

A GUIDE TO THE ANGKOR MONUMENTS



M a u r i c e G i a z e

# A N G K O R



THE MONUMENTS  
OF  
THE ANGKOR GROUP

by

Maurice Glaize

A translation from the 4th French edition.

Synthesis should be made from time to time, so that writers may pass on the work of the specialists to a wider public.

A. Maurois

Dedicated to Henri PARMENTIER in admiration of his work.

## PREFACE TO THE 4TH FRENCH EDITION

Published in 1944 in Saigon, republished in 1948 and again in Paris in 1963, *"The Monuments of the Angkor Group"* by Maurice Glaize remains the most comprehensive of the guidebooks and the most easily accessible to a wide public, dedicated to one of the most fabled architectural ensembles in the world.

In his preface to the first edition, Georges Cœdes (1886-1969), the unchallenged master of Khmer studies and the then director of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, wrote:

*"Maurice Glaize's guide, more than a quarter of which is devoted to fundamental ideas concerning the history of the country, its religions, the meaning and evolution of the monuments, their architecture and their decoration, the sculpture, and finally to the work of the Conservation d'Angkor, gives an initiation to Angkor that until now has been lacking. The guide recommends itself on these qualities alone. By means of taking apart and rebuilding the monuments during the process of anastylosis Mr. Glaize has learnt to know their secrets and, like a professor of anatomy, reveals to his readers all the details of their structure. But further, in daily contact with the ruins since 1936, he has learnt to love them, and one can easily perceive the emotion of the artist as he faces the corner of a gallery lit by the morning sun, or views the light playing on the waters of an ancient pool at sunset..."*

*In brief, this volume is a book that is of service not only as a guide for touring the monuments, but also as a presentation of the results of the most recent research to a wider public. With these diverse titles, it deserves the success which I hope for it with all my heart..."*

Founded on an exceptional understanding of the monuments and an ability to popularise to a high level, this rightful success was soon gained - the work of Mr. Glaize being no less valuable for students of research than for tourists, or for the most demanding connoisseurs of art. With the exception of Georges Trouvé, whose involvement was sadly too brief, nobody had a better understanding or 'feeling' for the monuments of the Angkor region than Henri Marchal or Maurice Glaize. But if H. Marchal was the first to make use of anastylosis towards the end of 1931 for his exemplary reconstruction of Banteay Srei, it was M. Glaize who generalised its use

for the "Angkor Group" - notably in the "rebirth" of Banteay Samre, for the sanctuary of Neak Pean, and the "resurrection" of the sanctuary of the Bakong.

It would, however, be unsatisfactory to simply republish a work written now some fifty years ago without some form of amendment. All manner of events have in the mean time intervened that impose necessary revision - although, in terms of the Author's thoughts, those responsible have made the request that any alteration should be as discrete as possible. These factors derive as much from the unhappy events resulting from ongoing political changes as from events directly affecting the monuments themselves. On the one hand, there has been the abrupt and rapid decline, since 1945, in the state of some of the better known temples, such as the Baphuon and Angkor Wat - symbolic of the highest achievement of Khmer classicism. On the other, towards 1955, the availability of modern techniques and materials enabled the improved efficiency of the Angkor Conservation Office, which then expanded from a simple workshop to a research office with engineers and technicians. Under the direction of Bernard Phillippe Groslier more ambitious programs were devised, and large, urgent site-works, previously unthinkable, were able to be undertaken. The brutal deterioration of the political situation in 1975 and the resulting insecurity came to ruin these hopes and put an end to the activity that had previously run uninterrupted since the founding of the Conservation Office in 1908. The resumption of work, even with limited objectives, was to take a long time in coming.

These facts cannot be omitted from a Guide whose primary aim is the reader's instruction. Likewise, progress in research has considerably reduced the importance for a long time placed on the notion of the "god-king" and the "royal linga", with more qualified interpretations being proposed by Jean Filliozat and even Georges Cœdes himself during the 'sixties. There has been a similar evolution in terms of the symbolism of the monuments (in particular with respect to Phnom Bakheng and the temples from the period of the Bayon) for which a recourse to texts has allowed the release from mere hypothetical speculation. All of these amendments have been handled unobtrusively, usually with simple notes. It is with the same concern for "revision" that the original, but old, photographs have been substituted with a choice of more recent and more evocative illustrations.

Jean BOISSELIER - 1993



## INTRODUCTION

There is only one way to best view Angkor - without unnecessary stress and with some benefit - and that is to allow at least a week, and to visit within reason two or three temples per day maximum. If this period of time is insufficient to penetrate to all the secrets of the very particular architecture and the dense ornamentation - which require a certain adaptation in order to fully appreciate their value - it is instead permitted to at least taste their charms, to assimilate the rudiments of Khmer Art, and to leave with a desire to study them in more depth.

A stay of short duration will, however, give a good idea of the ensemble - on condition that one paces one's programme according to the small amount of time at one's disposal, and has no pretension to 'see everything'. For this reason, we propose several itinerary types to aid the task of the hurried tourist. A minimum of three days would seem to us essential to make contact with the principal monuments of the group.

Angkor may be visited in all seasons. However the most favourable period extends from November to March, during the first months of the dry season, when the temperature is particularly clement. In contrast, April and May are hot and humid, and then come the rains - through to September - which put one at risk of immobilisation for several

hours - though without always lasting an entire day. They are extremely rare in the morning, and the sandy soil quickly dries. This is the time when the forest becomes alive and verdant, when the reservoirs and moats refill, when the stones become covered in creepers and lichens - and it is only important to no longer climb except with extreme caution amongst the boulders and on the sandstone blocks, which the moss renders slippery.

It is preferable, particularly in the hot season, to leave early in the morning and to return before eleven o'clock, and not to revisit in the afternoon until three or four o'clock - the light at the end of the day being generally more favourable. The majority of the monuments - and in particular Angkor Wat - lose much in being viewed against the light.

We would especially recommend the setting of the sun at Angkor Wat, where sometimes the spectacle will include the flight of the bats in the fading light, or else from the top of Phnom Bakheng or Phnom Krom, or the terrace of the Srah Srang - or from the beach of the baray, where the bathing is delightful. Finally, if you have the opportunity, do not miss, by the light of the full moon, the second level courtyard of Angkor Wat at the foot of the central tower, or the upper terrace of the Bayon.

## **SUGGESTED ITINERARIES**

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### **FOR ONE MORNING**

Angkor Wat, Bayon, the Small Circuit, a traverse of Ta Prohm from the west to the east, the terrace of Srah Srang.

Distance - 27 kilometres.

### **FOR ONE AFTERNOON**

The Bayon, the Small Circuit, a traverse of Ta Prohm from the west to the east, the terrace of Srah Srang, Angkor Wat.

Distance - 30 kilometres.

### **FOR ONE DAY**

*morning*

The Grand Circuit, with a visit to Pre Rup, Neak Pean, Prah Khan (traverse from east to west), the terrace of the Leper King.

Distance - 37 kilometres.

*afternoon*

The Bayon, the Small Circuit, a traverse of Ta Prohm from the west to the east, the terrace of Srah Srang, Angkor Wat.

Distance - 30 kilometres.

### **FOR TWO DAYS**

first day

*morning*

The Bayon, the terrace of the Leper King, Tep Pranam, Prah Palilay, the Royal Palace, the Baphuon.

Distance - 20 kilometres.

*afternoon*

The small circuit via the Royal Palace, the Victory Gate, Ta Prohm (traverse from west to east), Banteay Kdei (ditto), the terrace of Srah Srang, and possibly Phnom Bakheng.

Distance - 27 and 32 kilometres.

second day

*morning*

The Grand Circuit, with a visit to Pre Rup, Banteay Samre, Neak Pean, Prah Khan (traversed from east to west)

Distance - 46 kilometres.

*afternoon*

Angkor Wat

Distance - 12 kilometres.

### **FOR THREE DAYS**

first day

*morning*

The Bayon, the terrace of the Leper King, Tep Pranam, Prah Palilay, the Royal Palace, the Baphuon

Distance - 20 kilometres.

*afternoon*

The Kleang and Prah Pithu, the Victory Gate, Thommanon, Chau Say, Takeo, on returning Phnom Bakheng

Distance - 26 kilometres.

second day

*morning*

The Grand Circuit, with a visit to Pre Rup, Mebon, Ta Som, Neak Pean, Prah Khan (traversing from east to west)

Distance - 37 kilometres.

*afternoon*

Prasat Kravan, Ta Prohm (traversing from west to east), Banteay Kdei (traversing from west to east), the terrace of Srah Srang.

Distance - 26 kilometres.

third day

*morning*

Banteay Samre, Banteay Srei

Distance - 70 kilometres.

*afternoon*

Angkor Wat

Distance - 12 kilometres.

### **FOR FOUR DAYS**

first day

*morning*

The Bayon, terrace of the Leper King, Tep Pranam, Prah Palilay, the Royal Palace

Distance - 20 kilometres.

*afternoon*

Baphuon, the Kleang and Prah Pithu, the Victory Gate, Thommanon, Chau Say, on returning Phnom Bakheng

Distance - 24 kilometres.



second day

*morning*

Takeo, Ta Prohm (crossing from west to east), Banteay Kdei (crossing from west to east), the terrace or Srah Srang, Prasat Kravan.  
Distance - 28 kilometres.

*afternoon*

Angkor Wat  
Distance - 12 kilometres.

third day

*morning*

The Grand Circuit, with a visit to Pre Rup, Mebon, Ta Som, Neak Pean, Prah Khan (passing through from east to west)  
Distance - 37 kilometres.

*afternoon*

Siem Reap river and Phnom Krom  
Distance - 25 kilometres.

fourth day

*morning*

Banteay Samre, Banteay Srei  
Distance - 70 kilometres.

*afternoon*

The Roluos group (Bakong, Prah Ko), the western baray (swimming)  
Distance - 54 kilometres.

**FOR FIVE DAYS**

first day

*morning*

The Bayon, the terrace of the Elephants and of the Leper King, Tep Pranam, Prah Palilay, the Royal Palace.  
Distance - 20 kilometres

*afternoon*

The Baphuon, the Kleang and Prah Pithu, the Victory Gate, Thommanon, Chau Say  
Distance - 24 kilometres

second day

*morning*

Takeo, Ta Prohm (crossing from west to east), Banteay Kdei (crossing from west to east), the terrace of Srah Srang, Prasat Kravan.  
Distance - 28 kilometres.

*afternoon*

The Bayon (to study the bas-reliefs), Phnom Bakheng.

third day

*morning*

The Grand Circuit, with a visit to Pre Rup, Mebon, Ta Som, Neak Pean, Prah Khan, (passing from east to west)  
Distance - 37 kilometres.

*afternoon*

Angkor Wat  
Distance - 12 kilometres.

fourth day

*morning*

Banteay Samre, Banteay Srei  
Distance - 70 kilometres.

*afternoon*

Siem Reap river, Phnom Krom  
Distance - 25 kilometres.

fifth day

*morning*

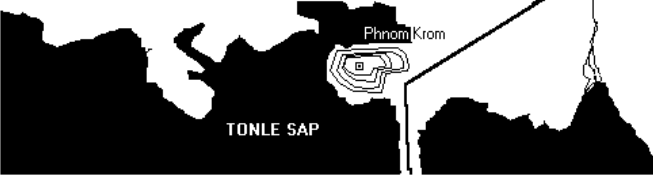
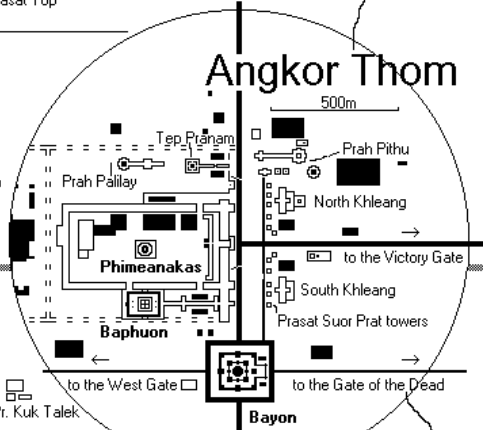
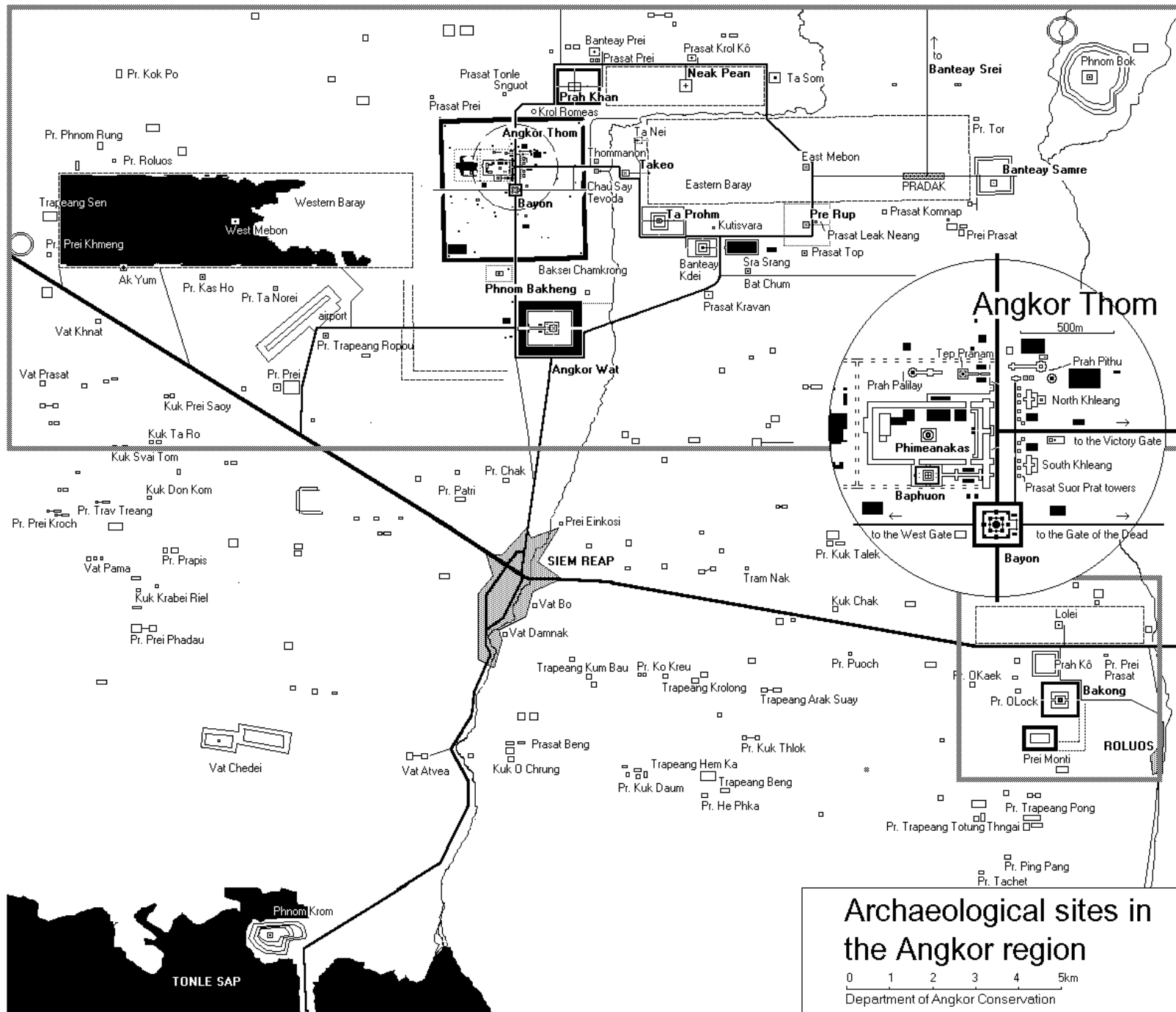
The Roluos group (Bakong, Prah Ko, perhaps also Lolei)  
Distance - 28 and 30 kilometres.

*afternoon*

Angkor Wat (to study the bas-reliefs), western baray (swimming)  
Distance - 38 kilometres.

**FOR SIX DAYS AND MORE**

Ad libitum, including the secondary temples and, perhaps, with an excursion to Beng Mealea (a day trip)  
Distance - 100 kilometres.



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**PART ONE - GENERAL PRINCIPLES**



If one is to believe the legend, the ancient dynasties of the Khmer empire were derived from the union of a Hindu prince, Preah Thong - who had been banished from Delhi by his father - with a "female serpent-woman", the daughter of the Nagaraja, who was sovereign of the land. She appeared to him in radiant beauty, frolicking on a sand bank where he had come to make camp for the night. He took her as his wife, and the Nagaraja, draining the land by drinking the water that covered it, gave him the new country, called it Kambuja and built him a capital.

A variation, revealed on an inscription at Mison in Champa (mid Vietnam) and reproduced in various descriptions of Cambodia, substitutes for the prince the Brahman Kaundinya, who "married the nagi Soma to accomplish the rites" and, throwing the magic lance with which he was armed, founded at the point of its landing the royal city where Somavamsa, the race of the moon, would rule.

Another popular tradition, though less widespread, gives as the origin the coupling of the maharashi Kambu and the apsara Mera, whose union is symbolic of that between the two great races, solar (Suryavamsa) and lunar (Somavamsa). This survives particularly in the word Kambuja - son of Kambu - from where derives the name "Cambodian" by which we now call the present descendants of the ancient Khmer.

Whichever version one takes, the mythical implication is undeniable and the truth remains - that the Khmer people are born of a joining of two distinct elements; Indian and native. They are not, as some would believe, just people of purely Indian or Hindu origin who had come, following migration, to settle in a region devoid of any inhabitants, or where the indigenous race had been eliminated by mass deportation.

Established since prehistoric times in the lower Mekong valley of the southern Indo-Chinese peninsula that included not only present day Cambodia but also Cochinchina and parts of Siam and Laos, they were in fact a mixture - from an ethnological rather than a linguistic point of view - of people from lower Burma and various barbarous people from the annamitic chain, themselves in turn quite probably deriving from Negroid and Indonesian roots. The Indian contribution apparently resulted from a natural expansion towards the east for commercial, civil and religious reasons rather than for any brutal political motivation.

Moreover, with the fall of the Khmer empire - that so captures the imagination in the extent and apparently abrupt timing of its destruction - came perhaps a total decline and abandonment of the capital,

but, mysteriously, not the entire extinction of the race. With a little help from France and a clear understanding of the glory of their past, these people soon regained an awareness of their value and began to rise again, having never ceased to exist. Having retained their fundamental characteristics - their traditions, their religion and their language - their artistic talents need only the opportunity to revive.

Some physical catastrophe, earthquake, flood, or a drying up of the country's economy has been suggested, and though it is difficult to accept that an earthquake could leave so many stone structures standing, there are however indications, such as the filling of the enormous basins and low areas of Angkor Thom and its suburbs, that render the suggestion of an overflow of the Great Lake or the rupture of some dike plausible - and it is common that such disasters usually result in epidemic and devastation. Likewise, the collapse of a perfected hydraulic system that gave life and fertility to the region could have quickly transformed to inhospitable areas of land that had until then been populated and plentiful.

But human causes suffice. Although only five centuries separate us from the date of Angkor's abandonment as capital, it should not be forgotten that a hard and far less glorious time followed the four century period - from the 9th to the 13th - of her splendour. Already exhausted by builder kings seeking to ensure their posthumous glory, the Khmer people could no longer offer resistance to a series of bloody wars followed no doubt by the systematic transfer of the population to slavery. Ruin came, but not total extinction.

#### CAMBODIA AND THE CAMBODIANS.

The geographical framework of the ancient Khmer empire is reflected in that of its monuments. Although these are found grouped in a particularly dense manner in the Angkorian region to the north of the Great Lake, one can however include in totality more than a thousand remains scattered over the

whole of the area between the gulf of Siam and Vientiane on the one side and between the Mekong delta and the valley of Menam on the other - that is to say in Cambodia itself, the major part of Cochinchina, lower and middle Laos, eastern Siam and a part of the Menam valley. The changes that occurred over the centuries came not from any lack of unity in the population, but rather from a contrast of a physical nature between the dry regions to the north of the chain of the Dangrek mountains and the fertile plains to the south.

Present day Cambodia is found bordered by the Gulf of Siam to the south-west, Laos to the north and Vietnam to the east and south-east. Its main artery is the Mekong valley, which crosses from north to south. This is joined at Phnom Penh by the Tonle Sap, spreading to the north-west in a large plain of water that extends for some 140 kilometres by 30 and irrigates the surrounding plains.

The Tonle Sap - once a maritime gulf that now forms a lake - has the peculiarity that each rainy season, from May to October, its waters are no longer able to flow into the flooding Mekong and become choked, rising by ten metres and so forming a huge regulatory basin, whose surface area triples that of the dry season. Large water festivals with canoe races during November's full moon mark the end of this period, and the King, in a symbolic ritual, presides over the reversing of the current.

Each annual deluge sees the Tonle Sap rise still further, completely flooding the forested zones that border its banks and ensuring a particularly abundant source of nourishment to its fish - so making it the richest fish pond in the world.

Cambodia lies between 10 and 14 degrees latitude north, and the climate nears the equatorial with an almost constant temperature. The contrast between the dry season and the season of the heavy rains is, however, quite marked, and although the average temperature of the year is



28 degrees, the nights of December and January - that are particularly fresh - see the temperature fall to around 20 degrees, while the months of April and May are distinguished by a torrid heat reaching 35 degrees in an atmosphere charged with storms which never break.

Although affected by the monsoons, the country is protected from the coast by chains of mountains ranging from 1000 to 1500 metres in height - notably the Elephant mountains, where the Bokor altitude station is located - giving it a less humid and unhealthy climate than Cochinchina. Here the skies are often quite fresh and clear - and extremely favourable to moonlit nights.

With its eight million inhabitants for an area of 180,000 square kilometres, Cambodia is an under-developed country with little cultivation. Thin agricultural resources are complemented with fishing, a little rearing of cattle and some forestry, while a large part of its area is mostly covered with unbroken forest and bush, and remains deserted.

Rice and fish are the staple diet, and the harvest is regulated by the rhythm of the rains and floods. Fish are plentiful - even in the paddy fields where they hibernate in the underground mud during the dry months to re-emerge with the first rains. On the Tonle Sap, during the dry season, entire villages are established on the open lake - their belongings suspended from poles with the racks of drying fish.

The rural Cambodian lives a rudimentary existence, by the water if possible, in straw huts or in wooden houses raised from the ground on posts of two metres in height. He is sheltered from the animals and the floods and keeps his meagre livestock under his home. With just enough work to be able to pay his taxes and support his family he lives preferably in the middle of his small-holding, and, without much of a taste for business, is content to let the Chinese or Vietnamese deal with the surplus produce from his paddy or sugar palm, pigs, chickens or the fruits of his garden.

The extensive crossbreeding over the centuries - the happiest of which has resulted, particularly in urban areas, from a mixing with the Chinese - does not appear to have fundamentally changed the nature of the people. Cambodians are broad and muscular (standing on average 1m.65), are brachycephalic and generally dark in colour. The nose is broad, the lips are thick and the eyes straight and narrow. The hair is worn short, even by the women. When they feel that one shows them some interest, they are hospitable and sweet natured.

Sensitive and religious, the family centres its life on the pagoda, where the male youth is obliged to spend some of his time. Generous towards their priests - the innumerable monks whose bright orange robes animate the landscape and to whom subsistence is readily assured - they take every opportunity to venerate the Buddha and gain merit, marking the year with numerous festivals to satisfy a distinct taste for leisure.

The national religion is Buddhism of the Small Vehicle, or *Theravada*, of the Pali language - which is also practised in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and Laos. The monastic life here plays the principal role and the popular faith, while rudimentary and sometimes tinted with remains of ancient superstition, is based on the transmigration of the soul and the search for personal salvation through work during the course of an existence in which each action is accounted for in the regulation of the future. After death the body is carried to the pyre, and the cremation ends with either the deposit of the ashes in a small funerary monument (Cedei) or their scattering on sacred ground.



Our knowledge of ancient Cambodia derives from three sources; - the interpretation of the bas-reliefs, the writings of Chinese travellers, and the reading of the stone inscriptions. Nothing remains of the tinted parchment manuscripts, written in chalk, or the latania leaves on which the inscribed characters were blackened with a pad. These essentially perishable records were able to resist neither fire, the humidity nor the termites.

#### A. THE BAS-RELIEFS

The scenes sculpted on the bas-reliefs - in particular at the Bayon - often show almost exactly, if one has time to study them closely, a picture of daily rural life that has barely since changed. One can see in them the same kinds of dwellings, the same carts or canoes, the same costumes, the same instruments for cultivation, hunting, fishing or for music, the same habits and the same manual trades.

#### B. THE CHINESE CHRONICLES

The most complete of the Chinese chronicles - and the most descriptive - are those of Tcheou Ta-Kouan who, in 1296, just after the first wars with the Siamese and at the beginning of the period of decadence, accompanied a Sino-Mongole envoy to Angkor. His *"Memoirs on the Customs of Cambodia"*, translated by Paul Pelliot and published in the Bulletin of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient of 1902, give an idea of the conditions of life in Cambodia at the end of the 13th century. He says of the inhabitants:

*"The customs common to all the southern barbarians are found throughout Cambodia, whose inhabitants are coarse people, ugly and deeply sunburned. This is true not only of those living in the remote villages of the maritime islands, but of the dwellers in centres of population. Only the ladies of the court and the womenfolk of the noble houses are white like jade, their pallor coming from being shuttered away from the strong sunlight.*

*"Generally speaking, the women, like the men, wear only a strip of cloth, bound round the waist, showing bare breasts of milky whiteness. They fasten their hair in a knot, and go barefoot - even the wives of the King, who are five in number, one of whom dwells in the central palace and one at each of the four cardinal points. As for the concubines and palace girls, I have heard that there are from three to five thousand of them, separated into various categories, though they are seldom seen beyond the palace gates. When a family has a beautiful daughter, no time is lost in sending her to the palace.*

*"In a lower category are the women who do errands for the palace, of whom there are at least two thousand. They are all married, and live throughout the city. The hair of their forehead is shaved high in the manner of the northern people and a vermilion mark is made here and on each temple. Only these women are allowed entry to the palace, which is forbidden to all of a lesser rank.*

*"The women of the people knot their hair, but with no hairpin or comb, nor any other adornment of the head. On their arms they wear gold bracelets and on their fingers, rings of gold - a fashion also observed by the palace women and the court ladies. Men and women alike are anointed with perfumes compounded of sandalwood, musk and other essences.*

*"Worship of the Buddha is universal...".*

### C. THE INSCRIPTIONS

The epigraphy is less anecdotal in nature and describes the other Cambodia, particularly its history, offering a more serious documentation. Together with the study of the art, it has enabled the accurate dating of the monuments.

Inseparable are the names of Barth, Bargaigue, Kern and Aymonier, then of Louis Finot and of Georges Cœdes, all of whom dedicated themselves to their task with an impressive methodology and a rigorous discipline. Due to the number of discoveries their science soon became of major importance.

