

PŪRVĀPARAPRAJÑĀBHINANDANAM
EAST AND WEST, PAST AND PRESENT

**Indological and Other Essays
in Honour of Klaus Karttunen**

EDITED BY

BERTIL TIKKANEN & ALBION M. BUTTERS

STUDIA ORIENTALIA 110

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ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF THE PĀŚUPATA MOVEMENT: ABOUT HERACLES, LAKULĪŚA AND SYMBOLS OF MASCULINITY

Hans Bakker

ABSTRACT

Research of the multiple relations of the classical traditions of Greece and India has fascinated scholars from the early days of Indology, in particular Western scholars who saw a Greek influence in many aspects of Indian culture. From the research of Klaus Karttunen we possess today a much more balanced view of this relationship. Thanks to his scholarship in both, the Greek and Indian traditions, we now know that many of the early claims and theories are unfounded. Karttunen has also been able to demonstrate that some of the extravagant stories about India in early Greek sources do actually have a basis in truth. As a tribute to Klaus Karttunen's work, I will discuss in this contribution the case of possible Greek influences on the development of Saivism in the early centuries of the Common Era.

1. LĀGUḌI

The study of the origins of organized Saivism received a completely new perspective with the publication of the *Pāśupatasūtras* (PS) and Kauṇḍinya's commentary thereon, the *Pañcārthabhāṣya*, by R. Ananthakrishna Sastri in 1940. Research by Minoru Hara, Daniel Ingalls, Alexis Sanderson, Thomas Oberlies, and Peter Bisschop, to mention just the major players in this field, built on this new evidence and paved the way for our present investigation, which draws heavily on their work.¹

For the last fifteen years, we have also been fortunate to enjoy another source that comes from the same Pāśupata tradition and is chronologically not too far

¹ Hara (2002); Ingalls (1962); Sanderson (2006); Oberlies (2000); Bisschop (2006). In Bakker (2010), the early beginnings of the Pāśupata movement have been examined. The present contribution can be viewed as a sequel to that article.

removed from Kauṇḍinya. This text reflects the view of the layman (*laukika*) rather than that of the initiated ascetic, who is the primary person treated by Kauṇḍinya. This text is the original *Skandapurāṇa* (SP), whose composition we date between CE 550 and 650, which means that the text is probably about 200 years later than Kauṇḍinya's commentary. Much had happened in India during those two hundred years: it saw the rise and fall of the great Gupta empire, the assault of the Huns, and the gradual recovery of centralized power in the new capital Kanauj (Kānyakubja) under the Maukharis and the great Harṣavardhana of Thanesar.

The first thing that strikes us when we compare the *Skandapurāṇa*'s account of the well-known descent of Śiva in Kāyāvataṛaṇa (called Kārohaṇa in that text and known today as the city of Karvan in Gujarat) with that of Kauṇḍinya is that the uniqueness of this mystical event is no longer maintained. Reflecting the general Hindu and Buddhist conception of the time, viz. that a Buddha or a god incarnates on earth again and again in various forms and persons, the *Skandapurāṇa* makes Śiva's descent in Gujarat a cyclic event: each world period (*yuga*) has its own incarnation: Bhārabhūti in the Kṛtayuga, Diṇḍimuṇḍa in the Tretā, Aṣāḍhi in the Dvāpara, and Lāguḍi in the current Kali age.²

Another development that apparently took place or gained prominence in the 5th to 6th centuries is that the *avatāra* story in Kārohaṇa itself was revised. God is said in the *Skandapurāṇa* to have been born into the house of a certain Somaśarman, who is said to belong to the lineage of the *ṛṣi* Atri, father of Soma, the Moon.³ This new tradition may have been invented to account for a lineage of Pāśupata teachers who traced their pedigree back to Somaśarman, a topic that I have discussed in my paper *Somaśarman, Somavaṃśa and Somasiddhānta*,⁴ and which we should leave aside here. The *Skandapurāṇa* is, in all likelihood, the first extant text that mentions this incarnation by name: Lāguḍi (variant: Lākulin), meaning 'club-bearer' (*laguḍa/lakuṭa*: 'club'). However, this relatively late first attestation of the name 'club-bearer' does not exclude the possibility that the association of this incarnation with the attribute of the club is much older. For this we have some indications.

