



From Guru to God: Yogic Prowess and Places of Practice in Early-Medieval India

It is hard to imagine the history of Indian art without envisioning a meditating yogi or sage deep in contemplation, seated in lotus pose or standing in the absolute stillness that is achieved only upon final emancipation from worldly bonds. Among the most enduring of India's visual tropes, the image of the yogic master signifies far more than it shows. In the past, yoga was not a publicly available practice that could be studied either casually or with varying degrees of seriousness. Rather, it was a highly exclusive ritual activity that could lead either toward liberation or to the acquisition of powerful magical abilities, otherwise known as *siddhis*. While the path to obtaining *siddhis* was potent enough to turn a sage into a sorcerer, the path to liberation often constituted a dramatic ontological shift at the level of the soul. Because knowledge of yoga gave the practitioner the potential to transcend the realm of human existence and enter a state akin to becoming divine, it was restricted to highly accomplished gurus and their most dedicated pupils.

The transformative potency of yoga was not limited to human practice. By the early centuries of the first millennium, Hindu gods too came to be represented as masters of the discipline. Deities were understood to be living presences who made and remade the world through the power of yoga. Like their human counterparts, they drew strength from yoga, in the form of a fiery heat (or *tapas*) that enabled them to act efficaciously in the world. Shiva was seen as the quintessential sage who, seated on the lotus at the center of the cosmos, created the world through his practice. Vishnu took on the form of Nara, an ideal sage, whose ascetic practice was represented visually as producing Narayana, or the form responsible for cosmic generation (fig. 2).¹ By the turn of the first millennium, prominent gurus and yogis had become canonized as divine incarnations and remained alive and present in their images long after their lifetimes on Earth.

Mythological Landscapes and the Poetics of Practice

One of the best known depictions of yoga's power is found in a relief sculpted across the vast façade of an unfinished rock-cut temple in the southern Indian village of Mamallapuram, not far from the shores of the Bay of Bengal, facing toward the sea (fig. 1). Created in the seventh century during the reign of the Pallava kings, the monument has long presented a striking visual enigma, as its imagery suggests more than one story.² Some have interpreted it as representing the descent of the Ganges River through

Fig. 1
Descent of the
Ganges. India, Tamil
Nadu, Mamallapuram,
ca. 7th century

Fig. 2
Nara and Narayana,
Vishnu Temple, relief
from the east side.
India, Uttar Pradesh,
Deogarh, ca. 500 CE

the intervention of King Bhagiratha, who became an ascetic and performed penance to obtain Shiva's assistance in bringing the river goddess Ganga down from the heavens so that he could appropriately perform the final rites for his dead ancestors. Others have argued that it better fits an account from the *Mahabharata* in which the Pandava Prince Arjuna wandered the wilderness as an ascetic, seeking Shiva in order to acquire a magical weapon that would help him recover his lost kingdom. What is striking is not the differences in the two narratives but their primary points of convergence on the level of composition and theme. (For more on Prince Arjuna, see cat. 10a.)

Both narratives center on a king or prince who becomes a sage in order to ultimately fulfill his worldly duties. Through the performance of bodily austerities and meditation, he is able to directly encounter the supreme god, who, appeased by the sage's yogic prowess, grants him a boon that redresses past wrongs and restores cosmic order. In both interpretations, the key moment can be located in the relief's upper left quadrant, where we encounter a penitent sage performing a rigorous yogic practice. The iconography of the sage's stance has been interpreted as representing either the penance of gazing into the sun (*suryopasthana tapas*) or the penance of the five fires (*panchagni tapas*) performed to conquer passion, anger, greed, attachment, and jealousy.³ Here, the external iconography evokes the internal process: the sage's eyes and arms are raised to the sky as he stares up into sun. Once he is king, the sage becomes a true ascetic, marked as such by such iconographic features as his long beard and matted locks of hair (*jata*), the noticeable gauntness of his body, and his simple attire, consisting only of a loincloth and sacred thread (*yajnopavita*). Besides him stands none other than the god Shiva, fully manifest in anthropomorphic form, marked as both a deity, possessing four arms and a sacred trident, and a powerful ascetic, sporting similarly matted locks of hair. The efficaciousness of the practice is indicated most clearly by the iconography of Shiva's response: the supreme god's lower left hand extends outward in a boon-granting gesture (*varada mudra*), communicating to the viewer that the sage has been successful in procuring his desired favor.

