

SECTION II

ARCHITECTURE

THE PRECINCT OF THE THAI UPOSATHA HALL [BÔT] A Southeast Asian Spirit World Domain

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The designation of an *uposatha* hall¹ is one of the most important canonical requirements for a Buddhist monastery. This importance stems from the Observance of *Pātimokkha*, i.e., periodic recitations of the rules of discipline which are held there. It is through Observance of *Pātimokkha* that the monks maintain rigorous discipline and there are strict rules related to the Observance. The use of the hall for the ordination of new monks adds greatly to its significance in Thailand. The Thai *uposatha* hall, also known as the *bôt*, sits within a precinct designated by boundary markers or *bai sīmā*. The use of stone markers, like the need for the hall itself, has its roots in the Pāli Canon. However, a close and critical reading of the Pāli text reveals that the precinct of the *uposatha* hall surrounded by these markers is firstly optional, and secondly has evolved beyond what is strictly required by the texts.

The *Mahāvagga* (II, 6) sets out the need to establish a boundary (*sīmā*) of the residence for one Order whose members must Observe *Pātimokkha* together. In the *Vinaya Pitaka*, the Pāli term *sīmā* merely refers to the boundary or limit of one "parish," i.e., an area in which lives one and only one Order of monks (P.E.D. 1979; cf. *Mahāvagga* II, 6). It does not specifically refer to the *uposatha* hall. However, within the *sīmā* (with a limit of three *yojanas* across; *Mahāvagga* II, 7.1), one dwelling place is to be designated as the *uposatha* hall. The Pāli Canon lists a number of things, namely, rocks, anthills, hillsides, trees, roads, rivers, ponds and even the village boundary as suitable markers for the *sīmā*, but markers for the *uposatha* hall are not specified. Furthermore, it is left to the individual Orders to set a limit to the size of the *uposatha* hall or its precinct if they so wish (*Mahāvagga* II, 9.2).² In other words, a precinct for the *uposatha* hall is optional; it is a marked boundary for the total area of residence for one Order which is required.

Published material on the Buddhist monastic sites in India leaves ambiguous the form, even the presence, of such markers for either an area of residence or an *uposatha* hall. As the canonical requirements for *sīmā* and *uposatha* hall designations

predate the archaeological remains, and the markers mentioned in the canon would be easily obliterated with time, it is impossible to say they did not exist. Nothing remains at Buddhist archaeological sites in India which was obviously the marker of either a *sīmā* or an *uposatha* hall. However, a number of small stone pillar forms can be seen at Sañchi which may have served that purpose. For example, at the large monastery west of the Great Stūpa, small stone pillars are positioned at the entrance in a way which might have served as markers (fig. 1). There is, on the other hand, no ambiguity about remains of *sīmā* markers or *uposatha* halls in Sri Lanka and the countries of Southeast Asia.

As *Mahāvagga* II, 8–12, which established the need to agree on the *uposatha* hall, does not specify its markers, the different Orders were presumably free to develop their own traditions. Sri Lanka and the countries of Southeast Asia all use stone markers, apparently borrowing one of the canonically sanctioned *sīmā* markers for the area of residence of one Order to mark the *uposatha* hall. The correctness of the demarcation of the *uposatha* hall has been an important issue in establishing the monasteries of Thailand. That the *bai sīmā* of Thailand, in contrast to their counterparts in most other Buddhist countries,³ are varied in form and often lavished with ornamentation gives testimony to their importance and the possibility of local cultural influences on this aspect of Thai Buddhist architecture. It has been established that a number of Buddhist sites in Thailand, e.g., Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai (cf. Gosling 1983), occupy the same site as ancient fertility or earth spirit cults. Richard O'Connor (1989, 398–399) has also noted that against the context of earlier practices related to locality and ancestral spirits, the Buddha image has supplanted the rulers' personal deities. Evidence of this is the practice of conquerors to collect great images and house them in or near their palaces. It is thus clear that, on the one hand, there has been significant integration of earlier local beliefs with Buddhist doctrine, and on the other it is also very clear that the notion of a pure form of Buddhism (represented by the Pāli tradition) was also very important in

Thailand. This study delves into the implications of the designation of the precinct of the Thai *uposatha* hall or *bōt* within such a context. It looks at the forms and ornamentation⁴ of the markers or *bai sīmā* as possibly symbolic of their origins. This symbolic potential, in conjunction with related practices, is considered as the basis of evaluating the meaning and significance of the precinct in its broader cultural context. It is also an attempt to place in clearer perspective some of the subtle aspects of the relationship between Theravada Buddhist tradition and the heritage of earlier belief systems.

BAI SĪMĀ FORMS

The *uposatha* hall of Thailand is surrounded by eight stone markers placed at the middle of the four sides and at each of the four corners. This practice is found in every period of Thai art history. Likewise, the classic form of the *bai sīmā*, a stone slab with a leaf-like shape, can be found in varying proportions and with varying degrees of ornamentation from the earliest periods of art history in Thailand until the present (see table 1). This form is associated with a *bodhi* leaf.⁵ There are, however, other forms which prove significant in understanding the full range of meaning and give some potential additional reasons for the great significance of this Buddhist tradition in Thailand. Thai Buddhist traditions have developed along with other Theravadin traditions in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia and the *bai sīmā* can be expected to reflect these as well as internal cultural influences.

The earliest *bai sīmā* found in Thailand belong to the Dvaravati (Mon) period (sixth–eleventh/twelfth centuries C.E.).⁶ Most of these are found in the northeastern part of Thailand although some stones of a similar type have been found in the central and southern regions. While most *bai sīmā* are of modest size, many of these early northeastern examples are very tall, some over two meters in height,⁷ and many are embellished with carved ornaments. In horizontal section, they vary from slab-like to square, octagonal or circular. The form typically curves from the shoulder up to a peak at the center. This results in a leaf- or, in some cases, a lance- or shield-like form (fig. 2). One interesting form at a Dvaravati site, Wat Thammasala in Nakhon Pathom,⁸ although probably dating to a much more recent period, may reflect an earlier Dvaravati style. It is a fluted bullet shape (fig. 3). Perhaps it can be seen as an elongated *amalaka* form following the precedent of a Dvaravati finial form such as can be seen in the museums in Nakhon Pathom and Bangkok. Alternatively it might be a cluster of pillars but now brought together in one point at the top. This point seems to be either repaired or newer than the original.

One of the smallest Dvaravati *bai sīmā* is an interesting example, dated to the ninth century, on display in the British Museum (item 1946–10–15.3). Only about thirty to thirty-five cm in height, the slab form is very clearly based on a leaf. It is also one of the more profusely ornamented, being completely carved over with floral patterns.⁹ While many of the Dvaravati *bai sīmā* are decorated with floral ornamentation, this is generally only around the base. A fair number are carved with scenes from the

Jātakas or the life of the Buddha (fig. 4) or with an image of the Buddha in meditation or preaching *mudra*. *Sīmā* stones carved with *Jātaka* scenes have also been found at the Mon Kalyani monastery site in Burma (Luce 1969, 252; cf. Quaritch Wales 1980). Perhaps the most common ornament is a representation of a *stūpa* or pot form with a greatly attenuated spire located exactly on the central axis of the form (fig. 5). Perhaps the spire should be seen as a shaft of light from celestial realms descending on the reliquary; such a motif would emphasize the notion of holy relics.

The tall heavy forms of the Dvaravati Period (fig. 6) are reminiscent of the *menhirs* found in the northeastern region of Thailand, for example at Ban Nong Hin Tang, Chaturat, Chaiyaphum province (Paknam 1981a). They are thought by H. G. Quaritch Wales (1980, 51) to be an earlier megalithic cultural trait re-emerging through a Mon Buddhist cultural decline. The large Dvaravati slab forms with pictorial bas-reliefs¹⁰ bear a resemblance to the hero tablets of the Korku of central India (Elwin 1951, fig. 150) or the stone *tjoeroep* of Sumatra (van der Hoop 1931–32, fig. 129) as well as the more pillar-like third century hero stones of the Ikṣvāku king Vāisisṭhīputra Cāmtamūla found at Nāgārjundakoṇḍa (Huntington 1985, 182, fig. 9.31). Although hero tablets such as these are not known for the northeast of Thailand, other related forms of honoring the dead, namely carved wooden pillars, are known in that region.

Numerous *bai sīmā* remain around the sites of the *uposatha* halls in the old city of Sukhothai. They exhibit the classic *bai sīmā* form of the Central Plain. This form has been attributed to Sinhalese influence (Paknam 1981b, 205). It is, therefore, interesting to note that the early Sinhalese *sīmā* stones are usually pillar-like (cf. Bandaranayake 1974) rather than slab forms as in Thailand. In Sri Lanka these post-type markers were used around a number of structures including certain *stūpa* (figs. 7 and 8), image houses and *kuṭī* (monastic residences) as well as the *uposatha* hall (Bandaranayake 1974, 219, n.1) It is to be noted that *bai sīmā* have also been used around a few *chedi* in Thailand. In most early Sinhalese examples, single square posts, without ornament, were located very close to or against the structure at each marker location, usually a total of eight points. The *sīmā* markers of the twelfth century Baddhasīmāpāsāda of Polonnaruwa (figs. 9 and 10) are twelve pairs of pillars located some distance from the structure and arranged to imply lines radiating out from the structure. They are also exceptional as they are topped with pots and floral motifs. The classic Thai *bai sīmā* in fact bear more resemblance to the early, ornamented Sinhalese guardstones (fig. 11). Later Sinhalese *sīmā* stones are small slab forms, but these are quite devoid of ornament and are paired with a smaller post similar to the early Sinhalese *sīmā* stones. These paired markers are placed a short distance away from the building. Similar markers have also been noticed at a contemporary *uposatha* hall of a historic monastery in Pegu.

A range of pillar form *bai sīmā* can be found in Chiang Mai. Paired round pillars serve as *bai sīmā* at Wat Bupparam, Chiang Mai (fig. 12). Paired octagonal pillar markers are to be seen at Wat Cet Yot, Chiang Mai, surrounding a plinth which supports

both a hall and a *mondop*. Wat Phra Singh, also in Chiang Mai, likewise has paired marker stones. Post-like *sīmā* stones at northern Thai temples associated with Burmese Buddhist influences, for example at Wat Maha Wan in Chiang Mai, are sometimes short pillars topped with relatively large lotus-bud forms (fig. 13). An illustration of a Burmese *uposatha* hall in Mae Sariang, north Thailand, in Keyes's *The Golden Peninsula ...* (1977, 93) also shows a *sīmā* post of similar type. Very little has been published on the Burmese *sīmā* post and this seems to indicate that, like the Sinhalese posts, they were of little artistic interest. A rare photo of a Pagan *sīmā* post appeared in the obituary for U Bokay (long time Conservator in Pagan) in the March 1989 issue of the *Siam Society Newsletter* (Di Crocco 1989, 27). The photo shows U Bokay next to a *sīmā* post in Pagan. The post is a short square pillar with moulding around its top. The top is ornamented with a leaf pattern radiating from a form in the center. The central form is not very clear in the photo, but may be a low open flower form or the base of a broken form. Perhaps it was a bud form as is found in the Burmese type *bai sīmā* of north Thailand or a pot form as at Baddhasīmāpāsāda.

It is also worthwhile to look briefly at what little is known of the Khmer boundary markers. The Asian Art Museum in San Francisco displays an eleventh century Khmer boundary stone (item B7652) in Bhaphuon style (fig. 14). Its plan form is square and in elevation it is shaped similarly to the Thai *bai sīmā* in curving up to a point. Each of the four sides is decorated with a bas relief including one of the animals of the four directions, elephant, bull, horse and lion. Significantly, the pictorial bas reliefs each show Krishna (according to the display card) overpowering the animal and thus would represent the conquest or transcendence of the four directions. The basic form itself is very similar to that which tops the pillars lining the approach to the Khmer tower sanctuary Prasat Phanom Rung in northeast Thailand (fig. 15). This Khmer form is very similar to some of the Dvaravati *bai sīmā* of the Kalasin area, but much smaller. Prasat Phanom Rung was also surrounded with boundary stones. These are leaf-shaped slab forms ornamented with bas reliefs of deities of the directions on their mounts.¹¹

The Khmer seem also to have used a pillar form. Giteau (1965, 138) shows the boundary marker of Preah Khan, Kompong Svay, to be a pillar articulated into three tiers, the lower one square and the upper two octagonal in section. Each tier is decorated with a divine figure in an arched niche on each face. The lowest tier has a much larger figure of Lokeshvara. The top has an overall bud-like appearance as it is finished off with moulding and a bell form topped by a small bud finial. Thus while maintaining the proportions of a pillar, it is articulated as a *prāsāda* form similar to the Khmer tower shrines or *chaitya* such as are on display at Musée Guimet (fig. 16) and the square stepped *chedis* of the type found at Wat Kukut, Lamphun. Furthermore the square base and octagonal upper tiers may link it to the tradition of the *yūpa*, the pre-Buddhist sacrificial post (see Vedic Building Traditions below). Parānavitana (1946, 38) notes in his study of the *stūpas* that all Brahmanical *yūpas* known in India and found in Sinhalese *stūpas* are square at the bottom and octagonal in the upper section.

Another interesting exception to the classic leaf form of *bai sīmā* can be seen at Wat Phra That Lampang Luang, Lampang. There the *bai sīmā* appear as a cluster of half-buried rounded stones. The central stone appears slightly higher and in one case seemingly shaped into a sort of bud form.¹² Enquiries brought the response from local residents that it was the old custom of the area. This is confirmed by Paknam (1981a) who also states that these rounded stones are the tops of pillars buried in the earth. The only other example of anything similar to this is the one remaining *bai sīmā* at the *bōt* of Wat Thammasala, Nakhon Pathom, which is described above. This does not seem to have any parallel outside of Thailand, unless it is to be found in Laos or perhaps among the Dai of Yunnan, areas for which information is meagre.

In the Ayudhya and Ratanakosin periods the classic leaf-form *bai sīmā* dominates. Ornamentation often gives the *bai sīmā* the appearance of a *deva* torso with a breast-plate medallion (figs. 17 and 18) and *nāga* motifs (figs. 18 and 19) begin to appear. There are a number of unique forms to be found in the Ratanakosin period. Notably during the reign of Rama IV, *bai sīmā* in the form of a squared pot or reliquary surrounded by stylized *nāga* heads at each corner were installed at a few sites, for example Wat Pathumwannaram, Bangkok. The *uposatha* hall of Wat Benchamabopit in Bangkok built by Rama V has unique precinct markers in the form of flat, square paving slabs decorated with the form of a *Vajra*, the weapon of Indra and also a symbol of wisdom or enlightenment. The slabs are turned at forty-five degrees to the orientation of the surrounding paving. The bud-topped pillars at the corners of the low wall surrounding the *uposatha* hall are also deemed to be *bai sīmā* (cf. Chulalongkorn University 1987).

