

# THE JAVANIZATION OF INDIAN ART

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Hinduism and Buddhism left indelible marks on East Javanese culture. It is only necessary to examine the sculpture of Candi Singhasari to note the encroachment of Indian gods on foreign soil: the solemn dignity of a portly Agastya; the ample girth of a gruesome Ganesa; and the threatening pose of a triumphant Durga. Though the Hindu deities bear the unmistakable trappings of Saivite imagery, beneath these veils exist transformed images which serve the needs of indigenous religious beliefs and practices. The purpose of this article is to examine the Candi Singhasari images and determine their ritual significance in thirteenth-century East Java.

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The fourteenth-century Old Javanese poem *Nagarakrtagama* affirms the importance of ancestor worship in East Java and describes a royal "walkabout" in which the Majapahit royal family visits the cornerstones of the empire and pays homage to the deified ancestors of the king. In the poem, the Buddhist monk Prapanca recounts the religious observances at Candi Singhasari, in which the king enters the interior of the sanctuary and performs the *puspa* ceremony for his great-grandfather Krtanagara and then departs Singhasari and visits Kagenengan to offer worship to the founder of the Singhasari dynasty, Rajasa.

1. A *prasada* (temple-tower) has its place in the centre, showing something to be wondered at: the imposing appearance thereof, holy, high.
2. of the aspect of the mountain Meru. A Shiwa-abode, in Shiwa's likeness, has its place in the Interior,
3. for the Lord Girinatha's Son is considered the object of the devotion, a god materialized.
4. His relation is: the Princes' ancestor, submissively venerated by all the world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Pigeaud, *Java in the 14th Century*, vol. 3 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960), p. 40.

There are strong parallels between the imperative of the Majapahit royal family to honor the deified ancestors of the king and the ancestor worship among some tribal groups in Indonesia. The Land Dayak of Borneo, for example, believe that when a noble soul dies his spirit ascends the mountain upon which the common ancestors of the tribe reside. From these lofty realms the ancestors preside over earthly affairs and on particular occasions descend the mountain to partake in splendid celebrations. These lavish ceremonies serve to honor the ancestors and secure their blessings for a prosperous future. Quite clearly every Dayak does not become one of the ancestors (*kamang*) for only exceptional souls join their ranks.

Ce sont les héros des guerres, tombés lors d'une chasse aux têtes, les chasseurs de têtes victorieux, afin que leur bravoure se transmette de génération en générations, les prêtres et les hommes ayant des titres et un rang, à condition qu'ils soient morts de mort naturelle. Ce sont les hommes qui ont de la pama (nous avons vu que cela veut dire à peu près "force qui porte chance"). Ainsi, les ancêtres qui reçoivent un culte sont une élite, ce ne sont pas tous ascendants.<sup>2</sup>

Noble tribesmen become *kamang* only after the Dayak prepare a grand feast in which they carve a wooden figure or *pantak* of the deceased. When the *pantak* is ready, the priest summons the soul of the deceased and invites it to inhabit the wooden image. A ceremony proceeds in which "the *pantak* is set upright, sprinkled with rice, and fed like a child by putting bits of rice in his mouth."<sup>3</sup> Then the *pantak* is transferred from the house and planted into the ground near the village center or *padagei*. The Dayak believe that at the moment the *pantak* is transported to the *padagei*, the soul of the deceased joins the *kamang* and returns to the mountain abode of the ancestors.

The Dayak funeral ceremony recalls the description of a *sraddha* ceremony in the *Nagarakrtagama*. Prapanca vividly recounts a posthumous ceremony for the final deliverance of the soul of the Queen Grandmother Gayatri, the Rajapatni. He describes a splendid audience in which the regent Gajah Mada reminds the king of his duty to hold the *sraddha* ceremony for the Queen Grandmother who died twelve years before. In canto 63, stanza 4, the court artisans busy themselves in preparation for the momentous occasion.

2. all the multitude of the artisans there, making plaited bamboo-work, fashioning the *sthana singha* (lion-throne) in the *wanguntur* (main court-yard),
3. setting aside those who carved *wawans* (carriers) for food, *bukubukuran* (all kinds of tower-like structures) and figures and things of that kind.
4. Took part also the smiths of *dadaps* (embossed coverings) of gold and silver, all of them bestirring themselves the more in their respective customary occupations.<sup>4</sup>

At the propitious moment the entire court gathers in the main courtyard where a glorious lion throne towers. Here the priests place the flower effigy or *puspa* of the

<sup>2</sup> Waldemar Stohr and Piet Zoetmulder, *Les Religions d'Indonesie* (Paris: Payot, 1968), p. 222. An English translation of the quotation reads: "These are the war heroes who died in headhunting raids, the victorious hunters whose bravery passes from generation to generation, the priests, and titled and high-ranking persons who died a natural death. These men have pama (we have seen that this term signifies 'a power or force which brings good fortune'). Thus, the ancestors who form the cult are an elite group. They do not represent all ancestors."

<sup>3</sup> Willem F. Stutterheim, "The Meaning of the Hindu-Javanese *candi*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 51 (1931): 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Pigeaud, *Java* 3: 73.

Queen Grandmother which serves as her earthly abode during the ceremony. In canto 64, stanza 5 we actually witness the descent of the soul to earth and its final placement in the *puspa*.

1. At the waxing moon, on the twelfth night, they invited there that *swah* (soul), *sutra* (sacred texts) recital was performed
2. and *homa* (fire offering) worship, on the other hand also *parishrama* (amphidromy); they were (only considered) complete at the arrival of the *swah* (soul) again (on earth).
3. The honoured holy *puspa* (flower effigy) was worked on with *yoga* (concentration); in the night was performed the eminent *pratistha* (placing) ceremony.<sup>5</sup>

Once the soul enters the *puspa*, the illustrious court honors the Queen Grandmother with towering offerings of prepared foods. For seven days elaborate ceremonies and colorful pageants crowd the main courtyard. The carnival-like activity served to please the soul of Rajapatni, who in turn is expected to favor the reign of her descendants.

1. As long now as the Princes' activities, performing the *shraddha* (posthumous) ceremony, celebrating the honoured Deceased One, lasted,
2. so long without missing they were causing pleasure to the Illustrious *Rajapatni*, for whom the ceremony was performed.
3. May it have for result Her favour for the prosperity of the Illustrious Prince's reign!
4. The honoured Illustrious Rajasanagara may be vanquishing his enemies, with for limit Moon and Sun!<sup>6</sup>

The funeral for the Queen Grandmother continues, as the poem describes how the king orders the repair of the Kamal Pandak sanctuary with the express purpose of making the holy shrine a *candi* for the Queen Grandmother. Here the honored and illustrious Sri Jnanawidi performs a Prajnaparamita ceremony in which he presumably consecrates an image of the Queen Grandmother deified in the form of Prajnaparamita.

