

SI CHON: AN EARLY SETTLEMENT IN PENINSULAR THAILAND

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The Isthmian Context

Few areas in Southeast Asia are as impacted with the press of history as the isthmian tract of peninsular Thailand. It is an area that first came into prominence as a land route, a trans-peninsular portage, between the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Siam. At least before the first half of the third century, and possibly until the fifth century, traders and envoys moving between China and India appear to have shunned the all-sea route leading through the Straits of Malacca in favor of a passage across the waist of the peninsula.¹ The early use of this route may be discerned in the itinerary of a mission apparently sent to India, or at least some locality on the shore of the Bay of Bengal, by the emperor Han Wu Ti (141-87 B.C.)². The mission was in search of pearls, glass and rare stones which were obtained in exchange for gold and assorted silks. These 'strange and precious' objects were eagerly sought by Chinese courts, and in response to the stimulus of this commerce small city-states developed on the peninsula in the early centuries of the Christian era to function as entrepôts in a trading pattern that linked Persia, India, Funan and, ultimately, China. The strategic role of peninsular harbor states and emporia such as Tun Sun,³ Langkasuka and Tāmbraḷiṅga was so critical to

- 1) For the most recent and authoritative discussion of the early routes of maritime trade in Southeast Asia, see O.W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce* Ithaca, New York 1967 pp. 31-36.
- 2) The relevant passage is translated and analyzed in Wang Gungwu, 'The Nanhai trade: A Study of the Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea,' *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol 31 no 2, 1958 pp. 19-22.
- 3) On the basis of the textual evidence, Tun Sun is believed to be located in the northern reaches of the peninsula rather than on the isthmian tract. For an analysis of the problem, see Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese* Kuala Lumpur 1961 pp. 15-21. Both Langkasuka and Tāmbraḷiṅga are considered to be located on the isthmian portion of the peninsula. See *ibid.* pp. 67 and 252-67.

early international commerce that Funan in the third century found itself obliged to extend its hegemony over the area.

Even after the fifth century when the textual evidence indicates that the bulk of international commerce between India and China no longer utilized the land portage but was directly sea-borne through the Straits of Malacca, the area retained some of its entrepôt functions and its importance as a supplier of tin and gharu wood.⁴ Certainly the small city-states of the area experienced a period of prosperity during the sixth and seventh centuries after Funan's control had ended. This is clearly indicated by the brisk pace of tribute missions sent to China by states of the isthmus during the period.⁵ Such missions, whatever else their function may have been, were a mechanism in facilitating commerce.⁶

With the consolidation of international trade attendant on the prosperity of a strong China under the T'ang dynasty, the isthmus became once again a focal area in the geo-politics of Southeast Asia. By the last quarter of the seventh century, the dominant maritime power of the period, the Sumatran-based empire of Śrīvijaya, had extended its control over the Hindu-Buddhist settlements strung out along the Merbok Estuary of Kedah. The Ligor inscription reveals that the northern reaches of the isthmus, probably as far north as the Bay of Bandon, had passed under Śrīvijayan control by A.D. 775. The degree of Śrīvijayan control, the fluctuation of its power, and its cultural impact on the area are open questions, but Śrīvijaya has given its name to an art style which is associated with many objects found in isthmian sites.

The Indians had manifested a commercial interest in the area during Pallava times and before. An Indian mercantile company, the

- 4) For a survey of commodities involved in the early maritime trade of Southeast Asia, see Paul Wheatley, 'Geographical Notes on Some Commodities involved in Sung Maritime Trade,' *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol 32 no 2, 1959.
- 5) Gungwu, *op. cit.* Appendix A pp. 118-23 lists the tribute missions from Southeast Asia to China up to the Sung dynasty.
- 6) The character of diplomatic and commercial relations between China and Southeast Asia is examined in O.W. Wolters, 'China irredenta: the south,' *World Today* vol 19 no 12, 1963 pp. 540-52.

