

## Chapter 1

# Introduction

## Volume 2: Odisha and Java

ANDREA ACRI AND PETER SHARROCK

This edited volume is the second of two forming an anthology that programmatically reconsiders the creative contribution of the littoral and insular regions of Maritime Asia to shaping new paradigms in the Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture of the mediaeval Asian world. Both volumes, inscribing themselves in the same intellectual trajectory of the edited volume *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons* published by ISEAS (Acri 2016), bring together new interdisciplinary research that contributes to a new sense of the historical role of Maritime Asia. Overall, they aim to recalibrate the importance of these innovations in art and architecture, thereby highlighting the cultural creativity of the monsoon-influenced southern rim of the Asian landmass. They also make a case for the importance of comparatively studying those phenomena from the prism of intra-Asian connections, taking into account circulatory dynamics while remaining anchored to the disciplinary traditions specializing on the various regions that constitute the rich cultural mosaic of Maritime Asia.

Most of the proposed studies stem from papers presented in two summer programmes held in East Java in 2016 (co-organized by the SOAS Southeast Asia Art Academic Programme [SAAAP] and the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute) and in Central Java in 2017 (co-organized by the SOAS SAAAP and Universitas Gadjah Mada).<sup>1</sup> These scholarly gath-

erings aimed at rediscovering the influence of the Buddhist and Hindu paradigms of mediaeval kingdoms adjoining the maritime trade route. With contributions from leading local and international scholars, the anthology expands on themes of innovation and transfer in the unique monuments, icons, and rituals developed in South India and Sri Lanka, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Java, and the Khmer and Cam domains that strongly impacted Buddhist and Hindu art, architecture, and religious culture in India, Nepal, Tibet, and China, and incite to deeper explorations.

Having discussed the intellectual framework informing this collective body of work in the Introduction to Volume One (Acri and Sharrock 2022), containing nine studies mainly dealing with intra-Asian transfers<sup>2</sup> and mainland Southeast Asia,<sup>3</sup> we will now summarize the nine studies contained in this volume, mainly covering the regions of Odisha and Java.

Part I, 'From Odisha to Java', consists of two chapters focusing on the eastern Indian littoral state of Odisha and its longstanding overseas maritime links with insular Southeast Asia and Java in particular. Chapter 2, 'Saviour "at the Time of Death": Amoghapāśa's Cultic Role in Late First Millennium Odishan Buddhist Sites', by Sonali Dhingra focuses on the Bodhisattva Amoghapāśa as an important cultic figure at several contemporaneous eastern Indian Buddhist establishments in Bihar and Odisha. Highlighting the popularity of

1. Both programmes were generously (co-)funded by the Alphawood Foundation in Chicago. The Alphawood Foundation has also significantly contributed to the funding of the present publication.

2. By Iain Sinclair; Yury Khokhlov; and Peter Sharrock.

3. By Jinah Kim; Swati Chemburkar; Shivani Kapoor; Swati Chemburkar; Andrea Acri; Olivier Cunin; Mya Chau; Mai Bui Dieu Linh; and Trần Kỳ Phương.

this Bodhisattva over a large part of the Buddhist world, the author suggests that the likely reason behind the widespread relevance of Amoghapāśa's cult was his specific role associated with death and afterlife. Focusing on extant sculpture recovered from archaeological sites in Odisha, particularly Ratnagiri, as well as textual records, she discusses the devotional and cultic significance of Amoghapāśa as a 'saviour at the time of death', suggesting that through a fresh interpretation of the relevance and meaning of his defining attribute, the *pāśa*, we can understand the association of Amoghapāśa with death, saving the dead at deathbed, and post-mortem rites in India and across Asia between the 8th and 10th centuries.

