

Thai - Cambodian Culture Relationship through Arts

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Thai-Cambodian Culture Relationship Through Arts



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THAI – CAMBODIAN CULTURE RELATIONSHIP THROUGH ARTS



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Certificate

This is to certify that Ms. Charuwan Phungtian a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Science, Magadh University, Bodh - Gaya prepared this thesis under my supervision and guidance. The present work incorporates the results of her study and the contents of thesis did not at any time form a basis of the award of any previous degree to anyone to the best of my knowledge and belief.



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Preface

I got the inspiration to take up this thesis “Thai-Cambodian Culture relationship through arts” at the time I used to work in the camp with the S.E.A. refugees to resettle their lives in America. I worked with the “Consortium” organization under the administrative of UNHCR. The camp was at Phanat Nikhom, Chonburi, Thailand. I had good social relationship with all of my refugee students in the camp with all clans, tribes and countries. Especially for the Khmers, I learnt Khmer language and Khmer dance. I was fascinated with their arts so much. Apart from this, I took my Ph.D. topic from one part of my previous M.A. thesis “Some aspect of Buddhist arts in Thailand”. Its chapter “Lopburi art” helped me very much to make further studies on details of my present work on this Ph.D. thesis. I am proud of my work and give very much gratitude and my thanks to many persons.

I must express my thanks and my gratitude to my respected supervisor Professor Dr. Sahai Sachchidanand, Head of the Department of Ancient Indian and Asian Studies, Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya, Bihar (India) who very kindly allowed me to take up this thesis. Besides, he with full attention pours out his scholarship and his knowledge and gave me the benefit of many suggestions for my Ph.D. work. This help has caused me deep respect and regards towards him. I feel thankful for his kindness.

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And the thing that I could not forget to mention right here is both of my own students, Rev. Wasana Thuankaew and Rev. Ahnan Ruang-Chacknara, graduate B.A. students, Faculty of Buddhist Studies, Mahachulalongkornrajavittayalaya University. They worked hard and helped me so much as my thesis work progressed. Especially, Rev. Wasana Thuankaew helped me so much with his help on the thesis in the computerized work area. I would like to say so many thanks to both of them.

At last, I express my sincere gratitude to my parents, Mr. Klueng & Chintana Chareonla and Dr. Theerayut Phungtian my husband. I feel very deeply indebted for their great encouragement, affection and loving generosity.

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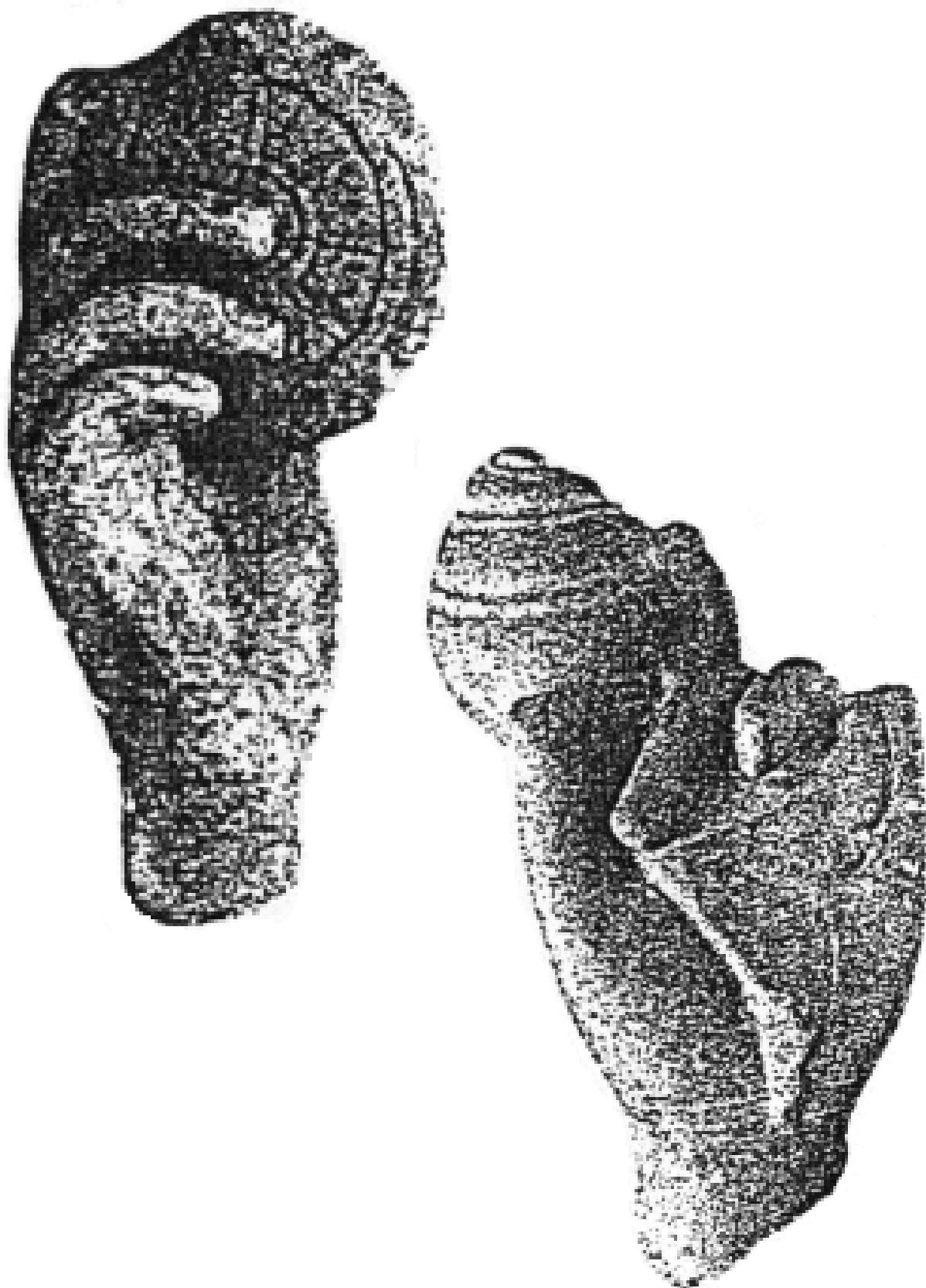
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Introduction

Thai-Cambodian Culture Relationship



Introduction:

Thai-Cambodian Culture Relationship

Thailand and Cambodia are very close neighbours with common borders and cultural relations. We, as Thai people, received and adopted some arts and culture from ancient Cambodia. The pre-Thai scripts and spoken words were adopted from Khmer native language which we are using now.

The area of south-East Asia covers broadly the whole of the Indo-Chinese peninsula and East Indies, popularly called Suvarna-bhumi which, to be more precise, comprised the territories now known as Myanmar, Siam (Thailand), the Malay Peninsula, Cambodia (Kambujadesa), Laos, Vietnam on the main land and the Island of Sumatra, Java, Madura, Bali and Borneo. ([Fig. 1](#))

The Brahmanical religion that flourished in South-East Asia was not the Vedic religion of old. It evolved and developed in India almost at the same time when Buddhism and Jainism flourished. The essential character of this new religion was sectarian which recognised Brahma [the Creator], Visnu [the Nourisher], and Siva [the Destroyer], the three great gods of Brahmanical trinity. As we know, it is the names of these three gods that later gave birth to the three renowned Brahmanical sects such

as Brahmanism, Vaisnavism and Saivism which dominated as the most popular religious force, evident from the hundreds of inscriptions found in different parts of South-East Asia.¹

The arrival of the Hindu and Buddhist religions as part of the process of Indianisation had profound consequences for the development of Imperial Khmer art. By the time it is first noted in Cambodia during the first centuries of our era, Hinduism had become a devotional religious centre of a pantheon of gods (such as Shiva, Vishnu and Krishna) and goddesses (such as Uma, Parvati and Lakshmi) who were all recognised as manifestations of the same formless universal essence. Of special importance to Khmer kings were Shiva and Vishnu who, along with the god Brahma, form a trinity encompassing the cyclical cosmic functions of creation, preservation and destruction. Harihara, a combined form of Shiva and Vishnu, was also especially popular. Hinduism was the state religion of the kings of Angkor. Until the thirteenth century when it was permanently eclipsed by Buddhism, which had played a lesser role in Cambodia since the pre-Angkorian period.

The Khmer people today are primarily found in the country of Cambodia (formerly Kambuja) but the original heartland of the Khmer was associated with an area of the middle Mekhong river in Laos and the southern part of Northeast Thailand. Thus the remains of Khmer temples at Angkor are justly famous and rulers from at least the 9th to 14th centuries concentrated their temples

1. Upendra Thakur: Some aspects of Asian history and culture, p. 83.

within the urban area of Angkor, throughout this period, if not far before, the Khmer also inhabited parts of Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. ([Fig. 2](#))

Use of the Khmer language in early Southeast Asia probably extended far beyond the limits of present-day Cambodia, into the Mekhong delta, the Khorat plateau of Northeast Thailand, and central Thailand's lower Chao Phraya valley. It is possible that a proto-Khmer language was spoken by the people of Funan, a (1st to 5th century A.D.) Kingdom located in the lower Mekong of southern Cambodia. How these peoples reached the area is unclear, but similarities in the material cultures of Northeast Thailand and Cambodia by the beginning of the Christian era suggest a shared heritage originating at a much earlier date.

During the early first millennium A.D., the adoption of aspects of Indian civilization had a profound effect on the nature of Khmer urban settlement. Indian imports included concepts of kingship and law, the use of Sanskrit in the recording of inscriptions on stone, ([Fig. 3](#)) and most especially, the Hindu and Buddhist religions with their distinctive styles of art and architecture. For example, the word for 'brick' in Thailand developed from the Sanskrit, and the erection of brick and stone structures to honor deities may date to the advent of Indian religious influence. Previously shrines were made of wood, a custom which still survives in rural areas of Thailand where small wooden shelters house the spirits of the land. The building of these shrines would be undertaken by the whole community, and like Hindu and Buddhist temples were

part of a ritual complex designed to ensure the continued prosperity of the society.

The construction of Khmer temples in Thailand represented not only the founding of a religious shrine, but the incorporation of a community to serve the gods and rulers to whom the centre was dedicated. The building of stone temples with small inner cells to house a cult image is clearly modelled on Indian prototypes. However, the tradition of ancestor veneration is deeply ingrained in the culture of the Khmer peoples. Thus the temples of the Khmer represented an amalgamation of established customs of ancestor and spirit veneration with imported ideas which continued from the 8th to the 12th centuries. At the end of the 12th century, Jayavarman VII erected two massive temples honoring his parents: Ta Prohm was dedicated to his mother in 1186 A.D. and five years later, Preah Khan was dedicated to his father.

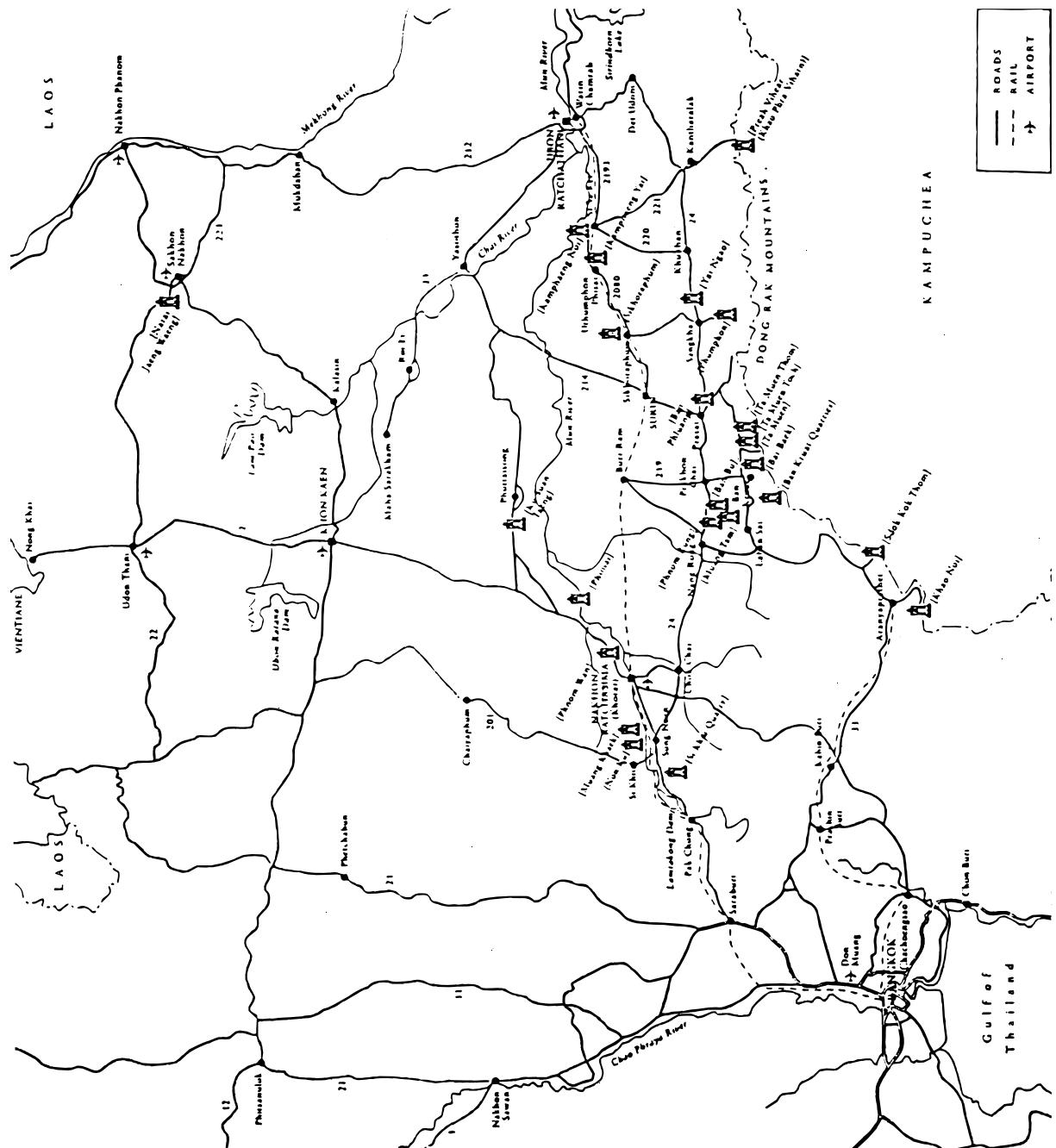
The high esteem accorded at royal courts to religious figures was crucial in the blending of Hinduism and Buddhism with pre-existing ancestor cults. The many Indian concepts of state and kingship adopted by the Khmer also reflect the political power of priests. A mutually beneficial liaison existed between the king and his religious advisors, the first of whom may have reached the Khmer courts in the early 1st millennium A.D. Some scholars argue that the earliest Indian advisors to Southeast Asia were Buddhist missionaries who arrived in the wake of Indian traders. As one of the characteristics of the absorption of Indian religions in Southeast Asia has been toleration, Buddhism, Hinduism, and earlier beliefs appear to have co-

existed peaceably, a rare state of affairs in the face of priestly activity limited to religious conversion. This implies that religious advisors and rulers were equally concerned with earthly and immortal existence, a concept whose essence is expressed in the term ‘devaraja’, a Sanskrit word meaning ‘god who is king’. A Khmer ruler would be consecrated as devaraja by the court priest and would take a Sanskrit-based name, such as Jaya (victorious) or Surya — (from the sun god Surya). To this he would add the suffix -varman, meaning ‘protector’. The ruler would commemorate the event with inscriptions, and the foundation of a temple. For the most part, the temples of the Khmer rulers were dedicated to Hindu gods, principally Shiva and Vishnu. However this did not exclude incorporation of other religious elements, and traces of a variety of Buddhist doctrines may be seen in many Khmer temples. In the late 12th century, Jayavarman VII (1181–1219) adopted Mahayana Buddhism as his state religion. Thus during this period, architecture and sculpture show their greatest development in Buddhist rather than Hindu iconography.

The development of Cambodian arts can be seen in the Thai art of the Lopburi period (11th–15th century A.D.) It was occupied by the Khmers or Cambodians and as such the art of this period is known locally as Khmer art which deals with Mahayana elements, just like the Sri-Vijaya school of art. This school of Buddhist art marks the last stage of the growth of Buddhist art in Thailand before the rise of the Thai people to power in the land which is now called Thailand.

Chapter I

*The Rise & Fall
of the Khmer
&
the Arrival of
the Thai*



The Rise & Fall of the Khmer and the Arrival of the Thai

The Rise of the Khmer

To study Khmer arts and their influence, it is first necessary to know who are the Cambodians, where they lived originally, how they came to hold sway in this part of the world, and who were the peoples enslaved by them. Old Cambodians, or Khmers, acted as forerunners of Western colonizing powers, and when they lost the territory once they conquered, their ruler now began to fear whether the people whom they once continually harassed, would not now harass them in turn, since they have become more powerful, and also to moan the loss of her past glory.

The original Khmers, the ancestors of the modern Cambodians, lived around the Great Lake at the early period of the Christian Era. The region must have been rich and prosperous for it enticed the Indians to come and find fortune in this land of gold, known as “Suvarnabhumi” in Sanskrit.

According to legend in the fifth century a Brahmin, called Kaundinya, came to this land. He married a local princess, Soma, the daughter of a local chieftain who worshiped a Naga (Snake god). This Naga was the

sacred symbol of the indigenous population, and the daily re-enactment of this mystic union between the king and a Naga princess was still an essential part of the court ceremony at Angkor over thousand years later. He taught her Indian civilization and belief. Thus Kaundinya and his successors built the country into a strong Indianized State, known as Funan. It seems that the descendants of this union followed a religion mixing elements of both Brahmanism and Animism, and were commonly known as Adhiraja “King of the Mountain”. They had gained this title because the king was thought to have a direct link with the god Shiva, who continuously manifested himself through a stone alter placed on a mountain top at the kingdom’s center. The very name Funan is a direct Chinese transliteration of the ancient Khmer word “Bnam” meaning mountain.

Funan had several states owing allegiance to the supreme king. Towards the fifth century two states in the north of Funan were united and formed themselves into the State of Chenla around the middle of the Mekhong River, in the region of Champasak at Wat Phu. The country then came under the domination of Champa at the end of the fifth century. In the second half of the sixth century, the king of Chenla Bhavavarman, who established his capital to the north of the Great Lake, annexed both Funan and Chenla together, and subjugated other feudatory states of Funan. He extended his country right up to Dongrek and what was later to become the Khmer Empire, and replaced Funan.

There was no Thailand then but a country which the

Chinese called Tche-Tou, in what was to be Thailand in the Menam Valley. The town of Phimai (near Korat) was mentioned for the first time under King Isanavarman (610) under the ancient name of Bhimapura.

After the death of Jayavarman I in 667 Chenla was split up into two kingdoms: the Water-Chenla and the Land-Chenla. Water-Chenla was in the region now called Cochinchina, and Land-Chenla would correspond to the modern region of Cambodia up to Dongrek. Then in 802 a prince who had fled to Java came back and reunited both Chenlas into a united Khmer kingdom, and settled his capital at Indrapura. He was known as Jayavarman II (802–869).

Thus kingdom of Angkor was founded by Jayavarman II, a prince from water Chenla who had spent his youth as a hostage in Java. He returned to Cambodia in about 800 A.D. He met the Brahman Sivakaivalya, who was to become his life-long spiritual mentor. In about 802 A.D. he married Dharanindradevi and declared himself a king and promptly initiated the reunification of his fragmented nation. He founded and moved his capital city three times, Hariharalaya, Amarendrapura Mahendraparvata, and at last he moved his capital back to Hariharalaya. He threw off the overlordship of Java. However in order to do this he not only had to conquer back the kingdom, but also restore the cult of “Mountain king” to Cambodia by performing the necessary ceremony needed to link the king with the god Shiva and had the newly consecrated *linga* placed a top the “Bakong” pyramid located at the city center.

Under king Yasovarman (889–908) Angkor-Thom was built and he called his capital, not Angkor-Thom, but Indrapat. He built temples known as Phimeanakas, Loley and Bapuon. He fought with Champa, took their capital and put a general of his choice on the throne, but a Cham uprising along the frontier forced him to retreat to his country.

The Khmer kingdom expanded eastward and westward: eastward and southward at the expense of Champa² until this latter country was overrun by Cambodia. Leclere³ said that the Cambodians fought against the Chams and pillaged them in 969, 1145 and 1153. In 1145 king Suryavarman II took Vijaya, the capital of Champa, and annexed the country, but in 1158 the Chams revolted and became independent. The Chams were subjugated again in 1190 by Jayavarman VII and a Cambodian put on the throne until 1120. The Cambodians then withdrew from Champa because all their forces were after this required to fight against the Thai in the West, who were rising up against their sovereign in order to gain independence. It was at this time that the Chinese embassy to Cambodia reported that the Cambodian country was much devastated by the wars with the Thai (1296).⁴ This referred to the campaigns of Rama Kamhaeng of Sukhotai.

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2. The Chams at this period owned the territory what is now Cochin-China and Annam, from Kampot to Binh Thuan (Phan-Thiet) and from Binh-Thuan right up to the Gate of Annam (see Leclere: *Histoire du Cambodge*. p. 11)
 3. Ibid: p. 144.
 4. Tcheou Ta-Kouan: *Memoires sur les Coutumes du Cambodge*.

The Khmer Empire also expanded westward at the expense of the Mons of Davaravati and then at the expense also of the Thai who had come into the basins of the Menam and Mekhong Rivers in great numbers around the thirteenth century at the fall of Nanchao in Yunnan in 1253.

Thus the Khmer Empire became bigger and bigger at the expense of her neighbours through a succession of Khmer warrior kings. Her beautiful capital of Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom and many other archaeological sites were built on the forced labours and sweat of her sons and people she had enslaved. Angkor was first started by Yasovarman who died in 900 A.D.⁵

King Suriyavarman, who died in 1050, extended the country towards Luang Prabang, Sukhotai, Sawankaloke (Sri Sachanalai) and Lavo (Lopburi). The Mons at this time must have been very weak and therefore fell an easy prey to the Khmers, who always seized chances to annex a defenceless country — as will be seen later that this has always been her tactics during the Ayudhya period of Thai history. Burma under King Anoratha (or Anurudha) at Pagan had become powerful, had taken the Mon capital of Pegu at this time, and annexed the whole country right down to the coast of Martaban. It was also said according to Thai legends that Anoratha even led his victorious army down to the Menam basin. King Anoratha's empire and that of the Khmers must have touched each other and even overlapped in the Menam basin. At the farthest extent, the Khmers reached Muang Singh in the

5. Leclerc: *Histoire du Cambodge*, p. 104, put it at 908 A.D.

north, right up to the confines of China, and left ruins of Saifong at Viengtiane, Phimai at Korat, and Preah Vihear in Dongrek mountains, as vestiges of the extent of her empire in those hey-days. Preah Vihear and Phimai were built by Jayavarman VI around 1080, although the town of Phimai was already mentioned in 610 in the reign of King Isanavarman as part of his Chenla territory. The Khmers also claimed to have extended their empire towards the whole of the Malay Peninsula. Khmer history recorded that Suryavarman I (1002–1049) made peace with Champa in order to fight the kingdoms of Louvo and of the Menam valley, without having to face wars on two fronts.⁶

Under the reign of King Jayavarman VIII (1162–1201), it was mentioned that king Rajendravarman was a governor of Nakorn Rajsima at the time when the Thai were rising up to obtain their liberty. It was also mentioned that the extent of the Khmer empire at this time reached beyond Sukhotai.⁷ In the reign of Jayavarmadi-paramesvara, in the first half of the thirteenth century, at the decline of Khmer power, it was still mentioned that her territory extended from Champa to Attopeu and beyond, to the gulf of Thailand and to the mountains on the west of the Salween, to the Chinese frontier in the north beyond Luang Prabang, and to the cape of Karman in the south. It was a vast territory of some one million square kilometres with about 20 tributary states.

6. Leclerc: *Histoire du Cambodge*, p. 111.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

The Decline & Fall of Angkor

Jayavarman VII was the builder of the great capital city complex of Angkor Thom with the visage of its creator carved on huge stone tower looking benignly over all four corners of his far flung empire.

Jayavaraman VII was a devoted Buddhist and introduced a new state religion of “Buddharaja” centered on the Bayon, which blended elements of the worship of Shiva and Vishnu with a branch of Mahayana Buddhism. The Buddhist sect instituted by Jayavarman VII followed the teachings of the Bodhisattva or Buddhist Saviour Avalokiteshvara. He also had constructed the important Buddhist sanctuaries of “Banteay Kedei” “Ta Prohm”, and the “Prah Khan”. Other important constructions include the “Terrace of Elephants” “Terrace of the Leper King” and The “Western Terrace”. The existing system of highways connecting all the different regions of the empire were upgraded and extended, and after the annexation of the Kingdom of Champa a new highway was built between its capital at Angkor. These highways had a total of 121 rest-houses set up along their routes. Then to show that he put the welfare of his subjects before his own, he had 102 hospitals founded throughout the whole empire for public use. Truly he was a king of kings.

This reign lifted Angkor to glorious heights, but at the same rime the seeds of its downfall were being sown. This king’s fervent following of Buddhism caused great resentment among the Brahman, and his huge program of construction and expansion sapped dry the energy and

enthusiasm of the common people.

In 1218 A.D., the rule of Jayavarman VII came to an end and the actual circumstances surrounding his fall are not known. Did he die, was he overthrown, or was he forced to abdicate because of old age or illness. Whatever the cause, there followed a period of bitter dispute over the succession.

Yet some at least of the underlying factors of Angkor's decline were emerging even now. In some ways the reign of Jayavarman VII stood at an end, not a beginning. After him, indeed, the decline seen with hindsight by the historian was probably not manifest to the inhabitants of Angkor, and the realm did indeed remain prosperous and proud for a century or more; but the foundations of its pre-eminence were being eroded, warfare was to become increasingly defensive and damaging, and no subsequent ruler was able to scale the heights of magnificence reached by Jayavarman VII.

There is a way of taking Jayavarman's professions of responsibility for the lives of all his subjects that accuses him of presuming too much. In his victory, it might be said, he was deluded into thinking himself invulnerable; in his royal wealth and pomp, he came to believe himself divine; and to sustain an illusion he wore his kingdom down into poverty. For all his monuments and all his victories had to be paid for in the sweat of those who were made instruments of his leaping ambition. In the end, some have argued, it was the exhaustion of the kingdom brought about by Jayavaram's extravagance that set it upon its downward course.⁸

After the demise of Jayavarman VII in 1218 A.D., there followed a period of bitter conflict between the supporters of Buddhism and Brahmanism, reminiscent of the darkest days of Angkor. Jayavarman VII was a devoted follower of Brahmanism and his reign marked the high point of Brahman reaction against Buddhism, resulting in the vandalism of many of the Buddhist inscriptions and statues in the Bayon. During the exceptionally long reign of this king the empire was faced with enemies on all sides.

The Arrival of the Thais in the Peninsula & contact with the Khmer

The Thais who had arrived to settle down in big numbers in this area, were the first one to shake the might of the Khmers. It was against the power of such an extensive empire that the Thai had to fight their way to independence. They had already established their kingdoms around Chiengsaen and Chiengrai in upper Laos. Some of the Thais wandered southward into Sukhotai and the Menam basin, which was Mon territory but held by the Khmers as indicated above.

The Thai of Sukhotai under Phra Ruang (or Nai Kong

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8. For example, L.P. Briggs wrote: "All the great monuments of antiquity were built by forced labor and the almost necessary consequence of a prolonged period of architectural greatness was an exhausted, spiritless people. The people became dissatisfied with the greedy gods for whom they must continuously toil and fight and give...." (The Ancient Empire, Philadelphia, Pa: American Philosophical Society, 1951, p.p. 258f).

Krao, the first Phra Ruang) had to carry sacred water from Thale Chubsorn in Louvo every year to king Patum Suriwong (Indravarman II). This was the custom at the time that in order to show the glory and extent of power, the Khmer king must have water from the four corners of his empire carried by the enslaved people to the royal anointment ceremony at his metropolis.

Phra Ruang of Sukhotai found it very hard for his people to carry water in big earthen jars available at that time in very shaky bullock carts on a very long hazardous journey through jungles and hills for several weeks to reach the Khmer capital and pay homage to its king. He afterward found a means of weaving bamboo and then have them lacquered with dammar gum resin (wood oil) to prevent them from leaking, and the baskets containing water would not break like earthen pots. When the Khmer king heard of this new unheard-of invention, he felt that Thai were getting too clever and must be nipped in the bud. He ordered Phya Decho, one of his army commanders to follow Phra Ruang to Sukhothai and kill him. But instead, Decho was killed by Phra Ruang. After he had killed Decho, Phra Ruang did nothing more in case revenge would arrive, but to protect himself and seek freedom for his own people.⁹

After Phra Ruang's time, Sukhothai became a prosperous kingdom. King Ram Khamheng the great was the founder and first king of Sukhothai dynasty.

It is said that every important civilisation of the world

9. M.L. Manich Jumsai and Chalermnit: History of Thailand and Cambodia, Bangkok Press, 1985, p. 19.

has a golden age or a classical age when material, intellectual and spiritual progress simultaneously reaches a high level. Thus, the Sukhothai period was the golden age of Thailand and the determining factors were national independence and religion. The culture and artistic activities with regard to Buddhism reached their zenith during this period. Buddhist art in Sukhothai period is regarded as the most beautiful. And, original Thai art expression was especially beautiful in the field of sculpture. The Sukhothai period, in this respect, represents the golden age in the history of Thailand as the Gupta period was in the history of India.

The period of the Sukhothai kingdom (1238–1439 A.D.) represents the great evolution of religion in this country.¹⁰ It witnessed the introduction of the new sect of Hinayana. The Lankavong or Sinhalese Hinayana sect of Buddhism from Ceylon was first introduced in Sukhothai kingdom which strongly survives as the state religion of Thailand.

The other strong influence of Khmer art of Lopburi can be seen in this period, too. The principle architecture is “Phra Prang” which derived its form from Khmer sanctuary. The Prang or another type of Siamese stupa also appears in this period. The Phra Prang is the further developed architectural building from the corner tower of Khmer temple. There is further development of the Phra Prang from the original Khmer style. The best example of Phra Prang is the large one at wat Pra Sri Ratana Maha-that, Chalieng in the city of Sisatchanalai.

10. For details: Dumrong Rajanubhab, H. H. Prince,: Letters of Princes, Part 49, 57.

Chapter II

***Religious Background of Thai
& Cambodian Arts***



King Jayavarman VII

Religious Background of Thai & Cambodian Arts

Khmer Religions & Beliefs

The history of Cambodia begins at Funan prior to the third century A.D., the first time its name occurs in Chinese records. Some of its early rulers were Indians, undoubtedly maintaining close contact with their home country. From at least the time of Funan and Chenla, the Khmer state had looked to Indian ideals, Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia is one of the most contentious issues in the history of this region. All that can be said for certain is that Cambodia was never a colony of India, and nor was it ever subject to a military attack from the subcontinent. It would appear instead that Indian ideals spread through the trade and commercial networks that have long linked the two regions, and that the early Khmer chieftains who adopted these ideals did so actively rather than passively. The Indian notion of kingship and its connection with a universal divine power proved irresistible to early Khmer rulers at a time when they were attempting to centralise territory, power and prestige. They were equally attractive to the later kings of Angkor.

Funan seems to have had trade with the Kushan empire in the third century and with Andhra Pradesh in Southeast India and probably Sri Lanka as early as the fourth or fifth century. Buddhism and Hinduism co-

existed, and from around the middle of the fifth century on the rulers of Funan appended the suffix “Varman” to their names, a term borrowed from South India. King Jayavarman (480–514 A.D.) figures prominently in the Chinese histories and probably was follower of the Hindu god, Shiva, as indeed were many of the Cambodian rulers.

Hinduism in Cambodia

Buddhism and Hinduism — the two great religions of India — reached Cambodia soon after the beginning of the Christian era, they are the dominant influences and few traces remain of any earlier religious beliefs; although these undoubtedly survived among the people. Khmer art was pre-eminently aristocratic, dedicated to the service of the Indian religions which were sustained by the kings and high officials, who were the patrons of the religious foundations.

Buddhism and Hinduism had been introduced by Indian travellers seeking fortune in South East Asia, and Brahman priests, who alone were capable of celebrating the rites, were not slow to follow. The Brahmans were very powerful; counsellors, spiritual advisers to the kings, guardians and tutors of the young princes in close contact with the royal family. They encouraged art, and some of the finest works resulted from their patronage. Until the end of the twelfth century temples were nearly all Hindu; either small, simple, village chapels or immense buildings

containing temples with many sanctuaries enclosing the Holy of Holies, where the divine image could be dimly perceived in the shadows. The god was usually Siva, sometimes Visnu. This supreme being was accompanied by lesser deities enshrined and venerated in the corners of the temple. Within the sanctuary Siva resided in his phallic symbol, the *linga*, which was usually preferred to an anthropomorphic likeness.

Whether it is worshipped as Siva, the propitiator, Hara, the god, who inspires, Ugra, the violent, Sambhu, the peacemaker, or the very ancient Rudra, god of terror; it is always Isvara, god of the sanctuary, benign guardian of his flock. In Cambodia little is made of the fearsome aspect. When Siva is pictured as king of the dance it is in a hieratic, harmonious choreography with none of the frenzy presaging world annihilation. They loved to fashion him in an idyllic pose, seated on the bull, Nandin, embracing his wife, Uma, a gentle reassuring image which was repeated again and again.

Legends of Siva were the inspiration for many of the bas-reliefs, but the artists more often found subjects for their decorations in the stirring tales of Visnu. Epic poems and popular belief have woven a rich fabric of the Vishnu legends.

Hinduism is monotheistic. Visnu and Siva have sometimes even been combined to make a conglomerate portrait of Harihara. The god is not simply a divine principle; he descends also to earth and it is he who governs the mind of the ruler.¹¹

11. Madeleine Giteau: Khmer sculpture and the Angkor civilization, p. 15.

Royal temples were dedicated to the divinity residing in the sanctuary idol and partly incarnate in the king. Thus every ruler had to raise his own temple where he was still worshipped after reunion in death with the god whose incarnation he had been. Princes and officials, too, wanted to make sure of survival by union with a god, so sanctuaries and idols multiplied and a whole world of statues arose beneath the chisels of the sculptors. The developing spirit of Khmer art was a response to such personal cults. For a long period the idol had been an idealized impersonal representation, as art became more realistic, the principle was embodied in a man-deity. This apotheosis was probably only accessible to a small number of the privileged and it is likely that the great mass of simple people were left to contemplate and adore the pictured mythology of the gods. The lintel and pediment at the entrance would be sparsely decorated, but the legendary epics gradually increased in richness, filling the walls of the galleries so as to excite the imagination and devotion of the faithful reiteration of the age-old stories.

Buddhism in Cambodia

Buddhism emerged in India in the sixth century B.C. as an ethical philosophy preached by the historical Shadyamuni Buddha (also known as Siddhartha Gautama). It was only later on that the Buddha came to be worshipped as a divine figure.

In Cambodia, both main traditions of Buddhism alternated in popularity: the earlier and the more philosophically austere Theravada school, and the Mahayana or ‘Great Vehicle’ of Buddhism. The latter, which stressed the role of compassionate Bodhisattvas such as Lokeshvara who renounced personal salvation in order to help other humans attain ‘Nirvana’, reached its apogee in the late 12th and early 13th century. Theravada Buddhism has been dominant in Cambodia from the late 13th century until the present day.

The advent of Buddhism did not efface all traces of Hinduism. The two schools of Buddhism, Hinayana and Mahayana — the small and the Great Vehicle (on the Way to Salvation) — came early to Cambodia, but Hinayana, while not disappearing altogether, quickly gave place to Mahayana. Mahayana lends itself to philosophical speculation and great heights of piety. Apart from Sakyamuni, the revealed Buddha and Lawgiver, it provides its devotees with many forms of Buddha and Bodhisattva. Compassionate beings who delayed their own certain salvation to help others, the Bodhisattva were images of hope and fervour in the breasts of the pious. The images multiplied and their protection was invoked by believers hoping to rejoin them in paradise. The lightning-bearer, Vajrapani, and Maitreya, the future Buddha, were part of the Khmer iconography, but Avalokitesvara was by far the most popular. A merciful god, watching over the unfortunate and answering their prayers, he is sometimes called Lokesvara — the Lord of the world — as an alternative to Avalokitesvara — the

Lord who looks down from above. The Khmer people created sanctuaries and statues in which his miracles were recalled and where prayers to his age could be repeated.

The cult of Avalokitesvara was practised in the pre-Angkor period and continued with a strong following, up to the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century when Mahayana influence was strongest. It was during the thirteenth century that a school of Buddhism which had originated in Ceylon came to Cambodia. Theravada or Hinayana, was the doctrine of the Thera, the Elders of the monastic order of the southern school of Buddhism. Disciples clung strictly to the teachings of Buddha, accepting only one path to salvation: the Three Gems-Buddha, his Law and his Community. In the sanctuaries Buddha alone is represented, accompanied sometimes by arhats in prayer. This doctrine allows no royal cult, therefore Buddhist monarchs had perforce to bring the Brahmins from India to conduct their court ritual. Temples with many courtyards were no longer constructed of stone and no attempt was made to build lasting sanctuaries to the god. Buildings were intended as a meeting-place where the faithful could hear the word of the law and pray together. A wooden or brick built chamber was all that was needed for the new cult, a vast sanctuary where the devoted could kneel before the Buddhas on the altar.

[*¹² *There is no link in the original photocopy text to this footnote, it is included here ‘roughly’ for information.]*

12. Op. cit., p. 15.

Of all the monasteries built between the fourteenth and the seventeenth century very little remains; only a few statues far from their original site and, here and there, traces of carved wood panels; a brief reference in the chronicles of Cambodia, or, even more rarely, an inscription commemorating the founding of a temple.

Ancestral Elements in Khmer Religious Beliefs

Among the many supernatural beings reserved by the Khmer during the pre-Angkorian and Angkorian periods, ancestral spirits distinctly play a very significant role. Bearing in mind the ancestral worship as described by Stutterheim in Java and Bali, the Cambodian inscriptions read more understandably to a modern man whose realms of politics and religion are clearly distinguishable.

Neither Hinduism nor Buddhism, however, fully displaced the worship of traditional Cambodian ancestor spirits “Nak ta”, especially among the general population. On the imperial level, this concern for ancestors and their correct burial was one of the factors behind the rise of the Hindu “Devaraja” cult (literally “god-king”) that gained a prominence in Cambodia that it never managed in India. Like the process of Indianisation, however, the exact nature of this cult is still not fully understood. Whether or not the kings of Angkor were ever fully regarded as Hindu gods, an important outcome of the Devaraja cult was the injection of a funerary and memorial content into Hindu sacred architecture in Cambodia.

When a man died, his soul had to be liberated from earthly bonds through certain rites which involved an establishment of figures, asrama, or other religious foundations or at least some concrete donations to the gods. There might have been simpler and inexpensive forms of the deliverance of ancestral souls but the aristocratically biased information of the Cambodian inscriptions makes no reference to them. However, it is unmistakably clear it is a Khmer funerary rite. Information from several inscriptions asserts that the purpose of establishing certain religious objects was to “deliver the deceased” to the next world. Evidence of this kind is widespread, so only a few items will be cited here. An inscription on the stele of Ta Keo, dated 639, contains this passage: “By devotion to the fortunate Sambhu, for the deliverance of his parents, the (founder), master of his senses, has erected it on the earth with the rites proper to Devi.”

There was another trend of thought derived from sanskrit texts and believed by highly Indianized or Indian ascetics in the Angkorean empire. By one’s own effort, one’s soul could unite with the Absolute after death. An expression of this idea is explicitly exemplified by an eulogy in the inscription of the stele of Phum Da, dedicated to an ascetic Jnanapriya Aryamaitrin in 1054. He was praised since, during his lifetime, he was “devoted to the meditation of Siva [and was] like the reality of Siva Himself which had resided in him”. After his death, “his purified soul now shared the supreme beatitude. [In his eyes] those who, tormented by the six enemies [senses], do not seek a refuge in the middle of forests in the so-

journ of meditation are out of their minds.”¹³

Thus, death in the Khmer system of belief was in fact not an extinction of being but a rebirth in the abode of the ancestors. The concept of death as a rebirth was shown in the figure of Rahu or Kirtimukha carved on stone coffins from the Angkorean period and on later Siamese and Cambodian urns.

The Introduction & the Development of Buddhism & Brahmanism in Thailand

Buddhism in Thailand

Thailand is one of the few countries where Buddhism still flourishes and exists as a living force. Historians and archaeologists hold divergent views regarding the exact period when Buddhism is said to have reached Siam. Some scholars believe that Buddhism was introduced in Thailand before the Christian Era during the reign of Emperor Asoka, who is credited with having sent Buddhist missionaries to various parts of the world. This is proved by archaeological finds at Pong Tuk and Phra Pathom. Remains of a large number of Buddhist structures, the images of the Buddha, inscribed terracottas and definite symbols of Buddhism like the Dharma-

13. Nidhi Aeusrivongse: The Devaraja cult and Khmer kingship at Angkor, p. 118.

chakra, belonging to the first or second century A.D., have been found in these places.¹⁴

It is most probable that Siam was the first country where the Indians landed by sea-route before proceeding to the neighbouring countries. There is every likelihood that the traders who went by sea at first landed to the South of Thailand. While some of them settled down there, others might have proceeded to Cambodia and Annam in the East and Malay Peninsula in the South. Thus, they were able to establish their colonies in the vast region of South-East Asia.¹⁵

Regarding the religious movement in this part of the world, it may be suggested that the Indians who came to Thailand and her neighbouring countries, brought the Buddhist faith and spread it in these countries. That Buddhism reached Thailand can be supported on the basis of archaeological evidence and literary and foreign accounts as well as other historical records and traditional beliefs which tend to suggest that this religion was introduced into Thailand at four different stages as following:

1. Early Theravada Buddhism (Hinayana sect or Southern Buddhism) in the 3rd century B.C.
2. Mahayana Buddhism (Northern sect) in the 7th century A.D.
3. Pukam (Pagan) Theravada Buddhism in the 11th century A.D.

14. Bapat, P.V, 2500 years of Buddhism, p. 79.

15. Majumdar, R. C., The Indo-Siam Culture (India and Thailand), Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 1, July, 1953, p. 103.

4. Lanka (Lankavamsa or Lankavong) Theravada Buddhism in the 13th century A.D.

The role & development of Buddhism in Thai Monarchies

Lankavong Theravada Buddhism has officially occupied the highest position as the national religion in the history of Thailand. The development of Lankavong Buddhism in Thailand began at quite an early date in this country. The Lankavong monks preference was to reside in the forest hermitages built by the king himself. They used the Pali (Magadhan script) language in performing their religious ceremonies, which were different from that of the Sukhodayan monks, as the latter used the Sanskrit language for the same purpose. These differences kept Lankavong monks aloof from the local monks. They did not stay with local Sukhodayan monks in the same monastery nor did they perform Sanghakamma and other religious ceremonies with them.¹⁶

This was the first stage of its development. Later on, unity was brought about among the two divisions of the Sangha. Lankavong and local Sukhodayan monks began to live in peace and harmony by the wise policy of king Ram Khamhaeng. After the unification of the Sangha, they were divided into two sections called Arannavasi and Gamavasi. The Arannavasi represented those who were mainly devoted to Vipassanadhura or meditation and who lived in forest hermitages, while the Gamavasis were

16. Department of Fine Arts: King Ram Khamhaeng and the Lankavong Buddhism, Silpakon Journal, p. 72.

mainly devoted to Ganthadhura or the study and teaching of the scriptures, and who lived in towns and villages.¹⁷

King Ram Khamhaeng, for the sake of promoting Buddhism in his kingdom, extended the royal patronage to the Buddhist Sangha by adopting several measures for better organisation and administration of the order.

One important designation of monks at this time was “the seniormost monk”, who possessed the highest qualifications in matters of discipline and knowledge of Dhamma. He was honoured by the king with the title of Sangharaja or Patriarch. He was the head of Buddhist Sangha in the kingdom. This was the first major development of Buddhism in Thailand since it came to stay in this country long before the 3rd century B.C.

The next phase of development of the Lankavong sect of Buddhism in Sukhothai kingdom is to be seen in the reign of king Mahadhammaraja Lithai (1347–1376 A.D.), who was the grandson of king Ram Khamhaeng. It was the administration of the Sangha, which was originally organised during the time of king Ram Khamhaeng. The two sections of the monks — Aranavasi and Gamavasi had improved their administration to the best of their capacity. Also this king was the first Thai monarch who left the throne temporarily and entered the monastic life of a Buddhist monk.

This noble example was followed by the Siamese

17. Arannavasi is the Thai word meaning “anyone who lives in the forest hermitages” Arana – forest and Vasi – householder. Also Gamvasi means the layman, Gama derived from Sanskrit language meaning village, Vasi-householder. (Rahula, W: A History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 197.

kings of the Ayudhya and Bangkok periods. Since then it has become customary for Thai youths to accept monkhood for at least a short time (of four months; vassa) in their lives.¹⁸ The achievement of king Lithai represents the beginning of Buddhist tradition and customs which were not seen before.

The Sukhothai kingdom reached the highest peak of political grandeur during the reign of king Ram Khamhaeng and religious glory during the reign of king Lithai. But after their death, the successors of these two great monarchs were too weak to protect the empire from the rulers of Ayudhya. As a result, the Sukhothai Kingdom was annexed to Ayudhya, which became the new Siamese capital in 1378 A.D. Owing to this transformation, the Buddhist centre in course of time shifted from the late Sukhothai kingdom to Ayudhya.

All the Ayudhya kings from king U-Tong or Prara Tibodi I (who was the founder and first king of this kingdom) up to kings who ruled in the 14th century A.D. were the ardent followers of Lankavong Buddhism, during which times several Buddhist monasteries were constructed, giving great impetus to the spread and development of Buddhism in Thailand.

During the period 1448–1488 A.D. history records the glorious days of Lankavong Buddhism under the patronage of great king Boramatrailokanat or Trailok. During his reign of 40 years the development of this sect took place in several respects. King Trailok became a Buddhist monk for a period of eight months and was ordained at

18. Spinks, Charles Nelson, Thailand: Past and Present, p. 39.

Wat Chulamani in Pisanulok, his capital and the administrative centre of his reign. It is recorded in Siamese Chronicles that some 2,388 men were also ordained on this great memorable occasion.

King Trailok was the first Siamese king who dedicated his own palace to the Buddhist Sangha. Moreover, he had constructed monasteries and viharas inside the area of his palace. One of the religious activities of this king was that he adorned the images of Bodhisattva's 500 incarnations in A.D. 1458. The production of these images represented his intense faith in Buddhism.

The important event of the Ayudhya period was the establishment of a new sect of Buddhism, named Vanaratnavong or the Pa-Kaeo¹⁹ sect which differs from the original Lankavong. The introduction of Pa-Kaeo sect took place in the reign of king Indraraja I, in 1422 A.D.

The reign of King Boromakot marks another turning point in the history of Buddhism in Thailand. King Boromakot ruled over Ayudhya from 1732 A.D. and in his reign history repeated itself in reverse. It was at this time that Ceylon received the Buddhist faith and doctrine from Thailand, although it was the country from where Thailand had received Buddhism in earlier years.

The Ceylonese King, Kirtisiri (1747–1781 A.D.) sent his delegation to Thailand to invite a group of monks in

19. Pa Kaeo sect is the name of the new sect of Theravada Buddhism, first originated in Ayudhya period before the reign of King Baromatrailokanath. Pa-Kaeo is a Thai word meaning "the forest of glass": Pa – forest, and Kaeo – glass.

order to re-institute higher ordination (Upasampada) in Ceylon. King Boromakot of Ayudhya agreed to send a group of monks headed by Abbot Phra Upali Mahathera and Pra Ariyamuni Thera. They went with the royal envoy to Ceylon and helped in the reintroduction of the higher ordination and the reorganisation of the Buddhist Sangha in that island. The Siamese Buddhist missionaries were successful in their religious propagation.

A new capital city was constructed on the eastern bank of Menam (Chao Phya) river by king Rama I, the founder of Chakri Dynasty. This new capital of Thailand came to be known as Bangkok, which is still the capital city of Thailand.

In the days of King Rama Tibodi I, Lankawong Buddhism remained the national religion. The king himself had taken several important steps to promote this religion. First of all he financed from his own private purse for a new and complete edition of the Buddhist Canon of the Tripitaka, written on palm-leaves. It was soon found that this Tripitaka edition had been made in a hurry from unreliable texts.

A most important event took place in this reign. It was the Ninth Buddhist Council held at Wat Mahadhatu in Bangkok in 1788 A.D. under king Rama I's auspices. This council worked for five months. The magnitude of this Council may be judged by the latest edition of 1925—8, consisting of 45 volumes of an average of 500 octavo pages. The revision on this occasion resulted in what has come to be known as the Tripitaka Chabab Tongyai — The Great Gilt Edition²⁰ written on palm-leaves. It is still

preserved and kept in the library in the precincts of the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha in the royal palace in Bangkok. This Council was officially regarded as the ninth of the Buddhist Councils held in all the Buddhist Countries of the world.

The most important event relating to the development of Buddhism in Thailand was the establishment of a new Nikaya or sect of Buddhist Sangha known as Dhammayuttika Nikaya. This new sect of Buddhism was founded by Prince Mongkut, who was a Buddhist monk for 27 years. The Dhammayuttika system was officially recognised and Prince Mongkut began to regularise its practice and to lay down a regular course of studies with its nucleus at his seat of Wat Bovoranives. He travelled widely in the country to spread his doctrine.

In the reign of king Rama IV (or Prince Mongkut, his original name), there were two sects or Nikayas of the Buddhist Order in Thailand. One was the Mahanikaya or the original Lankavong Buddhism, and the other was the Dhammayuttika Nikaya. There are several different practices between the monks of the two schools. The Dhammayuttika monks did not receive money by hand and did not take milk in the evening. They also did not put on their shoes at the time of their entrance into their residence. Monks of both the schools also differed in the system of wearing the robes. But, in spite of these difference, they had developed the doctrine and practice to the best

20. Tripitaka Chabab Tongyai is the Thai word meaning “The Great Gilt Edition”, Tripitaka – Edition or Buddhist doctrine, Chabab – Volume and Tongyai – great or big gilt.

possible condition. Both of them flourish up to the present day.

King Rama V paid great attention to the Buddhist education of the monks. He was the founder of the “Buddhist University” in Thailand known as Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya, now housed in Wat Mahadhatu in Bangkok. This University provides higher education in Buddhism along with the modern subjects. The other Buddhist University known today as Maha-makutrarajavidyalaya was also established during his reign. The latter was founded by king Rama V’s brother. This University was built for the Dhammayuttika monks. Both Universities were maintained through royal patronage of king Rama V himself.²¹

Now, we come to the present king of Thailand, King Rama IX or king Bhumibol Adulyadej. He became a Buddhist monk in keeping with the noble practice of his predecessors. The important event in his reign was the august occasion of the Buddha Jayanti, the 2,500th Anniversary of the Buddha Mahaparinirvana. The Buddhist world celebrated this grand day. Thailand also commemorated this day with great celebration in Bangkok and also throughout the country.²²

Besides his patronage for the restoration and construction of Buddhist monuments in the country, the king also gave royal patronage to the prosperity and progressive working of the two Buddhist Universities which were

21. Jermsawatdi, Promsak, Thai Art with Indian Influence, p. 39.

22. 2,500 years of the Buddhamahaparinibbana (the year of the Buddha’s death) corresponding to 1957 A.D. according to the Thai Calendar.

established during the time of King Rama V. During his reign, Thailand sponsored the meeting of the Council of world Buddhist Association V in Bangkok. Delegates from Buddhist countries of the world participated in this council in large number. This was also one of the important events which marked the development of Buddhism, now the national religion of Thailand.

Brahmanism in Thailand

In the Brahmanical art of Siam (Thailand), Siva is not so prominently represented as in Cambodia or Indonesia. The Siamese art, as we know, developed from the period when the Hindu and Buddhist missionaries from India went to Indo-China and preached their doctrines there. The influence of pure Brahmanism in ancient Siamese art can be seen in many images of Vishnu, Laksmi Ganesa and Ardhanarisvara(Uma-Maheavara or Siva-Parvati). The most interesting aspect is the Phra Prang or the sikhara of the Siamese temples which, with the coming of the Thais in the 13th century, started to be of less and less dimensions in breadth. These Prangs or sikhara in Bangkok look like “narrow and lofty Sivalingas” which remind us of the Khmer temples of semi-curvilinear and cruciform sikhara.

In a Brahmanical temple of the 17th century, situated in the centre of the Lopburi town, the middle stupa is for the installation of the lingam which shows that the temple was constructed for the worship of Siva. In the triple

shrine of Phra Prang Sam Yot (the temple with three sikhara) which was later turned to Buddhist uses, the central shrine is slightly larger than the two on the sides, all facing east and connected with one another “invariably bring to the mind the Brahmanical trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesa or Siva.”

In central Thailand we have three temples within an enclosure, each consisting of a long brick building with an ordinary tiled roof. In one of these three buildings there are fifteen large beautiful images of brass, all in standing posture, with their crowns, amulets and drapery gilded. The most distinguished of the images of the same deities along with those of Paravti, Vishnu Brahma etc. The second sacred building, dedicated to Ganesa, also contained four images of Mahadeva, besides a large image of Ganesa. The third building was dedicated to the worship of the *linga* “of which there was a large gilded figure in the centre of the altar, surrounded by forty or fifty small brass images, such as those of Siva, Ganesa, Narayana, Hanumana, Nandin etc. The images were perhaps brought at different times from western India”.²³

As we have shown above, the architectural characteristics of the modern temples of Bangkok (Wat) prominently display Khmer influence in the form of oblong Prangs (spires) surmounted by trisula or trident. They seem to have evolved from the older Mon-Khmer monuments of Petchaburi (Vajrapuri), Lopburi and Visnuloka, which came to Thailand in the wake of the influx of the Mongolian art-motifs in 13th century A.D. when Tais or

23. Upendra Thakur: Op. Cit., p. 90.

the D'ais started pouring in Thailand from China.

The interesting sculptures of Sri Deva contain, among other statues, the magnificent torso of a Yaksini, two very fine images in tribhanga with cylindrical caps besides a fragment of a Nandi — all these clearly pointing to Brahmanical, particularly Saivite inspiration. As a matter of fact, the Brahmanical cult predominates the later Indo-Cambodian art which is quite evident from the fact that the images of Brahma, Indra, Vishnu and Siva adorn the entrance of almost every temple in Bangkok and other parts of Thailand, where Siva-lingas in large numbers, have been found. In the large sanctuary of Na Khom we have a large size *linga* which is “divided into a cubic base section (Brahmabhaga), an octagonal section in the middle (Visnubhaga) and a cylindrical section on the top (Rudrabhaga). These sections are of relatively equal length and the object is thus a conventionalized rendering of the phallic emblem of Siva.”

Yet another remarkable *linga* has been found from Wat Sra si Mum area. This *linga*, crystal in shape, is supposed to be rare, — potent treasure — and may have served as a votive object or may have been carried as an amulet. The devotees of Siva in India attach great value to such natural objects — usually stones from the beds of sacred rivers — with phallic shape. Often they carry such small lingas on their person as an act of worship. Similarly at Anlong Pong Tai five Visnus resting on a serpent Ananta, besides numerous lingas placed in as many as ten rows spread over 130 metres in length, have been found.

In fact, the whole river bed is bedecked with lingas over which “the gurgling crystal clear waters are forever performing the holy rite of ablution.” Thus, the early Brahmanical images of Siam show the characteristic Indian tribhangha which, according to Le May, may be associated with the Gupta art, and the origin of all the Brahmanical gods found in Siam must be sought in Central and Southern India, runners of these... swaying, lissome, sinuous figures of the Cola period in the South.”²⁴

The Introduction & Origin of Buddhist Art in Thailand

Thai traditional arts have numerous distinctive qualities which make them easily distinguishable from those of other neighbouring countries in South-East Asia. Much of their inspiration and many of their features have been borrowed or adapted from other Asian sources, including the Indian, Mon-Khmer, Sinhalese, Chinese and other civilizations.

