

## AN EKAMUKHALĪṄGA FROM PENINSULAR SIAM

by

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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.<sup>1</sup> While a number of *liṅgas* have been recorded from sites on the Peninsula such as Nagara Śri Dharmaraja, Satinphra, 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*.<sup>2</sup> The base, the *Brahmabhāga*, is cubic in form and is 47.8 cms high. The middle section, the

- 1) For an account of the art and archaeology of the Jaiyā area, see, de Lajonquière, L., 'Le domaine archéologique du Siam', *Bulletin de la Commission Archéologique de Indochine (BCAIC)*, 1909, pp. 129-39; and 'Essai d'inventaire archéologique du Siam', *BCAIC*, 1912, pp. 227-28; Coedès, G., *Les Collections archéologiques du Musée National de Bangkok*, Paris, 1928, and *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam*, vol. 2, Bangkok, 1929; Claeys, J.Y., 'L'archaéologie du Siam', *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (BEFEO)*, vol. 31, 1931, pp. 378-93; Dupont, P., 'Visnu Mitrés de l'Indochine occidentale', *BEFEO*, vol. 41, pt. 2, 1941, pp. 233-54; and 'Le Buddha de Grahi et l'école de C'aiya', *BEFEO*, vol. 42, 1942, pp. 105-13; Quaritch Wales, H.G., 'A Newly Explored Route of Ancient Indian Cultural Expansion', *Indian Art and Letters*, vol. 9, 1935, pp. 19-22; Griswold, A.B., and Luang Boribal Buribhand, 'Sculptures of Peninsular Siam in the Ayuthya Period', *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 38, 1950, pp. 1-60; and Dhammasada Bani, *A History of Buddhism in Chaiya and the Bay of Bandon Region, Jaiya*, 1961.
- 2) Gopintha Rao, T.A., *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. 2, Madras, 1916, pp. 75-99 and Banerjea, J.N., *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed. rev., Calcutta, 1956, pp. 458-60.

*Viṣṇubhāga*, 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 (*pīṭhikā*).<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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 *pīṭhikā*, including a stone deposit box on which the *liṅga* stands, see Coedès, 'La destination funéraire des grands monuments khmèrs', *BEFEO*, vol. 40, pt. 2, 1940, pp. 331-33 and plate 13.

4) Parmentier, H., *L'Art khmèr primitif*, Paris, 1927, pp. 311-12.

5) Malleret, L., *L'archéologie du delta du Mekong*, vol. 1, Paris, 1959, pp. 379-80.

almost certainly posterior to them in date.<sup>6</sup> 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 *ekamukhalinga* 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

A comparison of the *ekamukhalinga* 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 distention, 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 étranglé a sa base par un lien".<sup>9</sup> 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 south-eastern Siam, at Prac'inburi, would appear to match the realism of the Transbassac *liṅgas*. See Dupont, P., *L'archéologie mène de Dvāravati*, Paris, 1959, figs. 317 and 318.

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

8) The conventionalized Khmer *liṅgas* of the Angkorian period have a somewhat flattened top and are much less naturalistic. See the *liṅga* from Phnom Bakheng illustrated as plate 54 in Delvert, J., 'L'Erosion des Gres des Monuments d'Angkor', *BEFEO*, vol. 51, pt. 2, 1963.

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 *mukhalīngas* considered to date from the period prior to the ninth century.<sup>10</sup> One of the singular features of these pre-Angkorian *mukhalīngas* is the fusing of the *jaṭā* 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 *līnga*.

In any event, the *jaṭa* on the Jaiyā *līnga* is somewhat more complex than that displayed on the Oc-Eo emblem. There is, however, an *ekamukhalīnga* from Vat Sak Sampou<sup>11</sup> (fig. 3) which displays a coiffure which is very much like that worn on the Jaiyā *līnga*. 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 *jaṭās* 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 *līnga* from Vat Sak Sampou is considerably more realistic than the Jaiyā *līnga*. The face on the Jaiyā *līnga* is much larger than that on the pre-Angkorian *līnga*. Śiva on the Jaiyā emblem displays the third eye and wears the crescent moon in his hair. Both features are absent on the other *līnga*. It would be tempting to consider the pre-Angkorian emblem a later and badly understood copy of the Jaiyā *līnga*. The attenuated realism of the latter argues against that however.

10) Several examples are illustrated in Pierre Dupont's *La Statuaire preangkorienne*, 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.

11) Illustrated in Parmentier, H., 'L'Art présumé du Fou-nan', *BEFEO*, vol. 32, pt. 1, 1932, plate 14 A and p. 188.

The style and types of Cham *lingas* have been surveyed recently by Jean Boisselier.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

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.<sup>14</sup> It is a type closely related to the pre-Angkorian emblems of Cambodia, a fact noted by Professor Malleret.<sup>15</sup> 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 *jatā* caught by a horizontal sash, and the globular form above this sash merges with the fillet of the *Rudrabhāga* in the manner typical of the pre-Angkorian *lingas*.<sup>16</sup> 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

12) Boisselier, J., *La Statuaire du Champa*, Paris, 1963, pp. 410-15.

