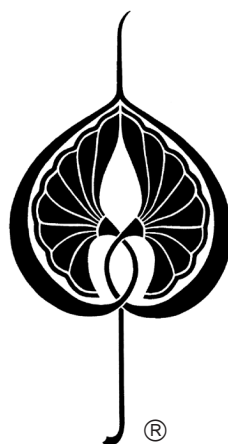


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CONTENTS

Forest as Challenge, Forest as Healer: Reinterpretations and Hybridity within the Forest Tradition of Thailand BROOKE SCHEDNECK	1
Awakening Faith in the Pure Land Section of the <i>Qixinlun</i> CHRISTOPHER CALLAHAN	25
Monastic Lineages and Ritual Participation: A Proposed Revision of KURODA Toshio's <i>Kenmitsu Taisei</i> MIKAËL BAUER	45
Selected Materials for the Study of the Life of Buddha Śākyamuni CHARLES WILLEMEN	67
SPECIAL SECTION: RECENT RESEARCH ON ESOTERIC BUDDHISM	
The Purification of Heruka: Reflections on Identity Formation in Late Indian Buddhism DAVID B. GRAY	81
A Brief Exploration of Late Indian Buddhist Exegeses of the "Mantrayāna" and "Mantranaya" VESNA A. WALLACE	95
On the Subject of <i>Abhiṣeka</i> CHARLES D. ORZEC	113
The Life of the Tang Court Monk Vajrabodhi as Chronicled by Lü Xiang (吕向): South Indian and Śrī Laṅkā Antecedents to the Arrival of the Buddhist Vajrayāna in Eighth-Century Java and China JEFFREY SUNDBERG, IN COLLABORATION WITH ROLF GIEBEL	129

Ritual Studies in the <i>Longue Durée</i> : Comparing Shingon and Śaiva Siddhānta Homas RICHARD K. PAYNE	223
BOOK REVIEWS	
<i>Emptiness and Temporality: Buddhism and Medieval Japanese Poetics</i> by Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen STEFFEN DÖLL	263
<i>Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu</i> by Albert Welter COURTNEY BRUNTZ	272
<i>Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture</i> by Jane Naomi Iwamura KENDALL MARCHMAN	277
BDK ENGLISH TRIPITAKA SERIES	285

Forest as Challenge, Forest as Healer: Reinterpretations and Hybridity within the Forest Tradition of Thailand

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The forest has held an ambiguous and ambivalent place in Buddhist history. It is featured prominently in major moments of the Buddha's life story as the place of his birth, enlightenment, and death. It is also perceived as a place of fear, resistance, escape, sickness, spirits, danger, and temptation. In contrast to these negative attributes, the forest has been described as a place to encounter nature free from distractions; it embodies solitude, peace, and tranquility. How can one resolve these differing notions? Why does this ambivalence exist? How have all of these meanings changed over time?

This essay looks at the rhetoric of the forest in Buddhist thought by tracing the ambivalent attitudes of the forest within the Pāli canon, to meanings of the forest as described in popular Thai forest biographies, and finally to contemporary Buddhist writings, both from Thailand and Western countries. The Pāli canon suggests the best place to practice is the natural world; it is isolating and challenging at first but soon can help transform the mind. The forest tradition of Thailand depicts the forest as more than just isolating, but rather dangerous and fearful. In contemporary times there is hardly any trace of the forest as a fearful place because it is instead depicted as sacred, and there is a feeling of merging with the natural world that aids awakening. In his recent book, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, David McMahan points to a change in the meaning of the forest as Buddhism developed. He states that the reverence for nature is not apparent in the Pāli canon, which he finds ambivalent toward the wilderness. There is no appreciation of nature for nature's sake, no sense that nature is sacred.¹ This paper shows how this change, from ambivalence toward nature to nature as sacred, occurred within the forest tradition of Thailand.

The change seen in these conceptions of the forest can be explained by cultural and religious hybridities. Hybridities studies explore the global context in terms of flows of ideas, people, and economies through all forms of media. Marwan Kraidy in her book uses case studies of hybrid cultures to show the wide applicability of hybridities.² Kraidy finds that hybridity in modern times is not homogenizing but also does not produce complete heterogeneity. In the forest tradition this kind of hybrid formation is apparent where there is a mixing of ideas of the forest as challenging and also peaceful. Both of these ideas are established in the Pāli canon, as this article details, but find more overt expressions when connected with other social discourses. I use hybridity in this broad sense in order to capture the spectrum of mixing that occurs over time during different moments of encounter and exchange.

McMahan also uses hybridity to describe Buddhism in North America. He argues that this consists of a hybrid of indigenous Buddhist concepts with discourses of psychology, Romanticism, and science. The result is something neither dominated by Buddhist ideas nor by discourses of modernity. Indigenous Buddhist concepts, appropriated in a modern context, reveal a hybrid process drawing on Western ideas and concepts.³ Within the modern-day forest tradition of Thailand modern romanticist ideas of nature are mixed with early Buddhist conceptions that advocate practice in the forest. I conceive of the modern transformation of the forest as a hybrid, bringing together the ambivalence of the early tradition with discourses of modernity. This paper presents how particular manifestations of modernity have created a hybrid understanding of the forest in the Buddhist tradition.

FOREST MONK, VILLAGE MONK

In early Theravāda Buddhist history there emerged a distinction between monks who practiced in the forest and those who settled in villages and towns. Reginald Ray labels the Buddha and his earliest disciples as saints of the forest and uses their significance to argue that forest renunciants should be represented in a separate category within Buddhist studies, alongside settled monastics and laity. Ray argues that forest renunciants were the earliest paradigm for normative Buddhism, and the only paradigm before the tradition became institutionalized.⁴ After monasteries became established near villages, the paradigm of town monk emerged. As an ideal type, the forest dweller corresponds

to the vocation of meditation and the village dweller to study of the Buddhist teachings and interaction with the laity. Taylor writes of the history of the forest tradition and how after meeting his teacher, Ajahn Man, Ajahn Mahā Boowa (var. Mahabua) “turned away from scholastic or book pursuits (*kanthathura*) to kammathaana [practices of the forest monk] practices. This narration of ‘turning away’ from scholastic worldly pursuits is symbolically important in the charisma building of a forest monk.”⁵ However, these two vocations are not mutually exclusive since forest monks may study and village monks may practice meditation and monastics can move between these two roles. Indeed, in response to Ray’s creation of the separate category for the early forest renunciants, Kapstein argues that instead early Buddhist monks could have spent time in both the monastery and the forest.⁶

Tambiah discusses the differences between village and forest temples in his book, *Forest Saints and the Cult of Amulets*. He concludes that the forest temple has more monks than novices, that all are expected to practice meditation, and that the community is seen as a group of professionals, which includes laity not only on ritual days but also during meditation retreats.⁷ The village monastery, in contrast, is more closely connected to the sangha hierarchy, and in most temples, young monks and novices are expected to seek education while also fulfilling their duties of participating in chanting and merit-making ceremonies for the laity. Settled village monasteries developed alongside the forest movement so that today there is still a distinction between these two types.

The developments of new movements and interactions of both types with the state have featured prominently in the history of Theravāda Buddhism in general and Thai Buddhism specifically. Thailand received this bifurcated classification of monasteries from Sri Lanka. King Lithai of the Ayutthaya era established a sangha organization based on the division of town and forest monasteries, as can be found in the Thai chronicles from this period.⁸ The periods of ascendancy between town and forest monasteries waxed and waned until the monk Ajahn Mun initiated a revival for the forest tradition beginning in the 1920s. Because of the popularity of this lineage, forest monks today are treated as exemplary followers of the Buddha’s path and have become famous nationally and internationally for their teachings.

Originally comprised of individual wandering monks, forest practices eventually became institutionalized as well. Yet forest monasteries

still maintain their distance from the center by not participating in larger community activities. This contrasts with village monks who must be more attuned to annual community rituals.⁹ Taylor also quotes Ajahn Mahā Boowa as saying that forest monks “should continue to live in the forests and hills so as to find quiet places to do the work of a recluse (*Samana-Dhamma*) without being too involved in other duties not considered really necessary.”¹⁰

Parnwell and Seeger find that some monks practicing in Thai forest monasteries today continue to distance themselves from ritual communities. They interviewed a forest monk who agreed that forest and village monasteries are distinct. This monk interpreted village monasteries to be a place where one must perform rituals and where the abbot acts as an exorcist. He sees this as a contrast to the forest monastery where it is easy to organize meditation teachings and dhamma talks. This monk was happy not to have to comply with villagers’ needs, and he refuses to perform folk festivals in his monastery.¹¹ Ajahn Mahā Boowa, in reference to the awkwardness of forest monks who are invited to take part in ceremonial functions writes that they “are not used to the ways of society and all the formalities of these functions. For they have never had much occasion to get involved in society and their ceremonies.”¹² He finds that they also rarely go to these functions because they are not the kind of events forest monks find interesting.¹³ With this background in mind, the next section discusses the meanings of the forest as seen in the Pāli canon, Thai forest monk biographies, and in modern reinterpretations.

THE FOREST IN THE PĀLI CANON

Since the Pāli canon literature is vast it is difficult to make a definitive statement about meanings of the forest in these texts. Yet in general the forest is depicted as a tool for awareness development that contributes to peaceful and contented attitudes of monks. Swearer writes that the textual record “testifies to the importance of forests, as a preferred environment for spiritual practices such as meditation as well as a place where laity sought instruction.”¹⁴

Specific examples can also be found in *Vakkali’s Verses* (*Theragāthā* 350–354) and *Dantika’s Verses* (*Therīgāthā* 39–62), as well as the *Gaṇaka-Mogallāna-sutta*, in which living in a remote spot is recommended.¹⁵ In these verses the forest is seen as a place to develop awakening, to train one’s mind to remain firm in one’s effort, and to begin to overcome

mental hindrances. In the *Mahā-samaya-sutta*, the forest is a functional and sacred place for meetings among monks which *devas* of all kinds also seek to attend.¹⁶ Harrison points out that in the “Forest Suttas” section of the *Samyutta-nikaya* (S.I. 197–206), forest-dwelling practitioners are frequently taught and reproved by deities and other supernatural beings apart from the Buddha; the forest is a place to encounter this supernatural world.¹⁷ Thus it is a place where one can witness the peacefulness, contentedness, and serenity of the holy ones who live there.¹⁸

But the forest can be challenging. In the *Bhaya-bherava-sutta*, the Buddha and a Brahmin converse about how the forest is a difficult place to live because it is so isolated. The Brahmin complains to the Buddha, “it’s not easy to endure isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. It’s not easy to maintain seclusion, not easy to enjoy being alone. The forest, as it were, plunders the mind of a monk who has not attained concentration.”¹⁹ Thus the forest is a difficult place for one who has not attained a level of concentration in meditation, but eventually the forest changes to a pleasant place of enjoyment, once one has overcome problems with isolation and concentration. Perhaps the most well-known quote regarding this from the Pāli canon is in the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta*, which advocates one to act

As a deer in the wilds,
unfettered,
goes for forage wherever it wants:
the wise person, valuing freedom,
wanders alone
like a rhinoceros.²⁰

Harrison also finds this isolation of the forest praised in the early texts. He writes that “life in the forest was seen to be conducive to meditation, life in the urban monastery inimical to it.”²¹ Ascetic practices such as living in the forest were thought to enhance the contemplative life. This again exemplifies the positive side of practicing in the forest; it allows one freedom and unfettered space for practice even if one feels isolated at first.

Another sutta that depicts the forest as a place of practice is the *Bhaddiya Kāḷigodhā-sutta*. In this sutta the Venerable Bhaddiya Kāḷigodhā “on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, would repeatedly exclaim, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’” Bhaddiya Kāḷigodhā explains that he used to be a householder with much property and people to guard it. However, despite his material possessions, he still felt fear

and agitation. But upon entering the forest he says: “I dwell without fear, unagitated, confident and unafraid—unconcerned, unruffled, my wants satisfied, with my mind like a wild deer.”²² The forest here embodies freedom from worldly possessions and desires.

This is far from a comprehensive look at the Pāli canon’s relationship to the forest, but from this small selection we do see the forest depicted as a place of isolation where one can train one’s mind and a place where one can eventually feel tranquil by following the Buddha’s path. The forest is a difficult place to live but once certain hardships can be endured, the forest can enable a simpler lifestyle. For many of the early disciples of the Buddha, time spent in the forest contributed to their contentedness and serenity. This can be seen as well in the Mahāyāna sutras, most notably through Daniel Boucher’s work on the *Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā-sūtra* (Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla) titled *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahāyāna*. He translates that the authors of this text advise readers to “‘take pleasure in the wilderness’ (13.17), to take ‘pleasure in lodging in secluded hinterlands’ (14.14–15), to ‘always dwell in forests and caves’ (15.1), and to ‘frequent the wilderness and manifold hinterlands’ (16.3).”²³ Here is the exhortation to practice in the forest and benefit from its pleasures. But we have seen there is also discomfort and isolation related to the forest so that a mix of uneasiness and pleasure characterizes the early Buddhist conceptions of the forest.

Both tendencies of challenge and healing are seen in the literature from the Pāli canon. This tension is depicted in many more examples of Buddhist literature than can be quoted here. These two tendencies are given more overt expression in different ways. The first generation of Thai forest monks, with their wandering lifestyles through vast stretches of forest, portrayed their experiences as fearful and challenging. This reinterpretation brings a different shade of meaning to the tamer ideas of isolation and difficult forest lifestyles related in the Pāli canon. More contemporary forest monks, with the forests tamed and the influence of modernization, reinterpret the forest as a place of escape from modern busy lifestyles. Each reinterpretation constitutes a hybrid formation of ideas and brings a new level of understanding about the forest in the Thai forest tradition.

THAI FOREST MONKS' BIOGRAPHIES

This section covers the discourses of the forest found in Thai forest monks' biographies, especially those of Ajahn Mun and some of his disciples such as Ajahns Lee and Khao. Ajahn Mun's biography was made famous by his disciple Ajahn Mahā Boowa, published under royal patronage in 1971. Ajahn Mun became a famous forest monk in the 1930s, and his disciples followed his way of life until the 1960s when the forests of Thailand became invaded for their abundant resources. Thus the disciples eventually became settled monastics, but the forest still featured prominently in their lives and teachings. These biographies reveal much about the nature of the forest at this time period. In continuity with the Pāli canon, the forest is still seen as a place of challenge and freedom and a place where one is advised to practice. But while looking for common themes in their writings, it is clear that beyond seeing the forest as merely isolating, the forest monks also find a place of fear, a place of wild animals and uncertainty where mindfulness must be constantly employed.

The biographies of the forest tradition have been studied by three notable scholars: Stanley Tambiah, James Taylor, and Kamala Tiyavanich.²⁴ These authors seek to understand the relationship between the forest tradition and nation-state and to account for the popularity of the movement. Taylor's book looks broadly at the history of the forest tradition and its relationship to the reform tradition of the Thammayut in Thailand. He traces the forest tradition's eventual institutionalization by the settled monastics of the Thammayut and the complex interplay between state and sangha in early twentieth-century northeastern Thailand. Tambiah looks in depth at the biography of Ajahn Mun and traces the connections between charisma and hagiography of Buddhist saints. He delineates the polarities between town and forest monks, focusing primarily on the description of forest monks within their broad historical landscape. Tiyavanich focuses on Ajahn Mun and many of his disciples' biographies to tell the life stories of the forest monks. She also analyzes what she sees as the nation-state's undoing of local traditions through standardization of the tradition and the forest closure period. Tiyavanich's project of describing the lives of the wandering monks comes closest to my project here; however, the thesis of this article focuses more closely on the meanings of the forest. I use these authors' insights but move the account

forward in history in order to discuss the meanings of the forest to modern interpreters who came to join the forest tradition.

Fear and Challenge

Similar to the Pāli canon literature, in the Thai forest tradition, the forest is seen as a productive place to practice because it offers a challenge to one's mind. Thai forest monks often state this and write about the fears encountered while living in the forest. They argue that living in the forest keeps one alert because of the fear and challenge of the forest environment. The biographies and stories of forest monks are filled with discussions of how they often are faced with dangerous situations while living in the forest. As well the forest is described as wild, lonely, and desolate. Thus it is not seen primarily as a peaceful place, but one that keeps the forest monk alert with mindfulness. Ajahn Khao is recorded as saying that every *dhutaṅga* (a group of thirteen ascetic practices commonly observed by forest monks) monk is afraid of death and one part of the heart does not want to go into the forest, but if one is determined, that is what must be done.²⁵

Famous forest masters Ajahn Mun and Ajahn Mahā Boowa discuss fear as both enemy and teacher. Ajahn Mun is quoted as saying that “of all the enemies to his life in the forest, the greatest is likely to be fear,”²⁶ while Ajahn Mahā Boowa says that the forest monk “will look for a place that arouses fear in order to help him to arouse the effort to do his work more easily.”²⁷ Ajahn Mahā Boowa continues this discourse as he discusses the usefulness of wild animals, such as tigers, in this effort. Tigers are especially known to arouse fear quickly as just seeing their footprints creates “a feeling of insecurity and uncertainty in the place where he is staying.”²⁸ This creates, for the forest monk, a state of watchfulness from which diligence arises.

Ajahn Mahā Boowa illustrates this when he relates a story of a layman (*upāsaka*) accompanying a forest monk who was significantly changed by his encounter with a tiger. After the forest monk hears of this encounter, he calls the tiger the *upāsaka*'s teacher and concludes that since their meeting “The *Upāsaka* worked hard at his meditation practice and got rid of all his opinionated conceit so that he was transformed into a good person both inwardly and outwardly. From the time that the tiger came to help and train him, even though it was only one night, there was nothing that one could blame in the *Upāsaka*.”²⁹ Thus the fear of the tiger is what created this positive result for this

man. The tiger trained him to be a better person through this fear, and the *upāsaka* was significantly affected by this encounter. Ajahn Mahā Boowa quotes Ajahn Mun discussing the value of tigers also. He says that “They [the forest monks] must consider the forests and hills as being places of death for those who are afraid of tigers.... But until they have got rid of fear in whatever they are afraid of, they must not leave....”³⁰ It is not enough to be in the presence of tigers but to stay until the fear has been lifted.

Instead of a fearful and timid person, the forest transforms the forest monk into a warrior. Forests are thus a “suitable battleground for getting rid of fear in his heart.”³¹ Ajahn Mun furthers this warrior image by saying that “living under the shade of a tree in a desolate forest is like going into the front line of battle,”³² and “To live in the forest in the right way a person must be a warrior.”³³ For Ajahn Mun this is the place where one can gain support in the practice of meditation and feel liberated by making progress toward diminishing the hindrances of the mind. Ajahn Mahā Boowa explains that Ajahn Mun felt that the forest was “without a doubt the most appropriate battlefield to choose in one’s struggle to attain all levels of Dhamma.”³⁴ Thus ideas of struggle, battle, and challenge predominate the depictions of the forest in these forest monk accounts. The forest monks indicate that this fear is necessary to train the mind and produce the mindfulness needed to conquer their fears.

Mindfulness

The use to which forest monks put their fear is increased mindfulness, so the forest is also a place to develop awareness. Ajahn Lee lists a number of reasons he will continue to wander in forests throughout his life, and all involve aspects of mindfulness. He argues that wandering in the forest allows one to observe the environment and take lessons from how animals live. It sharpens one’s senses if one is alone in the forest because one must always be alert for danger. One can reflect on the teachings of the Buddha there without societal distraction.³⁵

Ajahns of the forest tradition argue that the forest keeps the *dhutaṅga* monk focused on the task of attaining dhamma. Because of the living conditions, forest monks retain their diligence. In Ajahn Mahā Boowa’s companion volume to Ajahn Mun’s biography called *Paṭipadā: Venerable Ācariya Mun’s Path of Practice*, he describes Ajahn Mun’s teaching style. He writes of Ajahn Mun, “In those wild forests you will be able

to get rid of all kinds of laziness and fear. A lazy or timid person should go and live in such a place for it will help him to develop effort and diligence and also to overcome his fears.”³⁶ Ajahn Mahā Boowa writes similarly of a forest monk, Ajahn Chob, who found that whenever he left the forest “his heart tended to be lazy, careless and over confident and he had little interest in helping himself.... He ate more food than when he was living in more rigorous conditions, and he also slept a lot and was more lazy.”³⁷ Ajahn Mahā Boowa comments, “The force of the fear of danger drives [forest-dwelling monks] to be watchful and careful and to maintain mindfulness.... Those who live in desolate, lonely places ... therefore have a much better opportunity to promote their striving in this way than have those who stay where they feel safe and secure and where they feel no anxiety at all....”³⁸

Ajahn Mun also found forest dwelling conducive to meditation and awakening the senses. He finds that in addition to the Buddha’s prescription of living in the forest, it is valuable because one doesn’t have distractions or involvements.³⁹ Meditating in the natural surroundings of a forest environment makes the mind feel “constantly on the alert, earnestly focusing on its primary objective—the transcendence of *dukkha*.”⁴⁰

The isolation of the forest, it is argued, creates an increase in mindfulness as well as makes dhamma practice easier than in places that cause agitation and restlessness. The isolation pushes the *kilesas* (ignorance, greed, delusion) to the forefront of one’s mind so one can destroy them. Ajahn Mun describes the forest as having an eerie solitude of which “the constant fear of danger can motivate the mind to focus undivided attention.”⁴¹ Ajahn Mahā Boowa remarks that remote forests are the right place to cut off all forms of *dukkha*, where a person can hone in on exactly what they need to understand in order to overcome the *kilesas*.⁴² Ajahn Lee, in his autobiography, writes that living in the forest allows him to observe influences of the environment. The forest is a place to sharpen your mindfulness so that “rust won’t have a chance to take hold.”⁴³

In these Thai forest monks’ biographies we see interpretations similar to the Pāli canon regarding the difficulties of forest living and also the necessity of overcoming this to attain *nibbāna*. But here there is more focus on actual danger rather than just feelings of isolation. There are no worldly distractions in the forest, so this aids in the development of mindfulness, but there is also fear of the unknown

wilderness that creates alertness. The next section demonstrates how the meanings of the forest become further developed in contemporary times so that there is less focus on danger and more on the peaceful, natural settings of forest living.

MODERN REINTERPRETATIONS

By the mid-1960s news of Ajahn Chah, a disciple of Ajahn Mun, had spread to Euro-Americans traveling within Thailand and Southeast Asia. Speaking of Ajahn Mun, Louis Gabaude writes: "His radical way of life and practice of strict mental discipline miles away from merit-making or protective rituals, in a pristine, natural environment appealed to westerners who found there a genuine and original way of practice beyond religion, and a monastic tradition previously unknown to them."⁴⁴ In 1967 an American monk named Ajahn Sumedho came to stay at Ajahn Chah's monastery called Wat Pah Pong. After this, other Euro-Americans came to Wat Pah Pong, and after five years as a monk, Ajahn Sumedho became the abbot of a new international forest monastery called Wat Nong Pah Nanachat. Later, Ajahn Sumedho and Ajahn Chah visited England to establish a branch monastery of the forest tradition. Soon after, the first monastery was created, Cittaviveka in Chithurst, followed by a number of other Ajahn Chah branch monasteries throughout England, France, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Italy, Canada, and the United States.⁴⁵

In the contemporary period the forest tradition has expanded to far-reaching locations; however, the forest itself has experienced tremendous physical change. Ajahn Khao describes the forest in 1940s northeastern Thailand as thick with overgrown flora, where wild elephants and tigers roamed, and the few people there traveled not by car or boat but by foot and buffalo cart.⁴⁶ The Buddhist monks in contemporary Thailand do not have such lush and dangerous forests in which to roam and wander, but the forest still occupies a space for them within the tradition. This section shows how the accounts of contemporary forest monks' relationships with the forest differ from the forest monks' biographies. Using both Euro-American monks such as Ajahn Sumedho and others within the Ajahn Chah lineage, as well as contemporary Thai forest monks and nuns such as Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu and his disciples, the following discusses how meanings of the forest have been reshaped and reinterpreted since further encounters with modernity, Westernization, and globalization, thus creating

a hybrid discourse of indigenous Buddhist ideas about the forest with these new encounters.

McMahan argues that “many staples of Buddhist modernist literature—the exaltitude of nature, the idea of spiritual experience as identifying with the natural world or a universal spirit ... owe much to the intertwining of Buddhism and Romanticist-Transcendentalist stream of thought.”⁴⁷ McMahan goes on to assert that modern Buddhist ideas have mixed with Romanticism so that society and nature have become opposed. In this discourse, the West becomes identified with consumerist city life and the East offers hope for a more natural lifestyle.⁴⁸ Therefore some modern Buddhists look to the East for a less artificial way of life, corresponding with Romantic thought. McMahan writes that for Romantics and Transcendentalists, nature “militates against contrivance; the voice within is not the voice of society with its conventions and rules.”⁴⁹ Influenced by these ideas, for modern Buddhists the forest becomes a place to seek out solitude not only for aid in meditation and to lessen worldly distractions but also for its own sake, to be rid of society in general. Thus it is not perceived as a dangerous place with fearsome animals and other beings, and meditation is not its only purpose.

This can be seen in the discourses of the “naturalness” forest. In the contemporary forest monk writings, the forest is emphasized as peaceful and tranquil with no mention of fear or challenge. The second aspect of this modern discourse of the forest portrays it as a place to escape modernity and the effects of globalization. The forest, for these Buddhist thinkers, has stopped in time and constitutes an unfettered lifestyle. These ideas can be seen in the brochure for Wat Pah Nanachat titled “The International Forest Monastery” where it states, “Far from the stress and busyness that afflict city life, a tranquil, natural setting provides the perfect environment for developing peace and wisdom. Forest monasteries in Thailand provide a calm atmosphere of silence and solitude.”⁵⁰ The statements here show the forest as a tranquil spot away from modernity, and a place of peace where one can be at one with nature. This is not to say that there is no discussion of wild animals or fear in more modern forest tradition writings. There is some of this discourse remaining; however, it is infrequent and certainly the ideas of being at one with nature and the forest as an antidote to modernity predominate.

One with Nature

One of the most pronounced reinterpretations of the forest's meaning is the idea that the forest engenders a connection with nature. This can be seen in both the Pāli canon's and Thai forest tradition's ideas about the forest; however, the modern reinterpretation takes this further. It depicts the forest primarily as a site to understand nature and how it relates to the dhamma. This feeling for nature is, as discussed above, connected with the tradition of Romanticism. Carrithers argues that this influenced the well-known German forest-monk in Sri Lanka, Nyanatiloka.⁵¹ Carrithers finds that some European monks originally had an interest in German Romanticism, which later developed into an interest in Buddhism. For them the idea of the forest as solitary and private was fundamental to conversion to a committed Buddhist lifestyle within the Sri Lankan forest lineage.⁵²

This idea of being at one with nature is seen in writings of second- and third-generation forest monks, both Thai and Euro-American. Speaking of the forests of Tao Dam Forest Monastery in Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand, contemporary forest monk Pañnavuḍḍho Bhikkhu writes, "the natural habitat and wildlife make me feel deeply enmeshed in nature. Biologists and botanists who visit speak with great enthusiasm about the diversity of the ecological surroundings. The place is a tropical paradise."⁵³ Thus this forest monk feels close with nature in this forest monastery, praising its beauty and ecological wonders. This discourse continues with Venerable Santacitto, who writes about how the forests can be of benefit in modern society. "Trees pull us up; especially in our modern materialistic society. To a large extent we have lost touch with our ability to really be with nature. We've forgotten how it functions to help us turn in to our inner nature."⁵⁴ The forests provide freedom from modern society and also the conditions to understand our own nature. This is a far different idea of the forest than Ajahn Mun's generation who used the forest more for its production of fear and uncertainty and less for its wonder and awe.

In the introduction to *A Still Forest Pool*, Jack Kornfield and Paul Breiter romanticize the forest monasteries of northeast Thailand, describing them thus: "there is the stillness of trees rustling and the quiet movement of monks doing chores or mindful walking meditation,"⁵⁵ "the whole forest setting supports the atmosphere of simplicity and renunciation."⁵⁶ In the same book they quote Ajahn Chah as saying that in the forest one learns from nature. "Here in the forest where a monk

can learn to contemplate the nature of things, he can live happily and peacefully. As he looks around, he understands that all forms of life degenerate and eventually die.”⁵⁷ So in these contemporary writings the reader is advised to observe nature, take in its peacefulness, and in this way learn about reality. There is no mention of fear or uncertainty, but there is a focus on the simple, natural setting of the forest.

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu also understands the forest as embodying the liberating power of nature. He sees nature as dhamma, and this inspired him to found Wat Suan Mokkh as a forest monastery in 1932. He believes we feel a sense of peace and transcendence of the self in the forest. It is nature that shows a way out of suffering and a separation from the troubles of the everyday world.⁵⁸ Buddhadāsa adheres to a view of the intrinsic dhammic value of nature because nature engenders well-being and serves as a teacher of the mind and spirit.⁵⁹ Thus Buddhadāsa argues that nature teaches us as we observe it, and we need this in the modern world filled with materialism. This kind of teaching is quite changed from the practice of encountering wild animals in order to produce mindfulness.

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu continues this trope as he also speaks of the ways nature can heal humanity. Jack Kornfield writes of his talk with Ajahn Buddhadāsa: “Ajahn Buddhadāsa spoke of the healing power of the trees and walkways of Suan Mokkh. When I asked him how so many Westerners who begin spiritual life with deep inner wounds, pain, and self-hatred, can best approach practice [Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu responded that] they should be taken out into nature, into beautiful forests or mountains. They must stay there long enough to realize that they too are part of nature.”⁶⁰

Present here is also the idea that natural living in the forest connects one to the Buddha and his time. Kornfield and Breiter write that one has to leave the city temples where monks study, chant, and preach “to find the simple life of dwelling in the forest, the meditative living with robe and bowl, as old as the Buddha himself.”⁶¹ They continue to praise the forest tradition as the place where one can find what one reads about the Buddha, wandering with his monks in the forests of India, a life of simplicity and meditation, supported by alms-food, and dwelling in the forest. It is here that monks are intent “to live fully and realize in their own hearts and minds the insight and inner peace taught by the Buddha.”⁶²

This discourse is also illustrated in the booklet about Wat Pah Nanachat: “The contemporary Thai forest Tradition ... is a down-to-earth, ‘back to roots’ movement that models its practice and lifestyle on that of the Buddha and his first generation of disciples. The advent of the modern age notwithstanding, forest monasteries still keep alive the ancient traditions through following the Buddhist monastic code of discipline (*vinaya*) in all its detail and developing meditation in secluded forests.”⁶³ These contemporary enthusiasts for the forest dhamma thus feel that in the forest one can live like the Buddha, but also through the practitioner’s appreciation of nature, one can be at peace. Mae Chii Aree Kieatthubthew, a student of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu, in a dhamma talk regularly given at the International Dhamma Hermitage⁶⁴ writes that, “when we are in the forest, we will learn to appreciate not only its natural beauty but also peace in our mind.”⁶⁵ She finds that in the forest we can “learn about one’s self and learn about the nature of existence.”⁶⁶

Here we see a sharp focus on how the forest can teach humanity how to live and the feelings of peace and wonder that arise simply from being in nature alone. The appreciation of nature itself is emphasized here so that the forest is no longer just a place of isolation with no distractions, no longer used for the fear it can induce, but has immense value in and of itself.

Escape from and Challenge to Modernity

Ajahn Mahā Boowa comments in Ajahn Khao’s biography that one should dress appropriately when visiting a forest monastery because forest monks are so accustomed to living in the forest that they have become a part of it. When they see lots of people and material progress they see a departure from the dhamma and are dismayed. Ajahn Khao would disappear into the outlying forests if many people came to his forest monastery because he couldn’t withstand the current of the world.⁶⁷ Here we see Ajahn Khao’s resistance to modernity, but for him the forest is an escape because he is used to the forest life and finds it hard to deal with modern progress. This section shows how the escape from modernity of contemporary forest monks is a resistance to living in the modern world and how these monks find the forest to be an antidote. Ajahn Chah writes, “People outside may call us mad to live in the forest like this, sitting like statues. But how do they live?”⁶⁸ Thus there is a critique here of modern life and the forest can provide a

place opposed to this. The critique illuminates how the forest is a challenge to the city and societal living as well as man-made culture and technology that creates a distance from ourselves and nature.

Thus it is emphasized that forests are removed from man-made technologies. Ajahn Kevali, abbot of Wat Pah Nanachat, discusses the forest in these terms. He has stated that the technique of the forest monastery is to have one's lifestyle immersed in nature so as to learn from nature. When sitting under a tree one doesn't see anything determined by human intention.⁶⁹ Ajahn Jayasāro of Wat Pah Nanachat also finds the forest is uninhibited by man-made creations. He writes, "So we lead a very simple life, one bared down to the essentials, not surrounded by anything man-made or anything that's going to pull you out of yourself."⁷⁰

Maechii Pairor, a student of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu and a long-time teacher at the International Dhamma Hermitage, discusses in one of her dhamma talks a vision of nature that coincides with the tropes of Romanticism. She believes that humans have lost connection to the forest through the artificial constructs of society: "At present, we are surrounded by a man-made culture until we have lost the possibility to observe things like the tides, the seasons, and other natural changes, and in this loss we have become afraid of being alone with nature. Instead we feel lonely in a forest, and cannot absorb the serenity offered by nature."⁷¹ Mae Chii Aree believes that one can find peace without technology. She writes, "But after a few days in the forest—a few days without TV, cell phone, MP3 player, or ipod, iphone, computer, Internet—we may feel peace developing gradually and slowly in our hearts."⁷² This shows the aversion to modern living that contemporary Buddhists are displaying, with its antidote being natural living in a forest setting. Thus some of these contemporary forest monastics reveal anti-modernity sentiments. This caused a reinterpretation of the tradition where the forest is perceived more as a place of escape from man-made culture, rather than a place of fear and challenge to the mind.

In addition to man-made objects and technology, the forest also provides a space apart from the influence of cities and societal living. Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu speaks of the forest as providing a way to live naturally, apart from cities and material items. He is recorded as saying in one of his dhamma talks titled "Forest Wat Wild Monks": "The meaning of 'wild monk' is to live naturally.... Even now, we see

that we're sitting on the ground, which is much different than in the city wats. Here, we sit on the seat of the Buddha—the ground. This is one example for you to understand what nature is like, and how different it is from the cities, and how different are the hearts of those who come sit and interact with Nature."⁷³ Thus the town monasteries, it is argued, have compromised the natural forest lifestyle by not living as closely with nature.

Ajahn Chah also contrasts city living with living in the forest. Paul Breiter translates him as saying: "Living in the city, we live among distraction and disturbance. In the forest, there is quiet and tranquility. We can contemplate things clearly and develop wisdom. So we take this quiet and tranquility as our friend and helper. Such an environment is conducive to Dharma practice, so we take it as our dwelling place; we take the mountains and caves for our refuge. Observing natural phenomena, wisdom comes about in such places."⁷⁴ Thus there is learning and reflection of nature that forests create as opposed to cities and modern living, which are unnatural.

In another collection of dhamma talks, Ajahn Chah finds that the forest is a place to store up one's wisdom to get ready to go back into the city. He is quoted as saying, "Here in the forest we can sow and cultivate the seeds of wisdom. Living amongst chaos and turmoil these seeds have difficulty in growing, but once we have learned to live in the forest, we can return and contend with the city and all the stimulation of the senses that it brings us. Learning to live in the forest means to allow wisdom to grow and develop. We can then apply this wisdom no matter where we go."⁷⁵ Contemporary forest monks and nuns are attracted to this lineage, in many cases, because they are frustrated with modern life. They find it chaotic and meaningless. The forest becomes the antidote for this, a place to renew a connection to traditional and premodern ways of living. Thai forest monks were wary of worldly things and material development as well and tried to hide from them. But they did this because they wanted to maintain dhamma, not recreate a more traditional time period. The simplification of life in the forest monastery in contemporary times is a release from contemporary interactions with society.

Ajahn Sumedho also calls attention to this distinction in his article "The Forest Tradition as a Challenge to the Modern World." He emphasizes that the forest is a place that is untouched, uninfluenced, and uncorrupted by the desires and ignorance of humanity.⁷⁶ Thus, it

is the ultimate natural environment in contrast to modern urban society, which is characterized as corrupt and artificial. For him, the forest challenges the assumptions of modern life, the conceits of the modern Western world.⁷⁷ The forest, in his words, “offers the modern world a gift.” He believes this gift is a truth that has been forgotten.⁷⁸

Well-known Thai monk Phra Phaisan Visalo also sees the forest monastery as a challenge to modern society. He calls forest monasteries spaces of resistance that question the validity of popular values.⁷⁹ He believes that they play the role of a “retreat center where people who are worn out by competition in society can heal themselves and recover their wholeness through meditation, relaxation, and reflection upon themselves with a new approach to life.”⁸⁰ Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu is quoted as saying that “The deep sense of calm that nature provides through separation from the stress that plagues us in the day-to-day world protects our heart and mind. The lessons nature teaches us lead to a new birth beyond suffering caused by our acquisitive self-preoccupation.”⁸¹ Thus forest monasteries are the beginnings of a change in social patterns where new values can be expressed.

In these modern reinterpretations we see that different meanings of the forest are emphasized, such as being close with nature and moving away from modernity and globalization. Nature becomes appreciated for its own sake in addition to being an avenue for better practice through its distance from modern living. For contemporary forest monks, being in nature is pleasant and peaceful from the start—there is no longer fear of spirits or wild animals—only tranquility. Certainly a factor in this is the domestication of the forest in Thailand, but it also has to do with modern ideas of tranquility in nature, the idea of being at one with nature via Romantic and Transcendentalist thought, and the forest as an antidote to city living. The contemporary monastics of the forest tradition, through their writings, produce a hybrid formation of the rhetorics of the forest in Buddhist thought. They mix the indigenous Buddhist attitude of simplicity and peacefulness that the forest can bring with modern attitudes toward nature. Through this the tranquility of the forest becomes amplified and the challenge the forest poses to one’s practice is downgraded.

CONCLUSION

The Forest Sangha website’s passage on the history of the forest tradition sums up the two discourses of the first-generation forest

lineage period and the modern period, infused with Western categories. It states: "The Buddha's disciples who chose to undertake these dhutanga practices and live austerely in the forest did so for many reasons: because dwelling in the wilderness with its ruggedness and danger, such as tigers and snakes, provided an excellent arena for spiritual training and overcoming fear; because the wilderness with its simplicity, quietude and natural beauty provided a place for pleasant, peaceful abiding and joyful meditative concentration."⁸² These two reasons for living in the forest stated above are actually two separate discourses that have changed over time. The first emphasizes the fear and challenge of the forest experienced by the first generation; the second stresses the romanticist-infused aspects of the forest as a pleasant, simple, and peaceful place.

This case study of the meanings of the forest in the Thai tradition fits into the recent emphasis in Buddhist studies on hybridity and reinterpretations as a way to analyze Buddhist modernism.⁸³ The Pāli canon writings of the forest and the forest tradition of Thailand already contained the qualities of escaping the distractions of the world and meditating in solitude, but through interactions with discourses of modernity such as Romanticism, this is accentuated. The forest becomes a place to escape modernity. It is a challenge to twenty-first century living, instead of just a challenge to the mind, and becomes a symbol of anti-modernism against materialism and narratives of progress and development. Forest monasteries were always places of natural surroundings and solitude, but this meaning is extended for contemporary interlocutors. Nature itself becomes entwined with the teachings of the Buddha. These reinterpretations show the range of expressions present from which to draw in the Buddhist tradition. The reinventions are not radical changes but are developed and finessed to fit new contexts and discourses of debate about modernity and globalization.

These discourses of modernity that have created hybrid formations with indigenous Buddhist concepts show one of the ways religion adapts and reacts to the contemporary world. There is a growing need to understand new religious formations and how they are constituted. One of the most pressing issues for scholars of religious studies concerns the mechanisms by which religion maintains its relevance in contemporary times. This analysis of the rhetorics of the forest explores one important manifestation of this.

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Awakening Faith in the Pure Land Section of the *Qixinlun*

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Towards the end of the treatise known as the *Dasheng Qixinlun* (Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna, T. 1666),¹ the reader is told of an excellent expedient means devised by the buddhas to protect and strengthen the faith of those who lack courage and strength. This expedient means is the practice of wholehearted meditation on Amida Buddha.² Through this meditative practice, the practitioner will be born in the buddha land beyond, where one will always see the Buddha, maintain non-retrogressive faith, and be forever separated from evil paths of existence. In a treatise known for its systematic exposition of the One Mind (*isshin*, 一心), modern scholars have regarded this reference to the worship of Amida with suspicion and a few have even questioned whether this section (T. 1666:583a12–21, hereafter PL section) was a part of the “original text” or a later interpolation. Indeed, the majority of the *Qixinlun* is given over to philosophical discussion of the One Mind, and this reference to Amida is the only mention of a specific buddha or bodhisattva in the text. Moreover, some might question whether the proposed practice of meditation on Amida Buddha with the intention of being born in his Pure Land is in keeping with the central tenets of the treatise: that all things are of the One Mind and that the mind being permeated with suchness is a pure potentiality of buddhahood. If all things are of the mind, can we not say that Amida and his Western Paradise are merely creations of the mind and ultimately unreal? If the mind is permeated with suchness and serves as the matrix or womb of enlightenment, what need does the practitioner have in meditating on an external buddha in a distant land?³

While the scholarly suspicions concerning this section and its relation to the text as a whole are certainly well warranted, earlier scholarship has often presupposed in their examination of this section a certain

understanding of Pure Land faith and practice, an understanding that post-dates the sixth-century text. Beginning with Shandao (613–681) in China and continuing with Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262) in Japan, Pure Land practice increasingly became identified as saying the name of Amida Buddha, with meditation playing less a role and even being considered an indication of a lack of faith in the other power of the Buddha. The brief exhortation to meditate on Amida in order to strengthen one's faith found at the end of the *Qixinlun*, even if it was a latter interpolation, represents a different conception of Pure Land faith and practice, both earlier and continuing within other schools.

In order to understand this section and re-examine the relation of it to the *Qixinlun* as a whole, it is necessary to return this section to the period in which the text that we now have was most likely translated/composed. After a brief introduction to the questions concerning the origin, authorship, and production of the text as well as the doubts over the PL section, this short paper will provide two close readings of the PL section. First, we will offer an **inter-textual reading** of the PL section, examining its language in the light of earlier texts. Second, we will then give an **intra-textual reading** of the section, showing how it fits in the text as a whole. Even if this section was a later interpolation, there is much in the text that foreshadows the section and reveals a rationale to this “addition.” Through these two close readings, we will locate the meaning of the PL section in terms of earlier Buddhist texts and the treatise as a whole.

I. THE AWAKENING OF FAITH AND SCHOLARLY DOUBT

The *Qixinlun* is a text that has occasioned a lot of doubt. Scholars are still unsure of who authored the text and where and when it was composed and translated, if indeed it is a translation at all. Without the discovery of some new document, many of these questions will no doubt continue.

According to the earliest known commentary by Tanyan (516–588), the text was composed by Āśvaghoṣa (first or second century CE), the famed Indian poet and supposed author of the *Buddhacarita* (Life of the Buddha). According to the comprehensive catalogue of Buddhist texts called the *Lidai sanbaoji* (Record of the Three Treasures of the Successive Dynasties, 597), the treatise was written by Āśvaghoṣa and a translation was made in 550 by the Indian monk Paramārtha (499–569), a translator

of many important Yogācāra treatises, such as the *Mahāyānasamgraha* (Compendium of Mahāyāna, T. 1593). A catalog compiled in 730 called the *Kaiyuan shijiaolu* (Catalogue of the Buddhist Teachings in the Kaiyuan Era, 開元釋教錄, T. 55:2154:538b) lists a second translation of the treatise by the Khotanese monk Śikṣānanda (650–710), the translator of the eighty fascicle *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (Garland Scripture, T. 279).

Few scholars today accept that the treatise was composed by Aśvaghōṣa, and many regard the text that we have as an apocryphal work composed in sixth-century China. The main reason why the authorship of Aśvaghōṣa is challenged is that many of the doctrinal concepts found in the text represent later developments of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought that could not possibly have been known by the Aśvaghōṣa of the first or second century CE.⁴ To make matters more complicated, questions have been raised concerning whether or not Paramārtha is indeed the translator, and it has even been suggested that the second translation by Śikṣānanda was based on a Sanskrit translation of the Chinese original. While the lack of a Sanskrit original or extant Tibetan version has led many scholars to suppose that it was composed in China, the literary quality of the text suggests that its origins are not entirely Chinese. In comparison with other forged translations, the *Qixinlun* does not quote from known translations and has no known allusions to Taoist or Confucian texts. Moreover, the text is written in an extremely concise manner without literary embellishment, out of keeping with the ornate *pianliti* style that was popular in the sixth century.⁵ This evidence has led many scholars to conjecture that some form of the text was produced in either India or Central Asia and that the author or authors, perhaps even Paramārtha himself, rewrote the text in light of sixth-century Chinese intellectual concerns.⁶

Like the treatise itself, the PL section has occasioned doubts and has often been interpreted as a later interpolation by some unknown author. According to Walter Liebenthal, the fourth section on faith and practice is “one of the most corrupt sections in the whole treatise,”⁷ and the admonition to practice meditation on Amida (*buddhānusmṛti*) is in contradiction with an earlier statement that true *samādhi* neither abides in the characteristics of perception (*lakṣaṇa*) nor in the characteristics acquired (*upalakṣaṇa*).⁸ Moreover, he finds that the exhortation to meditate on Amida, whom he regards as a petitionary deity, is in contrast with the conception of the pervasive yet impersonal “Cosmic Mind” expressed in the main body of the text. Concerned with

this incongruity, Liebenthal wonders if Tanluan (476–542?) or one of his disciples “tampered” with the text or if the author of the text was pressured by Amida worshippers in his community.⁹ In the notes to his English translation of the *Qixinlun*, Yoshihito Hakeda similarly finds that this section “does not belong to the discussion of five practices but is an appendix.”¹⁰

In perhaps the foremost study of the *Qixinlun*, KASHIWAGI Hiroo has also argued that the PL section is possibly an addition to the text. Without denying the historical relation between *tathāgatagarbha* thought and Amida faith, as demonstrated in the reference to Amida in texts like the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (*Baoxing lun*, T. 1611), the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* (*Ru Lengjia jing*, T. 671), and Paramārtha’s translation of the *Mahāyānasamgraha* (*She dasheng lun*, T. 1593), Kashiwagi notes that the connection between the contents of these texts and Amida faith is by no means necessary. Many other *tathāgatagarbha* texts, such as the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* (*Dafengdeng rulaizang jing*, T. 666), the *Buzeng bujian jing* (Neither Increasing nor Decreasing Sutra, T. 668), and the *Foxinlun* (Buddha-Nature Treatise, T. 1610), do not mention Amida at all. In addition, if one looks at the different translations of the first category of texts, the reference to Amida is not always found. Based on this evidence, Kashiwagi argues that the connection between *tathāgatagarbha* thought and Amida faith is not a necessary relation but merely a product of historical circumstance.¹¹

Despite these doubts, Kashiwagi nevertheless finds that meditation on Amida as an expedient to attain non-retrogressive faith is given a position in the entirety of the *Qixinlun* through a suggestion of this practice found in the seventh item of the “Reasons for Writing” at the beginning of the text. Moreover, noting the resemblance of this conception of meditation on Amida as an expedient to attain non-retrogressive faith with passages from the *Shizhu piposha lun* (Treatise Analyzing the Ten Stages, T. 1521) Kashiwagi supposes that the latter may have played a role in the formation of the text of the *Qixinlun*.¹²

II. AN INTER-TEXTUAL READING OF THE PL SECTION

Before offering an intertextual reading of the PL section, it is necessary to say something of the Pure Land Buddhist literature that predates the *Qixinlun* and forms the background of the PL section. Although Pure Land Buddhism did not take shape as a separate school of Buddhism with a particular understanding of faith and practice in

Amida until the Tang dynasty (618–907), references to Amida and his Pure Land are found in a number of sutras that were translated into Chinese beginning as early as the Later Han (25–220).¹³ The oldest sutra that refers to Amida is Lokakṣema's translation of the *Pratyupanna-samādhi-sūtra* (*Banzhou sanmei jing*, T. 418, hereafter *Pratyupanna-sūtra*) in 179. While this text merely mentions Amida in passing, several translations of the Larger *Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra* were made first by Lokakṣema in the late second century (T. 362), Zhi Qian in the mid-third century (T. 361), and then Buddhahadra and Baoyun in the early fifth century (*Foshuo Wuliangshou jing*, T. 360, hereafter *Larger Sutra*).¹⁴ These texts relate the story of Amida, describe the splendors of his Pure Land, and enumerate his vows to enable all sentient beings to be born there. After Kumārajīva's (344–413) arrival in Changan in 401, the shorter *Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra* was translated (*Foshuo Amituo jing*, T. 365; hereafter *Amida Sutra*), as well as several translations of sutras and treatises that mention Amida, such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* (*Miaofalianhua jing*, T. 262:25c, 54c; hereafter *Lotus Sutra*), the *Dazhidu lun* (*Great Wisdom Treatise*, T. 1509:108c), and the aforementioned *Shizhu piposha lun*. In addition to the two *Sukhāvativyūha* sutras, another sutra that played a central role in the development of the Pure Land tradition in East Asia and is the *Guan wuliang shou fo jing* (*Contemplation on the Buddha of Infinite Light Sutra*, T. 365, hereafter *Contemplation Sutra*). Although traditionally thought to be a fifth-century translation by Kālayaśas (fl. early fifth century), it is now widely regarded as an apocryphal text.¹⁵ Lastly, we should make mention of a short treatise called the *Wuliangshoujing youbotishe yuansheng ji* (*A Discourse on the Sutra of Eternal Life and Gāthā of Aspiration to be Born in the Pure Land*, T. 1524; hereafter *Treatise on Rebirth*) that is attributed to the Yogācāra master Vasubandhu (fl. late fourth or fifth century) and which was translated by Bodhiruci (sixth century) in 529. Also, an alleged disciple of Bodhiruci named Tanluan produced an important commentary on this treatise called the *Wangshenglun zhu* (*Commentary on the Treatise on Rebirth*, T. 1819), which is roughly contemporary with the *Qixinlun*.¹⁶

Despite the unified picture and singular interpretation presented in later developments in the Pure Land tradition, it must be stressed that these sutras and treatises present a diversity of conceptions of Amida and his Pure Land as well as a variety of practices and understandings of faith. When comparing the above-mentioned texts in

terms of their relevancy to the questions concerning the PL section, one of the questions that arise is just how we are to conceive of Amida and his Pure Land. According to Paul Harrison, the three main Pure Land sutras describe Amida and Pure Land as if they actually exist, while the *Pratyupanna-sūtra* presents a vision of Amida and his Pure Land as ultimately empty and a mind-only illusion.¹⁷ Although the three Pure Land sutras do describe Amida “as if” he is a historical personage and Sukhāvātī “as if” it is a real geographical place, the picture presented in these texts is a little more complicated than naïve realism. In the *Larger Sutra*, Amida is also portrayed as having a resplendent buddha-body and an infinite lifetime, and his Pure Land is presented as a nirvana-like realm that is both empty and endowed with qualities of purity, quiescence, and eternality. Similar to the statement in the *Pratyupanna-sūtra* that the mind creates and is the Buddha (T. 418:906a), the *Contemplation Sutra*, which describes sixteen visualizations of Amida and his Pure Land, finds in the eighth visualization of Amida that “this mind creates the Buddha, this mind is the Buddha” (T. 365:343a). Based on the transcendent vision presented in these sutras, the *Treatise on Rebirth*, after describing the three perfections of Amida, the bodhisattvas, and Sukhāvātī, maintains that these three are ultimately the one dharma principle, the unconditioned *dharmakāya* (*asaṃkṛta-dharmakāya*) of True and Real Wisdom (真實智慧無為法身; T. 1524:232b).¹⁸

Another problem that arises when looking at these texts is the variety of practices and different understandings of the mind of the practitioner. In the *pratyupanna-samādhi* described in the *Pratyupanna-sūtra*, Amida is merely presented as an example of a form of meditation in which one beholds the buddhas of the present. Similarly, the *Shizhu piposha lun* describes the “easy practice” (安行) of saying the names of the buddhas, of which Amida, who has assured birth in his Pure Land for those who recite his name, is discussed as the example *par excellence*. In the three main Pure Land sutras, a variety of practices are outlined, such as performing various meritorious deeds, transferring merit, saying the name of Amida Buddha, wholehearted concentration on the Buddha, and contemplating the features of Amida and his Pure Land. Later in the *Treatise on Birth*, these practices are structured into a single visualization practice with five gates: (1) worshipping Amida; (2) praising him by reciting his name; (3) vowing to be reborn, which is explained as *śamatha*; (4) contemplating Amida and his Pure Land, which

is explained as *vipaśyanā*; and (5) transferring merit to other beings (T. 1524:231b).¹⁹

In addition to these various practices, the texts also describe the mental state of the practitioner. In the eighteenth vow of the *Larger Sutra*, meditation on the Buddha is described as having three aspects: a “sincere mind” (至心), “serene faith” (信樂), and the “desire to be born” (欲生) (T. 360:268a). In the *Contemplation Sutra*, it is said that those born in Amida’s land possess three kinds of mental states: the “utmost sincere mind” (至誠心), the “deep mind” (深心), and the “mind that arouses the vow to direct merit” (廻向發願心). According to the *Treatise on Rebirth*, the performance of the five mindful practices is said to produce the faithful mind (信心). As we can see here, one of the ambiguities found in these descriptions of the mental state of the practitioner is whether these states of mind are the necessary accompaniments of practice or the products of practice.

Now, let us look closely at the specific language of the PL section of *Qixinlun* in the light of the pre-existing literature in order to illuminate the conception of Amida and his Pure Land and the understanding of faith and practice found in the text.

Next, when sentient beings first learn this teaching and desire to seek correct faith, their minds are timid and weak. Because they abide in this world of suffering, they fear they will not be able to always meet with the various buddhas and personally present offerings, and they are apprehensive that, the faithful mind being difficult to perfect, they will be liable to regress.²⁰

The section begins by singling out those who learn this teaching for the first time and seek correct faith, and it describes their initial state of mind as being “timid and weak” (怯弱). Interestingly, this expression is also found in the “Phantom City” chapter (化城喻品) of Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, where we are told “the Buddha knows the minds of living beings are timid, weak and lowly, and so using the power of expedient means, he preaches two nirvanas in order to provide a resting place along the road” (T. 262:26a).²¹ The expression is also found in the *Shizhu piposha lun*, where it is used to admonish those who too readily desire an easy practice without generating a great aspiration.²²

Curiously, Liebenthal argues that the term “*sahā* world” (娑婆世界), which designates the enduring world of suffering, was a term that the author did not know,²³ but this term is found in many of

Kumārajīva's translations, including his translation of the *Amida Sutra* (T. 366:348a). Because the initial practitioner resides in such a world, there is the fear that they will not be able to "always meet with the various buddhas and personally present offerings" (常直諸佛親承供養). It was commonly held in early Buddhism that encountering a buddha and making offerings was a necessary requirement for enlightenment and that after the *parinirvāṇa* of Śākyamuni this world system is devoid of a buddha. With the development of Mahāyāna literature, various sutras sought to fill this absence by proclaiming that buddhas, such as Akṣobhya and Amida, existed in other world-systems and were accessible through various forms of *samādhi*.²⁴ As a result, the notion of being able to meet or see various buddhas through meditation became widespread in Mahāyāna literature. Connected to the fear of not being able to meet with various buddhas and make offerings is the apprehension that without their presence, one would lose faith and fall back into lower stages of the path.

In the next passage, we are told of a form of meditation to allay these fears and protect faith from regression.

They should know that the *tathāgatas* have a superior expedient means to embrace and protect the faithful mind. That is to say, taking wholehearted thought and meditation on a buddha as a cause and condition, they will, in accordance with their vows, obtain birth in a buddha land of another region, always be seen by a buddha, and forever be separated from evil paths.²⁵

Interestingly, this expedient means is described as being employed to "embrace and protect the faithful mind" (接護信心). While the verbal expression *shehu* is most often used to describe the Buddha's protective activity toward sentient beings (接護),²⁶ here the object of this protective activity is faith. The expedient device itself is wholehearted concentration (專意) and meditation on a buddha (念佛), which are taken as the cause and condition of one's birth in a buddha land. Although the exact phraseology found here is somewhat unique, these two components are similarly distinguished in the description of the lowest grade of aspirants to the Pure Land in the *Larger Sutra*, where it is said that they "wholeheartedly think (專意) even if for ten thought-moments and meditate on the Buddha of Infinite Life (念無量壽佛), wishing to be born in that land" (T. 360:272c).²⁷

The passage above ends with the karmic result of this practice, which is birth in a buddha land and which is simply described as in

“another region” (他方). Notice, so far, the passage is non-specific about which buddha and which buddha land. Also, the Chinese expression “Pure Land” (淨土) is not used. In a manner similar to the practices described in the *Pratyupanna-sūtra* and the *Shizhu piposha lun*, I would suggest that the non-specific character of this passage suggests a generic view of meditation on a buddha, of which Amida is given as the foremost example.

In the next passage, a sutra (修多羅) is cited as evidence of this excellent expedient device and an explanation is given of its result.

As a sutra expounds: “If someone wholeheartedly meditates on Amida Buddha of the world of Utmost Bliss in the West, if one directs the roots of goodness that one has cultivated and vows to be born in that world, then one obtains birth.” Because one always sees the Buddha, there will be no regression. If one contemplates that Buddha as suchness and as the *dharmakāya* and continually strives to cultivate this practice, one will ultimately obtain birth because one abides in correct *samādhi*.²⁸

While there is no known Chinese sutra that exactly corresponds to this citation (and it is not at all clear where it begins and ends), similar language is found in many of the Pure Land sutras and treatises. Looking at this citation closely, we notice that there are three aspects to this practice: wholehearted meditation (專念), direction of the merit (廻向), and the vow or aspiration for birth (願求生). These three aspects are found in several passages in the *Larger Sutra*, particularly those describing the three grades of aspirants in the second part of the sutra. In the description of the upper grade, the sutra states: “Awakening the mind of enlightenment, they wholeheartedly meditate on the Buddha of Infinite Life, cultivate various virtues, and aspire for birth in that land” (T. 360:272b). Notice here, the two components mentioned earlier are combined in wholehearted meditation (專念). The transfer of merit is mentioned in the opening preface to three kinds of aspirants, which also explains that the result of these practices will be the attainment of birth and entrance into stage of non-retrogression (不退轉). The stage of non-retrogression (*avaivartika*) is mentioned as a benefit to those who are born in the Pure Land in both the *Larger Sutra* and the *Amida Sutra*. It is also discussed at length in *Shizhu piposha lun*, where it is said that the easy practice of reciting the names of the buddhas allows one to quickly enter the stage of non-retrogression. Although there are various interpretations of this stage, it is generally regarded

as the first stage in the bodhisattva path, the stage of joy (*pramuditā-bhūmi*) where one awakens to the undefiled wisdom (*anāśrava prajñā*) and gains partial insight into true suchness. Once this stage is attained and this wisdom is acquired, one will no longer fall back into lower stages.²⁹

In the final lines of the PL section, the expedient means of meditating on a buddha such as Amida is further explained as ultimately the contemplation of suchness and the *dharmakāya* (真如法身). In this passage, this ultimate contemplation precedes birth, though it is not clear here whether “birth” refers to birth in the Pure Land or the birth of wisdom.³⁰ In the Pure Land sutras, it is unclear at what point this ultimate contemplation of suchness and the Buddha as *dharmakāya* occurs. According to the *Larger Sutra*, the bodhisattvas born in Amida’s Pure Land perceive all dharmas as empty and suchness and have practiced the *samādhis* of emptiness, non-form and non-desire, and non-arising and non-ceasing (T. 360:274ab), but this is after or upon birth. The only clue we get in the *Larger Sutra* as to how a practitioner is to view Amida’s body is given in the section on the three aspirants. In the highest grade, the aspirant directly sees Amida and his host at death. When the aspirant of the middling grade dies, Amida transforms and manifests his buddha-body adorned with the signs of a true buddha. In the lowest grade, the aspirant merely sees Amida in a dream. According to the *Contemplation Sutra*, those who see the wondrous adornments of the Pure Land will attain insight into the non-arising of all dharmas (T. 365:341c) and those who visualize the buddha-body of Amida simultaneously perceive the bodies of all buddhas and realize the buddha-mind (T. 365:343bc). In the chapter on the aids to the *samādhi* of meditation on a buddha of the *Shizhu piposha lun*, the bodhisattva is told to concentrate on the buddha’s *dharmakāya* and without attachment to either the physical body or the dharma-body of the buddhas realize that all dharmas are eternally quiescent like empty space (T. 1521:86a). Later treatises, such as the *Treatise on Rebirth* and Tanluan’s commentary, interpreted Amida and his Pure Land in terms of suchness and maintained that ultimately one should see Amida as the *dharmakāya*.

It should be clear from this reading of the PL section that while it alludes to previous Pure Land literature, it presents a particular conception of Amida and the Pure Land and a particular understanding of faith and practice. It is interesting that there is no mention here of saying the name of Amida or any other buddha. The practice found

here is contemplation and *samādhi*, in keeping with the preceding sections. Also, no mention is made of the other power (他力) of the Buddha, a concept popularized in Tanluan's *Commentary on the Treatise of Rebirth*. Indeed, the practitioner is told to cultivate this meditative practice with diligence. A central concern expressed in the PL section is that one will not be able to meet and see a buddha and will lose faith. The expedient practice that it offers will allow one to continually be in the presence of a buddha and attain a non-retrogressive faith. Ultimately, the goal of the practice is not to merely see a buddha but to contemplate that buddha as suchness and *dharmakāya*, key notions discussed in the exposition on the One Mind found in the body of the *Qixinlun*.

III. AN INTRA-TEXTUAL READING OF THE PL SECTION

Although some have argued that the PL section might have been an interpolation by a later figure that tampered with the “original,” a close reading of the text *that we have* reveals a close relation between the PL section and the text as a whole. If indeed the PL section was added to some earlier version of the text, the text as a whole was significantly altered as well to rationalize this addition. Let us look closely at the entirety of the text and how what precedes the PL section suggests and rationalizes the need for such an expedient device as wholehearted meditation on a buddha such as Amida.

Scholars such as Kashiwagi and Hakeda, while expressing their doubts about the PL section, have noted that the section is nevertheless suggested by the seventh item in the “reasons for writing” given at the beginning of the text.

The seventh reason is to explain to them the expedient means of wholehearted meditation so that they may be born in the presence of the Buddha and keep their minds fixed in an unretrogressive faith.³¹

The concerns to maintain non-retrogressive faith and cultivate the faithful mind are also mentioned in reasons three and four, and the need to reveal an expedient means to eliminate karma and protect the mind is listed as the fifth reason. All eight of the reasons for writing show a marked concern for the ordinary person (凡夫, *prthagjana*), who is prone to error and needs encouragement. In the question and answer section that follows the eight reasons, we are told that the need for an explanation of the teachings such as found in this treatise, while not necessary while the Tathāgata was present in the world,

is now necessary for those who seek to understand the vast and profound meaning of the Tathāgata, after his passing from the world. This concern for correct understanding and non-regressive faith in a world where the Buddha is *absent* naturally leads to a discourse and a practice that will enable one to be in the *presence* of a buddha.³²

The main body of the *Qixinlun* is contained in part three, where we are given a systematic exposition of the true meaning of the One Mind in terms of its essence and its manifestation in the conditioned world of life and death. Here, we are told that all things are of the One Mind, which in its essence is suchness (真如) and in the conditioned world of life and death is the “womb of enlightenment” (如来藏, *tathāgatagarbha*) within all sentient beings. Throughout the rest of part three, the text alternates between the absolute and relative viewpoints, explaining how the mind is in its essence originally pure and enlightened but also how that same mind is characterized by deluded thoughts and ignorance and thus impure and unenlightened.

In answer to the question of how if all sentient beings are equally endowed with suchness and purity can there be so many kinds of believers and non-believers, the author of the treatise explains that the permeation of suchness operates through both a primary cause and a coordinating condition (因緣). It illustrates this with the example of the piece of wood. Although a piece of wood possesses the fire-nature within as the true cause of its burning, without someone who knows this and who can employ the skillful means to light it, the wood will not burn of its own accord. Enlightenment is explained in a similar fashion. As this passage is key to my overall argument, I quote it at length.

In the same way a man, though he is in possession of the correct primary cause, [Suchness with] permeating force, cannot put an end to his defilements by himself alone and enter nirvana unless he is provided with coordinating causes, i.e. his encounters with the buddhas, bodhisattvas, or good spiritual friends. Even though coordinating causes from without may be sufficiently provided, if the pure principle [i.e., Suchness] within is lacking in the force of permeation, then a man cannot ultimately loathe the suffering of *samsara* and seek bliss in nirvana. However, if both the primary and the coordinating causes are sufficiently provided, then because of his possession of the force of permeation [of Suchness from within] and the compassionate protection of the buddhas and bodhisattvas [from without], he is able to develop a loathing for suffering, to believe that nirvana is real, and to cultivate his capacity for goodness. And when his cultivation of the

capacity for goodness matures, he will as a result meet the buddhas and bodhisattvas and will be instructed, taught, benefited, and given joy, and then he will be able to advance on the path to nirvana.³³

In this key passage, enlightenment is said to require both the true cause (正因) of the permeation of suchness within and the external condition (外緣) of meeting with a buddha, bodhisattva, or spiritual friend. Again, we see here a concern for the presence of a buddha or other spiritual being, which is stated here as a necessary condition for progress on the path.

In the following section, these external coordinating causes are further distinguished into two categories: particular (差別緣) and universal coordinating conditions (平等緣). Under the particular coordinating conditions, it is said that from the moment a particular individual aspires to seek enlightenment one sees or meditates on buddhas and bodhisattvas, who sometimes appear as family, friends, and enemies and whose great compassion allows for the force of permeation. In the case of the general coordinating causes, it is said that every buddha and bodhisattva vows to save all sentient beings and that the power of their wisdom naturally perfumes (自然薰習) sentient beings and allows them to universally see the various buddhas through *samādhi*. In these two types of external conditions, seeing a buddha or bodhisattva is both the cause and the result of the functioning of the permeation of suchness.

But if the One Mind is ultimately without distinctions and undifferentiated, how can there be talk of internal causes and external conditions? How can there be talk of “this” influencing “that”? In discussing the influences/function of suchness (真如用), *Qixinlun* explains that the buddhas made great vows to liberate all sentient beings because they knew that ultimately there was no distinction between themselves and others. Because the buddhas are identical with the *dharmakāya* and all-pervasive suchness, their spontaneous activities are incomprehensible and without any mark of influence. Nevertheless, “because of the fact that sentient beings receive benefit through seeing or hearing them, their influences [i.e., of suchness] can be spoken of [in relative terms].”³⁴

The *Qixinlun* further elaborates by distinguishing between two different conceptions of the influences of suchness. First, there is the mind of the ordinary man and of the two vehicles (the *śrāvakas* and the *pratyekabuddhas*) that can only comprehend the influence of

suchness as the outer influence of a physical form, a “corresponding-body” (應身, *nirmāṇakāya*). Second, there is the mind of the bodhisattva from the initial stages until the final stages that realizes that the external world is unreal and perceives the influence of suchness as a “recompense body” (報身, *sambhogakāya*). This “recompense body” is described as having infinite corporeal forms and the major and minor marks of a buddha, and “the land of its abode has innumerable adornments.”³⁵ Although Amida and his Pure Land are not mentioned here, the reference to a “recompense-body” buddha residing in a land with innumerable adornments is clearly suggestive of a buddha like Amida and a land like Sukhāvātī. It is interesting to note here that the vision of such a buddha who resides in a land of adornment is found not in the ordinary believer but rather in the bodhisattva. The text continues by noting that while these bodhisattvas know that these marks and adornments do not come from without and are of the mind, their conception of the functioning of suchness is still incomplete, as it is not free of dualistic thinking. When the bodhisattva leaves the last stage of bodhisattvahood, he or she will be free of dualistic thinking and will see (or enter into) the ultimate, the *dharmakāya*. As we saw in the final words of the PL section, the ultimate goal of the practice is to contemplate “that Buddha as suchness and as the *dharmakāya*.”

In the discussion of the aspiration for enlightenment through the perfection of faith in chapter three of part three, the *Qixinlun* distinguishes between those of higher capacity and those of slight capacity. In case of the former, it is said that “having been able to meet with the buddhas, they serve them, honor them, and practice the faith.”³⁶ The language here closely resembles the language of the PL section. The only difference is that in the PL section beginning practitioners are said to fear that they will not be able to perfect their faith because they are unable to meet and honor the buddhas. At the end of this section on the perfection of faith, we find that “after the aspiration for enlightenment has been aroused by the bodhisattva, they are forever separated from timidity and weakness (怯弱) and do not fear descending into the stage of the two vehicles.”³⁷ Here again, we see language quite similar to the PL section, though it is expressed here not as the fear of the beginning practitioner but as the accomplishment of the bodhisattva.

As stated earlier, the PL section is found at the end of part four, which is devoted to faith and practice. After describing the four kinds

of faith in the *ultimate source*, the excellent qualities of the Buddha, the great benefits of the dharma and the sangha, the *Qixinlun* lists the five practices of charity, observance of the precepts, patience, zeal, and cessation and contemplation. Although cessation and contemplation are discussed in turn, it is important to note that they are listed as one practice. The process of the practice of cessation is described as stopping the mind and realizing that all things are of the mind. Once one is absorbed in the concentration of suchness, one's faith is strengthened and one attains a state of non-retrogression. Ultimately, one attains the "*samādhi* of one movement" (一行三昧) in which one realizes the one aspect of the *dharmadhātu* and the non-duality of the *dharmakāya* and all sentient beings. In order not to get absorbed in this state and keep from performing compassionate deeds, one must also practice contemplation, in which one recognizes that all things are produced by primary causes and coordinating conditions. Through cessation, it is said that one severs one's attachments to the world and abandons the "timid and weak" views of the lesser two vehicles. By practicing contemplation, one arouses the great mind of compassion and cultivates good roots.

What follows next is of course the PL section. It should now be clear that this section follows naturally from what precedes it. Let us quote the PL section again in full to make our conclusions clear.

Next, when sentient beings first learn this teaching and desire to seek correct faith, their minds are timid and weak. Because they abide in this world of suffering, they fear they will not be able to always meet with the various buddhas and personally present offerings, and they are apprehensive that, the faithful mind being difficult to perfect, they will be liable to fall back. They should know that the *tathāgatas* have a superior expedient means to embrace and protect the faithful mind. That is to say, taking wholehearted concentration and meditation on a buddha as a cause and condition, they will, in accordance with their vows, obtain birth in a buddha land of another region, always be seen by a buddha, and forever be separated from evil paths. As a sutra expounds: "If someone whole-heartedly meditates on Amida Buddha of the world of Utmost Bliss in the West, if one directs the roots of goodness that one has cultivated and vows to be born in that world, then they will obtain birth." Because one always sees the Buddha, there will be no regression. If one contemplates that Buddha as suchness and *dharmakāya* and continually strives to cultivate this practice, one will ultimately obtain birth, because one abides in correct *samādhi*.

In the final words of the section, meditation on Amida is described as contemplation of suchness and *dharmakāya*. The attainment of birth, which is either birth in the Pure Land or birth of undefiled wisdom, is also said to be a result of correct *samādhi*, or cessation. Thus, this section defines meditation on a buddha such as Amida in terms of the twofold meditative practices of cessation and clear observation discussed in the preceding passages. Moreover, the PL section follows its usual course of extending its discussion to the case of the ordinary practitioner. Understanding the PL section based on the different conceptions of the influence of suchness mentioned in part three, we find that the section itself moves from the initial stage of the beginner, to the resplendent vision of a buddha like Amida as a *sambhogakāya*, and finally to the ultimate goal of the practice, the contemplation of suchness and the *dharmakāya*.

As we can now see, the PL section clearly fits within the *Qixinlun* as a whole. In terms of its language, the PL section resonates with many of the preceding passages. For example, the phrase “correct faith” (正心), which Liebenthal maintains the author could not have known, is used five times (T. 1666:575b [1x], 577c [1x], 581a [1x], 583a [2x]). The phrase “timid and weak” is used a total of seven times in the *Qixinlun* (T. 1666:581a [2x], 581b [1x], 582a [1x], 583a [3x]). The phrase “meet with the various buddhas” is used three times (T. 1666:578c [1x], 580b [1x], 583a [1x]). The phrase “faithful mind” is used fifteen times (T. 1666:575b [1x], 575c [2x], 580b [3x], 581c [4x], 582a [2x], 583a [3x]).

In terms of the issue of perfecting faith and attaining a state of non-retrogression, this concern is announced in the reasons for writing at the beginning of the treatise, explained in the body of the text, and given an expedient practice to reach this goal in the PL section. Underlying the fear that one will not be able to maintain a faithful mind is the concern for the absence of a buddha in a post-*parinirvāṇa* world. The *Qixinlun* provides an answer to this problem by revealing the presence of the Buddha in the world as the all-pervasive suchness, the indivisible *dharmadhātu*. It also answers this concern by offering an expedient practice that provides a way to be in the presence of a buddha. Here, we have the primary cause of permeation of suchness within and the coordinating condition of the compassionate protection of a buddha from without.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

While there have been some doubts about whether the PL section was a part of an original text of the *Awakening of Faith*, there can be little doubt now that it is integral part of the text we have. Rather than understand this practice of meditating on Amida in terms of later Pure Land developments, I have chosen to read this section in terms of pre-existing literature and within the text as a whole. What we find is an understanding of such a practice that, while sharing some similarities with that found in pre-existing literature, is fully situated within the doctrinal and practice-related concerns of the treatise itself.

NOTES

1. A word on my method of listing titles of sutras and treatises: If a Sanskrit original exists and I am referring to that text, I will give the Sanskrit title. If only a Chinese text exists, I will give the Chinese title, English translation, and *Taishō* number in quotes. References to specific passages in the *Taishō* canon are given by page number and block.
2. Generally, I have used Amida Buddha throughout the paper to refer to Amitābha (Buddha of Infinite Light) and Amitāyus (Buddha of Infinite Life) unless otherwise stated. In much of the Pure Land literature, these two are conflated.
3. Even before the production of the *Qixinlun* in the sixth century, similar such questions were asked by Chinese Buddhists such as Daosheng (d. 434), who argued that since buddha-nature is within us, there is no need to go to a pure land beyond. The idea of a pure land is merely the artifice of the Buddha.
4. For example, Kashiwagi lists a number of doctrinal concepts, such as, suchness as both empty and non-empty, the various attributes concerning *tathāgatagarbha*, connection between *tathāgatagarbha* and *ālayavijñāna*, etc., that represent late developments in Mahāyāna Buddhist thought. KASHIWAGI Hiroo, *Daijō kishinron no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1981), 177.
5. Ryuichi Abe, introduction to *The Awakening of Faith*, trans. Yoshihito Hakeda, 2nd repr. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 25.
6. Kashiwagi believes that Paramārtha or someone of his circle may have played a role in the production of the text that we have. Kashiwagi, *Daijō kishinron no kenkyū*, 181.
7. Walter Liebenthal, “New Light on the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda śāstra*,” *T’oung Pao* 46 (1958): 187.
8. *Ibid.*, 187. The earlier section he is referring to is T. 1666:582b.

9. Ibid., 189. Concerning this incongruity, Liebenthal finds: “In the first part of the *Śāstra* the Buddha is cosmic mind, manifesting himself in different ways, but completely beyond human reach. The Chinese Sage, indeed, was never approached like a god by way of offerings and prayer. Amitābha, on the contrary, is a god in heaven who can be induced to favour by good deeds setting in motion the mechanism of *karman*. Both concepts do not fit together.” Same page.

10. Yoshihito Hakeda, *The Awakening of Faith*, attributed to Aśvaghoṣa, 2nd repr. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 102.

11. Kashiwagi, *Daijō kishinron no kenkyū*, 379–380.

12. Ibid., 380–381.

13. This is a brief survey of Buddhist literature with references to Amitābha and is obviously very cursory. According to FUJITA Kōtatsu, the number of extant Sanskrit texts number of texts that refer to Amitābha and his Pure Land is 31 and the number of Chinese Buddhist texts of Indian origin is 290. FUJITA Kōtatsu, *Genshi jōdo shisō kenkyū* (A Study of Early Pure Land Buddhism), 3rd ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 141–161.

14. The last translation listed is the most widely used version in Pure Land Buddhism and is traditionally attributed to the third-century monk Saṅghavarman in medieval catalogues. This attribution has been questioned, and many scholars believe that this translation was actually made by Buddhahadra and Baoyun in the early fifth century. For the problems concerning the *Larger Sutra*, see Fujita, *Genshi jōdo shisō kenkyū*.