Finally a note about the placement of the markers. They are usually separate from the building, but may be incorporated in the *kamphaeng kaew* or low boundary wall which normally surrounds the hall (fig. 20). In a few cases in the Ratanakosin period of Thai art the *bai sīmā* are attached to the wall of the *uposatha* hall, e.g., at Wat Bovornives Vihāra, Bangkok (fig. 21). The slab form markers located at the center of each side are aligned with the plane of the wall but, when separated from the building, the corner markers may be either aligned with the side walls or turned at an angle of forty-five degrees to the wall planes so that their faces are toward the center and toward the sub-cardinal directions (see fig. 20.) This separation from the building itself and the common orientation which recognizes the cardinal and the sub-cardinal directions emphasizes the notion of marking a precinct as distinct from simply marking a building. It is also worth noting that the prominence of the markers themselves contributes to the notion that the precinct itself is important rather than merely the place for the hall. In the earlier periods, Dvaravati and early Sukhothai, the markers were fairly large and thus prominent. In later periods (Ayudhya and Ratanakosin) when the markers were relatively small, it became common to provide the marker with a base which increased its overall height. This may be a way of ensuring an immovable marker since the precinct is meant to be permanent, but it gives added prominence as well. The marker was also often given a housing. These shelters range in form from a

miniature tile-roofed pavilion such that as found at Wat Putthaisuwan, Ayudhya, to the glazed canopy form housings at Wat Saket, Bangkok (fig. 22). Regardless of form, these housings likewise increased the prominence of the *bai sīmā*.

It should be noted that there are a few examples in Thailand of what is known as a *mahāsīmā*, in which case the entire monastery is consecrated and bounded by *bai sīmā*. This practice reflects the freedom granted in the *Mahāvagga* for each Order to decide if it wished to have a limited area for its *uposatha* hall and, if so, how large. The *mahāsīmā* is no doubt rare as it increases the difficulty of ensuring that outsiders are not within the *sīmā* during Observance of *Pātimokkha*. It should perhaps also be noted that there are a number of examples of *uposatha* halls in water (on piles or rafts; cf. Jumsai 1988), on islands or surrounded by moats. While this may be symbolically significant and seems to enhance the notion of purity of the area as well as emphasizing its separation from its surroundings, it does not seem to be a substitute for boundary markers of the *uposatha* hall. All island sites, such as at Wat Chanasongkram, Sukhothai, have the normal boundary stones.

Before leaving the discussion of form, it is necessary to draw attention to the current custom of burying round stones called *lūk nimit* under the *bai sīmā*. When the area for a new *uposatha* hall is consecrated, nine large round stones, generally covered with gold leaf (fig. 23) and accompanied by precious gifts, are buried, one per hole, in holes at the eight locations for *baisīmā* and one at the center¹³ of the area under the *uposatha* hall. These *lūk nimit* are said to be associated with the *nāga* and are credited with making the precinct sacred. There is a problem in this. It is a contemporary practice today and although Stratton and Scott (1981, 25) refer to it in relation to Sukhothai architecture, it is not a well-documented archaeological artifact for either Sukhothai or for Ayudhya. Furthermore, according to Dr. Piriya Krairiksh (personal communication 1990), there have been no *lūk nimit* discovered at any Dvaravati (Mon) site, only *bai sīmā*. Neither are *lūk nimit* documented for other Buddhist countries. This leaves the historical origins of the *lūk nimit* an open question. The Pāli term *nimittā* means "mark" and the *Vinaya Pitaka* actually uses it for the markers of the *sīmā*, i.e. boundary of the residence. Wright (1990) has suggested that *lūk nimit* are a remnant of the practice of offering a sacrificial victim to the earth deity. This and other possible interpretations will be addressed below in the context of locality spirit domain beliefs. It may be a purely local custom, but its name has Sanskrit or Pāli roots which may point to Indian origins. Perhaps it has developed out of an earlier custom even though in its original form it was not so visible a feature. Thus it could indicate not a change in practice but changes in attitudes to or the emphasis placed on various aspects of the symbol or ritual complex.

With few exceptions the *sīmā* markers in and around Thailand can be placed in two basic categories of forms. The first is the flat slab form shaped like a leaf and the second comprises various pillar forms (see table 1). In addition there are a number of unique forms such as the pavement slabs which mark the *bōt* of Wat Benchamabopit, Bangkok. While the first two categories fit into the general pattern for the region, there is more variety

in Thailand than in other countries and the markers seem more prominent and more decorated. The variations in the forms reveal diverse influences behind this Thai Buddhist custom. While most of these variations seem to reflect influence from Sri Lanka, Burma or the Khmer, this does not explain their role in Thai Buddhist traditions. Both the prominence and ornamentation of the markers indicate the great importance placed on the precinct. It is also most significant that the sacredness of the precinct is now attributed to the link, through the *lūk nimit*, between the *bai sīmā* and the *nāga*. The symbolism of both the forms and motifs in their ornamentation must be analyzed in the context of Thai and Southeast Asian culture to understand their full significance.

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE *BAI SĪMĀ*

It can be argued that the Thai attitude toward the *bai sīmā* and even the precinct they mark as being sacred goes beyond the intentions of the Pāli Canon. Furthermore, once consecrated the precinct is considered sacred forever.¹⁴ That the one space which might be called a ritual space given specific attention in the Pāli Canon is now said to be sacred because of association with the *nāga* is very significant. Given the fact that clear evidence of association with the *nāga* is fairly recent, the fact that in Theravada doctrine the Buddha is not divine and that even the modern-day conservative monks do not like to consider the *Pātimokkha* as "ritual," the sacredness of the precinct presents a complex problem. Thai *bai sīmā* seem to be ornamented not merely out of love of decoration, but in a deliberate expression of symbolism. This symbolism may provide clues to the roots of the sacredness of the precinct.

The boundary stones are highly venerated by the people of Thailand. That such reverence is directed toward the marker itself is shown by an old *bai sīmā* set up with a censer and candle rail in front of it, for example at Wat Bovornives Vihāra, Bangkok (fig. 24). It is also common to find around a *bai sīmā* in its original location a collection of small votive images. That the stones are considered sacred or powerful spirit-world elements is also reflected in the fact that moss from the *bai sīmā* is an ingredient in some powerful potions in folk magic (Terwiel 1979, 144). That the *bai sīmā* are often provided with shrine-like shelters in the Ayudhya and Bangkok Periods seems also to indicate that a degree of reverence is accorded the marker itself or its location. At one Dvaravati site in Ban Nong Paen, Kalasin, three decorated *bai sīmā* were found in the center of a nearly square area marked with other plain *bai sīmā* (Vallibhotama and Ruang-srichai 1983, 145), and this was interpreted as a sign that the *bai sīmā* had become objects of worship. A careful reading of the *Vinaya Pitaka*, on the other hand, shows that the Pāli Canon is concerned primarily with the pragmatic aim of avoiding confusion related to the Observance of the *Pātimokkha*.

The general tone and requirements of the text are referred to above and have been discussed in some detail in an earlier work (Indorf 1984). It is, however, pertinent to elaborate on a few points here as it is widely accepted (especially in academic

circles) that the *uposatha* hall is sacred because it is established following ritual required in the *Vinaya Pitaka*. The *Vinaya Pitaka* briefly sketches "historical" contexts¹⁵ in which rules of discipline were set out by the Buddha and these are helpful in understanding the intention of the rules.

With regard to rules for demarcation of a *sīmā*—and it is to be noted that it is a boundary of residence, not a precinct specifically for the *uposatha* hall which is required—there were various problems related as to who should be present at a recitation of the *Pātimokkha*. For example, boundaries were too big and monks could not arrive in time, boundaries overlapped and monks did not know which gathering to attend, etc. It became necessary to clearly mark a limited area (three *yojanas* distance across) as residence of one Order and to allow space between boundaries of different residences. Also, monks went to the wrong dwelling place (*vihāra*) within a boundary (*sīmā*) when it was time for the Observance and it became necessary to mark one and only one dwelling place within the boundary as the *uposatha* hall. The formal announcements or resolutions (*kammavāca*) required in designating the *sīmā* or *uposatha* hall follow a simple and similar formula in both instances. Two points are relevant here. In the case of the boundary (*sīmā*) of residence, the markers are referred to as having been agreed upon (*Mahāvagga* II, 6.1), but no details of a *kammavāca* for that purpose are included in the Pāli Canon. In the case of the *uposatha* hall, no mention is made of the markers; the *kammavāca* (*Mahāvagga* II, 8.2) refers directly to "such and such dwelling place" having been agreed upon. There is a third *kammavāca* detailed in the Pāli Canon (*Mahāvagga* II, 9.2) and it is for the optional case in which an Order wishes to set a limit to the *uposatha* hall. In this case there is reference to marks having been agreed upon. This constitutes the "ritual" requirements of the Pāli Canon. While these ritualized announcements make the agreed designations binding on the Order, it does not seem to be a consecration. It appears, in the contexts of the Pāli Canon, more to be intended as a social contract.

Another aspect is the relationship of divinity to the notion of a sacred place. Even though Buddhahood is acclaimed as the highest moral state attainable, the early Buddhist texts do not represent the Buddha as divine. Inasmuch as within all ritual, even social, there is an element of the "sacred," this formal designation presents a complex and subtle problem. The Pāli Canon gives evidence that a distinction between the practice of what the Buddha taught and commonly accepted norms of sacred ritual was recognized. Monks are warned against participating in rites and rituals; even the rituals to be observed following the Buddha's demise were to be left to the laity (*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*). As the urge to maintain order through sacred ritual is very deep-rooted, it is hardly surprising that the social ritual announcing marks of the *uposatha* hall should expand or evolve into a more elaborate ritual and take on sacred status. It is about the only ritual given specific initiation within the early Pāli Canon. In later texts such as the *Mahāvamsa* and the *Jātakas* the term "*malaka*," said to refer to a circular enclosure set aside for sacred functions, begins to appear (P.E.D., 1979). In the *Mahāvamsa* (Geiger 1964 III: 115), Mahāvihāra and Cetiya-

batavihāra are said to each have had thirty-two *malakas*, one of which was for the *uposatha* hall while one at the Mahāvihāra contained the Bodhi Tree. *Malakas* as square platforms were present in the ruins of the Western Monasteries of Anuradhapura. Thus the notion of "sacred places" within a monastery seems to have emerged, perhaps by the third century B.C. (arrival of the missionary monk Mahinda in Sri Lanka) or by about A.D. 1000 when the *Mahāvamsa* was written. It is, however, significant that even today these rituals are not canonical and are seen by the conservative Theravadins as not purely Buddhist. It is generally acknowledged that the ceremony itself is largely "Thai custom" (Prof. Somphop Piromya 1984, personal communication).

It also seems significant that in Thailand today, at least among the dominant Central Plain culture, the most important function of the *uposatha* hall is the Ordination ceremony. The term "Ordination Hall" is the preferred translation of *uposatha* hall in Thailand and Ordination is the first, sometimes only, function mentioned in an explanation of the purpose of the hall. The Ordination ceremony is considered most significant as it is the ritual of transforming the ordinary layman into a member of the *Saṅgha*, which is deemed above and apart from not only the everyday world but the spirit world as well. This ceremony takes on additional importance as an opportunity for laypersons, family and friends of the ordinand to perform an act of great merit in contributing to the ceremony. The importance placed on the Ordination as an interface and transition between the lay world and the *Saṅgha* seems to be reflected in the prominence of the *uposatha* hall in the layout of the Central Plain's monasteries (cf. Indorf 1984). By contrast the *uposatha* hall of northern Thai monasteries of an earlier period is generally in a much less prominent location, even often more or less hidden away at the back of the compound. This difference obviously reflects differences in attitudes and in the significance accorded the *uposatha* hall and its precinct.

At many *wat* in Thailand there are two sets of *bai sīmā* (see fig. 20). This is commonly attributed to one of two factors. One is that it indicates a Royal *wat* (Chulalongkorn University 1987, 153). The other factor relates to the fact that there are two sects of Buddhist monks in Thailand, one of which is closely associated with the Sinhalese reforms of Thai Buddhism. Double *bai sīmā* are said to represent boundary installation ceremonies conforming to the requirements of both sects (cf. Stratton and Scott 1981, 46). In this respect it is interesting to note that the stones of the two sets are almost invariably identical. The disagreement clearly concerns the ceremony, not the form. In fact, the disagreement may have nothing to do with Buddhist requirements or tradition, but may concern the manner in which Thai or local cultural elements have become part of Thai Buddhist traditions.

CONSECRATION OF THE UPOSATHA HALL

Documentation of the consecration ceremony is not readily available,¹⁶ but the ceremony is generally acknowledged to be

basically the same as for house-building, only more important. Tambiah (1984) provides an account of the consecration of sacred images which is useful as a comparison. The *Vinaya Pitaka*, while providing a basis for the ritual, does not provide the structure or detail of the ritual. It does not even provide a formula for announcing the marks (*nimitta kittetabbā*; *Mahāvagga* II 6.1), only the formula for posing a motion to accept them as the boundary markers for a residence (*Mahāvagga* II 6.2). This is reflected in accounts in *Epochs of the Conqueror* (Jayawickrama 1968, 137–138) and in the *Pādaeng Chronicle* (Mangrai 1981, 118–119) which give some insight into the ceremony. In paragraphs 86 and 87 of the *Pādaeng Chronicle*, it is stated that in 1449 the king gave sixteen stones as markers and Somacitta Thera led a group of monks in an "extolling recitation ceremony beginning with the recitation on the stone in the east" (Mangrai 1981, 118) and working around back to the east. In the *Epochs* ... it is said that when King Tilaka established the *uposatha* hall of the Great Rattavana Monastery in 1452, the recitation of the resolution pertaining to a formal agreement on the markers is said to have begun with the words "Yonder rock is the sign ..." beginning with the stone on the east. This was followed by recitation of the *Sammuti Kammavāca* (official announcement fixing the boundary) stipulated in the *Mahāvagga*. These accounts from the fifteenth century seem to indicate a ceremony of two parts, and only the second part is noted as being "laid down by the Lord" (paragraph 87; Mangrai 1981, 119), a fact borne out by a careful reading of the text *Mahāvagga* II 6. As noted above, the *Vinaya Pitaka* does not actually give the formula for announcing the marks (*nimitta kittetabbā*; *Mahāvagga* II 6.1), only the words for posing a motion that those designated be accepted.

