PERFORMING PROWESS:

Essays on Localized Hindu Elements in Southeast Asian Art from Past to Present

Edited by
Wannasarn (Saam) Noonsuk

Performing Prowess:
Essays on Localized Hindu Elements in Southeast Asian Art from Past to Present

This book is dedicated to:

Professor Kaja M. McGowan,
prominent scholar in the field of social history of art in Southeast Asia and much beloved teacher by her students.

Professor Laura Meyer,
the founding mother of the Art History Program at California State University, Fresno and a kind mentor and excellent role model for her younger colleagues and students alike.

Occasional Publication Series
Art History Program
Department of Art, Design, and Art History
College of Arts and Humanities
California State University, Fresno

VOLUME 1

PERFORMING PROWESS:

Essays on Localized Hindu Elements in Southeast Asian Art from Past to Present

Wannasarn (Saam) Noonsuk, Editor

First Edition

FRESNO STATE
Art, Design and Art History

Art History Program
Department of Art, Design and Art History
California State University, Fresno

1st Edition
Published in 2023 by
Art History Program
Department of Art, Design and Art History
California State University, Fresno
5225 N. Backer Ave. M/S CA65
Fresno, California 93740 USA

Recommended Citation:
Noonsuk, Wannasarn (Saam), ed.
Performing Prowess: Essays on Localized Hindu Elements in Southeast Asian Art from Past to Present. The Art History Program Occasional Publication Series, Volume I. Fresno: Department of Art, Design and Art History at California State University, Fresno, 2023.

ISBN (e-book): 978-616-603-315-1

DOI: https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.22817177

Stable URL: https://fsartanddesign.org/research/performing-prowess.pdf

Copy Editor: Allison Nakazawa

Book Designers: Zachary Dytche, Tony Xiong, and Sandra Xiong

Front Cover Designer: Tony Xiong

Back Cover Designer: Tony Xiong and Sandra Xiong

Contents

Preface and Acknowledgements

In Fall 2018, the California State University (CSU) Office of the Chancellor approved the elevation of the former Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Art with an emphasis in Art History to a full B.A. in Art History Degree at CSU Fresno, which is the first and only one of its kind in the vast San Joaquin Valley. Born from the hard work of the Art History Faculty/Area and the generous support from various organizations, this new Art History Program has developed a number of new courses and promoted the studies of social history of art around the world. By studying art in its specific social context, we can see how meanings of artworks were formed and appreciate the different modes of thinking and cultural diversity through time in human history. To extend this multi-cultural focus even further, the Art History Program created the publication series that allows in-depth studies of particular themes in world art and related fields, such as architecture, archaeology, and material culture. I am deeply honored that the Series Editorial Board gave me the opportunity to serve as the editor of this series' inaugural volume in Fall 2019 and wish to thank the Board members for their relentless support, including Drs. Laura Meyer, Keith Jordan, and Luis Gordo Peláez. I would particularly like to dedicate this book and express my gratitude to Dr. Laura Meyer, the founding mother of our Art History Program. We owe a lasting debt of gratitude to her and wish her a wonderful retirement.

For this inaugural volume, I chose the theme that explores diverse aspects of Hindu elements in Southeast Asian art because it helps us see the long process of how cultural elements of a religion from one place were accepted, modified, utilized, and localized in another place, not only in the ancient times, but also in an on-going process in the modern-day world. In our case, the cultural forces of Hindu belief, based on its connection to sublime deities, sophisticated recitations, magical power, and personal prowess, continued for at least 1,500 years, mixed with indigenous practices, and remained strong in Southeast Asia, even after that religion were overshadowed by Buddhism and Islam. Also, the largest Hindu community outside India is in fact Bali, an enchanting island in Indonesia. While I was working as Senior Specialist for the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SEAMEO SPAFA), I thank its late director, Dr. Rujaya Abhakorn, for assigning me to lead the Seminar and Workshop on Hindu Art in Southeast Asia, which took place in Bali in 2017. This leadership experience helped deepen my knowledge in this subject and certainly inspired this volume.

Although the production of this peer-reviewed volume was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, we were very fortunate that we were able to pick it up and complete our work this year. I am grateful to Dr. Vithaya Arporn, Head of the Center of Excellence for Women and Social Security, Walailak University, for his help in acquiring an ISBN for this Open-Access book.

I wish to record my utmost appreciation to the contributors in this volume, for their exceptional

essays, collaborative spirit, and perhaps most of all, patience. I am also grateful to the anonymous peer reviewers who made many important suggestions for improvement on the essays. It has been delightful working with them all, both my old and new colleagues. Exceptionally, we all also agreed to make this book an Open-Access publication, so that students, scholars, and the general public can have its digital copy for free. The dissemination of knowledge is our true goal, and I am confident that our contributors' high-quality work in this volume will no doubt benefit the academic world. Without the hard work and unwavering dedication over a long period of time of our Copy Editor, Ms. Allison Nakazawa, and our Book Designers; Zachary Dytche, Tony Xiong, and Sandra Xiong who are all outstanding CSU Fresno alumni, this book would not see the light of day. I truly owe them an enormous gratitude. At the end, this book became tangible because of the generous support of CSU Fresno, Provost Xuanning Fu, the College of Arts and Humanities, Dean Honora Chapman and Associate Dean Sergio La Porta. The College and University granted me the Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities Award to travel to Thailand to complete this book project. I am deeply indebted to them.

Last but not least, I am deeply grateful to Professor Kaja McGowan for doing us the honor of writing the volume's remarkable Introduction, which pinpoints the significance of this subject and meaningfully weaves all the chapters together. Reading her work delightfully brought me back to the years I studied at Cornell with her as my dissertation committee Co-Chair along with Professor Stanley O'Connor. A leading specialist in art and culture of Bali, where the local form of Hinduism still prominently thrives, she always educated her students with warmth and first-rate scholarship. In fact, four contributors in this volume are her former or current students. This book project, as I have been, is very fortunate to have received her kind guidance and support, and from the bottom of my heart, I would humbly like to dedicate this book to her.

Wannasarn (Saam) Noonsuk
Editor
California, May 2023

Notes on Contributors

Pamela Nguyen Corey

Dr. Corey researches and teaches modern and contemporary art history, focusing on Southeast Asia within broader transnational Asian and global contexts. She received her BA (Studio Art) from the University of California, Irvine, and her PhD (History of Art and Visual Studies) from Cornell University. Prior to joining Fulbright University Vietnam in January 2021, she was an assistant professor in the History of Art & Archaeology department at SOAS University of London. She has published in numerous academic journals, exhibition catalogs, and platforms for artistic and cultural commentary. Her first book, *The City in Time: Contemporary Art and Urban Form in Vietnam and Cambodia* (University of Washington Press, 2021), was the recipient of a Millard Meiss Publication Fund from the College Art Association. In arguing for a renewed understanding of the spatial formation of contemporary art practices in Vietnam and Cambodia, the book centers artists' engagement with urban forms and temporalities, and complicates prevalent interpretations of postwar artistic subjectivity. She co-edited "Voice as Form," a special issue of *Oxford Art Journal* (2020), which introduces material from her new research into the use of voice and sound in contemporary artworks from Southeast Asia and its diasporas. She continues to carry out research on global modernism, contemporary art in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, and decolonizing art history debates in various writing and editorial projects.

Gauri Parimoo Krishnan

Dr. Krishnan has dedicated 30 years to the arts and heritage sector in Singapore. She is an art historian, independent curator and museum consultant based in Singapore and India. She has curated seminal exhibitions, such as *Alamkara: 5000 Years of India, Ramayana: A Living Tradition, and On the Nalanda Trail: Buddhism in India* among others. Her major contribution as the founding senior curator is the development of the South Asian galleries of the Asian Civilisations Museum (2003) and the Indian Heritage Centre (2015) at their inception - the latter she led to completion as its lead curator and inaugural Centre Director in 2015. She currently is the chief curator of the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya managed by the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library in New Delhi. Her research interests include the *Ramayana*, Buddhist art of Asia, Indian Diaspora, and Indian Trade Textiles to Southeast Asia. She earned her MPA in Bharata Natyam (1986) and PhD in Art History from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in 1995. Her major publications include *Naina Dalal: Contemporary Indian Printmaker, The Power of the Female: Devangana Sculptures on Indian Temple Architecture, Ramayana in Focus: Visual and Performing Arts of Asia, The Divine Within: Art & Living Culture of India and South Asia, Nalanda, Srivijaya and Beyond: Re-exploring Buddhist Art in Asia, and Ratna Dipa: New Dimensions in Indian Art History & Theory, Essays in Honour of Prof Ratan Parimoo* among others.

Astara Light

Astara Light is a PhD candidate in the History of Art and Visual Studies Department at Cornell University. Her dissertation tentatively titled: "Hauntings in contemporary Indonesian art: Tracing cosmological and ecological knowledge through exhibition histories" centers on the work of artists from Bali and Java who engage with different media including painting, sculpture, and installation art. Her dissertation considers how artists visually highlight ecological problems by drawing on spiritual perspectives unique to Indonesia. She looks broadly at artists who exhibit their work nationally and internationally, including in Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Her previous research considers Indonesian art alongside topics of performance and movement theory, religion, indigeneity, and national identity. She received an MA (Art History and Visual Studies) from the University of Victoria in British Columbia, a dual MA (History of Art and Southeast Asian Studies) from the University of California, Riverside, and her BA (Religious Studies and East Asian Studies) from Indiana University, Bloomington. She has done several research projects and exhibitions at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, the Legacy Art Gallery in Victoria, and the California Museum of Photography.

Kaja M. McGowan

Dr. McGowan is Professor of Art History at Cornell University. Her areas of interest involve South and Southeast Asia with emphasis on Indonesia, particularly Java and Bali. Her research explores the flow of ideas and artifacts along trade routes -- architecture, bronzes, textiles, ceramics, performance traditions, and visualizations of texts like *Panji Malat*, the *Ramayana*, and the *Mahabharata* -- artifacts that move and those that are locally produced. This accounts for the shaping of ideas and the development of styles across vast geographical and historical distances. Her work is governed by the complex ways in which History of Art and Visual Studies intersect with Anthropology, Material Culture, Colonial and Post-colonial Theory, Performance, Gender and Religious Studies.

John N. Miksic

Dr. Miksic is Emeritus Professor in the Southeast Asian Studies Department, National University of Singapore, and Senior Research Fellow, School of Humanities, Nanyang Technological University. He holds an MA in International Affairs from Ohio University, and an MA and PhD from the Department of Anthropology, Cornell University. He has received awards from Singapore and Indonesia for contributions to the study of Southeast Asian culture. His current research projects include the archaeology of ancient ports on the shores of the Straits of Melaka, early cities in Indonesia, Cambodia and Myanmar, and ceramic analysis. He has published extensively on early Hindu and Buddhist material culture in Southeast Asia.

Wannasarn (Saam) Noonsuk

Dr. Noonsuk is Associate Professor of Asian Art and Archaeology, Department of Art, Design and Art History at California State University, Fresno. He was Senior Specialist at the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SEAMEO SPAFA), and a tenured faculty member and Head of the Archaeology Research Unit at Walailak University, Thailand. He received his BA in Archaeology from Silpakorn University (1st class honor), MA in Anthropology from the University of Hawai'i, and MA and PhD in History of Art and Archaeology from Cornell University under the auspices of the late King of Thailand, and was also a post-doctoral fellow at the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Paris under the auspices of the French Government. He directed an excavation program in southern Thailand and published a number of books and articles related to early Southeast Asian trade, state formation, and social roles of art. His recent books include *Peninsular Siam and Its Neighborhoods* (ed., 2017) and *Tambralinga and Nakhon Si Thammarat: Early Kingdoms on the Isthmus of Southeast Asia* (2nd edition, 2018) (https://peninsularsiam.wordpress.com). He also currently serve as the Vice President for Programs for the Fresno County Archaeological Society.

Anissa Rahadiningtyas

Dr. Rahadiningtyas is an art historian who earned her PhD in Art History at Cornell University for her research on the position and question of Islamic religiosity, rituals, and performances in works of modern and contemporary art in Indonesia. She currently is Assistant Curator of Islamic aesthetics in modern and contemporary Southeast Asia at the National Gallery of Singapore. Her research interests include Indian Ocean studies, postcolonial and decolonial theories, comparative modernisms, gender and feminism, and Islamic studies. She has published her essays and articles on the online journal and essay platforms, *The Jugaad Project*, and *Post MoMA*.

Introduction

Hindu Forms/Material Returns: Advocating for a Water-Centered Approach

Kaja M. McGowan

A teacher meets her students as mutable forms for which no destiny seems impossible. When my former doctoral student at Cornell, now Dr. Wannasarn Noonsuk (Saam) asked if I would write the introduction to this edited volume on Hindu Art in South and Southeast Asia, I was honored to consider stitching together the various essays under one roof. Indeed, Saam's contribution to this volume, entitled "Crossed Destinies: The Early Relationship between Tamil Nadu and Thailand with Special Reference to Hindu Artistic and Cultural Elements" sets the stage for just such an architectural metaphor, or what in Old Javanese literature is referred to as a *candi bhaseng karas*, a "temple of words" or a "book monument" (Zoetmulder 1974, 146). By way of introduction, Saam writes:

> *Perched dramatically on the edge of the Coromandel Coast and fearlessly abraded by the forces of the monsoon winds and waves, the Shore Temple at Mamallapuram was erected by the Pallava king Rajasimha (c. 700-728) and was the earliest known example of a stone-built temple in South India, after centuries of rock-cut shrines. This Shaivite temple consists of a pair of sanctuaries of unequal size. With a doorway pierced into the sanctuary wall on the outermost rim of the beach, the sanctum under the highest vimana tower opens directly on the sea, not only to receive the prayers from sailors, but also to catch the first rays of the rising sun, strikingly bathing the divine every dawn. To achieve this remarkable effect the designer of the temple departed from convention by placing a second small, towered shrine at the rear, or west end of the temple, facing into a now ruined courtyard which is encircled by numerous small sculptures of recumbent bulls. Whatever the motive for this innovative design, the door of the central sanctum symbolically opens on the sea lane to Southeast Asia and modern-day Thailand (Craven 2006, 151; Michell 2000, 87; O'Connor 1965, 1). (Noonsuk, this volume).*

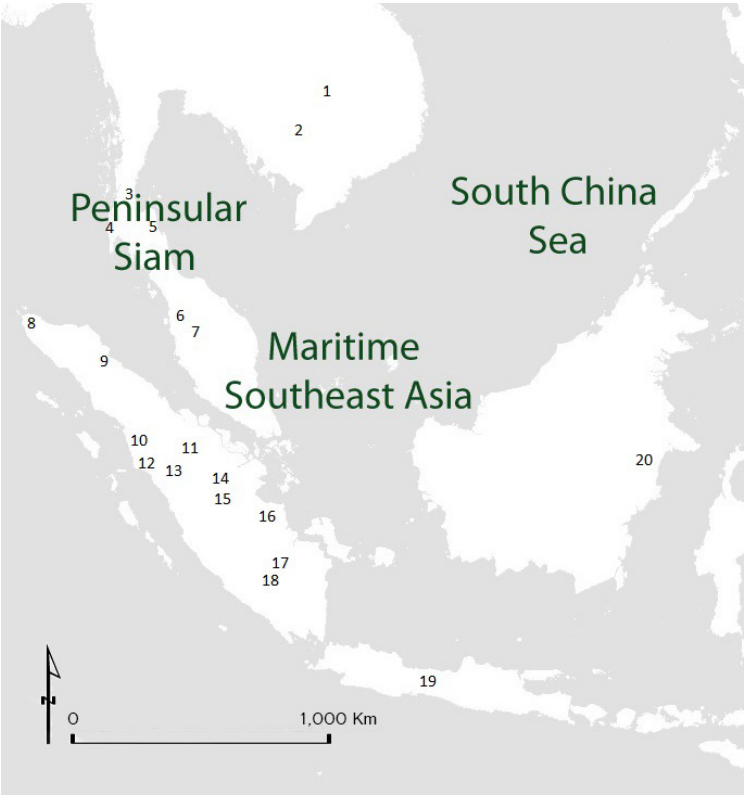
We are lured as spellbound readers to that eastern horizon and through that doorway at the Shore Temple, where a fluid exchange of Tamil sensibilities on Southeast Asians, despite the vicissitudes of time and distance, continues to be felt today. His essay unpacks this early relationship through time since the late centuries BCE based mainly on ceramics, inscriptions, sculpture, and other archaeological records. He concludes with a discussion of the living Hindu rituals still performed in Thailand that are a direct result of Tamil interaction. Indeed, by the 2nd to 4th century A.D., Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms were beginning to emerge in Southeast Asia. The adoption of Indic political and religious ideas and their visual manifestations in statuary, architecture, and urban design as well as the use of Sanskrit and

other imported writing systems represented a dramatic change, which early researchers of Southeast Asian history characterized as the "Indianization" of the region (Majumdar 1941; Cœdès 1968). Even as cultural transactions occur through various fluid networks, they often result in the formation of boundaries and help to construct perceptions of self and others. As art historians, we are hardly immune to this phenomenon. Oftentimes our own research is informed by networks within which we operate, and it is circumscribed by regional and disciplinary boundaries.

This volume invites papers from scholars who are exploring how objects fashioned of diverse materials, and uniquely constrained aesthetic practices, have moved across regions that we today subsume within "South Asia" and "South-East Asia." (Map 0.1) By investigating these questions about migration, cross-cultural exchange, and the visual arts this volume can be seen to engage with, while seeking at times to move beyond, two modern paradigms for the study of Southeast Asia. The "Indianization" paradigm, as it is called, maintains that Southeast Asia received its most important aesthetic and political ideologies from South Asia. Beginning in the 1960s, opponents of this approach became more outspoken (Smail 1961; Benda 1962), arguing that the region was no longer considered a passive recipient of culture but an independent and fully autonomous center able to generate its own social, religious, and political organizational structures, many of which survived, and even thrived, when adjusting to later cultural imports. During the 1980s, more hybrid frameworks, such as O.W. Wolters's "localization" (mentioned by many of the authors in this volume) maintained that Southeast Asian communities selectively and self-consciously chose to embellish their worlds with choice motifs from various cultures including those of South Asia (Wolters 1982). This appreciation of a wider social horizon has resulted from a change in theoretical orientation – an increasingly ecological turn toward ideas of a "connected "history, and other postcolonial and globalized approaches – that assigns greater importance to both nonelites as agents of social and political change and to contacts among all groups beyond political boundaries. Many of the essays in this volume give agency to the powerful role of the sea, for example, and to the prowess of sea-faring skills in a richly maritime world (Noonsuk, Miksic).

More recently, Leonard Andaya has advocated for a water-centered approach in the study of South and Southeast Asia (Andaya 2018). Such an approach is multidimensional and incorporates an

Map 0.1. South and Southeast Asia and relevant placenames in this volume. Source: W. Saam Noonsuk



Map 0.2. Sites mentioned in the volume, including No. 1 Kompong Cham Kau; 2 Angkor; 3 Chaiya; 4 Khao Pra Narai, Takuapa River; 5 Nakhon Si Thammarat/Tambralinga; 6 Kedah, Merbok, Province Wellesley; 7 Perak, Malaysia (Ipoh, Tanjong Rambutan, Sungai Siput, Pengkalan Pegoh, Bidor, Jalong, north of Ipoh near Sungai Siput; 8 Neusu, Aceh; 9 Kota Cina; 10 Barus; 11 Padang Lawas; 12 Mandailing Regency, Sibolga; 13 Sorik Merapi; 14 Kota Aur, Kampar Kiri, Batusangkar; 15 Padang Roco; 16 Muara Jambi; 17 Palembang, Musi River; 18 Bumiayu; 19 Dieng Plateau; 20 Kutai. Source: John Miksic and W. Saam Noonsuk

understanding of the physical characteristics of water, the transformations it undergoes through human intervention, and the sociocultural meaning that is applied to it by individual communities. By examining this dynamic interaction, new spatializations swim to the surface. This increasingly porous perspective has also arisen from revised understandings of technological developments and studies of their material trajectories through time and space. Along with the exchange of religions and religious ideas, material culture and technology, several cultigens diffused widely and across ethno-linguistic boundaries because of the interconnectedness of the regions around the ocean. The human impact on landscapes reveals itself in various ways. Human populations affect their environment but also adjust to it. The plants they cultivate or those that grow wild, shape their agricultural systems, village structures, architectural, culinary, and medicinal traditions, rituals, and art (Hoogervorst 2012, 2013; Gonda, 1973). If plants could speak, I think that they would have a great deal to say about performing prowess in South and Southeast Asia, but I will return to that thought by way of conclusion.

Performing Prowess, the title of this collection of essays, was deliberately suggested for its double directedness. It serves as both a nod back to historian Oliver Wolters' academic catchphrase of Southeast Asian Studies – "man of prowess" – and a forward-looking glance into current and future scholarship that now incorporates a larger and more diversified range of performative actors than were considered previously. According to Wolters, "prowess had to be spotted in every generation" (Wolters 1982, 112). As such, prowess signified the spiritual and leadership resources of those responsible for mobilizing religious

sentiment, settlements, and mandalas in pre- and protohistoric Southeast Asia. It was also the quality which justified what he called "self-Hinduizing" strategies for leaders to aspire to be like the Hindu god, Shiva, for example, someone known to achieve mighty things. Such a person could be "Shiva-like" because his energy seemed to match Shiva's divine energy (Wolters 1982, 112-113). Inspired by the work of anthropologist, James Boon, Wolters describes how this divine force, referred to by the Sanskrit word *sakti* ("spiritual energy") in Bali, is more often associated with the Hindu god, Visnu (Boon 1977). *Sakti* in Bali is not related to immobile religious and social institutions, but rather Visnu's preferred vehicle is "an ascendant, expanding ancestor group." Such a group, according to Wolters, would be "led by someone with remarkable prowess" (Wolters 1982, 93-94). Visnu's *sakti* regarding the power of water as *amrita* (the elixir of life) and its mobilization would not have been lost on Balinese or Khmer sensibilities for that matter as can be discerned in this volume. Corey's analysis of contemporary Cambodian artist, Svay Sareth's large-scale sculpture titled *Toy (Churning of the Sea of Milk)*, a playful nod to the story's monumental depiction in bas-reliefs at the 12th-century temple of Angkor Wat, exhibited at the 4th Singapore Biennale, with its larger than life-size soldiers, stitched from camouflage fabric and stuffed with a seed-hair fiber, allegorizes water's invisible presence in fluid political forces at play, past and present. Corey describes her selected artists as having "deployed Hindu forms" as "vessels of meaning," harnessing myth as "the centrifugal force," the very "hinge of the work." For the essays in this volume that explore contemporary themes (Noonsuk, Corey, Rahadiningtyas, and Light), this quest for the present, in the words of Stanley J. O'Connor "is registered in Southeast Asian art as a continuing revision of forms, formats, and iconography…The world is as it appears, and we find our way through it, and our home in it, in the ways that we make it appear" (O'Connor 1995, 5).

Recent scholarship has expanded the range of possibility to include more actors who can potentially perform prowess. Within scenarios of this kind, past and present, religious leaders, artisans, puppeteers, poets, dancers, and musicians would have participated in the prestige apparatus of the elite, man (and/or woman) of prowess, inviting participants not only to reveal their *sakti* to mobilize labor, but also to control skilled labor in the spiritual realms, in industry and the arts, thereby empowering the leadership from the ground up. What is lost in much academic scholarship is the creativity of the productive processes of making that bring the artifacts themselves into being: the life of the raw ingredients themselves, and the sensual awareness of practitioners (McGowan 2007; Ingold 2012). Reformulating the body, and its sensuousness, has allowed scholars to take another look at what it might mean to perform prowess not just by elites, but by artisans as well (Stoller 1997). The contemporary manipulation of raw ingredients by living artists in Southeast Asia, can also provide clues to the distant past, particularly from the vantage point of material returns. Materials themselves know no faith but are brought to the task at hand by their makers. Materials have their own affordances, and often dictate the outcome. Saam's essay, again, reaches out for this analogy between his edited volume and built forms, especially through his concept of a "realm of crossed destinies" in which thatched roofs supported by wooden pillars are described as distinctively characteristic of early Hindu shrines in the Malay-Thai peninsula. He compares the thatched roofs of peninsular Thailand to thatched roofs on Hindu shrines in Bali, Indonesia today, maintaining that the initial inspiration may have come from Tamil Nadu and/or Kerala in India. Although no shrines with thatched roofs might have survived in Tamil Nadu today, according to Saam, the "Draupadi shrine, one of the rathas at Mamallapuram, dated to around the second quarter of the 7th century, demonstrates in free-standing stone just how an early Tamil shrine with a thatched roof may have looked" (Huntington, 1999, 307). Saam crosses the material destinies of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Thailand, and Bali through a shared preoccupation with the vernacular and ephemeral role of thatched roofs to which I will return momentarily after introducing more formally the essays in this volume.

One could say that the very "prowess" of Wolters' slender volume, entitled *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, first published in 1982, resides in the questions it poses

and the case it makes for deep continuities between the ancient Southeast Asian past and the world of today. Indeed, Wolters mobilizes his "man of prowess" to propose that cosmopolitan urbanity and open-mindedness have been characteristic of Southeast Asian elites for whom the time that mattered most was the present. Such an approach bodes well for this volume which includes a balanced number of essays addressing early Hindu presence in Mainland and Island Southeast Asia (Noonsuk, Miksic, and Krishnan) in tandem with essays that explore Hindu forms in contemporary Southeast Asian contexts (Noonsuk, Corey, Rahadiningtyas, and Light). One overarching theme that would appear to unite all the essays to varying degrees is the challenging task of trying to focus on what is arguably an isolable Hindu presence without engaging with indigenous, Buddhist, and later even Islamic practices. Since I have already given pride of place to Saam's essay, I will now turn to his fellow contributors in the order that they appear:

Gauri Parimoo Krishnan's "An Overview of Hindu Heritage in Southeast Asia" tacks back and forth between the two paradigms mentioned earlier. Allowing the scholarship of George Cœdès to take the lead, Krishnan chooses to focus on what is Indic, rather than Hindu or Buddhist in the art of Southeast Asia. While acknowledging the seamlessness with which Hindu beliefs, practices, and traditions have influenced the everyday lives of Southeast Asians and continue to manifest even at official mainstream and popular cultural levels, she maintains that studying Southeast Asian art from the perspective of Indianization necessitates looking at it as one connected Hindu-Buddhist tradition with several selective adaptations. Here, she champions Central Java's Borobudur and Prambanan temples as sites in a "religious continuum," where from one generation to the next, religious affiliation may change but the force driving the making and dedication of such enormous monuments remains the same. She concludes by voicing the second paradigm, that though the "hand of the Indian master artist may have inspired Southeast Asian craftsmen," it is their "creative genius" that requires acknowledgement. Otherwise, she argues, "how would sites such as Borobudur with its Buddhist narratives, Prambanan with its *Ramayana* narratives, Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Bayon and sites in Bali and Thailand unite the plastic arts in both the regions and within Southeast Asia?"

John Miksic confronts the conundrum of how to interpret the data in his informative essay "Hindu Art in the Straits of Melaka." Championing the scholarly assumption that most of the population of the Straits of Melaka in ancient times was Hindu (with a particular devotion to the god Shiva), he wonders how that ultimately squares with the fact that most of the religious artifacts and inscriptions from the precolonial era found in the Straits of Melaka are Buddhist (Miksic 2010). Countering the "Indianization" paradigm, Miksic argues convincingly that it seems likely that the main agents who transported South Asian cultural elements across the Bay of Bengal were Southeast Asians who had been to South Asia. Advancing a salient argument that Buddhism and Hinduism concern themselves with different aspects of life, he writes:

> *Buddhism does not provide special guidance on daily affairs, the cycle of life, or the rise and fall of kings, leaving a gap which Hindu priests and related supernatural beings filled even in Southeast Asian communities which espoused Buddhist teachings. This has sometimes led to the notion that Southeast Asians created a syncretic form of religion combining Hinduism and Buddhism, but this does not seem accurate (Hariani Santiko 1995). The same complementarity of Hinduism and Buddhism also existed in early India. The oldest written texts from the Straits of Melaka, found in Kedah reflect Buddhist beliefs. The people of the Straits of Melaka would have seen nothing contradictory in using beliefs derived from Hinduism and Buddhism in different aspects of life. (Miksic, this volume).*

Miksic concludes his essay with a tantalizing site in South Sumatra, the Bumiayu site (Map 0.2), an

exceptional case where Hindu art and architecture appear to have evolved in harmony with Javanese Hindu examples but did not copy them directly. The Bumiayu sculptures provide the best example of the process of localization of Hindu art in Sumatra, an enticing site for future archaeologists and historians to investigate further.

Pamela Corey's essay, "Of Myth and Message: Some Reflections on 'Hindu' Forms in Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia," should be read in tandem with "Rethinking the Modern and the Islamic through Hindu Forms in Haryadi Suadi's and Arahmaiani's Works" by Anissa Rahadiningtyas. Among other things, both authors introduce Indonesian contemporary artist, Arahmaiani (b. 1961, Bandung, Indonesia) and her critical juxtaposition of Hindu and Islamic iconographies in *Lingga-Yoni*. Since their selective framings of Arahmaiani's work in relation to other contemporary Southeast Asian artists are uniquely configured, both authors develop quite distinctive interpretations. When first displayed, *Lingga-Yoni* drew an accusation of blasphemy from a Muslim fundamentalist group as the Shaivite symbols of *lingga* and *yoni* were read as offensive when juxtaposed with Arabic calligraphy. On the one hand, Corey situates Arahmaiani's works and her reworking of Hindu iconographies with contemporary artists, Heri Dono (b. 1960) from Indonesia and Svay Sareth (b. 1972) from Cambodia, as representative of a "generation of artists whose works engage more critically and directly with social, political, and environmental issues." Rahadiningtyas, on the other hand, offers a counter-narrative to Corey's analysis by looking closely at Arahmaiani in relation to Haryadi Suadi. Both trained in the same art training institution in Bandung, Indonesia, these two artists came from different generations but "shared distinct methods of artmaking and being in the world." Her essay aims to show multiple modes of engagement with Hindu forms that cannot be separated from Islam as both artists respond to the long history of localization, accepting religious diversity as a dynamic way to address possibilities of reclaiming and inhabiting multiple Islam(s) outside of the established Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia.

As I mentioned earlier, Corey provides a few preliminary reflections on a selection of artworks made by contemporary Indonesian and Cambodian artists that source and rework forms that have origins in epic narratives of Hindu mythology, such as the *lingga-yoni* or the Churning of the Ocean of Milk from the *Mahabharata*. As she discerns, these artworks discussed accrue intellectual and market value through exhibitions (notably biennales), and curatorial and academic writing. Applying the concept of "Hindu form" to complicate the attribution of these works as "Hindu art," she argues that "few – if any – of these artists would necessarily classify their work as such." This begs the question for those anonymous past practitioners represented in this book, a question which we can only reach for, but never fully answer. The retrieval of these forms for contemporary artistic practice, according to Corey, is "more of an act of historical excavation and of testing how they might work as culturally legible and/or provocative mediums and media for today's publics to be easily combined with other visual idioms referencing Buddhism or Islam." Wolters would see this "excavation process," articulated by Corey, as yet more evidence of that cosmopolitan urbanity and outward-lookingness so characteristic of Southeast Asian elites.

What Corey calls "excavation," Rahadiningtyas refers to as "reclamation." Through close visual analysis of works by Haryadi Suadi and Arahmaiani, Rahadiningtyas shows compellingly how a re-articulation of Sufi teachings and non-orthodox, "syncretic" forms of Islam that reject both modernist abstraction and Quranic aesthetic, will always be on the margins of modern and contemporary Islamic art as a category. Suadi's and Arahmaiani's works present a break from the boundaries and limitations set by modern art tradition and Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia as they escape and challenge this fixed categorization of modern Islamic art. Indeed, Suadi's incorporation and maintenance of the *Srabad* motifs of Ganesh, Semar, and Togog, from Cirebonese glass painting, affirms the porous and fluid transitions and exchanges from Hindu-Buddhist to Islamic motifs in the context of Cirebon. Arahmaiani's artistic practice that reemphasizes the importance of "syncretism" in her understanding of Islam manifests

in her reworking of Hindu forms in her paintings and performances. Her so-called "syncretic" practice represents Arahmaiani's conviction to challenge with performative prowess the increased fundamentalism in Indonesian Islam.

Finally, in "Crossing Lines: Locating Power, Prowess, and Spiritual Energy in Works by Contemporary Balinese Artists," Astara Light examines questions of prowess and *sakti* in the context of Balinese contemporary art. She considers the work of Balinese artists who took part in a recent exhibition, entitled "Balinese Masters" at the Art-Bali gallery in Nusa Dua. Works on display by artists like Mangku Muriati, Made Wianta and Nyoman Erawan foreground performance forms and experiences of shadow theater either through Kamasan style painting or by drawing on experiential aspects of this traditional form. These artworks also demonstrate ways that genealogies of authority in Bali can be traced through images and curatorial spaces. Light explores the role of the shadow theater (*wayang kulit*), dance masks, and serpentine daggers (*kris*) as Hindu props in the hands of Balinese contemporary artists. She also engages with ideas of performativity more broadly and in relation to artworks that speak to ecologically motivated themes. Not only do these artists wield and interrogate ideas of power through their visual and material works, but within the context of this exhibition, Light raises important questions regarding gender and what it means to be an artistic "master" today, specifically through the work of Mangku Muriati. Born in 1967, Mangku Muriati's painting is a unique example of prowess and *sakti* as Wolters defines it since a well-formed artisanal ancestral group is in large part the source of her power. As Light acknowledges, Muriati's connection to her father Mangku Mura (1920-1999) is important to her artistic legacy because he chose her not only to be his artistic successor, but also to assume his role as priest (*mangku*) of their clan temple in Banjar Siku. Light concludes, "Mangku Muriati considers painting and priestly duties as complementary, comparing the role of an artist to a shadow puppeteer (*dalang*), who needs an extensive knowledge of characters and stories, ultimately derived from what is considered the sacred scripture. While her father was alive, Mangku Muriati said that her painting lacked spirit, but her father's passing brought her painting to life; she took on his strokes." (Campbell 2019, 92-93).

Though Light does not allude to this, very likely Mangku Muriati inherited her father's compositional choices as well. One such composition (hung traditionally in ancestral shrines where the offerings are placed in Kamasan), made famous by Mangku Mura in the 1970s, was "Mandara Giri" (The Churning of the Sea of Milk), a cataclysmic aquatic episode which takes place in the *Adiparwa* in the *Mahabharata*. According to the story, a tug-of-war ensues between the gods and the demons, who use the serpent Vasuki, coiled around (*mekilit*) the mountain, Mandara, which is used as a churning pole. This Mandara (or shrine-like meru) is set on the stable back of Visnu's avatar, the divine tortoise, Kurma. As the mountain rotates, several hairs are rubbed off Kurma's back. With time, these hairs wash ashore and become *kusha*, the quintessential material for thatched roofs. Here, we can see through mythological selection (as in the case of Corey's discussion of Cambodian artist, Svay Sareth) how connections between prowess and political fashioning can take center stage. The story of Muriati and her growth as an artist and a spiritual leader in her community is key to understanding how the concept of prowess and "soul stuff" tied to authority can be understood in respect to people's lives, their artistic production, and their ritual activities in relation to the family shrine of origin (McGowan 2007). Mangku Muriati pushes the boundaries of what authority, spiritual and political, can look like through her work. While Wolters discusses how ancestors are key in supporting prowess, the "Balinese Masters" exhibition, according to Light, "describes tracing the aesthetic DNA of art."

DNA can be traced through hair; it can also be traced in the case of Mangku Muriati through the materially rich relationship she shared with her father, not only in the raw ingredients of paint and the Hindu mythologies harnessed to their artistic work, but also in the ritual commemorative activities related to her inherited ancestral temple with its shrines. Here, by way of conclusion, I want to return to Saam's essay in this volume, and especially to his concept

Figure 0.1. Thatched Roofs at Kayusalem Temple, Pura Besakih, Bali. Source: this image by scinta1 is marked with CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Figure 0.2. Thatched roofs in modern-day secular structures in southern Thailand. Source: this image by laughlin is marked with CC BY 2.0.

of a "realm of crossed destinies" in which thatched roofs supported by wooden pillars are described as distinctively characteristic of early Hindu shrines in the Malay-Thai peninsula. He compares the thatched roofs of peninsular Siam (Thailand) to thatched roofs on Hindu shrines in Bali, maintaining that while the thatch-roofs were indigenous to Southeast Asia, their combination with brick foundations to make Hindu shrines may have been inspired by the architecture from Tamil Nadu and/or Kerala in South India. Saam crosses the material destinies of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bali (Figure 0.1), and Thailand (Figure 0.2) through a shared preoccupation with the vernacular and ephemeral role of thatched roofs. I bring up DNA, hair, Mangku Mura, and his daughter, Muriati because of the ways in which the origin of this thatch is arguably at the heart of Mangku Muriati's prowess. Since the materials used to make walls of shrines are not very durable, care must be taken to ensure that the walls are well protected from the elements by widely overhanging eaves. The main framework is made of bamboo with the roof ridge supported by king posts, girders, and columns. The usual roofing material used in buildings is a thick thatch that is made from what in Bali is called *alang-alang* (Imperata sp. or in Sanskrit, *kusha* or *darbha*). The grass is gathered in ring-like bundles which are coiled over the midrib of coconut fronds and stitched in place. These sections of thatching are lashed onto the bamboo framework of the roof. Lastly, the roof is combed like hair with a special type of rake and the bottom edge is trimmed with a knife. Such a roof, which may be up to 50 centimeters in thickness, can last for many years. In the case of Balinese religious structures and family shrines, sometimes black thatch (*ijuk*) from the sugar palm is used instead of *kusha (alang-alang)*.

Uncoiling kusha's Hindu form and navigating her material returns, mythologically, ritually, and ecologically, requires a water-centered approach. Fresh and salt-water meet and mingle at estuaries to form a brackish water environment, where special flora and fauna thrive. The liminality of this brackish environment is *kusha's* domain. As Saam alludes to in his masterful essay, thatched roofs have served for centuries as vital material ingredients in Hindu and Buddhist rituals and aesthetic practices that have moved across vast regions that we today subsume within "South Asia" and "South-East Asia." Even as cultural transactions occur through various fluid networks, "crossing destinies," they often result in the formation of boundaries and help to construct perceptions of self and other. *Kusha's* very materiality is integral to such boundary formation across aquatic time and space. (*Kusha's* very name signifies *sharp* in the sense of *acute* and is the root for the Sanskrit word for "expert," *kosala*.) At the heart of coaxing *kusha* to speak of its own prowess is the understanding that such a pervasive plant and its properties must be studied in partnership with various human communities in South and Southeast Asia. By examining the dynamics of *kusha*, important connectivity and new spatializations will unfold one performative blade at a time much like the essays, stitched together in this volume, to make a *candi bhasang karas*, "a temple of words."

References

Andaya, L.Y. 2018. "Water in the Study of Southeast Asia." *KEMANUSIAAN: the Asian Journal of Humanities* 25 (Supp. 1), 21–38.

Bellina-Pryce, B. and P. Silapanth. 2006. "Weaving Cultural Identities on Trans-Asiatic Networks: Upper Thai-Malay Peninsula—An Early Socio-Political Landscape." *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient* 93, 257-293.

Bellina, B., P. Silapanth, B. Chaisuwan, C. Thongcharoenchaikit, J. Allen, V. Bernard, et al. 2014. "The Development of Coastal Polities in the Upper Thai-Malay Peninsula." In *Before Siam: Essays in Art and Archaeology*, edited by Nicolas Revire and Stephen Murphy, 69-89. Bangkok: Siam Society and River Books.

Benda, Harry J. 1962. "The Structure of Southeast Asian History." *Journal of Southeast Asian History 3*, no. 1 (March), pp. 106-38.

Boon, James. 1977. *The Anthropological Romance of*

Bali 1597-1972. Cambridge University Press, pp. 204-205.

Bouvet, P. 2009. "Étude Préliminaire de Céramiques Indiennes et « Indianisantes » du Site de Khao Sam Kaeo IVe-IIe siècles av. J.-C." *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient* 93, 353-390.

_____. 2011. "Preliminary Study of Indian and Indian Style Wares from Khao Sam Kaeo (Chumphon, Peninsular Thailand), Fourth-Second Centuries BCE." In *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia*, edited by P.-Y. Manguin, A. Mani, and G. Wade, 47-82. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Castillo, C., B. Bellina, and D. Fuller. 2016. "Rice, Beans and Trade Crops on the Early Maritime Silk Route in Southeast Asia." *Antiquity* 90 (353), 1255-1269.

Chaisuwan, B. 2011. "Early Contacts between India and the Andaman Coast in Thailand from the Second Century to Eleventh Century CE." In *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia*, edited by P.-Y. Manguin, A. Mani, and G. Wade, 83-112. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Cœdès, George. 1968. *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, edited by Walter F. Vella. Translated by Susan Brown Cowing. East-West Center Book. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Craven, R. C. 2006. *Indian Art: A Concise History*. New York: Thames and Hudson.

Desai, M. 2018. *Wooden Architecture of Kerala*. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing.

Glover, I. C. and B. Bellina. 2011. "Ban Don Ta Phet and Khao Sam Kaeo: The Earliest Indian Contacts Re-assessed." In *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia*, edited by P.-Y. Manguin, A. Mani, and G. Wade, 17-46. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Gonda, Jan. 1973. *Sanskrit in Indonesia*. New delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 2nd ed.

Hoogervorst, T. 2012. "Southeast Asia in the Ancient Indian Ocean: Combining Historical, Linguistic, and Archaeological Approaches. Oxford: University of Oxford. Dissertation

_____. 2013. "If Only Plants Could Talk: Reconstructing Pre-Modern Biological Translocations in the Indian Ocean." In *The Sea, Identity and History: From the Bay of Bengal to the South China Sea*, edited by S. Chandra and H. Prabha Ray, 67-92. New Delhi: Manohar 2013.

Huntington, S. 1999. *The Art of Ancient India*. New York: Weather Hill.

Ingold, Tim. 2012. "Toward an ecology of materials," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41, 427-442.

Jacq-Hergoualc'h, M. 2002. *The Malay Peninsula: Crossroad of the Maritime Silk Road* (100 BC-1300 AD). Handbook of Oriental Studies. Part 3 Southeast Asia, 13. Leiden: Brill.

Krairiksh, P. 1980. *Art in Peninsular Thailand prior to the Fourteenth Century A.D.* Bangkok: Fine Arts Department.

Lavy, P. 2014. "Conch-on-hip Images in Peninsular Thailand and Early Vaisnava Sculpture in Southeast Asia." In *Before Siam: Essays in Art and Archaeology*, edited by Nicolas Revire and Stephen Murphy, 152-73. Bangkok: Siam Society and River Books.

Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra. 1941. *Greater India*. Lahore: Dayan and College Book Depot.

Manguin, P.-Y. 2011. "Introduction." In *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia*, edited by P.-Y. Manguin, A. Mani, and G. Wade, xiii-xxxi. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

McGovern, N. 2017. "Balancing the Foreign and the Familiar in the Articulation of Kingship: The Roya

l Court Brahmans of Thailand." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 48(2): 283-303.

McGowan, Kaja. 2022. "Coaxing *Kusha* to Speak a Connected History: Meditating on the Ritual, Aesthetic and Ecological Matrices of Salt Reed Grass in South and Southeast Asia," presented on a panel, entitled "Matrices and Flows," for the XXth Biennial Symposium of the American Council of Southern Asian Art (ACSAA) in Atlanta, Georgia (April 7 – 10, 2022).

_____ 2007. "Love, Death, and Shifting Patronage in Bali during the 1930s: Two Spatial Models Meet 'Face to Face' on Sacred Threads of Sound," In *Asian Art in the Twenty-First Century* (Clark Studies in the Visual Arts), edited by Vishaka Desai, 96-122. New Haven: Yale University Press.

_____. 2007. "Raw Ingredients and Deposit Boxes in Balinese Sanctuaries: A Congruence of Obsessions." In *What's the Use of Art: Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context* (eds.) Morgan Pitelka and Jan Mrasek (University of Hawaii Press) pp. 238-271.

Michell, G. 2000. *Hindu Art and Architecture*. New York: Thames and Hudson.

Mus, P. 1975. *India Seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa*. Translated by I.W. Mabbett. Monash Papers on Southeast Asia 3. Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University.

