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EATING THE HEART OF THE BRAHMIN: REPRESENTATIONS OF ALTERITY AND THE FORMATION OF IDENTITY IN TANTRIC BUDDHIST DISCOURSE

EATING THE HEART: TRANSGRESSION IN TANTRIC BUDDHIST LITERATURE

Religious identity, as is now widely recognized, is not monolithic but relational, developing and changing through the encounters that continually occur between competing religious traditions.[1] In this article I will explore the process by which religious identity was formed in a Tantric Buddhist tradition during the early medieval period, through an exploration of a body of discourse composed during its period of early development. This tradition, which gave rise to the Buddhist Yoginītantras, is fascinating because it developed in dependence upon a non-Buddhist tradition, and thus faced the challenge of forging a distinctly Buddhist identity. This challenge was particularly great as this body of scripture, particularly the *Cakrasamvara Tantra,* which will be the focus of this essay, exhibited numerous signs of "heretical," non-Buddhist affiliation, and was also notorious for its transgressive rhetoric.

[1] I will argue this below in relation to the early medieval South Asian context. For two recent studies on the formation and change of religious identity in contentious cultural contexts see Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), and Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

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This article will explore two closely related phenomena. The first is the process by which Buddhists appropriated elements of discourse, both textual and ritual, from a Hindu tradition, focusing on an example notable for its transgressive character. Second, it will examine the process by which the elements of this "charnel ground" (*śmāśana*) culture were adapted and transformed within a monastic Buddhist context. This will be done through, not the examination of a normative instance of these processes, but rather, an anomalous instance, one that highlights a limit of Tantric Buddhist discourse, a limit that can be ascertained along the lines outlined by Foucault.

This limit will be highlighted via a comparison of two closely related texts that were composed in the eighth century, one in China and the other in India. The first recounts a myth of the origin of a ritual praxis, narrating the subdual of Śaiva *ḍākinī*s, represented as heretical on account of their engagement in transgressive practices of violent ritual and anthropophagy. The second, an Indian Buddhist Tantra, describes in some detail the same praxis of anthropophagy, and thus comes close to crossing the line of heteropraxy established by the former text. These texts are useful not so much because they are representative cases of the processes of appropriation and adaptation, but rather because they are exceptional or extreme cases that represent the limits of the processes. They shed light upon the manner in which Buddhists in eighth-century India struggled to reformulate their identity in response to internal and external pressures.

The first text in question concerns a mantra contained in the *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra,* an early and important Tantric Buddhist text likely composed during the mid-seventh century in India.[2] This mantra, *hrī haḥ,* styled the "*ḍākinī mantra,*" is listed in the fourth chapter of this text, entitled the "General Mantra Treasury."[3] This chapter concludes with a long list of mantras associated with various classes of nonhuman entities, including gods, titans (*asura*), and a host of nonhuman spirits known for

[2] The Tibetan translation of this text is preserved in the sDe-dge Kanjur (D), To. 494, rGyud-'bum vol. tha, 151b–260a. The Chinese version, translated by Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing in the early eighth century, is entitled 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經, T.848.18.1a–55a. For a translation of this text based on both the Tibetan and Chinese versions see Stephen Hodge, *The Mahavairocana Abhisambodhi Tantra with Buddhaguhya's Commentary* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003). Regarding the dating and provenance of the *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra* (*MAT*) see Hodge, *The Mahavairocana Abhisambodhi Tantra,* 14–18, and also his article "Considerations on the Dating and Geographic Origins of the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra,*" in *The Buddhist Forum,* vol. 2, *Seminar Papers, 1991–1993,* ed. Tadeusz Skorupski and Ulrich Pagel (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1994), 57–83.

[3] This is the fourth chapter in both the Tibetan and Chinese versions of the text. For correspondence between the two see Hodge, *Mahavairocana Abhisambodhi Tantra,* 16–17, and also Alex Wayman and R. Tajima, *The Enlightenment of Vairocana* (repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), 22–27.

their fondness for human flesh, such as the *rākṣasa*s, *yakṣa*s, *piśāca*s, in addition to the *ḍākinī*s.[4] Buddhist mantras are "spells"; that is, they are carefully structured verbal utterances that are recited in conjunction with ritual practices to produce a desired magical effect.[5] In the *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra,* these are presented devoid of any contextualization, with no explanation of their history, ritual use, or the magical effects of their successful application.[6]

The Indian master Śubhakarasiṃha and his Chinese disciple Yixing addressed this lacuna in their massive Chinese *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Sūtra Commentary* (*MAC*), which they composed in the early eighth century in Chang-an.[7] In this work they relate a fascinating myth concerning the revelation of the *ḍākinī* mantra, which occurs as follows:

Next is the *ḍākinī-mantra.* There are those in the world who are well-versed in this technique, and are practitioners of Iśvara's esoteric lore (*vidyā,* 咒術), who are able to know when a person's life is about to end. They know of this six months in advance, and then knowing it they immediately apply the spell to extract a person's heart and eat it. It turns out that within the human body there is a concretion, which is thus called human concretion (人黃). It is like the concretion found in cattle.[8] One who is able to eat it attains the greatest powers (*siddhi,*

[4] See the *MAT* at T.848.18.17a.13–19, and also the translation at Hodge, *Mahavairocana Abhisambodhi Tantra,* 163.

[5] Generally, mantras are often (but not always) semantically meaningless verbal formulas, although they are always structurally meaningful. As Robert A. Yelle has shown in his *Explaining Mantras: Ritual, Rhetoric and the Dream of a Natural Language in Hindu Tantra* (New York: Routledge, 2003), the form of mantras is closely related to their function. Their repetitive structures mirror their "repetition" (*japa*) in ritual, which is deemed essential for achieving their effects, which are "magical" in the sense used by Moshe Idel, who defined "Jewish magic" as "a system of practice and beliefs that presupposes the possibility to achieve material gains by means of techniques that cannot be explained experimentally." Moshe Idel, "On Judaism, Jewish Mysticism and Magic," in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium,* ed. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 195.

[6] This lack of contextualization is common in esoteric Buddhist literature, which typically describes practice elements in a sufficiently cryptic way to prevent one from putting them into practice on the basis of reading the text alone. The obscurity of the *MAT* is famous for triggering Kūkai to travel to China in order to gain the instruction that he needed in order to put the text into practice. Regarding this see Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 108–11.

[7] 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏, T.1796.39.579a–789c. Regarding Śubhakarasiṃha (善無畏) and his disciple Yixing (一行), see Chou Yi-Liang, "Tantrism in China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8:251–72. According to tradition, this commentary was expounded by the former and recorded by the latter. I will thus refer to Śubhakarasiṃha as the author of this text.

[8] The substance 牛黃, "bovine concretion," is a calculus or bezoar found in the digestive tracts of cattle. It is still employed in traditional Chinese medicine, where it is valued for its ability to dispel heat and eliminate toxins. See John K. Chen and Tina T. Chen, eds., *Chinese Medical Herbology and Pharmacology* (City of Industry, CA: Art of Medicine Press, 2004), 184–85; and Dan Bensky and Andrew Gamble, trans., *Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia*

成就), [such as] circling the world in one day,[9] obtaining anything that one desires, and being able to control people in various ways. If they have an enemy, they can use this spell to punish him, causing extreme sickness and suffering. However, this method cannot kill people. Should they follow this self-devised method, they know when a person is to die six months in advance. Knowing this, they use this spell to extract his heart. Although they take his heart, there is [another] procedure, [whereby] they must replace his heart with something else. [Thereby] this person's life does not [prematurely] end. When he reaches his time of natural death, then [the heart simulacrum] malfunctions.

Their chief was the yakṣa Maheśvara, who worldly people say is the ultimate [god]. They were subject to Mahākāla, the god called the "Great Black One" (大黑). Vairocana, employing the method of Trailokyavijaya[10] and wanting to exterminate them, transformed himself into Mahākāla, exceeding him in an immeasurable manifestation. His body smeared with ashes in a desolate place, he summoned with his magical art all the *ḍākinī*s, who had all of the magical powers [such as] flying, walking on water and being completely unhindered. He upbraided them, saying: "Since you alone always devour people, now I will eat you!" Then he swallowed them, but did not allow them to die. Once they had submitted, he released them, completely forbidding them to [eat] flesh.[11] They spoke to the Buddha saying, "We presently eat flesh to survive. How can we sustain ourselves now?" The Buddha said, "I will permit you to eat the hearts of dead people." They said, "When a man is about to die, the *mahāyakṣa*s and so forth know that his life is exhausted, and they race there to eat him, so how can we get [our share]?" The Buddha said, "I will teach you the mantra procedures and *mudrā*s.

Medica, rev. ed. (Seattle: Eastland, 1993), 416–17. It is also recommended as an antidote to poison in the *Suśrutasaṃhitā;* see Dominic Wujastyk, *The Roots of Ayurveda,* rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 138 n. 94. Bezoar, usually found in the digestive tracts of ruminants, has long been valued for its medical and magical properties and was especially regarded as a universal antidote. Its use for this purpose was popular in Europe following the translation of Arabic manuals on magic and medicine, such as pseudo al-Majrīṭī's *Ġḥāyat al-ḥakīm,* also known as the *Picatrix.* See *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat Al-Ḥakīm,* ed. David Pingree (London: Warburg Institute, 1986), 20, (1.5.25), 32 (2.1.2), 73 (2.10.78), 227 (4.9.25), and also *"Picatrix" Das Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo-Maǧrīṭī,* trans. Hellmut Ritter and Martin Plessner (London: Warburg Institute, 1962), 32, 56, 126–27, 420.

[9] The Chinese here, 一日周遊四域, would most literally be translated "circling the four regions in one day," that is, the four regions in the cardinal directions.

