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Sūrya's Nāgas, Candra's Square Seat and the Mounted Bull with Two Guardians

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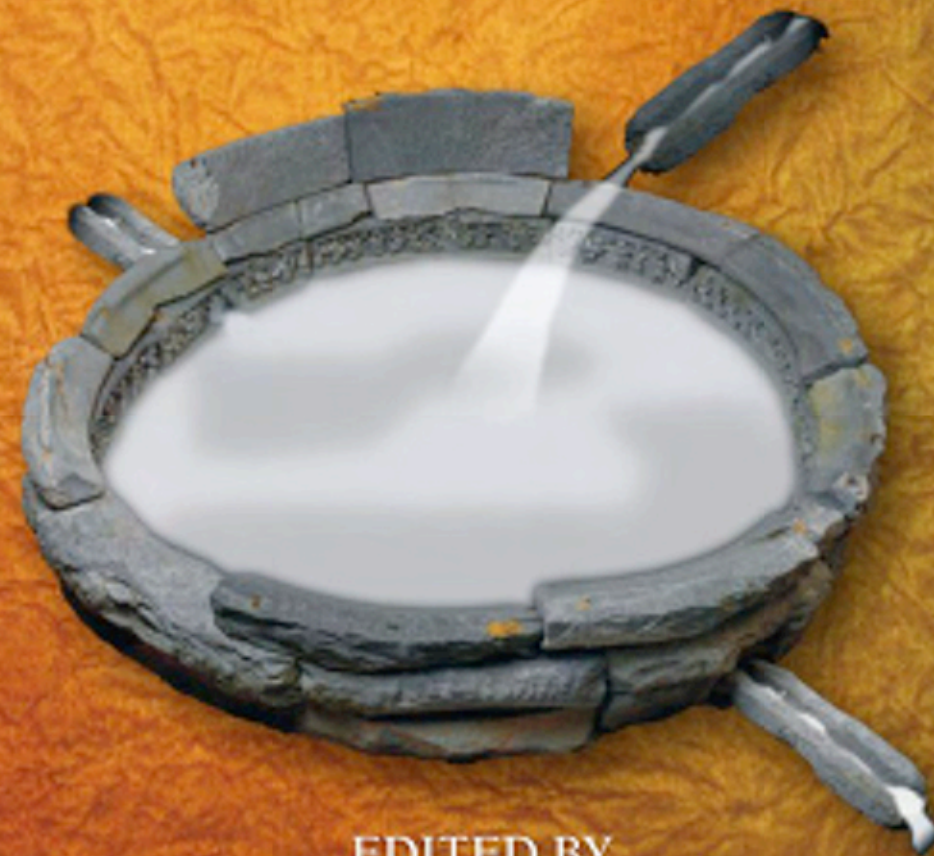
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PRAJÑĀDHARA

Essays on

ASIAN ART HISTORY EPIGRAPHY AND CULTURE

in Honour of
Gouriswar Bhattacharya



EDITED BY

Gerd J.R. Mevissen and Arundhati Banerji

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47

Iconographical notes on two Khmer illustrated stela inscriptions

ARLO GRIFFITHS

In this contribution, I propose to offer an iconographical explanation for the horizontal sequences of sculpture that we find adorning the front sides of two Khmer stelae from the first half of the 11th century CE, one of which is new and practically unpublished, while the other is published but has hitherto been misinterpreted. It is a great honor to have the chance to dedicate these minor notes to a scholar who has made major contributions to the study of Indian iconography as well as Indian epigraphy. It is this scholar, Gouriswar Bhattacharya, who, at breakfast one morning during the 9th International Conference on Bengal Art in Bogra (Bangladesh), in February 2007, provided me with the vital reference to a Pāla-period image of Sūrya that helps to clinch the first issue of interpretation that I will address.¹

My starting point is the illustrated top of the recently discovered Khmer stela inscription² dated to c. 1014 CE that has received the inventory number K. 1198 in the framework of the *Corpus des inscriptions khmères*.³ It is shown as **Plate 47.1**. Anticipating some of the arguments to be presented below, let us note the central presence of Śiva, mounted on his bull, flanked by his two guardians Nandin and Kāla/Mahākāla. To his right is Brahmā, of whose four faces three are visible, on a throne rimmed with lotus petals; to his left, four-armed Viṣṇu mounted on Garuḍa. Finally, to Brahmā's right, Sūrya rests on a lotus-cushion placed on his horse-drawn chariot, holding a flower-stalk (presumably of lotus) in each of his two arms; and to Viṣṇu's left, Candra on a plain rectangular platform, holding stalks indistinguishable from those of Sūrya (although Candra's might rather represent water-lilies)⁴ in his two arms. There are subsidiary figures, perhaps guardians, at both ends of the composition. This short iconographic description gives rise to notes in four domains where some progress seems to be possible.

The iconography of Sūrya and of Candra

There is a rather abundant literature on the theme of the Nine Deities or Navagrahas in Khmer art. With regard to this theme, involving small images of Sūrya, Candra, five figures of problematic identification, and finally Rāhu and Ketu placed in a row, I may limit myself initially to a reference to Mireille Bénisti's eleventh 'Note on Khmer iconography' (1976), where all important previous secondary literature is referenced.⁵ Based on comparison with the rather numerous Khmer examples of such series,⁶ which always display Sūrya and Candra juxtaposed at the (spectator's) far left of the row, the identification of these two figures at the top of K. 1198 is certain, although here they are not in juxtaposition. I would like to draw

attention below to two details of their iconographical representation in ancient Khmer art that are clearly visible on our stela.

