

Monks, Merchants, and Kings: The Transmission of Buddhism to Southeast Asia in the First Millennium CE and the Evidence of Candi Borobudur

Himanshu Bhardwaj

Student, University of Delhi

Abstract

This essay examines the factors that carried Buddhism from its Gangetic homeland across Southeast Asia during the first millennium CE, and asks what motivations, routes, and agents made that transmission possible. It argues that the spread of the doctrine was neither linear nor the product of organised missionary campaigns or forced conversion. Rather, Buddhist texts, images, and practices travelled in fragments along maritime and overland trade routes, carried by monks, merchants, and diplomatic envoys, and moved in more than one direction, with ideas at times filtering back towards the regions that had originally transmitted them. Three agents are identified as decisive: the close and long-standing association between monastic communities and trading networks, visible from the Satavahana and Kushana period at sites such as Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda; the intensification of long-distance commerce in the Bay of Bengal and South China Sea during the fifth and sixth centuries; and the readiness of new dynasties in China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia to employ Buddhism to legitimise their political authority and to fashion a distinct identity for newly established regimes. The Liang emperor Wu and his exchanges of relics with the Funan, Panpan, and Dandan polities are taken as an instance of this dynamic. The second half of the essay turns to a specific case study, the ninth-century monument of Candi Borobudur in central Java, built under the Sailendra dynasty. Through its architecture, its threefold cosmological scheme of Kamadhatu, Rupadhatu, and Arupadhatu, its narrative reliefs, and the votive deposits recovered from the site in 1974, the essay considers the long scholarly debate over the character of its Buddhism, from Krom and Stutterheim through de Casparis to Magetsari, and argues that Borobudur is best understood as a combination of exoteric Mahayana and esoteric Mantranaya or Vajrayana elements. A comparison with the stupa at Kesariya in Bihar suggests that this synthesis drew upon a transitional Indian prototype.

Keywords: Buddhism; Southeast Asia; Sailendra dynasty; Borobudur; Esoteric Buddhism; Vajrayana; Mahayana; Java.

Buddhism originated in Gangetic region of northern India in the 5th century BCE. Gautam Siddhartha born in an upper-class ruling family, renounced his family and wealth after witnessing for the first time, in his late twenties, some of the most visible and disconcerting aspects of urban life and became Buddha

also known as the “the enlightened one”. His biographical work was composed several centuries after his death. After attaining enlightenment at a place called Bodhgaya which can be located in present day Bihar state of India. Buddhism travelled and spread of vast area of continent Asia in first millennium CE. Buddhism started from northern Indian and spread to areas such as Central Asia, China, Korean Japan, Southeast Asia and maritime polities of Southeast Asia. The spread of Buddhism of large distances may have been facilitated by various factors like the encouragement of missionary work which resulted in travel of monks and nuns through dangerous land and sea routes to places which were far away from the Buddhist heartland into Southeast Asia. Another reason may have been the close relationship between merchants and Buddhist communities helped in long distance spread Buddhist ideas. In this essay I am going to discuss about spread of Buddhism in Southeast Asia in the first millennium CE in the first part. And I am going to try to discuss the site of Borobudur in Indonesia and the presence of Vajrayana Buddhism through available visual and textual evidence related to the site of Borobudur.

Southeast Asia geographically it comprises an environmental patchwork of highlands, lowlands area which includes landmass, peninsula, shelves and islands and intervening seas extending across tropical latitudes for about 5000 kilometres south-eastwards from Burma (Myanmar) to eastern Indonesia. Geographically Southeast Asia can be divided into two parts, that is Mainland Southeast Asia and Island part with Malay peninsula as the dividing line. Mainland Southeast Asia comprising China south of the Yangtze, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Indochina and peninsular Malaysia. And Island part comprising Indonesia, East Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan. Transmission of Buddhism was very complex. Transmission didn't necessarily happen in one direction, there were ideas sometimes filtering back to places that were originally transmitting centres. Buddha emphasised on missionary work but transmission of the doctrine outside South Asia was never undertaken in an organised way or forced conversion. Buddhist teachings, text, and image spread in fragments along the major trade routes.¹

