AN EKAMUKHALIŇGA FROM PENINSULAR SIAM

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There is in the National Museum in Bangkok a liṅga (fig. 1) on which a head of Śiva is represented. It reportedly was found at Jaiyā, a center of ancient Hindu-Buddhist settlement on the east coast of Peninsular Siam from which many antiquities of pre-Thai occupation have been recovered.1 While a number of liṅgas have been recorded from sites on the Peninsula such as Nagara Śri Dharmaraja, Satinthra, and several places in the Merbok Estuary area of Kedah, the Jaiyā emblem is the only one to bear a face (ekamukhaliṅga). It is thus one of the rare anthropomorphic representations of Śiva in the art of the Peninsula, and it affords some interesting parallels with several objects related to the pre-Angkorian art of Cambodia—that is the art of the empire of Funan and the kingdom of Chen-la and its successors—and to an isolated ekamukhaliṅga found in western Borneo.

The Jaiyā ekamukhaliṅga is divided into three parts in accordance with the prescriptions in the Śiva āgamas.2 The base, the Brahmbhaga, is cubic in form and is 47.8 cms high. The middle section, the

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Vishnubhāga, is octagonal in shape and is approximately 43 cms high. The topmost section, the Rudrabhāga, is cylindrical and is approximately 51 cms high, while the superimposed face measures 29.5 cms from the bottom of the chin to the top of the jaṭā. The two lower sections of the liṅga would not normally be visible, since they would be enclosed in the pedestal (piṭhikā).3 It would thus not be apparent to the worshipper that there was a disparity in the relative sizes of the three principal parts of the liṅga.

Such a highly conventionalized and simple form as the liṅga resists easy chronological classification. This is especially true in an area such as Peninsular Siam where there is not a great number of liṅgas available for study, but it is possible to draw some analogies with liṅgas studied elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

In his pioneer study of the pre-Angkorian art of Cambodia, Henri Parmentier found a number of liṅgas that appeared to be rather naturalistic in conception and he was inclined to place them anterior in time to representations that were more conventionalized.4 His distinction has been given added force by the discovery in the Transbassac area of a number of liṅgas that are distinguished by their greater realism. Their statistically greater incidence in the territory of the lower Mekong, the area considered to be the center of the political community of Funan, has argued in favor of viewing the realistic representations as earliest in time. Professor Malleret would date the most realistic liṅgas from the Transbassac area from the end of the fifth century to the beginning of the sixth century.5

The Jaiyā emblem is lacking in the anatomical fidelity characteristic of the earliest of the Transbassac liṅga in which the filet and the contours of the gland are outlined in pronounced relief and is

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3) For sectional drawings and photographs of the arrangement of the various elements of liṅga and piṭhikā, including a stone deposit box on which the liṅga stands, see Coedès, ‘La destination funéraire des grands monuments khmès’, BEFEO, vol. 40, pt. 2, 1940, pp. 331-33 and plate 13.
almost certainly posterior to them in date. The realistic liṅgas are notable for the greater dimensions of the Rudrabhāga relative to the two lower sections. Frequently one of the lower sections is suppressed entirely. The Jaiyā emblem, on the other hand, has three clearly defined units of approximately equal length, and on this basis, together with its attenuated realism, it would fit into the category which Malleret calls “conventional emblems”.

Within this last series there is an ekamukhaliṅga found at Oc-Eo (fig. 2), an ancient Funanese port city, which gives evidence of sufficient naturalistic tendencies to be one of the most ancient of the ‘conventional’ emblems. Its realism consists of the swelling ovoid form of its top section, the strongly marked gland, and the disproportion between the size of the top section in comparison to the octagonal and cubic sections. The measurements of the three sections beginning with the base are: O m. 21; O m. 21; O m. 23. It would thus appear that this liṅga would follow rather closely the earliest type of liṅga and may therefore belong to the end of Funanese art or the beginning of the art of Chen-la in the late sixth or early seventh century.

