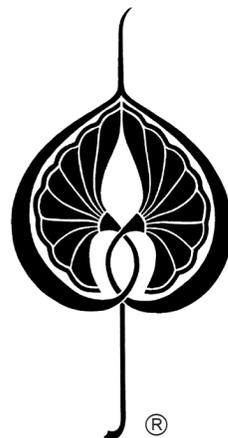


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The Life of the Tang Court Monk Vajrabodhi as Chronicled by Lü Xiang (吕向): South Indian and Śrī Laṅkā Antecedents to the Arrival of the Buddhist Vajrayāna in Eighth-Century Java and China

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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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, 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 Tripitaka Master [Vajrabodhi], [875b] recorded [his biography] as follows:

His Reverence¹⁹ was originally the third son of Īśānavarman (Yishenawamo, 伊舍那靺摩), 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), *Śataśāstra* (*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 LÜ XIANG'S BIOGRAPHY OF VAJRABODHI

There is much reason to pay attention to Lü 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 Lü 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 shichisoēi 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 Nāgapaṭṭinam⁶⁸ 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 Parānavitana 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. Parānavitana 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 *ādipāda* 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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, 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 composed 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, Laṅkā 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 Rājasimha built the fabulous Kailasanāth temple in Kāñcī, the Dharmarāja *maṇḍapa* cave, and the Rājasimheśvara 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 (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-ḍākinijālasaṃvara*;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 *Subāhupariṣṭha*, 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 Lanikā, unique for its execution in Pallava style, was almost certainly the handiwork of Mānavarman or one of his three Kāñci-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, Uddaṇḍapura, 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 Tiriyaṅ 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 Jingsi (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-buddhasamāyogaḍākinijālasaṃvara*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 *Śilāmegha*. 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 *grāmvāsī* 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 *Siddhamātrkā* inscription of the mid-ninth century, found among the ruins of a group of buildings to the north-west of the Twin Ponds (Kuṭṭampokuna) 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 *ārāma*¹⁵⁰ within the precincts of the Abhayagiri and extended his royal patronage to the Kappūra and Uttarāḷha 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

āraṇyavāsī 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 *āraṇyavāsī* 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 Barabuḍur *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 Barabuḍur 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 Barabuḍur 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 Barabuḍur 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 Caṅḍi 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

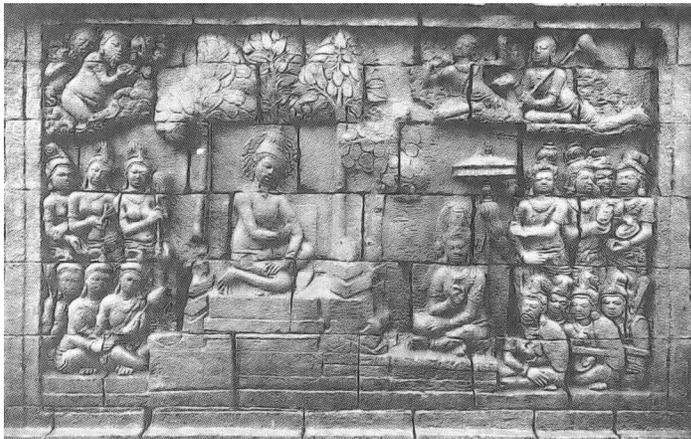


Figure 7. Bhīṣmottarasangheṣa, explicitly identified in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as a *ṛṣi*, depicted on the walls of the *stūpa* at Barabudur. The reader will note that both varieties of the Sewu shrines' lintel motifs are to be seen perched in the clouds in the background; the figures on the Javanese temple 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 untoured 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 (*arṇava*), 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>prasavaṇa</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 Desein, 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 Bhusan 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 *Vairocanaḥhisambodhi-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 *Pīṭhikās* of Śivalingas,” *South Asian Studies* 20, no. 1 [2004]: 1) notes that the *pīṭhikā* 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 (良贲; 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-ien 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 耨尾祥雲,

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 *Pramānakīrtiḥ: 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 *Dvādaśānikāya(-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*, *Dvādaśānikāyaśāstra*, *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 世界聖典刊行協會, 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 Guhyasāmāja 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 Siddhamātrkā-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-jñā*. 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 Kāñci; *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 *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*. Jingangding 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 *Vairocanābhisambodhi-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 Rājasīṃha, 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 **Buddhanetradhāraṇī* (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 “ffut dziaj^h”. 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 *Mahākāruṇika-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 later-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 Hiuen-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 *samāja* of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* 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 Vajraśekhara/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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* 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-saṅgraha: 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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* 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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* itself, suggesting that the Abhayagirivāsins may have had access to a slightly more extensive

version of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*. 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 *Āryasarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhānahṛdayaguhyadhātu-karaṇḍamudrānāmadhāraṇīmahāyāna-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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, 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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* 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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*. 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 Vairocanābhisambodhi 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-Mañjuśrī-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 Mizhunna, 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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*? 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 Laṅkān king or himself served as the Laṅkān king's ambassador, an event that is independently documented in the Tang diplomatic annals and the Tang *History of Foreign Countries*. The Sinhalese king Śilāmegha 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 Laṅkān 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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*; 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-aṣṭottaraśatakanāma* 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 (*Sinhala* [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 composers 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 Laṅkā 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 Laṅkā master Samantabhadra (indeed, Matsunaga, “*Fuhōden* no tenkyo 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 Yugikyō [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 Cabezón [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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, 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 Atiraṇacaṇḍeśvara at Śāluvaṅguppam (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, Atiraṇacaṇḍa, “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.) Hultzsch (“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 Abhayagirivihāra 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 *Mahāvairocanaḥisambodhi-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-

