

Fig. 8 Śaiva ascetics at the Baphuon appearing to churn, drink and vomit milk. (Swati Chemburkar)

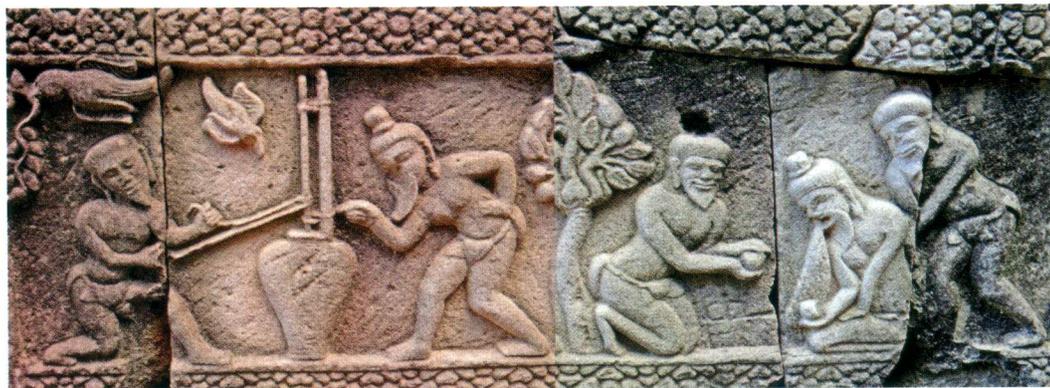


Fig. 9 Mý Son E1 pedestal relief depicting a disciple attending to his guru. (River Books)



Fig. 10 Mý Son E1 pedestal relief with ācārya performing some ritual. A yogapaṭṭa is tied around his knees. (River Books)

the epigraphic evidence, there is no trace of this ritual in iconography, but it does help us to identify the ascetics depicted with hair piled up on their heads, in buns, as Pāśupata ascetics.

Besides *liṅga* worship, initiation rituals, and ash bathing the ascetics are also seen in hermitage or forest settings such as the 11th century Baphuon temple reliefs following dietary practices referred to in early Śaiva scriptures for the purpose of gaining mastery over mantras. These reliefs depict ascetics churning milk, and drinking it along with butter, a practice attested in three Khmer caves inscriptions.⁶³ (Fig. 8)

An image on the Mý Son pedestal shows an ascetic reclining, and a disciple touching his legs, this practice of service to the teacher is established in the *sūtra*,⁶⁴ the disciple performs certain duties such as rubbing oil, cleaning the guru's feet etc., basically following a guru like a shadow to show devotion, and good conduct, in order to receive instruction. (Fig. 9)

We see another image of a *ācārya* on the pedestal wearing a *yogapaṭṭa* (cloth band) across his knees and instructing a practitioner. The final aim of a Pāśupata practitioner is to merge with Śiva, through yoga.⁶⁵ A great emphasis is placed

on this attainment through yogic practices, comprising of *Prāṇāyāma*,⁶⁶ or control and suspension of breath, holding a posture for long hours by wearing a *yogapaṭṭa* etc. The *yogapaṭṭa* is closely associated with the imagery of Lakuliśa and by wearing it this *ācārya* follows the Lakuliśa lineage in attaining the highest stage of Pāśupata yoga. (Fig. 10)

The concept of eight forms of Śiva (*aṣṭa-mūrtis*) associated with the Pāśupata cult and its worship is mentioned in several Khmer inscriptions, including the 10th century Mebon, Pre Rup stele inscriptions of Rājendravarman and foundation stele of Bakong.⁶⁷ There is no doubt that the eight forms of Śiva were symbolized by eight *liṅgas*.⁶⁸ The cylindrical Śaiva bun found in the Bayon during the restoration work clearly displays this eight-fold arrangement. (Fig. 11) On the front side is a syllable or a *bijamantra* that resembles 'om' probably indicating certain practices within the sect. Similar ascetic figures are depicted on the Bayon and Banteay Chhmar reliefs. Fig. 12 shows bearded Brahmins conducting a fire ritual on the eastern gallery of Banteay Chhmar. The concept of the eight-fold manifestations of Śiva is also found in the

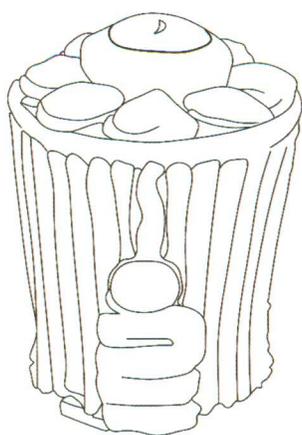


Fig. 11 Drawing of Śaiva chignon found at the Bayon that possibly depicts a *bijamantra* and stored at the Siem Reap Conservation (original record no. DCA. 40/ new no. N. 1213).