Manigrāmam, was active at Takuapā, an early entrepôt located on the east coast of the isthmus above Phuket, during the ninth century.⁷ The successors to the Pallava, the Cōḷa, reacting against the restrictive trade policies and impositions of Śrīvijaya, raided the isthmian tract possibly in 1017 and also in 1025 and 1068.⁸ Among the material evidence of the Cōḷa impact in the area are statues at Takuapa and Vieng Sra in Cōḷa style, and an inscription at Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja.⁹

Burmese kings turned their attention to the isthmus as early as the reign of King Aniruddha in the mid-eleventh century.¹⁰ And it was control over the commercial routes of the area that briefly embittered relations between Burma and Ceylon leading to a war in 1165-66.¹¹ Indeed, this incident is merely a punctuation mark in the long continuum of contacts between the isthmian area and Ceylon. Professor A.B. Griswold has recently identified Buddha images found at Sungei Golok, in the province of Nārādhiwāsa near the Malayan border, and at Prāṇapurī province further north, as products of Ceylon dating to about the fifth century, and Ceylon cultivated especially close contacts, religious and political, with the isthmian state of Tāmbraṅga during the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries.¹²

In the rich mix of competing influences to which the isthmian tract was subject in ancient times, the Khmer empire played a prominent role. Funan had left its impact on the area and even after its

7) Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., 'Takuapa and Its Tamil Inscription,' *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol 22 no 1, 1949 pp. 25-30.

8) Majumdar, R.C., 'The Overseas Expeditions of King Rajendra Cola,' *Artibus Asiae* vol 24 pts 3/4 pp. 338-42.

9) Coedès, G., *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam, deuxième partie* 2nd ed, Bangkok p. 38.

10) Luce, G.H., 'Some Old References to the South of Burma and Ceylon,' *Felicitations Volumes of Southeast-Asian Studies Presented to Prince Dhaninivat* Bangkok 1965 vol 2 p. 270.

11) Sirima Wickremasinghe, 'Ceylon's Relations with Southeast Asia with Special Reference to Burma,' *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies* vol 3 no 1, 1960 pp. 44-49.

12) 'Imported Images and the Nature of Copying in the Art of Siam,' *Essays Offered to G.H. Luce* Ascona 1966 vol 2 pp. 41-55 and Senarat Paranavitana, *Ceylon and Malaysia* Colombo 1966 pp. 74-81.

collapse cultural exchanges appear to have persisted around the shores of the Gulf of Siam involving the kingdoms of Chen-la and the city-states of the isthmus.¹³ At the beginning of the eleventh century, a pretender to the throne of Angkor itself appears to have been a member of the ruling family of a kingdom at Ligor (Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja), an indication that the elite in the area moved easily in the cultural and political ambience of the Khmer world at that time.¹⁴ Following his victory over Jayaviravarman, the usurper with the isthmian background, Suryavarman I extended Khmer power over the Menam basin as attested by an inscription at Lopburi of 1022-25.¹⁵ In the view of L.P. Briggs, Khmer power at this time extended as far as the isthmus.¹⁶ Recent research on an inscription from Jaiyā on the Bay of Bandon indicates that Khmer cultural influence was still strongly felt in the isthmus as late as the last three decades of the thirteenth century.¹⁷

Some Objects from Si Chon

All this merely blocks out some of the major political and cultural currents which flowed along and over this strategic area prior to the Thai conquest in the latter part of the thirteenth century. When the very spotty archaeological exploration of the area has been extended, it should be possible to see the press of all these relationships congealed into sequences and patterns made by objects. The purpose of this note is to bring to the attention of historians and art historians some photographs of objects from a site in the isthmus which has not previously been recorded in the literature available in European languages. The objects were photographed during a very brief visit

13) O'Connor, S.J., 'Satingprah: An Expanded Chronology,' *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol 39 no 1 July 1966 pp. 137-144.

14) See Coedès, G., 'Stèle de Prasât Bēn (K. 989),' *Inscriptions du Cambodge* Paris 1964 vol 7 pp. 164-89.