The lush and sacred setting for both stories can be understood as an ideal landscape for yoga, populated by gods, sages, and animals of the forest, and watered by the Ganges River situated in the cleft at the relief's center. While the ascetic performing penance in the relief's upper left quadrant demonstrates the ability to access Shiva on a heavenly plane, the scene just below constitutes a landscape of yogic aspiration and emphasizes the importance of practice in the human world (fig. 1). The action unfolds around a hermitage so idyllic that even normally inimical animals, seen here as lions and deer, can reside peaceably side by side. The most prominent human figure, a solitary sage in a moment of deep meditation, sits leaning forward, facing the Vishnu temple that dominates the scene. Below and to the right is a group of three seated sages. The first wears a yoga strap (*yogapatta*) prominently around his legs. Further below and toward the river, at the center of the relief, are others worshipping at the river. The first of this group, to the viewer's far left, stands upright in *urdhvabahu* (raised arm) pose, which, in this context, functions as a less masterful mirror of the *panchagni tapas* performed by the ascetic high above. It may well be that we are witnessing multiple iterations of the same sage, caught at different moments in the process of perfecting his practice.

Scholars have offered various interpretations of the figures in this lower portion of the relief. One reading identified the overall setting as the Badari hermitage, home of Vishnu's incarnation as Nara and Narayana, which too was positioned near the banks of the Ganges. Textual accounts of Arjuna's penance, which were known to the relief's patrons, described Arjuna as worthy of wielding Shiva's weapon because Arjuna had been Nara in one of his previous lives. If this were the case, it seems certainly meaningful that the temple housing the icon is directly below, and the sage is performing penance before Shiva above, which creates a visual analogy between the perfected human practitioner and an icon of god.⁴ Proponents of the Descent of the Ganges story have since posited the alternative theory that the solitary meditating figure to the left of the temple may represent



Bhagiratha thanking the god Vishnu in his form as the sage Kapila, who set in motion the events leading to the quest.

In addition to emphasizing the ways in which yoga could set the world in good order, the relief at Mamallapuram includes one final scene that reminds us that not every yogi was necessarily honorable. To the immediate right of the river-cleft, just opposite the figures praying at the banks near the forested hermitage, is a small but carefully delineated figure of a yogic cat, standing upright in imitation of the human practitioners on the left. Like the perfected sage in the upper left quadrant, he is depicted as an ascetic with a protruding ribcage. But his practice yields a very different effect. He is not accompanied by Shiva or Vishnu, but by a flock of worshipful mice blindly holding their paws together in *anjali mudra*, or the gesture of devotion. Rather than representing the power of yoga to illuminate truth, this vignette emphasizes the danger of false gurus whose practice is directed primarily toward quelling their own worldly hungers.⁵ While the trope of the hypocritical cat was quite common in well-known classics such as the *Hitopadesha*, the trope of the false guru, particularly associated with antisocial Tantric groups like the Kapalikas, was frequently found in dramatic parodies such as the *Mattavilasa* (Drunken Games) and the *Bhagavadajjukīya* (The Hermit and the Harlot), which were popular in the nearby Pallava court at Kanchipuram.⁶