Additional information on the ceremony is available in the "Ratanakosin Bicentennial Publication" (n.d.) on Wat Benchamabopit which included an account of the construction and dedication by King Rama V of the new *uposatha* hall (built between 1899 and ca. 1910). The account focuses on the role of the king and does not provide all the details which are required to explain fully the dedication as a ritual. The personal involvement of the king in the events is clearly detailed. It is also clear in this account that planting the *bai sīmā* and *lūk nimit* were part of, or combined with, a ceremony concerned with inviting an image, in this case an already consecrated copy of the famous Phra Buddha Chinarat image of Phitsanulok, to take up residence in the new hall. Consecration of the precinct and consecration of the image seem always to remain distinct.

Both ceremonies involve replication of a mandala pattern in some aspects of their ritual layout. During the *Buddhābhiseka* the images being consecrated are arranged in a mandala pattern (Tambiah 1984, fig. 9) similar to the arrangement of eight *bai sīmā* around the *uposatha* hall plus one *lūk nimit* at the center. It is significant also that the space for the *Buddhābhiseka* ceremony must have four entrances/exits and its corners are marked with flags, sugar cane and banana plants and umbrellas. The "Ratanakosin Bicentennial Publication" (n.d.) on Wat Benchamabopit, does not, unfortunately, give clear details of the arrangement of the site, position of monks, etc. But in both ceremonies the chanting of *paritta* verses, recitation of the Buddha's first

sermon and episodes of his life for long hours by a certain number of experienced and venerated monks, are the main content of the ritual. Such recitations and chantings are commonly performed to confer blessing and protection and it is surely just such recitations which are meant by the "extolling recitations" in the *Pādaeng Chronicle*. During the image consecration ceremony, additional monks surrounding the new images sit in meditation. This is said both to help generate and to transfer to the new image psychic energy, enhancing that transmitted by the historic or famous presiding image. The number of monks and their skill and fame are also factors in enhancing the power transmitted. The meditating and chanting monks hold a cord originating at the presiding sacred image and surrounding the site. This is said to prevent evil spirits from getting close to the new images.

Tambiah (1984) discusses the importance of the lineage of the consecrated images and gives several accounts of the ceremony (the *Buddhābhiseka*), reflecting the current practice in the Central Plain and customs of the north and also of Cambodia. These latter areas have slightly different versions of the ceremony, particularly with respect to the "opening of the eye," which is the moment when the new image is ritually linked to its lineage. At that moment the new image is infused with life-force and the qualities or miraculous powers of the old image and thus is linked to a chain of images reaching far back in Buddhist history to an "original likeness." This practice derives from the Theravada doctrinal position that an image made in the true likeness of the Buddha is a "reminder" of the Buddha's teachings, his virtues and his victories over defilements (Tambiah 1984, 231). The first images of the Buddha were made hundreds of years after his demise; thus the physical likeness is quite debatable. Buddhist stories exist to explain how monks or the *nāga*, skilled in a certain form of meditation trance which could reproduce the true likeness, aided in the creation of the first image. However, in view of the diversity of physical images and in the importance placed on the consecration ceremony being performed with an established image to create a lineage, the "likeness" seems more to be a likeness in spirit power (linked to meditation skill and virtue) than a physical likeness. The ceremony for consecrating an image (*Buddhābhiseka*), while based on certain tenets of the Pāli doctrine, is also not stipulated in the Pāli texts. However, the ritual including the "opening of the eye," originally a Brahmanical ritual, seems to date back to at least the fifth century B.E. in Sri Lanka (Tambiah 1984, 255). In the north and in Cambodia, this moment is part of the main consecration ceremony; in the Central Plain, it is a separate ceremony conducted after the consecration ceremony.

During the *Buddhābhiseka* the arrangement of images is placed between the old image and altars for candles, some of which seem to be associated with the *devas* who are invited to observe the ceremony. While the location of the elements associated with *devas* is not entirely clear, they seem to form a polarity with the presiding image and, significantly, the *devas* themselves are only invited to observe (cf. Tambiah 1984, 249–254). The relationship between the *devas* in their observer status and the Buddhist elements during the consecration ceremony is

significant in view of the separation of the Triple Gems from the spirit world.

The consecration of the *uposatha* hall can be more clearly understood by studying the house-building ceremonies. Turton's (1978) account of the ceremony of transferring ownership to the householder revealed an interesting detail with reference to ceremonies for the temples. The local religious experts who perform the house-building ceremonies in the north objected to the transfer ceremony being performed by monks as is the custom in central Thailand. This was because

... the power of the Buddha is greater than that of [the local experts'] spirit teachers who would be offended and punish them and ... [because] a house is not an object of sacrifice (whereas other structures, e.g., bridges and temples, are). (Turton 1978, 128–130)

This clearly indicates an important ritual difference between ceremonies for construction of a house and those conducted for certain other structures even though the ceremony may appear to be similar.

Although not addressing the ritual context as a whole nor the ceremony in detail, Wright (1990, 45) adds another interesting observation to aid in understanding the consecration of the *uposatha* hall. He apparently attended such a ceremony and saw the *lūk nimit* lashed to poles and suspended over the holes in which they were to be buried. A vigorous blow with a knife cut the lashings and sent the *lūk nimit* to the bottom of the hole. Wright interpreted this as the mimicking of an earlier practice of offering a sacrificial victim to the Earth Goddess. However, he leaves the question of historical development open and bases this speculation on the generally accepted association of *lūk nimit* with the *nāga* who, in turn, is associated with the Earth Goddess (as spouse; cf. Ferguson 1982, 289). The currently available data are ambiguous in nature and the broader historical and ritual contexts need further investigation. There may be equally valid alternative explanations. This point will be considered further once additional relevant information is introduced.

Anthropological studies in northeast Thailand have shown that the definition of the area of the *wat* and the precinct of the *bōt* within the *wat* are more than a matter of mere convenience for the Order of monks. The *bai sīmā* mark an important "ecological separation of *wat* ... from the (village) which parallels the separation of monk from villager" and this distinction is significant in daily life and important to both personal and communal ritual (Tambiah 1970, 71). This echoes the ritual difference between houses and certain other structures noted by Turton (1978). That the notion of domain, and the correct ordering and use of domain is important in Thailand and Laos has been shown by a number of studies.¹⁷

This general concern for correct ordering of domain must be at the root of the Thai concern for the correctness or purity of *sīmā* which is still very important to the Thai Buddhist community (cf. Paknam 1981a, 57–58). It can be detected also in the account of the fifteenth century efforts of the Thai kings who

sought to purify Buddhism in their kingdoms. In this effort monks ordained in the Sinhalese tradition reordained monks throughout the kingdom using boats or rafts as particularly pure *uposatha* halls (cf. Hazra 1982). The effort to purify the religion stemmed from the Southeast Asian traditions of leadership by "big men" in which the state of spiritual matters in the country was held to have a direct bearing on the country's future. This made the state of religious practices part of the king's responsibilities (cf. *Pādaeng Chronicle*, par. 67–75 in Mangrai 1981, 113 ff). In that context, the ability to "purify" and designate a sacred place properly would have been extremely important. Thus, a study of beliefs related to locality spirits in general as well as of house-building ceremonies is necessary to clarify the importance of the precinct of the *uposatha* hall in Thai traditions.

HOUSE-BUILDING CEREMONIES

Before looking at specific details, it is helpful to focus briefly on the well-known basis of such practices to articulate the conceptual context. The overall objective of house-building ceremonies is to ensure an auspicious dwelling place for the owner. In general this is done by creating a harmony between the new dwelling, its site and the owner. The basis for this effort is the belief that all things have their specific qualities and forms of spirit energy which can be understood through signs and omens or with the aid of spirit practitioners' techniques. Thus, ceremonies to determine and control spirit energy mark significant stages in the selection of the site and construction of the house. One of the most important stages is the erection of columns. All accounts indicate that the objective at that point is primarily to placate and remove from the site the earth or locality spirits (known as *Phra Phūm*) as well as the spirits associated with the trees used for timber in the new house. Beyond this, however, details of different accounts vary.

Terwiel (1979, 164) found that there are nine different *Phra Phūm* (see table 3). It seems they are all the object of the house-building ceremonies. Chantavilasvong (1987, 166–167) also described offerings to the *Thao Thāng Sī* or Deities of the Four Directions, including Indra and *Nāng Thoranī* or the Earth Goddess. In addition to these, Textor's (1973, 601) account of the ceremonies also mentions offerings to *Phra Phāli* (Bāli)¹⁸ believed by some to be controller of locality spirits. Temiphan (1978, 33)¹⁹ explains that spirits are removed from the site by first driving tree spirits from the posts by chipping the posts slightly and then attracting all the relevant spirits to occupy food offerings which are subsequently thrown out. During this process, the offerings are first placed at the perimeter of the site, then transferred to the location of the central pillar. From that point, when occupied by the spirits, the offerings are removed from the site. Terwiel (1979, 164) observed such a process involving a square offering container divided into nine squares. Turton (1978, 116) likewise found that special offering trays were used but that local experts disagreed on whether these were left under the posts or were thrown out. He also found that,

to remove spirits, earth was removed from each corner hole and then removed from the site. In this connection, two other interesting points emerge from Turton's study. The first is that gravel was placed in the post holes and, according to some informants, was associated with driving spirits away. Secondly, stones were buried in the earth near each of the four extreme corner posts, and this was also said to relate to driving spirits away. Chantavilasvong (1987, 166) records that clear water which has been blessed and crystal sand from a river are poured into each column hole. Auspicious leaves (chosen according to the day) are also placed in the holes. Details of the ceremonies for Iban longhouse construction in Sarawak point toward a possible explanation for the pebbles, stones and crystal sand. During the Iban ceremonies, river stones were placed in the first column hole. This was done to make the house "cool" (Freeman 1970, 121). In spirit practitioners' terminology this means to bring them under control or to remove malevolent spirit energy, i.e., in effect, to remove spirits. In both animism and Hinduism, rivers are sacred and water is a purifying element. Stones washed by river water thus counteract malevolent spirits. Other items placed in the hole, such as the blood of a sacrificial cock in the case of the Iban (Freeman 1970, 121), may be aimed at replacing the removed spirits with a new spirit. A blood sacrifice is generally related to the notion of renewed energy or establishing a new life or stage of life in many Southeast Asian spirit practices. These factors may have relevance to questions about the *lūk nimit*.

Although accounts of the Thai house-building ceremonies did not seem to reveal emphasis on putting a new spirit into the house, parts of the house such as the principal column and, particularly in the north, the carved transom (*ham yon*) over the main door are considered to be occupied by strong spirits related to the owner. This association of spirit or spirit energy with a house may be accomplished in ways more subtle than blood sacrifice. These ways include the use of measurements based on parts of the owner's body (arms, hands or feet), the dressing of principal columns with male or female clothing belonging to the owner, use of leaves from plants with auspicious-sounding names, attachment of magic formulae or symbols to parts of the house and the burial of precious things (real or symbolic) in the column holes. All of these have been practiced at times in Thailand as well as other parts of Southeast Asia (cf. Waterson 1990) and are seen as imbuing the house or its parts with a spirit of its own and as generating a harmony of spirit between owner and house.

Another mode of creating a harmonious relationship with the natural world is the use of geomantic practices. The Thai are also very careful with respect to the location and orientation of the house within the site, as documented by Prof. Somphop Piromya (1976). Oracles and the presence of auspicious signs as well as a rotating mandala involving the *nāga*, whose position shifts every three months, are of prime importance in determining location and orientation. A mandala of thirty-six squares with the perimeter squares subdivided to create a total of thirty-two half squares plus four corner squares is used in determining auspicious locations for various parts or spaces (Piromya 1976).

While these practices fall within a broad general pattern found in animistic practices world wide, the echo of Vedic ritual is also present and has been generally recognized (cf. Terwiel 1979, 181), but it has not been thoroughly analyzed. While space here does not permit as full an investigation as would be ideal, a brief review of pertinent aspects of Vedic tradition can provide insight into the house-building ceremonies and the process or meaning of establishing a precinct for the *uposatha* hall in Thailand.

VEDIC BUILDING TRADITIONS

Numerous Vedic texts, the *Silpashastra*, set out rules and guidelines for specific artistic and building tasks. These rules for building are generally related to the use of the *vāstupurusha mandala* and are seen as a means of establishing a new manifestation of Purusha in the world of form as either an auspicious dwelling for its owner or, in the case of the temple, a dwelling suited for a particular deity. This involves reading signs and omens and correctly using a *vāstupurusha mandala* in the planning and construction of the building. The parallels between this and the intent of Southeast Asian practices are immediately clear and it is worthwhile to focus on the details of a few aspects of the use of the *vāstupurusha mandala*.

First, the *vāstupurusha mandala* is not just one mandala, but rather a series of thirty-two mandalas (Kramrisch 1986, 62; cf. *Manasara*). Or perhaps it should be said that there are a number of interpretive applications of the *vāstupurusha mandala*. These applications are divided into two categories based on the division of the square²⁰ into an odd or an even number of subdivisions. Odd numbered mandalas are related to deities while even numbers are associated with demons.²¹ The ideal of the odd number series is the eighty-one square mandala and the ideal of the even number series is the sixty-four square mandala.²² Both types are related to the *vāstupurusha* legend,²³ i.e., the mandala is a *yantra* by which any deity or aspect of Brahman may be brought into the manifest universe or world of extension in four directions. In each application of the *vāstupurusha mandala*, individual deities (up to forty-five in number) are associated with the squares of the mandala. The border zone of the mandala may be occupied by thirty-two gods. The *Vāstunāga*, support of all architecture, is associated with the northeast direction. He is worshiped as a golden serpent, but has a double nature. As Godhead he is unmanifest, or ophidian, but as manifest he is Isana, i.e., Śiva (Kramrisch 1986, 85). There are a number of ways in which the deities may be related to the squares of the mandala, but Isa or Isana²⁴ is always in the northeast corner (*Manasara*). There is one significant difference in the application of the *vāstupurusha mandala* to dwellings and to temples. For the orientation of a temple a fixed mandala (*sthiravāstu*) is used while a rotating mandala (*caravāstu*) is used in other applications.

In the *Vāstusūtra Upanishad*²⁵ the *vāstupurusha mandala* is seen to have a vertical counterpart in the Vedic sacrificial post, the *yūpa*. The *yūpa*, a pillar of certain proportions with a spheri-

cal head, is constructed to the east of the Vedic sacrificial hall. Particular variations are suitable for different purposes, e.g., for sacrifices to deities or to ancestor spirits (Boner et al. 1986, 53). Likewise, *yūpa* are erected on a number of occasions; for example, after performance of a sacrifice, in connection with a gift, or after donations or other acts of charity or at a burial place (Pant 1976, 14, 16).