15) Coedès, G., *Les États hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie* 2nd ed, Paris 1964 pp. 252-53.

16) Briggs, L.P., 'The Khmer Empire and the Malay Peninsula,' *Far Eastern Quarterly* vol 9 no 3, 1950 p. 286.

17) de Casparis, J.G., 'The Date of the Grahi Buddha,' *Journal of the Siam Society* vol 55 no 1, 1967 pp. 30-40.

to Amphur Si Chon, an area on the east coast of the peninsula between the Bay of Bandon and the town of Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja. The modern village of Si Chon is approximately thirty-eight miles directly north of Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja from where it can be reached by boat or by a road that is in some stretches little more than a track. For some miles approaching Si Chon, it follows the shifting sands of what must be an ancient beach and a vehicle with four-wheel traction is essential.¹⁸

Three sites in the vicinity of Si Chon have yielded many antiquities: Wat Jom Tong, Na Khom village and Wat Sra Si Mum.¹⁹ Some objects remain at the sites, while others are now in private collections in Si Chon, Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja, and, so I am told, Bangkok. The following notes relate to objects, some *in situ*, others in private collections, which are said to come from these sites.

Wat Jom Tong

Figures 1 and 2 This male figure with four arms, wearing a roughly conical headdress and a long skirt or *dhoti*, is a representation of Viṣṇu in *sthanaka-murti*. While its arms are broken and its attributes are thus missing, it is very likely that they were the conch (*śankha*), club (*gadā*), wheel (*cakra*) and either the lotus (*padma*) or the symbol of the earth (*bhu*).²⁰ Images of this type are familiar from such sites on the isthmian tract as Takuapā, Vieng Sra, Surāstra-dhāni and Satingprah. Indeed, it is found in a number of sites around the

18) My visit to the site in May 1966, while enroute to Sarawak to participate in archaeological field work with the Sarawak Museum, was made possible by a grant from the JDR IIIrd Fund and the cooperation of the Department of Fine Arts of Thailand. I was accompanied to Si Chon by Mr. Nikom Suthiragsa of the Fine Arts Department, and Messrs. Samran and Chiaranai, scholars from Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja. I am most grateful for their assistance.

19) A fourth site a hill called Kao Ca is some distance from Si Chon but can be reached by jeep. For a photograph showing several stone images and a *snānadroṇi*, and a brief account of a visit to this and other sites in the Si Chon area, see Suchit Wongthet, 'Borankhadii Phanēchhōn (Wandering Archaeology),' *Chāo Krung* vol 16 no 2 Nov 1966.

20) Banerjea, J.N., *The Development of Hindu Iconography* Calcutta 1946 pp. 387-88 and Dupont, P., *La statuaire préangkorienne* Ascona 1955 pp. 143-44.

Gulf of Siam in both Thailand and Cambodia. It is well-known as the mitred *Viṣṇu* as a result of studies by Pierre Dupont.²¹

The *Viṣṇu* from Si Chon bears a considerable resemblance to the well-known *Viṣṇu* image from Takuapā which is now in the Bangkok Museum. Neither image has the customary reserves of stone at the hips, which were disguised by the knot of a sash and the handle of the club, and which functioned as part of a system of supports to protect fragile areas of the image against fracture. Instead, the lower arms are held away from the body and were supported by reserves of stone which were attached to the soles. Vestiges of these reserves may be seen on the base near the left and right feet. Images with this system of reserves appear to be a late development in the series of long-robed *Viṣṇu* images in both Thailand and Cambodia and probably date from a period extending from the second half of the seventh century through the eighth.²²

In one significant respect, the Si Chon image differs from the Takuapā *Viṣṇu* and most of the other long-robed images found in peninsular Thailand. The central panel of drapery which falls from the gathered knot at the waist extends only to the lower hem of the *dhōṭī*. It does not connect with the base where it would form a reserve of stone to reinforce the image against fracture at the ankles. The Si Chon image is similar in this respect to the practice employed in Cambodia in images such as the *Viṣṇu* of Trung-dien which dates from the second half of the seventh century through the eighth.²³

