



**Figs. 1 and 2** Śiva dances on his bull. *Khuông Mỹ, Quảng Nam, 11th century.*

in neighbouring Cambodia from the 7<sup>th</sup> century. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century this sect was the most widespread Śaiva order in India and expanding across Southeast Asia. Several inscriptions testify to Pāśupata ascetics emigrating southeast from North India to Nepal and Bengal<sup>1</sup>, south to Karnāṭaka and Tamil Nādu from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most notable features of the early stages of practices in an aspirant life, when he lives in a temple is mentioned in the *Pāśupati-sūtra* (verse 1.8) and *Gaṇakārikā* (verse 7) as:

The *Pāśupati-sūtra* is the main sacred text of the Pāśupata sect; the *Gaṇakārikā* are short texts of vulgarization based on the religious content of the *Pāśupati-sūtra*.

*Hasita-gīta-nṛtya-dumḍumkāra-namaskāra-japyopahārenopatiṣṭhet.*<sup>3</sup>

(One should worship a *liṅga* with an offering of laughter, music, dance, uttering auspicious sounds of *dumḍumkāra*, paying homage to the god with whispered incantations).

Today's northern Vietnam extending south along the central coast toward the Mekong delta was known as Linyi in China. Linyi appears to have existed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century

CE till at least 7<sup>th</sup> century near modern day Trà Kiệu in the Quảng Nam province of Vietnam. The respected teachers of the early polity were called Brahmins<sup>4</sup> and the king was a follower of the *nirgranthas* possibly a reference to ascetic Brahmins such as Śaiva Pāśupatas.<sup>5</sup>

The 9<sup>th</sup> century Glai Lomov stele describes Pāśupata practices indicating their presence in the Cham courts. The supremacy and importance of *liṅga* worship with dance and music by Śaiva ascetics appears to be depicted in several Mỹ Sơn and Trà Kiệu pedestals. Ascetic figures depicted on the pedestals hold musical instruments or dance. The 7<sup>th</sup> century pre-Angkorian Khmer art of Sambor Prei Kuk also depicts Śaiva ascetics dancing and singing.

If we compare this male figure (BTDN 14) with the one on the Mỹ Sơn pedestal, we see that both hold the same instrument. The instrument remained in popular use and is notably associated with Śiva in the two effaced 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century reliefs from Khuông Mỹ (Figs. 1, 2). The supreme deity dances on his bull while playing the instrument.

3 PS 1.8, p. 13, lines 14-16 See Minoru Hara, Dissertation pages- 181-183, 549-550.

4 *Nam Qi shu* (History of Southern Qi) *juan* 58, quoted from Geof. Wade 'Beyond the Southern Borders: Southeast Asia in Chinese Texts to the Ninth Century' in *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu Buddhist sculpture of early Southeast Asia*, ed. John Guy, page 25.

5 This reference is repeated in the *Liang shu* (History of the Liang) *juan* 54. William Soothill and Lewis Houdus 1937, p. 185 notes that the term *nirgrantha* refers to "devotees who are free from all ties, wander naked, and cover themselves with ashes," possibly implying to Pāśupatas. Soothill and Houdus, (1937) Comps. *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms: With Sanskrit and English Equivalent and a Sanskrit-Pali Index*, London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. [Repr., Richmond, Surrey: Curzon press, 1995].