Thai art mainly deals with the Buddhist religion and is known as Buddhist art, which forms the national ideal and conception of life. It is said that during the greater part of the kingdom’s history, religious motifs predominated; sculpture, metal casting, sacred architecture and the arts were employed for embellishing temples and were for many centuries the principal modes of expression.

Just as the mediaeval artists of Europe gave outward

24. Op. Cit., p. 91.

form to their religious aspiration by building cathedrals and beautifying them with sculptures, wood-carvings and so forth; or by labouring to produce exquisitely illuminated manuscripts, so did the Thais express their devotion to the sacred doctrine of Lord Buddha by sculpting or casting glorious images and rearing magnificently adorned buildings in which to house them.

The Classical Thai Buddhist Art owes more to India than to any other country, but it seldom drew its inspiration directly from there. Indian art and craftsmanship are no doubt regarded as the prototypes of Buddhist art in this country. The waves of adaptation and imitation from Indian sources swept the country since the first quarter of the beginning of the Christian Era. It is said that several schools of Indian art came in contact with Thai art at a very early period. Stylistic evidence shows the influence of the Amaravati school of Indian art on Buddhist art in Thailand in the early centuries of the Christian Era. Later still, the Gupta, Pallava and Pala-Sena elements from India are noticeable in Thai art.

In the field of architecture, it received the modelled structure of the architectural art from the Peninsular South India, where the three great empires of the Chalukyas of Badami in the Deccan, the Pallavas of Kanchi on the coast, and the Pandayas of Madurai in the far south flourished.

In the field of sculpture and painting also, the Indian school of art played an important part in the Siamese Buddhist artistic workmanship. The images and idols along with the wall-paintings in Siam owe their origin

and adaptation to different Indian schools of art such as the Gandhara, Mathura, Amaravati and the Classical art of the Gupta period which were responsible for the introduction, origin and growth of the Buddhist art in Thailand. Especially the Orissan art and architecture as well as art from Bengal in Eastern India are regarded as the main prototypes of art in Thailand and of other South-East Asian countries.

Thailand is the land of many human cultural activities and artistic workmanship. Several human races have settled down in this country since remote times, and all of them had their cultural and artistic elements, which contributed a lot to Buddhist art in this country. The introduction and origin of the Buddhist art in Thailand, no doubt, represents the close relationship in the primitive art of the early powerful kingdom of Thailand called the Dvaravati kingdom.

In the long duration of the Mon's Dvaravati kingdom in central Thailand, there was considerable artistic activity and movement in both architecture and sculpture, which is classified by scholars as the Dvaravati school of art. It is regarded as the first and earliest Buddhist school of art in Thailand. From archaeological excavation and researches, a few objects belonging to this period have been found which consist of the Buddha Images, bas-reliefs and Dhammachakra (Wheel-like symbols of the sacred doctrine of the Buddha). They reveal a strong Gupta influence and are probably Indian workmanship.

Next to the Dvaravati period of the early Buddhist art of Thailand is Sri-Vijaya kingdom. This kingdom ex-

tended its sway over parts of present Indonesia, Cambodia and areas of South and Central Thailand. This kingdom reached its zenith around the eighth century A.D. The surviving examples of Sri-Vijaya art in Thailand strongly resemble the features of the splendid monuments of that period, which are found in Java and Sumatra island. They deal with Mahayana elements, as at that time the Mahayana sect of Buddhism flourished in some island-countries of South-East Asia such as Java, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula and Southern Thailand as well as in Cambodia. This school of art is called the Sri-Vijaya school of art, which is regarded as the next stage of growth of Buddhist art in Thailand, after the Dvaravati school of art, which bears strong elements of Hinayana Buddhist art.

The next stage of development can be seen in the art of the Lopburi period (11th–15th century A.D.). It was dominated by the Khmers or Cambodians and as such the art of this period is known locally as Khmer art which deals with Mahayana elements, just like the Sri-Vijaya school of art. This school of Buddhist art marks the last stage of the growth of Buddhist art in Thailand before the rise of the Thai people to power in the land which is now called Thailand.

The school of art from this period onwards has been classified by the archaeologists and scholars as Pure-Thai art, which consisted of different schools of art. The Pure-Thai art is classified into five artistic styles such as:

1. Chiengsaen

2. Sukhothai
3. U-Tong
4. Ayudhya
5. Bangkok styles respectively.

It would not be out of place to discuss here the transformation and intercourse of Indian art with the first three schools of art in Thailand. The question is how did the Indian art of different schools come in contact and later became the prototype of the early Buddhist art in Thailand?

As we know, when Indians migrated to the various countries of South-East Asia they brought with them Indian culture and artistic activity, and began to spread them in such regions in which they had settled. There were several waves of Indian immigration in South-East Asia countries, especially in Thailand.

The immigration of Indians in Thailand started long before the beginning of the Christian era. It was in 2nd and 1st century B.C. that Emperor Asoka sent his Buddhist missionaries to propagate the new Doctrine of Theravada Hinayana Buddhism in Suvarnabhumi, with the result that the Indians started settling down in this country from that time onwards.

The second and third centuries A.D. represent the Golden Age of artistic immigration from India into Thailand and other South-East Asian countries. The Gupta school of art succeeded the Amaravati school in those

regions. The opening of the Takuapa-Chaiya²⁵ trans-peninsula route was responsible for this cultural fusion towards the end of the eighth century A.D. The culture of the Dvaravati kingdom is to be considered as a stylised form of this wave of Indian immigration to Thailand, which seems largely to penetrate via Burma and the Three Pagodas Pass route in western Thailand.²⁶

The duration of the next wave of Indian settlers in Thailand was from the middle of the sixth to the middle of the eighth century A.D., corresponding to the dominance of the Pallavas in South India. This wave followed almost exclusively the trans-peninsula route from Takuapa to the Bay of Bandon, now in South Thailand. Later on, from the second half of the eight century A.D., Thailand witnessed the Mahayana wave which came to the Bay of Bandon by the same trans-peninsular route and it brought the influence of the Pala-Sena art of Bengal (India) into South of Thailand.

Scholars suggest that the Indian settlers generally followed three routes for coming to Thailand. All these routes may have been in use simultaneously or at different periods, and they were certainly used to bring into Siam many different styles of Indian art.

The first route was used by the earliest Indian immigrants, who came from the region of Amaravati at the

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25. Now these two locations are combined and are located in the Thai Boundary. It lies in South of Thailand, Chaiya, one of the districts of Surathani province of South Thailand.
 26. Pandey, C.B.: India's Contribution to world Thought and Culture, Vivekananda Rock, Memorial Committee, p. 455.

mouth of the Krishna river of South India. They landed probably at the port of Martaban, South Burma, and then travelled southward through the Three Pagodas pass into South Central Thailand.

But in the days of the Gupta emperors at Magadha in India, the Indian missionaries as well as traders coming eastward used the ancient port of Tamralipti (Tamluk) on the Hooghly River for their starting point.²⁷ These emigrants also went to Martaban, unless they were bound for Akyab and Arakan on the west coast of Burma, since Thaton was the ancient seat of the Mon civilisation in Lower Burma, and Martaban was an equally useful port either for Thailand or for Burma also.

In Pallava times, there was the southern route from Kanchi (Canjeevaram) in Tamil Nadu (India) which was the capital of the Palava kings. This route led either straight across to Mergui and Tenassarim or as slightly southward to Takuapa and Puket Island (Junk Ceylon) in the South of Thailand. This route was also used by Indian missionaries and traders to reach Thailand.

Another route to consider here is the entire searoute round the island of Singapore and up to the Gulf of Siam.²⁸ All these routes facilitated the journey of the Indian immigrants to settle in Thailand and spread their culture and religious art in Thailand.

27. Near modern Calcutta, Capital of west Bengal state, it stands much nearer the sea. (Le May. Reginald: A concise History of Buddhist Art in Siam). Cf. Department of Fine Arts: Art in Thailand, Bangkok. 1955.

28. Ibid.

Chapter III

*The Defining of the
Contemporary Forms
&
Ages of Khmer Art Style
in Thailand*



The Defining of the Contemporary Forms & Ages of Khmer Art Style in Thailand

According to contemporary opinion the art of Khmer Style in Thailand is the fine art which combined and linked with the school of art in Cambodia very closely. To define the forms and ages of the contemporary art of Khmer style in Thailand it must be necessary to show its art relationship to the main school of art in Cambodia in each period and style.

Apart from being the cradle of Khmer arts in Cambodia there were many discoveries of Khmer inscriptions throughout the country far more overall than the contemporary inscriptions in Thailand.

These inscriptions could give us the exact years for their historical incidence dealing with the archeology evidence as well. The way to study the archeological places is to define each art style and age in Cambodia by two branches of the French academy; the archeologist and the inscription reader. The most famous art historian is Professor Philippe Stern who studied Khmer Arts. He was the chief museum librarian of Guimet Museum in Paris France and the other one is Ms. Gilberte de Corol Remusat. Their principle idea was trying to find the development of varied and different Khmer carving, to examine and sequence them into categories. They took each line school of art then compared them. If they came into the same line with no conflict it meant that their anal-

ysis was correct. If there was a conflict it showed that some line or other was a mistake. Then they had to start from the beginning again.

Professor Philippe Stern and Ms. Gilberte de Corol Remusat used two kinds of carving development comparing one to the other. They were the lintel and the stone decorations from the pillar for the door, because these two subjects were carved out from sandstone from the beginning of Khmer art through to the last school, giving much information for study. When they saw the same line school of arts on lintel and the door pillar then they considered with the other architecture, Na-baan, wall pillar, bas-relief, statue, round-relief and animal etc. The results suited each other very well. In these cases it made me believe that to study and define the Khmer art style in Cambodia was in fact correct.

For the study of this Khmer style and form it helps to study the relationship to the script and era in the inscription, which Prof. George Coedes (Fig.4) has already studied; this could define the art style and form to relate to the historical circumstance. It could define the art style in the inscription to the right era. That was the result for defining the age of art along with the defining of the art style and form finally.

With the study of both as mentioned above it gives us some knowledge about which antique or archeology were built in what reign period; what king and how old was its era. It shows that to study art it could not be separated from the history circumstance at all.

To define the name and art style of each Khmer

school of art must define it in principle along with the important archeological and religious places much more than to define it from the sculpture. Sculpture could be moved from place to place making its origin uncertain. This differers completely from the permanent ancient place which could not move anywhere.

However, before studying the age and style of contemporary Khmer arts in Thailand, it is necessary to mention about the defining of the ages and style of Khmer arts in Cambodia; first for a convenient comparison to find out the relationship of its influence and diffusion throughout Thailand.

The acceptance of the age and Khmer art style nowadays is divided into three main principles and sixteen subdivisions as the following shows:

1. Pre-Angkorian Period

1. Pre-Angkorian Period: Started from the late Funan kingdom until Chenla kingdom or the early times before king Yasovaraman I established Yasothonpura or Angkor to be the Khmer kingdom in the middle of 9th centuries. The art in this period could be divided into six forms as follows:

1.1 Phnom Da style around 450–540 A.D. The Phnom Da style of art was got the definition name from the southern mound of Cambodia which was the settle place of the god shrine in Bramanical Vishanavism Pancaratra sect and it was the place that discovered the

sculpture of Rudravaraman (around 514 A.D.) who was the last king of Funan Empire until the reign of king Bhavavarman (around 557 A.D. up to 607 A.D.) who was the first king of Khmer kingdom. However Phnom Da Style of art was discovered only in sculpture work. There is no trace of any other architecture at all.

1.2 Thala Boriwat around 607 A.D. The French academic named this school of art after the place where a group of lintels were found near the southern bank of the Mekhong river in Laos. That area in the river had a spinning water flow around it, so they called that place “Thala Boriwat”. It is Lao language meaning ‘spinning water’ which the same as Thai language. The carving on this lintel style had some parts looking very much like the carving in India in the Gupta and late Gupta period especially at Elora cave number six. The French scholar defined its age at around 607 A.D. before Sombor Prei Kuk lintel which it was developed continuously in another step.

1.3 Sombor Prei Kuk Style after 600 A.D. This school of art was called after a group of ancient places at Sombor Prei Kuk in the present time (Fig. 5). From the previous time it was Isanpura the capital city of the Khmer kingdom. At that time king Isanvarman I ruled over his kingdom from 600 A.D.—around 650 A.D. He established many important shrines such Sombor Prei Kuk shrine, Phnom Thom, Dambang Dek etc.

1.4 Prei Kmeng Style around 635–700 A.D. The art of Prei Kmeng was named after the Prei Kmeng shrine the representative style of art in the reign of Bhavavarman II of the Khmer kingdom. The important shrines in

Prei Kmeng style are the oldest Svay Pream shrine, the door way in the east of Phnom Bassat shrine, the south Prasat-Prei, Prasat Andet etc.

1.5 Kompong Preah Style around 706–825 A.D. The French scholars named Kompong Preah Art style after the Prasat Kompong Preah (Fig.6,) the identical style of art in this period.

During this period in the hard time of Khmer kingdom there was a civil war. The land was split into Highland Chenla and Water Chenla when the arts declined automatically. The construction in this period are Kompong Preah Prasat, the oldest part of Ak Yom Prasat, the older part of Trapeng — Phong Prasat, the western doorway of Phnom Bassat Prasat, Phum Prasat and the ancient group of architecture at Ban Roluoh.

2. Angkorian Period.

The Angkorian Period means in the age that the Khmer kingdom was established and dominated with its royal dynasty at Yasodharapura or at Angkor, built by king Yasovarman I in 893 A.D. to the end of the age of Angkor or Angkor Thom, which king Jayavarman VII established as a Khmer kingdom in 1177 A.D.

However, dividing of Khmer art ages in Cambodia, French scholars moved the khmer art age of Angkor period up to king Jayavarman II before he established Angkor in 825 A.D. Khmer arts from Jayavarman II had been developing continuously to the later period in tandem.

2.1 Kulen Style around 825–875 A.D. This art period could count to be as a transition between the pre-Angkor art and the Angkor art style. The French scholars defined its name after the Phnom Kulen mountain where the shrine was located during this period.

The art of Kulen was built late in the reign period of king Jayavarman II, who went back from the Javaka region to save his country from power struggles, uniting the Highland Chenla and the Waterland Chenla to be one kingdom. In this period the Khmer kingdom was creating stability down to the south of the Dounglek range of mountains and the Devaraja culture of king Jayavarman II's was established.

The Kulen art style had been active continuously down to the reign of Jayavarman III. The important Kulen architectures are Prasat Prei of the north, the group of Prasat Sombo, Prasat Damrei Krap, Prasat O Pong, Prasat Khting Slab, Prasat Rup Arak, Prasat Thma Dap, Prasat Koki, Prasat Kraham, Prasat Neak Ta and the middle Prasat of Trapeang Phong etc.

2.2 Preah Ko Style around, 875–893 A.D. The art of Preah Ko was named after the Preah Ko shrine (Fig. 7). King Indravaraman I built it in the 882 A.D. at Hariharaya region for installing the deity of his male and female ancestors in the form of Siva and his Devi.

Prasat Preah Ko is the representative of this fine arts period in the reign period of king Indravaraman I. The important shrines are Prasat Lolei etc.

2.3 Bakheng Style after 896 A.D. — around 927 A.D. The Bakheng Style was named after Panom Bakheng

shrine (Fig.8) which king Yasovaraman I built it for installing the Devaraja statue in the form of Raja Siva *linga* named Yasodharesvara in the middle of the town Yasopura which he established it to be as a royal Khmer kingdom.

For this reason, we assume that the Bakheng shrine is representative of the fine art at that period. There are more important shrines like; Prasat Phnom Bakheng, Phnom Krom, Phnom Bok, Prasat Kravan, etc.

2.4 Koh Ker Style 921–945 A.D. The scholars called this art after the shrine that Jayavarman IV established at Chokgalya region (present Kohker) after he moved from Yasopura to Kohker (Fig.9). He seized the throne from his nephew, who had the right over the throne after Yasovarman I.

For this reason, all the shrines at Kohker were a union of this art period in the same reign of Jayavarman IV. All the shrines in this period are Prasat Thom at Kohker, Baksei Chamkrong, Prasat Damrai, Prasat Chrap, Prasat Chen, etc.

2.5 Pre Rup Style 947–965 A.D. Rajendravarman built Pre Rup shrine (Fig. 10) in 961 A.D., at Yasothonpura after Yasovarman I ruled over his empire and moved from Chokgalya region back to Yasothonpura again.

So French scholars selected Prasat PreRup to be a representative of Pre Rup Style in this period. It was in the reign of Rajendravarman. The important shrines in this period are Prasat Mebon oriental 952 A.D., Pre Rup 961 A.D., Being Vien 946 A.D. and Bat Chum 953 A.D., etc.

2.6 Banteary Srei Style 967–1000 A.D. The name of Banteary Srei school of art was named after Banteary

Srei shrine (Fig.11). Yajnavaraha Braman who was the royal fortune teller of king Jayavarman V, built this shrine dedicated to Lord Siva, outside the town, Yasopura. The inscription discovered which was made at the same time the Banteay Srei shrine gave us the exact year of building. This art style was begun in 970 A.D. The more important shrines are Banteay Srei 1510, **Prasat Sralao**, the northern small one of Khleang.

2.7 Khleang Style 1550–1600. Formerly the Khleang style was defined in the same period as Banteay Srei. There are some differences, the Khleang style was made inside the city Yasopura where the royal dynasty lived. But, the Banteay Srei style was popular outside the city at the same time. For the reason that the two of Prasat Khleang were built in this period the French scholars used those buildings to be a representative of the Khleang style. It was in the reign period of Jayavarman V to Jayaviravarman who was the founder of Prasat Ta Keo around the area of Yasothonpura.

The group of buildings in Khleang style are Prasat Ta Keo, Phimahn-ahkas, the arch gate of the royal palace (Fig. 12), Prasat Phnom Srok and Prasat Kao Preah Vihear.

2.8 Baphuon Style around 1010–1080 A.D. The first half period was in Suriyavarman I period and the second half was in Uthaiyadithvarman II. The art of Baphuon was named after Prasat Baphuon (Fig. 13) which got the credit from its perfect art style. Prasat Baphuon was built by Uthaiyadithvarman II and for the Siva Linga installation named Udayadityesvara.

The French scholars defined Prasat Baphuon as a

representative style of Baphuon art which prospered in the Suriyavarman I and Uthaidithvarman II reign period.

The very important Baphuon art style is at Prasat Phnom Chisor, some added construction of Prasat Kao Preah Vihear, Chau Srei Vibol, Prasat Baphuon, Prasat Maeboon, Prasat Wat Khna, Wat Ek, Wat Baset, Khna Sen Kev, the north and the south Prasat Klung, etc.

2.9 Angkor Wat Style 1100–1175 A.D. The French scholars named Angkor Wat school of art after the Angkor Wat shrine. ([Fig. 14a](#)) King Suriyavarman II established it for installing the Deva statue of himself in the Vishnu form. After his death this statue was named Boromvishnuloka.

Prasat Angkor Wat ([Fig. 14b](#)) was first built at the beginning of his reign period, being finished after his death around 1700 A.D.

However the word Angkor Wat was named in the later period because they didn't discover its original name in Sanskrit script at all. As we know, this shrine is as big as a city and after was transformed to be Buddhist monastery, Theravada sect, instead of being Hindu shrine. This huge shrine was named Angkor Wat.

Prasat Angkor Wat was used as a representative of Angkor school of art in the reign period of king Suriyavarman II. Besides this, there are many important shrines such as Prasat Beng Meala, Prah Pililay, the top shrine of Bakong, Prah Pithu, Chao Say Tevoda, Thommanon, Banteay Samre, Sau Pheap, Wat Athava, including the middle part at Prasat Phah Khan Kompong Svay.

2.10 Bayon Style 1177–1230 A.D. Jayavarman VII

built Prasat Bayon at the central of Nakorn Tom (Fig. 15). It was his royal capital city established in his reign period. He built this new city after he won, at the height of the Cham in 1724. Although, Prasat Bayon was built at the late end of his reign and due to its giant size being the centre of the royal city allowed the French scholars to define the name Bayon to be the representative of the art style for the reign period of all arts in the period of Jayavarman VII — and a little while after his reign.

The Bayon style of arts had many art architectures which we can prioritise into four periods as the following:

The 1st period: Prasat Ta Prohm, Prasat Banteay Kdei, Prasat Prakhan.

The 2nd period: The additional part of Prasat Prakhan at Kampong sawai, the outer wall of Prasat Ta Prohm and Banteay Kdei at Pra Nakorn, the pavilion of Arogaya Sala and Drahma Sala which was built of bricks, the wall and the door top faces at Pra Nakorn and Prasat Chrung, the beginning of Banteay Chmar.

The 3rd period: The Bayon and the major part of Banteay Chmar.

The 4th period: The latest bas-relief, including the pavilion base of the royal palace.

3. Post Angorean Period

3. Post Angkorean Period. After the Khmer kingdom moved the capital city from Pra Nakorn to resettle at another place, at that time it lost its dignity to Ayuddhaya,

the Thai kingdom. According to the Khmer arts of the late Bayon style was in decline, and missing information from the period. So that Khmer Art, after the Angkor period, was started at the beginning of 1343 A.D.

3.1 Srei Santhor 1432 A.D. It is Khmer art that got the entire Ayuddhaya art style influence.

Even though Khmer Arts in Cambodia could be exactly defined in their period from the Khmer inscriptions, not so in Thailand. The period of the Khmer arts diffusion from the central capital city to Cambodia through the Thai territory was longer. And at the same time, its arts influence in each Khmer period must had been been longer until the new arts style came to Thailand for the next new wave.

From those reasons, the Thai scholars had to define the Khmer arts in Thailand along with the Khmer period in Cambodia. Therefore, the Khmer arts in Thailand was called the contemporary art of Khmer in Thailand²⁹ or the now well known “Lopburi” period. His highness Krompraya Dumrongrakanupap is the one who gave the definition “Lopburi Period” instead of the “Khmer art” in Thailand.

The main reason was a political matter — to avoid mentioning the Khmer culture or the minor ethnic group of Khmer in Thailand at that time. So, the good definition of “Lopburi” period is the best because Thai people believed that “Lavo” or “Lopburi” city is the cradle of Khmer art influence in Thailand.

29. For detail: Suriyavudh Suksvasti, Dr.: The contemporary of Khmer arts in Thailand, p. 44.

The Contemporary Art of the Khmer in Thailand

The contemporary art of Khmer in Thailand was divided into two main periods as follows:

1. The contemporary art style before the Mahithonpula period.
2. The contemporary art style of the Mahithonpula period.

The main reason for using the Mahithonpula reign period to divide the contemporary of Khmer arts in Thailand is that the Mahithonpula dynasty began and occupied Thail territory from the first half of 11th century. There were many sovereign Khmer kings in this period, starting from Jajavarman VI (1080–1107 A.D.) Suriyavarman II (1107 A.D.—after 1145 A.D.). King Jayavarman VII (1181–1218 A.D.) was the most powerful king who administrated Cambodia and the other nearby countries. Mahithonpula dynasty's kings created and rebuilt the three huge importance ancient architectures in Thailand. They were Prasat Hin Phimai, Prasat Phnomwan; Nakornrajasrima and including Prasat Phnomrung; Burirum. etc.³⁰

From its identity and important art character mentioned above, it deserved to use the Mahithonpula reign period to define the art styles and ages to differentiate the development period of the real contemporary Khmer arts in Thailand.

30. Suriyavudh Suksvati, Dr.: op. cit., p. 42.

1. The contemporary art before the Mahithonpula period. (around the first half of 6th century—the second half of 10th centuries A.D.)

1.1 The contemporary art of Phnom Da Style (the first half of 6th century). It was the art which had relationship line with the Phnom Da art in Cambodia. There is no trace of its architecture but only some important sculptures in Thailand such as the first Hindu sculptures of Sri-Tep, Phetchaboon province. (Fig.16)

1.2 The contemporary art of Thala Boriwat (around the second half of 6th century). Its style of art in Thailand was similar to the southern Thala Boriwat style in Laos and Cambodia. There were only the lintels at Wat Thong-Toa and a temple on the top of Khaw Ployvan, Chanthaburi.

1.3 The contemporary art of Sombor Prei kuk style (around the second half of 6th century). Its art style was similar to the model in Cambodia. The important arts are the lintel at Wat Supatnaram, Ubonrajathani; some lintels from Prasat Khao Noi; Aranyapradej: Uma Statue; Aranyapradej: Vishnu statue; Dong Sri Mahabodu, Prachinburi.

1.4 The contemporary art of Prei Kmeng Style (around late 6th century—the first half of 7th century). Its art style was closed to Prei Kmeng in Cambodia. The most important architecture is Prasat Phom Pon in Sangkha, Surin province. Some lintels at Prasat Khao Noi, Aranyapradej and lintel at Prasat Ban Noi (Fig. 18), Sakhew province. Prakanapati statue from Phnom Rung, Buriram. Pra Suraya statue from Sriraj, Phetchaboon. The

bass-relief on Sema at Phupra-unkran, Burirum province.

1.5 The contemporary art of Kompong Preah Style (around the second half of 7th century—middle of 7th century). Its art style was similar to Kompong Preah art in Cambodia. There was no discovery of any architecture in Thailand except a lintel of unknown origin. Now it is at the national museum, Ubonrachatani.

During this period Cambodia had a civil war and the country was divided into two parts of land-Chenla and water-Chenla. Therefore, there was no trace of architectural diffusion. The discovery was only sculpture; the brass sculpture from Prakhonchai district, the sculpture from Ban Fai; (Fig. 19) Burirum, the sculpture from Ban Ta Nod, Nakornrachasima. (Fig. 20)

1.6 The contemporary art of Kulen style (around the second half of 8th century — the beginning of 9th century). The Kulen art style in Thailand had relationship with the Kulen in Cambodia. But, we couldn't find any architecture of Kulen in Thailand because this period was the turning point of Khmer art in Cambodia. Therefore, we found very few Kulen art in Thailand. The important sculpture is only the statue of Pra Autnareesavara which was discovered in Ubonrajatani. (Fig. 21)

1.7 The contemporary art of Preah Ko style (around the first half of 9th century). The Preah Ko art in Thailand was similar to its model in Cambodia. We found only the important decoration of architecture. There are the lintels of the brick building at Prasat Phnom Wan, (Fig. 22) Nakornrachasima and a lintel, (Fig. 23) it is now kept in the national museum at Phimai. Apart from this,

there is an important sculpture which very rare in Thailand; the *Singha Davanban* from Wat Poh Yoi at Burirum which was the contemporary art in this period.

1.8 The contemporary art of Bakheng style. (around 9th century). It is already related with the Bakheng art in Cambodia. The main architectural decorations are the lintels named “Vishnu Anuntasayinpattamanapa” at Prasat Wat Srisawai, Sukhothai and the lintel of Garuda named “Crudwahana” from the brick Prasat Phnomwan, Nakornrachasima.

1.9 The contemporary art of Koh Ker style (around the second half of 9th century). The art style was similar to the Koh Ker Style in Cambodia. The important architectures are the brick Prasat at Phnom Rung; (Fig. 24) Burirum, Prasat Muang Keak and Prasat Noanku, Nakornrachasima, Prasat Sangsilpachai, Surin, including a lintel from Sakaew province.

Sculpture: the bronze of Pradyabarami statue; Srakaew province, Deva statue from the brick Prasat; Phnomrung; Burirum, Deva statues from Prasat Muang Keak and Prasat Noanku; Nakornrachasima.

1.10 The contemporary art of Pre Rup style (around the end of 9th century—the beginning of 10th century.) Its art style was similar to the Pre Rup style in Cambodia. The importance architecture is “Prang Keak” or “Devalai” in the middle of Loburi town (Fig. 25) and the lintel of Garuda named “Crudwahana” from Prajinburi.

Sculpture: Bhraman statue from Phnom Rung, Burirum.

1.11 The contemporary art of Banteary Srei

(around the first half of 10th century). Its art style was related to the Banteay Srei in Cambodia. The most important architecture is Prasat Banmaithaicharoen; Buriram, the lintel of the brick Prasat at Wat Prangtong; Chokchai district, Nakornrachasima.

Sculpture: the head of a male statue from Prasat Phnom Rung; Buriram.

1.12 The contemporary art of the royal palace gate (around the second half of 10th century). Its art style was similar to the entrance gate of the royal palace in Cambodia. The importance of this art style were some lintels of the chamber and Copura of the pavilion wall at Prasat Muang Tam; Buriram (Fig. 26) and including “the white elephant stable” at Prasat Phnom rung; Buriram.

Sculpture: Vishnu statue from Ku-Noi at Muang Nakornchampasi; Mahasarakam.

2. The contemporary art style of the Mahithonpula period (around the first half of 11th century — the second half of 11th century)

2.1 The contemporary art style of Baphuon style (around the first half of 11th century). Its art style was concerned with the Baphuon art in Cambodia. However the contemporary Baphuon style in Thailand started a little late from its model in Cambodia. It began at the reign of Jayavarman, the founder of the Mahithonpula dynasty in northeastern Thailand.

The important Prasat in this period are Prasat Ban

Plung; Surin, “Prang Noi” of Phnom Rung, Prasat Muang-tam; Buriram, Prasat Khampeng Yai; Srisaket, Prasat Panomwan; Nakornrachasima (Fig. 27), Prasat Tamean Tom; Surin, Prasat Sadokoktom; Sakaew, etc.

Sculpture: Vishnu and Uma statue from Prasat Phnom Rung; (Fig. 28) Buriram. Naga Buddha image was found at Wat Mahathat; Ayutthaya. (Fig. 29)

2.2 The contemporary art of Angkor Wat (around the second half of 11th—the beginning of the 12th). Its art style was similar to Angkor Wat style in Cambodia. The importance arts in Thailand are the main shrine and the double shrine at Muang Sri Tep; Petchaboon, Prasat Naraijangwang; Sakonnakorn, the main shrine at Prasat Phimai; Nakornrachasima, (Fig.30) the main shrine at Prasat Phnom Rung (Fig. 31); Buriram, Prasat Ban Ra Gnang; Srihoraphum, Prasat Yai Ngao; Surin, Prasat Ku Suan Tang, Buriram, and “Prang Ku” at Srisaket, etc.

Sculpture: Bodhisatlokitasavara from Prasat Ta Muan Tom; Surin, Siva statue from Aranyapradej; Sakaew, standing Buddha statue with full ornament and Buddha-Naga statue with ornament from central part of Thailand and northeastern parts.

2.3 The contemporary art of Bayon (around the 12th century). Its art style was similar to the Bayon in Cambodia. In this period, there are many buildings and sculptures which have the Bayon influence through Thailand. The importance architecturs are Prasat Wat Chaochan; Srishanalai, Sam-Tapahdang, Prasat Wat Pra Pailuang (Fig. 32) and Prasat Wat Sri Sawai; Sukhothai,

Prang Sam Yot; Loburi (Fig. 33), Prasat Muang Singh; Kanchanaburi, (Fig. 34) the ancient building “Kosinarai” pound; Banpong; Rachaburi; Prasat Wat Khampaeng Lang; Phetchaburi, Prang Prommatath (Fig. 35) and Prang Hin Dang at Prasat Phimai area; Nakornrachasima the library of Phnom Rung; Buriram, Ku Ban Dang; Mahasarakam.

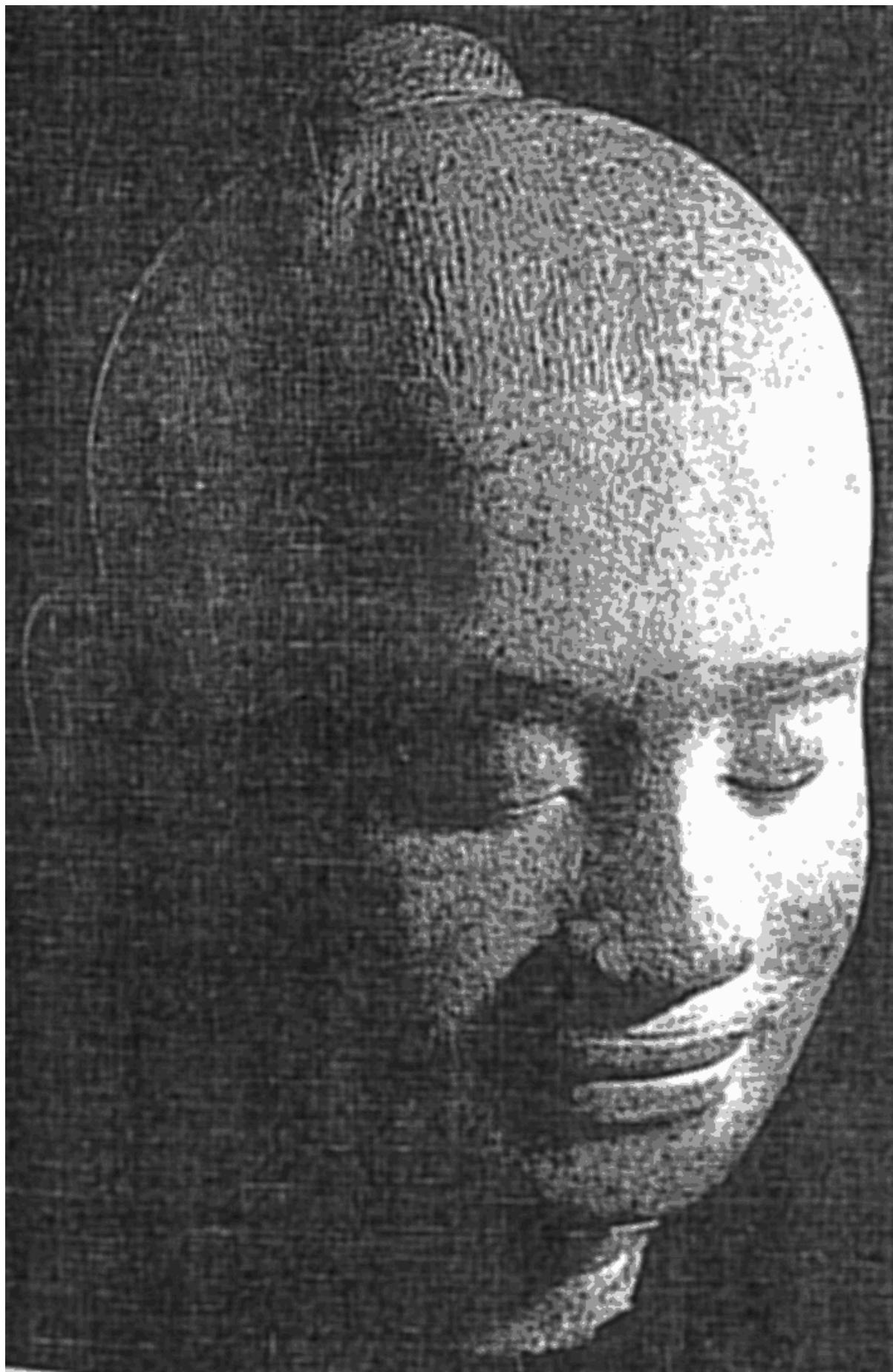
Besides this, there is the ancient architecture named “Dharmasala”, the Khmer ancient building for teaching the Dharma. There are the following places: Prasat Nong Plong; Nanglong district, Kuti Ruessi; Buriram, Prasat Ta Muen; Surin.

Another building is the hospital named “Arogayasala”, the ancient Khmer traditional hospital. There are the following places: Kukaew; Khonkan, Kusantar; Mahasarakam, Prang Ku; Roi-ed, Prasat Khampeang Noi, Prasat Ban Samor; Srisaket, Prasat Ta Muen Tod, Prasat Chaneang, Prasat Ban Chang Pee, Prasat Chom Pra, Prasat Chaneang, Prasat Ban-Prasat; Surin, Prasat Kok-Prasat, Prasat Noi, Prasat Kuti-Ruessi; Buriram, Ku Bhramchamsil, Prang Ban Pol Songkram and Prang Konburi; Nakornrachasrima, etc.

The contemporaries of Bayon sculpture are the sculpture from San Ta Pa Dang; Sukhothai, Pra Bodhisatlogasavara statue (Fig. 36) and the female statue “Pratyabaramita” (Fig. 37) from Prasat Muang Singh; Kanchanaburi, Buddha statue with Naga (Fig. 38), the round relief portrait of Jayavarman VII (Fig. 39) and including the bronze sculpture from Prasat Phimai; Nakornrachasima, etc.

Chapter IV

The Khmer Art in Thailand



The Khmer Art in Thailand

The earliest inscriptions of the Khmer in Northeast Thailand date to the end of the 6th century. One found in the province of Surin, north of Ta Muen, was erected by a king called Mahendravarman. The inscription, written in Sanskrit, commemorates the installation of an image of Shiva's bull Nandin. Mahendravarman ordered the inscription carved after he had conquered 'all the country'. Scholars are still debating about what territory was vanquished by Mahendravarman, with many attempts being made to assign a specific location to cities mentioned in other inscriptions found within Cambodia.

The other source of information this period are Chinese accounts, and references in these to tributary states such as Funan and Chenla have been subject to similar attempts to place them geographically. Traditionally, Funan is dated to the 1st to 5th century, and is said to have included southern parts of present day South Vietnam and Cambodia. Chenla, from about the 6th to 8th century, is placed more to the north: northern Cambodia, middle Laos and the southern part of Northeast Thailand. More recently, epigraphical analysis has shown that Funan and Chenla were only one of a number of polities, and that the domains controlled by rulers of these societies were in constant flux depending on the fortunes of the moment.

The inscriptions erected by Mahendravarman pro-

vide an example of this process, for after what appears to have been a flurry of campaigns and proclamations of success, a hiatus of several hundred years occurs. What is more, no temples in Thailand which are known at present, can be dated to the end of the 6th century. The earliest structures, such as Prasat Phumphon in Surin province date to the 7th century, but are not associated with any inscriptions.

No Khmer temples in Thailand can be dated to the intervening 8th and 9th centuries. Nonetheless, numerous polities of Mon and Khmer peoples existed on the Khorat Plateau and in fact, a clear-cut distinction between the two groups prior to about 1000 A.D. does not appear to be justified. Evidence of this proto-Mon/Khmer culture includes a few inscriptions, remains of irregular cities enclosed by moats and earthen ramparts, Buddha images, and large boundary stones carved with Buddhist scenes. Both the Buddhist culture to the north of the Dangrek mountains and the Hindu cults which prospered to the south represented the absorption of far more than a religious system. Indian scripts such as Pali and Sanskrit were used for sacred inscriptions. Mon and Khmer scripts developed from these and offered a means of writing the spoken language of the time. In addition, other aspects of India culture were absorbed such as literature, mathematics, astronomy and astrology. Although evidence of much of this material architecture remains in the temples of the Khmer.³¹

31. Smithi Siribhradra, and Moore Elizabeth: Palace of Gods, p. 26.

Jayavarman II and the Devaraja Cult

This cult was initiated by Jayavarman II, in 802, when he was crowned chakravartin ('universal sovereign', 'king of kings', king of the Khmer world), some 10 years after he, as an ordinary king, had managed to subdue other Khmer kings. He then appointed a Brahmin to elevate a local god of the deities to a similar rank, as king of the local deities, the supreme protectors of Khmer land (Jacques, 1997). This king of the gods corresponded with the Khmer expression of kamrateng jagat ta raja, which translated in Sanskrit is the devaraja ('the god who is king'), the king of gods, who was to be incarnated as a miraculous *linga*. The devaraja was, in a way, a double of the human sovereign. Erroneously, it has been interpreted as a 'god-king', a god with the essence of the king himself.

Jayavarman II also put a priest in charge of this divinity and decided that his appointment was going to be hereditary. The devaraja became the religious symbol of the royal power, thus initiating a national cult. Little is actually known about the devaraja, being mentioned only once, in an inscription of the 11th century, and it is possible that western scholars have over-emphasised its importance.

In contrast with the paucity of Khmer temple remains in Thailand prior to about the 10th century, a succession of temple sites in Cambodia are linked to the political consolidation of the Khmer. One important site was the 7th century capital of Isanavarman I at Sambor Prei Kuk, to the east of the Tonle Sap Great Lake. However, the founding of the Khmer capital is traditionally dated to

802 A.D. At this time Jayavarman II was consecrated as devaraja or ‘god who is king’.

The devaraja cult developed from worship of Shiva, symbolized by the *linga*, the phallic form of the god’s creative force. The temple which was built to shelter the image of the god was a recreation of the celestials’ mountain-top dwelling. Thus the most auspicious Khmer temples were either built on real mountains or as temple-mountains, which mimicked the natural form. Through the intermediary of the priest the ruler as earthly king could be united with his divine aspects.

The first of the Khmer Devarajas, Jayavarman II, is thought to have returned to Cambodia about 800 A.D. from exile in Java (this is not necessarily the present island of Java!). After shifting his centre of power several times he established his capital on Mount Mahendra. This has been identified as Phnom Kulen located just north of Angkor. An inscription dated to 1052 A.D. from the temple of Sdok Kok Thom recounts that a priest or Brahmin named Hiranyadama came to perform a ceremony that would make it impossible for Cambodia to continue to pay allegiance to Java. Jayavarman II, was consecrated sovereign, to be the Chakravarti or universal ruler.

This ceremony marks the beginning of over six hundred years of Khmer expansion, lasting until 1431 when Angkor fell to the Thais. Jayavarman II’s immediate successors ruled from the site of Roluos, located to the southeast of Angkor. The next ruler but one, Indravarman I (877–89), played a significant role in two key aspects of the Khmer state — the templemountain and

water management. Building of both Preah Ko and Bakong were started at Roluos during Indravarman I's reign. The Bakong (881 A.D.) was Indravarman's devaraja shrine, whereas Preah Ko (879 A.D.) was dedicated to his predecessors. The Bakong stands upon a series of pyramidal terraces and culminates with a tower at the top. The inspiration for this plan is believed by some scholars to have come from the contemporary monument of Borobodur in Java.³²

French Periodization of Khmer Art

The art and architecture of the Khmer has been classified into periods by French art historians. Each style takes its name from the principal monument built by the ruler at Angkor, with the sequence being based on a combination of epigraphical information, evolution of the temple-mountain concept, and types of ornamental carving. Many of the elements found on the Khmer doorway — pilasters, pediments, lintels, and colonettes — have been shown to change over the centuries and have come to be used as an index by which to date a temple. Lintels in particular have proved useful, as the large pieces of stone often survive even when the rest of the temple has collapsed.

There are fourteen stylistic periods, which can be divided into a pre-Angkorean (c.600–800 A.D.), a Transitional (c.825–875 A.D.) and an Angkorean phase (c.875–1230). These are listed below along with some of the principal rulers.

32. Op. cit., p. 26.

| Period | | Style | Year | King |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Pre-Angkorean | Funan | 1. Funan | c. 300–450 | |
| | | 2. Phnom Da | c. 450–540 | Maharavarman I |
| | | | | Mahendravarman |
| | Chenla | 3. Sambor Prei Kuk | c. 600–650 | Isanavarman I |
| | | 4. Prei Kmeng | c. 635–700 | Bhavavarman II |
| | | 5. Kompong Preah | c. 706–825 | |
| Transitional | | 6. Kulen | c. 825–875 | Jayavarman II |
| Angkorean | Early | 7. Preah Ko | c. 875–893 | Indravarman I |
| | | 8. Bakheng | c. 893–925 | Yasovarman I |
| | | 9. Koh Ker | c. 921–945 | Jayavarman IV |
| | | 10. Pre Rup | c. 947–965 | Rajendravarman II |
| | Middle | 11. Banteay Srei | c. 967–1000 | |
| | | 12. Khleang | c. 965–1010 | Jayavarman V |
| | | 13. Baphuon | c. 1010–1080 | Udayadityavarman II |
| | Late | 14. Angkor Wat | c. 1100–1175 | Suryavarman II |
| | | 15. Bayon | c. 1177–1230 | Jayavarman VII |
| | | 16. Post-Bayon | c. 1230–1431 | |
| Post-Angkorean | | 17. Lopburi | 1431 | Final conquest by the Siamese |
| | | | | Thai-Khmer |

Khmer temples in Thailand built during the ascendancy of the Angkorean capital are described using the same periodization. The usage is part legitimate, as Khmer temples in Thailand and those in Cambodia derive from the same tradition.³³

Thailand, however, has never been a colony, and while traditions of art and archaeology in the early 20th century followed the western-derived models developed to explain the sequence of Khmer architecture in Cambodia, in recent years Thai scholarship has become increasingly independent. This trend at first affected the field of prehistory, but for historical periods as well, the material culture of Thailand is ill-served by derivative terminology. For example, in describing the unique appearance of a lintel from an 11th century Khmer temple in Thailand, the only vocabulary available to the Thai art historian at present takes its paradigms from Khmer temples in Cambodia. Consequently, the Thai must resort to detailing why the lintel is like the prototype, leaving the impression that the ‘best’ works are to be found in Cambodia. The special qualities that exist only in Khmer works in Thailand are now being recognized, and it is likely that soon a new means of classifying Khmer art in Thailand will be created.

Angkorean Period Temples in Thailand

The majority of Khmer temples in Thailand were built after the 10th century. During the reign of Rajendranarman II (944–968 A.D.), control was exerted over an increasing

33. Op. Cit., p. 30.

number of northeastern Thai principalities, A few structures, such as Prasat Beng, can be attributed to this period, but all have been vandalized. It was a difficult time for the Khmer, and Rajendravarman II's predecessor, Jayavarman IV, had been forced to abandon Angkor. Rajendravarman II managed to re-establish the capital at Angkor, but also attempted to extend control to Champa, on the coast of southern Vietnam. His reign is also remembered in association with Banteay Srei, 'citadel of women', a small and beautifully carved red sandstone temple built by the king's chief priest.

A number of temples remain in Thailand from the 11th century, in the Khleang and Baphuon styles. Many are three brick towers on a single platform, such as Prasat Prang Ku in Sisaket province. Others, such as Ban Phluang in Surin province, have only one tower of sandstone and probably brick, on a laterite T-shaped base. A different plan dating to the same period is seen at Prasat Kamphaeng Yai in Sisaket province. Instead of a platform with multiple towers, the buildings of the sanctuary are aligned within a gallery. In the case of Prasat Muang Tam, another 11th century temple, there are two enclosures: an inner gallery and an outer laterite wall.

The Angkorean monarch during the first half of the 11th century was Suryavarman I. Although some control over the Northeastern parts of Thailand had existed in the previous century, Suryavarman I is credited with consolidating these gains. His reign is thought to have been a stable one, with conflicts with Champa dying down. Suryavarman I's successor was his son Udayadityavar-

man II. He ruled from 1050–1066 A.D., during which time he continued to expand the Khmer-controlled domain. Revolts occurred in a number of locations, and a resurgence of battles with Champa weakened the kingdom. Udayadetyavarman II nonetheless continued to build temples, and among these is the Baphuon. Although much of the temple has been destroyed, its plan may have served as a prototype for Angkor Wat built in the first half of the 12th century.

By the end of the 11th century in Thailand, sandstone was the main construction material, although brick was still used, as seen in the five brick towers of Prasat Sikhoraphum. During this period, the plan of some parts of the temple, particularly the central tower, became more elaborate. In addition to the square inner cell (*garbhanrha*), there was also a corridor (*antarala*) connecting this to the antechamber (*mandapa*). Sometimes the portal of the main door of the antechamber has a shallow porch (*ardhamandapa*). Several examples of this plan remain, including Prasat Phnom Rung in Buriram province.

Parts of these temples may have provided models for the construction of Angkor Wat by Suryavarman II (1113–1150). Angkor Wat was a massive undertaking, noted both for its plan and for the extensive reliefs carved on the gallery walls. These are two metres high and continue for over 1,500 metres. The temple is unusual in being dedicated to the god Vishnu, and facing west. Neither practice appears to have been adopted by the Khmer in Thailand, with the exception of Prasat Bai Baek in Buriram province which faced west. However,

the ritual associated with the temple is unclear.

During the end of the 12th and early 13th centuries, the rate of Khmer temple building reached its height. A number of these were Mahayana Buddhist, the religion adopted by the ruler at Angkor, Jayavarman VII, (1181–1219 A.D.) who had come to the throne after a devastating Cham attack on the capital. He not only subdued the Chams, but revived the organization of the empire and was perhaps the most active of all the rulers at Angkor, leaving a large number of inscriptions. His great city, Angkor Thom, had at its centre the largest of all temple complexes, the Bayon. In was in this building that he declared visually his adherence to Mahayana Buddhism.

Many new shrines dedicated to Mahayana Bodhisattvas were built outside Angkor during Jayavarman VII's reign. In addition to temples in Northeast Thailand, structures were built in areas to the west and far north into the central plain of Thailand. While some, such as Wat Si Sawai in Sukhothai district, have been largely built over in later periods; others such as Muang Singh, have not.

One specific type of laterite structure which is unique to Jayavarman VII's era is known as a hospital, as inscriptions found at many record dedications to a Mahayana Buddha associated with healing. Another small type of building erected at this time is called a rest house, for numbers of these appear to have acted as roadside sanctuaries on the provincial roads leading to the capital at Angkor.

Kings still ruled at Angkor after Jayavarman VII. Chou Ta-Kuan's account is informative on the continued

splendor of the court. The expansionary policies of Jayavarman VII, however, had seriously over-extended the resources of his empire. For the common people, his adoption of Mahayana Buddhism appears to have offered little change to their arduous lives.

The Thai kingdoms in the central plain grew increasingly strong, and eventually, in 1431, sacked Angkor. The Khmer heritage was not lost, for the motifs and architecture of the Hindu and Mahayana Buddhist temples were incorporated into the religious structures of Sukhothai during the 13th to 15th century, although the Khmer temples themselves generally fell into disuse and were for many centuries left to crumble. Today many are being restored and venerated as part of Thailand's cultural heritage.³⁴

The Art Of The Khmer

Architecture

The mountain is home of the gods in both Hindu and Buddhist cosmology. Mount Meru rises up from a central continent, and is surrounded by concentric rings of mountains and oceans. The Khmer temple recreates this cosmos in miniature. The central tower, often flanked by subsidiary ones, stood for the five peaks of the Mount, while walls and a surrounding moat symbolised the encircling mountains and waters. The temple complex was enclosed within a stone wall, often bordered by a further moat.

34. Op. Cit., p. 30.

The Khmer did not develop the technique of true vaulting, and the restrictions imposed by the corbelled arch had important consequences architecturally. This lack of true vaulting meant that large areas could not be roofed over, but as assembly of the faithful was not an integral part of ritual, the stimulus to develop the true arch was not present. Instead Khmer architecture developed the use of multiple chapels, which, crowned with tiered roofs, were then joined with galleries. Thus the vertical thrust of the towers was balanced by a lateral expansion of galleried enclosures. In this way the development of the temple complex fulfilled its ritual function of establishing harmony through a microcosmic restructuring of the macrocosm.³⁵

Fourteen periods have been established by French scholars for Khmer art and architecture on the basis, firstly of epigraphic evidence (inscriptions on stele), and secondly on the evolution of aesthetic and architectural elements (temple architecture, decorative elements, the style of the reliefs, etc.). The latter are obviously related to the historic and aesthetic tastes in vogue at the time when the French scholars made their important studies.

Only buildings in brick and stone have been preserved, all others in perishable material having been lost. Archaeological and historical evidence has confirmed that there was a civil, military and religious urbanism, with extensive hydraulic works consisting of the *barays* and thousands of canals and dams, bridges and roads. But the most striking feature of Khmer civilisation is its temples.

35. Op. Cit., p. 35.

The temple was conceived according to the Indian tradition of a temple-mountain, recreating on earth the mountain abode of the gods, Mount Meru, located north of the Himalayas, and traditionally surrounded by water (seas, rivers, lakes) symbolically represented by the moats built around the temple, and the adjacent *barays*. The building followed rigorous rules of measurements and perhaps astronomical alignments.

Initially, from Pre-Angkorean times until the 10th century, the temple was built at the top of natural high ground, a hill, to represent a temple-mountain, with a simple square plan for one shrine in which to preserve and protect the sacred *linga*. The temple was surrounded by a ditch with a raised access along the axis of the shrine's main entrance door, which was adorned with carved lintels.

Gradually, the temple was modified to assume the shape of a step-pyramid. During the 11th century, the temple-mountain was further developed with the addition of a sequence of monumental terraces. The various elements became progressively more complex, with enclosure walls all around, elaborate *gopuras*, and more buildings as annexes to the shrine, such as the so-called 'libraries', whose real function remains unclear. Some temples grouped together several sanctuaries, usually in odd numbers.

The plan of the temple evolved from square to cruciform to central-circular. During the Angkorean period there were two major types of plan for the temples: the centred plan with buildings grouped within concentric

enclosure walls (10), and the axial plan with the main and subsidiary buildings arranged along a linear axis such as at Koh Ker.

Despite the marvels of Angkor Wat and Bayon, a great deal of Khmer architecture was poorly executed, either using inferior materials (wood, laterite, sandstone which was often soft) or using them in an unsafe way.

Technically, the Khmers did not go beyond the stage of the simple vault (arch) created by superimposing slabs, in a technique called corbelling, limited by the burden of the weight. As a consequence, they could not build large rooms inside the temple shrines, but only narrow cells and connecting galleries. The impressive transformation in the art of Khmer temple building, from the simple single cell of pre-Angkorean times to the complexity of Angkor Wat, corresponds to an expansion in social organisation, the structuring of labour and organisation of construction work, and the development of irrigated agriculture and seasonal cropping to produce a food surplus.

Architectural Symbolism

No treatises dealing with the Khmer laws of architecture have been found but it is likely that Khmer architects and builders may have had some knowledge of the basic books of Indian architecture (*shastra*), like the *Manasura* and the *Mayamata*.

Scholars such Rene Dumont, Pierre Grison and Philippe Paris have proposed theories which, besides clarifying the essential laws of architecture, should also lead to an understanding of the astronomical and cosmo-

logical symbolism of the temples. More recently, Eleanor Mannikka has published the results of her 20 years of research on Angkor Wat, focusing on its measurements. Their studies have looked at the following aspects which may have formed the basis of Khmer architecture:

- a) accurate geographic measurements of the distances existing between the temples, which may establish a meaningful network pattern between the sites.
- b) a detailed study of the alignments within the architectural elements of a temple in relation to the trajectory of the sun, and the importance of the ritual alignment along the cardinal points, leading to an astronomical and cosmic symbolism.
- c) accurate measurements of the geometric patterns and their organisation within the plan of the temple, which may reflect different underlying symbolic mandala.
- d) an assessment of the numbers which seem to have been used in multiples of a basic unit of measurement, known from Indian numerology, arranged in patterns throughout the temple, reflecting a cosmic symbolism.

Stone proof of the symbolism of Khmer architecture may be seen in a stele at the southeastern corner of Bayon's wall. In it, the city of Angkor Thom is compared to Sudharma, the assembly-hall of the gods at the summit of Mount Meru. Although they were Mahayanists, the builders drew their inspiration from Sanskrit sources, in order to create (at the five gates of the city) the five guardians of the 33 gods, the yakshas pulling the magas on the bridges

in front of the gates, the four great kings looking over the four cardinal points (the famous face towers on the four cardinal points, the famous face towers on the gates), and the images of Indra, sculpted at the corners of the gates, mounted on the three-headed elephant Airavata.

