PRATU Journal of Buddhist and Hindu Art, Architecture and Archaeology of Ancient to Premodern Southeast Asia

https://pratujournal.org ISSN 2634-176X

Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in Likely Tantric Buddhist Context from the Northern Indian Subcontinent to 11th-Century Bali

Durga Mahiṣāsuramardinī dalam konteks agama Buddha Tantrayana dari Subkontinen India Utara dan Bali pada abad ke-11

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Edited by: Ben Wreyford, Pratu Editorial Team
Received 1 April 2019; Accepted 1 November 2019; Published 8 May 2020
Funding statement: The research for this study was funded by the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme, Academic Support Fund (SAAAP #049), at SOAS University of London.
The author declares no known conflict of interest.

Abstract: This study examines the significance of the originally Hindu goddess Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Durgā slaying the buffalo demon) in Tantric Buddhist temple contexts of the 8th–11th century in Afghanistan and northeastern India, and 11th-century Bali. Taking a cross-regional approach, it considers the genesis of Tantric Buddhism, its transmission to Indonesia, and its significance in Bali during the 10th–11th century. Drawing primarily on archaeological and iconographic evidence, it suggests that Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī is likely to have reached Bali as part of a late 10th–11th century phase of renewed transmission of Tantric Buddhism from the northeastern Indian subcontinent to Indonesia, following an initial late 7th–8th century phase.

Keywords: Bali, Durgā, Heruka, Mahiṣāsuramardinī, maritime networks, Padang Lawas, Tantric Buddhism, Tantric Śaivism, Tapa Sardār, Uḍḍiyāna, Vajrayāna, Vikramaśīla, Warmadewa

Abstrak: Penelitian ini melihat signifikansi dari dewi Hindu Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Durgā membunuh iblis kerbau) dalam konteks kuil Buddha Tantrayana pada abad ke-8 hingga ke-11 di Afghanistan dan timur laut India, serta abad ke-11 di Bali. Melalui pendekatan lintas regional, penelitian ini mempertimbangkan asal-usul agama Buddha Tantrayana, penyebarannya ke Indonesia, dan signifikansinya di Bali sekitar abad ke-10 hingga ke-11. Bukti-bukti arkeologis dan ikonografis menunjukkan kemungkinan bahwa Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī mulai dikenal di Bali pada akhir abad ke-10 hingga ke-11 sebagai bagian dari penyebaran kembali agama Buddha Tantrayana dari timur laut India ke Indonesia, setelah fase awal penyebarannya pada akhir abad ke-7 hingga ke-8.

Kata kunci: Bali, Durgā, Heruka, Mahiṣāsuramardinī, jaringan maritim, Padang Lawas, Buddha Tantrayana, Saiwa Tantrayana, Tapa Sardār, Uḍḍiyāna, Vajrayāna, Vikramaśīla, Warmadewa

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Introduction

This study traces early iconographic representations of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Durgā slaying the buffalo demon), originally a Hindu goddess, in Buddhist contexts — from Tantric Buddhist sites of the 8th–11th century in the northern Indian subcontinent, to Balinese temples of the 11th century (Figure 1). Taking a cross-regional approach based primarily on archaeological evidence, I aim to highlight the significance of Tantric Buddhism within the local syncretic tradition of 11th-century Bali, and I suggest that Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī may have reached Bali as a Tantric Buddhist deity.

The story of Durgā slaying the buffalo demon is first narrated in the 6th-century *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*. Known also as Caṇḍī or Caṇḍikā, she appeared as a wrathful protective goddess, originating from a mountain of fire generated by the anger of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods, who were troubled by demons. She went to fight the army of demons riding a lion, and finally defeated their king Mahiṣāsura, who took the form of a buffalo.[1] Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī images are widely known in Hindu contexts in early South Asia, beginning in the Kuṣāṇa period (1st–4th century) and becoming more frequent from the Gupta period (3rd–6th century).[2]

Representations of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in Buddhist contexts are uncommon. The earliest known example is an 8th-century large, painted clay sculpture found at Tapa Sardār in Ghazni, Afghanistan.[3] She also appears on a terracotta plaque of the 10th–11th century at the Tantric Buddhist *mahāvihāra* (great monastery) of Vikramaśīla in Bihar, northeast India,[4] one of the great centres of learning in the Pāla Empire (8th–12th century) which were critical for the transmission of Tantric Buddhism to Indonesia. Durgā appears in the Tantric Buddhist textual sources, not in her Mahiṣāsuramardinī form but mounted on a lion, in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, on which commentaries were written by two Indian teachers associated with Vikramaśīla.[5]

Tantric Buddhism, also known as Esoteric Buddhism, Vajrayāna and Mantrayāna, and including the Shingon tradition of Japan, is characterised by the incorporation and development of Tantric Śaivic teachings within a Buddhist fabric. The earliest evidence for this form of Buddhism comprises 7th-century rock sculptures and stelae in the Swat Valley of northern Pakistan, as discussed in the next section. However, monastery sites in Odisha, in eastern India and on the Bay of Bengal, are also known to have played an important role in its early development, as well as its transmission to Southeast Asia.[6] Tantric Buddhism reached Bali in the 8th–10th century, based on the excavation of clay miniature *stūpas* and round clay tablets of this date, the latter impressed with Tantric Buddhist *mantras* (sacred recitations) or figures of Buddhas or bodhisattvas.[7] Tantric Buddhism then flourished under the Warmadewa dynasty (9th–11th century).

Six images of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī are known from early *pura* (temple) contexts in central Bali and on its northern coast associated with the Warmadewa dynasty. Most are found in co-occurrence with figures representing Buddhas or bodhisattvas belonging to the Tantric Buddhist pantheon, which date to a similar period in the 10th-11th century. These include stone images of Buddha Akṣobhya and the bodhisattva Amoghapāśa, and two bronze figures of Buddhas Vairocana and Ratnasambhava. The largest Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī image comes from the Pura Bukit Dharma in the village of Kutri, and dates to the ca. 11th century. It is venerated to this day in association with Mahendradattā, a Warmadewa queen.[8]

The earliest provenanced examples of the Mahiṣāsuramardinī iconographic form in Southeast Asia come from Central Javanese Śaivic *candi* (temple) complexes of the 8th–9th century.[9] These include Gedong Songo, Dieng,[10] the Śiva temple of the Prambanan complex, also known as Loro Jonggrang,[11] and Candi Sambisari.[12] However, those from Buddhist contexts in Java postdate the Balinese examples that form the focus of this article, being found in *candis* of the 12th–13th century. These

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme at SOAS University of London for their generous funding of the research behind this article. I also wish to thank Véronique Degroot and Daniel Perret at the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Jakarta, for their kind preliminary advice.

[1] Santiko, "The Goddess Durgā in the East-Javanese Period," 215.

[2] Silvi Antonini, "Considerations on the Image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī of Tapa Sardār," 317.

[3] Taddei and Verardi, "Tapa Sardār Second Preliminary Report," 47–58.

[4] Thapar, ed., *Indian Archaeology 1974–75*, 7–8; Sahai, "Archaeological Excavations at Antichak," 128; Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 117.

[5] Skorupski, "Durgatipariśodhana Tantra," vol. 1, 8–9 & 77.

[6] Acri, "Esoteric Buddhist Networks," 8–9, cites the most significant literature on the importance of Odisha.

[7] Goris, *Sejarah Bali Kuno* [Ancient Balinese History], 11.

[8] See the section below in this article, "A Shift in the Perception of the Role of Durgā during the Majapahit period?"

[9] Ariati, *Journey of the Goddess Durga*, 86–93.

[10] Photographs of three Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī images from Dieng Plateau *candis*, from the *Album Ankersmit II / Van Kinsbergen met foto's van monumenten van Java* prepared by Isidore van Kinsbergen in ca. 1865, are accessible via the Rijksmuseum website, with references RP-F-2005-159-40, RP-F-2005-159-41 and RP-F-2005-159-45 (persistent URLs embedded).