2 *Skandapurāṇa* S recension (SPs 167.112–117) in Bisschop (2006). These four names (including Lākulin) also occur in the *Mukhāgama* (3.19) and *Guhyasūtra* (7.113) of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* corpus, but there they seem to refer to holy places rather than persons or incarnations. The date of the *Mukhāgama* and *Guhyasūtra* are unknown, but they may be more or less contemporaneous with the *Skandapurāṇa* (see Goodall & Isaacson 2007).

3 SPs 167.124 in Bisschop (2006: 103).

4 Bakker (2000).



Figure 1A Mathurā, Club-bearing ascetic (ASI)



Figure 1B Mathurā, Lakulīśa (State Museum, Lucknow)

To begin with, there is an image found in Mathurā (Figure 1A),⁵ usually dated to the third century CE on stylistic grounds, of a rather glum-faced, club-bearing ascetic. This figure might represent either an ascetic associated with the Pāśupata sect or – less likely, because characteristic iconographic signs are absent – the incarnation of Śiva himself.⁶

Secondly, the American scholar Daniel Ingalls, who compared the Pāśupata sect with the school of the Greek Cynics, broke new ground in his paper *Cynics and Pāśupata: The seeking of dishonor* when he conjectured that the name Lakulīśa, the Lāguḍi of the *Skandapurāṇa*, may have been prompted by the Greek Ἡρακλῆς, “if it lost its first syllable in order to help out a folk etymology”.⁷ If this were correct, it might point to an (iconographic) influence of the Hellenistic school of the Cynics, whose patron saint was the club-bearing Heracles, on the movement of the Pāśupata.

Ingalls’s wider suggestion, namely that the Pāśupata practice of seeking dishonour may have originated under the influence of the Cynics, has been met with scepticism by contemporary scholarship. Thomas Oberlies (2000) has argued in his *Kriegslisten und ungeziemendes Benehmen: Die Askesepraktiken der Pāśupatas* that antinomian praxis, as part of the context of the *brahmodya*, is already attested in the *Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa* (2.3,9.9); the influence of Cynicism in

5 Meister (ed.) (1984: Plate 80).

6 Shah (1984: 97).

7 Ingalls (1962: 296 n. 30). Accepted, with some reservation, in Hara (2002: 129–130).

this particular respect, something that was conjectured by Ingalls, is not required to explain the phenomenon. Though it may indeed be the case that the Pāśupata antinomian praxis in the second stage of the ascetic's career is an indigenous Indian development, the eponymous attribute of the saint, the *laguḍa* or club, remains as yet unexplained. Let us reconsider the earliest iconographic evidence.

The first unquestionable visual representation of the divine Śaiva teacher with the club attribute is a fifth-century image from Mathurā. This sculpture is understood to be an image of Lāguḍi or Lakula (Figure 1B).⁸ For reasons of comparison and further exploration of Ingalls's Greek connection, I would like to draw attention to an image of Heracles found in Aï Khanum on the Darya-i Pandj River. On display in the Musée Guimet (Paris) in 2007, it has since been touring in Europe and the USA. (Figure 2).⁹

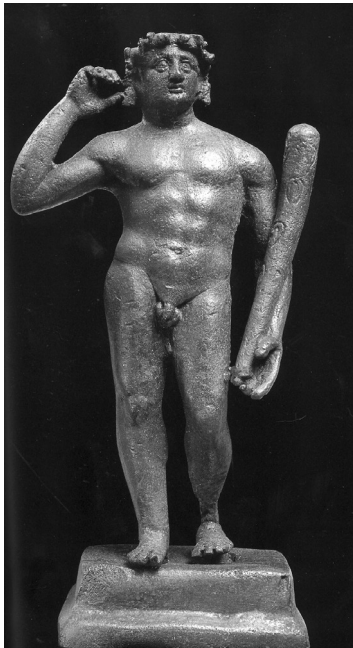


Figure 2 Aï Khanum, Heracles
(National Museum of Afghanistan)

The natural gnarls which usually characterize Heracles' cudgel, and which in stylized form are visible on the club of the Aï-Khanum Heracles, resemble the phallic line pattern on the club of the Mathurā image (Figure 3): a Greek symbol of masculinity encounters an Indian symbol of virility.

