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MAPPING THE ESOTERIC BODY IN THE ISLAMIC YOGA OF BENGAL

INTRODUCTION

Islam's rapid rise within indigenous communities in the eastern and northern regions of premodern Bengal engendered extraordinary cultural and religious change from around the early Mughal period.[1] Among the significant markers available to us of this change is a large and little-studied corpus of Islamic literature in Bengali. Spanning from sacred biography to Sufi romances and practice manuals, this literature testifies to the articulation of a regional Islam among newly Islamized communities. As many as twenty of the extant texts—only about half of which have been published, and none of which appear likely to predate the sixteenth century—concern matters of Sufi doctrine and practice.[2] One of the most consistent concerns of this genre is the explication of Islamized forms of Tantric yoga, the practices of which appear integral to Sufism as it was

[1] Concerning the expansion of Islam among the Bengali peasant classes, see Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). He concludes that "Bengal's Muslim society from the thirteenth century through the sixteenth was overwhelmingly urban" (97).

[2] Ahmad Sharif, whose critical editions of Bengali Islamic texts make possible studies such as the present one, provides a list of the published and unpublished Bengali texts he considers "Sufi treatises" (*sūphīśāstras*); see Ahmad Sharif, *Bāṅalār Sūphī Sāhitya* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1969), 5–6. His criteria are unclear, however, for the list includes the Nātha narrative *Gorakha Vijaya*.

0018-2710/2007/4604-0003$10.00

developed in Bengal. Although the sources for this yoga are clearly indigenous, primarily the Nātha cult and at a later stage Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇavism, Muslim authors encode their disciplines within Islamic doctrinal categories and articulate them as integral elements of a Sufi praxis regimen.

Generalizations about the supposedly syncretic nature of Bengali religious culture, and the quest to understand how and why Islamization took place, have not infrequently dominated the study of Islam in premodern Bengal. Scholarship has tended to elide its diversity, and particular Islamicate religious forms, such as Sufi yoga, have hence received relatively little detailed attention.[3] With this gap in mind, the present essay focuses upon a process that was central to the articulation of Islamic yoga: the translation into Islamic categories of the yogic or esoteric body, that which Sanskrit sources commonly refer to as the *sūkṣma* (subtle) body, or *puryaṣṭaka*. In the second part of the essay, I explore issues that arise in framing inquiry into this material.

Tantric practices became prevalent across an extraordinary spectrum of sectarian boundaries in South Asia and beyond, flourishing with Śaivism, Buddhism, and Vaiṣṇavism and finding a place in both Jainism and the Brahmanical *smārta* traditions as well.[4] If one leaves aside monolithic Orientalist characterizations, it would seem evident that in South Asia, Islam constituted no less likely a ground for the assimilation of Tantric yoga. In important ways, a suitable foundation was already in place: Sufi traditions, after all, embraced elaborate spiritual disciplines that, like those of Tantric yoga, required esoteric initiation and presupposed a mystical physiology as the locus for meditations involving syllabic formulas, visualization, and controlled respiration. Islamic adaptations of indigenous yogic disciplines are indeed by no means unique to Bengal: Sufi

[3] Exceptions include David Cashin's important study, *The Ocean of Love: Middle Bengali Sufi Literature and the Fakirs of Bengal* (Stockholm: Association of Oriental Studies, Stockholm University, 1995); and France Bhattacharya's recent annotated translation of a Sufi yoga text, "Un texte du Bengale médiéval: Le yoga du kalandar (*Yoga-Kalandar*); Yoga et soufisme, le confluent des deux fleuves," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 90–91 (2003–4): 69–99. Tony Stewart's work on the cult of *pīr*s is particularly noteworthy: "Alternate Structures of Authority: Satya Pīr on the Frontiers of Bengal," in *Beyond Hindu and Muslim: Multiple Identity in Narratives from Village India*, ed. Peter Gottschalk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21–54. Stewart has published a volume of translations from the literature on *pīr*s as well: *Fabulous Females and Peerless Pīrs: Tales of Mad Adventure in Old Bengal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[4] On the role of Tantric practices in the *smārta* tradition, see, e.g., Gudrun Bühnemann, "Maṇḍalas and Yantras in *Smārta* Ritual," in *Maṇḍalas and Yantras in the Hindu Traditions*, ed. Gudrun Bühnemann (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 57–118. Concerning the relationship between Hindu orthodoxy and Tantric Śaivism, see Alexis Sanderson, "Purity and Power among the Brahmans of Kashmir," in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy and History*, ed. Steven Collins, Michael Carrithers, and Steven Lukes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 190–216. On Tantra in Jainism, see especially John Cort, "Tantra in Jainism: The Cult of Ghaṇṭākarṇ Mahāvīr," *Bulletin d'Études Indiennes* 15 (1997): 115–33.

*silsilah*s and Ismāʿīlīs in South Asia attest multiple examples of experimentation,[5] and as Carl Ernst shows, Arabic and Persian translations of the lost Sanskrit *Amṛtakuṇḍa* circulated in Sufi circles as far afield as Istanbul.[6] In the presence of the enormous variety of *dhikr* techniques available in late medieval Islam, it was apparently not uncommon for Sufis to "obtain multiple initiations into the practices of several Sufi orders, though the primary orientation would remain in a single order."[7] The variable and extendable nature of the elements of Sufi meditational praxis, the potential for the individual Shaykh to innovate, and the probable Islamization of yogi communities in Bengal, discussed subsequently, suggest historical circumstances in which the development of Islamic forms of Tantric yoga should be of little surprise.

ISLAMIZING THE YOGIC BODY

Tantric conceptions of the body consistently place the human organism into a relation of structural homology to the macrocosm. This mapping of biocosmological equivalence extends from celestial realms and hell worlds—and the rivers, mountains, and pilgrimage centers of sacred geography—to the social world, rendering mastery of the external universe possible through yogic technique alone. Similar conceptions are not alien to classical Sufi mysticism; in the thought of Ibn ʿArabī, for example, all that exists in the human being has an analogue in the macrocosm, "the great human being" (*al-insān al-kabīr*).[8] Perhaps facilitated by Islamic precedents, Bengal Sufism adapted to itself the basic template of the yogic body as formulated by the Nātha cult and reconfigured it within the parameters of Indo-Islamic thought. In the Bengali *Sir Nāmā*, we are told that Allāh's entire creation of eighteen cosmological spheres (*ʿālam*) is present within the body, within which we may obtain, according to *Tālib*

[5] In this essay, as far as possible, Islamic terms are given in their Arabic, singular forms, with the English "s" added to form the plural, and the Bengali rendering provided in parentheses, if it differs considerably.