W.F. Stutterheim questions the choice of Prajnaparamita:

[T]here arises the question why exactly this goddess was chosen in preference to all others? A question one is justified in putting since we may assume that there was some connection between the personality and qualities of a king or queen and the deity chosen for their deification.<sup>7</sup>

He seeks the answer among the many words of praise in the *Nagarakrtagama* where Prapanca venerates the Queen Grandmother as the illustrious prince's grandmother and the embodiment of Paramabhagavati. Stutterheim notes that Bhagavati is a name for Laksmi, which is consistent with the fact that Prapanca compares her husband with Bhatara Visnu. Stutterheim further claims that Bhagavati is also the name for Prajnaparamita, and he proposes that the whole expression could be replaced by Bhatari Adiprajna or Prajnaparamita. The same stanza continues to praise the Queen Grandmother and describes her as "*chattra ning rat wisesa* i.e., 'the eminent protector of the

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>7</sup> W. F. Stutterheim, "Note on Saktism in Java," *Acta Orientalia* 17 (1938): 148.

world.”<sup>8</sup> If we recall that Rajapatni is the daughter of Krtanagara, the last Singhasari king, and the wife of the Vijaya, the first Majapahit king, then the venerated grandmother is indeed “the eminent protector of the world.” She is the progenitor of the Majapahit dynasty and the first cause of the royal family. As the regenerative force of the universe she is deified in the form of Prajnaparamita, for in Mahayana Buddhism the Goddess of Wisdom is the “spirit representing matter, from which everything in heaven and earth sprung, the supreme self-existent-power of nature, the universal Mother, the first cause.”<sup>9</sup>

The adoption of Indian gods for the deification of ancestors is apparent among the “Singhasari related” images cited in the *Nagarakrtagama*. Prapanca portrays Krtanagara as a staunch Buddhist, “submissive at the Feet of the Illustrious Shakya-Lion.”<sup>10</sup> He also mentions that upon his death, Krtanagara was deified in the form of three funerary images: a splendid Jina; an Ardhanarisvari; and an imposing Siva-Buddha. Stutterheim reminds us that “in India there has never been found any statue of a deceased king in the guise of a god. . . . Only Farther India and Indonesia provided us with such specimens.”<sup>11</sup> Not only the deification of Krtanagara in the guise of an Indian deity, but also the unorthodox combination of both Hindu and Buddhist images for his apotheosis suggests that non-Indian traditions influenced Singhasari funerary practices. Most extraordinary is the deification of His Majesty in the form of a “Siva-Buddha” for which we have no known image in India. The fourteenth-century Old Javanese poem *Sutasoma* propounds that there is no distinction between Siva and Buddha.

[A]nd there is no difference between god Buddha and god Siwa, the king of gods.

It is said that the well-known Buddha and Siwa are two different substances.

They are indeed different, yet how is it possible to recognize their difference in a glance, since the Truth of Jina and the Truth of Siwa is one.

They are indeed different, but they are of the same kind, as there is no division in Truth.<sup>12</sup>

If there is no distinction between Siva and Buddha, then who or what does this merged image of Siva-Buddha represent and, even more importantly, why was Krtanagara deified in the form of a syncretic god, especially when he was supposedly a staunch Buddhist? The answer may lie in the invocation to the *Nagarakrtagama* where Prapanca praises the deity Siva-Buddha as “the honoured Illustrious Protector of Mountains, Protector of the protectorless. He is surely, Ruler over the rulers of the world.”<sup>13</sup> Supomo contends that “the honoured Illustrious Protector of Mountains” is neither Siva nor Buddha, but Lord of the Mountain or the Supreme God of the Realm.<sup>14</sup> We have already noted the importance of the sacred mountain in ancestor worship. Here upon the lofty peaks reside the spirits of the ancestors who bestow the life force of the

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>10</sup> Pigeaud, *Java* 3: 49.

<sup>11</sup> Stutterheim, “The Meaning of the Hindu-Javanese *candi*,” p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Mpu Tantular, *Sutasoma*, trans. Soewito Santoso (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1975), p. 578.

<sup>13</sup> Pigeaud, *Java* 3:3.

<sup>14</sup> Mpu Tantular, *Arjunawiwaha: A Kakawin of Mpu Tantular*, vol. 1, trans. S. Supomo (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), p.80.

universe. This magical and mysterious power animates every aspect of the natural world, and most particularly manifests itself in the process of generation and regeneration. Not every man has an equal capacity to receive this divine energy, and "he who was considered to have the greatest capacity"<sup>15</sup> has the duty to sustain the life force of the kingdom.

A temple of the village was supposed to be the place where the sacred ceremony of contacting the ancestral spirits was performed. The conductor of the ceremony would induce himself into a state of trance and let the ancestral spirits flow into him while the people knelt down before the incarnation of the forefathers "who had descended from the mountains and from the holy sources of the fertility-bringing rivers." Their presence alone was sufficient to provide the community with the absolutely necessary magic "life power," "to further the growth of rice, to calm the devastating overflowing streams, to subdue epidemics afflicting the population."<sup>16</sup>

The indigenous belief in the Lord of the Mountain explains how the East Javanese could practice ancestor worship and still accept the pantheons of Hinduism and Buddhism. In reality there would be no conflict, for every aspect of the universe is simply a manifestation of the Supreme God of the Realm. The *Sutasoma* proclaims that "there is no difference between god Buddha and god Siwa."<sup>17</sup> They are one and the same, for they are animated by the same life force which energizes the entire universe. When Krtanagara was deified in the form of a Siva-Buddha, he became neither Siva nor Buddha. Rather, he symbolized the collective powers of the Supreme God of the Realm and thereby assumed the merged form of a Siva-Buddha.

The adaptation of Indian religion to affirm indigenous ancestor worship is nowhere more apparent than in the deification of Krtanagara in the form of *ardhanari* whose aspect is the Holy Vairocana-Locana:

2. naturally an Ardhanarashwari, with her, the honoured Illustrious Bajradewi, united,
3. His honoured associate as to increase in the world, one in *kriya* (rites) and *brata* (observances).
4. The Holy Vairocana-Locana was Their aspect, being one *arca* (cult statue), celebrated in the realm.<sup>18</sup>

Stutterheim believes that a fourteenth-century *ardhanari* sculpture now in Berlin is the posthumous image of Krtanagara.<sup>19</sup> If this is the case, then the sculpture represents a beautiful example of *hari-hara* and *ardhanari*. In the first instance, the image is half Visnu and half Siva in which the deities combine to form a supreme god, just as Siva-Buddha symbolizes the Lord of the Mountain, the unity of the kingdom, the oneness of the *dharma*. The *ardhanari* aspect of the sculpture is androgynous, with the left side physiologically female, corresponding to the Visnu half, and the right side male, corresponding to Siva. This classical symbol of Indian iconography vividly represents the

<sup>15</sup> Nidhi Aeusrivongse, "The Devaraja Cult and Khmer Kingship at Angkor," *Explorations in Early Southeast Asian History: The Origins of Southeast Asian Statecraft*, ed. Kenneth R. Hall and John K. Whitmore (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1976), p. 112.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Tantular, *Sutasoma*, p. 578.