[11] Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art*, 59; Ariati, *Journey of the Goddess Durga*, 91–93.

[12] Girard-Geslan et al., *Art of Southeast Asia*, 397 & fig. 173.

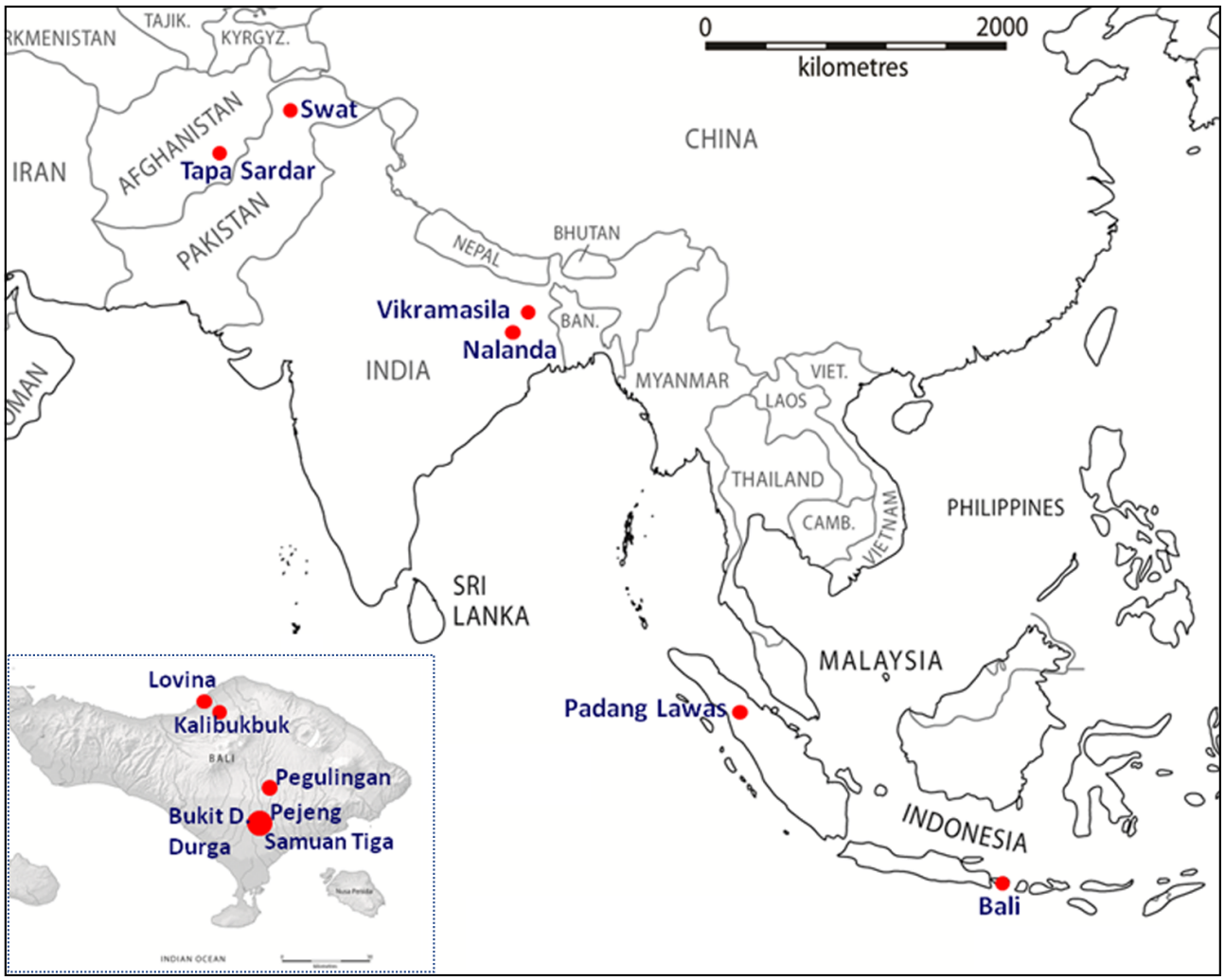

Figure 1. Map of the region with inset map of Bali, showing the main sites discussed in the text. Modified by the author based on templates by CartoGIS Services, The Australian National University, College of Asia and the Pacific. © CartoGIS Services and Ambra Calo.

include Candi Singasari, where the iconography is primarily Buddhist,[13] and Candi Jawi, the syncretic character of which is marked by the Buddhist *stūpa* crowning its Śiva shrine.[14] This earlier occurrence in Bali is likely to be significant.

Other Balinese temples of the 10th-11th century contain Tantric Buddhist images alongside Śaivic ones, as documented by Oka Astawa's research over the past two decades, reinforcing the importance of Tantric Buddhism in Bali during this period.[15] These temples are located in the central Balinese region which was the main seat of power of the Warmadewa dynasty.[16] Astawa has discussed the Buddhist images in some detail.[17] In the Pura Mas Ketel, in Pejeng, was found a hollowed stone cylinder (height 22 cm, diameter 50 cm) showing four seated directional Buddhas in relief, as identified by W. F. Stutterheim on the basis of the *mudrā* their hands display.[18] Amitābha appears in *dhyānamudrā* (west), Amoghasiddhi in *abhayamudrā* (north), Akṣobhya in *bhūmisparśamudrā* (east) and Ratnasambhava in *varamudrā* (south). At the Goa Gajah temple were found further images of Amoghasiddhi and Amitābha, together with the remains of a now-

[13] Fontein, *The Sculpture of Indonesia,* 158–59; Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art*, 79–80, pl. 237.

[14] Fontein, *The Sculpture of Indonesia,* 156–57; Kinney, Klokke and Kieven, *Worshiping Siva and Buddha*, 129–32.

[15] Astawa's research includes "Kalibukbuk, Sebuah Situs Pemujaan Agama Buddha" [Kalibukbuk, a Buddhist Ritual Site] (1997); "Stupika dan Meterai Tanah Liat dari Situs Kalibukbuk" [Clay Stupikas and Impressed Tablets from the Kalibukbuk Site] (2000); "Stupika Tanah Liat dari Situs Pantai Lovina Kalibukbuk" [Clay Stupikas from the Lovina Beach Site in Kalibukbuk] (2006); *Agama Buddha di Bali* [Buddhism in Bali] (2007); "Arca dan Relief Dhyani Budha" [Statues and Reliefs of Dhyani Buddhas] (2014); "Bukti-bukti Awal Agama Budha" [Early Evidence of Buddhism] (2018).

[16] Hobart, Ramseyer and Leemann, *The People of Bali*, 28.

[17] Astawa, [Statues and Reliefs of Dhyani Buddhas],17–20 & figs. 3–6; [Early Evidence of Buddhism], sections 2.1–2.8.

[18] Stutterheim, *Oudheden van Bali* [Antiquities of Bali], vol.1, 108 & 159; vol. 2, fig. 10.

collapsed, rock-carved sculpture of a *stūpa*. In the Pura Pegulingan, in Tampaksiring, are found further images of four seated directional Buddhas, identified as Vairocana in *dharmacakramudrā*, Akṣobhya in *bhūmisparśamudrā*, Amoghasiddhi in *abhayamudrā* and an unidentified, fragmentary fourth Buddha. In the Pura Melanting, in Tetiapi, west of Pejeng, is an image of the bodhisattva Padmapāṇi.

This paper will therefore consider the representation of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in likely early Tantric Buddhist contexts in South Asia, and the role of long-distance maritime networks in the transmission of Tantric Buddhism to the Indonesian archipelago. Archaeological evidence for this form of Buddhism at sites in Sumatra, Java and Bali, and its connection with sites in South Asia, will then be brought together to provide a framework for locating the Balinese Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī images in the context of a 'second wave' of Tantric Buddhism's transmission to the region in the 10th–11th century.