This symbolism tallies with the great interest of the Khmers in the stories of the battles between the devas (gods) and the asuras (devilish monsters), always aiming to destroy the city of the gods. Moreover, since the Khmer kingdom represented the world of the gods (Phimeanakas inscription), and the Chams asuras, the offensive of the latter against the Khmers had to end in disaster for the assailants, just as the asuras' attack on the divine city of Indra ended, after a short-lived victory due to the advantage of surprise. Thus the effective system of defence provided by Jayavarman VII was said to be identical to the one installed by Indra for the divine city in order to prevent any new offensive by the asuras.³⁶

The Central Tower

Although vast spaces were not desirable within the central tower of the Khmer temple, it was the tower and its supporting structure which received the greatest elaboration, in particular around the windows and doors. Each central cell generally had four entrances, oriented towards each cardinal direction, although in many of the smaller temples, only the principal entry is functional, with the other three being false doors. ([Fig. 40](#))

The doorways are crowned with an arch, supported

36. Boisselier, J., Trends in Khmer Art. SEAP, NY, p. 20.

by pilasters and often ending in the upturned heads of *nagas*. Under the arch is the fronton or pediment, frequently carved with a Hindu or Buddhist scene. Within the frame of the arch and pediment, is a second framing made up of lintel and colonettes. Like the pediment, the lintels are principal vehicles for carving.

Structural and Decorative Lintels

The lintel was fitted to the jambs using a variety of techniques. Generally, this involved cutting a 45° degree triangular wedge out of the lintel, and inserting into it the positive element to match the form, carved from the top of the doorframe. By the 13th century, however, when it seems that many temples were constructed in a hurry, the lintel was often just laid flat on the doorjambs. These changed also, often being made up of a stack of stones, rather than a single stone such as seen at Muang Khaek.

An arch, or in later periods, a rectangle, was built of stone blocks on top of the structural lintel to prevent the weight of the building cracking the lintel. A second, decorative lintel with carving, was then fixed to the structural lintel. In the 11th and 12th century, this was usually done by removing a square section from the lower rear corner of the lintel, thereby creating an overhang, or hook, which allowed the decorative lintel to be hung on the front of the functional lintel. The structural member was also cut and hung so as to balance the additional weight of the decorative lintel.

Decorative lintels play a major role in Khmer architecture. The lintel was one of the principal areas for carving and

as such is a rich source for iconographical study as well as an invaluable aid to dating based on carving style. ([Fig. 41](#))

This technique had many variations, depending on the width of the lintel in relation to the rest of the door-frame. Sometimes the functional lintel even had a small lip on the front to accommodate the second lintel. The colonettes which were placed in front of the doorjamb on both sides, served to support the front part of the decorative lintel. By the 13th century, many temples were being built of laterite blocks. These blocks were cut just after removing the stone from the ground, while the laterite was still soft. The laterite blocks are generally larger than sandstone blocks, which in turn affected methods of construction. For example, earlier brick buildings often had a stone cross-piece inserted midway up the facade. This allowed positioning of a stone pediment to complement the lower stone lintel without the danger of too much weight pressing down on the lintel and cracking it, as well as potentially collapsing the brick layers. The use of the very large laterite blocks by-passed this problem, since the weight of the upper pediment could be distributed across several substantial pieces.

Construction Materials

Brick, sandstone and laterite were the three principal structural materials used in Khmer architecture. The predominance of one over the others varied according to the needs of a particular structure and the local availability. Most Khmer builders prior to the 9th century preferred brick to stone, but by the end of the century sandstone

began to replace brick construction. However, even after sandstone began to predominate during the second half of the 11th century, brick was still seen in a number of structures. During the entire span of Khmer architecture up to the 13th century, wood was used for all non-religious buildings, and for ceilings, stiffening elements, and frameworks in stone structures.

When brick was the primary material, it was assembled without mortar by means of a flexible substance of vegetable origin. In addition, the bricks were rubbed together, grinding them and rendering the joinery almost imperceptible. Mouldings and profiles were carved after the brick was placed. Figures were sculpted, and a series of holes made to later receive and hold a coating.

The use of brick to build Khmer towers in Northeast Thailand dates to the earliest monuments, such as the 7th–8th century Prasat Phumphon, in Surin province. These are preceded in Cambodia by the brick buildings at Sambor Prei Kuk. The popularity of brick continued throughout the span of Khmer temple construction. By the 11th century, a number of brick monuments were erected, such as Prasat Muang Tam and Prasat Kamphaeng Yai. Although these were no different from earlier structures in their basic designs, development was seen in an increasing degree of rebatement, and a greater articulation of the pedimental areas over doorways. By the 12th century as is the case at Prasat Sikkhoraphum, the brick pediment creates a shallow porch on the front of the building.

From the end of the 10th century, progress in meth-

ods of stone construction meant that brick was reserved for secondary buildings or elements such as vaults or arches not yet built in sandstone. Stone, however, was never absent in any brick constructional elements were also in sandstone such as structural lintels and thresholds, although these would sometimes employ laterite for reasons of economy in regions far from sandstone quarries.

Laterite was the commonest material available, and was used in all eras, for big works, basements, and thick walls. Particularly during the late 12th century reign of Jayavarman VII, the rate of building increased. With such hasty construction, laterite was seen everywhere, covering vaults, in non-sculptured parts of walls, secondary edifices, and provincial foundations. As in brick buildings, however, sandstone continued to be used for areas of detailed carving.

Given its adaptability, sandstone was often carved in imitation of wood, not always an effective application. Mortar was not used, the blocks being ground together to produce a structure held together mainly by inertia. Iron was frequently used as a safeguard, incisions being carved horizontally in the two sandstone pieces so that they could be secured by a metal pin.

Si Khiu Stone Quarry

Part of this quarry, situated in the Si Khiu district of Nakhon Ratchasima province (Fig.42), has been destroyed by the Friendship Highway built in the 1950s, en-

tire sandstone hill. On the upper platform are traces both of where the stone has been removed and where it has been cut in preparation but never taken away. The forms of these stones vary in shape — some are long and probably intended for lintels, some are cube shaped, while others are curved, perhaps awaiting use as lotus shaped finials.

To the south of this sandstone hill there is a large open area from where all the stone has been removed and today villagers use it for tapioca planting. We do not know where the stone was actually used, and no scientific tests have been carried out, but it lies only a few kilometres directly to the east from Prasat Non Ku and Muang Khaek.

Ban Kruat Stone Quarries

Situated in the Ban Kruat district of Buriram province is an area covering over one square kilometre, in which piles of sandstone blocks are scattered over many small hillocks. This is where Khmer stonecarvers came for the stone with which to build numerous temples. The quarries are only 20 kilometres from Phnom Rung as the crow flies; nevertheless scientific tests have not been used to establish whether stone from this quarry was actually used at that site. (Fig. 43)

Ban Kruat differs from the Si Khiu quarry in that the stone from here is widely scattered across the site and is not grouped in the form of a large hill as at Si Khiu.

Of particular interest here is that over such a wide area it is possible to see all the stages involved in quarrying the blocks of stone. Light incisions mark the outline of what would be cut into a vertical trench a few centimetres wide. Intersecting trenches mark out rectangular blocks which would later be cut through at the base. Closely spaced vertical holes were a method of effecting deep vertical breaks.

Religious Symbolism

Every surviving Khmer building had a religious purpose. The reason is simply that only temples and other religious foundations merited the use of permanent materials — brick, sandstone or laterite and all else has decomposed over the centuries. Even the palace of the king at Angkor was timber.

The Hindu Gods

To appreciate fully these monuments built by the Khmers between approximately the 7th and the 13th centuries, it is important to know something of the Hindu and Buddhist cults to which they were dedicated. The buildings and their artefacts were single-mindedly designed for worship. “Most of the objects to be met are devotional in nature, created with religious and utilitarian rather than aesthetic motives; and they were fashioned by craftsmen who worked in a tradition which dictated strict canons of iconography and manufacture, and who could never have

understood the meaning of the word ‘artist’ as it is used today.” This is Roy Craven writing about Khmer artefacts, and his comments apply equally to the architecture. None of the work of this period lends itself to being judged on modern grounds of taste, even though the results may well inspire and delight.

Over the Khmer Empire as a whole, Hinduism dominated until the end of the 12th century, when it gave way to Mahayana Buddhism, although not for long. Both came from India, and although the exact means are in doubt, it is likely that Indian traders were the first to introduce their religion to Cambodia. Hinduism over the centuries had changed its focus, with different gods in ascendancy, but by the time it reached the Khmers there were two principal cults — that of Vishnu and that of Shiva. These two gods were part of the Hindu Trinity (the third was Brahma) which commanded a pantheon of lesser gods and had *inter alia* a complex relationship. They were connected in many of the same myths, acted partly in concert, partly in rivalry.

Vishnu, four-armed and holding a conch, discus, mace and lotus, is the Protector. His fundamental role in cosmology is to conserve the status quo in the universe. He takes a particular interest in human affairs, so much so that on occasions he takes on an earthly form to intervene. These various forms of Vishnu are known as *avatar*, and the two most famous are Rama, eponymous hero of the *Ramayana* epic, and Krishna. Both of these personalities embody a kind of magical ideal; they are true heroes, physically and morally. Other *avatar* of

Vishnu include a lion, wild boar, dwarf, turtle and fish. In the range of Hindu deities, Vishnu is essentially kindly and well-disposed to man, and this accounts for a large part of the god's popularity as a cult.

Shiva contrasts with Vishnu in a number of ways. His main cosmological role is as the Destroyer — he brings each kalpa, or world cycle, to an end with his dance of destruction. However, Shiva's force is by no means just a negative one. As in modern physics, Hindu cosmology envisaged the universe as having a cyclical nature. The end of each kalpa brought about by Shiva's dance is also the beginning of the next. Rebirth follows destruction. In the cosmological sense, Shiva's powers are more fundamental than Vishnu's.

The Khmers worshipped Shiva primarily in the form of a *linga* — a pillar, usually in stone, derived from a phallus and representing the essence of the god. The *linga*, mounted in a pedestal representing an equally abstract Yoni, or female organ, occupied the shrine of a temple, and was the focus of rituals conducted by the priests. The other forms in which Shiva was represented were as the 10-armed god dancing the universe to destruction, as the supreme yogi, or ascetic, and riding with his consort Uma on his steed, the bull Nandin.

The third member of the Trinity, Brahma, despite his designation as the Creator, inspired no cult, and so appears incidentally in Khmer temples — emerging from the lotus that grows out of Vishnu's navel as he sleeps — and in small statues. Brahma is recognisable by his four heads, each facing a cardinal direction.

Other, lesser gods make appearances. The most commonly met with is Indra, formerly the principal Vedic god but by the time Hinduism reached the Khmers simply the god of the sky and rain. Like all Hindu gods he has a steed, or *vahana*. In Indra's case, this is the elephant Airavata (in Thai, Erawan), normally shown with three heads. Other gods include Ganesha (Shiva's elephant-headed son), Agni (the Vedic god of fire), Kubera (guardian of the North), Surya (Vedic god of the sun and guardian of the East), Varuna (god of seas and rivers and guardian of the West) and Yama (god of Death and guardian of the South).³⁷

The Linga

One of the main attributes of Shiva, the god of fertility, was the Phallic symbol of the *linga* (Fig. 44). With the elevation of Jayavarman II to devaraja, the *linga* cult became a religious, rather than simply a personal cult, as it had been with previous king. From now on, the prosperity of the kingdom was considered to be bound up with the welfare of the royal *linga*.

The original miraculous *linga* was supposed to have been obtained from Shiva through a Brahmin who gave it to the first king of the dynasty in a ceremony on the sacred mountain at the centre of the city. The king participated with Shiva in sovereign attributes of cosmological proportions, and the people's obedience to the king was a gesture of homage that implied the religious rapport known as *bhakti*, the concept of devotion so dominant in Hindu

37. Freeman, Michael: Khmer temples in Thailand and Laos. p. 20.

religion. This devotion acknowledged the King's reputation for spiritual achievement becoming thus a uniting element between various regions of the kingdom.³⁸

Naga

In addition, a number of mythological creatures play important parts. The most ubiquitous is the *naga*, serpent inhabitant of the underworld. Nagas appear throughout Khmer art and architecture, and are usually multi headed (Fig. 45). Individual *nagas* have roles in particular myths, such as the sleep of Vishnu (the *naga* Ananta supports the god's body as he floats on the cosmic ocean) and the Churning of the Sea of Milk (the *naga* Vasuki's body is used as a rope entwined around Mount Mandara and pulled alternately by the gods and the demons to rotate the mountain). In reality, the *naga* derives from ancient snake-worship pre-dating major religions such as Hinduism. Other creatures that make an appearance include the *garuda* (the man-bird steed of Vishnu and mortal enemy of the *nagas*).

Stories involving the *naga* or serpent are found in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology. Their popularity in Khmer art is striking. The underwater kingdoms of the *naga* are formed by the rivers, lakes and seas of the world, and here these kingly beings inhabit luxurious palaces studded with pearls and gems. The *naga* is not only keeper of the life energy stored in the waters, but also guardian of corals, shells and pearls, and carries one jewel in his head.

38. Roveda, Vittorio: Khmer Mythology Secrets of Angkor, p. 16.

The sinuous form of the *naga* creates arches around pediments, the balustrades around ponds and flanking causeways. Such causeways are often referred to as ‘*naga bridges*’, but in all these instances, the elongated tube of the *naga*’s body symbolises the rainbow linking the human and divine worlds. The significance of the *naga* derives from the puranas or ancient stories of India. However, its popularity in Khmer art stems from the pre-Indian belief in the spirits of the land and water. With the dissemination of Indian religions into Khmer lands about two thousand years ago, Indian iconography offered a variety of ways to express these spirits, as well as incorporating local dynastic histories, and Hindu and Buddhist stories.

Kala

Another creature seen throughout the chronology of Khmer art is the *kala* (Fig. 46). Many interpretations have been given to the face of the *kala* which so often forms the centerpiece of Khmer lintels and pediments. The creature is also referred to as kirtimukha, from two Sanskrit words, *kirti*, meaning ‘glory’ and *mukha* meaning ‘face’. He can be seen protecting temple doorways from India, to Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia, where he is sometimes referred to as Panaspati. In all cases, his rounded face has a wide jaw is present, but often only his large triangular tongue can be seen extended to support the weight of the garland issuing from his mouth.

Indian legends relate that the voracious *kala* demanded a victim of Shiva. The god was enraged by the request and

ordered the creature to devour himself. The *kala* god was enraged by the request and ordered the creature to devour himself. The *kala* proceeded to consume himself, until only his body and hands were left. Shiva then ordered him to serve as guardian of temple entries as a reminder of the god's power to protect or destroy. In this interpretation, the *kala* causes one to consider whether one's own life and deeds are worthy of the gods.

Many *kalas* such as those at Muang Tam also have hands and arms, even bracelets upon occasion, to hold the garland firmly in place. It is this aspect of the creature which adds confusion to the iconography, for the presence of arms and hands is often associated with the demon Rahu.³⁹

The Symbol of Buddhism

Buddhism was the other principal religion. Its two forms are Mahayana ('Greater Vehicle') and Theravada (also known as Hinayana 'Lesser Vehicle' — a term not surprisingly considered derogatory by its followers). The Buddhism practised throughout Southeast Asia today is Theravada — the more traditional and conservative form — but at the time of the Khmer Empire, Buddhist worship was exclusively Mahayanist.

Mahayana Buddhism seems to have played a more important role in what is now Thailand than in Cambodia — or at least, it was important over a longer period. At Angkor, it made its major appearance at the end of the 12th century with the accession of Jayavarman VII, but on

39. Smithi Siribhradra, Moore Elizabeth: Palace of Gods, p. 17.

the Khorat Plateau it was established much earlier. The temple of Phimai, in particular, was a centre of Buddhist worship. After the 7th century, Tantric thought began to infiltrate both Buddhism and Hinduism, and makes an important appearance at Phimai. Tantra is ‘the doctrine and ritual of the left hand’, in which the female force, or shakti, plays a dominant role in the universe. This esoteric belief involved many magical and mystical rituals, and female divinities played an increasing part. Vajrayana Buddhism was a development of Tantric thought, and had elaborate iconography. It was named after vajra, meaning thunderbolt or diamond, thus thunderbolts appear as its symbol in the shape of arrows and tridents, while the diamond represents pure and indestructible knowledge and virtue.

One of the characteristics of Mahayana Buddhism is the number of bodhisattvas literally ‘Buddhas-to-be’, beings who had voluntarily halted their progress on the path to Buddhahood, stopping just short of Enlightenment in order to be able to assist mankind. In some ways they were the Buddhist equivalent of saints, and their proliferation (particularly under Vajrayana Buddhism) gave the religion some of the characteristics of Hinduism, with its pantheon of gods. The iconography at Phimai, for instance, is complex and varied.

Khmer temples are full of symbolism — not just in the details of lintels and pediments, but in the architecture itself, and on the largest scale. One of the pleasurable surprises in discovering Khmer architecture is to realise that the logic behind it is an attempt to recreate an entire cos-

mology on Earth. Jeannine Auboyer wrote that “Indian architectural symbolism, even within India itself, was never interpreted with more precision than in the Khmer Empire”. The large temples, such as Phimai, Phnom Rung, Preah Vihear and Muang Tam, are nothing less than great models in stone of the universe. Both the Hindu and Buddhist universes share the same essential components; a succession of concentric mountain ranges and seas surrounding a central continent, out of the centre of which rises Mount Meru, the five-peaked home of the gods. That the gods of the Khmer universe inhabited mountain tops attracted the builders to any natural prominence, hence the hill-top temples of Khao Noi, Phnom Rung, Preah Vihear and Wat Phu (this last on the slopes of a mountain topped with an enormous natural *linga*).⁴⁰

Women in Khmer Art and Society

In Khmer mythology and society, man is the very centre of the word; women define themselves almost exclusively in relation to this all-powerful other. Society’s main concern was the distinction between the status of formal wives and that of concubines, who in both categories could be numerous. For the king, the most important figure was that of the main wife, the agramahishi who, in her position of royal consort and mother of the king’s progeny, would assume considerable influence in Khmer society.

She had a commanding role in the royal palace and, if she gave the king’s sons, one of whom was destined to

40. Madeleine Giteau, Khmer sculpture and the Angkor civilization, p. 15.

become king, she would rise to a higher rank. She could even appoint the new heir to the throne, in a climate full of conspiracies, assassinations and usurpers.

In the absence of a direct heir to the throne, a member of the royal family could become eligible through the lineage of his mother or wife. Equally, when a king was too young to rule, the regent was often chosen through the female lineage. Usurpers married the daughter or widow of their predecessors in an attempt to legitimise their royal status. Therefore, it is evident that, at least at the royal level, for the Khmers the matriarchal system was as important as the patriarchal one, if not more so.

Little is known about the role of ordinary women in Khmer history. The only well-documented female figures are the wives of Jayavarman VII. (Fig. 47) His main wife was Indradevi to whom he gave the title of Principal queen (*agramahishi*), after the death of his first wife, Jayarajadevi, eldest sister of Indradevi.

The great stele of Phimeanakas, composed by Indradevi in memory of her sister, reveals the character of those two princesses. Jayarajadevi married Jayavarman when he was still a prince, and followed his fortune, often involving long separations from him, worrying about his fate. She spent almost all her life in strict penance in order to obtain the success and return of her husband. Despite all this hardship, her beauty was not affected. In her spiritual exercises she was instructed by her sister Indradevi, to consider the Buddha as the beloved who could be reached through the fire of torments and the sea of pain.

When Jayavarman VII returned triumphant to Angkor as king of kings, she was so thankful that she decided, together with her husband, to disperse on earth all their wealth, by making it available to the gods and the poor, through the donation of ritual objects worthy of the royal treasure, and by nourishing those in need. Unfortunately, her happiness was shortlived and, perhaps consumed by too many strict ascetic practices, and, according to an inscription “despite her eternal loyalty to the beloved husband, soon after her master was invested of more power, she entered the mirvana”. Her death filled the king with sorrow, and he crowned her younger sister Indradevi as queen, placating the “fire of pain that was burning the world”.

Indradevi was said to be a woman full of grace, pure and devoted to her king, and a person of great culture and intelligence. She was appointed by the king as the main teacher of two important temples where she was “always distributing her knowledge to a crowd of women” (Phimeanakas stele).

This is not the place for a critical essay on the role of female protagonists of the great Indian epics; however, it seems that, in general, women were treated as passive elements in the narrative. They existed to respond to the passion of the males, but not initiate it. It is not surprising, therefore, that in Khmer iconography too, women do not play a significant role. Their celestial counterparts, the *apsaras*, were very popular, however, and appeared in most of the narrative reliefs in association with the gods, watching and supporting their actions. Less common were the *devatas*, pure female beings of the gods’ para-

dise, who amongst their other roles, had the function of guarding the main doors of the temples. (Fig. 48)

An example of earthly women's involvement in the royal household can be found in Chou Takuan's description, in the 13th century, of a troop of "girls holding shields and lances (spears), the bodyguard of the palace" accompanying the king whenever he left the palace. Perhaps a 'precedent' for this occurs in a pediment at Angkor Wat interpreted as showing a *naga* princess fighting Prince Kaundinya, with an army of women unique in Khmer art.⁴¹

The Palace of God

Hills and mountains, of course, make their own topographical demands, and are not necessarily located conveniently for administration, trade and settlement. Temples on the level plateau, such as Phimai, Muang Singh and Muang Tam, were often designed for a closer resemblance to the concentric layout of seas and mountain ranges. Moats, ponds, enclosure walls and galleries were the means, in the large temples, forming a series of nested enclosures.

The centrepiece in each case is the sanctuary tower built over the shrine. In the majority of temples there is just one shrine and tower, but in some there is a group, commonly three or five. Given the five peaks of Mount Meru the latter number had a special significance. In what Clause Jacques calls 'State Temples' (successive principal temples at the Khmer capital), five towers were

41. Vittoro Roveda, Khmer Mythology. p. 26.

often arranged in a quincunx, in faithful imitation of Mount Meru's peaks — four smaller ones surrounding a large central tower. Unusually, there is an example of this in Northeast Thailand, at Sikkharaphum — unusual in that this is quite a small foundation and certainly no State Temple.

One further piece of symbolism that establishes the larger temples as microcosms of the universe involves the *nagas*, the serpent rulers of the underworld — the subterranean reaches of Mount Meru. Nagas themselves are rich in symbolism in both Hinduism and Buddhism: they play a part in a number of key serpentine bodies can also represent the rainbow, which in Khmer cosmology is a bridge between heaven and earth. The main entrance to a number of significant Khmer temples is in the form of a causeway flanked by *nagas*, the symbolism being that, this is the bridge from the world of men to the abode of the gods. The *naga* 'bridges' at Phimai, Phnom Rung and Preah Vihear are particularly prominent.

Almost certainly, the religious symbolism which dictated the form of Khmer temples also influenced the details of the architecture. Although there is no general agreement among archaeologists and architects, the dimensions and proportions of the buildings probably followed a precise system. This may have been arithmetical or religious or both, and various attempts have been made to show how the ground plans for temples were arrived at. No contemporary Khmer architectural texts have been found — there was no Khmer equivalent of Palladio — and this has left the matter open to some in-

genious explanations. The models worked on have so far been in Cambodia, but they translate to Thailand.

American art historian Eleanor Mannika proposes numerology as the basis for temple plans, based on her studies of Angkor Wat. In this, key numbers from Hindu cosmology are used as units of measurement.

Another system, after Matila Ghyka and Rene Dumont, uses basic geometry. Applied to the simplest type of sanctuary, a redented square cell with one doorway, a sequence of circles can give all the dimensions and angles. The type example of this is the southern sanctuary of Banteay Srei, northeast of Angkor. Starting with the doorway as the ‘module’, the plan can be drawn with no more than a compass and a straight line. And, as Dumont points out, circles are simply drawn with only a length of cord attached to a central point. Nevertheless, the basic dimension are even simpler than this: the sides of the square interior of the cell are twice the width of the doorway, and the exterior sides are twice as large again, and although a succession of circles and intersections can explain the redenting, they are by no means essential.

The three most common Hindu icons found in Khmer temples in Thailand are Vishnu Reclining (*Vishnu Anantasayin*), Shiva Dancing (*Shiva Nataraj*) and Shiva riding with Uma on the bull Nandi (*Umamhesvara*); these occur mainly on pediments and lintels. There is less surviving Buddhist imagery built into the architecture, despite the strong Mahayana and even Tantric tradition in the upper Mun Valley in the northeast. There is, however, a great deal of statuary, and by far the most com-

mon image is that of the Buddha meditating while sheltered by the *naga* Muchalinda.

In addition to these representations, certain scenes and stories recur, drawn mainly from Hindu epics and texts. The *Ramayana* furnishes the material for many lintels and pediments; even when the episodes depicted are obscure, the presence of certain characters, such as monkey troops, is a fairly strong indication. Scenes from the life of Krishna also occur, as does the Churning of the Sea of Milk, although this last does not play the same important role in Thailand as it does in the architecture and bas-reliefs at Angkor.

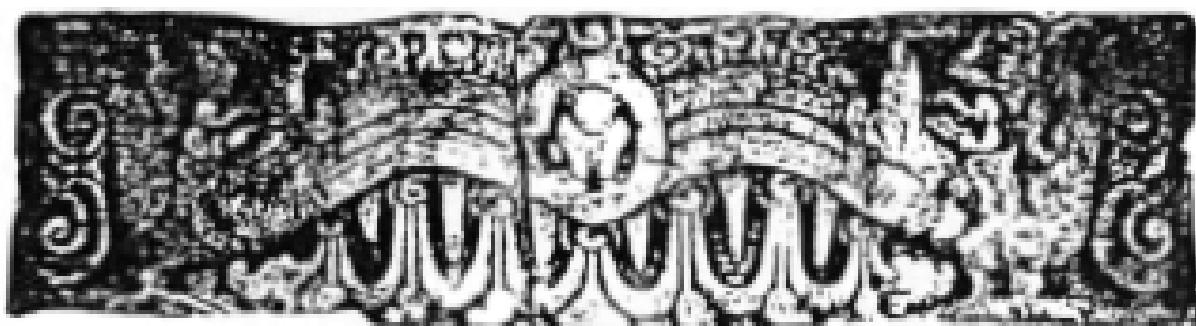
Styles Of Lintels

The decorative lintels over almost every doorway in a Khmer temple provided the carvers with a standard rectangular frame in which to work. Although by no means the only surfaces that were decorated with reliefs, Khmer lintels were of great importance. They often carried the most significant icons: divinities and scenes from Hindu epics in particular. From their designs and locations, lintels can often be read for information about the temple, such as the god to whom it was dedicated, and the importance of a particular cult. Even more than this, lintels are a means of dating temples. The motifs and styles changed over the centuries, and minute variations have been studied. However, all the models after which the styles changed over the centuries, and minute variations

have been studied. However, all the models after which the styles were named by French art historians are in Cambodia, and the development of lintels in what is now Thailand did not follow exactly the same course. There are many cases of a style of carving appearing much later than it did in Cambodia, or two styles sometimes appear in the same lintel. Muang Tam, for example, has two Khleang lintels among the other Baphuon ones, even though they were all carved at the same time.⁴²

Also, elements from local folk art often creep in to the designs, whether as a naive treatment or as the occasional erotic gesture (as in the Reclining Vishnu lintel at Kamphaeng Yai).

Unlike Cambodia, where the style of carving appears in the period of the same name, lintel styles in Thailand sometimes lasted longer, and are found at later dates. The styles named here are from Cambodian prototypes, but these examples are from Thailand — Kompong Preah, Bakheng, Pre Rup, Banteay Srei and Khleang — while Baphuon lintels are notably abundant.⁴³



42. Freeman, Michael, Op. Cit., p. 37.

43. More detail: Smithi Siribradra and Mayuree Verapsert, Lintel: a comparative study of Khmer lintels in Thailand and Cambodia, Bangkok: Siam Commercial Bank; 1989.

Thala Borivat

(A variety of Sambor Prei Kuk). Inward facing short-bodied *makaras*. Two arches joined by central medallion. Small figure on each *makara*.

Sambor Prei Kuk

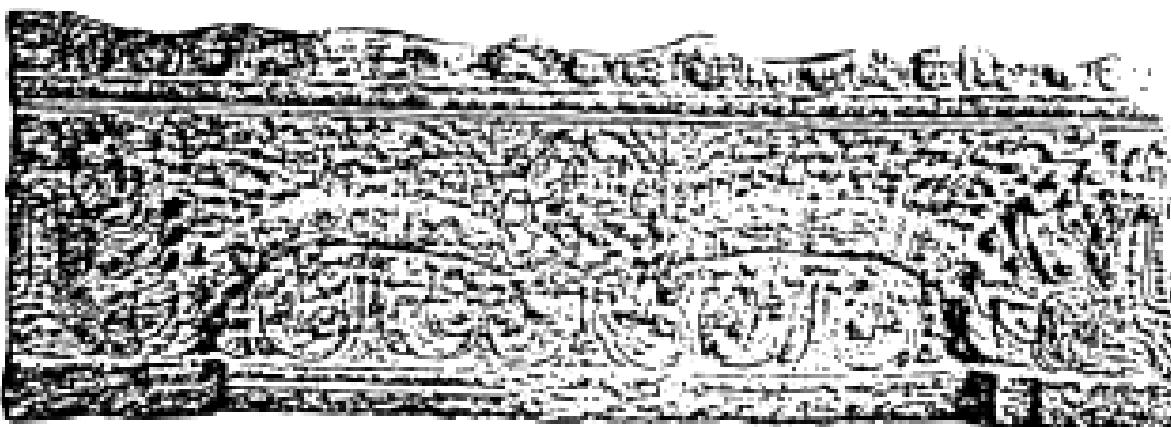
Inward-facing *makaras* with tapering bodies. Four arches joined by three medallions. Small figure on each *makara*.

Prei Kmeng

Continuation of Sambor Prei Kuk, but *makaras* disappear, being replaced by incurving ends and figures. Arches carry a straight line, and are sometimes rectilinear.

Kompong Preah

Arches replaced by a garland of vegetation (like a wreath) more or less segmented. Medallions disappear, central one sometimes replaced by a knot of leaves. Leafy pendants spray out above and below garland.



Preah Ko

Kala appears in centre, issuing garland on either side. Distinct loops of vegetation curl down from garland. Outward-facing *makara* sometimes appear at the ends.

Bakheng

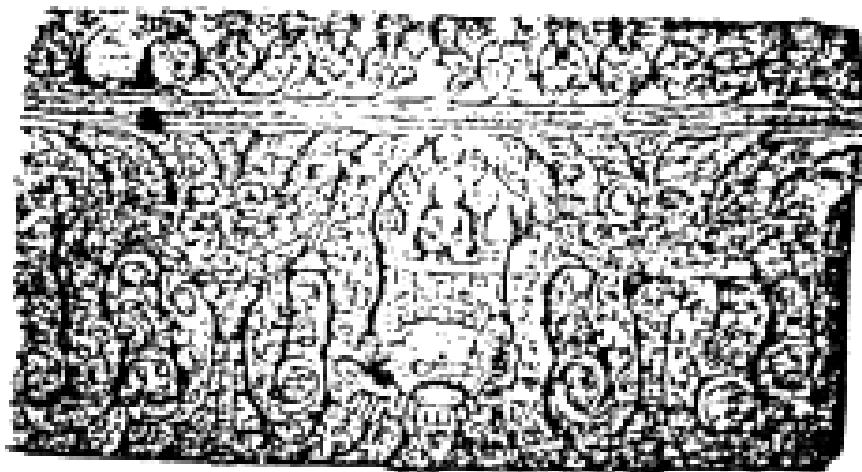
Continuation of Preah Ko. In Thailand, garland becomes a *naga* (heads facing outwards at the ends). Loops of, vegetation below the *naga* form tight, circular coils.

Koh Ker

Centre occupied by a prominent scene, taking up almost the entire height of the lintel. Usually no lower border. Dress of figures shows a curved line to the *sampot* tucked in below waist.

Pre Rup

Tendency to copy earlier styles, especially Preah Ko and Bakheng. Central figures. Reappearance of lower border.



Khleang

Central Kala with triangular tongue, hands holding garlands, but no other figures. Vegetation above *kala* forms a triangle. Loops of garland on either side divided by floral stalk and pendant. Vigorous treatment of vegetation.

Banteay Srei

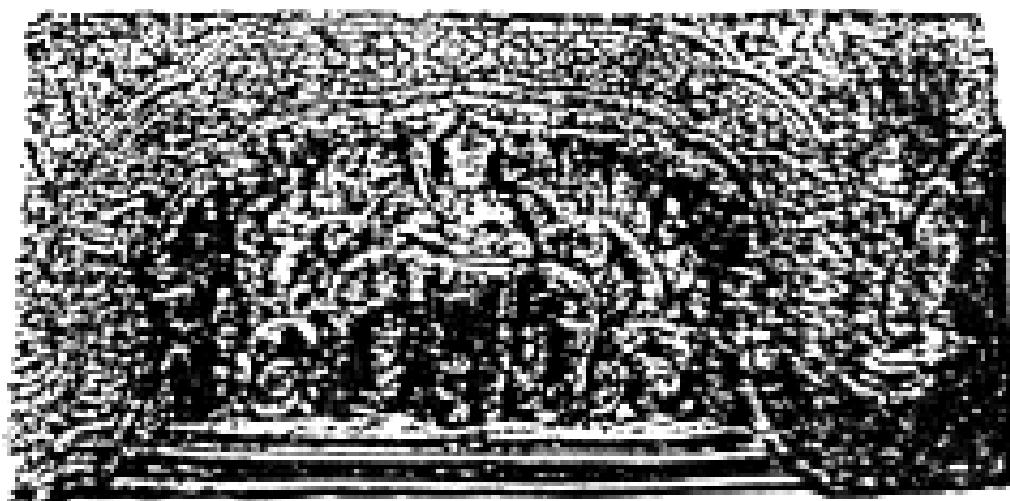
Increase in complexity and detail. Garland sometime makes pronounced loop on either side, with *kala* at top

of each loop. Central figure.



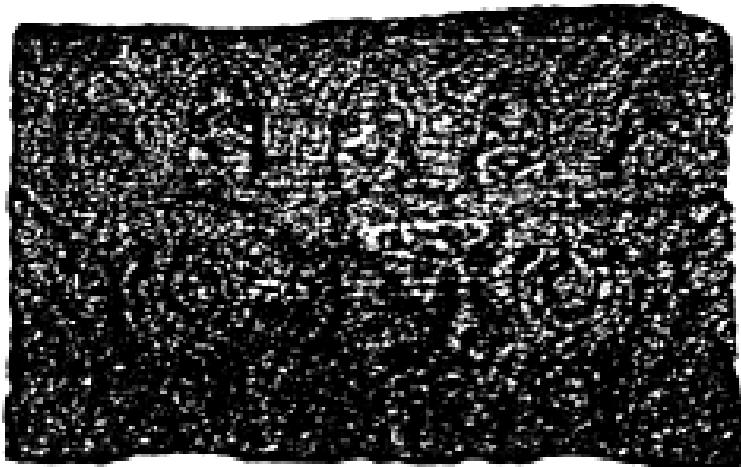
Baphuon

Kala surmounted by divinity, usually riding steed, or a scene from life of Krishna. Loops of garland no longer cut. (In Cambodia there is a second type: a scene with many figures and little vegetation).



Angkor Wat

Two distinct types: 1. Centred, framed and linked by garlands. 2. A scene, often narrative, filled with figures. When *nagas* appear, they are crowned. When there is vegetation, its curls are tight and prominent. Sampots and head-dresses on figures are in the Angkor Wat style. No empty spaces. At Phimai: Tantric Buddhist motifs.



Bayon

Most figures disappear: usually only a *kala* surmounted by small figure. Mainly Buddhist motifs. Garland cut into four or more parts — these sometimes become individual whorls of vegetation.

Inscriptions

Many inscriptions in Sanskrit and ancient Khmer have been found within the area of the Angkorean empire, allowing us to reconstruct the history of Cambodia. About 1,200 inscriptions have been found so far, mostly engraved on stone slabs. Those in Sanskrit, the language of the elite, tell of the deeds and merits of the kings, and list the temples they endowed. Information on the common people and daily life is scarce. The inscriptions in Khmer are, in most cases, a sort of inventory of the material goods of a particular personage, land and cattle ownership, lists of slaves, and of the assets of the temple. Nothing has survived of the manuscripts on palm leaves which

presumably filled the so-called ‘libraries’ of the temples. (Fig. 49)

The inscriptions refer to a well-structured society, with each important personage having received a title from the king, or holding a designation of rank, probably not hereditary. The notion of the caste system appears to have been meaningful only for Brahmans. The rural population seem to have been closely organised around the temple’s authority. There were slaves, who were taken from nearby countries and particularly from the ‘barbarian’ hill tribes, and were then bought and sold.⁴⁴

Sculpture in stone

The Khmer mastery of stone included three dimensional sculpture as well as the bas-reliefs which decorated the temples. (Fig. 50) The central shrine of the complex housed the cult image, generally carved from stone. The stylistic evolution of these images follows the same classification scheme as the temple architecture. However, whereas temples are often dated by the floral motifs of the lintels, hairstyle and dress provide the principal means of dating sculpture.

The Khmer stone carver performed a similar task whether working on a lintel bas-relief or a sculpture in the round — in essence a similar technique to wood carving, a tradition which long preceded the use of stone. Few pieces of stone sculpture dating from the pre-Angkorean period have been found in Thailand and most of the pieces found date from the 10th century onwards.

44. Roveda, Vittorio,: Khmer Mythology, p. 9.

Bronzes

Khmer bronze work presents itself differently from stone sculpture both in its execution and use. The production of a lost-wax bronze involved a process of modelling rather than carving. In this regard, bronze casting presents affinities to stucco and terracotta modelling. The virtuosity of the Mon peoples of central and northeastern Thailand in modelling these materials suggests Khmer interaction with the Mon throughout the period of Khmer stone temple building. (Fig. 51)

The majority of bronze objects produced by the Khmer were part of a portable set of ritual objects. This very portability has made it difficult to provenance bronzes. (Fig. 52)

In comparison with finds of stone sculpture, a great number of pre-Angkorean bronze images have been found in Thailand. Most are Mahayana images such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. (Fig. 53) Surprisingly, bronzes from the 10th and 11th centuries are scarce and the next important finds date to the 12th and through to the second half of the 13th century.

Ceramics

The temples of the Khmer required a steady supply of ritual containers. The upper classes also needed vessels to store items such as honey, wine and the lime used to make up the betel-chewing quid. While metal containers were prized the bronze-casting foundries have not been found; this despite many bronze statues thought to have been cast in Northeast Thailand. However ceramic ves-

sels were also used. Excavations by the Fine Arts Department in recent years have shown that the area to the south of Prasat Phnom Rung and Prasat Muang Tam was a major ceramic-producing centre. Indeed, the extent of production suggests that Khmer ceramics made in Thailand were exported to all parts of the empire. (Fig. 54)

The pottery tradition of Northeast Thailand stretches back to the prehistoric era with, for example, the red-painted designs found in the cemeteries of Ban Chiang. Similar red painted wares have been found at settlements in the province of Buriram, where the later temples of Muang Tam and Phnom Rung are found. Simple kilns dating to the early first millennium A.D. producing unglazed pottery have been excavated by archaeologists from Silapakorn University. Finally, numerous multi-chambered kilns such as those at Ban Kruat exist which were the production centres for the green and brown glazed ceramics used by the Khmer.⁴⁵

The Principal Types of Khmer Temples

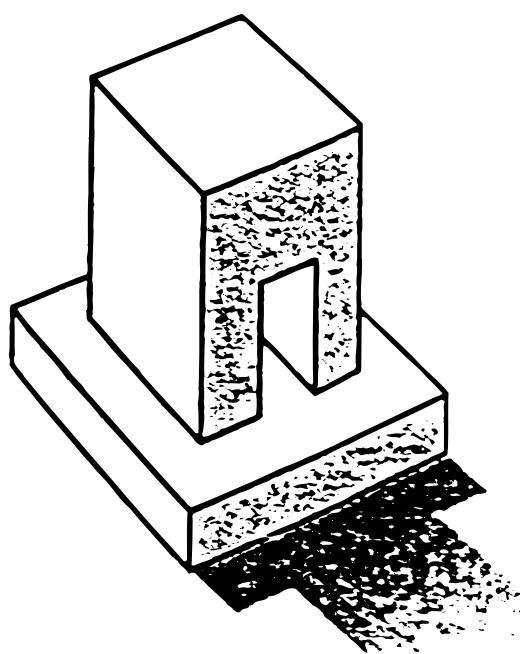
Most Khmer temples derive from Indian models, and the more complex constructions owe much to those of the Chola dynasty in southern India. There was nevertheless an evolution over the centuries, as the ambitions of the builders grew. The earliest sanctuaries were single shrines, but this design was later expanded to a number of sanctuary towers on the same platform. The size and shape of

45. Smithi Siribhadra and Elizabeth Moore: Op cit. p. 74.

the tower building of Angkor Wat and Phimai, the most characteristic feature of Khmer temple architecture.

It even outlasted the Khmer empire, being taken up by the Siamese in the form of the *prang*. In Thailand, this is the term used to describe Khmer towers such as those at Phimai and at Phnom Rung, although inaccurately, as it was never used in Cambodia. Strictly speaking, it refers specifically to later towers in Khmer style (there was a ‘Khmer Revival’ period when Ayutthaya became the Siamese capital). More accurately, *prasat* is the usual term for a sanctuary tower, although in Thailand it is often used to refer to the entire temple.⁴⁶ The various types of Khmer temple found in Thailand and Laos are the following:

Single sanctuary



Single Sanctuary

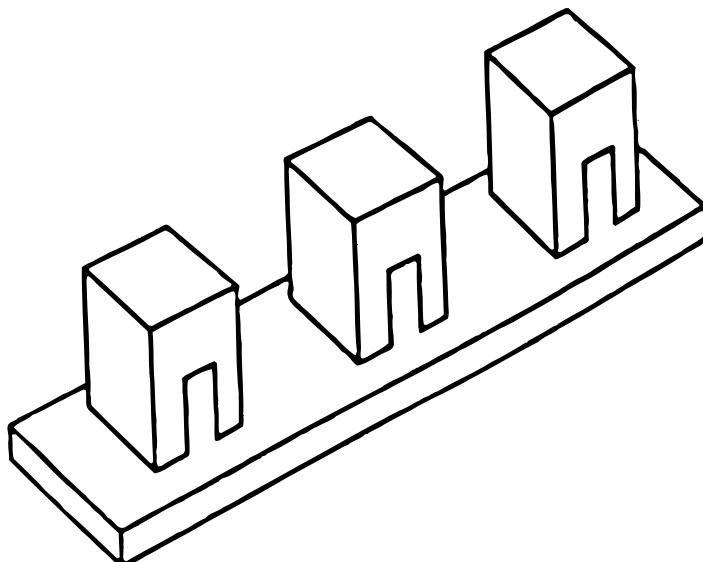
Surrounded by a moat and often in a small enclosure. The enclosing wall typically has a single eastern *gopura*, and a single ‘library’ facing west, located in the south-east corner of the enclosure. There may be a small *baray* or pond to the east, often on the axis of the temple.

Examples: Ban Phluang, Muang Gao. A similar layout

was also used for the chapels for hospitals from the reign of Jayavarman VII in the 13th Century.

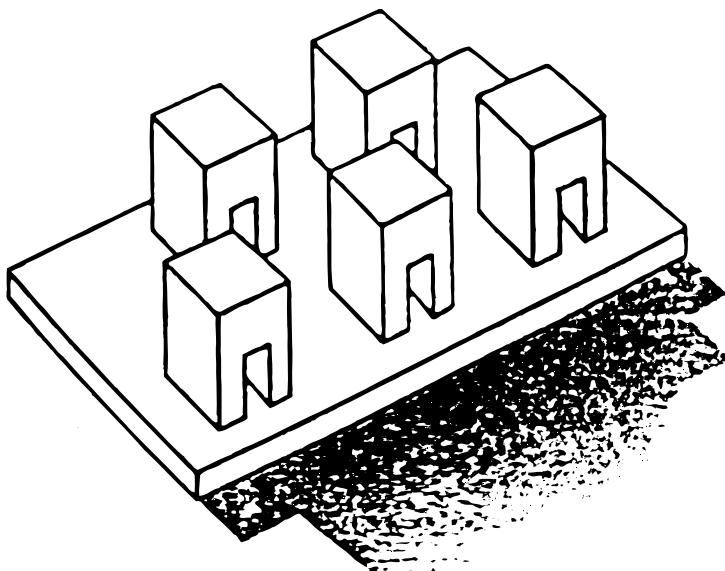
Examples: Ta Muen Toch, Kamphaeng Noi.

46. Freeman, Micheal,: Op Cit., p. 28.



Row of three sanctuary towers

Khao Noi, Ku Suan Taeng, Bai Baek, Wat Si Sawai.



central complex of *Muang Tam, Kamphaeng Yai.*

Single dominant tower

Highly developed architecturally, connected by a vestibule (*antarala*) at the front to a rectangular antechamber (*mandapa*). These three structures together form a single architectural unit, and lie at the centre of a major temple's principal enclosure.

Row of three sanctuary towers

Normally facing east. Sometimes in an enclosure with at least an eastern *gopura*, and sometimes with one or two west-facing 'libraries' in the eastern part of the enclosure. **Examples:**

Double row of sanctuary towers

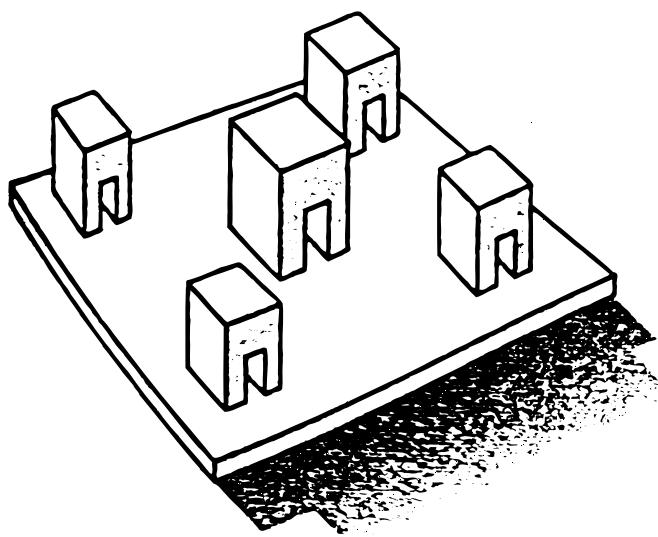
Three in front, two behind, in an enclosure with *gopuras*, and normally with two 'libraries' in the usual position facing towards and located in front of the towers.

Examples: the cen-

Examples: *Phimai, Phnom Rung, Preah Vihear.* For major temples, the plan is more complex, and the arrangement of the towers is the focal point of a larger distribution of buildings and other structures. There are two kinds of layout, both found this northern part of the former Khmer Empire:

Concentric layout of enclosures and moats

The sequence of wall, galleries and moats represents the concentric mountain ranges and seas surrounding the central continent and Mount Meru. Typically, there might be an outer wall and two enclosures, with a moat or four corner ponds within the outer enclosure. **Examples:** *Phimai, Banteay Chhmar, Muang Tam, Muang Singh.*



Quincunx of towers

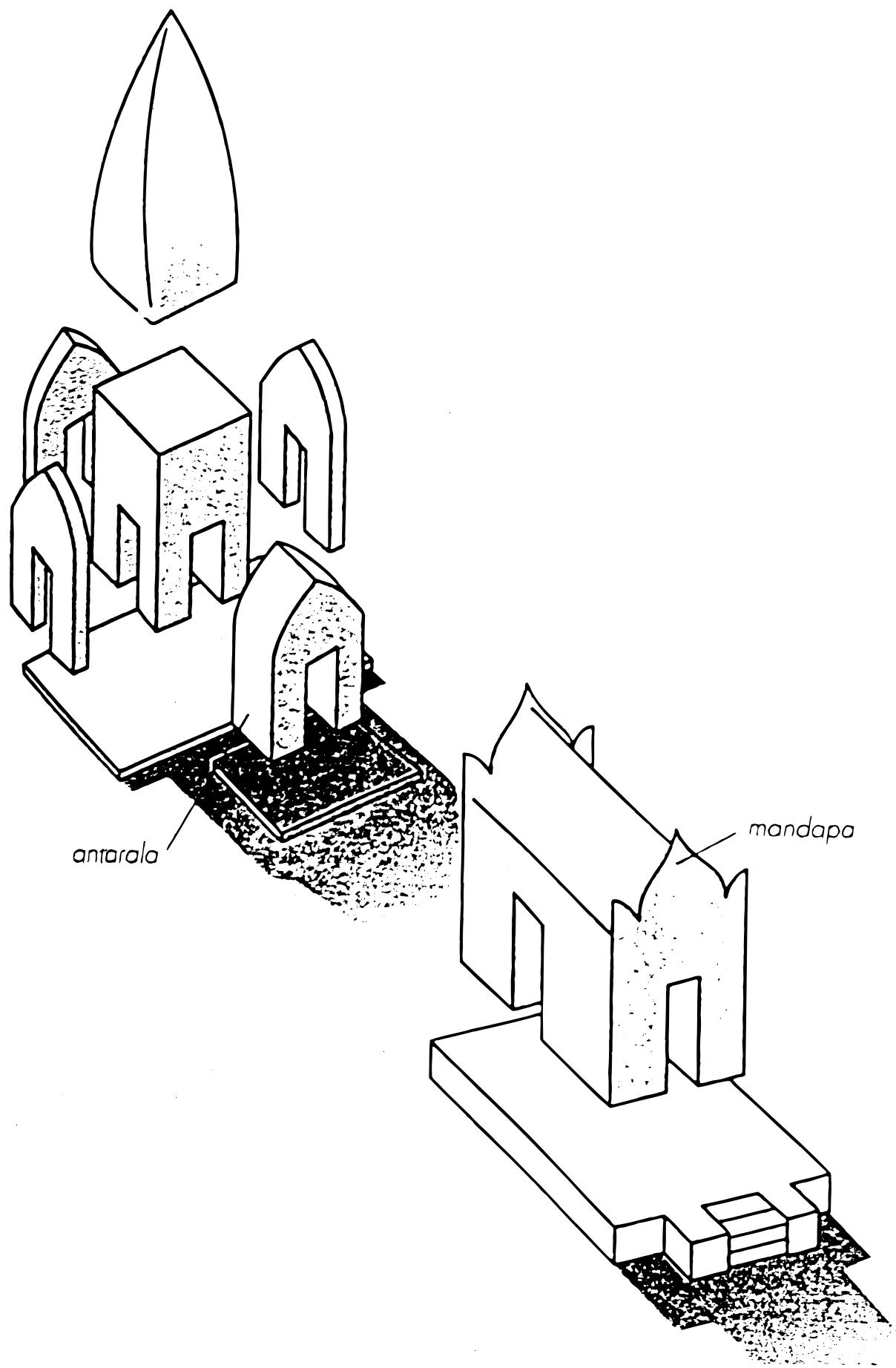
on a central platform, the central, principal tower being the largest. The cosmological symbolism is obvious, but such a layout is normally reserved for major temple mountains.

Example: *Sikhoraphum.*

Axial temples

In which the structures are laid out in line, ending with the sanctuary and its surrounding enclosure. The three most famous temples with this plan are all in this region, two in Thailand, one in Laos, and all are axial for the same reason, to take advantage of the slope of a prominent hill.

Examples: *Phnom Rung, Preah Vihear, Wat Phu.*



Building Techniques

The three building materials used by the Khmers were brick, sandstone and laterite, but the importance of each changed over the centuries. The earliest temples were in brick, the easiest medium to work in. It was not, however, used exclusively because of its limitations. Door frames and windows were always in stone, with the lintels and pilasters bearing the load. At its best, Khmer brickwork was of a high order — the size of the individual bricks was small by modern standards (on average about 30 x 15 x 7cm), allowing a detailed and often delicate effect from a distance, while the bonding was made not with mortar but a vegetable compound, which was both strong and virtually without thickness. In some instances, the brick was carved directly with designs: in Thailand there are examples at Yai Ngao, Muang Tam and Khao Noi, although brick carving never reached the peaks of the bas-reliefs at Prasat Kravan at Angkor.

Sandstone was altogether more difficult to work, requiring more labour (for transporting dressing and lifting into place), and importantly, labour that was skilled. The jointing and dressing of blocks took much longer than simply laying courses of bricks. New types of joint had to be worked out into the stone. Nevertheless, once the Khmer builders had gained confidence in using sandstone, they were able to take on much larger projects. In particular, they were able to realise the ambitions of their rulers to create microcosms of the universe on a grand architectural scale. Sandstone had always been used for

decoration — lintels especially — but when it formed the main structure of the temple, friezes and bas-relief panels could be applied directly. Phnom Rung is an outstanding example of an entire sanctuary that is for the most part decoratively carved.

Despite their mastery of many building techniques, the Khmers never adequately solved the problem of roofing their structures. They were not heirs to any architectural traditions that included arching and vaulting, and never discovered it for themselves. Instead, roofs were closed by the technically primitive device of overlapping the one below, until the sides finally met at the top. Known as corbelling, this prevented the Khmers from spanning large interiors; galleries and shrines remained narrow and cramped. It is argued that this was not particularly important, given that the central sanctuary was a place for rituals performed by priests and ruler alone, and there was no need to shelter a congregation. However, temples like Preah Vihear and Phimai show a love of building on a grand scale where possible, and if the Khmers had acquired the means to create large spaces by vaulting — as was happening in Europe at exactly that time — it is very likely that they would have taken full advantage. Sandstone building reached its peak during the Angkor Wat period in the early and middle 12th century. Not surprisingly, this was also the architectural peak for the Khmers.

Laterite is a type of iron-rich clay quite common in mainland Southeast Asia. It is easy to cut out of the ground, but after exposure to the air and sun dries very

hard. Its pitted structure when dry makes it impossible to work finely, but it is ideal for foundations and the core of buildings faced in stone or brick. When stone was the main material used, laterite often furnished the foundations and platforms and less important structures such as outer enclosing walls. Laterite was also used decorated with stucco; this became the main construction method in Thailand during Jayavarman VII's ambitious building programme at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries. Examples of this are Muang Singh, and the various chapels of hospitals and rest-houses.⁴⁷

The Temples

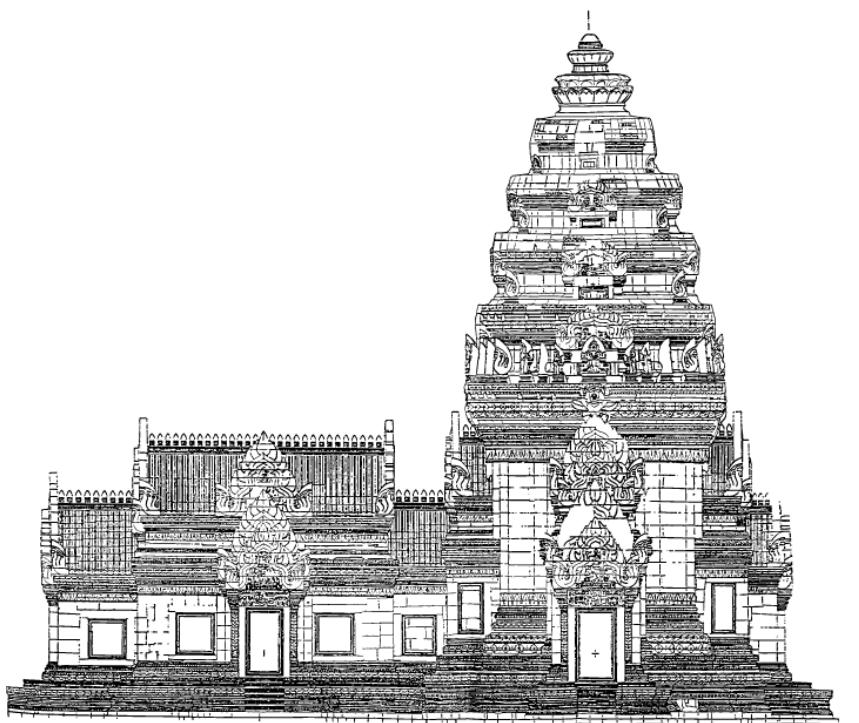
Since the first surveys by Etienne Aymonier and Lunet de Lajonquiere, some 300 Khmer sites have been discovered in Thailand, dating from the 7th to the 13th centuries. Most are in the southern part of the Khorat plateau in northeast Thailand, an integral part of the Khmer empire. A few other sites have been found in the north, in the west as far as Three Pagodas Pass on the Burmese border and in the Chao Phraya valley. However, most of the sites outside the northeast have undergone constant renovation and are now substantially different from their original state. The relative isolation and, until recently, lack of development on the Khorat plateau have helped to preserve much of the original architecture intact.