Establishing Real Places for Yogic Practice

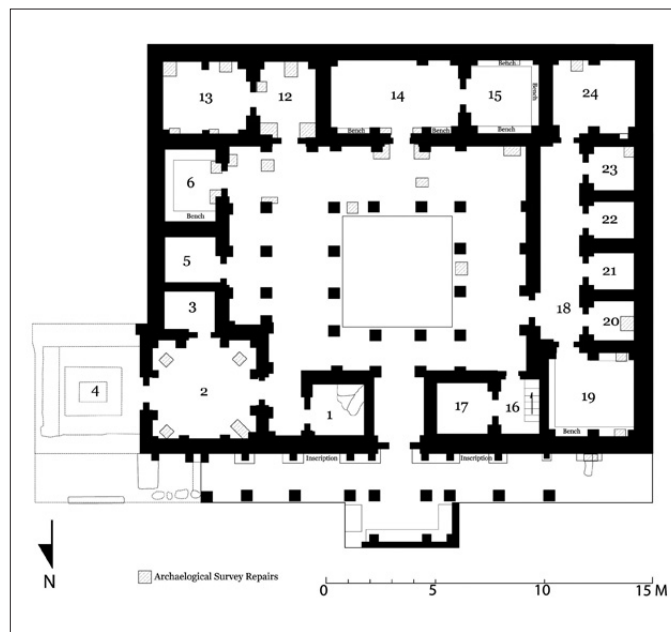
The ideal landscapes associated with yoga were not merely poetic tropes confined to the spheres of visual and literary representation. They were real places of natural beauty whose sanctity encouraged the establishment of temples and ascetic abodes. It is no coincidence that the small Vishnu temple in the Mamallapuram relief closely resembled contemporary temples built at the same site, which unlike the capital at Kanchipuram, functioned both as idyllic retreat and growing port town. Elsewhere in India, the seventh and eighth centuries witnessed the formalization of new kinds of Hindu monasteries (*mathas*), presided over by head gurus whose authority was rooted in their mastery of sacred scriptures and yoga. By the turn of the first millennium, monasteries had grown significantly through royal patronage, and in some cases had become large-scale multifunctional centers, serving variously as colleges, rest-houses, charitable distribution centers, hospices, and foci for worship.⁷ Despite the increasing institutionalization of ascetic practice, great attention was given to establishing places that

could provide an idyllic locale for austerities and yoga.

A good case in point can be seen in the survival of a Shaiva monastery in the village of Chandrehe, located in the modern-day central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh (figs. 3a–d). Situated not far from the banks of the holy Son River, the monastery was intended to serve as a quiet and peaceful retreat. An inscription still affixed to the front verandah reveals a delightfully complex history.⁸ According to the inscription, the “spacious and lofty” monastery was built in 973 by a guru named Prabodhashiva, who intended it to accompany a temple established a generation earlier by Prashantashiva, his spiritual teacher and predecessor. Prashantashiva, in turn, had intended the site to be one of two remote hermitages; the other one was located along the Ganges River at the famed pilgrimage city of Varanasi (Banaras or Benares).⁹

Both of the hermitages established by Prashantashiva were meant to be places of peaceful respite from

Figs. 3a–d
Plan and views of
Shaiva Monastery.
India, Madhya
Pradesh, Chandrehe,
ca. 973







the more centralized monastery at Gurgi, which had been built a generation earlier “at an enormous expense” by the emergent Kalachuri King Yuvarajadeva I (reigned 915–45) in conjunction with a large royally sponsored temple.¹⁰ At Gurgi, resident sages inevitably became involved in the administration of state religious affairs. But the retreats at Varanasi and Chandrehe were reserved for “*siddhas*” and “tranquil *yogins*,” who were intent on destroying all obstacles to achieving clarity of mind and success at meditation, with the goal of reaching final liberation.¹¹ Fittingly, both Prashantashiva and Prabodhashiva were described in ways that emphasized their yogic prowess. In the Gurgi inscription, Prashantashiva was praised as a highly learned sage “who had mastered [all] the *asanas*” and “who felt the inner joy” that comes from keeping his “steady mind absorbed in the meditation of Shiva seated in the midst of the lotus of his heart.”¹² The text from Chandrehe similarly described the sage Prabodhashiva as “practicing austerities even in his boyhood on the bank washed by the river [Son]” and as having “realized God through the performance of religious austerities and meditation, and living on fruits [*priyala* and *amalaka*], greens, and lotus roots [*shaluka*].”¹³