8 Meister (ed.) (1984: Plate 82).

9 *Afghanistan* (2008: 113, Plate 14).



Figure 3 Ai Khanum, Heracles' club (left) Mathurā, Lakuliśa's club (right) (details of Fig. 1B & 2)

Ai Khanum, whose excavations by a French mission began in 1965, represents an important Hellenistic city that was founded in the wake of Alexander's conquest of Central Asia (329–327 BC).¹⁰ This city, possibly Ptolemy's "Alexandria on the Oxus",¹¹ was once the centre of a hybrid culture in which East met West. This is clear from, among other things, coins found of the Indo-Greek king Agathokles (c.170 BC). They show two Indian deities, who have been identified as Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa), obverse, and Saṃkarṣaṇa (Balarāma), reverse. As Härtel has observed, "these coins are the oldest examples at all of the pictorial representation of Hinduistic gods, a fact which cannot be emphasized enough".¹²

Elements of the syncretistic culture of Bactria reached Western India with the entrance into the Subcontinent of Saka tribes, who built a kingdom from Mathurā to southern Gujarat in the last decades before the Common Era. That Heracles remained a popular figure there until Kuṣāṇa rule is attested, for instance, by the so-called Hercules-type of coins of the Saka ruler Rajuvula (1st quarter of the 1st c. CE), some of which were found in Mathurā,¹³ and a second-century CE image of Heracles and the Nemeian Lion, which was also found in Mathurā (Figure 4).¹⁴

10 Bernard (2008: 81 ff.).

11 Karttunen (1997: 47, 279).

12 Härtel (1987: 574).

13 Allen (1936: 187); Singh (1989: 150); Karttunen (1997: 313). See also, e.g. <www.griffterrec.com/coins/coins.html>: "Coin of Rujavula (c.10–20 CE (?)), Senior ISCH 153.6a, 15 x 14 mm, 3.29 gm, Die position = 9h, Obverse: Lion right; corrupt Greek legend, Reverse: Crude Hercules standing left. Kharosthi legend."

14 Vogel (1930: pl. XLVII), b. Vogel remarks (ibid. p. 118): "Cette pièce de sculpture est évidem-

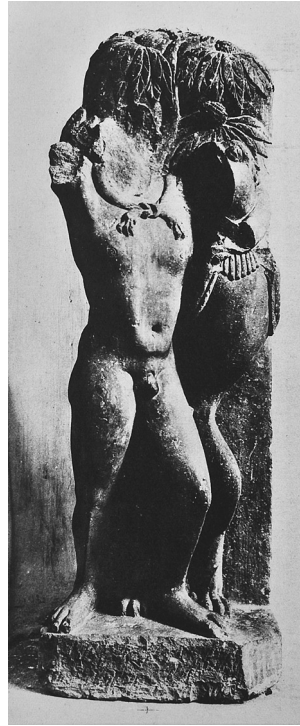


Figure 4 Mathurā, Heracles and the Nemeian lion (Mathurā Museum)

The Pāśupata movement originated under Saka hegemony in a part of India where the figure of Heracles was contemporaneously known. If the iconography of Heracles had exerted some influence on or had moulded the figure of the club-bearing divine teacher, we would expect this to be apparent in the sources that date to the period in which both the figure of Heracles and the Pāśupata teacher existed side by side, viz. the first centuries of the Common Era. However, neither our oldest source, the *Pāśupatasūtras*, nor Kauṇḍinya's commentary references the club as an attribute or the name Lāguḍi.¹⁵ Therefore, Ingalls's hypothesis

ment l'imitation assez faible d'un thème bien connu de l'art hellénistique. M. Foucher pense qu'on a voulu représenter quelque scène de la légende krishnaïte." Cunningham in *ASI Reports*, vol. XVII (1884) pp. 109–110 notes: "The head of Herakles is unfortunately wanting; but the pose and muscular development of the body are infinitely superior to any purely Indian sculpture that I have seen. Herakles has his left arm wound about the lion's neck, while with his right he is raising the club, which appears behind his back, to strike a blow. The raised arm is also gone. The lion is rather a weak animal. The group is not cut in the round, but is an *altro-relievo* with a rough back, and has apparently formed one side of an altar." Cf. Harle (1986: 67–68). The "Indian Heracles" of Greek sources, mentioned by Megasthenes et al., is mostly identified as Kṛṣṇa, a deity very well at home in Mathurā (Karttunen 1989: 211–212).