Until recently these sites have been overshadowed by

47. Freeman, Micheal,: Op Cit., p. 32.

the extensive work done by the French in Cambodia, and in particular at Angkor. It is only within the past 30 years that substantial excavation and restoration has been carried out in Thailand and the true importance of its Khmer temples is now acknowledged. The turning point was the careful restoration of Phimai and Phnom Rung beginning in the 1970s. Indeed, Phimai is one of the largest Khmer sanctuaries ever built, while the architectural decoration of Phnom Rung is widely considered to be some of the finest and innovative ever produced. Even more recent excavations and lesser known sites have uncovered remarkable bronze artefacts, including the largest complete Khmer cast figure found to date.

Finally, the discovery of many inscriptions has reinforced the important role of this region in the dynastic succession of the empire. The northeast provided the Khmer empire with a line of kings that included two of its greatest rulers — Suryavarman II and Jayavarman VII.



Chapter V

*The Influence of Khmer Art
on Lopburi
&
Sukhothai Arts in the Central
Plain of Thailand*



The Influence of Khmer Art on Lopburi & Sukhothai Arts in the Central Plain of Thailand

Although difficult for the khmers to control because of its distance, the valley of the Chao Phraya was strategically and economically important. This has always been the main rice-growing area of Thailand, while the river provided communications at least as far as Nakhon Sawan. The capitals of Thailand, throughout its history, have been located in this broad valley. When the Khmers first established a base here, it was at the former Mon city of Ivo, or Louvo, now called Lopburi. Another important centre was at the site of Sukhothai, further north. The Thai people had not yet settled the valley — their main wave of immigration took place around the 12th century — but when they did, eventually expelling the Khmers, they too chose the existing cities for their own centres. As a result, there was considerable rebuilding. The Khmer temples that survive are nearly all from the 13th century, following the Bayon style, mainly in laterite, with stucco decoration. At this distance from Angkor (between 400 & 600 km as the crow flies), there was considerable independence, not only in government, but also in the architecture. The term ‘Lopburi Style’ has some justification for these monuments of the Chao Phraya valley, although for a long time Thai historians used it for all Khmer temples and carvings in Thailand.⁴⁸

48. Freeman, Micheal,: Op. Cit., p. 208.

The Art of Lopburi

(11th–13th Century A.D.)

The final stage of the early or pre-Thai Buddhist art in Thailand is to be seen in the art of the Lopburi period. It is the pre-Thai art, which bears strong, influence of the Khmer art. It is said that in the central, Eastern and north-eastern parts of Thailand is found a new style of early Buddhist art, both in architecture and, sculpture, which has affinities with the khmer art of Kambuja or Cambodia.

This period is known as the Khmer period in Thailand. According to Siamese archaeological circles, it is generally understood that the period of Khmer dominion extended over central Thailand in the valley of the Menam River, with its chief centre at Lopburi or Lavo.

It is believed that during the occupation of the whole of central Thailand in the valley of Menam river by the Khmers, besides political establishment in this land, the artistic activities of Khmers also took place there, especially at the town of Lavo or Lopburi. The political and cultural domination of the Khmers covered this area for nearly three centuries.

The close relationship between the Khmers and the primitive tribe during this period marked the movement in the field of cultural and artistic activities in Thailand before the migration of the Thai people into Indo-China and in the land which now comprises present Thailand.

Besides the Khmer's dominion over the Menam valley of Central Thailand, the Khmers had also ruled over

the ancient Mon Kingdom of Dvaravati. and some principalities in north of present Thailand. The Khmer King divided the Dvaravati kingdom into two separate provinces, which formed the head quarters of Khmer dominion. It was ruled by a Khmer general or Viceroy. The northern province had its headquarter at Sukhothai and the Southern Province had Lavo or Lopburi as its centre.

After the establishment of the Angkor empire by Jayavarman II up to the beginning of the 10th century, Hinduism of the Saivite sect became the state religion with the introduction of Devaraja cult by that king. The Khmer monuments in the form of stone sanctuary or temple, called Prasad Hin (Prasad = Sanctuary, Hin = stone in the Thai language) were found scattered in several towns of the present Thailand. All these monuments were dedicated to the Brahmanic deities. They were mainly Saivite monuments, because the Khmers during this period of construction, were the followers of Saivism. The Khmer monuments were in Siamese territory especially at the town of Lopburi, where even now several large and perfect Khmer monuments can be seen. This means that Lopburi was the most important centre of Khmer dominion and authority. The style of these monuments closely resembles the style in the Khmer empire itself.

King Jayavarman VII (1181–1220 A.D.) was a Buddhist king, who spread his political and artistic power in the whole of the Khmer empire and vassal state, including the towns in present Thai territory. He built many monuments to commemorate the supreme deity of the Mahayana school of Buddhism such as the temples of Bayon,

Ta-Prohm, Prah-Khan, Banteay, Kadai, etc. He further spread his political dominion toward the north-eastern and central parts of modern Thailand at the beginning of 12th century, which is confirmed by one of the Khmer inscriptions,⁴⁹ as well as the remains of the Khmer temples having Buddhist elements in several towns in central and northeastern parts of modern Siamese territory.

All these temples were built to shelter the statues of this King. The name of this statue is Jayabuddha-mahanatha.

But, after the end of 12th A.D. the Thai people who came from southern China for their livelihood, started entering the Indo-Chinese peninsula, especially the area now called the present Thailand. There was long warfare between them and the Khmers, who were defeated by the Thais. The Thais gained complete control over the Khmers toward the close of 13th century. The Thais set up their independent kingdom named Sukhothai or Sukhodaya. The Thais finally smashed the Khmer power in the middle of the 15th century, and Kambuja or Cambodia became a vassal state of Thailand. Right up to modern times, Angkor itself was in the Siamese territory until it was ceded to France as late as 1907 A.D.

The Lopburi school of art has its chronology based on the periods of similar Khmer art in Cambodia, for instance, the Angkor Wat style of art (circa 1110–1175 A.D.) at the time of king Suryavarman II, who built the Angkor Wat temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu (or Vaisnavism), or the Bayon style of art (circa 1177–1230 A.D.) which flour-

49. For details: Coedes. George.: Angkor, p. 24.

ished in the days of king Jayavarman VII, who built the Bayon temple which marked the prominent monument of Mahayama element and workmanship.

But, some of the Lopburi antiquities found in Thailand are, however, much older than these two Khmer periods.⁵⁰ Some of them might date back to the 6th century, but most of the objects and monuments date only from the 11th century onwards. The Lopburi objects are carved from stone or cast in bronze. Most of the Buddhist objects belong to the Mahayana workmanship.

The architecture of the Lopburi school of art available in Lopburi and other towns in central and north-eastern parts of Thailand are of great significance by virtue of their peculiar features, which bear the strong influence of Khmer art. Both Brahmanical as well as Buddhist Mahayana monuments appeared in Thailand.

The outstanding monument of this period is Prasat Hin or stone temple at Lopburi. The stone temple of this period at Pimai, Na Kon Ratchasima province, is regarded as one of the best examples of Khmer architecture in Thailand. This temple appears to be Buddhistic, probably of the Mahayanistic order judging from the carved lintels over the doors of the main sanctuary. The stone temple of Phimai is enclosed within a rectangular wall.

Archaeological researches have shown that the origin of this temple dates back to the time of Jayavarman II in the ninth century A.D. Its plan comprises a square or rectangular form, there being a one-side door-entrance. The other three door-entrances were in the form of a fake

50. For details: Na Paknam, N.: Art of the Buddha Image, pp. 154–156.

door; the main sanctuary has the portico in front. Also in some cases, a group of viharas accompanied the main sanctuary with a verandah or gallery to connect them.⁵¹

At Lopburi, there are many large and perfect Khmer monuments, but prominent among them were two main Khmer temples Wat Maha Tat and Pra Prang Sam Yot (the temple of the three stupas or the temple of three towers).⁵² Wat Maha Tat has its architectural features on the usual plan of a sanctuary-tower with a *mandapa* attached to the whole in a walled enclosure and it seems to carry the eye with it as it soars upward to heaven.

The Pra Prang Sam Yot stands on a rising ground. The design and conception in the construction of this temple are not Buddhistic, but Brahmanic. The three towers of this temple ranged along side one another inevitably bring to the mind the Hindu Trinity of Brahma, Siva and Vishnu. Non Buddhist figures, too, have been found on the towers-bearded figures with their hands resting on clubs, which also points to an originally Brahmanic construction.

Three of these towers, called Prang, represent the peculiar form of Khmer architecture. The Prang for the first time appears in Thailand and later on, this style of architecture became one of the developed religious structure of Thai Buddhist art. The Prang shape was closely similar to Prang or tower of Angkor Wat or Bayon temple and

51. Department of Fine Arts: The Lopburi Art in Thailand, p. 37.

52. The Thai word designated the great monument in Lopburi School of Art, located in Lopburi as Pra-Prang-stupa or temple, Sam means three, Yod means towers, summit.

other Khmer towers in the 11th century.

The Prang was composed of stone or brick along side from below to top accompanied by the design of the jack-fruit petal as its decoration. This style of architecture in pyramidal shape, no doubt, bears the strong influence of Indian architecture that of the sikhara of the Indian temple in Indo-Aryan or North Indian style. The Indian sikhara may be regarded as the prototype of Khmer Prang which was borrowed later by the Thai architects (Fig. 55).

Generally speaking, the architecture of this period differs slightly from the Khmer Monuments in Kambuja proper. The architectural buildings of Lopburi usually have a low basement of foundation, not erected on the high platform like the Khmer monuments.

One of the important features of this architecture is that the temple has no window, but there is the wind-hole instead of the former. In this also, the stupa (in Thai called Chedi) is present in the form of a square in plan. There are five successive superimposed terrace-squares. The fifth terrace is the main, large stupa. In each of the square terraces, there are niches to shelter the standing Buddha Images. The corner of each stupa terrace is decorated with the miniature small stupa.

The town planning of this period was square in plan. In the geometric centre of town planning, space was reserved to erect the main, large temple as the centre of town. There used to be several temples in Buddhistic as well as Saivite and Vaisnavite character. The town consisted of gate-entrances and the fort with semi laterite enclosures. This style of town planning was, no doubt,

similar to the town-planning of the city of Angkor Thom built by King Jayavarman VII in Kambuja of which the Bayon temple was the important central sanctuary in the geometric centre of Angkor Thom. Thus, it may rightly be said that the town-planning of the Lopburi period is a miniature replica of Angkor Thom.

The Lopburi School of art produced perfect sculpture in bronze and stone. The sculptures of Mahayana divinity consist of several styles and gestures such as the statues of Bodhisattva Lokesvara and the Mahayana goddess Prajnaparamita. For Mahayana propagation the Lopburi art borrowed its style from Sri-Vijaya art and Kambuja itself and the Hinayana elements from the art of the Dvaravati period. There are several Buddha Images in different mudras or gestures.

But the most popular style of Buddha Image in this period is the seated Buddha Image under the Naga called Pra Nag Prok (in Thai) meaning the Buddha seated under the hood of the Naga's head. Naga is the great serpent which appears in Hindu and Khmer mythology. On the other hand, the decorated Buddha Images with ornaments were also available in this period.

The Lopburi artists also carved the statues of Brahmanic deities both Siva and Vishnu, whose worship was popular in Kambuja and Lopburi. The style belonged to the Khmer Angkor Wat style and some of them were of typical Bayon style. The materials used are sandstone and bronze. The style of the Buddha Images of Lopburi art consisted of a single image seated or standing on a pedestal, or seated under the Naga.

From the late 12th century A.D., however, the artist carved a group of Buddhas on the same pedestal for the first time.⁵³ Sometimes, the Mahayana Triratna (Three Gems) is shown personified by the Buddha under the Naga in the middle, flanked by the Bodhisattva Avolokitesvara on the right and the Mahayana goddess Prajnaparamita on the left. For Brahmanic images, for instance, we have images of Lord Siva, Vishnu and Visvakarma.

The characteristics of the Buddha images of this school of art consist of two styles — the Early and Late Lopburi style. The early style represented the Buddha Image, with the ushnisha or protuberance on the skull in the form of low gland like that of Dvaravati ushnisha, but the shape assumed different forms as the coil of a shell or shape of small cone. The other was in the shape of a crown and lotus flower surrounded with its petals. There are two styles of hair — the parallel fold hair and the curls of hair. Also the parting line round the top-knot of Buddha can be seen. The headdress and low crown of the Buddha's head are available.

The face of the Buddha is broad and square in shape with large, thick mouth and lip; prominent eyebrow; long, prominent nose and square chin. The Buddha's robe consists of two forms: the robe covering the whole of the body in the case of the standing Buddha and the robe with bare right shoulder in the case of the seated Buddha image. The end of the robe is hanging down to the navel. The rim of a skirt-like lower robe is in promi-

53. For details: Department of Religion: Hinayana and Mahayana Sects of Buddhism p. 65.

nent position. The ear is long extending to the shoulder. In the case of the decorated ornamented Buddha there are neck-bracelets, arm-bracelets and necklaces round the neck and the upper part of the Buddha's body.

The Buddha's pedestal is in the form of a lotus-flower in both forms of up and down lotus-petal. The lotus petal is formed by the rim line at the end of each petal.

On the other hand, the late Lopburi Buddha image consists of the following features. The head is not square but an oval shape. There is another line or rim attached at the mouth of Buddha. The design of ushnisha is like a long-lotus petal and a small halo is placed in the middle of the lotus ushnisha. This halo is cone-shaped. In the case of Buddha with the Naga, the peculiar features are the eyes which are sunk in the face. The beard and moustache also can be seen. The skirtlike lower rob is illustrated by the prominent rim at the waist and ankle of the Buddha. The end of this robe is in the form of rectangular cloth appearing in front of a girdle. The halo of the Buddha is the seven-hooded uncrowned Naga which stretched over the head of the Buddha.⁵⁴ The coil of the Naga's body consisted of three parts. The Buddha's face is shown in a sensitive and benign attitude, smiling like those in the Bayon period in Kambuja. The Buddha Images of this period have been classified under seven different mudras or gestures; the most prominent of which is the mudra of the Buddha under the seven-hooded uncrowned Naga as already related above (Fig. 56).

54. Department of Fine Arts: The Siamese Buddha Image; Cf. Boribal Buribhand, Luang: The Thai Images of the Buddha, p. 42.

The statues of the Bodhisattva during this period consist of the figure of small Dhyani Buddha placed in front of the ushnisha of the statue. The head of the statue is square and the forehead is straight. The jaw is square and firm and the eyebrows are almost straight. The nose is rather flattened and the mouth is long with full lips. The eyes look downward and seem almost closed. The hair is no longer formed of spiral curls but seems like scales divided by partition lines. The whole gives the appearance of a strong, ruthless being, which is too human to fulfil the conditions necessary for the representation of a Buddha or a Bodhisattva.⁵⁵

Besides this, there is no trace of painting from Lopburi period in Thailand.

Thus, the Lopburi school of art flourished for nearly two centuries up to the later part of the 13th century A.D. The Thai people who came from Southern China became now the new powerful leaders of Indo-Chinese Peninsula replacing the Khmer political dominion. But the Lopburi school of art still flourished and the remains of the monuments and antiquities can be seen even today.

Wat Mahathat, Lopburi

Although many times restored and added to, Wat Phra Si Ratana Mahathat (to use its full name) is still an impressive example of late Khmer provincial architecture. This was the principal temple of Louvo, as Lopburi was known, and

55. Le May, Regionald: Op. Cit., pp. 150–151.

although the layout and majority of buildings are from the Ayutthaya period (including a fine *viharn*), the lower tower and its *mandapa* form the Khmer heart of the complex.

Louvo, a former Mon centre, was taken by the Khmers during the reign of Suryavarman I (1002–1050). It became the regional capital for the middle Chao Phraya valley; the earliest Khmer inscriptions from here are dated 1022 to 1025. Louvo remained a Khmer centre for most of the period from early 11th until the late 13th century, but there are a number of clues that the local rulers or governors attempted to assert their independence. In 1115 Louvo sent an independent mission to China (where it was known as Lo-hu). This was only two years after Suryavarman II succeeded to the throne after a struggle, and the timing of the mission was probably opportune. Forty years later, just after Suryavarman II's death, another independent Louvo emissary was sent to China. The outcome of this is unknown, as is the exact status of Louvo throughout these two centuries; but there were certainly periods when it functioned as part of the Khmer Empire, both administratively and militarily. In the famous bas-relief at Angkor Wat depicting the parade of the king and princes, the Louvo contingent under its commander Rajendravarman is clearly treated as a well-disciplined Khmer force and an integral part of the army, in contrast to the Siamese mercenaries, depicted as exotic barbarians.

In all events, Louvo had definitely broken away from Angkor by 1289, when it began once more to send ambassadors to China. This clouded history of Louvo's relations with Angkor has a direct bearing on the art and

architecture that survives. The sanctuary at Wat Mahathat recalls elements of Phimai and Angkor Wat, particularly in the profile of the tower, but the proportions and the building materials are quite different. There is still no general agreement over whether this was simply a provincial version of the Khmer models at Angkor, or whether it was an expression of a locally developed culture. Thai historians have tended to identify a distinct Lopburi school, and it may well be that at this distance from the Cambodian capital, with evidence of attempts at political independence, Wat Mahathat and its neighbouring temples should be considered slightly apart from the mainstream of Khmer architecture. A source of confusion is that the 'Lopburi School' is sometimes applied to all Khmer architecture, in the Northeast as well, and even to all artefacts as far back as the 7th century, which unnecessarily includes some Dvaravati sculpture.⁵⁶

Plan: Although the entire precinct of Wat Mahathat is of considerable interest, most is post-Khmer, and the relevant structure is the central laterite tower and *mandapa*. Wat Mahathat is located close to the centre of the old city of Lopburi, immediately to the west of the railway station. The entrance gate is in the middle of the eastern side; directly ahead is the ruin of a large brick viharn, and the Khmer sanctuary lies behind this.

Central sanctuary

Isolated from the surrounding buildings, the sanctuary tower, *mandapa* and the short connecting *antarala* from

56. Freeman, Michael,: Op. Cit., p. 210.

a single imposing structure in laterite, built on a low, stepped brick platform. The two most immediate impressions are the height and the familiar corncob profile of the tower, like an upwardly-stretched version of the tower at Phimai. Some of the techniques used at Phimai to create an imposing effect have been employed here to an even greater degree. In particular, the base is very high, and its narrow stepped terraces form a concave profile that sweeps up to the main body of the sanctuary. This, combined with the outward bulge at the main cornice level, gives a waisted effect that enhances the impression of height. The two tiered arches and pediments over the doorways are also taller and more pointed than those at Phimai.

The redenting, the diminishing tiers and the inward-leaning antefixes all contribute to the characteristic curve of the tower. Instead of sandstone, however, the structure is in laterite, originally completely covered in stucco. Traces of stucco decoration remain, some of it, such as on the cornice of the tower, of very high quality. Nevertheless, seeing Wat Mahathat after the major temples of the Northeast leaves an impression of imitation. The use of sandstone throughout the towers of Phimai and Phnom Rung helps to give them coherence; the carving of the *makara-naga* arches, the pediments and so on appear integral to the structure. Using stucco for a similar effect seems more superficial, however substantial the underlying laterite framework. B. P. Groslier considered this use of stucco to reproduce the original Khmer stone architecture to be little more than *trompe l'oeil*, and that

such laterite or brick imitation “exaggerates the parts to the detriment of the composition as a whole”.

This aesthetic judgement notwithstanding, Wat Mahathat’s tower marks an important point in the transition from Khmer sanctuary tower to Thai *prang*. The striving for the effect of height and the elevation of the multi-terraced base evolved into the typical slim, cylindrical *prang* mounted on a massive and elaborate base, such as at Wat Phra Ram in Ayutthaya, and at the later Wat Arun in Bangkok. The concrete restorations to the upper levels of the tower and the concrete beams supporting the northern doorway date to 1983.

Only one of the external lintels, over the south door of the *mandapa*, remains *in situ*. Although the details are not particularly clear, it has an interesting history. The tower was built late in the 13th century, and this is made, not in stone, but in plaster on top of laterite — normal at this late date. However, the design is definitely not from the late 13th century. The figure in the centre holding two animals is probably Krishna, and the garland loops strongly on either side. These and other details are definitely Baphuon in style, from two centuries previously. The mystery is why the carver would have made such an out-of-date design. An ingenious explanation is that this lintel is a copy of an original in stone from the sandstone ruins behind the tower, since lost. By this date, stone carving skills had probably disappeared; builders preferred the less demanding stucco applied to laterite.

Artefacts: A lintel and statuary from Wat Mahathat are on display at the Somdet Phra Narai National Museum

nearby. The lintel, depicting Indra riding on Airavata, is in the Angkor Wat style and dates to between 1100 & 1175.

Prang Sam Yod, Lopburi

The outline of this three-towered laterite sanctuary (the Thai name means ‘Three Prangs’) is Lopburi’s most well-known symbol. Built during the reign of Jayavarman VII, Prang Sam Yod was, like all temples of the Bayon period, consecrated to the Mahayana Buddhist faith of the king. The central sanctuary contained an image of the Buddha under *Naga*; statues of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and Prajnaparamita occupied the other two.⁵⁷ Following Jayavarman VII’s death, the temple may have been converted to Shivaite use as a *linga* was enshrined here, as happened at the Bayon and elsewhere.

Plan: The three inter-connected towers are on a north-south axis, each with doorways opening east and west. The building material is laterite, originally covered with stucco, some of which remains. The stucco decorations of the main cornice level at the corners of the towers are of high quality, with remaining 5-headed *nagas*, *kala* face, elephants and a frieze of *hamsas*. The later addition of a *viharn* during the reign of king Narai, when the sanctuary was converted to Theravada Buddhist use, is inappropriately in brick, and spoils the view from the east. There is only limited room to appreciate the temple, as it occupies a relatively small, raised island, surrounded by

57. Op. Cit., p. 214.

buildings and traffic. Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of 13th century Khmer architecture and provincial concrete shop-houses has an undeniable appeal.

Prang Khaek, Lopburi

Prang Khaek is one of the outstanding Khmer art of the Lopburi style which some indications of late Bakheng and early Koh Kmer style (10th century A.D.) in Cambodia.

Even more incorporated into the modern town than Prang Sam Yod, the brick sanctuary of Prang Khaek occupies a small traffic island opposite Lopburi's Provincial Judiciary (San Changwat Lopburi). The sanctuary comprises three towers on a north-south axis, the ruin of a brick viharn immediately in front of the middle tower's east door, and another brick building to the south, on the axis of the towers. There is no sign of a base. The central tower is the largest of the three; all are in brick, redented, with traces of the original stucco covering. The profile, particularly of the two flanking towers, has a slightly squat, tapered curve reminiscent of Phnom Rung.

The Art of Sukhothai

(13th–14th Century A.D.)

Sukhothai is the name of the first historical powerful Thai kingdom whose capital was of the same name Sukhothai (literally meaning “Happiness of the Thais”). The reli-

gious buildings as well as the religious art of this kingdom reached its zenith in the time of Sukhothai period — art derived from the neighbourhood countries; India, Sri Langko, Srivijaya, Cambodia, etc.

The Lopburi Khmer art was one of the cultural and artistic activities influenced during this period. The important architectural Khmer style art in this period are Viharas, Phra Prang and monasteries. Phra Prang or Siamese stupa is a further developed architecture building from the corner tower of the Khmer temple. There is further development of the Phra Pang from the original Khmer style. The best example of Phra Prang is the large one at Wat Pra Sri Ratana Mahathat at Srisatchanalai, Sukhothai. This Prang was restored in later time in Ayutthaya period. But its original date of construction is attributed of king Maha Thamaraja I (or king Lithai) of Sukhothai.

The architectural feature of this sanctuary is the high plan and the whole structure was not erected on the rectangular superimposed terrace-basement like the corner-tower or Khmer temple, but was erected on the single basement. The portico or front porch was attached to the side of the structure, but only the front portico is more bulging in a prominent way than other porticos. The Sukhothai Prang has no lintel or door-jambs like the Khmer Prang, but there are the niches to house the walking Buddha image. Thus this style of architecture represents the specialized form of the Phra Prang having its characteristics as those of western Architecture.⁵⁸

58. Department of Fine Arts: The Siamese Buddha Images, p. 5.

Sukhothai Historical Park

Sukhothai is a city that has great importance in Thai history, having once been the capital city for those Thai people who settled this inter-montane valley, fed by the Ping, Yom and Nan rivers, from the mid-thirteenth century to the mid-fifteenth century. Over this 200 year period Sukhothai saw the birth of a true Siamese identity and style in architecture, the applied arts and many other areas including the formalisation of the Khmer-derived Siamese script. Today a wealth of ruins may be observed in the Historic Park which has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The rectangular plan of the city with the most important religious building in the middle suggests the influence in the city planning of the Khmer, who always placed the principal shrine in the centre surrounded by ponds and canals.

Although most of the buildings are post-Khmer, evidence of Khmer influences remain. A Khmer style sandstone deity from the mid-12th century has been found close to San Ta Pha Daeng, while the architecture of Wat Phra Pal Luang is similar to Khmer architecture of the Bayon period and was probably constructed at the very beginning of the 13th century.

Sukhothai: San Ta Pha Daeng

The oldest surviving Khmer building at Sukhothai, this single sanctuary tower stands on an exceptionally high base, which gives it imposing proportions, despite not

being particularly large. It was built entirely in laterite, although the superstructure has long since collapsed. There are no traces of the original stucco moulding on the building. (Fig. 57)

Artefacts: The torsos of five life-size statues were uncovered here, and originally led Boisselier to date San Ta Pha Daeng to the Angkor Wat period, but they, and the site, are now generally regarded as being from the Bayon period (13th century A.D.) or named as Lopburi art of Thailand.

Sukhothai: Wat Si Sawai

Wat Si Sawai is situated within the city walls some 350 metres to the south of Wat Mahathat (Fig.58). The temple is surrounded by a laterite wall with the entrance to the south. From the evidence of artefacts it is believed that site was a Brahmin shrine, featuring three towers in a row on one base, before the founding of the city. In 1907 Crown Prince Vajiravudh visited the site and discovered a statue of Shiva within the viharn in front of the tower. Later, following restoration by the Fine Arts Department, a lintel with Vishnu reclining was discovered. In the Sukhothai period the temple was converted to Theravada Buddhist use and three new towers were constructed, as seen today. Some of the stucco decoration shows influence of the Khmer Bayon period but was executed in the mid 14th century. There has been some unfortunate crude restoration of the stucco in recent years.

Artefacts: A worn lintel showing Vishnu reclining is at the nearby Ramkamhaeng National Museum.

Sukhothai: Wat Phra Pai Luang

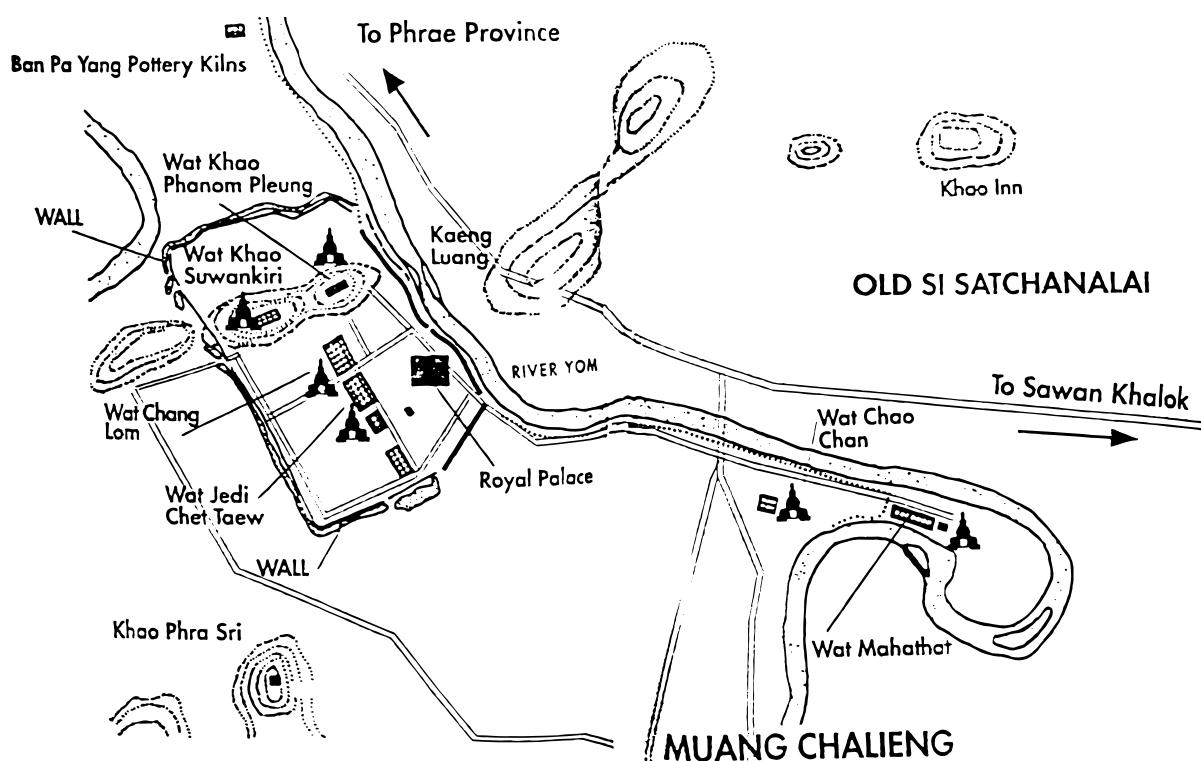
The largest Khmer temple at Sukhothai, Wat Phra Pai Luang is located north of the triple earthern ramparts that define the later Siamese city. (Fig. 47, previously mentioned) Later additions, both structural and decorative, give the temple a slightly Siamese appearance, but the surviving northernmost sanctuary tower is a fine example of its period — laterite with extensive stucco moulding in the Bayon style (13th century). Noteworthy are the door surrounds ending in *makara* spewing forth *nagas*. The temple was probably Mahayana Buddhist dating to the reign of Jayavarman VII (1180–1219). A statue of the Buddha sheltered by *naga* was found here. Later during the Sukhothai period the temple was converted to Theravada Buddhism, and the architecture reflects the change. In fact, thanks to continued restoration and addition to the stucco, this tower has the most complete appearance of all Khmer sanctuaries built in this manner (more typically, at the nearby San Ta Pha Daeng, or at Muang Singh in Kanchanaburi, the bare effect of plain laterite is not at all the way that the temples were conceived).

Layout: Originally a line of three towers, facing east as customary, but now only the northernmost survives intact. Of the central and southern towers, only a few courses of the laterite blocks still stand, and these are bare of stucco. All three *garbhagrhas* contain pedestals for *lingas*.

Artefacts: A stone Buddha in meditation may be seen at the Ramkamheang National Museum.

Old Si Satchanalai

The historic city of Si Satchanalai is situated in the eponymous district in Sukhothai province, some 530 kilometres from Bangkok and 60 kilometres from Sukhothai. Its main significance lies in the magnificent ruins remaining from the Sukhothai period when Si Satchanalai was virtually a twin capital with Sukhothai. Nevertheless there are two wats with Khmer remains situated at the site of an earlier town known as Muang Chalieng to the east of the later city in the gooseneck of the River Yom. Both temples should be visited together and visiting details are combined. The atmospheric setting of this site and the main ancient city certainly make Si Satchanalai well worth a visit.



Si Satchanalai: Wat Chao Chan

This is one of the oldest temples in the area and was also probably built before the creation of Sukhothai as the royal

capital. (Fig. 59) It is situated close to Wat Sri Rattana Mahathat on the gooseneck of the Yom river. The grounds house the remains of a laterite building in the Khmer style of 13th century, although of a workmanship of lesser quality than found at other Khmer sites. The building is square in plan with sides of 7 metres and redented corners. Entry is on the east side with the other three sides having niches for Buddha images. The upper part of the building is in three tiers surmounted by a lotus bud. It was previously thought that the temple may have been one of the ‘houses with fire’ built during the reign of Jayavarman VII, but as the plan is different from other such sites its purpose cannot be definitively established. In fact it was probably built after the reign of Jayavarman VII in the 1230s–50s. On the other hand, it is possible that a very thorough restoration may have obscured some of the evidence.

Si Satchanalai: Wat Mahathat

The temple is situated to the east of Wat Chao Chan on the banks of the Yom river. Important features of the wat include the large laterite tower on a square base with projecting steps and porch at the front. Inside is a small stupa believed to have housed a Buddha relic. The tower is thought to have been built in Khmer style during the first half of the 13th century. From its size it was clearly an important temple which was then renovated during the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya periods, giving it more appearance like a Siamese *prang*. In front is a large viharn constructed from laterite; its upper part has col-

lapsed leaving only the base, columns and some walls. The walls and entrance gate have stucco decoration which, although executed later by Siamese craftsmen, shows the influence of the earlier Khmer style, in particular the entrance portal being topped with a four-face tower reminiscent of the Bayon. Although the temple was built in the Mahayan Buddhist tradition, during the Sukhothai period this changed to the Theravada school.

Phetchaburi: Wat Kamphaeng Laeng

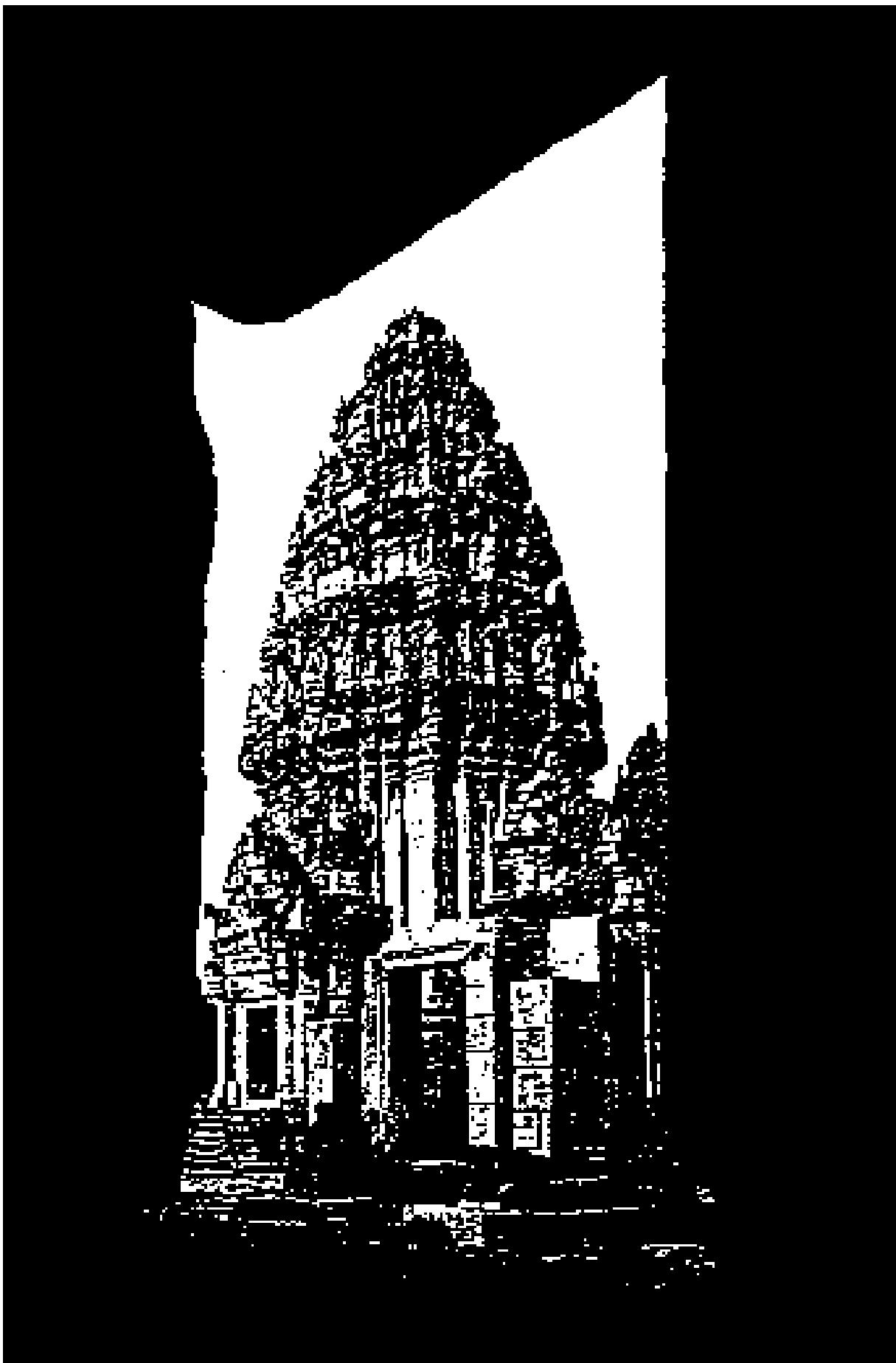
Although not en route to any of the other monuments, and not really worth the journey for its own sake, this late period (Bayon, 13th century A.D.) Khmer site has considerable charm. Located in a quiet backwater of the rather old-fashioned town of Petchburi, the laterite temple is now in the grounds of a modern Buddhist wat. (Fig. 60)

Plan: Surrounded by a laterite wall, the complex comprises five structures — four towers each on a stepped base, and a shrine built to a cross-shaped plan. The orientation is, as usual, to the east, with the four-porched shrine at the front looking out over a small artificial pond. The towers are in a slightly unusual configuration: a row of three at the front, with the remains of a single tower directly behind and centred. All the buildings are of laterite, which is typical of the period, and would originally have been covered with stucco, of which there are a few remaining fragments.

Artefacts: In 1956, a statue of Shiva's consort Uma was found in one of the towers.

Chapter VI

Prasat Phimai



Prasat Phimai

Phimai is unquestionably the most important Khmer monument in what is now Thailand, and its recent complete restoration makes it possible to appreciate the significance it must have had for the region at the height of the Khmer Empire. Known from inscriptions to have been the temple of the city of Vimayapura, the “city of Vimaya”⁵⁹ (hence the modern name, with the ‘V’ becoming corrupted to ‘Ph’), Phimai was built by the banks of the Mun River some 60 km north-east of the modern provincial capital of Nakhon Ratchasima (Khorat). It is one of the largest of all Khmer temples. (Fig. 61)

The importance of this site owes much to the local ruling dynasty, by name Mahidharapura, which furnished a succession of Angkor’s king — beginning with Jayavarman VI (1080–1107) and including arguably the two greatest Khmer rulers, Suryavarman II (1113–1150) and Jayavarman VII (1181–1219). Vimayapura and this part of the Khorat Plateau were by no means a backwater. The 1082 A.D. inscription still at Phnom Wan mentions both the city and the king, Jayavarman VI. A century later, at Angkor itself, Phimai is mentioned in the inscription at Preah Khan as being the destination of one of the imperial roads. Two centuries after that, Chou Ta-Kuan’s account of life at Angkor in 1296–7 includes a passing reference to what might be Phimai when he mentions that Cambodia was divided into more than

59. Freeman, Micheal,: Op. Cit.. p. 97.

ninety provinces; one of them he calls P'umai.⁶⁰

Although not immediately apparent from its outward appearance, or even from some of its decorations, one of the most striking features of Phimai is that it was built as a Mahayana Buddhist rather than a Hindu temple. For anyone familiar with Angkor, this is unusual for a major temple built at the beginning of the 12th century. In Cambodia, large Khmer temples were dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu until the Buddhist king Jayavarman VII came to the throne in 1181. Here on the plateau, however, there was a tradition of Mahayana Buddhism that stretched back to the 7th century. At Phimai, Tantric beliefs also played an important role, as can be seen in some of the lintels, particularly those inside the sanctuary. (Fig. 62)

The religion of the pre-Khmer temples at Phimai remains uncertain. Animistic worship was important, and some shrines may have been built by Buddhist devotees. According to Prince Damrong, (Fig. 63) a Wheel of the Law was found together with a Buddha image in the Dvaravati style. A platform excavated in a mound south of the city gates had four large pots embedded in the corners, suggesting it was used for ritual purposes. It is likely that a number of religions were practised simultaneously, with an intermixing of animistic, Buddhist, and Hindu cults.

Whatever the origin of Mahayana Buddhism at Phimai, its presence at a major Khmer temple of the beginning of the 12th century was unusual. In Cambodia at this time the principal religion was still Hinduism, but here on the Khorat plateau, the Khmer form Mahayana Bud-

60. Ibid, p. 7.

dhism had been well-established since the 7th century. Evidence of this may be deduced from the many Buddha images found here and in the neighbouring province of Buriram. It did not affect the plan of the temple, but as we will see, encouraged a number of unique motifs.

The temple was built on a naturally secure site — almost a natural island — where the Mun River Turns sharply south and a tributary, the Klong Chakrai, joins it. The result of this configuration is a raised strip of land bounded by water on three sides, large enough not only for the temple, but a surrounding community as well. The outer laterite enclosure of Phimai is, in fact, the outer wall of the old city, measuring one kilometer by just over half a kilometre. This wall was in turn protected by a broad moat, fed by the river. There were four entrances to the city and the temple, with the principal one known as Pratu Chai, “Victory Gate”, at the south, at the end of the road from Angkor. This last was recently reconstructed; the eastern gate, as well as the east wall, has at some point in the past been destroyed by the encroaching river changing its course. East of the city, a *baray* was dug, the Sa Pleng. This arrangement of moat and outer enclosure, with the temple proper occupying a considerably smaller area inside, is strikingly similar to that of Angkor Wat, at the capital. In fact, the dimensions are not that different. The outer enclosure of Angkor Wat, just inside its moat, measures 1025 x 800 m. That of Phimai is 1020 x 580 m, no mean size for a provincial site. As today most of the area inside was taken up with the settlement; it is possible that the modern street layout reflects the old city plan.

The temple proper begins at the second enclosure.

Unusually, Phimai is oriented to the south (but not exactly), and it maybe that this was in order to face in the direction of the capital, Angkor, with which it was connected by one of the most important royal roads, 225 kilometres long. Several other reason have been suggested. One is the influence of the earlier kingdom of Funan in lower Cambodia (1st to 5th centuries), itself possibly adopting the Chinese custom of orientation to the south. Another is that the temple honours ancestors of the orientation: the axis points 20 degrees east of south, and Phnom Rung, first major stop along the road, almost the same. Such inaccuracy would have been unusual for the Khmer builders, who were capable of laying highways as straight as any Roman road. Most likely, there is a combination of factors at work, with the orientation of the land between the rivers playing a major role.

Although inventoried by Aymonier in 1901, Phimai languished in ruins until the 1950s, when the Fine Arts Department began excavating and clearing the site. The technical study for the restoration was made by Bernard Philippe Groslier, the last French conservator at Angkor, and the reconstruction work carried out by the Fine Arts Department under the direction of Prince Yachai Chitrabongse from 1964–9. One peculiarity noted was that the tower, although collapsed from two levels above the cornice, was in good condition, which suggested that the superstructure might have been deliberately pulled down. Aymonier noted that this corresponded with local legends that the Burmese, or the Lao, had been responsible.

Plan of the Temple

Traditionally, the approach to the temple was from the south, along the royal road from Angkor, via Phnom Rung. The approach passed a laterite landing stage on the river, and a kilometre beyond this entered the city through the Victory Gate. This and the other gates, as well as the wall, were built later than the temple proper, by Jayavarman VII. Directly ahead, north from the city gate, is the main entrance to the temple. Nowadays, however, the normal approach when travelling from Khorat skirts the eastern side of the temple.

Like Angkor Wat, Phimai is laid out concentrically, with the main sanctuary at its heart. The first enclosure is a rectangle of 83 x 74 m, offset north of the centre of the second enclosure, which measures 274 x 220 m. This in turn is offset to the north within the third enclosure that makes up the old city limits. For comparison, the enclosures of Angkor Wat are also eccentrically placed away from the main entrance, although not by as much as here. When the outer city moats are included, and the four ponds in the corners of the second enclosure, the plan is clearly an ambitious model of the universe: a series of mountain ranges and oceans surrounding Mount Meru at the centre. (Fig. 64)

Naga ‘bridge’

The entrance to the temple proper begins with a cross-shaped terrace lined with *naga* balustrades, all well restored. The *nagas* with their rearing heads are a reminder right at the start that the entire temple is a model of the

universe. They represent a ‘bridge’ from the world of men to the abode of the gods. That Phimai is a Buddhist sanctuary has not affected the layout of the temple; nor has it lessened the role of the *nagas*, which the Khmers elevated in their scheme of cosmology. (Fig. 65)

To the left of this terrace are the remains of a rectangular building, locally known as the Khlang Ngoen (Treasury). It may indeed have had some practical use, as grindstones were excavated here. They may have been used for ritual preparations.

Outer southern gopura

The *naga* ‘bridge’ leads directly into the southern *gopura*, or entrance pavilion, of the second enclosure — the main entrance to the temple and larger than the other three *gopuras*. This entrance is a substantial building in its own right, its four wings giving it a cross-shaped plan. Here, as throughout the temple, the Khmers used two distinct kinds of sandstone, red and white. At the entrance, the red sandstone dominates the view, being used for the main structure of the *gopura* and the enclosure walls stretching left and right. A closer look shows that it is very finely textured, while soft and easy to crumble. Over the centuries it has weathered badly; a high iron content gives it its red colour, and also causes it to oxidise.

The white sandstone, on the other hand, is much tougher and very compact. In the *gopura* it has been used for the doors and windows, and for the massive pillars that divide the interior into three naves. Walking through the *gopura*, note the wings on either side, to the

left and right. The windows facing out are false; those facing in toward the enclosure are real, and both types have the typical balustrades.

Second enclosure

The southern *gopura* opens out onto the second enclosure, covering a little more than ten acres. Ahead, a causeway leads towards the main sanctuary, with the tower clearly visible. To the left and right are two of the enclosure's corner ponds. A short detour to see the pond at the left shows that it was originally lined with stone blocks. From its south-west corner there is a clear view of the tower and the first enclosure, reflected in the water. It is not certain when these ponds were dug.

Back on the causeway, continue towards the southern *gopura* of the inner enclosure, crossing a broad terrace that encloses four rectangular depressions, which probably contained water for ritual use, as at Phnom Rung.

Inner southern *gopura*

The *gopura*, like the previous one, is built mainly of red sandstone, with doors, windows and lintels in white sandstone. By contrast with the newly carved red stone from the recent restoration, the original blocks show the darkening effect of weathering. The wings are much shorter than those of the outer *gopura*, but have separate doorways. Far to the left and right, beyond the rows of blind windows, the corner pavilions also have south-facing entrances. Although not obvious at first, there is an unusual asymmetry in the gallery that makes up this in-

ner enclosure: the eastern part is shorter than the west, and there are nine windows to the left of the *gopura* but only eight to the right. In addition, there is an extra door on the left.

Only a lintel tops the main entrance directly ahead. This, with a central design of a giant holding a pair of elephants aloft and standing over a *kala* head, is probably not in its original position. The style is transitional between the end of the Baphuon and the start of the Angkor Wat period, although with some peculiarities, such as the very low position of the *kala*. There are no means of identifying who the giant is.

Inside the *gopura* on the right side of an inner door frame, now protected by a sheet of clear plastic, is the temple's principal inscription. The last date mentioned is 1112 A.D., and among other matters, it celebrates the installation of a statue of a deity, Trailokyavijaya, by the local ruler Virendradhipativaraman in 1108. This sheds some light on the temple's Buddhist cult. Trailokyavijaya was a Tantric Mahayana god who attempts to convert the Hindu god Shiva to this form of Buddhism, and in the inscription the statue is called the 'general' of the Lord of Vimaya.

Central sanctuary

Entering the central courtyard, the main sanctuary lies directly ahead, while on either side are semi-ruined towers — Prang Hin Daeng in red sandstone on the left, Prang Brahmadat in laterite on the right. The entrance facing is that of the *mandapa*, the extended antechamber to the

sanctuary. This, like the ensemble of the sanctuary, is entirely of white sandstone, and richly carved. (Fig. 66)

The pediment, with an undulating frame bordered by large leaves, carries the figure of *Shiva Nataraj* — the dancing Shiva. Although parts are missing or broken (the blank-faced stones are from the restoration), the main elements are clear. The kneeling figure on the far left is Shiva's disciple, *Kareikalammeyar*, who first appears in southern Indian art in the 8th century and was taken up by the Khmers in the 11th and 12th centuries. Characteristically, she is portrayed with drooping breasts. On the left, by Shiva's knee, an unidentified deity, but probably Brahma, rides what looks like a *hamsa*, or swan. On the far right, the bull *Nandin* kneels, with a *rishi* in attendance.

The lintel below this pediment is missing. At the base of the pilasters of this entrance are carved figures, nearly identical, and taking the role of guardians. The sheaf of arrows carried by the figure at left, however, identifies him as *Vajrasattva*, the Buddhist Tantric deity. In Khmer art, figurative carvings at the base of pilasters appears to have begun here at Phimai, at the end of the 11th century.

Continue through the doorway and the *mandapa*. This is connected to the cell, or *garbhagrha*, of the sanctuary by a short corridor, the *antarala*. Ahead, over the doorway to the *antarala*, is a Buddhist lintel. Although badly weathered, it depicts, in two registers, the unsuccessful assault on the Buddha by the army of Mara — the forces of evil. The Buddha sits above, in the centre, in the attitude of calling the earth to witness, and protected by the seven-headed *naga* *Muchalinda*. At his side, women

tempt him, while below, four-faced warriors mounted on elephants and dragons prepare to attack. Ahead, over the entrance to the *garbhagrha*, is another two-tiered Mahayana Buddhist lintel, very badly weathered, showing the Buddha meditating under the shelter of the *naga*'s hood.

Within the *garbhagrha* is a statue (a copy) of the Buddha in the same position — a popular representation that recurs often at Buddhist Khmer sites. About one metre to the right, as you face the Buddha, is a diamond-shaped hole in the floor. This is a conduit, known as a *somasutra*, leading from the base of the cell outside to the east; this was to drain lustral water used in rituals, and its exit can be seen in the north-east angle of the towers, just above ground level.

Continue and leave through the north door. Still inside the northern porch, turn to examine the north-facing interior lintel, which is in particularly fine condition. Again, the theme is Buddhist, and in two registers, although here the central figure breaks the two levels. As with so much Tantric Buddhist sculpture, the iconography is complex and difficult to interpret, but the three-headed and six-armed central figure is believed to be the deity Vajrasattva, although the attributes he holds are not the expected ones. Smaller identical figures flank him on either side, while dancers, accompanied by the musicians underneath Vajrasattva's pedestal, trample on human bodies. These last might represent the vanquished forces of evil and ignorance.

There are similar two-tiered interior lintels over the

other entrances to the *garbhagrha*, with Mahayana Buddhist themes. In fact, there is an interesting division of themes and religions between the inside and the outside of the sanctuary. All the lintels around the shrine, and leading up to it inside, are Buddhist; while the exterior lintels, as we will see in a minute, are Hindu in inspiration. The central figure over the eastern entrance is believed to be *Trailokyavijaya*, the deity mentioned in the temple's main inscription, while on the western side the central figure is the Buddha, standing and in the teaching position (the way his robes are carved shows the legacy of 9th–11th century Dvaravati art that preceded the arrival of the Khmers). (Fig. 67a)

Tower

Leave the sanctuary by the northern porch, and cross to the northwest corner of the courtyard to the left. The tower, visible from most parts of the temple, appears at its most impressive from here in the inner courtyard. The best views are from the north-west and north-east corners, the former in the late afternoon, the latter in the early morning. These diagonal views show the lines of the tower at their clearest, and it is worth pausing here to see just how this landmark in Khmer architecture achieves its effect.

The importance of Phimai's tower should not be underestimated. The inscription of 1112 refers to the dedication of a deity in 1108, so that Phimai pre-dates Angkor Wat by several years. This central sanctuary and the surrounding gallery are the oldest surviving parts of

Phimai, and were begun during the reign of Jayavarman VI (1080–1107). Without doubt, the ogival profile of this tower, a major architectural innovation, influenced the design of Angkor Wat's five towers.

This inward-curving silhouette is one of the most distinctive, and unique, symbols of Khmer architecture, variously likened to pine cone, bomb-shell and corn-cob. Even after the collapse of the Khmer Empire (temple building other than in wood virtually ended in the 14th century, and the capital at Angkor was abandoned in 1432), this type of tower persisted. The Siamese, who conquered Angkor, revived and remodelled it as the *prang*, in brick or laterite, covered with stucco. Ayutthaya temples such as Wat Buddhaisawan are in direct lineage to Phimai.

The origin of these Khmer towers was the Indian *shikara*, in particular those of the Chola dynasty in southern India (end of the 9th to mid of the 13th centuries). The Khmers, however, developed these pyramidal designs into soaring curved towers. The view from these corners of enclosure illustrates how the points along the curved profile are set by five tiers, beginning at the main cornice. Each is a reduction of the one below, both in height and diameter. There is, in fact, no mathematical progression, and the calculations must have been worked out simply by eye, probably from a model. Importantly, each of these tiers has an overhang lip, and the space below allows enough room for a series of antefixes at each angle. These free-standing stones, in a shape that echoes that of the tower, fill in the line of the curve, and on the upper

tiers even lean inwards to complete the shape. The result is a silhouette that curves to a point without being unduly massive. Far from being just decorations, the antefixes have an architectural role.

In addition, the builders have used redenting both to alter the shape of the tower and to give a vertical component. In principle, redenting means cutting back the corners of a square into a number of angles, and this helps to articulate the structure. Here, compressing the corners in a series of angles makes the section of the sanctuary more rounded. Later, at Angkor Wat, the corner angles were taken back even further, so that the towers appear virtually round. Here there is still a sense of four sides.

Finally, the tower has been made as imposing as possible by various means, and seems even taller and grander than its actual 28.15 metres above the level of the courtyard. The techniques used are the reducing height of the tiers, which gives a simple perspective effect from ground-level, the vertical lines of the redenting, the rising levels of the porches, and the outward bulge at the main cornice level, which gives an almost arrow-head profile.

Lintels, pediments and decorations

Locally, the tower invites comparison with that of Phnom Rung to the south-east, built a little later but quite different in its impression, being more definitely pointed and squatter. It is also worth noting that each part of the sanctuary starts at a different level, related to its importance. The sanctuary tower has the highest base, followed by the *mandapa*, and then the porches.

The entrances to the sanctuary, the faces and tiers of the tower, all allow room for the carving of scenes and figures, and all have been used to the full. The resulting iconography is rich and complex. The lintels and pediments provide standard spaces for the most important carvings, which on the outside of the sanctuary mainly show scenes from Hindu epics like the *Ramayana*. This mixture of religious motifs — Buddhist and Hindu — is a reminder of how easily they co-existed for most of Khmer history.

A series of two or three superimposed pediments rises over each entrance. Above these on each of the four faces of the tower, giant figures of *garudas* support the cornices with outstretched arms and wings. From here in the north-west corner of the enclosure, the west face of the tower can be seen at its best. Directly above the *garuda* an antefix stands on the cornice. This represents one of the deities of direction: Varuna, who guards the west, supported by *hamsas*. On the same level, all the way round the tower, are other antefixes: gods of direction in the centre, *nagas* at the corners, and a mixture of guardians and female divinities at the other angles formed by the redenting.

