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REEXAMINING THE ART OF THE AMOGHAPĀŚA *MAṆḌALA* ASSEMBLY OF THE 13TH CENTURY FROM INDONESIA

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Abstract

This article discusses the style and iconography of the statues from Candi Jago, consisting of Amoghapāśa and his attendants, and their later copies. It departs from the notion that the new transmission of esoteric Buddhism in the thirteenth century from Northeast India to Java brought along iconographic programs as well as artistic elements. However, the problem of whether such artistic influence can be attested remains disputed among scholars. Using both formal and comparative analysis of the statues' photographic reproduction, this paper re-examines the style of the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly to unravel the problem of locating the Pāla influence. It begins by tracing the development of the cult of Amoghapāśa and its eight-armed form, following the notion of the movement of Buddhist masters seeking refuge to explain its re-emergence in the thirteenth-century Java. Finally, it elaborates on the theories concerning the style of Candi Jago statues and their later copies related to the presence of Pāla style elements. It concludes that the so-called Pāla elements on the statues reflect the creative force of Javanese artisans in incorporating these new elements into their artworks.

Keywords: Buddhism; Siṅhasāri; Amoghapasa Lokeshvara; Style; Indonesia, Candi Jago

INTRODUCTION

In Candi Jago, Java (Fig. 1), the statue of Amoghapāśa and its *maṇḍala* assembly become tangible evidence of an established iconographic tradition. The *maṇḍala* assembly consisted of Amoghapāśa as the main figure (Fig. 2) and Tārā, Sudhanakumarā, Hayagrīva, and Bhṛkuṭī as his attendants (Fig. 3). A stone slab and at least five known bronze plaques were made copying this group, showing the important role of this *maṇḍala* assembly during the thirteenth-century period in insular Southeast Asia (Reichle 2007, 85). Amoghapāśa statue (height 2.15 m) from Candi Jago is elaborately carved out of a single stone, standing straight *(samapāda)* against a back slab with its body adorned with ornate jewellery and clothing and flanked by lotus plants that grow from the roots. Amoghapāśa's iconography is eight-armed and depicts a *varadamudrā* (gesture of charity), an *abhayamudrā* (gesture of protection), a *pāśa* (noose), and an *akṣamālā*

(rosary) on the four right hands and a *kamaṇḍalu* (water pot), a *tridaṇḍa* (three-pronged staff), a *padma* (lotus), and a *pustaka* (book) on the four left hands. The attendants, carved with the workmanship no less embellished than the main figure, are half in height (around 1.12 to 1.53 m). Their attributes are a *dharmacakramudrā* (gesture of teaching) with flowers on the palm for Tārā, an *añjalimudrā* (gesture of respect) with a *pustaka* tucked under his left arm for Sudhanakumāra, a *vandanamudrā* (gesture of salutation) on the right hand and the left arm rests on a *daṇḍa* (staff) for Hayagrīva, and an *akṣamālā*, a *vandanamudrā*, a *kamaṇḍalu*, and a *tridaṇḍa* for the four-armed Bhṛkuṭī. Meanwhile, the stone sculpture (Fig. 4) and bronze plaque (Fig. 5) copies, each measuring 1.63 m and 22 cm in height respectively, depict the main figure and his retinues within a single stele. Apart from the similar iconography and attributes for Amoghapāśa and his four retinues, the copies also incorporate four Tathagatas and their *śaktis* (female consorts) into the assembly (Sinclair 2022, 30). The workmanship quality and the distinguished iconographical configuration made this group a very interesting epitome of pre-modern Indonesian artistic tradition.

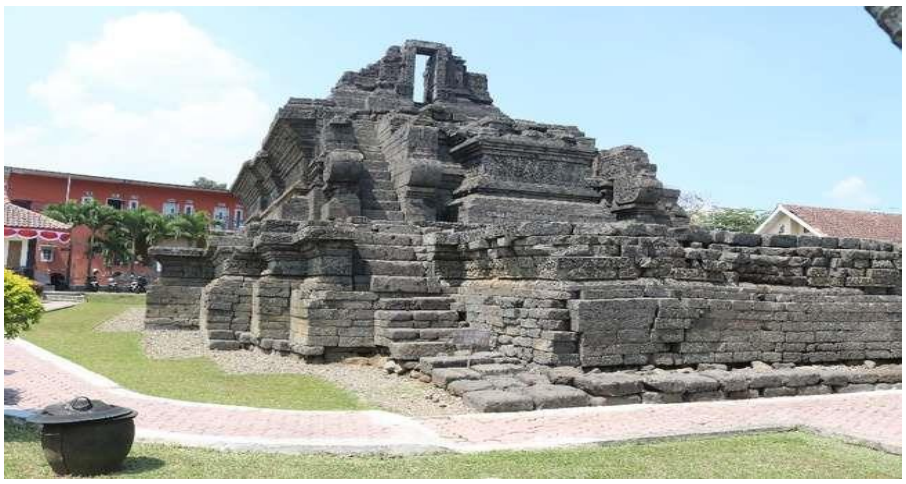

Figure 1 Candi Jago in Malang, East Java (photograph by author, 2024)

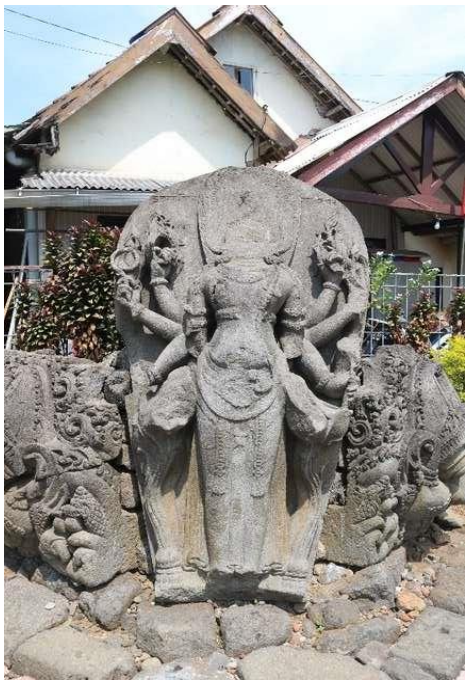

Figure 2 Amoghapāśa, h. 2.15 m, around 1268-1280 CE, Candi Jago, East Java (photograph by author, 2024).

