Temple consecration rituals in ancient India: Text and archaeology

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Chapter 7

Theory versus practice: traces of construction rituals in South and Southeast Asia

One of the main questions posed at the very beginning of this study concerns the relation between textual data and practice: were the rituals such as those described in the Kāśyapaśilpa and related texts ever performed? And, if this was the case, did it occur in accordance with the texts? The present chapter focuses on finding the answers to these questions through an analysis of the material traces of construction rituals as documented in the archaeological reports and through the accounts of eye-witnesses.

7.1 Material traces of construction rituals in India

One of the ways to determine whether the rituals known from the Kāśyapaśilpa and the related works have ever been performed is to examine whether there is a correlation between the consecration deposits described in the texts and the material remains of consecration deposits discovered in the area where these texts might have been used. In order to do so, it is desirable to first (Section 7.1.1) provide a brief overview of the characteristics of the consecration deposits installed in the course of the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* and *mūrdheṣṭakā* rituals according to the textual sources, paying special attention to the material aspects of the deposits, such as the presence or absence of a container, its appearance, the appearance of the first bricks and the crowning bricks, the nature of the objects placed in the container and in the middle of the bricks, and the location of the deposit within a building. The archaeological finds possessing features that are in agreement with the prescriptions of the texts will be presented in Section 7.1.2. A catalogue of archaeological finds, which might be considered testimonies to the very existence of construction rituals, is provided in Appendix IV.

7.1.1 Characteristics of the consecration deposits installed during the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* and *mūrdheṣṭakā* rituals according to the textual sources

7.1.1.1 *Prathameṣṭakā*

According to the majority of the textual sources presented in Chapter 5, the first bricks are rectangular. In addition, their length, breadth to height ratio is, in most cases, 4: 2: 1.[1] The measurements vary in each text. According to the Kāśyapaśilpa the length of the bricks should range from between eight and thirty-nine *aṅgulas*, but according to the Marīci Saṃhitā it should be from three to eleven *aṅgulas*.[2] *Aṅgula*, 'finger', is a relative standard of measurement and may be calculated, for instance, from the breadth of the finger of the patron or architect. As stated by almost all texts, the first 'bricks' should be made of the same material as the structure in which they are installed (see Chapter 5 note 19).

According to the South Indian texts, there are usually four first bricks in total and they are installed forming a square. When a fifth brick is used, it covers the other four.[3] Small objects, such as gems, metals, minerals, grains, earth taken from various locations, gold, golden lotus flowers and, in one case, figures of a tortoise and an elephant, are deposited in the middle of the bricks[4] and are not enclosed in any additional container (see, for example, KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 52cd).

As far as the location is concerned, according to all South Indian works, the first bricks are to be installed to the right or to the south of the entrance (*dvāradakṣiṇe*).[5] The texts do not any give precise information as to the level on which the bricks are to be placed, but it seems that they are installed in the lower parts of the temple base or in the foundation pit. In this regard it should be noted that the prescriptions for the digging of the foundation pit often precede the section about the first bricks, while the construction of the temple base usually follows it. In any case, the bricks ought to be on a lower level than the consecration deposit casket (*garbhabhājana*) installed during the *garbhanyāsa* ceremony.[6] In addition, some texts state that the bricks should be placed 'at the

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[1] See, for example, KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 23cd-24ab, MarīciS 6.3.2, ViṣvaksenaS 8.12-14, MM 12.104, Śilparatna 12.19-20.

[2] See KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 22cd-23ab and 24cd-25ab and MarīciS 6.3.2.

[3] See, for example, Ajita 10.59.

[4] KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 52cd: gems, gold lotus flower, Ajita 10.58-59: gems, metals, minerals, grains, *cūrṇapiṣṭa*, Suprabheda 27.30cd-31ab: gems, earth taken from various locations; in the absence of gems one should place gold, Kāmika 51.33: 'gems and so on' (*ratnādīn vinyaset madhye*…), Kāraṇa T313a 4.122cd: gems, five types of earth, Dīpta T1018 (252): five types of earth (*pūrayed avaṃ tatra pañcamṛdbhir vicakṣaṇaiḥ*; the verse is corrupt, perhaps one should read: *pūrayed avaṭe ratnān*), AtriS 6.35cd-36: gems, minerals, grains, a tortoise, an elephant, MarīciS 6.4.2.1: gems or gold, KJñK 30: only gems, ViṣvaksenaS 8.30cd-33ab: gems and earth.

[5] For the placing of the first bricks to the south or right from the entrance, see KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 48, Ajita 10.11cd-12ab, Dīpta T1080 chapter 2 page 251, Kāraṇa T313a 4.120, Suprabheda I.28.23 (as given by Bhatt 1964: 64 note 10), ĪŚGDP 27.63, KJñK 30, MarīciS 6.4.2.1, AtriS 6.31ab, ViṣṇuS 13.7cd, TantraS 1.89.

[6] The exceptions here are MM 12 and MS 12 in which the first bricks are installed on the top of the deposit casket.

foot of the pillar' (*stambhamūle*).[7] Considering that, according to the South Indian texts, the deposit casket should also be installed to the right or to the south of the door and 'at the foot of the pillar' (see note 28 below), it might be assumed that the first bricks and the casket are placed one upon the other. As for the 'pillar' under which the first bricks and the casket should be placed, the texts do not provide any additional information.

As far as the North Indian works are concerned, the passages dealing with the appearance of the first bricks are almost identical to those in the South Indian texts, but the prescriptions concerning the number and the location of the bricks are different and not always easy to understand. The Somaśambhupaddhati prescribes nine or five first bricks, which are installed under the walls of the temple and in the centre. The Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra, on the other hand, speaks of four bricks, which should be placed at the corners of the building ground, which face the intermediary directions.[8] It is difficult to guess what the exact location of the first bricks should be according to the three other North Indian texts, which mention the ritual, namely the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, Hayaśīrṣa Pāñcarātra and the Agni Purāṇa. This is because the passages lack details and can thus be interpreted in various ways. The texts state that the bricks should be placed in the intermediary directions (VDhP 94, four bricks) or in the cardinal and intermediary directions as well as in the middle (HayaP 12, AgniP 41, nine bricks). Yet, it is not clear whether the bricks should be installed in the centre of the foundation pit or under the walls of the building. In addition, the Viśvakarma Vāstuśāstra stipulates that the first brick or bricks be placed either in the northeast or in the west. The actual number of the bricks, however, is not specified.

Contrary to the South Indian treatises, the North Indian texts do not prescribe any items to be deposited in the middle of the bricks. Instead, the Somaśambhupaddhati, Hayaśīrṣa Pāñcarātra and the Agni Purāṇa mention that precious stones and gold should be placed inside the jars installed under the first bricks (one jar under each brick). The Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, on the other hand, advises that a single jar, either made of stone or of metal, should be installed in the centre of the foundation. Yet, the text does not say whether the jar should contain any items.

7.1.1.2 *Garbhanyāsa*

Almost all textual sources give a fairly precise description of the deposit casket used in the *garbhanyāsa* ceremony. It should be made of metal, preferably of gold, silver, brass or copper, of which the latter is mentioned most frequently.[9]

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[7] See KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 48, Dīpta T1018 2 (p.251), Kāraṇa T313a 4.120.

[8] See Brunner (1998: xii-xiii), SŚP IV.1 and SaSū 35.27cd-28ab.

[9] A deposit casket of copper is prescribed by ĪŚGDP 27.74cd, ViṣṇuS 13.24ab, MS 12.52cd, Śilparatna 12.32, MM 12.9ab, TantraS 12.5, AtriS 10.11. The KŚ prescribes the casket to be made

Other materials are also prescribed sporadically, namely stone, iron and, when these are not available, wood, clay and even sea-shells.[10] The shape of the deposit container is not specified in the Kāśyapaśilpa. According to many texts, however, the container should be either square or round,[11] and the North Indian treatises Hayaśīrṣa Pāñcarātra and the Agni Purāṇa state that it should be in the shape of a lotus (*padmākāra*).[12] Since nothing is said about the decoration of the casket, it might be assumed that its sides were left unadorned. The most characteristic feature of the deposit casket is the division in compartments: nine according to some texts, twenty-five according to others; certain treatises allow both types of casket.[13] Moreover, all texts state that the deposit casket should be firmly closed with a lid. With regard to its size, the prescriptions of the texts vary among each other as in the case of the first bricks. According to the Kāśyapaśilpa, the casket should measure from five *aṅgulas* up to twenty *aṅgulas*, its size depending on the height of the temple (see KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 8cd-9).

The passages in the North Indian texts[14] dealing with the appearance of the *garbhabhājana* differ from the South Indian ones in that they do not mention compartments. It is not entirely clear what conclusions are to be drawn from this state of affairs in the textual sources. We might, for instance, have to consider the possibility that the compartments were a self-evident part of the deposit casket and were thus not specifically mentioned in a certain group of texts.

The objects to be placed in the *garbhabhājana* are usually much more varied than those to be deposited together with the first bricks. Still, even here, of all the items mentioned precious and semiprecious stones appear in all the lists.[15] Apart from precious stones, minerals and pigments (*dhātu*),[16] grains (*bīja*;

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of gold, silver, copper or brass (KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 7cd-8ab). The same is stated by Ajita 17.6, Suprabheda T360 28.3cd, Dīpta 4.8 and Kāraṇa 6.7cd (as given by Bhatt 1964: 123 n. 1: *haimarājatakāṃsyaṃ vā tāmreṇa phelakāṃ kuru*. The transcript T313 does not mention brass: *suvarṇarajatābhyāṃ vā kuryāt tāmreṇa phelakā*).

[10] Kāmika 31.13cd (stone), KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 8a (transcript T1, iron), PādmaS 6.24cd (wood), PādmaS 2.22ab (clay, in the case of a deposit for a village), Ajita 17.40cd and Suprabheda T360 28.4ab (sea-shell).

[11] Cubical: Ajita 17.8ab, TantraS 12.5. Either cubical or round: Kāmika 31.13ab, Dīpta 4.10cd, Kāraṇa 6.12ab, MM 12.13, Śilparatna 12.44ab.

[12] AgniP 42.21 and HayaP 12.20. The passage is identical in both texts.

[13] Nine compartments are prescribed by AtriS 10.11cd, PādmaS 6.24ab, MarīciS 13.1.1, ŚrīprS 7.8b, KJñK 16. KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 13cd and Dīpta 4.12ab prescribe twenty-five compartments. MM 12.13cd, MS 12.19ab, Ajita 17.10ab, Suprabheda 28.6, Kāmika 31.12cd and Kumāra 31.2168ab leave a choice between nine and twenty-five compartments, but give prescriptions only for placing the objects in twenty-five compartments.

[14] Only three North Indian works mention *garbhanyāsa*: HayaP, AgniP and VV, see Chapter 5.

[15] Precious stones are prescribed by KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 19-21ab, Ajita 17.21cd-23, Kāmika 31.41-43, Kāraṇa 6.29-31, Dīpta 4.15-17, Suprabheda T360.28.18-19ab, MM 12.27cd-29, MS 12.42cd-45ab, ĪŚGDP 27.85cd-86ab, PādmaS 6.34cd-36ab, KJñK 45, ViṣṇuS 13.32, HayaP 12.15-16 etc.