We start a clockwise circuit of the sanctuary at the west side door of the *mandapa*. Unusually, both the lintel here and what is left of the pediment show the same scene, and the action crosses between them. This is the scene in the *Ramayana* epic in which Rama and his brother Lakshmana have been entrapped in the coils of a *naga*. This happens when Indrajit, Ravana's son, fires at them with

an arrow, which magically turns into a serpent. In the top left corner you can see Indrajit aiming the arrow, while some of the monkey troops on the lower register point at him to warn Rama. Others show their anguish in various ways, and Sita cradles Rama's head. Above, on the pediment, however, help is about to arrive in the form of a garuda and monkey reinforcements flying down.

Further along, the west entrance below the tower also has scenes from the *Ramayana* on both the lintel and the pediment. The lintel shows Rama's troops building the causeway across the ocean to Lanka in preparation for their invasion. The monkey warriors carry boulders to throw in the sea, which is represented by various denizens on the lower right, including fish and dragons. The pediment above is a battle scene from the same epic.

Over the north entrance to the sanctuary , the lintel shows a four-armed Vishnu dancing, while the incomplete pediment carries an as-yet uninterpreted scene, probably from the *Ramayana*.

Around the corner, the lintel over the eastern entrance to the shrine has had different interpretations applied to it. Originally it was thought to be a scene from the *Ramayana*, in which Lakshmana cuts off the ear and nose of the demon Ravana's younger sister Surpanakha, while Rama and Sita look on. That the victim looks distinctly unfeminine seems not to have been noticed until more recently. A second interpretation had Rama killing Viradha, but then Rama would have appeared twice in the same scene. More likely is the suggestion by Bruno Dagens that this is a scene from the life of Krishna (one of the earthly

manifestations of the god Vishnu). In this, Krishna is killing Kansa with his parents watching. The clue is the half-hidden figure of a bull, up-ended with its legs tied. This could represent the bull Arishta which, with a *simha* (also shown), unsuccessfully tried to kill Krishna under instruction from Kansa. In all, an interesting example of the problems of finding the meaning in Khmer carvings.

The pediment probably shows the death of Ravana, near the end of the *Ramayana* epic. Until recently, however, it was thought that this was the judgement of Ravana's uncle, the Brahma Malivaraja (also from the *Ramayana*), shown in the middle descending from heaven on a *hamsa*. Heaven here is represented by no less than the temple of Phimai itself! Below, chariots, are Rama (left) and Ravana (right). So far so good, but if you look carefully under the horses' hooves, you can see an inverted head. Khmer lintel carvers were quite fond of including the various parts of a story in a single narrative lintel, and this head is now thought to be Ravana's, as he is killed.

Over the east side door to the *mandapa* is a lintel that may show yet another episode from the *Ramayana*, possibly the return of Rama to Ayodhya, having finally conquered Ravana in the battle of Lanka. The pediment shows a gathering of the major gods: Shiva above and, from left to right, Bragma, Indra and Vishnu. Possibly, they are conferring blessing on the victorious Rama in the lintel below.

Other buildings in the inner enclosure

This point in the circuit around the courtyard brings us to the so called Prang Brahmadat. Square in plan and 16m

high, this laterite tower in generally poor condition. It was built later than the main sanctuary, around the beginning of the 13th century during the reign of Jayavarman VII. Inside is a reproduction of an important statue discovered here — a portrait of Jayavarman VII himself in the posture of the Buddha. The original is in the Phimai Nation Museum. This is one of a few lifelike statues of the king that have been discovered. Another, almost identical, but carved when Jayavarman was younger, was found in the capital at Angkor, and is now on display at the National Museum in Phnom Penh; this museum also has another head from a similar statue. There are lintels over the north, east and south entrances, all weathered to black — on the east and south are Buddhist scenes, while the north shows Krishna fighting a horse. The western lintel is uncarved.

On the other side of the courtyard is another partly-ruined square tower, almost as high at 15m but built in red sandstone. This is locally called Prang Hin Daeng, ‘Red Stone Tower’, and was also built at the start of the 13th century. Adjoining it to the north is a ‘library’, aligned east-west and facing in towards the *mandapa*; its entrance has a lintel apparently showing Krishna battling animals. A number of *lingas* were found here during restoration.

Inner galleries

The galleries that surround the inner enclosure form a continuous walkway broken only by the four *gopuras*. Reenter the main southern *gopura* and turn either right and continue to the west *gopura*, or left to make a longer anticlockwise circuit that takes in various Tantric Bud-

dhist lintels around the galleries. The windows open onto the courtyard.

At the west *gopura*, turn to look through to the tower. Note that the west and east doorways of the tower are aligned with those of this *gopura* and the east *gopura* beyond. However, as it is the ensemble of the sanctuary rather than the tower that is centred within the courtyard, this alignment of doorways is offset to the north. This is the reason for the west and east *gopura* being north of the centre — not only here in the inner enclosure, but in the outer enclosure as well.

The twin pavilions

Leave the west *gopura* through its west doorway. Directly ahead is the corresponding *gopura* of the outer enclosure. In the space between, on either side, are the remains of two large rectangular buildings, of uncertain purpose. They have identical plans, although the northern of the pair is almost completely ruined. The entrances to the southern building are on the north and south sides. Inside, rows of metre-square holes cover the surface of the laterite floor.

The remaining outer *gopuras*

Walk around the north side of the inner enclosure to the east outer *gopura*, which is in reasonably good condition and has an attractive setting. The massive square columns that divide the interior into three naves are especially impressive, buttressed by angled beams just below the capitals.

Artefacts: The most famous is the statue of Jayavarman VII already mentioned. In addition, a number of unplaced lintels, statues and lingas are kept at the Phimai National Museum nearby.⁶¹

The other art objects of Phimai temple

Inscription

Thus during many centuries prior to the first inscriptions erected at Phimai, the natural advantages of the site encouraged a tradition of settlement and worship which by 1000 A.D. represented a considerable heritage. The earliest inscription in the Phimai area written in both Sanskrit and Khmer was installed at Prasat Phnom Wan, located to the south of Phimai, in 1082 (see p. 104). It commands the military and religious officials of a king called Jayavarman VI, 'victorious protector', to care for the monastery dedicated to Shiva at Phnom Wan. The inscription also mentions Vimayapura, the city of Vimaya (Phimai). A monastery is thought to have existed at Phimai also — one which was kept active within the temple walls well into this century. The real significance of the inscription is that the ruling line of Jayavarman VI, known as the Mahidharapura dynasty, is thought to have originated in this part of Northeast Thailand. The presence of so many major temples Phnom Rung, Muang Tam, Phimai, Phnom Wan — in this region corroborates this belief. A descendant of Jayavarman VI was Suryavarman II (1113–1150), one of the greatest Khmer kings who expanded the empire to its

61. Op. Cit., p. 88.

limits and built Angkor Wat. He was also kinsman to Narendraśrī of Phnom Rung, and the royal connections of this area are reflected in the size and importance of Phimai and Phnom Rung.

Several inscriptions have been found at Phimai itself, and have been the subject of considerable scholarly analysis. One of these was found on the south *gopura* of the inner enclosure around the central temple. This inscription carries several dates, the last of which is 1112 A.D. The local ruler, Virendradhipativarman, is mentioned not only in this inscription, but can be seen in the bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat. There he rides on his war elephant, accompanied by his troops, in a similar scene to the victory narratives carved on the lintels at Phnom Rung.

Mahayanist divinities in heaven

A narrative lintel of the type that started to become popular towards the end of the 11th century shows a compartmented scene (the right part is missing). The row of *hamsas* and *garudas* along the bottom are holding the main panels — a clear sign that the scene is celestial. The various divinities are carved in sizes according to their importance, from the principal male figure to the praying *rishis* on the upper left.

Row of standing Buddhas

There are a few such lintels featuring a line of Buddhas, each in a niche, with the hands raised in the preaching attitude — the Vitarka Mudra. The interest of these lintels lies in the garments, for while the figures are clearly

Buddhas and male, they are wearing women's dress of the period. This is hard to explain under any circumstances, but the most convincing hypothesis (by Jean Boisselier) is that this was a tradition of a local Tantric sect. (Fig. 67b)

Fragment of lintel with giant *simha*

This incomplete lintel (the right third is missing) is carved with great flair and vigour. It has an unusual design for its period (that of Angkor Wat), with a fully-formed *simha* taking the role of the *kala*. The garland and vegetation is particularly deep.

Ashvamedha ceremony

This lintel also uses the narrative technique which, when it is possible to identify the scene, can be of great interest. This ceremony, with a horse's head in the middle, and one priest pouring water onto the hands of another, comes from India and is known as the Ashvamedha. It occurs at the end of a year in which the king releases a favourite horse to roam wherever it will, in order to test the loyalty of his subjects. A troop of soldiers follow the horse to observe how it is treated — and if it is harmed in any way, to mete out punishment.

Kala surmounted by a divinity

This recently excavated lintel has many features from the Preah Lo style of the previous century — the *kala* head disgorging the garland and the strong loops of leaves trailing down from the garland. This is one of many ex-

amples in Thailand of styles lingering beyond the normal dates in Cambodia.

Indra on Airavata

Very similar to the previous lintel in style, this features the god Indra on his three-headed elephant Airavata.

As well as the carving style , the dress is typical of the mid-10th century. One anomaly in both is the detail of Ganesha at each end riding on own trunk. Elsewhere, this is found earlier or later than this period.

Vishnu stepping over the ocean

This beautifully carved lintel, with a prominent scene in the centre standing in high relief out from the rest of the design, is typical of the Koh Ker style. The episode in the central panel is part of the Three Steps of Vishnu, in which Vishnu steps over the ocean onto a lotus held by the Earth goddess Bhumidevi. Note the two figures of Ganesha on either side, and how Krishna is killing Kansa by tearing him apart; a fully finished version of this has him tied up, but here he is loose. Also, if you look closely, you can see what might be the outline of a fang on the side of cheek. If so, he might be Vishnu transformed into a lion, and killing Hiranya.

Churning of the sea of milk

This is one of the few known examples from Thailand of one of the favourite Khmer cosmological stories, a magnificent example being that of Angkor Wat. The removal of the heads by thieves underlines the sad necessity of re-

moving valuable artefacts from the sites. The composition is more typical of the earlier Baphuon period than of Angkor Wat, but details, such as of dress, belong firmly in the mid-12th century.

Mount Mandara is here shown as a pole: Vishnu wraps himself around it to command the proceedings, but is also incarnated as the turtle to stop the mountain sinking. The *naga* Vasuki is held by the two teams — gods and demons. Note Brahma sitting on top of the pole (unusually, with his multiple heads in a three-quarter rather than a full profile) and lakshmi and the horse Ucchaisaravas peering over the top of the turtle. The flying maidens are *apsaras*, just created by the churning.

Vishnu stepping over the ocean

In another of Vishnu's exploits, less often treated, he appears as a dwarf, crossing the ocean and subduing king Bali. This version of the Vamanavatara, as the incarnation is known, is Angkor Wat in style, as evidence by the clothing and ornaments of the period. Vishnu takes both the central position, stepping over the sea, and at right, where he subdues Bali.

Hindu Iconography

By no means all of the lintels at Phimai take their inspiration from Buddhism. Many of the narratives, especially in the inner enclosure, relate to Hindu deities, particularly Shiva and Vishnu. As at Phnom Rung, the pediment over the main entry depicts Shiva dancing. However, the god Vishnu appears to have also been popular, particularly in

his manifestation as Rama and Krishna.⁶² In the Krishna story, at the end of the period just before the present era, demons threatened the order of the cosmos. The goddess Earth ascended to the home of the gods, Mount Meru, and pleaded for protection. Chief among the demons was Kamsa, whom Vishnu had previously slain, but who had returned to cause havoc on earth. Vishnu was approached, and listened to the petition. He responded by plucking two hairs from his head, one fair and one dark. The two hairs became the half-brothers Krishna and Balarama, born to kill again the demon Kamsa. The two boys spent their childhood amongst cowherds, tending the flock.

Krishna's superhuman nature was at last revealed when he overcame a wicked *naga* king called Kaliya. Krishna tears the *naga* apart, jumps in the water, battles with the creature, and finally dances upon it. The great serpent eventually retreated, for Vishnu in all his guises is the moderating preserver, rather than destroyer. In his incarnation as Krishna, Vishnu defeats many other animals, including the bull Arishta, the horse Kesin, the elephant Kuvalayapida, and the *simha*. This last motif, although popular in Khmer scenes, does not actually figure in the Indian version of the tale. Krishna is usually seen gripping the rear leg of the animal as he prepares to hurl it into the air. Other times, such as on a lintel on the south-east entrance *gopura*, and another on the entry to the central courtyard, the taut torso of Krishna, or possi-

62. Smithi Siribhadra and Elizabeth Moore: Palaces of gods; Khmer art & architecture in Thailand, p. 240.

bly a giant, holds aloft two elephants whilst rampant lions issue from the mouth of the creature beneath his feet.

The final victory comes when Krishna kills the evil Kamsa. This episode is depicted on a lintel on the east porch of the central tower. In this lintel, and again and again in the carvings at Phimai, one is conscious of the surface of the stone in the bodies of the figures. There is a tension created by the contrast of the sharply tactile surface and the volumes confined within them. The rise of Krishna's chest as he raises his arms to assault kamsa seems to push against the skin of the stone. Within the fixed outline of the lintel, triangular confines of lintel and pediment, the Khmer love of narrative could be expressed. And within the narratives subscribed to in the 9th to 13th century A.D., the divine human figure, the god who is king, reign supreme. The manifestations were many, from small stationary guardian and ascetics, to the vibrant movements of dancing Shivas or Krishna defeating evil. Throughout Khmer art, until the excessive expansion and changing times which precipitated its disintegration after the reign of Jayavarman, VII, the human figure mirrors the ascendancy of the individual. The ruler at the pinnacle of society, and the consequent multiplication of the hierarchy beneath him, translated easily into the tales of valour from the Indian epics. The confidence and prosperity of Khmer culture reached its height during the 12th and 13th centuries. This is reflected at Phimai in the tensioned human figures; men and women who move amongst the riotous vegetation to fill the lintel's surface.⁶³

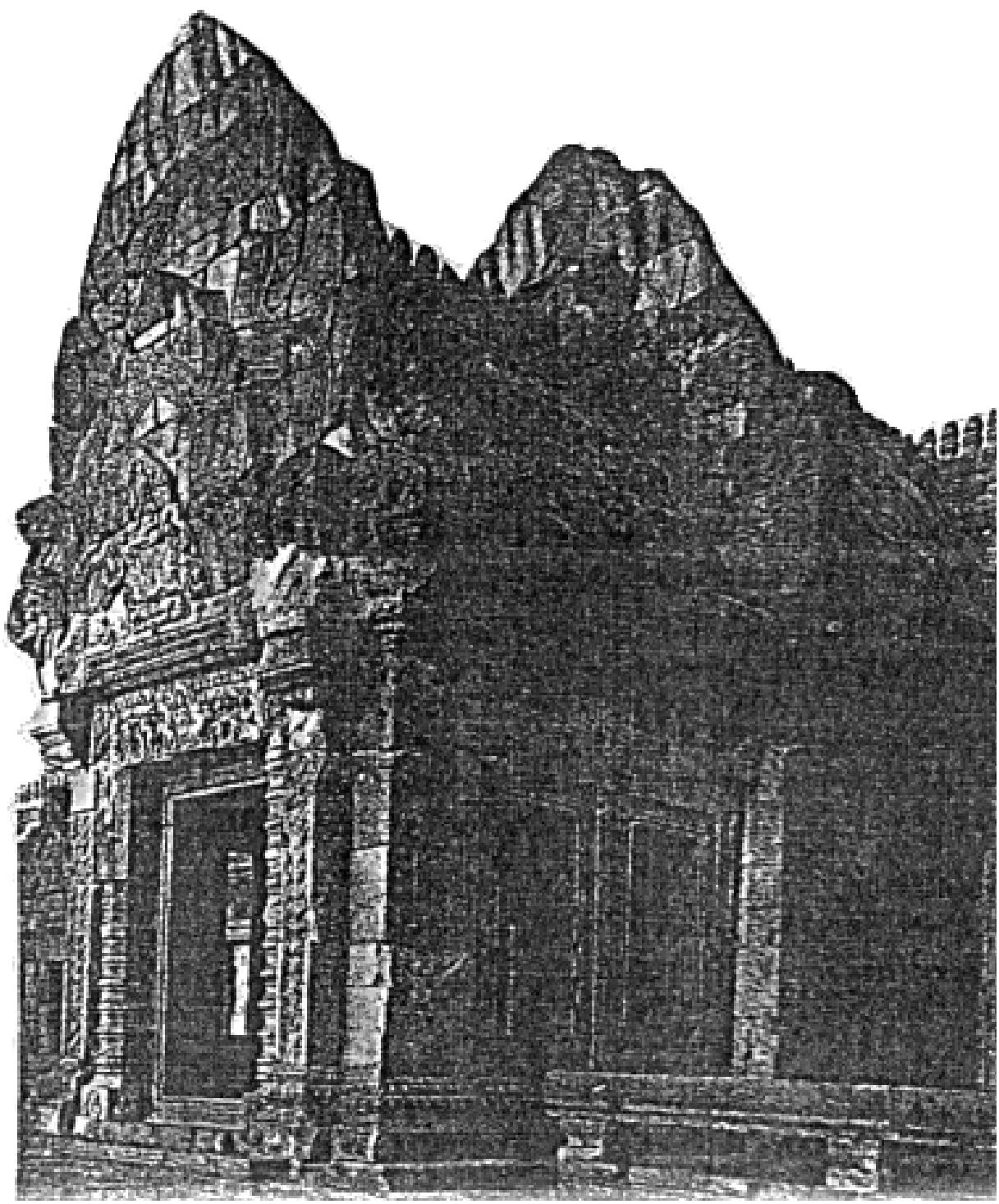
63. Op. Cit., p. 240.

Chapter VII

Prasat Phnom Rung

&

Prasat Muang Tam



Prasat Phnom Rung

The inscriptions Prasat Phnom Rung offer a unique insight into the nature of Khmer rule in Northeast Thailand between the 10th and 13th centuries A.D. They record the family history of Narendraditya and his son, Hiranya, making it clear that they ruled autonomously, not as vassals to the king at Angkor. Some of this history is depicted on the narrative reliefs adorning the main sanctuary. If, as they appear to, these reliefs do relate to Narendraditya's life, they represent the earliest portraiture and carving of historical scenes in Khmer art.⁶⁴

This major temple, built mainly in a high quality pinkish sandstone, combines an impressive hill-top site that commands the surrounding plain, and an extraordinary amount of architectural decoration of the highest order. ([Fig. 68](#))

Added interest is given by its intensely local associations, for much of Phnom Rung's iconography and decoration is a celebration of this region's most powerful family — that of Narendraditya, a member of the Mahidharapura dynasty. Throughout Phnom Rung there is evidence of the autonomy of local rule. The builders certainly owed allegiance to Angkor but they were much more than mere vassals.⁶⁵

Begin with the setting, for the name 'Phnom Rung' refers to the ancient volcano upon which the temple sits.

64. Smithi Siribhadra and Elizabeth Moore: Op. Cit., p. 267.

65. Michael Freeman: Op. Cit., p. 99.

Phnom Rung hill rises over 350 metres above the surrounding plain. On a fine day, one can gaze across the floodplain below. The eye is first caught by the sparkle of water in the *baray* or reservoir of the neighbouring temple of Muang Tam, and then by the bark grey foothills of the Dongrek Mountains, the border of Cambodia. The strategic value of the hill-top location of Phnom Rung continues to be appreciated today by the Thai Royal Air Force, who share the crest of the mountain with the ancient temple. In former times, Phnom Rung was midway between the great city of Angkor to the south and Phimai to the northwest. The ruler who controlled the Phnom Rung area most probably also had suzerainty over the fertile floodplain stretching south to Prasat Muang Tam. This powerful fiefdom appears to have been held during one of the most prosperous periods of the region's history, by the family of Narendraditya.

Altogether eleven inscriptions have been found at Phnom Rung. The name 'Phnom Rung' itself appears once on a stele inscribed with a Sanskrit eulogy and several times in the Khmer inscriptions. It is unusual for a temple to retain their original Khmer names which here means 'broad mountain'.⁶⁶

The earliest of the inscriptions found at Prasat Phnom Rung is in Sanskrit. It is only four lines, but has been dated to around the 7th or 8th century. This date precedes that of the 9th century usually given to the existing structures within the temple complex.

Eleven inscriptions have been found at Phnom Rung,

66. Smithi Siribhadra and Elizabeth Moore: Op. Cit., p. 267.

and together give a patchy account of its history. The most important is the last, a stele erected in 1150 by Hiranya, son of Narendraditya. In it, Narendraditya is described as claiming suzerainty over this region as a result of having defeated many of King Suryavarman II's enemies. Suryavarman II, builder of Angkor Wat and one of the greatest Khmer rulers, was indeed a relative and a contemporary of Narendraditya, and the campaigns that led to the king's rule at Angkor from 1112 to 1152 may well have involved Narendraditya and his troops. The tone here is that of a powerful regional ruler supporting the king. There is a battle scene carved of on one of the upper pediments above the south entrance to the sanctuary, with war elephants, one of which crushes an enemy soldier with its trunk. If this is from Narendraditya's campaigns, it may be the earliest historical scene in the country. Inside the south doorway is a lintel showing a king performing a ritual, aided by a *rishi*, and this also may be an image of Narendraditya.

Soon after the campaigns, probably at the beginning of the century, Narendraditya turned his back on war and entered monastic life as a *yagi* and *gura*. Hiranya, his son, claims for himself to have completed his Brahmanic education by the age of 16, became a great elephant hunter by the age of 18, and at 20 had a golden image of his father erected. Stating his lineage and accomplishments in this way, Hiranya was using the inscription to legitimize his claims to rule — standard practice at the time.

This inscription begins with a hymn to Shiva, one of the three principle Hindu deities, and the god appears in

important locations in the temple: dancing over the main entrance to the *mandapa*, and as the supreme *yagi* over the main entrance to the east *gopura*. There is no doubt that Shivaite worship was well established at Phnom Rung, but Vishnuite images have also been found, and are referred to in another inscription.

Looking back in time from Narendraditya and Hiranya, there are 10th century accounts (in inscriptions) of land being purchased to build the sanctuary and its neighbouring community, with slaves assigned to its upkeep, and of a feudal-style land distribution system known as *Kalpana*, in which land was allocated to servants of the temple who would then return a proportion of the produce to the monastery. The earliest inscription of all was carved in the 7th or 8th century, at least a century before the earliest buildings that can be seen today.

Plan of the Temple

The 383m inactive volcano that rises over the flat farmland that stretches 30 km south to the visible Dongrek Mountains provides the setting for one of the Khmer empire's few, but spectacular, axial temples. The Khmer concern with architectural symbolism, increasingly focused on the recreation of Mount Meru and the surrounding elements of the Hindu universe, made mountains particularly compelling and special sites. ([Fig. 69](#))

The Khmer word 'phnom', meaning hill, describes the location. Like Preah Vihear, the cliff top temple 190 km to the east, and Wat Phu even further east in Laos on a

mountainside overlooking the Mekong River, Phnom Rung was built to take advantage of its naturally commanding site, and a sequence of causeway steps and terraces make a long, impressive approach to the sanctuary at the top. The entire complex is strung out on an east-west axis, a little over $\frac{1}{2}$ km from the first laterite terrace on the eastern slope of the hill to the western gopura. (Fig. 70)

Although the modern approach to the temple is by roads from the east and west that converge on the entrance gate close to the top of the hill, the real start is another $\frac{1}{2}$ km to the east, at the foot of the eastern slope. Now partly covered in vegetation, its laterite steps lead up to the first of a series of cross-shaped platforms. Continuing west, a long causeway, second platform, succession of staircases and final platform lead to the enclosure. This, surrounded by a gallery with a gopura in each face and corner pavilions, contains the central sanctuary and several other buildings of different periods.

‘White Elephant Hall’

From the visitor centre near the entrance, walk back down the slope and to the left in the direction of the first cross-shaped terrace. The large laterite and sandstone structure that you come to first is known locally as the ‘White Elephant Hall’. This is a rectangular building with porches on its east and west walls, surrounded on three sides (west, north and east) by galleries and walls. The name is no more than imaginative folklore: there is no reason for believing that this building had anything to do

with white elephants. Before restoration, Phnom Rung was locally thought to have been a king's palace. A king would have been expected to possess white elephants, and they would have had to be kept somewhere. The real function of the building is not known.

Causeway

The cross-shaped terrace just south of the 'White Elephant Hall' marks the beginning of the principal approach to the temple. From the middle of this platform, which measures 40m north-south and 30m east-west, face east — the view is directly towards the staircase and the tower. Sixty-seven lotus-bud-tipped boundary stones line each side of the 160m causeway; their shape is the first indication on the visit of Phnom Rung's architectural style, which is of the Angkor Wat period from the first few decades of the 12th century.

First *naga* 'bridge'

Walk along the laterite-paved causeway towards the next cross-shaped stone terrace in the distance. This terrace, with five-headed *naga* balustrades, is one of the special inventions of the later periods of Khmer architecture. Found also at Phimai, and at Angkor Wat itself, it is known as a *naga* 'bridge'. The bridge in question is less of a physical one, even though the platform is raised on pillars, than a cosmological one. The *nagas* lining it in the form of balustrades here perform the function of a rain-

bow, with which they are sometimes compared in Khmer inscriptions, and are a bridge between this world and the divine. The hill beyond, and the sanctuary at its top, are a recreation of the centre of the Hindu universe. This platform, fully restored, is particularly fine. It rises half on carved pillars, and can be ascended from the east, north and south. In its centre, a large lotus leaf is very lightly carved — unfinished, in fact. The balustrade of rearing five-headed *nagas* is in the style of Angkor Wat, and carved in great detail; note the scales and backbones.

Staircase and second *naga* ‘bridge’

From here a broad staircase rises in five sections to the sanctuary. At the top is another large terrace just before the entrance, set with four artificial ponds. These, intended for ritual use now once more contain water since the restoration has been completed. ([Fig. 71](#))

Between the western two ponds is the eastern projection of a second *naga* ‘bridge’. Similar, though smaller than the first at the foot of the staircase, it features *naga* balustrades facing in three directions: east, north and south. In fact, there is a subtle difference in the balustrades. Look carefully at the point where the *naga* heads rear up and notice that they are being disgorged by another creature.

This is a *makara*, and its body, rather than the snakes’, lines the cross-shaped platform. Post-holes indicate that this terrace had, or was intended to have, a wooden roof.

Eastern gopura

The level of this terrace broadens and extends west as a platform for the entire sanctuary. The enclosure is marked by a rectangle of galleries, with *gopuras* in the middle of each of the four sides. Facing the sunrise over the distant plains, the eastern *gopura* is the principal entrance. A succession of doorways lies ahead on the line of the temple's axis — through the *mandapa* (or entrance pavilion), the *antarala* that connects it to the *prang* and out again through the western *gopura*.

This eastern *gopura* is an elaborate building in its own right, with diminishing chambers on either side that give it a ‘telescoped’ appearance. The main doorway has a double-sectioned projecting porch, with a double pediment at the front, and a slightly higher one behind. Note that the rear pediment has not been finished: the arch is merely undressed blocks.

The pediment at the front features a Hindu *yagi*, surrounded by female attendants and celestial dancers. In such a key location for an east-facing temple, this almost certainly represents Shiva as the supreme ascetic. One clue is the hairstyle, the same as that on the dancing Shiva on the *mandapa* inside. Another is the posture, known as *lalitasana*, or ‘royal ease’ — a relaxed position with the right leg extended. Not only this, the carving may also be an image of Narendraditya, the local ruler who became a yogi. Identifying a king with a god was a practice common at Angkor; this may be a regional version. Unusually for the 12th century, the area around the figure of the *yagi* is blank; perhaps the carvers intended

to add another lightly incised garland, or perhaps this area symbolises the ascetic life of a yogi. The lintel below shows a divinity seated over a *kala*, who grips the hind legs of a pair of lions.

The *gopura* also has two smaller entrances. The northern of these, to your right as you stand facing the main door, carries a small pediment; with a scene that must be from the *Ramayana* — one of the battles between the monkeys' troops and the *yakshas*.

The view from the top, with the help of a map, gives a clue to Phnom Rung's importance during a long period from the 8th to the 13th centuries. From the platform in front of the east *gopura* there is a good view to the south and east. Just 6km to the south-east, hidden by trees, lies the other important temple in the area — Muang Tam (the 'Lower City', so-called because of its relation to Phnom Rung) — and the *baray* just to its north of it can be seen glistening from here. Muang Tam was connected to Phnom Rung by a road — one of the most important of the royal roads that spanned the empire. It continued on to Angkor, via the Ta Muen Pass in the Dongrek Mountains (too far to be made out from here). Resting houses and hospitals lined this route, and with binoculars, you should be able to spot the laterite tower of Kuti Reussi, the chapel of a hospital, just to the right of the nearest corner of the *baray*. Beyond this, another hospital, and resting house, was located at the Ta Muen Pass, close to the important temple of Ta Muen Thom. To the north and west, the view is obscured by trees and the slope of the hill, but the royal road continued north-west

to Phimai. Khao Phnom Rung, as the hill is called, is clearly strategic, while the fertile plain that surrounds it, aided by a water management programme of *barays* and canals, provided the local rulers with a powerful economic base. The view today of rice-fields and trees, at its best in the rainy season, gives a sense of continuity with this past.

Central sanctuary

Enter the main doorway of the *gopura* and continue through to the enclosure. As you emerge on the other side of the *gopura*, the *mandapa* lies directly ahead, so close to the doorway that it blocks the view of the *prang* beyond. This restricted view makes the pediment and lintel of the *mandapa* the first thing that you can see, and both are masterpieces.

The pediment depicts a ten-armed dancing Shiva — *Shiva Nataraj* — and while it resembles the one in a similar position at Phimai, it is more complete, the god has a more benign expression, and there is great suppleness to the posture. The figures at Shiva's feet are badly damaged. Also there is Ganesh, the elephant-headed son of Shiva, and two female disciples, one of whom (with the drooping breasts) is almost certainly *kareikalammyar*.

Below the pediment is the lintel, which in recent years has become the most famous in Thailand. In counterpoint to the dancing Shiva, the image here is of Vishnu reclining — *Vishnu Anantasayin* — and despite the missing left edge and being broken in two pieces, it is one of

the finest representations of this well-known Hindu scene. Its recent history has been dramatic. Before restoration work began, the lintel rested on the ground, but at some time in the early 1960s, it was found to be missing, presumed stolen. Later, it was discovered to have been acquired by an American art foundation and on loan to the Art Institute of Chicago. As the restoration of the temple neared completion in the 1980s, public outcry grew in Thailand for its return, which was successfully negotiated in exchange for a payment made to the American foundation from private sources in the United States and an agreement to allow temporary loans of artefacts to the Art Institute of Chicago. The lintel was replaced in 1988, the year that the Phnom Rung restoration was finished (Fig. 72).

Vishnu reclines on his right side on the back of the *naga* — the world-serpent Ananta or Sesha. However, in the development of this famous scene over the centuries, by the 12th century when this was carved, the body of the *naga* has diminished, and the most prominent creature is a long-bodied dragon with a lion's head. The few dragons that have entered Khmer iconography seem to have come from China and Vietnam. Possibly, this was inspired through contact — direct or indirect — with the Chams of the central Annam coast. Brahma rises from Vishnu on a lotus flower, while Lakshmi as usual cradles Vishnu's legs; the tail plumage of two *hamsas* makes an arch for the scene. The motifs on either side (though the left is missing) are a *kala* face issuing garlands and two elegantly carved parrots below, with other figures, such

as a female monkey with young fitting precisely into the tightly-knit design.

Cross over the small platform (the third and final ‘*naga bridge*’) and enter the *mandapa*. Steps lead down into the room, which is about a metre below the level of the *antarala* and shrine. The steps are recent additions, and there is no agreement as to why the floor should be so low. Perhaps there might have been a raised wooden floor; the ceiling was certainly of wood to conceal the corbelled construction of the roof. The *mandapa* now contains a statue of the kneeling bull Nandi (Shiva’s steed), and blocks caved with the guardians of direction.

These are, clockwise from the entrance:

East: Indra on the elephant Airavata

South-east: Agni on a rhinoceros

South: Skanda on a peacock

South-west: Nirriti on a *raksasa*, or demon (missing)

West: Varuna on a *naga* (though elsewhere normally on a *hamsa*)

North-west: Vayu on a deer (missing)

North: Kubera on an elephant-headed lion

North-east: Shiva on the bull Nandi⁶⁷

In the *antarala* beyond, an interior lintel carrying five

67. Michael Freeman: Prasat Phnom Rung & Muang Tam, p. 20.

rishis or yogis reaffirms the importance of Shivaite worship. Continue through into the shrine, where the *linga* would have been situated. To the left, inside the porch that opens to the south, are two lintels. One shows a row of figures, the central one bearded, and this is believed to show the ceremony in which Narendraditya became a *rishi*. (Fig. 73) The other lintel shows Shiva as an ascetic surrounded by other *rishis*. On the opposite side, in the porch opening north, one of the lintels is too badly damaged to be identifiable, while the other shows Arjuna firing an arrow. Leave the sanctuary through the west door, pausing inside the porch to look at the lintel in which Krishna kills Kansa (the other interior lintel is missing). As you emerge from this western porch, the west *gopura* lies directly ahead; to your left is the small square building known as the Prang Noi. Walk over to the right instead, for a general view of the tower.

Tower

Compare this view with the same one at Phimai. From the decorative details, Phnom Rung's tower was built in the early 12th century, after that at Phimai but still before Angkor Wat. Unusually, however, while you might expect to see some progression — an intermediate stage between the towers of Phimai and Angkor Wat — in some important way it is actually further from Angkor Wat and closer to Chola Indian *shikaras*, such as that at Rajarajesvara.

The redenting of Phimai's tower, with six interior an-

gles at each corner, giving a rounded section, and those at Angkor Wat even more so. Here however, the corners have been redented to only four interior angles, and the tower is distinctly pyramidal. You can see also that the cornice is much less prominent than at Phimai, so that there is none of the waisted arrowhead impression that helps make Phimai so imposing. If you step closer for a moment to the west door below the tower, you will see that the scene carved on the pediment includes a model of this very tower, with its slightly squat, pyramidal shape. Two tiers of pediment above this, roughly at cornice level, is another representation of the tower.

None of this implies that Phnom Rung's tower is in anyway less than that of Phimai. It has its own unique character, unlike any other Khmer temple, and the quantity and standard of carving that decorates it is exceptional. As at Phimai, there are five levels, including the cornice, each smaller than the one below, and the pyramid is topped with the vase of plenty. Originally, this might have been surmounted with Shiva's trident, where the lightning rod now is; some justification for thinking this is the image of the tower in the west pediment.

Lintels, pediments and decorations

The *antarala* at Phnom Rung has a door on each side, giving a total of eight entrances in the sanctuary, each of them the opportunity for placing a lintel and pediment. These locations, together with the interior lintels, give Phnom Rung a wealth of imagery, all of it Hindu. We

start at the western end.

The badly damaged lintel over the west door of the sanctuary carries the same scene as over the west door of Phimai's *mandapa* — that of Rama and Lakshmana caught in the coils of a serpent. The pediment is related to it, and shows Sita being taken under Ravana's orders to the battlefield to see them. She is carried in a flying chariot, rendered as a miniature of this very temple, while the air all around is filled with Rama's monkey warriors.

Continue clockwise around the sanctuary. Note the pilasters and colonettes that frame the north door — the former carved with rampant lions at the base, the latter with praying *rishis*. The lintel above is damaged, but originally showed Vishnu riding garuda. Above, monkey troops fill most of the pediment in an unidentified scene from the *Ramayana*.

A little further along, the lintel over the *antarala* shows Krishna despatching an elephant and lion in a carving that, despite the loss of Krishna's face, has a fine sense of movement. In the pediment, Sita is being abducted by Ravana. Appearing twice, she is taken prisoner in the lower part, and carried away at the top in Ravana's chariot. The gravity of the occasion appears not to concern two monkeys copulating in a tree.

The next doorway along is the north entrance to the *mandapa*, showing the Battle of Lanka, with airborne monkey troops swooping down from above. Continue around the corner to the east entrance of the *mandapa*, where you first entered the enclosure. It has a false half roof on either

side, and under the east gables of these are two half-pediments. That on the left as you face the entrance is of special interest, because it seems to show a rite described in the 13th century at Angkor by Chou Ta-Kuan (the Chinese emissary whose account has provided much information on everyday life). Although the carving is damaged, it appears to show a puberty ceremony in which a priest breaks the hymen of a girl with a miniature *linga*. Chou Ta-Kuan's account goes: "Daughters of rich parents, from seven to nine years, of age (or eleven, in the case of poor people) are handed over to a Buddhist or Taoist [but Chou Ta-Kuan defines Taoists as "worshipping nothing but a block of stone (*linga*)"] priest for deflowering — a ceremony known as *chen t'an*. Each year the proper authorities choose a day of the month corresponding to the fourth Chinese moon and let this be known throughout the country... I have been told that at a given moment the priest enters the maiden's pavilion and deflowers her with his hand, dropping the first-fruits into a vessel of wine. It is said that the father and mother, the relations and neighbours, stain their foreheads with this wine, or even taste it."

Along the south side of the sanctuary, the pediment over the *mandapa* shows a fine carving of the bull Nandi, but the images of Shiva with Uma on his back have been unscrupulously hacked away. The lintel is missing.

Other buildings

In the south-west corner of the enclosure is a tower known as the Prang Noi (small prang), that rises no higher

than cornice level. The styles of the eastern and southern lintels date it to between the late 10th and early 11th centuries — pre-dating the main sanctuary complex. Unusually, it is lined with laterite, and as no trace was ever found of a superstructure, it may have been unfinished.

In the south-east corner is a laterite ‘library’, and on the north side of the central sanctuary are the remains of two brick building, one facing south, the other east. The colonettes still standing are stylistically from the Koh Ker period, so that these brick structures must date to around the early 10th century.

Western gopura

On April 13th each year, as the sun rises, it shines directly through the succession of 15 doorways and halls, from the east gopura, through the sanctuary, to the west where you now stand. This is the day chosen for the Phnom Rung Festival. Given the importance attached by the Khmers to auspicious dates, the dedication of the temple may well have been made on this day, when the plane of the ecliptic is aligned with the axis of the temple.

Artefacts: The Mahawirawong Museum in Khorat has a few interesting pieces, notably a statue of the elephant-headed Ganesh in 8th century Prei Kmeng style that is the oldest artefact recovered from Phnom Rung, a statue of Brahmani in early 10th century Koh Ker style, and another of a fourheaded Brahma.

There is also a lintel showing Krishna killing the serpent Kaliya at the National Museum, Bangkok.

Pasat Muang Tam

Prasat Muang Tam, the ‘temple of the lower city’, is only about eight kilometres from Prasat Phnom Rung in the Prakhon Chai district of Buriram province. On a sunny day, looking south to the Cambodian border from the temple on Phnom Rung hill, the immense *baray* of Muang Tam glitters on the floodplain below. Two hundred yards to the south in a secluded, wooded setting lies the temple complex itself. Little is known of its history as to date, no inscriptions have been found. Regional accounts state that Muang Tam was built after Prasat Phnom Rung, to serve as a residence for the governor. As the lintels of Muang Tam are stylistically a combination of the Khleang (c.965–1010) and Baphuon (c.1010–1080) styles, the complex must have been built after the first phase of building at Phnom Rung but before the later additions in the Angkor Wat style (c.1100–1175 A.D.). Although the main sanctuary was dedicated to Shiva, a small statue of Vishnu, fragments of which remain, has also been found. The presence of this figure in a Saivite temple was a common occurrence.⁶⁸

The temple has recently been restored by the Fine Arts Department, as some preservation work was clearly necessary to prevent collapse due to subsidence. During the course of the restoration work, excavations uncovered some important finds, including two statues.

So far, however, no inscriptions have been found,

68. Smithi Siribhadra and Elizabeth Moore: Op. Cit, p. 163.

which makes it difficult to place Muang Tam in the history of the region. The styles of carving, particularly in the lintels, are the best guide to the temple's dates. Most are a combination of Khleang and Baphuon styles, and so were probably carved between the end of the 10th century and the end of the 11th. The temple was dedicated to Shiva — a large *linga* was found in the central shrine, and a prominent lintel from the north-east tower features Shiva and Uma riding the bull Nandi — but fragments of a statue of Vishnu have also been uncovered. Worship of the two gods in the same temple was by no means uncommon.

Muang Tam is a substantial 'flat' temple built to a concentric plan, (Fig. 74a), ([Fig. 74b](#)) but with two unusual features. It is flat in the sense that there was no attempt at physically elevating the central sanctuary, either by raising the platform or by building a dominant tower. At the same time, the five central towers and the dedication to Shiva make it clear that the central sanctuary was supposed to represent Mount Meru (and the larger main tower probably Mount Kailasa, where Shiva lives). The five brick towers are one of Muang Tam's peculiarities, being built as a front row of three and a back row of two rather than as a quincunx. (Fig. 75)

The other special feature of the temple is the importance given to the four corner ponds that surround the inner enclosure, each L-shaped so that they appear as a continuous square moat intersected by four broad causeways. Each of the ponds is surrounded by an embankment in the form of ground-hugging *nagas*; their

tails meet to form low gates leading down into the water, and these would have had a ritual role. It is likely that these ponds represent the four oceans surrounding Mount Meru, but this layout is unique among Khmer temples.

The five towers, together with two ‘libraries’, occupied the inner enclosure. Its wall, broken at the four cardinal points by *gopuras* on the east, south, west and north. The main entrance is, as usual, on the eastern side. East of this, and beyond the courtyard of the modern wat (Wat Prasat Burapharam), are the remains of a small *baray*, now dried up. It is aligned exactly with the axis of the temple, and so may have been built at the same time. Further north is a much larger *baray* — 1,150m x 400m — which you skirt round in the usual approach to the temple from Phnom Rung or Surin. This *baray* is one of very few that have remained full since they were built — although it was dug after the temple, this means close to 900 years of continuous use.⁶⁹ Very possibly, it was contemporary with the great west Baray at Angkor, also still in use. It is fed by streams flowing from the Dongrek Mountains to the south while openings on the *baray*’s northern side were intended to regulate the flow of water into the artificial Khlong Pun (‘Lime Canal’) to the north. This canal, dug in the lowest part of the plain between the Dongreks and Phnom Rung Hill, stretches 20 km to the north-east, and was a major part of a Khmer water management system designed to cope with the region’s notoriously unreliable rainfall.

69. Michael Freeman: Op. Cit. p. 36.

Outer eastern gopura

From the small village road that leads south from the *baray* by the modern wat, a short path leads to the main eastern entrance. The lintel over the main doorway in the centre features Krishna fighting the five-headed *naga* Kaliya. The pediment above is carved around a central *kala* face, as are both the lintels and the pediments of the two side entrances. The *kala* plays a particularly important role in the decoration at Muang Tam, and occurs frequently in the lintels and pediments. More than this, there are two different styles of *kala* carved at Muang Tam — most, such as those here over the outer doorways, are Baphuon style, but a few, such as over the inner south door of this *gopura*, are in the ‘earlier’ Khleang style. This is one of several clues in the Northeast that the styles known from Angkor do not always coincide neatly with the periods. ([Fig. 76](#))

Above, on the corners, are *naga* antefixes marking the ends of arches. The strange-looking projection held in front of the *naga* like a saxophone, is a garland that issues from the creature’s mouth — very typical of the Baphuon style and a common treatment of garlands in lintels. Pass through into a cross-shaped room with connecting chambers on either side, where the two side entrances are located.

To the left and right, laterite walls, topped with a curved coping (and a smaller sandstone coping on top of this), form the outer enclosure. These, as well as some of the other structures at Muang Tam, have suffered from subsidence — the relatively low-lying land here is close

to the watertable and often waterlogged, as evidenced by the survival of the ponds and the large *baray* to the north. These walls, which previously undulated in a precarious manner, have recently been restored.⁷⁰

Close to this *gopura*, the statue of stone guardian figures named “Nandikesvara” was discovered.

Outer enclosure

Pass through the *gopura* into the temple’s outer enclosure. Ahead is the inner enclosure with the restored brick towers, and on either side are two of Muang Tam’s L-shaped ponds, effectively making a broad moat. They are dotted with lotus plants, which flower in the morning. On either side, note the low stone gateways with a few steps leading down into the water. The door frames are in fact formed by the tails of *nagas*, whose bodies make up the pond’s embankment. A ceremony of some form would have been performed here by priests.

To the north and south are other *gopuras*, smaller than the eastern and western entrances, each with attractive views back over the ponds. This outer enclosure of Muang Tam is worth spending time walking around, particularly when there are few other people (by comparison with Phnom Rung and Phimai, Muang Tam is little visited).

Inner enclosure

Return to the central walkway leading between the ponds from the main entrance, and enter the inner eastern gop-

70. Op. Cit., p. 120.

ura that leads to the central sanctuary. Above the doorway is yet another *kala* lintel in the Baphuon style — the *kala* grasps the garlands that issue from his mouth, and a row of *rishis* form the top border. Pass through, and turn to see the lintel that faces in towards the tower. This is a scene from the life of Krishna, in which he battles the *naga* Kaliya, and wins. The pediment above features a *simha* above the ubiquitous *kala*.

On either side is the gallery wall that surrounds the enclosure, extensively restored sandstone on a laterite base. Like Phnom Wan and Sdok Kok Thom, the gallery has windows facing both in and out. There are no corner pavilions. In the south-east and north-east corners, recent excavations have uncovered the foundations of two ‘library’-like buildings.

Central towers

At the heart of the temple are the five brick towers, four of them restored. The arrangement, in two unequal rows, is unusual; the main shrine, which was larger than the others, is in the middle of the front row. It had completely collapsed by the time restoration work was begun, and there were insufficient bricks found to allow reconstruction. As it stands, it has just the lower dozen courses, on a massive stepped laterite platform.

Although the restoration with new bricks makes it a little more difficult to appreciate the quality of the original workmanship, there is still evidence of brick carving to quite a high standard. On the south side of the front row’s northern tower, the pediment arch has been carved in

outline only, but the *nagas* at each corner can be made out. During restoration work, traces of stucco were found on these towers, and it is likely that the decoration was never intended to be completed only in brickwork.

The lintels are of high quality. The main east-facing lintel of the northern tower on the front row is in the Baphuon style, but in other ways stands apart from Muang Tam's other lintels. Particularly deep, and in a red sandstone that has weathered to black in parts, it shows Shiva with Uma riding the bull Nandi, executed in an unusually naive manner. Another good example of provincial folk art is the treatment of the lintel on the tower directly behind — this features a small scene of Krishna lifting Mount Govardhana, rather nonchalantly, with one of the sheltering cattle behind. Krishna stands above a *kala*, which appears on all the tower lintels. Those on the south-west and south-east towers feature divinities sitting over the *kalas*, and a row of *rishis* at the top.

Outer western gopura

Leave the inner enclosure to the west. The inner western *gopura*, unlike the others, was built of sandstone for some reason, and has long since collapsed. Continue past the ponds on either side to the outer western *gopura*. On the inner and outer entrances of this structure, note the unfinished lintels with a raised central area of stone in the shape of a diamond. For various reasons, incomplete works appear at temples throughout the Khmer empire. Quite often, it was simply a matter of the death of the king or dignitary who commissioned the building

— his successor might have little interest in finishing it, particularly when compared with the need to begin a temple. At any rate, being able to see lintels at various stages of carving, a tour of these temples helps to visualise the way in which the stone carvers approached them. The northern lintel of Phnom Wan's shrine, for example, shows the stage between the modelling of the basic features and the detailing. Here is a much earlier stage, in which the surrounds have been cut back to leave a plain diamond shape in the centre. This would then have been carved into the main motif — probably a *kala* face as in the other *gopuras*. The pilasters on either side of the door are also at different stages — on one the design has only been roughed out, while the other is partially carved.

Baray

Another feature of Muang Tam which indicates long-term use of the site, with building taking place over several hundred years, are the two *baray* or reservoirs. Leaving the main entrance to the compound, one passes through the courtyard of a modern wat, fragrant with ancient frangipani trees. Beyond, is a small reservoir; it is unexcavated, and its relationship with the temple enclosure is unclear. However, as it is precisely aligned with the central door of the outer *gopura*, it may well have been part of the original plan.

A second, later, reservoir is seen immediately north of the temple compound. Its size far exceeds the earlier *baray*, measuring 1,150 x 400 metres. Rectangular *baray* can be found throughout the Northeast, their angularity

distinguishing them from natural ponds. They range in size from small tanks for family use, to this massive *baray* and the even larger one, just north of Prasat Phnom Wan.

The significant aspect of the Muang Tam *baray* is the ingenious way that it has been sited to take advantage of the landscape. The land upon which Muang Tam was built slopes ever so gently from south east to north west. Streams originating in the low hills to the southeast of Muang Tam enter the reservoir on its south-eastern corner. From the northern corners of the reservoir openings allow the stored water to flow down to the massive khlong Pum, or ‘Lime Canal’ dug across the valley floor. While the course of this canal has now begun to meander, its unnatural straightness in the level landscape shows that it was originally built by man. (Fig.77)

The canal is perfectly sited at the lowest point of the basin formed between the Khao Phnom Rung, over 300 metres high, and the 250 metre high hills to the south of Muang Tam. Numerous streams which bring the water off the slopes of Phnom Rung are also channelled by man-made trenches into the Sa Bua Lai *baray* lying at the eastern foot of Khao Phnom Rung, and the Khlong. The canal stretched for over 20 kilometres, from the south side of the Phnom Rung mountain, north east to the nearest town.⁷¹

Altogether, the system included at least thirty to forty kilometres of canals, two large *baray*, and fifteen small basins. The men, women, and children whose lives were

71. Smithi Siribhadra and Elizabeth Moore: Op. Cit., p. 166.

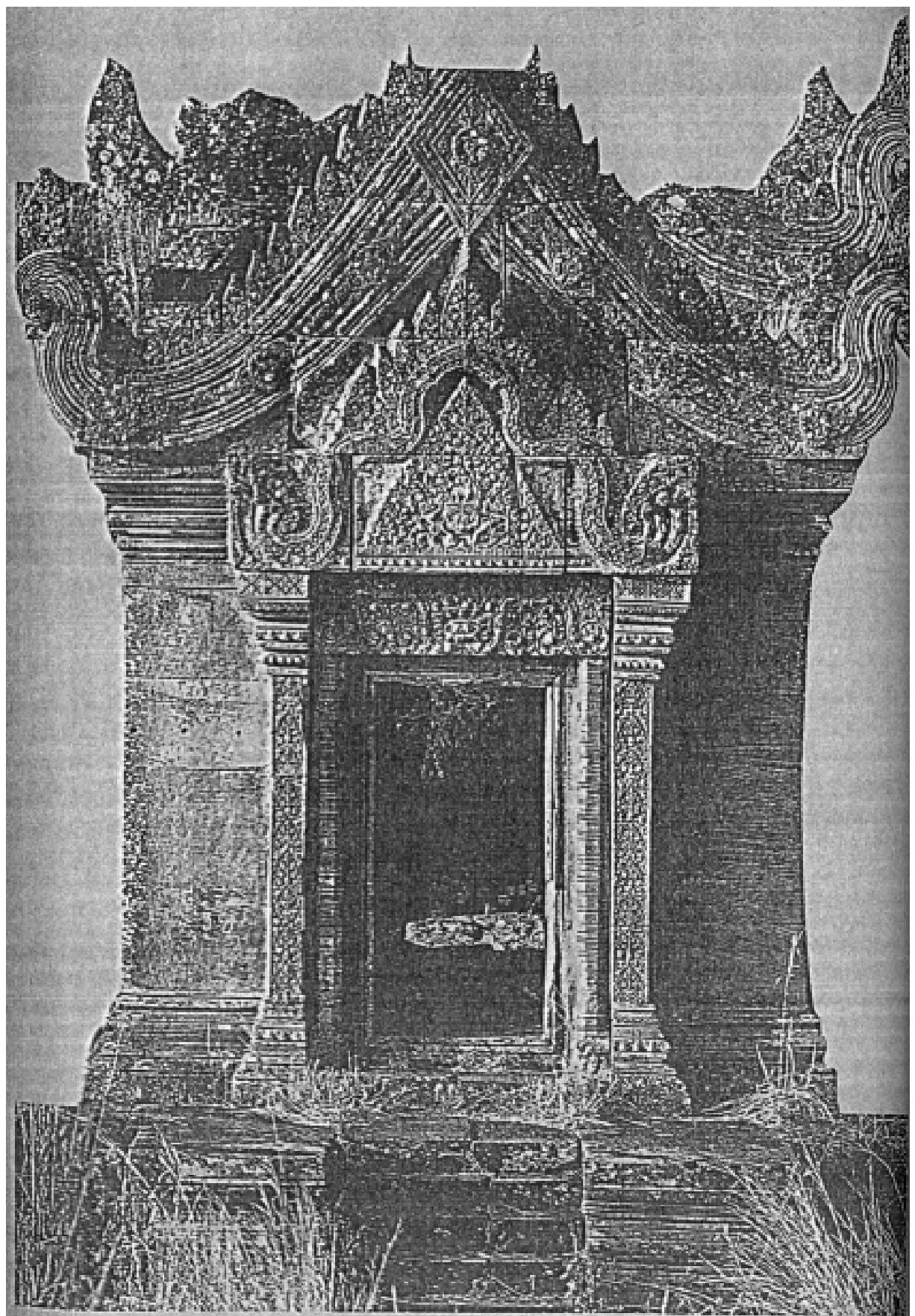
spent caring for the temples, were also responsible for the construction, maintenance, and operation of water as well.

On aerial photographs, the remains of small canals branching off the central conduit, form a criss-cross pattern on the level floodplain. This method of water management offered farmers protection against the unpredictable pattern of rainfall. If the spring rains came late, the young rice seedlings might die. If at the end of August, as was often the case, the rains suddenly ceased, water could be drawn from *baray*. Likewise, if the September and October rains proved too heavy, to water could be drawn off to the level needed endure a successful harvest. Given assurance of to water from these water control structures of the temples, the region could prosper.

Artefacts: Two stone figures were uncovered during recent excavations, both significant, and now at the National Museum, Bangkok. One figure, found near the base of the outer eastern gopura, was broken into three pieces, and although unfinished, is in a posture that suggests he was holding a club. If so, he would be a guardian figure known as Nandikesvara. The other statue, carved from the same sandstone, was found, unusually, in the large *baray* to the north. This figure has small fangs at the corners of the mouth, and so was almost certainly a guardian of the kind known as a Mahakala. It would originally have stood as a pair with the statue of Nandikesvara. Why it should have been moved is not known, although one obvious suspicion is that it was thrown into the *baray* by iconoclasts.

Chapter VIII

Prasat Phra Viharn



Prasat Pra Viharn

Prasat Phra Viharn & Phra Viharn Mountain

This magnificent temple built and added to over many reigns occupies the most spectacular site of any Khmer sanctuary. The cause of a border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand was settled eventually in Cambodia's favour — the temple being on the Cambodian side. Known as Preah Vihear in Khmer, it is called Khao Phra Viharn by the Thais.

For the Khmer, a sanctuary was above all a cosmological recreation. A mountain or cliff top location would be the first choice for Khmer architects building a major temple. This is especially true in temples dedicated to Shiva because of the associations with his mountain home, Mount Kailasa. The other significant mountain top temple in Thailand is Phnom Rung. The tower at the centre of the complex symbolized Mount Meru, the mountain home of the gods. Its floorplan was small, being only a fraction of the sacred enclosure. The rings of mountains and seas which surround the mount were represented in the Khmer temple by walls and moats, which were arranged about the central shrine, either concentrically, or as was the case at Preah Vihear, in a lengthwise plan. The horizontal spread of subsidiary buildings complemented the verticality of the temple tower. The result was a low but vast expanse, either open to the sky or pierced

with windows to lighten dark stone corridors. Only the tower housing the shrine to the gods was sheltered from the light.