Na Nagara, Prasert. 1978. "Inscriptions from Nakhon Si Thammarat." In *Report of the Seminar on Nakhon Si Thammarat History*, 439-452. Nakhon Si Thammarat: Nakhon Si Thammarat Teachers College (in Thai).

Noonsuk, P. 1997. *Archaeological Sites in Southern Thailand*. Bangkok: Office of the National Research Board (in Thai).

Noonsuk, W. 2017. "Prologue: The Isthmian Tract and the Gulf of Siam." In *Peninsular Siam and Its Neighborhoods*, edited by Wannasarn Noonsuk, 1-20. Nakhon Si Thammarat: Cultural Council of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

_____. 2018. *Tāmbraliṅga and Nakhon Si Thammarat: Early Kingdoms on the Isthmus of Southeast Asia*. The 2nd Edition. Nakhon Si Thammarat: Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Government.

O'Connor, S. J. 1965. Brahmanical Sculptures of Peninsular Siam. PhD diss. Cornell University.
_____. 1972. *Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam*. Ascona: Artibus Asiae.

Smail, John R. W. 1961. "On the Possibility of an Autonomous History of Modern Southeast Asia." *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2, no. 2 (July), pp. 72-102.

Stoller, Paul. 1997. *Sensuous Scholarship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sumio, F. 2004. The Long 13th Century of Tāmbraliṅga: from Javaka to Siam. *The Memoirs of the Toyo Bunko* 62: 45-79.

Tomber, R. 2008. *Indo-Roman Trade: From Pots to Pepper*. London: Duckworth.

Wales, H.G.Q. 1976. *The Malay Peninsula in Hindu Times*. London: Bernard Quaritch LTD.

Wolters, O. W. 1999. *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. New York: Cornell Southeast Asian Program.

Chapter 1

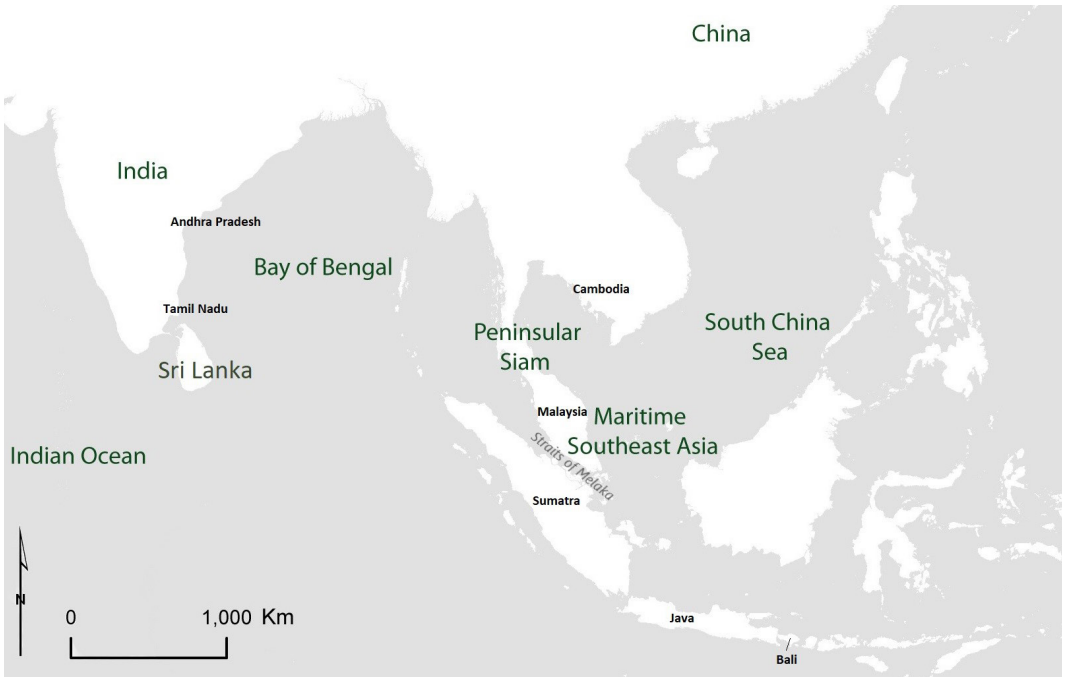
Crossed Destinies: The Early Relationship Between Tamil Nadu and Thailand with Special Reference to Hindu Artistic and Cultural Elements

Wannasarn (Saam) Noonsuk

Abstract

This essay discusses the early relationship between societies in modern Tamil Nadu and Thailand through time since the late centuries BCE based on archaeological, historical, and art historical records. The ancient remains of cultivars from archaeological excavations in peninsular Thailand suggest that some plants were imported from the Indian Peninsula already around the 4th to 2nd centuries BCE. Peninsular Thailand also has the oldest Tamil inscription dated to around the 2nd century CE and probably the largest pre-10th century corpus of Tamil inscriptions in Southeast Asia. Influences of artistic styles from Tamil Nadu and its immediate neighbors were clear from around the 5th to 11th century in peninsular Thailand (Siam), pointing to possible existence of direct sea lanes cutting across the Bay of Bengal between these two regions. Some illustrations of artworks and English translations of inscriptions in this essay are published for the first time. Toward the end of the essay, a discussion of the living Hindu traditions in Thailand related to Tamil influences is offered. The author proposes

Figure 1.1. Shore Temple at Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India. Source: "Shore temple" by sabamonin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0. To view a copy of this license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/



Map 1.1. South and Southeast Asia and relevant placenames in this volume. Source: W. Saam Noonsuk.

that the long social interaction, such as maritime trade, directly between the two regions was an indispensable context for the understanding of the localization of South Indian Hindu artistic and cultural elements in Southeast Asia.

Introduction

Perched dramatically on the edge of the Coromandel Coast and fearlessly abraded by the forces of the monsoon winds and waves, the Shore Temple at Mamallapuram was erected by the Pallava king Rajasimha (c. 700-728) and was the earliest known example of a stone-built temple in South India, after centuries of rock-cut shrines (Figure 1.1). This Shaivite temple consists of a pair of sanctuaries of unequal size. With a doorway pierced into the sanctuary wall on the outermost rim of the beach, the sanctum under the highest *vimana* tower opens directly on the sea, not only to receive the prayers from sailors, but also to catch the first rays of the rising sun, strikingly bathing the divine every dawn. To achieve this remarkable effect the designer of the temple departed from convention by placing a second small, towered shrine at the rear, or west end of the temple, facing into a now ruined courtyard which is encircled by numerous small sculptures of recumbent bulls. Whatever the motive for this innovative design, the door of the central sanctum symbolically opens on the sea lane to Southeast Asia and modern-day Thailand (Craven 2006, 151; Michell 2000, 87; O'Connor 1965, 1).

The eastern horizon, viewed from the doorway of the Shore Temple at Mamallapuram (or Mahabalipuram), the ancient port of the Pallava kings, was not just the holy place of the rising sun, but also the prosperous direction of trading opportunities across the Bay of Bengal. The societies of today's Tamil Nadu and Thailand have had a long history of interaction which formed a strong foundation for the spread of Hinduism. It is not surprising that Tamil influences were most strongly felt in peninsular (or southern) Thailand/Siam. Despite being some 2,000 km. apart, they were united by the sea and directly interacted with one another. Both the Tamil and maritime Southeast Asian people excelled in seafaring. They could have cut directly across the Bay of Bengal rather than having to follow the arching coastline to the north and back to the south, which would have made the oceanic route much faster than overland roads (Map 1.1).

As the Bay of Bengal became the realm of crossed destinies, trade and social interaction led to the localization of Tamil cultural elements in

Thailand and the absorption of Thai culture by recent Tamil immigrants. The process is still on-going and observable as Tamil communities are still active in Bangkok, and some people of Tamil heritage now speak Thai rather than Tamil, while maintaining some Tamil traditions.

The earliest Tamil inscription on a pottery sherd found in peninsular Thailand can be dated to the 2nd century CE, and is the oldest such evidence in Southeast Asia. Other three stone inscriptions in Tamil language followed, probably constitute the largest pre-10th century corpus of Tamil inscriptions in Southeast Asia. We do not have this kind of density in coastal Burma or the Straits of Melaka during this early period, and along with other evidence which will be presented later, this suggests that there probably were direct sea lanes cutting across the Bay of Bengal between Tamil Nadu and peninsular Thailand.

Influences of artistic styles from Tamil Nadu and its immediate neighbors were clear and abundant from around the 5th to 11th century in peninsular Thailand. The last Tamil-style temple in peninsular Thailand may be dated to around the 14th century. Today, the Brahmins of the royal court of Thailand trace their origin to an island near Tamil Nadu, a claim which is supported by certain ceremonies characteristic of Tamil Hinduism, which took on a new meaning in the local context (McGovern 2017). Vibrant Tamil communities still flourish in Thailand, such as at the Sri Maha Mariamman Temple (a Hindu temple known locally in Thai as Wat Khaek Silom) in Bangkok.

Although it seems that Tamil influences in Thailand have mostly been related to trade and religious practices, some evidence suggests other dimensions of interaction. As mentioned in the historical record from Tamil Nadu, military expeditions were conducted against maritime polities in Southeast Asia in the early 11th century. In the 13th century, a king from Tāmbraliga Kingdom in peninsular Thailand in turn may have received support from a Tamil king to attack Sri Lanka, which has had long-term conflicts with Tamil polities.

More interestingly, there is evidence that certain edible plant species were imported from the Indian Peninsula to Thailand around the 4th to 2nd centuries BCE, and are still part of the food culture in Thailand even today. Sustained contact and bonds between modern Tamil Nadu and Thailand have sunk deep roots and encompass broad dimensions of life from trade to war, from language to food, and from religion to art.

This essay will discuss the early relationship between societies in modern Tamil Nadu and Thailand through time since the late centuries BCE based mainly on art historical and archaeological records. Some inscriptions and historical documents will also be included. Toward the end of the essay, a

Figure 1.2. Rouletted Ware fragments, Phukhao Thong, Ranong Province, Thailand. Courtesy of Captain Boonyarit Chaisuwan.

discussion of the living Hindu traditions in Thailand related to Tamil influences will be offered as well. It will become clear that the long social interaction, such as maritime trade, between the two regions was an indispensable context for the understanding of the localization of South Indian Hindu artistic and cultural elements in Southeast Asia.

The Earliest Contacts

Social interactions between South India and peninsular Thailand can be traced back to the period between the late centuries BCE and the early centuries CE. These two regions were strongly linked by the monsoon winds, seafaring, and maritime trade. Their people have also lived in a similar kind of environment and experienced similar geographical challenges. The monsoons dictated the rhythm of both rainfalls and seasonal winds, which inevitably shaped agricultural life, seafaring patterns, and other activities from the society-wide down to the personal level. Their proximity to the sea and coastal environment led them to be excellent collectors of marine resources and explorers of the seascape. Both regions belong to what may be called Monsoon Asia, and their people may have shared a belief system in an earth deity since the prehistoric period (Mus 1975). It was this geographical and cultural nearness that provided the foundation for an intimate bond between the societies of both regions.

Early ports sprang up along the Coromandel Coast and the shorelines of peninsular Thailand at around the same time, beginning in the late centuries BCE. Arikamedu and Alagankulam in Tamil Nadu, for example, were prosperous ports with connections reaching both Southeast Asia and the Roman world. Arikamedu was located on the Ariyankuppam River. It has occupational layers dating from before the inception of Roman trade. An earlier Megalithic-phase fishing community has been found there. Arikamedu was not only a port but also a center of production. Its peak was between 50 BCE and 50 CE, during which a number of workshops have been identified, which produced metal, glass, gemstones, ivory, and shell in the southern sector of the site. Roman finds are common in this ancient port, including intaglios and pottery fragments. Excavations at the site have revealed a number of Roman *sigillata* sherds derived from Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean (ESA, ESB). They vary in date between c. 10 BCE and 50 CE. Greek Koan amphorae dated to between the 1st century BCE and the Augustan period were found. A wide variety of pottery from the West found at the site include Eastern (Kos, Knidos, Rhodes, Turkey) and Western (Italy, Gaul, Spain, North Africa) Mediterranean pottery, amphorae from Egypt (both Nile Valley and Mareotis products), and an organic storage jar from the Hadramawt. Other Mediterranean finds are coins, lamps, glass vessels, and beads. Alagankulam, located on the Vaigai River leading to the turbulent Gulf of Mannar, was an important trading site. It has yielded a range of Roman pottery, including three sigillata sherds from Italy and Asia Minor (ESB), and six Roman coins from the late 4th and early 5th century (Tomber 2008, 132-40). This site may have superseded Arikamedu. Both sites' access to the exotic eastern goods, such as pearls and silk, may have been the main attraction for the Roman merchants. Thus, this made the commercial partnership across the Bay of Bengal even more crucial.

The artifacts that form early evidence of contacts across the Bay of Bengal during the last centuries BCE to early centuries CE include, but are not limited to, semi-precious stone beads, Indo-Pacific glass beads, and Rouletted Wares, which were producing in multiple sites, including Arikamedu, and became shared material culture in this maritime region. The Indo-Pacific beads were small, drawn, monochromic glass beads, also produced in South India and Sri Lanka among other places. They were found in a large number of coastal sites in Southeast Asia.

Rouletted Ware (RW) are typically black shallow bowls, with a slipped and well-burnished surface, fired in a reduction kiln atmosphere. Its most distinctive feature is the indented concentric linear patterns on the interior, flat bottom of the vessel, produced by the continuous rolling motion of the toothed roulette as it was held against the revolving vessel on a potter's wheel. Rouletted Ware first emerged in around the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE and may have lasted until the 3rd century CE

(Bouvet 2011, 71-72). It had multiple origins. In India, while Arikamedu was one of the major production sites, this type of ware was found along the Coromandel Coast from Bengal to Sri Lanka. Among the 124 sites with Rouletted Ware in India, 45 of them are from Andhra Pradesh along the Krishna river, making it the largest group. In peninsular Thailand, Rouletted Ware was found in several sites, especially Khao Sam Kaeo and Phukhao Thong (Figure 1.2).

The site of Khao Sam Keao, in Chumphon Province, is on the eastern coast of the Isthmus of Kra, at the estuary of the Kraburi River on the opposite coast from Phukhao Thong . It is the narrowest point to cross the peninsula, around 44 km. I joined an excavation project at Khao Sam Keao in 2006. The site consisted of four main hills. Recent research by the Thai-French Archaeological Mission demonstrated that the hilltops are relatively flat (around 150 x 150 m. and 200 x 200 m.) and partially enclosed by ramparts, embankments, and ditches using natural ravines to some extent. The population at the site mainly settled on gentle slopes on the hills within the ramparts (Glover and Bellina 2011, 21). These ramparts may have been used for defense or for water management. The hills were most suitable for settlements, as the remote sensing analysis used by the expedition shows that the surrounding lowlands of the hills were subject to flooding in ancient times. While this site was never coastal, it had easy access to the sea via the Tha Taphao River (Bellina-Pryce and Silapanth 2006, 268).

Although there is no reliable dating for the ramparts, there are radiocarbon dates for the occupation layers associated with them. These C-14 dates suggest the period between the very early 4th and 2nd centuries BCE was the time of greatest human activity at the site. However, based on the paleographic dates of inscribed items, this site may have continued to be occupied until the early centuries CE, although with lesser population and activity. In the late centuries BCE, Khao Sam Kaeo also demonstrated signs of urbanization with different zones of activities. The complex rampart system and the presence of water tanks suggest great communal investment to build and maintain them. The large size of the settlement (54 hectares) and the complex activities in it indicate that Khao Sam Kaeo may have been an important urban center comparable to those in South Asia, such as Arikamedu in Tamil Nadu, Nagarjunakonda in Andhradesa, Rajgir in Bihar, and Sisupalgarh in Orissa (Bellina-Pryce and Silapanth 2006, 272, 283).

Rouletted Ware found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Bouvet (2009, 364; 2011, 73-4) show homogeneity in paste, surface, and production technique, and thus indicate one center of production. Two stratigraphic

Figure 1.3. Tamil Inscription on a Pottery Sherd, Phukhao Thong, Ranong Province, Thailand. Courtesy of Captain Boonyarit Chaisuwan.

units provided Rouletted Ware sherds (KSK-Fine Ware 1 Group), and yielded C-14 dates of the 4th to 2nd centuries BCE. The technical and chronological similarities between Rouletted Ware from Khao Sam Kaeo and Arikamedu indicate that Rouletted Ware from Khao Sam Kaeo was imported from Arikamedu. Manguin points out that the quantity of Rouletted Ware found in Southeast Asia is too small to regard them as a major trade item: he says, "For some four centuries of exchange activities, enough whole dishes to set tables for only five dozen people" have been found (2011, xxi). This ware may have been carried along by the Indian merchants to Southeast Asia and served specific purposes for them, perhaps in religious settings. It may have also been regarded as a kind of prestige good for the elite. In any case, Rouletted Ware found at Khao Sam Kaeo may have been one of the earliest types of evidence for the direct flow of goods and material culture from Tamil Nadu to peninsular Thailand and even Southeast Asia in around the 4th to 2nd centuries BCE.

Located on the western coast of the Isthmus of Kra, facing India, is the archaeological site of Phukhao Thong (or Golden Hill) in Ranong Province, which I excavated in 2006 with Captain Boonyarit Chaisuwan. The site sits on the southern bank of ancient Kluai Bay and can be dated based on four AMS radiocarbon dates to 200 BCE-20 CE, although its chronology seems to overlaps with that of Khao Sam Kaeo and to have remained active throughout the early centuries CE (Castillo et al. 2016, 1259). This ancient bay, which is now mangrove forest, is protected by small islands (such as Kluai Island) from the open water of the Andaman Sea and is around 20 km. south of the mouth of the Kraburi river. Many small rivers and waterways flow from the Phuket mountain range that runs north-south as part of the backbone of the peninsula from the Tenasserim range in Myanmar to Phuket Island. These rivers may have provided potential transportation and communication passageways between the sites around ancient Kluai Bay, the hinterland communities, and the settlements on the east coast of the isthmus. Located around Kluai Bay near Phukhao Thong, other archaeological sites are found on the high grounds or hills, likely forming a complex of sites. They all yield a variety of artifacts which mostly are related to ornament production, including (but not limited to) finished and unfinished glass and semi-precious stone beads and ornaments, fragments of metal items and tools, gold ornaments, and a considerable amount of pottery sherds (Chaisuwan 2011; W. Noonsuk 2018, 21-2).

Rouletted Ware and other Indian Fine Wares, such as stamped and unstamped bowls, knobbed wares, dishes with a rouletted or chattered rim, and a stamped leaf medallion at the center of the inner base, were found in Phukhao Thong as well. It has been noted that Phukhao Thong has the largest corpus of Indian Rouletted Ware (300-1 BCE) so far known in Southeast Asia (Castillo et al. 2016, 1259), and that the Indian ceramic imports at Phukhao Thong are more numerous and diverse than the ceramic imports at Khao Sam Kaeo and may have come from various Indian workshops (Bellina et al. 2014, 81). The workshops in Arikamedu seem to have been among them.

The most tantalizing find from Phukhao Thong which is related to the Tamil connection is the inscribed sherd discovered by me in April 2006 during ground survey in the northeastern side at the base of the hill (Figure 1.3). The sherd was found among other ceramic and rock fragments by one of numerous looters' pits in the area. It seems to have been dug up and discarded by modern-day looters.

The inscription on the sherd is perhaps the earliest Tamil inscription in Southeast Asia, dated to around the 2nd century CE based on palaeographic analysis. Bellina et al. (2014, 81) reported that Iravatham Mahadevan and Richard Salomon seem to read *...tū Ra o...* as a possible part of the Tamil word *tuṟavōn* or *tuṟavōr*, which means "ascetic" or "recluse" (Skt, *ṛṣi* or *sannyāsin*), but not of a Buddhist kind (Skt, *bhikṣu*; P., *bhikkhu*), while Emmanuel Francis proposes *tūṟavam*, "common black plum," or *tūṟavu* for a "plum recipient" as an alternative interpretation. Inscribed ceramics in Brahmi and Tamil-Brahmi have been discovered in several places in India and as far as the Red Sea at Berenike. Some of them have a clear association with trading activities.

Both interpretations are very interesting. The latter, on the one hand, shed light on the kind of organic goods traded across the Bay of Bengal and

recorded on the ceramic container. We normally do not have the remains of these organic goods. It would be interesting to study further about the plum. Where was it from? What was it for? What was the role of Tamil merchants in this plum trade?

The first interpretation, on the other hand, suggests a possibility that a kind of ascetic may have traveled from Tamil Nadu to peninsular Thailand as this kind of inscription sometimes recorded the owner of the ceramics. Our ceramic may have been a personal item of a Tamil ascetic, who traveled on a merchant ship as it was common for ascetics, priests, and monks in ancient times to depend on merchants to travel along trade routes to provide spiritual support to people as well as to spread their religions. Our Tamil ascetic may have come to peninsular Thailand to provide spiritual support and ritual services to the overseas Tamil communities. It should be noted that religious beliefs and rituals were vital in trading activities and overseas communities, especially before the industrialized period. In preparation for their journeys to unknown terrains or across the seas, traders needed not only provisions (such as food supply and fresh water), manpower, suitable transport, and a logical plan, but also spiritual security. They were fully aware that they might die on the journey as expressed in a number of historical documents. Thus, regardless of their religions, they sought peace of mind and spiritual guarantee for success through their prayers and proper rituals, and to achieve this, they needed a ritual specialist. In return, the religious establishments and ritual specialists received donations from merchants.

An ascetic as a ritual specialist and spiritual guide was crucial in the context of long-term overseas communities as well. Tamil immigrants may have come to work in business and craft production in peninsular Thailand. Just like Tamil communities in Southeast Asia today, they may have brought their religious practices and ritual specialists with them to keep them close to their roots and spirituality back home. Prosperity and success would have sprung from the performance of proper rituals. The ascetic's main duty in this context was to conduct rituals for the overseas Tamil communities, and not so much to spread the religious philosophy to the indigenous people. However, in the long run, these religious belief systems, practices, and rituals would also have

Figure 1.4. Tamil Inscription on a Goldsmith's Touchstone, Khuan Luk Pat, Krabi Province, Thailand. Courtesy of the Phra Khru Athon Sangarakit Museum.

spread to and become very important for the indigenous people in Southeast Asia as the early kingdoms started to emerge and localize these elements in the latter half of the first millennium CE.

The second oldest Tamil inscription in Southeast Asia, dated to around the 3rd century CE, was also found in peninsular Thailand, by a villager at Khuan Luk Pat (or Khlong Thom) in Krabi Province. Khuan Luk Pat, which means "the Bead Mound," is on the west coast of the peninsula, like Phukhao Thong, and is situated on a natural mound on the north side of the Khlong Thom River. The mound is around 1.5 sq. km. long and around 8 m. higher than sea level. The Khlong Thom River may have offered a line of passage to the hinterland and also formed a part of the transpeninsular routes across the peninsula. One may navigate the river upstream to the northeast and reach the source of the Tapi River, which leads to the Bay of Bandon on the east coast where several other ancient communities were situated. At this site, artifacts that have been reported, some of which have been collected in the Phra Khru Athon Sangarakit Museum (named after the former abbot of Khlong Thom Temple, who was an active collector of artifacts from this site), include a bronze mirror of the Han Dynasty, Indian and Roman gold and bronze coins, inscribed seals bearing an Indian script, Indo-Roman intaglios and seals, Chinese and Middle Eastern ceramic sherds, metal ornaments and tools, molds for earrings and rings, lumps of raw glass, glass slag, tin and lead ingots, and a variety of beads and ornaments made of gold, lead, glass, and semi-precious stones. Although the site may have emerged in the last centuries BCE, it seems to have reached its peak after Phukhao Thong in the early centuries CE. The presence of Middle Eastern ceramics on this site further suggests that it may have been involved to some degree in overseas maritime trade until the 9th century AD (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, 85-89; P. Noonsuk 1997, 183).

The inscription under discussion is on a so-called "goldsmith's touchstone" (Figure 1.4). This "touchstone" is a polished, flat piece of limestone, 6.80 cm. long, 3.30 cm. wide, and 0.60 cm. thick (P. Noonsuk 1997, 199). Its trapezoidal shape and slanting cut at one end makes it look roughly like a Neolithic stone axe, but both ends are smooth. The two cross-cutting long grooves, other marks, and inscription's content on the stone led scholars to believe that they were characters of gold testing.

It has been proposed that the inscription's language is Tamil and its script is Brahmi, which can be deciphered as *perumpadan kal* meaning "stone of Mr. Perumpadan" (after Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, 87). It was read by Prof. Subarayalu of Tamil University, Tanjavur, India in 1993 and can be dated to the 3rd century CE on a palaeographic basis (Chaisuwan 2011, 86). He may have been an important Tamil gold trader and/or goldsmith,a role played by Tamil merchants and craftsmen in Southeast Asia even today. This inscription likely suggests the presence of trading activities, craft production, and a community of Tamil people in Khuan Luk Pat in the early centuries CE.

Recent archaeobotanical analysis by Castillo et al. (2016) has shed light on the food consumption and cultivation of the early ports of Phukhao Thong and Khao Sam Kaeo and their overseas Indian communities. Rice was the main cereal at both sites and was identified as the Chinese domesticate *O. sativa ssp. japonica*. It seems to be cultivated in the nearby foothills or hinterlands of the sites by the local populations. The Indian populations there had not brought their Indian variety of rice, *O. sativa ssp. indica*, to cultivate there, perhaps because rice was already available there. This means that they may have depended on the local populations to provide them with the main staple, so that they could focus on their trade and craft production. However, the Indian populations might have brought other species not locally available, such as the pulses, as they might have preferred to have some food they were familiar with while living overseas. Castillo et al. (2016, 1262-3) identified mung bean (*Vigna radiata*), horsegram (*Macrotyloma uniflorum*) and pigeon pea (*Cajanus cajan*) as pulses of Indian origin at both Phukhao Thong and Khao Sam Kaeo. However, Phukhao Thong as it is located on the India-facing coast had a larger suite of pulses of Indian origin, including black gram (*Vigna mungo*) and grass pea (*Lathyrus sativus*), which were not found at Khao Sam Kaeo.

Mung bean (*Vigna radiata*) is of great

Figure 1.5. Conch-on-hip Vishnu Image, Wat Sala Thung, Chaiya, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Source: Author.

Figure 1.6. Conch-on-hip Vishnu Image, Ho Phra Narai, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Source: Author.

interest in the discussion of Tamil trade because its possible origin includes the Indian Peninsula. Based on our discussion of strong ties between Tamil Nadu and peninsular Thailand so far, it is highly likely that some of the mung bean came from Tamil Nadu. Being a versatile plant, mung bean seeds can be dried and stored for use at a later date or germinated and eaten as bean sprouts, whereas the whole plant can also be used as fodder. In South Asia, split mung beans are cooked with spices and made into dhal, while in Southeast Asia, they are also used in confectionery, cooked in syrup as dessert, or made into fine noodles or vermicelli (Castillo et al. 2016, 1263). Stir-fried mung bean sprouts are very popular in Thailand, and it is not surprising that it is the most important pulse grown in the country today. It is important to note here that the mung bean was introduced to peninsular Thailand by at least the 2nd century BCE, and it became embedded in regional agricultural traditions and food cultures. While mung bean was firmly adopted in Thailand, some pulses such as horsegram did not make it, suggesting local selective adoptions. This analysis is exceptional in educating us that the sustained Indian influences coming with maritime trade did not involve only arts and religions, but also plants and food culture that became very close to life for people in Southeast Asia.

Early Hindu Art

The period around the 5th to 8th centuries CE saw a series of artistic and religious influences from the Indian Peninsula to Thailand, which would leave long-term imprints in the region. Hindu art thrived in this period and its influences came from many parts of India. They definitely include Tamil Nadu and its immediate neighbors in South India.

Inspired by the immediate prototypes from Andhra Pradesh, the northern neighbor of Tamil Nadu, the earliest stone statues were the four Vishnu images found on the east coast of peninsular Thailand, one from Wat Sala Thung (the oldest one as well, Figure 1.5), in Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, and three images from Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, at Ho Phra Narai (*Narayana* Shrine, Figure 1.6), Wat Phrang, and Wat Ta Nen. It is interesting that the Vishnu images from Nakhon Si Thammarat Province were all found on ancient beach ridges running north-south parallel to the coastline, suggesting the preferred locations on high ground for settlements and the shared belief of Vishnu among them (W. Noonsuk 2018, 83-90).

Extensively studied by Stanley J. O'Connor (1965, 59-97; 1972, 19-40), these statues formed the earliest style of Vishnu images in Southeast Asia, called "conch-on-hip style." Relatively small with the heights of around a bit more than half a meter, they are four-armed figures of Vishnu in *sthanaka-murti*, each wearing *dhoti* while leaving their torsos mostly nude, having tall, decorated mitres, and holding a conch shell on the hip. Each has a broad sash falling in a semicircular arc in front of the thighs. These statues seem to be frontal with very small details on the back and have three supports: the first is the mass of cloth, the second the club (*gada*), and the third the main block of stone in which the legs and the heavy vertical fold of the *dhoti* between them are carved (O'Connor 1972, 21).

While these statues—mistakenly dated to the 8th century—were described by previous scholars as clumsily made, aberrant, and the result of unskillful local craftspersons, O'Connor instead successfully established that they are instead the earliest group of Vishnu images in Southeast Asia, emerging not long after their Indian prototypes from the early centuries CE. Their style can be traced back to ultimate prototypes from the period of Kusana rule at Mathura (c. the 1st to mid-3rd centuries CE), although the most immediate stylistic influence seems to come from the 4th century art of Andhradesa on the Coromandel Coast. In the iconography of the four-armed Vishnu as it developed at Mathura, the earliest images have the anterior right arm raised with the hand in *abhayamudra*, while *padma* (lotus) evolved later as a distinctive symbol to be held in Vishnu's hand. This makes the Chaiya statue earlier than those from Nakhon Si Thammarat, as it raises its hand in *abhayamudra* and can be dated to no later than 400 CE while those at Nakhon Si Thammarat appear to have already held the *padma* and can be dated to the 5th century CE (O'Connor 1972, 39). However, Lavy (2014, 169) recently argued that the Chaiya statue

should instead be dated to around CE 500, and those at Nakhon Si Thammarat should be dated to the early to mid-sixth century CE. Although there are two more images of this group from Oc-Eo and from southern Cambodia on the other side of the Gulf of Siam, the corpus of early Vishnu images on the east coast of peninsular Thailand is the earliest among them and seems to have served as the immediate prototype for them.

The artistic influences from Tamil Nadu on the Vishnu stone images in Thailand became clearer during Pallava art. The Vishnu images of "Group B," such as two statues from Khao Siwichai in Surat Thani Province, which appear to be made in the same workshop, and two statues from Dong Si Mahapot in Prachinburi Province, each wear a double girdle and a diagonally placed hip-sash, and those with the tall cylindrical mitre (*kiritamukuta*) appear to reflect a response to Pallava art of the 7th century, assimilated into an earlier tradition (O'Connor 1972, 47-48). They are comparable, for example, to the portrait of Nrsimhavarman (*Mamalla I*), on south face of "*Dharmaraja*" shrine at Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu, dated to around the mid-to-late 7th century (Huntington 1999, 310).

The fact that some of them were found in Prachinburi Province on the other side of the Gulf of Siam from peninsular Thailand suggests that this style, like the older styles of Vishnu images, spread with maritime traders using the wind pattern to cut across the Gulf of Siam directly, forming a kind of neighborhood of water with shared belief systems and artistic styles (W. Noonsuk 2017). The Tamil merchants may have been active to some extent in this sphere as well.

Religious architecture from the 5th-8th centuries in peninsular Thailand has been less studied than stone sculpture. In part, it is because they were very fragmentary. However, they may represent the artistic influences from Tamil Nadu and its immediate neighbors in South India. The Hindu free-standing shrines from this period in peninsular Thailand interestingly demonstrate uniformity in construction. They were basically built in two parts, including the bottom part made of brick (or brick and stone), and the upper part made of wood and thatch, which has disappeared. After the 8th century, roof tiles may have been used in some sites, such as Bujang Valley in peninsular Malaysia and Thung Tuk on the island of Ko Kho Khao (Takua Pa District, Phang-nga Province, peninsular Thailand). Their construction may be called "the minimum program of temple" (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, 137-139), in which a shrine architecture is just a minimal, elementary religious structure focusing on the presence of a *cella*, usually a small room, even in a large temple, where the representation of the god of the temple is installed and in front of which the rituals and worship are performed. The sculptures found at these early shrines point to their association with Hinduism. From my observations, there may be three types of Hindu shrine structures depending on the materials used in the bottom parts, while the pillars and roofs were made of perishable materials.

The first type has the bottom part made of bricks and does not use stone architectural parts at all. They may have a low square or rectangular brick foundation with a *cella* enclosed by brick walls at the center and a wooden thatch-roofed structure supported by wooden pillars.

The second type uses carved stone slabs and blocks as door frames, thresholds, lintels, pillar bases, and parts of foundations (Figure 1.7). This type is much more common. These stone architectural parts are usually made of limestone, perhaps because it is softer and easy to find in the small hills in the coastal plain. It is almost impossible to distinguish between the thresholds and lintels, since the lintels are also undecorated, unlike those in Khmer architecture.

The third type uses stone architectural parts, like the second type, but has granite decorated door frames and pillars, which are rare and very interesting. They have been found only at five sites in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, including, from north to south, Mokhalan, Wat Sak Lek, Wat Phra Mongkut, Wat Phra Doem, and Wat Phetcharik 1. The granite door frames are usually beautifully decorated with floral patterns (Figure 1.8).

It is highly likely that the uses of granite blocks and granite architectural decorations were

Figure 1.7. Monument No. 2, Khao Kha, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Source: Author.

Figure 1.8. Decoration on Granite Stone Doorframe, Wat Phra Mongkut, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Source: Author.

Figure 1.9. Draupadi Shrine, part of the rathas at Mamallapuram. Source: "File:CinqRathaDraupadi.jpg" by BluesyPete is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0. To view a copy of this license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0

artistic influences from Tamil Nadu, probably starting in the 7th-8th centuries. The Tamil people had a great tradition of granite rock-cut and built shines. The sublime temples at Mamallapuram mentioned at the beginning exemplify this achievement. The floral decoration on the granite architectural parts from Nakhon Si Thammarat Province is also comparable to that of Tamil temples. The more precise dates and comparisons of these early shrines with decorated granite components, however, require further studies. Also, there is another shrine with large granite decorated elements at Tha Ruea in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, which was dated by some scholars to the 14th century as will be discussed later.

The possible thatched roofs supported by wooden pillars are also distinctive characteristics of these early Hindu shrines in the Thai-Malay Peninsula. Today, we can still see thatch-roofed Hindu shrines in Bali, Indonesia, as well. However, we have to remember that Hinduism was not native to Southeast Asia, and the initial inspiration to have a Hindu shrine built in this way may have come from Tamil Nadu and Kerala, combined with local elements in peninsular Thailand as well. Although no shrines with thatch roofs seem to have survived in Tamil Nadu, the "Draupadi" shrine (Figure 1.9), part of the *rathas* at Mamallapuram, dated to around the second-third quarter of the 7th century, demonstrates in free-standing stone how an early Tamil shrine with a thatched roof may have looked (Huntington 1999, 307). It has a small, square *cella* or sanctum, comparable to those in peninsular Thailand.

Furthermore, the living Hindu shrines with wooden superstructure and tile roofs are also found in Kerala, the immediate western neighbor of Tamil Nadu, separated by the Western Ghats. Kerala also has heavy rainfalls and winds, comparable to peninsular Thailand, and this may have been a reason why wooden superstructure is preferred in both places, as it allows the moisture to flow out better and it is easier to maintain. Therefore, Kerala may have been another source of inspiration. However, it is difficult to date the wooden architecture in Kerala as it has been maintained and altered regularly, and this makes the art historical comparisons between Kerala and peninsular Thailand very difficult. Also, the prevalent plan of a shrine in Kerala today is circular (Desai 2018, 66), not square or rectangular like those in Tamil Nadu or peninsular Thailand. Further studies could shed light on this topic.

The Growing Presence

The period between the 9th and 11th centuries saw increased presence of Tamil communities and influences in peninsular Thailand. Tamil stone inscriptions and a number of sculptures have been discovered, suggesting that contacts between Tamil Nadu and peninsular Thailand were continued and intensified during this period of late Pallava and Chola Dynasties. The contacts did not involve only trading and religious activities, but also military interventions as well.

The most well-known Tamil collection of finds in Thailand was perhaps from Khao Phra Narai (*Narayana* Hill) in Kapong District, Phang-nga Province, on the west coast of the peninsula. It was located at the source of Takua Pa River that flows to Ko Kho Khao where an important emporium of around the 8th to 10th centuries was situated. The Khao Phra Narai collection includes a Tamil stone inscription and a monumental group of late Pallava stone statues, believed to be of purely Tamil workmanship. The inscription and the statues were found in the same area of the hill, near the brick ruin which may have likely been their Hindu shrine (P. Noonsuk 1997, 374).

The inscription, also called the Takua Pa Inscription or Inscription No. 26, carved on a limestone slab, is in fragmentary condition. Its script and language are both Tamil. H.G. Quaritch Wales (1976, 127) agreed with Nilakanta Sastri in translating its remaining five lines as follows:

> *The tank dug by Nangur-udaiyan (and) called Avani-naranam (is placed under) the protection of the Manigramam, the residents of the military camp and …*

It has been proposed that the title *Avani-naranam* (Vishnu of the earth) was a well-known title of the Pallava king Nandivarman III, one of the last Pallava kings, whose name was in a laudatory poem, the *Nandikkalambakam*. The king is believed to have reigned in around the second quarter or the middle of the 9th century, which is in accordance with the Pallava style of the writing of the Takua Pa inscription itself and the late Pallava style of the stone statues found on same the hill as well (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, 273; Wales 1976, 127).

The interpretations of the inscription's content have been debated. Both Wales (1976, 128) and Jacq-Hergoualc'h (2002, 274) did not agree with Nilakanta Sastri in thinking that some peninsular territory was actually annexed for some time by the Pallavas with a strong Tamil military force. They believed instead that the inscription suggests a local Tamil trading post which was established with the goodwill of the local polity and the soldiers employed by the Tamil merchants guild being merely a kind of local security police, as wealth required protection. The name *Manigramam* (*Manikkiramam*) derived from the Sanskrit term *vanik-graman* (guild of merchants) designates a powerful Tamil mercantile corporation. These guilds enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy in Tamil Nadu and abroad, and won over the political and religious authorities in the regions where they were active by means of large gifts, including the construction of works for the public good, such as water tanks, like the one mentioned in the Takua Pa inscription. Their privileges on foreign soil may have included the construction of their Tamil temple in their trading outpost, and the tank mentioned in the inscription may have been

Figure 1.10A. Tamil statues, Khao Phra Narai, Phang-nga Province, Thailand. When they were still entwined by a large tree. Courtesy of the Phuket National Museum.

Figure 1.10B. Tamil statues, Khao Phra Narai, Phang-nga Province, Thailand. When they were moved from the findspot to the Phuket National Museum. Courtesy of the Phuket National Museum.

associated with the temple. It is interesting that the most likely location of this *Manigramam* outpost at Khao Phra Narai, where the Tamil inscription, a group of Tamil statues, and a ruin of brick temple were found, is located upriver. This may be due to the fact that the Tamil merchants wished to maintain their relations with inland markets across the peninsula that had been pioneered by their Tamil ancestors centuries before.

Entwined by the trunk of a large tree until recently moved to the National Museum in Phuket, the group of monumental Tamil statues were found at Khao Phra Narai, as previously mentioned. The group includes three statues sculpted from tuffaceous sandstone in high relief with a totally flat back section. It has been accepted that they consists of Vishnu flanked by two kneeling figures of the goddess Bhūdevī and the ṛṣi Mārkaṇḍeya (Figure 1.10A-B). The principle image of Vishnu is 235 cm. in height and reflects late Pallava art between 750 and 850, comparable to two stone images of Vishnu of the similar style and dimensions, which were dated to the end of the Pallava dynasty (around the 8th to 9th centuries) and were on display at the Art Gallery of Tanjuvur (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, 330).

It can also be proposed that the Khao Phra Narai group of statues was made by a Tamil sculptor either in South India or in peninsular Thailand, with no other Hindu images in the peninsula appearing to be even remotely related to it (O'Connor 1972, 55). This supports the hypothesis of the large presence of the Tamil community or trading outpost which

Figure 1.11. Ganesha Image, Thung Tuk, Ko Kho Khao, Phang-nga Province, Thailand. Courtesy of Captain Boonyarit Chaisuwan.

either brought in their own statues or sculptors. Also, although the peninsular sculptors were very skilled as seen in previous monumental artworks, they may have concentrated on or have been commissioned in greater degree to create Mahayanist artworks, popular in peninsular Thailand at that period of time. In any case, the date between 750 and 850 of the Khao Phra Narai statues would fit comfortably with the ceramic evidence on Ko Kho Khao, which also provided Tamil-style statues.

At Ko Kho Khao, an island on the estuary of Takua Pa River, a variety of artifacts, such as glass beads and vessels, glazed ceramics, and statues has been found and can be generally dated to the 8th to 10th centuries. The archaeological excavation by Chaisuwan (2011, 103) at Thung Tuk or Mueang Thong Site on the island revealed only one occupation layer. Two Tamil-style stone statues were found by villagers on the island, including a Ganesha and a Devi carrying a child. First, an image of Ganesha, found at Thung Tuk Site, is 72 cm. high and can be dated to the 9th century (Figure 11). It is of crude manufacture, but its high *jatamukuta* speaks for a Tamil origin. Second, a stone bas-relief of a Devi carrying a child is in a style similar to that of the Khao Phra Narai group discussed previously and can be dated to the same period of time (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, 331).

It can also be proposed that the Khao Phra Narai group of statues was made by a Tamil sculptor either in South India or in peninsular Thailand, with no other Hindu images in the peninsula appearing to be even remotely related to it (O'Connor 1972, 55). This supports the hypothesis of the large presence of the Tamil community or trading outpost which either brought in their own statues or sculptors. Also, although the peninsular sculptors were very skilled as seen in previous monumental artworks, they may have concentrated on or have been commissioned in greater degree to create Mahayanist artworks, popular in peninsular Thailand at that period of time. In any case, the date between 750 and 850 of the Khao Phra Narai statues would fit comfortably with the ceramic evidence on Ko Kho Khao, which also provided Tamil-style statues.

At Ko Kho Khao, an island on the estuary of Takua Pa River, a variety of artifacts, such as glass beads and vessels, glazed ceramics, and statues has been found and can be generally dated to the 8th to 10th centuries. The archaeological excavation by Chaisuwan (2011, 103) at Thung Tuk or Muang Thong Site on the island revealed only one occupation layer. Two Tamil-style stone statues were found by villagers on the island, including a Ganesha and a Devi carrying a child. First, an image of Ganesha, found at Thung Tuk Site, is 72 cm. high and can be dated to the 9th century (Figure 1.11). It is of crude manufacture, but its high *jatamukuta* speaks for a Tamil origin. Second, a stone bas-relief of a Devi carrying a child is in a style similar to that of the Khao Phra Narai group discussed previously and can be dated to the same period of time (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, 331).

On the other side of the peninsula, there is evidence of Tamil communities as well. Inscription No. 29 kept in Wat Phra Mahathat in Nakhon Si Thammarat City has two sides (Figure 1.12A-B). The first side (Side A) has 16 lines seemingly written in Sanskrit but has not been transliterated. It also has the symbols of the sun and moon. The second side (Side B) has 14 lines, written in Tamil language and with Tamil script, and tentatively dated to around 857-1157 on a palaeographic basis. The Tamil side has been translated to Thai language (see Prasert na Nagara 1971, 442), but there is no published English translation as far as I know, so that I would like to offer a preliminary English translation based on this Thai translation with the expert help from Prof. Nandana Chutiwongs for the first time as follows:

I. svasti śrī śaka
II. one hundred and five has passed
III. Monday falling on
IV. dharmasenāpati
V. that are brāḥmaṇa
VI. by the order dharmasenāpati
VII. one
VIII. dharma
IX. if anyone harms gaṅgā
X. red cows be executed
XI. mother
XII. demerit
XIII. teḷlāma
XIV. the eighth time

Figure 1.12A. Inscription No. 29 (Side A), Wat Phra Mahathat, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Courtesy of the National Library of Thailand.