The notion of sacrifice is present in all Vedic ritual and is implicit also in the use of the *vāstupurusha mandala* as it is based on the legend of the origin of man from the remainder of a sacrifice to the gods (Kramrisch 1986, 44). Vedic legend describes the self-sacrifice of Purusha, whose parts when reassembled constitute the germ of the manifest world, the remainder becoming man. Sacrificial offerings, therefore, have always been part of the Vedic ritual. According to the earliest texts even human sacrifice may have once been practiced (Kramrisch 1986, 16, 68–70), although animals and grains are more commonly mentioned and known in practice, along with food or organic materials and precious substances. The use of sacrificial substances such as minerals, gems, precious metals or organic material in connection with the *vāstupurusha mandala* is symbolic of the parts or different qualities of Purusha through whom aspects of Brahman are assembled and manifested in the four directions, i.e., the world of form. These substances are seen as the seed elements giving rise to the material universe.

Before discussing the possible insight this provides into building ceremonies and the practices related to *bai sīmā*, it is helpful to look briefly at certain applications of Vedic traditions. Kramrisch (1986, 228) emphasizes that in the use of the mandala it is not enough to use it merely in planning the building. It is to be physically drawn on the site and represented in the structure. At the beginning of construction the site must be leveled and the mandala drawn on the leveled ground. This may have had a very important impact on early Southeast Asian Buddhist traditions. Luce (1969, 232–234) remarks on the great importance placed on the clearing, leveling and enclosing of a sacred site in Burma. He also remarks that the enclosing wall is a significant feature and it is generally described as beautiful. Thai tradition has a counterpart to this wall, the *kamphaeng kaew*, or crystal wall, which often encircles a temple building. It would seem that these enclosed sites represent the established mandala of Brahmanical tradition and perhaps the *malakas* of Sinhalese tradition recorded in the *Mahāvamsa*.

Khambatta (1989, 262–264) notes in his description of the rituals for building a Hindu home that an offering, usually in a small copper pot, is buried in the foundation at the beginning of the construction and in the center of the floor at the completion of the building. This offering is called "Embryo," evidently the Golden Embryo or *hiranya garbha* which is the cosmic seed or origin of the manifest universe (cf. Snodgrass 1988, 77). In this can be seen a physical representation of the mandala at the perimeter and center of the site and through this the ritual core of the *vāstupurusha mandala*, namely, the establishment of a manifestation of Purusha with particular character or qualities.

Parallel with this physical manifestation of the mandala in the Hindu house is the use of deposit boxes in sacred structures

in both Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. In Sri Lanka the deposit box (*yantragala*) is a square stone slab or copper box with nine, sixteen, seventeen or twenty-five holes arranged in a grid or square mandala pattern (fig. 25). They have been found in relation to *vihāra* as well as *stūpa* (S. J. O'Connor 1966, 57). When found with at least some of their original contents, the contents indicate an association with orientation and cycles of time. The contents include representations of Hindu divinities, the guardians and animals associated with the four directions. Similar deposit boxes or foundation deposits have been found in Java, Sarawak, Malaysia, South Thailand and at Angkor. Quaritch Wales (1969) found that a deposit box associated with a Dong Lokhorn site in east Thailand had contained a small Pala type Buddha image. Some of the Javanese and Sarawak boxes included ashes from cremation in their contents, a practice unique to Southeast Asia (S. J. O'Connor 1966; cf. Harrison and O'Connor 1967). The lidded deposit box from the Batu Pahat site in Malaysia is of particular interest. It included a copper pot in the central depression and its rich store of contents included gold and silver foil objects as well as precious stones (S. J. O'Connor 1966, 54), indicating clearly the meaning or symbolism of the *vāstupurusha mandala*.

While the pattern of the holes in most deposit boxes conforms to a simple grid, the deposit box found at the summit of the main shrine of Prasat Kok, Angkor (Snodgrass 1988, 130), represents an interesting variation emphasizing the meaning of the box and perhaps the significance of the orientation. The pattern of depressions emphasized the notion of the four directions by placing four small squares in pairs on opposite sides of the ends of cross-axes. In each of the four corners were additional small squares arranged parallel to the diagonals. In one corner there are four; in each of the other three corners there are two such small squares (fig. 26). The quadrant with four squares also contains a *vesica piscis* pattern with its axes aligned with the axes of the box. Emphasis on this quadrant, if, as Snodgrass claims, it is the northeast quadrant, can be interpreted as symbolic of the Sungate leading out of the Universe (Snodgrass 1988, 131)²⁶ The arrangement of elements is very evocative of both extension in four directions and the act of manifestation of Purusha through the anchoring of each of the four directions with four squares and by emphasis on diagonals as well as its particular emphasis on the northeast. Diagonals are representative of the breath or wind, i.e., spirit movement which effects manifestation. The *vesica piscis* in this quadrant seems also to be a direct reference to *Vāstunāga* as the support of all architecture since the *vesica piscis* can be seen as the origin of all systematically generated geometry (cf. Lawler 1987) within the extended world. It is furthermore evocative of the method of establishing orientation by using a gnomon, which involves the *vesica piscis* (cf. *Manasara*). This would not diminish the symbolism of the Sun Door, but rather emphasizes it as the notion of boundary between the conditioned and the unconditioned.²⁷

There are a number of very obvious features of Thai house-building ceremonies and practices which reflect Vedic influence. Among them are the use of the thirty-six square mandala to determine auspicious locations and the rotating mandala of

the *nāga* to determine orientation. Also the inclusion of Indra and references to the Deities of the Four Directions as well as the use of a nine square pattern in the form of an offering tray are direct reflections of Vedic tradition. The focus on movement from perimeter to center is also reminiscent of the Brahmanical mandala and its notion of the central energy point (*bindu*).

The use of an odd number mandala associated with both the Earth Deity (Pṛitvi) for offering trays and the number of *lūk nimit* of the *bōt*—as distinct from use of an even number mandala to avoid the inauspicious when building a house—is also evocative of Vedic tradition. The use of the nine-compartment tray for offerings to the gods, specifically earth deities, is appropriate in Vedic terms, but the notion of removing the spirits rather than installing them raises interesting questions with broader implications. This conflict is evident in Turton's (1978, 128–130) account of disagreements between the local experts over this matter. It may reflect an ambiguity which has arisen between two originally distinct Vedic or even local spirit belief practices which have become so similar by corruption through time that they are now taken to be the same. Perhaps originally, in the one case, throwing out the offering removed the spirits; in the other, burying the offering kept the appeased spirits resident.

The eight *bai sīmā* and nine *lūk nimit* associated with the *nāga* with its Earth Deity symbolism is another link to the Vedic tradition. However, the *nāga* is also prominent in Southeast Asian myth and sometimes claimed as part of the original pre-Indian-influence heritage of the region. This dual root may be the key to the high profile of the *nāga* in Thai Buddhist architecture in Thailand and generally in Southeast Asia. In contrast to Vedic tradition where the *Vāstunāga* is only associated with the northeast direction, all nine *lūk nimit* are associated with the *nāga*. This has interesting implications which will be addressed below.

An additional point of interest here is the frequency with which the *uposatha* hall faces the northeast or north (Indorf 1984, 47–49). The northeast orientation may be a result of the use of a gnomon, but it nonetheless brings the *uposatha* hall into close association with the northeast and thus the *nāga*, or in Vedic terms *Vāstunāga*, as well as the notion of the Sun Door or boundary between the conditioned and the unconditioned. The southwest–northeast axis has other associations as well. It is the diagonal of the ghosts and the southwest is associated with ancestors. Thus, in view of the earth (fertility)–sky (ancestor) polarity of Southeast Asia (cf. R. A. O'Connor 1987, 398), it takes on special significance. This significance is also reflected in the ornamental barge-boards and finials (*chaw-fa*) of the *uposatha* hall. The serpentine barge board with its lower acroterion represent the *nāga*. The finials (*chaw-fa*) at the apex of the roof have been given different interpretations. Jumsai (1988, 136) lists *garuda*, swan (*hong* or *hamsa*), horn, chicken head, plough, rudder and *nāga*. In some Ratanakosin period buildings it is clearly a deity figure. The barge board with its ornamentation has also been compared to a rainbow. In most of these interpretations it is easy to see the earth (fertility)–sky (ancestor) polarity symbolism. This association is also implied in the case of the

north orientation which in Thailand is associated with royal access and sponsorship (cf. N.M.V. 1976) since, again, rulers mediate between the human and the spirit world for the well-being and prosperity of the country.

In this context the discovery of animal bones and tortoise shell (Quaritch Wales 1969) under the Dvaravati period Chulapaton Chedi at Nakhon Pathom is very interesting. If they are associated with construction of the chedi, the obvious explanations are sacrificial victims in line with *vāstupurusha* tradition, or oracle practices.²⁸ In the Southeast Asian context there may be another possibility. Ashes from royal cremations were placed in the deposit boxes of shrines in Java related to the deification of royal persons. Ash has also been recovered from the Srivijayan remains of Maura Takus in Sumatra. Laboratory tests identified it as ash from corn husks (site archaeologist, 1989, personal communication). However, it is to be noted that in contemporary Thai practice "sandalwood flowers" consisting of a small incense stick plus an artificial flower made of corn husk is placed on the cremation pyre. Thus the corn husk ash could represent ash remains from a cremation. In Java the deification of rulers and members of the royal court was a prime formative force in the evolution of Hindu and Buddhist architecture and at the later sites of Cetu and Sukhu can be seen the re-emergence of an indigenous belief system connected with early terraced hill sites for ancestral remains. Chulapaton Chedi (sixth to ninth centuries) is more or less contemporary with the earlier Javanese shrines, and it may represent similar practices of deification of royalty at the center of the political domain. This would also fit comfortably with Quaritch Wales's (1980) interpretation of the large *bai sīmā* of the late Dvaravati as a megalithic cultural sub-stratum re-emerging. It would bring the Dvaravati culture and its Buddhist monuments into a cultural pattern or milieu similar to that of Java. And in this context it is worth mentioning the early Mon practice in Burma of the *Jetavan*, a special building for keeping remains of the kings inside Buddha images. It is perhaps as the last vestiges of such practices that within the grounds of Wat Phra Kaew in Bangkok the remains of the Chakri kings are contained in portrait sculptures.

Comparison of the *lūk nimit* to the Hindu ceremony involving an "Embryo" in the form of a copper pot and the parallel use of copper or stone deposit boxes raises interesting possible interpretations. The covering of gold leaf on the *lūk nimit* seems to render the spherical stones as *hiranya garbha* (Golden Embryo) which would give them the function of establishing a manifestation of Purusha or Brahman. The meaning of the term *lūk nimit* may even hint of this ritual significance. Furthermore, the Pāli or Sanskrit words *nimittā* and /or *nimmitta* from which the Thai *nimit* may derive have several meanings, all of which add significance to the possible meaning of the *lūk nimit*. *Nimit* is usually translated as "spherical mark or image." In Buddhist meditation practices leading to the Brahma *vihāras* of *jhanic* states, the term *nimit* is used for the mental after-image of a *kaṣiṇa* (a circular physical sign of earth, color, light, etc.) used in *samatha* or tranquillity meditation. After a certain stage of practice is reached, the *nimit* is a substitute for the actual *kaṣiṇa* (cf. *Visuddhi-magga*).

The Pāli *nimittā* not only means "sign" or "mark" but also "omen, prognostication, ... sexual organ, ... ground, reason, condition" (P.E.D. 1979, 367). The Sanskrit term *nimittā* in later Hindu texts is, furthermore, associated with the causal conditioning of all being in the term *desha-kāla-nimittā*. This is translated by Vivekananda (Vol. 2, 130–135), as "space, time and causation" and carries the implication, if not actual meaning, of being a manifestation of Brahman into the material plane of existence. This meaning is in fact more similar to the Pāli term *nimmitta* meaning "measured out, planned, laid out, created by supernatural power (*iddhi*) or one of the five or three spheres in *kāmalōka*" (the sense sphere; cf. P.E.D. 1979, 368). As the Thai use both Pāli and Sanskrit loan words and have a love of homonyms this ambiguity of meaning may be intentional.

Although the details of the ceremonies for both temple and house building are not entirely clear, they seem to fit comfortably within a prototypical pattern. But the question remains, why would Vedic or the Hindu *vāstupurusha mandala* be used for a Buddhist *uposatha* hall? The answer must lie in the importance of the earth (fertility) and sky (ancestral) polarity and the notion of the separation of the *wat* from the village as revealed by Tambiah's work and noted above. It would appear that the aim of the ceremonies for the *bai sīmā* around the *bōt* would be to establish either a spirit-free domain (as the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Saṅgha* are above all spirits) or in effect to create a special, bounded, spirit world domain. These objectives would present certain difficulties in the context of animistic spirit world beliefs, particularly as related to the notion of domain. In addition these cultural needs would have to be reconciled with the more orthodox Buddhist doctrine represented in the Pāli Canon in respect for the importance of "pure Buddhism" in Thai culture.

The *Mahāvamsa* references to *malaka* and the presence of *malaka* as terraces in the Western Monasteries of Anuradhapura are evidence that the relationship between the Triple Gems and spirit world beings was addressed at an early stage. The response to this problem was not, however, formally incorporated in the doctrine or texts. It seems to have been spread in an informal way leaving each cultural group plenty of room to interpret the need in their own context. Buddhism took over, but did not completely erase, the role of the ideal social order from the older spirit beliefs. Buddhist sites occupy sites linked to the god of the soil, sometimes occupying the same places as ancient fertility cults, e.g. Wat Mahathat in Sukhothai (Gosling 1983). Buddha images became the rulers' personal deity and great images such as Phra Kaew or Phra Singh were housed in or near their palaces. It is, therefore, necessary to look more closely at some of the beliefs concerning the spirit world and spirit world domains.

SPIRIT WORLD DOMAINS

As was noted above, the Thai locality spirit, *Phra Phūm*, is in fact nine different earth place spirits, each with a particular domain (see table 3), yet it is considered appropriate to placate or remove all of them in the building of a house since their domains

have no natural boundaries—only power or influence centers. The notion of domain as a sphere of power rather than as a defined territory is reflected in the Southeast Asian notion of political power as a mandala of influence. It corresponds to the notion of a spirit world domain as being without precise boundaries but with a particular center. Thus the problem of establishing a boundary as edge or limit of domain set within the spirit world network of locality spirits, as well as spirits of ancestors and political leaders, became a complex cultural problem.

The regional differences regarding locality spirit practices within Thailand are instructive. LeBar et al. (1964, 204) note a tendency toward house spirits in the Central Plain area and a tendency toward neighborhood or village spirits in the north and northeast. Krug (1982, 92) alludes to this in mentioning the change in the practice of offerings to the *arak* (protection) spirit of the northern Thai house compound. Formerly these offerings were made biannually along with offerings to ancestors. Now they are made daily in line with the concepts of the Central Plain *Phra Phūm*. Tambiah (1970) has also observed the importance of locality spirits in the northeast, and Durrenberger (1980, 52–56) identified house spirits as a Yuan or Central Mekong River Tai²⁹ custom and village spirits as a Shan or western Tai custom. He furthermore identified these village spirits as the spirits of deceased conquerors or leaders. This association of locality spirit and ancestor and ruler would have to be addressed in establishing a Buddhist domain in a northern and northeastern Thai context where Thai cultural traditions first took root.