[16] Prescribed by KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 26-27, Kāmika 31.44, Kāraṇa 6.40-41, Dīpta 4.23-24, Ajita 17.24-25ab, Suprabheda T360.28.20cd-21, MM 12.25cd-27ab, MS 12.40, ĪŚGDP 27.87-88, ViṣṇuS 13.31, AtriS 10.5, MarīciS 13.1.1, HayaP 12.14.

sometimes made of metal)[17] and the attributes of the main deity are placed in the deposit casket.[18] Moreover, according to many treatises *svastikas*[19] and figures of tortoises and elephants are placed[20] together with 'auspicious objects' (*maṅgala*),[21] medicinal plants or herbs (*oṣadhi*),[22] bulbs of lotuses and other plants,[23] earth taken from various locations,[24] metals (*loha*)[25] and 'fragrant substances' such as camphor.[26] Two texts mention images of lotus flowers made from gold.[27] Furthermore, specific items should be included in the deposit containers for each of the four *varṇas* (in the case of a deposit for a house).

As to the location of the deposit casket (*garbhabhājana*) within a temple, all South Indian treatises state that it should be installed to the right or to the south of the door and under 'a pillar'.[28] The same locations are mentioned for the first bricks. As for the level on which the casket should be installed, the texts are more precise than they are in the case of the first bricks. The prescriptions, although they may slightly vary in different texts, follow the same pattern. That is to say, the level on which the casket is installed depends on the caste of the patron; the higher the caste, the higher the position of the casket within the temple. For the Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiṣyas the *garbhabhājana* would usually be placed somewhere within the temple base; for the Śūdras it might be installed in the plinth. Moreover, some texts add that the placing of the deposit casket 'in the ground' is suitable for all the castes (see KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 4-5). According to the few North Indian texts, which mention the *garbhanyāsa*, the deposit box should be installed in the middle of the foundation pit.[29]

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[17] KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 28-29ab, Ajita 17.27-28ab, Kāmika 31.46-49cd, Kāraṇa 6.42cd-44, Suprabheda T360 28.19cd-20ab, MM 12. 23-25ab, MS 12.41-42cd, ĪŚGDP 27.87-88, ViṣṇuS 13.33, HayaP 12.17.

[18] KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 21cd-25, Ajita 17.21ab, Dīpta 4.19cd-22, Kāraṇ T360 28.25cd-26, MM 12.33, MS 12.50-51, ĪŚGDP 27.90, ViṣṇuS 13.34cd-35ab, MarīciS 13.1.1.

[19] MM 12.32ab, MS 12.38.

[20] Dīpta 4.18ab, 19ab (tortoise and elephant), KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 21cd (elephant only), Kāraṇa 6.33ab, ĪŚGDP 27.89ab (tortoise only). In the Vaiṣṇava texts, the image of a tortoise is often accompanied by other attributes of Viṣṇu, such as the conch shell, the discus, the club and the bird Garuḍa, see ViṣṇuS 13.34ff, PādmaS 6.8cd, AtriS 10.9cd, MarīciS 13.1.1 and HayaP 12.18cd.

[21] Kāmika 31.39cd-40, Kāraṇa 6.36-39, MM 12.34-35ab, MarīciS 13.1.1.

[22] Ajita 17.30, Kāmika 31.49cd-50ab, MM 12.30, MS 12.45cd-47.

[23] HayaP 12.13.

[24] HayaP 12.11-12.

[25] Ajita 17.25cd-26, Suprabheda T360.28.23cd-24ab, PādmaS 6.38cd-39, MarīciS 13.1.1, HayaP 12.18ab.

[26] Kāmika 31.50ab-51cd, MM 12.31, MS 12.48-49.

[27] ĪŚGDP 27.89ab and ViṣṇuS 13.35 (in the latter the lotus is included in the list of the attributes of Viṣṇu). In addition, MM 12.49, 45ab and 66a respectively prescribes a lotus only for a consecration deposit meant for the temples of Brahmā, Savitṛ and Lakṣmī.

[28] See KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 48 and *garbhanyāsa* 5, Kāmika 31. 83cd-84ab, Kāraṇa 6. 80cd, Ajita 17. 3cd, Raurava 60.16cd, ĪŚGDP 27.73, MS 12.65, MM 12.41ab-42cd, MarīciS 13.1.2, AtriS 10.38b-42a, Kriyādhikāra 5.31, ViṣṇuS 13.25cd, PādmaS 6.20, VāstuV 13.20.

[29] HayaP 12, AgniP 41, VV 6.

7.1.1.3 Mūrdheṣṭakā

During the *mūrdheṣṭakā* ritual, four bricks are installed in the upper part of the temple superstructure. They are arranged in the same way as the first bricks in the South Indian treatises: in other words, they form a square. It is not easy to understand from the texts where exactly the crowning bricks should be located. It is unlikely that they should be installed on the very summit of the temple. More plausibly, they are likely to be placed on a slightly lower level (see KŚ *mūrdheṣṭakā* 1cd-2), for instance under the temple finial (*stūpi*; see KŚ *mūrdheṣṭakā* 54). The size and general appearance of the crowning bricks are the same as those of the first bricks. In the middle, a small deposit consisting of precious and semiprecious stones, gold and other metals and grains[30] is installed, as in the case of the first bricks.

7.1.2 Consecration deposits excavated in India

7.1.2.1 Archaeological finds that may correlate with the *prathameṣṭakā* ceremony as described in the texts

Despite numerous descriptions in the texts, archaeological remains testifying to the performance of the *prathameṣṭakā* ceremony in ancient India are difficult to find. The only example discovered thus far was found in a Śaiva temple in Ulagapuram in Tamil Nadu. Below the *upāna*-course of the western door-jamb of a ruined *maṇḍapa* of the temple four granite slabs "in the shape of bricks" were discovered (Mitra 1981: 46). The stones were placed in such a way that there was a small opening in the middle of them, covered by another stone slab.[31] Mitra does not mention whether any additional items were found in the vicinity of the stones.

The fact that the stones formed a square and that they were located in the vicinity of the entrance points into the *prathameṣṭakā* ritual as described in the South Indian treatises. With regard to the number of stones, it should be noted that the Ajitāgama prescribes five first stones: the fifth one covering the other four (see Ajita 10.59). It is true that *upāna* is a location that is rather too high for the first bricks according to the Kāśyapaśilpa itself (see KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 4), where it

[30] KŚ *mūrdheṣṭakā* 51cd-52: gems, Ajita 15.43-43: gems, metals, grains, Dīpta T1018 20 (page 310): gems, grains, Kāmika 61.18cd: gems, Kāraṇa 10.37-38ab: gems, KJñK 32: gems or gold, MarīciS 13.2.3: gems or gold, AtriS 10.53cd-54ab: gems or gold, PādmaS 9.32cd-33: gems, minerals, grains, metals, MM 18.147cd-150: gems, grains and grains made of metals, colouring substances, herbs, MS 18.191-196: gems, metals, Śilparatna 34.20ab: gems.

[31] Unfortunately, no photograph or drawing was available to me.

is mentioned as one of the possible places for the *garbhabhājana*. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that the majority of the texts do not provide precise instructions with respect to the level on which the first bricks should be installed and that, as in the case of the level on which *garbhabhājana* should be installed, there might have been differences among various traditions.[32]

As reported by Mitra (1981: 46), the Ulagapuram temple belongs to the Chola period, which means that it is contemporary to the majority of our textual sources.[33] Moreover, the Śaiva Siddhānta works that form a substantial part of the textual sources discussed in Chapter 5 apparently enjoyed a great popularity in Tamil Nadu, the region where the stones were found (see Chapter 2.1). Hence, it is not unlikely that the Ulagapuram stones are not only remains of a ceremony of placing the first bricks, but that this ceremony was also performed according to one of the ritual treatises mentioned in Chapter 5.

7.1.2.2 Archaeological finds that may correlate with the *garbhanyāsa* ceremony as described in the texts

Consecration deposit receptacles, although not abundant in India, were discovered at several locations. Yet, the majority of them cannot be considered remains of the *garbhanyāsa* performed on the basis of the sources discussed in Chapter 5. They are never simultaneously divided into compartments and installed in the vicinity of the entrance as stipulated in the South Indian treatises, nor are they simultaneously lotus-shaped and installed in the centre of the foundation as required by all but one of the North Indian texts.[34] In a few cases, the relationship with the texts is impossible to determine, on the one hand, because the publications mentioning the finds often lack essential information, such as the material of the receptacle or its exact location within the building, and, on the other, because the descriptions of the *garbhabhājana* in certain texts lack details.[35]

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[32] According to TantraS 1.89 the first bricks are to be installed in the *pāduka*, which in many texts is a synonym of *upāna* (for *pāduka* and *upāna*, see Dagens 1984: 40). TantraS was written in the 15th century AD. Yet, it is possible that the practice of installing the first bricks in the *upāna* was known also in the earlier centuries.

[33] The Chola period is usually dated 9th – 13th century AD (see Harle 1994: 292-327). The texts, in which the first bricks, numbering four or five, should be installed near the entrance date, roughly, from the 7th to the 16th century AD (see Chapter 5).

[34] The description of the *garbhabhājana* in the North Indian Viśvakarma Vāstuśāstra is not detailed enough to be of any use for the present investigation. The text states only that the deposit casket should be made of gold, silver or copper.

[35] For example, Sarma (1982: 101), discussing the pot discovered in the Mahadeva Pushpabhadrasvami temple in Vijayapuri (Andhra Pradesh) does not mention the material of which the pot is made. Concerning the location, it is only stated that the pot was found "beneath

The only receptacle that corresponds with the descriptions given in the South Indian texts and which may perhaps be brought into connection with *garbhanyāsa* was not discovered *in situ*. It is a square copper box with twenty-five regular compartments and provided with a flat lid.[36] Its length, breadth and height measure nine inches. Unfortunately, many important details about the find are missing in the report. For instance, it is not reported whether, at the time of discovery, the box contained any traces of metals, earth or vegetable matter. The original location of the box cannot be ascertained either According to the available reports, the box was found during the digging of a well on the outskirts of the territory of Pondicherry (Lamb 1964a), but it is impossible to establish whether it was originally deposited there or if it ended up there by chance. Moreover, it is not stated whether there are any ancient temples or other structures in the vicinity of the place where the box was found.