Figure 1.12B. Inscription No. 29 (Side B), Wat Phra Mahathat, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Courtesy of the National Library of Thailand.

Figure 1.13. Linga and Yoni, Than Phra Sayom, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Source: Author.

More studies, transliterations, and translations of this inscription on both the Tamil and Sankrit sides by specialists would be very beneficial. The fragmentary nature of the inscription prevents any clear interpretations. While Prof. Chutiwongs acknowledged the difficulty of the translation of this inscription, she also suggested that: (1) it was written in Sanskrit and Tamil; (2) its content is spiritual and probably dedicative; and (3) an important person called "*senāpati*" was chiefly involved.

It may also be said that its content is associated with Hindu beliefs and practices, reflected in the terms it uses, such as Brahmins, Ganga, and red cows. Some scholars (e.g. P. Noonsuk 1997) also proposed that it may have been a declaration of laws or rules by an official called "*dharmasenāpati*" which could be loosely translated as the minister of law. In any case, the existence of this inscription suggests that there was the presence of a Tamil community or a Tamil trading outpost in Nakhon Si Thammarat, perhaps since the late 9th to 10th centuries. The fact that their beliefs and rules required a record on stone implies the significance of the Tamils.

This Tamil inscription is also matched with a monumental Tamil-style artwork from Nakhon Si Thammarat City. It is the pair of a linga and yoni installed together in a ruined sanctum of a shrine, called Than Phra Sayom. The lower part of the large yoni (the ablution basin for linga) was previously covered with dirt so that only the round shape of its top part could be seen and be measured to 125 cm. in diameter. However, recent excavation by the Fine Arts Department revealed its complete shape, showing that it has a round, tall base with a restricted waist in the middle of its profile (Figure 1.13). This style of yoni may be comparable to that of the Vijayalana Colisvara temple at Narttamalai in Tamil Nadu, which can be dated to the mid-9th century (Huntington 1999, 510-511). The Than Phra Sayom shrines had wooden superstructure and also housed older yonis, dated to around the 7th to 8th centuries, and stone architectural parts, some of which are granite. It may have been a shrine for Tamil people, and today some local Brahmins still conduct rituals there.

Two small bronze statues in the coastal lands of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province demonstrate Tamil artistic influences or may have been imported from Tamil countries (P. Noonsuk 1997, 358). The first is a seated image of Harihara, 16.5 cm. high, from

Figure 1.14. Bronze Image of Harihara, Na San, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Source: Preecha Noonsuk.

Figure 1.15. The Bronze Image of Gopal (Young Krishna), Ban Payang, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Source: Preecha Noonsuk.

Figure 1.16. The Bronze Image of the Baby Krishna Crawling, Perhaps 1500-1700, Southern India. Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, Inventory No. 1991.257. Source: Author.

Na San, dated to around the 10th to 11th centuries (Figure 1.14). It has four arms, elaborate headdress, and detailed ornaments on the round body while the lower legs and arms seem to be improbably slim. It is the only statue of Harihara found so far in the peninsula. The second is a statue of Krishna when he was a very young child, called *Gopal*, found at Ban Payang near the Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University (Figure 1.15). It depicts him crawling with only the right arm raised to hold a lump of butter. This is the only image of *Gopal* found in Thailand so far, and, judging from the headdress, it may be possibly dated to the post-Chola period or around 1500-1700, similar to a small statue on display at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco (Figure 1.16).

Tamil artistic influences can be seen on the east coast of peninsular Thailand, not only in Nakhon Si Thammarat, but in other places as well. For example, a bronze head of Vishnu dated to the mid-10th century was found at Wat Suthawat, Chumphon Province. Krairiksh (1980, 192) mentioned that its style was closely related to the Chola-style Vishnu images of the same period and that this statue might have been imported from India at the time of the Chola raid in the isthmus. Two Chola-style statues of Vatuka-Bhairava (c. the 10th century) and Vishnu (c. the 11th century) were discovered at Wiang Sra (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, fig. 183, 185; Krairiksh 1980, 190), while a Surya image dated to the 10th to 11th centuries was found at Wat Sala Tung, Chaiya (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, fig. 186), both in Surat Thani Province. Wiang Sra is almost in the middle of the peninsula, whereas Chaiya is on the east coast. These artworks probably suggest Tamil trading activities along the east coast of the peninsula.

It may have been the need to protect this commercial interest that partly encouraged the Chola king to launch a military expedition against the coastal kingdoms in (pen)insular Southeast Asia in 1025 CE as recorded in an inscription on the south wall of the *Rajarajesvara* Temple in Tanjuvur. Among other targets, two kingdoms on the east coast of peninsular Thailand were mentioned, including *Ilangasoka* (Langasuka, with its heartland in today's

Pattani Province), "undaunted in fierce battles," and *Madama-lingam* (Tāmbraliṅga, with its heartland in today Nakhon Si Thammarat Province), "[capable of] strong action in dangerous battles" (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002, 356).

In the later period, it seems that the peninsular kingdoms and the Tamil kingdoms continued to have complex military interactions, some collaborative, some antagonistic. Notably, the Buddhist king Chandrabhanu of Tāmbraliṅga led military expeditions against Sri Lanka, in part to claim its sacred relics and prominent status in the Buddhist network in the 13th century. According to South Indian and Sri Lankan documents, it seems that Chandrabhanu's first attack on Sri Lanka was in 1247, when he began his operation in the southern part of the island, but was defeated by the Sinhalese king Parākramabāhu. However, Chandrabhanu managed to take control of another kingdom in the north of the island, where he was attacked in turn by the Pandyan king in 1258, and was forced to pay tribute. With unyielding effort, Chandrabhanu launched his second campaign against Parākramabāhu's kingdom in the southern part of Sri Lanka again at the end of 1262, this time with additional troops from the Cholas and Pandyas of South India. However, he was defeated again and died in the battle against Parākramabāhu's army, which was in turn supported by the Pandyan King Vira-Pandya. After Chandrabhanu's death, Pandyan inscriptions mentioned that a prince succeeded him to rule the northern half of Sri Lanka, but his reign was short-lived as well (Sumio 2004, 54).

King Candrabhanu's relationship with the Cholas and Pandyas may have been materialized in the Tamil-style temple at Wat Pho, Tha Ruea Sub-district, in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, a port or landing place since at least the 9th century. In 1976, Wales (1976, 153, 177) reported that there was a brick structure and three large granite bracket capitals dated to around the 14th century (Figure 1.17). However, more stone architectural parts were actually discovered at the site and were moved to the Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Unfortunately, the site was completely destroyed by the construction of the Nakhon Si Thammarat College of Dramatic Arts in 1980. Granite was an unusual material in peninsular Thailand but a popular material in Tamil Nadu, while the style itself points to a South Indian origin. These granite capitals, appearing to be outside the

Figure 1.17. Granite Bracket Capitals, Wat Pho, Tha Ruea Sub-district, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Source: Author.

mainstream of Buddhist artistic tradition in Nakhon Si Thammarat at that period of time, may have been the artworks of a Tamil sculptor and their temple may have belonged to an overseas Tamil trading community.

Localized Living Tamil Hindu Traditions in Thailand

The Tamil trading communities were well-established and widespread along the two coasts of peninsular Thailand, where the activities of Tamil people and influences were most intense. Some of these communities may even date back to the late centuries BCE. They lived there long enough to require ritual specialists, temples, water tanks, and stone inscriptions. However, these overseas communities and their material culture are only part of the story. The Tamil people have intimately interacted with and, in some cases, became inseparable from the local people in the long run. It may be nearly impossible to observe this process in the distant past with a great degree of certainty as the material evidence they left behind was quite thin. However, the history of the royal court Brahmins of Thailand may offer a rare example of this localization process (e.g. McGovern 2017; Wolters 1999).

Using various strands of evidence in his remarkable study, McGovern (2017) noted that, since at least the 17th century, the royal court Brahmins of Siam seem to trace their origin to the place they called *Rāmarāt*, probably the island of Rameshwaram between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. Some documents recorded that they arrived via Nakhon Si Thammarat, where Hindu and Tamil traditions were particularly strong as discussed previously.

Their Tamil origin can also be seen in the *Trīyampawāi-Trīppawāi* ceremony they characteristically performed. This is actually two ceremonies performed in succession. The *Trīyampawāi* invites Shiva down to earth, provides him with daily offerings and then sends him back to heaven, while the *Trīppawāi* is a shorter, analogous ceremony for Vishnu. During these ceremonies, the Swing Festival is the most well-known, in which teams of four men swung from the giant swing just outside the Brahman Temple (*Dēvasthāna*) and one of them attempted to catch a bag of coins suspended from a pole with his teeth. The brightly red Giant Swing is still a famous attraction of Bangkok today.

McGovern (2017:288-289) proposed that the very name of the *Trīyampawāi-Trīppawāi* festival points to an origin in the Tamil-speaking region of South India, in which *Trīyampawāi* derives from Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvempāvai*, and *Trīppawāi* is likewise a corruption of Āṇḍāḷ's *Tiruppāvai*. Both texts were written in Tamil as early as the late first millennium CE, and involved Tamil festivals in the sacred month of Mārkaḻi, which falls on the second lunar month in Thailand when the *Trīyampawāi-Trīppawāi* is also performed. Importantly, the Tamil hymns are used during the *Trīyampawāi-Trīppawāi* rituals performed in the Brahman Temple in Bangkok. The Shiva Shrine in the Brahman Temple itself also has the *Naṭarāja* and double lingas, which are characteristic features of Tamil tradition.

However, the Tamil traditions of the royal court Brahmins of Thailand have been localized in the Thai context. For example, the Swing Festival, involving teams of men swinging in great heights in order to catch a bag of coins with their teeth, may have been a local innovation (see Concluding Remarks in this volume for more information). The royal court Brahmins, who now cannot speak Tamil, have also performed ceremonies, such as the water oath ceremony (libation oath), which are not practiced in Tamil Nadu or India. This evidence demonstrates that the royal court Brahmins of Thailand were the key agents in localizing Tamil Hindu traditions to serve the concerns of the Thai people and especially the Thai Kingship, balancing the foreign, seemingly sophisticated materials with the local, familiar characteristics (McGovern 2017:298-299). This has made the Tamil influences a long-lasting and crucial part in the history of Thailand.

Conclusion

The Tamil and local populations in modern Thailand have had a long history of interactions. Thailand not only has the two earliest Tamil inscriptions found in Southeast Asia dated to the early centuries CE, but may also have the largest pre-10th century corpus of Tamil inscriptions in Southeast Asia. In terms of

artworks, Tamil influences can be seen in a variety of media, including ceramics, stone and bronze sculptures, and brick shrines. Some of these artworks were imported from Tamil Nadu or made in Thailand by Tamil artists. The relationships between the two regions were multi-faceted and encompassed trade, artistic traditions, food culture, languages, military campaigns, and diverse belief systems. However, Hindu artistic and cultural elements seem to be the most prominent Tamil heritage in Thailand. Pre-15th-century Hindu artworks in the Tamil idiom are numerous and the royal court Brahmins in Thailand still refer to their Tamil origin and practice distinctive Tamil Hindu traditions, although they no longer speak Tamil. It is clear that this long-standing and multi-faceted relationship between the two regions made possible the spread and localization of South Indian Hindu artistic traditions in Thailand.

Notes

I wish to express my utmost gratitude to Prof. John Miksic for his valuable comments on the manuscript, Prof. Nandana Chutiwongs for her expert suggestions on a translation of Inscription No. 29 from Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Captain Boonyarit Chaisuwan and various organizations for providing me with informative illustrations. Some parts of this essay previously appeared in the book chapter – Wannasarn Noonsuk (2019) "Tracing Tamil Imprints in Art and Culture of Thailand." In *Sojourners to Settlers: Tamils in Southeast Asia and Singapore*, edited by Mahizhnan, Arun and Nalina Gopal, 100-17. Singapore: Indian Heritage Centre and Institute of Policy Studies.

References

Bellina-Pryce, B. and P. Silapanth. 2006. "Weaving Cultural Identities on Trans-Asiatic Networks: Upper Thai-Malay Peninsula—An Early Socio-Political Landscape." *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient* 93: 257-93.

Bellina, B., P. Silapanth, B. Chaisuwan, C. Thongcharoenchaikit, J. Allen, V. Bernard, et al. 2014. "The Development of Coastal Polities in the Upper Thai-Malay Peninsula." In *Before Siam: Essays in Art and Archaeology*, edited by Nicolas Revire and Stephen Murphy, 69-89. Bangkok: Siam Society and River Books.

Bouvet, P. 2009. "Étude Préliminaire de Céramiques Indiennes et « Indianisantes » du Site de Khao Sam Kaeo IVe-IIe siècles av. J.-C." *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 93: 353-90.

Bouvet, P. 2011. "Preliminary Study of Indian and Indian Style Wares from Khao Sam Kaeo (Chumphon, Peninsular Thailand), Fourth-Second Centuries BCE." In *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia*, edited by P.-Y. Manguin, A. Mani, and G. Wade, 47-82. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Castillo, C., B. Bellina, and D. Fuller. 2016. "Rice, Beans and Trade Crops on the Early Maritime Silk Route in Southeast Asia." *Antiquity* 90 (353): 1255-69.

Chaisuwan, B. 2011. "Early Contacts between India and the Andaman Coast in Thailand from the Second Century to Eleventh Century CE." In *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia,* edited by P.-Y. Manguin, A. Mani, and G. Wade, 83-112. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Craven, R. C. 2006. *Indian Art: A Concise History*. New York: Thames and Hudson.

Desai, M. 2018. *Wooden Architecture of Kerala*. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing.

Glover, I. C. and B. Bellina. 2011. "Ban Don Ta Phet and Khao Sam Kaeo: The Earliest Indian Contacts Re-assessed." In *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia*, edited by P.-Y. Manguin, A. Mani, and G. Wade, 17-46. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Huntington, S. 1999. *The Art of Ancient India*. New York: Weather Hill.

Jacq-Hergoualc'h, M. 2002. *The Malay Peninsula: Crossroad of the Maritime Silk Road (100 BC-1300 AD)*. Handbook of Oriental Studies. Part 3 Southeast Asia, 13. Leiden: Brill.

Krairiksh, P. 1980. *Art in Peninsular Thailand prior to the Fourteenth Century A.D.* Bangkok: Fine Arts Department.

Lavy, P. 2014. "Conch-on-hip Images in Peninsular Thailand and Early Vaisnava Sculpture in Southeast Asia." In *Before Siam: Essays in Art and Archaeology*, edited by Nicolas Revire and Stephen Murphy, 152-73. Bangkok: Siam Society and River Books.

Manguin, P.-Y. 2011. "Introduction." In *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia*, edited by P.-Y. Manguin, A. Mani, and G. Wade, xiii-xxxi. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

McGovern, N. 2017. "Balancing the Foreign and the Familiar in the Articulation of Kingship: The Royal Court Brahmans of Thailand." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 48(2): 283-303.

Michell, G. 2000. *Hindu Art and Architecture*. New York: Thames and Hudson.

Mus, P. 1975. *India Seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa*. Translated by I.W. Mabbett. Monash Papers on Southeast Asia 3. Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University.

Na Nagara, Prasert. 1978. "Inscriptions from Nakhon Si Thammarat." In *Report of the Seminar on Nakhon Si Thammarat History*, 439-452. Nakhon Si Thammarat: Nakhon Si Thammarat Teachers College (in Thai).

Noonsuk, P. 1997. *Archaeological Sites in Southern Thailand*. Bangkok: Office of the National Research Board (in Thai).

Noonsuk, W. 2013. "Kingdom on the Beach Ridges: A Landscape Archaeology of Tambralinga in Peninsular Siam." *Asian Perspectives*. 52 (2): 268-299.

Noonsuk, W. 2017. "Prologue: The Isthmian Tract and the Gulf of Siam." In *Peninsular Siam and Its Neighborhoods*, edited by Wannasarn Noonsuk, 1-20. Nakhon Si Thammarat: Cultural Council of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

Noonsuk, W. 2018. *Tāmbraliṅga and Nakhon Si Thammarat: Early Kingdoms on the Isthmus of Southeast Asia*. The 2nd Edition. Nakhon Si Thammarat: Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

O'Connor, S. J. 1965. "Brahmanical Sculptures of Peninsular Siam." PhD diss., Cornell University.

O'Connor, S. J. 1972. *Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam*. Ascona: Artibus Asiae.

Sumio, F. 2004. The Long 13th Century of Tāmbraliṅga: from Javaka to Siam. *The Memoirs of the Toyo Bunko* 62: 45-79.

Tomber, R. 2008. *Indo-Roman Trade: From Pots to Pepper*. London: Duckworth.

Wales, H.G.Q. 1976. *The Malay Peninsula in Hindu Times*. London: Bernard Quaritch LTD.

Wolters, O. W. 1999. *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. New York: Cornell Southeast Asian Program.

Chapter 2

Localization of Indic Heritage in Southeast Asia: Some Observations

Gauri Parimoo Krishnan

Historiographical Framework for the Study of Southeast Asia's Indic Heritage

Trade in the ancient and pre-modern times and the European discovery of Asia about five hundred years ago, led to the recognition and inexhaustible demand for the natural resources of the Southeast Asian region. In the 17th century the greed for the control over the natural resources was followed by a genuine interest in the study and documentation of the cultural corpus of these regions that were for centuries connected through land and maritime economy. In this transregional communication many ideas, technologies and knowledge were exchanged within Asia and the west. With each wave of European trade interest in Asia either through VOC, EIC among others, and the establishment of factories in Calicut, Goa, Surat, Madras, Banten, Batavia, Calcutta, Melaka, Penang, and Singapore to name a few – interest in archaeology of the regions gradually developed and thrived since the 18th century. It is through these early attempts at documentation and restoration work that the European interest began to focus on monuments and sites, such as Borobudur, Prambanan (Figure 2.1), Champa, Angkor Wat (Figure 2.2), Dvaravati, Ayutthaya, and those in the Malay world.

Consumption and unquenchable thirst for trade goods, and cultural relics went hand in hand in most port cities in Asia. Alongside natural products, man-made cultural monuments and artefacts, such as statues of deities and fragments of monuments, also travelled to Europe. European contribution to museology in Asia has played a great part in the discovery, classification, and conservation of art, architecture and culture when many of these monuments were first "discovered" by them in various states of neglect. For the birth of archaeology in undivided India and Malaya, much credit goes to the British for undertaking scientific study, documentation and restoration as well as conservation of ancient monuments, which often resulted in taking collections back to the UK, as well as building purpose-built museums for archaeology, natural history and ethnology such as the Indian Museum, Kolkata (1814); Government Museum, Chennai (1854); Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum (1855) and the Prince of Wales Museum (1922), Mumbai (now CSMVS) among many other smaller museums in most residency towns and princely states. In Southeast Asia, the Dutch built the Museum Nasional (Gedung Gajah) in 1868, the French built the Danang Museum of Cham Sculpture (1919), and Phnom Penh Museum (1917-1924); and the British built museums in Perak (1883), Sarawak (1888) and Singapore (1887). The Archaeological Survey Annual Reports and the Journals of the Royal Asiatic Societies set up in Bengal, Mumbai, and the Malayan Branch in the Straits Settlements in Singapore contributed immensely to the study and research of the regions of South and Southeast Asia which to this day remain the most reliable resources to study all aspects of the region and its interconnectedness.

Figure 2.1. Prambanan, a large 9th-century Hindu temple in Central Java, Indonesia. Source: "Candi Prambanan Temple Compounds (P1120032)" by christopher-amos is marked with CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Figure 2.2. Angkor Wat, a world-renowned early-12th century Hindu temple in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Source: "Angkor Wat" by Pigalle is marked with CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Indic Heritage in Southeast Asia

Coming of people from India to Southeast Asia is not the same as the arrival of Europeans in America – was rightly observed by some early European scholars. The purpose of their visit was mainly for the search of gold, spices, aromatic woods and fragrant resins. It is probable that the priests who consecrated the first Brahmanical or Buddhist sanctuaries and the scholars who composed the first Sanskrit inscriptions were preceded by seamen, traders, or immigrants – founders of the first Indian settlements.

When Georges Cœdès began his study of the Indianized States of Southeast Asia, or the "expansion of Indian culture" he rightly observed that "the oldest archaeological remains these states have left us are not necessarily evidence of the first civilizing wave" (Cœdès 1968, 14-15). The contact between India and "Farther India" dates back much further hence the great kingdoms that were influenced by the great traditions of sculpture carving in stone and temple building reflect their own heritage alongside what they absorbed by way of enculturation from India, China and Europe over time. From the beginning of the Current Era, Indians were arriving in greater numbers and were accompanied by knowledgeable persons capable of spreading the religions and the arts of India and the Sanskrit language. Cœdès (1968, 15) noted that "The Indianization of Farther India is the continuation overseas of a 'Brahmanization' that had its earliest focus in Northwest India and that having begun well before the Buddha, continues to our day in Bengal as well as in the South" and in fact, the most ancient Sanskrit inscriptions of Farther India are not much later than the first Sanskrit inscriptions of India itself.

Cœdès (1968:15-16) continued, "Indianization must be understood essentially as the expansion of an organised culture that was founded upon the Indian conception of royalty, was characterised by Hinduist or Buddhist cults, the mythology of the *Puranas,* and the observance of the *Dharmashastras*, and expressed itself in the Sanskrit language. It is for this reason that we sometimes speak of 'Sanskritization' instead of 'Indianization.'" "Sanskrit civilization" of Bengal and the Dravidian countries is the fact that one spread by land and the other by sea, in a sense, by "osmosis." The Indic civilization in Southeast Asia was the civilization of an elite and not that of the whole population, whose beliefs and ways of life are still insufficiently known.

Cœdès for the first time pointed out the presence of Indian elements, not so much Hindu or Buddhist, as both were assimilated to different degrees in different cultures and never really seen as separate strands but one continuous Indian iconography, religion and philosophy. This at times even manifested in religio-political iconography such as the *Devaraja* cult of the God-King or the adaptation of many Hindu auspicious symbols, religious iconography of deity images, themes for mythological narratives, and design concepts for massive religious monuments. Prominent examples such as the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, Garuda, Naga, Apsara, Kinnara-Kinnari, Hanuman, the Buddha or the Bodhisattva, Earth Goddess or the Prajnaparamita can be cited here – some of which have also become national symbols in Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia for example. The Devaraja cult first emerged in Indonesia - was also adapted in Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand through the selective adaptation by the erstwhile rulers. Evolution of the architecture and iconography of temples inspired by the *Devaraja* cult such as the Bhadreshwara temple at *My Son* in Vietnam, Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom in Cambodia, Prambanan and Candi Panataran in Central and East Java are just a few highlights that can be studied to understand how the aspiration and timeless glory and values of the ruler-builders have been immortalized at these temples. At the same time, it reflects how the Indic philosophy of Karma and rebirth, veneration to the Ishtadeva (Ishwara), and the interchangeability between divinity and royalty have been assimilated and guided the temple architecture and sculptural iconography, including epigraphic records accompanying them.

This essay is a preliminary attempt to explore what is Indic, rather than Hindu or Buddhist in the art of Southeast Asia, what was their universal appeal that spread across Southeast Asia and how it can be deciphered and interpreted. Studying Southeast Asian art from the perspective of Indianization

without undermining its own independent indigenous growth necessitates we look at it as one connected Hindu-Buddhist tradition with several selective adaptations than as Hindu and Buddhist separately. For example, Borobudur and Prambanan are not to be seen in isolation but as a continuum, where from one generation to the next, religious affiliations may have changed but the force driving the making and dedication of such enormous monuments remained the same. Faith in Shiva, Brahma, Rama or the Buddha are a continuation of the same mystical conception and their image-making and devotional worship are also interrelated. It is worth noting that even though the main shrine arca (religious icon) of Prambanan are Shaivite, the representation of the *Ramayana* narrative begins in its balcony walls starting in the *pradakshina* (Hindu traditional circumambulatory passage) order with Vishnu reclining on the Shesha Naga with Garuda seated by his side extolling the story of the incarnation of Rama as the inaugural panel of the narrative. It is also suggested by scholars after more than hundred years' study that the *Ramayana* narratives are not based on the Valmiki or the Sanskrit version alone, but oral versions from Sumatra, and *Malay Hikayats* which were popular in Central Java, alongside Jain, Tamil as well as the Bengali versions. Here, during the Srivijaya period, Palembang was recognised as the great centre for learning Sanskrit grammar and scriptures and should be highlighted as one of the possible sources of diffusion of the *Ramayana*.

Furthermore, notices of composite icons, such as Harihara, Shiva-Parvati as Ardhanarishvara, and the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara figures adapting Shaivite iconography, are quite noteworthy in Hindu and Buddhist religious philosophy and iconography, seamlessly coexisting and intermingling in Southeast Asia.

Philosophical and Religious Concepts

With the exception of Balinese and certain Cham communities, it is noted that Hinduism does not exist as a practiced religion in Southeast Asia. However, it is widely accepted that Hindu beliefs, practices, and traditions have seamlessly entered in the everyday lives of Southeast Asians and continue to manifest even at official mainstream and popular cultural levels. Such manifestations are not to be mistaken as Indic influences but an assimilation of the past histories of these communities whose culture evolved out of a melting pot of many cultures – local, regional and distant. It is the people to people contact through which some of it has survived to this day. However, for the major classical art and architectural traditions in the Khmer region, Srivijaya, Central Java, Funan, Champa, and Thai kingdoms, it was the agency of the ruler-Hindu or Buddhist preceptor-scholar networks that contributed greatly to their cultural and artistic traditions. Perhaps of Indic origin, the preceptor would have played a key role in officiating the building's planning, philosophical objective of the building project and the rituals accompanying the construction, consecration of the monuments and the on-going rituals to fulfil the desires of the rulers to be consecrated as the presiding deities such as Shiva of Vishnu.

Notices of similar practice can be gleaned from the many epigraphical evidence found since the beginning of the Current Era. Between 1131 and 1147, it was at Angkor Wat that Suryavarman II was deified in the form of a statue of Vishnu with the posthumous name Paramavishnuloka. The name was an indication of the favour Vaishnavism enjoyed at the court more by the legendary cycle of Vishnu-Krishna-Rama. It was more adept than Shaivism for inspiring bhakti, devotion, and mysticism, found in the same period at Java, whereas the kings of Kadiri represented themselves as incarnations of Vishnu as well. The composition by Triguna of the *Krishnayana*, an epic poem dealing with the legend of Krishna depicted in the bas-reliefs of Candi Jago and Panataran, dates from the early 12th century period including the *Ramayana* reliefs (Cœdès, 1968, 158-162). This is incidentally synchronous with the Vaishnavite religious movement in India inspired by Sri Ramanujacharya, the 12th-century theologian, philosopher and the organiser of temple administration who popularised the Sri Vaishnava philosophy of Vedanta through personal devotion or *saguna bhakti*.

Localization and Selective Adaptation

In 1927, when Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore visited Malaya, Bali, Java, Sumatra, and Siam, his observation of Asian universalism had been aptly cited by Sugata Bose, highlighting in his recognition of the phenomenon of localization rather than Indianization. He watched many royal performances of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, visited monuments and recognised how they have been adapted by the Balinese, Javanese and Siamese. He wrote in his poem Siam in October 1927 giving final expression to his search for traces of Indian universalism in Southeast Asia with these words:

> *Today I will bear witness to India's glory, that transcended its own boundaries. I will pay it homage outside India at your door.*

He was pointing to the vast Indic inspired art, architecture, performing arts and literature including the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* epics which is very widely practiced and captured the popular psyche for centuries. Even until today, local population in Indonesia throng the open-air performance venues of the Wayang-kulit or the *Sendratari Ramayana*, and take great joy in the antiques of the monkeys, the battle with the ogres and the delicate Sinta's deliverance from Lanka when Hanuman locates her. These are real lived experiences of the Indonesians, which are shared by the Khmers, Thais and to an extent Malays as well. The idea of localization and adaptation not only highlights how and why Southeast Asians connect with the Indian epics, but also encourages us to reflect on what it is that drives them to continue to engage with it. In their perspective, they are no longer Indic, or Hindu or Buddhist, but cultural substratum of their ancient heritage, that also contains elements of Islam and Christianity among other indigenous beliefs and practices, as well as western education, language and modernisation. Many island nations and their port cities are more receptive to the changes and adaptable than their remote mainland neighbours, where change is much slower and less frequent.

Epics, Hindu Deities and Popular Themes

It is noteworthy that the epics appeared in epigraphy and art much before they made their way to literary documentation or creative writing in the form of a text for performing arts or for recitation. The oral narratives and written texts were absorbed by the local authors and sometimes kings. Certain indigenous tales were added on as branch stories or 'popular' diversions and classical tales were found in written form as early as the 12th century in Java, the 15th century in Thailand, and the 16th-17th century and 18th-19th century in Cambodia. As for the *Malay Hikayats*, earliest available references are from the 17th century, but it is now widely believed that they existed orally much earlier and were written down much later.

C. Sivaramamurti and Jean Filliozat among others have identified many epigraphs which bear witness to the proliferation of the knowledge of the *Ramayana*, Valmiki himself and the many epithets and situations which are metaphorically referenced by later writers. It is possible that Tamil or eastern Indian priests or scholars would have created these inscriptions and truly demonstrated the knowledge of Sanskrit poetry and literary techniques. The Vo-canh inscription is dateable to around the 3rd century and the Tra-Kieu inscription to the 7th century (both from Vietnam). They bear witness to the knowledge of the *Ramayana* story and the veneration of its creator Valmiki himself and the context of the creation of the *Ramayana* poetry.

In Cambodia, at many sites such as Preah Khan, Pre-Rup, Prasat Barmei, Prasat Trepan Run between the 10th-13th centuries, references to the *Atharva Veda*, *Puranas*, and *Ramayana* texts are present. Episodes from the Ramayana are mentioned as metaphors as well as examples of great literature. This suggests that the knowledge of the verses, their references in epigraphy as well as in sculptural artworks had developed hand in hand, and that aesthetic, literary and visual sensibilities were well developed at the same time. It is also worth mentioning that sectarian rivalry between Shaiva and Vaishnava or Buddhist did not exist, which means that the tradition of the *smarta* Brahmanical practice was followed in this region of Southeast Asia as rightly observed by Jean Filliozat.

The epics in Indian tradition bear a religious

connotation, it involves two of the most popular incarnations of Hindu god Vishnu, namely Rama and Krishna who have appeared on earth to restore peace, harmony and balance in society and to establish the success of good over evil. In the case of Rama, he is not only a good son, husband and king, but he is also very self-restrained and controlled. He never rages or engages in destructive acts, however, being a human, he is prone to certain weaknesses such as banishing his wife Sita to the forest just because he overhears his subjects discussing her conduct and chastity. In Southeast Asian countries, the Hindu epics are so ingrained in the popular culture that one notices them becoming indigenized, leading to many branch stories as well as interpretations wholly local in nature. Many times these variations reflect their local culture, popular customs or audience expectations as well as the aspiration of the ruling, intellectual and working classes. With regards to the *Mahabharata*, it is also a popular tale alongside local Indonesian folklore of the Panji cycle especially referring to the major heroes, such as Arjuna, Bhima and Duryodhana who find local kings, nobles and soldiers relatable with them. For Cambodia, the Rama story is known through epigraphy and sculptural reliefs on monuments steeped in Hindu culture such as Banteay Srei (Figure 2.3) and Angkor Wat that the story was known in the ancient period, but what survives is a much later version of *Ramakerti*, written during the Khmer middle period, when Buddhism was at the peak and the character of Rama is given a Bodhisattva-like character who provides deliverance to his subjects (Pou, 1981, 20). Other names that are localized: through Buddhist lens are Trijata to Sujata, the virtuous demoness who protected Sita, in the *Ashokavatika*; through Thai and Khmer lenses, Maricha to Maharik, one which can expand; and through Tamil-Malay lens Guha-Skanda to Guhan, one who resides in the hills etc (Pou, 1981, 23-29). Through extensive research into the localization of Sanskrit proper names, Saveros Pou demonstrates how the original Sanskrit version has been indigenized, giving rise to the *apabhramsa* phonetic versions likely due to the lack of Sanskrit expertise among the later Khmer writers and scribes as well as prakritization due to the overarching Buddhist milieu when the *Ramakerti* was written. In any case, it has also been noted that the text available

Figure 2.3. Banteay Srei, a 10th-century Hindu temple in Cambodia. Source: "Banteay Srei temple near Siem Reap in Cambodia" by UweBKK (ɑ 77 on) is marked with CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

was written as a *sahitya* to accompany the Lakhon-Khol performance in Cambodia danced by men.

Based on visual and performing art traditions of Southeast Asia, it can be noted that for the Khmer people, the theme of brotherly love between Rama and Lakshmana bore major importance hence etymologically the *Reamker*, the title of the *Ramakerti* refers to the 'glory of the elder brother' while the theme of abduction of Sita by Kabandha and Ravana as well as the killing of Bali by Sugriva are some of the key or favourite themes that are didactic in nature – teaching the importance of human values and royal conduct. For the Thai versions of the *Ramayana*, it can be noted that many Thai customs have been interspersed by the authors of the *Ramakien* in response to its purpose for the Thai court and public culture (Figure 2.4). For themes, such as the respect for the king, teachers and elders, maintaining integrity, justice, gratitude, and fidelity in one's actions, the law of Karma, and realization of the transitoriness of life on earth are extolled as Buddhist values, which are also prevalent in Hindu tradition.

Besides literary transmission, orally transmitted knowledge about religious mythology, iconography and philosophy, Hindu iconography is adapted from visual or verbal familiarization; for example, the Funan or pre-Angkorian period where Durga, Vishnu, Ganesh and Shiva became popular. However, speaking about Mukhalinga in Khmer art dating to around the 8th-9th centuries, the clear knowledge of the tripartite division of the *linga* form, the phallic symbolism and installation of it in the *yonipeetha* base suggests that its making was officiated by a class of priests or officiating agents. In the same regard, sculptures of Harihara, Shiva-Parvati as Ardhanarishvara and other composite deities were inspired by popular Hindu themes which could be easily localized and understood.

Art, Architecture, Decorative Vocabulary and Aesthetic Principles of Classicism

The adaptation and localization of artistic vocabulary, styles, motifs, patterns, design principles, stone carving, metal casting and architectural construction techniques arriving from India over time had varied impacts in Southeast Asia, and the impulse to create their own creations has manifested in some of the finest monuments, sculptures and paintings in the region. In his conclusion, Cœdès notices how the

Figure 2.4. Ravana (Thotsakan) standing on his grand chariot in Khon Dance telling the Ramakien stories. Source: "Scene from the Khon Classical Thai Mask Dance show" by Alaskan Dude is marked with CC BY-NC 2.0.

Indian aesthetics, transplanted to Cambodia, Java and other countries of the farther east gave birth to Khmer, and Javanese art, for example (Cœdès, 1968, 255-256). Here I would like to point out that the familiar likeness of the works of Indian master artists may have inspired the Southeast Asian craftsmen; however, the creative genius of handling the materials and conceiving the forms was wholly their own. Here, their creativity, planning, visualisation and execution are acknowledged. Otherwise, how would the sites such as Borobudur with its Buddhist narratives, Prambanan with its *Ramayana* narratives, Angkor Wat, Ankor Thom, Bayon, Bali, and Thailand unite the plastic arts within Southeast Asia? What unites them despite their unique regional and historical styles is their classicism which evolved under some of the great master craftsmen and patrons of their times. Besides iconography, it is the classicism in stylization of the sculptural forms that have endured over time as symbols of traditional national identity.

Without the confirmation of the knowledge of traditional Indian aesthetics texts such as the *Chitra Sutra* (text on ideals of painting) and *Pratimalakshana* (Sanskrit text on iconography and iconometry) or the teaching of principles of art and aesthetics such as the *Natyashastra* (text on dramaturgy) or Poetics, it is very difficult to judge how Hindu and Buddhist aesthetics were transplanted from India. Evidently, the way the *mudras*, the *asanas*, the *bhavas*, and the flow of compositional lines are arranged on Southeast Asian monuments, there is little doubt that the Southeast Asian craftsmen demonstrated a deep understanding and translated the aesthetic principles through their forms. This further points to the Javanese, Balinese, Khmer or Cham aesthetic principles which may already have been well developed for it to absorb what was being received through the Indic sources. If the story of the *Ramayana* epic could be transplanted to Java through *Bhattikavya* which is a text dealing with poetics, there is little doubt that *nagara*, *dravida* and *vesara* architectural treatises or *Pratimalakshana* dealing with the figural art of heroes, heroines, gods and demons would not have travelled in some form such as palm leaf or oral instructions which are now lost forever, unless new research may support this view in the future.

Conclusion

This paper offers some observations on Indic inspired aspects in the architecture, sculpture, iconography, philosophy, literature and epigraphy across several centuries in different parts of Southeast Asia. It sees these manifestations as a continuum that inspired different disciplines which further inspired each other osmotically. It raises research questions for further deliberation and avenues to review previous interpretations.

References

Bose, S. 2010. “20th Century Rediscovery of Asian Universalism: Rabindranath Tagore’s Interpretation of the Epics.” In *Ramayana in Focus: Visual and Performing Arts of Asia*, edited by Gauri Parimoo Krishnan, 172. Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum.

Cœdès, George. 1968. *Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Translated by Sue Brown Cowing. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i, East-West Center Press.

Filliozat, Jean. 1984. “The Ramayana in Southeast Asian Sanskrit Epigraphy and Iconography.” In *Asian Variation in Ramayana*, edited by K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, 192-193. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

Poolthupya, Srisurang. 1981. “Thai Customs and Social Values in the Ramakien.” In *The Ramayana in Southeast Asia*, edited by S. Sahai, 49-66. Gaya: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies.

Pou, S. 1981. “Some Proper Names in the Khmer Ramakerti.” In *The Ramayana in Southeast Asia*, edited by S. Sahai, 19-30. Gaya: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies.

Sarkar, H.B. 1983. “The Ramayana in Southeast Asia.” In *Asian Variation in Ramayana*, edited by K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, 210. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

Chapter 3

Hindu Art in the Straits of Melaka

John N. Miksic

Abstract

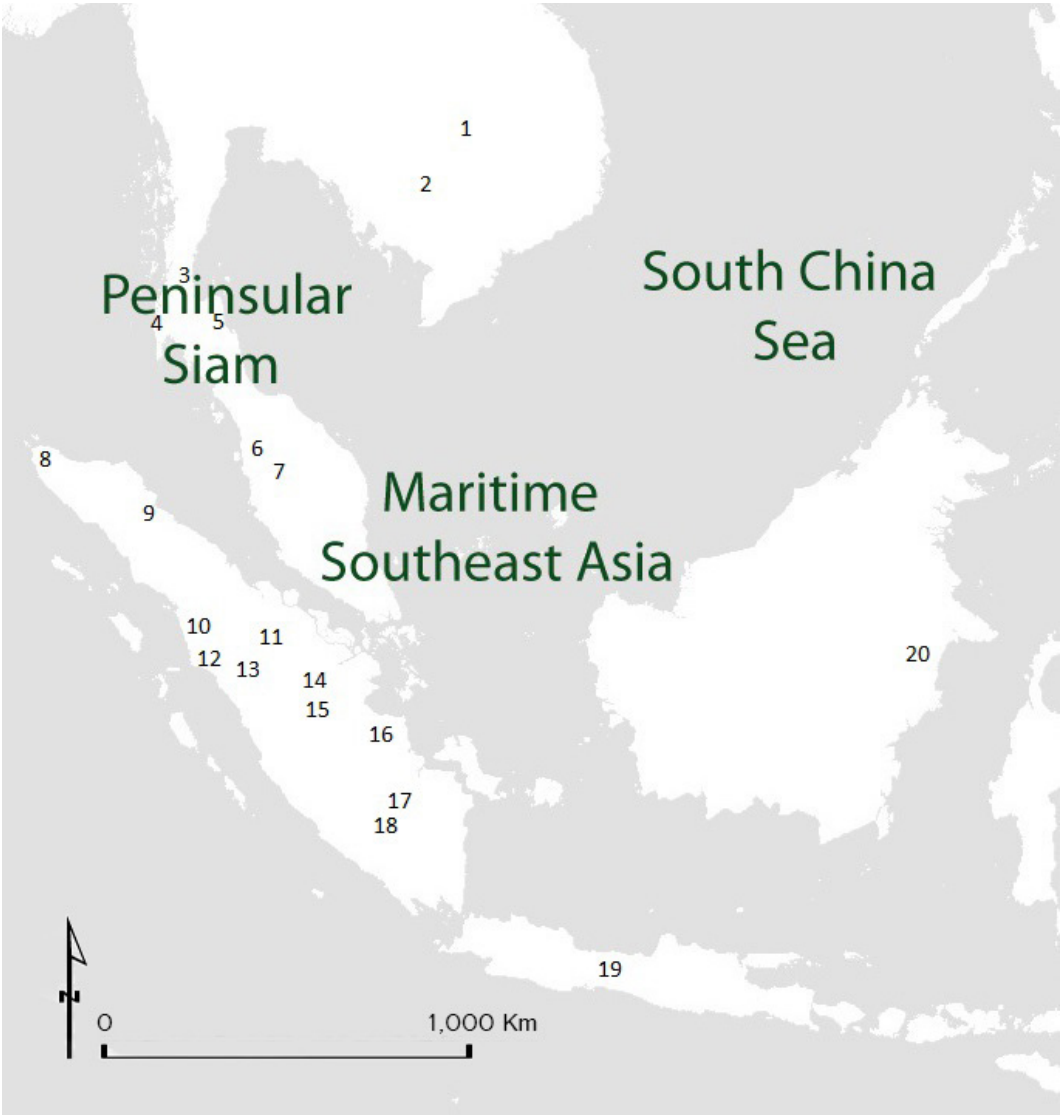
Examples of Hindu and Buddhist art demonstrate that these Indic religions inspired sculptors and architects in Sumatra and peninsular Malaysia for over a millennium. The spread of religious art was supported by commercial relationships with ports around the Bay of Bengal, but important works of Indic art and architecture are also found in locations far from the sea, where the mode of transmission must have been through internal communication. Buddhism was much more influential than Hinduism in the Straits of Melaka. The Chola invasion of the Straits of Melaka in the early eleventh century led to the spread of Hindu art at the north end of the Straits, but the rest of the Straits was not affected by this event. Other factors must have been responsible for the appearance of Hindu art in central and southern Sumatra.

Malayo-Polynesians and South Asian Culture

The people who lived in the Straits of Melaka (see Map 0.1 in the volume's Introduction and Map 3.1 in this chapter) were the ancient world's most expert seafarers. By 1,500 years ago the Malayo-Polynesians had settled islands spread over more than half the earth's circumference. After centuries of contact between the Straits of Melaka and South Asia, artists in the Straits began to create artworks modeled on Hindu and Buddhist precepts around 500 CE.

O.W. Wolters (Wolters 1999) used the word "localization" to refer to a mode of cultural change whereby arts and ideas formulated in South Asia were transmitted to Southeast Asia. He used the picturesque phrase "refracturing and restating" to denote the fact that Southeast Asians absorbed (or in a figurative sense were absorbed by) some elements of Indic culture and not others; local cultures in different parts of Southeast Asia differed significantly in the emphasis they placed on certain cultural elements: some elements become more prominent in Southeast Asia than they were in South Asia, while others prominent in South Asia were rare or non-existent in Southeast Asia. The process and principles which dictated the way this selection took place are still to be identified; it is hoped that this essay will help future scholars advance further in the quest to understand the evolution of Southeast Asian culture in the premodern period.

