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VOLUME ONE

From Early Times to c. 1800

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CHAPTER

5

RELIGION AND POPULAR BELIEFS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA BEFORE c. 1500

The world of Southeast Asia presents a variegated cultural pattern. Geographically, the area can be divided into mainland and maritime Southeast Asia with the Malay peninsula as the dividing line, the southern part of which belongs to the island world, whereas its northern part is more continental in nature. As to maritime Southeast Asia, the motto of the modern Republic of Indonesia: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, freely translated as Unity in Diversity, can be applied to the area as a whole. For, although numerous different languages are used in this vast area, they all belong to the family of Austronesian languages—apart from small pockets of tribal areas. Culturally, too, there is an underlying concept of unity despite the astounding diversity in almost every aspect. The conception of Indonesia as a 'field of ethnological study', as formulated by Dutch anthropologists, can be applied to the entire area.¹

As far as religion is concerned, the diversity is less pronounced since Islam strongly predominates in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and the southern Philippines, and Catholic Christianity in the major part of the Philippines. In mainland Southeast Asia, on the other hand, Theravāda Buddhism is the established religion of all states except Vietnam, where both Mahāyāna Buddhism and Confucianism predominate. Yet Hindu-Buddhist religion prevails in Bali, and tribal religions have persisted almost everywhere in the more remote areas. Moreover, the great religions have been influenced by earlier tribal beliefs. It is the task of the historian to describe and, if possible, to elucidate the religious developments in order to enable us to look at the present conditions against their historical background.

The study of religious developments is, however, beset with difficulties. These are essentially of two kinds: the nature of religion in the context of Southeast Asia; and the condition of our sources. In Western societies religion is generally felt to be clearly separated from other fields of social and political life, so that it can be studied for its own sake. This is also the case with modern Southeast Asia. In pre-modern Southeast Asia, however, it is hardly possible to separate religion from other fields of socio-economic and cultural life, with which it is closely interwoven. There is not even a

¹ P. E. Josselin de Jong, *Unity in Diversity: Indonesia as a field of Anthropological Study*, Dordrecht, 1964.

real equivalent of our term religion in the pre-modern languages of the area. To study religion one has, as it were, to detach from their social and political contexts those elements that we subsume under religion. These include, for example, various rituals and other forms of the worship of God, of deities or superhuman spirits and powers, as reflected in art and architecture, in literature and inscriptions. These considerations naturally lead us to the second type of difficulty: the nature of our sources.

The sources that have come down to us for the study of religion in Southeast Asia are, on the whole, richer than those available for other aspects of civilization. This is mainly because religious values were considered eternal, so that buildings erected for religious purposes—unlike dwellings for men, including kings—had to be made of durable materials such as stone or brick. Whereas perishable materials could be used for worldly purposes (toys, portraits etc.), effigies of gods and other divine powers required the use of stone or metal. Similarly, texts dealing with religious topics or containing important religious elements were written down for future generations. They were regularly copied as soon as the originals had become difficult to read. Land grants with immunities for the benefit of religious foundations, inalienable 'as long as the sun and the moon illuminate the world', used to be written on stone or bronze. Such documents, classed as inscriptions, are, by and large, the most important sources for the history of religion in Southeast Asia, but, as they are almost always associated with temples or other religious foundations, they are available only for the areas and periods in which such foundations existed. The unequal distribution, rather than the paucity, of sources is indeed one of the most serious problems facing the historian of the ancient period. Thus, the epigraphic sources are rich for Burma from the eleventh century, for Thailand from the thirteenth, for Cambodia and Champa (southern Vietnam) from the fifth, for central Java from the eighth century to the tenth, for eastern Java and Bali from the tenth century; but they are scarce or non-existent for the remaining areas and periods. Thus, nearly all Sumatran inscriptions are either from the end of the seventh or from the end of the thirteenth century to the fifteenth, and the situation is even worse for most of the remaining parts of Southeast Asia.

The literary sources are even more unequally distributed over the area and period. In contrast with the rich literary sources for (northern) Vietnam, written in Chinese, we do not possess a single line of literature from ancient Cambodia, nor from Champa or the Philippines. For eastern Java there is a rich literature in Old Javanese from the tenth century, and in Burma from the twelfth century, written in Pāli, the sacred language of the Buddhists of the Theravāda school. For western Malaysia, Sumatra and Thailand, the literary sources begin just before the end of the period under consideration. No literary sources are available for the remaining parts of Southeast Asia. Their absence is only partly compensated for by some foreign, mainly Chinese, references as well as by archaeological data. This distribution of sources is by no means a coincidence, for important source materials for early religion, whether written or archaeological, can be expected mainly in the principal centres of civilization, which were mostly important political and economic centres as well.

These different types of sources may inform us about different aspects of religious thought and institutions. The Old Javanese texts include not only major poetical works and prose literature, but also religious tracts and treatises. The oldest of these can be dated back to the tenth century. This is a compilation of two or more *Mahāyāna* texts, called *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*. A number of other texts belong to a somewhat later period, in particular a few Śaiva treatises, such as the *Sewasasana*, *Wr̥haspatitattva*, *Bhuwanakośa*, *Bhuwanasarikṣepa*, *Tattwa sang hyang Mahājñāna*, *Agastyaparwa*, and others. In addition, the *Brahmāndapurāṇa*, an Old Javanese encyclopaedic text based on an Indian prototype, is important for our knowledge of brahmanic Hinduism as known in Java.² Among the literary works some have a direct bearing on religion. Foremost among these is the *Nāgarakertāgama*, a long poetical text composed in 1365 by a high official at the court of Majapahit.³ It is important not only for the history of religious, especially Buddhist, ideas but also for religious institutions. Thus, a few cantos give us lists of different kinds of buildings associated with various religious sects. A somewhat later text, the *Śivarātrikalpa*, supplies much detailed information on Śaiva ritual. Whereas such learned and poetical texts inform us mainly about religious ideas and practices among the classes associated with the royal courts, the inscriptions often allow us glimpses of popular beliefs, especially in the long imprecation formulas found at the end of many Old Javanese inscriptions. These texts nearly always deal with the transfer to religious institutions or to certain persons of fiscal revenues and other emoluments. In the latter case it is usually stipulated that all or part of the revenues shall be used to the benefit of some named religious or charitable institution(s). Some such details may supply valuable information on the nature and socio-economic status of religious foundations.⁴

As to mainland Southeast Asia, Burma has left a considerable number of religious, legal and grammatical texts written in Pāli. The oldest of these, inscribed on gold plates, originates from the neighbourhood of modern Prome and dates back to the seventh century or earlier, but a rich Pāli literature, commentaries on Buddhist texts, lawbooks etc., was written at the court of Pagan, central Burma, from the end of the twelfth century. There, too, the inscriptions inform us about many aspects of religion on which the scholastic texts are silent.

The same type of Theravāda Buddhism, originating from Sri Lanka, also flourished in the area of present Thailand, but our sources supply less

² For these and other Old Javanese texts the reader is referred to Theodore G. T. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, I–IV, The Hague, 1967–80, cf. in particular the general index in vol. III. Five works deserve particular mention: (1) J. Kats, *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, The Hague, 1910; (2) J. Gonda, *Het Oud-Javaansche Brahmanā-Purāṇa. Prozatekst en kakawin*, Bandung, 1932; translation, ibid., Bandung, 1933; (3) Sudarshana Devi, *Wr̥haspatitattva*, Nagpur, 1957; (4) A. Teeuw, S. O. Robson, Th. P. Galestin, P. J. Worsley, and P. J. Zoetmulder, *Śivarātrikalpa of Mpu Tanakung*, 1969; (5) Haryati Soebadio, *Jñānasiddhānta*, 1971.

³ Theodore G. T. Pigeaud, *Java in the 14th Century. A Study in Cultural History*, I–V, The Hague, 1960–3.

⁴ The most comprehensive collections of Old Javanese inscriptions are J. L. A. Brandes and N. J. Krom, *Oud-Javaansche Oorkonden* (hereafter OJO), 'Batavia'-s-Hage 1913 (without translations) and H. B. Sarkar, *Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java*, I–II, with translations but only up to 929.

information than on Burma. A considerable number of votive inscriptions from northern and central Thailand, written in Mon, testifies to Buddhist piety in the eleventh century, but long inscriptions, mainly in Thai, start only at the end of the thirteenth century. Buddhist texts in Pāli from the area of present Chiengmai are even considerably later in date, but often supply information on earlier religious history. An example is the *Jinakālamāli*,⁵ written in 1516 by the scholar-monk Ratanapañña at Chiengmai. It is, in fact, a kind of Buddhist chronicle comprising pious stories, usually with precise dates. The chronology seems, however, confused: at least we have not yet succeeded in understanding the system that was used. The text mingles facts with legends. For example, it tells the story of a miraculous statue of Buddha brought back from Sri Lanka by king Rocarāja, a name which is, however, unknown from other historical sources. In conjunction with other, roughly contemporary, Buddhist works the story can be placed in the context of turbulent developments in Thailand and Cambodia at the beginning of the eleventh century.⁶ For the history of Theravāda Buddhism, rather more valuable information is to be derived from exogenous sources such as the *Mahāvaṃsa*, written in Sri Lanka, which contains a number of references to the religious contacts with Southeast Asia, in particular Burma, or the later *Gandhavaṃsa* (probably seventeenth-century) or the *Sāsanavaṃsa*. More even than for maritime Southeast Asia, Chinese sources, in particular dynastic annals and travel accounts, supply important information on certain periods and areas with which the Chinese came into contact. An example of the first type of sources is the *Liang Shu*, a seventh-century history of the Liang dynasty. Original Chinese travel accounts include the records of Buddhist pilgrims such as Fa Hsien (beginning of the fifth century) and I Ching (seventh century).⁷

A few words should be added on the archaeological sources. In most parts of Southeast Asia there are impressive and beautiful religious monuments of the past, often restored to their pristine glory. The most prestigious monuments can be admired at Pagan (central Burma), Chaiya and Nakhon Sithammarat (southern Thailand), Sukothai and Ayutthaya (central Thailand), Angkor (western Cambodia), central and eastern Java, and Bali. These monuments are visible expressions of piety founded by kings with important contributions by members of the royal families and other court dignitaries, but constructed by compulsory and sometimes voluntary labour of the artisans and of the agricultural masses. This probably explains why the archaeological sources, in contrast to most of the literature, may give us some idea of popular beliefs. These can be expressed in different ways, especially in the iconography and in the reliefs. Thus the reliefs of Borobudur in central Java (first half of the ninth

⁵ A. P. Buddhadatta, *Jinakālamāli*, London: Pali Text Society, 1962.

⁶ G. Cœdès, *Les États Hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie*, 3rd edn, Paris, 1964, 251f.

⁷ W. P. Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca, compiled from Chinese Sources*, Batavia, 1876; E. Chavannes, *Mémoire composé à l'époque de la grande dynastie T'ang sur les religieux éminents qui allèrent chercher la loi dans les pays de l'occident*, Paris, 1894; J. Takakusu, *A record of the Buddhist religion as practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (671–695 A.D.) by I-tsing*, Oxford, 1896.

century) and the Bayòn in Angkor (end of the twelfth century) show many scenes that depict aspects of the daily life of different classes of people. The study of such reliefs may supplement the information obtained from texts, inscriptions and foreign notices.

The study of the less spectacular archaeological data of the historical period has hitherto received little attention, except for sherds of Chinese and other (Thai and Vietnamese) ceramics, which may give valuable chronological data. On the other hand, the study of ancient tools, foundations of non-religious buildings, major irrigation works, coins and other material remains may well contribute to a better understanding of different aspects of daily life, including religion.

One other type of source, though not strictly legitimate as evidence for ancient history, may nevertheless give some insights into the character of the ancient local religious traditions as they existed before Indian or Chinese influence, and that is constituted by our knowledge of the religious practices current in recent times among the upland or montagnard tribal peoples of the area. Such communities have preserved distinctive cultural traditions characteristic of those who, like the ancestors of modern Southeast Asians, live in relatively small scattered groups and lack a written language or full-time religious specialists. It must be emphasized, though, that it is the general character rather than the detail of specific myths and rituals that is relevant.

The montagnards or hill peoples of Vietnam, for example, have (or had, when studied by modern scholars) a rich variety of what may in a loose sense be called animistic cults and beliefs. Some cults are addressed to ancestors, others to spirits of various types—of waters, mountains, and fields—as well as to the wandering spirits who may be encountered anywhere. There is no clear dividing line between such spirits and the local gods of the hearth, or of the earth, fire, sky and thunder. Magic energies are believed to be everywhere potential, and an apparatus of magical procedures has evolved, including the use of amulets. Sorcerers conduct rituals to cure illnesses, speed the spirits of the dead to a safe haven, and procure fortune in tribal war. Chiefs have important ritual functions, especially at harvest time when as representatives of their communities they cut the symbolic first sheaves of grain, and such seasonal rituals are accompanied by feasting and celebrations.

Features of particular groups include the *phi* (spirits of forests, mountains and waters) worshipped by the Lao, the ancestral totem dog Pau Hou from whom the Mau believe themselves to be descended, the cult of the Muong common ancestor who is regarded as the inventor of agriculture, the forest spirits with whom individuals ally themselves among the Jarai, and the offerings to Yang Xo'ri, protectress of the crops, made by the Sedang.⁸

It is the task of the historian to try to reconstruct the Southeast Asian past with the help of these different types of sources, which often confirm or supplement each other, but sometimes appear contradictory. In the latter case the historian has to examine the sources very carefully to make a

⁸ Le Than Khoi, *Le Viêtnam, histoire et civilisation*, Paris, 1955, 44–51, 87f.

choice on the basis of relative reliability. Thus contemporary documents are generally more reliable than texts written many centuries after the period that they describe. It should, however, be added that by and large these sources are richer for religion than for political or economic history.⁹

THE EARLIEST TIMES

This section is concerned with the transitional period from the beginning of the Christian era to the fifth century, in relation to which we dispose of some written sources both from Southeast Asia itself (a few Sanskrit inscriptions) and from outside the area (mainly Chinese notices). This was a decisive period when the first real kingdoms emerged in conjunction with the first contacts with the more ancient civilizations of India and China. In contrast with Chinese influence, which remained confined to Vietnam, Indian cultural influence gradually spread over many parts of the region. In the absence of any direct data on Indian cultural expansion, historians have formulated different theories as to the causes and the nature of this process, which is often termed Indianization. The disadvantage of this term is that it may suggest a conscious effort on the part of Indians to spread their culture over major parts of Southeast Asia. This was indeed the view expressed by most scholars until about half a century ago and is still occasionally found in works by Indian historians. It was based mainly on analogies with Greek, Roman or Western expansion.¹⁰

As there is, however, no evidence for Indian conquests in Southeast Asia (apart from an occasional raid in the eleventh century), nor for any large-scale Indian emigration or colonization, it is now generally thought that the influence of Indian civilization, including religion, should mainly be attributed to endeavours by some Southeast Asian élites to assimilate important elements of Indian culture. The eclectic nature of Indian influence is a strong argument in favour of this latter view. This applies to religion as much as to other elements of civilization. By the beginning of the Christian era some parts of the region had already reached a high level

⁹ No comprehensive history of the religion of Southeast Asia exists. There are, however, many excellent works on specific areas, periods or aspects, for example W. Stöhr and J. Zoetmulder, *Die Religionen Indonesiens*, Stuttgart, 1965, French translation under the title *Les Religions d'Indonésie*, trans. L. Jospin, Paris, 1968. All references given here are to the French edition. Stöhr deals with tribal religions in Indonesia: known only since relatively recent times, they are not directly relevant to this chapter. Zoetmulder's account, on the other hand, is a judicious discussion, based almost entirely on literature, of classical Indonesian religion. The present account owes much to this publication, from which, however, it differs by the inclusion of much archaeological and epigraphic material.

¹⁰ Many accounts tend to overemphasize the importance of these foreign influences on the beginnings of Southeast Asian kingdoms. There can be little doubt that foreign contacts would only have carried significant effects at a time when there already existed ordered societies in Southeast Asia with élites that were capable of assimilating foreign influences and utilizing these to their own advantage. For a discussion of such problems see especially Ina E. Slamet-Velsink, *Emerging hierarchies. Processes of stratification and early state formation in the Indonesian archipelago: prehistory and the ethnographic present*, Leiden, 1986, and C. Higham, *The Archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia*, Cambridge, UK, 1989, 306–18.

of civilization which enabled local élites to choose, albeit mostly unconsciously, those forms of Indian religion which were consistent with, or could be adapted to, their own beliefs and practices.

Earlier scholars have often assumed that Indian influence was mainly confined to the early centuries of the Christian era, when the first contacts between South and Southeast Asia were established. More recent research has, however, emphasized the continuous nature of such relations, at least until the maritime supremacy of the Western powers rendered such regular contacts more difficult or nearly impossible.

The sources at our disposal mainly reflect the beliefs held by such local élites, but to understand religious history in its social reality, we need to step outside the monastery or temple library and look at the didactic bas-reliefs on the temple walls, shiny from the reverent fondling of the faithful; at the wayside shrines decked with their little offerings of flowers or incense; at the stories told to children of the spirits of heroes who lived long ago; at the whole lore which a community tells itself about the invisible sacred world that surrounds and contains it.

It is from this perspective that we should view the influence of Indian religions on Southeast Asia. Yet, although only a small part of the population was directly influenced by Indian ideas, it should be emphasized that this was the élite which left us ancient literature, architecture and iconography—in other words, the products of high civilizations which we still admire. In addition, the court culture was never completely separated from the rest of the population, and much of it gradually percolated to the agricultural masses. On the other hand, it was inevitable that the court was also influenced by the popular culture.

The manner in which Indian ideas blended with ancient cults must have differed from one area to another. For ancient Champa, a non-Vietnamese kingdom occupying territory that was later absorbed by the southward expansion of the Vietnamese, Paul Mus has proposed an analysis of the way in which Indian cults, notably those of the Hindu god Śiva with the linga (*linga*, a phallic symbol) as his icon, were moulded to the tradition of prior cults such as those of the earth gods identified with the territory inhabited by specific communities. In each such cult, the deity was represented by an icon, often a rough stone (easily replaced by the linga of Śiva), and could be approached by the prayers of the faithful only through rituals addressed to this icon. Such rituals were directed especially to the assurance of fertility; the *yoni* (womb) stone on which the linga stood, which received the sacral fluid poured over the linga, was especially apt to symbolize the fertilized earth. Thus a high god of Hinduism was, as happened also in India, adapted to serve the purpose of primal religion, becoming in the process part of a particularistic tradition identifying a community with its territory.¹¹

It is possible to see small-scale territorial cults of this sort surviving beneath the mantle of imported Indian religion in other parts of the region.

¹¹ L. Cadière, 'Croyances et Pratiques Religieuses de Vietnamiens', *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, 33, 1 (1958) 1ff.; P. Mus, *India seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous cults in Champa*, trans. I. W. Mabbett and D. P. Chandler, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia no. 3, Clayton, Vic., 1975, 7.

Cambodian inscriptions of the pre-Angkor period (i.e. before c. 900 CE) include references to many shrines, such as the 'god of the stone pond', which appear to be addressed to local spirits that inhabit or (as Mus argued in the case of the earth god) are identified with features of the landscape. The old Mon states in Burma, which became staunchly Buddhist, had a chthonic cult; kings as representatives of their communities presided over rituals that linked them with their local patron gods, and after their death the rulers would go to join their ancestors in an invisible other-world where they would be united with the earth goddess, a tree or mound serving as the point of contact between the sacred and profane worlds. With the advent of Buddhism, burial mounds turned into Buddhist stupas and the tree spirits, blithely integrated into Buddhist observance, turned into *sotapan*, followers of the Buddhist teaching who were set on the path to salvation.¹² Such practices were in accordance with Buddhist teaching in India, where the oldest stupas were also burial mounds, in which corporeal relics of Lord Buddha or of Buddhist saints were enshrined. Certain trees, including the famous *āśvattha* beneath which Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment, were the abodes of Yakṣas, ferocious giant spirits who became pious protectors of early Buddhism.

