

RECENT DVĀRAVATĪ DISCOVERIES AND SOME KHMER COMPARISONS

by

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My primary purpose is to discuss some of the Dvāravatī art objects that have come to light since I published my book entitled *Dvāravatī* ten years ago;¹ also to give my impressions of the more recently discovered Dvāravatī sites that I had the opportunity to visit during January and February 1978. Those are In Buri Kao, Sab Champā and Kantharavisai. In addition I shall say something about the new Dvāravatī finds at the long-known sites of Dong Śī Mahā Phot and Śī Thep, the latter of course being a site that long antedates the Dvāravatī period.

In Buri Kao. Perhaps the most interesting is In Buri Kao, or Khu Müang, largely because a considerable amount of excavation has been undertaken there by the Fine Arts Department. J. Boisselier first drew attention to the site which he visited in 1966. He later published a plan of it together with illustrations of a number of objects.² These were mostly stuccos that were either in private ownership or had reached the little museum established at Wat Bot, In Buri.

Unfortunately this site, like that of Ku Bua, has been known to the public too long to provide the sort of rewards for controlled excavation that were obtained at Müang Bon (Nakhon Sawan Province). There intensive work was undertaken by the Department immediately after my discovery of the site. So it is that, in place of bas-reliefs *in situ*, we have in the In Buri museum a mixed assemblage of stucco fragments and other objects. They probably cover a very considerable time span, but are deprived of archeological context.

From its situation near the Chao Phraya River in Sing Buri Province we might expect that In Buri Kao could well have formed an early step in the expansion of Dvāravatī northwards from U Thong. Indeed Boisselier saw evidence of contact between the two sites in the existence of a large votive tablet in private ownership at In Buri—now unfortunately lost. He noted that fragments of a tablet evidently from the same mould, when it was newer, had been found at U Thong. We now have another apparent connection with U Thong in the shape of two small, headless terracotta figures of a man leading a monkey not previously known from other Dvāravatī sites.

In Buri Kao is nearly square. It measures about 700 metres from east to west, and 800 metres from north to south, with rounded corners. It has a low rampart inside the broad moat from which radiate a number of ancient canals. There are said to be three large *sra* (tanks), one of which, about 75 metres in diameter, I saw when I visited the place. Near this was the habitation site where excavations had brought to light potsherds down to a depth of 7 feet.

* Based on a lecture delivered at the Siam Society in January 1979.

1. *Dvāravatī, the Earliest Kingdom of Siam* (London, 1969).

2. J. Boisselier, "Travaux de la mission archéologique française en Thaïlande", *Arts Asiatiques*, XXV (1972), figs. 58-65.

The sherds I saw displayed on a board at Silpakorn University, according to the depths at which they had been found, were for the most part plain, undecorated pottery throughout. Any changes in colour seemed to be due to different temperatures of firing. There was also a small proportion of cord-marked wares. However the local museum had on display two or three examples of well-preserved Dvāravatī-type pots.

Many *stūpa* mounds are said to exist outside the enclosure. One on the north side I noticed had been destroyed by a recently dug canal. I saw two excavated sites, the basements of *stūpa* built of large bricks with plain mouldings, and stairs on each face. At Site 2 (see fig. 1), the three stone statues mentioned below had been found.

Besides the votive tablet and the man and monkey figurines, there are four other objects preserved in the museum at Wat Bot which were undoubtedly made locally and which suggest the town's early foundation. The most impressive is a large *dharmacakra* ("Wheel of the Law") which was found in 1970 (fig. 2). It has the spokes in the round, an early feature, but unfortunately no decoration. Presumably it was abandoned before completion. There is a well-preserved, segmented stucco finial, 18 inches high, and having a terracotta core (fig. 3). It is of the early type, having distinct parasol discs. The archetype of this is the large stone example found at Nakhon Pathom and dated by an inscription as of the sixth century A.D. Finally there are two $\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\varsigma$ fragments which may be considered early. One bears a clear representation of the alternate lotus-and-lozenge motif. The other depicts a model building such as is known from U Thong stuccos.³

The large assemblage of stucco fragments displayed in the museum includes many finials or pinnacles, some segmented and with terracotta cores, as well as decorative pieces with vegetal or flower motifs. There are also miniature pillars, animal and human faces, and certainly some of the fragments show good quality of work. But unfortunately a characteristic common to nearly all of them is that of being extremely weathered. So it is usually difficult to distinguish what may have been originally good from what is of poor workmanship.

The abundance and depth of the deposits at the habitation site suggest long occupancy. This would be borne out if I am right in supposing that the decorative fragment illustrated by Boisselier⁴ represents a simplification of the earlier stucco *makara* angle piece found at Ku Bua, and also illustrated by him,⁵ though without hazarding the comparison I am making here.

Among the paraphernalia to be expected from a Dvāravatī site are a number of stone querns and rollers. Said to have been excavated from a depth of about 5 feet at the habitation site, many coloured glass beads are on display, also some earrings, weights and a metal arrow-head.