Genesis of Tantric Buddhism

The earliest archaeological evidence for Tantric Buddhism has been identified in the Swat Valley of northern Pakistan. Nearly two hundred rock sculptures and stelae representing Tantric Buddhas and bodhisattvas, dating to the 7th–8th century, were found in the Barikot and Jambil areas of Swat by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan.[19] These include Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi, different forms of Maitreya, Vajrapāṇi-Vajrasattva, and possibly Mañjuśrī. A few exceptions to the clearly Buddhist sculptures in Swat are a small number of sculptures representing a Durgā-like goddess, Gaṇeśa and Sūrya.[20] The sites of Amluk-dara and Barikot, in particular, have produced Tantric Buddhist rock sculptures of probably the early 7th century, inferred from the radiocarbon dating of material associated with the destruction of what appears to have been a Buddhist complex at Barikot. This gave a date of 605–685 CE, constituting the earliest known evidence of Tantric Buddhism.[21]

Luca Olivieri has discussed a particularly notable stela, now in the Swat Museum, representing a *siddha* (liberated being) seated in *vajraparyaṅkāsana* on a lion throne flanked by two figures, and possibly holding a *vajra* (thunderbolt or diamond ritual weapon) and *kapāla* (skull). He suggests this may indicate a knowledge of *siddhas* in the area in the 7th–8th century, which is significant because of the tradition that the *siddha* Padmasambhava introduced Vajrayāna to Tibet from this region in the 8th century, via a trans-Himalayan route.[22]

The Swat Valley was the centre of the legendary Uḍḍiyāna kingdom, which Giuseppe Tucci argued was the birthplace of Vajrayāna.[23] Uḍḍiyāna also included Kashmir to the east of Swat, and the Ghazni region of eastern Afghanistan, to the west. Ghazni became tied to the Swat Valley under the rule of the Turki-Śāhi dynasty of Kabul (8th–9th century).[24] Tantric Buddhism flourished in this region during this period, but also in contemporary northeastern India under the Pālas. Archaeological and epigraphic evidence from *mahāvihāras* in Bihar and Bengal, discussed further below, suggests that Tantric Buddhism converted Tantric Śaivic deities brought into the Buddhist pantheon, recalling the appearance of Gaṇeśa, Sūrya and the Durgā-like goddess alongside Tantric Buddhas and bodhisattvas in the Swat Valley. Śaivic images in Buddhist context are also known from the Silk Road oasis sites of Dandan-oilik, Kizil and Balawaste in Xinjiang.[25]

Transmission of Tantric Buddhism to Indonesia

Maritime trade between the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia is documented archaeologically since the 4th century BCE at sites on the Thai Peninsula, including Khao Sam Kaeo, and since the 2nd century BCE at Sembiran and Pacung on the northern coast of Bali, and at Batujaya on the northwestern coast of Java.[26] Batujaya has produced a unique continuous stratigraphic sequence with 2nd century BCE–4th century CE burials containing Indian artifacts, directly below Buddhist temple foundations possibly dating as early as the 5th–6th century, therefore too early to relate to Tantric Buddhism.

The first phase of transmission of Tantric Buddhism to western Indonesia appears to have occurred from both the northern and southern Indian subcontinent in the late 7th or early 8th century, but especially from South India and Sri Lanka, where foundational scriptures that reached Southeast Asia, including the *Mahāvairocanatantra* and *Sarvatathāgata-*

[19] Filigenzi, *Art and Landscape*; Olivieri, "Guru Padmasambhava in Context," 25–27; Callieri et al., "Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai," 191–226; *Valleys of Memory*, 12 & 16.

[20] Filigenzi, *Art and Landscape*, 141–48; Olivieri, "Guru Padmasambhava in Context," 27.

[21] Olivieri, 26–27 & n.7.

[22] Olivieri, 32–35.

[23] Tucci, *Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley*,1–12.

[24] Tucci, "On Swāt," 11.

[25] Silvi Antonini, "Considerations on the Image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī of Tapa Sardār," 317.

[26] Bellina, ed., *Khao Sam Kaeo*; Calo et al., "Sembiran and Pacung on the north coast of Bali"; Manguin and Indradjaya, "The Batujaya site."