Contrary to most accepted theories, it seems likely that the main agents who transported South Asian cultural elements across the Bay of Bengal were Southeast Asians who had been to South Asia. Southeast Asian visitors to South Asia no doubt appropriated cultural elements at their sources before transporting them across the Bay of Bengal. Southeast Asians would not have been disturbed that their use of these icons deviated from South Asian practices. Southeast Asians who were not sailors or traders would not have had the impression that they were localizing anything; Indic culture was already being fractured in India when Southeast Asians who traveled to South Asia chose fragments of it to bring back home. Given this indirect form of appropriation, it is amazing how closely some elements of Indic



Map 3.1. Sites mentioned in the chapter, including No. 1 Kompong Cham Kau; 2 Angkor; 3 Chaiya; 4 Khao Pra Narai, Takuapa River; 5 Nakhon Si Thammarat/Tambralinga; 6 Kedah, Merbok, Province Wellesley; 7 Perak, Malaysia (Ipoh, Tanjong Rambutan, Sungai Siput, Pengkalan Pegoh, Bidor, Jalong, north of Ipoh near Sungai Siput; 8 Neusu, Aceh; 9 Kota Cina; 10 Barus; 11 Padang Lawas; 12 Mandailing Regency, Sibolga; 13 Sorik Merapi; 14 Kota Aur, Kampar Kiri, Batusangkar; 15 Padang Roco; 16 Muara Jambi; 17 Palembang, Musi River; 18 Bumiayu; 19 Dieng Plateau; 20 Kutai. Source: John Miksic and W. Saam Noonsuk.

culture such as Sanskrit language were related to their South Asian sources. A particular form of temple architecture, the *vimana-mandapam*, was imported from India to a few locations in the northern Straits of Melaka, a situation which calls for closer investigation. In terms of sculpture, however, artists in the Straits of Melaka felt free to modify the originals in order to make local statements using imported materials.

Relations between Buddhism and Hinduism in the Straits of Melaka

The oldest evidence of Indic religion in Indonesia consists of inscriptions connected with a form of Vedic Hinduism in Kutai, eastern Borneo; no deity is singled out for veneration. Most laymen and many scholars assume that the majority of the population of the Straits of Melaka in ancient times was Hindu, with a particular devotion to the god Shiva. It is true that traditional Malay culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries betrayed evidence of

pre-Islamic influences from Hinduism, mainly connected with the veneration of the god Shiva. Colonial-era scholars such as Richard O. Winstedt played a major role in creating this impression (Winstedt 1947, 26-33, *passim*; 1951, 27-38, *passim*; Devahuti 1965, 69-101). The vast majority of religious artifacts and inscriptions from the precolonial era found in the Straits of Melaka are Buddhist (Miksic 2010). How does one interpret this data?

Buddhism and Hinduism concern themselves with different aspects of life. Buddhism does not provide special guidance on daily affairs, the cycle of life, or the rise and fall of kings, leaving a gap which Hindu priests and related supernatural beings filled even in Southeast Asian communities which espoused Buddhist teachings. This has sometimes led to the notion that Southeast Asians created a syncretic form of religion combining Hinduism and Buddhism, but this does not seem accurate (Hariani Santiko 1995). The same complementarity of Hinduism and Buddhism also existed in early India. An inscription at Nalanda in northeast India records the establishment of a monastery for monks from Indonesia in the mid-ninth century, but it compares the Indonesian prince for whom the monastery was dedicated to the Hindu heroes Yudhishthira and Arjuna, and refers to the Hindu deities Krishna, Parvati, Shiva, Lakshmi, and Vishnu, as well as the esoteric Buddhist goddess Tara (Chatterji 1967, 326-327). The oldest written texts from the Straits of Melaka, found in Kedah and Province Wellesley, reflect Buddhist beliefs. The people of the Straits of Melaka would have seen nothing contradictory in using beliefs derived from Hinduism and Buddhism in different aspects of life.

It has often been inferred that Shiva was the most popular Hindu deity in early Southeast Asia, but Pierre-Yves Manguin has detected "a long chain of Vaishnava settlements, a merchant network that ran parallel to the similarly widespread Buddhist network" which reached the Straits of Melaka during the mid-first millennium CE (Manguin 2004, 304). In the Straits of Melaka, most examples of Hindu art and architecture are found in contexts where there is evidence of direct involvement of Tamil speakers from south India who were devotees of Shiva. Small isolated Ganesha images have been found in scattered locations in Sumatra such as Kota Aur, on the Kampar Kiri (Schnitger 1937, 13) and West Sumatra (a small bronze found near Batusangkar is in the office of the archaeological department there). They are not necessarily signs of the existence of Hinduism; Ganesa was sometimes incorporated into Buddhism in many Buddhist realms.

The Straits of Melaka in Historical Sources

Chinese Texts

Chinese texts provide the best source of historical data for the Straits of Melaka during the period between 500 and 1500 years ago. The Chinese perceived Srivijaya, their main partner in tributary trade in western Indonesia from the seventh to the eleventh centuries, as the predominant political power there. After 906 CE, the Chinese ceased to refer to Srivijaya (*Shih li foshih*), and instead used the term *San foqi*, "Three Vijayas," to refer to southeast Sumatra. This probably reflects a new Chinese recognition of the nature of the mandala system.

Historians have assumed that Srivijaya was a unified kingdom, perhaps even an empire, but the polity probably resembled a league of ports rather than a centralized state (Noonsuk 2013, 2). Kingdoms in the lands bordering the Straits of Melaka in the precolonial era did not control large swathes of territory. Precolonial political systems of the Straits of Melaka have been termed mandalas (Wolters 1999). The basic units which made up the mandalas usually consisted of one main city, market, port, religious center, or other central point, with smaller satellite settlements, religious sanctuaries, etc. These units often came together for periods of a few years to a few centuries to form super-mandalas. This polycentric mode of organization fostered the development of societies which jealously guarded their independence, politics, economy, and culture. For example, Srivijaya's rulers were Buddhist. The site of Bumiayu in the hinterland of Srivijaya's capital at modern Palembang on the Musi River has yielded much Hindu statuary. This may have been a local cultural statement on the part of the Bumiayu population using Hinduism to proclaim their cultural

(and perhaps political) autonomy from Palembang.

Chinese sources provide more data about southeast Sumatra than for the north end of the Straits. Ships coming from China could easily reach the area of Palembang and Jambi by sailing more or less due south, because that coast "faced" China (Wolters 1967). This does not mean that the north end was less important; Indian sources emphasized the importance of Kedah in comparison to Srivijaya, probably due to the same factor, i.e. that Kedah faced the South Asian subcontinent. Historians may have overemphasized the importance of Sumatra's southeast coast in the development of society in the Straits of Melaka due to the greater amount of historical data provided by Chinese sources. A Chinese Buddhist monk, Yijing, passed through the Straits of Melaka twice in the late seventh century. On his way to Bengal he sailed on ships belonging to the ruler of Srivijaya. His route ran from China to Srivijaya (probably Palembang), then Malayu (probably Jambi), then to Kedah, then to Bengal. On the way back he retraced the same route, but added that Malayu and Kedah "were now Srivijaya." Most historians have assumed that this indicated some sort of subjugation, but it may have simply meant that Srivijaya and Kedah had agreed to collaborate rather than competing so that Srivijaya focused on the China trade, leaving Kedah to specialize in relations with South Asia.

Tamil Sources on the Straits of Melaka

Ancient Indian sources do not describe Southeast Asia in detail. Indian literature from 2,000 years ago depicts the "Golden Land" (*Suvarnabhumi* in Sanskrit) and the "Golden Peninsula [or Island]" (*Suvarnadvipa*) in the east where young men could go to seek their fortunes. These terms are very vague, but probably referred to the western coast of modern Myanmar and the Siamo-Malay Peninsula, and the island of Sumatra. This image made its way into Greco-Roman geographical works in the first and second centuries CE, in the Greek name *Aurea Khersonesos* ("Golden Peninsula"; Wheatley 196, xvii, 123-176).

Some of the earliest references to the Straits of Melaka appear in literature in Tamil and Sanskrit. These two languages often appeared together in religious inscriptions. Sanskrit was used by Hindu priests for addressing the gods, and in some schools of Buddhism. Tamil was used for secular matters. A Tamil poem of the second and third centuries CE, *Pattinappalai*, refers to trade with a port in *Kalagam*. *Katahadvipa* ("Kedah Peninsula") appears in Sanskrit *Purana* literature from the fourth century CE (Devahuti 1965, 29). In the *Kathasaritsagara*, a Sanskrit compilation of stories, Kataha appears several times. In one story Kataha is described as "the seat of all felicities" (Wheatley 1961, 273-281). *Kataha*, *Kadaram*, and other variants in Sanskrit and Tamil refer to ports in the Merbok estuary in the modern state of Kedah, on the northwest coast of peninsular Malaysia. Over 80 archaeological sites from the early historic period have been found there.

An inscription from Nagapattinam, south India, dated 1006 refers to "the lofty shrine of Buddha in the *Chulamanivarma vihara* [monastery] which the ruler of Śrīvijaya and Kataha, *Mara Vijayottungavarman* of the *Sailendra* family with the *makara* crest had erected in the name of his father" (Seshadri 2009, 125). Srivijaya was a major maritime kingdom based at Palembang, south Sumatra, which had been founded in the seventh century. In 1018-1019 the (probably Buddhist) Kataha-Srivijaya ruler gave presents to a Hindu temple in the Chola kingdom (Christie 1998, 253 fn 52).

No inscriptions of the eleventh century have been found in Kedah. The *Song Shi*, a Chinese source, says that a Tamil nautical guide of 1015 mentioned *Ku-lo* on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula; this is probably Kedah. In 1012 Arab merchants had come to Guangzhou on a *Ku-lo* ship (Wolters 1966, 228, note 22). Kedah was a very important port for the south Indians. When Srivijaya is mentioned in Tamil inscriptions of the early eleventh century, usually the ruler is designated as the king of Kedah *and* Srivijaya.

Despite these cordial relations, the Tiruvalanggadu inscription dated 1017-1018 calls Rajendra Chola "the victor of Kataha." Majumdar hypothesized that he attacked Kedah in 1017-1018, but only completed the conquest in 1025 (Majumdar 1986, 171-173 footnote 2). The first part of the

Tiruvalanggadu inscription consists of 524 lines in Tamil, followed by 271 lines in Sanskrit. Both are dated in the sixth year of Rajendra's reign, but the Sanskrit section was probably added later. An inscription from the ninth year of Rajendra's reign (1020-21) does not mention Kataha, but one from his thirteenth year (1024-25) records Rajendra's conquests in India. Another Tamil inscription dated 1022-1023 calls Rajendra the ruler of Gangge and Kadaram.

An inscription of 1030-31 on a great temple dedicated to Shiva at Tanjor, the Chola capital, records that King Rajendra Chola I had captured *Sanggramavijayottungavarman*, king of Kadaram, seized his great war gate, and confiscated his treasure. Kadaram is mentioned twice in the inscription: first to report that its king had been captured, and second in the list of territories of Srivijaya which Rajendra attacked. No other ruler is mentioned, implying that *Sanggramavijayottungavarman* ruled them all. He was captured and taken to India, after which we know nothing more about his fate. A depiction of his war-gate appears on a seal on a copper-plate charter inscribed in 1036 and found in Tamil Nadu in 1987 (Nagaswamy 1987, 13), indicating the importance attached to the victory over Kedah in 1025.

Tamils ruled the northern end of the Straits for the next century before the Chola kingdom itself fell into decline. The conquest of Srivijaya does not seem to have caused trade to suffer. Indeed, archaeological evidence in the form of Chinese ceramics and architectural remains indicates that Kedah was very prosperous in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Lamb 1961a, 21-3).

Later in the century something occurred in Kedah involving the Cholas. Our main source of information on this period comes from Chinese records, which are muddled, due to probable Chinese misunderstanding of the political situation in Kedah and southern India. An inscription found in Guangzhou states that Divakara had been king of Srivijaya since 1064-1067. Sometime during that period Divakara, the ruler of *Sanfoqi* sent a "clansman" to "escort his ships" to Guangzhou. He saw a Daoist temple in ruins and reported this to Divakara, upon which Divakara sent an official to supervise the reconstruction of the temple, and donated 500,000 gold cash to buy rice fields to endow it. The project was completed in 1079. In 1070 Divakara became ruler of the Chola kingdom in south India. This inscription shows that even after Divakara returned to rule the Chola Empire, he was still seen by the Chinese as the ruler of *Sanfoqi*. *Sānfóqí Zhunian guo* (Chola Country of *Sanfoqi*) sent missions to China in 1077, 1079, 1082, 1088, and 1090. Fukami (1987) has argued that this name refers to Kedah, which was then a province of the Cholas. The Chinese at this time were confused about the relationship between the Cholas and Kedah, because they were unaware of the Chola practice of appointing a crown prince to rule the Tamil-dominated area in the Straits of Melaka, which may have included north Sumatra as well as Kedah.

In 1089-90, the king of *Kidara* (Kedah, no doubt a vassal of the Cholas) asked the Chola ruler Kulottungga I to grant a new charter to the Buddhist sanctuary built at Nagapattinam in 1006 at the request of the Sailendra ruler Cūdāmaṇivarman. Kulottungga I renewed the charter in 1089-90, which he called *Sri Sailendra Chudamanivarmavihara*, and issued the charter in the name of the king of *Kidara* (Kedah). Kulottungga I probably had ruled Kedah as viceroy before returning to India as king.

These scattered sources suggest that Tamils from the Chola kingdom established a satellite kingdom at the north end of the Straits in 1025 which lasted for about a century. The most visible traces of this period include Shiva sanctuaries in Kedah and two inscriptions in Sumatra, the most famous of which was carved in Barus in 1088. South Indian influence on Sumatran sculpture was strong during this period, but none is visible in Java (Lunsingh Scheurleer and Klokke 1988, 36). "On the Siamo-Malay peninsula, Brahmanical sculpture in Peninsular Siam from the ninth to the eleventh century is dominated by south Indian styles. This intrusion of south Indian style represents a violent discontinuity in the course of Brahmanical sculpture on the peninsula" (O'Connor 1972, 52).

Most examples of Hindu art in the lands bordering the Straits of Melaka are connected with the period of Tamil domination. Kedah probably

became the center of a Hindu colony during the eleventh century.

This period of foreign domination left a vivid imprint on Malay history. According to most recensions of the *Malay Annals*, one of the principal chronicles of Malay literature, the first Malay ruler was the son of Raja Chulan, a great conqueror from India, and a princess who lived beneath the ocean near modern Singapore (Brown 1970, 10-12)). This name must be a thinly disguised memory of Rajendra Chola, who dispatched the fleet that conquered Kedah and the other Straits ports.

Tamil Inscriptions in Southeast Asia

Three inscriptions in Old Tamil from the period 800-1300 CE have been found in Sumatra. Combined with another in Myanmar, two in peninsular Thailand, and one in China, they help us to put the art historical information about Hinduism in the Straits of Melaka in context. The inscription, at Khao Phra-Narai in southern Thailand, was found 16 kilometers up the Takuapa River which flows into the Bay of Bengal. This inscription, in Old Tamil language and ninth-century script, suggests that a ruler sponsored the construction of a tank which was protected by members of a south Indian trading company (Manigramam) and residents of a military camp. Remains of a temple and large statues of Vishnu and two companions, probably imported from south India, have been found there (Christie 1998, 251, Sastri 1949).

The oldest Tamil inscription in Sumatra is located at Barus on the northwest coast, not on the Straits of Melaka. The toponym Barus is very old; it appears in some versions of a Greek work by Klaudios Ptolemaios written in the second century CE. The eighth century Chinese source *Xin Tang Shu* said that Barus was one of two capitals of Srivijaya. Barus appears in references in many languages in connection with camphor which came from the nearby forest and was in great demand in the entire trading network from Arabia to China. Inscriptions, coins, and statuary have been found here, as well as pottery from the Persian Gulf, India, and China.

Barus was not mentioned in the Tanjor inscription as part of the Kedah-Srivijaya attack; a South Asian merchant enclave may already have been established there. An inscription was erected there in 1088 during the reign of Kulottungga in the Chola kingdom, then at its height (for the translation, see Karashima and Subbarayalu 2009, 285-286). It is one of the strongest pieces of evidence that Tamil merchants benefited from the Chola invasion of the Straits of Melaka in 1025 or 1026. The inscription was set up by the *Ainnurruvar* trading company, and termed its members "sons of Shiva." It implies that Indian merchants controlled a *velapuram*, a coastal settlement, which was part of a larger *pattinam* or port city (Christie 1998, 258).

Another inscription in Old Tamil language and script was found at the north tip of Sumatra, at Neusu, Aceh (Christie 1998, 258-259; Karashima and Subbarayalu 2009, 288-289). Unfortunately, it is only partly legible; it contains the word *mandapam*, probably a reference to building a temple. It has been dated to the twelfth century, based on the script form.

Two more Tamil inscriptions are found. One of these was erected at Nakhon Si Thammarat, peninsular Thailand. This text is partly in Sanskrit, partly in Tamil, and records a gift to Brahmanas. It may have been connected with statues of the Hindu deities Vishnu, Surya, and Bhairawa found in the Chaiya area but possibly imported from south India (O'Connor 1972, Figures 32-34). An inscription from Porlak Dolok in the Padang Lawas region of Sumatra dated 1261 bears a text in Palaeosumatran and Tamil scripts and languages. Although the use of Tamil suggests a south Indian connection, a link to Sri Lanka is also plausible (Miksic 2004b, 2007; Schnitger 1936a, 6). No merchant guilds are mentioned in either inscription; the structure of commerce may have changed by this time. There is archaeological as well as textual evidence for south Asian connections and Hindu art at Padang Lawas; see below. An inscription from Bagan, Myanmar, in Sanskrit and Tamil, however, suggests that the *Nanadesi* merchant association was still active there; they gave a donation to a Vishnu temple (Christie 1998, 265-266; Karashima and Subbarayalu 2009, 286-287).

The last of the Old Tamil inscriptions comes

from Quanzhou, one of China's most important ports for several centuries where numerous foreign communities were established. Marco Polo described the port, which he visited around the time this inscription was carved; it is dated 1281, is written in Chinese and Tamil, and records the installation of an image of Shiva.

These inscriptions point to a strong link between the locations where they were found, the worship of Shiva, and Tamil merchants. No Hindu works of art and architecture have been found at the sites where the inscriptions were discovered in Kedah or Sumatra. Some of the locations where Hindu art has been found in the Straits were however also probably places where South Asian merchants were based.

Hindu Art in the Straits of Melaka

Hindu art in the southern Malay Peninsula and Sumatra is rare compared to Buddhist art. No inscriptions from this region mention local rulers who espoused Hinduism. No Tamil inscriptions have been found in Kedah, but strong Tamil presence there in the eleventh century is demonstrated by works of art (sculpture and temple architecture). Chola power declined in the twelfth century, and Kedah disappeared from Indian sources around the same time. The Merbok region ceased to be important at about the same time, but this correlation is probably not causal; different factors were probably responsible for the decline of Kedah and the Chola kingdom based at Tanjor.

Aside from Kedah, major examples of Hindu art have been discovered in several places on Sumatra: at the coastal port of Kota Cina; Padang Lawas and Mandailing Regency in the north Sumatran highlands; and at Bumiayu, another hinterland site located in south Sumatra. There are no historical sources connected with Bumiayu; the reasons for its rise and fall are unknown. The art of Bumiayu does not seem to have had any connection with the south Indian-influenced works of Hindu art at the north end of the Straits; it bears some resemblance to Javanese art, but is not very similar to any known from Java.

Hindu Remains: Peninsular Malaysia

During the early 20th century, several impressive bronze images related to Buddhism were discovered in the area of Ipoh, in the state of Perak, most of them during the course of tin mining. In the early 1900s, a bronze Buddha image was found at a depth of 18 meters in a mine at Tanjong Rambutan. In 1908, a four-armed Avalokitesvara was found in a mine near Sungai Siput, together with an earthenware pot containing gold jewelry. Thirty years later, the same mine yielded an eight-armed Avalokitesvara seated on a throne (Nasution and Abdur-Razzaq Lubis 2005, 2-4). In 1931 two Buddhist bronzes were found in Pengkalan Pegoh, one of which is very large (46.5 cm). A bronze throne for a seated figure was also found in a tin mine in Pengkalan (Evans 1932; van Stein Callenfels 1936; A. Halim Nasir 1977, 67-69). In 1936, an eight-armed statue 93.5 cm tall depicting Avalokitesvara wearing a tiger skin was found at Bidor.

The only object from the tin mining area of Perak which might be related to Hinduism is a bronze statue from Jalong, a village in interior Perak, north of Ipoh in 1936 near Sungai Siput. It is quite tall (52.5 cm). Griswold (1962, 64-66, Plates 1-2, color plate on page v) attributed it to the ninth century. He thought it might have been a portrait of a human Brahmin, or Agastya, this is still controversial. The statue has long hair in straight rows rather than the typical ornate hairstyle of the god, but attributes which link it to Agastya include a prominent abdomen, *upavita* over the left shoulder, and a water flask in the left hand. To this one might add the short beard. The right hand is broken, and whatever attribute it may have held is lost, so no help can be gained from that source. The theory that this is Agastya is contradicted by the fact that this figure has no jewelry; instead he has distended earlobes, pierced but lacking any ear ornaments, which is a typical attribute of the Buddha. Figures on lintels and other sculptures in pre-Angkor Cambodia interpreted as Brahmin priests wear no jewelry either, and have projecting heels like the Jalong bronze, but they have elaborate hairstyles (Wat Eng Khna; Dupont 1955, pl xxvii). Griswold cites three pre-Angkorian bronze bodhisattvas as

Figure 3.1. Candi Bukit Batu Pahat, Kedah. Source: Author.

comparisons, but they have elaborate hairstyles. He also noted the similarities of the statue's hair style to bodhisattva images from southern Thailand, but their dissimilarities include such traits as the presence versus absence of jewelry and long versus short sarong. In favor of the Agastya hypothesis is a Shiva from Kompong Cham Kau with similar body structure except for the protruding stomach (Dupont 1955, plate 20, right).

No other figures of Agastya are known from the Straits of Melaka. The true identity of the Jalong bronze is still unknown.

Kedah

No Brahmanical sculpture can be positively identified in Kedah. No inscriptions of the eleventh or twelfth centuries exist which would allow us to confirm that a Chola political center or trading guild base was established in Kedah. Architecture however indicates a sudden increase in south Indian cultural influence in the Merbok estuary at this time; combined with historical sources, this makes the hypothesis that Kedah was a Chola dependency very probable.

The earliest archaeological remains in Kedah are located between the Muda River and the south shore of the Merbok estuary. They mostly consist of Buddhist remains and inscriptions from the first millennium CE. On the north side of the Merbok, remains of Hindu structures outnumber Buddhist remains. The Hindu shrines consist of a room called a *vimana* for a holy object such as a statue or lingga, and a pavilion or *mandapam* in which a statue of Shiva's mount Nandi was usually placed (Peacock 1980). This style of architecture is found nowhere else in Southeast Asia except for one site in Padang Lawas, north Sumatra (Si Topayan; Lamb 1961a, 1-9). All the vimana-mandapam structures in Kedah are datable to the period of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, thus after the Chola conquest (Nik Hassan Shuhaimi and Othman Yatim 1990, 90).

Archaeologist Jane Allen (1988) identified 87 sites in the Merbok region. Most of these consist of religious sanctuaries, but few indications of their religious affiliation or date are preserved. Few have been excavated, and many have been severely disturbed. She divided the ruins into two phases: early and late. During the early period, six out of eight structures were identified as Buddhist; only two were Hindu. In the late period, six out of seven structures were Hindu. She also identified three Hindu structures of unknown date. In another survey, Jacques-Hergoualc'h (1992, 35-63) identified

nine Buddhist sites and fourteen Hindu sites (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992, 65-160). The Chola kingdom was mainly Hindu. Rajendra Chola was a devotee of Shiva. These facts combined with the historical data make it difficult to doubt that these were shrines for Shiva in the form of a lingga and his bull Nandi, constructed during the period when Kedah was the probable residence of Tamil viceroys who were in the direct line of succession to the kingship in the Chola realm.

After the Chola kingdom declined, Kedah seems to have lost its importance. It was not a major port after the twelfth century. Kedah may have been mentioned briefly in the *Zhu Fan Zhi* (1225): ships went every year to Malabar from Jambi, Sanfoqi, and *Ji-to*, which may have been a Chinese word for Kedah (Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 91, footnote 16), echoing the triumvirate mentioned by Yijing 500 years previously. Wang Dayuan in the fourteenth century and Ma Huan in the fifteenth century refer to Kedah but give no details.

The largest ancient ruin in Kedah, Candi Bukit Batu Pahat (Figure 3.1), has a *vimana* and *mandapam*, and a stone conduit for holy water or *somasutra*. These features are common in ancient and modern Hindu temples in South Asia and modern Southeast Asia, but only one ancient temple in Indonesia has a *somasutra*: Candi Arjuna on the Dieng Plateau. In Cambodia, they are found only at the pre-Angkorian site of Sambor Prei Kuk. The only ancient *vimana-mandapam* design known from Southeast Asia other than those in the Bujang Valley is Biaro Si Topayan at Padang Lawas (Lamb 1961a, 16; Bosch 1930, 134-135; Callenfels 1920, 65 ff; 1925, 11; Coolwijk 1926, 25 ff). There are several other temples in south Kedah with the *vimana-mandapam* layout. Candi Bukit Batu Pahat also yielded important consecration deposits: six stone boxes with nine shallow depressions for objects inside them. Treloar and Fabris (1975) dated the temple to the tenth-eleventh to fourteenth century. It now seems probable that the temple was built during the Chola reign in the eleventh century. No remnants of the sacred object which formed the focus of worship at Candi Bukit Batu Pahat have been discovered, but a gold foil lingga, a symbol of Shiva was found in the central depression of each of the reliquaries (Nik Hassan Shuhaimi and Othman 1990, 56). It is quite probable therefore that this temple was dedicated to Shiva. It is the largest of any of the surviving temples in south Kedah, indicating that the builder had considerable resources at his disposal; this also suggests the intervention of such a person as a Chola viceroy in its construction.

The practice of creating consecration deposits in temples is described in a south Indian Hindu text written in Sanskrit around the eleventh or twelfth century, the *Kâśyapaśilpa*. Despite the undoubted Indian origin of the practice, out of over 200 archaeological discoveries of such deposits, only fifteen come from India (Ślączka 2007). In Southeast Asia, such deposits are found in over 200 sites, at Buddhist as well as Hindu shrines.

Other *vimana-mandapam* sites in Kedah include Site 16 (Kampong Pendiat). H.G. Quaritch Wales conducted a brief excavation there in the 1930s; the temple was completely excavated in 1969-70 and moved to Muzium Arkeologi Lembah Bujang. Site 16 also yielded a bronze consecration deposit with an elaborate set of items including a miniature golden bowl, lotus, lion, bow, two arrows, sword, dagger, noose, spear or staff, shield, drum, and book; a silver miniature plowshare, bell, yoke, and bull; a copper horse and an iron elephant. Minerals in the deposit included diamonds, zircon, pearl, yellow glass octahedrons, and a marble bead. Dorothy Quaritch Wales excavated 16A, 14 meters east of Site 16, in 1941. Architectural remains included a brick plinth. The only religious artifact recovered there was a standing bronze Buddha image (Nik Hassan and Othman 1990; Murphy 2017, 29-30). Though no chronological association between the two structures was reported, it is possible that the Buddhist sanctuary was replaced by a Hindu temple, probably at the instigation of the Cholas.

Another *vimana-mandapam* structure was found at Site 19 (in Kampong Bujang, north of the Merbok; Nik Hassan and Othman 1990, 24-27). Associated finds include Song pottery, which suggest an eleventh- to thirteenth-century date. Aside from the *vimana-mandapam* form, other evidence that this was a Hindu (Shaivite) shrine include a bronze trident, a terracotta Ganesha, and a nine-chambered reliquary; this was the most elaborate of the stone

Figure 3.2. Left: Ganesha from Site 4; Right: Dvarapala from Site 35/36; both now in Muzium Lembah Bujang. Source: Author.

ritual deposit boxes found in Kedah, but its contents were unfortunately missing. The temple was made of bricks, and had a vaulted roof, possibly like the structure depicted in a bronze shrine found at Kedah Site 4. Iron nails were rarely found in Kedah, suggesting that the Southeast Asian system of joining wooden architectural elements with dowels was usually employed by the local architects there, but Site 19, as well as Sites 21 and 22 used iron nails (Nik Hassan and Othman 1990, 28), possibly a sign of foreign involvement in their construction. Other architectural elements at Site 19 which are rare in Kedah but may have been imported from India included some profiles with moldings, either steps or with slopes at 45° angles, roof tiles, a possible brick antefix (Nik Hassan and Othman 1990, Figure 1, 30).

A few artifacts associated with Hinduism have been found in the north Merbok zone. Many, perhaps most, were imported from India. One is a bronze statue from Sites 21-22 along the bank of the Bujang River which flows into the Merbok from Kedah Peak. It has been tentatively identified as a bodhisattva, but other interpretations are possible (Nik Hassan Shuhaimi and Othman Yatim 1990, 48, 50). Two Ganesha statues have been recovered from the Merbok area (Hergoualc'h 1992, 243). One made of clay in badly damaged condition was found at Pengkalan Bujang (Quaritch Wales' Site 19). This statue depicts the elephant-headed god seated in *maharajalila* posture, which is unusual for him but is also found at Satingphra (peninsular Thailand). Song Dynasty ceramics have been found here, dating this site to the eleventh century (Nik Hassan and Othman 1990, 58-59).

The other Ganesha, made of granite, was found at Site 4, about one kilometer from Site 41, on the west bank of the Bujang River (Hergoualc'h 1992, 244) (Figure 3.2). No written report of the discovery exists, but staff of the Bujang Valley Museum told Hergoualc'h that it was found with a few structural remains. In style the statue is simple, even featureless. It has four arms, holding unidentifiable objects. On his vehicle or *vahana*, a rat is depicted on his seat. Song-Yuan ceramics found here suggest that this

might be a thirteenth-century site (Nik Hassan and Othman 1990, 58-59).

A Shiva lingga fragment was found at a small structure 4.75 m. from the main temple at Site 50 (Kampong Bendang Dalam). This shrine was designed as a *vimana-mandapam*. A head of Kala, the demon who stole the elixir of immortality, made of granite, was also discovered here (Nik and Othman 1990, 40, Plate 39). Such heads are ubiquitous as decorative motifs over doorways and niches for statuary in ancient and modern Hindu temples, and were also found in Hindu and Buddhist temples in ancient Java. A Kala head decoration for a balustrade of a staircase found at Kampong Sungai Mas, south of the Merbok, is made of a different material: a fine-grained greenish stone which may be of local origin. Its style is similar to that of balustrades found at central Javanese sites such as the Ratu Boko Plateau in the ninth century. This example may have belonged to an early period Buddhist site.

A statue of the Hindu goddess Durga Mahisasuramardini, who was closely associated with Shiva in Indonesia, was discovered by Quaritch Wales at Site 4 in 1921 about 100 meters from the site which Hergoualc'h called SB13, on the bank of the Bujang River (Nik Hassan and Othman 1990, 54). Like the Ganesha, this image is made of granite, but is so highly eroded that few features can be made out. This goddess was popular in central Java, but the use of granite and the few details of the general outline of the statue suggest an origin in south India, where granite was commonly used for statues. There is no granite in Java.

Another sculpture made of coarse granite was found at Quaritch Wales's Site 35/36 (Hergoualc'h's SMM3, 245) (Figure 3.2, right). Most scholars agree that it depicts a Dvarapala or door guardian, a figure common in central Java during the eighth and ninth centuries. The guardian seems to have been portrayed in a kind of dance posture, which is unusual. The statue displays some general similarities with the Durga from Site 4. Dvarapala were found on both Hindu and Buddhist sites in Java. The Kedah sculpture is depicted as a relief on a flat stele; this design is also found in Sri Lanka. A head of a Dvarapala has also been found at an unknown site somewhere in the Bujang Valley (Nik Hassan and Othman 1990, 83, plate 38).

The last major object of portable art found in Kedah to be mentioned is a bronze cover found by plantation workers near Site 4 (Quaritch Wales 1940, 13). It depicts a miniature shrine with a vaulted roof, and is unique because of human figures on the corners, which Hergoualc'h (1990, 248, doc. 272) thinks are *risi*, suggesting a Shaivite cult.

In summary, though Kedah was probably a governorship of a major Hindu kingdom from south India for a century, no locally-made Hindu art works have been found there. The Merbok Estuary, especially the Bujang River valley, was an important trading zone where South Asians, Southeast Asians, and Chinese conducted extensive commerce, reflected in the Chinese ceramics and Indian Ocean glassware found there. Hinduism may have infiltrated popular Malay culture at this time, or it may already have been present previously. Thus when Islam replaced Buddhism as the common religion among the ruling class, Hindu chants and other elements persisted among commoners until the mid-twentieth century.

Hindu Remains: Sumatra

Barus

Middle Classic inscriptions from Java mention foreign merchants, but there is no indication that they formed semi-permanent enclaves there until the fourteenth or fifteenth century. In Kedah, however, there is historical and archaeological evidence that a Hindu enclave existed after the invasion of 1025 CE. There are two or possibly three sites of foreign enclaves from the eleventh century in the northern end of Sumatra: Aceh, Barus, and Kota Cina. Barus on the west coast has evidence of Arabs, Persians, and Indians, while Kota Cina on the northeast coast has evidence for south Indians, Sinhalese, and Chinese, and Neusu and Aceh have an inscription in old Tamil. Barus and Aceh are well-known in historical sources, but Kota Cina has no documented history.

The Neusu inscription has been discussed above (for historical sources on ancient Aceh, see Edwards McKinnon 1988, 1996).

Figure 3.3. Left: Shiva lingga; right: Vishnu. Kota Cina. Source: Author.

Barus and Kota Cina are two of the best- studied ports in ancient Southeast Asia. These two sites provide archaeological evidence of urban settlements, but with important differences, perhaps due to the fact that Kota Cina lay on the main route from the Indian Ocean to China, while Barus was on the west coast of Sumatra. It was a dead-end destination; the route down the west coast of Sumatra ended there.

An inscription set up by a Tamil merchant guild in 1088 shows that Tamil merchants were beneficiaries of the Chola invasion of the Straits of Melaka in 1025. The fact that Barus was not on the list of Śrīvijaya's ports conquered by the Chola invasion is probably significant. It may have been the kingdom's northern pole as it was described in Chinese sources of the eighth century, but it was much more closely associated with India than with Palembang or China. One archaeologist envisions Barus as a "foreign merchant station, probably controlled by south Indians in alliance with a local prince," "completely independent of local political power" (Guillot 1998a, 130). This view is too extreme (see discussion of the Barus inscription above). Barus was undoubtedly ruled by local chiefs, and the settlement no doubt had an appreciable number of indigenous inhabitants. It is also significant that despite the evidence that a South Asian trading guild was deeply involved in Barus's economic affairs, no examples of Hindu art have yet been recorded from this site.

Kota Cina

Kota Cina lies near the mouth of the Deli River in northeast Sumatra. Archaeological excavations (Edwards McKinnon 1984) discovered brick temple foundations, Buddhist and Hindu statuary, large quantities of Chinese and local ceramics, Chinese and Sri Lankan coins, gold, bronze and iron slag, molds

for making jewelry, food remains such as shells and bones, and wooden house posts. One surviving structure may have been a *mandapam* associated with south Indian Hinduism; another may have been a Buddhist monastery.

The best evidence for dating Kota Cina comes from tens of thousands of porcelain sherds found in excavations and surface surveys which can be assigned to the late Northern Song and Southern Song (roughly from 1080 to 1260). These together with the imported stone statues of Buddhist and Hindu deities suggest the possibility of a South Asian component of Kota Cina's population. The main activity in Kota Cina was not religion but trade.

The stone statuary at the site includes the lower portion of a Vishnu (Figure 3.3, right), a possible statue of his consort Sri, and a Shiva lingga (Edwards McKinnon 1984, 68-76; 1996, 94) (Figure 3.3, left). Two Buddha images were also imported from Sri Lanka and India, probably during the period of Chola rule (Satyawati Suleiman 1981, 17-18, 22-23).

Edwards McKinnon interpreted some brick architectural remains at Kota Cina as probable Shaivite sanctuaries. The structure he designated as Location 3 may have had a *vimana-mandapam* layout (Edwards McKinnon 1984, 50-55). An iron nail found there may be evidence of Indian construction. A Shiva lingga made of black stone was found lying on the surface of the ground 25 meters from the site; it may have originated from this brick temple. In an odd association, two fragments of gold leaf bearing Chinese characters meaning "piece of gold" and "ten measures" (probably a reference to pure gold in the Chinese system of assaying) were also found at the site. It is not unusual in modern Southeast Asia for Chinese to participate in the worship of a Hindu icon. This may also have been the practice at Kota Cina.

A round statue base with a spout to channel ceremonial liquid poured over an icon during a lustration ritual was found at another site in Kota Cina called Makam Pahlawan or Location 4. Edwards McKinnon assumes that this was a *yoni* or base for a lingga (Edwards McKinnon 1984, 61), but it could have been used for a Buddhist statue. Another image base without a spout was found 150 meters away. No other remains were associated with it; it may have been moved from its original site.

At Location 8, 400 meters from Keramat Pahlawan, an important group of stone statues was discovered in the remains of a complex surrounded by a low brick wall: two Buddhas, a standing Vishnu, and a female deity. Edwards McKinnon (1984, 71) notes that Vishnu images are often found in Sri Lankan Buddhist temples. The female statue may have depicted Vishnu's consort Bhu-devi, or Pattini, a south Indian deity statues of whom are sometimes found in Sri Lanka (Edwards McKinnon 1984, 75-76). Thus, rather than a combined Hindu-Buddhist complex, Location 8 may have been the site of a purely Buddhist shrine with some syncretic Hindu elements.

As in Kedah, the Hindu works of art and architecture at Kota Cina may have been imported or constructed in the aftermath of the Chola invasion of 1025. As in peninsular Malaysia, there is evidence that south Indian culture did influence the local population. In northeast Sumatra, Tamil linguistic influence has been demonstrated in the area inhabited by the Karo ethnolinguistic community (Edwards McKinnon 1996, 91-95). This is probably a unique situation in which an Indian vernacular language, not Sanskrit, had a significant impact in Southeast Asia. It is impossible to date this development, but the archaeological and historical evidence suggests that it probably occurred in the eleventh century. The nearest large town to the Merbok estuary is Sungai Patani; the word *petani* in modern Malay means "farmer," but in this case it may have been derived from Tamil *pattinam*, "seaport." A village in the same area is named *Mahligai*¸ which is a loan word from Tamil *malikai* meaning roughly "pleasure palace/ princess' bower." The word appears in the bilingual Old Malay/Tamil inscription from Porlak Dolok, Padang Lawas, dated 1261 (Griffiths 2014, 220).

Padang Lawas

Padang Lawas, "Broad Plain," is an area of several hundred square kilometers located at the eastern end of a pass between mountains which facilitate communication between the west coast of

Sumatra, especially the Barus area, and the Straits of Melaka. The Panai River which connects Padang Lawas to the Straits of Melaka may be connected with the name *Pannei*, which appears in the list of places conquered by the Cholas in 1025 and claimed by Majapahit in 1365. At least 26 elaborate brick shrines for esoteric Buddhism were built here between the tenth and thirteenth centuries (Perret 2014c, 19).

Rampant lions on one temple, Biaro Bahal I, are very similar to carvings of the twelfth century found on brick shrines at Polonnaruva, Sri Lanka. Two inscriptions from Si Topayan may date from the fourteenth or even fifteenth centuries (Griffiths 2014, 226-228). Imported ceramics found at Si Pamutung yielded evidence that occupation began in the late tenth century, increased in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and then declined until abandonment in the early fourteenth century (Perret et al. 2007, 70; Dupoizat 2014). The Porlak Dolok inscription written in Old Malay and Tamil and dated 1261 is another confirmation of the link between Padang Lawas and south India, but that inscription does not contain any references to a specific religion (Griffiths 2014).

Hindu Art of Padang Lawas

Bautze-Picron (2014, 122) infers that most of the Buddhist statuary of Padang Lawas is closely affiliated with northeast India and Bangladesh. A bronze Ganesha from an unknown location, number 157 in Perret's (2014b) list, is stylistically related to Bangladesh, eighth-ninth centuries (109). Bautze-Picron notes that Ganesha is sometimes found in Buddhist contexts under the name Vinayaka, so the presence of this deity cannot be assumed to indicate a Hindu presence. She characterizes other early bronzes from Padang Lawas such as the 1039 CE Avalokitesvara from Gunung Tua and the bronze Buddha from Si Pamutung as south Indian or Sri Lankan in style. A bronze image of a woman showing possible Tamil influence was found at Biaro Bahal I, Padang Lawas (Bosch 1930, 137-138) in association with a stone image, also possibly of south Indian origin. The site itself was Buddhist. The bronze statue was not that of a deity; it had no lotus cushion, and wore no jewelry. Edwards McKinnon thinks it may have been locally made due to use of a punch-marking technique of decoration which may have been a special feature of the Padang Lawas area, but in Tamil style (Edwards McKinnon 1996, 91).

Padang Lawas has yielded a huge number of temple guardian sculptures: 28 makaras, 36 dvarapalas, 53 lions, eleven Kalas, two elephants, two nagas, and 16 yakshas. There are also 21 statues of deities, including nine reliefs, but not counting two Ganeshas from Sangkilon and Tandihet the existence of which has not been corroborated (Perret 2014b, 38-40). Nineteen of the statues in Perret's list are Buddhist, and two are the aforementioned Ganesha images which could be either Hindu or Buddhist. One is a stone image from Porlak Dolok, but it has never been photographed and its present location is unknown; the other is a bronze from an unknown location.

The sculptures from Padang Lawas contain few Hindu examples. Perhaps the only incontrovertible indications of Hindu presence in sculptural form are a lingga found at the Tandihet I temple site (Schnitger 1936a, 11, plate X; 1937, 30; Perret et al 2007, 63) and a Shiva Mahadeva from Bara (Susanto 1995, 22-23). A Vishnu image said to have been found in Tapanuli, which includes the Padang Lawas area, was advertised for sale in 1991 (Lunsingh Scheurleer 2014, 150). A stone Vrsanha (Nandi) image excavated from Simangambat suggests the worship of Shiva.

The Si Topayan temple foundation exemplifies the *vimana-mandapam* form (Schnitger 1937, 31-32), and was thus probable a Shaivite sanctuary, but no Hindu statuary has been reported found there. Inscriptions in a special type of script probably carved in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries which may be the ancestor of the script used in the Lake Toba region today were discovered there, on a square piece of stone with a dragon-like head. Griffiths however notes that an inscription from the site contains the word *biara*, which he believes implies a Buddhist orientation (Griffiths 2014, 228).

Lunsingh Scheurleer (2014) discussed five bronzes found in Padang Lawas (a bronze Lokanatha, seated Buddha, throne back, female saint, and a hanging lamp). She believes all five came from Tamil Nadu or were made by a Tamil craftsman residing

Figure 3.4. Makara with warrior figure from Si Topayan, Padang Lawas. Source: Author.

Figure 3.5. Left: Kala heads; Right: offering stand with lotus petals. Si Topayan, Padang Lawas. Source: Author.

in Padang Lawas during the Chola period. She speculates that the hanging lamp was perhaps used in the Bara temple, which might have been Hindu (Lunsingh Scheurleer 2014, 152-155). "The figurine of a woman saint" found in Bahal I (and illustrated in the *Oudheidkundige Verslag* 1930, Plate 38, the same issue in which Bosch's report on Padang Lawas appeared) is completely south Indian in appearance, and does not resemble any ancient bronze statue known to have been made in Sumatra.

The temple of Si Topayan (Lamb 1961a, 16; 1961b, 7-10, Plates 1-4, Figures 1-2; Bosch 1926, 25-26, 1930, 134-135, Plates 29b, 30a-b, 31a-c, I-IV; Callenfels 1920, 65-67, 1925, 11-12) is the only *vimana-mandapa* type temple in Southeast Asia outside of the Bujang Valley in Kedah. Callenfels published a preliminary plan of Si Topayan (Callenfels 1920, Figure 4) and several photographs when trees were still growing on top of the structure (Figures 3-4; in the latter the makaras can be seen still in situ).

Bosch focused on the inscriptions, but his photographs and site plans are invaluable for the study of the architecture of this site. Lamb (1961b) reproduced some of Bosch's illustrations from 1930. Lamb did not visit the site, but he read Bosch's report and immediately recognized the similarity between Si Topayan and Candi Bukit Batu Pahat. Apparently he did not read Callenfels' report on the site published in 1920. According to Callenfels, a test trench had been dug at Gunung Tuwa Tonga by the Dutch Controleur which discovered two large stone makaras. These were moved to the Controleur's compound; Callenfels included a photograph of one of them in his report (Figure 3.3; photographs of both were published in the *Oudheidkundig Verslag* 1925, plate 6a, accompanying Callenfels' 1925 article). Callenfels then states that "Sitokpayan" was in Gunung Tuwa Tonga, so the makaras must have come from that temple (Figure 3.4).