A careful inspection of Sūrya's conveyance (**Plate 47.2**) reveals the scaly skin of what looks like a dragon partly hidden behind the horse, the chariot, and Sūrya himself, but with head and tail still clearly visible. We seem to be presented here *en profil* with what is usually presented *en face* and is mostly hard to identify in Sūrya's depiction in Khmer series of the Navagrahas: two horses yoked to the chariot with a dragon-like being functioning as yoke-pole. It seems to have been K. Bhattacharya who first identified this iconographical detail, in his second 'Note on Khmer iconography' (1956: 188), claiming even that in these lintels "the Sun's chariot most often has a serpent in the guise of a yoke-pole".⁷ This observation was presumably ignored by Malleret, Bénisti, and all later writers on Khmer art that I am aware of, both because the presence of the *nāga* is nowhere very clear in the (photographs of) Khmer Navagraha-series with which they worked, and because the *nāga* had not yet been registered in association with Sūrya either in South Asian plastic art or in the relevant Sanskrit sources.

To support his identification, K. Bhattacharya adduced several Sanskrit sources in his seventh 'Note on Khmer iconography' (1957: 220).⁸ Among the textual descriptions that I have seen, there is none that explicitly describes the serpent as yoke-pole, but passages such as the following, quoted from the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* and the *Matsyapurāṇa*, to mention just two examples, are relevant nonetheless for our depiction of Sūrya.

stuvanti munayaḥ sūryaṃ gandharvair gīyate puraḥ |
nṛtyanty apsaraso yānti sūryasyānu niśācarāḥ ||
vahanti pannagā yakṣaiḥ kriyate 'bhīṣusaṃgrahaḥ |
vāḷakhilyās tathaivainam parivārya samāsate ||
so 'yaṃ saptagaṇaḥ sūryamaṇḍale munisattama
himoṣṇavārivrṣṭīnām hetuḥ svasamayaṃ gataḥ ||

'The sages praise Sūrya; the Gandharvas sing [his praise]; the Apsarases dance in front of Sūrya, the Night-wanderers (Rākṣasas) behind; **serpents draw [his chariot]**; Yakṣas hold the bridles; and the Vāḷakhilyas surround him on all sides. This group of seven in Sūrya's sphere, O best of sages, is the cause of cold, heat, water, and rains; it abides by its own regimen.'

[*Viṣṇupurāṇa* 2.10.20-23 (≈ 2.11.16-18), crit. ed. Pathak 1997-99]⁹

bhujaṅgarajjubhīr baddhāḥ saptāśvā raśmisaṃyutāḥ |
padmasthaṃ vāhanasthaṃ vā padmahasthaṃ prakalpayet ||

'**Bound by cords of snakes are the seven horses** joined by bridles. He should make [Sūrya] standing on a lotus or on a conveyance, with lotuses in his hands.'

[*Matsyapurāṇa* 261.8, Ānandāśrama ed., reprint 1981]

Given the eventual development in Khmer art leading to the depiction as dragon of the serpent (*ahi*, *uraga*, *nāga*, *pannaga*) that would normally be depicted as cobra in South Asian art,¹⁰ we may indeed connect such a textual description with the dragon-like creature that might represent an elaborate yoke-pole on our stela, where alternatively, however, the dragon could also be seen as pulling the chariot in tandem with the horse (or more than one horse, only one being visible), or even as functioning as reins.

Some recent discoveries by historians of South Asian art now help simultaneously to strengthen K. Bhattacharya's claim concerning the depiction of Sūrya with *nāga* in the Navagraha-series and mine that a dragon-like *nāga* is visible on our stela. This "less known aspect of Sūrya iconography" (Mevisse forthcoming: 10) can moreover now be proven not to be a Khmer invention, but rather to be an iconographical convention shared with, or – to use currently unfashionable parlance – inspired by South Asian artistic traditions.

First, there is the somewhat different Pāla-period image kept in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts that the honorand of this volume referred me to, which displays the "very rare feature" of snakes "occupying the upper edge of the chariot-pedestal", plus a single *nāga* at the (spectator's) left extremity of the row of seven horses, facing the latter.¹¹ There is also another Pāla-period image (kept in the Mainamati museum) showing the equally rare feature of "snakes riding on the back of each horse". Both motifs are probably "meant to illustrate the reins of the horses which are held and directed by Aruṇa".¹² An attempt was made by Diserens (1997-98) to demonstrate the likelihood that a possibly 6th-8th century CE Sūrya stela from the Chamba hill state in far northwestern India displays one or two *nāgas* surrounding Sūrya's team of seven horses, and that this would be an illustration of the Purāṇic phrase *vahanti pannagāḥ*. The published photographs are unfortunately not sufficient to remove all doubt, but a fragment of a third Pāla-period image (kept in the Dinajpur museum), with an unmistakable *nāga* in a similar position at the (spectator's) right extremity of the row of horses, along with its mirror image in the Virginia Museum of Fine Art piece, to my mind strongly supports Diserens' claims.¹³

*

Let us now turn to a point of Candra's depiction on our stela (**Plate 47.3**): the fact that he is seated on a square platform or pedestal. Although it may at first sight seem to be a mere detail, it is in reality the only major distinguishing mark between him and Sūrya.¹⁴ Several authors (among whom K. Bhattacharya and Bénisti) have noticed the convention in Khmer art of depicting Candra on a pedestal, but its shape – even though it is without exception square in the corpus of Khmer Navagraha-series – is, as far as I can see, nowhere specified in the secondary literature, and no textual foundation in Indian Sanskrit literature has hitherto been quoted to explain the origin of this iconographical convention.¹⁵ I believe I am now in the position to do so.

In an article published in 1989, David Pingree refers to the rite of *grahapūjā/grahaśānti* described in two late Gṛhyasūtras of strong Vaiṣṇava inspiration: the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra* (4.13, ed. Caland 1927: p. 65, l. 16-17), on the one hand, and the *Āgniveśyagrhyasūtra* (2.5.1, ed. L.A. Ravi Varma 1940: p. 77, l. 6), on the other. Pingree (p. 5) was interested in the "set of geometrically shaped pedestals on which the statues of the planets are to be placed" according to these two texts, because, as the great scholar explained, "[t]hese pedestals ... are of extraordinary importance in the history of planetary worship". He noticed a discrepancy in the two texts that he used between the shapes enjoined for Candra's pedestal, and concluded on this basis, it seems, "that variation with regard to the forms of the pedestals was quite normal within the Indian tradition" (1989: 5, cf. also p. 9).