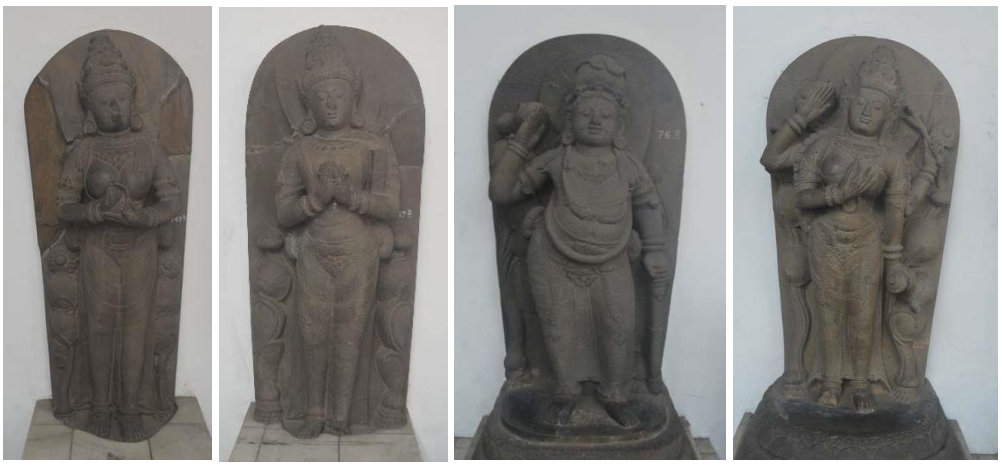

Figure 3 Amoghapāśa's Retinues, from left to right: Tārā (h. 1.12 m), Sudhanakumarā (h.1.14 m), Hayagrīva (h. 1.53 m), and Bhṛkuṭī (h. 1.38 m), around 1268-1280 CE, National Museum of Indonesia, Jakarta (photographs by author, 2019)

Epigraphic and textual sources complement the historical context of the statues, adding a rich focal interest for various studies. According to a fourteenth-century Javanese poet, Mpu Prapanca, who wrote in *Nāgarakṛtāgama* (canto 41:4), the temple and the main statue were erected to enshrine the late Siṅhasāri king Viṣṇuvardhana (r. 1248-1268 CE), who died in 1268 CE. Scholars put a twelve-year extension as a range for the dating of the temple and the statues in anticipation of the usually commemorated *sraddha* ceremony for the late king around 1280 CE (Fontein 1990, 154). The copies of the group in a stone slab and bronze plaques were commissioned later by the successor

of Viṣṇuvardhana, Kṛtanāgara (r. 1268-1292 CE). The stone slab copy offers more firm dating with an inscription on the base, dated to 1286 CE, that mentions Kṛtanāgara gifted the image to the king of Melayu, Mauliwarmadewa (de Casparis 1985, 248). Unsurprisingly, the group has been vastly studied, ranging from its iconography and related text as well as its place in the context of maritime Southeast Asia's religio-political history.

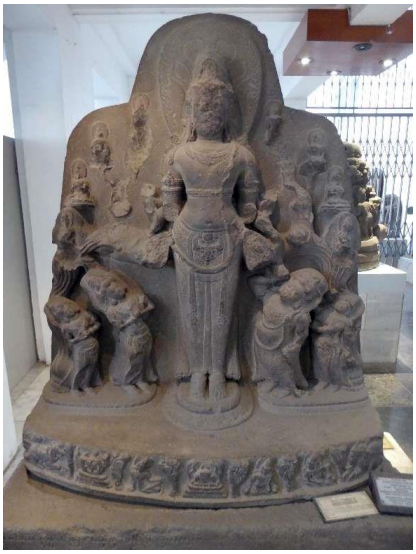

Figure 4 Amoghapāśa stone sculpture copy, h. 1.63 m, 1286 CE, National Museum of Indonesia, Jakarta (sources: photodharma.net)

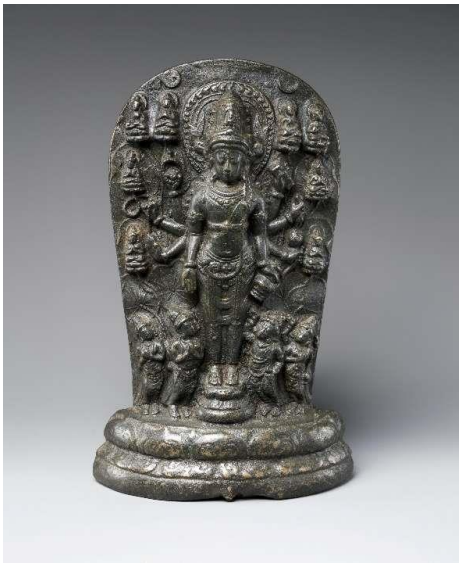

Figure 5 Amoghapāśa, bronze plaque copy, h. 22 cm, 13th century CE, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (source: metmuseum.org)

Despite the vast literature on the group, some issues remain enigmatic, especially regarding the presence of a Pāla stylistic influence on these statues. It becomes more apparent when this stylistic problem is put within the framework of a new transmission of Buddhism to the insular Southeast Asia after the twelfth century. Many scholars have conjectured that the critical shift of socio-political development from the Hindu and Buddhist to the Muslim ruling dynasty in Northeast India around the twelfth to thirteenth century might have impacted Southeast Asia through the exodus of monks, as it also happened anywhere in the Himalayas (Acri 2016, 21). This migration of monks is especially impacting the development of the local religious milieu through the transmission of the tantric systems adhered to by the local rulers (Acri and Wenta 2022, 3). At the same time, scholars proposed that Siṅhasāri's sculptures show legible Pāla style influence, thus supporting the argument of the influx of new stimuli along with the transmission of tantric iconography (Schoterman 1994, 155; Lunsingh Scheurleer 2008, 296–97; Sinclair 2022, 30;Acri and Wenta 2022, 29). In this regard, the statues of the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly from Candi Jago are often considered as both the iconography brought during the thirteenth-century wave of Buddhist transmission and the artworks that bear Pāla style elements.

