ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN MEDIAEVAL MARITIME ASIA

The **Nalanda-Sriwijaya Series**, established under the publishing programme of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, has been created as a publications avenue for the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre. The Centre focuses on the ways in which Asian polities and societies have interacted over time. To this end, the series invites submissions which engage with Asian historical connectivities. Such works might examine political relations between states; the trading, financial and other networks which connected regions; cultural, linguistic and intellectual interactions between societies; or religious links across and between large parts of Asia.

The **ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute** (formerly Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) was established as an autonomous organization in 1968. It is a regional centre dedicated to the study of socio-political, security and economic trends and developments in Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic and economic environment. The Institute's research programmes are the Regional Economic Studies (RES, including ASEAN and APEC), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS).

ISEAS Publishing, an established academic press, has issued more than 2,000 books and journals. It is the largest scholarly publisher of research about Southeast Asia from within the region. ISEAS Publishing works with many other academic and trade publishers and distributors to disseminate important research and analyses from and about Southeast Asia to the rest of the world.

ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN MEDIAEVAL MARITIME ASIA

Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons

Edited by
ANDREA ACRI

ISEAS YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE

First published in Singapore in 2016 by ISEAS Publishing
ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute
30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Singapore 119614

E-mail: publish@iseas.edu.sg
Website: http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg

ISEAS Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia : Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons / edited by Andrea Acri.

1. Buddhism—Asia.
I. Acri, Andrea, 1981–

BQ266 E77 2016

ISBN 978-981-4695-08-4 (soft cover)
ISBN 978-981-4695-09-1 (e-book, PDF)

Cover image: c. 9th century seated Vajrapāṇi statue from Central Java; gift of John and Evelyn Kossak, The Kronos Collections, 1984. Photo courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (www.metmuseum.org)

Typeset by Andrea Acri

Printed in Singapore by Mainland Press Pte Ltd

For
Roy Jordaan

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely thank the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, and especially Director Tan Chin Tiong and Deputy Director Ooi Kee Beng, for having generously supported this project. I am also grateful to Derek Heng and Terence Chong who, in their capacities as NSC Heads, facilitated the completion of this volume. I would naturally hope that this book will further stimulate the study of Buddhism, Tantric traditions, and intra-Asian connections at the NSC and, more generally, in Singapore.

A word of thanks is also due to Ng Kok Kiong and Stephen Logan at ISEAS Publishing, who handled the publication process in a most professional manner.

I am most grateful to Rolf Giebel, Arlo Griffiths, Roy Jordaan, Nicolas Revire, Iain Sinclair, and Jeffrey Sundberg for their feedback and/or assistance on several aspects of this volume, including my own Chapter 1 and Chapter 13. I extend my thanks to John Guy, who facilitated the procurement of the image of the Vajrapāṇi statuette kept at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, reproduced on the book cover. A number of indivduals and institutions need to be credited for kindly granting permission to reproduce pictures, drawings, or artworks under their copyright, namely: the American Institute of Indian Studies, the Archaeological Survey of India, Joachim Bautze, Osmund Bopearachchi, Sven Bretfeld, Birgit Breitkopf, Ven. Rangama Chandawimala, Swati Chemburkar, Pia Conti, Véronique Degroot, Michael Flecker, Goh Geok Yian, Alexander Götz, Yves Guichard, John and Susan Huntington, the Leiden University Library, the Leiden Museum of Ethnology, the National Gallery of Victoria, Mori Masahide, Gerd Mevissen, and Ulrich von Schroeder.

Jongwook Kim and Sarah Chay are to be credited for consolidating the general bibliography, while Shaashi Ahlawat, Pritha Mukherjee, and especially Azad Hind Nanda, for helping me to create the Index.

Last but not least, I express my gratitude and appreciation for the contributors who, besides sharing their knowledge, endured with patience the rather long and complex editorial process.

ABBREVIATIONS

AKR = *Amoghapāśakalparāja*
ASI = Archaeological Service of India
APP = *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (*Nayasūtra*)
Chin. = Chinese
CUL = Cambridge University Library
DDB = Digital Dictionary of Buddhism
ed. = editor, edited, edition
EI = *Epigraphia Indica*
EMC = Early Middle Chinese 中古漢語 (http://eastling.org/tdfweb/midage.aspx)
GNP = *Gaṇapatitattva*
GST = *Guhyasamājatantra*
GSMV = *Śrīguhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*
GSVV = *Śrīguhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāviṁśa-tividhi*
J. = Japanese
JS = *Japasūtra*
JTS = *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書
K = Khmer inscription (as per Cœdès' numeration)
KS = *Kriyāsaṅgraha*
KSP = *Kriyāsaṅgrahapañjikā*
LOr = Leiden Oriental (manuscript)
MDJ = *Mikkyō daijiten* 密教大辞典 → Mikkyō Gakkai (1983)
MJ = *Mikkyō jiten* 密教辞典 → Sawa 1981
MMK = *Mañjuśrī-* (or *Mañjuśriya-*)*mūlakalpa*
MMoA = Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (http://met-museum.org)
MVA = *Mahāvairocanābhisaṁbodhi-sūtra* or *-tantra* [also: *VAT*]
SDP = *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana*
SHK = *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan*
SHKAS = *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānan Advayasādhana*
SHKM = *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānan Mantranaya*
Skt = Sanskrit
STTS = *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*
SV = *Sarvavajrodaya*
T = *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經
Tōh. = Tōhoku Catalogue nos. of the Derge Canon
TC = Tibetan Canon
tr. = translator, translated, translation
VAT = *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhitantra* [also: *MVA*]
VŚ = *Vajraśekhara*
XTS = *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書

CONVENTIONS

Romanization of Asian languages follows the systems commonly used in the contemporary scholarly community, viz. (unaccented) Pinyin for Chinese, revised Hepburn for Japanese, Wylie for Tibetan, etc. Sanskrit follows IAST, with the variants included in the international standard 'ISO 15919:2001 Information and documentation—Transliteration of Devanagari and related Indic scripts into Latin characters'; the same standard, with some upgrades, is used for the romanization of Old Javanese (cf. Acri and Griffiths 2014). For East Asian languages, traditional unsimplified characters are used; modern simplified characters are provided in the bibliography for the names and works of scholars, as per the original sources. Reconstructions of (doubtful) Sanskrit words and proper names are preceded by an asterisk (e.g., *Maṇicintana). A general, unified bibliography is provided at the end of this volume, while primary sources in Asian languages are listed at the end of each chapter. Common abbreviations, such as titles and editions of primary sources, are noted in each chapter as well as in a unified section on p. xi. The copyright for the reproduction of images has been sought whenever possible. In cases where this was not possible, common guidelines established for the fair use of images that are intended solely for scholarly and research purposes have been followed.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Esoteric Buddhist Networks along the Maritime Silk Routes, 7th–13th Century AD

ANDREA ACRI

In their introduction to a recent special issue of *History of Religions* devoted to (Esoteric) 'Buddhist Visual Culture', Jinah Kim and Rob Linrothe (2014) encouraged 'a geographically wide framing of almost every question that can be asked about Esoteric Buddhism'. They argued:

> Yunnan, Java, Japan, and the Tibetan regions of the Indian Himalayas can be as important as Bodh Gaya, Chang'an, or Lhasa, and an overly narrow focus limits the prospects for fruitful comparison. The *Ekādaśamukhadhāraṇī*, for example, seems to have found purchase from Gandhāra to Nara, Gilgit to Palembang. It is the deprovincializing and simultaneous decentering of any particular locale and any particular type of evidence (texts, epigraphical records, or visual art) that must occur in order for the study of Esoteric Buddhism to generate greater insights. (p. 2)

Espousing an analogous wide-ranging perspective, this volume studies the genesis, development and circulation of Esoteric (or Tantric) Buddhism throughout the vast geoenvironmental area that may be defined as 'Maritime Asia', from the 7th to the 13th centuries AD. In doing so, it upholds a trans-regional approach laying emphasis on the mobile networks of human agents ('Masters'), textual corpora ('Texts'), and visual/architectural models and artefacts ('Icons') through which Esoteric Buddhist discourses and practices spread far and wide across Asia. This extensive Introduction proposes several issues for consideration in surveying recent scholarly literature and in contextualizing the religious, historical, and socio-political dynamics—intervening on a local/regional as well as cosmopolitan/supralocal scale—that shaped these networks as they moved across different geographical and cultural contexts.

Maritime Asia, encompassing 'Monsoon Asia'[1] as its core, spans the eastern littorals of the Indian Subcontinent (and their hinterlands) in the west to the South China Sea littorals (and their hinterlands), the Philippine islands, Korea and Japan in the east;[2] its geographical fulcrums are the littorals of peninsular and mainland Southeast Asia, and the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago. Spreading across the superimposed geopolitical boundaries of modern nation states, and transcending such equally arbitrary and historically constructed geographical divisions as South/Southeast/East Asia, this largely maritime expanse was influenced by similar environmental and climatic factors, such as the seasonal monsoons. Being the theatre of circulation of people, goods, languages and ideas through sea routes since time immemorial, Maritime Asia may be theorized as forming—just like Eurasia—one interconnected network, and arguably even an integral cultural ecumene with a shared background of human, intellectual, and environmental history.

During the period that concerns us here, which is defined by way of convention as 'mediaeval',[3]

1. What Reynolds (2006: x) calls the 'geoenvironmental metaphor of Monsoon Asia' inspired early 20th-century French savants, such as Paul Mus, Sylvain Lévi, Jean Przyluski, and George Cœdès; see in particular Mus 1933.

2. Inner continental (North) India and China, Tibet, as well as Korea and Japan may be considered as 'appendices' or 'edges' of Monsoon Asia, linked to the sea- and land-based networks of trade, cultural, and religious exchange that collectively shaped Maritime Asia. Similarly, the Eurasian continent may be conceptualized as 'core', and the Mediterranean and North Africa as 'edges' (Wang Gungwu in Ooi 2015: 121).

3. This is the widely used periodization referring to the post-Gupta period of South Asian history (especially as per

Maritime Asia may be conceptualized as a 'socio-spatial grouping' or world region (Lewis and Wigen 1997) constituted by a pattern of ever-changing relations dominated by basic underlying affinities. This region comprised a web of coastal and inland polities connected to each other through a network of cosmopolitan port-cities across the Bay of Bengal/Indian Ocean and the South China Sea/Western Pacific Ocean, forming a 'single ocean' (Wolters 1999: 44–45) or, rather, a 'Two-Ocean Mediterranean' (Wang Gungwu in Ooi 2015: 57–93). Following an increasing recognition of the predominant role played by the sea routes (the so-called 'Maritime Silk Roads')[4] in shaping premodern intra-Asian connectivity, it seems appropriate to study both regional and cosmopolitan manifestations of Esoteric Buddhism, not just on their own terms but also for their participation in complex circulatory processes involving economic/mercantile, diplomatic, and religious networks moving across the 'Southern Seas'.[5]

Cutting across the natural boundaries and barriers of continental topography, sea-based routes formed a network of conduits that led to the formation of a mediaeval global Buddhist Asia. The Indian Ocean trade network emerged as a 'largely coherent structure, and has been a space which served as a huge stratum connecting the various kingdoms and cultures adjacent to it, causing interchanges in all possible fields and certainly mutual influences' (Kauz 2010: 1). By the middle of the 7th century AD, factors such as a radical expansion of commercial maritime routes connecting South with East Asia contributed significantly to the exchange not only of mercantile goods but also, and more importantly, of ideas, beliefs and ritual practices, and artistic styles.

DEFINING ESOTERIC BUDDHISM: ITS GENESIS, AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ŚAIVISM

Esoteric Buddhism is a phenomenon of enormous importance for the religious and cultural history of Asia. Esoteric Buddhism favoured the transmission of cults and philosophical ideas, ritual technologies, artistic motifs, material culture, political paradigms, and scientific notions across the Buddhist ecumene; at the same time, it partook of, and had an impact on, the imaginaries and related practices characterizing the Sanskritic continuum that shaped many sociocultural contexts in Maritime Asia and its bordering regions from the 7th to the 13th century and beyond. Yet its genesis, development and circulation remain poorly understood.[6] The very terms 'Esoteric/esoteric Buddhism' and 'tantric/Tantric Buddhism' (or 'Tantra') are still contested,[7] and none of the emic labels of Mantranaya ('Method of

Davidson 2002; cf. 2015: 372–73). I extend the application of 'mediaeval' to the wider area of Maritime Asia, as done by Sprengard and Ptak (2004: vii), and also by Wong and Heldt (2014: 16) with respect to China, 'as a gesture to a more global history'; compare Abu-Lughod's (1989) and Pollock's (2006) application of the term to the Eurasian world.

4. Sen (2014a: 39) argues that the labels (Maritime/Overland) 'Silk Road(s)/Route(s)' are misnomers, for 'Silk from China was neither the earliest nor the most commonly traded commodity. The early history of maritime trade indicates the prevalence of beads, precious stones, and pearls as the main merchandise; during the later periods, bulk goods, such as incense, pepper, spices, and porcelain dominated the trading activity' (cf. Whitfield 2007: 208–10). However, since the terms 'Silk Road(s)/Route(s)' have become part of the modern global parlance, I will not refrain from using them here.

5. Advocating a maritime focus in the study of intra-Asian connectivity, Ray (2013: 13) rightly notes that 'though the seas have been important for the five millennia of human history, they are also the most glossed over in historical discourse, which has tended to focus on predominantly land-based national histories'. For a similar critique against a land-based approach in the spread of Buddhism across Asia, see Sen (2014a: 40); on the fundamentally interlinked nature of overland and maritime routes, see Whitfield 2007: 206–8.

6. Authoritative histories of Esoteric Buddhism are remarkably few. Recent works focusing mainly on the Indian Subcontinent and Tibet include those by Wedemeyer (2013), Sanderson (2009, esp. 70–243, which also encompasses Southeast Asia, and 1994), Davidson (2002), and Tribe (2000); cf. also the now classic, yet still seminal, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* by Snellgrove (1987). For studies focusing on Central and East Asia, see my n. 31.

7. For an overview of the problems and a survey of the relevant secondary literature, see especially McBride 2004; Orzech, Sørensen and Payne 2011: 3–10; Lehnert 2012: 247, n. 2. A promising shift in focus from the etic terms used to describe the traditions to the actual content of ritual practice may be found in the text-historical study of early Mantranaya literature by Shinohara (2014).

Mantra'), Vajrayāna ('Diamond/Thunderbolt Way') and Mantrayāna ('Way of Mantra')—though legitimate and attested in primary textual sources—can be used as a single catch-all label for the diverse array of strands, orientations, and historical trends of Esoteric Buddhism.[8]

In dealing with a broad range of Buddhist traditions over an extensive geographical area and timespan, this volume adopts the descriptor 'Esoteric Buddhism' widely employed in contemporary Buddhological scholarship—being fully cognizant of the fact that any etic catch-all category unavoidably entails some level of essentialization and generalization. While this general label in many instances may be considered as virtually coterminous with 'Tantric Buddhism',[9] it also extends to the whole gamut of 'hidden' or 'secret' texts, practices and teachings from around the 4th to the 10th century and later that characterized certain orientations of Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially in East and Southeast Asian contexts.

Admittedly, it is often difficult to reduce or pin down Esoteric Buddhism exclusively to specific and distinct textual corpora, lineages, or 'schools', for many religious, social and institutional phenomena occurring in lay milieux across the Buddhist, Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, and Jaina divide since the early mediaeval period were increasingly dominated by Tantric orientations. These orientations, which were not in each and every instance 'esoteric', 'secret', or initiatory, may include (e.g.) ritual violence, transgressive devotional practices, the use of mantras and magical formulas (for both this-worldly and other-worldly purposes), sorcery, possession and exorcism, and different genres of sacred performance. Thus, by applying a polythetic approach, one may argue that some of the distinctive features of elite Esoteric Buddhist milieux penetrated—through some sort of 'trickle-down effect'—the extended social fabric; conversely, many 'popular' cults and practices influenced high-cultural/textual manifestations of Esoteric Buddhism.[10]

A key area of contention has focused on whether there was a clearly defined and self-consciously distinctive stream of Esoteric Buddhism that developed in the Indian Subcontinent in the first few centuries of the Common Era that preceded the more markedly Mantranayic/Vajrayānic developments from the 7th century onwards. According to

8. Vajrayāna, first attested in the late 7th century (Tribe 2000: 196), refers to a specific strand of *vajra*-centred Mantranaya Buddhism, while Mantranaya is a more neutral term encompassing a variety of (early) Esoteric Buddhist traditions; Mantrayāna is a rather late usage (11th century AD, see de Jong 1984: 92–93). Kapstein (2001: 236) differentiates the philosophical and exegetical literature on Vajrayāna, or 'the developed Tantrism that becomes prominent only during the last few centuries of Indian Buddhist history', from the practice of *mantranaya*, 'as it was conducted in the monastic universities in India during the mid-first millennium'. To Linrothe (1999: 58), the term 'Tantric Buddhism' 'may be used to designate within Mahāyāna the ritualized use of *dhāraṇī* and certain imagery shared with more developed forms of Esoteric Buddhism'. Orzech (2006a: 148), discussing a Song Buddhist catalogue of AD 1013, notes that all texts are classified as belonging to the Hīnayāna, the Mahāyāna, or the 'esoteric portion of the Mahāyāna Scriptural Collection' (大乘經藏秘密部); this fact suggests that '"esoteric" (秘密) was a well-understood and frequently employed taxonomic term and a distinct subdivision within the Mahāyāna'.

9. I consider the descriptor 'Tantric Buddhism', and the related adjectives 'pre-/proto-Tantric', as legitimate alternatives to 'Esoteric Buddhism', for a number of reasons. First, the word *tantra* is firmly established in Buddhism (and Śaivism) by the 8th century: for instance, *tantra* designates texts such as the *Susiddhikara* and *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhi* in Sanskritic discourse, and Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasiddhi* (ca. 750–80) refers to numerous Buddhist Tantras; moreover, many of the beliefs and practices found in the 'mature' Tantric scriptural corpus had already been around since at least the 5th century. The unwillingness of many modern scholars to adopt this descriptor may reflect a (subconscious) tendency to avoid the label 'Tantric' because of its (projected) monothetic association with radical, eroticized, and transgressive forms of Buddhism. On the other hand, the cognate label 'Tantric Śaivism' is widely accepted, even to indicate the mainstream, 'soft core' currents of the Mantramārga, such as the Śaiva Siddhānta.