[10] The text reads here 降伏三世法門, which I interpret as a translation of *trailokyavijaya-dharmaparyāya.* Note, however, that the proper name Trailokyavijaya is usually translated in Chinese as 降三世. The reference to the deity Trailokyavijaya is appropriate, as he is particularly associated with the subjugation of Śaiva deities. Regarding this deity see Nobumi Iyanaga, "Récits de la soumission de Maheśvara par Trailokyavijaya—d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein,* ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1985), 3:633–745. Iyanaga has informed me that this is probably a reference to the second *Trailokyavijaya* chapter of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha Sūtra,* which does in fact contain a brief account of the subjugation of the *ḍākinī* at T.18.882.374c16–375a19; for a discussion of this passage see Kuo Liying, "Dakini," in *Hōbōgirin,* ed. Hubert Durt (Paris: Librairie d'Amerique et d'Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve, 2003), 8:1101.

[11] The Chinese here, 悉令斷肉, literally reads "completely commanded that [they] stop [eating] flesh."

You will be able to know six months before someone dies, and knowing this, you should protect him with this method, so he will not fear being injured. When his life has expired, then you can seize and eat [his heart]." In this way, they were gradually induced to embark upon the path. Thus there is this mantra, *hrī haḥ,* which removes the taint of heretical practices.[12]

This myth represents a Buddhist justification of what Phyllis Granoff has termed "ritual eclecticism." This phenomenon, common in India during the early medieval period, entailed the acknowledgment of the efficacy of religious practices that are openly recognized as belonging to an outsider group. These are often assimilated into the appropriating group's practice tradition by strategies of subordination, such as via claims that the tradition's own practices are "supermundane" (*lokottara*), while those of the outsider's are "mundane" (*laukika*).[13]

Such subordination is often dramatized in Buddhist literature by myths that portray the outsider religious group as dangerous "heretics,"[14] whose misdeeds trigger a cosmic Buddha such as Vairocana to subjugate them, bringing both them and modified forms of their practices into the Buddhist fold. These myths are products of a process in which Tantric Buddhists, having appropriated elements of Hindu ritual, were seeking to forge an identity through a representation of a radical "other," in this case Śaiva Hindus. This representation does not, naturally, provide us with any reliable information about the other group, as distortion, exaggeration, and outright fabrication are common colors in the polemicist's palette. Representations of a rival group engaging in radical actions such as cannibalism are relatively common in this genre of religious literature.[15] These

[12] My translation of T.1796.39.687.b17–c11. I am grateful for the assistance and helpful criticism provided by Ryūichi Abé, Nobumi Iyanaga, Nanxiu Qian, and the anonymous peer reviewer of this article. Iyanaga has twice published his translation of this text, which differs from mine at several points. See his article "Daikokuten," in *Hōbōgirin,* ed. Adrien Maisonneuve and Jean Maisonneuve (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1994), 7:839–920, esp. 857–60), and also his article "Dākinī et l'Empereur—Mystique bouddhique de la royaut'e dans le Japon medieval," in "Reconfiguring Cultural Semiotics: The Construction of Japanese Identity," ed. Fabio Rambelli and Patrizia Violi, special issue, *Versus (Quaderni di studi semiotici)* 83/84 (May–December 1999): 41–111, esp. 51–53.

[13] See Phyllis Granoff, "Other People's Rituals: Ritual Eclecticism in Early Medieval Indian Religions," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28, no. 4 (2002): 399–424. The use of *lokottara/laukika* to distinguish Buddhist from non-Buddhist practices is common in the Buddhist tantras, including the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa,* as discussed by Granoff, "Other People's Rituals," at 404–5.

[14] I mark the word "heretic" with scare quotes to indicate its polemical nature. Buddhist portrayals of "heresy" tend to emphasize their sinful behavior, typically indulgence in transgressive violence and/or sexuality.

[15] With regard to such distortion in heresiographical propaganda see John Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 134ff. Early Christian polemical literature, for example, attributed numerous "perversions" to rival groups. See, e.g., Philip Amidon, *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 61–63, 68–82.

constructions of alterity have the complementary purpose of delimiting the self, "making a total contrast between insiders and outsiders."[16] As John Henderson has argued, polemical religious discourse inevitably implies "an account of both self and other, of orthodox as well as heretical; for the former positions and defines itself by reference to the latter, even arises and develops historically by constructing an inversion of the heretical other."[17]

The "heretical other" constructed in this myth are *ḍākinī*s who are affiliated with the Śaiva deity Mahākāla. This passage contains one of the earlier occurrences in Buddhist literature of the *ḍākinī*s, who would become very important in the later Buddhist Yoginītantras.[18] One of the earliest appearances of the *ḍākinī* in Buddhist literature occurs in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra,* a Buddhist scripture composed in India during the fourth century, where they appear to designate a class of female nonhuman or quasi-human beings, associated both with the anthropophagic Rākṣasī demons as well as with outcaste groups of human carnivores.[19] The text threatens carnivores with the following fate: "The [carnivore] is born again and again as one who is ill-smelling, contemptuous, and insane among the families of the Caṇḍāla, the Pukkasa, and among the Ḍomba.[20] From the womb of a Ḍākinī he will be born into a carnivorous family, and then into the womb of a Rākṣasī and a cat; he belongs to the lowest class of men."[21] The *ḍākinī*s here are depicted in a negative light, and are particularly associated with

[16] This point is made by Mary Douglas with regard to the biblical myth of the sacrifice of children to Moloch, in her article "Children Consumed and Child Cannibals: Robertson Smith's Attack on the Science of Mythology," in *Myth and Method,* ed. Laurie L. Patton and Wendy Doniger (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996), 48.

[17] Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy.*

[18] The Yoginītantras were a transgressive class of Buddhist tantras that were composed from the eighth century onward, as will be discussed below. These were often compared by Buddhist authors to the Yogatantras, a genre that was considered less controversial. For a discussion of these doctrinal categories see David L. Snellgrove, "Categories of Buddhist Tantras," in *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata,* ed. G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 56, no. 3 (Rome, 1988), 1353–84.

[19] Regarding the dating of the *Laṅkāvatāra,* its terminus ante quo is 443 CE when it was first translated into Chinese. There is evidence, however, pointing to its existence in India many decades earlier during the fourth century. See Florin G. Sutton, *Existence and Enlightenment in the Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 13–19. Note, however, that the term *ḍākinī* does not appear in the early translations. See n. 21 below.

[20] The Caṇḍāla and Ḍomba are well-known outcaste groups, as are the Pukkasa.

[21] My translation of *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra,* 8.14–15, from the Sanskrit in P. L. Vaidya, ed. *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1963), 105. Note that the term *ḍākinī* does not appear in Bodhiruci's sixth-century Chinese translation of this passage or in a similar passage that precedes it. In both cases, the term *rākṣasī* (羅殺女) stands in the place of *ḍākinī* (T.16.671.564b18–19, 563a24–25). However, the terms *dāka* and *ḍākinī* (T.16.671.565a6: 荼伽荼伽女) occur in the following chapter, which presents a *dhāraṇī* for protection from possession by evil spirits, including the *ḍākinī.* This may indicate the growth of belief in the *ḍākinī*s as terrifying spirits beginning in the sixth century. I am grateful to Nobumi Iyanaga for bringing Bodhiruci's translation to my attention.

meat eating.[22] This negative portrayal was evidently still widespread when the *MAC* was composed, in which they are portrayed as dangerous and heretical entities in need of reform.[23]

There is another early reference to a class of texts known as the *ḍākinī* tantras, which echoes elements of Śubhakarasiṃha's myth. It occurs in the autocommentary to the *Pramāṇavārttika,* a text composed by the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti, who was active during the late sixth and early seventh century.[24] In this work he mentions a class of texts called *ḍākinī* tantras, in the context of a passage addressing the issue of whether or not "success" (*siddhi*) in magical procedures involving mantras is dependent upon adherence to ethical norms (*dharma*) or not.[25] His answer was "No, for it is evident that there are observances in the *ḍākinī* and *bhaginī* tantras, etc., which are incompatible with ethical norms and are replete with violence, theft, sexual intercourse, perverse actions, and so forth, and through which there is distinctive success."[26] Alexis Sanderson has reported that the *ḍākinī* tantras were texts infamous for their advocacy of ritual killing, which accords well with Śubhakarasiṃha's portrayal of the *ḍākinī*s.[27] A

[22] A similar association occurs in Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra,* 4.4, in which the *ḍākinī*s are associated both with (largely) carnivorous beasts and demons. The list occurs as follows: "Tigers, lions, elephants, bears, serpents, all enemies, and likewise all hell guardians, ḍākinīs, and *rākṣasa* demons." 4.4: *vyāghrāḥ siṃhā gajā ṛkṣāḥ sarpāḥ sarve ca śatravaḥ / sarve narakapālāś ca ḍākinyo rākṣasās tathā,* in P. L. Vaidya, ed. *Bodhicaryāvatāra with Commentary* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960), 51. This text was most likely composed during the eighth century: Śāntideva has been tentatively dated to 658–763 CE. See Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton, *Śāntideva: The Bodhicaryāvatāra* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), viii.

[23] For an excellent comprehensive survey of the *ḍākinī*s and the lore concerning them see Adelheid Herrmann-Pfandt, *Ḍākinīs: Zur Stellung und Symbolik des Weiblichen im Tantrischen Buddhismus* (Bonn: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1992).

[24] Toshihiko Kimura has argued that Dharmakīrti lived c. 550–620 CE, contra several other attempts to date him either somewhat earlier or somewhat later. See his "A New Chronology of Dharmakīrti," in *Dharmakīrti's Thought and Its Impact on Indian and Tibetan Philosophy,* ed. Katsura Shoryu (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), 209–14.