[6] Carl Ernst, "The Islamization of Yoga in the Amrtakunda Translations," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, ser. 3, 13, no. 2 (2003): 199–226. More recently, Ernst has provided an overview of the Sufi engagement with yoga and yogis as reflected in Persian, Arabic, and Urdu sources, in "Situating Sufism and Yoga," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, ser. 3, 15, no. 1 (2005): 15–43. He notes that "a more extensive engagement with yogic tradition took place among Indian Sufis through regional Indic languages, especially on the frontiers of Bengal and the Punjab," and he remarks, "much remains to be done in the evaluation of the significance of yogic themes in these literatures" (32–33). On the Ismāʿīlī practice of yoga, see Dominique-Sila Khan, "Conversation between Guru Hasan Kabīruddīn and Jogī Kāniphā: Tantra Revisited by the Ismaʿili Preachers," in *Tantra in Practice*, ed. David Gordon White (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 285–95.

[7] Carl Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism: An Essential Introduction to the Philosophy and Practice of the Mystical Tradition of Islam* (Boston: Shambhala, 1997), 121.

[8] See William C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn Al-ʿArabī's Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 288.

Nāmā, the fruits of visiting Mecca and Medina.[9] It is within the body that one must wage holy war against Iblis and his minions, a Sufi conception of *jihād* enriched through the addition of yogic categories such as the *ṣaḍripu*, "six enemies" of lust, and so forth.[10] The body itself is likened to a province (*wilāyah*, Bengali *bilāt*) or city under the rule of the soul, as king, with the various administrators of Indo-Islamic polity under his jurisdiction: the *ʿaql* (intelligence, Bengali *ākal*) is the *vazīr* or prime minister (*ujīr*); correct discrimination is the *qāḍī* or judge (*kājī*); and the body's hair the masses of subjects (*ruʿāyā*, Bengali *rāyat*), all the transactions of whom are recorded in the *daftar* (Bengali *daptar*), or account book, of the heart. Filling the coffers of the royal treasury is the body's stock of seminal fluid, the expenditure of which spells the kingdom's ruin.[11] The sun and moon, or rather four moons, circulate through the human organism, in which are also present the planets, the twelve signs of the solar zodiac, and seven days of the week.[12] Bengal's plentiful rivers and canals for their part find biological correspondence in the body's *nāḍī*s, conceived of as carriers of blood, semen, and the vital airs; also present in the body are the seven oceans of Indian cosmography in the form of the bodily fluids.[13]

Muslim authors in Bengal faced a range of options in negotiating the Islamization of Tantric yoga and adopted multiple and sometimes inconsistent approaches. Some early Bengali Sufi texts retain a substratum of Nātha practice little affected by Islamization and articulated in largely indigenous vocabulary, especially when the subject matter has minimal theological implications. Often, Islamic categories are translated into equivalent Bengali or Sanskrit terminology; use of Persian or Arabic technical vocabulary for yogic concepts is common as well, reflecting the dynamic processes by which equivalence was sought. Finally, building upon equivalences and the transformational possibilities of translation, we find articulation of entirely exogenous Islamic conceptions and practices.[14] Individual authors approach this range of possibilities differently. Some who were evidently learned in the Islamic sciences, such as Mīr

[9] *Sir Nāmā*, in Sharif, *Bāṅalār Sūphī Sāhitya*, 271; see also Tālib Nāmā, in ibid., 87.

[10] Ibid., 295.

[11] *Nur Jāmāl/Surat Nāmā*, 201, and *Sir Nāmā*, 294–95, both in Sharif, *Bāṅalār Sūphī Sāhitya*. The matter of these two texts overlaps considerably here.

[12] *Sir Nāmā*, in Sharif, *Bāṅalār Sūphī Sāhitya*, 272.

[13] *Nur Jāmāl/Surat Nāmā* enumerates the *nāḍī*s and describes them as carriers of blood (*śoṇita*), much as the rivers of the earth carry water. See Sharif, *Bāṅalār Sūphī Sāhitya*, 199–201.

[14] On equivalence and translation in Bengali Islamic literature, discussed subsequently, see Tony Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving the Muslim-Hindu Encounter through Translation Theory," in *India's Islamic Traditions, 711–1750*, ed. Richard M. Eaton (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 363–92.

Muhammad Saphī and Hājī Muhammad, make pronounced efforts to systematize Tantric yoga within the framework of Indo-Persian Sufi doctrines and technical terminology. The doctrinal positions of these authors exhibit little accommodation of indigenous sources. At the other extreme we may situate the narrative literature on Nātha themes performed and evidently also partly composed within Muslim communities, a literature that evidences few traces of Islamization.[15] More typical perhaps is the middle ground of Sufi practice manuals, such as *Yoga Kalandar* and Ābdul Hākim's so-called *Cāri Mokāmer Bheda*. In these two cases, we find serious attempts at framing yoga within an Islamic view of the sacred alongside the expression of clearly heretical doctrines, including the characteristic Nātha pursuit of bodily immortality. Conspicuously absent in this literature, moreover, is a consistent emphasis upon Sufi theologies of divine love.

Despite these differences, Bengali Sufi texts share an almost invariable concern with yogic practices and moreover make the yogic body a primary locus of Islamization. At the center of early Islamic reconceptualizations of the esoteric body in Bengal lies a homology between *cakra*s, the plexuses of the Tantric subtle anatomy, and *maqām*s (Bengali *mokām*), the "stations" of Islamic mysticism, generally conceived of as stages marking the progressive passage of the wayfarer along the Sufi path (*tarīqah*). Bengali Sufis shared a conception of *maqām*s as a bodily series of four stations correlating to four cosmological spheres (*ʿālam*) and frame the yogic mastery of this ascending series as the soul's ascension through the cosmological levels. This correspondence of *cakra*s with *maqām*s and cosmological spheres is in turn consistently extended to a second Islamic taxonomical set: that of "abodes" (*manzil*, Bengali *mañjil*). This is a taxonomy that comprehends a hierarchy of interwoven dimensions of Sufi spiritual life: shariah, Islamic orthopraxis; *tarīqah*, the path of Sufi discipline; *haqīqah*, the experience of truth or reality; and *maʿrifah*, ultimate gnosis. This homology of the *cakra*s with Sufi *maqām*s and the stages of the religious path seamlessly integrates Islamic orthopraxy within the framework of Islamic yoga and relegates it, as in many forms of Sufism, to a low but foundational station.