<sup>18</sup> Pigeaud, *Java* 3: 50.

<sup>19</sup> W. F. Stutterheim, *Het Hinduisme in de Archipel* (Jakarta: Wolters, 1952), p. 71.

mystical combination of primordial male and female energies in which "the essential characteristic of this combination of opposites is not their merging but their dynamic simultaneous incorporation within a single entity."<sup>20</sup> Thus the deification of Krtanagara in the form of an *ardhanari* expresses his ability to contain and balance the opposing forces of the universe. Benedict Anderson claims that:

[t]he most obvious sign of the man of Power is, quite consistently, his ability to concentrate: to focus his own personal Power, to absorb Power from the outside, and to concentrate within himself apparently antagonistic opposites.<sup>21</sup>

Prapanca's statement that the Ardhanarisvari is also the Holy Vairocana-Locana once again affirms the syncretic nature of East Javanese religion. Whether the sculpture is Ardhanarisvari or Vairocana-Locana, the image symbolizes the divine energy of the universe as expressed in the process of generation and regeneration and its overt manifestation in the sexual prowess of the king. Indeed his virility is a rather public sign that the king still has the ability to channel the creative energies of the universe for the blessings of his kingdom. Any marked decline in sexual activity would signify his waning power.

Indeed the sexual fertility of the ruler is one essential sign of the Power that he holds, for his seed is the microcosmic expression of the Power he has concentrated. The fertility of the ruler was seen as simultaneously evoking and guaranteeing the fertility of the land, the prosperity of the society, and the expansionist vitality of the empire.<sup>22</sup>

We are fortunate in having Prapanca's description of the deification of Krtanagara as the Ardhanari and Siva-Buddha. The account offers a glimpse of the extent of the "Javanization" of Indian imagery within the fourteenth-century Majapahit court. Indeed it is apparent that the East Javanese adopted Indian religion and iconography with a selective eye. They sought concepts and imagery which they could remold with the express purpose of ritualizing their own philosophical beliefs.

A similar process of acculturation transformed the Hindu sculpture of Candi Singhasari. At first sight the funerary temple of the Illustrious Krtanagara appears to be just another variant of the usual East Javanese temple. Upon a square elevated terrace, a base with projections in four directions supports the body and the superstructure of the monument. A significant difference is that the base is not the base and the body of the temple does not contain the usual cella. Instead, the main sanctuary is located in the supposed base and the surrounding projections are the subsidiary cellas. Hindu ritual practice requires the circumambulation of the main sanctuary to view the deities in the subsidiary cellas for they represent other aspects of the temple deity. Usually Hindu temples are aligned along an east-west axis, and the ritual procession proceeds in a clockwise manner or *pradaksina* in which the devotee follows the diurnal path of the sun. Ganesa is invoked at the beginning of worship, for he is the "Remover of Obstacles," and assists the pious along their spiritual path. Durga emerges triumphant at the end, for she delivers the universe from the demon of death. At Candi Singhasari the images in the subsidiary cellas follow no such order. The temple faces west, devotees perform a

<sup>20</sup> Benedict Anderson, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Claire Holt et al. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.



Figure 1: Candi Singhasari



Figure 2: Candi Singhasari Agastya

A. J. Bernet Kempers *Ancient Indonesian Art*  
(Amsterdam, 1959) Plate 238

counterclockwise circumambulation, or *prasavya*, and commence worship with Agastya not Ganesa, marking a significant departure from traditional Hindu ritual.

Though mutilated, the portly image of Agastya represents one of the finest hermits of Java. He wears the turban of an East Javanese ascetic, with braids plaited in and around the headcloth. This large turban frames a serene face partially concealed by a finely chiseled beard. Across his fleshy and ample girth flows a sacred thread or *upavita*, while a long garment covers his lower body and fastens under his protruding belly. Over his left shoulder he balances the fly whisk or *cauri* attached to a deeply chiseled lotus stem. The broken right arm holds the meditation beads or *aksamala* in front and against his body; the left arm hangs down and presumably carried a water vessel or *kundi*. To the right of the figure is a pedestal, which supports the trident or *trisula* of which the upper section is missing. On the left is the tell-tale Singhasari symbol of lotus leaves, flowers, and buds.

Agastya is a familiar figure in Indian and Southeast Asian art. He is counted among the eight disciples of Siva and plays an important role in the history of Java as the Vedic seer who brought Indian culture from South India to the non-Aryan lands. As early as AD 760 the Dinaja stone inscription proclaims the worship of both Siva and Agastya in Java. The first verse mentions that "[t]here was the wise and mighty king Devasimha"<sup>23</sup> protected and purified by the god Putikesvara. Then follows a passage which describes a king known as Gajayana, who was devoted to Agastya and "had with (the help of) his ministers and leaders of army (?) caused to be built the charming abode (i.e. temple) of the sage. . . ."<sup>24</sup> The inscription continues that the high-minded Gajayana had seen a wooden image of Agastya made by his ancestors and so ordered a sculptor to chisel a wonderful black stone image.

F.D.K. Bosch wrestles with the meaning of the word Putikesvara and its possible connection with the worship of Agastya in eighth-century Java. He concludes that:

Putikesvara was, like Bhadresvara in Campa and Devaraja in Kambhoja, the essence of royalty, a palladium, the possession of which ensures the possession of undiminished strength to its owner and prosperity to his kingdom. And the claim of Agastya to worship was that in Java he played the role of the intermediary who first received this holy emblem and transmitted it to the ruling line.<sup>25</sup>

The close association between Agastya and Siva explains why in Java both the name and image of Agastya became linked with those of Siva or Siva Guru, and why certain images called Siva Guru are actually worshipped as Agastya. J. Ph. Vogel has clarified the iconographic confusion and asserts that images "which bore the Trisula or the trident in their hands"<sup>26</sup> were in fact of Siva and not Agastya. His conclusion seems reasonable, for Siva is the Supreme God from whom the divine and mysterious powers of the universe flow, while Agastya is the disciple of Siva whose primary duty is to confer the divine life force on the most suitable royal claimant. Agastya's celebrated position as bestower of the scepter of state is noted in a passage from the *Madhuravijayam* of Gangadevi, where a noble ruler faces a political crisis in which he plots to free South India from Muslim

<sup>23</sup> Bijan Chatterjee, *India and Java* (Calcutta: Greater India Society, 1933), p. 38.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, "Agastya," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde* 76 (1936): 514.

<sup>26</sup> Cited in K. N. Sivaraja Pillai, *Agastya in the Tamil Land* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1985), p. 52.

domination.<sup>27</sup> The king has a dream in which a mysterious woman relives the horrors of Muslim rule and then produces a mighty sword which has been sent by Agastya "because of the strength of your arms."