The earliest known inscriptions date from the 7th century and relate to the central Indian "Saka" era. Later than the Christian era by 78 years, this must have been introduced to the Indian Archipelago and Indo-China by Hindu astronomers.

*"From the beginning" - we are told by Mr Cœdes - "they simultaneously used two languages - a scholarly language, Sanskrit, reserved for the genealogy of royalty or dignitaries, for the panegyric of the monuments' foundation or for that of the revered donors - and a common language, Khmer or Cambodian, reserved for the disposition of the foundation and the listing of servants or objects donated to the temple. Sanskrit texts are only written in verse: these are the compositions that the Indians call 'Kavya'".*

Sanskrit ceased to be the scholarly language used in Indochina when, towards the 14th and 15th centuries, the Brahmanic and Mahayana (or Large Vehicle) Buddhist religions were replaced by Hinayana (or Small Vehicle) Buddhism, and the language used became Pali, also of Hindu origin. As for the old Khmer, Mr Cœdes remarks that *"it differed far less from present day Cambodian than the language of Chanson de Roland differed from French"*.

The inscriptions were engraved with a burin or etcher's chisel in letters of less than a centimetre in height on steles, on tablets and on the door openings of the sanctuaries. The steles, whose location varied between monuments, generally stood in a special shelter, either as rectangular slabs with two inscribed faces or as bornes with four sides, in a hard, polished stone and fixed to the ground or to a base by means of a tenon. Many were found in open countryside.

The text on the jambs of the door openings often covered most of their surface. Towards the end of the classic period it became usual to recount in one or many lines the setting of a statue - a god or a divinity - in the sanctuary, either in reserving a smooth place in the decorative surface of the stone or in scraping a patch clear: this is also true for the identification of certain scenes in the bas-reliefs. Finally, on many of the blocks, roughly inscribed characters can be seen which must have been made by the masons.







Chinese texts first referred to *Fou-Nan*, in the first denomination of what was later to become the kingdom of Cambodia, at the beginning of the Christian era - then little advanced since, in the 3rd century, *"the people of the country were still naked"*. In its geographical location, however, it was the natural stop-over between India and China, and this contact with the two large Asiatic civilisations was to assure its rapid transformation with the impression of their double influence.

From the 3rd to the 5th century the clearly Hindu kingdom of Fou-Nan acquired a large territorial boundary - whose dynastic traditions Mr Coedes attributes to the court of the Pallavas - establishing the capital in the region of Ba Phnom in the south-eastern part of present day Cambodia. Rich and powerful, it maintained steady relations with the Chinese - a fact proven by numerous ambassadorial missions.

Towards the middle of the 6th century, however, the feudal states became unsettled, and the most powerful of them, the Tchen-La or Kambuja (Cambodia as such), proclaimed its independence and gradually enlarged - to Fou-Nan's disadvantage - to eventually take her capital after three quarters of a century of battle during the life of Isanavarman. Gaining the throne around 615, he reigned until 644 and founded the new capital of Isanapura - probably at Sambor-Prei Kuk near Kompong Thom.

A little afterwards, and for the whole of the 8th century, the kingdom divided into two rival states; - the coastal or lower Tchen-La, comprising Cochinchina and the lower Mekong basin to the south of the chain of the Dangrek mountains, - and the inland or upper Tchen-La corresponding to the territories situated to the north of these as far as upper Laos. During this period the lower Tchen-La suffered invasion from Java and Sumatra, where the Malayan empire of Shrivijaya had become powerful. Indeed from Java, at the beginning of the 9th century, came the king - evidently there in exile - who was to re-establish the unity of the kingdom and initiate the so called *"angkorian"* period.

Appealing to the ancient dynasties he ruled under the name of Jayavarman II, and, proclaiming Cambodia's independence from Java, began to investigate a site for his capital - no longer in the lower Mekong basin, but in the region to the north of the Great Lake or Tonle Sap. After a trial period on the plain he cast his interest to the chain of the Mahendra (Phnom Kulen) which, with its vast eastern plateau of 10,000 hectares, offered remarkable conditions for defence against invasion. It was therefore here that, in the year 802, he established the siege of his State and laid the foundations for a new cult - that of the god king or Devaraja - by establishing, on his pyramid of Rong Chen, the first Royal Linga.

After fifty years of reign that had allowed him to unify the country, Jayavarman II, perhaps discouraged by the difficulties of access and the poor potential for the cultural development of the settlement he had chosen - and its distance from the Great Lake - descended once again to its northern shores. He died around 850 at Hariharalaya, the region of Roluos also adopted by first his son and then his nephew, Indravarman I. It was this king who built the artificial pyramid of Bakong - the first sandstone monument - and founded there in 881 the linga Shri Indresvara.

In the last few years of the 9th century, his son Yasovarman, judging his power to be sufficiently stable and seeking to create something of more permanence, finally abandoned the temporary nature of the nomadic settlement to create a veritable *"puri"*, with defined limits and endowed with all the prestige of a capital worthy of its name. This was Yasodharapura, the first Angkor, where the *"Vnam Kantal"* or *"Central Mount"* of the inscriptions - identified after fervent research by Mr Goloubew with the hill of Phnom Bakheng - served as a base for the linga Shri Yasodharsvara, the master idol of the kingdom.

Angkor was to remain the capital during the following centuries of battle and glory, except for a period of 23 years from 921 to 944, when the king moved to Chok Gargyar (Koh Ker), a hundred kilometres to the north-east. His nephew Rajendravarmān returned to Angkor and *"restored the holy city that had long remained empty"*, building the temples of the eastern Mebon and of Pre Rup, and leaving for war with Champa where he sacked the temple of Po Nagar.

Around the 11th century, at the time when the temples of Ta Keo, Phimeanakas and the Baphuon were being built, it seems that the limits of the city were modified and that, by shifting slightly to the north, it no longer had Phnom Bakheng as its centre, but corresponded noticeably from thenceforth to the layout of the future Angkor Thom. During this period a foreign dynasty

took the throne. Perhaps of Malayan origin, the usurper - Suryavarman I - soon enlarged the kingdom to encompass the whole southern part of Siam or *Dvaravati*.

The first half of the 12th century was dominated by the reign of one of the principal kings of Cambodia - Suryavarman II - whose immense architectural realisation of Angkor Wat was to mark the apogee of classical Khmer art. After having being allied with the Chams against the Annamites (Vietnamese) he then turned against them, winning a brilliant victory and gaining part of Champa.

Revenge was not long in coming, and a period of troubled times followed the death of the king, some time after 1145. Power was again seized by an usurper, and in 1177 a surprise attack by the Chams ended in the fall and the sacking of Angkor, followed by general devastation.

The invader, however, subject in his turn to a complete defeat, was expelled by Jayavarman VII who was crowned king in 1181 at the age of about 55. Champa was put under the control of the Khmer and governed by the brother-in-law of the victor who, following his conquests, then extended his power as far north as Vientiane on the Mekong and west to the basin of the Menam.

At the same time and with prodigious activity, Jayavarman VII raised Cambodia from its ruins and reconstructed its capital Angkor Thom, surrounding it with a high wall breached by five monumental gates - he rebuilt the central temple of the Bayon, built or restored to completion the monuments of Prah Khan, Ta Prohm and Banteay Kdei, as well as others of less importance, and furnished the country with numerous hospitals.

Such effort, coming after so many bloody battles, could not but drain the facilities and energy of the nation - so that from the beginning of the 13th



century, after the death of this last great king, the Khmer people fell to inertia. Gradually its princes were stripped first of their ancient conquests by their Thai neighbours, and then of their heritage. Already in 1296 the Chinese envoy Tcheou Ta-Kouan gave some indication of this growing pressure, which must have resulted in the 15th century abandonment of Angkor and the establishment of the Cambodian kings on the banks of the lower Mekong.

To continue with the history of Cambodia from this time would be to leave the bounds of this study, since the period from the 15th century to modern times has little to offer the history of archaeology. The regions of Siem Reap and of Battambang, annexed with no right by the Siamese, were restored to Cambodia in 1907. The year 1907 is not only a date of political importance - it is also since this restitution that the French scholars and architects, encouraged by the sovereign who succeeded to the throne, have been able, by methodical research and the precise technique of anastylosis, to revive the ancient relics of a glorious civilisation.





The religious history of ancient Cambodia is founded on syncretism. From the time of Fou-Nan until the 14th century, Brahmanism and Buddhism - the two great Indian religions - co-existed. Imported to Indochina at the latest towards the beginning of the Christian era, their dual influence is evident time and again in Angkorian architecture and epigraphy.

The Khmer kings, while not seeking to impose their personal beliefs, generally seemed to have shown great religious tolerance. Sylvain Lévi moreover makes the observation that the two religions, originally foreign to the country, must rather have seduced the middle aristocracy as the manifestation of an elegant and refined culture than to have penetrated to the depth of the masses. Even now there remains a caste of priests - the *"Bakou"* - who carry the Brahmanic cord. Practising the official religion they play an important role, guard the sacred sword and preside at certain traditional festivals.

This fusion of the two religions did not however preclude occasional acts of fanaticism, manifest in the systematic mutilation of the stone idols that were butchered with the carvers tool or re-cut to suit the form of the opposing faith - the stele of Sdok Kak Thom describes for instance how *"king Suryavarman I had to raise troops against those who tore down the holy images"*, while in the 13th century there was a relentless and violent Shivaite reaction against the works of Jayavarman VII.

The oldest known archaeological remains in Fou-Nan are Buddhist, suggesting that Buddhism probably preceded Brahmanism. If so, then this would have been in the form of Hinayana or the Small Vehicle (though in Sanskrit) rather than Mahayana or the Large Vehicle. Not appearing in any certain manner until the end of the 7th century, this latter must have gained favour during the Angkorian period in parallel with the official Brahmanism, which usually predominated.

At the dawn of the 9th century, the accession to the throne of Jayavarman II - from Java - and the establishment of his capital in the region to the north of the Tonle Sap was to mark the establishment of a new cult that was to continue until the decline of the Khmer empire - that of the Devaraja or the god-king, symbolised in the linga that was considered as an incarnation of Shiva.<sup>1</sup>

Set on a *"temple-mountain"* or a tiered pyramid raised at the centre of the capital, this image must have been revered in the residence itself of the living king. The inscription of Sdok Kak Thom again gives

us the filiation of a whole family of priests who, for more than two centuries, were responsible for maintaining the observation of the newly established ritual.

In Cambodia there was also the privilege of apotheosis, which could benefit not only the king but also certain figures of high delineage - sometimes even during their lifetime - from where came the use of the *"posthumous names"* indicating the celestial abode of the deceased monarch, each one being assimilated to his chosen god.

Towards the end of the 12th century, the Buddhist king Jayavarman VII, in order to assure perpetuity to the symbolic cult of the *Devaraja*, instituted the similar cult of the *Buddha-king* at the Bayon - the central temple of Angkor Thom - manifest in the portrait statue that was found broken at the bottom of the well (and which has now been restored). This form of adaptation, however, was not to last, and from the 13th century, following a return to Shivaïsm, the Buddhism of the Large Vehicle - of the Sanskrit language - was replaced by that of the Small Vehicle - of the Pali language - to which Cambodia has remained faithful.

#### HINDU BELIEFS

*"While for other human beings" - we are told by Sylvain Levi - "senses are witnesses that provide unquestionable assurance, for the Hindu they are but the masters of error and illusion.... The vain and despicable world of phenomena is ruled by a fatal and implacable law - each act is the moral result of a series of immeasurable earlier acts, and the point of departure for another series of immeasurable acts which will be indefinitely transformed by it... Life, when so considered, appears as the most fearful drudgery - like an eternal perpetuity of false personalities, to come and to go without ever knowing rest. So the sovereign perhaps then became none other than the Deliverance, the sublime act by which all causative forces became*

*eliminated, and which ceased once and for all for a system given the creative power of the illusion."*

Such is the framework in which the two main Indian religions were to develop. Introduced to Cambodia it would seem evident that in their transcendent form they could only touch an elite, and were never to penetrate to the masses. The crowds, when admitted to enter the temples, came not in order to worship some or other god of the Hindu pantheon, but rather to prostrate themselves before their duly deified prince or king.

#### BRAHMANISM

Brahmanism appeared in India several centuries before Christ and was itself derived from Vedism, based on the adoration of the forces and phenomena of nature. Determined by the *"Brahmana"*, its ritual is strongly coloured with symbolism and associated with a particularly crowded polytheism.

At its summit is the *"Trimurti"*, the supreme trinity that synthesises *"the three active states of the universal soul and the three eternal forces of nature. Brahma, as activity, is the creator, - Vishnou, as goodness, is the preserver, - and Shiva, as obscurity, is the destroyer"* (Madrolle).

#### BRAHMA

In India, as in Cambodia, Brahma has never been a primary divinity despite his apparent supremacy as creator of the world. He is represented with four arms and four opposing faces, two by two, symbolic of his omnipresence. Sometimes he is seated on a lotus whose stem grows from the navel of Vishnou, reclining on the waves. His wife or feminine energy

(*"sakti"*) is *Sarasvati*, and his mount is the sacred goose or *"Hamsa"* - *"whose powerful flight symbolises the ascension of the soul to liberation"* (Paul Mus).

Vishnou and Shiva, on the other hand, predominate. After having been associated with Vishnou in the same image during the pre-angkorian period - split by half vertically in the form of Harihara - Shiva initially clearly prevailed. Towards the end of the 11th century until the time of Angkor Wat, however, it would seem that he was ousted by Vishnou.

#### VISHNOU

Vishnou, the protector of the universe and of the gods, generally stands with a single face and four arms, carrying as attributes the disc, the conch, the ball and the club. His wife is Lakshmi, the goddess of beauty. One can often see her between two elephants who, with raised trunks, spray her with lustral water. The mount of the god is the sun bird, Garuda, who has the body of a man and the talons and beak of an eagle and is, as genie of the Air against the genies of the Waters, enemy since birth of nagas or serpents.

In the form of the Brahman dwarf *Vamana*, Vishnou crosses Heaven, the Earth and the intermediate atmosphere in three steps to assure possession of the world to the gods. Between each cosmic period (Kalpa), while the world sleeps, the god slumbers on the serpent Ananta, carried by the ocean waves. On awakening he is reincarnated, as man or beast, to triumph over the forces of evil, each time starting a new era. These are the *"avatars"*, or the descents of the god to earth, the principal of which number a dozen.

#### THE AVATARS OF VISHNOU

In the form of the *tortoise*, Vishnou participates in the popular *"Churning of the Ocean"*, taken from the Bhagavata Pourana and common in iconography - the gods and the demons dispute the possession of the amrita,

the elixir of immortality, and the tortoise serves as a base for the mountain forming a pivot.

As the man lion, *Narasimha*, Vishnou claws the king of the Asuras, Hiranya-Kasipu, who dared to challenge his supremacy.

But in particular it was *Rama* and *Krishna*, the two human incarnations of whom the Indian poets wrote, that provided the sculptors of the walls and frontons of the temples with an endless supply of subject matter. The two main epics of the Ramayana and of the Mahabharata, we are told by Keyserling, *"are to the Hindus what the Book of Kings was to the exiled Jews - the chronicle of a time when they were a force to be reckoned with on earth while also in closer contact with the celestial powers."* They were devoted to the legends because *"they had no sentiment about historical truth - for them the myth and the reality were but one and the same. Soon the legend is judged as reality and the reality condensed in the legend. The facts by themselves are irrelevant"*.

Krishna remains quite human. Exchanged as a child he escaped death at birth to lead a bucolic existence in the forest. Of Herculean strength, he drags a heavy mortar stone to which he has been attached by his step mother, felling two trees along the way. As an adolescent of great beauty he charms the shepherds and shepherdesses and protects them and their flocks from a storm by raising mount Govardhana with one arm. Mounted on Garuda he triumphs in his battle against the asura Bana, but generously spares the asura his life at Shiva's will.

It is at the request of the gods, who urge him to rid the world of the demon Ravana, that Vishnou manifests himself as Rama, son of the king of Ayodhya. Winning a contest in which he has to shoot a bird behind a moving wheel with an arrow, he gains the hand of the beautiful Sita, the adopted daughter of the king of Mithila. Then sadly exiled by her father he goes, with

his brother Lakshmana, to live as an ascetic in the forest, accompanied by his wife. There they are subject to attack by the rakshasas. Sita, first saved from the hands of one of them, Viradha, is then taken by their king Ravana - particularly menacing with his multiple arms and heads - who carries her to the island of Lanka (Ceylon) while the two brothers are lured by an enchanted gazelle with a golden coat. Alerted by the vulture Jatayus, who tries in vain to prevent the kidnapping, they set off to recover Sita, meeting with the white monkey Hanuman who takes them to his king *Sugriva* - whom they find grieving in the forest, having been ousted from his throne by his brother *Valin*. They form an alliance with him. *Valin* is killed by an arrow from *Rama* during a struggle, and *Sugriva*, heading his army, leaves for the attack of Lanka.

*Hanuman*, who is sent ahead to investigate, finds the despondent *Sita* in the grove of asoka trees where she is guarded by the *rakshasis* (female demons) and exchanges a ring with her to prove the success of his mission to *Rama*. He leaves, but not before torching the palace of *Ravana*, and the monkeys, having first constructed a dike to cross the channel of water separating them from their enemies, begin the multiple episode struggle - with the furious scrum dominated by the duel between *Ravana* on his chariot drawn by horses with human heads and *Rama*, also mounted on a chariot or on the shoulders of *Garuda*. A son of *Ravana*, the magician *Indrajit*, restrains *Rama* and *Lakshmana* with arrows which transform into serpents and encoil them - but *Garuda*, swooping from the sky, saves them. Victory finally goes to *Rama*, who rescues the unhappy *Sita*. However, suspected of being corrupted, she is put to the test of fire. Proven innocent by this ordeal she is solemnly returned by the god of fire, *Agni*, to her husband - who is finally restored to the throne of his fathers.

#### SHIVA

In the Trimurti it is *Shiva* who, with *Brahma* at his right and *Vishnou* at his left, has to be considered as the supreme god, of whom the others are but the emanation and reflection.

Sometimes he is the great destroyer, the genie of the tempest and of destructive forces - though more so in India than in Cambodia, where he is rarely presented in a bad light - while elsewhere as the protector he is benevolent, the god who conceives and creates. He is also the first of the ascetics, going naked to rub himself in the cinders of a dung fire, living on charity and practising meditation - the source of perfection.

In his human form he usually has a single face with a third eye placed vertically in the middle of the forehead and his hair raised in a chignon, showing a crescent - but he sometimes also has multiple heads. His arms likewise vary in number, his principal attribute is the trident and his torso is crossed with the Brahmanic cord. He determines destiny with his dance - the frenetic rhythm of the "*tandava*". His *sakti* or feminine energy can also herself be sweet or ferocious - sweet she is *Parvati*, the goddess of the Earth, or *Uma*, the Gracious, whom one can often see sitting on Shiva's knee when he is throned on mount Kailasa or riding his usual mount, *Nandin* the sacred bull - ferocious, she is *Durga* the Aggressor who, with her lion, overcomes the demon buffalo.

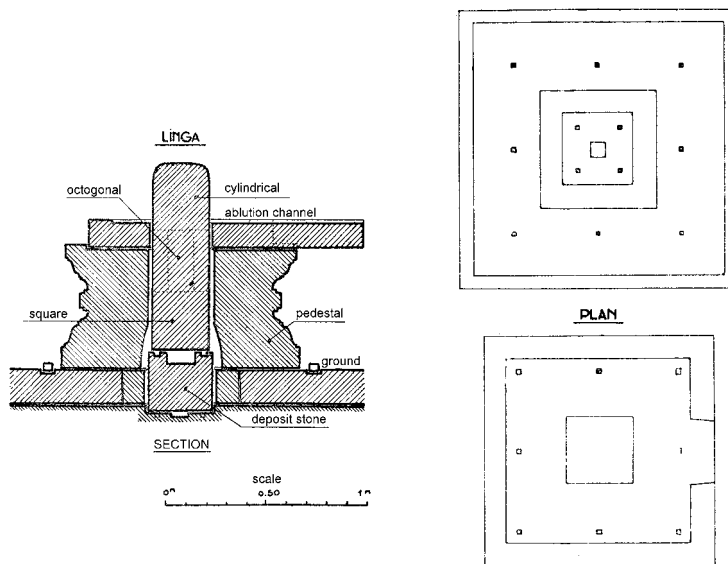
The cult of *Shiva* is no less reserved - particularly in its symbolic representation, the creative power expressed by the "*linga*" - though there is no particular reason to dwell upon the phallic nature of this image which, for the oriental spirit, goes far beyond questions of human sexuality.

The *linga* is formed in a cylinder of carefully polished stone, with rounded corners at its top, rising from a base that is first octagonal in section and then square. It represents, according to the legend, the sheath of *Vishnou* (octagonal), and then of *Brahma* (square), protecting the earth from contact with the sacred pillar which, descending from the sky as a column of flame, would drive itself into the soil. Only the cylindrical section projects from the pedestal. This is covered with a channelled stone (snanadroni) that has a projecting beak forming a gully that is always orientated to the north. The



priest anoints it with lustral water which flows over it in a symbolic ritual destined to bring rain and fertility to the lands.

From the union of *Shiva* and *Parvati* are born two sons - *Skanda*, the god of war whose mount is the peacock or the rhinoceros - and *Ganesha*, the god of initiative, intelligence and wisdom. Popular in Cambodia, he has the head of an elephant and the body of a man - usually plump and coiled with the Brahmanic cord. Normally seated, he dips his trunk into a bowl resting in one hand, while with the other he holds the tip of one of his broken tusks. His mount is the rat. Legend has it that, originally a handsome young man, he was one day standing guard at his mother's door and prevented his father from entering who, enraged, decapitated him. At the insistence of *Parvati*, *Shiva* consented to give him the head of the first living being that presented itself - which was an elephant.



#### INDRA AND SOME SECONDARY DIVINITIES.

An ancient superior god of vedism, *Indra* remained the principal of the secondary divinities. He is sieged in paradise on the summit of *Mount Meru* and, armed with a thunderbolt or "*vajra*", he rouses the storms that generate the life-giving rains. His mount is *Airavana*, the white elephant born of the churning of the Sea of Milk, who generally has three heads.

#### *Kama*.

The god of love, he is a handsome adolescent with a sugar cane bow and lotus stem arrows. His spouse is *Rati* and his mount is the parrot.

#### *Yama*.

The Law Lord or supreme judge, who presides over the underworld. He is mounted on a buffalo or rides an oxen drawn chariot.

#### *Kubera*.

The god of riches, he is dwarfed and deformed. He is commander of the "*Yaksha*" or *Yeaks*, the grimacing giants with bulging eyes and prominent fangs that one finds particularly as *dvarapalas* or guardians, armed with clubs at the sanctuary doors.

Finally are the countless demigods, found in profusion in the decoration of the temples. Amongst others are the benevolent *deva*, eternally in battle with the *asura*, ogres and demons - the *apsaras*, flying celestial nymphs, born of the Churning of the Sea of Milk, they animate *Indra's* sky with their dancing - there are also the *devata* of the bas-reliefs who stand, richly adorned and motionless, holding flowers - and the *nagas*, the stylisation of a multi-headed cobra, descendants of *Nagaraja*, the mythical ancestor of the Khmer kings, and genies of the water.

## BUDDHISM OF MAHAYANA OR THE LARGE VEHICLE

It would be wrong to believe that the first Buddhism eliminated the preceding divinities of the Brahmanic pantheon - quite the contrary - for the most part it assimilated them, though giving them a role that was secondary to that of the Buddha. The conquest however was more apparent than real, and in India soon became a cause of weakness.

*"The Large Vehicle"* - we are told by Madame de Coral-Remusat - *"develops the supernatural aspect of the Buddha - it involves a whole pantheon of bodhisattvas or future Buddhas, then the Dhyani-Bouddhas or Buddhas in Contemplation. To the belief in Nirvana, advocated by the Hinayana, the Mahayanists add an infinite Paradise - the "Pure Earth" where the soul is reborn according to its merit"*.

The *"Lotus of the Good Law"*, the canonical reference, describes the genesis of the formation of these bodhisattvas who are the saints of the new religion. Arriving at the very threshold of Nirvana through meditation and understanding, they defer their own deliverance in order to dedicate themselves to the salvation of others through teaching.

In Cambodia, Avalokitesvara or Lokeshvara is the spiritual son of the transcending Dhyani-Buddha *Amitabha* - the image of whom he carries on his chignon. He personifies, as Paul Mus has explained *"the notion of providence, unknown to primitive Buddhism"*. He is the *"Lord of the World"* from whom all gods emanate, himself the god of morality and graciousness - a masculine replica of *Kouan-Yin*, the other dominant figure in far eastern Buddhism. His attributes are often comparable to those of Shiva. Sitting or standing on a lotus blossom that elevates him above the world, he generally has four arms. His attributes are the flask, the book, the lotus and the rosary - but the number can vary from two to six or twelve and more. The face often has a third eye on the forehead and the heads can be multiple and in tiers.

In the living architecture of the towers of the Bayon, by the turning of his four faces to the four cardinal points, he is omnipresent.

*Lokeshvara* is also represented bedecked with jewels, or *"irradiant"* - where a multitude of small beings emanate from his body - Buddhas, divinities or demigods - in such a way that Louis Finot has compared their likeness to a chain-mail coat made of a pattern of figurines.

In the Buddhist Trinity, the *Buddha* sits in the centre between *Lokeshvara* and his feminine form, the *Prajnaparamita* or *Tara* - both of whom stand. She is the *"Perfection of Wisdom"* and also has four arms, with an *Amitabha* on the front of her chignon.

## THE BUDDHA

All figurative representations of the Buddhist religion are characterised by an attitude of meditation - the face is graced with a smiling serenity and the eyes remain either half or entirely closed.

The Buddha is not often portrayed standing or reclining, but usually sits with his hands in one of the ritual gestures or *"mudra"*. Standing, his posture is known as *"the absence of fear"* - the arms beside the body and bent at the elbow, the hands raised with the palms to the front. Sitting *"in the lotus position"* with the legs crossed parallel and the feet extending, he is in *"meditation"* with the hands flat in the lap, or in *"charity"* with the right hand stretched before the thigh, palm uppermost - or else similarly but with the palm downwards, *"calling the earth to witness"*. Otherwise he is as *"teacher"* with the hands returning against the chest, a finger of one between the thumb and index finger of the other.

The Buddha is sometimes seated on a base representing a lotus blossom and sometimes on the coils of the body of the naga, Mucilinda, who shelters his meditation under the fan of his multiple heads which spread from



the nape of his neck. He is clad in the monastic robe covering the right shoulder - sometimes indicated with a simple line on the stone. The top of the head is marked by a protrusion covered in ringlets of hair and often treated like a chignon. This is the *"ushnisha"* which, at the time of Siamese influence, finished in a flame while the face became disproportionately elongated to an oval. The ear lobes are lengthened and pierced, but are without jewellery.

One finds, however, some examples of the *"adorned Buddha"* wearing the diadem and royal insignia - in which manner he is considered as the "sovereign of the world". This conception responds to the legend of Jambupati, a proud king who refused to pay homage to the Buddha - who then appeared before him in all his resplendence.