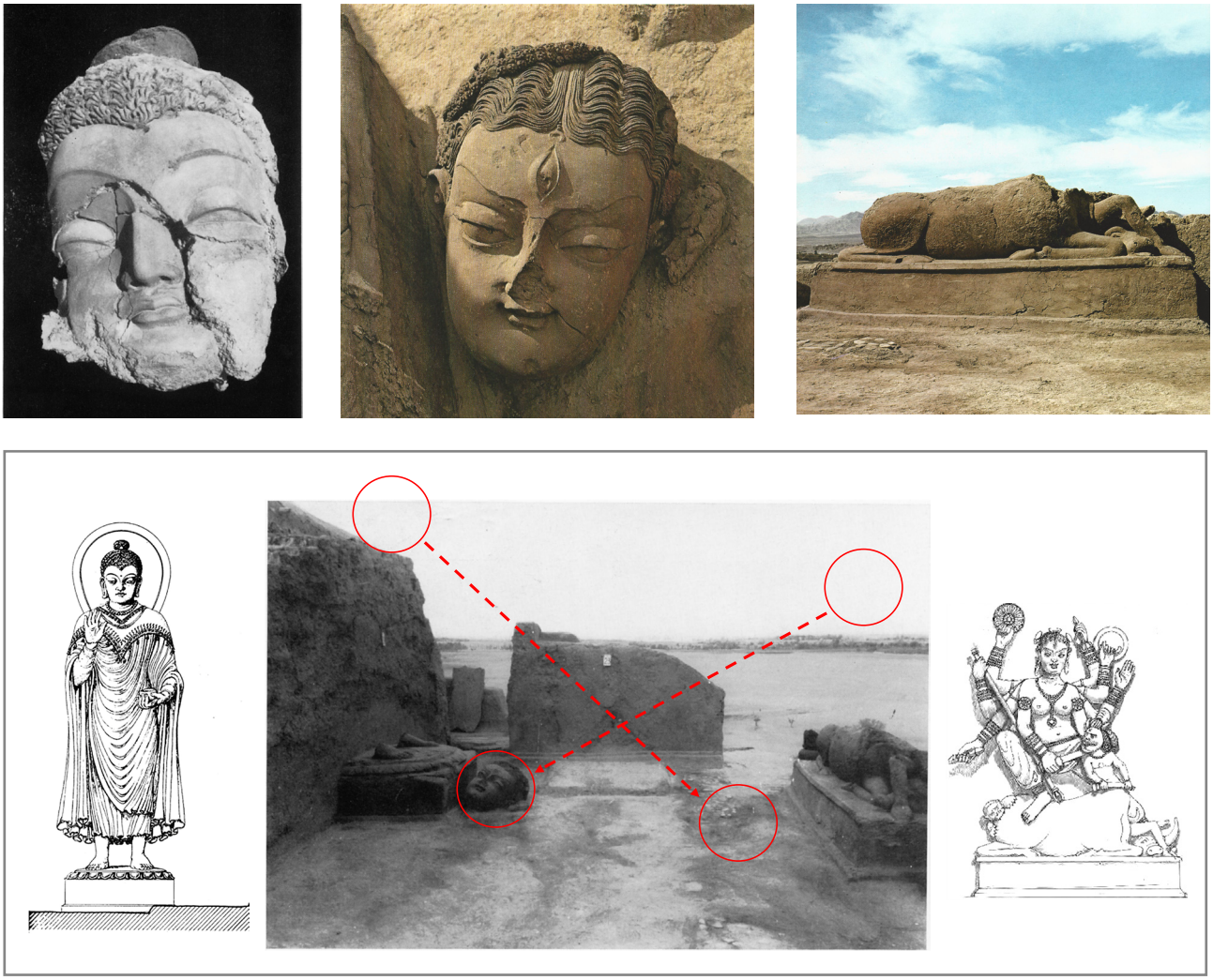

Figure 2. Images of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī and a standing, bejeweled Buddha, facing each other at *vihāra* 23, Tapa Sardār, Ghazni, ca. 8th century. The images' heads were found toppled near the base of the opposite figure (lower middle). Buddha image height ca. 3.7 m (lower left), head 72 cm (upper left); Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī image height ca. 3.0 m (lower right), head 64 cm (upper middle); the drawings of the reconstructed images are reproduced at approximately the same scale. Photograph of the general view of *vihāra* 23 modified by the author from Taddei and Verardi, "Tapa Sardār Second Preliminary Report," 53–55 & fig. 47, and the photograph of the Buddha's head (TS.1144) and drawing of the reconstructed Buddha image reproduced from figs. 11 & 75. Photographs of Durgā's head (TS.1145) and the base of the Mahiṣāsuramardinī image showing the slain buffalo demon reproduced from Taddei, *India Antica*, figs. 76 & 77. Drawing of the reconstructed Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī image reproduced from Filigenzi and Giunta, "The Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan," fig. 9. All photographs and drawings reproduced with permission © Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, ISMEO.

tattvasaṃgraha, may have been compiled.[27] Associated with this phase are clay tablets impressed with Tantric Buddhist *mantras* and figures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, along with miniature *stūpas*, from sites on Bali's northern coast and inland, dating to the ca. 8th–10th century.[28] These are discussed further below.

The 11th century is considered to have seen a 'second wave' of Tantric Buddhist teachings in Southeast Asia, leading to new developments lasting into the 13th century.[29] Of particular significance to this study is an 11th-century image of Heruka or Hevajra from Padang Lawas, the site of a Tantric Buddhist monastery in north-central Sumatra.[30] The image finds parallels in material from Bangladesh,[31] and I suggest there is a stylistic similarity with the large Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī image of similar date in the Pura Bukit Dharma in Bali. These connections may attest to the 11th-century networks connect-

[27] Acri, "Esoteric Buddhist Networks," 2 & 9, citing Hodge, *Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisaṃbodhi Tantra*, 11–12.

[28] See the section below in this article, "Clay Tablets and Miniature *Stūpas* from Ghazni and Bali."

[29] Acri, "Esoteric Buddhist Networks," 8.

[30] Perret, "Sculpture of Padang Lawas," 67; Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art*, 76–77 & pl. 228.

[31] Bautze-Picron, "Buddhist Images from Padang Lawas," 111–12.

ing the *mahāvihāras* of the Bihar and Bengal with monastic centres in Sumatra and Bali.

Tantric Buddhism had also reached Tibet during the 8th century,[32] as well as western Indonesia and China. The Tibetan Vajrayāna tradition did not include Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in its pantheon although, as noted earlier, Durgā is mentioned in the 8th-century Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit *Sarvadurgatiparišodhanatantra*, but not in her Mahiṣāsuramardinī form.[33] However, Elizabeth English, drawing on the research of Alexis Sanderson, points to the formative influence of non-dual Śaivism on the cult of Vajrayoginī in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition of Tibet.[34] She indicates that the associated rites were connected with Uḍḍiyāna, from where Padmasambhava is believed to have brought the tradition. Importantly, the ritual significance of the posture of dancing while trampling on corpses seen with wrathful forms of Vajrayoginī in Tibet, such as Vajravārāhī, may be related to that of the wrathful Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī.[35]

Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī at the Tapa Sardār Monastery Site, Ghazni

A large, collapsed, originally-polychrome clay figure of an eight-armed Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī (original height ca. 3 m) was found in *vihāra* (chapel) 23 at the Buddhist monastery site of Tapa Sardār in Ghazni, Afghanistan. It originally stood facing a bejeweled (paré) standing Buddha (original height ca. 3.7 m), but the head of Durgā was found at the feet of the Buddha, and the Buddha's head at the base of the Durgā image with its buffalo demon (Figure 2).[36]

The find of an apparently Hindu deity in a Buddhist monastery context was first interpreted as an anomaly. Maurizio Taddei, who excavated the site, and Silvi Antonini have considered whether the Tapa Sardār Durgā was a Hindu deity or a local Buddhist reinterpretation of the goddess, or if it indicated the tolerant character of Buddhist teachings at the monastery, permitting the inclusion of a Hindu deity.[37] The images date to Tapa Sardār's late phase (8th century),[38] corresponding to the formative period of Tantric Buddhism, and I suggest that the sculpture can be interpreted as representing the conversion of Tantric Śaivic deities within the newly-forming Vajrayāna tradition in the region.

Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī at the Vikramaśīla Mahāvihāra, Bihar

Hindu deities in Buddhist context are also known archaeologically in northeastern India during the Pāla period at the Vikramaśīla and Somapura *mahāvihāras*, which showed distinct evidence of Tantric Buddhist practice, and from where the tradition was transmitted to Southeast Asia.

The Vikramaśīla *mahāvihāra* in Bihar was active during the 9th–12th centuries, and has been identified at the archaeological site of Antichak. It was a major centre of Tantric Buddhist learning, together with other *mahāvihāras* in the region, including Nālandā, Somapura, Odantapurī, Trikaṭuka and Jagaddala.[39] Archaeological excavations at Antichak, conducted by Patna University in 1960–1969 and the Archaeological Survey of India in 1972–1982, have revealed a large square monastery with a two-stepped, cruciform-plan *stūpa* at its centre. Large amounts of terracotta plaques decorating the *stūpa* terrace walls were recovered, and represented both Buddhist and Hindu deities, including Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī, together with Śiva, Pārvatī, Bhairava, Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu and Sūrya.[40] Notably, two Indian Tantric Buddhist teachers of the 8th–9th century who wrote commentaries on the *Sarvadurgatiparišodhanatantra*, noted above as referring to Durgā in Tantric Buddhist context, are associated with the Vikramaśīla *mahāvihāra*. These are Buddhaguhya, whose teacher Buddhajñāna consecrated the monastery, and Ānandagarbha, who studied there.[41]

Excavations at Paharpur in Bangladesh, site of the Somapura *mahāvihāra*, revealed a *stūpa* with a cruciform ground plan similar to that at Vikramaśīla, and also yielded several stone reliefs and terracotta plaques representing Hindu deities, including Śiva and Gaṇeśa.[42] Frederick Asher's study of the plaques at the Vikramaśīla and Somarapura *mahāvihāras*, while acknowledging a certain incongruity in finding Hindu deities in Buddhist context, indicates that "it

[32] Olivieri, "Guru Padmasambhava in Context," 21 & 30.

[33] Skorupski, "Durgatiparišodhana Tantra," vol. 1, 1, 8 & 77.

[34] English, *Vajrayoginī,* 37–40 & 43–44; Sanderson, "History through Textual Criticism," 41–47.

[35] English, *Vajrayoginī*, 50–59.

[36] Taddei, "Tapa Sardār: First Preliminary Report"; "Mahisamardini Image from Tapa Sardar"; "Parinirvāṇa Buddha at Tapa Sardār," 111–15; Taddei and Verardi, "Tapa Sardār Second Preliminary Report," 47–57; Verardi and Paparatti, "From Early to Late Tapa Sardār"; Filigenzi, "Ritual Forms, Cult Objects"; Filigenzi and Giunta, "The Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan," 85.

[37] Taddei, "Mahisamardini Image from Tapa Sardar," 203–12; Silvi Antonini, "Considerations on the Image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī of Tapa Sardār," 313–26.

[38] Verardi and Paparatti, "From Early to Late Tapa Sardār," 441.

[39] Acri, "Esoteric Buddhist Networks," 8.