Figures 3 and 4 These stucco heads are damaged and difficult to integrate into any of the existing styles. Figure 3 appears to be a female divinity while the headdress of figure 4 suggests the *jalā* of a Bodhisattva. If the head actually is a Bodhisattva of the Mahāyāna

21) 'Viṣṇu mitrés de l'Indochine occidentale,' *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* vol 41 no 2, 1941 pp. 233-54 and *La statuaire préangkorienne*, *op. cit.* pp. 122-34.

22) For a discussion of this later series of long-robed *Viṣṇu* images, see Dupont, *La statuaire préangkorienne*, *op. cit.* p. 130; Malleret, L., *L'Archéologie du delta du Mékong* vol 4 *Le Cisbassac* Paris 1964 pp. 145-46; Boisselier, J., *Le Cambodge* Paris 1966 p. 239 and O'Connor *op. cit.* pp. 138-41.

23) Dupont, *La statuaire préangkorienne*, *op. cit.* Plate XIXB.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Viṣṇu. Stone. From Si Chon. Collection of Charat School, Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja.

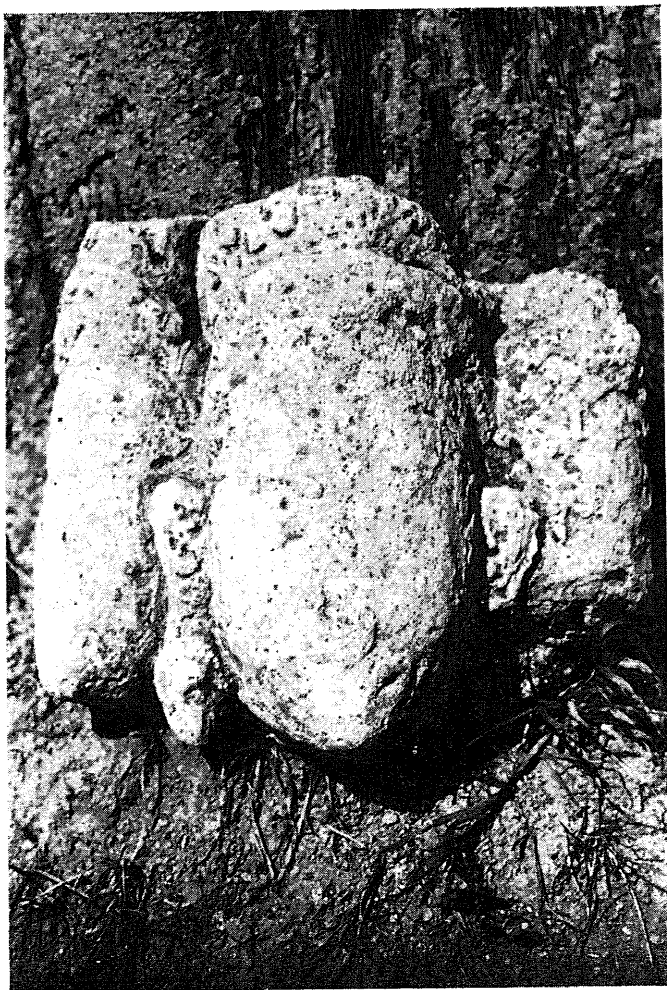


Figure 3
Female Divinity. Stucco. Wat Jom Tong, Amphur Si Chon.