Normally the Buddhas only appear on earth after long intervals. The historic Buddha, Sakyamuni, the founder of this religion, lived from the 6th to the 5th century before Christ and was of noble blood. The son of the king of Sakya and of the queen Maya-Devi, his name was Siddhartha.

His parents, to whom a prediction had been made of his future, tried to dissuade him from his destiny by sheltering him from all harsh realities and forcing him to lead a life of leisure within the palace.

Already married and the father of a child, he became exposed to conditions of decay, suffering and death while out walking through an encounter with an old man, a sick man, and a corpse. A meeting with an ascetic then convinced him to forsake the ways of the world.

Fleeing the palace one night and abandoning his family and possessions, he determined to lead from thenceforth the life of a wandering hermit, becoming a disciple of the Brahmins. Soon disillusioned with the vanity of their teaching, however, he sought a more severe form of

asceticism, but weakened by his ordeals and feeling no closer to his objective he abandoned extreme measures, committing himself instead to the *"middle way"*. Through only meditation he freed himself from all temptation and evil, finally attaining enlightenment and the quality of the Buddha.

Foregoing immediate entrance to Nirvana but having found the path to enlightenment, he decided to *"turn the Wheel of the Law"* and to preach his doctrine - which he was to practice for 44 years until his death.

The principal episodes represented in Khmer art are; - *"The Great Departure"*, where, accompanied by his faithful servant Chandaka, the future Buddha leaves his palace on the horse Kanthaka, whose clattering hooves are cushioned by the hands of the four Lokapalas or *"guardians of the world"*, - the *"Cutting of the Hair"*, where with one stroke of his sword he renounces his worldly life, - the *"Offering of the animals in the forest"*, - the *"Offering of Sujata"*, the young girl who gives the sage a bowl of rice, - the *"Offering of the Lokapalas"*, whose four bowl he mixes into one to show there is no difference between their gifts, - the *"Submission of the Elephant Nalagiri"*, drugged and enraged by the enemies of Happiness, - the *"Meditation under the Bodhi tree"*, a species of Banyan or *"Ficus Religiosa"*, - the *"Assault of Mara"* and of his demons whom the goddess of the Earth, called upon to attest the merits acquired by the holy ascetic, drowned in the water that gushed when she wrung her hair, symbolic of the abundance of the sage's previous libations - and the *"carnal Temptation"* by the seductive daughters of Mara.

Death and the entrance to Nirvana are portrayed with the representation of the Buddha lying on his right side, with one arm along his body and the other folded under his head.

Finally, the faithful still now pay homage to the Buddhas footprints, on which the crossing lines, engraved with various symbols, surround the central emblem of the wheel or *"sakra"*.



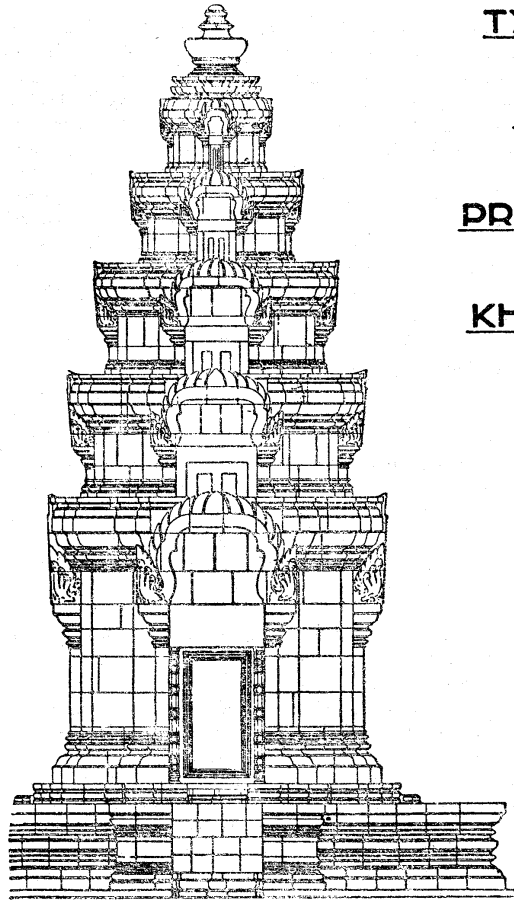
A. MEANING AND PURPOSE.

The clearing of the Angkor monuments, in revealing their planning and structure, ended the misinformed speculation by some authors that some at least of the stone structures had been palaces for the king or other high dignitaries. The quincunx of towers, while sometimes joined by dark narrow galleries and littered with undoubtedly cultural remains, do not however constitute a palace. At most, the long rooms sometimes surrounding the core of the buildings - also built of hard but less noble materials and broader since they were roofed with timber and tiles and not with stone - could perhaps be considered as having been places of rest.

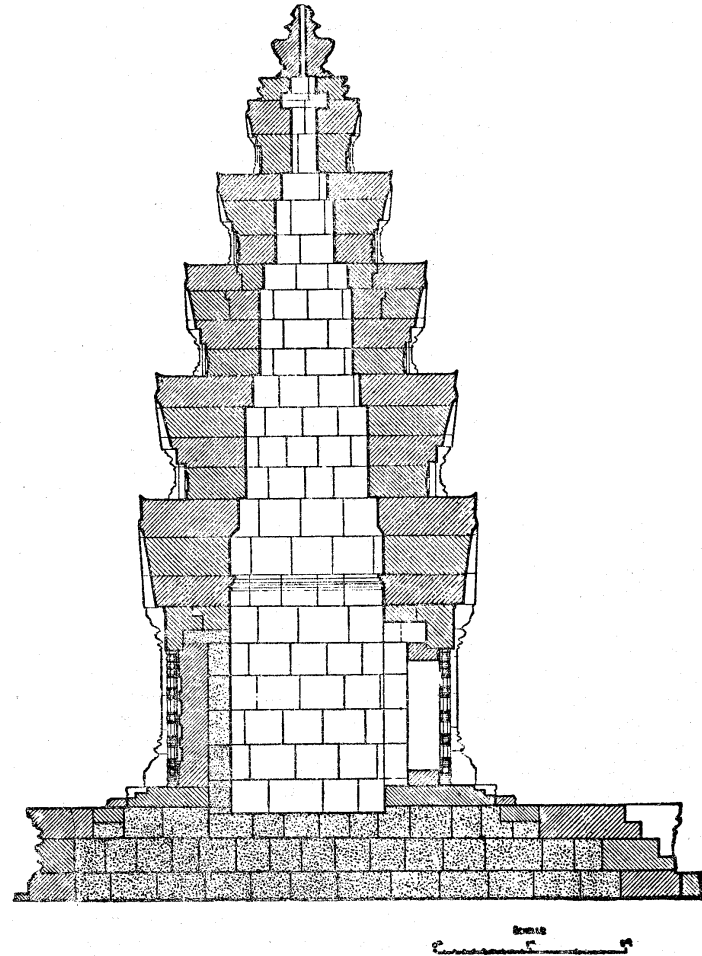
The fact that, in the account of his voyage, Tcheou Ta-Kouan did not describe the royal palace as being built of stone - that he indicates for the other monuments - suggests that it was rather constructed in light-weight materials like all other dwelling structures. *"The tiles of the king's private dwellings", he wrote, "are in lead, while other parts of the palace are covered with pottery tiles, yellow in colour... Long colonnades and open corridors stretch away, without grand symmetry... The dwellings of the princes and of the important officers are quite different in size and design from those of the people. The family temple and the main hall are covered with tiles... Straw thatch covers the dwellings of the commoners - they would not dare to use tiles..."*

It is certain that the stone buildings we see at Angkor, with an architecture that obeys rigorous and constant rules of order and symmetry, served purely monumental ends. Satisfying only requirements of longevity and steeped with symbolism, they merely indicate the framework of the capital and suburban settlements that were otherwise built from perishable materials - and an undoubtedly religious framework, since each element represents but a blossoming of sanctuaries responding to the multiplicity of gods and divinities. Other than these saintly dwellings were not considered worthy to survive.

The stone monuments are temples in so far as they are monuments raised in honour of the divinities. Their number and size may perhaps surprise, seeming disproportionate to the area occupied by the city and its suburbs and to the density of the population - whatever the religious fervour of the Khmer. With our western mentality we are naturally inclined to see in all religious buildings the equivalent of our churches and cathedrals that respond to a need of general faith - to the pious sentiments of the masses - that were the work of a population who met there in order to pray and to practise the rituals of their religion.



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The Khmer temples, however, were not places of public religion, but religious foundations - the personal work of a king or an aristocrat, destined to accumulate spiritual *"merits"* for their authors - that could then reflect on other participants.

These grandiose schemes, realised by a labour-force whose service was perhaps not always given voluntarily, absorbed much of the populations' energy and, in addition to the various military exploits, virtually exhausted them - precluding any other activity in order to endow each monarch with a new jewel. And yet, although it was due to this colossal effort that the cult of the god-king - and of all others who merited such deification - could continue in a setting that was worthy of it, the masses were not admitted to honour their gods, sieged as they were in the very midst of their settlement. Such honour was reserved only for the officiants. With the usual appetite for the traditional ceremonies described by the inscriptions, the faithful, crowded into the external enclosures, would prostrate themselves at the passing of idols and relics summarily offered by the priests for their adoration, or otherwise walk in procession in the ritual direction of *"pradakshina"*, that always keeps the sacred site to the right, or in the opposite direction of *"prasavya"* reserved for funeral processions.

In present day Cambodia, the Buddhist monasteries or *"pagodas"* consist, apart from the *"vihara"* or temple surrounded by *"sema"* (sacred marker stones), of a public meeting room - which is comparatively far less monumental - and lodgings for the monks. It can be assumed that, around the stone temples in Angkorian times, there were the same modest dwellings and places where monks and laymen could meet for the everyday practising of their religion. Tchou Ta-Kouan, when describing the monks who *"shave their heads, wear yellow robes and bare their right shoulder"* just as today, explained that *"their temples are often roofed with tiles and contain only one statue, closely resembling the Buddha Sakyamuni. Moulded from clay, it is painted in various colours and draped with red. Buddhas on the towers,*

*however, are bronze..."*. This text confirms the esoteric nature of some of the stone monuments and of their religious destination.

Mr Coedes, based on certain epigraphic evidence, stated *"that the principal temples, those that were of royal origin, are funerary temples or mausolea and, in some respects, tombs, if one is to assume that the ashes were placed there under the statue representing the deceased in his divine aspect. These were not public temples or places of pilgrimage, but rather the final resting place for the Cambodian sovereign, throned in his divine aspect, as in a palace"*. The discovery of numerous stone tanks, similar to sarcophagi, ultimately led him to the conclusion that the Angkor monuments were at the same time both temples and mausolea - *"the last resting place of a being who, during his life, enjoyed certain divine rights, and for whom death consummated his assimilation to a god - a funerary palace in which his mortal remains were laid to rest, but where his statue also stood representing him in the form of a god"*.<sup>2</sup>

In the present state of our knowledge, it seems reasonable to hold with this double function, although clearly the notion of the pantheon dominates that of the necropolis.

## B. SITING, STRUCTURE AND SYMBOLISM.

In each of the Angkor monuments a preoccupation with symbolic order seeks to create a representation of the universe in reduction - the tiered bases representing the *Meru*, the abode of the gods - the chains of mountains as their enclosure walls and the oceans as their moats - realising a kind of correctly ordered model.

Astrology determined siting which responded to magical ends. At the chosen location, the architect with the help of the high priest - or the high priest himself - would make an extensive *"interpretation of space"*, and so construct his building with four doors facing the four cardinal points - the east

remaining, and only rarely approximately, the main orientation with the diagonals of the square joining the intermediate points.

The predominance of this eastern orientation, a sort of glorification of the rising sun, could be considered as a manifestation of the sun cult so favoured in ancient civilisations - and taken when rising with its most strength at the summer solstice and following the course of its light, the ambulation ritual of *pradakshina* around the temple in fact becomes none other than the living translation of this trajectory. According to some archaeologists, the siting of most of the Angkor monuments corresponded to a sort of marking out of the solar path according to the solstitial alignments.

The temple type of Khmer architecture is the "*temple-mountain*", with terraces tiered in varying numbers following a law of constant proportional reduction that would have enclosed a pyramid. This is the Celestial Mountain or *Meru*, erected on the axis of the world (often marked by a deep well) serving as a pedestal for the god-king - symbolic in elevation from the base, where the faithful prostrate themselves and pray, to the summit, where the officiant addresses the gods and where the very spirit of the divine king resides.

Sometimes the pyramid is crowned with a single sanctuary, others with a quincunx of towers in evocation of the five summits of *Meru*. Occasionally other buildings also adorn the tiers. In every case, the square or rectangular surrounding walls enclose secondary buildings at the base - the chains of mountains surrounding the cosmic mountain and separated by the seas, represented here by moats. For the Khmer, this double principle of tiering and of successive enclosure forms the origin of all architectural realisation.

Occasionally, however, - particularly in the less important monuments of the pre-angkorian period or at the beginning of the classic art - the notion

of elevation was expressed by the simple raising of the buildings on a terrace, where they were presented as if on a plateau - sometimes as an isolated sanctuary, sometimes as one or two rows of towers.

Towards the beginning of the 11th century came the appearance of covered galleries linking the corner sanctuaries or surrounding the central group - with entrance pavilions or "*gopura*" on the four axes - forming interior courtyards that emphasised the private nature of the religious buildings. These were often themselves complemented with other galleries on pillars, perhaps with half-vaulted side-aisles, dividing the courtyard into four sections - or else, serving to accentuate the eastern orientation, expanding into long rooms adjoining the principal building, flanked on either side by the so called "*libraries*" that opened to the west.

Gradually, and particularly when Buddhism became more widespread and so promoted the conventual life, the temple became a monastery - with the same system of cloisters closed by the galleries repeating in each concentric enclosure. Usually the arrangement of tiers gave way to a ground-level composition where the idea of elevation was only expressed in the succession of separating galleries and the predominance of the central sanctuary. The east-west axis became increasingly accentuated, forming a corridor virtually uninterrupted by rooms or vestibules - a sacred vista to the heart of the monument. In the last great ensembles such as Prah Khan and Ta Prohm, a profusion of annexe buildings further complicated the plan that so retained nothing of its original beautiful simplicity. Motivated by an apparent "*dread of emptiness*", the Khmer continued to make alterations and additions to the detriment of the grand vision.

While in Cambodia the direct descendants of the builders of Angkor, dumbfounded by the colossal effort accomplished by their ancestors, assumed the origin of the monuments to be divine and so attributed their construction to *Indra* and his son, the celestial architect *Vishvakarman*, it was customary in the West, however, following the revelations made by Mouhot on discovering Angkor Wat in 1860, to have a certain contempt for this strange art, for which the main appreciation was found in the romantic charm of the ruins being engulfed by the jungle.

For a long time the tomes of art history passed them over in silence, so that even in the second half of the nineteenth century the period was still described as one of the weakest in terms of the realisation of any architectural quality. In cultural circles it was the level of ornament and the faultless execution of the detail that were admired rather than the value of the whole. Khmer art was taken as a minor art, trailing behind that of India - and even the well known poet Paul Claudel, on viewing the towers of Angkor Wat, saw only *"five stone pineapples fringed with flames"*.

This lack of understanding came at a time when little was known of the large Angkor monuments, and from the particularly Western desire to compare things to one's own experience. The French spirit enjoys reason, logic and truth, and is preoccupied with technique and the intrinsic value of each form - which so tends to establish a kind of hierarchy in the appreciation of art. In the East, by contrast, such perfection matters less. The architecture is the basis for a spiritual expression, and the Angkor temple, formed of conventions and symbols, is but the translation of an idea, of a force that is superior to mere aesthetic considerations.

Architecturally, supported by the test of time, we can be justified in recognising that the Khmer, in composing Angkor Wat, in arranging the royal esplanade of Angkor Thom or the admirable perspective of Prah Khan with its avenue of bornes and the lake of Neak Pean - or in digging the two barays and the Srah Srang - showed a strong understanding for the concept of the grand scheme, so realising an ensemble that stands unique. As a progression of *"events"* these are a prelude to the conceptions of Le Notre<sup>3</sup> and of the grand urban designers of modern times. Angkor Wat, comparable to the most impressive of history's architectural compositions, in responding to all the requirements of a *"component"* within an already established plan, attains a classic perfection by the restrained monumentality of its finely balanced elements and the precise arrangement of its proportions. It is a work of power, unity and style.

The conformity of Khmer art is undeniable - and though India may be at its source, she is so as stimulator rather than creator. Indian influence perhaps imposed ideas of direction, framework, tradition and constraint, but in following these *"formulae"* the Khmer put them to their own particular use and, in the execution, took control. While the builder of the Hindu temples has no respect for any architectural concept and, carried away in a frenzy of modelling, encumbers the composition which so becomes confused with the extravagance of the decoration, the Khmer sculptor on the other hand maintains a feeling for the dimension of the mass, and, working always directly on the surface of the pre-formed panels of wall, submits to the discipline imposed by the architect to enhance the main idea, to emphasise the form by the organisation of his mouldings and ornamentation rather than to detract from its purity - he never allows free rein to his fantasy and spirit except in the detail, which is usually minute.

Through India also came themes from Greece, Rome, from Egypt and from Syria, with some reminiscence of Arab or French art of the middle ages - there are also influences from China, and, by a sort of anticipation, certain elements that can be found in the Renaissance, baroque or rococo styles.

Despite being subject to such influences, Khmer art nonetheless maintained, as said, a strong individuality - which also appears in its shortcomings, failings and faults - or at least those characteristics which we so judge through our Western eyes. Yet if it would be unjust to lament the lack of any interior spaciousness, which may be upsetting but which remains nonetheless inherent in the very nature of the buildings, then perhaps we cannot help but be dismayed by the absence of any *"real"* buildings that - in responding to purely spiritual ideals - rarely go beyond the state of the appearance or the perceived impression.

Usually the exterior only gives but an imperfect - if not misleading - idea of the internal structure; - illusory storeys - truncated proportions - the

perception of the necessity of the arch but dressed as a wall and defying the laws of gravity - flying ribs barred by wooden ceilings at the height of the cornice - lubricious stairs so steep that they have to be climbed on all fours and with feet turned sideways - conflicts between the plan and the façade - half vaults, false doors and walled-in windows - cuts and assemblies of stone that are only relevant to the carpenter... This lack of sincerity in the means of expression - yet the Asian cares not nor suffers for it. And we would be wrong to assume ourselves to be more demanding than he, or to let these shortcomings detract from our true appreciation of the outcome.

#### THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS

All Khmer architecture relies on notions of axis and symmetry, necessarily implying the repetition of its elements.

#### THE PRASAT

The fundamental element is the sanctuary tower, or *"prasat"*, that sheltered the idol within its square chamber. Orientated accordingly, it opens to the exterior sometimes with two or four doors, but usually with a single opening to the east - the closed sides being walled with false doors. The plan can become cruciform by the adjoining of *avant-corps* forming vestibules that appear towards the end of the tenth century.

The axial stairways, generally preceded by a decorative base step in *"acolade"* form, lead to the prasat, built on a base which can itself be raised on a terrace.

The principal level, crowned with a cornice, can have its corner piers formed with a simple or double redent, perhaps with divinities sculpted in the niches. Each door is framed by colonnettes carrying lintels, themselves bordered by pilasters supporting a fronton. Above, the false storeys - almost always numbering four - follow the principle of proportional reduction of the tiered temples, with a repetition of the same elements that are found at the



base, while internally the stone courses are corbelled like a sort of stepped chimney that sometimes contained a hanging velum or wooden ceiling. A crowning motif with lotus petals closes the top, into which was set a metal pole - perhaps a trident.

On each upper tier the external silhouette was animated with antefixes, often as models of the prasat, set at the corners. Thus the sanctuary tower itself becomes its own decoration, so affirming its character as a temple in reduction.

The towers with four faces of the Bayon period (late 12th century) are a simple variation of the prasat.

#### THE GALLERIES

The galleries surrounding the prasats constitute the successive enclosures, which it is customary to number from the centre of the monument. In simple form they are bordered by two walls, one of which may be plain, and lit by openings that can be clear or decorated with an always uneven number of turned balusters. Above the cornice they are covered with a corbelled vault, sometimes shallow, and masked internally by a wooden ceiling. The exterior can have a ridge crested with a line of turned stone finials or small decorative crenellations, and often imitates the parallel undulations of a channel-tiled roof, terminating in a line of lotus petals.

Forming a cloister, the galleries can also open broadly on one side with the replacement of the wall by a line of pillars. Rarely appearing before the beginning of the 12th century, this arrangement was soon joined by a second row of pillars forming a side-aisle covered with a half vault, with beams or struts connecting the points of support. In the axial galleries all walls disappeared, and the central passage has a side-aisle to either side.

#### THE ENCLOSURES AND THE GOPURA

When they are not defined by galleries, the different enclosures are bounded by simple walls with a coping. There is usually an entrance pavilion or "*gopura*" on each axis, with a central core that is generally cruciform in plan and frequently complemented with vestibules, porticoes and lateral wings with secondary entrances. Sometimes, particularly on the side of the main entrance, the gopuras become quite developed, with the external silhouette taking the form of one or three towers - similar to those of the sanctuaries - or a crossing of naves with four gable ends treated with frontons.

#### ANNEXE BUILDINGS

Some temples have, linked to the central sanctuary by an adjoining vestibule, a vaulted long room with an avant-corps to the east and the side walls pierced with a door framed by windows - an arrangement also found in the monuments of India.

In the eastern part of the first enclosure, on either side of the main axis, two similar buildings open only to the west in inverse to the sanctuaries and are poorly lit by long, narrow, horizontal windows. These are usually referred to as "*libraries*". While an inscription found at Prasat Khna seems to justify this name, these buildings, while certainly ritual in siting, must rather in our view have contained - apart from the sacred books - various religious artefacts. When there is only one library it is found to the south.

While the internal plan forms a simple rectangle, the external gives the impression of a nave with a side-aisle to either side - since a false half-vault covers most of the depth of the wall - and a false upper storey. The barrel of the vault ends in frontons.

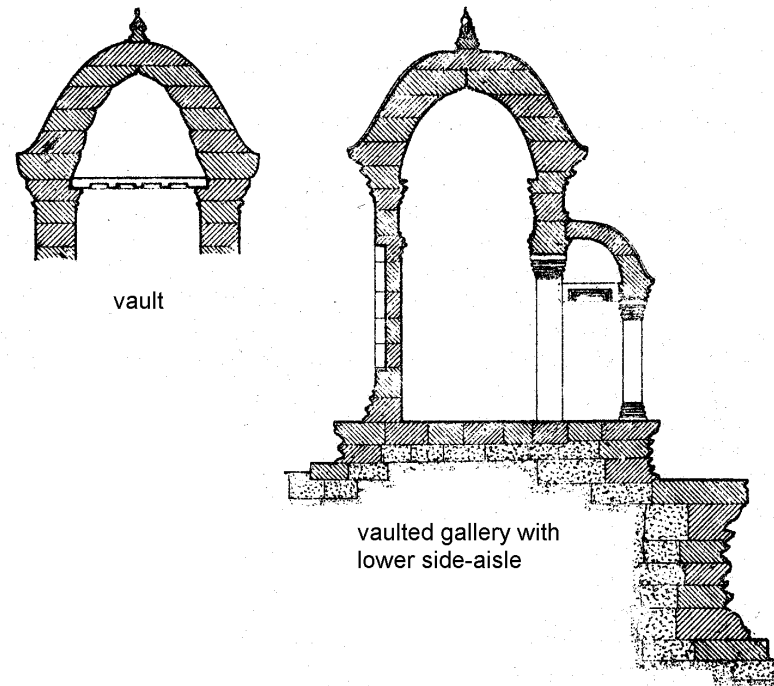
Within the last enclosure of the principal temples towards the end of the 12th century, on the east side (there is one to the north of the main axis at Prah Khan and at Ta Prohm) are buildings - wider than normal due to an

audacious system of double curving vaults - that served as a "rest house with fire". For a long time called "dharmasala", they are mentioned by Tchcou Ta-Kouan; - "on the main roads there are places of rest similar to our stage posts". The inscription of Prah Khan tells of 121 rest houses lining the ancient roads of the kingdom. From Angkor to the capital of Champa (along the eastern road through Beng Mealea and Prah Khan of Kompong Svay) there were 57, corresponding to an average relay distance of 12.5 km.

Apart from these three particular types of building, one finds various other buildings within the successive enclosure walls whose utilitarian nature is confirmed by their course masonry and particularly by their tiled timber roofs - of which numerous remains have been found. These mainly surrounded the temple in the form of a line of long rooms or galleries, and were used either as places of habitation or retreat for the priests - with the throng of lay people attached to the service of the temple no doubt being lodged in wooden huts in the surrounding area - or else as warehouses, stores and shelters for the faithful.

#### AROUND THE MONUMENTS

In principle, each temple was surrounded by a moat. Representing, as described, the ocean in this microcosm, this could also have provided a means of defence. Ahead of the main axis - or even on a number of axes - the lions or "dvarapalas" armed with clubs stand as guardians. Across the moat extends a wide paved causeway, sometimes for hundreds of metres, bordered by naga-balustrades set on stone blocks - an essentially Khmer motif - punctuated by lateral stairways and sometimes terminating in a vast cruciform terrace, used for ceremonies and ritual dance, or framed by pools. Otherwise a line of decorative bornes may lead to a "baray".



*"In Cambodia" - Henri Parmentier tells us - "it would seem the construction was but a tedious necessity that was skimped in order to realise as quickly as possible the form which was more or less determined by tradition".*

It is a fact that the Khmer, who had specialised for so long in timber architecture - in which they are considerably skilled - showed some delightfully incompetent technique in the art of building in durable materials, ignorant even of the rudiments of stereotomy. Too often the stone blocks were neither squared nor arranged in coursing by the natural lie of the stone. Vertical joints running from bottom to top without any horizontal overlapping, as in the towers of the Bayon, created veritable fault planes. The mass of the large walls was rarely homogenous, the main structure being surfaced in a simply adhered covering that was often relatively thin and of a different material. The porticoes or galleries with wide opening bays see the whole weight of the fronton or vaults distributed on long monolithic architraves resting on pillars, which in turn almost invariably fractured under the excessive load.

Everywhere the mistakes and errors are flagrant, with nothing to correct them other than, in certain critical cases, double T form iron straps set into and linking adjacent stones. The excessive corbelling and the mixed use of materials in the construction of the vaults - such as in the 10th/11th century practice of strengthening the sandstone lintels by doubling them with timber beams - also caused extensive structural failure. The stone is constantly used in the manner of timber with the same means of assembly, taking no account of the fact that the material is not able to act effectively in tension.

And yet the ensemble remains, despite the ravages of time and climate. All of these faults that trouble us or provoke our reproach are happily tolerated by the Khmer - as Orientals less concerned with shortcomings in detail - with neither eye nor spirit offended, and their general appreciation for the quality of the work certainly unchanged.

#### BUILDING MATERIALS

The temples of ancient Cambodia are constructed either in sandstone or in brick, often combined in a greater or lesser proportion with laterite.