Callenfels described the structure as very irregular in dimensions, from which he inferred that it had been built hastily. He further noted that this temple was completely different from any others he saw in Padang Lawas, but that it must belong to the same period based on the form of the makaras. The main difference was of course the *vimana-mandapam* layout, though he did not call it that; he used the term "pendopo terrace" instead. In 1925 some clearing of the site was made to clarify the relationship between the *vimana* and the *mandapam* (Callenfels 1925, 11-12). He also published photographs of two makaras in the same report. In 1926 Coolhaas, the architectural inspector of the Oudheidkundige Dienst, excavated the site, during the course of which numerous remains of badly damaged subsidiary structures came to light (Bosch 1926, 25-26). These include a short column with *Kala* heads and a possible offering stand with lotus petal decoration (Figure 3.5).

Mandailing Natal Regency

On the west side of the pass which leads from Padang Lawas to the Indian Ocean coast of Sumatra, at least two and probably three sites manifest themselves as Hindu in nature. One of these is Sibolga, a port on the west coast of Sumatra, at the mouth of the Lumut River, where a Ganesha was found. The second is Bonan Dolok, three kilometers south of Simangambat, where a Ganesha statue, a fragment of a bas relief, and a few other pieces of carved stone have been found (*Oudheidkundig Verslag* 1914, 106; Schnitger 1937). Several other probable sites are also known, but have been largely destroyed.

The most intriguing site in this area is known as Simangambat (Bosch 1930, 134; Ery Soedewo 2014), which some scholars have dated to the late ninth century, based on close parallels with Javanese architecture of that era (Perret et al. 2007, 77; Perret 2014a, 337). Perret hypothesizes that it was built by a Javanese Shaivite group, oriented toward Sorik Merapi (Perret 2014a, 337). Inscribed objects have been found on the peak of Sorik Merapi, but they seem to be Buddhist in nature (Griffiths 2014, 233-235). A number of other sites with similar remains exist in the same area. A sherd from one of these, Biaro Nagasaribu (Sukawati Susetyo 2014, 178, Figure 6) is a part of a Changsha bowl of a well-known type which is found in numerous ninth-century sites in Java.

FM Schnitger (1936b) listed the remains at Simangambat as comprising two Kala heads, Shiva statue fragments, *gana, trisula-cakra* and winged conch, and antefixes. The latter are common elements of central Javanese temples of the eighth and ninth century, but are not typically found in Sumatra. The shrine may have exhibited a *vimana-mandapam* layout, but this has not been definitively established. An earthenware pot was found containing a consecration deposit: gold flakes, glass and carnelian beads, and semi-precious stones. Part of a bull statue indicates a probable Shaivite affiliation. A Ganesha reportedly found at Pasar Siabu in this area (noted by Callenfels 1920 and Bosch 1930) possibly originally from a ruined structure at a nearby site in Sibaluang.

It is impossible to deny the very strong parallels between the sculptures at Simangambat and central Javanese art of the same period. It is not easy to understand why a group of Javanese would want to move to this location, build a few temples, and leave no other traces of their existence, even given the importance of the gold-panning activity which local people today carry on in the Batang Gadis river, and probably did so a thousand years ago. The makaras

Figure 3.6. Ganesha image from Jalan Mayor Ruslan, now in Museum Sultan Badaruddin II, Palembang. Source: Author.

from the Biaro Nagasaribu site (Sukawati Susetyo 2014, Figures 2a-b, 3) bear a close resemblance to those from Padang Lawas rather than central Java. Without further data it will be impossible to understand this most improbable complex of sites.

Sumatra, South of the Straits of Melaka

The southern end of the Straits of Melaka technically lies at Singapore. Historically and culturally, however, it is useful to include the southern part of Sumatra in this discussion. At Kota Kapur, Bangka, images of Vishnu, a possible lingga and somasutra, have been found, including a structure which it has been suggested may have been a fire altar for Vedic Brahmanism (Hariani Santiko 2014; Manguin, 1993). Other than the famous Vishnu images of Bangka (illustrated in Satyawati Suleiman 1980a, Plate 13), few identifiable Hindu remains have been found in this region. Among the scattered artifacts which may be related to Hinduism are a bronze Dipalakshmi from Kota Kandis, Jambi, which Edwards McKinnon (1996, 91 and 96, Figure 6) labels "Shaivite." A statue of the bull Nandi from Jambi has led Adam (1921) and Schnitger (1937, 7) to suspect that Candi Kedaton may have been a Shiva temple. At Sarolangun in the same province, an unfinished Ganesha now in the Palembang museum was found together with a statue of Buddha (Schnitger 1937, 7; Satyawati Suleiman, 1983, 202; 1985, 99); this may be an example of the incorporation of Ganesha into Sumatra Buddhism. In the provincial museum of Lampung is a bronze Shiva image found at Liwa, West Lampung, in 1993; according to the object's caption.

Palembang

South Sumatra is the only area in Sumatra where local artists may have created significant sculptures of Shiva. Hindu statues have been found at Palembang. This city was the capital of the polity of

Srivijaya from the seventh to early eleventh centuries. Since its conquest by the Chola Empire in 1025, Palembang has continued to serve as a major port. The great majority of sculptures and inscriptions from Palembang and vicinity are affiliated with Buddhism. Some Hindu statues found in Palembang can be stylistically dated to the Srivijaya period; others date from the post-Srivijaya era. Tanah Abang (Bumiayu) dates from the post-Srivijaya era of the eleventh through fifteenth centuries. It is not clear what polity that site may have belonged to.

Among the major bronze images of Hindu deities found in Palembang is a Shiva Mahadeva stylistically dated to the Srivijaya era (Satyawati Suleiman 1980a, Plate 5). It was apparently discovered in the same context near Sarangwati in eastern Palembang (Air Besi) as three other bronzes depicting Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu (the latter illustrated by Satyawati Suleiman 1980a, plate 7; Schnitger 1936a, 5), each on its respective *vahana* or mount. These images are in a completely different style associated with the art of the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit which flourished in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It is possible that the Mahadeva image was deposited in Palembang long after its original date of production. The three Javanese style images may have been brought from Java in the fourteenth century, when Majapahit is believed to have conquered Palembang. Satyawati Suleiman however gave reasons for believing that the Vishnu was locally made in view of certain features which are not typical of Majapahit sculpture (Satyawati Suleiman 1980, 5).

Other major sculptures found in Palembang include a stone Ganesha found at Jalan Mayor Ruslan (Figure 3.6). No other finds were associated with it; the image has been dated to the eleventh or twelfth century on stylistic grounds (Edwards McKinnon

Figure 3.7. Possible funerary image from Bumiayu I, now in Museum Sriwijaya, Palembang. Source: Author.

1985, 18). A Shiva image found in the vicinity of Palembang and dated stylistically to the eighth or ninth centuries is in the Museum Nasional Jakarta (Inv. No. 6031; Suleiman 1980b, 36-37; Figure 6).

Bumiayu/Tanah Abang

The site of Tanah Abang (or Bumiayu) is located 80 kilometers up the Musi River from Palembang, near the junction of the two rivers which form the Lematang, one of the major tributaries of the Musi. In 1904, a lingga, a Brahma statue, and other symbols of Hinduism were sent to the Batavian Society from this area. In 1930, FDK Bosch visited it but found no remains worth describing. Schnitger found a bust usually identified as Shiva here (Schnitger 1936a, 6). Satyawati Suleiman (1980, 8) commented that the statue may be Shiva, in view of the rosary which the image holds, but this statue also holds a sash in one hand, which she compares to the iconography of bodhisattvas; she believes this may have been a local variation; one could further hypothesize that this indicates an unusual relationship between Hindu and Buddhist art at this site. More recent research has found unusual sculptures associated with brick foundations. One mound seems to have been a stupa, so both Buddhists and Hindus may have worshiped here, possibly at different times. Tanah Abang was probably occupied from the ninth to twelfth centuries. Inscribed characters, including *sri*, dated palaeographically to the tenth or eleventh century, have been found on some of the bricks (Griffiths 2011, 157).

Bumiayu is one of the largest religious complexes of the early historic period yet found in South Sumatra. Six temples have been discovered here, together with at least four artificial reservoirs,

Figure 3.8. Terracotta panel with lotus decoration, Bumiayu, now in Museum Sriwijaya Palembang. Source: Author.

a water channel, statues of Hindu gods, possible portrait statues of local rulers, and ceramics. Soejatmi Satari (2002) illustrated statues found at the site. Numerous videos on the site are available on YouTube. For instance, there is a documentary (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Th3gd211a70) on the site (in Indonesian language) together with an interview with the archaeologists Bambang Budi Utomo and Agus Aris Munandar (accessed 9 April 2016; for other sites, use the search term "Situs Candi Bumi Ayu").

Major structures here include Candi Bumiayu I (Soejatmi Satari, 2002, 116) where six stone statues have been found. The identifiable figures are Shiva, Agastya, and Nandi. Soejatmi Satari (2002, 118-119) dated them stylistically to the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Two other statues have royal attributes, but no traits that would demonstrate that they are meant to portray gods. One rather corpulent figure holds his hands in the *dhyanimudra* position, with a round disc upon his palm (Figure 3.7). The other possible royal figure holds his hands in the same mudra, upon which rests an object which may represent a receptacle for cremation ashes, or a flower. There is evidence that after 1000 CE, the east Javanese began to make statues into which the spirits of deceased rulers could be invited to descend and confer blessings and protection on the living; Soejatmi Satari hypothesized that the non-divine figures from Bumiayu were used for this purpose. According to the *Desawarnana*, a fourteenth-century Javanese text, the deceased were represented by floral images during the *sraddha* ceremony meant to signify the reunion of the spirit of the dead person with the universal soul of which we are all detached portions twelve years after our death (Canto 64, stanza 5; Pigeaud 1960, 75).

In Candi Bumiayu II, three more stone statues were excavated. These represent Shiva and Brahma; the third is either an unknown king or a deity. All are dated stylistically to the eleventh or twelfth centuries.

At Candi Bumiayu III a statue identified as the Hindu goddess Camundi was recovered; Soejatmi Satari dates it to the general period of the eighth/ ninth to twelfth centuries. The terracotta decorations at some of the temple sites is quite unusual in Sumatra, but became common in fourteenth-century East Java. The imagery of the lion pulling a cart at Bumiayu I (Perret 2014a, Figure 5, 368) is completely unprecedented elsewhere but the sculpting of the vegetation beneath the terracotta lion from the same site (Perret 2014a, Figure 6) would not be out of place in Trowulan, Majapahit's fourteenth-century capital.

A female torso wears what seems to be a caste cord or *upavita* made up of human skulls, which is somewhat reminiscent of the imagery of the Mahakala image found at Padang Roco, West Sumatra, usually dated to the fourteenth century. A frieze of terracotta with lotus blossoms is similar to a stone at Kuburajo, West Sumatra, which probably served as a backrest for a royal person during ceremonies, similar to the *pepadon* of Lampung (Miksic 1985, 1986, 1987; below, Figure 8). A *gana* figure with fangs from Bumiayu is also related to the esoteric art of Padang Lawas and Padang Roco.

The Hindu art of Bumiayu is quite different from the Tamil-style artifacts found around the same time at the north end of the Straits of Melaka, but it is difficult to escape the conclusion that there was some connection between the Chola victory of 1025 and the appearance of Shiva imagery in what was a staunchly Buddhist region. Locally-made ceramics from the tenth century at Bumiayu appear to be similar to the ceramics found in Palembang (Manguin, 1993), but it is possible that the statuary was made later. There is no indication of direct Chola occupation of this site, or any other site south of Padang Lawas. There is no sign of Javanese pottery at the site either. This observation, coupled with the unique style of sculpture at Bumiayu, casts doubt on the theory of direct influence from Java at this time. During the tenth to twelfth centuries Java was in a state of disunity; little sculpture or architecture from this period has been found in Java itself.

Conclusion

Jan Christie's statement (1998, 267) that "The direct impact of the south Indian merchant associations in Southeast Asia was limited both temporally and geographically" seems to be true, with the qualification that their impact was quite pronounced in Kedah and north Sumatra. There is no evidence of locally-produced Hindu sculpture or architecture in those

areas, but the *vimana-mandapam* form of temple architecture was directly imported to Kedah and to Padang Lawas. In the case of Kedah, it is easy to account for this phenomenon by reference to the Chola invasion of 1025. It is not so easy to assume a Tamil presence in Padang Lawas, which is far from the coast, but one must consider the possibility that there actually were Tamils in that hinterland area long enough to exert some influence. The Simangambat site shows such a close relationship to central Javanese Hindu art of the eighth and ninth centuries that one cannot dismiss the possibility of some sort of direct connection with Java, despite the difference which separates them.

In South Sumatra, the Bumiayu site is an exceptional case where Hindu art and architecture appear to have evolved in harmony with Javanese Hindu examples, but did not copy them directly. The Bumiayu sculptures provide the best example of the process of localization of Hindu art in Sumatra which has yet come to light. Why this should have been so poses a question for future archaeologists and historians to investigate further.

References

Adam, T. 1921. "Oudheden te Djambi." *Oudheidkundige Verslag*. Bijlage U, 194-197.

Allen, J. 1988. Trade, Transportation, and Tributaries: Exchange, Agriculture and Settlement Distribution in Early Historic-Period Kedah, Malaysia. PhD diss., University of Hawaii.

Bautz-Picron, C. 2014. "Buddhist Images from Padang Lawas Region and the South Asian Connection." In *History of Padang Lawas II*, edited by Daniel Perret. Paris: Association Archipel, 107-128.

Bernet Kempers, AJ. 1959. *Ancient Indonesian Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bosch, F.D.K. 1926. "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het eerste en tweede kwartaal." *Oudheidkundig Verslag*, 3-36.

Bosch, F.D.K. 1930. "Verslag van een reis door Sumatra." *Oudheidkundig Verslag*, 133-159.

Brown, C.C. 1970. *Sejarah Melayu Malay Annals*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

Callenfels, P.V.vS. 1920. "Rapport over een Dienstreis door een deel van Sumatra," *Oudheidkundig Verslag* (Second quarter), Appendix G: 62-75.

Callenfels, P.V.vS. 1925. "Verslag van Dr. P.V. van Stein Callenfels over zijn inspectiereis door Sumatra," *Oudheidkundig Verslag* (Second Quarter): 11-14.

Callenfels, P.V.vS. 1936. "An Interesting Buddhist Bronze Statue from Bidor, Perak," *Journal of the Federated Malay States Museums* 15: 175-179.

Chatterji, B.R. 1967. *History of Indonesia Early and Medieval*. 3rd edition. Meerut/Delhi/Calcutta: Meenakshi Prakashan.

Christie, J.W. 1982. Patterns of Trade in Western Indonesia, 9th through 13th Centuries AD. PhD diss., University of London.

Christie, J.W. 1998. "The Medieval Tamil-Language Inscriptions in Southeast Asia and China." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29 (2): 239-68.

Christie, J.W. 1999, "Asian Sea Trade Between the Tenth and Thirteenth Centuries and its Impact on the States of Java and Bali." In *Archaeology of Seafaring: The Indian Ocean in the Ancient Period*, edited by H.P. Ray. Delhi: Pragata, 221-270.

Devahuti, D. 1965. *India and Ancient Malaya*. Singapore: Donald Moore for Eastern Universities Press.

Dupoizat, M-F. 2014. "Chinese Ceramics Imported in Si Pamutung, Padang Lawas" in *History of Padang Lawas I. The Site of Si Pamutung (9th century- 13th century AD)*, edited by Daniel Perret and Heddy Surachman. Association Archipel: Paris, 275-333.

Dupont, P. 1955. "La statuaire préangkorienne."

Artibus Asiae Supplementum 15. Ascona: Artibus Asiae.

Edwards McKinnon, E. 1984. Kota Cina: Its Context and Meaning in the Trade of Southeast Asia in the Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries. PhD diss., Cornell University.

Edwards McKinnon, E. 1985. "Early Polities in Southern Sumatra: Some Preliminary Observations Based on Archaeological Evidence." *Indonesia* 40: 1-36.

Edwards McKinnon, E 1988. "Beyond Serandib: A Note on Lambri at the Northern Tip of Aceh." *Indonesia* 46: 102-121.

Edwards McKinnon, E. 1996. "Medieval Tamil Involvement in Northern Sumatra, c.11-c.14 (The Gold and Resin Trade)." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 69 (1): 85-99.

Edwards McKinnon, E. 2011. "Continuity and Change in South Indian Involvement in Northern Sumatra: The Inferences of Archaeological Evidence from Kota Cina and Lamreh." In *Early Interactions Between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross-Cultural Exchange* edited by Pierre-Yves Manguin, A. Mani and Geoff Wade. Singapore: ISEAS, 137-160.

Evans, I.H.N. 1932. "Buddhist Bronzes from Kinta, Perak." *Journal of the Federated Malay States Museums* 15: 135-136.

Fukami, S. 1987. "Reexamination of San-fo-ch'i : Change of Perspective of the Study on Early History of the Western Part of Insular Southeast Asia." Abstract. *Southeast Asian Studies* 25 (2), 205-32. http://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/110000200422. Accessed 30 September 2016.

Griffiths, A. 2011. "Inscriptions of Sumatra: Further Data on the Epigraphy of the Musi and Batang Hari River Basins," *Archipel* 81: 139–175.

Griffiths, A. 2014. "Inscriptions of Sumatra III. The Padang Lawas corpus studied along with inscriptions from Sorik Merapi (North Sumatra) and from Muara Takus (Riau)" in *History of Padang Lawas North Sumatra II Societies of Padang Lawas (Mid-Ninth-Thirteenth Century CE)*, edited by Daniel Perret. Paris: Association Archipel, 211-254.

Griswold, A.B. 1962. "The Jalong Bronze." *Federation Museums Journal* 7: 64-66.

Guillot, C. 1998. "La nature du site de Lobu Tua à Barus, Sumatra." In *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea: Miscellaneous Notes* edited by C. Guillot, D. Lombard, and R. Ptak. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 113-130.

Hirth, F. & Rockhill, W.W. 1911. *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Entitled Chu-fan-chi.* St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Jacq-Hergoualc'h, M. 1992. *La Civilisation de Ports-Entrepôts du Sud Kedah (Malaysia) Ve-XIVe Siècle*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Karashima, N. 2009. "Medieval Commercial Activities in the Indian Ocean as Revealed from Chinese Ceramic-Sherds and South Indian and Sri Lanka Inscriptions" in *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia* edited by H. Kulke, K. Kesavapany, and V. Sakhuja, V. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 20-60.

Karashima, N. and Sen T.S. 2009. "Appendix II Chinese Texts Describing or Referring to the Chola Kingdom as Zhu-nian." In *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia* edited by H. Kulke, K. Kesavapany, and V. Sakhuja. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 292-307.

Karashima, N. and Subbarayalu, Y. 2009. "Appendix I Ancient and Medieval Tamil and Sanskrit inscriptions relating to Southeast Asia and China." In *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the*

Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia edited by H Kulke, K Kesavapany and V. Sakhuja. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 271-291.

Kulke, H., Kesavapany, K. and Sakhuja, V. 2009. *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Lamb, A. 1961. "Miscellaneous Papers on Early Hindu and Buddhist Settlement in Northern Malaya and Southern Thailand." *Federation Museums Journal New Series* 6: 1-90, i-xlx.

Lamb, A. 1961b. *Chandi Bukit Batu Pahat: Three Additional Notes*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press for the Department of History in the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. Papers on Southeast Asian Subjects No. 5.

Lunsingh Scheurleer, P. 2014. "Five Bronzes Found in Padang Lawas." In *History of Padang Lawas II. Societies of Padang Lawas (mid-9th century-13th century CE)*, edited by Daniel Perret. Paris: Association Archipel, 147-157.

Manatunga, A. 2009. "Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia during the Period of the Polonnaruva Kingdom." In *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia* edited by H. Kulke, K. Kesavapany, and V. Sakhuja. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 193-207.

Manguin, P-Y. 1993. "Palembang and Srivijaya: An Early Harbour-City Rediscovered." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 66 (1): 23-46.

Manguin, P-Y. 2004. "The Early Maritime Polities." In *Southeast Asia from Prehistory to History* edited by I. Glover and P. Bellwood. London: Routledge Curzon, 282-313.

McGovern, N. 2017. "Balancing the Foreign and the Familiar in the Articulation of Kingship: the Royal Court Brahmans of Thailand." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 48 (2): 283-303.

Miksic, J.N. 1985. "Parallels Between the Upright Stones of West Sumatra and Those of Malacca and Negeri Sembilan." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* 58 (1): 71-80.

Miksic, J.N. 1986. "A Valley of Megaliths in West Sumatra: Mahat (Schnitger's Aoer Doeri) Revisited." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 59 (1): 27-32.

Miksic, J.N. 1987. "From Seri Vijaya to Melaka: Batu Tagak in Historical and Cultural Context." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 60 (2): 1-42.

Miksic, J.N. 2010. "The Buddhist-Hindu Divide in Premodern Southeast Asia." *The NSC Working Paper Series*. Singapore: Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre.

Miksic, J.N. 2013. *Singapore and the Silk Road of the Sea*. Singapore: NUS Press.

Miksic, J.N. and Goh, G.Y. 2017. *Ancient Southeast Asia*. Oxford and New York: Routledge.

Murphy, Stephen A. 2017. "Revisiting the Bujang Valley: A Southeast Asian Entrepôt Complex on the Maritime Trade Route." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Series 3): 1-35.

Nagaswamy, R. 1987. "Archaeological Finds in South India: Esâlam Bronzes and Copper Plates." *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 76: 1-68.

Nasution, K.S. and Abdur-Razzaq Lubis. 2005. Kinta Valley: Pioneering Malaysia's Modern Development. Ipoh: Perak Academy.

Nik Hassan Shuhaimi Nik Abdul Rahman. 1984. Art, Archaeology and the Early Kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra c. 400 – 1400 A.D. Ph.D. diss., University of London.

Nik Hassan Shuhaimi Nik Abdul Rahman and Othman Mohd Yatim. 1990. *Antiquities of Bujang*

Valley. Kuala Lumpur: Museum Association of Malaysia.

Noonsuk, W. 2013. *Tambralinga and Nakhon Si Thammarat: Early Kingdoms on the Isthmus of Thailand*. Nakhon Si Thammarat: Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University.

O'Connor, S.J. 1972. "Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam." *Artibus Asiae Supplementum*. Ascona: Artibus Asiae.

Peacock, B.A.V. 1980. "New Light on the Ancient Settlements of Kedah and Province Wellesley." In *Lembah Bujang* edited by Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan United Selangor, 82-88.

Perret, D., Heddy Surachman, Lucas P. Koestoro, Sukawati Susetyo. 2007. "Le programme archéologique francoindonésien sur Padang Lawas (Sumatra Nord)." *Réflexions préliminaires*. Archipel 74: 45–82.

Perret, D. 2014a. "Societies of Padang Lawas (mid-ninth – end of thirteenth century CE)." In *History of Padang Lawas II. Societies of Padang Lawas (mid-9th century- 13th century CE)* (Cahier d'Archipel 43) edited by D. Perret. Association Archipel: Paris, 283-372.

Perret, D. 2014b. "The Sculpture of Padang Lawas: An Updated Inventory." In *History of Padang Lawas II. Societies of Padang Lawas (mid-9th century-13th century CE)* (Cahier d'Archipel 43) edited by D. Perret. Paris: Association Archipel, 36-106.

Perret, D. 2014c. "Introduction." In *History of Padang Lawas II. Societies of Padang Lawas (mid-9th century- 13th century CE)* (Cahier d'Archipel 43) edited by D. Perret. Paris: Association Archipel, 11-36.

Pigeaud, T.G.Th. 1960. *Java in the 14th Century: A Study in Cultural History*, Translation Series 4, 3: Volume III, Translations. Leiden: KITLV.

Quaritch Wales, H.G. 1940. "Archaeological Research on Ancient Indian Colonization in Malaya." *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 18 (1): xiii-85.

Sandhu, K.S. 1973. *Early Malaysia: Some Observations on the Nature of Indian Contacts with Pre-British Malaya*. Singapore: University Education Press.

Santiko, Hariani. 1995. "Early Research on Sivaitic Hinduism During the Majapahit Era." In *The Legacy of Majapahit by John N. Miksic and Endang Sri*, edited by Hariani Soekatno. Singapore: National Museum, 55-72.

Santiko, Hariani. 2014. "Situs Kota Kapur." In *Candi Indonesia Seri Sumatera, Kalimantan, Bali, Sumbawa* edited by Wiwin Djuwita Sudjana Ramelan. Jakarta: Direktorat Pelestarian Cagar Budaya dan Permuseuman, Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 180–183.

Sastri, K.A.N. 1949. "Takuapa and its Tamil Inscription." *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22 (1): 25-30.

Sastri, K.A.N. 1955. *The Cholas*. Madras: University of Madras.

Satari, Soejatmi. 1985. "Research Activities in Indonesia." In *SPAFA Final Report Consultative Workshop on Archaeological and Environmental Studies on Srivijaya*, Padang, Prapat dan Medan (Jakarta).

Satari, Soejatmi. 2002. "Sebuah Situs Hindu di Sumatra Selatan: Temuan Kelompok Candi dan Arca di Bumiayu." *25 Tahun Kerjasama, Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi dan École française d'Extrême-Orient*. Jakarta: Kedutaan Besar Prancis di Indonesia: 113-132.

Schnitger, F.M. 1936a. *Oudheidkundige Vondsten in Palembang*. Bijlage C. Leiden: Brill.

Schnitger, F.M. 1936b. "De temple van Simangambat

(Zuid Tapanoeli)". *Tijdschrift van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wettenschappen* 76: 334-336.

Schnitger, F.M. 1937. *The Archaeology of Hindoo Sumatra*. Internationales Archiv fur Ethnographie Supplementum Band 33. Leiden: Brill.

Schnitger, F.M. 1989. *Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Seshadri, G. 2009. "New perspectives on Nagapattinam." In *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*, edited by H. Kulke, K. Kesavapany, and V. Sakhuja. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 102-134.

Ślączka, A.A. 2007. *Temple Consecration Rituals in Ancient India: Text and Archaeology*. Leiden: EJ Brill.

Soedewo, Ery. 2014. "Archaeological remains displaying Indian cultural influence in the region of the Batang Gadis and Batang Angkola rivers, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra." In *History of Padang Lawas. Volume II: Societies of Padang Lawas (mid-9th – 13th century CE)* edited by Daniel Perret. Paris: Cahiers d'Archipel 43, 183-210.

Soekmono, R. 1973. *Pengantar Sejarah Kebudayaan Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Penerbitan Yayasan Kanisius.

Suleiman, Satyawati. 1980a. "The History and Art of Srivijaya." In *The Art of Srivijaya* edited by M.C. Subhadradis Diskul. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1-42.

Suleiman, Satyawati. 1980b. *A Few Observations on the Use of Ceramics in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Pusat Penelitian Purbakala dan Kebudayaan.

Suleiman, Satyawati. 1981. *Sculptures of Ancient Sumatra*. Jakarta: Proyek Penelitian Purbakala.

Suleiman, Satyawati. 1983. Artinya penemuan baru arca-arca Klasik di Sumatra untuk penelitian arkeologi Klasi, Rapat Evaluasi Hasil Penelitian Arkeologi I, Cisarua 8-13 Maret 1982. Jakarta: Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional (Jakarta), 201-221.

Suleiman, Satyawati. 1985. "The Art of Srivijaya" in *SPAFA Final Report Consultative Workshop on Archaeological Studies on Srivijaya, Padang, Prapat dan Medan*, Indonesia. Bangkok: SPAFA Co-ordinating Unit, 97-104.

Susanto, R.M. 1995. Laporan Hasil Penelitian Arkeologi Candi Bara, Padang Lawas, Kabupaten Tapanuli Selatan, Tahap I. Medan: Laporan Balai Arkeologi Medan.

Susetyo, Sukawati. 2014. "Settlements Associated with Padang Lawas *Biaros*: A Study of *Biaros* Nagasaribu and Mangaledang." In *History of Padang Lawas II. Societies of Padang Lawas (mid-9th century- 13th century CE)* (Cahier d'Archipel 43), edited by D. Perret. Paris: Association Archipel, 171-181.

Treloar, F.E. and Fabris, G.J. 1975. "Evidence for the Contemporary Existence of Two Kedah Sites." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 38 (1): 74-77.

Westenenk, L.C. 1920. *De Hindoe-Javanen in Midden- en Zuid-Sumatra*, Albrecht & Co., Weltevreden.

Wheatley, P. 1961. *The Golden Khersonese*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press.

Winstedt, R.O. 1947. *The Malays: A Cultural History*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Winstedt, R.O. 1951. *The Malay Magician: Being Shaman, Saiva and Sufi*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Wolters, O.W. 1967. *Early Indonesian Commerce: A Study of the Origins of Srivijaya*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University.

Wolters, O.W. 1999. *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program in Cooperation with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. Studies on Southeast Asia No. 26. Revised Edition.

Chapter 4

Of Myth and Message: Some Reflections on "Hindu" Forms in Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia

Pamela N. Corey

Abstract

This text surveys a selection of artworks by contemporary Indonesian and Cambodian artists that source and rework forms that have origins in historical iconographies and epic narratives of Hindu mythology, such as the Ramayana *or the Churning of the Ocean of Milk (samudra manthan) from the* Mahabharata. *Within conceptual image-making, mythological forms and figures from Hinduism are reconstituted simultaneously as signs, artefacts, reminders, and vital means of communication, and may be combined with other visual idioms referencing Buddhism or Islam. I discuss the multeity of meanings in artworks by Heri Dono (b. 1960, Jakarta, Indonesia), Arahmaiani Feisal (b. 1955, Bandung, Indonesia), and Svay Sareth (b. 1972, Battambang, Cambodia). For these artists, mythological narrative is often the hinge of the work, shaping its meaning and message. While Islam and Buddhism have drawn more appeal as interpretive frameworks for contemporary art from Southeast Asia, the works here by Dono, Arahmaiani, and Svay demonstrate how historical Hindu forms have yielded persistent and subtle means of communication and provocation for these artists.*

Introduction

The question of contemporary Hindu art in Southeast Asia begs a number of definitional questions regarding "contemporary," "Hindu," and "art" in order to discern the sum of the parts. This inquiry merits broader and more in-depth investigation by other scholars and specialists in Hindu art in Southeast Asia and beyond, but at the invitation of my colleague W. Saam Noonsuk, I provide a few preliminary reflections on a selection of artworks made by contemporary Indonesian and Cambodian artists that source and rework forms that have origins in historical iconographies and epic narratives of Hindu mythology, such as the *lingga-yoni*, the *Ramayana*, or the Churning of the Ocean of Milk (*samudra manthan*) from the *Mahabharata*. The artworks discussed are located within the regime of contemporary art that is produced and recognized by, and accrues intellectual and market value through, galleries, museums, small and large-scale exhibitions (notably biennales), and curatorial and academic writing. Therefore, the question of contemporary vernacular productions or more popular arts falls outside the purview of the discussion here.

However, alongside the distinction I make here for focusing on contemporary art as opposed to contemporary arts, I also use "Hindu form" in order to complicate the attribution of these works as "Hindu art," for few – if any – of these artists would necessarily classify their work as such. The nature of the historical transmission and localization of Indic narratives and artistic forms in Southeast Asia, beginning in the first centuries of the first millennium CE, have rendered present-day articulations of their artistic representations more so as distinctively

Javanese or Khmer rather than Hindu (Anderson 1996). The retrieval of these forms for contemporary artistic practice is more of an act of historical excavation and of testing how they might work as culturally legible and/or provocative mediums and media for today's publics. Therefore, as important, if not more so, as decoding the traditional meanings embedded in these forms' iconographies and historical functions are the present-day circumstances that beckon them in the present. Within conceptual image-making, mythological forms and figures from Hinduism are reconstituted simultaneously as signs, artefacts, reminders, and still vital means of communication, and may be combined with other visual idioms referencing Buddhism or Islam. This essay examines the sourcing and reworking of such forms, and the ensuing multeity of their meanings, in artworks by Heri Dono (b. 1960, Jakarta, Indonesia), Arahmaiani Feisal (b. 1955, Bandung, Indonesia), and Svay Sareth (b. 1972, Battambang, Cambodia).

Unlike the more prominent attention given to Buddhist form in contemporary art from Southeast Asia, and the increasing international draw of works displaying and synthesizing Islamic references, artworks legibly reworking Hindu motifs have not been as prevalent on the global art stage. The historical localization of selected Indic models within Southeast Asia, the predominance of Buddhism and Islam as national religions, and the relatively marginal status of Tamil Hindus in the region today (notably in Singapore and Malaysia) (Wilford 2005) have rendered Hinduism a less identifiable presence in contemporary art by Southeast Asian artists. In these instances, Hindu narratives and iconographies have often been made more accessible primarily through figurative representations as opposed to the perceivably abstract and more malleable constructions and actions that can be related to Buddhist idioms of absence, withdrawal, and the non-self, and that resonate with conceptual artistic methods and the mediums of performance and installation, for example, in the works of the celebrated Thai artist Montien Boonma (1953-2000). Similar relationships between abstraction and Islamic significations (e.g. Arabic-based calligraphy) in artworks by Indonesian, Malaysian, and Thai artists, including A.D. Pirous (b. Meulaboh, Aceh, 1932) and Jakkai Siributr (b. 1969, Bangkok, Thailand), have also garnered appeal at national and international scales of reception.

Prominent narrative and illustrative references to Hinduism are perhaps most apparent in works by contemporary Balinese artists, such as Yogyakarta-trained Nyoman Masriadi (b. 1973, Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia), who uses them in more allegorical ways, vis-à-vis satire and mass culture, with less reliance on pictorial forms associated with Balinese aesthetics or traditional painting styles (for example, wayang-derived imagery associated with Kamasan painting) that may be perceived as constraining legibility and appeal for international publics. For this reason, as Adrian Vickers suggests, Masriadi stands apart as a Balinese artist who has begun to forge a more 'global' path, currently enjoying a successful regional market profile (Vickers 2006, 57-58). On the other hand, painters like Ketut Teja Astawa (b. 1971, Tuban, Bali, Indonesia) similarly comment on current socio-political issues, such as land reclamation, but maintain the use of specifically Balinese aesthetic motifs, Balinese-Hindu iconography, and a mixture of languages to create semiotically-laden images that require a versed viewer and significant depth of reading (Wittesaele 2017, 22-28). The latter is thus situated less easily among international audiences, although universal accessibility is not necessarily the artist's desire or objective.

Heri Dono's Wayang Worlds

Born in Jakarta and currently based in Yogyakarta, Heri Dono is one of Indonesia's most acclaimed artists, and belongs to a generation of artists whose artistic formation can be understood as having been significantly shaped by Suharto's New Order Regime (1966-1998). Dono studied at the Institut Seni Indonesia (Indonesian Institute of the Arts) in Yogyakarta from 1980 to 1987, where he received awards for painting in 1981 and 1985, but discontinued his academic studies to pursue the study of *wayang kulit* (popularly translated as shadow puppetry) under the master puppeteer (*dalang*) Pak Sigit Sukasman (b. 1932-d.?) (Rath 2003, 44).

There are several factors that coalesced in Dono's innovation of *wayang* as a efficacious contemporary art form, positioning him as an international artistic protagonist and cultural actor. These include the socio-political climate of the New Order Regime and Dono's institutional training combined with his personal study (perhaps akin to an apprenticeship) with *dalang* Sukasman. In addition, there is the very nature of *wayang* itself as a versatile artistic and story-telling medium, described as both puppet and performance, as form and content, and as a world of performative expressions assuming both 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional forms in which the puppeteer and puppet, the performer and the mask mutually animate each other (Mrázek 2000; Rath 2003; Holt 1967)

An early work like *Wayang Legenda* (1988) demonstrates the ways in which Dono modified the traditional iconographies, narrative languages, and stories of *wayang* to create an intermedial world of forms – traversing painting, performance, installation, and robotics – responsive to the pulse of recent socio-political developments. The interweaving of present-day commentary into the traditional story form of *wayang* through the improvisational commentary and interjections of the *dalang* already makes it an interactive and audience-attuned form of narration and entertainment. The porous nature of its narrative structure facilitates the collapsing the temporal boundaries between tales of the past and the present, whether through allegory or direct interpellation, "breaking the fourth wall" per the language of cinema. Amanda Rath notes that as a student of *dalang* Sukasman, Dono would already have been introduced to the incorporation of non-traditional iconography into the *wayang's* pictorial

Figure 4.1. Heri Dono, *Wayang Legenda Indonesia Baru*, 2000. Installation view at Negotiating Home History and Nation: Two Decades of Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia 1991-2011, Singapore Art Museum. Photograph by the author.

and plastic vocabulary (Rath 2003, 44); it is thus unsurprising that *Wayang Legenda* took shape during Dono's study with Sukasman from 1987 to 1988.

When Dono created and performed *Wayang Legenda* in Yogyakarta in 1988, *wayang* – as a form of protected cultural heritage and means of promoting national identity – provided a vehicle of 'tradition' and hence of communication that the artist could navigate to insert political commentary without fear of retribution, according to Julie Romain and the artist (Romain 2016, 185) (Figure 4.1). With Dono as author, producer, puppet-maker (the piece featured sixty of his hand-crafted puppets), and *dalang*, *Wayang Legenda* demonstrated a desire to decenter Java as the mythologized font of Indonesian identity and cultural tradition through a sourcing of materials, stories, and languages from a plurality of voices and cultures in Indonesia. As Astri Wright describes, "Giving contemporary formulation to the longstanding nationalist search for an Indonesian identity, he draws on ideas from cultures ranging from Sumatra to Irian Jaya, mixing and merging them with Javanese traditions and his own idiosyncracies" (Wright 1994, 234). *Wayang Legenda's* narrative is based on a Batak legend, from a North Sumatran community whose culture and livelihood were imperiled by deforestation projects in 1980s. In the story, a brother and sister fall in love and are turned into a tree, a significant departure from the popular mytho-historical tales derived from Hindu epics such as the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* (Romain 2016, 185). Dono's decision to rescale the female characters to the same size of the male figures, and to blur the definition between the refined (*halus*) and coarse (*kasar*) iconographical attributes of the figures to the point of dissolution between the two key categories of character types, upset the hieratic conventions of *wayang kulit* to the anger of many traditional puppet makers (Romain 2016, 188). In addition, the primary narration in Bahasa as opposed to Javanese, the standard language for performing wayang as well as the principle dialect used in a program of "Javanization" launched by Suharto, enabled him to embody the role of an outsider and assert a more democratizing perspective:

> *To me, wayang is only a medium for expressing a story. And folk-tales, legends, and various types of folklore are widespread throughout Indonesia. Why do we only perform stories from the Mahbharata, Ramayana, and Panji epics? As an Indonesian, I feel the responsibility to*

Figure 4.2. Heri Dono, *Flying Angels*, 1996, fiberglass, fabric, bamboo, acrylic paint, electronic and mechanic devices, cable, automatic timer, 10 pieces, each 39 x 24 x 10 in. (100 x 60 x 25 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art.

make a contribution in the field of art. Say that each of the twenty-seven provinces in Indonesia has five folk-tales. How many folk-tales could then be made into wayang performances? Wouldn't wayang then truly become the property of the Indonesian people? (Wright 1994, 234)

Dono's hybridized forms would subsequently develop into three-dimensional and animatronic iterations, and the 'Realist' impulse in his work (the commitment to representing and giving voice to marginalized members of society) would persist in terms of redefining relationships among Indonesian ethnicities and class communities as well as between the so-called high and low, local and global, artistic and mediatic divisions in art and culture. Dono's long standing fascination with comics and cartoons informed the development of his formal language, as an embeddedness within and criticality toward the contemporary "techno-industrial" complex of the late twentieth century, according to Jim Supangkat (Supangkat 2003, 30). *Flying Angels* (1996) was created during a period of escalating tensions and political turmoil leading up to Suharto's downfall and the beginning of Reformasi (Figure 4.2). Consisting of hand-made, mechanized puppets with flapping wings reminiscent of wayang golek, the artist described them as metaphors of transcendence: "Angels have wings and can fly wherever they want" (Antoinette 2007, 210). Yet real freedom or transcendence is belied by the repetitive automation of the puppets' jerky movements, whose motions of flight without actual traversal of space gestures to the irony or illusion of freedom or of progress and reform. For Dono, and as theorized in Benedict Anderson's study of *wayang* as shaping Javanese world views, *wayang* thus serves as an instrument of moral query, facilitating both social and self-criticism (Anderson 1996).

Arahmaiani's Sign-Specificity

In attempting to recover the relief's meaning, one is inevitably led back to the intention of the artist. All the evidence so far indicates that he was aiming to give visibility to states of movement, process, and change. Inescapably, his work is mimetic, since its claims are based on a harmonious reciprocity between macrocosm and microcosm. It follows that perturbations on one level are causally antecedent to consequents on the other. But rather than the skillful depiction of a prior reality to be enjoyed for its powers of persuasive similitude, the artist's intention seems to have been theurgie. Simple representation would have been at once too static in aim and too equivocal in result, since the work's power actually derives from the tension of its disparate parts – smith, bellows, and the dancing Ganeśa, a dog, the flames of Hell – on the face of it a confusion of realms and expectations. Its unity of theme and its metaphorical energy depend upon something outside the actual work itself (O'Connor 1985, 63; 65).

In this passage, Stanley J. O'Connor describes an enigmatic image of a smithy found at Caṇḍi Sukuh in East Java that he links to tantric ritual and the cosmic energies metaphorized but also activated by metalworking. His description of the image's composition of seemingly disparate parts, held in tension at the level of representation, meaning, and invocation, is a fitting analogy for Arahmaiani Feisal's assembled images, actions, and objects. Arahmaiani's works represent a trajectory of artistic practice rooted in a desire to reveal the workings of signs and symbols as they serve as both latent and legible conduits of ideology and power in Indonesia and the world today. It is often through the deceptively simple act of juxtaposition that her most profound exposures of such interstitial constructions and transgressions of meaning are enacted, plying the tensions between signs to reveal the workings of semantic production. As she wrote in a 1993 essay that strikes a parallel tone with that of O'Connor's reflections on image and theurgy at Caṇḍi Sukuh:

My art doesn't talk about composition, 'essential' line, 'harmonious' colors or

'matching' arrangements... the focus of my attention is the situation, the forces which 'move the body' – that which is opposed to 'form'. Consequently, my art is not 'retinal'; its objective is not to please the eyes. What's of primary importance is the actual process of creation" (Datuin 2000, 68).

An early painting that earned the artist controversial attention and even threats upon its exhibition in Jakarta in 1994 demonstrates this impulse. What was initially construed by its local viewing public as an illicit interplay of text and image operates in Arahmaiani's *Lingga-Yoni* painting through risky elements of pictorial and textual clarity and legibility upon quick apprehension (Figure 4.3). In the painting, the inverted sign of the *lingga-yoni* and the use of multiple scripts perform a controversial act in their very interaction. Arahmaiani created the painting to make a statement against sexual and religious intolerance, against rising fundamentalist interpretations of Islam in Indonesia. The reference to Purnawarman, ruler of one of Java's first Indic states, in the lower register's Pallava script, expresses her interest in excavating Java's pre-Islamic history, while the upper register's Jawi script, a modified form of Arabic that is automatically associated with sacred Koranic text, reads as a string of alphabet letters and then as "Nature is Book." The juxtaposition of this latter text in combination with a reversal of the traditional *lingga-yoni*, symbolizing Saivite cosmic union in Hindu iconography, is what offended conservative Muslim viewers upon its first exhibition in Indonesia, even leading to death threats for the artist, who subsequently left for Australia.