Sufi conceptions of the *maqām*s lack uniformity, and the unusual series adopted in Bengal consists of *nāsūt*, *malakūt*, *jabarūt*, and *lāhūt*. Classical Sufism does not employ these terms to describe *maqām*s but reserves them rather for the domain of cosmology as signifiers for *ʿālam*s, worlds or spheres of existence: the spheres of *jabarūt* (ruling power) and *malakūt* (sovereignty, the angelic realm) stand in opposition to the *ʿālam al-mulk*, a *Qurʾānic* term connoting the "here below"—the "world of kingship."

[15] Such as the narratives *Gorakha Vijaya* and *Gupicānder Sannyāsa*.

Transcending all these is *lāhūt*, the "incommunicable world of the divine essence"—"the world of absolute divine transcendence" beyond the spheres of existence.[16] The pair *lāhūt-nāsūt* appears in the writings of al-Ḥallāj, where it signifies the duality between divinity and humanity.[17] These terms came to be important cosmological categories in the work of Ibn ʿArabī and play a significant role in illuminationist (*ishrāqīyah*) theosophy. As a sequence of four, however, they find place most conspicuously in Persian Shīʾī cosmology as the ascending planes of the universe.[18]

Whatever their sources for Sufi doctrine may have been, and some possibilities will be discussed subsequently, the agents involved in the framing of an Islamic yoga in Bengal develop their translation strategies from among a wide range of options and in doing so arrive at a systematization distinct from what we know of other Islamized yoga systems. What they achieve is, for example, conceptually different from what the redactors of the Arabic translation of the *Amṛtakuṇḍa* do; the latter adopt a system of seven planets as the organizing metaphor for the yogic body, in which the ascent of the *kuṇḍalinī* through seven *cakra*s is cast as a journey through the planetary spheres, an important theme in Neoplatonic mysticism.[19] Bengali Sufis for their part articulate a holistic system integrating elements of Islamic orthopraxis, Sufi discipline, stages of spiritual progress, and cosmological spheres—sets of correspondences that they further extend through linkage to the taxonomical sets of the Tantric *cakra*s: controlling deities, elements, colors, shapes, seasons, sounds, and spiritual experiences. In establishing these sets of correspondences, taxonomic shifts ensue. The four elements of Greco-Islamic philosophy, for instance, replace the five elements of Indian philosophy, and the pantheon of Hindu deities present as lords of the *cakra*s gives way to a series of archangels, governors of the cosmological spheres: Isrāʾīl (Ājrāil, in Bengali), Isrāfīl, Mīkāʾīl, and Jibrīl. These angels combine in their beings the functions of both Tantric deities and their "mounts" (*vāhana*s) by themselves manifesting in the form of animals: tiger, snake, elephant, and peacock, respectively.[20]

Homologizing or establishing equivalence between the conceptual categories of Nātha yoga and Sufism lays a foundation that enables shifts more substantial than substitution. In Tantric sequences of *cakra*s, the hierarchy of plexuses along the spinal column culminates in the plexus at

[16] L. Gardet, "ʿĀlam," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. Bernard Lewis et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 350–51.
[17] Christopher Shackle, "Lāhūt and Nāsūt," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 614.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ernst, "Islamization of Yoga," 218.
[20] See *Yoga Kalandar* in Sharif, *Bāṅalār Sūphī Sāhitya*, 94–101.

the crest of the cranium, or even beyond the body, as locus of the supreme divinity. While practice systems of Tantric yoga sometimes place considerable emphasis on the heart, the *cakra*s are nonetheless considered to constitute a vertical and hierarchical progression. In *Yoga Kalandar* and similar texts of Bengali Islamic yoga, we find, however, both a shift from the head to the heart and a disruption of the verticality of the *cakra*/*maqām* hierarchy. The *nāsūt maqām* is equated with the Tantric *mūlādhāra cakra* at the base of the spine and is the locus of an "oven" (*tiharī*); the fire therein animates the body and, stoked through yoga, is capable of effecting immortality. Above this in the navel region is situated the *malakūt maqām*, the angelic sphere presided over by Isrāfīl and equated with the *maṇipūra cakra* of yoga. The vertical sequence is then disrupted by identifying the *jabarūt maqām* with the *amṛtakuṇḍa* situated in the head near the base of the palate (*tālumūla*), while *lāhūt*, the supreme station, is located lower in the yogic body at the heart and equated with the *anāhata cakra*.[21]

Hence, despite its ritual importance as the source of the nectar of immortality (*amṛta*), a seat of the soul (*ātmā*), as well as the *maqām* in which one may obtain a vision of the Prophet of Light (*Nūr-e Muḥammad*), Bengali Sufis considered the *amṛtakuṇḍa* a lower biocosmological level than the station of the heart. This was certainly dictated in part by the Sufi emphasis on the heart as locus of the presence of Allāh. Al-Ḥallāj, for example, speaks of God as he "who flows between the pericardium and the heart,"[22] while al-Ghazālī and others cultivated the metaphor of the spiritual heart as a mirror for the reflection of the divine. For al-Ghazālī, the heart possesses a window into the *malakūt*, the unseen spiritual world.[23] The *dhikr* of the heart is regarded as superior to the *dhikr* of the tongue, and *dhikr* itself is sometimes spoken of as having the purpose of polishing the mirror of the heart.[24]

In the yogic heart of Bengali Islamic yoga, described as the mirror of God, we find a complex layering: forming the "setting" of the *maqām* are the lotus of a thousand petals, signaling in Tantric physiology the locus of the supreme reality, and the Throne of the Lord, referred to by the Sanskrit *siṃhāsana* or by Arabic terms. It is significant to note how seamlessly

[21] Bhattacharya provides a useful chart of the taxonomical sets associated with the *manzil*s and *maqām*s in *Yoga Kalandar*, in "Un texte du Bengale médiéval," 93.