That these links with the spirit world be given permanent expression in a public place or center of power seems to have been important. Mangrai (1981, fig. 12) shows an old photograph of the nineteenth century tombs of Tai princes in the Tunga Market in the Shan States (fig. 27). The market is also the place of the city spirit shrine (Mangrai 1981, fig. 11). The tombs are in the form of plinths supporting a pillar which is crowned with a bud-like finial. This form can still be seen in certain *wat* as reliquaries around a *wihān* or the *bōt*. It is also commonly used as *lak müang* or *jai bān* pillars (locality spirit post) found in most Thai towns and cities (fig. 28; cf. Terwiel 1978, 168, fig. 2). Some *jai bān* pillars are in clusters, e.g., a group of five in quincunx arrangement (Penth 1989, 13). Similar arrangements for village spirit shrines can be seen in Lava (Lovea) villages around Angkor (Martel 1975, Plate 23b). This brings to mind the cluster of pillars buried at Wat Phra That Lampang Luang as *bai sīmā*. And it is relevant here to point out the strong similarity between the tombs of Tai princes of the Shan States and the locality spirit posts with the famous lotus bud form of *chedi* of Sukhothai (fig. 29; cf. Indorf 1986) which is the acclaimed contribution of the Thai to the tradition of Buddhist architecture. The lotus bud *chedi* was built in conquered territory by the kings of Sukhothai apparently as a symbol of their power.³⁰ While it is currently impossible to determine which application is the oldest, the use of the same form in these different applications does point to a common root in the significance of these apparently different areas of symbolism.³¹

The similarity between this form and the *sīmā* markers in both Sri Lanka at Baddhasīmāpāsāda and in the Burmese tradi-

tion and the Vedic *yūpa*, vertical counterpart of a mandala, is striking. This similarity gains additional importance from the existence of an offering platform with a bud-topped post beside it at Wat Phra That Haripunjaya, Lamphun (fig. 30). Pillars with a large bud on top are also found near entrances to the precinct of halls within the temples of Luang Prabang. They are perhaps related to the precedent for the bud form pillars at Wat Benchamabopit (see above). A sacrificial hall is not part of a Buddhist monastery; however, the *yūpa* could have been erected to mark the construction of the *wat* or some part of it as a donation or act of charity. Pant (1976, 16–17) notes that the *Mahāvamsa* Ch. 28 mentions that a *yūpa* was erected at the site of a *stūpa*, i.e., the Brahmanical tradition was associated with Sinhalese Buddhist customs or practices.

This symbolic link between *yūpa*, boundary markers and reliquary forms is also illustrated by the Khmer Khleang style *chaitya* (ca. 965–ca. 1010) on display in the Musée Guimet, Paris (item MG 17487). It is a square pillar form on a triple base and supports an octagonal pot resting on a lotus and supporting a bud-like form (see fig. 16).³² Three sides of the post are adorned with bas reliefs of *Bodhisattvas* while the fourth shows the Buddha protected by the Serpent Muchalinda, king of the *Nāgas*. This *chaitya* in its sub-division into a square base, an octagonal shaft and a spherical head may conform to the *yūpa* specifications of the *Vāstusūtra*. In form it is not all that different from the boundary pillar of Preah Khan, Kompong Svay, with Lokeshvara at its base.

In addition, the association of boundary definition with a symbolic reference to the four directions or the notion of four directions—e.g., the Khmer boundary marker in Bhaphuon style at the Museum of Asian Art (see fig. 14) and similarly shaped Dvaravati markers—evoke the notion of a "boundary" consisting of a number of centers each one addressing the four directions rather than a boundary as a line.

The very definition of domain by center rather than by edge or boundary line implies the notion of overlapping spirit world domains which could then pose certain problems in establishing a place for the *Sanḥa*. This problem appears in the context of northern Thai history as recorded in *Epochs of the Conqueror*. Early Tai chiefdomships derived their legitimacy from a cult of a locality spirit by demonstrating an association with that spirit (Keyes 1977, 28). In view of the close link between the ruler and locality spirits, it is significant that within the *sīmā* area the king cedes his authority.³³ In the *Epochs of the Conqueror* there are references to kings of Chiang Mai ceding their rights over the land given to the monastery (Jayawickrama 1968, 137, 151). One such occasion was in 1451/52 when King Tilaka surrounded a site "with rows of lance(-bearers)"³⁴ declaring it permanently set aside for the *Sanḥa* (Jayawickrama 1968, 137–138). The incident provides an interesting glimpse of an attempt to deal with the problem of overlapping spirit world domains and perhaps some insight into the meaning of certain forms found in the monastic complex. Small lance-like forms can be seen in front of each elephant around the *chedi* of Wat Chang Lom, Si Satchanalai (fig. 31). Perhaps these should be read as symbolic of the ceding of this area to the *Sanḥa*. Lance-like forms of the

Dvaravati period may also have had a similar connotation, as also the extra set of *bai sīmā* of Royal Wats.

This row of lance-bearers or lances³⁵ has additional significance. Corollary to the notion that a spirit domain radiates from a center and is not confined within fixed boundaries is a belief in the possibility of controlling spirit movement or of establishing barriers to spirit movement. In fact, many folk practices are found which have the intention of influencing or preventing movement of spirits into places where they are unwanted. Most of these practices are tricks or puzzles designed to outsmart or confuse the spirit and thereby prevent the potentially dangerous spirit from interfering with human activity. One example is the puzzle placed on a Lawā grave (LeBar et al. 1964; Kauffmann 1980, 104–105, figs. 62, 62). However, the most obvious and significant device for preventing spirit movement is the ring of stones used around graves or cremation sites commonly found in India and also north Vietnam (Childe 1926; Agrawal 1982; Janse 1951). Two such stone circles have also been found in northeast Thailand according to Quaritch Wales (1980, 50–51).³⁶ The concept of the ring of stones seems also to have been applied in certain Buddhist relic-containing monuments, since placing a ring of gold or gold covered bricks in a *stūpa* is known among Tai cultures. *The Crystal Sands, Version B* (chronicle of Nakhon Sri Thammarat) gives an account of Holy Relics arriving from Sri Lanka and being installed in a *cetiya* and bound and protected by a "*bābhayantra*." A *bābhayantra* is described as an arrangement of objects such as gold bricks, generally in a circle, which is thought to exert a magical force (Wyatt 1975, 70–71). Mangrai (1981, 8) reports that the abbot of Wat Brasing Hokad of Kengtung in the Shan States found such a ring of gold bricks inside an old *cetiya* which he had torn down to build a new one.³⁷

Another guardian device commonly found in indigenous architectural traditions is the display of auspicious symbols, such as the *singh* on the Batak house. Such symbols were often installed following appropriate ceremony or, as in the case of the horn-like finials of the *Nāga* houses in Assam, after appropriate feats of valor had been performed. Ancestral figures which guard doorways or village gates may also be considered in this respect. All represent a spirit captured or enlisted to guard a dwelling place. Many of the rituals associated with installing such symbols involve sacrifice. Chicken sacrifices are associated with making the bamboo "stars" or crosses used by the T'in and Lawā to ward off evil spirits. These devices are fixed to the house where religious ceremonies are to be carried out (Dessaint 1981, fig. 8). Such "stars" as well as ancestor figures are also used near the village gates of the Akha of north Thailand to prevent the entry of evil spirits (Lewis 1984, 226). Within this context, the most powerful guardians are generally reserved for the chief's house or clan ancestral houses and were sometimes associated with human sacrifice. It was in this context that human sacrifice seems to have been associated with the gates of Pagan (cf. Luce 1969). Likewise, human sacrifice was associated with establishing fortifications of cities, palaces and *lak müang* both in Ayudhya (Terwiel 1978, 161) and in Burma (Spiro 1967, 104–105). In Mandalay these sacrifices were related to the foundations for the gates to the city as well as the corners and the

center of the city (Foucar 1963, 26–27). These locations again bear out the similarity to Vedic ritual which establishes domain based on the *vāstupurusha mandala*.

One historical instance of human sacrifice is particularly significant in its implications for this study. The Jengtung State Chronicle, paragraph 95, records that the border between Alāvi and Jengtung in the Shan States was protected and a truce between the states was sealed by the construction of a monastery at the border and by the sacrifice by live burial of (perhaps two) humans facing each other. A single post was planted at the site of the sacrifices (Mangrai 1981, 233–234). The chronicle account does not make clear whether or not the monastery and the site of the human sacrifice were directly associated, but the fact that both a Buddhist monastery and the human sacrifice were carried out for the same objective is very significant. Wright (1990, 49) states:

human sacrifices of ancient date are recorded in the literature to do with Phra That Phanom, Nakhon Phanom Province and Wat Phu in Southern Laos. These appear to have been replaced by animal sacrifice at a later date.

He does not give a specific source for this information nor is it clear from the context of his statement how or even if the sacrifice was directly related to either the *chedi* or the *wat*. As in the case of the Alāvi–Jengtung border, the ritual context is ambiguous.

Tambiah's (1978) studies in northeast Thailand provide accounts of communal and personal ritual which often include both monks and layperson spirit practitioners. These accounts provide significant, relevant insight since in them it is clear that monks and layperson spirit practitioners perform discretely distinct roles. Monks recite Buddhist *suttas* and blessings while lay specialists address or act as mediums for spirit world entities. The two parties may participate at different sites within a single series of ceremonies sometimes spanning a few days, or on the same site within hours. In both instances it is considered one ritual. This same separation within one ritual of the Buddhist and *deva* domains is reflected in the consecration ceremonies of Buddha images described by Tambiah (see above). It is thus impossible to conclude on such evidence as given in the *Jengtung State Chronicle* and as presented by Wright that sacrifices of any sort were directly related to or part of a specifically Buddhist ceremony or even Buddhist site. But these historical references do provide further evidence that such practices co-existed in a Buddhist cultural context. Perhaps it can be said that the Alāvi–Jengtung case may indicate that building a monastery and performing a human sacrifice were seen to be equally potent in relation to defining a spirit domain or controlling spirit world movement.

To understand how they could be considered equally potent, one need only recall the emphasis placed on the power of spiritual merit and spiritual purity, both in indigenous spirit beliefs and in Buddhist as well as Brahmanical traditions. The *Jātakas* of the Buddhist canon provide ample illustrations, as

does the *Rāmāyana* which forms part of the classic literature of most Southeast Asian cultures. Evidence of a belief in the strength of merit or merit making (*tham bun*) is present in Thai history through inscriptions and chronicles as well as in current practice. Accounts of the ceremony for installing the *bai sīmā* of Wat Benchamabopit ("Ratanakosin Bicentenary Publication," n.d.) show that declarations of merit through virtue and good deeds as well as the recitation of *suttas* by a symbolically significant number of monks were part of the ceremonies. Mangrai (1981, 15) refers to historical use of gold leaves inscribed with protective *suttas* such as the *Mangala Sutta*, *Mora Sutta* and *Ratana Sutta* buried at city gates to prevent evil spirits from entering. This provides a direct example of Buddhist *suttas*, and specifically those extolling virtue, used in a comparable way as human sacrifice in the context of Southeast Asian spirit world practices.

The power of spiritual merit is furthermore the basis for the relationship between the *nāga* and the Earth Goddess and Buddhism. Significantly, the *nāga* is seen as a guardian of the Buddha and Buddhism (cf. Tambiah 1970). The Earth Goddess, or *Nāṅg Thoranī*, is well known in Thailand and she has an important place in Buddhism. She is normally depicted in the act of wringing water from her hair. This represents the moment just before the Buddha's enlightenment when she testified to the Buddha's great virtue with the volume of water accumulated through the custom of calling the Earth to witness meritorious deeds in water-pouring ceremonies. Following this, the *nāga* king, Muchalinda, came to protect the Buddha from the resultant flood. The image of the Buddha seated on the coils of the *nāga* and protected by his expanded hoods is very common in Thai as well as in Khmer art. Perhaps, as this relates to a testimony of virtue, it should be read as a symbol of the Buddha's great virtue. Thus, the Earth Goddess and the *nāga* are not only intimately associated with Buddhism but also specifically with the virtue of the Buddha and the protective power of virtue both within and beyond the borders of Thailand.

As a *Phra Phūm*, the *Nāgarāja*'s domain of camps, stockades, gates and doors as well as his role as protector of the Buddha makes him a suitable guardian of the *uposatha* hall precinct's boundary. He is, however, not the only guardian spirit involved. Tambiah (1970, 264–268) discussed at some length the presence of the *Chao Phau Phaa Khao* ("holy man dressed in white," or simply *Chao Phau*), the guardian spirit of the *wat*. A wooden statue of *Chao Phau* is kept in the *uposatha* hall but he is, significantly, considered resident in the village spirit shrine located behind the *wat*. From Tambiah's work it seems *Chao Phau* is different for each *wat*, associated with specific ancestral figures in line with the ancestor–locality spirit complex of the northeast. *Chao Phau* seems to be in the class of locality–ancestor or hero spirits (as are the Burmese Nats who guard the Buddhist temples of Burma) and his domain is the entire monastic compound and not specifically the *bōt*.

Finally, there is another *Phra Phūm* called *Wajjathāt* who is guardian of monasteries and sacred places in general (see table 3). The function of this *Phra Phūm* in relation to the *wat* and *uposatha* hall is not clear as there is a notable lack of reference to

this spirit in common practice. By the implications in the name *Wajjathāt*,³⁸ and in the Pāli *Vayadatta*, of age or era and the ancestors, this *Phra Phūm* could perhaps be considered as equivalent to the Fates or Furies. This would account for the oracle sticks present in almost every *wat* and would be appropriate in relation to the function of a sacred place in general. Also "*Vayu*" as the element air, breath or space is sometimes considered a Brahmanical divinity. *Wajjathāt* is expelled from the house site and may be propitiated during similar ceremonies for the *uposatha* hall. On current evidence it is not clear. In view of the Buddhist *Saṅgha* being deemed above all spirits, there is perhaps reason to think that *Wajjathāt*, like the king, must cede all rights to this territory, while *Chao Phau* (benevolent ancestral figure) and the *nāga* (protector of Buddhism and boundaries, as well as representative of the boundary between the conditioned and the unconditioned) are enlisted to perform guardian functions.