Location & Approach

Prasat Phra Viharn is located on a mountain top in the Phnom Dong Rak, or Dong Rek Range. Dong Rak, in Khmer means “the mountain of ‘Mai Khan’ (a long stick for carrying loads on the shoulder).

The temple was built in dedication to Sri Sikkharesvara, which means the “supreme being of the mountain”, that is Shiva. The Khmer kings built the palace, this abode of the gods, at the site known as Prasat Phra Viharn or Sri Sikkharesvara Sanctuary.

The temple is aligned from north to south on a rocky south-facing spur of the Dangrek Range which forms the Thai-Cambodian border. Separating Thailand and Southeast Cambodia, the Dong Rek range lies at the latitude of $14^{\circ} 23' 20''$ north, and the longitude of $104^{\circ} 41'$ east. Its highest peak on the south side, and the lowest slope on the north side, are 657 and 535 metres above sea level respectively. The height of the steep cliff, Peuy Ta Di, from the top down to the flat land at the foothill in Cambodia, is 547 metres. On the Thai side, forest covers the lower hills. Where the trees thin out, the temple begins. The staircases, gopuras, processional walkways and courtyards stretch about 850 metres along the length of the outcrop, rising some 120 metres in height from entry to summit. The first 80 metres of the approach are staircases, wide at first, and then narrowing as they become

steeper. Some of the steps have been carved from the rocky outcrop, the rest having been brought from nearby quarries.

The first pause comes at a 30 metre long platform bordered by a *naga* balustrade. The bodies of the serpent, about a metre thick, are carved from sandstone blocks. Their multiple heads rear up at the ends, facing north down the staircase. The style of the *nagas'* heads, smooth, without crowns, is very similar to that seen at Prasat Muang Tam, suggesting an 11th century date for this part of the temple.

After the *naga* balustrade, the first of the cruciform *gopuras* is reached. As the outermost of the five gateways, it is known as *Gopura V*. Although much of it has fallen down, some of the door structures remain. All are finely carved, particularly the pediments with their poly-lobed frames in the shape of the body of the *naga* bordered by a flame-like foliage. A pathway going east from this *gopura* leads down towards a stream, said to have once been a reservoir. The main entryway to the temple, however, continues towards the south. A causeway, 270 metres long and 11 metres wide, is lined with lotus-shaped pillars, similar to those found at Prasat Phnom Rung. Remains of a smaller rectangular pond are found to the east of the causeway. *Gopura IV* (Fig. 78a), (Fig. 78b) at the end of the avenue is set on a foundation, similar to *Gopura V*, although the cruciform plan has been extended on both axes. The tiered pediments are typical of this period of Khmer architecture and may be compared with those found at Banteay Srei. This *gopura* is more

complete than the outermost one, and the style of the carvings and the presence of three 11th century inscriptions date it to the late Khleang and early Baphuon periods. Motifs on the lintels and pediments include the ever-present *kala* or *kirtimukha* head, popular also at the 11th century temple of Muang Tam. Nagas are featured in a number of guises: there are finely carved scenes of Krishna killing the serpent Kaliya, Vishna reclining on the serpent Sesha, and above this on the pediment facing south towards the temple, the story of the Churning of the Sea of Milk, the body of the serpent wrapped around Mount Mandara to extract the elixir of immortality from the primordial ocean.

A second causeway continues south from *Gopura IV*. It, too, would have once been lined with boundary pillars. A small stone-lined pool to the east is called the ‘lion-head’ pool, after the head of a lion built into its southern side. At the end of the causeway, some 152 metres in length, is the third, or outermost courtyard (as with the *gopuras*, the first courtyard is the one closest to the temple). The east and west courtyards which flank *Gopura III* take this axis of the temple complex to its widest point before narrowing again in the second and first courtyards. The final causeway between the third and second courtyards has shortened also, to about 36 metres in length. Remains of a *naga* balustrade flank the boundary pillars on the outside.

The second courtyard is formed by *Gopura II* and I to the north and south respectively, while a gallery and short wall close off the sides. To the south of this courtyard, the remains of a large antechamber lead into the doorway of

Gopura I. Two ‘libraries’ flank this hall on either side.

The final *gopura* of the temple, *Gopura I* leads into a courtyard containing the *mandapa* and the totally collapsed *prang* behind. Intact galleries, lined with windows on the courtyard side, form the walls to the east and west. The south side is formed by a blind *gopura* abutting the very edge of the cliff. Doors in the outer walls give access to annex buildings to the east and west, possibly used for royal rituals or preparation for ceremonial dances.

It is not known when construction first began at Preah Vihear. Most of the existing structures, notably much of the third courtyard where inscriptions from this period are found, date only to the reign of Suryavarman I. Indeed it is believed that this site was his personal temple and that the main *prang* used to house a Bhadresvara or *linga* which was used in ceremonies to release the sacred power from the Lingaparvata at Wat Phu near Champasak, 130 kilometers to the east. Equally, the carving of the main sanctuary and the *naga* balustrades and the boundary posts also date to this era. Further inscriptions were erected at Preah Vihear under Suryavarman (1113–1150) and his chief priest, Divakarapandita. Suryavarman II is also thought to have finished or altered parts of the second courtyard, the causeways, and the staircases. After this time, the temple appears to have fallen into disrepair.

The ruins of the temple today guard many secrets about its use from the 9th to 12th century. The graceful forms carved from stone depict not only the gods, but animals, both mythical and real, and the rich foliage of

the forest. The inscriptions, in praising the gods, evoke other images. Ritual feasts and offerings included peacock feather fans with gold handles, rings with nine jewels, and golden bowls. The life of the court was filled with colour and music, for the temple also required offerings of dancers, flower receptacles, sacred cloths, incense and candles.⁷²

Before the World Court passed the decision placing Preah Vihear under Cambodia's Sovereignty, Prasat Phra Viharn was under the jurisdiction of Thailand, a part of Ban Phumi Saron, in Tambon Bueng Maloo, Kantaralak District, Srisaket Province.

It is rather unique that the sanctuary faces Thailand in the north direction, and the access to the temple is by the steps along the slope on the Thai side. Access from the Lower Khmer Plain is via a steep passage that leads past the 'Bandai Hak' Pass on the east side of the sanctuary.



From the temple, roads and stone steps, covering the distance of metres, sloped down to the foothill. From there a long worn stone stairway, ravaged by time, leads all the way down to the ground below. The 'Bandai Hak' or 'broken stair' Pass is another eloquent remnant telling

72. Smithi Sribhadra and Elizabeth Moore: Op Cit., p. 119.

us of the past. It may well have been a route of devoted pilgrims coming from the Lower Khmer Plain, undeterred by the test of God.⁷³

North of the stone steps leading to the sanctuary is a reservoir formed by a stone dam 2.5 metres wide. Sra Trao or Sra Khang Krao are Khmer words meaning ‘beyond the gate’. Sra Trao is located outside the sanctuary compound at the mountain top and receives water from Huay Trao. Srisak Vallibhotama suggests that it was a ‘Barai’, a Khmer style reservoir. The stream flows past the barai to the plan in Kamalasai District in Srisaket Province.

Prasat Phra Viharn is built from sandstone obtained there in the mountains. Remains of quarries from which the stone was probably taken can still be found around the edge of Sra Trao and near Mo I Daeng. Baked brick and Daitamapuak ('sticky mud'), greenish clay with a stony consistency were also used for construction.

Geographical History of the Vicinity of Phra Viharn Mountain

Phra Viharn Mountain is found in the lower Chi-Mun river basin along the slope of the Phnom Dong Rek range, in Srisaket Province Thailand. The topography divides into two distinct parts.

The Low-Lying Plain is called Rasisalai Plain or Rasisalai Field. This area is linked with communities of different periods. Ban Noan Soong was a salt farming community and Ban Don Kleu was known for salt farming and iron smelting. Ancient development of communities in

73. Dhida Saraya Ph.D.: Preah Vihear; Sri Sikharesvara, p. 97.

the Rasislai Plain ended around the 14th or the 15th century of the Buddhist Era. (9th–10th centuries A.D.) Hardly any traces of Khmer archeological sites or objects remain. However a vernacular culture can be detected in the burial pottery, which has black, brown and red stripes. One ancient community, Muang Teuy, dating back to the early Chenla Period, has been discovered in Yasothon and Ubon Ratchathani Provinces.

The Highlands are south of the Mun River and lead up to the Phnom Dong Rek Range. An ancient community has been found here along with archeological objects belonging to a period before the 16th century of the Buddhist Era. (11th century A.D.) The prosperity enjoyed here derived from Khmer culture. The local technological expertise was adapted for survival in the highlands. The sanctuary was built as a common center of worship. Ponds were dug and reservoirs, called Barai, were constructed.

A number of inscriptions record the relations of these communities with Phra Viharn Sanctuary. They tell of labor by male and female slaves, animals, vehicles and others. Evidence of the community's relationship with another sanctuary, Prasat Kamphaeng Yai, indicates that Shiva was revered as a local god, linked to the people's worship of their ancestors. Local devotion to the god Sri Phruddhresvara of the town of Saduk Amphil is another example.

A large number of buildings were added to prasat Phra Viharn during the 16th century of the Buddhist Era in the reign of King Suryavarman I (the Bapuan Period).

Communication during this period between the Isan region (around Phra Viharn Mountain and the nearby highlands) and the Lower Khmer Plain is evident in the sanctuaries to the east of Ta Miang Pass which are built in the Bapuan style. Some prominent ones are Prasat Ta Muen Thom, Prasat Ban Phluang, and Prasat Yai-ngao. Prasat Ta Muen Thom, in particular, is situated along the route that connects the Lower Khmer Plain with Isan. The sanctuary is of Bapuan design and the temple dates back to the 16th to 17th century of the Buddhist Era. (11th–12th centuries A.D.)

A prominent monarch of this period was King Suryavarman I. Some of the inscriptions found at Phra Viharn Mountain are from the period of his reign. During this era, Khmer influence in Isan, especially around phra Viharn Mountain, was widespread.

There is still some question as to who lived in the region before. There are no written records of indigenous people before the coming of the Khmer. The only sources are Khmer inscription. Other documents, like the Khmer chronicles, also belong to later periods. This does not mean, however, that all traces of earlier inhabitants are lost.

Some scholars believe that the Sanskrit portion of the Shiva Sakti Inscription, found at Phra Viharn Mountain, dates back to King Yasovarman. The Khmer portion, they believe, is from the Suriyavarman I period. This suggests that the Sri Sikharesvara Sanctuary was established at Phra Viharn Mountain around A.D. 893–1053, during the reign of King Yasovarman.

The same stone inscription also refers to an event which occurred during the reign of King Jayavarman II who instituted the cult of Devaraja, the basic ideology of the Khmer monarchy. Jayavarman II unified the Khmer kingdom and founded the capital of Amarendrapura, not far from the present Great Khmer lake. The origins of this King are still unknown. However, most academicians tend to agree with Coedes that he came from Java, that his reign was a declaration of great power, and that he was independent of Java.

This inscription is also interesting in its mention of Jayavarman's biography. It is recorded that his honors as a conqueror reached afar. He married a lady called 'Pran', a descendant of an indigenous people. Her title was Kambuja Lakshmi Kamboj Lakshmi and her brother was called Vishnuval.

This lady belonged to a people whose rituals traditionally include burning of offerings, and who were devoted to Vishnu. As Jayavarman's influence grew over the land and its people, he appointed native families to various positions. Vishnuval, for example, became his close aide. Also mentioned in the inscription are the lines of succession of different families and the names of other prominent individuals. Some were scholars who propagated the cult of Shiva. Among them was Shiva Sakti who incised this inscription of a later date.

Based on the inscription, it appears that, before the 15th century of the Buddhist Era (10th century A.D.), the descendants of indigenous people were present in the area. Their original names are mentioned, though they

were later changed and given suitable new meanings as part of the new culture. For example:

Pran became Kambuja Lakshmi;

Lakshmindra became Vishnuval.

Nasa was given the title of Sri Paridhivinnarendra.

Kesavabhatta was renamed Arimadhna and became a consultant to the king.

Prannavasvara was called Sri Naruependrabhok.⁷⁴

Prasat Phra Viharn

As mentioned before, this stone prasat was a place sacred to local people under the name ‘Bhavalai’. When the Khmer King established Shiva as the Mountain God, the name Sri Sikkharesvara referred to a place of god under the cult of Shiva. (Fig. 79)

Prasat Phra Viharn faces north (hence the access road is on the Thai territory). Passage and buildings form a line up the four levels of stone terraces, with the principal Prang at the top level. Buildings on each terrace or courtyard are in the Greek-cross plan (Kopura). The entire length of the sanctuary extends over 800 metres.

Scholars tend to view Prasat Phra Viharn from its entrance. That is, from the principal Prang at the top level, down to Kopuras of the 2nd and 3rd levels from the top, and finally to the lowest level Kopura, being the furthest away from the center.

74. Dhida Sarava Ph.D.: Op Cit., p. 107 & Op. Cit., p. 123.

Principle Features of Prasat Phra Viharn

In this thesis, Prasat Phra Viharn will be examined from the lowest level up to the top. That is, from the first to the fourth-level courtyard, where the Bhavalai is located.

Generally speaking, the four courtyards comprise five *Kopuras*. However, a closer look reveals that only buildings on the first and second levels form a *kopura* in the full sense. On the third and fourth levels, other buildings have been added to the original ones.

These buildings can be categorized as:

A. *Kopuras*, on the first and second levels. These large porticos are for pilgrims to meditate in, as a gesture of homage to the God, before entering the Bhavalai.

B. Palace Buildings, or the *kopura* on the third-level courtyard. This group of buildings was the King's residence when he came to pay homage to the mighty god. The two wings were shelters for pilgrims.

C. The Principal Prasat for the Supreme Divinity on the highest level. This mighty group of building is considered the center of the whole site. The Principal Prang housing the *lingum*, the Sikara Prang, with a curved roof, is at the center, behind the Mondop at the front. ([Fig. 80](#))

Access to the temple is via:

1. The Front Stone Stairway: This main passage is on the north side. The stairway is 8 metres wide and 78

metres long. The first flight has 162 steps. At the first landing is a large stone *singha*, a statue on stone block. Another 54 step flight, 4 metres wide and 27 metres long, leads up to the second landing, also decorated with stone *singha* statues.

2. The Nagaraj Courtyard: This stone-paved courtyard is 7 meters wide and 31.8 meters long. From here a stairway leads to the first-level Kopura. The stair-heads are in the form of seven-headed snakes, called “*Ngu Suang*” by local residents. These serpents face north toward the prasat. Manit Vallibhotama pointed out that: “The heads and tails of the *nagas* on both sides look like ordinary snakes, characterizing an early example of this style of animal figures. The head portion of the *naga* on the west side looks very impressive because it is made from a single length of solid stone”.⁷⁵

From the Nagaraj Court are buildings on the courtyards at different levels.

Two *Kopuras* (on the first and second-level courtyards):

3. The First-level Kopura: This is a pavillion in the Greek-cross plan on an elevated, rabbeted-angled base. Each of the roofed doorways on the four sides has a portico and a stairway where seated stone lions are placed.

Blocks of stone, one on top of another, form a col-

75. Op Cit., p. 129.

umn. They are carved in a variety of ornaments, i.e., flamboyant, floral and lozenge designs.

Roof tiles are terra cotta known as “kaboo”, the gable relief features alternate spiral and lozenge designs. A carving at the top of the gable depicts the God Vissukarma, seated with his knees drawn up. At the ends are dancing angels.

Pediment decorations, “Bairaka”, are carved in floral designs.

The east portico still remains. Carving on its pediment portrays a seated god with knees drawn up above the head of (the protector) and decorated with scroll and triangular patterns. Carvings on the edge of the pediment show two five-headed *nagas* with their bodies curving along the edge and their tails entwined.

From the east portico, stone steps lead down to the ground below. This passage, Bandai Hak (Broken Stair) Pass, provides access to the Lower Khmer Plain.

An avenue connecting the first and second-level *kopuras* is lined with stone curbs. It is 10 metres wide and 275 metres long. Stone columns, 2.15 metres high, with lotus-shaped capitals, line up along both sides of the avenue. These colonnades are called “Candle Columns” or “Nang Riang Columns”.

A rectangular pond lies east of the avenue near the second-level Kopura. Its dimensions are 18.30 metres in width and 36.80m in length. Called Sra Song, the pond stores rain water which flows from the upper levels. A seated stone *singha* is located at the landing of the stairway that leads down to the water.

This avenue leads up to the upper-level Kopura.

4. The Second-level Kopura: This pavillion is also situated on a cruciform base. It comprises four gate-pavillions and a hall.

The Front Gate-Pavillion is divided into two chambers. Its portico faces the avenue and a *singha* statue is placed by the door frame.

Carvings on the pediment depicts a deity sitting with knees drawn up.

On the lintel is the face of Kirtimukha.

Decorative patterns are carved into the door frames, at the bases of which are statues of yogis in the sitting position, with their palms pressed together.

The East Gate-Pavillion is divided into three chambers. Statues of seated *singha* are placed beside the exterior portico.

The pediment and the lintel of the portico show a carved figure of a deity sitting with knees drawn up, above the head of kirtimukha.

Carvings on the lintel of the interior portico depicts a seated deity surrounded by 6 heads of Naga.

The west Gate-Pavillion, is also divided into three chambers. Pediments and lintels feature similar figurative reliefs.

The South Gate-Pavillion, like the north-facing one, is divided into two parts, with the interior portico showing identical decorative patterns.

The pediment of its exterior portico features exquisite carvings, depicting a scene from Narai Sib Pang (Ten Re-

incarnations of Vishnu). The episode, the Churning of the Ocean narrates the story of Vishnu, in his reincarnation as a turtle, carrying the symbolic Meru Mountain on its back. The carvings show Naga curling around the axis, the symbolic mountain, with angels pulling one end and demons pulling the other.

Carvings on the lintel of the exterior portico shows Reclining Vishnu on Anantanagaraj's back. A lotus emerges from his navel and at the center of the lotus sits Brahma.

The Main Hall is divided into 5 chambers with connecting doors.

From the courtyard, an avenue, with a colonnade on each sides, leads up the slope to the Palace on the next level (3rd from the starting point). The stone curbs on the roadside are elevated and filled with earth, to prevent rain water from flowing into the buildings. To the east not too far from the third level lies Sra Hua Singha. This square stone-paved pond is 9.20 metres wide. At the center is a stone head of *singha*, with water flowing from its mouth.

Near the pond is a rabbeted-angled, elevated stone base.

5. The Palace Buildings (the 3rd level courtyard, sometimes referred to as the third-level Kopura). They include five spacious buildings, the central palace, the left and right wings, and the crosswise buildings. The overall structure gives an impression of royal residence.

The Central Palace Building is a building in the Greek

Cross Plan. The dimensions are 34 x 35 metres. The building features a gable-roof, with walls and ante-chambers on the four sides making a total of five rooms. There are 17 windows, affixed with bars made of “daita-maphuak” stony clay, and 10 solid-stone doors.

The Central Palace Building incorporates:

The North-facing Antechamber, of which the traces of the exterior and interior porticos still remain.

The pediment of the exterior portico depicts Krishna standing under the tree with his right hands seizing the foot of a lion and his left hand holding the elephant's foot. A figure of a deity, seated with knees drawn up, is carved in the lintel and the relief on the door frame features decorative “phum Khao Bin” (Lotus-Shaped) design and a seated yogi with his palms pressed together.

Carvings on the interior portico depicts Krishna (Govinda or Govardhana) in a standing position, with his left hand on his waist and his right hand holding a mountain, to protect the herdsmen, who are at his feet together with their herd of cattle, from rain and thunder. The lintel shows carvings of four-handed Vishnu on his Garuda above the head of Kirtimukha. The wings of the Garuda looks like those of an ordinary bird, with no hands.

The East-facing Antechamber has north, south and west porticos.

Carvings on the pediment of the north portico depicts a divine or human figure catching hold of a horse above the head of Kirtimukha. The lintel shows Shiva embracing Uma above the head of Kirtimukha.

The pediment of the south portico depicts Ganesha above the head of Kirtimukha. The lintel shows a seated deity with knees drawn up.

On the pediment and lintel of the west portico are carvings of a seated god above the head of Kirtimukha.

The West-facing Antechamber is identical to the one facing east.

The pediment and the lintel of the north portico display a dancing god above the head of Kirtimukha.

The pediment and the lintel of the south and east portico are identical to those of the east-facing antechamber.

The South-facing Antechamber is identical to the north-facing one.

The pediment of the exterior portico depicts Shiva and Uma riding the Holy Bull Usubharaj under the tree. The lintel shows a seated deity with knees drawn up.

The Main Hall has 6 windows on the north side and 2 on the south side. The windows are affixed with stone bars. The hall does not have any decorative designs.

The Right-Left Wings are rectangular buildings. Each wing is divided into 3 rooms. (It is believed that the buildings have been added at a later period).

The Crosswise Place Buildings are Buildings to the right and the left.

From the third-level courtyard, a seven steps stairway leads up to the avenue to the stone sanctuary. The icon is enshrined in the principal *prang*.

The avenue leading to the fourth level is 34 metres long. On each side is a line of 9 Nang Riang columns. The

balustrade is stone blocks in the form of 7 headed *nagas*. At the end of the avenue another stairways leads up to the prasat.

6. The Principal Prasat (on the fourth level court-yard). The site consists of the *kopura*, the galleries, the Bannalai, and the Bhavalai housing the sacred divinity. All the buildings here can be divided into two groups: the north-facing and south-facing and south-facing groups.

Khmer inscriptions dating back to the Suryavarman reign, during the 16th century of the Buddhist Era, are on the two back doors of the central hall, in the north-facing group of buildings.

Buildings in the south-facing group are connected to one another by galleries. At the center of these galleries is Bhavalai or the principal *prang*.

Bhavalai comprises the *mondop* and the curved-roofed Sri Sikhara Prang. In front of the *prang* is an antechamber, which lies on a tripletiered, rabatted-angled base. A five step stair provides access to every doorway. The *prang* was built on a rabatted-angled base (now collapsed). Over the threshold of the north doorway connecting the antechamber at the front is a stone inscription, in Sanskrit. The top of the *prang* was decorated with lotuses, which have fallen to the ground nearby.

The front antechamber is 15 metres wide and 17 metres long. The stair has three steps. Its roof is covered with a stone block in the shape of the roof of a ship. On the pediment of the north portico is a relief of a ten armed figure standing on the back of an elephant. His ten

hands hold different things. The two lowest hands hold a harp or a skull-headed cane. The fourth right hand holds a trident and in the second left hand is a human head. The fourth left hand raises up a two-armed stone figure and the palms of the two upper hands are pressed together.

Some archeologists say that the pediment depicts dancing Shiva. However, because the figure is on an elephant's back, other archeologists argue that it portrays Shiva killing Kajasura, an elephant-figured demon. Inside the antechamber are statues of a standing deity and Ganesha, a lingum, and a replica of the prang.

Outside, east and west of the galleries, are two other large buildings believed to be the library and the store-house.

Manit Vallibhatama hypothesizes that the east building may have been the living quarters of the dancers of the Bhavalai, and the west building was a place where pilgrims bathed in sacred water. His conjecture is based on the basin-like structures seen in the four antechambers of the central hall.

Other places of significance in the vicinity are:

7. A pair of stupas seen along the way down to the stone courtyard below. Local residents call them 'Phra That'. These are cubic structures, 1.93 metres wide and 4.20 metres high. The curved head looks like mushroom-headed nail. There is an opening for storing objects, which have apparently been taken out during the earlier surveys by French scholars.

8. Mo I Daeng, a precipitous cliff where a group of Thai soldiers are stationed. There are incomplete bas-reliefs of male and female figures standing in line. Near these reliefs are traces of a pig figure, believed to be Narai in his reincarnation as a Boar, and Narai, or Vishnu, seated under the heads of Naga.

9. Huay Trao or Sra Trao. There is a stream at the courtyard of the foothill of Phra Viharn Mountain. This is a vast lowland. Around this area, blocks of stone have been placed on top of one another to form a dam which directs the water to other directions. There is a hypothesis that the said lowland may have been “Barai” (a Khmer reservoir). Water from this Barai flows down to the plain in Kamalasai District of Srisaket Province.

10. Peuy Ta Di. This is the cliff where the sanctuary is situated. There is a folk tale that monk, Luang Ta Di, once built a shelter here and Peuy Ta Di meant Luang Ta Di’s shelter. Down below is a panoramic view of the beautiful scenery of the Lower Khmer Plain.

11. The Prang at Don Tuan Pass is located 11 kilometres from Prasat Phra Viharn, northeast of Phum Saron Village, this is a group of laterite *prang*. Carvings on the columns at the approach of the first *prang* shows similar patterns to those on columns at Prasat Phra Viharn, but not of the same refined craftsmanship. Another *prang* nearby is made of laterite reinforced with brick.

The Builder of Prasat Phra Viharn

Architecture is never without roots. It is always related to the social and cultural environment. Religious architecture, in particular, is always associated with local cults and beliefs. Khmer temples and other buildings of the 15th century B.E. and of later period reflect faith in the power of the god king, the cult of Devaraja, as well as ancestral worship and animism. Places of worship were not built only on the tops of mountains. Temples were also built on elevated bases in the form of a *prang* or spired Prasat representing the cosmic Meru Mountain, a symbolic link with the universe. The town plan of Yasodharapura and the pyramid-shaped Koh Ker Sanctuary are examples of this tradition.

Places of worship were later built to focus on a central point. The most suitable location for this style was along the slope of the mountain. Buildings could be built at different levels, surrounding the sanctuary at the center and highest level. This style is evident in stone building on Phra Viharn Mountain which were built in the 10th century A.D. in the reign of King Suryavarman I. Construction was not completed in one era; more buildings were added later. Some architects hold a view that certain parts of Prasat Phra Viharn were already in place before the reign of Suryavarman I.

Several scholars have expressed opinions concerning the construction of Prasat Phra Viharn.

M. Parmentier suggested that the main stairway at the lowest level, the first- and second-level *kopuras*, as well as the passage linking them, were built during the reign

of King Yasovarman. This hypothesis seems likely, because there was a popular preference during the reign of King Yasovarman to build the house of god on the slope and on the top of a natural or man-made mountain. The King himself installed the sacred symbol, Sri Sikkharesvara, at Phra Mountain.

In later periods more buildings were added to the site. The King's palace or "palais" was built during the reign of Suryavarman I (on the third-level court yard). The beautiful architecture of this building has always been likened to heaven itself.

Succeeding kings carried on this hill site tradition.

The abode of the god, the main *prang*, was built on the highest level during the reign of king Udauditayavarman II. (The building, however, has already collapsed.)

Buildings and the Main *prang* on the fourth level were renovated and modified at the royal command of King Suryavarman II.

Professor George Coedes had another view. He cited the inscriptions which state that Prasat Phra Viharn was built during the reign of King Suryavarman I, when the King accepted the command of a heavenly emissary to build a sanctuary in homage to Sri Sikkharesvara during the 16th century of the Buddhist Era. Eleven years passed, and construction was yet incomplete when the King passed away. Suryavarman II further modified the sanctuary.⁷⁶

Manit Vallibhotama, a Thai archeologist, cited an inscription found at the principal prasat, which mentions

76. Op. Cit.. p. 201.

Suryavarman I in 1038 A.D. Manti concluded that Suryavarman and his consort, Sri Vera Lakshmi (a descendant of King Jayavarman II) had enlarged the sacred place of their ancestors, known as the Bhavalai. (Details are recorded in the inscriptions on the Main Prang of Prasat Phra Viharn and in the Prasat Ta Keo Inscriptions.)

Although his comment seems to suggest the relationship between the construction of this stone temple and worship of ancestors, Manit still shares other scholars view that it was built solely under the influence of Hinduism.

M.R. Suriyavudh Suksvasti, after examining the art of Prasat Phra Viharn, drew the conclusion that the architecture and decorative ornaments of this sanctuary are early Bapuan and in true Bapuan style. This accords with some of the inscriptions found at Prasat Phra Viharn, dating back to the reign of King Suryavarman I. M.R. Suriyavudh suggested that,

“All architectural structures that remain today were most probably built between the reign of King Suryavarman I, during the second half of the 16th century of Buddhist Era or the early Bapuon period, and the reign of King Udauditayavarman II, during the first half of the 17th century of the Buddhist Era (11th century A.D), the actual period of Bapuan Art.”⁷⁷

The principal prasat (on the fourth-level courtyard), he believes “was a contemporary of the art of early Ang-

77. Suriyavudh Suksvasd, Prasat Khao Phra Vihear: The most distinguished Khmer temple on the mountain in SEA., p. 9.

kor Wat, with some influence of the Bapuan Art..."

Other than the differing points of view of these scholars, there are numerous legends about who built the sanctuary. Interestingly, these stories cannot be traced back very far.

Most of them are folk tales of recent origin which try to decipher the meanings at the names of places in the vicinity of Khao Phra Viharn.

Some stories originated from the jatakas. All this suggests that they date from later period when residents had become curious about the surroundings of Phra Viharn Mountain.

Some of these legends reflect the impression created by the sanctuary, comparing Prasat Phra Viharn to the "Temple of Heaven". The spell of the place must have captivated the hearts of many people living in the highlands around Phra Viharn Mountain and in the Lower Khmer Plain, in the towns of Siem Reap and Battambong. The period referred to in these legends was the 17th century of the Buddhist Era (in the reign of Suryavarman II).

A Legend About the Heavenly Temple on the Top of Phra Viharn Mountain

This story appears in the Cambodian Chronicles, 1877 A.D. It is about a Princess from the Lower Khmer Plain, a granddaughter of the King of Cambodia, she was escaping from a usurper who had proclaimed him-

self King Phromklay. The girl was sentenced to death, but her newborn son was rescued by Phraya Paksa (or a large bird). When the boy grew up, he was called Phra Bat Paksi Cham Krong.

With the assistance of Old Kuhay, an old herdsman, the prince was protected from the threat of the false King. He became skilled in horseback riding, spending a lot of time herding cattle. Their life continued like this for a while. However, the prince was different from everyone else. He had round birthmarks on his palms and on the undersides of his feet — a sign of blessing. The rumors of this reached the King, who ordered his men to try to kill the young man. The chase went on fiercely so that Old Kuhay and the prince had to flee into a forest near Battambong. Thus, a village in this area was named Baan Thao Kuhay.

The old man and his ward continued to run until they came to a shady banyan tree, at a place called Phra Viharn Sawan (The Heavenly Temple). The places along this escape route have been given names such as Kok Yiab Yam, the place where they escaped from a stampede of the king's elephants, and Chong Klay (Klay Pass) or Jong klay, near a large field. By the time they arrived in Baset, their pursuers were far behind.

After King Phromklay passed away Prince Paksi Chamkrong, as a descendant of the former King, was crowned. He became Phrabat Kamarateng Anyapaksi-chamkrong. Remembering the heavenly temple, he had a sanctuary built at the site. That sanctuary was where Prasat Phra Viharn is located.

The Case of Phra Viharn Mountain

The history of Thailand and Cambodia witnessed a dramatic change when England and France began to expand their economic and political influence into Southeast Asia. The English imperial power was strongly felt in Burma and India, west of Thailand; while France concentrated on Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, which the French collectively called Indochina. Thailand was caught in between the two powers.

Burma fell to England in 1825 A.D.

The French influence gradually grew stronger in the Indochinese countries.

During the early Rattanakosin Period, Cambodia was under Thai control. Cambodian King's were educated in the Thai court.

King Rama I of the Chakri Dynasty adopted Prince Eng, and sent him to rule in Cambodia, giving him the name Somdej Phra Narai. His son, Prince Chan was crowned in Bangkok and succeeded the throne. The Thai King gave him the title of Somdej Phra Uday Rajadhiraj Ramadhibodi, the King of Cambodia.

Throughout the reign of King Rama II, Cambodian kings were in exile in Saigon or in Bangkok.

During the reign of King Rama III, Thailand and Vietnam were engaged in a 14 years war known as Annam-Siam War, which lasted from 1833 to 1846 A.D., resulting in Thailand's sovereignty over Cambodia once more. The Thai King sent Prince Duang to rule northern Cambodia. He was crowned in Bangkok in 1847 A.D., given the regalia and a golden plate engraved with his title,

Phra Hariraksha Ramadhibodi, the King of Cambodia.

In 1860–1861 A.D., during the reign of King Rama IV, there was a civil war in Cambodia. After this tumultuous period, the Thai King crowned Prince Narodom, a son of Phra Hariraksha the King of Cambodia. The regalia was sent, in a procession, to Muang Udongmeechai.

At that time France had already ruled over Saigon and South Vietnam, and had been exploring the geography and history of Cambodia and Laos since 1861 A.D. The year marked the beginning of French colonization of Cambodia and Laos. On August 11, 2406 B.E., Prince Narodom conceded to be under the French protection, but unlike Vietnam, Cambodia was not yet a French colony.

A treaty was signed between Thailand and Cambodia on December 7, 1863 A.D., verifying Cambodia's status as a dependent state of Thailand.

France invited Thailand to attend the coronation ceremony of Prince Narodom. Thailand sent the regalia and the golden plate in a ship, and gave the new King the title of Somdej Phra Narodom Baromraj Devavatara.

King Narodom died in 1906 A.D., during the reign of King Rama V. He was succeeded by King Srisawat who passed away in 1929 A.D.

France made Somdej Phra Srisawat Manivong the new King. He ruled until the World War II broke out and Indochina was occupied by Japan.

Sihanouk became politically active in Cambodia after World War II and Cambodia regained its independence on December 19, 1950 A.D.

In 1949 A.D., France raised the issue of Phra Viharn Mountain, protesting Thailand's occupation of the site.

The Thai-Cambodian relations deteriorated steadily. Cambodia claimed that Phra Viharn Mountain belonged to Cambodia and the Cambodian government terminated diplomatic ties with Thailand on December 1, 1958 A.D.

On October 6, 1959 A.D. The Cambodian government took the case to the World Court.

In 1959 A.D., the Thai government announced that, "The government received a report from the Royal Thai Embassy in Phnom Penh that the Cambodian Government has filed a petition to the World Court at the Hague, requesting the court to pass a decision ordering Thailand to remove its armed forces from Phra Viharn Mountain, and to pass a final Judgment that Cambodia has sovereignty over Phra Viharn Mountain."

Thailand's lawyer for this case was M.R. Seni Pramoj.

The proceedings involved two treaties, resulting in the world Court's decision to grant Cambodia sovereignty over Prasat Phra Viharn.

Agreement between Siam and France (A.D. 1904)

Article 1. The eastern border between Thailand and Cambodia starts from the beginning of Kapongphu Canal, along the shoreline of the lake until it reaches Kaphongcham Canal. From this point onward, the boundary follows a straight line, with the northern border reaching up

to the Dong Rek Mountains (Banthad Mountain). From there the border line follows the contour of Pannam Ridge, at the terrain around the Sen and Menam waterways of one part, and the area around the Mun River of the other part, and continues to the east along the ridge of the mountain until it reaches Mekhong River. From this point onwards, the river serves as the border of Siam according to the new agreement dated October 3, in the year 112 of the Rattanakosin Period (1887 A.D.).

There are other significant issues in this treaty. For example, Thailand had to give the territory on the right bank of the Mekhong River to France in exchange of the French evacuation from Chanthaburi. There was also an agreement to send a governor to jointly designate the boundary under article 1.

In 1907 A.D., Siam and France signed another treaty. Under this agreement, the Thai government had to yield the right of possession over Seam Reap, Battambong and Srisophon to France. Annex to this agreement concerning the border line contains provisions that affects the land where Phra Viharn Mountain is located. Article 1, of this agreement states that the border line between Siam and French Indochina begins from the shoreline across from the highest peak of Kud Island (Koh Kud) and along the course of Srisophon River to a place ten kilometers south of the town of Aran (a province in Thailand). From here a straight line is drawn to the Dong Rek Mountain, halfway between the Tako Pass and Samet Pass. It is understood, however, that the boundary must be delineated to allow passage between the town of Aran

and Tako Pass in the territory of Siam, starting from the Dong Rek Mountain mentioned above. The boundary continues along the Pannam Ridge, which falls into the Lake and the Mekhong of the one part, and the Mun River of the other part, and continues to the mouth of the Mekhong River, at Pak Huay Don near Pak Mun, along the border line agreed upon by the boundary committee on January 18 in the year 123 of the Rattanakosin Period, 1907 A.D.

On June 15, 1962 A.D. the World Court passed a decision that the ruins of Prasat Phra Viharn are under Cambodian sovereignty, in accordance with the map charted by France under the Treaties of 1904 A.D. and 1907 A.D. It was based on the grounds that Thailand had never lodged any protest against the said map. This was despite Thailand's continued affirmation that the Thai government had always considered the Pannam Ridge as the border, in accordance with provisions in all treaties that referred to the area in dispute. (Based on the Pannam Ridge, Phra Viharn Mountain was on Thai territory. According to the French map, the mountain is located within the Cambodian border).

The Thai government also confirmed that between 2450–2482 B.E., a number of prominent Thai officials visited Prasat Phra Viharn. This demonstrated the Thai sovereignty over the area. In addition, all foreign travellers, except the French scholars, had visited Phra Viharn Mountains under the understanding that the site was under Thai sovereignty. On the other hand, there was no evidence of Cambodians visiting the sanctuary during

this period.

Prominent individuals who visited Phra Viharn Mountain include: Krom Luang Sapphasit Sitthiprasong visited the site in 1900 A.D. when he was the Governor serving as the Regent over Eastern Laotian towns.

W. A. Graham wrote two books on Thailand. The first edition was in 1912 A.D. and the third edition was dated 1924 A.D. The caption under a photograph of Prasat Phra Viharn reads,

“The interior of an ancient gallery of Phra Viharn Sanctuary in Eastern Siam”.

Between 1924–1925 A.D., Thailand announced the registration of Prasat Phra Viharn.

In 1926 A.D. regulations on maintenance of this historical site were announced.

Somdej Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanubhab, then President of the Royal Academy, arrived in Srisaket on January 27, 1929 A.D. and visited a number of historical sites in Srisaket, including Prasat Phra Viharn.

In 1939 A.D. Luang Vichitr Vadakarn at that time the Director-General of the Fine Arts Department, inspected the map of this area and discovered that a stream, instead of the Pannam Ridge, was used as the boundary. The government headed by Field Mashall P. Pibulsonggram, tried to reach an agreement with the French government in Indochina.

The Thai government made an announcement and openly put area under its protection on October 11, 1940 A.D.

In 1940 A.D., the Fine Arts Department registered Pra-

sat Phra Viharn as a national historical monument. The announcement was made once again in the Royal Gazette on December 22, 1959.

In 1941 A.D. the Thai government printed a book called Thai Nai Samai Sang Chart (Thailand during the period of building up the nation). The caption under a picture of Prasat Phra Viharn said that Thailand regained possession of the sanctuary from French Indochina according to the modified boundaries under the Tokyo Treaty, 1941 A.D.

On July 15, 1962 A.D., Thailand evacuated everything from Phra Viharn Mountain. The Thai territory in that area was indicated by a rectangular stupa (formed by square bases placed on top of one another) on a hill, away from the new Thai border, on the cliff where a Thai flag was placed.

Prasat Phra Viharn led to a temporary conflict between Thailand and Cambodia. The dispute was brought about by Cambodia's claim of sovereignty over Prasat Phra Viharn which Thailand considered being on Thai territory.

This incident, viewed from a different perspective, reflects an example of social and cultural crisis faced by a number of countries dealing with international laws that define the boundaries and sovereignty of each nation.

In the past, Prasat Phra Viharn belonged to pilgrims of all nationalities. When it was left deserted in the forests and mountains, hunters and Suay tribesmen might have come by occasionally. Now the location of the sanctuary happens to be at the cultural boundary of two peoples,

whose development as a nation has drifted further and further apart. They are the Thai people in Thailand and the Cambodians in Cambodia.

The attitude that Khmer art belongs to Cambodia and the Thai art to the Thai people is probably not an acceptable answer. The fact that Khmer inscriptions were found here and that local people speak Thai with a mixture of Khmer dialects is not a true indication either.

The history of humanity is long. Will it not be possible that, at one moment of time, we have created cultural heritage to be shared and cherished by all?

A song from the Indochine Band called “This Music Has Its Origin — Phra Viharn Mountain” (September 1991), reflects the impressions of the present generation to a certain degree. The words are given below, some of which are underlined by the author of this book.

“Access to Phra Viharn Mountain is via Srisaket. ‘Srisa’ means ‘head’ in English. Srisaket lies next to Cambodia. The sanctuary is situated on a cliff. It is an immense stone prasat, an invaluable legacy from our ancestors. Birds come to take refuge under its shelter. Thais and foreigners come to witness its beauty. Prasat Phra Viharn reaches out to the clouds, towering majestically against the blue sky. Whoever witnesses such exquisite beauty is curious about its origin.... Please don’t fire bullets into the temple. This is our historical heritage that must be preserved by mankind, so that our posterity will know about the development of this treasure handed over to them from their forefathers... legacy of history, men of all nations must help to preserve it (the last sen-

tence partly) in Khmer words)....”⁷⁸

The Prasat Phra Viharn, situated on top of Dong Rek Mountain, attests man’s past endeavor in combining politics and culture of the people in the Korat Plateau of Thailand and in the Lower Khmer plain of present day Cambodia. The Lower Khmer plain is generally referred to “Lower Khmer” and north of this up to the Korat Plateau is referred to “Upper Khmer” area.

The historical background of the Prasat Phra Viharn is related to two large groups of people. The first group, located in the Lower Khmer area, is credited for building the kingdom of Angkor with a center around the Khmer Great Lake. The second group is attributed to the people who lived along the foot of the Phnom Dong Rek Mountain south of the Mun River. This mountain is known from the late royal Khmer chronicle as “Dong Rek Area”

The ancient Khmer kings saw the importance of the unity between politics and cultural belief of these two groups of people. At any rate, the dispersion of the political power into the Dong Rek area was clearly seen since the time of King Jayavarman II.

King Jayavarman II had initiated the practice that the building of royal power and status of the Khmer king were related to ‘divine being’ called divine kingship ideology. This ideology, comprising a belief system and ritual, refers to Khmer kings as divine beings on earth who bestowed peace, prosperity and happiness to man. The core of this ideology is based on the construction of temples dedicated to Vishnu with lingum, a symbol of all sa-

78. Op. Cit., p. 226.

credness, being placed at all major sites. These sites are both located in the Angkor area and outside where the ancient Khmers had social and cultural contact.

The divine kingship ideology stresses not only the belief in making the Khmer king's status divine but extends also the traditional belief related to animism and ancestor worship by the people. This characteristic joins the divine kingship ideology with the basic belief of the people in general.

The Phra Viharn Mountain is considered as one of the sites that is related to King Jayavarman II and his royal consort, Queen Kambuja Lakshmi. The building of this religious temple on top of a mountain is appropriate in many dimensions, e.g. the relationship with supernatural power and the joining of the belief system of the two groups of people at one place. At the same time, the divine status of the king was accepted by the people. For this reason the building of Prasat on top of this mountain is related directly to the divine kingship ideology.

The Prasat Phra Viharn was built on an old sacred area known as "Bhavalai" by the local people. It was after King Yasavarm who established Sri Sikkharesvara, the great mountain of god Shiva, that the place was also known as the Monument of Sikkharesvara.

The importance of the Phra Viharn Mountain was apparent during the reign of King Suryavarman I. It was the time when the construction of the Prasat Phra Viharn came into existence with its heavenly splendor. From this period onward the succeeding Khmer kings expanded and renovated the Prasat.

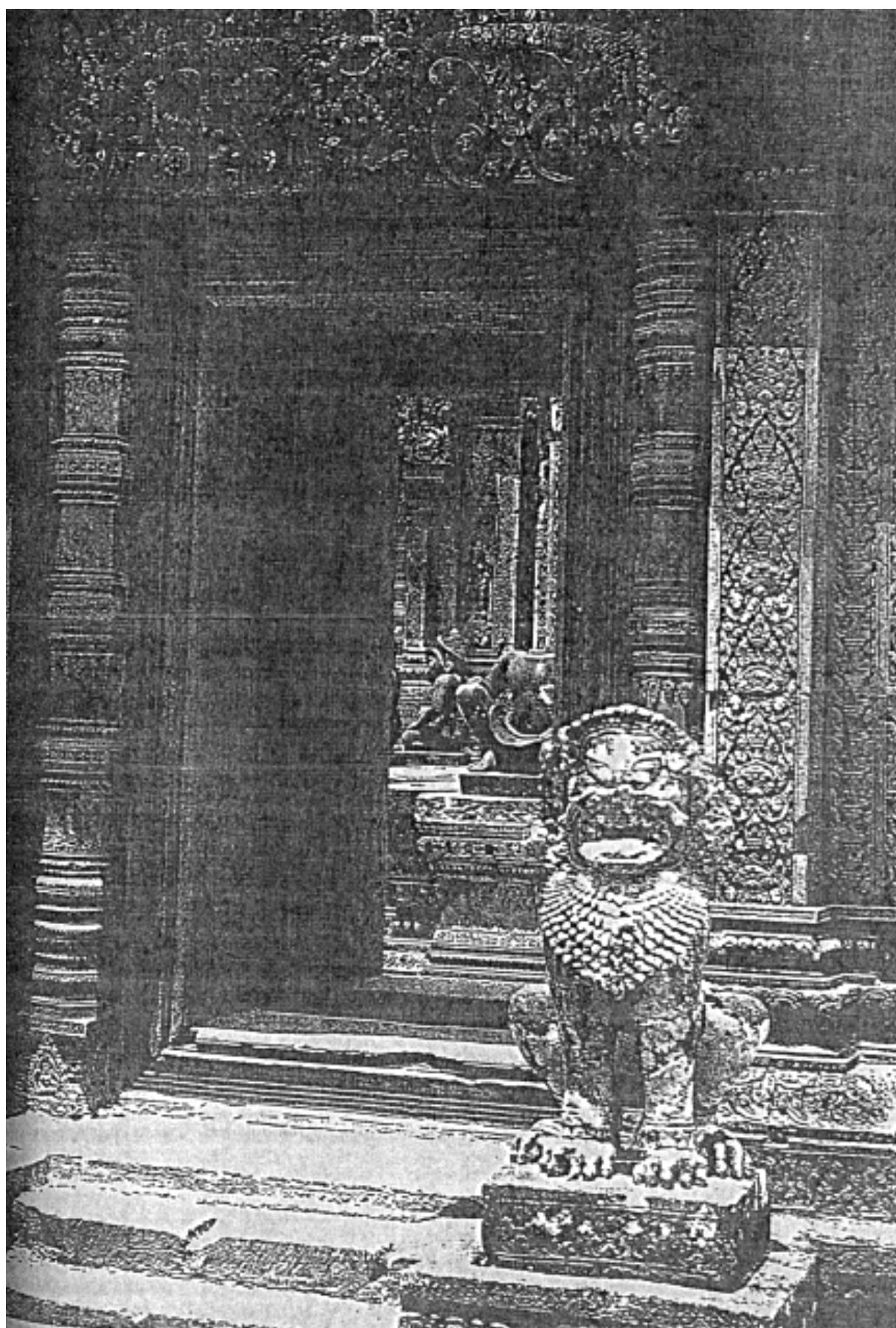
During the time of King Suryavarman I religious temples with Khmer art style and architecture prevailed throughout the Korat Pleateau area. This phenomenon was considered a great cultural and political accomplishment by the Khmer kings. The Prasat Phra Viharn which is compared to Viharn Sawan (a viharn in Heaven); had attracted the people's attention and devotion to the highest god. These feeling and perception are still being passed down in the recent oral tradition of the local people about this heavenly temple.

In the time of King Suryavarman II who built the Angkor Wat, the Prasat Phra Viharn was renovated together with other religious temples associated with divine kingship ideology. This action enhanced further the king's power and authority as emperor on this earth. It applies also to King Jayavarman II and King Suryavarman I. At the same time, the Phra Viharn Mountain and the Prasat Phra Viharn both became a pilgrimage site for the king and the general population.

After the reign of King Suryavarman II, the importance of the Phra Viharn Mountain and the Prasat Phra Viharn declined. This is seen from the Khmer political and cultural expansion especially during the time of king Jayavarman VII who had no connection with the Phra Viharn Mountain at all. During the reign of King Jayavarman VII, it was a period of building "hospitals" and "rest-houses" including the expansion of political and cultural relations passing to the Mun-Chi Rivers up to the Sakon Nakhon Basin and the Mekhong Basin up till Vientiane and Vienkham.

Chapter IX

***Miscellaneous Temples
in Thailand inspired by
Khmer Art***



Miscellaneous Temples in Thailand inspired by Khmer Art

The Royal Road to Phimai

The Khmer rulers placed great priority on communications within the empire, and one of the great accomplishments was the network of roads fanning out from the capital. (Fig. 81 a) These are mentioned in several inscriptions and although over much of their length the actual highway has disappeared, the routes can be traced by means of various constructions — bridges, rest-house chapels and hospital chapels, particularly from the reign of Jayavarman VII. In addition, maps and aerial photography reveal some stretches. One of the most important of the royal roads was that connecting Angkor to Phimai, about 225 km in length. (Fig. 81b) Others ran from the capital to Beng Mealea and Preah Khan of Kompong Svai (to the east), to Koh Ker and probably on to Champa (to the north-east), to Kompong Thom and Sambor Prei Kuk (to the South-east), and towards present-day Sisophon (to the west). Although the bridges and chapels, and much of the highway construction, belong to the reign of Jayavarman VII, some of these roads must have been in use long before, simply because of the dates of the cities and temples they connected.

The royal road to Phimai almost certainly existed at the time that Suryavarman II came to power at the begin-

ning of the 12th century, and probably considerably earlier. Phimai was then a major centre, and the road had both military and trade importance, although whether its route was the same as later is not known. However, by the early 13th century, it certainly left the capital through the north gate of Angkor Thom, and headed northwest to cross the Dongreke close by Ta Muen Thom.

Along the plateau section of the road, from the Dongrek Mountains to Phimai, there are enough buildings known to make this an interesting, and unusual, itinerary. The only part of the original road that is still driveable is Route 2163 that enters the town of Phimai. Elsewhere, maps and aerial photographs show sections that were almost certainly part of the highway but are now in poor condition. So, there is little point in trying to stick to the actual route; instead, this itinerary goes from temple to temple — from the Ta Muen Pass to the final destination, Phimai.⁷⁹

Ta Muen Thom Of the several passes across the mountains, the Ta Muen Pass was pre-eminent. We know this not only because of the importance of the temple of Ta Muen Thom, built around the natural rock *linga* and pedestal at the heart of the sanctuary, but because Jayavarman VII had a rest-house and hospital built nearby.

Ta Muen Toch Two and a half kms to the northwest, the trail leads to the chapel of a hospital.

Ta Muen Another 300m brings you to the *dharma-sala* — the chapel of a rest-house where pilgrims and other travellers would have spent the night. Its windows

79. Michael Freeman: Khmer temples in Thailand and Laos, p. 154.

are on the south side only, and would have faced out onto the road.

Bai Baek There is no evidence that the three small brick towers of Bai Baek, now in farmland, were actually on the road, but the temple does lie on a direct line from the pass to Muang Tam and Phnom Rung — and we know that the Khmers built these roads straight if at all possible. You can reach Bai Baek by driving north from Ta Muen to Ta Miang village, turning left along Route 2121, and then south after 9km.

Ban Kruat Around the town of Ban Kruat, which lies on the way to Muang Tam (Route 2121 west, then Route 2075 north), were many kilns. If you like, take a detour away from the former royal road to the quarries a little to the south-west.

Muang Tam Reach Muang Tam and its important *baray* via the village of Ban Chorakhae Mak.

Kuti Reussi #2 Continuing on towards Phnom Rung, clearly visible to the north-west, skirt the west side of the *baray*, and stop at this chapel of a hospital.

Bun Bu At the T-junction with the road from Prakhon Chai to Phnom Rung, make a short detour right for 1½ km to see the remains of this chapel of a rest-house.

Kuti Reussi #1 Return in the direction of Phnom Rung. After 2km, just pass the road to Muang Tam, stop at this chapel of another hospital (why there were two so close together is not known).

Phnom Rung Continue up the hill to Phnom Rung, the major stop on the road between Angkor and Phimai.

Phimai There is no completely easy and direct

modern road from Phnom Rung, and in order to enter Phimai along the surviving section of the original road, you will have to negotiate some winding country roads. Go first to Nang Rong (the road down the hill, Route 2221, is in exactly the right alignment to have been part of the royal road). Then take Route 24 west in the direction of Chok Chai and Khorat. If you have time, and enough sustained interest, there is a surviving straight section of the road that covers more than 15 km — as a cattle trail among the fields. To see part of it, turn right from Route 24 onto an un-numbered road 11 km west of Nang Rong (the nearest km marker shows 87 km to Khorat), signposted to Ban Nong

Thanon After nearly 4 km the road bends left; the straight section ahead probably follows the original route. After another 3 km, where the road bends right, the trail directly ahead is a path that continues straight for more than 15 km — the original route (ignore the track that veers off the left). There is of course, nothing to see, and though fascinating as a piece of amateur archaeology, it is an enthusiast's detour. Continue to Phimai by rejoining Route 24, driving another 17 km to Nong Ki, turning right and follow the winding roads to the village of Hin Dat on the main of North-Eastern Railway line. From Hin Dat continue north on Route 2163, entering Phimai by the Victory Gate on the south.

another unaccounted for footnote somewhere here⁸⁰

80. Op. Cit.. p. 156.

The Temples along the Royal Road to Phimai of Jayavarman VII

Prasat Ta Muen Thom

Situated in Kab Choeng district, Surin province are the remains of Ta Muen Thom built in the 11th century. The Dangrek Range divides the lower part of Northeast Thailand's Khorat Plateau from Cambodia. Along much of the Dongreks the escarpment of the plateau towers over the Cambodian plain below. Temples such as Preah Vihear, which overlook this precipice, can only easily be approached from the Thai side of the border. However, at a few places, passes exist through the mountain range. Given the topography, temples which commanded these passes were of great strategic value. The sanctuary at Ta Muen Thom is one of these temples on the road connecting Angkor with Phimai and for centuries was one of the finest stone temples of this period. (Fig. 82) Sadly, the destruction seen at the site today does not date to the period of the temple's occupancy, but to recent history.

Khmer Rouge troops occupied the temple, and in the course of several skirmishes wreaked severe damage to the structure. In the ensuing years, treasure seekers almost completed the task, chiselling off every potentially saleable bas-relief from the temple facade. Reconstruction has begun, but the task is more difficult than usual. Recent excavations have uncovered many interesting discoveries such as several inscriptions yet to be deciphered and a

svayambhu (a natural rock *linga*) on a pedestal hewn directly from the bedrock. This clearly determined the site, as it is enclosed by the garbhaghra. The main tower was built on a natural rock platform that extends as far as the east and west *gopuras*, and has been carved with a number of holes and insets. A *somasutra* follows a natural channel in the bedrock that leads out from the garbhaghra. The latter indicates the relative importance of this site.

A massive laterite staircase leads down from the southern *gopura* into Cambodia, and some 20 metres beyond this is a platform at the edge of a stream. A landing platform constructed near the stream is at the foot of a monumental staircase leading up the hill, a distance of some 30 metres. The surrounding gallery of the temple has four *gopuras*, with the principal entry being on the south. Inside the gallery, the central sanctuary and two additional *prangs* to the north are built of a pinky-grey sandstone. Two intact laterite buildings are also found in the courtyard, one of a rectangular plan near the eastern wall and another square cell located by the western wall, as well as the foundations of other buildings.