The efficacy of this representation as an artistic intervention hinges upon the incorporation of text, for while the inversion of the *lingga-yoni* form appears in itself to be a radical subversion, its precedent can be found at the fifteenth century Caṇḍi Sukuh temple, the inspiration for Arahmaiani's depiction. Unusually representational and

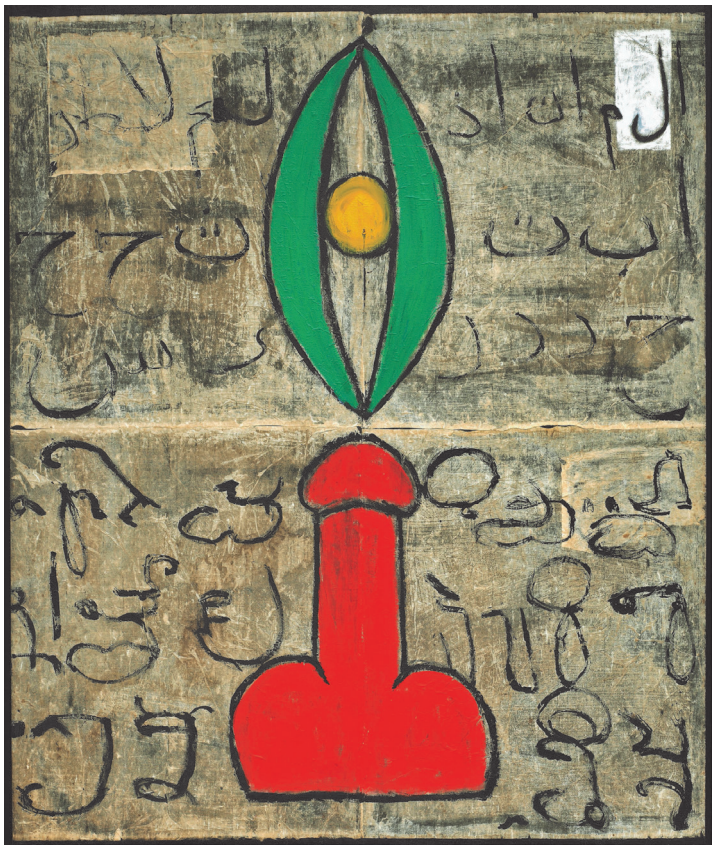


Figure 4.3. Arahmaiani, *Lingga-Yoni*, 1994, acrylic on canvas, 182 x 140 cm. © Arahmaiani. Collection of Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara (MACAN), Jakarta, Indonesia | Image Courtesy of Museum Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara (MACAN), Jakarta, Indonesia.

physiologically referential in its figurative likeness to a phallus and vulva, the *lingga-yoni* at the entrance to the Caṇḍi Sukuh terraces departs from its more schematic and abstracted counterparts found elsewhere in Southeast Asia. For conservative viewers, the work was thus saturated with a graphic provocation that was further exacerbated by an accompanying work at the exhibition. *Etalase* was the title for a glass vitrine containing a meticulously arranged collection of objects, including a Koran, a Coca Cola bottle, a pack of condoms, and a Buddha figurine. The proximity of the Koran to the condoms incensed members of a Muslim fundamentalist group, obscuring the semantic questions enacted by the carefully assembled display of objects in their entirety, which functioned as a network of signifiers of religion, capitalism, and sex at work in a globalized world. In addition, as Angela Dimitrakaki has noted, *Etalase* could be interpreted as a double exposure of commodity fetishism, emphasizing at one level such a meaning upon perceptual identification of the collection of objects, while simultaneously and ironically yielding to an art world consumption of 'the work' itself (Dimitrakaki 2016, 20). Joan Kee has cautioned that such consumption has been increasingly fueled by prevalent interpretations of the work of artists like Arahmaiani within a singular and flattened Asian, feminist, artistic subjectivity pervasively scripted into art world identifications of Asian women artists (Kee 2011). Nonetheless, Wulan Dirgantoro emphasizes that for local publics in Indonesia, one must still be mindful of the ways in which Arahmaiani's work speaks meaningfully to a specific and still urgent feminist directive: "In a context in which female bodies have all but disappeared from public purview, she makes hers visible as a social and political context – one constantly overdetermined by the violence of the state" (Dirgantoro 2016, 13).

Representing a consistently embodied approach within her practice, the *lingga-yoni* finds analogous iterations in several of Arahmaiani's works, particularly in its deployment as site and signifier of cultural and capital currencies and flows, and as counterfoil to embodied enunciations of individual subjectivity. Perhaps it finds its most resonant avatar in the Coca Cola brand, which features prominently in *Etalase* (1994), *Sacred Coke* (1994) (Figure 4.4), *Coke Circle* (1995), and *Handle without Care* (1996-97).

Figure 4.4. Arahmaiani Feisal, *Sacred Coke* (detail), 1993-2014, wooden table, organic rice, soil, Coca-Cola bottle and condom 40 ½ x 41 x 41 in. (102.5 x 104 x 104 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Tyler Rollins Gallery.

Frequently foregrounded as a cipher of imperialism and neoliberal soft power, as Flaudette May V. Datuin notes (Datuin 2000, 68), in addition to its invocation of such art historical references as Pop and the readymade, the Coca Cola bottle often stands in as a central totemic and phallic icon in such works as *Sacred Coke* (1994) and *Handle without Care* (1996-97). Both works invite formal identification with aspects of ritual and tradition, vis-à-vis the staging of the bottle, capped with a condom, within a concentric arrangement of organic elements such as rice and soil in *Sacred Coke*, or with parodic allusion to Balinese ceremonial performance and the ritualization of a similarly staged upright Coca Cola bottle in *Handle without Care*.

Leading up to the controversial 1994 *Sex, Religion, and Coca-Cola* solo exhibition at Oncor Studio in Jakarta, which precipitated Arahmaiani's departure to Australia and subsequent relocations, Suharto's New Order Regime had set the stage for a number of provocative performances and public interventions Arahmaiani and fellow members of a body art group staged in 1980s Bandung during her fine arts studies at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Bandung Institute of Technology (Dirgantoro 2016, 25). Raised in a middle-class family – her father a progressive Muslim cleric and her mother from a background that practiced a Javanese blend of Hindu-Buddhist-animist religions – Arahmaiani asserts that such a historical and spiritual syncretism is part of her upbringing and her intellectual formation. In the context of the suppression of Indonesia's pre-Islamic history in favor of a modern, nationalist Islamic identity, Arahmaiani's work has revealed a compulsion to excavate histories of cultural and religious pluralism. These concerns run alongside the artist's interrogations into issues of migration and labor, ecological destruction, rising religious fundamentalism, and female subjectivity. Sourcing signs, scripts, and symbols from an array of cultural lexicons, some specific to Indonesia and others from references ranging from religious iconography to mass media and global popular culture, Arahmaiani navigates the passage between object and image as a form of meaning-making, and plays with the fluidity of these significations as they are constructed across discrepant positions of perception and judgment.

Figure 4.5. Svay Sareth, *Toy (Churning of the Sea of Milk)*, 2013, cotton, wood, iron, 15 × 5 × 1 m. Collection of the Artist. Singapore Biennale 2013 commission. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

Svay Sareth's Monuments of Myth and Mortality

In 2013, a large-scale sculpture titled *Toy (Churning of the Sea of Milk)* was exhibited at the 4th Singapore Biennale (Figure 4.5). Referencing the famed story of conflict and creation from the *Mahabharata*, the sculpture re-enacted the temporary alliance between *devas* (gods) and *asuras* (demons) to churn the cosmic ocean using Mount Meru as a churning pivot, Vishnu's tortoise avatar Kurma as supporting base, and the mythical serpent or naga Vasuki as rope. The churning of the cosmic ocean would yield *amrita*, the nectar of immortality, which the *devas* and *asuras* had agreed to share. However, in some versions of the story, the gods had been secretly counseled by Vishnu to seek a strategic reconciliation with the *asuras* to gain the amrita for themselves, in order to restore their strength after having been cursed by the Sage Durvasa. Ultimately, the *devas* were assisted by Vishnu and other higher gods to consume all the *amrita*.

Seventeen meters long and four meters high, the scale of *Toys* recalls the story's monumental depiction in bas-reliefs at the twelfth-century temple of Angkor Wat, in addition to the free-standing sculptures lining the causeway to southern gate of Angkor Thom, with *devas* on one side, *asuras* on the other, each team grasping the naga's body. However, unlike the awe inspired by the sculptural works in-situ in Cambodia, and their fetishization as objects trafficked within networks of collectors and museums for more than a century, the sculptures fabricated by Cambodian-born artist Svay Sareth defer such a sense of aesthetic gravitas. As cued by the title, the figures have been literally transformed into larger than life-size toy soldiers, stitched from camouflage fabric and stuffed with *kapok*, a seed-hair fiber also known as Java cotton. The sinuous clefts and curves of their majestic stone counterparts in Angkor have been translated through two-dimensional figurative needlework in a contrasting red thread to render graphic, cartoon-like facial expressions, and the delineation of the figures' garments or of the aquatic creatures adorning the base.

Toy used a popular tale from Hindu mythology to allegorize perennial cycles of conflict and collaboration, of political forces at play whose agents move like pieces on a chessboard and in which sides are chosen according to the game of statecraft. Metaphors and materials of war are recurring elements in Svay's practice, and the processing of images across mediums mark developments throughout his practice, which encompasses sculpture, installation, and performance. In one such instance, *Toys* connects to a previous work using the churning of the ocean of milk as a figure of contemporary reflection on post-war politics and societal rebuilding in Cambodia. A 17-meter long digitally rendered banner titled *Churning* was publicly installed at Brookfield Place (formerly of the World Financial Center) in New York City, created for his residency at Brookfield Arts during the Season of Cambodia festival in 2013 (Figures 4.6 and 4.7). There are two transpositions at work with the panoramic image. First, a popularly frequented public square that hosts the Cambodia-Vietnam Friendship Monument in central Phnom Penh is superimposed as a photographic mural lining the walkway of a public plaza in a part of lower Manhattan home to major corporate and financial offices, and in close proximity to the World Trade Centre and the 9/11 Memorial. The other transposition is digitally

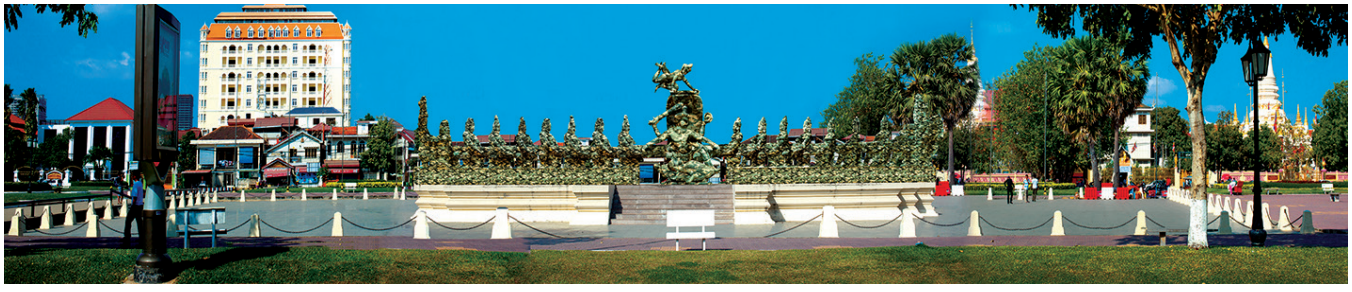


Figure 4.6. Svay Sareth, *Churning*, 2013, site-specific vinyl banner, 3 x 17 meters. Courtesy of the artist and Erin Gleeson.

Figure 4.7. Svay Sareth, *Churning*, 2013, site-specific vinyl banner, 3 x 17 meters. Installation view, Brookfield Place, New York City. Courtesy the artist and Erin Gleeson.

Figure 4.8. Svay Sareth, *Ruins (I Vote 2018)*, 2016, *kapok*, camouflage cotton fabric, embroidery, fabric paint, 381 x 50.8 x 50.8 cm. Courtesy the artist and Erin Gleeson.

enacted within the image, with the Churning of the Ocean of Milk stone sculptures, as though extracted from their Angkor Thom location and sheathed in camouflage, overlaid onto the site of the Cambodia-Vietnam Friendship Monument in Phnom Penh. This erasure of the monument and replacement with the mythical figures enacts an allegorical parallel regarding the tug-of-war of power and strategic illusions of cooperation, in which the role of Vietnam as historical antagonist, liberator, occupier, and neoliberal ally of Cambodia stands as a salient example. A subsequent work, *Ruins* (2014-ongoing), segmented the soft sculptures evocative of those from *Toys* and scattered their fragments in a seemingly haphazard way, like detritus, throughout the exhibition space, like looted sculptural remnants or dismembered body parts in the aftermath of a landmine or in battle. The near ludicrous appearance of the chosen materials and the reduction of majestic statuary to plush – even kitsch – toys amplifies the contrast to their grim references of pillaging and destruction in the context of looting and war. One sculptural piece, a pendant or reclining arm with its index finger blackened with ink, also speaks to the theater of the democratic process in Cambodia, a tenuous undertaking since the first post-Khmer Rouge national elections held in 1993 (Figure 4.8).

Svay's recent works emerge from a trajectory in which related themes of humor and futility have

operated within performance journeys that span time and space, often a test of physical endurance that serve the work's constitution as mnemonic process and catharsis. Born in Battambang and raised in a Thai border refugee camp, Svay was a co-founder of the Phare Ponleu arts school in Battambang, and due to the school's cooperation with various French organizations, he later received a scholarship to pursue undergraduate and graduate education in France. After receiving his MFA from the L'Ecole Régional Supérieur des Beaux-arts de Caen in 2009, he returned to Cambodia with his former student and wife, Yim Maline, also a practicing artist, and worked as the artistic director of Artisans d'Angkor based in Siem Reap. Between 2009 and 2011, he staged various iterations of a performance in which he dragged by hand a wooden canoe across challenging expanses of sea and land. *Mardi* (2009) speaks to experiences of displacement and migration rooted in the artist's upbringing as a child of the military and his upbringing in a refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border. The performance found an iteration in *Mon Boulet* later in 2011, but instead of pushing a boat, and inspired by the futile labor of Sisyphus, Svay hauled a metal sphere, two meters in diameter and weighing 80 kg, from Siem Reap to Phnom Penh, a journey on foot following a well-established and populated route that traced the path of the ancient Khmer capital to the present-day capital along the Tonle Sap River. The magnification of scale, whether in terms of distance or size, in addition to the significance of site and location thus appear as recurring concerns in his work, particularly in the artist's combination of actions and objects to channel history and memory.

Conclusion

The artists discussed here have deployed Hindu forms as vessels of meaning or as syncretic elements in artworks prompted by contemporary issues, particularly in response to regimes of power as expressed through governmental structures, religious ideologies, and socio-ethnic fissures. As one of a number of cultural and aesthetic vocabularies furnished by "tradition" within each of these artists' respective circumstances, Hindu references provide points of recognition, investigation, and both narrative ambiguity and illumination. Figurative forms in this selection of works enable a testing of mediatic crossings, such as with Heri Dono's animatronic puppets, or Svay Sareth's material translations. Intertextual references to literature, mythology, and historical texts inform Svay's and Arahmaiani's practices, ranging from Indic inscriptions to English literature. For these artists, myth is often the hinge of the work, shaping its meaning and operating as a centrifugal force within the artwork. While Islam and Buddhism have drawn more appeal as interpretive frameworks for contemporary art from Southeast Asia, the works here by Dono, Arahmaiani, and Svay demonstrate how Hindu forms have yielded persistent and subtle means of communication and provocation for these artists.

References

Anderson, Benedict. 1996. *Mythology and the tolerance of the Javanese* (2nd ed.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.

Antoinette, Michelle. 2007. "Deterritorializing Aesthetics: International Art and its New Cosmopolitanisms, from an Indonesian Perspective." In *Cosmopatriots: On Distant Belongings and Close Encounters*, edited by Edwin Jurriëns and Jeroen de Kloet, 205-34. Amsterdam; New York, NY: Rodopi.

Datuin, Flaudette May V. 2000. "Passing through Fire: Pain and Transformation in the Art of Arahmaiani." *ARTAsiaPacific* 26: 66-71.

Dimitrakaki, Angela. 2016. "The Premise of Contradiction and Feminist Politics: Reflections on Arahmaiani's Art and Life." *Afterall* 42: 15-23.

Dirgantoro, Wulan. 2016. "Arahamaini: Challenging the Status Quo." *Afterall* 42: 25-35.

Holt, Claire. 1967. *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kee, Joan. 2011. “What is Feminist About Contemporary Asian Women’s Art?” In *Contemporary Art in Asia: A Critical Reader*, edited by Melissa Chiu and Benjamin Genocchio, 347-69. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mrázek, Jan. 2000. “More than a Picture: The Instrumental Quality of the Wayang Puppet.” In *Studies in Southeast Asian Art: Essays in Honor of Stanley J. O’Connor*, edited by Nora Taylor and Boreth Ly, 49-73. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.

O’Connor, Stanley J. 1985. “Metallurgy and Immortality at Caṇḍi Sukuh, Central Java.” *Indonesia* 39 (April): 52-70.

Rath, Amanda. 2003. “Shadow Stories: Wayang in the Work of Heri Dono · Indonesia.” *Prince Claus Fund Journal* 10a: 42-59.

Romain, Julie. 2016. “‘All Art is Part of the Same Constellation’: A Conversation on Craft and Artistic Practice with Heri Dono.” *Journal of Modern Craft* 9, no. 2 (July): 183-91.

Supangkat, Jim. 2003. “Upside-down Mind: The Art of Heri Dono.” *Prince Claus Fund Journal* 10a: 28-39.

Vickers, Adrian. 2011. “Balinese Art versus Global Art.” *Jurnal Kajian Bali* 1, no. 2 (November): 34-62.

Wilford, Andrew C. 2005. “The Modernist Vision from Below: Malaysian Hinduism and the ‘Way of Prayers’.” In *Spirited Politics: Religion and Public Life in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, edited by Andrew C. Wilford and Kenneth M. George, 45-68. Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.

Wittesaele, Charlotte. 2017. “Art, Land Reclamation and Green Governmentality in Indonesia: A Comparison of Teja Astawa’s Dewa Murka (2016) and Tita Salina’s *1001st Islands – The Most Sustainable Island in Archipelago* (2015-2016).” MA thesis, SOAS University of London.

Wright, Astri. 1994. *Soul, Spirit, and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters*. Kuala Lumpur; New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 5

Rethinking the Modern and the Islamic through Hindu Forms in Haryadi Suadi and Arahmaiani's Works

Anissa Rahadiningtyas

Abstract

This paper focuses on works by two Indonesian artists, Arahmaiani (b. 1961) and Haryadi Suadi (1939-2016), whose works show the continued relevance of Hindu forms in contemporary Indonesia and their ability to accommodate, and be accommodated by, Islamic forms and practices. The "syncretic" use of Hindu and Islamic forms in Arahmaiani's performances and paintings, as well as the eclectic juxtaposition of Hindu images in Haryadi Suadi's glass paintings, I argue, can be framed as a proposition to put forward a different understanding and embodiment of being "modern" and "Islamic." While both artists represent different generations of artistic practice, they share the same genealogy of artistic training at the modernist art school in Bandung. Haryadi's turn to local methods of art-making and Arahmaiani's embrace of performance as a new art praxis break away from the modernist art tradition that dominated the art pedagogy and the exhibitionary space in Indonesia from the 1960s until at least the 1990s. Focusing on these two artists from different generations also shows multiple modes of engagement with Hindu-Buddhist forms in Indonesian modern and contemporary art. Arahmaiani's performance and painting serve as a reparative space to "rediscover" the continuities of Hindu-Buddhist and pre-Islamic symbolism and values in Indonesia's Muslim societies. At the same time, Haryadi's works show the maintenance of Hindu-Buddhist forms as mediated through the long tradition of Sufi visual and material cultures circulated in Cirebon, West Java. I suggest that the reworking of Hindu-Buddhist forms in their works consequently operates to address the possibilities of inhabiting different perspectives on Islam outside of normative practice, as well as to challenge the established notion of modern and contemporary Islamic art in Indonesia.

Introduction

> *My latest works in the form of paintings, videos, installations, and performances are influenced by my research into the past cultures of Animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism in Indonesia (Arahmaiani 2016).*

Even though Arahmaiani (b. 1961, Bandung, West Java) published this statement to articulate her current works specifically, her engagement with "syncretism" as a category of practice had started since her early performance in the 1980s. In *The Flower* (1982) (Figure 5.1), Arahmaiani meditated on a constructed three-tiered stone platform that is evocative of Hindu-Buddhist temple ruins occasionally found in Yogyakarta. On the top of the platform, Arahmaiani arranged five sets of round stones on top of rectangular ones to represent the four cardinal directions with a higher center in the middle. The slightly angled sets are an invocation to the Hindu-Buddhist mandala form manifested in numerous temples, batiks, and artworks in

Figure 5.1. Arahmaiani, *The Flower*, 1982, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. (Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York)

Southeast Asia. According to Arahmaiani, this efficacious mandala structure was activated not only by her performance but also by the presence of local people who considered it sacred and came before the performance to pray and write on the platform with white chalk. Dressed in white, Arahmaiani then sat still between the center stones and the platform's edge, carrying a Javanese kris on her lap. The kris was an important element in this performance as it ties her body not only to the past Hindu-Buddhist architectural and religious form but also to her familial past as it was an heirloom from her grandfather. In this performance, Arahmaiani sought to re-establish a corporeal and spiritual connection to the Hindu-Buddhist past and her ancestral line. Her research and incorporation of Hindu-Buddhist forms – her "syncretism" – I argue, is a proposition to put forward a different understanding and position of being "Islamic."

In this paper, I am juxtaposing Arahmaiani's method of syncretism with Haryadi Suadi's (1939-2016, Cirebon, West Java) composite imagery derived from the long tradition of Sufi practice in Cirebon, West Java. Similar to Arahmaiani, Haryadi's works engage with Hindu-Buddhist forms as a lens to redefine and broaden the category of Islamic art in Indonesia. *Srabad (Ganesh)* (Figure 5.2) resituates Ganesh, the Hindu deity, painted in light blue with four hands and red and white mask-like face, within a constellation of texts that articulate the Islamic notion of tawhid (the expression of the oneness of God). The colorful Ganesh seated on an ochre background is additionally surrounded by *basmala* (بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ) "In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful), as well as the words "الله" ("Allah" – God) and "مُحَمَّد" (Muhammad) in several visual and calligraphic iterations. On top and bottom margins are the cropped Cirebonese cloud and rock motifs that are known as *megamendung* and *wadasan*, other prominent patterns associated with the port city of Cirebon on the North coast of Java. The title "*Srabad*" also adorns the painting as Haryadi wrote it in Latin script below the Ganesh and on its right with Jawi script that reads "اسرابت." Also known as *Arab Pegon* in Javanese context, Jawi is a permutation of Arabic script often used in the Indo-Malay Archipelago to write in local languages.

The composite image of Ganesh in Islamic garb represents one of several *srabad* motifs in Cirebonese material and spiritual tradition. *Srabad* is a Cirebonese concept, an abridgment of the phrase "*ningser saking abad*" or the transition or passing between times. This visual concept connotes the shifts of religious lives and civilization from Hindu-

Figure 5.2. Haryadi Suadi, *Srabad (Ganesh)*, 2006, enamel paint of reverse glass painting, 41.5 x 31.5 cm. (Collection of Haryadi Suadi family, photo by Michael Binuko and Kemas Indra Bisma)

Buddhism to Islam. Srabad, therefore, makes visible the successive religious traditions, along with their iconographies, that represent the full development of belief systems in the context of Cirebon. Besides Ganesh, srabad also takes the form of Semar and Togog, two divine but worldly characters in Javanese mythology and shadow play tradition that have existed since before the coming of Islam. All these three divine figures are also known for their liminal position, as figures in between realms, that enable them to inhabit Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic spiritual and iconographical spheres. These forms are painted and recontextualized by Haryadi Suadi within a new constellation of images that reflect the eclecticism of srabad patterns. Srabad in Haryadi's glass painting shows the continuity of Hindu religious images in contemporary Indonesia and their ability to accommodate and absorb and be absorbed by Islamic forms and practices. Furthermore, Haryadi's reiteration of srabad also shows the genealogies of artistic practice that tether to the modernist art tradition in Bandung and the Cirebonese spiritual and making practice in the form of reverse glass paintings.

By looking closely at these two artists who came from different generations and share distinct methods of art-making and being in the world despite being trained in the same art training institution in Bandung, Indonesia, this paper aims to show multiple modes of engagement with Hindu-Buddhist forms in Indonesian modern and contemporary art. Arahmaiani's performance is intended as a

Figure 5.3. Fakultas Seni Rupa dan Desain, Institut Teknologi Bandung (FSRD ITB – Faculty of Art and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology), formerly known as the Universitaire Leergang voor de Opleiding van Tekenleraren (University of Education for Art Teachers).

reparative space to "rediscover" the continuities of pre-Islamic symbolism and values in Indonesia's Muslim societies to counter the hegemonic stereotypes and ideals about Islam set up by Western media as well as by Muslims themselves. Haryadi's reinterpretation of srabad images, on the other hand, shows maintenance of particular Cirebonese motifs related to religious rituals and materiality associated with a localized Sufi order through the practice of glass painting. I argue that the reworking of Hindu-Buddhist forms in their works cannot be separated from Islam as both artists respond to the long history of vernacularization and acceptance of both religious traditions to address the possibilities of inhabiting different perspectives on Islam outside of the established orthodoxy in Indonesia. Arahmaiani's insistence on bringing her body through performance and Haryadi's maintenance of local methods of art-making are a further challenge to the modernist art tradition and the established conception of modern and contemporary Islamic art that dominated the exhibitionary space since the New Order period (1966-1998) in Indonesia.

Breaking Away from the Modernist School

Both Haryadi Suadi and Arahmaiani were trained at the Faculty of Art and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology, and belonged to a different generation of artistic training. Formerly established as an art teacher training institute in 1947 by the Dutch colonial government during the period of the Indonesian Revolution, this school and its particular brand of modernist aesthetics introduced by the Dutch teachers to their Indonesian students emerged as a dominant paradigm in Indonesian modern art, particularly after the rise of the New Order period (1967-1998). The school is now known as the Faculty of Art and Design under *Institut Teknologi Bandung* (ITB). It is interesting to note that Ganesh, the Hindu deity and the patron of intellectuals, also happens to be the university's logo. The use of Ganesh as the university logo transpired in the early 1960s from the presence of many Hindu-Buddhist stupas and statues, including Ganesh, on the university ground taken from colonial archaeological excavations from temples in Java by

Dutch researchers and archaeologists, possibly since the early twentieth century.

Earlier generations of artists who studied directly under the Dutch teachers, such as Ahmad Sadali (1924-1987), Srihadi Soedarsono (b. 1931-2022, Solo), But Muchtar (1930-1993), Mochtar Apin (1923-1994), A.D. Pirous (b. 1932), and their abstract paintings dominated the exhibitionary space and art competitions held from 1966 onwards. After the Dutch teachers left in 1959, Sadali, Srihadi, Pirous, Apin, and several other of their contemporaries became the instructors at the school. These artists turned instructors also opened new studios in the 1960s, including the Sculpture and Printmaking studios, after their return from their continued artistic training in the United States and Europe. Together they passed down the importance of formalist abstraction as a method of art-making, continuing the legacy of the principle of international modernism they initially learned from the Dutch teacher and developed through their encounters with American abstract expressionism and other Western modernist forms.

Haryadi joined the newly opened Printmaking Studio in 1964 and studied under Mochtar Apin and other modernists. Despite Apin's universalist and modernist approach, the Printmaking Studio provided a space for Haryadi and his other cohort, T. Sutanto (b. 1941), to break away from the school's canonical aesthetics of formalist abstraction and exploration into European post-impressionism. Growing up in Cirebon, Haryadi was always drawn to myriads of local visual materials and performances, such as the wayang or the shadow puppet theaters and other Cirebonese art forms, in addition to their mystical and spiritual dimensions. His early prints from the 1960s, such as his 1965 *Ramayana* (Figure 5.4), show his persistence in exploring his lived tradition using new techniques and materiality, adapting the story-telling mode from Hindu-Buddhist temple reliefs and translating them onto a woodblock printed cloth. His carved woodblock sinuous lines fill the space between the battle scenes taken from the Indic epic of Ramayana. While cloths are perhaps common to use in printmaking, Haryadi's choice of cloth as a material was also a nod to the materiality of wayang theater where the story of light and shadow unfolds on a white cotton cloth. In the 1970s, Haryadi's conviction to return to "*kebudayaan Indonesia*" or authentic Indonesian culture, and to craft new artistic practices with a language that was both modern and Indonesian, was shared by several of his contemporaries, including A.D. Pirous. Haryadi's approach, however, arguably more radical as he also engaged with the works of a Japanese print artist, Shiko Munakata, as well as his ideas of modernism. Haryadi shared Munakata's position and his idea of discarding the methods and

Figure 5.4. Haryadi Suadi, *Ramayana*, 1965, woodcut print on cloth, 100.3 x 188 cm. (Collection of Haryadi Suadi family).

materials of Western painting and returning to local aesthetics. Haryadi believed in the exploration of local methods, materials, ways of seeing, processes, and techniques, or in what Sanento Yuliman (1969, 2001) terms "*seni rupa yang lain*" (loosely translated as "the other art/aesthetics"). Sanento was Haryadi's cohort at FSRD ITB and a prominent art critic who argued against the separation between high art and low art in modern art discourse that marginalized local conceptions of aesthetics and artistic practices. Haryadi's persistence, inevitably, led to his liminal position in the history of modern art in Indonesia, as critics often saw his works as not modern enough.

Arahmaiani joined the Painting Studio at FSRD ITB in 1979 and belonged to a generation, which Jim Supangkat refers to as "*generasi 80an*" ('80s generation). Arahmaiani's works, as well as those of her generation, are shaped by the need for a new art praxis to accompany new political awareness and activism that addressed the limitations of the male-centered, politically neutral, and disinterested modernist practice. Frustration with Soeharto's dictatorial/militaristic regime amongst students since 1975 and the negative effects of modernization and global capitalism also molded Arahmaiani's political consciousness (Rath 2011, 286-7). Performance and installation became Arahmaiani's method of political and environmental activism, where she progressively articulates the importance of collaboration as a strategy of reparation. At the core of many of her performance works is her commitment, proposal, and feeling of responsibility as a Muslim to extend transcultural dialogues that could (re)generate reparative readings towards Islam and Muslims amid turbulent national and global politics since the 1970s onwards. Her works, such as *The Flower* (Figure 5.1), reassert and connect the experiences of marginal bodies (women, minorities) through her own self that disrupts the mainstream ideas and the scriptural iterations of Islam.

Rethinking the Islamic through the "Syncretic" and the Srabad

As I have pointed in the beginning, the presence of Hindu-Buddhist and pre-Islamic forms in both Arahmaiani and Haryadi's works present the possibilities to rethink the idea of being "Islamic," and therefore, of the practice and discourse of modern and contemporary Islamic art in Indonesia. Their works show how modern and contemporary artists in their effort to claim the "Islamic" in their practices also engage with past religious traditions mediated by Sufi rituals and materialities in Java, and in the case of Arahmaiani, with artistic practices, she encountered during her nomadic collaborative processes in different parts of the world, including Thailand and Tibet. This argument complicates Kenneth George's (2012, 62) assertion that modern and contemporary artists in Indonesia and Malaysia mainly discover "Islamic art" through encounters with curated forms of "authentic" Islamic expressions shown at the museums and framed by academic institutions in the West. As noted by Iftikhar Dadi (2010) and other scholars of Islamic art, Islamic art history as a field is rooted in Orientalism and Western superiority that consequently limits the study of "authentic" Islam to research that focuses on or show the dominant influence of Islam from the Islamic "heartland," a broad territory assumed to encompass the Arab world, Persia, and South Asia before the advent of colonial modernity. These histories, practices, and meanings of Islam in locations such as Southeast Asia and across Africa have been marginalized and obliquely labeled under different categories, such as "primitive art" or only "Hindu-Buddhist art." The eclectic and the syncretic in the works by Arahmaiani and Haryadi serve to open up the narrow framing of Islamic art as set up in the field of Islamic art history in the West as well as in the discourse of modern and contemporary Islamic art that was specifically constructed in Indonesia.

Modern Islamic art as an artistic practice and discourse began to develop in Indonesia with the *lukisan kaligrafi* (calligraphic painting) of Ahmad Sadali and A.D. Pirous in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Makhmud Bukhori (1985), Pirous's colleague and one of the curators for Pirous's solo exhibition in 1985, differentiated lukisan kaligrafi from *kaligrafi murni* or traditional calligraphy, defining it as "painting that adopts the forms and characters of calligraphy and transforms it into a new and

complete form." The term "*lukisan*" or "painting" is used as a construct to redefine calligraphy in this new form that is not bound by the rules and tradition of Islamic calligraphy and thus signifies its modernity. Before its adaptation in modern painting, calligraphy was often perceived as a thing of the past and the traditional, and therefore, it had to be "rediscovered" and "reworked" to fit the imagination of modernity during the New Order period. Sadali and Pirous's explorations with calligraphic modernism originated in their awareness of being Muslims when religion was increasingly gaining traction amongst the new middle-class elites. *Lukisan kaligrafi* constitutes what Iftikhar Dadi (2006, 2010) terms as "calligraphic modernism," which refers to how artists reinterpret the use of Arabic calligraphic forms from Islamic and Islamicate traditions by opening them to new expressive and abstract possibilities. It connects *lukisan kaligrafi* with the broader practice of Muslim artists in West Asia, North Africa, and South Asia that roughly started in the mid-twentieth century.

After Pirous's 1972 solo exhibition in Jakarta, Sadali and Pirous's mode of practice and representation quickly dominated the mainstream perception of modern Islamic art in Indonesia. Sanento Yuliman (1985) notes that five years later, several painters from Bandung and other cities, such as Yogyakarta and Jakarta, began to experiment with Arabic/Quranic calligraphy using varying forms of abstraction. The making of the canon of modern Islamic art that put primacy to *lukisan kaligrafi* also coalesced through the state- and private-sponsored group exhibitions and its increased demands in the art market. The discourse of *lukisan kaligrafi* or modern

Figure 5.5. Ahmad Sadali, *Untitled 34*, 1985, marble paste, gold leaves, and oil paint on canvas, 116 x 93 cm. (Collection Ahmad Sadali family).

calligraphic painting subsequently emerged in printed media in the 1980s and 1990s. It celebrated the rise of a new generation of artists from different schools that incorporate Quranic calligraphy using varying methods of abstraction. Muslim painters embraced abstraction as it enabled them to pursue "*realitas transenden*" or transcendental reality, which could lead them to the ultimate truth that is God (Hadi W.M. 1990). Artists such as Amang Rahman Jubair (1931-2001), Umi Dachlan (1941-2009), Syaiful Adnan (b. 1957), Abay D. Subarna (b. 1940), Amri Yahya (1939-2008), Hendra Buana (b. 1963), Hatta Hambali (b. 1949), and several others formed the core of the canon of *lukisan kaligrafi* and Islamic art in Indonesia. The works of Sadali and Pirous continued to appear in many group exhibitions of Islamic art, leading the modern Islamic art canon and lending the exhibitions a validation of Sadali's and Pirous's authority in the practice of *lukisan kaligrafi*, and therefore, Islamic art.

In addition to the primacy of *lukisan kaligrafi*, modern Islamic art in Indonesia was also primarily defined through the assertion of the artist's religious piety and ethical responsibility as a good Muslim. Sadali's idea of beauty in Islam focused on the notion of art as a form of devotion to God and a medium to instill deeper spiritual contemplation. In an international symposium of Islamic art in Istanbul in 1983, Sadali elaborated in his presentation paper that for him, "Islamic art" is "a reflection of the Most Beautiful and Most beauty Loving God (*hadith*), a '*tasbih*' rathers than so-called self-expression." While for A.D. Pirous, as noted by Kenneth George (2005; 2010), producing Islamic art meant bearing the responsibility to present Quranic legibility and immutability for himself and his audience. Sadali and Pirous's view of Islamic art echoed the concept of *l'art pour Dieu et l'art pour humanité* (art for God and art for humanity) established by Muslim intellectuals and poets in the early 1960s (Yustiono 2005, 226). Manifestos written and concluded in the 1950s and '60s regarding what constituted as "Islamic art" and "Islamic aesthetics" prioritized the importance of religious piety and commitment to proselytize Islam through art (Prawira 1956; Kratz 1986). However, it is important to note that neither Sadali nor Pirous ever intended their works as a medium for religious proselytization (*dakwah*). When asked about the potential of his *lukisan kaligrafi* as a tool for dakwah, Pirous carefully responded that his works were not meant to spread religious doctrines; instead, they were invitations for ethical contemplation through beauty.

What was increasingly considered as a "good Muslim" during the New Order period were those who subscribed, in varying degrees, to the modernist/reformist interpretations of Islam. By "modernist Islam," I refer to the conception articulated by Martin van Bruinessen (2013) that describes it as those movements that expressly seek accommodation of Islam with modernity, with an emphasis on rationality and compatibility with modern science. This term is often interchangeable with reformist Islam or used in a much broader range of reformist movements in Islam that favor more literal readings of the Quran and Hadiths. Many reformist Muslims regarded the religious practices of "traditional" and localized Islam that absorbed pre-Islamic religious symbolism and practices, including Hindu forms, as heterodox, and therefore, not Islamic. The notion of "Islamic" became increasingly more rigid as expressions of Islam that fell outside the mainstream practice were pushed to the margins. As a result, works by Haryadi Suadi and Arahmaiani that show a re-articulation of Sufi teachings and "syncretic" forms of Islam that reject both modernist abstraction and Quranic aesthetic are always in the margin of modern and contemporary Islamic art as a category. Therefore, Haryadi and Arahmaiani's works present a break from the boundaries and limitations set by modern art tradition and Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia as they escape and challenge this fixed categorization of modern Islamic art.

The "Syncretic" Islam as Practice

In several conversations, Arahmaiani proposed the idea of "syncretism" as the underlying principle in her practice as an artist and activist. She emphasized the significance of the difference in her family background as it informed her preoccupation with reasserting the possibilities of a different kind of

Islam. Her father is a modernist-leaning *santri* who was politically active in *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* (HMI – Muslim Students Association), and an Islamic political party, while her mother, according to Arahmaiani, is more Sundanese and *kejawen*. Her grandparents from her father's side were descendants of Arif Muhammad, a figure attributed to the spread of Islam in the seventeenth century Garut, West Java, whose tomb and residence lie by the Hindu-Buddhist temple complex, Candi Cangkuang. From her father, she learned about multiple reinterpretations of Islam and engaged in dialogues about politics. While from her mother and grandfather, she learned traditional dances, martial arts, and performances. The identification of *santri* as more Muslim and *kejawen* and Sundanese as its antithesis by Arahmaiani seems to echo Geertz's enduring analysis of Islam in Java (Geertz 1960). Geertz's dichotomous analysis of *santri* and *abangan/priyayi* in some ways reflects the Dutch colonial policy and reifies the colonial scholarship regarding the superficiality of Islam in the archipelago. In the struggle to claim Islamic authenticity in modern Indonesia, *abangan*, "syncretic Islam," and *kejawen* that is often associated with both terms, continue to be typically positioned as more Javanese/Sundanese, and therefore, not a "real" or "true" Islam. This categorization potentially denies the experience of Muslims whose religious system and practices cannot be neatly identified as Islamic, according to Geertz's modernist lens of Islam.

As summarized by Claire Robison (2018) from Stewart & Shaw (1994), the use of syncretism in religious scholarship declined after the rise of postmodern and postcolonial thoughts in the 1970s and 1980s due to its assumptions that religious orthodoxies are pure instead of diverse products of human cultures. Scholars criticize the term's presupposition of an authentic and static form of religion, mostly located in the textual doctrine, and overlooks the dynamic and fluid interchange enabled by cultural contacts. Drawing from Asim Roy (1983), Robison continues that the negative judgment of syncretism as an impure manifestation of religion or culture has also sometimes been used to contrast popular form of religious practices, or "folk" religion, with a higher form of religious traditions, which possess stricter theologies or rituals. Robison further notes that scholars have proposed terms to replace syncretism, such as symbiosis, acculturation, indigenization, or assimilation that have come into popular use as they avoid the value judgments and colonial/reformist critiques often embedded in the term syncretism.

However, I would argue that the identification and proposition of "syncretism" as a practice for Arahmaiani holds a possibility of pushing the boundaries of Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Islamic debates on orthodoxy have influenced the critical valuations of religious phenomena, condemning certain rituals and beliefs that fall outside of the dominant interpretation as *shirk* (worshiping entities other than God), *bid' ah* (innovation), haram (forbidden action), or *khorafat* (ridiculous tales, superstitions). By returning to syncretism, Arahmaiani seeks to alleviate these rigid boundaries and cultivate and perform Islam that is heterogeneous and open to embracing pre-existing religious and cultural practices and new ideas and worldviews. To a large extent, her view on Islam is akin to a more "traditional" strand of Indonesian Islam, represented by the notion of "*Islam Nusantara*." This term was proposed officially by the Nadhlatul Ulama in 2015 to provide an alternative for interpretation and representation of global Islam currently dominated by the Saudi's and the Middle Eastern perspectives. Nadhlatul Ulama is one of the biggest grassroots Muslim organization in Indonesia that was established in the early twentieth century to counter the reformist Muslim organization, Muhammadiyah, by promoting "traditional" Islam that was developed from Sufi teachings and practices with stricter adherence to the Quran. "*Islam Nusantara*," therefore, refers to Islam that has developed in the Indo-Malay Archipelago since at least the sixteenth century and has undergone a longue-dureé of indigenization, vernacularization, and acceptance of universal Islamic values according to social and cultural reality in Nusantara.

Another work of Arahmaiani that shows the manifestation of Hindu-Buddhist form is her painting *Lingga-Yoni* (1993) that was first shown in her solo exhibition in 1994, *Sex, Coca-Cola, and Religion*. As noted by other scholars who have

Figure 5.6. Arahmaiani, *Lingga-Yoni*, 1993, acrylic paint, and rice paper on canvas. (Museum of Contemporary Art in Nusantara, Jakarta).

written about Arahmaiani (Datuin 2000; Rath 2011; Dirgantoro 2016; Dimitrakaki 2016), this painting and several other installations in the exhibit elicited an unprecedented reactionary response of blasphemy from a Muslim fundamentalist group. The Muslim group, whom Arahmaiani identifies, was led by someone related to the owner of the gallery, condemned Arahmaiani for putting together sacred Islamic iconographies and objects with other religious symbolism and profane images. *Lingga-Yoni* shows Arahmaiani's loose rendering of Jawi characters as well as what seems to be Pallava scripts that encase an inverted composition of *lingga* and *yoni*. Her use of Jawi exposes the tenuous relationship that many Indonesians have with Arabic as they mostly associate the scripts with the sacred book, and thus ascribing sacredness to the script itself. Arahmaiani's other works in the exhibition further exacerbated the accusation, and Arahmaiani's explanation of her intention to address global capitalism and commodification of religion and its symbolism through these works failed to abate the violent reaction she received.

Arahmaiani reworked and inverted the *lingga* and *yoni* composition to elevate the feminine energy above the masculine while maintaining the balance and harmony between the two opposites. Arahmaiani often openly criticizes the imbalance of power between the feminine and the masculine, and consequently, the marginal position of women in religion. In an interview, she recalls the time when she was disappointed to learn from her father that her aspiration to become a prophet would never be possible because there is never a female prophet

(Ulung 2019). Nevertheless, Arahmaiani persists in challenging rigid religious dogmas that privilege men as an interpretive authority and defends her rights to her own interpretation as a woman and an individual. Dualist representation of the feminine and masculine – that often creates a spectrum in between or a potent synthesis – continues to anchor the spiritual and cultural practices in the archipelago since before the coming of major religions, including Hinduism and Islam. Arahmaiani renders *yoni* in a thick dark outline that contains the solid green and yellow core, while lingga is rendered in red. Surrounding the monumental construction of the *lingga* and *yoni* are Jawi scripts on the upper half, divided indistinctly by perhaps a creased line that separates it neatly from what looks to be the Pallava writings on the lower half of the composition. The use of rice paper to layer the canvas serves as a fertile ground for cosmic collaboration. It also emphasizes the significance of rice and agricultural lives in Indonesia, especially in Java, whose spirituals and cultural practices are informed by and tied with the rites of the fertility goddess that combine the animist and Hindu-Buddhist belief systems.

It is interesting to note that Arahmaiani's scheme of colors – red, green, yellow, black (of the writings), and white (indexed indirectly through the rice paper) – also corresponds to the cosmology in Hindu-Javanese as well as Islam in Java. Both forms might be interchangeable since many Hindu and Buddhist traditions have been thoroughly Islamicized in Java (Woodward 1989, 16-17). In this new constellation proposed by Arahmaiani in *Lingga-Yoni*, *lingga* and *yoni* could be read as a bridge between the scriptural renditions of Arabic/Jawi texts and Pallava that divide the composition horizontally, and therefore, between the Hindu-Buddhist system of knowledge and power to Islamic. For this reason, it might be possible to also read the lingga and yoni in Arahmaiani's painting as an epitome of a transitional image that connects the long history of cultural and religious forms, from animism to Hindu-Buddhism and Islam.

