

European Association for Asian Art and Archaeology

Online Panel no. 8

**Tantric, Folk, and Tribal Goddesses in the Art of
South Asia: Intersection, Transformation, and
Fusion of Mainstream and ‘Marginal’ Traditions**

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**Fields of Tension between Manuscript and Print
in Early Modern East Asia**

(Tuesday, 23 November 2021; 13:00)

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Date: Tuesday, 23 November 2021

Time: 13:00 - 17:30 (CET time, UTC+1)

Chair: Mia Dora Prvan

- 13:00 - 13:15 **Chiara POLICARDI:** Feminine, divine, animal: the transformative nature of *yoginīs*
- 13:15 - 13:30 **Sandra SATTLER:** Tracing the History of the Emaciated Goddess through the Lens of
Iconography: Cāmuṅḍā in Selected Purāṇas and Sculptures from North and Central India
- 13:30 - 13:45 **Stefano BEGGIORA:** The Fury of Dharani: A Case Study among Odisha's Adivasis Goddesses
- 13:45 - 14:15 *DISCUSSION*
- 14:15 - 14:30 BREAK**
- 14:30 - 14:45 **Malgorzata SACHA:** The Enigma of Therianthropy: Yoginīs, Animism and a Visual Mind
- 14:45 - 15:00 **Paolo E. ROSATI:** Cāmuṅḍā in the Art of Early Medieval Assam: Her Cross-Cultural Roots
- 15:00 - 15:15 **Camilla CIBELE:** Chinnamastā: The Headless Goddess
- 15:15 - 15:45 *DISCUSSION*
- 15:45 - 16:00 BREAK**
- 16:00 - 16:15 **Radu LECA:** Media Histories of the Courtesan Yoshino in Early Modern Japan and China
- 16:15 - 16:30 **Cynthia BROKAW:** Authorship between Manuscript and Print in Early Modern China
- 16:30 - 16:45 **Young Kyun OH:** Printing and the Death of the Text
- 16:45 – 17:00 **Melanie TREDE:** The Mass-Production of Medieval Tales in Seventeenth-Century Japan: The
Formation of Cultural Memory in Sets of Printed Books, Illuminated Handscrolls, and Bound
Manuscripts
- 17:00 – 17:30 *DISCUSSION* (Discussant: Julie Nelson DAVIS)

ABSTRACTS

(in alphabetical order)

THE FURY OF DHARANI: A CASE STUDY AMONG ODISHA'S ADIVASIS GODDESSES

Stefano BEGGIORA

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The myths of Indian tribal communities (ādivāsī) still bear witness of an extremely rich culture. The existence of uncountable regional versions, the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of the mythological matter, the changing patterns according to cultural and historical occurrences has made this complex cultural corpus extremely difficult to be systematically arranged. This paper proposes an analysis of the cosmogonic tradition of an indigenous community of Odisha: the Kondhs. They worship a kind of mother goddess of the forest, seductive and terrifying at the same time, to whom human sacrifices were once celebrated. This cult, together with that of the numerous forest goddesses (banadevatā), overlapped in ancient times with the cult of Hindu tantric deities in the regional background, and even today it merges with them through a process of cultural osmosis. The paper is based on several years of field study in Odisha, and also proposes an ecological interpretative key regarding the ongoing discourse on environmental policies and the religiosity of the territory in this particular region of India.

Stefano Beggiora, PhD, is an Associate Professor at Università 'Ca' Foscari' Venezia.

AUTHORSHIP BETWEEN MANUSCRIPT AND PRINT IN EARLY MODERN CHINA

Cynthia BROKAW

Department of History Brown University, Providence, RI, USA

The tension between manuscript and print publication came to a head in China during the publishing boom of the late sixteenth through the eighteenth century. To be sure, ever since the invention of woodblock printing in the eighth century, China enjoyed a mixed book culture of manuscript and print. The publishing boom of the early modern period ensured the dominance of print, particularly commercial print—but by no means sapped the vitality of manuscript culture. This culture continued to flourish for several reasons: it allowed for tighter authorial control of circulation; encouraged a collective writing/editing process among literati; protected professional and craft secrets, etc.