Equally vague for dating, and stylistically mediocre, are the Buddha images that have been found. A stucco head was seen and illustrated by Boisselier.⁶ In the local museum there is a stucco standing Buddha, about 2 feet 6 inches in height. Both forearms are projected with

3. J. Boisselier, *Nouvelles connaissances archéologiques de la ville d'U Tong* (Bangkok, 1968), fig. 5.

4. *Arts Asiatiques*, XXV (1972), fig. 64.

5. *Ibid.*, fig. 38.

6. *Ibid.*, fig. 63.

hands in the *vitarka mudra* (fig. 4). It was found by local people and, being in semi-relief, probably formed part of the stucco decoration of a *stūpa*. Also in the museum are the three stone figures found during the excavation of Site 2. Two are small, weathered reliefs of the seated Buddha. The third is a better-preserved standing figure, 2 feet 6 inches high (fig. 5). It seems to belong to Dupont's Group C, the type that is inscribed in a narrow rectangle. But the extreme narrowness of the stone here suggests that it was unfinished. In that case, as with the *dharmacakra*, it would point to the existence of a local workshop. The discoveries to date certainly leave many questions unanswered; but I understand that further excavations are in progress, the results of which are awaited with interest.

Sab Champā is a town site situated some 15 kilometres from Chai Badal in the Nam Sak Valley. It is an area that was reclaimed from the jungle a few years ago. The site was in fact discovered by an agricultural officer concerned with land clearance. Potentially it was probably at least as promising as In Buri Kao, for included in its compass were several considerable mounds. But a team from Silpakorn University had but a short time to work there before Sab Champā was irretrievably ruined by the tractors brought in to transform the area into agricultural land. The university explorers were mainly interested in prehistory, and concentrated their attention upon a neolithic burial. However, they made known the existence of several chance finds which indicated the continued occupation of the place through Dvāravatī times.⁷

The ancient town is but a little larger than In Buri Kao, but more oval in shape. Its most striking feature is the formidable fortification consisting of a broad moat with an inner and outer rampart about 5 metres high. The moat cuts deep into the limestone, and is a remarkable achievement whether it was dug by the neolithic people or in the Dvāravatī period when improved iron implements would have been available (fig. 6).

Several superficial finds reported by the University archeologists concern us. One is a terracotta plaque impressed with an *abhiṣeka* of Śrī on one side and a figure of Kuvera on the other.⁸ Rather more remarkable is a terracotta figurine made from double mould. Though the head is intact and there is no monkey, it is very reminiscent of the man leading a monkey statuette from U Thong. This is because of the similarity of the armlets and other ornaments.⁹ Then, outside the enclosure, about 200 metres to the north, was found a fragmentary, octagonal stone pillar with a lotus base, and a Pāli inscription.¹⁰ I refer below to the garland decoration of this pillar.

When I visited Sab Champā there was nothing to be seen of the ancient mounds said formerly to have been visible. But the ground was strewn with Dvāravatī-type sherds, as well as a few cord-marked. A farmer living nearby showed me a fragment of the ankle of a stone Buddha, a bit of a votive tablet depicting the head of a Buddha, and an iron-socketed implement. More interesting were photographs of three objects of the Dvāravatī period in private possession which were subsequently shown to me by a member of the Department. These were a weathered stone Buddha head, a portion of the rim of a *dharmacakra*, and a seated Buddha figure.

7. โบราณคดี (*Archeology*), vol. III pt. 4, pp. 93-101.

8. *Ibid.*, fig. 4.

9. *Ibid.*, fig. 1.

10. *Ibid.*, fig. 5.

The *dharmacakra* fragment is particularly suggestive of early occupation, because of its ornamentation with good lotus-and-lozenge design. There is sufficient indication that the spokes were carved in the round. The stone seated image, carved against a reredos, is small, only 20 centimetres high, so one cannot be sure that it originated locally. It is seated in the special *paryāṅkāśana* pose, that is to say only the ankles are crossed (fig. 7). This is a feature retained from the Amarāvātī period, the style in general being late Gupta. Exceptionally, for a seated image, both hands are in the *vitarka mudrā*. Dupont thought that such development was never actually achieved in seated images, despite a tendency thereto resulting from the influence of standing images.¹¹

Kantharavisai. An ancient town site in Maha Sarakham Province, Kantharavisai lies about 50 kilometres east of Khon Kaen. The road cuts through the egg-shaped town, which is some 500 metres across. It has a moat 18 metres broad between ramparts 2 or 3 metres high and 6 metres through. In 1972 the Fine Arts Department discovered and excavated a mound inside the enclosure. From fragmentary *sema* (boundary stones) found on the east and north, the remains appear to have been those of an *uposatha* hall. The extant basement of it, built of laterite blocks topped with bricks, measures 37 by 10.5 metres. When I visited the site in January 1978 it was not possible to make out more than the outline of the basement, and to notice that Dvāravatī-type sherds were scattered about. The finds by then had been deposited in the Khon Kaen Museum. There is a single votive tablet depicting the Buddha seated in *vajrāsana* pose, of a type known from not-far-distant Müang Fa Daed. More remarkable are the contents of an earthenware bowl 12.5 centimetres high and 20 centimetres broad at the mouth. It had been found at the northeast corner of the basement. The contents consisted of 66 more or less fragmentary silver plaques, embossed with Buddhist figures. Perhaps they were originally foundation deposits.