Two other Gṛhyasūtras, however, associated with other Vedic schools – of equally exclusive South-Indian distribution just like those of the Vaikhānasas and the Āgniveśyas – also contain a description of *grahapūjā*, and in both of these texts not consulted by Pingree it is Candra to whom the square (*caturasra* or °*aśra*) platform is assigned. They are the *Jaiminīyagrhyasūtra* (2.9, ed. Caland 1922: p. 34, l. 12) and the

Baudhāyagrhyasēsasūtra (1.16.14-15, ed. R. Shama Shastri 1920: p. 205 [reprint 1983, p. 217]), and the latter speaks explicitly of *grahasthāna* 'placement for the *grahas*'. The exceptional round (*vr̥tta*) placement for Candra is only found in the Vaikhānasa text, while the three other mentioned sources place him on a square one. It must be a reflection of this same, probably more widespread tradition that we see in the Khmer depictions of the lunar deity.¹⁶

The identification of the central figure and his acolytes on K. 1198 in connection with K. 693

The stela K. 1198, along with another contemporary inscribed and illustrated stela, the so-called Stela of the Stun Crap (inventory number K. 693), dating to 1003 CE, was recently included in a German exhibition of Khmer art, for which a catalogue was compiled under the editorship of Wibke Lobo (2006). **Plate 47.4** shows the sculptures that adorn the top of the front side of K. 693, and may be compared with the photograph accompanying item no. 36 in the mentioned catalogue. With regard to the iconography of this composition, Thomas S. Maxwell's notice of K. 693 has to be quoted here at length (p. 117):

The stela is shaped in such a way as to resemble a part of a lotus flower. The pointed middle has the classic shape of a lotus petal. It is flanked by two smaller rounded elements, that represent parts of neighbouring petals. A row of eight such petals is also visible at the base; they represent the horizontal directions of space [...]. The central figure sits on an animal presented *en face*: a water buffalo, which is the symbol of Yama, the god of death. As the latter is simultaneously the lord of the South, we may assume that the petal that displays him symbolizes the southern direction. He is sitting in a typically royal posture and holds high a staff, the *yamadaṇḍa*, with which he selects the dead for his judgment, and assigns to them one or another hell. The reliefs of Angkor Wat, that were produced a century after this stela, show that Yama is the supreme source of justice in the world beyond, as counterpart to the living king on earth. To his left and right two further figures are kneeling, who represent his aides Dharma and Citragupta. On either side of this central group we see an orb, in which sits a figure, namely the Sun god (left, in a war chariot) and the Moon god (right, on an altar) as symbols for the passing of time. Form and iconography of the stela therefore represent space and time. The ancient Khmer temples generally were considered to be abodes of Yama, irrespective of the specific cult to which they were dedicated, for they were thought to be transit points to the mortal's fate after death. The fragmentary inscriptions mention images of gods who embody certain humans. These were placed in temples on contested land, which may explain the Yama symbolism.¹⁷

I fear that I must express my disagreement with every part of Maxwell's interpretation. It is indeed an elaborate house of cards built on an interpretation first proposed in 1953 by Coëdès (p. 202):

[The stela] is decorated, at the top of its first broad side, with a bas-relief showing a deity seated on an ox [*sic*] and holding a club in the left hand; on either side, two kneeling figures each hold a club. This trinity no doubt represents Yama between his assessors Dharma and Citragupta. On either side there is a circle, which to the left encloses the sun on a chariot, and to the right the moon on an altar.¹⁸

The same interpretation hinging on the identification of the central figure as Yama was quoted also by Dalsheimer in her catalogue of the ancient art collection of the National Museum of Phnom Penh, although in careful terms and with explicit acknowledgement of the fact that the identification is hypothetical (2001: 210). This interpretation, however, entirely lacks supporting evidence.

The sculptural composition of K. 693 has in common with that of K. 1198 the placement of Sūrya and Candra at the far right and left of a central figure¹⁹ who holds a staff or mace in his right hand, is mounted in royal posture²⁰ on a bull or buffalo, and is immediately surrounded by two facing figures who both also seem to hold a staff or mace. Although the perspective from which the bull or buffalo is depicted is different, the iconography of the central figure is clearly the same in both compositions. The most noteworthy difference between the two stelae is the presence of two further figures – Brahmā and Viṣṇu – around the central one on K. 1198. The company of these two deities of unmistakable identification, however, renders equally certain the identification of the central figure as Śiva and that of his *vāhana* as the Bull:²¹ The theme is that of the Trimūrti, represented, as usual, with “Brahmā placed to the right and Viṣṇu to the left of the central Śiva figure”.²² The corollary is that the two minor figures flanking Śiva have to be identified as his guardians Nandin and Kāla/Mahākāla, and that the objects they and Śiva hold are varieties of the pike (*śūla*), stick (*vetra*) or skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) mentioned as attributes of Nandin and/or Śiva in Sanskrit literature.²³

This analysis of the iconography of K. 1198 was also given in the notice of this piece, item 37 in the catalogue of the same German exhibition (p. 118). It is a remarkable fact indeed, that those responsible for the exhibition and its catalogue have failed to notice that the illustrated parts of K. 1198 and K. 693 are to be interpreted in conjunction, and have permitted two vitally different notices to stand literally alongside in the same catalogue.²⁴

Comparison of the two stelae allows us to correct the iconographical interpretation first given for K. 693 by Cœdès, carefully repeated by Dalsheimer, and now used by Maxwell as a foundation for audacious speculations. On that stela we find the same central deity with the same figures of Sūrya and Candra at both outer ends of the composition – but without Brahmā and Viṣṇu. It thus seems considerably less likely that the sculptor of the stela K. 693 intended to represent Yama, flanked by Dharma and Citragupta, than that he intended the same deities as we find on K. 1198, except Brahmā and Viṣṇu. From this it follows that the entire interpretation for the K. 693 stela’s symbolism proposed by Maxwell must be reconsidered.