### *Sandstone.*

The Cambodian "*thma puok*" - literally 'mud stone' - is variable in colour and is, with the exception of the particularly durable rose coloured sandstone used notably at Banteay Srei, a soft stone with little strength. The predominant grey sandstone decomposes and becomes friable under the action of the elements, cracking with the growth of roots and, often laid against the grain, defoliating - it rarely maintains the clear surface and keen line of its decoration and profiles. It weighs from two to two and a half tonnes per cubic metre.

Some large open quarries have been found on the hillside between the temple of Beng Mealea and the south-east extremity of the chain of the Phnom Kulen, at about forty kilometres from Angkor. Transport must have been in part by water, in part by carrying on shoulders or pulling on rollers. The regularly placed round holes of a few centimetres circumference and depth, apparent in most of the stone blocks of the monuments, probably took either wooden pegs tied by vines or metal lugs for a kind of hoist arranged to allow the stone to be manoeuvred during the course of construction - these holes, which legend has it are the impressions of the fingers of Indra, were then filled either with cut stone inserts or with mortar plugs.

Sandstone was initially used sparingly, and almost exclusively for the surrounding elements of openings and false doors, but gradually became used for all the elements of construction - though with the exception of thick internal block walls, utility buildings and certain areas of paving.

### *Brick*

Brick was used in all the early structures and then in numerous temples of the first half of the classical period (9th-10th centuries). It was manufactured on site and well baked in order to enable sculpting and to be used in the forming of corbelled vaults. Their size could vary from 22 x 12 x 4 to 30 x 16 x 8.5 centimetres and more. Generally a pale pink in colour they

were apparently rarely seen in elevation, having been preferably covered in a sculpted coating of decorative lime based mortar - the brick backing having been previously rough-hewn for the thicker layers.

### *Laterite*

Laterite or "*bai kriem*" - literally 'grilled rice' - is a porous, reddish brown stone that has certain analogies with our mudstone. Abundant in the subsoil of the southern part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, it is easily cut when it comes out of the ground but then hardens in the open air. Unfortunately some blocks undergo a decomposition, rendering them friable and leading to inevitable collapse.

As a material used for in-fill that can be cut and shaped, laterite was also used in the construction of retaining walls in the tiered temples, for utility buildings, the piers of bridges, enclosure walls and for the paving of courtyards.

### *Timber.*

From some of the most durable of species, timber served even in the monumental architecture of the classic period for the building of certain external light-weight elements in combination with the stone.

Internally, timber was used in beams either for supporting or reinforcing, for the roof carpentry, for the double-leafed pivoting doors - whose pivot socket-holes can often still be seen in the door cills - for the dais sheltering the idols, or for the richly decorated panelling of the walls and ceilings - some remnants of which, decorated with flowers and lotus blossoms (though deteriorated by the humidity and the termites) were still in place in Angkor Wat at the time of its clearing. Fragments of beams also remained, as they do in many of the other monuments.

### *Tiles.*

The roof tiles of the annexe buildings are excellent in quality, and numerous specimens have been found during excavation. In baked clay and either plain or glazed and with a fixing nib, they are of two types; - the first with a flat edge to form channels, the second curved to form joints enabling a roof covering of so-called "*Roman tiles*". The ridge can be marked with a line of turned stone finials and, at the base of each slope, the stop tiles can also curl in the form of lotus petals or some other decorative motif.

## THE BUILDING PROCESS

### *Foundations.*

The Angkor monuments were generally constructed on a firm ground of clay-bound sand, so reducing the foundations to their simplest expression - one or two courses of laterite laid sometimes on a bed of consolidated gravel. There was little settlement, except where there was banking.

### *Substructure.*

The base platforms are a common feature. Often formed in combination, they can be crowned by a simple band when built as retaining walls for the tiers of a pyramid, or abundantly moulded and ornate as the base platform for terraces that may carry some other structure. They can be one of the most remarkable elements of the architecture.

The Khmer substructure has the peculiarity that it remains independent of the movement in vertical expansion of the building it supports. It is a base, a plateau emerging like the very mound of the celestial Meru - it is the horizontal component in the composition. This is reinforced by the moulding with its horizontal axis of symmetry, expressed as a central band between two opposing ogees. The symmetry is reflected in the smallest detail of the ornamentation, where only the lines of lotus petals invariably turn upwards.

### *Walls.*

Whether in sandstone, brick or laterite, the walls have dry joints without mortar. For the brickwork, only a kind of vegetal adhesive, of unknown composition, serves to reinforce the bonding.

In an architecture where the sequences of moulding and sculpture are carried out on an in-situ masonry structure, it is important to obtain as near as possible a monolith by the perfect adherence of the beds and vertical joints, rigorously dressed and made filiform. This was achieved through polishing each block by rubbing it against the surrounding stones in its immediate contact - a bas-relief at the Bayon (the internal gallery, west side, southern part) gives a precious indication of this operation.

The wall thickness is essentially variable but always far in excess of the limits imposed by the strength of the material - depths of one metre to a metre and a half are not uncommon, and it is not unusual for enclosure walls to be built with the length of the block laid perpendicular to the face of the wall.

And while it is true that the same wall, plumb from top to bottom on its internal side, can correspond externally to steps corresponding to various false elements, this feature can also simply relate to a juxtaposition of cladding on course blockwork that has lost cohesion.

It is interesting to note that the door frames, set in main or internal walls and treated with an assembly of mitred or straight joints - as in timber - always have their bottom member set above the level of the paving. The existence of these high cills, which can make a visit to the temple quite tiring, must be intended to accentuate the cellular character of the space so enclosed in order to increase the number of sanctuaries by compartmenting the galleries to the extreme, rather than for any technical necessity.

### *Stairs.*

The tiered temple is like a *"stairway to heaven"* - which is perhaps sufficient to justify the steep incline that can be set from an angle of 45° to 70° - unless otherwise the stone steps are simply a replica of the wooden stairs that give access to the timber houses, where the absence of a riser allows the foot to be placed despite the gradient.

Whatever the reason, the respective dimensions of the steps and the risers are the inverse of those to which we are accustomed, and the arrangement - where the stairway is presented from the front and generally set into the substructure without intermediate landings - transforms the ascension into a veritable climb, confirming that it was not intended for the advance of a crowd but rather only for use by certain officiants. From the monumental point of view the advantage is clear - the square of the base not having to spread in surface area, the entire building rises to its zenith with a particular thrust.

### *Vaults.*

The problem of the vault conditions a characteristic of the Khmer temple - and indeed of all religious architecture of Hindu inspiration - which is the absence of any large internal space - a disadvantage since there is no place to shelter any assembly of the religious faithful.

Only a keyed arch will enable large openings. Known since antiquity in the West, it was used as far as China, so seeming strange that the Khmer of the 9th to the 13th centuries were ignorant of it - despite their use of radial joints in the lining of circular wells, as, for example, at the western Mebon. Perhaps it is necessary to see some ritual reasoning for this abstention, or a respect for the Hindu saying in which we are told by Henri Parmentier that - *"the dressed arch has no rest, only the corbelled arch sleeps..."*

The Khmer vault does not transfer its thrust to the points of its support, so that no reaction is provided by its elements - it is formed by a continuation of the walls which overhang until they meet on the axis of the covered space. The beds are therefore horizontal and the elements successively corbelled and finally topped with a bridging stone, so linking the two walls.

The sloping inner face, usually following the line of a slender cone, is left rough when masked by a timber ceiling at the height of its springing. However, when remaining in view, it is carefully finished and can be decorated, particularly on the half vaults of the gallery side-aisles. The outer face is much smoother and almost semicircular in profile, with its curve serving as a template for the mass of the fronton.

In the cruciform-planned buildings the intersection of the two barrels is normally formed as a groined vault, while for the square-planned *"prasat"* the principle of the cloistered or coved vault applies, though often interrupted by some vertical elements corresponding to the projections of the illusory external storeys.

### CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

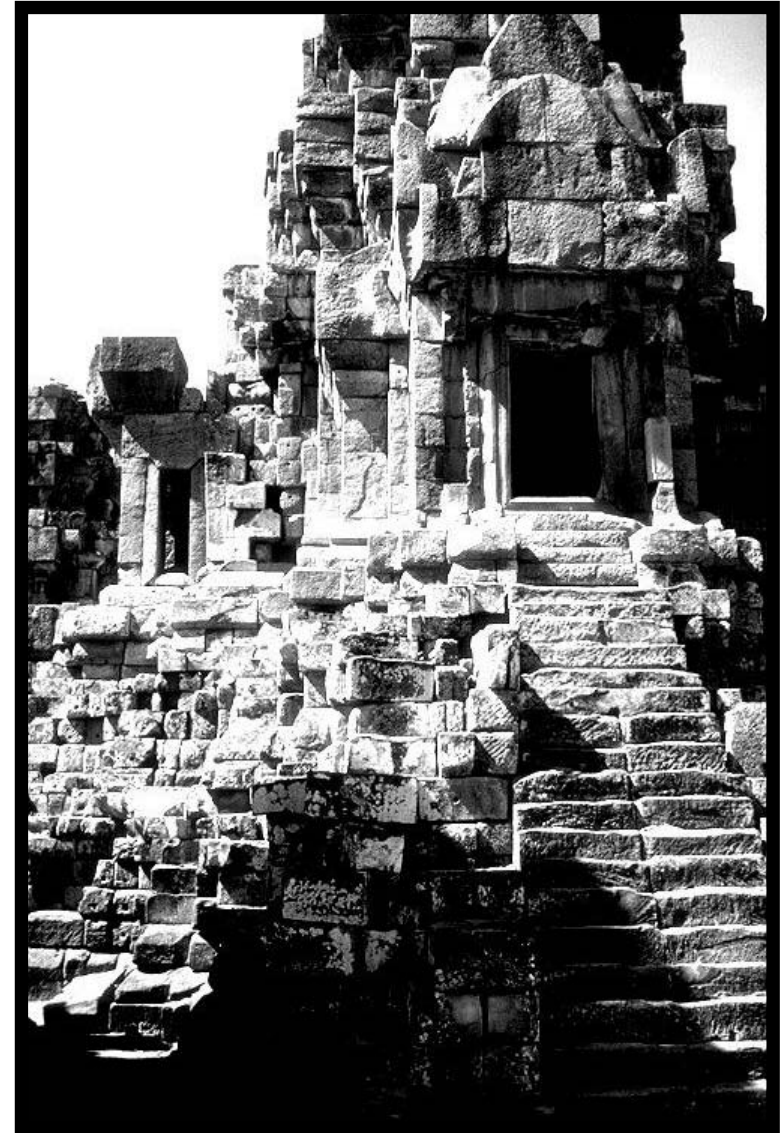
We do not know what means the Khmer had at their disposal for the construction of their temples. The bas-reliefs give only some cursory indication of the methods used for polishing the stone blocks, but show no lifting apparatus. We are therefore reduced to hypotheses.

Present day Cambodian labourers still rely on the building methods of their ancestors. Highly skilled at erecting a sturdy scaffolding with a few simple timbers cut from the forest and tied with lengths of vine, they can lift the heaviest of loads. Using their climbing ability to good advantage, they carry them on their shoulders suspended from two sticks or bamboo poles, or haul them to great heights on rails of logs. One can therefore suppose that

similar methods of lifting were previously used, with ladders or inclined planes perhaps aided by winches or capstans.

George Groslier undertook some interesting research into the time required for the construction of a large temple in the north-west of Cambodia - Banteay Chmar. His calculations, based on reasoning and logic rather than on actual fact, led him to conclude a construction period of 32 to 35 years. We would tend towards this latter figure, which noticeably corresponds to the duration of the reign of Suryavarman II, the builder of Angkor Wat. The uniform style of this monument enabled the assumption that it was built without interruption under a single direction.

On the other hand, Groslier's thesis provides a strong argument against the attribution to the single king Jayavarman VII, who reigned for some 20 years, for the totality of the temples in the so called "*style of the Bayon*", where there is abundant proof of alterations and which particularly lack any unity.









The ornamentation is the triumph of Khmer art, where the architecture, as we have seen, is but the realisation of a ritual. Far from distracting the attention from the collective composition or from the geometry of the lines and volumes, the ornamentation emphasises and enhances each form, though without domination. Through the ornamentation, the rigid framework of the profiles and masses becomes animated with the shimmering of light and shade - all are in living communion. Unified in their setting, the scenes with figures and the decoration achieve perfect harmony.

Not one of the Khmer monuments has any technical sterility, and it is to the ornamental sculpture, the plastic expression of the creator's vitality, that this is due. Even used in profusion, as in some temples, so that no surface of wall is left bare, the ornamentation is neither distracting nor without style, never performing the function of mere in-fill.

Like the priests themselves, the architects and sculptors were but servants responsible for the same cultural tradition - creating with equal self denial, their achievement remaining anonymous and impersonal. Working to an abstract concept, the artist's accomplishment was subject to constant repetition - with the art being conditional on this process engendering not monotony but rhythm.

In practical terms, such self denial was the only possible solution - since it would have taken more than a royal decree to have sculpted the square kilometres of wall by the thousands of sculptors - and the artist an exceptional being whose work was selflessly grafted on to that of the master craftsman. He was free within certain limits, but from the first mark engraved on the stone to the last cut of the chisel it was necessary for him to answer to a team of craftsmen, of specialist labourers working to a pattern who could not give course to their creative fancy except in the minutest detail.

Each with his defined task, and, if one can call it such, his *"vision"*, could attain a sufficient level of manual skill without supervision - indeed the Khmer were too idealistic to stop at some imperfection, taken for secondary, as long as the value of the intention remained intact. Sometimes real artists revealed themselves, so producing the extraordinary achievement of a Banteay Srei - yet everywhere one can perceive a unity, enhanced by flashes of brilliance created by the most skilful of hands. So it was, in fact, that the very restricted number of the fundamental elements of the architecture and the eternal repetition of the motifs favoured the task of unification - the evolution of the decor related only to the character of each

period, depending upon whether one finds oneself in a time of incubation, blossoming, crystallisation or decline.

### THE BAS-RELIEFS

If the Khmer artist managed occasionally to free himself from the constraints that controlled him to give expression to his personality, then it would evidently be in the narrative form of the bas-reliefs. Escaping from the strictly ornamental intricacy of the arabesque he could - on subjects drawn from history or mythology, from epic legends or ethnography - if not let go his emotion, then at least tend towards movement, nature and life. It is also probable, although nothing remains of them today, that besides these stone pages - recalling in some ways the tapestries of our own middle ages such as those of Reine Mathilde at Bayeux - there were frescos painted in the same spirit serving to animate the cold, bare interior of the sanctuary walls.

Except at Bakong, where we can see, on the upper tier of the pyramid, some rare remains of bas-reliefs displayed to the open air, it seems that until the 11th century the Khmer were content with the representation of but a few scenes on the limited areas of the lintels or frontons - the most remarkable of which are to be found on the tympanums of Banteay Srei. Thereafter the practice is reserved for the frontons, sometimes in a single composition, sometimes in superposed registers. Ignorant of the laws of perspective, the Khmer used this last means of expression to indicate successive planes, with the lower register representing the foreground.

At the *Baphuon* the bas-reliefs appear in registers on narrow areas of wall, forming a succession of small scenes which, although of legendary inspiration, tend towards naturalism and are simplistic in expression.

At *Angkor Wat* on the other hand there are, on the twelve or thirteen hundred square metres of the large external gallery wall, vast compositions harmonising with the fine order of the monument - the walls are entirely

covered, without a space, without a break, forming a whole or divided into registers according to the nature of the subject matter - either of pages overflowing with life, or of harsh, highly stylised images - all cut into the surface of the stone.

At the *Bayon*, finally - at least in the external gallery - we leave the legendary subjects for accounts drawn from the history of the ruler and scenes from everyday life. These reliefs, treated in more volume and less formal in style, provide extensive information about the customs of the ancient Khmer - often differing little from those of present day Cambodia. They are situated, as at Angkor Wat, in that part of the temple accessible to the public, for whom they are intended. It is here that the artist, inspired by a higher force, endeavours to identify with the people, to inform them, to raise them to his level. It was the "*propaganda*" of the time.

One cannot leave the series of bas-reliefs without mentioning the impressive treatment of the *Terrace of the Elephants* of Angkor Thom. In a single development of nearly 400 metres these animals, almost full size, are represented in profile, participating in hunting scenes and treated more realistically than was normal. Some panels are sculpted with fine garudas, standing "*as atlantes*". Immediately to the north is the redented double wall of the terrace known as the "*Terrace of the Leper King*" showing the many registered rows of straight-faced women who formed the courts of the kings of the fabulous beings who haunt the flanks of Mount Meru. These various bas-reliefs are in the style of the Bayon.

### DEVATAS, APSARAS, DVARAPALAS

These are the low reliefs of isolated figures or groups, sculpted sometimes on a plain wall or on a background of decoration, but usually sheltered within niches.

As celestial nymphs - whose hieratic nature is accommodated so well in their frontal presentation - the devatas generally decorate the pediments of the sanctuary and, in the 12th century, the walls of the halls and galleries. Angkor Wat is lavished with hundreds, engaging the visitor with the charm of their ever-serene smile. The fresh vitality of their youthful figures with their bare torsos - the grace of their supple gestures and of their slender fingers, holding a lotus or playing with a string of flowers - distracts one from the weight of their legs, that invariably suffer - and their awkward feet presented always in profile due to an inability to express their foreshortening.

Portrayed in at least half scale and adorned with jewellery, the *devatas* differ, depending upon the period, by the hang of their long dress or "*sarong*", and the prodigious variety of their hair styles and tiaras or diadems ("*mukuta*").

The liturgical dance, which held such an important place in the ritual - the Ta Prohm stele tells of 615 dancers living within the temple enclosure - should have provided the sculptor with an opportunity to depart from the representation of the usual rigid postures and to express some movement. But although Cambodian dance is capable of expressing the whole range of human sentiments, the *apsaras* always appear on the stone in the same pose derived from that of a flying figure, though hard to believe, with only some variation in the gesture of the arms. The stylisation is taken to the extreme and the use of a pattern doubtless.

Generally at a reduced scale and assembled in lines as at *Prah Khan*, or in the remarkably composed motifs of twos and threes as on the pillars of the *Bayon*, the thousands of *apsaras*, clad only in a light cloth that hugs the thighs with its ends flying behind, are bedecked in jewels and glittering head dresses. Standing isolated from the world on a lotus blossom or flying in the open air, they are the divine symbols of joy.

The *dvarapalas* are the standing figures, armed with a lance or a club, represented on the pilasters that flank the entrance to the sanctuaries of certain temples such as Prah Khan - a god on one side with a benevolent smile and an asura on the other, his menacing character represented in puerile fashion by a sinister grin and stern features. Their purpose is to ward off harm. At other times, sheltered in the niches on the corner piers of the prasats, they are powerful warriors and more human in aspect - perhaps assertive as at Prah Ko, or elegant as the ephebes of Banteay Srei.

#### MURAL ORNAMENTATION

Of all activity in Khmer art, the mural ornamentation, more than any other, gives proof of the adaptability of the sculptor and of his extraordinary prolixity. He resents leaving any surface untouched, literally devouring the wall - yet from the very excess of this profusion is born an impression of greyness that enhances the centres of interest - where the complication only appears in the study of the detail - though which detracts nothing from the clarity of the line or form.

When a panel of wall is completely covered it can be either with a regular coating of geometric motifs or with pure ornamentation as at Banteay Srei. Otherwise there is the combination of some areas of decoration with an organic background treated almost naturalistically, as in certain parts of Prah Khan. Typically there are only a few constituent motifs, used to form the basis of a repetition - though never merely a copy. The evolution is continuous and the incidentals multiply over the course of the centuries.

Organic inspiration draws on the lotus, with the buds, petals or blossoming flowers giving birth to a whole variety of rosettes. Occasionally - particularly in the early period - there is also the delicate umbel of the blue lotus, recalling the lotus of Egypt. A whole range of coiling vegetation is then derived from the acanthus leaf, stretching in flames and rolling in volutes,

forming vertical bands or a succession of foliated scrolls - so close to our Renaissance - scattered with figurines or animals.

Finally, stifling all fantasy with the use of a few simple geometric forms, the artist exhausts all possibilities offered by the circle, the lozenge and the square, combined in bands or in panels.

On the walls or internal pillars and the reveals of openings, mainly during the 12th century, a fine sculpting in the surface of the stone came to animate the severity of the galleries - with figures in prayer set in niches, delicate leaves and an assortment of braids and pendant friezes - in a veritable work of tapestry.

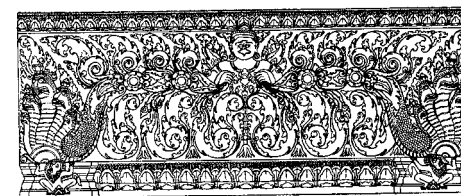
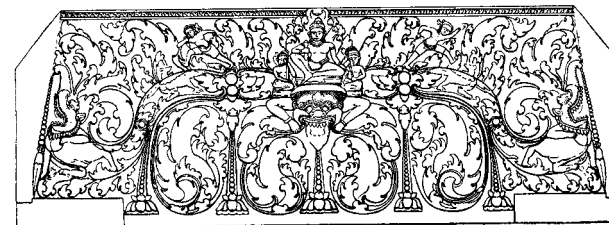
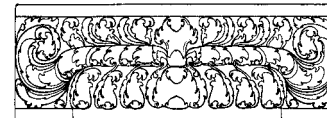
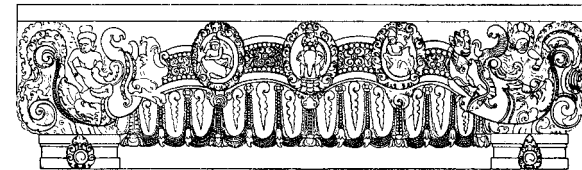
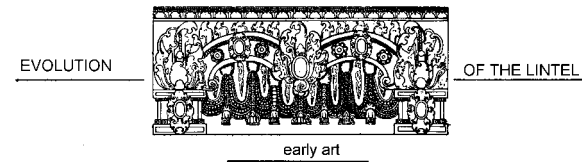
#### COLONNETTES

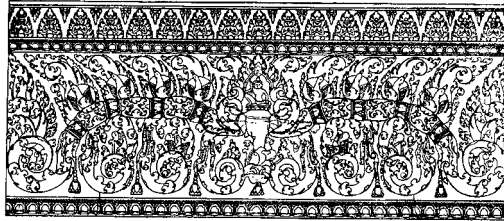
Destined to carry the lintel, the colonnettes are generally round in section in the primitive art (7th-8th centuries), rectangular in the style of the Kulen (first half of the 9th century), and then octagonal from the beginning of the period of classic art.

From the base - sculpted with a small figure set in a niche - to their capital, the shaft is circled with a variable number of moulded rings, separated by clear bands and fringed with decorative leaves. The number and size of the rings increases from the end of the 9th century - when the finest examples are found - until the 13th century, when the clear bands shrink and the leaves multiply and shrivel until they disappear altogether.

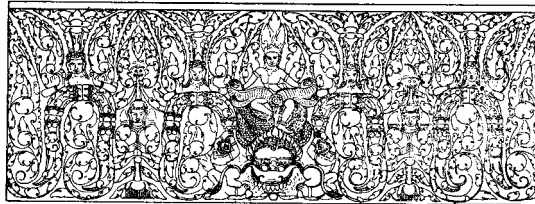
#### LINTELS

These were, with the colonnettes, the only sculpted sandstone elements in the early brick prasats. The decoration, straight from India and deriving from architecture in wood, was composed essentially of a sort of shallow arch enhanced with medallions, disgorged at the extremities by "makaras" - sea monsters with trunks - that turn to the centre to let fall a series

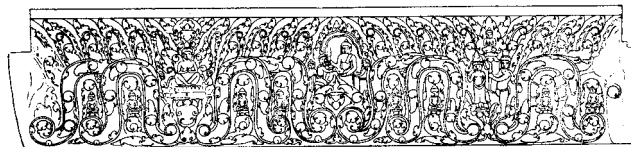




10th century



first half of 12th century



second half of 12th century



end of 12th century

of pendants. With time the makaras gave way to a motif of vegetal scrolls, the foliage increasing to turn the arch into a veritable branch and providing, in the Kulen style with the occasional reappearance of the makaras, some pieces of the highest order. It was during this period that the Javanese motif of the *head of Kala* appeared, placed high in the centre on the lintel. The ferocious two-armed monster, thought to represent an aspect of Shiva as Time who destroys all things, thereafter became ubiquitous.<sup>4</sup>

In the classic art the branch of foliage is developed to the extreme, becoming horizontal or sinuous and sometimes divided into four by an ornamental motif, perhaps with a central figure generally mounted on the head of Kala. It stands out on a background of flaming leaves and scrolling vegetation, often disgorged by lions and ending in multiple-headed nagas. Lintels of the Prah Ko style (late 9th century), where the decoration is enhanced with a multitude of small figures, are some of the most interesting. They are particularly high and crowned in addition with a small frieze.

In the 12th century one finds some lintels where the branch has multiple breaks. It then disappeared completely, the vertical axis becoming an axis of symmetry for the ornamentation formed of long flaming leaves unfurling from broad coils, while the head of Kala moves progressively lower.

### PILASTERS

Initially executed on a brick background in a lime based plaster, of which a few rare elements still remain, the decoration of the pilasters did not fully develop until the more general use of sandstone.

Flanking each door in order to support the fronton, the pilasters formed long vertical bands, designed in all evidence for the vertical repetition of identical motifs. From their base to their cornice, both of which were moulded, they could be covered in foliated scrolls unfolding from a series of vegetal coils, often ringed and extending for the width of the panel until the

middle of the classic period. Then they became bordered laterally with small leaves, the artist's fantasy only expressed in the addition of small figures and animals participating in the rolling of the scrolls.

Simultaneously, and whatever the period, was found the "*chevron*", where each element was composed of a central motif surmounted by a fleuron forming a point and from which fell two symmetrical leaves. The central motif was frequently accompanied by a small tri-lobed niche sheltering a small figure or rather, towards the end of the 11th century, by a shaft of foliage. In the twelfth century, the period that established the taste for bas-reliefs, small scenes with figures decorate the lower part of the pilaster above the base moulding.

In some periods, and particularly that of the *Baphuon* (11th century), the shaft of foliage became the principal motif, dominating the surface of the panel to give an entirely upward thrusting movement in a "*herringbone*" pattern. Occasionally there also appeared the ascension of motifs in the form of a lyre (*Bakheng* and *Angkor Wat* styles) or lozenges (end of the 9th century).

#### FALSE DOORS

The three false doors of a prasat were the replica in stone of the wooden door of the eastern entrance - formed in two leaves separated by a square-blocked closing bar - with each panel treated in the same spirit as the pilasters but framed with a rich moulding that became increasingly invasive. In the 9th century, kinds of mascarons (the heads of lions or similar) mark the middle of each door leaf, corresponding perhaps to real door handles.

#### FRONTONS

To the mediterranean spirit, the idea of the pediment implies the geometric form of the triangle that closes and affirms, - it is the rigid and steadfast crown of the Greek temple.

