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# A Buddhist Bhairava? Kṛtanagara's Tantric Buddhism in Transregional Perspective

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**ABSTRACT** This article discusses some key aspects of the historical and religious background of the period of Kṛtanagara and his aftermath in East Java and Sumatra. Our analysis is based on a comparative study of Old Javanese, Sanskrit, and Tibetan textual sources and artistic vestiges (“medias”) to highlight the transregional networks of tantric Buddhism (“traditions”) that may have contributed to shape the king’s religio-political agenda. Having identified the enigmatic colossal statue at Padang Roco/Sungai Langsat in Dharmasraya (Central-Western Sumatra) as a Mahākāla bearing Śaiva iconographic contaminations, and as a product of Siṅhasāri-period East Java from Sino-Tibetan prototypes, we revive Moens’ (1924) idea of an association between the icon and Kṛtanagara. Adding to the discussion on the Eastern Indian-style icon of Arapacana Mañjuśrī found near Candi Jago, we highlight further parallels that complement and fine-tune the idea advanced by previous scholars about the commonality of the tantric Buddhist paradigms practiced at the courts of Kṛtanagara and Kublai Khan, and propose that their legacy was adopted by the political elites of the subsequent generation in both Nusantara and China.

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**KEYWORDS** Ādityavarman, Mahākāla, Gur gyi mgon po, Bhairava, Mañjuśrī, Kṛtanagara

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

A fascinating and still lingering problem in the religious history of Nusantara<sup>2</sup> is the question [1] of what tantric Buddhist systems were adhered to by Siṅhasāri King Kṛtanagara (r. 1268–

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1 Translations from Old Javanese, Sanskrit, and Tibetan are our own unless otherwise specified. All dates are in the Gregorian calendar.

2 We refer to Nusantara as the region comprising the modern nation states of Indonesia and Malaysia.

1292) of the Rājasa dynasty (East Java).<sup>3</sup> This ruler, who has rightly been called an “empire builder,”<sup>4</sup> held an important place in Javanese history, as suggested by the praise found in Mpu Prapañca’s fourteenth-century Buddhist-flavoured Old Javanese versified travelogue-cum-chronicle *Deśavarṇana* (or *Nāgarakṛtāgama*, 1960),<sup>5</sup> and especially by the many significant East Javanese artworks and monuments associated with him, like the Buddhist Candi Jago (built by Kṛtanagara to commemorate his ancestors), the Śaiva Candi Singosari, and the syncretic royal mausoleum of Candi Jajava/Jawi. Kṛtanagara passed down to history as the king who engaged in a diplomatic and then military confrontation with the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan (r. 1260–1294), the founder of the Yuan dynasty in China, who carried out an unsuccessful maritime invasion of Java in 1292/1293.<sup>6</sup> No less importantly, Kṛtanagara is also regarded as a crucial innovator in religious matters, being the unprecedented promoter of a Śiva-Buddha cult located at the intersection of Śaiva and Buddhist domains, and centred around his own apotheosized persona (Hunter 2007; Acri 2015).

In this article we discuss some key aspects of the historical and religious background of the period of Kṛtanagara and his aftermath in East Java and Sumatra. Through a comparative study of Old Javanese, Sanskrit, and Tibetan textual sources as well as artistic vestiges, we intend to highlight the transregional networks of tantric Buddhism that may have contributed to shaping the king’s religio-political agenda. Taking as a point of departure the enigmatic colossal statue at Padang Roco/Sungai Langsat in Dharmasraya (Central-Western Sumatra) that has been variously called a Bhairava, a Mahākāla, or a ‘Buddhist Bhairava,’ we advance an identification of this remarkable vestige in the light of possible Indian and Sino-Tibetan prototypes and Siñhasāri-period East Javanese statuary. Reviving Moens’ (1924, 557) idea of an association between the icon and Kṛtanagara, we discuss the statue’s origin, thereby complementing, and fine-tuning, the discussion independently provided by Sinclair (2022b) in this special issue. Adding to the discussion on the Eastern Indian-style icon of Arapacana Mañjuśrī from Candi Jago, we highlight further parallels that support the idea advanced by previous scholars about the commonality of the Buddhist paradigms practiced at the courts of Kṛtanagara and Kublai Khan. We then propose that their legacy was adopted by the political elites of the subsequent two or three generations, for instance Ādityavarman (fl. c. 1320–1378), who became chief minister in East Java and then King in Sumatra, and Yesün Temür (1293–1328) and Tugh Temür (1328–1332) in China. While confirming the view that the esoteric ritual systems adhered to by Kṛtanagara were centred around fierce tantric deities, including Bhairava, we argue that a specific Hevajra-related form of Mahākāla was part of the sovereign’s personal cultic pantheon in the final years of his reign. [2]

3 Moens (1924, 544) opted for the *Kālacakra* tradition and highlighted the importance of Yamāri (as a Buddhist Bhairava), Mañjuśrī, Amoghpaśa, and Akṣobhya, all conceived of as emanations of the Ādibuddha. Nihom (1986) has argued that Kṛtanagara was initiated into a Hevajra cult and that the same was a reaction to the tantric empowerments of Kublai (see Pott [1946] 1966, 68–69). Lokesh Chandra (1995, 156–57) has proposed the *Guhyasamāja*’s role as a root text of the doctrinal and ritual system revolving around the figure of Akṣobhya. O’Brien (2008) has stressed the role of Mahāvairocana as Ādibuddha, and Śaiva-Buddhist syncretism, in Kṛtanagara’s cult.

4 See de Casparis (1995–1996, 248), approvingly referring to Berg (1950).

5 See *Deśavarṇana* 43.4, “Of all the kings of olden times there was none as famous as this king” (trans. Robson 1995, 156). While this source represents the ‘official’ account, the Old Javanese *Pararaton* conveys a more critical characterization of Kṛtanagara.

6 See Bade (2013) and, for a recent report from the perspective of archaeology (including late thirteenth-century inscriptional evidence from Serutu island, located between Kalimantan and Sumatra), see Hung et al. (2022).

The case study presented here contributes to the overarching issues to which this special issue is devoted, namely inter-religious contact on the one hand, and the transfer and localization of belief systems and practices across the medieval Buddhist world (i.e., the vast region including the Indian subcontinent, the Himalayas, East Asia, and Southeast Asia) on the other. Our comparative analysis and trans-regional contextualization suggests that the peculiar iconographic program characterizing the statuary produced under Kṛtanagara and in the aftermath of its reign—especially the use of a ‘charnel ground imagery’—should not be regarded as the expression of a fuzzy Javanese, Sumatran, or Southeast Asian ‘local genius,’ as previous scholarship has tended to do.<sup>7</sup> Rather, this program reflects a politically driven adoption and reconfiguration along regional lines (as well as Kṛtanagara’s ‘syncretic’ attitude) of Indic religious motifs that may be traced to specific tantric currents, against the background of analogous and largely coeval developments attested in other areas of the wider Indic world. [3]

### Kṛtanagara’s Religious Agenda and its Political Ramifications

Following up on Moens’ (1924) remark that Kṛtanagara’s Buddhism was similar to the tantric Buddhism of Kublai, Berg (1965, 98–99) argued that the Siṅhasāri king adopted the particular form of Buddhism that he knew to be practised by the Mongol ruler in order to acquire supernatural powers to assist him in a military engagement with Java, as well as in his conquest of Tibet. Several scholars have subscribed to this view ever since.<sup>8</sup> While these claims seem to be compelling in the light of the prevalent religious paradigms and political contingencies across the Buddhist world in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and in particular the late phase of tantric Buddhism, the question of what specific tantric system(s) Kṛtanagara was initiated into remains unanswered. The *Deśavarṇana* (43.3) laconically refers to the fact that as he grew older, Kṛtanagara held to all sorts of (Buddhist) esoteric rites, including the *gaṇacakra*, which in its usual technical meaning indicates a transgressive ‘tantric feast.’<sup>9</sup> Siṅhasāri-period art historical evidence as well as later Old Javanese sources suggest that the ruler, besides sponsoring icons of wrathful manifestations of both Hindu and Buddhist deities (the latter especially in the final years of his reign), implemented an eclectic—or properly syncretic—agenda merging the figures of Śiva and Buddha into a unified cult revolving around his persona, in a way that was as much religious as political. [4]

The art historical record of the reign of Kṛtanagara is permeated by an imagery of a markedly horrific aesthetic character, which is associated with transgressive practices of the ‘charnel ground culture’ found in the Bhairavatantras and the Buddhist Yoginītantras. The most notable artistic remains include the ‘dancing Bhairava’ and the ‘tantric Gaṇeśa’ of Candi Singosari, the gigantic *dvārapāla* locally referred to as Totok Kerot, and a Cāmuṇḍī group dated 1292 now preserved at the Trowulan Museum. All these icons feature a demonic look and an abundance of skulls—carved in their basements, crowning their foreheads, and again adorning their bodies as colliers, bracelets, earrings, diadems, and sacred threads. As far as the textual archive is concerned, although both religious and belletristic literature that can be firmly dated to the Siṅhasāri period is scant (Hunter 2007, 32), a handful of (often remarkably [5]

7 See, for instance, Lunsingh Scheurleer (1998, 2000). A contribution highlighting the tantric aspects is Acri (forthcoming).

8 See Moens (1924, 558), suggesting a Yamāri initiation for Kṛtanagara, as opposed to an Hevajra initiation of Kublai; Lokesh Chandra (1995); Nihom (1986); Hunter (2007); Bade (2016).

9 This stanza is quoted *infra*, fn. 11.

well-crafted) Sanskrit hymns preserved in Balinese manuscripts mention fierce deities displaying iconographical features that are in harmony with those characterizing the aforementioned art historical vestiges, and are therefore likely to be roughly coeval (see Acri, forthcoming).

While Kṛtanagara's fascination for wrathful divine icons might have been dictated by his personal credo and initiatory practice, which emphasized the encounter with the powerful, horrific, and transgressive aspects of the numinous, the cults associated with those icons are likely to have also served his political purposes. Foremost among these was the success of his expeditions against neighbouring polities, among which Malayu in Sumatra. But no less important was the protection of the realm from Kublai's aggression. As remarked by Hadi Sidomulyo (2010, 98), quoting Hunter (2007, 38), the major shift in religious orientation detectable after Kṛtanagara's accession to the throne "should probably be linked in part to the threat posed by the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan in the last quarter of the 13th century." This concern seems to be hinted at in a passage of the *Deśavarṇana* (Canto 42.3) in praise of the sovereign:

*tuhun nṛpati tan pramāda luput in mada makin atiyatna riñ naya  
apan tātās i kevāhiñ bhuvanarākṣaṇa gavayān i kālaniñ kalī  
nimittaniran anrāgāp samaya len brata mapagāh apākṣa sogata  
tumirva sañ atitarāja riñ usāna magāhakāna vṛddhiniñ jagat.*

Nevertheless the King was not negligent, was free of intoxication, and was more and more energetic in his policy  
For he had realized how difficult it is to protect the world in the age of Kali.  
This is why he held fast to esoteric doctrines and observances, and was firmly committed to the sect of the Buddhists,  
In order to imitate the kings of old, and to guarantee the continued prosperity of the world. (trans. Robson 1995, 155)

Canto 43.1 adds that in the Kali age the "world became violent and turbulent. Only the divine being who concentrates on the six supernatural faculties of the Buddha could protect the world as god-king" (trans. Robson 1995, 155). While this statement may reflect the general attitude of what may be referred to as 'Kali age Buddhism' (Verardi 2018), here it is likely to specifically refer to Kṛtanagara's political concerns and his commitment to esoteric Buddhist cults and apotropaic rituals, especially to counteract the power of the expansion-driven Yuan emperor.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, in Canto 43.3–4, Prapañca describes the sovereign as "very energetic in the rites for application of magic" (*Deśavarṇana* 43.3–4).<sup>11</sup>

10 The apocalyptic tone of the *Deśavarṇana* may also reflect the concerns of Buddhist communities struggling against Muslim attacks and Hindu dominance in the religious landscape of the Indian subcontinent, and possibly even hint at one of the enemies of the Hindu-Buddhist world order, namely Islam, which was by then making inroads in Sumatra, and which would eventually lead to the fall of Majapahit around the late fifteenth century/early sixteenth century. For a similar view applied to Ādityavarman and the Padang Roco Mahākāla, by whose time much of Sumatra had already begun to convert to Islam, see Reichle (2007, 204–05), referring to de Casparis (1995–1996). A similar apocalyptic and eschatological theme is prominently featured in the eleventh-century *Kālacakratāntra*, a product of the age of the decline of Buddhism in Northeastern India: According to Newman (1998, 331), "Islam appears in the *Kālacakra* tantra in Buddhist prophecies depicting the end of the current age of degeneration, the *kaliyuga*. In fact the tantra as a whole is a 'yoga for the liberation of men at the time of the *kaliyuga*'."

11 "But as he grew somewhat older he held to all sorts of esoteric rites; Mainly of course it was the *Subhūti Tantra* the essence of which he guarded and cherished in his heart. He applied himself to worship, yoga and meditation for the stability of the whole world. Not to mention the Gaṇacakra always accompanied

Evidence of Kṛtanagara's eclectic adherence to both Śaiva and Buddhist tantric systems for political purposes, and his interest in 'war magic,' is provided by a reference in the Sukhāmṛta copper plate inscription of 1296 (Poerbatjaraka 1940, 33–49) to the special patronage accorded by Kṛtarājasa (aka Raden Wijaya, r. 1293–1309) to Mpu Kapat, a priest of Śaiva persuasion adhering to the Bhairava observance, whose father already served Kṛtanagara in the same capacity. The inscription mentions the manifestation of Kṛtanagara's "divine nature" (*kadevātmakan*) as a powerful means to terrorize and subdue his enemies, and specifies that the consecration name of this *ācārya* was *astrarāja* ("Chief of Weapons/Weapon-Mantras"),<sup>12</sup> which suggests that his duties included war rituals (Jákl 2020, 36). Hunter (2007, 35–36) argued that Kṛtanagara may have patronized the family of Patipati precisely because of their role as instructors in Bhairavika Śaivism, which assisted the ruler in the art of warfare.

Another association with martially driven magical empowerment is suggested by an unusual iconographical feature of the statues of deities facing the main directions at Candi Singosari (i.e. Nandīśvara and Mahākāla [east], Durgā [north], and Gaṇeśa [west]; the ascetic Agastya [south] being the exception), namely the short sleeveless "military jacket" or "tantric jacket" (*kavaca*), which according to Stutterheim (1936, 308–09) has a magically protective purpose (cf. Pullen 2021a, 41–42, 163). An analogous martial function may be detected in the Cāmuṇḍī group, probably originating from Candi Singosari, featuring miniature replicas of the Bhairava and Gaṇeśa standing on skull-pedestals found in the same temple. The back of the statue carries an Old Javanese inscription in Javanese script (except the first line, in Nāgarī script), dated to the last year of Kṛtanagara's reign (1292), attributing the erection of the image to the satisfaction of the king at his victory over the entire world (*divvijaya riṅ sakalaloka*) and the entire archipelago (*sakaladvīpāntara*; Santiko 1992, 123). Hariani Santiko (1992, 216–17), having noted that in Bengal and South India Cāmuṇḍā was associated with *vaśīkaraṇa* ("subjugation") rituals aiming at defeating enemies (*śatrubali*), hypothesized a connection between this sculptural group and analogous rituals directed towards Kṛtanagara's archenemy Kublai Khan. Invocations to Cāmuṇḍā also occur in mantras associated with the tantric magical acts of *vaśīkaraṇa* and *uccāṭaṇa* ("expulsion") in the *Samvarodaya*, a Buddhist Tantra from Nepal belonging to the *Cakrasamvara* cycle, in a context belonging to the cult of *śmaśāna* containing an invocation to Mahākāla (Tsuda 1996, 102).<sup>13</sup> The sculptural representation of a Goddess that is otherwise unattested in Javanese art suggests that her martial character was aligned with the sponsor's needs.