The worship of mountains as abodes of gods or of powerful spirits is also well attested in Indian religion where, for example, Śiva is thought to reside on top of mount Kailāsa, identified with one of the highest peaks of the Himalaya, and Mount Mahāmeru or Sumeru (in Pāli Sineru), the mountain of the gods at the centre of the universe, is an important cosmographic motif influential in art and architecture. In Southeast Asia, however, mountain worship developed into important cults. Thus, in Indonesia some volcanoes, conceived of as 'living' mountains, received worship as the abodes of great Hindu gods, such as Śiva, 'Lord of the Mountain(s)' (Girīndra) and Brahmā, who became identified with the (subterranean) fire. One of the most impressive temple complexes in (east) Java, Candi Panataran, which will be briefly discussed later, is devoted to the cult of Śiva Girīndra. The greatest Buddhist monument in Southeast Asia, Borobudur in central Java, is not a temple but a complex of terraces and galleries, richly decorated with narrative reliefs and statues, which encloses a natural hill as a kind of mantle in stone.

In Cambodia, more even than in other Southeast Asian kingdoms, mountain symbolism was embodied in monumental architecture. There, a whole series of monuments of the Angkor period (from c. 900) were constructed as large terraced pyramids. Though they were dedicated to Śiva or Viṣṇu or to a Buddhist Bodhisattva (a being destined to become a Buddha in a future life, and in Mahāyāna, which was the prevalent form of Buddhism in Southeast Asia before the thirteenth century, effectively an object of worship in his own right), the magnificence and obsessiveness of their Mahāmeru symbolism went far beyond any Indian models.

Further, there are many evidences of mountain spirit cults that were not Indian in origin. An early example in Cambodia is the site of Ba Phnom, situated on the Mekong River near the Vietnamese border. Though indeed

¹² H. L. Shorto, 'The *dewatau sotapan*, a Mon prototype of the 37 *nats*', BSOAS, 30 (1967).

the evidence identifying it as a major cult site in pre-Angkor times is equivocal, it does appear to have long been a symbolic centre of the kingdom—hence a *Mahāmeru*—and the scene of sacrificial rituals addressed to a goddess; according to one view this goddess was a fusion of an aboriginal Me Sa (White Mother) with the Indian *Umā Mahiśāsuramardini*, a demon-slaying embodiment of the spouse of Śiva; sacrifice was conducted at the site as recently as the nineteenth century.¹³

Other kingdoms had their mountain spirit sites, where rituals had to be conducted for the sake of the prosperity of the state. In Pagan, it was Mount Popa. In Sukothai in the thirteenth century, it was at the hill site where the spirit, Phra Kapung, resided beside a spring that issued from a mountain:

If the prince who is sovereign in Muang Sukothai worships this spirit properly and presents it ritual offerings, then this country will be stable and prosperous; but if he does not present ritual offerings, then the spirit of this hill will no longer protect or respect this country, which will fall into decline.¹⁴

Origin myths, legitimizing kingdoms and giving their peoples a place in the grand scheme of the universe, were sometimes taken from India but often betray local myths. In Vietnam, for example, the story is told of Lac Long Quan, the Dragon Lord, who first civilized the Vietnamese people; from this spirit's union with queen Ao Co came the line of lords who, according to the tradition, first ruled in the Hong (Red) River area.

Archaeological evidence includes, notably, that of the Dong-son culture, northern Vietnam, which reflects aspects of early religion in the late centuries BC. Richly decorated bronze drums were found all over Southeast Asia, for example in Kuala Terengganu on the east coast of west Malaysia, and on the island of Alor in eastern Indonesia. They show incised designs likely to embody symbols current in myth and ritual.¹⁵ Some scholars have associated the Dong-son culture with a speculatively reconstructed complex of cultures characterized by sky spirits, as opposed to another complex represented by the many megalithic remains in the region and characterized by earth gods. However, it is nowadays widely believed that the megaliths do not in fact attest any one coherent culture.

Funerary rituals normally enclosed elements of indigenous religion. The Indian religions favoured cremation, but a wealth of sources vouches for the survival in historical times of other practices, particularly interment, though this was often only partial: a body was first cremated and its remains were subsequently buried, commonly in an urn. Chinese sources assert that in ancient Champa the great men of the land were dealt with in this way, except that the urns were then committed to the sea or to rivers. The kingdom known as Tun-sun, presumably situated on the eastern coast of the Malay peninsula, was claimed to practise exposure, corpses being

¹³ D. P. Chandler, 'Royally sponsored human sacrifices in nineteenth century Cambodia: the cult of *nak ta Me Sa* (*Mahiśāsuramardini*) at Ba Phnom', JSS, 72 (1974).

¹⁴ Coedès, *États*, 377f.; cf. also Coedès, *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam*, 2nd edn, Bangkok, 1961, 44f.

¹⁵ A. J. Bernet Kempers, *The kettledrums of Southeast Asia: a bronze age world and its aftermath*, Rotterdam, 1988; Higham, *Archaeology*, 201.

offered up to the birds.¹⁶ The earliest state in Cambodia, known by the Chinese appellation of Fu-nan and flourishing from the second to the sixth century, was said to know four practices: cremation, depositing in the sea, grave burial, and exposure. In Burma, in the later Shan states, the remains of a monk were sometimes buried under a post.

Human sacrifice, attested in remote parts of the area until the recent past, may have been more widespread in the ancient period. This type of practice is likely to have attended the antique cults of territorial gods and spirits of tree, river, and mountain. In each case, it was considered that the spirit, dwelling essentially in a placeless, timeless, sacred world, was inaccessible to the community except through special rituals designed to give him the means of communication. It should, however, be added that there is no real evidence as to the prevalence of human sacrifice in the civilized areas of ancient Southeast Asia.

There are many indications of the importance of the worship of local deities. Just as ancient India had its Yakṣa cults, many areas, villages or even impressive trees and other striking points in nature had their guardian spirits. Thus, the cult of the *nats* in Burma acquired official status and was sanctioned by the Buddhist orthodoxy. The same applies to the cults of the *nāgas* (mythical snakes) in many parts of the region. Thus, a five-headed cobra was the main tutelary spirit of the maritime kingdom of Śrivijaya, while the founder of the earliest kingdom in Cambodia is said to have married a Nāgī (female cobra), from whom later rulers trace their descent.

Except in Vietnam, where Chinese influence predominated, ancestor worship was not common, except again for the royal dynasties where ancestor cults emphasized the continuity of the state. The same applies to totemism, which does not seem to be observed—at least not in the sense that includes the idea of families or communities descending from certain animals which, for that reason, were considered sacred within such communities.¹⁷

Some animals seem to have enjoyed a kind of worship. Snakes have already been mentioned in connexion with the *nāga* cult, in which Indian influence probably blended with ancient indigenous snake cults. There are scattered references to other animals but, compared with, for instance, India, animal worship was and is relatively unimportant. In addition, most of the references are in the context of religions of Indian origin, such as the special status of the Garuda, a mythical eagle and mount of god Viṣṇu, in Indonesia.

In the areas where the influence of Indian religions was strong, we often see complicated patterns in which outside influence is closely interwoven with ancient Southeast Asian beliefs. In many cases one may discern the

¹⁶ P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500*, Kuala Lumpur, 1966; P. Pelliot, 'Le Fou-nan', BEFEO, 3 (1903) 279.

¹⁷ Some scholars, in particular W. H. Rassers and his followers, have found evidence of totemism in Indonesia, but the indications are marginal or unconvincing. Thus, many Javanese authorities during and after the Kadiri period (c. 1100–1222 and later) are mentioned by names preceded by a term indicating an animal, such as *macan*, 'tiger', *kébo*, 'buffalo', *gajah*, 'elephant', etc., but there are no indications that such names refer to totem animals. It is much more likely that these are warrior names reflecting the animals figuring on their banners, etc.

power of ancient beliefs at the background of apparently Hindu or Buddhist ceremonies. In Pagan, for example, *naga* spirits were regarded as the owners of the site where the palace of King Kyanzittha (c. 1084–1112) was to be built, and had to be propitiated. The rituals involved in the ceremonies attending the dedication of the palace, though accompanied by the recitation of Buddhist texts, were hardly Buddhist.

Amulets, talismans, portents, the whole panoply of apotropaic magic pervaded the religious life of everybody, high or low, monk, ascetic or layman. In mainland Southeast Asia, Buddhist monks, like the ascetics in maritime Southeast Asia, were regarded as a vehicle of a sort of spiritual energy that could operate in the arena of local magic forces. The monks subscribed readily to notions of magic inhering in relics, and impressed laymen with Buddhist miracles. Several such cases belong to Thai tradition; at the shrine of Wat Mahathat in Sukothai, which contained Buddha relics, a neckbone was seen to float out of the stupa.¹⁸ Such prodigies were regarded as signs to the faithful to encourage them to make the pilgrimage to Sri Lanka. It should be added that many of the magic features of Buddhism in Southeast Asia were already inherent in Buddhism before it spread to Southeast Asia, but underwent various forms of adaptation to Southeast Asian beliefs and practices. Similar observations can be made with reference to Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism in the region, including maritime Southeast Asia. As, however, religious developments in the mainland and in maritime Southeast Asia are quite different in many respects (though agreeing in others), especially during the classical period (from about the fifth to the end of the fifteenth century CE), it is proper to discuss them separately.

RELIGIONS OF INDIAN ORIGIN ON THE MAINLAND

Brahmanism

On the mainland of Southeast Asia, it was ultimately Buddhism that came to dominate, but it is important to recognize that, from early times, Brahmanism and Buddhism were mingled in the cultural legacy bequeathed to all the 'Indianized' states. Just as ancient Southeast Asian traditions mingled freely with the observances of imported religion, so did the lore of different imported religions mingle with each other: the orthodoxy of a state would favour one, each king being free to patronize his own favoured cults and divinities, but others persisted, their representatives dotted about the countryside in temples and monasteries.

Persecutions were rare, but not perhaps quite unknown. The seventh-century Chinese traveller I Ching tells us that Buddhism had been persecuted early in that century in Zhenla (Chen La),¹⁹ a Chinese designation of Cambodia, especially in the pre-Angkor period, i.e. before the end of the

¹⁸ Cœdès, *Recueil*, I, 54.

¹⁹ I Ch'ing, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and the Malay Archipelago*, trans. J. Takakusu, Oxford, 1896, 12.

ninth century, and the absence of significant evidence of Buddhism (there is some, but not much) during the reign of Jayavarman I (c. 657–81) may possibly lend some support to the story. Śiva cults, as well as Viṣṇu cults, Mahāyāna Buddhism as well as Hinayāna, coexisted in most kingdoms during the early centuries, though as time passed a process of polarization gradually skewed the distribution of different sects and schools; after the thirteenth century, and particularly under the influence of the prestige attached to ordination in Sri Lanka, Theravāda Buddhism rapidly rose to prominence in kingdom after kingdom as state orthodoxy. Even then we must not overlook the continuing importance of brahmins in a narrower role: up to the present century, the Buddhist courts have engaged brahmins in astrological and ritual functions.

If such brahmins were Indians (the Indian brahmins are indeed occasionally mentioned in Southeast Asian inscriptions), one wonders how or why they should have left India. This is the more surprising since Indian lawbooks contain prohibitions for brahmins against overseas travel, which was regarded as ritually polluting. These prohibitions may have had little practical effect, and would not have deterred ambitious men lured by the hope of honour and fortune in a distant land. It has been suggested that some learned brahmins were invited by Southeast Asian rulers at a time when commercial relations between Indian and Southeast Asian ports had spread the fame of such brahmins to the courts. It is indeed likely that this happened sometimes, but probably not on a large scale. It is, for example, striking that the Indian *gotra* names, never omitted in Indian inscriptions, are not normally mentioned in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, in the few cases where they are mentioned it is likely that they refer to Indian brahmins. It therefore follows that the great majority of Southeast Asian brahmins would have been Southeast Asians, many of whom had acquired their knowledge of the Sanskrit texts and of brahmanic ritual in Indian ashrams.

Whatever their origin, brahmins had great influence in the Southeast Asian courts in various capacities. As they had access to the sacred texts, the lawbooks and other literature in Sanskrit, they were employed as priests, teachers, ministers and counsellors: the principal advisers of the kings. Government, particularly in early centuries, depended upon such men, who were the chief available sources of literacy and administrative talent and experience. As in the early Indian kingdoms, an important office was that of the *purohita*, a chief priest with ritual and governmental functions. The epigraphic record of the mainland kingdoms demonstrates the powerful influence of *purohitas*, notably in Burma and Cambodia, where they often served under several successive rulers and provided continuity to the government in troubled times. In ninth-century Angkor, for example, Indravarman I had the services of Śivasoma, who was a relative of the earlier king Jayavarman II and was said to have studied in India under the celebrated Vedānta teacher Śāṅkara.²⁰

It is noticeable that sacerdotal offices such as that of the *purohita* tend in Cambodia to pass from uncle to nephew in the maternal line. This has

²⁰ Coedès, *États*, 205.

often been seen as a persisting influence of indigenous matrilineal social organization. More recently it has been suggested that this type of succession might rather show how a line of kings would seek to ally itself to particular powerful families by marriage, generation after generation; a family thus related would come to have its male members given high office by tradition, which would produce the effect actually observed.²¹ Although this was a desirable side-effect, it is unlikely that the kings would have been able to enforce this matrilineal succession unless it was based on tradition among the priestly families.²²

Not only in the 'Hindu' courts, such as Angkor, but also in the Buddhist courts, such as those of Pagan in Burma and Sukothai in Thailand, the brahmins conducted the great ceremonies, such as the royal consecration, and functioned as ministers and counsellors, but had to share their influence with that of the Buddhist monks. By its very nature Buddhism was concerned with the acquisition of spiritual merit and moral perfection rather than with the rites and ceremonies of a royal court, which were left to the brahmins. The grand ceremonies in Pagan that attended the dedication of Kyanzittha's palace have already been mentioned; they required the services of numerous brahmins, although Theravāda Buddhism was then well established. In Cambodia, as late as the thirteenth century (during the revival of 'Brahmanism' after the extravagant Mahāyāna Buddhism of Jayavarman VII), Jayavarman VIII built a temple for the scholar-priest Jayamangalārtha, and likewise for the brahmin Vidyeśavid, who became court sacrificial priest. The Chinese visitor Chou Ta-kuan refers to the presence of brahmins wearing the traditional sacred thread.²³

What is shown by the role of such brahmins is that it is appropriate to speak of Brahmanism as distinct from the specific cults of Śiva or Viṣṇu, or any of their innumerable kin: the priests stood for a social order and for the rituals that gave to the political or local community a sense of its unity and its place in the world.

Śaivism

Cults of Śiva were strong in the ancient kingdoms of Cambodia and Champa. Two major roles played by Śiva need to be distinguished: the political and the devotional.

The political role was as the focus of linga cults: the linga, originally the 'phallus', was the emblem of Śiva as god of creation and fertility for his devotees. Such cults were sponsored by rulers at the central shrines that constituted the ritual hub of their kingdoms. State-sponsored linga cults

²¹ Thomas A. Kirsch, 'Kinship, Genealogical claims and Societal Integration in Ancient Khmer Society: an Interpretation', in C. D. Cowan and O. W. Wolters, eds, *Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays presented to D. G. E. Hall*, Ithaca, 1976.

²² There are interesting parallels suggesting that royal succession could be based on principles different from those followed by other sections of society. This was the case with the old Minangkabau kingdom (Sumatra Barat), where the rulers succeeded one another along patrilineal lines in a society generally based on matrilineal succession. See especially P. E. De Josselin de Jong, *Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan, socio-political structure in Indonesia*, Leiden, 1951, *passim*.

²³ *Mémoires sur les coutumes du Cambodge de Tcheou Takouan*, trans. P. Pelliot (Oeuvres Post-humées de P. Pelliot, vol. III), Paris, 1951, 14.

were maintained in Cambodia till the twelfth century. In Champa, the royal capital at Mi-son in the fourth century (in Quang Nam district of present central Vietnam) had a royal Siva cult with a linga called Bhadreśvara (combining the king's name, Bhadravarman, with Īśvara, a title of Śiva) as its principal object of worship; the later king Śambhuvarman endowed a linga called Śambhubhadreśvara. In the eighth century this linga, thought to incorporate the essence of the kingdom, was taken away by 'Javanese' raiders.²⁴ In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Jayasimhavarman III established a linga cult down in the south, at the shrine of Po Klaung Garai.

In Cambodia many state monuments had Śiva lingas in their central shrines, often with the iconography of other gods (or even Buddhist divinities) represented in the sculpture of surrounding buildings. The rulers of Cambodia favoured great tiered pyramidal masses that became more elaborate as time went on; many of these had lingas in the central towers that stood at their pinnacles. The *devarāja* (either 'god-king' or 'king of the gods') cult, instituted at the beginning of the ninth century, though its precise nature has been debated,²⁵ was presumably Śaiva nevertheless, and for a number of kings of Angkor it represented for them the sanctification of their role.

But Śiva was not only an emblem of royalty and power; he was also a god of grace; he is referred to as such, for example in a Cambodian inscription of 624, which identifies him with Brahmā and thus represents a sort of mystic theism. One Śaiva sect, represented in Cambodia, was that of the Pāśupatas, who had a doctrine of union with Śiva as the one god.²⁶

This form of devotion has been seen as attesting the Śiva cult as a personal form of religion that stepped aside from social and sectarian divisions. Many inscriptions also embody a type of cult that made of Śiva not a possession of brahmanic ritual but a personal god who had a particular relationship with a divinely inspired ruler. The Śiva cult in Cambodia has thus been interpreted as a means of exalting the king as a vehicle of spiritual energy. A rather similar idea of kingship is attested in the Ly dynasty of Vietnam (c. 1010–1225), though with a quite different cultural vocabulary to express it; the ruler is not a god but has in him a concentration of the spiritual energies of the land.²⁷

Vaiṣṇavism

The god Viṣṇu claimed his purlieu from the beginning, though with a few exceptions his dominion was never quite as conspicuous or constant as those of Śiva or of the Buddha. In Cambodia, the inscription of Queen Kulaprabhāvati, who died in 514, attests that she founded a hermitage and a reservoir for the benefit of brahmins, and the record refers to the

²⁴ For these 'Javanese' raids see Coedès, *États*, 173.

²⁵ For the *devarāja* cult see pages 324–9.

²⁶ O. W. Wolters, 'Khmer "Hinduism" in the seventh century,' in R. B. Smith and W. Watson, eds, *Early South East Asia: Essays in Archaeology, History and Historical Geography*, London and New York, 1979, 431.

²⁷ K. W. Taylor, 'Authority and legitimacy in eleventh century Vietnam', in D. G. Marr and A. C. Milner, eds, *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, Singapore and Canberra, 1986, 143.

Vaiṣṇava myth of Śeṣa, the cosmic serpent on whom Viṣṇu reclines in rest between the world cycles; iconographically Viṣṇu is thus represented recumbent upon the serpent and with a lotus growing from his navel. The inscription of Guṇavarman, likewise, indicates a devotion to Viṣṇu, for whom an image of his footprints was endowed. (Viṣṇu in the form of the sun god spanned the universe in three strides, and, in a related myth, as the dwarf Vāmana, performed the same feat to gain the promised possession of whatever ground he could cover in three steps; Viṣṇu's footprints are thus evocative of power and dominion.)

The association of Viṣṇu with the sun is an important theme in the history of his cult; it was made early in India and influenced the form of religious art and myth in places where Vaiṣṇavism was practised. There may thus have been a fusion of the Viṣṇu cult with the influence of sun worship from Persia and the dynasties established by Persian conquerors. Some early images of Cambodia, belonging to the so-called 'Fu-nan' period (before the seventh century), represent deities with tunics in a Central Asian style, also found on images of Persia and northwestern India. They have been thought to reflect Iranian influence. Inscriptional references to a 'Śakabrahmaṇa' may similarly reflect an extension of 'Scythian' influence, as Śaka corresponds to our term Scythian; some have even thought that the Śaka dominions in India, which from the second to the end of the fourth century covered much of western India, may have been a major contributor to the 'Indianization' of much of Southeast Asia.²⁸ Such inferences, though, are speculative.