The classic Khmer pediment (or fronton), however, formed in single or superimposed frames, abuts the arching line of the gallery vaults and participates in the upward movement of the prasat. Far from being inert, it takes in that which is found below and carries it skywards, serving as a base for other diminishing frontons that are set at the projection of the upper tiers. With no sterility of line, it is enveloped by the supple, undulating poly-lobed arch of the stylised naga, whose body is indented with flaming leaves and whose heads themselves curve around to stand erect at either extremity. The composition of the tympanum scenes further enhances the impression of uplift.

Initially the brick frontons - covered in stucco and poorly ornate with a few isolated motifs (reductions of buildings and figures) - were somewhat sacrificed to the sandstone lintels, and so were quite different in form. Derived from the horse-shoe arch of the Indian monuments they consisted of a large, usually shallow, rectangular panel. From the end of the 9th century they were often realised in sandstone, the tympanum becoming covered in a vegetal decoration with large volutes forming a single composition, while the frame, treated as a flat section, terminated with the heads of diverging makaras.

At the end of the 10th century the makara gave way to the multi-headed naga, disgorged by the head of Kala, which itself disappeared with the period of the *Baphuon* in the middle of the 11th century. The arch then became more rounded, showing a certain tendency to realism. Finally, in the 12th century, the naga is once again disgorged by the head of a monster, reminiscent this time of a dragon's head. With the appearance of the vaulted gallery the general outline becomes raised, taking the form of a slender poly-lobed arch.

Simultaneously one can see the appearance, from the 10th century, of tympanums with scenes beside those with a vegetal decoration, which only

last until the beginning of the 12th century. Like the bas-reliefs on the walls, the episodes are sometimes represented in a single panel and sometimes set in superposed registers - a formula that prevails in the style of the *Bayon*.

One must not forget to mention, from the 10th - 11th centuries, (Koh Ker, Banteay Srei, Prah Vihear) some remarkable triangular frontons. These recall wooden architecture, conditioned by the double slope of the tiled roofs that preceded the appearance of the vault - the two diverging lines scroll at the extremities into large volutes.









## ANIMALS

### *The Naga.*

The naga - a stylised cobra - is endowed with multiple heads, always uneven in number from three to nine, arranged in a fan. Deriving from India, it figures in the original legend of the Khmer people and is the symbol of water.

Common in the art he is, in the entirely original motif of the naga-balustrade, of fundamental importance. Initially - notably at *Bakong* (end of the 9th century) - the body lies directly on the ground and the massive heads are particularly imposing. Thereafter the body is raised on stone blocks and the heads, where at first simply crowned with a diadem, become more broadly crested - either with flaming tresses as at *Angkor Wat* or *Prah Palilay*, or with a purely ornamental continuous halo as at *Beng Mealea*. In this period (first half of the 12th century) the neck is bare and perfectly curved.

A little afterwards - for example at *Banteay Srei* - the naga is disgorged, as on the borders of the frontons, by a kind of dragon. A head of Kala appears on the nape and a small garuda on the axial crest. In the style of the *Bayon*, this last element became "devouring", and the naga little more than an accessory, straddled by an enormous garuda. Although of superb execution like those on the terrace of *Srah Srang*, the motif loses all simplicity of line to become heavy and confused.

At the entrances to *Angkor Thom* and *Prah Khan*, the naga carried by the devas and the asuras offers no particular novelty, but on some ancient Khmer bridges - probably of a later period - the heads of naga protect an image of the Buddha.

The two nagas with entwined tails of Neak Pean, devoid of any ornamentation, appear in their nudity the same as the naga *Mucilinda*, sheltering the meditation of the Buddha with their fanned heads.

### *The lion.*

The lions are guardians of the temples, adorning the entrance on either side of the steps. They can be, it must be said, quite mediocre. Unknown in the fauna of Indochina, they imposed an obligation on the sculptor to look for inspiration only in themes from India, from Java or from China, with no reference to natural reality.

Philippe Stern has shown that their evolution, from the 9th to the 13th century, was restricted to the progressive raising of the hindquarters and to the increasing stylisation of the mane.

In the style of *Prah Ko* (late 9th century) the lion, sitting resolutely and particularly squat, is not without some character. At *Phnom Bakheng*, shortly afterwards, while the head remains caricatural with its enormous muzzle and bulging eyes, the proportion improves due to the elongation of the body. Simply crouching towards the end of the 10th century, they stand increasingly firmly on their four paws with an excessively arched back, while their form becomes more lank. In the *Bayon* style, the countenance becomes grimacing and the head sometimes three quarters turned. The tail, generally remaining part of the mass, follows the length of the spine - or else, where it was perhaps formed in metal, it has disappeared altogether.

The "*gajasimha*" or "*elephant-lion*" is an uncommon variety of lion with an extended turned-up snout.

#### *The elephant*

One rarely finds the elephant sculpted in the round except standing at the corners of the tiered platforms of pyramids dating from the first half of the classic period - *Bakong*, *eastern Mebon*, *Phimeanakas* - its stature decreasing at each level with the architectural elements. Facing outwards, it marks therefore the four intermediate cardinal points. Sculpted realistically from a single block of stone, it wears a harness complete with bells.

One should also mention, as sculptures in the round, the three-grouped heads that embellish the inward corners of the monumental gates of Angkor Thom - their trunks descending vertically to tug at bunches of lotuses in a delightful decorative motif.

#### *The bull*

As the mount of Shiva, *Nandin* the sacred bull lies facing the entrance to some of the temples dedicated to this god. When the prasat is open to the four cardinal points, as at *Phnom Bakheng* and *Bakong* - where there must originally have existed a previous sanctuary in light-weight materials - a *Nandin* is placed on each of the four sides, symbolic of the universal power of its master. At *Prah Ko* there is one facing the single entrance to the three primary sanctuaries. One can also find him, though in various stages of deterioration, at *Banteay Srei*, *Ta Keo* and *Chau Say Tevoda*.

*Nandin* has a hump like a zebu - quite realistically portrayed in the 9th century in a natural pose in which the rear legs fold under the body. From then he increasingly raises himself on one of his limbs, while his proportions become lank and his lines less pleasing. He generally wears a collar with small bells or metal jewellery.

#### STATUARY

Many visitors are surprised to see so few statues around the monuments - but it is unfortunately not possible to leave them for fear of theft and deterioration. Many of the finer pieces found during the excavations are therefore either in the National Museum in Phnom Penh or in the Angkor Conservation Office store rooms.

Khmer statuary has often been denigrated, since, amongst the thousands of respectable pieces, it has furnished only a few that are truly outstanding, capable of entirely satisfying our western taste and endowed, like the ancient Greek masterpieces, with a sense of perfection.

It is not just a talent to sculpt that we assume as a requirement in the artist, but also an inspiration, an aesthetic intellect, a superior technique and the assertion of a personality. Characteristics that for the Khmer gave force

to the ornamental sculpting and assured its mastery would, in our view, necessarily detract from the quality of the work.

Khmer art is a concept in search for a form. The artist does not inspire himself from nature, does not compel himself to represent movement and life in order to create a "work of art". Without abstraction he seeks real expression, but through the eyes of a visionary in accordance with the principle of static form so endeared by his race. His work is an act of faith - more collective than individual - where each can find his own emotion, and the masterpiece born from the intensity of the internal flame that inspires him, from his spiritual communion with the divinity. This can result in the weakness - quite irrelevant to him - of certain details, and the adaptation of forms that to us may seem startling - fantastic figures and composite beings, gods with multiple arms and tiered heads. But from here also derives a powerful facial expression and a calm beauty, radiant with a spirit aspiring to Buddhist serenity.

It is understandable that many of the pieces judged by us to be the most remarkable date from the early period of Khmer art up to the 9th century, where the sculptor attempted to render an exact anatomical likeness. These include, for example, the admirable statue of Shiva with eight arms set in a supporting arch from *Phnom Da* (Takeo Province) that is in the National Museum of Phnom Penh, standing between two acolytes, - and also the Harihara of the *Asram Maha Rosei* (Musée Guimet), - the Harihara of *Prasat Andet*, of an elegant purity of line (National Museum, Phnom Penh) - and the numerous Vishnous of *Phnom Kulen*. Characteristic of this period is the hair style set in a cylindrical mitre, and the fact that nowhere does one encounter, in this essentially restrained art, anything frenetic, wild or erotic as in some Indian sculpture.

From the end of the 9th century when one finds - notably at *Bakong* and *Phnom Bakheng* - some superb female figures with an imposing

solemnity of expression, the sculptor tends towards stylisation and a form of increasingly rigid and conventional hieratism, though which is not without some strength. Then, from the end of the 10th century (*Banteay Srei*) to the time of *Angkor Wat* (first half of the 12th century), preference sways to the statuette, where the figure is more supple and the countenance softer.

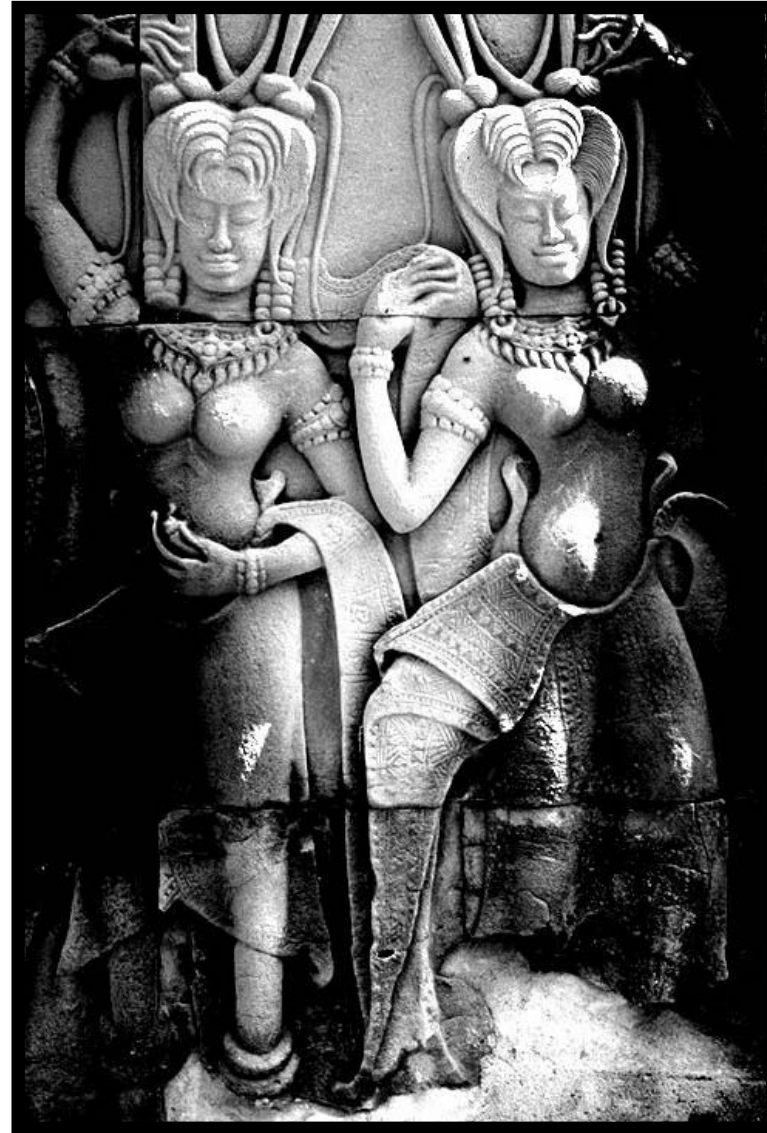
Finally in the 12th century the concept of the spiritual triumphs, and while the body - simply modelled and fashioned on massive legs - can often be clumsy, the energy is concentrated rather in the portrayal of an intense vitality deriving from the meditation of the being.

Besides the delightful and richly ornate feminine divinities is the endless repetition of the image of the Buddha, sitting on the coiled body of naga who shelters him with the fan of its multiple heads. One finds, particularly at the *Bayon*, several examples imbued with a profound mysticism which are truly inspiring. Certain representations of bodhisattvas, apparently portrait statues of deified dignitaries, present themselves for universal admiration, while works like the Prajnaparamita of *Prah Khan* (Musée Guimet) or the irradiant Lokeshvara of the central sanctuary of the same temple, truly touch a high art.

Bronze was rarely used except for the statuettes, formed with the "lost wax" process and offering the same characteristics as the statuary. It is quite probable that there existed many more important pieces which have since been re-melted due to the scarcity of the material. A large fragment (the head and part of the shoulders) of a colossal reclining Vishnou, more than twice natural size and evidently from the 11th century, was found down the well at the western *Mebon*. A work of real quality, it shows that the Khmer, with the mediocre means at their disposal, were not averse to the ambitious use of metal.

It only remains to say a few words about the pedestals of the statues. Moulded and decorated like the base platforms of the terraces or sanctuaries and with an axis of horizontal symmetry, they supported, like the plinth of the linga, an ablution platform or "*snanadroni*", allowing the lustral water to flow along a beak invariably turned to the north. Under the statue in the pedestal a cubic block of stone with generally 16 or 32 alveoles aligned around its perimeter held the sacred deposit, consisting of some gems or precious materials. It is not impossible that they also sometimes contained the ashes of the deified dignitaries.

On top of the towers, within the crowning lotus, was placed another sort of deposit stone - a stone slab placed flat and sculpted with a variable number of holes laid out in ritual alignment - though not one managed to escape the attention of the looters.



A. BY EPIGRAPHY

It is now known that the oldest remains of Khmer architecture so far discovered date from the 6th century AD, and that the constituent monuments of the Angkor group followed one another without interruption from the end of the 9th century to the beginning of the 13th. Epigraphic evidence has enabled Coëdes to accurately order this short period of less than four centuries as follows:

|                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Roluos Group                          | 879-881-893                         |
| Phnom Bakheng                         | towards 900                         |
| Koh Ker Group                         | 931 ± 950                           |
| eastern Mebon                         | 952                                 |
| Pre Rup                               | 961                                 |
| Banteay Srei                          | 967                                 |
| Ta Keo                                | + 1000                              |
| Baphuon.                              | ± 1060                              |
| Angkor Wat.                           | first half of the 12th century      |
| Ta Prohm.                             | 1186                                |
| Prah Khan.                            | 1191                                |
| Bayon and<br>the walls of Angkor Thom | the last years of the 12th century. |

These dates, which are those of the foundation or inauguration, do not, however, imply that each of these temples was built in a single procedure. Monuments such as Ta Prohm, Prah Khan or the Bayon, for example, show unmistakable signs of alterations or additions which deny them any quality of absolute unity.

It remains nonetheless that we have a solid chronological foundation which, by analogy, provides the framework for a general classification based on the natural evolution of architectural motifs and decoration.

Until 1923 the Bayon was considered as a Shivaïte temple and amongst the oldest, following an erroneous interpretation of the inscription of Sdok Kak Thom - which names the monument raised by king Yasovarman, at the end of the 9th century in the middle of his capital Yasodharapura, as the "*Central Mountain*". This was mistakenly thought to be the Bayon centred within Angkor Thom.

The theory, for a long time held as fact, was to be contested by Louis Finot, supported by the discovery that the monument was in fact Buddhist. Some controversy followed, successively leading Mr Philippe Stern - associate conservator of the Musée Guimet - to place the Bayon, based mainly on a study of the different styles, in the first half of the 11th century - and then Georges Coëdes, through epigraphic research, to attribute the foundation to king Jayavarman VII at the end of the 12th century. This revelation in 1928 rejuvenated the Bayon by three centuries, revolutionised the understanding of its chronology - attributing its faults no longer to the explorative beginnings of Khmer art but rather to the flagging discipline of the decadent period - and also shattered a number of architectural, decorative and religious anomalies. Today the new theory can be considered as generally accepted and apparently definitive.

It was Mr Victor Goloubew who brought the discussion to a decisive conclusion with his meticulous research into the succession of the capitals. By keen intuition he ceased looking for the "*Central Mountain*" of the inscription inside Angkor Thom and instead focused his attention on the Shivaite "*temple-mountain*" of Phnom Bakheng, constructed just to the south on a natural hill. Excavations from 1931 to 1934 revealed the remains of enclosure walls, of gopuras, of grand axial roads and of symmetrically arranged pools - all framed within a double levee of earth forming a quadrilateral that is still quite visible in the landscape. The location of the first Angkor was therefore determined to be quite independent of Angkor Thom and the Bayon of Jayavarman VII.

Other excavations, undertaken in 1936, have enabled Mr Goloubew to suggest the existence of another intermediate capital, dating perhaps from the 11th century and centred on Phimeanakas or the Baphuon - or else on the first site of the Bayon. It would have had moats at its limits, lined with laterite steps, between two levees of earth formed at a hundred metres within the line of the future ramparts of Angkor Thom. Other canals have been found on

either side of the principal axial roads as well as the remains of gates and drainage channels, confirming again the particular importance that hydraulic works had for the ancient Khmer, for whom water constituted such a vital element.

## B. CHRONOLOGY BY STYLE

The work of Philippe Stern and Mme de Coral-Remusat gives us a method of classification for the monuments based on their grouping by styles, resulting from the analytical study of their decorative themes.

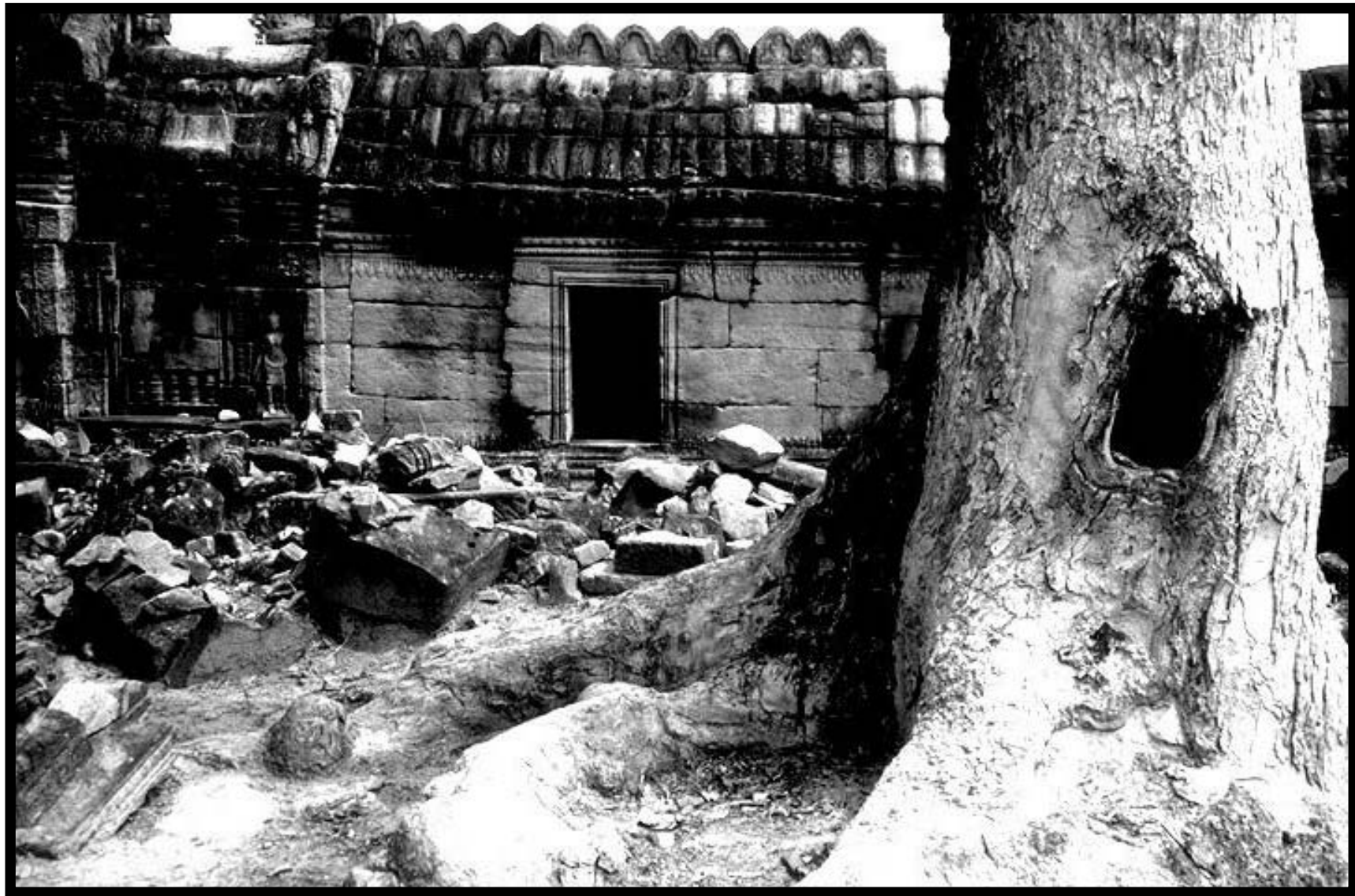
Although necessary to exercise caution, since changes in the natural evolution of any art can be induced by external influences, reversion to archaism or perhaps the sculptor tempted by innovation - it would seem that in this instance, however, such methodology carries the maximum guarantee of accuracy, since the Khmer artist was not able to, as it were, give free rein to his imagination or fantasy.

Conducting their research in close relationship with the dates determined by epigraphy, our art historians applied their methods to monuments that are in fact already fixed with some precision in time - these markers serving as a control, within a kind of framework, for the careful study of the various elements of the ornamentation; - colonnettes and lintels, pilasters and frontons, the bas-reliefs and sculpture in the round. "*When the decoration of one or more of the monuments*" - we are told by Mme. de Coral-Remusat - "*shows characteristics identical to those in the decoration of a structure that is placed in time, one has the right to conclude that the monument or monuments in question are approximately contemporaneous with this structure - they are clearly earlier if their decoration is less evolved, and later if it is more so*".

The filiation of the monuments so established by Mr Philippe Stern and Mme. de Coral-Remusat is described in the following table:

| PERIOD  | MONUMENT  | INSCRIPTION DATES                       |
|---|---|---|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> century   | Sambor Prei Kuk (Kompong Thom)  |   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> century (2nd half)  | Ak Yom (the earliest parts)   |   |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> century (1st half)<br>(2nd half)                          | Phnom Kūlen<br>Rolūos Group<br>Prah<br>Bakong<br>Lolei  | 879<br>881<br>893                       |
|   | Phnom Bakheng<br>Phnom Krom<br>Phnom Bok  | towards 900                             |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> century (1st half)<br><br>(2nd half)                     | Prasat Kravan<br>Baksei Chamkrong<br>Koh Ker Group<br>eastern Mébôn<br>Pré Rup<br>Bantéay Srei<br>Small monument behind the north Kléang  | 921<br><br>931±950<br>952<br>961<br>967 |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> century (1st half)<br><br>(2nd half)                     | Ta Kèo<br>north and south Kléang<br>Phiméanakas<br>Gopura of Royal palace<br>Baphūon<br>western Mébôn   | ±1000<br><br><br><br>±1060              |
| end of 11 <sup>th</sup> or<br>12 <sup>th</sup> century (1st half)         | Béng Méaléa<br>Prah Palilay (sanctuary)<br>central Sanctuary of Bakong (?)<br>Prah Pithu (main elements)<br>Chau Say Tevoda<br>Thommanon<br>Bantéay Samrè<br>Prah Khan of Kompong Svay (central part)<br>Angkor Vat   | 1st half of 12 <sup>th</sup> century    |
| end of 12 <sup>th</sup> century or<br>13 <sup>th</sup> century (1st half) | Ta Prohm<br>Bantéay Kdei<br>Terrace of Srah Srang<br>Prah Khan of Angkor<br>Néak Péan<br>Ta Som<br>Ta Nei<br>Bayon and ramparts of Angkor Thom, gates<br>with faces and Prasat Chung<br>Terraces of the Royal Forecourt<br>Prasat Suor Prat<br>Bantéay Prei Prasat Prei<br>Gopura of Prah Palilay | 1186<br><br><br><br>1191                |

THE ANGKOR MONUMENTS  
IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER





The first known documentation relating to the Khmer monuments came, as we have seen, from descriptions given by Chinese envoys, and notably by Tcheou Ta-Kouan at the end of the 13th century - that is to say before their abandonment. Thereafter, from the 16th century onwards, the Angkor ruins frequently drew the attention of missionaries and merchants from the west, but it was only in the second half of the 19th century that they began to interest the archaeologists and scholars. The account of the voyage by P. Bouillevaux in 1856 and the enthusiastic descriptions by the naturalist Henri Mouhot, discovering Angkor Wat in 1860, opened the way for several foreign explorers, such as the German Bastian and the British Thomson and Kennedy, and then for the official missions by Doudart de Lagrée, Francis Garnier and Delaporte - the latter returning to France with some sculptures and moulds, presenting them to the public at the Paris Exhibition of 1878. At the same time the Dutchman Kern, followed by Barth and Bergaigne, deciphered the first of the stone inscriptions, while Moura, Aymonier, Pavie, Fournereau and General de Beylié, amongst others, considerably increased the bounds of acquired knowledge.

In 1898 the Governor General Paul Doumer resolved to co-ordinate all effort and to give the monuments the scientific directive that they lacked. He therefore founded the *École Française d'Extrême Orient*, placed under the control of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, with a mission to study from a historic, monumental and linguistic point of view the various countries of the Indo-Chinese Union, to assure protection to the archaeological sites and to prepare an inventory of the temples. It was under the enlightened direction of Louis Finot and Alfred Foucher that Lunet de Lajonquiere, Henri Parmentier, Dufour and Carpeaux thus began the methodical exploration of the Cambodian monuments.

The treaty of 1907, in assuring the return by Siam of the original provinces that she had taken, finally allowed a resolute and fruitful devotion to the task at hand - the research and the safeguarding of the monuments of the Angkor region. The first *Conservator*, Jean Commaille, was murdered by robbers in 1916 after eight years of good work undertaken in extremely difficult conditions. Henri Marchal replaced him, followed in 1932 by Georges Trouvé - who also died tragically in 1935 - then Jacques Lagisquet (1935-1936) and Maurice Glaize (1936-1946).<sup>5</sup> Profiting the world simultaneously with their scholarly research were Maître, Arousseau and Georges Coedes, succeeded by Finot and Foucher, with Parmentier, Marchal and Claeys as heads of the Service Archéologique, while also working closely with the *École* were Mssrs Georges Groslier (the director of Cambodian Arts), Philippe Stern (the associate Conservator of the Musée Guimet) and Mme. de Coral-Remusat - along with Victor Goloubew, Paul Mus, Henri Mauger and Pierre Dupont.

## WORKING METHODS

The archaeological domain of Angkor provided the École Française d'Extrême Orient with an endless field of research.

Since its inauguration the EFEO has endeavoured to keep the sites clear with the removal of vegetation and the freeing of the temple bases from the accumulated piles of earth and rubble, raising and classifying the fallen stones while attending to immediate dangers with provisional measures - already a colossal task since it is a question no less of preventing the devouring forces of nature from destroying the work of man.

The ruin in fact - except with some rare exceptions - can not be attributed to the brutal action of conquerors or of vandals. The Khmer monuments survived their own civilisation, only suffering a slow death after abandonment *"to the ravages of time"* and the relentless growth of vegetation that was no longer controlled, together with the humidity of a tropical climate and undermining by termites.