[40] Thapar, ed., *Indian Archaeology 1974–75*, 7–8; Sahai, "Archaeological Excavations at Antichak," 128; Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 117.

[41] Skorupski, "Durgatiparišodhana Tantra," vol. 1, 8–9.

[42] Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur*, 39–58.

Figure 3. Clay miniature *stūpas* with cone-shaped bases and impressed clay round tablets, from Gūdul-i Āhangarān, Ghazni (left), and Kalibukbuk, northern Bali (middle and right). Photographs of Gūdul-i Āhangarān material reproduced from Taddei, "Inscribed Clay Tablets and Miniature Stūpas from Ġaznī," figs. 9 & 21, with permission © Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, ISMEO. Photographs of Kalibukbuk material by Ambra Calo (CC BY-NC 4.0).

was accepted and canonically prescribed practice to use Hindu images" in such contexts.[43]

The evidence from the Vikramaśīla and Somapura *mahāvihāras* indicates that the presence of apparently Śaivic deities may have been a formative characteristic of early Tantric Buddhist art. The presence of the 8th-century Durgā image at Tapa Sardar, rather than being an anomaly, may therefore constitute additional evidence of this early development. It was this form of the Buddhist teachings, characterised by their incorporation of Tantric Śaivic elements within a Buddhist ideological fabric, which was transmitted to western Indonesia, Angkor in Cambodia, and Champa in central Vietnam,[44] the centres of which were in contact with each other also. Regarding the syncretic nature of Tantric Buddhism in Java, Sanderson points to the intertextuality of Buddhist and Śaivic religious texts, such as between the Tantric Buddhist *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan* and *Kalpabuddha*, and the Śaivic *Jñānasiddhānta*.[45]

An important copper-plate inscription from the Nālandā *mahāvihāra*, dated to 860, documents early links with Indonesia. It records that the Pāla king Devapāladeva granted the construction of a monastery at Nālandā by the Śrīvijaya ruler Bālaputra, from southeastern Sumatra.[46] The Nālandā inscription mentions Tantric Buddhas and bodhisattvas together with Śiva, Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu, among other Hindu deities.[47]

The Nālandā inscription also refers to the divine couple Kāma and Ratī, who are associated with Śiva and Pārvatī. Notably, Kāma and Ratī also appear in a 12th-century *kakawin*, the *Smaradahana* by Mpu Dharmaja, incarnated as legendary ancestors of the East Javanese rulers of the Keḍiri kingdom, who followed a syncretic Buddha-Śiva religious tradition and were related to the earlier Warmadewa dynasty of Bali.[48] According to F. D. K. Bosch, these incarnations of Kāma and Ratī can be equated with the historical royal couple Udāyana and Mahendradattā Warmadewa, as discussed in more detail later in this study.[49]

The Bihar and Bengal *mahāvihāras* therefore connect evidence for the presence of originally-Hindu deities in Tantric Buddhist context, including Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī, historical contact with communities in Indonesia, and legendary ancestor traditions relevant to the Warmadewa dynasty of Bali.

Clay Tablets and Miniature Stūpas from Ghazni and Bali

The earliest evidence of Indic religion in Bali, from controlled excavations, are clay miniature *stūpas* and round clay tablets impressed with Buddha and bodhisattva figures or Tantric Buddhist *mantras* in

[43] Asher, *Art of Eastern India*, 93.

[44] Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 117.

[45] Sanderson, 121–22.

[46] Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, 13–14.

[47] Majumdar, "Nālandā Copper-plate of Devapāladeva," 26–31.

[48] Poerbatjaraka, *Smaradahana*, 111.

[49] Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, 88–89.

Sanskrit (Figure 3), which were translated by Roelof Goris.[50] These have been found at the sites of Kalibukbuk, Pejeng and Pegulingan in northern and central Bali, and dated to the 8th–10th century.

The Bali finds parallel material from the site of Gūdul-i Āhangarān, in the Ghazni region of eastern Afghanistan (Figure 3). Taddei discussed the Gūdul-i Āhangarān clay miniature *stūpas* in relation to similar examples excavated at Tapa Sardār, also in Ghazni.[51] He indicated that miniature *stūpas* from the Ghazni area are characterized by a cone-shaped base, a feature also found in Tibetan examples described by Tucci, who had indirectly dated them to the 10th century,[52] but not in examples from elsewhere in India and Central Asia. At Gūdul-i Āhangarān, the miniature *stupas* with cone-shaped bases were associated with round clay tablets impressed with Buddha or bodhisattva images, or with Buddhist *mantras* in Sanskrit.

The object types and their archaeological association are both also seen at each of the Balinese sites. Clay miniature *stūpas* and impressed round tablets were first found in Bali in 1920 at the Pura Penataran Sasih in the village of Pejeng, and at the Pura Pegulingan in the village of Manukaya, north of Pejeng.[53] Excavations by the Bali Institute of Archaeology in 1991 at the site of Kalibukbuk, near the northern coast, produced 90 miniature clay *stūpas* (variation in height 6–8 cm, width 5.5–8 cm) and eight round impressed clay tablets (diameter 3 cm, thickness 1.5 cm). Bali's northern coast has produced significant archaeological evidence of trans-Asiatic contacts since the 2nd century BCE, especially with the Indian subcontinent and the western Indian Ocean, notably at the sites of Sembiran and Pacung, as documented by my own and several previous excavations by I Wayan Ardika.[54] Other sites on the northern coast, such as Gilimanuk and Pangkung Paruk, have also demonstrated that intensive long-distance exchange continued into the mid/late 1st millennium CE.[55]

The Kalibukbuk excavations also revealed the remains of a brick *stūpa* with square base 2.60 x 2.60 m, and another octagonal brick structure 8 m wide.[56] Five miniature *stūpas* (height 22 cm, width 15 cm) were found inside the *stūpa* structure, a practice also known at the Tibetan *stūpas* discussed by Tucci. Subsequent excavations at Kalibukbuk produced more miniature *stūpas*, giving 142 in total.[57] The relative dating of the site to the 8th–10th century is based on epigraphic and stylistic analysis of the material. The Kalibukbuk miniature *stūpas* and tablets are currently kept in the Bali Provincial Museum in Denpasar, and in the Gedong Arca Museum in Pejeng, where those from the Pura Penataran Sasih and Pura Pegulingan are also kept.

Candi Sewu's Ground Plan and the Shingon Vajradhātumaṇḍala

The clay *stūpas* and tablets discussed above represent the first phase of transmission of Tantric Buddhism to Bali, and are contemporary with major temple complexes in Java, which show marked evidence of Tantric Buddhist practice in their architectural form and sculpture. These include the 8th-century Candi Borobudur and Candi Sewu complex in central Java, with ground plans based on *maṇḍalas*.

Bosch, in pioneering research, noted similarities between the ground plan of Candi Sewu's central shrine and the Vajradhātumaṇḍala of the Tantric Buddhist Shingon tradition of Japan, with its positioning of the five Buddhas and their consorts, and seated Vairocana in the central cell, as determined by H. Smidt. Certain details followed the version in the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, a Sanskrit and Old Javanese text of the ca. 10th century, containing the Balinese text *Kalpabuddha*.[58]

East Asian parallels for the Candi Sewu ground plan can be explained through the contemporary transmission of Tantric Buddhism to Tang China, which involved the translation of texts into Chinese. One such translator and teacher was Amoghavajra (704–774) from Samarkand, who translated texts describing the Vajradhātumaṇḍala from Sanskrit into Chinese.[59] Amoghavajra was in Java prior to establishing himself at the Tang capital, Chang'an. The Tantric Shingon tradition of Japan was founded by the monk Kūkai (774–835), and its "core revelations are the seventh-century C.E. *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and the *Tattvasaṃgraha-sūtra*," maintain-

[50] Astawa, [Statues and Reliefs of Dhyani Buddhas], 17; Goris, [Ancient Balinese History], 11.