Prasat Ta Muen Toch

Situated a few hundred metres from the older prasat of Ta Muen Tom in the Ta Muen district of Surin province, this site in the Bayon style dates from the reign of Jayavarman VII. From an inscription found here it is known

that Prasat Ta Muen Toch is the chapel of a hospital. (Fig. 83) The inscription praises the Lord Buddha and Bhaisayagura and states that King Jayavarman VII, the son of Dharnindravarman, was the builder of this hospital for the benefit of the local population. In addition it details the doctors and the nurses, who were both male and female, the various ceremonial articles and the medicines dispensed. Additional information can be gleaned from the Ta Prohm inscription at Angkor (inscribed in the year A.D. 1186 and translated by George Coedes) in which it was stated that 102 hospitals such as this one were built in the various towns by royal command throughout the kingdom. The merit accruing from such buildings would pass to the mother of Jayavarman VII and Jayavarman himself with the added proviso that he might become a Buddha in his next life. Ta Muen Toch is the hospital which is nearest to the current Thai-Cambodian border and in the thirteenth century it would have been the first hospital encountered by travellers on the road from Angkor and lower Cambodia through the pass in the Dangrek Mountains to Phnom Rung and Phimai. The hospitals would seem to have been built from less durable materials than other structures and all that remains today are the chapels.

This hospital chapel differs from others such as Kamphaeng Noi in that the body of the *prang*, as well as the entrance, the pediment and the top of the roof were constructed of sandstone. Other hospitals found in Thailand have laterite chapels with only the ornamental pillars, the door frames and the top of the *prang* being sandstone.

Prasat Ta Muen

This long laterite building, nearly 1 km before Ta Muen Thom on e the approach road, is of considerable historical interest. Its all-laterite construction places it in the Bayon period during the reign of Jayavarman VII, when rapid and often crude building techniques were the norm. This building was the chapel for one of the resting places. (Fig. 84) Chou Ta-Kuan referred to these *dharmasalas*, as they were known, in his late 13th century account: “On the great routes there are places of rest like our post relays.” The pass through the mountains made this an inevitable location on the royal road, and we know from inscriptions at Angkor that this was one of 17 such stops between the capital and Phimai.

The chapel consists of a tower and adjoining long porch, essentially making one long hall. The tower, now 13m high, is partially collapsed; its base is 6.3m square. The 12m-long entrance is a little narrower at 5m. Five square sandstone windows line the south side only — one in the base of the lower, the other along the wall of the porch. The chapel faces nearly east, with a door at each end. There is no surrounding enclosure. Pilgrims and travellers stopping here would have sheltered in wooden buildings around the site, not in the chapel itself. The layout is very similar to the *dharmasalas* built within outer enclosures of Preah Khan and Ta Prohm at Angkor. These, built in sandstone rather than laterite, have a long entrance hall extending east from the tower, and windows along the southern side only. The reason

for this, more obvious at the Angkor sites, in that the *dharma* salas were sited a few metres north of the road — the windows, therefore, face out onto the pilgrim's way. **Artefacts:** Carvings of seated Buddha figures on a stone slab were found inside the porch, and may have been an antefix for the tower.

Prasat Bai Baek

This small brick temple, consisting of just three towers, was until recently hidden in the forest just north of the border, and was difficult to find without local assistance. (Fig. 85) Since 1990, however, the surrounding land has been cleared for agriculture, leaving the miniature towers visible but in a setting that is not particularly attractive. The most notable feature of Bai Baek is the unusual use of two-tone brickwork — the only instance known in Thailand. The arrangement of red and white bricks — the former used above the doorways — shows that this was deliberate and not just because two different kilns being used haphazardly. The significance, however, is lost.

Another feature that sets Bai Baek apart is that the entrances to the towers face west. This is extremely rare (the best-known example is Angkor Wat); the vast majority of Khmer temples are oriented to the east. Again, the reason is unknown. In the case of Angkor Wat, the fact that it was dedicated to Vishnu appears to be significant, although there is no complete agreement about even this the most thoroughly researched of all Khmer temples. Perhaps Bai Baek also was Vishnuite.

Plan: The three towers, built very close together in a north-south row, face west. The other three sides of each tower have false doorways, as is usual.

Ban Kruat Kilns & Quarries

The most extensive Khmer stone quarries known in Thailand lie a little to the south-west of Ban kruot, a few kms from the ridge of the Dongreks. Also in the vicinity are the collapsed remains of many kilns, and although there is little left to see of these, pottery is constantly being turned up by the local farmers. Local archaeologists from Buriram recently excavated one of the earthen kilns, but had insufficient funds to protect it from erosion during the rainy season. It is worth asking at Ban kruat in case other kilns have been more recently restored.

The sandstone quarries (*laeng tad* in Thai) offer more to see, although clearly this is of specialised interest. The area covers several acres. Look for the various techniques used to cut the stone into rough blocks — all the different stages are represented. Light incisions show where the stone was intended to be cut; at other places all four vertical cuts have been made, in preparation for cutting through at the base. Elsewhere, rows of vertical holes were a method of making deep vertical breaks by drilling.

Perhaps surprisingly, as at Si Khiu quarry, no analysis has to date been carried out to find where the stone from here was used. Phnom Rung is only 24 km as the crow

flies, and Muang Tam 18 km, and it is a fair guess that Ban Kruat was an important source.

Artifacts: No doubt many ceramic pieces in various museums came from this area, but pottery, like votive bronzes, was highly portable, and would have left the area as soon as it was made. Unfortunately, illegal, and so the origins are never declared.

Muang Tam

(see the detail on the main chapter VII)

Kuti Reussi #2

Very similar in appearance to the other Kuti Reussi at the foot of Phnom Rung Hill, this redented laterite tower in its small enclosure was built during the reign of Jayavarman VII (the Bayon style of late 12th to early 13th century) as the chapel for another hospital. (Fig. 86) Set among rice fields with picturesque rural views all around, this compact site is little visited but worth stopping for on the way between Phnom Rung and Muang Tam.

Prasat Ban Bu

Though more collapsed than Ta Muen, and in a location lacking atmosphere (the grounds of a school), this laterite chapel is another of the eight *dharma-salas*, or rest-houses, so far found on the road (PDFmaker comment: *I have given up trying to understand or correct some of the incomprehensible English in this thesis*) to metres long. It

was built in the reign of Jayavarman VII, the Bayon style, of late 12th to early 13th century. (Fig. 87) Spaced approximately 12 to 15 kilometres apart, they were an easy day's walk from one to the next. Although the resthouses on the longer eastern road from Angkor to Chapa were built in sandstone, these on the Phimai road were laterite.

This was originally a laterite tower with a long entrance hall, measuring 11.5 x 5.1m. Only the walls of this chapel remain, and it is really worth a stop only if you are driving this route to or from Phnom Rung. The only in situ carving is a rosette-shaped sandstone panel, which must have been brought here from another temple of an earlier period.

Kuti Reussi #1

Close to the foot of Phnom Rung Hill, this redented laterite tower with 3 x 2.6m porch on its east side was one of Jayavarman VII's hospital chapels . (Fig. 88) Confusingly, it shares the same name with the nearby laterite chapel close by the *baray* of Muang Tam. The name however, means nothing more than 'hermit' s cell' and is a local description. Although not worth a special trip, it is a short stop on the way between Phnom Rung and Muang Tam.

Plan: Like other similar chapels of the period (e.g. the other Kuti Reussi, Prang Ku and Kamphaeng Noi), the layout is very simple — a small tower with eastfacing porch, set in a small rectangular enclosure with a single eastern gopura.

Prasat Phnom Rung
(see the detail on the main chapter 7)

Prasat Phimai
(see the detail on the main chapter 6)

The Other Miscellaneous Khmer Temples in Thailand

Prasat Phnomwan

Situated between the modern city of Khorat and the ancient site of Phimai. Phnom Wan was catalogued by both Aymonier and de Lajonquiere. Three important inscriptions dated 891, 1055 and 1082 A.D. have been found at the site. The last of these, inscribed on the doorjamb of the southern porch, mentions the monastery at Phimai. While the fifty or so kilometres between the two temples can be covered today in under an hour, in the 11th century the distance was a substantial undertaking. In addition, there are many other contemporary temples in the Phnom Wan region such as Non Ku and Muang Khaek. Thus the mention of Phimai, known to be an important city at this time, makes the establishment of particular interest. This link, and the fine and early carving at Phnom Wan testify to a venerable monastic establishment. (Fig. 89)

Little remains today of the wide moat which once enclosed the temple. To the east is a large *baray* or reservoir, about half a kilometre in length. Remains of a further reservoir, over a kilometre in length, are visible on World War II aerial photographs of the area. All these bodies of waters completed a microcosmic recreation of the Hindu universe. The central Mount Meru, home of the gods, was surrounded by a wall. Beyond the wall lay the sacred oceans. Fulfillment of this plan ensured harmony with gods, bringing prosperity to the kingdom. At Phnom Wan, the wall is represented by the gallery which forms a rectangle around the central sanctuary. The plan is similar to Phimai, except that the two side *gopuras*, which at Phimai are offset to align with the doorways of the central cell, are centered in the side galleries of Phnom Wan.

The earliest evidence for the temple's existence underlies the eastfacing annex found in the southern sector of the courtyard. Although this building today is a jumble of sandstone blocks and bricks, the base is made up of the very large bricks typical of 7–9th century remains. As at Phnom Rung, it may be that a second or third brick tower once existed which was covered over during construction of the sandstone sanctuary seen today. Clearly the temple was altered and added to over several centuries, from at least the late 9th century through the end of the 11th century. Parts of the corbelled roof, all sandstone blocks, still remains intact. Altogether, the temple measures more than 25 metres in length. Although the building is predominantly built of white sandstone, parts of the roof are

red sandstone and the red stone has also been used to make the rounded bobbin columns in the windows.

An inscription bearing the date 891 A.D., written in Sanskrit, was found on one of the doorjambs at Phnom Wan. It refers to two early kings who reigned at Angkor, Indraverman I (867–889 A.D.) and Yasovarman I (889–910 A.D.). A lintel from Phnom Wan, now at the Bangkok National Museum, provides further evidence for Phnom Wan's existence by at least the second half of the 9th century (late Preah Ko style). A *kala* occupies the centre of the lintel, his face and head composed of wonderfully expressive curls of foliage. A garland issues from his mouth, and from the garland emerges two triple-headed *nagas*. The creatures are arched upwards, with further vegetative swirls rising up to crown their heads. The rest of the lintel continues this motif, the curls taking on the form of soft wings on the upper register. Both the looseness of the curls and the depth of the carving make this piece unique.

A contrast in styles, and proof of continued work on the temple some two hundred years later, is offered by the *in situ* lintel over the north entrance of the sanctuary.

Another lintel, dated to the end of the Bakheng period (first half of the 10th century), shows that the popularity of the *kala* motif did not inhibit other scenes. In this case, the central figure is the god Vishnu, mounted atop a rather sturdy rendition of his vehicle Garuda who, as is often shown, demonstrates his mastery over his arch enemy, the subterranean *naga*. The tails of the two *nagas* are grasped firmly in the Garuda's hands. The bodies of

the *nagas* curve upward and then across the length of the lintel. Various *devatas* dance on the back of the *nagas*, some unusually depicted with a lion-like body and a tail.

As so much of the temple is no longer intact, it is difficult to tell to which deity it was principally dedicated. Certainly during some of its existence, however, the Hindu god Shiva was pre-eminent. The 1055 A.D. inscription on southern doorjamb mentions a Saivite monastery. Two other traces of Shiva worship are a carved stone hand holding a lotus, identified as Shiva's consort Uma, and a large stone *linga*, both now in the Mahavirawong Museum in Nakhon Ratchasima.

Finds of Buddha images suggest that the temple was used well into the 12th and 13th centuries when Buddhist worship became the norm. This custom continues today — images of the Buddha from many different periods fill the dimly lit interior of the temple, which is still used for worship. Much remains to be learned about the Phnom Wan complex, and its relationship to Phimai.

Prasat Sdok Kok Thom

This small Baphuon-period temple is situated 33 kilometres north of Aranyaprathet road in the Ta Phraya district of Prachinburi province. It was built during the reign of King Udayadityavarman II in the 11th century. (Fig. 90) Right on the border, Sdok Kok Thom was for a number of years in the 1980s occupied as a military post by the

KPNLF troops and therefore unvisitable. It was ‘opened’ when Thai troops pushed back the Cambodian rebels and began clearing the mines in 1990 for a visit by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. A relatively compact site, Sdok Kok Thom retains a fairly complete *gopura* at the main east entrance, enclosure wall and ‘libraries’, while its *prang* has collapsed, in an unusual way, leaving the west side as a thin spire. The rubble of fallen sand-stone blocks surrounds the *prang*.⁸¹

Despite its modest size, the relative importance of the priestly family who had been given the site by king Udayadityavarman II led to the consecration of an important Shiva *linga*, with a stele being inscribed in Sanskrit to commemorate the event. Indeed, Sdok Kok Thom is best known for its inscription, one of the most important for the study of Khmer history. Now housed in the National Museum in Bangkok, it dates to about 1052, during the reign of Udayadityavarman II and chronicles the history of the Shivakaivalya dynasty of priests who had served King Jayavarman II, founder of the Khmer empire, since 802. It relates how Jayavarman II arrived from Java, became king of Indrapura (probably east and across the Mekhong river from present-day Phnom Penh) and later moved his capital to Hariharalaya, close to Angkor on the northern shore of the Tonle Sap. In addition it also provides information on subsequent Khmer history, the Khmer system of kingship, the various beliefs adhered to and details about the Brahmin family and their involvement with later Khmer kings.

81. Smithi Siribhadra & Elizabeth Moore: Op Cit., p. 201.

Prasat Ban Phluang

Situated in the Prasat district of Surin province, the small Baphuon temple of Ban Phluang rests pristinely upon its base within a landscaped courtyard. (Fig. 91) A moat, crossed by a single causeway on the east side, surrounds the sanctuary. Like so many of the Khmer temples in Thailand, the tranquility and order seen at Ban Phluang today is the result of years of careful reconstruction and continued maintenance by the Fine Arts Department. Reconstruction work was carried out at Ban Phluang during the 1970s by Vance Childress, an American architect working in conjunction with the Fine Arts Department. This extremely detailed excavation report offers valuable insights into Khmer construction techniques in general. Here, all three building materials were employed — sandstone, laterite and brick. Both laterite and brick were easily obtained locally, but most probably the sandstone was brought from quarries to the south. Its transportation was not a problem, for most of the pieces weighed less than a 1,000 pounds, similar to loads of rice carried on ox-carts today.

Prasat Ban Phluang was built during the second half of the 11th century. At this time, Udrayadetyavarman II (1055–1065) ruled at Angkor. The style of architecture and sculpture of this period takes its name from the Baphuon, the major temple built by Udrayadetyavarman II at Angkor. During this period, the Khmer interpretation of the pyramid temple-mountain with terraces and concentric galleries developed greater complexity. An evolution in decorative carving was also seen, particularly in the

depiction of the human figure and the appearance of greater narration on lintel carvings.

Finds of pottery underneath nearly all the houses of the present village at Ban Phluang show that the 11th century village occupied much the same area as today. Whether an earlier village existed at the site is unknown. The lack of inscriptions from the site means that the name of the ruler who initiated construction of the temple also remains a mystery. The temple's reservoir or *baray* was once almost a kilometre in length. Construction of a reservoir was often the first step in the founding of a new village, for the water provided an essential resource to cope with the extended dry season, ensuring a food supply for the people.

The building of the temple, although begun in the mid-11th century, was never completed, perhaps reflecting the financial situation of the time, or the relative power of the person who commissioned it. During excavations, two unfinished *naga* cornices were unearthed. Among the several guardian figures carved on the outside of the lower part of the temple, one has been left unfinished and the chisel marks left by the sculptor can still be seen. A number of the tools used to build Ban Phluang were found during excavations. These included the iron chisels and mallets that were used to work the sandstone and laterite. Although such implements tend to shatter aged stone, both the sandstone and laterite are softer for at least a couple of years after quarrying.

The construction of the temple started with the laterite foundation, perhaps on the auspicious north-eastern

corner. The blocks were placed evenly on a prepared bed of sand, with precautions taken to ensure that all pieces were smooth. Notches found on both the front and back of the bottom of show that a system of lifting was used to place the four levels, each about half a metre high. A different placement method was used to lay the floor the terrace, for these blocks have holes not on the bottom edge, but one on the top and one midway on the back of the block. This would have allowed each piece to be swung snugly into place against its neighbours and ensure a good fit.

Careful analysis of dimensions during excavation at Ban Phluang showed that the next step in the construction of the temple was the installation of the pedestal and *linga* dedicating the sanctuary to Shiva. Essential astrological materials would have been placed under the pedestal, along with precious, gold leaf, and valued spices. Looting, however, probably began at the temple as early as the 14th century. Robbers attempted to remove the pedestal, and dug down to a depth of almost four metres in search of treasures placed during consecration.

Following the placement of this ritual centre of the temple, the sandstone base of the temple was laid. This exterior was faced with laterite on the inside. Doors were constructed on all four sides, although only the east door provided entry into the temple, the doors on the other sides being false. Stones were probably moved up onto the terrace platform on ramps, and scaffolding set up as the building grew higher. Once a stone had been set roughly in position, it may have been lifted again. Holes

drilled into the top of the block would have been first filled with water. Wooden pegs inserted into the holes would become tight once they absorbed the water. Ropes could then be wrapped around the pegs, and with the aid of a simple pulley, it could be raised. This would allow a final finishing of the sides and bottom to obtain a good fit. Some stones are better nested than others, as both beginner and seasoned artisans would have been working on the temple.

After 18 levels of sandstone, the builders probably switched to brick. The use of brick to create the upper layers of a sandstone tower is an unusual feature of the temple. It may have stemmed from difficulties in obtaining stone, or the easier logistics of placing the bricks on the upper portions of the tower. During excavation, large quantities of brick were unearthed in the area around the temple, and the top layer of sandstone was found to have been inscribed with brick shapes. It is not certain, however, if the tower was ever finished. The other unfinished elements such as the guardian figures suggest that work may have been abruptly interrupted, perhaps due to a change in fortune of the local patron, or the ruler at Angkor.

Prasat Sikkhoraphum

The style of the lintels and other sandstone carvings of Prasat Sikkhoraphum in the eponymous district of Surin province dates the monument to the Angkor Wat period in the early part of the 12th century of Suryavarman II, al-

though the superstructure of the brick towers was rebuilt by the Lao at a later date. The plan of the temple is a quincunx with four brick towers around a central larger one surrounded by a moat. Such a plan is not found elsewhere in Thailand and has particular cosmological significance. Symbolism of this kind was normally reserved for more important state temples such as Ta Keo, Pre Rup and Angkor Wat. (Fig. 92)

The five towers sit upon a low, square laterite platform, oriented to the east. Brick was no longer used in Cambodia as a building material for prasats or important buildings after being supplanted by sandstone during the 11th century and if it was used at all it was only for insignificant buildings and for small additional details. But in Khmer architecture in Thailand, brick continued to be widely used in the construction of prasats until the second half of the 12th century, when laterite took over. However, as in Cambodia, for very important buildings sandstone was the preferred material from the 11th century onwards.

The importance of the site is also reflected in the care with which the brick was laid. The rebuilding by the Lao clearly show the results of craftsmen who, as well as coming from a different cultural background, did not understand the intricacies of Khmer architecture. The various antefixes have been repositioned at will with the deities responsible for the various directions (north, south, etc.) being replaced incorrectly.⁸²

Today, the most significant feature of the site is the sandstone doorway with its pilasters, lintels and columns

82. Op. Cit., p. 219.

still intact. Little decoration remains on the four smaller towers, but the vestiges still in place suggest a prosperous establishment. At the end of an arch on the south-west tower, a multi-headed *naga* raises his heads in protection. The *nagas* emerge from the square and toothy jaws of a *makara*. The creature lacks the snout usually associated with the *makara*, resembling instead the sleek lines of the dragons seen on the lintel over the doorway of the central tower. Remnants of stucco can be seen on the brick beneath the *nagas*. Stucco motifs were also found by the Fine Arts Department during recent excavations at Muang Tam, to the south-west of Prasat Sikkhoraphum, a reminder that all the brick towers were once coated and most probably painted.

Prasat Muang Singh

Prasat Muang Singh, ‘the sanctuary tower of the city of the lion’, is located in Kanchanaburi province in the western part of Thailand, close to the Burmese border. The architecture does not pose a problem in dating the Bayon style temple, namely to the reign of Jayavarman VII, 13th century A.D. In the Preah Khan inscription of Jayavarman VII mention is made of the various cities to which the king sent a statue of Jayabuddhamahanartha. Among these towns are many believed to be in Thailand; Rajapura or Rajburi; Ravapura or Lopburi; Vajrabura or Petchaburi; and Srijayasimhapura, which is likely to be Muang Singh. (Fig. 93)

This prasat was discovered during the time of King Chulalongkorn (1868–1910) and registered with the Fine Arts Department since 1935, but a full excavation and restoration has only been carried out recently. The excavations have revealed that laterite was the chief construction material. This is typical of the Bayon style and the quarries which supplied the laterite have been located not far to the east of the temple. What is unusual is that sandstone has not been used for the door frames, lintels and pediments. Instead where decoration was required stucco was employed, a technique popular in the area of the Chao Phraya basin in the earlier Dvaravati period.⁸³

Like Prasat Ta Muen Thom, the location of Muang Singh was strategic. Commanding a vital outpost for the Angkorean king Jayavarman VII (1181–1218), the ruler of Muang Singh controlled a critical portion of the empire. The geographical conquest in the late 12th and early 13th centuries was always consolidated with the establishment of a new temple. Another as-yet unexcavated Khmer sanctuary known as Muang Krut or ‘city of the Garuda’ is located a few kilometres east of Muang Singh. As the remains in this area are more fully documented in coming years, the image of Muang Singh as a lonely outpost may change to show it as one of a number of prosperous trading centres of the late 12th century.

At Muang Singh, as at earlier large sites, both the temple and the outer limits of the city replicate the cosmos. The plan of the outer rectangular enclosure, the city limits, is somewhat irregular. Measuring about 800 by

83. Op. Cit., p. 317.

1400 metres, it is situated on the banks of the Kwai Noi River. The southern border, rather than completing a perfect rectangle, has a spur on its southern side, following the course of the river. The outer enclosure is built of laterite on top of an earthen rampart. Seven more encircling moats and earthen ramparts on the north, east and west of the temple complete the replication of the celestial universe. The survival of these multiple city enclosures is rare. They are invaluable in helping to recreate a sense of the Khmer temple as centre of a much larger fortified city.

The rectangular wall of the temple is also laterite. Its enclosure is about one-tenth of that of the city, measuring about 81 by 104 metres. Within this is another, smaller rectangle, that of the galleries. The first indication of the Mahayana Buddhist affiliation of the complex is seen on the inside of the north gallery wall, in the form of the compassionate Bodhisattva, Avalokitesvara carved into the laterite face. The quarries which supplied the laterite for the complex have been located, not far to the east of the temple. The rough finish of the laterite blocks provided a good base for the application of stucco, which once covered the exterior of the temple. The many pieces of stucco recovered during the Fine arts Department's reconstructions offer a glimpse of the temple as it was during the time of Jayavarman VII. The heads in particular also indicate a sequence of Mon Dvaravati, Khmer Bayon, and Thai influences on the styles of decoration.

In the absence of inscriptions, it has been statues recovered during excavations which have provided the

best means of dating the temple. Many portray Mahayana figures such as Avalokitesvara and Prajnaparamita. Avalokitesvara is one of the most frequently seen Bodhisattvas of Mahayana Buddhism. He is one of the five jinas created by the Adi-Buddha. These jinas or ‘victorious ones’ are each associated with directions, with the jina of the west being Amitabha. If evoked, Amitabha, has the power to ensure that a person will be born in his next life in paradise. Buddhahood will thus be attained in the next existence.

All the jinas are also associated with multiple emanations of Bodhisattvas and other deities. The most important emanation of Amitabha is Avalokitesvara, known as the compassionate Bodhisattva. It is in part from Avalokitesvara that the visible universe is created; his compassionate aspect derives from the way in which he has delayed his own attainment of Buddhahood to assist all humans in reaching enlightenment.

Of the various attributes associated with Avalokitesvara, two can still be seen on one of the statues of the Bodhisattva recovered from Muang Singh. In this case, Avalokitesvara is shown as Lokesvara or ‘lord of the world’ holding a book, flask, lotus and rosary. The statue still holds all but the last. A small seated figure of Amitabha can be seen on the front of his cylindrical chignon. The style of the short pleated skirt or with its wide belt and anchor-shaped drape, is typical of the late 12th and early 13th centuries. The deity’s broad features closely resemble those of the Bayon’s face towers, which are believed to represent King Jayavarman VII as Lokesvara.

Prasat Khao Noi

This small prasat is situated in Prachinburi province and has recently undergone extensive renovation by the Fine Arts Department. Its main significance lies in its finely carved lintels which are among the earliest. Built on an isolated hill, overlooking the western plains of Cambodia, its three brick *prangs* face east and are constructed in a row with the northern and middle *prang* on one base and the southern *prang* on a separate one. Following excavation the lintels are now housed in Prachinburi museum. Recently, the central *prang* has been rebuilt by the Fine Arts Department and copies of the lintels placed in situ. Although judging by these lintels, the prasat appears to have been built in the mid-7th century at the time of the Sambor Prei Kuk (c.600–650) and the beginning of the Prei Kmeng (c.635–000) periods (both overlap artistically), the central *prang* was clearly reconstructed in the 11th century and the lintels from the original 7th century structure were reused.

Prasat Non Ku

Situated in the Soong Nern district of Nakhon Ratchasima province, the neighbouring 10th century temples of Prasat Non ku and Muang Khaek are thought to have been the religious centres of the ancient city of Muang Khorakhapura. Constructed during the Koh Ker period, Prasat Non Ku's outer wall encloses a small square tem-

ple on a sandstone base which faces east and two smaller shrines which face west. Muang khaek and Non Ku, located about 30 kilometres west of the present provincial capital, occupy a strategic defensive and trade position on the western edge of the Northeast's Khorat Plateau.

In this region, many streams flow down from the hills which mark the boundary of the plateau. Just to the northeast of Phimai, these tributaries merge into the Mun River. The Mun continues east across the plateau, finally emptying into the Mekong River across the Laotian border. The presence of many streams on the upper reaches of the Mun has meant that alluvium has been deposited, creating one of the most fertile areas on the plateau. It is an area with abundant salt, a product that inscriptions mention was transported by boat. Muang Khorakhapura was also near to the present town of Si Khiu, where fine sandstone quarries were found. That these combined advantages were apparent to the ancient Khmer is clearly seen in the cluster of temples which were founded in this area — Phimai, Phnom Wan, along with Non Ku and Muang Khaek are well placed to utilise the waterways of the upper Mun. During at least part of its existence, Muang Khorakhapura shared this area with another large city, the 9th–11th century Muang Sema. Some scholars think that Muang Sema was the centre of a kingdom recorded in inscriptions as Sri Chanasa. Unlike the Hindu remains found at Muang Khorakhapura, Muang Sema's rulers are thought to have been Buddhist.

Prasat Non Ku was included in the inventories carried out by both Aymoniet and de Lajonquiere. Subsequently

1959 saw the first excavations and restorations carried out at this site by the Fine Arts Department. The work was incomplete and recently the Department has carried out additional works. The tower which was constructed on a sandstone base has completely collapsed, all that remains being the two-metre high rectangular base. Various artefacts found in the vicinity lead to a date within the Koh Ker period or at least to the first half of the 10th century.

Prasat Muang Khaek

Prasat Muang Khaek, situated in the Soong Nern district of Nakhon Ratchasima province, dates from the end of the Koh Ker period, c.940 A.D. Today, only the sandstone features, notably the door frames of the central sanctuary and northern *gopura*, are standing. Three massive pieces of sandstone make up each doorframe, with the structural lintels overhanging the doorjambs. Originally, these would have had additional support from the walls.

Recent excavations by the Fine Arts Department have greatly increased our knowledge of the site. We now know that this site embodies the same constructional principles and plan as those found at Prasat Thom of the same period in Cambodia, 1100 miles north-east of Angkor, in which outer structures are large and gradually diminish in size towards the centre of the temple. However, at Prasat Thom the *mandapa* can only be entered from the front, whereas at Muang Khaek entry can also be effected from the two sides. This style of architecture is reminiscent of the Chola

style in India which covered the period 900–1287 A.D.

The main *prang* was built from brick on a relatively high sandstone base, and although the walls and roof have collapsed long ago, it is still possible to appreciate its rather unusual nature; both northern entrance to the *mandapa* the doorway connecting the *mandapa* to the *antarala* are much taller and larger than the side entrances. Although all the brick walls have disappeared, we can surmise that the roof would also probably have been brick.

Prasat Kamphaeng Yai

The Mun River becomes broader as it flows east across the Khorat Plateau. There are fewer tributaries and over the centuries the river has cut more deeply into the flat alluvium. During the rainy season, waterways in the eastern province of Sisaket easily overflow their banks. During the extended dry season from November to March, there is little or no precipitation. Economically this region is one of Thailand's poorest.

It is also the home of one of the most spectacular Khmer objets found in recent years. During excavations by the Fine Arts Department at Prasat Kampaeng Yai in Uthumphon Phisai district, a large bronze guardian figure was unearthed in the inner courtyard. The discovery was only 10 centimeters underground, near the southwestern gate. Portions of life-size bronzes have been found, such as the torso of a reclining figure of Vishnu found at Angkor

and a bronze head from Ban Tanot in Northeast Thailand. The only known full-figure bronzes have, as a result of various wars, been moved from Cambodia to Ayutthaya to Burma (Myanmar), and today are kept in Mandalay. Thus the provenance as well as the fineness of execution, make the guardian from Kampaeng Yai quite unique.

The Temple plan

Although the bronze guardian is the most recent and spectacular result of the Fine Arts Department's excavations, many instances of fine carving and the plan of the temple suggest that it was a prosperous establishment.

The temple complex is found behind a modern wat outside the town of Ban Kamphaeng. The wall of the temple's name (Kamphaeng Yai meaning 'large wall' in Thai) is an imposing sandstone and laterite gallery, over fifty metres on each side, with a *gopura* at each of the four cardinal points. The main, eastern *gopura* has three doorways to the courtyard and is in the form of a cross. Just before entering the courtyard, there is an inscription in Khmer carved on the left side. Still intact are the horizontal windows of the gallery walls. Similar windows are seen in the 'libraries' of Preah Vihear and Phnom Rung, and may date to the early 11th century.

From the carving of the lintels, it would seem that the buildings were constructed at different times and during the period of Udayadityavarman II. Thus the central tower combines stylistic elements from the 10th century Banteay Srei period and the later Khleang style of Angkor Thom, whereas the lintel from the north 'library', de-

picturing a reclining Vishnu, is in the 11th century Baphuon style. In addition lion guardians at the base of the central tower are typical of that period. (Fig. 94)

The sanctuary was probably dedicated to Shiva as evidenced by an inscription in which Kamrateng Añ Shivatasa gave the land for the glory of Brudheshvara which would seem to refer to Shiva. The site consists of six extant buildings. All are of brick except for the central *prang* which is a mixed construction of sandstone and brick with a brick superstructure. At the centre of the enclosure is the main *prang*, flanked port and south by two small *prangs*. Behind the southern *prang* stands another, and, given the Khmer love of symmetry, it is likely that its pair was planned but never built. In the east of the enclosure are two brick annexes facing west in the position usually occupied by 'libraries'.

An image of the Buddha seated on a *naga* measuring over a metre high was formerly housed in the modern vihara which adjoined the main temple. It was found at the base of the main tower. This image has now been moved to the new monastery constructed outside the ancient site.

Prasat Kamphaeng Noi

The enclosure of Kamphaeng Noi in Uthumphon Phisai district of Sisaket province is on a slight rise, surrounded by a modern monastery. Despite this long term use, the site preserves much of its original plan, including a reservoir or *baray* to the east of the temple, and a crumbling

laterite annex. A great deal of public building was carried out during the reign of Jayavarman VII. (Fig. 95) Many of the structures were hastily built and were rather poor technically. Accordingly, many have collapsed and it is difficult to find one in good condition. The builders made use of stone lintels from existing structures and the lintels found here have been reused from an earlier ruined Baphuon period prasat, the location of which is still unknown.

also unknown is location of the text footnote below⁸⁴

An outer wall of laterite surrounds an area of about 20 by 35 metres. The wall is pierced only on the east by a cruciform gopura made of laterite and sandstone. Although much of the gate has fallen down, the face of a kala on the lintel over the doorway still guards the entry. Holes which can still be seen in many of the blocks allowed them to be pegged and tied for lifting into position.

The central laterite tower, representing the chapel of the 13th century hospital, is a redented square, each side measuring about five metres. On the east is a square porch, about three metres long. The three other sides of the building only in their relative sizes. The size of the structure probably corresponded to the size of the local community. Generally the east-facing prang would contain an image of Buddha Bhaisajyagura and Vajradhara. In the south-east corner of the enclosure would be situated a 'library' facing west. The walls would have one gopura on the eastern side. On the northeast side outside the wall would be a small, square pond whose laterite border would be stepped.

84. Op. Cit. p. 148.

Prasat Narai Jaeng Waeng

Prasat Narai Jaeng Waeng was built in the reign period of king Udayadityavarman II in the Baphuon style (11th century A.D.)

A small sandstone temple on a high laterite platform. The lintels and pediments are all interesting, and there is a fine *somasutra* still in situ — one of very few throughout the remains of the Khmer empire. This is, in fact, the most northerly Khmer sanctuary still in good condition. The name is both unusual and reflects the history of the region — Narai is the Thai name for Vishnu, but *jaeng waeng* is old Khmer, meaning ‘long legs’. The entire name presumably refers to the reclining Vishnu on the northern pediment. What makes this unusual is that Sakhon Nakhon has for a few centuries been a Lao area, and so the name pre-dates this. [The modern Khmer pronunciation would be *cheung weng*].

Plan: While there may originally have been an enclosure and even a moat, all that remains today is the sanctuary tower, with a single entrance on the east side, covered by a porch.

The sanctuary: Enter through the gate on the south side, and walk around to the right to begin at the eastern entrance. Over the entrance to the porch, only the lintel remains, featuring Indra, guardian of the east, riding the elephant Airavata. Inside, the door to the sanctuary carries a pediment showing Shiva dancing — as at Phimai

and Phnom Rung. Here, however, the figure unusually has 12 arms rather than 10. If you have already visited Phimai and Phnom Rung, you should be able to recognise the surrounding figures — the female disciple Kareikalammeyar seated on the left as you face the carving, and Ganesh on the right playing an instrument. The pediment has at some point been roofed over — the corbels intrude on both sides. On the lintel below, Krishna fights two *simhas*.⁸⁵

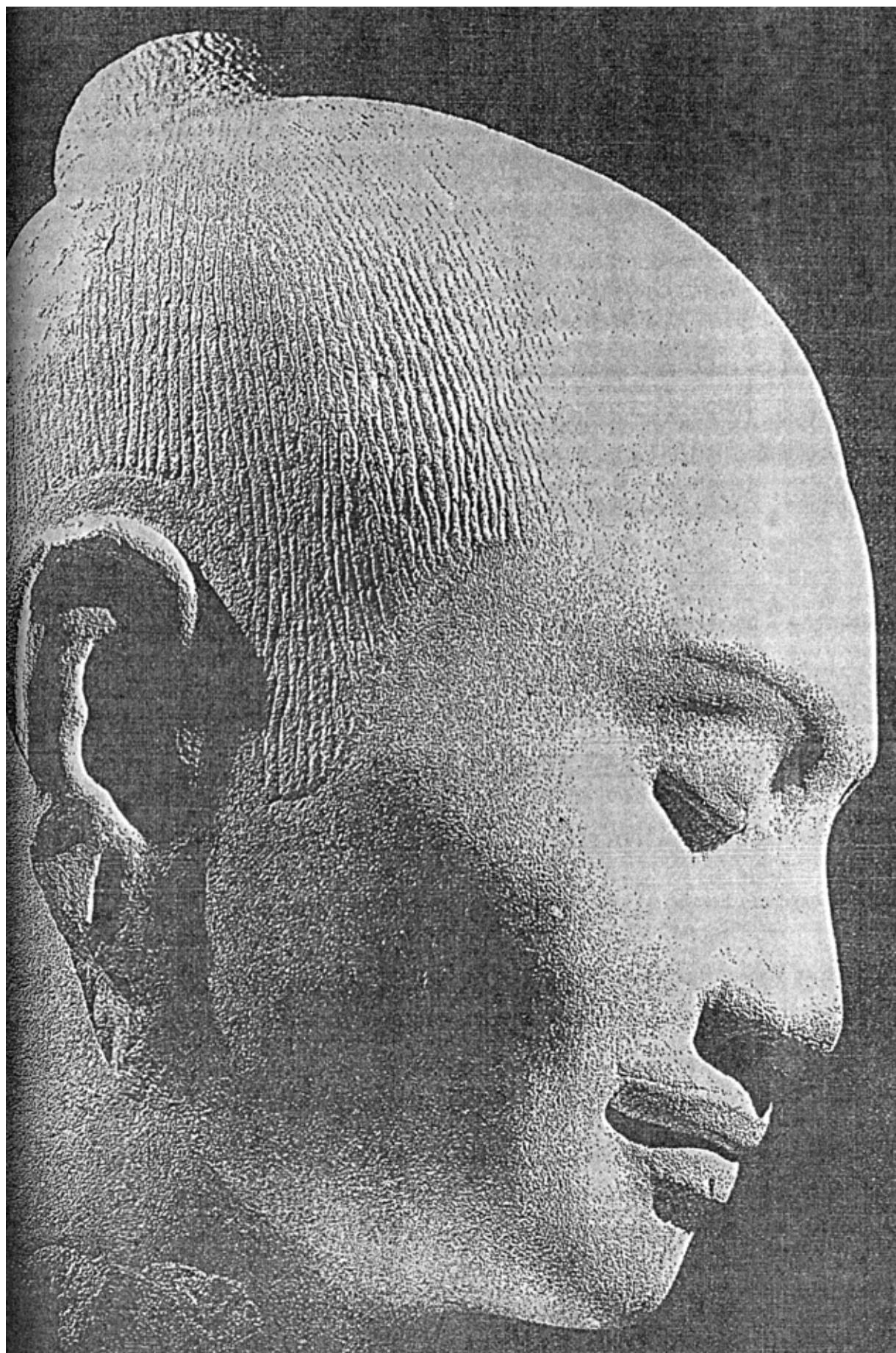
Walk clockwise around the sanctuary tower. On the south side is a lintel divided into an upper and lower band, clearly telling a story. The meaning, however, has not been deciphered, although the presence of a monkey in the central porch on the upper band suggests that this might be from the *Ramayana*.

Continue round to the north side, which has a false door, like the west and south. The pediment, very provincial in style but powerful, is of Vishnu reclining, and has given the temple its local name. The style, and the checked pattern of the *sampot* worn by the god, show the influence of local folk art, and invites comparison with the reclining Vishnu at Kamphaeng Yai. Below, the lintel carries another scene of Krishna fighting, but here he battles with a single *simha*.

On the platform under the door, a *somasutra* emerges from the *garbhagrha*, as at Phimai and Phnom Rung. Here, however, it retains a finely carved spout in the form of an elephant-headed beast — either a *makara* or a *gajasimha*.

85. Michael Freeman: Op. Cit., p. 192.

Conclusion



Conclusion

Among the religion and its art, we as Thai people cannot deny that Indian and Khmer arts are the major elements of influence on Buddhist arts in Thailand.

India planted her Indian civilization through S.E.A. and it took its deep root on the soils of Suwannapuhm. India was the birth place of important religions of the world such as Brahmanism, Buddhism, which influenced the culture and civilisation of many parts of the world that accepted India as their “mother land”. They are indebted to India in many respects. India, Cambodia and Thailand had their close relationship through religion, culture and art. India, the “mother land” of culture spread her civilization of Brahmanism and Buddhism to the south of the “Malayu Peninsula” in the first instance. Then, these religious cultures went to the north that was Siam (Thailand) at that time. The second route was from the south of Malayu at Malaka to the northeast of ancient Khmer “Kampot”. The Khmer culture was prosperous on its land before the coming of the Thais (Siamese). When the Thais had their strong influence over the land of Menam Chao Praya then they had already received and adapted the Indian-Khmer culture of Brahmanism and Buddhism to themselves, with no doubt. One of the strong Khmer arts that we can see the most clearly in Thailand is that of the pre-Thai art of Lopburi. Prince Dumrongrajanupahp, the specialist and expert of Thailand archealogist, defined the word “Lopburi” art in Thailand to avoid the political problem between Thailand and Cambodia at that time.

The fact is that the ancient territory of Thailand nowadays used to be the place of Khmer people before the entry of the Siameses (Thais). The Angkor and Bayon period of art style had already flourished over the north-east, upper and lower Mun valley, and the central plain of Lopburi, Ayutthaya and Sukhothai of Thailand. Suryavarman II, and Jayavarman VII the great of Angkor and Bayon period respectively, were the important, great builder Khmer kings of the ancient Khmer empire. Suryavarman II, the great warrior and conqueror, was the founder of the Vishnuist sect. Angkor Wat was built in the first half of the 12th century by Suryavarman II to pay homage to Lord Vishnu in Brahmanism. Of all the Khmer monuments, Angkor Wat is the most ordered, the most beautifully balanced, the most harmonious, the biggest and the most perfect Khmer temple of the world. It was named as “the one of the seven wonders of the world” in the middle age. Khmer art reached the highest peak of its glory in the 12th century of the Angkor period.

The next greatest king of the ancient Khmer is king Jayavarman VII, the great. He was the founder of the Mahayana sect in Buddhism in Thailand. Bayon temple was built in the late 12th century, the temple-mountain of Bayon, rising in the center of the city. Angkor Thom was the capital city of king Jayavarman VII. The late 12th century was the period of the greatest expansion for the Khmer empire. Despite the fact that it took him several years of fighting to gain the supreme throne, Jayavarman VII, the dynamic builder of Angkor Thom and the Bayon, of Ta Prohm, Preah Khan and other monuments, will re-

main the great Khmer king of all. The Bayon temple is gigantic in size, the mysterious 225 giant faces on its sanctuary towers and above all, the atmosphere of mystery it radiates.

The inscription at the temple of Preah Khan at Angkor refers to the existence of 121 Dharmasala “house of fire” built at regular intervals, it seems, along the principal routes across the Khmer empire direct and straight far beyond to Phimai. It is true that these are well-known features of Indian culture and that until recent times they were seen in Cambodian villages and regularly used by visitors.

The inscription at the temple of Ta Prohm tells us that there existed in the empire 102 Arongayasala “hospitals”, literally “house of the sick”. It is clear that Jayavarman VII made an effort to organize these hospitals and contribute to their good management. Fortunately, nearly 20 stelae have been discovered bearing a long Sanskrit poem consisting in particular of set of rules governing these hospitals. This gives a fairly precise idea of how they functioned. But whether they were real hospitals, housing sick people, or just dispensaries are still questions for which we do not have answers.

Among the various Khmer temples in Thailand, there is something that is much interesting on the subject about the “Thai-Cambodian culture relationship through arts”. That one is the ancient road of Jayavarman VII. To see the clear picture of its wonderful treasures, we must take a real site visit along this ancient road, to make the complete work of study on both the art and culture relationships of the two countries.

On the Ancient Royal Road of Jayavaman VII

There was one ancient route going straight from Phimai to Angkor. Many ancient Khmer architectural sites are situated along this road. It was the communication route of various kinds of people like the warriors, merchants, kings, rich, poor, monks, philosophers, pilgrims, travellers and so on. They travelled up and down from one community to another continuously through hundreds of years.

Tracing the ancient time of Jayavarman VII's period

Before going along this ancient road in order to study all the Khmer temples located on it, we should know first who was the founder and builder of these wonderful brick and stone architectures in this area of Thailand. The answer to this question is the ancient Khmer people. But, if we believe a new theory that Thai people moved from nowhere else, only settled on Thai territory from the ancient time till nowadays, then the answer should be changed to be that one. The people who built these Khmer sanctuaries on various parts of Thailand were the local people who lived on that region at that time. On the other hand, it could be the Khmer people or the Thai people because the border line always changed from time to time but the people themselves never moved somewhere else for long. These people were the ones who faced the current of historical change, when the political centers changed from one to another. These dimensions of change made the local people accept the growing influence of various kinds of elements in each

central Khmer growing period.

The Khmer kingdom in the past had no exact border like nowadays. But, we can estimate that all kinds of Khmer influences were strongly spread around in the basin between the Mekhong and Chaopraya river were the land was called lower Khmer, now in the northeastern part of Thailand in the present day, having the central administration control at Angkor; and had some small cities spread around occupied by Khmer kings or noblemen. From central Angkor, everything spread in all dimensions in concrete and abstract terms such as the huge architecture, religion, fine arts, literature, culture etc. All of these subjects were shown and communicated by various ancient royal roads, cut like a spider web from its central Angkor circle around through the frontier headquarter cities. Whenever those ancient routes were cut through any town or dispersed community, the only distinguish thing that the roamers could see from the far distance, like the name or sign of the community, were religious sanctuaries, built by the great capacity of the Khmer people in the ancient time. Some of these religious temples were built by bricks, some by sandstone and some by laterites according to the particular character of each preference period and natural resources available. The structure and appearance of the buildings were also different from each other by their site, prosperity of the city and the faithful degree in religioun of the kings, people and art skill of the local craftsmen in each place and time.

Those religious architectures are found in any place in

the ancient community, anywhere we had archeological digging. Besides the religious building that spread around through out the whole kingdom, there were other types of architectures. The one that we should mention here is “Dharmasala” or the house with fire. It is the rest-house for the travellers along the ancient roads throughout the country. We could compare the “Dharmasala” as a traveling lounge in the present day. The rest-houses were built at intervals of a one-day-walk or about 17 kilometres. Another kind of religious building is “Alogayasala” or a hospital which was built for giving traditional treatment to sick people by medical methods and knowledge about herbs, including spiritual treatment by a Brahmin who performed a religious ritual, symbolised by the magic power of “Paesatjayawaitoon yaprapa”⁸⁶ statue, installed as the main holy statue in the middle of every single Alo-gayasala. All of these ancient hospitals, traveling lounges or religious buildings were built with bricks or hard stones that did not retain their strength for long. Even though those buildings were in ruins and collapsed, they could be rebuilt again very easily. The remaining ancient architectures became to be important evidence for historical and archeological surveying, enabling archeologists to prove their background long in the past.

On the road of Jayavarman VII

Many roads were built in different times and periods by different Khmer kings. There was a road in the reign

86. The pharmacist master, who gave traditional treatment to the sick people.

period of Jayavarman VII the great, the last emperor of the ancient Khmer kingdom. He changed this route so much as he created it for himself.

According to a Prasat Prakhan inscription it mentions that king Jayavarman VII built Dharmmasala or rest-houses on this route from Angkor to Prasat Hin Phimai. Each Dharmasala was about a one-day-walk in distance. As well, he also built Arogayasala or many hospitals along this road. For this purpose he also offered his properties, land, utensil, slaves and servants to the Gurus who were in charge as the superintendents for those Arogayasala.

The traces of the Jayavarman VII road in Cambodia were a mystery, lacking clues. But in Thailand, this important road was researched and discovered little by little until it became very clear to the public. This ancient route the archaeologists were sure, had its starting point into Thailand at the group of Prasat Tamean, Surin province. Along this road there were many religious sanctuaries, Arogayasala, Dhammasala from point to point. Starting from the group of Prasat Tahmean, the road goes straight through Prasat Thamore Dharmasala at Ban Kroud, Buriram province, then straight to Prasat Ban Bu, Dharmasala and Kuti Rusri Arogayasala at Prakhonchai, Buriram. After this, the road is connected to Prasat Phnom Rung with Prasat Muang-Tam located nearby, then the road goes forward to Khok Prasat Dhammasala at Nanglong, Buriram. Through Ta Pleng Dharmasala at Nanglong, Buriram, to Prasat Hnong Plong at Nanglong then to Prasat Ban Houy Kan Dharmasala at Houy Ta Lang then to Prasat Ban Prang Arogayasala at Houyta-

lang, the road is goes straight ahead to San-Kuti-Rusri Arogayasala at Phimai, Nakornrachasima province, finishing at Prasat Hin Phimai.

Most of these ancient buildings current names were not in use in ancient times. They were renamed in a later time. And the route was also not the same as the present day due to changes over time, making it difficult to trace its original track.

The start of Jayavarman VII road for surveying must be from Nakornrachasima province to Phimai district. Between these points there is an important Khmer sanctuary named Prasat Hin Phanomwan on the way to Phimai. The archaeologists presumed that Prasat Phanomwan was a religious Khmer temple around late 9th to late 11th century before the Jayavarman VII period. It was a Hindu shrine until the time of Jayavarman VII, when it was changed to be a Buddhist place.

Prasat Hin Phanomwan was a huge Khmer temple composed by the main sanctuary, gopura, the gallery built with mixed red and white sandstone. The main shrine itself has three entrances, at the centre of the shrine is a big standing Buddha image, from the style of art it was installed later on.

From Phanomwan, we go to Prasat Phimai or Vimai-pura, the name in the inscription. This small city may have been built in the time of Suriyavarman I, the Angkor King. In the same period, the road from Angkor had already started to cut straight up to this border city. The religious constructions of Vimaipura must have doorways facing south. Prasat Hin Phimai is the only Khmer

religious temple that faces south being different from any other Khmer temples that always face east. Apart from this, the appearance of Prasat Hin Phimai is similar to Prasat Hin Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Prasat Phimai was also built before Angkor Wat. Then it is reasonable to believe that Prasat Hin Phimai might be the model, or a model experiment, for Angkor Wat in later times.

Arogayasala: Kuti Ruessi

There was an Arogayasala Kuti Ruessi outside Phimai named “Arogayasala Kuti Ruessi”. Arogayasala or the hospital located outside Phimai city was surrounded with Baray, big ponds dug to keep water for use in Phimai. The road past this Arogayasala was rebuilt and redecorated by the officers of Fine Arts Department. Its appearance makes us see with our eyes, that this is an ancient road or the ancient Jayavarman road.

This Arogayasala Kuti Ruessi is a good example of many Arogayasala. Inscriptions from different Prasat at Phimai, Saifong, Prasat, Danprakham and Ta Muen Toch inform us about the intention of building many Arogayasala on this Prasat Hin road of Jayavarman VII as follows: “The body illness of the people is the big painful mind of the king. Even though the distress of the people is not his own but still also his responsibility. If so, the king and all together with the doctors who are very brave and strong learners on science of medicine killed the enemy of the people with the weapons named medicine.”

Jayavaraman VII built this hospital and installed the Avarokitasavara statue, Pisatchaiyasukot, Buddha image, Prapasatguruwaitoonprapa to put away the body

distress of the people. He also offered many utensils, medical instruments, land and servants to be on duty, ten for each Arogayasala.

Arogayasala were not only in Thailand on this ancient road but also all over in the northeastern parts. How archaeologists know which Prasat are Arogayasala is by noting the shape, plan of building that are similar. The general character of this Arogayasala makes it the best example.

In general appearance, the Arogayasala is in a compound surrounded by a sandstone or laterite gallery, gopura or the pediment doorway. Passing through the entrance then we meet the main sanctuary where prapaisatgurawaitoonprapa is installed, using holy water medicine to cure illness. Apart from the main shrine, there is Vihar on the left, outside the gallery there is a Baray or a pond for medical cure.

The plan of all Arogayasala will be similar to the above. When those plans are compared with the inscription found in almost Arogayasala, it assures the archaeologist that the building mentioned is an Arogayasala. The Prasat Hin-like Arogayasala in Thailand, are on the ancient Jayavarman VII road with many other Arogayasala as at Prasat Hin Sakham Pangnoi, Prasat Timechan, Ku Cutnam; Srisaket, Prang Ku; Chaiyaphom, Prasat Meang Kao and Prasat Nangrum; Nakhonrachasima, etc.

The present day ancient Khmer route is from Phimai — Houytalang — Lumprimart — Nanglong for 100 kilometres, a two hours drive. The ancient Jayavarman road is near the Thai border (in the present day) at Surin province,

at the buildings of Prasat Tamein, Kabcheng sub-district. This group at Prasat Tamein have the three components of Prasat at a distance of about 200 metres. The three buildings are different in the construction, meaning that they are Dhammasala, Arogayasala and a religious shrine.

The first shrine is Ta Muen which in plan is the same as other Dhammasala, a compound with the tall shrine and one side has a long porch divided into two chambers. The first chamber is a square which archaeologists assume is a room for the Buddha statue and another one is a rectangle, 8–10 metres long. Archaeologists believe this room is the lodge for the travellers roaming along this ancient road. It is easy to imagine that the exhausted travellers, after a long day, stopped at Dhammasala, entered the lodge, took a bath, had a meal then chanted to the Buddha image. After they find a place to sleep to refresh their energies for the next day.

Next from Prasat Tamein is Prasat Ta Muen Toch meaning the small Tamein. The archaeologists found this Prasat and declared it an Arogayasala exactly. Its plan is exactly the same as Kuti Ruessi at Phimai. The main shrine stands in the middle, the Vihar is on the right, the chamber with *gopura* is in the front standing around the main shrine. The main Prasat faces to the east and the pond is on the right of the main Prasat. Apart from this, there are the Buddhist statues named “Phra Bodhisatt Phisatchaiyaguruvittonprapa” and the inscription telling about the construction of this Arogayasala. They were moved to the national museum in Bangkok later on.

The last Prasat of this group is Prasat Ta Muen Thom.

This is the large Buddhist place. The main Prasat is settled on a hill. To the south there are stairs down to the stream that curves around the main shrine. From this view Prasat Ta Muen Thom is standing by the stream. Prasat Ta Muen Thom is on the top of the cliff the frontier line between Cambodia and Thailand. If we stand at the Prasat, we are in Thailand, but if we go down to the stream then we are in Cambodia. Because Prasat Ta Muen is on the Thai-Cambodian border, great damage and ruin was caused during the war in Cambodia.

Prasat Ta Muen Thom is very big and beautiful. The main sanctuary is in four porches. The main porch is in long shape faced to the south. Each shrine in every corner is decorated by the elegant friezes.

Today, to study the Khmer art at Prasat Ta Muen Thom, we gain much knowledge:— learning about the pure Khmer art of construction by Khmer artists of the three different architectures at the same time; Religious sanctuary, Arogayasala and Drammasala. For the people in this ancient time, travelling along the Jayavarman VII road, could perform religious rituals, get medical treatment, take rest, and worship all at the same time.

In the field of art, we have the religious buildings, edifices for ritualistic purposes and for monastic life, the creation of impressive images to convey the idea of the Buddha. Bodhisattvas, monks and other sacred personages and the treasury of stories and legends with their abundance of narrative motifs, setting up a vocabulary of symbols to convey the main religious ideas. The art of Buddhism and Brahmanism devised convincing visual

images of the world's metaphysical structure especially the structure of the worlds beyond the limits of the empirical, terrestrial world.

The art in Thailand was a composite art. The various influences of art of different nations were imbibed by the Thai artists in to their own artistic work. The Thai artists introduced new elements of art side by side with the adoption of old style of art, which makes Thai arts one of the most interesting Buddhist art of South-East Asia or Eastern Art of the world.

The original prototype of Buddhist art in Thailand was no doubt Indian art, but when the Thais came in contact with other nations on the Indo-Chinese peninsula of South-East Asia, they adopted the concepts and elements of cultural and artistic activities of those countries. The Mons of Dvaravati, the Malay or Indonesians of Sri-Vijaya as well as the Khmers of the Lopburi period contributed much towards the development of Thai art, but while the process of borrowing was going on, Thai artists introduced new elements, being ultimately responsible for the birth of many schools of Thai arts in Thailand; having an independent stlye of its own best seen in the well known arts of the Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Bangkok period.

India, Cambodia and Thailand have had a connection for a long time. At the present many prehistoric excavations have been carried on in South East Asia and the result seems to prove that the people there had an ability in technology, such as in growing rice, and bronze metallurgy, since the most ancient times not formerly known. This probably leaves no doubt that during the

period the connection between the Indians and the South East Asians was on an equal basis. Exchange of ideas and technology would have gone on between the two areas, having benefits for both sides.