15. For a discussion of the textual origins of this text, see FUJITA Kōtatsu, “The Textual Origins of the Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching: A Canonical Scripture of Pure Land Buddhism,” trans. Kenneth Tanaka, in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert Buswell (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1990). Fujita takes a compromise position on the text, agreeing with both those who argue for its Central Asian origin and those who argue that the present text shows evidence of Chinese (re-)composition. Also, see Julian Pas, “The Kuan-wu-liang-shou Fo-ching: Its Origin and Literary Criticism,” in *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilizations*, ed. Leslie S. Kawamura and Keith Scott (Emeryville, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1977).

16. The exact dates of this commentary are unknown. According to Daoxuan’s biography, Tanluan died in 542, though some evidence suggests a later date. The temporal proximity to the *Qixinlun* and his alleged connections to the members of the Di-lun school suggest the possibility of a relationship between Tanluan and the *Qixinlun*.

17. Paul Harrison, trans., introduction to *Pratyupanna Samādhi Sūtra*, BDK English Tripitaka 25-II (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and

Research, 1998), 3.

18. Although Amida is commonly regarded as a *sambhogakāya*, neither the *Treatise on Rebirth* nor Tanluan's commentary make this identification clearly. It is Daochuo (562–645) who clearly identifies Amida as a *sambhogakāya* in the *Anle ji* (The Collection of Peace and Bliss, T. 1958).

19. I am following the interpretation of this text given by Richard Payne, who convincingly argues that the five gates of contemplation form a single visualization practice or *sādhana*. Richard Payne, “The Five Contemplative Gates of Vasubandhu's Rebirth Treatise as a Ritualized Visualization Practice,” in *The Pure Land: History and Development*, eds. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard Payne (Berkeley: Regents of the University of California, 1996), 233–266.

20. T. 1666:583a 12–15. The translation of the PL section is my own. In addition to Hakeda's English translation, I made reference to Takemura's study and Japanese translation: TAKEMURA Makio, *Daijō kishinron dokushaku* (Tokyo: Sankibō, 1993).

21. *The Lotus Sutra*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 103. T. 262:26a.

22. Hisao Inagaki, trans., *Nāgārjuna's Discourse on the Ten Stages (Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā): A Study and Translation from Chinese of Verses and Chapter 9* (Kyoto: Ryukoku gakkai, 1998), 138–139.

23. It is unclear why Liebethal thinks that this term, as well as *nienfo*, *wangsheng*, and *zhengxin*, would be unknown to the author. Many of the texts that he cites have these terms, and it is difficult to believe that the producer of the *Qixinlun* would be unaware of Kumārajīva's translations.

24. See Jan Nattier, “The Indian Roots of Pure Land Buddhism: Insights from the Oldest Chinese Versions of the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha,” *Pacific World*, 3rd ser., 5 (2003): 179–201. In this article, she has argued convincingly that in the earlier Pure Land literature, such as the translation of *Akṣobhyavyūha-sūtra* (T. 313) and the earlier translations of the *Sukhāvatī* sutras, the “one buddha per world” principle was still operating.

25. T. 1666:583a15–17.

26. For examples of the latter, see Bodhiruci's translation of the *Mahāsatya-nirgrantha-sūtra* (*Dasazhe niganzi suoshuo jing*, T. 272:330a) and Narendrayāśas's translation of the *Mahākaruṇā-puṇḍarīka-sūtra* (*Dabeijing*, T. 380:971a).

27. T. 360:272c. In the description of the upper and middle grades, the language used is “wholehearted concentration on the Buddha of Limitless Life” (一向專念無量壽佛).

28. T. 1666:17–21.

29. Hisao Inagaki, trans., *Nāgārjuna's Discourse on the Ten Stages*, 139n1, 160.
30. Finding the final sentence of the PL section contrary to expectations, Takemura argues that birth here refers to the birth of Buddha wisdom. Takemura, *Daijō kishinron dokushaku*, 504.
31. Hakeda, trans., *Awakening of Faith*, 34. T. 1666:575c. For part three of this paper, I have sometimes relied on Hakeda's translation rather than re-translate all the significant passages.
32. Recently, in the work of Gregory Schopen, John Strong, and Malcolm Eckel, the dialectic between presence and absence has become a popular hermeneutical device in analyzing images, relics, and material signs of the Buddha. In a similar fashion, I would argue as well that Pure Land Buddhism, with its methods of visualizing a buddha and being born in their Pure Land, arose out of the need to be in the presence of a buddha in a post-*parinirvāṇa* world that was marked by absence.
33. Hakeda, trans, *Awakening of Faith*, 63. Bracketed material is Hakeda's. T. 1666:578c.
34. Ibid. 69. T. 1666:579b.
35. Ibid., 70. T. 1666:579b. Hakeda's translation here is a little free. Strictly speaking, there is no mention of a "land," the text merely says the "place where they abide."
36. Ibid., 79. T. 1666:580b.
37. T. 1666:581a.

Monastic Lineages and Ritual Participation: A Proposed Revision of KURODA Toshio's *Kenmitsu Taisei*

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INTRODUCTION

This article aims to revise KURODA Toshio's notion of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism (*kenmitsu taisei*, 顯密体制) through an analysis of primary documents mainly related to ritual participation from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. From the outset, I have to make clear that I do not intend to dismiss the *kenmitsu taisei* model nor doubt its value for understanding the relation between religion and state during the medieval period. The main purpose of this article is to refine the notion of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism in order to fully grasp its institutional implications and better understand the position of the large temple complexes within the larger framework of the state. Kuroda considered exoteric-esoteric Buddhism as medieval Japan's main ideology underlying the socio-political system, the *kenmon taisei* (権門体制), from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries and argued that the Tendai school was its main ideological constituent.¹ While recent scholarship has shown that Kuroda's interpretation of the relation between Buddhism and state can be criticized from different points of view, I will limit myself to question Kuroda's emphasis on Tendai as the main component of *kenmitsu* Buddhism and focus on the presence of particular Nara (710–794) schools' institutions and lineages into the Heian period (794–1185).² In the pages to follow I will reconsider the emphasis on Tendai from both doctrinal and institutional points of view. First I will approach *kenmitsu* Buddhism through a comparison of Tōdaiji's Tōnan'in (東大寺東南院) and Kōfukuji (興福寺). Second, I will corroborate findings of this comparison through several examples of monks' careers and demonstrate the necessity to reformulate not only Kuroda's understanding of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism but in extension also the very notion of a *kenmon* (権門) itself. It will be made

clear that I do not label the *kenmon* as separate, private entities but instead argue for a view that blurs the division between the state and the monastic institutions. Thus, my approach is reminiscent of recent research by TAKAYAMA Kyōko on Kōfukuji's internal structure, IHARA Kesao's work on the *kenmon*'s internal organization (*kasei*, 家政) within the larger framework on the state (*kokusei*, 国政), or OKANO Kōji's study on the relation between the temple complexes and the state from an institutional point of view.³ In other words, by redefining *kenmitsu* Buddhism, I primarily look at the entanglement between the state and the temples instead of focusing on a process in which the temples detached themselves from the state.

KŌFUKUIJ AND TŌDAIJI'S TŌNAN'IN

Having its roots in an earlier temple, Yamashina-dera (山階寺), built by Kagami no Ookimi (鏡女王, ?–683) in 669, Kōfukuji was built at its present-day location by then Great Minister of the Left (*sadaijin*, 左大臣) Fujiwara no Fuhito (藤原不比等, 659–720) in 710, who possibly envisioned the temple as one whole with the newly constructed capital, Heijō-kyō (平城京).⁴ About three decades after the start of the Four Great Temples (*shi daiji*, 四大寺) system in 680, in which Kōfukuji was included, and after Fuhito offered significant support for the temple's main ritual, the Vimalakīrti Assembly (Yuima-e, 維摩会) from 706, Kōfukuji would find its final location in what is now the modern city of Nara.⁵ Originally being identified as a Fujiwara clan temple (*ujidera*, 氏寺), Kōfukuji's significance changed by 801, when it was finally officially designated by imperial decree as the sole ritual space for the Yuima-e, a state ritual based on the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* (*Yuimakyō*, 維摩經).⁶ After Genbō's (玄昉, ?–746) return from Tang China in 734, Kōfukuji finally came to be identified with the Hossō school (法相宗), one of the so-called Six Nara Schools.

The early Japanese Hossō school is traditionally divided in two large branches, corresponding to Northern and Southern factions that would later merge into one Hossō school. Fukihara Shōshin addresses three periods, consisting of four transmissions. The first transmission consisted of Dōshō's (道昭, 629–700) introduction, and the second transmission was represented by Chitsū (智通, ?–?) and Chidatsu (智達, ?–?).⁷ The third transmission was the combined efforts of the three monks Chihō (智鳳, ?–?), Chiran (智鸞, ?–?), and Chiyū (智雄, ?–?), while the fourth was Genbō's teaching.⁸ I will now discuss the first and

the fourth in more detail as they embody the early dual nature of the Japanese Hossō school.

The first transmission is traditionally ascribed to the monk Dōshō, who went to Tang China in 653 to study under Xuanzang (玄奘, 602–664) and Kuiji (窺基, 632–682) at age twenty-five and returned to Japan around 660.⁹ In his early life he thus witnessed the Taika Reforms (645), the reign of Empress Kōtoku (孝德天皇, r. 645–654), and the career of Fujiwara no Kamatari or the infancy of the Fujiwara house. It is not certain when he entered the monastery, but it seems probable that he first entered Gangōji (元興寺), one of the original seven state temples (*shichi daiji*, 七大寺).¹⁰ Prior to his departure to Tang China he studied Sanron (三論), which might explain his interest in the study of Hossō given the historic opposition between these two systems of thought.¹¹ Fukihara even speculates that Dōshō might have in fact studied a form of Dilun (地論), an early Chinese development that carried within itself the opposition between Yogācāra and *tathāgatagarbha* and in extension the difference between Faxiang (法相) and Huayan (華嚴). Although Dōshō's possible background in Dilun is an interesting hypothesis, as we are then dealing with those schools (Hossō, Sanron, and Kegon) that I will consider an integral part of later Japanese exoteric-esoteric Buddhism, there seems to be no textual foundation for the claim that Dōshō was indeed exposed to Dilun. According to the *Nihon Shoki*'s entry for the year 653, thirteen monks accompanied Dōshō.¹² In addition, his arrival is recorded in several Chinese sources, for example the *History of the Song* (宋史, Ch. *Song shi*) and the *Complete Chronicle of the Buddha and the Patriarchs* (佛祖統紀, Ch. *Fozu tongji*), where it is mentioned he studied with Xuanzang.¹³ Japanese sources such as the *Sandai jitsuroku* (三代実録) or the *Fusō ryakki* (扶桑略記) mention that a certain Dōshō founded the temple Zeninji (禅院寺) at Gangōji after his return from Tang China, thus indicating when he returned (660–662) and that he must have brought his Hossō expertise to the already-existing Gangōji, originally known for its study of Sanron.¹⁴ Interestingly, this Zeninji was a branch temple dedicated to the praxis of certain Hossō techniques, more specifically an early form of “meditation on consciousness only” (*yuishikikan*, 唯識觀).¹⁵

Genbō, who represents the fourth transmission, already found himself in Dōshō's lineage by way of Gien (義淵, ?–728). According to the *Zoku nihongi* and the *Honchō kōsōden*, Genbō belonged to the Abe clan (Abe uji, 阿部氏) and travelled to the Tang in 717.¹⁶ According to

the *Nantō kōsōden* (南東高僧伝), the *Sangoku buppō denzū engi* (三国佛法伝通縁起), and the *Genkō shakushō* (元享釈書), he studied under Zhizhou (智周, 668–723), but Fukihara doubts this as there would have been only a one-year difference in their ages. However, keeping in mind similar situations in Japan, while this might be rare, it is not inconceivable. After his return to Japan twenty years later in 735, members of Genbō's envoy were promoted to higher positions, while he himself received the rank of senior prelate (*sōjō*, 僧正) in 737 at the Ministry of Monastic Affairs (*sōgō*, 僧綱) under Emperor Shōmu (聖武天皇, 701–756).¹⁷ Genbō imported more than five thousand texts (many of them esoteric ones, such as Śubhakarasiṃha's [Jpn. Zenmui, 善無畏] translation of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*), that were stored at Kōfukuji where he settled and the monk Zenshū (善珠, 723–797) eventually inherited his lineage, called the “Northern Temple” (北寺).¹⁸ Of utmost importance is that Genbō brought back esoteric scriptures that were stored at the exoteric Hossō center. Not only does this early presence of esotericism clearly transcend the sectarian division “miscellaneous esotericism” (*zōmitsu*, 雑密) versus “pure esotericism” (*junmitsu*, 純密) imposed by certain Shingon scholars, it also seems to suggest an early link between esotericism and Hossō at Kōfukuji.

But why were this monk and his new corpus of exoteric and esoteric texts designated to Kōfukuji, and how is this early stage of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism connected with socio-political developments? The answer might be found in the contemporaneous struggle between the Fujiwara and the Tachibana (橘), both dependents of Emperor Shōmu. Genbō was close to Emperor Shōmu and his widow Empress Kōmyō (光明天皇, 701–760), daughter of Fujiwara no Fuhito and (Tachibana) Agata Inukai Michiyo (厩犬養 三千代, 665–733). The latter had two sons from a previous marriage, the most important of them being the court official and poet Tachibana no Moroe (橘諸兄, 684–757). After a split had occurred in Shōmu's household, even resulting in military conflicts in 740, Kōmyō was able to force Tachibana no Moroe to retire with the help of another of Fuhito's sons, Fujiwara no Nakamaro (藤原仲麻呂, 706–764).¹⁹ It is clear that, as both the widow of Emperor Shōmu and Fuhito's daughter, Empress Kōmyō's actions seem to have been aimed at the maintenance of a national system centred on the imperial family while at the same time the Northern Fujiwara were confirmed as the keepers of that system through their broad influence on an emerging temple network.²⁰ We may then interpret Fujiwara

no Fuhito and Empress Kōmyō's policies along the lines of YOSHIKAWA Shinji's interpretation of the history of the Fujiwara through his study of the *Kōfukuji ryūki* (興福寺流記).²¹ The emergence of the Tōdaiji Construction Agency (*zō tōdaiji shi*, 造東大寺司) and the memorial services for Fujiwara no Fuhito, as well as the establishment of a new center of Buddhist learning and state ritual (the storage of Genbō's corpus at Kōfukuji), are then situated within the Fujiwara struggle to prevail over imperial factionalism around the middle of the eighth century. Thus, the allocation of esoteric texts at the Hossō center and the later fixation of the Yuima-e at Kōfukuji in 801 then symbolize the consolidation of the dominance achieved by the Northern Fujiwara. However, in addition to this institutional aspect, the storage of esoteric texts can also be interpreted as the first stage in the gradual development towards a new type of exoteric-esoteric discourse.

It is interesting to note that even at this early stage there must have been a significant interest on the part of Hossō and Sanron towards esoteric Buddhism as Genbō clearly saw the necessity to include esoteric texts in his collection at the exoteric Kōfukuji.²² I consider the storage of an esoteric corpus at the *ritsuryō*-era Kōfukuji as part of a gradual change in state discourse noted by Ryūichi Abé. In *The Weaving of Mantra*, Abé in fact confirms this process by examining a new type of language that formed a breach with the *ritsuryō* state and its own specific type of discourse. Abé mentions that Buddhist institutions legitimized their role in *ritsuryō* society by "serving as an indispensable link that maintained the Confucian model of cosmic order." He then continues that this was the reason the Nara schools did not (yet) develop their own specific discourse. This situation changes after Kūkai's development of a new form of discourse when specifically Confucian terminology is now imbedded in Buddhist esoteric terminology that legitimizes the emperor's role. However, the development towards this discourse as exemplified by the storage of esoteric texts at Kōfukuji has one very important implication for us: Buddhism, not Confucianism, will gradually become "responsible for the sacred language necessary for the maintenance of cosmic order" and its clergy "is no longer an inferior analogue of the government bureaucracy loyally serving the emperor, as depicted in *ritsuryō* literature."²³ Thus, the allocation of Genbō's corpus at Kōfukuji under the *ritsuryō* state will in time not reinforce (as originally intended), but rather be part of a development

towards a new type of discourse and institutional network that would radically alter the *ritsuryō* state's ideological basis.

This gradual esoteric change is equally noticeable in the *San'e jō ichi ki* (三會定一記), the main source listing the Yuima-e's ritual participation: the identity of the lecturer gradually shifts towards an exoteric-esoteric one, mainly identified as Hossō-Shingon versus Sanron-Shingon. While the earliest recorded lectureships clearly show the overwhelming presence of Hossō and Sanron, this opposition gradually changes into a Hossō-Shingon and Sanron-Shingon identity.²⁴ While some might interpret this as the persistence of "Nara Buddhism" or read a Shingon absence into the *San'e jō ichi ki* as these monks' Shingon lineage is not explicitly mentioned in this particular source, I would argue that the identity of Nara Buddhism has fundamentally changed from an exoteric to an exoteric-esoteric one and that the set Hossō-Shingon/Sanron-Shingon became an integral part of *kenmitsu* Buddhism as the state's main ideological framework. We will now turn to the center of Tōdaiji's Sanron-Shingon studies, Tōnan'in.

The *Tōnan'in jimu shidai*'s first entry discusses the career of Shōbō (聖寶), who constructed Tōnan'in in 875 and founded the esoteric temple Daigoji (醍醐寺) the year before, two institutions of great importance for understanding the development of specific exoteric-esoteric lineages and institutional developments within the Nara temples.²⁵ Here, I would argue that an examination of Tōnan'in and Daigoji lineages is indispensable for a correct understanding of *kenmitsu* Buddhism as state discourse.

Shōbō first entered Gangōji and studied Sanron under two masters, Gankyō (願曉) and Enshū (円宗).²⁶ In addition, he received grounding in Kegon and Mind Only (Yuishiki, 唯識) at Tōdaiji, though his primary identity seems to have remained Sanron. Following, he studied esotericism with Shinga (真雅) and Shinzen (真然), and received esoteric initiation from Gennin (源仁) in 884.²⁷ The *Tōnan'in jimu shidai* interestingly links Shōbō to an important ritual implement used during Kōfukuji's Yuima-e, a trident like object called *goshi shinyoi* (五師子如意). This Nyoī (Skt. Anuruddha) symbolizes both the exoteric and the esoteric and is composed of two main parts: a lion (*shishi*, 師子) that stands for the exoteric, and a trident (*sanko*, 三鈷) expressing the esoteric.²⁸ In the same way the *Tōnan'in jimu shidai* explains the origin of this ritual object, an entry from the *Ruijū yoyōshō* (類聚世要抄) explains its meaning as follows (abridged): "According to oral transmission the *Goshi shi*

nyoi is the wish granting jewel of the high priest Shōbō. The lion's head expresses the fearful truth of the exoteric, while the trident expresses the deep and the hidden of the esoteric."²⁹ Interestingly, the story links the origin of one of the central ritual acts of the Yuima-e back to the founder of the Tōnan'in, the Sanron center at Tōdaiji, and explains its meaning by referring to the combination of the exoteric and the esoteric. Tōnan'in's being mentioned as playing a significant role further reinforces the perceived distinction between Hossō-Mikkyō and Sanron-Mikkyō at the Yuima-e: both are represented while the union of the exoteric and the esoteric is expressed in front of the imperial emissary (*chokushi*, 勅使).

A much later entry from the *San'e jō ichi ki* for the year 1295 reconfirms this object's supposed link with Tōnan'in and Shōbō.³⁰ In addition to Shōbō's case, his successors at Tōnan'in all seem to display this Sanron-Mikkyō identity. Tōnan'in's second head, Enchin (延徹), studied both Sanron and *mikkyō* and received the esoteric initiation from Retired Emperor Uda (宇多上皇, 867–931).³¹ His exoteric-esoteric background on both doctrinal and institutional levels is well exemplified by his tenure as tenth abbot of Tōji next to his identity as a Sanron scholar overseeing Tōnan'in. The third head, Saikō (済高), likewise combined both exoteric and esoteric doctrinal background and institutional affiliation, being both the overseer of Tōnan'in and esoteric temples such as Kajūji (観修寺) and Kongōbuji (金剛峰寺).³²

After having briefly addressed the gradual formation of two forms of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism, one based at Kōfukuji and the other at Tōdaiji, I will now look closer at the institutional implications of these two lines. First, the Sanron-Shingon connection was physically established at the Tōnan'in (東南院) at Tōdaiji and directly connected with the Shingon temple Daigōji through its founder, the Tōdaiji monk Shōbō. The *Daigoji zassu shidai* list the temple's head priests, and a comparison between these and those in charge of Tōdaiji reveals that we are dealing with the very same monks and lineages, thus showing a direct link between Tōnan'in and Daigoji (see Table 1).

Table 1. The first eight head priests of Daigoji, their main doctrinal identities, and their connections to both institutions according to the *Daigoji zassu shidai*.³⁴

<i>zassu</i>	Daigoji	Tōnan'in
Kangen (観賢)	920; Shingon	Student of Shōbō
Enchin (延愼)	925; Sanron	Student of Shōbō; Tōdaiji abbot in 924, head of Tōnan'in ³⁵
Enshō (延性)	928; Shingon	Student of Shōbō
Jōsū (貞崇)	930; Shingon	Student of Shōbō
Ijō (一定)	945; Sanron, student of Kangen (Shingon)	Second-generation student of Shōbō
Jōjo (定助)	947; Shingon, student of Enchin (Sanron) and Ijō (Shingon)	Third-generation stu- dent of Shōbō
Nikyō (仁皎)	957; Sanron, student of Kangen (Shingon)	Second-generation student of Shōbō
Kanri (観理)	960; Sanron, student of Enchin (Sanron)	Head of Tōnan'in; second-generation stu- dent of Shōbō; Tōdaiji abbot in 969

While the scheme above clearly demonstrates these monks' institutional or doctrinal affiliation through both Daigoji and Tōnan'in, we should not ignore certain of these monks' connection with Tōji. However, doesn't this contradict the opposition between Tōdaiji-Tōnan'in-Daigoji versus Kōfukuji-Tōji? In fact, I argue that that this does not contradict but illustrates the competition between several exoteric-esoteric lineages at Daigoji and Tōji in which certain monks infiltrated the higher monastic positions of the other party. From its very foundation, both Tōnan'in and Daigoji were connected through their founder, Shōbō, and as shown in Table 1 his lineage continues to take up the highest position at Daigoji while residing at Tōdaiji's Tōnan'in. As pointed out by FUJII Masako's research on Daigoji's Sanbōin, this temple was not a monolith either and, just like Kōfukuji

or Tōdaiji, displayed competition between several lineages within its walls. We cannot go into a detailed overview of intra-Daigoji competition here, but a comparison between Fujii's overview of thirteenth to fourteenth Daigoji heads and the *Tōdaiji bettō bunin* clearly reveals that the link between Tōnan'in and Daigoji persisted well into the fourteenth century.³⁶

Second, an example of a ritual site where all these exoteric-esoteric lineages and institutions met and confronted each other was undoubtedly Kōfukuji's lecture hall (*kōdō*, 講堂) where the Yuima-e was carried out yearly.

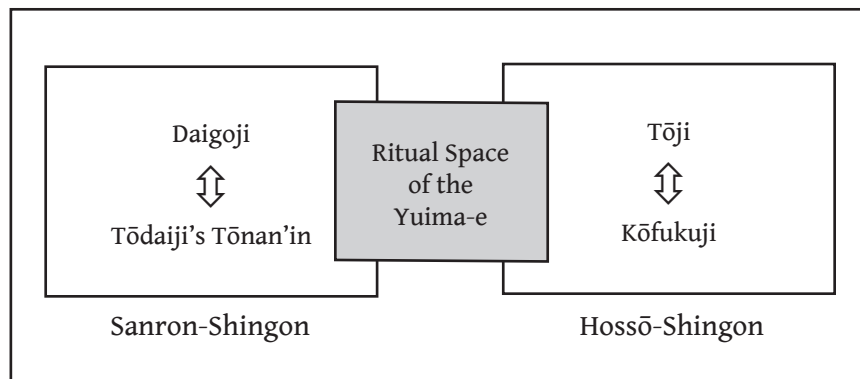


Figure 1. The ritual space of the Yuima-e.

The scheme in fig. 1 shows how the Yuima-e displayed confrontations of both Sanron-Shingon and Hossō-Shingon lineages, but I have to stress the necessity to take into consideration Tendai developments as well. The Yuima-e sessions for the years 967–969 not only show the presence of certain lineages, they also reflect the intense competition between these groups, and I argue that this competition has to be situated in their larger socio-political context. In other words: the connection between the internal and external sphere of the large temple complexes becomes apparent in the ritual. In this sense, the connection between *kenmitsu* and *kenmon taisei* is found within the ritual sphere. Between 967 and 969 the Yuima-e looked as follows (see table 2):³⁷

Table 2. Parties present at Yuima-e sessions.

Year	Lecturer	Affiliation	Candidate
967	Zenyū (禅愉)	Enryakuji-Tendai	The candidate (<i>ryūgi</i> , 堅義) is Chūzan (仲算), Kōfukuji, Hossō.
968	Gikō (義光)	Kōfukuji-Hossō	The candidate is Enshō (円照), Kōfukuji, Hossō.
969	Hōen (法縁)	Tōdaiji-Sanron	The candidate is Jōyū (定祐).

These three sessions overseen by judge and Kōfukuji abbot Anshū (和秀) clearly display three major monastic complexes: Kōfukuji, Tōdaiji, and Enryakuji. In a sense, the 967 session featuring Zenyu and Chūzan can be interpreted as a micro version of the Ōwa Debates of 963 when Chūzan also confronted Enryakuji monks on the universality of buddha-nature.³⁸ In fact, Judge Anshū had been present at the Ōwa Debates as well, turning these Yuima-e sessions into good examples of the larger conflict between Enryakuji and Kōfukuji. As indicated by Paul Groner, Ryōgen employed existing tensions between Hossō, Sanron, and Kegon to attack Kōfukuji's domination of the Nara schools. In a sense, these three Yuima-e sessions above display the same conflict as the position of lecturer enabled these monks to further progress to higher positions in the Ministry of Monastic Affairs. In addition, the conflict between Enryakuji and Kōfukuji, as host of the Yuima-e, might even be illustrated by the fact that originally another Enryakuji lecturer was appointed for the 969 session but for reasons unknown was withdrawn and replaced by Hōen of Tōdaiji. Enryakuji was able to participate again in the Yuima-e in 977, 990, and 1020 but would then disappear from the Yuima-e's ritual scene.³⁹ By then, Enryakuji's esoteric monks had gained a different route to the Ministry of Monastic Affairs and no longer needed participation in Nara's main rituals.⁴⁰

In order to show the institutional and doctrinal interconnectedness between Kōfukuji and Tōji in more detail, I will now turn to specific examples of key figures in Kōfukuji's history. This analysis will divert from Kuroda's approach to *kenmitsu* Buddhism by emphasizing monastic lineages across temple complexes, thus criticizing any view on temples as monolithic power blocs. We will now look at the example of Jōshō (定照, 906–983) and Kojima Shinkō (子島眞興, 934–1004),

who both seem to represent different aspects of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism.

JŌSHŌ

The Kōfukuji monk Jōshō was born in 906 as son of Fujiwara no Moromasa (藤原師尹, 920–969). It is unknown when he entered the monastery or under whom he initially studied Hossō as a novice, but it seems he was connected to supervisor Ningyō (仁教, ?–?), student of Nyomu (如無).⁴¹ As an exoteric monk, Jōshō received the esoteric initiation from Kangū (寬空) and entered Tōji in 946.⁴² He quickly moved up within Shingon. In 953 he received the initiation to the Dharma of the Diamond Realm (*kongō kai hō*, 金剛界法) at the Shingon-in (真言院) at Tōdaiji and in 959 he entered the Dharma of the Womb Realm (*taizō kai hō*, 胎藏界法) at Rendaiji (蓮台寺). In 979 he was appointed abbot of the esoteric temple Kongōbuji (金剛峯寺).⁴³ More important to us, however, is that the crux of his esoteric career seems to have rested on his strong rise within Tōji's hierarchy.

In 966 he was appointed Tōji's overseer of the commoner monks (*bansō bettō*, 凡僧別当), and in 967 he became the third abbot (*san chōja*, 三長者).⁴⁴ At that time, the abbot of Tōji was his teacher Kangū, and the second abbot (*nichōja*, 二長者) was Guse (救世), also of Kōfukuji. When he held the position of *jō sōzu* (正僧都) in 977, he became the second abbot (二長者) of Tōji. Two years later, he combined the head abbotship of both Kongōbuji (金剛峯寺) and Tōji.⁴⁵ This way, one single person gradually combined several of the highest exoteric and esoteric monastic positions. This dual exoteric-esoteric identity runs throughout the institutional side of his career, perhaps best exemplified by his appointment as lecturer at the Yuima-e in 962. Having received the esoteric initiation several years before and being placed within Kangū's lineage, he took the Yuima-e's highest office of lecturer in 962 at age fifty-two.⁴⁶

Two years after his Yuima-e lectureship, he was appointed vice master of the precepts (*gon risshi*, 権律師), and in 968 he reached the rank of master of the precepts (*risshi*, 律師).⁴⁷ Moving up fast, he was appointed head abbot of Kōfukuji in 971, one year after his foundation of what would become one of the temple's most important noble cloisters (*monzeki*, 門跡): Ichijōin (一乗院).⁴⁸

But what is the significance of his position at this point in history? I argue that Jōshō exemplifies well the importance of Hossō-Shingon

lineages from an institutional point of view. In addition, the many high offices he combined at both exoteric and esoteric institutions while being a noble exemplifies well the need to reinterpret the large temple complexes from the point of view of exoteric-esoteric lineages rather than monastic power blocs who rose against the state apparatus. In contrast, I argue that cases such as Jōshō's show that what made up "the state" was a complex web of monastic lineages and institutions standing in a mutually dependent relationship with lay institutions. While Fukihara argued that Jōshō represents the stage in which esotericism was increasingly incorporated into Hossō thought, I chose to highlight the institutional union of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism that Jōshō represents.⁴⁹ I will now turn to a monk who exemplifies well the Hossō-Shingon synthesis from a doctrinal point of view: Kojima Shinkō.

KOJIMA SHINKŌ

Kojima Shinkō's background can be traced back to two lineages. First, he was the student of Kōfukuji's Chūzan (仲算, 934–1004), one of the participants at the Ōwa Debates mentioned above.⁵⁰ Second, he is also found in Shingon's *Ono-ryū* (小野流) through Niga (仁賀).⁵¹ Being in both an exoteric and an esoteric lineage, he became the patriarch of the Kojima ryū (子島流), a center for the combined study of Hossō and Shingon. He authored many Hossō and Shingon works, and legend has it he was also the one who developed the Kojima Mandala (子島曼荼羅).⁵² The *Kojimasan Kangakuji Engi* (小島山観覚寺縁起) describes how Shinkō received a mandala from Emperor Ichijō (一条天皇, 980–1011) after the monarch recovered from illness following Shinkō's prayers: "The emperor felt the beneficial effect of this dharma and said: 'This mandala is for the salvation of all living beings and was painted by Mañjuśrī. From now on the master should again be able to have all living beings benefit from it. [Therefore] I bestow on this saint [the duty of] practicing the Two-World Mandala.'"⁵³ This short passage in fact shows an emperor requesting a ritual for the health of the sovereign and its people, challenging two points. First, it suggests that Shinkō was not as detached from the capital and those in power as he is usually depicted. The classic image of Shinkō is one of detachment of worldly affairs and disinterest for court politics, but it seems this image might have to be reconsidered.⁵⁴ Second, and more significant to us, is that the donation of the mandala and the imperial request to

practice on it places this exoteric-esoteric monk's actions within the context of state discourse.

Born in the Yamato or Kawachi area around the lifetime of famous monks such as Genshin (源信, 942–1017), Shinkō was of common descent at a time higher monastic functions had become reserved for the nobility. The struggle he must have faced is well illustrated by his Yuima-e lectureship in 1003 at an advanced age, only one year prior to his death.⁵⁵ At the age of ten, he became the student of Kōfukuji's Kūshō (空晴), a monk who became lecturer at the Yuima-e in 932 at age fifty-five.⁵⁶ Four years later, Shinkō received the precepts from another of Kūshō's students, Chūzan (see above), a Kōfukuji monk who strikingly resembles Shinkō's profile. Both were of low descent, were Kōfukuji monks, shared the same Hossō teacher, are said to have disliked high office, and left ample proof of their scholarship. Perhaps the best examples of Chūzan's innovative scholarship are his *Private Record of Views on Four Logical Errors* (*Inmyō shishū sōi shiki*, 因明四種相違私記), still kept at Kōfukuji, and his *Private Record on the Truth of the Four Parts* (*Shibun gi shiki*, 四分義私記).⁵⁷

Shinkō's work *The Explanation of the Ritual Procedures of the Lotus and Matrix Realm* (*Renge taizōkai giki kaishaku*, 蓮華胎藏界儀軌解釈) seems to confirm his early study of Hossō: "First I studied the teachings of Jion (慈恩), now I trace the steps of Samantabhadra (普賢菩薩)."⁵⁸ Interestingly, this personal statement mentions he turned to esoteric teachings after the study of Hossō, which suggests he used the esoteric for a better understanding of his earlier acquired knowledge of the exoteric.⁵⁹ According to SAEKI Ryōken, Shinkō decided on the agreement of the exoteric and the esoteric in order to reconcile esoteric Buddhism's idea of realizing buddhahood with this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu*, 即身成佛) with Hossō. The solution was not to enter the esoteric by means of the exoteric, but vice-versa.⁶⁰

The *Origin Chronicle of Kangakuji of Mount Kojima* (*Kojimasan kangakuji engi*, 子島山觀覺寺縁記) describes the beginning of his monastic career as follows: "From the Eikan [938] till Kankō [1004] era, novice Shinkō came to Kangakuji and successfully illumined the splendor of the dharma. Originally from Kawachi, he soon became the student of the Nara priest Chūzan. At the age of fourteen, in the third year of the Tenryaku era, he lived at Kōfukuji in Nara. After having terminated the study of the basic teachings [exoteric Buddhism], he entered the golden light of the secret teachings of Shingon [esoteric Buddhism]

and studied with the priest Niga of mount Yoshino who transmitted to him the hidden texts of the secret cultivation.”⁶¹ This order fits the chronology as he did indeed receive the esoteric initiation thirty-four years later at Zenjōji (善成寺) through Niga. The *Shingon fuhō honchō ketsumyaku* (真言附法本朝血脈) clearly shows the lineage Shinkō-Niga-Hōzō-Jōjo (定助), which means he belonged to the Daigoji lineage as Jōchō was Daigoji abbot Kyōri’s (経理) student who was included in the Hossō transmission through Chūzan and thus must have belonged to Shinkō’s circle.⁶² In other words: Kyōri also received the esoteric initiation and the Daigoji lineage through Niga. In addition, he belonged to the third generation at Ichijōin and the fifth at Daikakuji.⁶³ In 1008 he took the position of lecturer at the Yuima-e and in 1028 he reached his highest position, lesser second-ranking prelate (*gon shōsōzu*, 権少僧都).⁶⁴ But doesn’t Shinkō’s appearance in the Daigoji lineage contradict my earlier suggested division between Tōdaiji-Tōnan-Daigoji and Kōfukuji-Tōji? In fact, it does not, and for reasons that urge us further not to consider these monastic institutions as monolithic power-blocs. As illustrated by Jōshō’s foundation of Ichijōin, Kōfukuji would come to be consisted of many sub-temples with corresponding lineages within its walls. As illustrated by the easy route of Jōshō as exemplified by his early lectureship at the Yuima-e, and Shinkō’s much more difficult path, we are definitely dealing with an institutionally more powerful line in the former’s case. It is this lineage that is here considered as standing vis-à-vis Tōnan’in’s exoteric-esoteric line.

In sum, Shinkō first studied Hossō and mastered meditation on consciousness only. In a second phase he studied esotericism and used the concept of *sokushin jōbutsu* to perfect the exoteric meditation on consciousness only.⁶⁵ The appropriation of esoteric praxis into the Hossō curriculum continued, as exemplified by later Kōfukuji monks such as Jōkei (貞慶, 1155–1213). In reference to Shinkō, ARAMAKI Noritoshi further notes that the theoretical basis of the later Hossō-Shingon synthesis was laid by Kūkai, and refers to the *Himitsu mandara jūjūshinron*’s (秘密曼荼羅十住心論) inclusion of Yuishiki thought and practice. However, it is argued, Kūkai did not yet present a specific praxis that reconciled both. It was only with reform movements centered on Shingon-Hossō monks from Shinkō on that a synthesis between Hossō and Shingon was attempted.⁶⁶ However, according to Aramaki, mainly Hossō-Shingon thinkers, and not Tendai, constituted the prevailing innovative current of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism.

While this paper focuses on Hossō-Shingon and Sanron-Shingon, I take a more nuanced stance here: Tendai was undoubtedly a significant part of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism but in order to fully understand the interaction between the large temples and lineages within the larger framework of the state, we have to equally address the lasting importance of Hossō and Sanron and its synthesis with Shingon parallel to Tendai's development.

Regardless of Shinkō's solutions to the doctrinal Hossō-Shingon dilemma, the Hossō school continued to grapple with the problem as exemplified by the scholarship of the Saidaiji revivalist Eizon (叡尊, 1201–1290), a Kamakura-period descendant of Shinkō's lineage, or Ninshō (忍性; 1217–1303).⁶⁷

CONCLUSION

Through the analysis of primary sources that pertain to the institutional and ritual careers of specific monks, I hope to have drawn attention to several issues that urge us to rethink certain aspects of Kuroda's notion of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism. More specifically, the examples of exoteric-esoteric monks belonging to Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji's Tōnan'in have shown that Tendai Buddhism might not have been the main constituent of an exoteric-esoteric system underlying the state apparatus.

First, the early allocation of esoteric texts at Kōfukuji shows that a gradual development of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism predates Kūkai and Saichō's time. The combined interest in both Hossō and Sanron by early Gangōji and Kōfukuji monks gave rise to two forms of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism: Hossō-Shingon vs. Sanron-Shingon, one based at Tōdaiji and the other at Kōfukuji. Over time, both were linked with specific esoteric temples, Daigoji and Tōji respectively, giving rise to lineages that combined institutional positions at both exoteric and esoteric temples. The site where these institutional and doctrinal oppositions met was the sphere of ritual debate, as exemplified by the Yuima-e.

Second, the institutional and doctrinal affiliations as well as the lineages of these monks show that one cannot simply differentiate the state from the temples or even one *kenmon* from another, a view that implicitly questions Kuroda's view on the temples as private institutions challenging the centralized state. Here, I would adopt Mikael Adolphson's usage of the term "shared rulership," but in addition

stress the importance of taking into account Hossō-Shingon and Sanron-Shingon lineages in connection with their lay patrons to fully understand the position of these monastic complexes in their larger socio-political context.⁶⁸ As shown above by the examination of lineage and ritual participation, the state and the temple complexes were mutually dependent and their power was exactly the outcome of this interdependency.

NOTES

1. Toshio Kuroda, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy," *The Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, nos. 3–4 (1996): 262.
2. UJIMA Susumu 上島亨, "Chūsei zenki no kokka to bukkyō" 中世前期の国家と仏教, *Nihon Rekishi Kenkyū* 403, no. 3 (1996): 31–33; and UJIMA Susumu 上島亨, *Nihon chūsei shakai no keisei to ōken* 日本中世社会の形成と王権 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010), 416–420.
3. TAKAYAMA Kyōko 高山京子, *Chūsei Kōfukuji no monzeki* 中世興福寺の門跡 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2010), 10; OKANO Kōji 岡野浩二, *Heian jidai no kokka to jiin* 平安時代の国家と寺院 (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 2009), 4; IHARA Kesao 井原今朝男, *Nihon chūsei no kokusei to kasei* 日本中世の国政と家政 (Tokyo: Azekura Shobō, 1995), 45–46. On the importance of Tōji and Daigoji documents for a better understanding of Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji's organization, see NAGAMURA Makoto 永村眞, *Chūsei Jiin Shiryō Ron* 中世寺院史料論 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2000).
4. The actual dedication ceremony (*kuyō*, 供養) took place in 714. "Kōfukuji ryaku nendaiki" 興福寺略年代記, *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū* 29, no. 2 (1930): 116. The start of Kōfukuji's construction by Fuhito is also mentioned in the Heian-period "Shichi daiji nenpyō" 七大寺年表, *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū* 27, no. 1 (1930): 466.
5. IZUMIYA Yasuo 泉谷康夫, *Kōfukuji 興福寺* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1997), 15; see also *Shichi daiji nenpyō*, 466; "Kōfukuji ryaku nendaiki," 115.
6. "Kōfukuji ryaku nendaiki," 122; T. 475, 14.537a–557b, T. 476, 14.557–587, and T. 474, 14.519–536; *San'e jō ichi ki* 三会定一記, in *Dai nihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本仏教全書, vol. 123 (Tokyo: Busshō kankokai, 1912), 1. The *Kōfukuji ryaku nendaiki* mentions that Kōfukuji's precursor Umayasakadera (三階寺) was the site of the Yuima-e as early as 714 ("Kōfukuji ryaku nendaiki," 116). See also Mikael Adolphson, *The Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers and Warriors in Pre-Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 23. On Kōfukuji's origins in connection with the Yuima-e, see Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press,

2002), 129–130. For a detailed analysis of Jisson’s writings (*Jisson goki*, 尋尊御記) regarding the founding of the Yuima-e in 657, see Nagamura, *Chūsei Jiin Shiryō Ron*, 207–208.

7. *Nihon bukke jinmei jisho* 日本佛家人名 (Tokyo: Kōyūkan, 1911), 799–800 and 802.

8. *Nihon bukke jinmei jisho*, 804. FUKIHARA Shōshin 富貴原章信, *Nihon yuishiki shisō shi* 日本唯識思想史 (Kyoto: Taigadō, 1944), 182–183.

9. Fukihara, *Nihon yuishiki shisō shi*, 43; *Genkō shakusho* 元享釋書, in *Dai nihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本仏教全書, vol. 101 (Tokyo: Busshō kankokai, 1912), 143.

10. *Genkō shakusho*, 141.

11. On the opposition between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika in Japanese, see NAGAO Gajin 長尾雅人, *Chūkan to yuishiki* 中觀と唯識 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1978). “Sanron” literally means “Three Treatises” and refers to Nāgārjuna’s *Madhyamaka-sāstra* (Jpn. *Chūron*, 中論), the *Dvādaśanikāya-sāstra* (Jpn. *Jūnimon ron*, 十二門論), and Āryadeva’s *Sāta-sāstra* (Jpn. *Hyakuron*, 百論).

12. Fukihara, *Nihon yuishiki shisō shi*, 141.

13. T. 2035, 49.129a–475c.

14. *Kokushi taikēi* 国史大系, ed. KUROITA Katsumi 黒板勝美, 60 vols. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1964–1967), vol. 4; *Kokushi taikēi*, vol. 12.

15. Fukihara, *Nihon yuishiki shisō shi*, 148.

16. *Ibid.*, 176; “Kōfukuji ryaku nendaiki,” 116.

17. *Sōgō bunin* 僧綱補任, in *Dai nihon bukkyō zensho*, vol. 123 (Tokyo: Busshō Kankōkai, 1912), 5. Translation for *sōgō* titles are taken from Joan Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

18. Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 151–152; T. 848, 18.1–55.

19. In this year Tachibana no Moroe defeated Fujiwara no Hirotsugu’s (藤原広嗣) rebellion in Kyūshū. Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650–800* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009), 214.

20. YOSHIKAWA Shinji 吉川真司, “Fujiwara uji no sōshi to hatten,” in *Ritsuryō Kanryōsei no Kenkyū* 律令官僚制の研究 (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1998), 123.

21. Yoshikawa, *Ritsuryō Kanryōsei no Kenkyū*.

22. Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 45.

23. *Ibid.*, 334.

24. For example, between 834 and 853, thirteen Hossō monks, six Sanron

monks, and one Kegon monk took the position of lecturer (*San'e jō ichi ki*, 2–3). Tenth-century sessions would feature esoteric Tendai monks in addition to Hossō-Shingon monks such as Jōshō (see below) in 962 or Sanron-Shingon lecturers such as Enchin in 911 (*San'e jō ichi ki*, 11, 7).

25. *Tōnan'in jimu shidai*, in *Dai nihon bukkō zensho* 大日本仏教全書, vol. 122 (Tokyo: Busshō kankokai, 1912), 2; *Zoku shingonshū zenshō* 續眞言宗全書, in *Zoku shingonshū zenshō kankōkai* (Kōyasan: Zoku Shingonshu Zensho Kankokai, 1975–1988), 3.

26. The *San'e jō ichi ki* confirms Enshū's Sanron identity and his lectureship at the Yuima-e in 869. Interestingly, Shōbō was candidate the same year at age twenty-eight (*San'e jō ichi ki*, 4). Gankyō was lecturer at the Yuima-e in 845 and is listed in the *San'e jō ichi ki* as a Sanron scholar residing at Kōfukuji (*San'e jō ichi ki*, 2).

27. *Zoku shingonshū zenshō*, 2–3. This source also mentions that Gennin, also Shinga's student, studied both exoteric and esoteric teachings (*Sōgō bunin*, 46). The *Tōdaiji bettō shidai* (東大寺別当次第, in *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類從, ed. HANAWA Hokiichi 塙保己一 et al., part 565, 592–621 [Tokyo: Gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1959–1960]) mentions Shinga as the twenty-third abbot of Tōdaiji (*Tōdaiji bettō shidai*, 594).

28. *Mikkyō daijiten* 密教大辞典 (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1968), 1733–1734.

29. Source mentioned in TAKAYAMA Yuki 高山有記, *Chūsei kōfukuji yuima-e no kenkyū* 中世興福寺維摩会の研究 (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1997), 102.

30. *San'e jō ichi ki*, 87–88.

31. *Tōnan'in jimu shidai*, 2; *Zoku shingonshū zenshō*, 3–4;

32. *Sōgō bunin*, 57. However, he died the year of his appointment (*Tōji chōja bunin* 東寺長者補任, in *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū*, vol. 3 [Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1930], 656).

33. *Tōnan'in jimu shidai*, 2.

34. *Daigoji zassu shidai* 醍醐寺座主次第, ed. Kyōto Furitsu Sōgō Shiryōkan 京都府立総合資料館, “Shoji bettō narabini Yuima-e Tendai sanne kōshi tō shidai” 諸寺別当并維摩会天台三會講師等次第, *Shiryōkan kiyō* 資料館紀要18 (1990): 121; *Tōnan'in jimu shidai*, 157–759.

35. *Tōdaiji bettō shidai*, 598; *Daigoji zassu shidai*, 121.

36. FUJII Masako 藤井雅子, *Chūsei daigoji to shingon mikkyō* 中世醍醐寺と眞言密教 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2008), 44–45; *Tōdaiji bettō shidai*, 611. For example, Fujii lists Jōken (定賢) of Sanbōin (三宝院) as head of Daigoji in 1182. The same monk is mentioned as Tōdaiji abbot and residing at Tōnan'in by the Tōdaiji records. Other examples are Jōhan (定範), who became Daigoji head in 1221, and Shōchū (聖忠), a Tōnan'in monk who became Daigoji head in 1307.

All belonged to Daigoji's Sanbōin ryū (三宝院流). For a detailed overview of the foundation and lists of the Tōdaiji abbots, see NAGAMURA Makoto 永村眞, *Chūsei tōdaiji no soshiki to keiei* 中世東大寺の組織と経営 (Tokyo: Hanawa Shōbō, 1989), 26–43.

37. *San'e jō ichi ki*, 11.

38. Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei*, 105–108.

39. *San'e jō ichi ki*, 12, 15.

40. Initially, only lectureship in the Three Southern Rituals could enable a monk to further his career and advance to the Ministry of Monastic Affairs. However, Shirakawa (白川, 1053–1129) changed the access to the Ministry of Monastic Affairs when he determined that the esoteric initiation became a valid prerequisite to enter this ministry. This meant that esoteric Tendai monks were enabled to advance as well. *Shoreishō* 初例抄, in *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類従, ed. HANAWA Hokiichi 塙保己一 et al., 29 vols. (Tokyo: Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1959–1960), vol. 24, 587.

41. TOMABECHI Seiichi 芭米地 誠一, “Heian ki Kōfukuji ni okeru Shingon shū ni tsuite” 平安期興福寺における真言宗について, *Bukkyō Bunka Ronshū* 9 (2003): 407–409; *Kōfukuji bettō shidai* 興福寺別当次第, in *Dai nihon bukkyō zenshū* 大日本仏教全集, vol. 124 (Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912), 5–7; *Kōfukuji sangō bunin* 興福寺三綱補任, in *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 続群書類従 4, no. 2 (1930): 701. Jōshō was abbot and Gen'ei (玄延) was vice-abbot. The *Genkō shakusho* confirms Ningyō and Kangū as his teachers (*Kokushi taikei*, vol. 31, 168–169). Nyomu's dates are unknown, but he is mentioned as one of the monks who received esoteric initiation from Retired Emperor Uda (宇多上皇, 867–931).

42. Kangū received the transmission from Retired Emperor Kanpyō (Emperor Uda) (*Zoku shingonshū zenshō*, 5). His dates are unknown, but he was the teacher of the Hossō-Shingon monk Guse (救世, 890–973).

43. *Dai nihon shiryō* 大日本史料 (Tokyo: Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjō, 1926–), 1/17/137; *Kōfukuji bettō shidai*, 5–7.

44. *Dai nihon shiryō*, 1/11/693.

45. *Tōji chōja bunin*, 661; *Genkō shakusho*, 169. For an overview of these appointments, see Tomabechi, “Heian ki Kōfukuji ni okeru Shingon shū ni tsuite,” 394–405.

46. *San'e jō ichi ki*, 11.

47. *Sōgō bunin*, 70; *Sōgō bunin*, 72.

48. *Kōfukuji bettō shidai*, 6; “Kōfukuji ryaku nendaiki,” 133.

49. Fukihara, *Nihon yuishiki shisō shi*, 328.

50. *Genkō shakusho*, *Kokushi taikei*, vol. 31, 167. For an elaborate discussion on

these debates, see Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei*, 94–117.

51. *Zoku shingonshū zenshō*, 7. Fukihara, *Nihon yuishiki shisō shi*, 321.

52. Different kanji are found for *kojima* in both primary as secondary sources. In this dissertation I opted for the character 子 as used in the *engi*.

53. *Kojimasan i Kangakuji Engi*, in *Dai nihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本仏教全書, ed. SUZUKI Gakuji Zaidan 鈴木学術財団, 150 vols. (Tokyo: Bussho kankōkai, 1912–1922), 119:2.

54. ARAMAKI Noritoshi, “The Influence of Yogacāra-vijñānavāda on Kamakura Buddhism,” in *Japanese Buddhism: Its Tradition, New Religions, and Interaction with Christianity*, ed. Minowa Kaoru et al. (Tokyo and Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1987), 42.

55. *San’e jō ichi ki*, 14. *Genkō shakusho*, *Kokushi taikēi*, vol. 31, 167.

56. *San’e jō ichi ki*, 9. He attained the rank of *risshi* in 938 and *shōsōzu* in 948; he passed away in 957 at age eighty.

57. Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei*, 106. T. 2277.

58. *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten* 佛書解説大辭典, ed. ONO Genmyō 小野玄妙, 15 vols. (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1974–1988), 11:295, T. 2231. Mentioned in Tomabechi, “Heian ki Kōfukuji ni okeru Shingon shū ni tsuite,” 414. OISHIO Chihiro 追塩千尋, *Chūsei no nanto bukkyō* 中世の南都仏教 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1995), 49.

59. Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 428.

60. Kūkai used this term based on the *Treatise on the Aspiration for Enlightenment* (*P’u-t’i-hsin lun*, attributed to Nāgārjuna) and formulated his own commentary, *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (The Meaning of Realizing Buddhahood with This Very Body). Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 12 (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 31. See also Paul Groner, “Shortening the Path: The Interpretation of the Realization of Buddhahood in This Very Existence in the Early Tendai School,” in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, ed. Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1992), 439–473.

61. *Kojimasan Kangakuji Engi*, *Dai nihon bukkyō zensho*, 119:1.

62. *Shingon fu hō hongan ketsumyaku*, *Zoku shingonshū zenshō*, 7. Oishio, *Chūsei no nanto bukkyō*, 45.

63. Tomabechi, “Heian ki Kōfukuji ni okeru Shingon shū ni tsuite,” 418.

64. *Sōgō bunin*, 105.

65. KENCHŪ Jōjun 間中定潤, “Kojima Shinkō no Yuishiki kan, Mikkyō tono kanrensei” 小嶋真興の唯識観一密教との関連性, in *Kitabataka Tensei kyōju*

kanreki kinen: Nihon no Bukkyō to Bunka 北畠典生教授還暦記念：日本の仏教と文化 (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1990), 269.

66. Aramaki, “The Influence of Yogacāra-vijñānavāda on Kamakura Buddhism,” 42.

67. Oishio, *Chūsei no nanto bukkyō*, 50.

68. Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 239; NAGAMURA Makoto 永村眞, *Chūsei Jiin Shiryō Ron* 中世寺院史料論 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2000).

Selected Materials for the Study of the Life of Buddha Śākyamuni

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The first of the “three precious things” is the life of the Buddha. Its study will lead to insights into and understanding of the two other precious things, dharma (doctrine) and sangha (religious order).

I. INTRODUCTION

Name: Buddha Śākyamuni is the historical Buddha. Buddha means “awakened” (Skt. *budh*°, to awaken; Sanskrit is the Latin of Buddhism in general). He was born into the noble Gautama family of the Śākya clan of Kapilavastu in southern Nepal. That is why he is also known as “Śākya sage,” Śākyamuni. He was given the name of Siddhārtha, “Goal Accomplished.” Gautama Siddhārtha is Śākyamuni, the Buddha.

Place of birth: foot of the Himalayas, in Lumbinī (Rummindei), near Kapilavastu, now in Nepal. In the brahmanical society of Magadha, immediately to the south, he was said to be of the *kṣatriya* caste, just below brahmins. Rulers are linked with his caste.

Life and death: he died ca. 483 BCE, at the ripe age of approximately eighty years (see Narain 1994 in the bibliography, below). Traditional dates of his death, (*pari*)*nirvāṇa*, vary widely, from 2420 BCE to 290 BCE. The southern Theravāda tradition believes that the death of the Buddha occurred in 543 BCE. This chronology is said to be part of the long chronology. A short chronology, taking mainly northern Sanskrit-based information literally as to the time (about a hundred years) between the death and the reign of King Aśoka (ca. 264–227 BCE; see Narain 1994), places the death between 420 and 350 BCE, possibly shortly after 400 BCE, as in Bechert 2004. The Japanese scholar U₁ Hakuju (宇井伯壽) was the first to propose the short chronology in 1924–1930. He dates the death to 386 BCE.

The Buddha, called Bodhisattva before his enlightenment, knew worldly happiness in his palace in Kapilavastu, and he later practiced asceticism in Uruvilvā. These experiences led him to find a middle way leading to perfect rest, nirvana. Having realized the four noble truths—(1) suffering, *duḥkha*; (2) origination, *samudaya*; (3) extinction, *nirodha*; and (4) the path, *mārga*—and the twelve links of the chain of dependent origination in Bodh Gayā, presently in Bihar, he put an end to karma, intentional action, and to samsara, birth and death, two dogmas of Indian intellectual life at the time. He then went to the Mṛgadāva, Deer Park, in today's Sārnāth, near Vārāṇasī, Benares, to turn the wheel of the law, dharma, doctrine, i.e., to preach for the first time. Vārāṇasī (in today's Uttar Pradesh) has been a traditional center of cultural life since long before Rājagṛha (Rajgir in Bihar), Magadha's capital at the time of the Buddha. The young Śākyamuni, still in his thirties, went there to expound his new teaching, but he did (could?) not do that on the bank of the Ganges in Vārāṇasī itself. After that he spent about forty-five years as a wandering ascetic, making conversions. Many of his converts were brahmins, a fact which seems to have influenced the development of later schools, *nikāyas*, e.g., Vātsīputriya Pudgalavādins or "Personalists." At the age of approximately eighty he passed away in Kuśinagara, in the land of the Mallas. He had accepted a meal of pork or of truffles (there is uncertainty about the meaning of the Indian term *sūkara-maddava*). It was presented to him by the metal-worker Cunda. The Buddha seems to have died of mesenteric infarction (Mettanando and von Hinüber 2000).

Only after he had arrived from Rājagṛha, Mahākāśyapa was able to set fire to the bier. After the cremation the bones (*śarīra*, relics) and the ashes were distributed.

The Buddha and his life's experiences are a practical example for our own behavior. The study of his life is of utmost importance.

Buddha is the first of the triple refuge. The second (dharma, doctrine) and the third (sangha, religious order, namely its rules, *vinaya*) refuges are expounded by the Buddha himself, but the first one shows us how to live a moral life, also as a layperson.

II. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Literature about the life of the Buddha is quite vast and exists in many languages (Sanskrit, Pāli, Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, etc.). Many Japanese scholars are very interested in the legend and in the

facts concerning the life of the Buddha (see Hirai 2002). One can follow developments in the yearly catalogue of Tokyo's Sankibō Busshorin (山喜房佛書林, <http://www.bukkyosho.gr.jp/>). For example, the general catalogue no. 25, pp. 22–25, of 2008 presents new books about the life of the Buddha.

While Chinese and other East Asians pay a great deal of attention to (religious) history, South Asians are more concerned with the Buddha's message, the teaching. That explains why Chinese texts are numerous today, even though they ultimately rely on Indian material.

Material in Indian languages exists in English translation.

The Pāli *Jātakanidāna* (*Nidānakathā*, Account of Events; fifth or sixth century) is translated in Jayawickrama (2002), but the material found in the Pāli canon as a whole is presented in Ñānamoli (1978). Many modern authors rely on these texts. Pāli material is certainly not older than Sanskrit material. The Sautrāntika Sarvāstivāda *Lalitavistara* (Graceful Description) is not a text by one author. It grew over time, and became quite influenced by so-called Mahāyāna ideas (e.g., *tathāgatagarbha*). Speaking in terms of *nikāyas* (schools, rather than vehicles, *yānas*), one can say that the Sarvāstivāda text adopted some Mahāsāṅghika elements, a phenomenon which is typical for Sautrāntikas, i.e., non-Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādins. From the end of the seventh century these were known as Mūlasarvāstivādins, which helps explain why there is a Tibetan version. The text was already studied in 1902–1908 by Lefmann. The standard edition of the text is Vaidya (1958). The Mongolian version was studied by Poppe (1967). The Chinese versions T. 186 (*Puyao jing*, 普曜經, by Dharmarakṣa, 308 CE) and T. 187 (*Fangguang da zhuangyan jing*, 方廣大莊嚴經, by Divākara: arrived in Chang'an in 680 CE, d. 688 CE) do not exist in English translation.

Another old biography of the Buddha is found in the *Mahāvastu* (The Great Event), a Lokottaravāda Mahāsāṅghika text. It was translated by Jones in 1949 (see Jones 1949–1956). This text is part of *vinaya* literature.

The most famous biography of the Buddha is Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* (Acts of the Buddha). Aśvaghoṣa (ca. 100 CE) was a brahmin who converted to Sautrāntika Sarvāstivāda Buddhism but was influenced by (Bahuśrutīya?) Mahāsāṅghika ideas. The first fourteen chapters of the Sanskrit text, which belongs to world-class literature, are preserved in the original Sanskrit language. The remaining fourteen chapters exist in Chinese and Tibetan versions. Johnston

(1972; orig. pub. 1936) studied and translated the Sanskrit text, trying to reconstruct the last fourteen chapters. There are numerous reprints of his work. The Tibetan version was translated to German by Weller (1926–1928). The Chinese version, T. 192 (*Fo suoxing zan*, 佛所行讚), was translated by Willemen (2009). The Chinese text is the work of Baoyun (寶雲) in 421 CE in Jiankang (建康, Nanjing). Beal (1883) made a pioneering English rendering of the contents more than a century ago. Only the Chinese and the Tibetan texts have all twenty-eight chapters.

Biographical material in the Chinese language was noticed early on by Samuel Beal in the second half of the nineteenth century, but outside of Japan it has been given scant attention. Zürcher (1978) offered a Dutch translation of T. 184 (*Xiuxing benqi jing*, Former Events about His Practice, 修行本起經) and T. 196 (*Zhong benqi jing*, Middle [Length] Scripture about Former Events, 中本起經). He considers both Chinese texts to be the work of Kang Mengxiang (康孟詳). Nattier (2008) considers only T. 196 as Kang Mengxiang's work, carried out between 190 and 220 CE, the final years of the Han (漢). Based on Kawano's (河野) work Nattier mentions that T. 184 may be a revised and expanded version of an old, lost Xiao (*Short*) *benqi jing* (小本起經), perhaps established during the Eastern Jin (東晉, 317–420 CE). Then there is Zhi Qian's (支謙, d. ca. 252 CE, during the Wu 吳 dynasty in South China) T. 185 (*Taizi ruiying benqi jing*, Auspicious Former Events of the Crown Prince, 太子瑞應本起經, of 223–228 CE). Hirakawa (1993) says that this text possibly is of Mahīśāsaka affiliation. In that case the text may have reached China via the maritime route, ultimately coming from East India. T. 196, 184, and 185 seem to have been widely used at the time, and they have been reworked more than once. The anonymous T. 188 (*Yichu pusa benqi jing*, 異出菩薩本起經, Former Events of the Bodhisattva, different ed.) wrongly attributed to Nie Daozhen (聶道真) has no relation with T. 185. T. 190 (*Fo benxing ji jing*, 佛本行集經, Collection of Former Acts of the Buddha, *Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra*?) of the Gandharan Jñānagupta (523–600 CE) is said by Hirakawa (1993) to be clearly of Dharmaguptaka affiliation. The text is a collection from existing literature, and borrows, e.g., from the *Buddhacarita*. The text transcends sectarian lines. At the very end (T. 190, 932a17–21), it is mentioned that the Buddha's biography is known by different names, but that it is essentially the same text. Mahāsāṅghikas have a *Dashi* (大事, *Mahāvastu*), Sarvāstivādins have a *Da zhuangyan* (大莊嚴, *Lalitavistara*), Kāśyapīyas have a *Fo sheng yinyuan* (佛生因緣, Causality of Buddha's

Life), Dharmaguptakas have a *Shijiamouni Fo benxing* (釋迦牟尼佛本行, Former Acts of Buddha Śākyamuni), and Mahīśāsakas have a *Pinizang genben* (毗尼藏根本, Basis of the Vinayapiṭaka).

A text which has quite some influence in Japan is T. 189 (*Guoqu xian-zai yinguo jing*, 過去現在因果經, Cause and Effect of Past and Present) by Guṇabhadra (394–468 CE), completed between 444 and 453 CE. Guṇabhadra came from South India via the maritime route, and he was nicknamed “Mahāyāna.”

All these texts show that in China, both North and South, before the Tang (唐, 618–907 CE) there was a keen interest in the life of the Buddha.

Lamotte (1988) distinguishes five more or less successive stages in texts about the legendary life of Śākyamuni. (1) Biographical fragments incorporated in the sutras. He refers to the *Majjhimanikāya* and to Saṅghadeva’s Chinese *Madhyamāgama* T. 26, and *Ekottarikāgama* T. 125. He also mentions the Sanskrit *Catuṣparīṣat-sūtra*, as studied by Waldschmidt (1952–1962). This text has its correspondent part in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*. He also mentions the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in different recensions (Pāli, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese). (2) Biographical fragments incorporated into the *vinayas*, esp. in the Dharmaguptaka *vinaya*. Buddha biographies may indeed have developed from the *vinaya*, or perhaps vice versa. About Frauwallner’s (1956) theory about the relation between Buddha’s biography and the *Vinaya* (old *Skandhaka*), Lamotte (1988) does not fully agree. (3) Autonomous but incomplete works in the “Lives” genre. These developed from ca. 100 CE. He mentions *Lalitavistara*, *Mahāvastu*, and many Chinese texts (T. 184, 185, 186, 189, 190, 191). (4) Complete “Lives” of the Buddha. These also developed from ca. 100 CE. Examples include T. 194 (*Sengqie Luocha suoji jing*, 僧伽羅刹所集經, Scriptural Text Compiled by Saṅgharakṣa, translated into Chinese by Sengqie Bacheng, 僧伽跋澄, Saṅghabhadra). Another text is the *Buddhacarita* (T. 192), translated by Baoyun. In the *Saṅghabhedavastu* and the *Vinayakṣudrakavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* the life of the Buddha is narrated. (5) Sinhalese compilations.

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The Purification of Heruka: Reflections on Identity Formation in Late Indian Buddhism¹

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A fascinating feature of Buddhism, and one that facilitated its development into a truly global religion, is its readiness to adapt to new and changing cultural contexts. This feature assured its development from a Northeast Indian renunciant movement to a pan-South Asian religion, and, eventually, into the global religion that it is today. This adaptability, perhaps, is rooted in the anti-essentialist stance adopted by the Buddha and subsequent generations of Buddhist thinkers. That is, Buddhist thought has been characterized by its resistance to the notion that people and things are the way they are because they possess some sort of unchanging essence, an *ātman* or *svarūpa*. Buddhists rejected this commonly held belief and argued instead that everything is in a constant state of flux, changing from one moment to the next.

This philosophical position seems to have led some Buddhists to reject the fixation on the Sanskrit language that characterized the ancient Vedic tradition. This fixation was based on essentialist assumptions about the nature of reality, namely the belief that Sanskrit was the underlying verbal code through which the universe was created. This was mirrored, philosophically, by Dīnāga's rejection of ontologically real universals. He argued instead that meaning occurs not at the level of the word, through a one-to-one correspondence between word and thing, but rather at the level of the sentence, through a process of exclusion (*apoha*).² Rejecting the Vedic cosmogony³ and the conservative attitudes toward language and culture that accompanied it, the Buddha is reported to have told the monks and nuns to travel and to teach the dharma in the language of the place, rather than in a primordial language, be it Sanskrit or Māgadhī, which only the learned would understand.⁴

This flexibility had tremendous consequences. Unlike Hindu Brahmins, Buddhist monks and nuns readily traveled to other cultural regions and translated their scriptures into the languages they encountered there. Buddhists, in India and elsewhere, also readily adapted elements from other religious traditions, converting local deities, such as *nāgas* in India, dragons in China, and so forth, into Buddhist protector deities, or assimilating local deities, such as the Japanese *kami*, with the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna Buddhist pantheon.⁵ These adaptations could, and were, easily justified as exercises in “expedience” or skillful means. In other words, they were strategies, motivated by compassion, designed to further the spread of the “true teaching,” the *saddharma*.

This “expedience” has been a powerful force driving the development of Buddhism from its founding up until the present day. Here I will focus on an example of this sort of development, involving the creative appropriation and transformation of elements of a Hindu tradition by Indian Buddhists. This concerns the figure of “Heruka,” a major tantric Buddhist deity.

The deity Heruka is an important figure in part because he is not limited to a single text or tradition, but is highlighted in many of the *tantras*. He was originally seen as a liminal being closely associated with demonic entities. The seventh-century *Subāhupariṣcchā-tantra* stated that “At night gods, demons (*asura*), goblins (*pīśāca*, *sha za*, 食肉), and *herukas* (*khraḡ ’thung ba*, 食血) wander unresisted in the world, harming beings and wandering on.”⁶ However, in the *Mahāyoga-tantras*, a genre of Indian tantric literature that was composed during the seventh and eighth centuries, Heruka is portrayed as a buddha, albeit one manifesting in a fierce form. He appears as a major figure in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-ḍākinījālasamvara-tantra*, a text that was composed by the late seventh or early eighth century.⁷ He would become the most important male deity in the *Yoginī-tantra* genre, which closely followed precedents set by the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*. These precedents include a focus on the terrifying locale of the charnel ground and on the ferocious deities that dwell there, particularly the *yoginīs* and *ḍākinīs*, who were associated with black magic, sacrificial rituals, and meat eating. He is described as follows in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*:

Greatly Glorious Vajraheruka is very terrifying, blazing with ash; his visage blazes blue for beings, and his mandala of light blazes red. He is as fierce as the end-time of great destruction. Greatly blazing,

his voice blazes, like a charnel ground fire. He has a crown of skulls, fierce like the end-time of great destruction. Possessing the methods such as ferocity, he is as terrifying as a charnel ground, with various faces, and eyebrows arched in anger. With his blazing gaze and dance, he incinerates the triple world, along with Rudra, Mahādeva, Viṣṇu, the Sun, the Moon, Yama, and Brahmā, reducing them to ash.⁸

In this text he is portrayed as a *nirmāṇakāya* emanation of the cosmic Buddha Mahāvajradhara. He assumes the form of a *yogī*, a fierce *yogī* of the charnel ground, smeared with ash and adorned with bones. He did this in order to vanquish evildoers who were taking over the world, at the request of the Hindu deities who were incinerated in the resulting conflagration, but were later restored by him.

This description draws very heavily from the mythology and iconography of the Hindu deity Śiva, also known as Mahādeva and Maheśvara. He is known as the lord of *yogīs*, and was famed for his preference for meditating in charnel grounds and other desolate places, enjoying the company of the ghoulis creatures who haunt such locales. Heruka appears to have originally been one of these creatures, and was later promoted to the role of a major deity by the Buddhists. This promotion was likely a response to the growing popularity of the Śaiva deity Bhairava, the ferocious manifestation of Śiva responsible for the destruction of the cosmos at the end of each eon.

Heruka rises to great prominence in the *Yoginī-tantras* composed during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, such as the *Hevajra* and *Cakrasaṃvara tantras*. These sources acknowledge the connection between Heruka and his Hindu predecessor, Bhairava. For example, the thirty-second chapter of the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* succinctly describes him as follows: “[He has] four faces, and from four to as many as one hundred thousand hands. He has a white body and Bhairava’s form.”⁹ Elsewhere in the text,¹⁰ Heruka is also described as “the terror of Mahābhairava” (*mahābhairavabhīṣaṇaṃ*), a clear acknowledgement of the connection between these deities.

What exactly is their connection? From the academic perspective, Heruka is clearly a Buddhist transformation of the Hindu deity Bhairava. While Buddhists acknowledge this fact, they do so surreptitiously rather than openly. They did so via the creation of an origin myth of the deity Heruka, which was developed no later than the tenth century, and probably quite earlier.¹¹

According to this myth, during the distant past, Bhairava and his consort, Kālarātri, and their various divine and demonic followers began to cause mayhem throughout the world. Bhairava and his consort took control of the axial mountain, Mt. Sumeru, and their followers took control of twenty-four other sites located throughout South Asia and the Himalayas. There they began to indulge in wanton violence and sexuality. Mahāvajradhara, viewing this from the highest heaven, decided to act in order to preserve the cosmic order. He manifested in one of Bhairava's form, as Heruka, and his host of buddhas and bodhisattvas also manifested in Śaiva guise. They descended to earth in this form, and subdued Bhairava, Kālarātri, and all of their followers, seizing control of Mt. Sumeru and the other twenty-four sites. In the process, they established the Heruka mandala on earth.¹²

This myth is clearly apologetic. It acknowledges both the organic connection between the cults of Bhairava and Heruka and the historical precedence of the former. But it subordinates the Śaiva cult, representing its transformation as an example of the enlightened activity of the buddhas, rather than a historical appropriation by Buddhists.

Myths such as this were apparently not sufficient to allay the concerns of Indian Buddhists. Throughout the literature on Heruka we find repeated attempts to highlight his Buddhist credentials and "purify" him of suspicions of non-Buddhist origination. The classic method of asserting the Buddhist credentials of a newly appropriated deity is to correlate that deity to classical Buddhist doctrinal categories. Probably one of the earliest attempts to purify Heruka in this fashion occurs in the *Hevajra-tantra*, as follows:

Cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*) is Heruka's form. He is the Lord Savior of the World. Listen, as I will speak of that form in which he manifested. His eyes are red with compassion, and his body is black due to his loving mind. His four legs refer to the four means of conversion.¹³ His eight faces are the eight liberations,¹⁴ and his sixteen arms the [sixteen forms of] emptiness.¹⁵ The five buddhas are [represented] by his [five] insignia, and he is fervent in the subjugation of the wicked.¹⁶

This passage begins with language evocative of Hindu theology, but then quickly segues into Buddhist terminology. This early correlation of elements of Heruka's form and iconography to classical Buddhist doctrinal categories was dramatically expanded in later works. Perhaps the most notable example was composed by Śraddhākaravarman, a Kashmiri scholar who was active during the late tenth century, and

who collaborated with the great Tibetan translator Rinchen Zang-bo (*rin chen bzang po*, 958–1055). He wrote a curious little text called the *Purification of Heruka* (*he ru ka'i rnam par dag pa*).

This text provides his readers with a symbolic explanation of Heruka, his implements, and subsidiary elements in his mandalic environment. According to this exegesis, all of the non-Buddhist ornaments and so forth, depicted in the origin myth as deriving from the cult of Bhairava, are explained in terms of normative Mahāyāna Buddhist categories. Specifically, the text correlates elements of Heruka's iconography to the grounds (*bhūmi*) and perfections (*pāramitā*) of a bodhisattva's practice. The text begins as follows:

The teaching on the purification of the Reverend Blessed Lord Śrī Heruka has the nature of the purity of true concentration. It is true—that is, unerring—because it is not common to the disciples (*śrāvaka*) and so forth, and because [it teaches that] mind—as [the five gnoses] such as the discerning,¹⁷ in the form of the moon and *vajra*, the five clans or the single host—is the very nature of consciousness. It is the stage of devotional practice. Devotion refers in particular to the reverential practice of meditating on the deity's form as the embodiment, in a single savor (*ro cig, ekarasa*), of all of the aids to awakening (*bodhipakṣikadharmā*), because this is the antidote to misknowledge. The purification of each thing is none other than this.

His four faces have the nature of the four joys,¹⁸ because he is the nature of the joys that arise from contact with the four great elements, and of the fruit, the exalted doors of liberation such as emptiness.¹⁹ The double drum (*damaru*) in the first of his twelve hands is the purification of the perfection of generosity because it continually sounds the teaching of the mandala's wheel of the inseparability of self and other. It is the antidote for the envy that steals the happiness of others. It is the ground of delight,²⁰ because it gives rise to the enjoyment of the great bliss of the inseparability of self and other.

His axe is the purity of the perfection of moral discipline, as it cuts off with moral discipline the disorder of breaking the commitments of eating and so forth, as well as the non-virtuous actions such as killing. It is the stainless ground,²¹ because it turns one away from all sins. His flaying knife is the purification of the perfection of patience, because it completely cuts away impatience and disturbances of consciousness brought about by being struck with a sword, staff, cudgel, and so forth by someone thoroughly agitated. It is the ground of luminosity.²² This means that one rests one's mind without disturbance, and by thus resting one destroys misknowledge. Lacking that, stainless gnosis (*anāvilajñāna*) shines.²³

The text continues in this vein, correlating the implements held in his hands to the perfections and bodhisattva grounds. It also exhaustively correlates his other iconographical features and the other deities of his mandala with Buddhist categories. He then explicitly describes the Hindu deities subordinated by Heruka in terms of the Buddhist mythology of evil. That is, he associates them with forms of Māra, the antagonist of bodhisattvas.²⁴ He describes Bhairava and Kālarātri as follows:

Bhairava is the essence of Māra of the Afflictions. The afflictions are the root of passion (*kāma*), and passion is Maheśvara. He has the pride of emanating and recollecting out of desire and attachment, and he is the very thing that binds one, namely cyclic existence. He is the lord who terrifies (*bhairava*) with his eyebrows, moustache, and so forth, [and produces the terrors] of old age and dilapidation, by means of partiality and impartiality. This is because he is the nature of speech which is sound itself, such as the sound of thunder and so forth. In order to counteract his pride, he is supine, pressed down with [Heruka's] left foot, playfully, without undue fixation or zeal.

Kālarātri is the essence of Māra Lord of Death. [She represents] the destruction and emptiness of the aggregates. Lacking all mental states of wrath, she has the nature of nirvana, while at the same time appearing as the most important element of cyclic existence, the inner and outer essence of which exists in the three times, the past, future, and present. This is because she apprehends the gnosis that manifests as great bliss, which arises from the contact of his right foot with her who is the passionless night, the darkness of unknowing.²⁵

The passage identifying the Hindu deities with Māra, the classical Buddhist evil one, was most likely directed to an Indian Buddhist audience. It demonizes the Hindu deities, but it does so in a subtle fashion. It portrays the deities as almost willing participants in the divine play, or *līlā*, of awakening. Bhairava is pressed by Heruka's foot, but playfully, not zealously, to counteract his pride, just as a parent might correct a child's misbehavior. And Kālarātri is assigned an ambiguous role, inwardly awakened while outwardly participating in the maintenance of cyclic existence. The text hints at the erotic violence that is present in older versions of the myth, which relates that after the Buddhist deities subjugated their male Śaiva counterparts, they enjoyed their wives sexually. But it does so in a much milder fashion, eliminating the more troubling elements of the narrative.