A comparison of the ekamukhaliṅga from Oc-Eo (fig. 2) with the Jaiyā emblem (fig. 1) indicates that the latter is considerably more stylized in its treatment of the Rudrabhāga. It has neither the swelling ovoid distortion, nor the accentuated gland of the Oc-Eo emblem. The face on the Jaiyā liṅga is much larger than that on the Oc-Eo emblem. The coiffure on the Oc-Eo liṅga is difficult to read from the available photograph but Professor Malleret describes it as “deux masses globuleuses formant a chignon étrangle a sa base par un lien”. Such a coiffure is rare in the pre-Angkorian statuary of

6) For examples of liṅgas of the realistic type see Ibid., plate 80 a and d. Also, Parmentier, H., ‘Relevé Archéologique de la Province de Tay Ninh (Cochinchina),’ BCAIC, 1910-1911, page 71, fig. 2 L. Two liṅgas found in southeastern Siam, at Prac’inburi, would appear to match the realism of the Transbassac liṅgas. See Dupont, P., L’archéologie môme de Dvāravatī, Paris, 1959, figs. 317 and 318.

7) Malleret, op. cit., p. 383, no. 107, pl. 81.


9) Malleret, op. cit., p. 383.
Cambodia, probably because of the infrequent representation of Śiva in anthropomorphic form, but it is quite common on a number of mukhalingas considered to date from the period prior to the ninth century. One of the singular features of these pre-Angkorian mukhalingas is the fusing of the jata with the filet on the gland of the Rudrabhāga (fig. 2). That is, of course, a function of the relative realism of the representation, and it is a feature which the Jaiyā sculptor did not find necessary to include. This is further indication of a later date for the Jaiyā liṅga.

In any event, the jata on the Jaiyā liṅga is somewhat more complex than that displayed on the Oc-Eo emblem. There is, however, an ekamukhaliṅga from Vat Sak Sampou11 (fig. 3) which displays a coiffure which is very much like that worn on the Jaiyā liṅga. Both wear the hair in a chignon constricted by two lateral ligatures on the top of the skull. The remainder of the hair falls in loops on either side of the head. In both, the head from the hairline to the top of the head is treated as a flat surface without any modulation to indicate tresses. In general configuration, the jata are sufficiently alike to indicate either a common prototype, or some cultural and artistic contacts.

There are, however, a number of differences between the objects which would suggest a difference in chronology. The liṅga from Vat Sak Sampou is considerably more realistic than the Jaiyā liṅga. The face on the Jaiyā liṅga is much larger than that on the pre-Angkorian liṅga. Śiva on the Jaiyā emblem displays the third eye and wears the crescent moon in his hair. Both features are absent on the other liṅga. It would be tempting to consider the pre-Angkorian emblem a later and badly understood copy of the Jaiyā liṅga. The attenuated realism of the latter argues against that however.

10) Several examples are illustrated in Pierre Dupont's La Statuaire prəangkoriennne, Ascona, 1955, Artibus Asiae Supplementum XV, plate 21 B and C. The coiffure is also present on the Śiva from Kompong Cham Kau (Ibid., plate 20 B), an image which occupies a marginal place in the corpus of pre-Angkorian art.

The style and types of Cham lingas have been surveyed recently by Jean Boisselier. He notes the rather distinctive and independent character of the Cham lingas although there is some evidence of influence from Khmer and Indonesian art. While the Cham lingas, in Boisselier's view, offer insufficiently distinctive characteristics on which to develop a chronological classification, there is some evidence that those which are most realistic are the most ancient. None of the lingas illustrated by Boisselier bear any similarity to the Jaiyā emblem in general configuration, and neither do the Cham mukhalingas offer any direct analogy.