Though Agastya's primary task is to confer sovereignty, we must also investigate other aspects of his mythic and semi-historical personality to interpret the Candi Singhasari image. Of particular interest is his miraculous birth in which the gods Varuna and Mitra became sexually aroused from seeing the celestial nymph Uravasi. They let their semen fall in a water jar, and from this womb-like vessel emerged the dwarfish form of Agastya.

A miraculous birth is the natural concomitant of the life history of all distinguished and holy personages. It is a universal convention to say that extraordinary persons were not born in the ordinary way. The stories of the birth of Christ, Buddha, and the three Vaisnava alvars are other instances of a large class of such legends.<sup>28</sup>

The extraordinary birth of Agastya marks only the beginning of a lifetime of phenomenal deeds. He stayed the abnormal growth of the Vindhya and drank up the ocean in his zeal to aid Visnu in his battle to destroy the asuras.

The Kalakeyas or Kaleyas, a class of Asuras, had fought under Vrta against the gods. After the death of their leader they hid themselves in the ocean where the gods could not reach them, and determined to extirpate the Brahmans and holy men; for thus, they thought, they would bring about the end of the world. The gods, alarmed by their raids, were advised by Visnu to implore Agastya for help. The Risi, accordingly, drank up the water of the ocean and thus laid bare the Kalakeyas, who were then slain by the gods. . . .<sup>29</sup>

Agastya assists not only Visnu but also the noble young prince Rama who enters Agastya's hermitage to pay homage to the sage. "Agastya, who shone like the sun,"<sup>30</sup> welcomed the virtuous Rama to the forest and presented his guest with "fruits, roots, flowers, water and other things in great profusion"<sup>31</sup> and then offered celestial weapons to make him invincible in combat.

Here is a celestial and powerful bow, encrusted with gold and diamonds, that belonged to Vishnu. O Tiger among Men, it is the creation of Vishwakarma.

Here also is the Brahmadata dart, which is infallible and resembles the sun; it is pre-eminent and was given to me by Mahendra; here also are these two inexhaustible quivers, filled with sharp arrows that blaze like torches and here a mighty silver scabbard and a sword decorated with gold.

With this bow, O Rama, Vishnu slew the great asura in battle and formerly acquired inexpressible glory amongst the dwellers in the celestial regions.

This bow, these two quivers, the dart and the sword, pledges of victory, do thou accept, O Proud Warrior, and bear them as Vajradhara the thunderbolt.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Sastri, "Agastya," p. 505.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 474.

<sup>29</sup> "Agastya," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1926.

<sup>30</sup> Valmiki, *The Ramayana of Valmiki* vol. 2, trans. Hari Prasad Shastri (London: Shanti Sadan, 1962), p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

A curious episode occurs in the Agastya myth as the venerable hermit grows old. He encounters his ancestors' dangling heads down in a hole. They beg Agastya to marry and beget a son to perform the death rituals for them. In compliance, Agastya by magical powers produces a beautiful maiden, Lopamudra. When Lopamudra reaches puberty, Agastya asks for her hand in marriage, to which she agrees. Agastya then immediately demands that she discard her precious jewels and garments, and dress in rags and rough bark cloth. As the ideal wife, she obeys his commands and partakes of his vows in the blissful glade of Gangadhara. For years Agastya's self-control is so great that he never thinks of Lopamudra with passion. At last he desires his wife, but she refuses his advances and says: "I will not approach you dressed in the rags of asceticism, for this ochre robe must not be made impure in any way. But dress me and yourself in heavenly ornaments, and I will come to you."<sup>33</sup> He argues that to use his powers of *tapas* to obtain riches would destroy his ascetic powers, but Lopamudra remains unmoved. After numerous adventures, Agastya fulfills her conditions. He then asks Lopamudra to choose between 1,000 sons or 100 sons or a single son far superior to the 1,000. She selects the one covetable son who is born repeating the *Vedas*, *Upanisads*, and the *Angas*. "Agastya was highly pleased, and his ancestors obtained the *lokas* they desired."<sup>34</sup>

The Agastya myths help to clarify the iconography of the Candi Singhasari hermit. The image wears the turban of an East Javanese hermit, which signifies that Agastya has renounced worldly pleasures and practices asceticism. Classical Javanese literature abounds with tales of gallant young princes who endure an initiation ritual in which they spend time in isolation (the forest, the wilderness) and undergo untold suffering and danger. From the extreme deprivation comes ritual purification in which the cleansed heroes emerge from their ordeal with renewed purpose. The Calcutta stone proclaims the glory of the great King Airlangga and mentions how the Illustrious One "accompanied by a small band of horsemen (?) and [the] best of servants he betook himself to the forest."<sup>35</sup> Presumably Airlangga had fled his devastated capital and sought refuge in the forest, where he practiced asceticism to obtain powers to overcome his adversaries.

The renouncement of this worldly life is not the only duty of a hermit or ascetic. Another equally important and rather contradictory duty is to marry and beget a son to honor the deceased forefathers. The attributes of the Candi Singhasari Agastya suggest these conflicts. Agastya holds in his right hand his meditation beads, the *aksamala* used in yogic meditation and representing ascetic devotions, and in his broken left hand, we may presume, he held his traditional water vessel, a standard attribute of the hermit in Indian art. For Agastya the vessel also signifies the circumstances of his miraculous birth. This extraordinary birthing vessel contains the fertile waters of the universe whose regenerative powers sustain and preserve cosmic life. The *Nagarakrtagama* affirms the social and religious importance of the "fertile waters" when Prapanca describes the highly erotic dances of the *sraddha* ceremony. The illustrious king displays his sexual prowess as he dances in wild abandonment with women who embody the procreative powers of the honored Deceased One. Like the brimming waters of Agastya's

<sup>33</sup> Wendy O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 54.

<sup>34</sup> Sastri, "Agastya," p. 476.

<sup>35</sup> Chatterjee, *India and Java*, p. 72.

birthing vessel, the symbolic union of the Queen Grandmother and the king ensures the prosperity and fertility of the kingdom.

Bosch claims that Javanese epigraphy affirms a close association between a hermit figure and his miraculous powers to create the fertile waters of the universe. He particularly cites the fifth-century inscription of Tugu which states that in former times the *rajadhiraja* or "strong armed guru" miraculously dug a nearly seven-mile waterway in only twenty-one days.<sup>36</sup> Other later inscriptions also proclaim the water-producing powers of a guru. The Kamalagyan inscription of AD 1037 praises His Majesty Airlangga for his flood-control projects for which he is revered as Bhatara Guru. The Sumengka inscription of c. AD 1059 also commemorates the waterworks projects of Airlangga, in which the king is addressed with his posthumous title *paduka mpungku bhatara guru*.<sup>37</sup> Bosch ponders whether Airlangga received the title Bhatara Guru because he executed waterworks projects or whether he was worshipped first as Bhatara Guru and then felt obliged to fulfil his title with projects befitting a guru. In either case, the symbolic significance is clear. Airlangga possessed the magical powers of a guru to bring forth the spring waters of the universe to sustain life in his kingdom.