The rise of print in the late sixteenth century, however, raised new questions about the implications of the manuscript/print divide. Two in particular interest me: printing required collaboration with a publisher, who might well, as owner of the material means of publication (the woodblocks), claim some degree of control over content and distribution. How did the negotiations over the publication process affect notions of authorship and intellectual property, both in texts and pictorial prints? The ready availability of block cutters and printers (and the low wages they could be paid), by easing the move from manuscript to print (and back), helped to blur the lines between (manuscript) draft and (printed) book. How did the simplicity and flexibility of the print technology shape the interaction between manuscript and print culture in the early modern period?

Cynthia Brokaw is a historian of early modern China, with a focus on social history and the history of the book. Among her publications are *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) and *The History of the Book in East Asia*, edited with Peter Kornicki (Franham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013).

CHINNAMASTĀ: THE HEADLESS GODDESS

Camilla CIBELE

University of Turin, Turin, Italy

Chinnamastā (or Chinnamuṇḍā) is a terrific Goddess, very popular in Tantrism, included as sixth in the group of Mahāvidyās. Widespread in India since at least the ninth century, her cult is nowadays limited to the northeast areas of the subcontinent and in some Tibetan areas, and it is practiced by a strict group of adepts in small local communities. Chinnamastā (whose name literally means “the one whose head is severed”) is always depicted holding her own severed head in the left hand (head that she has severed by herself), while drinking one of the three streams of blood, flowing out her mutilated body. Sometimes she is flanked by two female attendants, who are drinking the other two blood streams. Usually the Goddess stands on the divine couple, Kāma e Rati, while they are having intercourse; rarely is the Goddess herself who is having sexual intercourse with Śiva, who lies under her. Self-decapitation and drinking one's own blood are the key elements of Chinnamastā iconography: in the Indian context, there is not, as far as we know, another Goddess with these peculiar characteristics. In this paper, I will briefly analyze the evolution of the Goddess' iconography and its meaning, based on both the iconographic and philological sources (*Śāktapramoda*, *Tantrasāra* and *Mantramahodadhi in primis*).

Camilla Cibebe is a PhD fellow at the University of Turin with a focus on the iconographic development of Chinnamastā in South Asia. Previously, she obtained a BA and a MA in Archaeology from the University of Naples 'L'Orientale'. Then, she specialized in Museology obtaining a Post-Graduate Master from Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione IULM of Milan. Camilla, among the South Asian languages, studied Sanskrit, Bengali, Malayalam and Tamil.

MEDIA HISTORIES OF THE COURTESAN YOSHINO IN EARLY MODERN JAPAN AND CHINA

Radu LECA

Institute of East Asian Art History, Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

Many of the illustrated texts printed in Kyoto, Osaka and Edo from mid-seventeenth-century onwards are concerned with narratives and information on prostitution quarters. Printed courtesan critiques, for example, made frequent references to the prostitutes' calligraphy and painting skills that referenced manuscript culture. To illustrate the complex interaction between print, manuscript and other media in this period, I will focus on the media histories of the prostitute Yoshino both in Japan, chiefly in the work of Ihara Saikaku, and in China, where Yoshino's fame spread to the point to which her painted portraits were imported from Japan. Particular attention will be given to the work of Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693), who re-configured the Yoshino myth both in manuscript and print. This paper argues that although print was the most prolific and experimental media of the time, it relied heavily on conventions and the cultural cache of manuscript, as well as of three-dimensional media such as dolls and puppets that aimed for lifelike representations of prostitutes such as Yoshino. The various embodiments of the Yoshino myth were thus structured along fault lines between different media. This case study illustrates a multi-sited model of narrative dissemination in a rapidly changing media landscape that resonates with contemporary developments across East Asia.