The yoga practiced at Chandrehe was not one of the radical variations associated with esoteric Tantric sects, but rather part of a more mainstream strand. Prashantashiva and Prabodhashiva belonged to a prominent lineage, the Mattamayuras or Drunken Peacocks, within a broader, pan-Indic, religious tradition known as Shaiva Siddhanta and associated with a body of ritual manuals, the *Shaiva Agamas* (or, more broadly, *Tantras*).¹⁴ Although today Shaiva Siddhanta is widely associated with southern India, it may have emerged as early as the eighth or ninth century in the northern region of Kashmir, and then spread through Central India in subsequent centuries.¹⁵ In the *Shaiva Agamas*, yoga formed one of four major categories referred to as “four feet” (*chatushpada*), the other three of which included knowledge (*jnana*), action (*kriya*), and proper conduct (*charya*). Together, these four were understood as essential components in the attainment of liberation. *Jnana* led to a state of union with God (*sayujya*); *kriya* brought about a nearness to God (*samipyā*); yoga helped one attain the form of God (*sarupyā*); and *charya* ensured that the soul attained residence in the region of God (*salokya*).¹⁶ Within Shaiva



Siddhanta, yoga was a distinct discipline or an individual practice, taught only to those initiated at the right level, and it was considered essential for the achievement of final liberation. The power of yoga to help one attain immortality after death was articulated beautifully in a contemporary inscriptional verse from a related site, where the head guru, described as “the foremost among Shaivas ... went [to his rest] in the place of Shiva, the eternal station, through yoga.”¹⁷

Situated near the banks of holy rivers, the Ganges and Son respectively, Varanasi and Chandrehe may have been envisioned as ideal spaces for performing yoga. While Varanasi was a holy city long associated with a sacred geography, Chandrehe offered a forested setting not entirely unlike that depicted in the lower left quadrant of the relief at Mamallapuram. Even as Prabodhashiva was actively making the monastery more accessible to travelers—through an infrastructure of roads and bridges, described as “a wonderful way through mountains [and] across rivers and streams, and also through forests and thickets,”¹⁸—Chandrehe remained fairly removed, even in modern terms. The real geography of the site may have resonated quite well with the poetics of its inscription, which described Chandrehe as a place where “herds of monkeys kiss the cubs of lions [and] the young one of a deer sucks at the breast of the lioness,” and where “other hostile animals forget their [natural] antipathy [to one another]; for the minds of all become tranquil in penance-groves.”¹⁹

Such a locale may have evoked not only the poetics of ideal landscapes but also the pragmatics of practice as articulated in Shaiva ritual manuals. The *Sarvajnanottara Agama*, for example, dictates that

the student, pure, after performing his bath and ablutions, should bow his head to Shiva, salute [his lineage of] preceptors of yoga, and [then] engage in yoga in an empty building, or in a delightful monastery, or in an auspicious temple. Or [he may practice] on the bank of a river, in a desolate spot, an earthen hut or in a forest; [provided it is] sheltered, windless, noise-free and unpopulated, free from obstacles to yoga, free from doubt [about its ownership] and not too hot.²⁰

Fig. 4
Guru and Disciples,
Lakshmana Temple,
India, Madhya
Pradesh, Khajuraho,
ca. 954

Chandrehe offered both a “delightful monastery” and an “auspicious temple,” located near the bank of a river in a fairly secluded and forested landscape. Moreover, it was a place that remained thoroughly under the ownership and purview of the resident monastic community, a place where one could practice highly potent rituals without fear of interruption at a critical moment. It may well be that such monastic sites formed the real world analogue for visual and literary representations of landscapes populated by sages practicing yoga.