The better-preserved pieces are from 4 to 6 inches in height. They include impressed figures of the Buddha, both seated and standing, some *devatā* figures with interesting dress details, and a few figures of *stūpa* and *dharmacakra*. HSH Prince Subhadradis has published the results of his study of these, coming to the conclusion that they date from the late Dvāravatī period, tenth or eleventh century.¹² This is in view of their style and pronounced ethnic features. So I shall here only remark on the *stūpa* and *dharmacakra*, which have a comparative value in connection with what I say later.

Such Buddhist symbols are well known from other sites, e.g. *stūpa* I at Ku Bua;¹³ and one of the gold plaques found in the Thamorat Cave near Śī Thep.¹⁴ What I want to stress is that,

11. P. Dupont, *L'archéologie mène de Dvāravatī* (Paris, 1959), p. 239.

12. M.C. Subhadradis Diskul, "Silver plaques of Dvāravatī period, excavated at Amphur Kantharavichai, Maha Sarakam" (in Thai), *Archeology*, vol. 3 (1974), pp. 302-314, illus.

13. *Guide to the Antiquities found at Ku Bua, Rajburi* (Bangkok, 1961), fig. 11.

14. Illustrated in James H.W. Thompson Collection *Catalogue*, 1962; and Theodore Bowie, ed., *The Sculpture of Thailand* (New York, 1972), fig. 28.

even so late in the Dvāravatī period, the *stūpa* depicted on the silver plaques are readily recognizable as such, even though in some cases the parts are becoming dissociated (fig. 8). Equally so the Wheels are quite orthodox (fig. 9). In characteristically composite Dvāravatī manner, the artists have given the pillar supporting the Wheel an Ionic capital, such as is usually found crowning the spokes of *dharmacakra*. But its use in this way is already found in the Ku Bua tablet mentioned above. It seems to me likely that these silver plaques, though late, are not of local manufacture.

Śī Thep. Accessibility to Śī Thep has changed with the decades. When I revisited it in 1964 it was still in the jungle, and a Landrover was the required mode of conveyance. Now it is within the pale of modernity. Only the last 5 miles, from where one turns off the Petchabun highway, are rather rough. The envisaged thorough excavation of the ancient city is still in the future. But I was happy to see on the occasion of my 1978 visit that the pre-Dvāravatī and post-Dvāravatī architectural remains are still in a good state of preservation. All the historical evidence to which I have long ago drawn attention is still clearly to be seen.¹⁵ What I was interested in on this recent occasion was some evidence that had just come to light on the Dvāravatī period of occupation. The objects in question were being kept, prior to their removal to a national museum, in the new Śī Thep Amphur office that had been built a couple of years before at the junction with the main road.

That there was a Dvāravatī occupation of Śī Thep is already beyond question. This was established both by a few objects already published that have been found in the city, and by the Buddha images carved in the nearby Thamorat Cave.¹⁶ Striking further confirmation had become available by 1978: indeed one could hardly desire more weighty evidence than the over-5-foot-wide stone *dharmacakra* (in part locally restored) that lay in front of the Amphur office (fig. 10). Its decoration is of early type, with lotus-and-lozenge motifs well delineated. Though the spokes are not in the round it could hardly date from later than the eighth century. In the storeroom at the back of the office I saw the fragment of a smaller Wheel: it had three spokes remaining, not in the round, and all decoration had flaked off. There were also two large stone feet and, more important, the upper part of a stone pillar. This was decorated with garlands about which I say more below.

I was also shown photographs of several stuccos. Besides a monster head and a *kinnara*, there were examples of vegetal decoration. Certainly they indicate the existence of *stūpa* remains in or near Śī Thep, at one time lavishly embellished with stuccos. But as to the state in which one might find them now it is difficult to be optimistic.

15. H.G. Quaritch Wales, "The exploration of Śrī Deva", *Indian Art and Letters*, X (1936).

16. H.G. Quaritch Wales, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

The most regrettable examples of what may happen where sites covered by only shallow deposits have long been exposed to traditional agriculture are provided by the Dvāravatī towns in the Prachin valley. This is particularly so at Dong Śī Mahā Phot, where the Fine Arts Department has carried out quite extensive excavations since 1967. Unfortunately the comparative wealth of chance finds, many of them reaching the Bangkok National Museum, which were made over the years, has been paralleled in the excavations by the extreme paucity of the objects found *in situ*. Time and again the official report, published in 1970,¹⁷ ends its description of an excavation with the remark that, aside possibly from an image base and some potsherds, "no antiquities were found". Exceptions must be made for the charming *devatā* relief from Site 16, and also the important Khmer bronze hoard found at Site 11.