[51] Taddei, "Inscribed Clay Tablets and Miniature Stūpas from Ġaznī," 73.

[52] Tucci, *"Mc'od rten" e "Ts'a ts'a"* ["Mc'od rten" and "Ts'a ts'a"], 51.

[53] Astawa, [Kalibukbuk, a Buddhist Ritual Site], 8–17; [Clay Stupikas and Impressed Tablets from the Kalibukbuk Site], 60–70; [Clay Stupikas from the Lovina Beach Site in Kalibukbuk], 11–23.

[54] Ardika and Bellwood, "Sembiran"; Calo et al., "Sembiran and Pacung on the north coast of Bali".

[55] Soejono, *Sistem-Sistem Penguburan Pada Akhir Masa Prasejarah di Bali* [Burial Practices in the Late Prehistoric Period in Bali], 164–70; Gede, "Budaya Penguburan Pra-Hindu, Pangkung Paruk" [Pre-Hindu Funerary Customs, Pangkung Paruk], 112–30; Calo et al., "Trans-Asiatic Exchange of Glass, Gold and Bronze."

[56] Astawa, [Kalibukbuk, a Buddhist Ritual Site], 8–17.

[57] Astawa, [Clay Stupikas and Impressed Tablets from the Kalibukbuk Site], 64.

[58] Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, 124–27; Smidt, "Eine populäre Darstellung der Shingon-Lehre" [A Popular Account of Shingon Teachings], 189.

[59] Lehnert, "Amoghavajra," 351–59.

ing "seventh-century Indian paradigms, but with a Japanese overlay."[60]

Bosch also pointed to the lack of close comparators for Candi Sewu's ground plan in Nepal and Tibet.[61] This highlights that the routes of Tantric Buddhism's transmission from the Indian subcontinent to Southeast and East Asia in the 7th–8th century, led to traditions that were distinct from those that developed in the Himalayan region.

The Pura Bukit Dharma Durgā and Padang Lawas Heruka: An 11th-Century Link?

Of the six Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī images known in Bali, the largest (height 2.2 m including pedestal) and probably earliest is that in the Pura Bukit Dharma, in the village of Kutri in Gianyar, central Bali (Figure 4).[62] The image is kept in the goddess's pavilion on a hill (*bukit*), giving the temple its name, suggesting its long-standing location there. The eight-armed, slender figure of Durgā stands in a dynamic, dancing posture over the slain Mahiṣa, holding a *cakra* (wheel/discus), *kartika* (crescent-shaped knife), *śakti* (spear), *śara* (arrow), *dhanus* (bow) and *śaṅkha* (conch) attributes.[63] The figure's dynamism is increased by the rendering of her flowing, draped garment. Stutterheim placed it in his group dating to the 10th–13th centuries,[64] fitting with a likely 11th-century date. Below Durgā's hill-top pavilion is another, currently named the Śiwa-Buddha pavilion, which contains a smaller image of Akṣobhya (Figure 5), dated by Stutterheim to the ca. 10th century.[65]

The Pura Bukit Dharma Durgā differs stylistically from all other known Mahiṣāsuramardinī sculptures in Bali and Java, but more closely resembles an 11th-century Tantric Buddhist image of a wrathful Heruka (Figure 6), now largely destroyed, from the Bahal II temple at Padang Lawas, the site of a Buddhist complex in north-central Sumatra.[66] The site has provided other distinct evidence for Tantric Buddhism and was occupied between the 9th and 13th centuries, based on inscriptions, sculpture and architectural remains. Padang Lawas is located ca. 1200 km from the Śrīvijaya centre in Palembang, southeast Sumatra.[67]

The Padang Lawas Heruka is represented in dancing posture, originally over a corpse that is now lost, and holds a *vajra* and *kapāla*.[68] The dynamic dancing posture, slim angular limbs and flowing drapery resemble the rendering of the Pura Bukit Dharma Durgā, as opposed to the softer, rounder features of other Mahiṣāsuramardinī images known from Balinese and Javanese temples. Notably, stylistic similarities between Padang Lawas and East Javanese art have been discussed by Marijke Klokke.[69]

Heruka is important for understanding the relationship between Tantric Śaivism and Tantric Buddhism. According to Sanderson, "Heruka's first appearance in the Mantranaya is in the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, where his name appears in a Mantra for the drawing of all the [Śaiva] Mother-goddesses into Buddhism, and it is that, with the insertion of a single seed syllable, that is adopted as the Mantra of Heruka in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinījālaśaṃvara*."[70] In particular, it is significant that both Heruka and Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī are wrathful deities associated with rites in cremation grounds.

Heruka is also mentioned in the ca. 11th-century Tantric Śaivic *Kālikāpurāṇa*, where he is associated with Śiva and *śivaliṅgas* which, according to K. R. van Kooij, could parallel his association with Akṣobhya in Buddhism.[71] In light of this, it seems significant that Akṣobhya is found in a pavilion associated with the Pura Bukit Dharma Durgā. As discussed at the start of this article, an image of Akṣobhya is also found in the Pura Mas Ketel in Pejeng with the other directional Tathāgatas (Buddhas) Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi, and in the Pura Pegulingan in Tampaksiring, just to the north.[72]

Claudine Bautze-Picron has shown that the closest parallels for the Padang Lawas Heruka are two images of the 11th–12th century found in Comilla, in southeastern Bangladesh, and she discusses a network extending across the Bay of Bengal during this period.[73] This may have reached north-central Sumatra directly by sea, or via Burma and the Thai-Malay Peninsula. An extension of this network from Sumatra to Bali in the 11th century may explain the stylistic similarities of the Padang Lawas Heruka and Pura Bukit Dharma Durgā. Maritime routes

[60] White, "Tantra in Practice," 21.

[61] Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, 117–19.

[62] Stutterheim, [Antiquities of Bali], vol.1, 126–35; vol. 2, fig. 27.

[63] Badra, "Atribut Senjata pada Arca Durgã Mahisãsuramardinî" [Weapon Attributes on the Durgā Mahisāsuramardinī Image], 54–59, identifies the *kartika* as *ketaka* (shield).

[64] Stutterheim, [Antiquities of Bali], vol.1, 116–21.

[65] Astawa, [Buddhism in Bali], 47; Stutterheim, [Antiquities of Bali], vol.1, 109–32; vol. 2, fig. 1.

[66] Perret, "Introduction," 21; "Sculpture of Padang Lawas," 67; "Societies of Padang Lawas," 370–72; Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art*, 76–77 & pl. 228.

[67] Perret, "Introduction," 12.

[68] Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art*, 77; Bautze-Picron, "Buddhist Images from Padang Lawas," 111–12.

[69] Klokke, "The Padang Lawas *Makaras*," 129–46.

[70] Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 156.

[71] Kooij, "Some Iconographical Data from the Kālikāpurāṇa," 163.

[72] Astawa, [Statues and Reliefs of Dhyani Buddhas], 19–20.

[73] Bautze-Picron, "Buddhist Images from Padang Lawas," 111–12.

Figure 4. Image of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the Pura Bukit Dharma, Kutri, Bali, ca. 11th century. Stone. Height 2.2 m, including pedestal. Photograph supplied by Leiden University Libraries Special Collections, shelfmark OD-7746, but copyright status undetermined; for reuse please contact Leiden University Libraries Special Collections.