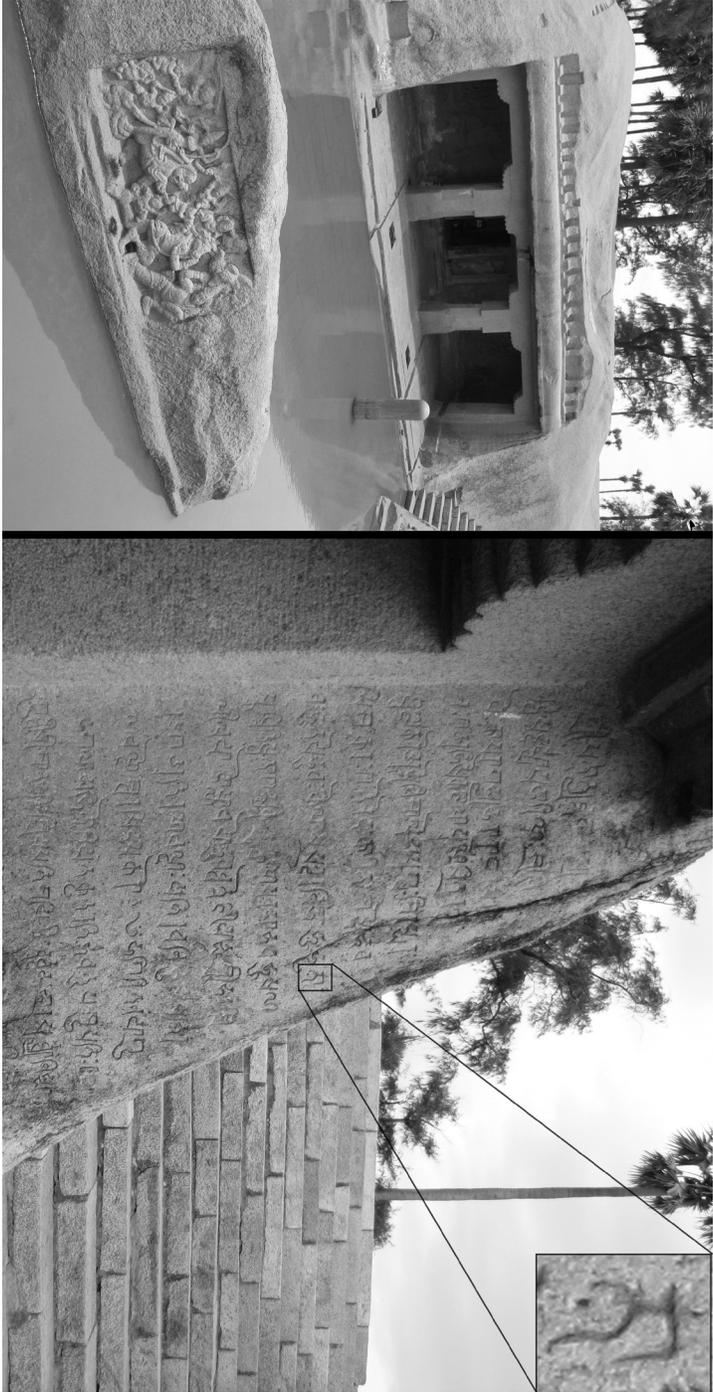


Figure 10. Narasimhavarmar's cave temple "Atrianacandēśvara-Pallava," its flanking inscription executed in the Siddham script, and (inset) a unique formation of the "ta," exhibiting exactly the same half-length post-stroke which distinguishes the Sino-Javanese formation of "ja." Photographs courtesy 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 *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-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 Kuñjarakarnadharmakathana 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 *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*. 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 *Cūlavamsa* 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 Aritṭhapabbata (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 *kaḷand* 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*) *Vāḷiriyavāda* 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, nivāradi peḷa, hā gāṭa pada vivaraṇayekin 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 *Cūlavamsa*, 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 *Cūlavamsa*’s account. In his pillar inscription of Kivulekaḍa in the Kuñcuṭṭu Koraḷe of the North Central Province, Sena I employs the name Salamevanraj and deems himself *Riṭigal-aram-kaarū*, the “Founder of the Riṭigala *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 *Cūlavamsa* 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 Tiriyāya* [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 Mihintaḷe, 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 Mahāyānist 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 Siṅghala.”

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 Siṅghala 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 Lan̄kā" (Hartzell, "Tantric Yoga," 320, translating the colophon which reads "*kr̥tir iyaṃ siṃhalāvasya śrīlan̄kājanmabhūr abhūt tasya jayabhadrākhyah̄ khyātaḥ. kṣāntim̄ kurvvantu viraḍākinyah̄*"; 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 Barabuḍur 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 Barabuḍur 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 Barabuḍur 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 Abhayagirivihāra, four new colleges—Mahindasena, Uttarasena, Vajirasena, 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 *Varṣāgraprchā-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 *āraṇyakas* “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 *paṃsukūlikas* and *āraṇyakas* 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) furthers 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 Sangha, or does not eat food given to the congregation by donors. He sets up a temporized [sic] room for himself. The Sangha 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 *Subāhupariṣṭha* 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 *Subāhupariṣṭha*’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 Abhayagīrivihāra 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/vidyādharas*. 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 *vidyādharas*, 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 *Śrīparamādyā*, 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 Hunlunweng’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."