13) *Ibid.*, pp. 410-12, figs. 250-55. Parmentier, H., *Inventaire descriptif des Monuments Cams de l'Annam*, Paris, 1909, figs. 6 and 123, and pp. 88 and 209; and Bosch, F.D.K., 'La lingobdhavamurti de Civa en Indochine', *BEFEO*, vol. 31, no. 3-4, plates 107 and 108.

14) Bosch, F.D.K., 'Oudheden ter Westerafdeeling van Borneo', *Oudheidkundig Verslag*, 1920, pp. 102-05.

15) Malleret, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

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 *ekamukhalinga* 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 *ekamukhalingas*. It also seems very likely that the ultimate prototypes for these *ekamukhalingas* may have been Indian Gupta models. For example, the simplicity of the coiffure on all of the emblems would argue for a Gupta prototype.<sup>17</sup> An ascetic on the left of the Ramayana panel from the late Gupta temple at Deogarh wears a *jaṭā* which is quite, but not exactly, similar to the coiffure on the Jaiyā emblem.<sup>18</sup> 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 (*ekāvali*), 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.<sup>19</sup> The crescent moon and the third type of Śiva are all present on the Gupta *ekamukhalinga* from Khoh.<sup>20</sup>

It would thus seem that some Gupta *ekamukhalinga*, such as the early fifth century and very simple emblem from the cave temple at Udayagiri,<sup>21</sup> is the ultimate prototype behind the Jaiyā emblem and the other somewhat similar *ekamukhalingas* of Cambodia and Borneo. Given the very simple form of the *linga* 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 à l'Étude d'Avakitecvra*, Paris, 1958, p. 238.

20) Frédéric, L., *The Art of India: Temples and Sculpture*, New York, n.d., fig. 93.

21) Kamrisc, S., *The Art of India*, London, 1954, plate 46.

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 *ekamukhalinga*. This may account for the similarities and differences between the Jaiyā monument and the *ekamukhalingas* 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. *Ekamukhalinga* from Jaiyā. National Museum, Bangkok.