Association of monarchs with antinomian and martial traditions of tantric Buddhism was common from the twelfth to the fourteenth century and beyond across the Buddhist world: Besides Kṛtanagara and Kublai, as well as the Sumatran king of East Javanese pedigree Ādityavarman (see Hunter 2015, 324–27; Bautze-Picron 2014, 107, 123; Reichle 2007, 139), other prominent sovereigns of the Khmer and Cam domains are likely to have been initiated into

by gifts, beloved of his subjects. He was very virtuous, firm in his Buddhist observances and very energetic in the rites for application of magic; Hence his descendants have one by one been supreme rulers and god-kings" (trans. Robson 1995, 155–56). The *Subhūti Tantra* might be the Sanskrit-Old Javanese manual *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan (Advayasādhana)*: for the colophon of version C of one of its manuscripts refers to the text it transmits as *Saṅ Hyaṅ Tantra Bajradhātu Subhūti* (ed. Kats 1910, 118).

12 Jákl (2020, 36) translates the compound *ācāryāstrarāja* as "Master of Divine Weapons," while Zoetmulder (1982, 147) glosses *astrarāja* as "king of arrows."

13 The *Cakrasamvara*, a Tantra dominated by Heruka, betrays a characteristic 'bricolage,' incorporating as it does Śaiva deities, including Cāmuṇḍī (alias Cāmuṇḍā). The *Cakrasamvara* and its cycle of related scriptures were popular from the late tenth to the late thirteenth centuries in Northern India, Nepal, Tibet, and other regions where a Tibetan Buddhist diaspora influenced local Buddhisms, including Mongolia and China (Gray 2007, xiii).

tantric systems dominated by wrathful deities to ensure their success on the battlefields.<sup>14</sup> As noted by Bautze-Picron (2014, 123), in that period “esoteric Buddhism was tightly intertwined with politics and [...] fierce characters like Mahākāla or Heruka/Hevajra were made the protectors of various kingdoms.” The existence of a transregional web of cultural, diplomatic, and religious nature is reflected by the fact that icons of wrathful deities found in East Java were integrated in a wider network that connected them to Sumatra, Bali, South Asia, and the Khmer and Cam domains in the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.<sup>15</sup> Veneration of Hevajra/Heruka and Mahākāla was especially significant outside South Asia, and the latter deity in particular was a state-protector deity in Tibet, in the Dali kingdom (Bryson 2017), in the Tangut Empire/Western Xia, and in China under the Yuan (Weirong 2008). Bautze-Picron (2016, 180) argues that

Images exported by monks evidently reflected concepts developed in Eastern India, but they merged with local Southeast Asian spiritual and political considerations[;...] both Hevajra and Mahākāla were images of political power in regions outside the Indian Subcontinent, symbolizing the duty of the ruler to protect the country by destroying its enemies (Mahākāla), while illustrating the presence of the political power as universal (Hevajra/Heruka standing at the centre of a *maṇḍala*) and destructive of negative forces (Hevajra/Heruka dancing on corpses). One may thus wonder whether in India, as was the case in Southeast Asia or China, they had the leading position of protecting the state [...].

[13]

Icons of fierce tantric gods and goddesses found in the Buddhist kingdoms of Sumatra, notably at the predominantly Hindu site of Bumiayu (South Sumatra), and at the Buddhist sites of Muara Takus (Central Sumatra), Biaro Bahal, and Padang Lawas (North Sumatra), display iconographic resemblances with statues produced in East Java during the Siṅhasāri period.<sup>16</sup> The same holds true for the gigantic statue originally found at Padang Roco in Central-Western Sumatra, which we will discuss below.

[14]

## The Padang Roco Statue: Bhairava or Mahākāla?

The colossal, 4.4-metre-high statue unearthed in 1906 at Padang Roco (see figure 1), now kept at the National Museum of Indonesia in Jakarta, represents a standing one-headed, two-armed demonic deity generally labelled by art historians as “Bhairava” or “a (tantric)

[15]

14 For instance, Jayavarman VI (r. c. 1080–1107) and Jayavarman VII (r. c. 1181–1218) in the Khmer domains and Vidyānandana (r.c. 1191–1203) in the Cam domains, who sponsored sanctuaries at Prasat Phimai, Angkor Thom, and My Son, respectively: see Sharrock (2022, 148), according to whom the Heruka planted by Jayavarman VII in the centre of Angkor within Bayon state temple could have amounted to “the ceremonial highpoint of Jayavarman’s *indrābhiṣeka* or second coronation, the Indic consecration that confers *cakravartin* status following a foreign acquisition.” On war magic in Indian tantric Buddhism, see Sinclair (2014).

15 The image of a dancing Hevajra/Heruka unearthed at Padang Lawas bears resemblances to two similar eleventh- or twelfth-century icons from the Comilla district in modern Bangladesh (Bautze-Picron 2014, 111, 125). The *Hevajratāntra* enjoyed a significant popularity in Sumatra, as suggested by the quotation in the epigraphic record of portions of that text (Griffiths 2014, 230). The fourteenth-century inscription of Saruaso II (Hunter 2015, 325), issued by Ādityavarman’s son, the crown prince Anaṅgavarman, mentions his “daily meditation on Hevajra” (*hevajranityasmṛti*), which implies initiation into that deity’s system.

16 See, for instance, the damaged torso of a frightful Goddess wearing a garland of skulls, identified as Cāmuṇḍī or Bhairavi (Satari 2002, 125, 132), as well as the remarkably demonic Gaṇas and Kāla-Kirtimukha heads (Satari 2002, 131–32).



**Figure 1** Colossal statue representing Kṛtanagara as an emanation of Mahākāla(-Bhairava?), Padang Roco/Sungai Langsat, Sumatra. Jakarta, Museum Nasional Republik Indonesia. Photo: Andrea Acri.



Buddhist Bhairava.”<sup>17</sup> Accepting the label given by van Stein Callenfels (1920, 63), Bautze-Picron (2014, 113–14) emphatically rejects the previous identifications, and regards it as the Buddhist deity Mahākāla instead. Noting that Bhairava and Mahākāla may be (and, indeed, were) easily confused due to their entangled iconographies,<sup>18</sup> she argues that several iconographical features closely match those found in depictions of Mahākāla in Indo-Tibetan art. Bautze-Picron (2014, 114) correctly observes that the knife and the skull-cup held in the two front hands typically belongs to the Mahākāla iconography displayed by South Asian icons;<sup>19</sup> yet, the Indian Mahākāla (now kept at the Berlin Museum) reproduced as fig. 3 in her article does not precisely show the same pose as the Padang Roco statue, as he holds the knife in the right hand dangling by his waist, separated from the skull in the left hand. Building on this identification, Sinclair (2022b) identifies the statue as a Vajramahākāla emanating from the (*Dākini*)*vajrapañjara* (Derge No. 419) and related sources, comparing it with the standing Mahākāla image depicted on the undated Minangkabau ritual dagger named “Mandākinī” or “Si Mandang Giri,” whose form and iconography relates to both East Java and Bihar, Bengal, and Nepal (Bautze-Picron 2014, 115). While these identifications go in the right direction, there appears to be an even closer correspondence with the typical iconography of the one-headed, two-handed form of Mahākāla known as *Gur gyi mgon po* in Tibetan (“Lord of the Pavilion” or “Lord of Death,” Skt. \*Pañjaranātha; see figure 2),<sup>20</sup> whose right hand holds the knife right above the skull, pointing towards it, at the level of the heart. A guardian-deity emanating from the Hevajra-related *Vajrapañjaratantra* and the *Mahākālatantra*, \*Pañjaranātha protects the Hevajra *maṇḍala* and those who are engaged in its practice.<sup>21</sup>

Like the Padang Roco icon, this form of Mahākāla stands on a corpse, and usually displays an emblem-like image of Akṣobhya (of which Mahākāla is an emanation); however, while in the latter Akṣobhya is hosted in the crown, in the Padang Roco icon it is hosted above it, in the bun. As argued by Sinclair (2022b), this peculiar placement is an iconographical oddity, which might reflect “a misinterpretation of the directive ‘upon the upraised orange hair,’ *ūrdhvapiṅgalakeśopari*,” specified in the description of Vajramahākāla given by *Sādhnamālā* 301 (= *Śrīmahākālasādhana*: see infra). Mahākāla \*Pañjaranātha also displays features that are not found in the Padang Roco icon, namely the semi-squatting posture with legs bent, the *gaṇḍī* (long wooden gong) held horizontally across the hands, the tiger skin, the sacred thread made out of a snake, garlands of severed heads, and a crown ornated by five skulls. While the majority of the Tibetan and Nepalese icons depicting this form of Mahākāla date from the fifteenth century and later (see Pal 1977),<sup>22</sup> there exists an iconographical variant that Linrothe (2004, 267, Cat. 18) described as the ‘original’ \*Pañjaranātha, i.e., the Lord of the

[16]

17 See Moens (1924, 557) (who also suggests an identification with Yamāri); Bernet Kempers (1959, 78); Chutiwongs (2006); Reichle (2007, 175, 191, 200); Kulke (2009, 229, 231, *passim*). Both Kulke (2009, 229n2) and Chutiwongs (2006, 54) incorrectly report that the statue was discovered in 1935 by Schnitger.

18 Mahākāla is the Buddhist manifestation of the originally Śaiva Mahākāla or Bhairava, whose iconography was already well-established by the Gupta period (see Pal 1977, 98).

19 Contrast Reichle (2007, 201): “The exact identity of these two Bhairavas remains a mystery, as the iconography does not fit the descriptions of any of the fierce emanations of Akṣobhya discussed in Bhattacharyya’s *Buddhist Iconography*.” The other Bhairava mentioned by Reichle is the Mahākāla icon found at Candi Jago: see infra.

20 According to Ducher (2019, 137), the element *Gur* (Skt. *pañjara*) refers to the fact that \*Pañjaranātha is the protector of the *Pañjaratantra*, while Bryson (2017, 410n15), referring to Tucci’s view, prefers the translation “Lord of Death,” as *pañjara* means “cage” as in “cage of bones,” i.e., skeleton.

21 Huntington and Bangdel (2003, 335) describe \*Pañjaranātha as “the lord of the exterior *vajra* enclosure, containing the whole Hevajra mandala palace and the charnel fields.”

22 Earlier Pāla freestanding statues of Mahākāla (eighth to twelfth centuries) are generally four-armed, holding additional attributes such as sword and *khaṭvāṅga* (Bryson 2017, 410–11). Rare eleventh- and twelfth-



**Figure 2** Gur gyi mgon po/Mahākāla \*Pañjaranātha, painting on cotton, Tibet, fifteenth century. Collection Navin Kumar, New York.



**Figure 3** Early form of Mahākāla \*Pañjaranātha, Lord of the Sa skya lineage of Gayādhara paṇḍita. Particular of figure 2 (bottom-right)

early Sa skya lineage of Gayādhara *paṇḍita* (d. 1103) (*ga ya da ra'i lugs*), whose iconography derives from the fifteenth chapter<sup>23</sup> of the *Vajrapañjaratantra* (figure 3).<sup>24</sup> This icon, standing straight-legged in erect posture and not holding the *gaṇḍī*, is a virtually identical match of the Padang Roco Mahākāla—save for the crown, the coiffure, the thread, and the body's ornaments. Worthy of note is also the similarity between the elongated ears of the corpse on which the Padang Roco statue is standing and those of the Indo-Tibetan icons. In view of the significant iconographic similarities, coupled with the centrality of the cult of Gur gyi mgon po/\*Pañjaranātha as a tutelary deity associated with state-protection Buddhism at the Yuan court and with the Sa skya order, we identify this particular hypostasis of Mahākāla as a likely prototype for the Padang Roco statue.

However, we believe that there is more to say about this enigmatic icon. An aspect that strikes the eye is a set of iconographic features typically attested in East Javanese Śaiva statuary from the Siṅhasāri period. The most significant one is the skull pedestal on which the statue rests, which finds no counterpart in any known icons or iconographical descriptions of Mahākāla (Sinclair 2022b) but is regularly encountered in Siṅhasāri Śaiva icons—see in particular the remarkably similar pedestal of the Singosari Bhairava (figure 5). The same icon also holds a skull and a flaying knife; the latter displays no vajra in its pommel (just like in the Padang Roco statue, and unlike in most of the Indo-Tibetan icons), and is held in a different position than that characterizing \*Pañjaranātha Mahākāla and other Buddhist *krodha* icons, such as Vajrabhairava.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, instead of the crown of five skulls that characterizes the standard iconography of Mahākāla across the Buddhist world, which is indeed depicted on the Candi Jago Mahākāla (see figure 6), the Padang Roco statue's head displays a prominent bulbous, turban-like bun with a small icon of Akṣobhya on it. This bun has a different aesthetic quality than the tall, often ovoidal standing hair (*ūrdhvakeśa*) displayed in icons of Mahākāla in Nusantara and their Indian cognates;<sup>26</sup> although a similar puffed-up bun is also found in many paintings and sculptures of fierce Buddhist deities from Eastern India, one is reminded of the 'ascetic buns' depicted on East Javanese reliefs and statuary, like the Agastya of Candi Singosari. A typically East Javanese element is the so-called *candrakapāla* (moon-skull) etched within each diamond of the pattern of the statue's sarong (figure 7, see Reichle 2007, 169).

[17]

century depictions are reproduced and discussed by Rhie in Linrothe and Watt (2004, 46–49). See also Bautze-Picron (1991, 253–54 and *infra*, fns. 24 and 69).