This review of various aspects of spirit world domain beliefs and related practices in Thailand is by no means complete. Nonetheless, several important factors emerge which surely must have had an impact on the development of the Buddhist monastic complex and which explain why the purity of the precinct of the *uposatha* hall is so important even today. The interesting parallels between symbols of and practices related to the ancestor spirit, locality spirit, political domain and certain sacred structures point to a common sub-stratum of spirit world beliefs. The Buddhist *Saṅgha*, as not part of, but above the spirit world must nonetheless be reconciled with a complex spirit world network.

CONCLUSION

Although unable to cover all facets thoroughly, this study pulls together many aspects and isolated details which help to clarify the significance of the precinct of the Thai *uposatha* hall. The general ritual structure involved in the designation of the precinct seems quite obvious when set in the structurally complex context of spirit world beliefs of Southeast Asia. The picture which begins to emerge is perhaps deceptively clear.

There are many ambiguities and unanswered questions regarding both the details and the origins of these practices which could change the picture significantly. The similarities between Hindu, Buddhist and animistic thought which allowed the adaptation of diverse elements into a cohesive cultural tradition, along with the nature of the records of these developments and the need to cross disciplinary boundaries, makes retracing the roots of the traditions and verifying significance a slow, difficult task.

There is, however, no doubt that the nature of the spirit world domain complex has led to the transformation of a "social ritual" to designate a place of assembly for the Observance of *Pātimokkha* into the consecration of a sacred precinct. That this transformation occurred entirely in Southeast Asia is doubtful. The Sinhalese also seem to have been similarly inclined and may have given a similar direction to the developments in Thailand.

However, of all Theravada countries, Thailand seems to have the strongest and most varied expression of the sacred precinct. The Pāli texts do not provide ritual guidance to meet the needs apparently felt by the Buddhist community, particularly the laity. Therefore, Vedic traditions were chosen as a tool to harmonize two spheres of religious practice, namely the Buddhist and the animistic. Although the ritual elements used in meeting the needs for the *uposatha* hall were apparently carefully chosen from Vedic tradition to relate to Buddhist traditions, the ritual structure of practices and beliefs related to the precinct seem to stem largely from Southeast Asian attitudes to the spirit world domain.

Aspects of Southeast Asian beliefs which required accommodation seem to be primarily the following: locality spirit domain as a center of power radiating influence without boundaries; links between locality spirits and ancestors; links between or association of the ruling chiefs with locality spirits, or, in more general terms, the relationship between earth and sky spirits and between political power and spiritual power. These must be seen against the Thai belief, as implied and expressed in the Pāli text, that the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Saṅgha* are above and apart from the spirit world. Another facet of the problem is the importance of expressing spirit world order or links in the built environment. This latter facet seems to have contributed to the prominence and artistic quality of the markers of the precinct.

The general ritual framework within which the need to address beliefs related to spirit powers was reconciled with Buddhist needs is fairly simple. To begin with, the place to be reserved for the Buddhist *Saṅgha* and especially the *uposatha* hall had to be cleared of all spirit world influences. This apparently was accomplished (at least in part) by means also employed in the house-building ceremonies.

Once cleared, the site had to be protected against future spirit world intrusions. This latter objective seems to have been accomplished by four means. First, through animistic ritual which may have been conducted at the village shrine, a benevolent ancestral figure, *Chao Phau*, was enlisted to look after the *wat*. Second, Vedic rituals of *vāstupuruṣa* traditions involving deities found mentioned in Buddhist texts were adapted to establish a precinct. In this way, the *nāga*, who provides a link between locality spirits and Buddhism, was made a principal guardian. Associated with virtue and protection, it is also significant that the *nāga* symbolically surrounds the hall and extends right up to the *chaw fa*, thus representing a bridge to higher realms, another aspect of virtue. Third, the space is occupied by and thus becomes the domain of an image which has been infused with a psychic power with a genealogy linking it to an "original likeness" of the Buddha. Symbolic themes seem to focus on elements derived from ancestor or hero worship practices and reinforce this notion of a domain occupied by the psychic power of the lineage of sacred images. This is particularly appropriate in a context where ancestor or hero spirits were associated with benevolent locality spirits. And the fourth means of protecting the site is the "extolling recitation ceremony" mentioned in the *Pādaeng Chronicle* which seems to use the same ritual technique as the *Buddhābhiseka* and focuses on

each of the boundary stones in turn. In this ritual the protective power of the merit extolled is concentrated and anchored on each stone which explains why the stones themselves, even after being dislodged from their original location, are deemed sacred.

In view of the great importance accorded the *nāga* and the *nāga*'s association with *lūk nimit*, let us look again at the implications of the *lūk nimit*. Although a relatively late practice, the terminology chosen for the *lūk nimit* may in fact veil older ritual meaning or meanings. As stones they could be seen as part of the purifying process, driving spirits away. That is, the forceful dropping of the stones as observed by Wright (1990) might be related to driving away the unwelcome spirits. On the other hand, *lūk nimit* could be a substitute victim offered to the Earth Goddess as suggested by Wright, or the gold covered spheres may be a Golden Embryo (seed element) manifesting a new domain. Perhaps it is both.

That all nine *lūk nimit* are associated with the *nāga* has an additional implication in Vedic tradition. In no application of a *vāstupurusha mandala* are all nine squares associated with the same deity; thus, in this case each *lūk nimit* would seem to represent a mandala within a mandala, i.e., each is a center. Nested numerology and various forms of nested sets of symbols are common in Buddhist metaphor or symbolism. The *bai sīmā* seem to mark not only the boundary of a precinct, but each marks a spirit world energy center ruled over by the *nāga*, i.e. "boundary" is generated by a series of centers. Perhaps the central location may represent the manifestation of a spirit world domain for the presiding image with its particular psychic power genealogy. Thus the center *lūk nimit* would be associated with *Vāstunāga* while the perimeter locations would be associated with the *nāga* as *Nāgarāja* both as *Nakhonrāad*, the *Phra Phūm* of gates, camps and stockades as a protector of the precinct, and as *Muchalinda* representing the protective power of the Buddha's virtue.

That the *nāga* plays the role of principal guardian is particularly significant. The *nāga* is not only guardian of bounded territory, but as *Vāstunāga* is also the foundation of architecture and all physical manifestation. As such the *nāga* represents the boundary between the conditioned (this world) and the unconditioned (*nibbāna*). This significance is parallel to that implicit in the Ordination ceremony which has come to be the most important function of the *uposatha* hall in Thailand.

One very significant aspect of the adaptation of Vedic ritual traditions is the apparent de-emphasis of the notion of sacrifice

in favor of the reliance on boldly presented evidence of merit. While sacrifice to the temple is mentioned by Turton (1978), the nature of the sacrifice is ambiguous. Perhaps the precious objects buried or the gifts given to the *Saṅgha* on the occasion of consecration constitute the sacrifice. Or perhaps the use of the *vāstupurusha mandala* is itself considered the sacrifice. The notion of sacrifice seems to have been expressed in different ways at different times and places, as evidenced by the offering platforms at Wat Phra That Haripunjaya. There is also the question of to whom or to what the offering is actually made, the temple or its guardian spirit, i.e., the *nāga*. However, the evidence for any of these interpretations of the sacrificial aspect of the ritual is still somewhat ambiguous.

What is not ambiguous is the protective role of merit through "extolling recitation" and the display of symbols of merit both during the ritual and in the markers themselves. This display includes more abstract symbols such as the leaf-form representative of the Bodhi Tree and the supreme enlightenment or attainment of *nibbāna* which occurred there, and the ever-present lotus as well as the very clear depiction of *devas* (fig. 32) and scenes of merit from the *Jātakas* on early Dvaravati *bai sīmā*. Inscriptions on or buried under the markers or related to the consecration proclaim meritorious deeds. That the participation of monks in the ceremony establishing the precinct seems largely to consist of "extolling recitation," i.e., recitation of protective *suttas* which focus on great merit and virtue, is significant. While this may be a way of clearing the site supplementary to methods also used in house-building ceremonies, it does not require the monks to be involved directly with spirit world beings or beliefs and thus is an activity appropriate for the *Saṅgha*. However, from the viewpoint of spirit world practices of Southeast Asia, psychic energy generated by this activity and symbolic evidence of merit left on the site would constitute continued protection. Thus while the *nāga* definitely plays an important role as a guardian, to a large extent even through the presence of the *nāga*, it is the merit of the Buddha plus the merit of the precinct's founders which protect the precinct. The Buddhist *uposatha* hall thus becomes, within Southeast Asian spirit world practices, a purified island of refuge, isolated from the complex network of spirit world domains and infused with a powerful psychic energy of the presiding image. But by that very token, it is a Southeast Asian spirit world domain which serves as a precinct for the Buddhist *uposatha* hall.

NOTES

1. *Upasatha*, the term and the practice, is derived from the Vedic *upavasatha*, or day of preparation before the *Soma* sacrifice marking the stages of the moon's waxing and waning. The day was used by communities of religious ascetics in pre-Buddhist India for expounding their views. The custom was adapted by the Buddhist *Saṅgha* and became the Observance of *Pātimokkha*.
2. Significantly, *Mahāvagga* (II, 9.1) states that the Observance of *Pātimokkha* is properly carried out even if some of the participants are outside the agreed *uposatha* hall, provided they could hear the recitation.
3. There is some evidence, e.g., in Giteau's work (1965, pl. 6a) that Cambodian *sīmā* markers may also be lavishly ornamented, but there is little available evidence regarding the range of form and motif.
4. The range of forms was first presented at the 33rd ICANAS in Toronto (Indorf 1990) and the discussion below expands on that work in view of additional data discovered since then. The range of subject matter in the ornamentation was studied in some detail in a paper (Indorf 1991) presented at the 12th IAHA conference in Hong Kong. See tables 1 and 2 which are based on that work.
5. The Thai name for the stone, *bai sīmā* (often spelled *bai semā*), indicates it is a leaf-like or slab-like form as the term *bai* means "leaf" and is a classifier for leaf-like objects.
6. The earliest hall associated with Buddhism is the meeting hall at Pong Tuk which may be sixth century (Higham 1989). Illustrations of this hall in Krairiksh (1975) and Dupont (1959) indicate small squarish projections remaining at two corners of the base platform. These might have been a form of boundary marker in keeping with a tradition similar to the early Sinhalese practice as described and illustrated by Bandaranayake (1974). However, unlike the Sinhalese stones, they occur only toward the front and are aligned with the sides of the base rather than set at a 45 degree angle to the sides.
7. One of the larger examples found was a marker from Phu Khieo, Chaiyaphum, which measured 2.35 meters tall by 72 cm wide and 35 cm thick (Paknam 1981a).
8. Although on a Dvaravati site, just beside the brick mound remains of a Dvaravati structure, these *bai sīmā* are probably from a later period, either Ayudhya or Ratanakosin judging from the form of the *bōt*. But it is possible that they attempt to reflect a style or form of an earlier period.
9. Although it is dated much earlier, its form and floral ornament bear comparison to certain Islamic grave markers of the region; for example, of Java and Sumatra from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1966, 89–93) connects this form with the Gujarat area of India. A grave marker of this type from Malacca, dated 1475, is in the collection of the National Museum of Singapore (Choo 1987, fig. III).
10. Diskul (1956, 363, figs. 1–7) divides the decorated Dvaravati slab type *bai sīmā* into three phases: (1) relatively broader proportions with a narrative form of pictorial bas relief; (2) taller thinner proportions and less narrative depictions although still representative of *Jātaka* and scenes from the Buddha's life; (3) tall thin proportions with bas relief carvings reflecting the style of the Dvaravati stone images.
11. When seen by this author they were on the site but not *in situ* on the boundary. They were said to have been at the corners and midpoints of the surrounding wall. However, such forms were identified simply as "antefixes" in M. Vallibhotama (1967, figs. 59, 61).
12. These observations were made in 1978. During another visit in 1984 the forms were found partially obscured by earth and recent renovations had enclosed each cluster within a square surrounded by concrete curb.
13. The location is not always conceived of as the precise geometric center of the hall. One informant explained it was located under the gaze of the principal image. This seems to derive significance in relation to the common meaning of the term *nimit* as used with reference to meditation (see discussion of the term below). It is also probably a reflection of the importance now placed on the presiding image and the notion of the lineage of that image (see Tambiah 1984).
14. According to the Pāli Canon a monastery should have only one *uposatha* hall. Thus, if two wats merge, the *bai sīmā* of one are taken up. Furthermore, in establishing a new *uposatha* hall, for fear that a previous one now vanished may have occupied the site, the site is ritually cleansed or cleared of earlier consecrations to ensure that the ceremony about to be conducted will take proper effect (cf. Paknam 1981a).
15. The authenticity of that attribution or the "historical" context is a moot point. It is well accepted within Buddhist and academic circles that, as Dutt (1924) has shown, the *Vinaya Pitaka* was formalized within one hundred years of the Buddha's demise at a time before sectarian differences were important and began to influence the content of other portions of the *Tipitaka*, e.g. the *Sutta Pitaka*.
16. Either King Mongkut prior to his accession in 1851 or Krom Phraya Pavares Viriyalongkon who succeeded him wrote about the ceremony (Dr. Piriya Krairiksh, personal communication 1990), but the author has not yet been able to see a copy.
17. For example, by Turton (1978), Clement (1982, 62–70), Terwiel (1979, 159–160) as well as Tambiah (1970, 71).
18. *Bālī* is the Asura King defeated by Vishnu in Dwarf Manifestation. *Bālī* had acquired sovereignty over the entire earth and Indra's heaven by the force of his austerities. However, Vishnu regained the earth and Indra's heaven, but left the nether world to *Bālī*.
19. Temphan was working in the northeast, Terwiel in the Central Plain, while Chantavilasvong and Turton were concerned with the north.
20. The square is symbolic of the extended world. There are also variations based on the circle and, for city planning, on other forms as well (cf. *Manasara* Vol IV).
21. The odd number series of mandalas is related to the geometrical progression of the number 8. The first is a single square related to Brahmā. The second (with eight squares as the perimeter) is related to gods and has the center square related to Pritivi (the Earth), and in application can be treated as an eighty-one square mandala. The third square (with sixteen as perimeter) is related to men. Fourth in this series is the forty-nine square mandala (with twenty-four squares as its pe-