Chapter 3, 'Circulation of Buddhist Maṇḍalas in Maritime Asia: Epigraphic and Iconographic Evidence from Odisha and Java (8th–11th Century)' by Umakanta Misra deals with the eastward spread of Esoteric Buddhist Tantra, of which architectural and sculptural *maṇḍalas* were a constitutive part, from the Indian subcontinent to other regions of Maritime Asia. This study explores the development of *maṇḍalas* based on Caryā- and Yoga-tantras in the architectural and iconographic programmes of the Buddhist sites of Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, and Lalitagiri, situated in Odisha. In the first part, it argues that Odisha emerged as an early centre of Esoteric Buddhism, presenting epigraphic, sculptural, and architectural evidence of *maṇḍalas* that Buddhist monks transmitted to Southeast and East Asia. In the second part, it highlights similarities between the Odishan architectural and art historical remains and analogous monuments and objects from Buddhist sites of Central Java.

The remaining seven chapters of Volume Two are presented in Part II, 'Java and its Translocal Echoes', entirely devoted to Javanese instantiations of Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture studied from a comparative perspective that locate the island at the centre of the vibrant traffic of religious ideas, practices, and artistic styles that characterized mediaeval Maritime Asia. Chapter 4, 'The Scheme of Borobudur', by Hudaya Kandahjaya builds on previous work on the meaning of the Central Javanese Buddhist monument, and

proposes an enhanced solution to this problem by analysing the monument's shape and layout in the light of meaningful numerological patterns in the context of Buddhist doctrine. It includes a brief survey of previous interpretations, and a detailed discussion of the author's hypothesis on the basis of relevant Sanskrit and Old Javanese texts as well as inscriptions matching the symbolic and iconographical features of the Javanese monument.

Another study devoted to Central Javanese Buddhist architecture is Chapter 5, 'Candi Pembakaran at Ratu Boko: Its Possible Function and Association with the Mediaeval Sri Lankan Monastery at Anurādhapura', by Saran Suebsantiwongse. It proposes a new interpretation of the square, two-terraced platform with a deep hole at the centre found just steps away from the entrance to the second enclosure on the north side of the Ratu Boko complex. The purpose of this structure, now known as Candi Pembakaran, remains unclear, and opinions range from its former use as a crematorium to a sacrificial fire pit. A fragment of inscription unearthed near the entrance of the second enclosure, revealing that the complex was modelled after the Abhayagirivihāra in Anurādhapura (Sri Lanka), the existence of a sacred Bodhi shrine at Abhayagirivihāra, and the shape and location of the structure near a water source, all suggest that the structure at Ratu Boko might have had the same function, owing to the fact that the Bodhi shrine is one of the three parts of a typical Buddhist monastery.

Chapter 6, 'The Conqueror of the Three Worlds: The Cult of Trailokyavijaya in Java Studied Through the Lens of Epigraphical and Sculptural Remains', by Michel Gauvain investigates the diffusion and nature of the cult of Trailokyavijaya in Java. This wrathful manifestation of Vajrapāṇi, also called Vajrahūṃkāra and sometimes described as a transformation of Vajrasattva (and thus identical in essence with the Buddha Mahāvairocana), or as an emanation of the Buddha Akṣobhya, belongs to a category of beings who have been defined as 'wrathful destroyers of obstacles' (*krodha-vighnāntaka*), a class of esoteric deities whose task is not merely the protection of the devotees or the intimidation of recalcitrant beings, but also

the removal of external and internal hindrances and the transmutation of ignorance into wisdom. While the cult of the deity spanned almost the entire Asian continent over many centuries, it appears to have received considerable popularity in Java in the 8th–11th centuries.

Chapter 7, ‘The Social Context of the Central Javanese Temples of Kalasan and Prambanan (8th–9th Century CE)’, by Mimi Savitri explores the issues of how the Buddhist temple of Kalasan and the Hindu complex of Prambanan were initiated, executed, and maintained. Building on the realization that art historians have often focused on the aesthetic and religious aspects of Javanese temple complexes, the author notes that they have often neglected the social contexts of the Javanese communities in the creation and maintenance of such sanctuaries, as well as their social life. The chapter combines research on the archaeological and architectural features with an analysis of Old Javanese inscriptions related to the temples in order to cast light on the social dynamics of the period in which the temples were built and flourished.