Radu Leca is a historian of Japanese art and cartography specializing in early modern Japanese visual culture. Among his publications is *Cartographies of Alterity: Shapeshifting Women and Periaquatic Spaces in Seventeenth-century Japan*. In: Lara Blanchard and Kristen Chiem (eds.) *Gender, Continuity, and the Shaping of Modernity in the Arts of East Asia, 16th – 20th Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2017) and the forthcoming co-edited *Mapping Japan: Enduring Encounters* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

PRINTING AND THE DEATH OF THE TEXT

Young Kyun OH

Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, USA

One of the characteristics of Chosŏn Korean (1398–1910) print culture is the near void of commercial printing in the way it manifested in early modern European cultures, let alone in China and Japan. Although there were a handful of commercial printers who trafficked examination books, primers, ritual manuals, and the like, their items of sales were limited. Story books and fiction titles circulated mostly in manuscript, and so did literati writings; and contemporary works by Chinese literati were bought directly and individually from China. One may conclude, then, that printed books were not the primary textual medium through which ideas were promoted and exchanged, cultural power was consolidated and negotiated, and the society at large and the eventual national community were coagulated. In a sense, texts were produced and consumed more intensively in manuscript form before their until it was printed. Considering the significance and the (un-)impact of printing as a medium in the Chosŏn book culture, this paper will discuss the specific aspect of texts dying (in the sense of not being read) when they are printed, with a special focus on the printing of anthologies (*munjip*) of mid- and later Chosŏn. Comprising the largest portion (about seventy per cent) of extant books from premodern Korea, printed versions of *mujip* epitomize the enshrinement and thus the death of texts, in sharp contrast to the malleability and circulation of manuscripts.

Young Oh is an Associate Professor of Chinese and Sino-Korean at Arizona State University. He works on the cultural connection among East Asian societies with particular foci on the language and the book, and has published on the linguistic histories and the culture of books of East Asia. His interest lies in how cultures interact to influence each other, how language, books, and other kind of media function as vehicles of cultural transmission and exchange, and how different geographical regions come to form a continuous cultural space. His current projects include the history of Sinitic reading practice and the rise of encyclopedism in East Asia.

FEMININE, DIVINE, ANIMAL: THE TRANSFORMATIVE NATURE OF *YOGINIS*

Chiara POLICARDI

University of Milan, Milan, Italy

The *yoginīs*, a class of beings primarily connected to the Hindu Śaiva domain, blur the boundaries between different realms. On the one hand, in the context of the *yoginī* cult, the boundary between the human and the divine is rather fluid, for *yoginīs* appear as both powerful goddesses and mortal women who acquire a divinised status through perfection in tantric ritual. On the other hand, the *yoginīs* are frequently conceived and depicted as partly anthropomorphic and partly theriomorphic in form, with seductive feminine bodies but animal faces.

The present paper focuses on the peculiar liminal nature of *yoginīs*, investigating how such an ambiguous status, in between divine, human, and animal, is functional to their most important role in the tantric context, that is the transformation of the practitioner. The encounter (*melaka* or *melāpa*) with these deities or sacred figures, indeed, causes the tantric adept to undergo a quick and intensive transformation: he gains supernatural powers (*siddhis*) and knowledge (*saṃpradāya*), and he is elevated to the state of *vīra*, becoming similar to Bhairava himself, in a very short period of time. Thanks to *yoginīs*, the practitioner breaks his ordinary, everyday vision of the world and liberates himself from the limits of his conventional identity in the quickest way.

Analysing iconographic evidence (in particular from Hīrāpur and Bherāghāt temples) as well as relevant textual passages from Vidyāpīṭha and Kaula literature (in particular from *Brahmayāmala*, *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* and *Kaulajñānanirṇaya*), the present contribution examines the ways in which the *yoginīs* are portrayed as human and non-human at the same time.