On the other hand, the earlier portion of the text, which correlates Heruka's implements to the bodhisattva perfections and grounds,

was likely directed to concerns shared by both Indian and Tibetan Buddhists. The key term in this portion of the text is *viśuddhi*, “purification.” It is a technical term that is very meaningful in the tantric context. As Francesco Sferra notes, the term *viśuddhi*

deals with the crucial theme of the essential nature of things, not merely as aiming at theoretical definitions, but also as a starting point of the practice that leads to awakening. In this second context we see the term “purification” is used in two different ways. One the one hand it indicates pureness, Buddha’s nature itself, the ever shining and pure condition that is always present in all things. This pureness represents one of the foundations on which the practice and doctrine of the Buddhist Tantras is based and which can be exemplified by the formulas *viśuddhis tathatā* and *tathatātmikā śuddhiḥ*. On the other hand, the term indicates “purification” and therefore a process or a means.²⁶

This text does not overtly discuss any elements of practice, although it almost certainly implies meditative and ritual purification via the identification of oneself with Heruka. It associates with the deity Heruka the innate purity of the buddha-nature, which is simultaneously the ground and goal of the practice. The ambiguity of the term *viśuddhi*, however, also permits another interpretation, which is the purification of Heruka, in the sense of sanitizing the deity of the non-Buddhist elements with which he was associated.

Here it is important to understand the context in which this text was written. Śraddhākaravarma was intimately involved with the incipient stage of the massive project of the translation and transmission of tantric Buddhist texts and their associated practice traditions to Tibet, known as the “latter transmission” (*phyi dar*) of the dharma. This project was motivated in part by controversy concerning the orthopraxy of the antinomian practices described in the *tantras*.²⁷

Many of the Buddhist *tantras*, and particularly the *Mahāyoga-tantras*, appear to advocate morally transgressive practices. The translation of tantric texts and, presumably, the dissemination of tantric practices, were controlled by the imperial Tibetan State during the first transmission of the dharma in the eighth and ninth centuries. During this time, the *Mahāyoga-tantras* were particularly singled out for proscription.²⁸ Later, transgressive practices described in the *tantras*, including violent sacrifice, sorcery, sexual rites, and offerings of impure substances, were strongly criticized by the Tibetan king

Yeshé Ö (*ye shes 'od*, 947–1024),²⁹ who sent Rinchen Zang-bo to India to learn if such teachings were orthodox or not.

In India, Rinchen Zang-bo would learn that the transgressive texts about which King Yeshé Ö was suspicious were popular and considered to be canonical by the Buddhist scholars he met in Kashmir and Magadha. However, he would also learn that Indian Buddhist scholars developed sophisticated hermeneutical systems for the interpretation of these texts, and that these systems did not usually privilege the literal interpretation of these passages. In other words, the *tantras* employed language in a radical fashion in order to accelerate the awakening process in properly prepared students and were not understood as advocating the overturning of the conventional moral order. Indeed, largely for these reasons, the *tantras* were considered to be highly secret. This secrecy was for the protection of the unprepared, and not for the hoarding of wisdom by an initiated elite.³⁰

One might surmise that Śraddhākaravarma wrote this text to assuage doubts that the king's envoy, Rinchen Zang-bo, may have had concerning the deity Heruka and the *Yoginī-tantras* that focus on him. These texts, after all, were notorious for their apparent advocacy of practices that violated mainstream Indian behavioral norms, including those dealing with sexuality and violence. Heruka may have been doubly suspect, on account of his obvious connection with a major non-Buddhist deity. By firmly associating Heruka with pivotal Buddhist concepts, the author may have been attempting to assure the reader of his bona-fide Buddhist credentials.

Śraddhākaravarma's association of all of the major iconographic elements of Heruka with normative Mahāyāna concepts appears to have been an attempt to achieve what Robert Thurman calls the integration of the sutras within the *tantras*.³¹ This is a twofold process. Tantric exegetes not only drew upon classical Mahāyāna sutric categories to legitimize the *tantras* as Buddhist, but these categories were transformed in the process, becoming elements in the edifice of tantric theory and practice. This integration most likely eased Tibetan anxieties concerning the orthodoxy of the tradition.

King Yeshé Ö was concerned about the transgressions that were allegedly being practiced by some tantric practitioners in Tibet. He was particularly concerned about violent sacrifice and the use of impure substances as food and offerings. Buddhists have long opposed the former, and the latter inspired his indignation as a sacrilege.³²

Śraddhākaravarma may have had such doubts in mind when he wrote that Heruka's axe "cuts off with moral discipline the disorder of breaking the commitments of eating and so forth, as well as the non-virtuous actions such as killing." This language completely transforms the violence implicit in the iconography, portraying the deity's militaristic demeanor as symbolic of his ardent resistance to moral turpitude.

Evidently, this question was asked in India, and the Buddhists had an answer. In effect, they bifurcated ferocity (*krodha*) into two distinct forms: one into what might be termed "wrath," a secondary addiction (*upakleśa*) associated with anger; and the other into a form of "fierce compassion." The latter is not related to anger at all, the Buddhists claim, but is an expedience—what we might term "tough love"—in which one manifests the appearance of wrath in order to discipline those who are unresponsive to more peaceful instructional methods. This reasoning was developed centuries earlier by eighth-century scholars such as Śubhākarasiṃha, Yixing (一行), and Buddhaśrījñāna.³³

Buddhists considered Heruka and his entourage as *nirmāṇakāya* embodiments of the buddhas, and their manifestation in such fierce forms was thus considered to be motivated by compassion, an aspect of the enlightened activity of the buddhas. It is thus a dramatization of a uniquely tantric soteriology, which holds that even the most evil of beings can be awakened, and that this awakening is achieved by the very means of their source of bondage. Ron Davidson argues, concerning this myth, that "as soteriology, it implies that no depravity is irredeemable; indeed, it affirms that the defiled condition will be answered by the insistent movement towards awakening, becoming finally the stuff of enlightenment itself."³⁴

There is no doubt whatsoever that Śraddhākaravarma was completely successful in this attempt at "purification," for not only was Heruka "purified" in the eyes of most Tibetans, but he also became a preeminent means of purification. His application of what might be termed creative commentary should not be viewed as simply an apologetic attempt to obscure Heruka's heterodox associations. It was that, but much more; it was also an attempt to reinterpret and reposition Heruka and the *Yoginī-tantras*, to recreate them in and for a new cultural context.

Through the efforts of Indian commentators such as Śraddhākaravarma, and the later generations of Tibetan commentators who followed him, *Yoginī-tantras* such as the *Hevajra* and *Cakrasaṃvara*

became extremely popular in Tibet, and Heruka became one of the most important tantric deities. Tantric practices centering on him became quite widespread. One *sādhana* focusing on Heruka which is very popular among practitioners of the Geluk tradition today is entitled “The Śrī Cakrasaṃvara Yoga of Triple Purification,” *dpal ‘khor lo sdom pa’i dag pa gsum gyi rnal ‘byor*. This triple purification is enacted by identifying one’s body, speech, and mind with the body, speech, and mind of Heruka and his consort Vajravārāhī. This is effected by visualizing oneself in their forms, reciting their mantras, and contemplating the esoteric significance of the syllables *śrī he ru ka*.³⁵

There is no doubt that the deity Heruka, in his journey from India to Tibet, underwent tremendous transformation. From his origins as a blood-drinking ghoul in Śiva’s entourage, he became a *nirmāṇakāya* buddha in Śaiva garb. While his non-Buddhist persona made him suspect in Indian Buddhist circles, he completely shed the suspicion of heretical origination in Tibet, where Śaivism was not a thriving and threatening competing tradition, but was simply a doctrinal category. In this new terrain, he himself became a source for purification, for tantric Buddhists seeking to put into practice the esoteric teaching that he was believed to have propounded eons ago. He is also a living presence, accessible to the faithful via meditation or pilgrimage to his sacred abode at Mount Kailash. His purification, the *Herukaviśuddhi*, was undoubtedly a great success.

NOTES

1. A shorter version of this essay was originally delivered at the International Association of Buddhist Studies conference held in Atlanta, Georgia in 2008. Many thanks to the attendees of this panel who provided me with helpful feedback and suggestions.
2. See Bimal Matilal, *The World and the Word: India’s Contribution to the Study of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 37.
3. Regarding the Buddhist rejection and transformation of the old Vedic cosmogonies see Joanna Jurewicz, “Playing with Fire: The Pratītyasamutpāda from the Perspective of Vedic Thought,” *Journal of the Pāli Text Society*, 26 (2000): 77–103
4. See Richard Gard, *Buddhism* (New York: George Braziller, 1961), 67.
5. Regarding this practice of adaptation and assimilation see Alicia Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation: The Historical Development of the*

Honji-Siujaku Theory (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1969).

6. This translates the Tibetan version of the text *Subāhupariṣcchā*, To. 805. D rgyud 'bum vol. wa, 188b. The Chinese translation adds *nāgas* to the list, and groups together the *pīśāca* and *heruka* as “classes of evil demons who drink blood and eat flesh” (T. 895, 18.720a10: 及食血肉諸惡鬼類)

7. This estimate is based upon Amoghavajra's description of this text in his *Assembly of the Eighteen Adamantine Pinnacle Yoga Sutras* (金剛頂經瑜伽十八會) which was composed in 746 CE. For a study and translation of this important work see Rolf Giebel, “The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei: An Annotated Translation,” *Journal of Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies* 18 (1995): 107–201.

8. My translation from *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-ḍākinijālasamvara-nāma-uttara-tantra*, To. 366, D rgyud 'bum vol. ka, 157b.

9. My translation of *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* 32.12. For an annotated translation, see David Gray, *The Cakrasaṃvara Tantra: A Study and Annotated Translation* (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies/Columbia University Press, 2007), 303–304.

10. That is, *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* 2.14. See Gray, *The Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, 167.

11. There are hints of this myth in the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* itself. The earliest known version of the myth occurs in Indrabhūti's tenth-century commentary on the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra*. For a translation of this, see Gray, *The Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, 44–54.

12. For more information on this myth, see Ronald Davidson, “Reflections on the Maheśvara Subjugation Myth: Indic Materials, Sa-skya-pa Apologetics, and the Birth of Heruka,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 14, no. 2 (1991): 197–235.

13. The “four means of conversion” (*saṃgrahavastuśka*) are (1) generosity (*dāna*), (2) pleasant speech (*priyavādītā*), (3) altruistic conduct (*arthacaryā*), and (4) having the same interest [as others] (*samānārthatā*). Regarding these see Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (orig. pub. 1932; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004), 251–259.

14. The eight liberations (*vimokṣa*) are (1) liberation of the embodied looking at a form, (2) liberation of the disembodied looking at a form, (3) liberation through beautiful form, (4) liberation of infinite space, (5) liberation of infinite consciousness, (6) liberation of nothingness, (7) liberation of the peak of existence, and (8) liberation of cessation. See Tsepak Rigzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1986), 236.

15. These are (1) internal emptiness, (2) external emptiness, (3) emptiness of the internal and external, (4) emptiness of emptiness, (5) emptiness of the

great, (6) emptiness of the ultimate, (7) emptiness of conditioned phenomena, (8) emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, (9) emptiness of the extremes, (10) emptiness of the beginningless and endless, (11) emptiness of the unabandoned, (12) emptiness of nature, (13) emptiness of all phenomena, (14) emptiness of self-characteristics, (15) emptiness of non-apprehension, and (16) emptiness of the reality of nonexistence. See Rigzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 160–161.

16. My translation of *Hevajra-tantra* 2.9.10–12, from the Sanskrit edited in David Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 2.92.

17. The five gnoses (*pañcajñāna*) are (1) mirror-like gnosis (*ādarśajñāna*), (2) gnosis of equality (*samatajñāna*), (3) discerning gnosis (*pratyavekṣanājñāna*), (4) accomplishing gnosis (*kṛtyānuṣṭhānajñāna*), and (5) gnosis of reality (*dharmadhātujñāna*). See Rigzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, 384.

18. The four joys are (1) joy (*ānanda*), (2) supreme joy (*paramānanda*), (3) the joy of cessation (*viramānanda*), and (4) natural joy (*sahajānanda*). Regarding these see Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra*, 34–35.

19. The *trivimokṣamukha* are emptiness (*śūnyatā*), signlessness (*animittatā*), and wishlessness (*apraṇihitatā*).

20. That is, *pramuditābhūmi*, the first bodhisattva ground.

21. That is, *vimalabhūmi*, the second bodhisattva ground.

22. That is, *prabhākarībhūmi*, the third bodhisattva ground.

23. My translation from Śraddhākaravarma's *he ru ka'i rnam par dag pa*, To. 1481, D rgyud 'grel vol. zha, 125a, b.

24. Māra, literally "Death," is traditionally considered to have four forms: (1) Māra of the Components (of sentient existence), *skandhamāra*; (2) Māra of the Afflictions, *kleśamāra*; (3) Māra the Lord of Death, *mṛtyupatimāra*; and (4) Māra the Son of God, *devaputramāra*. Concerning the mythology surrounding the Māras see Trevor Ling, *Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil* (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1962).

25. My translation of Śraddhākaravarma, *he ru ka'i rnam par dag pa*, 126b–127a.

26. Francesco Sferra, "The Concept of Purification in Some Texts of Late Indian Buddhism," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 27, nos. 1–2 (1999): 85–86.

27. For an insightful discussion of this period and the controversies triggered by antinomian tantric texts and practices see Jacob P. Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 95–109.

28. See Samten Karmay, "The Ordinance of Lha Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od," in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson: Proceedings of the International Seminar of Tibetan Studies, Oxford 1979*, ed. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1980), 151.

29. See Karmay, "The Ordinance of Lha Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od," 154.

30. Regarding the interpretation of the tantras and their use of language, see the essays in Donald Lopez, *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988). See also Ronald Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 236–292; and Christian Wedemeyer, "Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies: Connotative Semiotics in Mahāyoga Tantra Ritual and Scripture," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75, no. 2 (2007): 383–417.

31. See Robert Thurman, "Tsoñ-kha-pa's Integration of Sūtra and Tantra," in *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization: Proceedings of the 1982 Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies held at Columbia University*, ed. Barbara Nimri Aziz and Matthew Kapstein (New Delhi: Manohar 1985), 382.

32. See David Ruegg, "Problems in the Transmission of Vajrayāna Buddhism in the Western Himalaya about the Year 1000," in *Studies of Mysticism in Honor of the 1150th Anniversary of Kobo Daishi's Nirvāṇam*, *Acta Indologica* vol. 4 (Narita: Naritasan Shinshōji, 1984), 377–378.

33. This topic is explored in much greater depth in my article "Compassionate Violence? On the Ethical Implications of Tantric Buddhist Ritual," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 14 (2007): 239–271.

34. Davidson, "Reflections on the Maheśvara Subjugation Myth," 227.

35. This *sādhana* is entitled *dpal 'khor lo sdom pa'i dag pa gsum gyi rnal 'byor*. It is contained in a popular book of *sādhana*s entitled *bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang yi dam khag gi bdag bskyed sogs zhal 'don gces btus* (Dharamsala: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1994).



A Brief Exploration of Late Indian Buddhist Exegeses of the “Mantrayāna” and “Mantranaya”

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This is a brief philological analysis that seeks to shed some light on the terms “Mantrayāna” and “Mantranaya,” based on selected exegetical works related to several Buddhist *tantras* of the Unexcelled Yoga class. It also takes into account certain Buddhist tantric interpretations of the word “mantra” in later scholastic sources that may help us to understand not only the ways in which different Buddhist tantric traditions in India construed the term “mantra,” and thereby the concepts of Mantrayāna and Mantranaya, but also the later Mantrayāna’s self-representation. As attested in many tantric sources, the terms Mantrayāna, Mantranaya, Mantranīta, and Mantramārga are employed interchangeably. The word “mantra” that delineates their meanings is a semantic signifier both of a particular method of actualizing awakening and of ultimate reality itself. Thus, it is both signifier and signified. Defined as a “protection of the mind” in most Buddhist tantric sources, it became a designation for the different tantric strategies for achieving a nonconceptual state of mind as well as for the representation and communication of the nonconceptual, inconceivable, and nondual reality.

In the view of the later Indian commentators on Buddhist *tantras*, Mantrayāna is held as a special type of Mahāyāna. In the *Guṇavati*, a commentary on the *Mahāmāyā-tantra*, Ratnākāraśānti (ca. 970–1045) resorts to the exposition in the *Śrīvajraśīkhara-tantra* to define Mantrayāna as a profound (*gambhīra*) Mahāyāna, which differs from the System of Perfections (*pāramitā-naya*) in its method and in the length of time it takes the adept to attain awakening (*bodhi*). The method (*upāya*), or the path (*mārga*), of bodhisattvas, which must be cultivated for three immeasurable eons, is contrasted here to that of Mantrayāna, which Ratnākāraśānti characterizes as a highly eminent

(*atimahat*) path to awakening (*bodhimārga*),¹ which, having an abridged form (*saṃkṣepa-rūpa*) and the aspects of the mandala disk with its retinue and so on, facilitates a faster (*kṣipratara*) and easier (*sukhatara*) accomplishment of awakening.²

The *Guhyasamājapradīpodyotanavyākhyā* provides us with a similar and clearly stated definition of the term “Mantranaya” (“Mantra System”) in this way: “That which is secretly spoken (*mantryate*) or communicated by spiritual mentors is mantra. A sevenfold system (*naya*) is that which leads to (*nayati*), or makes one obtain (*prāpayati*), the practice whose content is that [mantra].” That which constitutes the sevenfold Mantra System is explained thus: “The Mantra System is said to be a sevenfold exposition (*ākhyāna*): the mandala, community, fire-pit, oblation, *melāpaka*, process (*krama*), and reality (*tattva*).”³ Thus, the Mantra System is here also understood as a component of the Mantra-Mahāyāna that provides Mahāyāna with a new multiplex of ritual and meditational practices as a faster path to liberation.

This commentary on the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* further informs us of a *modus operandi* that Indian Buddhist exegetes employed in their theories of mantra (*mantra-vāda*). It is said to comprise the four types of discussion of mantra, namely, the designation (*saṃjñā*) of a mantra, the meaning (*artha*) of a mantra, the recitation (*vidarbhaṇa*) of a mantra, and the *vajra* speech that is free from sounds.⁴ This fourfold sequence reflects the structure of many Unexcelled Yoga *tantras*, which contain four main divisions of exposition: (1) the introduction of the subject matter and the speaker of the *tantra*, both of which are identified as mantra; (2) the provisional and definitive meanings of the *tantra*, which, as Buddha’s speech, is identified as mantra; (3) the description of mantras and mantra recitation in the stages of initiation and completion; and (4) the final accomplishment of the *tantra*, buddhahood characterized by *vajra* speech, the primordially non-arisen A.

The Kālacakra master Vibhūticandra (twelfth to thirteenth centuries)⁵ holds a view similar to that of Ratnākāraśānti. In his *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha*, a commentary on Raviśrījñāna’s *Amṛtakaṇikākhya-ṭippanī*, he asserts that bodhisattvas who follow the practices of mantra and bliss (*mantra-sukha-caryā*) have a swift accomplishment (*kṣipra-siddhi*) due to recitation of mantras and so on.⁶ This mantra practice (*mantra-caryā*) is defined in the aforementioned *Guhyasamājapradīpodyotanākhyā* as a *tathāgatas’* practice (*tathāgata-caryā*), as a practice of the precious persons (*ratna-pudgala*) whose

reality (*tattva*) spiritual mentors (*guru*) explain as mantra, and who having accomplished the stage of completion have mantra practice as their conduct (*caraṇa*) with a non-concentrated *samādhi* (*asamāhita-yoga*). However, this mantra practice is not separate from the bodhisattva practice, which *mantrins*, according to their abilities, undertake by any means that can accomplish the aim of sentient beings, whether or not those means are contrary to worldly conventions.⁷ Thus, for the above-cited authors, although the Mantrayāna may seem to diverge from the earlier Mahāyāna in terms of its practices, which at times go against conventions, it should not be examined in isolation from Mahāyāna. It is its larger Mahāyāna context that gives it the unmissed Buddhist identity.

Kumāracandra, in his *Ratnāvalīpañjikā* commentary on the *Kṛṣṇayāmāri-tantra*,⁸ glosses “Vajrayāna” as “Mantra-Mahāyāna.” In explaining the process of initiation into the Kṛṣṇayāmāri Mandala, he cites the following words by which the *vajra* master selects his main disciple at the time of initiation: “Come, boy! I shall accurately teach you Mahāyāna that has a method (*vidhi*), which is the system of mantra practice (*mantra-caryā-naya*), [for] you are a suitable vessel for the sublime system (*mahā-naya*).”¹⁰ Thus, in this tantric tradition also, the term Mantra-Mahāyāna designates a type of Mahāyāna, which is qualified as “a sublime system” on the basis of its having mantra practice as its method.

In his *Amṛtakaṇikākhyā-ṭippaṇī*, a commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, Raviśrījñāna (ca. twelfth century)¹¹ defines sublime mantra (*mahā-mantra*) as gnosis of sublime bliss (*mahāsukha-jñāna*), and the Mahāyāna System (*mahāyāna-naya*) as a means by which that sublime mantra is obtained (*nīyate*) or achieved (*prāpyate*).¹² Likewise, explaining the meaning of Mañjuśrī’s epithet as one who has the “sublime system” (*mahānaya*), Raviśrījñāna interprets the phrase as “the one for whom the appearances of the signs of smoke and the like are without appearances and without an object.”¹³ In his commentary on the *Amṛtakaṇikākhyā-ṭippaṇī*, Vibhūticandra confirms that the term *naya* (“system”) should be understood as a path of seeing the signs (smoke and so on).¹⁴ For these two masters of the Kālacakra tradition, what characterizes the Mantra-Mahānaya is the practice of the six-phased yoga (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*) that brings about the appearance of the ten signs, beginning with smoke and ending with *bindu*, to the yogi’s mental perception. These are said to be appearances of the yogi’s

own mind, and hence neither the object of his meditation nor external appearances.

Raviśrījñāna also employs the term Mahāmantra-naya, which he describes as three imperishable (*akṣara*) and self-aware (*svaśamvedya*) families (*kula*), which are of the nature of joy (*ānanda*), supreme joy (*paramānanda*), and special joy (*viramānanda*) of the body, speech, and mind, whose imperishability is due to *prāṇāyāma*. Here, the Mantranaya is a specific yogic method of manipulating vital energies, which induces the experiences of certain types of bliss that facilitate the actualization of the Buddha's body, speech, and mind. But this Mahāmantra-naya is also a sublime mantra family (*kula*) that consists of the *tathāgatas*, such as Vajrasattva and others. A reason for it to be considered a family is its nonduality, and it is sublime (*mahā*) due to being a self-aware (*svaśamvedya*) awakening mind (*bodhicitta*), which, as a pervader (*vyāpaka*), is the same essence (*samarasa*) of all phenomena. The word "mantra" in this context is defined in a similar way as in other tantric exegetical treatises: "Bliss (*sukha*) is called mantra due to being a protection of the mind (*manastrāṇa-bhūta*)."¹⁵ In Raviśrījñāna's view, when it is said that the Buddha arose from this system of sublime mantra, it means that he arose from sublime bliss (*mahāsukha*) and is therefore of the nature of sublime bliss. Vibhūticandra further explains Raviśrījñāna's above-mentioned exposition, stating that bliss is a protection of the mind because it is a gate (*dvārā*) to the practice (*caryā*) of imperishable bliss (*akṣarasukha*), for it is by means of bliss that the *yogī* attains awakening in accordance with yogic practices. He also emphasizes that bliss is mantra, as it is free from conceptualization (*nirvikalpa*).¹⁶

Raviśrījñāna distinguishes the Mantra System (*mantranīti*) from the System of Perfections (*pāramitānaya*) in the following manner. "In the Mantra System, the nonduality of emptiness and compassion, of wisdom and method, is of the nature of sublime bliss (*mahāsukha*) that is arisen from *samādhi*. However, in the System of Perfections (*pāramitānaya*), the mind (*citta*) that consists of Svābhāvikakāya, which is of the nature of the identitylessness of all phenomena (*sarvadharmānairātmya-svarūpa*), is free from mental wavering such as I and mine, the object and subject of apprehension, and so on." In the Vehicle of Perfections (*pāramitāyāna*) that consists of the Mantra-Mahāyāna (*mantramahāyānātmaka*), the gnosis of reality (*tattva-jñāna*) is of the nature of non-origination (*anutpāda-rūpa*), which has the gnosis of

nonduality as its result.¹⁷ Thus, following the *Vimalaprabhā*'s expositions on the Vajrayāna, Raviśrījñāna wants us to understand the Mantra-Mahāyāna as an integration of the Mantranaya and the Pāramitānaya in terms of the indivisibility of the bliss and emptiness, generated by means of this integration. Just as these two, bliss and emptiness, should not be understood as entirely identical, although pervading each other, so also the Mantranaya and the Pāramitānaya, although being mutually interactive, bear their own distinct features.

Elaborating on the aforementioned exposition of the Mantranaya and Pāramitānaya by Raviśrījñāna, Vibhūticandra seems to go further, affirming that the reality of non-origination (*anutpāda-tattva*) is found in both vehicles, in the Pāramitāyāna and in the Mantrayāna, due to their non-differentiation. For him, these two vehicles, or systems, are not merely ancillary to each other. To illustrate his point, he compares the following statement from the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* and the *Kālacakra-tantra*, which we also encounter in Nāropā's *Sekoddeśatikā*:¹⁸ "It is said in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, 'He who [courses] in the perfection of wisdom attains *samādhi* on space,' and so on. Here also [in the *Kālacakra-tantra*, chap. 5, v. 115, it is said]: 'with minds absorbed in space,' and so on."¹⁹ Vibhūticandra also justifies his view of the nondifferentiation of the Pāramitāyāna and the Mantrayāna in terms of their non-origination by pointing out that if a cause, or the Pāramitāyāna, is without origination, then its result, or Mantrayāna, must also be without origination, because a cause is of the same kind as its result, as, for instance, a rice sprout does not come from a *kodrava* seed.²⁰ Raviśrījñāna specifies the result of the System of Perfections (*pāramitānaya*) as a Jina, the teacher (*śāstr*), and he characterizes the Mantra System (Mantranaya) as a reality of the stationary and movable worlds (*sthiracalajagat-tattva*). This means that the Buddha, or the mind that has realized the emptiness of all phenomena as taught in the System of Perfections, and its object, or the entire world consisting of the gnosis of bliss as taught in the Mantra System, become unified. This seems to be a different way in which Raviśrījñāna seeks to point out the integrative nature of the Mantra-Mahāyāna than the one previously mentioned. According to him, both systems have the Vajra Lady of Bliss (*sukha-vajra-praṇayinī*), who is the self-aware, Madhamayaka's thought (*madhayamaka-dhī*), which is ultimately neither expounded (*kathyate*) nor invented (*kriyate*) by a spiritual mentor, and which is a self-arisen (*svayambhū*) and inconceivable (*acintya*) gnosis.²¹

Raviśrījñāna further alludes to the integrative character of the Mantra-Mahāyāna by distinguishing Mahāyāna from Vajrayāna in terms of their respective domains of inquiry and realizations. He does so by asserting the following: “Mahāyāna pertains to conventional (*saṃvṛti*) reality, while Vajrayāna refers to the ultimate reality (*paramārtha*).”²² Vibhūticandra further explains this statement, commenting that Vajrayāna practice (*caryā*) utilizes the ultimate reality, which is luminosity (*prabhāsvara*), and the Mahāyāna practice utilizes conventional reality, which is generosity (*dāna*) and so on. He asserts these two types of practices as compatible.²³ That is, the synthesis of the two as the Mantra-Mahāyāna unites the domains of conventional and ultimate realities in its theory and practice. The Mantra-Mahāyāna is presented here as a synthesis of both the path and the goal, of both the cause and the result, and of both the emptiness of all phenomena and sublime bliss. These two masters’ presentation of the Mantra-Mahāyāna synthesis seems to go even further in terms of asserting the utter indispensability of the integration of the Mantra System and the System of Perfection for soteriological purposes. Considering the fact that Raviśrījñāna and Vibhūticandra were masters of the *Kālacakra-tantra* tradition, which explicitly expresses this synthesis as its strategy,²⁴ it is not surprising that their interpretations of the Mantra-Mahāyāna is in alignment with that of the *Kālacakra* tantric system, where the word “vehicle” (*yāna*), as appearing in the compound Vajra Vehicle (*vajrayāna*), is explained as a unification of the cause, or the *Pāramitānaya*, and its result, or the *Mantranaya*.²⁵

In the *Sekoddeśaṭīkā*, Nāropā’s exposition on the meaning of the word “mantra,” which is also based on the *Kālacakra* tantric view, points not to the emptiness aspect of the awakened mind, but to the supreme, imperishable gnosis (*paramākṣara-jñāna*) of mantra due to being a protection of the mind. In support of this interpretation, he cites the following lines from the root *tantra* of the *Laghukālacakra-tantra*, which reads:

Since the meaning of [the word] mantra is a protection of the elements of the body, speech, and mind, therefore the imperishable gnosis of emptiness is [implied] by the word *mantra*.

A mantra that consists of merit and knowledge is of the nature of emptiness and compassion.²⁶

The view of mantra as bliss or as the gnosis of sublime bliss is by no means unique to the *Kālacakra-tantra* tradition. Ratnākāraśānti, in

his *Hevajrapañjikāmuktāvalī*, a commentary on the *Hevajra-tantra*, gives a somewhat different interpretation of the word “mantra,” stating: “It is mantra due to protecting the world (*jagat-trāṇa*) and due to reflecting on the meaning of reality (*tattvārtha-manana*).” But, when defining “mantra” as “*bodhicitta* that is arisen from *samādhi*,”²⁷ he demonstrates his agreement with other exegetes who describe mantra as a mind of awakening (*bodhicitta*), which consists of sublime bliss.²⁸ Likewise, in the *Yogaratanmālā*, a commentary on the *Hevajra-tantra* attributed to Kaṇha, mantra is defined as the ultimate (*pāramārthika*) *bodhicitta*, and as reality (*tattva*), which is the gnosis of the unexcelled sublime bliss (*anuttaramahāsukha-jñāna*), free of conceptual elaborations (*niśprapañca*).²⁹

In accordance with the explicit dichotomization of mundane and supramundane rites found in the later Buddhist *tantras* and their commentaries,³⁰ Raviśrījñāna, in his *Amṛtakaṇikākhyā-ṭippanī*, classifies mantras into two main categories: mundane (*laukika*) and supramundane (*lokottara*). Mundane mantras are characterized by letters (*varṇa*), or by the synopsis of a series of letters into a single syllable (*pratyāhāra*), which bring about pacification, prosperity, and other mundane results achieved in mundane rituals.³¹ In contrast to mundane mantras, a supramundane mantra consists of *nāda* (an unproduced sound) representing compassion, and of *bindu*, signifying emptiness due to the yoga of the supreme, imperishable (*paramākṣara*). This supramundane mantra is unified and has a luminous nature (*prabhāsvarātma*). It is the goal that is to be accomplished (*sādhyatva*), and it is the meaning (*artha*) of all mantras and of the *mahāmudrā*, the highest achievement. Its progenitor (*janaka*) is the Lord (*bhagavān*) himself. Due to being of the nature of ultimate reality (*paramārtha*), that Lord is without syllables (*anākṣara*).³² It is safe to assume that the obvious parallel between Raviśrījñāna’s presentation of the supramundane mantra as unified compassion and emptiness and his previously given explanation of the Mantra-Mahāyāna is not fortuitous. This parallel is based on the view of the supramundane mantra as the ultimate source of the Mantra-Mahāyāna.

Supramundane mantra, which is characterized as luminosity, or clear light (*prabhāsvara*), is said to be the source of all utterances. In that respect, it is nondual with mundane mantras.³³ If it is not mantra itself that impedes a *samādhi* on reality, but its verbal and mental recitation, then Mantra-Mahāyāna is conceived as a path characterized by

nonduality in terms of the indivisibility of the mantras uttered by *yogīs* from their source, supramundane mantra. Nāropā, in his *Sekoddeśatikā*, alludes to supramundane mantra when speaking of *anāhata* as mantra consisting of the utterances of all sentient beings, as *saṃbhogakāya*, a speech *vajra* characterized by delight, as it delights all sentient beings with the utterances of all sentient beings.³⁴

In Raviśrījñāna's view, due to being innate gnosis (*sahajajñānatva*), the Buddha himself is a source (*yonī*) of all mantras. It is in light of this perspective that Raviśrījñāna wants us to understand the following instruction cited from the first chapter of the *Pañcakrama* attributed to the *tāntrika* Nāgārjuna, in which the process (*krama*) of *vajra* recitation is described in accordance with the *Yoga-tantras*: "The *yogī* should abandon an external recitation [of mantras], which is an impediment to meditation. Why would the Lord Vajrī, who [himself] is the meaning of mantras and who is of the nature of *vajra*, recite [mantras]?"³⁵

Kṛṣṇācārya (Kāṇha), in his *Vasantatilakā*, a work based on the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra*, also expresses his perspective on the inappropriateness of mantra recitation at the advanced stage of yogic tantric practice. Centuries later, Vanaratna (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries), in his commentary on the *Vasantatilakā*, the *Rahasyadīpikākhyā*, poses the question: "Why should the king of *yogīs* who has ascended the stage of completion practice mandala, *homa*, meditation, and recitation [of mantras]?" In his response to this question, he states that all external practices, which constitute the stage of generation (*utpattikrama*), are artificial (*kṛtrima*) because they are conceptualized (*kalpita*), accomplished through external means, and characterized by dissolution, just like a crafted object such as a pot is subject to destruction.³⁶ His explanation for why mundane mantras can be efficacious in mundane rites despite their artificiality is based on his view of the importance of the realization of emptiness. His assertion is that mantras that arise from the letter A facilitate the mundane rites of pacification and the like in accordance with their nature; otherwise, they do not have the completely known reality (*parijñāta-tattva*). To explain what Kṛṣṇācārya means by this somewhat cryptic statement, Vanaratna cites the following verses:

The nature of the letters of mantra is a single, supreme, and imperishable [syllable A]. Only due to a complete knowledge of that [syllable A] can mantras accomplish the rites.

Hence, we do not desire mantras that are of the nature of letters,

since they are not potent causes of curving even a blade of grass.³⁷

In Kṛṣṇācārya and Vanaratna's views, the syllable A, which is the leader (*nāyaka*) of all syllables and the chief of mantras, is non-arisen by nature and is a pointer to the primordially non-arisen reality (*ādyanutpanna-tattva*), the nature of all non-arisen phenomena. From that syllable A, all fields of knowledge (*vidyāsthāna*) are extracted (*uddhṛta*), namely, the five fields of knowledge that belong to the Buddhist *Nikāyas* and the fourteen fields of knowledge belonging to the *Nikāyas* of non-Buddhist traditions, such as the Vedas and their Aṅgas, Mīmāṃsa, Nyāya, Purāṇas, and Dharmaśāstras. Without that lord of mantras none of these could be uttered. The syllables of mantras, *tantras*, and exoteric *śāstras* obtain their instrumentality (*kāraṇatva*) only due to that letter A. In the *Yoginī* and other *tantras*, this should be understood as a nonconceptual extraction (*uddhāra*) of mantra.³⁸ All sentient beings are dependent on this mantra (the syllable A) by their nature. The flow of the speech of all sentient beings, be it manifest or unmanifest, is of the very nature of mantra (the syllable A), because speech arises from it and because it is present in every act of speech. Only the mantras that are employed in one's rite with this view (*dṛṣṭi*) become productive (*saphala*).³⁹ Here again, we see the emphasis on the importance of the integrated approach of the Mantra-Mahāyāna. Ritual practices and mantra recitations devoid of the view of emptiness, stipulated by the system of perfections, are declared barren.

A discussion of mantras' ultimately non-arisen nature can be seen already in one of the earliest Buddhist *tantras*, the *Vairocanaḥbhisambodhi-tantra*, which employs the Madhyamaka's analytical method to demonstrate the emptiness of mantras. It is stated there that the characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of mantras is neither created, made effective, nor approved by any buddha. The reality (*dharmatā*) of phenomena, which remains during the arising of the *tathāgatas* and during the non-arising of the *tathāgatas*, is the mantra-reality (*mantra-dharmatā*) of mantras. The power of a mantra does not issue from the mantra, it does not enter sentient beings, it does not arise from substances, nor is it perceived by its doer. It is successful because of the inconceivable (*acintya*) dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). The *tantra* advises the *yogī* to always follow the eternal (*satata*) Mantra System (Mantranaya), while understanding that all phenomena are inconceivable by nature.⁴⁰

Furthermore, Ratnākāraśānti also seems to hold the view that recitation of mantras without the knowledge of their meaning is ineffective.

In commenting on the following verse of the *Mahāmāyā-tantra*, which reads: “A yoga consisting of mantras, body, and dharma is said to be threefold. Due to the threefold knowledge, one is not smeared by the faults of cyclic existence,” he explains that the threefold yoga, or *samādhi*, which has reality (*tattva*) as its object, consists of the mantra, the deity’s form that arises from mantras, and dharma, by means of which the *yogī* becomes similar (*sadṛśa*) to Vajrasattva Śrīheruka. Here, he describes mantra as an utterance (*vacana*) that illuminates reality (*tattvodyotaka*), and dharma as knowledge (*jñāna*) of the meaning of mantras (*mantrārtha*). In his view, the *yogī*’s purification from sins (*pāpa*), the faults of cyclic existence (*bhava-doṣa*), is unattainable by the recitation of mantras alone because all three ingredients of this yoga are necessary for purification.⁴¹ Thus, according to Ratnākāraśānti, although recitation of mantras is an indispensable part of the path of purification, it alone is soteriologically ineffective without the knowledge of the mantras’ higher, connotative meanings.

Owing to the fact that in Buddhist *tantras*, mantra and *prāṇa* are seen as inextricably connected, the previously mentioned commentators tend to define *prāṇa* as mantra. For instance, Vanaratna refers to the wind of *prāṇa* as mantra on the basis that *prāṇa* that rises from the region of the navel is a cause of all mantras. Its circulation he calls “recitation” (*jāpa*). Those within the three realms who resort to *prāṇāyāma* are referred to as the ones who recite the king of mantras.⁴² Thus, *prāṇāyāma* becomes a higher practice of mantric recitation, which is soteriologically more effective than a verbal or mental recitation of mantras.

Commenting on the practice of the retention (*dhāraṇā*) phase of the six-phased yoga of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (chap. 18, v. 148), Nāropā points to the *prāṇa* that is retained in the center of the heart *cakra* as one’s own mantra (*svamantra*) due to being a protection of the mind.⁴³ Similarly, in the *Vimalaprabhā*, in Vajrapāṇi’s exposition of the *Kālacakra-tantra*’s six-phased yoga, and in Raviśrījñāna’s commentary on the *Ṣaḍaṅgayoga* of Anuparamarakṣita, mantra recitation (*mantra-jāpa*) is explained as the control of vital energies (*prāṇa-saṃyama*).⁴⁴ In the same text, Raviśrījñāna also gives other meanings to the word “mantra,” such as an uttering of syllables and as the retention (*dhāraṇā*) phase of the six-phased yoga, or the retention of *prāṇa*, to which he also refers as a “vajra recitation” and as a “recitation of the neuter” (*napuṃsaka-jāpa*), meaning a reflection on the *prāṇa* present

in the *avadhūti* channel. In that regard, he cautions that prior to engaging into this higher form of mantra recitation, one must know the *prāṇāyāma*.⁴⁵

According to the *Vimalaprabhā*, it is due to the control of vital energies that deities grant boons and not due to unrestrained *prāṇa* and verbal speech. This, we are told, is the definitive meaning of the phrase “mantra recitation” (*jāpa*). But when it is said that mantra recitation with a rosary and the like is to be performed for the sake of ordinary *siddhis*, we should understand this in terms of a provisional meaning.⁴⁶

In view of the preceding interpretations of mundane and supramundane mantras and their validity, one could say that the term “Mantrayāna” is understood as referring to a path (*mārga*) that explains and utilizes mantras in two ways. The first is as an external method characterized by the verbal and mental recitation of mantric expressions, which can be described as a specific type of performative utterance whose validity depends on the prescribed procedures and circumstances. Although this type of utterance is a linguistic act characterized by intentionality and conceptualization, it ignores conventional linguistic forms. As such it produces a new kind of experience. However, any fascination with mantric utterances is to be resisted as a distraction from the ultimate, supramundane mantra. The fact that our commentators felt an obligation to discourage a preoccupation with mantric utterances without the proper epistemic framework suggests that they were responding to a widespread tendency they witnessed.

The second manner in which mantras are utilized is constituted by internal yogic practices that give rise to the sound of innate bliss. Devoid of conceptualization, these practices lead the *yogī* to the realization of the ultimate mantra. Similarly to mundane mantras, the validity of the supramundane mantra is contingent on technicity, in this case, on the *prāṇāyāma* and other five phases of the six-phased yoga. Being the *yogī*’s innate identity, or the gnosis of imperishable bliss, it is nonlinguistic by nature, devoid of intentionality, and non-relational. Nevertheless, one can say that the self-awareness of the ultimate mantra is the result of prescribed performative procedures, the *prāṇāyāma* and so on. Likewise, although non-relational, the ultimate mantra expresses itself in dialogical relationship, as attested by Buddhist *tantras*, which disclose their interlocutor, teacher, and audience. Although devoid of intentionality, it seeks a profound responsive understanding and reverential reception upon being heard.

Articulating criteria of the depth of responsive understanding became a prominent task of exegetes of mantra. As we have seen, in their endeavor to achieve this, our commentators framed the ultimately inconceivable, supramundane mantra of voiceless words into the microworld of their ready-made exegetical structures and formulations, characteristic of Indic śāstric systems. They are interpreters of what was heard and what was implied in a given context that limited the possibilities of the infinitude of embedded perspectives and meanings of the ultimate mantra. In light of this, one could say that their interpretations of the Mantra-Mahāyāna, as one of the innumerable expressions of supramundane mantra, are usually subject to the same contextual limitations.

Similarly to the relationship between the system of perfections and the system of mantras, the relationship between mundane and supramundane mantras is by no means that of a static opposition between two different kinds; theirs is a dynamic relationship of two interactive aspects of the same phenomenon. In that relationship, mundane mantras are the pervaded and the ultimate mantra is their pervader, or the ultimate mantra is enacted in its diverse provisional forms through mundane mantras and through all other utterances by means of which the different fields of knowledge have been transmitted and the nature of human experiences shaped. Hence, even the words of our exegetes are pervaded by the supramundane mantra. Thus, supramundane mantra is subject to both repetition and re-signification. In that respect, Mantrayāna with all of its various tantric traditions can be said to be only one of its multifarious re-significations. As such, it itself is subject to re-signification in the ongoing interplay of the conceptions, perceptions, and linguistic forms on the part of its exponents. In that respect, any attempt to draw a conclusive interpretation of the Mantrayāna appears misguided.

NOTES

1. Cf. Benoytosh Bhattacharya, ed., *Sādhana-mālā*, vol. 1 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1968), 225, where Vajrayāna is defined as a path of the unexcelled and perfect awakening (*anuttarasamyaksambodhi-mārga*). In Samdhong Rinpoche and Vajravallabh Dwivedi, eds., *Kṛṣṇayamāritantram with Ratnāvalī Pañjikā of Kumāracandra*, Rare Buddhist Texts Series, vol. 9 (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1992), 235, Vajrayāna is glossed in a similar way as the unexcelled path of awakening (*anuttaraṃ bodhimārgam*).

2. Samdhong Rinpoche and Vajravallabh Dwivedi, eds., *Mahāmāyātantram with Guṇavatī by Ratnākāraśānti*, Rare Buddhist Texts Series, vol. 10 (Sarnath, Varanasi, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1992), 2–3. The *Mahāmāyā-tantra* belongs to the class of *Yoginī-tantras*.

3. The *Guhyasamājapradīpodyotanavyākhyā*, cited in Vajravallabh Dwivedi and Thinlay Ram Shashni, eds., *Bauddhatantrakōśa*, part 1, Rare Buddhist Text Series, vol. 5 (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1990), 90: *mantryate gurubhir upāṃśu kathyate yaḥ sa mantrah; tadviṣayacaryāṃ tām nayati prāpyatīti nayah saptavidhaḥ*.

*maṇḍalaṃ gaṇakuṇḍaṃ ca balir melāpakakramaḥ |
tattvaṃ saptavidhākhyānaṃ sa mantranaya ucyate ||*

4. The *Guhyasamājapradīpodyotanākhyā*, cited in Dwivedi and Shashni, eds., *Bauddhatantrakōśa*, p. 90.

5. For information on the life of Vibhūticandra, see Cyrus Stearns, “The Life and Tibetan Legacy of the Indian Mahāpaṇḍita Vibhūticandra,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 19, no. 1 (1996): 127–171.

6. See *Amṛtakaṇīkodyotanibandha* in Banarsi Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti with Amṛtakaṇīkā-ṭippaṇī* by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and *Amṛtakaṇīkodyotanibandha of Vibhūticandra*, Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica, vol. 30 (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1994), 209.

7. The *Guhyasamājapradīpodyotanākhyā*, cited in Dwivedi and Shashni, eds., *Bauddhatantrakōśa*, 41.

8. The *Kṛṣṇayamāri-tantra* is classified as a method (*upāya*), or father, *tantra* of the Unexcelled Yoga *tantra* category, belonging to the Yamantaka cycle.

9. Samdhong Rinpoche and Dwivedi, eds., *Kṛṣṇayamāritantram*, 123.

10. *Ibid.*, 94:

*ehi vatsa mahāyānaṃ mantracaryānayaṃ vidhim |
deśayisyāmi te samyag bhājanas tvaṃ mahānaye ||*

The Tibetan translation reads somewhat differently:

Come, boy! I shall authentically teach you
the method of mantra practices in the Mahāyāna
[for] you are suitable vessel for the Mahāyāna.

*bu tshur theg pa chen po la |
gsang sngas thsul gyi cho ga ni |
khyod la yang dag bstan par bya |
khyod nitheg chen snod yin no ||*

11. Raviśrījñāna is known as a great *ācārya* in the Kālacakra tantric tradition of Vikramaśīla. In his benedictory verses of the *Amṛtakaṇīkāṭippaṇī*, he affiliates

himself to the lineage of the *siddha* Śabarapāda, also known as Śabarīpa (ca. seventh century), to whose lineage also belonged Luipā, Dārikapā, Sahajayoginī Cintā, and Ḍombī Herukapāda. According to Śubhākāragupta, Raviśrījñāna was his contemporary and the contemporary of Śākyaśrībhadrā (1127–1224) and Dharmākāraśānti, all of whom were followers of Abhayākāra Gupta (1084–1103). According to Vibhūticandra (Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti with Amṛtakaṇikā-ṭippaṇī* by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha of Vibhūticandra*, 113), Raviśrījñāna was a disciple of Dharmākāraśānti. In addition to his commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, Raviśrījñāna also wrote two commentaries on the six-phased yoga as taught in the *Kālacakra-tantra*: the *Ṣaḍaṅgayogaṭīkā* and the *Guṇapūrṇināma-ṣaḍaṅgayogaṭippaṇī*.

12. *Amṛtakaṇikākyā-ṭippaṇī* (Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti with Amṛtakaṇikā-ṭippaṇī* by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha of Vibhūticandra*, 27).

13. *Amṛtakaṇikākyā-ṭippaṇī* (ibid., 39): *mahānayo nirālambanirābhāsadhūmādip ratibhāso asya sa tathā*.

14. *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha* (ibid., 147): *nayo 'dhyakṣadhūmamādimārgaḥ*. In Jagannāth Upadhyāya, ed., *Khasamatantraṭīkā*, *Samkāya Pātrika Series*, vol. 1 (Varanasi: Sampūrṇāndanda Sanskrit University, 1983), 235, the term *naya* is interpreted in this way: A system (*naya*) is that by means of which something is explained (*vyākhyāte*) or ascertained (*nīyate*). A system is that by which the Lord explains a *sūtrānta* with its provisional meanings (*neyārtha*).

15. *Amṛtakaṇikākyā-ṭippaṇī* (Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti with Amṛtakaṇikā-ṭippaṇī* by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha of Vibhūticandra*, 14): *manstrāṇabhūtātvaṁ mantraṁ sukhāṁ udāhṛtam iti*.

16. *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha* (ibid., 210): *mantrasukhaṁ nirvikalpam*.

17. *Amṛtakaṇikākyā-ṭippaṇī* (ibid., 88, 16).

18. See Mario E. Carelli, ed., *Sekoddeśaṭīkā of Naḍapāda (Nāropā): Being a Commentary of the Sekoddeśa Section of the Kālacakra Tantra* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1941), section on Vajrapāṇi's description of the *Kālacakratantra*'s six-phased yoga.

19. Cf. the exposition of a twofold yoga practice (*yogābhyāsa*) in the *Mantrayāna* and *Pāramitāyāna* contained in the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakra-tantra*: J. Upadhyaya, ed., *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā of Kalkin Śrīpuṇḍarīka on Śrīlaghukālacakratantrarāja* by Śrīmañjuśrīyaśas, vol. 1, *Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series*, no. 11 (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1994).

20. *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha* (Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti with Amṛtakaṇikā-ṭippaṇī* by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha of Vibhūticandra*, 132): *tathā hi prajñāpāramitāyām uktam. ākāśe sa yogam āpsyate*

yaḥ prajñāpāramitāyām ityadi. atrāpi ākāśāsaktacittaiḥ ityādi.

21. Amṛtakaṇikākhyā-ṭippaṇī (ibid., 17–18).

22. Amṛtakaṇikākhyā-ṭippaṇī (ibid., 106): saṃvṛtir mahāyānaṃ paramārthe vajrayānam.

23. Amṛtakāṇikodyotanibandha (ibid., 208).

24. For an example, see the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakra-tantra*: Upadhyaya, ed., *Vimalaprabhāṭikā of Kalkin Śrīpuṇḍarīka on Śrīlaghukālacakratantrarāja* by Śrīmañjuśrīyaśas: “Here in Vajrayāna, having resorted to the mundane and ultimate realities...” (*iha vajrayāne laukikalokottarasatyam āśritya*).

25. The *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakra-tantra*: V. Dwivedi and S. S. Bahulkar, eds., *Vimalaprabhāṭikā of Kalkin Śrīpuṇḍarīka on Śrīlaghukālacakratantrarāja* by Śrīmañjuśrīyaśas, vol. 2, Rare Buddhist Text Series, vol. 12 (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1986), chap. 2, v. 13, p. 163.

26. Carelli, ed., *Sekoddeśaṭikā of Naḍapāda (Nāropā)*, 69. In Francesdo Sferra and Stefania Merzagora’s edition (Francesdo Sferra and Stefania Merzagora, trans., *Sekoddeśaṭikā by Nāropā* [Paramārthasaṃgraha], Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 99 [Rome: Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, 2006]), the citations is on p. 193.

kāyavākcittadhātūnāṃ prāṇabhūto yatas tatas /
mantrārtho mantrasābdena śūnyatājñānam akṣaram //

27. Ram Shankar Tripathi and Thakur Sain Negi, eds., *Hevajratāntram with Muktāvalī Pañjikā of Mahāpaṇḍitācārya Ratnākāraśānti*, Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series, vol. 48 (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2001), 29.

28. Cf. the *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha* (Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti with Amṛtakaṇikā-ṭippaṇī* by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha of Vibhūticandra*, 143).

29. D. L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajratāntra: A Critical Study*, vol. 2, London Oriental Series, vol. 6 (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 109, 111.

30. One does not find this type of dichotomization in the earlier *Kriyā-* and *Caryā-tantras* as well as in the *Yoginī-tantras*, such as the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra*, and the like.

31. We find a similar category of mantras in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, where the class of *dhāraṇīs* called the “*mantra-dhāraṇī*” is described as mantra words (*mantra-pada*) that facilitate a pacification of sentient beings.

32. *Amṛtakaṇikāṭippaṇī* (Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti with Amṛtakaṇikā-*

ṭippaṇī by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha* of Vibhūticandra, 88), and the *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha* (ibid., 194). In the *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha* (ibid., 208), Vibhūticandra asserts emptiness as the reality (*dharmatā*) of all mantras.

33. Cf. the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakra-tantra* (Dwivedi and Bahulkar, eds., *Vimalaprabhāṭikā* of Kalkin Śrīpuṇḍarika on *Śrīlaghukālacakratantrarāja* by Śrīmañjuśrīyaśas, 17); the *Amṛtakaṇikāḥyā-ṭippaṇī* (Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* with *Amṛtakaṇikā-ṭippaṇī* by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha* of Vibhūticandra, 4); and the *Paramārthasaṃgrahanāmasekoddeśaṭikā* (Sferra and Merzagora, trans., *Sekoddeśaṭikā* by Nāropā, 62), which give the same reading: “*guhyaṃ śrāvakaḥ pratyekabuddhaḥ uttaraṃ vajrayānaṃ*” (“Secret is Vajrayāna, which is superior to the vehicles of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas”), or it is a unification (*ekalolībhāva*) of the body, speech, mind, and gnosis.

34. Sferra and Merzagora, trans., *Sekoddeśaṭikā* by Nāropā, 70.

35. Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* with *Amṛtakaṇikā-ṭippaṇī* by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and *Amṛtakaṇikodyotanibandha* of Vibhūticandra, 88, 200, and 28.

*bāhyajāpaṃ tyajed yogī bhāvanāyāntarāyikam |
mantrārtho bhagavān vajrī vajrātmā tu kathaṃ jayet ||*

See also Rām Śaṅkar Tripathi’s Sanskrit edition of the *Pañcakrama* (*Pinḍīkrama* and *Pañcakrama* of Ācārya Nāgārjuna, Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series, vol. 25 [Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2001]), p. 39, v. 6.

This view of a mantra recitation as an artificial, conceptual, and external practice, which the yogī must abandon on the stage of completion (*niṣpanna-krama*), characterized by a nonconceptual method leading to the realization of nondual reality (*advaya-tattva*), is common to all traditions of the Unexcelled Yoga tantras. One finds clearly stated instructions for the yogī to abandon the practices of mantra recitation and mandala visualization in a variety of sources such as those of the *Kālacakra-tantra*, *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, and the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra*.

36. Samdhong Rinpoche and Vajravallabh Dwivedi, eds., *Vasantatilakā* of Cāryavartī Śrīkṛṣṇācārya with *Commentary Rahasyadīpikā* by Vanaratna, Rare Buddhist Text Series, vol. 7 (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1990), 7–8.

37. Ibid., 72:

*svabhāvo mantravargasya paramākṣara ekakaḥ |
tatparijñānamātreṇa mantrāḥ syuḥ karmakāriṇaḥ ||
ata eva hi necchāmi mantrān varṇasvarūpiṇaḥ |
na hi śaktās tṛṇasyāpi kubjikaraṇahetavaḥ ||*

So far, I have been unable to identify a source of these two verses cited by Vanaratna.

38. Cf. Tripathi and Negi, eds., *Hevajratāntram with Muktāvalī Pañjikā of Mahāpaṇḍitācārya Ratnākāraśānti*, 24, where the *mantra-tattva* is explained this way: “*mantra* itself is reality, the letter *a*, etc. (*mantra eva tattvam akārādi*).”

39. Samdhong Rinpoche and Dwivedi, eds., *Vasantatilakā of Cāryavartī Śrīkṛṣṇācārya with Commentary Rahasyadīpikā by Vanaratna*, 71–76, 86. Cf. the *Amṛtakṇikodyotanibandha* (Lal, ed., *Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti with Amṛtakṇikā-ṭippaṇī by Bhikṣu Raviśrījñāna and Amṛtakṇikodyotanibandha of Vibhūticandra*, 208), where it reads: “Emptiness is the reality of all *mantras* (*sarvamantrāṇāṃ dharmatā śūnyatā*).” Another way in which Vanaratna and Kṛṣṇācārya speak of the emptiness of *mantras* is by identifying *dharmakāya*, the emptiness of the buddhas, as *mantra* because it is a protection of the mind, and by ascertaining the sound of sublime bliss (*mahāsukha-dhvaṇī*), or *nāda*, as *mantra* on the grounds that it too is a protection of the mind and a secret speech (*gupta-bhāṣaṇa*).

40. The *Vairocanaḥbhisambodhi-tantra* cited in Banarsi Lal, ed., *Luptabuddhavadānasamgrahaḥ*, part 2, Rare Buddhist Text Series, vol. 25 (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2001), 68.

41. Samdhong Rinpoche and Dwivedi, eds., *Mahāmāyātāntram with Guṇavatī by Ratnākāraśānti*, p. 27, v. 5:

mantasaṃsthānadharmātmā yogas trividh ucyate |
trividhena tu jñānena bhavadoṣair na lipyate ||

42. Samdhong Rinpoche and Dwivedi, eds., *Vasantatilakā of Cāryavartī Śrīkṛṣṇācārya with Commentary Rahasyadīpikā by Vanaratna*, 68.

43. Sferra and Merzagora, trans., *Sekoddeśaṭikā by Nāropā*, 115.

44. The *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakra-tantra*: Upadhyaya, ed., *Vimalaprabhāṭikā of Kalkin Śrīpuṇḍarīka on Śrīlaghukālacakratāntrarāja by Śrīmañjuśrīyaśas*, chap. 4, v. 113, p. 208; Sferra and Merzagora, trans., *Sekoddeśaṭikā by Nāropā*, 130: *mantrajāpo nāma prāṇasaṃyamah*; and Francesco Sferra, ed. and trans., *The Śaḍaṅgayoga by Anupamarakṣita with Raviśrījñāna’s Guṇabhāraṇīnāma-śaḍaṅgayogaṭippaṇī*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 85 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per L’Africa e L’Oriente, 2000), 97.

45. See Raviśrījñāna’s *Guṇabhāraṇīnāmaśaḍaṅgayogaṭippaṇī*, a commentary on Anupamarakṣita’s *Śaḍaṅgayoga* (Sferra, ed. and trans., *The Śaḍaṅgayoga by Anupamarakṣita with Raviśrījñāna’s Guṇabhāraṇīnāma-śaḍaṅgayogaṭippaṇī*, 121–122).

46. Dwivedi and Bahulkar, eds., *Vimalaprabhāṭikā of Kalkin Śrīpuṇḍarīka on Śrīlaghukālacakratāntrarāja by Śrīmañjuśrīyaśas*, chap. 2, v. 207.

On the Subject of *Abhiṣeka*¹

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Two years after the beleaguered Emperor Suzong retook the capital from An Lushan's rebel forces in the waning days of 757, Amoghavajra wrote to him requesting permission to establish altars for *abhiṣeka* (consecration) at the Xingshan temple where he was based.² The request, coming from a man who had remained in the rebel-held capital and had mobilized occult forces on behalf of the emperor and his generals, states that "*Abhiṣeka* is the supreme gateway to the Great Vehicle." Thus, Amoghavajra sought permission to build an altar "for *abhiṣeka* to benefit the State. This altar possesses the teaching of pacification and prosperity and the ability to subjugate and bring joy. I offer its merits to extinguish the hosts of evil" (T. 2120:52.829b27–28). The request was utilitarian. Consecration is presented not as another worldly end, but with the express aim of producing adepts who could wield the ritual technology of the three types of *homa* (votive fire offerings). These Amoghavajra pointedly names—pacification, prosperity, and subjugation. In the following years and at Amoghavajra's request permanent altars for such rites were established at other temples in the capital, in the inner palace, and at the great pilgrimage center at Mt. Wutai.³ After Amoghavajra's death in 774 and throughout the ninth century temporary altars for *abhiṣeka* were also erected on an annual basis "for protection of the State."⁴

The caricature of Buddhism that it is "Hinduism for export" is perhaps more profound than one might at first allow.⁵ Beyond the obvious and superficial facts of Mahāyāna and esoteric Buddhist incorporation of the gods Indra, Maheśvara, Agni, or Vinayaka, the core ritual technology for manipulating the religious subject in esoteric Buddhism is a further articulation of Brahmanic procedures, and is directly related to those found in the *gṛhya* sutras and their various extensions

(Brahmanic rites for householders) and those used for the consecration of images and kings.⁶

Another often repeated bit of wisdom is that Buddhism, as a “heretical” system, rejected the teachings of the Vedas. Buddhism certainly criticized some Vedic practices—notably animal sacrifice—but in a wide variety of early Buddhist scriptures, including the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the *Suttanipāta*, and elsewhere, the Buddha is depicted as endorsing or reinterpreting Vedic practice for householders and even claiming to be the original teacher of the Vedas in past existences.⁷ These claims should come as no surprise given Buddhism’s need to make inroads in a population where Brahmanic religious practices held sway. Mahāyāna texts emerging after the first century of our era further deploy metaphors of fire and yogic heat in a variety of stunning and widely influential scenarios, including that of Sarvasattvapriyadarśana’s self-immolation as a beacon of the dharma in the *Lotus Sutra*.⁸ By the time of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* (sixth–seventh centuries CE), as if to deflect the opprobrium of those who would charge Buddhism with being a pale version of the Veda, we find an elaborate rationalization for the use of *homa*, including the recitation of the genealogy of Agni through forty-four “fires,” the claim that the Buddha was the teacher of these rites in the past, and a new set of fires taught by the Buddha after his enlightenment.⁹

Despite these connections, core Brahmanic rites—the fire sacrifice or *homa* and consecration or *abhiṣeka*, etc.—remained peripheral to Buddhist practice for nearly a millennium. Beginning in the sixth century, however, numerous *vidhis* (*yigui*, *cidi*, 儀軌, 次第, etc.)—ritual manuals detailing the use of spells or *dhāraṇīs*, mantras, and elaborate procedures for the construction and worship of images—were translated into Chinese. Although most of the Indic originals of these texts disappeared long ago, the manuals preserved in Chinese are witness to the movement of Brahmanic ritual technology—*abhiṣeka* and *homa*—from the margins of Buddhist practice to a preeminent role.¹⁰ I will focus here on *abhiṣeka* and return later to the practice of *homa*.

One of the Chinese terms for Buddhism was “the teaching of images” (*xiangjiao*, *xianghua*, 像教, 像化), and at the heart of the ritual technology preserved in these Chinese manuals are images (broadly construed) and the process through which they are created. Three terms are important for understanding the creation and use of images and the growing importance of *abhiṣeka* in esoteric Buddhist texts from

the sixth century onward. The first is *adhiṣṭhāna* (adhi√sthā, Ch. *jiachi*, Jpn. *kaji* 加持, Tib. *byin rlabs*), which has a sense of “to occupy” or “inhabit.” This term has been widely discussed in treatments of esoteric Buddhism and translated as “empowerment” or “grace.”¹¹ It is related to the term *pratiṣṭhā* (zhu, zhuchi, zhuchu, 住, 住持, 住處)¹² designating the establishment of a deity in a material object such as an image, a vase of water, or a rosary.¹³ The third term, *āveśa* (ā√viś, Ch. *aweishe*, *bianru*, *zhaoru*, *fa*, 阿尾奢, 阿尾舍, 阿尾捨, 扁入, 召入, 發), and its related terms (pra√viś), have received much less yet more idiosyncratic treatment, notably by Michel Strickmann.¹⁴ *Āveśa* is defined as a friendly “entry” or possession.¹⁵ The term *āveśa* appears in early Vedic texts to describe, for instance, the entry of processed soma into the deities or sages.¹⁶ It is the common term used for possession throughout South Asian literature and practice. Fredrick Smith, in his recent book *The Self Possessed*, traces *āveśa*, *pratiṣṭhā*, and other related terms across South Asian literature and practice, describing their relationships with particular techniques used to produce “entry,” including *mudrā*, *nyāsa*, and mantra.¹⁷ I think of these ritual techniques as a kind of tattooing of the image or body to make it a fit vehicle for the divine.¹⁸ Smith focuses on understandings of the self as multiple, permeable, and malleable and as the foundation for understanding Brahmanic ritual.

Just as the ritualization of the self or body is produced through the imposition of mantra, *mudrā*, and *nyāsa*, so too there are typical indications of “entry” or the establishment of a deity in the consecration of images. Images and humans alike are described as “shaking,” “trembling,” or even “dancing.”¹⁹ In light of these similarities, and in light of the evidence below, I argue that in many of the texts from the sixth century onward the ritual production of images, rites of *abhiṣeka*, and *homa* should be treated as closely related, or even as aspects of a single ritual technology for producing and deploying divine subjects.²⁰ I further argue that rather than approaching these rites in terms of interior states we can fruitfully see them as ritually produced forms of publicly shared subjectivity.

INDICATIONS OF SUCCESSFUL INSTALLATION OF A DEITY

The earliest unambiguous record of a Buddhist votive *homa* (as opposed to the use of fire for simple exorcism) is found in the sixth-century *Avalokiteśvaraikādaśamukha-dhāraṇī-sūtra* of Yaśogupta (耶舍崛多) (*Shiyimian guanshiyin shenzhou jing*, 十一面觀世音神呪經, T. 1070)

dating from 561–578.²¹ In this scripture a detailed image of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara is fashioned from wood as follows:

You should use white sandalwood to fashion an image of Avalokiteśvara. The wood must be fine and solid and without defect. The body is one *chi* and three *cun* long²² and should be made with eleven heads. The three front faces should have the appearance of bodhisattvas, the three faces on the left should have an angry appearance, the faces on the right have bodhisattva visages with protruding fangs. The one face in back is laughing heartily. The topmost face should have the appearance of a buddha. All the faces, front and back, should be radiant. The eleven faces should have flower crowns and in each of these flower crowns is Amitābha Buddha. Avalokiteśvara's left hand grasps a *kuṇḍika* [vase] with a lotus flower. His right hand holds a necklace and displays the *mudrā* of fearlessness [*abhaya mudrā*]. The image should be carved such that it is adorned with jeweled necklaces.

Having constructed the image, the practitioner is to spend the first fourteen days of the month making various offerings to the image while chanting a *dhāraṇī* (T. 1070, 20.150c22–151a19). Beginning on the fourteenth day of the month the practitioner is instructed to set up a sandalwood fire before the image and to take 1008 pieces of incense, dip them in soma oil (*suma you*, 蘇摩油), and offer them into the fire. If properly done, on the evening of the fifteenth day Avalokiteśvara enters the altar, the image shakes, and a voice praises the practitioner and offers to grant four supernormal boons (151a20–151b2). The text describes other rites, including the installation of a relic in the image, setting up the image near a relic, and throwing flowers onto the images, and in each case the response of the deity's "great thunderous voice" indicates success of the rite.²³

One can find a number of such texts throughout the sixth and seventh centuries with similar prescriptions and results. The presence of the deity is announced by earthquake, the shaking or the moving of the image. It is notable that these texts say nothing about rites for opening the eyes of an image (*kai mu*, *kai guangming*, 開目, 開光明). While both canonical texts and epigraphy as early as the sixth century mention eye-opening rituals, the earliest extant ritual description of an image consecration involving an eye-opening occurs in a text dedicated to Ucchuṣma (T. 1277, 大威力烏樞瑟摩明王經) rendered by Ajitasena (阿質達霰) in Turfan in 732.²⁴ The eye-opening procedure is not accompanied by shaking or other image miracles such as a booming

voice.²⁵ Sixth- through eighth-century texts give details of construction, offerings, *dhāraṇī* and *homa* practice, and the miraculous shaking and speaking of the image announcing the successful installation. The role of the eyes, however, figures prominently in the consecration of disciples.

ABHIṢEKA: INSTALLING A DEITY IN A PERSON

By the mid-seventh century *homa* and image rites such as those above were joined by *abhiṣeka* in Atikūṭa's (阿地瞿多, fl. 650s) imperially sponsored *Tuoluoni ji jing* (陀羅尼集經) or *Collection of Coded Instructions* (*Dhāraṇī-saṃgraha-sūtra*, T. 901).²⁶ Half a century later, in a group of texts translated by Bodhiruci (菩提流支, ?–727) under the auspices of Empress Wu's imperial patronage, *abhiṣeka* and *homa* are again key elements of ritual procedures.²⁷ During the early eighth century *abhiṣeka* and *homa* were the defining features of the ritual programs of the esoteric scriptures translated by Śubhākarasiṃha and by Vajrabodhi, and his disciple Amoghavajra.

The rite of *abhiṣeka* as used in esoteric Buddhism employs a technology not unlike that used to produce and then consecrate images. The aim of both rites is first to make the image or the person a fit abode for a deity by creating its attributes, properly “mantrifying” the recipient through *nyāsa* and *mudrā*, and then to induce the “entry” of the deity into the image or the person. Strickmann and others have discussed *āveśa* rituals for inducing possession of children by a deity for oracular purposes.²⁸ However, the role of *āveśa* in rites used to consecrate disciples, that is *abhiṣeka*, has been overlooked.²⁹

The ritual of *abhiṣeka* is detailed in the *Mahāvairocana Scripture*, in the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, and elsewhere.³⁰ Based on the Brahmanic consecration of an overlord, in these texts *abhiṣeka* is presented as a ritual reenactment of the mythic event of Siddhārtha's enlightenment and consecration as Mahāvairocana in the Akaniṣṭha heaven.³¹ The process involves the confession of sins, the taking of bodhisattva vows, the summoning of the blindfolded disciple before a mandala, the throwing of a flower onto the mandala to establish a karmic bond with a tutelary deity, the first vision of the mandala and the deity, the imparting of the deity's mantra, and the use of *mudrā* and mantra to impress key attributes of the deity on the disciple's body. For this essay I will focus on the description found in Amoghavajra's epitome (summary/translation) of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*

(T. 865, *Jin'gang ding yiqie rulai zhenshi she da cheng xianzeng dajiao wang jing*, 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經).³²

Early in the scripture, Sarvārthasiddha (Siddhārtha) is seated in deep trance:

At that time all of the *tathāgatas* assembled in a cloud surrounding Sarvārthasiddha Mahāsattva's *bodhimaṇḍa* and manifested their *sambogakāyas* and said, "Good son, how can one ascend to unsurpassed *bodhi* using ascetic practices without the knowledge of the True Reality of all of the *tathāgatas*?" At that time, Sarvārthasiddha Mahāsattva, having been aroused by the *tathāgatas* forthwith exited the *āṣphānaka samādhi*, and did obeisance to the *tathāgatas*, saying, "World-honored *tathāgatas*, instruct me, how should I practice, what is this True Reality?" (T. 865, 18.207c)

Later in the text, the ritual of *abhiṣeka* recapitulates for the disciple Sarvārthasiddha's initiation. Having been blindfolded, the disciple is sworn to secrecy:³³

The *vajra ācārya* should himself make the *sattva-vajrī mudrā*, which he places facing downward on the disciple's head, making the following pronouncement: "This is the *samaya-vajra*. It will split your head [if you reveal it to others], you must not discuss it."

The teacher then empowers the oath-water and the disciple drinks it, and the teacher tells the disciple that from then on he (the teacher) is to be regarded as Vajrapāṇi and warns that hell awaits him if he treats the teacher with contempt. Then the teacher has the disciple say the following:

I beseech all the *tathāgatas* to empower (*adhiṣṭhāna*, 加持) me and for Vajrasattva to enter (*bianru*, 扁入) me. Then the *vajra ācārya* should bind the *sattva-vajrī mudrā* and say: "Ayaṃ tat samayo vajraṃ vajrasattvam iti smṛtam; āveśayatu te 'dyaiva vajrajñānam anuttaram Vajrāveśa aḥ." [This is the pledge, the *vajra* known as *vajrasattva*; may it cause unsurpassed adamant knowledge to enter you this very day! Adamantine entry! Ah!] Then [the teacher] makes the wrathful-fist (*kroḍa-muṣṭi*), breaking the *sattva-vajrī mudrā*, and [makes the disciple] recite at will the one-hundred-syllable mantra of the realization of the Mahāyāna with adamant speech. Then *āveśa*.³⁴

The text then details the transformative results of the entry ("he comprehends the minds of others," "eliminates all suffering," etc.). The teacher makes the *mudrā* and releases it on the disciple's heart confirming the installation in the disciple's heart ("hṛdayaṃ me'dhitiṣṭha").

At this point the disciple throws a garland onto the mandala, establishing a connection with the deity on whom it lands. The garland is then placed by the teacher on the disciple's head as the teacher recites: "Om pratigrhṇa tvam imaṃ sattva[m] mahābala." (Om, accept this being, O you of great power!). The "entry" is completed as the teacher uncovers the disciple's face while pronouncing the following mantra:

Om vajrasattvaḥ svayaṃ te 'dya cakṣūdghāṇanataparaḥ. Udghāṭayati sarvākṣo vajracakṣur anuttaram. [Om Vajrasattva himself is intent upon opening your eyes today. The all-eyed one opens the unsurpassed vajra-eye.] Then [the teacher] recites the vision mantra: He vajra paśya. [Hey, vajra, look!] Then he makes the disciple look at the Great Mandala in the regular order. As soon as he has seen [it the disciple] is empowered (*adhiṣṭhāna*) by all the *tathāgatas* and Vajrasattva dwells in the disciple's heart. . . . [The teacher] empowers a flask with scented water using a *vajra* and anoints the disciple's head with this heart mantra: Vajrābhiṣiṇca! (O vajra, consecrate!) Then with a particular *mudrā* and fastening a garland [to the disciple], he places his own insignia in the palms of the [disciple's] two hands, reciting the heart mantra: Adyābhiṣiktas tvam asi buddhair vajrābhiṣekataḥ. Iḍaṃ te sarvabuddhatvaṃ grhṇa vajra[m] susiddhaye. Om vajrādhipatitvam abhiṣiṇcāmi. Tiṣṭha vajra. Samayas tvam. [You have now been consecrated by the buddhas with the *vajra* consecration. Take for good success this *vajra* for your complete buddhahood! Om, I consecrate you *vajra* lord. Abide, *vajra*! You are the pledge.]

The centrality of entry and establishment of the deity in the disciple's heart is readily apparent.³⁵ We can also see that the blindfolding and subsequent uncovering of the disciple's eyes is paralleled in well-known rituals of "eye-opening" in the construction of images. Amoghavajra's version of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* does not mention the disciple shaking or trembling. However, his *Maheśvara's Discourse on the Swiftly Efficacious Technique of Āveśa* specifies that the indication of successful possession of a child medium is "trembling" (戰動).³⁶ Other accounts of *abhiṣeka*, however, note that successful initiation is accompanied by "shaking and tremors," as well as dancing, fainting, or leaping.³⁷ Michel Strickmann aptly observed that this is a process of "iconisation."³⁸

THE PRODUCTION OF THE SUBJECT IN ESOTERIC RITUAL

The core myth of Siddhārtha's conversion from asceticism to esoteric initiation in *abhiṣeka* holds an important lesson often overlooked:

Siddhārtha thinks he is alone—a Jamesian subject seeking an individual, interior, enlightened subjectivity. He is aroused from his breath-suppressing trance (which would issue in death) and reoriented to a path of ritual practice *in a social space*. Indeed, while esoteric ritual may be practiced alone, key rites such as consecration must take place with others. Enlightenment, in this model, is inextricably social: it is a spectacle produced through ritual practice, for oneself and others. Even when one performs a ritual “alone” one generates a mandala and populates it with deities—the ritual subject is socially conceived.

Amoghavajra’s repeated requests to establish altars for *abhiṣeka* and *homa* in the most prominent official temples in the capital and beyond underscore the social dimension of esoteric ritual. Although bounded by oaths of secrecy these rites are performances intended for an audience, sometimes an audience of a few disciples, sometimes an imperial audience, and sometimes even a wider audience. For instance, Zhaoqian’s biography of Amoghavajra claims that in 755 he gave *abhiṣeka* to the military commander Geshu Han and his subordinates and that “nobles and the like, an assembly of some one thousand persons, ascended the ritual arena.”³⁹ The rites are designed to interpellate (to use the Althusserian vocabulary) the initiate and those observing it into a social practice.

Although the social dimension of *abhiṣeka* is, on its face, quite obvious, traditional South Asian discourses concerning “entry” as well as contemporary scholarly treatments of “possession” assume an *interior* experience produced when an exterior entity inhabits or cohabits an image or a body. Esoteric texts are often structured around an opposition between “exterior” and “interior” performance.⁴⁰ As such, our attention is channeled by an ontology that separates the self into subject and object, the self (or self-possessed) and the self which is possessed. From such a perspective, our access to possession is secondary—we can only observe the outward signs of “possession” while the interior “experience” remains obscure. Indeed, the easy fit between this traditional taxonomy of possession and much contemporary discourse on religious “experience” can divert our gaze from the social production of subjectivity or self.⁴¹

Recent work on the creation of ritual subjects or selves—both in the present and in antiquity—affords us an alternative.⁴² In this view, “subjects” are socially produced ritual and discursive objects. Semiotically speaking, they are codes produced, propagated, and shared through

institutional means. On this reading the scriptures and ritual manuals for the performance of *abhiṣeka* and *homa* translated or composed in China detail the process for producing and displaying a subject constructed in ritual and liturgy. This subject then can be understood as an institutional construct, typical, rather than unique and autonomous—a subject produced socially for institutional ends.⁴³ Unlike the interior self, the subject of *abhiṣeka* or *homa* is a subject socially accessible, produced for religious manipulation, and available for study. Indeed, its utility is precisely the fact of its social accessibility. Thus, although traditional discourses privilege the interior self, a social approach to these rites allows us to invert the usual hierarchy of interior and exterior to view the socially produced subject of ritual as the primary fact.