The remaining three chapters focus on the Hindu art and architecture of Central and East Java. The posthumously published Chapter 8, ‘Sītā as Rāvaṇa’s Daughter at Candi Prambanan’, by the late Roy Jordaan deals with Sītā as depicted in the *Rāmāyaṇa* bas-reliefs on the inner side of the balustrade wall enclosing the ambulatories of the three main shrines of the temple complex of Prambanan. One of the riddles that Sītā presents us with at this temple site is her background, that is to say her birth and parentage. This matter appears to be particularly relevant for the interpretation of the twelfth bas-relief scene on the Brahmā temple that shows Rāvaṇa’s corpse surrounded by a few women. Perusal of the literature shows that in numerous post-Vālmīki tellings Sītā is represented as the daughter of Rāvaṇa with his main consort Mandodarī. Although in India, the land of origin of the Rāma-story, this idea is not completely unknown, this representation is best known among widely separated peoples in regions like Tibet, Khotan (Turkmenistan), much of mainland Southeast Asia, as well as Java. This

fact also highlights the innovative character of the ‘periphery’.

Chapter 9, ‘Hydro-architectonic Conceptualizations in Central Javanese, Khmer, and South Indian Religious Architecture: The Prambanan Temple as a *Sahasraliṅga* (1,000 *liṅgas*) Mechanism for the Consecration of Water’, by Jeffrey Sundberg argues that the Prambanan Śaiva temple complex served principally as a site for the production of large quantities of consecrated water by flowing over a towering erect statue of Śiva mounted on a *praṇāla*. Building on the thesis of Roy Jordaan that the entire inner courtyard of Candi Loro Jonggrang was intermittently flooded to create a giant *tīrtha* at the sacred site, the author brings new evidence from the temple complex itself as well as sites in Cambodia (i.e. the ‘purification sculptures’ carved into the rocky beds of the natural river at Kbal Spean) and Sri Lanka. The writer proposes that the curious ribbed and spike-tipped bulbous finials that ascend the monuments spires are in fact *liṅgas*, of which there are approximately 1,000 at Prambanan. The flutings on these finials, which direct monsoon rains into huge *makara*-gargoyle spouts that pour water into the courtyard, thus appear to depict in architectural form a giant *liṅga* and the Descent of the Ganges myth. The scale of this vast and elegant holy water production monument was unrivalled in premodern Asia and counts among the original conceptual reformulations of Indic ideas undertaken by the Javanese.

The collection is closed by Chapter 10, ‘New Archaeological Data from Mount Penanggungan, East Java’ by Hadi Sidomulyo, which presents a comprehensive survey of the plethora of archaeological sites located on Mount Penanggungan, a five-peaked extinct volcano lying in the province of East Java near the city of Surabaya. This mountain, which came to be identified with the sacred five-peaked Mahāmeru of Hindu and Buddhist tradition, was regarded by the Javanese as a locus of supreme sanctity, and was located in the proximity of the former Majapahit capital. The chapter describes the remains that were first surveyed by early Dutch and Indonesian archaeologists, then documents the extraordinary wealth of additional

sites discovered in recent years, contextualizing them against the background of East Javanese history and epigraphic and textual sources of the Majapahit period.

#### References

- Acri, Andrea (ed.). 2016. *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*. Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.
- Acri, Andrea and Peter Sharrock. 2022. 'Introduction. Volume 1: Intra-Asian Transfers and Mainland Southeast Asia', in Andrea Acri and Peter Sharrock (eds.), *The Creative South: Buddhist and Hindu Art in Mediaeval Maritime Asia. Volume One*, pp. 1–6. Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.