Figure 4
Male Divinity. Stucco. Wat Jom Tong, Amphur Si Chon.

tradition, then it would pre-date the Ayudhyā style, an idiom which prevailed in Si Chon from the fifteenth century onward and of which there are many sculptural examples in the area.²⁴ It is more likely however that these figures are merely subordinate deities in a stucco tradition associated with the Thai Buddhist styles of Ayudhyā and Bangkok. The balance of probability would seem to favor this interpretation since there are structural ruins in the area of Wat Jom Thong which reportedly date from the Ayudhyā period and the stuccos do not appear to be associated with the Dvāravatī tradition of stucco and terra cotta work revealed by such sites as U-Thong, Ku Bua, Bau Kok Mai Den and Nakhon Pathom.²⁵ While there was a workshop influenced by Ceylon and turning out sculpture in the Jaiyā area between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, there is nothing which indicates that these two pieces should be associated with that tradition.²⁶

Figure 5 This is a clay, Buddhist votive tablet. These small images were stamped from metal molds as a pious act and they have been found in various styles over much of mainland Southeast Asia.²⁷

24) A discussion of the national Ayudhyā style and its impact on the isthmian tract is found in Luang Boribai Buribhand and A. B. Griswold, 'Sculpture of Peninsular Siam in the Ayuthya period,' *Journal of the Siam Society* vol 38 no 2, 1951.

25) See for example the illustrations in Fine Arts Department, *Guide to the U-Thong National Museum, Suphanburi* Bangkok 1966 and Dupont, P., *L'archéologie mène de Dvāravatī* Paris 1959.

Buddha images in the style associated with the kingdom of Dvāravatī were made along the coastal reaches of the isthmus. They are found in museums at Jaiyā and Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja. I was told that an image in this style had been located in an area of Amphur Ta Sa-la which is a few miles south of Si Chon on the road to Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja.

26) Dupont, P., 'Le Buddha de Grahi et l'école de C'aiya,' *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* vol 41, 1942 pp. 103-08.

27) For general background, see Foucher, A., 'Les débuts de l'art bouddhique,' *Journal Asiatique* January 1911 pp. 65-66. Filliozat, J., 'Les usages des tablettes bouddhiques aux "Saintes Empreintes"', or *Arts Asiatiques* vol 1 no 4, 1954 pp. 309-16. The basic study on votive tablets in Thailand is Coedès, G., 'Siamese Votive Tablets,' trans. Graham, W.A., *Journal of the Siam Society* vol 20 no 1, 1926 pp. 1-23.

They were apparently especially popular with people of modest means who were unable to afford a Buddha image of bronze or stone. In the Malay Peninsula these objects are found in large quantities in limestone caves.

This tablet belongs to Professor Coedès' 'Type III' which is clearly Khmer in style. It matches exactly the tablet illustrated in Plate VI, center, of Coedès' article on votive tablets. According to Professor Jean Boisselier, Khmer votive tablets do not appear to have been made before the eleventh century.²⁸ Since this tablet does not exhibit any of the complex Mahāyana iconography seen in tablets in the style of the Bayon, and since it has affinities with the multiple figures in prasats and arches associated with the style of Angkor Wat, we may date it to the second half of the twelfth century.²⁹

Evidence of Khmer influence in the area is not unexpected in view of the fact that some time after 1001, Jayavīravarma appears to have launched his campaign to secure the throne of Angkor from a base at Ligor which is considered to be in the general area of Si Chon.³⁰ Dupont found Angkorian influences in the art of Jaiyā north of Si Chon on the Bay of Bandon.³¹ An inscription at Jaiyā in the Khmer language now dated 1183 may actually date to the last three decades of the 13th century. And, at nearby Vieng Sra, a small stone model of a prasat on a pedestal was discovered by Lajonquière. Its function is unclear but it appears to be a reduced model of a Khmer tower sanctuary with a niche, false doors, and a fronton with a nāga in relief. It may belong to the Khmerizing style of Lopburi.³²

Na Khom village

Na Khom is located several miles south of Si Chon. The remains of ancient construction and four large stone *lingas* are scattered about a grassy plain; a fifth is under a nearby house. Local people describe several depressions in the area as 'ancient tanks'.

28) Boisselier, J., *op. cit.* p. 375.

29) See *ibid.* fig 70d.

30) Coedès, 'Stèle de Prasat Běn (K. 989),' *op. cit.*

31) Dupont, 'Le Buddha de Grahi et l'école de C'aiya,' *op. cit.*

32) de Casparis, *op. cit.* 39-40.