Yet, the material and the shape of the box, particularly the division into twenty-five compartments, suggest that it is highly plausible that it had been used as a deposit casket during a *garbhanyāsa* ritual. Even the size of the box seems to be within the range of dimensions prescribed for a deposit casket in many texts, including the Kāśyapaśilpa.[37] It should be added that the Pondicherry box, if indeed it was a *garbhabhājana*, could have been installed during a ceremony of founding a village and in this case it might simply have been deposited in the ground, on a specific spot of land, not within a building. The placing of a deposit box for a town or a village is mentioned in a few architectural and ritual texts.[38]

The only example of a (partial) correspondence with the North Indian texts is a brick with depressions in the form of a lotus with eight petals, which was discovered in the central part of the foundations of a brick structure in Birdpur, Uttar Pradesh (Mitra 1981: 47 and plate 25). Under the brick a copper vessel was found. The correspondence with the texts is, however, not complete. According to the sources, the deposit receptacle should be made of metal.[39] Moreover, none of the architectural and ritual treatises explicitly state that the lotus-shaped container should be installed on top of a copper vessel. On the other hand, it should be noted that the same texts that speak of a lotus-shaped deposit box stipulate that the first bricks must be placed on top of metal jars, one of which is deposited in the centre of the foundation (see Section 7.1.1.1 above). What we see in Birdupur might therefore be understood as a conflation of two rituals that are described in the North Indian texts, namely the *garbhanyāsa* and *prathameṣṭakā*. At this point

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the *garbhagṛha*." On the other hand, one text mentioning the *garbhanyāsa* does not provide a sufficient description of the deposit casket (see VV 6).

[36] For the photograph of the box, see Lamb (1964a, plate II).

[37] See KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 8cd-9 and section 2.1.2 above. Considering that five *aṅgulas* measure approximately 3.5in, the Pondicherry casket measures almost thirteen *aṅgulas*. It thus fits the prescriptions of the Kāśyapaśilpa.

[38] See AtriS 6.38-40, MM 9.101-128 and MS 12.84ab-92ab.

[39] See HayaP 12.21ab, AgniP 41.21.

it should be noted that the texts, although fairly uniform in their descriptions of the *garbhanyāsa* as far as the main elements of the ritual are concerned, may vary considerably in details. Thus it is possible that the brick and the metal vessel discovered in Birdpur are remains of the *garbhanyāsa* ritual, but performed following a tradition slightly different to the one explained in the texts described in Chapter 5. Unfortunately, essential information, such as the date and the initial function of the structure in which the objects were discovered, are not available.

Stone slabs that, like the Birdpur brick, have cavities in the form of lotus petals are mentioned in a few archaeological reports, but unfortunately their provenance is unknown (see Oertel 1908: 102, Marshall 1915: 87, Dikshit 1938: 94). According to Marshall (1915: 87), these are *āyāgapaṭṭa* slabs – votive tablets of the Jain religion,[40] but no arguments in support of this identification are given. In view of their similarity to the Birdpur brick, it cannot be excluded that at least some of these slabs functioned as receptacles for consecration deposits.

7.1.2.3 Archaeological finds that may correlate with the *mūrdheṣṭakā* ceremony as described in the texts

None of the archaeological reports, which I have been able to check, mention the discovery of four bricks or stone slabs in the *śikhara* of a temple. Superstructure deposits of a different nature, however, were found in the *śikhara*s of eight temples of Pāpanāsi in Andhra Pradesh. They consist of copper vases containing several objects, such as precious stones and fragments of gold leaf (a detailed description of the finds is given in Appendix IV). The Pāpanāsi finds do not fit the descriptions of the *mūrdheṣṭakā* ceremony, mainly because the items were installed in jars. As previously stated, the objects deposited during the *mūrdheṣṭakā* ceremony should be placed 'loose' in the middle of the four bricks, without any container. Moreover, the archaeological report dealing with the discovery does not mention the crowning bricks.[41] Hence, the copper jars of Pāpanāsi either bear testimony to a distinct tradition of performing the *mūrdheṣṭakā* (providing that the four bricks were present, but not mentioned in the archaeological report), or they are the remains of an entirely different ritual, perhaps related to the 'installation of the vases' (in the superstructure) not dealt with in the Kāśyapaśilpa, but described in a few other texts (see, for instance, ĪŚGDP 34.20cd-26ab).

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[40] *āyāgapaṭas* are cult objects of the Jain faith. They are "votive tablets, square slabs bearing relief sculptures on one side, possibly used as altars near a stūpa for the deposit of offerings" (Harle 1986: 61 and fig. 41). See also Pal (1994: 26, 119).

[41] The bricks might have not been reported, being considered insignificant by someone unacquainted with the ritual texts. Nevertheless, the fact that the items were placed within vases is enough to assume that the builders of the Pāpanāsi temples followed a tradition distinct from that described by the texts discussed in Chapter 5.

7.2 The accounts of witnesses of construction rituals

The single written account of a construction ritual, which dates from approximately the same period as the Kāśyapaśilpa and related texts is Baya Cakaḍā, a 13th century palm-leaf manuscript written in Oriya (Boner, Śarma and Das 1972: xli-xlii). It is a book of accounts, which records the expenditures used for the construction of the Sun temple of Konarak (Orissa), including the costs of some of the ceremonies performed during the construction. One such ceremony is the installation of metal jars on the summits of the main temple and front hall. According to the manuscript, the jar installed on the summit of the main temple contained white paddy, curd, 18 precious stones, a "*napuṃsakā śilā*", "*haritāla* stones" (yellow orpiment), pure camphor, seeds of fragrant plants, *sāla* resin, twelve gold pieces and twenty silver pieces. The placing of the objects within the jar was accompanied by the recitation of mantras (Boner, Śarma and Das 1972: 143-144). Similar ingredients were deposited in the jar installed on the top of the front hall. They included paddy, biri,[42] curd, "9 precious stones (navaratna) for the 9 planets," "11 golden discs for the Ādityas" (ibid., 131) and consecrated food "from the great temple of Puruṣottama" (ibid., 132). After the items were deposited, the jars were wrapped in a red silken cloth.

The installation of the jars on the summit of a temple is not dealt with in the Kāśyapaśilpa, but the placing of nine precious stones, gold, grain, camphor and yellow orpiment in a deposit container, as well as wrapping the container in cloth, are all common elements of the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* and *mūrdheṣṭakā*. Moreover, it is also interesting to see that Baya Cakaḍā mentions the neuter stone, *napuṃsakā śilā*. As stated by the Kāśyapaśilpa, neuter stones should be used for the ceremony of placing the crowning bricks (KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 21).

Apart from Baya Cakaḍā, no first-hand accounts of construction rituals dating from the same period as the texts are available. However, there are several detailed reports testifying to the popularity of such rituals in India during the 19th and 20th centuries. Unfortunately, only a few rituals described in these reports display certain similarities to the textual prescriptions. For example, in Sirmur, Punjab, four jars filled with objects brought from various sacred sites (such as Hardwar) are installed in the four corners of the new house (Rose 1909: 123). The foundation stones are placed above the jars. This resembles the practice of placing the first bricks above metal jars filled with valuables as described in the North Indian works, such as the Hayaśīrṣa Pāñcarātra, the Agni Purāṇa and the Somaśambhupaddhati. In Amritsar, mangoes, betel leaves, curds, and so forth are placed in the foundation pit. Next, a jar containing a coconut, seven kinds of grain, a gold or silver coin and a paper recording the year, day and hour of laying

[42] Phaseolus Radiatur (Boner, Śarma and Das 1972: 58).

the foundation is covered with cloth and deposited in the pit. The jar is sprinkled with oil, and gods and snakes are worshipped. Finally, the pit is closed with five or seven flat bricks (ibid.). Also here certain correspondences with the texts can be established. Thus, the deposit container receives seven kinds of grain (cf. KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 28-29), it is wrapped with cloth and sprinkled, the *pūja* is performed and the pit is closed with bricks.

A report by Stevenson (see Stevenson 1971: 353-360, 408-415, orig. pub. 1920) dates from approximately the same period. She provides an account of how water is poured on the foundation of a new house and how the gods and the building tools are subsequently worshipped. During the next phase of the ritual, a copper or an earthenware pot filled with the five nectars and, as expressed by Stevenson, with a 'heterogeneous collection of articles' including a coin, an areca-nut, unhusked rice, five different kinds of leaves, a lump of turmeric and *dūrvā* grass, is placed in the foundations. The pot is surrounded by concrete so that a little platform is formed on which the foundation stone is laid. The foundation slab, known as *padma-śilā*, the lotus-stone, is decorated with a carving of an eight-petalled lotus and a *svastika* (Stevenson 1971: 354-355), which calls to mind the stone slabs decorated with lotus flowers discovered on various ancient sites in India. The construction ceremony for a temple described by Stevenson (ibid., 408-409) resembles the one for a house, but is more elaborate.

7.3 Material traces of construction rituals outside India

The limited number of excavated objects in India matching the descriptions of the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* and the *mūrdheṣṭakā* is certainly surprising, especially when one bears in mind the amount of textual sources that contain descriptions of these rituals. Therefore, before jumping to the seemingly obvious conclusion that the performance of these ceremonies was extremely rare in ancient India, it may be useful to try and find additional data from regions, which kept close contact with ancient India for centuries and where traces of Indian culture are still visible. The spread of Indian culture was accompanied by the spread of Sanskrit: the language of the textual tradition, which forms the basis for the present study. For that reason, in the search for the archaeological remains of construction rituals, one should also take the regions where Sanskrit was known, at least to the political and religious elite, into consideration, namely the area stretching from present-day Afghanistan, through Nepal and Sri Lanka to Malaysia and Indonesia. The evidence of Sanskrit literacy in this area is provided by numerous Sanskrit inscriptions on stone, terracotta, copper, silver and gold and its cultural unity has already been underscored by Pollock (1996), who referred to it as the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis'.

In contrast to India, the survey of the archaeological reports from other parts of the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' resulted in numerous archaeological remains

testifying to the performance of various construction rituals. The finds that show, to a degree, correspondences with the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* and *mūrdheṣṭakā* as described in the textual sources, are presented below. A detailed description of excavated objects (over two hundred in number) considered as traces of construction rituals is given in Appendix IV.

7.3.1 Archaeological finds, discovered outside India, bearing similarities with the *prathameṣṭakā* ceremony as described in the texts

Four rectangular stones forming a square were found at Prasat Trapeang Run 208, 2, an early 11th century temple located in Angkor, Cambodia.[43] The stones were discovered in the pit in the centre of the structure. They were accompanied by five little gold leaves placed in the middle (Parmentier 1936: 283-284). The arrangement of the stones as well as the presence of the gold leaves[44] suggest the performance of the *prathameṣṭakā* ritual as described in the South Indian treatises. The location, on the other hand, is not consistent with the South Indian tradition: the four stones were not installed to the south or to the right of the entrance. As far as the North Indian texts are concerned, the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa seems to allow the installation of four first bricks in the centre of the foundation pit (see Section 7.1.1.1 above). Yet, it does not mention that any objects should be placed, without a container, in the middle of the bricks. The consecration deposit of Prasat Trapeang Run, therefore, while possessing certain features prescribed by the Indian treatises, does not fully correspond with any specific text or group of texts.

Similar stones to those of Prasat Trapeang Run, but five in number, were reported from Prasat Ak Yom, an 8th century Śaiva temple situated south of the Western Baray in Angkor.[45] The stones were found among the debris blocking the pit leading to an underground chamber, which was located much lower, at a depth of 12.35 metres below the aperture of the pit.[46] The pit also contained a stone statuette of a masculine deity and two pieces of gold leaf, each bearing an image

[43] Parmentier (1936: 284) dates the temple 1006 AD.