This social production (and display) of the subject is demonstrably the case, for instance, when we examine manuals concerning the process of *homa*. Many of the same preparatory rites (bathing, fasting, purifying the ritual space, etc.) are found in descriptions of image construction, in *homa*, and in *abhiṣeka*. Just as rites for the construction of images and *abhiṣeka* prescribe certain facial features, accoutrements, *mudrās*, mantras, etc., so to do rites for *homa*.

For instance, Bodhiruci's translation of the *Scripture of the Cakravartin of the Single Syllable of the Buddha's Crown* (*Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin*, *Yizi fo ding lunwang jing*, 一字佛頂輪王經, T. 951, 709 CE) contains a long segment titled "Homa Altar" (*humo tan*, 護摩壇), which forms the final section of this extensive compendium.⁴⁴ It sets out the differently shaped altars suitable for each type of rite and it appears to be the earliest use of what becomes the canonical three-fold taxonomy of rites: *śāntika* for pacification (*anyin fa*, 安隱法, T. 951, 19:262a13), *pauṣṭika* for prosperity (求大豐饒諸眾善法, T. 951, 19:262b3), and *abhicāruka* for subjugation (調伏他法, T. 951, 19:262b21).⁴⁵ Here, and in the many scriptures translated in the following half century, we see the appearance of a fully formed semiotic system evident in types of ritual and details of performance. For instance, in describing *abhicāruka* rites for subjugation the text specifies what part of the month is best, that one wear black or red garments, that the fire altar be triangular in shape and what direction the corners should be oriented to, specifics about its size and construction, where to sit and in what posture, how one should look when chanting (furious), what sort of wood to use (jube wood, kudong wood—both sour/bitter), and so forth (262b6–13).

By the beginning of the eighth century such descriptions were frequently accompanied by instructions for “visualizing” deities including Agni, Acala, etc.⁴⁶ In Bodhiruci’s translation of the massive *Scripture of the Mantra of Amoghapāśa’s Miraculous Transformations* (不空罽索神變真言經, T. 1092) produced in 707 CE, details of performance are joined by step-by-step mental procedures. For instance, the practitioner is instructed to contemplate the golden-colored flames of the fire becoming a ra (囉) *bīja* or seed-syllable which then changes into Agni, whose body, color, implements, faces, eyes, etc., are then described.⁴⁷ It is here that we should situate the elaborate description of the generation of the mandala found at the beginning of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*. Having undergone *abhiṣeka* the disciple is instructed to look at the mandala “in a regular order” (T. 865, 18.218c04, 則令弟子次第而視大曼荼羅). This order evokes the visionary process through which the mandala and its deities are generated and through which the disciple “visualizes” himself as the deity.⁴⁸

These textual descriptions of inner experience paralleled to outer action are a part of the ideology of esoteric Buddhism. The *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and other texts spend a great deal of time describing the inner, the outer, and the privileged ontological status of the former over the latter. *Abhiṣeka*, *homa*, and related practices appearing in eighth-century texts are ritual practices constituting a social self or subject, even as that subject engages in the ostensibly interior process of visualizing a divine self. By inverting the received taxonomic hierarchy of inner and outer we can see these textual instructions as an extension of a ritually created, iconographically conventional, and socially shared subject. In this light, then, the ritual process of *āveśa* is affirmed and extended through textual descriptions of inner experience, and these descriptions are a part of the ritual production of a socially constructed subject.

NOTES

1. My thanks to Dorothy Wong and Wei-Cheng Lin for comments on a presented version of this paper at the Workshop on East Asian Buddhism and Buddhist Art held at the National Humanities Center, April 20, 2012.

2. Amoghavajra’s request is dated May 30, 760. The Xingshan monastery was the premier official monastery in the capital and one officially charged with translation activities. Situated on Chang’an’s central artery, it occupied the entire Jingshan section of the city 靖善坊. For a discussion see CHEN Jinhua,

Crossfire: Shingon-Tendai Strife as Seen in Two Twelfth-Century Polemics, with Special References to Their Background in Tang China, Studia Philologica Buddhica Monograph Series 25 (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies in Tōkyō, 2010), 171–178. For a discussion of Amoghavajra and sources on him see Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), esp. 135–150; and the recent dissertation by Geoffrey Goble, “Chinese Esoteric Buddhism: Amoghavajra and the Ruling Elite” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2012).

3. It is unclear where exactly on the temple grounds the altar was located, and Amoghavajra made a second request for such an altar in the same temple a mere three years later. Another *abhiṣeka* altar was being completed in the Mañjuśrī pavilion when Amoghavajra died in 774. Ennin reported a permanent altar in the Translation Hall some seventy years later. See Chen, *Crossfire*, 168n8. Amoghavajra made a series of requests to initiate a program of rebuilding and the initiation of monks to perform rituals at Mt. Wutai. For the Wutai complex see Chen, *Crossfire*, 181–183. Chen’s chapter on “Institutional Support,” 167–207, systematically documents all of the esoteric establishments of the time.

4. Haiyun (海雲, fl. 822–874) mentions the annual erection of *abhiṣeka* altars at temples around the capital during the ninth century in his *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji* (兩部大法相承師資付法記, T. 2081, 50.785b23–24). See Chen, *Crossfire*, 167–168.

5. The comment is attributed to T. R. V. Murti and has been widely repeated. See Frits Staal, “There Is No Religion There,” in *The Craft of Religious Studies*, ed. Jon R. Stone (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 63.

6. Fire sacrifice was the core technology of Vedic traditions, and *homa* is detailed in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* of the *Black Yajus Veda*. There, and in later Vedic influenced traditions, we find *homa* employed for a wide variety of ends, including easy childbirth, production of wealth, averting disease or illness, etc. The *grhya* sutra material most relevant is found in the *śeṣa*, *pariśiṣṭa*, or *vidhāna* texts. Ronald Davidson has proposed a tentative scenario for the movement of brahmanic rites down register into householder practice and thence into Buddhist practice. See “Some Observations on the Uśnīṣa Abhiṣeka Rites in Atikūṭa’s *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*,” in *Transformations and Transfer of Tantra: Tantrism in Asia and Beyond*, ed. István Keul (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 91–93. For an introduction and historical situation of this literature see Laurie Patton, *Bringing the Gods to Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). On the role and development of *abhiṣeka* see Ronald M. Davidson, “Abhiṣeka,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, eds. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2011), 71–75.

7. For a succinct treatment see Y. Krishnan, "To What Extent Buddhism Repudiated Vedic Religion?" *East and West* 43, no. 1/4 (December 1993): 237–240. In some scriptures the Buddha is also depicted as taking credit for teaching the Vedas in a past life, a theme found as late as Buddhaguhya's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Scripture*. See Stephen Hodge, *The Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra with Buddhaguhya's Commentary* (London: Routledge, 2003), 386. Yixing explicitly makes this argument in his *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Scripture*. T. 1796, 39.779a19–26.
8. For this episode see Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (the Lotus Sūtra)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), chap. 23, 294–298.
9. The section on "Worldly and Transcendent Homa" is rendered as a *gāthā* in parallel lines of five characters each. For these "worldly" fires, see T. 848, 18:43a7–b12; the discussion in Michel Strickmann, "Homa in East Asia," in *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*, ed. Frits Staal (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), 2, pt. 1: 417–418; and the translation in Hodge, *The Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra*, 381–390. According to Buddhaguhya's commentary the Buddha taught the Brahmanical fires when he was a bodhisattva as a way of reducing pain and suffering. He then supplemented them with twelve more fires. See Hodge, *The Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra*, 381, 386.
10. The question of the emergence of image worship in India and its relationship to early Brahmanic ritual practice has been explored by Phyllis Granoff, "Images and Their Ritual Use in Medieval India: Hesitations and Contradictions," in *Images in Asian Religions: Texts and Contexts*, eds. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 19–55. Granoff posits a tension between Brahmanic ritual and later Purāṇic image-based worship.
11. *Adhiṣṭhāna* has received considerable attention for its role in the work of Kūkai and other proponents of Japanese *mikkyō* or esoteric Buddhism. See *Bukkyōdaijiten* 436b–437a.
12. As well as several other translations: 依止 安住 安立 建立, 所住, 所住處, etc.
13. See Fredrick M. Smith, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 388–390. Michel Strickmann summarizes this process in *Mantras et mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 184–189.
14. Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, esp. 214–220.
15. *Praveśa* traditionally designated a hostile state of possession or subjectivity. Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 14.
16. *Ibid.*, 179.

17. See *ibid.*, 374–390, on the relationship between *āveśa*, (*prāṇa*) *pratiṣṭhā*, and *nyāsa*.

18. Gavin Flood has called this process “entextualization.” On the relationship between body and text see Gavin Flood, *Body and Cosmology in Kashmiri Saivism* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993), 245; and more recently, Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 3–30.

19. Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 392–398. See especially Smith’s discussion on 391–393 of the *Guhyasamāja*, the Dalai Lama’s commentary, and the *Kālacakra-tantra* concerning the signs that the wisdom-being has entered the disciple, including shaking and dancing. The same shaking takes place when a child is used as a medium, as in Amoghavajra’s *Maheśvara’s Discourse on the Swiftly Efficacious Technique of Āveśa* (*Suji liyan Moxishoule tian shuo aweishe fa*, 速疾立驗魔醯首羅天說阿尾奢法, T. 1277, 21.330a23–24): 此真言應誦七遍。則彼童女戰動。當知聖者入身。“This mantra should be chanted seven times and then the girl will tremble and one will know that the sage has entered her body.”

20. *Āveśa* creates the divine subject, *homa* deploys it.

21. There is also a translation of the scripture by the famous monk-pilgrim Xuanzang, T. 1071, vol. 20 (*Shiyi mian shenzhouxin jing*, 十一面神咒心經), as well as one by Amoghavajra, T. 1069 (*Shiyi mian guanzizai pusa xin miyan nian-song yigui jing*, 十一面觀自在菩薩心密言念誦儀軌經).

22. In Tang times this would have equaled roughly 9.5–10 inches.

23. See the version of Xuanzang, T. 1071, 20.154a27–b2; Amoghavajra’s version, T. 1069, 20.141b19–141c6; and the version in Atikūṭa’s *Dhāraṇī-saṃgraha-sūtra*, T. 901 18.824b13–825a9.

24. Steles in Shaanxi dating from the early sixth century mention donors in charge of opening [the eyes] of the image (*kaixiang guangming zhu*, 開像光明主). See Dorothy C. Wong, *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004), 81–82.

25. T. 1227, 21.148c25–26: 以檀香水浴之。以飲食香花供養。以彩色嚴之。像額間點赤或黃至來月一日開目立壇。Strickmann places this image making in the context of well-known examples of image consecration involving eye-opening in South and Southeast Asia. See *Mantras et mandarins*, 184–189. Although Chinese epigraphy indicates the rite as early as the sixth century, canonical translations do not include a description until 732. It may well be that the eye-opening rite replaced the image miracles. It is much easier to make a person shake than it is to make a statue shake.

26. The text was rendered in 654. For more on this text, see, Koichi Shinohara, “The All-Gathering Maṇḍala Initiation Ceremony in Atikūṭa’s Collected *Dhāraṇī* Scriptures: Reconstructing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Ritual,”

Journal Asiatique 298, no. 2 (2010): 389–420; and Davidson, “Some Observations on the *Uṣṇīṣa Abhiṣeka* Rites in Atikūṭa’s *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*,” 77–97.

27. Bodhiruci’s translation of the *Scripture of the Cakravartin of the Single Syllable of the Buddha’s Crown* (*Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin*; *Yizi fo ding lunwang jing*, 一字佛頂輪王經, T. 951, 709 CE).

28. See Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, 213–229.

29. Like Strickmann, both *Bukkyōdajiten* and *Mikkyōdajiten* treat the induction of possession states for oracular purposes while overlooking its use in *abhiṣeka*.

30. Ryūichi Abé’s discussion of *abhiṣeka* as presented in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* is easily the best in English. See *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press), 133–149.

31. The Akaniṣṭha heaven is at the summit of the realm of form in Buddhist cosmology. *Abhiṣeka* is found earlier in the *Guanding jing* (T. 1331) and discussed at some length by Michel Strickmann, “The Consecration Sūtra: A Buddhist Book of Spells,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1990), 75–118. However, in this case it is not used to consecrate an overlord but rather to transmit a text. See Davidson, “*Abhiṣeka*,” 74.

32. For a basic introduction to this text see Rolf Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras: The Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra / The Susiddhikara Sutra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2001), 5–15. For an examination of the text and its corpus, see and also Steven Neal Weinberger, “Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (*Tattvasaṃgraha* tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 2003).

33. I follow Rolf Giebel’s translation in *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 73–79, with minor modifications. The original is T. 865, 18.218b1–219b2.

34. The parallel passage in Dānapāla’s (Shihu, 施護) full translation of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* (translated 1012–1015, during the Northern Song, *Fo shuo yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xianzheng san mei dajiaowang jing*, 佛說一切如來真實攝大乘現證三昧大教王經, T. 882) uses 召入 as a translation for *āveśa*: T. 882, 18.354a5–6, 以金剛語隨其所樂應當持誦。然作召入法。當召入時。從微妙智生。以是智故。即能如應覺了他心。

35. It is also used elsewhere in the scripture involving the entry of the deities of the mandala. See Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 70: “Then having bound the supreme samaya seal in accordance with the rules, The Adamantine Teacher enters [the mandala], after which he breaks the seal and [effects] the entry (*āveśa*) [of the deities into the mandala]. This is the heart-mantra for all en-

try.” The original (T. 865, 18.217a23–25) reads 即勝三昧耶結印如儀則金剛師入已摧印而遍入此諸遍入心。

36. See *Suji liyan Moxishoule tian shuo aweishe fa*, 速疾立驗魔醯首羅天說阿尾奢法, T. 1277, 21.330a23–24: 此真言應誦七遍。則彼童女戰動。當知聖者入身。

37. See Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 392, 395–396, and note 18 above.

38. Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, 204.

39. T. 2056, 50.293b6–7: 士庶之類。數千人眾。咸登道場。

40. See, for example, the distinction between inner and outer *homa* in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, T. 848, 18:44a1: “Next is inner *homa*, which eradicates karma and rebirth” (*fuzi nei humo miequ yu yeh sheng*, 復次內護摩 滅除於業生). Or another example: T. 1796, 39:662b7–8. *The Scripture Outlining Recitations and Contemplations of the Yoga of the Peak of the Vajra* (*Jin’gang fenglouge yiqie yujia yuqi jing*, 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經), attributed to Vajrabodhi, says that in the “adamantine inner *homa* . . . total enlightenment is the flame and my own mouth is the hearth” (T. 867, 18:266a20).

41. Robert Sharf has probed the notion of “Experience,” in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 94–116. His essay “Thinking through Shingon Ritual,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26 (2003): 51–96, challenges both traditional and recent interpretations of inner visionary experience.

42. For an analysis of the role of liturgy in shaping subjectivity in the context of late antiquity see *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*, eds. David Brakke, Michael L. Satlow, and Steven Weitzman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). See also Derek Krueger, “Romanos the Melodist and the Christian Self in Early Byzantium,” *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (London: Ashgate, 2006), vol. 1, 255–274, and his “The Great Kanon of Andrew of Crete, the Penitential Bible, and the Liturgical Formation of the Self in the Byzantine Dark Age,” in *Between Personal and Institutional Religion: Self, Doctrine, and Practice in Late Antique Eastern Christianity*, eds. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Lorenzo Perrone, *Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

43. Krueger, in speaking of the self produced through the performance of Andrew’s liturgy, observes that “This self was not unique to any individual. Rather, through the liturgy the clergy sought to reproduce this self in each participant. Byzantine liturgy thus provides access to the self as institutionally formed, not individual but typical. This self is not an autonomous religious self but rather a cultural product, the subject of liturgy” (Krueger, “Great Kanon”).

44. T. 951, 19:261c16–263b3. This is the first appearance of the term *humo*

(護摩), though the text also calls the rite *huotan fa* (火壇法). Related scriptures are T. 952, a variant of 951, and T. 1092, among others. On Bodhiruci, his biography, and his role in the court of Empress Wu see Antonino Forte, “The South Indian Monk Bodhiruci (D. 727), Biographical Evidence,” in *A Life Journey to the East: Sinological Studies in Memory of Giuliano Bertuccioli (1923–2001)*, eds. Antonino Forte and Federico Masini (Kyoto: Scuola Italiana di Studi sull’Asia Orientale, 2002), 77–116; and Timothy Hugh Barrett, “Stūpa, sūtra and śarīra in China, C. 656–706 CE,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 18 (2001): 1–64.

45. The terms are translated as above as well as rendered in transliteration 扇底迦, 布瑟置迦, 阿毘柁嚧迦 at T. 951, 19.237a7, and T. 1092, 20.260a9–12. Details of an *abhicāruka* rite (*apizhelujia fa*, 阿毘柁嚧迦法, T. 952, 19:272c6), including a triangular altar, the officiant facing south in a hostile crouch, etc., in what would become classical marks of the rite, are found in Bodhiruci’s *Wu foding san mei tuoluoni jing* (五佛頂三昧陀羅尼經, T. 952, 19:272c11–12), translated sometime between 693 and 706. The Buddhist streamlining of *homa* into a three-, four-, or five-fold taxonomy appears to be coeval with the Buddhist appropriation and domestication of *homa* that occurred in the seventh century.

46. See, for example, Atikūṭa’s *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*, T. 901, 18.851a23–851c04.

47. T. 1092, 20.260b4–5. “One should take the incense water and sprinkle it onto the flames, snapping the fingers three times, one should visualize the golden flames making a *ra* character and transforming to Agni” (當以香水灑淨火上彈指三遍 當觀火焰金為囉字變為火天).

48. This process, sometimes dubbed “deity yoga,” has been put forward by some as a defining characteristic of tantra. The process begins at T. 865, 18.207c and proceeds through 216b. The initial portion of this process begins with Samantabhadra visualizing a *vajra* on a lunar disk in his heart and results in his visualizing himself in the form of a buddha. Giebel’s translation appears in *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 23–24; and Abé has a clear discussion in *The Weaving of Mantra*, 142–146.

The Life of the Tang Court Monk Vajrabodhi as Chronicled by Lü Xiang (吕向): South Indian and Śrī Laṅkā Antecedents to the Arrival of the Buddhist Vajrayāna in Eighth-Century Java and China

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I. ABSTRACT¹

This paper will examine a Tang-era biography of the great Tang court monk Vajrabodhi. The biography was composed by Lü Xiang (吕向), lay disciple of Vajrabodhi, tutor to the emperor's sons, and one of the most esteemed scholars of his day. After the presentation of an annotated translation of this biography, the paper will examine external evidence which serves to validate Lü Xiang's biography and add substantive context to the life of Vajrabodhi. These validations all concern two closely linked southern kingdoms, the Pallava kingdom at Kāñcī on the mainland and the Lambakaṇṇa ruling in northern Śrī Laṅkā, whose dynastic fates were entwined by the fact that the Sinhalese regent Mānavarman had been restored from his exile by the Pallava army and Mānavarman's three successor-sons were all born in Kāñcī. Vajrabodhi's metaphysical experiences at the Tooth Relic at the Abhayagirivihāra in Anurādhapura, the *stūpa* of the Eye Relic, as well as at the Footprint Relic on the summit of Adam's Peak will be noted. Lü Xiang's biography will be shown to offer strong suggestions why the supreme Tang court monk Amoghavajra, Vajrabodhi's primary disciple, selected Śrī Laṅkā when he ventured abroad to obtain a complete library of the manuscripts of esoteric Buddhism. The paper then examines the context of Kāñcī and Vajrabodhi's preceptor Nāgajñāna, explaining why the doctrinal character of several works of esoteric Buddhism such as the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, first noticed when Nāgajñāna inducted Vajrabodhi into their secret rites during his seven-year tutelage in South India, are demonstrably derivative from

tantric Śaiva doctrine and material by noting the effervescent Śaiva milieu supplied by the contemporary Pallava domain, which ranged in creed from Siddhānta to Kāpālika. The paper will then initiate an argument that Buddhist wilderness monks, a type sponsored by both the Sinhalese Lambakaṇṇa and Javanese Śailendra kings, served as the bridge by which Śaiva religious innovations were channeled into esoteric Buddhist texts. These wilderness monks may have been the precursors or prototypes for the Buddhist *siddha* movement: both wilderness monks and *siddhas*, it will be argued, were known in the Śailendra kingdom in Java around 835 CE or even earlier. Finally, this paper will examine Adam's Peak, noting how the early Tibetan rNying-ma esoteric material was imputed to originate there, and how some imagery from the Vajrabodhi biography parallels the imagery of the allegorical mountain in the opening strophes of the Javanese Abhayagirivihāra inscription.

II. PREFACE: AN EIGHTH-CENTURY JAVANESE MONK IN THE LINEAGE OF VAJRABODHI AND AMOGHAVAJRA

The sophisticated Kēlurak inscription² demonstrates that the great Śailendra kings of Central Java were actively engaged in erecting shrines and temples to Buddhist deities of the Vajrayāna around 782 CE. The precise textual provenance and doctrinal affiliation of the esoteric doctrine embodied in the Mañjuśrī temple of Kēlurak is in some doubt. However, the primacy which the Kēlurak inscription accords to the deity Mañjuśrī paralleled, or was even possibly inspired by, devotional observations to the same deity by the great Tang court monk Amoghavajra (705–774 CE),³ minister to Chinese emperors, bureaucrats, and generals.⁴

That the Śailendra kings certainly knew of Amoghavajra and were probably powerfully attracted by his prowess in state-protection⁵ is beyond dispute, for at least one Javanese monk, referred to as Bianhong (辯弘), went to China intending to study the doctrines of esoteric Buddhism at Amoghavajra's feet. Modern Javanology owes a tremendous debt to the influential Japanese monk Kūkai (空海) for documenting the essence of the story of Bianhong:⁶

Bianhong, a monk of the country of Heling,⁷ was while in his native land practicing the yoga of Cakravartīcintāmaṇi and had attained some degree of spiritual power. On suddenly hearing that the teachings of Mahāvairocana's Great Mandala of the Matrix of Great

Compassion⁸ were to be found in South India, he fervently yearned to study them and set out for South India. On the way he suddenly met someone who asked, “Where are you going?” He replied, “I have heard it said that the great teachings of the Matrix [of Great Compassion] are to be found in South India. I yearn in my heart to study them, and therefore I have equipped myself for a journey and taken to the road.” That person informed him, “Those teachings have been taken by the Ācārya Amoghavajra and transmitted to the land of the Great Tang, and his pupil, the Ācārya Huiguo, is presently at Qinglong Temple (青龍寺) in Chang’an (長安), where he is giving instruction in them. If you go there, you will certainly be able to receive them together with others, but otherwise they will be difficult to obtain.” When he had finished speaking, he vanished. It is thus evident that he was a divine being. [Bianhong] turned back and set out for the Great Tang. He eventually visited Qinglong Temple, where he met His Reverence [Huiguo] and explained in detail the purpose of his visit, offering him one seven-gemmed initiation flask, one bronze bowl, three conch shells, and various famed aromatics. His Reverence held an initiation [ceremony] for him and conferred on him the great teachings of the Matrix [of Great Compassion]. Bianhong presently resides in Bianzhou (汴州), where he propagates the esoteric teachings [lit. “esoteric wheel”].⁹

Kūkai’s report on the Chinese journey of Bianhong affords us one perception of the religious culture of Java around the time Bianhong arrived in China in 780, showing the Javanese groping towards currency with the systems of the Buddhist *tantras*. It is uncertain whether Bianhong ever returned home to Java or sent scriptures copied from the manuscripts available to him in the monasteries of Chang’an, but it is clear that he was not the only Javanese monk to venture abroad in search of esoteric knowledge. It seemingly took the Javanese about a decade to establish another important link with the Indic world which undoubtedly guaranteed them access to tantric libraries and consecration lineages in the more current of esoteric doctrines: if Bianhong was tracking down Amoghavajra, other agents of the Śailendra king were evidently tracking back Amoghavajra’s sources in Śrī Laṅkā, soliciting Sinhalese monks from the famed Abhayagirivihāra to establish themselves in the Javanese heartland.

This paper seeks to amplify understanding of the religious and cultural context of Śailendra Java by translating and examining an underappreciated early biography, written a few decades after his death by a scholarly lay disciple, of the influential Tang court monk Vajrabodhi,

Amoghavajra's mentor. The information in Lü Xiang's biography, which focuses on the life of Vajrabodhi before he arrived in China, will be seen to yield plausible explanations for much of the extant evidence concerning the early propagators of esoteric Buddhism to China and the early exponents of that Buddhism, such as the Javanese Bianhong. We will examine Vajrabodhi's connection to a particular nexus of South Indian cultural power, centered on the Pallava kingdom at Kāñcī and the Pallava-sponsored Sinhalese Lambakaṇṇa kingdom at Anurādhapura, noting its particular relevance to the history of Buddhism in Java. This dyad was greatly influential to Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, and seemingly greatly attractive to the Sumatrans and Javanese, who themselves, in many ways, were exponents of it.¹⁰ Such Malayo-Javanese interest in South India is evident in their adoption of the Pallava-Grantha script,¹¹ both in Śrīvijaya as well as in Sañjaya-era Java: one presumes that contemporary South Indian ideas about kingship, cosmology, and the divine accompanied the use of the script across the ocean. This essay will conclude with an examination of the implications of this study of the Pallava-Sinhala background for certain expressions of early Javanese esoteric Buddhism, namely, the participation of Sinhalese wilderness monks of the Abhayagirivihāra and some allegorical imagery contained in the opening strophes of the Javanese Abhayagirivihāra inscription, for our understanding of the Pallava and Sinhalese milieu from which they sprang.

In particular, we will see that Lü Xiang's biography of Vajrabodhi provides an intellectual and cultural context which renders plausible and comprehensible the specific interest manifested by both Amoghavajra and the Śailendra kings in the Sinhalese kingdom: indeed, so deep are the Laṅkā associations of the two Tang patriarchs that careless Chinese chroniclers claimed at one time or another that each of the two were Sinhalese.¹² In the case of at least Amoghavajra, and arguably Vajrabodhi as well, Laṅkā preceptors provided essential access to the preeminent Buddhist tracts in the *Yoga-tantra* collection. In any effort to understand more about the pan-Asian influence of the cultural dyad of Pallava India and Śrī Laṅkā, it is important to examine the lives of these two monks. It will be especially worth our while to focus on the life of Vajrabodhi.

III. THE SCHOLAR LÜ XIANG

The biography of Vajrabodhi which will be examined in this paper is the extensive one written by his lay disciple Lü Xiang, probably compiled within two decades of Vajrabodhi's death and then included in Yuanzhao's (圓照) *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* (貞元新定釋教目錄, Catalogue of Buddhist Teachings Newly Established in the Zhenyuan Era, T. 2157, 55.875a–876b) in the sixteenth year of the Zhenyuan (貞元) era (799–800 CE). The biography has been referenced or summarized by modern scholars on several occasions,¹³ but until now has yet to be fully translated and explicated. It, and another early biography by Hunlunweng (混倫翁; T. 2157, 55.876b29–877a21) which was compiled into the same volume immediately after Lü Xiang's biography, differ substantially from the better-known Song-era biography¹⁴ composed by Zanning (贊寧), some two hundred years later, as part of his series of profiles of Buddhist monks.

Before examining the biography of Vajrabodhi, a few words should be said about its eminent and highly educated author, whose own biography is found in the *Tangshu* (唐書, 202.10b–11b). Born of humble means in Shandong Province, Lü Xiang rose in the bureaucracy on the strength of his scholarship, was the second of the scholars inducted into the Hanlin (翰林, the Imperial Academy), and once served as a teacher for the emperor's sons.¹⁵ Of the three hundred-odd individuals honored with induction into the Imperial Academy during the entire Tang dynasty, Lü Xiang held the longest recorded tenure within that organization. After his initial induction into the Hanlin in 722 CE, he steadily gained in rank within the academy and served the Tang court as a scholar and a government official who prepared official documents for the emperors, and was celebrated for his style. Indeed, he was one of five court scholars tasked with producing a commentary on the *Wenxuan* (文選), the famous anthology of Chinese verse and prose,¹⁶ the study of which rivaled the Five Classics of Confucius during the Tang period. The *Collected Commentaries of the Five Officials* was produced in 718.

Formal dates for the birth and death of Lü Xiang are unknown, but it is certain that one of his classmates (Fang Guan, 房琯) was born in 697; Lü Xiang was probably of the same age and thus in his mid-forties when Vajrabodhi died. While the date of Lü Xiang's death is unknown, within his biography of Vajrabodhi is a reference to titles which only came into being in 757 CE but not the posthumous imperial honorific

granted him in 765, suggesting that Vajrabodhi's biography was composed around two decades after Vajrabodhi's death.¹⁷

There are several indicators which suggest that the biography as compiled into Yuanzhao's *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* had been touched up with a light editorial hand after Lü Xiang's own death, for the biography as published alerts the reader to the availability of Vajrabodhi's translated texts, incorporated elsewhere into the volume.

IV. TRANSLATION OF LÜ XIANG'S BIOGRAPHY OF VAJRABODHI, AS FOUND IN THE ZHENYUAN XINDING SHIJIAO MULU¹⁸

There is also the *abhiṣeka* disciple Lü Xiang, Grand Master for Proper Consultation, Branch Secretariat Drafter, Attendant on the Heir Apparent, Scrivener for Princes, and Academician of the Academy of Scholarly Worthies, who out of veneration for his teacher, the Tripiṭaka Master [Vajrabodhi], [875b] recorded [his biography] as follows:

His Reverence¹⁹ was originally the third son of Īśānavarman (Yishenawamo, 伊舍那摩), the *kṣatriya* king of a kingdom in Central India. Because he was later recommended to the [Chinese] emperor by Mizhunna (米准那),²⁰ the general of the king of a South Indian kingdom,²¹ he ended up being called a South Indian. At the age of ten years, he became a monk at Nālandā Monastery, where he studied grammatical treatises under the teacher Śāntijñāna (Jijingzhi, 寂靜智).²² When he was fifteen, he went to the countries of West India,²³ where he studied the treatises of Dharmakīrti (Facheng, 法稱) for four years. He returned to Nālandā Monastery and at the age of twenty received full ordination. For six years he studied the *vinaya* of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, as well as studying the *Prajñāpradīpa* (*Bore deng lun*, 般若燈論), *Śatakaśāstra* (*Bailun*, 百論), and *Dvādaśamukhaśāstra* (*Shier men lun*, 十二門論)²⁴ of the Southern school.²⁵ When he was twenty-eight, he studied the *Yoga Treatise* (*Yuqie lun*, 瑜伽論, *Yogācārabhūmi*), *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (*Weishi lun*, 唯識論), and *Madhyāntavibhāga* (*Bian zhongbian lun*, 辯中邊論) under the scholar Jinabhadra (Shengxian, 勝賢) in the city of Kapilavastu.²⁶

Three years later, at the age of thirty-one, he went to South India, where for seven years he served and worshipped Nāgajñāna,²⁷ a disciple of the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna (龍樹)²⁸ who is seven hundred years old and is even now still alive. He was instructed in the *Sutra of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle* (*Jingangding yuqie jing*, 金剛頂瑜伽經),²⁹ Vairocana's *dhāraṇī* teachings,³⁰ Mahāyāna sutras, and treatises on the

five sciences and received *abhiṣeka* [initiation] into the Five Divisions,³¹ and there was nothing in the treasury of the buddhas' secrets that he did not master. He then took leave of his teacher Nāgajñāna and returned to Central India, where he visited and paid homage at the holy *stūpas* commemorating eight events [in the life] of the Tathāgata [i.e., Śākyamuni].

Then, South India having suffered for three years from a severe drought, its king Narasiṃhapotavarman (Naluosengqiebuduowamo, 捺羅僧伽補多鞞摩)³² sent an envoy to invite His Reverence to erect an *abhiṣeka* site within his palace and pray for rain, on which occasion the sweet beneficence of rain poured down and the king and ministers rejoiced. They then built a temple for His Reverence and installed him in it, and more than three years passed.

In the south of the country, near the sea, there was a temple of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, and beside the gate there was a *nyagrodha* [banyan] tree that had withered. His Reverence fasted and circled it for seven days, whereupon the tree grew vigorously once again. The bodhisattva appeared in response and spoke these words: "Your studies have now been completed. Go to Siṃhala to pay homage to the Buddha's tooth and climb Mount Laṅkā to worship the Buddha's footprint.³³ Upon your return, go to the Middle Kingdom and pay your respects to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. That country has a karmic connection with you. You should go to spread the teachings and save all beings."

Having heard these words, he was overcome with joy. The monks had all heard these words, and the crowds at the temple then said, "If the bodhisattva descends on the *nyagrodha* tree, the branches and leaves thrive, and when he leaves, it promptly withers. Take this as a sign." After three weeks [His Reverence] went back and took leave of the country's king.

Taking with him eight disciples, both monks and laymen, he went to Siṃhala and reached the city of Laṅkā. The king, ministers, and four groups of people³⁴ welcomed His Reverence with fragrant flowers.³⁵ He then went to Abhayarāja Monastery,³⁶ located next to the palace, and made obeisance to the Buddha's tooth, holding fragrant flowers and worshipping with earnest sincerity. He then sensed the Buddha's tooth radiate light in the air [875c], which formed a canopy that manifested everywhere. A large crowd all saw this auspicious sign.

He resided at that monastery, worshipping for half a year. He then betook himself to the southeast, to Mount Laṅkā. En route, he paid homage at the Stūpa of the Buddha's Eye,³⁷ on which occasion he circled it for one day and one night, and none of his prayers went unfulfilled. Next, he arrived at the city of Saptaratnagiri [Mountain of Seven Jewels]. Then he came to a mountain of jewels under the state control of the kingdom of Rohaṇa [Luhena, 嚕呵那].³⁸ The ground on that mountain was replete with *tāla* [palmyra] trees. The king of that kingdom had previously believed in the Hīnayāna. Hearing that His Reverence had arrived, he went outside the city to welcome him from afar, and extensive offerings were laid out beside the king's palace. For a month and some days His Reverence explained for [the king] the essential principles of the Mahāyāna, whereupon he was able to comprehend them, and he faithfully accepted them and rejoiced. He then gave His Reverence extensive gifts of sundry valuables, but he did not accept them, saying, "My original purpose in coming was to pay homage to the Buddha's footprint; it was not for the sake of rare treasures. Since I have come here from afar, pray show me the way." The king then dispatched people to carry a sedan chair for His Reverence to ride in, and they took him as far as the foot of the mountain.

The mountain had many ferocious beasts, lions, poisonous snakes, savages, and *rākṣasas* [demons]. Dark winds [full of dust] and a cruel fog constantly protect the rare treasures on top of this mountain. Unless one is paying one's respects to the sacred sites, it is not possible to ascend and gain entry to this mountain. His Reverence burned incense at the foot of the mountain and, making obeisance, made a great vow: "I pray that I may see the mountain gods from the time when the Buddha was formerly in the world and preaching the dharma!" When he had finished making this prayer, the sky cleared, the fog dispersed, and the ferocious beasts hid themselves. Then, together with his disciples, he crossed a stream towards the east on the mountain's north face. Ascending, they turned back towards the northwest and then the southwest, exploring valleys, grasping lianas, and hanging on to creepers. In a strange kind of solitary danger, they reached halfway up the mountain. Near the north face, there was a spring from which water flowed forth, and in it there were nothing but red crystals, lapis lazuli, gold, silver, and jewels, as well as precious grasses and also *mandāra* flowers and *utpala* [blue lotus] flowers. From time to time they came across caves,³⁹ all of which were places where earlier spirits⁴⁰ had

cultivated the Way. It would be impossible to list all the fragrant flowers, grasses, and trees on the mountain.

Without stopping or tarrying, they climbed for seven days, and only then did they reach the summit of the mountain. Searching for a holy site, they saw a round stone, about four or five feet high and about twenty feet across. The Buddha's right foot[print] was hidden on top of the stone and was seen to be damaged.⁴¹ Doubts arose in their minds that it might not be the Buddha's footprint, and they looked up to the heavens and wept, thinking of the Tathāgata of yore. Then in response five-colored clouds appeared and there was a halo of light, and the wheels on the Buddha's footprint appeared quite clearly. They heard a voice say, "This is truly the Buddha's footprint. He only left this footprint for the sake of beings of past generations whose karma would be heavy in the future." On hearing this, they rejoiced and made offerings of fragrant flowers. They entered meditation for one day, and after coming out of meditation they circumambulated [the footprint] for seven days, holding on to the stone as an aid as they proceeded around it. Apart from the Buddha's footprint, there were on top of the stone several stone saucers, in which they lit lamps.

At the time, there were savages who brought sugar cane, coconuts, bananas, yams,⁴² and so on, which they came and offered to His Reverence. [876a] When his disciples saw them, they ran off, scattering in all directions. His Reverence said [to the savages], "We have come here to worship, not to harm you." He then took their gifts and bestowed on them the precepts of the Three Refuges. The savages used to bring small stones, which they would place as offerings on top of the Buddha's footprint and [then] crush and ingest them. What was the meaning of damaging the top of the center [of the stone] in this way? They said it cured chest pains. From this they realized why the Buddha's footprint had gradually worn away.

It was very windy on top, and they could not remain for long. The summit provided a panoramic view in all four directions. Fifty to sixty *li* from the foot of the mountain it was surrounded by an outer perimeter of mountains, like city walls in appearance. On top of the mountains there were generally white clouds. People of that country called them the Laṅkāpura Mountains. Beyond the mountains to the northwest there extended the realm of Siṃhala, and in the other [directions] the ocean. As he was looking at the view, His Reverence inadvertently lost his foothold and came to a stop at the bottom of some

steps overlooking a cliff without harming a single hair. Know that this was due to the inconceivable power of the Buddha. There was no end to the shock and joy of the disciples and others. They then returned along the path and made their way back.⁴³ They paid their respects once again at all the holy sites and took their leave.

One year after his arrival [in Siṃhala], [His Reverence] returned to the kingdom in South India. He related the above events in detail, and they were reported to the king, who again invited him to stay and worship in the palace. One month passed, and His Reverence said respectfully to the king, “This poor monk previously made a sincere vow to go⁴⁴ to the land of China⁴⁵ to pay his respects to Mañjuśrī and spread the Buddhist dharma.” On the same day he took leave of the king.

The king said, “The route to the Tang kingdom is very far, the ocean is difficult to cross, and you will not manage to get there. If you stay here and teach and convert [people], it will suffice to obtain benefits.” [The king] repeatedly asked him to stay, but His Reverence’s long-cherished wish did not change.

The king said, “If you insist on going, I shall send an envoy to escort you and present some local products [to the Tang emperor].” He then dispatched General Mizhunna with a Sanskrit copy of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā[-sūtra]* (*Da bore boluomiduo*, 大般若波羅蜜多), a chair adorned with seven precious materials, a gold bracelet adorned with seven precious materials, earrings inlaid with jewels, miscellaneous articles, armor, silk cords,⁴⁶ agallochum, Borneo camphor, various goods, aromatics, and so on to present to the Tang kingdom, asking His Reverence to inspect and bless them and deliver them to that country. On the day of their departure, the king, his ministers, and the four groups of people escorted them to the seashore with fragrant flowers and music. His Reverence, facing east, paid homage to Mañjuśrī from afar and paid homage to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the west. Then, having bidden farewell to the multitudes, he boarded the ship and they took to the sea.

Catching a favorable wind, they crossed the sea in a day and a night and arrived at the port of Bozhili (勃支利津) in Siṃhala. They encountered thirty-five Persian vessels which were trading in precious stones in that country. Seeing His Reverence, the merchants attended on him with one accord. Śrīśīla (Shilishiluo, 室哩室囉), the king of Siṃhala, hearing that His Reverence had returned, again welcomed him into his palace and hosted him for one month. But although he tried hard to

detain him, he would not stay. Having paid his respects once again to the Buddha's tooth, he promptly proceeded on his way. The king sent monks and laymen to see him off at the seashore with fragrant flowers and music. When the day came for His Reverence's departure, the merchants all followed him across the sea.

After a month they reached the kingdom of Vijaya (Foshi, 佛逝).⁴⁷ The king of Vijaya [876b] welcomed His Reverence with a golden parasol and a golden litter. Hampered by foul winds, they stayed for five months. It was only after the winds had settled that they were able to set out. It is impossible to describe in detail the minor incidents and strange things in the countries through which they passed and the perils at sea, with its immense waves and seething waters.

When they were within twenty days from Tang territory, they all of a sudden encountered foul winds which suddenly gave rise to fog while they were in the middle of the ocean. In the darkness poisonous sea-serpents, whales, and their ilk appeared and disappeared, their heads intertwined. The thirty-odd merchant vessels drifted with the waves, and it is not known what became of them. Only the single ship carrying His Reverence was able to escape this disaster because he recited the [*Mahā*]pratisarā[-dhāraṇī] (*Suiqiu*, 隨求).⁴⁸

It is estimated that they covered more than one hundred thousand *li* by sea, chasing the waves and drifting with the swell. For about three years they passed through foreign lands, experiencing various hardships, and only then did they manage to reach the imperial borders of the Great Tang. On reaching Guangfu (廣府)⁴⁹ they again encountered a rainstorm. The military governor (*jiedushi*, 節度使) sent two or three thousand people on several hundred small boats to welcome them to the seaport from afar with fragrant flowers and music.

They reached the Eastern Capital (Luoyang, 洛陽) only during the eighth year of the Kaiyuan (開元) era [720], and [His Reverence] had a personal audience with the emperor at which he reported one by one details of every incident. By imperial edict measures were taken to have him settled and provided with the four necessities [of a monk].⁵⁰ Monks requested [instruction in] the dharma, and princes and dukes asked about the Way. Henceforth he accompanied the imperial carriage back and forth between the two capitals [Luoyang and Chang'an].

In the eleventh year [of the Kaiyuan era, 723], he became engaged in translation. What he translated at Zisheng Temple and Jianfu Seminary⁵¹ amounted to four works in seven rolls.⁵² In the cyclic year

gengwu (庚午), the eighteenth year of the Kaiyuan era [730], they were entered into the *Kaiyuan Catalogue of Buddhist Teachings*.⁵³ From the nineteenth year [of the Kaiyuan era, 731] he further translated the *Ritual for Practicing the Samādhi of Vairocana in the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* (*Jingangding jing yuqie xiuxi Piluzhena sanmodi fa*, 金剛頂經瑜伽修習毘盧遮那三摩地法) in one roll, the *Spell Text of the Great Body of the Bodhisattva Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara* (*Qianshou qianyan Guanshiyin pusa dashen zhouben*, 千手千眼觀世音菩薩大身咒本)⁵⁴ in one roll, the *Spell Text of the Heart Dhāraṇī of the Vast, Perfect, and Unobstructed Great Compassion of the Bodhisattva Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara* (*Qianshou qianyan Guanzizai pusa guangda yuanman wuai dabei xin tuoluoni zhouben*, 千手千眼觀自在菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼咒本) in one roll, and the *Secret Ritual of the Dhāraṇīs of the Messenger Acala* (*Budong shizhe tuoluoni bimi fa*, 不動使者陀羅尼祕密法) in one roll.⁵⁵ The texts of the above four works in four rolls are extant, and they were translated by the South Indian Tripiṭaka Master and śramaṇa Vajrabodhi,⁵⁶ known as Jingangzhi⁵⁷ in Chinese.

In the twenty-fourth year [of the Kaiyuan era, 736] he accompanied the imperial carriage to the Western Capital [Chang'an]. In the twenty-ninth year [of the Kaiyuan era, 741] there was an imperial edict, allowing him to return to his home country.⁵⁸ He reached the Eastern Capital [Luoyang], where he fell ill and bade his final farewell. A *stūpa* was erected at Longmen (龍門)⁵⁹ on the cyclic day *dingyou* (丁酉), the twenty-seventh day and day of the new moon, in the cyclic month *xinwei* (辛未), the second month, in the cyclic year *guiwei* (癸未), the second year of the Tianbao (天寶) era [743].⁶⁰

V. AN EVALUATION OF THE CREDIBILITY OF Lǚ XIANG'S BIOGRAPHY OF VAJRABODHI

There is much reason to pay attention to Lǚ Xiang's biography and to prefer it to Zanning's Song-era portrait despite its discrepancy with Zanning's biography on many important details concerning Vajrabodhi's life before his arrival in China.⁶¹ The grounds for favoring the biography by Lǚ Xiang over that by Zanning are substantial. First, the biography was written by one of Vajrabodhi's lay disciples, one of the most accomplished and honored scholars of his day, and a man who was tasked with getting his details right; this fact alone should provide innate credibility for the account. Second, as is mentioned in



Figure 1. Śrī Pāda or Adam's Peak: the “*Laṅkāparvata” was a pilgrimage quest of the Tang monk Vajrabodhi as well as the reputed source of many early rNying-ma Buddhist *tantras*.

note 60, the much shorter account of Vajrabodhi's life composed by Hunlunweng, which includes the epitaph written on Vajrabodhi's funeral *stūpa* and was placed immediately after Lü Xiang's biography in the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, also accords by and large with Lü Xiang's with regard to the basic facts of Vajrabodhi's life, including the ascent of Mount Laṅkā. These two biographies were preserved in Yuanzhao's *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* by the end of the century in which Vajrabodhi died. Lü Xiang's biography thus found its final form within the lifetime of those who knew Vajrabodhi, and as noted above it seems possible to date the biography to 757–765 CE. Lü Xiang's biography is further validated because it served as the basis for the biographical notes recorded in the Japanese monk Kūkai's *Himitsu mandarakyō fuhōden* (祕密曼荼羅教付法傳, Account of the Dharma Transmission of the Secret Mandala Teachings), indicating that Lü Xiang's account was considered as factually unobjectionable in the circles of esoteric Buddhist devotees from whom Kūkai obtained his biographical materials.⁶² Furthermore, the density of detail is impressive (as Lévi notes, Lü Xiang furnished “the richest and most precise biography of Vajrabodhi”⁶³), even if the proportions of the biography seem odd on the surface—Lü Xiang devotes more space to

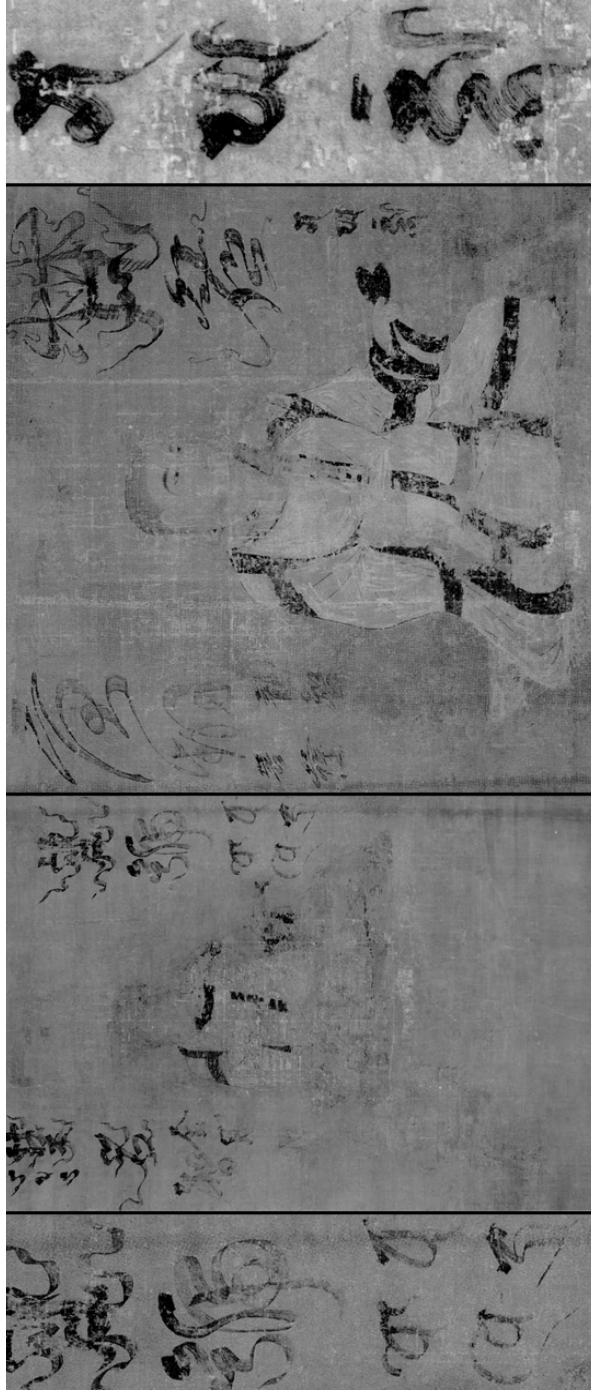


Figure 2. Portraits at Tōji of Vajrabodhi (left) and Nāgajñāna (right) flanked by magnifications of their Siddham-scripted names. The label of the latter portrait (far right) deems him, ineptly, “Na-gha-jña.” The portrait of Vajrabodhi originated in China and was brought back to Japan by Kūkai, while the portrait of Nāgajñāna was commissioned by Kūkai in 821 CE and possibly labeled by him. The Chinese text associated with the murals of the patriarchs is Kūkai’s *Shingon fuhōden* (眞言付法傳). Photo appears in Tōji Hōmotsukan 東寺宝物館, ed., *Kōbō daishi no sho: onhitsu shichisozei shichifuku* 弘法大師の書 御筆七祖影七幅 (Kyoto: Tōji Hōmotsukan, 2002).

Vajrabodhi's fortnight at the Buddha's footprint on "Mount Laṅkā" than he does to Vajrabodhi's first thirty-one years, let alone his seminal indoctrinations into the mysteries of the primary *Yoga-tantra Vajroṣṇīṣa* at the hands of Nāgajñāna⁶⁴ of South India. These seemingly haphazard distributions and curiously inverted proportions also obtain in the narration of Vajrabodhi's Chinese period. It is possible that the uneven prominence of detail within Lü Xiang's biography came about because he considered that the bare bones of the story (for instance, the relationship with Amoghavajra) would be known to his readership and he wanted to focus his efforts on material that would add novelty to aspects of his preceptor's life which either were less widely appreciated or else were conveyed to Lü Xiang in private audiences with his master. I personally consider the latter explanation more likely; it is worth noting that much of the biographic material focuses heavily upon Vajrabodhi's career prior to his arrival in China, and seems to be the result of personal interaction with Vajrabodhi, with the uneven distribution of detail in his biography conveying his master's sense of what was important.⁶⁵

Augmenting the inherent credibility of the court scholar Lü Xiang's account, certain of the details in the biography accord with, are validated by, or even explain several of the curiosities associated with the transmission of esoteric yoga-tantric Buddhism to China in the first half of the eighth century. The suite of corroborating evidence, discussed in detail in three subsections below, includes the Pallava ambassador-general Mizhunna (section Va), the southern Śrī Laṅkā kingdom of Rohaṇa (section Vb), and the account of the shipwreck on the initial approach to China (section Vc).

*Va. The First Validation of Lü Xiang's Biography:
The Pallava General Mizhunna*

The first interesting facet of Lü Xiang's biography which tends to validate its legitimacy is its repeated mention of General Mizhunna, who was tasked by Narasiṃhapotavarman to accompany Vajrabodhi and present a set of gifts to the emperor of China. In providing a proper name for Narasiṃhapotavarman's ambassador, Lü Xiang included him among only three other members of the laity (Vajrabodhi's father King Īśānavarman, his Pallava sponsor King Narasiṃhapotavarman, and his Sinhalese admirer King Śrīśīla) to be so distinguished. Of this group of four, only Mizhunna was not a regent whose name would be known

to anyone reasonably well-versed with the contemporary royalty of the more prominent South Asian polities; Mizhunna ranked a mention even where the kings of Rohaṇa and Śrīvijaya remained unnamed.⁶⁶ Despite Lü Xiang's pointedly double-introduction of Mizhunna into the narrative, he is allowed to disappear during the voyage and that component of the Vajrabodhi saga is unresolved. If Lü Xiang troubled himself in twice providing Mizhunna's name to his audience, then it is likely that he had a reason for doing so. Indeed, of all the historical personages whose lives intersected Vajrabodhi's, only Mizhunna intended to reach China, the location of Lü Xiang's readership, so we may presume that his name was featured because Mizhunna's was a name and a story which was known to the readership and doubtlessly available in the full diplomatic records of the Tang court. This, I believe, is a supplemental demonstration of the earliness of Lü Xiang's undated work: some of Lü Xiang's readership likely met Mizhunna and therefore knew him personally. Such acquaintances extended, almost certainly, to Lü Xiang himself, the second person honored by induction into the Imperial Academy.

Despite the biography's suggestion that Mizhunna accompanied Vajrabodhi throughout his three-year diversion through Southeast Asia, I am uncertain whether Mizhunna continued to accompany Vajrabodhi after the sea-storm, or whether Mizhunna's diplomatic duties demanded that he continue to press his mission by continuing to China. The success of General Mizhunna's mission also might account for the access which Vajrabodhi obtained when he arrived in Guangzhou several years later: how could the Chinese possibly evaluate Vajrabodhi and accord him with a triumphal welcome at both the harbor where he docked as well as at the palace of the emperor without someone like an ambassador to attest to his exploits, his background, and his royal connections with the Pallava court at Kāñcī and the Sinhalese court at Anurādhapura?

It is interesting to note that Mizhunna was only one of a flurry of Pallava ambassadors to be sent around this time to the Tang court. Sen provides an interesting précis:

The Indian mission of 720 on the other hand, specifically mentions the threat from the Tibetans and Arabs as the reason for seeking help from the Tang court. The envoy from the South Indian King Shilinaluolu(seng?)jiamo (Śrī Nārāyaṇasiṃha?) sought permission from emperor Xuanzong to attack the Arabs and Tibetans with the war elephants and horses the Indian king possessed and asked

the emperor to pick a title for his army. Pleased with the Indian king's offer to form a coalition against the Arabs and Tibetans, the Chinese emperor bestowed the title of "*Huaide jun*" ("The Army that Cherishes Virtue") to Śrī Nārāyaṇasiṃha's troops. The South Indian king sent two more envoys in the same year, one seeking an epithet for a (Buddhist?) monastery, and another acknowledging the title of "king" that the Chinese emperor had bestowed on him.

The above South Indian king, as has been pointed out by Luciano Petech, can be identified as Narasiṃhavarman II Rājasīṃha of the Pallava dynasty. Since Narasiṃhavarman II's reign is marked by peace, prosperity, and flourishing maritime trade, Petech is perhaps right to observe that the Indian king's "quite gratuitous offer of help, which could not possibly materialize for obvious geographic reasons, was evidently prompted by reasons of prestige and/or maritime trade."⁶⁷

Indeed, the Pallava-Chinese relationship was so cordial that, as Mahalingam notes, Narasiṃhavarman II Rājasīṃha built a Buddhist *vihāra* at Nāgapattinam⁶⁸ for the Chinese emperor and allowed him to name it,⁶⁹ and one is led to wonder whether Vajrabodhi had a hand in its design.⁷⁰ Such repeated, persistent diplomatic intercourse may serve as an explanatory context for Vajrabodhi's easy access to the inner sanctum of the Tang court. In fact, given the chronology, one surmises that the welcome arrival of Vajrabodhi or Mizhunna in Guangfu in 719 CE actually instigated the series of intense and cordial diplomatic interchanges between the Chinese and the Pallavas recorded to occur in 720.⁷¹ If so, their salutary effect paralleled the arrival of Amoghavajra in Laṅkā in 742, where the transmission of religious knowledge and texts between highly adept monks immediately stimulated a high-level religio-diplomatic interchange between the Buddhist Sinhalese king at Anurādhapura and the Tang emperor at Chang'an.⁷² A similar occurrence seemingly transpired some half a century later, when the Javanese kings became patrons involved in the Sinhalese dispensations, likely involving precisely this same style of interchange of tantric texts and, in the Javanese case, a cadre of adept monks as well.

Vb. The Second Validation:

Contemporary Evidence of the Mahāyāna in Sinhalese Rohaṇa

The account of the kings encountered while in Laṅkā provokes interest. The Anurādhapura king Śrīśīla was obviously sympathetic to Vajrabodhi and his doctrines, and indeed, the extant historical records

of Laṅkā inform us that the Sinhalese king Mānavarman (the patron “Śrīśīla” of Vajrabodhi’s biography; his reign lasted from approximately 684 to 718 CE) had intimate ties and relations with the very Pallava lands and court where Vajrabodhi had sojourned for the seven years prior to his arrival in Laṅkā: Mānavarman had spent a long exile serving as a general for that regal South Indian court at Kāñcī before gaining the use of the Pallava army to effect his own installation on the Anurādhapura throne and reestablish the second Lambakaṇṇa dynasty. Mānavarman’s three sons, each of whom would in turn rule at Anurādhapura, were all born in Pallava lands during the exile. The dates of the early Second Lambakaṇṇa dynasty assigned by Nicholas and Paranavitana are: Mānavarman from 684 to 718 CE, followed by his sons Aggabodhi V from 718 to 724, Kassapa III from 724 to 730, and Mahinda I from 730 to 733.⁷³ Amoghavajra, in turn, must have met the long-reigned Aggabodhi VI (733–772) during his 742–746 stay in Śrī Laṅkā.

The other, and often subordinate, kingdom in Śrī Laṅkā was the southern tropical kingdom of Rohaṇa, which Lü Xiang noted adhered to the principles of the Theravāda when Vajrabodhi arrived. Rohaṇa was seemingly not yet a client kingdom of Mānavarman, who emerged from exile only around twenty-five years earlier, and so the king’s devotion to Theravāda is not unexpected. It is likely that Vajrabodhi’s efforts to elucidate the principles of his brand of the Mahāyāna at the court of the king of Rohaṇa indeed worked as claimed. Dohanian notes the relics of Mahāyāna worship scattered across the island, even though he assigns dates of a century or two after Vajrabodhi’s travels.⁷⁴ However, there is a datum in the epigraphic evidence which is immediately pertinent and indicates that the south of the island had adopted Mahāyāna shortly after Vajrabodhi’s sojourn. Paranavitana discusses a triplet of large rockface inscriptions concerning an Aritārāvehera from Rāssahela (Rājagala) near Bātticaloa.⁷⁵ The donor of one of the inscriptions found at this Tārā Vihāra was Āpāy Daḷsiva, who is to be identified with the *āḍipāda* Dāṭhāsiva mentioned as a king of Rohaṇa in the *Cūlavamsa*. Perera notes that paleography suggests that the inscription comes after Kāśyapa III’s (724–730) inscription, bolstering the credibility of Lü Xiang’s claim that Vajrabodhi had indeed persuaded the king of Rohaṇa to accept the principles and deities of the Mahāyāna.⁷⁶

*Vc. The Third Validation of the Biography:
Shipwreck and Vajrabodhi's Loss of the Vajroṣṇīṣa*

In his tale of the Iron Stūpa, an allegorized account of the origin of the highly-valued *Vajroṣṇīṣa*⁷⁷ teachings, Amoghavajra quotes Vajrabodhi's telling of the episode of the cataclysmic sea-storm which beset his ship on the initial approach to China:

I set forth from the western country [India] to cross the southern ocean in a fleet of more than thirty great ships, each one carrying more than five or six hundred persons. Once, when we were crossing in convoy in the very middle of the great ocean we ran into a typhoon. All the ships we depended upon were tossed about [like driftwood], and the ship I was on was about to be inundated. At that time I always kept the two scriptures [that is, full and abridged versions of the *Vajroṣṇīṣa*—my brackets, JRS] I was bringing nearby so that I could receive and keep them and do the offerings. Now, when the captain saw that the ship was about to sink, everything on board was cast into the ocean, and in a moment of fright the one-hundred-thousand-verse text was flung into the ocean, and only the superficial text was saved. At that time I aroused my mind in meditation, doing the technique for eliminating disasters, and the typhoon abated, and for perhaps more than a quarter mile around the ship wind and water did not move. All on board took refuge in me, and bit by bit we got to this shore and arrived in this country.⁷⁸

There are many factors and circumstances in Vajrabodhi's biography and translated works that lead us to believe in the veracity of Amoghavajra's account. Primarily, the veracity is evidenced by Vajrabodhi's 723 CE translation of the first *samāja* of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*, which bears but faint resemblance to the highly corroborant texts for which we have extant Sanskrit manuscripts from Nepal, the Tibetan translations, and the version known to Amoghavajra, which was seemingly gathered from his Śrī Laṅkā expedition just two decades after Vajrabodhi's publication.⁷⁹ The "translation" of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* provided by Vajrabodhi stands at such variance to all of the other versions, including the text translated by Amoghavajra upon his return from the text-gathering trip to Śrī Laṅkā, that it has been taken to be a ritual *sādhana*.⁸⁰ Indeed, it is not impossible that what Vajrabodhi provided as his translation of the first section of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* is entirely his own creation, extemporized in Chang'an based upon imperfect memories of the text he encountered in Kāñcī and resources available to him in

China: Vajrabodhi's version of the text disposed many excerpts from the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*,⁸¹ an alternate *mūlasūtra* certainly available to Vajrabodhi in Chang'an because it was translated by his fellow Indian monk Śubhākarasiṃha.⁸²

These considerations are reinforced by the chronology worked out by Chou, which places the meeting of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra in 718 CE.⁸³ It is interesting to note that Amoghavajra's presentation of the storm story perfectly accords with Chou's chronology: Amoghavajra quotes Vajrabodhi in the third person, confirming that the loss occurred on the initial approach to China in 716, when Amoghavajra was not there.⁸⁴

It is imperative to observe that for the remainder of Vajrabodhi's life, he and Amoghavajra had to conduct their activities without access to the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, the major text of the school, improvising and relying upon Vajrabodhi's memory.⁸⁵ Even with this drastic impairment, Vajrabodhi established his reputation in China as an influential Buddhist thaumaturge, preceptor, confidante to the emperor, and innovator despite his lack of access to the major texts of his discipline, and at the end of his life he instructed his favored disciple Amoghavajra to journey back to Śrī Laṅkā to find them.

*Laṅkā as the Exclusive Destination for
Amoghavajra's 742 Text-Gathering Expedition*

Another primary benefit to the study of Lü Xiang's biography of Vajrabodhi is that it provides clues and a context for the seemingly exclusive interest in the Sinhalese kingdom of Anurādhapura exhibited by Amoghavajra during his 742–746 sojourn, and subsequent Śailendra interest in the Abhayagiri monks and monastery.

That Vajrabodhi's disciple Amoghavajra restricted his epic journey of 742–746 to the Sinhalese kingdom of Anurādhapura, but no farther, is almost certain. There is an off-pitch tone which is rung in the several accounts which describe Amoghavajra's alleged journey to India, namely, the pervasive attempts on the part of his biographers to excuse a description of Amoghavajra's exploits in India on the grounds of its indescribable expansiveness. The early biographer Zhao Qian's (趙遷) awkward interjection of a brief mention of India ("Amoghavajra then visited India; he traveled in all of India's kingdoms. The traces of his activities are so plentiful that we must leave a gap, as we cannot record all the details"; T. 2056, 50.293a16) is reprised in the official

Song biography collated by Zanning. Zhao Qian makes no mention of texts gathered, sights seen, teachers found, notables encountered, researches conducted, or miracles performed, despite this journey being Amoghavajra's first trip to the original sites of historical Buddhism. On this fundamental detail, the question of whether Amoghavajra went to India at all, Zanning was unable to conjure up any more details of Amoghavajra's alleged Indian excursion despite his access to the widest array of biographical material possible; Zanning's narrative simply claimed that "then he visited the Five Indias, where he caused auspicious omens many times" (T. 2061, 50.712c10).⁸⁶

Amoghavajra's monastic disciple Feixi (飛錫),⁸⁷ who helped Amoghavajra with translation work, presents a restricted and, to my mind, accurate account of Amoghavajra's journey. In his biographical stele,⁸⁸ dated just a handful of days after the 774 CE death of Amoghavajra and composed on imperial order, Feixi stated flatly that his master's singular destination for the transoceanic voyage was the island of Laṅkā: the emperor Xuanzong (玄宗) sent Amoghavajra to the Country of the Siṃhalas as an "envoy to aid the religion of the empire" (*jiguo xinshi*, 齋國信使).⁸⁹ According to Feixi, Amoghavajra then returned directly from Laṅkā in 747 CE.⁹⁰

Given this abundant and persuasive evidence that Amoghavajra limited his ventures to Laṅkā (a constraint seemingly imposed by his dying master Vajrabodhi in his will; see Zhao Qian, T. 2056, 50.292c14)⁹¹ when he sought to recover the missing cardinal texts of his credo, the operative task is to deduce the unacknowledged rationale which directed this Tang exegete to the Lion Isle. The Song-era biography by Zanning provides no clue to clarify this underlying motive, but in light of the biography of Lü Xiang, a number of plausible explanations suggest themselves. First, the history of the Pallava kingdom where Vajrabodhi spent his seven years of tutelage under Nāgajñāna suggests that it was then unsuitable for Amoghavajra's purposes. It is a historical truth that the Pallavas were in 742 in much tighter straits than when Vajrabodhi studied there during the golden rule of Narasiṃhavarman II. Indeed, given the conditions in the Pallava lands, it may have been not just optimal but absolutely necessary for Amoghavajra to visit Anurādhapura instead of Kāñcī to obtain the *Vajroṣṇīṣa*: the Pallava capital had been overrun and the Pallava dynasty riven by schism since the time that Vajrabodhi had left.⁹² However, whatever might be happening in the domain where Vajrabodhi took his seminal esoteric

instruction at the hands of Nāgajñāna, there are perfectly sound reasons to consider Śrī Laṅkā as a valid objective, rather than a second-best fallback for the crumbling and trouble-filled Pallava state. An obvious justification for preferring Laṅkā comes from noting the fact that the Lambakaṇṇa kings were Buddhists, profuse in their sponsorship of their religion and impressive public monuments to it.⁹³ Lü Xiang devotes great space to accounts of Vajrabodhi fervently and continuously worshipping at such specifically Buddhist sites as the Tooth Relic at the Abhayagirivihāra in Anurādhapura as well as at the Footprint on Adam's Peak.⁹⁴ Given the record of the miraculous response by both items to Vajrabodhi's presence, Vajrabodhi's deep appreciation for the unique spiritual possibilities of contemporary Śrī Laṅkā is not surprising. However, there is no extant documentation which indicates that Amoghavajra followed Vajrabodhi's trail up the sacred mountain, and it seems that the primary purpose of Amoghavajra's trip was to acquire a library of esoteric texts rather than visit pilgrimage sites.⁹⁵ There are other rationales and considerations for preferring Anurādhapura to Kāñcī not inherently evident from the biography of Vajrabodhi. It was certainly within his royal power for Mānavarman to have composited the best library of the type of Buddhist esoterica which attracted Vajrabodhi, and generously allowed him both access and the amanuensis staff necessary to copy the prized texts. Indeed, it is not out of the question that the Sinhalese library of Buddhist esoterica was itself largely authored by the Laṅkān monks exiled with Mānavarman while he awaited his opportunity to cross the strait and gain the throne,⁹⁶ that they were the true source of the innovative esoteric doctrines, and that Nāgajñāna was conveying these Laṅkān-originated teachings. Finally, there is a substantial chance that Nāgajñāna or a skilled disciple, perhaps either the master Samantabhadra, who served as Amoghavajra's final preceptor and initiator, or else the *ācārya* *Ratnabodhi,⁹⁷ moved from Kāñcī to Anurādhapura. In fact, in his longer account of the Shingon lineage, Kūkai wrote of Nāgajñāna specifically that he "resided in South India, where he spread the dharma and benefitted people, and traveled to the kingdom of Siṃhala, where he exhorted those with links with Buddhism" (*Kōbō daishi zenshū* 1:9). It is impossible to determine which of the several alternative rationales is the true reason for Amoghavajra's exclusive preference for gathering texts in Laṅkā, but the repeated claims in both the contemporary Chinese and the early Shingon material that Amoghavajra also studied under

Nāgajñāna during his excursion⁹⁸ seems to tilt the balance of plausibility toward this last explanation.

Given the historical information about Vajrabodhi's discipleship under Nāgajñāna at Kāñcī, we see that we have a very formidable quintet at Kāñcī in the 680s: an internationally renowned tantric master whose disciple ministered to Indian kings and the Chinese emperor, and the four exiled royals (Mānavarman and his sons Aggabodhi V, Kassapa III, and Mahinda I) who would recover their throne and govern Sinhalese Rājaraṭṭha for the fifty years from 684 to 733. It is significant that Amoghavajra took the tantric consecration in Laṅkā. This second, Laṅkān consecration (Amoghavajra's first consecration into the mysteries of the *Yoga-tantras* was given in China by his preceptor Vajrabodhi) was the capstone, the *non plus ultra*, of his religious education and training. To me, it is interesting that Amoghavajra required, requested, and accepted another consecration lineage aside from that offered by Vajrabodhi, his dead primary preceptor, *mūlācārya* and noted patriarch of the Shingon school. Within four years of Amoghavajra requesting his final instruction in the esoteric teachings in Laṅkā, the particular Sinhalese *abhiṣeka* lineage, seemingly associated with Nāgajñāna either directly or at one disciple's remove, again freshly touched the emperor Xuanzong of China, one of the most singularly powerful men in the medieval world before the generals' An Shi rebellions of 755–763 ruined his state. Although Amoghavajra had administered an esoteric consecration to the emperor shortly before setting off on his pilgrimage, providing the emperor with another tantric initiation perhaps superseded the original consecrations which were performed within the lineage of Nāgajñāna via Vajrabodhi. The crux of the issue, as was argued above, may have had to do with the availability of authentic esoteric Buddhist texts.

*The Sea-Storm, Java, and the Location of
the Meeting of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra*

Amoghavajra's independent but parallel account of the great sea-storm, quoting Vajrabodhi in the third-personal singular as though Amoghavajra was absent from the scene, helps substantiate the claim of one of his biographers that Amoghavajra had originally met Vajrabodhi in Java, during the three years after his shipwreck that Vajrabodhi wandered in Southeast Asia. Where exactly in Southeast Asia Vajrabodhi traveled is left unspecified by Lü Xiang, but I do not

envision Vajrabodhi finding spiritual and intellectual satisfaction in the more primitive islands in the South China Sea. Kūkai, for his part, took it as fact that Vajrabodhi met Amoghavajra in Java.⁹⁹ This is corroborated by an extant account, exceedingly likely to be accurate given that it convenes in both time and location with other known facts, of his meeting with Amoghavajra, also compiled into the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*.¹⁰⁰

He was from Siṃhala in southern India. His dharma name was Zhizang [Wisdom Treasury, 智藏] and he was called Amoghavajra [Bukong Jingang, 不空金剛]. Since I have not heard of his clan or family, I will not write about it. It is reckoned that he was born in the cyclic year *yisi* (乙巳), the first year of the Shenlong (神龍) era [705] of the Great Tang. He was naturally intelligent and yearned for the Way from a young age. He left his parents, shaved his head, and [donned] tattered robes. In the cyclic year *wuwu* (戊午), the sixth year of the Kaiyuan era [718], when he was just fourteen, he met Vajrabodhi, the Tripiṭaka Master Hongjiao [Propagator of the Teaching, 弘教三藏],¹⁰¹ in the land of Java [Shepo, 闍婆]¹⁰² and studied under him. He attended upon him in the southern seas, boarding a sailing ship and braving dangers, and through terrifying waves and pounding swells he followed him like a shadow. Only in the eighth year of the Kaiyuan era [720] did he reach the Eastern Capital [Luoyang]. (T. 2157, 55.881a11–a17)

What might we learn from this passage? First, it is obvious that Java ranked among the locales suitable for a well-educated Indian religious adept like Vajrabodhi to occupy his time, instead of energetically resuming his approach to his intended destination of China. Indeed, Java had for centuries been an exponent of Indian Sanskritic culture, in both Śaiva and Bauddha strains, and some locations on the island must have been perceived as hospitable ground for Vajrabodhi. Whether Vajrabodhi, accompanied by an ambassador of the Pallava king, bided his time in the circles of Javanese monastics, Java's laity, or the Śailendra royalty will forever be unknown. However, his presence in Java raises speculation whether such mid-eighth century activity as the establishment of a monastery, whose precise *nikāya* affiliation and Buddhist doctrinal background remain uncertain, at Pikatan by a younger sibling of King Sañjaya (r. 716–746? CE) and the subsequent allotment of crown lands to the Pikatan monastery by Sañjaya's probable son the Raka of Panangkaran,¹⁰³ might reasonably be attributed to Vajrabodhi's influence. As late as his Canggal inscription of 732 CE,

Sañjaya was seemingly devoted to the worship of Śiva, but the mythologized sixteenth-century Sundanese narrative *Carita Parahyangan*, the only pertinent account known to me, declares that Sañjaya himself urged his son to convert from his religion, on the grounds that its bloodthirstiness scared people.¹⁰⁴ It is thus well within the realm of historical possibility that Vajrabodhi planted the seed of appreciation for esoteric Buddhism in Java during his sojourn in 717: the elaborate, richly, and regally endowed Buddhism of the high Śailendra period some decades later seems to have sought to ground itself in the very locales and traditions esteemed by Vajrabodhi a half-century before.

VI. THE PALLAVAS, THE SINHALESE, AND THE SHAPING OF MEDIEVAL BUDDHIST CULTURE

This section will address information and indicators from the realms of the Pallavas and the Sinhalese which bear on the question of Nāgajñāna, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and the doctrines that they encountered and transmitted. In particular, we will take note of the strong Śaiva inflection to some of the Buddhist *Vajroṣṇīṣa* texts associated with this trio, and as well of the great influence of these centers of esoteric teaching on the Buddhist world of the eighth century. After examining briefly the astonishing content of some of these *Vajroṣṇīṣa* works, I will note the pertinence of the thesis which posits ascetic wilderness monks, communing in forbidding locales with Śaiva counterparts, as prototypes of the Buddhist *siddhas*.

In a passage above, it was noted how only four historical personages, three regents and a royal ambassador, were singled out by name in Lü Xiang's biography. It was further established that two of these kings were intimately connected: the Pallava regent Narasiṃhavarman II and the Sinhalese dynast Mānavarman, who spent a long exile at Kāñcī serving as a general (Narasiṃhavarman and Mānavarman possibly shared the bonds of successful campaigns under the Pallava insignia), and who owed his kingdom to the Pallava army of Narasiṃhavarman II's grandfather, the first Narasiṃhavarman (r. 630–668 CE). This debt to the Pallavas was profound: Holt notes Mānavarman's Kāñcī-born sons and successors Aggabodhi V, Kassapa III, and Mahinda I, "all of whom sustained their father's reestablished dynasty, not only had shared their formative exilic years in the court of Narasiṃhavarman but were actually born in India. It is only natural, then, that Pallava cultural and political influence would have become quite strong in Śrī

Laṅkā during the reign of these Sinhalese but culturally and politically Pallava-dominated kings. Indeed, this period of Sinhalese history, beginning in the early eighth century and continuing well into the ninth, witnessed largely unsuccessful attempts at the centralization of royal power patterned after the Pallava administrative model.”¹⁰⁵

The extent of Pallava influence is not limited to extensions of their administrative structures to an allied kingdom. While the contemporary Pallava kings remained energetic devotees of Śiva—Narasimhavarman II Rājasiṃha built the fabulous Kailasanāth temple in Kāñcī, the Dharmarāja *maṇḍapa* cave, and the Rājasiṃheśvara shore temple at Māmallapuram—a remarkable diversity of religious belief was allowed to flourish in their tolerant and cosmopolitan domain.¹⁰⁶ The Pallavas had long permitted Buddhism,¹⁰⁷ and in fact the Chinese religious pilgrim Xuanzang (玄奘) wrote this about the kingdom of “Drāviḍa” (Daluopitu, 達羅毘荼):

The capital is Kāñcīpura, situated on a seaport across from the kingdom of Sinhala.... They are deeply attached to the principles of honesty and truth, and highly esteem learning; in respect of their language and written characters, they differ but little from those of mid-India. There are some hundred of *saṅghārāmas* and 10,000 priests.¹⁰⁸ They all study the teaching of the Sthavira school belonging to the Great Vehicle. There are some eighty Deva temples, and many heretics called Nirgranthas. Tathāgata in olden days, when living in the world, frequented this country much; he preached the law here and converted men, and therefore Aśoka-rāja built stūpas over all the sacred spots where these traces exist.¹⁰⁹

In contrast to the conventional Mahāyāna monk Xuanzang fifty years before, the Vajrabodhi of Lü Xiang’s biography is very much immersed in the apparatus of the generation of the early *tantras* without Lü Xiang explicitly stating so. We observe this in his reading of Nāgārjuna’s corpus, the emphasis on Adam’s Peak (a topic to be explored in depth in the next section), and both the esoteric Buddhist master Nāgajñāna and the *Vajroṣṇīṣa* textual corpus he transmitted to his disciple.¹¹⁰ Indeed, thanks to Lü Xiang we are fortunate to have caught a datable glimpse of these Eighteen Assemblies (largely a proxy reference for the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*) at Kāñcī, in the hands of the teacher of Vajrabodhi, at a datable time. Their second retrieval occurred thirty years later through the directed agency of Amoghavajra, one of its earliest proponents, from the Sinhalese at Anurādhapura.