[25] I interpret dharma here in its normative rather than descriptive sense, as described by Richard Gombrich in his *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* (1996; repr., New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1997), 34–37. For a similar normative use of the term see the *Agañña Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya* 27.7–8, translated in Maurice Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (1987; repr., Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 408–9.

[26] My translation of the following text: na / dharmaviruddhānām api krauryasteyamaithunahīnakarmādibahulānāṃ vratānāṃ ḍākinībhaginītantrādiṣu darśanāt / taiś ca siddhiviśeṣāt. Text edited in Raniero Gnoli, *The Pramāṇavārttikam of Dharmakīrti: The First Chapter with the Autocommentary* (Roma: Istituto Italiana per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1960), 163; cf. the translations in Ronald Davidson, "The *Litany of the Names of Mañjuśri:* Text and Translation of the *Mañjuśrināmasaṃgīti,*" in Strickmann, *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein,* 1:8, and Alexis Sanderson, "History through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śaivism, the Pañcarātra and the Buddhist Yoginītantras," in *Les Source et le temps,* ed. François Grimal (Pondicherry: École française d'Extrême Orient, 2001), 11–12 n. 10.

[27] See Sanderson, "History through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śaivism, the Pañcarāta and the Buddhist Yoginītantras," 12 n. 10.

commentator on this text, Karṇakagomin, identified these texts as follows: "In the Ḍākinītantras the rule of postinitiatory discipline is that one attains the power of the Mantra if one kills and devours a living creature."[28] It seems almost certain that these were not Buddhist texts, despite their similarity to the Yoginītantras, which cannot be dated earlier than the late eighth century.[29] Dharmakīrti clearly identifies them as non-Buddhist teachings, as follows: "Violence, sexual union, the doctrine of the Self and so forth are explained as being the causes of bad and good results in mantra ritual texts that are Buddhist and non-Buddhist, [respectively]. How could both be true if one is designated as being incompatible [with ethical norms]? Since there is no verdict on this matter as a ritual text of antithetical import accords with the other [perspective], there is no certainty [with regard to this issue]."[30] This passage reflects the ritual eclecticism common during this period, which was characterized by an unwillingness or inability to reject the efficacy of the practices of other religious groups, as Granoff has observed.

On the basis of these and other texts, Sanderson has argued that the *ḍākinī* tantras were Śaiva texts.[31] His claim is supported by Śubhakarasiṃha's account, which clearly links the *ḍākinī* to the god Śiva, particularly in his terrifying form Mahākāla. This deity was particularly favored by extreme Śaiva groups such as the Kāpālikas, who were infamous for their advocacy of transgressive practices, including violence and socially disapproved modes of sexuality.[32] Dharmakīrti, like Śubhakarasiṃha, thus portrays the *ḍākinī*s as heretical, largely on account of their propensity toward violence.

This myth bears a striking resemblance to the contents of the Buddhist Yoginītantras, a genre of literature that appeared in India no later than the

[28] This is Sanderson's translation (ibid.) of the following text: ḍākinītantre samayavyavasthā yadā prāṇinaṃ hatvā khādati tadā mantrasiddhim āsādayati, in R. Sāṅskṛtyāyana, ed., *Pramāṇavārttikasvavṛttiṭikā: Ācāryadharmakirteḥ Pramāṇavārttikaṃ svārthānumānaparicchedaḥ svopajñavṛttyā Karṇakagominviracitayā taṭṭikayā ca sahitam* (Allahabad: Kitaba Mahala, 1943), 578.

[29] See Davidson's suggestion to the contrary ("The *Litany of the Names of Mañjuśri,*" 8).

[30] This passage occurs as follows in Dharmakīrti's root text in the context of the above passage: tathā hi bauddhetarayor mantrakalpayor hiṃsāmaithunātmadarśanādayo 'nabhyudayahetavo 'nyathā varṇyante / tat katham ekatra viruddhābhidhāyi dvayaṃ satyaṃ syāt / tatrārthāntarakalpane tad anyatrāpi tulyam ity arthānirṇayāt kvacid apratipattiḥ (Gnoli, *The Pramāṇavārttikam of Dharmakīrti,* 123).

[31] Sanderson, "History through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śavism, the Pañcarātra and the Buddhist Yoginītantras," 12 n. 10.

[32] Regarding the Kāpālikas see David Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects* (1971), 2nd rev. ed. (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991); Hugh Urban, "The Remnants of Desire: Sacrificial Violence and Sexual Transgression in the Cult of the Kāpālikas and in the Writings of Georges Bataille," *Religion* (1995), 25:67–90; and Alexis Sanderson, "Purity and Power among the Brahmans of Kashmir," in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History,* ed. Michael Carrithers et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 190–216.

mid-eighth century, and which was also referred to as *ḍākinī* tantra.[33] These texts were notorious for their transgressive rhetoric, and their apparent advocacy of practices that would normally be prohibited in Buddhist contexts, such as sexuality and ritual violence.

The Buddhist Yoginītantras, like the Hindu Tantric traditions to which they are closely related, appear to have originated in a distinct subculture that could be termed "the cult of the charnel ground," consisting of antinomian male and female renunciants, yogins and *yoginī*s, who chose a deliberately transgressive lifestyle, drawing their garb and, in part, sustenance from the liminal space of the charnel grounds that was the privileged locus for their meditative and ritual activities.[34] This was a manifestation of the "siddha movement," a pan-South Asian religious movement noted for its marginality, and its advocacy of a liminal social identity that was often symbolically associated with marginal social spaces such as the charnel ground.[35] The Śaiva Kāpālikas constituted the best-known group of this subculture, as attested by the numerous references to them in Sanskrit literature.

[33] The earliest Yoginītantra is evidently the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-ḍākinījālasamvara* (To. 366), a text which is described in Amoghavajra's *Guidelines to the Eighteen Assemblies of the Vajraśekharasūtra-yoga* (金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸; T. 869.18.286.c9–16), a text composed by him following his return to China from India in 746 CE. See Rolf W. Giebel, "The *Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei:* An Annotated Translation," *Journal of Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies* 18 (1995): 179–82. To my knowledge, only the term Yoginītantra is attested in Indian sources regarding this genre of Buddhist tantric texts. However, the later Tibetan author mKhas-grub-rje (1385–1438 CE) gives *ḍākinītantra/mkha'-gro-ma'i rgyud* as an alternative designation. See Ferdinand D. Lessing and Alex Wayman, *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems,* 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978), 250–51. This should not be taken as a reference to the earlier *ḍākinī* tantras mentioned by Dharmakīrti, but is likely the result of the interchangeability of the terms *yoginī* and *ḍākinī* in this literature.

[34] Dick Hebdige defined the term "subculture" as "cultures of conspicuous consumption. . . . It is through the distinctive rituals of consumption, through style, that the subculture at once reveals its 'secret' identity and communicates its forbidden meanings. It is basically the way in which commodities are used in subculture which mark the subculture off from more orthodox cultural formations." *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979), 103. The charnel ground cult did indeed have its distinctive style, characterized by ornamentation derived from the charnel grounds (skull, bones, ash, etc.), as well as "distinctive rituals of consumption," such as the extraction and consumption of power substances from human corpses. Hebdige's definition is also cited by Hugh Urban, who relies upon his work as well as Bourdieu's to explicate the development of a distinct identity by the Kartābhajās in colonial Bengal. See his *The Economics of Ecstasy: Tantra, Secrecy, and Power in Colonial Bengal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 60ff., and esp. 241 n. 5. I have adapted Shiníchi Tsuda's term "cult of the cemetery," because "cemetery" is not an appropriate translation for *śmaśāna.* This expression was first employed in his essay "A Critical Tantrism," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 36 (1978): 167–231. See as well his article "The Cult of śmaśāna, the Realities of Tantra," in *The Sanskrit Tradition and Tantrism,* ed. Teun Goudriaan (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 96–108.

[35] For an excellent survey of the siddha movement see Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

The Yoginītantras also focused on female deities, most particularly the *yoginī*s and *ḍākinī*s, who, like the *ḍākinī*s of earlier lore, were particularly associated with meat eating, (potentially violent) sexuality, and outcaste social groups.[36] These texts are also notable for their association with "heresy," namely, Śaiva traditions such as the Kāpālikas who appear to have been a significant source for these traditions. Alexis Sanderson has argued in several published articles and unpublished papers that the Yoginītantras in general, and the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* (*CST*) in particular, were composed in dependence upon earlier Śaiva scriptures, and he has pointed out several examples of intertextuality to support this argument.[37]

The *CST,* a Yoginītantra composed by the late eighth century,[38] contains a fascinating passage that reproduces important elements of Śubhakarasiṃha's myth. It occurs in the eleventh chapter, which reads as follows:

[36] These names are interchangeable in the Yoginītantras. Some tantras, such as the *Hevajra,* primarily use the term *yoginī* for the tradition's female deities, while others, such as the *Cakrasamvara,* primarily use the term *ḍākinī.* Parallel passages in the *CST* and the closely related *Abhidhānottara Tantra* (*AD*), however, often attest both terms in otherwise identical passages, suggesting that they were understood to be interchangeable. For an excellent study of the *yoginī*s and the sexual practices associated with them see David Gordon White, *Kiss of the Yoginī: "Tantric Sex" in South Asian Contexts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). In fact, the very same three groups mentioned in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* reappear as *yoginī*s in the *Hevajra Tantra,* a Buddhist Yoginītantra dating to the late eighth century. These are the *yoginī*s Ḍombī, Caṇḍālī, and Pukkasī, mentioned in the *Hevajra Tantra* at 1.3.10. See the translations in David Snellgrove, *The Hevajra: A Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 1.58, and Ch. Willemen, *The Chinese Hevajratantra* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1983), 48. Regarding the dating of the *Hevajra Tantra* see Snellgrove, *The Hevajra,* 1.11–14.