To maintain each monument just in the state in which it was revealed by clearing, to refrain from major work and consolidation other than to what is visible, to stabilise sinking or leaning elements which may cause collapse using only simple supports or straps that can be as ugly as they can unreliable - these for a long time were the limited objectives of the directors of Indo-Chinese archaeology, alarmed as they were by some audacious monumental restoration undertaken in France during the 19th century.

Such measures, in creating new possibilities for the study of the ruins, allowed them - due to the discovery of the inscriptions, the bas-reliefs and the statues - to reveal some of their secrets and to reawaken. But how to see in these precarious and crumbling ruins, even after their clearing and the basic classification of their rubble, more than just mere evidence - and not to sense a calling for their reconstruction?

The complete interpretation, which by means of patient research and the analysis of all the constituent elements leads to an architectural synthesis, is the only one that allows one to deepen and exhaust the subject - and it is incompatible with chaos. The confusion and the dilapidation of the ruins too often prevent the researcher from going beyond the emotions felt by his artistic or poetic heart - yet by reconstituting the whole from its scattered parts strictly in its ancient form and by the same technical means previously used, he can bring it once again to life.

For some time now, both in Greece and Java, the method known as *anastylosis* has made it possible to regenerate the monuments and to re-establish their integrity. *"Anastylosis"* - Balanos, the conservator of the Monuments of the Athens Acropolis tells us - *"consists of the re-establishment or rebuilding of a monument with its own materials and according to its own methods of construction. Anastylosis allows the discreet and justified use of new materials in replacement of missing stones without which the original elements could not be repositioned"*.

As such, in a veritable 'jigsaw puzzle', the pieces of the game can weigh many hundreds of kilograms, sometimes tonnes, and the player is forbidden to remake any sculpture, moulding or decoration, with complete disregard for his own personality.

Having first cleared the surroundings and removed all vegetation, the sections of walling that still remain standing are taken down course by course, with each block being numbered, and then reconstructed, after cleaning the beds and joints, with the help of numerous drawings and photographs. At the same time the stones found in the rubble which have tumbled from the crumbling upper walls are re-assembled according to the location of their natural fall, sorted by categories and divided by vertical location. These are then progressively reconstructed on the ground with their fundamental elements - doors and false doors, pilasters and corner piers, lintels, frontons,

bases and cornices - with rough blocks cut as necessary to fill the voids. It then only remains to proceed with the reconstruction and to complement the original methods of securing with the aid of hidden cement grouting in the blockwork and iron cramps to assure proper bonding.

Anastylosis, so admirably suited to the art of the Khmer that is so exceptionally traditionalist and unchanging in the relationship between its principal elements and so lacking in any individualistic tendencies on the part of the builder, was introduced to Cambodia by Henri Marchal on his return from a study trip to Java where he saw and was convinced by the excellence of its methodology. Employed by him at Banteay Srei towards the end of 1931 and advocated by Mr Coedes, it has already enabled the reconstruction in the Angkor group of the gopura of *Prah Palilay*, of *Neak Pean* and its pools - previously barely known - of *Banteay Samre* and of *Bakong*, the Victory gate and the north and south gates of *Angkor Thom* - the first two preceded by their line of giants holding the naga - many of the sanctuaries of *Prah Khan* and the crumbling towers and the central core of the *Bayon*. All these saved from near ruin.

We appreciate that some - with an appetite for the picturesque and for whom nothing matters but the dramatic romanticism symbolised by the vision of some piece of wall crumbling under a weight of roots - may bemoan the former condition of the monuments, but we believe nonetheless that there is more to be gained from the French tradition of rediscovering the 'truth' of a monument by means of its anastylosis. It becomes a work of clarity, though never clinical, that above all respects the forest setting by making of each temple site a glade within it. By way of an example we have left some compositions, such as *Ta Prohm*, "in a natural state" - but for the rest, the spectacular could not take precedence over archaeological preoccupation. The reconstructed but deserted sanctuaries inspire - according to the imagination of each - as much lyricism as melancholy, and the accomplished

work, of a scientific precision that perfectly conforms to current thinking, assures the improvement of the building without harm to its character.

#### NOTE ON THE COLLABORATION OF THE AÉRONAUTIQUE INDOCHINOISE WITH THE WORK OF THE E.F.E.O. AT ANGKOR

Since 1921, the 'Aéronautique Indochinoise' has been organised by Ct. Glaize, and aerial photographs by Ct. Borzecki and Ct. Cassé have given the archaeologists a new understanding of the region. The chief of the archaeological service, Mr Claeys, benefited, even before the war, from the same statute as R.P. Poidebard in Syria. Certain pilots, such as Ct Terrassu, bring the results of their own observations.

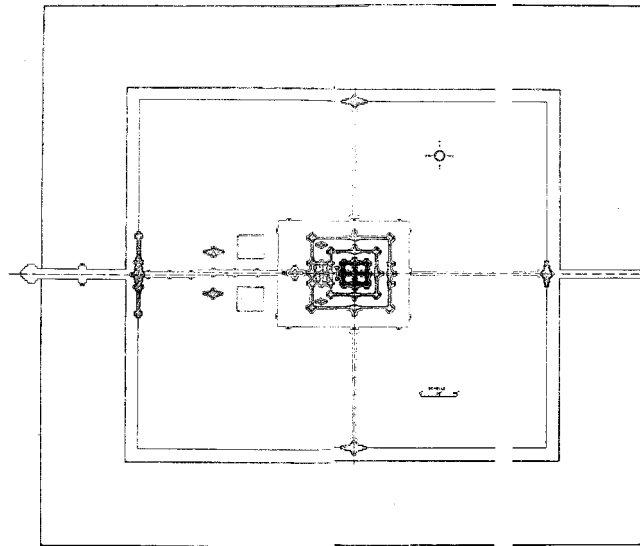
At Angkor, revelations from aerial photographs were particularly fruitful. The identification of superimposed enclosure walls, successive alterations and the trace of abandoned sites allowed V. Goloubew to place the location of the first capital of the 9th century.

At Prah Khan of Kompong Thom, near Sambor, the aeroplane enabled the discovery of enclosure walls, of various alignments and of the barays that give Khmer archaeology the quality of its composition, urbanism and of the grand axial compositions following astrological principles. These were quite unsuspected before aerial observation.



PART TWO - THE MONUMENTS

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From the terrace itself of the Grand Hotel in Siem Reap, the southern elevation of the central group of Angkor Wat, formed of a quincunx of towers, can be seen in silhouette at the far end of a long cutting through the forest. Whether one gets there by the straight main road (six kilometres from Siem Reap) or by the original winding and shaded back road (*route Commaille*), one finally skirts the south-west corner of the water filled moat to gain the monument by its principal entrance - the western causeway - the end of which is shaded by a magnificent Banyan tree. A road that eventually leads to the airport continues from the causeway to the left.

This orientation to the west, in contrast to the other Angkor monuments which face the rising sun, initially gave cause for much confusion - some seeing a simple topographic necessity where others saw ritual organisation.

Angkor Wat, forming a rectangle of about 1,500 by 1,300 metres, covers an area - including its 190 metre wide moats - of nearly 200 hectares. The external enclosure wall defines an expanse of 1,025 metres by 800, or 82 hectares. It is the largest monument of the Angkor group.

Constructed to the south of the capital (Angkor Thom), Angkor Wat is sited in the south-east corner of the ancient city of Angkor - Yasodharapura - built by Yasovarman I, centred on Phnom Bakheng and which stretched between the Siem Reap river to the east and the dike of the baray to the west. The temple could therefore have been placed on either side of the main access road to Angkor Thom. In terms of topography, only the ease of transporting the stones from the quarries of Phnom Kulen by river pleads in favour of an orientation to the west. This argument seems insufficient, and so one is drawn inevitably to reasons of tradition.

It is therefore likely that it was the destination itself of the monument that determined its unusual orientation, in order to observe some particular rite. Due to research by Mssrs Finot, Coedes, Przulski and Dr Bosch, the Head of the *Service Archéologique des Indes Néerlandaises*, it seems proven that Angkor Wat is in fact a funerary temple, and the only one built during the life of the founding king - Suryavarman II - for his consecration, and probably also as a depository for his ashes.

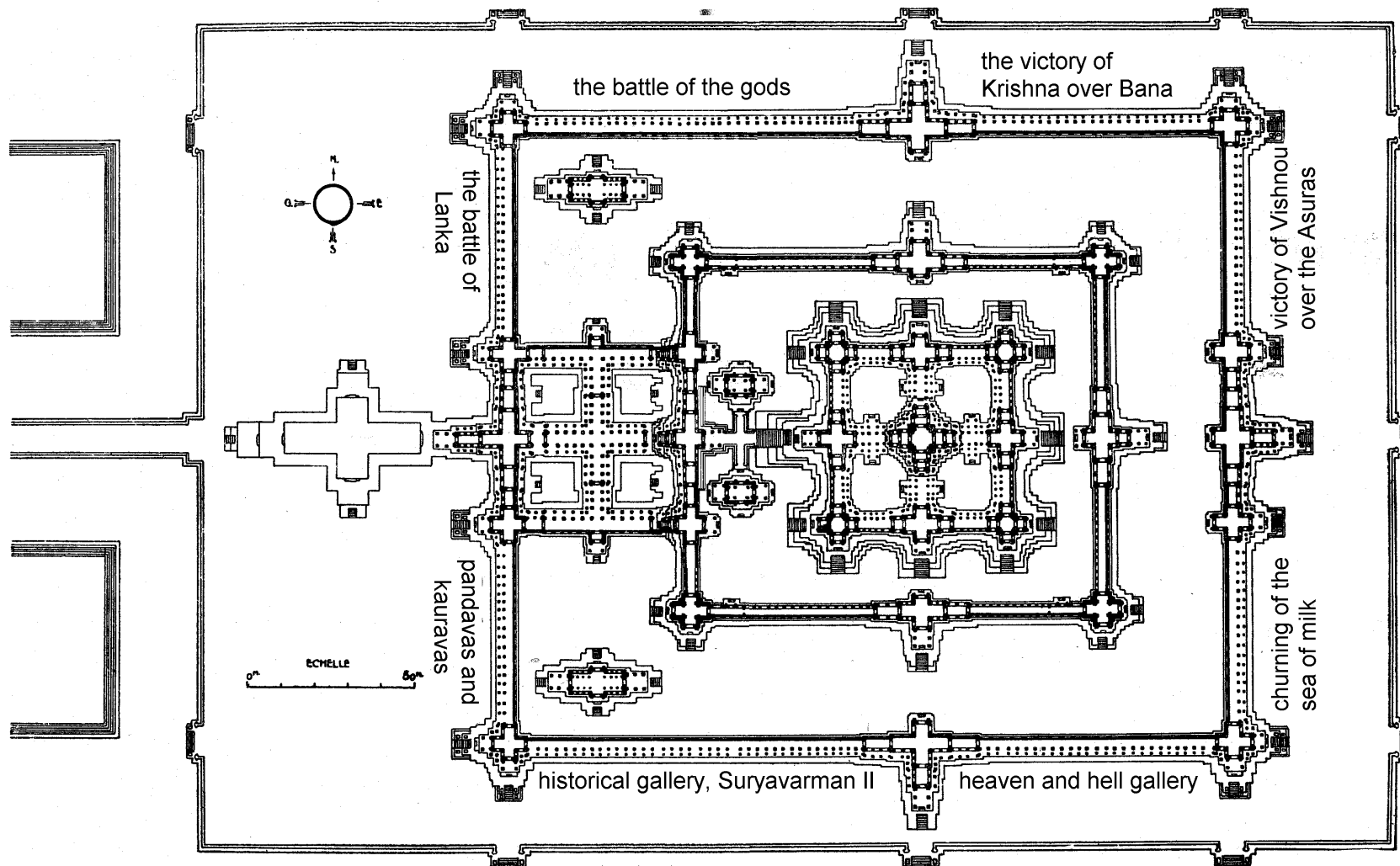
This westward orientation is, according to Dr Bosch, typical of the Indo-Javanese funerary monuments and opposite to the orientation of sanctuaries dedicated to divinities. Furthermore, in the

## Angkor Wat

*"The temple city"*

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|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Date     | <i>first half of the 12th century</i>                                |
| King     | <i>Suryavarman II</i><br><i>(posthumous name: Paramavishnouloka)</i> |
| Cult     | <i>Brahmanic (Vishnouite)</i>  |
| Clearing | <i>by Commaille from 1908 - 1911</i>                                 |





Brahmanic ritual, the funerary rite is performed in reverse of the normal order, just as in fact at Angkor Wat, in the gallery of the bas-reliefs depicting the parades, the ritual procession is not made according to the usual custom that follows the sun (*"pradakshina"*) whilst keeping the monument to one's right, but in the opposite direction, the *"prasavya"*. Finally, in making Angkor Wat a Vishnouite foundation, and in no longer identifying with Shiva in the form of a royal linga as his predecessors, but with Vishnou - whose usual association with the west has been explained by Mr Coëdes - it was quite natural that Suryavarman II should have adopted this new orientation.

The *"tomb of Lu Pan"*, placed by the Chinese diplomat Tcheou Ta-Kouan in the late 13th century to the south of the capital and said to have measured 10 *"li"* in circumference, could also perhaps be identified with Angkor Wat, so indicating its funerary character since that time. Moreover, according to the Cambodian legend of Prah Ket, Angkor Wat was an identical palace to *"the sky of the Thirty Three"*, built by the celestial architect Vishvakarman by order of Indra for a prince whom the god had summoned to be sent back to earth to live for a second time - this would mean, according to the interpretation of Mr Coëdes, that Angkor Wat was constructed in order to serve as a residence to a deceased prince who was posthumously deified.

#### DESCRIPTION

Isolated from the forest by its moats, Angkor Wat was, of all the monuments of the group, the best placed to escape the invasion of the jungle and hence ruin. Moreover, following the establishment of Buddhism of the small vehicle, it has always sheltered pagodas, as a place of pilgrimage for the Khmer, within its enclosure - though at one time partially masking the main façade these had to be re-sited in order not to detract from the overall perspective. It was also necessary to undertake some important clearing work, remove large amounts of accumulated earth and, even though the buildings were in relatively good repair, effect considerable consolidation work. The main axial causeway also required restoration.

If Angkor Wat is the largest and the best preserved of the monuments, it is also the most impressive in the character of its grand architectural composition, being comparable to the finest of architectural achievements anywhere. By means of its perfectly ordered and balanced plan, by the harmony of its proportions and the purity of its lines - of a solemnity that one rarely encounters in the Khmer themselves - and by the very particular care taken in its construction, it merits being placed at the apogee of an art that can occasionally surprise in its complexity and poor craftsmanship. This temple is the one that comes closest to our latin ideas of unity and classic order, born of a symmetry responding to the emphatic axes. Angkor Wat is a work of power and reason.

In 1866 the Scottish photographer John Thomson already saw in Angkor Wat the symbol of Mount Meru, the centre of the Universe. According to him, we are told by Madame de Coral-Remusat, the seven circles of the central tower corresponded to the seven chains of the mountains of Mount Meru, the three terraces of the temple to the three platforms of earth, water and wind on which the cosmic mountain rests, and the water filled moat to the Ocean.

The plan is also the only one which, in adopting a combined solution, has managed to reconcile the two elements of the tiered pyramid and the temple at ground level forming cloisters, elongated in relation to the east-west axis. Angkor Wat is in effect a three tiered pyramid, with each level bounded by galleries incorporating four gopuras and corner towers - the upper terrace is square, forming a quincunx of towers, and the lower two, though concentric on three of their sides, have become rectangular by their elongation towards the west. The two esplanades so created have allowed the placing on the second level of two *"library"* type buildings, and of two others on the first - which are more monumental in character - in a cloister that is divided by crossing galleries.



### THE MOATS

The moats surrounding the external enclosure of the monument (the fourth from the centre) are bordered by steps ornate with a moulded sandstone perimeter, and are five and a half kilometres in their overall length. They are crossed only on two axes - to the east by a simple levee of earth that could formerly have served to bring materials to site from the river, and to the west by a 200 metre long and 12 metre wide sandstone-paved causeway, lined with columns along its sides that support its corbelled edge. A few remain visible, notably those to the right of the two lateral stairways that give access to the water level. Beside the road a cruciform terrace, raised by a few steps and embellished with lions, precedes the causeway. Both are bordered with naga-balustrades.

### THE EXTERNAL ENCLOSURE

The temple enclosure, formed in a high laterite wall and separated from the moat by a thirty metre wide apron, is divided on the axis by a long colonnade of 235 metres in length composed of a three part gopura - the towers of which are cruciform in plan - and galleries that link with the two pavilions at either extremity which served as ground-level passageways for elephants.

While the extreme passageways are closed towards the galleries with richly ornate false doors and have crossing naves with gable ends, the three elements of the gopura, with open circulation, are crowned with three towers that are unfortunately truncated - most of their upper tiers having crumbled. The galleries are obscured from the monument by a plain wall simply decorated with a cornice and a low frieze of apsaras in a "*tapestry*" motif. Quite narrow (2m.20), they are bounded on their external side by a line of square pillars bordered with a half-vaulted side-aisle, also supported on pillars, but of which only some parts remain - its absence, depriving the composition of a strong horizontal element, considerably detracts from the proportion of the whole.

Viewed from the front, the ensemble serves as a kind of screen that masks the pilgrims' view of the monument itself - which it reproduces in the geometry of its silhouette - until the very last moment. It is an example of a theme that is developed hereafter in all of its variations - from minor to major and with no trace of discord - seeking to create a state of mind and to control the drama, which it does with complete success.

The axial western vestibule, flanked on its northern side by a superb naga, shows at once some of the exceptional ornamental sculpture to be found at Angkor Wat - the capitals of the pillars and the architrave have a precision of profile comparable to Grecian art. The pilasters and lintels - the best preserved of which can be seen above the eastern door - are also remarkably fine.

The galleries' eastern façade confirms the near perfection - false windows with turned balustrades are surmounted with a frieze of figurines mounted on a variety of animals and framed by a background decor of superbly preserved devatas, either individually or in groups of two or three, which can be counted amongst the finest in the monument.

We will but mention the gopuras of the fourth enclosure on the three secondary axes, generally little visited but nonetheless commendable; - of excellent proportion but remaining unfinished, particularly internally, they are rectangular in form with a crossing of naves with side-aisles, and are far less developed than the western. One gains access along a path cut through the undergrowth in line with the central sanctuary. The view from the north gopura across the moat towards the mound of Phnom Bakheng is particularly delightful.

## THE MONUMENT

Plunging into the semi-darkness of the western gopura, the visitor is presented with the incomparable looming perspective of Angkor Wat and its causeway - now universally celebrated - framed in the full light of the door ahead. Three hundred and fifty metres long and 9m.40 in overall width, the causeway is established on earth fill and forms an eight metre wide processional way that is raised above ground level by one and a half metres. Paved and faced in sandstone it is bordered by naga-balustrades on blocks which, in the sunlight, fringe it with a play of light and shadow. On either side along its length, six stairways with naga heads punctuate the monotony.

Towards the middle and on either side are two elegant buildings, elevated and lying lengthways, generally known as "*libraries*". Their situation in this part of the temple that is accessible to the faithful, their low proportion and the presence of their four monumental porticoes giving access to their large nave with pillars - extensively lit by windows with balusters - clearly distinguishes them from the usual style of this type of building. We can perhaps see here public reunion halls similar to those in modern pagodas. The causeway then passes between two square pools - the northern of these has retained its surrounding stone steps and is always full of water. From its north western corner is a picturesque view of the monument reflected in its entirety.

The temple itself is presented raised on a vast surrounding terrace that is graced with sugar palms and overshadowed by mango trees. Preceding the main entrance is a high, cruciform terrace, on two levels - the so-called "*Grand Terrace*" - where ritual dance was probably performed and which, during processions and displays, served as a tribune for the sovereign. Its overhanging cornice, carried on columns, supports a naga-balustrade.

The first level of the three tiered pyramid appears as a broad horizontal element surrounded by galleries. Stretching for 1,400 metres in

total length, these form a tight succession of rigid frames for the central sanctuary - where the chamber of the deity is in fact no more than five metres in width.

The absence in a composition of this size of any dominating building is one of the characteristics of the architecture - and while the perspectives created may appear at times a little artificial, the effect remains nonetheless impressive due to a principle of unity.

The lower gallery, the celebrated gallery of the bas-reliefs, accessible to the mass of the faithful and of 187 metres by 215, is presented on its shorter side, with a three-part gopura linked to the corner pavilions - with their crossing naves and stairways - by means of a 2m.45 wide vaulted passageway. This has a plain inner wall and columns to the outside, doubled by a side-aisle with a half-vault, also carried on columns. The grey of the superposed stone roofs, channelled in imitation of tiles and floating above the play of light between the pillars, caps the string of open bays with two delicate, shimmering lines.

In silhouette above are the corner towers, though unfortunately truncated, of the second enclosure, and then those of the central group. These towers, so particular to Angkor Wat, appear like coned tiaras due to their multiple redents, and are more elongated than elsewhere due to the extreme development of their crowning motif - they have three rows of lotus petals in addition to the four reducing upper tiers of the normal prasats, with each projecting cornice lined finally with steles and antefixes.

The gallery of the second enclosure, of 100 metres by 115, adjoins the one preceding it to the west by the particularly pleasing arrangement of a crossing cloister - similar to that at Beng Mealea, a temple in the same style, - formed by covered passageways that link the two three-core gopuras with a secondary transversal passageway. The ensemble is found placed here at

an intermediate height between the first and the second levels of the pyramid, and the necessity to gain the upper level under shelter has inspired the architect to raise his galleries three times just before the steps, with an accompaniment of gable ends treated with frontons. It is masterful architectural dynamism, with a lightness of touch that gives the construction an ethereal quality.

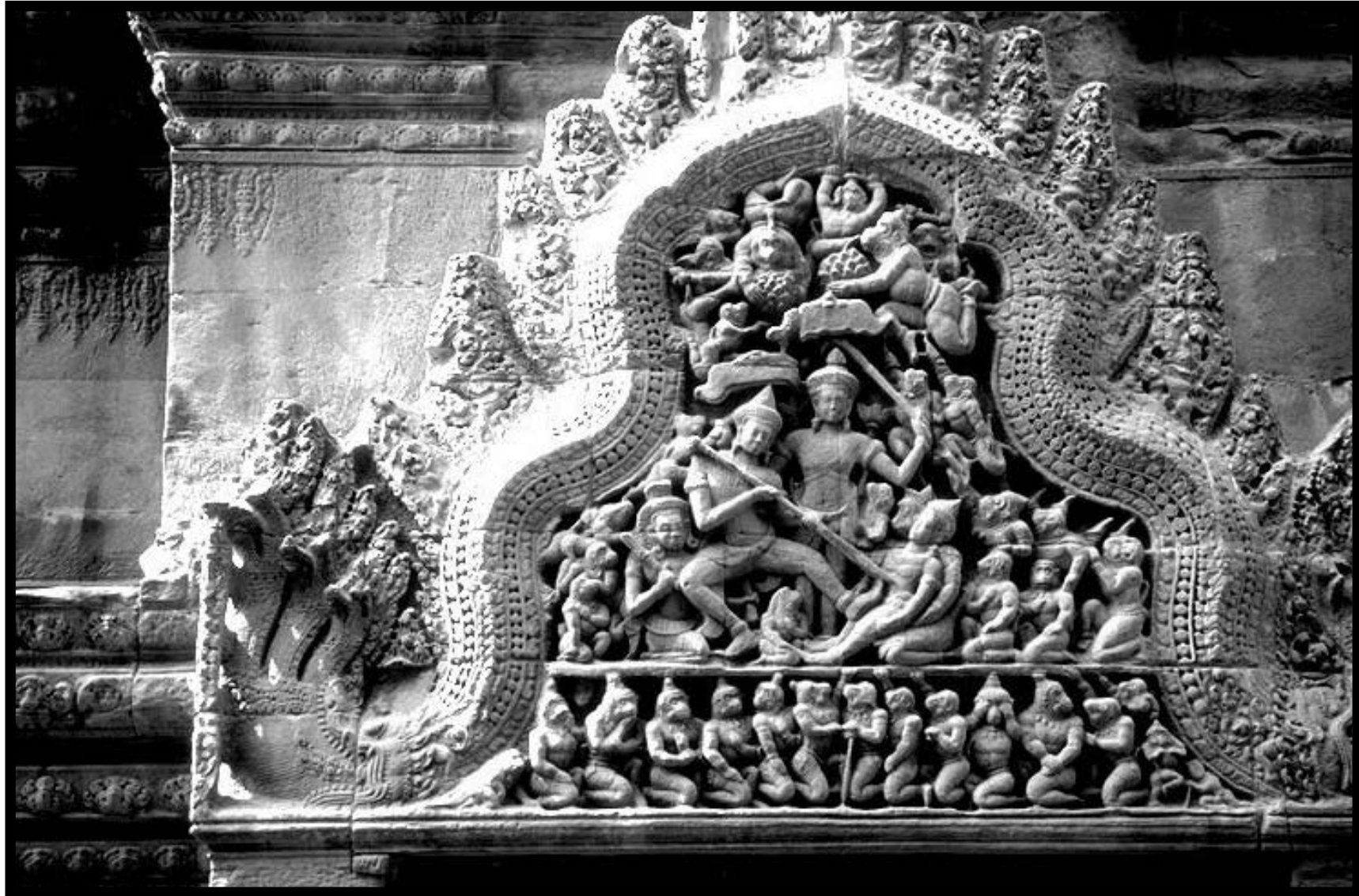
While the two galleries to the north and south - of 2m.90 in width - are closed to their exterior but have a double row of pillars towards the courtyard, the two main arms of the cross have a central 3m.15 wide nave with double side-aisles forming 7m.70 overall. The remaining area has four tanks each with richly ornamented sides and a single central stair, which could either have been pools or lower level courtyards. Given the absence of steps forming the usual pool surround and the presence of sculptures, it would seem that, if ever there was water, its level could not have been any higher than the top step corresponding to the base course, which, like the stone facing, has been left crudely finished.

The main vaults of the crossing cloister were, as elsewhere, masked by a timber panelled ceiling sculpted with rosettes in the form of lotus blossoms, some remnants of which have been found in places. This ornamentation continues on the half vaults, which have no false ceiling but instead were enhanced with colourful painting and some gilding, also applied to the overall decoration; - the entablature with a frieze of apsaras under the cornice, the horizontal braces, the tympanums with scenes on the frontons - where one can recognise amongst others the Vishnouite legends of the *"churning of the ocean"* and of the *"god sleeping on the serpent Ananta"* - and the pillar-base motifs of ascetics in prayer. Here the visitor can appreciate something of the style of ornamentation from the classic period of Khmer art, with its smiling devatas, the window balusters worked like timber and the delicate ornamentation cut into the surface of the stone with a discretion which, while not casting any harsh shadow, subtly animates the walls.