In southern Burma, the very name of one of the early cities of the Pyu, an ancient people closely related to the Burmans, viz. Viṣṇupura (modern Beikthano), may emphasize the cosmic aspect of Viṣṇu as the heavenly king of the universe. The religious observance at Śrīksetra (modern Hmaw-za near Prome) had a place for images of Viṣṇu and his consort Lakṣmī, goddess of royal majesty and of fortune, and the Kagyun cave site has a relief of a recumbent Viṣṇu. It was only in Burma, incidentally, that we find statues portraying the god standing on his mount, the mythical eagle Garuda.²⁹

In Pagan, Viṣṇu played an important part in the state ritual if not in private devotion; under Kyanzittha Viṣṇu had his own temple, and the myth of Buddhist prophecy promulgated to glorify the king made of Kyanzittha an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Brahmins associated with the building of the palace may have been custodians of an old Vaiṣṇava cult. Lakṣmī was worshipped at Pagan as Kyak Sri.

In Angkor, several rulers such as Jayavarman III (r. c. 850–77) gave honour to Viṣṇu, but by far the most conspicuous success of Vaiṣṇavism in gaining state support was embodied in the construction of Angkor Wat by king Sūryavarman II (r. c. 1113–50). This, the most famous and the most impressive of all the monuments of Angkor, was built as a series of concentric courtyards surrounding a central pyramidal pile on top of which five towers rose in quincunx to place the Mountain of the Gods

²⁸ K. Bhattacharya, *Les Religions Brahmaniques dans L'Ancien Cambodge*, Paris, 1967, 130.

²⁹ G. H. Luce, *Old Burma—Early Pagan*, New York, 1969–70, I. 216.

(Mahāmeru) in the centre of the kingdom, and the kingdom in the centre of the universe. The complex measures overall about 1550 by 1800 metres. An outer gallery was decorated with a series of bas-relief carvings over two metres high running in long sections around the complex, extending more than 1600 metres. They depict secular as well as religious scenes, notably including myths of Viṣṇu and his incarnation of Kṛiṣṇa. The ritual and cosmological symbolism of the monument is richly embodied in every detail of Angkor Wat's art and design, but it has also been claimed to represent a devotional form of Viṣṇu worship. Such cults were strongly developed in India (especially that founded by Rāmānuja) and, to some extent, in Java, where most kings of the Kadiri period (c. 1100–1222) were considered incarnations of Viṣṇu. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that the Vaiṣṇava character of Angkor Wat was not pronounced—even to the extent that the monument was later adopted by the Buddhists as their own.

The devotional aspect of Vaiṣṇavism found expression from early times, and the Pāñcarātra sect, whose doctrines crystallized in the first two centuries CE, taught devotion (*bhakti*) to Viṣṇu as the supreme deity. An inscription of the time of Jayavarman I, in seventh-century Cambodia, refers to a Pāñcarātra priest. Ninth- and tenth-century Angkor knew the sect also, displaying a knowledge of metaphysics according to which Viṣṇu had four emanations (*vyūha*) and lay at the basis of the universe in all its forms, himself being without form.³⁰ Thus Vaiṣṇavism, like Śaivism, included a significant stream of devotional monistic theism.

Buddhism

Buddha images and votive seals attest the introduction of the Dharma (Buddhist teaching) from early times. The record begins with a number of Buddha statues, found in various parts of Southeast Asia, both on the mainland, especially at Dong-duong (near Danang in central Vietnam), Korat (northeastern Thailand), Vieng-sra (peninsular Thailand), and in the archipelago at Sempaga (south Sulawesi, north of Ujung Pandang), Jember (east Java) and on the Bukit Séguntang near Palembang (south Sumatra). These Buddhas, usually represented standing and dressed in clinging transparent robes, reflect a style the prototype of which has been found in Amarāvatī, Andhra Pradesh, India, and dated back to the early centuries of the Christian era. It has, however, convincingly been argued that the earliest Southeast Asian Buddhas were not made in or directly inspired by Amarāvatī, but more probably by Anurādhapura in Sri Lanka, which had itself been strongly influenced by Amarāvatī. As a consequence these earliest Buddhas in Southeast Asia must be dated considerably later than had been thought and probably belong to between the fourth and the sixth century CE.³¹

³⁰ K. Bhattacharya, 96–9; 'The Pāñcarātra sect in ancient Cambodia', *Journal of the Greater India Society*, 14, 1955, 111–16.

³¹ J. Boisselier, in his *La Statuaire du Champa*, Paris, 1963 (Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, vol. 54), dates the Dong-Duong bronze Buddha to a period ending in the early sixth century; cf. P. Dupont, *L'Archéologie Mône de Dvāravatī*, Paris, EFEO, 1959; L. Malleret, *L'Archéologie du Delta du Mékong*, II, Paris, EFEO, 1960, 202–208 and pl. LXXXV.

Buddhism, with its universal values, came to be embodied perhaps more than brahmanism in the teachings of pilgrims and wandering scholars. Certainly, in the first seven or eight centuries CE, there was a cosmopolitan oecumene of Buddhist culture disseminated across Asia by travelling monks. Our knowledge of these, like that of the earliest states that grew up along the trading routes, depends a great deal upon Chinese texts, which tell of monks from India and the Buddhist lands of central Asia finding their way by the Silk Road to northern China or by sea through Southeast Asia to destinations often in Kiao-chi (Tonkin) or southern China. In the second and third centuries, the monks who in one way or another reached or passed through Tonkin in the course of their teaching and studying included the Parthian An-shih-kao; Mou Po from China, who was converted to Buddhism there; the Sogdian Kang-seng-hui, child of a merchant in Tonkin; the Indo-Scyth Kalyāñaruci who translated the Lotus Sūtra; and Mārajivaka, who went from India to Tonkin and later to Canton at the end of the third century.³²

Such travels criss-crossed the Buddhist world. Most of the monks were scholarly, actuated by the desire to disseminate the Dharma embodied in holy scriptures, or to find and study such scriptures in foreign lands. From the fifth century, the desire of Chinese Buddhists to refresh and purify their scriptural tradition led numbers to make the hazardous journey to India. Fa-hsien was one, at the beginning of the fifth century, and he gained fame by the account he left of his journey; on the return stretch he took the sea route via Sri Lanka and arrived back in China after an adventurous journey; he suffered shipwreck and was obliged to stay in (probably western) Java for five months waiting for another ship to finish his journey.³³

Quite a few monks passed that way in the following two centuries, some spending long periods or settling down in places like Fu-nan, the Chinese transcription of the earliest kingdom in Cambodia. Nāgasena was a Buddhist monk sent to China by the ruler of that country. He carried two ivory models of stupas and Chinese references suggest a possible Mahāyāna element in the Buddhism he practised. In the seventh century, the great Chinese Hsuan-tsang went to India and back, but he took the land route both ways. At the end of the century, though, I Ching went to India by sea and spent several years in Southeast Asia, notably in Śrivijaya at or near present Palembang in south Sumatra. His accounts are of great value, especially for the data they contain about the distribution of Buddhist schools and sects in different countries. Thus, he notes that the Saṃmitiya Nikāya, a sect closely related to the Theravādins of Sri Lanka, was well represented in Champa, while the Sarvāstivādins, asserting the reality of the *dharmas* (in this context: elements of existence), had followers in other areas.

I Ching wrote a valuable compilation of short biographies of about sixty monks who set off for India in search of the Buddhist teaching, but some of

³² Tran Van Giap, 'Le Bouddhisme en Annam des origines au XIIIe siècle', BEFEO, 32 (1932) 211f.

³³ Fa-Hsien, *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*, trans. J. Legge, New York, 1965 (reprint); also translated by S. Beal in *Travels of Fa-hien and Sung-Yun*, London, 1964 (reprint).

these died en route.³⁴ Places in mainland Southeast Asia which they visited include Cambodia and Dvāravatī (in present-day Thailand). At the time of the Tang dynasty (from 618) the Vietnamese were taking an active part in Buddhist traffic; monks such as Mokṣadeva, Khuy Sung, and Hue Diem set off on pilgrimages, and the teacher Van Ki, traditionally supposed to have been a disciple of the Chinese master Hui-ning, brought to Vietnam Buddhist texts translated into Chinese, which was the language of literati in Vietnam until the nineteenth century.

Thus the early stages of Buddhist history in the eastern zone, in 'Indochina', are reasonably well represented in the historical record, even though the rulers of Cambodia and Champa generally favoured Brahmanism for their court cults. Few Chinese sources are, however, available for present-day Burma, then the country of the Mon (especially the coastal areas including the Irawaddy and Salween deltas), the Pyu in south-central Burma, the Burmans in north-central and northern Burma and others. Almost all sources before the eleventh century, inscriptions and monuments, are those of the Pyu with their centres in Śrīksetra (present Hmaw-za near Prome) and Viṣṇupura (Beikthano). The archaeology of the latter site has suggested to its excavator that Buddhism is represented by undecorated monuments with square bases and drum-shaped superstructures, which are not unlike certain stupas in eastern India; they apparently date back to as early as the second century.³⁵

The history, and particularly the architecture, of Śrīksetra are much better known. Buddhist architecture of Old Prome was technically advanced, and employed the true arch—a feature which, remarkably, occurs only in Burma among the countries of Southeast Asia. Three great pagodas guarded the city; the best preserved of these is the Bawbawgyi, which is fifty metres high.

Inscriptions on gold plates from Maungun near Prome, probably datable to the seventh century, reflect the Pāli tradition and thus represent the earliest Southeast Asian evidence of Theravāda Buddhism, which gradually, especially from the eleventh century, became the prevalent religion of Burma and, a few centuries later, of most of mainland Southeast Asia. On the other hand, there is much evidence for Mahāyāna Buddhism in Pyu art, which includes various representations of the Bodhisattvas (future Buddhas) Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, as well as of the Buddha Dipaṅkara, who was thought to calm the waves. The Pyu were familiar with a Sanskrit Buddhist canon, which perhaps came to them from northeastern India.

The seventh-century Chinese pilgrim Hsuan-tsang mentions Śrīksetra as a Buddhist kingdom, as does I Ching in 675. There are Chinese literary references to Pyu embassies to China in 802 and 807; the notice given of their country claims that in it there were more than a hundred Buddhist monasteries, and all boys and girls would serve for a spell as novices in the order.³⁶

³⁴ *Chinese Monks in India*, trans. Latika Lahiri, Delhi, 1986.

³⁵ Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites in Burma*, Rangoon, 1972; *Report on the Excavations in Beikthano*, Rangoon, 1968.

³⁶ G. H. Luce, 'The ancient Pyu', *JBRS*, 27 (1937) 249f.

Thus it is evident that Buddhism was strong among the Pyu; but it was the Mon kingdoms that seem to have become the chief disseminators of Buddhism of the Theravāda school to the later empires which from the eleventh century came to displace them; and the early history of Mon Buddhism is particularly obscure.

It may go back a long way. For example, there is the tantalizing evidence provided by an ivory comb found in Thailand, at Chansen, possibly from the second century, though the radiocarbon datings are discrepant; it bears what appear to be Buddhist symbols.³⁷ The oldest known Mon Buddhist inscription, near Nakhon Pathom, sixty-five kilometres west of Bangkok, is not much earlier than 600 CE. P. Dupont considered that the influence of the Mon kingdom of Dvāravatī can be seen in the archaeology of Cambodia before the seventh century, but there is no religious sculpture from before the sixth century; when it begins in the following century, it resembles that of Dvāravatī and shows the influence of the Gupta style.³⁸

The recent discovery of a Buddhist inscription at Noen Sa Bua in the Prachinburi area of eastern Thailand, dated 761 CE, written in Old Khmer with a quotation of three verses in Pāli,³⁹ indicates the expansion of Theravāda Buddhism to near the present Thai–Cambodian border in the pre-Angkor period.

The manner in which Buddhism expanded is, however, still far from clear. Dvāravatī may have been no more than a specific Mon kingdom with its heartland in central Thailand and a Buddhist culture quite distinct from that of any of its neighbours, or it may be part of a wider culture that included all the Mon lands of Burma and Thailand and even extended into pre-Angkor Cambodia. The use of Old Khmer in the Prachinburi inscription may be an indication in that direction. Although Indian culture, and Buddhism in particular, seems to have spread predominantly from west to east, the actual pattern may have been much more complicated. The earliest evidence for an Indianized society actually comes from Fu-nan, in particular from the ancient city of Oc-eo on the Gulf of Thailand.⁴⁰ On the other hand, little is known of the state of Buddhism among the Mon of present Burma. There, too, the population may have been Buddhist since very early times without leaving any significant traces.

The Buddhism of Dvāravatī is well enough attested, hazy though the political outline of the state may be. Coedès identified Mon Buddhist sites associated with Dvāravatī culture in the peninsula and in various parts of Thailand, including Haripuñjaya (Lamphun) to the north.⁴¹ The art of Dvāravatī is represented in iconography by a particular style of the Buddha image with a broad face and eyebrows continuing above the nose. Standing

³⁷ Higham, *Archaeology*, 272; E. Lyons, 'Dvāravatī, a consideration of its formative period', in Smith and Watson, 354; see also B. Bronson, 'The late prehistory and early history of central Thailand', *ibid.*, 330f.

³⁸ Dupont, *L'Archéologie Mône de Dvāravatī*.

³⁹ Mendis Rohanadeera, 'Telakatâhagâthâ in a Thailand Inscription of 761 A.D.', *Vidyodaya Journal of Social Science*, I, 1 (1987) (with thanks to Dr N. Chutiwongs, who kindly drew our attention to this important inscription).

⁴⁰ L. Malleret, *L'Archéologie du Delta du Mékong*, I–IV, Paris, EFEFO, 1959–63.

⁴¹ Le Royaume de Dvāravatī, Bangkok, 1929; 'Les Mons de Dvāravatī', in Ba Shin, J. Boisselier and A. B. Griswold, *Essays offered to G. H. Luce*, Ascona, 1966, I, 112–16.

Buddha statues are often represented with *both* hands in the attitude of protection (*abhayamudrā*). Another particular feature is the representation of the Buddha descending from heaven attended by Indra and Brahmā. Local artists may have been inspired by models from Amarāvatī and Sri Lanka, as well as from Gupta India, but adapted these to their own aesthetic conventions.

Thaton, centre of an ancient Mon state, certainly knew Buddhism by the eleventh century, when it was conquered by king Anawrahta (Aniruddha) of Pagan (r. c. 1044–77). Perhaps it had been recently influenced by Hari-puñjaya, but we may perhaps give credence to the tradition which ascribes the advent of Buddhism in the area to the great fifth-century scholar Buddhaghosa, who would have spent his last years in Thaton after a fertile career in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, there are indications that the Buddhist tradition which was passed on to the Burmese may have been derived from Kāñcī (Conjeevaram) in South India. There may be some truth in all of these possibilities; one direction of influence does not exclude others.

At all events, the early Mon states bequeathed their Theravāda Buddhism to the various expanding kingdoms that, from the eleventh century onward, overran their territory. The expansion of Angkor under Sūryavarman I (r. c. 1002–50) brought Dvāravatī within the Khmer empire; Pagan, under Anawrahta, absorbed the culture of Thaton; and later on, with the rise of the Thai kingdoms, these too took as part of their cultural legacy a substantial inheritance from the Mon. In Pagan, a major role is ascribed to Anawrahta in doing away with the corrupt old religious practices and purifying the religious establishment with a graft of Mon Theravāda, but this account belongs to a subsequent rewriting of history in the interest of an orthodox establishment; it is likely that, in identifying Buddhist legitimacy with the actions of a strong king regarded as the founder of Pagan's fortunes, it exaggerates the changes made by Anawrahta. Anyhow, the tradition is that he was converted to Theravāda after his conquest of Thaton in 1057, influenced by the Mon teacher Shin Arahan who then became the court teacher for himself and subsequent kings.⁴²

Links with Sri Lanka were certainly important. The Sinhalese king Vijayabāhu I (r. c. 1055–1110) was confronted with the task of restoring the Buddhist faith after the depredations of the South Indian Cōlas, and in 1071 at his request some Burmese monks were sent to help. This initiated a close relationship between Sri Lanka and mainland Southeast Asia. It worked both ways, the Theravāda communities in each helping those of the other, but for most of the time it was the established Mahavihāra order in Sri Lanka that was regarded in the east as the fountainhead of pure religion, and numerous missions were sent across so that Burmese and other monks could take the higher ordination (*upasampadā*) in the Mahavihāra lineage and transmit successive purifying streams of it to their homelands.

Anawrahta was said to have obtained a set of scriptures from Sri Lanka, and a replica of the Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha. The archaeology of his

⁴² Michael Aung-Thwin, *Pagan: the Origins of Modern Burma*, Honolulu, 1985; and 'Kingship, the sangha and society in Pagan', in K. Hall and J. Whitmore, eds, *Explorations in Early Southeast Asian History: the Origins of Southeast Asian Statecraft*, Ann Arbor, 1976.

reign, more trustworthy than such traditions, demonstrates his piety by a large number of votive seals, inscribed variously in Sanskrit and Pāli.⁴³ It has been debated how far they show the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism, but they are certainly not deep-dyed Theravāda; it is altogether likely that the real conquest of Theravāda in Pagan came later, under Kyanzittha, whereas Anawrahta's religious allegiance was more eclectic.

Kyanzittha (r. c. 1084–1112) was certainly an active sponsor of Buddhist foundations and activities (but not exclusively Buddhist as we have seen). He endowed the construction of a number of monuments, the most famous of which is the Ānanda or Nanda temple (*Anantapaññā*, 'Endless Wisdom'), completed probably by 1105 and said to be a miraculously inspired copy of the legendary Nandamūla grotto in the Himalayas. It is decorated with reliefs representing scenes based on the life of Lord Buddha, as well as stories of his earlier incarnations (*Jātaka*). Kyanzittha also completed the famous Shwezigon, and he sent a mission to India to carry out repairs to the Vajrāsana shrine at Bodhgaya, site of Lord Buddha's Enlightenment. Some scholars have found evidence of Burmese style in some details of the temple.⁴⁴ The inscription recording the restoration of the Vajrāsana ends in the well-known wish that the spiritual merit that the king acquired by this pious deed may enable all sentient beings to escape from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Kyanzittha gave special patronage to all forms of the Mon cultural legacy, but like many of his successors, fostered the relations with Sri Lanka. Copies of the Mahavihāra recension of the Scriptures were distributed to monasteries.

Burma was thus the chief power-house in the dissemination of Theravāda Buddhism, which eventually became the dominant orthodoxy in the mainland kingdoms. The status and prestige attached to the spiritual lineages established by the returning monks in their home countries assured a steadily increasing success for the Sihala (Sinhalese) orders and their offshoots. But we must not allow this Theravāda dominance to obscure the fact that a variety of sects flourished before and even during its ascendancy.

We need to recognize, for example, that Mahāyāna Buddhism long remained influential, and there is evidence of it at many places and times. Bodhisattvas such as Maitreya and Mañjuśrī were popular in Burma before the rise of Pagan. As early as 791 CE an inscription in Cambodia (at Siemreap) refers to an image of Lokeśvara (better known as Avalokiteśvara). Mahāyāna in Angkor has been seen as a continuing thread, whatever the orthodoxies of successive monarchs. Many inscriptions refer to characteristically Mahāyāna doctrines, such as those concerning the Void (*śūnya*), the 'mind-only' (*cittamātra*) and the three bodies of the Buddha. Perhaps most conspicuously, the reign of Jayavarman VII (1181–1218) is a high point of Mahāyāna aspiration.

Under this ruler, Avalokiteśvara was virtually the patron god of the state, in his various forms and associations, including Balaha and the

⁴³ Than Tun, *History of Buddhism in Burma, A.D. 1000–1300*, Rangoon 1978 (JBRS, 61.1.2, *separatum*), 4f.