[37] See his "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," in *Buddhism into the Year 2000: International Conference Proceedings* (Los Angeles: Dhammakaya Foundation, 1994), 87–102, and also Sanderson, "History through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śaivism, the Pañcarāta and the Buddhist Yoginītantras." There appears to be no doubt that Buddhists did draw upon Śaiva sources in the composition of the Yoginītantras, and my research on the *CST* generally confirms Sanderson's conclusions, as will be noted below. There is, however, a good deal of uncertainty regarding the exact relationship between Śaiva and Buddhist sources, and until more textual research is completed, some of Sanderson's conclusions remain hypothetical. For a critique of aspects of Sanderson's argument see Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism,* 386 n. 105. Despite this uncertainty, I believe that the preponderance of evidence supports Sanderson's thesis. Among this evidence I would include the *CST* materials discussed in this paper, which appear to be the product of Buddhist appropriation from sources that earlier Buddhists, such as Śubhakarasiṃha, would have identified as Śaiva.

[38] A provisional terminus ante quem for the *CST* is provided by quotations from it in a datable commentary, Vilāsavajra's *Ārya-Nāmasaṃgītiṭīkā Mantrārthāvalokinī-nāma* (To. 2533), Vilāsavajra having lived in the second half of the eighth century. See Davidson, "The *Litany of the Names of Mañjuśri,*" 6–7. Actually, the majority of cases that Davidson notes as citations from the *Laghusamvara Tantra* (an alternate name for the *CST*), the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinījālasaṃvara* (To. 366) is actually cited. In Indian texts of this period, unlike later Tibetan texts, citations such as *samvaratantre* or *samvare* invariably refer to the latter text. There is one case, however, in which Vilāsavajra quotes the *CST,* chap. 2, and another case in which he refers to a passage in chap. 48 of this text. See my *The Discourse of Śri Heruka: A Study and Annotated Translation of the Cakrasamvara Tantra* (New York: Amerian Institute of Buddhist Studies, forthcoming) for a more detailed discussion of this evidence.

Now above all I will speak of the power that the adept should attain, through which there is rapid engagement in power by means of eating only. The person who goes perspiring a pleasant fragrance, speaking the truth, blinks after a long time, is not angry, and who has fragrant breath in his mouth, is one who is born as a man for seven lives. Splitting him there is the concretion in his heart. Taking this makes a drop with one hundred repetitions of Śrī Heruka's Essence Mantra. One will fly up and travel tens of millions of leagues. Just through eating [it] one will become one who has knowledge of the three worlds. One will travel five hundred million [leagues] in a day and a night, and will have a divine body. Whoever knows Śrī Heruka's Essence will be given whatever things he desires.[39]

A systematic comparison of the two texts is in order. Both the *MAC* and the *CST* are texts primarily concerned with the ritual uses of mantra, the *ḍākinī* mantra and Śrīheruka's Essence (*hṛdaya*) and Quintessence (*upahṛdaya*) mantras, respectively. Śubhakarasiṃha's *MAC* claims that there are *ḍākinī*s who are associated with Śiva or Maheśvara in his Mahākāla form, and who seek to extract concretion from the hearts of certain people. Evidently due to serious competition over the valuable commodity contained in their hearts, they would extract their hearts six months prior to their death and replace it with a magical simacrulum. The text does not specify who these people are, but merely tells us that the *ḍākinī* had a way to identify them. Mahāvairocana's forceful intervention, however, led them to renounce this reprehensible practice, and promise that they would only consume the hearts of deceased individuals.

The *CST* is more specific regarding the apparent victim or bearer of this commodity, the *rocanā* or concretion. It is a person who has been born as a man for seven times in a row. The text lists five characteristics whereby such individuals may be identified, drawing upon the ancient Indian beliefs concerning the marks of divinity, which suggests that the person "born as a man for seven lives" enjoys semidivine status.[40] The *CST* also provides

[39] My translation from my edition of the Sanskrit; cf. the Sanskrit in Janardan Shastri Pandey, ed., *Śriherukābhidhānam Cakrasaṃvaratantram with the Vivṛti Commentary of Bhavabhaṭṭa* (Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2002), 1.85–86.

[40] I refer to the passage in the *Nala* section of the *Vanaparva* of the *Mahābhārata,* i.e., 3.54.23–25, where Damayanti is faced with the difficulty of selecting Nala from four gods who magically assume his appearance. Her response is to make a truth-vow, compelling the gods to reveal their marks of divinity, which include their inability to perspire or blink and their failure to cast a shadow. Nala, however, is revealed by his possession of these very human characteristics. For an English translation of the relevant passage see J. A. B. van Buitenen's *The Mahābhārata* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 2:328. I am grateful to Jeffrey Kripal for bringing this text to my attention. The *saptajanmamānuṣajātaḥ* is an anomalous figure, bridging the gap between the human and divine realms. Unlike gods, but like humans, he perspires and blinks. But unlike ordinary humans, his perspiration is pleasant smelling and he blinks rarely. In addition, we learn in the closely related *AD,* a *CST* "explanatory tantra" (*vyākhyātantra*), that he casts a sevenfold shadow (*saptachāyaḥ*), which separates him both from the gods, who cast no shadow, and also from humans, who cast an ordinary

a similar ritual means for identifying them. In the *MAC* myth, the *ḍākinī* are provided with a mantra, *hri haḥ,* which enables the *ḍākinī* to predict the time of death of the concretion bearers.[41] A close variant of this mantra is contained within Heruka's Quintessence mantra,[42] which is recited over the drop of concretion (*rocanā*) to effect the miraculous powers. According to *CST* chapter 12, which lists the various powers attainable through the application of the Quintessence mantra, "Enchanting water with this, if one rinses one's eyes [with it] one will recognize the one born seven times. Those whose life is exhausted will appear as if dead; the long-lived will appear to be full of life."[43] Thus the *CST* asserts that its Quintessence mantra will confer the very power promised by Mahāvairocana Buddha to the *ḍākinī*s, namely, the ability to identify the bearers of the precious concretion and accurately predict their life span.

As in the case of the *MAC,* the concretion is located in the heart, and is to be attained through the action of "splitting open," presumably, the victim's chest cavity. The text is not specific concerning the conditions under which this violent act is undertaken. Both texts describe the powers that can be attained by consuming this substance. These are quite similar, as both texts promise the power to travel immense distances in one day, as well as the power to acquire whatever one desires.

There is, however, a major difference between these texts. In the *MAC,* the ritual appropriation of this concretion is represented as the reprehensible behavior of the heretical Śaiva *ḍākinī*s, whose nefarious behavior triggers Mahāvairocana's intervention. This myth is a variant of an established genre of Buddhist conversion narratives, in which Buddhist deities assume the guise of non-Buddhist deities, subjugate them and convert them into subordinate deities. The story of Vajrapaṇi's conversion of

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one. On the other hand, the *AD* also states that he has a "divine form" (*divyarūpa*). In *CST,* chap. 49, moreover, it is precisely a "divine form" that is attained through eating the concretion (*rocanā*) found in his heart, which also confers the divine power of flight. He best approximates the *vidyādhara,* or "wizards," of the medieval Indian imagination, who are central figures in Tantric pantheons and who are depicted in eighth-century texts such as Uddyotasūri's *Kuvalayamālā* as capable of flight (like gods), but blinking (like humans). See Granoff, "Other People's Rituals," 414–15. The relevant passage in the *AD* is chap. 63 of the Sanskrit text; for a facsimile edition see Lokesh Chandra, ed., *Abhidhānottara-Tantra: A Sanskrit Manuscript from Nepal* (Delhi: Jayyed Press, 1981), 303–4.

[41] Evidently, this mantra enabled them to know in advance when the bearers would die, although this was apparently something they already would know. But rather than steal their hearts as before, this method allowed them to "protect" the bearers of this commodity, evidently protecting them from other evil spirits such as Mahāyakṣas who would seek to violently seize it.

[42] The *upahṛdaya* mantra, given in reverse order in *CST,* chap. 8, is *oṃ hrīḥ ha ha hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ.*

[43] My translation from my edition of the Sanskrit; cf. Pandey, *Śrīherukābhidhānam Cakrasaṃvaratantram,* 1.87.

Mahādeva in the *Tattvasaṃgraha Sūtra* is a well-known example of this genre.[44] There is likewise a Yoginītantra version of this narrative, which holds that Heruka[45] and his retinue manifested in the world in Śaiva guise in order to subjugate the Hindu deity Bhairava and his retinue and put an end to their "evil conduct," which involved both violence and wanton sexuality.[46]

These myths played an important role in Buddhist discourse, namely, as justification for Buddhist appropriation of elements of non-Buddhist traditions, in this case the Śaiva-Kāpālika that evidently was an important source for Yoginītantras such as the *CST.* Such appropriation, however, is typically a process "wherein the borrowed item is transformed through the process of incorporation, thus fundamentally altering both the appropriated and the appropriator."[47] Appropriation is not a feature unique to Tantric Buddhism, but rather was typical of Buddhism throughout its history. For example, while Buddhists opposed elements of the Vedic ritual lore, particularly the practice of violent animal sacrifice, they actively appropriated other elements of Vedic ritual lore, such as the *homa* fire sacrifice.[48] They also advanced a thoroughly transformed "version" of the Vedic sacrifice, the "bloodless sacrifice" or *Mahādāna* rite of ceremonial gift giving.[49] Refraining from the ritual killing of animals has often been

[44] For a partial translation and study of this narrative see David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), 134–41.

[45] Heruka is the chief deity of the *CST,* the *Hevajra Tantra,* as well as a number of related Yoginītantras.