The fact that East Javanese epigraphy identifies a historical *rajadhiraja* with the powers of Bhatara Guru is particularly useful for our analysis of the Candi Singhasari Agastya. We observe not only the identification of a living king with a Hindu deity, but also the overlapping and inseparable nature of king and hermit. The Singhasari king in the guise of Agastya also plays the important role of intermediary. He is the one who first receives the scepter of state and then confers sovereignty on the most suitable claimant, much as Agastya bestows the celestial weapons on Rama to ensure his invincibility in combat. The king also affirms traditional Javanese beliefs, for we may liken the scepter of state to the divine powers of the ancestors. These intangible and mysterious powers flow from the deified image of the king in the central sanctuary, for the honored Deceased One is the living Singhasari king's most immediate forefather. He bestows the divine life force on his descendant, who practices asceticism to concentrate the regenerative energy of the universe. The most explicit expression of this power is the blessed union of the royal couple from whose extraordinary birthing vessel comes the heir apparent to ensure the prosperity of the Singhasari dynasty.

The ritual circumambulation of Candi Singhasari proceeds from the king in the guise of Agastya to Ganesa who originally resided in the eastern cella. The traditional form of Ganesa takes a peculiarly "Javanese twist" with the macabre Candi Singhasari image. The elephant-headed deity sits in the pose of royal ease or *maharajalila* upon a throne of human skulls. His mammoth head sinks between his shoulders and bears a stupa-like crown or *mukuta* which is bedecked with skull ornaments. He has four arms and is richly adorned with anklets and bracelets. A snake sacred thread or *upavita* writhes about his ample girth and skull earrings dangle on either side of his trunk. Ganesa's trunk coils to the left and rests on a skull bowl which he holds in his lower left hand, while he carries upright meditation beads in his upper left hand. With ease he

<sup>36</sup> F.D.K. Bosch, "Guru, Trident and Spring," *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1961), p. 164.

<sup>37</sup> Aurora Roxas-Lim, "Caves and Bathing Places in Java as Evidence of Cultural Accommodation," *Asian Studies* 21 (1983): 133.



Figure 3: Candi Singhasari Ganesa

Jan Brandes, *Beschrijving van Tjandi Singasari*  
(The Hague: 1909) Plate 41

balances another skull bowl in his lower right hand and raises an axe in the upper right one. To either side of his elephant head is a round disk surrounded by an irregular nimbus.

The skull ornamentation of the Candi Singhasari Ganesa deserves special comment, for, as Alice Getty has remarked, "the use of the skull ornaments on the representations of Ganesa is a purely Javanese conception and is practically never met with outside of the Malay Archipelago."<sup>38</sup> One possible explanation for the macabre Ganesa is that Krtanagara "in His somewhat old age . . . held to the esoteric (sense) of all *kriyas* (rites)"<sup>39</sup> among which the *Nagarakrtagama* specifically mentions the *Ganacakra* and *Prayogakriya*. Pigeaud speculates that the *Ganacakra* i.e. Gana wheel, is in some way associated with the *Prayogakriya*, for elsewhere in the poem *Prayoga* seemingly is another name for Ganesa, for he is described as "the removal of obstacles."<sup>40</sup>

Though the practice of esoteric rituals feasibly explains the demonic form of Ganesa, it does not clarify why the skull-bedecked Ganesa appears almost exclusively within the Malay Archipelago. How is this possible when the rituals themselves originated elsewhere? One possibility is that the remote location of East Java provided a fertile ground for the development of an unorthodox cult, in which Indian religious practices were adopted and then transformed to strengthen indigenous needs and beliefs. Some support for this hypothesis can be drawn from the overlapping symbolism of the Ganesa birth story and ritual head-hunting practices in parts of Southeast Asia.

The *Puranas* explain that Parvati created Ganesa out of scrubbings from her body and formed the impurities into the figure of a man to which she gave life by sprinkling him with the water of the Ganges. Then Parvati placed her first-born son outside her apartment to guard against intrusions. One day while Parvati was bathing Siva demanded entrance, and a fight ensued in which Siva cut off Ganesa's head. Parvati was so enraged that she threatened to destroy the universe unless Siva restored her son. Siva commanded his host of deities to bring the head of the first living creature that they encountered, which happened to be an elephant. He then affixed it to the headless trunk and resuscitated Ganesa.

The Ganesa birth story affirms the importance of "the taking or borrowing of a head" to restore cosmic order and bears comparison with the direct association between the taking of heads and the general well being of the village in some tribal areas of Southeast Asia. R.E. Downs reports that among the Toraja of Sulawesi "[t]he native term for head-hunting (*menga'e*) is synonymous with that for harvesting (*menggae*). . . ."<sup>41</sup> He also contends that "the two acts are likened to each other by the Toradja themselves."<sup>42</sup>

At the harvest feast the exploits of the women as priestesses and those of the men as headhunters are celebrated. On returning from a raid the *towugi* is made from a branch of the arenga-palm and is used to cure the sick and to end the mourning period at the rice barn, after which the deceased is asked to make the crops succeed.

<sup>38</sup> Alice Getty, *Ganesa: A Monograph on the Elephant-Faced God* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1971), p. 57.

<sup>39</sup> Pigeaud, *Java* 3: 49.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> R. E. Downs, "Headhunting in Indonesia," *Structural Anthropology in the Netherlands*, ed. P. E. De Josselin de Jong (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), p. 123.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

The chief blessing bestowed on their descendants by the ancestors is that of good crops and health, and the best way to keep them well disposed is to keep them supplied with heads. The temple, moreover, where the heads are deposited, is usually decorated with fertility symbols such as over-sized male and female genitals.<sup>43</sup>

The ritual character of headhunting to ensure that the ancestors bestow good crops and health on the Toraja community resembles the sacrifice of a slave in the Ngaju Dayak death feast or *tiwah*. The Ngaju Dayak of Borneo believe that when a grave sin is committed or a free Dayak "leaves this world . . . to . . . enter the company of the divine ancestors," the cosmic order is destroyed:

The whole community, together with the entire cosmos, belong to the world of death. They are doomed to death. Ruin and disaster hang like a cloud . . . over the whole world. Man moves on in darkness. No light illuminates his path. Omens and dreams fail to appear. The eyes of the godhead no longer rest on him. The approach to the Upperworld and the Underworld, to the deities and the ancestors, is barred to him. . . . The hunter does not return from the forest, the fisherman is seized by the crocodiles.<sup>44</sup>

To restore cosmic order the whole community re-enacts the creation of the universe. They dramatize the sacred event with two ritual groups who represent the hornbills that alight on the fruit-laden branches of the Tree of Life. Battle breaks out between them, and together they proceed to destroy the tree and finally themselves. The annihilation is marked by a head taken in a head-hunting ritual or a slave who is ceremonially stabbed to death.