15 The *Mahābhārata* knows the Pāśupata sect, its vow (*vrata*), doctrine (*jñāna*), and practice

that the Greek Heracles launched the Indian Lakulīśa is just as unlikely as his assumption that the Hellenistic school of the Cynics influenced the development of the Pāśupata practice.

An orthogenetic root of the club-bearing deity seems to be more obvious. The *Amarakośa* (3.3.42) mentions *laguḍa* as a synonym of *daṇḍa*. It is but natural to conceive of the club as a variant of the traditional stick or staff (*daṇḍa*) of the brahmin ascetic. The earliest Pāśupata monument known to us, the *Mathurā Pilaster of Candragupta II* of the Gupta Year 61 (i.e. CE 380),¹⁶ depicts a naked three-eyed figure with a *daṇḍa* in his right hand and what is possibly a *kamaṇḍalu* in his left (Figure 5).¹⁷



Figure 5 Mathurā, Daṇḍapāṇi on Triśūla Pillar, G.É. 61 (Mathurā Museum)

Admittedly, the origin of the word *laguḍa/lakuṭa* – which is attested, for instance, in *Manusmṛti* (8.315) and *Mahābhārata* (7.29.16) in the sense of ‘cudgel’ or ‘club’

(*yoga*); it also knows the Pāśupata weapon (*astra*), which Śiva gave to Arjuna, but this weapon is a divine arrow (MBh 3 App. 27, l. 1), not a club. Lāguḍi/Lakulīśa is unknown to the MBh and so is his club.

¹⁶ *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* III (1981), 240.

¹⁷ The identity of this figure is disputed. That we are concerned with a divine figure follows from the third eye. Acharya (2005: 209) proposes to read the name of this deity as Caṇḍa. My designation “Daṇḍapāṇi” is descriptive, it is not the proper name of the deity.

– remains as yet unclear.¹⁸ But even if we do not accept Przyłuski’s etymology that links the word to the Austro-Asiatic *lāṅgula*, meaning ‘stick’ or ‘penis’,¹⁹ we may assume that phallic symbolism easily suggested itself to the Indian mind and came to be associated with this particular attribute. The phallic shape of the club seen in the earliest representations of the divine teacher, evident from the line pattern and its upright position, may have been prompted by the ithyphallic nature of this teacher and his prototype, Śiva. Thus, the club may have replaced the ascetic *daṇḍa* by virtue of its more outspoken phallic, i.e. Śaiva connotation.²⁰ The names Lāguḍi (or ‘club-bearer’) in the *Skandapurāṇa* and Lakuliśa (i.e. ‘Lord of the club-bearers’) in the *Guhyasūtra* (12.18) of the *Nīśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* are derived from this eponymous attribute.²¹

2. THE FOUR DISCIPLES

Another major development (in addition to the invention of the figure of Lāguḍi) that took place in the 4th to 6th centuries is also attested by the *Skandapurāṇa*: Kuśika is no longer the only disciple. The number of disciples said to have been initiated by Lāguḍi himself has increased to four. These four are considered to have a semi-divine status; our text declares them to have sprung from the four faces of God (Parameśāna) out of His desire to bestow grace (*anugraha*) upon the world:

You four should descend to earth to become twice-born ascetics.
And after having led the brahmins to the supreme station, you,
O masters of yoga, should return to Me. (SPs 167.120)

The first disciple, Kuśika/Kauśika, is born in Ujjain and initiated there by Śiva’s incarnation himself, just as is seen in Kauṇḍinya’s version. But the venue has changed. According to the *Skandapurāṇa*, the initiation takes place in the cremation ground instead of a temple. The Lord, smeared with ashes, is said to hold a firebrand (*ulmuka*) in his left hand (SPS 167.127–128). This seems appropriate

18 Cf. Mayrhofer, EWA s.v. *lakuṭa*: ‘Nicht erklärt.’

19 Turner, CDIAL s.v. *lakuṭa*: Ac. to J. Przyłuski Pre-Aryan in sense ‘penis’ is of same origin as *lāṅgula* &c ← Austro-as.; but prob. same word as ‘stick’. See also Mayrhofer, KEWA s.v.