10. For instance, the striking similarities shared by some (both premodern and contemporary) ritual dances and performances in Tibet and Nepal (i.e., *caryānṛtya, bhairab naach*), Bali (*topeng pajegan* and the masks Sidha Karya, Barong, and Rangda), and Japan (*sanbasō* dance and the mask Okina) have been ascribed to a common Tantric Buddhist source by Coldiron (2005: 240–44) and Emigh (1996); cf. Acri 2014. Wedemeyer (2013: 257–58, n. 130) considers performances like the *caryā* dance as the historical descendants of earlier Tantric ceremonies dominated by the ritual logic and 'elite ideology' of esoteric fringe practitioners.

one representative scholarly opinion, Esoteric Buddhism 'evolved gradually, becoming a distinctive stream within the late Mahāyāna closely connected with *dhāraṇī* practice' (Orzech, Sørensen and Payne 2011: 6).[11] Even though the use of magical formulas (*dhāraṇī*, *mantra*, *vidyā*) is not per se a marker of Esoteric Buddhism (as these formulas were widely used in exoteric, mainstream Buddhist milieux for this-worldly purposes), *dhāraṇī*-practice may account for the genesis of early Mantranaya Buddhism within the Mahāyāna, emphasizing as it does the efficacy of mantras for soteriological purposes; over time, the practice of reciting spells became more complex, incorporating elements of image worship and visualization (Shinohara 2014: 194). Thus, many strands of Esoteric Buddhism may be seen as special trends or 'fashions' of (esoteric or secret, and therefore superior) ritualism, magic and meditation, which 'encompassed a variety of different sub-movements and doctrinal and ritual innovations within (primarily Mahāyāna, or bodhisattva-oriented) Buddhism, beginning in the early-mid first-millennium' (Wedemeyer 2013: 9–10). As such, Mantranaya—as opposed to the exoteric Pāramitānaya—was often perceived as an esoteric salvific path within the Mahāyāna. Its advocates regarded this path as superior, and in any event faster and easier, than other Buddhist paths.

A distinguishing feature of mediaeval Esoteric Buddhism was initiation (*abhiṣeka*). The practitioners of this path—both monastic and lay—underwent an initiation ceremony bestowed by a master in order to pursue a fast process of liberation, or fulfill mundane goals, with the assistance of psycho-physical techniques (*sādhana*, *upāya*) such as yogic meditation and visualization, *maṇḍala*s, mantras, magico-ritual procedures, and worship of (Esoteric) Buddhist icons. Esoteric Buddhism, and especially the Vajrayāna strand, had in its central practices and discourses an element of initiation by a *vajrācārya*, transgression, empowerment, divinization, worship of wrathful deities, and secrecy.[12]

Esoteric Buddhism shared significant common elements with Tantric Śaivism, to the extent that the two religions participated in an interdependence of discourse in such disparate domains as philosophy, soteriology, ritual, and iconography. This complex phenomenon of dialectic influence and interchange has triggered a wide range of etic interpretations. While the formative phase of the non-dual and transgressive Vajrayāna Buddhism and its foundational texts (labeled Yoganiruttaratantras in the Tibetan tradition) is still a matter of debate as only a fraction of 'proto-Tantric' Buddhist (and Śaiva) textual corpora have survived for us, scholars generally agree on the view that the whole canon was the result of a synthesis with a corpus of Sanskrit texts of antinomian character called Yoginītantras or Ḍākinītantras, which began to appear in South Asia by the 7th or 8th century. Sanderson (1994, 2001), hypothesizing a direct influence from Śaiva milieux of the Mantramārga ('Way of Mantra') where mantra-related salvific and/or mundane practices rose to prominence during the 6th and 7th centuries, argues that the Yoginītantras were originally of Śaiva persuasion, and reflected the transgressive rhetoric and practices of such marginal groups as the Kāpālikas, the ash-smeared, skull-bearing devotees of the terrifying Bhairava/Mahākāla. Conversely, Davidson (2002) maintains that in the early *siddha* milieux of composition and circulation of such corpora the boundaries between Buddhism and Śaivism

11. Prior to the development of a self-conscious esoteric Mahāyāna movement distinct from the exoteric Mahāyāna, the *dhāraṇī*-texts that were translated into Chinese from the 4th century onward formed the matrix out of which the Vidyādhara Collection (*Chimingzhou zang* 持明咒藏; *Vidyādharapiṭaka*) was compiled during the mid-7th century (see Gray 2009: 2–3, Davidson 2002: 24, and the seminal study by Hodge, 1992; cf. Shinohara 2014). The *Vidyādharapiṭaka* itself was perceived as the precursor of later extensive Tantric collections such as the *Vajraśekhara/Māyājāla* (see Dalton 2005: 122). These prototypical esoteric varieties of Buddhism may already have been in existence by the 5th and 6th centuries, as suggested among other things by the iconography of early cultic sites in Maharashtra. Early Śaiva (proto-)Tantric scriptures, such as the core of the *Niśvāsatattvasaṁhitā* (prob. AD 450–550), attest to the same stock of beliefs and practices—*vetāla*-rituals, possession, initiation, and the acquisition of supernatural powers through mantras, elixirs, or magical procedures—that are also found in slightly later Buddhist texts, such as the *Mañjuśriyamūlakalpa*.

12. For a description of 'eight significant features of Tantric Buddhism', see Tribe 2000: 197–202.

were not clear-cut, and the vectors were subaltern individuals or (tribal) ethnic groups living at the margins of the Brahmanical social order. Another position, advocated by Seyfort Ruegg (1964, 2008), posits an early 'pan-Indian religious substratum' or common cultic stock that would ex hypothesi form the endogenous common source and cultural background from which both Śaiva and Buddhist traditions derived, and to which they ultimately owe their shared common elements.

Consolidation and spread of Esoteric Buddhism: 'royal' vs. 'mercantile' paradigms

A widespread scholarly opinion views the development of Esoteric Buddhism as an eminently royal affair. According to Ronald Davidson (2002: 23), one of the main exponents of this paradigm, 'esoteric Buddhism has a very strong political element which is occluded in the modern Buddhist apologia'. To Davidson, Esoteric Buddhist ideology, even the monastic one, is a mirror of Indian mediaeval life (2002: 115):

> When the Mantrayāna becomes culturally important outside India, it is principally through the agency of official patronage, either aristocratic or imperial. Given these circumstances, it would be extraordinary if the military and political culture of early medieval India had not shaped esoteric institutions, doctrines, literature, rituals, and iconography, at least to some degree.… Esoteric Buddhism is the form of medieval Buddhism that internalized, appropriated, reaffirmed, and rearranged the structures most closely associated with the systems of power relations, ritual authentication, aesthetics, gift-giving, clan associations, and sense of dominion that defined post-Gupta Indian polities.

According to Davidson, what ensured the consolidation and expansion of Esoteric Buddhism was its alignment to state interests, effected through monastic agents who entered the royal courts and secured the support of the elites, often competing with the ritual specialists of what was the most popular religion and ritual technology of their time over large portions of South and Southeast Asia: Śaivism. Thus, the relationship between Esoteric Buddhist ritual specialists and royal elites seems to be coterminous with one that existed between Brahmanical *purohita*s and the courts they served.[13]

By acting as royal chaplains, religious preceptors (*rājaguru*), subduers of demons,[14] magicians, thaumaturges, and even courtly advisors, Buddhist monks whose ritual practice adhered to 'esoteric' traditions provided warring monarchs with rituals geared towards the obtainment of what was most sought after by them: power. Through the invocation of powerful entities, the proffering of mantras and spells, and the enactment of royal initiations, those masters promised kings the safeguarding of their kingdoms, victory against their enemies, invincibility in battle,[15] and indeed divinization of their body (see Flood 2006: 11). White (2012: 165) captures the translocal dynamics involved in this process by noting that besides trade, warfare, and political expansion, the contacts and exchanges favouring the spread of (Indic) adstratal Esoteric Buddhist (and Tantric Śaiva) traditions took place at the hands of religious and magico-ritual spe-

13. Linguistic evidence supporting this inextricable connection between politics and religious/ritual ideology is provided by the use of terms pertaining to the ritual sphere in the mediaeval Indic political domain (and vice versa), such as the important terms *maṇḍala* or *mantrin* ('possessor of [secret] spells': Davidson 2002: 143–44); the latter, indicating the king's counselors, has remained in use in modern Hindi, Indonesian, and Malay with the meaning of 'minister [of state]' (compare the Chinese and English 'mandarin': see Strickmann 1996).

14. On the importance of demonology and 'exorcism' as vectors of transregional transfer and adoption of Buddhism (and Śaivism), see Strickmann 1996: 149, White 2012: 150, and Giebel, this volume.

15. To be sure, the employment of monks in warfare is not exclusive to this period: witness the Chinese military campaigns that started in the 4th century (Sen 2003: 36). However, the Esoteric Buddhist signature of the martial rituals carried out by Amoghavajra at the Tang court is miles apart from the 'true Buddhism' claimed by Xuanzang, who turned down an offer by Emperor Taizong to accompany him in his Korean campaign (ibid.: 37). Much has been written on the topic of 'war magic' and Esoteric Buddhism in India and beyond (besides the contributions by Acri, Bade and Goble in this volume, see Sinclair 2014, White 2012, Sanderson 2004, Davidson 2002, and Lokesh Chandra 1992a, 1992b).

cialists enjoying royal or imperial patronage—'a prime example being the battlefield sorcerers whose magical devices and counter-devices were considered to be choice weapons in battle'. Through rituals, whether internalized or enacted, these agents offered the courtly elites an easy path to the mainstream Buddhist ideal of personal salvation on the one hand, and to the Tantric ideal of divinization on the other. By the same token, they ensured a broader support for their cause by providing lay householders with equally powerful means—ritual, magical, meditative, and devotional—to achieve both their mundane and supramundane goals.

An alternative view lays emphasis on traders—who were among the original propagators of Buddhism in its early stage—as the main agents of the dissemination of 'Maritime Buddhism' across Asia (see, e.g., Bopearachchi 2014, Dayalan 2013, Lancaster n.d.).[16] While the success of Buddhism (in both its exoteric and esoteric forms) overseas has been too often simplistically perceived as the unique result of economic and social forces connected to a mercantile class-ideology, characterized by an inherent dynamism and opposed to a 'static' Brahmanism, it is undeniable that lay householders active in trade, crafts, and warfare played a role in patronizing and spreading—e.g., through pilgrimage, travel, or migration—Esoteric Buddhist cults.[17] Hiram Woodward, criticizing Davidson's model for failing to make a place for the 'link' between courts and monasteries on the one hand, and between monasteries and society at large on the other (2004: 332), questions Davidson's assumption that 'a factor in the rise of the Mantrayāna or of institutional esoterism … was the loss of mercantile support and the rise in official patronage' (2004: 353; cf. Davidson 2002: 82–83, 167). Trying to bridge the gap between the 'royal' and 'mercantile' model, Woodward rightly argues that

> the turn to Mantrayāna in Java in the 780s and 790s is hard to square with such a notion, as is ninth-century Southeast Asian support for a monastery in Nālandā. Only merchant networks could have sustained the contacts with Bengal and Sri Lanka that made possible the movement of monks and the transfer of texts. It is hard to see why the territorial and defensive aspects of the Mantrayāna, so connected in Davidson's mind with official patronage, need be thought incompatible with merchant values. Indeed, bonds among merchants in widely separated ports could well have been enhanced by beliefs in secret codes, despite differences in language and ethnicity, much as a cluster of mandalas exhibits alternate paths to a single unified goal.

Recent scholarship has unveiled the multi-directional connections existing between Buddhist centres, tied to each other by overlapping networks of relations that were religious as much as economic, diplomatic, and political in nature.[18] Therefore, to understand the establishment (and disruption) of complex networks, an eclectic, rather than 'single model', approach is required. To better grasp such a multifaceted, trans-regional phenomenon as the patterns of Buddhist transmission across Maritime Asia, which was shaped by socio-political, economic, and perhaps even environmental factors, one may try to apply, as was done by Neelis (2011: 10) with respect to South, Central, and East Asia, a 'networks approach' or 'networks model'. As Neelis (2011: 319) persuasively puts it:

> Multidirectional movement by agents of Buddhist transmission … who selectively left traces of their journeys in literary texts, inscriptions, and material artifacts indicates more complex patterns of transmission than an oversimplified flow of influence in a single direction along a fixed route. As they consolidated multifaceted links between religious, economic, and political nodes along multiple

16. By contrast, Sen (2014a: 42–43) discusses evidence of 'antagonistic encounters' between Buddhist monks and (Hindu?) merchants plying the overland and maritime commercial routes.

17. See Szántó 2012: 34–35 on the readership of the *Catuṣpīṭhatantra*, and his n. 47 for a summary of Pāla evidence of Buddhist patronage by members of the above-mentioned social groups; cf. Mishra 2011 on the 'vertical' spread of Vajrayāna in mediaeval Odisha (formerly: Orissa).

18. On the intersection between trade, diplomacy, the emergent Esoteric Buddhist networks in the 7th century, and their integration in the wider Asian Buddhist world in the 8th century, see Sen 2003; cf. Hall 2010 on the (inter-) regional trade networks of insular Southeast Asia in the 9th and 10th centuries, in the light of archaeological evidence from shipwrecks and epigraphy.

> lines of communication, they formed their own parallel exchange networks, thus enhancing possibilities for cross-cultural contact and transfer.… It remains to be seen if trade networks played comparative roles as catalysts for long-distance transmission in other Buddhist geographical and historical contexts that were beyond the scope of this inquiry: Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.

This approach individuates the nodes, conduits, and hubs that facilitated the dynamic processes of exchange, thus going beyond the metaphors of cultural 'flows' and 'influences' that have so far characterized the scholarly discourse. To fully appreciate how religious, mercantile, and diplomatic networks acted as catalysts for transmission of Esoteric Buddhism far and wide across Asia, it is necessary to adopt a geographically wider 'Maritime Asian' perspective, and take into account the maritime vectors linking together the nodal centres in the Buddhist ecumene.

PLACING ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN MEDIAEVAL MARITIME ASIA

As is shown by scriptural, epigraphic, and art historical materials, esoteric cults, doctrines, and ritual technologies flourished across the mediaeval Buddhist ecumene. *Vajra*-accoutrements, icons of Esoteric Buddhist deities, and *dhāraṇī*s based on Esoteric Buddhist texts in Sanskrit have been recovered across a vast swathe of both the continental landmass and island territory of Maritime Asia.[19] Networks of Buddhist clerics of different ethnicities adhering to novel Tantric developments began to emerge in the 7th century in disparate locales, moving along the maritime routes connecting South, East, and Southeast Asia. Those sea routes, established over the centuries—if not millennia—by a steady flow of traders and seafarers, were also plied by pilgrims and religious specialists who crossed oceans and lands in search of esoteric knowledge, rare Sanskrit scriptures, relics and icons, powerful spells, and rituals of maṇḍalic initiation (*abhiṣeka*) imparted by renowned *ācārya*s, as well as in search of political sponsors.

Esoteric Buddhism coexisted in many contexts with varieties of mainstream exoteric Mahāyāna or Pali Buddhism(s). Gaining momentum in the 8th century, in what could indeed be described as a 'Tantric turn', it eventually became a nearly pan-Asian phenomenon. Its expansion was initially driven by a handful of exceptional masters endowed with a remarkably cosmopolitan vision and 'international' ambitions, who gained the support of the ruling elites of their time. Kings who either sponsored or granted direct recognition as state religion to Esoteric Buddhism during its 'first wave'[20] of pan-Asian expansion belonged to such prominent, and roughly coeval, Asian dynasties as the early Candras (r. ca. 850–1050) and Pālas (r. ca. 750–1199) in the northeastern Indian Subcontinent, and the early Bhauma-Karas in Odisha (r. ca. 825–950); the Yarlung dynasty in Tibet (r. ca. 618–842); the early Second Lambakaṇṇas in Sri Lanka (from the late 7th to the mid-9th century, up to Sena I); the Śailendras and cognate Śrīvijayan rulers in Java, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula (r. ca. 7th–13th centuries);[21] the Chinese Tangs (r.

19. Evidence from insular areas, which is rarely accounted for in studies on Esoteric Buddhism, has been found in Sri Lanka (see Mudiyanse 1967; Chandawimala 2013), the Maldives (see Gippert 2004, 2005), the Indonesian Archipelago (see Nihom 1994, 1998a; Sundberg 2003; Kandahjaya 2009, this volume; Griffiths 2011b, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c; Griffiths, Revire and Sanyal 2013; Cruijsen, Griffiths and Klokke 2012; Long 2014; Hall 2010; Miksic, this volume), and the Philippines (see Orlina 2012).

20. Linrothe (1999) has elaborated a schematic model encompassing three phases of Esoteric Buddhism on the basis of the iconographical and doctrinal developments carried by each one of them. While pointing out that some of the stages after the 8th century may be contemporaneous and contiguous, he argues that 'Phase One dominates the period between the late sixth to the eighth centuries, Phase Two presides from roughly the eighth to the late tenth century and Phase Three from the late tenth century through to the twelfth' (ibid.: 13). Although this model may retain its usefulness when analysing wider-ranging historical or soteriological aspects of Esoteric Buddhism, here I would rather use the term 'wave' as a metaphor for the spread of esoteric fashions far and wide across Asia, and identify two main waves: the first from around the 7th to the early 10th century, the second from around the late 10th to the 13th century. Each of these waves appears to have been characterized by new religious networks, socio-political configurations, scriptural canons, and iconographic fashions.

21. The issue as to whether the Śailendra Buddhist kings belonged to a distinct dynasty—of either Javanese, South-

618–907), especially under Emperors Xuanzong (r. 712–56) and Daizong (r. 762–79); the later Silla dynasty in Korea (r. 661–935); and the Japanese imperial dynasty in the Heian period (r. 794–1185). Having suffered a sudden decline in royal support, if not outright persecution, in locales as disparate as Tibet, Sri Lanka, Central Java, and China in the middle of the 9th century,[22] Esoteric Buddhism picked up momentum again in the 11th century (the 'second wave') and remained vital through the 12th and 13th centuries across much of Maritime Asia. Major royal figures of that period who elected Esoteric Buddhism as their personal and official cult, or supported Tantric rituals as a means of achieving their political ends, are Jayavarman VII in Cambodia (r. ca. 1181–1220), Kṛtanagara in East Java (r. 1268–92), and Kublai Khan in China (r. 1260–94). Having virtually died out in the Indian Subcontinent by the late 13th century, it continued to live or even thrive—in its localized adaptations—until the 15th century in Java and Sumatra (e.g., under King Ādityavarman, r. ?–1375), and to the present day in Nepal, Tibet, Bali, and Japan.