Proceeding through the axial passageway of the crossing cloister - while glancing south to the *"Prah Pean"* (the thousand Buddhas) where most of the statues have been re-established - though without much interest being not uncommon and rather later than the monument<sup>6</sup> - we recommend taking the north branch of the transversal gallery to exit at its extreme doorway - though not without first observing the good tourist's time-honoured rite of standing against the wall in its vestibule and beating the chest to experience the unusual resonance. One can then pay a visit to the high *"library"*, which is more easily accessible than its symmetrical image on the southern side; - from here is a fine view to the upper tiers of the pyramid.

The large surrounding courtyard between the second and the third enclosure is quite plain, the only decoration along the length of its long façades being the false window openings and the eleven stairways of its gopuras and corner towers. Here the two *"libraries"* are extended. Like those in the external enclosure they have four door openings, but only two porticoes - though in contrast they are extensively lit by the balustered windows along the side-aisle of the large nave.

Returning to the north gallery of the crossing cloister, where an inscribed stele dating from later than the foundation of the temple, discovered in the undergrowth, has been set in the western part, one can, turning immediately to the left, gain the second level by a stairway with steps that are less slippery than those of the central stairway.<sup>7</sup> The gallery of the second enclosure is 2m.45 in width, with a plain wall towards its exterior and balustered windows to the courtyard. The poor treatment of its façades due to the lack of any lower side-aisle is relieved by the countless devatas, sculpted in bas-relief with an extraordinary variety of intricate hair styles and costumes.





From the foot of the north-west corner tower, while the sun is going down, or from the north-east corner during the morning - or by the moon-lit night - the view of the central group is unforgettable.

The enormous two-storey thirty metre high substructure - breached by the cascading stairs of which the some 70° slope ascends in a single flight to follow the rising line of the base - is square in plan, as is the 60 metre wide quincunx of towers, and ringed with galleries whose axial gopuras are preceded by porticoes. Of all the galleries in the temple, only these open to both sides, with balustered windows on one and the double row of columns of a side-aisle on the other. In the middle, the 42 metre high central tower, reinforcing the four points of its crossed plan with a double vestibule, reaches to a height of 62 metres above the main causeway in a dramatic skyward thrust.

Around the courtyard of the second level one can appreciate several well preserved frontons on the surrounding gallery, particularly those above the eastern door of the northern gallery, the central door of the southern gallery, and then - unfortunately at some distance - those on the corner towers of the central group, the best preserved of which are to the north-east, representing scenes of battle. On the west side, two small "*libraries*", again with four doors but with walled-in windows, flank the axis and adjoin one another on the same level by means of a raised crossed walkway supported on small pillars. Here, the access stairway to the third level is less steep than the eleven others (about 50°), though anyone suffering from vertigo might prefer to use the southern axial stairway, where additional concrete steps and a handrail make the ascent - and particularly the descent - less dangerous.

The surrounding gallery on the upper level is only 2 metres wide and divided, like the crossing cloister, into four smaller quadrants by axial galleries, with 2m.40 wide naves and side-aisles. We recommend the entire trip around, as much for the view over the rooftops below - unfortunately

missing their ridge-line finials, none of which has been found intact - which plunges down to the grand entrance causeway and the surrounding countryside, as for the view up to the central tower.

The necessity to make the central tower dominate, despite its restricted plan, has inspired the architect to complement it on each of its axes with doubled porticoes. Their superstructures project like those over the stairways of the crossing cloister, while their cornices and half-vaulted side-aisles correspond to as many horizontal incisions on the corner piers of the main tower, without which the extension in height would seem quite disproportionate.

Some fine sculpture, quite large in scale, remains on the frontons, while traces of plaster in some areas suggest that the whole of the central tower was once painted or gilded.

The sanctuary was open originally to its four sides - the Buddhist monks, in taking possession of the temple, walled in the openings, having first expelled the Brahmanic idol, and sculpted the false doors with standing Buddhas. The southern entrance, re-opened by Commaillie in 1908, stayed clear, so allowing George Trouvé to gain access to the central well in 1934. Plain sand was excavated to a depth of 25 metres - the level corresponding to the external ground level of the monument - but unfortunately did not yield the treasure placed under the pedestal, no doubt long since stolen. It did however enable the discovery, at a depth of 23 metres, of the sacred foundation deposit, composed of two circular gold leaves of 0m.18 in diameter and 65 grammes in weight, set in a block of laterite.

It can be seen, to finish with the upper level, that the monks have in places undertaken some regrettable repair work, in particular replacing some pillars or missing lintels with columns originating from other parts of the monument.

## THE BAS-RELIEFS

The bas-reliefs cover the back wall of the gallery of the third enclosure for two metres in height and a total area of more than 1,000 square metres - excluding the two corner pavilions. Limited to the zone that would have been accessible to the public, they represented legendary and historic scenes for the enlightenment of the faithful. Cut directly into the surface of the wall and having suffered minimal decay, they are more graphic than sculptural. Their inconsistent workmanship - excellent while the artist proceeds to clearly define without tending towards sculpture in the round, but only mediocre when the exaggerated contours result in a style described by Paul Claudel as "*loose and flabby*" - is due no doubt to the hands of differing craftsmen.

The hurried visitor will be content with a tour of the galleries to the south of the central axis, together with its western gallery up to the north-west pavilion - which are particularly remarkable. The north-east quarter, on the other hand, though showing no particular shortcoming in composition, has been hurried in execution. Mr Goloubew, by the nature of certain motifs, suspects the late intervention of Chinese artisans charged with finishing a work that had previously only been outlined.

The order of the panels reveals, apart from anything else, two different conceptions; - the first, in a single composition, represents a veritable profusion of figures in the various stages of frenzied combat - the others, perhaps slightly later in execution and more restrained in style, are arranged in registers according to the formula which was to prevail during the second half of the 12th century. Almost all have been identified by Mr Coedes, and we follow them according to the direction imposed by the funerary rites of "*prasavya*" - but leaving from close to the west entrance and heading south, rather than from the east and heading north - in accordance with the learned reasoning of Dr Bosch and based on the running of events which marked the reign of the deified sovereign. All the subjects relate to the legend of Vishnou.

## *WEST GALLERY, SOUTHERN PART.*

The battle of Kuruksetra between the Kauravas (advancing from the left) and the Pandavas (from the right), depicting four divisions of the Mahabharata, one of the major Hindu epics.

The composition is in a single panel and lined along its base with a procession in which one can distinguish some musicians, some foot-soldiers leading warriors marching to combat and their chiefs carried by elephants or horse drawn chariots. It is only in the centre that the struggle turns into a furious scrum where certain details - such as the wounded horse collapsing lanced with arrows - are treated with a striking realism.

One can identify with some certainty; - to the left, Bhishma, the chief of the army of the Kauravas, dying pierced with arrows, - and Drona, no longer wearing the conical head-dress of the devas and other heroes, but with the classical chignon of the Brahmins; - to the right is Arjuna, whose four armed driver is none other than Krishna.

One will notice that in places the rubbing of the reliefs by visitors' hands or the remains of some ancient lacquer has given the stone the appearance of bronze or of polished granite, clarifying them distinctly.

## *SOUTH WEST CORNER PAVILION.*

The four branches of the cross-planned pavilion are decorated with sculpted scenes, unfortunately decayed in places by water infiltration through the loose-jointed vaults.

### *1. above the north door.*

A scene from the Ramayana, where Rama kills the enchanted gazelle Marica, so enabling the abduction of Sita by Ravana.



2. *north branch, east wall.*  
Krishna, accompanied by Balarama, raising mount Govardhana (conventionally represented by a pattern of small diamonds) with his right arm in order to shelter the shepherds and their flocks from the storms unleashed by the fury of Indra.
3. *north branch, west wall (above the opening)*  
A scene from the legend of Vishnou - the churning of the Sea of Milk that extracts the elixir of immortality over which the gods and the demons dispute. On the upper part are two discs, each containing a figure, representing the sun and the moon.
4. *west branch, north wall (above the opening).*  
Ravana, taking the form of a chameleon, enters the women's chamber in the palace of Indra.
5. *above the west door.*  
The child Krishna dragging the large stone mortar to which he had been tied by his adoptive mother, Yasoda, felling two arjuna trees in passing.
6. *west branch, south wall (above the opening).*  
Ravana with multiple heads and arms tries to shake the mountain on which Shiva and his wife Uma are throned.
7. *south branch, west wall (above the opening).*  
Shiva meditating on a mountain top with Uma at his side is sighted by Kama, the god of love, who shoots him with his sugar-cane arrow. The god, furious at being troubled, strikes the fool who dies in the arms of his wife Rati.
8. *above the south door.*  
The murder of Pralamba (?) and the extinction of a fire by Krishna.

9. *south branch, east wall (above the opening).*  
A scene from the Ramayana. Above is a duel between the two enemy brothers, Valin and Sugriva, the king of the monkeys. Rama, intervening in the struggle assures the victory of his ally by killing Valin with an arrow. Below, Valin dies in the arms of his wife, Tara, who wears a three pointed mukuta. The panel, which adjoins the window and shows on several registers the monkeys mourning Valin, is remarkable in the variety of their attitudes and expressions.
10. *east branch, south wall (above the opening)*  
A badly ruined and unidentified panel. One can distinguish a seated figure in the centre, conversing with many others, above figures of ascetics.
11. *above the east door.*  
Krishna receiving offerings destined for Indra (?).
12. *east branch, north wall.*  
The Dvaravati nautical festival where one can see two superposed junks mounted with apsaras. The vessel above carries some chess players while the lower one has some figures playing with children. To the right is a cock fight.

#### *SOUTH GALLERY, WESTERN PART.*

This is the "*historical gallery*", where a single panel of 90 metres in length is dedicated to king Suryavarman II, the builder of Angkor Wat, consecrated under the name of Paramavishnouloka.

The section to the left starts on two tiers: - above is the royal audience, just to the throne of the sovereign, installed on the mount Shivapada and recognisable by his large size and the gilding - although of a later date - which covers him. Below are women of the palace in procession.

From here is the rallying of the army; - the chiefs, descending from the upper register, rejoin their troops who pass a crowd of infantry-men at the base with the riders represented abreast in a sort of rudimentary perspective. The chiefs, whose rank is marked by the number of parasols that surround them, are all set against a verdant background and can be identified by the 28 small inscriptions engraved beside them. Standing on elephants with their trunks coiled or dressed, they encircle the king, Paramavishnouloka - the twelfth from the left - who is superior in stature, wears a conical mukuta with a diadem, and reaches the upper edge of the panel with his 15 parasols. He is armed with a sort of long-handled knife which is similar to the "*coupe-coupe*" still used by the Cambodians today.

A little further on, the parade loses its military character to give way to a religious pageant of Brahmins with chignons who ring small bells. This is the procession of the *rajahotar* or royal sacrificial priest, whom one can see carried in a palanquin behind the ark containing the sacred flame, itself preceded by musicians, standard bearers and jesters.

The parade continues, finishing at the extreme right with the Siamese - then allies of the Khmer - with their strange bell-shaped dresses and hair styles decorated with feathers, giving them the air of Oceanian warriors and for a long time mistaken for "*barbarians*".

#### *SOUTH GALLERY, EASTERN PART*<sup>8</sup>

For this panel of 60 metres in length - dedicated on three registers to the judgement of the dead by Yama and then on two registers to the representation of heaven and hell - one is further guided by 36 short inscriptions which reveal that there are 32 hells and 37 heavens - these last remaining without much appeal and of a dull monotony. They are but sky borne palaces in which the elected, surrounded by their servants, lead a life of leisure, the joys of which remain singularly earthbound.

The tortures are far more varied and are but transitory - the Hindu religions knowing nothing of eternal damnation - and it is worth noting that the executioners, generally large in stature and aided by ferocious beasts, are themselves also damned.

From the left lead the two paths, one to the heavens (above), and the other to hell (below). Yama, the supreme judge with multiple arms, mounted on a buffalo, indicates to his two assessors - the registrars Dharma and Sitragupta - those unfortunate souls who are to be thrown down to hell to suffer a refined cruelty which, at times, seems to be a little disproportionate to the severity of the crimes committed. So it is that people who have damaged others' property have their bones broken, that the glutton is cleaved in two, that rice thieves are afflicted with enormous bellies of hot iron, that those who picked the flowers in the garden of Shiva have their heads pierced with nails, and thieves are exposed to cold discomfort.

Running along the length of the composition and separating hell from the rich palaces of the elected above, with their lavish draperies and sumptuous flying apsaras, is a frieze of garudas standing "*as atlantes*".

#### *EAST GALLERY, SOUTHERN PART*

Taken from the Bhagavata-Pourana this shows the grand scene, known universally and often represented in Khmer art, of the churning of the Sea of Milk. The registered panel extends for nearly 50 metres and has an axial symmetry. Consequently it is far more stylised than the others - the figures all having the same attitude of concentrated exertion in their rhythmical hauling.

The churning produces an elixir of immortality, over which the gods (devas) and the demons (the asuras) are in dispute. Resting on a tortoise - one of the forms of Vishnou - the mount Mandara serves as a pivot while the cord is represented by the serpent Vasuki. The asuras hold the head and the

devas the tail. On the bas-relief, the asuras, to the left, number 92 and wear a sort of helmet, while the 88 devas on the right wear the diadem with mukuta. Each are directed by three larger figures, fortunately breaking the monotony, and, to the extreme right, by the monkey Hanuman, ally of the gods.

Vishnou, represented again but this time in human form as Caturbhuj, presides over the operation which, according to the legend, lasted for more than a thousand years. Hundreds of various beings appear successively, including the white elephant Airavana, the mount of Indra, - the horse Uccaihsravas, - countless hordes of delectable apsaras (running here as a frieze along the length of the panel) - and Lakshmi, the goddess of beauty. The serpent then spits the halahala, the deadly venom which covers the waves, risking the annihilation of the gods and demons - particularly those near the head. At the demand of Brahma, Shiva sacrifices himself and drinks the scalding poison, that scars his throat.

Finally the elixir which flows is seized by the asuras - but Vishnou appears before them in bewitching beauty as Maya (the illusion), to regain the coveted cup.

On the bas-relief, where this part of the story is not in fact related, one can also see again at the base - framed by two registers of guards and servants waiting near some chariots, elephants and the horses of the drama's players - an image of the serpent Vasuki, slithering in an aquatic background before participating in the churning. Close to the pivot, various fish and maritime monsters writhe in the turbulent current.

#### *EAST GALLERY, NORTHERN PART*

One will notice on the wall, while traversing the east gopura, a large inscription - although of a later date (beginning of the 18th century) - which relates to the placing of the funerary monument or "cedei" that one can still see, half ruined, to the exterior of the gallery.

The panel of the bas-reliefs is here quite mediocre in execution and, with an axis of symmetry, represents the victory of Vishnou over the asuras. From the two sides, on two barely distinguishable registers, the army of the asuras moves towards the centre, where mounted on the shoulders of Garuda, the four-armed god - whose face is turned to the south - sends his enemies running after having wreaked carnage. All the warriors have the characteristic mask of the demons, and the same crested head-dress. One will notice, slightly to the right of the central motif, a group curiously mounted on gigantic birds.

#### *NORTH GALLERY, EASTERN PART*

Here, in a terrific scum framed by parades of armies, is the victory of Krishna over the asura Bana. The workmanship is at its worst. One can identify, successively from left to right; - mounted on Garuda, Krishna with eight arms and tiered heads framed by two heroes, - Garuda extinguishing the defensive wall of flames which protects the enemy city and behind whom stands Agni, the god of fire, on a rhinoceros, - four replicas of the initial motif where, on the second, the god has only four arms, - the meeting with the god Bana, with multiple arms, coming from the opposite direction and mounted on a chariot pulled by grimacing lions, - once again on Garuda, Krishna and his two victorious companions, - and finally, to the extreme right, Krishna kneeling in front of Shiva who, throned on the mount Kailasa with Parvati and Ganesha, asks him to spare Bana his life.

#### *NORTH GALLERY, WESTERN PART*

Another combat scene - devas against asuras - in a single panel and with no division of registers. Here the workmanship improves.

Cœdes sees in this panel "a precious iconographic document, in which all the main gods of the Brahmanic Pantheon parade, carrying their classic attributes and riding their traditional mounts". It portrays a series of duels where each of the 21 gods is represented struggling with an asura, from

whom he differs only in the style of the hair - all set on a background of fighting warriors.

One can recognise, from left to right - after the seven first groups of adversaries; - Kubera, the god of wealth, on the shoulders of a Yaksha, then, two groups further on, Skanda the god of war with multiple heads and arms mounted on his peacock, - Indra standing on the elephant Airavana with four tusks, - Vishnou with four arms on Garuda, who separates with each of his limbs the four rearing horses of two enemy chariots, - the asura Kalanemi, with four tiered heads, whirling his sword-wielding arms, - Yama, the god of the dead and supreme judge on a chariot drawn by oxen, - Shiva drawing a bow, - Brahma on the sacred goose Hamsa, - Surya, the god of the sun, standing out on his disc, - and finally Varuna, the god of the waters, standing on a five headed naga harnessed like a beast of burden.

#### *NORTH WEST CORNER PAVILION.*

Entirely ornate like its symmetrical image on the south west, this pavilion has some remarkably well preserved scenes of the highest order.

##### *1. above the eastern door.*

A scene from the Ramayana shows mount Malaya and the meeting between Rama, his brother Lakshmana and Sugriva, the king of the monkeys, in order to settle a pact of alliance.

##### *2. eastern branch, north wall (above the opening).*

Vishnou sleeps, reclining on the serpent Ananta, his feet held by his wife, under a flight of apsaras. Above are some fine examples of sculpture showing the procession of the nine gods coming to request incarnation on earth; - Surya on his horse drawn chariot, set on his disc, - Kubera on the shoulders of a Yaksha, - Brahma on the Hamsa, - Skanda on the peacock, - an unidentified god on a horse, - Indra on an elephant, - Yama on the buffalo, - Shiva on the bull Nandin - and another unidentified god on a lion.

##### *3. eastern branch, south wall.*

Krishna regains mount Maniparvata. Mounted on Garuda with his wife Satyabhama, the god is accompanied by his army and servants carrying the spoils of the vanquished asura Naraka. The mountain, the cause of the struggle, is shown behind Krishna.

##### *4. north branch, eastern wall (above the opening)*

A conversation in a palace, where one can see, under the two talking figures, the bodies of two men lying on their bellies, and then, on a number of registers, some charming scenes from the ladies chambers.

##### *5. above the north door.*

A scene from the Ramayana - the attempted abduction of Sita by the giant Viradha, at whom Rama and Lakshmana shoot arrows, in a forest setting.

##### *6. north branch, western wall (above the opening).*

A scene from the Ramayana, badly deteriorated by water infiltration, showing the ordeal of Sita who is put to the test of fire after her deliverance in order to prove her innocence and purity. Only the stake and the silhouette of some figures - probably Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and Hanuman - remain, above numerous registers of monkeys treated with particular vitality. The princess has completely disappeared.

##### *7. western branch, north wall (above the opening).*

A scene from the Ramayana. Rama returns on the chariot Pushpaka that served as his transport in Ayodhya after his victory. This chariot, magnificently decorated and pulled by Hamsas (sacred geese) belonged to Kubera and was stolen by Ravana. Here again some deteriorated figures end a long vertical panel of jubilant monkeys, represented with some humour.

8. *above the western door.*

A scene from the Ramayana. In the middle of a group of monkeys, Rama, accompanied by Lakshmana, forms an alliance with the rakshasa Vibhisana, who betrays his brother Ravana.

9. *eastern branch, south wall (above the opening)*

A scene from the Ramayana. The discussion between Sita, captive of Ravana, and Hanuman in the asoka grove. The princess, with the tender hearted rakshasi Trijata at her side, gives Hanuman the ring that is to prove the success of the mission to Rama. Below are tiers of rakshasis.

10. *south branch, eastern wall (above the opening).*

An unidentified scene where, on the upper part, one can see Vishnou sitting with four arms receiving homage from some gracious apsaras who crowd up to him.

11. *above the south door.*

A scene from the Ramayana. Rama and Lakshmana fighting with Kabandha, *"a rakshasa with an enormous body, a large chest and no head but with a face on his belly"*.

12. *south branch, eastern wall.*

A scene from the Ramayana. The archery contest which Rama, in the centre, wins. In the court of King Janaka, beside a richly clothed Sita, Rama, in a powerful draw, shoots his arrow at the target (represented here by a bird perched on a wheel) while below are aligned the defeated pretenders.

#### WEST GALLERY, NORTHERN PART

*"An inextricable entanglement of monkeys and rakshasas"* - Mr Coedes tells us - *"hitting and tearing at one another with tree trunks or lumps of rock. On this busy and confused background - some details of which are not without humour - a series of duels show the main chiefs of the two parties.*

*In the centre of the panel, a large rakshasa with ten heads and ten pairs of arms is attacked by a god mounted on a large monkey - one need look no further to recognise the battle of Lanka, whose story occupies, almost entirely, the penultimate division of the Ramayana".*

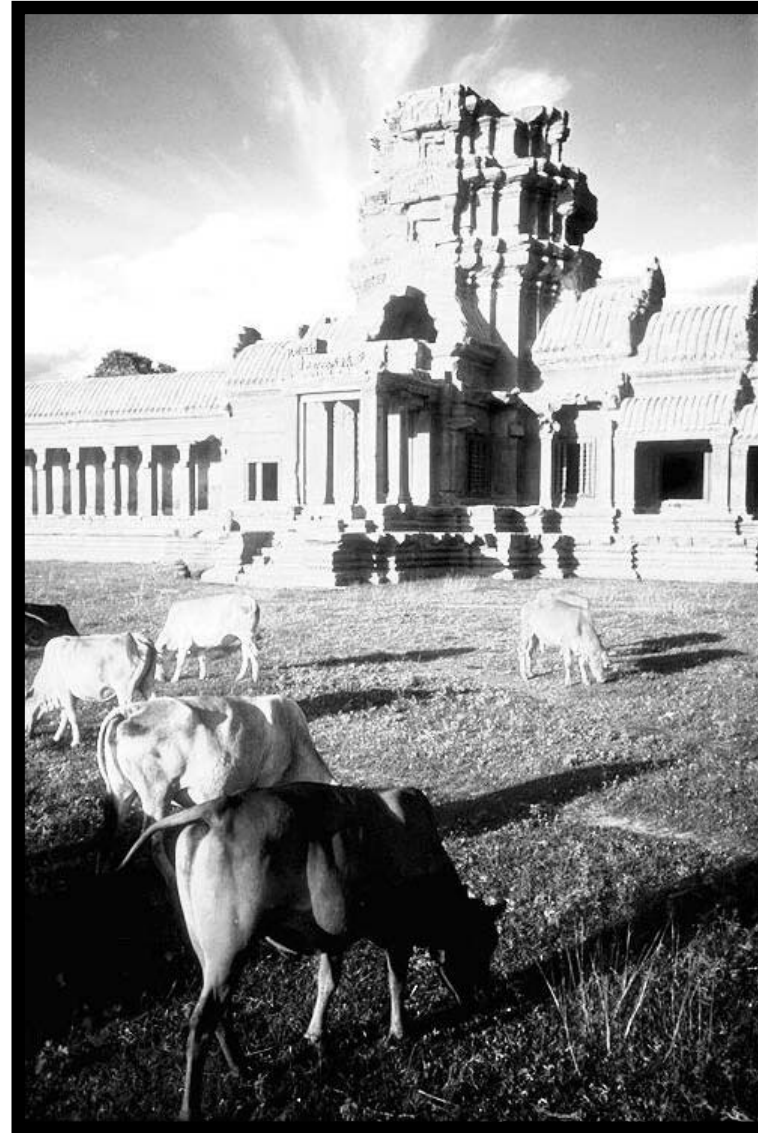
The battle of Lanka (Ceylon) that enables Rama, with help from his allies the monkeys, to recapture the lovely Sita, constitutes an outstanding piece of narrative sculpture which, besides some superb modelling, merits a detailed examination by the extraordinary vitality of the figures, represented in full action.

The principal adversaries can be seen towards the middle of the panel; - to one side, Rama standing on the shoulders of Hanuman surrounded by a hail of arrows, with, behind him, his brother Lakshmana and the renegade rakshasa Vibhisana. Both stand, their calm attitude in contrast to the chaos around them. On the other side is the giant Ravana with multiple arms and tiered heads, on his war chariot pulled by curiously stylised lions.

Between the two, Nila, the furious monkey, straddles two strange lions pulling chariots, presented head-on. He carries the body of his recently vanquished enemy on his shoulders. Another, Angada - the son of Valin - pulls the tusk from an elephant who is coiffed with a three pointed mukuta, somersaulting both it and the rakshasa it carries. Further to the right is a lively group with another monkey brandishing, by holding their rear legs, two enormous monsters that he has just unharnessed - as well as many other duels too numerous to mention...

An American visitor, in her enthusiasm for Angkor, made the request that her ashes be scattered on the causeway of Angkor Wat - a satisfaction granted to her at the beginning of 1936. Such a gesture symbolises the extraordinary power which these ancient ruins have on peoples' imagination.

Whatever one may think, Angkor Wat merits a number of visits - and at least two - one for the monument and another dedicated to the bas-reliefs. If these can be seen in the morning, when the light is clear, then the rest should best be seen at the end of the day as the towers become increasingly golden with the sun sinking to the horizon. Sometimes, in the twilight, the bats - the curse of the ruins which reek with their droppings - leave in their thousands, and it is a curious spectacle to see them rise like columns of smoke to be dispersed with the winds to the atmosphere. One should also not miss the nights of the full moon, nor the displays of traditional Cambodian dancing on the western esplanade, which bring the ancient legends to life by the glow of torch-light. These extraordinary dances, so discreet and controlled - where every sentiment and passion can be expressed in the merest quiver, resonating through the dancer to burst from the finger tips - they illustrate the architecture with living bas-reliefs.



Three hundred metres from the western axial entrance to Angkor Wat, level with the first kilometre marker stone, one can see a small ruined sandstone tower to the left. Following the discovery in 1928 of a stele inscribed with the edict of Jayavarman VII relating to hospitals, this small monument could perhaps be identified as the chapel belonging to one of these 102 establishments, founded by the socially conscious king and mentioned in the inscription of Ta Prohm. Mr Coedes tells us, on the other hand, that *"Ta-Prohm Kel is associated with the legend of Pona Krek, the paralysed beggar whose stiff joints were freed here by the horse of Indra. He then mounted the steed which carried him skyward"*.

Passing between some sculpted stones, where one can see in particular several representations of the bodhisattva Lokesvara, one crosses the remains of a small sandstone gopura before reaching the prasat, of which only the main lower section and the first three upper tiers of the northern and eastern sides remain standing - though themselves badly deteriorated. The sanctuary opens to the east, has false doors on the three other sides and is set on a moulded and decorated base. An evacuation channel for lustral water - or *"somasutra"* - passes through its northern wall.

The decoration is abundant and reasonable in execution - in the style of the Bayon, on a background of foliated scrolls with devatas on the corner piers. On the jambs of the main door are some curious circular medallions, delicately sculpted in *"tapestry"*. Each is embellished with a roughly sketched figure which, with lively inspiration, is almost caricatural in nature.