The choice for Śaiva imagery on the two stelae

The two stelae that have passed under review belong to the category known as ‘illustrated stelae’ (*stèles historiées*) in the domain of Khmer epigraphy ever since, in his article of 1932, Louis Finot introduced the term (p. 257):

Finally, there exists a number of stelae characterized by a noteworthy particularity: the presence of a figure in high relief, sculpted at the top or the bottom of the text of the front side. One might call them by the conventional name ‘illustrated stelae’.²⁵

At the time, only six examples were known. Notwithstanding this very limited basis for discussion, Finot posed the question whether it would be possible systematically to establish “a connection between the subject of the sculpture and that of the text”.²⁶ Indeed in four of his six examples, he believed to be able to do so.

Since Finot wrote, a considerable number of new ‘illustrated stelae’ have been discovered – among them our K. 1198 and K. 693. It is impossible to give a precise list of all known examples, since this category can only be distinguished arbitrarily from other inscribed and illustrated pieces,²⁷ but our two stelae,

in combining basically identical images of Sūrya and Candra around a largely identical central theme, form a clear subclass. So while it must be admitted that the typological utility of Finot's category of 'illustrated stelae' as a whole is rather limited, his question concerning the existence of a connection between iconography and text remains a valid and interesting one that we can try to answer for the shared iconographical elements of our pair of stelae.

Misled by Coëdès into elaborations on the theme of Yama and the finiteness of human life, and apparently unnotified by his editors of the important parallelism with K. 1198, Maxwell pushes his interpretation beyond the pale of informed scholarship. He does briefly refer to the possible significance for iconographic interpretation of the contents of the inscription,²⁸ but the inscription does not mention Yama. In view of the fragmentary (i.e. partially illegible) nature of the inscription K. 693, it is of course impossible to draw any certain conclusion from this *argumentum e silentio*, but I strongly suspect that the choice for central Śaiva imagery can be explained with evidence positively present in the inscription: the fact that it opens with a foundation (*kalpanā*) for the cult of a god called *kamrateṅ jagat liṅgapura*, who is virtually certain to have been a form of Śiva.²⁹ Also in the case of the almost perfectly legible inscription K. 1198, whose contents are predominantly concerned with a Śaiva sanctuary, it seems that this Śaiva character is the connecting link between the text and the central image.³⁰ There are a number of Indian illustrated inscriptions that allow us to strengthen this hypothesis, and to propose one also for the surrounding figures of Sūrya and Candra.

The significance of Surya's and Candra's placement

Despite the existence in South Asia of inscribed and illustrated stelae, comparable to the ones known from ancient Cambodia, manuals of Indian epigraphy do not make mention of any category corresponding to the one proposed by Finot, and the question of a possible relationship between sculpture and epigraphical text does not seem to have been posed. Emmanuel Francis has shown me some good Vaiṣṇava examples from Karnataka, where such a connection is beyond doubt.³¹ Most relevant in the present context, however, are those Indian inscriptions, which are illustrated with representations of the Sun and Moon. I have undertaken no systematic search for such inscriptions, but may refer, besides my **Plate 47.5** from 13th-century Karnataka,³² to some examples from a dynastic corpus published with relatively numerous and good plates: that of the western Indian Śīlāhāra dynasties.

The examples are all about a century or more later than our two Cambodian stelae,³³ and the motif in question seems to be associated predominantly with the medium of stone inscriptions, copper-plate grants displaying it being comparatively rare. The two figures in these examples are always non-anthropomorphic, with the Sun represented as a circle and the Moon as a crescent. It consistently stands at the top of the stone inscriptions that I have seen, sometimes enclosing a deity (in many cases arguably identifiable with one mentioned in the inscription) or an auspicious symbol like a *pūrṇakalāśa*, or the two elements are simply juxtaposed immediately, often with the Sun on the (spectator's) left and the Moon on the right as on our two stelae.

The Vihar stone inscription of Anantadēva of śaka 1003 (Mirashi 1977: 113-115, pl. XLV) very clearly shows a crescent Moon and a full orb for the Sun (with the former appearing on the left, and *vice versa*), without other illustrations. The Cintra stone inscription of Aparāditya I of ś. 1059 (*ibid.*: 127-130, pl. LV) also very clearly shows the same motif, but Sun and Moon have here traded places, and a depiction of the 'ass-curse' has been sculpted below the inscription. Precisely the same combination of motifs is found on

the Chānje stone inscription of Aparāditya I of ś. 1060 (*ibid.*: 130-132, pl. LVII). The Bassein stone inscription of Mallikārjuna of ś. 1083 (*ibid.*: 153-156) bears a rather more elaborate combination of motifs (Sun and Moon, two *liṅgas* of different sizes being worshipped by two human figures, ass-curse), but the plate only includes the inscribed portion of the stone. Sun and Moon are again very clearly visible on the Lonāḍ stone inscription of Aparāditya II of ś. 1106 (*ibid.*: 156-158, pl. LXVIII), and they here enclose a *kalaśa* (barely visible on the plate), while a depiction of a *liṅga* on *yoni* also figures lower on the stone, interrupting the first lines of the inscription. The Bassein Stone inscription of Anantadēva II of ś. 1120 (*ibid.*: 163-165, pl. LXXI) shows the Sun at the (spectator's) right and the Moon at the left, enclosing a *kalaśa*, and a cow with a suckling calf at the bottom of the stone. There are several other stone inscriptions in Mirashi's corpus, but they are either unaccompanied by plates or the plates do not clearly show the illustrations.