The killing of the slave takes place on the sacrificial post (*sapundu*). It begins towards sunset and lasts until sunrise. All the participants dance around the slave and stab him with sacred spears, daggers, swords and blowpipes. This has been referred to as torture, but the killing has to take place in this way since the slave meets his death on behalf of the entire community and all the participants at the feast. About sunrise he receives the *coup de grace* and collapses dying in his own blood. The corpse is laid on the ground and covered with a cloth. It lies in the direction from sunrise to sunset (head towards sunrise, legs towards sunset), for it is stepping out of life into death. . . .

The whole community together buries the dead slave. . . . When this has been done they place themselves in front of the priest. He smears them with the blood of the sacrificed slave, and during this ceremony they again describe the cosmic circle from sunset to sunrise.<sup>45</sup>

From this sacred ceremony emerges a newly created world in which the Tree of Life once more bears fruit. This state of well-being lasts until the world era reaches its term or until the cosmos suffers another imbalance, at which time the community again performs the death feast and restores the fruit-laden Tree of Life.

Perhaps the skull ornamentation of Ganesa symbolizes the head-hunting trophy whose ritual "borrowing" ensures the well being of the community, for, as we observed among the Toraja, the "taking of heads" serves to honor the ancestors from whom good

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Hans Scharer, *Ngaju Religion*, trans. Rodney Needham (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1963), p. 131.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-41.

crops and health flow. Not surprisingly, Ganesa is the Indian deity chosen to embody the indigenous belief in the potency of the "borrowed" head, for his own elephant head was a "borrowing" to placate his irate mother Parvati and restore cosmic order.

Not only the skull ornamentation of the Ganesa but also the deity's place in the viewing order at Candi Singhasari suggest that indigenous religious practices transformed Hindu traditions. In Hindu temple ritual Ganesa is invoked at the beginning of worship, for as the "Remover of Obstacles" he assists the pious along their spiritual path. At Candi Singhasari Ganesa has relinquished his primary position as bestower of success and wisdom, for he originally resided in the eastern cella between the formidable images of Agastya and Durga. Robert Brown has observed that, "[t]his is precisely the arrangement found in Javanese temples during the central Javanese period as well, so the Tantric nature of the eastern Javanese Ganesa did not change his iconographic placement in the temples."<sup>46</sup>

Ganesa's intermediary position recalls the central image of the relief at Candi Sukuh in Central Java in which the dancing elephant man is also a demonic form of Ganesa. Stanley O'Connor notes the distinctive treatment of the "Remover of Obstacles" with his exposed genitals, demonic physiogomy, rosary of bones, and awkward dance posture.<sup>47</sup> He links the Candi Sukuh Ganesa with the Tantric ritual of *Ganacakra* in which the word *Gana* may refer to Ganesa. Poerbatjaraka found an explanation of the *Ganacakra* in a collection of life stories of Lamaistic saints written by Taranatha. The well known Acarya Kukuraraja or "Dog-king" was a famous Yogacarya, who was initiated into the secrets of the cemetery. The holy man preached the law or *dharma* by day in the form of a dog, while at night he went to the cemetery with his disciples to perform the *Ganacakra* ceremony. O'Connor is tempted "to link the quite clearly Tantric representation of the dancing Ganesa holding a dog in the Sukuh relief to the ritual described by Taranatha. But, as Professor Zoetmulder has pointed out, texts tell almost nothing about the rules and purposes of such rituals in Java. Their secrets have always been carefully guarded."<sup>48</sup>

In 1932 Stutterheim recorded faint echoes of Tantric ritual in the *kraton* of Surakarta where the *cantang balung* play the buffoon, with the upper part of their naked bodies painted with yellow stripes. Their duties are "to become fuddled in public with gin or arak and to dance in an intoxicated state."<sup>49</sup> On special occasions they perform the drinking elephant dance or *gajah ngombe* in which they hold a glass of gin in their right hand and in their left a string of flat leaf-shaped bones and hop about the floor, alternating their right and left foot at every gong beat. They also present another quite remarkable dance with definite sexual overtones in which they imitate the behavior of mating dogs. Originally the *cantang balung* carried a seal of office, which is described as oval in shape with a phallus inside a heartshaped vulva. The phallic symbolism of the seal well suited the *cantang balung* for they also supervised the public dancing girls or prostitutes.

<sup>46</sup> Robert L. Brown, "Ganesa in Southeast Asian Art: Indian Connections and Indigenous Developments," in *Ganesh*, ed. Robert L. Brown (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), p. 188.

<sup>47</sup> Stanley J. O'Connor, "Metallurgy and Immortality at Candi Sukuh, Central Java," *Indonesia* 39 (April 1985): 53-70.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>49</sup> W. F. Stutterheim, "A Thousand Years Old Profession in the Princely Courts on Java," *Studies in Indonesian Archaeology* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956), p. 99.

By superimposing this image of the cantang balang of the twentieth century on our fifteenth century relief we find a remarkable series of parallels: the dancing elephant, the awkward hopping dance form, the reference to a dog, the bones, which in our relief are also carried in the left hand . . . , and, to draw a possible further connection, the insignia of office is almost mirrored by the very realistic phallus and vulva . . . contained within an ornamental surround carved in the first stone arch that offers entrance to the Suku terraces. If we then add to this list something not included in the relief—the gin and the dancing girls who are specialists in erotic attraction—we have completed the left-handed Tantric associations of promiscuous intercourse, drunkenness, and graveyards (the rattling bones).<sup>50</sup>

The *Nagarakrtagama* describes similar erotic dancing in the celebration of the *srad-dha* ceremony of Rajapatni. Grand festivities marked the occasion and liquor streamed like a flood. In the Great Hall the Illustrious King, in the presence of the honored Deceased One, performed erotic dances with women, some of whom “forgot what they were doing. . . .”<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the erotic abandonment of the ecstatic dance broke the frozen silence of death and released the soul of the deceased to the land of the ancestors.

In our relief it is the darkly energetic dance of Ganesa, the guardian of the thresholds, who breaks open a path for the soul, which is represented here as an animal wreathed in the flames of Hell, just as the *srad-dha* rites of the Rajapatni culminate in the erotic tension, the vital pressure generated by the princes’ transports with the dancing girls.<sup>52</sup>

In Bali Ganesa may also “break open the path for the soul.” Stutterheim has observed that the elephant-headed deity often stands to the extreme right of Balinese groups of deified personages. Accordingly, he concludes that the worship of Ganesa is “in some way drawn into the ceremonies of deifying the statues of kings and queens.”<sup>53</sup>

As these images were made in commemoration after the death of the royal personages, it is not impossible that Ganesa, who was undoubtedly worshipped during their lifetime as ‘Remover of Obstacles’, was placed at the right of each group in order, if properly propitiated, to remove all obstacles from their paths after death.<sup>54</sup>

Another explanation for the intermediary position of Ganesa focuses on ancestor worship in which the preservation of dynastic lineage plays an important role. The *Puranas* state that the elephant-headed deity is the eldest son of Siva and Parvati and as such he is sometimes referred to as Pillaiyar or Son *par excellence*. His position as first born is mentioned in the Old Javanese *kakawin Smaradahana*, where Siva abandons his ascetic practices and fulfills the hopes and dreams of the gods when his union with Uma bears fruit.