Many local Buddhist legends credited the initial transmission of Buddha doctrine to the reign to this pious act of King Asoka. The most important of these was Sri Lanka (Ceylon), where the Mauryan ruler is recorded to have sent his son Mahinda with a sapling of the Bodhi Tree, the Sacred Fig tree under which the Buddha is understood to have received enlightenment. This was presented to the Sri Lankan ruler Devanampiya Tissa, who shortly after receiving the gift is said to have established the first Buddhist monastic institution in his kingdom.² Asoka was portrayed as the ideal king with titles such as Chakravartin which can be translated to Universal Ruler. But the spread of Buddhism was not as simple as state sponsored propagation. By the third century BCE, an intimate relationship between the monastic community and trading networks had developed in South Asia. The early Buddhist sites were mostly located near urban centres along the trade routes. Inscriptions by King Asoka, highlighting teachings associated with Buddhism, have been found near many of these urban centres. After the death of Asoka, the two major succeeding empires Satavahanas and Kusanas played a significant role in the diffusion of Buddhism in South Asia. Places such as Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda and others in the eastern part of

¹ The account of transmission followed here is that of Tansen Sen, “The Spread of Buddhism,” in *The Cambridge World History*, Volume 5: Expanding Webs of Exchange and Conflict, 500 CE–1500 CE, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 447–79, esp. 447–50.

² Sen, “The Spread of Buddhism,” 450–52. On the legendary character of much of the Asokan material see also Nicholas Tarling, “Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia before c. 1500,” in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Volume One: From Early Times to c. 1800, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 276–334.

the Deccan suggest intimate connections not only between Buddhism and the local trading communities, but also with merchant guilds engaged in overseas maritime commerce.³

China played an important role in transmission of Buddhism in Southeast Asia, but the route of transmission of Buddhism to China is extensively debated. Although the route wasn't sure, it was clear that there was a presence of Buddhist doctrine and monks in the Han capital around the year 65 CE. By 5th century CE The fifth and sixth centuries witnessed several developments across most of Asia that resulted in the spread of Buddhism to places that either had no prior encounter with the doctrine or were marginally in contact with it. The exchange between South Asia and China augmented Central and Southeast Asia's participation in flow of Buddhist monks, merchants and paraphernalia from one region to another. The establishment of Nalanda seems to have had significant impact on cross-regional Buddhist exchanges during the second half of the first millennium.⁴

Two factors contributed to rapid spread of Buddhism during the second half of 1st millennium CE. First, new dynasties and polities that emerged in China, Japan, and Korea, as well as in Central and Southeast Asia, started employing Buddhism to legitimize their political authority. Their aim was often to create a distinct identity for the newly established regime through the use of Buddhism. Since these new polities legitimise themselves with Buddhism, there link with existing Buddhist centres were important to import texts and paraphernalia in order to further the cause of the doctrine in their land. Therefore, it leads to the second factor, the intensification of long-distance commercial activity in the fifth and sixth centuries reinforced the association between merchants and monastic communities and contributed to the spread of Buddhism to new sites of interactions.⁵

Liang Dynesty in southern China is considered important as they employed Buddhism in an unprecedented way. The founding ruler of the dynasty, Emperor Wu (r. 502–49), not only propagated Buddhist doctrines and rituals within his state, but also established connections with Buddhist centres in South Asia, and took steps to transmit the doctrine to Korea. He also sent envoys to the Funan polity in Southeast Asia to Fetch Buddhist relics. These efforts motivated other Southeast Asian platies such as Panpan, Dandan, Funan to exchange Buddhist relics with Chinese court. All these polities were located in the maritime regions of Southeast Asia and were encountering Buddhism more intensely due to the upsurge in long-distance mercantile activity in the Bay of Bengal and South China Sea regions.⁶