- 23 Pace Huntington and Bangdel (2003, 335) and Linrothe and Watt (2004, 267), who claim that it is chapter 18 (whereas the Tantra only has 15 chapters).
- 24 On the other hand, Sinclair (2022a) links it to the Mahākāla of the Ngog tradition of the *Pañjara* (Gur rkyang Rngog lugs). An example of early standing icon of Mahākāla is the ca. eleventh-century four-armed Pāla sculpture reproduced by Rhie in Linrothe and Watt (2004, 52). The earliest Nepalese depictions of this form of Mahākāla are a painting dated 1543 (Pal 1977, 101, fig. 8) and an illumination on a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript dated to 1367 (Pal 1977, 102, fig. 9); compare the metal statue reproduced here as figure 4. All these icons hold a magic stick (the last one in vertical instead of horizontal position) in addition to the dagger and skull-cup. A similar two-armed, one-faced form carrying the knife and the skull bowl in his right and left hands respectively (without *gaṇḍī* and magic staff, but with five skulls on the hair and a chain of severed heads) is described in the twelfth-century *Sādhanamālā* as Śrī Mahākāla Bhaṭṭāraka (Bhattacharya 1968, 345).
- 25 See also the smaller Mahākāla icon found at Candi Jago (Reichle 2007, 199). This type of flaying knife has a different shape than the Mandākini dagger and its prototypes, found in Mahākāla sculptures from the Indian subcontinent (see Sinclair 2022b, fig. 2 and 3).
- 26 Pace Reichle (2007, 199), who notes that the headdress of the Candi Jago Mahākāla shaped as a “tall ovoid [...] marked by thin striations” is remindful of that of the Padang Roco statue. In our opinion, this headdress more closely resembles that of the Mahākāla on the dagger “Si Mandang Giri”; compare the hairstyle of the two-armed Mahākāla from Lakhisarai near Indapaigarh in Bihar (Bautze-Picron 1991, fig. 16), and also the small standing Mahākāla statue from Padang Lawas, featuring the crown of hair typical of this god, as well as the garland of skulls (see Reichle 2007, 147, fig. 5.8; Bautze-Picron 2014, 113, 116).



**Figure 4** A gilt copper figure of Gur gyi mgon po/Mahākāla \*Pañjaranātha, Tibet or Nepal, thirteenth to fourteenth century. Collection Navin Kumar, New York.

The skull and the half-moon are motifs traditionally associated with Śiva. In East Java they are transformed into a single emblem where the fang-like moon encircles both sides of the skull, which is often represented on royal-sponsored Śaiva statues and temples produced in or after the Kaḍiri and Siṅhasāri periods (see Pullen 2021a, 166–76). Indeed, the *candrakapāla* constituted the official emblem of East Javanese King Bāmeśvara (c. 1117–1135), which is interpreted by Hadi Sidomulyo as a Śaiva symbol connected with the gradual growth in popularity of Bhairava cults in East Java since that period, as attested by epigraphic and literary sources (see Robson and Sidomulyo 2021, 150–51). As such, it could be regarded as a symbol of allegiance to a specific Bhairavika priestly lineage, an emblem of dynastic genealogy, or both.

Keeping in mind that Mahākāla, even in his tantric Buddhist manifestation, admittedly occupies a “liminal position at the *bauddha–tīrthika* divide” (Sinclair 2022b, par. 54), being ultimately a transformation of the originally Śaiva Mahākāla/Bhairava, it seems reasonable to ask whether the ‘contamination’ of a Buddhist icon with iconographic elements that are commonly found in Śaiva icons dated to the Siṅhasāri period intended to give it a subtle Śaiva ‘imprint,’ or simply reflected a typically East Javanese style. Either scenarios link back to King Kṛtanagara, whose ecumenic and/or syncretic religious agenda is reflected by some of the art and architecture produced under his reign. In the light of these outstanding questions, a re-examination of the provenance and function of the Padang Roco statue seems in order. [18]

## The Padang Roco Mahākāla as Kṛtanagara’s Wrathful ‘Deification Statue’

A general scholarly consensus attributes the Padang Roco statue to Ādityavarman, deeming it to be a representation of himself as a deity, ever since Schnitger expressed that idea in 1937.<sup>27</sup> This attribution, in spite of hardly being supported by any evidence, has eclipsed earlier alternative views, and has not been seriously called into question thus far.<sup>28</sup> While the common features shared by the statue with the Buddhist and Śaiva tantric imagery developed in East Java during the reign of Kṛtanagara may seem to support it—for one could argue that Ādityavarman, who spent several years at the East Javanese court, was influenced by the artistic and religious paradigm of the period—, one could also argue that Kṛtanagara himself sponsored this in many respects unique icon. Indeed, Moens (1924, 557) suggested just that, asking whether the East Javanese king did not send to Padang Roco this “portrait statue” (*portretbeeld*) along with the Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara replicating the deified portrait sculpture of Kṛtanagara’s deceased father Viṣṇuvardhana (figure 8) as a proof of his power.<sup>29</sup> Along similar lines, independently of both Moens and ourselves, Sinclair (2022b, par. 36) argues that the statue was not only an “iteration of a type that had already reached the Siṅhasāri royal domains and was, therefore, known to Kṛtanagara,” but also represented a portrait of [19]

27 “We have to do here probably with a portrait of the Menangkabau king Adityawarman” (Schnitger 1937, 8).

28 Reichle (2007, 204), while accepting the statue’s association with Ādityavarman, points out that “there is no definitive proof that the image is a portrait of Adityawarman, or even that he erected it.” Bernet Kempers (1959, 87), having mentioned the usual identification with Ādityavarman, laconically reports that “according to another interpretation it represents Kṛtanagara”; this probably refers to Moens’ view (see *infra*).

29 On the similarities between this statue and the Khmer Jayabuddhamahānātha portrait statues of the Khmer King Jayavarman VII, which would suggest the spread of a *devamūrti* cult following the close contact between the Malay and Khmer worlds in the thirteenth century, see Sinclair (2022a, 34). See *infra*, fn. 31.



**Figure 5** Bhairava of Candi Singosari, East Java, Leiden Museum of Ethnology. Photo by user Hnapel, Wikimedia Commons (File: Museum\_Volkenkunde\_Leiden\_stenen\_beeld\_10.jpg). Licence: CC BY-SA 4.0.



**Figure 6** Head of Mahākāla, Candi Jago, particular of photo Oudheidkundige Dienst 785, Leiden University Library (created in 1902). Copyright status undetermined/author unknown.





**Figure 7** Candrakapāla emblems on the sarong of the Padang Roco Mahākāla. Jakarta, Museum Nasional Republik Indonesia. Photo: Andrea Acri.

the latter. In what follows we shall test this idea against relevant art historical and textual evidence.

Firstly, the iconographical variations displayed by the statue with respect to its possible Indo-Tibetan prototype suggest that the Nusantara icon reflects a process of local adaptation, on the one hand, and responded to Kṛtanagara's specific needs, on the other, namely to represent himself in the form of a protective deity displaying the attributes shared by Mahākāla and Bhairava. In particular, the frontal upright posture emphasizing verticality not only mirrors that of the Amoghapāśa-Viṣṇuvardhana of Padang Roco but is also strikingly reminiscent of that of Majapahit-period 'deification statues' representing divinized royal or aristocratic mortals. These East Javanese deification statues display an unusual combination of features, namely attributes and gestures related to meditation, ritual, and worship, and are depicted as being absorbed in/united with the supreme deity, which "is not specified and borrow aspects of the great gods of Hinduism and Buddhism [...]. The equality of Śiva and Buddha, of Shiwaism and Buddhism, is stressed" (Lunsingh Scheurleer 2008, 300). As such, the Padang Roco statue would qualify as a possible precursor. In fact, no less than four statues displaying traits of the Siñhasāri period-style associated with Kṛtanagara—including the merging of divinities belonging to different religious denominations—and recovered in the Candi Singosari compound have been regarded as early codifications of the formula recurring in deification statues sculpted in the Majapahit period (Lunsingh Scheurleer 2008, 321–22, figs. 23, 24 and 25).<sup>30</sup> Further, as pointed out by Sinclair (2022b, see in particular figs. 6 and 7), there appears to be a striking similarity between the physiognomic traits of the face of the Padang Roco Mahākāla and that of the so-called Joko Dolog statue portraying Mahākṣobhya—and possibly Kṛtanagara<sup>31</sup>—, a smaller replica of which, also bearing unusual individual traits, is now found in Malang.<sup>32</sup> We also point out that the smaller damaged statue (now lost) of Mahākāla found at Candi Jago (figure 6) shares with the Padang Roco statue the unusual feature of facial hair.<sup>33</sup> While it may seem naïve to attribute the similar facial traits of various idealized deities to a conscious will by Kṛtanagara to reproduce his features in those divine icons, we do not think it is beyond the realm of possibility. But even if this view is rejected, one may still propose that those statues are products of the same East Javanese stylistic tradition or even of the same workshop.

Further, as noted by Reichle (2007, 187, 191), there are intriguing iconographical similarities between the Padang Roco Mahākāla statue and other icons found in East Java associated

30 One among them, known as 'the statue with the bishop's mitre' and tentatively identified by Lunsingh Scheurleer (2008, 322) as an Ardhanareśvarī (instead of a Pārvatī), is flanked by replicas of the freestanding Singosari Gaṇeśa and Bhairava, which we also find in the Cāmuṇḍī group associated with Kṛtanagara (see *Deśavarṇana* 43.6, relating that a deified icon of Kṛtanagara was set up in the form of the Śaiva Ardhanareśvarī together with the Buddhist Śrī Bajradevī). See also the deified image, now at the Hermitage Museum, of Kṛtanagara in the form of Viṣṇu and Śiva (Stutterheim 1932).

31 While Hadi Sidomulyo (2010) argues against this identification, which has been suggested by several scholars, we do not see any problems with the fact that Kṛtanagara was the only sovereign to have represented himself as a deity while he was still alive, given the innovative and radical character of his religious agenda, the grandeur characterizing the artistic and architectural production sponsored by him, and the references to his divine nature found in Old Javanese sources. For the idea that the Joko Dolog statue and its replicas might have been inspired by the Khmer Jayabuddhamahānātha statues/royal portraits of Jayavarman VII, see Fontein (1990, 55), and the qualifications by Reichle (2007, 45–49).

32 According to Lunsingh Scheurleer (2008, 293), the statue, "thickset and inelegant [...] shows individual traits and can therefore be called an exceptional sculptural portrait." Another gigantic (and unfinished) statue possibly representing Akṣobhya, and also stemming from Kṛtanagara's period, is the so-called 'Reco Lanang' near Trawas, East Java (see Acri 2018, Plate 3).

33 See Reichle (2007, 199): "Facial hair is another unusual attribute shared by both the Sumatran and Jago Bhairavas" (note that Reichle calls "Bhairavas" what are actually Mahākālas: see Bautze-Picron 2014, 116).



**Figure 8** Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara, originally found at Padang Roco, Sungai Langsat, Sumatra. Jakarta, Museum Nasional Republik Indonesia. Photo: Andrea Aciri.

with Kṛtanagara, so much so that they “would lead one to suspect that it was made in East Java” (Reichle 2007, 191).<sup>34</sup> These include the detailed and intricate carving of the jewellery and the delicate patterning of the sarong’s fabric, which are reminiscent of the Prajñāpāramitā statue found near Singosari; the skull pedestal on which the statue rests, which, as we have noted above, closely resembles that of Śaiva statues from Singosari, such as the dancing Bhairava and the ‘tantric Gaṇeśa’ (and their smaller replicas in the Cāmuṇḍī and Ardhanareśvarī groups); and the snake bracelets, the cascading ringlet of hair, the sashes of the sarong tied in large bows at the sides of the waist, and the *kāla*-shaped belt buckle, which also characterize the Ardhanareśvarī group and the Candi Jago Mahākāla (Reichle 2007, 199). The last icon also displays similar attributes—a skull cup and a cleaver held pointing down along his right thigh, rather than in front of his chest—, and hosts an Akṣobhya in the central niche of the headdress (Reichle 2007, 199–201). Unlike that icon, however, the Padang Roco statue displays a typically ‘royal’ diadem (Reichle 2007, 172–73), devoid of skulls; its calves, arms and chest are covered with swirling hair—“a unique characteristic of this statue” (Reichle 2007, 169–71).

As mentioned above, the *candrakapāla* emblem is another motif associated with Kaḍiri and Siṅhasāri art, and statues produced under Kṛtanagara in particular, as is the flower ear-ornament motif displayed by the Padang Roco icon and other statues associated with Kṛtanagara, which according to Pullen (2019, slide 28) disappears in the fourteenth century. A similarity may also be detected between the rare textile pattern carved on the statue’s dress and the pattern displayed on three statues from Candi Jago (i.e., Śyāmatārā, Bhṛkuṭī, and Sudhanakumāra), which is otherwise unattested in Java.<sup>35</sup> Lastly, the colossal size of the Padang Roco statue, which exceeds that of most of the monumental statuary ever produced in Java, may also be relevant to determine its origin and dating: gigantic statues are unusual in Nusantara, but were commonly produced during Kṛtanagara’s reign.<sup>36</sup>

Just like previous scholars, Reichle (2007, 201) connected these statues to Ādityavarman rather than Kṛtanagara, arguing that “it is tempting to think that Ādityavarman erected this small statue at Jago after his renovation of the site and then the monumental image after coming to rule in Sumatra.” However, we believe that the evidence mentioned above supports the association—firstly voiced by Moens, and also advanced by Sinclair (2022b) in this special issue on the basis of iconographic evidence—of the Padang Roco Mahākāla statue (as well as the other smaller icons at Candi Jago) with Kṛtanagara himself rather than Ādityavarman. Since the former did actually send to Sungai Langsat in 1286 the large statue of Amoghapāśa from Candi Jago that was later re-consecrated by Ādityavarman in 1347, the transfer of the Mahākāla statue, in spite of its even larger size, cannot be ruled out as an impossible feat.<sup>37</sup>

34 At the same time, Reichle (2007, 191) mentions other aspects of the statue that would seem to point to a later, Majapahit-era date: the flaming nimbus, the high floating scarf, and the stiff pose, all of which are reminiscent of fourteenth-century sculptures from East Java. While Reichle may be right, these features seem to be rather general, and in any event do not preclude the fact that the Siṅhasāri statues may be the iconographic precursors of the later specimens.

35 Since this pattern, known as *balah kacang*, has disappeared from the textile tradition of Java but is nowadays still woven in the Minangkabau region of West Sumatra, Pullen (2019, 213n2, see 137–40) has argued that it might have been brought from Java to Sumatra by Ādityavarman.

36 For example, the Totok Kerot statue, the colossal Lokapālas and other large statues of Hindu deities at Candi Singosari, the Akṣobhya statue of Reco Lanang, the Joko Dolog statue, the Cāmuṇḍī group in the Trowulan Museum, the Candi Jago Amoghapāśa, etc.

37 As noted by Sinclair (2022b), the Amoghapāśa base inscription of 1286 displays letterforms that are much like those on the Joko Dolog’s inscription of 1289, so much so that they may have been produced by the same scriptorium. Indeed, paleographically, the script appears to conform to the one typically used in Kṛtanagara’s period.