Early, if rare, Esoteric Buddhist vestiges are found in Western India, as evidenced e.g. by imagery from Buddhist caves in the Western Deccan, such as Ellorā (Malandra 1996), Aurangabad (Brancaccio 2010) and Kānherī, where Tārās and (esoteric) Avalokiteśvaras are found as early as the 6th–7th centuries (Pandit 2015; Bopearachchi 2014: 164–67).[23] By the 9th century, a Buddhist monastery hosting a famous *caitya* and a Tārā temple was located in Mahābimba in Koṅkana (the Konkan coast of western India); the well-known illustrated Nepalese manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* dated AD 1015 (CUL ms. Add. 1643, f. 193r), presenting a visual documentation of divinities and renowned centres across Buddhist Asia, mentions Mahāviśva (a corruption of Mahābimba?) as the seat of a famous Lokanātha (cf. below, n. 57; Szántó 2016: 2), and links a significant number of other Buddhist sites to Koṅkana (see Kim 2014: 48).

It is generally acknowledged that major centres of Esoteric Buddhism (and of Tantrism in general) were found in the northeastern areas of the Indian Subcontinent, roughly corresponding to modern Bihar (itself the cradle of Buddhism since the time of the Buddha), West Bengal, and Bangladesh. Bihar was the seat of such prestigious institutions of Buddhist learning as Nālandā, Vikramaśīla, Somapura, and Uddaṇḍapura (Otantapurī), where esoteric fashions seem to have become popular from the late 8th through the 12th century;[24] the whole northeastern region hosted major masters of Mantranaya and Vajrayāna Buddhism, and several Tantric works stem from there.

It is now increasingly recognised that Odisha (Oḍra) played a significant role in the formation of Esoteric Buddhism and its spread to Southeast Asia. This region, part of which was formerly known across the Indic world as 'Kaliṅga', boasted important monastic centres and sacred pilgrimage sites, such as Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, and Lalitagiri, which were connected to the maritime networks via the

east Asian, or even South Asian origin—that reigned in Java up to ca. AD 850, and was followed by a Javanese line of Śaiva kings, has been the object of a longstanding controversy among scholars; among the supporters of a dual-dynasty theory are Jordaan (2006, and Jordaan and Colless 2009) and Long (2014), while Sundberg (2011, this volume), along with the majority of archaeologists and historians of premoden Java, opt for a single-dynasty theory. As this introduction is not the right place to discuss this complex issue in detail, suffice it to say that in Java from the mid-9th century we note a prevalence of royal support for Śaivism instead of Buddhism, and no more mentions of Śailendra monarchs, whereas in Sumatra Buddhism continues to thrive, and we find references to 'Śailendra' monarchs and a 'Śrīvijaya' polity. For a useful survey of the literature, and a balanced approach favouring a 'Javanese multi-dynastic' model, see Zakharov 2012.

22. Apart from socio-political contingencies, such paradigm-shifts may have occurred as the result of religious 'reforms' that promoted a turn towards non-Esoteric varieties of Buddhist traditions (as happened, e.g., in Sri Lanka [see Sundberg, this volume] and, at a later date, in Myanmar and Cambodia with respect to the prevalence of Theravāda/Pali Buddhism over Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna) or even different religions (as happened, e.g., in Central Java).

23. Malandra (1993: 116) has noted a similarity between the depiction of the eight Bodhisattvas on the exterior of the Central Javanese Candi Mendut and some of the Ellorā caves; a possible iconographical influence stemming from Ellorā on the sculpted triptych of Mendut has been hypothesized by Revire (2015a).

24. On the Pāla-sponsored monasteries as centres of Tantrism, see Saran 1981, Tanaka 2008, Sanderson 2009: 87–108, Delhey 2015: 4, Decleer n.d.: 15–16.

ports of Kaliṅgapatana and Puri.[25] An evocative locale in the pan-Asian Tantric world across the Bauddha-Śaiva divide was Śrīśailam/Śrīparvata in Andhra Pradesh.[26] Some have identified this as the 'Vajraparvata' mentioned in the 14th-century Sri Lankan chronicle *Nikāyasaṅgraha* as a seat of the heretic Vājiriyavāda and Nīlapaṭadarśana monks who introduced varieties of Tantric Buddhism on the island in the 9th century, while others have linked it to the early Buddhist site of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa—another source of Mahāyāna and perhaps also Tantric cults.[27] This area, connected to the important seaport of Viśakhapatnam, was 'a launching point for missionaries to Kashmir, China, Bengal, and Sri Lanka' (White 1996: 60).

Other South Asian locales that are at present not commonly associated with Buddhism, such as the prevalently Śaiva South India (Kāñcī and Nākappaṭṭiṇam in Tamil Nadu in particular),[28] or that are now associated with Theravāda/Pali Buddhism, such as Sri Lanka,[29] are also being recognised as prominent centres—if not cradles, indeed—of Esoteric Buddhist activities in the early mediaeval period. Scholarly investigations of archaeological remains confirm the information, found in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese textual sources, that both South India and Sri Lanka once hosted important lineages of Esoteric Buddhist masters and repositories of Tantras, and acted as hubs for the spread of esoteric traditions to Southeast Asia and beyond. Foundational scriptures, such as the *Mahāvairocanatantra* and *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*, may have been compiled there (Hodge 2003: 11–12). According to Esoteric Buddhist hagiography, Nāgārjuna—one of the Mahāsiddhas often associated with South India in mediaeval Sanskrit sources—received his revealed texts from Vajrasattva in an iron *stūpa*, and later transmitted them to Nāgabodhi (a.k.a. Nāgabuddhi; see Ap-

25. See Malandra 1996: 186 n. 12, 204; Sadakata 1997; Donaldson 2001; Ray 2008: 130–33; Sanderson 2009: 80–83; Mishra 2011; Reichle, this volume. Szántó (2016: 4) reports that the *Saṁvarodayā*—the to date only surviving initiation manual of the *Saṁvara* cycle, copied on a Nepalese ms. dated 1054 AD—was written by a certain Bhūvācārya at Ratnagiri. On the important role of Odisha in the spread of (Esoteric) Buddhism overseas, see Patra 2013, several papers in Patnaik 2014, and Tanaka 2014, who describes some *dhāraṇī*s unearthed at Udayagiri II that have not been found anywhere else in India, but versions of which are extant in Sri Lanka, Tibet, China and Japan (the same documents provide evidence of the connection between Śubhākaradeva of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty and Udayagiri). On the hypothesis (now largely abandoned) of a connection between the Javanese Śailendras and Indian dynasties, such as the Śailodbhavas of 7th-century Odisha or the Ikṣvākus of Śrīśailam/Śrīparvata of Andhra, see Majumdar 1937; Sarkar 1985a, 1985b; Lokesh Chandra 1995a. On the identification of the Tantric seat of Oḍḍiyāna with Odisha (rather than the Swat valley), see Donaldson 1995: 174, 2001: 8–16. On the possible influence of Tantric practices from Odisha on the demonic figures of Balinese dance-drama, see Emigh 1996.

26. See Yamano 2009 and White 1996: 60–61, 110–12. White discusses the close associations of Śrīśailam/Śrīparvata with the *siddha*s and esoteric/alchemical traditions (including those stemming from Nāgārjuna) in both Buddhist and Śaiva lore, and points out that there may have been two separate toponyms—the one being in the Kurnool district of the central Deccan plateau, the other one sixty miles to the east, near Nāgārjunakoṇḍa (White 1996: 375, n. 47, referring to an earlier work by Arion Roṣu). On the esoteric features of some early Buddhist sites in Andhra, see Ray 2008: 128–30.

27. Lokesh Chandra (1993a: 500) links Śrīparvata to Vajraparvata on the grounds of the former's close association with Vajrayāna. On the introduction of Esoteric Buddhism in Sri Lanka by a monk of the Vajraparvata ordination lineage (*vajraparvvata-nikāyavāsīvū bhikṣu*), and its adoption by Matvalasen (i.e., King Sena I, r. 834–54), see Sankrityayana 1934: 214–16; Mudiyanse 1967: 9; Lokesh Chandra 1993a and 1993b: 118–26; Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 215, n. 168; Chandawimala 2013: 117. Interestingly, the *Nikāyasaṅgraha* contains a list of early Esoteric Buddhist scriptures followed by the Vajraparvata-dwelling monks, such as the seminal *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*, *Māyājāla*, *Paramādya*, *Cakraśaṁvara*, etc. (Lokesh Chandra 1993b: 125;).

28. Lokesh Chandra (1993a: 500–502) has stressed the importance of Kāñcī—which he connects to Oḍḍiyāna—for overseas (and especially insular Southeast Asian) Esoteric Buddhism (see also Guy 2004 and, on Buddhism in Tamil Nadu, Monius 2001).

29. Although Sri Lanka was one of the early recipients and exporters of Theravāda/Pali Buddhism, recent studies have underlined the numerous vestiges of both Mahāyāna and Esoteric Buddhism existing on the island. These includes images of Vajrasattva and Tārā, sealings with Vajrayāna elements, the fragments of *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra* found in the Ceṭiyagiri Monastery, the *Dhāraṇīghara* mentioned in the *Mahāvaṁsa*, the *dhāraṇī*s from Abhayagiri and those found in the Great Book of Protection (see Mudiyanse 1967; Sundberg 2004; Sundberg and Giebel 2011; Chandawimala 2013).

pendix A) in South India (Orzech 1995); monks of the caliber of Puṇyodaya, Amoghavajra and Prajña travelled from China to South India and/or Sri Lanka to get hold of some rare esoteric texts and receive initiation from local consecration masters.

Many of the Southeast and East Asian locales received their Buddhism(s) via high-profile diplomatic and commercial contacts entertained with South Asian entrepôts that doubled as centres of Buddhist diffusion. In these cosmopolitan entrepôts, Buddhism coexisted alongside Śaivism, being either sponsored, or at least benignly tolerated, by predominantly Śaiva dynasties.[30] These strategic crossroads of mercantile and political power constituted the 'nodes' that probably played a crucial role in the genesis and development of Buddhism in general, and Tantric traditions in particular, insofar that they supported prestigious centres of learning, sponsored monastic congregations and institutions, or housed ancient relics visited by pilgrims coming from all over the Indic world. Think, for instance, of Nālandā and Vikramaśīla in northeastern India, Abhayagirivihāra at Anurādhapura in Sri Lanka, the Buddhist institutions of higher learning in Sumatra alluded to by Yijing, and the Buddhist monumental complexes of Central Java.

THE PLACE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE ESOTERIC BUDDHIST ECUMENE

A series of recent, monumental works on Esoteric Buddhism in South, Central, and East Asia has dramatically improved our knowledge of these traditions in their regional contexts, and laid out the basis for an exploration of the connections—mostly across the overland Silk Roads—that linked the opposite ends of the Eurasian landmass.[31] Yet scholarship needs to move beyond the paradigm envisaging a 'diffusionist' spread of Esoteric Buddhism from a South Asian 'heartland' or 'motherland' to East and Southeast Asian 'peripheries', for cults were transmitted from multiple centres, and by no means followed a mono-directional pattern. According to Sen (2003: 11), during the Tang period Chinese Buddhist monks ceased to suffer from a 'borderland complex': hence, China ceased to be a 'frontier' and became a terminus, and centre of diffusion, of Buddhism in its own right.[32] Similarly, Skilling (2009: 42) re-evaluates the important participation of premodern Siam in a much wider world of Buddhist cultural interchange than is usually assumed at present, questioning 'whether "India" should always be the "centre", Siam the periphery—a passive recipient of "influence"'.

Southeast Asia—and large areas of what are now the Malay peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago in particular—played an important, Asia-wide role as both a crossroads and terminus of Buddhist

30. Such as the Pallavas in the Tamil country, who did not oppose Buddhism. Gillet (2013: 115) argues that Buddhism played a major role in the construction of Pallava iconography through dynamics of assimilation, yet the alleged 'silence' of this dynasty regarding Buddhism ultimately suggests a counter-acting strategy through inclusion. Singh (2014: 56) regards this attitude as an 'incorporative kingship within a polytheistic or monolatrous context' dictated by reasons of realpolitik. For instance, the Pallava may have acted out of diplomatic politeness when dealing with other Buddhist powers, as suggested by the protection enjoyed by Vajrabodhi in Kāñcī, and by their religio-diplomatic links with contemporary pro-Buddhist dynasties such as the Tangs, the Śailendras, and the Lambakaṇṇas. Around AD 1019 a Buddhist temple, the *Śailendra-Cūḍāmaṇivarmavihāra*, was founded at Nākappaṭṭiṇam by Cūḍāmaṇivarman, king of Kaṭāha (Kedah in the Malay Peninsula), with the support of staunch Śaiva King Rājarāja Cōḷa I. In a similar fashion, the Pālas were early adopters of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Mantranaya and Vajrayāna developments, but at the same time patronized Śaivism, especially in its Atimārga branch (see Sanderson 2009: 87–88, 108–15; Bagchi 1993: 13; Davidson 2002: 85).

31. See, e.g., Kapstein and van Schaik 2010, Dalton 2011, Meinert 2016 (Central Asia and Tibet); McRae and Nattier 2012 (India, Central Asia and China); Orzech, Sørensen and Payne 2011 (East Asia).

32. For instance, while the 3rd-century *Gaṇḍavyūha* locates the original seat of Mañjusrī at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Yijing considered Mount Wutai in China to be the adopted home of that Bodhisattva (Lamotte 1960: 84–85), and this is the very reason why Indian monks Prajña and Vajrabodhi travelled to China (Copp in Orzech, Sørensen and Payne 2011: 361; cf. Sen 2003: 76–86); ms. CUL Add. 1643 of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* mentions a *mahācīne mañjughoṣaḥ* ['Mañjuśrī in (Greater) China'] (Kim 2014: 49, 67). Mediaeval Sanskrit and Tibetan sources speak about the traditions of Mahācīna- or Mahācīnakrama-Tārā and a (markedly transgressive) Chinese mode (*cīnācāra*) of worshipping Tārā (see N.N. Bhattacharyya 2005: 98, 106, 110; Bühnemann 1996).

contacts. With the exception of a handful of recent studies dealing with aspects of (Esoteric) Buddhism in the context of Southeast Asia and maritime connectivity,[33] much of previous scholarship has tended to either display a bias towards (reified and/or constructed) manifestations of Theravāda and exoteric Mahāyāna Buddhism in the area, or perceive it as a consumer rather than a 'generator' of Esoteric Buddhism. As a consequence, the creative and constitutive force of Southeast Asian agents and milieux in the transfer, transformation, and 'translocation' of people, texts, notions, and artefacts remains to be fully appreciated. The existence of a Sinhala monastic complex in Central Java, a Śailendra-Śrīvijayan monastery at Nālandā, and a *Śailendra-Cūḍāmaṇivarmavihāra* at Nākapaṭṭiṇam; the survival, besides the Chinese reports, of Sanskrit and vernacular textual materials (from epigraphic as well as manuscript sources) of Mantranaya and Vajrayāna persuasion, some of which contain quotations traceable to Sanskrit Tantras; and the significant remains of statues, ritual implements, and monuments, all conjure up the role of insular Southeast Asia as a recognized seat of esoteric cults in a highly interconnected Buddhist cosmopolis rather than a remote and backward periphery.[34] Recent epigraphical studies by Griffiths have underlined 'the pan-Asian character of Buddhism and the integral place the Indonesian Archipelago once held in the ancient Buddhist world' (2014a: 137). Woodward (2004: 353) has advanced an argument for 'treating Indonesia and India as an integral unit well into the ninth century', making 'a case for possible influence of Borobudur Buddhism upon subsequent developments in India', yet at the same time admitting that 'there is little evidence of inhabitants of Southeast Asia participating in the creation of the Yogini Tantras'. On the other hand, the contribution of insular Southeast Asian masters to Vajrayāna Buddhism in Tibet, also through the handful of texts composed in 'Suvarṇadvīpa' that were introduced into the Tibetan canon (e.g., the *Durbodhāloka* by Dharmakīrti), is acknowledged by the Tibetan tradition from the 11th century, and confirmed by modern scholarship (see Schoterman, this volume, and below, p. 19). Transmission of Buddhist ideas from Sumatra and/or Java to the Himalayan region has been suggested on the basis of artistic and architectural similarities between the Tabo monastery in Himachal Pradesh, which Atīśa visited in 1042, and Borobudur (Wayman 1981: 140–42; Nihom 1994: 72, n. 192; cf. Kimmet 2012: 98–99 and Lokesh Chandra and Singhal 1999). Be this as it may, it is difficult not to concur with Skilling (1997: 188) that 'the composition of *Durbodhāloka* presupposes the existence and study in Śrīvijaya of the abstruse Prajñāpāramitā and Abhisamayālaṃkāra literature; of a high level of scholarship; and of royal sponsorship'. This scenario is also suggested by the figure of Shihu (施護, *Dānapāla, d. 1018), an exceptionally prolific South Asian monk-translator who in the late 10th century reached China with a good knowledge of the languages of Sanfochi (Śrīvijaya) and Shepo (Java) (see Sen 2003: 384; Orzech 2011a: 449–50).

Both Sumatra and Java are likely to have acted as important places in the development of (esoteric fashions in) the cults of Mañjuśrī and Tārā, which had an inherent 'maritime' aspect insofar that they were tutelary deities of travellers, and seafarers in particular (Hanneder 2008, Ray 2012: 56–60, Bopearachchi 2014); the popularity of those deities in Sri Lanka, mainland Southeast Asia, Java, Sumatra, and China suggests the existence of strong Buddhist connections between those locales by the 9th century.[35] As pointed out by Chou (1945: 321)

33. See Woodward 2004; Kandahjaya 2004 (esp. 40–112); Sundberg and Giebel 2011; Sharrock 2012, 2013a; Sen 2014a; Long 2014.

34. These data would seem to lend some support to Tāranātha's claim—however exaggerated it may be—that, from the time of king Dharmapāla (late 8th–early 9th century) on, there were in *madhyadeśa* many students from Southeast Asian kingdoms, and during the time of the four Senas about half of the monks of Magadha were from Southeast Asia (see D. Chattopadhyaya 1982: 330).