Haryadi's works maintain the continuous presence of Hindu forms in Cirebon, mediated by Islamic/Sufistic rituals and symbolism through Javanese wayang or shadow theaters and other forms of folk performances and artistic practices, most notably glass paintings. In addition to *Srabad (Ganesh)* (Figure 5.1), Haryadi also produced two other glass paintings in 2006 in the style of srabad as he positioned the wayang characters of Semar and Togog in the center of floating signs related to Islamic and Cirebonese visual and spiritual traditions. A well-known and one of the most important characters of *punakawan* (clown servants) in Javanese and Sundanese shadow theaters, Semar is the queer God-clown (Semar is of the feminine and the masculine) whose wisdom and humor guide both the journey of the hero or ruler characters as well as the audience. Semar is a bridge that connects three realms; they are the mediator between the heroes and the Gods, and they also connect the story and the hero characters to the audience as they can speak in both high and low registers. Through Semar and other punakawan, dalangs could channel and relate the current social and political issues to the epic stories through humor and playful conversations. In the epic of Mahabharata, Semar serves as the advisor to the Pandawa heroes as they fight against the evil force led by the Korawas. Togog is the brother of Semar, a God-clown who serve the Korawas and the counterbalance to Semar. In both Haryadi's glass painting, Semar and Togog are cloaked and surrounded with Arabic calligraphy that forms Islamic phrases of the oneness of God, affirming the embodiment of Islamic teachings and symbolism in the divine figures of the God-clowns.

While the shadow theater and the presence of Indic epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana had been recorded in inscriptions and manuscripts in Java since at least the 10th and 11th centuries (Sears 1984; Holt 1967, 128), many scholars and local practitioners believed and argued that Semar and the rest of the divine punakawan are Javanese inventions as they have no counterparts in the Indian epics. Semar draws various genealogies to Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic origins and embodies the philosophies and spiritual practices of each religious tradition that transcends their rigid doctrinal barriers. Local scholars also associate Semar with Javanese mysticism, a highly localized form of Sufism that developed since Islam was accepted in Java since the 15th and 16th

Figure 5.7. Haryadi Suadi, *Semar*, 2006, enamel paint on reverse glass painting, 62 x 52 cm. (Collection of Haryadi Suadi family).

Figure 5.8. Haryadi Suadi, *Togog*, enamel paint on reverse glass painting, 62 x 52 cm. (Collection of Haryadi Suadi family).

centuries, which governs the spiritual lives and the everyday conducts of the Javanese (Purwadi 2004). Traditionally, in making the Cirebonese shadow puppet characters and glass painting, Semar is believed to be the most sacred character to make or to paint due to Semar's spiritual prowess. The making of Semar requires the makers (the dalang or the glass painter) to also possess the necessary power through Sufi rituals, such as meditation and fasting. Failure to harness the power of Semar would often result in sickness or misfortune.

The calligraphic Semar finds precedence as one of the established motifs in Cirebonese glass paintings. This motif circulates amongst glass painters in Cirebon through copies, which today is usually made on tracing papers and spread further using the xerox machine. The practice of copying is common, even required, in Cirebonese material tradition as glass painters, batik makers, or dalangs would copy the main patterns or wayang forms from the works of their teachers and predecessors. For them, copying or tracing is a way of honoring the ancestors and acknowledging past creative and spiritual forces in recent works. It is worth noting the difference in the calligraphic motif that dons the bodies of Semar and Togog. Semar's smooth and fluid calligraphic line reveals the elegance of Semar figure despite their rather grotesque appearance of drooping eyes, flat nose, bulging belly, and sagging breast. Togog's calligraphic lines are more sinuous and mazelike as if they were easily tangled – perhaps an index to Togog's more complicated nature as the divine advisor to the evil forces. While the main patterns, such as Semar of Ganesh, are faithful copies of the established visual conventions, artists could assert their creative agency in working the surrounding scene and background.

Haryadi was most likely to copy the popular calligraphic Semar and Togog from other glass painters in Cirebon or from the xeroxed patterns that I found in his private library (Figure 5.9). One of the prominent glass painters whom Haryadi learned Cirebonese glass painting and its lexicons is Rastika (1942-2014). After their initial meeting in 1972, Haryadi worked closely together with Rastika to popularize and "modernize" Cirebonese glass paintings on the national stage. From Rastika, Haryadi learned glass painting techniques, Cirebonese patterns, and subject matter while striving to "modernize" the form by breaking the limitations of the strictly formulaic methods and visuality of glass painting. Haryadi introduced the use of different colors, compositions, and textures while adhering to images that carried spiritual and symbolic significance. Haryadi's training at the modernist school like ITB and his position as a "modern" artist afforded him the ability to assert his artistic interpretations of the centuries-old images that have been perpetually replicated on Cirebonese material cultures. From Haryadi, Rastika took up to reinterpret supplementary elements of Cirebonese glass painting so long they maintained their spiritual and historical significance. Today, many Cirebonese glass painters recognized the importance of Haryadi and Rastika's collaboration and effort in developing new ways of painting in Cirebon.

In addition to the main patterns, Haryadi also reworked several other patterns into his *Semar* (Figure 5.7) and *Togog* (Figure 5.8) from Cirebonese visual vocabularies related to the long history of Sufism that accommodates pre-Islamic belief systems. On the top corner of both paintings, Haryadi inserted a cropped piece of *megamendung* pattern – a coiled cloud design in neat layers of blue that bears reference to the Chinese influence in Cirebon. *Megamendung* is a quintessential pattern of Cirebon that is widely replicated in Cirebonese batiks, carvings, and other materials. It is commonly accompanied by *wadasan* or a rock pattern made of a similar layered structure as the cloud, which Haryadi decided to omit. Instead of using *wadasan* to signify the ground, Haryadi painted potted plants, rendered in flat and solid colors. Haryadi also added another essential pattern in his *Togog* (Figure 5.8) in the form of highly colorful three congregated fishes with one head on the right side of the Togog figure. In Cirebonese glass paintings, this pattern is known as *iwak teluh sirah senunggal*. It stands as a visual iteration of tawhid and a localized manifestation of "*manunggaling kawula gusti*" (unity with the divine) in the Javanese Islamic/Sufistic context. However, this particular pattern can be traced back to the pre-Islamic period beyond Cirebon or Java as it appeared on architectural elements in ancient Egypt, in

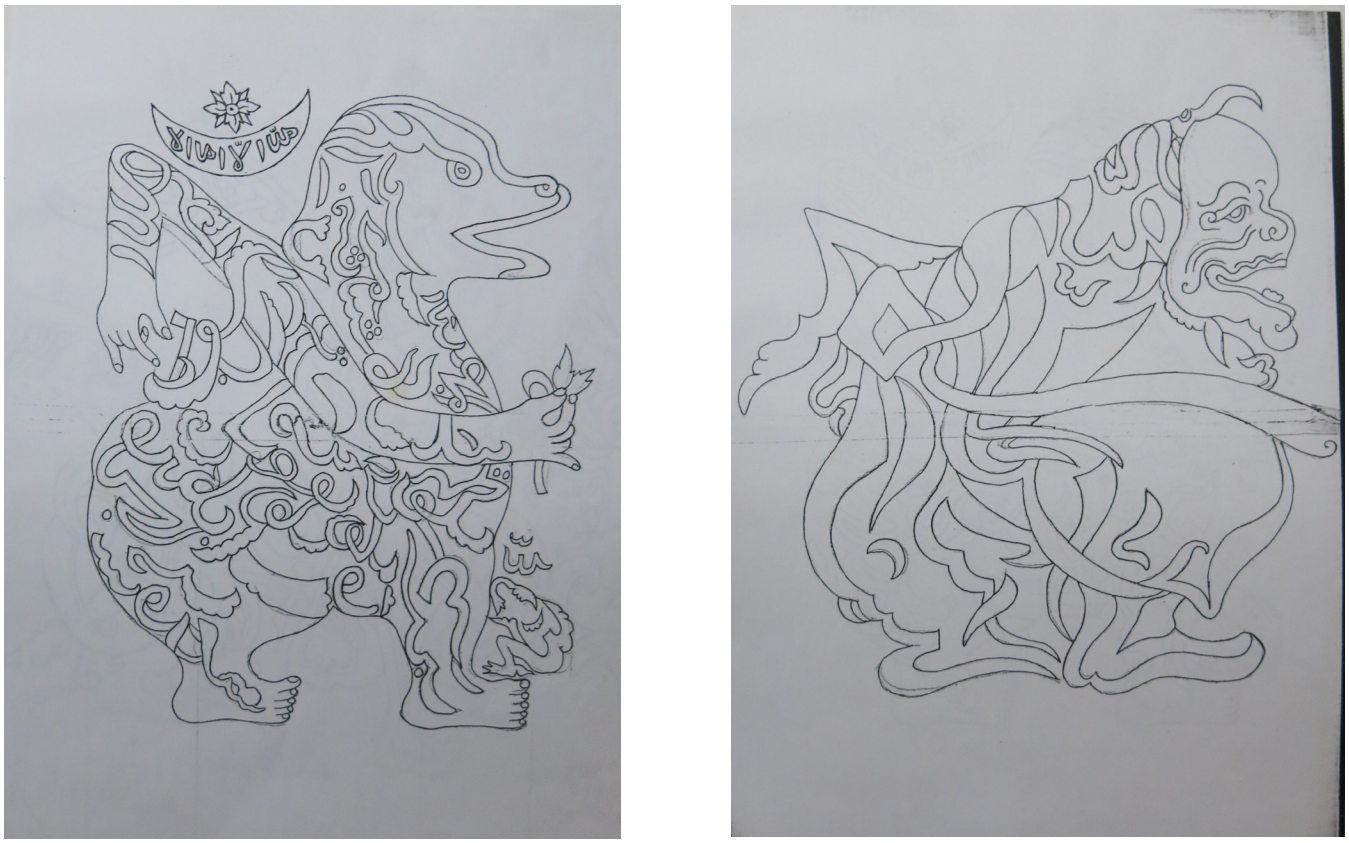


Figure 5.9. Xeroxed copies of Togog (left) and Semar (right) in Haryadi Suadi's private library. (Author's documentation).

medieval Christian objects in Europe, in Hindu and Buddhist objects in India and Japan, and several other iterations in different parts of the world (Gallop 2019, 226-32). As further elaborated by Anabel Teh Gallop (2019, 226), this pattern in Southeast Asia is strongly associated with the circulation of the Shattariya *tariqa* or Sufi order in Java, particularly in Cirebon. This motif also appears in one of the Cirebonese royal courts and other architectural elements within the city, indicating how the three fishes with one head are deeply ingrained in the visual and spiritual tradition of Cirebon. Other visual forms in both *Semar* (Figure 5.7) and *Togog* (Figure 5.8), such as the sun and the crescent moon, the mandala-like pattern with black, green, yellow, red, and white circles above Semar, might function as visual summaries of long prayers dedicated to God.

Conclusion

The continuous presence of Hindu forms in modern and contemporary artistic practices in Indonesia must be analyzed in conversation with Islam as many Hindu-Buddhist traditions in Java have been fully absorbed into Islamic praxis and belief systems. Haryadi Suadi's incorporation and maintenance of the srabad motifs of Ganesh, Semar, and Togog, from Cirebonese glass painting, affirms the porous and fluid transitions and exchanges from Hindu-Buddhist to Islamic in the context of Cirebon. Arahmaiani's artistic practice that reemphasizes the importance of "syncretism" in her understanding of Islam manifests in her reworking of Hindu forms in her paintings and performances. The "syncretic" practice is Arahmaiani's proposition to challenge the increased fundamentalism in Indonesian Islam. By returning to syncretism, Arahmaiani seeks to alleviate rigid boundaries posed by Islamic orthodoxy to cultivate and perform Islam that is heterogeneous and open to embracing pre-existing religious and cultural practices as well as new ideas and worldviews.

Their works also pose a challenge to the established categorization and historicization of modern and contemporary art as well as Islamic art in Indonesia. While both had training in a modernist art institution, their insistence on breaking away

from the modernist and elitist conventions of art allow them to complicate and enrich the practice of modern and contemporary Indonesian art. Framing their works as a critical negotiation and interrogation of the notion and category of "Islamic" through their use of Hindu forms also opens a way to acknowledge and complicate the analyses of the works of other Indonesian Muslim artists that draw from pre-Islamic forms as more than either "secular" or not related at all to their experiences and ideas of being Muslims.

References

"Dakwah dengan Kaligrafi Al-Quran: Percakapan Khusus, A.D. Pirous." *Tawakal*, May-June 1987.

Arahmaiani. 2012. "My Second Life in Tibet."

Arahmaiani & Siobhan Campbell. 2019. "Balancing Feminine and Masculine Energy." Southeast of Now 3:1.

Bukhori, Machmud. 1985. "Gerak Waktu ke Bidang Datar." In Lukisan, Etsa, dan Cetak Saring A.D. Pirous: Pameran Retrospektif 1960-1985, edited by Machmud Bukhori & Sanento Yuliman. Bandung: Galeri Decenta, pp. 9-30.

Chamberts-Letson, Joshua. 2006. "Reparative Feminisms, Repairing Feminism – Reparation, Postcolonial Violence, and Feminism." Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory 16:2, pp. 169-189.

Close, Rebecca. 2016. "Shadow of the Past: Indonesian Artist Arahmaiani at Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York." Art Radar, 18 October 2016.

Dadi, Iftikhar. *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Dadi, Iftikhar. 2010. Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

_____. 2006. "Rethinking Calligraphic Abstraction." In Discrepant Abstraction, edited by Kobena Mercer. London: Institute of International Visual Arts; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Datuin, Flaudette May V. 2000. "Passing through Fire: Pain and Transformation in the Art of Arahmaiani." ArtAsiaPacific 26: 66-71.

Dimitrakaki, Angela. 2016. "The Premise of Contradiction and Feminist Politics: Reflections on Arahmaiani's Art and Life." *Afterall* 42: 15-23.

Dirgantoro, Wulan. 2016. "Arahamaini: Challenging the Status Quo." *Afterall* 42: 25-35.

Gallop, Anabel Teh. 2019. "Cultural Interations in Islamic Manuscript Art: A Scholar's Library from Mindanao." In *The Library of an Islamic Scholar of Mindanao: The Collection of Sheik Muhammad Said bin Imam sa Bayang at the Al-Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) Library, Marawi City, Philippines: An Annotated Catalogue with Essays*, edited by Oman Fathurahman, Kawashima Midori & Labi Sarip Riwarung. Tokyo: Institute of Asian, African, and Middle-Eastern Studies, Sophia University, pp. 205-48.

Geertz, Clifford. 1960. *Religion of Java*. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press.

George, Kenneth & Mamannoor. 2002. A.D. *Pirous: Vision, Faith, and A Journey in Indonesian Art, 1955-2002*. Bandung: Yayasan Serambi Pirous.

George, Kenneth. 2012. "The Cultural Politics of Modern and Contemporary Islamic Art in Southeast Asia." In *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art: An Anthology*, edited by Nora Taylor & Boreth Ly. Ithaca, New York: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2012.

Holt, Claire. 1967. *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kratz, E.U. “Islamic Attitudes towards Modern Indonesian Literature.” In *Cultural Contact and Textual Interpretation*, edited by C.D. Grijns & S.O. Robson. Dordrecht, Holland; Cinnaminson, USA: Foris Publication.

Lenzi, Iola. 2006. “Curatorial Premises, Project Methodology, and An Interview with Arahmaiani.” In *Stitching the Wound*. Bangkok, Thailand: Jim Thompson House.

Mamannoor. 1996. *Pemaknaan Baru Seni Lukis Tradisional: Pengantar Pameran Lukisan Kaca Haryadi Suadi*, 6-30 September 1996. Jakarta: Galeri Lontar.

Prawira, Ch. 1956. “Tjita Islam dan Kesenian Nasional.” *Hikmah* 41, 3 November 1956.

Rath, Amanda. 2011. “Contextualizing Contemporary Art: Propositions of Critical Artistic Practice in Seni Rupa Kontemporer Indonesia.” Dissertation, Cornell University.

Robison, Claire. 2018. “Syncretism.” In *Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism*, edited by Z.R. Kassam. Springer, pp. 665-68.

Samuel, Jerome. 2008. “Haryadi Suadi et la peinture sous verre: Un art Populaire au service des academies.” *Archipel* 76.

Sedgwick, Eve. 2003. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Spanjaard, Helena. 2003. *Moderne Indonesische Schilderkunst*. Abcoude: Unipers.

Sudjoko. 2000. “Menuju Nirada.” In *Refleksi Seni Rupa Indonesia: Dulu, Kini, dan Esok*, edited by Biranul Anas. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.

Van Bruinessen, Martin & Julia Day-Howell. 2007. *Sufism and ‘Modern’ Islam*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris.

Van Bruinessen, Martin. 2013. *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the “Conservative Turn*.” Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Woodward, Mark. 1989. *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Wright, Astri. 1994. *Soul, Spirit, and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters*. Kuala Lumpur; New York: Oxford University Press.

Yuliman, Sanento. 2001. “Dua Seni Rupa.” In *Dua Seni Rupa: Serpihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, edited by Asikin Hasan & Jim Supangkat. Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam.

_____. 1985. “Citra dan Cita Karya A.D. Pirous 1960-1985.” In *Lukisan, Etsa, dan Cetak Saring A.D. Pirous: Pameran Retrospektif 1960-1985*, edited by Machmud Bukhori & Sanento Yuliman. Bandung: Galeri Decenta, pp. 31-99.

Yustiono. 2005. “Interpretasi Karya Ahmad Sadali dalam Konteks Modernitas dan Spiritualitas Islam dengan Pendekatan Hermeneutik.” Dissertation, Institut Teknologi Bandung.

Chapter 6

Crossing Lines: Locating Power, Prowess, and Spiritual Energy in Works by Contemporary Balinese Artists

Astara Light

The question of prowess in relation to contemporary Balinese artworks links to different visual articulations of authority in meaningful ways. Contemporary artists, whose work reflects prowess by harnessing Balinese performance imagery and referencing performativity in their works, imbue their artistic messages with additional prowess, power, or spiritual energy (*sakti*). In this sense, "performing prowess" could be conceptualized in a fairly concrete way. O.W. Wolters first introduced the idea of "prowess," which describes how rulers (particularly male rulers) have garnered authority in different areas of Southeast Asia. In what follows, I situate this concept in conversation with the recent exhibition "Balinese Masters: Trajectory of Aesthetic D.N.A in Balinese Fine Arts," which was held at the Art-Bali gallery and AB-BC building in Nusa Dua, Bali, in Indonesia in the summer of 2019. I will explore the work of nine artists who are from Bali: Mangku Muriati (b. 1966, Kamasan), Made Wianta (b. 1949-2020, Apuan, Tabanan), Nyoman Erawan (b.1958, Sukawati Gianyar), Gede Mahendra Yasa (b. 1967, Singaraja), Ida Bagus Putu Purwa (b. 1977, Sanur), Nyoman Masriadi (b. 1973, Gianyar), Ketut Budiana (b. 1950, Padangtegal, Gianyar), Putu Sutawijaya (b. 1971, Tabanan), and Ida Bagus Made (b. 1915–1999, Tebasaya, Ubud). Two artists of this group – Nyoman Masriadi and Ida Bagus Made – were not featured in the exhibition, but their work intersects with the focus of the show in meaningful ways. This exhibition highlighted multiple artists together in dialogue with each other and introduced significant questions surrounding what authority, power, and mastery mean for Balinese and Indonesian art histories more broadly.

Wolters argues that men who are true leaders must have "prowess" which goes hand in hand with "soul stuff" because it suggests the idea of an innate power, charisma, and spiritual energy. The concept of *sakti* is central to this as well because it lends authority to the qualities of prowess that define a leader (Wolters 1999, 18). Wolters elaborates on how prowess also connects to the concept of *sakti*, a Sanskrit word meaning "spiritual energy" that holds significance in Hinduism. This concept plays an especially central role in Bali, because it demonstrates the value of ancestral power and lineages (Wolters 1999, 93). In this paper, I expand on the idea of prowess and how spiritual power/*sakti* can be considered in relation to ancestors. Specifically, the idea of lineages is not restricted to biological or familial definitions. Rather, drawing on the framing of the "Balinese Masters: Trajectory of Aesthetic D.N.A in Balinese Fine Arts" exhibition, I consider artistic lineages as another form of ancestry or "aesthetic DNA" that is also driven and shaped by *sakti* and power.

Bali is a Hindu majority island and province in the Muslim majority archipelago nation of Indonesia. The concept of *sakti* is one example of how Hindu ideas and practices have been integrated in Balinese religious and performance forms. Since Bali is the only Hindu majority island in Indonesia, it is often researched and described as separate from the rest of the country. While it is a distinctive place

with a long history of Hinduism and Indic ideas that have been integrated with many religious practices that continue through to today, it should be noted that the island is not isolated or in a bubble separate from other dynamics in the archipelago.

The anthropologist James Boon discusses specific aspects of *sakti* in a Balinese context. He describes it as a "powerful influence" that is linked to ancestral spirits (Boon 1977, 88) and as a form of "ancestral power" that can be strengthened through different genealogical and religious practices (Boon 1977, 133; 139). He also argues that *sakti* can be understood as a form of divine energy and power that comes from specific Hindu deities like Shiva, Brahma, or Vishnu and manifests in an earthly and physical context. And it can be accessed by different individuals in society, including warriors, prophetic figures, and political leaders (Boon 1977, 205). Thus, in the context of Bali, prowess and *sakti* can also be traced in religious, political, socio-cultural, and artistic domains, which all closely intersect with each other. For example, many pre-modern Balinese rulers and Indonesian presidents have drawn on religion and the arts to cement their own prowess which reveals ties between the arts and state authority. The focus of this paper is on how visual arts in Bali, which includes performance, reflect different forms of prowess, *sakti*, and authority.

The exhibition "Balinese Masters" was curated by artist and curator Rifky Effendy in collaboration with other artists and scholars. It included works by both famous and lesser known artists. Nonetheless, they all visually articulate questions that are relevant in Bali and internationally. These artists draw from many visual approaches and artistic techniques to create a range of works in different media, including painting, sculpture, multi-media, and installation works. The exhibition provided a sense of the breadth of techniques and styles that Balinese artists employ in their work. Here, I focus particularly on artists who evoke performance imagery since it is a thread that connects multiple works to each other and allows us to examine how prowess is performed in striking ways. Their works offer new ways to consider how Balinese artists situate themselves, both in relation to each other, as well as to a global art scene. In addition, I will consider how ideas of artistic "masters" intersect with, or parallel the concept of "prowess" and authority that Wolters discusses.

There are a number of reasons to examine "prowess" in relation to the exhibition "Balinese Masters." Firstly, because the artists have been placed in dialogue with each other, the exhibition provides an opportunity to consider multiple artists and their contributions to Balinese art histories together. Secondly, the idea of "masters" employed in the exhibition's title presents overlapping implications with the idea of prowess since they are both powerfully charged conceptual framings. A curatorial statement introducing "Balinese Masters" describes the goals of the show as follows: "to examine the aesthetic achievement of art in Bali and reconsider artistic practice as a search of form or visual within the context of: religious ritual, cultural or social and economic activity in Bali by escaping from the canonical point of view that dichotomizes, breaching other paradigm boundaries" (Effendy 2019, 1). This reveals the challenge that many modern and contemporary artists in Indonesia face: to shift away from a canonical view of art while simultaneously creating works in a field defined by ideas of artistic "masters," eliciting associations of famous artists in European or classical art contexts. Nonetheless, this exhibition does counteract many of these tropes by including a combination of artistic groups and individual artists working in a range of media and styles. Considering ideas of prowess and mastery together is productive for re-evaluating contemporary Balinese art in new ways.

Shadows of Prowess, Authority, and Ancestral Ties

Some of the artists in the exhibition evoke authority and prowess by referencing the well-known performance form of shadow puppet theater (*wayang kulit*). Different narratives are performed through this medium, but the Sanskrit epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which are important in Hinduism, are particularly popular. Shadow puppet theater has a long history and is highly respected in many

areas of Indonesia, including Bali and Java. The artists, Mangku Muriati, Made Wianta and Nyoman Erawan reference shadow theater in distinctive ways. Their artworks in "Balinese Masters" center on performance forms and experiences of shadow theater either through traditional Kamasan stylistic approaches or by drawing on experiential aspects of this performance form. The materials, visual effects, and process of making shadow puppets are all referenced in painting, installation, and multi-media sculptural artworks. They speak to the powerful effect created by shadow theater in Bali. These artworks also demonstrate ways that genealogies of authority in Bali can be traced through images and curatorial spaces.

The three artists – Muriati, Erawan, and Wianta – draw on experiences tied to viewing shadow performances, but each artist works with very different media. Muriati employs an earlier style of painting from the Kamasan tradition to create artworks with a "traditional" look but content that speaks to modern histories in Indonesia. Erawan and Wianta focus on the shapes and silhouettes created by the shadows and light from the other side of the screen, and Wianta specifically emphasizes the raw materials used to make puppets. The organization of artworks in this show creates a sensation of simultaneously looking at different temporal moments in Balinese art histories. The exhibition layout begins with some "traditional style" paintings and then transitions to works in a modernist style as well as contemporary artworks. Considering the visual approaches employed in this range of works reveals that in many ways shadow puppets and shadow theater carry a presence and power in multiple artistic expressions in Indonesia.

Mangku Muriati is notably one of the few female artists featured in this exhibition. While she is a contemporary artist, she also utilizes stylistic approaches that reference earlier Kamasan art forms. Muriati studied painting from her father, who was an established artist in this tradition. She not only gains authority from her father's legacy but also situates her works in relation to larger artistic trajectories and lineages. Muriati puts a dynamic spin in her paintings, which draw on traditional styles while also addressing socio-historical issues. In one painting

Figure 6.1. Mangku Muriati, *Penangkapan Pangeran Diponegoro*, 2015, pencil, acrylic, ochre, cinnabar on cotton cloth, 23.6 x 31 inches (60 x 80 cm). Photo courtesy of Heri Pemad Art Management (HPAM).

(Figure 6.1), *Penangkapan Pangeran Diponegoro*, which translates as "the arrest (or capture) of Prince Diponegoro," Muriati represents the Dutch invasion and capture of this historical leader. Two figures, who appear to be Dutch men because of their white faces, facial hair, and hats, stand on either side of him, one holding a rifle. Simultaneously a female figure holds onto his legs in an effort to keep him in place. The scene and title speak to ideas of prowess since Diponegoro is a well-known ruler, often represented in visual and written accounts. His persona and the story of his capture is a narrative that signals a shift in political control and power in Java. In addition, this scene is famously represented by the Indonesian painter Raden Saleh in *The Capture of Prince Diponegoro* (1857). According to Siobhan Campbell, this painting is significant because "Muriati created a new narrative in response to one of the most well-known paintings in modern Indonesian art history" (Campbell 2019, 94). In this way Muriati is establishing her own authority and prowess in an artistic lineage by referencing and building on the work of Saleh.

Her work is a unique example of prowess and *sakti* as Wolters defines it, since ancestral ties are a significant source of power. Muriati's connection to her father Mangku Mura is important to her artistic legacy because he chose her as his artistic successor. In addition, Mura "passed on his role as priest (*mangku*) of their clan temple. This was clearly a pivotal resolution. Before he passed away, Mangku Muriati said that her painting lacked spirit, but her father's passing brought her painting to life; she took on his strokes." (Campbell 2019, 92-93). This account relates to Wolters' idea of prowess because he argues that ancestry plays a central role in relation to spiritual energy (*sakti*). In his notes on "soul stuff" and "prowess" Wolters describes how "Visnu represents *sakti* engaged in the world, and a well-formed ancestor group is the social form required to actualize *sakti*." And he notes that in Bali "Such a group is led by someone of remarkable prowess" (Wolters 1999, 93-94). Here, we can see how connections between prowess and ancestral lineages are clearly emphasized.

The story of Muriati and her growth as an artist and spiritual leader in her community is key to understanding how the concept of prowess and "soul stuff" tied to authority can be understood in relation to people's lives. She also pushes the boundaries of what authority can look like through her work. Another painting by Muriati featured in this exhibition is titled *Wanita Karir*, which translates as "career woman." It conveys a reclamation of authority by women, who take on professions or work outside of a purely domestic realm. This painting depicts four scenes with women engaged in different occupations and activities. Especially vivid is a scene on the lower left, showing a woman teaching with a white-board and rows of students holding books. The more modern subject matter contrasted with a "traditional" or Kamasan style painting offers a playful switch of the viewers' expectations. It presents a scene that is unexpected given the style and mirrors Muriati's own ambitions as a female painter in a male-dominated vocation in Indonesia. Thus, Muriati's artworks convey authority through her own role as a female artistic master carrying on a tradition from her father, as well as through the innovative artistic and conceptual approaches she adopts.

Whereas Muriati's paintings connect with shadow theater through the Kamasan tradition and the figures' stylistic reference to shadow puppets, other works in this exhibition reflect shadow puppet performances in a range of ways, including materially and experientially. Two installation projects draw on actual shadows or reference shadows in particularly evocative ways. The innovative installation and sculptural works by Made Wianta and Nyoman Erawan reflect on the material qualities, performative effects and imagery from shadow theater. Kleinsmiede considers the role that phenomenology holds in relation to shadow theater: "However one interacts with and around the *wayang* performance, one does so bodily. Many sensations are involved. Humor, pathos, instruction – all impact corporally." (Kleinsmiede 2002, 39).

In his installation work *Treasure Island* (Figure 6.2), Made Wianta uses materiality and plays with the shadows cast by raw buffalo hides to evoke the experience of viewing a shadow-puppet performance. The work draws on installation and

Figure 6.2. Made Wianta, *Treasure Island*, 2012, raw buffalo leather, mirrors, and nails. Variable dimensions. Photograph by the author.

sculptural techniques to convey the effects and materiality of the puppets themselves. The material qualities of this work directly reference shadow puppets and the process of making them. This work is a series of raw buffalo hides in irregular shapes and of varying sizes that range from two feet long, to larger than life-sized. The edges of the buffalo hides are scalloped, but overall, they resemble the original shape of the animal hide. The title *Treasure Island* further suggests the value tied to shadow puppets, as treasures, and locates them geographically in Bali, or perhaps Java as another island where shadow puppets have a long history.

Mirrors and nails are also used on these raw hides giving them an elaborate quality, recalling the gold embellishments and other adornments that are often added to shadow puppets. These sculptural works suggest deconstructed shadow puppets, showing the original materials used before they were cut, pierced, painted, and crafted to form specific identities and represent characters who appear in different shadow puppet performances. The works provide a sense of the actual process of making the puppets before a performance can even happen by revealing the literal "raw" and original materials. The different sculptural hide elements in Wianta's installation piece are suspended from the ceiling and rely on the effect of the shadows they create on the walls and floor of the room. Color also plays a more central role since the color of the hides are either a whitish or dark brownish red tone. This links to iconography of shadow puppets since many characters, like Arjuna – a heroic figure in the *Mahabharata* – are shown with white or red faces at different points in their narrative or life-stages. The walls of this section of the gallery are also painted a deep red, which makes the space darker. This results in a spatial and visual effect: the walls create a darkness surrounding the work, similar to an un-lit interior space or an outdoor setting at night where a shadow puppet performance might take place. The floor itself becomes like a "screen" for the shadows that are cast by the hides hanging from the ceiling. Wianta and Erawan position themselves as *dalang* and figures of authority by reflecting the experience of a shadow puppet performance in their installation and multi-media artworks.

Figure 6.3. Nyoman Erawan, *Shadow Dance #29, #23, # 26*, 2017, mixed medium, 78.7 x 59 inches, 78.7 x 78.7 inches, 78.7 x 59 inches (200 x 150 cm, 200 x 200 cm, 200 x 150 cm). Photograph by the author.

In the mixed-media work *Shadow Dance #29, #23, #26* (Figure 6.3), artist Nyoman Erawan invokes the visual details and craftsmanship involved in different shadow puppets, specifically the carved details and imagery. The title of this work indicates the larger significance that shadows hold in Balinese art, performance, and culture. Erawan's piece is a three-panel series done in mixed-media with paint and actual metal pieces that give the surface a dramatic three-dimensional and tactile aspect. The colors are primarily black, gray, blue, gold, yellow, and white. Strokes of dark paint mixed with organically shaped sections or carved details give the impression of movements that have been blurred and captured in film or frozen in the frame of the canvas. According to A.L. Becker:

> *Movements are on a single plane, but by turning a flat puppet on its axis the shadow can be made very thin, and by moving a puppet closer to the light, the shadow can be made to grow larger and more diffuse. Holding two or more puppets at once, as in a battle scene, the dalang can create a blurred frenzy of shadow movement. (Becker 2002, 79).*

In this way, the visual approaches that Erawan employs suggest a direct connection to the movement and techniques found in a shadow play performance.

In *Shadow Dance*, Erawan references the physical details and qualities of the shadow puppets, especially the carved details and colors that are inscribed in the buffalo hide or paper used to create individual puppets. The details in this work, gilded and edged flames, leaves, and feather-like motifs evoke the gold painted and intricately carved details on shadow puppets, especially the gold ornaments and crowns that many of the puppet characters wear. These details also reference similar designs found in dance costumes, headdresses, jewelry, and other gold-gilded ornamentation of dances. This references movements of shadow puppets and dance, revealing connections between both performative art forms.

The reference to a "shadow dance" relates the imagery to *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet)

performances where the puppets themselves are in motion and create "dancing shadows." The scale of these works is especially impressive, each panel measures 78.7 x 59 inches, (200 x 150 cm) or 78.7 x 78.7 inches (200 x 200 cm) and encompasses an entire wall. This work connects to shadow puppet aesthetics and has a larger-than-life quality that creates a powerful performative experience for the viewer. The scale draws one in, visually but also physically, through the large scale and the intricate and carefully executed smaller details.

The approaches adopted by the artists in these multi-media works included in the exhibition demonstrate processes of innovation that harness earlier visual and performative forms used in shadow theater. Wianta's and Erawan's works incorporate visual and physical techniques that are concrete and tangible – the use of rawhide materials suggests the process of cutting and inscribing finely carved designs into leather puppets. While the shadows that the installation pieces create on the floor evoke the ephemeral experience of watching the puppets used in a performance setting. Simultaneously the artworks make the actual shadows, or references to shadows, a multisensory and embodied experience for the viewer by using larger scaling and decorative three dimensional elements in unique ways. Wianta and Erawan become like *dalang* by re-creating a kind of experience of shadow puppet performances in their works. In contrast, Muriati assumes power through her role as a painter in the Kamasan artistic lineage, as well as through her visual references to ideas of authority. There is a prestige and "prowess" tied to the shadow puppet performance traditions that each of these artists utilizes in different ways. This connection further gives an authority and power or *sakti* to their artistic projects.

(Un)masking Powers and "Big (Muscular) Men"

Building further on connections between prowess and performance forms in Bali, I consider the artists Gede Mahendra Yasa and Ida Bagus Putu Purwa, both of whom were featured in the "Balinese Masters" exhibition. They reference Balinese performance by depicting dance masks in surprising ways that suggest the charged power they convey. Targeting issues of 'masters' in art history in his painting, Yasa is humorous and experimental in his visual and theoretical approach. His painting asks the viewer to consider how European dominated art historical discourses govern the work he does. Purwa's painting and his visual reference to ideas of male authority through masks and physical size also relates to paintings by the artist Nyoman Masriadi.

Wolters describes how "the leadership of 'big men'," or the phrase he uses more frequently "men of prowess," depended on "their being attributed with an abnormal amount of personal and innate "soul stuff," which explained and distinguished their performance from that of others in their generation" (Wolters 1999, 18). Some notable points include his description of prowess as tied to spiritual charisma through the idea of "soul stuff" and how prowess is associated with men specifically. Drawing on ideas of spiritual power, authority, and masculinity, I will consider how they relate to symbolism in the artworks by first examining how objects associated with power and spiritual energy (*sakti*), such as dance masks, are visually referenced in a number of works. Next, I turn to a consideration of how ideas of authority and power are equated with a kind of physical masculinity, which parallels Wolters' reference to "big men" in metaphorical and literal ways.

Gede Mahendra Yasa's paintings reference the power and symbolism of Balinese dance masks in a surprising way. His detailed oil painting, *School of (Pre-)Raphael* (Figure 6.4), recreates Raphael's painting *The School of Athens* and presents a humorous tableau with many identifiable scenes from European paintings that are surrounded by a flurry of Balinese performative, religious, and artistic imagery. These include dance masks, as well as figures of Barong and Rangda, who are standing in the central atrium of the school. The pair tower over a number of Greek philosophers, who include Plato and Aristotle, as they approach the group from behind. The Barong and Rangda figures are a distinctive part of Balinese religious and performance spaces. Together, they symbolize a balancing of forces. Rangda is a witch figure unique to Bali and inspired by Kali, the Hindu

Figure 6.4. (left) Gede Mahendra Yasa, *School of (Pre-)Raphael*, 2018, oil on canvas, 39 x 59 inches (100 x 150 cm). (right) Close up of detail. Photograph by the author.

goddess of destruction. Barong is a male, dragon-like figure in Bali that is associated with the Hindu god Shiva and often presented as the counterpart to Rangda. Barong is usually defined as the more positive and grounding force to Rangda's destructive energy. But each figure may also appear individually in a performance setting, and their duality is not "good versus evil." In fact, a Barong performance was part of the opening activities of the exhibition itself. It is particularly striking that Yasa has included these iconic figures amidst well-known European paintings. By placing different artistic lineages together, Yasa presents Balinese art and performance forms alongside and equal to European ones.

Other figures in this scene include different creatures that live in Bali, such as iguanas, birds, monkeys and even a larger-than-life cockroach climbing up the side of a wall. In some sections of the composition, Yasa has replaced the familiar European sculptural forms with images of Garuda and a painting of Jatayu from the *Ramayana*. Another ubiquitous figure in the scene is a photographer, who pops up in several places and appears to record the different activities. Yasa's painting not only surprises the viewer with this presentation of a range of artistic references from Europe and Bali, but also prompts questions surrounding how art historical institutions function to include and exclude different lineages and geographies.

In an interview with Richard Horstman, Yasa addresses his own experience navigating different issues in art history and challenging the perceptions of Balinese art "as secondary, as a craft, and not as a legitimate part of Indonesian modern art history" (Horstman 2018a). One visual approach that Yasa has used in his projects is to translate imagery from a range of artistic contexts, or as Horstman says, "he (Yasa) utilized various appropriations in his works that have been internationally recognized as modern or contemporary art masterpieces" (Horstman 2018a). Yasa also draws from the Batuan style and has formed an art movement called "Neo-Pitamaha." He describes his motivations for developing this movement as follows:

> *(It) began after my 2011 solo exhibition in Milan, Italy because of problems with my "identity" as a Balinese painter. I began to think a lot about my artistic roots, and then started to explore Balinese painting (focusing on painting from the last century—the Classical style referred to as Kamasan, and the Batuan traditional style. (…) And then I challenged myself to contemporize what the academic artists (…) thought was impossible. And I proved them wrong! (Horstman 2018a).*

Here, we can see how Yasa's awareness of the boundaries existing in art institutions and art historical disciplines have defined Balinese art and led to his more unconventional approaches. Yasa also

explains his strategy in making paintings with smaller figures filling the space: "I wanted to contemporize the Batuan painting style emphasizing the full compositions, with no empty spaces. Complete with the dualities and horror, the dense and decorative style—very Balinese." He has also drawn inspiration from the American painter Mark Tansey and Marvel and DC Comics: "I wanted to mimic their method to create my own universe—an art history universe" (Horstman 2018b).

Yasa's unusual approach to contrasting different artistic lineages and imagery by combining them together in his paintings places Balinese art and performance forms in dialogue with Raphael who represents a European power that is 'outside' of Yasa's own national and regional context. This act pushes the viewer to see that Balinese artists can and should be understood at the same level as the European 'masters' who are more prominent in art historical narratives. It is also notable that several works by Yasa have proven commercially successful in international art markets, raising more than double their estimates at Christie's Hong Kong Asian art auction in 2018 (Horstman 2018b). In *School of (Pre-)Raphael*, Yasa harnesses the power and spiritual energy associated with dance masks and Balinese performances and situates himself in relation to different artistic conversations. He simultaneously unmasks the dominant European histories that govern and dictate what defines 'art' and 'masterpieces', thereby questioning this authority and how it is justified.

Artworks by Ida Bagus Putu Purwa introduce another approach to unmasking. In his three-part painting series, a different mask is featured on each canvas and their titles speak to hidden meanings: *Behind The Mask, Behind The Religion, and Behind*

Figure 6.5. Ida Bagus Putu Purwa, *Behind The Spirituality*, 2017, charcoal and oil on canvas, 78.7 x 59 inches (200 x 150 cm). Photo courtesy of Heri Pemad Art Management (HPAM).

The Spirituality. This series visually references authority and power associated with dance masks. I focus on the painting *Behind The Spirituality* (Figure 6.5) which specifically investigates the physical power of a muscular male body in relation to religious and performance imagery. The authority of Purwa's figure recalls Wolters' definition of men of prowess as "big men" (Wolters 1999, 18), by representing physical strength. Wolters presumably meant "big men" in a more metaphorical sense—men with "big" personas. However, Purwa's painting is a reminder that historically physical size and impressive physiques can also play a role in perceptions around male rulers and authority figures.

The juxtaposition of a muscular male body and dance mask presents a striking image and persona. It conveys a multifaceted form of authority: that of performing a particular character that embodies and represents power through physical strength, specifically tied to an image of masculinity. The same words from the title of the painting *Behind the Spirituality* are painted across the middle section of the canvas in red. Not only does this convey ideas of 'unmasking' but it signals that the target audience extends outside of Indonesia. Since the text on the artwork is in English the message can be understood by Indonesians as well as visitors from other areas.

In *Behind The Spirituality* a large torso with bulging shoulder muscles and prominent veins on the forearm takes center stage in the canvas and compositionally divides it in half. On the left side of the canvas are arrangements of couples, resembling relief carvings of tantric sex scenes from Hindu temples. On the right half of the canvas, the central figure is turned toward the right and wears a mask that resembles a Barong face with wide round eyes, sharp teeth on the upper and lower jaws, pointed ears, and a rounded nose. Like Yasa, Purwa uses the mask to reference religious and performance imagery since Barong is a Balinese adaptation of the Hindu deity Shiva. Purwa has drawn a stylized outline of a *kris* (frequently spelled *keris* in Indonesia) or dagger, which the figure grasps in their right hand—this carries clear phallic references and relates to Wolters' theory of prowess and male leaders.

Margaret Wiener describes the multifaceted associations of *krisses* with power, ritual, and authority in Bali, stating: "The material culture of power is most perfectly represented by (the *kris*)" (Wiener 1995, 63). She notes that *krisses* have many ritual ties and uses and that, as "rather obvious phallic symbols," they are associated with masculinity in Bali. She explains that "in precolonial Bali, all men owned at least one *keris*. This marked, in part, their status as warriors." Wiener sums up the value of *krisses*: "As both tokens of history and as enspirited objects, sources and means of power, they were central to the representation and practice of precolonial authority" (Wiener 1995, 66). Thus, the presence of a *kris* in Purwa's painting connects the imagery directly to lineages of religious and political authority as well as ideas around masculinity in Bali.

Purwa's work connects to a range of ideas surrounding prowess, firstly the mask and *kris* are both symbolic of performative and religious power. Secondly, the visual references to tantric scenes in the background connect the specifically Balinese imagery to larger Hindu traditions and religious sites. Finally, the use of a muscular body, presumably a very muscular male torso, adds a literal physical prowess or authority to the figure. Yet, the title and writing directly on the canvas suggest there is something beyond what is immediately visible. It asks the viewer to look closer and consider, as the title states, what is "Behind the Spirituality"?