Mirashi's corpus also includes two interesting and very clearly reproduced copper-plate grants, the first of which is the oldest Śilāhāra inscription known to me displaying the motif of Sun and Moon. The Miraj plates of Mārasimha of ś. 980 (*ibid.*: 200-206, pl. XC) show a stylized *triśūla* on the otherwise empty plate i a, while plate iii b, also not inscribed with text, shows the motif of Sun and Moon, a *liṅga* on *yoni* being worshipped by a man who sits with folded hands, and a large bull. Finally, the Tāḷale plates of Gaṇḍarāditya of ś. 1032 (*ibid.*: 207-214, pl. XCII) received the following comments from Mirashi (p. 207):

On the front side of the first plate there is an engraving of a cow and its sucking calf, with a double-edged sword in an upright position on one side, the whole surmounted by the figures of the sun and the moon. This kind of engraving is found in almost all inscriptions relating to the grant of land in Southern India. The cow is intended to represent land, the milk the produce of the land, the calf the enjoyer, and the sword the royal power. *The sun and the moon denote perpetuity.* They seem intended to show that the person who receives land by virtue of the grant is to enjoy it under the authority of the king as long as the sun and the moon endure. [emphasis added]

Although we will probably never be able to prove conclusively what meaning the stone and copper-plate carvers of India and Cambodia had in mind when they joined images of the Sun and the Moon to inscriptions, there is plenty of very suggestive internal evidence to support Mirashi's main interpretation that "the sun and the moon denote perpetuity". Mirashi does not mention that there are probably two aspects of this perpetuity. Most of the Śilāhāra inscriptions express the warning to those who would violate a religious foundation with variants on the 'ass-curse', which declares (in the words of the Lonāḍ inscription referred to above) that "whoever will destroy or cause to be destroyed the contents of this (royal) order – his mother will be violated by an ass (which is) the best among asses." But the Khmer inscription K. 693 expresses the equivalent warning with the following imprecation, verse III on side A:

*kalpanām ye vilumpeyur laṅghayeyu[ś ca śāsanam]
dvātriṃśanarakam yāntu yāvaca candradivākaraḥ ||*

'Those who would damage the foundation and violate the edict must go to the thirty-two hells for as long as Sun and Moon shall last!'

The same idea is expressed in Khmer in K. 1198 (side C, lines 52-53):

nau 'naka ta pampāta dharmma noḥ dau svey·narakka tarāpa vraḥ candrāditya mān·leya

'May people who violate that pious work undergo hell for as long as Sun and Moon shall last!'³⁴

The positive perpetuity that Mirashi emphasizes is brought out equally clearly in our inscription K. 1198, again in Khmer (side A, lines 1-2):

*siddhi svasti jaya 'aiśvarya mān·lābha tarāp·vraḥ candrāditya mān·leya (p)i vraḥ kamrateṅ·
'añ·śrī lakṣmipativarmmeśvara nu vraḥ kamrateṅ· 'añ·śrī lakṣmipativarmmasvāmi vraḥ
kamrateṅ· 'añ·śrī lakṣmipativarmmaikanātha vraḥ kamrateṅ· 'añ·śrī lakṣmipativarmmeśvari
vraḥ kamrateṅ· 'añ·śrī lakṣmipativarmmajanani vraḥ kamrateṅ· 'añ·gauripatiśvara vraḥ
kamrateṅ· 'añ·nartakeśvara dār·pūjā lvoḥ mahāsaṃhāra*

‘May success! may prosperity! may victory! may sovereignty! may profit remain here, for as long as the Sun and the Moon shall last, so that [the seven divine images erected by and named after general Lakṣmīpativarman] shall receive worship until the apocalypse!’³⁵

Sūrya and Candra as depicted on K. 693 do not symbolize the finiteness of mortal life, as proposed by Maxwell. Rather, both on that stela and on K. 1198, they denote nearly the opposite: the everlasting and inviolable nature of the religious foundations recorded in the inscriptions engraved on these same stelae.

Notes

1. Some of the points made here figured also in my inaugural lecture at Leiden University (Griffiths 2006), which was pronounced and published in Dutch. Gerd Mevissen again provided gracious assistance toward my preparation of this contribution, as well as important references to secondary literature. I am grateful also to Emmanuel Francis, Kristen De Joseph, Marijke Klokke, Charlotte Schmid and Annette Schmiedchen for their comments on previous versions of the present paper.
2. The Khmer part of the inscription borne by the stela was published and translated by S. Pou (incompletely – the small side b is omitted, and the large sides A and C are her B and A – and without recognition of the fact that the inscribed text is to a large extent arranged in short parallel columns rather than in continuous lines) as ‘Stèle de O Smach’ under the inventory number Ka. 18 (2001: 240-260). Cf. also her reproductions of two rubbings as plates XVII-XX. The illustrated part is included on plates XVIII and XX.
3. See the opening footnote in Griffiths 2005. I am grateful to my CIK-collaborators Gerdi Gerschheimer, Bertrand Porte, Christophe Pottier and Dominique Soutif for their assistance in laying some of the groundwork for this publication.
4. Cf. K. Bhattacharya 1957: 220, n. 3: « Plus précisément, l’attribut de Sūrya est le padma (*Nelumbium speciosum*) et celui de Candra, le kumuda (*Nymphaea esculenta*). On sait que ces deux espèces de lotus s’épanouissent respectivement au lever du soleil et de la lune. » In fact the Sanskrit terms mentioned by Bhattacharya do not denote two species of lotus, but one species of lotus and one of water lily. On the botanical and other issues involved, see Hanneder 2002.
5. Except, as Gerd Mevissen points out to me, Pal & Bhattacharyya’s chapter VII, entitled “The Concept of Nava-Deva of Cambodia” (1969: 48-53).
6. Cf. item 59 in Jessup & Zéphir 1997 (p. 240f.); see also item 62 (p. 248f.) for another example. Following Bénisti’s meticulously argued and well-informed study (ignored both by Jessup & Zéphir in their notices as well as by K. Bhattacharya in his 1997 reissue of a 1964 article), I will below refer to these series as depicting the Navagrahas.
7. « le char du Soleil a le plus souvent un serpent en guise de timon » (1957: 220). The quotation is taken from an article that appeared one year later, but virtually the same claim was made already in the afore-mentioned second ‘Note on Khmer iconography’ (1956: 188 n. 3).