Chiara Policardi earned a PhD in Asian and Africa Studies from ‘Sapienza’ University of Rome (2017), with a thesis on the therianthropic representations of the medieval *yoginīs*. She also obtained a BA and a MA from University of Milan in Indology. In 2016, in collaboration with Małgorzata Sacha (Visiting Professor at ‘Sapienza’), Chiara taught the workshop series “Animal symbolism in religious imagery with special reference to the Near East and the Indian subcontinent”, at Italian Institute of Oriental Studies (‘Sapienza’).

CĀMUṄḌĀ IN THE ART OF EARLY MEDIEVAL ASSAM: HER CROSS-CULTURAL ROOTS

Paolo E. ROSATI

Independent scholar, Rome, Italy

The Tantric goddess Cāmuṅḍā is the destroyer of the demons Caṅḍa and Muṅḍa. She is often identified with Kālī and both are associated with Bhairava/Mahākāla, the terrific form of Śiva.

Cāmuṅḍā is an angry and hungry mother who is related to the cremation ground, blood sacrifices and anthropophagy. Like every mother, however, she entails an amorous aspect. From a psychoreligious perspective, a religious icon cannot be read as a static representation of the divinity, but it should be read as a *dynamic and living entity*. Hence, the devotees of Cāmuṅḍā do not exclusively worship her dreadful aspect but they are aware of her submerged amorous aspect; indeed according to Sarah Caldwell (1999), “anger and desire” are “inextricably related”.

More specifically, three early medieval sculptures of Cāmuṅḍā that are preserved at Kāmākhyā-*pīṭha* (Assam) will be addressed to explore her iconological link to two distinct inputs—one related to death and fear, the other one related to sex and desire. In fact, metonymic and metaphoric reading of the iconography of Cāmuṅḍā underscores an intersection, transformation, and fusion of myths and symbols, which belongs to various Brahmanic strands and local traditions.

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to explore the intersection between the *raudra* (fierce) and *saumya* (peaceful) aspects of the goddess Cāmuṅḍā, through interrelation of iconographic and textual data, in order to shed light on her cross-cultural roots.

Paolo E. Rosati obtained his PhD from ‘Sapienza’ University of Rome. His main topic of research is Assamese Tantra, with a focus on gender and cross-cultural issues. Paolo also gained a MA in Art History and Religions of South Asia and a MPhil in South Asian Art and Archaeology. He published in *Religions of South Asia* (RoSA), *Religion*, and *History and Sociology of South Asia*.

THE ENIGMA OF THERIANTHROPY: *YOGINĪS*, ANIMISM AND A VISUAL MIND

Malgorzata SACHA

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In religious imagery, the human-animal hybrid always marks the liminal space where the boundaries are blurred and the chaotic forces lurk. The mythical *yoginīs*—female magical beings and paradigmatic shape-shifters—have been worshipped till day with fear and awe in the borderline sacral spaces in India. Their therianthropic forms depicted in sacred images and described in religious literature have been variously interpreted by scholars. Drawing on contemporary discussion on image hermeneutics (the visual studies) and the revival of animism (anthropology, religious studies, psychology), the author offers some reflections on the religious functions of ambiguity and ambivalence in hybrid imagery of the *yoginīs*.

Malgorzata Sacha is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Psychology of Religion at the Institute for the Study of Religions, Jagiellonian University of Cracow, Poland. She is a philosopher and a certificated psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice. Her research interests encompass, among others: psychoanalysis and culture, gender issues in religion, religious iconology, Hindu inspired new religious cults. She has published and presented a number of articles and papers on Hindu religious traditions. She authored and co-authored several books, among them: *Ginefobia w kulturze hinduskiej* (*Gynophobia in Hindu culture*, translation into English in progress).

TRACING THE HISTORY OF THE EMACIATED GODDESS THROUGH THE LENS OF ICONOGRAPHY: CĀMUṄḌĀ IN SELECTED PURĀṄAS AND SCULPTURES FROM NORTH AND CENTRAL INDIA

Sandra SATTLER

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, UK

This paper seeks to provide an intermedial approach to the study of the emaciated goddess Cāmuṅḍā; that is, an inquiry into her development, extrapolated from textual and visual sources. The skeletal deity presents a pan-Indian phenomenon with elaborate sculptures scattered throughout South Asia and beyond. Within the paradigm of fierce goddesses, she occupies a crucial role as she blurs the lines between Tantric and orthodox, sectarian and religious affiliations. She is a mother, a *yoginī*, an independent goddess, an aspect of Mahādevī, and, for instance, a model for the Jain goddess Saccikā.