35. On Java and Sumatra as early seats of Mañjuśrī and Tārā cults, as well as the possible connection between forms of Tārā, the Javanese Nyai Loro Kidul, and the Chinese Guanyin, see respectively Miksic 2006 and Jordaan 1997, 1998. On the pan-Asian cult of Mahāpratisarā—a female deity not unrelated to Tārā—and especially its Javanese attestations, see Cruijsen, Griffiths and Klokke 2012. Sundberg (2004: 114–16) has postulated the presence in Java of Chinese Buddhist personalities on the basis of a lintel-piece from Candi Sewu, which depicts among many

and Sundberg and Giebel (2011: 152), according to an account by Yuanzhao compiled into the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu,* and also to the Japanese master Kūkai*,* Vajrabodhi (a.k.a. Vajrabuddhi; see Appendix A by Sinclair) first met Amoghavajra in Java, which should have displayed evidence of theological sophistication because it likely

> 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.

Java under the Śailendras, with such majestic and exquisitely crafted Buddhist monuments as Borobudur, Candi Sewu, Plaosan, and Mendut, must have ranked among the great sacred centres of Buddhism. This may be inferred, e.g., from the mid 9th-century Siddhamātṛkā inscription unearthed at Candi Plaosan in the Prambanan area (de Casparis 1956: 188–89, 202), which describes the worship of a Buddha-temple (*jinamandira*) by pilgrims continuously arriving from Gurjaradeśa (Gujarat, or the dominions of the Gurjara-Pratihāras in North India?). The illustrated manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* CUL Add. 1643 dedicates a vignette to (an image of the Buddha) Dīpaṅkara in Java (f. 2r). As argued by Sinclair (this volume, p. 31) on the basis of the Tantric geography exposed by the *Manjuśriyamūlakalpa* (51.636–640), 'by the late eighth century Kaliṅgoḍra, the "Maritime Kəliṅ", had been accorded Buddhavacana-level recognition in the Sanskritic world'.

Given its strategic geographical location, the Malay Peninsula, where the domains of Śailendra/Śrīvijayan Buddhist rulers were located, acted as an important intersection in the traffic of pilgrims plying the maritime routes. Testimony to this fact are the many sealings found at multiple sites in the period from the 6th to the 12th century; some of these objects display (esoteric) Mahāyāna iconography and are inscribed in northeastern Indian scripts, suggesting that they could have belonged to pilgrims from the Subcontinent (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002: 47). Manuscript CUL Add. 1643 (f. 120r) mentions a Lokanātha on Mount Valavatī in Kedah (Kaṭahadvīpa).[36] The exquisitely crafted late 8th-century bronze Avalokiteśvaras found in the Chaiya district of modern Thailand and in Bidor (Perak, Malaysia) show close similarities with the Avalokiteśvara found at Wonogiri in Central Java, suggesting a link between those locales (see Sharrock and Bunker, this volume).

As attested to by epigraphic and archaeological evidence, the Cam and Khmer domains were fully integrated in the web of intra-regional Southeast Asian networks connecting the mainland and the Malay Peninsula to Java, Sumatra, and China between the 7th and 10th centuries. Those locales hosted Esoteric Buddhist masters (such as Kīrtipaṇḍita and Puṇyodaya),[37] and were the seats of monastic institutions or temples devoted to the worship of esoteric Mahāyānic Lokeśvaras.[38]

bearded figures one of distinctive Sinitic appearance (cf. Klokke 2011: 20–21). Woodward (1977) has discussed some Chinese silk patterns on the decorative motifs of Candi Sewu, hypothesized a Chinese (Daoist) influence on the numerological patterns of Borobudur's upper terraces (1999), and argued that the Javanese Bianhong, who studied in China under Huiguo, might have been the 'mastermind' of Borobudur (2009).

36. See Kim 2014: 49, 63, 65 (who erroneously locates Kedah in Indonesia rather than Peninsular Malaysia).

37. An inscription of the reign of Jayavarman V (r. 968–ca. 1000) tells us that Kīrtipaṇḍita, an adept of the Buddhist Yogatantras, acted in the capacity of royal guru, teaching the *Tattvasaṅgraha* and its commentaries (Sanderson 2003–4: 427, n. 284, 2004: 238; Green 2014: 84–85). Puṇyodaya travelled from India to China and then back to mainland Southeast Asia (see Lin 1935, Woodward 1988, 2004). On peninsular Southeast Asian traces of Vajrabodhi, see Sharrock (2012, 2013a, this volume).

38. A stele found at An Thái village in Vietnam's Quảng Nam province, dated AD 902, documents an example of a monastery built primarily as a site of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna worship (Sinclair 2012). Chutiwongs (2005: 80–81) has hypothesized a connection between doctrinal elements featuring in the inscription and the Sanskrit-Old Javanese text *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan*. Sanderson (2009: 117–18) discusses a few inscriptions from the 9th and 10th centuries that record the installation of esoteric Mahāyānic Lokeśvaras—and, at the same time, Śaiva deities—along with the construction and support of associated *vihāra*s, e.g., the Đông Dương stele of 875 and the Nham Biền stele of 908. The latter inscription relates that the courtier Rā-

Several iconographic features of Wat Phra Maen in Nakhon Pathom, as well as related Buddhist statuary from Dvāravatī, display esoteric overtones, suggesting that esoteric forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism may have evolved there in Theravāda guise.[39]

THE 'FIRST WAVE' OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM (CA. 7TH–EARLY 10TH CENTURY AD)

The early networks that initiated the expansion of an 'Esoteric Buddhist package' from the 7th century were constituted by monks affiliated to related esoteric orders,[40] who travelled—often alongside, or even in the capacity of diplomatic envoys[41]—along the paths opened by long-distance traders that favoured the quick exchange of goods, peoples, and ideas.[42] Thanks to textual evidence, and especially the Sino-Japanese biographies of early masters, we are now able to reconstruct, albeit with an element of uncertainty, the probable pedigree and social circle of those prominent individual agents. Those charismatic personalities, more often than not associated with a vigorous activity of translation, commentarial work, and initiation of pupils, travelled—at times tracing the footsteps of their master(s)—both eastwards and westwards along the sea routes between the Indian Subcontinent and Japan. It is probably this network of masters and their disciples that acquired, transformed, and propagated images, texts and devotional practices connected with Buddhist divinities ranging from the Bodhisattvas and Goddesses that were popular in both exoteric and esoteric Mahāyāna milieux, such as Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi, and Tārā, to the ferocious forms of Vajrapāṇi/Vajrasattva and Heruka (and his hypostases Hevajra and Saṁvara) that became predominant in Phase Two/Three Vajrayāna.

That the 7th- and early 8th-century networks were crucial for the formation and consolidation of Esoteric Buddhist cults and practices across Maritime Asia is suggested by the 'archaic' nature of the theological and ritual framework of major Esoteric Buddhist traditions outside of the Indian Subcontinent. As White (2000: 21) points out:

> What we find, in fact, is that the historical time frame in which the transmission (to China, Tibet, Korea, Japan, Southeast Asia) of various Indian Tantric paradigms occurred has invariably proven definitive for the structure and content of the 'export' Tantric tradition in question. It is as if the original revelation re-

jadvāra made two trips (*siddhayātra*, either pilgrimages or diplomatic missions) to Java (Mabbett 1986: 302, Green 2014: 80–83). Green 2014 and Schweyer 2009 are surveys of the relevant epigraphic and (art-)historical evidence. On the iconography of Đông Dương and its relationship with the Tantric *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra*, see Woodward 2011.

39. See Revire 2010. For the worship of Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi in central Thailand, perhaps as early as the second half of the 7th century, see Boisselier 1965: 149; Chutiwongs 1984: 221, 256–57; Revire 2010: 98. For a *khakkhara* finial and several other bronze ritual objects that have close parallels with Esoteric Buddhist material found in Central Java and beyond, see Revire 2009, 2015b: 139, n. 22).

40. All the major figures in the transmission of Esoteric Buddhism to China and Southeast Asia up to the 8th century were monks. However, a category of non-monastic, householder *vajrācārya*s seems to have become more important than *vajrācārya* monks in South Asia during the late phase of Vajrayāna in South Asia (modern Balinese 'Bauddha Brahmins' may be considered the heirs to this category of householder-practitioners: see Sinclair 2012). A current scholarly desideratum remains to identify the networks of non-institutionalized practitioners, including *siddha*s and low-caste ritual or performance specialists, who contributed to the spread of forms of Tantrism overseas (see Acri 2014).

41. See Sen (2003: 37–44) on the Tang-sponsored Buddhist diplomatic missions in the 7th century, and further, Sundberg and Giebel (2011) on the diplomatic connections of Vajrabodhi's journeys. Sinclair (this volume, p. 48) speculates that the diplomatic lines of communication between the Tang capitals and insular Southeast Asia might have been used by Buddhist monks Bianhong and Prajña.

42. P.C. Chakravarti (in Majumdar 1971: 662), citing Pliny and the account by Chinese pilgrim Faxian, notes that the journey by merchant ship from the Pāla port-city of Tāmralipti to Sri Lanka (en route to Southeast Asia and China) took only a fortnight. Yijing recounts that thirty-seven out of the sixty Chinese monks who went to the Indian Subcontinent travelled by sea on merchant ships; further, he states that his own journey from Canton to Sumatra took a month, while the remaining leg from Kedah in Peninsular Malaysia to the Nicobar islands took ten days, and from there to Tāmralipti it took fifteen days (Ray 2008: 124). But according to other sources, because of the prevailing direction of monsoon winds, it was nearly impossible to make a return voyage between China and the Indian Subcontinent in one year (see Jordaan and Colless 2009: 112).

> mained fossilized, like an insect in a block of amber, in the export tradition. This is manifestly the case, for example, with Japanese Shingon—founded by Kūkai (774–835 C.E.)—whose core revelations are the seventh-century C.E. *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and the *Tattvasaṅgraha-sūtra*.… Shingon practice remains, in many respects, a preserved specimen of those enshrined in seventh-century Indian paradigms, but with a Japanese overlay.… Similarly, Tibetan Buddhism, with its preponderance of Vajrayāna practice based on revelations found in what would later be classified as the Tantras of Yoga and Supreme Yoga, preserves the Tantric status quo of eighth-century India, from which it was introduced into Tibet by the legendary Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava.

Analogous considerations have been made by Nihom (1994: 189) with respect to Buddhist data preserved on Java and Sumatra. Reflecting a doctrinal situation preceding 8th-century systematizations, they

> may greatly aid us in attempting to reconstruct the intellectual history of the Tantras in India itself by providing a control relative to the much better known, preserved and studied traditions of Central and East Asia'.[43]

Among the early prominent monks are the Central Indian Atikūṭa (fl. 650s) and Puṇyodaya (Chin. Nati 那提, fl. 650s), the Chinese Yijing (635–713),[44] Baosiwei (寶思惟, Skt. *Maṇicintana/*Maṇicinta or *Ratnacinta, d. 721), and the South Indian Dharmaruci/Bodhiruci (d. 727). The vectors and initiators of a systematic, fully developed form of Esoteric Buddhism are 'three great *ācāryas*' of the mid-Tang period, namely the Indian Śubhākarasiṁha (Chin. Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637–735),[45] Vajrabodhi (Chin. Jingangzhi 金剛智; 671–741),[46] and Vajrabodhi's ordained pupil Amoghavajra (Chin. Bukong 不空; 704–74; probably a native of Samarkand).[47] This triad, which inspired various generations of pupils,[48] was bound to be associated with a 'canon', as it were, of revealed scriptures, commentaries, ritual manuals and their connected practices[49] for many centuries to come. Among the 8th- and 9th-century figures related to this triad, and especially to its last member Amoghavajra, were Nāgabodhi (Chin. Longzhi 龍智),[50] whose biography remains obscure but who is

43. See Acri 2011a: 12–15 for analogous remarks on the archaic theology informing Śaiva texts from premodern Java and Bali, which also seem to predate the mature Saiddhāntika systematizations.

44. Although the status of Yijing as an Esoteric Buddhist monk is debated, his biographies suggest that he trained with Śubhākarasiṁha and was acquainted with the teachings of the *Vajraśekhara* and *Guhyatantra*, besides writing a commentary of the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* (see Keyworth in Orzech, Sørensen and Payne 2011: 342–43; Shinohara 2014: 147–67).

45. He was probably the eldest son of King Buddhakara, the alleged ancestor of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty kings of Odisha (Chou 1945: 251–52, n. 3; Pinte in Orzech, Sørensen and Payne 2011: 340; cf. Tanaka 2014).

46. According to an account by Zanning, he was a Brahman from South India (Malayakūṭa), whose father served as *purohita* at the royal court of Kāñcī (Orzech 2011c: 346). Conversely, Lü Xiang's biography reports that he was the third son of Īśānavarman (*yeshanawamo* 伊舍那鞅摩), the *kṣatriya* king of a Central Indian dynasty (i.e., the Maukharis), and 'because he was later recommended to the [Chinese] emperor by Mizhunna (米准那), the general of the king of a South Indian kingdom, he ended up being called a South Indian' (trans. Giebel, in Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 134). (On the rendering of Chin. Jingangzhi 金剛智 as Vajrabuddhi, see Appendix A).

47. Chinese biographies of Amoghavajra present contradictory information, describing him as either the son of a Brahman or a merchant from Central Asia. Chou (1945: 322) argues that Amoghavajra's biographers tried to conceal his embarrassing background as a merchant, which would be undignified for a monk of his rank.

48. Orzech (2011c: 345) has noted that the three monks, who are traditionally referred to by later Chinese disciples and Japanese scholars as the founders of the Chinese Zhenyan school, did not represent themselves as such.

49. These were the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* and *Susiddhikaramahātantra* (first propagated by Śubhākarasiṁha), the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha* (propagated by Vajrabodhi), (versions of) the *Guhyasamāja* (already known to Nāgabodhi), *Śrīparamādya*, *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, other revealed scriptures belonging to the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*/*Vajraśekhara* cycle (*Jingangding* 金剛頂, summarized and propagated by Amoghavajra), as well as Amoghavajra's *Jingangding jing yuqie shibahui zhigui*.

50. The biographical material on this figure, who is said to have lived for one hundred years and counted among the Mahāsiddhas, is mostly of a supernatural or legendary nature—for example that he was instructed by the Mahāsiddha Nāgārjuna, and, like the latter, resided at Śrīśailam or

believed to have met Amoghavajra in Sri Lanka in the 740s, and previously Vajrabodhi; Amoghavajra's Chinese disciples Huilang (?–781) and Huiguo (745–806); the latter's Javanese disciple Bianhong (辨弘, fl. late 8th century); Prajña (Chin. Boruo 般若, alt. Bolaruo 般剌若; ca. 744–810, likely from present-day Afghanistan), disciple of Amoghavajra's prominent pupil Yuanzhao (d. 800); the Koreans Pulga Saui and Hyecho (both fl. 8th century),[51] disciples of Śubhākarasiṁha and both Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra respectively); and the Japanese Kūkai (774–835, Huiguo's and Prajña's disciple).[52] The networks of 7th- to 9th-century monks may be visualized on a map of Maritime Asia (Map 1.1, p. 16), where 'Indian', 'Sri Lankan', 'Śailendra and Javanese', 'Chinese', and 'Korean-Japanese' circles offer a telling picture of the extraordinary period of intra-Asian connectivity that became the hallmark of the rise and spread of Esoteric Buddhist traditions in the course of just two or three generations.

The initial triad formed by Nāgabodhi, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra had strong ties with Southern India and Sri Lanka, both of which areas acted as an important hub for the dissemination of Esoteric Buddhism to Southeast Asia. On account of the shared artistic styles and iconographical motifs, Holt (1991: 82) argued that the regions of Pallava South India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia 'constituted a veritable cultural triangle from the seventh into the ninth century'. Noting the 'pan-Asian influence of the cultural dyad of Pallava India and Śrī Laṅkā' in the 8th century, Sundberg and Giebel (2011: 153) focus on the status of some Buddhist sects operating in Kāñcī and at the Abhayagirivihāra as custodians of esoteric texts and oral teachings that played a key role in shaping the mediaeval pan-Asian Esoteric Buddhist paradigm. King Narasiṁhapotavarman (i.e., Narasiṁhavarman II Rājasiṁha, r. 700–728) of Kāñcī granted Vajrabodhi special protection and sent his general 'Mizhunna' (Chin. 米准那) along with him to China on a diplomatic mission. So amicable were the relations between the Pallavas and the Tangs in that period that Narasiṁhavarman II built a Buddhist 'Pagoda' in Nākappaṭṭiṇam in honour of the Chinese emperor, allowing him to name it (Seshadri 2009: 109–18).[53] It is, again, through a Pallava link that Vajrabodhi, on the occasion of his visit to Sri Lanka on the way to China, enjoyed the protection of King Mānavarman ('Śrīśīla' of Vajrabodhi's biography), who prior to his coronation in 684 underwent a long exile in Kāñcī, serving as a general (Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 145–46). As argued by Sundberg and Giebel (ibid.),

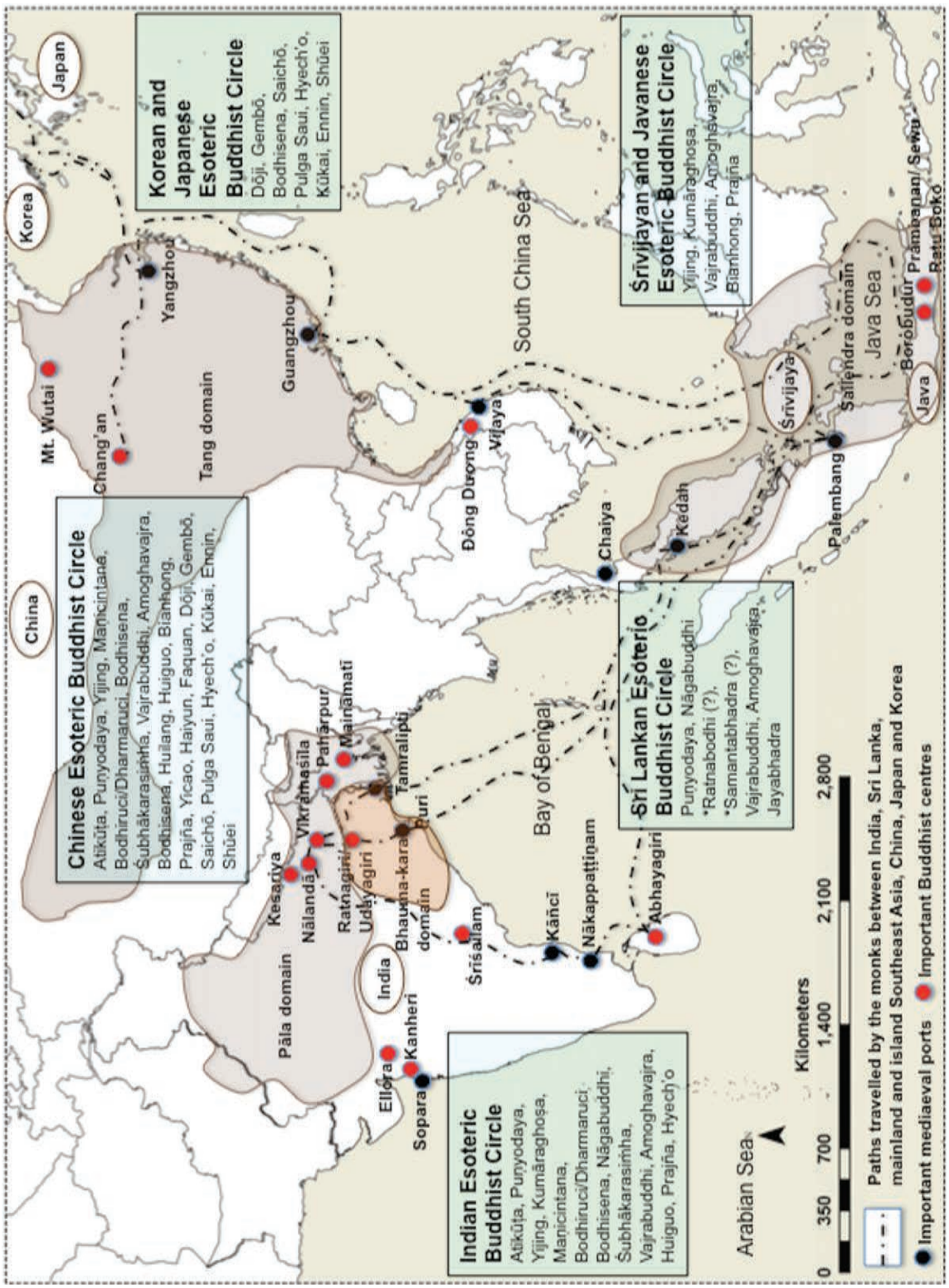
> Such repeated, persistent diplomatic intercourse may serve as an explanatory context for Vajrabodhi's easy access to the inner sanctum of the Tang court. In fact, given the chronology, one surmises that the welcome arrival of Vajrabodhi or Mizhunna in Guangfu in 719 CE actually instigated the series of intense and cordial diplomatic interchanges between the Chinese and the Pallavas recorded to occur in 720. 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. 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.