[22]

[23]

Indeed, the possibility that the colossal Mahākāla sculpture might not have been locally produced on behalf of Ādityavarman but rather brought from East Java was recently voiced— independently from Moens—by Kulke in a short (and, by his own definition, “conjectural”) post scriptum to his 2009 article on Ādityavarman, where he argues that

in view of its Siva-Buddhist iconology, its style and excellence of workmanship and the fact that no locally produced stone sculptures of any size and of similar quality are known in Sumatra, its East Javanese origin should not be ruled out completely, particularly if the stone out of which it was produced is unknown in Dharmasraya. (Kulke 2009, 249) [24]

Kulke concludes that, if this is the case, the rituo-political function of the statue would have to be reconsidered, representing “a mighty demonstration of Majapahit’s authority in Dharmasraya rather than [...] a symbol of Adityawarman’s independence from Majapahit” (2009). The transfer of the grand icons of Amoghpaśa and Mahākāla from East Java to Sumatra, which must have been an extraordinary logistic feat, was then possibly meant to be an act of “ritual conquest” (2009, 230),<sup>38</sup> or rather, as already suggested by Berg (1965, 99) and de Casparis (1985, 247–48), a political alliance against the threat of an attack by Kublai Khan or other hostile forces. [25]

More recently, Ni Wayan Ariati (2016, 159–63) has discussed the images of wrathful deities showing stylistic features associated with the reign of Kṛtanagara, including the Candi Singosari Bhairava (which to her portrays Kṛtanagara himself), the Padang Roco statue (which she calls a “Bhairava”), and a statue of Bhairava or Bhīma from the temple of Pejeng in Bali, and suggested that “the spread of Bhairava imagery throughout East Java and as far as Sumatra to the West, and Bali to the East, may have occurred in the late Singasari period due to Kertanegara’s desire to create a strong system of ‘magical defence’ in the archipelago.” Ariati concludes that the Padang Roco statue could reflect political purposes like those of Kṛtanagara, in the context of Ādityavarman’s reign in Sumatra and his concerns about possible threats from Yuan China as well as the rising power of the Islamic trading states in Northern Sumatra (Ariati 2016, 163). [26]

## The Candi Jawi Śiva-Buddha Statue: A Parallel Icon?

In support of the view that the Padang Roco colossal statue might have been crafted in a Siṅhasāri milieu, we would like to draw attention to some relevant Old Javanese textual evidence, i.e., a well-known textual passage in the *Deśavarṇana* that was already mentioned by Moens as being relevant to the issue of the statue’s origin. This is the description, in Canto 56, of a statue representing ‘Śiva-Buddha’ at the syncretic Candi Jawi: [27]

38 See also Sinclair (2019, 7), according to whom, as suggested by the Old Javanese chronicle *Pararaton*, “this situation was the result of the long military campaign launched against the Malays (*pamalayu*) by Kṛtanagara in 1275.” Sinclair (2022a) also points out that, according to the *Deśavarṇana* (41.5cd), it was thanks to the Amoghpaśa icon (*devamūrti*) sent to Sumatra that the Malay lands ultimately became submitted to Kṛtanagara’s authority (alternatively, the expression *kadevamūrtinira* could refer to Kṛtanagara’s own ‘divine nature’: compare *kadevātman* in the Sukhāmṛta inscription, see supra). In the inscription carved on the icon, Kṛtanagara defines himself a “Supreme King of the Great Kings” (*mahārājādhirāja*), as opposed to *mahārāja* Maulivarmadeva, and the same title is used by Ādityavarman in the Pagaruyung I/Bukit Gombak Stele (Hunter 2015, 303).

*ndan tirikahnikanan̄i sudharma riñ usāna rakva karāñā* [28]  
*kīrtti śrī kṛtanāgara prabhū yuyut nareśvara sira*  
*tākvān rakva sirāñadhiṣṭhita śarīra tan hana vaneh*  
*etunyañ dvaya śaiva boddha sañ amūja nūni satatā. 56.1*

*cihnañ caṇḍi ri sor kaśaivan apucak kaboddhan i ruhur* [29]  
*mvañ ri jro śivavimbha śobhita halapnirāparimitā*  
*akṣobhyapratime ruhur mmakūṭa tan hanolyantikā*  
*sañke siddhinirān vināśa tuhu śūnyatatvaparamā. 56.2*

Now the character of the foundation in the past is of course well-known: [30]  
 It was a pious work of King Kṛtanagara, the great-grandfather of the King.  
 Moreover it was he who ruled over it in bodily form, and he alone.  
 And hence it was both Śaivas and Buddhists who always used to worship there.  
 56.1

As a sign of this the *caṇḍi* below was Śaiva, with a Buddhist pinnacle above. [31]  
 And within was a splendid image of Śiva of limitless fineness;  
 A statuette of Akṣobhya above the crown was undoubtedly its highest point.<sup>39</sup>  
 And it was through its supernatural powers that it was destroyed, being truly of  
 the highest essence of Void. 56.2 (trans. Robson 1995, 165)

This passage contains several interesting points, two of which are worth discussing in detail [32]  
 here. First, the expression *añadhiṣṭhita śarīra* in line c of verse 1 has been translated by Robson  
 as “ruled over it in bodily form,”<sup>40</sup> thus suggesting that the sanctuary must have been some  
 kind of state temple adhering to the Śiva-Buddha cult espoused by Kṛtanagara. In harmony  
 with this idea is Pigeaud’s (1960, 68) translation of the expression as “to erect [...] in person,  
 self, alone.” However, in the light of the meaning (among others) of *adhiṣṭhita* in Sanskrit  
 as “inhabited,” one could also understand *añadhiṣṭhita* as having a meaning akin to that of  
 the cognate Old Javanese verbs *añadhiṣṭhāna*, *inadhiṣṭhāna*, “(intr.) to take one’s place in st.  
 material, embody os. in; (tr.) to give a material support to, make st. enter into st. material,  
 give a visible form to” (Zoetmulder 1982, 18) (compare the substantive *pañadhiṣṭhānan*, “that  
 in which st. is embodied or made visible). One could therefore propose the translation “he  
 embodied himself in it,” hinting at the fact that the temple hosted a statue regarded to be a  
 divine embodiment of Kṛtanagara, thus suggesting that the temple was devoted to his personal  
 cult *while he was still alive*.<sup>41</sup> If that was the case, we would have another piece of evidence  
 highlighting Kṛtanagara’s penchant for representing himself in divine form.

Second, this passage has been generally interpreted as describing two statues—one of Śiva [33]  
 (*śivavimbha*), and a smaller one of Akṣobhya (*akṣobhyapratimā*) placed above the crown (*i*

39 Robson freely (but probably rightly) translates *antika* as “its highest point”; however, the word is glossed by Zoetmulder (1982, 87) as “in a high degree, complete,” whereas in Sanskrit it means “near, proximate, in the presence of,” and “reaching to (the end of), final, ultimate.”

40 Compare Zoetmulder (1982, 17) s.v. *adhiṣṭhita*: “superintended, appointed; superintending.”

41 The *Deśavarṇana* (43.5–6) suggests that Kṛtanagara was represented post-mortem at two locations, i.e., at Singosari with a Śiva-Buddha statue, at Sagala as a Jina, and as an Ardhanareśvarī incorporating the divinities Vairocana and Locanā. Although scholars have tended to assume that Candi Jawi was a shrine dedicated to Kṛtanagara, there is no firm evidence supporting this view. It can be added that, contrary to prevailing custom in East Java, the orientation of the entire complex was not towards the west, but towards the east, with the summit of Mt Penanggungan as a backdrop, thus suggesting a special function (we thank Hadi Sidomulyo for having pointed this out to us in an email dated 22/01/2022).

*ruhur mmakūṭa*)—which were considered as together representing Lord Śiva-Buddha (see Pigeaud 1960, 152–53; Nihom 1986, 495; Hunter 2007, 41).<sup>42</sup> This feature seems to be reiterated in stanza 3 of Canto 57 of the *Deśavarṇana*, which mentions the Akṣobhya as “very hard to make out there above” (*atisūkṣma*, lit. “very subtle,” immaterial, etc.) (Zoetmulder 1982, 157). The placement of a movable icon of Akṣobhya above Śiva’s crown, while not impossible, seems awkward; indeed, Krom (1920, 2:72–75) suggested that the Akṣobhya may have actually been hosted in a ‘secret chamber’ above the temple. In support of this view, we note that the word (*m*)*makūṭa* in 56.3 may have been used by Prapañca to refer (in the sense of “crest, point, head”) not to the statue, but to the supposedly Buddhist upper section of the temple, where the *śikhara* begins.<sup>43</sup> However, following Poerbatjaraka (1917), we deem the former scenario (i.e., an icon of Śiva with a small Akṣobhya carved above the crown) to be more likely. At the same time, we cannot avoid drawing a parallel with the colossal statue of Padang Roco, which also hosts a small image of Akṣobhya in the headdress—not *in*, but *above* the crown, in the bun.

The mention of a Śiva statue with an Akṣobhya image above the crown is remarkable, for the iconographical merger (whether eclectic or syncretic) of Śaiva and Buddhist features is rare in Nusantara (except during Kṛtanagara’s reign and its aftermath), and in the entire Indic world indeed, although comparable icons from both South and Southeast Asia are known to exist.<sup>44</sup> That this arrangement might have been deemed controversial is suggested by the stanzas of the *Deśavarṇana* following those quoted above, which relate the visit to Candi Jawi of an eminent Buddhist monk-scholar (*munivara*) of courtly pedigree and his conversation with the temple’s abbot, “at the time when the holy image of Akṣobhya disappeared” (*təpək sañ hyaṅ akṣobhyāvimbhan hilaṅ*, 57.1a):

*sira ta mahās atīrtha seccāməgil riṅ sudharma ḍaləm,* [35]  
*praṇata marək i sañ hyaṅ arccātibhaktyāṅdharāṅastutī*  
*ya taṅ amuhara śālyani tvasniraṅ sthāpakānaṅśaya*  
*ri vanaṅanira bhaktya ri hyaṅ sivārccātaṅā ṅakṣama. 57.2*

*munivara mavarah sire tatva sañ hyaṅ sudharmmeṅ daṅū* [36]  
*mvaṅ i hananira sañ hyaṅ akṣobhyavimbhātisūkṣme ruhur*  
*ryy ulihiran umaluy muvah maṅhinəp riṅ sudharmmomarək*  
*salahāśa kavṅian sirān ton ri mukṣa hyaṅṅ ārcčālilaṅ. 57.3*

*pilih anala śarārkkā rakva śakābde hyaṅ ārcčan hilaṅ* [37]  
*ri hilaṅira sināmbər iṅ bajraghoṣa sucaṅḍi daləm*  
*pavaravarahiraṅ mahāśrāvakāvas ndatan saṅśaya*  
*pisaniṅu valuya dhārmma təkvan kadohan huvus. 57.4*

42 Compare *Deśavarṇana* 43.5, mentioning Kṛtanagara’s post-mortem release in the world of Śiva-Buddha (*mokteṅ śivabuddhaloka*), and his installation at Singosari as a statue of Śiva-Buddha (*śivabuddhārca*), as well as the *Pararaton*’s reference to Kṛtanagara’s initiation name as Bhaṭāra Śiva-Buddha (18.15–16).

43 Chutiwongs (2006, 58–59) has argued that the configuration of Candi Singosari, which might have hosted the ‘dancing Bhairava’ in its vestibule overseeing the other Śaiva icons, and probably also a now lost icon of Akṣobhya in the upper chamber, would mirror the syncretic icon of Candi Jawi, as well as the Padang Roco ‘Buddhist Bhairava’ (which, to her, was sponsored by Ādityavarman).

44 For a sixth/seventh-century South Asian image of Maheśvara-Mahākāla (with a small buddha in the crown) from Kashmir, see Granoff (1979); for a Śiva-Lokeśvara from Bengal, and a Śiva bronze with Akṣobhya in the coiffure from Thailand or Cambodia, see de Mallman (1964, fig. 1 and 10).

He was travelling about visiting holy bathing-places and chose to spend the night within the sanctuary. [38]

He humbly came before the holy statue and with great devotion he respectfully offered praises.

This caused the Abbot to feel pained, as he doubted whether he was entitled to worship an image of Śīwa, and so he asked about it with an apology.

The sage informed him of the true nature of the sanctuary in the past. And of the presence of the holy statue<sup>45</sup> of Akṣobhya, very hard to make out there above. [39]

When on his way back he again spent the night in the sanctuary in the presence. He was disappointed and dismayed to see that the statue had completely vanished.

It must have been in “fires-arrows-suns” of the Saka-era (1253, AD 1331) that the holy statue disappeared; [40]

When it disappeared the fine *caṇḍi* within was struck by lightning.

The repeated account of the great monk is clear and leaves no room for doubt— It could not possibly become a sanctuary again, and moreover had already been deserted. (Trans. Robson 1995, 165–66)

Prapañca informs the reader that the statue disappeared (*vināśa*, *muṣṣa*, *hilaṅ*)<sup>46</sup> in 1331— that is, nearly forty years after Kṛtanagara’s death. While it may appear that Prapañca, especially in 57.1a, is referring to the Akṣobhya statuette only, the fact that he uses the term (*hyaṅ*) *arcca*, referred to the Śīva statue, instead of (*saṅ hyaṅ*) *vimbha* or *pratimā*, referred to the Akṣobhya image, suggests that in 57.4a he is hinting at the disappearance or physical removal of the Śīva + Akṣobhya statue as a single icon (see Nihom 1986, 495). Because of the association of Akṣobhya with wrathful manifestations of tantric Buddhist deities, Kṛtanagara’s penchant for wrathful deities (compare the Bhairava of Candi Singosari, possibly representing its central icon), and Prapañca’s notorious reticence to openly refer to, and provide the details of, the tantric nature of Kṛtanagara’s cult, one may assume, just like Moens (1924, 534, 558) did, that the Śīva icon enshrined at Candi Jawi would have been a wrathful one, i.e., a Bhairava.<sup>47</sup> [41]

In the light of the above, we find it tempting to entertain the hypothesis that the statue at Jawi and the Padang Roco icon were one and the same. The pedestal of skulls, the flaying knife and the skull, as well as the *candrakapāla* and the *kāla-kīrtimukha* buckle displayed by [42]

45 Robson translates *vimbha* as “statue”; contrast Zoetmulder (1982, 38) s.v. *akṣobhyavimbha*, “the image of Akṣobhya.” Compare *akṣobhyapratimā* in 56.2c, translated as “statuette of Akṣobhya.”

46 Robson renders *vināśa* in 56.2 as “destroyed,” one of the possible meanings of that word in Old Javanese; however, since 57.1 and 57.4 use the word *hilaṅ*, “vanished, disappeared, lost, destroyed, dead, come to an end, ceased” (Zoetmulder 1982, 626), and 57.3 uses *muṣṣa* “to vanish, disappear” (1982, 1155), it is likely that *vināśa* was understood as a synonym of the other two words, conveying the meaning of “vanished, disappeared.” Furthermore, the expression *śūnyatatvaparamā*, translated by Robson as “being truly of the highest essence of Void,” coupled with *vināśa* in 56.2, seems to suggest that the statue *disappeared* because its essence was emptiness. On the homologization of Paramaśīva and Akṣobhya with the element space or ether, which is void by definition, see *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan* (Kats 1910, 65) and Acri (2016, 328–39n24), and *infra*, fn. 60.