In mainland Southeast Asia Buddhist Doctrine might have presence to the 4th century. There are evidences of architectural influence of Nagarjunakonda and Amravati on the design of stupas in Pyu and Mon and as well as the discovery of Mauryan Style Buddhist Inscription suggesting the transmission of Buddhism to mainland Southeast Asia by the second century CE.⁷ Although Indian culture, and Buddhism in particular, seems to have spread predominantly from west to east. The earliest evidence for an Indianized society actually comes from Fu-nan, in particular from the ancient city of Oceo on the Gulf of Thailand. On the other hand, little is known of the state of Buddhism among the Mon of present Burma. There, too, the population may have been Buddhist since very early times without leaving any

³ Sen, "The Spread of Buddhism," 452–56. For the monastic–mercantile nexus in South Asia more broadly see Jason Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1–30.

⁴ Sen, "The Spread of Buddhism," 456–62.

⁵ Sen, "The Spread of Buddhism," 462–66. These two factors carry the weight of the argument advanced below.

⁶ Sen, "The Spread of Buddhism," 466–70.

⁷ Nicholas Tarling, "Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia before c. 1500," in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Volume One: From Early Times to c. 1800*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 280–85.

significant traces.⁸

It would be a mistake, however, to read the mainland record backwards from the Theravada orthodoxy of later centuries. Mahayana Buddhism long remained influential there, and there is evidence of it at many places and times. Bodhisattvas such as Maitreya and Manjusri were popular in Burma before the rise of Pagan. As early as 791 CE an inscription in Cambodia refers to an image of Lokeshvara, better known as Avalokitesvara. Mahayana in Angkor has been seen as a continuing thread, whatever the orthodoxies of successive monarchs.⁹ Fifth and sixth century had been very Important for the spread of Buddhism to the maritime region of Southeast Asia. The earliest evidences of practice and presence of Buddhism to fourth and fifth century. Fifth century Sanskrit inscription was found at Kheda in present day Malaysia commissioned by sea captain named Buddhagupta which also have an image of Stupa engraved on it.¹⁰ Buddhist influence in maritime Southeast Asia can be distinguished between the western part of the area, that is Sumatra, western Malaysia and West Borneo and eastern part that is Java, Nusa Tenggara and Borneo. Buddhism prevailed in most of its western part until the coming of Islam, it flourished in the eastern zone mainly during certain periods. In Java the decisive phase falls in the Sailendra period, c. 750–850.

The remainder of this essay tests that model against a single monument. If the transmission of Buddhism was carried by monks and merchants along maritime routes, taken up by rulers in search of legitimacy, and reworked locally rather than received intact, then the evidence from ninth-century Java should show all three at once: a dynasty investing heavily in the doctrine, a monument indebted to Indian models yet answerable to none of them exactly, and a form of Buddhism assembled from more than one strand. Candi Borobudur allows each expectation to be examined in turn.

First millennium was an important period in the historical development of ancient Indonesian culture. There was an increasing contact with India which led to acceptance of Indian influence in the land of Javanese group of Islands. The movement of people, commodities, and technologies across had a positive impact on local communities, which led to an exchange of new ideas and practices. The people of region began to adopt the concept of a Hindu-Buddhist kingdom. There was presence of Indian and Chinese priests and monks in Javanese Islands. Van Laure suggested that these priests might have come at the invitation of some of the Islands rulers.¹¹ Some important figures that have come and settled in the region were Gunavarman who lived in Javadvipa, Sakyakirti who lived in Srivajya, and Dharmapala from Kanchi, who had taught for 30 years at Nalanda. There were also Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, who stopped at Srivijaya on their journeys. That Srivijaya had become, by the close of the first millennium, a centre of Buddhist learning in its own right rather than merely a waystation is shown by the fact that Atisa studied there for twelve years before departing for Tibet.¹²

Esoteric Buddhism favoured the transmission of cults and philosophical ideas, ritual technologies, artistic motifs, material culture, political paradigms, and scientific notions across the Buddhist ecumene. The very term Esoteric Buddhism and Tantric Buddhism is contested and there are various

⁸ Tarling, "Religion and Popular Beliefs," 285–90. On Oc Eo and Funan see also George Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. Walter F. Vella, trans. Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968), 36–38.