20 The *Atharvavedaparīśiṣṭa* 40, dealing with the Pāsupatavrata, contains the following interesting passage, specifying what should be given to the initiated brahmin: *tato 'ya mauñjīm prayacchati || sāvitrīyā tu daṇḍam pālāśam bailvam āśvattham vāsiṃ lakuṭam khaṭvāṅgam paraśum vā ||* (40.3.2). For translation and explicatory notes see Bisschop & Griffiths (2003: 331–332). These authors date this text to the 2nd half of the 1st millennium (op. cit. 324).

21 The names Lakulin/Lakuliśa/Lakuladhārin are also known to the Pāsupatavidhi texts discovered and published by Diwakar Acharya; for instance the *Samskāravidhi* (Acharya 2007).

for a cremation ground and may indicate that the initiation included branding. Although it is tempting to hypothesize that the ascetic's club has been mistakenly interpreted for what was originally a firebrand, this hypothesis has to be discarded, not only because of what has been said above, but also, more importantly, because images of Lakulīśa with a firebrand have never come to light and the *ulmuka* is elsewhere never mentioned as one of his potential attributes. On the other hand, the firebrand as an attribute is found in some later images of Śiva as a teacher, in his so-called "Dakṣiṇāmūrti."²²

The ancient cremation ground in Ujjain has been identified. Locally known as Kumhār Ṭekḍī, this site was the subject of preliminary explorations by M.B. Garde in the season of 1938–1939. Discovered there were skeletons in sitting posture, reflecting the normal way of interring yogins. Kuśika may have been one of them.²³ The specification of these four disciples in the *Skandapurāṇa* allows us to catch a glimpse of the spread and ramification of the movement; it will be our subject in the final part of this essay.

From the Mathurā Pilaster of CE 380, we deduce that the Pāśupata movement had spread from South Gujarat to Mathurā before the end of the fourth century. This is true for at least one tradition of gurus, the so-called "Vaimalas", who traced their pedigree directly back to Kuśika. In an image found in Mathurā that might be slightly later than the pilaster, the ithyphallic divine teacher – who, to judge by his attribute, is to be identified as Lāguḍī – is shown with two disciples.²⁴ Evidently the Kuśika lineage (*paramparā*) had lost its monopoly and needed to compete with a rival tradition that also claimed direct descent from Śiva's incarnation.

The *Skandapurāṇa*'s account of the four disciples of Lāguḍī, which would become the standard, reflects a bifurcation which may have started already in the 4th century, if not earlier. The earliest known image that shows four disciples seated around a divine teacher, however, comes only in the 6th century (Figure 6). It is found "above the doorway in the east vestibule to the great cave at Yogeśvarī near Bombay", dated by Walter Spink to circa CE 525.²⁵

22 For instance in the Dakṣiṇāmūrti in the Kailāsanātha temple in Kanchi. See Bisschop (2006: 211).

23 Garde (1940: Plate VIII (b) & (c)).

24 Shah (1984: 97); Meister (ed.) (1984: Plate 81).

25 Spink (1983: 243); Shah (1984: 88). The divine figure in the *Yogeśvarī* Cave seems to be four-armed: the left upper hand holds the rosary and the left lower hand the club; the right lower hand seems to make a *vyākhyānamudrā*, whereas the right upper arm is missing (cf. Shah 1984: 98). This Pāśupata monument, just as the monuments at Mandapesvar and Elephanta, shows the flourishing of the Pāśupata movement in the middle of the 6th century, when the movement's



Figure 6 Yogeśvarī Cave, Lakulīṣa with four disciples.

The account in the *Skandapurāṇa* tells us that the third disciple, who was initiated in Mathurā, was named Mitra. No doubt there were many Mitras in Mathurā, but the mention of this name in this context may betray some historical awareness of the fact that the city of Mathurā, before the arrival of the Sakas, had been governed by a Mitra dynasty.²⁶ Making a (legendary) Mitra the fountainhead of a lineage of Pāśupata gurus in Mathurā would only add to the authenticity of this tradition.