47 Contrast Nihom (1986, 497), who thinks, to our minds implausibly, that the cult-icon of Candi Jawi was the Joko Dolog statue (which, to our minds, is more likely to correspond to the ‘Jina’ deification image of Kṛtanagara at Sagala). On the analogies between Śīva/Rudra and Akṣobhya, see *infra*, fn. 60.



the latter statue are all compatible with Bhairava's iconography on the one hand, and with Śaiva statuary of Kṛtanagara's period on the other, whereas one notes the absence of such typically Buddhist iconographical features as *vajras*. Could this statue, mainly reflecting an esoteric, unfamiliar Buddhist iconographical type newly introduced from overseas on the one hand, and Kṛtanagara's wish to merge a Buddhist and Śaiva iconographical type on the other, have led astray lay worshipers and low-level religious agents in the aftermath of Kṛtanagara's reign? Could Kṛtanagara's wish to represent his divinized persona as a subtly 'Śaiva-Buddhist' icon of Mahākāla have been largely forgotten by the third decade of the fourteenth century except in elite milieus? This scenario, however far-fetched it may sound, seems to be supported by the fact that the caretaker of Candi Jawi apparently regarded the temple's main icon as Śaiva, whereas the learned monk, coming from the courtly 'inner circle,' was aware of the icon's (as well as the temple's?) 'true nature,' and worshiped it accordingly. The detail about the Akṣobhya image as being "very hard to make out there above" in *Deśavarṇana* 57.3 suggests that, if the Akṣobhya icon was not easily visible above the statue's crown, it must have been very small indeed, while the size/height of the Śiva statue must have been huge. The hypothetical sizes of the main statue and of the Akṣobhya image are compatible with those of the Padang Roco Mahākāla statue and the Akṣobhya above its crown. It seems at least theoretically possible that in the dimly lit sanctum of the temple the small Buddhist icon carved on the coiffure of the colossal statue, which was probably placed on a high altar or pedestal, could have gone unnoticed. Indeed, Poerbatjaraka (1917, 144–47) already noted that the only way to justify the dialogue between the Śaiva abbot and the Buddhist monk in canto 57 of the *Deśavarṇana* would be to suppose that the Akṣobhya image was not easily visible, and that the abbot was apparently unaware of its existence.

Adding to the mystery, the account about the disappearance of the statue due to its supernatural powers suggests that Prapañca may have intended to provide a fictional account to justify the removal of an icon that was deemed to be controversial during his time. Indeed, the Buddhist monk's sibylline statement about "the true nature of the sanctuary in the past" could hint at the fact that it was frequented by both Śaiva and Buddhist worshipers on account of its syncretic statue, but also indicates that the sanctuary had been later repurposed to cater uniquely to the Śaivas. Could the main 'Śiva-Buddha' icon have been regarded and worshiped as a Buddha (i.e., Mahākāla) by the Buddhists, and as a Śiva (i.e., Bhairava) by the Śaivas, precisely on account of its subject—the intra-sectarian Mahākāla—and its overlapping Śaiva and Buddhist iconographic features? [43]

Be this as it may, it does not seem coincidental that the statue disappeared after the Śaiva abbot comes to know about the Akṣobhya image from the monk, as a result of which the sanctuary is allegedly struck by lightning and abandoned (see Hunter 2007, 41n36). Of course, it is difficult to explain the complete disappearance of what was likely to be a huge statue, even as a result of the incident involving lightning mentioned by Prapañca (and from the Old Javanese wording it seems that the lightning was the effect rather than the cause of its disappearance). But that something worthy of being recorded did actually happen, whether or not along the lines mentioned in the *Deśavarṇana*, is suggested by an inscribed stone block with the date 1254 *śaka* (1332 CE), i.e., just one year after the alleged disappearance of the statue, which was recovered from Candi Jawi and is now kept at the Trowulan Museum (figure 9).<sup>48</sup> While one could only speculate about its function and the circumstances surrounding its [44]

48 We thank Hadi Sidomulyo for having brought to our attention this artefact, and for having provided us with a photograph of it.



**Figure 9** Inscribed stone block recording the date 1254 *śaka* (1332 CE), recovered from Candi Jawi, now kept at the Trowulan Museum, East Java. Photo courtesy of Hadi Sidomulyo.

placement, we find it remarkable that around that year Ādityavarman had already started his political career in East Java (under the reign of Queen Tribhuanā, Kṛtarājasa’s daughter), and certainly had access to ships because of his prominent position at court—indeed, he might even have visited the Yuan court in the capacity as a diplomatic envoy in 1332, exactly one year after the disappearance of the statue (see *infra*, fn. 81). Assuming that the ‘Śiva-Buddha’ statue of Jawi was actually the Padang Roco icon, one could speculate that the statue was removed from the temple and sent to Sumatra by ship by Ādityavarman, just like the Amoghapāśa statue lying nearby in Padang Roco was sent by Kṛtanagara.

Admittedly, while the hypothetical scenario reconstructed above does provide a solution [45] to the enigma of the syncretic Candi Jawi and Prapañca’s description of its missing statue, as well as the identity and provenance of the colossal statue of Padang Roco, it is impossible to prove at this stage. It is also partly undermined by the fact that neither the Śaiva icons recovered at Candi Jawi, nor the relatively small dimensions of the sanctuary and its cella match the colossal size of the Padang Roco statue. If the statue was indeed enshrined in an East Javanese temple, a better candidate would be Candi Singosari, where *Deśavarṇana* 43.5d states that Kṛtanagara was worshiped (post-mortem) as Śiva-Buddha: *rinke sthānanirān dhinamma śivabuddhārcca halap mottama*, “His Majesty was laid to rest, people say; Here is the place where he is enshrined as a Śiwa-Buddha statue of imposing fineness” (trans Robson 1995, 156). Thus, to summarize, one could envisage the following alternative hypothetical scenarios (see table 1):

**Table 1**

Original site	Nature of the icon	Function	Transfer to Sumatra
East Java	divinized persona of Kṛtanagara (while still alive)	assert Kṛtanagara’s power over South Sumatra. Repurposed by Ādityavarman	by Kṛtanagara

Original site	Nature of the icon	Function	Transfer to Sumatra
East Java	divinized persona of Kṛtanagara (while still alive)	protect the realm from Kublai Khan's military threat. Repurposed by Ādityavarman	by Ādityavarman or Tribhuvanā
Candi Jawi	divinized persona of Kṛtanagara (while still alive)	protect the realm from Kublai Khan's military threat. Repurposed by Ādityavarman	by Ādityavarman or Tribhuvanā
Candi Singosari	divinized persona of Kṛtanagara (post-mortem)	protect the realm (post-mortem). Repurposed by Ādityavarman	by Ādityavarman or Tribhuvanā

Any one of the scenarios outlined above is supported by the fact that Kṛtanagara is known to have commissioned replicas of icons he deemed significant and dispersed them across his realm, including East Java and Sumatra, for political purposes.<sup>49</sup> None of them makes the possibility that the Padang Roco statue was intended as a trans-sectarian Mahākāla, i.e., a subtly Śaiva-Buddhist wrathful icon representing a divinized Kṛtanagara, any less likely. [46]

### Kṛtanagara's *jinābhiṣeka*

Given the precedent set by Kṛtanagara with the erection of a Śiva-Buddha statue in Candi Jawi, as well as other 'deification statues' in Singosari and other locations, including the Joko Dolog icon, one could imagine that the Padang Roco statue was meant to represent the ruler himself as a subtle merger of Mahākāla and Bhairava. In support of this view, and in order to cast some light on what tantric Buddhist systems Kṛtanagara would have adhered to, we shall now discuss his consecration name (i.e., *jinābhiṣeka*, "consecration as a Jina"). This is reported as Jñānabajreśvara in the *Deśavarṇana* (43.2c), as Jñānaśivabajra in the Vurare inscription engraved on the back of the Joko Dolog statue (1.11), and as Jñāneśvarabajra in an inscription of Singosari of 1351. What the exact meanings of these compounds are has been object of speculation over the past hundred years (Nihom 1986, 492–95). [47]

The terms *jñāna* and *bajra*—a Javanese spelling of *vajra*—occurring in all three compounds, whether separated by *śiva* (as in the Vurare inscription) or *īvara* (as in the Singosari inscription), are likely to have been understood as forming the word *jñānavajra*. This form is found not only in the *Deśavarṇana*, but also in a Sanskrit language/Nāgārī script dedicatory inscription engraved on the back of a statue representing a miniature version of eight-armed Amoghapāśa (in the same style as the icon from Candi Jago), describing Kṛtanagara as a [48]

49 See, for instance, the images at Jago and the statues of Amoghapāśa found in Padang Roco and near Rambahan in West Sumatra (Reichle 2007, 99), the set of bronze plaques depicting the same deity commissioned by Kṛtanagara (2007, 100), as well as the Prajñāpāramitā statues from Java (e.g., Candi Singosari) and Sumatra (e.g., Muara Jambi: see 2007, 59–67); see also the aforementioned smaller replicas of the dancing Bhairava and Gaṇeśa of Singosari reproduced in the Cāmuṇḍi and Ardhanareśvari groups (2007, 187–88). To Lunsingh Scheurleer (2008, 291), the replication of Amoghapāśa on different medias by Kṛtanagara "served to demonstrate to a wide audience the power and legitimacy of his rule." The idea that the Padang Roco Mahākāla statue might have been a replica of Kṛtanagara's Śiva-Buddha statue at Singosari was hinted at by Moens (1924, 557).

“great Mahāyāna follower” (*pravaramahāyānayāyinaḥ*) and giving his official name as *śrī kṛtanagaravikramajñānavajrottungadevamahārājaḥ*.<sup>50</sup> *Jñānavajra* is a technical term appearing in tantric Buddhist texts in association with a weapon usually emanating from a wrathful form of a buddha or bodhisattva.<sup>51</sup> In the Yogatantra commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*, the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokini* by Vilāsavajra, it denotes a circle of flames that makes the protected space “unapproachable by Māras” during the ritual of the *maṇḍala* (Chapter 4; Tribe 2016, 143); this *jñānavajra* is the same *vajra*, generated from the syllable HŪM, that in the *Vajrabhairavatantra* transforms itself into the deity Vajrabhairava, who tames the wicked ones and protects sentient beings. In the mythic narratives denoting the origins of Vajrabhairava in the Tibetan tradition, *jñānavajra* is an important term for Vajrabhairava’s *liṅga*, which is considered to be a powerful weapon with which he subjugates and converts the evil ones, such as Yama(rāja), Śiva-Maheśvara, and their retinues.<sup>52</sup>

The term *bajrajñāna* is attested in Old Javanese transmitted literature. For instance, the Sanskrit-Old Javanese tantric Buddhist manual *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan* (*Advayasādhana*) (46a) identifies the body with eight petals of a lotus, which are stabilized by *bajrajñāna*, which in turn equals *advayajñāna*.<sup>53</sup> The related text *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānan Mantranaya* (v. 12) mentions a *vajra*-wielding vow equated to Vajrasattva, through which the unsurpassed *bajrajñāna* penetrates the disciple and becomes his heart.<sup>54</sup> The word *bajrajñāna* also occurs in the Old Javanese Buddhist *kakavin Sutasoma* (or *Poruṣādaśānta*) by fourteenth century East Javanese courtly poet Mpu Tantular as the name of the supreme deity Mahāvairocana, whose manifestation is the prince and king-to-become Sutasoma. The deity is invoked in its opening hymn as follows: *śrī bajrajñāna śūnyātmaka*,<sup>55</sup> “When He emerges in the mind of the enlightened one, He is in all respects equal to the brilliance of sun and full moon together” (*Sutasoma* 1.1, *sākṣāt candrārka pūrṇādbhuta ri vijilirān saṅka riṅ boddhacitta*). The mention of sun and moon may be an echo of the *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan*’s *advayajñāna* (42a), arisen from the “sun of meditation” (*śūryasmṛti*) and “tranquil moon” (*śāntacandra*), representing the syllables

[49]

50 The inscription (as well as the icon, now kept at the MET Museum in New York) probably dates from the period between 1286 and 1292. For a transliteration and English translation by Dániel Balogh, see <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/636158> (retrieved March 29, 2022).

51 In the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṅgraha* (Chapter 1.11–12), it is associated with the emanation of Vajrasattva, when it denotes multiple *jñānavajras* that come together into one *jñānavajra* that pervades the whole space. This *jñānavajra* emits rays of light with *tathāgatas* abiding at the edges.

52 This appears to be an iconographic appropriation of the Śaiva *liṅga*, by means of which Vajrabhairava tames wicked deities and sometimes protects sentient beings: see A mes zhabs, *Gshin rje chos ’byung* (14–16); Tāranātha, *Gshin rje chos ’byung* (41); \*Kumāracandra, *Vajrabhairavapañjikā* (287).

53 The term *jñānavajra* is glossed as *advayajñāna* (“non-dual gnosis”) in Candrakīrti’s commentary *Pradīpod-dyotana* on the *Guhyasamāja* (123, chap. 13). The *Deśavarnana*, after having mentioned Kṛtanagara’s initiation name, says that the king studied the scriptures on reasoning (*tarka*) and grammar (*vyākaraṇa*) until he was completely accomplished; on the esoteric level, this could point to a passage of the *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan*, where *tarka* is designated as *advayajñāna*, and *vyākaraṇa* as *advayayoga* (O’Brien 2008, 236); when both “are successfully coalesced in the yogin, the Body of Pure Clear Light ensues, the process clearly linked with *bajrajñāna*.” Note that the Bhairava *ācārya* who (re)consecrated the Mañjuśrī statue from Candi Jago was also described as being well-versed in *nyāya* (= *tarka*) and *vyākaraṇa* in the Manah-i-Manuk charter (see infra).

54 This passage has parallels in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana* (292) and the *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi* (vv. 294–95). This *bajrajñāna* might have been understood as a synonym of, or as being related to, the *jñānavajra* mentioned in tantric scriptures as the means to gain success or the powers of all *tathāgatas*.

55 We wonder whether the epithet *śūnyātmako* points to the mainstream Mahāyāna concept of emptiness associated with *jñānavajra* in the “emptiness mantra” *śūnyatājñānavajrasvabhāvātmako ’ham*, which is a cliché in tantric Buddhist texts, including the *Vajrabhairavatantra* (in the passage preceding the generation of Vajrabhairava in stages from the heart of Mañjuśrī), and the *Mahākālatantra* (in the passage concerning the generation of various forms of Mahākāla: see 234).

*am̐ aḥ* (see O'Brien 2008, 208–10).<sup>56</sup> This set of images pertaining to the meditative sphere finds a parallel in the mental generation of Mañjuśrī as the moon (peaceful) and the sun (as the wrathful Vajrabhairava or Mahākāla) in Indian sources, including the *Vajrabhairavatantra*.<sup>57</sup> We wonder whether the pattern of a blazing sun-disc incised on the back of the Padang Roco Mahākāla (which is also found on the Amoghapāśa at Padang Roco, as well as on the Gaṇeśa of Singosari: see Moens 1924, 557), and the half-moon behind the head of icons of Mañjuśrī from Central Java and China (e.g., Mogao Cave 98 dating to 925, see Miksic 2006, 209) reflect these symbolical associations.