Figure 5. Image of Buddha Akṣobhya in the Śiwa-Buddha pavilion, near the Pura Bukit Dharma, Kutri, Bali, ca. 10th century. Stone. Height 38.5 cm. Photographs by Ambra Calo (CC BY-NC 4.0).

connecting the northern Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia were travelled since the late 1st millennium BCE, based on finds of gold, carnelian and glass beads of north Indian and Central Asian origin at coastal archaeological sites on the Thai-Malay Peninsula, in Sumatra, Java and Bali.[74]

Relations between Southeast Asia and the Pāla Empire's Tantric Buddhist *mahāvihāras* at Nālandā, Vikramaśīla, Somapura, Trikaṭuka, Odantapurī and Jagaddala would have occurred along the maritime routes crossing the Bay of Bengal.[75] This network also accounts for an interesting find at the site of Si Pamutung in the Padang Lawas complex, of an 11th-century dirham minted under the Qarakhanid dynasty (mid-late 10th–early 13th century) in Bukhara, in modern Uzbekistan.[76] Si Pamutung also produced glazed ceramics of the 9th–11th century from Pakistan and Afghanistan.[77] In the 11th century, the Qarakhanids ruled Transoxania north of the Oxus river, while the Ghaznavids (early 11th–12th century) ruled to the south with their capital at Ghazni, in the region ruled by the Turki-Śāhi dynasty in the 8th century during the last phase of Tapa Sardār.[78] The 11th-century Qarakhanid dirham and ceramics from the same region found at Si Pamutung provide further evidence for an 11th-century exchange route connecting northern India and Central Asia to Indonesia.

Other Durgā Images in Early Temples in Bali

Apart from the Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the Pura Bukit Dharma, associated with a ca. 10th-century Akṣobhya, five other images of the deity are still venerated in early Balinese temples. These appear to be representative of what I argue was an early 'Buddha-Śiva' tradition under the Warmadewa dynasty, syncretic but with a predominantly Tantric Buddhist character. Three of the Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī images are found in central Bali, the seat of

[74] Manguin and Indradjaya, "The Batujaya site"; Indradjaya, "Pre-Srivijaya Period on the Eastern Coast of Sumatra"; Calo et al., "Sembiran and Pacung on the north coast of Bali"; Bellina, ed., *Khao Sam Kaeo*.

[75] Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 87–88.

[76] Kalus, "A Dirham from Bukhara," 423–28.

[77] Perret and Surachman, "Middle-Eastern Earthenware and Terracotta," 430.

[78] Verardi and Paparatti, "From Early to Late Tapa Sardār," 441.

Figure 6. Image of Heruka found in the Bahal II temple at Padang Lawas, north-central Sumatra, ca. 11th century. Stone. Height ca. 1.2 m. Photograph supplied by Leiden University Libraries Special Collections, shelfmark OD-10591, but copyright status undetermined; for reuse please contact Leiden University Libraries Special Collections.

Figure 7. Image of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the Pura Puseh, Kutri, Bali, ca. 10th–13th century. Stone. Height 63 cm. Left: photograph supplied by Leiden University Libraries Special Collections, shelfmark OD-8712, but copyright status undetermined; for reuse please contact Leiden University Libraries Special Collections. Right: recent photograph by Ambra Calo (CC BY-NC 4.0).

the Warmadewa dynasty, and two on the northeast coast.

A smaller image of an eight-armed Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī, missing a large part of the lower section, is kept in the Pura Puseh (Figure 7), located in the same temple complex in Kutri as the Pura Bukit Dharma. Stutterheim placed it in his 10th–13th century group, but it differs stylistically from the larger Durgā in the Pura Bukit Dharma.[79] In the Pura Puseh there also stands an eight-armed Amoghapāśa, a form of Avalokiteśvara, which appears to also be stylistically datable to the 11th century.[80] It has been argued by Natasha Reichle, with particular reference to Sumatra, that Amoghapāśa iconography in western Indonesia shows the religious and stylistic influence of Pāla India on Indonesian Tantric Buddhism.[81]

A third eight-armed Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī is in the Pura Pejaksan in Bedulu (Figure 8). Its style differs again from the Durgās discussed above, and Stutterheim dated it in the 13th–14th century.[82] It is currently placed at the centre of an array of Śaivic deities, including Gaṇeśa, and figures of dignitaries or teachers.

A fourth, two-armed, stylistically-coarser Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī is kept in the large Pura Samuan Tiga (Figure 9), also in Bedulu. It is flanked by two sacred stones in its pavilion. The Durgā image and each of the flanking stones is associated with a specific *ratu* (queen), recalling the association, with a possible protective function, between Mahendradattā and the Pura Bukit Dharma Durgā. The Samuan Tiga Durgā is associated with Ratu Sedahan Ratna, and the stones with Ratu Pande and Ratu Pasek – *pasek* means 'ancient clan' in Balinese. Such sacred stones, widely found incorporated in Balinese temple contexts, represent an earlier animistic substratum of propitiatory rites integrated into Balinese religious tradition.[83] A possible fifth Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī may be present in a nearby pavilion in the Pura Samuan Tiga complex, but it is too damaged to identify with certainty. This image is also associated

[79] Stutterheim, [Antiquities of Bali], vol.1, 128–29; vol. 2, fig. 28.

[80] Astawa, [Buddhism in Bali], 47; Stutterheim, [Antiquities of Bali], vol. 2, fig. 29.

[81] Reichle, *Violence and Serenity,* 85–132.

[82] Stutterheim, [Antiquities of Bali], vol.1, 150; vol. 2, fig. 47.

[83] Calo, *Trails of Bronze Drums*, 146–51.

Figure 8. Image of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the Pura Pejaksan, Bedulu, Bali, 13th–14th century. Stone. Height ca. 65 cm. Photograph by Ambra Calo (CC BY-NC 4.0).

with a queen, namely Ratu Agung Śakti. There are also two bronze seated Buddha images of Vairocana and Ratnasambhava in the Pura Samuan Tiga,[84] but these were not available for study at the time of my visit.

Interestingly, two seated Buddha images at the early Buddhist Goa Gajah complex in the Bedulu area, of which only one remains, are also associated with a queen, namely Ratu Petapan. The repeated association between queens and early Buddhist images may indicate the presence of an animistic substratum involving queens, possibly as female protective principles.

Two further Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī images, one eight-armed and the other six-armed, are reported by Ardika at the Pura Puseh in Tejakula, on the northeastern coast.[85] They are located with Śaivic deities at present.

[84] Astawa, [Early Evidence of Buddhism], section 2.8.

[85] Ardika, "Archaeological Research in Northeastern Bali," 217.

A Shift in the Perception of the Role of Durgā during the Majapahit period?

The Pura Bukit Dharma is believed to have been the cremation ground of the Warmadewa queen Mahendradattā (d. 1001 or 1011), known also as Guṇapriyadharmapatnī, who is to this day associated with this temple's Durgā.[86] She was a Javanese princess of the Sañjaya dynasty of East Java (8th–10th century) who married the Balinese king Udāyana Warmadewa.

Mahendradattā's association with Durgā rites and the perception of her as a sorceress and practitioner of black magic, is based on a 14th-century ritual drama, the *Calon Arang*, written during the Majapahit period (late 13th–16th centuries).[87] The demonised description of Durgā and, by association, of Mahendradattā also, has been discussed by Hariani Santiko, who highlights a shift in the perception of Durgā.[88] Identifying Durgā as the main goddess of Śaktism and Śaivism, rather than having a Tantric Buddhist context, she concludes that she "started out as a goddess who aided humankind and was worshipped in Tantric rituals [but] became a demonic female *rākṣasī*" in the *Calon Arang*.[89] Based on the lack of Tantric Buddhist sculpture in Bali after the 13th century, in contrast to the significant amount of material in 11th-century temple contexts, I suggest that Tantric Buddhism became less prominent within the syncretic Balinese tradition from the early/mid Majapahit period. This may have led to a shift in the perception of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī from being a protective wrathful deity of Tantric Buddhism to a demonised figure associated with black magic, a perception maintained to the present.

Similarly, a review of East Javanese sculpture of the Singasari and Majapahit periods by Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer has identified that, beginning in the 13th-century Singasari period, a shift is detectable in sculptural features that emphasises the demonic attributes of deities whose earlier depictions were not characterised in this way.[90] In particular, she examined a group of Majapahit-style Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī images in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. She highlighted their demonisation when compared with earlier representations, including how Durgā's association with the local female

[86] Hobart, Ramseyer and Leemann, *The People of Bali*, 28–29.