This Pallava-domain Buddhism, manifestly accepted although seemingly not sponsored by the contemporary Pallava kings, may have served its credo by generating and crystallizing such a seminal text as the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*. That such a text should receive its first historical mention in the Pallava domains is significant in light of Alexis Sanderson's extensive scholarly documentation of direct esoteric Buddhist borrowings from Śaiva tantric texts.¹¹¹ Indeed, Sanderson observes specifically of the innovations of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* that "we find the beginning of a process of assimilation of Śākta Śaiva language, practices, iconography, and concepts that would become ever more comprehensive throughout the rest of the Mantranaya's creativity. Here we find for the first time the requirement that candidates enter a state of possession (*āveśaḥ*) at the time of their initiation. This feature, which is altogether alien to antecedent Buddhism, is the hallmark of initiation in the Śaiva Kaula systems, setting them apart from all others." Sanderson then proposes that "the centrality of possession in the Śākta Śaiva domain may derive from its Kāpālika antecedents, since the *Saiddhāntika* Śaivas report that the Kāpālikas [of the *Atimārga*] defined liberation as arising from a state of possession (*āveśaḥ*) by the qualities of the deity."¹¹² That the Kāpālika themselves were recognized quantities in the Pallava kingdom is known from the Sanskrit farce *Mattavilāsa* (Drunken Sport), where its royal author the Pallava king Mahendravarman II (r. ca. 600–630) contrived a story around a Kāpālika seeking his missing skull-bowl.¹¹³ As for the religious situation at the beginning of the eighth century when Vajrabodhi lived in the Pallava domains, the foundation inscription on the *vimāna* of Narasiṃhavarman II's showpiece Kailāsanātha temple mentions specifically that he was devoted to the Śaiva Siddhānta *mārga*.¹¹⁴ Given the dedication of this regent, one of the cardinal figures in the Vajrabodhi story, to at least a mild form of Śaiva esoterism, one can easily see how a tantric adept like Nāgajñāna could flourish there.¹¹⁵

Assuming that the *Vajroṣṇīṣa* as summarized by Amoghavajra in the *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle Scripture*¹¹⁶ did not differ from the set of original texts given by Nāgajñāna to Vajrabodhi, we see that it is a heady mix indeed, as the *Vajroṣṇīṣa* obtained by Amoghavajra from Śrī Laṅkā¹¹⁷ is redolent of an origination in an esoteric Śaiva context. Among the texts obtained by Amoghavajra may be found the above-mentioned *Tattvasaṃgraha*, which constitutes the first through fifth assemblies

in his *Vajroṣṇīṣa* system; at least one *Yoginī-tantra*, the system's ninth assembly, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-ḍākinījālasaṃvara*;¹¹⁸ and as well an edition of the *Guhyasamāja*, the fifteenth of the assemblies.¹¹⁹ Appreciation of this latter text, which declared itself to be promulgated while the Buddha was residing in the vulva of the Vajra Maidens, was effectively censored by Amoghavajra, who chose to transliterate rather than translate the unchaste term in the original Sanskrit; he noted both discretely and opaquely that the *Guhyasamāja*¹²⁰ was "expounded in a secret place, that is to say, it was expounded in the *yoṣḍbhaga* place, which is called the *Prajñāpāramitā* Palace."¹²¹ Invoking specifically these two latter scriptures, Davidson was led to observe that "The earliest *siddha* literature simply speaks of a sexual ritual that is sacramental rather than yogic. It is found in such scriptures as the *Guhyasamāja*, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, the *Laghusaṃvara*, and others that became understood as proposing the path of 'highest yoga.'"¹²² It is indeed difficult to envision such nominally but superficially Buddhist texts originating in any locale other than a tolerant, strongly Śaiva, and doctrinally effervescent location like Kāñcī, where indeed they were first seen.¹²³

A graphic indicator of the presence of the type of transgressive doctrines espoused by such texts as the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* and the *Guhyasamāja* occurs in the peculiarly-named Nālandā temple in Śrī Laṅkā. This Sinhalese Nālandā was created, almost assuredly by Mānavarman or one of his three Kāñcī-born successor-sons, in a conspicuously anomalous Pallava style. The temple, whose associated inscription has now largely weathered beyond legibility, was evidently built for some transgressive doctrine, as it was embellished with two bas-reliefs each depicting three human and humanoid creatures, the middle of whom is indisputably male, engaged in sexual intercourse. The erotic frieze defies both easy description and easy identification with standard images of symbolic union between a deity and his consort. Possibly the frieze represents the copulation with non-humans enjoined by the *Subāhuparipṛccha*, translated into Chinese in 726 by Śubhākarasiṃha, as a means of harvesting *siddhi* powers.¹²⁴

The context of this first glimpse of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the other texts constituting the *Vajroṣṇīṣa* was "South India," a term which Lü Xiang seemingly used to specify the domain of the Pallavas, where the text likely originated¹²⁵ and was formulated before it had a chance to be institutionalized in such renowned monasteries as Nālandā.¹²⁶



Figure 3. The “Nālanda” temple in Śrī Lanḡā, unique for its execution in Pallava style, was almost certainly the handiwork of Mānavarman or one of his three Kāñcī-born successor-sons. The temple contains an erotic frieze which must accord with the purpose of the temple. Photographs courtesy of Ven. Rangama Chandawimala Thero.

That the *Tattvasaṃgraha* should make its way quickly into the larger and more influential intellectual venues is no surprise if we consider the firm evidence of the wide-ranging journeys of such historical characters as the peripatetic Vajrabodhi; the near-contemporary Chinese pilgrim Daolin (道琳), who expressed strong interest in the methods of the Buddhist *tantra* and who coursed from Nālandā to Lāṭa in western India to “stand before the divine altar and receive the *vidyās* once again”;¹²⁷ or his kindred spirit Śākyamitra, tentatively dated by Davidson to the late eighth or early ninth century,¹²⁸ who traveled almost as widely as Vajrabodhi in search of spiritual truth, venturing to Koṅkana in western India, Sahya in the Western Ghats, Draviḍa in the south, and Oḍiyāna in the north.

That Nālandā served as a common nexus among these characters is significant, for as Sanderson observes, “Under these [Pāla] rulers eastern India witnessed an extraordinary development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in all its branches, particularly in the Tantric Way of Mantras (Mantranaya), which if not entirely the product of this region was very largely so; and this immense creativity, whose products formed in due course the basis of the Buddhism of Inner Asia, was nurtured and refined in a number of major monasteries, of which the most eminent were those of Nālandā, Vikramaśīla, Somapura, Trikaṭuka, Uddanḍapura, and Jagaddala.”¹²⁹

However true this may be, Nālandā was not uniquely prolific, as there was seemingly no geographic center for the depth-psychological realizations which underlay the generation of the Buddhist *tantras*; Sanderson’s reliable primary observation on Nālandā seems to ignore an obvious second pole in the early development of these scriptures: the Pallava-Sinhala nexus which is so evident from the biography of Vajrabodhi and the actions of Amoghavajra. Indeed, it is interesting to reflect on the fact that, of all of the Buddhist *viḥāras* visited by Vajrabodhi during his long monastic career, only the Abhayagirivihāra and Nālandā are singled out by name.

That Nāgajñāna, the earliest recorded preceptor known to promote and distribute this genre of text, is associated with no named *viḥāra* despite Vajrabodhi’s seven years’ study there is indeed food for thought, especially in light of Gray’s hypothesis that the Buddhist forest or wilderness monks served as a bridge by which Śaiva religious innovations were channeled into esoteric Buddhist texts. Gray ascribed the genesis of this esoteric Buddhist material to the mingling

of Buddhist wilderness monks and Śaiva meditators and ascetics in the charnel grounds on the edges of society.¹³⁰ It is therefore of some importance to note that the extant Theravāda chronicles record a revival, starting with Mānavarman himself, in sustained royal sponsorship of the Sinhalese forest monks during the second Lambakaṇṇa dynasty,¹³¹ even while suppressing mention of Lambakaṇṇa patronage of the type of esoteric doctrines which are so manifest in the contemporary Chinese chronicles of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra. (Besides the direct textual evidence of the esoteric inclinations of the Lambakaṇṇa dynast Mānavarman, it is clear that his grandson Aggabodhi VI, the king named Śilāmegha in the biographies of Amoghavajra who reigned ca. 733–772 CE, worshipped in the same manner. A unique admission by any of the Mahāvihāra chronicles that a Sinhalese king was lured into delusional support for tantric doctrine comes from the early fourteenth-century chronicle *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya* written by the monk Devarakṣita/Dharmakīrti at the upland temple of Gaḍalādeniya, which asserts that King “Matvala-Sen” [“Mad Dog Sena,” i.e., Sena I, r. 833–853 CE] fell victim to a cunning Indian monk of the Vajraparvata sect.¹³²) Either we must posit that the kings of the second Lambakaṇṇa dynasty like Mānavarman and Sena I followed a curious pattern of dual tracks of royal favoritism, supporting handsomely both the ascetic wilderness monks mentioned in the later Theravāda histories and separately (but in parallel) the group of tantric adepts whose existence was edited out of the orthodox histories; or else we must accept that the Sinhalese wilderness monks *were* the monks who were the primary transmitters of Vajrayāna Buddhism in Śrī Laṅkā. A fascinating substantiation of the validity of Gray’s hypothesis about the role of the wilderness monks in the introduction of Śaiva doctrine into esoteric Buddhist practice is found in the form of the cache of unambiguously esoteric Buddhist statues,¹³³ discovered together in 1983 at the circular hilltop *vaṭadāge* named Girikaṇḍivihāra at Tiriyāy on Laṅkā’s northeast coast¹³⁴ which was created during the reign of Amoghavajra’s patron Śilāmegha.¹³⁵ The statues were recovered from under a paving stone of a ruined meditation hall (*padhāna ghara*) with the double-platform¹³⁶ which is distinctive to the Sinhalese wilderness monks,¹³⁷ positioned just to the west of the northern stairway leading to the *vaṭadāge*. Given this apparently substantial indication of the esoteric proclivities of the eighth-century Sinhalese wilderness monks,¹³⁸ there can be no surprise in discovering the presence of exactly this genre of monks occupying

another double-platform meditation hall on the Ratu Baka plateau in the Central Javanese heartlands,¹³⁹ explicitly Sinhalese, explicitly originating from the Abhayagirivihāra, and acting under royal Śailendra patronage.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, these royally-patronized ascetic activities paralleled and possibly inspired the intermittent wilderness retreats of such Sino-Japanese tantric figures as Kūkai, Hanguang (含光), and Amoghavajra himself at their imperially-sponsored mountain *vihāras* of Jingesi (金閣寺) on Mount Wutai (五臺山) and Kongōbuji (金剛峯寺) on Mount Kōya (高野山).

With Gray's strongly and almost undeniably substantiated suppositions about the central role played by wilderness monks in the transfer of tantric Śaiva doctrine into esoteric Buddhist text in mind, we might account for the lack of a named *vihāra* for Nāgajñāna by assuming that he was not formally associated with a temple, but instead led his life as a wandering ascetic, rather like Nāgabodhi and other *siddha* figures known to the Tibetans. Indeed, in any effort to examine the evidence to understand what Davidson in his influential study called "the tension that developed between forms of esoterism that evolved within the hallowed walls of Buddhist monasteries and those forms synthesized by the peripatetic figures of the Buddhist 'Perfected' (*siddha*),"¹⁴¹ it seems to me that what we know about the nominally liminal wilderness Abhayagirivāsins like those at the top of the Ratu Baka in Java renders them strong candidates for the role of proto-*siddhas*. The similarities in practice and background between wilderness monks and *siddhas* are undeniable: as Davidson phrases the matter, "Since the contemporary Indian literature depicted this dominion [over *Vidyādhara* sorcerers—my brackets, JRS] as achieved by those performing their rites in real or visualized cemeteries, *siddhas*' ritual systems demonstrate an obsession with the same means. The cemeteries, isolated groves, primal forests, and analogous locales were understood to be the gateways to the *Vidyādhara* realm, and alternative species of beings—tribal, demonic, kingly, whatever—were understood to be their aids to success. All these elements contributed to the *siddhas*' practice, whose overarching designation was simply the *Vidyādhara* discipline (*vidyādhara-saṃvara*)."¹⁴² The wilderness monks were likely the agents who ushered in the material of the transgressive *Yoginī-tantras* like the copies of the *Sarva-buddhasamāyogaḍākinījālasaṃvara*¹⁴³ and the *Guhyasamāja* which were obtained by Amoghavajra during his 741–746 text-gathering trip, and which almost certainly came from a sojourn at the Abhayagirivihāra



Figure 4. The hilltop *vaṭadāge* named Girikaṇḍivihāra at Tiriyāy and Paranavitana's proposed reconstruction of the original form. At the wilderness monastery, presumably named Girikaṇḍi, just to the north of the *stūpa* was found the largest cache of esoteric Buddhist statues yet recovered from Śrī Laṅkā. Also around the *vaṭadāge* were six shrines, including one devoted to the Footprint Relic worshipped by Vajrabodhi. The inscriptions of the *vaṭadāge* associate it with Amoghavajra's host, King Śīlāmegha. Image taken from Senarat Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo* (Colombo: Lake House Investments, 1967), 26.



Figure 5. The *prākāra* created by the Javanese Śailendra king on the Ratu Baka plateau for the Sinhalese monks of the Abhayagirivihāra. The distinctive double-platformed structure lying within is found in a number of places in Śrī Laṅkā, primarily some kilometers to the west of the Abhayagiri *stūpa* at Anurādhapura and at Ritigala, but also at Tiriyāy where the large hoard of esoteric Buddhist statues was discovered under one of the paving stones. The structures served the *tapovana*, or forest ascetic, monks. In this Javanese instance, the *vana* was conspicuously lacking; the structure was located at the end of a long array of purposely-leveled terraces, accessed by a lofty double gate, near which was found a royally-sponsored *vajra*-mantra associated with the *Sarvatathāgatattva-saṃgraha*.¹⁴⁴ Photo courtesy of Mark Long.

there. Indeed, the Śailendras were very likely acquainted with these particular *Yoginī-tantras*, and perhaps more, at least by the time of their first contacts with the Abhayagirivihāra a half century after Amoghavajra. For this reason, Central Java might offer uniquely illuminating and tightly chronologized data on the joint presence of both wilderness monks and *siddhas*, as will be argued in depth below.

Continuing on the theme of the wilderness monks straddling the line between ordained Buddhist monastic and free-living antinomian Buddhist *siddhas*, we see that there are implications for the dating and relative sequencing of the texts of the *Yoga-*, *Yoginī-*, and *Niruttarayoga-tantras* which might help illuminate an important historical process. Nihom observes that “despite the *Tattvasaṃgraha*’s proclamation that the purely Buddhist Vajradhātu maṇḍala subordinates the other maṇḍalas presented in the text,” which are populated by a mélange of Buddhist and pacified Hindu deities, “the Vajradhātumaṇḍala may have been codified from pre-existing elements and so introduced by the *Tattvasaṃgraha* for the purpose of providing a relatively orthodox Buddhist explanation for other *yogatantra* maṇḍalas.”¹⁴⁵ Acknowledging the validity of Nihom’s point, Gray worked with the extant evidence to place the early *Yoginī-tantras* like the *Cakrasaṃvara* in a freshly envisioned historical setting, reaching the novel but well-substantiated conclusion that the *Yoginī* doctrines must have paralleled or probably even preceded the *Yoga-tantras* rather than followed them.¹⁴⁶ Gray concludes that the *Niruttarayoga-tantras* were “texts which may have been inspired in part by sources of authority which lay outside of the monastic sphere, such as among the forest and charnel ground renunciants whose relationships with the monasteries were probably tenuous, and where they would come into close association with the Śaiva renunciants who were originating a similar set of practices and meditations.”¹⁴⁷ The interesting dynamic in late seventh-century Buddhist India was therefore not how the early *Niruttarayoga-tantras* evolved from the *Yoga-tantras*, but rather how the tantric texts which were being synthesized and increasingly studied in the orthodox urban *grāhavāsī* monasteries accommodated the transgressive but apparently effective doctrines originated by the wilderness *āraṇyavāsī* monks.

We may be witness to this phenomenon of assimilation reified in a Sinhalese *Siddhamāṭṭṛkā* inscription of the mid-ninth century, found among the ruins of a group of buildings to the north-west of the Twin Ponds (Kuṭṭampokuṇa) area, themselves about 125 meters to the

east-northeast of the Abhayagiri stūpa.¹⁴⁸ The ruined structures may be safely identified as the ārāma of the Abhayagirivihāra named Kapāra, for another Sanskrit inscription from within the same confines, first reported in 1954, provides the name of the cloister.¹⁴⁹ The *Cūlavamsa* chronicles record that Sena I built the Vīraṅkura ārāma¹⁵⁰ within the precincts of the Abhayagiri and extended his royal patronage to the Kappūra and Uttarālha fraternities.¹⁵¹ An extended examination of the paleographical features led Gunawardana to conclude that the record contains features closely approximated by the inscriptions of the Pāla king Devapāladeva and thus falls within the first half of the ninth century, incidentally the period during which Sena I reigned.¹⁵² The inscription was treated by Gunawardana, who wrung useful facts out of it. Based on the content of the extant portions, Gunawardana notes that “the last of the legible lines [of the inscription] fix the number of monks who were to live at the monastery and lay down regulations pertaining to the filling of vacancies that may occur. It appears from this portion of the inscription that regulations were being laid down for a hermitage which had been recently founded.”¹⁵³ The cumulative evidence (the provenance from the Kapārārāma, the paleography and the very choice of the Siddham script, the inaugural tone of the inscription) thus all seems to point to this inscription being an edict of Sena I, who was the confirmed sponsor of the multitude of wilderness monk meditation platforms clustered at Ritigala and the notorious apostate admitted to by the *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya*. The inscription contains a strophe reading *cāturmahānikāyeṣu pañcaviṃśatiḥ pañcaviṃśatis tapasvinaḥ tena śatannaivāsikānāṃ catvāriṃśat śāstrābhiyuktās tapasvinaḥ nikāyabhedamvināpi grhītaniśrayāḥ*, or “[There shall reside] twenty-five monks from each of the four mahānikāyas; thus [making] one hundred residents in all. [Of these, there shall be] forty ascetics versed in the śāstras. [They shall be] those who have taken tutelege (*niśraya*) void of any difference with regard to a nikāya.”¹⁵⁴ On the basis of this information, Gunawardana was able to demonstrate the presence in medieval Śrī Laṅkā of the four great Indian Buddhist nikāyas.¹⁵⁵

For the purpose of the present essay, especially given Sena I’s sponsored erection of fifty-odd wilderness double-platform structures on the mountainside at Ritigala, what is remarkable is the term used to designate the newly installed inhabitants of the Kapārārāma: *tapasvins*, or “ascetics; generators of ascetic *tapas* power.” Given Rahula’s observation that “there were also forest-dwelling monks known as

āranyavāsī or *vanavāsī* dwelling in jungle areas, as opposed to *grāhavāsī* residing in towns and villages. From about the 6th century, the forest-dwelling monks were sometimes referred to as *tapassi* ‘hermit’ or ‘ascetic’, which is not a term usually applied to *bhikkhus*,” we might very well surmise that these selected individuals were the same species of royally-patronized wilderness monks who were sponsored by Lambakaṇṇa and Śailendra alike.¹⁵⁶ Given our complete lack of understanding of the *nikāya* affiliations of the wilderness monks, we must raise the issue of what sort of *tapasvins* are designated in the inscription, especially the forty who were tasked with studying the *śāstras*.¹⁵⁷ What are we to make of the situation? Several interpretations present themselves. First, the inscription may after all refer to one hundred ordinary *grāhavāsī* monks from the four traditional *nikāyas*, flattering them with an unconventional and perhaps unexpected description of their *tapas* power, a term which seems much better suited to the *āranyavāsī* from both the more ancient sister structures explicitly associated with the Abhayagiri and located just a few miles to the west of the Kapārārāma and as well from Sena I’s Ritigala site along the Kadambanadi river thirty miles to the southeast. If this first interpretation is rejected as unlikely, then in the inscription are we encountering a description of a mixed cohort of monks, both conventional *grāhavāsī* monks of an ascetic *tapasvin* bent as well as forty wilderness monks, devoid of *nikāya* affiliations, who excelled in the study of the *śāstra* texts?¹⁵⁸ As a final alternative, are we to interpret the inscription as designating an entire century of the wilderness monks sponsored by Sena I and inducted into an urban monastery, including both sixty wilderness *tapasvins* who were formally affiliated with a *nikāya* and a group of *tapasvins* who stood outside of the *nikāya* structure?¹⁵⁹ If the latter is the case that holds, then we must confront the possibility that we have intercepted the chance epigraphic survival of a historical datum which suggests that Sena I sponsored not only the monastic wilderness *tapasvins* who seemed to be so heavily involved in the germination and propagation of the esoteric Buddhist texts, but also sponsored within his urban monastery a group of individuals with only a nodding acquaintance with monastic norms and obligations, who we might take to be *siddhas*. In support of this interpretation, we should note an observation by Gray, in his fascinating dissertation on the origins and doctrines of the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra*: “the locus of tantric practice in early medieval India appears to have been the

siddha movement.... It appears to have developed in association with the forest renunciant tradition, independent of the monasteries, which is suggested by the numerous stories of *siddhas* who did live in the monasteries being expelled on account of their antinomian behavior.”¹⁶⁰ Indeed, these forest monks, like *siddhas*, seem to have organized themselves into *gaṇā*, or “circles”:¹⁶¹ the *paṃsukūlikas* belonging to the Abhayagiri separated and formed their own special group (*gaṇā’hesum*) in the twentieth year of Sena II (r. 853–887 CE).¹⁶²

Antinomian *siddha* figures seemingly are not directly represented in contemporary East Asian accounts, but I think that there is substantial evidence that such adept ascetics were known to the Javanese and were prominently and copiously represented in the lithic sculptures of certain of their temples, including such Śailendra Buddhist edifices as the causeway amendments to the eminent Caṇḍi Sewu temple, the lintels above each of the appended porches in the inner- and outermost of the four tiers of Sewu’s 240 shrines, at least two of the five Jina temples at Caṇḍi Ngawen, on the lintel above the entryway to Caṇḍi Pawon, and on the reliefs of the Barabudur *stūpa*. In all cases, these bearded figures seem to be positioned on high in the backgrounds of lintels, sometimes amidst clouds, in poses of apparent flight or levitation. They wear earrings, jeweled armbands, and an *upavīta* cord, and tie their hair back into a topknot (fig. 6). On both the Sewu shrines and the Barabudur reliefs, these bearded images share space with conventional heavenly *devas* as the predominant iconic motif.

Given the prevalence of these bearded figures, we must seek to determine what the sculptors intended to represent. When I first noticed these figures at Caṇḍi Sewu, I assumed that they were *ṛṣis* and marveled at the pervasive portrayal of a Hindu presence on a Buddhist temple. This superficial identification is trivially disproven by comparing these bearded mystery figures’ iconography with that of the depiction of the explicitly ascetic *ṛṣi* Bhīṣmottarasangheṣa from the story on the Barabudur walls (fig. 7). Bhīṣmottarasangheṣa is presented as quite lean and wearing nothing but a loincloth; he certainly bears no adornment like the bearded lintel figures. Conveniently for our examinations, the image on his Barabudur panel provides the *ṛṣi* with the conspicuous heavenly accompaniment of our floating bearded figures on one side and *devas* on the other; the bearded figures clearly differ from the *ṛṣi*.



Figure 6. A lintel recovered from the Plain of Saragedug south of the Ratu Baka plateau, providing an excellent general depiction of the type of figures which adorn the entryway amendments on the main Caṇḍi Sewu temple and the porches added to the inner and outer of its four tiers of 240 subsidiary shrines, as well as several other temples in Java. Records of the precise provenance of this particular lintel, conspicuous for its depiction of apparently East Asian figures and now in the Museum Sonobudoyo in Yogyakarta, were destroyed during the Indonesian War of Independence, allegedly by a Dutch bomb.¹⁶³

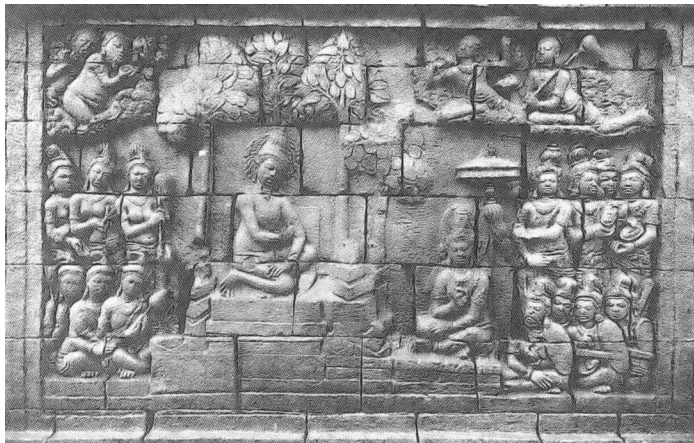


Figure 7. Bhīṣmottarasangheṣa, explicitly identified in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as a *ṛṣi*, depicted on the walls of the *stūpa* at Barabudūr. The reader will note that both varieties of the Sewu shrines' lintel motifs are to be seen perched in the clouds in the background; the figures on the Javanese temple lintels are clearly not intended to represent *ṛṣis*.

A well-considered hypothesis concerning the specific identity of somewhat similar bearded figures has been recently made by Acri.¹⁶⁴ On the basis of evidence gathered from Old Javanese literature and Central Javanese temple reliefs at both the Buddhist *stūpa* of Barabudur and the Śaiva temple of Prambanan, where figures with comparable general attributes to the bearded lintel figures are found in narrative panels depicting scenes of human dancers and terrestrial entertainers, Acri has proposed to identify them as *vidus*, Śaiva ascetics-cum-performers living at the periphery of the religious scene. These theatrical ascetics, Acri argues, could represent a Javanese localization of Atimārga groups known from Sanskrit literature, such as Pāśupatas, Kāpālikas, and Kārukas. Just like their South Asian counterparts, the Javanese characters, although bearing signs of Brahmanical attire, are ridiculed by the literary sources—apparently lying within the boundaries of the orthodox form of Śaiva Siddhānta sanctioned by the *kraton*—and depicted as dancers and buffoons indulging in drinking bouts and enjoying the company of women, or even as foreign spies and insurrectionists masquerading as ascetics.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, Acri's identifications of *vidus* at the performance scenes in the narrative panels seem highly plausible. However, for the bearded lintel characters to be selected for widespread representation at such a number of the Central Javanese Buddhist temples, alternating at Sewu and at Barabudur with representations of celestial beings, suggests to me that the bearded figures on those temples are more than just the peripheral Śaiva minstrel-ascetics who might be found intermittently in the performance scenes demanded by the narratives depicted on the panels.

If the *ṛṣi* hypothesis does not bear fruit and the Śaiva *vidu* hypothesis seems unlikely given the predominance of these bearded figures at Buddhist temples, I cannot at present reject the notion that these untensured figures represent adept monks subject only to the Mahāyāna *vinaya*, a topic of considerable importance in Kūkai's Japan and pertinent to the lintel's figures because the Mahāyāna *vinaya* did not require the shaving of a disciple's head.¹⁶⁶ Alternatively, the bearded lintel figures may be references to the great tantric ascetic monk Mahākāśyapa, whose long hair and unshaven beard served as an indicator of the longevity of his cave *samādhi*. Vajrabodhi's fellow Indian monk Śubhākarasiṃha (fig. 8) reportedly tended Mahākāśyapa's locks.¹⁶⁷ However, pending further research into the specific stipulations of the Mahāyāna *vinaya*, both the provision of sculpted earrings

and jeweled armbands for the lintel figures, as well as their existence on an elevated plane that they shared with *devas*, tends to minimize the persuasiveness of appeals to a relaxed *vinaya* code as an explanation for the bearded mystery figures.¹⁶⁸

As argued in an earlier paper of mine,¹⁶⁹ an eleventh-century Ratnagiri portrayal (fig. 9) of a possible *siddha*¹⁷⁰ presented in Davidson's study¹⁷¹ provides to my eye an exact iconographic match for the bearded mystery figures on the Javanese lintels: each of the fundamental features (the beard and moustache, the hair tied into a topknot, the *upavīta*, the earrings and jeweled armbands) are shared between the two depictions. As Davidson argues, the seeming Ratnagiri *siddha* has gained the sword *siddhi* and become a *vidyādhara*, a Buddhist sorcerer of immense contemporary fascination to Indian and Chinese Buddhist audiences. I am presently convinced of the identification of the Javanese lintel characters as *siddhas* who had gained the supernatural power of *khecari*, the *siddhi* of flight.¹⁷²

To summarize the developments in Central Java discussed in the pages immediately above, we find that within a fifty-year span we evidently have a stimulating and edgy mixture of modes of Buddhist being: Sinhalese wilderness monks of the Abhayagirivihāra (792 CE), and, seemingly, depictions of *siddhas* on some of the middle-period Buddhist temples (Barabudur ca. 825?, the renovated Caṇḍi Sewu¹⁷³ ca. 835?). How these seemingly consonant groups might fit together on a Venn diagram is still a matter of conjecture and speculation, but the Central Javanese evidence argues that they do all indeed deserve to appear clustered on the same diagram. Whether or not a true eighth-century wilderness monk resembled the *siddha* characters or followed a specifically Mahāyāna *vinaya*, there is no denying that an excellent case could be made that the behavior and beliefs associated with ascetic wilderness monks who held to the doctrines of the esoteric Buddhist texts was the fundamental causeway to a fully developed *siddha* movement.

In regard to the surfacing of explicit *siddha* modes only in India, Tibet, and Java, I would like to remark on a statement by Gray, who notes of his studies on the date of the *Cakrasaṃvara*: "This would make the *Cakrasaṃvara* an unorthodox contemporary tradition to the *Tattvasaṃgraha*; the former the product of extra-monastic communities of *yogins*, the latter a product of the monastic context. The latter tradition was well received in East Asia which was for cultural reasons



Figure 8. The self-portrait of Śubhākarasiṃha from the *Gobu shinkan*. Image taken from Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Five_Abhisambodhi_1.jpg.¹⁷⁴



Figure 9. In the center, an eleventh-century Ratnagiri depiction of a possible *siddha* who had gained the sword *siddhi* and become a *vidyādhara*. Detail from the pedestal of a crowned Buddha image (left) from Ratnagiri, Orissa, now in the Patna Museum, inv. no. Arch 6501. Ratnagiri photos: G. Mevissen 2011, courtesy of Patna Museum. At the right, a close-up of the Saragedug lintel of fig. 6. Although more than a century and a half separates their sculpting, the reader will observe the striking similarities between the figures: the topknot, beard and moustache, the *upavīta*, the earring and armband. The Javanese versions are almost entirely depicted among the clouds, presumably having mastered the flight *siddhi*.

more receptive to less transgressive traditions, but the former tradition was very well received in Tibet, where objections of the type encountered in China were raised, but were evidently overcome, probably due to the decentralized political state Tibet was in at the time, which would have rendered ineffective any attempts at censorship.”¹⁷⁵ We should note that the extant historiographical evidence and the geography of Java suggest that the Javanese were better linked with those traditions which traveled to China, but the social milieu suggests that the Tibetan experience with Buddhism was better suited. In the end, it may have been the personal predilections of the reigning king which determined which types of doctrines, monasteries, and monks would receive royal patronage and official support.

VII. ADAM’S PEAK: ALLEGORIZED MOUNTAIN AND MYTHICIZED SOURCE OF ESOTERIC TEACHING

The final feature of note in Lü Xiang’s biography is the extensive narrative of Vajrabodhi’s ascension of Adam’s Peak to worship at the Buddha’s mystical footprint. It is remarkable that Lü Xiang should describe the event with such care and in such detail; the reader is left with the almost necessary interpretation that this mystical ascension of Adam’s Peak was seminal for Vajrabodhi,¹⁷⁶ perhaps exceeding in importance even his esoteric consecration at the hands of Nāgajñāna.¹⁷⁷ While the importance of this is implied by the substantial narrative space devoted to the episode by Lü Xiang, there is much that is known from the schools of Buddhism practiced in Tibet, Laṅkā, and Java some eighty years later which offer the grounds to greatly amplify modern understanding of this passage in Lü Xiang’s biography.

Such an intensive and dedicated description of Mount Laṅkā would not be out of place in the judgments of near-contemporary Tibetan¹⁷⁸ devotees of esoteric Buddhism, for, as Mayer observes in regard to the early Tibetan rNying-ma (Ancient) School, “The rNying-ma-pa tradition holds that many of their earliest scriptures, specifically very early tantric materials, were first revealed in Ceylon, especially at Adam’s Peak.”¹⁷⁹ Few of the texts which Mayer describes as claiming to originate on Adam’s Peak have been published, but one prime example, the *Dgongs pa ’dus pa’i mdo*¹⁸⁰ (The Sutra of Gathered Intentions, Skt. *Samājavidyā-sūtra*), has been translated and extensively explicated by Dalton in his doctoral dissertation. The root *tantra* of the *Dgongs pa ’dus pa’i mdo* opens with a prophecy of the historical Buddha at his

parinirvāṇa that he will “return to teach secret mantra at the peak of Mt. Malaya¹⁸¹ in Śrī Laṅkā” to five notable disciples, one of whom is the demon Rāvaṇa known as the “Lord of Laṅkā,” who spent the intervening 112 years in meditation. After the century passed, the five disciples emerged from meditation to discover the Buddha had died and the world has plunged into misery, provoking a curious reaction which is strikingly similar to Lü Xiang’s description of the reaction of Vajrabodhi and his disciples upon encountering the Buddha’s footprint on the peak of the *Laṅkāparvata: “Having marvelously and involuntarily wept, they each clairvoyantly perceived all. Through acts of magic they truly and completely gathered upon the peak of the thunderbolt Mount Malaya, on the ocean island of the realm of [Śrī] Laṅkā. Thus gathered together, the whole assembly, with one voice let out a wail of extreme desperation.”¹⁸² Dalton continues: “This cry of yearning is heard by the Buddhas, who rouse Śākyamuni and send him, in the form of Vajrapāṇi, the Lord of Secrets, down to the peak called ‘Ferocious’, otherwise known as Mount Malaya [Malayagiri], on the island of [Śrī] Laṅkā, to fulfill his own prophecy.”¹⁸³ Interestingly for Laṅkā studies, “Mount Malaya” also features in the *Dgongs pa ’dus pa’i mdo*’s incorporation of a Rudra-taming myth, where Adam’s Peak replaces the Mount Sumeru of the analogous Maheśvara-taming myth in the preeminent *Yoga-tantra*, the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*.¹⁸⁴ The linkage between Adam’s Peak and Sumeru is seemingly made explicit in a piece of archaeological evidence recently recovered from no place other than the Abhayagirivihāra itself, where a replica of Sumeru bearing the footprints of the Buddha was lodged under a statue of the Buddha.¹⁸⁵

Other than the Laṅkā-centered experiences of Vajrabodhi, I am aware of no evidence which suggests that an equivalent appreciation of Adam’s Peak in the extant corpus of the Tang Chinese esoterists, so Lü Xiang’s inclusion of this passage might seem to be the product of some tale related to him by Vajrabodhi; I can only surmise that the emphasis that Lü Xiang placed on the story comes from his honest conveyance of an equal sense of importance to his master. Phenomenologically, Vajrabodhi’s experience of Adam’s Peak is reported as mystical, wild, and dangerous; literarily, Lü Xiang has conveyed a great number of seeming irrelevancies, such as the lateral movements across the mountain.¹⁸⁶ There is just enough possible irrelevancy to make one think that it is a factual narrative of a journey, and just enough of the patently

supernatural to make one think that it is an allegory; Lü Xiang's description might be intentionally metaphorical, or it might also be his own direct but uncomprehending transmission of a narrative which his preceptor Vajrabodhi fashioned as a metaphor or an allegory.

Pertinent to the study of Javanese Buddhism, such allegorical imagery features in the very opening strophe of the Javanese Abhayagirivihāra inscription of 792 CE, which is also devoted to a description of Sumeru. This passage was initially deciphered and translated by de Casparis and later commented upon by the learned Indian scholar Lokesh Chandra, who suggests many amendments and enhancements.¹⁸⁷ Basing his efforts upon the transliteration offered by de Casparis,¹⁸⁸ Chandra renders the following translation of the opening strophe:¹⁸⁹ "I pay homage to Sambuddha who is verily the Sumeru, of vigorous qualities, and endowed with the awe-inspiring power of knowledge, whose deep caves are [profound] wisdom, whose rocks are lofty tradition, whose Good Words are brilliant [like the sheen of] metal¹⁹⁰ (*dhātu* [of Sumeru]), whose cascades are Love, whose forests are meditation, whose glens are few desires, who is not shaken by the violent tempests of the eight ways of the world //1//"¹⁹¹

Chandra notes that the first three stanzas refer to Sumeru, fire (*vahni*), and waters (*aṇava*), corresponding to three of the *mahābhūtas* or elements: earth, water, fire. He suggests that the fourth element, wind, may be found in the succeeding stanza. In the Vajradhātu Mahā Mandala only these four elements guard its corner directions. Chandra proceeds to tabulate the following correspondences between the Perfectly Enlightened One (Sambuddha) and Sumeru:

Sumeru	Sambuddha
deep caves (<i>guhā</i>)	profound wisdom (<i>dhi</i>)
rocks (<i>śīla</i>)	lofty traditions (<i>smṛti</i>)
shining metals (<i>dhātu</i>)	Good Words (<i>sadvākya</i>)
cascades (<i>prasravaṇa</i>)	Love (<i>maitri</i>)
forests (<i>vana</i>)	meditation (<i>samādhi</i>)
valleys, glen (<i>kandarā</i>)	few desires (<i>alpecchatā</i>)
violent tempests (<i>ugra pavana</i>)	eight ways of the world (<i>aṣṭa loka-dharma</i>)

Such allegorical imagery highly parallels Vajrabodhi's account of Śrī Pāda and indeed may account for its form. It leads me to believe that it bore an importance to contemporary Buddhists which is now but imperfectly recoverable by us, much like the fascinating biography of Vajrabodhi itself.

NOTES

1. Unless otherwise indicated, credit for the present translations of the lengthier passages from the original Chinese as well as a substantial number of their scholarly footnotes is due entirely to Rolf Giebel. In fact, there is no section of the manuscript which has not benefitted from his deep acquaintance with both the primary and secondary sources, and the reader would soon bore of the reading of a note of thanks for each individual contribution by this scholar; I expect that his contributions are obvious. For their assistance with my preliminary studies of the biography of Vajrabodhi and for enriching the commentary on it, I am immensely grateful to Bart Dessein, Chih-Jie Lee, Karen Mack, Jin Su Tsai, and Hongbo Li, whose spot appraisal at Tucson's Himmel Park, where our deeply loved daughters Phoebe and Vivian played for many contented hours after preschool, convinced me that the Vajrabodhi biography was tractable. Laura Harrington was kind enough to provide a copy of Eastman's unpublished conference notes; Geoffrey Goble shared access to his unpublished conference presentations; Venerable Rangama Chandawimala Thero supplied valuable perspectives and material on recent discoveries in Anurādhapura; Dulmini Silva helped with a transliteration of the *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya*; Ralph Gabbard facilitated access to the essays of Du Hongjian; Sudarshan Seneviratne clarified my understanding of the fascinating and important esoteric Buddhist edifices at Tiriyāy; Gudrun Bühnemann assisted greatly in the interpretation of passages of Sanskrit; Gerd Mevissen provided images from his private collection and offered knowledgeable background on their possible interpretation; James Hartzell amplified the understanding of the Sinhalese preceptor Jayabhadra; and Emmanuel Francis lent his expertise in South Indian epigraphy to thresh out misimpressions in my treatment of Pallava affairs. Ping Situ, Chinese librarian at the University of Arizona, initially unearthed background information about Lü Xiang, and I am indebted to both Hongbo Li and Dexin Liu for providing a précis of Fu's biography of Lü Xiang. Andrea Acri, Jacob Dalton, Roy Jordaan (whose engaging study of the Prambanan temple complex stimulated me to investigate Central Javanese history and led to this paper), Charles Orzech, Henrik Sørensen, and Hiram Woodward all deserve much credit for commenting upon a draft of this paper and pointing out useful research leads or generating observations. Finally, I wish to express my thanks to John Holt, both for his critical reading of this paper as well as his excellent lectures on religion, which opened my eyes to a

deeper and more satisfying dimension of existence.

A note (or apology) to the reader: the evidence and issues examined in this essay are often densely interconnected and sometimes defy easy representation in the linear form of a printed essay. I have tried to smooth the presentation as effectively as I could, in order that it might be a pleasant and logical read. The reader will forgive the author if the material defied his best efforts to tame it.

2. F. D. K. Bosch, "De inscriptie van Keloerak," *Tijdschrift Bataviaasch Genootschap* 86 (1928): 1–64; Himanshu Bhushan Sarkar, "South-India in Old Javanese and Sanskrit Inscriptions," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 125, no. 2 (1969): 193–206; Lokesh Chandra, "The Śailendras of Java," in *Cultural Horizons of India*, vol. 4 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1995), 218–224.

3. Raoul Birnbaum (*Studies in the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī: A Group of East Asian Maṇḍalas and Their Traditional Symbolism* [Boulder: Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, 1983]) dwells extensively upon the centrality of Mañjuśrī to the late period of Amoghavajra's esoteric practice.

4. For an extensive list of Amoghavajra's major clients and patrons, see Charles Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 144n31.

5. Lokesh Chandra, "Tantras and the Defence of T'ang China," in *Cultural Horizons of India*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1992), 257–266. Recently, Geoffrey Goble delivered highly informative conference papers ("Bloodstained Bodhisattva: Amoghavajra's Militarized Buddhism in the Chinese Context," paper presented to the Midwest Regional American Academy of Religions conference, Chicago, April 2008; and "Amoghavajra and Esoteric Buddhism: The Presentation of Foreign Ritual Technologies in Tang China," paper presented to the American Academy of Religions conference, Montreal, November 2009) which greatly amplified these themes of Chinese state-protection and grounded them in great factual detail. See also Geoffrey Goble, "Chinese Esoteric Buddhism: Amoghavajra and the Ruling Elite" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2012). In addition, see Steven Weinberger, "The Yoga Tantras and the Social Context of Their Transmission to Tibet," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 23 (2010): 131–166, for parallel evidence of the Tibetan king's great fear and suspicion of the power of Indian esoteric masters and texts.

6. C.f. Yutaka Iwamoto, "The Śailendra Dynasty and Chandi Borobudur," *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chandi Borobudur* (Tokyo: The Executive Committee for the International Symposium on Chandi Borobudur, 1981), 85; Hudaya Kandahjaya, "A Study on the Origin and Significance of

Borobudur” (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2004), 95 offers an alternative translation of the same passage, which is from the biography of Huiguo (惠果).

7. The Chinese characters specify Heling (Ho-ling, 訶陵) as the country of Bianhong’s origin. This country was Java. As Junjiro Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671–695)* (Delhi: Munshiram Manohar Lal, 1966), xlvii, n. 3 notes, the *New History of the T’ang* (618–906), book 222, part ii records that “Ho-ling (Po-ling) is also called Java.” Book 197 of that same work points out that “Ho-ling lies to the east of Sumatra.”

8. **Mahākaruṇāgarbha-mahāmaṇḍala*, the main mandala described in the *Vairocanaḥisambodhi-sūtra*.

9. *Kōbō daishi zenshū* 弘法大師全集 1:42.

10. John Holt (*Buddha in the Crown: Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991], 82) observes that “these artistic similarities between insular Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka point to a common source of religious and cultural inspiration: South Indian Pallava culture. Indeed, these three regions may have constituted a veritable ‘cultural triangle’ from the seventh into the ninth century. Of greatest cultural importance to the period from the seventh through the tenth centuries was the political link established between the fortunes of the Pallava Empire and Sri Lanka. Because of this link, Pallava cultural influence flowed rapidly into Sri Lanka.”

11. For a good summary of the importance of South India to the archipelago, see Sarkar, “South-India in Old Javanese and Sanskrit Inscriptions.” Himansu Bhusan Sarkar (*Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java*, 2 vols. [Calcutta: Mukhopadhyay, 1972], 1:16) notes in his paleographic commentary on Sañjaya’s Canggal inscription that its script was used in the Hanh Khiei inscription as well as the Uruvalli copperplates of the Pallavas. The time is ripe for a renewed study of the provenance of the *varṇapāṭha* of Śrīvijaya and Sañjaya-era Central Java, using present knowledge of South Indian inscriptions. M. Dhaky (“Javanese *Pīthikās* of Śivalingas,” *South Asian Studies* 20, no. 1 [2004]: 1) notes that the *pīthikā* bases which are invariably found with the Śivalingas of Central Java are found almost nowhere in mainland India other than in a few Pallava complexes associated with Narasiṃhavarman II Rājasimha, one of the central figures in the Vajrabodhi story.

12. Zhang Yanyuan’s (張彥遠) 847 CE *Lidai minghua ji* (歷代名畫記, Record of Famous Painters of Successive Dynasties, 9.16b–17a) mentions Vajrabodhi. Zhang records that Vajrabodhi was from Laṅkā and was particularly good at painting Buddhist images. The statues under the wooden *stūpa* of the Guangfu temple were attributed to Vajrabodhi (Yiliang Chou, “Tantrism in China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8, nos. 3–4 [March 1945]: 276n30).

Yuanzhao writes in one place in the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* (T. 55, 881a) that Amoghavajra was originally from Siṃhala, but later in the same work (T. 55, 889c) and elsewhere (T. 2120, 52.826c) he writes that Amoghavajra was born in the Western Regions (i.e., Central Asia). Amoghavajra's birthplace has been variously identified by different authorities, and it has been suggested that Yuanzhao's identification of Siṃhala as his birthplace was due to a misinterpretation of a statement by Liangben (良賁; T. 1709, 33.430b), who refers to him as "a *Tripitaka* master who received *abhiṣeka* in Siṃhala in South India" 南天竺執師子國灌頂三藏 (Chou, "Tantrism in China," 285n2). An inscription attributed to Quan Deyu (權德輿, 759–818), a high-ranking official, also assigns a Sinhalese origin to Amoghavajra, but it should be noted that Quan Deyu's authorship of the said inscription is suspect.

13. The biography first came to the attention of Sylvain Lévi ("Les missions de Wang Hiuen-Ts'e dans L'Inde [suite et fin.], *Journal Asiatique* 15, 9th ser., no. 156 [Mai-Juin 1900]: 418–421), who found the "*Tcheng-iuen sing-ting-i-kia mou-lou*," compiled by "Iuen-tchao" at the start of the ninth century, in the first chapter of the Korean *Wen-tcha-lo kia fou fa tchoan* (History of the Tantric Sect), which Lévi brought back from Japan. Lévi furnished a précis of this biography of Vajrabodhi. Prabodh Chandra Bagchi (*Le canon Bouddhique en Chine, les traducteurs et les traductions*, vol. 2 [Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1938], 554–557) also offered an abbreviated commentary. Chou ("Tantrism in China," 272n3) also took note of Lü Xiang's biography, observing that Yuanzhao's *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, which Zanning refused to use, contains two biographies of Vajrabodhi. The first one (T. 2157, 55.875b1–876b27) was written by his lay disciple Lü Xiang. The second was much shorter and made by somebody named Hunlunweng (T. 2157, 55.876b29–877a21). Chou intermittently used Lü Xiang's biography to offer supplemental or alternative information to Zanning's biography of Vajrabodhi.

14. Chou, "Tantrism in China," 251–271.

15. Fu Xuanzong 傅璇琮, "Zhongguo zuizao liangwei hanlin xueshi kao" 中国最早两位翰林学士考, *Wenxian* 文献 4 (October 2002).

16. David R. Knechtges, *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 53–54.

17. Lü Xiang's biography was probably composed earlier than 765, as it neglects to mention Vajrabodhi under the posthumous title Dahongjiao sanzang (大弘教三藏) granted to him in 765 with Amoghavajra's recommendation (see Chou, "Tantrism in China," 283n61). Chou (*ibid.*, 275n20) observes an anachronism in a military title which suggests to him that Lü Xiang wrote his account after 757. However, it is possible that Yuanzhao himself updated minor details in a biography which had been composed shortly after the death of Vajrabodhi and the erection in 743 of his *stūpa*: Yuanzhao's editorial hand

is evident in his advertisement of the existence of Vajrabodhi's translations compiled elsewhere into the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*.

The parallel and much shorter biography by Hunlunweng (T. 2157, 55.876b29–877a21, compiled by Yuanzhao into the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* immediately after Lü Xiang's biography) forms part of the epitaph that was apparently inscribed on Vajrabodhi's *stūpa*, presumably at a slightly later date since it refers to Amoghavajra by the epithet Zhizang (智藏), which Zanning reports was granted to him around 746 (T. 2061, 50.712c12; Chou, "Tantrism in China," 293). Mention may also be made of an account of Vajrabodhi's life attributed to Du Hongjian (杜鴻漸, d. 769), the Assistant Secretary of the Imperial Secretariat (*zhongshu shilang*, 中書侍郎) mentioned by Zanning (T. 50 712a; Chou, "Tantrism in China," 283–284). Excerpts of this account are preserved in the Japanese *Ruiju hassoden* (類聚八祖傳, Classified Anthology of Biographies of the Eight Patriarchs) by Yōkai (榮海, 1274–1347), but its authorship has been queried by Iwasaki, who suggests that it possibly dates from sometime between 795 and 806. For our present purposes it may be worth noting that it briefly mentions Vajrabodhi's visit to Sri Laṅkā and his ascent of Mount Laṅkā. IWASAKI Hideo 岩崎日出男, "To Kōzen senjutsu Kongōchi sanzō oshō ki no itsubun ni tsuite" 杜鴻漸撰述『金剛智三藏和尚記』の逸文について, in *Ajia bunka no shisō to girei: Fukui Fumimasa hakushi koki kinen ronshū* アジア文化の思想と儀礼 福井文雅博士古稀記念論集, ed. Fukui Fumimasa Hakushi Koki Taishoku Kinen Ronshū Kankōkai 福井文雅博士古稀・退職記念論集刊行会 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha 春秋社, 2005).

18. Credit for the following translation of Lü Xiang's biography of Vajrabodhi is due to Rolf Giebel, who is also to be thanked for contributing substantially to the commentary upon the biography.

19. The term by which Lü Xiang refers to his master is *Heshang* (和上), a combination of the logographs for "harmony" and "superior"; William Soothill and Lewis Hodous (*A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, with Sanskrit and English Equivalents, and a Sanskrit-Pāli Index* [London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1937], 253a) note that this is a conventional term for a monk. They record that "the Sanskrit term used in its interpretation is *upādhyāya*, a 'sub-teacher' of the Vedas, inferior to an *ācārya*; this is interpreted as strong in producing (knowledge), or in begetting strength in his disciples." Raffaello Orlando ("A Study of Chinese Documents Concerning the Life of the Tantric Buddhist Patriarch Amoghavajra (705–774 A.D.)" [PhD diss., Princeton University, 1981], 41n3) notes that *upādhyāya* indicates "a preceptor monk or teacher of novices; it is often used in an extended sense as an honorific." *He-shang* could therefore be translated as "senior preceptor"; Orlando in his dissertation chose in many cases to translate it as "His Holiness" or "Your Holiness."

20. His name has been restored as Madhyana (TOGANOO Shōun 耆尾祥雲,

Himitsu Bukkyōshi 秘密佛教史 [Kōyachō 高野町: Kōyasan Daigaku Shuppanbu 高野山大學出版部, 1933], 93, 95) or Mihr Zāda (SAKAKI Ryōzaburō 榊亮三郎, “Kongōchi sanzō to shōgun Maijunna” 金剛智三藏と將軍米准那, *Daijō* 大乘 [1943]: 22–7).

21. Although there were several kingdoms in contemporary South India, among which were the Cōḷa, the Pāṇḍya, and the Chāḷukya, Lü Xiang seems to use the term “South India” not generically but rather to refer specifically to the dominant South Indian polity of the Pallavas.

22. This name could very well be Śāntibodhi according to the careful investigation by L. W. J. van der Kuijp, “*Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi: Notes on the Guhyasamāja Literature,” in *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ: Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. Birgit Kellner, Helmut Krasser, Horst Lasic, Michael Torsten Much, and Helmut Tauscher (Vienna: Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, 2007), 1001–1021.

23. Chou, “Tantrism in China,” 314, notes that many Chinese monks went to Western India during the seventh century, because Laṭa in Southern Gujarat was mentioned as a center of the *dhāraṇī* teaching at this time.

24. These include two of the set of four famous *sāstras* (四論) enumerated in Soothill and Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 182a. They note that the *Śataśāstra* of two *juan* was composed by Devabodhisattva, and the *Dvādaśanikāya(-mukha) śāstra* of one *juan* was composed by Nāgārjuna. By citing this specific text by this specific author, Lü Xiang is contributing to a notion, strongly held by Kūkai, of a sequence of patriarchs which extends back into the primordial divinity of Vairocana. I am grateful to Bart Dessein for drawing attention to these relevant scholarly references: For the tradition that the *Śataśāstra* (or *Śatakaśāstra*) was written by Nāgārjuna’s disciple Āryadeva, see Richard Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967) or Cheng Hsueh-li, *Nāgārjuna’s “Twelve Gate Treatise” Translated, with Introductory Essays, Comments, and Notes* (Dordrecht: Reidel Publishing, 1982). For the Sanskrit title of the *Shier men lun*, we find *Dvādaśadvāraśāstra*, *Dvādaśanikāyaśāstra*, *Dvādaśamukhaśāstra*, and *Dvādaśadvāraka*. Of all the variants, *Dvādaśadvāraka* might be preferred (C. Lindtner, “Cheng Hsueh-li: Nāgārjuna’s Twelve Gate Treatise,” *Orientalische Literaturzeitung* 80, no. 4 [1985]: 409–413).

25. Or “Emptiness school” (reading *kong* 空 for *nan* 南)? Cf. MOCHIZUKI Shinkō 望月信亨, *Mochizuki Bukkyō daijiten* 望月佛教大辭典, 10 vols. (Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai 世界聖典刊行協会, 1957–1960), 2:1339c.

26. Kapilavastu is one hundred miles due north of Benares and was the capital of the principality occupied by the Śākya clan. Xuanzang, writing in the 640s, recorded that the country was largely a wasteland (Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World, Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang* [A.D. 629]

[London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1884], 14).

27. Longzhi (龍智), whose original name has often been restored as Nāgabodhi, especially in the Japanese-language scholarship originating with Matsunaga. The esoteric preceptor Nāgabodhi was known to the Tibetans, who had preserved his commentaries on the *Guhyasāmaja*. Like Longzhi, the Tibetans' Nāgabodhi lived in the South of India and enjoyed an age reputed to be seven centuries. The Nāgabodhi known to the Tibetans served the master Nāgārjuna as a disciple; this same relationship between Longzhi and Nāgārjuna is stated as fact in Lü Xiang's biography, affirmed by the circle around Yuanzhao around 800 CE, and is taken as true by Kūkai when he produced his histories of the Shingon traditions.

Van der Kuijp (“*Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi: Notes on the Guhyasāmaja Literature”) conducted an extensive scholarly examination of the Tibetan records of Nāgabodhi's writings. While acknowledging points of similarity between the master Nāgabodhi known to the Tibetans and Vajrabodhi's preceptor Longzhi of the Chinese records, van der Kuijp calls into question the proper restoration of the original Sanskrit of Longzhi's name. Based on the Chinese-Sanskrit lexicographical resources available to him, van der Kuijp was compelled to conclude that Longzhi's name could represent *Nāgajñāna, *Nāgaprajñā, or *Nāgabuddhi, while, on the basis of additional considerations of Lü Xiang's phonological rendering at the end of his biography, Jingangzhi's (金剛智) name would likely have to be restored as *Vajrabuddhi. In the case of neither Longzhi nor Jingangzhi could van der Kuijp find grounds to justify a restoration to *Nāgabodhi or *Vajrabodhi, nor could he equate the former's name to the Tibetans' Nāgabodhi, whose original Sanskrit name could be restored with great certainty because of the Tibetans' regularization of Sanskrit translation. It may be noted in passing that Hunlunweng (see section V) writes in his brief account of Vajrabodhi's life that “the Great Master was called Bodhivajra” (T. 55.876c), with “Bodhivajra” being rendered in phonetic transcription, but this is perhaps an error on the part of Hunlunweng.

Van der Kuijp's erudite examination overlooked one piece of salient evidence which confirms his doubts about the identity of Nāgabodhi and Longzhi: the Siddhamāṭṛkā-scripted spellings of the names of Nāgajñāna and Vajrabodhi's names on the Tōji (東寺) monastery's huge wall murals of the seven Shingon patriarchs. Kūkai brought back five of these portraits, including that of Vajrabodhi, from China in 806 and they are listed in his *Go-shōrai mokuroku* (御請來目錄, Catalogue of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items) of 806. A further two portraits, those of the second and third patriarchs Longshu and Longzhi, were created in 821 at Kūkai's request and have been lodged in the Tōji monastery since that time (Cynthia Bogel, *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009], 120). These latter two portraits included labeling in ineptly spelled Siddham, providing the name of Nāgārjuna in the five syllables

na-gha-ra-rju-na, while that of the remaining patriarch is rendered in merely three syllables as *na-gha-jña*. The Siddham labels of these Tōji portraits of the eighth-century patriarchs clearly show the true Sanskrit name of the fourth patriarch to be Vajrabodhi, and it is highly likely that the clumsy execution of the name of his predecessor was intended to designate Nāgajñāna or Nāgajñā (see fig. 2). In keeping with van der Kuijp's surmises, this person will be called Nāgajñāna throughout the paper.

Van der Kuijp's correct conclusion that the Tibetan Nāgabodhi was to be distinguished from the Indian master recorded as the Chinese Longzhi is a useful historical fact. His corollary observations about the curious, even perplexing, multiple biographical parallels (to wit: discipleship under Nāgārjuna; an age reputed to be seven centuries; residence in the esoteric centers of South-Central India, at either Śrī Parvata / Śrī Śailam or at Kāñcī; *abhiṣeka* names which are almost cognates) and about the discrepancy between the Tibetan recordings of Nāgabodhi's recorded mastership and authorship of texts in the *Guhyasamāja* tradition, on the one hand, and Lü Xiang's attribution to Longzhi of mastership of the *Vajroṣṇīṣa* corpus, on the other hand, are significant and well worth pondering.

28. Ryūichi Abé (*Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1999], 229–230) discusses the representation of Nāgārjuna's name in Chinese: the variants Lung-meng ("Victorious Dragon") and Lung-shu ("Dragon-Tree") for Sanskrit Arjuna. Lü Xiang chose to translate as "Dragon-Tree."

It is worthy of note that such mythological facets contained within Nāgārjuna and Nāgajñāna's biographies as their celestial travels to the heavens and submarine travels to the palace of the King of the *Nāgas* (Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 221–222) were independently noted as important by Yijing (義淨), who arrived in India in 673 CE. Yijing's *Da Tang xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan* (大唐西域求法高僧傳, Record of Eminent Monks Who Sought the Dharma in the West) recorded Indian adepts who "seek the secret books from the *nāga* palaces in the oceans and search for mantras from stone chambers in the mountains." Yijing also independently knew of a "*Vidhyādhara*" collection, comprised of one hundred thousand verses in Sanskrit that were collected by Nāgārjuna, but were then gradually lost and scattered. He explicitly said that there is no way of comprehending the *tantras* without an oral transmission (Stephen Hodge, "Considerations on the Dating and Geographical Origins of the *Mahāvairocanaḥisambodhi-sūtra*," in *The Buddhist Forum III*, ed. Tadeusz Skorupski and Ulrich Pagel [New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1995], 63–64). There lies within Yijing's observations of Buddhist monastic concerns at Nālandā ca. 680 CE the kernel of Kūkai's concerns when establishing his Shingon school in Japan more than a century later.

29. Presumably a version of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*. Jīngāngding is frequently restored to *Vajraśekhara by other commentators, but as

Rolf W. Giebel (“The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei: An Annotated Translation,” *Journal of Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies* 18 [1995]: 109) has pointed out, the Siddham characters provided by Kūkai and Haiyun (海雲) read *Vajra-uṣṇīṣa/Vajroṣṇīṣa*. An extensive, 132-folio *Vajra-śekhara-mahā-guhyā-yoga-tantra* (an explanatory *tantra* of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*) is registered in the Tibetan Tohoku catalogue (James Hartzell, “Tantric Yoga: A Study of the Vedic Precursors, Historical Evolution, Literatures, Cultures, Doctrines, and Practices of the 11th Century Kāśmiri Śaivite and Buddhist Unexcelled Tantric Yogas” [PhD diss., Columbia University, 1997], 381).

30. Presumably the teachings of the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*.

31. The five families (*kula*) of deities (Buddha or Tathāgata, Vajra, Ratna, Padma, and Karma).

32. Chou, “Tantrism in China,” 316 notes that the Pallava kings carried confusingly many *birudas* or royal titles. Each king could have more than a dozen such epithets. The Narasiṃhapotavarman of Lü Xiang’s narrative is to be identified with Narasiṃhavarman II Rājasiṃha, who is believed to have reigned from 690–728 CE (T. V. Mahalingam, *Inscriptions of the Pallavas* [New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research and Agam Prakashan, 1988], xciv).

33. The holy footprint, the Śrī Pāda, still exists today on the Samanalakanda, or the Butterfly Mountain. One ancient name for the mountain was Mount Rohaṇa and another Mount Malaya, for the Malayaratṭha kingdom and district in which it lay.

34. I.e., monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.

35. Here and below *xianghua* (香花) can probably be taken as either “fragrant flowers” or “incense and flowers.”

36. *Wuwei wang si* (無畏王寺), lit. “Fearless King Monastery.” The true name of the Fearless Mountain Monastery, Abhayagirivihāra, could be obtained with the substitution of *shan* (山), mountain, for *wang* (王), king: Lü Xiang’s variant is either an inadvertent misprint or else an indicator of the close royal ties enjoyed by the Abhayagirivihāra, located to the side of the royal palace and custodian of the palladium of the Sinhalese kingdom. It should be noted that, during the medieval period, the Abhayagirivihāra served as the custodian of the Buddha’s Tooth Relic which Vajrabodhi worshipped repeatedly, on both of his landings in Laṅkā, and Xuanzang affirms Lü Xiang’s location of the palace: “By the side of the king’s palace is the *vihāra* of Buddha’s tooth, which is decorated with every kind of gem, the splendor of which dazzles the sight like that of the sun.... By the side of the *vihāra* of Buddha’s tooth is a little *vihāra* which is also ornamented with every kind of precious stone. In it is a golden statue of Buddha; it was cast by a former king of the country, and is of the size of life” (Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, 249).

37. *Foyan ta* (佛眼塔, **Buddhanetrastūpa*). Such a temple devoted to an eye relic is unknown in extant Theravāda chronicles. Amoghavajra was reputed to have employed a **Buddhanetradhārāṇī* (佛眼真言, T. 2056, 50.293a14; Orlando, “A Study of Chinese Documents,” 163) to halt elephants that had run amok in Anurādhapura; it is possible that he was employing a spell of great local importance to the Laṅkāns of the eighth century. The temple containing the eye relic, if Lü Xiang is correct about its existence, was perhaps so strongly associated with the esoteric movement that it was eliminated in an orthodox Theravāda reaction.

38. During the early medieval period, the island of Laṅkā was divided into three kingdoms, the lush southern portion of the island being known as Rohaṇa, the mountainous central region termed Malayaraṭṭha, and the harsh northern Anurādhapura kingdom as Rājaraṭṭha. The northern kingdom, whose extensive irrigation works rendered it the most advanced and prosperous of the regions, could often impose a client kingship on the southern portion of the island.

39. Read *ku* (窟) for *jue* (崛)?

40. These “earlier spirits” may be taken to be either ancestral spirits or the spirits of former monks.

41. As will be noted in greater detail in note 177 below, Faxian (法顯), writing about three hundred years before the visit of Vajrabodhi, noted the legend of the Buddha’s conquest of the island from *nāgas* by striding across the land. His right foot was placed on Adam’s Peak, while the left foot was placed where the Abhayagiri *stūpa* was erected.

42. Read *shu* (薯) for *shu* (署).

43. Or, “He then returned to the path and made his way back”?

44. Read *wang* (往) (v. l) for *bi* (彼).

45. Interestingly, “China” is rendered phonetically (Zhina, 支那), rather than being referred to as the Middle Kingdom or the Country of the Tang; it is as though the author is trying to add a sense of verisimilitude to Vajrabodhi’s speech by transcribing the word “Cīna,” which he would use when conversing with the South Indian king.

46. Or bridles?

47. Edwin George Pulleyblank’s researches (*Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* [Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1991]) show that the early Tang pronunciation of the characters 佛逝 should be expressed in the international phonetic code as “fɦut d͡ziajʰ”. I have restored Vijaya with confidence.

48. See Gerd J. R. Mevissen, “Images of Mahāpratisarā in Bengal: Their Icono-

graphic Links with Javanese, Central Asian, and East Asian Images,” *Journal of Bengal Art* 4 (1999): 99–129 for an extensive discussion of Mahāpratisarā, a goddess of substantial popularity in both Java and Tang China, for whom there was a cult but no mandala. Mevissen (ibid., 123n57) notes that Amoghavajra also employed the *Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī* to save his ship from foundering off the coast of Java. A recently discovered Sanskrit *codex unicus* of the *Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī-vidyāvidhi*, devoted to the making of a protective amulet, is translated and explicated in Gergely Hidas, “Mahāpratisarāvidyāvidhi: The Spell-Manual of the Great Amulet,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 63 (2010): 473–484. Aspects of Mahāpratisarā worship are treated in Gergely Hidas, “Remarks on the Use of the Dhāraṇīs and Mantras of the *Mahāpratisarā-Mahāvidyārājñī*,” in *Indian Languages and Texts through the Ages: Essays in Honour of Prof. Csaba Tóttösy*, ed. Cs. Dezso (Delhi: Manohar, 2007); Gergely Hidas, *Mahāpratisarā-Mahāvidyārājñī, The Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells: Introduction, Critical Editions and Annotated Translation*, Śata-piṭaka Series: Indo-Asian Literatures, vol. 636 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 2012); and T. Crujisen, A. Griffiths, and M. Klokke, “The Cult of the Buddhist Dhāraṇī Deity Mahāpratisarā along the Maritime Silk Route: New Epigraphic and Iconographic Evidence from the Indonesian Archipelago” (forthcoming). I am indebted to Hiram Woodward for the original reference.

49. The capital of Guangdong (廣東) Province, i.e., Guangzhou (廣州) or Canton.

50. Clothing, food, bedding, and medicine.

51. Zishengsi (資聖寺) and Jianfu daochang (薦福道場), both temples in Chang’an; the latter is more commonly known as Dajianfusi (大薦福寺).

52. T. 866, 18.223c (4 rolls); T. 1075, 20.173a (1 roll); T. 1087, 20.211c (1 roll); and T. 1173, 20.710a (1 roll).

53. *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (開元釋教錄, T. 2154, 55.571bc).

54. Lokesh Chandra, “Mantras of the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara,” in *Cultural Horizons of India*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1992), provides an interesting facsimile of a Japanese copy of the *Mahākāraṇika-dhāraṇī*, illustrating the primary forty-two *mudrās* of Avalokiteśvara’s one thousand arms. The authorship is attributed to Amoghavajra and not Vajrabodhi. Cynthia Bogel (“Ritual and Representation in Eighth Century Japanese Esoteric Buddhist Sculpture” [PhD diss., Harvard University, 1995], 325) discusses the location of *Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra* images in Japan.

55. T. 876, 18.326c; T. 1062A, 20.113c; T. 1061, 20.112a; and T. 1202, 21.23a.

56. Here Vajrabodhi’s name is transliterated (Bariluoputi, 跋日羅菩提), with instructions to combine (二合) the sounds of the second and third characters.

57. Read *zhi* (智) for *he* (合)?

58. Charles D. Orzech (“Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra [651–780],” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Richard K. Payne, and Henrik H. Sørensen [Leiden: Brill, 2010], 280) notes that Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra “left Chang’an in 741, likely in response to an imperial order expelling foreign monks,” and observes that “Zanning’s account obscures the issue by presenting Vajrabodhi saying that he does not have to leave because the order applies to ‘barbarian’ monks *huseng* 胡僧, not to ‘Indian’ monks *fanseng* 梵僧, and it also portrays Xuanzong as personally ordering Vajrabodhi to stay.” Orzech cites *Song gaoseng zhuan* (T. 2061, 50.711c2–6) and Chou, “Tantrism in China,” 277–278, for the relevant translation (Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang,” 280n75).

59. Zanning’s biography records that Vajrabodhi’s *stūpa* at Longmen (near Luoyang) was located to the south of the Yi (伊) River.

60. Lü Xiang’s biography of Vajrabodhi presumably ends here, and it is followed by the epitaph composed by Hunlunweng, which is prefaced by a biography of Vajrabodhi that by and large concurs with Lü Xiang’s biography regarding the basic facts of Vajrabodhi’s life.

61. Zanning seemingly had access to other radically discrepant sources which are today lost. This other body of biographical sources even contains dates for Vajrabodhi’s death which vary from Lü Xiang and Hunlunweng’s by a decade! The discrepancies with Zanning’s sparse account were so great that Chou (“Tantrism in China,” 273n5) felt compelled to inject a comment wondering whether Zanning had reason to reject Lü Xiang as a source. This reluctance to use Lü Xiang’s information is especially baffling as Zanning was himself a late-era inductee into the Hanlin (Charles Orzech, “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga,’ the Chinese Appropriation of the Tantras, and the Question of Esoteric Buddhism,” *Journal of Chinese Religion* 34 [2006]: 590). I thank Charles Orzech for drawing attention to the work of Jinhua Chen (“Zhihuilun 智慧輪 [?–875/876], a Late Tang Promoter of Esoteric Buddhism Whose Life Was Misrepresented by Zanning 贊寧 [919–1001]: A Reconstruction on the Basis of New Textual and Epigraphic Evidence,” in *Buddhism across Borders*, ed. Jinhua Chen and Tansen Sen [Singapore: Nalanda-Sriwijaya Series of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, forthcoming]), which demonstrates Zanning’s unreliability in regard to another Tang-era monk. For reference, here is the entirety of Zanning’s presentation of the brief pre-China portion of Vajrabodhi’s biography as rendered by Chou (“Tantrism in China,” 272–275, translating T. 2061, 50.711b6–711b18):

The monk Vajrabodhi 跋日羅菩提 [namely] Chin-kang-chih 金剛智 in Chinese, was a native of Malaya 摩賴耶 (meaning brightness in Chinese) in South India. It was a district located near Potalaka 補

陀落伽 Mountain, where Avalokiteśvara's palace was situated. His father, a Brahman, was proficient in the five kinds of knowledge and a teacher of the king of Kāñcī 建支. Vajrabodhi was able to read ten thousand words every day when he was a few years old. He quickly comprehended whatever he saw and retained it throughout his life. At the age of sixteen he was enlightened by Buddha's doctrine and [therefore] did not wish to learn the treatises of the *Nigāṇṭhas*. He cut [his hair and put on] a dyed [robe] and became a monk. [This conversion] was probably the result of [good seeds] planted during a former existence. Later he accompanied his teacher to Nālandā Monastery in Central India where he studied the *sūtras*, *abhidharmas* and so on. When he was fully ordained, he heard the lectures on the *Vinayas* of the eighteen schools. Again he went to West India to study the *Hīnayāna* treatises and the doctrine of yoga, Three Secrets, and *dhāraṇī*. By the time ten years had passed he had become conversant with all the three *Piṭakas*. Then he visited Ceylon and climbed Laṅkā Mountain. Travelling eastward, he visited twenty countries or more, including Bhoja [Chou's transliteration of the characters transliterated above as Vijaya—see note 47; my brackets, JRS] 佛誓, the country of naked people, and others. Having heard that Buddha's Law was prospering in China, he went there by the sea route. Because of frequent mishaps, he took several years to get there. In the year of *chi-wei* in the K'ai-yuan period [719 A.D.] he reached Kuang-fu.

62. Van der Kuijp (“*Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi: Notes on the Guhyasamāja Literature,” 1016n38) observes that Kūkai's primary treatment of Vajrabodhi “is taken verbatim, and with but a few omissions, from the sketches of *Vajrabodhi's life by Lü Xiang and Hunlunweng that, inclusive of various dates for several events in *Vajrabodhi's life, are quoted in Yuanzhao's *Zhenyuan shinding shijiaolu*. To be sure, Kūkai himself readily acknowledges his source for these dates.”

63. Lévi, “Les missions de Wang Huien-Ts'e dans L'Inde,” 418.

64. Given the importance in esoteric Buddhism of guided gradations of practice which culminate in a tantric consecration (*abhiṣeka*), Zanning in his Song-era biography strangely omits mention of the name of a teacher under whom Vajrabodhi was consecrated with the initiatory rites of esoteric Buddhism.

65. To me, what is remarkable in Lü Xiang's account, besides the sketchy references to disciples, none of whom are provided with a name or a background, is the paucity of detail about Vajrabodhi's life before arriving at the Pallava court. To quantify this, I note that approximately 7 percent of the biography deals with the life of Vajrabodhi before he went to Kāñcī, 16 percent deals with his experience in Kāñcī, 38 percent deals with his initial experiences in Śrī Laṅkā, 11 percent concerns the preparations for the diplomatic mission

from Kāñcī, 6 percent deals with his second six-month stay in Śrī Laṅkā, 8 percent involves the sea journey and sea-storm, and 15 percent addresses his time in China. All told, a rough quarter of the biography involves the Pallava state at Kāñcī, while almost half concerns the isle of Laṅkā.

66. The country of Śrīvijaya existed as late as 742 CE when it sent its last embassy to China (Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World, 589–1276* [Leiden: Brill, 2005], 59). It dropped off the historical map some time thereafter, with it falling under the control of the Śailendra dynasty. It is possible that the name of the Śrīvijayan king would have been provided by Lü Xiang if the country still existed when he wrote his account circa 760.

67. Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and the University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 26.

68. John Guy, "The Lost Temples of Nagapattinam and Quanzhou: A Study in Sino-Indian Relations," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* (1993): 291–310, provides line drawings of the temple, which had a distinctively tiered Chinese appearance, before they were destroyed.

69. Bielenstein (*Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World*, 75) reports that the king requested the name "Attachment to Civilization."

70. Mahalingam, *Inscriptions of the Pallavas*, lvi.

71. In his biography of Vajrabodhi, the imperial-court scholar Lü Xiang meticulously lists the items sent with Mizhunna as diplomatic gifts. In the diplomatic chronicles documented by Bielenstein (*Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World*, 75), no mission with these specific gifts can be identified. That said, it should be noted that the Chinese diplomatic chronicles are incomplete, as is evident in the case of Śrīvijaya (Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World*, 62).

72. Just as in the case of the gift by Narasiṃhavarman of a Sanskrit copy of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* to the emperor Xuanzong, the Sinhalese king Aggabodhi VI too sent a copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā* with his initial embassy to the Tang court.

73. Cyril Wace Nicholas and Senarat Paranavitana, *A Concise History of Ceylon, from the Earliest Time to the Arrival of the Portuguese in 1505* (Colombo: Ceylon University Press, 1961), 344.

74. Diran Kavork Dohanian, *The Mahāyāna Buddhist Sculpture of Ceylon* (New York: Garland, 1977).

75. Senarat Paranavitana, "Three Rock Inscriptions at Rāssahela," *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. 4 (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), 171.

76. Lakshman S. Perera, *The Institutions of Ancient Ceylon from Inscriptions*

(from 3rd Century B.C. to 830 A.D.), vol. 1 (Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 2001), 237–238.

77. The *Vajroṣṇīṣa* is the label for a vast one hundred thousand-verse fundamental text of esoteric Buddhism. It was comprised of eighteen “assemblies,” which are independent tantric works. In his *Indications of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle Scripture* (Giebel, “The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei”), Amoghavajra translated a summary of this *Vajroṣṇīṣa*, and it is clear that the *Vajroṣṇīṣa* obtained by Amoghavajra placed the first five *saṃāja* of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* at the beginning of the sequence of assemblies. Systems of eighteen esoteric texts were also known to both the late eighth-century Indian scholar Jñānamitra and as well the contemporary Tibetan rNying-ma school (K. Eastman, “The Eighteen Tantras of the Vajrasekhara/Māyājāla,” paper presented to the 26th International Conference of Orientalists in Japan, Tokyo, May 8, 1981; Giebel, “The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei,” 114). In both of these systems, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* replaces the position of dominance held by the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* in the system described by Amoghavajra and, presumably, known to Vajrabodhi.