An interpretation of the word *bajrajñāna* as Kṛtanagara's kingly power of world-protection— an activity that implies an occasional exercise of violence—was advanced by O'Brien (2008, 226–27, 236–37). Since *bajrajñāna* equals a divine *vajra* mind-weapon, an analogy can be established between Sutasoma and Kṛtanagara in the *Sutasoma* (e.g. 3.4cd): That text, while sponsored by Kṛtanagara's great-grandson Rājasanagara, has been regarded as representing a political allegory whereby Sutasoma = Kṛtanagara and Poruṣāda = Kublai Khan (2008, 229, 236).<sup>58</sup> Sutasoma uses a thunderbolt-weapon emerged from the concentration on *ñāna* and the Bodhyagrī-mudrā against evil, namely Gajavaktra and his master Poruṣāda, a manifestation of Śiva as Mahākāla.<sup>59</sup> O'Brien takes *bajrajñāna* in Kṛtanagara's *jinābhiṣeka*'s name and *ñānabajra* in the *Sutasoma* as having no appreciable difference. As for the element *-śiva-* and *-īśvara-*, she interprets them as an attempt to syncretically unite Śiva and Buddha (2008, 237–40). We find this interpretation plausible, also on account of the attestation of *bhaṭāra śivabuddha* as the *abhiṣeka* name of Kṛtanagara in the Old Javanese *Pararaton* (18.15–16), and in harmony with the hypothesis that Kṛtanagara might have been portrayed in the Padang Roco Mahākāla. Speaking about the Śaiva way, the *Sutasoma* (40.6) states that one of its dangers is to acquire supernatural powers and become an embodiment of the fierce deity Rudra, whose power is difficult to control. Kṛtanagara, as the sovereign who inspired the allegorical narrative of the *Sutasoma*, would have eclectically chosen to unite both ways to increase his power against the enemies of his kingdom, both during his life and post-mortem. It is, therefore, not surprising that Kṛtanagara would have chosen to represent himself as (Mah)ākṣobhya (of which Mahākāla is an emanation) in the Joko Dolog statue carrying the *abhiṣeka* name Jñānaśivabajra, given the repeated equations found in post-Kṛtanagara Old

[50]

56 Compare *advayacitta* mentioned in *Sutasoma* 41.2ab (see Ensink 1974, 205).

57 For instance, in the early commentary on the *Vajrabhairavatantra* by \*Akṣobhya, the mantra-master is instructed to visualize a moon-disc (*candra-maṇḍala*) arising from the transformation of the letter A as the seat of a peaceful form of Āryamañjuśrī, who emerges from the seed-syllable DHIIḥ, located above Mahākāla. At the third stage of the process, one should visualize the sun-disc (*sūrya-maṇḍala*) manifesting from the letter ĀḤ in Mañjuśrī's heart; this sun (which is actually Vairocana) emits a bundle of rays of light that impels to action the tathāgatas, bodhisattvas, wisdom-goddesses and *krodha*-deities in all directions of space. According to commentator \*Akṣobhya, the sun has to exit from the heart of Mañjuśrī because one has to realize that Mañjuśrī in a peaceful form cannot train the wrathful beings, while the form with the sun in his heart is regarded as wrathful and capable of intimidating the wrathful ones [*dang por 'jam pa'i dpal de nyid kyis bdag nyid kyi zhi ba'i skus ldang ba rnams 'dul ba ma yin par gzigs te/ thugs kar nyi ma gnas par bya ste/ de'i 'od zer gyis sdang ba rnams bsdigs te/*. Akṣobhya's *Śrīvajrabhairavatantraṭīkā* (380).

58 Elements of political allegory are customary in Old Javanese *kakavins*, as they are customary in Sanskrit *kāvya*s (see Acri 2010).

59 The standard model of pacification by *krodha-vighnāntaka* deities, including Vajrabhairava and Hevajra, of the *māras*—often embodied in Brahmā, Rudra, Viṣṇu, and Indra—with the sun-*maṇḍala* (the Sun representing Mahāvairocana) which is at the heart of the wrathfulness of the mind, and the final blessing with the *ñānavajra*, is shared by the *Sutasoma* (esp. Canto 139.9, where Sutasoma uses the *bodhyagrimudrā* and a *vajra* having the appearance of the sun [*kadi sūyyarūpa*] to tame Poruṣāda, after having converted a Nāga, Gajavaktra, and a tigress) with Indian and Tibetan Buddhist sources relating the origins of the deity Vajrabhairava, i.e. A mes zhab, *Gshin rje gshed* [I] (14–16).

Javanese literature between Akṣobhya and Śiva or manifestations thereof, including Rudra,<sup>60</sup> and the *Deśavarṇana*'s reference to the Śiva (i.e., Bhairava?) with Akṣobhya above the crown enshrined at Candi Jawi.

Be this as it may, in view of the apotropaic and/or the martial implications of the term *jñānavajra* in the texts mentioned above, and considering the particularly hostile relationship between Kublai and Kṛtanagara that would have prompted the adoption by the latter of tantric initiations as magical means to combat the impending invasion of Java by the former, it may be suggested that Kṛtanagara's initiation name *jñānabajreśvara* was borrowed from the tantric nomenclature found in both the Yogatantras and the more transgressive Yogottara and Yoganiruttaratantras.

The textual and art historical record suggests that Kṛtanagara adopted tantric technologies to repel Kublai's hostilities. Given that the Yuan emperors were familiar with the cult of Mahākāla, Hevajra, Heruka/Cakrasaṃvara, and Yamāntaka/Vajrabhairava, it seems plausible that the Javanese king, who had openly challenged Kublai in a series of diplomatic incidents culminating in the invasion of Java by the latter's army, had been initiated into similar cults to counteract the power of his rival on a magico-ritual plane.

## Nusantara at the Crossroads: Transregional Buddhist Links in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century

Unfavourable socio-political developments—most notably the Muslim invasions and the demise of the Pāla-Sena dynasty in Northeastern India—caused the decline of Buddhism in Northern India in the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, triggering a diaspora of Buddhist masters and artisans seeking sponsorship in Southeast and East Asian courts. Some of these masters would have been prime vectors for the transmission of the tantric systems adhered to by Kṛtanagara and Kublai Khan. Art historical vestiges suggest that Northeastern Indian and Newar artists were hosted at the court of Kṛtanagara—just as they were by Kublai and subsequent Yuan rulers—to produce Buddhist icons (in particular, the statues found at Candi Jago).<sup>61</sup> More circumstantial evidence indicates that prominent religious figures from

60 The *Kuñjarakarna kakavin* says that Akṣobhya is an embodiment of Īśvara (23.3) and also of Mahākuśika (one of the five Ṛṣis-children of Śiva, associated with the homonymous sect of Śaivism; 23.1). In the Buddhist-flavoured *Arjunavijaya* (27.1), Akṣobhya is equated to Rudra. It is relevant to mention in this context that in Sanskrit the word *akṣobhya* (“unshakeable”) does not only refer to the Buddha of the Vajrayāna pantheon, but is also used as an epithet of Śiva, and the same usage is found in a Sanskrit-Old Javanese passage of the Śaiva text *Jñānasiddhānta* (ch. 25), which attributes the epithet *akṣobhya*—along with *vimala* “spotless” and *ākāśam iva* “like the sky”—to the Supreme reality, which the Old Javanese commentary glosses as *sañ hyaṇ akṣobhya*, i.e., the illustrious Akṣobhya. As noted by Haryati Soebadio (1971, 40), this immediately calls to mind the Buddhist Akṣobhya, as well as a passage of the Sanskrit-Old Javanese Buddhist manual *Saṇ Hyaṇ Kamahāyānikan* (59b), where Akṣobhya is described as bright as the light of the sun and as being beyond the senses.

61 After the demise of Nālandā and Vikramaśīla, scholars from Northeastern India and Nepal fled to Tibet, Southeast Asia, and China, thereby influencing the local artistic and architectural canons (see von Schroeder 1981, 311; O'Brien 2016, 317; Filliozat 1969, 47). Northeastern Indian or Newar elements have long since been noted in the statuary and decorative features of East Javanese Buddhist art—especially the one associated with Kṛtanagara (O'Brien 1993, 252–55; Lunsingh Scheurleer 2008, 296–98). The occurrence of the words *bharāla* (“god”) and *bharāli* (“goddess”) in a number of inscriptions associated with Kṛtanagara, as well as on the Nāgarī-inscribed Buddhist statues from Candi Jago, supports this Northeastern Indian/Newar link (see Griffiths 2014, 242–43).

the subcontinent may have been hosted by the East Javanese monarch and his successors, and possibly also by Ādityavarman in Sumatra.<sup>62</sup>

Among this evidence is the graffiti inscription recording the passage at the Karimun islands in Central-Eastern Sumatra—right in the middle of the straits separating the island from the Malay Peninsula and the actual island that is now Singapore—of the Indian *paṇḍita* Śrī Gautamaśrībhadra (also known as Gautamaśrī), who hailed from Bengal and was active in Tibet, Nepal, and China between the early to mid-thirteenth century and at least 1279 (Sinclair 2018, 2021). Gautamaśrī is identified in Tibetan lineage texts as an expert in many tantric texts and practices, including the *Kālacakra* (Bu ston, *Deb ther sngon po* [*Blue Annals*], 802), which he taught to Tibetan disciples, and which were adopted by the subsequent Sa skya pa tradition. In 1253 a lama of the Sa skya pas, Dam pa Kun dga' grags (Dan-ba Guoshi 膽巴國師, 1230–1303), who later became Kublai Khan's state preceptor, helping him to establish the Yuan dynasty and performing war magic for him, met and studied with Gautamaśrī in Tibet (Sinclair 2018). Dam pa Kun dga' grags played an important role in introducing the cult of Mahākāla among the Mongols and helped their armies during their military campaigns (Weirong 2008, 319, 2011, 542; Debreczeny 2014). Thus, the figure of Gautamaśrī may represent a plausible link between the East Javanese and Sino-Tibetan courts: even though positive evidence is lacking, it is hardly conceivable that he (and/or his acolytes) would have embarked on such a long sea journey and crossed the straits without spending some time in East Java—a major political and religious powerhouse of the time—either on the way to or back from China.<sup>63</sup> With regard to this, it seems significant that Gautamaśrī, as noted by Sinclair (2022b), is known to have transmitted an anthology of *sādhanas* that incorporates the *Śrīmahākālasādhana* (corresponding to *Sādhanamālā* 301), a work on the two-armed Vajramahākāla that might have been the source of the iconographical detail of the Akṣobhya placed upon the upraised hair (rather than on the crown) of the Mahākāla of Padang Roco, and perhaps also of the main statue of Candi Jawi—whether or not they were the same icon.

A contemporary of both Gautamaśrī and Dam pa Kun dga' grags (and teacher of the latter) was 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280), also known as Chos rgyal 'Phags pa. As the seventh patriarch of the Sa skya monastery and a powerful member of the 'Khon family, 'Phags pa was undoubtedly one of the most important masters in the Sa skya lineage. Regarded as a Tibetan emanation of Mañjuśrī, he earned his fame in the Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist history as a national preceptor (*guoshi*) in 1261, and then as imperial preceptor (*dishi*) of Kublai in 1269 and 1270 (Petech 1990, 36–37). 'Phags pa—whose relationship with Kublai was modelled on the patron-lama liaison (*yon mchod*: see Ruegg 1995)—acted as the Mongols' proxy in Tibet and was in charge of religious institutions throughout the Mongol empire.

62 Schoterman (1994, 158) hypothesized a connection between Śākyaśrībhadra (d. 1225), who fled the destruction of Vikramaśīla in Eastern India and escaped to Tibet in 1204, Candi Jago, and the Amoghpaśa statue sent from East Java to Padang Roco, which however remains to be proven. The *Deśavarṇana* (93.1) records the presence at the court of Rājasanagara of the Indian monk (*bhikṣu*) Buddhāditya from Kāñcī and the brahmin (*vipra*) Mutali. The fact that one of the two sides of the Batu Bapahat II inscription of Ādityavarman is written in Sanskrit and Grantha script “supports a close connection of the court of Malayu with South India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries” (Hunter 2015, 303, who incorrectly states that the inscription is written in “Tamil”).

63 Sinclair (2018, 17) suggests a possible involvement of Gautamaśrī in the “final flourishing of Sanskrit culture in Java and Sumatra, as seen in the inscriptions of Singasari and Ādityavarman, which can now be reexamined with reference to Gautamaśrī's expertise.” He also argues that Gautamaśrī, who was in contact with the Buddhist *paṇḍita* Vibhūticandra (fl. 1204–1248), was instrumental in reviving the worship of the eight-armed form of Amoghpaśa that had been transmitted earlier from Śrīvijaya to Nepal (Sinclair 2022a).

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More importantly, he occupied the office of royal religious officiant (*mchod gnas*) and was responsible for granting the emperor tantric initiation rituals (*abhiṣeka*). 'Phags pa seems to have had a determining influence on Kublai and the religious practices in his court, despite some scholars claiming otherwise.<sup>64</sup> The *Tibetan Script Edict* (*'Ja sa bod yig ma*) records that 'Phags pa granted three Hevajra initiations to Kublai in 1253.<sup>65</sup> Chinese, Mongol, and Tibetan sources agree that “rites of Hevajra and Mahākāla seem to have become customary for every enthronisation of a Yuan emperor” (Franke 1978, 60).

The cult of Mahākāla (and Gur gyi mgon po/\*Pañjaranātha in particular) was of paramount importance at the court of Kublai and his successors, especially in connection with state-protection rituals. Like Vajrabhairava (and its precursor Yamāntaka, “The Ender of Yama/Death”), Mahākāla is regarded as an emanation of Mañjuśrī,<sup>66</sup> and is also a protector of the Sa skya order, which was influential at the Yuan court. Various epigraphic and textual sources confirm that Kublai himself was conceived of as a wrathful ‘imperial’ incarnation of Mañjuśrī as Mahākāla,<sup>67</sup> through which he consolidated his spiritual and political authority in accord with the Buddhist ideology. Mahākāla was invoked by the armies during the Sino-Mongol military campaigns.

Tibetan Buddhist lamas were in charge of the ritual protection of the empire on Wutaishan—a major transnational ritual centre of Sino-Tibetan Buddhism, regarded as the place of birth of Mañjuśrī since at least the seventh century—in the Yuan era, and 'Phags pa administrated Wutaishan's clergy in 1257–1258 before being appointed imperial preceptor in 1260 (Charleux 2015, 95–96). As mentioned above, 'Phags pa's disciple National Preceptor Dam pa Kun dga' grags, after having met and studied with Gautamaśrī, took residence for almost ten years on Wutaishan at 'Phags pa's request, and became abbot of Shouningsi before 1272, after which he became known as a tantric ritual specialist at Kublai's court.<sup>68</sup> Dam pa Kun dga' grags was a teacher in the lineage of the Mañjuvajra *maṇḍala* of the *Guhyasamāja*, a specialist in the *Hevajratantra*, and a devotee of Mahākāla (Franke 1994, 162)—in fact, he was even deemed to be an incarnation of the same (Debreczeny 2014, 135). He built a temple for the performance of state-protection rituals devoted to that god (Debreczeny 2014, 137), and specifically the form of Mahākāla represented in the golden statue sponsored by 'Phags pa, i.e., Gur gyi mgon po/\*Pañjaranātha, the special protector of the Sa skya order on Wutaishan. 'Phags pa instructed the Nepalese artist Arniko, supervisor-in-chief of all artisans at the Mongol

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64 Petech (1993, 651) states that 'Phags pa was “just a tool utilized by Qubilai to implement a policy of control without conquest.” Weirong (2004, 196) argues that the control of Tibet was the main objective of Kublai's association with 'Phags pa. For the view supporting 'Phags pa's influential position at the Yuan court, see Franke (1978, 1981) and Smith, Jr (2009).