- rimeter) and these are associated with goblins (*pisacas*) (Kramrisch 1986, 61).
22. The *Mandūka* plan of sixty-four squares is the model for all even numbers; the *Paramasāyika* plan of eight-one squares is the model for all odd numbers.
 23. One exception, the forty-nine square mandala (based on 7 X 7) bears no direct relation to the legend of the *vāstupurusha* (Kramrisch 1986, 61). See also note 21.
 24. Name of Śiva as regent of the northeast; Isana is apparently the older form of the name.
 25. The *Vāstusūtra Upanishad* is the basic text for the Vedic building traditions found reflected in all the *Silpa* texts. It establishes the principles of form generation on which the use of the *vāstupurusha mandala* rests (Boner et al. 1986, 1–3).
 26. The Sungate or Sun Door is the boundary between the conditioned (the world) and the unconditioned (*nibbāna*) or in Brahmanical terms the *apara*–Brahman and the *para*–Brahman. North is normally identified with the Sun Door, but there are both Vedic and Buddhist variations which shift it to the northeast (Snodgrass 1988, 272). In the *vāstupurusha* tradition the northeast is associated with a remainder of "0", associated with the Sun or Surya (Kramrisch 1986, 37–38).
 27. See footnote 26. The gnomon establishes a link to the natural order of the physical world through aligning the building with the sun path. The gnomon, a small pole, is fixed in position and the shadow falling across a circle's circumference determines east–west orientation and a line from which a square is constructed in a technique involving the *vesica piscis*. This, in turn, could serve as a basis of geometric proportions and patterns (cf. Lawler 1987) which guide the construction of the building or complex.
 28. Or, it could be early prehistoric remains such as found by Quaritch Wales (1969, 17, 66) at another site. The author, while at the site during an April 1991 visit, was told by a worker associated for the past five or six years with the site and the technical school (within whose grounds the *chedi* is located) that human remains had been found under the *chedi*. This may be only rumor/legend, like the story of the existence of an underground tunnel all the way to Wat Thammasala several kilometers away. The context of the association was not clear, but was said to have been "directly under" the *chedi*. It has not been possible to verify the claim.
 29. The Yuan or Central Mekong River Tai are also known as Lān Nā Tai. In the light of what is to be discussed below, it is tempting to speculate that these subtle differences between the various Tai groups, if more thoroughly studied, could help unravel some of the mystery which still surrounds the emergence of early Tai kingdoms.
 30. Later, when the area came under Ayudhya's control, some were in turn encased in a bell-form or *prāng*, for example at Wat Mahathat, Chaliang.
 31. Dates for some of these specific applications are available, but dates for the earliest use of the form in these different applications are not. Thus the discussion cannot at present be aimed at establishing which context is the origin of the use of this form and thus its original significance.
 32. The crowning form is similar to bud-shaped ceremonial flower arrangements (*phūm*) used in Thai ritual. This *chaitya* is also illustrated in Snodgrass (1988, 42, fig 13a).
 33. This is even true of the Thai government today (cf. Paknam 1981a, 57).
 34. It is noted that Mangrai placed "–bearers" in brackets, but the degree to which this was actually implied in the text or only felt necessary by the translator is not clear. As will be clear in the following discussion, it could have been possible for the lances themselves to be physically planted in the ground rather than being held by a bearer.
 35. See footnote 34.
 36. These sites in Thailand and north Vietnam have not been definitely associated with a particular ethnic group (see Higham 1989); however, other megalithic remains have been associated with the Samre, a Mon–Khmer group of Vietnam (Quaritch Wales 1980, 50–51) and with the Lawā (also Mon–Khmer) of north Thailand (Kauffmann 1980, 111).
 37. The abbot did not exactly remember the date inscribed on the bricks but remembered it as about 600 years ago. The old gold bricks were re-enclosed in the new *cetiya*.
 38. See table 3, note 9.

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TABLE 1
FORMS OF BAI SĪMĀ

FORM	PLACE/PERIOD	EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, RELATED FORM
LEAF			
classic leaf	all areas, all periods	Wat Na Pramen, Ayudhya	stele, hero tablets, Sinhalese guardstones
attenuated leaf			
pointed tip	Isan, Dvaravati	from Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	spear or lance point
squared tip	(style of ancient Lavo)		shield
3-dimensional			
square, section form	Isan, Dvaravati	from Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	Khmer boundary markers, e.g., at Prasat Phanom Rung, also item #B7652 Asian Art Museum, San Francisco
octagonal "bullet"	Dvaravati	Wat Maha Chai, Müang Maha Sarakham	
intersecting slabs	contemporary	Wat Sala Loy, Korat	[emphasizes cross axes, the world of 4 directions]
POST			
simple post			
large heavy sections	Isan, Dvaravati	from Müang Fa Daed Song Yan	megaliths; pillar form hero stones;
simple round section	Chiang Mai	Wat Bupparam, Chiang Mai	arranged as paired sets of pillars at Baddhasīmā-pāsāda, Polonnaruwa
paired sets			
paired octagonal pillars	Chiang Mai	Wat Cet Yot	
small, square section	Chiang Mai	Wat Phra Singh	later Sinhalese monasteries; later Mon of Pegu
paired with slab (?)			
pillar, bud top	Chiang Mai, 16th–18th c.	Wat Maha Wan, Chiang Mai	Burmese <i>sīmā</i> markers, Shan States and Pagan; Tai princes' tombs, Shan States; Sukhothai lotus bud <i>chedi</i> ; <i>lak müang</i> or <i>jai ban</i> pillars; <i>yūpa</i> , Wat Phra That Haripunjaya; ¹ Khmer <i>chaitya</i> or boundary pillar ²
buried cluster	Lampang	Wat Phra That, Lampang	<i>jai ban</i> pillars sometimes in clusters
UNIQUE FORMS			
squared urn forms	Central Plain, Ratanakosin	Wat Pathumwannaram, Bangkok	reliquary urn
flat paving slab	Bangkok, Ratanakosin	Wat Benchamabopit, Bangkok	mandala ?

Notes follow table 3.

TABLE 2
ORNAMENTATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE *BAI SĪMĀ*

N.B. This table reflects the range of motifs, quoting at least one example, but does not reflect the motif. Data from Paknam 1981a, except as noted.

ORNAMENTAL MOTIF	PLACE	PERIOD	DATE
BUDDHA FIGURES			
seated in meditation	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
standing	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
Bodhisattva standing on lotus	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang, Wat Mai Kut Ngong	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
LIFE OF THE BUDDHA			
Queen Maya bathed by elephants	Kampuchea	Dvaravati	12th c.
birth of the Buddha	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	Dvaravati	6th c.
return to Kapilavastu	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	Dvaravati	6th c.
Angulimala threatens the Buddha	Khon Kaen Museum	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
JĀTAKA TALES			
Mahajanaka	Khon Kaen Museum	Dvaravati	5th/6th c.
Chandakumara	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	Dvaravati	(5th sub-p.)
Temiya	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	Dvaravati	(5th sub-p.)
Vidhura Pandita (bound over to the <i>yaksha</i>)	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
Brahma Narada	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang, Wat Mai Kut Ngong	Dvaravati	(6th sub-p.)
Vessantara	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
others, not specifically identified	Müang Fa Daed Song Yang and Khon Kaen Museum	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
human figure dancing around a house	Khon Kaen Museum ³	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
DEVAS & MYTHICAL CREATURES			
Sakka (Indra) on Erawan	Northeast Thailand	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
flying <i>devata</i>	Wat Phnom Wan (Wat Nai) Lopburi	Lopburi	7th–14th c.
<i>devata</i> holding lotuses	Museum, Nakhon Sri Thammarat	Srivijaya	8th–13th c.
<i>devata</i> holding lotuses ⁴	Wat Thong Thua, Khlong Narai, Chantaburi	Lopburi (Srivijaya style)	11th–12th c.
<i>devata</i> in border at base of form	Wat Klang, Ayudhya	Ayudhya	14th–18th c.
<i>Kirtimukha</i> mask and foliage	Wat Maha That, Khlong Krachaeng, Phetchaburi and Wat Klang, Ayudhya	Ayudhya	14th–18th c.
Narayana (Vishnu) on Garuda	Wat Khanon Pak Khu, Ayudhya	Ayudhya	14th–18th c.
Garuda tramples Nāga underfoot	Wat Thamle Thai, Ayudhya	Ayudhya	14th–18th c.
Garuda	Wat Chang Yai, Wat Tum Ayudhya	Late Ayudhya	17th–18th c.
	Wat Phra Maha That, Nakhon Sri Thammarat	Ratanakosin	Rama I (1782–1809)
<i>Nāga</i>	Wat Phrom Niwat Worawihan (Wat Khon Yuan), Ayudhya	Late Ayudhya	17th–18th c.
	Wat Senatsanaram, behind Wang Chan Kasem, Ayudhya; also Wat Pathumwannaram, Bangkok	Ratanakosin	Rama IV (1851–1868)
different <i>devata</i> each <i>bai sīmā</i>	Wat Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom	Ratanakosin	Rama VI (1910–1925)

TABLE 2, cont
ORNAMENTATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE *BAI SĪMĀ*

ORNAMENTAL MOTIF	PLACE	PERIOD	DATE
ANIMALS			
elephant, monkey next to column supporting <i>dharmacakka</i>	Cambodia	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
peacock	Wat Chom Khiri, Nak Phrot, Nakhon Sawan	Ayudhya	14th–18th c.
FLORAL & ABSTRACT			
floral borders at base of marker	Khon Kaen Museum	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
overall floral patterns	British Museum;	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
	Wat Mahathat, Phetchaburi	Late Ayudhya	ca. 18th c.
acanthus/cloud pattern	Phimai	Dvaravati	(2nd sub-period)
lotus at top of leaf form <i>bai sīmā</i>	Wat Siri Chantanimit, (W. Chantaram) Chantanimit	Lopburi	7th–14th c.
	Wat Chong Lom, Suphan Buri	Late Ayudhya	ca. 18th c.
lotus-like reliquary form finial	Wat Khruawan, Thonburi	Ratanakosin	Rama III (1824–51)
central axis raised dividing into double spiral at bottom	Wat Nang Phaya, Phitsanulok	Late Sukhothai	1368–ca. 1438
diamond-shaped lozenge in center			
– vertical along axis	Phimai Sanctuary, Korat	Lopburi (Bayon style)	12th–13th c.
	Wat Saphan Hin	Sukhothai	14th–15th c.
	Wat Mangkon, Sukhothai	Sukhothai/Early Ayudhya	14th–15th c.
– horizontal along axis, like breast plate	Wat Chai Watanarm Ayudhya	Middle Ayudhya	ca. 16th c.
bands of floral ornament around edges, along the central axis, lozenge at the center ⁵	Ayudhya and Bangkok	Late Ayudhya; Ratanakosin	ca. 18th c.; 1782–ca. 1925
floral pattern completely covers marker with a band edging form	Wat Palilai, Chaiya	Ratanakosin	Rama III (1824–51)
SYMBOLIC MOTIFS			
<i>Dharmacakka</i>	Cambodia	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
	Wat Phra Mahathat, Nakhon Sri Thammarat	Ratanakosin	Rama III (1824–51)
flag or banner ⁶	Khon Kaen Museum	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
waterpot with spout and pinnacle, trident	Khon Kaen Museum	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
reliquary or <i>stūpa</i> with attenuated spire ⁷	Khon Kaen Museum	Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
<i>stūpa</i> on central axis	Wat Phra That Phanom, at four corners of relic	Contemporary with Dvaravati	6th–9th c.
floral pattern resembling tree of life	Wat Khanon, Ayudhya	Late Dvaravati/Early Ayudhya	11th–14th c.
central flower (wheel) in a tree surrounded by birds, forest animals	Chaiya	Late Ayudhya	ca. 18th c.
lotus base on 3 tier pedestal, garuda, demons, guardians of the word ⁸	Wat Sa Bua, Phetchaburi	Late Ayudhya	ca. 18th c.

(Notes follow table 3.)

TABLE 3

THE NINE PHRA PHŪM
(after Terwiel 1979, 175)

THAI	PĀLI/SANSKRIT	REALM
Chajjamonkhon	Jayamaṅgala	houses, residences, shops
Nakhonrâad	Nāgarāja	camps, stockades, gates, doors, ladders, barracks
Thewatheen or Theepheen or Thewakhráj	Devathera or Devena	stables, pens, barns, cowsheds
Chajjasòb	Jayāsabaṇa	granaries
Kontāb	Gandharva	special ceremonial houses, bridal houses
Thammahōraa or Jawwaphêw	Dharmahorā	rice fields, open fields, mountains, forests
Wajjathāt or Tawetheen (according to <i>Prapheenit Thai</i> , p. 288)	Vajadatta ⁹	monasteries, sacred places
Thammikarâad	Dharmikarāja	fruit and vegetable gardens
Thâadthaaraa	Dāṣaḍārā	brooks, lagoons, swamps, rivers, canals

NOTES TO THE TABLES

- Similar forms are also seen beside the entrances to an area defined by a low wall around the *wihān* or *uposatha* hall of a monastic complex in Luang Prabang.
- For example, boundary pillars for Preah Khan, Kompong Svay. Although the top form is actually a bell-shaped floral ornament supported by mouldings and with a small bud form finial, the general appearance of the top of this form is bud-like.
- This stone marker was observed by the author. While the figure may represent a *jātaka*, its ornamental motif is reminiscent of hero tablets of central India and Sumatra.
- Similar in form and ornament to Cambodian *sīmā* stone from Phum Dun, Battambang, in the Museum of Vat Po Veal at Battambang (Giteau 1965, pl. 69).
- These bands divide the marker into two halves. Since the top is often treated like a collar and the medallion appears as a chest ornament, the marker takes on the appearance of a torso of a *devata*.
- Flags are used by the Sinhalese as well as the Akha of north Thailand as a signal to the spirits, to send a message or establish communication with the spirits. Flags or banners of various forms have been used to represent ancestors, e.g. by the Khmer groups in northeast Thailand, and a form of ancestral flag made of flowers or of carved wood can be seen in temples in the northern parts of Thailand.
- This form is usually described as having an attenuated spire; however, it seems possible to interpret it as a shaft of light descending from above as a sign of the special powers of sacred relics.
- The pedestal has three tiers. The top one is decorated with *garudas*, the middle with demonic figures, while the lowest is plain. Plaster ornament for the lowest tier may have deteriorated. Guardians of the world are found on the principal *bai sīmā* only.
- This name is not listed in the *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, but may be one of the minor deities classed as *Vāyadeva* who were present at the *Mahāsamaya Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* ii, 259). The name itself in both Pāli and Thai seems to imply "old age" or age as an era and the notion of hero or ancestor. If related to *Vāyadeva* it may be harpies, half woman half bird. *Vāyu* as an element, breath, air or space is also sometimes considered a divinity (Snodgrass 1988). The name *Tawetheen* would seem to link this *Phra Phūm* to the Heaven of the 33.