78. See Charles Orzech, “The Legend of the Iron Stūpa,” in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 317 from which this translation of T. 1798, 39.808b16–28, is directly excerpted. David B. Gray (“On the Very Idea of a Tantric Canon: Myth, Politics, and the Formation of the Bka’gyur,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 5 [December 2009]: 13) offers a parallel translation.

79. David L. Snellgrove, “Introduction,” in *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha: Facsimile Reproduction of a Tenth Century Sanskrit Manuscript from Nepal*, ed. Lokesh Chandra and David L. Snellgrove (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1981); Giebel, “The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei”; Rolf W. Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras: The Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra and the Susiddhikara Sutra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2001); Steven Weinberger, “The Significance of Yogatantra and the Compendium of Principles (*Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra*) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2003). Cardinal mantras of the vajra-goddess-dominated Vajraguhya Mandala from the second chapter of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* have recently been identified by Ven. Rangama Chandawimala Thero (“Esoteric Buddhist Practice in Ancient Sri Lanka,” *International Journal of the Humanities* 5, no. 12 [2008]: 950) on two of the “*dhāraṇī* stones” recovered from the Abhayagirivihāra. Interestingly, Chandawimala has discovered that the Abhayagiri tablets provide mantras for the four Offering Goddesses of the Vajraguhya Mandala which are missing from the extant text of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* itself, suggesting that the Abhayagirivāsins may have had access to a slightly more extensive

version of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*. The text of the Abhayagiri tablets is presented in Nandasena Mudiyanse, *Mahāyāna Monuments of Ceylon* (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1967), 99–103. It should be pointed out that Mudiyanse’s published transcription is not complete—no transcription of the back of tablet vii is offered despite the text being clearly visible in Mudiyanse’s Plate 39. Gregory Schopen (“The Text on the ‘Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagiriya’: A Minor Contribution to the Study of the Mahāyāna Literature in Ceylon,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 5, no. 1 [1982]: 101–102) identifies another of the tablets’ *dhāraṇīs* as being taken from the *Āryasarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhānaḥṛdayaguhyadhātu-karaṇḍamudrānāmādhāraṇīmahāyāna-sūtra*, which advocates its placement in a *stūpa*. Rolf Giebel has identified this *dhāraṇī* among the forty-two Siddham manuscripts brought back to Japan in 806 by Kūkai. Besides the extant Sanskrit, the text exists in two redactions of a translation by Amoghavajra (T. 1022a and T. 1022b) and another Chinese translation by Dānapāla (T. 1023), as well as a late eighth-century Tibetan translation, and it has been found in tenth-century Chinese *stūpas* (Schopen, “The Text on the ‘Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagiriya,’” 102, 106).

80. Kazuko Ishii, “Borobudur, the Tattvasaṃgraha, and the Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan,” in *The Art and Culture of South-East Asia*, ed. Lokesh Chandra (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1991). Rolf Giebel, the translator of Amoghavajra’s edition of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*, offered valuable amplification in a personal communication. He noted that it could be said to read like an extended *sādhana* with explanatory interpolations. It is definitely not a faithful translation of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* as we have it today, although there are many parallel sections. MATSUNAGA Yūkei 松長有慶 (“Fuhōden no tenkyō to chosaku mokuteki” 『付法伝』の典拠と著作目的, in *Kōbō daishi kenkyū* 弘法大師研究, ed. NAKANO Gishō 中野義照 [Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 1978]) has suggested that Vajrabodhi’s translation reflects a somewhat more primitive version of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*. Giebel also wondered whether one should not consider the possibility that it may be an adaptation and rearrangement by Vajrabodhi for practical purposes, which might explain why it gives the impression of being more like a ritual manual. Dale Todaro (“An Annotated Translation of the ‘Tattvasaṃgraha’ [Part 1] with an Explanation of the Role of the ‘Tattvasaṃgraha’ Lineage in the Teachings of Kukai” [PhD diss., Columbia University, 1985], 11) provides a brief survey of the text Vajrabodhi translated: “It is not properly speaking a translation of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* but a somewhat unorganized and partial outline of major practices in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* lineage. In contrast to the *Tattvasaṃgraha* translated by Amoghavajra this text explains in greater detail how to make and enter the central assembly of the *Vajradhātu* maṇḍala, how to perform a *homa* or burnt offering, etc. This text and Amoghavajra’s translation are the first two texts Kūkai lists in his *Sangakuroku* and so this indicates the

importance he attached to both of them.”

81. Ishii, “Borobudur, the Tattvasaṃgraha, and the Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan,” 157–158. The research results of TAKAHASHI Hisao 高橋尚夫 (“*Ryakushutsu-nenju-kyō to Vajurōdaya—nyū-mandara ni tsuite*” 『略出念誦經』と『ヴァジュローダヤ』—入マンダラについて, *Mikkyōgaku Kenkyū* 密教学研究 14 [1982]) found that wording reminiscent of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and not dissimilar to that found in Vajrabodhi’s translation is also found in the *Sarva-vajrodaya*, a ritual manual for the *Sarvatathāgatattattvasaṃgraha* composed by Ānandagarbha, who flourished towards the end of the eighth century and who also wrote a word-for-word commentary on the *Sarvatathāgatattattvasaṃgraha*. Takahashi suggests that there either may have existed some sort of ritual manual known to both Vajrabodhi and Ānandagarbha, or else such thinking was commonplace at the time and may even have been deliberately employed so as to moderate the message of the *Sarvatathāgatattattvasaṃgraha*, which (as argued by Tsuda Shin’ichi in, e.g., “A Critical Tantrism,” *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 36 [1978]) was at complete variance with that of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*.

82. Rolf W. Giebel, *The Vairocanaḥisambodhi Sūtra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2005). It is possible that Vajrabodhi did not lose everything, as he provided a number of translations which were entered into the official catalogs. Besides those listed by Lü Xiang in his biography, Vajrabodhi is credited with translating twenty-four other works (Bagchi, *Le canon Bouddhique en Chine*, 559–560, 712–713), including the *Cundā-dhāraṇī* in 723 CE and the *Pañcākṣara-Maṇjuśrī-dhāraṇī* in 730. His translation of the *Cundā-dhāraṇī* (T. 1075, 20.173a–178c), called the *Foshuo qi juzhi fomu zhunti daming tuoluoni jing* (佛說七俱胝佛母准提大明陀羅尼經, Sutra of the Great Spell and Dhāraṇī of Cundā, Mother of Seven Koṭī Buddhas, Spoken by the Buddha), claimed that it contained a *dhāraṇī* so essential that it was called the “mother of the past seven koṭīs of *tathāgatas*.” Given the lengthy list of diplomatic gifts sent by Narasiṃhavarman via Vajrabodhi and Mīzhunna, which presumably actually arrived at the harbor at Guangfu if Lü Xiang were able to give such an extensive and precise account of them, one wonders how the textual baggage brought on the same ship by Vajrabodhi was so terribly mistreated. It may ultimately have been a question of the accessibility of various items in the hold of the ship.

83. Chou, “Tantrism in China,” 321. I am in agreement with the generally accepted view that takes Yuanzhao’s biography as the most reliable. Contrary evidence, however, can be found in the biographies of Amoghavajra by Zhao Qian (T. 2056) and Feixi (T. 2120), according to which Amoghavajra left his home in northern India and at age ten traveled with his maternal uncle, presumably through Central Asia, arriving in China in modern-day Gansu Province (Orlando, “A Study of Chinese Documents,” 136, 161). This is the

itinerary favored, for instance, by Hiram Woodward ("Esoteric Buddhism in Southeast Asia in the Light of Recent Scholarship," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 35 no. 2 [2004]: 339).

84. Orzech, "The Legend of the Iron Stūpa," 317.

85. It remains a curiosity that Lü Xiang reports the storm but does not report the loss of manuscripts. Perhaps Vajrabodhi, given his standing and ambitions at the Tang court, found it impolitic to mention the loss to anybody except his disciple Amoghavajra, preferring to cloak his inadequacy by invoking the secret obligations and revelations which were a hallmark of the esoteric Buddhist system.

86. Those biographers who do stipulate that Amoghavajra went to India may have been obligated by Amoghavajra's own statement in his will that he went to the "Five Indias" (T. 2120, 52.844a16; Orlando, "A Study of Chinese Documents," 108). A similar statement may be found in the biography of Hanguang (T. 2061, 50.879b18), Amoghavajra's chief disciple, who is named as accompanying Amoghavajra to Śrī Laṅkā and being allowed to take an esoteric *abhiṣeka* under the Sinhalese preceptor Samantabhadra. In trying to evaluate these elements of *prima facie* claims that Amoghavajra and his monastic suite did indeed visit all five portions of the Indian mainland, I am struck that neither Amoghavajra nor Hanguang include a mention of Śrī Laṅkā, where they most assuredly did go. It is possible that Amoghavajra was speaking quite generally, including Laṅkā as a part of India, in much the same manner that an American visiting England might speak of a "European" vacation. Such a surmise is supported by the observations of Bielenstein (*Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World*, 72) that "The Chinese historians of T'ang and Sung times had only vague knowledge of the political borders of India.... They were usually content to divide it schematically into Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central India, which stood in no relation to real conditions."

87. Soothill and Hodous (*A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 318) translate this name as "Flying Staff," a synonym for a traveling monk.

88. T. 2120, 52.848b1–849b25; Orlando, "A Study of Chinese Documents," 159–171.

89. T. 2120, 52.848c4, translated by Orlando, "A Study of Chinese Documents," 162.

90. These considerations on the exclusivity of Laṅkā in Amoghavajra's itinerary are corroborated by considerations on the diplomatic activity generated by his visit. Upon his departure from China, Amoghavajra was seemingly either acting as or being accompanied by an ambassador. Why, if he were an ambassador, go only to Śrī Laṅkā unless it was thought that Laṅkā was the place to go to get the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*? And why would he go there unless Vajrabodhi did indeed direct him? Amoghavajra's great spiritual

breakthrough in Laṅkā is confirmed by the fact that he returned either accompanied by an embassy from the Śrī Laṅkā king or himself served as the Laṅkā king's ambassador, an event that is independently documented in the Tang diplomatic annals and the Tang *History of Foreign Countries*. The Sinhalese king Śīlāmegha was thus the only Indic king to be represented diplomatically by Amoghavajra upon his return to China, further evidence both that Amoghavajra's Western journey was confined to the island and did not include the mainland, and that Amoghavajra knew the Sinhalese king well enough to act as his ambassador. Amoghavajra thus seems, minimally, to have initiated and concluded his journey to the West at the court of the Laṅkā king at Anurādhapura; it is impossible to find any extant evidence to corroborate the single-sentence assertion that Amoghavajra went elsewhere. While Stanley Weinstein (*Buddhism under the T'ang* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 57) reported of Amoghavajra's intentions of a second departure to Śrī Laṅkā in 750, a trip ostensibly abandoned because of an illness, Weinstein in specifying Laṅkā seems to have read more into the cited passage than is warranted. The passage in question leaves Amoghavajra's destination for the 750 trip ambiguous, merely reading "In [Tianbao] 9 (750), there was again an imperial edict allowing him to return. He [Amoghavajra] left the capital but fell ill en route and, unable to proceed, stayed in Shaozhou" (T. 2157, 55.881b).

91. Pertinent to the theme of this section (Vajrabodhi's apparent urging that Amoghavajra visit Laṅkā), Hyech'o (慧超), a Korean named as a disciple of both Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra (the latter naming in 774 the elderly Hye-ch'o as one of the six living monks who had been inducted into the Five Families of the *Sarvathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*; see T. 2120, 52.844a29–b2; Orzech, "Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang," 282), left in 723 for a pilgrimage to the Five Indias (Henrik H. Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism in Korea," in *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia*, ed. Richard K. Payne [Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006], 68–69). The record of Hyech'o's youthful travels, recovered among the manuscripts at Dunhuang, indicates that he went to Magadha and the sites of historical Buddhism, rather than the South Indian sites the biography of Lü Xiang leads us to expect if indeed Hyech'o's itinerary was guided by Vajrabodhi. (Henrik Sørensen observed in a private communication that "the Buddhist sanctuaries in Northern India would in any case appear to have been the goals Hyech'o set himself. Moreover, the travelogue is rather terse and really does not reveal much in terms of Esoteric Buddhism. As can be seen from the Dunhuang manuscripts, it is a far cry from Xuanzang or Yijing.") The extant evidence suggests that Hyech'o began both his association with Vajrabodhi and his inspired interest in esoteric Buddhism in 733, after Hyech'o's return from India. Max Deeg ("Has Huichao Been Back to India? On a Chinese Inscription on the Back of a Pāla Bonze and the Chronology of Indian Esoteric Buddhism," in *From Turfan to Ajanta: Festschrift for Dieter Schlingloff on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Eli Franco and Monika Zin, vol. 1 [Lum-

bini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2010], 207) presents this information in an integral translation of the preface to *T. 1077a*, a unique Mañjuśrī text which was one of the collaborations of Vajrabodhi and Hyech'o. An extended reconstruction and examination of the mantric content of *T. 1077* has been offered in Rolf W. Giebel, "The One Hundred and Eight Names of Mañjuśrī: The Sanskrit Version of the *Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta-aṣṭottaraśātakanāma* based on Sino-Japanese Sources," *Indo Ronrigaku Kenkyū* インド論理学研究 3 (2011). Hyech'o stayed with Vajrabodhi for eight years until the latter's death in 741. Deeg's careful analysis ("Has Huichao Been Back to India," 210) suggests that Hyech'o possibly made a second trip to India.

92. Mahalingam, *Inscriptions of the Pallavas*, lviii–lxiii.

93. Senarat Paranavitana (*Sinhalayo* [Colombo: Lake House Investments, 1967]) surmised that half of the extant architecture of Anurādhapura was due to the kings of the second Lambakaṇṇa dynasty.

94. As I mentioned above, it seems that Vajrabodhi personally narrated to Lü Xiang accounts of his Laṅkān journey, which Lü Xiang faithfully conveyed to his readership.

95. This goal is made concrete in a recollection of this episode in Amoghavajra's life shortly before he died: "I served my Master Vajrabodhi for twenty-four years and received the methods of Yoga. I traveled to India to search out those I had not yet received and all the scriptures and commentaries.... In all I obtained over five hundred mantras, scriptures and commentaries on the Yoga. I presented careful translations of the Sage's words to the State to promote reverence and prosperity" (Orzech, "The 'Great Teaching of Yoga,'" 49, translating *T. 2120*, 52:840a).

96. As will be examined in greater detail in section VII of this paper, many of the earliest *tantras* in the rNying-ma school are attributed to supernatural revelation on Adam's Peak. This fact might suggest that the original Laṅkān compositors of these texts, while anonymizing themselves, left proud clues to their ethnic origin by positing the origin on a conspicuous token of their island.

97. According to the preface to the *Dacheng yuqie jingang xinghai Manshushili qianbei qianbo da jiaowang jing* 大乘瑜伽金剛性海曼殊室利千臂千鉢大教王經 (Ocean of the Adamantine Nature of Mahāyāna Yoga, Being the Scripture of the Great King of Teachings of Mañjuśrī of a Thousand Arms and a Thousand Bowls, *T. 1077a*), seemingly written by Vajrabodhi's Korean collaborator Hyech'o, in 741 Vajrabodhi returned an esoteric Buddhist manuscript to his master in the kingdom of Siṃhala in South India among the Five Indias. This master's name is given as *ācārya* *Ratnabodhi (Baojue, 寶覺) who, it would seem, is not attested elsewhere in the extant literature. It is possible that Vajrabodhi maintained communication across the two decades he spent in

China with several of his old Indian and Laṅkā teachers, with Nāgajñāna being the cardinal one. Although it has to be pointed out that doubts have been cast on the reliability of this preface because of several factual errors contained therein (e.g., the assertion that Vajrabodhi was still alive in Tianbao 1; cf. Giebel, “The One Hundred and Eight Names of Mañjuśrī”), the specificity of this detail of Vajrabodhi’s Sinhalese correspondence in the last year of his life weighs strongly in the effort to deduce why Amoghavajra was directed to Laṅkā upon Vajrabodhi’s death.

98. It is very difficult to reconcile the conflicting accounts about Amoghavajra’s teacher(s), and perhaps one should not even attempt to do so. Nonetheless some sort of summarization of the claims might be in order. In their two early biographies, both Feixi and Zhao Qian record that Amoghavajra underwent his final *abhiṣeka* and received his vast corpus of manuscripts and resources from a monk in Laṅkā named Samantabhadra Ācārya (普賢阿闍梨). Beginning with a stele inscription (no. 133 of the *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biao zhiji*, 代宗朝贈司空大辯正廣智三藏和上表制集, Collected Documents Related to Amoghavajra; T. 2120, 52:860a9–c10; Orlando, “A Study of Chinese Documents,” 92–93) written on Jianzhong (建中) 2/11/15 (4 December 781) by his highly placed lay disciple, the Censor General Yan Ying (嚴郢), and probably initially installed in the grounds of Daxingshansi (大興善寺), mention of an alternate Laṅkān preceptor for Amoghavajra is recorded: none other than Vajrabodhi’s mentor from South India, Nāgajñāna himself. Yan Ying also mentions Nāgajñāna’s recurrence in the history of the patriarchs in his eulogy for Amoghavajra and preface for his portrait (no. 70 of the *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biao zhiji*, T. 2120, 52:847a2–b7; Orlando, “A Study of Chinese Documents,” 78). Although one could understand why Yan Ying might wish to reintroduce Nāgajñāna to avoid acknowledging an alternate lineage through the Laṅkān master Samantabhadra (indeed, Matsunaga, “Fuhōden no tenkyō to chosaku mokuteki,” 25, has suggested that the reason why Kūkai adopted this scenario in the *Himitsu mandarakyō fuhōden* was to lend authority to Amoghavajra’s lineage by positing a direct master-disciple relationship between Nāgajñāna and Amoghavajra), Yan Ying forewent an opportunity to strengthen this association in his cursory treatment of the tale of the Iron Stūpa (on which see Orzech, “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga,’” which paralleled Amoghavajra’s telling of it).

It should be said that it is not out of the question that Nāgajñāna could have resided in Laṅkā at the time of Amoghavajra’s visit. Although it was claimed that Nāgajñāna appeared thirty years old but actually had lived for seven centuries, it is entirely possible that Nāgajñāna looked thirty because he was indeed thirty (seldom do the elderly champion and enthusiastically adopt texts and rituals with an erotic aspect), and forty years later when Amoghavajra may have encountered him, he would have been a wise seventy-

year-old hosted by new Buddhist sponsors while his prior base in the Pallava kingdom was disturbed by schism and war.

Acknowledging the name of Amoghavajra's patron in Laṅkā seems to have been a point of controversy and subject to dispute, for Kūkai says in the 821 CE *Shingon fuhōden* (眞言付法傳, Account of the Dharma Transmission of Mantras) that Nāgajñāna is also called Samantabhadra (*Kōbō daishi zenshū* 1:54). Yet in his account of Amoghavajra in the earlier *Himitsu mandarakyō fuhōden*, in a passage largely based on Feixi's biography, he substitutes Nāgajñāna for Feixi's Samantabhadra as the name of Amoghavajra's teacher in Laṅkā (*Kōbō daishi zenshū* 1:20–21; cf. Orlando, "A Study of Chinese Documents," 162–163; Ryūichi Abé, "From Kūkai to Kakuban: A Study of Shingon Buddhist Dharma Transmission" [PhD diss., Columbia University, 1991], 190–191). Elsewhere, in his *Heizei tennō kanjōmon* (平城天皇灌頂文, Emperor Heizei's Abhiṣeka Document) for the 822 CE ordination of the emperor at the newly constructed *abhiṣeka* hall at Tōdaiji (東大寺), Kūkai again claims that Amoghavajra was instructed by Nāgajñāna: "During the Tianbao [742–756] years [Vajrabodhi's] senior disciple, the Tripitaka Master Daguangzhi (Amoghavajra), paid a visit to Nāgajñāna, obtained the *Vajroṣṇīṣa*- and *Mahāvairocana-sūtras* and so on, as well as the mandalas of the five families and so on, and returned to the Tang kingdom" (*Kōbō daishi zenshū* 2:157; cf. Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 198).

99. Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 222–223, citing *Kōbō daishi zenshū* 1:11.

100. Feixi, whose account of the exclusivity of Laṅkā as the locale of Amoghavajra's text-gathering pilgrimage I considered plausible and valid while others were not, reported that Amoghavajra was the son of a north Indian Brahman and met Vajrabodhi in Chang'an (Orlando, "A Study of Chinese Documents," 161). Other, and in my opinion more candid and forthright, biographies declare Amoghavajra to be an assistant, accompanying his merchant uncle, presumably joining the great Persian trade fleets which Vajrabodhi used as his conveyance to China.

101. This is an abbreviation of Vajrabodhi's posthumous name, Dahongjiao sanzang (大弘教三藏).

102. As Pulleyblank documents in *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation*, 278, the character 闍 was used in Buddhist transcription for Sanskrit "ja" and "jā," while 婆 had a phonic value of "ba" in Tang times. The island of Java is clearly designated.

103. M. Boechari, "Transkripsi sementara prasasti Wanua Tengah III" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.).

104. Jeffrey Sundberg, "The Old Sundanese *Carita Parahyangan*, King Warak, and the Fracturing of the Javanese Polity, c. 803 A.D.," in *From beyond the Eastern Horizon: Essays in Honour of Professor Lokesh Chandra*, ed. Manjushree Gupta (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2011).

105. Holt, *Buddha in the Crown*, 83.

106. Dehejia and Davis argue strongly and persuasively that a Śaiva curse inscribed on the floor of the royal Vaiṣṇava Ādi-Varāha cave of earlier Pallava kings, admonishing worshipers not to stray from the worship of Śiva, was instigated by none other than Narasiṃhavarman II Rājasimha himself; the curse is also chiseled upon three monuments known to have been sponsored by Rājasimha. However, as noted above, Rājasimha seemed to be quite accommodating of the Buddhist sympathies of the Tang emperor in his dealings with that country. Vidya Dehejia and Richard Davis, "Addition, Erasure, and Adaptation: Intervention in the Rock-Cut Monuments of Māmallapuram," *Archives of Asian Art* 60 (2010): 4.

107. In the Pallava King Mahendravarman's (fl. 600–630) Sanskrit farce *Mattavilāsa*, the monk Nāgasena, speaking in demotic Sanskrit, refers to returning to the "Rā'avihāra," the Royal Monastery. Michael Lockwood and A. Vishnu Bhat, *Mattavilāsa prahasana (The Farce of Drunken Sport) by King Mahendravarman Pallava* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1981).

108. Longhurst remarked that there are a few Buddhist images to be seen in temple yards, but "of the monasteries and other Buddhist buildings mentioned by Xuanzang, not a vestige remains, and the mutilated state of the few remaining images of the Buddha seems to indicate that the overthrow of the Buddhists at Kāñchī was both sudden and violent." A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, part 3 (Simla: Government of India Press, 1930), 9.

109. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, 228–231.

110. In this regard, it is instructive to contemplate Ronald Davidson's dictum that "if we are seeking prototypes for those composing the new esoteric scriptures as the Word of the Buddha, we need to begin with the teachers of the first commentators" (*Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* [New York, Columbia University Press, 2002], 160). In the case of Nāgajñāna, the lineage of preceptorship explicitly lies in Nāgārjuna, the first of the human figures in the Shingon line promoted by Kūkai. Realistically assuming that this Nāgārjuna composed the texts (rather than receiving them supernaturally from the deity Vajrasattva), then another link to the Pallava domain may be made: according to the Tibetans, Nāgārjuna was born in Kāñcī, and they explicitly assign to him the alias "Kāñcīnara."

111. One of the great regrets for the history of medieval Buddhism is that no Javanese canon stands preserved alongside those composed in Tibetan and Chinese for Java seemingly maintained its contacts with the Buddhist Indic world even while these were interrupted for different reasons in both China and Tibet around the year 840: the Chinese began a drastic crackdown on the bankrupting tax privileges given to Buddhist monks and monasteries, while the Tibetan king turned against Buddhism. Neither kingdom esteemed esoteric

Buddhism again until the eleventh century. Furthermore, Javanese Buddhists were also subject to the cultural strains of competing with Śaivas, unlike the cases of both Tibet and China where Śaiva theologies were largely an abstract rhetorical postulate. Despite their texts having been gone for the past five hundred years and more, the evidence due to the Śailendras might yet help shed light onto one of the deeper mysteries of medieval Indic Buddhism. In particular, it will be suggested below that Java holds uniquely illuminating data for a historically interesting phenomenon: wilderness monks like those of the Abhayagirivihāra are exactly the group of monks who both channeled Śaiva developments into Buddhist esoteric texts, and might otherwise be known as the monastic version of those itinerant and *vinaya*-rejecting Buddhist sages, the *siddhas*. Furthermore, it will be seen that pursuing a thesis of the wilderness monks as quasi-*siddha* or proto-*siddha* characters might offer some satisfying interpretations of otherwise baffling features from the Central Javanese Buddhist temples. One notable exception to the general disappearance of the Javanese corpus is the early tenth-century *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamamahāyānikan*, a tantric manual which exists in both purely Buddhist and a hybrid Bauddha-Śaiva redaction (Lokesh Chandra, “Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan,” *Cultural Horizons of India*, vol. 4 [New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1995]).

112. Alexis Sanderson, “The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period,” in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, ed. S. Einoo (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, 2009), 133 and 133n311. For an extended study of the South Indian phenomenon of *āveśaḥ* and its Chinese correlate *aweishe* (阿尾奢), see Smith’s well-written volume, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), particularly pp. 390–470, which focus upon *āveśa* in its esoteric Buddhist context. For research specifically oriented to East Asian esoteric Buddhism during the Tang period, see as well Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, ed. Bernard Faure (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 204–238; Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 123–141; and Charles Orzech, “Vajrabodhi,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Richard K. Payne, and Henrik H. Sørensen (Leiden: Brill, 2010). Regarding mention of *āveśa* in Vajrabodhi’s translations, I am indebted to Charles Orzech for pointing out in a personal communication that the *Jin’gangfeng louge yiqie yuzhi jing* (金剛峯樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經, Scripture of the Pavilion with the Vajra Peak and All Its Yogas and Yogins), the work of Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, or a collaboration between the two (Pol Vanden Broucke, “On the Title and the Translator of the Yūgikyō [T.XVIII no. 867],” *Kōyasan Daigaku Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 高野山大学密教文化研究所紀要 7 [1994]: 184–212), contains multiple references to *āveśa* (T. 867, 263a8, 264a19, 268c23–26, 269b23, and 269b27). As Pol Vanden Broucke (“The Twelve-Armed

Deity Daishō Kongō and His Scriptural Sources,” in *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia*, ed. Richard K. Payne [Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006], 149–150) documents, this very scripture was brought back to Japan by Kūkai in 806 and serves as one of five cardinal texts which constitute the Shingon canon even though no record of it exists in any of the scriptural catalogues of the Tang. Todaro (“An Annotated Translation of the ‘*Tattvasamgraha*,’” 387) points out that Kūkai’s main temple at Kōyasan, the Kongōbuji, is named after this particular sutra.

Both Lü Xiang and Hunlunweng are silent on Vajrabodhi’s induction of possessions, but Zanning’s Song-era biography records Vajrabodhi as employing two child spirit mediums to lead the spirits of one of the emperor’s deathly ill daughters and her deceased nurse back from the Land of Yama (Chou, “Tantrism in China,” 279). Verifying Vajrabodhi’s interest in using children to act as spirit mediums, Michel Strickmann (*Mantras et mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine*, Bibliothèque des sciences humaines [Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996], 213–241; and *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 206–207, 210, 233–234) discusses and offers pertinent excerpts of various of Vajrabodhi’s translations which specify the ritual means by which children might be so possessed. A text by Amoghavajra (T. 1277) entitled *Suji liyan Moxishouluo tian shuo aweishe fa* (速疾立驗 Gobu shinkan 魔醯首羅天說阿尾奢法, The Rites of Āveśa with Swift Efficacy as Explained by the Deva Maheśvara) is a manual for inducing the possession of children by “emissaries of Maheśvara” (Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 229–233; Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, 125, 280n27): one presumes that this text is very close to the Śaiva antecedents of this esoteric Buddhist phenomenon. Written by none other than the Pallava king Mahendravarman, the seventh-century farce *Bhagavadajjukāprahasana* features a tale of identity confusion when the spirits of two people, one a Buddhist *yogin* and the other a prostitute, manage to inhabit each other’s bodies (Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 328–330).

113. Lockwood and Bhat, *Mattavilāsa prahasana*.

114. *South Indian Inscriptions* I.24:12–14. For examinations of Narasiṃhavarman’s devotion to the Siddhānta *mārga*, see Alexis Sanderson, “History through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śaivism, the Pañcarātra and the Buddhist Yoginītantras,” in *Les sources et le temps*, ed. François Grimal, Publications du Département d’Indologie 91 (Pondichéry: École Française d’Extrême-Orient & Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2001), 8n6; and Dominic Goodall, *The Parākyatantra: A Scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta. A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, Collection Indologie 98 (Pondichéry: École Française d’Extrême-Orient & Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2004), xix n. 17. I am indebted to Emmanuel Francis for the references.

115. Kaimal, noting the admixture of male *vimāna* and female *prākāra* walls at Narasiṃhavarman II Rājasimha’s Kailāsanātha temple, offered an interpreta-

tion of the *prākāra* ensemble as a prototype of a *yoginī* temple. Padma Kaimal, "Learning to See the Goddess Once Again: Male and Female in Balance at the Kailāsanāth Temple in Kāñcīpuram," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73, no. 1 (2005).

116. Giebel, "The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei."

117. As argued extensively above, I believe that his biographer Feixi is correct when he wrote that Amoghavajra went only to Śrī Laṅkā, but in any case all the biographies concur that it was from Laṅkā that he obtained his texts and received his ultimate *abhiṣeka*.

118. Giebel, "The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei," 179–182; see also David B. Gray, "On Supreme Bliss: A Study of the History and Interpretation of the 'Cakrasamvara Tantra'" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2001), 411; Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 198, 204; and Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 145–156.

119. Giebel, "The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei," 193–195; Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 141–145.

120. Giebel, "The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei," 193. Extant commentaries on the *Guhyasamāja* are attributed to Nāgabodhi, who was a South Indian disciple of Nāgārjuna and reputed to have attained the age of seven centuries, much like the Shingon lore surrounding Nāgajñāna (van der Kuijp, "Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi: Notes on the Guhyasamāja Literature"). The commentaries of Nāgabodhi are preserved in Tibetan translation, and Nāgabodhi is regarded as one of the prominent Indian *siddhas*. Given the similarity of their names, backgrounds, and circumstances, Nāgabodhi and Nāgajñāna have been mistaken for one another. Without constituting proof, there is much to suggest these two exegetes were collaborators or confederates, each working slightly different veins of early esoteric Buddhist material, or perhaps, in the case of Nāgajñāna, even generating that material in the name of Nāgārjuna. (The doctrinal discrepancies between the commentaries of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi discussed in Bentor's study of the *Guhyasamāja* make it clear that Nāgabodhi was not creating material in the name of Nāgārjuna [Yael Bentor, "The Convergence of Theoretical and Practical Concerns in a Single Verse of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*," in *Tibetan Rituals*, ed. José Cabezon [New York: Oxford University Press, 2009]. It is possible, however, that Nāgajñāna composited the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and assigned to his creation the famous name of Nāgārjuna.)

121. Bogel (*With a Single Glance*, 75) remarks on the relative chastity of the depiction of consorts in the Vajradhātu system mandalas of the *Gobu shinkan* (五部心觀), an illustrated pantheon of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* preserved at the Onjōji (園城寺) monastery since 855 CE and due to Śubhākarasiṃha. The same illustrated pantheon contains the image of a *stūpa* in Kelikila's hand which

is an adroitly camouflaged ithyphallic symbol, its true nature made evident only by the Siddham label “*stabdha-liṅga*” (Lokesh Chandra and Sudarshana Singhal, “The Buddhist Bronzes of Surocolo,” in *Cultural Horizons of India*, vol. 4 [New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1993], 129). The *vajra* also came to be regarded as a phallic symbol (Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 197).

122. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 198.

123. Research into the erotic forms of Gaṇeśa so prominent in East Asian iconography might reveal that their textual basis lay in the only extant work of the important monk Hanguang, who is known to have accompanied Amoghavajra to Śrī Laṅkā on his text-fetching expedition. Paralleling interest in Śiva’s elephant-headed son by Nāgārjuna, Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra (Lewis Lancaster, “Gaṇeśa in China: Methods of Transforming the Demonic,” in *Ganesh: Studies in an Asian God*, ed. Robert Brown [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991], 281–285; James H. Sanford, “Literary Aspects of Japan’s Dual-Gaṇeśa Cult,” in *Ganesh: Studies in an Asian God*, 291–296; Christopher Wilkinson, “The Tantric Gaṇeśa: Texts Preserved in the Tibetan Canon,” in *Ganesh: Studies in an Asian God*, 238–239; and Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 255), Hanguang’s work (*T.* 1273, 21.321b–323a) concerns worshipping the *yab-yum* form of the god Gaṇeśa, who is generally called *Mahāryanandikeśvara in esoteric Buddhism (Chou, “Tantrism in China”) and addressed as “Vinayuhka” [*sic*] in the mantra of Hanguang’s text. Hanguang’s work seems to be yet another of the Śaiva-influenced ensemble of Buddhist texts to be retrieved from Laṅkā.

124. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 203. A detailed study of the “mantras and invocations” which appear on a broken stone slab found near the Nālandā *gedige* (*Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report 1952* [Colombo: Archaeological Department, 1953], 11) might go far in revealing the purpose of the temple; these were written in Sinhalese characters also datable to the ninth century.

125. Rolf Giebel’s examination of the shorter but parallel biography of Vajrabodhi by Hunlunweng reveals that although Hunlunweng does not directly refer to the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*, he does specify that it is from South India that Vajrabodhi procured “a text of the great bodhisattva teachings in 200,000 words and a Sanskrit manuscript of yoga.”

126. The respect for north Indian culture by the Pallavas is evident in the existence of the Śaiva cave-temple Atiraṇaṇḍeśvara at Śāḷuvaṅguppam (E. Hultzsch, “The Pallava Inscriptions of the Seven Pagodas,” *Epigraphia Indica* 10 [1910]: 12), which Hultzsch implies was founded by Narasiṃhavarman II Rājasimha as it contains many of his known epithets (the name of the cave, Atiraṇaṇḍa, “Destroyer of Enemies,” is itself one of them). What distin-

guishes this inscription is the fact that its six verses were transcribed twice, on either side of the entrance. The characters on the left compose a Sanskrit verse executed with Pallava-Grantha characters of a style associated with Narasiṃhavarman II, while those on the right contain the same verses but executed in North Indian Siddhamāṭṛkā script. (The Grantha offering on the left is extended by a seventh verse interspersed with a few *birudas*. Emmanuel Francis, who had closely inspected and photodocumented the inscription, observed in a personal communication that the seventh verse and *birudas* are seemingly of another hand than the previous six verses.) Hultzsich ("The Pallava Inscriptions of the Seven Pagodas," 3) notes that the same duality of Pallava and Siddham script is found on Narasiṃhavarman's Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñcī, where the royal *birudas* on the first and fourth tiers of the *prākāra* shrines surrounding Kailāsanātha are executed in an extraordinarily florid and gracious style of Siddham, while those of the second and third tiers were engraved using the Pallava-Grantha script (Michael Lockwood, *Māmallapuram and the Pallavas* [Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1982], 104).

The presence of the Siddham script as a second medium for Pallava Śaiva dedications seemingly shows an attempt to be cosmopolitan, to connect with a respected cultural powerhouse, and implies the rapid dissemination of knowledge and of religious innovation. This Siddham script also obtained in important Buddhist inscriptions in Java and Śrī Laṅkā, and was used to record the mantras in the manuscripts of the Chinese and Japanese esoteric schools.

In a past paper (Jeffrey Sundberg, "The Wilderness Monks of the Abhayagiri vihāra and the Origins of Sino-Javanese Esoteric Buddhism," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 160, no. 1 [2004]: 110–113), I had occasion to observe that the eight paleographic peculiarities of Javanese Siddham inscriptions documented by Bosch, "De inscriptie van Keloerak," 1–16, were found as standard forms in the contemporary Chinese manuscripts, even though no extant North Indian example of these distinctive forms has ever been found. I had hopes of finding the origin of these Sino-Javanese peculiarities when I first read of the Siddham inscriptions in the Pallava temples. While the Atiraṇacaṇḍeśvara inscription does not offer the hoped-for Indian paradigm for the distinguishing Sino-Javanese form of the script, it is worthy of note that the Pallava implementation of the "ta" exhibits exactly the same post-scripted half-length stroke that differentiates a Chinese or Javanese "ja" from the North Indian form.

127. Hodge, "Considerations on the Dating and Geographical Origins of the *Mahāvairocanaḥśambodhi-sūtra*," 64.

128. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 159–160.

129. Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 87–88. Hodge demonstrates, on the basis of the identification of the flora prescribed in the rituals discussed in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, that this fundamental text was almost certainly for-

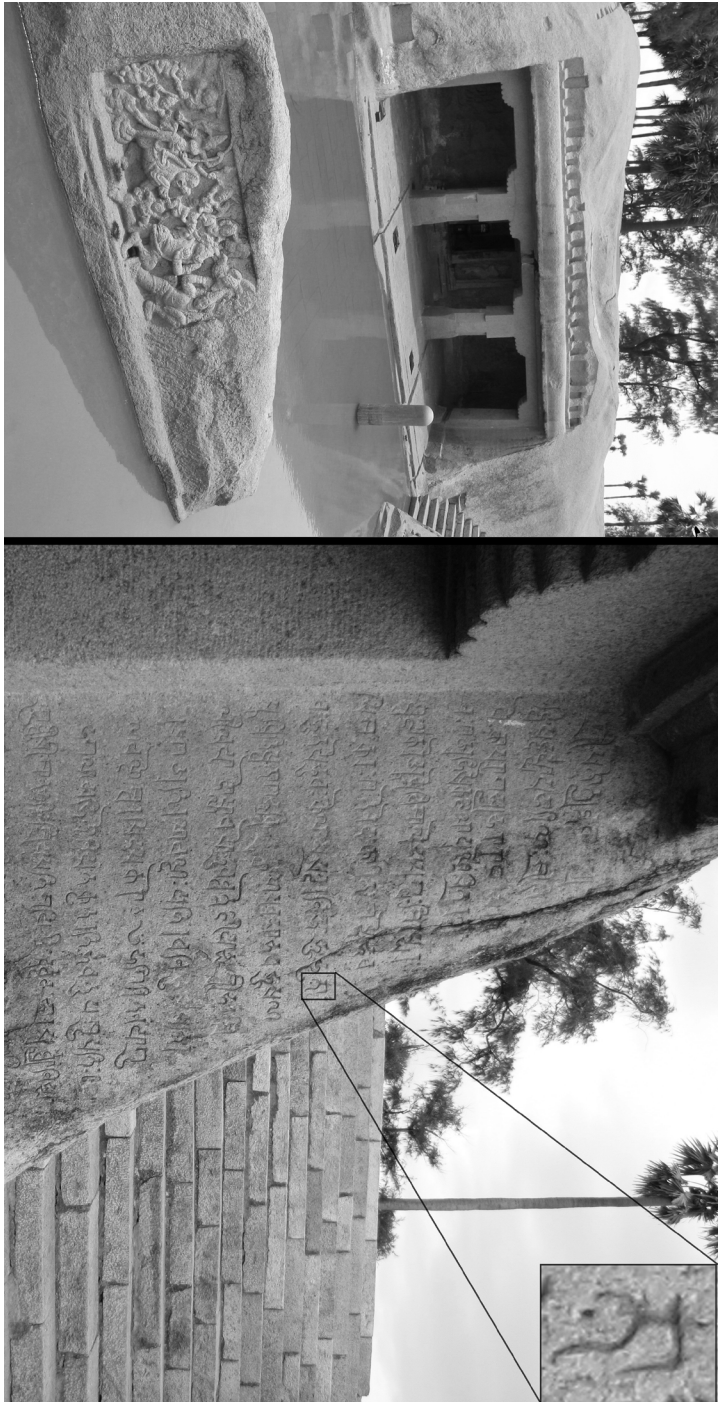


Figure 10. Narasimhavarmman's cave temple "Atrianacandēśvara-Pallava," its flanking inscription executed in the Siddham script, and (inset) a unique formation of the "ja," exhibiting exactly the same half-length post-stroke which distinguishes the Sino-Javanese formation of "ja." Photographs courtesy of Emmanuel Francis.

mulated in the region between Nālandā and the southern foothills of the Himalayas (Hodge, “Considerations on the Dating and Geographical Origins of the *Mahāvairocana-bhīṣaṃbodhi-sūtra*”). Hodge specifically considers the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* as composed in the quiet of the wilds in the foothills of the Himalayas, by monks traveling out from Nālandā for spiritual exercises (ibid., 74).

130. Gray, “On Supreme Bliss,” 204ff. I am impressed with Gray’s conclusions about the relationship between Buddhist and Śaiva ascetics in their venues in the wilderness and on the margins of society. However, Gray derived those conclusions by drawing logically correct inferences from faulty evidence introduced by Max Nihom (*Studies in Indian and Indo-Indonesian Tantrism: The Kuṅṅarakarnadharmakathana and the Yogatantra* [Vienna: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien, 1994]), whose erudite meditations on the strange, disjointed legacy of Balinese Buddhist literature led Nihom to conclude that the extant Balinese mantras dated from before the time that this mantric material was composed in great Buddhist compendia such as the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*. In light of present understandings of Javanese history and culture, Nihom’s conclusions are indefensible: the Javanese sought out from South India, Śrī Laṅkā, China, and Nālandā such exponents of esoteric Buddhism as Amoghavajra, but during the eighth century were not themselves sought by these sources. I hope in a future publication to present an argument that in the ninth century, the splendor of their Buddhist temples and culture garnered overseas admiration for the Javanese achievements.

131. Mānavarman himself sponsored the wilderness monks: the *Cūḷavaṃsa* records that he built a hermitage for *paṃsukūlika* monks at the Thūpārāma. During the reign of Mānavarman’s oldest son Aggabodhi V (r. 718–724), four monasteries were built for the *paṃsukūlikas* and he presented them with his royal garments. Aggabodhi VII (r. 772–777) “decreed that food fit for royalty be given to them regularly.” Sena I’s wilderness monastery complex at Ariṭṭhapabbata (the subject of n. 132) was “endowed with extensive resources (*mahābhogaṃ*) and equipment worthy of royalty (*parikkhāraṃ rājārahaṃ*). Furthermore, attendants, slaves and workmen were appointed to look after their needs” (R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough: Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka* [Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1978], 43).

132. The passage in question reads:

After them, 1,126 years after the introduction of Buddhism and 1,362 years after the death of Buddha, King Matvala Sen became ruler of this country. But, he was not a man who had associated with men of learning. During his reign, a heretic (*tīrthaka*) of the Vajraparvata *nikāya* clad in the robes of a priest (*bhikṣu-pratirūpaka*) came to this country from Dambadiva, and lived in the *ārāma* called Viraṅkura.

Having presented 15 *kaṇḍa* of gold which he had brought to the cook of the royal household, Girivasasen by name, he got him to sound his praises to the king, who, hearing of his virtues, just as the grasshopper leaps into the fire taking it for gold, went to the ascetic and being impressed with his secret discourse, which he called a secret teaching (*rahas baṇa*), accepted the false (*adharmā*) *Vāḍḍiyavāda* doctrines, and abandoning the true doctrines such as the *Ratna Sūtra*, which shine in power extending over 100,000 crores of worlds, he by reason of his embracing these false doctrines fled from the palace he lived in, and giving up the city to the Tamils went to Polonnaruwa and died there. (C. M. Fernando, *Nikāya saṃgrahaya: Vicārātmaka prastāvanāva, nivārādī peḷa, hā gāṭṭa pada vivaraṇayekina upalakṣitaya* [Colombo: Lake House, 1908], 18, with light amendment and amplification by Jeffrey Sundberg based on the edition by L. Gunaratna, *Nikāya saṃgrahaya hevath śāsanāvatarāṇaya* [Colombo: Ratna, 2005]).

Epigraphical and historical records show that Sena I sponsored on Mount Ariṭṭha scores of double-platform *tapovana* structures, of exactly the type hosted by the Śailendra king on the Ratu Boko plateau in Java. The *Cūḷavaṃsa*, presenting Sena I as a pious “aspirant to Buddhahood who had his thoughts fixed on the Ultimate,” records that he built a *paṃsukūlika* monastery at Ariṭṭhapabbata, and a contemporary epigraphical source supports the *Cūḷavaṃsa*’s account. In his pillar inscription of Kivulekaḍa in the Kuñcuṭṭu Korale of the North Central Province, Sena I employs the name Salamevanraj and deems himself *Riṭṭigal-aram-kaarū*, the “Founder of the Riṭṭigala Ārāma” (Lakshman Perera, *The Institutions of Ancient Ceylon from Inscriptions [from 831 to 1016 A.D.]*, vol. 2, part 2: Economic and Religious Institutions [Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 2005], xxxiii. “*Gala*” is Sinhalese for “mountain” and directly translates Pāli “*pabbata*” or Sanskrit “*parvata*”). In admitting the tantric apostasy of Sena I, the *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya* has singled out Sena I as an opportunity for a moral lesson, relating his credo to the disaster which befell his kingdom: during his reign the South Indian Pāṇḍya ruler Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha (r. 831–861) invaded Laṅkā and sacked Anurādhapura for the first time in four centuries, taking away all the valuables in the treasure house of the king and plundering the valuables of both *vihāra* and town. (The *Cūḷavaṃsa* acknowledges the invasion and notes: “He took and made the island of Laṅkā deprived of her valuables, leaving the splendid town in a state as if it had been plundered by *yakkhas*.”)

133. The Tiriyāy site turned up thirty-one statues of the Buddha, eleven of various bodhisattvas, three of Tārā, and a casket with a *stūpa* top and four *dhyāna* buddhas on the circumference (M. H. Sirisoma, *The Vaṭadāgē at Tiriyāy* [Colombo: Department of Archaeology, 1983], 9). Images of the bronzes are presented in Ulrich von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka* (Bangkok: Visual Dharma, 1990). The published collection includes a bodhisattva with a

crown containing all five *tathāgatas* (ibid., 232), which recent research by Hiram Woodward associates with the worship of Vajradhara of the *Guhyasamāja* (“Aspects of Buddhism in Tenth-Century Cambodia,” paper prepared for the conference “Buddhist Dynamics in Premodern Southeast Asia,” Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 10–11 March 2011).

In light of the themes of this section, it is interesting to note the ascetic character of some of the peripheral bodhisattva statues discovered among the cache of esoteric Buddhist statues under the paving stone of the ruined meditation platform at Tiriyāy. Two statues of Avalokiteśvara and one of Maitreya (Von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 252, plates 61C–H) are wearing animal hides tied around their waists and the *yajñopavīta* across their chests, while one statue, likely of Maitreya (ibid., 259, plate 64C) is almost unique in showing the bodhisattva wearing a *dhoti*. The Avalokiteśvaras from plate 64F and plate 64C wear arm bands besides having Brahmans’ caste cords.

The Tiriyāy wilderness monastery was seemingly not alone in harboring valuable material within. Strickland discusses the recent find of an Anurādhapura-area wilderness platform which still bears the telltale evidence of “robber pits,” where knowledgeable treasure hunters singled out specific features of the monastery for excavation. It may be that Tiriyāy yielded its seemingly unique treasure because it was too remote to suffer the depredations of looters. Keir Strickland, “The Jungle Tide: Collapse in Early Mediaeval Sri Lanka” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2011), 266–267.

134. Sirisoma, *The Vaṭadāgē at Tiriyāya*, 9.

135. A huge Sanskrit rockface inscription, located about 60 meters south of the shrine and written in Pallava-Grantha script of the eighth century (Senarat Paranavitana, “Tiriyāy Rock Inscription”; Senarat Paranavitana, “Note by Editor”; and B. Chhabra, “Text of the Tiriyāy Rock-Inscription”; all in *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. 4 [London: Oxford University Press, 1943]), mentions both Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuvāg-Mañjuśrī in connection with the foundation by a pair of merchant guilds of the Girikaṇḍicaitya, the *ākāśa-caitya* which forms the core of the circular shrine *vaṭadāgē* monument at Tiriyāy and which seems to have enshrined hair relics from the Buddha. Another Pallava-Grantha bilinear boulder inscription, located next to the staircase leading up to the Girikaṇḍicaitya, records that the document had been engraved in the twenty-third regnal year of Siṃghaḷendra Śīlāmegha Mahārāja, identically the proper name provided by the Chinese biographies for the king who hosted Amoghavajra. No king of the Lambakaṇṇa dynasty other than Mānavarman (r. 684–718) and Aggabodhi VI (r. 733–772) held their crown this long, so the association with Aggabodhi VI is assured and the correctness of the name given in the biographies of Amoghavajra is confirmed (Senarat Paranavitana, “Tiriyāy Sanskrit Inscription of the Reign of Aggabodhi VI,” *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. 5 [Colombo: Government Press of Ceylon, 1955]). Paranavitana (ibid., 176) ex-

presses little doubt that the dating inscription was carved by the same hand as the main inscription: the shrine at Tiriyāy was thus constructed in the decade after Amoghavajra departed Śrī Laṅkā. Sirisoma (*The Vaṭadāgē at Tiriyāya*, 9) mentions a pillar inscription, located near the ponds to the east of the shrine, which had not yet been transcribed or translated. Given the importance of the Tiriyāy site to the history of esoteric Buddhism, the reading of this inscription should be a research priority. Interestingly, the Tiriyāy structures were fashioned with a Pallava aesthetic. Kārttikēcu Indrapala (*The Evolution of an Ethnic Identity: The Tamils in Sri Lanka c. 300 BCE to c. 1200 CE* [Sydney: South Asian Studies Centre, 2005], 191–192) observes that the *dvārapāla* figures at Tiriyāy “exhibit Pallava influences of the eighth century.” Of the choice of Pallava-Grantha script, which was also employed in inscriptions at Kuccaveli and at the Ambasthala *caitya* at Mihintale, Indrapala (*ibid.*, 191) notes that “for the Pallava-Grantha script to have had such a pervasive influence over the local script so as to change its course of independent development, the Mahāyānists from the Pallava kingdom must have had far more influence in the island than is generally conceded.”

136. The meditation platform at Tiriyāy, with two platforms linked by a causeway and enclosed within a wall, has an unmistakable architectural connection to clusters of similar structures scattered across Laṅkā and as well, the single instance found in the Śailendra heartland in Central Java, explicitly associated with the Sinhalese Abhayagirivihāra and discussed extensively in note 140, below. Wijesuriya, working with references to the inhabitants of these structures in the extant histories generated by the orthodox Theravādin Mahāvihāra sect as well as in the Sinhalese inscriptional record, determined that these ascetic forest-monk (*tapovana*) structures were associated with rag-wearing (*paṃsukūlika*), forest-dwelling (*ārañṇaka*) monks and seemingly initially served them as shelters during the rain-retreats (Gamini Wijesuriya, *Buddhist Meditation Monasteries of Ancient Sri Lanka*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, vol. 10 [Pikakotte: State Printing Corporation, 1998]). Because these structures were not found in the proximity of the Abhayagirivihāra *stūpa* within urban Anurādhapura but located a few miles to the west, the structures have come to be called the Western Meditation Monasteries. Besides being found at Tiriyāy and by the score at Anurādhapura and at Sena I’s site at Riṭigala, ruins of these “double meditation platforms” are also found at Mullegala, Mānakanda, Veherebāndigala, Sivalukanda, Galbāndivihāre, Māṇikdena, and Nuvaragalkanda (Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough*, 44).

137. References to these wilderness monks and their productions may perhaps be found in rNying-ma “prophecies” like the *Tantra Which Comprises the Supreme Path of the Means Which Clearly Reveal All-Positive Pristine Cognition* (Dudjom Rinpoche, Gyurme Dorje, and Matthew Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History* [Somerville, MA: Wisdom

Publications, 1991], 460), which predict:

“The *Mahāyoga* tantras will fall onto the palace of King Ja.
The *Anuyoga* tantras will emerge in the forests of Singhala.”

Attribution to Laṅkā of the sequence of classes of *tantras* known as the *Mahāyoga-Anuyoga-Atiyoga* may be found in investigations of the *oeuvre* attributed to the mid-eighth-century Sinhalese monk (*siṅgalācārya*) Mañjuśrīmitra, the earliest of the commentators on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* and commentator as well on both *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayāna* ritual (Ronald Davidson, “The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*, vol. 1, ed. Michel Strickmann [Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1981], 5n13), who was active about the time Amoghavajra was journeying to Anurādhapura. I am indebted to Jacob Dalton for conveying valuable information on references to Mañjuśrīmitra found in the Dunhuang cache to me in a personal e-mail:

Regarding Mañjuśrīmitra, there are two mentions of him in the Dunhuang mss. The first one (1774) is a Chan text that received significant attention from *Mahāyoga* circles around Dunhuang (Pelliot Tibetan 689 is a *Mahāyoga* commentary on it). ITJ1774 is interesting because at the end, after the Chan text is over, there is a brief discussion of the “three secret classes” (*gsang ba sde gsum*), which may be a reference to the development-perfection-great perfection (*Mahayoga-Anuyoga-Atiyoga*) triad. In this context are mentioned three Indian *Mahāyoga* teachers—Buddhagupta, Śrī Mañju (whom I assume is Mañjuśrīmitra), and Huṃkara (*slob pon ni 'bu ta kub ta dang/shI rI man 'ju dang/hung ka ra dang*). Unfortunately, the rest of the work seems to be lost. The same passage seems to attribute the three secret classes to “*Guhya Laṅkā*.” The other manuscript (ITJ331) contains several texts, including a longish *Mahāyoga sādhana* I discussed in my article in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* [“The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32 (2004): 21–26]. The first text, however, is attributed to Singhala Ācārya Mañjuśrīmitra. It fills the first two folios. The title seems to be the “*Body, Speech and Mind Sādhana*” (*sku gsung thugs kyi bsgrub thabs*). It is basically a short *sādhana* for purifying one’s body, speech, and mind by means of light-rays dissolving into the corresponding three points of the head, throat, and heart.

Mañjuśrīmitra’s is not the only prominent instance of Sinhalese connection to the origination and dispensation of esoteric Buddhism. For instance, Padmasambhava, the Indian master who was invited to Tibet by its king and to whom the rNying-ma sect trace their roots, is reputed to have embarked on the long journey to Ceylon in order to obtain certain teachings and tantric ritual objects (Lokesh Chandra, “Evolution of the Tantras,” in *Cultural*

Horizons of India, vol. 3 [New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1993], 114). Even more significantly, the commentarial literature on the major *Yoginī-tantra* the *Cakrasamvara-tantra* records that its earliest extant commentarial work (the short, seven-hundred-*śloka* [*Cakra*] *Śaṃvaratantrapañjikā*, manuscript III.365A in Shāstri's Durbar Library Catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts) was composed by the Sinhalese monk named Jayabhadra ("May the heroic *ḍākiṇīs* grant peace!"). Jayabhadra, an adherent of Heruka, was born a Sinhalese in what was even then called "Śrī Laṅkā" (Hartzell, "Tantric Yoga," 320, translating the colophon which reads "*ḥṛīṭir iyaṃ siṃhalāvasya śrīlaṅkājanmabhūr abhūt tasya jayabhadrākhyāḥ khyātaḥ. kṣāntim kurvantu vīraḍākiṇyaḥ*"; I am indebted to James Hartzell for providing the original Sanskrit for his translation). The medieval Tibetan historian Tāranātha assigned to Jayabhadra the place of third *vajrācārya* at the Pāla monastery of Vikramaśīla. Sanderson ("The Śaiva Age," 91, 158) notes that epigraphical evidence confirms that the monastery was founded by the Pāla king Devapāla, rather than Dharmapāla as claimed by Tāranātha. The presence at one of the foremost of the great East Indian monasteries of a Sinhalese abbot who is expert in the esoteric doctrines of the *Yoginī-tantras* tends to support many of the arguments of Javalogical consequence to be mounted in note 170, below. It should be noted that the dates plausibly assigned to Jayabhadra vary by six or seven decades. Van der Kuijp ("*Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi: Notes on the Guhyasamāja Literature," 1015n37) dates Jayabhadra to around 900 CE and Sanderson ("The Śaiva Age," 159, 161) supports the assignment of a tenth-century dating to Jayabhadra by accepting Tāranātha's claim that the holder of the office of Vikramaśīla's *vajrācārya* maintained his tenure for twelve years, and deducing Jayabhadra's date by counting backward by twelves from one of the better-dated late *vajrācāryas*. If, however, it is assumed that the office of *vajrācārya* was instituted with the foundation of Vikramaśīla, as Gray is wont to do, we see that Jayabhadra thus dates to around the middle third of the ninth century, about the time when, as will be argued below, widescale depictions of *siddhas* begin appearing on the Central Javanese Buddhist temples (David Gray, "Eating the Heart of the Brahmin: Representations of Alterity and the Formation of Identity in Tantric Buddhist Discourse," *History of Religions* 45, no. 1 (2005): 62n65; David Gray, *The Cakrasamvara Tantra (The Discourse of Śrī Heruka): Study and Annotated Translation* [New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies and Columbia University Press, 2007], 11–12).

138. In my initial study of the Abhayagirivāsin wilderness monks of the Ratu Baka plateau (Sundberg, "The Wilderness Monks of the Abhayagirivihāra and the Origins of Sino-Javanese Esoteric Buddhism") and its claims about the relationship between wilderness monks and esoteric Buddhism, I crucially relied upon a datum which I discovered in the section of Coquet's 1986 work devoted to Nāgabodhi, the name conventionally provided for Vajrabodhi's preceptor Nāgajñāna (see note 27 for this paper's confirmation of the name proposed

by van der Kuijp, “*Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi: Notes on the Guhyasamāja Literature”). According to Michel Coquet (*Le Bouddhisme ésotérique Japonais* [Paris: Vertiges, 1986], 84), who provides no reference for his statement, traditions hold that Vajrabodhi’s tantric master “Nāgabodhi” went to Laṅkā and preached esoteric doctrines among the ascetic monks of the “Secret Forest school” or *guhāvāneyāh vāsinah* (Sanskritization found in Coquet) of the Abhayagirivihāra. These ascetics studied the Small and Large Vehicles as well as the *Triyāna*, the three stages leading to the *Yoga-tantras*. They called themselves disciples of Kāśyapa, the disciple who received the esoteric doctrines from the Buddha. Despite the number of tantric masters this Secret Forest school produced, they were still considered heretics for their doctrines and after a number of persecutions were forced to leave Laṅkā and seek refuge in the Himalayas. I am indebted to Andrea Acri for pointing out that this material seems derived from the entry “Abhayagiri” in the 1892 *Theosophical Glossary* of Madame Blavatsky. Coquet appears to have adopted Blavatsky’s unattributed (but curiously, almost unnervingly and supernaturally prescient!) data, given it a light amendment, and embedded it in his discussion of “Nagabodhi.”

139. John Miksic, “Double Meditation Platforms at Anuradhapura and the Pendopo of Ratu Boko,” *Saraswati Esai-esai Arkeologi. Kalpataru Majalah Arkeologi* 10 (1993); Lokesh Chandra, “The Contacts of Abhayagiri of Sri Lanka with Indonesia in the Eighth Century,” in *Cultural Horizons of India*, vol. 4 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1995); Sundberg, “The Wilderness Monks of the Abhayagirivihāra and the Origins of Sino-Javanese Esoteric Buddhism.”

140. The Javanese inscription announcing the presence of the Sinhalese monks of the Abhayagirivihāra was recovered just outside the east wall of the double-platform *peṇḍapa* (see fig. 6) at the southern tip of the artificial Ratu Baka plateau, a plateau which looked over some of the great Śāilendra Buddhist religious edifices like the immense Mañjuśrī temple complex at Caṇḍi Sewu on the Prambanan plain to the north. That the monks, explicitly Sinhalese, occupying the Ratu Baka Abhayagirivihāra were monks of the “wilderness” or ascetic variety is the necessary conclusion drawn from the form of the stone structure adjacent to the Siddham inscription which documented the Sinhalese presence for the Ratu Baka *peṇḍapa*, with two platforms linked by a causeway and enclosed within a wall, has an unmistakable architectural connection to the Western Meditation Monasteries of the Abhayagirivihāra. Given the enormously indicative recovery of the cache of esoteric Buddhist statues from the wilderness meditation structure at Tiriyāy, what was the reason for the overseas Śāilendra patronage of them? There is unfortunately little content in their inaugural inscription which directly bears on the nature of these Sinhalese monks and helps to resolve the question, so we will have to examine the context in order to suggest a plausible answer.

May we believe that these representatives of the Abhayagirivihāra acted

as conventional ascetic monks rather than the esoteric Buddhist adepts who occupied a similar double-platform wilderness structure at Tiriyāy? Could this explanation accommodate the circumstances of the royally sponsored erection of the Abhayagirivihāra *pendopo* in Central Java by the Śailendra king? The explanation of strict asceticism suits the Javanese case poorly. In refutation of the possibility that the Sinhalese monks in Java were conventional ascetics, it seems to me unlikely that the Śailendra king would benefit from procuring ascetic monks of this strictly ascetic variety—why cast across the Indian ocean to find a rag-garbed monk when you could more or less compel by royal fiat the existence of such a type from local Javanese stock, and what direct ritual or pedagogical benefit could such nominally self-absorbed Sinhalese monks render to the Śailendra king other than setting an example for Javanese equivalents? Given that the “*tapasvin*” monks seem to have indisputably not only cultivated royal Lambakaṇṇa support but also enjoyed a handsome lifestyle at the time of the construction of the Javanese Abhayagirivihāra (see note 131), it hardly seems possible that these monks were selected for their devotion to exemplary ascetic practices: their asceticism was relaxed. Indeed, it should be pointed out that nothing about the terrain surrounding the Javanese Abhayagirivihāra suggests that it should be considered as even slightly uncultivated: the Ratu Baka plateau at that time was an immense civil engineering project involving clearing, quarrying, excavating, and filling up the natural hill and refashioning it as a flat, manicured, terraced, and walkwayed plateau. (In just such a fashion, the elaborate preparation of the Ratu Baka joins this site with the Barabudur and Tiriyāy *stūpas*, both of which were erected upon natural hillocks which were laboriously enhanced by bulking them up with large quantities of fill; Jeffrey Sundberg, “Considerations on the Dating of the Barabudur Stūpa,” *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 162, no. 1 [2006]: 98–99, 120n44; Caesar Voûte, “A New Perspective on Some Old Questions Pertaining to Borobudur,” in *The Restoration of Borobudur: The Jewel of a Golden Age* [Paris: UNESCO, 2006], 240–250). In the cases of both Barabudur and Tiriyāy, the justification for the immense effort must have been a very pressing religious reason.) Given its condition, it is almost impossible to conceive of the artificial plateau area as “wild” and if it was difficult to access from the south and east because of the steepness of the bluff, from the northwest easy and flat access could be gained to the “wilderness” monastery via the stone stairs, paved paths, and walkways across the terrace. Furthermore, strict asceticism is a stratum of Buddhist monastic experience that is unlikely to travel well: if the world esteems the ascetic highly, the ascetic is unlikely to pay attention to the world at all; so seen from the opposite point of view, what inducements could be offered to a Sinhalese monk to traverse the ocean and conduct his austerities in proximity to the court of a different king? A wilder jungle than the one in which he already lives and even more wretched rags to wear? In summary, it seems that the “*vana*” was likely missing and the

more burdensome aspects of the “*tapas*” were minimized at both the Javanese *tapovana*-type monastery and many of the kindred ascetic meditation halls in its homeland.

In light of these considerations, it seems obvious that the attractiveness of the Sinhalese monks accommodated in the structure on the Ratu Baka plateau greatly transcended a mere admiration of paradigmatic ascetic monks by the Śailendra patron. These Sinhalese monks were, at very least, sufficiently interested in the enclaves of worldly power to respond to the inducements of patronage by the powerful Śailendra king, known to be deeply interested in Buddhist esoterism, and were persuaded to come to Java. The selection of these specific Abhayagirivihāra monks, out of all the spiritually accomplished or ritually competent personnel that the Śailendra might have found fit to import from across the sea, seems to me to be strongly suggestive corroborative evidence that these wilderness monks were indeed high-caliber masters of the yoga techniques and more, skilled commentators on the doctrines of these esoteric Buddhist texts, and, quite possibly, custodians of the most authentic versions of the texts because these Abhayagiri monks themselves were generating them.

The tantalizing opportunity to confirm or nullify this strongly-founded hypothesis on the true nature of the *padhānaghara* on the Ratu Baka lay in the grasp of scholars as recently as 1958, when an archaeological investigation unearthed written material within a foundation box on the Javanese Abhayagirivihāra structure’s north-east side, 60 centimeters below the ground. The foundation box included inscribed metal foils, one a small bronze sheet plated with silver and the other made of gold (S. Pinardi, “Data sementara bangunan kompleks pendapa kraton Ratu Baka,” *Berkala Arkeologi* 5, no. 2 [1984]: 37; *Laporan Tahunan Dinas Purbakala Republik Indonesia* [Jakarta: Dinas Purbakala Republik Indonesia, 1951–1952], 17–18, photo 24), potentially invaluable not only to the local history of the Śailendras and the Ratu Baka but also to the history of the pan-Asian Buddhist religion in the eighth century. (For a preliminary explication of another gold esoteric Buddhist mantra-foil found elsewhere on the Ratu Baka plateau, see Jeffrey Sundberg, “A Buddhist Mantra Recovered from Ratu Baka Plateau; a Preliminary Study of Its Implications for Śailendra-Era Java,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 159, no. 1 [2006].) Tragically for pan-Asian history, no reading or facsimile of these foils was ever published, and the foils had vanished from the archaeological repositories when I sought them in 2000, doubtless sold by a corrupt official to a corrupt collector. I am unable to determine whether the Archaeological Service of the Republic of Indonesia indeed explored the other cardinal directions at a sufficient depth to exclude the possibility of the existence of other *pripih* boxes, or even a cache of esoteric Buddhist statues like that recovered at the kindred double-platform meditation structure at Tiriyāy.

141. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 3.

142. Ibid., 332.

143. Giebel, "The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei," 179–182; Gray, "On Supreme Bliss," 411; Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 198, 204.

144. Sundberg, "A Buddhist Mantra Recovered from Ratu Baka Plateau."

145. Nihom, *Studies in Indian and Indo-Indonesian Tantrism*, 114. Nihom, manifestly a competent philologist, reached his conclusion trying to rationalize the strange detritus of Buddhist mantras which washed up in Bali after the fall of the Majapahit kingdom in Java. Nihom postulated that the Vajradhātu Mandala was unknown in Java, a conclusion which is substantially invalidated by the historical and archeological considerations outlined in the first part of this paper.

146. Gray, "On Supreme Bliss," 411ff.

147. Ibid., 380. The reader is directed to the extensive corpus of recent writings of Alexis Sanderson (e.g. "The Śaiva Age"), who has provided substantial primary-source documentation indicating that vast tracts of the *Yoginī-tantras* are directly adapted from Śaiva materials.

148. M. Wickremasinghe, "Buddhannehāla Pillar-Inscription," *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 191–200; cf. R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, "Buddhist Nikāyas in Medieval Ceylon," *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies* 9, no. 1 (Jan–Jun 1966): 57. This inscription has been mistakenly called the Jetavanārāma Sanskrit inscription. The remainder of the inscription has never been found (ibid., 58).

149. *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report 1954* (Colombo: Archaeological Department, 1955), 11, 30. The inscription employed Grantha characters of the tenth century and expresses the desire of the donor to become a perfect buddha who can quench the thirst of all men. The inscription is dated in the thirteenth regnal year of a king styled Sirisaṃghabodhi and records a lunar eclipse in the month of Nabhas (July–August) of that year.

150. The reader will recall from note 132 that the Viraṅkurārāma is the monastery which, the *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya* alleges, hosted the Vajraparvata monk who corrupted Sena I with esoteric Buddhist heresies. The ruins of the Viraṅkurārāma have yet to be identified. The researches of Perera (*The Institutions of Ancient Ceylon from Inscriptions*, 247) show that "viraṅkura" seems to be a title of a high-ranking official in the Rohaṇa kingdom.

151. Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough*, 16. In addition to Sena I's constructions at the Abhayagiri vihāra, four new colleges—Mahindasena, Uttarasena, Vajrasena, and Rakkhasa—were added by Sena's queen and ministers.

152. Gunawardana, "Buddhist Nikāyas in Medieval Ceylon," 58–61.

153. Ibid., 61.

154. M. Wickremasinghe, “Anurādhapura Jetavanārāma Inscription,” *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 9. Wickremasinghe mistakenly assumed that the inscription came from the Jetavanārāma. I am indebted to Gudrun Bühnemann for amplifying the translation. Cf. Gunawardana, “Buddhist Nikāyas in Medieval Ceylon,” 61.

155. On what the four *mahānikāyas* associated with the hundred monks might represent, Gunawardana (“Buddhist Nikāyas in Medieval Ceylon,” 62) concludes that it must represent a school of monks and proposes that the four *nikāyas* were the Mūlasarvāstivāda, the Mahāsāṅghika, the Sthavira, and the Sammitīya mentioned by Yijing as existing in India in the seventh century and by Vinītadeva, abbot of the Nālandā monastery who lived in about the eighth century. Similarly the *Varṣāgraprachā-sūtra*, translated into Tibetan during the eleventh century, structures the eighteen main *nikāyas* under these four principal groups (Gunawardana, “Buddhist Nikāyas in Medieval Ceylon,” 60; cf. Janos Szerb, *Bu-ston’s History of Buddhism in Tibet* [Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990], 98–100). Both Feixi (T. 2120, 52.848b27–b28) and Zhao Qian (T. 2056, 50.292c1) record that Amoghavajra was ordained at age twenty (i.e., in 725 CE, when he was already in China) in accordance with the *vinaya* of the Sarvāstivādin school (cf. Orlando, “A Study of Chinese Documents,” 136, 161; Chou, “Tantrism in China,” 286n8). Yuanzhao says that when he became an *upasampanna*, the ceremony was held at an altar built in accordance with the *vinaya* of the Sarvāstivādin school at the Guangfu Temple (廣福寺). Although the fact is unmentioned by Lü Xiang, the very title of Zanning’s biography of Vajrabodhi (T. 2061, 711b5) associates him with the Guangfu monastery of Luoyang.

156. Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon: The Anuradhapura Period 3rd Century BC–10th Century AC* (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1956), 195.

157. Rahula (*History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 197n1) puts paid to the notion that the wilderness monks were uninterested in scholarship and learning when he observes that in later times the Sinhalese *āraṇyikas* “took a greater interest in intellectual pursuits, and were even engaged in writing non-religious works. The *Bālāvabodhana*, a Sanskrit grammar, written by *āraṇyavāsī* *Dimbulāgala Mahā-Kāśyapa* is a good example.”

158. Additional considerations support this suspicion, as information suggests that the phrase also connotes wilderness monks who stood apart from the traditional sangha: in his history of Island Buddhism, Rahula (*History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 195) notes that “it is curious that only the *pamsukūlikas* and *āraṇyikas* were regarded as separate groups, and for this we are at a loss to find a satisfactory explanation.” Indeed the *Cūlavamsa* notes that during the reign of Sena I, a separate kitchen was established at the Abhayagiri for the

paṃsukūlikas. Wijesuriya (*Buddhist Meditation Monasteries of Sri Lanka*, 142) further this discussion of the separation of *grāmaṃvāsī* and *āraṇyavāsī* even when they shared space:

It was a time in which ascetic monks lived in “open” monasteries but frequently retreated to the exclusive monastic compounds built especially for them.... The ascetic monks seemed to have lived just as separately within these “open” monasteries as in the Meditation Monasteries which were built in the forest. The building of separate residences and kitchens for *paṃsukūlikas* in the “open” monasteries is evidence of this. In support of this, the *Samantapāsādikā* suggests that the two groups of monks could reside in one monastery while maintaining their identity: “A *bhikkhu* who had taken up the practice of purification (*dhūta*), though he stays in a monastery, does not stay in the rooms of the Saṅgha, or does not eat food given to the congregation by donors. He sets up a temporized [sic] room for himself. The Saṅgha cannot take the services of such an ascetic as a distributor of duties or as an attendant who would look after some other work.”

In considering this evidence, it seems possible that some groups of ascetic monks were distinguished as “separate” because they lacked the *caitya* structure which formally defined an *ārāma* or *vihāra*. As Rahula (*History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 115–116) writes, “Usually a monastery was called an *ārāma* or *vihāra*. According to the accepted option of the fifth century A.C., even a hut of leaves (*paṇṇasālā*) of at least four cubits in extent was indeed a *vihāra* built ‘for the Saṅgha of the four quarters,’ if there was a *cetiya* there, if the hearing of the *Dhamma* was done there, and if the *bhikkhus* coming from all four directions could, even without permission, wash their feet, open the door with the key, arrange the bedding, stay there and leave the place at their convenience.” As far as is known, the monks of the Western Meditation Monasteries had no *caitya*.

159. Gunawardana (*Robe and Plough*, 41–42) comments upon the *nikāya* affiliation of the wilderness monks: “The instances cited above also suggest that groups of *paṃsukūlikas* tended to live separately even if they were affiliated to a particular monastery or a *nikāya*” and, noting the incidence of *paṃsukūlikas* at the Mahāvihāra, he concludes that “it is not unreasonable to suppose that the *nikāya* division cut across the *paṃsukūlika* sect, although there is no clear reference in the sources to a *paṃsukūlika* faction within the Jetavana *nikāya*.”

160. Gray, “On Supreme Bliss,” 204.

161. Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 195.

162. Gunawardana (*Robe and Plough*, 42) comments on this *gaṇa*: “The relevant passage in the chronicle is too brief to enable one to make an adequate assessment of this incident, but there is no doubt that the loss of this faction would

have been detrimental to the prestige of the Abhayagiri *nikāya* since, as is evident from the generous patronage they enjoyed well into the tenth century, the *paṃsukūlikas* seem to have been immensely popular.”

163. In a prior discussion of this specific lintel (Sundberg, “The Wilderness Monks of the Abhayagirivihāra and the Origins of Sino-Javanese Esoteric Buddhism,” 114–116), I dwell extensively upon the implications of the markedly East Asian features, including slanted eyes and a long flowing beard, of the figures on this particular lintel. However, there is a substantial chance that the lintel I examined was the handiwork of a modern Chinese stonemason who stamped his own ethnicity upon ancient Javanese stonework. Eliza Scidmore (“Java: The Garden of the East,” in *Architecture of South East Asia*, ed. Roxana Waterson [Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1984], 199), writing in the 1880s, recorded that “in the garden of the Magelang residency, Miss Marianne North found a Chinese artist employed in ‘restoring’ Boro Boedor images, touching up the Hindu countenances with a chisel until their eyes wore the proper Chinese slant.” If the Sonobudoyo lintel was one of the archaeological artifacts subjected to the Sinifying enterprises of the nineteenth-century Chinese chiseler, then obviously my conclusions about the implications of the ethnicity of the figures is dead wrong. However, the lintel was seemingly found in the Yogyakarta rather than the Central Javanese province which encompassed the Magelang residency where the chiselman was at work. I am genuinely uncertain whether the Sonobudoyo lintel originally contained Chinese figures, but a very close inspection might reveal the relative ages of the carving marks around the eyes.

164. Andrea Acri, “More on Birds, Ascetics and Kings in Central Java. *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, 24.111–115 and 25.19–22,” in *From Lañkā Eastwards: The Rāmāyaṇa in the Literature and Visual Arts of Indonesia*, ed. Andrea Acri, Helen Creese, and Arlo Griffiths (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), 63–79.

165. Andrea Acri, “On Birds, Ascetics, and Kings in Central Java. *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin*, 24.96–126 and 25,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 166 (2010): 475–506.

166. Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 50–55.

167. Chou, “Tantrism in China,” 258. Śubhākarasiṃha seems to have led portions of his life in a manner which strongly paralleled that envisioned for the Sinhalese wilderness monks of the Abhayagirivihāra. Chou (*ibid.*, 258) records that Śubhākarasiṃha wandered wild plains and made pilgrimages to all the sacred spots: “He went to Kukkuṭapāda Mountain, where he cut [the *arhat*] Mahākāśyapa’s hair and Avalokiteśvara laid hands on his head. He spent the rainy season at Ḡdhrakūṭa Mountain, where a wild animal guided him into a deep mountain cave in which it was as light as day. There he saw a vision of Śākyamuni with attendants on both sides as if they were bodily present.”

Chou (ibid., 258n35) further notes that cutting hair for monks in a prolonged *samādhi* in their caves was a common practice. For similitude to the description of monks following this sectarian Mahāyāna *vinaya*, observe the self-portrait of the earringed, bearded Śubhākarasiṃha; the image is derived from the end of the *Gobu shinkan* (see fig. 8).