⁴⁴ Luce, *Old Burma*, 1. 62.

personified Perfection of Wisdom, the goddess Prajñāpāramitā. Compassion is the pre-eminent quality of a Bodhisattva in Mahāyāna perception, and Avalokiteśvara was above all a vessel of grace, making possible a rebirth in heaven for the faithful; as an embodiment of this Bodhisattva, the king sought to present himself as a loving guardian and father figure, building hospitals and caring for the welfare of all his subjects on the Aśokan model.

This currency of Mahāyāna Buddhism, between the eighth and the thirteenth centuries, cannot be understood in isolation from developments in India. In the first place, Buddhism was on the retreat in the land of its birth, yielding to the brahmanical orthodoxy over much of the subcontinent but acquiring strongholds in certain kingdoms on the periphery, especially in Bengal where successive rulers gave lavish patronage to the Mahāyāna foundations, and it was Bengal that was the most conspicuous source of religious influence upon Southeast Asia during this period. Cœdès identified three strands in Bengali Buddhism: a tendency to Tantric practices, syncretism with Hinduism, and accommodation to indigenous traditions such as ancestor cults.⁴⁵

In the second place, from the eleventh and especially in the thirteenth century, Muslim invasions may have prompted the flight of many monks as refugees. Tāranātha, the Tibetan historian of Buddhism, refers to monks travelling to various lands in the east, including Cambodia and perhaps Pagan. Another link between Southeast Asia and Bengal is constituted by the career of Atīsa (982–1054), who is supposed to have spent twelve years in ‘Suvarṇabhūmi’, probably southern Burma, before going to Tibet to reform the Tantric tradition there.

Evidence of Tantric Buddhism is not wanting in Burma in the period when we would expect it. In official Burmese tradition, as embodied in the ‘Glass Palace Chronicle’ (*Hmannan Yazawin*), a corrupt Tantric type of religion represented by the ‘Ari’ sect was practised among the Burmese in the eleventh century, before the creation of a great empire by Anawrahta; with his conversion to Theravāda and the assistance of Shin Arahan to purify the religion, the degenerate practices were stamped out. However, it appears probable that this account owes more to the desire of the proponents of the later Sinhalese orthodoxy for historical legitimacy in association with the great king than to actual historical fact. Actually, the chief substantial evidence of Tantric-style practices belongs to the thirteenth century, two centuries after the reign of Anawrahta. Some temples have decorations such as images of Hayagriva that are associated with Tantra, and in particular some thirteenth-century inscriptions in the Minnanthu temple southeast of Pagan describe the Samantakutṭaka monks who took beef and fermented spirits, heterodox practices suggestive of Tantra.

Who then were the degenerate Aris referred to by the *Glass Palace Chronicle*, who were supposed to wear ‘strong beards and untrimmed hair’ and, according to one interpretation of the enigmatic relevant passage, to practise a form of *jus primae noctis* with maidens about to be married?⁴⁶ There has been much debate over the meaning of the term *ari*, some seeing

⁴⁵ États, 182.

⁴⁶ G. H. Luce cites the *Hmannan* in a review in the JBRs, 9 (1919) 54.

it as representing *āriya*, 'noble' and others as representing *āraññaka*, 'silvan', alluding to the forest monks who meditated in seclusion. The latter interpretation is more generally favoured now. In the thirteenth century, there were inscriptions indicating an *āraññavāsi* ('forest-dwelling') sect headed by one Mahākassapa, who was perhaps the leader of a powerful and well-endowed community that attracted the rivalry of the orthodox Sihala school. But in 1248 the head of the Sihalas returned from Sri Lanka and his school regained favour.

At this point it is necessary to look back at the importance of this link with Sri Lanka, for of course it was not Bengal which made the running; from the eleventh century, inspired by the Mon legacy, rulers of Pagan (and eventually of other kingdoms besides) were more and more interested in acquiring the spiritual status conferred by the prestige of a state-established Mahāvihāra order sanctified by the ordination of its teachers in Sri Lanka.

In the twelfth century, a particularly important episode was the mission of 1170 headed by the patriarch Uttarajiva, which returned in 1180; the monk Capaṭa, however, remained a further ten years and returned with five colleagues (enough to constitute a chapter capable of transmitting the sect's lineage) and re-established the Mahāvihāra order in Burma; this new line was known as the Sihala *saṅgha* (coming from Sri Lanka), while the older one that had been headed by Shin Arahan was the Mrammā *saṅgha*; by the thirteenth century there were four sects as a result of further splits. A Cambodian prince was, incidentally, supposed to have been one of Capaṭa's party. Sinhalese Buddhism speedily became the major recipient of state support in mainland Southeast Asia.

One influential offshoot of the Sinhalese Mahāvihāra was created in Martaban by the monk Anumati, who returned from Sri Lanka in 1331. The spread of his school thereafter owed much to the interest of the rulers of the new Thai kingdoms, especially Sukothai. Under Lü Thai (acc. 1347), the monks Sumana and Anomadassi went to Martaban and took the higher ordination. On returning Sumana was given his own *Vat* (wat); he performed various Buddhist miracles and later went to Chiengmai, which thus, from 1369, became a major centre for the Sihala school.

A further expedition to Sri Lanka in 1423 saw thirty-nine monks from Chiengmai, Lopburi and Burma going to take the higher ordination; on their return they promoted Sinhalese Buddhism in their own countries. In Chiengmai in particular they received considerable favour, but there is evidence of conflict in that state over the rules of monastic discipline. This suggests rivalry between the newer and older schools.

In Angkor, the wave of Sinhalese Theravāda bore fruit in the thirteenth century, when the ostentatious display of Mahāyāna by Jayavarman VII was followed first by a temporary revival of Hinduism and then by the increasing influence of the saffron-robed Theravādin monks observed late in the century by the Chinese visitor Chou Ta-kuan.⁴⁷ The oldest Pāli inscription (after that of 761) dates from 1309. The king Indravarman dedicated a Theravāda monastery and Buddha image; the *Khmer Chronicle*,

⁴⁷ *Mémoires sur les coutumes de Cambodge*, 14.

which marks a new court tradition wholly influenced by Theravāda, begins its record in the middle of the fourteenth century.

Some have linked the fall of the great Angkorean tradition with Theravāda itself, suggesting that the Sinhalese school, with its emphasis on individual salvation rather than public Bodhisattva worship and with its implied egalitarianism, eroded the ideological foundations of the state. However, there is perhaps no need to appeal to such factors to account for the end of Angkor; economic and social conditions offer less speculative possibilities of interpretation.

In the western part of mainland Southeast Asia, the destruction by the Mongols of Pagan at the end of the thirteenth century did not affect the continued influence of Theravāda Buddhism, for the various successor states continued the tradition of generous patronage of the *sāṅgha*. In particular, the fifteenth century witnessed a revival of the Mon state of Pegu under the pious ruler Dhammadetī. He was a former monk who set about reforming the order. According to a sixteenth-century text he codified the pantheon of thirty-six spirits, thus regulating and accommodating to the official Buddhist cosmology the local *nat*-type spirits, re-identifying them as beings destined for Buddhist salvation, just as had been done in Pagan. Most of these beings were in fact tree spirits at Buddhist sites. Further, the king sent a mission to Sri Lanka. The monks who constituted it took their higher ordination by the Kalyāṇī (Kälani) river, and on their return a religious establishment, called the Kalyāṇī Sīma, was built for them; the Kalyāṇī inscription of 1479 records their pilgrimage.

The declaration by the Kalyāṇī inscription that the Buddhist order was corrupt, lazy and impure, and needed immediate action, demonstrates once more the concern of rulers to regulate the affairs of the *sāṅgha*, and raises the complicated question of the relationship of the monks to state and society. In theory, they had cut themselves off from society and sought no political influence; they were wholly dedicated to the Buddha's teaching. But how far was this theory embodied in reality?

In the Burmese case, kingdoms such as Pegu and Pagan provide evidence on both sides, and scholars have placed the emphasis some on one side, some on the other. It has been argued that, although royal patronage tended to politicize some sects, there were many other patrons; the various claims to secular authority over the monks tended to cancel each other out. The monks anyway had freedom of conscience. The hold of Buddhist devotion over national culture worked to limit the power of a ruler to regulate the order; when kings tried to confiscate large parts of the *sāṅgha*'s possessions, popular opinion operated to thwart such attempts.⁴⁸

On the other hand, there is no doubt that monks were in various ways intimately involved in affairs of government and society. Rulers made decisions that governed their concerns. Thus, a revised edition of the Buddhist Pāli canon was written by order of Kyanzittha. In 1154 King Aloncañsu determined that large temple donations would require royal permission. Monks spent time performing ritual functions on behalf of

⁴⁸ Than Tun, *History of Buddhism*, 39.

the state, praying for the king and chanting *parittas* for the benefit of royal enterprises. Monks were caught up in the hurly-burly of politics; some were even involved in rebellions. Kings determined which sects or subsects received large endowments and which did not, exploiting all the tendencies to factionalism of a community whose members had plenty of time to sit and think.

Similarly, in Angkor, rulers exercised a preponderating influence upon the economic life of the *sangha* by regulating the system of endowments to religious foundations of all sorts; by giving 'royal' status to favoured donations, they effectively bestowed tax exemption privileges upon the donors. By giving or withholding support to Buddhist foundations, they had influence upon the fortunes of the faith. Sūryavarman I (r. c. 1002–50) should not be seen as exclusively a Buddhist ruler, but he gave much emphasis to Buddhism. Jayavarman VII, as already noticed above, gave considerable prominence to the Mahāyāna school.

Conspicuous are the Thai kingdoms which rose on the rubble of Angkor's power. They sent monks on missions to Martaban or Sri Lanka, and provided well-appointed temples for favoured teachers. Ramkamhaeng (r. c. 1280–97),⁴⁸ in particular, paid special respect to the *sangha*. If his inscription of 1292 is to be given credence, he had a stupa built at Śri Sajjanālaya (Savankhalok), which took six years to construct, and endowed a number of monasteries.⁴⁹ At one, Vat Aranyika, he celebrated *kaṭhina*: the bestowal of robes on monks after the rainy season retreat. Further, the state of Ayutthaya, which succeeded Sukothai as the main Thai power in the fourteenth century, was no less pious. King Paramarāja, for example, built a monastery, the Laṅkārāma, for the benefit of the famous monk Dhammadikti, a Pāli scholar.

Further east, in Champa, the most notable episode of state support for Buddhism is constituted by the Chan Ch'eng kingdom (to use its Chinese name), established at Indrapura in Quang Nam by Indravarman, who made a state shrine to Avalokiteśvara called Lakṣmīndralokeśvara. There was a striking florescence of Buddhist art under this ruler and some of his successors.⁵⁰

In Vietnam, where Buddhism received strong and consistent support—even though this had to be shared with other traditions—the Chinese way of life determined that the influence of the state upon religious organization should be highly regulated by the ruler. Patriarchs of favoured sects were regularly given important advisory positions in the palace, and this inevitably politicized their following.

It is here that we can most appropriately review the influence of Chinese Buddhism upon Vietnam, for the organization is most marked in Chinese tradition.⁵¹ The most influential Chinese sect was the Ch'an (in India,

⁴⁸ Cœdès, *États*, 360, 377; A. B. Griswold and Prasert na Nagara, 'The inscription of King Rāma Gañhen of Sukhodaya (1292 A.D.)', Epigraphical and Historical Studies No. 9', JSS, 69 (1971).

⁵⁰ I. W. Mabbett, 'Buddhism in Champa', in Marr and Milner, 298–303.

⁵¹ On Buddhism in Vietnam, see Tran Van Giap, 'Le Bouddhisme en Annam'; K. W. Taylor, 'Authority and legitimacy in eleventh century Vietnam', in Marr and Milner, 139–76; K. W. Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, Berkeley, 1983; Thich Thien-An, *Buddhism and Zen in Vietnam in relation to the development of Buddhism in Asia*, Los Angeles, Rutland, Vermont, Tokyo, 1975.

Dhyāna, 'meditation'; in Japan, Zen; in Vietnam, Thien). According to Chinese tradition, the first Ch'an patriarch in China was the monk Bodhidharma, about whom legends grew up, and although such a person existed it is difficult to know the true facts about him. He is supposed to have practised 'wall meditation' (sitting meditating in front of a blank wall) for nine years, and to have visited Shao Lin, the monastery which became renowned as the home of various Ch'an practices and martial arts. The line of teachers which he originated was responsible for the dissemination of Ch'an to Vietnam.

Vietnamese tradition codifies and categorizes religious history, identifying a number of specific schools each with its stylized record listing patriarchs and generations of teachers. It is likely that this traditional account makes the pattern seem more organized and institutionalized than it was; there were temples dotted about the settled lands, each largely managing its own affairs under the eye of patrons and benefactors. However, there were certainly lines of teachers acknowledging allegiance to particular schools of Buddhism that traced their origins to a Chinese legitimacy.

The first was the Vinitaruci school (Ty-Ni-Du-Luu-Chi), named after its founder who was supposed to have been an Indian brahmin who went to China in the sixth century and studied under Seng-tsan, third patriarch in the Ch'an school in China. Going to Tonkin, he was installed in the Phap-Van temple, Ha-dong Province. The line of transmission that led from him, proceeding by the Ch'an process of 'mind-seal' (by which the master imprints his spiritual insights upon the disciple), is said to have passed through nineteen generations. Some patriarchs in the school (including, for example, Phap Thuan in the tenth century) were royal counsellors, some were renowned for spiritual attainments, some gained a reputation for scholarship.

The second major Ch'an-derived Vietnamese sect was the Vo Ngon Thong school, which was founded during the T'ang dynasty but found considerable favour from subsequent independent Vietnamese rulers; for example its fourth patriarch Khuong Viet taught at the palace and advised Le Dai-Hanh (980–1005), and the later king Ly Thai Tong was himself a patriarch of the school, representing the symbiosis of dynasty and *saṅgha*, which was conspicuous under the Ly, a dynasty which was brought to power largely through the work of Buddhist monks.

The third major Buddhist sect identified by Vietnamese tradition was that of Thao Dong, founded by a Chinese monk, Ts'ao-t'ang, in Champa, who was caught up in a war and taken to the Vietnamese court as a captive; there however he was given an important ministerial position as *quoc-su*, a largely secular, partly religious, supervisory post. His teaching was based on the *Amitābhāsūtra*, stressing the extinction of the individual self; a famous poem he wrote compares the phenomenal world to a flower in the sky—it is unreal, illusory. The line of patriarchs which directed the fortunes of the school he founded included a number of members of the royal family, notably the emperors Ly Anh Tong and Ly Cao Tong in the twelfth century.

As such examples remind us, the Buddhist communities, like the Brahmanical foundations, could not work in a vacuum; they depended

upon, and to a great extent were moulded by, the aspirations of the society in which they lived. Inscriptions are in Southeast Asia the chief sources for our knowledge of their organization, and inscriptions, left by pious rulers and laymen, tell us what were the motives of those who were willing to bear the burden of supporting a large and (at first glance) economically unproductive class.

These motives were partly material, and indeed the function of temples and monasteries in society needs to be seen against the background of that society's economic and political organization. But we need also to take account of the spiritual motives, which were real enough. Consider Pagan, a striking embodiment of religious zeal, where three or four thousand temples were built in an area of sixty-five square kilometres. The inscriptions which record the endowment of many of these foundations usually indicate why the donations were made. In most cases the donors hope to achieve *nirvāṇa* (the extinction of all *karma* and release from rebirth), *sambodhi* (the perfect enlightenment which is a condition of this release), or Buddha-hood. Sometimes they express the ambition to have a future life at the time of Maitreya, the next Buddha; thereby, profiting from his teaching, they can hope to attain enlightenment. Women donors sometimes profess the desire to become males in a later life (thus acquiring better means to progress towards salvation), or even to become Buddhas. Some rulers saw themselves as Bodhisattvas; such was Lu Thai in Sukothai, and it was said when he entered religion and embarked upon his spiritual career, the earth trembled.⁵²

Notable is the way in which the doctrine of merit is interpreted. Strictly speaking, the good *karma* of an act of merit such as endowing a religious foundation could accrue (in Theravāda at least) only to the agent himself, but loopholes were found in Theravāda traditions just as in Mahāyāna to make possible the transfer of merit to others; donors of property frequently willed the merit of their actions to the benefit of others (of a widow for her husband, or of a temple endowment for the poor). In Angkor, Jayavarman VII could seek to benefit his mother by virtue of the fact that, as a partial cause of his existence, she was partly responsible for his actions and thereby earned a share in his merit.

But it is clear enough that there could be rewards in life on earth for those who endowed temples and monasteries. They did not altogether relinquish any economic interest in the property they made over; the beneficiaries were like lease-holders in some respects, and there are cases in Pagan of disputes between temple and donor over the nature of the interest retained by the latter. An officially recognized endowment would be declared free of all claims by tax collectors and other royal officers, as in Angkor, even though the family of the donor might be continuing to exploit the donated land to some extent, and its members might be abbots or senior monks. Further, property made over to religion was less liable to future depredations of governments, bandits, or relatives, and would earn social status in the measure of its abundance. Donors who wished to maximize the merit they would gain by this spiritual banking system, as it

⁵² Coedès, *Recueil*, I. 111–16 (Inscription palie du bois des manguiers) at 115.

is sometimes called, would seek to emphasize their donations' permanence by solemn imprecations against any who in the future should violate the terms of the endowment. One such imprecation, in Pagan, says: 'Whoever injures these pagoda slaves, may the axe burst his breast! May he fall off a ladder!'⁵³

As recipients of so much pious generosity, the religious foundations of places like Pagan or Angkor became more and more prosperous, dotting the landscape everywhere and acquiring a major role in the economic system. Frequently they acquired fresh property by new donations; rarely did they lose property.

The monks, priests and nuns who were supported in them often enjoyed many of the amenities of a comfortable life, with bonded temple servants to look after all their wants. There has been some discussion of the status of such servants, who for many purposes were effectively slaves, and are usually named as such in translations of the sources which refer to them; but we need to take account of the fact that temple 'slavery' could, for some at least, be something of an honour. Not untypical is the case of a queen in Pagan making over three sons as slaves to a monastery, subsequently to be redeemed by a gift of property. Such transactions involve a purely ritual slavery. But plenty of those who toiled on temple lands or looked after the needs of the incumbents were menials descended, quite often, from captives seized from hill tribes.⁵⁴

The riches of the monasteries eventually made them rivals of the royal power of the state. A convincing argument advanced by Michael Aung-Thwin about the role of the wealth of the Buddhist order in the decline of Pagan may apply to other states as well: while land was plentiful, there was room for both state and *saṅgha* to extend their spheres of control and authority, but as time went on available resources became scarcer, and eventually the *saṅgha* became a rival to the state, disposing of abundant land and labour which otherwise should have been available to furnish the economic resources of government. This stage came in the thirteenth century, and prompted rulers to look more and more critically at the possessions of the monasteries, some seeking to 'purify' the Buddhist order—that is, to confiscate its surplus wealth. On one calculation, the *saṅgha* in Pagan came eventually to control 63 per cent of productive land. The attempts at confiscation were not always successful, and the conflict over resources tended to heighten factionalism, for the interest of the monasteries was bound up with that of the great landed families which endowed them, had members in the monkhood, and lived in symbiosis with the monastic estates. Hence centrifugal forces increased and civil war became more likely.⁵⁵ It is entirely possible that the same sort of process could be charted for Angkor.

⁵³ Luce, *Old Burma*, I. 109.

⁵⁴ On slavery in Cambodia, see C. Jacques, 'A propos de l'esclavage dans l'ancien Cambodge', in *XXXIXe Congrès International des Orientalistes*, Paris, 1973. *Proceedings. Asie du Sud-est continentale*; Y. Bongert, 'Note sur l'esclavage en droit khmer ancien', in *Études d'Histoire du Droit Privé Offertes à Pierre Petot*, Paris, 1959; A. K. Chakravarti, 'Sources of slavery in ancient Cambodia', in D. C. Sircar, ed., *Social Life in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1971.

⁵⁵ Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*; and Aung-Thwin, 'Kingship, the sangha and society in Pagan', in Hall and Whitmore, *Explorations*.