Portraying Divine Teachers

The development of monastic communities such as the one at Chandrehe corresponded with the increasing proliferation of sculpted images of gurus actively engaging in the dissemination of religious teachings (fig. 4). Known as *shikshadana* scenes, such images typically featured a guru—usually shown with a large belly indicating the retention of breath, and seated upon a special cushion or throne—facing a group of disciples who express their devotion through *anjali mudra*. Sometimes he was accompanied by male and female attendants holding ritual implements; at other times he was surrounded on all sides by his students. Often the guru would hold his hands in the *dharmachakra mudra*, indicating the act of teaching, or touch the head of a disciple, suggesting perhaps a more personal act of devotion or even possibly the conferral of initiation.²¹ The scenes were typically framed as distinct architectural spaces. The entrance was sometimes indicated through the presence of an armed gatekeeper, and the guru's spot was frequently differentiated through the presence of a pillared hall or overhanging canopy.

In addition to emphasizing the prominence of the guru, *shikshadana* scenes evoke the structure of ascetic communities in ways that were analogous to the real space of the monastery. Within the dwelling at Chandrehe, for example, were spaces specially designated for a range of ritual activities,

Figs. 5 and 6
Lakulisha in a central
wall niche. India,
Madhya Pradesh,
Batesara, ca. 8th
century



including teaching, worshiping, and meeting individually with the guru. Of particular interest is a set of sculpted figures found in the center of the door lintel marking entrance to the room that likely served as the primary seat of the resident guru (fig. 3). Although positioned in a spot normally reserved for an icon of a deity, the group instead featured a guru flanked by two worshipful disciples, one of whom is no longer visible. Both figures are portrayed as bearded ascetics, clad only in loincloths, and wearing tall matted locks of hair. But only the guru faces frontally, like an icon, engaging the viewer; he holds a palm-leaf manuscript, embodying spiritual knowledge, in his surviving hand. The room may have been analogous to a space sometimes found in monasteries today, specially designated as “the place where the [guru’s] mind is always fixed on God,” where he sits meditating on Shiva, and where he performs yoga.²² In the context of the *matha* at Chandrehe, it may have further resonated with the notion of a sage who had achieved a divine stature through the practice of austerities, meditation, and yoga.²³

The idea that once-living sages could be perceived and treated as manifestations of divinity has a long history in the Indian subcontinent. In early centuries, the Buddha himself took on a deity-like persona, even though he was understood to be technically human. In Hindu mythology, sages such as Nara were fundamentally understood as humans who were in fact manifestations of god. But an even clearer comparison can be found in Lakulisha, the human founder of the Pashupata sect, who, by the middle of the first millennium, had already been transformed into a fully endowed manifestation of the god Shiva.²⁴ His identity as a human aspirant was established most clearly through his distinctive iconography (fig. 5). He was typically portrayed as a two-armed yogi, holding a club and a rosary (*akshamala*), and seated in meditation, his legs crossed in lotus posture. Occasionally his right hand was positioned in *dharmachakra mudra* to signify his function as a religious teacher. But his status as a deity was established through texts and visual contexts. After the Puranas incorporated him into the mythology of Shiva by considering him the twenty-eighth manifestation of the great god and teacher of yoga, his image began appearing in key places on Hindu temples. Beginning around the seventh and eighth centuries and persisting well through the eleventh and twelfth, it was not uncommon to position elaborately framed images of Lakulisha on temple walls, in locations traditionally reserved for a fully manifest image of the god himself (fig. 6).