The gods, seeing that their hopes have been fulfilled and mindful of Wrhaspati’s advice, come to pay a visit, bringing with them Indra’s elephant, an animal of terrifying appearance. At the sight of it Uma is frightened to death. When shortly afterwards a son is born he appears to have the head of an elephant. Siwa declares that

<sup>50</sup> O’Connor, “Metallurgy and Immortality,” pp. 62-63.

<sup>51</sup> Pigeaud, *Java* 3: 78.

<sup>52</sup> O’Connor, “Metallurgy and Immortality,” p. 63.

<sup>53</sup> See Getty, *Ganesa*, p. 65.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

his name shall be *sang hyang* Gana; he will by nature be a remover of obstacles and will destroy the enemies of the gods.<sup>55</sup>

In no time the demons assemble and spread destruction whenever they pass. The gods panic and flee to Siva, who presents his elephant-headed son Ganesa as their savior. Then the army of the gods sets out with Ganesa in the lead. The first-born son saves the day, and the world is once again at peace.

When at last the demons are threatened with defeat, the demon king appears in person and rages with such fury that all the gods take flight. Only Gana stands firm and a fierce combat follows. When the demon hits him with his *bajra* (diamond weapon), a gift from Siwa, and severs his left tusk, he seizes the axe (*kutara*) which is one of the magic weapons recently presented to him, and cuts off his adversary's hands and feet, and finally his head. He restores to life with *amrta* those who have fallen on his side and they praise him with shouts of 'Gananjaya'. The world is at peace again. All extol the wisdom of Wraspati, to which they owe the birth of their saviour. Siwa reigns in heaven, with his consort Uma and his sons Gana and Kumara, for many *yugas*. As *ardhanariswara* (the lord who is half woman) he is the fulfillment of all who aim at uniting with the supreme deity.<sup>56</sup>

The unorthodox placement of Ganesa in the eastern or middle cella affirms his primary position as first-born son in the Saivite royal family. Embraced between the protective arms of his divine father and mother, Ganesa is also the heir apparent of the Singhasari royal family who performs the elaborate crossing over ceremony in which he releases the souls of his father and mother to ensure the flow of life-giving blessings from the deified ancestors to the Singhasari kingdom.

From the corpulent Ganesa, the processional path leads to Durga Mahisasuramardini, the invincible warrior who crushes the buffalo demon. Boldly she stands in her moment of victory as she rescues the universe from the tyranny of the demon of death. She is depicted as a beautiful young woman with elegant garments and lavish bracelets, anklets, and chains. Her serene demeanor contrasts with her skull-bedecked crown or *mukuta*, which betrays her Saivite origins and declares her mission to combat cosmic disorder whenever demons threaten to disrupt the world. She stands upon the defeated buffalo in a superb display of strength, with a slightly swollen womb and legs splayed apart in a daringly erotic pose. Without even a glance the goddess subdues the human form of the demon who appears in the form of a curly-headed boy on her left side. With her lower right hand she holds the buffalo's tail while slowly drawing her upper body backwards to inflict the death blow.

Though no inscriptions reveal how the Candi Singhasari goddess was worshipped, the obvious discrepancy in her serene demeanor and the brutal reality of the struggle suggests that Durga was invoked for her ambivalent qualities. The indomitable goddess appears in many guises in Old Javanese literature and especially the *kidung Sudamala*, which relates how the beautiful Uma commits adultery with a young shepherd. Her enraged husband Siva condemns her to live in the cemetery of Gandamayū in the form of the female demon Durga or Ra Nini. There she must atone for her sins until released from her twelve-year curse by Bhatara Guru in the form of Sadewa, the youngest of the Pandawa brothers. At the same time that Siva banishes Uma, he also punishes two

<sup>55</sup> P. J. Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974), p. 294.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-95.



Figure 4: Candi Singhasari Durga

Jan Brandes, *Beschrijving van Tjandi Singasari*  
(The Hague: 1909), Plate 44

celestial beings whom he turns into the demons Kalantaka and Kalanjaya. The demons offer their services to the Korawa brothers and agree to harass their archenemies, the Pandawas. Kunti, the mother of the Pandawa brothers, fears for the lives of her sons and secretly begs Ra Nini to kill the two demons. The goddess agrees on condition that Kunti delivers up her son Sadewa for sacrifice. The distraught mother refuses twice, but Ra Nini abducts Sadewa and brings him to Gandamayū where she ties him to a tree. Ra Nini appears in her terrifying form and demands that Sadewa exorcise her evil nature and restore her former beauty.

Sadewa declares that he lacks the power to do so, but the goddess insists and becomes so enraged as to be brought to the point of killing him. Warned by the sage Narada, the god Guru hastens to his rescue. He enters Sadewa's body, and the latter is now able to perform the exorcising ritual by concentrating his mind and using the appropriate *mantras* accompanied by offerings of flowers and the sprinkling of holy water. As a result the goddess regains her former beauty and splendour. She changes the name of her benefactor into Sudamala ('he by whom blemishes and evil are purified'), gives him weapons with which to kill his enemies and tells him to go to the hermitage of Prangalas.<sup>57</sup>

*Sri Tanjung* is a sequel to *Sudamala* in which the next generation of the Pandawa family plays an important role: Sidapaksa is the son of Sakula and Sri Tanjung is the daughter of Sadewa.<sup>58</sup> Sidapaksa is in the service of King Sulakrama, and one day the king sends him on an errand to a hermitage where Sri Tanjung lives with her grandfather. They fall in love and that same evening Sidapaksa elopes with his beloved. Rumors of Sri Tanjung's haunting beauty arouse the desire of the king, and he devises a plan to dispose of Sidapaksa by sending him on an errand to the palace of Indra with a letter designed to infuriate the god. The young messenger departs his earthly abode, overcomes the perils of his arduous journey, and reaches heaven in one day for he wears a magic jacket. This is the jacket that Durga gave to Sadewa in gratitude for releasing her from the curse. In heaven Sidapaksa is about to be killed when Indra discovers that the messenger is both the son and nephew of the Pandawas.