[44] Items most frequently prescribed to be placed in the middle of the first bricks are precious stones. According to several texts, however, when these are not available, they can be substituted by gold. See, for example, Suprabheda 27.30cd-31ab and MarīciS 6.4.2.1.

[45] According to Glaize (1963: 68) and Chihara (1996: 78), the older parts of Prasat Ak Yom date from the 8th century AD. Yet, on page 271, Glaize (1963) states that the construction of the temple already started in the 7th century and continued up to the 9th century AD: "Commencé sans doute au VIIe siècle et n'ayant pris son aspect definitive qu'au début du IXe…."

[46] The measurements of the stones vary in ABIA 1935 and BEFEO 35 (the report by Trouvé). While in ABIA (page 32) the stones are rectangular (0.35 in length by 0.25 in breadth and 0.14 in height), according to BEFEO they are almost cubical (0.35 in length by 0.25 in breadth and 0.34 in height).

of an elephant in repoussé (Trouvé 1933: 1130-1131). Parmentier suggests that the stones of Prasat Ak Yom were originally surrounding a consecration deposit.[47] If this was the case, the consecration deposit of Prasat Ak Yom would, like the one from Prasat Trapeang Run, follow the South Indian texts in the distribution of the stones, but would deviate from them in terms of the location. With regard to the number of stones, it should be remembered that certain Śaivāgamas prescribe five first stones, the fifth one covering the other four (see Ajita 10.59). It should also be noted that certain texts prescribe the placing of an image of an elephant in the middle of the four first bricks (see AtriS 6.35cd-36).[48]

In addition to the Cambodian finds, two deposits, consisting of four bricks forming a square with small items placed in the middle of them, were found in Po Nagar, a group of Śaiva temples in the province of Nha Trang in southern Vietnam. They were discovered inside the central shaft formed by the interior sides of four very thick foundation walls in the northwest tower and in the west tower of the complex (Parmentier 1906, 1918: 443).[49] At the bottom of the shaft of the northwest tower were four large bricks, which touched each other at the corners thus forming a square. They measured 34 by 19 by 11 cm (Parmentier 1906: 291), which more or less fits with the prescriptions of the Kāśyapaśilpa.[50] In the small cavity between the bricks a number of gold sheets were found, apparently deposited according to a specific order. Four square gold plates engraved with the figure of an elephant stood alongside the bricks. The remaining ones, in various forms, namely a lizard or a crocodile, a tortoise and a trident, were placed along the diagonals. In the centre, a lotus had been deposited, also cut out of gold leaf, and the ensemble was covered by fine sand. On the top, there was a thicker square plate divided diagonally into two equal parts: one made of gold, the other silver.[51] In addition, each of the four bricks had a square piece of gold leaf underneath. Other pieces of gold and of copper, a small piece of jade and a golden thread of around 2m long were found in the vicinity of the bricks. Half-way down the shaft, in the corners, were four earthen vases. One of them contained calcium (ibid., 294-295).

The deposit discovered in the west tower was very similar. Here gold and silver sheets, some of them engraved with the figures of an elephant and a

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[47] "…ils devaient entourer ce dépôt comme les briques qu'il a retrouvées autour de dépôt sacré de Pō Nagar à Nha-trang." (Parmentier as quoted by Trouvé 1933: 1130). For the deposits of Po Nagar, see below.

[48] Moreover, the placing of a figure of an elephant inside the deposit casket is prescribed by KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 21cd, Dīpta 4.18ab, 19ab, MarīciS 13.1.1, Kāmikāgama 31.54cd-55ab (only for a deposit for a *kṣatriya*) and MM 12.54 (only for the temple of Vajrin).

[49] 'Tower' is a common term for the main sanctuary in Champa, also known as tower-shrine or *kalan* (see, for example, Guillon 2001: 30).

[50] The length corresponds with the prescriptions. On the other hand, the height of the bricks is not exactly half their breadth and their breadth is not half their length as prescribed by the Kāśyapaśilpa (KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 23cd).

[51] See drawing in Parmentier (1918: 444, fig. 133), showing the distribution of the items.

tortoise, were also enclosed by four bricks.[52] Under the bricks, on the surface of the virgin soil, about sixty small gold squares were found. It is not known in which way the gold and silver sheets were originally placed, but according to Parmentier (1918: 443) they were possibly arranged in a way similar to that of the deposit in the northwest tower.

Although no specific text describes that the same assembly of objects as found in Po Nagar should be deposited during the *prathameṣṭakā* ceremony, several of the Po Nagar finds are mentioned among the items to be installed, if not during the *prathameṣṭakā*, then during the *garbhanyāsa*.[53] As in the case of the aforementioned deposits, the location does not correspond with the texts.

The temples of Po Nagar have been rebuilt several times, and the present exteriors can be dated to the 11th or the 12th century AD (Guillon 2001: 195-196). The construction of the temples, however, begun much earlier, during the late 8th century; the northwest tower itself possesses an inscription dating from the early 9th century. It may be assumed that the foundations of the northwest tower and west tower were not altered and that the deposits found there should, therefore, date to the late 8th or early 9th centuries at the latest.[54] In this case, they would be contemporary to the similar foundation deposit of Prasat Ak Yom.

Consecration deposits installed in the middle of four stones have also been found in Java. Four such deposits were discovered in Candi Viṣṇu,[55] which is one of the temples of the Loro Jonggrang complex in Prambanan, Central Java. The complex is dedicated to Śiva and was constructed during the 9th century AD.[56] It consists of three large temples standing in a row (the main temple: Candi Śiva, and on its sides Candi Viṣṇu and Candi Brahmā), three smaller temples opposite the three large ones, and a number of secondary shrines. The deposits of Candi Viṣṇu, consisting of bronze pots surrounded by four stones and covered by

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[52] The list of the objects discovered is given by Parmentier (1906: 292-293).

[53] AtriS 6.35cd-36 prescribes that gold tortoises are to be placed together with the first bricks and by Dīpta 4.18ab, 19ab, ĪŚGDP 27.89ab, MarīciS 13.1.1, ViṣṇuS 13.34cd, PādmaS 6.8cd and AtriS 10.9cd say they should be placed into the deposit casket. The placing of a gold lotus flower together with the first bricks is prescribed by KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 52cd; placing of gold lotus flowers in the deposit casket is prescribed by ĪŚGDP 27.89ab and by ViṣṇuS 13.35 (in the latter it is in the list of attributes of Viṣṇu). In addition, MM 12.49 prescribes a lotus for a consecration deposit meant for a temple of Brahmā. Tridents are often included in the list of attributes of Śiva, suitable for a consecration deposit for a Śaiva temple, see KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 25ab. For the texts prescribing placing of a gold elephant, see note 47 above.

[54] William Southworth, personal communication.

[55] On Java, 'candi' is the popular term for archaeological monuments, both Hindu and Buddhist, dating from the so-called "Indianized" or Classical Period (see, for example, Soekmono 1995: 1).

[56] The complex was dated on the basis of the Siwagrha inscription of 856 AD (de Casparis 1956: 280-330). This is one of the very few cases when a Central Javanese temple can be dated with some precision. As far as other Central Javanese temples are concerned, their dating, with only a few exceptions, cannot not be determined due to the lack of inscriptions. The dating of the Central Javanese temples provided by the majority of available sources and quoted in the present study are therefore tentative and should be regarded with caution.

another stone slab, were located in the base of the temple below the circumambulatory gallery at the four corners (Soenarto 1985; Soekmono 1995: 116). Two pots contained semiprecious stones and pieces of metals (gold, silver and bronze), the other two were empty (Soenarto 1985: 384-388).[57] Unfortunately, no photographs or drawings of the finds are provided. In addition to the four deposits, two empty cavities, perhaps originally housing bronze pots such as those described above, were found at the centre of the north side and under the threshold on the east side. Hence, the distribution of the pots and the (assemblies of) bricks in Candi Viṣṇu resembled, perhaps, the distribution of the first bricks and the metal jars in the Somaśambhupaddhati, that is in the corners and in the mid-points of the walls.

Stones forming a square were also discovered in the central shaft of Candi Brahmā, another temple of the Loro Jonggrang complex. However, nothing was found in the middle of the stones. The main deposit of the candi was located more or less in the centre of the structure, but on a much higher level (see IJzerman 1891: 65-66 and Appendix IV).

Finally, I would like to draw attention to one of the deposit boxes preserved in the office of the Dinas Purbakala in Prambanan. It resembles numerous other deposit receptacles found in Java (see below) – it is a cubical stone box with nine cavities shaped like a lotus with eight petals and it is covered with a lid. Yet, contrary to other such receptacles, it was discovered surrounded by four large stone blocks (see Lamb 1961: plate 15),[58] which, from the textual point of view, makes it a combination of the *prathameṣṭakā* with the *garbhanyāsa*. It is interesting to note that the practice of installing a compartmented deposit box between four stones was also known in ancient India. The 15th century commentary on the Tantrasamuccaya, a treatise on architecture that enjoyed a great popularity in Kerala, suggests that the square opening left among the first bricks is, in fact, destined for a deposit casket (see TantraS, commentary of Śaṅkara to verse 1.90). Considering that the level on which the first brick should be installed is not specified in many texts, it is possible that placing the deposit box in the middle of the first bricks was also followed in other regions of India.

[57] The pot in the southeast corner contained one rough agate, four silver pieces, five gold pieces, and two broken pieces of bronze while in the bowl at the southwest were found a piece of silver, three pieces of bronze and six of gold.

[58] The find site, unfortunately, is not reported and it is not known whether the box was discovered empty.

7.3.2 Archaeological finds, discovered outside India, bearing similarities with the *garbhanyāsa* ceremony as described in the texts

As mentioned above, the South Indian texts, including the Kāśyapaśilpa, describe a *garbhabhājana* that is either square or round, divided into compartments and installed to the right or to the south of the door. According to the North Indian treatises, it should be shaped like a lotus and buried in the middle of the foundation. Nothing is said about the compartments, but it cannot be ruled out that compartmented consecration deposit boxes were also known in the north of the subcontinent (see Section 7.1.1.2 above).

A remarkable number of the deposit receptacles unearthed in Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka are divided into compartments. This is especially surprising, because in India itself only a few such receptacles have actually been discovered. Regrettably, many of the compartmented containers were not found *in situ*. Moreover, the information concerning the find sites are often missing, as are the details on the contents of the few deposits discovered intact.[59] It is therefore not possible to check whether the objects deposited within the boxes and their location would correspond with the texts. In the few cases when the compartmented deposit receptacles were found intact, their contents to some extent corresponded with the textual prescriptions. In one case, the location was also consistent with the texts. Intact compartmented deposit vessels were unearthed in Candi Ngempon (formerly known as Candi Muncul), Loro Jonggrang and Candi Gebang in Central Java, Karangrejo and Jolotundo in East Java, and Candi Bukit Batu Pahat in Malaysia; objects, being presumably parts of a consecration deposit, were found in the vicinity of a compartmented box in Candi Gebang in Java. Sections 7.3.2.1 to 7.3.2.7 give a brief description of these finds. The remaining compartmented deposit boxes from the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' are discussed in Section 7.3.2.8.