This transition from human sage to manifestation of divinity was in keeping with broader transitions mapped out at many other places. Yoga, which had emerged initially as a highly individualized and often esoteric practice reserved only for renunciants, had become both a discursive strategy and a source of power. Prominent gurus seated at the head of growing monastic lineages almost universally claimed mastery of yoga and established a network of centers intended to facilitate yoga as a practice. The transformation of human aspirant to divinized and often royally patronized agent was articulated forcefully through the history of visual imagery and architectural interventions into wilderness landscapes. The slippage between humanity and divinity, and between worldly and spiritual, was embodied at places such as Mamallapuram and Chandrehe. At Mamallapuram, the ambiguity in the portrayal may have been a means to encompass the king’s multiple duties—as military commander charged with protecting his kingdom (as in the case of Arjuna’s penance) and as a pious individual seeking to perform the rites associated with the death of his ancestors (as in the case of the Descent of the Ganges). At Chandrehe, the sages Prashantashiva and Prabodhashiva remained closely connected both to larger royal centers and to a prominent lineage of rajagurus, or royal religious preceptors. In medieval India, the power of yoga was known for its multiple potentials, for its ability not only to fulfill spiritual desires, but also to achieve worldly ends. However, in the end, the true power of yoga remains rooted in its ability to transform the body and mind of the practitioner in deeply powerful ways, which has ensured its longevity through the present day.