This article will discuss the issue of the Pāla influence in relation to the new transmission of esoteric Buddhism by focusing on the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly statues. It will explore the problem that arises in locating the so-called Pāla influence in the development of Siṅhasāri art as a constituent of the established Javanese artistic tradition. The question of to what degree can these new elements be attributed to the thirteenth-century religious transmission requires further elaboration. The cumulative effort of scholars in answering this question builds to the extensive bibliography that reflects on the transformation of narratives and interpretations concerning ancient Indonesian art and its relation with India. Thus, the study of this lingering issue also means putting the statues of Candi Jago and their later copies into the framework of the object biography in terms of their functionality as archaeological and art historical objects and the interpretations attached to them.

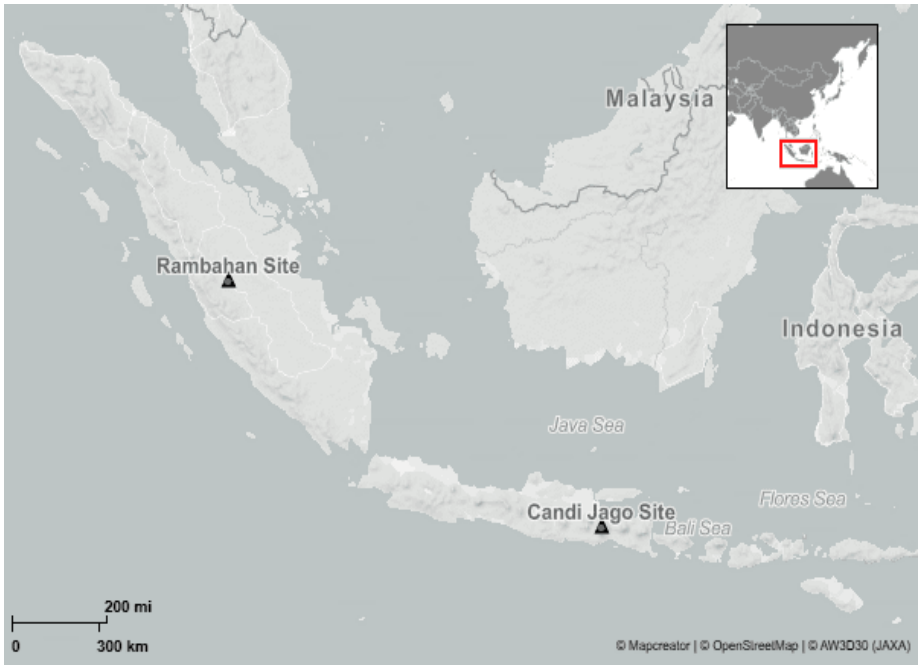

Figure 6 The Original Provenance of Amoghapāśa Maṇḍala Assembly and Its Copies Map (Source: mapcreator.io)

METHOD

This paper is art historical research focusing on the style and iconography of the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly from Candi Jago, East Java and its later copies in the form of a stone statue and bronze plaques. There are eleven known objects associated with this group, i.e. five figures of the original assembly found in Candi Jago, East Java, a stone slab sculpture found in Rambahan, West Sumatra, and at least five other bronze plaques, two of which are found in the regions near Candi Jago while the other three's original provenance remains unknown (Reichle 2007, 117; see Fig. 6 for the original provenance map). The main figure of Amoghapāśa is still on site, but his four attendants, along with the stone slab copy from Rambahan, are currently at the National Museum,

Jakarta. Meanwhile, four of the five bronze plaque copies can be traced in a collection of the Troppenmuseum, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (now Wereldmuseum), Leiden, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (previously in a private collection), New York. The photographic reproduction of these objects became the primary data for the formal analysis in this study.

Apart from the conventional art historical approach of stylistic and iconographical study, it will also incorporate a critical evaluation and comparison of different interpretations concerning the Pāla influence in Siṅhasāri art, i.e. a history of art history, through literature review. In structuring the multifaceted aspects of the problem in this article, it will begin by exploring the history of the eight-armed Amoghapāśa iconography, following its transformative development from its creation to its transmission in thirteenth-century maritime Southeast Asia. This forms the foundation of the theory concerning the new transmission of esoteric Buddhism, before moving on to explore the theory concerning the Pāla style influence in the Siṅhasāri period.

Lastly, it is also important to emphasise that this paper will use the term *maṇḍala* assembly to refer to Amoghapāśa and his attendants, rather than just using the term *Amoghapāśamaṇḍala.* This terminological clarification is important to distinguish the conceptual difference between a *maṇḍala* and a *maṇḍala* assembly. According to Luczanits (2008), a *maṇḍala* is an integrative part of a geometric ritual space (*maṇḍala* palace) and assembly of deities invited to inhabit the space. Thus, an assembly of deities without a configuration of ritual space is only partially a *maṇḍala,* and best referred to as a *maṇḍala* assembly (Luczanits 2008, 113).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Early Cult of Amoghapāśa and The Origin of Its Eight-Armed Form

Figure 7 Standing Amoghapāśa from Bihar (left) and Ratnagiri (right), 9th to 10th century (source: dsal.uchicago.edu)

The earliest textual records that indicate the worship of Amoghapāśa are preserved in sixth-century Chinese sources. Since 587 CE, Jnānagupta (fl. 561-592 CE), a scholar from Gandhara, had already translated *Amoghapāśahṛdaya* into Chinese (Meisezahl 1962, 272). This text, which is a recension of the lengthy *Amoghapāśakalparāja*, describes the practical aspect of worshipping Amoghapāśa, including the merit obtained from reciting the spell along with the protocol for the practitioner to gain protection from the deity (Meisezahl 1962, 268). Its existence became widely popular throughout the seventh century, with Chinese translations continually produced by the next generation of Buddhist scholars (Leoshko 1985, 128). The distribution of this text is also widespread throughout Asia. (Sinclair 2022, 12). In Indonesia, the evidence of the circulation of this text is proven by a gold foil inscription from Bali, which contains a short mantra that belongs to the text (Griffiths 2014, 183–85). The widely disseminated *Amoghapāśahṛdaya* is evidence of the popularity of the cult of this deity in South, Southeast, and East Asia during the second to third quarter of the first millennium.