8. For further references, see Chopra 1987-89 and Diserens 1997-98, recapitulated in Mevissen forthc., n. 144.
9. On this passage and the many Purāṇic parallels for a sevenfold group (*gaṇa*) accompanying the Sun, see Kirfel 1920: 130ff. The utility of Diserens' treatment (1997-98: 338ff.) is reduced by her apparently rather inadequate familiarity with the Sanskrit sources.
10. Cf. K. Bhattacharya 1961: 110 (no example predating the 12th century was known to Bhattacharya). The matter of the connection dragon/serpent in Khmer art is in fact more complex, as has been demonstrated by Bénisti (1965: 98ff., and esp. 104f.), who claims on p. 104 “that in reality no transformation from *nāga* to dragon had taken place” (« qu'en réalité il n'y avait pas eu transformation du *nāga* en 'dragon' »), but whose treatment of the issue to my mind leaves sufficient open space to maintain my reasoning above.
11. The image in question was first published by Chopra (1987-89). See Mevissen forthc., n. 142 for further references.
12. The preceding quotations in this paragraph are from Mevissen forthc.: 6 and 10.
13. For good reproductions of all the Pāla-period images referred to here, see Mevissen forthc.
14. If we disregard the chariot, the only minor distinctive feature of the Sūrya image itself is the lotus-cushion that this deity occupies on the chariot (cf. Bhattacharya 1958: 220).
15. Mevissen points out to me that “in contemporary south Indian Navagraha representations (mostly *maṇḍalas*) the figure of Candra sometimes appears within a square, or – if represented aniconically – is symbolized by a square”. He refers e.g. to Bühnemann 1989: 3; Rajeshwari 1989: 208-211, line drawings i, h, fig. 32; Sivapriyananda 1990: 129, 132 fig. 6, pl. 76; and Bhatt 2000: 249.
16. Charlotte Schmid has suggested to me that there might also be roughly contemporary and local textual – in the ancient Cambodian case, this means epigraphical – evidence that alludes to the Moon's association with the square shape. She referred me to verse LXII from the Stela of Lolei, dating to the end of the 9th century CE (K. 323):

*idañ ca svaḥkṛtan tārataṭākam hlādi kāntibhiḥ
catuṣkoṅkṛtan tvaṣṭrā vidhuvimbam ivāṃrgam ||*

And [king Yaśovarman also donated] this Tāra-pond ('Clear pond', 'Astral pond', 'Pond of pearls' or 'Pond of Śiva'), [a veritable Moon] refreshing by its charms, that he had himself established – as though (the Demiurge) Tvaṣṭṛ had made the lunar disc square [and] without the deer.

See Bergaigne & Barth 1885-1893: 391ff. for text (compounding *hlādikāntibhiḥ*), a French translation, and notes on the interpretation of this verse, which playfully alludes (as noted by Barth *ad loc.*, with ref. to p. 488) to an etiological myth of Tvaṣṭṛ setting the Sun in motion to reduce his radiance. I am not convinced that this verse indeed alludes to the Moon's association with the square shape, as it rather implies that the Moon is normally round.

17. „Die Stele ist so gestaltet, dass sie wie ein Teil einer Lotosblüte aussieht. Die spitz zulaufende Mitte hat die klassische Form eines Lotos-Blütenblattes. Sie wird von zwei kleineren, abgerundeten Elementen flankiert, die Teile benachbarter Blütenblätter darstellen. Eine Reihe von acht solchen Blätterblättern ist auch entlang der Basis zu sehen; sie stehen für die acht horizontalen Himmelsrichtungen [...]. Die zentrale Figur sitzt auf einem in Vorderansicht dargestellten Wasserbüffel (*mahiṣa*), dem Tiersymbol des Todesgottes Yama. Weil dieser zugleich Gebieter über den Süden ist, kann man annehmen, dass das Blütenblatt, auf dem er zu sehen ist, die Himmelsrichtung Süden symbolisiert. Er sitzt in der typisch königlichen Pose und hält einen Stab, den *yamadaṇḍa*, hoch, mit dem er die Toten für seinen Richterspruch auswählt und sie einer bestimmten Hölle zuteilt. Die Reliefs von Angkor Wat, die ein Jahrhundert nach dieser Stele geschaffen wurden, zeigen, dass Yama als Gegenstück zum irdischen, lebenden König im Jenseits der oberste Gerichtsherr der Toten ist. Links und rechts von ihm knien zwei weitere Figuren, die seine Gehilfen darstellen, Dharma und Citragupta. Auf beiden Seiten dieser zentralen Gruppe ist je eine Scheibe zu sehen, in der eine Figur sitzt, nämlich der Sonnengott (links, in einem Streitwagen) und der Gott

des Mondes (rechts, auf einem Altar) als Symbole für das Verstreichen der Zeit. Form und Ikonographie der Stele stellen daher Zeit und Raum dar. Die antiken Khmer-Tempel galten generell als Heimstätten Yamas, ungeachtet des spezifischen Kultes, dem sie geweiht waren, denn man verstand sie als Übergangsorte zum jenseitigen Schicksal der Sterblichen. Die bruchstückhaften Inschriften erwähnen Bildnisse von Gottheiten, die bestimmte Menschen verkörpern. Diese waren in Tempeln auf dem umstrittenen Land aufgestellt, wodurch sich möglicherweise der Yama-Symbolismus der Stele erklärt.“