168. Interestingly, the Sinhalese *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya* mentions a *gūḍhavinaya*, a secret *vinaya*, which was held specifically by the esoteric Buddhist Vajraparvata heretics and which could be important for considerations that the tantrists accepted an alternate *vinaya* (for *gūḍha*, see Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960], s.v. *√guh*). It is possible that this alternate secret *vinaya* finds expression in an alternate group of tantric practitioners mentioned in the *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya*, the *nīla-paṭas*, who seem to have worn dark-colored robes (*nīla-paṭa*, lit. “blue robes”) and practiced the “*nil-sādhana*.” The *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya* actually quotes a stanza from the *Nīlapaṭadarśana*, which “preaches of indulgence in women, wine, and love” (Mudiyanse, *Mahāyāna Monuments of Ceylon*, 9). Davidson (*Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 387n111) adds more on the *nīla-paṭas*, identical to the *nīlāmbara*. Having taken note of a passage in the *Subāhupariṣccha* as preserved in Śubhākarasiṃha’s 726 CE translation of the text into Chinese which enjoins that “a monk or *yogin* will attract a ‘non-human’ (generally a *yakṣi*) in the forest or other secluded spot, and their copulation yields worldly benefits, especially magical flight,” Davidson wryly comments on the *Subāhupariṣccha*’s specifications of the color of clothing appropriate for the ritual: “it also specifies the attraction of female tree-spirits (*yakṣi*) as sexual partners to confer *siddhi* and specifies which clothing is appropriate for the rite. Since the well-dressed *mantrin* wears blue to the ritual, we may suppose that this is the earliest datable attestation of the notorious ‘blue-clad’ (*nīlāmbara*) mob, whose sartorial preferences became the insignia of their infamous behavior. They are possibly connected to the extremely popular cult of Nīlāmbara-Vajrapāṇi (‘blue-clad Vajrapāṇi’), a system enjoying a plethora of Buddhist texts and ritual manuals” (Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 203–204).

169. Sundberg, “The Wilderness Monks of the Abhayagirivihāra and the Origins of Sino-Javanese Esoteric Buddhism,” 113n30.

170. The image presented in Davidson (*Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 333, fig. 23) has been published several times and with variant identifications. Debala Mitra (*Ratnagiri* [1958–61], vol. 2, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India* No. 80 [New Delhi: Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, 1983], 427–428, pl. CCCXXV.A) identifies the figure in question as Māra and the surrounding females as the daughters of Māra. Donaldson identifies the figure as either the *vidyārāja* Acala or Māra (Thomas Donaldson, *Iconography of the Buddhist sculpture of Orissa*, 2 vols. [New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre

for the Arts, Abhinav Publications, 2001], vol. 1, 58; vol. 2, fig. 95). Finally, Claudine Bautze-Picron (*The Bejewelled Buddha from India to Burma: New Considerations* [New Delhi: Sanctum Books in association with Centre for Archaeological Studies & Training, Eastern India, Kolkata, 2010], 105–106, fig. 127) identifies the fallen figure in the proper left of the pedestal as Māra and the central pot-bellied figure is identified as Yamāntaka. I am indebted to Gerd Mevissen for the references.

Given the essential similarities between this Ratnagiri figure and the widespread Central Javanese figures, I believe that a mutually reinforcing argument can be made on behalf of their being *siddhas*/*vidyādhara*s. Assuming that the Ratnagiri and Central Javanese figures were intended by their sculptors to represent the same type of Buddhist character, an identification with Māra cannot be considered as a valid emblem to sculpt in pairs along with elegant *devas* above temple lintels and in the background of the Barabudur reliefs, while Acala and Yamāntaka should only be represented in the singular, and probably only once, prominently, within an entire temple complex. Given the cluster of near-contemporary antinomian themes (the beard and earrings on the self-portrait of Śubhākarasiṃha [fig. 8] and the bubblings of concern by Kūkai with a “Mahāyāna *vinaya*” which permitted the beard) which seem consonant with *siddhas* or *vidyādhara*s, I am highly inclined to accept Davidson’s interpretation of the Ratnagiri image.

171. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 333, fig. 23.

172. Of interest and of potential benefit in a more particular identification of the bearded lintel figures, it should be noted that the sixteen figures supervising the eight circumambulation portals leading into the four peripheral chapels of the central Sewu temple each hold a slightly different attribute, like a citrus, a pitcher, or a rosary. They thus differ from the cookie-cutter depictions of bearded figures placed on the lintels of the shrine porches.

173. Among the Buddhist ruins of Central Java which can be comfortably assigned to particular early Buddhist kings, the small sum of available evidence suggests to me that the *rakas* of Panangkaran (r. 746–784) and Panaraban (r. 784–803) were primarily interested in the *Yoga-tantras*, while their successors the *rakas* of Warak (r. 803–827) and Garung (r. 829–847) may have been more interested in the *Yoginī-* or *Niruttarayoga-tantras*. The first two kings’ beliefs may be indicated in the inscriptions of Kālasan and Kēlurak as well as the *vajra*-mantra which seemingly bears Panaraban’s *raka* title (Sundberg, “A Buddhist Mantra Recovered from Ratu Baka Plateau”). Nothing is concretely known of King Warak’s religious appreciations, but I have argued (Sundberg, “Considerations on the Dating of the Barabudur Stūpa”) that the *stūpa* of Barabudur was erected both during Warak’s regnal period and within the *watak* of Warak. Although, given its ascent from the concrete literality of the closed galleried tiers into the obscure abstraction of the upper levels,

Barabudur is open to many reasonable interpretations, Hiram Woodward (“Bianhong: Mastermind of Borobudur?,” *Pacific World*, 3rd ser., no. 11 [Fall 2009]) acknowledges the presence of esoteric Buddhist practice just meters from the *stūpa* (M. Boechari, *Some Considerations of the Problem of the Shift of Mataram’s Center of Government from Central to East Java in the 10th Century A.D.*, Bulletin of the Research Centre of Archaeology of Indonesia No. 10 [Jakarta: Pusat Penelitian Purbakala dan Peninggalan Nasional, 1976], 92, 94; Sundberg, “Considerations on the Dating of the Barabudur Stūpa,” 103; Hudaya Kandahjaya, “The Lord of All Virtues, *Pacific World*, 3rd ser., no. 11 [2011]: 1–25), gives the monument a canny and comprehensive reading based upon the assumed directorship of someone like the China resident Bianhong (the Javanese monastic acquaintance of Kūkai whose story opened this essay many pages ago), and invokes explanations which were concordant with the early *Yoginī* texts like the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*. The widely distributed presence of the characters I have identified as *siddhas* in the skies of the reliefs may serve as a supplemental suggestion that the underlying concept of the monument may have ultimately originated in the early *Yoginī-tantras*.

Garung built up the temple complex at Plaosan Lor (Kusen, “Raja-raja Mataram Kuno dari Sanjaya sampai Balitung: sebuah rekonstruksi berdasarkan prasasti Wanua Tengah III,” *Berkala Arkeologi*, Tahun XIV, Edisi Khusus [1994]: 87; Sundberg, “Considerations on the Dating of the Barabudur Stūpa,” 112–113) and seemingly founded the temple of Sajiwan (Jeffrey Sundberg, “Śrī Kahulunnan and Central Javanese Buddhism during the Reign of the Raka of Garung,” forthcoming, will adduce a substantial number of indicators which suggest Sajiwan to be contemporaneous with Plaosan Lor). While the *siddha* characters are lacking at these sites, the westward orientation of both of the two temples safely attributed to Garung might be attributed to an *apradakṣiṇa* orientation of these temples and so may indicate their conceptual origin in the *Yoginī-tantras*: Heather Stoddard (“Dynamic Structures in Buddhist Mandalas: *Apradaksina* and Mystic Heat in the Mother Tantra Section of the Anuttarayoga Tantras,” *Artibus Asiae* 58, no. 3/4 [1999]) discusses the practice of the reversed or leftward circumambulation, *apradakṣiṇa*, which is prescribed in some of the extant Tibetan Buddhist *Yoginī* texts. (Todaro, “An Annotated Translation of the ‘*Tattvasamgraha*,’” 68, observes that Vajrabodhi’s ritual manual called for the drawing of the Vajradhātu Mandala starting with Vajrasattva in the west and moving to Akṣobhya in the north, i.e., in a clockwise, *pradakṣiṇa* fashion but originating in an unorthodox location.) While the loss of the primary statuary at Sajiwan and Plaosan (in particular, the statuary, almost certainly fashioned of hollow metal rather than monolithic stone, associated with the upper floors of the primary Plaosan temples) prevents the unequivocal determination of whether they were arrayed for a reversed circumambulation, their orientation to the west rather than the east suggests that custom had been reversed at those temples. Interestingly, the Abhayagirivihāra on the

Ratu Baka plateau is almost unique among the Sinhalese meditation monastery platforms in opening to the west. (At the time of the publication of this essay, I do not know the orientation of the wilderness monastery at Tiriyāy.)

Klokke observes a number of specific stylistic correspondences—in my opinion, they might be better termed direct stylistic borrowings—of the *kālas*, *makaras*, and floral borders between some architectural amendments to the original Śailendra Caṇḍi Sewu temple and King Garung's temple at Plaosan Lor which lead Klokke to posit Garung as the king who promoted these structural modifications (Marijke Klokke, "The History of Central Javanese Architecture: Architecture and Sculptural Decoration as Complementary Sources of Information," in *Anamorphoses: hommage à Jacques Dumarçay*, ed. Henri Chambert-Loir and Bruno Dagens [Paris: les Indes savants, 2006], 55–57). We might with great justification assert that Garung instigated *all* of the architectural and decorative supplements (including the introduction of the iconic elements of the bearded *siddhas*) to the Sewu temple, including both the porches newly added to the shrines of the Sewu complex and the portals of the circumambulatory *pradakṣiṇa* corridor, and as well the erection of a balustrade to the new *pradakṣiṇa* walkway which was decorated by raucous dancing and drumming figures. These architectural amendments and the associated opportunities to introduce new iconic motifs therefore provide an indicator of a change in the primary icon featured within the Sewu temple complex, from the original Mañjuśrī to an esoteric Buddhist deity more in keeping with the theme of the newly instituted friezes, perhaps Hevajra or Heruka. As a supplemental insight into the implication of the added *siddha* figures, we may turn once again to Davidson (*Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 223) for the likely explanation of the musical figures introduced into the reconstituted circumambulation corridors at the central Sewu edifice: "Likewise, Vajrayāna *siddhas* were, for all appearances, the first of Buddhists to employ singing (not chanting) and dancing (not simple hand gestures) in the acts of offering before images. Such acts were frequently enjoined in the *yoginī-tantras*, right from its earliest expression, and sometimes brought with them the values espoused in Śaiva/royal court affiliation, as seen in the longer *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*."

There are at least two other pieces of evidence known to me which suggest that the *Yoginī-tantras* existed in Central Java before the shockingly abrupt termination of government in 929 CE. Stutterheim discusses an oblong bronze cast skullcap, chased along the perimeter with clumsily executed spirals and florals, recovered from the saddle between the dead Merbabu and active Merapi volcanoes (Willem F. Stutterheim, "Een bronzen schedelnap," *Djâwâ* 9 [1929]). Chandra and Devi, in their study of the bronze hoard originating from Surocolo, identify the majority, including the central Vajrasattva, as belonging to the *Naya-sūtra*, which was translated, *inter alia*, by Amoghavajra (Lokesh Chandra and Sudarshana Singhal Devi, "The Buddhist Bronzes of Surocolo," in *Cultural Horizons of India*, vol. 4 [New Delhi: International Academy of Indian

Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1995], 125, 133). (Giebel, “The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei,” 175n182, notes that the shorter version is called the *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and the longer version the *Śrīparamādya*, which is the sixth assembly in Amoghavajra’s taxonomy. Amoghavajra’s translation [T. 243] is of the shorter version, of which there is also a translation attributed to Vajrabodhi [T. 241], but this attribution is suspect.) The remainder of the Surocolo hoard, including two distinctively boar-faced females, seemingly derives from a mandala of sixteen-armed Hevajra.

174. Cf. Lokesh Chandra, “Portraits of Two Kushan Princes and of Śubhākara,” in *Cultural Horizons of India*, vol. 3 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1993), 179; Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 76.

175. Gray, “On Supreme Bliss,” 422–423. Refer to note 121 for prime evidence of this East Asian sensibility.

176. As noted above, Vajrabodhi’s ascent of Adam’s Peak also features in Hun-lunweng’s biography.

177. I am aware of no extant evidence which suggests that there was an appreciation by esoteric Buddhist Sinhalese of Adam’s Peak *per se*, but evidence suggests that the Śrī Pāda footprint relic was important: one of the image shrines at the Tiriyāy site was specifically devoted to the Buddha’s footprint (Sirisoma, *The Vaṭadāgē at Tiriyāya*, 2). The footprint may indicate an association with the Abhayagirivihāra; Faxian, traveling three centuries before Vajrabodhi, relates the story of the Buddha taming the native Ceylonese *nāgas* by planting one foot on Adam’s Peak and the other on the location where the Abhayagiri stūpa was erected (James Legge, trans., *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms, Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fa-Hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon [A.D. 399–414] in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline* [New York: Dover, 1965], 102). The east side of the hillock on which the Girikaṇḍa caitya was built contained meditation caves which had been used by Buddhists since the second century BCE (Sirisoma, *The Vaṭadāgē at Tiriyāya*, 3, 6). Such caves seemed essential to the wilderness monks, being found in proximity even to the Javanese instance.

178. In a characteristically careful reading of and deeply informed reaction to this essay, Henrik Sørensen has properly emphasized the hazards and liabilities of employing Tibetan mythological material which dates from several centuries after the period of Vajrabodhi. It seems appropriate to clarify for the reader the evidentiary dependencies upon Tibetan material in this study.

For the purposes of amplifying the Chinese material on the life of Vajrabodhi, reference has been made to Tibetan sources on five occasions. In the first (see note 27, with the topic reprised in note 120), attention is paid to the existence of a South Indian master Nāgabodhi known to the Tibetans,

whose seven hundred-year longevity, fellow discipleship under Nāgārjuna, and supernatural exploits curiously paralleled the accounts of Nāgajñāna in Chinese and Shingon sources around the turn of the ninth century. In the second reference to Tibetan material (see note 77), the variances in composition of the eighteen assemblies between the canon described by Amoghavajra and the Indo-Tibetan analogue are observed. In neither of the first two instances where Tibetan material is discussed does the Tibetan material employed in the essay serve as anything other than a comparison. The third of the uses of Tibetan material is to incidentally note (see note 110) that Nāgārjuna was termed “the man of Kāñcī,” which seems to be a plausible but not conclusive acknowledgment of his origins in light of the material presented by Lü Xiang. Again, the use of this Tibetan information is descriptive and seems concordant with the context of the other information in this paper. The fourth use of asynchronous Tibetan materials occurs in note 137, where in a discussion devoted to the evidence discussing the Sinhalese wilderness monks as propagators of esoteric Buddhism, it seems appropriate to point out that a Tibetan text of mythological and imaginative character nevertheless specifically associated the production of the *Anuyoga-tantras* with the forests of Śrī Laṅkā. In this final section of the present essay, the argument will necessarily rely upon a final cluster of references to Tibetan material to allow an explication of the significance of Adam’s Peak; this dependence will differ fundamentally from the prior employment of Tibetan material because the reliance in this case is fundamental and interpretive rather than just incidental or comparative. The use of Tibetan attributions of its early materials’ revelation on Śrī Pāda is absolutely necessary to actively amplify this essay’s exploration of the possible meaning of the Chinese accounts, given that an interior understanding of Adam’s Peak is now lacking in the contemporary Chinese accounts themselves.

179. Robert Mayer, *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: The Phur-pa bcu-gnyis* (Oxford: Kiscadale, 1996), 12n16.

180. Dalton extensively examines the varying interpretations and appreciations of this sutra, the root *tantra* of the *Anuyoga* class of teachings, throughout its thousand-year lifetime (Jacob P. Dalton, “The Uses of the Dgongs pa ’dus pa’i mdo in the Development of the rNying-ma School of Tibetan Buddhism” [PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2002]).

181. Dalton (*ibid.*, 72n79) devotes a footnote to differentiating this Mt. Malaya from alternate Malayas, ultimately citing Lochen Dharmaśrī on its location in Śrī Laṅkā: “Malaya is at the center of the island which is like four petals of a lotus. In the local tongue it is called Sumanakūṭa.” As noted above in note 33, the name for the central mountainous region of Sri Laṅkā is “Malayaraṭṭha,” and this is the name which apparently held force for the Tibetans when describing the region’s most prominent peak.

182. Ibid., 64, translating *Dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo*, vol. 50, 17.5–17.7.

183. Ibid., 64.

184. Ibid., 72. For an instance of the employment of one of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha*'s Śiva-taming mantras in contemporary Java, see Sundberg, “A Buddhist Mantra Recovered from Ratu Baka Plateau.”

185. Ven. Rangama Chandawimala Thero, “The Impact of the Abhayagiri Practices on the Development of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka” (PhD diss., University of Hong Kong, 2007), 236. Ven. Chandawimala Thero has amplified the published information on this Sumeru in a personal communication: The image of Sumeru is small, just a few centimeters high, and rather crudely finished as it was placed in an invisible position under the Buddha image. It was accompanied by other auspicious marks. Another Sumeru has been found at the Topaveva Stūpa.

186. Rinpoche, Dorje, and Kapstein (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 455) include the following description of Sumanakūṭa or Adam's Peak, taken from Tibetan rNying-ma scriptures:

On its peak dwells the king of powerful craft.
On its face is a dog-shaped white rock.
It's adorned with the likeness of a lion
Leaping through space.
At its base grow eight medicinal roots:
Illness and disease do no harm here.
On the summit there is the eyrie and nest
Of the solitary Kalantaka bird,
Which dwells apart from all others.
The peak is of easy access to those of good fortune,
But to the unfortunate completely impregnable.

I am uncertain whether or not the various vegetation mentioned at the Adam's Peak of Lü Xiang's Vajrabodhi narrative bore some relationship to the eight medicinal roots of the Tibetan description.

187. Chandra, “The Contacts of Abhayagiri of Sri Lanka with Indonesia in the Eighth Century,” 13–14.

188. Johannes de Casparis, “The Dual Nature of Barabudur,” in *Borobudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument*, ed. Luis O. Gomez and Hiram W. Woodward (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

189. In his discussion of the Abhayagirivihāra inscription, Chandra (“The Contacts of Abhayagiri of Sri Lanka with Indonesia in the Eighth Century”) proposes several variant readings to those published by de Casparis. Having personally examined the stone on two occasions, I have found that about a third of Chandra's suggested alternate readings are indeed confirmed by a

careful examination of the stone, a third of the proposals are invalid, and the final third are uncertain because the relevant *akṣara* have been obliterated by fissures in the stone. In order not to disturb the symmetry of his subsequent analysis, I choose to present Chandra's translation integrally, without fussing over the precise details of the validity of several of his proposed amendments to de Casparis' original published transcription. This commentary will be subject to minor amendments in a future, comprehensive, and adequately documented publication of the inscription.

190. The stone of the Abhayagirivihāra inscription, like a number of other important Central Javanese inscriptions, was chosen because it was flecked with large crystals of quartz. The effect, when the stone is clean, is to produce a surface with speckles of crystalline luster. The hardness of the crystal often interfered with the lapicide's attempt to incise cleanly formed characters.

191. Chandra, "The Śailendras of Java."

Ritual Studies in the *Longue Durée*: Comparing Shingon and Śaiva Siddhānta Homas

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HOMA AS KEYSTONE: INTRODUCTORY METAPHOR

Think of a stone arch. Think of a second stone arch. Think of these two arches as intersecting—not necessarily at the top, that would be presumptuous, but at some point the two intersect with one another. One arch is ritual studies, the other is tantric studies. The stone best fitted for the intersection of the two is the *homa* ritual.

The *homa* is part of almost all tantric traditions, from South India to Mongolia, from Kashmir to California.¹ That alone makes it a key ritual for the study of *tantra*, a multifaceted religious tradition that places great emphasis on ritual. The importance of the *homa* for ritual studies is less easily discerned, and hence requires greater explanation.

Ritual studies, as the name implies, is an area of study, the only unifying factor being ritual itself. It is not, in other words, a discipline and as such does not have any unifying theory or method. There is, of course, a pantheon of ancestral spirits to be appeased by repeated mention—obeisances in the form of footnotes—but no unifying theory or even a single unifying theoretical orientation. And since method follows on theory, there is no agreement as to the appropriate method by which to judge the consequent claims.

This is not to say that there have not been important and valuable contributions to the field, but ones that of necessity have been surveys.² This is, of course, a horse of two colors. From one side, the horse looks white, from the other black.³ While the field as a whole lacks any coherent direction for growth, it benefits from the multiplicity of perspectives and approaches that are brought to bear on the topic.

SO, WHAT'S MISSING?

Christiane Brosius and Ute Hüsken have noted that “It is crucial to explore ritual dynamics by examining the development of a ritual in the *longue durée*.”⁴ There seem to be no studies that undertake such an approach. Studies of ritual change have tended to focus on single instances of change, rather than change over the *longue durée*.⁵ One of the difficulties of such a study, despite its desirability, is assembling adequate evidence to study. The *homa* can fill this lacuna—and is, therefore, the keystone at the intersection of ritual and tantric studies.

There is a huge body of ritual manuals recording different versions of the *homa* spanning two millennia of development, change, and transmission across the boundaries between religious cultures. This body of literature provides a perhaps unparalleled resource for the study of ritual dynamics in the *longue durée*.

The following translation provides one instance of a *homa* and contributes to a larger, ongoing project that has longitudinal aspects.⁶ In order to understand the dynamics of ritual change, a ritual's historicity, it is necessary to establish several such “data points” for comparison. The *homa* ritual manual translated here, from the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition, will be compared with a *homa* known from the Shingon tradition of Japanese esoteric Buddhism. Although this is only a single comparison, it is an instance of the kind of comparisons that cumulatively can establish the dynamics of ritual change.

HISTORICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN
ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA AND SHINGON

The two rituals I have chosen to compare here are from differing religious traditions, cultures, and times. On the one hand is the Śaiva Siddhānta fire ritual described in the *Somaśambhupaddhati*, a text dating from the end of the eleventh century.⁷ The chapter from this work prescribing the *homa* ritual is translated from Hélène Brunner-Lachaux's French translation, and is given below. Brunner-Lachaux identifies the author—Somaśambhu—as a South Indian *ācārya*.⁸ Although this particular work is identified as South Indian, Dominic Goodall calls attention to the fact that the “pan-Indian character of the early sect has been obscured, because almost all the extant works that bear the names of the twenty-eight principal scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta have been substantially altered or entirely rewritten in South India.”⁹ Thus, although we are here examining a work that comes from the

South Indian form of Śaiva Siddhānta, it derives from an older, more widespread tradition.

The second term of the comparison is the *Fudō Myōō soku sai goma* (Acalanātha Vidyarāja śāntika homa, 不動明王息災護摩). The *Fudō Myōō soku sai goma* ritual manual employed in this comparison was originally written by Dōhan (道範, 1178–1252), placing the two works within approximately a two-century span of one another (the contemporary version of Dōhan's text used in the training of Shingon priests on Mt. Kōya today was edited by Taishin Iwahara).¹⁰ This text is standard for the Chūin (中院) lineage of Shingon, the lineage associated with Mt. Kōya and the predominant lineage of Shingon in contemporary Japan. Beyond the distinctions in religious traditions, cultures, and times, however, it seems probable that the two traditions themselves both trace their origins further back to a common tantric religious culture. The nature of the development of the two distinct traditions—Śaiva Siddhānta and Buddhist—out of that shared religious culture remains an area requiring much additional research.

Goodall has emphasized that while Indian religions are commonly identified as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, this contemporary characterization is not representative of emic categorizations. In particular, in place of the category “Hinduism,” “various soteriologies and schools of thought might be enumerated, but three streams are commonly separated out: Vedic orthodoxy, and those of the heterodox Vaiṣṇavas, and Śaivas,”¹¹ that is, the adherents of Viṣṇu and Śiva. In the early scriptures of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava *tantra* “no concession is made to Vedism”¹² as soteriologically effective. However, “they used the Vedic ritual framework as a paradigm for their own; many tantric rites had elements calqued upon Vedic ones, in which the efficient parts of the ritual, i.e., the mantras, were taken from tantric scriptures instead of from the Vedic corpus.”¹³

One perspective on this early period is that offered by Alexis Sanderson. He has argued that tantric Buddhism appropriated much from the Śaiva traditions. Speaking of the royal patronage of both traditions in Southeast Asian kingdoms, he says that this patronage was

surely facilitated by the fact that the form of Buddhism adopted and developed was one that had equipped itself not only with a pantheon of ordered sets of deities that permitted such subsumptive equations [as Vairocana and his retinue with Śiva and his] but also with a repertoire of Tantric ceremonies that paralleled that of the Śaivas and indeed had modelled itself upon it, offering initiation by

introduction before a Maṇḍala in which the central deity of initiation (*devatāhaṃkāraḥ*, *devatāgarvaḥ*) through the use of Mantras, Mudrās, visualization, and fire-sacrifice (*homaḥ*); and this was presented not only as a new and more powerful means of attaining Buddha-hood but also, as in the Śaiva case, as enabling the production of supernatural effects (*siddhiḥ*) such as averting of danger (*śāntiḥ*), the harming of enemies (*abhicāraḥ*), and the control of the rain (*varṣāpaṇam* and *ativṛṣṭidhāraṇam*), through symbolically appropriate inflections of the constituents of these procedures.¹⁴

This suggests just how far-reaching the similarities between the two traditions are.

On the basis of Sanderson's statement just quoted, and others he has made, the incautious or uncritical reader may adopt the generality that Buddhist *tantra* is simply derivative from Śaiva. As with most such generalities, however, the situation proves to be rather more complicated.

Before turning to specific considerations, we can point out the high improbability that appropriations were only a matter of Buddhists appropriating from Śaivas. Similar situations, such as the relation between Buddhism and Bön in Tibet,¹⁵ Buddhism and Daoism in China,¹⁶ and Buddhism and Shintō¹⁷ in Japan, all evidence appropriations being made by both parties, what Ronald Davidson has called "reciprocal appropriation."¹⁸ By analogy, then, one would expect that appropriations were made by both Buddhists and Śaivites from each other.

However, let us consider in greater specificity some of the areas in which appropriations may have taken place. While appropriations certainly are possible in a wide variety of areas, such as myths, doctrines, etc., we can focus here on the issues involved in the appropriation of textual materials, deities, and ritual.

The question of textual appropriation plays a key role in discussions of the historical relations between Śaiva and Buddhist tantric traditions. Claims of textual appropriation obviously depend upon the dating of texts relative to one another. However, such dating is notoriously difficult in India, and in turn depends either upon outside sources, such as datable Chinese or Tibetan translations (and even these offer their own difficulties¹⁹), or upon theoretical arguments themselves based on philological principles. The philological issue affecting the discussions of the relations between Śaiva and Buddhist texts is the historical relation of more and less grammatically correct Sanskrit. Are we looking at instances in which scribes are correcting

what they perceive as bad grammar, in which case the historical relation is from less grammatically correct to more? Or, is the process one in which scribes are adding what in terms of classic Sanskrit are errors, perhaps because they are lazy or illiterate or replicating their own spoken language, with the resulting historical relation being from more to less grammatically correct? As Davidson has concluded, to take either of these as a general principle for dating entire corpora is not sound, but instead “decisions about textual borrowing are best made case by case.”²⁰ Davidson goes on to suggest “that a reciprocal appropriation model (allowing for oral recitation, partial memorization, ritual imitation, individual conversion, etc.) will prove the most useful.”²¹

In a series of studies on tantric deities,²² Gudrun Bühnemann has identified several instances in which Buddhist deities are appropriated into Hindu tantric pantheons, coherent with the reciprocal appropriation model suggested by Davidson. In dealing with the appropriation of deities, the scope of research moves beyond philological considerations to include those of art history and material culture. The understanding of art has changed over the last quarter century, a development that has been very important in understanding not only the role of religious art, but also its role in comparative historical studies. No longer is the focus on individual art pieces interpreted solely in terms of stylistic categories, such as Baroque or Gandharan, and relocated into the abstract categorizing space of a museum. Bühnemann emphasizes the importance of practice in relation to understanding the significance of iconography, thus she employs *sādhana* texts. She notes, “As in other Tantric texts, the deity descriptions in the MM [Mantramahodadhi] are not presented for their own sake but are included in the context of ritual worship to enable the worshipper to visualize the deity.”²³ For example, in discussing the appropriation of Ugratārā (“the fierce Tārā”), Bühnemann says that “It is noteworthy that not only the iconographic description of the goddess in the Buddhist *sādhana* was taken into [the Hindu] Phetkārīṇītantra, but also the characteristic Buddhist Tantric visualization pattern.”²⁴ This appropriation extends to “typically Buddhist Tantric worship mantras,”²⁵ particularly noteworthy because mantras often serve as the most important semiotic markers of religious affiliation.²⁶

Consideration of the appropriation of ritual practices requires us to consider the philosophic disagreement regarding the nature of

explanation and causality that has been at work in the study of the relation between Śaiva and Buddhist *tantra*. This disagreement has centered on the concept of a “substratum” of Indian religious culture, as employed by David Ruegg, initially in an essay in 1964.²⁷ Substratum served to identify the religious culture that constitutes the shared background of all Indian religions. For example, although the idea changes and develops over time and has particular sectarian inflections, the concept of karma can be recognized as an important element within the religious substratum of India.

Alexis Sanderson has critiqued this idea, and the comparable concept of a “common cultic stock” used by Stephan Beyer,²⁸ saying that they are problematic because “they are by their very nature entities inferred but never perceived. Whatever we perceive is always Śaiva or Buddhist, or Vaiṣṇava, or something else specific. Derivation from that hidden source cannot therefore be the preferred explanation for similarities between these specific traditions unless those similarities cannot be explained in any other way.”²⁹ Expressed in this fashion, the concept of a religious substratum does sound like Molière’s “dormitive principle”—a tautology that presents itself as explanatory, when it is in fact not. As such it seems “unsatisfactorily vague”³⁰ and potentially an obstacle to research that would otherwise lead to a better understanding of specific instances of appropriation.

Granted that it may produce such effects upon the intellectually lazy, the explanatory value of an inferred, i.e., theoretical, entity is not, however, to be dismissed out of hand. The status of such entities is a central issue in contemporary philosophy of science, specifically the discussions regarding scientific realism.³¹ A classic example of an entity inferred but not perceived is the electron. While electrons have never been directly perceived by anyone, their existence and characteristics are inferred from observations. The philosophy behind applying scientific realism to intersubjective objects such as the Indian religious culture as substratum for both Śaiva and Buddhist *tantra* would take us too far afield from the specific comparative project of this current essay.

Instead let us simply point to elements within Indian religious culture that were available for use by both Śaiva and Buddhist *tantrikas*. The components of praxis that come to be crystallized as part of both Buddhist and Śaiva *tantra* (including mantra, *mudrā*, votive rituals employing fire, and so on) are free-floating in the religious milieu,³² in

many instances being part of the Vedic ritual culture to which both are defining themselves by contrast.³³ As such these components, including the *homa*, were accessible to both traditions—as well as to others, such as Jaina *tantra*. While further historical study is necessary to clarify the detailed steps by which *homas* were constructed, including possible appropriations from one tradition to another, such appropriation takes place against the shared background knowledge regarding Vedic practices.

In other words, when considering processes of appropriation, the broader question of “Why?” needs to be asked. One only appropriates what makes sense, what appears valuable in the context of the broader religious culture, and it is that religious culture that needs to serve as an important point of reference in addition to specific texts, mythic tropes, ritual practices, deities, doctrines, or category systems.³⁴ As we examine similarities and differences between the Śaiva Siddhānta and Shingon *homas* as a basis for longitudinal considerations, this shared religious culture provides a background for both traditions. The comparative study of ritual, like the comparative study of texts, can provide additional resources for exploring the historical relations between these two traditions and the early development of *tantra*.

Structure of the Homas

The following table (table 1) gives a side by side comparison of the two *homas*. The Śaiva Siddhānta *homa* list has both a letter designation preceding the name of the set of ritual actions, which is related to the following structural analysis, and following the name the numbers of the *ślokas* in the appended translation. The Shingon *goma* actions are drawn from the analysis of the *Fudō Myōō soku sai goma*.³⁵ The identifying letters and numbers are based on two overlapping ways of organizing the ritual activities.³⁶ As I have noted previously elsewhere,³⁸ such linear representations of a ritual—whether based on observation or text—are of limited utility for comparative purposes. This is because they obscure the ways in which actions are grouped together into larger “grammatical” structures. Rituals are not, in other words, simply the doing of one thing after another, but rather a systematically organized and structured set of activities. Although this characteristic of ritual is almost universally emphasized as one of its defining characteristics, the step that might seem obvious—diagramming such structures—seems to be exceedingly rare.

Table 1. Comparison of the the Śaiva Siddhānta and Shingon *homas*.

Śaiva Siddhānta <i>homa</i>	Shingon <i>homa</i>
(a) return to Agni's residence (1–2)	• entering the hall • purification (A) dharma of endowing practitioner (A.1) dharma of Samantabhadra's vows (A.2)
(b) <i>saṃskāra</i> of the <i>kuṇḍa</i> (3–7) aspersion (3) building ritual (4, 5) kindling and fire (6, 7)	• construction (B) setting the boundary (B.3) endowing the ritual space (B.4)
(c) installation of Agni (9–13)	• encounter (C) requesting the deities (C.5)
(d) after installation (14, 15)	
(e) <i>saṃskāra</i> for impregnation (16–19a)	
(f) after the birth (19b–23)	
(g) protection of the infant (24–26)	
(h) <i>saṃskāra</i> of the ladle and spoon (27–30a)	sealing the ritual space (C.6)
(i) <i>saṃskāra</i> of the clarified butter (30b–41a)	<i>pūjā</i> offerings (C.7)
(j) aspersion of the face of Agni (41b–42)	
(k) name-giving to Agni (43)	
(l) departure of the parents (44)	
(m) initiating worship of Śiva (45, 46) feeding (45) connection of the <i>nāḍīs</i> (46) • ingredients and quantities (47–52a)	• identification (D) recitation (D.8)
(n) entirety of oblation (52b)	• entering the <i>homa</i> (D.8G)
(o) departure of Śiva (58–59)	• dissociation (E) latter <i>pūjā</i> offerings (E.9)
(p) interior & exterior offerings (60) • alternative from the <i>Līlāvati</i> (61–70a)	symbolic and material offerings ³⁷ depart the hall
(q) conclusion (70b–75a)	

The text includes an alternative version from the *Līlāvātī* and the details of “ingredients and quantities,” both of which are sections of the text that are not part of the ritual *per se*. Therefore, in the tabular listing above, they are not given initial letter designations, and in the following diagrams these sections are not included.

This first diagram (fig. 1) identifies the groups of actions according to clusters associated by symbolic meaning. The ritual axis is the three actions involving the practitioner creating a link between their own *nāḍīs* and those of the Śiva in the fire and the Śiva in the sanctuary. The ritual would be symmetrical, except for the large cluster of actions involved in giving birth to Agni in the *kuṇḍa*.

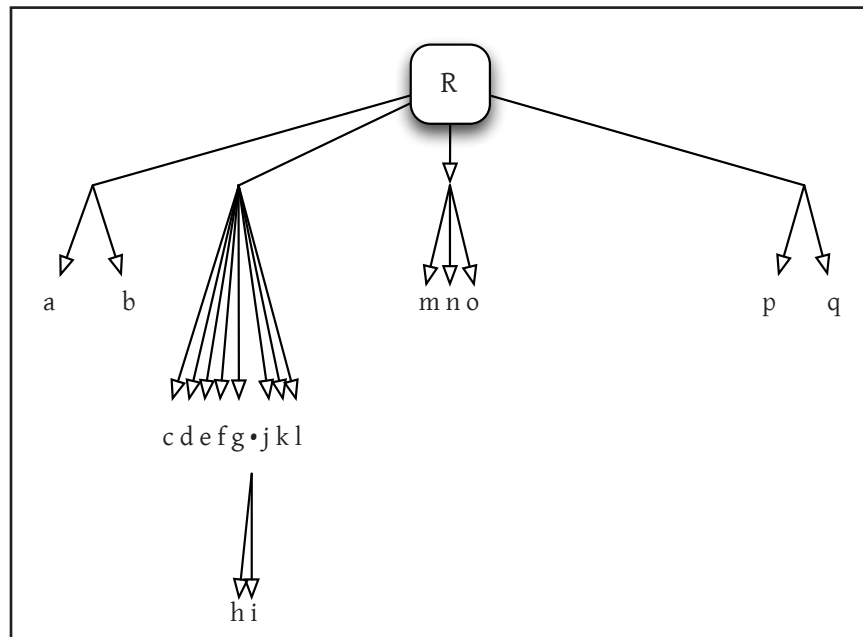


Figure 1. Diagram of the grammatical relations of actions of the ritual.

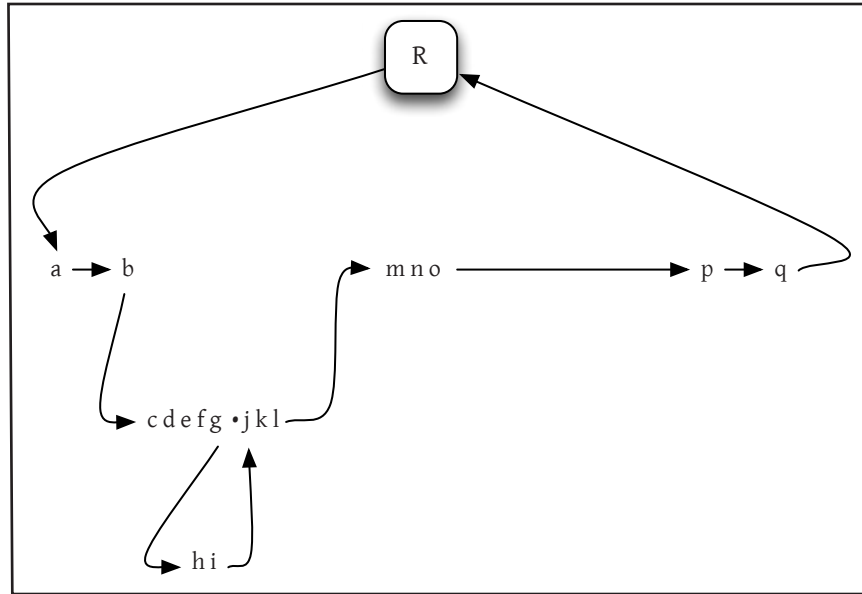


Figure 2. Diagram of the flow of actions through the ritual.

This second diagram (fig. 2) shows the flow of actions through the course of the ritual, in the order that the linear description in the table above follows, but now reflecting the grammatical relations between clusters of ritual actions.

Similarities and Differences

In comparing these two rituals there are three topics that we will focus on in this essay—a similarity, a difference, and a definitional issue. The similarity is the use of building ritual symbolism for preparing the altar-hearth. The difference is the ritual symbolism involved in evoking the deities into the altar-hearth. The definitional issue is the role of ritual identification in tantric ritual.

Building Rituals

Both the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition and the Shingon tradition employ ritual activities based on the symbolism of building, and the rituals used in building, to establish the altar-hearth where the fire is to be lit and offerings made into it. These point to a common background to be found in Brahmanic ritual culture, such as the *Śulva* sutras, and texts like the *Kāśyapa-Jñānakāṇḍaḥ*, which devotes a majority of its

text to questions of constructing not just hearths and temples, but also houses and towns.³⁹

The *Somaśambhupaddhati* prescribes digging up the site of the *kuṇḍa* (hearth), collecting the earth, filling and leveling the site, aspersions and pounding, and finally sweeping and coating of the site (§ 4–5 of translation). Two aspects of the text indicate that this is a set of symbolic activities, rather than literal instructions for the construction of the altar. First, the *Somaśambhupaddhati* makes reference to the *kuṇḍa* before this set of actions, and, second, the text identifies the mantra with which these actions are to be performed.

Similarly, in the Shingon *homa*, when one is first using a new hearth, one first symbolically, i.e., with *mudrā* and mantra, digs up the earth. Then the (symbolic) clay for the hearth is ritually empowered (加持, *kaji*). The ritual instructions for this are located at the end of the manual, and they indicate that this rite is to be inserted into the larger ritual when a new hearth is being used for the first time:

When starting a new hearth, after sitting down, it is proper to perform the following ritual prior to the universal homage.

[1] First, hoe *mudrā* and mantra. Vajra fist, thumbs and index fingers extended straight.

Mantra twenty-one times: om̐ nikhana vasudhe svāhā (om̐ dig the earth svāhā)

[2] Next: *mudrā* and mantra to empower the clay. Two hands in *añjali*. The two ring and two index fingers are bent so that the two phalanges of each are pressed together. The two thumbs are extended straight and withdrawn from the index fingers so as to form a shape like a mouth.

Mantra twenty-one times: om̐ amṛta udbhava hūṃ phaṭ svāhā (om̐ nectar producing hūṃ phaṭ svāhā)

[3] Next: the “great thunderbolt wheel” (*mahāvajra cakra*) *mudrā* and mantra.

[4] The class of various deities: The thirty-seven deities who are requested to come down to the altar are each represented by a seed syllable (*bīja* mantra). Note this single representation is used as a support for practice. (The thirty-seven deities are *Mahāvairocana*, *Akṣobhya*, *Ratnasambhava*, *Amitāyus*, and *Amoghasiddhi*, together with the thirty-two deities of the *Vajradhātu* Mandala.)

[5] The *devas* of the world: The twelve *devas*, together with the seven celestial lights and the twenty-eight lunar mansions.⁴⁰

Taken together, the similarity of this aspect of these two traditions indicates the perseverance of building rites across a wide diffusion of

ritual practices, here related to the performance of the *homa*. In order to further explore the commonality and perseverance of such building rites, comparisons will need to be made with the record found in the *Śulba* sutras (or, *Śulva* sutras), which “contain minute rules regarding the measurement and construction of the fire-places and sacrificial grounds.”⁴¹ Consideration should also be given to building rites more generally, such as those found in the *Kāśyapa-Jñānakāṇḍaḥ*, a text associated with the South Indian Vaiṣṇava Vaikhānasa sect, which maintained Vedic traditions.⁴² Regarding the dates of the author, Teun Goudriaan suggests that “We will not be far off the mark, if we place him in one of the two last centuries of the first millennium of our era.”⁴³ This text devotes a lengthy section to the construction of temples, providing evidence of the kinds of activities that would have been part of the culture, and available for metaphoric appropriation into ritual form. Here we find instructions for properly preparing the site by clearing it, repeatedly ploughing it, donating the land, ritual ploughing, food offerings to the deities, and so on.⁴⁴

Installation of the Deities

In contrast to the practices of preparing the site which are similar, the ritual actions associated with installing the deities in the altar-hearth differ fundamentally. The Śaiva Siddhānta use the imagery of impregnation, gestation, and birth to bring about the presence of Agni.⁴⁵ In contrast, the Shingon tradition employs the symbolism of inviting honored guests and sending a jeweled chariot for their convenience.

In her introduction to the first volume of her translation, Brunner-Lachaux gives a brief summary of the Śaiva Siddhānta fire ritual, discussing the central role of this symbolic gestation.

The cult of fire, which immediately follows the cult of Śiva when it is finished, was only seen by initiates of the first degree. The necessity of the cult is in no way questioned; it is on the contrary considered indispensable if one wishes to obtain liberation. It is a complex ritual, the object of which is Śivāgni. One must first have Agni be born: one assists in the sexual union of his parents, in the development of the embryo, in marking the customary sacraments of birth, and in the growing of the young fire. Once the fire has been created, one renders homage through a series of oblations (*homa*), after having the previously united the interior fire and Śiva.⁴⁶

Two deities, Vāgīśvara and Vāgīśvarī (who are identified as Brahmā and Sarasvatī⁴⁷) are installed in the *kuṇḍa* (§ 8). Burning coals, identified with the semen of Śiva, are poured into the *kuṇḍa*, while the practitioner imagines Vāgīśvara impregnates Vāgīśvarī (§ 12–13). Then follow the *saṃskāras* associated with impregnation, gestation, and birth: conception (*garbhādhāna*) (§ 16), production of a male child (*pūṃsavana*) (§ 17), parting of the hair (*sīmantonayana*) (§ 18). The child, Agni, is then born (§ 19b), given a bath (§ 20), the stain of birth is erased from the *kuṇḍa* (§ 21), and saliva is wiped from the child's mouth (§ 23). One informs the deities of Śiva's command that the child be protected by them (§ 26); Agni's eyes are opened (§ 39), and he is given the name Śivāgni (name-giving: *nāmakaraṇa*) (§ 43). While not all of these actions appear to follow the classic *saṃskāras* perfectly, it is clear that the structure of ritual actions is modeled on the *saṃskāra* system.⁴⁸ The sequence is constrained, however, to those most closely associated with birth.⁴⁹ The importance of this sequence is evident in the clustering of actions (c through l) in the diagrams above. It is worth noting here that this creates an asymmetry in the ritual, as there is no matching set of ritual actions associated with the death of Agni in the second half of the ritual to match his birth in the first.

In contrast, the Shingon *homa* shows none of this and is also more symmetrical in form. Agni and the other deities are evoked in the altar-hearth through an entirely different ritual symbolism. As alluded to above, this involves sending a jeweled carriage to the deities and inviting them to return to the site of the ritual—these actions being performed ritually with *mudrā* and mantra.⁵⁰ In contrast to the Śaiva Siddhānta birth symbolism, this is in keeping with the metaphor of feasting an honored guest, a metaphoric appropriation of symbolism from daily life that is found in the Vedic and Brahmanic ritual cultures as well.

The difference in the ritual symbolisms is reflected in differences in the organization of the ritual activities. In the case of the Śaiva Siddhānta *homa*, the fire is introduced into the *kuṇḍa* (altar-hearth) early in the ritual sequence, since it is the embers/semen of Vāgīśvara entering the *kuṇḍa*/vulva of Vāgīśvarī that lead to the birth of Agni. In the Shingon *homa*, the fire is not lit until after the deities have been invited into the ritual enclosure (*dōjō*, 道場), and it is sealed against external malevolent powers. Speculatively, we may suggest that the difference between the ritual symbolism employed by the two traditions

can be attributed to the difference between the Buddhist monastic tradition with its emphasis on celibacy, and the more householder oriented character of Śaiva Siddhānta. An additional consideration may be that Buddhist monastics did not adapt the life-cycle *saṃskāras* into their own ritual processes of initiation into the order. The symbolism involved in the life-cycle *saṃskāras* is strongly associated with the “twice-born” Brahmins.⁵¹

Ritual Identification

One of the recurring issues for the study of *tantra* has been its definition. Following the lead of Michel Strickmann, until the work of Davidson, I (and perhaps others) had considered ritual identification (Jpn. *nyūga ganyū*, 入我我入,⁵² Skt. *ahaṃkāra*) to be the defining characteristic of *tantra*. Previously, based simply on an examination of this ritual and an overly simplistic understanding of Śaiva Siddhānta theology as strong dualism, I had understood the tradition as one important exception to the defining character of ritual identification. An anonymous reviewer of another essay, however, drew my attention to the important role of ritual identification as part of the necessary preparations required to qualify to perform such rituals. Attempting to verify this I found, for example, that although it is only Śiva who liberates, such liberation is effected by means of initiation (*dīkṣā*) performed by an officiant who embodies the agency of Śiva.⁵³ According to Sanderson, when the officiant (*ācāryaḥ*) “prepares himself to perform the ritual he must surrender all sense of individual agency. He must see his person as the locus and instrument of the action of Śiva himself.”⁵⁴ Thus, although not constituting an explicit ritual element within the Śaiva Siddhānta *homa*, ritual identification is still a very important element of the tradition as such. Goodall characterizes Śaiva Siddhānta along with other tantric groups, by calling attention to the goal as one of equality with Śiva. “The central fact that characterises these tantric cults is that they are private cults for individuals who take a non-Vedic initiation (*dīkṣā*) that uses non-Vedic (as well as Veda-derived) mantras and that is the means to liberation, a liberation which consists in being omnipotent and omniscient, in other words realising the powers of Śiva.”⁵⁵ The nature of the relation between practitioner and Śiva, however, appears to have been conceived differently at different points in the history of Śaiva Siddhānta. Goodall suggests that “it appears likely

that the old Śaiva Siddhānta was a broadly dualist school which only after the twelfth century felt the influence of non-dualist Vedānta.”⁵⁶

Jan Gonda summarizes the Śaiva *homa* with its embryological symbolism. He adds a step that is relevant to the question of ritual identification. Once Agni has been born and ritually cleansed, Gonda explains that

Now the worshipper, soul and mind, shares in the process which is taking place. While considering himself identical with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra successively, and simultaneously performing the three ceremonies of establishing the fire, putting on the vessel and dismissal, he purifies and consecrates sacrificial butter and sprinkles with it the faces of young Agni, who then receives the name of Śivāgni. His parents, Vāgīśvarī and Vāgīśvara, are honourably dismissed, and Śiva is invoked to be present in the heart of the fire, seated on his throne, brilliant and supreme, worshipped and offered food. After that the worshipper must unite the arteries of his (yogic) body (*nāḍī*) with those of Śiva-of-the-temple and Śiva-of-the-fire, creating a sort of luminous circuit between these and proceed to perform the fire sacrifice (*homa*), consisting of oblations of ghee, and accompanied by offerings of fried rice grain, sugar-cane, flowers, etc. Finally he installs Śiva-of-the fire in his own heart and after some other observances returns to the temple to implore God to accept the *pūjā*, the *homa* and the merit produced by these.⁵⁷

Here we see the use of esoteric physiology as the means by which ritual identification is effected.⁵⁸ The same threefold identification by means of a circuit of light connecting the *nāḍī* of Śiva permanently located in the temple sanctuary, of Śiva temporarily evoked in the *kuṇḍa* altar-hearth, and the ritual practitioner himself is found in the section of the *Somaśambhupaddhati* translated below. This raises an important issue that also apparently distinguishes the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition from the Shingon form of tantric Buddhism, and which may have broader implications as a marker by which historical relations may be traced.

That is the conception of ritual identification *per se*. The visualization based on esoteric physiology found in the text examined here differs from the way in which the visualization of the three mysteries are visualized in Shingon. In the latter, it is by taking the bodily posture (by *āsana* and *mudrā*), speech (mantra), and mind (visualization and liturgical recitation) of the deity that the Shingon practitioner becomes identified with that deity. As a definitional point there may be a significant difference between being connected via an “energetic”

linkage of the *nāḍīs*, and visualized embodiment. The significance of this difference may also contribute to a deeper understanding of the histories of Śaiva Siddhānta and Shingon that a comparative study of their ritual practices will reveal, augmenting existing resources for historical studies.

CONCLUSION

These three factors, ritual construction of the altar-hearth, installation of the deities, and the nature of ritual identification, are three aspects of the ritual practices of Śaiva Siddhānta and Shingon that help us to begin to articulate the historical relations between these traditions from the perspective of ritual studies. The almost exclusively philological focus of prior study can in this way be augmented and given greater depth and nuance. In order for the method to yield more substantive results, however, many more such comparative studies of ritual praxis will be required.

SOMAŚAMBHUPADDATI: SECTION IV, FIRE RITUAL

Somaśambhupaddhati: Le rituel quotidien dans la tradition śivaïte de l'Inde du Sud selon Somaśambhu. Trans. by Hélène Brunner-Lachaux. Vol. 1 of 4 vols. Pondicherry: Institut Français d'Indologie, 1963.

Translated from the French by Richard K. Payne

Note: parenthetical and bracketed materials are Brunner-Lachaux's, as are the footnotes unless otherwise indicated; both text and footnote material in braces are mine; awkward grammar, etc., are also mine.

As she explains in the first footnote, Brunner-Lachaux's footnoted material largely draws on the work of Aghoraśiva and the commentary by Nirmalamāṇi: *Aghoraśivācārya-paddhati* (= *Kriyākramadyotikā*), with *Commentary (Prabhā)* by Nirmalamāṇi, ed. Rāmaśāstrin and Ambalavāna-jñānasambandhaparāśaktisvāmin (Cidambaram: n.p., 1927). In some cases she refers to Aghoraśiva, in others to Nirmalamāṇi, and in at least one case refers to this text simply as A. She gives many internal references to other sections within the *Somaśambhupaddhati*, and with one exception, those have been left as given. The exception is notes 145 and 162, which refer to material within this section itself (i.e., to note 147), and have been revised accordingly. She also makes reference to the *Mrgendrāgama*; see her *Mrgendrāgama: Section des Rites et Section du Comportement, Avec la Vṛtti de Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇakaṇṭha* (Pondicherry:

Institut Français d'Indologie, 1985). This latter also contains material on *homa per se*.

THE FIRE RITUAL⁵⁹

How one returns to the residence of Agni

1. And now,⁶⁰ after having obtained the permission of the master,⁶¹ he makes his return to the residence of Agni,⁶² and circumambulates in silence, with all the utensils of the cult, and carrying in his hands a vase of *arghya*.⁶³
2. Then, looking upon all of the materials of the sacrifice with a divine gaze,⁶⁴ he seats himself facing north,⁶⁵ the center of the *kuṇḍa* in front of himself.⁶⁶

*Saṃskāra of the kuṇḍa*⁶⁷

3. One should finish the rite of *nirikṣaṇa* (or gaze) with the *kuṇḍa*; then with [a bundle of] *kuśa*, reciting ASTRA, the rites of *prokṣaṇa* (aspersion of the top) and *tāḍana* (tapping); finally, with VARMA (KAVACA), the rite of *abhyukṣaṇa* (aspersion of the base).
4. [Then]; with ASTRA (KHADGA): digging (*khanana* or *khāta*), collecting [the earth] (*uddhāra*),⁶⁸ filling (*pūraṇa*) and smoothing (*samatā*); aspersion (*secana*) with VARMA (KAVACA); and pounding (*kuṭṭana*) with SARA (ASTRA).
5. With VARMA: sweeping (*saṃmārjana*), coating (*samālepa*), establishing the *kalā*⁶⁹ (*kalāprakalpana*), and wrapping the three blades⁷⁰ (*trisūtryāveṣṭana*); one then pays homage⁷¹ with [the *bīja*] HṚD.
6. Speaking the mantra of Śiva, [next one should place in the *kuṇḍa*] four blades of *kuśa* with three pointing north and one east, or reversed (*rekhācatuṣṭayavinyāsa*);⁷²
7. Then, lighting⁷³ with ASTRA (*vajrikaraṇa*); the fourfold *darbha*⁷⁴ (*catuṣpatha*) with HṚD; the net⁷⁵ (*akṣapāṭa*) with TANUTRA (KAVACA); the seat⁷⁶ (*viṣṭara*) with HṚD.

*Invocation of Vāgīśvarī and Vāgīśvara*⁷⁷

8. Install the goddess on the seat with HṚD, like a flax flower, with all the [favorable] signs, and in the same manner, the god, Vāgīśvara; then render them homage.⁷⁸

Installation of Agni

9. Then, in a pure receptacle, bring the fire to a suitable place;⁷⁹ give the demons their portion;⁸⁰ then purify with the *nirikṣana* rites and so on.

10. The officiant then performs the union of the three fires: the stomach fire, the *Bindu* fire, and the terrestrial fire;⁸¹ then one places [in the fire] the mind of Vahni, by means of the *bīja* of Vahni [HRŪṂ]:

“Om Hrūṁ, before the mind of Vahni, I bow.”

11. Then recite the *saṃhitāmantra* to Vahni; perform the transformation into nectar with the *dhenumudrā*⁸² (gesture of the cow); protect with ASTRA; encircle with KAVACA,

12–13. and render him homage;⁸³ then one carries it in a circle around the *kuṇḍa*, for three times, in the proper direction. Think of the fire as the semen of Śiva, and imagine that it is emitted by the god Vāgīśvara into the womb of Vāgīśvarī.⁸⁴ The officiant, kneeling down, should pour it into the *kuṇḍa* with HRḌ [leaning] towards [the recipient which is the opening].

After the installation of Agni

14. Following that, in the navel of the *kuṇḍa*, gather together the semen which has been emitted,⁸⁵ cover with a cloth, and give [the water for] purification (*śauca*) and for *ācamana*⁸⁶ with HRḌ.

15. Next, render homage to the fire-in-the-womb;⁸⁷ to assure protection, attach a bracelet of *darbha* grass around the wrist of the goddess with ASTRA.

*The saṃskāra to start the rite of impregnation*⁸⁸

16. In order to perform the rite of impregnation (*garbhādhāna*), after having rendered homage to the fire with SADYOJĀTA, one offers three oblations⁸⁹ with the mantra HRḌAYA.

17. In order to perform the rite for producing a male (*pūṃsavana*), in the third month one renders homage with VĀMA (-DEVA), then offer three oblations, accompanying each pouring of water with ŚIRAS.

18. In order to perform the rite of parting the hair (*sīmantonayana*), in the sixth month one renders homage with RŪPIN (AGHORA), then offer three oblations with ŚIKHA; and again with ŚIKHA,

19a. one forms the face and limbs, opens the mouth, and completes the formation⁹⁰ [of the infant].

*What is to be done after the birth*⁹¹

19b. And in order to perform the rite of birth, in the tenth month one renders homage with NARA (TATPURUṢA) and VARMA (KAVACA).⁹²

20. Reviving the fire with blades of *darbha*, etc., imagine giving [the infant] a bath that cleanses the impurities [originating from] the womb and attaching a strap of gold to the goddess's wrist.⁹³ Then honor with HR̥D.

21. Then, to erase the stain caused by the birth,⁹⁴ asperge the *kuṇḍa* with water consecrated by ASTRA (*prokṣaṇa*), strike [the ground] around the *kuṇḍa* with ASTRA (*tāḍana*), and asperge with VARMA (*abhyukṣaṇa*).

22. Then with ASTRA place the blades of *kuśa*, pointing toward the north and east, on the exterior and on the *mekhalā*,⁹⁵ and install the *paridhi*⁹⁶ and the bundles of *darbha* (*viṣṭara*)⁹⁷ on top with HR̥D.

23. To remove the saliva from the mouth,⁹⁸ offer five sticks⁹⁹ [into the fire] with ASTRA, the base and tip of each soaked in melted butter.

How to assure protection of the infant Agni

24. One then renders homage with HR̥D¹⁰⁰ to Brahman, Śaṅkara, Viṣṇu, and Ananta, who are held on the *paridhi*, to the east and north, in that order.

25. Then, for Indra and Īśvara¹⁰¹ who are seated on the *viṣṭara*, facing toward Agni, one should render homage to them with HR̥D, each in the proper direction, successively.

26. After which, one makes known to all the order of Śiva:
“Remove the obstacles, protect the infant!”

Saṃskāra of the ladle and spoon

27. One then takes up the ladle and spoon¹⁰²—the first turned upward, the second turned downward, heat them in the fire three times; then they are touched [three times]¹⁰³ with the base, middle, and point of a blade of *kuśa* [successively];

28. and then place the three [groups of] *tattva*, touching with the tips of the *kuśa* grass: *ātmātattva*, *vidyātattva*, and *śivatattva*, with the mantras HĀṂ, HĪṂ, HŪṂ, respectively.¹⁰⁴

29. Then with HR̥DAYA “place” Śakti in the ladle and Śambhu in the spoon. After encircling their necks three times¹⁰⁵ [with *kuśa* blades], and rendering homage to them with flowers, etc.,

30a. set them down on the left,¹⁰⁶ on top of the *kuśa* grass.

Samskāra of the clarified butter

30b. Then take the clarified butter and the vase of milk, purify with the rite of gazing, etc. (*īkṣaṇādi*).

31. Imagine one's own body as that of Brahman, take the butter, carry it three times around {holding it} over the *kuṇḍa*, and heat it in the south-east direction¹⁰⁷ {i.e., section of the *kuṇḍa*}.

32. Then next, imagine one's own body as that of Viṣṇu, and place the butter in the north-east section, using the point of a blade of *kuśa*, and with the *bīja* ŚIRAS [at the beginning] and SVĀHĀ at the end,¹⁰⁸

33. make an oblation of these drops to Viṣṇu. Following which, imagine one's own body as that of Rudra, hold [the butter] at the center of the *kuṇḍa*.¹⁰⁹ Following which, *utplavana* [which is performed thus]:

34. grasp two blades of *darbha*, the length of a span,¹¹⁰ between the thumb and ring finger, proceed with the sprinkling of the fire¹¹¹ (*utplavana*), in the direction of the fire, with ASTRA.

35. In the same way, but toward oneself, proceed with the sprinkling of oneself (*saṃplavana*), with HṚD. Then,¹¹² with HṚD, take a burning blade of *darbha* and proceed with the purification by throwing it [in the butter] with ASTRA.

36. [The rite of] illumination (*nīrajāna*) is done with another burning *darbha*, and [the rite of] *dīpa* with yet another. These blades of burning *darbha* are then thrown in the fire with the mantra ASTRA.¹¹³

37. Then, first knotting it, deposit a blade of *kuśa* the length of a span in the butter,¹¹⁴ imagine the butter is divided thus: *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* are on each side, and the third [*suṣumnā* is at the center].¹¹⁵

38. Then, with the spoon, one takes butter of the three parts, successively; offer into the fire when saying "SVĀ," and replace when saying "HĀ," and the remainder in the portion from which it comes:

Om Hām to Agni Svāhā!

Om Hām to Soma Svāhā!

Om Hām to Agni and to Soma Svāhā!

39. Thus for the opening of the eyes, in the eyes of Agni;¹¹⁶ then with the spoon full of butter, one must offer a fourth oblation in the mouth.¹¹⁷

Om Hām to Agni who grants wishes Svāhā!

40. One is to then recite the six *aṅgamantra*,¹¹⁸ rejoicing with the *dhenumudrā*,¹¹⁹ encircling by TANUTRA (KAVACA), and protecting the butter with ASTRA.¹²⁰

41a. Purify the other [parts of the] clarified butter by throwing, with HṚD, some drops of the butter.

*Aspersions of the face of Agni with the butter*¹²¹

41b. And now,¹²² the aspersion of the faces, their junction, their unification:

Oṃ Haṃ to Sadyojāta Svāhā!
 Oṃ Hiṃ to Vāmadeva Svāhā!
 Oṃ Huṃ to Aghora Svāhā!
 Oṃ Heṃ to Tatpuruṣa Svāhā!
 Oṃ Hoṃ to Īśāna Svāhā!

Thus, one asperses the faces (*vaktrābhighāra*), with separate oblations:

Oṃ Haṃ, Hiṃ to Sadyojāta and Vāmadeva Svāhā!
 Oṃ Hiṃ, Huṃ to Vāmadeva and Aghora, Svāhā!
 Oṃ Huṃ, Heṃ to Aghora and Tatpuruṣa Svāhā!
 Oṃ Heṃ, Hoṃ to Tatpuruṣa and Īśāna Svāhā!

*Thus, one joins the faces (*vaktrānusandhāna*).

*One must then make the unification, with the spoon let a trickle of clarified butter pour from Agni to Vāyu and from Nirṛti to Īśāna¹²³:

Oṃ Haṃ Hiṃ Huṃ Heṃ Hoṃ to Sadyojāta-Vāmadeva-Aghora-Tatpuruṣa-Īśāna Svāhā!

*Thus one unifies (*ekikaraṇa*) by dissolving the faces into the chosen face.

42. Where appropriate, one represents the chosen face¹²⁴ just as large as the *kuṇḍa*, and the disappearance of the other faces into it is called unification.

How his name is given to Agni

43. With the mantra IŚĀ¹²⁵ one renders homage to Agni, and one offers him a triple oblation with ASTRA; then with SARVĀTMAN (HRD)¹²⁶ one gives the name:

“O eater of oblations, you are Śivāgni!”

Departure of Vāgīśvarī and Vāgīśvara

44. One must then, after having rendered homage to them with HRD, give leave to the parents¹²⁷ of Agni; then with the *mūlamantra* followed by VAUṢAT, offer as directed the entirety of the oblation,¹²⁸ which ends the series of prescribed rites.¹²⁹

Worship of Śiva before the homa

45. And now, in the lotus of [Agni's] heart, one must invoke Śiva as he is called, with his limbs,¹³⁰ with his throne, resplendent, supreme, and to

him render worship;¹³¹ then, after having requested [his] permission,¹³² feed Śiva.

46. Then, having effected the connection of one's own *nāḍī* with the Śiva of the sanctuary and the Śiva of the fire,¹³³ he should proceed with the *homa*, as much of the time as possible with the *mūlamantra* and at least six times with each of the *aṅgamantra*.

Ingredients to be offered, and in what quantity

47. Each oblation of melted butter should be a *karṣa*,¹³⁴ those of milk and of honey also; it should be one *śukti* for the curdled milk, and one *prasṛti* for the sweet milk rice.

48. One places cooked solids in the dish to the extent suitable, a handful of *lāja*;¹³⁵ one cuts the roots in three, but one leaves the fruit whole.

49. One ought to offer the rice in half mouthfuls, and also the five small things;¹³⁶ the sugar cane by internodes, the lianas in fragments of two fingers' lengths;

50. the flowers and leaves are whatever; the ritual wood (*samidh*) are sticks of ten fingers' lengths; the camphor, sandal, saffron, musk, *yakṣakardama*,¹³⁷

51. one offers these in large grains, and the incense in fragments large as a jujube; the large tubers are cut into eighths. It is good to make the oblations following these rules.¹³⁸

52a. Thus one performs the *homa*, with the *brahmamantra* accompanied by their *bīja*.¹³⁹

How to proceed with the entirety of the oblation (pūrṇāhuti)

52b. Place the spoon, opening turned down, over¹⁴⁰ the ladle filled with clarified butter.

53. And, after having fixed a flower at the spout of the ladle, hold the two instruments with the *śaṅkhamudrā* (gesture of victory), the left hand holding them at their end, the right hand at their front.

54. Standing, feet together, chest inclined forward, place the point end of the instruments against your navel, gaze fixed on the spout of the ladle.

55. And, while it is successively [one before the other] Kāraṇeśvara, the first is Brahman, taking away then from *suṣumnā*¹⁴¹ without trembling bring their point end as far as level with your left breast,

56. while reciting the *mūlamantra*,¹⁴² followed by VAUṢAṬ, very distinctly. Then pour the melted butter into the fire, in a continuous stream about the size of a grain of barley.¹⁴³

57. Following which, give *ācamana*, the sandal paste, the betel, and the rest; with devotion, chant Sa glory;¹⁴⁴ then offer a full prostration.

Departure of Śiva who is in the fire

58–59. Then after having honored¹⁴⁵ Vahni as one should, one gathers with the *saṃhāramudrā*, with ASTRA followed by HUMPHAṬ, all the mantra, as well as the divinities who exist in the *paridhi*,¹⁴⁶ saying to them, “Pardon me.” Thus, as in beginning, with the *bīja* HṚD, one establishes in the lotus of one’s heart, [having entered] onto the most pure path.¹⁴⁷

Interior offerings

60. Then one must take [a little of] all which has been cooked, and on the two mandalas¹⁴⁸ which one traces beside the *kuṇḍa*, on the south-east side, give the interior offerings and the exterior offerings.¹⁴⁹

to the east	Oṃ Hām to Rudra Svāhā!
to the south	Oṃ Hām to the mothers Svāhā!
to the west	Oṃ Hām to Gaṇa Svāhā!
to the north	Oṃ Ham to the Yakṣas Svāhā!
to the northeast	Oṃ Hām to the planets Svāhā!
to the southeast	Oṃ Hām to the Asuras Svāhā!
to the southwest	Oṃ Hām to the Rākṣasas Svāhā!
to the northwest	Oṃ Hām to the Nāgas Svāhā!
to the center, toward the northeast	Oṃ Hām to Nakṣatra Svāhā!
to the center, toward the southeast	Oṃ Hām to Rāśi Svāhā!
to the center, toward the southwest	Oṃ Hām to Viśva Svāhā!
to the center, toward the northwest	Oṃ Hām to the Guardian of the domain ¹⁵⁰ Svāhā!

Then one dissolves the interior offerings.

Exterior offerings

Then in the second mandala:

Oṃ Hām to Indra Svāhā!
 Oṃ Hām to Agni Svāhā!
 Oṃ Hām to Yama Svāhā!

Om Hām to Nirṛti Svāhā!
 Om Hām to Varuṇa Svāhā!
 Om Hām to Vāyu Svāhā!
 Om Hām to Soma Svāhā!
 Om Hām to Īśāna Svāhā!

These in the eight directions, from the east to the north-east.

Then:

Om Hām to Brahman Svāhā: directed toward the top of the north-east edge

Om Hām to Viṣṇu Svāhā: directed toward the bottom of the south-west edge

Om Hām to the Guardian of the domain:¹⁵¹ between the two

Then, outside the mandala:¹⁵²

Om Hām to the crows and their fellows,¹⁵³ to those who break their commitments and their fellows Svāhā!

Such is the rule¹⁵⁴ for the exterior offerings.

One must offer [again] the offerings to the exterior of the *yāgamaṇḍapa*.¹⁵⁵

Then gather the mantras of the internal and external offerings with the *saṃhāramudrā*, one makes them return to oneself.

The fire ritual according to the Līlāvati

61. And now, here, in summary is one form of the fire ritual which may be made in a *kuṇḍa* or to a *sthaṇḍila*, and which is described in the Śaivite *āgama* named *Līlāvati*.¹⁵⁶

62. In “depositing” the *mūlamantra* on the eyes, one performs the rite of gazing (*ikṣana*), then the rite of aspersion toward the top (*prokṣana*) and the tapping (*tāḍana*), with ASTRA followed by HUMPHAT; then give the demons their share,

63. and as previously, with VARMA (KAVACA) proceed to the rite of aspersion toward the base (*abhyukṣana*), with the *mūrtimantra* pour the fire into the *kuṇḍa*:

“Om Hām Hām Hām, before the form of the fire, I bow down.”

And with the same mantra, one makes Vahni enter the *Bindu*¹⁵⁷ with the *saṃhāramudrā*,¹⁵⁸

64–65a. to begin. Then, holding one’s breath, arrest it in the navel. Following which, with *udbhavamudrā*, and exhaling with the mantra

“Om Hām Hrūṃ Hām, before the form of the fire, I bow down,”

one [places] the *bīja* of Agni,¹⁵⁹ in the form of a glowing wick, into the fire in the *kuṇḍa*, then render homage with the five *brahmamantra*.

65b. That finished, one offers five oblations (*āhuti*), with the *mūlamantra*.

66. With (the *bīja*) HRD preceded by OM,¹⁶⁰ one gives the name:

“You are Śivāgni.”

And with HṚD, render homage to Brahman, Śaṅkara, Viṣṇu, and Ananta,

67. from the east to the north, in the four directions, on the exterior of the *kuṇḍa*.

Following which one offers a cult to Śiva, as given above, to the section [at the invocation] of *Ādhāraśakti*.¹⁶¹

68–69a. One is to offer the oblations [in the fire], every time possible with the *mūlamantra*, and at least ten times with each *aṅgamantra*. One then gives leave to Śiva. Then one offers four oblations (*āhuti*) with the three mantra: Bhūḥ, etc., accompanying the *praṇava*, which are spoken at first separately, then all together.¹⁶²

69b–70a. Mentally reciting: “Om Hām Hūm Hṛdayāya,” one dismisses Agni in his turn. This is the opinion of the *Līlāvatī*.

[Conclusion of the worship of Śiva]

70b–71a. One then approaches Śiva,¹⁶³ saying: “Oh Bhagavan! Take these *karman*: *pūjā*, *homa*, etc., and the fruit attached which is its merit!”

71b–72a. and with *arghya* water, with the *mudrā* called *udbhavā*, with the *mūlamantra* preceding the *bīja* HṚD, and a firm heart, one completes the offerings.¹⁶⁴

72b–73a. Then one should render homage as has been described,¹⁶⁵ praising with the hymns, say good-bye, give the final *arghya*,¹⁶⁶ and say, “Pardon me!”¹⁶⁷

73b–74a. Then gather together with the *nārācamudrā* with ASTRA followed by HUMPHAT, the entire group of mantra,¹⁶⁸ making the *divyamudrā*, reunite them on the *liṅga* by uttering the *mūrtimantra*.

74b–75a. If it is a *sthaṇḍila* upon which homage has been rendered to the god,¹⁶⁹ it is into oneself that the mantra are to re-enter in the fashion described.

After which one proceeds to the cult of Caṇḍa.

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NOTES

1. To this extent, then, our approach here—looking for characteristics that spread most widely through the tantric cosmopolis—is effectively the opposite of that taken by David Gordon White in his *Kiss of the Yoginī: “Tantric Sex” in Its South Asian Contexts* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003). In that work he specifically focuses on tantric sex “because sexualized ritual practice is the sole truly distinctive feature of South Asian Tantric traditions” (p. 13).
2. See in particular, Jens Kreinath, Jan Snoek, and Michael Strausberg, eds., *Theorizing Rituals: Issues, Topics, Approaches, Concepts* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006); idem, *Theorizing Rituals: Annotated Bibliography of Ritual Theory, 1966–2005* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007); and the five volume series, Axel Michaels, ed., *Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010–2011).
3. If you have never heard this old folk expression, that is good, because I just made it up.
4. Christiane Brosius and Ute Hüsken, “Preface,” in Christian Brosius and Ute Hüsken, eds., *Ritual Matters: Dynamic Dimensions in Practice* (London, New York, and New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), ix.
5. Jens Kreinath, Constance Hartung, and Annette Deschner, eds., *The Dynamics of Changing Rituals: The Transformation of Religious Rituals within Their Social and Cultural Context*, Toronto Studies in Religion, vol. 29 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004) does not include any longitudinal studies of change. Similarly, among the ten “Theoretical Approaches” included in Kreinath, Snoek, and Strausberg, *Theorizing Rituals*, vol. 1, history is not included.
6. See Richard K. Payne, “Conversions of Tantric Buddhist Ritual: The Yoshida Shintō Jūhachishintō Ritual,” in *Transformations and Transfer of Tantra in Asia and Beyond*, ed. István Keul (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012); idem, “A Comparison of Tibetan and Shingon Homas,” *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies* 3, no. 11 (2008); idem, “Ritual Syntax and Cognitive Theory,” *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies* 3, no. 6 (2004); and idem, “The Tantric Transformation of Pūjā: Interpretation and Structure in the Study of Ritual,” in *India and Beyond: Aspects of Literature, Meaning, Ritual and Thought, Essays in Honour of Frits Staal*, ed. Dick van der Meij (Leiden: International Institute for Asian Studies, and London: Kegan Paul, 1997).
7. Alexis Sanderson, “The Śaiva Age—The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period,” in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, ed. Shingo Eisnoo, Institute of Oriental Culture Special Series, no. 23 (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, 2009), 56.
8. Hélène Brunner-Lachaux, *Somaśambhupaddhati, Première Partie, Le rituel*

quotidien dans la tradition śivaïte de l'Inde du Sud selon Somaśambhu (Pondicherry: Institut Français d'Indologie, 1963), xli–xlii.

9. Dominic Goodall, ed. and trans., *Hindu Scriptures* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), xxxiii.

10. For a translation of this text, see Richard K. Payne, *The Tantric Ritual of Japan: Feeding the Gods, The Shingon Fire Ritual* (Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1991).

11. Goodall, *Hindu Scriptures*, xxxi.

12. Ibid., xxxi.

13. Ibid., xxxi–xxxii.

14. Sanderson, “The Śaiva Age,” 124.

15. Jacob P. Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

16. Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009).

17. Richard Bowring, *The Religious Traditions of Japan: 500–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

18. Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 386n105.

19. See for example, Lewis Lancaster, “The Editing of Buddhist Texts,” in *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilization: Essays in Honor of Herbert V. Guenther on His Sixtieth Birthday*, eds. Leslie S. Kawamura and Keith Scott (Emeryville, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1977); and Jan Nattier, “The Heart Sūtra: A Chinese Apocryphal Text?” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15, no. 2 (1992): 153–223.

20. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 386n105. See this note for a fuller discussion of the specific issues involved.

21. Ibid.

22. Gudrun Bühnemann, “Buddhist Deities and Mantras in the Hindu Tantras: I, The *Tantrasārasaṃgraha* and the *Isīnaśivagurudevapaddhati*,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 42 (1999): 303–334; idem, “Buddhist Deities and Mantras in the Hindu Tantras: II, The *Śrīvidyārṇavatantra* and the *Tantrasāra*,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 43 (2000): 27–48; and idem, “The Goddess Mahācīnakrama-Tārā (Ugra-Tārā) in Buddhist and Hindu Tantrism,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 59, no. 3 (1996): 472–493.

23. Gudrun Bühnemann, *The Iconography of Hindu Tantric Deities*, 2 vols. (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2000), 1:21. See also, David L. Snellgrove, “Indo-

Tibetan Liturgy and Its Relationship to Iconography,” in *Mahayanist Art After A.D. 900*, ed. William Watson, *Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia*, no. 2 (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1971).