On the other hand the report does provide measurements of six bare laterite *vihāra* basements, and a total of three small *stūpa*. The latter have already been stripped of any laterite and of any stucco decoration they may once have had. Rather more informative, because we have nothing like them from other Dvāravatī sites, is the uncovering of the plinth and lower course of two laterite Hindu sanctuary towers. A third one, discovered and excavated at Ban Kok Kwang, some 14 kilometres east of the town, has the distinction of providing a truly gigantic image base. Important chance finds are still occasionally made. These include the huge Gaṇeśa found in fragments in the centre of the town in 1970. The excavation of another sanctuary mound in 1976 (Site 25) yielded an almost complete Viṣṇu.¹⁸

I believe it is necessary to express caution as to the dating of these long-robed Viṣṇu found in the area. Those found in the Malay Peninsula are considered to date from the sixth and seventh centuries. But to apply such dating to similar ones found in the Prachin valley might be to repeat the same mistake that was made in the early days when it was thought that all Dvāravatī Buddhas were of such dating. I even doubt that the Prachin valley was occupied by Dvāravatī before the end of the seventh century. Hindu sculptures of this type, surviving where they were far removed from the Śrīvijayan orbit, undoubtedly continued to be made for a considerable time. They finally ended with degenerate ninth or tenth-century Viṣṇu figures that were formerly to be seen in the U Thong and Suphan town spirit shrines.

17. Banchop Thiemthat and Nikhon Musikakhama, *Archeology of Prachin Buri*, in Thai (Bangkok, 1970) On page 36 there is an illustration of the gold meditating Buddha, in *vajrāsana* pose. This Dvāravatī image was found in 1856 at Site 3, and is kept in the Grand Palace. It became famous as the Nirantaraya "invulnerable" image and was customarily set up in the rites hall on the occasion of royal tonsures (cf. G.E. Gerini, *Chulakanta-maṅgala*, Bangkok, 1895, p. 113). On page 38 we are informed that the Buddha on the Nāga illustrated in *Dvāravatī*, pl. 55a, probably came from the *vihāra*, Site 5. A recently found standing image of the Buddha of Dupont's Group C, height 1.60 metres, placed in front of the Khok Pip Amphur office, provides a frontispiece to the report.

18. *Silpākon*, 21 pt. 2, B.E. 2520/A.D. 1977.

In the light of the recent finds I propose to give further consideration to the nature of the change which Dvāravatī art underwent after it was formed about the late sixth century. We have long been aware that, as with other heavily Indianized arts, there was no desire for originality.¹⁹ However, a limited sort of originality did occur when motifs were rearranged, perhaps unconsciously; or where there was some holdover of an earlier Indian style into a later period. The actual evolution of motifs had already taken place in India, where indeed further evolution would take place in later centuries. The Mōns of Dvāravatī wanted to maintain closely what they had learnt from India and Ceylon; but with the waning of Indian influences a long period of decline and simplification inevitably set in. This process was clearly demonstrated by Pierre Dupont in the succeeding refacings of monuments at Nakhon Pathom, also in the various series of Buddhist images he defined. In my book *Dvāravatī* I trace similar decline in the quality of the *dharmacakra* from the seventh century onwards; and also in the thrones of Buddhas seated European-style. I propose here to add another series, which I think is equally significant in showing the direction of change; that is to say a series of garlands decorating stone pillars. This is greatly helped by two of the recent finds I mention above.

The simple type of garland has only one Dvāravatī representative, that on the seventh-century pillar from Sal Sung, Lop Buri (fig. 11). Equally common in India was the compound type evolved from it, consisting of several superimposed ranges. We thus have five Dvāravatī examples, two of them with inscriptions. Perhaps the finest and earliest is to be seen on the fragmentary capital beneath the huge Nakhon Pathom block, well known from the heads looking out of *kudu* windows. It bears an inscription of the sixth or early seventh century, and has three varied ranges of garlands, the largest ones being made up of flowers. Since Gupta garlands are depicted as being made of beading these flowers are probably an Amarāvati holdover (fig. 12).

The garlands on the pillar from Site 11 at U Thong with their bold, deep cutting are perhaps almost contemporary to the delicately carved Nakhon Pathom example, but the floral representation is less evident (fig. 13). The Śi Thep fragment (fig. 14) shows a garland design of two ranges with some suggestion of florets, and may date from the late seventh century. Not earlier than the eighth century I should place the Śi Mahā Phot pillar with its schematized garlands and pendants (fig. 15). The Pali inscription on the Sab Champā pillar appears to show on paleographic grounds that it cannot be later than early eighth century.²⁰ Its garlands are schematic and imperfectly understood (fig. 16). Certainly our material shows a decline from the superb sixth-century work, which the Mōn artists strove in vain to maintain.