While the textual evidence of *Amoghapāśahṛdaya* is not preserved in India, the cult of this bodhisattva in the subcontinent was apparent from the artistic corpus. The statue of Amoghapāśa was very well-known, at least in Bihar and Odisha, where the Pāla dynasty held control or bestowed influence. Leoskho (1985, 131) pointed out that during the ninth and early tenth centuries, there might have been two coexisting traditions in depicting Amoghapāśa in the Gayā region, Bihar. Those depictions are the six-armed Amoghapāśa in the standing and seated versions. The standing version holds a *varadamudrā*, a *cintāmaṇi* (jewel), and an *akṣamālā* on the three right hands and a *kamaṇḍalu*, a *pāśa*, and a *padma* on the three left hands (Fig. 7 left). The seated version differs from the standing version through the addition of a *pustaka* held together with the *padma* on the left hand and the switch of the *abhayamudrā* for the *cintāmaṇi* (Leoshko 1985, 128–31). Another distinct iconography of Amoghapāśa in India is found in Ratnagiri, Odisha, dating from the eighth to the tenth century (Fig. 7 right). The Ratnagiri Amoghapāśa is four-armed, the two right hands portraying a *varadamudrā* and both a *pāśa* and an *akṣamālā* held together, a configuration that is unique to the Ratnagiri Amoghapāśa, while the two left hands carry a *padma* and a *kamaṇḍalu* (Dhingra 2022, 9–13). In both Gayā and Ratnagiri, the cult of Amoghapāśa was associated with the death-related ceremony (Leoshko, 1985, 13. Dhingra, 2022, 21-3)

Although both Leoskho (1985, 131) and Dhingra (2022, 9) postulated that some attributes of Indian Amoghapāśa are the precedent for depicting the deity in other forms, it is unlikely that those iconographies were transmitted outside of India, since the eight-armed form of the deity was more prevalent anywhere else. In contrast, there is no known eight-armed Amoghapāśa statue found on Indian soil (Sinclair 2022, 13). The popularity of eight-armed Amoghapāśa, or Avalokiteśvara in the more general sense, is testified by the depiction of the deity in Dunhuang paintings in China, made during the Tang dynasty period. The iconography also flourished in the form of sculpture during the contemporary Nara and Heian periods. In Khmer, the well-known iconography of Jayabuddhamahānātha made during the reign of Jayawarman VII (r. 1182-1220 CE) is

evidence of the importance of the cult of this eight-armed bodhisattva. Meanwhile, in the Himalayas, the statues and paintings of the deity are substantially produced and continuously worshipped to this day (Sinclair 2022, 18–19; 23; 32). The widespread cult of this version of the bodhisattva made the question of the common origin of this eight-armed Amoghapāśa interesting on its own.

Sinclair (2022, 9) proposed a theory that attributed maritime Southeast Asia as the origin of the eight-armed Amoghapāśa. He surveyed a corpus of more than twenty bronze statues of Amoghapāśa and/or Avalokiteśvara, dated stylistically from the seventh to the tenth century. Based on the majority of provenance that is concentrated in the Malay region of maritime Southeast Asia, the corpus is called the Śrīvijayan type (Sinclair 2022, 10). He argues that the treatment of a tiger pelt over the *sarung* in the figure, a visual idiom that was so common in the archipelago, is a strong indication of its local innovation. This Śrīvijayan type Amoghapāśa is depicted standing straight with one face and eight arms. The deity's eight arms each depict an attribute of a *varadamudrā*, an *abhayamudrā*, a *pāśa*, and an *akṣamālā* on the right hands, while on the left hands are a *pustaka*, a *padma*, a *kamaṇḍalu*, and varied attributes on the fourth left hand, such as an *aṅkuśa* (elephant goad), a *śaṅkha* (conch), or a *trisula* (trident). The presence of a *triśūla* in Amoghapāśa is mentioned in *Amoghapāśakalparāja*, showing a possible connection between the iconography and the text (Sinclair 2022, 13–14). Sinclair (2022, 17) postulated that the eight-armed Amoghapāśa emerged as a local genius associated with the cult of saviour deity for the seafaring journey that could potentially be correlated with the role of the bodhisattva of the eight great fears *(aṣṭamahābhaya)*.

The eight-armed Amoghapāśa enjoyed prosperous adoration in the Malay Archipelago for around three hundred years. After the eleventh century, no image of Śrīvijayan type Amoghapāśa was produced, indicating the decline of the cult simultaneously with the end of the Śrīvijaya empire (Sinclair 2022, 10). Therefore, the cult of eight-armed Amoghapāśa in Candi Jago, which emerged another three hundred years later after the defunct Śrīvijayan type Amoghapāśa, was a new phenomenon and a separate tradition from the earlier cult of the deity in the region. In iconography, its most notable distinction is that the Siṅhasāri period Amoghapāśa consistently held a *tridaṇḍa*, as opposed to a *triśūla* or its other alternatives seen in the Śrīvijayan type (Sinclair 2022, 30). Sinclair (2022, 10–11; 42) then proposed that the emergence of the Siṅhasāri period eight-armed Amoghapāśa, along with its *maṇḍala* assembly, was derived from later textual traditions transmitted from India during the so-called thirteenth-century wave of esoteric Buddhist transmission. However, the inspiration of this new textual tradition was also allegedly derived from the Śrīvijayan type Amoghapāśa, thus creating a full circle of transmission (Sinclair 2022, 42).

