



With Whose Voice is the Buddha Speaking Mantra-dhāraṇīs?

Heteroglossia in Buddhist Mantras

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The scholarly examination of Buddhist mantras and dhāraṇīs has to date emphasized a number of directions that treat such strings of phrases as if they were all of a piece, with one source and one voice. Thus, they were either to inform memory, or to incite mediation or to indicate pre-linguistic, non-thematic cognition, to mention the most important explanations. In some measure, such explanations are based in

Buddhist interpretive systems, some found in Mahāyāna scriptures, some in the śāstras. None of these explanatory systems has been very successful in describing either the range of vocalizations or the structures found in Buddhist mantras or dhāraṇīs. In the presentation, I hope to provide an analysis of these issues and indicate some of the more important voices found in such phrases.

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at Fairfield University. His area of expertise is in the social and linguistic dynamics of Buddhist ritual, particularly associated the use of mantras, dhāraṇīs and tantrism, and has translated texts from Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese. He has published five single-authored, most notably *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (2002) and *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (2005).