19. G. Coedès, *Les peuples de la Péninsule Indochinoise* (Paris, 1962), p. 72.

20. Verbal communication from professor Uraisi Varasarin.

If, by way of comparison, we turn to contemporary Chen-la, to see what the early Khmers made of the garland decoration they received from India, a surprise awaits us. A study by Mlle. M. Bénisti has made the evidence readily available.²¹ She shows that the early Khmers preferred the **simple** garland, particularly the kind seen at Ajanta Cave XXVII, which has a toothed leaf in the interior of each loop. The Khmers never experienced the extreme degree of Indianization that did the Môn. And with the decline of Indian influence, as I have attempted to show in previous publications, the Khmers tended to develop their art in accordance with urges from their pre-Indian civilization. From this they inherited a dislike for spiral or meandering forms and a preference for isolated motifs. So the seventh-century Khmers probably felt a repugnance for the compound garland with its more sinuous suggestions. But the simple garland containing the toothed leaf had greater appeal, and in the course of time the garland itself was evidently eliminated. In later Khmer art it is only the pendants surviving between the isolated leaf motifs that indicate the origin of the garland.²²

Quite to the contrary was the reception and treatment which the Chams gave to the Indian **compound** garlands. Not only did they welcome them but, actuated by the surviving influence of their previous Dong-son civilization, they had transformed them by the end of the ninth century into continuous undulating bands.²³

Interesting evidence for culture change exists on the periphery of the Dvāravatī cultural sphere, at Mūang Fa Daed in the northeastern province of Kalasin. The local population are likely to have been primitive Khmers, megalith builders, at the time the Môn Buddhist civilization spread to that region. Besides the evidence of art styles, other signs of this Môn influence have become available in recent years. I refer to the discovery of votive tablets inscribed with the name of a certain King Athid in Môn script,²⁴ as well as a Pāli inscription in Môn characters on one of the *sema* stones.²⁵ In addition to the Jātaka reliefs on the *sema* stones, the recent finding of half a dozen small bronze images of the Buddha at Site 3, similar to those known from U Thong, seems to be an indication of the Theravāda persuasion of the people.

The site is famous above all for its abundance of carved *sema* stones. In seeking an explanation in my book *Dvāravatī*, I could not fail to take into consideration the presence of many megalithic standing stones or menhirs in the same general region. The statement of the Fine Arts Department on this point may be considered vague.²⁶ But the late Major Seidenfaden,

21. Mireille Bénisti, *Rapports entre le premier art khmer et l'art indien* (Paris, 1970).

22. For examples in Khmer art from ninth-century Kulen onwards, see G. de Coral Rémusat, *L'art khmer: les grandes étapes de son évolution* (Paris, 1940), pls. VII, 19; VIII, 22; IX, 26.

23. Ph. Stern, *L'art du Champa* (Paris, 1942), pl. 36a.

24. Illustrated in *Silpākon*, XI, 6.

25. Piriya Krairiksh, *Buddhist Folk Tales Depicted at Chula Pathom Cedi* (Bangkok, 1974), page 26, note 10.

26. Fine Arts Department, *The Survey and Excavations in N.E. Thailand* (Bangkok, 1959), p. 61.

who was a very careful observer, mentioned having seen two perfect stone circles at one place in the northeast.²⁷ A magnificent standing stone some 9 feet high has been discovered in Udon Province, which I cannot imagine to have been originally a Buddhist *sema* stone.²⁸ The primitive Khmer megalith builders had probably been driven up to the Plateau by their Indianized kinsmen of the Mekong valley, and they took possession of the lands vacated by the vanished Ban Chiang civilization. In the same way it seems probable that other primitive Khmers escaped through a mountain pass to the province of Quang-tri, Viet Nam, where they established a full megalithic culture.²⁹ I suggest in my book that local tendencies gradually reasserted themselves as the Môn Buddhist influence began to decline, and that a cult of the *sema* developed. The size and decoration of the stones appear remarkable; moreover, nothing comparable has been found at any Dvāravatī site in central Siam, although at Fa Daed there is such an abundance. It seems to be a purely local development. And, unlike the orthodox Wheels depicted on the Kantharavisai silver plaques, some of those on the Fa Daed *sema* bear hints of vegetal decoration.³⁰ Other Fa Daed *sema* depict *stūpa* of such extreme attenuation that the sculptors might be suspected of having the idea of a sword or dagger at the back of their minds.³¹

My seemingly plausible hypothesis received a rude shock when attention was called to the existence of carved *sema* at the site of the ancient Môn Kalyani monastery at Thaton, Burma. These had actually been published as long ago as 1934.³² Neither the size nor number of these *sema* is mentioned, but seven are illustrated. They are all carved with Jātaka scenes which appear stylistically similar to the Fa Daed reliefs. They are thought to date from the eleventh or twelfth century. Their existence can leave no doubt that such stones were a feature of early Môn establishments. Their absence from corresponding sites in metropolitan Dvāravatī can be explained by the probability that, in an alluvial region where stone was not readily available, they would have been utilized for one purpose or another by later inhabitants. Luce states that in Burma *sema* were often removed from ancient sites.³³ But the profusion of carved *sema* at Müang Fa Daed, with the proximity in the region of megalithic menhirs, yet remained inexplicable and seemed to afford some measure of justification for my hypothesis. Such would be the case especially in considering that a people undergoing acculturation are likely to choose or stress a mode which has apparent affinity with something of their previous civilization.

Support for my view comes from another quarter; consequently my interpretation must remain radically different from that of Piriya Krairiksh, to whom we owe the identification of many of the Fa Daed Jātaka scenes.³⁴ Phnom Kulen, the mountain to the west of Angkor,

27. *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 29, p. 159.