[22] Quoted in Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 71.

[23] Timothy J. Gianotti, *Al-Ghazālī's Unspeakable Doctrine of the Soul: Unveiling the Esoteric Psychology and Eschatology of the Iḥyā'* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 149–67.

[24] Ibid., 71. Nūrī formulated the notion of the heart possessing four aspects, connected with *islam* (submission), *imān* (faith), *ma'rifah* (gnosis), and *tawḥīd* (the unity of God), respectively, to which Sufis add a fifth, the *sirr*, or "innermost part of the heart in which the divine revelation is experienced"; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 192.

the Throne, a *Qurʾānic* concept (e.g., 2:255, the "Throne Verse"), fits into the Tantric inner landscape, filling a function analogous to the seat or throne (*āsana*, *siṃhāsana*) visualized as part of the complex locus of the deity in *antaryāga*, "inner worship," as practiced, for example, in Bengal's contemporaneous Sākta tradition.[25] What shifts is the aniconic presence of God. On the level of form, Jibrīl the angel presides as the guardian divinity of the heart station, in the guise of a peacock. Also present, purely Islamic insertions into the internal landscape, are the animal soul (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*) and its eager instructor, Iblis, whom we must, as *Yoga Kalandar* informs us, expel from the heart to have a vision of the Lord.[26] As the locus of union between the individual soul (*jīvātmā*) and the supreme soul (*paramātmā*), the heart is compared to a glass jar or a crystal lantern in which the soul and the blemishless Lord (*prabhu nirañjana*) mingle like milk into milk or light with light, combining non-Islamic and *Qurʾānic* imagery, respectively.[27] Here we seem quite far from the moderate Sufi conception of *tawḥīd*, "unity," as the egoless experience of the existence of God alone; rather, more in line with nondualist Nātha doctrine, the imagery suggests what in orthodox Islam would be considered heretical, *ittiḥād* or ontological union.

Though the conception of the series of four *maqām*s outlined above is common in the Nātha-influenced Sufi yoga literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the texts nonetheless attest to complex processes of system formation in flux. Diversity is particularly evident in meditation practices (*sādhana*) and mantra. In *sādhana*, emphasis lies predominantly upon yogic practices for control of the vital airs, stimulation of the internal fire, and inner consumption of the nectar of immortality, all of which are embedded within visualization of the Sufi master (*murshīd*), angelic presences, and the Nūr-e Muḥammad. Sufi light imagery pervades the visualizations, yet we find considerable variation concerning the divine lights present within the subtle body and diverse modes of reconciling the presence of the Nūr-e Muḥammad with the bodily sun, moon, and the nectar of immortality present in the *amṛtakuṇḍa*. As far as mantra is concerned, despite sporadic references to oṃ and to the *ajapā* or *haṃsa* of yoga, it seems that Sufi *dhikr* formulas largely replace Sanskrit mantras. Modes of applying *dhikr* for the mastery of the subtle body vary, however, and the textual sources leave much unstated. The *maqām*s themselves contain plentiful minor variations; seasonal and color associations differ,

[25] See, e.g., the visualization of the goddess Tripurasundarī in *antaryajana* (inner worship), in chap. 16 of the sixteenth-century *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, esp. 16.30–31; Bhuvanmohan Sankhyatirtha and Chintamani Bhattacharya, eds., *Pūrṇānanda's Śrītattvacintāmaṇi* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, [1936] 1994), 542–63.

[26] In Sharif, *Bāṅalār Sūphī Sāhitya*, 101.

[27] *Yoga Kalandar*, in ibid., 100.

for instance, as does the sequence of presentation. A more substantive variation occurs in the manual composed by Ābdul Hākim, wherein the taxonomical associations of the *nāsūt* and *lāhūt maqām*s seem inverted; here, however, I suspect textual corruption. Perhaps most significant in this text is its reference to a fifth, secret *maqām* termed *hāhut*, in which one apparently cultivates pure formlessness.[28] Invoking secrecy, Hākim says nothing more concerning this. Yet another text, *Sir Nāmā* of Kājī Śekha Mansur, refers not only to *hāhut* but to an additional *maqām*, *khāhut*; to learn of these two, he informs us, one must seek oral instructions from a *pīr*.[29] Individual Bengali Sufi masters, though sharing a common conception of the yogic body, also apparently engaged in processes of continual innovation and competitive extension, offering to the initiated secrets transcending those of past and rival *pīr*s. This state of flux in early Islamic yoga appears over time to have proceeded not in the direction of greater systematization but rather toward greater diversity with the profusion of esoteric cults in the colonial and modern periods. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to trace the evolution of the *maqām-cakra* confluence in later Bengal, it is significant that the homology has remained intact, most notably for the Bāuls, one of several Bengali sects that draws followers from both Muslim and non-Islamic communities. In their case, Rahul Peter Das has shown there to exist an almost bewildering range of conceptualizations of the esoteric body and its *cakra*s or *maqām*s.[30]

FRAMING BENGALI ISLAMIC YOGA

Existing models of pre-modern Bengali religion and Islamization have not adequately addressed the case of Sufi yoga. Asim Roy, invoking religious syncretism as the primary lens for understanding Islam in medieval Bengal, posits Bengali Sufi literature as the work of a class of elite Muslims whose primary agenda was to mediate "classical sufic ideas" through "local symbols" to the masses of Muslim converts, masses "dominated by an instinctive search for divinity, religiosity, and godliness in the supernatural and the fantastic."[31] In this elite-masses model of Islamic mediation, "where [local] symbolism was found inadequate, unqualified use of indigenous materials occurred," or else the concepts of Tantric yoga simply "influenced the minds of these Muslim writers."[32] Roy's pioneering work in Muslim Bengali literature hence frames a model for

[28] 5.48–49 (156); this text is published in Cashin, *Ocean of Love*, 149–56.
[29] In Sharif, *Bāṅalār Sūphī Sāhitya*, 258.
[30] Rahul Peter Das, "Problematic Aspects of the Sexual Rituals of the Bauls of Bengal," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112 (1992): 402.
[31] Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 142, 169, quote on 81.
[32] Ibid., 169, 164.