Kāñcī; yet, his historicity cannot be automatically discounted on those grounds. On this figure, whose Chinese name is variously rendered in secondary sources as Nāgabodhi, Nāgabuddhi, or *Nāgajñāna/Nāgajña, see Van der Kuijp 2007, Sundberg and Giebel 2011, and especially Sinclair's Appendix A in this volume.

51. On the extensive, and seemingly repeated, travels of Hyecho to India and Central Asia, see Deeg 2010.

52. For a list of several other Indian monks who 'came to the Tang and settled, taught, and translated texts' in the course of the 9th century, such as Shi Mayue, Bodhivajra, Vajrasiddhi, Bodhirṣi, and Prajñacakra, see Orzech 2011b: 328–30.

53. Sen (2003: 26) argues that this alliance, and in particular the 720 diplomatic mission (and in general other post-Harṣa South Asian missions), might have had the purpose of contrasting contemporary Arab and Tibetan invasions of areas of the Subcontinent. Equally amicable relations between the Buddhist Tang and Kanauj could be evinced by the 7th-century Buddhist diplomatic missions (ibid.: 34–40), which Sen characterizes as 'spiritual underpinnings of diplomatic exchanges'.



Map 1.1: Paths travelled by the monks (7th–9th century) between India, mainland and insular Southeast Asia, China, Japan and Korea. (Map by Swati Chemburkar and Andrea Acri)

It would appear that in the Sri Lankan Buddhist milieux—i.e., in the Abhayagirivihāra itself—were found repositories of esoteric texts unavailable in China, and perhaps even inaccessible to travellers to India. As argued by Sundberg and Giebel (2011: 148), it was the quest for these texts, and the desire to receive *abhiṣeka* in a Sinhalese lineage seemingly associated with either Nāgabodhi or *Ratnabodhi (Chin. Baojue 寶覺), that prompted Amoghavajra to travel to Sri Lanka from China following the footsteps of his teacher Vajrabodhi.[54] Prajña too returned to South India from China to look for esoteric texts belonging to the Vidyādhara traditions (*chiming* 持明), and studied yogic techniques under consecration master *Dharmayaśas (Chin. Damoyeshe 達摩耶舍: Copp in Orzech, Sørensen and Payne 2011: 360–61).

So great was the religious aura and political prestige of South Asian centres of Buddhism that the 'peripheries' (i.e., outer regions) of the Buddhist cosmopolis tried to link themselves to these centres, thus becoming themselves centres with respect to the new peripheries that were being created as networks moved and the Buddhist frontiers extended—what Sen (2014b: xvii) has described as the emergence of 'multiple centres of Buddhist discourse'. A case in point is that of late 8th-century Central Java, where a branch of the Sri Lankan Abhayagirivihāra, apparently intended for the use of esoteric-minded Sinhalese Buddhist monks, was established by the Śailendras on the Ratu Boko promontory;[55] indeed, the area in the Kedu plain where Candi Sewu and the Prambanan temple complex were built appears to have been termed Laṅkapura by then, as if to recreate a local 'replica' of (Buddhist) Sri Lanka.[56] As shown by Miksic (1993–94), Degroot (2006), and Sundberg (2004, 2011, this volume), the Abhayagirivihāra-related structures of Ratu Boko share with their Sinhalese prototypes—that is to say, some of the Abhayagiri peripheral structures apparently populated by ascetic monks—common architectural motifs, such as double meditation platforms.

The use of Siddhamātṛkā—a (north)eastern-Indian variety of script, native to Nālandā—in foreign lands is well documented in extensive Esoteric Buddhist textual corpora from China and Japan. The numerically small, but culturally significant, corpus of inscriptions using this script scattered over disparate locales of Maritime Asia, besides being a token of the networks of Esoteric Buddhist specialists who plied those routes, may constitute 'an attempt to be cosmopolitan, to connect with a respected cultural powerhouse, and implies the rapid dissemination of knowledge and of religious innovation' (Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 200, n. 126). Pāla-sponsored Nālandā in the northeastern part of the Subcontinent, apart from being an old and illustrious centre of Buddhism, was also the cultural centre that dictated the predominant religious and aesthetic paradigm in the Buddhist cosmopolis from the 8th to the 13th century. As documented by the dual Siddhamātṛkā/Grantha inscription of Narasiṁhapotavarman to his early 8th century cave-temple Atiraṇacaṇḍeśvara and in the Kailāsanātha, even a fervently Śaiva dynasty such as the Pallava was eager to anchor itself to it by conforming to a certain 'Nālandā idiom' (Sundberg and Giebel 2012: 199, n. 126; Francis 2013).

Nālandā, which by the 9th century was 'the center of a new Asia-wide Tantric network' (Hall 2010: 21), constituted—alongside the South Indian Pallava realms and Sri Lanka—the common nexus (whether real or imagined) between many of the agents who played a role in shaping early Esoteric

54. On p. 190 the authors, referring to the biography of Hanguang (*T* 2061.879b18), mention the Sinhalese *Samantabhadra as Amoghavajra's 'final' initiator (cf. Chou 1945: 290–91; Lokesh Chandra 1993b: 114). Other biographies mention *Nāgajñāna (i.e., Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi 龍智) and *Ratnabodhi (Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 192–93; Sundberg 2014: 77).

55. As is testified to by an 8th-century Siddhamātṛkā foundation inscription (see de Casparis 1950: 11–22, 1961, 1981; Lokesh Chandra 1993a; Sundberg 2004, this volume).

56. See Griffiths 2011a, and compare with Acri 2010, arguing that Rāvaṇa's defeat by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in Sri Lanka as described in the Sanskrit and Old Javanese versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* represents an allegory for socio-political events of mid 9th-century Java—that is, the shift from an extended royal Buddhist favouritism to a new Śaiva course. See also Griffiths 2013 for a hypothesis concerning the existence of 'multiple Abhayagiris in more than one part of Southeast Asia—southern Cambodia, southern Vietnam, peninsular Thailand, besides the one on Java' (p. 75), and cf. Conti 2014: 384 and 394, n. 3.

Buddhist networks.[57] It was in the milieu of Nālandā that Śubhākarasiṁha, Vajrabodhi and Prajña were instructed and received their ordination before undertaking the career of travelling masters; Vajrabodhi received royal patronage in Kāñcī and Sri Lanka. Influence from both the Pallava realms and Nālandā may be detected at the enigmatic Rājiṇāvihāra, a Pallava-style late 8th-century temple built in a locale just north of Kandy, which now bears the name of Nālandā. The temple (*geḍigē*) features erotic reliefs of transgressive character (Mudiyanse 1967: 71; Chandawimala 2013: 146–47), and Dohanian (1977: 26, 131, n. 27) refers to the existence of a short 9th-century Siddhamātṛkā inscription found nearby (cf. Sundberg, this volume, n. 13). The evocative name of Nālandā extended further to Southeast Asia: the Sumatran royal Bālaputradeva, who was seemingly involved in the dynastic struggle that took place in Central Java in the mid-9th century,[58] is mentioned in an inscription issued by Devapāla at Nālandā, which records his sponsorship of a *vihāra* for the use of pilgrims from Śrīvijaya;[59] a locale named Nālandā (*naləndə*, *nalanda*) is mentioned, alongside Vārāṇasī, in two 10th-century Balinese inscriptions in connection with the Buddhist preceptor (*upādhyāya*) Dhanavan (Ardika 2015: 34; Goris 1954: 83, 86).[60] As has long since been noted, Nālandā played a major role in the transmission of artistic motifs to Southeast Asia since the 8th century (Bernet Kempers 1933, Lunsingh Scheurleer and Klokke 1988).

The period from the middle of the 9th up to the end of the 10th century has been characterized as a 'dark age for Buddhism' in China and Tibet (Matsunaga 1978: viii), and one also notes a reduced scale of Buddhist building activities in Southeast Asia, with the single exception of the temple of Đông Dương in Campā (Woodward 2011: 33). This predicament may have been related to the disruption of diplomatic, religious, and trade networks between locales where support for Esoteric Buddhism, or Buddhism altogether, by the ruling elites faded away, such as China under Emperor Wuzong (r. 814–46), Tibet under King Lang Darma (r. 838–41), Sri Lanka under Sena II (r. 854–89) and his successors (Sundberg 2014), and Java from around 850 onwards (see the chapters by

57. For a concise summary of the interactions between Sri Lanka and the centres of Tantrism patronized by the Pālas, see Sen 2014a: 53. It is noteworthy that, according to Tāranātha (D. Chattopadhyaya 1980: 18), the Sri Lankan Jayabhadra, one of the earliest exegetes of the *Laghusaṁvara/Herukābhidhāna,* was *vajrācārya* at Vikramaśīla (for a mid-9th century date, see Gray 2005a: 61, n. 61 and 62, n. 65; contrast Sanderson 2009: 159, who traces his tenure back to 880–92). The same Jayabhadra, at an earlier stage of his career, is recorded in the colophon of his *Cakrasaṃvarapañjikā* (ed. Sugiki, 2001) as having resided in the famous Buddhist establishment of Mahābimba in Koṅkana (the Konkan coast of western India; see Szántó 2016: 2 and cf. above, p. 8). Tāranātha reports the same information (see D. Chattopadhyaya 1980: 325; cf. 296).

58. Sundberg (this volume, Appendix B) contests the reading *vālaputra* on the Śivagṛha inscription, which was at the basis of the dynastic theory proposed by de Casparis (1956). While his effort is valuable insofar that it highlights the need to re-edit and translate that important (and, regrettably, heavily withered) inscription, I remain unconvinced by his re-evaluation, and regard the reading *bālaputra* as the most likely.

59. See H. Sastri 1923–24. Jordaan and Colless (2009: 28–40), having compared the Wanua Tengah III inscription with the Nālandā edict in the light of Jordaan's revised chronology of the Pāla kings, argue that Bālaputra was already king in Sumatra before he came to Java, only to advance his claim to succession after Rakai Pikatan ascended the throne in 847. This hypothesis suggests that the contacts between Bālaputra and the Pāla King Devapāla may have been not only of a religious and cultural nature. For instance, the possibility of a political alliance formed by Bālaputra, just a few years before his Javanese expedition, with the Pāla ruler would make perfect sense in the system of alliances among neighboring *maṇḍala*s as theorized in the Sanskrit *Arthaśāstra* (cf. Wolters 1999: 28–29 for Southeast Asian examples). A link between Java and northeastern India, i.e., a Śailendra effort to connect to Pāla-sourced Esoteric Buddhist doctrines, is also suggested by the mention, in the Siddhamātṛkā inscription of Kelurak (AD 782) found between Candi Sewu and Candi Lumbung in Central Java, of one Kumāraghoṣa, a royal preceptor (*rājaguru*) from Gauḍīdvīpa (modern Bengal) who installed an image of Mañjughoṣa (Mañjuśrī) at the request of Śailendra King Śrī Saṅgrāmadhanañjaya (Sarkar 1971 I: 37, 45). The word *golapaṇḍitā* (= *gauḍapaṇḍitā*) featuring in the undated Pasir Panjang rock inscription at Karimun Besar in the Riau archipelago has been interpreted as having been engraved by a monk from Bengal (i.e., Nālandā?) en route to mainland Sumatra or Java by Caldwell and Hazlewood (1994).

60. As pointed out by Ardika (ibid.), those Balinese inscriptions indicate that roponyms associated with centres of Buddhism in the Subcontinent, such as Vārāṇasī, Nālandā and Amarāvatī, were transferred to local places.

Sundberg and Acri in this volume). Another factor may have been the contraction of the Pāla empire from ca. 850 to 977, which could have caused a decline in royal benefactions to Esoteric Buddhism in northeastern India (Sanderson 2009: 96–97) and a negative 'cascade effect' overseas, especially with respect to maritime trade.

The 'second wave' of Esoteric Buddhism (ca. late 10th–13th century AD)

Nālandā-style imagery of Esoteric Buddhist divinities (re)appears in 11th- and 12th-century Angkor, Bagan, the Malay Peninsula, and East Java. As argued by Skilling (2007: 97),

> When we take into account other inscriptions and icons from the Malay Peninsula, together with epigraphic and iconographic evidence from Cambodia, we can conclude that in the eleventh century the Malay Peninsula and the Khmer lands participated in the intellectual, ritual, and iconographic world of Pāla culture, which at that time spread throughout the region, from India to Tibet and insular Southeast Asia.

Vestiges of Vajrayāna Buddhism in 10th- and 11th-century Java may be found in the groups of bronzes from Surocolo and Nganjuk, which have been suggested to represent esoteric *maṇḍala*s dominated by Vajrasattva, the central deity of Phase Two and Three Esoteric Buddhism.[61] Sumatra hosted renowned centres of Buddhist activity and higher learning by the 7th century, as documented by Yijing's account,[62] yet the archaeological remains and scant epigraphic evidence spread over disparate locales of the island—especially along the Batang Hari river (e.g., Muara Jambi and Muara Takus)—have yielded remains of Buddhist monuments and inscriptions that mostly date back to the 10th to 13th century, and which display Tantric features.[63] Nearly contemporary Tibetan traditions explicitly link esoteric teachings and lineages of masters to Sumatra (*suvarṇadvīpa*): for instance, the South Asian *Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna, aka Atīśa/Atiśa[64] (980–1054) was believed to have resided in Suvarṇadvīpa for twelve years (ca. 1011 to 1023), where he received the teaching of the Kālacakratantra by a local master, known to the sources as Dharmakīrti, Dharmapāla, Piṇḍo/Piṭo, or Kalki Śrīpāla.[65] Atīśa is said to have transmitted to Tibet the *Durbodhāloka* (a Sanskrit commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*), composed in Southeast Asia by his teacher Dharmakīrti from Suvarṇadvīpa under King Cūḍāmaṇivarman, who around AD

61. See Lokesh Chandra and Singhal 1995; Tanaka 2010: 339; Sharma 2011. On the popularity of Vajrasattva as Ādibuddha in Java and Cambodia, see Sharrock 2006, 2007, 2011a; cf. Conti 2014: 273–77 (note the mention of Vajrasattva as Ādibuddha in the Sab Bāk inscription).

62. In 671, this Chinese monk praised the high level of Buddhist scholarship he found in Sumatra, where he stopped—en-route from Guangzhou to Nālandā and from there back to China—to read Sanskrit Sūtras. In the accounts of his travels he advised that 'if a Chinese priest wishes to go to the West in order to hear (lectures) and read (the original), he had better stay here [i.e., in Sumatra] one or two years and practice the proper rules and then proceed to Central India' (Takakusu 1896: xxxiv). Further, Yijing reports that Śākyakīrti, one of the five most distinguished Buddhist teachers of his time, travelled far and large across the 'Five Indias' and finally settled in Śrīvijaya (Śrībhoja).

63. See Woodward 2004; Reichle 2007; Griffiths 2014c; Miksic (this volume); Kandahjaya (this volume). Pointing out that Buddhism thrived in Sumatra until the 14th or even 15th century, Griffiths (2014c: 239) makes the following relevant point: 'Despite being right across the Bay of Bengal from Sri Lanka, not to mention the proximity of Burma and Thailand, there is not a single written trace of influence of Pali Buddhism. On the contrary, we have evidence for the study and use of a variety of Sanskrit texts, both Mahāyānasūtras and Tantras'.

64. Isaacson and Sferra (2014: 70–71, n. 51) note that while it has become standard practice to prefer the form Atiśa (from Atiśaya?), the form Atīśa is just as problematic; they venture the speculation that the latter might be a corruption or 'transformation' of Adhīśa, which has the merit of being attested as a name or epithet. Kano (2016: 83, n. 2) refers to an interlinear gloss in a Tibetan manuscript from the unpublished *Tanjur Canon* by Üpa losel (ca. 1270–1355), reading *a dhe* [or *rhe*] *śa*.

65. Thus according to Newman (1991: 72–73), who identifies Suvarṇadvīpa with Java rather than Sumatra, whereas according to Skilling (1997: 190) the actual site might have been Kedah (contrast Schoterman, this volume, and Kandahjaya 2014). The *Blue Annals* assert that Piṇḍo (perhaps standing for *paiṇḍapātika*, a monk living on alms?) hailed from the Southern Seas, and was a disciple of Gser gling pa of Suvarṇadvīpa (Gnoli and Orofino 2006: 67). On Atīśa's (largely imaginative) account of his eventful oceanic journey to Suvarṇadvīpa, see Decleer 1995.