⁹ Tarling, "Religion and Popular Beliefs," 296–302. The mainland Theravada ascendancy belongs largely to the centuries after 1000 CE and so falls outside the scope of this essay.

¹⁰ Tarling, "Religion and Popular Beliefs," 290–92.

¹¹ J. C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian Social and Economic History* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1955), 103–05. Van Leur's insistence that the initiative lay with Southeast Asian rulers rather than with Indian colonists underlies the reading offered here.

¹² Atisa's residence at Srivijaya falls in the early eleventh century and so lies just beyond the period under discussion; it is adduced only as evidence of a standing that Srivijaya had already attained within the first millennium.

labels given to this school of Buddhism such as Mantrayana, Vajrayana. Tantric Buddhism extends to a whole gamut of hidden of secrets texts, practices and teachings from around the fourth century to tenth century and later characterised certain orientations of Mahayana Buddhism, especially in East and Southeast contexts. This also followed certain not so esoteric orientations such as ritual violence, use of mantras and magical formulas. A distinctive feature of medieval Esoteric Buddhism was initiation, under which practitioner of this path underwent a initiation ceremony bestowed by a master. Many scholars believe that Vajrayana Buddhism was a result of synthesis with Sanskrit texts such as yogintantras or Dakinitantras around the second half of the first millennium. Scholarly investigations of archaeological remains confirm the information, found in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese textual sources, that both South India and Sri Lanka once hosted important lineages of Esoteric Buddhist masters and repositories of Tantras, and acted as hubs for the spread of esoteric traditions to Southeast Asia and beyond.¹³

In Indonesian any religious structure based on Indianised shrine with a pyramiddial tower is valled a “Candi”. There were many candis in Java such as temples on Dieng ,Platue Batyjaya Temple Complex Candi Prambanan, Candi Jawi and many more. In the specific case study I am going to discuss Candi Borobudur. During the reign of Sailender Dynasty, in 8th to 10th century, architectural development of the temples advanced quite rapidly. Borobudur was the most spectulsr structure of period. It is a temple shaped of ten storied pyramid with large stupa at the top. The lowest level is the foot of a closed temple and above that there are five levels with square plane and four levels with a circular plan. The whole structure regarded as a intigration of stupa concept and the terraced sanctuary.¹⁴ Candi Borobudur symbolizes the Buddhist cosmology in which world is divided into three levels. At the lowest level is the Kāmadhātu, the world where humans live, depicted by the foot of the temple and the balustrade. At this level, humans are still confined by the desires of the world which are subject to the law of cause and effect or karmawibhangga. Therefore, at this level, the walls are decorated with reliefs depicting the story of karmawibhangga. The second level is the Rūpadhātu, which is the “form-realm.” At Candi Borobudur it is described up to level five, for there is a rectangular plan with reliefs of the Lalitawistara, Jātakas, Awadānas, Gaṇḍawyūha, and Bhadra-cari. The highest level is Arūpadhātu, depicted by a circular level, where unadorned stupas are placed. This level describes emptiness where there is no longer an external being. Besides being decorated with narrative reliefs and decorative carvings, Candi Borobudur is also equipped with 504 Buddha sculptures in the Rūpadhātu and Arūpadhātu sections. Nurhadi Magetsari argued that Candi Borobudur represented the unique combination of Mahayana and Vajrayāna Buddhism.¹⁵

Borobudur is an artificial mountain which combines the conception of the Buddhist stupa with that of Mount Meru, the World Mountains. The structure looks like a huge magic diagram which is a mystic rendring of the cosmos. As the pilgrim mounted the terraces of the sanctuary, he was believed to re-enact symbolically the ascent of the soul from the world of desire, which he was leaving behind, to the world of spiritual perfection and ultimate union with the Cosmic Buddha himself. There are scens of Jatakas stories depicting the previous incarnations of Buddha, the birth as prince as Prince Siddharta.