Bengali Sufism that reduces Islamic adaptations of Tantric yoga either to strategies for mediating Islam to credulous peasants or to inadvertent seepage from the indigenous religious environment into the minds of Muslims.[33]

Other interpreters have questioned the usefulness of the category of syncretism for explaining religious culture in premodern Bengal, as it seems predicated upon the notion of immutable religious essences and bounded communities.[34] As Richard Eaton frames the matter, "Instead of visualizing two separate and self-contained social groups, Hindus and Muslims, participating in rites in which each stepped beyond its 'natural' communal boundaries, one may see instead a single undifferentiated mass of Bengali villagers who, in their ongoing struggle with life's usual tribulations, unsystematically picked and chose from an array of reputed instruments—a holy man here, a holy river there—in order to tap superhuman power."[35] In a somewhat similar vein, Tony Stewart describes "pragmatic power" as an emic concern that defies our anachronistic interest in religious identity. Addressing the cult of Satya Pīr, he demonstrates how locally significant and pragmatic concerns could be mediated through multiple constructions of religious authority within a shared world.[36]

As an alternative framework, Eaton develops his observations on Islamicate religious phenomena into an analysis of the process of Islamization. In place of the vague concepts of syncretism and conversion, he suggests a model for mapping religious change, tentatively identifying three phases: "inclusion" of Islamic superhuman agencies, subsequent "identification" of these with indigenous ones, and eventual "displacement" of the latter.[37] We can perhaps extend this model's focus on divinities to include also doctrinal and ritual change. What Eaton identifies as stages of Islamization certainly finds extensive attestation in the Muslim yoga literature. In these texts, we find the inclusion of exogenous Islamic elements within indigenous ritual systems and extensive identifications

[33] In spite of this criticism, I should emphasize that Roy's study remains an impressively wide-ranging account of the literature, both published and unpublished, of premodern Bengali Islam.

[34] On the critique of syncretism, see especially Tony Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence," 371–76; and also Carl Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga," 17–20. The category continues to inform conceptions of Bengali religion; note, for example, the image evoked in the subtitle of Bhattacharya's annotated translation of *Yoga Kalandar*: "Yoga et soufisme, le confluent des deux fleuves." The image of converging rivers evokes what Stewart critiques as the "mixture" or "alchemy" model of syncretism ("In Search of Equivalence," 373–74).

[35] Eaton, *Rise of Islam*, 281.

[36] Stewart, "Alternate Structures of Authority," 23–24.

[37] Eaton emphasizes that these "are of course only heuristic categories, proposed in an attempt to organize and grasp intellectually what was on the ground a very complex and fluid process"; *Rise of Islam*, 269–70.

between yogic and Islamic categories, with Islamic yoga systems basing themselves upon the homology between the Sufi stations (*maqām*s) and Tantric *cakra*s. Building upon homologies, we also find displacement of yogic conceptions in favor of classical Sufi ones. Islamic angels, the Nūr-e Muḥammad, and *dhikr* formulas have, for instance, almost entirely displaced Tantric deities and mantras, yet the process of providing Islamic meanings to all dimensions of the ritual does not uniformly appear to have reached an advanced stage.

This model distances us from the presuppositions of the syncretism discourse and opens up new possibilities for conceptualizing religious power and change in Bengal. At the same time, Eaton's intervention would seem to attribute an unlikely homogeneity to the Bengali religious landscape. In the Sufi yoga literature, we often confront the work of learned religious specialists and complex attempts at system formation, for which the model of peasants unsystematically selecting from among a range of "reputed instruments" has obvious limitations. Moreover, as important as is the shift from reading the Bengali past in terms of "Hindu" and "Muslim," it seems problematic to posit Bengali peasants as a "single undifferentiated mass"; taking a cue from the figure of Satya Pīr, we should rather expect to find shared domains of religiosity, such as cults of local deities and *pīr*s, alongside complex constructions of religious allegiance and authority, including Muslim and non-Muslim, Śākta and Vaiṣṇava, Nātha cult and Dharma cult, Sufi and non-Sufi. Eaton's model would presumably predict continued and (eventually) complete displacement of yoga, beyond what is reflected in the early Islamic yoga texts, a teleological model of religious change treating such phenomena as artifacts gradually filtered out by the process of Islamization. Although the effects of modern reform movements might seem to verify this model, there is little indication that Bengali Sufism engaged in gradual displacement of yoga in the premodern period: the textual evidence seems rather to suggest an ongoing Islamic domestication of yoga, which makes it integral to Sufi discipline without displacing it.

Grounded in a critique of syncretism's inadequate treatment of agency and of the creative linguistic and religious processes at work, Stewart advances a sophisticated mode of analysis drawing on translation theory. Seeking to recover the "active dimension" of Bengali Sufi texts—akin to what in Ronald Inden's terminology we might call the ways in which they are "articulative"—Stewart suggests that we read these as "historical witnesses to the earliest attempts to think Islamic thoughts in the local language."[38] This shifts emphasis to the process of "production," for "the

[38] Ronald Inden, "Introduction: From Philological to Dialogical Texts," in *Querying the Medieval*, ed. Ronald Inden, Jonathan Walters, and Daud Ali (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13–14; Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence," 375.

unstated object of the model of syncretism is its end-product, pointing to the creation of some kind of static 'entity' which, by virtue of its violation of exclusive categories, is inherently unstable."[39] Stewart demonstrates this hermeneutic through analysis of a doctrinal tract of Ali Rajā, foregrounding processes of cultural translation and the search for equivalence. In his analysis, these serve to articulate "a thoroughly Islamic view of the world in a text that uses an ostensibly Hindu terminology to express it."[40] In seeking to apply Stewart's translation model to Islamic yoga, we face a complexity insofar as the texts are concerned not only with conceptual translation but directly with praxis. Textual sources on Islamic yoga participate in the multiform process of appropriating yogic discipline, which involves but is more than the translation of Sufi thoughts using indigenous terminology and concepts. If Ali Rajā offers an example of the attempt "to think Islamic thoughts in the local language," one could say that the yoga literature reflects the effort to accomplish Sufi aims through local practice. Stewart's application of translation theory is highly productive in elucidating the translation processes by which this practice is articulated within an Islamic framework. We can also take from his model the caution to avoid positing "Islamic yoga" as a static product of the Sufi encounter with yogis, shifting focus instead to "the conditions, both creative and constraining, within which that production, that experimentation, is possible, that is, to the way such encounter can take place."[41]