1019 founded a Buddhist temple in Nākappaṭṭiṇam (Skilling 1997, 2007). Van der Kuijp (2003: 420, n. 6) identifies this Dharmakīrti with the author of a commentary to the *Hevajratantra* (*Netravibhaṅga*, *Tōh*. 1191). Both Atīśa and Dharmakīrti were fervent devotees of Tārā, a deity that was popular in insular Southeast Asia.

A renewed focus on Esoteric Buddhism, no doubt triggered by royal patronage, can be detected between the 10th and 12th centuries in polities of mainland Southeast Asia, including the domains of the Cams along the Vietnamese littorals. Chutiwongs (2006) discusses information concerning the construction of a shrine to Heruka in Campā by Śrī Sūryavarmadeva towards the end of the 12th century, during Khmer occupation. The sanctuaries of Phimai and Si Thep, as well as several temples built at Angkor under the reign of Jayavarman VII, attest to Tantric iconographic programmes, as do the numerous bronze statues unearthed in the region.[66] The temple of Abeyadana (late 11th century) at Bagan displays Tantric features, arguably as the result of contemporary religious links and marital relations between the rulers of Bagan and those of Paṭṭikerā in Bengal.[67] As suggested by Bautze-Picron (2014b: 107), images found at the Sumatran sites of Padang Lawas are integrated in a network that connects them to South Asia, East Java, Central Sumatra, Cambodia and Campā in the 11th and 13th centuries; overall, the sites show a kind of Buddhism that belongs to the same phase of Vajrayāna as what was present in Khmer and Cam domains between the 12th and 13th centuries, and in East Java and China in the 13th century, 'when esoteric Buddhism was tightly intertwined with politics and when fierce characters like Mahākāla or Heruka/Hevajra were made the protectors of various kingdoms' (ibid.: 123).[68] The wild, ferocious character of the Esoteric Buddhist (and Tantric Śaiva) iconography that developed at the East Javanese courts of Kaḍiri, Siṅhasāri and Majapahit[69]

66. For an up-to-date, synthetic overview of Esoteric Buddhism at Phimai, and in the Khmer domains in general, see Conti 2014; on Angkorean sites such as Si Thep, Angkor Thom, the Bayon, Banteay Chhmar, etc., see the studies by Woodward (1981, 2012) and Sharrock (2006, 2007, 2009, 2011a, 2012, 2013a, 2013b). The Vajrayāna character of the Sab Bāk inscription of AD 1067 (K. 1158), recovered near Nakhon Ratchasima, has been discussed by Prapandvidya (1990), Sinclair (2012), and Conti (2014). Besides mentioning the *Guhyasamāja* and betraying knowledge of that system, the inscription echoes a 'signature verse' by Vāgīśvarakīrti, a *Guhyasamāja*-exegete who flourished in eastern India in the early 11th century (see Szántó forthcoming, who argues that Vāgīśvarakīrti might have been the *paramaguru* (guru's guru) of Vraḥ Dhanus, the author of the verse).

67. Abeyadana, the chief queen of King Kyanzittha (r. 1084–1112), was believed to hail from Bengal, and to be a follower of Mantranaya Buddhism. Kyanzittha's son, King Alaungsitthu (r. 1113–67), married a queen from Paṭṭikerā, which was an important centre of worship of the fierce goddess Cundā; Burmese literature and folk drama have preserved a memory of the romantic affair between the prince of Paṭṭikerā and Kyanzittha's only daughter (S. Bhattacharya 1994: 264–65). Much controversy exists around the Buddhist sect of the Aris (or Araññavāsins), which is described by 18th and 19th century Myanmar chronicles and scant epigraphic sources as a congregation of 'debased' monks devoted to sex, alcohol, dance and animal sacrifice, and worshipping local spirits (*nat*) and Hindu deities. Some scholars, such as Duroiselle, Ray and Luce, considered them followers of Tantric cults, whereas Than Tun (and most contemporary specialists of Myanmar) regard them as having little if anything to do with Tantrism (see S. Bhattacharya 1994). Championing the latter school of thought, Bautze-Picron (2003: 121–23, 199, 226 nn. 69, 70) has cast doubt on the view, advanced by earlier scholars mainly on account of the sexual nature of some of their friezes, that the Hpayathonzu (12th century) and Nandamanya (13th century) temples at Bagan were informed by a Tantric iconographic agenda. Further research is needed to clarify this issue.

68. The *Hevajratantra* appears to have enjoyed some popularity in Sumatra (and, conversely, Suvarṇadvīpa is mentioned by this text: see Schoterman this volume, p. 115). Besides the circumstantial evidence mentioned above attributing to Dharmakīrti from Suvarṇadvīpa the authorship of a commentary to the *Hevajra*, and the epigraphic evidence presented by Griffiths (2014c), must be considered the inscription of Saruaso II, which praises the crown prince Anaṅgavarman, son of Ādityavarman, the last line of which mentions his 'daily meditation on Hevajra' (*Hevajra-nityāsmṛtiḥ*). It would thus seem that Ādityavarman was following the same ideology and ritual technology adopted earlier by Kublai Khan and Kṛtanagara, who equated themselves to the central deity of the *maṇḍala*s of Buddhist Tantras such as the *Guhyasamāja* or the *Hevajra* (see Hunter in Kozok 2015: 324–27; Bautze-Picron 2014b; Reichle 2009: 139; O'Brien 1993).

69. Besides the statuary and architectural vestiges, 14th-century Old Javanese literary sources, such as the *kakavin Sutasoma*, attest to Esoteric Buddhist cults. In his *Deśavarṇana* (80.1) Prapañca refers to the existence of two

shares features with the Sumatran one, as attested in Biaro Bahal and Muara Takus, and in the Mahākāla statue attributed to Ādityavarman. The wrathful deity Hevajra and his Heruka instantiation are represented in a number of Khmer bronzes (Lobo 1994), and perhaps made into cult objects at Banteay Chhmar and other sanctuaries (Sharrock 2006, 2013a; Conti 2014: 273–77; contrast Green 2013), while Tantric Yoginīs prominently feature at the Bayon and Phimai (Sharrock 2013b). Heruka/Hevajra was part of the royal cults of the Mongol Khans (Bade, this volume), while Mahākāla was worshipped by the elites of the Dali kingdom in Yunnan (Bryson 2012).

It may be argued that the fierce, military-oriented iconography of Phase Two and Three of Esoteric Buddhism represents an 'antagonistic paradigm' reflecting socio-political contingencies. This paradigm, recently revisited by Verardi (2011), posits a hostility or antagonism between the two religions as reflected in either actual historical events, such as various forms of competition for royal support, devotees and resources, occasional interethnic or interreligious violence, or iconographic representations, such as Śaiva gods being trampled upon or subdued by Buddhist deities, and vice versa. Whereas modern scholarship often emphasizes the 'inclusive' and 'syncretic' character of Buddhism, whether or not in its esoteric varieties, in many Asian contexts, much of the extant textual and archaeological evidence points to the existence of a clear divide between Buddhism and competing religious systems, at least in elite milieux (see, e.g., Miksic 2010).[70] Having said that, it is beyond doubt that certain regional contingencies and personal idiosyncrasies favoured the formation of actual syncretic cults uniting doctrinal and ritual elements pertaining to distinct traditions—a paradigmatic case being the 'Śiva-Buddha cult' inaugurated by, and revolving around the figure of, East Javanese king Kṛtanagara (r. 1268–92), who leaned towards Esoteric Buddhism while at the same time patronised Tantric Śaivism.[71]

Unfavourable international political developments, and most notably the decline of Buddhism in northern India, may have triggered the rise of new networks at the turn of the 13th century. Nālandā and Vikramaśīla having been razed, scholars and artisans fled to Nepal and Tibet (von Schroeder 1981: 311), and possibly further afield to Southeast Asia.[72] A Nepalese (Newar) influence on the Khmer architecture of that period has been noted by Filliozat (1969: 47) and Sharrock (2007: 252); as pointed out by O'Brien (this volume), a diaspora of Newar artisans existed in the Sino-Tibetan sphere, and these artisans became popular at Khubilai Khan's court at a time that coincides with the reign of Kṛtanagara, Khubilai's Javanese adversary, and the patron of Candi Jago. Northeastern Indian or Newar elements have long since been noted in the statuary and decorative features of East Javanese Buddhist art;[73] similarly, the Nāgarī-inscribed Bud-

types of private Buddhist institutions, namely *kavinayan* and a (more prevalent) *kabajradharan,* and associates a locale named *buḍur* (Borobudur?) with the latter type of establishment (for a synthesis of relevant secondary literature, see Sinclair 2012). The Tantric legacy of Siṅhasāri and Majapahit appears to have been preserved by the Sanskrit sources used by Balinese Buddhist ritualists, which include fragments from several authoritative works of the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna: Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana,* and Advayavajra's *Kudṛṣṭinirghāṭana* (Hooykaas 1973: 600–603).

70. It goes without saying that in lay milieux the boundaries tend to become more porous, and lay devotion displays an inclusive attitude in many cultural contexts. Even so, I reiterate my argument that the (imprecise) category of 'syncretism' has often been (and continues to be) misused; cf. Estève 2009.

71. For a reevaluation of this cult in the East Javanese Siṅhasāri context, see Hunter 2007 and, for an added discussion on Majapahit and Bali, Acri 2015. A Bhairavika priest and other categories of Śaiva clergymen as well as mainstream Brahmans are mentioned in the Mula Maluruṅ inscription associated with Kṛtanagara (see Sidomulyo 2010: 107–8).

72. Tāranātha states that most of the Buddhist scholars of *madhyadeśa* fled to mainland Southeast Asia (i.e., the kingdoms of Pegu, Campā, Kamboja, etc.) after Magadha was invaded by the Turks (D. Chattopadhyaya 1980: 330).

73. See O'Brien 1993: 252–55, this volume. Schoterman (1994: 168) noted that the five main statues of Bodhisattvas at Candi Jago were executed according to the teachings of the Sanskrit *Amoghapāśasādhana*, which was written by Śākyaśrībhadra in northern India around the year 1200, and may have reached Java shortly thereafter. Lunsingh Scheurleer (2008: 296–98) underlines the northeastern Indian influence on a sculpture of Java in the Siṅhasāri period and also of Sumatra in AD 1286 by Kṛtanagara,

dhist statues from Candi Jago, and the occurrence of the words *bharāla* ('god') and *bharālī* ('goddess') in a number of inscriptions associated with Kṛtanagara, support a possible northeastern Indian, and especially Newar, link.[74]

SUMMARY OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS

In dealing with various aspects and traditions of Esoteric Buddhism and intra-Asian maritime connections from the 7th to the 13th century, the fourteen essays in this volume are not grouped according to strictly chronological or geographical criteria, but follow a thematic and disciplinary arrangement, under the three headings of 'Monks, Texts, Patrons' (Part I), 'Art, Architecture, and Material Culture' (Part II), and 'Bauddha-Śaiva Dynamics' (Part III). Rather than focusing uniquely on region-specific manifestations of Esoteric Buddhism, whether bound to modern nation-states or not, this volume embraces a perspective emphasizing the (maritime) intra-Asian interactions—also intended as the dialectic encounters between cultures and religions, doctrines and practices, and their human carriers—that occurred across geographical and cultural boundaries in the course of several centuries. Within this framework, it reveals the limits of a historiography that is premised on land-based, 'northern' pathways of transmission of (esoteric varieties of) Buddhism across the Eurasian continent, and advances an alternative—actually, complementary—historical narrative that takes the 'southern' pathways, i.e. the sea-based networks, into due account. In harmony with this perspective, several studies in the present collection focus on what is now the Indonesian Archipelago—a strategic geographical area that has yielded significant vestiges of its glorious Buddhist past, yet is still underrepresented in contemporary scholarship.

Capitalizing on recent Buddhological research, the essays integrate and link together perspectives from various disciplines (philology, history, art history, archaeology, and religious studies) and area-studies expertise. Concomitantly, a number of studies deal with textual materials in various premodern languages. This reflects the ongoing effort to lay a solid foundation upon which theoretical and historical analysis could rest, especially given the sheer amount of primary sources, in the form of manuscripts and inscriptions, which urgently await to be catalogued, edited, and studied.

Following on the main themes set out in this introductory Chapter 1, Part I explores a paramount aspect of intra-Asian interactions, namely the circulation of monks and texts. This aspect is inextricably linked to the adoption (and adaptation) of Esoteric Buddhist cults and rituals by the contemporary ruling elites, which form the primary focus of its two concluding chapters.

Chapter 2, 'Coronation and Liberation According to a Javanese Monk in China: Bianhong's Manual on the *abhiṣeka* of a *cakravartin*', by Iain Sinclair addresses the links between 8th-century Tang China and insular Southeast Asia. It examines a key figure in the transmission of Vajrayāna lineages between the Javanese and Sinitic worlds, namely a monk known by his Chinese name Bianhong, who in the 8th century travelled from his native island of Java to the Tang capital to study Esoteric Buddhism under Huiguo, one of Amoghavajra's pupils. The chapter includes an edition and annotated translation of the sole work attributed to him, the *Ritual Manual for Initiation into the Great Maṇḍala of the Uṣṇīṣa-Cakravartin*. Sinclair argues that the *Manual* embodies the interest in conversion and state protection shared by other Esoteric Buddhist masters moving through South, East and Southeast Asia at the time.

The islands of Java and Sumatra and their overseas connections provide the setting of the next two chapters. Hudaya Kandahjaya's '*Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan*, Borobudur, and the Origins of Esoteric Buddhism in Indonesia' (Chapter 3) focuses on the pre 10th century Sanskrit-Old Javanese Esoteric Buddhist compendium *Saṅ Hyaṅ*

which was reconsecrated around the mid 14th century by Ādityavarman (cf. Reichle 2007: 56ff).

74. See Lokesh Chandra 1983, Kandahjaya 2004: 68–69, Sinclair 2012, and Griffiths 2014c, who discuss the attestation of the word forms *bharāla* and *bharālī* and their probable cognates *bahāla*, *bahāra* and *bharāḍa* (<*bhaṭṭāra*[-*ka*], as suggested by Lienhard 1999: 38) in Newar sources. While these synchronic linguistic facts do not necessarily demonstrate the existence of direct links, they nonetheless suggest that analogous religious developments were probably taking place in different locales of late mediaeval Buddhist Asia.

Kamahāyānikan. Having discussed the relationship of this unique scripture with Esoteric Buddhist texts in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese, Kandahjaya provides preliminary answers to some key questions concerning its date and doctrinal inspiration, the milieu of its authorship, and its relationship with the Central Javanese Buddhist monument Borobudur. His analysis reveals that this text, which contains early esoteric material of possible northeastern Indian provenance, played an important role in the development of Esoteric Buddhist traditions in Indonesia; concomitantly, data from the Archipelago cast new light on the genesis of Esoteric Buddhism across the Buddhist cosmopolis, suggesting that the development of esoteric teachings could have occurred earlier than has been hitherto assumed.

Chapter 4 ('Traces of Indonesian Influences in Tibet') is an English translation by Roy Jordaan and Mark Long of a too rarely cited Dutch essay published as the pamphlet *Indonesische Sporen in Tibet* in 1986 by Jan Schoterman (d. 1989). This short yet seminal essay merits a re-edition and English translation insofar that it discusses the fascinating, and understudied, links between the Sumatran kingdom of Śrīvijaya and Tibet in the light of the accounts of the lives of famous Buddhist monks—such as Atīśa—and other primary sources in Sanskrit and Tibetan.

The two concluding chapters of Part I focus on the crucial issue of Esoteric Buddhism and royal sponsorship against the background of intra-Asian connections. Geoffrey Goble's 'The Politics of Esoteric Buddhism: Amoghavajra and the Tang State' (Chapter 5) focuses on the incorporation of Esoteric Buddhism in the bureaucratic imperial state of 8th century Tang China. Taking this as a case study, he suggests that the spread of early Esoteric Buddhism in Maritime Asia was driven by the tradition's guiding ethos of hegemony, control, and power and its consequent appeal to members of the ruling class.

The prominently historiographical Chapter 6, '(Spi)ritual Warfare in 13th-Century Asia? International Relations, the Balance of Powers, and the Tantric Buddhism of Kṛtanagara and Khubilai Khan', by David Bade examines the connections between, and explanations proposed for, the Tantric Buddhism and political actions of East Javanese ruler Kṛtanagara and the Mongol Khubilai Khan in light of recent scholarship on Tantric developments in the Buddhist world of the 13th century, as well as Rosenstock-Huessy's theory of religion.

In Part II we shift to the realm of the visual arts, architecture, and material culture within the context of intra-Asian connections. Its six chapters consider the circulation of Esoteric Buddhist iconography and architectural motifs between South and Southeast Asia, from the disciplinary perspective of art history and archaeology.

The first four chapters are set against the background of north- and southeastern India. This extensive geographical area, which includes Bangladesh and the modern Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal, has been recognized as one of the cradles of Esoteric Buddhism, and in general as a major source of inspiration for the arts of Tibet and Southeast Asia. The discussion is opened by Claudine Bautze-Picron in Chapter 7, 'Images of Devotion and Power in South and Southeast Bengal', which focuses on Esoteric Buddhist art, and in particular on images of the Buddha and other Buddhist deities, in eastern India from the 8th up to the 12th century. Bautze-Picron examines such different types of production as stone, terracotta, stucco or cast images, manuscript illuminations, cloth-paintings and murals, and sees them as reflecting contemporary religious values and daily concerns, as well as historical and socio-political factors—including the relationship between Buddhism, Brahmanism, and political power.

Swati Chemburkar's 'Borobudur's Pāla Forebear? A Field Note from Kesariya, Bihar, India' (Chapter 8) continues this line of enquiry, addressing the 'paradigm-shift' in Buddhist texts, ritual and sacred architecture brought about by the rise of the Pāla dynasty in 8th century Eastern India, which sent cultural waves across the expanding maritime and land trade routes of Asia. Chemburkar focuses on architectural breakthroughs, and argues that the design of a circular mountain *stūpa* of Buddhas at Kesariya (Bihar) was the precedent that made possible the celebrated and much more elaborate structure of Borobudur in Java.

