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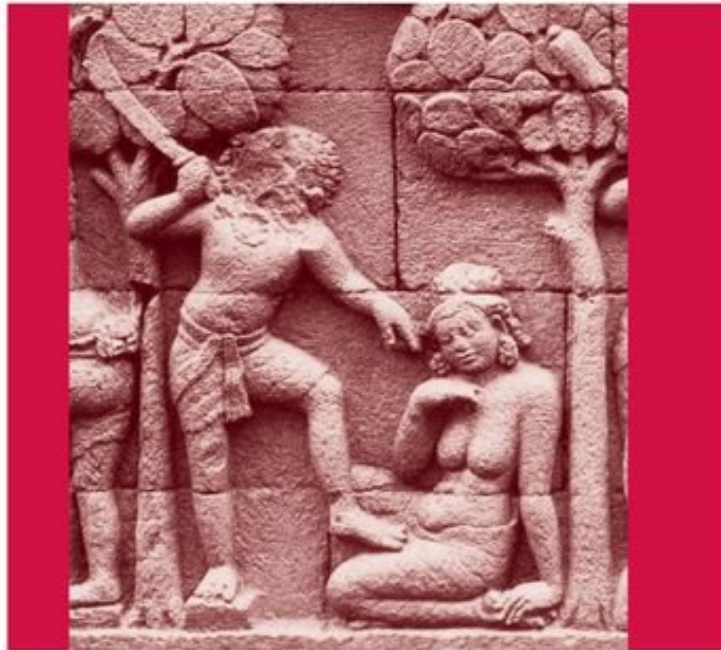
Jonathan A. Silk

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Incest and Schism
in
Indian Buddhist Legend and Historiography

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#4432677 in Books Univ of Hawaii Pr 2008-10-31 2008-10-31 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.20 x 1.30 x 6.10l, 1.60 #File Name: 0824830903370 pages | File size: 19.Mb

Jonathan A. Silk : Riven by Lust: Incest and Schism in Indian Buddhist Legend and Historiography before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Riven by Lust: Incest and Schism in Indian Buddhist Legend and Historiography:

Riven by Lust explores the tale of a man accused of causing the fundamental schism in early Indian Buddhism, but not before he has sex with his mother and kills his father. In tracing this Indian Buddhist Oedipal tale, Jonathan Silk

follows it through texts in all of the major canonical languages of Buddhism, Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese, along the way noting parallels and contrasts with classical and medieval European stories such as the legend of the Oedipal Judas. Simultaneously, he investigates the psychological and anthropological understandings of the tale of mother-son incest in light of contemporary psychological and anthropological understandings of incest, with special attention to the question of why we consider it among the worst of crimes. In seeking to understand how the story worked in Indian texts and for Indian audiences as well as how it might work for modern readers this book has both horizontal and vertical dimensions, probing the place of the Oedipal in Indian culture, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, and simultaneously framing the Indian Oedipal within broader human concerns, thereby contributing to the study of the history of Buddhism, the transmission of narratives in the ancient world, and the fundamental nature of one aspect of human sexuality. Starting from a brief reference in a polemical treatise, *Riven by Lust* demonstrates that its authors borrowed and intentionally adapted a preexisting story of an Oedipal antihero. This recasting allowed them to calumniate their opponents in the strongest possible terms through the rhetoric of murder and incest. Silk draws on a wide variety of sources to demonstrate the range of thinking about incest in Indian Buddhist culture, thereby uncovering the strategies and working methods of the ancient polemicists. He argues that Indian Buddhists and Hindus, while occupying the same world for the most part, thought differently about fundamental issues such as incest, and hints at the consequent necessity of a reappraisal of our notions of the shape of the ancient cultural sphere they shared. Provocative and innovative, *Riven by Lust* is a paradigmatic analysis of a major theme of world mythology and a signal contribution to the study of the history of incest and comparative sexualities. It will attract readers interested in Buddhism, Indian studies, Asian studies, comparative culture, mythology, psychology, and the history of sexuality.

the major schism in Indian Buddhism, and traces it through all of the texts, in all of the major languages of Buddhism, with a bit of Greek and Latin thrown in for good measure. He traces the myth back to its probable early sources and forward to its labyrinthine developments through the Buddhist (and Hindu) world. And since it is a tale of mother-son incest, he discusses its implications in the light of contemporary psychological understandings of incest. It is a highly original work, with truly impressive scholarship, both in the breadth of knowledge and in the care with which all the relevant texts are cited and translated. Beautifully and fluently written, it will surely capture a large audience of scholars, students, and those who take a personal interest in Buddhism.--Wendy Doniger "University of Chicago" What Jonathan Silk manages to do in this book is remarkable. Where previous studies have approached the initial split of the Buddhist community in India into two sects from a doctrinal or historical point of view, Silk looks at the legend that develops around a particular schismatic--Mahadeva--who is portrayed as having fornicated with his mother, killed his father, killed an arhat, and killed his mother, before becoming a monk himself. He goes on to explore the origins and implications of these themes, engaging comparative materials from within Buddhism while also looking at non-Indian versions of the story from China and medieval Japan, and more broadly, including traditions about incest from Persia, the Hebrew Bible, and medieval Europe. This is an impressive, inspiring, extraordinary, exciting study of an aspect of Indian Buddhism that has never been looked at before in quite this way.--John Strong "Bates College" the major schism in Indian Buddhism, and traces it through all of the texts, in all of the major languages of Buddhism, with a bit of Greek and Latin thrown in for good measure. He traces the myth back to its probable early sources and forward to its labyrinthine developments through the Buddhist (and Hindu) world. And since it is a tale of mother-son incest, he discusses its implications in the light of contemporary psychological understandings of incest. It is a highly original work, with truly impressive scholarship, both in the breadth of knowledge and in the care with which all the relevant texts are cited and translated. Beautifully and fluently written, it will surely capture a large audience of scholars, students, and those who take a personal interest in Buddhism. (Wendy Doniger University of Chicago) What Jonathan Silk manages to do in this book is remarkable. Where previous studies have approached the initial split of the Buddhist community in India into two sects from a doctrinal or historical point of view, Silk looks at the legend that develops around a particular schismatic Mahadeva who is portrayed as having fornicated with his mother, killed his father, killed an arhat, and killed his mother, before becoming a monk himself. He goes on to explore the origins and implications of these themes, engaging comparative materials from within Buddhism while also looking at non-Indian versions of the story from China and medieval Japan, and more broadly, including traditions about incest from Persia, the Hebrew Bible, and medieval Europe. This is an impressive, inspiring, extraordinary, exciting study of an aspect of Indian Buddhism that has never been looked at before in quite this way. (John Strong Bates College) About the Author Jonathan A. Silk is professor in the study of Buddhism at Leiden University.