Purwa's painting and its reference to an authority of muscular men recalls works by Nyoman Masriadi. Although he was not in the "Balinese Masters" exhibition, Masriadi is known for his paintings of exaggeratedly large and muscular male figures. A notable exhibition of his work was a solo show titled: "Masriadi: Black is my Last Weapon," which was held in 2008 at the Singapore Art Museum and organized in conjunction with the Gajah Gallery. In the curatorial statements Jin and Zineng briefly reference the title as follows: "This apparently enigmatic phrase – black is my last weapon – emerged in a conversation about the importance of black figures in his paintings. To Masriadi, black is a color that symbolizes strength and beauty, inseparable from each other." (Masriadi 2008, 107). Here Masriadi's work speaks to the meaning and power of

Figure 6.6. Cover of the exhibition catalog "Black is my Last Weapon," featuring the painting *The Man with a Short Sword* by Nyoman Masriadi, 2008. Image courtesy of the artist I Nyoman Masriadi.

blackness as a weapon, and the meaning is multi-fold and fluid since blackness can be both literal in the bodies of his figures and metaphorical, with the color black referencing a quality of strength. Thus, in some ways he leaves his works very open to interpretation.

One painting by Masriadi titled *The Man with a Short Sword* (Figure 6.6) is featured on the cover of the exhibition catalog and relates to the show's title and theme "Black is my last weapon." The male figure actually holds a weapon, and his body is crouched in a powerful pose as he stares directly and squarely at the viewer. It is as though he even challenges the viewer to engage him in battle. The title of this painting and iconography of the sword with its *naga* (serpent/dragon) adds additional layers of meaning. The presence of the *naga* and similarity of a short sword to a *kris* links it to spiritual associations specific in Bali and other areas of Southeast Asia. This is notable since the majority of Masriadi's works do not overtly feature Balinese cultural or religious ideas. In addition, the adjective of "short" in relation to a weapon and phallic symbol suggests deficiency, which creates an intriguing contrast next to the muscular figure and his intimidating stance (Masriadi 2008, 17). Perhaps the title reveals a vulnerability that is not immediately apparent when viewing this figure. Like Purwa, Masriadi plays with ideas surrounding masculinity and authority by exaggerating the bodies of his male figures. Masriadi also employs titles like "My body is not big enough," showing a very muscular man flexing his upper body (Masriadi 2008, 30), and "Preparing" which depicts a male figure standing on the edge of a diving board and looking down into the swimming pool below, to suggest inner vulnerabilities and insecurities experienced by the impressively sized men represented in his paintings (Masriadi 2008, 13).

Returning to Wolters idea of "prowess" and how it is conveyed through masks, Yasa and Purwa draw directly on power tied to masks used in performance and ritual contexts and juxtapose them with other messages around authority. Yasa employs and challenges the authority of European dominated art histories and ideas of what a 'masterpiece' means by placing Balinese artistic and performance imagery alongside scenes from famous paintings. In

this way he 'unmasks' art historical power systems. And Purwa combines the authority of masks with physical strength as well as tantric Hindu symbolism. Whereas Masriadi does not draw on dance masks in the way the other artists in this section do, his focus on inner vulnerability and outward muscularity can be considered a different method of 'masking' and conversely 'unmasking.' Both Purwa and Masriadi link weapons or *krisses*, which are associated with *sakti* (power and spiritual energy) in a Balinese religious context to ideas surrounding masculinity. The emphasis on the physical size and muscularity of the bodies in Purwa's and Masriadi's paintings uncovers the reality that perceptions of male authority, prowess, and "big men," as Wolters says, are also linked to physical prowess.

Elemental Shifts: Performativity, the Environment, and Feminine Prowess

Whereas the artworks in the previous sections more directly reflect performance forms, the works I discuss next exemplify "performativity" and ways that movement is conveyed through a consideration of how paintings by Ketut Budiana, Putu Sutawijaya and Ida Bagus Made relate to each other. Ketut Budiana and Putu Sutawijaya were both highlighted in "Balinese Masters" and have also exhibited their work internationally. Budiana's painting *Mother Earth's Love* presents an interesting pairing with another painting of his, titled *Kekuatan Ibu* (or "the power of the mother"), which is in the permanent collection at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan. Putu Sutawijaya's painting titled *Berebut Kesunyian* (or "Scramble the Silence") recalls other works in his oeuvre, which often depict bodies moving in formation together. This suggests another mode of power or spiritual energy (*sakti*) – that of groups of people assembled for a common purpose.

Both paintings share meaningful connections with a work by Ida Bagus Made that has become quite well known. The artworks in this section all show a different form of authority and performance compared to the works discussed previously. The "prowess" in these paintings comes from the spiritual energy (*sakti*) conveyed by figures in motion. Thus, it is more a performativity than a direct reference to dance or performance forms. The spiritual energy or sakti in many of these artworks also relates to the natural environment, ecological ideas, and even specifically natural elements like fire, air, and water. This is especially apparent in Budiana's painting, which conveys female authority and ideas of ecology translated through a divine mother earth figure.

Putu Sutawijaya, who was included in "Balinese Masters," often connects the figures in his paintings to the natural environment by depicting mountains or using groups of figures to form mountain-like shapes. Sutawijaya was born in Tabanan, Bali and he studied at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, (or *(ISI) Institut Seni di Indonesia*) located in Yogyakarta, central Java (Sutawijaya 2004, 45). As a contemporary artist, Sutawijaya works with a variety of media including painting, sculpture, and installation forms and he uses different materials like canvas, paint, resin, and metal. His paintings often emphasize performativity and in particular reference *sanghyang* or *kecak* dance forms in Bali. This represents a different way of understanding performance and power in Bali. While many of Sutawijaya's artworks are in a very modern style, they are especially notable for echoing cosmological meanings and even visual qualities of earlier Balinese arts.

In *Berebut Kesunyian* (Scramble the Silence) (Figure 6.7), a group of figures form a circular or mandala-like shape. As they reach and stretch their arms upward, their legs are bent and their torsos lean forward. The shape created by the group and their arm gestures resembles *kecak* dance, which is a famous performance form in Bali. It has indigenous and ritual meanings, while also taking on new variations, and is a popular tourist attraction. Sutawijaya's arrangement of figures in this image shows both dynamic motion inward and upward through each figure, and their formation as a whole creates a spiraling shape. Each figure connects with and folds into the figures next to them.

Whereas Sutawijaya often ties his figures to landscapes and religious sites like mountains and temples, he also sometimes connects them to more daily objects like soccer balls and chairs. In *Berebut*

Figure 6.7. Putu Sutawijaya, *Berebut Kesunyian* (Scramble the Silence), 2017, acrylic on canvas, 74.8 x 110 inches (190 x 280 cm). Photograph by the author.

Kesunyian, a red chair is held up in the center of the group and it appears that some individuals may be trying to pull it away. Thus, the implications in this painting are ambiguous; there is a sense of unity but also chaos. The title Berebut Kesunyian may also be a reference to this shift from unity to conflict with "silence" implying harmony and meditation and "scrambling" suggesting an interruption or shifting of this harmony. Furthermore, the figures in the foreground appear to be dancing and move in rhythmic harmony, while the figures in the background seem to be more focused on the chair as they reach out and toward it. This compositionally creates a sense of a circular, unified shape while simultaneously dividing the front and back of the scene.

In many of his artworks, Sutawijaya depicts nude bodies in motion or mass formations to create patterning and visual sequencing. He has described the inspiration for his projects as stemming from a "feeling of being moved as he places himself amid the problems and events he encounters" (Supangkat 2008, 112). In addition, he makes visual connections between the human body and the universe as a "macrocosm" in which living beings exist. Sutawijaya's works trigger questions of life, the human condition, and how we as individuals and collectives connect to each other and to our historical or ancestral pasts (Sutawijaya 2004, 9). These questions are raised in many of his titles, as well as the imagery of his works. Sutawijaya's artwork connects with Ketut Budiana's paintings through the performativity of figures and to the well-known painting *Atomic War* by Ida Bagus Made which also shows people in geometric formation.

Ketut Budiana's painting, titled *Mother Earth's Love* (Figure 6.8), from this exhibition suggests a harmonious and loving state of the natural world. It also connects with a painting by Budiana exhibited elsewhere that visually conveys the forces and agency of the natural world. *Mother Earth's Love* consists of three panels and each includes a distinctive scene and figures. The three panels together and subject matter create a sense of movement from left to right. Like many artworks by Budiana, the painting is done primarily with black, white, and gray colors and slight hints of red and gold. It is painted with a combination of acrylic, 24k gold and Chinese ink, and compositionally, there is a striking contrast

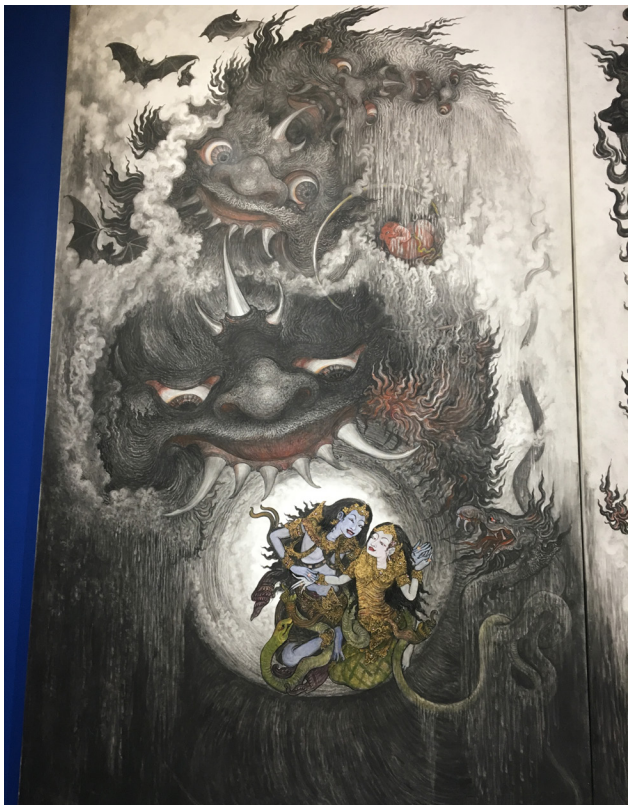


Figure 6.8. Ketut Budiana, *Mother Earth's Love* (full artwork and two details), 2018, acrylic, 24k gold, Chinese ink on canvas, 78.7 x 141.7 inches (200 x 360 cm). Photographs by the author.

and balance between areas that are much darker, especially in the lower left and upper right, and open white sections of the canvas.

In the middle section of the painting, a gray and hairy figure, possibly Bhoma the offspring of Wisnu and Pertiwi (Couteau 2018, 6), bends backwards toward the left but is pushed by the clouds and mist toward the right. A long vine or tree dominates this composition as it appears to grow out of the middle portion of the canvas and then arcs in different directions with curling tendrils of vines and leaves. In the upper right section of the painting, a delicate cascade of leaves, branches, and other foliage hang down resembling a weeping willow. Each leaf and vine is painted with exquisite detail in shades of gray, giving it an elegance and highlighting the subtle textures of the foliage. A bare breasted female figure wearing a red skirt or sarong appears on the right side of the scene. She floats upward toward the branches and leaves hanging down, and her dark hair billows up as though caught by a breeze as it slowly meets the branches. Her right hand extends out, and a misting of raindrops or seeds fall out of her hands. With her left hand, she holds up a gold bottle. This painting is both large and very detailed, drawing the viewer in to consider each figure, interaction, and portion of the scene. Budiana's image renders a divine mother earth energy and thus suggests a very different form of prowess than that discussed so far, a power that is generated from the natural environment and translated through a feminine persona.

Another painting by Budiana that offers an alternative message in relation to *Mother Earth's Love* is titled *The Power of the Mother* or *Kekuatan Ibu*. This work represents a monstrous interpretation of a mother earth goddess figure. *The Power of the Mother* was included in the exhibition "Haunted House Adventure: Monsters and Ghosts in Asian Art" at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in 2008 in Japan and is also part of the Museum's permanent collection. *The Power of the Mother* connects unseen beings with tensions around the environment, as well as bringing a monstrous and spiritual presence that is unique to Balinese cosmology into an exhibition and museum space in Japan. The figure of the mother-earth goddess becomes visible and present in and through the physical painting by Budiana. She also evokes love and fear. The Fukuoka online description of this work echoes the balancing of angry or destructive forces but also divine qualities in the same persona as follows:

> *The power of the earth mother comes from the awesome power of nature generated by fire, wind, water and light. However, this rich nature has been abused and damaged by humans, finally provoking the earth mother goddess into fury. The mother goddess, taking the form of monsters, called Raksasa, lays bare the power of her rage (Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, n.d.).*

According to this museum description, this figure is threatening mainly because she expresses the consequences and precarious state of the ecosystem when it has been mistreated. This artwork articulates both a spiritual presence in the figure depicted, as well as a haunted or ghostly presence because of the past damage and future risk to the natural environment. On first view, the Balinese cosmological meaning is clear in this painting, and the added ecological references make it relevant outside of the island of Bali.

In Budiana's painting the central figure of a mother-earth goddess or monster looms above two small figures, one of which is shooting at her with a bow and arrow. She appears to be pushing out of the canvas and clouds billow and swirl around her body. Her arms and legs are hairy, and her long nails are claw-like and sharp. Her eyes are bulging, and her nose is wide with large rows of teeth and pointed tusks emerging from around her face. Demon or monster faces appear to emerge and grow out of the top of her head. *The Power of the Mother* has a strong presence because of its visual dynamism and physical scale, it measures 110 inches (280 cm) tall and 57 inches (145 cm) wide, thus giving it an almost life-sized presence. The painting is executed almost entirely in greys, white, and black with some sparks of red and gold colors; this stylistic approach is used in other works by Budiana and highlights the faces and details more closely. In the painting, layers of textures

on the clothing, fur, decorative ornaments, and mist in the background are delicately rendered and draw the viewer in to engage closely with each figure and smaller aspects of the composition. Simultaneously, the scale of the mother-earth figure and overall dimensions of the painting make her more present in the artwork and space. Budiana also adopts this approach in *Mother Earth's Love*, which is a large horizontal work spanning three panels.

The paintings by Budiana further parallel an artwork by Ida Bagus Made, titled *Atomic War in Indra's Heaven* (or *Perang Atom* in Indonesian), which is from a slightly earlier "modern" period of Balinese art history and has been researched by Claire Holt and Kaja McGowan. Like Budiana, Made's painting also conveys powers of the natural environment by representing different elements and juxtaposing them with physical struggle and movement. McGowan discusses how Claire Holt was struck by this painting and in her writing described it as a "Balinese Laocoon" because of the intertwined figures engaged in a dramatic struggle. McGowan questions Holt's need to define Made's painting through a "bricolage of Hellenistic and Italianate Renaissance associations" when, in fact, the painting is rich with varied meanings, which are closely tied to Balinese culture (McGowan 2008, 33-35). Made's painting links religious references to the Hindu deity Indra with the power of natural forces and elements like "air, earth, fire, water and atmosphere," to which Budiana's painting *Kekuatan Ibu* also speaks.

McGowan describes *Atomic War in Indra's Heaven (Perang Atom)* as a "sonic battle, a cataclysmic event, compelling us to experience the canvas as if driven by a centrifugal force from the center, outward" and that it carries meanings related to sound and the *nawasanga* system, a Balinese cosmology with Indic religious origins (McGowan 2008, 40). In addition, Ida Bagus Made drew extensively on imagery and ideas associated with *sakti* or "inner energy" that are linked to a Balinese context (McGowan 2008, 44). Without being compared to a European 'masterpiece', Made's painting is a striking and creative artwork by a skilled painter. Yet, even as Holt herself admired Indonesian artists and sought to show the value of their work in her research, this association with the Laocoon demonstrates the problem that Balinese artists today are still pushing back against – their work is perpetually evaluated through a western art historical lens.

Made's painting represents an earlier Balinese art movement and is part of the permanent collection and gallery at the Puri Lukisan Museum in Ubud. Although this painting was not included in the "Balinese Masters" exhibition, it fits with the goals of the show as a way to highlight the ingenuity of visual and technical approaches that Balinese artists employ. This exhibition was not intended to be an exhaustive representation of all pathbreaking Balinese artists, since there are so many. In a conversation with the curator Rifky Effendy he discussed having a second exhibition that would continue the theme and include artists who were not featured in the first show. I conclude with this painting by Made since it sparks more questions surrounding prowess in a Balinese context and how mastery or 'masters' might be intertwined with this idea. This is especially important in Balinese art contexts where ideas of skill and worth that determine an artist's success in international exhibitions and global art markets are frequently based on a Western model that dictates what is "good" art.

The paintings by Sutawijaya, Budiana, and Made examined in this section further develop ideas of power and authority introduced earlier, but in a more visually performative way. Budiana's painting takes ideas of prowess in a different direction by representing female authority, expressed through images of a loving and destructive mother earth. Environmental ideas – specifically references to the natural elements of fire, air, and water – are emphasized in Budiana's paintings and in the painting by Made. And lastly, all three artists convey ideas of performativity and the body in space as a mode of power. In addition, these painters are well-known for their skill and talent and thus can be considered masters or artists who possess prowess.

Conclusion

Prowess, as Wolters defines it, reflects systems of authority. When placed in relation to the concept of

sakti, which is part of Balinese Hinduism, prowess takes on additional significance for its connection to "spiritual power" and "spiritual energy." These ideas in the context of Bali are also reflected through artistic forms and imagery. Many contemporary artists reference different visual and performance modes of power in new and creative ways. In this paper, I considered multiple works by contemporary Balinese artists who were featured in the recent exhibition "Balinese Masters" held in 2019. The idea of 'masters' relates to prowess since it is a concept that expresses authority. Many of the artists discussed push back on different power systems, both inside and outside of Indonesia. These include but are not limited to, global expectations of what defines art and mastery as well as expectations that are placed on artists working in certain areas and styles. Modern and contemporary Balinese artists are constantly asked to navigate artistic and religious requirements, ideas of authority, and their own status as artists. They are also frequently overlooked in more global art spaces since Bali is often seen as separate from Indonesia. The works discussed reveal that systems of authority need to be re-examined internally and externally, and especially that they should work for the artists themselves, as demonstrated in the cases of Muriati, Yasa, Masriadi and Made among others. I argue that these artists draw on performance imagery as reflections of power and that their performativity demonstrates the diversity of media and approaches with which Balinese artists work. This further highlights the fluidity and links between modern and contemporary art with performance media in Bali. The artists here represent *wayang kulit*, dance masks, bodies in motion, as well as *krisses* and weaponry to reference modes of power that are part of Balinese Hinduism in different ways. As a form of spiritual energy, *sakti* is also closely tied to ancestry and lineages in Bali. Wolters discusses how ancestors are key in supporting prowess and the "Balinese Masters" exhibition describes tracing the "aesthetic DNA of art." In this way, ancestral power can also be conceptualized in art movements and lineages, which find meaningful expression in the works of contemporary artists.

References

Becker, A. L. 2002. "On Arnheim on Language: The Case of Wayang." In *Puppet Theater in Contemporary Indonesia: New Approaches to Performance Events*, edited by Jan Mrázek, 73-83. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Centers for South and Southeast Asian Studies.

Boon, J. A. 1977. *The Anthropological Romance of Bali, 1597-1972: Dynamic perspectives in marriage and caste, politics, and religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Campbell, Siobhan. March 2019. "Women, Tradition and Art History in Bali." *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia*, Volume 3, Number 1: 77-101.

Couteau, Jean. 2018. *Whirling: Ketut Budiana*. Ubud, Bali, Indonesia: Museum Puri Lukisan, Yayasan Ratna Wartha.

Effendy, Rifky. 2019. *Balinese Masters: Trajectory of Aesthetic D.N.A. in Balinese Fine Arts*. Nusa Dua: AB BC Building.

Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. "The Power of the Mother," *Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, n.d.* https://faam.city.fukuoka.lg.jp/en/collections/6741/. Accessed July, 2019.

Horstman, Richard. 2018a. "Paradise lost and new frontiers: Gede Mahendra Yasa's landmark investigation into Balinese painting." *Life as Art Asia*. https://lifeasartasia.art/2018/06/12/paradise-lost-new-frontiers-gede-mahendra-yasas-landmark-investigation-into-balinese-painting/. Accessed November, 2020.

Horstman, Richard. 2018b. "Mahendra Yasa's 'On Language' a rare opportunity for Indonesian art collectors." *The Jakarta Post*. https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2018/11/12/mahendra-yasas-on-language-a-rare-opportunity-for-indonesian-art-collectors.html. Accessed November, 2020.

Kleinsmiede, Hendrik. 2002. “Watching Wayang with Spinoza: Mentalism and (Written) Language in Nonnative Scholarship on Wayang as Evidence of Paradigmatic Constrains.” In *Puppet Theater in Contemporary Indonesia: New Approaches to Performance Events*, edited by Jan Mrázek, 39-72. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Centers for South and Southeast Asian Studies.

Masriadi, I Nyoman. 2008. Masriadi: *Black Is My Last Weapon, Singapore Art Museum, 22 August - 9 November 2008*. Singapore: Singapore Art Museum.

McGowan, Kaja. 2008. *Ida Bagus Made: the Art of Devotion*. Ubud, Bali, Indonesia: Ratna Wartha Foundation.

Ramseyer, Urs. 2002. *The Art and Culture of Bali*. New ed. Basel: Museum der Kulturen.

Supangkat, Jim, and Putu Sutawijaya. 2008. *Legacy of Sagacity: the Case of Putu Sutawijaya*. Jakarta: Galeri Canna.

Sutawijaya, Putu. 2004. *Kamar & Ilusi Tubuh*. Jakarta: Galeri Canna.

Wiener, Margaret J. 1995. *Visible and Invisible Realms: Power, Magic, and Colonial Conquest in Bali*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wolters, O. W. 1999. *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. Rev. ed. Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University in cooperation with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

Concluding Remarks

Some Hindu Heritage in Modern-Day Thailand

Wannasarn (Saam) Noonsuk

Throughout this volume, we have learned that Hindu elements and forms have played a significant role in Southeast Asian art and culture from the ancient times to the contemporary period. Since Professor McGowan wrote the remarkable Introduction outlining and tying the chapters in this volume already, in this short essay, I will particularly use some examples from Thailand, a predominantly Buddhist country today, to address how Hindu heritage is still relevant in the modern-day societies in this region. Looking at the long-term trend, this book makes us realize that although almost all of the people in Southeast Asia nowadays (except Bali) do not identify themselves as Hindus, the force of this religion has a long history and still runs deep in their lives, sometimes without them realizing it. As a person who was born and raised as a Buddhist in Thailand, I was trained to worship any deities and respect any supernatural forces at any sacred places. The small shrine on the wall in my childhood home had images of the Buddha, Guanyin, Phra Narai (Vishnu), famous local Buddhist monks, and even my grandparents. Perhaps, this is the very nature of religiosity of the people in this region that has been passed down from generations. Interestingly, the Hindu people in India also lined up to pay homage to the Buddha image enshrined in Mahabodhi temple at Bodh Gaya where the historical Buddha attained his enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree. Like Thai people, most Hindu Indians also pay homage to anything sacred, regardless of its formal, religious affiliations. It was perhaps this profound belief of the auspicious and supernatural forces, rather than any particular religions, that spiritually linked the peoples in these two regions together since the distant past.

Early trade and social interaction across the Bay of Bengal facilitated the Hindu influences to reach Southeast Asian shores and the first Brahmanical statues were locally crafted in around the mid-second millennium CE, especially in peninsular Thailand (Noonsuk, this volume). For the large part, these statues (*Vāsudeva/Vishnu*) were considered the earliest stone anthropomorphic sculpture in Southeast Asia. Since then, for over 1,500 years, the "Hindu forms" continue to be created and used in this region, even in the contemporary artworks variously displayed in trendy modern-day galleries (Corey, Rahadiningtyas, and Light, this volume). Corey pointed out that within conceptual image-making in the contemporary period, "mythological forms and figures from Hinduism are reconstituted simultaneously as signs, artifacts, reminders, and still vital means of communication, and may be combined with other visual idioms referencing Buddhism or Islam" (this volume).

Added to this discussion of artistic creation, McGowan (this volume) remarkably conceptualized that, instead of thinking of elites as the only group who can perform prowess or sakti, the Sanskrit word originally derived from Hinduism to mean spiritual energy, we should also include artisans, puppeteers, poets, dancers, and musicians as men and women of prowess in our academic studies. These people of the arts have been "performing prowess" through their

ever-changing creativity of the productive processes that bring the artworks into being. This concept profoundly opens our eyes to the significance of the artists behind the Hindu forms in this volume.

The prowess of the creators of artworks in Southeast Asia is indeed complex and involves a variety of strands of forces. In some cases in present-day Thailand, the ceremonial casting of the very important Buddha images required the rituals performed not only by high-ranking Buddhist monks, but also by Brahmins (Poshyananda 1986). These Hindu priests seem to help bless the casting with success and extend their prowess to offer the in-progress Buddha image more sacred efficacy. This fact might confuse some students who were educated in today's world of rigid compartmentalization to perceive different religious orientations as separate modes of thinking. The complementarity of Hinduism and Buddhism is well recorded, and some Hindu deities, such as Lakshmī, Brahmā, and Indra, were also worshiped by Buddhists in the early period (Miksic and Krishnan, this volume). This characteristic doubtlessly continued to the present.

In modern-day Thailand, one of the most famous Hinduism-related shrines is the Brahma (ท้าวมหาพรหม or *Thao Maha Phrom*) Shrine or the Erawan Shrine in front of the Grand Hyatt Erawan Hotel at the Ratchaprasong Intersection in Downtown Bangkok (Figure 7.1). Because of several mishaps in the hotel's construction, believed to be due to its foundation-laying ceremony held at a bad time, this shrine and a spirit house for local deities were built in 1956 on the advice of Rear Admiral Luang Suwichanpat, a medical doctor of the Royal Thai Navy and expert in the traditional geomancy and astrology, who was also responsible for recommending the construction of another important Brahma shrine at the Government House of Thailand. Many tourists, especially Chinese and Chinese Malaysian, have also come to the Erawan Shrine to worship the Brahma image, a free-standing, stucco statue of approximately half life-size, covered with gold leaf. Although the Hindu god Brahma (the Creator of the Universe) has previously been present in Buddhist art as an assistant of the Buddha, this shrine is an early rare example (if not the first example) of this Hindu god having a stand-alone shrine of a grand scale, embellished with perpetual throngs of visitors, rich offerings, and even ceremonial dances by celebrities, in Southeast Asia or even India.

In the same area of the Ratchaprasong

Figure 7.1. People worshiping the Brahma statue at the Erawan Shrine at the Ratchaprasong Intersection, Downtown Bangkok. Source: "Erawan Shrine / Phra Phrom" by cb_agulto is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Intersection, there have been several shrines for Hindu deities blossoming after the Erawan Shrine became famous. These shrines were built by Thai businesspersons, not overseas Indians, and include: the Ganesha and Trimurti shrines in front of Central World; the Lakshmi and Jatulokapala shrines at Gaysorn Village; the Uma shrine in front of Ratchadamri Big C Store; the Indra shrine at Amarin Plaza; the Vishnu shrine (Narayana riding Garuda) in front of the InterContinental Hotel; the Vishnu shrine (Narayana standing on Naga) at the Royal Thai Police Headquarters. The Intersection clearly became the peerless hub of Hindu shrines in modern-day Thailand (White 2016) and these Hindu deities were chosen probably because they were in the similar "Hindu" idiom of protection and prosperity to the already famous Erawan shrine. Religious alignment seems to be of great importance in this context. The Ratchaprasong Intersection has been a very competitive business area in Downtown Bangkok and has more recently become an area of violent incidents caused by political conflicts. These factors have increased the demand for spiritual security and it can be predicted that more Hindu shrines will continue to be constructed in this area.

In front of the colossal Central World shopping center stands the shrine for the god Trimurti, who is the all-in-one personification of three supreme gods in Hinduism, including Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva (Figure 7.2 and 7.3). This free-standing, painted stucco statue was created in around 1985, believed to follow the style of an older Trimurti from the Ayutthaya period, and was moved to the current location in 2005 to be close to the Ganesha shrine (Lertworaruttikul 2006, 53-54). Although the god Trimurti was previously mentioned in Indian

Figure 7.2. Throngs of visitors coming to the Trimurti Shrine in front of the Central World Shopping Center. Source: "Trimurti shrine" by Kobetsai is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0.

Figure 7.3. The Trimurti statue combining the characteristics of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Source: "IMG_1504_" by hko_s is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

literature, the materialization of this god in visual art has never been popular, to say the least. At this location in Bangkok, he became the god of love, attracting younger people to come worship him and mainly seek his blessing for success in their romantic lives (Lertworaruttikul 2006, 57). The identification of this Trimurti image as the god of love has been promoted by the executives of the shopping mall, probably with their intention to create a new urban attraction and draw people to their mall. To achieve this end, they played love songs in front of their shopping mall, put the sign noting that the god Trimurti was also associated with love, painted roses on the interior of the shrine, and even organized special events for single people to come in large number to worship the god together at the same time.

In modern-day Thailand, the living Hindu heritage is strongest in the capital city of Bangkok and in the peninsular part of the country. For example, Nakhon Si Thammarat houses remnants of early communities, where Hinduism thrived, and still has a long line of Brahmana families Preecha Noonsuk (1984). In summer 2009 when I myself was directing archaeological excavation in that province, a local Brahmin invited me to visit his house. Once I arrived, he led me up to his shrine room full of Hindu images and performed a ritual to give me a blessing. He told me that his family has been Brahmins and served the gods for several generations but was not recognized by the court Brahmins in Bangkok, so he wanted to revive the Hindu traditions in Nakhon Si Thammarat. Interestingly, it seems to be a tradition that when his forebears retired, they ordained as Buddhist monks and wandered to the remote areas to be away from the complexity of social life and to practice deep meditations until they finally vanished.

This tradition offers some clues into the past, in which archaeologists found the coexistence of Hindu and Buddhists images at the same sacred places or the local ancient inscription recording the joint ritual performed by both Buddhist monks and Brahmins (Skilling 2017). These local Brahmins thrived in the Buddhist context and saw that they would be more recognized and respected by the people if they became Buddhist monks when they retired and wandered away from their families.

The local Brahmin's wish for the revival of Hindu traditions was in fact answered, but not necessarily in the way he wanted. In 2001, the City Municipality and Tourism Authority of Thailand led the movement to bring back the Hae Nang Dan ceremony of Nakhon Si Thammarat which was part of the *Trīyampawāi-Trīppawāi* festival (Polasit 2018, 68). Although the date of the origin of the Hae Nang Dan ceremony is still not known to us, Prince Naris recorded that he saw three boards of "Nang Dan" in Nakhon Si Thammarat City in 1933 (Laomanacharoen 2007, 14), but this ceremony was discontinued soon after. In Nakhon Si Thammarat, this ceremony involved the procession of three wooden boards depicting Hindu deities, including (1) the sun and moon gods on one board, (2) the goddess Dhrani (the earth goddess), and (3) the goddess Ganga (the goddess of rivers and water). The goddesses' figures themselves were carved, painted bas-reliefs, around one meter tall, emerging from the flat background of the framed wooden boards carried by men on wooden palanquins (Figure 7.4). Symbolically, these minor deities were carried to Shiva's shrine to welcome him to earth. The *Trīyampawāi-Trīppawāi* and the uses of wooden boards depicting deities also appeared in Bangkok, where the three boards were put in three freshly dug pits, aligning from east to west, and facing the ritual temporary pavilion to the south (Laomanacharoen 2007).

The ceremony also involved the use of a great swing (Figure 7.7), probably following the similar ceremony performed in Bangkok, where the assigned persons would swing themselves to great height and try to catch coins (Figures 7.5 and 7.6); Noonsuk, this volume). This practice was not part of Indian Hindu tradition (McGovern 2017), but in this particular context a tradition invented by the Siamese, based on the synthesis between indigenous and Indian

Figure 7.4. The three wooden boards depicting Hindu deities, with a brass Buddha image on an altar table in front of them, in the Hae Nang Dan Ceremony during April 11-15, 2018. Source: 77 Kaoded (News Website), https://www.77kaoded.com/news/kitdanai/78633, accessed on June 9, 2022.

Figure 7.5. The Giant Swing in Bangkok, where the "lo chingcha" ceremony took place. Source: "Giant Swing" by Raymond.Ling.43 is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Figure 7.6. The Swinging (or "lo chingcha") Ceremony at the Giant Swing in Bangkok in 1898.Source: https://teakdoor.com/images/imported/2017/10/1302.jpg, accessed on November 11, 2022.

traditions, probably sometime before the reign of King Prasat Thong (1629-1656) of the Ayutthaya kingdom but the exact date cannot be pinpointed (Laomanacharoen 2007, 20), to be performed in the transition between the first and the second lunar month. Sujit Wongthes (2007) proposed that the high swing tradition, which was called "lo chingcha" (โล้ชิงช้า) in Thai, might have come from the Karen or northern Southeast Asian cultures. The Karen words for "month" is "la" and for "first" is "chingcha", which together mean the "first month" (of the lunar calendar). He believed that the Karens and other tribes, including Tai-Kadai groups, celebrated the change of the season during the first month with ceremonial swings, and therefore "la chingcha" (ลาชิงช้า) in Karen language was used by the Tai/Thai people as "lo chingcha" to mean "swaying the swings" and became the name of the swing ceremony in the local Hindu tradition.

Although Sujit Wongthes' assumption has been much debated, because the Karen people did not have any ceremonies related to the use of big swings and his overreliance on just two Karen words (la chingcha) for his hypothesis seems risky, he was in the right direction about one thing that at least an indigenous hilltribe in the northern part of Southeast Asia still has a swinging ceremony, and it is the Akha people, whose language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group, and who mainly live in Yunnan Province in southern China, the Shan States of Burma, northwestern Laos, and northern Thailand.

The Akha people have their "Swinging Ceremony Ancestral Service" annually in late August, when the hard work in the rice fields and the last weeding have been done for the rainy season. They call this ceremony "yɛk'udzaë" (or "Yaerkuq dzaq-e"), which means "drawing and eating rain" or "drawing rain to eat" (Kammerer 1986, 264). It is a roughly four-day ceremony which starts with an offering to the ancestors at home, and each household would contribute at least one man to help with the construction of the main village swing. They first cut down four high trees for posts; fresh timbers would yield flexibility and not break easily. The Village Founder-Leader must inaugurate the swing by digging up the loose dirt in the old key posthole from last year (Kacha-ananda 1971, 125) and put in an offering, such as salt and rice seed while reciting verses for the spirit of the land. The men then dig up the other three new posthole to the depth of around 1 meter and tie the top of the post with vine ropes and with a small beam for hanging the rope for the seat

Figure 7.7. The Swinging (or "lo chingcha") Ceremony at the swing next to the Shiva shrine in Nakhon Si Thammarat City in the Hae Nang Dan Ceremony during April 11-15, 2018. Source: 77 Kaoded (News Website), https://www.77kaoded.com/news/kitdanai/78633, accessed on June 9, 2022.

Figure 7.8. The Swinging Ceremony of the Akha people at Mu 6, Ban Pha Mi, Tambon Wiangphangkham, Mae Sai District, Chiang Rai Province, circa August 2020. Source: 77 Kaoded (News Website), https://www.77kaoded.com/news/big/1919552, accessed on November 11, 2022.

down below for people to swing (Figure 7.9).

The Village Founder-Leader places an offering wrapped in a banana leaf on the seat and swings it three times, before putting it on the ground, and then he swings himself three times while reciting verses. Some Akha say that the main purpose of the swinging ceremony is to swing out bad fortune from the village and to swing in good fortune, prosperity, rain, and fertility or the indigenous Akha conception of "geeqlanq" to the village (Dr. Micah Morton, personal communication). After that, men in the village swing first as high as they can to the height of several meters or more above the ground and over the very steep slope, followed by women in a tamer fashion and after this point women dominantly play on the swing. This large swing can be dangerous because people would basically swing out beyond the edge of the cliff, so that pregnant women and small children are not allowed to use this large main swing. They create smaller swings for children at their houses during this ceremony.

Both Kacha-ananda (1971) and Kammerer (1986) noted that the Akha Swinging Ceremony is closely related to rain (water), rice, and women. Umsahyeh, the first female ancestor and daughter of the gods, was believed to have created this ceremony. The Akha people practiced this ceremony to commemorate her and to assure plentiful and timely rain, sunshine, and a good harvest of rice. Wang (2013, 112) also added another folktale explaining the origin of the swing festival that all the spirits of animals and insects killed during rice cultivation accused the Akha of these crimes to the supreme God Aqpoeq Miqyaer. The God promised to punish the Akha by hanging them one by one, but because of his preference of Akha people over the animals, the God instead asked Akha people to swing one by one. Swinging looked like hanging from a distance, so the deceived spirits of the killed animals were satisfied with what they saw. According to Wang, this story reveals an Akha philosophy that cultivation requires "destruction" but within the extent that harmony with nature and the supernatural beings can be restored.

Kammerer (1986, 300) contrasted the Swinging Ceremony with the Akha New Year's Ceremony (in January) and proposed that these two most significant ceremonies of the Akha people represented two underlying components of the Akha society and its calendrical cycle, which depended upon male and female together to advance the seasons. On the one hand, the New Year's Ceremony was dominated by men and boys playing spinning tops and related to

the dry season and the death of rice. On the other hand, the Swinging Ceremony was dominated by the goddess and the female, and was related to the rainy season and the regeneration and maturation of rice.

To understand the Thai Swinging Ceremony in the localized Trīyampawāi-Trīppawāi festival in comparison with the Akha Swinging Ceremony Ancestral Service, we can see some physical and symbolic similarities. Although they were performed in different seasons, with the Thai ceremony in the dry season and the Akha ceremony in the rainy season, they shared some symbolism related to soil and water. In the Thai ceremony, they dug pits to place the images of Dhrani, the Indic goddess of earth and fertile soil, and Ganga, the Indic goddess of water. In the Akha ceremony, the Village Founder-Leader also dug up loose dirt in the key posthole to place an offering for the spirit of the land to give fertility and the whole essence of their Swinging Ceremony was attached to the female deity/ancestor, the coming of age for young girls, the request for plentiful rain and water, and the maturation of rice. Therefore, it is possible to see that both the Thai and Akha swinging ceremonies address the same concerns, shared some important characters, and involved swinging to great height. This indigenous swinging ceremony may have been later merged with the Brahmanical rituals to make it look more sophisticated, fit for the royal court, and its timing may have also been changed to fit the Brahmanical framework, while still displaying the significant indigenous forms and messages.

It should also be noted that in Nakhon Si Thammarat on the western edge of the Gulf of Siam, the second rainy season occurs toward the end of each year, when the northeast monsoon carries the moisture from the gulf and creates rains in this area. Thus, if the Thai Swinging Ceremony took place in Nakhon Si Thammarat in December or January since at least in the 17 th century, then it would have been during a rainy season and the indigenous message about the celebration of the maturation of the planted rice would have been clearer than that in Ayutthaya or Bangkok in central Thailand.

However, instead of performing the Hae Nang Dan ceremony in the first-second lunar month (December-January), the modern-day organizers in Nakhon Si Thammarat conducted this ceremony in mid-April to synchronize the event date with the Thai New Year (Songkran), which is the most popular holidays and world-renowned celebration in Thailand with iconic pictures of people playfully splashing water to one other. The event organizers also added costume parades, stage performances, and light and sound shows to the traditional ceremony. All these changes seem to have been implemented to attract both foreign and Thai tourists to the city during the long national holidays, using the revived, unique local Hindu heritage.

With the examples from modern-day Thailand mentioned above, we can see that people usually do not follow Hinduism as a whole package of philosophy and strict ritual procedures, but Hindu deities continue to be worshiped based on their spiritual power to grant protection and prosperity. Hindu deities and rituals are also very sophisticated, making them attractive to worshippers. The centrality of the deities, magical powers, and efficacious rituals have perhaps been what aligned Hindu traditions with the indigenous beliefs, and led to the mixing of them. Thai people have always sought to perform any rituals or worship any deities or spirits for their particular needs in particular time. This religious fluidity and the familiarity with the Hindu elements, which have been selectively adopted for through times for over 1,500 years, contribute to the fact that some of the elaborate Hindu forms, rituals, and festivals have been used for diverse purposes – spiritual, artistic, political and economic – in the modern-day societies of this region and will continue to live on.

References

Kacha-ananda, Chob. 1971. “The Akha Swinging Ceremony.” *Journal of the Siam Society* 59(1): 119-128.

Kammerer, Cornelia. 1986. Gateway to the Akha World: Kinship, Ritual, and Community among Highlanders of Thailand. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Chicago.

Laomanacharoen, Siripoj / ศิริพจน์ เหล่ามานะเจริญ. 2007. โล้ชิงช้า : ประเพณีประดิษฐ์ใหม่ของพราหมณ์สยาม / Lo Chingcha: Reinvented Tradition of Siamese Brahmins, in *โล้ชิงช้า : พิธีกรรมดึกดำบรรพ์ของสุวรรณภูมิ ไม่ใช่พิธีพราหมณ์ชมพูทวีป / Lo Chingcha: Ancient Ceremony of Mainland Southeast Asia, Not An Indian Hindu Ceremony*, pp. 13-22. Bangkok: Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, 2550, (in Thai).

Lertworaruttikul, Supapon / สุภาภรณ์ เลิศวรรัตติกุล. 2006. ลัทธิบูชาพระตรีมูรติ : กรณีศึกษาบริเวณหน้าลานเอนกประสงค์ห้างสรรพสินค้าอิเซตัน ศูนย์การค้าเซ็นทรัลเวิลด์ เขตราชประสงค์ กรุงเทพมหานคร / The Trimurti Cult: A Case Study at Central World Shopping Center, Ratchaprasong District, Bangkok. BA Independent Study. Silpakorn University, Bangkok, 2549 (in Thai).

McGovern, Nathan. 2017. “Balancing the Foreign and the Familiar in the Articulation of Kingship: The Royal Court Brahmans of Thailand.” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 48(2): 283-303.

Noonsuk, Preecha. 1984. Traces of Ancient Brahmana Communities in Nakhon Si Thammarat. MA Thesis. Silpakorn University, Bangkok, 2527 (in Thai).

Polasit, Panwadi / พรรณวดี พลสิทธิ์. 2018. แห่นางดาน : ว่าด้วยการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมเมืองนครศรีธรรมราช / Hae Nang Dan: On Cultural Tourism of Nakhon Si Thammarat City. *วารสารรูสมิแล / Rusamilae Journal*, 39(3), pp. 65-76, 2561 (in Thai).

Poshyananda, Apinan. 1986. A Study of Art, Culture, and Mentality in Thai Society: The Lost Wax Casting of the Images of the Buddha and the Related Ceremonies (unpublished manuscript, also cited in O’Connor, Stanley 2017, Finding a Form, Discovering the Sublime, in *Peninsular Siam and Its Neighborhoods: Essays in Memory of Dr. Preecha Noonsuk*, pp. 21-34, edited by Wannasarn Noonsuk, Nakhon Si Thammarat: Cultural Council of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province).

Skilling, Peter. 2017. The Wat Maheyong Inscription (NS 10, K 407): The Thai-Malay Peninsula in the Wide World of Buddhist Material and Cultural Exchange. *In Peninsular Siam and Its Neighborhoods: Essays in Memory of Dr. Preecha Noonsuk,* pp. 55-80, edited by Wannasarn Noonsuk, Nakhon Si Thammarat: Cultural Council of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

Wang, Jianhua Ayoe. 2013. Sacred and Contested Landscapes: Dynamics of Natural Resource Management by AkhaPeople in Xishuangbanna, Southwest China. Doctoral Dissertation. University of California, Riverside.

White, Erick. 2016. Staging Hinduism in the Bangkok metropolis: Ritual Spectacle and Religious Pluralism in an Urban Thai Buddhist Milieu. *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia, vol. 19.*

Wongthes, Sujit / สุจิตต์ วงษ์เทศ. 2007. โล้ชิงช้าในภาษาไทยมาจากคำกะเหรียง-ลาชิงช้า / “Lo Chingcha” in Thai Language Came from Karen Word – La Chingcha.” In *โล้ชิงช้า : พิธีกรรมดึกดำบรรพ์ของสุวรรณภูมิ ไม่ใช่พิธีพราหมณ์ชมพูทวีป / Lo Chingcha: Ancient Ceremony of Mainland Southeast Asia, Not An Indian Hindu Ceremony,* pp. 23-26. Bangkok: Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, 2550, (in Thai).

Index

S

T

FRESNO STATE
Art, Design and Art History

ART HISTORY PROGRAM PUBLICATION SERIES CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

Kaja Mcgowan, Gauri Parimoo Krishnan, John Miksic,
Pamela Corey,Anissa Rahadiningtyas,
Astara Light, Wannarsarn (Saam) Noonsuk