¹³ Andrea Aciri, “Introduction: Esoteric Buddhist Networks along the Maritime Silk Routes, 7th–13th Century AD,” in *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*, ed. Andrea Aciri (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2016), 1–29.

¹⁴ John N. Miksic, *Borobudur: Golden Tales of the Buddhas* (Berkeley and Singapore: Periplus Editions, 1990), 17–45; Hugo Munsterberg, “Art of Ceylon and Indonesia,” in *Art of India and Southeast Asia* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1970), 196–201.

¹⁵ Noerhadi Magetsari, “Pemujaan Tathagata di Jawa pada Abad Sembilan” (PhD diss., Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, 1982).

There are also scenes depicting Maitreya, the future Buddha. this series ends with the mystic Dhyani Buddha who embody the ultimate esoteric teachings.¹⁶

The important question about the interpretation of the architecture of Borobudur and its Buddhism. Krom (1931:332) concluded that Borobudur was a stūpa embodying teachings of Tantric Mahāyāna based on the Yogācāra school.¹⁷ He was not quite sure that Borobudur represents exactly the teachings recorded in San Hyan Kamahayanikan (SHK) which were Sanskrit Old Javanese Buddhist compendium. W. F. Stutterheim took some key concepts in the SHK, mainly the tridhātu and stūpa-prāsāda—and related them to Borobudur.¹⁸ De Casparis discarded the compound bhūmisambhārābhūdhara being the origin of the name Borobudur, and shifted to a combination of the Ratu Boko and Tri Tepusan inscriptions to recapture Mus' idea of stūpa-prāsāda to arrive at the notion of the 'dual nature' of Borobudur.¹⁹ Magetsari concludes that Borobudur surely represents the progress in a yogin's experience.²⁰

Later a team of archaeologist unearthed a large number of clay stupikas and votive tablets, a few silver plates, and a lead-bronze inscription from the Borobudur yard in 1974. These artefacts were related to practices of both the exoteric Mahāyāna and esoteric Mantranaya tradition, yet their association with the site named Buḍur which according to the 14th-century Deśavarṇana belonged to the Vajradhara school (kabajradharan) suggests that Esoteric Buddhism played an important role there.²¹

We can further determine that the architects of Borobudur followed an Indian prototype called the kūtāgāra-prāsāda—or the stūpa-prāsāda in the SHK—to memorialize the eight miraculous events in the life of Śākyamuni, and to represent the body of the Tathāgata (dharmadhātu) embedded with multifarious virtues (Śrī Ghananātha), so that builders, supporters, and cultivators could accumulate virtues to speedily accomplish the highest goal.²²

Borobudur is compared with the stupa of Kesariya at Bihar India which was built between the time period of Gupta and the Pala Dynasties. KK Muhammad and Lone both observed similarities between two structures. The period was a transitional period. The fivefold, terraced architecture of Kesariya with large external Buddhas in niches appears to be a somewhat radical enhancement of the feature that Huntington noticed as the new trait of the transitional period. The concentric six terraces of the partly excavated stupa at Kesariya are built on a natural hill in the same way as Borobudur. The difference is that the lower four Kesariya terraces are more circular. Like Borobudur, Kesariya's design combines

¹⁶ Munsterberg, "Art of Ceylon and Indonesia," 196–201; Miksic, Borobudur, 46–65.

¹⁷ N. J. Krom, Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis, 2nd ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1931), 332; see more fully Krom, Barabudur: Archaeological Description, 2 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1927). The survey of the debate in this paragraph follows Hudaya Kandahjaya, "Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan, Borobudur, and the Origins of Esoteric Buddhism in Premodern Indonesia," in Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons, ed. Andrea Acri (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2016), 67–112.

