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Title:

Seventh Century Buddhist Tantrism in Tension with non-Buddhist Traditions: Ritual
Choreography and Theistic Imagination

Abstract:

Seventh century tantric Buddhism was differentiated from sixth century Mahāyānist practices by many variables. Some of the more intriguing, however, involved the various representations of divinities. On the one hand, non-Buddhist traditions were depicted as deriving from the Buddhas, in a Buddhist theogony. On the other hand, rituals appropriated from theistic traditions—also seen in the Vidhāna and related literature—were incorporated into the emerging Buddhist tantric rituals that expressed the expectation of Buddhist theophanies. The Uṣṇīṣa and Avalokiteśvara literature will be examined in support of a wide distribution of tensions between Buddhist and non-Buddhist practices and representations.