Notes

1. See, for example, Michael Meister, "Art and Hindu Asceticism: Śiva and Viṣṇu as Masters of Yoga," in *Art and Archaeology of South Asia: Essays Dedicated to N. G. Majumdar*, ed. Debala Mitra (Calcutta: Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of West Bengal, 1996), pp. 315–21, esp. p. 319.
2. Interpreters of the narrative relief at Mamallapuram have included the following: Michael D. Rabe, *The Great Penance at Māmallapuram: Deciphering a Visual Text* (Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2001), and "The Māmallapuram Praśasti: A Panegyric in Figures," *Artibus Asiae* 57, nos. 3/4 (January 1, 1997), pp. 189–241; Padma Kaimal, "Playful Ambiguity and Political Authority in the Large Relief at Māmallapuram," *Ars Orientalis* 24 (January 1, 1994), pp. 1–27; Marilyn Hirsh, "Mahendravarman I Pallava: Artist and Patron of Māmallapuram," *Artibus Asiae* 48, nos. 1/2 (January 1, 1987), pp. 109–30; Mary-Ann Lutzker, "A Reinterpretation of the Relief Panel at Māmallapuram," in *Chhavi II: Festschrift in Honor of Rai Krishnadas*, ed. Anand Krishna (Banaras: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1981), pp. 116–17; Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreu, "La Descente de la Gaṅgā à Mahabalipuram," *Études d'Orientalisme* 2 (1932), pp. 293–97; A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, pts. 1 and 2, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India* 17 (1924) and 33 (1928) (repr. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1982), pp. 40–44; Michael Lockwood, Gift Siromoney, and P. Dayanandan, *Mahabalipuram Studies* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1974), pp. 34–41; Victor Goloubew, "La Falaise d'Arjuna de Mavalipuram et la Descente de la Gaṅgā sur la Terre, selon le Rāmāyaṇa et le Mahābhārata," *Journal Asiatique*, 2nd ser., vol. 4 (1914), pp. 210–12.
3. Kaimal, "Playful Ambiguity," p. 5; Rabe, "The Māmallapuram Praśasti," p. 191.
4. Ramachandran, "The Kīratārjunīyam," pp. 69–77. Michael Rabe has written more recently in support of this interpretation in "The Māmallapuram Praśasti," pp. 194–96.
5. Ananda Coomaraswamy noted this image quite early in his *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927; repr. New York: Dover, 1985), p. 103. Michael Rabe suggests that this "hypocritical cat" serves as a foil to the righteous practice of the human practitioners, and to the Pallava patron king Narasiṃhavarman, who he somewhat controversially identifies as the central figure with the *yogapaṭṭa* in the lower left quadrant of the relief. See Rabe, "The Māmallapuram Praśasti," pp. 226–27.
6. The *Hitopadeśa* (Instructions in Well-Being) is a compendium of Sanskrit fables of great antiquity that was based on the earlier *Pañcatantra* (Five Texts), compiled around 300 BCE. Because the stories are narrated by animals, they are often categorized as children's literature, even though the narratives are deeply satirical. The *Mattavilāsa*, which is often attributed to the Pallava king Mahendra Vikrama Varma (reigned 600–630 CE) has been edited and translated many times. See L. D. Barnett, "Matta-vilāsa: A Farce," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 5, no. 4 (January 1, 1930), pp. 697–717; Michael Lockwood and Vishnu Bhat, eds. and trans., *Mattavilāsa Prahāsana: The Farce of Drunken Sport* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1981); and David N. Lorenzen, trans., "A Parody of the Kāpālikas in the *Mattavilāsa*," in *Tantra in Practice*, ed. David White (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 81–96. The *Bhagavadajjūkiya* has been translated by A. B. van Buitenen in "The Hermit and the Harlot," *Mahfil* 7, nos. 3/4 (October 1, 1971), pp. 149–66.
7. See Prasanna Kumar Acarya, *A Dictionary of Hindu Architecture: Treating of Sanskrit Architectural Terms* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), pp. 463–67; R. K. Sharma, *The Kalachuris and Their Times* (Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1980), pp. 196–202; J. Van Troy, "The Social Structure of the Śaiva-Siddhāntika Ascetics (700–1300 A.D.)," *Indica* 2, no. 2 (1974), pp. 81–84; J. Ramayya Pantulu, "Malkapuram Stone-Pillar Inscription of Rudradeva (Rudrāmba)," *Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society* 4 (1929), pp. 147–62.
8. The inscription from Chandrehe has been edited and translated by V. V. Mirashi, *Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chedi Era*, vol. 4, pt. 1, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* (Ootacamund, India: Gov. Epigraphist for India, 1955), no. 44, pp. 198–204.
9. This second hermitage is described by in an inscription from the royal center of Gurgi, which has been edited and translated by Mirashi, *Inscriptions*, pp. 224–33, no. 46.
10. On the extent of the archaeological remains at Gurgi, see Sir Alexander Cunningham, *Reports of a Tour in Bundelkhand and Rewa in 1883–84; and of a Tour in Rewa, Bundelkhand, Malwa, and Gwalior, in 1884–85* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1885), pp. 149–54; H. B. W. Garrick, *Report of a Tour Through Behar, Central India, Peshawar, and Yusufzai, 1881–82* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing), 1885, pp. 85–90; R. D. Banerji, *The Haihayas of Tripurī and Their Monuments*, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, no. 23 (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1931), pp. 41–47.
11. Gurgi inscription, verse 13.
12. Gurgi inscription, verse 15.
13. Chandrehe inscription, verse 11. Praśāntaśiva is described just a few verses earlier as living on "fruits, lotus-stalks and roots" (verse 7).
14. For more on the Mattamayūras, see V. V. Mirashi, "The Śaiva Ācāryas of the Mattamayūra Clan," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 26 (1950), pp. 1–16; R. N. Mishra, "The Saivite Monasteries, Pontiffs and Patronage in Central India," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, vols. 64–66 (1993), pp. 108–24; Richard Davis, "Praises of the Drunken Peacocks," in *Tantra in Practice*, ed. David Gordon White (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 131–45. Tamara Sears, *Worldly Gurus and Spiritual Kings: Architecture and Asceticism in Medieval India* (under review).
15. On the pan-Indic nature of Śaiva Siddhānta, see Richard H. Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 14–19, and "Aghoraśiva's Background," *Journal of Oriental Research*, vols. 56–62 (1986–92), pp. 367–78; Karen Pechilis Prentiss, "A Tamil Lineage for Śaiva Siddhānta Philosophy," *History of Religions* 35, no. 3 (February 1996), pp. 232–34; Helene Brunner-Lachaux, *Somaśambhupaddhati* (Pondicherry, India: Institut français de Pondichéry, 1998), pp. xliii–lii. Also significant are Devangana Desai's recent arguments for understanding the central Indian temple site of Khajuraho, located to the west of Chandrehe, as a Śaiva Siddhānta site (*Religious Imagery*, pp. 57–60, 149–74). On Śaiva Siddhānta in Kashmir, see Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, ed. Shingo Einoo (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2009), pp. 41–349; Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir," in *Mélanges Tantriques à la Mémoire d'Hélène Brunner. Tantric Studies in Memory of Hélène Brunner*, ed. Dominic Goodall and André Padoux (Pondicherry, India: Institut français d'Indologie, École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2007), pp. 231–442.
16. R. N. Misra summarizes these in "Beginnings of Śaiva Siddhānta and Its Expanding Space in Central India," in *Sāmarasya: Studies in Indian Arts, Philosophy: Interreligious Dialogue—in Honour of Bettina Baumer*, ed. Sadanand Das and Ernst Furlinger (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2005), pp. 275–306. See also Dominic Goodall, ed. and trans., *Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṅṭha's Commentary on the Kīraṇatantra* (Pondicherry, India: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1998), p. xxxvii.
17. Verse 10 of a tenth-century inscription discovered at the Mattamayūra monastic site of Kadwaha, edited by V. V. Mirashi and Ajay Mitra Shastri, "A Fragmentary Stone Inscription from Kadwaha," *Epigraphia India* 37, no. 3 (1967), pp. 117–24.
18. Chandrehe inscription, verse 13.
19. Chandrehe inscription, verse 14. It is notable that such evocations mirrored the representation of ideal places of practice seen in Māmallapuram, where lion and deer sit peaceably and in close proximity to the forest hermitage in the lower left quadrant of the Descent of the Ganges relief.