The Amoghapāśa *Maṇḍala* Assembly and the Late Buddhist Network

Before the revival of the eight-armed Amoghapāśa in maritime Southeast Asia, the iconography rapidly spread throughout Asia thanks to the vast maritime trade network. It reached China soon after its invention in the seventh century and was

continuously venerated until at least the twelfth century. In the neighbouring Khmer Empire, the Śrīvijayan type had been adopted and inspired a distinct eight-armed bodhisattva in Khmer iconography since the late tenth century, with the final evolution created during the twelfth century in the form of Jayabuddhamahānātha iconography. Around the same time as Jayabuddhamahānātha, the iconography finally arrived in the Indian subcontinent for the first time. The earliest evidence of the deity in India is through the *sādhana* composed by Śākyaśrībhadra (1127-1225 CE) that specifically describes the eight-armed Amoghapāśa and his companions. The same *sādhana* introduced the cult of the eight-armed Amoghapāśa in Nepal and Tibet, which resulted in great adoration of the deity in the region from the thirteenth century onwards (Sinclair 2022, 17–24; 27).

According to Tibetan sources, Śākyaśrībhadra was born in Kashmir in 1127 CE. The source also mentions that he had the vision of Amoghapāśa and his four companions when he visited Bodh Gayā (Schoterman 1994, 158–59). Sinclair (2022, 26) regarded that the vision in Gāya was an actual encounter with the icon of eight-armed Amoghapāśa imported from Southeast Asia, thus explaining its sudden emergence as Śākyaśrībhadra was aware of the absence of this iconography in Indian tradition and took the chance to be the first who codify it. The *sādhana* began to be composed before 1204 CE and was edited by Vibhūticandra (fl. 1204-1248 CE), a monk whom Śākyaśrībhadra met in Jagaddala Vihāra after he fled from the attack in Vikramaśīla Vihāra. Śākyaśrībhadra then spent the rest of his life in exile in Nepal and then Tibet before he returned to Kashmir in 1213 and died in 1225 CE (Schoterman 1994, 159). The work of Śākyaśrībhadra and Vibhūticandra was translated into Tibetan in Thaṃ Bahī monastery, a Nepalese Vikramaśīla Vihāra branch founded by Atiśa (fl. 982-1055 CE) (Sinclair 2022, 25).

Schoterman (1994, 159) argued that a copy of Śākyaśrībhadra's *Amoghapāśasādhana* was possibly used as the manual for the statues of Candi Jago. His argument is based on the comparison of the Candi Jago statues with the content of the *sādhana*, which is preserved in two versions, the Tibetan canon version and the eighteenth-century *Sādhanamālā* of Panchen Lama version. Iconographical variations exist in Candi Jago statues compared with Tibetan sources, such as the depiction of *dharmacakramudrā* in Tārā that is not mentioned anywhere and the alteration of Hayagrīva's and Bhṛkuṭī's *vandanamudrā*. Despite these variations, he concluded that the statues correspond to the *sādhana* almost exactly and argued that the former was executed according to the guidance from the latter (Schoterman 1994, 165).

In this regard, Sinclair (2022, 30) suggested Gautamaśrībhadra (fl. 1248-1255 CE), a Bengali monk based in Lalitpur, Nepal, as the agent who brought the *sādhana* to the archipelago. Gautamaśrībhadra probably met Vibhūticandra in Gustala Vihāra and learned about the tantric *poṣadha* ritual associated with the eight-armed Amoghapāśa there. An inscription from Karimun Besar Island, Riau, records the presence of Gautamaśrībhadra in the archipelago, with a post-quem date of the inscription suggested to be 1255 CE, after the earthquake that damaged Gustala Vihāra. The presence of Gautamaśrībhadra in maritime Southeast Asia and his relation to Vibhūticandra are seen

as the ultimate connection for the transmission of *Amoghapāśasādhana* to the Siṅhasāri court (Sinclair 2022, 30–31).

Additionally, Sinclair (2022, 29–30) also anticipated other unknown versions of *Amoghapāśasādhana* that were potentially used by the artisan of Candi Jago. While he agreed that the incorporation of a *tridaṇḍa*, first codified as an attribute for Amoghapāśa by Śākyaśrībhadra, is evidence of the reference to Śākyaśrībhadra's *sādhana*, he argued that Śākyaśrībhadra's versions could not be the direct model. His primary argument is the significant difference in the composition of the *maṇḍala* assembly. As shown by the stone and bronze copies, the overall configuration incorporates the four Buddhas (tathāgata) and their counterparts into the group. From the inscription on the Amoghapāśa of Rambahan, we know that this configuration is called *caturdaśātmaka*, or the fourteen deities with Amitābha on the crown of Amoghapāśa counted as the fifth tathāgata (Reichle 2007, 100;Sinclair 2022, 30). The four tathāgata and their four *śakti* are also found among the ruins of Candi Jago, forming the complete configuration of this *Amoghapāśamaṇḍala* assembly in its main temple (Reichle 2007, 87;Sundström 2020, 135). In contrast, Śākyaśrībhadra's *sādhana* neither mentions the tathāgata, their retinues, or their mantras in the assembly, causing a wavering of its direct role in Candi Jago (Sinclair 2022, 30). Regardless, the modified Śākyaśrībhadra's *Amoghapāśasādhana* or its other versions arrived in Java within approximately fifty years, demonstrating the express networks of religious ideas exchange during the period (Sundström 2020, 137).

The re-emergence of the eight-armed Amoghapāśa testifies to the interregional Buddhist network of the thirteenth century, transmitting new iconographical programs from the declining Buddhist centres in Northeast India to the supportive polities of Southeast and East Asia. Acri and Wenta (2022, 5–6) made a compelling association of this global phenomenon with the local context of Kṛtanagara's transgressive religious agenda in response to the geo-political ramifications. In this context, the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly is not an isolated case. The cult of Mahākāla and Mañjuśrī Arapacana also reveals the transmission of esoteric Buddhist systems and their political motivation during the reign of Kṛtanagara (Acri and Wenta 2022, 36–37). In the case of the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly, Reichle (2007, 126–27) argued about its functionality as a commemoration of Kṛtanagara's ancestor that generates merits and deliverance for the people, in which the distribution of its copies is also a political act. In explaining these active artistic productions during Kṛtanagara's reign, connected to the new influx of esoteric Buddhist ideas, scholars often presuppose an assured artistic influence from Northeast India in Javanese artworks.