28. *Muang Boran Journal*, vol. 2 no. 4 (1976), p. 32 and coloured plate.

29. H.G. Quaritch Wales, "The pre-Indian basis of Khmer culture", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1952), pp. 117-123.

30. Srisavara Vallibhotoma, "The *sema* complex of the North-East", *Muang Boran Journal*, vol. 1 (1975), fig. 5.

31. *Ibid.*, figs. 20-25.

32. *Annual Report of the Archeological Survey of India for the Years 1931-34*, pt. I, pp. 203 f.; pt. 2, pl. CXVI.

Also Piriya Krairiksh, "Semas with scenes from the Mahānīpāta-Jātakas in the National Museum at Khon Kaen", *Art and Archeology in Thailand*, 1 (1974), figs. 23-26.

33. G.H. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan* (New York, 1970), p. 252, note 228.

34. Piriya Krairiksh, *loc. cit.*

was sacred to the ancient Khmers. It was there that King Jayavarman II initiated his cult of the *devarāja* early in the ninth century. Though outwardly dedicated to the Śiva *liṅga*, this cult was strongly influenced by pre-existing fertility cults. It would thus appear that at some more recent period Theravāda Buddhism was introduced among the primitive Sāmrê people who still revere a supreme mountain deity. Understandably Buddhism there became influenced by their megalithic background. A cult of the *sema* evolved comparable to, but more developed than, that which I believe was practised at Fa Daed. Two explorers, J. Boulbet and B. Dagens, have described a number of hitherto unknown Hindu sites on Phnom Kulen, also the remains of two Buddhist *vihāra*.³⁵ In each of the last-mentioned the building was reduced to a mound, with around it eight correctly placed pairs of carved *sema*. Some of the stones exceed 2 metres in height. There is only one Jātaka scene, but many of the stones are carved with Buddhist or supposedly Buddhist emblems. Apart from an *abhiseka* of Śrī, all are either Wheels of the Law or *stūpa*. Only the latter are said to be recognizable as such to the better informed of the present-day Sāmrê inhabitants.

The transformation that I believe had overtaken the Fa Daed *dharmacakra* is abundantly confirmed at Phnom Kulen. The modifications there appear to me very significant. The *dharmacakra* acquires a vegetal character, sometimes with a spire, thus identified with the Tree of Life. In one case it is flanked by two animals which are certainly not the orthodox deer associated with the First Sermon (fig. 17a). More likely they represent the opposing creative forces. The other face of this stone (fig. 17b) bears what appears to be the representation of a mountain rather than of a *stūpa*. To the Sāmrê with their supreme mountain deity, the Mountain probably meant more than did the Tree. Two of the Phnom Kulen stones bear definite representations of the 'sacred sword'.³⁶ And we know that the sword or dagger is widely associated with the menhir.³⁷ Such changes cannot be explained in terms of orthodox Buddhism—nor can they be ignored. With nothing comparable known elsewhere in Cambodia, the discoverers did not fail to draw attention to the similar developments at Fa Daed, no less than 300 kilometres away. They thought that some religious people might have migrated thence to Phnom Kulen, attracted by its far-famed holy reputation. But Buddhist teachings from whatever source travelling far afield into the Khmer cultural environment might separately have undergone modification, just as the Hindu cult of the *liṅga* had earlier been transformed into that of the *devarāja*.

Reverting once more to recent discoveries in Thailand, an enigma is posed by some impressive Dvāravatī-like sculptures in a limestone cave near the southern shore of the Bay of

35. J. Boulbet and B. Dagens, "Les sites archéologiques de la région du Bham Gulen", *Arts Asiatiques* (1973), pp. 42 ff., illus.

36. *Ibid.*, photo 130 and figs. 15, 16.

37. F.M. Schnitger, "Les terrasses mégalithiques de Java", *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, tome XIII (1939), pt. 2, p. 106 and note 1.

Bandon. Examination *in situ* is essential for their full appreciation. The cave of Wat Kū Hā is situated a little off the main road running east from Surat, just before reaching the town of Kanchanadit. It is thus near the southern shore of the Bay, almost opposite the town of Chaiya on the northern shore. Disregarding a row of modern Buddhas one is confronted by an impressive array of Gupta-inspired art which is reminiscent of an Ajanta cave-temple. These works are all executed in a kind of clay adhering to the limestone walls.

Just inside the cave, overlooking the entrance, one is faced by a large bas-relief showing several earth-touching seated Buddhas, a *stūpa* of somewhat peculiar form, and several architectural features including a pediment (fig. 18). In a deep cleft in the rock to the left some 15 feet above floor level, a large clay figure of the Buddha in the round is seated European-style accompanied on either side by lesser images (fig. 19). I did not see any standing figures. Probably the best-preserved of all the Kū Hā sculptures is a large seated Buddha at a much higher level in the cleft. Only the head and shoulders of this image can be seen, and then only from outside the cave through a gap in the wall. Through binoculars the facial features appear exceptionally well preserved.