Several excavated receptacles without compartments also contained objects that the Indian texts say should be deposited in a *garbhabhājana*. These, as well as a few miscellaneous finds, are dealt with in Section 7.3.2.9.

[59] Lamb (1961: 7) observed: "The contents of these Javanese reliquaries which were found intact are not easy to relate to their respective reliquaries without some considerable research owing to the way in which they have all been jumbled together in cardboard boxes in the treasure room of the Jakarta Museum." The same can be said about many objects originating from consecration deposits discovered in other regions.

7.3.2.1 Candi Ngempon.

Candi Ngempon, formerly known as Candi Muncul, is located near Ngempon, Central Java. Soekmono (1979: 472) ascribes it to the so-called New Dieng style (730-800 AD) but, as in the case of many other Central Javanese structures, the exact date of this Śaiva temple cannot be established with any precision. In the central shaft of the candi, a cubical stone box was discovered. It was covered with a lid and divided into seventeen compartments (Soekmono 1995: 10, 130). It is interesting to note that the compartments had the shape of lotus petals, which brings to mind the brick discovered in Birdpur, Uttar Pradesh. Pieces of gold and bronze, beads, quartz crystals and sand mixed with earth were found in the box. The deposit box of Candi Ngempon corresponds very well to the descriptions of a *garbhabhājana* as given in the North Indian works. Thus, it was installed in the centre of the structure and can be described as 'having the form of a lotus' (*padmākāra*, the term used in the texts). Moreover, the pieces of gold, bronze and the other objects found within the box are all included in the lists of items to be deposited during the *garbhanyāsa* ritual. The only element that is not consistent with the majority of the texts is the material from which the box is made, namely stone instead of metal. Yet, in one text stone is indeed mentioned as a potential material for a deposit casket (see Kāmikāgama 31.13cd).[60]

7.3.2.2 Loro Jonggrang

The temple complex of Loro Jonggrang on the Prambanan Plain in Central Java (see Section 7.3.1 above) yielded numerous consecration deposits, but there was only one compartmented box among them. It was found in one of the courtyards of the complex; the exact location is not reported. The central compartment of the box contained thirteen gold fragments. The eight surrounding compartments each contained a few pieces of gold and between two to four other items, such as pieces of iron, mica, quartz crystals, other minerals and stones. In addition to this, the compartment facing south contained lumps of red earth (for the distribution of the items, see Appendix IV.1.2.51).

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[60] The box discovered in Candi Muncul was surmounted by a bronze pipe placed vertically (Soekmono 1995: 10). None of the texts mention such a pipe above the *garbhabhājana*. On the other hand, Tantrasamuccaya 1.74ff and Śilparatna 10.6ff mention a copper tube (known as *yoganāla*) as a part of a consecration deposit, different from the *garbha*, which should be installed in the centre of the foundation pit (in these two texts the *garbhabhājana* is installed to the right or to the south of the temple door). A pipe, similar to that of Candi Muncul, was also discovered in the temple shaft of Candi Merak (Central Java). Here, however, the deposit place was otherwise empty (Soekmono 1995: 10).

7.3.2.3 Candi Gebang

Candi Gebang is a very small Śaiva temple located to the north-northeast of Yogyakarta. Like Candi Ngempon, Soekmono (1979: 472) ascribed it to the period between 730-800 AD. [61] During the excavation of the candi, a square stone box covered with a lid and divided into nine compartments in the form of lotus petals was found (Stutterheim 1937a: 24 and plate 10). No additional information about the location of the box is given. When discovered, the box was presumably empty, but further excavation yielded several objects, such as bronze and gold images of crescents and tridents, which perhaps constituted the consecration deposit (Stutterheim 1937a: plate 11). This seems plausible as several Indian texts prescribe placing images of tridents inside a consecration deposit for a temple of Śiva.[62]

7.3.2.4 Karangrejo

An earthenware container with cavities resembling rays or lotus petals was found in the village of Karangrejo near Kediri in East Java. Unfortunately, the report does not say whether the box was discovered in a temple or the ground. Like the receptacle of Candi Ngempon, it was covered with a lid, but there were nine cavities, rather than seventeen. Inside three lotus flowers made of gold were found, along with fragments of bronze vessels (Stutterheim 1939: 121). Regretfully, nothing can be said about the date of the deposit.

7.3.2.5 Jolotundo

Jolotundo is a sacred bathing place near the village of Pandaan, south of Surabaya in East Java. It is a terraced structure cut into a slope of a mountain, which consists of three 'ponds' (the function of the 'ponds' has thus far not been established with certainty). In the middle of the central 'pond' there is a stone structure resembling a small shrine. The Jolotundo site has been dated 977 AD on the basis of an inscription (Groeneveldt 1887: 217; Stutterheim 1956; O'Connor 1966a: 53; Klokke 1993: 12). A nine-chambered stone box, filled with various objects, was found at the site (see Plate 3). The exact location where it was

[61] According to Dumarçay (1993: 80) the temple was originally Buddhist and rebuilt in the 9th century AD.

[62] See, for example, KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 25ab, but also Dīpta 4.21cd, Kāmika 31.52ab, Suprabheda 28.25cd, MM 12.33.

discovered was, however, not reported.[63] The compartments of the Jolotundo box are square and arranged in three rows of three. The walls of the central compartment are slightly higher than the others. The box rests on a round double lotus cushion and it was initially covered with a pyramidal lid. The cushion and the box are carved out of a single stone.[64] It is interesting that both South and North Indian traditions seem to be represented in the Jolotundo box as it is divided into compartments, yet, at the same time, a part of it is shaped like a lotus.

The objects that filled the box are more elaborate than those discovered in the sites discussed above. The central compartment contained a cylindrical gold casket. Silver coins, silver pieces of irregular shape and several figures cut out of gold leaf, namely a tortoise, two 'crowned snakes',[65] a crescent and two rectangles were placed in the remaining ones (van Hoëvell 1851: 112, Groeneveldt 1887: 217). All the gold pieces were inscribed. On the first snake was written, in Old Javanese script (as given by Brandes in Groeneveldt 1887: 216), '*o*m *baḥ svâhâ*', on the second one '*o*m *phaṭ svâhâ*', on the turtle '*ra*m', on the crescent '*ya*m'.[66] The first rectangular piece bore the inscription: '*o*m *ĩśânâya bhûtâdhipataye svâhâ*', the second: '*o*m *agnaye dvijâdhipataye svâhâ*'.

As already noted, several texts prescribe that a gold tortoise be placed in the deposit casket (see note 20 above). Moreover, images of snakes are sometimes prescribed for a consecration deposit to be installed in a well, a water reservoir and in a bridge.[67] A link with Indian architectural and ritual texts is also formed by the Sanskrit inscriptions on the gold pieces. Two of them are prayers to Īśāna and Agni, the gods of the northeast and southeast respectively. Although the textual sources do not explicitly state that the names of the gods of directions should be written down and placed into the deposit casket, the *lokapālas* are often invoked in the eight or nine jars placed during the *kumbhasthāpana* ceremony, which is a part of any consecration rite, including the *garbhanyāsa* (see the note to KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 39-41ab). By pouring water from the jars over the deposit casket, the *lokapālas* are transferred into it. It would be interesting to find out if the invocations to Īśāna and Agni were placed in the compartments facing the geographical directions associated with them. Unfortunately, the exact distribution of the items in the Jolotundo box was not recorded. It is plausible that the box initially possessed a set of eight or nine gold or silver pieces, each of them bearing an invocation to a guardian of directions. The gold objects (but not the

[63] van Hoëvell (1851: 112) writes that the box was discovered "bij het graven in het vierkant, waarom de waterstraal nederstort, diep in den grond", but he does not give additional information. According to Bosch (1961b: 51) the box was found under the small structure in the centre.

[64] The box has been depicted in various publications, see for example Lamb (1961, plate 20), Mitra (1981, plate 32) and Soekmono (1995, plate 1). For the drawing of the box and its lid see van Hoëvell (1851, fig. 8).

[65] These figures were referred to by van Hoëvell (1851: 112) as a dragon and a lion, but this identification does not seem plausible.

[66] According to Patt (1983: 224) 'the turtle read "ram" or "yam."'

[67] MM 12.99 and Mahānirvāṇatantra 13.170 as given by Pott (1966: 91-92).

silver ones) discovered in the box were acquired by the Museum of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences (at present: Museum Nasional, Jakarta) ten years later than the box itself (Patt 1983: 222). It is therefore possible that not all the objects actually found their way to the Museum. Moreover, all the data concerning the discovery of the box are known only second hand, by later writers, and for that reason may indeed not be reliable.

Just as the invocations to the *lokapālas*, the remaining inscriptions might also be linked to the Indian texts. '*Ra*m' and '*ya*m' may perhaps be identified as two *bījas* ('seed letters') belonging to the group: *la*, *ya*, *ra* and *va*, associated with the four elements, that is earth, water, fire and wind respectively. According to the Sanskrit ritual treatises, these letters should be written on the first bricks and the crowning bricks before their installation (see KŚ *prathameṣṭakā* 36cd-37c). In addition, the sound '*phaṭ*' is an essential part of the *astramantra*, frequently pronounced during the ceremony of placing the objects into the deposit casket (see KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 18d).

Apart from the objects described above, the Jolotundo box was also said to contain ashes and the remains of burned bones,[68] but no chemical analysis of the material discovered in the box was ever done. By the time the box found its way to the Museum of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences, some fifty-four years later, no remains of ashes or bones could be traced (Patt 1983: 222). Nevertheless, the belief that the Jolotundo box was in fact a burial urn soon became popular and supported the theory that the Javanese structures were tombs. This theory was finally refuted in 1974 by Soekmono.[69] It should be stressed that no Indian text prescribes placing bones or ashes inside a deposit container.

7.3.2.6 Candi Bukit Batu Pahat

The most complex deposit involving the use of compartmented boxes was unearthed in Candi Bukit Batu Pahat in Malaysia. The candi is located on the bank of the Batu Pahat river in the Merbok Estuary in Kedah, two miles to the north of the village of Merbok. The dating of the site is problematic. Wales (1940: 21) dates it 7th or early 8th century AD but does not give any grounds for doing so. Lamb (1960: 8, 106) and Bosch (1961: 488) suggest the 8th to 9th centuries on the basis of an epigraphic analysis of the inscriptions on the metal discs found on the site. Treloar (1972: 233), on the other hand, believes that the candi was built during the 12th or 13th century AD, basing his statement on the chemical analysis

[68] See van Hoëvell (1851: 112): "Toen de heer Wardenaar dezen bak voor 't eerst opende, vond hij in al de vakken asch en overblijfselen van verbrande beenderen."

[69] *Candi, fungsi dan pengertiannya*. PhD thesis, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta. The summary of the book appeared in the BEFEO a few years later and the English translation of the monograph was published in 1995 (see: Soekmono 1975 and Soekmono 1995).

of the metal objects found there, especially on the presence of mercury in the alloys.