The Problem in Locating the Pāla Style Influence

The idea of the Pāla art influence in Siṅhasāri period statues has long been conjectured since the first half of the twentieth century. Bernet Kempers (1933a, 176) surmised that the inspiration for the *maṇḍala* assembly of Amoghapāśa in Candi Jago, both iconographically and stylistically, could only be derived from places such as the Nālandā monastery in Magadha. He further attested by comparing them to a fragment of the statue excavated from Nālandā that depicts Tārā, Sudhanakumarā, Hayagrīva, and Bhṛkuṭī, but which main figure is missing (Fig. 8). His conclusion stated that it was this statue or other Pāla statues alike that could be regarded as the prototype for the statues of Candi Jago (Bernet Kempers 1933a, 178–79). Earlier in the same year, Bernet Kempers (1933b) also elaborated on the element of the Siṅhasāri statues that he considered Pāla-influenced. In his 1933 thesis, he frequently mentioned the characteristic features in the Pāla style that are also legible in the Siṅhasāri period statues. Some of those features are the flying ribbons and bows behind the headdress, the lotus plants flanking the deity, the attendants, the bodice, such as in Durgā from Candi Singasari, and the shawl, such as in Bhṛkuṭī from Candi Jago discussed here. According to him, the Pāla influence on Siṅhasāri period arts culminated in its purest form in the statues of Candi Jago and Candi Singasari (Bernet Kempers 1933b, 54; 75). Contemporary to Bernet Kempers, de Mallmann (1948) offered an alternative path in correlating the fragment from Nālandā to the *maṇḍala* assembly of Amoghapāśa from Candi Jago. She identified the missing icon of the fragment from Nālandā discussed by Bernet Kempers as Khasarpaṇa Avalokiteśvara based on the attributes, such as the attendants and the hungry ghost on the pedestal (Mallmann 1948:184). She later proposed an association between Khasarpaṇa Lokeśvara and Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara by emphasising corresponding iconographic attributes that represent the universal monarch, such as the flying ribbon behind the headdress, the four attendants, and the seven jewels of *cakravartin*. She further theorised that the transition from Khasarpaṇa Lokeśvara, which is very popular in Bengal, to Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara in Candi Jago follows an evolution from the four-armed Avalokiteśvara to the ultimately eight-armed deity (de Mallmann 1948, 182–85). However, in light of new data, both of Bernet Kempers' and de Mallmann's inferences are contested.

Figure 8 The fragment of four attendants, 11th to 12th century, Nālandā, Bihar, India (source: Bernet Kempers 1933, Afb. 3)

Scholars from the first half of the last century were often criticised for the lack of necessary contextualisation in comparing the cultures of two different regions and periods. The diffusionism of Bernet Kempers and the evolutionism of de Mallmann relied completely on a direct comparison and negated the complexity of India and Indonesia during the period. Similarly, Quaritch Wales (1951, 119), who proposed the theory of Greater India, used the enumeration of the affinity between the Candi Jago statue and Pāla art by Bernet Kempers to support the dichotomy of locally made and imported from India when comparing the Candi Jago statue with the stiffness of the later style. These propositions do not showcase the bigger picture of the observed phenomenon. In the case of the fragment from Nālandā discussed by Bernet Kempers, despite the fragment being almost contemporaneous, the stylistic differences with the Indonesian Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly are so striking (Reichle 2007, 106). The distinguishable clothing and jewellery between the two examples are conspicuous. Along with other elements, such as the floral-like *prabhamaṇḍala* on the rim and the elaborated petals and foliate motif on the base of the fragment from Nālandā (Fig. 8), it is further proven that there are no resemblances between these pieces as far as the style is concerned. Thus, it is more likely that the fragment from Nālandā, the so-called 'missing link' by Bernet Kempers, could not be directly attributed as the main source for the stylistic or the iconographic inspiration of the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly from the Siṅhasāri period.

In the rise of post-structuralism, as well as the emergence of the first generation of Indonesian archaeologists and art historians, the narrative of cultural transmission shifted to incorporate the local context and its active role in the process. Sedyawati (1990, 98–100) emphasised the Indonesian indigenous cultures as precedent and the interconnection between local cultures in seeing the process of cultural development. Meanwhile, Huntington and Huntington (1990, 70) redefined influence from an unavoidable force to an echo of stimuli interacting with cultures that actively select and modify it. Similarly, Brown (1994, 10-19) proposed a set of rules that illustrate the

transmission of this inspiration from South to Southeast Asia, which emphasise the deliberate freedom of local artisans in creating their artwork.

Through this new framework, recent scholars like Reichle (2007, 110) showed scepticism in an argument supporting the presence of Pāla influence in the statues of Candi Jago and their later copies. She suggests that the new wave of Buddhism would only account for the iconography of East Java, but not the artistic tradition. While she noticed that the connection with the Pāla dynasty is indicated by some stylistic elements and Nāgāri script on Candi Jago's statues, she argued that it might not have been transmitted during the thirteenth century. She argued that neither the art nor the palaeography on the Candi Jago statues matched the contemporary Pāla style. Instead, her comparison showed a more positive correlation with the Central Javanese precedents. Therefore, according to her, the so-called Pāla features in Candi Jago statues could only be derived from the continuation of the Central Javanese tradition, which had earlier absorbed it (Reichle 2007, 102–10).