Figure 5
Buddhist Votive Tablet. Clay. From Si Chon.
Collection of Charat School, Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja.

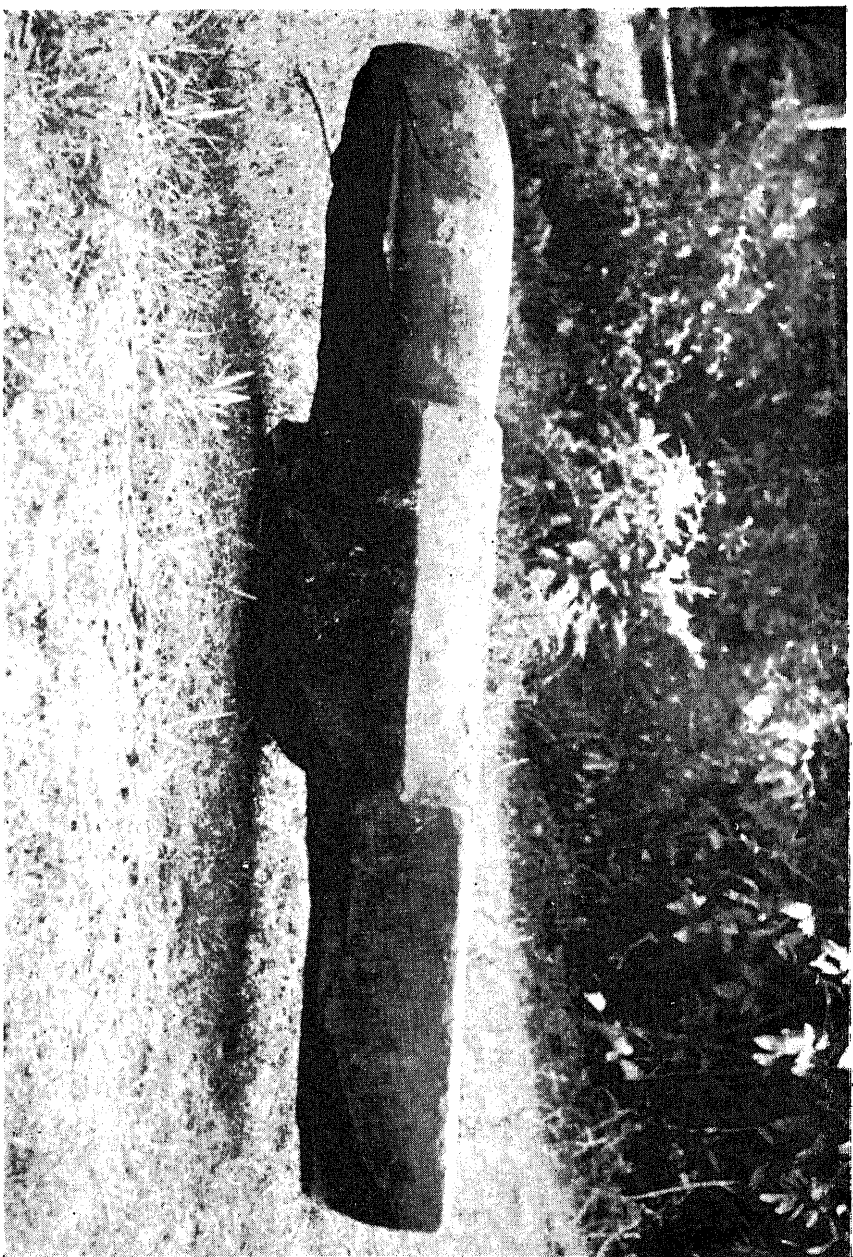


Figure 6

Linga. Stone. Na Khom Village, Amphur Si Chon.

Figure 6 The very size of this large *liṅga* indicates that excavation at Na Khom should reveal the foundations of a large sanctuary since the size of a *liṅga* is in a prescriptive relationship to the scale of the sanctuary which shelters it.