[87] Santiko, "The Goddess Durgā in the East-Javanese Period," 218–19; Hobart, Ramseyer and Leemann, *The People of Bali*, 28–29.

[88] Santiko, "The Goddess Durgā in the East-Javanese Period," 223.

[89] Santiko, 213–14 & 223.

[90] Lunsingh Scheurleer, "Skulls, Fangs and Serpents," 190, 196–97 & fig. 7.

Figure 9. Image of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the Pura Samuan Tiga, Bedulu, Bali. Stone. Height ca. 50 cm. It is flanked by two sacred stones. Photograph by Ambra Calo ().

demon Ranini was indicated through their shared features.

This post-Majapahit, and indeed present, perception of Durgā in Bali, alongside her more common occurrence in Hindu contexts in Indonesia, has led most studies of Durgā to focus on her demonic character in Hindu contexts, such as Pasek Ariati's recent volume on the goddess in the Indian subcontinent and Indonesia.[91] However, even if this approach provides an accurate description of Durgā in these contexts, it overshadows the importance of the Tantric Buddhist contexts where she was found during the 8th–13th centuries, during her journey from the Indian subcontinent to Indonesia.

Possible Links to Uḍḍiyāna in Royal Ancestral Records of the 10th–12th Century

The records for the East Javanese and Balinese royal houses, based on epigraphic and legendary sources, contain information suggesting further possible links to the Uḍḍiyāna region in the 10th–12th century. Reliefs at the ancient bathing place of Jalatuṇḍa in eastern Java, constructed in 977, commemorate the life of Udayana, a legendary Indian king, as a descendant of the Pāṇḍava prince Arjuna from the *Mahābhārata*.[92] While chronological considerations prevent the identification of the Udayana in the Jalatuṇḍa reliefs with the historical Balinese king Udāyana, according to Bosch, it is significant that the reliefs followed a Kashmiri version of Guṇāḍhya's *Bṛhatkathā*, a collection of prose stories originally written in Paiśācī rather than Sanskrit.[93] Bosch adds that the version of the narrative depicted is not known elsewhere in the Javanese archaeological record.[94] Tucci points out that many texts in Uḍḍiyāna were written in Paiśācī,[95] and this may suggest an Indonesian connection with Buddhism in Uḍḍiyāna.

Near Jalatuṇḍa, on the slopes of mount Penanggunggan, was found the Pucangan inscription, dated 1041

[91] Ariati, *Journey of the Goddess Durga*.

[92] Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, 60–86.

[93] Bosch, 66–107.

[94] Bosch, 86.

[95] Tucci, "On Swāt," 58.

and written in both Sanskrit and Old Javanese.[96] It commemorates Airlangga (990–1049), son of Udāyana and Mahendradattā Warmadewa and founder of the East Javanese Kauripan kingdom, which preceded the 12th-century Keḍiri kingdom. The inscription records the names of Airlangga's parents as Sang Ratu Luhur Śrī Guṇapriyadharmapatnī and her consort Sang Ratu Maruhani Śrī Dharmodayana Varmmadeva, in the same form as they appear in the royal couple's own edict dated to 989.[97] The syncretic Buddha-Śiva character of religion during Airlangga's reign is recorded in the Pucangan inscription, where it is described that he was consecrated as king in 1019/1020 "by Buddhist (Saugata), Śaiva (Māheśvara), and Mahābrāhmaṇa dignitaries."[98]

The *Smaradahana*, introduced briefly earlier, commemorates the legendary ancestry of the East Javanese Keḍiri kings.[99] The text describes successive incarnations of the divine couple Kāma and Ratī, also referred to in the Nālandā copperplate inscription, as legendary royal couples from places in the wider region of Uḍḍiyāna, including northern India and Central Asia, except for one queen from Sri Lanka. Canto 38 ties the narrative to ancient Kashmir.[100] The successive incarnations begin with Kāma as Nāmuṣṭi, a non-royal figure and perhaps a priest, and Ratī as princess Ratnawatī, daughter of Wikrama and cremated at Tāladhwaja, a place in Java. Kāma then reincarnated as king Udayana of Hastina, referring to Hastināpur in Uttar Pradesh, northern India, and Ratī as two consorts of Udayana, namely princess Wāsawā, daughter of king Candrasena of Ujjain, Madya Pradesh, and princess Ratnāwalī, daughter of king Sutawikramabāhu of Sri Lanka. The final incarnation saw Kāma as king Kāmeśvara from Dahana (the name of several places in Central Asia) but identified with the historical Keḍiri king Kāmeśvara (r. 1115–1130), and Ratī as his consort Śrī Kirāna. Bosch suggested that the king Udayana and his consorts in the *Smaradahana* can be equated with the Balinese Udāyana Warmadewa and his consort Mahendradattā, based on the fact that Mahendra and Wāsawā are both names of Indra. Together, the *Smaradahana* and Pucangan inscription connect the Warmadewa royal couple with a syncretic Buddha-Śiva form of religion in the East Java area and to a legendary ancestry in the wider Uḍḍiyāna area.

Conclusion

The distribution of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī images in secure or likely Tantric Buddhist contexts across the Buddhist world, from Afghanistan in the 8th century, and northeastern India in the 9th–10th century, to Bali in the 11th century — the last of these supported by the existence of additional Tantric Buddhist sculpture of the 10th–11th century in Bali — suggests that Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī may have first reached Bali as a Tantric Buddhist deity.

A shift in the Balinese religious tradition in the 13th–14th century is suggested by the changing evidence for Buddhism. The initial evidence for Buddhism dates to the 8th–10th century and is followed by substantial numbers of Buddha and bodhisattva images from the 10th–11th century, associated with the Warmadewa dynasty, and then an absence or greatly reduced prominence of Buddhist images in Bali. At this point the Śaivic aspect becomes more prominent.

Formal similarities between the clay miniature *stūpas* with cone-shaped bases excavated at sites dating to the 8th–10th century in both the Ghazni region of Afghanistan and contemporary Bali, suggest ideas relating to Buddhist ritual connected the areas. In both areas the *stūpas* were excavated in association with round clay tablets impressed with Sanskrit Buddhist *mantras* or Buddha and bodhisattva figures. The existence of 11th-century networks connecting the northeastern Indian subcontinent with Sumatra and Bali are suggested by the stylistic parallel highlighted between the 11th-century Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī image in the Pura Bukit Dharma in Bali and a contemporaneous Heruka image from the Tantric Buddhist monastery site of Padang Lawas in north-central Sumatra, which itself finds close stylistic parallels in what is today Bangladesh. These networks may have favoured renewed impetus in the transmission of Tantric Buddhist ideas to Indonesia, notably the presence of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the Tantric Buddhist pantheon which forms the focus of this article.

This study also suggests that the legendary royal ancestry records of the Warmadewa royal couple of Udāyana and Mahendradattā, in sculptural and written form, may provide further avenues for understanding the cultural connections between the eastern Java-Bali cultural sphere and the wider Uḍḍiyāna region in the 10th–12th centuries.

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[97] Bernet Kempers, *Monumental Bali,* 38–39.

[98] Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 118.

[99] Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, 87–107.

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PRATU Journal of Buddhist and Hindu Art, Architecture and Archaeology of Ancient to Premodern Southeast Asia

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About *Pratu*

Pratu: Journal of Buddhist and Hindu Art, Architecture and Archaeology of Ancient to Premodern Southeast Asia is funded by the Alphawood Foundation, under the auspices of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP). The journal is managed and edited by a group of research students in the Department of History of Art and Archaeology at SOAS University of London, in collaboration with an advisory group formed of members of SAAAP's Research & Publications Committee.

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Acknowledgement

Our sincere thanks to the anonymous scholars providing peer review of *Pratu* articles.