Figure 9 The Late Pāla Sculpture, c. late 12th century, India (source: dsal.uchicago.edu)

It can be postulated that the ornate late Pāla statues (Fig. 9) have a contrasting remark with the rather clean aesthetic of Candi Jago statues or their copies (Fig. 2-4). In a very general sense, the late Pāla statues, i.e. the statues produced during the reign of Nayapāla (ca. second quarter of the eleventh century) until Palapāla (ca. last quarter of the twelfth century), are characterised by the three-dimensionality of the figures, plasticity of the carving, accentuated body posture, pointed top of the stele, double lotus petal pedestal, and smaller central figure proportioned within the stele (Huntington, 1984, 67–63;1994, 58). Meanwhile, the Candi Jago statues show a contrasting or distinct characteristic, such as the completely attached backside of the figure to its stele, the

rounded top of the stele, the double lotus cushion with a smaller upper section, and the central figure that almost completely covers the surface of the stele. The anatomy of the deities is depicted with stiff and awkward poses, and female figures are shown with less exaggerated torsos. According to Sedyawati (1990, 106), this treatment of angular anatomy on the figures can be associated with the characteristics of the Indonesian art form, whose origin can be traced back to the pre-Hindu and Buddhist periods. Meanwhile, other features that are very common in Pāla statues are completely absent in Candi Jago, such as the *kīrttimukha* head and a pair of flying *vidyādhara* on the upper part of the stele. Taking Bernet Kempers' enumeration into account, we are left with fragmented elements that point to the correlation between the statues of Candi Jago and the Pāla style, while the overall finished artwork betrays any connection at all.

On the other hand, tracing such fragmented elements, such as smaller attendants, lotus plants, or flying ribbons behind the diadem, to the period before Siṅhasāri is obscure. Many scholars have postulated that during the Central Javanese period (ca. 700-930 CE), Pāla influence existed in the form of bronze statues. This period is when a direct connection between the Indonesian Śailendra dynasty and the Indian Pāla dynasty was recorded in an inscription from Nālandā, strengthening the evidence of an active relationship between the two regions (Huntington and Huntington 1990, 208–9). However, as noted from the discussion by Huntington and Huntington (1990), Huntington (1994), and Lunsingh Scheurleer and Klokke (1988), there are multiple problems in connecting the Central Javanese Pāla influence to its Eastern Javanese counterpart. First, the Pāla influence in Central Javanese bronze statues was exclusively transferred between metal artwork mediums and characterised by the dominant elements of Javanese bronzesmiths' selection and originality. Second, the so-called influence also lasted briefly between the eighth century to the first half of the ninth century; thus, its re-emergence in the twelfth century in the stone statues is a separate phenomenon with a different intensity. Finally, for unknown reasons, bronze statue production in Java ceased after the eleventh or two centuries before the Siṅhasāri period (Huntington and Huntington 1990, 208; Huntington, 1994, 62; 66; Lunsingh Scheurleer, 1994, 79–82). Therefore, it is improbable that the Pāla features in East Javanese stone statues were derived from Central Javanese bronze statues.

In this regard, Lunsingh Scheurleer (2008, 296-298), while agreeing with Reichle (2007) about the gap between the Pāla model and the Siṅhasāri sculptures, remains with the notion that the source of influence should be sought from the eleventh to the thirteenth century of the Pāla period work of art. She particularly emphasised the lotus plants flanking a deity, an element that appeared in the eleventh-century Pāla art and influenced the East Javanese period statues. In India, the lotus plants are designed to grow from their roots to the side of the deity, with the deity's lower hand palms placed on top of their blooming flowers (See detail on Fig. 9). Another less common variation is a pair of rising lotus plants forming intricate foliates with a depiction on top of each scroll. In Java, the lotus plants are completely separated from the main figure and grow from the inside of jars in later development. She concluded that the various degrees of "Javanisation" of the

Pāla elements in Siṅhasāri statues indicate that the transmission of Pāla features must have only happened earlier during the Kadiri period (Lunsingh Scheurleer 2008, 297, 322-323).

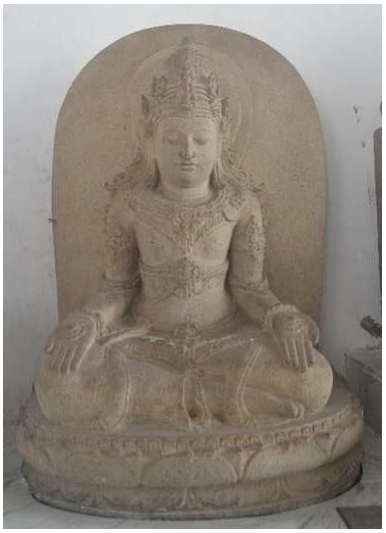

Figure 10 Seating Statue from Candi Gurah, h. 77 cm, c. 11th to 12th century, National Museum of Indonesia, Jakarta (photograph by author, 2019).

Soekmono (1998, 16), after the excavation at the Gurah temple, found a connection to the Siṅhasāri style in the sculpture dated from the eleventh to twelfth century based on palaeography, which aligns with the Kaḍiri period (ca. 1049-1222 CE). The elements such as the hair curls on the shoulder, ornate jewellery, a loop on the side of the hip, and the treatment of the lotus cushions are features of Siṅhasāri style (Fig. 10). Therefore, this group of statues is considered a link between the Central Javanese and East Javanese period (Soekmono 1998, 14–16). While this finding confirms that the Siṅhasāri style derived from a continuation of the period preceding it, the flying ribbon and the lotus plant flanking the deity that supports an argument on the early absorption of Pāla elements are absent. The complication is coupled with the very few remaining stone statues from the Kadiri period, which force us to abandon tracing these elements into the period preceding the Siṅhasāri.

The Freedom and Creativity of Javanese Artists Over the Pāla Elements

It can be postulated that the style of East Javanese Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly bears a continuity from the earlier period. As another example, Reichle (2007, 109) points out a trace of continuous tradition from Central Java to East Java in the form of a tiger pelt on top of the lower garment of Amoghapāśa. She compared the tiger pelt of Amoghapāśa from Candi Jago to a ninth-century bronze of Śiva Mahādeva from Tegal. Similarly, Sinclair (2022, 29) also considered the tiger pelt over the *sarung* on Candi Jago Amoghapāśa as a stylistic continuation from the Śrīvijayan type Amoghapāśa. The treatment of tiger skin over the *sarung* as an iconographic attribute of Avalokiteśvara,

and by extension his other manifestations, has been suggested as originating from maritime Southeast Asia (Sundström, 2020, 120). The form that is worn by Amoghapāśa from Candi Jago, with the tiger's head and a dangling front paw on the right thigh of the figure, is the most found on the surviving statues of Avalokiteśvara from insular Southeast Asia, which is dated to the eighth to the thirteenth century (Sundström, 2022, 123-124).