The *Skandapurāṇa* suggests that before the Pāśupata teachers settled in Mathurā, the movement had reached the city of Jambūmārga, located somewhere between Ujjayanī and Puṣkara.²⁷ In this city, the divine incarnation is reported to have initiated his second disciple, Gārgya. The exact location of Jambūmārga is unknown, but it must have been an important Śaiva centre. Professor Tsuchida (Tokyo) has suggested to me that it may be the town called Mo-hi-shi-fa-lo-pu-lo, Maheśvarapura, visited by Hsiuen-tsang in the first quarter of the seventh century. The Chinese pilgrim describes the place as follows:

home country came under the control of the early Kalacuris, who extended their rule to the northern Konkan where these monuments are preserved (Spink 1983; cf. Mirashi in CII IV.1, xlvi f., cxlvii f.). The Kalacuri king Kṛṣṇarāja, according to an inscription of his son (Śaṅkaragaṇa) datable to CE 597, is said to have been devoted to Paśupati from the day of his birth (*janmana eva paśupatisamāśrayaparaḥ*, CII IV.1, 41).

²⁶ Gupta (1989: 129–131).

²⁷ Bisschop (2006: 209).

The produce of the soil and the manners of the people are like those of the kingdom of Ujjayani. They greatly esteem the heretics and do not reverence the law of the Buddha. There are several tens of Dēva temples, and the sectaries principally belong to the Pāsupatas. The king is of the Brāhman caste; he places but little faith in the doctrine of Buddha.²⁸

This town may have been somewhere in the vicinity of the village of Beawar Khas (known today as Beawar City), which is around 50 km south of Pushkar (Rajasthan). This site has not yet been explored and the identification is very tentative.²⁹ Approximately 150 km to the south of Beawar, located between Pushkar and Ujjain, is a village presently known as Nagarī. This is the ancient town of Mādhyamika, located near Chitor (Hsiuen-tsang's Chi-ki-to) in Rajasthan. Archaeological remains in Nagarī (Mādhyamika) testify to its importance as a Śaiva centre in the 5th and 6th centuries. Just as in Maheśvarapura, Hsiuen-tsang reports the strong Śaiva presence in Chi-ki-to: "There are about ten Dēva temples, which some thousand followers frequent."³⁰ I have argued in an earlier publication that the 6th-century architrave found in Nagarī must have belonged to a large Śiva-Pāsupati temple, since one side shows Arjuna's acquisition of the Pāsupata weapon and the other side Dakṣa's initiation in the Pāsupatavrata (depicting a Dakṣiṇāmūrti).³¹

Combining these conjectures and the evidence, tentative as much of it may be, we could try to reconstruct the route along which the Pāsupata religion moved north in the fourth century. Coming from Karvan in Gujarat, and after having established itself in Ujjain in Western Malwa (Madhya Pradesh), it moved northwards along the ancient caravan route that connected the port of Bharukaccha (Bharuch) at the mouth of the Narmadā, through Ujjain, with Puṣkara in Rajasthan and the town of Mathurā further on in Uttar Pradesh. On this route Jambūmārga, or Maheśvarapura, became a Pāsupata headquarters like Ujjain and Mathurā.

28 Hsiuen-tsang in Beal II, 271.

29 Another candidate for Maheśvarapura has been proposed by Michael Willis (1997: 17), who identifies this place with the village of Shivpur (Shivpuri/Sipri), c.100 km west of Jhansi (MP), c.240 km south of Mathurā. The itinerary of the Chinese pilgrim suggests that Maheśvarapura lies on the route from Ujjain to the north through Chitor, that is on the axis Ujjain, Mandasor, Chitor, Puskar. See also Deloche (1980: I, 60 & Fig. 8). This appears also to be the route described in the *Tīrthayātrāparvan* (MBh 3.80.59–71).

30 Beal (II, 271).

31 Bakker (2004: 131–134). Cf. Williams (1982: 140–142). Shah (1984: 97–98) reports "an image [of Lakulīśa with four disciples] from Chitorgarh, built into the Rampol Gate", which she dates to "ca. seventh century" and illustrates in Pl. 84.