[46] For a study of an important Tibetan version of this myth see Ronald Davidson, "Reflections on the Maheśvara Subjugation Myth: Indic Materials, Sa-skya-pa Apologetics, and the Birth of Heruka," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 14, no. 2 (1991): 197–235. There is also an earlier Indian version of this narrative contained in Indrabhūti's commentary on the *CST,* which I have translated in my forthcoming book.

[47] This is an excerpt from Tony K. Stewart and Carl Ernst's definition of "appropriation." See their essay "Syncretism," in *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia,* ed. Margaret Mills et al. (London: Routledge, 2003), 587.

[48] The early Buddhist appropriation of the *homa* rite is attested both in Gandharan iconography as well as texts translated into Chinese beginning in the fourth century CE. See Giovanni Verardi, *Homa and Other Fire Rituals in Gandhāra* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1994); Michel Strickmann, "Homa in East Asia," in *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar,* ed. Frits Staal (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press), 2:418–55; and Richard Karl Payne, *The Tantric Ritual of Japan, Feeding the Gods: The Shingon Fire Ritual* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1991), 43–50. For a fascinating study of the Buddhist appropriation and transformation of Vedic cosmogonic discourse see Joanna Jurewicz, "Playing with Fire: The *pratītya-samutpāda* from the Perspective of Vedic Thought," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 26 (2000): 77–103. I am grateful to Noa Ronkin for bringing this work to my attention.

[49] I refer to the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* in the *Dīgha Nikāya,* which portrays the Buddha as instituting the *Mahādāna* rite as a nonviolent substitute for Vedic animal sacrifice. See the translation in Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddhas,* 133–41. Regarding the Buddhist *Mahādāna* and its later Hindu appropriation see Ronald Inden, "The Ceremony of the Great Gift (Mahādāna): Structure and Historical Context in Indian Ritual and Society," in *Asie du Sud: Traditions et changements,* ed. Marc Gaborieau and Alice Thorner (Paris: Éditions du

seen as a key marker of Buddhist identity, in contradistinction to one construction of alterity, which portrays "heresy" precisely in terms of such behavior.[50]

THE LIMIT OF TANTRIC BUDDHIST DISCOURSE

The "ritual eclecticism" exhibited in texts such as the *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhī Tantra* and the *CST* was not uncontested; the appropriation of non-Buddhist practice elements could and did lead to the Buddhist identity of these texts being challenged. The author or authors of the former tantra apparently expected such criticism and thus inserted into the text the following prophecy:

> In the future there will appear faithless beings with little intelligence, who not believing this teaching will have great misgivings and doubt, and who will just hear it, neither retaining it in their hearts nor accomplishing it. They themselves are unsuitable and they corrupt others. They will say, "This is not what was spoken by the Buddhas, but it belongs to the non-Buddhists!" But these foolish people do not know that the Bhagavat, the All-knowing One who has attained mastery over all phenomena, who has directly understood what benefits beings, has said: "I shall explain all of these things," having previously [vowed to] help beings.[51]

There evidently was considerable resistance to ritual eclecticism. A number of strategies were advanced to overcome this resistance, including propounding myths of the conversion of non-Buddhist deities, as well as putting forth the claim that Buddhist figures taught ostensibly non-Buddhist

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centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1979), 131–36. For a fascinating discussion of Buddhist transformations of Vedic sacrificial ideology see James R. Egge, *Religious Sacrifice and the Invention of Karma in Theravāda Buddhism* (Surrey: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 15–39, 47–60.

[50] See Granoff, "Other People's Rituals," 399. For a discussion of this issue in a Himalayan/Tibetan Buddhist context see Stan Royal Mumford, *Himalayan Dialogue: Tibetan Lamas and Gurung Shamans in Nepal* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 80–92. See also David N. Gellner, *Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest: Newar Buddhism and Its Hierarchy of Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 124–25. On the other hand, some Tantric Buddhist authors were aware of the numerous similarities between their own practice traditions and those of non-Buddhist groups. The Tibetan scholar 'Jam mgon Kong sprul, for example, has argued that Tantric practices devoid of altruistic motivation (i.e., the generation of *bodhicitta*) are essentially non-Buddhist. See David Germano, "Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*)," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 17, no. 2 (1994): 203–335.

[51] Translation in Hodge, *Mahavairocana Abhisambodhi Tantra,* 157. Anticipation of possible criticism is not unique to Tantric texts, but is common in Mahāyāna literature as well. Such unflattering portrayals of the scripture's own positions likely reflect actual criticism leveled by its opponents, as Jan Nattier discusses in her *A Few Good Men* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 65–66. I am grateful to Iain Sinclair for bringing Nattier's discussion to my attention.

ritual elements, such as the *ḍākinī* mantra, out of a compassionate motivation. The concept of "skillful means" (*upāya*), a strategy for inducing heretics to enter the Buddhist path, was frequently deployed as a means of neutralizing the tension triggered by signs of heteropraxy, particularly the presence of the transgressive rhetoric advocating ritual violence or sexuality that was quite common in the Buddhist tantras.[52] Ānandagarba, a ninth-century Buddhist commentator,[53] attempted to justify the violent and erotic rhetoric in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* by claiming that it was taught for the purpose of converting to Buddhism[54] those "low born ones who are opposed to the other tantras and who are inclined toward malicious deeds, who have the karmic obstruction of the inexorable sins,[55] and so forth, who adhere to the teachings in the Viṣṇu, the *ḍākinī* and deviant tantras,[56] who kill, who do not give but take, who tell lies, and who 'practice' with their mothers and daughters and who enjoy both suitable and unsuitable foods."[57] Likewise, the Tibetan polymath Bu-ston (1290–1364 CE), claimed that the Yoginītantras or "mother tantras" (*ma rgyud*) were taught "for the sake of training women." Shortly after making this claim, he continued, writing that "father tantras are [taught] so that men of one's own class who have unerring views can attain Awakening; mother tantras

[52] The concept of *upāya* was long invoked by Buddhist authors as means of dismissing as "interpretable" (*neyārtha*) doctrinal teachings that do not accord with their own views. The "interpretable" text is thus explained as an instance of *upāya* on the part of the Buddha, employed as a strategy for the conversion of those with "wrong views." On this issue see Donald S. Lopez, "On the Interpretation of Mahāyāna Sūtras," in *Buddhist Hermeneutics,* ed. Donald Lopez (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 47–70. Note, however, that the concept of *upāya* in Buddhist polemic only serves Buddhist apologetic needs and was probably never convincing to the authors' opponents. See Jamie Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Heresy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 241–42.

[53] Tāranātha places Ānandagarbha during the reign of King *Mahīpāla, who died, according to him, at the same time as the Tibetan King Ral-pa-can (d. 838 CE). See Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, trans., *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India* (1970; repr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990), 284. Tāranātha appears to confuse the Pāla succession here, as the first Mahīpāla did not rule until much later, c. 992–1042 CE (Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism,* 52). The Pāla king who did rule during this period was Devapāla (c. 812–50 CE), during whose reign we might tentatively place Ānandagarbha. Lessing and Wayman place him during the tenth century, but do not state their reasons for doing so (*Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems,* 24).

[54] That is, cause them to take refuge in the Three Jewels, generate the Spirit of Awakening and enter into the maṇḍala.

[55] The *pañcānatariya,* which are (1) killing one's father, (2) killing one's mother, (3) killing an *arhat,* (4) drawing the blood of a buddha with ill intent, and (5) causing a schism in the *saṃgha.*

[56] It is not clear what sort of texts Ānandagarba meant when he referred to *ḍākinī* tantras. It is clear that he is referring to texts that he considered heretical, and it is possible that, like Dharmakīrti, he was referring to a now lost genre of Śaiva text. But it is also possible that he is referring to the Buddhist Yoginītantras, which were composed by this time, but whose orthodoxy was questioned by many Buddhists.

[57] *Guhyasamājamahātantrarājaṭīkā,* To. 1917, D rgyud 'grel vol. bi, fol. 2a.

[were taught] in order to train outsiders who delight in killing and so forth, and who adhere to erroneous views and spiritual paths."[58] He thus portrays the *Cakrasamvara* and related tantras as representing a Buddhist strategy to facilitate the conversion of heretics, with whom he also associated women.

This strategy was apparently not always sufficient to assuage the doubts of Buddhists. As a result, Buddhists have often attempted to reencode suspect entities or practices. As Bernard Faure has observed, Buddhists have repeatedly "felt compelled to convert or subdue the local deities, to erase the memory of the places, to reconvert or desacralize spaces, to decide and re-encode legends."[59] In mythic language this complex process of conversion, characterized by subdual, erasure, and reencoding, can be symbolized by the trope of consumption and digestion. Even the heretical *ḍākinī* can be assimilated following their "digestion" by Mahāvairocana. Hence the presence of seemingly "raw," heretical elements in an Esoteric Buddhist text would not ordinarily pose an insurmountable problem for ingenious commentators. The quasi-heretical female deities of the *CST* were thus accordingly subjected to a "digestion" or reencoding through their correlation to normative Buddhist categories, perhaps because the myth of Heruka's subjugation of Bhairava was insufficient to assuage doubt concerning their appearance in Śaiva garb.[60]

Such strategies collectively constitute an important component of Tantric Buddhist discourse, the development of which is particularly notable during the ninth century.[61] This usually seamless integration of Buddhist

[58] Both quotes occur in Bu-ston's *bde mchog nyung ngu rgyud kyi spyi rnam don gsal,* in *The Collected Works of Bu-ston,* ed. Lokesh Chandra (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1966), 42.

[59] Bernard Faure, "Space and Place in Chinese Religious Traditions," *History of Religions* 26, no. 4 (1987): 341.