It is not known whether the candi was a Hindu or Buddhist temple. Soekmono (1995: 29-30) considers it to be of Tantric Buddhist origin arguing that the structure lacks the central pit which, according to him, is a characteristic of Śaiva temples (Soekmono 1995: 29). Indeed, the majority of the Buddhist temples of Java, the area covered by Soekmono, do not have the central shaft, but there is at least one example of a Buddhist temple that possesses it.[70] Moreover, what is true for Java need not necessarily be true for Kedah. A different view was presented by Bosch (1961: 488) who pointed to the presence of *liṅgas* and bulls in the deposit (see below) and suggested that the temple was Śaiva, which indeed seems highly plausible.[71]

The first archaeologist to excavate the site was Wales, who in his 1940 report refers to it as 'site no. 8' (Wales 1940: 18-21). During the excavations fragments of two stone boxes were found among the debris outside the main sanctuary.[72] They had nine circular depressions, the largest being in the centre, and they were probably once covered with lids. Almost twenty years later, during the excavations carried out by Lamb in 1958-59, six similar boxes were unearthed, this time in their original position and intact (see Lamb 1960a, 1960b, 1961). Three of them were found at the corners of the sanctuary, the other three at the mid-points of the walls.[73] All the boxes were placed in such a way that the lids were level with the top of the paving of the sanctuary floor. Presumably the *candi* possessed originally eight deposit boxes, four of which were installed in the corners and four at the mid-points of the walls.

Each of the six boxes discovered *in situ* had a copper pot in its centre. The pots contained semiprecious stones, minerals, gold dust, inscribed gold leaves (one in each pot) as well as seeds and other vegetable matter (seeds and vegetable matter were found only in the pots located in the northeast and in the west). The gold leaves were inscribed with a single letter (see Lamb 1960a: fig. 32 and plates 106-119). The inscriptions are not of a very high quality and therefore not easy to read, but it seems that the one on the gold disc from the box, which was installed in the southwest corner, reads '*oṃ*' (Treloar 1972: 232). More objects were deposited under the pots, in the nine circular depressions at the bottom of the

[70] This temple is Candi Sojiwan, located on the Prambanan Plain in Central Java.

[71] From the survey of the archaeological reports of South and Southeast Asia it appears that while several images (for example those of snakes) were shared by Hindus and Buddhists alike, the images of *liṅgas* were found exclusively in the Hindu consecration deposits while the bulls were part of a Buddhist consecration deposit only when accompanied by three more animals: an elephant, a lion and a horse (see Appendix IV).

[72] One of the boxes was kept, at the time of the publication of Lamb's articles, in the Alor Star museum, Kedah. The whereabouts of the second box is not known. For a photograph of one of the boxes found by Wales, see Wales (1940, plate 32).

[73] The boxes were located in the west, east and north corners and in the mid-points of the southwest, northwest and northeast walls (Lamb 1960a: 27 and fig. 8).

boxes. The eight smaller ones contained pieces of gems and minerals; the central cavity contained seven objects cut from gold, silver and copper leaf: a silver bull, a silver square with five 'stars' scratched on the surface, a copper turtle, a copper lotus flower, a gold *liṅga*, a gold semicircle and a gold seated female figure. Each of the female figurines wears a high headdress and holds a trident in the right hand and a lotus in the left hand. The goddesses are depicted seated with their legs crossed on a lotus cushion.[74] These seven objects were piled up in an order that differs slightly from box to box.

The appearance of the boxes as well as the majority of the items discovered inside them are in agreement with the prescriptions for the *garbhanyāsa* given by the Indian texts. Semiprecious stones, minerals, gold, seeds, images of bulls,[75] turtles and lotus flowers are all included in the lists of objects deposited in a *garbhabhājana*. Inscribed gold discs are not explicitly mentioned by the textual sources, but it should be remembered that the Śaiva works speak of mantras and letters of the Sanskrit alphabet that should be placed into the deposit casket. In such a case each compartment will receive a single letter (see KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 15-17ab). It should be noted, moreover, that the fragments of gems and metals contained in the eight small depressions at the bottom of the boxes were apparently distributed according to a fixed pattern (for the list of the gems and metals found in the boxes, see Lamb 1960a: 79-83). For instance, the cavity facing north almost always housed a piece of vivianite, the one in the northwest a fragment of crystal, the cavity in the west a piece of mica, the one in the southwest a yellowish-green chrysoberyl and so forth. This reminds us of the fact that in the Indian texts the items, including precious stones, are never placed at random and that the compartment in which a particular object should be deposited is always specified. On the other hand, images of goddesses and *liṅgas* are never mentioned as parts of a consecration deposit and, more importantly, no architectural work prescribes the installation of eight identical deposit boxes in a single structure. The number of the boxes discovered in Candi Bukit Batu Pahat and their distribution within the temple suggests, perhaps, that the construction ritual performed there was a local variant of the *garbhanyāsa* ritual of the Indian texts. In this variant, each compartment facing a specific geographical direction was substituted by an entire deposit box. The inspiration for placing the deposits in the corners and in the mid-points of the walls might also have been drawn from certain North Indian texts, such as the

[74] For the discussion on the identification of the goddesses, see Appendix IV.

[75] Figures of bulls should be placed into a deposit box during the *garbhanyāsa* according to several Śaiva texts. They are usually listed together with other attributes of Śiva, see KŚ *garbhanyāsa* 25ab, Kāmika 31.52ab, Kāraṇa 6.48cd, Dīpta 4.22ab.

Somaśambhupaddhati, in which the first bricks, accompanied by metal jars, are deposited at exactly the same locations.[76]

7.3.2.8 Other compartmented deposit containers discovered in South and Southeast Asia

Compartmented deposit boxes were discovered at many more Hindu sites in Java and Malaysia, and they were apparently also known in Thailand and Sri Lanka. However, contrary to the deposits described above, these boxes were not found *in situ*, or, in some cases, the details of their discovery have not been recorded. Compartmented deposit receptacles seem to have been especially popular in Java where they can be seen in several museums and on many ancient sites. The cavities of the Javanese receptacles usually have the form of lotus petals (see Plates 4, 17, 19 and 20); a few boxes, like those from Jolotundo and Loro Jonggrang that have already been mentioned, have regular square compartments grouped in three rows of three (see Plate 3), and at least two have their cavities arranged along the edge (see Plates 5 and 21). The Javanese deposit boxes have usually nine or seventeen cavities, nine being slightly more common; one receptacle preserved in the Prambanan Museum has thirty-three cavities (see Plate 6). All but one of the compartmented deposit boxes found in Java are made of stone.[77]

Apart from the deposits of Candi Bukit Batu Pahat, just one compartmented box was found in Malaysia. It was lying, broken, near the porch of the temple in the so-called site no. 19 in Kedah. The box has nine round depressions and is more elaborate than those described above: its outer sides are decorated with mouldings and pilasters (see Wales 1940, plate 73; Lamb 1960a, plates 165, 166). The site was dated to the 11th or 12th century AD by Wales. There is not enough evidence to establish whether the temple concerned was of Hindu or Buddhist origin.

A stone box with five square depressions forming a cross on its upper surface and covered by a pyramidal lid can be seen in the museum at Wat Machimawat in Songkhla, Thailand (Wales 1964). The details of the discovery are not recorded, but according to the local tradition the casket was found at Ban Wat Khanoon (Satingpra Peninsula), in a small ruined brick temple containing a bronze statue of Śiva.[78] The box was empty when presented to the Wat.

In Sri Lanka, compartmented deposit receptacles are very common, but almost all of them originate from Buddhist sites. Only three of such containers

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[76] The only difference is that the Somaśambhupaddhati prescribes nine bricks and nine jars – the ninth brick and jar are deposited in the centre of the structure. It cannot be excluded, however, that, if the ninth casket of Candi Bukit Batu Pahat existed, it was stolen in antiquity.

[77] The exception is the earthenware box from Karangrejo described in 3.2.2.

[78] Janice Stargardt, personal communication.

were found in Hindu temples - one in the so-called Shiva Devale in Polonnaruva, two in a Vaiṣṇava temple in Nalanda. The Polonnaruva container was presumably placed under the pedestal of an image of a deity. The receptacle has twenty-five regular compartments and it was empty when discovered (Bell 1907: 7-8). It is not specified whether it was made of stone or, like many receptacles in Sri Lanka, of brick. Of the two receptacles found in Nalanda one has twenty-five compartments, the other seventeen compartments (see Plates 33-34).

Finally, a remarkable deposit receptacle preserved at the Colombo Museum deserves a mention (Coomaraswamy 1914: plate xxii, fig. 124). It was discovered in Anuradhapura. Although Anuradhapura is famous mainly for its Buddhist remains, it is known that Hindu temples were also constructed there. Hence, it is possible that the box originates from a Hindu structure. The container is divided into twenty-five regular compartments and is covered by a lid. The difference with numerous other compartmented deposit boxes discovered in South and Southeast Asia is that, while all of them are made of stone or earthenware, the Anuradhapura box is made from copper or bronze,[79] and as such, corresponds entirely with the prescriptions of the Sanskrit texts. Apart from the box discovered in Pondicherry, which it closely resembles, it is, thus far, the only compartmented deposit container made of metal which may originate from a Hindu temple.

7.3.2.9 Other consecration deposits showing correspondences with the *garbhanyāsa* ceremony as described in the texts

As mentioned at the beginning of Section 7.3.2, a great number of deposit containers discovered in Southeast Asia and in Sri Lanka neither have compartments nor are they lotus-shaped as prescribed by the Indian texts. Yet, the majority of the objects deposited within them fit perfectly well in the lists of items to be placed in a *garbhabhājana*. The archaeological reports mention semiprecious stones, fragments of metals and minerals, figures of elephants and turtles, attributes of Viṣṇu, gold lotus flowers, *bījas*, vowels of the Sanskrit 'alphabet' and the names of the Guardians of the Directions inscribed on metal sheets, as well as seeds and other organic material enclosed in stone boxes or metal and earthenware jars discovered in Hindu temples. Moreover, several objects, such as gold leaves and semiprecious stones, which most probably also originate from consecration deposits, were found 'loose', without any container.[80]

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[79] Copper, according to Coomaraswamy (1914), bronze according to Karunaratne (1984: 125).

[80] For example, images of tortoises were found in the central shaft of Candi Viṣṇu (enclosed in an earthenware jar) and in the central shaft of Candi Śiva (enclosed in a cubical stone box). A gold image of an elephant was found in the Śaiva temple in Gatak, Central Java (enclosed in a stone box). Gold lotus flowers were discovered in the above mentioned deposits of Candi Viṣṇu and Candi Śiva (Prambanan Plain, Central Java), and in Baphuon in Angkor, Cambodia. Letters of the Sanskrit 'alphabet' and the name '*baruṇa*' were inscribed on metal plates being part of the deposit

The sites where the objects were discovered date from the 8th to the 13th centuries AD; some deposits might be as late as 15th or 16th century AD.[81] All these finds are described in detail in Appendix IV.