In Vietnam, too, there was potential friction between state authority and the independence of religious orders. Chinese tradition supplied an ideology that legitimized state authority over all phases of life and justified it in regulating the affairs of the Buddhist monks to a greater degree than was generally accepted elsewhere. This ideology was Confucianism.

Of course it is questionable how far Confucianism is a religion, but it deserves to be considered alongside the other systems since, like them, it provided a coherent ideology that gave men a view of their place in the universe, prescribed a code of morality and ethics, and furnished a body of rituals that gave expression to the sense of community identity.

Confucianism in independent Vietnam was taken over from China as a form of state orthodoxy, providing a didactic literature that could serve to shape national culture to a considerable extent. Under the Ly, Confucian scholars were required to write commentaries on Confucian texts. Statues of the Duke of Chou and Confucius were set up as icons in a national shrine. Confucianism was a part of the syllabus for state examinations alongside the other religions, but it really came into its own in the revival of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with the sternly political reassertion of national identity: state cults were promoted and Confucianism benefited from the rise of state power. Rulers such as Le Thanh Ton (r. 1460–97) actively promoted Confucianism.⁵⁶

RELIGIONS OF INDIAN ORIGIN IN THE MARITIME REALM

The religious developments in the island world of Southeast Asia are in many respects similar to those in the mainland, but there are important differences. The island world can be divided into two zones separated by a line running from north to south, west of the Philippines, between the islands Kalimantan and Sulawesi and east of Sumbawa. Very little is known of the early history and religion of the eastern zone before the sixteenth century; our sources are limited to the western zone, or rather to important parts of this zone, in particular large parts of Sumatra, the Malay peninsula, central and eastern Java, Bali and small parts of Kalimantan. These are the very areas where Indian influence made itself felt from the early centuries of the Christian era and where Indian religions were introduced, especially in circles associated with the royal courts.

The geography of maritime Southeast Asia shows important differences from that of the mainland, differences which carry historical implications. Owing to the presence of mountain ranges running mainly north to south, the mainland is split into at least four sub-zones, each with its own language and culture; maritime Southeast Asia, in contrast, presents a much more consistent pattern. Both in language and in culture the islands have much in common. Apparently, the straits and seas separating the islands and the Malay peninsula, easily navigable in general, were not

⁵⁶ K. W. Taylor, 'Authority and legitimacy in eleventh century Vietnam', in Marr and Milner, 153.

barriers like the mountain ranges of the mainland: they linked, rather than separated, the different parts of the region.

When, in the early centuries of the Christian era, Indian influence began to make itself felt, the population of many areas already enjoyed a high level of civilization, enabling their élites to adopt and adapt those elements of Indian civilization that they regarded as valuable or useful. These naturally included religion: in particular Brahmanic Hinduism, including especially Śaivism, and, apparently at a later stage, Mahāyāna Buddhism. Vaiṣṇavism seems to have had a much more limited appeal, whereas Jainism and Theravāda Buddhism left no traces in maritime Southeast Asia. As to Brahmanic Hinduism it should be stated at the very outset that the use of the term 'Hinduism' may be misleading because one of its most important features, the caste system, existed only in theory.⁵⁷ As, however, the brahmins and Brahmanic culture (including, for example, the use of Sanskrit, especially at an early stage before the seventh century) formed the chief element of the forms of Hinduism in Southeast Asia, the term 'Brahmanism' is preferable. As it preceded Śaivism and Buddhism, it is proper to discuss it first.

Brahmanism

Old Javanese sources from the eleventh century on regularly mention three religious communities (*tripakṣa*): the Śaivas (worshippers of Śiva as the supreme deity, also called Māheśvaras), the Buddhists (also called Saugatas) and the Rēsis (also called Mahābrāhmaṇas), each under the supervision of a central government official, called *dharmaḍhikāra* for the first two communities and *mantri er-haji* for the third.⁵⁸ The latter, though few in numbers, were by no means unimportant. They included not only different kinds of ascetics but also court brahmins, who were in charge of royal ceremonies, as well as of education.

The oldest inscriptions of the area, those of king Mūlavarman of Kutai in east Kalimantan (end of the fourth century CE) and of Pūrṇavarman of Tārumā (fifth century) are probably non-sectarian. Those of Mūlavarman describe precious gifts to brahmins, including thousands of cattle and large amounts of gold. The terms used for different kinds of gifts are known from the Indian epics and *Purāṇas*, but seem to reflect potlatch ceremonies. Precious gifts to brahmins are also mentioned in Pūrṇavarman's inscriptions, which are, however, of special interest for references to the worship of the footprints of the king and of his elephant. At several sites in west Java we may witness the king's footprints, more than life-size, by the side of his inscriptions, sometimes with curious symbols (such as a spider in front of each of the footprints carved into a large inscribed rock at Ci-aruteun,

⁵⁷ This is, however, a complicated issue, for the system of four classes (*caturwarna*) is occasionally mentioned in Old Javanese texts and inscriptions. There are, however, strong indications that this was a purely theoretical division of society mentioned mainly in stereotyped contexts, without any of the implications of the Indian caste system. See, for example, J. G. de Casparis, 'Pour une Histoire Sociale de l'Ancienne Java, Principalement aux Xème s.', *Archipel*, 21 (1981).

⁵⁸ See *Nāgarakertāgama* (abbreviated *Nāg.* in the sequel), 81–1–4; Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century* IV, 258 and 479–93. Pigeaud uses the term 'the three denominations'.

west of present Bogor). Although the worship of footprints, especially those of Viṣṇu and, much more stylized, of Lord Buddha, is well attested in India and Sri Lanka, there are no examples of the worship of human, let alone elephant, footprints there. In Indonesia, on the other hand, there is good evidence for the worship of footprints of ancestors in some areas, especially on the island of Nias near the west coast of Sumatra. It is therefore likely that in this case, as in the 'potlatch' ceremonies of east Kalimantan, a traditional Austronesian practice was continued in the guise of Sanskrit terms.⁵⁹

Two typically Hindu ceremonies occupied an important place in Indonesian courts: royal consecration (*abhiṣeka*) and funerary rites (*śrāddha*). The term *abhiṣeka* often occurs in Old Javanese sources. Although the oldest epigraphic reference to royal consecration dates back to 1019, the year of Airlangga's *abhiṣeka*, it is likely that the ceremony was performed much earlier, perhaps even at the time of king Pūrṇavarman of Tārumā (fifth century), who dated his Tugu inscription in his twenty-second regnal year. As regnal years are always counted from the year of consecration, this is an implicit indication of the performance of such a ceremony. The use of elaborate Sanskrit names preceded by *śri*, 'His Majesty', in addition to Old Javanese names and titles in ninth- and tenth-century inscriptions, confirms the performance of consecration ceremonies, since the conferment of such names, usually ending in *uttuṅgadeva*, 'Exalted Majesty' (aptly called *abhiṣekanāma*), has always been an essential part of the ceremony. The 'Calcutta' inscription of King Airlangga (dated 1041) contains the interesting passage *kṛtasamkāra pratiṣṭha ring singhāsana*, 'had the consecration ceremony carried out, established on the Lion Throne'. A pilgrimage to Īśānabajra, the shrine dedicated to the memory of King Siñdok, Airlangga's great-great-grandfather, and the erection of a rice-pestle (*halu*), symbolizing the king's potency to promote the fertility of the ricefields, completed the ceremony, which was carried out by Buddhist, Śaiva and Brahmanic priests (*mpungku sogata maheśwara mahābrāhmaṇa*, in that order). These details clearly show how much of the ceremony differed from its description in Indian texts.

The second important ceremony is another of the 'rites de passage': the funerary rites, or rather those performed to ensure the liberation of the soul of the deceased. In India such rites are of great importance to all Hindus. According to the texts they involve elaborate ceremonies, which were to take place at regular intervals after death and were performed by six generations in both ascending and descending lines; the presence of a son of the deceased was essential.

In ancient Java, the elaborate description of *śrāddha* in the *Nāgarakertāgama* concerns the purification and liberation of the soul of the 'Rājapatni' (Spouse of the King), the youngest of the four daughters of King Kērtanagara (r. 1268–92), who were also the four queens of King Kērtarājasa (r. 1293–1309). She was also grandmother of King Hayam Wuruk (r. 1350–89) and

⁵⁹ J. Ph. Vogel, 'The Yüpa inscriptions of king Mūlavarman from Kutei (East Borneo)', BKI, 74 (1918); and 'De Giften van Mūlavarman', ibid., 76 (1920); J. G. de Casparis, 'The Oldest Inscriptions of Indonesia' in C. M. S. Hellwig, and C. D. Grijns, *A Man of Indonesian Letters*, Dordrecht, 1986.

died in the year of her grandson's accession. The great *śrāddha*, performed in 1362, twelve years after her death (which was the usual period in ancient Indonesia), is described in no fewer than seven cantos of the text. This account contains many interesting features, which tend to show that the ceremony differed completely from its description in Sanskrit texts and from contemporary practice in Gaya (Bihar). The participants included not only members of the royal family but also high officials, as well as simple servants with their wives, priests and monks of different denominations, dancers, musicians, story-tellers and others. These details stand in clear contrast to the Indian *śrāddha*, confined to the close relatives of the deceased.⁶⁰

The ceremony itself involved various Tantric rites carried out by both Buddhist monks and by a *purohita*, 'chief court brahmin', all versed in the three Tantras (*Nāg.* 64–3). The centre of veneration was a lion-throne in the middle of a square: the place where the soul of the Rājapatnī was to descend after the completion of the correct rites. If our understanding of the passage is correct, an effigy of the Rājapatnī, made of flowers (*sang hyang puṣpaśārīra*, *Nāg.* 67–2) had been placed on the throne; subsequently the soul (*swah*) of the Rājapatnī was made to enter the 'flower body'. After seven days of ceremonies (which included ritual meals comparable with the *slamētan* of modern times) the queen was 'deified' as Prajñāpāramitā, 'Supreme Wisdom', conceived of as the mother of all Buddhas in Tantric thought.⁶¹ In addition to food and drink, money and clothes were distributed, which gave the whole ceremony a 'potlatch' aspect in addition to its animistic background. The analysis of the ceremony is therefore quite complicated. Its formal basis was the *śrāddha*, on to which not only Buddhist, but also ancient Austronesian beliefs were grafted. One could, however, just as well describe it as an essentially Austronesian rite embellished by learned elements from both Sanskrit ritual literature and Buddhist thought.

Such a *śrāddha*, performed on the twelfth anniversary of the death of a king or queen, is also mentioned in one of the last known Old Javanese inscriptions. It deals with a sacred domain called Trailokyapūri and is dated 1486.⁶² The text includes an order by King Girīndrawardhana dyah Raṇawijaya addressed to a court brahmin, Brahmarāja of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*, presumably an Indian (such *gotra* names tracing back a brahmin's family to a legendary Rishi are usual in India, as we have seen, but do not seem to occur elsewhere in Indonesia), to perform a *śrāddha* for the benefit of the soul of a king deceased at Indranibhawana. Another inscription mentions the worship of the eminent sage Bhāradvāja and of Lord (*bhaṭṭāra*) Rāma. As to the above-mentioned brahmin, he is said to have been well-versed in the Four Vedas (*caturvedapārāga*), a common epithet in India but

⁶⁰ Among the numerous publications on ancient Indian royal consecration are P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, III. 72ff.; J. C. Heesterman, *The ancient Indian royal consecration*, The Hague, 1957; J. Gonda, *Ancient Indian kingship from the religious point of view*, Leiden, 1966, 79–83.

⁶¹ For the *śrāddha* as performed in ancient Java see Pigeaud, *Java*, IV. 171f. Pigeaud rightly compares modern Javanese *nādran*, 'visiting ancestral tombs in the month of Šaban'.

⁶² See the translation of this inscription in Md. Yamin, *Tatangara Madjapahit*, Jakarta, 1962.

unusual in Java, where even *caturveda* occurs only in Old Javanese texts which are closely based on Indian prototypes. Rāma is well-known in Indonesia, but there are no other examples of a foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*) devoted to Rāma as a deity. In South India, on the other hand, such foundations are not rare. Since we know of a revival of Hinduism in its classical form during the time of the South Indian kingdom of Vijayanagara (1336–1565), it is likely that there was a direct relation between the developments in South India and eastern Java at a time when both were confronted with the expansion of Islam.⁶³

It should however be emphasized that the influence of Brahmanism is not confined to the earliest or last periods, nor to the performance of certain rituals. In fact, an important feature of the Indian way of life, at least for the higher classes, was the possibility to opt out of ordinary society to choose a life of contemplation—either as a hermit in the forest or as a member of some religious community. Such *āśramas* often became centres of education, since those who had chosen a spiritual vocation were considered to have acquired the wisdom which could attract people from elsewhere.

In some cases there developed a true alternative society. This appears to have happened at the Dieng plateau (*dihyang* in the inscriptions) in central Java. Situated at about 2000 metres above sea level on volcanic soil with many solfataras, it breathes an atmosphere of awe in which supernatural forces manifest themselves to mankind. More prosaically, this same atmosphere accounts for the serious weathering of buildings, statues and stone inscriptions. On the basis of important research by Krom, Poerbatjaraka and others, it may be concluded that an archaic form of Brahmanic Hinduism flourished on and around the plateau from early times to at least the eleventh century. There was a community of ascetics and monks with such titles as *pitāmaha*, literally 'grandfather', *guru hyang*, literally 'teacher of the gods' but apparently corresponding to the later term *dewaguru*, 'superior of a religious community'. Some other, more puzzling, titles such as *talahantan* also seem to denote priestly functions.⁶⁴

The most surprising feature of religion as practised there is the worship of a god called Haricandana. This name seems unknown in India as that of a god, but the word itself occurs in the meaning of 'yellow sandalwood'. As Haricandana is often invoked at the beginning of the imprecation formulas in Old Javanese inscriptions, usually in conjunction with the sage Agastya, it has been suggested that Haricandana was an epithet of Agastya indicating an image of the great Rishi made of yellow sandalwood (an Agastya statue made of black sandalwood is actually mentioned in the Dinoyo inscription of 760) but this is less likely as we have evidence of a Haricandana cult.⁶⁵ Thus a three-yearly and a, probably less elaborate,

⁶³ J. G. de Casparis, *India and Maritime Southeast Asia: a lasting relationship*, Kuala Lumpur, 1983.

⁶⁴ N. J. Krom, 'Over het Čiwaïsme van Midden-Java', *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde*, 58, serie B, no. 8 (1929).

⁶⁵ F. D. K. Bosch, 'De Sanskrit inscriptie op den steen van Dinaja (682 çaka)', *TBG*, 57 (1916); 'Het Lingga-Heiligdom van Dinaja', *ibid.*, 64 (1924); J. G. de Casparis, 'Nogmaals de Sanskrit-inscriptie op den steen van Dinojo', *ibid.*, 81 (1941).

yearly festival of Haricandana, for which villages had to supply rice and fruits, are mentioned in an inscription of 878. This cult was combined with that of Brahmā, for whom a 'pillar of rice' (*annalinga*) had to be prepared.⁶⁶ In this connection we also find the archaic Sanskrit term *makha* denoting a sacrifice. A reference to the worship of Haricandana is even found as late as the end of the fifteenth century in the *Tantu Panggeleran*, a late Old Javanese text in which brahmins are said to pay homage to this god. Here, as in other cases (such as those concerning Brahmā and Bhaṭṭāra Guru), we may have examples of ancient Austronesian deities under Indian names, but this remains no more than a plausible hypothesis as long as there is no clue as to the identity of such Austronesian deities.⁶⁷

The imprecation formulas, regularly found at the end of Old Javanese charters, are interesting examples of the manner in which Hinduism was blended with ancient Austronesian beliefs. Sometimes a considerable number of deities are invoked, including the great gods of the Hindu pantheon: Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahādeva (or Maheśvara or Śiva, but always in that order), followed by sun and moon, the eight 'elements': earth, water, fire, wind, the sacrificer, ether, time (*kāla*) and death (*mṛtyu*). Subsequently we get a whole list of lower deities, not only the usual kinds (*gaṇa*, *bhūta*, *preta* etc.) but also day and night, as well as the two (later three) twilights, the four guardians of the sky, the mysterious *putradewatā* and *rāmadewatā* (may we compare the fifteenth-century reference to Lord Rāma?). The six *Vināyakas*, forms of Ganeśa or deities associated with Ganeśa,⁶⁸ also figure in these lists, which also includes the eight points of the compass plus below and above (*i sor i ruhur*). Even the goddess Durgā (always as *durggādewī*) occurs among these lower powers. As has been demonstrated by Hariani Santiko, these imprecation formulas mark the beginning of a development leading to the conception of Durgā as a horrific man-eating demon abiding in cemeteries.⁶⁹

The most interesting item in these imprecations is the invocation addressed to the blessed deities (*devatā prasiddha*) who 'protect the royal residence of the kings in the land of Mataram' (*mangrakṣa kaḍatwan śri mahārāja ing bhūmi matarām*). This example is taken from the Sugihmanek inscription of King Dakṣa, dated 915—a time when the *kératon* was still in central Java. As to these 'blessed deities' there can be no doubt that the royal ancestors, the deified kings of Mataram, are meant, for the corresponding passage in the Mantyasih inscription of 907⁷⁰ lists the names and

⁶⁶ Conical shapes of boiled rice are still commonly used in Javanese *slamētan* ceremonies; cf. Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, London, 1960, 39f.; Pigeaud, *Java*, III. 118 and IV. 178.

⁶⁷ Haricandana is well known in India as the name of one of the trees in heaven; the authors have, however, not come across any example of this term indicating a divinity in Indian texts.

⁶⁸ For Śaḍvināyaka and other terms found in Old Javanese imprecations see Edi Sedyawati, 'Pengarcaan Ganeśa masa Kediri dan Siñhasāri', Ph.D. thesis, Universitas Indonesia, 1985. An English edition of this important work is in preparation at the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde, Leiden, Netherlands.

⁶⁹ Hariani Santiko, 'Kedudukan bhaṭṭārī Durgā di Jawa pada abad X–XV Masehi', Ph.D. thesis, Universitas Indonesia, 1987, 146ff.: an equally important work of which no English edition is as yet available.

⁷⁰ W. F. Stutterheim, 'Een belangrijke inscriptie uit de Kedoe', *TBG*, 58 (1927), in particular 210.

titles of those preceding kings. As to the Sugihmanek inscription,⁷¹ this text adds the puzzling words *umasuk i śarīra ning wang kabeh*, 'entering into the bodies of all people', just after the mention of the 'blessed deities'. Apparently the spirit of those former rulers was thought to pervade the minds of the people and lead them to protect the foundation. Protection was the supreme duty of kings, who were supposed to carry on their beneficial activity after their life on earth by pervading, as it were, the intentions of their subjects. The above passage also illustrates the idea of the deification of kings, on which more details will be given below.

Buddhist powers and concepts never figure in these imprecations; and Śaivism is not prominent. There is mention of Mahādeva or Maheśvara (two names of Siva) and of Durgā (Durgādevī, at a lower level than would have been expected of Śiva's *sakti*), as well as of Nandiśvara and Mahākāla (two subordinate forms of Śiva acting as doorkeepers, *dwārapāla*). There is also an important reference to the saints of the Pāśupatas and related Śaivite sects in the term *pañcakuśika*, sometimes specified as Kuśika, Garga, Maitri, Kuruṣya and Patañjali.⁷²

Some typically Austronesian deities or supernatural powers are a crocodile with the name of Si Pamunguan and another aquatic monster called Taṇḍang Luah, perhaps a river spirit for *luah* = river. The latter's name recalls that of Tandrun Luah, invoked at the beginning of the imprecations in the Śrivijaya inscriptions of Kota Kapur, Karang Brahi, Tēlaga Batu and Palang Pasēmah.⁷³ This Tandrun Luah probably was a special patron deity of Śrivijaya, perhaps associated with the river Musi. His unexpected reappearance in central Java more than two centuries later may be an example of inter-island borrowing of potent deities. The example occurs in the above-mentioned inscription of 907.⁷⁴ On account of its particular importance many more deities are mentioned than usual. There is a crocodile by the name of Manalu, and there are different snakes (*ulāsarpa*) and different fires (*rāla* and *apuy*). All these terms and names are preceded by *sang hyang*, always indicating deities, animals and objects considered sacred. There are a sacred axe (*sang hyang wadung*), a sacred heart (*sang hyang tēas*), presumably the centre of the foundation, and a sacred rice block (*sang hyang kulumpang*).