65 See A mes zhabs (124), recording the receipt of tantric empowerment by Kublai in the Female Water Ox Year when 'Phags pa was nineteen years old, but without mentioning the details. The *Shang lo tsā ba shes rab rin chen* confirms that it was a Hevajra (Dges pa rdo rje) initiation (Shes rab rin chen, *Dpal ldan sa skya'i gdung rabs 'dod dgu'i rgya mtsho*, 20). Hevajra was conceived of as a terrifying, *dharma*-protector tutelary deity linked to \*Pañjaranātha Mahākāla—the guardian of his *maṇḍala*—and was especially worshipped in the Sa skya monasteries.

66 On the longstanding association between Yamāntaka and Mañjuśrī, see Linrothe (1999, 171). The opening homage and the *explicit*s of the seven chapters of the *Vajrabhairavatāntra* invoke Vajrabhairava as having the name of Mañjuśrī (*om namo bhagavate mañjuśrīyākhyāśrīvajrabhairavāya*).

67 See, for example, the inscription composed by Tugh Temür featured on the Juyongguan gate, north of the Yuan capital of Beijing (Berger 1994, 106); the Tibetan historiographical source *mam thar* of U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1229–1309), written by Bsod nams 'Od zer (thirteenth century) (176); Tshal pa's biography of Smon lam rdo rje (1284–1346/47) (Debreczeny 2011, 22–23). See also Atwood (2004).

68 For Dam pa's biographies, see Franke (1994, 158–79).



court, to sculpt a \*Pañjaranātha in 1274 or 1276,<sup>69</sup> and install it in the temple of Zhuozhou, south of Dadu (Beijing), to which the Mongol victory over the Southern Song armies was attributed (Debreczeny 2014).<sup>70</sup> Another famous icon of Mahākāla was hosted in the temple to Vajrabhairava-Yamāntaka west of Huiqing pavilion in the Yuan palace compound (Watt and Wardwell 1997, 95).

As a wrathful incarnation of Mañjuśrī as Mahākāla, Kublai might also have been initiated into the cult of Vajrabhairava, one of the tutelary deities of the Mongols that was worshiped in China by the political elites and in Tibetan Buddhist milieus up to the Late Imperial and Republican period.<sup>71</sup> Besides some shared iconographical elements,<sup>72</sup> the association between \*Pañjaranātha and Vajrabhairava is suggested by the fact that the former is the most prominent among the fourteen protectors guarding the latter, and they are often depicted together on Tibetan paintings.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, both of them belong to the lineage of Akṣobhya, and reflect Buddhist appropriations of Śiva as Bhairava/Mahākāla. The cult of Vajrabhairava as a wrathful form of Mañjuśrī became fashionable in the Mongolian court of Kublai, and there are reasons to believe it was 'Phags pa or his direct disciples who introduced this cult there.<sup>74</sup> 'Phags pa was a lineage-holder of the (Western) Rwa lugs transmission of Vajrabhairava, and arrived at Ldon ston's invitation when he was residing at Wutaishan in China to receive Yamāri teachings from him (Dhongthog 2016, 67). 'Phags pa composed at least one *sādhana* of Vajrabhairava based on the teachings of Rwa lotsāwa,<sup>75</sup> and he was also a recipient of the Raktayamāri cult of the *mahāsiddha* Virūpa in the lineage of Glo bo lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen,<sup>76</sup> the thirteenth-century translator from the Mustang area (*glo bo*), who granted him the Yamāntaka initiation.<sup>77</sup>

Circumstantial evidence suggests that 'Phags pa conferred the Vajrabhairava initiation on Kublai. Cuevas (2021, 64) notes that there was a distinctive teaching that merged certain

69 A nearly coeval Nepalese statue of Mahākāla \*Pañjaranātha, dated by a Tibetan inscription to 1292, probably crafted in the tradition of Arniko, was donated by Dam pa Kun dga' grags (according to Debreczeny 2014, 133, see the reproduction on p. 163, fig. 1).

70 'Phags pa himself consecrated the temple and later appointed Dam pa as the temple's abbot (Weirong 2004, 202–04).

71 In the Qing epoch (1644–1911), the *maṇḍala* of Yamāntaka as Vajrabhairava was considered to be reproduced in the layout of Beijing (see Bianchi 2008).

72 For instance, the configuration of the two frontal hands in the images of Vajrabhairava and Mahākāla, holding the cleaver into the skull-cup at the level of the heart, as well as the standing posture.

73 See, for instance, <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/70> (retrieved March 28, 2022). A connection between Vajrabhairava and Mahākāla seems to be hinted at in Lalitavajra's *Śrīvajrabhairavasāadhanopāyikā* (*Rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi sgrub thabs*, TOH. 1999, Tseten 2018, 71), where Vajrabhairava is referred to as a form of Time (*kāla*), and where subsequent features of his iconography are correlated with different facets of Time.

74 According to the *Fozu lidai tongzai* (vol. 49, chap. 22, 729–30), the cult of Yamāntaka was introduced to China in the early Yuan dynasty by a disciple of 'Phags pa, whose transliterated name reads Ji-ning Sha-luo-ba-guan zhao, and who was sent by his master to study with La-wen-bu, a well-known recipient of the Yamāntaka system (see Watt and Wardwell 1997, 95). But Vajrabhairava may have reached China even before the Yuan period, as suggested by the descriptions of Yamāntaka (which may well refer to Vajrabhairava) in the Chinese canonical texts T. 1217, T. 890, and T. 891, all attributed to Faxian (?-1001) (see Bianchi 2008, 335n16).

75 The information that 'Phags pa composed a *sādhana* of Vajrabhairava based on the teachings of Rwa lo tsā ba is given in the colophon of the text entitled "The Light that Destroys Māra, the Sādhana of the Rwa Tradition of Śrī Vajrabhairava" (*dpal rdo rje 'jigs byed rwa lugs kyi sgrub thabs bdud 'joms snang ba zhes bya ba bzhuḡs so*), written by Dkon mchog Lhun grub (1497–1557). The *Light that Destroys Māra* identifies itself a text based on the Vajrabhairava *sādhana* composed earlier by Chos rgyal 'Phags pa (*chos rgyal 'phags pa mdzad pa'i sgrub thabs la gzhi byas*) with reference to the works of Rwa lo tsā ba (*rje btsun rwa lo tsā ba chen po'i gsung rab la yang gtugs shin tu dag par*).

76 See *Deb ther sngon po*, 379.

77 'phags pa rin po che'i bla ma yang yin pa glo bo lo tsa ba shes rab rin chen gyis (*Gshin rje chos 'byung*, 134).

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practices of Vajrabhairava of the Rwa tradition and the *Kālacakratantra*, i.e., a unique practice of the special Yamāntaka wheel device (*Gshin rje 'khor lo*) that was apparently bestowed by Ldong ston Shes rab dpal to 'Phags pa. According to Tāranātha (*Gshin rje gshed* [II], 109), Ldong ston conferred these same teachings upon the Mongol emperor (65). Initiations into the Vajrabhairava system were conducted for the Yuan dynasty by the imperial preceptors in later years: the first Taidung emperor, Yesün Temür, was granted the Vajrabhairava-Yamāntaka initiation by the imperial preceptor in 1324, and his wife in 1326 (Watt and Wardwell 1997, 99n15). It is plausible that the same preceptor performed a Vajrabhairava-Yamāntaka *abhiṣeka* on Tugh Temür (great-great grandson of Kublai and the emperor of the Yuan dynasty from 1328–1332) and his wife Budhashiri in 1329, for it is also known that Tugh Temür was bestowed two tantric initiations as an emperor, however no details of these have been given (1997, 95, 98). The evidence in support of the theory that it was the Vajrabhairava initiation that was conferred on Tugh Temür (and possibly on Kublai as well) is the existence of the *kesi*-silk tapestry thangka (now at the MET Museum in New York) designed according to the fourteenth-century Sa skya style, usually commissioned for the imperial initiation rituals (1997, 98).<sup>78</sup> Although Kublai's religiosity and that of his preceptors is relatively well-documented, one has to keep in mind the highly secret nature of these initiations, which were deemed dangerous and controversial even in Buddhist milieus. In that epoch these initiations, associated with war magic and the annihilation of enemies, must have formed the premodern counterpart of 'weapons of mass destruction,' and as such secretly guarded from potential competitors and the intelligence of foreign powers<sup>79</sup> (although, conversely, tantric initiations also had an aspect of 'soft power,' through which political establishments sought to increase their stature by garnering a reputation for magical efficacy in war).<sup>80</sup>

In the light of the above, it is relevant to mention here that Ādityavarman, in the period of Kublai's aftermath, was stationed in East Java as a minister, and might have visited the Yuan court in the capacity as a diplomatic envoy in 1325 and 1332.<sup>81</sup> Whether or not Ādityavar-

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78 The *kesi* features a nine-headed, thirty-four armed and sixteen-legged Vajrabhairava as the central figure of the *maṇḍala*, surrounded by 48 attendant deities. This configuration suggests the 49-Deity form of Vajrabhairava according to the Zhang lugs. It has been suggested that the fourteen figures featuring in the upper strip represent the masters of the Sa skya lineage (Leonov 1997, 100); the fourth figure in the row, wearing the characteristic elongated red hat of the Sa skya pas, could represent either the founder of the Sa skya monastery, Dkon mchog rgyal po, his son Kun dga' snying po, or 'Phags pa himself (1997, 100).

79 One could think about medieval tantric masters as the premodern counterparts of scientists involved in the development of atomic weapons, like Robert Oppenheimer in Project Manhattan in the 1940s, which was competing with Nazi Germany to produce the first atomic bomb. Compare the following description of the confrontation between Kublai and Kṛtanagara by Bade (2016, 155): "As a technique for obtaining power and control over the world, Tantric Buddhism—and especially its rituals—came to occupy the same place in 13th and 14th century Asian societies that science and technology occupies in our own time. The advocates of scientific method, like the advocates of Tantric Buddhism, have claimed that this method alone leads to knowledge and that knowledge is power."

80 This dimension seems to have been particularly important in the Tibetan cultural sphere (see, e.g., FitzHerbert 2018; Dalton 2011). According to Tāranātha (*Gshin rje chos 'byung*, 75), the *Yamāntakakrodhavijayatantra* and the *Mañjuśrī-Vajrabhairava[tantra]* are the best antidote (*gnyen po mchog*) against barbarians (*kla klo*) and demons (*lha min*).

81 Ferrand (1922, 25n2) noted the close similarity between the name of the Javanese envoy mentioned in the Chinese chronicle *History of the Yuan Dynasty (Yuanshi)*, namely minister Si-la Seng-kia-li-ye, sent in 1325 (*Yuanshi* 39.22a; 30.3a, 20a; corresponding to Seng k'ia-la, sent in 1332, *Yuanshi* 30.21a, 36.4b), and the name of the Sumatran king recorded in the *History of the Ming Dynasty (Mingshi)*, 324) as having sent a diplomatic mission in 1375 before the advent of a king of the Mauli dynasty in Sumatra in 1376, namely Seng-k'ia-lie-yu-lan, and regarded them as probably referring to the same person. Slamet Muljana (1976, 148–49, 2005, 5, 10) identified this figure as Ādityavarman.

man himself went to China, the existence of diplomatic channels<sup>82</sup>—as well as a flourishing maritime trade<sup>83</sup>—between the two kingdoms must have facilitated the transmission of the prevalent tantric systems of that period, centred on Mahākāla, Hevajra, Mañjuśrī, and possibly also Vajrabhairava-Yamāntaka, from China to East Java. But the flourishing intra-Asian diplomatic and commercial links of the thirteenth century also support the likelihood of a simultaneous parallel transmission via the earlier masters who, like Gautamaśrī, plied the maritime routes between India, Southeast Asia, and China. The cosmopolitan and expansion-driven sovereigns of the Yuan and the Siṅhasāri/Majapahit courts must have been keen to make use of the services of tantric Buddhist *paṇḍitas* looking for sponsorship, and some such ritual specialists might even have been part of their armies to support them on the battlefields. As noted by O’Brien (2016, 275), “Tension between China and Java may well have continued until the Yuan dynasty came to an end in 1368 [...] much of the design and embellishment of Candi Jago reflects the tension of those times.”<sup>84</sup>

## The Cult of Mañjuśrī and its Religio-Political Ramifications in Siṅhasāri/Majapahit East Java and Yuan China

The intra-Asian religious links as well as the diplomatic and military contacts between East Java and China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries discussed above prompt us to (re)consider the possibility that the existence, or rather re-emergence, of an elite cult of Mañjuśrī in East Java in the same period could be the expression of the same religio-political dynamics that linked the tantric Buddhist systems adhered to by Kṛtanagara and Kublai Khan. [61]

A majestic Mañjuśrī Arapacana statue probably stood at Candi Jago and is now kept at the Hermitage Museum. Counting among the finest examples of Indic statuary known from Nusantara, this Mañjuśrī, because of its size and outstanding quality, was probably housed in a sizeable separate shrine in the temple compound and must have been directly sponsored by a member of the political elite of the time (Miksic 2006, 207). While the statue carries two inscriptions dated 1343, and does not display the demonic attributes that are typical of Siṅhasāri icons, stylistic features suggest that it may have been crafted in the 1280s, hence well within the period of Kṛtanagara’s reign (Lunsingh Scheurleer 2008, 296). [62]

This statue of Mañjuśrī Arapacana is notable insofar that icons of this particular form of Mañjuśrī are not common in East Java. Indeed, the cult of Mañjuśrī (as a political symbol) is mainly attested in Central Java from the eighth to the eleventh century (Miksic 2006). It has been suggested that this unique icon represents a latent resurgence of art styles from Bengal and, as other contemporary statuary, it could betray a possible direct influence from Eastern India (Lunsingh Scheurleer 2008, 297; Reichle 2007, 196; Bautze-Picron 2016, 166). More recently, however, Pullen has pointed at a number of features that would also suggest a Central and East Asian connection. For example, the bodhisattva brandishes a sword with a [63]

82 On the aggressive maritime policy of the Yuan court, which included not only military operations but also “a flurry of diplomatic missions to the states in the Indian Ocean” to expand military and political influence as well as reviving the fiscally advantageous maritime commerce, see Sen (2006, 422, 427).

83 Hall (1992, 225–26) notes that this period witnessed a growing monetarization of the economy, which highlights “Java’s commercial prosperity as a major international centre of trade,” as well as the availability of foreign (especially Chinese) luxury goods to both elite and non-elite consumers.

