

Hārītī:

From a Demon Mother to a Protective Deity in Buddhism

—A History of an Indian Pre-Buddhist Goddess in Chinese

Buddhist Art

從鬼子之母到護法部眾——中國佛教藝術中的訶利帝母形象考

HEI Rui (黑蕊)

Degree of Master of Arts

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Department of History
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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.



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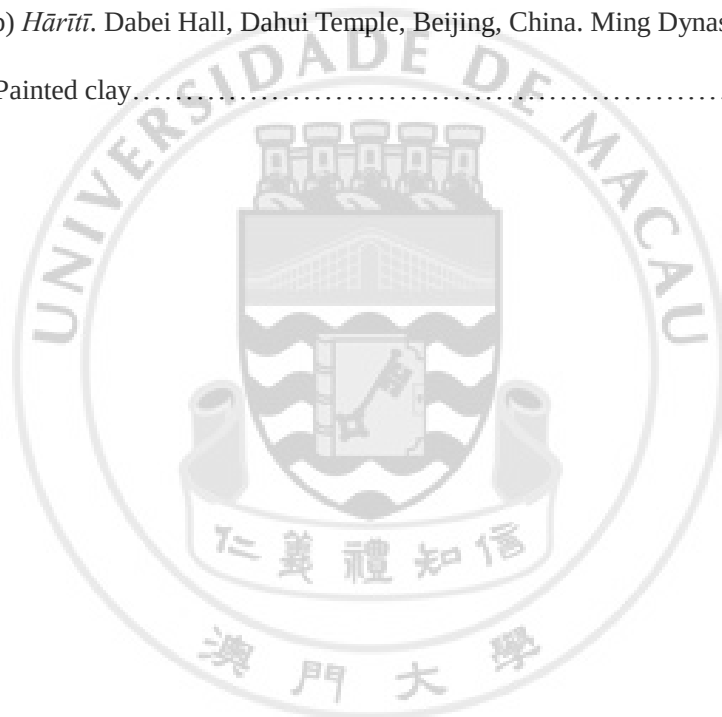
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ABSTRACT

Hārītī is an Indian local goddess that was adopted by Buddhism during Śākyamuni's time. With the spread of Buddhism, she was introduced to China and gained new identity due to the backdrop of Chinese Buddhism at large. This thesis is a comprehensive study of Hārītī in Chinese Buddhist art. It divides visual representations of Hārītī in Chinese Buddhist art into three types according to the different function and nature: as subordinate figure in narrative story, as main figure, and as one member of protective deities in the assembly of Indian gods (*zhutian* 諸天 various gods). The coherence between the Buddhist texts and representations of Hārītī in Indian and China is also discussed.

This thesis devotes efforts especially on the second and third types of Hārītī's representations. The second type indicates there is an independent Hārītī cult. However, the academics lack relevant study on the development of Hārītī cult. The third type that Hārītī as one member in the assembly of the protective deities is an innovation of Chinese Buddhism and has always been ignored by scholars. These aspects of this thesis will bring a new perspective on the development of an introduced deity in a different cultural landscape.

This thesis is based on primary sources such as Buddhist texts, Chinese literature, archeological surveys, catalogs, photos of stone caves, and museum collections. Iconography contextualization and iconographic analysis play important parts in its interpretations.

Key Words: Hārītī, Visual representation, Subordinate figure, Main figure, Protective deity