After seven blissful days in heaven in the company of celestial nymphs, Sidapaksa returns to earth, where the king informs the young nobleman that Sri Tanjung has committed adultery in his absence. Without questioning the accusation, Sidapaksa drags Sri Tanjung to the cemetery of Gandamayū and kills her. Once Sidapaksa regains his senses, he discovers the sweet-smelling fragrance of her blood, and only then realizes the innocence of his wife. Meanwhile, the soul of Sri Tanjung descends into the netherworld and visits the damned in hell. Afterwards she crosses a river on the back of a fish-elephant and arrives at the gates of heaven, where she is denied entrance for her time has not arrived. A tremendous upheaval in nature takes place when her wandering soul returns to her body still lying in the cemetery. Only then do the gods learn of her death, and Durga descends to earth and brings Sri Tanjung back to life. The goddess performs a purification ritual to protect Sri Tanjung against pain, misfortune, sorcery, and slander. Then a servant of Durga carries her back to her grandfather's hermitage where Sidapaksa rejoins her. Sri Tanjung refuses to meet him until he kills King Sudamala and brings back his head. Sidapaksa fulfills his wife's wish, and the story ends happily with their joyous reunion.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 444.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 445–46.

Both *Sri Tanjung* and *Sudamala* celebrate the powers of Durga, but the goddess is much more than the invincible warrior who slays the buffalo demon. Durga is the Supreme Goddess who manifests herself in countless forms. In *Sudamala* Uma embodies the spell-binding charms of womanhood and the potentially dangerous powers of untamed sexual energy, and when she assumes the terrifying form of Durga she demonstrates that deity's fierce and bloodthirsty character in slaying the demons and demanding a "much needed" male sacrifice to restore her former powers and beauty.

*Sri Tanjung* enacts a similar drama of triumphs and catastrophes, in which Durga also manifests the ambivalent qualities of the Supreme Goddess. Only Durga restores life to *Sri Tanjung* and performs a purification ritual to protect her from other life-threatening disasters. Here Durga personifies the mysterious powers of the Mother Goddess who nurtures and protects her own children, though her awesome and bloodthirsty aspect is never forgotten, for she performs her deeds of compassion in the terrifying form of Durga or *Ra Nini*. Likewise, *Sri Tanjung* embodies spell-binding and devastating powers. She is celebrated as the ideal of feminine beauty and obviously an "exciter of desire" which is the most immediate expression of the rhythm of life. Her death causes heaven and earth to tremble, for only she contains the regenerative powers to ensure the renewal of life. Durga cannot allow her to die, so she revives the lifeless body. Once reborn *Sri Tanjung* agrees to reunite with her husband on condition that he brings her a human sacrifice.

For the mother of the world is unyielding and unattainable by force; she manifests her favors only when pleased by some act of complete surrender. Men, therefore, to win her grace, have gone so far as to sacrifice themselves at her altars, cutting their own heads off and spilling their lives before her terrible feet.<sup>59</sup>

Though portrayed as "an exciter of desire," Durga also manifests the mysterious powers of procreation. From her swollen womb bursts forth the short-lived creatures of the universe whom the Mother Goddess succors and nurtures, defending her children in the form of an indomitable warrior or *Durga Mahisasuramardini*. Once petitioned to defeat a demon that threatens cosmic order, Durga enters the battlefield with a wild and bloodthirsty ferocity.

Then the goddess with her trident, her club, with showers of spears, and with her sword and other weapons slaughtered the great asuras in hundreds, and laid others low who were bewitched with the ringing of her bell; and binding other asuras with her noose she dragged them along the ground. Others, split in two by sharp slashes of her sword and crushed by blows from her mace, lay on the ground; and some, grievously battered by her club, vomited blood. Some were felled to the ground, pierced in the breast by her trident. Some, being closely massed together, were cut to pieces by the torrent of her arrows in the battlefield. Some were cloven by the goddess into two parts, with a single arm and eye and foot to each part; and others fell and rose again, although with head cut off.<sup>60</sup>

Ostensibly Durga performs battlefield slayings to combat cosmic disorder, but sometimes the ferocious goddess loses control and "stands outside the civilized order of dharma. . . ."<sup>61</sup> Gleefully she renders "her enemies limb from limb, tearing their flesh

<sup>59</sup> Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 90.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>61</sup> David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 100.

with her teeth, and drinking their blood, which then intoxicates her. Thirsting for more blood or dancing drunkenly out of control, she herself becomes a threat to the cosmos and must be tamed or subdued."<sup>62</sup>

Though the Candi Singhasari Durga does not exhibit the wrathful or destructive powers of the Supreme Goddess, her diabolical and fierce nature assumes prominence when we consider the unorthodox placement of the Candi Singhasari images. As previously mentioned, the western orientation of Candi Singhasari requires the pious to perform a counterclockwise procession to worship the deities in the subsidiary shrines. In Hindu ritual worship this anti-clockwise direction is associated with the nocturnal course of the sun and marks the veneration of the ancestors in funerary ceremonies. In some tribal regions of Southeast Asia rituals abound in which a counterclockwise procession portends death, evil, or black magic. In the Ngaju Dayak death feast or *tiwah*, the celebrants sacrifice a slave towards sunset and cross over the dead body from sunset to sunrise to complete the cosmic circle.

Not only her unorthodox position in the viewing order but also her association with Ganesa imply that the Candi Singhasari goddess was invoked in esoteric rituals. Durga is the beloved consort of Siva and the divine mother of Ganesa, whose demonic form suggests that esoteric or black magic rituals were performed at Candi Singhasari. Presumably the ghoulish elephant-headed deity was not worshipped alone, but rather formed part of an elaborate ceremony which invoked the ferocious nature of Durga and Siva.

The Candi Singhasari images affirm the dynamics of thirteenth-century East Java which served as a highly selective sieve through which Indian religion flowed. In the process of acculturation the Hindu deities underwent modification and even remolding, in which Saivite iconography and symbolism served to empower indigenous beliefs. The figures of Agastya, Ganesa, and Durga take on the attributes of the Singhasari royal family. Though Agastya is a disciple of Siva, the portly hermit also embodies the conflicting duties of a Singhasari king to perform ascetic devotions and beget a son to ensure the prosperity of the kingdom. His miraculous birthing vessel contains the fertile waters of the universe from which emerges Ganesa, the first-born son of Siva and Parvati, who, as the "Remover of Obstacles," is also the heir apparent of the Singhasari royal family. His birth promises the sustained blessings of the universe, for the elephant-headed deity performs the elaborate crossing over ceremony in which the souls of his father and mother are released to the abode of the deified ancestors from which the life force of the kingdom flows. Durga personifies the Queen Mother of the Singhasari dynasty, embodying the powers of creation and destruction. As the female regenerative principle, she unites in marriage with the hermit king and bears the heir apparent to ensure prosperity. Together the Singhasari royal family in the guise of Hindu deities affirm the primacy of ancestor worship. They are inseparably bound to the deified image of the honored Deceased One in the central sanctuary who facilitates the flow of the intangible and mysterious powers of the ancestors to the ruling king.

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.