This *liṅga* is divided into a cubic base section (*Brahmabhāga*), an octagonal section in the middle (*Viṣṇubhāga*), and a cylindrical section on the top (*Rudrabhāga*). These sections are of relatively equal length and the object is thus a conventionalized rendering of the phallic emblem of Siva.³³ It is not yet possible to date *liṅgas* with confidence because of the basic simplicity of the type, and because so few can be associated either with an inscription or can be proven to be associated with the original construction of a dated monument. There is, however, a general evolution of type from the most naturalistic representations to those most stylized and distant from their phallic prototype. The conventional treatment of the Si Chon *liṅga*, especially in the simple cylindrical shape of the *Rudrabhāga*, the low relief of the glans and frenum on that cylinder, and the relative equality of measure in the three sections of the emblem, all argue against associating the *liṅga* with those emblems considered to date from the first six centuries of the Christian era when much of the peninsula was dominated by Funan.³⁴ Conversely, the *liṅga* illustrated in figure 6 has not yet undergone extreme stylization.³⁵

33) de Lajonquière, L., 'Essai d'inventaire archéologique du Siam,' *Bulletin de la Commission archéologique de l'Indo-Chine*, 1912-1913 p. 142.

34) Professor Malleret developed the study of *liṅga* types during his investigations in the delta of the Mekong. His observations and systematic organization of *liṅga* types constitute an excellent point of departure for future studies. See *op. cit.* vol 1 pp. 377-88 and vol 4 pp. 141-42. For a study of a *liṅga* found at Jaiyā, just north of Si Chon on the Bay of Bandon, see O'Connor, S.J., 'An *Ekamukhaliṅga* from Peninsular Siam,' *Journal of the Siam Society* vol 54 no 1, 1966 pp. 43-49.

35) Two *liṅgas* found in southeastern Thailand at Pra'cinburi may be considered to belong to this realistic category and could be considered to date from a period before the sixth century. They are illustrated in Dupont, *L'archéologie mène de Dvāravati*, *op. cit.* figures 317 and 319. A conventionalized *liṅga* at Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja has been published in Lamb, A., 'Miscellaneous Papers on Early Hindu and Buddhist Settlement in Northern Malaya and

It may date, on the basis of parallels with types found in Cambodia, to sometime before the ninth century.³⁶

Figure 7 This *liṅga* and a broken *snānadroni* are located under a villager's house in Na Khom at a place known locally as the 'Brahmin's place'. The house has been built over the ruins of an ancient brick platform. The *liṅga* may date to roughly the same time period as that in figure 6.

Wat Sra Si Mum

It was not possible to visit this area during my tour of Si Chon. A number of antiquities are reported to have been found there by local people, however, and I was able to photograph several of them in a private collection.

Figure 8 This crystal *liṅga* is considered by its owner to be a rare and potent treasure. The owner of the object also possessed a large crystal bead almost two inches in diameter. Both were said to come from the area around Wat Sra Si Mum.

I am unable to find an illustration of any other *liṅga* of this type found in Southeast Asia. It may have served as a votive object or possibly it was carried as an amulet. Natural objects with a phallic shape, usually stones from the beds of sacred rivers, have been valued by devotees of Śiva in India and are carried on their person.³⁷ The sect of the Vīrasaivas in southern India are known to have carried *liṅgas* on their person as their chief act of worship.³⁸ Because it is so portable, this object could have been brought to Si Chon at almost any time.

Southern Thailand,' *Federation Museums Journal* vol 6, 1961 fig.113. Because of the bulbous treatment of the Rudrabhāga and the extension of the frenum as a continuous raised relief from the top of the glans to the upper edge of the octagonal mid-section (*Viṣṇubhāga*), the *liṅga* illustrated by Lamb is likely to be anterior to the Si Chon *liṅga* under discussion. There are two other *liṅgas* of the conventional type at Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja which have not yet been published.

36) Malleret *op. cit.* vol 1 p. 383.

