

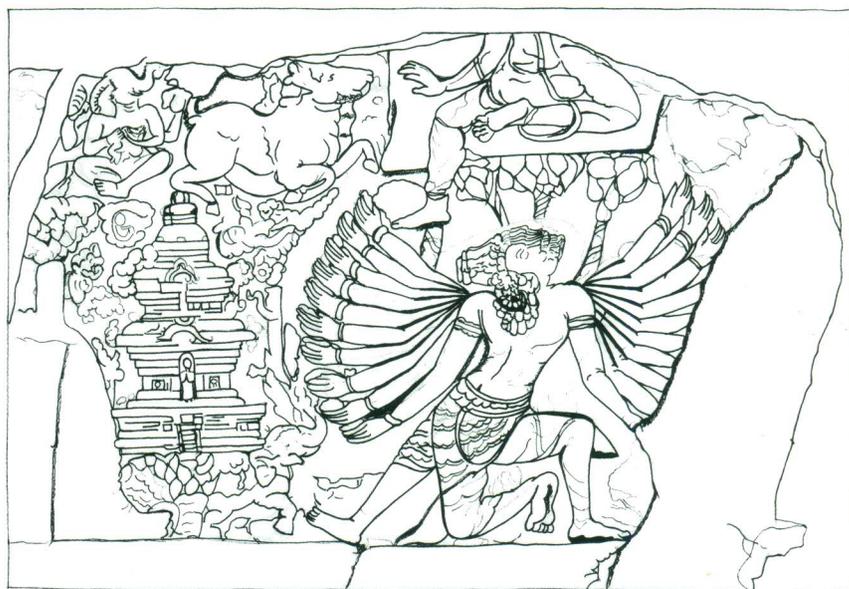
Fig. 1 Parmentier's 1909 drawing of the Mý Son E1 scarf dance.

Fig. 2 Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti, Mý Son, detached tympanum from F1 temple. Drawing based on reassembled sculptural fragments and Henri Parmentier's documentation, © Parul Pandya Dhar.

little ambiguous, there are only two feet visible, so this possibility may be discounted.

While the Mý Son F1 image clearly depicts a twenty-armed Rāvaṇa disturbing the harmony of Śiva's abode on Kailāsa, such a conclusive identification of the personage carved on the Đồng Dương mini-pedestal is beset with problems. The F1 Rāvaṇa, as expected of a mighty demon-king, is adorned with crowns, ear ornaments, arm bands, and bracelets; his hair falls back in neatly-stacked ringlets. Two distinct moments in the act of lifting Kailāsa have been simultaneously portrayed by juxtaposing two pairs of legs on Rāvaṇa's body (one of the legs is broken). The Đồng Dương mini-pedestal icon, by contrast, is far more modest, with no crowns gracing his multiple heads, no arm-bands and bracelets and only four pairs of arms compared with 10. Certainly, he does not inspire the same awe nor convey the same grandeur as the F1 Rāvaṇa.

Given that this sculpture was found in a predominantly Buddhist context, some scholars have suggested that it represents the demon Māra, who tried to distract the Buddha's final meditation before achieving enlightenment (eg. Guillon 2001, 82-83).³ However, this manner of depicting Māra as a multi-headed and multi-armed personage is most unusual. If the figure were interpreted as the demon Māra, it would have to be noted that there is an obvious parallel with the Śaiva context, and the iconography is clearly inspired by the *Rāvaṇānugraha* motif. Further, the presence of this sculpture at a Buddhist site does not exclude the possibility that it could



be a depiction of Rāvaṇa, given the numerous references to Śiva and other Brahmanical gods in the Đồng Dương inscriptions.⁴ Unfortunately, the top portion of this mini-pedestal, above the figure, is damaged. The presence of lotuses and a tiny human figure on one side of this pedestal suggests something more above or in front of the pedestal. Recently, it has been suggested that this mini-pedestal could actually have served as an altar or an offering table.⁵

While the exact identity of this figure remains an iconographic conundrum, it is undeniable that the depiction is inspired by the Śaiva *Rāvaṇānugraha* motif assimilated and adapted within a predominantly Buddhist milieu.

3 The caption for this piece as displayed in the Đà Nẵng Museum during my visit in 2010, labelled it as 'Māra?'

4 Đồng Dương stele inscription of Indravarman II (C. 66). See, Finot (1904: 84-99).

5 Pierre Baptiste suggests the possible use of this pedestal as an altar or offering table in Griffiths *et al.* (2018, forthcoming).