The movement did not end in Mathurā. The *Skandapurāṇa* speaks of the fourth disciple of Lāguḍi as a man born in the Kuru country, i.e. Kurukṣetra, but it stops short of mentioning him by name. This issue from the fourth face of Śiva is said to have been initiated by Lāguḍi in Kanyakubja, the city of Kanauj in Uttar Pradesh (SPS 167, 129). We take this as an indication that Kanauj had become another important headquarters for the Pāśupata sect in the 5th or 6th century. The explicit mentioning of the birth of the fourth disciple in the Land of the Kurus strongly suggests that this region also, with its capital Thanesar (Sthāneśvara), had become a stronghold of the new faith. The rise of the city of Kanauj as the political (and cultural) capital of Northern India in the 6th century ensured its position as the base from where the movement spread over Northern India and beyond, into Nepal and Cambodia.³²

3. THE ORIGIN OF A PAN-INDIAN RELIGION

The *Skandapurāṇa* describes the four disciples, after they had been initiated (*anugṛhya*), as apostles of the *Pañcārtha* Doctrine.

Lāguḍi (the divine incarnation) granted union (*yoga*) according to His own teaching (*Svasiddhānta*) and spoke:

This is the final mystical teaching known as *Pañcārtha*. It has been proclaimed to you in order that you liberate the brahmins from the fetters of death. You should make the brahmins reach the highest station by initiating them (in this teaching). Your dwelling places shall be on sacred river banks, in holy sanctuaries, as well as in deserted houses and forests, excluded from society.

Having heard this word of Lord Paśupati Himself, all these four disciples, being enlightened by God, did as they were told. (SPS 167.130–132)

To pursue the further course of the Pāśupata religion will remain a future task. I would like to conclude by briefly illustrating how a probably historic – and in many respects unique – mystical event, the religious enlightenment of the brahmin saint Kuśika in Ujjain, developed into a pan-Indian cult of Lakulīśa.

The author Kauṇḍinya gives the impression of still being in direct touch with the origins of the movement. He relates how the divine incarnation reached Ujjain by foot, a touching detail, and suggests that the authenticity of this event can be confirmed by the still visible traces that have been left behind.³³ In the two

³² Bakker (2007: 1–16).

³³ Kauṇḍinya *ad* PS 1.1. Sastri's edition pp. 3–4.

hundred years between Kauṇḍinya and the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*, great developments took place. There had arisen a number of gurus, no doubt rivals with one another, who claimed that their respective lineages (*paramparā*) hailed back to a disciple of the divine incarnation. To unite them, the idea of multiple disciples – first two, and then four – was invented.

In an orthogenetic process – or, less likely, a heterogenetic one through the influence of the Hellenistic figure of Heracles – the divine incarnation who was believed to have initiated these four disciples somehow came to be called Lāguḍi or Lakulīśa. Once the idea was accepted that this Lāguḍi had operated not only in Kārohaṇa and Ujjain, but had initiated in Śaiva centres such as Jambūmārga, Mathurā and another as far off as Kānyakubja, there was no longer a reason not to claim that he had operated in other places as well. The last vestige of historicity vanished. It was replaced by the belief that there had been incarnations of Śiva in all world periods: Lakulīśa was just one of them. And why should God limit his range to Western India? This new view is evident in a passage in the *Skandapurāṇa* that has been shown by Peter Bisschop to be an interpolation in the earliest extant recension of the text, the one preserved in Nepal (SPS).³⁴ This passage runs as follows:

Tradition has it that there are eight holy places of Śiva (Śaśimaulin) in the land of Magadhā, through which Laguḍīśvara wandered, surrounded by his pupils. When one has visited those, a man will be at once redeemed from sins. (SPS 167.169)

Thus, in a process typical of Indian culture, an elitist faith of ascetic virtuosi developed into a catholic religion, one of the many that the Indian subcontinent has to offer. The anonymous saviour of Kauṇḍinya turned into just another manifestation of the divine, his worship into just another form of Śiva devotion.

³⁴ Bisschop (2006: 15–17).

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Abbreviations

- ASI Archaeological Survey of India
- Beal Hsiuen-tsang, *Si-Yu-Ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World*
- CDIAL Turner, *Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages*
- CII *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*
- EWA Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindiarischen*
- KEWA Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*
- MBh *Mahābhārata*
- PS *Pāśupatasūtras*
- SP *Skandapurāṇa*
- SPS *Skandapurāṇa* S recension

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