20. As translated by Somadeva Vasudeva, *The Yoga of Mālinīvijayottaraṅtra: Chapters 1–4, 7–11, 11–17* (Pondicherry, India: Institut français de Pondichéry; École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2004), pp. 250–51. In addition, Somadeva Vasudeva compiled a range of idealized places from other Śaiva texts, including “a quiet, pleasant cave or earthen hut, free from all obstructions (*Mālinīvijayottaraṅtram*),” “a cave or inaccessible spot on a mountain, in a Śaiva temple or in a house or in an auspicious site” (*Kiraṇatantra*), a “secluded, level, clean, agreeable and remote” place “free from all obstructions” (*Mataṅgapārameśvara*), and “a secluded spot frequented by Yogins, avoiding areas that have been damaged by malevolent sorcerers (*kīlita*) or are guarded (*Svāyambhuvāsūtrasaṅgraha*)” (*ibid.*, pp. 247–52). For comparable sources, see Dominic Goodall, *Parākhyatantram: The Parākhyatantra, A Scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta* (Pondicherry, India: Institut français de Pondichéry; École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2004).

21. Thomas Donaldson has also identified a great number of such scenes in Orissa. For further discussion, see Thomas E. Donaldson, “Lakulīśa to Rājaguru: Metamorphosis of the ‘Teacher’ in the Iconographic Program of the Orissan Temple,” in *Studies in Hindu and Buddhist Art*, ed. P. K. Mishra (Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1999); Tamara Sears, “Encountering Ascetics On and Beyond the Indian Temple Wall,” in *History and Material Culture in Asian Religions*, ed. Benjamin Fleming and Richard Mann (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

22. Glenn E. Yocum, “A Non-Brāhmaṇ Tamil Śaiva Mutt: A Field Study of the Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam,” in *Monastic Life in the Christian and Hindu Traditions*, ed. Austin Creel and Vasudha Narayanan (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), pp. 250–52.

23. Yocum, “A Non-Brāhmaṇ Tamil Śaiva Mutt,” pp. 250–52.

24. For more on Lakulīśa, see D. R. Bhandarkar, “An Ekliṅgī Stone Inscription and the Origin and History of the Lakulīśa Sect,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay* 22 (1906), pp. 151–65; M. C. Choubey, *Lakulīśa in Indian Art and Culture* (Delhi: Sharada Pub. House, 1997).