[60] Most notable in the *Cakrasamvara* tradition are the preponderance of goddesses, who make up the majority of the deities in the tradition's maṇḍala, thirty-seven out of the total of sixty-two. These goddesses collectively constitute the "network of *ḍākinī*s" (*ḍākinījāla*) who are imagined pervading both the outer space of the sacred sites of South Asia, as well as the inner space of the practitioner's body. Perhaps due to the heretical associations of the *ḍākinī*s, Buddhist authors reencoded them by associating them with normative Buddhist categories, in this case, the thirty-seven "elements associated with awakening" (*bodhipakṣikadharma*). This association occurs in numerous texts, the earliest of which is likely the *Yoginīsaṃcāra Tantra,* a *CST* explanatory tantra. See chap. 2 of this text, edited in Janardan Shastri Pandey, *Yoginīsaṃcāratantram with Nibandha of Tathāgatarakṣita and Upadeśānusāriṇīvyākhyā of Alakakalaśa* (Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1998), 19–30. For a discussion of this correlation see Alex Wayman, *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism* (1973; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990), 8–11.

[61] A self-conscious awareness of esoteric Buddhism as a distinct movement was already developing during the eighth century, as we can see, for example, in the work of authors such as Śubhakarasiṃha, Amoghavajra, and Buddhaguhya, who were active during the mid-eighth century (see Hodge, *Mahavairocana Abhisambodhi Tantra,* 22–24). But the hundred years spanning from the late eighth through the late ninth century seems to have particularly fruitful for the development of distinctly esoteric schools of exegesis. Particularly notable on the East

and non-Buddhist elements is made possible by the central elements of Tantric Buddhist discourse. These include the use of radically transgressive rhetoric, as well as claims of the need for secrecy, namely, the symbolic interpretation of this rhetoric, and exhortations to avoid literal interpretation, namely, the naive performance of the acts implied by the rhetoric.[62] The resulting tension is a central element in Tantric traditions and a cornerstone of their political strategy.

Despite the deployment of these strategies, the *CST* seems to have faced considerable resistance even among those who would be most expected to advocate it, its commentators. Commentators on the *CST* exhibited typical exegetical ingenuity in their efforts to reencode it as a bone fide Buddhist text, collectively deploying all of the methods discussed above. Yet the eleventh chapter seems to have presented a significant challenge to this ingenuity. As such, the chapter does not represent a normative example of Tantric Buddhist discourse, but instead represents its limit, the extreme beyond which it could not function. As Charles Orzech pointed out with regard to the development of Esoteric Buddhism in China during this period, "The negotiation that is part of a living, complex, and changing tradition can often be glimpsed in the disjunctions or seams where divergent meanings are stitched together to respond to the necessities of life. By being attentive to these seams and to the underlying paradigms of a religious tradition we can deepen our understanding of religion in changing social and cultural contexts."[63] I believe that texts such as the *MAC* and *CST*

Asian side are the works of Kūkai (see Abé, *The Weaving Mantra*) and possibly Saichō and his esoteric Tendai successors. On the South Asian side, we see the development during this period of two distinct schools of exegesis for the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* that had great impact on the further development of Indian Buddhist Tantric thought. These include first, the Jñānapāda school, founded by Buddhaśrijñāna, who was active during the late eighth to early ninth centuries, and the school of the first abbot of Vikramaśīla monastery, which was founded by Dharmapāla c. 775–812 CE, and which would become an important center of Tantric Buddhist scholarship. (For a discussion of his life see Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism,* 309–16.) The second, the Ārya school of Guhyasamāja exegesis, seems to have developed somewhat later, most likely during the ninth century. (For a cogent discussion of the dating of pivotal Āryā tradition texts see Christian Wedemeyer, "Tropes, Typologies, and Turnarounds: A Brief Genealogy of the Historiography of Tantric Buddhism," *History of Religions* 40, no. 3 [2001]: 223–59.) The *Cakrasamvara* tradition of exegesis is not attested prior to the mid-ninth century, the likely date of its earliest commentator, Jayabhadra.

[62] Regarding Tantric Buddhist systems of interpretation and their strategies for dealing with transgressive passages in the texts, see Michael M. Broido, "Killing, Lying, Stealing, and Adultery: A Problem of Interpretation in the Tantras," in Lopez, *Buddhist Hermeneutics,* 71–118, and Christian Wedemeyer, "Antinomianism and Gradualism: The Contextualization of the Practices of Sensual Enjoyment (*Caryā*) in the Guhyasamāja Ārya Tradition," *Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 10, no. 3 (2002): 181–95.

[63] Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 205.

highlight one such seam, in which competing and possibly incompatible paradigms collided. They point to a limit of Tantric Buddhist discourse, a limit that can be ascertained along the lines outlined by Foucault, that is, by limits to a discursive formation's forms of expressibility, conservation, memory, reactivation, and appropriation.[64] Of crucial interest here are the points at which erasure and decoding occur during the "conversion" process wherein appropriated texts and practices are accommodated within Buddhist discourse. The limit of this discourse represents the point beyond which it could not safely proceed, the point at which it was vulnerable to being labeled questionable, invalid, foreign, and subject to active censorship or passive erasure from memory. The *CST* seems to embody this limit precisely because it contains, in a rather raw and unprocessed form, the very elements that, in myths such as those accounting for the origin of both the *ḍākinī* mantra and the deity Heruka himself, are represented as pertaining to the heretical other and hence are suspect.

The *CST* as a whole is thoroughly steeped in the charnel ground milieu of the Yoginītantras, a context in which the ritual use of corpse-derived products is de rigueur. Typically, its text is ambiguous enough to permit alternate readings (or creative commentatorial misreadings) of transgressive passages. This is also the case in chapter 11, which is unclear regarding both the means of acquiring and also the use of the concretion or *rocanā*. Probably the most scandalous reading is that the *rocanā* is acquired via an act of sacrifice or ritual murder. This is in fact suggested by the earliest and most conservative commentator Jayabhadra, who was active during the mid-ninth century.[65] Jayabhadra characterized the "person" (*puruṣa*) who bears the concretion as a "sacrificial victim" (*paśu*).[66] That "sacrificial victim," rather than "beast," is meant here is clear from the fact that the text identifies him as a "person" (*puruṣa*).[67] The term *puruṣa* itself has a sacrificial connotation deriving from the famous *Puruṣasūkta*

[64] See Michel Foucault's "Politics and the Study of Discourse," *Ideology and Consciousness* 6 (1978): 14–15.

[65] Jayabhadra is reported by Tāranātha as being the third Tantric preceptor at Vikramaśīla. According to him, the first two preceptors, Buddhajñānapāda and Dīpaṃkarabhadra, served during Dharmapāla's reign (c. 775–812); see Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India,* 18, 325–29. If this is correct and it is also the case that Vikramaśīla was founded during the late eighth century by the Pāla king Dharmapāla, then Jayabhadra was likely active during the early to mid-ninth century. There is important evidence confirming that Jayabhadra's commentary is the oldest extant commentary. It is used as a source for many of the later commentators, and it also preserves a number of older readings of the *CST* indicating Śaiva influence, many of which were emended in later versions of the text and its commentaries.

[66] From my reading of Jayabhadra's *Cakrasaṃvarapañjikā,* from Institute for Advanced Study of World Religions (IASWR) microfiche no. MBB-I-122, fol. 21b. See also To. 1406, D rgyud 'grel vol. ma, 54a.

[67] That is, the text's statement that he is a "person" (*puruṣa*) "who has been born as a man for seven lives" (*saptajanmamanuṣajātaḥ*).

hymn.[68] While other denotations of the term *paśu* might be implied here, such as the Śaiva technical sense of an "uninitiated person," the denotation of "sacrificial victim" is strengthened by a passage elsewhere in the *CST,* which, echoing the Vedas, lists five suitable candidates for sacrifice (*pañcapaśu*), one of which includes "man" (*mānuṣa*).[69] Another commentator, Bhavabhaṭṭa, comments here that from among the human social classes, the Brahmin is the sacrificial victim.[70]

This is not to say that the *CST* advocates human sacrifice, a practice that would be completely prohibited in a normative Buddhist context.[71] Nor do any of the commentators state this, despite their use of the suggestive but ambiguous term *paśu.* The full context of this text, however, suggests the possibility of this interpretation; this was, after all, the "heretical practice" that stimulated Heruka's assumption of a Śaiva disguise, and his conversion of its non-Buddhist practitioners.

[68] Ṛg Veda 10.90.

[69] See Hélène Brunner's "Jñāna and Kriyā: Relation between Theory and Practice in the Śaivāgamas," in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism: Studies in Honor of André Padoux,* ed. Teun Goudriaan (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 27. The term *paśu* in the sense of an uninitiated (and hence ignorant) person also occurs in at least one Buddhist text, chap. 1 of the *Ḍākārṇava Tantra* (a *CST* explanatory tantra), as follows: "The Lord Yogin manifests instantaneously in a divine form, assuming a transformed shape through the yoga of a cast image, etc. [This is] the yoga of form, the self-nature of which is emptiness, the defining mark of self-consecration (*svādhiṣṭhāna*). As for the yogin who lacks self-consecration, know him to be like a heap of chaff. This sort of supreme characteristic is not known by men who are beasts (*paśu, phyugs*)." To. 372, D rgyud-'bum, vol. kha, 139b. Regarding the "five sacrificial victims," the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* lists include the man, horse, bull, ram, and he-goat; see Brian Smith, *Classifying the Universe: The Ancient Indian Varṇa System and the Origins of Caste* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 250–51. The *CST* list is anomalous, as it invokes the Vedic category of the *pañcapaśu,* but lists in fact six items in its chap. 32, as follows: "The sacrificial victims are thus five, with the donkey, the man, tortoise, camel, jackal and horse, and so forth" (paśavaś ca tathā pañca kharmānuṣakūrmoṣṭraśṛgālahayādibhiḥ; my edition, cf. Pandey, *Śrīherukābhidhānam Cakrasaṃvaratantram,* 2.519). Only two of those listed overlap with the Vedic list. It brings to mind another anomalous list, that contained in the *Kālikā Purāṇa.* See Hugh Urban, "The Path of Power: Impurity, Kingship, and Sacrifice in Assamese Tantra," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69, no. 4 (2001): 799–800.