18. « [La stèle] est ornée, à la partie supérieure de la première grande face d'un bas-relief représentant un dieu assis sur un boeuf et tenant une massue de la main gauche; de chaque côté, deux personnages accroupis tiennent chacun une massue. Cette trinité représente sans doute Yama, entre ses assesseurs Dharma et Citragupta. De chaque côté, un cercle enferme, à gauche le soleil sur un char, et à droite la lune sur un autel. »
19. Disregarding the subsidiary figures at the farthest right and left of the composition on K. 1198.
20. Maxwell speaks of a “typically royal posture” („typisch königlichen Pose“), and Gerd Mevissen confirms that “his sitting mode is generally known in Sanskrit as (*mahārājātilāsana*)” (Liebert 1976: 233). Malleret (1960: 212) seems to identify it as a ‘Javanese’ posture, but I do not know on which terminological canon Malleret relies.
21. For the sake of developing the iconographical argument, I have left open the visual identification of the mount as bull or buffalo on either stela, but in reality the shape of the horns on K. 693 and the presence of the hump on K. 1198 are in themselves sufficient to clinch the matter. – In the secondary literature on Khmer art, Śiva’s Bull is still commonly referred to as ‘Nandin’. Concerning this incorrect usage, it is hoped that G. Bhattacharya’s seminal 1977 paper, as well as the follow-up publication of 1984, will soon attract attention also at the Southeast Asian periphery of Indology (cf. the contribution by Pratapaditya Pal to the present volume).
22. Cf. K. Bhattacharya 1961: 126, notes 4 and 6. The quotation is from n. 6 (« Brahmā placé à droite et Viṣṇu placé à gauche de la figure centrale de Śiva »).
23. For textual references, see G. Bhattacharya 1977 [= 2000: 149-172] and 1984 [= 2000: 173-180]; Goodall *et al.* 2004: 100-108.
24. This is not the only sign of an unprofessional editorial policy. The notice of K. 1198, for which Gerdi Gerschheimer, Dominique Soutif and myself were jointly responsible, was, despite numerous communications from Gerschheimer warning against this very error, attributed only to him; our notice was drafted in French, but the published German translation was not submitted to the author(s) for approval.
25. « Il existe enfin un certain nombre de stèles qui se distinguent par une remarquable particularité: la présence d’une figure en fort relief, sculptée en haut ou en bas du texte de la première face. On pourrait les désigner par le terme conventionnel de *stèles historiées*. » The wording suggests that Finot intended to adopt the conventional French terminology from a Western (classical?) epigraphical domain, but I have not managed to identify the source of this convention. It is remotely possible that Finot’s words have to be understood differently, viz. that he intended to establish a new convention in his own domain, that of Southeast Asian, in this case specifically Khmer, epigraphy.
26. « un rapport entre le sujet de la sculpture et celui du texte » (p. 258).
27. Cf. Boisselier 1966: 225f. For a beautiful photograph and notice of K. 449 (Finot’s pl. XX), see Jessup & Zéphir 1997: 246; see in that same catalogue also p. 174 for a photograph and notice of K. 940. The same two stelae are also included (with photographs and briefer notices) in Dalsheimer 2001: 202-205, nos. 101 and 102. The last mentioned catalogue further includes (under the nos. 104-107, pp. 206-210 respectively) K. 214 (Finot’s pl. XIXa); K. 91; K. 702; and K. 693.
28. His words “the fragmentary inscriptions” („Die bruchstückhaften Inschriften“) are misleading because, although it is indeed badly worn and therefore partly illegible, there is no reason to assume that the bilingual text covering four sides of the stela constitutes more than one single inscription.

29. Cf. e.g. K. 158, st. XXXIV (in comparison with B, l. 34 through c, l. 1 and K. 380 E, l. 3-4 and 58 for the identity of this deity with the Bhadreśvara of Liṅgapura (Vat Phu), and Sanderson 2003-04: 409-421 on that Bhadreśvara.
30. The inscription K. 1198 does not mention Brahmā at all, so it is most likely that the imagery of the Trimūrti was chosen only to highlight the supremacy of Śiva (cf. K. Bhattacharya 1961: 126 on the Śaiva conception of the trinity).
31. He has provided me photographs of the inscription at the entrance of the Keśava Temple at Sōmanāthapura (*Epigraphia Carnatica*: old edition, pt. III, 1894, no. 97 [p. 85f. and 166ff.]; new edition, pt. V, 1976, no. 88 [p. 475ff. and 924ff.]) and of two other inscriptions in the garden of the Oriental Research Institute at Mysore.
32. About this inscription, see Derret 1957: xvii f. (description of the same photograph, there part of plate II facing page 65).
33. That the motif itself existed much earlier, however, is proven by the random examples of its appearance on the seal that joins the two Poona plates of Vākātaka Prabhāvātīguptā, dating to the late fourth century CE (Mirashi 1963: 5-9, pl. II), and on the fourth century Candravallī (stone) inscription of Kadamba Mayūvarman (Gai 1996: 61, pl. II). [Editorial notice: please see also the addition below.]
34. Cf. the almost identical readings by Pou 2001: 245 and her translation on p. 250.
35. Cf. Pou 2001: 245 and 251.

Editorial Addition

At the request of the author of this contribution, the editors here subjoin a list of some further representations of the motif of Sun and Moon that has been treated above.