In both, her representations in temples and mythology, the focus is on her fierce appearance. Ultimately, iconography served as a tool to navigate and negotiate the originally tribal deity's position in a broader Hindu pantheon. Among other things, this included a borrowing/sharing of iconographic elements from/with other deities as well as establishing a consistent type over time. Her depiction is outlined in *purāṇas* such as the *Agni-*, *Garuḍa-* or *Devīpurāṇa*. A brief discussion of selected excerpts will locate her within this tradition and open up questions of her trajectory and link to other gods and goddesses. Subsequently, an overview of Cāmuṅḍā sculptures, primarily from medieval Madhya Pradesh, will be presented. Contrasting the literary sources with the art historical material will shed light on the relation of text and image. It will further attempt to reveal the space where these two traditions met and the Cāmuṅḍā cult developed.

Sandra Sattler is a doctoral researcher at SOAS and current AHRC CHASE scholar working on the iconography of fierce goddesses. She holds a BA and an MA (with distinction) in Indology both from Goettingen University, Germany. As a Fulbright fellow, she also studied at the University of California, Berkeley. Sandra was a Research Associate at Goettingen University's Department of Indology and Tibetan Studies for many years and has lectured in Goettingen, at the University of Muenster and Ghent University. Her research focuses on Indian temple art, Purāṇas and the Goddess tradition in India.

THE MASS-PRODUCTION OF MEDIEVAL TALES IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY JAPAN: THE FORMATION OF CULTURAL MEMORY IN SETS OF PRINTED BOOKS, ILLUMINATED HANDSCROLLS, AND BOUND MANUSCRIPTS

Melanie TREDE

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Answering to the introduction of movable types from Chosŏn and Europe around 1600, the capital of Kyoto saw an explosion of printed and illustrated books in various techniques and material guises accompanied by rising literacy levels. An important aspect of this phenomenon was the repackaging of canonical texts. Among these were sets of thirty-six medieval ballad drama texts (舞の本 *mai no hon*), the first printings of which appeared during the Kan'ei era (1624-44), followed by multiple reprints of best-selling pieces. Despite the rise of print production, the seventeenth-century was not only the most prolific in terms of illuminated handscrolls and bound manuscripts, but also saw new ways of streamlining mass-produced script-painting media that answered to the needs of an expanding audience. While art historical research has considered written and illuminated handscrolls of the early modern era as an obsolete material medium, recent research underscores the vitality and innovation of this canonical format (e.g. Shimohara Miho).

Taking up case studies of the *mai no hon* genre, this paper addresses the following questions: how does the “field of tension” play out between printed books, illuminated manuscripts, and handscrolls? What is the role of block-printing techniques for composing illustrations, and how do new formatting standards shape interplays between text and image during the seventeenth-century? And ultimately, which roles did the production of large sets of printed books and handwritten/painted handscrolls and manuscripts have?

Melanie Trede is a Professor in Histories of Japanese Art at Institute of East Asian Art History at Heidelberg University. Among Professor Trede's research and publishing interests are Japanese narrative paintings, gender issues and political iconographies, art terminologies and the concept of the frame in transcultural engagements as well as digital art history. She is the author of *Image, Text and Audience: The Taishokan Narrative in Visual Representations of the Early Modern Period in Japan* (2003), *Hiroshige. One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (2007/re-published 2010 and 2015), “*The Chinese render everything simple*”: *East Asian and European Negotiations on Perspective*” (2015), and most recently “*The Hat Maker: A newly discovered handscroll in the Berlin Asian Art Museum*” (2017).