[70] Bhavabhaṭṭa's name is usually represented in Tibetan as Bhavabhadra. The Sanskrit mss. of his commentary, however, give Bhavabhaṭṭa. According to Tāranātha (as cited above), he was the fifth Tantric preceptor of Vikramaśīla, which suggests that he may have been active c. 900 CE. This occurs in Bhavabhaṭṭa's *Cakrasamvaravivṛtti.* In his commentary on a line in *CST,* chap. 32, *varṇānāṃ varṇataḥ paśuḥ,* he writes that "among humans, from the class, i.e., from among the [social] classes, the brahmin is the sacrificial victim" (Pandey, *Śrīherukābhidhānam Cakrasaṃvaratantram,* 520: manuṣyāṇāṃ madhye varṇato varṇebhyo brāhmaṇaḥ paśuḥ).

[71] Indeed, it is not possible for us to know exactly what practices *CST,* chap. 11 implies, or whether such practices were actually performed in India or elsewhere in the Buddhist world. The commentators give us evidence regarding how it was understood in Buddhist monastic institutions. As will be seen, these sources indicate that the text and its practice tradition were gradually sanitized, such that transgressive practices were neutralized, either via outright erasure or through "sublimation," in which such ritual practices were reduced to internalized visualization exercises, devoid of actual transgressive impact.

The association of this passage in the *CST* with the reek of heresy triggered various commentatorial responses. Bhavabhaṭṭa, in his commentary on chapter 11, provides an interpretation of the text that removes the possibility of ritual violence. He begins by giving a different reading of the first verse, emending the text's claim that power is attained "by means of eating only" (*praśītamātreṇa*). Instead, he reads "through that which is scented only (**ghrāṇitamātreṇa*), namely, scent only (*ghrāṇamātreṇa*)."[72] This interpretation seems to accord with the tantra in that exuding a pleasant scent is one of the signs for identifying the bearers of *rocanā.* Nor is it necessary to "split him" (*taṃ bhakṣayitvā*). According to Bhavabhaṭṭa, one need only "smell him" (*taṃ ghrāṇayitvā*)[73] to achieve the desired powers, which appears to eliminate the need for both ritual violence and transgressive oral consumption of human bodily substances.

Bhavabhaṭṭa, however, stands alone in advancing this novel commentatorial solution to the text's troubling advocacy of ritual violence. However, there was another attempt to emend the text's call for anthropophagy. The Tibetan translations, in place of "by means of eating only," read "through service only" (*bsten pa tsam gyis*), which likely represents another attempt at emendation or commentatorial misreading.[74] What might the claim that power is achieved "through service only" mean? Again the commentaries provide an answer. *Vīravajra wrote in one of his commentaries that

> Recognizing these signs of [one born as a man for] seven lives, one should serve him with reverence so long as he lives, and one should pray "May I attain my power (*siddhi*) when he dies." As soon as he dies, one should take the concretion that is in his heart, recite one hundred times the appropriate [mantras] such as Śrīheruka's Essence and Quintessence. If one forms it into a drop (*tilaka*) on one's forehead, one will soar into the sky and travel ten million leagues. If one forms it into a drop over one's heart, one will know other's minds, [etc.].[75]

[72] Pandey, *Śrīherukābhidhānam Cakrasaṃvaratantram,* 1.85. The term *ghrāṇita* is not in fact the past passive participle from √ghrā "to smell," which is *ghrāta.* Bhavabhaṭṭa, aware of its ungrammaticality, follows it with the correct *ghrāṇa.* It is clearly an emendation based upon the term *prāśita.*

[73] See Pandey, *Śrīherukābhidhānam Cakrasaṃvaratantram,* 86.

[74] The Tibetan text *bsten pa tsam gyis* occurs in the standard Mardo-Prajñākīrti revision of Rinchen bZangpo's translation (To. 368, rgyud 'bum vol. ka, 222b), as well as in the Sumatikīrti-bLo-gros-grags revision of the same text, which is preserved only in the Phug-brag ms. bka' 'gyur (IASWR microfiche no. Lmpj 016,901, vol. nga, 106b). This translation is almost certainly not a reading of the Sanskrit *sevita,* as Pandey suggests (*Śrīherukābhidhānam Cakrasaṃvaratantram,* 85). Rather, it is likely a translation of *prasita,* which might represent a genuine variant text, or perhaps a misreading of the more transgressive *prāśita.*

[75] Tib. *dpa' bo rdo rje.* Very little is known about *Vīravajra, but as his commentary relies heavily on several others, and also quotes a wide range of Tantric Buddhist texts, it is relatively late, and probably dates no earlier than the eleventh century. One of his commentaries (To. 1408) on the *CST* was translated in the late eleventh century by Rinchen-grags (1040–1112 CE), indicating that he lived no later than then. *Vīravajra, *Padārthaprakāśikā-nāma-śrisaṃvaramūlatantraṭīkā,* To. 1412, D rgyud 'grel vol. ma, fol. 385a,b.

Evidently, this service is due to the one born seven times as a man, once he has been successfully identified. A Tibetan exegete, Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po (1092–1158 CE), reported that the "pandits" claim that those born seven times a man are bodhisattvas, who, if respectfully asked by an adept, will surrender their bodies.[76] This is a claim that does have a basis in the Indian textual tradition.[77]

Bhavabhaṭṭa's creative misreading aside, the *Cakrasamvara* corpus clearly points to the need to consume the *rocanā.* These readings accord with the myth in the *MAC,* where the concretion is consumed by the *ḍākinī*s. It is also consistent with the alternate reading that power is attained through "service" of the spiritually advanced beings known as "bodhisattvas" in Buddhist literature. This evidence points to the widespread Indian belief that bodies are literally transformed through spiritual practice and that the consumption of the flesh of certain spiritually advanced beings can result in the empowerment of the consumer. Here one might point out the eighth chapter of Śāntideva's *Training Compendium* (*śikṣāsamuccaya*), which begins with a lengthy quote from the *Āryatathāgataguhyaka Sūtra* describing certain bodhisattvas who create the aspiration that the beings who consume their flesh upon their death in a charnel ground will attain rebirth as gods in the heavens, or even *parinirvāṇa* itself.[78]

Are these explanations sufficient to remove the taint of heresy? Apparently not, for some Buddhists at least. While Mahāvairocana's conversion of the *ḍākinī*s from the violent practice of heart theft to the (relatively) nonviolent practice of postmortem anthropophagy is a positive one, it is not a conversion to normative Buddhist practice. Vīravajra's and Sachen's explanations evoke the passage in Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya,* although this is hardly the intent of that passage, which concerns bodhisattvas' giving up their bodies to feed and thereby save the carnivorous animals and which derives from well-known *Jātaka* tales.[79] Nor would willfully

[76] See Sachen Kun dga' sNying-po, *dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi ṭīka mu tig phreng ba,* in *The Complete Works of the Great Masters of the Sa Skya Sect of the Tibetan Buddhism,* vol. 1, *The Complete Works of Kun dga' snying po,* ed. bSod nams rgya mtsho (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1968), 320.2.

[77] The description of the "one born seven times a man" in the *AD* suggests that he may be a bodhisattva, as it ascribes to him a compassionate disposition (*karuṇāśaya*). See Chandra, *Abhidhānottara-Tantra,* 304.

[78] See the Sanskrit text edited in P. L. Vaidya, *Śiksāsamuccaya of Śāntideva* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1961), 89, and also the translation and study in Susanne Mrozik, "Cooking Living Beings: The Transformative Effects of Encounters with Bodhisattva Bodies," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32, no. 1 (2004): 179–80; cf. Cecil Bendall, *Śīkṣā-samuccaya: A Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine* (repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), 157.

[79] The most likely inspirations were probably the famous story of the king of the Śibis who offered his own flesh to a hawk to save the life of a dove, and the story of Prince Mahāsattva, who sacrificed his body to feed a starving tigress and her cubs. Regarding the former story see Edith Parlier's "La légende du roi des Śibi: Du sacrifice brahmanique au don du corps

causing the death of a bodhisattva be condoned in normative Mahāyāna Buddhism; it would put the practitioner in the position usually reserved in the legends for the antagonist of the bodhisattva who tests his or her resolve.

The presence of "raw" non-Buddhist elements in the *CST* was an ongoing problem with which the commentators were forced to contend, although these were gradually eliminated via emendations that rendered the text more legitimate in the eyes of skeptical Buddhists.[80] It is thus not surprising that another commentator on this text, *Bhavyakīrti,[81] seems suspicious of this chapter and reports on what must have been a controversy in Indian Buddhist circles regarding the legitimacy of Tantras such as this one as authentic discourses of a Buddha (*buddhavacana*). He wrote that

> With regard to taking the concretion (*rocanā*) it is not merely taking his concretion. This is the explanation of heretics.[82] Is this not suitable to be taught in a *yoginītantra*? This is not the case, however, since there are instructions to eat medicinal substances such as cow products in all of the *yogatantra*s such as the *Śri-Guhyasamāja,*[83] as well as in those of the heretics. Since these involve taking it from a corpse, it is not heretical? How are the *yogatantra*s and *yoginītantra*s different with regard to the explanation that the *rocanā* is taken by oneself from the corpse of one born seven times a man? Someone [says that] the *yogatantra*s were taught by the Buddha, and the *yoginītantra*s were taught by Māra. I myself am unclear about this. However, it should be understood in accordance with the following explanation: "When two things have the same fault, and when both have the same fault in meaning, in investigating the meaning in such a case, it is not suitable to settle on one of them."[84]

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bouddhique," *Bulletin d'Etudes Indiennes* 9 (1991): 133–60; regarding the latter, it is the first story in Ārya Śūra's *Jātakamālā;* see Peter Khoroche, *Once the Buddha was a Monkey, Ārya Śūra's Jātakamālā* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 5–9. For a discussion of these and numerous other instances of human flesh offerings see Reiko Ohnuma, "The Gift of the Body and the Gift of Dharma," *History of Religions* 37, no. 4 (1998): 323–59, and Hubert Durt's "Two Interpretations of Human-Flesh Offering: Misdeed of Supreme Sacrifice," *Journal of the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies* 1 (1998): 210–36.