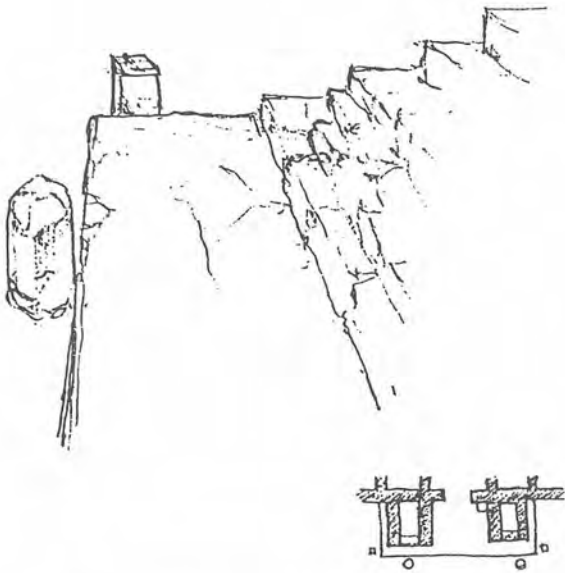


Fig. 1. Sketch of the stone posts flanking the corners of the stone paving in front of the entry to a monastery west of the Great Stūpa of Sañchi. Diagram shows plan location of posts.

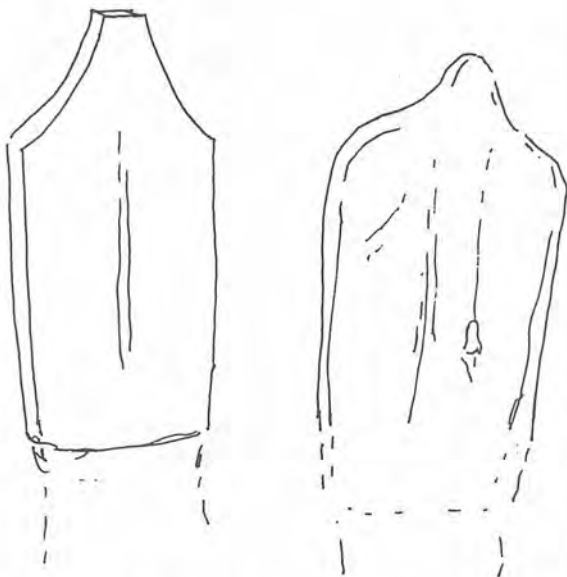


Fig. 2. Two Dvaravati period *bai sīmā* of Lovo style (after Paknam 1981a).



Fig. 3. Wat Thammasala, Nakhon Pathom. Fluted bullet shaped *bai sīmā*, brick covered with stucco.



Above left

Fig. 4. Dvaravati *bai sīmā* in the museum of Wat Po Chai Semaran, Ban Sema, Mueang Fa Daed, with *Jātaka* scene.

Left

Fig. 5. Dvaravati *bai sīmā* at the museum in Khon Kaen ornamented with a bas relief pot or reliquary form with an attenuated spire or shaft of light from above.

Above right

Fig. 6. Dvaravati *bai sīmā* at the museum in Khon Kaen. The form, square in plan, is an attenuated leaf shape which could perhaps also be seen as a lance point form.



Fig. 7. Niki Vihāra Chaitya, Anuradhapura. Remains of square base, post form *sīmā* markers are visible at corners and center of each side.



Fig. 8. Niki Vihāra Chaitya [*stūpa*]. Detail of one of the square pillar *sīmā* markers surrounding the base of the *stūpa*.



Fig. 9. Baddhasīmāpāsāda, Polonnaruwa. Paired pillars topped with pot forms serve as *sīmā* markers.



Fig. 10. Baddhasīmāpāsāda, Polonnaruwa. Detail of paired pillars which serve as *sīmā* markers.



Fig. 11. Guardstones flanking steps to building #11 (sixth–eleventh centuries) of Toluville, Anuradhapura.



Fig. 12. Wat Bupparam, Chiang Mai. Paired pillars serve as *bai sīmā*.

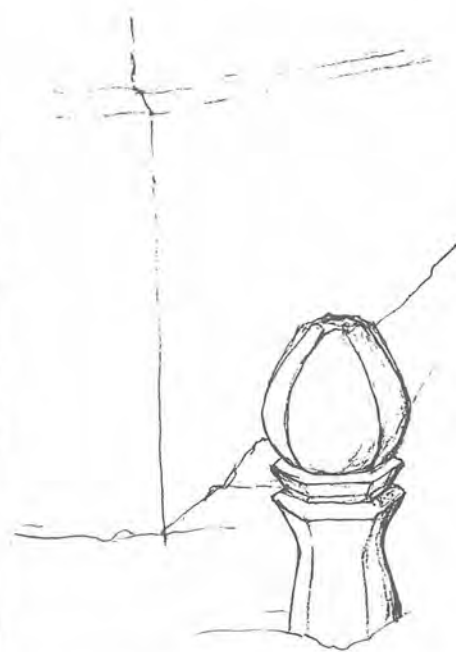
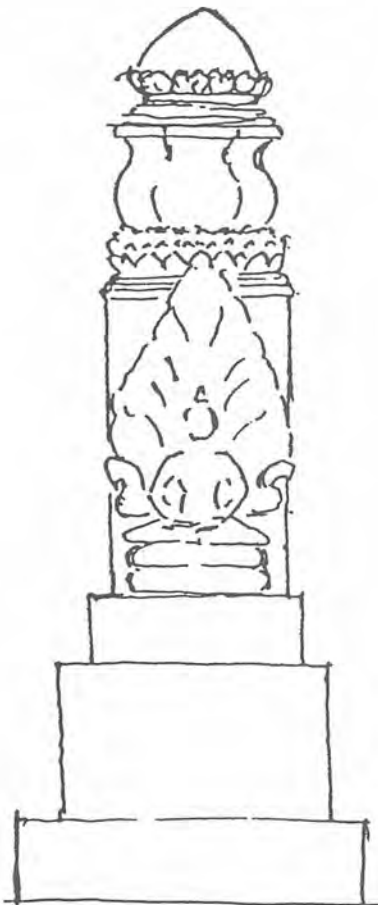


Fig. 13. Wat Maha Wan, Chiang Mai. A Burmese style pillar form *bai sīmā*.

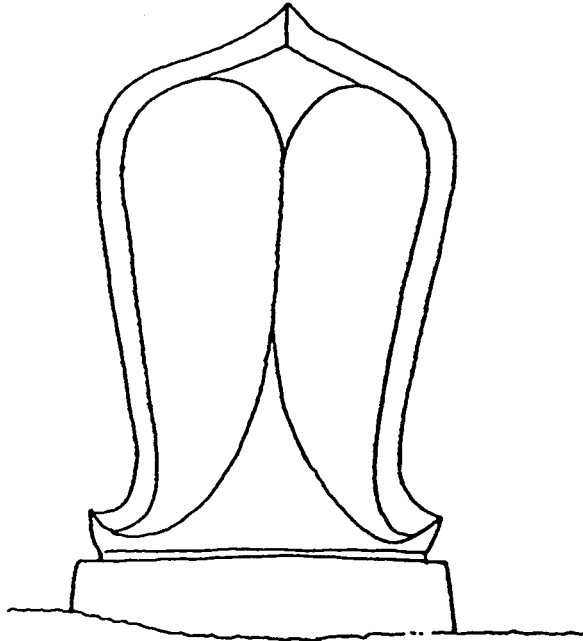


Above
Fig. 14. Khmer boundary marker in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.

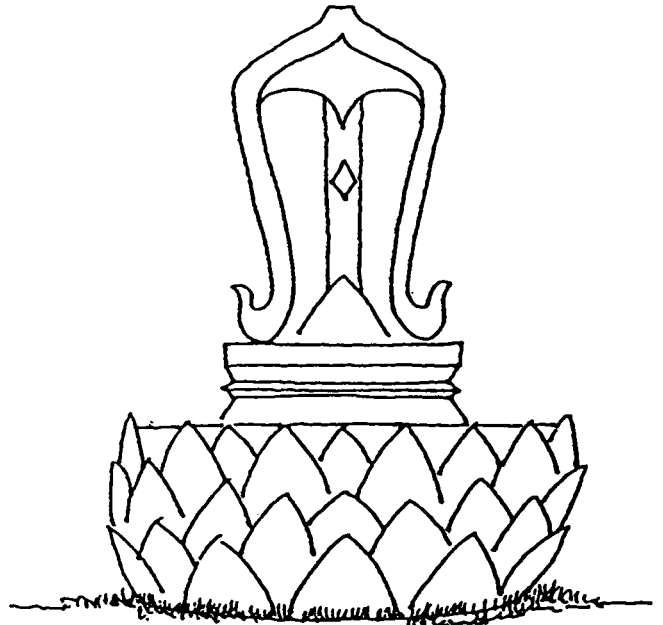


Above
Fig. 15. Prasat Phanom Rung. One of the pillars lining both sides of the approach to the stairs to the main sanctuary.

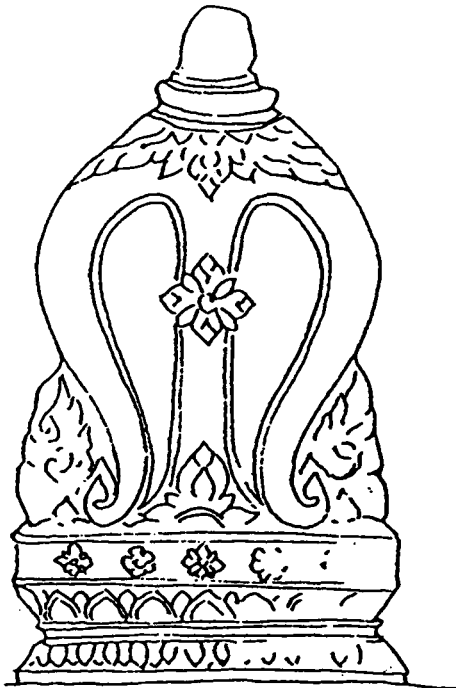
Left
Fig. 16. Khmer *chaitya* in the Musée Guimet, Paris.



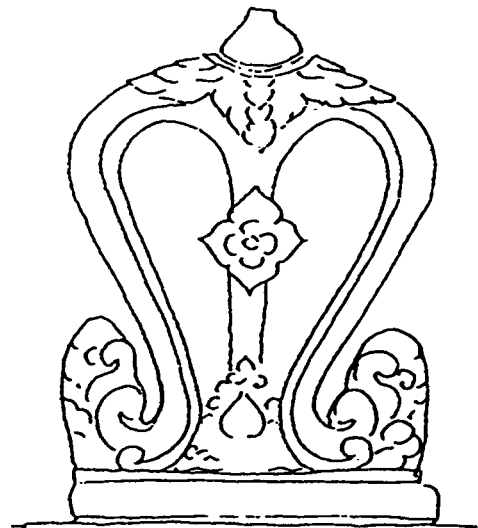
A. Wat Sri San Phet, Ayudhya.



B. Phra Puttha Bat, Saraburi.



C. Wat Kaeow Fa, Bangkok.



D. Wat Ratchadathithan, Thonburi.

Fig. 17. Four Ayudhya Period *bai simā* (after Paknam 1981a).



Far left
Fig. 18.
Mae Nang Plum,
Ayudhya. The *bai sīmā*
inside its housing; note
'breast plate' and
ornamental bands as well
as *nāga* heads at waist.

Immediate left
Fig. 19.
Wat Rajnadda, Bangkok.
Bai sīmā with *nāga* heads
at waist and decorated
with a star and *deva*
figure mounted on an
animal.



Left
Fig. 20.
Wat Bung, Nakhon Sri
Thammarat. Double *bai*
sīmā on pedestals a
short distance from the
uposatha hall within the
space defined by the
low wall known as
kamphaeng kaew (crystal
wall). Lower *nāga* head
acroterions of the barge
board are visible above
the roof eaves.



Above left
Fig. 21.
Wat Bovornives Vihāra,
Bangkok. *Bai simā* attached to
the external wall of the
uposatha hall.



Above right
Fig. 22.
Wat Saket, Bangkok. *Bai simā*
housings covered with
ceramic mosaic ornament.



Right
Fig. 23.
Wat Khun In (Phra Man),
Pothong, Ang Thong. Nine
stone spheres covered with
gold leaf waiting to be
installed as *lūk nimit* of a new
uposatha hall.



Fig. 24. Wat Bovornives Vihāra, Bangkok. Old *bai sīmā* stone set up on the north side of the *uposatha* hall with a candle rail and censers in front of it. It is not in the normal position for the *bai sīmā*.



Fig. 25. Stone deposit box from Anuradhapura.

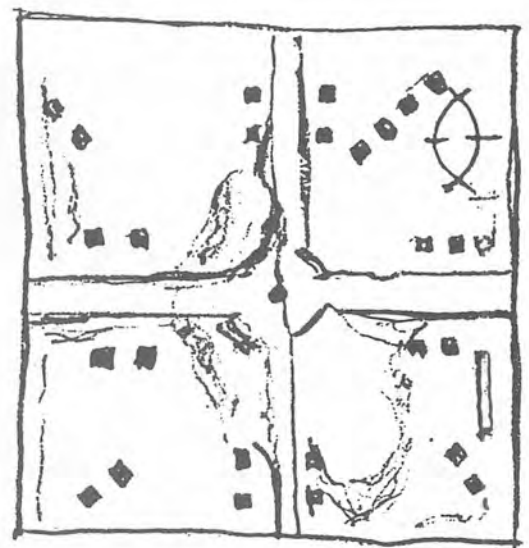
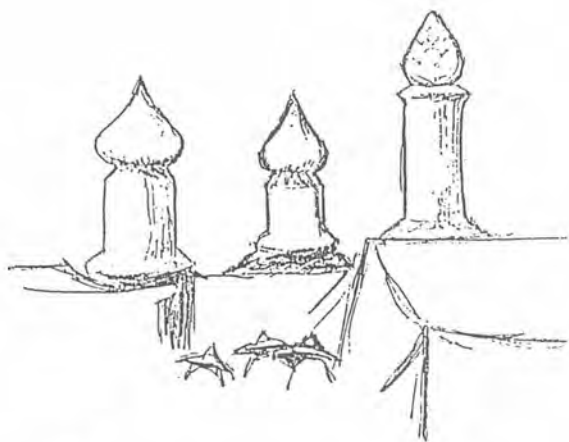


Fig. 26. Stone deposit box from the tower summit of Prasat Kok, Angkor (after Snodgrass 1988, fig. 74.2).



Above

Fig. 27. Tombs of the Tai princes of the Shan States (after Mangrai 1981, fig. 12).

Below

Fig. 28. Old wooden *lak mūang* or *wihān* pillar in the "museum" at Prasat Yai Ngao, Surin.



Above

Fig. 29. Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai. The lotus bud form *chedi*.

Right

Fig. 30. Wat Phra That Haripunjaya, Lamphun. Offering platform and *yūpa* next to the *wihān*.



Below left

Fig. 31. Wat Chang Lom, Si Satchanalai. Laterite leaf or lance-point forms stand in front of each of the elephants that surround the base of the *chedi*.

Below right

Fig. 32. Bas relief showing a *deva*-like figure on a Dvaravati *bai sīmā* at the Museum in Khon Kaen.