Some rivers were sacred, such as the Bengawan Solo (*sang hyang bhagawān*), as were some mountains. Thus, the fifteenth-century *Tantu Panggeleran* records the myth that the Mahāmeru or Sumeru, abode of the gods, was carried to Java and put down in the east of the island: the present Gunung Sēmeru. The worship of a still active volcano in its neighbourhood, the Bromo, is attested in the tenth century, where it is considered the abode of god Brahmā, who became identified with fire in ancient Java. A much smaller mountain, the Pēnanggungan, southwest of

⁷¹ See Brandes and Krom, OJO, 30, B-27/28.

⁷² First mentioned in the Mathurā inscription of Candra Gupta II (380 CE), published by D. R. Bhandarkar, *Epigraphia Indica* 21 (1921) 8f.; D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, 2nd edn, Calcutta, 1965, I, 277–9; R. C. Agrawala, *Journal of the Historical Society of Baroda* 20 (1970) 355f.

⁷³ G. Coedès, 'Les inscriptions malaises de Črivijaya', BEFEO, 30 (1930); for this term see line 12 on p. 40 and cf. p. 55.

⁷⁴ See Brandes and Krom, OJO, 30 line B-28/29.

Surabaya, was worshipped on account of its perfect shape: a central peak surrounded by four lower peaks approximately at the four points of the compass, the supposed shape of the mountain of the gods. Numerous smaller temples, mainly of the fifteenth century, have been discovered on its slopes.⁷⁵

Most of these cults, though probably Austronesian, are in harmony with Brahmanic Hinduism. Worship of mountains as abodes of mighty gods is reflected in mythology: for instance, the Himalaya is the father of Pārvatī, Śiva's spouse. The supreme god himself is often described as 'Lord of the Mountain' (Girindra or synonyms), and royal dynasties often pay homage to one particular mountain, such as the Rajput dynasties worshipping Mount Abu and the Eastern Gāṅgas of Orissa paying homage to Mount Gokarna, 'Cow's Ear'. As to the worship of rivers, not only the names of the Gaṅga (Ganges) and Yamunā (and the place of their confluence at Prayāga near Allahabad), but also those of the Kāvērī (the 'Southern Gaṅgā'), the Sarasvatī, Gomati (Gumti) and others come to mind. Fire was worshipped in the form of the three sacrificial fires of the brahmins, of the god Agni etc., and snakes were worshipped as *nāgas*. Ancient Indian and Indonesian cults are intertwined to such a degree that it is often impossible to decide whether certain elements of religion in maritime Southeast Asia are Austronesian under an Indian name or Indian influenced by Austronesian tradition.

The development of the great religions, especially Śaivism and, to a lesser extent, Vaiṣṇavism and Buddhism, has to be considered against the background of the cults and ceremonies, as well as the ideas and beliefs, described in this section.

Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism

The worship of Śiva, as well as the gods and divine symbols associated with Śiva, was the prevalent form of Hindu religion in Java before the sixteenth century. Sects worshipping Viṣṇu as the supreme deity are also mentioned but were less important. (Mahāyāna) Buddhism, on the other hand, strongly prevailed in Sumatra, the Malay peninsula and west Kalimantan. In Java it flourished mainly during the Śailendra period (c.750–850) and again, but by the side of Saivism, during the Singhasari-Majapahit period (c.1250–1450).

In the areas where Śaivism prevailed it was mainly centred on the royal courts from where, however, it radiated to secondary centres and to the countryside. Its influence on the agricultural communities was probably confined to those elements of Śaivism that were consistent with popular beliefs. Despite such limitations, the importance of Śaivism is considerable mainly because it flourished in those parts of maritime Southeast Asia that left most of the great monuments and pre-Muslim literature.

As to literature, not only the didactic texts mentioned at the beginning of this chapter but most of the Old Javanese literature is inspired or

⁷⁵ V. R. van Romondt, *Peninggalan-peninggalan Purbakala di Gunung Penanggungan*, Dinas Purbakala Republik Indonesia, Jakarta, 1951.

influenced by Śaivism. As to archaeology, numerous Śiva temples have been preserved and restored in central and eastern Java and in Bali. Statues of Śiva and associated deities, especially Durgā, Gaṇeśa and the so-called Guru, abound. Most Śiva images represent the god in his majestic Mahādeva form: four-armed with ascetic hairdress (*jaṭāmakuṭa*), third eye, characteristic emblems (trident, rosary, sacred thread in the form of a snake, etc.), royal attire and ornaments. Less frequently the god is represented in his demonic form of Kāla or Bhairava: nude, except for garlands of skulls and other horrific attributes, or else as a 'doorkeeper' (*dvārapāla*): guardian of the entrance to a temple (Nandīśvara, the god together with his mount, the bull, and Mahākāla, as the destructor of the world). In addition to these iconic forms, Śiva was also worshipped in the shape of his main symbol: the linga, originally a phallus but in a stylized representation as a column with a square base, a hexagonal middle part and roundish top, but with many variations. Other forms of Śiva, which were popular in South India, such as the dancing Naṭarāja and composite sculptures such as Somāskanda (Śiva together with his spouse Umā and Skanda, his little son, in between) are not attested in Java.

The typical Śiva temple has either a linga or a standing Śiva statue in its cella, to which the eastern entrance gives access through a small vestibule. On either side of the entrance there is a shallow niche for the above-mentioned guardian statues. Also in the three other main walls of the temple there are niches or, in the larger temples, secondary cellas. On the southern side is a standing figure of a bearded and corpulent deity, two-armed and soberly dressed, carrying a fly-whisk (*cāmara*) and a water bottle (*kamandalu*). At the corresponding place in the western wall there is a four-armed elephant-headed Gaṇeśa and, on the north, a Durgā, another form of Śiva's spouse, as *mahiṣamardini*, 'slaying the buffalo-demon'. The goddess, standing on the back of the buffalo and brandishing many different weapons in her eight arms, is on the point of killing the demon while he tries to escape through the wound in the buffalo's neck.⁷⁶

These details are of great interest, especially because this combination of deities is typical of ancient Java, although the individual images correspond to similar representations in India, except for the image in the southern niche. In South Indian temples this niche is usually occupied by a seated figure of Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the 'Supreme Guru', but this figure wears a conical crown (*kirīṭa*), is four-armed, carrying various attributes, and is richly decorated. In Java this deity is replaced by the sober figure of a teacher, whose Śaiva association is confined to the presence of a trident. On the analogy with the Dakṣiṇāmūrti, this statue was usually defined as that of the Divine Teacher (Bhaṭṭāra Guru), but, following R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka,⁷⁷ more recent researchers interpret it as a representation of the sage Agastya. It may seem strange that a ṛṣi, however wise and powerful he may have been, should be represented on a par with deities like Durgā and Gaṇeśa, but it is known that Agastya, for whom a temple and an image were made in east Java in 760,⁷⁸ enjoyed special veneration in Java.

⁷⁶ The iconography of Gaṇeśa and Durgā is discussed in the works mentioned in notes 68 and 69 above. No similar study of Agastya (or Bhaṭṭāra Guru) is available.

⁷⁷ *Agastya in den Archipel*, Leiden, 1926.

Whichever is the correct interpretation, there is no doubt that the Guru was one of the most popular representations in ancient Java. This may well reflect the particular awe felt for a teacher in Java till recent times.

The two other deities, Durgā and Gaṇeśa, were also very popular, as appears from the comparatively very large number of statues that have come down to us. It is curious that the goddess Durgā, Śiva's spouse, is most often represented in the bellicose stance described above, whereas Gaṇeśa, though carrying weapons, is rather benevolent. As to the group of four deities: Śiva 'surrounded' by the Guru, Gaṇeśa and Durgā, it has been suggested that it symbolizes, on a divine level, the principal actors on the stage of the world: the king, his spiritual guide, his prime minister and his queen.⁷⁹ The view of the world as a stage is well-known in Indonesia. It is, for instance, implied in the first verse of the poem *Arjunavivāha* (Arjuna's Wedding) and in the performances of the Javanese shadow theatre (*wayang kulit*).⁸⁰

In addition to belonging to this group of four deities, Durgā and Gaṇeśa also enjoyed worship by themselves. Whereas Durgā became more and more closely associated with cemeteries. Gaṇeśa was worshipped for his ability to move huge obstacles with his boundless force. Gaṇeśa statues were therefore placed at dangerous spots, such as river crossings or mountain passes. We have also at least one instance of a Gaṇeśa image placed by the side of a highway frequented by robbers, as appears from the inscription, dated 891, written on its back.⁸¹ In addition, Gaṇeśa is regularly invoked at the beginning of manuscripts of literary works.

In India Śiva was associated with Brahmā and Viṣṇu in a Hindu Trinity, the Trimūrti, but this term is not attested in Old Javanese literature. The concept was well known,⁸² but received little attention. Both Brahmā and Viṣṇu were held in great veneration. Numerous statues of the four-headed Brahmā have come down to us, comparatively many more than in India or in mainland Southeast Asia. A particular feature of Brahmā in ancient Java is the god's association with fire, including the subterranean fire revealing itself through the active volcanoes.⁸³ His consort Sarasvatī and his mount

⁷⁸ See note 38 above. The Dinoyo inscription of 760CE deals with a temple and image of Agastya (actually the replacement by an image of black stone of an earlier sandalwood (*candana*) image).

⁷⁹ W. F. Stutterheim, 'De dateering van eenige Oostjavaansche beeldengroepen', TBG, 66 (1936).

⁸⁰ J. Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan*, The Hague, 1974, 241f.

⁸¹ OJO XIX and XX; H. Bh. Sarkar, *Corpus of Inscriptions of Java*, I, Calcutta, 1971, nos. LVI and LVII, in particular the latter, lines 10–11. The first part of the text is written on an ordinary type of stone, the second on the back of a Gaṇeśa image. The most interesting passage in this context is: *makaphalā karakṣāna nikanang hawān gēng*, 'hopefully resulting in the protection of the highway'.

⁸² It is, for instance, clearly reflected in the conception of the Loro Jonggrang complex at Prambanan, where the three main temples are devoted to Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, each with a smaller temple devoted to the cult of their respective mounts (Nandi, Hamsa and Garuda). It should, however, be noted that the central and clearly predominant temple is devoted to Śiva, not to Brahmā. Actually, the worship of 'compound' deities such as Hari-hara or Ardhanārīśvara has never been popular in Indonesia—in contrast to ancient Cambodia where Hari-hara statues are very common.

⁸³ J. G. de Casparis, 'Oorkonde uit het Singosarische (midden 14e eeuw A.D.)', *Inscr. Ned.-Indië* 1 (1940). The inscription deals with regulations concerning the worship of the god Brahmā in close association with the volcano Gunung Bromo.

Hamṣa (the Goose) are rarely represented, although a few images show the god seated on this big bird.

The numerous Viṣṇu images raise, however, a different issue. From several sources it is known that there existed in Java a relatively small, but influential, Vaiṣṇava community. The *Nāgarakērtāgama*, after devoting two stanzas to the Śaivas, five to the Buddhists and four to the Rēśis community of ascetics, continues with one verse, half of which gives the names of eight Vaiṣṇava (*Vangśa Viṣṇu*) foundations (78–5). Compared with the thirty-eight Śaiva institutions this is a small number, but the devotees of Viṣṇu may have had considerable influence, especially in the twelfth century, when poetical works (*kēkawin*) extolling Viṣṇu or one of his incarnations were composed (*Kṛṣṇāyana*, *Hariwangśa*, *Bhomakāwya*, and others). In addition, many of the kings of that period were praised as 'partial incarnations' (*angśāvatāra*) of that god. King Jayanagara of Majapahit (r. 1309–21) is said 'to have returned home to Hari's (Viṣṇu's) estate' (*Nāg.* 48–3a) and was worshipped as a Viṣṇu image (*Nāg.* 48–3c).⁸⁴

Statues of the god, easily identifiable by his main emblems, the wheel (*cakra*) and the conch (*śaṅkha*), were quite common in Java. As a divine prototype of kings, especially in his incarnations as Kṛiṣṇa and Rāma, his cult was probably closely associated with the royal courts. Viṣṇu's spouse, Lakṣmī or Śrī, not only symbolized royal sovereignty but especially became a rice goddess whose activity promoted the fertility of the ricefields. As such she is still worshipped, in particular in west Java under the name Ni Pohaci Sangyang Sri.⁸⁵

More even than the goddess, Viṣṇu's mount, the heavenly bird Garuḍa, who rescued the immortality drink (*amṛta*) and devoured dangerous snakes, was quite popular. Either as a bird or, more often, partly anthropomorphic, he is represented not only as Viṣṇu's mount but also by himself. An east Javanese fourteenth-century temple, Caṇḍi Kēdaton, even has a series of reliefs devoted to the story of Garuḍa (the *Garuḍeya*).⁸⁶ In addition, Garuḍa is prominently represented in the coat of arms of the Republic of Indonesia and in the name of its national airline.

Apart from striking differences in emphasis, the worship of Śiva and associated deities shows few significant deviations from Indian tradition. On the other hand, the conceptions lying at the basis of early Indonesian art and architecture were probably quite different. As in India, a temple does not stand by itself but forms part of a group or complex. In Indonesia such complexes may be very large, comprising hundreds of separate buildings. This suggests that the deity to whom the temple complex as a whole is dedicated was conceived of as a heavenly king ruling the cosmos.

⁸⁴ N. Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis*, 2nd edn, The Hague, 1931, 170–5. For the poetical works under discussion see J. Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan*, 283–324. For the statues of King Kertanagara see Pigeaud, *Java*, IV. 141: *arcā* is translated by 'statue' and *pratimā* by 'statuette'. In the *Nāgarakērtāgama*, Jayanagara (1309–21) is the only king identified with Viṣṇu, but among the princes there were others, for instance Hayam Wuruk's brother-in-law Prince of Wēngkér, who was deified as Visnu.

⁸⁵ K. A. H. Hidding, *Nji Pohati Sangjang Sri*, Leiden, 1929; V. Sukanda Tessier, 'Le triomphe de Sri en pays soundanais', Publications de l'EFEO, 101 (1977).

⁸⁶ N. Krom, *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst*, 2nd edn, 1923, II. 223–9; Stutterheim, *Cultuurgeschiedenis van Java in Beeld*, 'Weltevreden', 1926, figs 137–42.

as an earthly king ruled his kingdom (in theory, 'the earth'). In general, the kingdom was conceived of as a *maṇḍala*,⁸⁷ consisting of concentric circles with the king as its centre. The innermost circle was reserved for the king and his immediate associates; the middle circle was occupied by dependants and officials considered subordinates of the centre, while the outer part was occupied by (semi-) independent rulers who were obliged to pay homage to the (principal) king. In addition there was a vertical stratification with the king at the apex of a stepped pyramid: the different, hierarchically ordered, groups comprising the society of those times.

In accordance with these ideas, the great Saiva complex of Roro (Loro) Jonggrang (about twenty-five kilometres east of Yogyakarta) consists of three divisions, each surrounded by its own wall with gateways. In the centre stands the majestic tower-like temple of Śiva; on either side, to the north and the south, are the somewhat lower temples of Viṣṇu and Brahmā. Opposite these main temples there are much smaller temples dedicated to the mounts of the three gods. Finally there are small structures near the gateways giving access to the middle division. The latter consists of about a hundred and fifty small temples arranged in three rows, which were apparently shrines for minor deities. These are again surrounded by a wall enclosing the present site of the monument. There still are, however, traces of a third enclosure, not parallel with the other two. As no remains of buildings have been discovered in the outer section, it is likely that this area was used for dwellings of priests and other temple personnel, schools with dormitories, and perhaps guesthouses.

As to the significance of the many small temples of the middle area, something more may be concluded by analogy with the contemporary Buddhist complex of Plaosan-Lor. There, many of the small temples and stupas surrounding the main building bear small inscriptions with the word *anumoda* followed by a title and name, indicating that the structure was a pious contribution by the authority mentioned there. This suggests that officials or local chiefs in different parts of the kingdom were asked or ordered to contribute to the royal foundation, thus attesting both their piety and their loyalty. Presumably the same applies to Roro Jonggrang, where indeed a few titles, written in black or red paint, have remained vaguely visible. It was probably, as already suggested by Krom,⁸⁸ a state temple which mirrored the relationships within the kingdom.

Roro Jonggrang marks a culmination which was followed by more than three centuries without major temple foundations in Java. It has already been mentioned that Buddhism strongly predominated in Sumatra and the Malay peninsula, but there are important exceptions. Thus, the three statues of P'ra Narai (Takuapa, southern Thailand)⁸⁹ are Śaiva and so are

⁸⁷ For the *maṇḍala* concept see the *Arthaśāstra*, ed. R. P. Kangle, Bombay, 1963, 164–7 (text), 364–71 (translation); U. N. Ghoshal, *A History of Political Ideas*, OUP, 1959, 91–9; O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, Singapore, 1982.

⁸⁸ *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis*, 172; de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, II (1956) 307ff.; 'Short Inscriptions from Tjandi Plaosan-Lor', *Berita Dinas Purbakala*, no. 4 (1958), especially plate I.

⁸⁹ Alastair Lamb, 'Miscellaneous papers on Early Hindu and Buddhist Settlements in Northern Malaya and Southern Thailand', *FMJ*, N.S. VI (1961); Stanley J. O'Connor, *Hindu Gods of Peninsular Thailand*, *Artibus Asiae*, Supplementum 28, Ascona, 1972, 52–88 and figs 28–31; M. C. Subhadradis Diskul, *The Art of Śrivijaya*, Paris, UNESCO, 1980, 23f.

the numerous sites of the Bujang valley, Kedah, Malaysia. In the absence of iconographic and epigraphic data, the buildings (actually only foundations as the superstructures must have been of perishable materials) are awkward to date, but stray finds of pottery may point to the end of the eleventh century or somewhat later.⁹⁰

From the middle of the thirteenth century Śaivism again flourished, as appears from the numerous sites in east Java and Bali, which can be dated between c. 1250 and 1450. Two sites are of particular importance on account of their size and beauty: Singhasari and Panataran. The tower temple (*prāsāda*) at Singhasari is especially remarkable for its marvellous sculptures representing gods of the Śaiva pantheon. In addition to Śiva in his majestic four-armed Maheśvara form, there are statues of Durgā (as nearly always in Indonesia, as *mahiṣamardini*, 'killing the buffalo-demon'), of Gaṇeśa and of Guru (or Agastya): the customary Saiva pantheon. In addition, however, we find a demonic Bhairava with the inscription *cakracakra* as well as statues of Viṣṇu and Brahmā. From the same, or a closely associated, site a famous image of Prajñāpāramitā, 'Perfect Wisdom', represented as a seated, two-armed goddess carrying a manuscript,⁹¹ has been recovered, thus pointing to a close association between Śaivism and Buddhism.

The great temple complex of Panataran near Blitar, east Java, belongs mainly to the fourteenth century, the age of Majapahit, during which it was probably a state sanctuary. Dedicated to Śiva, Lord of the Mountain, it consists of three courtyards with the main entrance gate on the west and the main temple in the eastern courtyard. Such a composition differs fundamentally from those of the central Javanese temple compounds such as Roro Jonggrang. There the secondary structures are all arranged in rows around the principal building. The arrangement as seen at Panataran, on the other hand, reminds one of that of the *kraton*, the Javanese royal residence. Thus in the present Yogyakarta *kraton* one may enter through the eastern gate and, crossing a number of courts, one would (if it were permitted) arrive at the king's private quarters. The resemblance is not fortuitous, for the Kingdom of Heaven is an idealized projection of the kingdom on earth. It is, however, important to note that such compounds differ completely from the Indian conception of the Mahāmeru.⁹²

As noted earlier, Panataran is devoted to Śiva as Lord of the Mountain(s), in this case especially the Kēlud. As one of Java's most active volcanoes it was, like the Bromo, an object of veneration. It seems, indeed, as though the worship of mountains as abodes of divine power, though Austronesian in origin, became more common or explicit in the fourteenth

⁹⁰ Lamb, 'Misc. Papers', 79–81.