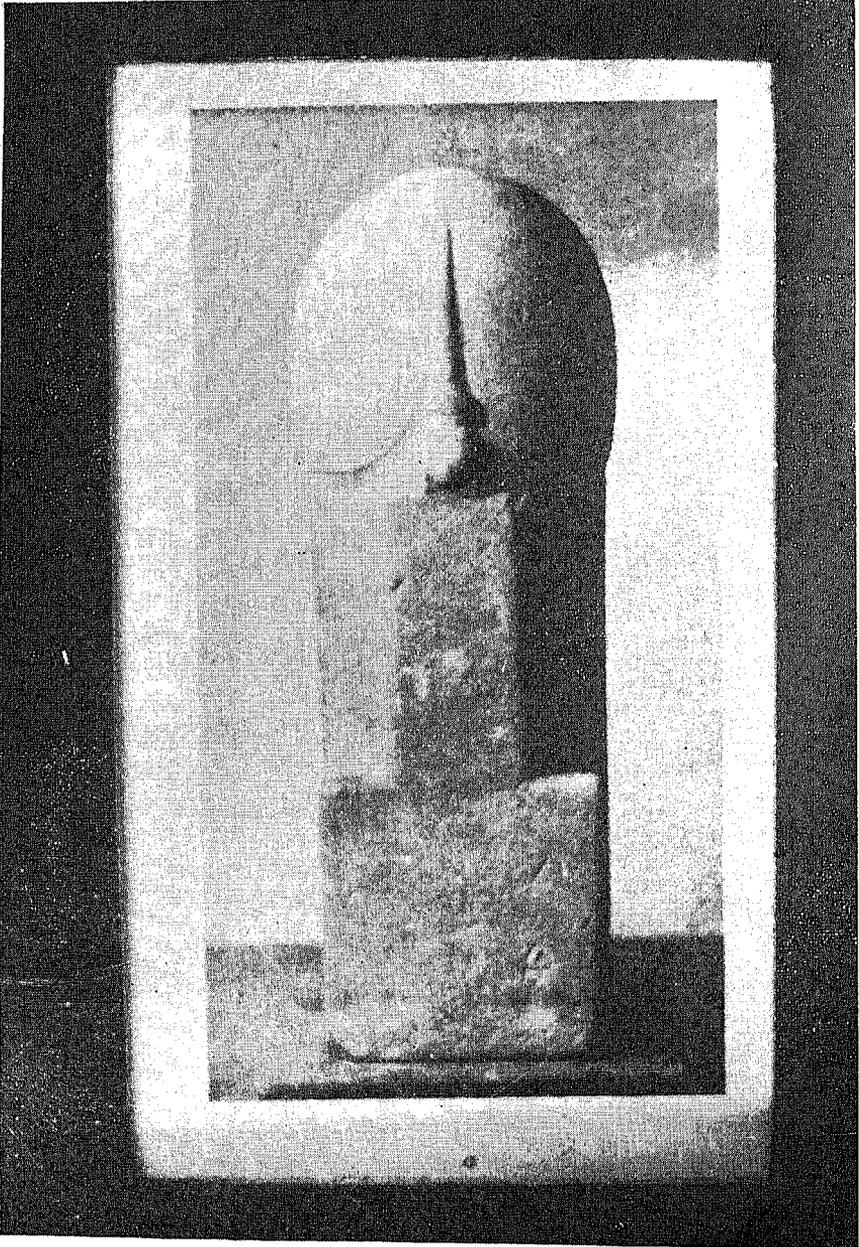


Fig.'2. Photograph from Malleret, L., *L'archeologie du delta du Mekong*, Paris, 1959.

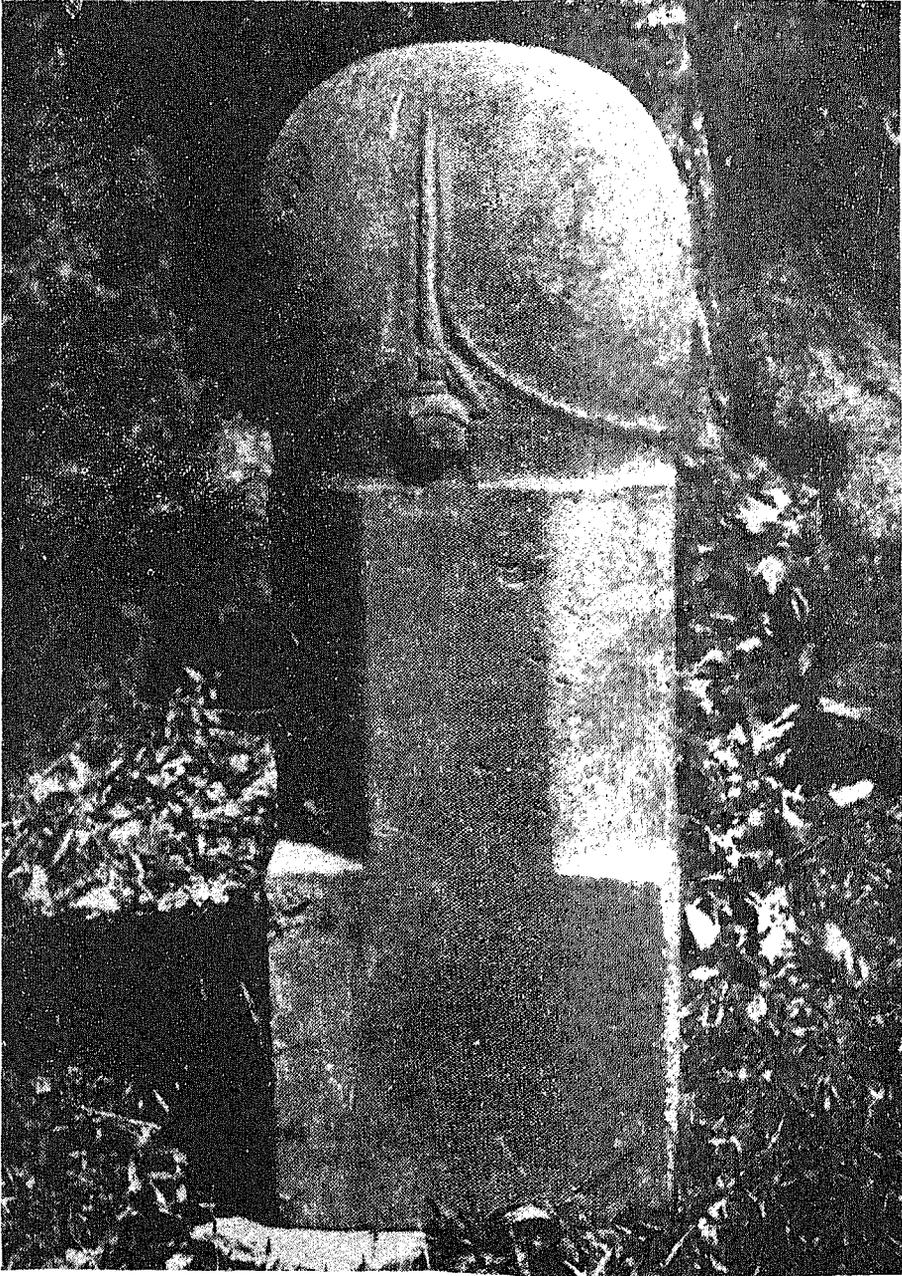


Fig. 3. *Ekamukhalinga* from Vat Sak Sampo. Photograph courtesy of Ecole Française d'Extreme-Orient.