Concerning the historical conditions, the context of early Bengali Sufi texts articulating the practice and conception of yoga, David Cashin demonstrates through doctrinal indicators that these usually exhibit links to specific Tantric cults. Although much of the literature cannot yet be dated precisely, it is nonetheless evident that the earliest Bengali Muslim esoteric texts, thought to date from the sixteenth century, reflect a Nātha yogi orientation; Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇava-oriented texts occur with equal frequency in the seventeenth century, coming to eclipse the Nātha-oriented texts in the eighteenth century, while in the nineteenth century, Nātha imagery is almost impossible to identify.[42] That is to say, Nātha influence dominates in the earliest stratum of textual evidence and disappears from the record over the subsequent centuries, while new cultic orientations emerge within Islamic esotericism.

[39] Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence," 372.
[40] Ibid., 386.
[41] Ibid., 387.
[42] See the chart of indicators and discussion in Cashin, *Ocean of Love*, 56–57, 109–12. In a more general fashion, the presence of Nātha practices in early Bengali Sufi literature is also discussed by Momtazur Rahman Tarafdar, "The Influence of the Natha Cult on the Growth of Sufism in Bengal," in *Shīʿa Islam, Sects and Sufism: Historical Dimensions, Religious Practice and Methodological Considerations*, ed. Frederick De Jong (Utrecht: M.Th. Houtsma Stichting, 1992), 97–104.

Historical inquiry into the context of Bengali Islamic yoga should hence begin with the pan-Indian Nātha yogi and Sufi encounter. Nātha yogis, practitioners of elaborate bodily and meditational disciplines with roots in the Kaula phase of Śaiva Tantra,[43] figure prominently in the religious landscape of north India from the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, thriving in the eras and areas of Islamic political and cultural expansion in the subcontinent. Sufi hagiographical literature confirms their status as significant spiritual "others," both as rivals and potential sources of wisdom for Sufis in the quest for sacrality and power. Carl Ernst, who discusses much of the evidence for the Sufi-yogi encounter, remarks that "the yogis were perhaps the only Indian religious group with whom Sufis had much in common. This was also an encounter between two movements that shared overlapping interests in psycho-physical techniques of meditation, and which competed to some extent for popular recognition as wonder-workers, healers, and possessors of sanctity. . . . The similarity between yogis and Sufis extended to the point that the heads of Nath yogi establishments became known by the Persian term *pir*, the common designation for a Sufi master."[44] Tales of magical competition and triumphal conversion register the extent to which Sufis viewed yogic practices as efficacious, if limited in comparison to those of the Shaykh, whose closeness to God enabled the performance of greater miracles (*karāmat*).[45] In Bengal, there are some indications that Sufis and yogis were in direct competition for patronage; for example, a possibly sixteenth-century Sanskrit text from

[43] Note, for instance, that Matsyendra(-pāda/-nātha), one of the legendary founders of the Nātha sect, along with Gorakṣanātha, is also credited in earlier tradition with the transmission of Kaula scriptures. Nearly all colophons of the pre-tenth-century *Kaulajñānanirṇaya*, for example, credit him with its revelation (*Kaulajñānanirṇaya*, National Archives of Kathmandu, Accession no. 3/362, Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, reel no. A48–13). According to Alexis Sanderson, Macchanda (i.e., Matsyendra) and *nātha*s (lords) of the *yuga*s, or world ages, figure at the earliest historical level of the Kaula tradition; see "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions," in *The World's Religions: The Religions of Asia*, ed. Friedhelm Hardy (London: Routledge, 1988), 679–82.

[44] Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga," 33–41, quote on 23.

[45] On the efficacy of the practices of yogis, one might cite the words of the Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddus Gangohi: "The manner in which certain unbelieving Jogis, who have not a trace of Islam in them, relate knowledge of spiritual matters and of the Divine Unity (*ʿilm-i maʿrifat u wahdat*) and the way in which they gain control over their breath and display miracles is not hid from the wise: but do you not see how Pharaoh also—curses be upon him!—as he was possessed of supernatural powers claimed divinity?" Quoted in Simon Digby, "ʿAbd al-Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 A.D.): The Personality and Attitudes of a Medieval Indian Sufi," in *Medieval India—a Miscellany*, ed. K. A. Nizami (Bombay: Asia Printing House, 1975), 3:35. Athar Abbas Rizvi provides an overview of the Sufi-yogi encounter in his "Sufis and Natha Yogis in Mediaeval Northern India (xii–xvi Centuries)," *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia* 7 (1970): 119–33; he notes that "the theme of sufis and yogis vying with one another in performing miracles is unending in later Sufi literature" (128). Several such tales of encounter are translated in Digby, *Wonder Tales of South Asia: Translated from Hindi, Urdu, Nepali and Persian* (Jersey: Orient Monographs, 2000).

north Bengal, *Sekaśubhodayā*, portrays a triangular struggle for royal favor between Brahmins, Nātha yogis, and a Shaykh, prompting the pious Brahmins and holy Shaykh to ally together against morally ambivalent yogis.[46]

Unfortunately, our sources appear lacking for reconstructing the Nātha cult in pre-Islamic Bengal. The pan-Indian Sanskrit literature of the sect is largely restricted to the exposition of normative practices and doctrines.[47] As for the vernacular narrative and song literature of Bengal, it seems highly improbable that any of the extant material in its present form predates widespread Islamization.[48] In fact, the majority of manuscripts of *Gorakha Vijaya*, the text most often cited in studies of the Nātha cult in Bengal, attribute authorship to a Muslim, Shekh Phāyjullā.[49] Oral traditions of Nātha literature have been preserved into the modern period, as Shashibhushan Dasgupta puts it, "only by Muslims and low-class Hindus."[50] We hence face a situation in which our only literary record of the Bengali Nātha cult is a literature produced or at least preserved within Islamized communities, which makes problematic its usefulness for reading into the pre-Islamic past.