⁹¹ For the Durgā see Stutterheim, *Cultuurgeschiedenis*, 72, fig. 10. The Prajñāpāramitā of Singosari is illustrated in all works on Indonesian art, e.g. Karl With, *Java, Brahmanische, Buddhistische und eigenlebige Architektur und Plastik auf Java*, Hagen, 1920, plates 138–9.

⁹² H. J. J. Winter, 'Science', in A. L. Basham, ed., *A Cultural History of India*, Oxford, 1975; P. S. Rawson, 'Early Art and Architecture', *ibid.*, 204. 'Each temple is conceived, as the Buddhist stūpa was, as "the axis of the world", symbolically transformed into the mythical Mount Meru, around which are slung, like garlands, the heavens and the earth.' The Buddhist system of cosmology, as followed in Indonesia, it seems, is set out in detail in such texts as the *Abhidharmaśāstra*, book III.

and fifteenth centuries. Thus, the numerous little sanctuaries discovered on the slopes of the Penanggungan in east Java have already been mentioned, and two large sites of mainly the fifteenth century have been discovered on the slopes of the Lawu, viz. Sukuh and Cēta. At Sukuh the cult of the linga of Śiva, though always characteristic of Śaivism, was more pronounced than elsewhere. It appears, however, that this cult was primarily associated not with fertility but with the liberation of the soul.

This cult was linked with that of Bhīma, one of the five Pāṇḍava heroes of the *Mahābhārata*, known for his enormous force. There are a number of Bhīma statues from Sukuh and contemporary sites, and also literary works in which Bhīma is represented as a saviour who, like Avalokiteśvara in Buddhism, even goes to hell to redeem sinners. Some late Old Javanese texts, such as the *Nawaruci*, *Dewaruci*, and *Bimasuci*, assign an important role to Bhīma. These texts have a strong mystical flavour. The Bhīma tradition, linked with speculation about death and immortality, has persisted in Bali also in the shadow theatre (*Bhimaswarga*).⁹³ Another late text, the *Tantu Panggēlaran*, composed about 1500, describes numerous hermitages and communities of ascetics especially in the mountain areas.⁹⁴ When parts of the lowlands had already been Islamized, Brahmanic culture still survived in the mountainous areas of eastern Java for a considerable time.

Buddhism

Buddhism, like Islam and Christianity, but in contrast to Austronesian beliefs, Brahmanism and Śaivism, is a world religion, which can be studied from numerous manuals. This section is therefore mainly confined to aspects which received particular emphasis in maritime Southeast Asia, but also covers the expansion of Buddhism and its place in the history and culture of the area.

The Buddhist doctrines are based on the revelation by Lord Buddha of the Four Noble Truths—the awareness that worldly existence is a form of suffering, that the causes of suffering can be determined, that therefore suffering can be eliminated, and that, finally, there is a Path leading to that end. However, the actual Buddhist doctrines reflect a rational approach. This includes a theory of causation which traces the miseries of existence back to ignorance (*pratityasamutpāda*),⁹⁵ following which all things are linked in a web of cause-and-effect relations containing twelve categories. The suffering that forms part of life stems from ignorance of the true nature of things. Beings are condemned by ignorance to a constant round of rebirth in conditions governed by *karma(n)*—the law by which all morally qualified acts, good or evil, necessarily carry their fruits, sometimes in this life, more often in the next. This belief, closely interwoven with the theory of transmigration of the soul (or of its equivalent) pervades

⁹³ M. Prijohoetomo, *Nawaruci*, Groningen-'Batavia', 1934, 1–139; *Bhimasuci*, ibid., 140–213; R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka, 'Dewa-Roetji', *Djawa*, XX (1940); H. I. R. Hinzler, *The Bima Swarga in Balinese wayang* in VKI, 90, The Hague, 1981.

⁹⁴ Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *De Tantu Panggēlaran*, The Hague, 1924.

⁹⁵ This twelffold chain of causes and effects was well-known all over the Buddhist world. In Java it has been found inscribed on a set of gold plates, together with an elaborate commentary; see de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, II (1956) no. III; Buchari, *Prasasti Koleksi Museum National*, Jakarta, 1985–6, 224–35.

all Indian thought. In the older form of Buddhism, the doctrine of the Elders (Theravāda), the supreme ideal of the pious Buddhist is to achieve a complete cessation of the circle of rebirths to attain *nirvāna*. This form of Buddhism is the norm in most of mainland Southeast Asia, as we have seen.

In maritime Southeast Asia, however, there is hardly any evidence of Theravāda, but another form of Buddhism called Mahāyāna (the 'Great Vehicle') emphasizes the gradual rise to the perfection of Buddha-hood through a long succession of existences as a Bodhisattva: a being, not necessarily human, striving for Buddha-hood and following a way of life which may ultimately lead to that end. Some Bodhisattvas, thought to abide on the verge of Buddha-hood, received special veneration, as did the ever-increasing number of Buddhas. Thus a new pantheon developed: it consisted of different kinds of Buddhas, in iconography distinguishable by the position of their hands; many different Bodhisattvas, each recognizable by particular emblems; and their female counterparts (Tārā). Even Hindu gods were incorporated into Mahāyāna, though at a lower stage than the Buddhist deities.

As to the influence of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia we have to distinguish between the western part of the area (Sumatra, western Malaysia and west Borneo) and its eastern part (Java, Nusa Tenggara and east Borneo). Whereas Buddhism prevailed in most of its western part until the coming of Islam, it flourished in the eastern zone mainly during certain periods. In Java these are the Śailendra period (c.750–850) and the Singhasari-Majapahit period (especially c.1250–1400). During the intervening period Buddhism continued to have followers, but remained somewhat in the background.

In Java Buddhism was strongly patronized by the Śailendra kings (c.775–860), as reflected in art and architecture. The archaeological sources, which include also a number of inscriptions, give us a fair idea of Buddhism as professed during that period.

The greatest of all Buddhist monuments in the region, Borobudur in central Java, is often described as a gigantic stupa. But, although there are numerous stupas on terraces, which recall the *maluwa* and *pesāwa* of the Sri Lankan stupas,⁹⁶ Borobudur is different in that the galleries and terraces predominate, whereas the main stupa functions as a kind of crown. A more satisfactory interpretation is that of a *stūpa-prasāda*, a term occurring in the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*. The second part of the compound indicates a building consisting of several storeys or terraces. Borobudur has also, but less successfully, been described as a Tantric *mandala*: a (magical) circle or closed sacred area within which certain rites could be carried out. Although Borobudur may well have been used as a huge *mandala*, it is unlikely that this was the intention of its creator(s), for clearly Tantric features are not apparent in Borobudur. Others have seen the monument as a monumental encyclopaedia of Buddhism, a view based on the illustration of numerous types of buildings, including palaces and stupas, many kinds of ships, trees, animals, crowns, etc. Its reliefs depict

⁹⁶ R. Silva, *Religious Architecture in Early and Medieval Sri Lanka*, Meppel, 1987, 19–26.

basic Mahāyāna texts with the help of which a keen student could receive excellent instruction under the guidance of a teacher.⁹⁷

On more than one occasion, a name occurring in two inscriptions of 842, Bhūmisambhāra, has been identified with Borobudur and it has been concluded from its description as a *kamūlān*, 'place of origin', that the monument marks the 'cradle' of the dynasty of the Sailendras ('Lords of the Mountain'). In this manner the dynasty would emphasize both its piety and its authority. Such an interpretation does not rule out the likelihood that Borobudur was also used as an encyclopaedia of Buddhism or, a few centuries later, as a Tantric *mandala*.⁹⁸

The conception of the other two great Buddhist monuments of central Java, Candi Sewu and Plaosan,⁹⁹ is quite different. Candi Sewu ('A Thousand Temples') at Prambanan, about thirty kilometres east of Yogyakarta, is a vast complex consisting of one large temple in the middle, surrounded by four rows of small temples, about 250 in all. It reflects the conception of a vast Buddhist pantheon with Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other superior beings, each assigned to its proper place in the sacred hierarchy. Its building may have started in or shortly before 782 and must have continued till well into the ninth century.

The northern complex of Candi Plaosan, one kilometre distant from Sewu, also comprises numerous structures, but there are important differences. At the centre there are two large, two-storey buildings separated by a wall, with a similar wall separating both from three rows of small temples and stupas. The two main buildings were built at the expense of the king and queen respectively; whereas many of the small structures carry short inscriptions, each indicating the name and title of the dignitary or official who contributed to its foundation.

Like Borobudur, these buildings are all inspired by Mahāyāna with strong emphasis on the worship of Bodhisattvas, Tārās, and some Hindu gods such as Kubera, Guardian of the North and associated with wealth.

⁹⁷ This is not the right place to discuss the manifold problems of the interpretation of Borobudur—problems which are commensurate with the size and richness of the monument. Actually, most of the interpretations that have been proposed long ago are clearly out of date (though still repeated in some modern publications). The best works at present available are Soekmono, *Chandi Borobudur. A Monument of Mankind*, Amsterdam and Paris: UNESCO, 1976; Jacques Dumarçay, *Borobudur*, Kuala Lumpur, 1978; and Jan J. Boeles, *The secret of Borobudur*, Bangkok, 1985.

⁹⁸ De Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, 1950, 134–92; De Casparis 'The Dual Nature of Borobudur', in Luis Gomez, and Hiram W. Woodward, eds, *Borobudur, History and Significance of a Monument*, Ann Arbor, 1980. As to its interpretation as a Tantric *mandala*, based partly on a passage in the *Nāgarakertāgama*, where Budur (*sic*) is mentioned in a list of buildings of the Vajradhara sect (canto 77, verse 3), as well as on a passage in the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan* (see the bibliographic essay for this chapter), Stutterheim was probably the first to propose the interpretation of Borobudur as the Tantric *mandala*, i.e. primarily an object of meditation. The idea of Borobudur being a kind of Encyclopaedia of Buddhism was first proposed by Siwaramamurti. Although both interpretations are correct as Borobudur has probably been used as a *mandala* and as an encyclopaedia providing information on many topics (not only on Buddhism), it is unlikely that either was the original purpose in the mind(s) of its creator(s).

⁹⁹ Jacques Dumarçay, *Candi Sewu et l'architecture bouddhique du centre de Java*, Paris, EFEQ, 1981; Indonesian edition under the title *Candi Sewu dan Arsitektur Bangunan Agama Buda di Jawa Tengah*, Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional, Depdikbud, 1986; De Casparis, 'Short Inscriptions from Tjandi Plaosan-Lor', *Berita Dinas Purabakala*, no. 4 (1958).

The Śailendras were outward-looking and in regular contact with other Buddhist kingdoms. Thus, an inscription of 782 mentions a monk from Gauḍa, present (northern) Bangladesh, who consecrated a Mañjuśrī image at or near Caṇḍī Sewu. Ten years later learned monks from Sri Lanka inaugurated a replica of the 'Abhayagiri of the Sinhalese monks', while teachers from Gurjaradeśa, modern Gujarat, took part in the consecration of the main building of Caṇḍī Plaosan. An inscription from Nālandā in Bihar (India) deals with a monastery built there by order of the Śailendra king, presumably on behalf of Indonesian students and pilgrims staying at or visiting Nālandā, one of the greatest centres of Buddhist learning at that time.

At the time of the Nālandā foundation (c. 860) the Śailendras were no longer reigning in Java but had moved to Śrivijaya in southern Sumatra. Their successors in Java, though by no means hostile to Buddhism, did not patronize it. We have to wait till the second half of the thirteenth century before we witness a revival of Javanese Buddhism.

In Sumatra, on the other hand, Buddhism continued to flourish under the patronage of the kings of Śrivijaya, but left few great monuments. Sumatra is not so poor in monuments as has sometimes been thought, but they bear no comparison with those of Java, either in number or in splendour. This has been attributed to the mercantile spirit of the empire, but there were probably other factors involved. As the soil of southern Sumatra is generally poor, the country did not produce the dense agricultural population with its reserve of labour necessary for the construction of great monuments. This same Śrivijaya sponsored, however, great monuments in countries as far away as India and China. Thus, at the turn of the millennium the king of Śrivijaya had a large monastery constructed on the east coast of South India, as well as a temple in Canton.¹

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Buddhism again flourished not only in Sumatra but also in Java. King Kērtanagara of Singhasari (r. 1268–92) was known, at least after his death, as Śiva-Buddha, but neither his inscriptions nor the long *Nāgarakertāgama* passage dealing with his reign show unambiguous evidence of Śaivism. Both are imbued with the spirit of Tantric Buddhism, in particular Vajrayāna, a sect which attributes superhuman power to the vajra, mentioned earlier. Different rituals in which this symbol played an important part were performed in order to shorten the otherwise long road towards Buddha-hood and Nirvāṇa. The nature of these ceremonies, which are only alluded to in our texts, is difficult to determine since the most important text mentioned in this connexion, the *Subhūtitantra*, has not yet been identified. A late source, the Old Javanese *Pararaton*, attributes to Kērtanagara the performance of rituals involving the use of alcoholic drinks and other excesses, but there is no contemporary evidence to prove that such rituals were actually carried out.²

¹ G. Cœdès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. Walter F. Vella, trans. Susan Brown Cowing, Honolulu, 1968, 141f.

² ibid., 198f.; but see also Nāg. XLIII-1 to 5 with Pigeaud's discussion of these difficult verses in *Java*, IV, 128–34. Cf. also the older interpretations proposed by J. L. Moens, 'Het Buddhisisme op Java in zijn laatste bloeiperiode', TBG, 44 (1924), and P. H. Pott, *Yoga and Yantra*, The Hague, 1966, 124f. and 130f.

Buddhism remained important throughout the fourteenth century, as reflected in art and literature. Some of the most important texts composed in that period are Buddhist in character,³ but the clearest evidence is archaeological. A number of the most important temples are Buddhist. Foremost among these is Candi Jago (or Tumpang) near present Malang, east Java. Its Buddhist character is clearly reflected not in its architecture or narrative reliefs, but in its statuary, which represents a Buddhist Tantric pantheon. These splendid images can now be studied in different museums. They are carved in a soft style and carry inscriptions in Nāgarī script of a type current in northeastern India, in particular Orissa, in this period. This may also be the strongest indication of an influx from India of new ideas and practices into Buddhism, although Buddhism in India was in serious decline at that time. This was not, however, the case with the entire subcontinent, for Mahāyāna continued to flourish in some areas, in particular coastal Orissa (Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitagiri). A possible relationship between this region and east Java has never been adequately studied, but it seems likely. From the end of the fourteenth century, however, there are very few, if any, Buddhist remains and this religion seems to have faded away even before the Islamization of Java.

In Sumatra, the kingdom of Śrivijaya, which had patronized Buddhism for six centuries, declined in the thirteenth century but was succeeded by Malāyu, which had its centre in present Jambi but moved to the west coast by the beginning of the fourteenth century. Unlike Śrivijaya, Malāyu maintained close relations with Java. In 1284 King Kertanagara sent a curious composite statue, consisting of copies of statues of Candi Jago in east Java, to the king of Malāyu. It was escorted by a high delegation and received by the Malāyu authorities with great pomp. These details are recorded in the Old Malay inscription carved on the back of the statue.⁴

Sixty years later it changed place again, this time to west Sumatra by order of one of the most fascinating figures on the politico-religious scene of the fourteenth century: King Ādityavarman (r. c. 1347–79). Possibly of partly Javanese descent, he spent his early career in Majapahit but returned to Sumatra before 1347. There he issued a large number of inscriptions in Sanskrit and Old Malay, written in a characteristic local script, and also one in Tamil. These texts are difficult to understand owing to the use of curious ungrammatical forms of Sanskrit and of esoteric Tantric terminology, the precise meaning of which is still imperfectly known. As to the type of Tantrism followed by Ādityavarman there is a statement that the king was 'always concentrated on Hevajra', a demonic form of the Jina Akṣobhya,⁵ whose worship involved bloody and erotic rituals, the latter in conjunction with female partners. Eating and drinking, presumably of palm wine, are also mentioned, but it is doubtful whether such excesses regularly took place. In any case, they did not prevent

³ Such as the *Nāgarakertāgama*, the *Sutasoma* and the *Kuṇjarakarna*. For these texts see P. J. Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan. A Survey of Old Javanese Literature*, The Hague, 1974.

⁴ N. J. Krom, 'Een Sumatraansche Inscriptie van koning Kṛtanagara', *Versl. Med. Kon. Ak. Wet.*, Afd. Lett. 5, (1916).

⁵ Satyawati Suleiman, 'The Archaeology and History of West Sumatra', *Berita Pusat Penelitian Purbakala dan Peninggalan Nasional*, 12 (1977). She correctly read *hevajra* in the last line of one of the Suroaso inscriptions (p. 11).

Ādityavarman from reigning for at least thirty-two years and becoming the spiritual father of the kingdom of Minangkabau. It is curious that not a single temple built by Ādityavarman has hitherto come to light, and only very few images. One of these few is, however, the largest statue discovered in Indonesia: a huge two-armed, horrific Bhairava,⁶ a demonic form of Śiva represented nude and brandishing a knife, while standing on a corpse above a pedestal decorated with human skulls.

Finally, attention is called to the important site of Padang Lawas in south Tapanuli. Ruins of at least sixteen brick temples and stupas were found in this arid plain, probably part of the ancient kingdom of Panai, with its capital situated on the river of that name. Originally a dependency of Śrivijaya, it made itself independent in or before the thirteenth century. Apart from an important set of Buddhist bronzes, dated 1039, most other antiquities seem to belong to the thirteenth century. The brick temples are remarkable for the reliefs depicting dancing Yakṣas and other demons.⁷

Nothing more is heard of Buddhism after Ādityavarman. It is unlikely that the esoteric and demonic form of Buddhism would have appealed to the population as a whole, unlike Theravāda on the mainland which was, and is, a truly popular religion. Already half a century before Ādityavarman a Muslim kingdom had been established at Pasai on the northeast coast of Sumatra. Its first ruler Malik al-Salih died in 1297. Other Muslim kingdoms and sultanates arose in ports of eastern Sumatra during the fifteenth century.

TWO SPECIAL PROBLEMS

Before discussing early Islam in Southeast Asia, it is proper to consider two special problems which have given rise to much discussion. They concern the generally held views that kings were regarded as gods and that there was a considerable degree of religious syncretism. Both views are open to serious doubt.

Historians of ancient India have given much thought to the problem of the kings' divinity. As kingship in Southeast Asia was strongly influenced by Indian ideas, some points have to be made.

First of all it should be emphasized that pre-partition India is a vast subcontinent with a written history that can be traced back to the second millennium BC. Generalizations are therefore often misleading.

Second, one has to be clear about the concept of divinity. In Christianity and Islam, divinity implies perfection and the absolute. Indian thought recognizes different stages or degrees of divinity, whereas the absolute—designated by terms such as *mokṣa*, *nirvāṇa*, *sac-cid-ānanda* according to various creeds—is a state far beyond the mere divine. It is true that kings were generally addressed as *deva*, usually translated as 'god', but this was

⁶ F. M. Schnitger, *The Archaeology of Hindoo Sumatra*, Leiden, 1937, plates XIII–XVI. The height of the statue is 4.41 m!

⁷ Rumbi Mulia, 'The ancient kingdom of Panai and the ruins of Padang Lawas', *Berita Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional*, 14 (1980).

a formality which would not necessarily imply a belief in the king's divinity. Although some passages in the texts are ambiguous, there is now a large measure of consensus among scholars to the effect that kings were not, as a rule, considered divine, but there were probably exceptions in particular periods or regions, or in the minds of some of the king's subjects.

Third, even if kings were considered to some extent divine, they would have shared this 'divinity' with many other creatures, including some priests and cows, or even snakes and trees.