- An inscribed boundary marker from Salsette Island near Mumbai, dated Vikrama year 1221/AD 1164-65, now in the British Museum (OA W 402 Witt Collection) depicts at the top symbols of the Sun and Moon and graphically illustrates the ass-curse below the inscription; cf. p. 94, col.pl. 72 in Michael Willis (1998) [The British Museum, Department of Oriental Antiquities:] North India, Sixth to Thirteenth Century, *Arts of Asia* (Hong Kong) 28/2 (March-April): 88-97. The ass-curse, accompanying a long (unread?) inscription, is also depicted (without Sun and Moon) on a 10th-century stone slab of unknown provenance in the Allahabad Museum; cf. Krishna Deva & S.D. Trivedi (1996) *Stone Sculpture in the Allahabad Museum, Volume II*, New Delhi: 60, no. 293, fig. 243AB.
- Eight hero stones depicting the motif of Sun and Moon are illustrated on p. 142 in Renzo Freschi (1987), Indian Horses and Horsemen, *Arts of Asia* (Hong Kong) 17/4 (July-August): 140-143.
- A number of stone stelae, some of them inscribed, with symbols of the Sun, Moon and stars are illustrated on p. 89, figs. 23-26, in Sue Thompson (1995) Stone Architecture of the Karnali Basin, West Nepal, *Arts of Asia* (Hong Kong) 25/4 (July-August): 81-89.
- On a golden plaque (inscribed “Si Mpu Geri”) from Java, the head of “Śiva” (or rather of Pārvatī) is flanked by Sun and Moon symbols; see fig. 1 in Kalpana Kartik (1995) The Gold Collection at the Jakarta National Museum, *Arts of Asia* (Hong Kong) 25/6 (November-December): 90-100.
- For Sun and Moon symbols flanking different Indian deities see Gerd J.R. Mevissen (2003) Corpus of Hindu and Jaina *devī* Images Bearing Figures or Symbols of Astral Deities, *Berliner Indologische Studien* (Reinbek) 15/16/17: 439-530 (esp. sections 1.1.1.3. ‘Pārvatī’, 1.2.2.2. ‘Mahiṣāsūramardinī’, 1.2.2.3. ‘Siṃhavāhinī’), and *idem* (2007) Images of Buddhist Goddesses Accompanied by Astral Deities, *Kalhār (White Water-Lily). Studies in Art, Iconography, Architecture and Archaeology of India and Bangladesh (Professor Enamul Haque Felicitation Volume)*, eds. Gouriswar Bhattacharya, Gerd J.R. Mevissen, Mallar Mitra & Sutapa Sinha, New Delhi, Kaveri Books: 154-201, pls. 20.1-32 (esp. sections I.B. and I.C. ‘Mārīcī’).

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Plate 47.1: Detail of the inscribed Khmer stela K. 1198, c. 1014 CE, top of side A. Photo: Christophe Pottier.

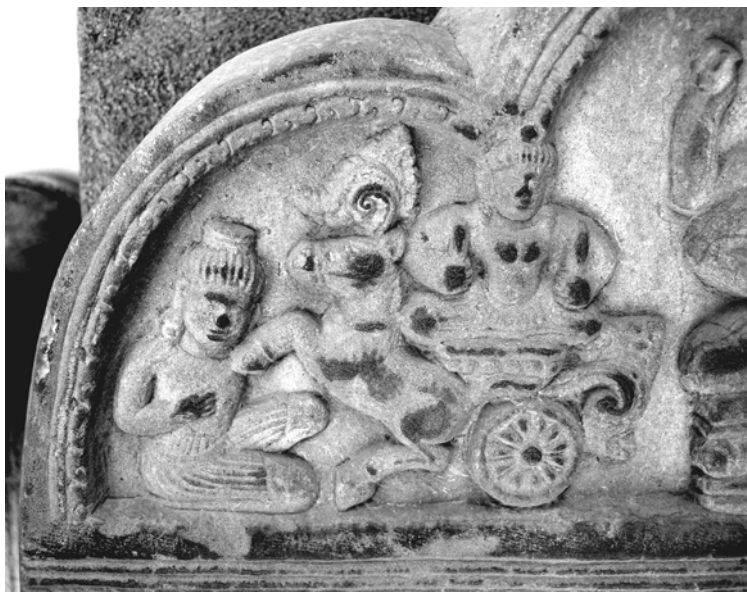
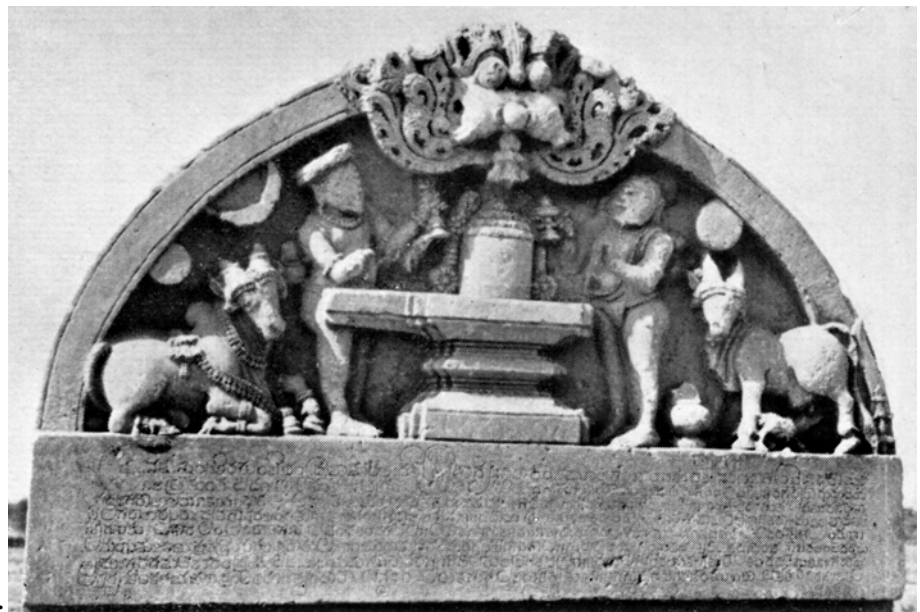


Plate 47.2:
Detail of Plate 47.1,
top of side A, left: Sūrya.
Photo: Dominique Soutif.



Plate 47.3:
Detail of Plate 47.1,
top of side A, right: Candra.
Photo: Dominique Soutif.

Plate 47.4: Detail of the inscribed Khmer stela K. 693, 1003 CE, top of side A. Photo: Bertrand Porte.



**Plate 47.5:
Detail of a stela in the
Pañcaliṅga Temple,
Sōmanāthapura,
Karnataka, India,
13th century CE.
Photo: Klaus Bruhn
(after Derret 1957: pl. II).**

PRAJÑĀDHARA

**ESSAYS ON
ASIAN ART, HISTORY, EPIGRAPHY AND CULTURE
in Honour of
Gouriswar Bhattacharya**

Edited by

**Gerd J.R. Mevissen
and
Arundhati Banerji**

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