Circumstantial evidence certainly points toward ongoing Islamization of Nātha lay communities in Bengal. Cashin, whose fieldwork in Bangladesh seems to have taken place in the 1980s, notes that "Nāthism, its imagery and folktales, has virtually died out on the village level."[51] Given Bangladeshi demographics, Islamization is the most obvious explanation for the disappearance of Nātha communities, and Islamization of both Nātha ascetics and lay communities is documented throughout the subcontinent.[52]

[46] Sukumar Sen, ed., *Sekasubhodaya of Halāyudha Miśra: Edited with Notes, Introduction and Translated into English*, Bibliotheca Indica Series 286 (Kolkata: Asiatic Society, 1963).

[47] Sanskrit treatises of the Nātha cult include, for example, the *Khecarīvidyā* of Ādinātha, ed. James Mallinson, in *The Khecarividya of Adinatha: An Early Hathayogic Text* (London: Routledge, 2006); the *Matsyendrasaṃhitā*, ed. Debabrata Sensharma, Bibliotheca Indica Series 318 (Kolkata: Asiatic Society, 1994); the *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* of Svātmārāma, ed. Swami Digambarji and Pitambar Jha (Lonāvalā, India: Kaivalyadhām Śrīmanmādhav Yogamandir Samiti, 1970); and the *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati*, in *The Siddha-Siddhānta-Paddhati and Other Works of Nath Yogis*, ed. Kalyani Mallik (Pune: Poona Oriental House, 1954).

[48] Kalyani Mallik opines that most extant Bengali Nātha literature dates from the eighteenth century; *Nāthasampradāyer Itihāsa, Darśana, o Sādhanapraṇālī* (Kolkata: Śaiva Prakāśanī, 1983), 138.

[49] Enamul Haq, *Muslim Bengali Literature* (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, 1957), 73.

[50] Shashibhushan Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, 2nd ed. (Kolkata: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, [1946] 1962), 369.

[51] Cashin, *Ocean of Love*, 40.

[52] On the subject of Muslim Nātha subsects, see George W. Briggs, *Gorakhnāth and the Kānphaṭa Yogīs* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, [1938] 1998), 62–75. See also Catherine Champion, "Between Caste and Sect: The Muslim Bhartrhari Jogis of Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh)" in *On Becoming an Indian Muslim: French Essays on Aspects of Syncretism*, ed. M. Waseem (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 279–93. While Nātha yoga has its roots in ascetic lineages, it has over the many centuries of its existence undergone a process

Nātha yogi communities have been by and large from the peasant class, and it would seem plausible that they gradually assimilated into the growing Muslim peasant class of eastern Bengal from the sixteenth century. As Richard Eaton argues, this is the period in which such a Muslim peasant class first emerges; it is also the period from which our literary records of Muslim yoga begin.[53]

The correlation Bengali Sufis posit between embodied *maqām*s, cosmological levels, and the four *manzil*s is a doctrine of unclear provenance that appears uniquely characteristic of Sufism in Bengal.[54] At the present stage of research, the precise channels for Bengali conceptions of the *maqām*s and *manzil*s remain uncertain. It is significant to note, however, that the renowned late fourteenth-century Shaykh Sharāf al-Dīn Yahyā of the Firdawsīyyah order, whose center of activity was Bihar, conceived of the soul's journey as a progression through the worlds of *nāsūt*, *malakūt*, and *jabarūt*, with the final stage culminating in *lāhūt*, characterized by experience of *tawḥīd* (the unity of God);[55] this is precisely the series

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of partial laicization, such that there exist large and diverse communities of lay Nātha yogis organized as castes and dispersed across the subcontinent. See Daniel Gold, "Nath Yogis as Established Alternatives: Householders and Ascetics Today," in *Ascetic Culture: Renunciation and Worldly Engagement*, ed. K. Ishwaran (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 68–88; and Briggs, *Gorakhnāth and the Kānphaṭa Yogīs*, esp. 44–61.

[53] Eaton postulates that prior to Islamization in the east of Bengal, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was prevalent in western Bengal, while goddess cults prevailed in the delta, especially south and east (*Rise of Islam*, 112). Eaton also makes the interesting observation that "contemporary Muslims perceived northern Bengal . . . as a fabulous and mysterious place inhabited by expert practitioners of the occult, of yoga, and of magic" (77). Much of the surviving literature of the Nātha cult in Bengal was in fact collected from oral tradition and manuscripts from these regions; Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, 367–68.

[54] There are some indications that the four *maqām*s adopted in Bengal were, as a set, categories of widespread importance in Indian Sufism. Dārā Shikoh, for instance, in his well-known ecumenical comparison between Sufism and Hinduism, correlates the sequence of four spheres with the Vedāntic sequence of four states of the soul—*jāgrat* (waking), *svapna* (dream), *suṣupti* (deep sleep), and *turīya* (the fourth state, unity). See Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1975), 2:419–20.

[55] See ibid., 1:234–37; and the passages of the Shaykh's *Maktūbāt-i Saʿdī*, trans. Peter Hardy, in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, ed. Ainslie Embree, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 1:453–56. Though not completely clear from Rizvi's account, it might be that just as he correlates *tawḥīd* with *lāhūt*, the Shaykh also envisioned a sequence of associations between other aspects of the path and cosmological spheres, much like the Bengali Sufis: Shariah and *nāsūt*, *tarīqah* and *malakūt*, and *haqīqah* and *jabarūt*, which would yield precisely the sequence envisioned in *Yoga Kalandar*, with the variation of *tawḥīd* for *maʿrifah*. The Shaykh also speaks of a secret stage of nonduality beyond the four, in which even the sense of "merging" vanishes, for merging still implies duality. Eaton provides the date of the Shaykh's death as 1381 CE (*Rise of Islam*, 87). Among his numerous disciples, Muzaffar Shams Balkhī had a close relationship with the sultan Ghiyath al-Dīn of Bengal, and the Firdawsīyyah order maintained a presence in the region. This could point toward the Firdawsīyyhah order in eastern India as a possible source for the sequence adopted in Bengali esoteric circles, though the idea might well have been widespread in India through other Iranian or Sufi channels.