¹⁸ W. F. Stutterheim, "Candi Barabudur: Name, Form and Meaning," in Studies in Indonesian Archaeology (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956).

¹⁹ J. G. de Casparis, "The Dual Nature of Barabudur," in Barabudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument, ed. Luis O. Gómez and Hiram W. Woodward Jr. (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1981), 47–83; and de Casparis, Prasasti Indonesia II: Selected Inscriptions from the 7th to the 9th Century A.D. (Bandung: Masa Baru, 1956). It should be noted that de Casparis is best known for proposing, rather than rejecting, Bhūmisambhārā-bhūdhara as the origin of the name; the position summarised here is his later one.

²⁰ Magetsari, "Pemujaaan Tathagata di Jawa pada Abad Sembilan"; see the discussion in Kandahjaya, "Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan, Borobudur, and the Origins of Esoteric Buddhism," 67–112.

²¹ Hudaya Kandahjaya, "The Lord of All Virtues," Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies, 3rd ser., 11 (2009): 1–24; and Kandahjaya, "Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan, Borobudur, and the Origins of Esoteric Buddhism," 67–112. The Deśavarṇana is a fourteenth-century text and post-dates the monument by some five centuries; it is used here as retrospective testimony to Borobudur's affiliation, not as evidence of ninth-century practice.

²² Kandahjaya, "The Lord of All Virtues," 1–24. The argument from the kūtāgāra-prāsāda to the stūpa-prāsāda of the Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan, and the reading of Śrī Ghananātha, are his.

three elements: a natural hill, a stupa, and a maṇḍala.²³

Taken together this evidence answers the expectations set out earlier. The Sailendra investment in Borobudur is legitimization of precisely the kind described in the first half of this essay. The monument's debt to a transitional Indian prototype, combined with its departure from anything actually built in India, is what transmission in fragments along trade routes would lead us to expect. And the coexistence at one site of exoteric Mahāyāna with esoteric Mantranaya is what follows once the assumption is abandoned that schools arrived whole, separately, and in sequence.

CONCLUSION

The spread of Buddhism across Southeast Asia during the first millennium CE cannot be attributed to any single cause, nor to any single agent. The evidence surveyed here suggests instead a convergence of three developments. The first was the long association between monastic communities and trading networks, already established in South Asia by the third century BCE and visible in the location of early Buddhist sites near urban centres along trade routes, and later in the connections between the monasteries of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda and the merchant guilds engaged in overseas commerce. The second was the intensification of long-distance maritime activity in the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea during the fifth and sixth centuries, which multiplied the points of contact through which texts, images, and practitioners could move. The third was the willingness of newly established dynasties, in China and Korea as much as in Java and Funan, to adopt Buddhism as a means of legitimising their authority and of fashioning an identity for themselves. Emperor Wu of the Liang, dispatching envoys to Funan in search of relics, illustrates how closely religious devotion, diplomatic exchange, and political calculation were bound together.

It follows that the transmission of Buddhism was neither an organised missionary campaign nor a process of forced conversion, and that the familiar image of a doctrine radiating outward from an Indian centre to a Southeast Asian periphery is misleading. The traffic was multi-directional.

Borobudur bears the argument out in a single monument. Built under Sailendra patronage, it is not a copy of an Indian model but a Javanese synthesis, in which the stupa is combined with the terraced sanctuary and with the conception of Mount Meru, and the whole is organised as a mandala through which the pilgrim ascends from Kamadhatu to Arupadhatu. The century of debate running from Krom and Stutterheim through de Casparis to Magetsari has not resolved into consensus, and the disagreement is itself instructive. The votive tablets, stupikas, and inscribed plates recovered in 1974 point to exoteric Mahayana and esoteric Mantranaya practice at the same site, while the fourteenth-century Desavarnana assigns Budur to the Vajradhara school. Taken together with the affinities observed between Borobudur and the transitional stupa at Kesariya, this suggests that the monument drew upon a shared architectural and doctrinal vocabulary circulating across the Buddhist ecumene rather than deriving from any one prototype.