[80] I have noticed a number of instances of the erasure of the names of Śaiva deities in my study of the *CST* manuscripts, its commentatorial tradition, and translations, which I discuss in the introduction to my forthcoming translation of this text.

[81] Tib. *bskal ldan grags pa.* According to Tāranātha, he was Bhavabhaṭṭa's successor at Vikramaśīla, and hence may have been active in the early to mid-tenth century (Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India,* 18, 325–29).

[82] The term used by *Bhavyakīrti is *mu stegs pa,* which is usually a translation of *tīrthika,* a Buddhist pejorative term for non-Buddhists.

[83] Chap. 15 of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* describes a number of pills concocted from various substances including human and cow's flesh, as well as a "pill of concretion mixed with aloe encased with the three metals"; *rocanāgurusaṃyuktāṃ gulikāṃ trilohaveṣṭitām.* Edited in Yukei Matsunaga, *The Guhyasamāja Tantra* (Osaka: Toho Shuppan, 1978), 75, verse 47.

[84] *Śricakrasamvarapañjikā-śūramanojñā-nāma,* To. 1405, D rgyud 'grel vol. ma, 19a.

There is little doubt regarding the non-Buddhist "heretics" to whom he is referring here. They are undoubtedly the Śaivas who are represented as the heretical other in the Buddhist origin myths. And it seems likely that he refers to the Śaivas particularly focused on fierce deities such as Mahākāla and Bhairava, such as the Kāpālikas, who were notorious for their practice of ritual violence, and not only in Buddhist circles. Indeed, the explanations of *Vīravajra and Sachen evoke the stories told about Kāpālikas in Hindu polemical literature, such as that related by Mādhavācarya in his *Śaṃkara Digvijaya* concerning the Kāpālika Ugrabhairava, who sought the head of an omniscient sage to roast in his sacrificial fire in order to obtain the ultimate *siddhi.*[85] The Kāpālikas have been characterized as having been engaged in a pursuit of power, one that often involved the transgression of social mores and rules of purity,[86] and it seems difficult to characterize this chapter of the *CST* in any other way than this.

*Bhavyakīrti's unwillingness to accept this text as Buddhist is telling and indicates that, for him at least, this text tested the limit of the appropriation process. But he was not the only one to harbor such doubts. His invocation of the figure of Māra, the classic Buddhist "evil one" who was believed to zealously strive to lead Buddhists astray,[87] suggests that his doubt reflected a controversy within the Indian Buddhist community over the orthodoxy of texts such as the *CST.* There is evidence that the Buddhist tantras in general, and particularly the transgressive Yoginītantras, were resisted by Buddhists adhering to the more conservative Nikāya traditions such as the Theravāda. According to the Tibetan polymath Tāranātha (1575–1634 CE), "In the temple of Vajrāsana there was a large silver image of Heruka and many treatises on mantra. Some of the *saindhava* and *siṃhala* śrāvakas said that these were composed by Māra. So they burnt these [texts] and smashed the image into pieces and used the pieces as ordinary money."[88] Despite such resistance, tantras such as the *CST*

[85] See Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and the kālāmukhas,* 32.

[86] They have been so characterized by Alexis Sanderson, "Purity and Power among the Brahmans of Kashmir," 198–202.

[87] Māra, "Death," the "Evil One" of Buddhist mythology, is the ideal spokesman for heresy, on account of his frequent attempts to delude the faithful with false teachings, which earned him the title "the Deceiver." See Trevor Ling, *Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962).

[88] Translated in Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India,* 279, but emended by me. They misunderstood the term *saindhava,* believing it to be derived from *siddha,* but it clearly is a *vṛddhi* derivative from *sindhu,* referring to monks from that region. Sindhu and Sri Lanka were both well known as being strongholds of the earlier Nikāya schools of Buddhism. The association of Siṃhala monks with the Vajrāsana complex in Bodhgaya is confirmed by Dharmasvāmin, a Tibetan pilgrim who traveled there during the thirteenth century and still found it to be dominated by Siṅgala monks. See George N. Roerich, *Biography of Dharmasvāmin (Chag lo-tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal), a Tibetan Monk Pilgrim* (Patna: K. P. Jawaswal Research Institute, 1959), xxiii–xxiv, 73. According to Tāranātha, this event

were ultimately accepted in some Indian Buddhist circles, and thence transmitted to Nepal, Tibet, and Central and East Asia. But this acceptance appears to have been contingent upon the transformation of both the text and its practice tradition, such that the more transgressive and "heretical" aspects of the text were erased or hermeneutically neutralized. Likewise, in the realm of practice, there is clear evidence of a movement away from the actual performance of transgressive practices toward sanitized versions of these practices, in which transgressive elements are either symbolically represented or internally visualized.[89]

Despite the controversy that this myth of anthropophagic *ḍākinī*s and their concomitant rituals seems to have inspired, these narrative and ritual elements do not seem to have been particularly well remembered or conserved in South Asia, Tibet, or East Asia. In the latter case, it lived on perhaps only in traces manifesting, for example, in the later *ḍākinī* cult in Japan.[90] In Nepal and Tibet, where the texts were preserved, the actual practices that may once have been associated with them were not preserved to my knowledge, that is presuming that they were ever even transmitted in the first place, manifesting beyond mere transgressive rhetoric.

This seam and limit reflect, among other things, the fractured and flexible nature of Buddhist identity. Religious identities are never monolithic and fixed but are fluid; in the language of James Clifford, they are "conjunctural," namely, relational, and subject to continual negotiation and re-

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took place during the reign of King Dharmapāla (c. 775–812 CE). If this is correct, it would have taken place during the early dissemination of Yoginītantras such as the *CST* and *Hevajra Tantra.*

[89] In my forthcoming translation of the *CST* I note the considerable evidence pointing toward an early understanding that the *CST* tradition was focused upon the performance of sexual practices that entailed the consumption of sexual fluids, a practice that would be considered highly polluting in the South Asian cultural context. In the Buddhist context as well, this tradition seems to have undergone a process of "domestication" or "sublimation" similar to what occurred in Hindu Tantric traditions in the transition from "hard core" Tantra, characterized by the consumption of sexual fluids, to the "soft core" of sanitized "High Hindu Tantra," to use David White's terminology. On the "domestication" of Hindu Tantra see Sanderson, "Purity and Power among the Brahmans of Kashmir," 202–3, and also his article "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions," in *The World's Religions,* ed. Stewart Sutherland et al. (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1988), 661ff. On "sublimation" see White, *Kiss of the Yogini,* 219–57.

[90] A considerable amount of Buddhist lore concerning *ḍākini*s was transmitted to China; for a survey see Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine,* ed. Bernard Faure (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 261–63. See also Wang Yao, "A Cult of Mahākāla in Beijing," in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Fagernes 1992,* ed. Per Kvaerne (Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), 2:957–64. In Japan it lived on in the form of the *Dakiniten* rite, which was considered "heretical." See Kuo, "Dakini," and Iyanaga, "Dākini et l'Empereur," as well as Carman Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanic Practices in Japan* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976), 55, and Karen Smyers, *The Fox and the Jewel: Shared and Private Meanings in Japanese Inari Worship* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 82–85.

negotiation.[91] Myth and ritual are simply modes of discourse that are not fixed in their application, but which in fact can be deployed to serve any number of ideological purposes. As such, they are key elements in the processes by which religious communities construct and reconstruct their identities. Identity, as Ger Duijzing has argued, "represents primarily a social bond between the individual and a collectivity or community, which may vary according to time or place, and may be accepted or contested by both insiders and outsiders."[92] Buddhism in eighth-century India was not monolithic, and the attempt to reforge an identity, traces of which linger in the texts examined here, was contested from within the Buddhist community, and possibly from without as well.[93] The very formation of a distinctly Tantric Buddhist discourse probably arose from such multiple pressures, traces of which are inscribed within the bodies of the texts.[94] It was these multiple pressures that shaped Esoteric Buddhist discourse in India, and that continued to reshape it as it was transmitted and took root in East Asia and Tibet.

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[91] See James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), esp. 10ff.

[92] Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 18.

[93] While there is no proof that religious conflict played a decisive role in the formation of Tantric Buddhist discourse, there is certainly evidence to suggest that it may have played a significant role. Important but not conclusive evidence might include the numerous stories in the hagiographies of saints such as the Mahāsiddha Tilopa that dramatize debates between Buddhists and non-Buddhists at sites such as Nālanda, where control over the institutional resources may have been at stake. See, e.g., Fabrizio Torricelli and Sangye T. Naga, *The Life of the Mahāsiddha Tilopa* (Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1995), 48–49.

[94] Jeffrey Kripal states in the introduction to his seminal work that his goal is not to present another highly sanitized and idealized portrayal of the Tantric traditions, but rather to "present Tantra . . . in its lived compromises and contradictions." See his *Kālī's Child* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 25. Tantric texts such as the *CST* are richly redolent with "compromises and contradictions" that probably reflect the messy, lived experiences of their authors. While much of the previous work on Tantra has tended to be idealized textual studies, it is important to note that this error is not intrinsic to the study of Tantric texts, but only to certain methodologies (such as the apologetic) that result in misinterpretation.