7.3.3 Archaeological finds, discovered outside India, bearing similarities with the *mūrdheṣṭakā* ceremony as described in the texts

Superstructure deposits or traces of them were found in several temples of South and Southeast Asia, but none of them consisted of four bricks or stones forming a square. The superstructure deposits in Cambodia consist of a single slab with cavities, most probably meant to contain small items such as precious stones and gold leaf (see Plates 7-8, 13-16). One such slab was also found in Thanh-dien in Vietnam, one in Candi Merak in Central Java (see Plate 17) and another one, with a single cavity, in a secondary temple of the Loro Jonggrang complex.[82] Unfortunately, all of these slabs were discovered empty.

In Central Java, superstructure deposits were discovered in Gedong Songo and in Candi Dwarawati. One of the temples of Gedong Songo contained in its superstructure a bronze box and a small golden *liṅga* (Krom 1923/1: 238). The deposit of Candi Dwarawati consisted of three gold plates with Kawi-inscriptions and one plate of gold alloy inscribed with the name 'Viṣṇu' (Krom 1923/1: 189). In East Java, miscellaneous items were found at the summit of Gunung Bondo (Jabung, Mojokerto): a gold *liṅga* together with a silver *yoni*, an inscribed gold sheet, a gold leaf in the shape of an animal, pieces of silver and bronze and pieces of bone (Soekmono 1995: 127).

In Vietnam, superstructure deposits consisting of fragments of metal sheets and figures cut out of metal plate, but not enclosed in a container, were discovered in the temple B1 of Mi Son and in the south tower of Po Nagar.[83]

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of Candi Śiva. Precious and semiprecious stones were found on several locations, for example in Candi Dwarawati (placed in bronze bowls), Ratu Boko (in earthen pots). Rice and other kinds of grain were found in Candi Selogriyo, in a bronze pot. A description of these finds is provided in Appendix IV.

[81] Pottier (1998: 518) suggests that the deposits discovered at the Terrace of the Elephants in Angkor might date from this period.

[82] For the slab of Thanh-dien, see Parmentier (1923: 283 and plate XV H), Malleret (1963: 86) and Appendix IV.1.2.32; for the one of Candi Merak, see Perquin (1927), Soekmono (1995: 11-12) and Appendix IV.1.2.76; for the slab discovered at Loro Jonggrang, see Dinas Purbakala, Jakarta, Laporan Tahunan 1953, fig. I.

[83] The same as in the case of foundation deposits, the detailed description of the finds and the references are given in Appendix IV. See Appendix IV.1.2.70 for Gedong Songo, 1.2.68 for Dwarawati, 1.2.78 for Gunung Bondo and 1.2.29 for Mi Son.

7.4 Consecration deposits discovered in Buddhist structures

The list of consecration deposits possessing features corresponding with the descriptions of the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* and *mūrdheṣṭakā* in the Kāśyapaśilpa and the related texts does not end with the finds mentioned above. The remaining ones, however, were not found in Hindu temples. All of them were discovered at Buddhist sites. Although the present study deals chiefly with Hindu ritual, it was, nevertheless, decided to include a short overview of the Buddhist consecration deposits in the present chapter, because of their remarkable similarity to the Hindu ones.

Buddhist consecration deposits were discovered in great numbers in all areas of the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' (see Appendix IV), but those showing closest correspondences with *garbhanyāsa* as described in the Indian texts originate mainly from Sri Lanka, where they are called *yantragala*. These are square receptacles of nine or twenty-five compartments constructed of stone or brick (see Plates 11-12). As stated by Paranavitana (1946: 23), they "can be seen at almost any ancient site in Ceylon." They are much larger than their Hindu counterparts from Java and Malaysia[84] and their compartments are almost always square, not lotiform (for a few exceptions, see Appendix IV). The majority of them were discovered below the relic chambers in *stūpas* and under the pedestals of images in Buddhist temples. A few were placed under the floor of the shrines for the Bodhi tree[85] and one was installed in the superstructure of a *stūpa*, at the base of the *harmikā*.[86]

Most of the Sri Lankan compartmented deposit containers were empty at the time of their discovery, their contents probably stolen by treasure-seekers. The few that were discovered undisturbed were filled with a variety of small objects, most of them made from bronze and copper, such as small statues of the Guardians of the Directions, the images of four animals: bull, elephant, lion and horse, representations of the so-called auspicious signs (*maṅgala*) and images of cobras. In addition, a few *yantragalas* contained terracotta and marble plaques with various images, inscribed copper sheets, miniature 'weapons' of the *lokapālas*, images of tortoises, precious and semiprecious stones, coins, conch

[84] For instance, the stone box discovered in Vijayarama under the Buddha statue of Vihāra no. 2 measured 91.5 cm^2 (Bell 1904a: 5). In contrast to this, the deposit boxes of Candi Bukit Batu Pahat were only 18 cm^2 (Lamb 1960).

[85] Two such deposits are known: one was found at Dematamalvihāra, in Southwest Sri Lanka (Jayasuriya et al. 1995: 290), the other comes from the 'Buddhist Railing Site' near Jetavanarama Dagaba in Anuradhapura (Bell 1904a: 4). The possible third example comes from the Monastery I of the Mahāvihāra, Anuradhapura - according to Bandaranayake (1974: 183) "there is a distinct possibility that [the structure in which the deposit was found] was actually a *bodhighara*."

[86] It was found in the Pabalu *stūpa*, Polonnaruva (Longhurst 1938: 7-11 and plate 4).

shells and, very rarely, gold ornaments, lumps of clay and decayed organic material (Karunaratne 1984: 151-156; see also Appendix IV). Several of these objects are prescribed by the Hindu architectural texts to be placed into a *garbhabhājana* (see Section 7.1.1.2) and many of them were indeed part of consecration deposits discovered in Hindu temples of South and Southeast Asia.[87] The images of the Guardians of the Directions, the group of the four animals[88] and the images of cobras are, on the other hand, exclusive characteristics of Buddhist consecration deposits of Sri Lanka.

In addition to the large containers made out of stone or brick, the archaeological reports from Sri Lanka also mention two compartmented boxes made of metal. Their appearance is remarkably consistent with the descriptions of the *garbhabhājana* in the South Indian treatises: they are much smaller than the majority of Sri Lankan *yantragalas*, square, and divided into nine and twenty-five regular compartments. The first box was unearthed during the digging of the foundation for a new building in Navagamuva Vehera in Hevagam Korale (Paranavitana 1934: 20), the second originates from the so-called Vidiya Bandara palace at Palanda (Plant 1914b: 76). A piece of gold was found in the central compartment of the Palanda receptacle, while the surrounding compartments contained various gems and pieces of metal; the box discovered in Navagamuva Vehera was empty.

The majority of the Sri Lankan containers date from the 9th or 10th century (see Appendix IV). The two metal boxes are probably much later as both Nagamuva Vehera and the Palanda palace were probably constructed in the 16th century.

Compartmented deposit receptacles made of stone were also used by the Buddhists in Thailand and, possibly, Bali. In Thailand, caskets with five cavities in their upper surface were discovered in the *stūpa* no.1 at Ku Bua, Ratburi (Wales 1964: 221) and in Wat Mahathat in Sukhothai (see Appendix IV.2.7 and Plate 9). In Bali, a set of nine compartmented boxes was discovered inside the 11th century temple complex of Gunung Kawi, south of Tampaksiring.[89] The boxes were placed at the entrance of a low underground chamber excavated under each shrine. They are square, with dimensions of around 40 by 40 by 15cm (Damsté 1921: 61). The nine shallow compartments are grouped three by three and in the

[87] It is interesting that the *maṅgala* signs, prescribed by several Hindu texts (see note 21 above), were almost never part of a Hindu consecration deposit. Yet, they were discovered in eleven Buddhist *yantragalas* of Sri Lanka (see Appendix IV).

[88] Apart from Sri Lanka (where it was a part of at least nine *yantragalas*), the group of four animals has only been discovered in the consecration deposit of the site no. 16 in Kedah. The group was accompanied there by miniature images of the weapons of the *lokapālas*, which are also a very common part of the consecration deposits of Sri Lanka.

[89] The temple complex is referred to by Damsté as Buddhist (see even the title of his 1921 article: "Een Boeddhistisch rotsklooster op Bali"). Yet, the basis for such a classification is not given and one cannot exclude the possibility of Gunung Kawi being a Hindu monument.

bottom of each compartment there is another, deeper square cavity (see Plate 10). At the time of their discovery all the boxes were empty.[90]

Compartmented receptacles were apparently also used in Nepal. Indraji (1882: 295) mentions deposit boxes placed in relatively modern Nepalese *stūpas*, which contained no relics. He writes: "In these *Chaityas*, three stones, each with nine square holes containing the seven jewels and gold, silver and other metals, are laid, one at the base of the mound, a second at the base of the dome, and a third under the top…."

Traces of the ceremony of placing the first bricks, even if not entirely consistent with the prescriptions of the texts discussed in Chapter 5, were found in Sahagrawa in Nepal and in Trung Quan in Quang Binh, Vietnam (Mitra 1972 and Aurousseau 1926: 363-365). In India itself, eight large bricks were found surrounding a relic casket in the relic chamber of the Buddhist *stūpa* in Sopara, north of Mumbay (Indraji 1882: 294 and plate III). Moreover, several Buddhist temples contained traces of superstructure deposits. Only one such deposit was found in Sri Lanka (see note 81 above), but in Cambodia, for example, superstructure deposits were very common and closely resembled those discovered in the Hindu temples of the same region.[91] As regards the similarity to the Hindu finds, it should be added that images of tortoises and lotuses cut out of gold leaf, very similar to those known from the Hindu sites, were found in the consecration deposits of the Buddhist temples not only in Sri Lanka, but also in Java, Sumatra and Vietnam.[92] All these finds are described in Appendix IV in greater detail.

7.5 Concluding remarks

The study of the available archaeological reports and accounts of witnesses did not result in finding a hundred-percent correspondence between a particular consecration deposit and one of the descriptions of the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* or *mūrdheṣṭakā* in the Kāśyapaśilpa and other Sanskrit treatises presented in Chapter 5. On the other hand, several consecration deposits discussed

[90] The boxes were also mentioned by Goslings (1926: 208-209) and by Treloar (1972). Goslings suggests that they were meant for the *navaratna*, the nine gems.

[91] Superstructure deposits slabs were found in Buddhist temples, such as Prasat Damrei Krap in Phnom Kulen, Ta Prohm, Preah Khan, Banteay Kdei and Bayon in Angkor (see Appendix IV). Those from earlier temples (for example from Prasat Damrei Krap) are almost identical with those discovered in the Hindu temples such as Prasat Thom and Prasat Dan in Koh Ker and Banteay Srei in the vicinity of Angkor. See Goloubew and Finot (1926, plate 67, 69, 70), Parmentier (1930 and 1939), Coedès (1940), Marchal (1944, plate XXXc), Boisselier (1966) and Appendix IV.