The wider implication is that Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana are best treated as analytical conveniences rather than as sealed compartments, and that the label of Esoteric or Tantric Buddhism remains contested precisely because the practices it names overlapped with those from which it is supposed to be distinguished. What the visual and textual evidence from Java finally records is not a

²³ Swati Chemburkar, "Borobudur's Pāla Forebear? A Field Note from Kesariya, Bihar, India," in *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*, ed. Andrea Aciri (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2016), 191–209. The observations of K. K. Muhammad and Lone, and Susan Huntington's characterisation of the transitional period, are cited there.

doctrine passively received from abroad, but one actively remade in the receiving society, in forms that had no exact precedent in the land of its origin.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Acri, Andrea. "Introduction: Esoteric Buddhist Networks along the Maritime Silk Routes, 7th–13th Century AD." In *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*, edited by Andrea Acri, 1–29. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2016.
2. Casparis, J. G. de. *Prasasti Indonesia II: Selected Inscriptions from the 7th to the 9th Century A.D.* Bandung: Masa Baru, 1956.
3. Casparis, J. G. de. "The Dual Nature of Barabudur." In *Barabudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument*, edited by Luis O. Gómez and Hiram W. Woodward Jr., 47–83. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1981.
4. Chemburkar, Swati. "Borobudur's Pāla Forebear? A Field Note from Kesariya, Bihar, India." In *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*, edited by Andrea Acri, 191–209. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2016.
5. Coedès, George. *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Edited by Walter F. Vella. Translated by Susan Brown Cowing. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968.
6. Dhar, Parul Pandya. "Dynamics of the Relationship between Indonesia and India in the Hindu-Buddhist Period." In *Connected Histories of India and Southeast Asia*, edited by Parul Pandya Dhar, 3–22. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2023.
7. Kandahjaya, Hudaya. "The Lord of All Virtues." *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, 3rd ser., 11 (2009): 1–24.
8. Kandahjaya, Hudaya. "Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan, Borobudur, and the Origins of Esoteric Buddhism in Premodern Indonesia." In *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*, edited by Andrea Acri, 67–112. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2016.
9. Krom, N. J. *Barabudur: Archaeological Description*. 2 vols. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1927.
10. Krom, N. J. *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis*. 2nd ed. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1931.
11. Leur, J. C. van. *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian Social and Economic History*. The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1955.
12. Magetsari, Noerhadi. "Pemujaan Tathagata di Jawa pada Abad Sembilan." PhD diss., Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, 1982.
13. Miksic, John N. *Borobudur: Golden Tales of the Buddhas*. Photographs by Marcello Tranchini. Berkeley and Singapore: Periplus Editions, 1990.
14. Munsterberg, Hugo. "Art of Ceylon and Indonesia." In *Art of India and Southeast Asia*, 196–201. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1970.
15. Neelis, Jason. *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
16. Sen, Tansen. "Itineraries of Images: Agents of Integration in the Buddhist Cosmopolis." In *Entangled Histories: Materials, Practices, and Knowledge across Eurasia*, edited by Pamela H. Smith, 182–201. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019.
17. Sen, Tansen. "The Spread of Buddhism." In *The Cambridge World History, Volume 5*:

Expanding Webs of Exchange and Conflict, 500 CE–1500 CE, edited by Benjamin Z. Kedar and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, 447–479. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

18. Stutterheim, W. F. “Chaṇḍi Barabudur: Name, Form and Meaning.” In *Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956.
19. Tarling, Nicholas. “Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia before c. 1500.” In *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Volume One: From Early Times to c. 1800*, edited by Nicholas Tarling, 276–334. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.