adopted as *maqām*s in Bengal. The Shaykh had studied for some time in Sonargaon in Bengal, an early center of Islamic learning, and was active mainly in Rajgir in Bihar. One can well imagine the Bengali doctrine developing in the context of the encounter between East Indian Sufis such as Shaykh Yahyā and Nātha yogis, an encounter widely attested in Sufi hagiographical literature, both inside and outside of Bengal. Digby notes, for example, Sufi sources reporting that when the Chishtī Shaykh Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, "traveling eastwards after Taimur's invasion of 1398, arrived at Pandwa, the capital of the Sultans of Bengal, he resided with other *darveshes* and *qulandars* upon the banks of the river, side by side with bands of Jogis."[56] The Shaykh afterward apparently demonstrated the fabled yogic practice of interment in the earth while living.[57]

Despite shortcomings in the evidence, it hence seems that the Sufi-yogi encounter and Islamization of Nātha communities provide historical circumstances for productive inquiry into the authorship and readership of the early texts of Muslim yoga. The Sufi adaptation of Tantric yoga, somewhat like participation in the cult of Satya Pīr, reflects engagement with locally esteemed sources of power within a shared world possessing multiple and sometimes competing models of religious authority. It is also, in part, an assertion of ownership—and not only over this body of efficacious praxis but perhaps over the allegiances of lay communities and patrons as well, for whose good graces early Shaykhs in Bengal found themselves in competition with local Nātha gurus. Networks of discipleship and transmission apparently succeeded in widely propagating Islamized yoga within Bengali Sufi circles, given its prevalence from the sixteenth century in vernacular texts. Once yoga was established as integral to Sufi praxis, there is no necessity to assume a uniform class of religious and literary agents participating in and developing it. It seems likely that, regardless of its roots, Muslim yoga involved a wide variety of participants.

Though a nuanced approach to Islamic yoga must primarily address the historical particularity of the agents involved, we should not in doing so ignore comparative questions concerning the transsectarian mobility of Tantric practices and the processes associated with Tantric cult formation. Alexis Sanderson has argued cogently that the *Yoginītantra*s and practice systems of late Indian Tantric Buddhism draw heavily upon Tantric Śaivism, appropriating Śaiva iconography, ritual, and scripture and transforming them within a Mahāyāna doctrinal framework.[58] His conclusion

[56] Digby, "ʿAbd al-Quddus Gangohi," 37.

[57] Ibid., 38.

[58] Sanderson, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," in *Buddhism into the Year 2000: International Conference Proceedings* (Bangkok: Dhammakaya Foundation, 1994): 87–102; see also "History through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śaivism, the Pañcarātra and the

is that "almost everything concrete in the system is non-Buddhist in origin even though the whole is entirely Buddhist in its function" and in self-perception.[59] This has relevance for thinking about Bengali Islamic yoga, a tradition that in its formation depended heavily upon exogenous sources for yogic praxis and conceptions of the subtle body. Much as Tantric Buddhism adopted the techniques of Tantric ritual as *upāya*, skillful means for achieving the Mahāyāna soteriological goal of supreme Buddhahood, Bengali Sufis transform the technologies of body-centered *sādhana* into means for *tawḥīd*, the egoless absorption into pure awareness of the presence of God. We find consistent concern for framing Tantric yoga within the Sufi praxis regimen and Islamic view of the sacred. Islamic spiritual beings and *dhikr* formulas almost entirely displace Tantric deities and mantras, much as Buddhist ones displace Śaiva prototypes, yet the process of providing Islamic meanings to all dimensions of the ritual is not carried out to uniform degrees. Nonetheless, we find Islamic yoga articulated within a framework that reifies adherence to Islamic orthopraxy, the Shariah, much as Buddhist authors attempted to frame Tantric practice within the moral worldview of the mainstream Mahāyāna.

Islamic adaptations of Tantric yoga foreground the extraordinary mobility of Tantric practices and their malleability in adaptation by diverse doctrinal frameworks. Unlike other South Asian religions possessing Tantric traditions, Islam does not share in a substratum of common assumptions such as belief in karma and rebirth and has radically different soteriological conceptions. Moreover, Islam comes to its assimilation of Tantra already in the possession of a developed esoteric tradition, a circumstance that has considerable impact upon the way it frames its practices. Bengali Sufis make some effort to establish an Islamic model of authority for Tantric yoga and for this purpose make, for example, vague invocations of Islamic *hadīth*.[60] In *Sir Nāmā*, Kājī Śekha Mansur goes so far as to inform us which *siddhi*s several prophets obtained through yogic practice.[61] Overall, however, Bengali Muslims frame Tantric yoga as a natural element of Sufi practice in no need of independent or additional validation. However, Tantric practices posed challenges to orthodox sensibilities. Ābdul Hākim's ritual manual, for instance, makes reference to the consumption of "four earths" (*cāri māṭī*), impure Tantric substances, and *vīrya rasa*, seminal fluid; he moreover shows no concern for encoding

Buddhist Yoginītantras," in *Les sources et le temps: Sources and Time; a Colloquium, Pondicherry, 11–13 January 1997*, ed. François Grimal (Pondicherry: Institut français de Pondichéry/École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2002): 41–47.

[59] Sanderson, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," 92, 96.

[60] *Sir Nāmā*, in Sharif, *Bāṅalār Sūphī Sāhitya*, 258.

[61] Ibid., 288.

this ritual within an Islamic framework.[62] Premodern Bengali Muslims were no more unanimous in accepting such ritual than were Buddhist communities: the scribe of a text by Shaykh Cānd, for example, seems to have abruptly discontinued his copying work in the midst of a description of a sexual ritual. As a colophon, he informs us that the author of the text was a "wicked non-believer."[63] Despite such contestations, Tantric yoga appears to have become an integral component of Sufi practice in premodern Bengal, surviving to some extent even in the face of modern reform movements.

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[62] The text of Hākim's so-called *Cāri Mokāmer Bheda* is published by Cashin in *Ocean of Love*; see 156.

[63] This manuscript evidence is recorded by Cashin in ibid., 217.