There is one mukhalinga in the Indonesian Archipelago which is of interest. It is located in Western Borneo, at Sepaoek on the Sepaoek River, a tributary of the Kapuas. It is a type closely related to the pre-Angkorian emblems of Cambodia, a fact noted by Professor Malleret. It bears a small head of Śiva on the Rudrabhāga. It is a conventional emblem with a cubic base, an octagonal mid-section, and a cylindrical top. The three sections are of equal length. The small face of Śiva is surmounted by a jaṭā caught by a horizontal sash, and the globular form above this sash merges with the filet of the Rudrabhāga in the manner typical of the pre-Angkorian lingas. While the size of the face and the coiffure are somewhat different from their counterpart on the Jaiyā linga, there is a similarity between the lingas in overall configuration and in their attenuated realism.

Our survey has revealed similarities and equally important discontinuities between the Jaiyā emblem and ekamukhalingas from Cambodia and Borneo. The Jaiyā ekamukhalinga displays the same kind of coiffure as that worn by the Śiva on the pre-Angkorian emblem from Vat Sak Sampou. There are, however, significant

16) Bosch, 'Oudheden ter Westerafdeeling van Borneo', op. cit., figs. 1 and 2.
differences between the two monuments in total configuration, degree of realism, and in size of the faces. The same air of elusive kinship can be found between the Jaiyā emblem and the ekamukhaliṅga from Western Borneo.

It is entirely possible that cultural interchange arising from trading relationships in the South China Sea is responsible for the similarities to be found between these ekamukhaliṅgas. It also seems very likely that the ultimate prototypes for these ekamukhaliṅgas may have been Indian Gupta models. For example, the simplicity of the coiffure on all of the emblems would argue for a Gupta prototype. An ascetic on the left of the Ramayana panel from the late Gupta temple at Deogarh wears a jatā which is quite, but not exactly, similar to the coiffure on the Jaiyā emblem. The simple neck ornament (hāra) of the Jaiyā figure would seem to accord well with Gupta adornment. It is not the simple single strand of pearls (ekāvalī), or the multiple twisted strands of pearls so favored during Gupta times, but it may be a string of pearls to which has been added a solid oblong piece with geometric design. The crescent moon and the third type of Śiva are all present on the Gupta ekamukhaliṅga from Khoh.

It would thus seem that some Gupta ekamukhaliṅga, such as the early fifth century and very simple emblem from the cave temple at Udayagiri, is the ultimate prototype behind the Jaiyā emblem and the other somewhat similar ekamukhaliṅgas of Cambodia and Borneo. Given the very simple form of the liṅga and its rather early conventionalization into three discrete geometric shapes, the essential type may have persisted with small modifications long after the collapse

17) See Sivaramamurti, C., 'Geographical and Chronological Factors in Indian Iconography', Ancient India, no. 6, January 1950, fig. 36.
18) Coomaraswamy, A., History of Indian and Indonesian Art, New York, 1927, plate 44, fig. 167.
19) It would thus be somewhat like the type of hāra worn by the Gupta Lokanatha of Sarnath. See, de Mallmann, M.-T., Introduction a l'Étude d'Avatālokitecvara, Paris, 1958, p. 238.
of the Gupta ateliers. The grudging nature of change in the type and style of Buddha images of the Theravāda is well known. A similar conservatism may be operative in such a simple emblem as the ekamukhaliṅga. This may account for the similarities and differences between the Jaiyā monument and the ekamukhaliṅgas from Cambodia and Borneo. Chronological differences are almost certainly involved as well as factors of local inflection. It is not possible to offer an exact date for the Jaiyā emblem but seventh through the eighth centuries would seem a reasonable guess.
Fig. 1. *Ekamukhalīga* from Jaiyā. National Museum, Bangkok.
Fig. 2. Photograph from Malleret, L., *L'archéologie du delta du Mekong*, Paris, 1959.
Fig. 3. *Ekamukhaliiga* from Vat Sak Sampou. Photograph courtesy of Ecole Française d'Extreme-Orient.