During the historical period, Buddhism and Hinduism gave an impetus to South East Asian people. These two great religions, originating in India modified their thought as well as giving them impetus to develop their culture and their own way of life. Through this process it is really quite difficult to separate both religions from each other in South East Asia. We owe the basis of our culture to India but at the same time many of our indigenous elements have been mixed with this foundation. In Thailand where Buddhism has always been the most venerated religion, Hindu priests are still maintained to perform important ceremonies such as to celebrate the birth of a royal child, the coronation and the anniversary of the regal day of the king.

So, it can be concluded that Indian art served as the prototype of art in Cambodia and Thailand. But Thai art in the course of centuries, developed its independent character and style combining local artistic talents and inspiration. Thai art forms one of the glorious chapters in the history of Thailand. The Thai people still remember with gratitude the unique contributions of India to their culture and civilization. But Thai artists never lost the individuality and sense of national integrity in their works of art, which clearly indicate the real independent character and artistic workmanship of Thai people all through the ages.

Appendices

Appendix: I

List of the Khmer style of art and period

| Art style | Period |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Phmom Da | the 6 th century to the early 7 th century |
| 2. Sombor Prei Kuk | first half of 7 th century |
| 3. Prei Kmeng | 7 th century, about 635 to 700 |
| 4. Kompong Preah | essentially 8 th century |
| 5. Kulen | 9 th century, about 825 to 875 |
| 6. Preah Ko | late 9 th century |
| 7. Bakheng | late 9 th century, early 10 th |
| 8. Koh Ker | first half of 10 th century, about 921 to 944 |
| 9. Pre Rup | mid-10 th century |
| 10. Banteay Srei | 967 |
| 11. The Khleangs | Late 10 th century, early 11 th |
| 12. Baphuon | mid-to late 11 th century |
| 13. Angkor Wat | 12 th century, about 1100 to 1175 |
| 14. Bayon | late 12 th century, early 13 th century about 1177 to 1230 |

*List of the ancient Lopburi (Khmer contemporary art)
objects in Thailand*

A. Architecture

- (1) A.D. 607–657 (3 lintels)
 - 1. Wat Su Batt, Ubonrachatani
 - 2. National Museum, Bangkok
 - 3. Wat Tongtoau, Chanburi
- (2) A.D. 657–707 (1 Prasat and 1 Lintel)
 - 1. Prasat Phum Phon, Surin
 - 2. Lintel ; Wat Tong Tong Toua, Surin.
- (3) Late 8th century—Beginning 9th century
 - 1. Round-Relief — *Singha* Stone, Wat Poh Yoi, Burirum.
- (4) 9th century (4 Prasat and 1 Shrine)
 - 1. Prasat Hin Sa Preng, Nakornrachasima.
 - 2. Prasat Non Ku, Nakornrachasima.
 - 3. Prasat Hin Muang Khaek, Nakornrachasima.
 - 4. Prasat Sang Silapachai, Surin.
 - 5. Deva Sathan (Prang Kak-Indian Shrine), Lopburi.
- (5) 10th–11th century (1 Lintel and 1 Prasat)
 - 1. Lintel, Wat Poh Yai, Burirum.

2. Prasat Hin Ban Muang Kao, Chaiyaphum.
- (6) A.D. 1057–1107 (18 Prasat, 1 Sculpture, 1 Prang & 1 Lintel)
 1. Prasat Sa Hin, Nakornrachasima.
 2. Prasat Ban Tanon Hak, Nakornrachasima.
 3. Prasat Hin Wat Phanomwan, Nakornrachasima.
 4. Prasat Hin Pra Khan or Tadam, Burirum.
 5. Prasat Hin Hong, Burirum.
 6. Prasat Khao Phnom Rung, Burirum.
 7. Prasat Muang Tam, Burirum.
 8. Prasat Hin Plai Ba, Burirum.
 9. Prasat Hin Ta Mean Thom, Surin.
 10. Prasat Hin Ban Prai, Surin.
 11. Prasat Hin Ban Phluang, Surin.
 12. Prasat Hin Kam Phaeng Yai, Srisaket.
 13. Prasat Hin Kam Phaeng Noi, Srisaket.
 14. Prasat Hin Hnong Ku, Roi – Ed.
 15. Prasat Hin Ku Ka Singh, Roi – Ed.
 16. Prasat Tong Hlang, Ubonrachatani.
 17. Prasat Sa Log Kok, Prachinburi.

18. Prasat Kao Sajang Doungruk, Prachinburi.

Prang Ku Suen Tang, Buriram.

Sculpture at Tam Wou Dang, Nakornrachasima.

Lintel at Wat Pra Keaw, Chainat.

(7) A.D. 1107–1157 (3 Prasat, 1 Shrine)

1. Prasat Hin Srihoraphum, Srisaket.

2. Prasat Prang Ku, Srisaket.

3. Prasat Hin Phimai, Nakornrachasima.

San Ta Pha Daeng, Sukhothai.

(8) A.D. 1157–1207 (3 Prasat, 5 Prang, 1 Sema, 1 Wall, & 1 ancient town)

Prasat

1. Prasat Hin Kok Prasat, Buriram.

2. Prasat Hin Ta Muen , Surin.

3. Prasat Khao Loan, Prachinburi.

Prang

1. Prang Sam Yot, Lopburi.

2. Prang Meang Singh, Kanchanaburi.

3. Prang Wat Kam Phaeng Lang, Petchaburi.

4. Prang Wat Pra Pai Loung, Sukhothai.

5. Prang Wat Sri Sawai, Sukhothai.
Sema at Nean Kok Pra, Burirum.
The Wall at Wat Prasrirattana Mahathat, Ratchaburi.
The ancient town at Prachinburi.
- (9) 12th–13th century (1 sculpture, 1 Prang)
 1. Buddhist Statue at Khao Pop Pra, Chiyaphom.
 2. Prang Wat Prasri Rattana Mahathat, Lopburi.

B. Sculpture (Stone/Bronze)

1. A.D. 607–657
2. A.D. 757–807
3. A.D. 957–1007
4. A.D. 1057–1107
5. A.D. 1107–1157
6. A.D. 1157–1207
7. A.D. 12th–14th century.

C. Stucco and Terracotta

1. 9th century
2. A.D. 1157–1207

Appendix: II

Architectural Terms

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Acroter | See Antefix. |
| Anastylosis | Integral restoration in which all the elements of a structure are analysed and numbered, following which the building is made structurally sound and rebuilt using original materials as much as possible. Additional materials are used only where structurally necessary. |
| Antarala | Vestibule connecting the <i>garbhagrha</i> to the <i>mandapa</i> . |
| Antefix | Pinnacle or other ornament that stands on a parapet. |
| Arcature | Niche. |
| Ardhamandapa | Shallow porch on a <i>mandapa</i> . |
| Arogayasala | Chapel, usually in laterite, that was part of a hospital. Part of a building programme undertaken by Jayavarman VII. |
| Asrama | Monastery, hermitage (Sanskrit). |
| Baluster | Circular-sectioned post or pillar, as in a barred window or the uprights of a balustrade. |
| Balustrade | Railing or similar in which balusters |

are the uprights surmounted by a beam or coping.

Baray Artificial lake or reservoir.

Colonette Small column, usually decorative in Khmer architecture, standing at either side of a doorway.

Corbel Deeply embedded load-bearing stone projecting from a wall.

Corbel arch False arch built from corbels projecting from opposite walls in tiers so that the topmost stones meet in the centre.

Cornice Decorated projection that crowns or protects an architectural feature such as a doorway. The cornice level is that immediately above the lintels.

Decorative lintel Rectangular stone slab carrying a carved design with important iconographical features. Attached above any doorway in a Khmer temple; has no structural supportive function.

Dharmasala Chapel, usually in laterite, that was part of a resting-house or way-station, built along the main roads leading from Angkor. Part of a building programme undertaken by Jayavarman VII.

Fronton See pediment.

Functional lintel See structural lintel.

Garbhaghrā The inner chamber in a Khmer sanc-

sanctuary, in the form of a square cell, Literally ‘womb house’.

Gopura Entrance pavilion, sometimes surmounted by a tower.

Laterite Red, porous, iron-bearing rock, easy to quarry but very hard when dried.

‘Library’ Isolated annexes usually found in pairs on either side and in front of the main entrance to a temple, or the entrance to an enclosure. This is a traditional name for them, although there is no certainty that they were actually used as libraries.

Lintel Stone block spanning an entrance, across the two door pillars. May be load-bearing or decorative. Also see structural lintel, decorative lintel.

Mandapa Antechamber: a pavilion or porch in front of the main sanctuary.

Pancha Yatana In Hindu religious architecture, a temple with a main central sanctuary surrounded by four other shrines and connected to them by cloisters.

Pediment The triangular vertical face above the lintel, over a portico or other entrance. Used decoratively.

Pilaster Square- or rectangular-sectioned pillar that is actually engaged in the wall, so that it becomes a projection.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Portico | Entrance porch. |
| Prali | Roof finial. |
| Prang | Thai term for an elongated cone-shaped tower. The central <i>prang</i> is built over the <i>garbhagrha</i> . |
| Prasat | From the Indian ‘prasada’, a terraced pyramid temple typical of South India. |
| Quincunx | Arrangement of five objects in which four occupy the corners and the fifth the centre. See Pancha Yatana. |
| Redenting | Architectural treatment of a structure in plan whereby the corners are indented (cut back) into successive right angles. |
| Sala | Rest hall. |
| Sema | Buddhist boundary stone. |
| Shikara | Pointed tower in Indian architecture; a tapering superstructure to the chamber of a sanctuary that had its origin in Orissa. |
| Somasutra | Stone pipe or channel through which the lustral waters used to wash the image inside the sanctuary are drained, projecting outside the temple. Often terminates with a carved <i>makara</i> head at the spout. Indicative of a Saivite temple. |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Srah | Artificial pond, usually smaller than a <i>baray</i> . ‘Sa’ in Thai. |
| Stele | Upright slab bearing inscriptions. |
| Structural lintel | The load-bearing upper member of a stone doorframe. Normally concealed for the most part. |
| Stucco | Plaster used for covering walls or for decorative purposes. In Khmer architecture, it was used to cover brick and laterite. |
| Trimukha | Literally, ‘three-faced’. Three-lobed design of a platform or structure seen in plan. |
| Vantail | Leaf of a door. |
| Vat | Khmer for ‘wat’. |
| Vault | Arch extended in depth. |
| Vihara | Temple building, rectangular in plan, designed to house a Buddha image (Sanskrit). |
| Viharn | Thai name for <i>vihara</i> . |
| Vihear | Khmer name for <i>vihara</i> . |
| Wat | General term used in Thai for Buddhist temple, from the Sanskrit ‘vatthu’. |

List of Illustrations

[This PDF has been made using only a very poor quality photocopy of the original thesis. The illustrations in the photocopy therefore were poor quality, only the best (from a bad lot of photocopy pages) have been included here.]



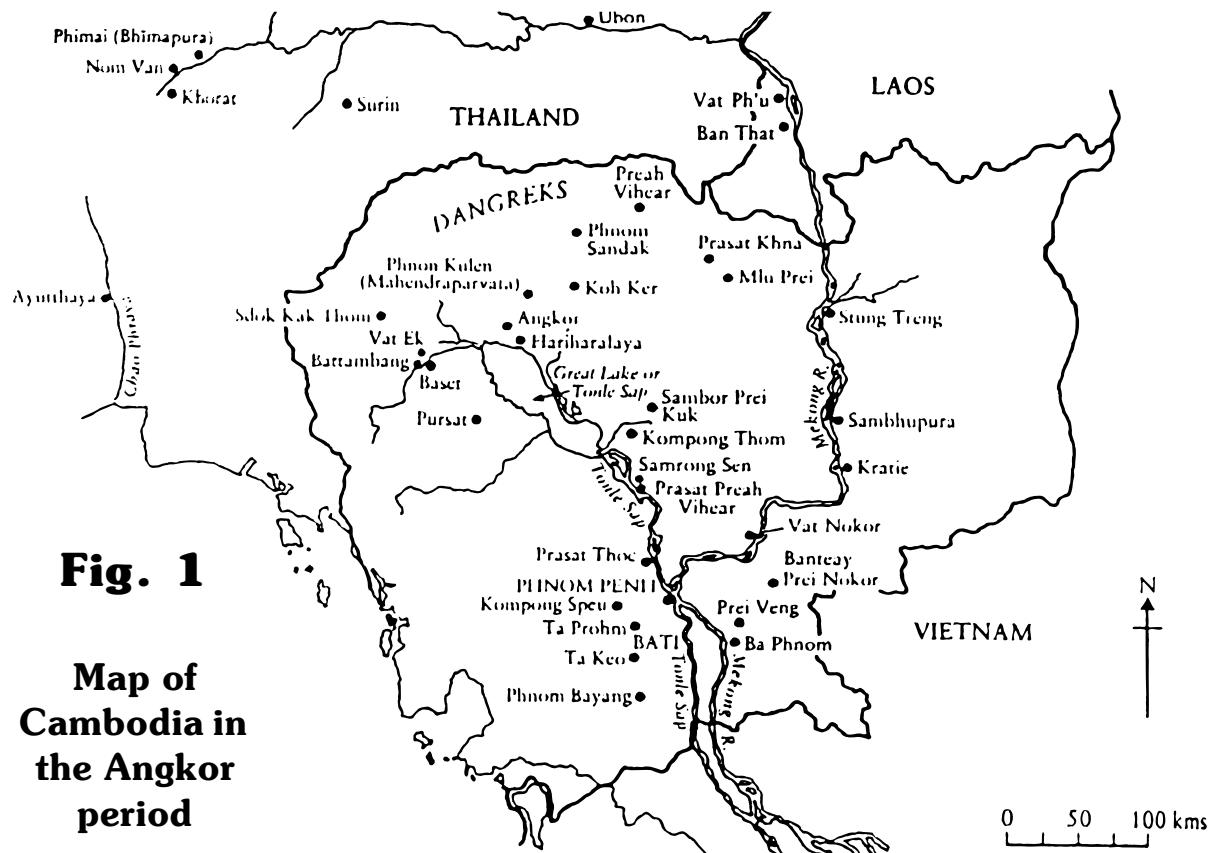
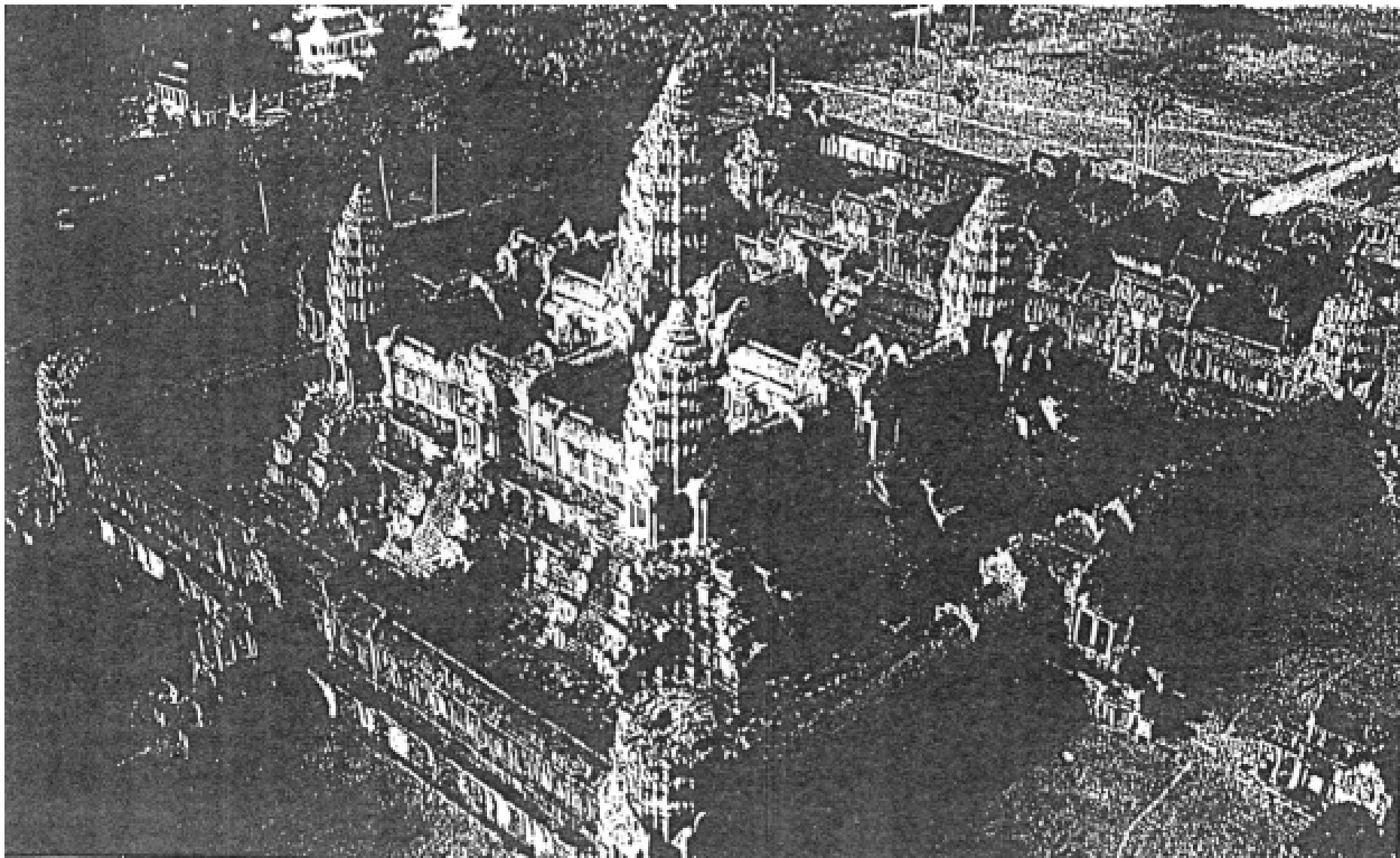


Fig. 1
**Map of
Cambodia in
the Angkor
period**



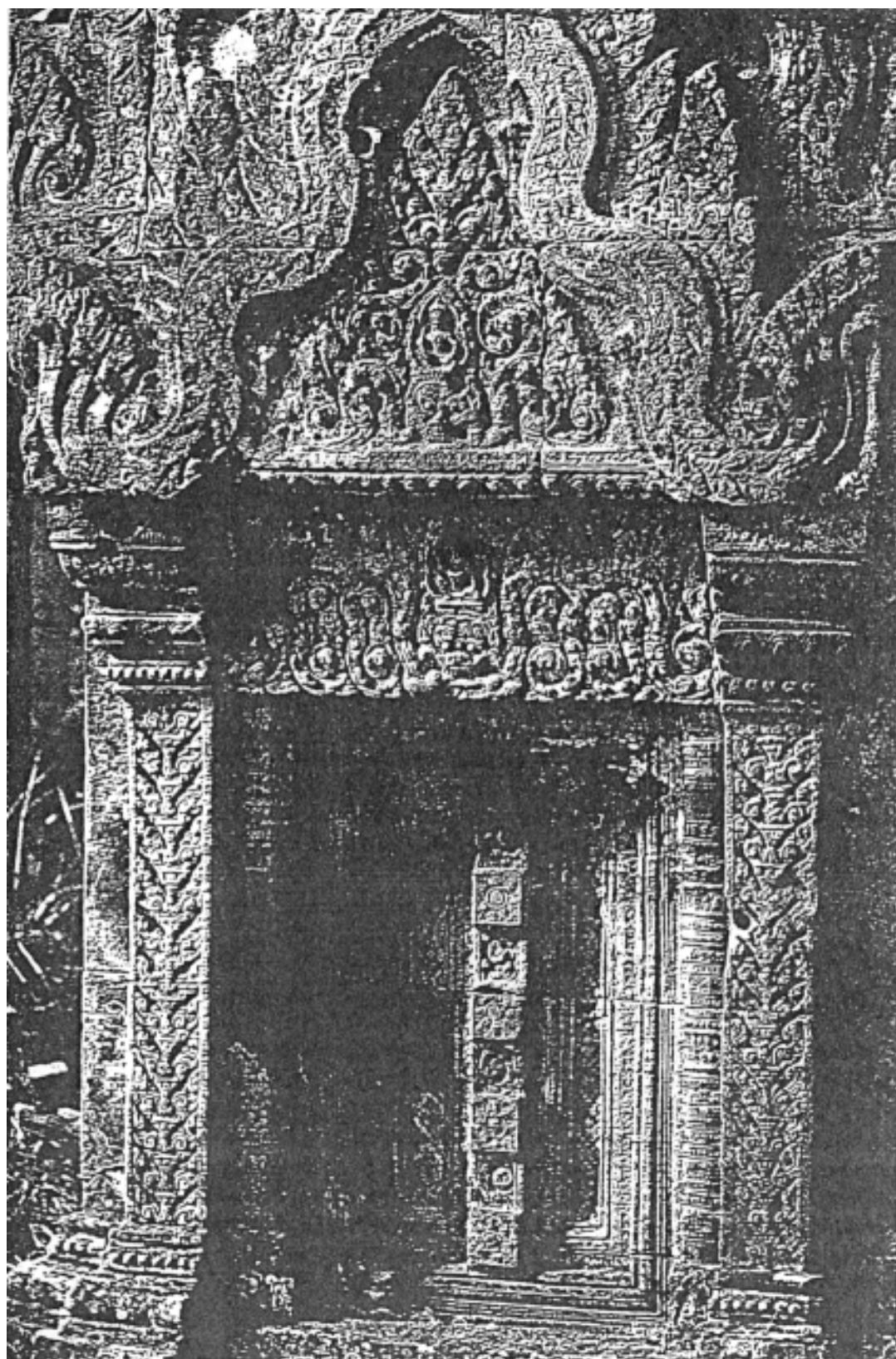
Fig. 2
**Sanskrit inscription at
Loilei temple, end of 9th
century**



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Fig. 14a

Aerial view of Angkor Wat from the northeast



**Fig.
40**

The false door, Prasat Preah Vihear, Srisaketh, Thailand. False doors, fully decorated, are set into both sides of the southern wall. Left, the door at the south-west corner, facing out over the plains below, has strongly curved motifs in its pediment and lintel. The frame of the pediment is decorated with a floral branch.

Decorative lintel, Baphuon style, Phimai Museum, Khorat, Thailand



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Fig. 41 Lintel in the Baphuon style, 11th century. This lintel shows the typical features of the style such as the *kalas* spewing forth garlands on both sides. The most important feature is the divinity sitting atop the *kala* flanked by two sword-bearing attendants. However, the divinity's lack of attributes prevents his identification. (Phimai Museum, Khorat)



**Fig. The bas-relief details of costume and ornament of Aspara at
48 Angkor Wat**



Fig. 50

Bayon bas-relief



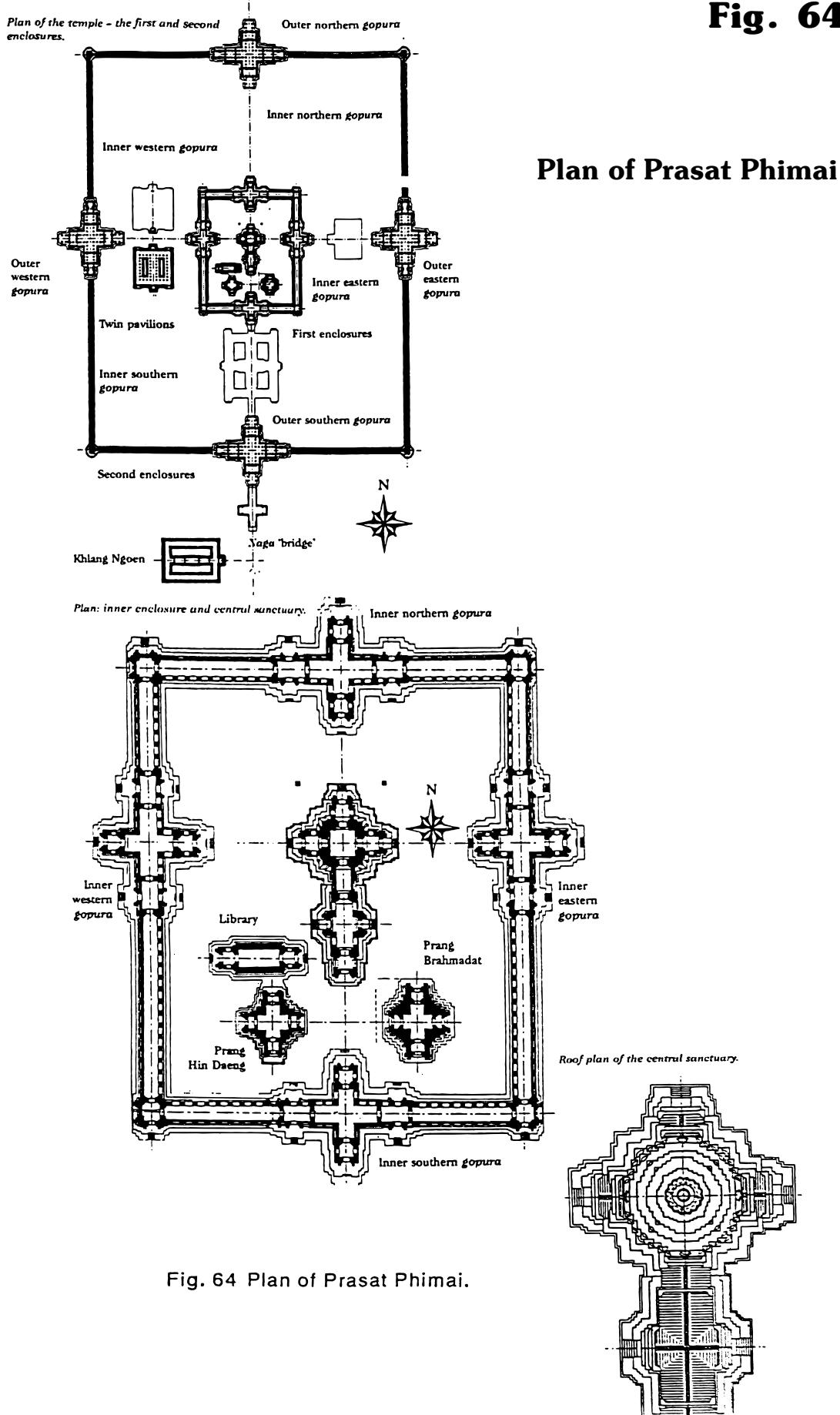
Fig. 71 The eastern gopura, naga terrace and pond.
Prasat Phnom Rung

Prasat Phimai, the tower and central courtyard,
Nakornrachasima, Thailand

Fig. 61



Fig. 64

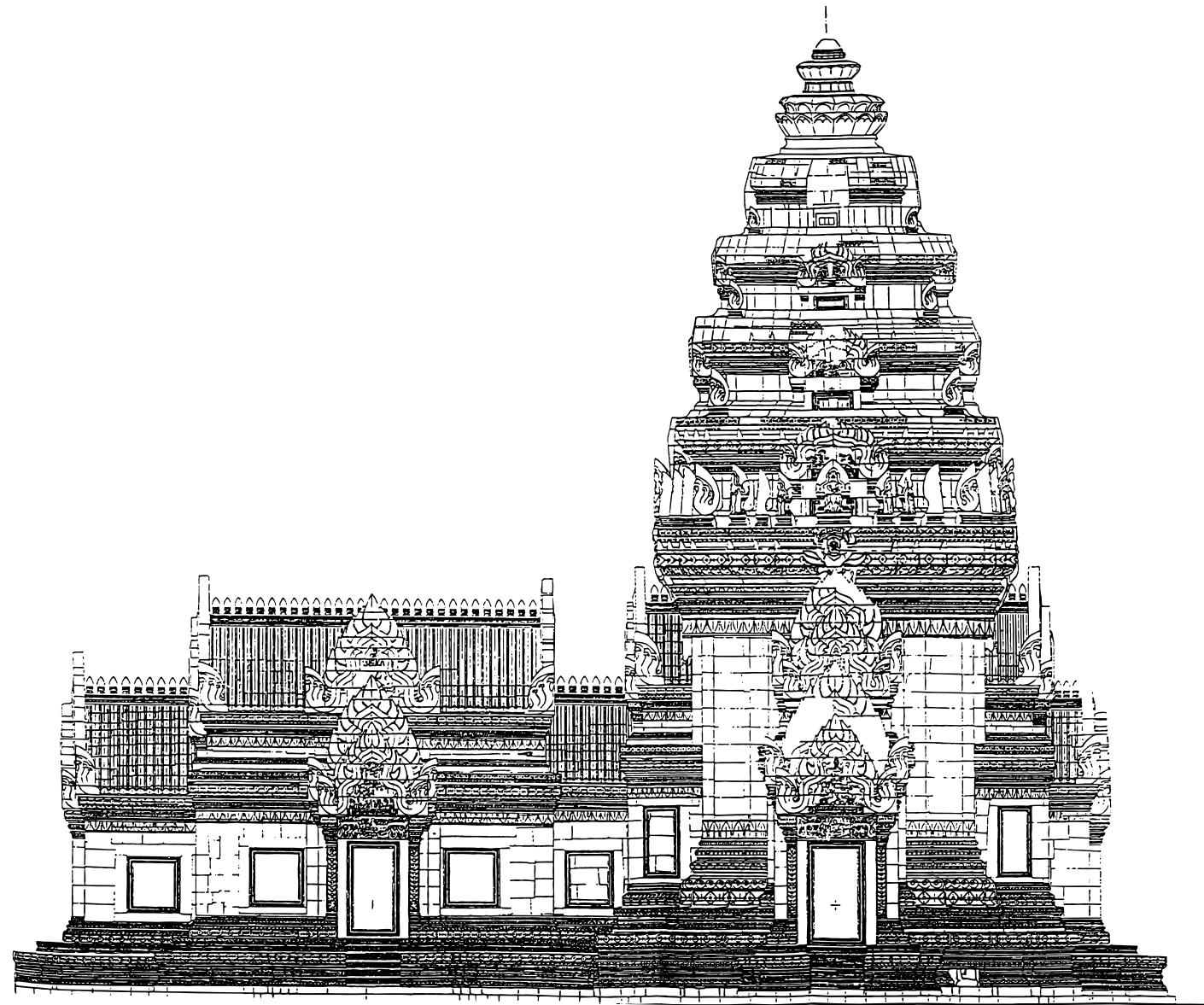


Prasat Phimai

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**Fig.
66**

**The central
sanctuary, the north
elevation of Prasat
Phimai (courtesy of
Ecole Francaise
d'Extreme Orient)**



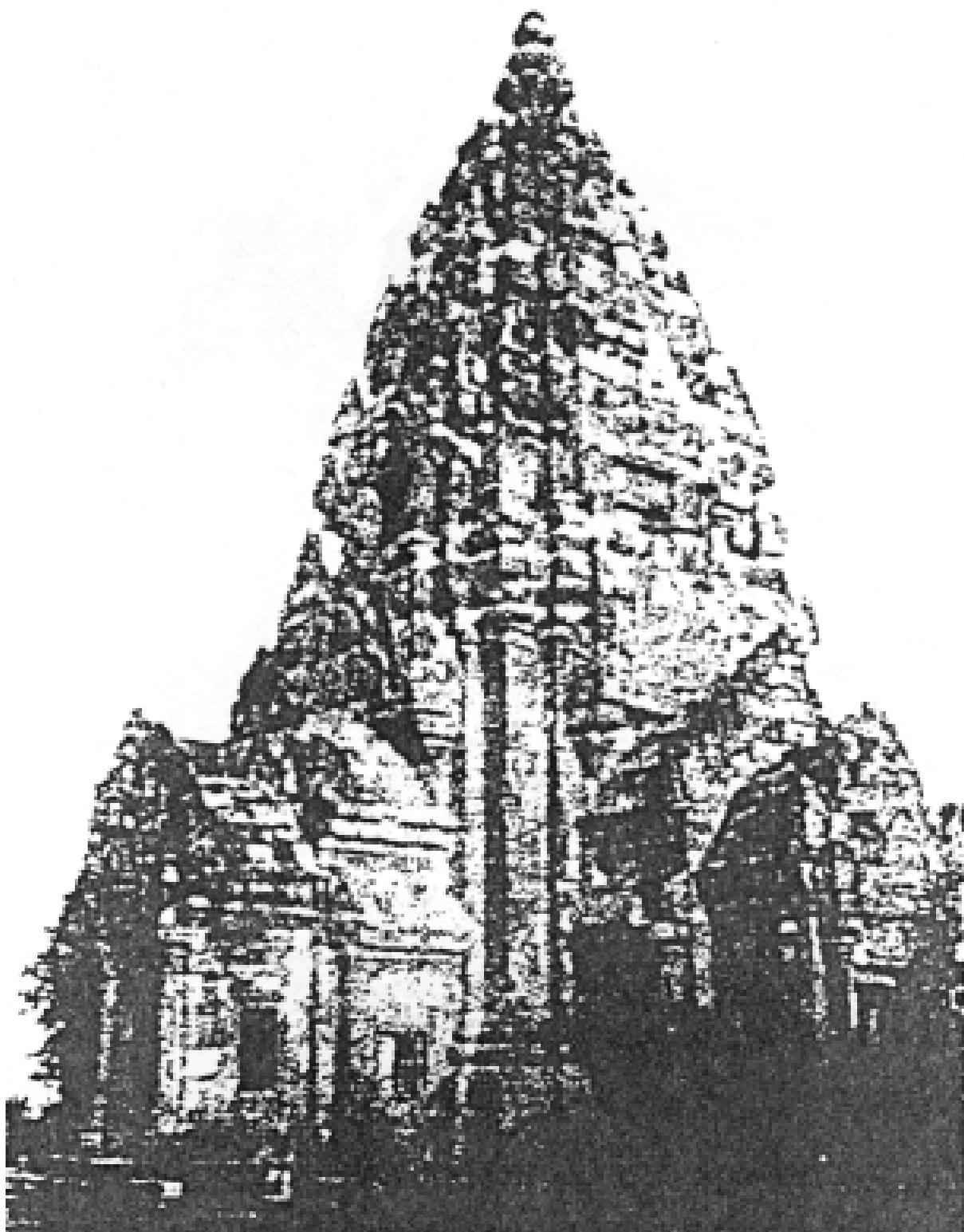
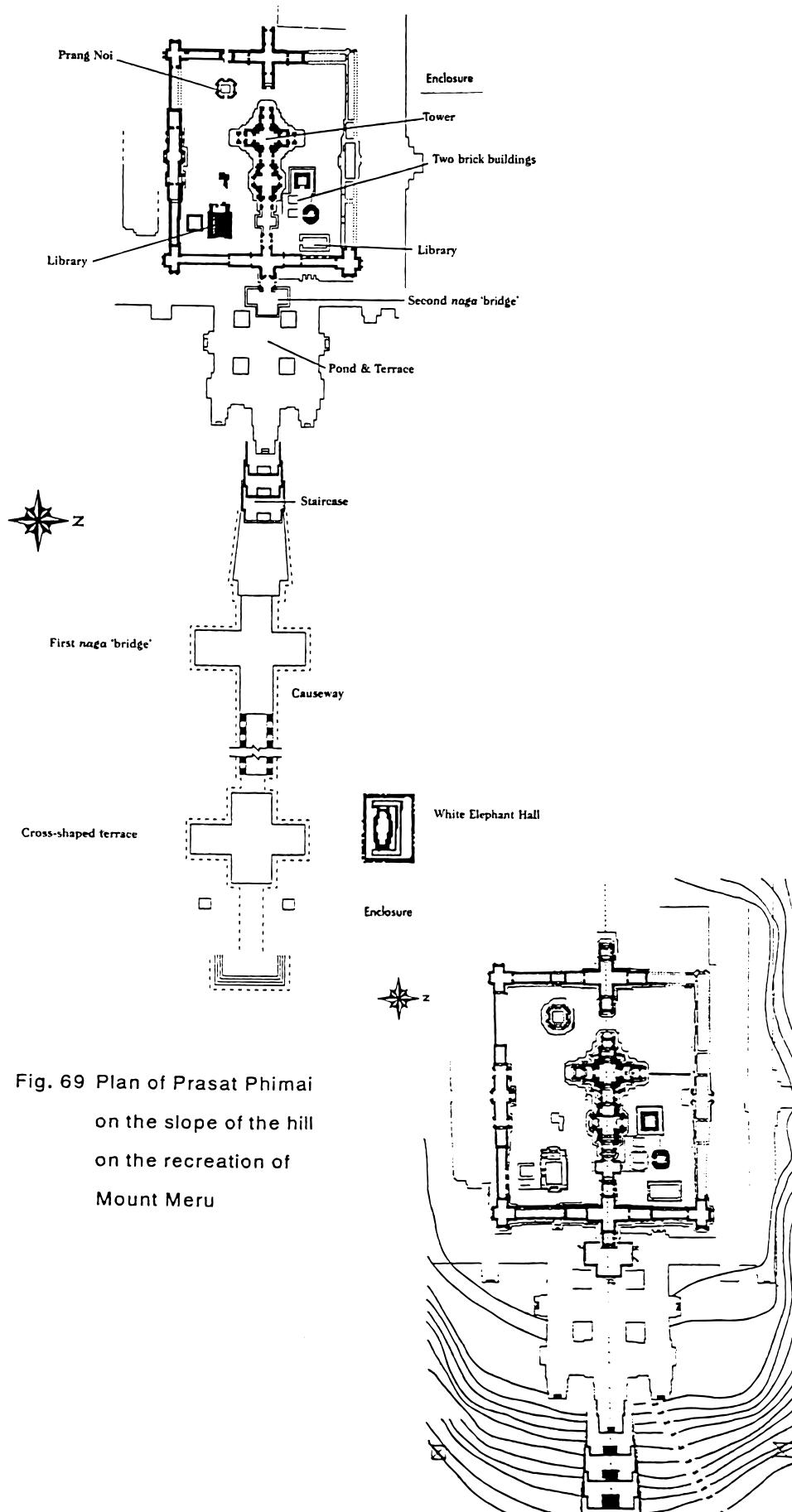


Fig. 68

The major temple of Prasat Phnom Rung, Burirum, Thailand



**Fig. 69 Plan of Prasat Phimai
on the slope of the hill
on the recreation of
Mount Meru**

**Fig.
69**

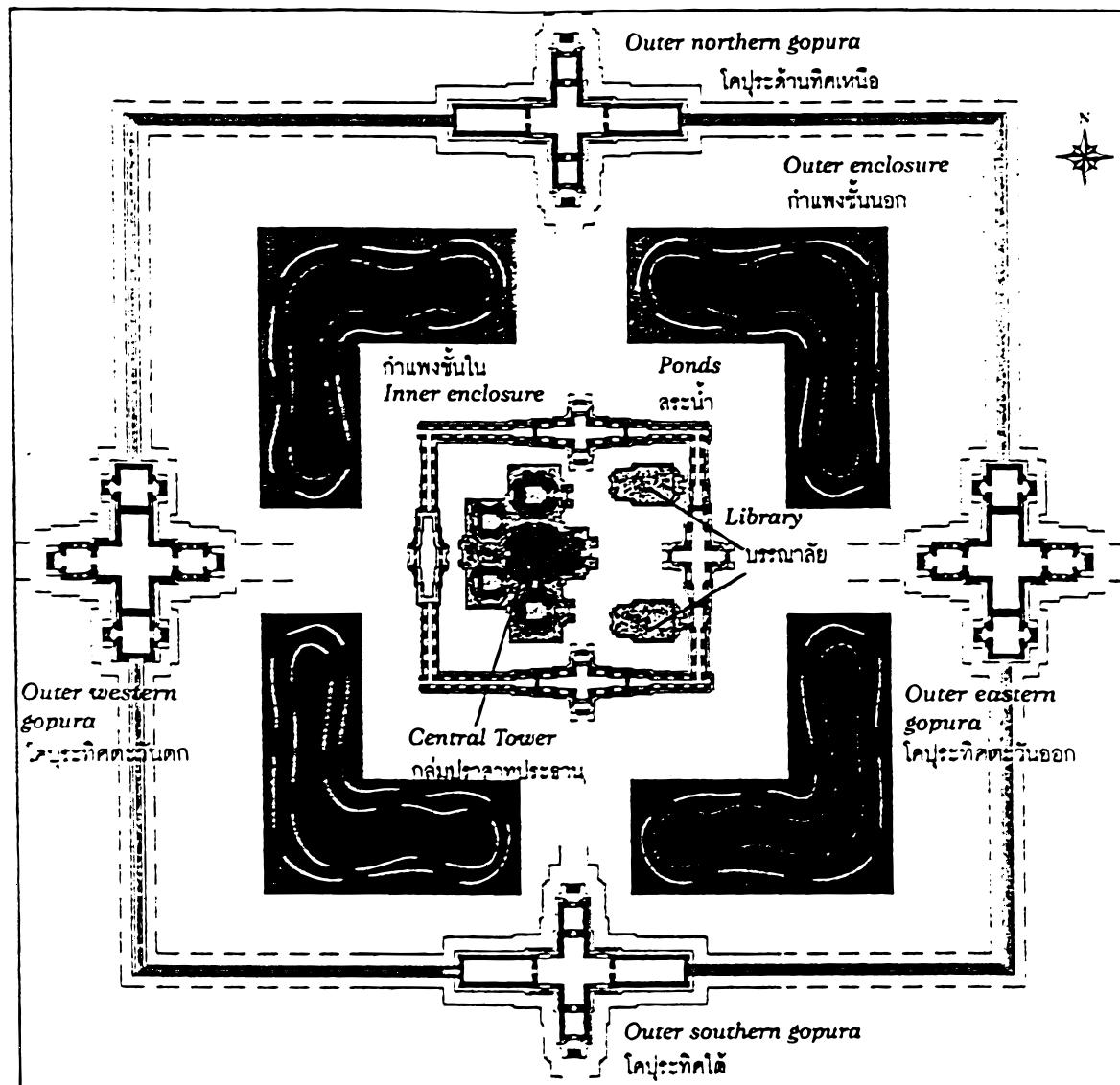


Fig. 74b

Plan of Muang Tam

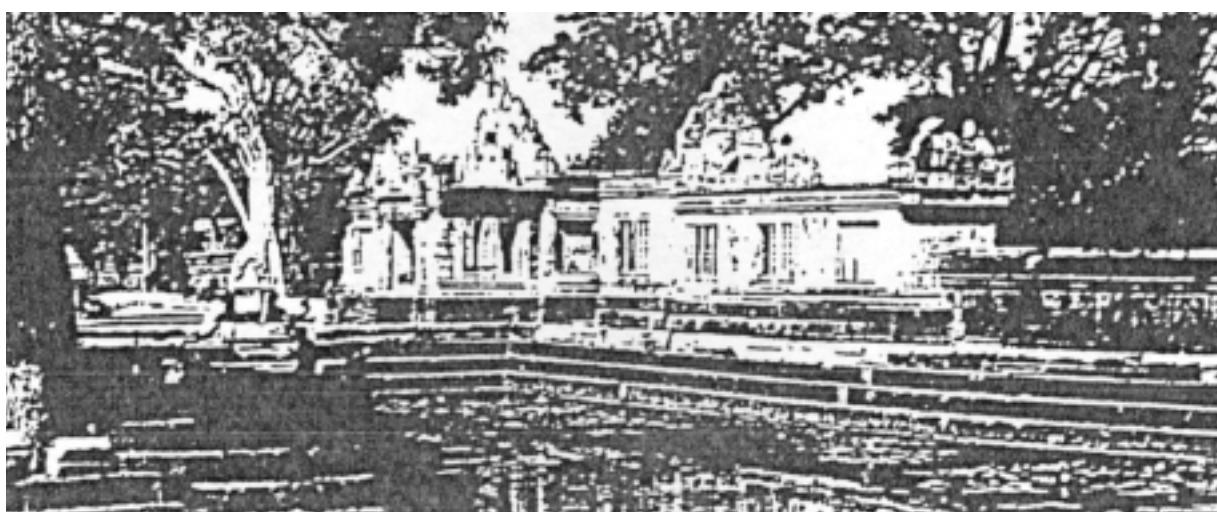


Fig. 76

**The eastern gopura after the restoration,
Prasat Muang Tam**

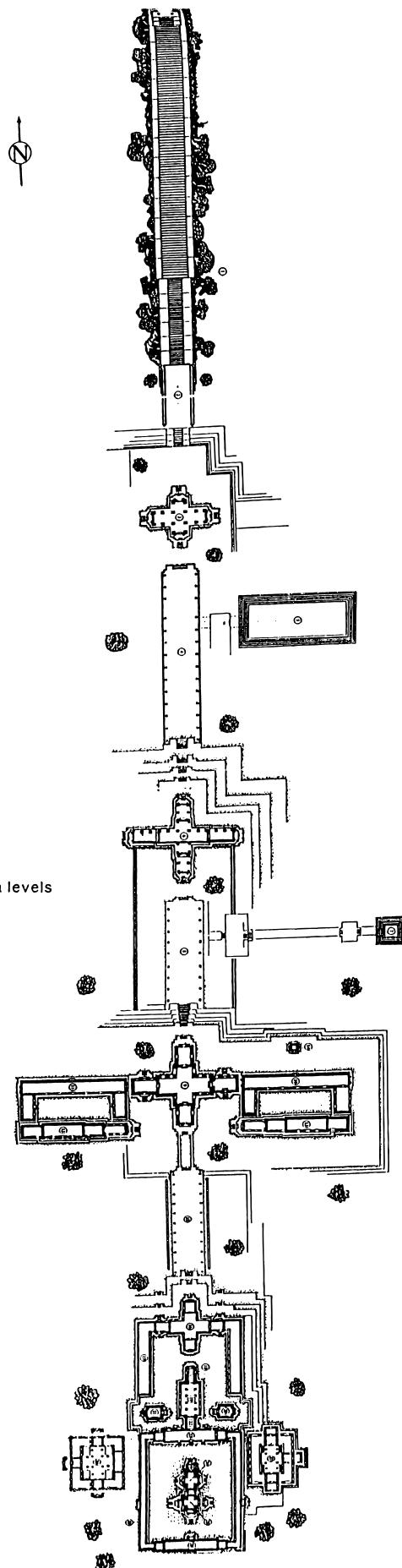


Fig. 80 An illustrated plan showing the four kopura levels
at Prasat Phra Viharn.

1. Steep Stairway Approach
2. Naga Balustrade
3. Kopuras I - Entrance Pavilions
4. Avenue (270.53 metres) with Border of Pillars
5. Baray 4.00 metres deep
6. Kopuras II - Cruciform Kopuras
7. Lion Head Pool 3.00 metres deep
8. Avenue (152.20 metres) with Border of Pillars
9. Kopura or Entrance Pavilion
10. East "Palace"
11. West "Palace"
- 12.-13. West Telescopic Hall - East Telescopic Hall
14. Watch Tower
15. Avenue (36.25 metres) with Border of Pillars
16. Kopura or Entrance Pavilion
17. East - West Portico
18. Telescopic Entrance to Main Hall
19. Main or Long Hall
- 20.-21. East - West Library
22. Covered Way between Main Hall
23. Kopura or Entrance Pavilion
24. Antechamber to Principal Sanctuary
25. Prasat or Sanctuary Tower
26. West Annexe
27. East Annexe
28. East - West Gallery
29. Blind Kopura

**Fig.
80**

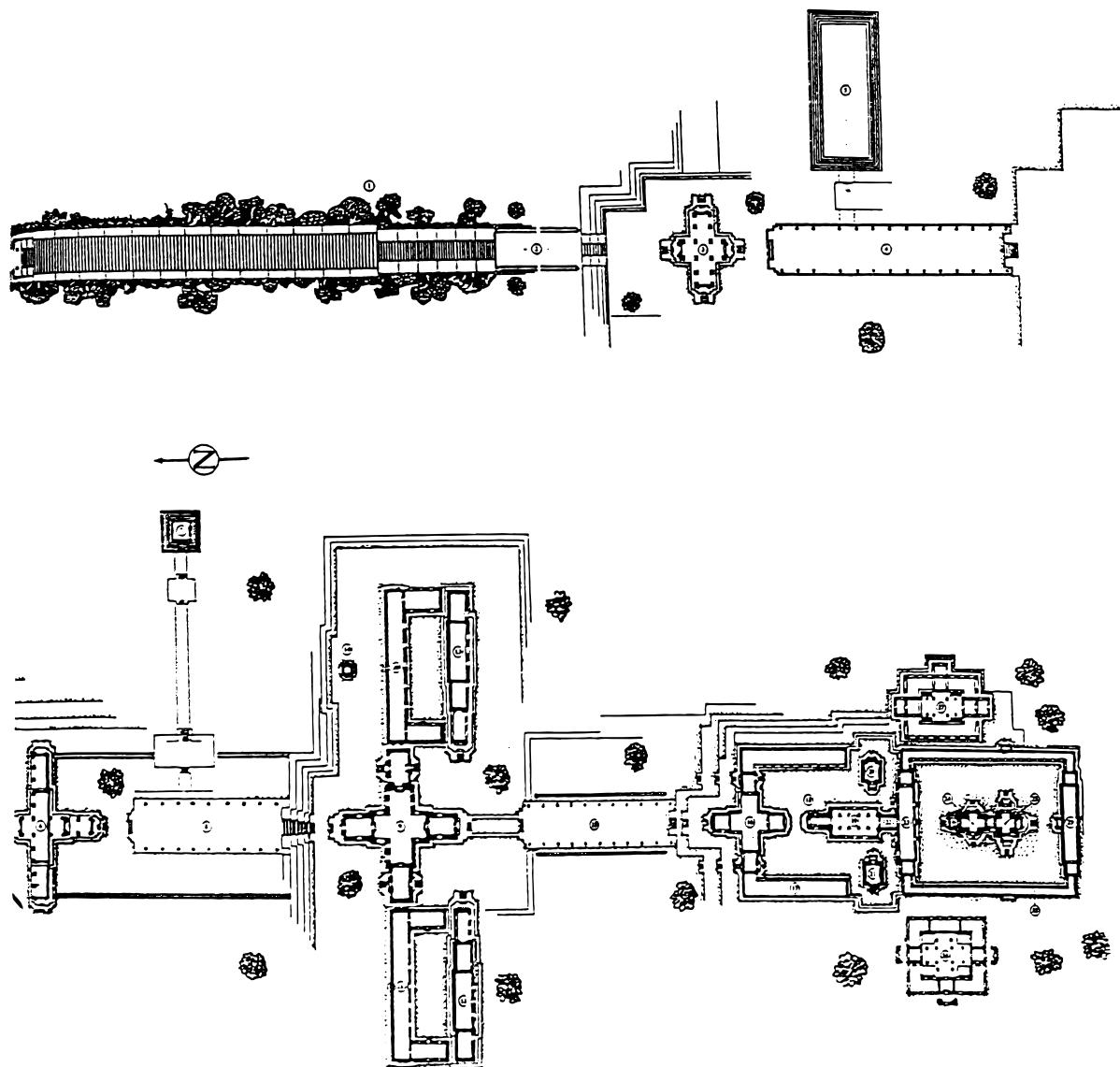


Fig. 80 An illustrated plan showing the four kopura levels at Prasat Phra Viharn.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Steep Stairway Approach | 16. Kopura or Entrance Pavilion |
| 2. Naga Balustrade | 17. East - West Portico |
| 3. Kopuras I - Entrance Pavilions | 18. Telescopic Entrance to Main Hall |
| 4. Avenue 270.53 metres) with Border of Pillars | 19. Main or Long Hall |
| 5. Baray 4.00 metres deep | 20.-21. East - West Library |
| 6. Kopuras II - Cruciform Kopuras | 22. Covered Way between Main Hall |
| 7. Lion Head Pool 3.00 metres deep | 23. Kopura or Entrance Pavilion |
| 8. Avenue 152.20 metres) with Border of Pillars | 24. Antechamber to Principal Sanctuary |
| 9. Kopura or Entrance Pavilion | 25. Prasat or Sanctuary Tower |
| 10. East "Palace" | 26. West Annexe |
| 11. West "Palace" | 27. East Annexe |
| 12.-13. West Telescopic Hall - East Telescopic Hall | 28. East - West Gallery |
| 14. Watch Tower | 29. Blind Kopura |
| 15. Avenue 36.25 metres) with Border of Pillars | |

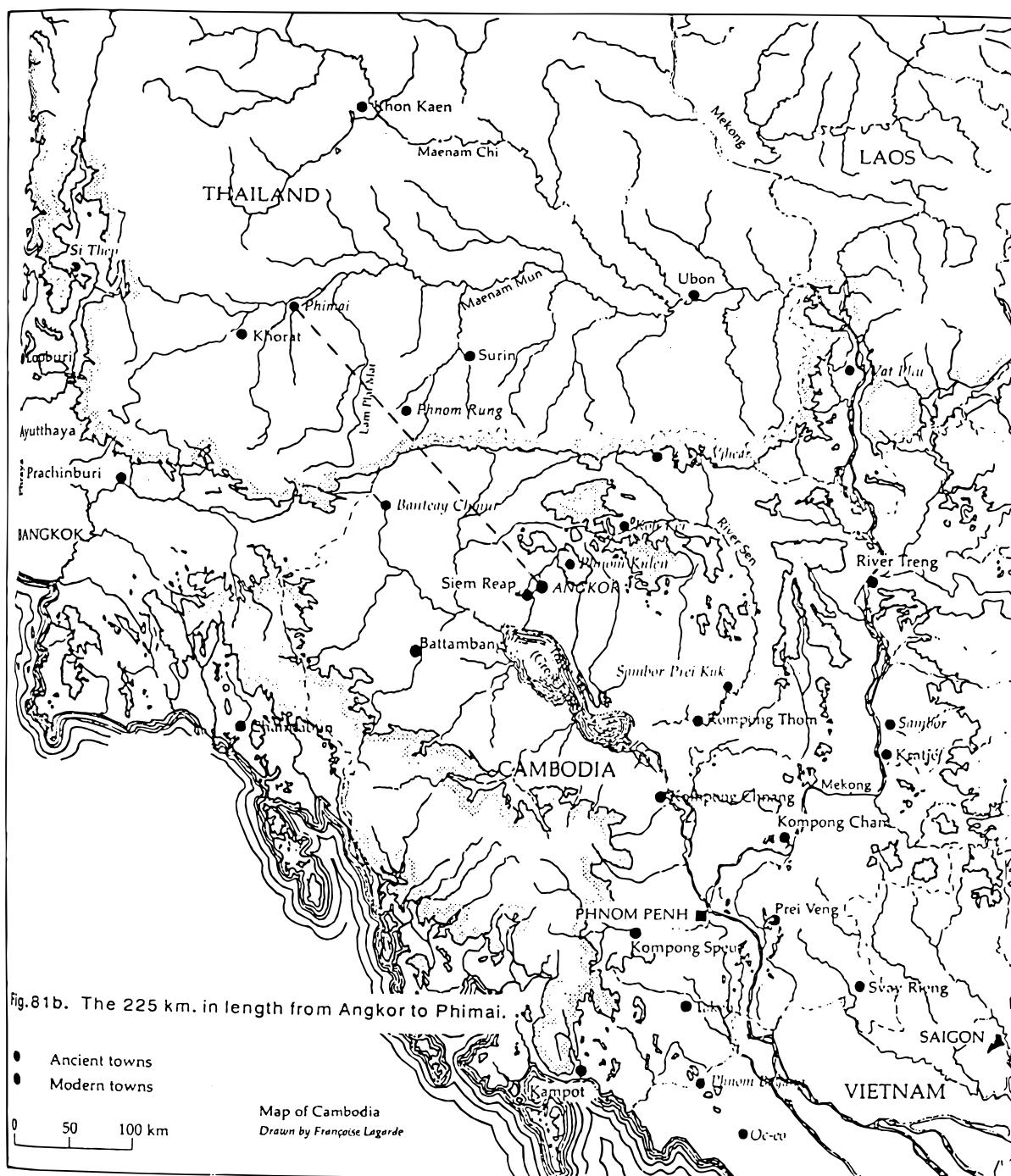


Fig. 81b The 225 km. road from Angkor to Phimai

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