37) Banerjea, J.N., *The Development of Hindu Iconography* 2nd ed, Calcutta 1956 p. 458.

38) *Ibid.* p. 454.



Figure 7

Linga. Stone. Na Khom Village, Amphur Si Chon.



Figure 8

Linga. Crystal. Private collection, Amphur Si Chon.

Si Chon and Tāmbraḷiṅga

The impression left by a visit to Si Chon is that the sites in the area are likely to be very rich in evidence on the pre-Thai history of the isthmus. On the basis of the few objects seen, either *in situ* or in private collections, it is possible to suggest that the pre-Thai material from several of the sites would date from at least the seventh or eighth century and extend through the twelfth or thirteenth century. It is very likely that occupation would have been continuous from at least that time until the present.

It is premature to link the material evidence to the textual evidence available to the historical geographers, but there is a strong possibility that excavation at Si Chon would be helpful in throwing light on what is a considerable body of textual evidence, mutually reinforcing and drawn from a surprising variety of sources—Chinese records, Sinhalese chronicles, Cōḷa epigraphy, early Thai Chronicles, and inscriptions found locally at Jaiyā and Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja—which indicate the existence of an important political and cultural center, Tāmbraḷiṅga, located in the coastal lands stretching between the Bay of Bandon and Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja.³⁹ It flourished from the end of the tenth century until it was brought under the hegemony of the Thai kingdom of Sukhotai sometime in the latter half of the thirteenth century. It was a state with sufficient military capabilities to allow it to intervene in the political affairs of the Mon kingdoms in the Menam basin at the end of the tenth century. During much of its history, at least from the beginning of the eleventh century until the end of the reign of Jayavarman VII, Tāmbraḷiṅga was, with varying degrees of intimacy, under the Khmer sphere of influence.⁴⁰ Its international contacts were complex as it maintained trading and tributary relations with China, where it was known as a producer of high quality gharu wood, and the Cōḷas may have considered it important enough to raid it during the eleventh century. Its contacts

39) A critical analysis of the textual evidence and a careful reconstruction of the political history of Tāmbraḷiṅga may be found in Wolters, O.W., 'Tāmbraḷiṅga,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* vol 21 no 3, 1958 pp. 587-607.

40) *Ibid.* p. 599.

with Ceylon were extensive, involving a community of religious interests, trade, and artistic exchanges.⁴¹

Its history prior to the end of the tenth century is shadowy but it is clear that Śrīvijaya had extended its control over the area, whatever it may then have been called, by the last quarter of the eighth century. There are inscriptions at Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja which date to the sixth century at the latest,⁴² indicating the existence of a community in the area at that date sufficiently prosperous and complex to require the commemoration of its affairs on slabs of stone.

Careful excavation and study of sites in the Si Chon area would contribute directly to testing the rich literary materials that seem to relate to this stretch of the peninsula. If Tāmbraḷiṅga was located in the coastal area between the Bay of Bandon and the present city of Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja, then Si Chon is almost certainly one of the population centers of that state. It would not be unexpected to find a range of material at Si Chon that embraced traditions as diverse as those of Funan, certainly Dvāravatī, Śrīvijaya, Ceylon and, heavily, the Khmer empire. Almost inevitably, Chinese ceramics of the Sung, Yuan and possibly Ming dynasties would be found in the area given its history of trading contacts with China.

41) For actual Sinhalese influence on the art of the area of Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja, see Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *A History of Buddhist Monuments in Siam* trans. S. Sivaraksa, Bangkok 1962 p. 6 and Griswold, A.B., 'Siam and the 'Sinhalese Stupa',' *Buddhist Annual* vol 1 Colombo 1964 pp. 76-77.

42) Inscription XXVIII in Coedès, *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam*, *op. cit.* and the inscription in plate 117 of Lamb, *op. cit.* which de Casparis has dated to the sixth century or before.

THE LANGUAGE OF COURTSHIP IN CHIENGMAI

by

Gehan Wijeyewardene