[92] For example in the foundation deposits of Candi Sojiwan, Central Java and Dai Huu in Vietnam and in Candi Gumpung in Sumatra (see Appendix IV).

above do correspond with the descriptions of the texts as far as certain features are concerned. The practice of installing the foundation deposit in the middle of four bricks attested in Tamil Nadu, Cambodia and Vietnam and the characteristic shape of the consecration deposit box as employed in Hindu temples of Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Java and Kedah - a cubical box with square or lotus-shaped compartments – are consistent with details given in the Kāśyapaśilpa and related texts. Many objects constituting the deposits, such as gold images of tortoises and elephants, metal sheets inscribed with 'seed letters', seeds and semiprecious stones reported from several sites in the entire area, as well as the importance apparently attached to the geographical directions and their guardians, too, agree with the prescriptions in the Indian treatises. It is true that burying precious objects in the foundations of new buildings is, and was, a well-known custom that also spread far beyond the area of the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis'.[93] Yet, it does not seem likely that certain specific features mentioned above, especially the shape of the deposit box and the installation of a foundation deposit among four bricks, were invented in each of the regions from India to Indonesia independently. Rather, the fact that numerous Indian texts describe comparable consecration deposits points to India as a plausible source of inspiration.

It is impossible to determine whether the direct source for the custom of installing a consecration deposit in the middle of four bricks and in a compartmented receptacle were Indian Sanskrit texts or whether the tradition was transmitted by people, for instance temple priests, travelling from India to the other regions of the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis', or merchants, perhaps carrying small models and drawings of temples and deposit boxes and telling stories about consecration of famous Indian temples. Moreover, even if it was the texts, it cannot be determined whether these were the one that are the subject of the present study. Still, it is not unlikely. Some of the Sanskrit treatises presented in Chapter 5 are of an earlier date than the excavated compartmented vessels and the brick assemblies, which means that it is possible that they were known at least to some of those who performed the construction rituals in the areas from which the finds originate. The Kāśyapaśilpa itself, compiled in the 11-12th century AD, is probably too late a work to have functioned as a model for many of the archaeological finds discussed above.

Returning to the questions asked at the beginning of this chapter with respect to the relation between the textual data and practice, one must conclude that the number of correspondences between the excavated consecration deposits and the ritual objects known from the texts proves that rituals, perhaps not identical, but very similar to those described in the Kāśyapaśilpa and the other texts were indeed performed, at least in Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Java and Sri Lanka. With regard to India itself, apart from two finds (one of which being of

[93] For the European Medieval tradition, see, for example, de Vries (1994: 109-122).

unknown provenance),[94] no correspondences with the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* and *mūrdheṣṭakā* as presented in the Kāśyapaśilpa and the related texts were found, despite the fact that construction rituals were certainly performed there as has been testified to by witness reports, the contemporary tradition and the (few) archaeological remains. Moreover, it is hardly conceivable that the ritual practices, which are described in numerous Indian texts and apparently left their imprint over a great deal of South and Southeast Asia, would not have been followed in the area where they originated. There must, therefore, be a different reason for the lack of material evidence for the performance of the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* and *mūrdheṣṭakā*.

At this point it should be noted that not only the archaeological remains that may linked to the three aforementioned rituals are lacking in India. The number of reported consecration deposits also generally appears to be lower than in the other regions of the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' (see Appendix IV). The reason for that may lie, in my view, not in the lesser popularity of the construction rituals as a whole or in the fact that the texts, presented in Chapter 5, were never used in reality, but partly in the differences in the histories of India, Sri Lanka and the countries of Southeast Asia and partly in the approach of the authorities in charge. In North India, the arrival of the Muslims resulted in the destruction of a great deal of Hindu temples starting from the campaigns by Mahmud of Ghazni in the 11th century AD.[95] Many temples were abandoned and the consecration deposits looted.[96] In South India, on the other hand, several important temples are still in use with, as it can be expected, their consecration deposits concealed in places where they were originally installed. Destroying the floor and walls of the sanctum sanctorum of a temple still in use in order to investigate the possible presence of a consecration deposit is naturally out of question. This may be one of the reasons for the scarcity of archaeological remains testifying to the performance of the construction rituals, especially those involving the placing of a

[94] The four bricks discovered in Ulagapuram and the compartmented metal casket of Pondicherry. See section 1.2.1 above.

[95] See, for example, Kulke and Rothermund (1986: 163ff).

[96] The cases of temples destroyed by pillagers are recorded in the archaeological reports from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Kelsall in no. 2 of the Indian Antiquary (1874: 177) writes: "The flooring of the temple [viz., a temple close to Kamlapur, two miles from Hampi], originally large slabs of stones, has been torn up and utterly ruined by persons in search of treasure which is supposed to be buried both here and in other parts of the ruins" and a report on a temple near Besnagar reads: "Treasure seekers have now wrecked the statues and destroyed the floor [of the interior shrine]" (Kincaid 1888: 349). A similar description is given of another temple in the vicinity of Hampi: "In the interior of the court, and close to the east entrance, was a small stone shrine, whose foundations had been damaged by the digging of treasure seekers." (Rea 1908: 26).

deposit in the lower strata of a building. Renovation or the replacement of temples have thus offered the only chance for archaeological remains to be discovered.[97]

As stated above, the second reason for the paucity of the archaeological remains associated with the construction rituals on the Indian subcontinent might have been the attitude of the authorities. British colonial rulers were apparently aware of the presence of the deposits,[98] but no excavations were carried out in India in order to retrieve them. This was caused, on the one hand, by a particular lack of interest in and understanding of the Hindu religion - the British authorities of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century AD showed much more interest in Buddhism than in Hinduism. Another reason was the fear of causing a conflict with the local religious authorities. As a result, the majority of excavation and restoration works of that period concerned Buddhist sites and monuments. This led to the discovery of numerous Buddhist consecration deposits, mainly in present Sri Lanka, but almost no Hindu ones. At the same time, the rulers of French Indochina took a totally different approach. Inspired by the tales of the 'treasures' hidden in the ancient temples, the French archaeologists undertook excavation works for the sole purpose of finding the deposits.[99] Their efforts were crowned with success, which proves the simple rule: seek and ye shall find.

Taking into account the arguments presented above, the relative scarcity of remains associated with the consecration deposits in India cannot be taken as a proof that the construction rituals were carried out on a much smaller scale than in the neighbouring countries. Although no direct proof exists, the indirect evidence consisting of the number of texts in which these rituals are described on the one hand and the consecration deposits discovered in South and Southeast Asia on the other render it highly plausible that the rituals performed in the antiquity included also the *prathameṣṭakā*, *garbhanyāsa* and the *mūrdheṣṭakā*. Lastly, it should be added that although the *garbhanyāsa* and the *mūrdheṣṭakā* seem to have been almost entirely forgotten in modern-day India, the *prathameṣṭakā* is still

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[97] Like, for instance, the finds of Pāpanāsi (see 1.2.3), which were discovered when the temples were dismantled and re-erected on another location due to the construction of a dam on the Krishna river, or the pedestal deposit stone discovered in Saurashtra during the renovation of the famous temple in Somnath (see Munshi: 1952 and Appendix IV).

[98] See Rea (1910: 24), writing about the 'treasure troves' hidden in ancient temples: "Jewels and sasanams inscribed on gold plates are, or were invariably buried below the images of worship, under certain piers, and in other parts of temples. This fact is well known to all who are acquainted with Hindu usages in regard to temples, and is the reason why the shrines of so many ancient deserted temples have had their floors dug into. This used to be specially noticeable in almost all the ruined temples at Vijayanagar, and the results must have been substantial, for it to have been so systematically done." See also note 6 above.

[99] For instance in Po Nagar and in Angkor Vat, the latter hidden at the depth of 23m (see Appendix IV). Such approach seems to prevail until today among the French archaeologists in Cambodia: the consecration deposits of the Terrace of the Elephants in Angkor were found during a deliberate search with the help of metal detectors (see Pottier 1998).

performed, at least for more significant temples, in more or less the way described in the texts.[100]

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the terminology. Apart from the question of whether the performers of the construction rituals in various regions of South and Southeast Asia were acquainted with the Indian treatises, the consecration deposits discovered there should not, in my opinion, be referred to by the Sanskrit terms used in these texts. These terms, especially *garbha*, 'embryo', carry a meaning, which was perhaps not transferred to the regions outside India, even if some of the texts were. It is not certain if the meaning of the objects was also taken over as well as their form. Even if the consecration deposits discovered in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Southeast Asia would have been identical to those described in the Indian texts, still, they would perhaps represent something different for the societies that installed them. In Java, the presumable modification of the function and meaning of the construction rituals is reflected in the fact that the foundations of temples and even the excavated consecration deposit boxes sometimes contained animal ashes and bones.[101] As mentioned previously, animal remains are never prescribed as a part of a consecration deposit in the Indian architectural and ritual treatises. Furthermore, none of the deposit vessels discovered in India contained animal remains. Their presence inside and in the vicinity of consecration deposits in Java therefore suggests the influence of the local tradition given that animal offerings seem to be a common element to the construction of buildings in certain regions of Southeast Asia.[102]

With respect to the archaeological finds from Buddhist sites presented in Section 7.4, the fact that many of them correspond, at least in part, with the prescriptions for Hindu consecration deposits expressed in Hindu ritual texts is worthy of future attention. Given the current state of our knowledge, it would, however, be imprudent to draw any firm conclusions. Yet, their similarity to the Hindu deposits suggests that the differences between Buddhism and Hinduism in

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[100] As communicated to me by several temple priests and scholars of ritual, among others by K.P.C. Anujan Bhattathiripad and Parameswaran Namboodiripad of Kerala and the Śaiva priests from the Kapaleśvara Temple in Madras.

[101] It is true that many claims concerning animal remains being a part of a consecration deposit proved false. For instance, the analysis of the contents of the central shaft in Candi Plaosan Lor revealed that the 'ashes' found there are in fact silicate deposits (Soekmono 1995: 122). It has to be remembered that many of the earlier finds reported to contain 'ashes' were never chemically analysed, so that there is a good chance that they did not contain anything of animal origin at all. On the other hand, animal bones were indeed found in some temple shafts, for example in Loro Jonggrang and in the (Buddhist) Candi Plaosan Lor (IJzerman 1891: 67-68). The latter were analysed, together with the 'ashes' found in the same building, at the Paleo- and Biological Laboratory of the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta (Soekmono 1995: 112). In addition, according to the list in the Appendix in Soekmono (1995: 123), ash was present in the stone box found at Pucung, Malang, containing also items known as 'usual' parts of a consecration deposit, such as inscribed metal sheets, gold images of turtles, coins and the *images* of *liṅga* and yoni.

[102] See, for instance, Jordaan and Wessing (1997: 110) who mention the burying of the head of a water buffalo, of a goat or of a chicken under the foundation of a dwelling under construction.

certain regions of South and Southeast Asia were perhaps smaller than has thus far been assumed. Finally, it should be stressed that the similarities between the Hindu and the Buddhist consecration deposits usually occur in one and the same region. It may, therefore, be stated that it is geography that is the major determinant of the form and contents of the consecration deposits of South and Southeast Asia, rather than the religious tradition.