

TRIPLE TEMPLES
IN INDIA, NEPAL AND CAMBODIA
A Contribution to the Question
of *Inclusivism*

THE PROBLEM

In the 1970s and 1980s of the last century a lively discussion took place centring around the term *inclusivism*. The indologist Paul Hacker proposed this term in lectures and essays in order to describe a particular attitude that he had observed among Indian religions, an attitude that he placed between tolerance and intolerance. In his last lecture given in 1977 in Hamburg and Vienna he defined this form of behavior as follows: 'Inclusivism means to declare a central idea of a foreign religious or ideological group to be identical with one or another central idea that is peculiar to the group to which one belongs oneself.'¹⁾ Wezler considers this attitude as subordination as well as *usurpation of another religion for the purpose of propaganda*. ('Vereinnahmung der anderen Religion, die zugleich der eigenen untergeordnet wird, mit dem Ziel der Werbung'),²⁾ or in brief as *subordinating usurpation* ('unterordnende Vereinnahmung').³⁾ Wezler accepts Hacker's observation,

¹⁾ 'Inklusivismus bedeutet, daß man erklärt, eine zentrale Vorstellung einer fremden religiösen oder weltanschaulichen Gruppe sei identisch mit dieser oder jener zentralen Vorstellung der Gruppe, zu der man selbst gehört' Oberhammer (1983: 12).

²⁾ Oberhammer (1983: 67).

³⁾ Oberhammer (1983: 77).

but also gives evidence for the fact that this attitude is not limited to Indian religious conditions.

Hacker illustrates his observation by a passage from the *Bhagavadgītā* 9.23, where Kṛṣṇa declares that 'Bhaktas who worship other gods, in reality, although against the rule (*avidhi-pūrvakam*), worship me'.⁴⁾ We will return to this passage. The idea is that there exists a peculiar hierarchy of one religion towards another, a hierarchy that is masked as equality. Is this really a significant feature of Indian religions as a whole, i.e. not only on the part of one 'fraction' (*mārga*) of Hinduism towards the other, eg. *Vaiṣṇava-mārga* towards the *Śaivas* and *Śāktas* etc., but also on the part of Hinduism towards Jainism and Buddhism and *vice versa*?

The question has until now only been answered by indologists or students of religion on the basis of texts, leaving aside considerations of cult and, in the case of Hinduism, excluding the probable message delivered by temple forms.

The affinity of temple forms and cultic matters cannot be better demonstrated than by the so-called *pañcāyatana* temples and the corresponding *pañcāyatana-pūjā*. Both the *pūjā* and the temple arrangement reflect the attitude of the *Smārtas* in India who worship the representatives of the five major groups of Hinduism (*Śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Saura*, *Śākta*, *Gāṇapatya*) on the same level.⁵⁾ Even if the quincux arrangement (one central temple, four corner temples) seems to favour the central deity, this arrangement is by no means understood as a hierarchy or as implying the subordination of the corner cults to the central one.

This equalizing attitude is based on the *Advaita-Vedānta* that looks at the various Hindu gods only as manifestations of the non-theistic *brahman*. Whether the great philosopher Śāṅkarācārya is indeed the creator (or propagator) of the *Smārta* movement cannot be definitely known. Yet, ideologically this idea would make a great deal of sense.

Since, however, one can argue that the *Smārta* movement is not significant for *Hindutva* on the whole, I would like to discuss another temple arrangement, the triple temples, one that is less frequent than the *pañcāyatana*

⁴⁾ *Bhagavadgītā* 9.23 (= Mahābhārata VI.31.23) *ye 'py anya-devatā bhaktā yajante sraddhayānvitāḥ / te 'pi mām eva Kaunteya yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam //*.

⁵⁾ Banerjea (1956: 541 f.); Gail (2001: 53 f.).

system but that should also be able to throw light on the different branches of Hinduism (*sampradāya*)⁶ and their mutual relationship.

THE TEMPLES

One unique specimen among the rock-cut *maṇḍapas* in Mamallapuram is the Trimūrtimaṇḍapa.⁷ The temple consists of three *cellae* side by side. The middle one protrudes from the façade (Fig. 1 and 2). It is slightly broader and deeper than the flanking shrines that each exhibit their own *hāra* of miniature shrines (*śālā, kūṭa*) on top of their entablature (*prastara*). Each sanctum is flanked by two *dvārapālas* in a three-quarter profile and is reached by a small staircase cut into the socle (*adhiṣṭhāna*).

The middle temple is dedicated to Śiva who is represented by a four-armed relief on the back wall and a black polished *liṅgam* in front. The chamber on the left side (from the visitor's perspective) is dedicated to Brahmśāstr̥, a form of Kārttikeya / Subrahmaṇya, who humiliates Brahmā by unveiling his ignorance of the Vedas. His four-armed image is also cut from the back wall. This form of Subrahmaṇya is limited to South India.⁸

On the left or southern side, an image of four-armed Viṣṇu (*abhaya, cakra, śaṅkha, kaṭyavalambita*) can be seen on the rear wall of the sanctum. Apart from this triple temple, on the southern side, there is a niche exhibiting a beautiful figure of Durgā standing on the head of a decapitated buffalo.⁹ She is eight-armed and holds in her uppermost arms, in keeping with Viṣṇu, a *cakra* and *śaṅkha* (Fig. 3). The temple is sculpted in the so called Māmalla style (circa 630-668 CE).

From here we jump to Rājasthān in the late 9th century, where a beautiful yet collapsing triple shrine can be found in the village of Aṃvān.¹⁰ In this case the three neighbouring chambers are of almost equal size (Fig. 4). They are combined as a rectangular structure and share a common porticus (*mukhālinda*, Figs. 4 and 5). The middle shrine is distinguished by two fea-

⁶ Purposefully I avoid the word sect that implies the negative connotation of declension from orthodoxy.

⁷ Srinivasan (1964: 156-161, Fig. 31, pls. XLIX and L).

⁸ The lower cave in Tirucirapalli easily demonstrates that Brahmśāstr̥ cannot be mistaken for Brahmā who is depicted with three heads.

⁹ Srinivasan (1964: Pl. L).

¹⁰ EITA (1991: 306-310, Fig. 127 f., Plates 695-706).

tures: a *pañcaratha* extension on the back façade and four columns on the front side. The original shape of the superstructure can no longer be identified since it has been almost completely destroyed retaining only a few stone layers that seem to have been piled up by the Archaeological Survey.

The three entrances to the shrines, however, are in relatively good condition – at least, they were when I visited the temple 1977 – and exhibit a carefully balanced decoration. That is to say in each case the crest image (*lalāṭabimba*), indicating the main deity, is accompanied by a set of deities embellishing the lintel, deities that belong in a particular way to the main deity.

Above the central entrance we find a figure of Viṣṇu-Garuḍāsana topped by the *daśāvātāras*; on the left side the *lalāṭabimba* is the sun god Sūrya squatting on his chariot drawn by seven horses, while the lintel shows the *navagrahas* starting with Sūrya, here in an upright position (Figs. 6 and 7). The right shrine was dedicated to Śiva. The *lalāṭabimba* depicts dancing Ganeśa instead of Śiva, who, however, appears as Viṇādhara in the middle of the *saptamāṭṛkās* (between Maheśvarī and Varāhī).¹¹⁾

Of all the triple temples that I have seen, these three entrances appear to be the most attractive both in terms of composition and execution.

Comparable to the Amvān temple is the Brājamaṭha triple temple in Gyarpur that is entered by a spacious open hall (*raṅgamaṇḍapa*, Fig. 8). The appearance of Sūrya as the main deity of a triple shrine is not surprising, since sun worship was not uncommon in Madhya Pradeśa (e.g. Umri and Maḍkheḍa).¹²⁾

The ensemble is dated to the latter half of the 9th century CE. Here the superstructure is widely preserved and the middle shrine is emphasized by a *nāgara latina* tower (*śikhara*)¹³⁾ (Fig. 9) The side shrines, dedicated to Śiva and Balarāma-Saṃkarṣaṇa, are covered with pyramidal roofs (*phāmsaṇā*). Again, as in Amvān, the three doorways are decorated in an original manner. The lintel image of Sūrya is framed by the *dvādaśādityas*, that of Śiva shows the *ekādaśarudras* positioned in a similar order, while the central Saṃkarṣaṇa is framed by another eleven figures of Saṃkarṣaṇa.¹⁴⁾

¹¹⁾ Gail (2001: Abb. 16).

¹²⁾ Gail (2001: 64-69, Abb. 87-98).

¹³⁾ By analogy one could argue that this superstructure resembles the original roofing of the Amvan temple.

¹⁴⁾ EITA (1998: 31-34).

One of the finest triple temples can be found in Drāviḍa-deśa. The popular name Muvar-koil is a Tamil adaptation of its inscriptional name *vimāna-trayam*. The ensemble of three free-standing two-storied temples (*dvitala-vimāna*) was built by Bhūti Vikramakesarī around 880 CE for himself and his two queens (Fig. 10). Only two *vimānas*, the central and southern one, are left out of a large sacred complex that comprised three *vimānas*, three halls (*ardha-maṇḍapa*) a broad *mahāmaṇḍapa* connecting the three shrines as well as the temple of Śiva's sacred bull (*vṛṣamaṇḍapa*), the *gopura* and 16 *parivāra* shrines. Bhūti Vikramakesari belonged to a minor dynasty, the Irrukveḷṣ, who were close allies of the Cōḷa and were later absorbed by them.

Within the general style of the Early Cōḷa, the Irrukveḷṣ developed their own idiom. The second layer of the platform (*jagatī*) is designed as a carpet of lotus leaves (Fig. 10), while the set of images differs considerably from that of the Cōḷa.¹⁵ Although basically equal and each dedicated to the same deity Śiva, the central shrine shows a more complex second story than its southern neighbour.

For our purpose, it is important to keep in mind that the three temples are Śaiva monuments and except for one niche exhibiting Viṣṇu all *devakoṣṭhas* are occupied by Śivamūrtis (Fig. 11).¹⁶

The richest variety of temple forms was created by the Hoysalas in Karnataka. We find not only more triple shrines (*trikūṭa*) than in the rest of India¹⁷ but also two double shrines (*dvikūṭa*)¹⁸ and a singular quadruple temple.¹⁹ While many of these *vimānas* are considerably damaged – in many instances the superstructures are now missing – there is one triple shrine that is not only well preserved but also excels in terms of its filigree beauty.

The Keśava temple at Somnathpur was built under the rule of Nṛsimha III by Somanātha Daṇḍanāyaka in 1268 CE. For the regular *pūjā* requirements

¹⁵ Compare for instance the two image sets of the Muvar-koil with the Brahmapurīśvara in Pullamangai (EITA 1983: p. 208 and pp. 165 ff.).

¹⁶ EITA (1983: 208).

¹⁷ 1. Foekema (1996: 43-46) = EITA (1996: 400); 2. Foekema (1996: 62-65) = EITA (1996: 395 f.); 3. Foekema (1996: 67-70) = EITA (1996: 396-398); 4. Foekema (1996: 71 f.) = EITA (398, 5). Foekema (1996: 73-75) = EITA (1996: 402); 6. Foekema (1996: 83-85) = EITA (1996: 401 f.); 7. Foekema (1996: 87-90) = EITA (1996: 403-406).

¹⁸ 1. Foekema (1996: 59-62) = EITA (1996: 393-395) = the famous Hoysaḷeśvara); 2. Foekema (1996: 77-80) and EITA (1996: 317f).

¹⁹ This is the only Hoysaḷa shrine dedicated to Lakṣmī. The side cells are devoted to Kālī, Śiva and Viṣṇu. Foekema (1996: 57 f.) = EITA (1996: 309-311).

he donated the tax income of the nearby village Somnathpur to the temple (*agrahāra*).

The sacred complex is entered by a hall (*dvāra-maṇḍapa*) that opens into a large courtyard (65 x 53 m), surrounded by 64 chapels (*devakulikā*) and a cloister (*mālikā*) (Figs. 12 and 13). The temple consists of three equal *vimānas* of the *vesara* order²⁰ with four-storied superstructures. The three shrines, stellate like their platform, are directed to the north, west and south and share an open, but screened hall (*raṅgamaṇḍapa*). The socle (*adhishṭhāna*), following the ground plan of the temples, is divided into six horizontal friezes, one of which – the third from above – is embellished with scenes from three important narrative books: the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.

The latter work pays homage to the one god to whom all three temples are dedicated: Viṣṇu as Keśava in the central shrine (now missing), Janārdana in the northern and Kṛṣṇa Veṅugopāla in the southern sanctum.

Dhaky points out that the *jaṅghā* images of the temple, although dedicated to Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa, also include those of Gaṇeśa, Brahmā, Sūrya, Indra, Kāmadeva, Sarasvatī and Caṇḍikā²¹. Śiva is not omitted (Fig. 14).

It is not uncommon in the Hoysaḷa area that Vaiṣṇava imagery dominates a Śaiva temple and *vice versa*. In this respect Dhaky characterises the Śaiva Kedareśvara, c. 1200-1220, as follows: ‘The pantheonic imagery of the *vimānas*’ *jaṅghā*-*pallavīs* [half-diamond shaped wall-projections] and rathas [here: central offsets] is of course of a mixed type where vaiṣṇava images figure abundantly’.²²

Although the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley developed their own original temple style of pyramidal square shrines with sloping roofs, North Indian features also left their imprint in Kathmandu.

The *rekhā śikhara* can be traced from the late 16th century CE onwards down to the 19th century.²³ One outstanding specimen is the Vaṃvīrvikaṭeśvara named after Bambahadur, a general of the Raṇās, who founded the temple in 1850 CE (Fig. 15). As in all other cases, the temple is a hybrid building: the substructure follows more or less the traditional form of a cloistered sanctu-

²⁰ The *vesara* order is a form that combines (or mixes) the curvilinear *nāgara* order with the pyramidal *drāviḍa* order, Dhaky (1977: 28 f.).

²¹ EITA (1996: 405).

²² EITA (1996: 369).

²³ Gail (1988: 28 f.).

ary, only the superstructure is strongly reminiscent of Indian prototypes. The *Triśivālaya* (seat of Śiva), its inscriptional name, is a hybrid in one more aspect. In the corner of the courtyard framed by *dharmasālā* buildings are chapels dedicated to Gaṇeśa, Durgā, Viṣṇu, and Sūrya. Thus it combines a quincux outlay (*pañcāyatana*),²⁴⁾ with a triple temple. Three brick *śikharas* surmount a common rectangular sanctum that includes, precisely beneath the *śikharas*, three *liṅgas*.

One of the finest sacred buildings of the early Angkor period is the so called Banteay Srei (citadel of women), some 30 km outside the city of Angkor (Fig. 16). Formerly the place was called Īśvarapura (town of Śiva). The founder is the brahmin Yajñavarāha (a name of Viṣṇu).

Built in 967 CE using a hard, rose-colored sand stone, its beautiful images are still well-preserved and a witness to the ability of the Khmer master sculptors.²⁵⁾

Although a recent study argues that the triple temple is more Khmer than any other Khmer structure, I think that the contrary is true. The superstructures of the three attached sanctuaries are stepped, and they share a hall alien to most Khmer temples.²⁶⁾ The author in particular studied the balanced image program with *Śaiva* images to the south and *Vaiṣṇava* images to the north of the central east-west-axis (Fig. 17). The slight domination of *Vaiṣṇava* images within the main complex is balanced by a slight dominance of *Śaiva* images on the entrance side. What is unique is the fact that the northern shrine is dedicated to Viṣṇu, and the central and southern ones to Śiva. The central *liṅgam* celebrates Śiva as *Tribhuvanamaheśvara*. The southern *liṅgam* was donated by the sister, the Viṣṇu statue by the parents of the founder.

Without the acroteria on the tower stories the pyramidal character of the superstructures would be more evident. The triple temple of Kodumbalur founded around 880 CE (Fig. 10) could very well have functioned as an inspiration for Banteay Srei scarcely a hundred years later.

²⁴⁾ Well known from the *Smārta* movement in India (see above).

²⁵⁾ Jaques / Held (1997: Tafn. 48-63).

²⁶⁾ Bourdonneau (1999: 41f.).

DISCUSSION

The seven temple groups that I have introduced represent different types. Either they are dedicated to one single deity (Śiva or Viṣṇu) or they are dedicated to three distinct deities. Only in one case, the Banteay Srei of Angkor, are two of three similar shrines dedicated to Śiva, while the northern one is dedicated to Viṣṇu.

The Trimūrti-maṇḍapa in Mamallapuram represents a central Śiva sanctum that is wider and deeper than the flanking shrines dedicated to Brahmaśāstā and Viṣṇu.

So, at first glance the conclusion seems obvious that the Śiva shrine dominates or subordinates the two others. Such a conclusion, however, would be premature. Brahmaśāstā is a form of Subrahmaṇya (Skanda, Kārttikeya) who is one of Śiva's sons. In South India he enjoys outstanding worship and forms part of the *holy family*, Somāskanda, i.e. Śiva with Skanda and his mother Umā. These three have been expressively depicted as baby Skanda between Śiva and Umā from the very beginning of South Indian art.

Viṣṇu on the other hand is, according to South Indian tradition, the brother of Durgā, the awesome form of Śiva's wife, a relationship that turns Viṣṇu into a brother-in-law of Śiva. The special link between Viṣṇu and Durgā is expressed by the conch and disc objects (*śankha* and *cakra*) that both carry in their upper hands (Fig. 3).

The special relationship between Śiva and Viṣṇu is well expressed by the figure of Harihara who also appeared in South Indian temple art from the beginning (Dharmarājaratha). Putting together these facts, it does not seem appropriate to interpret the configuration of the Trimūrti-maṇḍapa in terms of dominance and subordination or even inclusivism in the aforementioned sense.

Before we move on to the triple temples of Aṃvān and of Gyāraspur that are rather similar, as we have seen above, it is appropriate to consider the religious affiliations inscriptionally reported regarding the dynasty of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras who controlled large areas of North India between ca. 850 and 1050 CE. These reports bear witness to the liberal religious atmosphere which doubtlessly influenced the building activity at the time. The religious affiliation often changed from one generation to the next. Bhojadeva describes his ancestors in an inscription — dated 18th October 836 AD and found in the Kānyakubja area — including their religious affiliation: Devaśaktideva

was an adherent of Viṣṇu (*parama-vaiṣṇava*), his personal Śākta name he might have received from his Śākta mother or father, his son Vatsrājadeva preferred Śiva (*parama-māheśvara*), his son Nagabhaṭadeva worshipped the goddess (*parama-bhagavatī-bhakta*), his son Rāmabhadradeva worshipped the sun (*paramāditya-bhakta*), his son Bhojadeva himself, the author of the inscription, favoured the cult of Devī (*parama-bhagavatī-bhakta*).²⁷⁾

Avoiding the term tolerance I would like to characterise such a cultic situation as the undisputed coexistence of various religions.

The evidence of the inscriptions is also mirrored by important groups of temples. Osian was ruled by the Pratihāras of Māṇḍavyapura who were subordinates to the imperial Pratihāras of Kānyakubja.²⁸⁾ Their exquisite temples comprised specimens dedicated to Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śakti, as well as a large Jaina sanctuary. Sun worship was, to some extent, included by Sūrya niches (*devakoṣṭhas*) in Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa temples, and in one case a *devakoṣṭha* of a Viṣṇu temple was allocated to Pārsvanātha, 23rd Jina of the Jaina religion.²⁹⁾

The Candellas of Khajuraho appear in history as allies of the Pratihāras, but rose to power as their successors in Bundelkhaṇḍa around 925-950 CE.³⁰⁾ Their numerous temples involve centres for the worship of the Yoginīs, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Sūrya, and include a superb group of Jain monuments.

Our inscriptional and temple evidence pleads more for a familiar coexistence of religions than for any type of dominance and subordination.

This is also the basis on which we should evaluate the overall religious message of the triple temples of Aṃvān and Gyāraspur. The earlier temple places Viṣṇu in the central sanctum flanked by Sūrya and Śiva, the latter puts the sun god in the centre flanked by Śiva and Balarāma. In both cases the size and ornamentation of the shrines are comparable and do not represent any architectural or pictorial dominance except for the circumstance that one out of three sancta (Viṣṇu, Sūrya) occupies the centre.

Going back to South India, we find a different situation with the Muvar Koil (*vimāna-trayam*). The ensemble is exclusively Śaiva and the corresponding images of all three temples, originally 33 altogether,³¹⁾ are with the exception of one Viṣṇu image exclusively Śaiva.

²⁷⁾ EI XIX: no. 2.

²⁸⁾ EITA (1991: 119).

²⁹⁾ EITA (1991: 129-209).

³⁰⁾ EITA (1991: 83 f.).

³¹⁾ EITA (1988: Table 1).

The triple temple of Kodumbalur reflects the dominance of Śaivism in Tamil Nadu. Even more exclusive is the temple landscape in Bhuvaneśvar, the old capital of Orissa. All temples until the 12th century CE are Śaiva – the Vaitāl deul is Śākta – and generally depict in their *devakoṣṭhas* members of Śiva’s family exclusively, i.e. Pārvatī, Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa.³²⁾ The impact of Vaiṣṇavas only started during the supremacy of the Gaṅga dynasty and the erection of the Ananta-Vāsudeva temple in 1278 CE.³³⁾

The most attractive jewel among the Hoysaḷa temples is the Keśava temple at Somnathpur that we briefly described above. Here again all three sancta are devoted to Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa, but the temple niches include representatives of all the other important cults (see above). The question whether this arrangement reflects the *Bhagavadgītā* 9.23 and Kṛṣṇa’s statement that whoever worships other deities in reality worships Kṛṣṇa, cannot be excluded. On the other hand the impression prevails that this image arrangement does not reflect an *inclusivistic* attitude but a habitus of mutual acceptance. In this respect, the Śaiva Kedareśvara represents the other side of the coin. The shrine includes, among 160 wall images, numerous Vaisnava specimens.³⁴⁾

Summarising our observations, an *inclusivistic* manner as a trademark of Hinduism cannot be confirmed on the basis of triple temples.

The *vimana-trayam* of Kodumbalur should be seen as exclusively Śaiva. The Trimūrti *maṇḍapa* in Mamallapuram and the temples at Aṃvān and Gyāraspur cannot be evaluated in terms of dominance and subordination. The latter two in particular do not show any features of a hierarchy but a somehow undisputed co-existence of one cult with another.

The triple temples in India do not confirm Hacker’s opinion that inclusivism is a preeminent feature of attitudes among the Hindu communities. This impression might have arisen on account of textual passages from Purāṇic Hinduism. It is neither corroborated by the *pañcāyatana* ensembles that represent a priori five coeval cults according to *Smārta* doctrine, nor is it exemplified by the triple temples that we have tried to document.

In his illuminating book on Hinduism, Axel Michaels comes to the conclusion that there prevails a habitual equalization of the different beliefs of

³²⁾ Mitra (1966: passim).

³³⁾ Mitra (1966: 11, 58).

³⁴⁾ Foekema (1996: 63 f.).

so-called Hinduism.³⁵⁾ This is exactly the picture that is drawn by the Indian triple temples.

Let us have a final glance at the Nepalese and Cambodian triple shrines presented above. The Nepalese specimen is, as we have seen, a hybrid structure that combines an exclusive triple temple with a *pañcāyatana* design. Banteay Srei is unique insofar as one Viṣṇu temple is attached to two Śiva shrines.

Is this a case of inclusivism? I do not think so. Even more than in Indian history, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism are closely connected in the Khmer tradition. This fact is not only symbolized by the importance of the Harihara figure from the very beginning in Phnom Da,³⁶⁾ it also indicates the general climate of Hinduism in Cambodia. The pre-Angkor residence of the Khmer, today Roluos, was named Hariharālaya. The epic-Purāṇic interpretation of the unity of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa breathes another spirit than the above quoted passage from the *Bhagavadgītā* that *inclusivistically* subordinates other gods to Kṛṣṇa and that functioned as the basis of Hacker's theory. The *Harivaṃśa* formulates: adoration be to Śiva in the form of Viṣṇu, to Viṣṇu in the form of Śiva (*Śivāya Viṣṇu-rūpāya, Viṣṇave Śiva-rūpāya*).³⁷⁾

A passage from the *Vāyupurāṇa* can be directly interpreted as a description of the image of Harihara. Śiva addresses Viṣṇu: 'know yourself as prakṛti, and me know as puruṣa Śiva. You are half of my body, and I am half of yours'³⁸⁾. The idea of Ardhanārīśvara, the female form of Śiva, is elaborated by Mārkaṇḍeya's declaration that both Śiva and Viṣṇu are Ardhanārīśvarāḥ. The identity of Śiva and Viṣṇu can hardly be better ascertained.

Muir, who carefully studies relevant texts from the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṃśa* and the Purāṇas comes to the following conclusion: 'In the preceding pages, various passages have been adduced in which the supremacy of Mahādeva and his identity with the soul of the universe have been asserted',³⁹⁾ and other texts have been quoted in which the same rank and character are assigned to Viṣṇu.⁴⁰⁾ The reader will likewise have noticed that in some places also,⁴¹⁾ an attempt is made, by alleging the essential oneness of

³⁵⁾ Michaels (1998: 35).

³⁶⁾ Dupont (1935).

³⁷⁾ Muir (1873: 279).

³⁸⁾ Vāyupurāṇa I.25.23.

³⁹⁾ Muir (1873: 185 ff., 194, 196).

⁴⁰⁾ Muir (1873: 263 ff.).

⁴¹⁾ Muir (1873: 241, 268).

the two deities, to reconcile their conflicting claims'. In the following footnote 2 Muir lists such places from various Purāṇas. The last text, taken from the Padmapurāṇa, is as follows: 'Kṛṣṇa speaks:⁴²⁾ (...) The worshippers of Śiva, Sūra [sic; eig. Sūrya] (the Sun), Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu and Śakti, come to me, as streams flow to the ocean.'

This is most probably an allusion to *Bhagavadgītā* 9.23 f. (see above) with one decisive difference. The text does not say that the worship of other gods is against the rule (*avidhi-pūrvakam*) but addresses the (*Smārta*) worshippers – including the Vaiṣṇavas, worshippers of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa – on the same level. The same text could be uttered by Śiva or any other supreme god. We can also formulate, in accordance with *Smārta* doctrine, that Kṛṣṇa is here called the chosen god (*iṣṭadevatā*) without an indication of dominance over other cults.

Let us come back to the attitude of the Khmer regarding Vishnuism and Shivaism. As in the case of the Gurjara-Pratihāras the religious affiliation seems to have shifted from one king to the other. (Śāktism, however, does not seem to have played any significant role among the Khmer.)⁴³⁾

Regarding the religion(s) of the Khmer the impression of an open-minded Hinduism prevails, where the two main Hindu communities respected each other on an equal footing. Indications of *inclusivistic* attitudes cannot be observed. The Khmer Mahāyāna Buddhism is – comparably to North India – very much imbued with Śaivism.

When I asked, some twenty years ago, a young man in the Kathmandu Valley whether he belonged to the *Śaivamārga* – a term that encompasses all Hindu groups in Nepal – or to the *Bauddhamārga*, he answered: yes. Evidently, he was not aware of a difference.⁴⁴⁾

Triple temples can be exclusivist or pluralistic. They are *inclusivistic* since, in general coequal, the main deity admits images of other deities. They are not *inclusivistic* according to Hacker's definition, i.e. in terms of dominance and subordination.

⁴²⁾ *Śaivāḥ Saurāḥ ca Gaṇeśāḥ Vaiṣṇavāḥ Śaktipūjakāḥ / mām eva prāpnuvantītha sarvāpah sāgarāṃ yathā* // Muir (1873: 278).

⁴³⁾ Here a list of temples, of ruler and regnal years, and of religious affiliation: Phnom Bakheng – Yaśovarman I (889-910) – Śiva. / Phnom Krom – Yaśovarman I – Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā. / Prasat Kravan – Harṣavarman I (910-923) – Viṣṇu. / Pre Rup – Rājendravarman II (944-968) – Śiva. / Baphuon – Udādityavarman II (1050-1066) – Śiva. / Banteay Samre – Sūryavarman II (1113-1150) – Viṣṇu. / Angkor Wat – Sūryavarman II – Viṣṇu.

⁴⁴⁾ „Ein Hindu kann, (...) wie viele Subkasten in Nepal, Hindu und Buddhist zugleich sein“ (Michaels 1998: 35, n. 69; Gellner 1992: 73-104).

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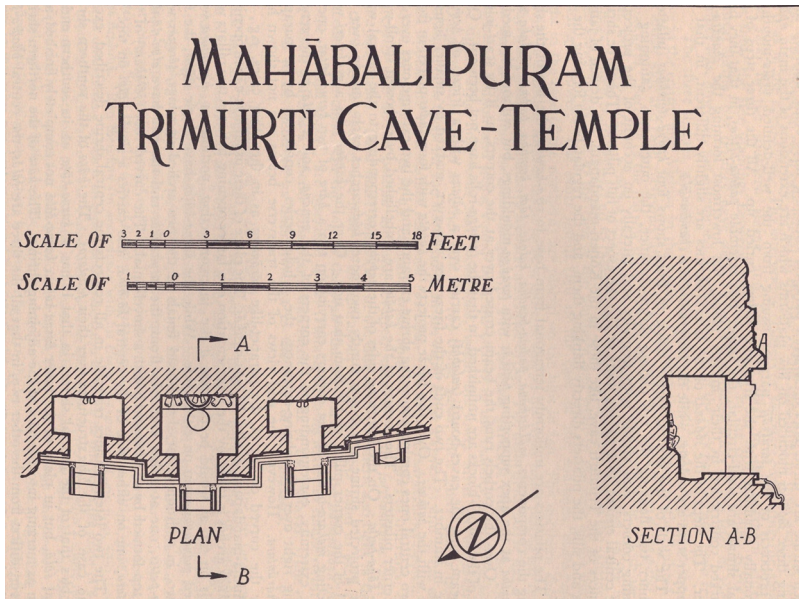


Fig. 1. Trimūrti-maṇḍapa, Mamallapuram. Ground plan (after Srinivasan 1964: Fig. 31)



Fig. 2. Façade of the Trimūrti-maṇḍapa, Mamallapuram (photo A.J. Gail)



Fig. 3. Durgā,
near Trimūrṭi-maṇḍapa
(photo A.J. Gail)

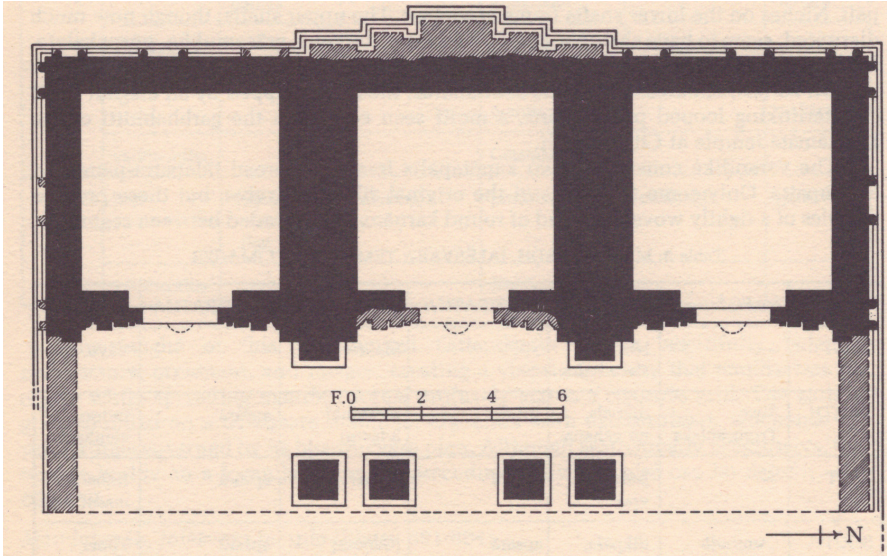


Fig. 4. Triple temple, Aṃvān. Ground plan (after EITA 1988: Fig. 127)



Fig. 5. Façade of the Triple temple, Amvān (photo A.J. Gail)



Fig. 6. *Navagraha* lintel, Sūrya temple, Triple temple, Amvān (photo A.J. Gail)



Fig. 7. Sūrya, *lalāṭabimba*,
Sūrya temple, Triple temple,
Amvān (photo A.J. Gail)

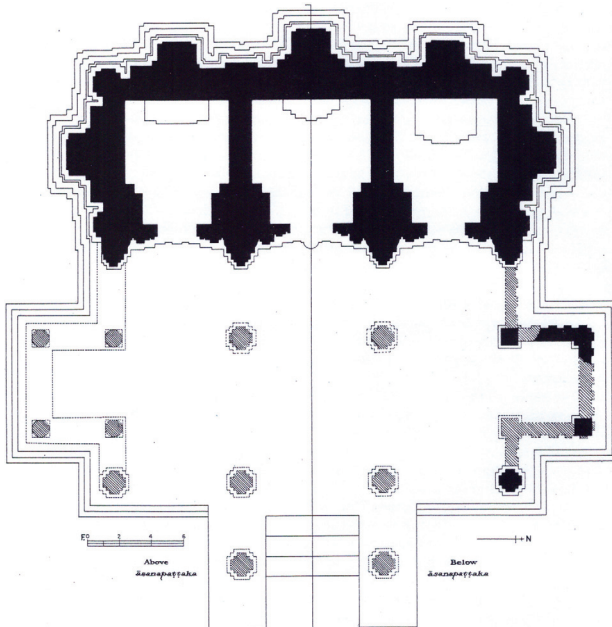


Fig. 8. Brājamaṭha
temple, Gyāraspur.
Ground plan (after
EITA 1998: Fig. 7)



Fig. 9. Façade, Brājamaṭha temple (after photo archive of AIIS, s.v. Gyāraspur)



Fig. 10. Muvarkoil from northeast, Kodumbalur (photo A.J. Gail)



Fig. 11. Ardhanārīśvara,
Muvarkoil, central temple, east
devakoṣṭha (photo A.J. Gail)

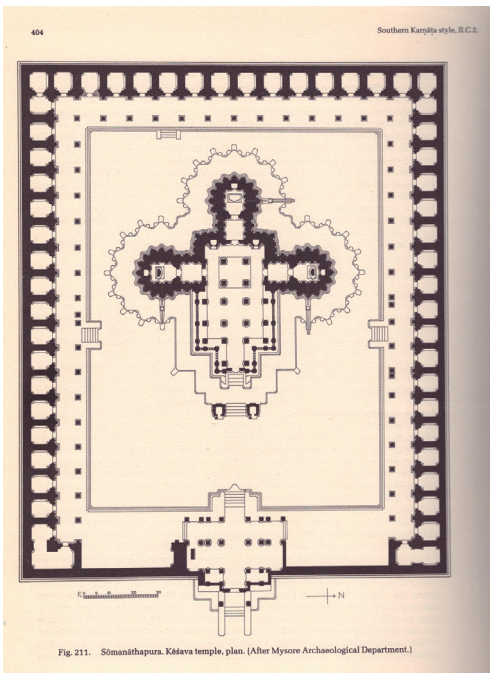


Fig. 12. Keśava temple,
Somnathpur. Ground plan
(after: EITA 1996: Fig. 211)



Fig. 13. Southern shrine,
Keśava temple
(photo A.J. Gail)

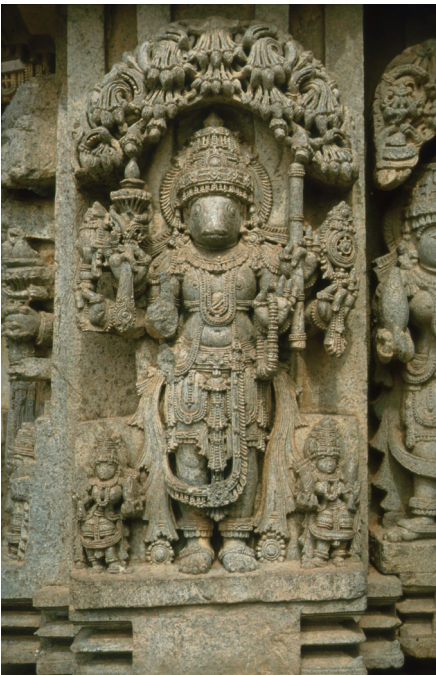


Fig. 14. Gajasamhāra
Śiva, Keśava temple,
jaṅghā
(photo A.J. Gail)



Fig. 15. Vaṃvīrvikaṭeśvara
(photo A.J. Gail)



Fig. 16. Banteay Srei from southwest, Angkor area (photo A.J. Gail)



Fig. 17. Khāṇḍava conflagration, Banteay Srei, *torāṇa* of northern sacristy (photo A.J. Gail)