Natasha Reichle's 'Imagery, Ritual, and Ideology: Examining the Mahāvihāra at Ratnagiri'

(Chapter 9) investigates another important Buddhist site of Eastern India, namely the main monastery of Ratnagiri in Odisha. Having elaborated on the Mahāyāna roots of the monastery and the later esoteric developments, Reichle notes that aspects of the esoteric iconography found at Ratnagiri are also seen at temple sites in Java and Sumatra, and may reflect similarities in the development of religious practices across insular Southeast Asia.

In Chapter 10, 'Seeds of Vajrabodhi: Buddhist Ritual Bronzes from Java and Khorat', Peter Sharrock and Emma Bunker trace a link between Eastern India and the Khmer Khorat plateau via the Malay Peninsula. Expanding on recent research focused on the role of Vajrabodhi in spreading esoteric teachings across the Buddhist ecumene, the authors argue that the little-known Buddhist bronzes from Khorat are part of the same cross-cultural expansion of Esoteric Buddhism over the seas between India and China that opened with Vajrabodhi's momentous journey.

The concluding two chapters of Part II are set in Sumatra and East Java respectively—two locales that, as we have seen in previous chapters, were at the heart of a thick web of overseas religious, economic, and diplomatic networks. Chapter 11, 'Archaeological Evidence for Esoteric Buddhism in Sumatra, 7th to 13th Century', by John Miksic presents an overview of recent archaeological discoveries of *vajra*s and inscribed gold objects in Sumatra and under the water near the island. These discoveries, as well as Sumatra's rich heritage of Buddhist monuments, lend support to the hypothesis that this area was a significant centre of Esoteric Buddhist activity during an important phase of the genesis and growth of that religious orientation, and that several streams of Buddhist thought and practice coexisted in various areas of the island for more than half a millennium.

Kate O'Brien's 'The Tale of Sudhana and Manoharā on Candi Jago: An Interpretation of a Series of Narrative Bas-reliefs on a 13th-Century East Javanese Monument' (Chapter 12) focuses on some narrative reliefs at the temple of Jago, the Buddhist shrine commissioned in AD 1268 by King Kṛtanagara. She proposes that an unidentified series of reliefs represent the tale of the Bodhisattva prince Sudhana and the *kinnarī* princess Manoharā, which on the one hand accords with the maṇḍalic programme of the shrine, and on the other reflects the Esoteric Buddhist ideal of kingship embraced by Kṛtanagara (and, perhaps, by his contemporary rival Khubilai Khan).

Part III comprises three chapters that add an important dimension to the discussion, namely the relationship between the cognate religious and ritual systems of Esoteric Buddhism and Tantric Śaivism. Coexisting in many contexts, yet often rivalling each other, these two traditions contributed to shape the religious discourse across Maritime Asia in the mediaeval period, giving rise to phenomena of hybridity, dialectics, appropriation, or antagonism.

The first two essays primarily analyse sets of textual and archaeological evidence from Java, linking them to contemporary developments in overseas regions. In Chapter 13, 'Once More on the "Ratu Boko Mantra": Magic, Realpolitik, and Bauddha-Śaiva Dynamics in Ancient Nusantara', I build on the work of previous scholars on the Esoteric Buddhist mantra in Sanskrit inscribed on a circa 8th-century gold foil recovered from the Ratu Boko prominence in Central Java, and identify two hitherto unnoticed attestations of it in two sources from Bali—one in a Sanskrit Buddhist hymn (the *Pañcakāṇḍa*), the other in a Sanskrit-Old Javanese Śaiva text (the *Gaṇapatitattva*). Through an analysis of related textual sources from the Indian Subcontinent and East Asia, my study casts new light on the context and function of the Ratu Boko artefact, and elaborates on the religious and socio-political scenarios opened up by it.

Jeffrey Sundberg's 'Mid-9th-Century Adversity for Sinhalese Esoteric Buddhist Exemplars in Java: Lord Kumbhayoni and the 'Rag-wearer' *Paṁsukūlika* Monks of the Abhayagirivihāra' (Chapter 14) examines the relationship between two chronologically and thematically distinct sets of late 8th- to early 9th-century lithic structures and inscriptions at the southern end of the Ratu Boko promontory in Central Java: the first is Buddhist and relates to the Sinhalese monks of the famous Abhayagirivihāra, the second is Śaiva and is connected to the Javanese nobleman Pu Kumbhayoni. The essay seeks to offer a plausible narrative about how the Bauddhas and the Śaivas intersected in AD 856 on that small

patch of Central Java, arguing that the Ratu Boko archaeological remains mirror an important event in the course of Buddhism in Asia: the emphatic AD 854 reversion of Sinhalese Buddhist kings from the Mantranaya to the Theravāda in the wake of the traumatic sacking of Anurādhapura after a circa 840 battle seemingly fought in the grounds of the Abhayagiri itself. Sundberg points out that the loss of Sri Lanka was part of the dimming of prospects and support for Esoteric Buddhists across Asia in the same decade. The appended Annex, 'Further Considerations of the Ratu Boko Mantra', offers additional insights on the inscribed gold foil discussed by myself in Chapter 13.

In the final Chapter 15, 'A Śaiva Text in Chinese Garb? An Annotated Translation of the *Suji liyan Moxishouluo tian shuo aweishe fa*', by Rolf Giebel we return to Tang China. Giebel takes up *The (Garuḍa) Āveśa Rite Explained by the God Maheśvara Which Swiftly Establishes Its Efficacy*, being a Chinese translation, attributed to Amoghavajra, of an unidentified original (South Asian?) Sanskrit source. This text, the greater part of which describes the use of child mediums in rites of spirit possession for the purpose of divination, would seem to be entirely devoid of any Buddhist content; given the many elements belonging to the Gāruḍa strand of Tantric Śaiva literature, this source may be indeed regarded as a Śaiva text in Chinese Esoteric Buddhist garb.

The volume is closed by two Appendices. Appendix A, 'The Names of Nāgabuddhi and Vajrabuddhi' by Iain Sinclair, makes a persuasive argument in support of a reinterpretation of the names of the famous Esoteric Buddhist masters popularly known as 'Nāgabodhi' and 'Vajrabodhi'. Appendix B, 'Notes on the Alleged Reading *vālaputra* on the Pikatan Funeral Stele' by Jeffrey Sundberg, engages with de Casparis' reading on the Śivagṛha Central Javanese inscription, which bears on the hypothesis of an end to Buddhist Śailendra rule in Java.

The collective body of work presented in this volume highlights the important role played by Esoteric Buddhism in shaping maritime intra-Asian connectivity from the 7th century onwards, and in influencing many cultural aspects of the local and cosmopolitan societies throughout Buddhist Asia to the 13th century and beyond. The resulting perspective contributes to transcend—in fact, overturn—the still dominant paradigm regarding Esoteric Buddhism as a marginal, or even aberrant and degenerate, phenomenon as opposed to mainstream Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in many Asian contexts. Indeed, one may even say that by the 10th century, Esoteric Buddhism had virtually become identical with 'Buddhist practice' throughout much of Asia.

PART I
MONKS, TEXTS, PATRONS

Chapter 2

Coronation and Liberation According to a Javanese Monk in China: Bianhong's Manual on the *abhiṣeka* of a *cakravartin*

IAIN SINCLAIR

A key figure in the 8th-century transmission of Buddhism between the Sanskritic and Sinic worlds is a monk known by his Chinese name Bianhong (perhaps a.k.a Ājñāgarbha).[1] To date, Bianhong's life and work have been known primarily from one account circulated in Japan by his more famous fellow student Kūkai. Here Bianhong's career will be examined in the light of the sole work attributed to him: the *Ritual Manual for Initiation into the Great Maṇḍala of the Uṣṇīṣa-Cakravartin* (Taishō Tripiṭaka 959), hereafter the *Manual*. Although Bianhong is often discussed in connection with the spread of Buddhism in his Javanese homeland, his *Manual* has been entirely overlooked to date. No other individual from Java is known to have travelled to the Tang and written in Chinese, but it will be argued here that the author of the *Manual* was indeed a foreign member of China's most prestigious lineage of Esoteric Buddhism. The *Manual*'s protocols were however determined not only by the twin-*maṇḍala* system of the Tang masters, but also the more obscure and archaic system of the Uṣṇīṣakalpas. It was the Uṣṇīṣakalpas that offered the most compelling rituals for the coronation (*abhiṣeka*) of a universal emperor, a *cakravartin*—a process that interested many Buddhist cognoscenti in South, East, and Southeast Asia at the time. To facilitate the discussion of these rituals, a preliminary Chinese edition and annotated translation of the *Manual* is also presented for the first time here.

Bianhong emerges into history in the wake of the first transmissions of soteriology-oriented Tantric Buddhism[2] to Tang China. The novelty of this form of Buddhism lay in the fact that it was transmitted from guru to disciple through initiation, and in its ability to harness the power of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas through mantras and yogic meditation. It had an exclusive character suited to talented monks and adventurous laypersons—especially those in the ruling elite, up to the level of the head of state, for whom the rituals of initiation (*abhiṣeka*) could be performed with full effect as a coronation (*rājyābhiṣeka*).[3] The Tang subtradition of the pan-Asian Mantranaya, in which Bianhong trained, while now well known,[4] will be reintro-

1. I dedicate this essay to Adrian Snodgrass, whose encouragement I have been fortunate enough to receive from the outset of my studies in this field. I also thank Andrea Acri for attentive and helpful editorial comments, Rolf Giebel for diligent feedback on the textual criticism of the *Manual* and copies of the relevant pages of the *Fuhōden*, Gudrun Bühnemann for corrections, as well as Hong Luo and other colleagues whose feedback is acknowledged throughout the essay. All errors are of course mine.

2. With regard to the use of the word 'Tantra' here, it should be pointed out that the two main scriptures promulgated by the Tang *ācārya*s, the *VAT* and *STTS*, are in fact called Tantras in the Sanskritic tradition (especially in expository works such as the *Jñānasiddhi*, *Tattvasiddhi*, and *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*) from the 8th century onwards. The Chinese word *jing* 經, used to designate these scriptures, undoubtedly translates a range of Sanskrit terms such as *āgama*, *sūtra*, *kalpa*, and *tantra*. The claim that 'Esoteric Buddhism' (the usual designation for the Tang tradition) is not Tantric or is different in kind from Tantric Buddhism has no evidential support.

3. The essential element of the rite is 'unction', *abhiṣeka* proper, in which the candidate is bathed in waters poured over his head, thereby enacting his 'rebirth' and the investiture of royal power. The Buddhist performance shares this element with the classical, i.e. Vedic, performance of *rājyābhiṣeka*, as described by Heesterman (1957: 114–22).

4. For the most recent survey of scholarship on 'Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia', which provides important background for this essay, see Orzech, Sørensen and Payne 2011.

Fig. 2.1: The Twin Maṇḍalas. Left: Japanese *maṇḍala* of the Matrix World (15th–16th century) (*Taizōkai mandara* 胎蔵界曼荼羅), opaque watercolour and gold paint on silk, 218.4 × 184.5 cm (image and sheet), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (AS9-1971), detail: central matrix (*Chūtai-in* 中台院, *garbhamaṇḍala*). Right: Japanese *maṇḍala* of the Diamond World (15th–16th century) (*Kongōkai mandara* 金剛界曼荼羅), opaque watercolour and gold paint on silk, 218.3 × 180.3 cm (image and sheet), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AS10-1971, detail: Vajradhātumahāmaṇḍala based in part on the first chapter of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*.

duced here in brief, as its major players and ideas are essential in the conception of Bianhong's *Manual*.

The primary carriers of this Buddhism were Śubhākarasiṁha 善無畏 (637–735), Vajrabodhi (a.k.a. Vajrabuddhi: see Appendix A) 金剛智 (671–741), and Amoghavajra 不空金剛 (704–74). These masters (*ācārya*) of the doctrine and praxis of Buddhist Tantric systems of South Asian origin, literate in both Sanskrit and Chinese, were renowned for their expertise in two Tantras in particular. The first, the *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhitantra* (*VAT*), was translated into Chinese under the guidance of Śubhākarasiṁha, who was also versed in its practice. He initiated disciples into the principal schema or *maṇḍala* of this Tantra, the Mahākaruṇodbhava-garbhamaṇḍala, a developed form of which was transmitted to Japan as the Genzu or 'current diagram' *maṇḍala*. The second of the two main Tantras transmitted in the Tang, the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha* (*STTS*), was the speciality of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, who selectively translated it and some related works into Chinese. Both were acquainted with the Tantras connected to the *STTS*, generically called '**Vajraśikhara* works' 金剛頂經 in the Tang, which by the middle of the 8th century had been incorporated into a set of eighteen *mahāyogatantras*.[5] Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra likewise bestowed initiation into the central *maṇḍala* of the *STTS*, the Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala, upon many East Asian students. Their lineage descended directly from the famous South Indian exponent of the *mahāyoga* Tantric system, Nāgabodhi 龍智 (fl. ca. 645–745).[6]

As the *VAT* and *STTS* have the same main object of worship—the omniscient, omnipresent Buddha

5. The earliest account of a corpus of eighteen works connected with the *STTS* is given by Amoghavajra (*T* 869), on which see Giebel (1995). These texts were first connected with the eighteen *mahāyoga* Tantras of the Rnying ma pa, which centre on the *Guhyasamāja* rather than the *STTS* itself, by Eastman (1983: 44). We can safely dismiss Davidson's (2012: 83) speculation that the Sanskrit original of *Jingangding* 金剛頂 is **Vajroṣṇīṣa* due to the lack of any discernible connection between the *Jingangding* texts and the Uṣṇīṣakalpas. See also Appendix A (p. 389).

6. See Appendix A on Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi's name and dates and his tutelage of Vajrabodhi.

Mahāvairocana—the two Tantras came to be regarded as teaching complementary systems, epitomized in the *ryōbu* 両部 or 'twinned' *maṇḍala*s. The two *maṇḍala*s were propagated in China for a few generations and up to the present day in Japan within the Shingon 真言宗 and Tendai 天台宗 orders (Fig. 2.1). Several sources of the Esoteric or Tantric Buddhism transmitted in and through Tang China have now been studied in depth in Anglophone scholarship,[7] although the exploits of key players such as Bianhong have barely begun to be explored.

Bianhong studied with the *ācārya* Huiguo 惠果 (746–805), an influential heir of Śubhākarasiṁha's and Amoghavajra's lineages, who gave initiation and instruction to several disciples in China. Huiguo's famous Japanese student Kūkai 空海 provided the richest, earliest, and most authoritative account of Bianhong in his *Himitsu Mandarakyō Fuhōden* (hereafter *Fuhōden* 付法傳), completed in 806.[8] Another brief notice of Bianhong appears in a lineage history composed in 834 by Haiyun 海雲, a Chinese monk in Huiguo's lineage. Haiyun's *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa* has been published in the Chinese Tripiṭaka of the Taishō era (hereafter *T*), No. 2081. The passages relating to Bianhong in these works have been competently translated into English.[9] They may now be revisited in connection with new information from the *Manual* (*T* 959), which provides by far the most detailed documentation of Bianhong's training, expertise, and religious interests.

A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY OF BIANHONG

Bianhong is said to have been active in China in 780 and 806. His dates of birth and death are unknown; he was probably born at least two decades before visiting China. Bianhong's homeland is identified as Heling 訶陵, a Chinese transliteration of the toponym Kəliṅ, cognate with the Sanskrit name Kaliṅga. The kingdom of Kəliṅ was located wholly or in part in the Indonesian Archipelago, probably on Java, though the kingdom's boundaries do not seem to have been coextensive with the island of Java in the 8th century.[10] At this time Kəliṅ was an important waystation for Buddhist pilgrims travelling the sea route between the Indian Subcontinent and the Tang. It was visited by Vajrabodhi, who stayed there in 719, and by Amoghavajra in the 740s. There had been a significant Buddhist presence in Java since at least the 7th century. By the late 8th century, Kaliṅgodra, the 'Maritime Kəliṅ', had been accorded Buddhavacana-level recognition in the Sanskritic world in the *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa* (or *Mañjuśriya-*, hereafter *MMK*).[11]

Little is known of Bianhong's life in Kəliṅ. In East Asian sources he is regarded as a monk, and so seems to have received at least the ordination of a novice before leaving for China. According to an anecdote related by Kūkai, while in Kəliṅ Bianhong is said to have gained some proficiency in the yogic invocation of the Bodhisattva Cakravarticintāmaṇi.[12] This Bodhisattva person

7. The Chinese translations of the *ryōbu* Tantras have been translated by Giebel (2001, 2005) and Hodge (2003), while the twinned *maṇḍala*s have been described in detail by Snodgrass (1988). Many associated biographical, scriptural, and ritual sources have been treated in the useful survey of Orzech, Sørensen, and Payne (2011).

8. Reprinted in *Kōbō Daishi Zenshū* 弘法大師全集 v.I.

9. The biographical account in the *Fuhōden* has been paraphrased by Yutaka Iwamoto (1981: 85) and translated by Hudaya Kandahjaya (2004: 95) and Rolf Giebel (Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 130–31). One of two relevant passages in Haiyun's lineage history has been translated by Harriet Hunter (2004: 48–49).

10. The location of 'Ho-ling' has been debated by Louis-Charles Damais (1964) and W.J. van der Meulen (1977), among others. Today the place name can be reconstructed in Early Middle Chinese (EMC) phonology as *Xɑliəng, which corresponds to Kəliṅ or Khliṅ. In the Song dynasty translation of the *STTS*, the two glyphs 訶 陵 transliterate the syllables *hā rīṁ* in the word *sarvatathāgata-pratihārīṁ* 一切如來鉢囉帝訶陵 (*T* 882.350b13–14). Here it will be provisionally accepted that Kəliṅ is located on Java, following Keiji Matsunaga's (1999: 33) comparison of premodern Chinese toponyms for places in Southeast Asia. Matsunaga's data show that Heling is consistently distinguished from West and East Sumatra, Bali, the Malay Peninsula, etc. in Chinese historical sources.

11. See *MMK* 51.636–640 (ed. Jayaswal 1934: 32). A further remark that the kings of this place 'will be' Buddhists, in the 'prophetic present', occurs in the Tibetan translation of this passage. According to Patra (2013: 56), the toponym Kaliṅgodra refers to the sea between Java and Kaliṅga proper, which he locates in Odisha.