Finally, there are many passages in texts and inscriptions in which kings are compared with deities in a manner suggesting a close relationship, if not identity, with deities. Thus, as early as the fourth century CE King Samudra Gupta is described as the equal of the Lokapālas (*Dhanadā-Varuṇendrāntaka-sama*, 'the equal of Kubera, Varuna, Indra and Yama').⁸ Such phrases, which are confined to court poets intent on bestowing exaggerated praise on their patrons, carry little weight as arguments in favour of the king's divinity. On balance it may therefore be concluded that kings were not considered divine in any real sense in ancient India.⁹

By and large, the same applies to Southeast Asia, but the matter is far more complicated. Not surprisingly, as far as the deification of rulers is concerned, there are considerable differences among individual areas of the region, partly due to differences in official religions. Thus, the very idea of deification of kings is contrary to the monotheism of Islam. This is not the case with Theravāda Buddhism, but there the position of the gods (*deva*) is a modest one: they lead a happy life but, although they live very long, they are not immortal. In addition, their world is quite separated from ours. This would not have encouraged kings to seek identification with gods. The same applies to Mahāyāna, but there the multitude of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas provides an opportunity for ambitious rulers to claim the status of one of those superior beings. Their superiority was, however, mainly confined to wisdom and charity rather than to superhuman power. As we shall see, however, these concepts of Mahāyāna may have significant implications for some Buddhist kings. 'Hinduism', on the other hand, in particular Śaivism, provided the kings with opportunities to receive the kind of worship reserved to gods during, or more often after, their life on earth. The survey which follows will therefore mainly be confined to Mahāyāna and Śaivism. Because of the differences among various areas it seems necessary to separate mainland and maritime Southeast Asia.

In mainland Southeast Asia, there was a major religious dimension to kingship, but it is necessary to remember that, whatever it implies for the notion of royal divinity, it did not mean that any ruler once crowned was treated by everybody with awe-filled veneration and unquestioning obedience. The fallible humanity of a king was commemorated by the

⁸ D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, 2nd edn. Calcutta, 1965, book III, no. 2: Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, pp. 262–8, line 26.

⁹ The supposed divinity of ancient Indian kings has long been a point of controversy among Indologists, but the *communis opinio* is perhaps best summarized by A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, London, 1954 (reprint 1961), 81–8.

constant need to fight enemies abroad, in the provinces, at court and within his own family.

The significance of the idea of divine kingship, then, is not as an instrument of enhanced power. It is, rather, a ritual statement. But this statement, though it may not have worked magic for the political fortunes of rulers, may be important enough in its own way as an expression of cosmological belief about the spiritual forces informing the operation of human society and nature. Further, we must remember that the agrarian societies with which we are dealing lacked the modern idea of an impersonal state commanding a loyalty from its citizens that transcends the claims of individuals in government. In its place, the legitimacy of a ruler required a symbolism that could be supplied by religious categories.

There are various sorts of evidence of the divine sanction for kingship. One is constituted by the Indochinese linga cult, where the lingas were given the names of kings who endowed them in combination with Śiva's title Īśvara. As we have seen, the Chams had such cults at Mi-son, with a Bhadreśvara and subsequently a Śambhubhadreśvara. In Angkor, above all, many lingas and statues of gods were endowed by kings and by members of the royal family and the great men of the land.

A special case in Angkor, which has commonly been treated as an example of the royal linga cult but needs to be considered separately, is the *devarāja* cult instituted by the founder, Jayavarman II, to sanctify the independence and unity of the Khmer kingdom. It is known from only a few inscriptions, which show that the cult was maintained by a number of subsequent kings, and that it had attached to it a specially assigned lineage of priests.

Much has been written about this cult by modern scholars. Cœdès regarded it as more or less identical to the cult of the great 'temple-mountains', the pyramidal monuments which so many rulers built.¹⁰ More recently Kulke has argued against this, identifying the *devarāja* instead as a portable and probably bronze icon which could be installed at different places.¹¹ The name of the cult, as Filliozat was the first to argue, need not be translated as 'god-king' (comporting the idea of royal divinity); it could refer instead to Śiva as 'King of the Gods'. Filliozat, who argued for a South Indian provenance of the cult, has further proposed that the Śiva cult thus attested was one in which the devotees had a sophisticated theology of Śiva as the supreme deity and unique and universal sovereign. The *devarāja*, therefore, was not confused with the person of the individual king; the divine self of Śiva is eternally pure, and no earthly ruler, even if partaking of divinity to the extent that in his innermost self he comes from Śiva, can possess that purity.¹²

Other aspects of the cult have been explored. Claude Jacques has examined it through the Khmer-language terms used in the inscriptions,

¹⁰ Cœdès wrote on the subject in various places. A summary of his views is in *Angkor—an Introduction*, trans. E. F. Gardiner, Hong Kong, 1962, 22ff.

¹¹ 'Der Devarāja-Kult', *Saeculum*, 25, 1 (1974); trans. I. W. Mabbett, as *The Devarāja Cult*, Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, Data Paper no. 108, Ithaca, 1978.

¹² J. Filliozat, 'Sur le Çivaïsme et le Bouddhisme du Cambodge, à propos de deux livres récents', *BEFEO*, 70 (1981).

and suggested that, instead of the Khmer expression *kamrateñ jagat ta rāja* being a translation of the Sanskrit *devarāja*, it may be the other way round—the Sanskrit term may name no Indian god at all but refer to a purely local god of a sort that may be called upon to protect a lineage or, in this case, a royal line.¹³

This reminds us of Paul Mus' view of the evolution from prehistoric cults of earth gods, their icons often consisting of rough stones, to linga cults which took over the same religious meaning that the earth gods had possessed. In one sense, the imported linga cult melted into the local tradition, appealing to the same set of ideas as did the cult of the territorial earth spirit; in another sense, the local tradition evolved into a more sophisticated ritual inspired by the imported myth—both perspectives, in Mus' interpretation, would be legitimate. Either way, a cult such as the *devarāja* should be seen as having signified to its worshippers the king as ritual embodiment of the patron god. Filliozat argued against this identification, asserting that Śiva's transcendence and purity excluded it. Both interpretations could, however, be right—one on the level of theology, the other on that of the sociology of religion.

The idea of royal divinity, however, depends upon more than just the linga cults and divinized statues of royalty. There are, for example, the shrines dedicated to royal ancestors which have as icons statues of gods and goddesses identified with human ancestors. At Angkor, Indravarman I dedicated the Preah Koh to the former king Jayavarman II and his wife, to Indravarman's own parents, and to his maternal grandparents. One can no doubt see in such a practice elements of the tradition indigenous to the soil which, on Mus' reconstruction, saw ancestors—especially ancestors of community chiefs—as merging with community gods. Such a merging is well attested in Chinese indigenous religion, and there are traces of such thinking in Indian ideas about the afterlife entered by ancestors.

But perhaps the most conspicuous sort of evidence is the symbolism implicit in the architecture of many Southeast Asian capital cities and the great monuments which were often constructed in their centres to represent the Mahāmeru, the home of the gods and *axis mundi*. A particularly elaborate example is constituted by Angkor Thom, capital city of Jayavarman VII, and the Mahāyāna Buddhist shrine, the Bayòn, in the centre of it: the whole complex was rich in cosmological meaning, representing on one level the myth of creation by churning the ocean of milk, and the causeways that approached the city walls being assimilated to Indra's rainbow, the ascent to heaven. The king sent twenty-three statues of himself to the provinces, and in return received images of the gods of the localities which were housed in the Bayòn's galleries; thus the Bayòn, as home of the gods, embodied all the spiritual energies of the kingdom.

Vietnam, which inherited the more secular Chinese traditions, was a different case, but there were similar ideas at work: the rulers were not

¹³ C. Jacques, 'The Kamrateñ Jagat in ancient Cambodia', in Karashima Norobu, ed., *Indus Valley to Mekong Delta: explorations in epigraphy*, Madras, 1985.

perhaps seen as gods, but they had spiritual or quasi-divine characteristics often expressed in Buddhist terms. As Keith Taylor has put it, they 'stimulated and aroused the supernatural powers dwelling in the terrain of the Vietnamese realm'.¹⁴

What one can infer from such evidence of royal divinization is perhaps that in order to understand it we must revise our conceptions of the nature of divinity. In the cultures of monsoon Asia, divinity was a quality of the sacred world that lies unseen and implicit in the things of the world around us, like electromagnetic radiation or gravity. It could make itself accessible and potent through ritual. Kingship was itself a kind of ritual, serving to centre the kingdom on an individual, just as a shrine could centre it on an icon; in each case, the spiritual energy of the gods in the sacred world would be manifested.

Compared with mainland Southeast Asia, we notice many differences in maritime Southeast Asia as far as the divinization of kings is concerned, although there seems to be some agreement in its principal features.

Living kings were not generally regarded as gods. Thus, one of the best-known (semi-)historical texts, the *Pararaton*, tells us how the last king of Kadiri in east Java, Kértajaya, wished to be venerated as a deity. When the courtiers were reluctant, the king decided to teach them a lesson. After briefly leaving the audience hall he returned complete with four arms, a third eye in the middle of his forehead and other marks of Siva. The ministers and courtiers were, however, unimpressed. Suspecting some kind of magical trick, they left the palace to join the insurgents.¹⁵ The anecdote suggests that some kings may have tried to get themselves venerated as gods, but without success.

Of King Kértanagara of Singhasari in east Java it is known that, in 1289, he had himself consecrated as the Jina Akṣobhya, as described in the Sanskrit inscription carved on the lotus cushion of a large Akṣobhya statue, which can therefore be considered an idealized representation of the king.¹⁶ It should, however, be emphasized that Akṣobhya, though endowed with superhuman qualities, is not a god but a transcendental Buddha: a state of perfection which, at least in principle, can be attained by any living being. This did not, however, prevent Kértanagara from being killed in an attack by the subordinate ruler of Kadiri.

There is, however, a different conception which seems to have been generally adhered to in maritime Southeast Asia, at least in some areas and periods. It implies that kings were originally divine beings who descended to earth for the benefit of mankind, but returned to heaven as soon as their task was accomplished. This return required, however, the performance by the deceased king's successor of the appropriate rituals. Such rites are

¹⁴ 'Authority and legitimacy in eleventh century Vietnam', in Marr and Milner, 143.

¹⁵ Harry J. Benda and John A. Larkin, *The World of Southeast Asia, Selected Historical Readings*, translated from the Dutch by Margaret W. Broekhuysen, New York, Evanston, London, 1967, 38f.

¹⁶ This statue, probably originating from the area around Trowulan, East Java, now stands in a park near Jalan Pemuda at Surabaya. For the inscription see H. Kern, *Verspreide Geschriften*, VII, The Hague, 1917 (originally published in 1910). For important corrections see R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka, 'De inscriptie van het Mahākṣobhya-beeld te Simpang (Soerabaja)', BKI, 78 (1922).

described in Indian texts, in particular the so-called *śrāddha*, which had to be performed by the king's eldest son at regular intervals after death. Indonesian sources mention, however, only a single great *śrāddha* to be carried out twelve years after the death of a royal person. The great *śrāddha* for the benefit of the soul of the Rājapatnī in Majapahit has already been described. We saw that the queen was transformed into Prajñāpāramitā as a result of the ceremony, and was thenceforward worshipped in a temple near present Tulung Agung south of Kadiri.¹⁷

King Jayanagara, the second ruler of Majapahit (1309–21), is said to have been deified as both Viṣṇu and the Jina Amoghasiddhi, and other kings and queens were deified in a similar manner.¹⁸ On the other hand, most kings of Kadiri (mainly twelfth century) are described as incarnations of Viṣṇu, or rather of mythical kings who were themselves incarnations of Viṣṇu, such as Rāma, Paraśurāma, Kṛiṣṇa and Vāmana. Thus, one king is described as *Madhusūdanāvatāra* (incarnation of Viṣṇu as Kṛiṣṇa, slayer of the demon Madhu) or as *Vamanāvatāra* (incarnation of Viṣṇu as the Dwarf who conquered the world with three steps). Being a second-degree incarnation of the god dilutes the divine element, which is even further watered down by the fact that the king is often described as being merely a partial incarnation (*amśavatāra*) of the god (or his incarnation). The king's 'divinity', if this is the right term, was therefore strictly limited.¹⁹

Whatever their status during life, kings were sometimes worshipped as gods after their death when, as the poet puts it, 'they returned home to the gods' abode' (*Nāg.* 41–4a). This suggests that the king was a deity who temporarily stayed on earth in the guise of a human being but returned 'home' when his task was accomplished. The fact that this 'return' was often brought about by human violence (only one king of the Singhasari dynasty died a natural death) does not seem to have made any difference: while abiding on earth the king naturally behaved like a human being and suffered the consequences of his acts.

As stated above with reference to the Rājapatnī, many kings after the beginning of the second millennium were venerated in the form of a statue of the deity into whom the king had 'returned' after his death on earth. It is thought that many of the extant stone statues of Śiva and Viṣṇu, especially those with unusual attributes and individual facial expression, represent deified rulers or members of the royal family.²⁰ This is quite likely. It has, however, also been assumed that the temples known to have been dedicated to deceased kings were actually mausoleums in which the mortal remains after a king's cremation were kept in an urn deposited in a pit below the principal cult image. Such pits occur in all Śaiva temples, but their contents have usually been disturbed by treasure-hunters. On the

¹⁷ Pigeaud, *Java*, I and III, cantos LXIII–LIX and IV, 169–211.

¹⁸ For Jayanagara's apotheosis see canto XLVIII of the same publication.

¹⁹ cf. Sanskrit *amśavataraṇa*, title of sections 64–7 of the Indian *Ādiparvan*. The Old Javanese *Adiparwa* (ed. Juynboll, The Hague, 1906, 47f.) mentions *angsāvatāra*: 'it always seems to mean that only part of the god was incarnated': Stutterheim, 'Some remarks on pre-Hinduistic burial customs on Java', *Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, 1956 (originally published in 1939), 71 n. 18.

²⁰ Stutterheim in the preceding article and in 'Een Oud-Javaansche Bhima-cultus', *Djawa*, XV (1935).

one hand, in none of the pits discovered intact have any human remains been identified; any ashes found have proved to be of vegetable or animal origin. The idea of the god arising as a Phoenix out of his ashes finds no support in Indonesian religion, in which corporeal remains were generally considered polluting (as in India), to be disposed of as completely as possible. Thus, in present-day Bali the ashes remaining after a cremation are taken to the ocean.²¹

If temples dedicated to the cult of defunct rulers were not mausoleums they could have been cenotaphs, but it is preferable to abandon the funerary association altogether and regard the temples concerned as commemorative monuments devoted to the cult of the deity with whom the essence of the deceased would have merged. With the help of the *Nagarakertagama* and other texts, it is often possible to determine whether a certain temple is dedicated to the cult of a deified ruler or to a deity as such. Thus, the large Amoghapāśa of Candi Jago is an effigy of King Višnuvardhana of Singhasari (r. 1248–68) according to the text (*Nāg.*, 41–4), while of King Anuṣapati (r. 1227–47?) it is stated (41–1) that he returned ‘home to Girīndra’s [Śiva’s] abode . . . in the likeness of Śiva, splendid, in the eminent *dharma* [religious domain] in Kidal’ (i.e. Candi Kidal near present Malang).

On the other hand, there are many east Javanese temples without any known association within a defunct ruler. Thus the greatest temple complex of the province, Candi Panataran, was a state temple devoted to Śiva as Lord of the Mountains. In many cases, however, the sources do not permit us to decide in favour of either alternative.

The second problem concerns the so-called syncretism of Śaivism and Buddhism. Here, too, the issue is more complicated than it may seem at first. Following H. C. Kern and W. H. Rassers,²² it has long been accepted that the two main religions merged into one from the reign of Kertanagara (1268–92). More recent research has, however, demonstrated that our sources do not warrant such a conclusion. Except perhaps for one or two individual cases, such as that of Kertanagara, known as *sang Śiva-Buddha* after his death (if not during his life), there was no true syncretism but a more complicated and more interesting relationship between those two religions. As early as the eighth century CE the stone inscription of Kélurak, central Java, dated 782, writes of the Mañjuśrī image, the erection of which is the main object of the inscription, that ‘this is the majestic Vajrabearer (vajrabṛ̥ti), Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara’, thus suggesting that the Bodhisattva embodies, as it were, Indra and the three main gods of Hinduism. It would, however, be wrong to regard this passage as an expression of syncretism. It is much better explained as an expression of the universality of the image, which embraces these gods but also conceals in its interior (*antargatān sthitāḥ*) the Buddha, the Dharma and the *Saṅgha*.²³

²¹ Soekmono, ‘Candi: Fungsi dan Pengertiannya’, thesis, Universitas Indonesia, 1974. An English edition of this important work is in preparation.

²² *Çiva dan Buddha. Dua karangan tentang Çiwaisme dan Buddhisme di Indonesia*, with an introduction by Edi Sedyawati, Jakarta, 1982.

²³ F. D. K. Bosch, ‘De inscriptie van Keloerak’, TBG, 48 (1928).

Even an 'orthodox' Mahāyāna text such as the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* equates the highest Bodhisattva stages with those of the great Hindu gods.²⁴

Most modern scholars, for example J. Gonda, Hariati Soebadio and Soewito Santoso, have rightly rejected the use of the term syncretism. Gonda replaced it by 'coalition', suggesting a close link between the two religions. Soebadio devoted an important section of the introduction to her edition of the *Jñānasiddhānta*, an Old Javanese text of the Majapahit period (?), to this problem. Though accepting Gonda's term, she interpreted it as 'a striving for the same ultimate goal using different ways' and, on the basis of some verses of the probably contemporary *Sutasoma*, compared it with 'climbing a mountain. Different ways are used, but in the end the same peak is reached. Nevertheless the ways that are used are considered different.' In addition, she rightly pointed out that 'many facts plead for a longstanding peaceful coexistence of Buddhism and Śivaism', perhaps including 'plain borrowing of a Buddhist text by Śaivites, and adapting it for the Śaivite purposes'.²⁵

There remains, however, a serious problem concerning Kertanagara. The statement that 'the king as the highest principle in the country quite logically would have been identified also with the highest principles of the religions in his country' is unexceptionable, but it is strange that no other king is ever described as Śiva-Buddha. The compound does not indicate a composite deity such as Hari-hara—half Viṣṇu half Śiva—for no Śiva-Buddha image is known to have existed. It is therefore more likely that the king's memory was worshipped in a temple with both a Śiva and a Buddha image. This agrees with a difficult passage in the *Nāgarakērtīgama* (56–2), which describes a temple (Jajawi, i.e. the present Candi Jawi) having a Śiva statue below (*i sor*) but a statue of the Buddha Akṣobhya above (*i ruhur*). This suggests a two-storey temple with a Śiva image in the lower, and a Buddha image in the upper storey. This is a good illustration of Soebadio's view that Śaivism and Buddhism, though united in one building, are also separated: truly a good example of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*!²⁶

There are also other contexts in which the term syncretism has been used, probably with better justification. This applies not only to Hari-hara, but also to the absorption of ancient Austronesian deities into the great religions. In the former case, however, the process had already taken place in India; in the latter it is preferable to use other terms, such as acculturation.

In conclusion, it is clear that the term 'syncretism' requires inverted commas, or else it should be avoided. The same applies to other uses of this term, for example, in respect of Islam in Java or of the influence of the Austronesian substratum on the great religions.

²⁴ See also the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, ed. Rahder, Utrecht-Leuven, 1926, in particular the Seventh Stage. Cf. also Rahder, 'Daśabhūmika-Sūtram. Seventh Stage', *Acta Orientalia*, IV (1926). The most detailed analysis of the Śiva-Buddha concept is that by Soewito Santoso in his edition of the *Sutasoma. A Study in Javanese Wajrayāna*, Satapiṭaka Series, vol. 213, New Delhi, 1975, ch. IV, 40–127.

²⁵ Gonda, 'Śiva in Indonesien', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, XIV (1970); Soebadio, *Jñānasiddhānta*, 1971.

²⁶ cf. also Max Nihom, *Studies in the Buddhist Tantra*, Leiden, 1982, for a different interpretation.