In the present state of knowledge it would be too facile to attribute these sculptures to Dvāravatī influence, even without claiming any Dvāravatī political domination of the region. There is good reason to believe that in the seventh and eighth centuries, prior to the coming of the Śrīvijayans, this area was occupied by the state of Tāmbraḷiṅga. Elsewhere I have given reasons for supposing that the Buddhist remains of the early period found around the Bay of Bandon represent a parallel development to that of Dvāravatī, derived independently from Gupta or late Gupta sources.³⁸ I have expressed the same opinion with regard to the Buddhist objects found at Yarang, Pattani, which was probably the site of the contemporary state of Langkasuka.³⁹

A writer in a recent issue of *Muang Boran Journal* expresses similar views both as regards Wat Kū Hā art and that of Yarang: "The art of the fourth and sixth centuries was strongly influenced by Gupta art, and this easily explains why image styles are so much alike. What needs to be explained are the differences in points of detail."⁴⁰ A detailed study, on a comparative basis, of the art of Wat Kū Hā is urgently called for, and as regards Yarang I cannot do better than quote the closing sentence of the above-mentioned article: "Yarang has yet to be excavated scientifically, but when it is we can expect the site to yield up some of the answer to the question of why an art style like Dvāravatī is found spread so far afield."⁴¹

The other side of the medal, so to speak, concerns the extent of Śrīvijayan influence in Dvāravatī. We are certainly now in a better position to delimit this than was the case a decade ago, when I regarded it as the great question for the future. The discovery of the remarkable series of bas-reliefs at Chula Pathon *stūpa*, which was incompletely excavated by Pierre Dupont,

38. H.G. Quaritch Wales, *The Malay Peninsula in Hindu Times* (London, 1976), pp. 60 f.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

40. No na Paknam, "Dvāravatī art styles in Pattani", *Muang Boran Journal*, vol. 5 no. 2 (Dec. 1978-Jan. 1979), p. 77.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

and their subsequent analysis by Piriya Krairiksh, has largely cleared up this problem so far as western Dvāravatī is concerned. Dr. Piriya has shown their complete freedom from Mahāyānist concepts and from the representation of Bodhisattvas as cult images.⁴² I have explained in a recent article that the undoubted Mahāyānism which must have accompanied the large number of Mahāyānist bronzes found at Phra Khon Chai and elsewhere on the Khorat Plateau, and which probably reached the Thamorat Cave near Śī Thep, resulted from influences spreading westwards from Chen-la.⁴³ These influences brought to the Plateau the late eighth-century Khmer style of Kompong Prah, which is ultimately of Javanese and not Śrīvijayan inspiration. As evidence for Śrīvijayan influence, and then only to the extent that Śrīvijayan art styles were appreciated throughout Dvāravatī, we still have little more than isolated votive tablets and occasional small bronze Bodhisattvas, such as have been found at U Thong,⁴⁴ Ku Bua,⁴⁵ and more recently at Müang Fa Daed.⁴⁶

42. *Op. cit.*, pp. 21-24.

43. H. G. Quaritch Wales, "The extent of Śrīvijaya's influence abroad", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. LI pt. 1 (1978), pp. 5-11.

44. *Guide to the U Thong Museum*, fig. 28.

45. J. Boisselier, *Arts Asiatiques*, XXV (1972), fig. 36. He found it at Site 17, near Wat Klong. Boisselier also gives in this publication an excellent plan and elevation of Wat Klong, the appearance of which monument, as I noticed when revisiting it in 1978, has been greatly improved by the removal of the debris on the north side, as well as the monks' museum formerly on the summit.

46. Illustrated in *Guide to the Khon Kaen Museum*.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

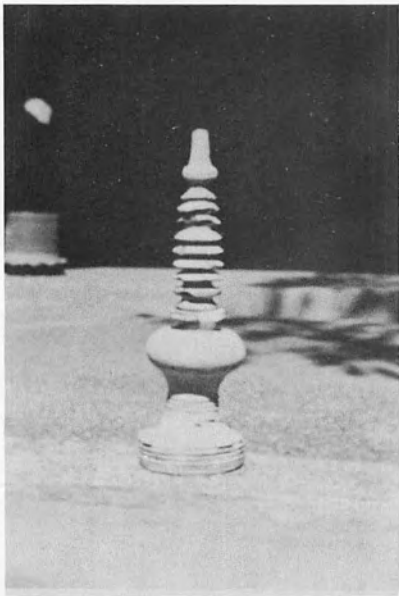


Figure 3.



Figure 5.

Figure 4.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

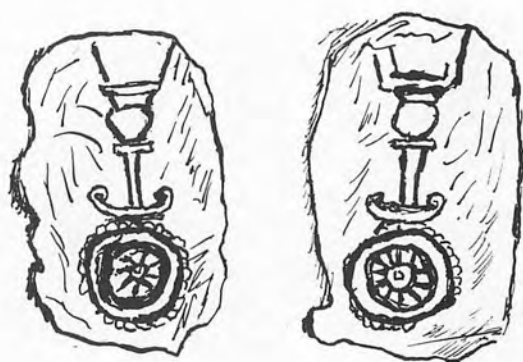


Figure 9.