84 This view is also supported by the depiction in a relief of the ca. mid-fourteenth century Candi Panataran in East Java of Indrajit (Rāvaṇa’s son) as a quintessential Mongol mounted archer, which would not only reflect “the lived experience or memory of the military operations of the Mongol army in Java in 1293” (Gommans 2018, 246), but perhaps also contemporary concerns.

*vajra* pommel—a feature attested in modern Nepalese and Sino-Tibetan *thangkas* and bronzes, but unknown in north-eastern Indian art of the Pāla period (Pullen 2021b, 159). Further, she has argued that the pattern depicted on its dress does “not fit into any design category known today in Java, Sumatra or the Malay Peninsula” (Pullen 2021a, 40), but rather reflects Iranian and Chinese motifs, i.e., an Indo-Sasanian design incorporated by the Mongols. This fact suggests the possibility of borrowing and imitation through political and commercial channels that existed throughout the thirteenth century (Pullen 2021a, 38–39).<sup>85</sup>

The inscriptions engraved on the two faces of the statue, although recording the same date, display important differences in their language and script. Bosch (in Kozok and van Reijn 2010, 142) argued that a religious official of the Bhairava sect, Sañ Ārya Vañśādhirāja,<sup>86</sup> erected and consecrated “a statue of Bhairawa, the highest god of his sect, in the shape of Mañjuśrī” in 1343/Śaka year 1265 (the year recorded on the inscriptions) and made the inscription on the front of the statue, while the one on the back was inscribed later for Ādityavarman. Bosch noted that the relationship between the Bhairava priest Vañśādhirāja and Mañjuśrī would be explained by the fact that

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In the lamaistic pantheon Bhairawa is the highest manifestation of Mañjuśrī in his dreadful shape (*krodha*), one of the most hideous divinities of tantric Buddhism, depicted with 16 feet, 34 arms and 9 heads (of which the lowest one is a bull’s head), trampling underfoot gods, men, quadrupeds and birds, having his abode in a cemetery populated with corpses, those sentenced to death, phantoms, vultures, dogs and jackals. Wañśādhirāja did not erect and consecrate in this shape the main god of his sect, but in the gentle shape (*śānta*) of Mañjuśrī, the god of wisdom, equipped with a book and a sword. (Bosch in Kozok and van Reijn 2010, 142)

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The deity to which Bosch refers is not Bhairava, but the ‘Buddhist Bhairava,’ namely the buffalo-headed deity Vajrabhairava, which has indeed a longstanding association with Mañjuśrī Arapacana (as a wrathful emanation thereof) as well as Akṣobhya.<sup>87</sup> Although Vajrabhairava as such does not appear to be attested in the extant textual and iconographical

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85 See Pullen (2021a, 60 and 146–47, 2021b, 165): “The carving of the patterns is very clear and precise and appears to reflect several different influences, often depicted on Sassanian textiles. This idea may suggest that textile patterns were transmitted to Java from following long-distance trade, for instance, from the royal courts in Yuan China to the Javanese court, where the competing monarchs, Kublai Khan and Kṛtanāgara, practiced Esoteric Buddhism.” Pullen (2021a, 237) also draws attention to the similarity between pearl-chain jewelry on a painted Vajravārahi from Western Xia, Khara-Khoto, of the late twelfth to thirteenth century and early Siñhasāri sculpture, such as Prajñāpāramitā, which further strengthens the Mongol connection.

86 This figure might correspond to the Sañ Ārya Vañśādhirāja Ḍaṅg Ācārya Śivanātha mentioned in the pre-1350 Nlavan charter, and the Ḍaṅg Ācārya Śivanātha of the Bhairavapakṣa mentioned in the Manah-i-Manuk charter (Pigeaud 1960, 104–07; formerly known as Bendosari, see Bosch in Kozok and van Reijn 2010, 142).

87 In a version of Vajrabhairava’s mythic origins preserved in Tāranātha’s *chos ’byung* going back to the oral tradition of Rwa Lo tsā ba (*Gshin rje gshed* [I], 41), we find an account describing *bhagavān* Mañjughoṣa manifesting himself in the wrathful body of Vajrabhairava in order to tame the evil ones (41–43). The Arapacana form of Mañjuśrī is already associated with Vajrabhairava and its ritual practice, as well as Akṣobhya and his *vajra* family (*vajrakula*), in the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti* (Wayman 1985, 23–25), and the *Vajrabhairavatāntra* describes a meditative practice through which the mantra-master mentally generates Vajrabhairava through the visualization of discs, which in \*Akṣobhya’s commentary are conceived of as the seats of Mahākāla and Mañjuśrī. Note that the form of Mañjuśrī described by two commentators of the *Vajrabhairavatāntra* is in harmony with the iconography of the Candi Jago icon: Śoṇaśrī (400–01) and \*Vajrasiddha (419–20) mention “Mañjuvajra [...] protector with one face, two arms, holding a sword and a book, sitting in a cross-legged posture, and who is of the nature of *hetuvajradhara*, as taught in various Tantras,” and Lalitavajra (24) understands Mañjuśrī as *mañjuśrīrjñānasattva*, being one-faced, two-armed, and having a yellow body (*’jam dpal ye shes sems dpa’ zhal gcig phyag gnyis sku mdog ser por ru’o*).

record of Nusantara,<sup>88</sup> an elite cult of this deity may very well have existed in East Java: its absence of evidence might be due to the fact that such esoteric icons, most probably cast in metal or painted on perishable supports, must have been exceedingly rare, and are therefore likely to have disappeared long since.<sup>89</sup> However, in the context of this inscription, the involvement of a (Śaiva) Bhairavika priest in the statue's consecration may simply suggest that the eclecticism and/or syncretism promoted by Kṛtanagara was carried forward in the early Majapahit milieu in which Ādityavarman flourished. According to Kulke (2009, 233, 241, 245), Ādityavarman was moved by some sort of 'tantric obsession,' for which he took Kṛtanagara as an example, also with respect to his stance towards 'deification in life': In the fourteenth-century Kuburaja stone-slab inscription, Ādityavarman is praised by his son Advayavarman as an incarnation of Lokeśvara (*avatāra śrīlokeśvaradeva*) (2009, 241).

In the light of its inscriptions, previous scholars have regarded the sculpture as being commissioned by Ādityavarman, who was also responsible for the renovation of the temple. On this basis, Miksic (2006, 207) suggested that Ādityavarman "did espouse a form of Buddhist doctrine which included Mañjuśrī as an important figure."<sup>90</sup> However, the importance of this bodhisattva for the form of Buddhism practiced by the Sumatran ruler could be equally true in the case of Kṛtanagara. Apart from the fact that the statue found at Candi Jago could be dated to Kṛtanagara's reign on stylistic grounds, one should bear in mind that his enemy Kublai was considered an incarnation of Mañjuśrī as Mahākāla. Indeed, since Mahākāla was regarded as an emanation of Mañjuśrī, our Mañjuśrī Arapacana statue could have been part of a maṇḍalic configuration or royal cult including the two deities. Although none of the Mahākāla statues recovered at Candi Jago matches the one of Mañjuśrī in size and fineness, one could either hypothesize the existence of a lost icon, or indeed regard the Padang Roco Mahākāla as the 'sister icon' of our Mañjuśrī. Be this as it may, considering Kublai's association with Mañjuśrī and the importance of this deity's cult in Sino-Tibetan circles, the iconography and Northeastern Indian stylistic features of the Candi Jago icon, and the rarity of Mañjuśrī icons in East Java, it seems safe to assume that a transregional tantric cult, characterized by a markedly martial and political dimension, of Mahākāla (and perhaps also Vajrabhairava and Yamāri/Yamāntaka) as a wrathful form of Mañjuśrī may have been practiced at the Yuan and Siṅhasāri/Majapahit courts in the same period, as a result of the parallel influence of a wave of Indian and Tibetan masters who initiated sovereigns into tantric systems. This religious configuration, based on a prototypical tantric tradition that was transmitted to Java from overseas during Kṛtanagara's reign, would still have been followed by Ādityavarman.

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88 Bautze-Picron (2014, 118n56) tentatively suggests that the frightful deities depicted in relief at the Pulo and Bahal I Buddhist monuments in the Padang Lawas region (Sumatra) might be *krodhas*—especially "the two characters with elephant and bovine (a bull?) faces which might allude to Vighnāntaka and Yamāntaka/Yamāri or Vajrabhairava." Compare Reichle (2007, 245n75): "Masks like that of Yama [...] bear an intriguing resemblance to the ox mask of Biaro Pulo (reproduced as fig. 5.14, 2014, 151)."

89 Similar considerations can be made with respect to the Old Javanese textual archive: The scant Buddhist literature dating back to the Siṅhasāri and Majapahit period, including Buddhist-inspired *kakavins*, reflects more mainstream traditions while concealing a core of esotericism. We hope to be able to discuss vestigial textual evidence that may be traceable to the cult of Vajrabhairava or a precursor tradition in a future article.

90 Accepting Moens' view, Miksic contends that, just as Kublai was consecrated into the Hevajra system, Kṛtanagara was consecrated at the cremation ground of Vurare as Yamāri, and that his syncretistic pantheon included Mañjuśrī, a Sadāśiva-Yamāri, and an Amoghapaśa-Maheśvara (Miksic 2006, 200; referring to Moens 1924, 558).

## Conclusion

This article has gathered and linked together data drawn from textual sources and artistic remains to attempt to identify the tantric systems adhered to by Kṛtanagara against the historical background of transregional religious, artistic, and political contacts between North-eastern India, Tibet, Sumatra, East Java, and China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Accepting the widespread scholarly view that Kṛtanagara, in the final period of his reign, imitated Kublai's tantric initiations and adopted tantric technologies practiced at the coeval Yuan court to protect his kingdom from external aggression and consolidate his control over part of Sumatra, we have advanced the hypothesis that the East Javanese ruler may have been familiar with cults revolving around the wrathful protector Mahākāla, and perhaps also Vajrabhairava-Yamāntaka, both being conceived of as fierce manifestations of Mañjuśrī. A growing body of evidence suggests that the circulation of tantric texts and icons was made possible by the diplomatic contacts existing between East Java and China in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, as well as by a diasporic wave of Eastern Indian, Nepalese, and Tibetan tantric Buddhist masters and artisans who sought political sponsorship overseas.

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On the basis of iconographical and stylistic features, and in substantial agreement with the arguments advanced independently by Sinclair (2022b) in this special issue, we have argued that the wrathful deity represented in the colossal icon of Padang Roco was not meant to be a portrait of Ādityavarman, but rather a deified image of Kṛtanagara himself, and that it may have been transferred from Java to Sumatra either by the same sovereign or by Ādityavarman a few decades after Kṛtanagara's death. Fine-tuning Bautze-Picron's (2014) and Sinclair's (2022b) identification of the deity as a Mahākāla rather than a Bhairava, we have pointed to an early form of \*Pañjaranātha/Gur gyi mgon po, protector of the Sa skya order and tutelary deity of the Mongols, as the most likely prototype. Further, while we agree with Sinclair's remarks on the "suitability of Mahākāla as an object of worship for Hindu-Buddhist royalty" (2022b), we do not deem Kṛtanagara's religious attitude to have been just eclectic and bilateral, but rather syncretic, and have tentatively proposed that the Padang Roco icon reflected an attempt to either subtly merge Mahākāla and Bhairava, or to appropriate the Bhairava/Mahākāla of the Śaivas as the Buddhist Mahākāla.

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In support of the above hypothesis, we have noted the appearance in an otherwise eminently Buddhist icon of iconographical features that are mainly attested in East Javanese Śaiva statues from Kṛtanagara's period. Further, we have drawn attention to an iconographical parallelism existing between the Padang Roco Mahākāla and the 'Śiva-Buddha' statue representing Kṛtanagara at Candi Jawi described in the *Deśavarṇana*, namely the icon of Akṣobhya above the crown (i.e., upon the upraised hair). Since, according to Prapañca, this statue, worshiped by both Buddhists and Śaivas, disappeared in 1331, we think it necessary to consider, at least theoretically, the possibility that the two statues might have actually been one and the same; but we deem it more likely that they were separate icons reflecting a similar religious and political agenda. That Kṛtanagara's eclectic attitude towards Śaiva and Buddhist cults might have climaxed in the unification of Mahākāla and Bhairava into his royal persona is suggested by the fact that a similarly syncretic merger of Śaiva and Buddhist features characterize the 'deification statues' produced under as well as after his reign; and that a mix of Śaiva and Buddhist terminology is detectable in his initiatory name, Jñānabajreśvara (or, according to the *Pararaton*, *bhaṭāra śiva-buddha*). The association of *jñānavajra* with weapon-like emanations of protective wrathful deities, such as Mahākāla and Vajrabhairava, in tantric literature

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appears to reflect Kṛtanagara's political concerns, and this quest for magico-ritual martial efficacy may partly explain his syncretic stance.

The sudden appearance in East Java of a large and exquisite icon of Mañjuśrī, probably dating from the period of Kṛtanagara's reign and later reconsecrated by Ādityavarman, which displays Eastern Indian as well as Central Asian/Mongol stylistic influences, has prompted us to explore the doctrinal, cultic, and mythical association existing between Mañjuśrī, Mahākāla, and Vajrabhairava (and his precursor Yamāntaka) in tantric literature. The fact that Kublai Khan was thought to be an incarnation of Mañjuśrī; that he and his court worshiped Mahākāla as a state-protector deity; and that he, just like his successors, might have received Vajrabhairava initiation by Tibetan masters, can be taken as circumstantial evidence to support the hypothesis that the same tantric systems may have been adopted also by Kṛtanagara, in an attempt to counteract the magical efficacy of his enemy. In fact, applying Sinclair's (2022a) argument about Kṛtanagara's co-option and absorption of Amoghapāśa as a divine protector of the Śrīvijaya–Melayu polity, one could also hypothesize that Kṛtanagara adopted a similar, perhaps more mimetic, attitude towards the chief protective deity of Kublai.

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Just like subsequent Yuan emperors continued Kublai's tradition of tantric initiations, the tantric systems adhered to by Kṛtanagara were carried forward by Ādityavarman, one of the last known Buddhist kings of Sumatra, who 'appropriated' the statues of his powerful ancestor to consolidate his political legitimacy as *mahārājādhirāja* and successor to the Siṅhasāri and Majapahit royal lines, and perhaps even to counter the advance of Islam on the island. This seems all the more plausible since the two-armed form of Mahākāla is often invoked in Buddhist Tantras, including the *Dākinīvajrapañjara*, as "devouring adversaries of the dharma," chopping their flesh and drinking their blood (Sinclair 2022b).

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Our discussion has highlighted the dislocation and decontextualization of tantric traditions through the migration across the Buddhist world of ritual specialists, as well as the circulation of medias such as texts and icons. The latter in particular, in the form of colossal statues, appear to have been adapted to the local contexts in Java and Sumatra, by the initiative of Kṛtanagara and his successors, as public statements expressing political power imbued with religious significance through the articulation of divine royalty and supernatural efficacy. Since analogous ideas and practices were current in the Yuan court as well as other coeval Asian milieus, it seems unlikely that these icons reflect local/indigenous 'ancestral' beliefs and practices, but rather represent a cross-fertilization between local and translocal tantric elements in the late phase of tantric Buddhism.

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