One last aspect to associate the Pāla elements to the creative force of Javanese artisans concerns the attendant figures. Sundström (2020, 136) emphasised that the new knowledge brought by the twelfth-century wave of Buddhism was not the cult of Amoghapāśa, which had already been known in Java for centuries, but rather the incorporation of his attendants into the new Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly. The arrival of this maṇḍala challenged thirteenth-century Javanese artisans to execute the idea of an accompanied deity into their artworks. At first, they had done it in the conventional way of separating each figure into their stele as in Candi Jago but later adopted a new method of depicting all of the deities into a single stele as in the copies. Sundström (2020, 139) argued that this adoption of a new format might indicate that the artist was aware of a composition with the main deity and his smaller attendants within a single stele. While this composition on stone sculpture is very rare in the artwork from the period preceding the Siṅhasāri, Huntington (1984, 28, 56) found that such a composition is part of a strictly defined stylistic idiom in Pāla arts that can be traced to the pre-Pāla period in the seventh century. We have seen the example of Tārā, Sudhanakumarā, Hayagrīva, and Bhṛkuṭī, which are commonly depicted as the attendants of Avalokiteśvara and his other manifestations through the fragment from Nālanda discussed above. Yet, despite the possibility of Pāla inspiration in this format, the composition of Rambahan statues and bronze plaque copies still has a conspicuous difference compared to typical Pāla art. Taking an example once more from the fragment from Nālanda discussed above (Fig. 8), it is obvious that the fragment is arranged with the outermost figures, i.e. Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī, slightly larger than their male counterparts. Meanwhile, the stone slab from Rambahan shows a juxtaposed arrangement with Sudhanakumarā and Hayagrīva slightly larger than their female counterparts. On the other hand, the very broad and tri-arced stele of Rambahan statues illustrates the experimentation of the sculptor with this new format, compared to the efficiency in utilising the space shown by the late Pāla statues (Fig. 9). It might be explained through the possibility that the reference for this format was not necessarily an object of similar materiality, i.e. stone statue. Other fragile media, such as tangible drawing or painting, that depict the assembly would allow the Javanese artist to take as much freedom in the final execution.

Returning to the problem of locating the Pāla influence, we can now add the factor of local artisan agency into account. Thus, the significant difference in the form of elements, such as the lotus plant flanking the deity, between Candi Jago statues and their Pāla counterpart should be seen not as a process of Javanisation that happened over time, as proposed by Reichle (2007) and Lunsingh Scheurleer (2008), who sought the precedent in the period before Siṅhasāri, but rather an interpretation and creativity of Javanese artisans in incorporating these new elements into their artwork. In other words, the so-

called Pāla influence is less a deterministic force that gradually transforms over time, and more a volitional motif consciously adopted by Javanese artisans in their artmaking, thus supporting the argument for its arrival in the thirteenth-century wave of Buddhist transmission. This also reflects the dynamic and complexity of the Siṅhasāri period sculptural tradition. Following what Sedyawati (1985, 92; 133; 371) had observed from the corpus of Gaṇeśa statues, the Siṅhasāri art could not be defined in a single style but consisted of various and heterogeneous sculpting traditions that accommodated the demand from diverse social structures of that time. Therefore, a new motif can be seen intertwined with the old motif in the Siṅhasāri sculpture.

While in the case of our Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly, it is obvious from the composition of the attendants and the lotus plant element, the broader corpus of Siṅhasāri sculptures might show other examples in support of the hypothesis. Indeed, if we consider other sculptures from Siṅhasāri that are beyond the group of Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly, there are also a few sculptures with ornamentation that show a stronger resemblance with typical Pāla art, such as *vyāla* (pranching lion) ornamented backrest (Sholah 2022, 97–102). Other aspects of the statue, such as the textile patterns and the ornamental jewellery with the extensive use of pearls, also suggest a similar association with Pāla art (Pullen 2025, 21). Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this study to elaborate on the broader Siṅhasāri period sculptures.

As observed from the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly, we can suggest a few remarks concerning the arrival of new artistic inspiration in the thirteenth century. First, in seeing the remnant of Pāla influence in the Indonesian Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly, the old elucidation that sees the Javanese artisan as a passive recipient might not be so relevant. As Huntington (1994, 58) noted, Javanese artists, unlike in Tibet, where Pāla images were replicated with great fidelity, applied their creativity and modification to the Indian art forms to create their preferred final piece. This is also because Indonesian artisans saw Indian art forms as discrete units they could modify, select, and contextualise to their creation (Brown 1994, 17–18). Finally, the social complexity of the Siṅhasāri period allows a diverse sculptural tradition to flourish (Sedyawati 1985, 371).

CONCLUSION

This paper has integrated the discussion on the new transmission of esoteric Buddhist teaching to Southeast Asia in the thirteenth century with the arguments regarding the presence of Pāla style influence in the Siṅhasāri period statues. By focusing on the group of statues called the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly, it follows the transformative history of the cult of the eight-armed Amoghapāśa and showcases that its re-emergence in the thirteenth-century Java was part of the global phenomenon of the migration of Buddhist masters from Northeast India to the Southeast and East Asia. While scholars might expect a legible Pāla influence on the statues as the immediate consequence of the transmission, the observation on the Candi Jago statues and their later copies reveals a rather perplexing clue. The so-called Pāla stylistic elements exist in their modified form and are integrated into the creative force of Javanese artists. In this paper,

it is argued that such an idiosyncrasy of the style in the Indonesian Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly is purely an unprecedented workmanship, rather than interpreted as having undergone an evolutionary development. It reflects that the transmission of style involves many factors that prevent artistic idioms from being received with the same obedience as iconographic programs. Among others, the freedom and creativity of Javanese artisans played a significant role in selecting elements to be executed in the final artworks. At the same time, Java has had a continuous artistic tradition for up to five hundred years during the making of the Amoghapāśa *maṇḍala* assembly statues. Future research that incorporates a larger corpus of statues from a wider period could further shed light on this issue.

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