24. Bühnemann, *Iconography*, 1:35.

25. *Ibid.*

26. For example, Sanderson notes that Vedic and tantric religious forms differed most importantly in the mantras employed. “This became the chief formal criterion: in Vedic worship (*pūjā*) the actions that compose the liturgy were empowered by the recitation of Vedic *mantras* drawn from the *Rgveda* and *Yajurveda* rather than by that of the heterodox *mantras* of the Tantras.” Alexis Sanderson, “Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions,” in *The World’s Religions*, eds. Stewart Sutherland et al. (London: Routledge, 1988), 662.

27. David Seyfort Ruegg, “Sur les rapports entre le bouddhisme et le ‘substrat religieux’ indien et tibétain,” *Journal asiatique* (1964): 77–95. Cited in David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism in South Asia and of Buddhism with ‘Local Cults’ in Tibet and the Himalayan Region* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008).

28. Stephan Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā: Magic and Ritual in Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 42.

29. Alexis Sanderson, “Vajrayāna: Origin and Function,” in *Buddhism into the Year 2000: International Conference Proceedings*, ed. Dhammakaya Foundation (Bangkok: Dhammakaya Foundation, 1994), 92–93.

30. Robert Mayer, “The Figure of Maheśvara/Rudra in the rñin-ma-pa Tantric Tradition,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 21, no. 2 (1988): 271–310, 272.

31. Anjan Chakravartty, “Scientific Realism,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/scientific-realism/>.

32. See, for another perspective, David Gordon White, *Kiss of the Yoginī: “Tantric Sex” in Its South Asian Contexts*. White explains his decision to focus on tantric sex on the grounds that “All of the other elements of Tantric practice—the ritual use of mandalas, mantras, and *mudrās*; worship of terrible or benign divinities; fire offerings [i.e., *homa*]; induced possession; sorcery; and so on—may be found elsewhere, in traditions whose emic self-definitions are not necessarily Tantric. In addition, all of the elements of Tantric exegesis, that is, Tantric ‘mysticism,’ are second-order reflections not unique to Tantra, and that in fact have, over time, brought Tantra back into the fold of more conventional forms of South Asian precept and practice” (p. 13).

33. Richard K. Payne, “Tongues of Flame: Homologies in the Tantric Homa,” in *The Roots of Tantra*, eds. Katherine Anne Harper and Robert L. Brown (Albany:

State University of New York Press, 2002).

34. Ronald M. Davidson makes this point in his forthcoming “Rise and Development of Tantric Buddhism.” My thanks to the author for sharing a prepublication draft of this essay.

35. Payne, *Tantric Ritual of Japan*, 285–321.

36. *Ibid.*, 92–93.

37. These two sets of offerings in the Śaiva Siddhānta *homa*, one to the inner mandala and one to the outer, take place at the same place in the ritual structure as the two sets of offerings in the Shingon *homa*, one symbolic offerings and one material. The parallel here is noteworthy, and perhaps significant enough to warrant attention in future studies based on ritual history.

38. Payne, “Conversions of Tantric Buddhist Ritual,” 376.

39. T. Goudriaan, trans., *Kāśyapa’s Book of Wisdom (Kāśyapa-Jñānakāṇḍaḥ)* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965).

40. Richard K. Payne, “From Vedic India to Buddhist Japan: Continuities and Discontinuities in Esoteric Ritual,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, eds. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1048. Text is adapted from Richard K. Payne, trans., *Ritual Directions for the Śāntika Homa Offered to Acala* (Koyasan: Department of Koyasan Shingon Foreign Mission, 1988), 101–103.

41. Jan Gonda, *The Ritual Sūtras: A History of Indian Literature*, vol. 1, fasc. 2 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), 470.

42. Goudriaan, trans., *Kāśyapa’s Book of Wisdom*, 7.

43. *Ibid.*, 10.

44. *Ibid.*, chaps. 21–33: 78–116.

45. Cf. J. Gonda, *Viṣṇuism and Śivaism: A Comparison* (orig. ed., 1970; reprint, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1996), 84–86.

46. Brunner-Lachaux, *Somaśambhupaddhati*, xxviii.

47. Carl Gustav Diehl, *Instrument and Purpose: Studies on Rites and Rituals in South India* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1956), 125.

48. See Raj Bali Pandey, *Hindu Saṃskāras: Socio-Religious Study of the Hindu Sacraments*, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1969), 48–85.

49. For a discussion of the different ways in which the life cycle rituals are organized, see Lakshmi Kapani, *La Notion de Saṃskāra*, 2 vols. (Paris: Collège de France, Publications de l’Institut de Civilisation Indienne, 1992), chap. 2, “Nature et Fonctions des Śārīra-saṃskāra dans les Ṛghya- et Dharma-sūtra: Du Cycle d’Une Vie.”

50. See for instance, Payne, *Tantric Ritual of Japan*, 104.
51. Carl Gustav Diehl, *Instrument and Purpose: Studies on Rites and Rituals in South India* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1956), 180.
52. The interpenetration of the three mysteries (*sanmitsu*, 三密) of the buddha and the three acts (*sangō*, 三業) of the practitioner (body, speech, and mind, which in the case of ritual are: *mudrā*, mantra, and visualization) as the central ritual act for Shingon tantric rituals. Not all Shingon rituals have this characteristic act at their center, indicating a different source that can be traced back to China.
53. Dominic Goodall, "Initiation et Délivrance selon le Śaiva Siddhānta," in *Rites Hindous: Transferts et Transformations*, eds. Gérard Colas and Gilles Tarabout (Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2006).
54. Alexis Sanderson, "The Doctrine of the Mālinīvijjottaratantra," in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism: Studies in Honor of André Padoux*, ed. Teun Goudriaan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 285.
55. Dominic Goodall, *The Parākhyatantra: A Scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta* (Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry and École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2004), xxi.
56. Goodall, *The Parākhyatantra*, xxvi.
57. Gonda, *Viṣṇuism and Śaivism*, 85; internal citations to primary sources elided.
58. On esoteric physiology, see Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006). Symbolically related to ritual identification is possession, and in his discussion of possession, Flood notes that the distinction between the possessing being and the possessed person is in some cases not maintained (p. 92).
59. This section is by far the most detailed in our text, like those manuals of Aghoraśiva. The ritual complex that Somaśambhu presents as the daily ritual of fire is given as a special ritual by Aghoraśiva, for example, in the section "Pavitravidhi," in the section "Dikṣa," etc., it is situated in the section of the work dealing with *naimittikakarman*. It is in these sections, commented on also by Nirmalamāṇi, to which we will appeal for elucidation of our text, for all the details which are not in the daily ritual according to Aghoraśiva.
60. The primary question to resolve is the following: who is qualified to officiate in the ritual? According to Nirmalamāṇi who cites the *Sārasaṅgraha*: only those who have received *abhiṣeka*, otherwise known as *deśika* or *ācārya* [1a]. But we have summarized (see Introduction, p. xxiii) other opinions, according to which initiates of the second degree (*putra*) may already perform the ritual. The ritual of fire is indispensable for obtaining liberation, according to a majority of texts [1b].

61. According to Appayadīkṣita one requests, “Svāmin, agnikāryaṃ karomi.”
62. *Agni-niketana*, *-sadana*, *-āgāra*: the place at which one performs the ritual of fire. For grand occasions, temples have a hall especially reserved for the cult; but on ordinary days it is performed in the *ardhamanḍapa*, in a *kuṇḍa* permanently dug into the floor.
63. Ordinary *arghya*, probably.
64. This is a look trained by the invisible eye (*aparacakṣus*), says the editor of our text. The difference between this action and that which carries the name *nirīkṣana* is not clear, but Aghoraśiva also distinguishes between the two.
65. Facing the East or the North, according to A. (RKP: A is the abbreviation Brunner-Lachaux uses for the *Aghoraśivācārya-paddhati*.)
66. The *kuṇḍa* is a pit dug into the floor but surrounded by raised walls, and bordered on the exterior by a ditch or belt (*mekalā*) of decreasing width toward the center, formed like stairs (see plate VIII [in Brunner-Lachaux, *Somaśambhupaddhati*, unnumbered page, following p. 372]). For special rituals the shape is variable, depending upon the goal that one seeks to attain; for the daily ritual (of Śivāgni) it is cubic, and the sides are of the length of a forearm. There are mobile *kuṇḍa*, small containers of metal in which one may perform the ritual of fire. In the absence of a *kuṇḍa*, the fire will be lit in an area specially prepared (*sthaṇḍila*): a square platform constructed of sand or of clay, a forearm’s length on each side, and three *āṅgula* in height. It is to be very regular, without undulations [2a]. It is in this fashion that the *mekhalā* is drawn. In each case, a vulva (*yoni*) having the form of a sheet of *aśvattha* must be symbolized at the middle of the side of the uppermost belt (see plate VIII [in Brunner-Lachaux, *Somaśambhupaddhati*, unnumbered page, following p. 372]), and it is on this side that the officiant is seated. The *kuṇḍa* or the *sthaṇḍila* is prepared in the south, the southwest, or the north, or elsewhere [2b].
67. The rites that are described in this section prepare the *kuṇḍa* (or the *sthaṇḍila*) to receive Agni. They are for an empty *kuṇḍa*. The first four, already encountered, assure its purification (see III, 2, note 1; and 5, note 7). The following six “construct” the receptacle; it is evidently a fictive construction, performed by the mantra, and it is at the same time a transformation, and a purification. The next two assure the birth following on the balance of the construction (one should note *samālepa*, application of a slurry of cow dung)—equally fictive. The last install on and in the *kuṇḍa* the objects required for the ritual. To facilitate references, I have given in parentheses, if it is not in the text, the Sanskrit term that designates each *saṃskāra* in the usual lists.
68. It was the earth (by thought) for in removing the debris of coals, bones, etc., and gives into a hole in part of that earth (*pūrana*). The same rites are given in the *Mrgendrāgāma* [4a] and explained in its commentary, with some differences; for example, *khāta* is not distinguished from *uddhāra* (here

utkīraṇa) nor *rehācatuṣṭayavinyāsa* from *vajrikarṇa*; and in the description of *vajrikarṇa*, the commentator gives it as in our *śloka* 6, but the lines are drawn instead of being formed by the blades of *kuśa* [4b].

69. One distributes the five *kalā* of *Bindu* (see Introduction, p. xix) in the following fashion:

- at the center of the *kuṇḍa*: *śāntyatītakalā*
- on the east edge: *śāntikalā*
- on the south: *vidyākalā*
- on the north: *pratiṣṭhākalā*
- on the west: *nivṛttikalā*.

The *kuṇḍa* is then “made of *kalā*” [5a]. The correspondence between the *kalā* and the directions is that of the “faces” of *Sadāśiva* with which the *kalā* are associated, and the directions.

70. According to the authors, the son is in cotton or in *darbha*. It is nothing other than simply the construction of the three *mekhalā* that the *kuṇḍa* has, which has been ritually constructed. The action, according to *Aghoraśiva*, is done with *ASTRA* [5a].

71. Enjoined in accord with the two preceding actions; according to A., the mantra is: “*Oṃ Hāṃ kalāmayāya kuṇḍāya Namaḥ*” (*HĀṂ* is the *bīja* of *HRD*).

72. Three parallel blades, the fourth across the first. If the officiant is turned toward the north, perform as described; if the is turned toward the east, perform the contrary [6a].

73. The *vajra* is made with of three blades of *kuśa* formed as a trident (double) [7a].

74. The fourfold is made by to blades of *kuśa* crossed: one pointing toward the east, the other toward the north [7a].

75. The net: one places vertically in the interior of the *kuṇḍa*, against the walls, blades of *kuśa* spaced evenly. [7a].

76. The seat is called *kūrcarūpa*: it is formed of a stack of blades of *kuśa*. According to A., one welcomes the deities to this *āsana* with the invocation: “*Oṃ Hāṃ Vāgīśvarī–Vāgīśvarāsanāya Namaḥ!*” [7a].

77. *Vāgīśvarī* (Goddess of Speech) is one of the names of *Sarasvatī* in the *Purāṇa*. One could, through the association of ideas, think that *Vāgīśvara* of our text is *Brahman*. But the *dhyāna-śloka* is described with the characteristic attributes of *Śiva*, and there is no indication suggesting that there should be a linking of the names.

78. With *gandha*, *puṣpa*, etc. [9a].

79. That is to say, it must either come from friction between the two *araṇi*, that is, the “stones of the sun” (*sūryakānta*, which gives fire when seeing the sun,

says a legend), or from the home of a *dvija* (Śaivite initiate) [9a]. Needless to say there is a third procedure that is used daily. One brings the embers on a ceramic or copper tray.

80. One throws some embers in the direction of Nirṛti (southwest) with ASTRA. For the four rites of purification, see III, 2 and 5.

81. The details of the procedure, as described by Aghoraśiva, are: one says, “Om Hām Haṃ Hām Vahnimūrtaye Namaḥ” as one captures the terrestrial fire with the *saṃhāramudrā* (evidently a simulated action), one attracts it [to the interior {of the *mudrā*?}] and breathes in through the left nostril; retaining the air, with HRD one unites the fire of the navel and the fire of *Bindu*; then, breathing out through the right nostril, one says, “Om Hrūṃ Vahnicaityāya Namaḥ!” and deposits with the fire as the recipient, using the *udbhavamudrā* and the *bīja* of Vahni, as a bouquet of bright flames [10a]. The *bīja* HRŪM (*śikhābīja*) is not in the first mantra, but it does appear in the second, symbolizing Śivāgni (H = Śiva; R = Agni; Ū = vowel of the Śikhā; see III 12, note 4, p. 107) or Agni in his divine form, in relation with Śiva. One “places” the *bīja* in the fire of the *kuṇḍa*, which is no longer an inert fire (*jaḍa*) but a divine fire (*cit*), of the same seed as Śiva, as we shall see.

82. By reciting the *mūlamantra* followed by VAUṢAṬ.

83. With a flower.

84. The god and the goddess have their heads toward the northeast side [13a].

85. A lotus is drawn in the center of the *kuṇḍa* in relief (see plate VIII {in BL}); it is this lotus that marks the “navel” [14a]. As one gathers the embers together, imagine that the semen of the god is being gathered in the same way in the womb of the goddess. {A lotus also occupies the center of Siddhānta mandalas; see Hélène Brunner, “Maṇḍala and Yantra in the Siddhānta School of Śaivism: Definitions, Description and Ritual Use,” trans. Raynald Prévèreau, in *Maṇḍalas and Yantras in the Hindu Traditions*, ed. Gudrun Bühnemann (Leiden: Brill, 2003).}

86. This is done with a few drops of the *arghya* water, which one throws into the fire [14b].

87. First, one covers the dry *darbha* (*sad-indhana*) and one empowers {“attise”: fuels} with ASTRA. One then renders homage with the mantra: “Om Hām garbhāgnaye Namaḥ!” [14b].

88. The rites that follow occur in the intra-uterine life of the embryo, then in the young infant. They are accomplished with the five *brahmantra* and the five corresponding *aṅgamantra*, imagining the growth of Agni. The fifth is described in śloka 43.

89. Oblations of sesame, according to A.

90. Here we follow the editor rather than Somaśambhu, who places the last two actions after the birth. On the contrary they appear to be prior to the birth: complete the formation of the infant, and render him perfect. Nirmalamani explains *vaktrāṅgakalpanā* as: one gives form to the head, the face, the neck, etc. [19a]; and *niṣkṛti* is glossed as *niḥśeṣakaraṇa* by a commentator of Somaśambhu, cited by Nirmalamani. This is also found in the *Rāmanāthapaddhati* which clearly distinguishes the three actions: *vaktrāṅgakalpana*, *vaktrodghāṭana*, and *niṣkṛti*, as in our text [19b]. If *niṣkṛti* means, as the editor of our text says, purification of the mouth, the rite would duplicate that described in *śloka* 23.

91. We have relocated this title, see preceding note.

92. VARMA for the oblations.

93. One first removes the bracelet of *darbha*.

94. Not only the mother, but all the close parents are impure, as one knows, for several days following the birth of an infant. It is this state of impurity that is ended immediately here by the three ordinary rites of purification.

95. Or: on the *mekhalā* and on the exterior.

96. According to the *Mṛgendrāgama*, the *paridhi* are sticks from sacrificial trees; they are of a forearm's length (like the side of the *kuṇḍa*), as large as the little finger, and they should be fresh, regular, and without fault [22a]. One places these as the first or the second *mekhalā* (we say the *gurukka*!); but according to the *Mṛgendrāgama*, they are placed outside, at some distance from the last *mekhalā*. This is the *āsana* of Brahman, Śaṅkara, Viṣṇu, and Ananta (*śloka* 24).

97. *Viṣṭara* = bundle of thirty *darbha*, the length of a forearm. One places these as the third *mekhalā*, and it is the *āsana* of the *Lokapāla*.

98. And to nourish Agni [23a].

99. For Agni with five mouths (see *infra*).

100. "Om Hām Brahmanē Namaḥ!" etc. Each *mantra* evokes the corresponding deity, and installs them on their seat. The texts are not in accord on the subject of which direction to direct each of these; but Aghoraśiva gives the same directions as Somaśambhu.

101. These eight deities (the *Lokapāla*) are the cardinal and ordinal compass points. Aghoraśiva adds two: Brahman and Viṣṇu.

102. *Sruc* is the ladle; *sruva* smaller and masculine, the spoon. They are made of hardwood.

103. Following Aghoraśiva, first *prokṣaṇa*, *abhyukṣaṇa*, and *avakunṭhana*. Then heat, turning round in a circle once above the fire, touch the point of the *kuśa* to the points of the instruments; heat again, turning in a circle, and touch with the middle of the *kuśa* the middle of the instruments, etc. [27a].

104. Aghoraśiva, while maintaining the correspondences given here, indicates the *nyāsa* in inverse order, as he indicates an inverse order of touching {*kuśa* to instruments} to that given in our text.

105. With VARMA [29a].

106. With the *mūlamantra* [29a].

107. The text appears to be very incomplete here. *Śloka* 31 may be completed as follows: ...place it there, and with the point of the blade of *kuśa*, and taking a drop of offering, say, “Om Hām, Brahamaṇe Svāhā!”; to which Aghoraśiva adds, “this is the rite called *sthāpana*, or installation [of butter into the fire]” [31a]. But one also finds *tāpana* [31b].

108. Therefore, “Om Hīm Viṣṇave Svāhā!” to which Aghoraśiva adds, “this is the rite called *adhiśrayaṇa*, that is to say, maintaining [of the fire]” [31a].

109. Ending with “...and by saying, ‘Om Hūm Rudrāya Svāhā!’ one should offer with the point of a blade of *kuśa* a drop [of butter for Rudra]. This is the rite called *udvāsana* or cessation [of the fire]” [31a]. The names of these three rites are related to the functions of Brahman, Viṣṇu, and Rudra respectively; but their symbolic significance is not entirely clear.

110. One first makes a knot (*brahmagranthi*) at the middle; the instrument so constituted is called *pavitra* (purifier) [34a]. One grasps the two ends, between the thumb and ring finger of each hand, and in the left hand hold the bases of the *darbha*, the right hand the points [34b]. The same gesture for *saṃplavana*.

111. According to the *Bālajñānaratnāvalī*: “*utplavana* makes it possible to rise over the highest obstacles that exist in the most subtle form; the descent is made with *saṃplavana*” [34c].

112. First throw the *darbha* that was being used into the fire, after having undone the knots.

113. Just as the first time when one throws the butter—one throws it into the fire.

114. According to Aghoraśiva, two blades knotted and then separated to form a V, with which one divides the surface of the melted butter, upon which the V is floated, into three parts.

115. *Idā* on the left, *piṅgalā* on the right.

116. If one believes Aghoraśiva, the order indicated is followed during the light fortnight (waxing moon): one begins by taking the butter in the right part (*piṅgalā*) and offering it into the right eye in invocation of Agni; then one draws from the left (*idā*) and offers the butter into the left eye in invocation of Soma; finally, one draws from the center (*suṣumnā*) and offers the butter into the center eye of Agni with the three mantra. In the dark fortnight {waning moon} one inverts the first two actions, and in performing the third one days

Somāgnibhyām in place of *Agnīṣomābhyām* [38a].

117. Taking the butter from the center.

118. *Brahmamantra* and *aṅgamantra*, according to Aghoraśiva [38a].

119. “*Recayet*” is surely an error; read: “*rocayet*.” The *dhenumudrā* is accompanied by the *mūlamantra* and completes the rite of *amṛtikaraṇa*. This is the last of the eighteen *saṃskāras* of the butter, according to A., which are given after *rakṣaṇa* and *avakuṇṭhana* [38a].

120. According to Aghoraśiva, one renders homage here with the *mūlamantra* [38a].

121. For this section we follow the Kāśmīr edition, which presents the actions in a more satisfactory manner than does the text of Dēvakōṭṭai; that one seems to have significant errors, because the mantra clearly show that the rite has three stages, and it gives the second the name of the third. The modified verses are marked with an asterisk.

122. The Dēvakōṭṭai edition gives “*matam*” instead of the “*tataḥ*” reading of the Kāśmīr edition which we have adopted.

123. Then cross, over the *kuṇḍa*.

124. Nirmalamāṇi comments on the expression *abhilaṣitavaktra* (here *iṣṭavadana*) in the section entitled *pavitravidhi*. He cites the *Bṛhatkālottārāgama* which indicates that the face to which one must make these oblations (and therefore the others have to be melted) depends on the goal of the *homa*. For a *homa* performed with the goal of liberation it would be Īśa; Puruṣa for obtaining *siddhi* (*aṇimā*, etc.); Aghora for rituals of reparation or when the intention is malevolent; Vāmadeva if one seeks to make other people dependent upon you; and Sadyojāta (the western face) for the daily performance of the fire ritual [42a]. This citation is reproduced (in truncated form) by the editor of Somaśambhu (p. 50); but he does not indicate the divergence of opinion between Somaśambhu and the others since it retains the face of Īśa for the daily ritual, instead of Sadyojāta. One is to imagine the chosen face takes the dimension of the *kuṇḍa*, and that it is placed in the upper part, i.e., it is turned toward the top, so as to receive the oblations [42b].

125. The giving of the name (*nāmakaraṇa*) is the fifth of the *saṃskāras* of which Agni is the object (the first four are described in *ślokas* 16–19). It is completed with the fifth *brahmamantra* and with the fifth *aṅgamantra*.

126. Assuming again (cf. I, 20) that SARVĀTMAN is synonymous with the HRD (*bīja*), this is also in accord with the parallel passage of Aghoraśiva [43a]. The mantra is in effect: “Om Hām Śivāgnis tvam Hutāśana!” The name Śivāgni reminds us that Agni is here not an independent deity, but an aspect of Śiva. The form of Śivāgni meditated upon differs in its attributes from Agni in other traditions (see *Rauravāgama*, I, p. 59, note 23).

127. One then offers three *āhuti*, according to Aghoraśiva. Prior to the following phase, that author describes a ritual (perhaps prescribed solely for exceptional occasions), which consists of evoking one by one, then joining together, the seven tongues of Agni, as was done for the faces. The oblations are to be made to the one tongue that remains.

128. *Pūrṇāhuti*, will be described later.

129. This entire oblation effects in a single act the *saṃskāras* that remain, up to and including the tonsure (*cūḍā-karman*) [44a]. The first five have been effected one after the other, according to the regular lists; the sixth is *niṣkramaṇa* (first outing of the infant), the seventh *prāśana* (first solid food), and the eighth is *cūḍā-karman* (tonsure).

130. *Sāṅga* is perhaps to be understood in a technical sense (see II, 3, note 1).

131. Begin with the invocation of Śiva in the heart of Agni, to be meditated upon in the form of Śivāgni. The mental worship which one offers following is, according to the *Jñānaratnāvalī*, cited by Nirmalamāṇi, a complete worshipping, ranging from the invocation of the throne to the offering of *pavitra* [45a] (see section III, 47–92). The term *bhāśvara* of our text perhaps means “accompanied by the heart,” which indicates that the *pūjā* must include an *āvāraṇa* (see III, 85b, note 1).

132. According to a passage from Aghoraśiva, permission is requested of Agni in these terms, “O Agni, you are the splendor of Īśvara, you are pure, you are supreme; that is why I am establishing in the lotus of your heart, that I may offer these oblations” [45b]. This begins the invocation of Śiva in the heart of Agni. But in the passage of the *Jñānaratnāvalī*, just cited, the permission to offer oblations is requested of Śiva, after one has made the invocation [45a]. It seems that this is the opinion of Somaśambhu.

133. This action is described in detail by Aghoraśiva, “After this, one is to penetrate into the *nāḍī* that is in the middle of Agni’s body (*suṣumnā*); then, in the lotus of his heart offer *dhūpa* and *dīpa*; unite the faces of Śiva with those of Agni, and exit by pronouncing the *mūlamantra*; and imagine that the luminous *śikhā* exits through the nose of Śiva who is in Agni, and passes into the Śiva in the sanctuary, a continuous line of light uniting the two” [46a]. And, this is the union with the *nāḍī* of the Śiva of the sanctuary. One is to then effect in an analogous fashion the union of one’s own *nāḍī* with those of the two Śiva [46b]. A sort of imaginal luminous circuit is established, whereby the three aspects of Śiva {in the fire, the sanctuary, and the practitioner} are united. It is said that after the invocation of Śiva in Agni one is to separate the fire into two parts, one which serves to cook the rice (and where one does not evoke Śiva), the other where Śiva is evoked and the *homa* performed [46c].

134. A *karṣa*, a *śukti*, a *prasṛti*, weigh respectively a quarter, a half, and two *pala*. A *pala* is approximately equal to 93 grams.

135. *Lāja* is rice expanded {soaked in water?} and dried.
136. The term *sūkṣāṇi* seems to designate the small things such as sesame, barley, etc., as well as flours and similar powders. But, we do not know for sure what the five varieties to which our text alludes actually are.
137. See III, 84, note 1.
138. It must be added that it is not necessary to offer all of these ingredients, a single ingredient will suffice, and the one that is preferred is melted butter. In the absence of that, one offers black sesame, or grains of rice, or barley, or *samidh*.
139. With SVĀHĀ at the end. The recitation of each mantra is accompanied by an oblation.
140. It reads: *puṣkara-upari* in Aghoraśiva, that is, above the hollow portion of the ladle.
141. Action explained above, see III, 62b, note 1.
142. As it is said in the section *japa* (III, 93).
143. Following Aghoraśiva and Appayadikṣita, at this time one gives cooked rice to the fire as *naivedya* [57a].
144. It seems clear that the beginning of the half *śloka* 57b is corrupt. One finds in Aghoraśiva's manual, at this stage, the following injunction, "*tad bhasmābhivandya*," that is, render homage to the ashes [57a]. Nirmalamāṇi details this, "light some blades of *darbha*, and make a mark on your front with the ashes in which the nature of Śiva manifests" [57b]. *Bhūti* may perhaps be placed for *vibhūti*, but *āvartya* is surely wrong. It is not customary to chant the hymns at the end of the *homa*, beginning with *visarjana*.
145. By offering the eight flowers (see below, note 147).
146. And by *viṣṭara*.
147. That is, *suṣumnā*. The text is not very clear. One installs in the heart not only the various mantra and divinities who have been disturbed {displaced from the sanctuary and brought to the hearth?}, but above all Śivāgni, that aspect of Śiva who has been invoked in the form of Agni. Aghoraśiva describes this action as follows (parentheticals add the details given by Nirmalamāṇi), "Then render homage with the eight flowers, and give *arghya* for departing, one should make up those (the mantra) which are in Agni, they unite with the *mūrti* (of Agni), give separately leavetaking to Śiva (i.e., install in his own heart), then with: Oṃ Bhūḥ-Svāhā, Oṃ Bhuvāḥ Svāhā, Oṃ Svaḥ-Svāhā. Oṃ Bhūr-Bhuvāḥ-Svaḥ-Svāhā, give the four *āhuti*, then the *bali* to Brahman and the others. Greet Agni; in making the oblation, one says "rest yourself," and then give leavetaking with the mantra, Oṃ Hraṃ Hrūṃ Śivāgnaye Namaḥ!; one should then give leavetaking to Brahman and the others in inverse order

(of their installation, that is, the placement like Agni in one's heart)" [59a].

148. These are two squares that have been drawn to the right, toward the sun, and southeast of the *kuṇḍa*; that which is more west (the left) is called the interior; that which is more east (the right) is called the exterior [60a].

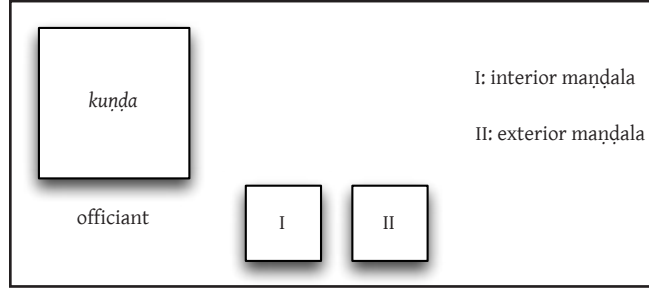


Figure 3. Location of the two mandalas for the interior and exterior offerings, stanza 60.

149. Offerings of cooked rice mixed with water [60b].

150. The *kṣetrapāla* is Bhairava.

151. In A., "Nīlaloḥitāya Svāhā!"

152. Coat the surface with cow dung [60c].

153. That is, dogs, *bhūta*, outcastes, *preta*, crows, etc. [60c].

154. A bit more extended in Aghoraśiva, who has furthermore offerings to the fire, the sun, etc.

155. Not indicated precisely. It seems that it may be new offerings that are given outside the temple. But according to actual usage, the offerings to the crows and so on are the same as those given outside the temple; one should perhaps adopt the reading of the Kāśmir edition, "*Yāgamaṇḍapād bahir vābalir deyaḥ*," one should make these (last) offerings outside.

156. *Āgama* is taken here in the larger sense of Śaivite texts, since the *Līlāvātī* does not figure in the list of *Śaivāgama*. A manual by this name is not known in our time, but the ritual of fire that is given {here} is well known; it is a simple ritual, whose different phases have already been commented upon above.

157. That is, unite the fire with *Bindu*.

158. *Mudrā* by which Agni was first grasped.

159. Hrūṃ.

160. *Dhruva* = *praṇava*.

161. That is, following the start of the *pūjā* proper (see III, 47, et seq.).

162. As shown in note 147 to *śloka* 59 above.

163. Here one returns to the sanctuary, or to the place of the worship of Śiva (section III) to bring this worship to a close. According to Aghoraśiva, one is to chant the hymns and make *sakalikaraṇa*, then approach Śiva holding *arghya* [71a].

164. One completes the offerings of *japa* (see III, 94 et seq.): a knee on the ground, one deposits one's offerings, mentally, with a little of the *arghya*, into the hands of Śiva who makes the *varamudrā* [71a].

165. By means of the eight flowers ritual [73a].

166. *Parāṇimukhārghya*: this is the *arghya* given at the moment that the *pūjā* is brought to a close. One presents to the "members" from ASTRA, and to the "faces" of Sadāśiva from the Sadyojāta, that is, in the inverse of the normal order [73a]. See III, 76a, note 4 and 90a, note 3. Nirmalamāṇi explains that this *arghya* does not mean that given upon the leavetaking of Śiva, but simply marks the end of the *pūjā* [73b]. One is to understand that Śiva continues to be present in the *liṅga* (if there is a *liṅga*), but it is not more than a "special presence" that has been obtained by the rites of invocation. According to certain texts, a distinction is made between the fixed *liṅga* (the rite is then as described here) and the mobile *liṅga* which requires the application of the relative injunctions as in the case of the *sthaṇḍila* (last *śloka*).

167. The *śloka* given by Aghoraśiva is as follows:

"Oh master, your insignificant servant, who has an impure heart, importunes you.

"However, for the speck of true devotion that I have for you, deign to pardon me!" [73c].

168. The mantra that are outside of Śiva, in the locations called *bhogasthāna*, are to be honored separately. They are to be replaced in the *mūrti*, so that they do not totally disappear [73d]. The mantra that are around the god (*āvaraṇadeva*) return into the *liṅga*, and the mantras invoked during the worship of the throne return into the *pīṭha* [73e]. In the case of a mobile *liṅga*, it is explained that these return into the box, "By mentally repeating the *mūlamantra*, the *deśika* should take the *liṅga*, envelop it in colored cloths, and place it in the middle of the box; one then closes the cover, recollecting Bhīma-Rudra [by which one requests his protection]" [74a].

169. That is, if one has worshipped without the use of a *liṅga* as a support.

BOOK REVIEWS

***Emptiness and Temporality: Buddhism and Medieval Japanese Poetics.* By Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008. 224 pages. Hardcover, \$55.00.**

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In *Emptiness and Temporality: Buddhism and Medieval Japanese Poetics*, Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen explores *renga* (linked poetry) and the critical writings by Shinkei (1406–1475) from a comparative perspective. She notes “striking affinities between a medieval Japanese poetic practice and post/modernist critical and philosophical concerns” (p. 2) and is thus able to examine *renga* in terms of Derrida’s *différance*. While Ramirez-Christensen boldly ascribes to the practice of *renga* a possibly redeeming quality for the problems of the twenty-first century—a time she characterizes by globalization, capitalization, and instrumentation—her comparative approach leads to intriguing interpretations in the field of medieval poetics. It is this comparative and critical methodology that clearly distinguishes *Emptiness and Temporality* from other works on the topic of *renga*, such as Wolfram Naumann’s *Shinkei in seiner Bedeutung für die japanische Kettendichtung* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967), Earl Miner’s *Japanese Linked Poetry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), and, of course, her own work, *Heart’s Flower: The Life and Poetry of Shinkei* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994) and *Murmured Conversations: A Treatise on Poetry and Buddhism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

Emptiness and Temporality consists of an introduction, fifteen chapters, and an appendix that includes a glossary and an index. The main part of the book is divided in two sections: “The Poetics of *Renga*” (chapters 1 through 6) and “*Kokoro*, or the Emptiness of the Sign” (chapters 7 through 15).

In her introduction, Ramirez-Christensen asserts that representative medieval arts such as *renga* and *Nō* shared aesthetics that were based on the Buddhist “twin concepts of emptiness and temporality” (p. 1). Accordingly, the book focuses on “understanding the cultural products arising from a milieu strongly influenced by Buddhist ways of seeing and speaking” (p. 4). Furthermore, the author takes up KARATANI Kōjin’s suggestion that “deconstruction was already prefigured in Japan” (p. 3), especially in the medieval arts, an argument she uses to illustrate the philosophical relevance of these aesthetics for the post-modern reader. However, this is not an end in itself but above all a chance to “suggest how deconstruction might be turned towards the ethical ends pursued by Buddhism as a way of mental liberation” (p. 5) in order to “make the earth inhabitable again by all of us, and not only by the fortunate few among us” (p. 7).

The first chapter, “The Grammar of the *Renga* Sequence,” carves out the basic structural features of a poetic sequence produced during a *renga* session. Ramirez-Christensen observes a historical development from the simple pairing of verses as a pure pastime to the complex system that Muromachi-era-linked poetry masters held as a standard. In this later form of *renga*, while the poems’ lines are composed extemporaneously, there are elaborate rules to follow that may be roughly described as “principles of continuity and change” (p. 12). Certain superordinate themes would be pursued for a minimum amount of verses, but within this continuity one also would find interspersions on differing subjects. Thematic unity also had a maximum number of verses after which it would be replaced by other topics. These and other rules—“both thematic and aesthetic in character” (p. 14)—prevented symmetry and monotony. As is made clear through the example of the first fifteen verses of *Minase sangin hyakuin*, one of the characteristic features of *renga* progression was tensility, i.e., a well-defined tension that kept the poetry cohesive and interesting and served to propel the sequence as a whole into motion. Thus, the individual verse is not at all meant to produce an independent statement that has meaning in itself, but has a “purely functional value of shaping the movement of the whole” (p. 20).

Chapter 2, “The Link as a Structure of Signification,” examines how such a tensile structure may be conceptualized as *hen-jo-dai-kyoku-ryū*, which Ramirez-Christensen translates as “prelude-beginning-topic-statement-dissolve” (p. 21). Quoting from Shinkei’s *Sasamegoto*, the

author argues that the alternate production of verses is first “characterized by a lack” (p. 24) in that no single verse may as such stand fully and completely; if it did, there would be no possibility for the next verse to connect, and the movement of the whole would be impeded and eventually come to a standstill. Secondly, the verses have to be “in a mutually defining contrastive relationship” (p. 26). That means that every verse looks to what went before for connection and reference, and is in turn interpreted and reformulated by what follows. Thus it is embedded organically into the prior sequence, but at the same time cannot remain content merely with elaborating on what had been already said. Instead, it has to aim at a twist, a turn, that keeps things apace and interesting. Therefore, “every verse in *renga* is, strictly speaking, ambiguous” (p. 27).

“Emptiness, or Linking as *Différance*,” the third chapter of the book, opens with an introduction to the Buddhist concepts of emptiness and dependent origination. This, according to Ramirez-Christensen, is equivalent to the poetic process of *tsukeai* through which the link between one verse and the other is established. As each verse is devoid of any substantial meaning, *renga* achieves significance only by way of the relation between its verses. It also connects well with “contemporary structuralist and poststructuralist theory” (p. 30), specifically Saussure’s linguistics and Derrida’s deconstructivism. In Saussure’s perspective, a word—and by extension, language—is not an image of reality but “a product of the term’s differential relation with other units of the linguistic system of which it is a part” (p. 30). It is this difference, this gap in between, that Derrida develops into his concept of *différance* which implicates two things: First, *différance* means the relation of difference and mutual conditioning between parts of a (quasi-spatial) system. Second, *différance* also involves temporality because the persistent process of redefinition within the system defers meaning and renders a final and clear-cut definition impossible. Seen this way, “*tsukeai*, or the link between any two verses, can also be characterized by the concept of *différance*” (p. 33). While the individual verses do not carry their meaning themselves and instead only gain significance in their differential relation to the whole of the sequence, they are also constantly reread against what follows later and thereby may gain new significance.

Taking a detour through “meaning-fulfilment” (*Bedeutungserfüllung*) in Husserl’s phenomenology, the fourth chapter, “Linking

as Hermeneutical Process,” illustrates how *tsukeai* must actively understand the preceding verse(s) in order to play its role as motor of the poetic process. This requirement can only be met by paying heed not only to what has been expressly said, but also to what is there, either as intention only or also as anticipation, reflection, association, and correlation. Thus, “*renga* enacts what Gadamer calls ‘a fusion of horizons’” (p. 44). Active poetic understanding must result in an interpretation and reconstruction of the preceding verse by which the meaning of the sequence as a whole is altered.

“The Link as Figuration and Metaphorical Shift,” the fifth chapter, begins by relating the traditional and somewhat obvious possibilities of connecting verses with one another, such as pillow words (*makura kotoba*, words conventionally paired with one another) and puns (*kake kotoba*, most often playing on homonyms). It goes on to also give examples of poems in which the link functions on a more sublime and complex level. Going beyond the surface of linear poetic conventions, such links dig deep into the verses’ “hidden intention” (p. 53) and effect a “metaphorical shift” that turns, transforms, or transposes the simple description of a scene or an emotion into “symbolist poetry” (p. 52).

Chapter 6, “*Différance* and ‘the *Jo-ha-kyū* of the Myriad Arts,’” argues that the structural principle of “Prelude-Break-Climax” (p. 185) plays an important role not only in Shinkei’s *renga* poetics but in all areas of the arts in medieval Japan. Ramirez-Christensen gives the example of Zeami and his theory of Na theater. Therein also, she diagnoses a “mutually signifying relationship” and proposes to accordingly understand Nō “less as a visual than a hermeneutic theater” (p. 59). Although there are certainly differences to be made out in the aesthetics of individual arts, the first part of the book closes with the claim that “Muromachi art is everywhere informed by the principle of *symbolic* animation that is *jo-ha-kyū*” (p. 61).

The book’s second part opens with “The Close Link and the Distant Link.” It introduces the distinction between, on the one hand, a close link between verses based on semantics or even association and, on the other, a distant one “lacking in phonological, syntactic, and associative fluidity, but nevertheless producing a unified feeling or thought (*kokoro*)” (p. 66). Given Ramirez-Christensen’s interpretation of the link as dynamic and signifying *différance*, it goes without saying that the distant link is “the most challenging and potentially the most creative space for generating *renga*’s distinct poetry” (p. 67). Thus, “in the

Close Link the words succeed one another in a manner all too predictable” (p. 76, translation from *Guhishō*, attributed to Fujiwara Teika), while the distant link effects a hermeneutical movement capable of resulting in a “powerful shock of awakening” (p. 75) of “quasi-religious” (p. 76) quality.

“Emptiness and Enlightenment in Poetry,” the eighth chapter, explores in greater depth the spiritual implications of *renga*’s Distant Link technique through a close reading of Shinkei’s *Sasamegoto*. The decisively symbolist nature of the Distant Link reacts as a kind of answer to the “riddle” of the preceding verse; at the same time, it makes accessible a realm of “ultimate truth” (p. 78) and as such at least approximates a religious function: “Shinkei’s idea of poetic training is the same as the Way of mental discipline by which one arrives at this ultimate realm of enlightenment (*satori*), or of the direct insight of ‘Zen’ ” (p. 79). Poetry of the highest quality then “has its ground in existential knowledge ... more properly called wisdom” (p. 80). It also includes the moral effect of liberating the reader from her or his illusions and producing insight into the “true nature of reality” (p. 84), the permeability and interrelation of phenomena, i.e., the Buddhist concepts of temporality and emptiness.

Ramirez-Christensen changes perspective in the ninth chapter, “Medieval Symbolic Poetry and Buddhist Discourse.” While it has already become clear that, in order to adequately read *renga* poetics, their Buddhist associations have to be taken into account, the author now argues for more than just a secondary, if illuminating, affinity. Here, she suggests that “established conventions of how particular images ... are handled are based on an earlier ‘primordial,’ historically prior, determination of reality as a whole” (p. 87). The Buddhist connection is thus no accident but rather the matrix that made Shinkei’s poetics possible in the first place. Exploring the double entendre between poetry and Buddhist emptiness—words are empty, and that is precisely why, in a best case scenario, they also render this universal emptiness accessible—Ramirez-Christensen goes on yet another detour through “Wittgenstein’s Silence” and “Heidegger’s Understanding” (p. 93). While Wittgenstein’s concern “with delimitating the sphere of the logical” (p. 94) merely serves to highlight Buddhist soteriology as the “possibility of liberation from ‘the problems of life,’ that is, suffering” (p. 94), affinities are ascertained to Heidegger’s thought which “is said

to have taken a crucial turn (*die Kehre*) that took it beyond philosophy as rational inquiry and into the language of poetry” (p. 96).

“Beyond Meaning: Beauty Is the Aura of Contemplation,” chapter 10, in its discussion of central aesthetic concepts like *yojō* (“aura”) and *y(gen* (“ineffable depth”) relies on thorough interpretations of several specimens of *waka* and excerpts from critical treatises. While such terms are regularly used to describe the effect of individual poems (such as Saigyō’s verses on the snipe rising from the evening marshes), they also serve to delineate a realm in which “objects become manifest within a relation of ... dependent origination” (p. 98), i.e., the realm of “symbolic ambiguity based on a Buddhist understanding of phenomena” (p. 99). Phenomena, lacking substratum, are nothing but traces of other phenomena on the one hand and pervasive emptiness on the other, and therefore “words are there to trace the shape of an absence ... intended to open up a wordless disclosure in the reader’s or auditor’s mind” (p. 107).

The eleventh chapter, “*Ushin*: Poetic Process as Meditation,” pointedly connects the practice of poetry with the Tendai Buddhist meditation practice *shikan* (“tranquility and insight”) (p. 187). Poetry in the implicit understanding of Fujiwara no Shunzei, which gave the *Shinkokinshū* its characteristic coloring and on which also Shinkei relies heavily, aims at “freeing the mind from the apparent solitude of meaning in mundane discourse” (p. 109). It is identical to meditation in “transcending both the fixed formulations of language and of thought itself” (p. 110).

But Ramirez-Christensen has Shinkei going beyond what Shunzei had implicated and explicitly interprets poetic creation as religious practice in her twelfth chapter, “Poetry and the Instantaneous Illumination of Zen.” For Shinkei, language does not merely “represent and transmit meaning; rather, it is a heuristic device for experiencing existence or true reality as it is understood in Mahayana Buddhism” (p. 117). As such, a poem closely resembles—and actually has infrequently been identified with—the *dhāraṇī* (“true word”) as concentration of the mind and “mimetic *embodiments* of enlightenment, of the Real” (p. 120) in esoteric Buddhism.

“Linking by Words and by Mind: Understanding, Interpretation, and Iterability,” chapter 13, elucidates two other categories of linking techniques. The first, “Linking by Conventional Word Associations” (p. 122) is convenient and doubtless the feature that allows for a

communal production of *renga* in the first place. It runs the risk, however, of merely attaching something irrelevant to the preceding verse. A skillful *renga* practitioner would rather approach the sequence's context by way of "Linking by Feeling or Conception." That is because "[r]enga, if it is to aspire to be a serious art, cannot be a merely entertaining game of words; rather it must be a dialogue between the hearts/minds (*kokoro*) of speaking subjects" (p. 124). Only then can the religious quality Shinkei and Ramirez-Christensen are seeking be achieved; only then are the different contributions to a sequence in a relation of dependent co-origination; only then is there the *différance* that allows for a meaningful comparison with poststructuralism.

Poetry that thus commits not to flashy effects on the verbal surface but to the creative integration of a contemplative state of mind results in those aesthetics that have come to be seen as typically medieval. This point is further developed in chapter 14, "The Chill and the Meager (*Hieyase*): Poetics and the Philosophy of the Privative." The poetic product is characterized by a "vital tensility" (p. 142) and tends to a "precise and utterly disciplined choice of words" (p. 145). This characteristic results, in aesthetic terms, in a chill, monochromatic, transparent quality of the poem which, in turn, illustrates the dialectical model of the three truths according to Tendai: "moving from the provisional (or conditioned) phenomena to the realm of emptiness, and then returning to phenomena with an illumined sense of their indeterminacy as both conditioned and empty, or neither, hence at one with the middle truth" (p. 146).

"The Mode of Ambiguity Is the Dharma Body," the book's fifteenth and final chapter, presents a longer quote, again from *Sasamegoto*, along with a thorough interpretation of the two given poems and their critical evaluation. It once more emphasizes poetry's capability of liberating the parties involved in its hermeneutical process from their illusions and leading them into a realm of freedom and truth.

The book comes to a close with the following paragraph: "A smile, a tear, a moving power; temporality, the paradox of motion, the gap that elicits a smile or a tear, a breakthrough. Being and time, process, the edges of things, the margins holding the center in place, the supplement that enables the essential. Labor and management, East and West, subject and object. Form and formlessness, the one and the many, the many in the one. Grasses in the wind. Renga" (p. 162). *Emptiness and Temporality* thus challenges the reader. It has already been indicated

that this is not a book which first and foremost aims at the usual academic production and preservation of knowledge. Instead and above all, it seeks—quite successfully—to overturn “those hierarchically organized dualisms that again and again confirm the system of oppression that operates the global society we have constructed” (p. 7). While it certainly seems commendable to question authority and established academic practices, *Emptiness and Temporality* gives, in several places, less the impression of a systematic study on a specific matter than of essayistic association.

This, no doubt, is what Ramirez-Christensen intends, as it truthfully mirrors *renga* practice. But it does, at times, leave the reader bewildered as to why, for example, a discussion of Saussurean linguistics, Buddhist emptiness, and Nietzsche’s view on the relativity of truth is interrupted by a somewhat disconnected and disorienting paragraph on Western logocentrism, science and technology, and the hunt for profit (cf. 30ff.). Maybe the overall structure of the book might have been even more convincing and worked to greater effect in the sense of the author’s intention if such passages consequently had been grouped into a separate part of the book. The present constellation seems somewhat problematic and, depending on the context, at times even drifts into the absurd. For example, in her discussion of the poem “What could it be / in the common dew all around / that thus came to be? / As to that which settles upon / my sleeves—they are tears,” Ramirez-Christensen at first locates the poem firmly within the realm of *yngen* and interprets the question as an ontological one: “what is *within* this transparent globule of water that gives us a clue to its origins? The answer is of course, wholly nothing; there is no inner substance that has made it what it is” (p. 104). But then she takes off into a statement that might make some readers question the sincerity of her otherwise sound interpretations: “It is indeed a question about climate and weather, the one remaining field still to be controlled by science, and about environment and ecology, but only as these are related to the philosophical issue of the ultimately immeasurable ‘formlessness’ that grounds ‘form,’ the dewdrops that are external manifestations of something else” (p. 104).

Moreover, while the translations and their interpretations for the most part are convincing and enjoyable to read, individual concepts are not always translated consistently or explained satisfactorily. For example, *wa shite* is ambiguously defined as “adapting the ‘original

figure' to (Japanese) understanding" (p. 58). *Aware* is translated as "pathos" (p. 18), "moving character" (p. 82), and also as "numinosity" (p. 112). Similarly, concepts taken from the Western traditions are not always pursued consistently, e.g., "discursive" (p. 2), "high art" (p. 139), and "religious experience" (p. 139). Also, there are factual errors: *suji* (sinew) is not identical to *fushi* (node, p. 142); in the comments on a poem by Shūa, the parallelism between warbler/plum and cuckoo/deutzia has become inverted (p. 124). And in her comparative reading of two poems, the amount of five words in Sōgi's is intentionally exaggerated vis-à-vis a count of only two in Shinkei's (pp. 132–135).

While such conceptual marginalities might not seem important, one might indeed be skeptical as to whether the term "symbolist poetry" is adequate in a Buddhist context. What exactly is symbolized? Equally, it is not at all clear which Buddhism—being a complex historical phenomenon with a range of philosophical traditions—Ramirez-Christensen is referring to, as in several places the terms Zen, Mahāyāna, Shingon, Tendai, and Buddhism seem to be used rather interchangeably (e.g., the discussion of *dhāraṇī* in the "Illumination of Zen" chapter). The same goes for the prolonged discussion of aesthetic concepts which ends with *yojō*, *y gen*, *en*, *shina*, *yū*, and even *michi* being synonyms for "aware." While the reader certainly is able to grasp the author's intention, one might wish for more conceptual rigorousness and detailed analysis. Also, at least a courteous nod to standard monographs would have been appreciated. A discussion of *Shinkokinshū* aesthetics and *hieyase* seems incomplete without bibliographical reference to David Pollack's *Fracture of Meaning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986). Similarly, the Buddhist background and resulting religious nature of Shinkei's *renga* poetics were already observed in Naumann's *Shinkei*.

Nonetheless, *Emptiness and Temporality* brings to the table novel and fascinating interpretations of some well-known and many hitherto obscure passages from Japanese poetic and critical literature; a genuine interest in a philosophically inspired dialogue between East and West, past and present; and an outspoken political agenda that goes with a high level of reflection. It makes for a gripping and thought-provoking read for the philosophically interested and critically minded.

***Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu.* By Albert Welter. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 381 pages. Hardcover, \$74.00.**

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Albert Welter's analysis of Yongming Yanshou's (904–975) conception of Chan comes after many years of studying Yanshou and his ongoing interest in the development of Chan Buddhism during the Five Dynasties and early Song periods. Throughout, Welter details Yanshou's multifaceted writings on Chan, and his book is useful for rethinking the role of Buddhism during important developmental periods. He concludes that Buddhism's role in the Song and Ming, especially in regards to literati culture and Confucian learning, needs to be reexamined. Through his analysis of the diversity of perspectives among literati monks, Welter shows that Buddhism should not be reduced simply to the Linji faction of Chan that was a leading branch of Chan during the Song. Yanshou's Chan in the *Zongjing lu* (宗鏡錄, Records of the Source-Mirror, compiled in 961) leads to a broader analysis of Chan development, and Welter concludes there is much scholarship that needs to occur to further this investigation on Yanshou and Chan.

In the earliest known biography of Yanshou, he is characterized as a “promoter of blessings,” placing him outside sectarian divisions and casting him as a Chan master, a Pure Land practitioner, and an advocate for bodhisattva practice. In Welter's first chapter, he evaluates these multiple identities, using hagiographic data to evaluate each distinction given to Yanshou. Welter points out that the multiple images show how Yanshou did not fit easily into Song sectarian categories; however, because his image remained controversial in Song Buddhist circles, one can conclude his presence was important. The way Yanshou was portrayed by different Buddhist circles was not always in line with his own thought and practice. How his identity was negotiated indicates his place within multiple circles, as well as how different groups understood notions of what Chan/Zen were.

These representations were problematic to a rather divided Song Buddhism, and to overcome this, later Chan advocates took Yanshou on as their own, claiming him as a master. The Song-dynasty Chan monk Daoyuan (道原, n.d.) claimed that Yanshou was a member of

the Chan school. In the *Jingde Chuandeng lu* (景德传灯录, Record of the Transmission of the Lamp, compiled in 1004 by Daoyuan) Yanshou is incorporated into the Fayen lineage and presented as a Chan master. Welter notes the ironies of this inclusion, as Yanshou heavily influenced Chan circles while sparsely mentioning prominent Chan figures in his texts. Welter concludes that for Yanshou, Chan was a part of the broader Buddhist scholastic tradition. Yanshou's work rejected sectarianism, favoring unity among Buddhist teachings. Welter further argues that Yanshou's inclusion of *zong* (正宗) in his *Zongjing lu* was an additional counter to sectarianism. *Zong* is a rather problematic term because it can refer to a doctrinal interpretation from a text or school, but it can also suggest essential truth that unites Buddhist teaching as a whole. Yanshou's understanding of *zong* and Chan were based on the second interpretation of *zong*, and he used the term to advocate correct, implicit truth beyond sectarian divisions.

Yanshou's biography in the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* (禅林僧宝传, Biographies of Monks of the Chan School, 1123) portrayed a new image of Yanshou, one as a Pure Land practitioner, an influential view that continues to the present. Two aspects of Yanshou made him an attractive Pure Land practitioner: his propensity for *Lotus Sutra* recitation and his potential for helping the Song Pure Land movement in its establishment of a Pure Land patriarchy. As a representative of Pure Land, in the *Longshu jingtu wen* (龙舒净土文, a Pure Land miscellany composed by Wang Rixiu around 1160) it is asserted that Yanshou had a vision of Guanyin—a major figure in the Pure Land cult. It additionally provides episodes of people receiving blessings after worshipping Yanshou's *stūpa*. Both gave rationale for Yanshou's elevated status in the Pure Land cult, and with this high status, Yanshou's identity transformed into an object of admiration and a receiver of supplications.

Welter adds a new identity, Yanshou as a representative of bodhisattva practice. This new identity is not intended to further complicate Yanshou's biography; rather, it is meant to conceptualize Yanshou without the limitations of sectarian hagiography. Welter views Yanshou's *Shou pusa jiefu* (受菩萨戒法, On the Induction into the Bodhisattva Precepts) as evidence of the priority of bodhisattva practice in Yanshou's thought. Welter's rethinking of Yanshou as a proponent of bodhisattva practice is a useful strategy for identifying him, as it enables one to link Yanshou to Chan lineage, while accounting for his image as a Pure Land practitioner. Welter concludes that the

bodhisattva precepts frame Yanshou's understanding of Chan, cast as the means for rebirth in the upper ranks of the Pure Land.

In chapter 2, Welter looks closer at Yanshou's use of *zong*—the term indicating implicit truth that underlies all Buddhist teachings. *Zong* temples were officially designated Chan establishments with *jiao* (教, teaching) temples designating Tiantai ones. Thus, in Yanshou's references, *zong* is referred to as implicit truth while signifying the means of organizing doctrinal Buddhist groups in the Song. In addition to this, the Buddhist scholastic tradition understood *zong* as reference to specific doctrine, interpretation of doctrine, theme/meaning/teaching of a text, or a religious/philosophical school. These different interpretations of *zong* occurred during the Song, but Yanshou largely drew from the abstract and theoretical meanings. In translating *zong* as implicit truth, Yanshou harmonized Chan teachings and the scholastic Buddhist tradition, indicating that ultimate meaning comes from implicit truth that is beyond sectarian divides. Yanshou theorized that *zong* unites doctrines and resolves differences because implicit truth is not confined to a specific sect. Instead, Yanshou borrowed from multiple sources, and his work included scholastic Buddhism, Huayan, and Tiantai. In analyzing Yanshou's method for marking Chan in the *Zongjing lu*, Welter concludes that Yanshou used Chan sources in conjunction with a vast group of Buddhist writings. Yanshou's method went beyond sectarian divisions of the time, as well as uses of *zong* as identifier of Chan establishments. Yanshou instead took the term *zong* as representative of correct, implicit truth, to contend truth is beyond factions. Welter argues Yanshou's writing about *zong* in the *Zongjing lu* was meant to serve as a literary expedient, leading people to correct truth beyond sectarian divisions of the time.

Chapter 3 investigates how Yanshou's program to unify sects through the understanding of *zong* as implicit truth affected his representation of Chan in the *Zongjing lu*. Welter discusses how Yanshou established that one's mind, and not one's sect, leads to implicit truth—*zong*. For Yanshou, truth is a pretext for highlighting the teachings of patriarchs and buddhas, and he argued that the doctrine of mind-as-truth can be found in teachings from Śākyamuni to Bodhidharma. He did so to contend that teachings from the Buddha, Buddhist scriptures, and doctrinal schools are harmonious with teachings of Bodhidharma and Chan lineage. Yanshou asserted that buddhas and patriarchs established the message of *zong*, while sages and worthies established its

essence. Welter finds this contention surprising because Yanshou thus prioritized sages and worthies over buddhas and patriarchs; however, the sages and worthies Yanshou pointed to in the *Zongjing lu* were from diverse sects, including Huayan, Tiantai, and Chan. Welter uses this as a further example of Yanshou's point of view that Chan was connected to, and not separate from, the larger Buddhist tradition. *Zong* was the unifying factor for Yanshou of different sects, and Welter claims this distinguished Yanshou from rival Hongzhou and Linji groups.

In chapter 4, Welter provides an analysis of Chan sources and patriarchs from the *Zongjing lu*; this is important new scholarship. Little work has been done on how Yanshou incorporated Chan patriarchs and their writings into his conception of Chan, and because it is part of the understanding of Chan movements in the Five Dynasties and early Song periods, it should not be overlooked. Yanshou included 170 Chan masters and texts in the *Zongjing lu*, including fragments of Chan masters' teachings. Despite this inclusion, the *Zongjing lu* has only been studied as a supplement to proper Chan because it was seen in competition with the Linji faction. Welter's analysis in this chapter seeks to establish the *Zongjing lu* as one of the earliest and best resources for understanding Chan during an important developmental stage. In addition to aiding scholarship in rethinking Chan developments during the Five Dynasties and early Song, Welter provides a very useful chart of the development of Chan from Bodhidharma through the disciples of Huineng, as explicated by Yanshou in fascicles 97 and 98 of the *Zongjing lu*. Welter's tabling of the *Zongjing lu* Chan masters takes into account the fragments and texts attributed to Chan masters. Additionally, his detailing points to the broadness of the *Zongjing lu*, indicating how Yanshou's Chan incorporated numerous sources. Indeed, Yanshou's references and citations to non-Chan works were more plentiful. What is surmised from detailing these fascicles is that while Yanshou endorsed Chan's connections to other sects, he did not defy orthodox factional identities. Instead, Yanshou's conception of Chan in the *Zongjing lu* includes Chinese lineage masters.

In chapter 5, Welter analyzes the Chan lineage masters' fragments of teachings in the *Zongjing lu*, and he does so in comparison with Yanshou's contemporaries. Fascicles 1, 97, and 98 are the primary locations for his analysis, and his examinations are vital for understanding Yanshou's conception of Chan. Issues Welter contends with in this chapter include: fragments of texts compared to similar texts of

Yanshou's contemporaries; alternate fragments exposing differences with other sources; fragments unique to the *Zongjing lu* depiction of Mazu Daoyi and the Hongzhou faction; fragments attributed to more than one master; and non-Chan masters included in Chan lineage.

Chapter 5 also indicates how Yanshou used *zong* for a double purpose—as implicit truth and lineage. Yanshou's task was to reexamine the function of words and letters to demonstrate their effectiveness. Part of this meant including non-Chan lineage masters, once again placing Chan within the broader scope of Buddhism. Additionally, expanding knowledge meant including fragments from masters who were otherwise unknown and undocumented. Yanshou's primary message, therefore, went beyond doctrinal teachings because, for him, Chan principles were incomplete. To really investigate Buddhism one should read extensively from Buddhist scriptures because it is through scriptural and doctrinal exegesis that truth is revealed. Yanshou's inclusion of non-Chan lineage masters warrants a separate investigation to show the parameters under which Chan and non-Chan masters can be incorporated. This is beyond the space of Welter's work. However, he suggests that the inclusion of Tiantai would be an interesting starting point because the notion of lineage connects the two schools, and many Chinese Buddhists considered Chan and Tiantai as under the same meditation movement.

In chapter 6, Welter ultimately shows the need to reevaluate the role of Buddhism in particular time periods. He contends that scholars have focused on Buddhism during the Tang and Confucianism during the Song, and he wants to get into the subject of Buddhist and Neo-Confucian interactions to expand the understanding of the post-Tang intellectual terrain. While he is influenced by ARAKI Kengo's work, Welter also contends there are missing Buddhists not included in the Linji faction, including Confucian monks and doctrinal Buddhists. Yanshou was a leader in the latter group, and together, the two groups form what Welter labels the Buddhist School of Principle. Yanshou's work is important for this group, extending great influence during the Song. After introducing this new group, Welter explores the implications of proposing a new Buddhist group and suggests two categories—Foxue (佛学, Study of Buddhism) and Chanxue (禅学, Chan Studies)—are useful for recognizing Buddhism as a significant component of the Song literati intellectual terrain. Both imply literati monks participated in debates to validate their own traditions, but Welter points to the

diversity of perspectives among literati monks, going against assumptions that there was a uniform Buddhist position. Groups included in this diversity of the *wen* (文, literary) movement included: those who linked the *wen* revival in the Song to the *wen* of antiquity; more moderate literary figures who combined moralism with literary and cultural interests; Buddhists with interests in *guwen* (古文, neo-classical literature), sometimes called Confucian monks; Buddhists who maintained a traditional approach to Buddhist teaching while on good terms with secular literati; secular literati with contrasting positions to *guwen* principles; and the Linji faction of Chan monks. This typology allows for a greater array of approaches in dealing with Buddhist-Confucian relations.

Welter's work is an important contribution to studies of Chan, the Song, and Buddhism's role during important developmental periods in China. The work is limited in some senses, with chapter 3 remaining unable to delve too deeply into Yanshou's broad influences. This limitation is recognized by Welter and is small in comparison to the primary focus of the work that restores Yanshou's Chan status. Finally, the book concludes with a translation of fascicle 1 of the *Zongjing lu*. This is another important inclusion to scholarship on Yanshou. It is the first translation into a Western language, and the first annotated translation into any language. The text represents Yanshou's notion of *zong* as implicit truth, and Welter's translation of it benefits scholarship on Yanshou and traditions that trace themselves through him.

***Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture.* By Jane Naomi Iwamura. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 214 pages. Paperback, \$24.95.**

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Jane Naomi Iwamura's *Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture* is a concise yet captivating analysis that demonstrates how mass media perpetuates Orientalist stereotypes. Iwamura posits that constructed representations of Asian religions are hyperreal to the American public. The increasing visual consumption of media reifies these stereotypes in a virtual world within the mind of the consumer.

Consequently, the Orientalist stereotypes in the virtual world become more real than one's actual experiences. The book contains three detailed but accessible case studies to illustrate her claims, which should be helpful for undergraduate classes.

The American stereotype of the "Oriental Monk" is central to Iwamura's argument. She traces its genealogy in the book's introduction. Iwamura asserts that more affable Orientalist stereotypes were developed after the conclusion of the Second World War in contrast to earlier devious representations of Asians such as Fu Manchu and Dragon Ladies. Charlie Chan was the most successful predecessor of the Oriental Monk. Iwamura points out that both Chan and the Oriental Monk relied on a mysterious base of wisdom unavailable to the Western mind. However, unlike Fu Manchu, the Oriental wisdom is not recognized as a threat to the West because it originates from a subservient, effeminate source. Thus, Iwamura warns against viewing these more positive Asian representations as progress as they often harbor latent Orientalist prejudice as well.

Attached to the Oriental Monk is what Iwamura labels "the bridge figure," a representation of the dominant Western culture, most often as a male orphan. Alone and out of touch in his own culture, the bridge figure finds solace in the alterity of the Oriental Monk and his teachings. The mystical wisdom of the East is transmitted to the West through this relationship, saving the latter from the perils of modernization. Despite this criticism of Western social norms, Iwamura writes that the Oriental Monk still "operates as an imaginative construction, circulating widely and subjectively reinforcing this new system of Western dominance" (p. 21).

Although the book examines Asian religions in general, it offers a great deal to Buddhist studies scholars. This is most evident in the second chapter in which Iwamura focuses on D.T. Suzuki and his legacy within American Buddhism. Instead of concentrating on his works, Iwamura demonstrates how Suzuki's image and style came to embody Zen Buddhism. American media was fascinated by the "enigmatic" Suzuki, mostly because he matched Western attitudes of how Oriental Monks were supposed to look and act. Fashion magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* created a certain style for Suzuki that legitimated him in the eyes of American elites and the counterculture Beats as well. Zen as style or fashion "became something to 'try on' and 'entertain' rather than something that directly challenged American

values” (p. 36). Iwamura indicates that Zen’s popularity in the United States was viable due to the neutralization of the Japanese threat after World War II combined with the freedom of American intellectual openness to (appropriate) foreign cultures that separated democracy from its ideological communist opponent.

Iwamura then turns her attention to the media battle over the true successor to Suzuki as inheritor of Zen in the United States. Zen represented an outlet from mainstream American culture that appealed to both elites and hipsters; this divide was soon labeled as Square Zen and Beat Zen, respectively. Iwamura uses the writings of Jack Kerouac—*The Dharma Bums* in particular—as a lens to interpret Beat Zen that was distinguished through spontaneity and nonexclusivity. Simply stated, Zen wisdom could be found anywhere, in anyone, at any time. Iwamura notes that Suzuki was critical of the Beat approach to Zen, yet the popularity of Kerouac’s writings continue to introduce Americans to D.T. Suzuki and Beat Zen. In contrast, Alan Watts eventually came to represent Square Zen despite his early attempts to place himself between the two Zen styles. The media depicted Watts as a more legitimate successor to Suzuki because of his religious vocation as an Episcopal priest and his scholarly approach to the tradition. The transmission of Japanese Zen was complete in Watts in that his appearance was wholly Western, yet he could understand the previously inaccessible details of Zen. Moreover, Watts could lucidly translate these Eastern teachings for Westerners willing to learn. As a result, Japanese Zen was often described as stale and stagnant in contrast to the new sophisticated American version. This attitude expands outside Zen to categorize the American “imperialist nostalgia” directed toward Asia, and Japan in particular, at that time.

In the third chapter, Iwamura presents a case study of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the role of the Oriental Monk. The Maharishi led the Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement that rose to popularity during the 1960s thanks in large part to its powerful celebrity following.¹ Whereas media portrayals of D.T. Suzuki were often flattering—if not reverent—depictions of the Maharishi were much more ambivalent. Using a variety of magazine articles about the Maharishi, Iwamura deftly unfolds the reasons for their equivocation regarding Mahesh. Although some of the suspicion arose from political concerns—Iwamura notes India’s non-allegiance with communist and democratic states alike during the Cold War—the central concern

of the media was that the Maharishi did not always act according to Western notions of Eastern spiritual gurus. Mahesh was comfortably adept in the West, and this was often the root of the skepticism in the articles. Therefore, when Mahesh stepped outside these prescribed boundaries of behavior for an Oriental Monk, the authors were quick to question his spiritual authority (p. 78). Additionally, photos from the magazine articles capture the Maharishi enjoying his newfound celebrity—thanks to followers like Mia Farrow and The Beatles—and acting suspiciously Western—negotiating over the phone and riding in helicopters. In other words, there was a pervasive belief that there were certain (Western materialist) things of which a “real” Oriental Monk should have no interest, and yet the Maharishi enjoyed them. “All in all, the majority of American reviewers seemed most troubled not necessarily by *what* Mahesh had to say (most of which perplexed commentators), but rather by *how* he achieved popular recognition, namely, through the authorial framework of celebrity” (p. 102, emphasis in original). The legitimacy of an Oriental Monk figure—to be labeled as “real”—is inextricably linked to how well one fits within that Orientalist representation. Iwamura briefly discusses Deepak Chopra to demonstrate how this is as true today as it was four decades ago.

In her last case study Iwamura focuses on the 1970s television show, *Kung Fu* starring David Carradine as Kwai Chang Caine. This is the standout chapter of the book due to Iwamura’s skillful integration of issues regarding class, race, gender, and sexuality into the framework of the Oriental Monk. Caine provides Iwamura with her clearest example of hyperrealism. Despite being a fictional character from a TV show, Caine (and other fictional or fabricated representations of Oriental Monks) collapses the distinction between fiction and reality, “supplementing, if not supplanting, more historical models” (p. 112). That claim is bolstered by the fact that David Carradine was never able to separate himself from the “mark of Caine,” and eventually succumbed to his new “reality” by learning martial arts and spearheading various *Kung Fu* sequels.

Iwamura convincingly argues that *Kung Fu* mediated the significant divide between the burgeoning values of young Americans of the 1970s with the ideals of their older family members. *Kung Fu*, therefore, played to both sides of the divide. It held on to the traditional elements of the Western genre that was popular to the older generation while the protagonist embodied the more progressive ideals of the younger

generation. Iwamura adds that the common themes of human reconciliation and spiritual justice provided the audience a weekly release from the social turbulence of the time. However, whatever racial-ethnic progress is evident in *Kung Fu* is severely undercut by the continued Orientalist representations and implications prominent during the show's run. Although the show highlights minorities as victims of social injustice and racial oppression, it represents these issues as individual issues, never pointing to the systemic issues that condone and perpetuate the oppression. *Kung Fu* preaches a message of pacifism in response to individual injustice in hopes that "the hearts of individuals will automatically lead to a changing society" (p. 135). Yet, instead of understanding the problems of the minority supporting characters, the audience most often identified with Kwai Chang Caine. The biracial protagonist provides the dominant majority white audience a "bridge" to access the foreign, Oriental worldview. Furthermore, it allows Caine the initiative—a right reserved for white males—to take action when necessary. "This authority to judge both the oppressor and the oppressed and to morally engage in justifiable violence becomes the hallmark of the character as ego ideal. Through a Virtual Orientalist frame, Caine not only mirrors the audience's desire for such authority but also confers and reestablishes their claim to such" (p. 143). Before concluding the chapter, Iwamura engages in a brief but fascinating discussion of how *Kung Fu* reflected the United States' renewed fascination with China—the show began in the same year as Nixon's 1972 visit to China. Ultimately, *Kung Fu* maintains American dominance through the pacifism and futility of its wholly Chinese characters.

In the conclusion, Iwamura notes how cultural amnesia allows for the continual immersion in virtual Orientalism of older and younger generations alike. Consumers are often blind to the same arcs and stereotypes—making them substitutable, one Asian stereotype for another—because they address the needs and desires of the dominant majority audience. In an increasingly media-obsessed society countless movies, shows, video games, and cartoons continue to perpetuate Orientalist paradigms. This is especially true of products intended for the youngest audiences. Outrageously popular franchises like *Avatar*: *The Last Airbender* and *Kung Fu Panda* initiate today's youth into the normative doctrines of American exceptionalism and rugged individualism. Like *Kung Fu*, these new franchises straddle generational gaps while ultimately maintaining patriarchal authority.

Iwamura ends the book with a short case study that holds special interest to Buddhist scholars—the Dalai Lama. The case study is a particularly effective way to conclude the book because the Dalai Lama matches all the elements from the book's previous case studies. Like Suzuki, the persona and style of the Dalai Lama have come to embody "Buddhism" for many Westerners. This is obvious in that the Dalai Lama has become the template for graphic representations of the Oriental Monk. Furthermore, the Dalai Lama's numerous celebrity endorsements aid his spiritual and political causes. However, Iwamura stops just short from attributing to the Dalai Lama the same ramifications that resulted from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's celebrity entourage. While this is surely an attempt to sidestep controversy, her silence on this matter seems telling. Similar to *Kung Fu*, the story of the exiled Dalai Lama—newly adopted by the West—is retold through several films where the pacifist Oriental Monk patiently waits for the powerful West to step in and help him seek justice for his oppressed culture. Iwamura saves the most powerful critique of the Dalai Lama as Oriental Monk for last. Through the support of the Dalai Lama and his mission, America reveals its desire to atone for the copious wrongs committed throughout its past and present. Yet, even in this exchange, America takes the upper hand by exerting its hegemonic influence over the oppressed Tibetan culture.

The case study of the Dalai Lama as Oriental Monk is so powerful and devastating that it is surprising that Iwamura chose to tack it on to the end of her conclusion rather than dedicate an entire chapter to it. One can only assume that Iwamura presented this cliffhanger so that she could return to it in the near future. On the other hand, perhaps there was concern that a thorough analysis of the Dalai Lama as an Asian stereotype might be too controversial. These same questions detract from her brief survey of Deepak Chopra. Iwamura goes so far as to posit that Chopra mixes the stereotype of the Oriental Monk with the "American model minority myth," yet chooses not to provide any detail on the suggestion (p. 110). Undoubtedly, there is still plenty of water in the well of *Virtual Orientalism* should Iwamura choose to return.

Virtual Orientalism is a very strong book that lucidly displays how Orientalism is still thriving three decades removed from Edward Said's revolutionary work. Although only one of the three case studies is directly focused on Buddhism, the conclusions drawn throughout

the book apply to Buddhist studies. Scholars of American Buddhism should find the chapter on D.T. Suzuki particularly interesting. Not only does Iwamura chronicle the early days of American fascination with Zen Buddhism, she unveils a new way of analyzing American Buddhism through a concept like fashion. Using fashion as a tool to study American Zen seems especially relevant in a time when “Zen” is invoked to describe everything from baby accessories to cellphone games. Additionally, she uncovers new frontiers for research, such as her use of media to illustrate the differences between Beat Zen and Square Zen that could be juxtaposed to the contention between the Rinzai and Sōtō sects. *Virtual Orientalism* provides both new methods and content for future research in Buddhist studies.

That Americans are consuming virtual representations of Buddhism and Buddhist figures should be both intriguing and frightening to Buddhist studies scholars. These increasingly popular stereotypes push students into our classes, yet they come stuffed with hyperreal notions of Buddhism gleaned from video games, movies, and TV shows. *Virtual Orientalism* exposes the perpetuation of these stereotypes through Iwamura’s compelling analysis that should be accessible material for undergraduates. Moreover, it gives scholars a glimpse at how media is a dynamic tool for future research, and a mandate to constantly reevaluate how we engage our students in class.

NOTES

1. A recent new wave of celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey and Russell Brand have been outspoken about the benefits of Transcendental Meditation.

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The *Pacific World*—Its History

Throughout my life, I have sincerely believed that Buddhism is a religion of peace and compassion, a teaching which will bring spiritual tranquillity to the individual, and contribute to the promotion of harmony and peace in society. My efforts to spread the Buddha's teachings began in 1925, while I was a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley. This beginning took the form of publishing the *Pacific World*, on a bi-monthly basis in 1925 and 1926, and then on a monthly basis in 1927 and 1928. Articles in the early issues concerned not only Buddhism, but also other cultural subjects such as art, poetry, and education, and then by 1928, the articles became primarily Buddhistic. Included in the mailing list of the early issues were such addressees as the Cabinet members of the U.S. Government, Chambers of Commerce, political leaders, libraries, publishing houses, labor unions, and foreign cultural institutions.

After four years, we had to cease publication, primarily due to lack of funds. It was then that I vowed to become independently wealthy so that socially beneficial projects could be undertaken without financial dependence on others. After founding the privately held company, Mitutoyo Corporation, I was able to continue my lifelong commitment to disseminate the teachings of Buddha through various means.

As one of the vehicles, the *Pacific World* was again reactivated, this time in 1982, as the annual journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies. For the opportunity to be able to contribute to the propagation of Buddhism and the betterment of humankind, I am eternally grateful. I also wish to thank the staff of the Institute of Buddhist Studies for helping me to advance my dream to spread the spirit of compassion among the peoples of the world through the publication of the *Pacific World*.

Yehan Numata
Founder, Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai

In Remembrance

In May of 1994, my father, Yehan Numata, aged 97 years, returned to the Pure Land after earnestly serving Buddhism throughout his lifetime. I pay homage to the fact that the *Pacific World* is again being printed and published, for in my father's youth, it was the passion to which he was wholeheartedly devoted.

I, too, share my father's dream of world peace and happiness for all peoples. It is my heartfelt desire that the *Pacific World* helps to promote spiritual culture throughout all humanity, and that the publication of the *Pacific World* be continued.

Toshihide Numata
Chairman, Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai