Temple consecration rituals in ancient India: Text and archaeology
Ślączka, A.A.

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Author: Ślączka, A.A.
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Chapter 2

Character, authorship, date of the Kāśyapaśilpa

2.1 Kāśyapaśilpa – a Śilpaśāstra or an Āgama?

Some texts are easy to define – they belong to a certain category or they form a part of a certain genre. Others are like the composite animals of Indian tales, the numerous *makaras*, *vyālas* or the *kinnaras*, so often depicted on temple walls.
As it is frequently depicted, a *makara* possesses the head of an elephant and the tail of a crocodile. When it catches your eye, at first glance you will see a crocodile, but when you look closer, you will notice how an elephant's trunk emerges out of the crocodile's body. The Kāśyapaśilpa is such a *makara*. On the one hand, its "obvious", "crocodile part" makes the Kāśyapaśilpa classifiable in the genre of the Vāstuśāstras. On the other, it contains many characteristics of an Āgama.

The Āgamas are texts dealing mainly with ritual, but also with temple architecture. Traditionally, the name Āgama is used with reference to Śaiva works, while those belonging to the Vaiṣṇava or Śākta tradition are generally known under the name *saṃhitā* and *tantra* respectively, even if the colophons of some of the Śaiva texts display the name *tantra* or *saṃhitā* as well. In the present study, however, the names will be employed according to their traditional usage.

The Śaivāgamas can be divided into four groups: Śaiva, Pāśupata, Soma and Lākula or Nākula. Śaiva again can be sub-divided into the schools of Vāma, Dakṣiṇa and Siddhānta, of which the last one has become popular in the south of India, especially in the Tamil country (Bhatt 1964: I). "Even today, Śaiva siddhānta is an important school of Hindu philosophy in Tamilnad, and temples in the region most often claim allegiance to Śaiva siddhānta liturgical texts" (Davis 2000: 14). According to the lists given by the works belonging to the school, the canon of the Śaivasiddhānta consists of twenty-eight 'root' treatises (*mūlāgama*) and numerous 'subsidiary' treatises (*upāgama*) linked with one or the other *mūlāgama*.[1]

Ideally, each Śaivāgama is divided into four parts or 'feet' corresponding to four aspects of religious conduct: *caryāpāda* (proper conduct), *kriyāpāda* (ritual action), *yogapāda* (discipline) and *jñānapāda* (knowledge). However, only

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[1] For the list of the *Āgamas*, see Filliozat (1985: xi) and the "Table des Āgama et des Upāgama" opposite p. xix and Gonda (1977: 181). The names of the *mūlāgamas* together with corresponding *upāgamas* are included in the *tantrāvatārapaṭala* chapter found in some of the *mūlāgamas*.

a few Āgamas actually possess all the four parts,[2] and in the majority of the works only the *kriyāpāda* is preserved (Bhatt 1964: ii-iii). The *kriyāpāda* is of special interest for the present study as it deals with temple architecture and temple worship and it is here where the descriptions of the construction rituals are contained.

As mentioned above, the Kāśyapaśilpa possesses, on the one hand, the characteristics of a Śilpaśāstra – it is a treatise on architecture and iconography dealing with the same subjects as other such works. As many other Śilpaśāstras,[3] its first part contains the prescriptions for the building of a temple starting with the preparation of the terrain and its second part deals with the rules for making of images of the deities. This second part is usually not included in the Āgamas or only very briefly mentioned.[4] On the other hand, it is connected with the Āgamic tradition: Kāśyapam or Aṃśumatkāśyapam[5] is the name of one of the twelve *upāgamas* of the *mūlāgama* Aṃśumad. This connection is confirmed by the colophons in the Kāśyapaśilpa, some of which read, next to '*iti kāśyapaśilpe*', also: '*iti aṃśumadbhede kāśyape*' and '*ity kāśyape*'.[6] The association with the Āgamic genre is also visible in the treatment of certain subjects: here the ritual plays a more important role than in an average Śilpaśāstra.[7] The Kāśyapaśilpa is thus, in a certain sense, a hybrid text, showing characteristics of both genres - it is a 'textual *makara*'.

2.2 The Kāśyapaśilpa and the Aṃśumad

Certain scholars have been aware of the connection between the Kāśyapaśilpa and the Śaivāgamas.[8] Yet, the view that the Kāśyapaśilpa is, in fact, the *upāgama* Kāśyapa (or Aṃśumatkāśyapa) is not shared by everyone. Perhaps due to the similarity of the names 'Aṃśumad' (the *mūlāgama*) and 'Aṃśumatkāśyapa' (the

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[2] For a discussion on the division in the four *pāda*s in the Kiraṇa and related texts, see, for example, Goodall (1998: lviii-lxv).

[3] For instance, the Mayamata, the Mānasāra and the Śilparatna.

[4] Usually, only the iconography of the Śiva *liṅga* is explained in the Āgamas in detail. See, for example, Dagens (2004: 416-417).

[5] The name 'Aṃśumatkāśyapam' is given by the CintyĀgama; see note 1 above.

[6] See the critical apparatus at the end of each of the chapters of the edition.

[7] The text deals with certain rituals not mentioned or very seldom mentioned by the majority of the Śilpaśāstras, but present in ritual texts, including the Āgamas. For example, it describes the binding of a protective thread (see KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 35d), the proclamation of an auspicious day (*puṇyāhavacanam*) and the placing of the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet in the deposit casket (*akṣaranyāsa*). For other similarities between the Kāśyapaśilpa and the Śaivāgamas, see Chapter 5.

[8] Expressed, for example, by Varma, who writes: "The *Aṃśūmān* is one of the twenty-eight major *Śaivāgamas* and the K.Ś. [Kāśyapaśilpa] is one of its twelve *Upāgamas* (supplementary *Āgama*)… This matter has not been very clear to many and we are indebted to Mr. Diehl of Upsala for his kindness in clarifying these points…" (Varma 1970: 3 note 9).

upāgama), or due to the fact that the Aṃśumad is not well known given that it was never published, the Kāśyapaśilpa was often equated with the *mūlāgama*.[9] For example, the New Catalogus Catalogorum (NCC) states that the Kāśyapaśilpa is not the *upāgama*, but the *śilpa* portion of the *mūlāgama* Aṃśumad, which implies that it is not a separate text (NCC 1966: 1, 147). The *upāgama* Kāśyapa is also mentioned there, yet no connection with the Kāśyapaśilpa is suggested (ibid., 144). There are, however, several arguments against this statement.

During my research stay in India (in spring 2000 and 2001) I came across two distinct groups of texts whose colophons contain the word '*aṃśumat*'. The first group represents the text that is the main focus of the present study and has been previously edited, albeit not critically – the Kāśyapaśilpa. The colophons of the manuscripts belonging to this group read: *iti kāśyapaśilpe*, *iti kāśyapīye*, *ity aṃśumān bhede kāśyape*, *iti kāśyape* and *ity aṃśūmānkāśyape* (see note 7 above). The second group represents an unedited text, whose colophons read instead: *ity aṃśumati tantre* and *ity aṃśumāntantre*.[10] This text is much more substantial than the Kāśyapaśilpa and deals with ritual rather than with art and architecture. This latter text seems to be equated with the *mūlāgama* Aṃśumad: the word 'Aṃśumadāgama' is written above the page containing the chapter register and some of the transcripts of the text figure as Aṃśumadāgama in the catalogue of the library to which the text belongs.[11] This equation is supported by the fact that

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[9] See, for example, Kramrisch (1946: 296 note 67), who equates the Kāśyapaśilpa with 'Aṃśumadbheda' (according to the Catalogus Catalogorum another name of the *mūlāgama* Aṃśumad, see New Catalogus Catalogorum 1966: 1) and Dagens (2001: 65 note 2) who writes: "[the Kāśyapaśilpaśāstra] … est en réalité un *āgama* intitulé *Aṃśumad* ou *Aṃśumadbheda*." Bhattacharyya uses the name 'Kāśyapaśilpa' along with 'Aṃśubhedāgama' and 'Kāśyapīya' (Bhattacharyya 1963: 149, 141 and 180 respectively). Rao quotes the Kāśyapaśilpa under the name 'Aṃśumadbhedāgama' (Rao 1999: 255ff; cf. Kāśyapaśilpa, ed. Poona, chapter 48.38-43). It has to be noticed that the name Aṃśumadbheda does not occur in the colophons of the manuscripts of the Aṃśumad known to me. On the other hand, it does occur, with the addition '*kāśyapa*' (viz. *ity aṃśumadbhede kāśyape*) in the colophons of the manuscripts of the Kāśyapaśilpa. In this case it is perhaps plausible that the name Aṃśumadbheda should be considered as a synonym of Kāśyapaśilpa and not of the *mūlāgama* Aṃśumad. The name Aṃśumadbheda occurs on the first page giving the chapter directory of the Kāśyapaśilpa transcripts T158 and T297.

[10] As given by the colophons of the transcripts T3, T4, T158, T273, T889, T957, T1007 and T1070 of the manuscripts of the Aṃśumadāgama preserved at the Institut Français d'Ingologie, Pondicherry.

[11] Viz. to the library of the Institut Français d'Indologie, Pondicherry. The name 'Aṃśumadāgama' on the page with chapter register is found on transcripts T3, T4, T889 and T1070. As I could only see the transcripts of the manuscripts, not the manuscripts themselves, which are often part of small private libraries, there is a remote possibility that the name was added by the scribes. The equation of the Aṃśumattantra and the Aṃśumadāgama is, however, further supported by Bhatt in his edition of the Ajitāgama where he refers to some of the manuscripts of our 'second group' as 'AṃśumadĀgama' and to those of the first group as 'Aṃśumatkāśyapa' (Bhatt 1964: 410-411).

the text itself refers to the Āgamic tradition.[12] Moreover, Aṃśumattantra, the name given by the colophons, is one of the names of the Aṃśumadāgama according to the New Catalogus Catalogorum (NCC 1966: 1).

If the equation of the Aṃśumattantra and Aṃśumadāgama is right, then the texts represented by group one (the Kāśyapaśilpa) would, according to the New Catalogus Catalogorum, be a *śilpa* part of the texts belonging to group two (the Aṃśumattantra or Aṃśumadāgama). This, however, is unacceptable. As mentioned above, the colophons of the manuscripts of the Kāśyapaśilpa point to a text other than the Aṃśumadāgama, even if it is associated with it in one way or other. Secondly, several chapters of the Aṃśumadāgama deal with the same topic as the Kāśyapaśilpa, but in a totally different way. An example is the chapter describing the placing of the first bricks – one of the rituals discussed in detail in the present study. The chapter dealing with placing the first bricks of the Aṃśumad and that of the Kāśyapaśilpa do not show more mutual similarities than two such chapters taken from any two Śaivāgamas. Another argument against the assertion that the Aṃśumad and the Kāśyapaśilpa are indeed one and the same text lies in the fact that the formulaic expression, which announces the discussion of a certain topic at the beginning of each chapter, is different in both works. Such expressions are a reoccurrent pattern and are connected to a specific Āgama.[13] Moreover, the person to whom the text is revealed is different in both works.[14]

On the basis of these arguments it can be concluded that the Kāśyapaśilpa and the text that calls itself Aṃśumattantra and is equated with the Aṃśumadāgama are indeed two distinct works. The Kāśyapaśilpa is thus more than just the *śilpa* portion of the Aṃśumadāgama as known to us from the manuscripts preserved in Pondicherry.[15] Yet is it its *upāgama*? In my opinion there is a strong evidence to support this. As noted earlier, the colophons of many of the manuscripts of the Kāśypaśilpa give the name of the *upāgama*.[16] Moreover, the Kāśyapaśilpa itself refers to the Aṃśumat in its first chapter just as another *upāgama*, the Mṛgendra, refers to its *mūlāgama*, the Kāmika (see Bhatt 1966: iii). These, of course, can be later additions in order to give the Kāśyapaśilpa a greater authority by 'adopting' it by the Āgamic tradition. However, there are additional

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[12] See transcript T3 chapter 2.3c where 'Kāmika and other [Āgamas]' (*kāmikādi*) are mentioned.

[13] In the Kāśyapaśilpa the expression reads: "*atha vakṣye viśeṣeṇa …*" while in the Aṃśumattantra it reads: "*… vakṣye śrūyatāṃ ravisattama.*" In a few chapters these expressions do not occur, but this is very exceptional.

[14] Each Āgama is written in the form of a dialogue. The Āgamas are believed to be revealed by Lord Śiva to the ten Śivas and eighteen Rudras created by the Lord himself. Each of them transmitted one Āgama to a definite god and they, in turn, taught it to sages who instructed other sages (see Gonda 1977: 181-182). The person addressed in the Aṃśumattantra is Ravi, in the Kāśyapaśilpa it is Kāśyapa. The Kāśyapaśilpa seems thus to be a dialogue between the sage Kāśyapa and Śiva or one of Śiva's forms.

[15] The only other possibility would be to assume that the Aṃśumattantra *is not* the Aṃśumadāgama. However, this does not seem very probable.

[16] Kāśyapa or Aṃśumatkāśyapa. See note 7 above.

arguments which make the connection between the Kāśyapaśilpa and the Āgamic tradition beyond doubt: for instance, the elaborate descriptions of the rituals (see note 6 above).

Thus, while it is impossible to be absolutely certain, it is highly plausible that the Kāśyapaśilpa is the *upāgama* Kāśyapa. In any event, the text should not be equated with the *mūlāgama* Aṃśumad.

2.3 The Kāśyapaśilpa and Kāśyapa

The Kāśyapaśilpa, contrary to many other architectural works, such as the Mayamata or the Mānasāra, is known under several names. Apart from many variants of the name 'Aṃśumadāgama' (which, as shown above, have been used incorrectly with reference to our work), the text has been known as 'Kāśyapīya' or 'the Śilpaśāstra by Kāśyapa'.[17] The most common name, however, remains 'Kāśyapaśilpa', even though it does not figure in the majority of the manuscripts of the text. The name Kāśyapaśilpa probably owes its popularity to the fact that it was used for the two editions of the text; the addition *śilpa* was perhaps employed to emphasise its architectural and iconographic nature.

The Kāśyapaśilpa is traditionally ascribed to the sage Kāśyapa who learned about *śilpa* from Śiva himself, the latter often occurring as the narrator and teacher in iconographic and architectural texts.[18] The name Kāśyapa appears quite frequently in Sanskrit literature. A sage called Kāśyapa was the foster father of Śakuntalā as described in Kālidāsa's work. The Aśvamedhaparvan of the Mahābhārata mentions a Kāśyapa who was a good friend of the Pāṇḍavas. He was the priest of Vasudeva and was regarded as a very distinguished ascetic. A few other Kāśyapas have been listed by Vettam Mani (1975: 398). Kāśyapa is a patronymic of Kaśyapa, a name which itself also occurs in Vedic and Brahmanical texts. In the Ṛgveda the name occurs only once (9.114.2), but in later Vedic texts it is more common.[19] According to Macdonell and Keith's Vedic Index of names and subjects (1912: 145) "he is always a mythical character, as belonging to the distant past." The word *kaśyapa* occurs in its normal meaning of 'tortoise' in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, when the *kūrma*, 'tortoise', which is to be placed in the first layer of the fire altar is said to be a *kaśyapa*. The tortoise is here also identified as a form of Prajāpati who created living beings: "therefore all creatures are said to be descended from Kaśyapa."[20] This is an early reference to

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[17] See, for instance, Bhattacharyya (1963) who, along with 'Kāśyapaśilpa', uses several other names in the references to our text.

[18] "In the majority of the Vāstuśāstras, Śiva who has also taught the 64 arts to Garga, is the source whence Vāstuvidyā, the science of architecture, is revealed, as in the Viśvakarmaprakāśa I.3-4, Agnipurāṇa, in the Mayamata, Kāśyapaśilpa and Mānasāra…" (Kramrisch 1946: 424).

[19] See MacDonell and Keith (1912: 144-145) and Walker (1968: 535).

[20] Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 7.5.1.5: *sarvāḥ prajāḥ kāśyapyaḥ*. Translation: Eggeling (1894: 390).

the myth of Kaśyapa as the progenitor of all living beings, which is found later on in epic and Purāṇic texts.[21]

The name Kāśyapa as the great sage and a knower of architecture and art is frequently encountered in the iconographic texts. Bhaṭṭotpala, the commentator of the Bṛhat Saṃhitā who lived in the 10th century AD, quotes extensively from a certain Kāśyapa.[22] The Bṛhat Saṃhitā, however, is certainly an earlier text than the Kāśyapaśilpa. The Kāśyapa quoted there cannot therefore be the same as the author of the Kāśyapaśilpa. He might, perhaps, be an author of a prototype of it, as some scholars have suggested.[23] It should be stressed, however, that the text quoted by Bhaṭṭotpala does not resemble the Kāśyapaśilpa as we know it. The Kāśyapa of the commentary to the Bṛhat Saṃhitā belongs to the North Indian tradition, while the Kāśyapaśilpa is a work on South Indian architecture. In the Mānasāra the name Viśvakāśyapa is mentioned in a list of works and authors (Bhattacharyya 1963: 178), but we do not know if this is the same Kāśyapa as mentioned by Bhaṭṭotpala. This name points again to an early text compiled by a certain Kāśyapa. Kāśyapa is further regarded as a great authority in the Viśvakarma Vāstuśāstra, the Atri Saṃhitā and in the Śilpasaṃgraha (Bhattacharyya 1963: 99-100). However, here also the connection with the Kāśyapaśilpa cannot be established.

Apart from the Kāśyapaśilpa, there are numerous other works ascribed to Kāśyapa, the best known probably being the Kāśyapajñānakāṇḍa of the Vaikhānasa school translated into English by Goudriaan (1965). The tradition ascribes to the same Kāśyapa (the author of the Kāśyapajñānakāṇḍa) "two other volumes, called Satyakāṇḍa and Tarkakāṇḍa, which are not available any more."[24] In addition, Kāśyapa is known as an ancient authority on medicine, law and even music, and several works, having 'Kāśyapa' included in their name, are preserved in manuscript form.[25]

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[21] See Vettam Mani (1975: 396-397).

[22] See, for example, commentary to Bṛhat Saṃhitā 56 and 60 where the quotations are especially frequent (ed. Bhat).

[23] See Kramrisch (1946: 425 note 15): "Further authorities referred to in the Commentary of the Bṛhat Saṃhitā include Kāśyapa to whom might be traced back the prototype of the Kāśyapaśilpa." See also Bhattacharyya (1963: 99-100).

[24] Goudriaan (1965: 7). Goudriaan, referring to the Sanskrit introduction of the editor of the Kāśyapajñānakāṇḍa, R. Pārthasārathi Bhattachar, p. 1, adds: "together these works formed the Kāśyapa-Saṃhitā (a name which is in vogue also for the Jñānakāṇḍa only)."

[25] For other works ascribed to Kāśyapa, see New Catalogus Catalogorum (1966: 144-145). Manuscripts of works entitled Kāśyapīyaroganidhānam (a treatise on medicine), Kāśyapasaṃhitā (astrology) and Kāśyapadharmaśāstram (dharma) figure, for example, in the catalogue of the manuscripts at the Institut Français d'Indologie at Pondicherry (numbers 3939, 3938 and 3936-3937 respectively).

2.4 The supposed date of the Kāśyapaśilpa

It is generally extremely difficult to establish an exact date for *śilpa* texts. "We have to realise that the Śilpaśāstra, according to its practical importance, was always exposed to additions or alterations which had to bring them 'up to date'. So it is very difficult to find out the correct date of a Śilpaśāstra in its ancient form and to distinguish the original kernel from later additions because the language lacks all special and personal characteristics and there are seldom some hints for chronological conclusions" (Losch 1949: 154). There are a few exceptions to this general rule, such as the Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra, which can be attributed to king Bhoja and therefore would derive from the 11th century A.D. or the Tantrasamuccaya in which the date of the birth of the author is given (see Sastri 1945: iii; Mallaya 1949: ii-iii). The Kāśyapaśilpa is not one of these exceptions. As stated by Losch (1949: 154): "…for compendiums like Maya, Kaśyapa etc. it is nearly impossible to find such characteristics as to settle a certain date."

Nevertheless, some attempts have been made to establish a date for the Kāśyapaśilpa. Kramrisch (1946: 269 note 67) situates it prior to the 15th century, before the Tantrasamuccaya and the Śilparatna. Both these works, indeed, have made use of the Kāśyapaśilpa.[26] Varma (1970: 3) believes that Kramrisch's date is too late and, on the basis of the style and the way of treating the subjects, estimates that the Kāśyapaśilpa was composed during the 12th century A.D. Pisharoti (1939: 29) notes that the Kāśyapaśilpa and the Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati give a different geographical distribution of the three traditional architectural styles, namely the Nāgara, the Vesara and the Drāvida. On this basis he considers the Kāśyapaśilpa to be later than the Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati, though still earlier than the Tantrasamuccaya. A similar period is suggested by Bhattacharyya: he places the Kāśyapaśilpa together with the Mānasāra between the 11th and the 15th century A.D., but at the same time thinks that it was compiled earlier than the Mānasāra and later than the Mayamata (Bhattacharyya 1963: 179-181). Finally, Ruelius (1978: 98) dates the Kāśyapaśilpa to the 11th or 12th century A.D.

It can be concluded that the Kāśyapaśilpa cannot have appeared later than the 15th century A.D. This date is certain: the commentary to the Tantrasamuccaya, where quotations from the Kāśyapaśilpa are found, was written in the 15th century as stated by the text itself. Nevertheless, establishing the lower limit for the timeframe of our text is more difficult. If we believe Pisharoti, according to whom the Kāśyapaśilpa is later than the Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati, we have to assume that the Kāśyapaśilpa cannot have been produced earlier than

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[26] Several passages of the Kāśyapaśilpa are found in the Śilparatna; the Kāśyapaśilpa is apparently also quoted in the Vimarśinī, the commentary written by the son of the author of the Tantrasamuccaya who lived in the 15th century AD (Mallaya 1949: iii).

late 11th century A.D.[27] On the other hand, it closely resembles the Mayamata, which was possibly written between the 9th and the 12th century A.D. (Dagens 1994: xliii), and to certain Āgamas, especially Dīpta and Ajita. The period after the 12th century A.D. thus seems to be too late a date for the Kāśyapaśilpa. Hence, we can agree with Ruelius and assume that the Kāśyapaśilpa was probably written around 11th – 12th century A.D.

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[27] Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati quotes Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra, which belongs to the 11th century A.D. See Losch 1949: 155: "The fact that the work cites often Bhoja assigns it to a date not earlier than 1060 a.Ch."