12. The name Cakravarticintāmaṇi has now been established as the Sanskrit original counterpart of the Chinese name Ruyilun (J. Nyoirin) 如意輪, deprecating *Cintāmaṇi-

ifies a wish-fulfilling *dhāraṇī* that circulated throughout Asia in a variety of texts and translations. One work on yogic self-identification with Cakravarticintāmaṇi is extant in a Chinese translation attributed to Vajrabodhi (*T* 1087). Its visualization procedure describes a six-armed form of the Bodhisattva that is well known in East Asia.[13] Images of this form of Cakravarticintāmaṇi, as well as a four-armed form of similar appearance, have been recovered from South Asia, Java, and elsewhere in Southeast Asia (Fig. 2.2).[14] Most of the Chinese translations are old enough to confirm Kūkai's report of the Bodhisattva's cult in Kəliṅ in the 8th century.

Cakravarticintāmaṇi's power of wish fulfilment furnishes Kūkai's biography of Bianhong with an appropriate moment of serendipity. Bianhong is said to have desired initiation into the system of the *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhi*, which was apparently unavailable in Kəliṅ at the time. As Kūkai tells it, his wish was facilitated by a 'sudden' meeting with a person who advised Bianhong to seek initiation in China rather than in the southern part of the Indian Subcontinent (Nan Tianzhu 南天竺):

> The man declared: 'That dharma [of the *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhi*] used to be transmitted by *vajrācārya* Amogha in the land of the Great Tang 大唐國. His disciple, *ācārya* Huiguo, now at Qinglong Monastery 青龍寺 in Chang'an, received the transmission. If [you] stay [there, you] shall meet [Huiguo and] receive [it]; otherwise, [it will be] hard to get'.
>
> [His] speech finished, [the man] disappeared. Immediately [Bianhong] knew [that he was a] divine being. Furthermore, [Bianhong] turned around, heading for the Great Tang.[15]

Fig. 2.2: The six-armed Bodhisattva Cakravarticintāmaṇi, metal statuette, 7th–9th century, 'found near the ruins at Brambanan and in the Mountain Diéng or Prahu', current location unknown; drawing in Raffles (1817 II: 56–57, third page of plates). The iconography is described in Vajrabodhi's text: 'The first [right] hand is pensive due to [his] sympathising [with] beings. The second holds a wishing gem, which can fulfill all desires. The third holds a rosary, as though lifting out from the suffering of rebirth. The left [hand] holds down the radiant mountain, succeeding in not upturning [it]. The second holds a lotus, which can purify sinful dharmas. The third holds a wheel, which can circulate the unsurpassed dharma' (*T* 1087.213b17, 20–25). Other Indonesian icons of the Bodhisattva are extant, most of them four-armed (e.g., MMoA Acc. Nr. 1984.473).

cakra. Sarah Fremerman has noticed that the proper form is given in Chinese transcription, namely in *T* 1080 and 1088 (2006: 118). A short related text in Siddhamātṛkā has been studied by Giebel (2012: 197).

13. See Fremerman (2006: 125ff.) on the canonical Chinese sources for the Bodhisattva's iconography, i.e., *T* 1084–89.

14. The only known example of the six-armed form found in Java, now kept in the Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (formerly Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde), has been identified by Nandana Chutiwongs (1994: pl. 5).

15. 彼人報云:「彼法者、不空金剛阿闍梨將去傳大唐國。彼弟子惠果阿闍梨、今見在長安青龍寺傳授。若住必合受、不然者難得。」言畢不見。即知神人。更却向大唐 (*Fuhōden, Kōbō Daishi Zenshū* I. 42 5–8, with punctuation added.)

This meeting, the *Fuhōden* suggests, is the fruition of Bianhong's mantric practice. In Japan it was well known that recitation of the *dhāraṇī* could summon the Bodhisattva to grant the *mantrin*'s wishes.[16] Kūkai thereby elevated a minor anecdote about his fellow initiate to one link in a chain of momentous events leading up to the inheritance of Huiguo's Tantric lineage.[17]

In 780 Bianhong arrived at the Tang capital Chang'an 長安, as is briefly recorded in an anonymous, posthumous biography of Huiguo (*T* 2057).[18] By this time Huiguo was versed in the major Tantric systems transmitted in the Tang capital.[19] Bianhong arrived carrying 'a set of brass cymbals from his homeland intended [as a gift,] presented at the Shengfo-yuan 聖佛院 [Hall of Sacred Buddhas at Daxingshan monastery]'. The wording suggests that these may have been official gifts, which further implies that Bianhong travelled under state sponsorship.[20] Bianhong's familiarity with Tantric Buddhist protocol is demonstrated by other gifts: 'a pair of conches, a brass [object[21]], and four vases for the abbot [Huiguo], the full offerings'.[22] Bianhong was much more familiar with Tantric protocol than his East Asian fellows, such as the Korean monk Hye-il 惠日, who in 781 came from Silla to see Huiguo bringing only his 'faith' (*xinwu* 信物), like Kūkai.[23]

Bianhong duly received initiation from Huiguo into the Tantric system of the *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhi*. Kūkai referred to this event at least twice in his writings, thereby establishing a precedent, and legitimacy, for his own credentials as a foreign disciple of Huiguo. No other monks from Southeast Asia are known to have received their authority to practise Tantric Buddhism in Tang China. Bianhong is unlikely to have spoken much Chinese soon after arriving, and as Huiguo is not known to have been fluent in Sanskrit, communication must have been difficult. The Japanese monk Enchin 円珍 (814–91) relayed misgivings about Bianhong's training: 'in the chatter it is said that Bianhong did not receive the eight seals [optionally imparted in the transmission of the *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhi*].'[24]

Haiyun reports that Bianhong also received initiation into the system of the *STTS*, the *Vajradhātu-abhiṣeka, along with other affiliates of the Daxingshan monastery.[25] This report is not corroborated in Huiguo's main biography, and sits uneasily with Kūkai's claim that he was the only non-Chinese student to be initiated into the *ryōbu maṇḍala*s by Huiguo.[26] Nonetheless, the *Manual* affirms that its compiler formulated it 'in compliance with the Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala' of the *STTS*, and in so doing possessed credentials in that system. The *Vajradhātu-abhiṣeka could have been bestowed on Bianhong by someone other than Huiguo, as Amoghavajra left several Chinese

16. The conditions under which the Bodhisattva may appear to the *sādhaka* are specified in Japanese lore discussed by Fremerman (2006: 56).

17. Rhetorical strategy in Kūkai's autobiographical writing, his 'hand in the creation of his own legend', has been discussed by Matsuda (2003: 22–28).

18. 'In the inaugural year of Jianzhong [780], there was Bianhong, a monk of Kəliṅ nationality' 建中年初,有訶陵國僧辨弘 (*T* 2057.295b16–b18). This biography was composed in 826 (Baoli 2 寶曆二年); its author must have been a disciple of Huiguo, according to Shigeo Kamata in Kamata ed. (1998).

19. In 768 Huiguo had been initiated into the systems of the *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhi* and *Susiddhikara* Tantras by Śubhākarasiṁha's disciple Xuanchao 玄超, and Amoghavajra himself bestowed initiation into the *STTS*—or, in the wording of the biography, the '**Mahāyoga* Tantras (*dajiaowang*) of the **Vajraśikhara*' 金剛頂大瑜伽大教王經 (*T* 2057.295a9–13).

20. *Cong benguo qiang* 從本國將 may, alternatively, convey the mere fact that the items were made in Java. In any case, the long journey would necessarily have been supported by persons of some means. State permission would also have been needed, if later Javanese policy is any guide (cf. *Deśavarṇana* 16.2, trans. Robson 1995: 35).

21. *Tong* 銅: the lacuna (indicated by □) probably originally referred to a dish or begging bowl, *pātra*, following the *Fuhōden*. From comparable passages in Tantric sources, we might also expect *wan* 椀 (e.g., *T* 893.622b9), *bo* 鉢 (*T* 901.889b28), or simply 'utensils', *qi* 器 (e.g., *T* 893.637c5).

22. 螺兩具。銅□瓶四□,奉上和上。充供養。求授胎藏毘盧遮那大法 (*T* 2057.295b16–b18).

23. Cf. *T* 2057.295b19–21.

24. The source for this remark is the *Taizō Yuga ki* 胎藏瑜伽記 of Enchin, which Gōhō 杲寶 (1306–52) quotes: 又語話中曰。辯弘闍梨未得八印 (*T* 2216.56b18–19). The reference is to *VAT* Ch. 14 (秘密八印品, *T* 848.36c ff., trans. Giebel 2005: 151–53). Enchin added: 'the commoners of Bianzhou [see n. 33 below] have no understanding of the eight seals' 汴州門下不解用八印 (*T* 2216.56b18–19).

25. 所傳金剛界法者。則有大興善寺傳灌頂教同學惠應阿闍梨惠則成都府惟尚。汴淋辨弘 (*T* 2081.784a27–b1).

26. Kūkai presents this claim as Huiguo's own testimony (Matsuda 2003: 55–56).

disciples who were qualified to administer it.[27] It is also conceivable that the initiation was received in Kəliṅ. Nonetheless, the lineage histories composed after Kūkai explicitly identified Huiguo as the guru who bestowed the *Vajradhātu-abhiṣeka upon Bianhong.[28]

Bianhong's movements between his final training with Huiguo and the end of the 8th century are obscure.[29] Soon after taking initiation—while still called a *śramaṇa*, not yet an *ācārya*—Bianhong moved to Shengshan-si 聖善寺, a prestigious monastery founded several decades earlier in the Tang dynasty's eastern capital, Luoyang 洛陽. Shengshan monastery was the last residence of Śubhākarasiṁha, and had strong ties to the ruling elite. Although the monastery had served as a base for Tantric practitioners, Bianhong may have been stationed there by the Tang government,[30] since its reputation as a site of Tantric practice was at the time being overshadowed by its growing role as a nexus of Northern Chan 北宗禪.[31] Śubhākarasiṁha's famous disciple Yixing 一行 (683–727),[32] who had studied at the monastery, was routinely called a (Northern) Chan master (*chanshi* 禪師). It was at Shengshan-si that the *Manual* was compiled, as its front matter records. Parts of the *Manual* suggest that Bianhong there studied Tantric practices transmitted outside Huiguo's lineage, about which more will be said below.

Map 2.1: Places of significance in Bianhong's career and initiatory circle (simplified, selective topography): Kəliṅ, Bianhong's homeland, probably located on Java; Chang'an, the western capital of the Tang dynasty, where Bianhong was initiated into the *maṇḍala* of the *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhitantra* in 780; Luoyang, eastern capital, where Bianhong compiled his *Manual* (*T* 959); Bianzhou, Bianhong's last known residence, reported in 805; and Yangzhou, where Bianhong's disciple Quanya was active. Some of Bianhong's fellow initiates travelled to China from Korea/Silla (Hye-il 惠日, O-jin 悟眞) and Japan/Nippon (Kūkai, a.k.a. Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師). (Map drawn by author)

By the beginning of the 9th century Bianhong had moved to Bianzhou 汴州,[33] the area surrounding present-day Kaifeng city 開封市. Bianzhou is

27. The lives and qualifications of the disciples 'moulded in the **pañcakula*' 五部琢磨 whom Amoghavajra mentions in his will (*T* 2120) have been treated by Goble (2012: 254ff.).

28. So said, e.g., Enchin; see the Chishō Daishi sōjō 智証大師系讃, *MDJ* (Appendix: Mikkyō hōryū keisan 密教法流系讃, Sankoku sōjō 三国相承, no. 6, p. 3). Later accounts in agreement include *T* 2373.436c22–25 and *T* 2390.108c8.

29. In 788, a translation team working on the **Ṣaṭ-pāramitāsūtra*—supervised by Prajña 般若, the Indian monk best known as Kūkai's Sanskrit teacher—was joined by a monk called Biankong 辯空 residing at Zhangjing-si 章敬寺 in Chang'an (*T* 261.865b8; cf. *T* 2156.756b11). The possibility that the name of this otherwise unknown individual is misspelled (i.e., *kōng* 空 as a homophone of *hōng* 弘) is remote, but should not be ruled out in view of the fact that Bianhong's name was spelled in various ways.

30. Monks from the Sanskritic world could not leave China without imperial permission, even those as eminent as Śubhākarasiṁha (Chou 1945: 269). As Charles Orzech observes, 'highly educated monks quickly became servants of the state, and their movements and activities were surveyed and controlled' (2011: 27).

31. Since the entire monastery was razed in the aftermath of the An Lushan rebellion 安史之亂 between 762 and 771, according to Jinhua Chen (2006: 143), it is unlikely that much of Śubhākarasiṁha's legacy survived in a form that Bianhong could use; even Śubhākarasiṁha's remains had been transferred to nearby Longmen 龍門 (Chou 1945: 270).

32. On Yixing, see, in brief, Keyworth (2011).

33. Bianzhou 汴州 is mentioned as Bianhong's abode in Kūkai's *Fuhōden* and in *T* 2216, *T* 2373, and *T* 2453 (based on Haiyun). It is therefore unlikely to be a permutation of Luozhou 洛州, i.e., Luoyang; the alternative name Bianlin 汴淋 given in *T* 2081 is probably a synonym or an error. There are no indications that this place is located anywhere other than China. That is, Bian 汴 (EMC Bhyèn) does

located near Luoyang, closer to China's northern coast (Map 2.1), and during the Tang dynasty several monasteries flourished there. This place is Bianhong's last reported destination. In 806 Kūkai wrote that 'Bianhong is nowadays (今) seen residing in Bianzhou, promulgating the secret *maṇḍala* (秘輪)'.[34] After Huiguo had passed away the year before, the epitaph composed in his honour by Kūkai recorded that 'Bianhong of Kəliṅ passed as many as five days prostrating' out of respect for their departed teacher.[35]

Bianhong is not heard of again until the second generation of Japanese pilgrims arrives in China to study Tantric Buddhism. In 839 a monk identified as Bianhong's Chinese student, Quanya 全雅, met Ennin 圓仁 (794–864) shortly after he embarked from a Japanese ship at Yangzhou 揚州. There Quanya set up a *maṇḍala* of Cakravarticintāmaṇi, according to Ennin's diary.[36] This was presumably done in order to speed up Ennin's goal of visiting Tiantai Mountain 天台山. Ennin separately wrote in his catalogue of texts obtained in China that

> [I] came across *ācārya* Quanya, the dharma transmission disciple of the Great-Tang-revered *ācārya* Bianhong. [We] conferred [about the possible transmission of] the secret dharma. [I] thereupon implored him to bestow the **dharmaparyāya* of [mantra] repetition, together with the Twinned Maṇḍalas, the *Garbha and Vajra [Maṇḍalas], the various [related] **maṇḍalavidhi*s and so on.[37]

Ennin did not receive initiation from Quanya, but was initiated by others in Huiguo's lineage later in his stay.[38] Nonetheless, Ennin sent to Japan writings used or written by Quanya. These included treatises in Siddhamātṛkā,[39] at least one of which is extant—an alphabet (*varṇamālā*) in Sanskrit and Chinese kept at the Tō-ji 東寺 in Kyoto.[40] It is unclear whether these little-known texts convey any of Bianhong's teachings.

The writings of Ennin record the last direct contact between Japanese pilgrims and Bianhong's immediate circle. As Quanya was unknown to members of Huiguo's lineage before Ennin, he must have been accepted as a disciple when Bianhong was quite old. There are no indications that Bianhong returned to Kəliṅ, or that he had the freedom to do so; rather, he almost certainly remained in China until the end of his life.[41]

---

not transliterate a non-Chinese place name (e.g., Bawean, Dieng) or the name of an island (*zhou* 洲).

34. 彼辯弘見住汴淋，宣傳秘輪 (*Fuhōden*, op. cit.)

35. 訶陵辨弘經五天而接足 (*Keika Hibun* 惠果碑文, quoted in *T* 2433.418b13 and *MDJ* 1979). Parts of the epitaph have been translated by Matsuda (2003: 40ff.).

36. The *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 is the travelogue referred to by Reischauer (1955) as 'Ennin's Diary'. For the text of the short passage on Quanya see e.g., Pan (1998: 65). The meeting is briefly discussed by Jesse Palmer (2009: 124–25).

37. 又逢大唐內供奉辯弘阿闍梨付法弟子全雅阿闍梨。諮稟祕法。遂乃嚩授念誦法門。并胎藏金剛兩部曼荼羅諸壇樣等 (*T* 2165.1076a29).

38. According to Palmer (2009: 125), 'Later accounts… claim that Ennin received the Diamond World (*kongōkai* 金剛界) *maṇḍala* initiation from Quanya as well'. Here Palmer may be referring to the Tendai monk Keichin 慧鎮 (1281–1356) who, writing in 1323 (Ono 1933–35 I: 322), states that Quanya received from Bianhong initiation into the *ryōbu maṇḍala*s, but transmitted only the Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala to Ennin: 傳 全雅 受金剛於辨弘大師受金界灌頂 (*T* 2373.436c29). This factoid is still repeated in standard reference works (e.g., Buswell Jr. and Lopez 2013). A *Jingangjie zhuzun yigui* 金剛界諸尊儀軌 (**Vajradhātunānādevatāvidhi*) cited in Ennin's diary is known only through mentions in Japanese works (cf. e.g., *T* 2391.157a16; *T* 2400.709c18).

39. Quanya's Siddhamātṛkā treatise on the 'Wheel of Syllables (*Akṣaracakra)' chapter of the *Vairocanābhisaṁbodhi* has not yet been identified with any extant work, but it was known in Japan (e.g., 全雅悉曇初載大日經中字輪品, cited in *T* 2702.391c9–392a5).

40. The Siddhamātṛkā treatise 悉曇章 of Quanya, kept at the Kongōzō of the Tō-ji, has been published in facsimile by Mabuchi (2006: figs. 4–6). It begins (verbatim transcript of the Sanskrit part, with selective correction): *ʔ namo saṁmaṁntābuddhānāṁ a ʔ namā* (post-corr.: *namo*) *saṁmaṁntā buddhānāma* (read: *dharmāṇām*) *ʔ namo saṁmaṁntāvajrāṇāṁ va* (post-corr.: *vaṁ*) *ʔ namo sarvajñāya || siddhir astuḥ siddhā* (post-corr.: *siddhāṁ*) *a ā i ī u ū ṛ ṝ ḷ ḹ e ai o au aṁ aḥ || ka kha ga gha ṅaḥ ca cha ja jha ñāḥ ṭā ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇāḥ ta tha da dha naḥ pa pha ba bha maḥ ya ra la va śa ṣa sa ha jñaṁ kṣaḥ || ka kā ki kī ku kū ke kai ko kau kaṁ kaḥ….*

41. This is by far the most likely outcome, in light of the aforementioned restrictions on monks' travel. The hypothesis that Bianhong returned to Java, entertained by Woodward (2009: 25) and others, has no support in Chinese historical sources.