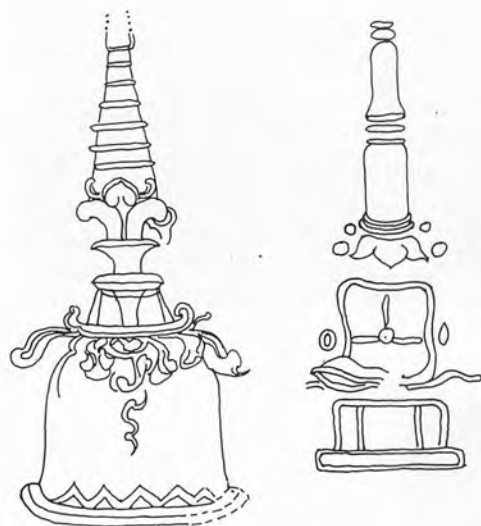


Figure 8.



Figure 10.



Figure 11.



Figure 12.

Figure 13.





Figure 14.



Figure 15.



Figure 16.

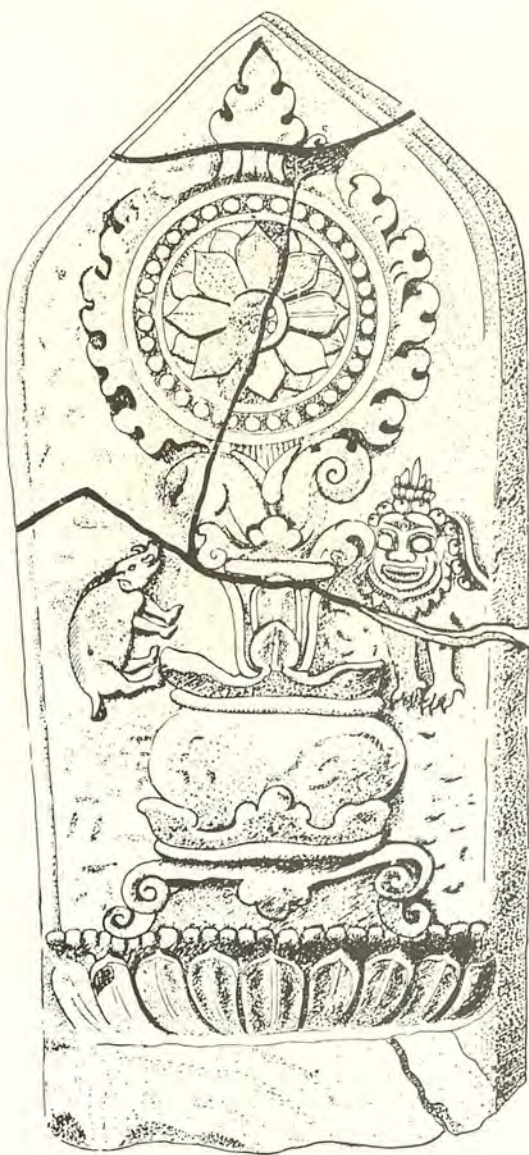


Figure 17.

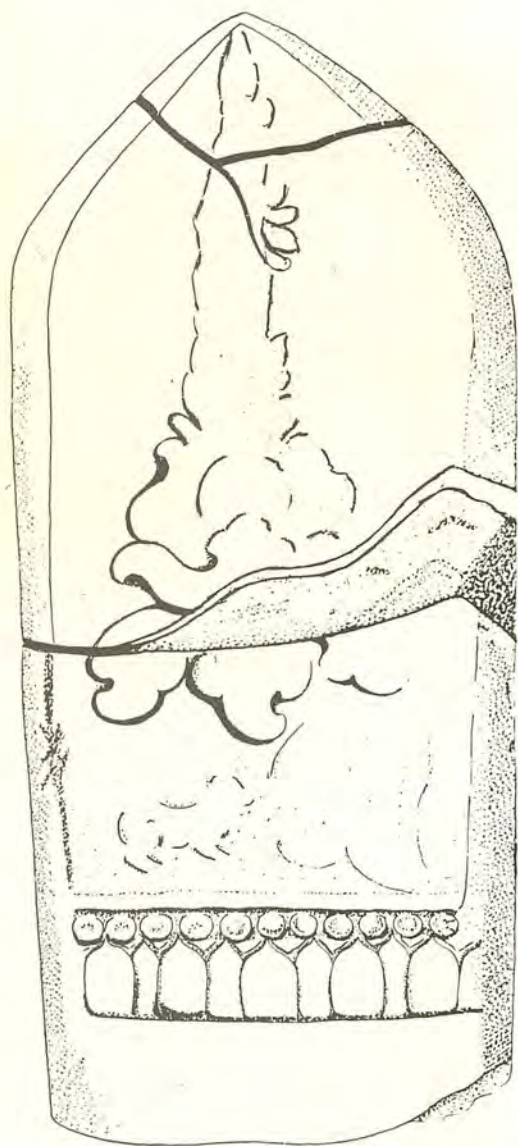


Figure 18.