## *Ta Prohm-Kel*

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>late 12th century</i>   |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Jayavarman VII</i><br><i>(posthumous name:</i><br><i>Maha paramasangata pada)</i> |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Buddhist</i>  |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by H. Marchal in 1919</i>   |





## Phnom Bakheng

Thirteen hundred metres north of the western axial entrance to Angkor Wat and 400 metres south of the southern gate of Angkor Thom, to the west of the road, one can see a wide track in the forest ascending a natural hill of 60 metres in height. This is Phnom Bakheng, the centre of the first kingdom of Angkor, or Yasodharapura, which formed a square of about 4 kilometres on each side and of which, travelling on the main road from Siem Reap, one crosses the double levee of earth forming its southern boundary - 600 metres before arriving at the moat of Angkor Wat.

On his accession in 889, Yasovarman abandoned Hariharalaya (Roluos), the rudimentary capital of his predecessors situated on the plain, and became the first, seduced by the mysticism of the hills, to find his "*Meru*" (the seat of the gods) and his "*Ganga*" (the river Ganges) symbolised here in the hill of Phnom Bakheng and the river of Stung Siem Reap - the latter probably being diverted to follow the eastern boundary of the new city.

As an imposing replica of the Bakong at Roluos, the temple of Phnom Bakheng, glorified by its choice position and prominence over the surrounding landscape, had yet further to assert its monumental character in order to justify its role as the base and shelter of the Devaraja - the linga Shri Yasodharesvara of the inscriptions - the master-idol of the kingdom. So came the first realisation of a quincunx of sandstone towers crowning the upper level of the pyramid and the multiplication of secondary towers on the lower tiers.

Phnom Bakheng is best climbed at the end of the day or early in the morning, either by its immediate steep slope or by the gently winding path bearing to the left, formerly taken by tourist elephants - which is a classic and very pleasant walk. From the summit one can enjoy a view stretching across the plain - dominated by the two other peaks that are also each crowned with a temple by Yasovarman; - Phnom Krom to the south, close to the Tonle Sap lake, and Phnom Bok to the north-east, standing out from the distant dark line of the Phnom Kulen - and then the plain of water of the western baray, the forest of Angkor Thom and the majestic composition of Angkor Wat, lying golden in the setting sun.

In previous chapters we described how Mr Goloubew identified the "*Central Mountain*" of the inscriptions - the centre of the capital from the end of the 9th century - with Phnom Bakheng. In particular, his excavations revealed the existence at the foot of the hill of a buried rectangular enclosure of 650 metres east-west by 440 metres north-south, intersected by gopuras of which some remnants are still visible at the

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>towards 900</i>   |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Yasovarman I</i><br><i>(posthumous name:</i><br><i>Paramashivaloka)</i>   |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic (Civaite)</i>   |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>clearing work at different times by</i><br><i>Henri Marchal from 1919 to 1930</i><br><i>research by Mr Goloubew</i><br><i>from 1931 to 1934</i> |

base of the hill at the eastern entrance. Similar traces have appeared on the other axes where the stairways, unlike those of the eastern flight, have retained a few of their treads.

The art of Yasovarman shows a constant preoccupation with the quest for the monumental and the improvement of construction techniques in the use of scarce but durable materials. However, one can observe that in the detail, except for some powerful elements - such as the base platforms and the cornices, the devatas of the corner piers and the colonnettes - it failed to transcend a certain banality in the decoration and a disparity in the respective scale and arrangement of the motifs - one bemoans, for example, the lintels of preceding styles - those more broad and vigorous in manufacture of the Kulen, or more magnificent and dense but yet solid of Bakong and Prah Ko. This tendency towards finesse and detail derived perhaps from habits learned while sculpting in the decorative mortar of the brick monuments and the timber of the palaces - techniques which here restricted the craftsman's necessity to work in volume to the call of the architect.

#### DESCRIPTION

The two lions framing the bottom of the path which leads to the upper plateau are amongst the finest and the best proportioned to be found in Khmer art. At the top of the hill, where once some Vietnamese monks were established and who made various inevitably regrettable alterations, one leaves to the right a building of which only some sandstone pillars remain, to pass two lingas set as bornes and a light-weight structure sheltering a Buddha's footprint of a more recent date - to then cross the remains of a gopura that originally intersected the laterite enclosure wall. On either side of the axis are two "*library*" type buildings in sandstone, ventilated by lines of lozenge shaped holes. Initially opening to the west, they have later each been pierced with another opening in their eastern sides.

The temple appears from here as a stack of five bare-faced tiers, becoming progressively smaller from 76m.00 at the base to 47m.00 at the summit, with an overall height of 13 metres. The severity of the lines is fortunately broken by the cut of a steep axial stair inclined at 70%, flanked by lions at each rise and framed by the cascades of small sanctuary towers that are repeated at the corners. The upper platform, with the quincunx of towers that are either truncated or have disappeared altogether, is no longer imposing, while the brick towers encircling the base of the pyramid are for the most part ruined and barely worth mentioning.

Thirty six of these towers, opening to the east and sometimes pierced subsequently with another door opening to the west, stood aligned in a single rank - except on either side of the axial pathways where they are found coupled on a common base, making a total of forty four. Many of them are missing or remain incomplete. Just before their remains, on the left, are two large pedestals. Found during the clearing work, these are remarkable in detail and quite pure in style.

The Bakheng pyramid is unique in not having its interior formed by in-fill - the bedrock has simply been hewn away as necessary and a sandstone cladding applied, as one can see in the north-east and south-east corners where land-slides reveal the substructure. No doubt the form of this natural frame has forced the narrow width of the tiers - less than 4 metres and obstructed by the small pyramid towers - which barely allow any circulation. These 60 prasats are constructed in sandstone and open to the east - those to the west side being practically inaccessible. They remain in rough form and are composed, as usual, of a principal core with four upper tiers and a decorative crown.

The north-south axis of the monument is slightly offset to the west, leaving borders on the fifth level differing in width from 5 to 12 metres - room enough to accommodate pageants.

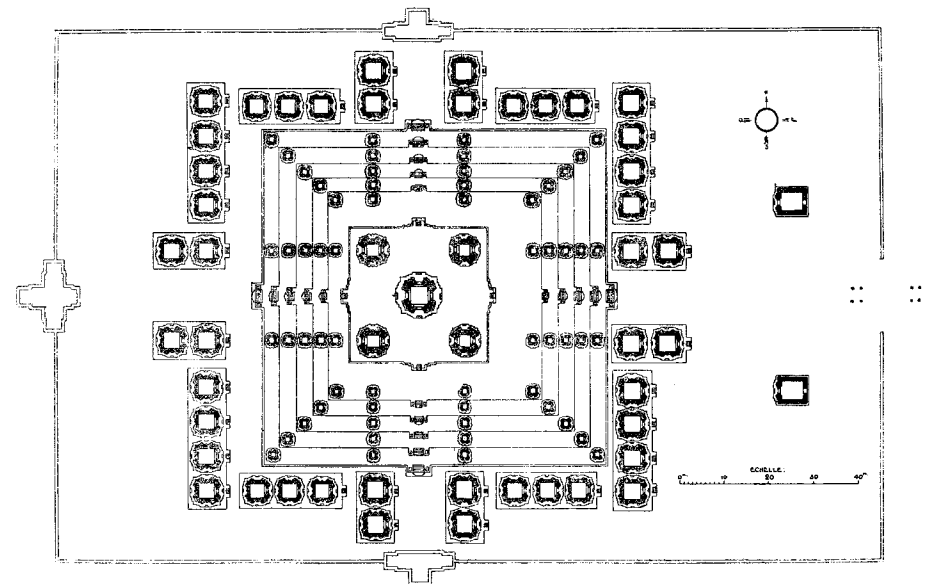
A sculpted retaining wall of 1m.60 in height serves as a base for the 31m.00 wide upper platform, which, until the clearing work, was encumbered with a mound of re-used blocks, amassed by the monks to form the base of a huge sitting Buddha whose torso remained incomplete. There was some surprise, on starting to dismantle the blocks, to find a quincunx of towers - though unfortunately only the principal level of the central sanctuary remained, measuring 8 metres on each side. The four corner towers, of 6 metres, were reduced to a few bases of wall, leaving the silhouette of this 109 towered temple particularly deformed.

The central tower was constructed with particular care and opens to the four cardinal points. At the foot of the pyramid it was possible to find three of the four "*Nandin*", or sacred bulls (the mount of Shiva), which assured the omnipresent power of the god. A rectangular stone tank of 1m.40 by 0m.80 in width and 0m.72 in depth, with a drainage hole in the bottom, was extracted from the internal well - which stops at bedrock at a depth of 2 metres. This must have had, according to Mr Coedes, some funerary purpose - it was perhaps a sort of sarcophagus once containing the mortal remains of the deified king. In front of the eastern side of the tower one can see a regular arrangement of holes formed in the pavement - most likely for the placing of masts or wooden poles. The other four sanctuaries sheltered a linga which was perhaps set on a pedestal. Each has two opposing doors.

In terms of decoration, the remains show evidence of all the qualities and faults indicated above. Besides the imposing devatas on the corner piers surmounted by apsaras, one can appreciate the delicately sculpted bands of foliated scrolls and the pilasters with chevrons or trellis-work enhanced with figurines that are characteristic of the style. Also noteworthy are the lightly relieved tympanums of the frontons, almost square in proportion and quite confusing in composition, but which are solidly contained by the diverging makaras terminating their framing arch. They have a central base with

figures flanked by large scrolls fringed with a series of small heads of divinities - a formula that one finds only during this period of Khmer art.

An inscription is still visible on the western jamb of the north door dating from king Jayavarman V (968 - 1001) - and therefore later than the monument - but recalling the foundation of Yasovarman.



## *Baksei Chamkrong*

*"The bird that shelters under its wing"*

Situated 150 metres north of the main axial stairway to Phnom Bakheng, this small temple appears in a frame of beautiful trees to the left of the road as a stepped pyramid, fine in proportion and warm in hue - since it is built in laterite and brick as the construction materials typical of the 10th century. The surrounding brick enclosure wall has almost entirely disappeared, though to the east, the remains of an axial gopura with sandstone steps are still visible.

The pyramid measures 27 metres across at the base and 15 at the summit for an overall height of 13 metres. In laterite with four tiers it follows the usual laws of proportional reduction - the first three are simply treated with a plain cladding while the last forms a moulded plinth for the sanctuary tower. Four steep stairs rising in a single flight mark the axes, framed at each change in height with side walls that restrict access to the various levels - which remain quite narrow. The visitor wishing to ascend to the upper platform should climb these stairs with extreme caution, since some of their treads are badly eroded.

The sanctuary tower is in brick - as usual with no use of mortar in the joints, which remain filliform. Measuring 8 metres each side, it stands on a moulded sandstone base leaving a narrow surround. Its mass is considerable with respect to the proportion of the pyramid and continues the ascending lines - though it is rounded at the summit since the upper tiers have lost their sharp profiles to the action of the vegetation.

The sanctuary opens to the east. False doors on the other sides are, with the colonnettes and lintels, the only sandstone elements, which are carefully ornate with an intricate decoration. On the false doors one should note the vertical bands of foliated scrolls, while on the branch end of the eastern lintel, a Ganesha sits astride his trunk in a motif one also finds at the Mebon Oriental. Its centre is marked by the image of Indra on a three headed elephant, while above the whole composition is a frieze of small figures.

The external decoration in lime based mortar has virtually disappeared - though one can still see on the facing brick of the corner piers the outline of the devatas, destined for a coating of plaster and given form to avoid an excess of its thickness. The interior of the tower has its floor level set a metre lower, is well preserved and shows the regular brick corbelling of the vault and the diminishing bands corresponding to the reducing sections of the upper tiers. A more recent reclining Buddha lies against the back wall.

Door jamb inscriptions date from the reign of Rajendravarman and mention the setting in the temple, in the year 947, of a golden statue of Shiva, implying that the building dates from this time.

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*Date* 947  
*King* Rajendravarman  
*Cult* Brahmanic  
*Clearing* by H. Marchal in 1919

These are the remains situated between the south moat of Angkor Thom and Baksei Chamkrong, to the north of this last monument and 125 metres west of the road. One reaches the temple along a cart track that turns to the left just before the causeway of giants preceding the south gate of Angkor Thom. It stands as a ruined square brick tower with a single sandstone door frame that has a lintel with a central garuda and branches of purely ornamental decoration. Originally it was preceded to the east by a tiered laterite terrace that was probably once covered with thin sandstone paving, corresponding no doubt to the name given to the prasat by the locals.

The main interest in the excavation was the discovery, under the paving of the sanctuary chamber, of an intact sacred deposit composed of a quincunx of five gold leaves. The larger central leaf was engraved with the outline of a standing bull - the mount of Shiva.

On the same track as the preceding monument but 175 metres further on, and so 300 metres west of the road, these three brick towers are aligned north-south and open to the east. They stand on a common laterite platform of 24 metres by 9m.60. The northern tower is incomplete and, like the southern, its height is truncated just above the doors. The middle tower, where one can see Indra on a three headed elephant in the centre of the lintel, contains a pedestal with its linga. The lintel of the southern tower, resting on the ground, also represents Indra, but his mount has a single head.<sup>9</sup> The lintel of the northern tower remains only in rough outline.

## *Thma Bay Kaek*

*"The crow's rice stone"*

*Date* 10th century  
*Cult* Brahmanic (Shiva)  
*Clearing* by M. Glaize in 1945

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## *Prasat Bei*

*"The three towers"*

*Date* 10th century  
*Cult* Brahmanic (Shiva)  
*Clearing* by H. Marchal in 1919



Of all the Angkor temples, it was the Bayon, at the centre of Angkor Thom, which most confounded the archaeologists. In earlier chapters, when discussing the chronology of the monuments, we touched briefly on the debate that ran with respect to the dating of its construction, based, until 1923, on the false identification of the *“Central Mountain”* mentioned in the inscription of Sdok Kak Thom - which referred in fact to Phnom Bakheng and not to the Bayon. This latter was therefore no longer assumed to be the *“temple-mountain”* of Yasodharapura, the capital of king Yasovarman dating from the end of the 9th century, and was instead recognised as the official sanctuary of the last city of Angkor Thom, reconstructed by Jayavarman VII towards the end of the 12th century following its sacking by the Chams.

It may seem surprising that, contrary to its function, a temple of this size was built without any external enclosure wall or moat - until one appreciates that these were in effect formed by the ramparts of the city of Angkor Thom itself and by its moats, with the gates taking the place of gopuras.

#### THE EXTERNAL ENCLOSURE

The walls of Angkor Thom, the southern of which lies 1,700 metres north of the axial entrance to Angkor Wat, form a square of 3 kilometres each side enclosing an area of 900 hectares. Nearly 8 metres high and topped with a parapet that has no battlements, they are constructed in laterite and buttressed on their inner side by an earth embankment - the top of which forms a surrounding road. Externally they are surrounded by a one hundred metre wide moat, which is crossed at each of the city gates by a causeway. The general flow of water within the square city was apparently established from the north-east to the south-west, in which corner it discharges into a kind of reservoir - the *“Beng Thom”* - itself draining to the external moat through a row of five tunnels cut through the embankment and the wall.

#### THE PRASAT CHRUNG

At the corners stand four small temples - *“the Prasat Chrung”* - each containing an inscribed stele mentioning the foundation by Jayavarman VII of a *“Jayagiri scraping the brilliant sky at its top and of a Jayasindhu touching at its impenetrable depth the world of the serpents”*. Mr Coedes has shown that these referred, in the emphatic manner that was usual for the Khmer, to none other than the walls and the moats of Angkor Thom in comparison to the mountains and the ocean surrounding the earth.

## Angkor Thom

*“The Large City”*

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Each of the Prasat Chrung is in the style of the Bayon and was dedicated - as was the city itself - to the bodhisattva Lokeshvara. In the form of a sanctuary tower in sandstone opening to the east, they are cruciform in plan with four vestibules and have two upper tiers crowned with a lotus. The walls are decorated with devatas set in niches and with balustered false windows partially masked by blinds. To the east is a square planned shelter for the stele, open to four sides and vaulted with a cloistered arch. The whole arrangement is enclosed by a wall in which is a single opening.

A visit to one of the Prasat Chrung - perhaps to the one in the south-west corner - can be made on horse-back or by foot in the dry season along the wall-top track - if it has been cleared. It is a very pleasant walk (3 kilometres) under the shade of the trees where, having first climbed the embankment at the foot itself of the south gate, one then descends at the west gate after having skirted a quarter of the city limits. One can see in places the remains of laterite steps discovered by Mr Goloubew, corresponding to the moats of the 11th century enclosure of Angkor Thom.

#### THE GATES OF ANGKOR THOM

Very little is known about organisation of the city, with its light-weight dwellings. Centred on the Bayon, it was divided into four quarters by four axial roads that were probably bordered by moats. A fifth similar road was set on the axis of the Royal Palace, leading to the east.

Corresponding to these avenues are five monumental gates. From the exterior, the crossing of the moat is made, as previously described, on a causeway. At the northern entrance this now forms a bridge for part of its length, following hydrological works in 1940.

*"Lining either side of the causeway" - we are told by Tcheou Ta-Kouan - "are 54 gigantic divinities, like fearsome war-lords. The parapets of the causeway are in solid stone, sculpted to represent nine-headed serpents,*

*with the 54 divinities holding the serpents as if to prevent them from escaping".*

To consider the suggestion made by Mr Coedes and Paul Mus, this double railing in the form of a naga was perhaps *"one way of symbolising a rainbow which, in the Indian tradition, is the expression of the union of man with the world of the gods - materialised here on earth by the royal city. In adding the two lines of giants - devas on the one side and asuras on the other - the architect aimed to suggest the myth of the churning of the ocean in unison by the gods and demons in order to extract the elixir of life. The representation of the churning, with the moats for the ocean and the enclosure wall - and specifically the mass of its gate - for the mountain, is a kind of magic device destined to assure victory and prosperity to the country".*

Until now it has only been possible to reconstruct the lines of devas and asuras of the Victory gate (the gate to the east centred on the Royal Palace) and the north gate, where the grimacing faces of the demons are particularly expressive, in sharp contrast to the serene faces of the gods.

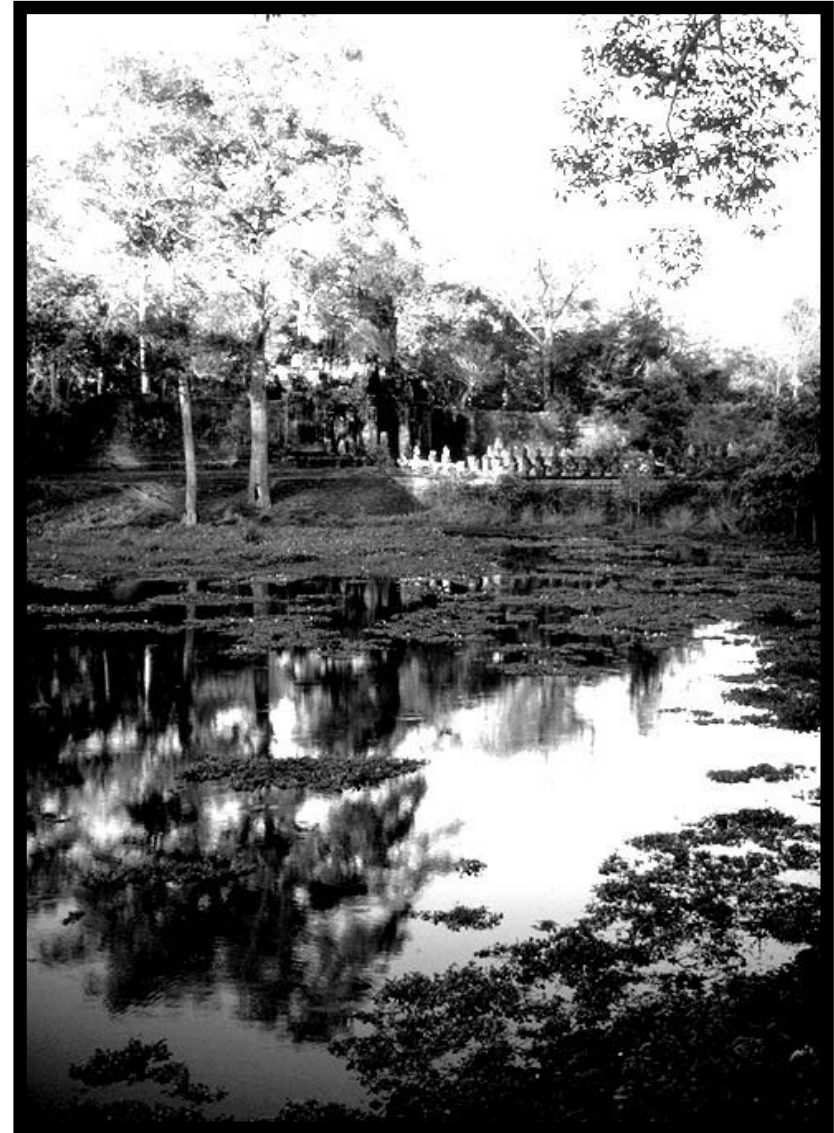
The five gates are all similar and were found reasonably well preserved. Two of them, the north and the south, were restored by M. Glaize from 1944 to 1946 and can now be seen with their crowning motifs - though incomplete in terms of sculpture - in their original form. The most pleasing in composition are the northern gate and the western side of the Gate of the Dead (to the east, centred on the Bayon, at the end of the *route Dufour*), while the best faces are to be seen at the west gate (*route Carpeaux*).

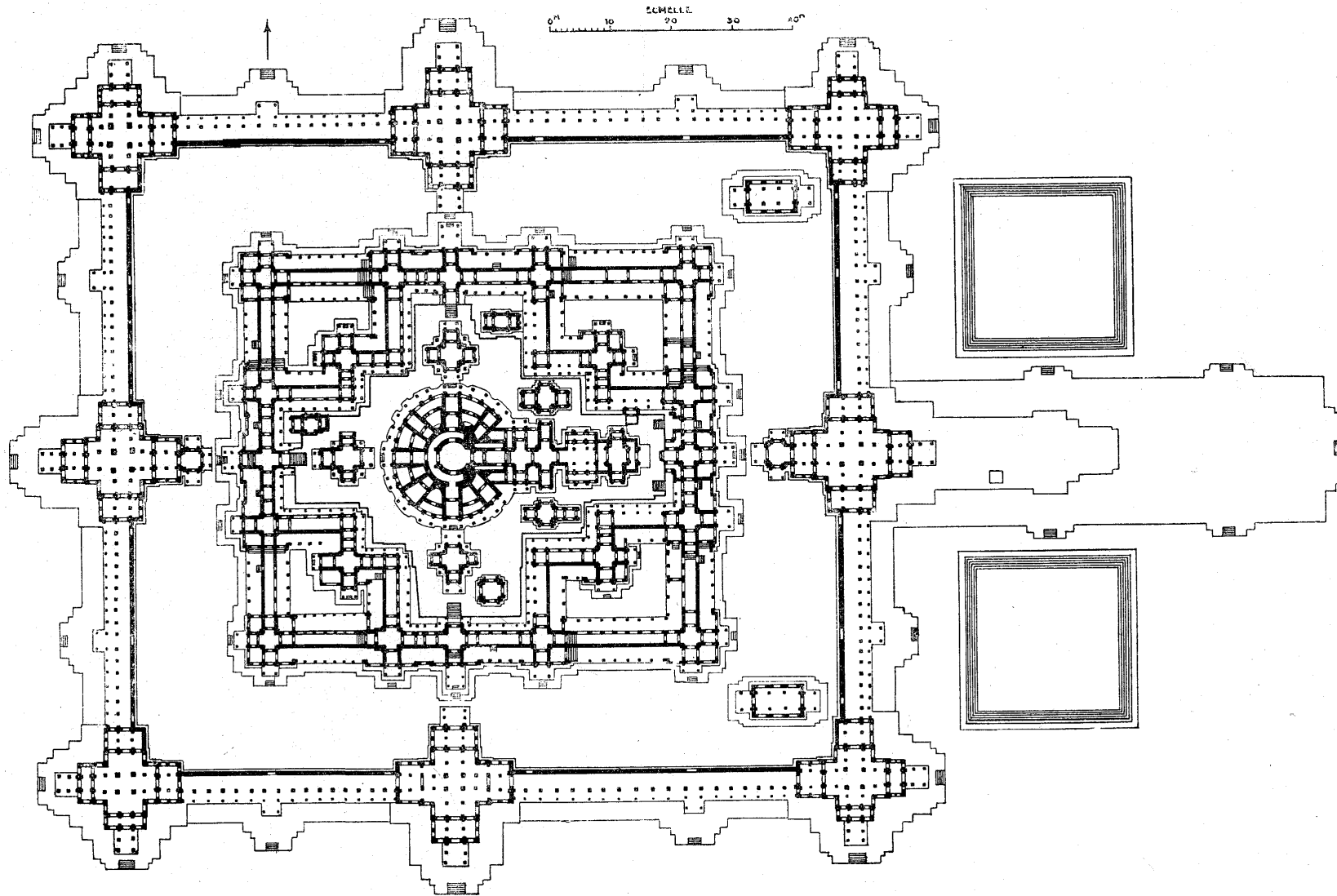
The proportion of their openings (3m.50 wide by 7 metres high) is distorted by the absence of lintels or frontons. Originally they would also have been furnished with double wooden doors, mounted on pivots, which were apparently fitted with a horizontal closing bar, the holes for which still remain visible in the walls.



Forming a group of three aligned towers, they stand over 23 metres in overall height. The main tower, with its two opposing faces, is flanked by two other smaller towers - each with a single face - that are set into it and correspond internally to reinforcing walls forming guard rooms, each with two dark back-rooms. The ensemble responds quite apparently to the same abstraction as do the four-faced towers of the Bayon - with the regal power radiating to the four cardinal points.

Finally, at the base, the four inward corners contain the superb motif of the three headed elephant, whose vertical trunks descend to tug at lotuses, forming pillars. They represent none other than the mount of Indra, whom we can see clearly at the Victory gate, sitting between two apsaras and holding the thunderbolt or "*Vajra*". The presence here of the god at the extremity of the access causeway confirms the hypothesis suggested previously, - where the naga, imitating the rain-bow, simulates the bow of Indra.





Fifteen hundred metres of straight road separate the south gate of Angkor Thom from the Bayon. We recommend that, skirting it to the right, you gain access to the temple by the long redented eastern terrace, embellished with lions and naga-balustrades, that corresponds to its main entrance. One can see that the naga motif here is representative of the last period, where the hood is straddled by a garuda. On either side are the remains of ancient pools.

The Bayon best presents itself in the morning, when the sunlight is the most favourable. One should not fail, however, to return by the light of the moon, when the lines and shadows become softened and the stone and its verdant background composed in a perfect unity of hue and tone - when the faces, mellow and subdued, take on an emotive expression from which radiates a sort of lyrical charm - where each becomes exaggerated in over-scale, doubled in profile and infinitely multiplied. One dissolves in the serenity of this Buddhist tranquillity, embryonic amongst the phantoms.

*"Previously", Pierre Loti tells us, "it was necessary, in a complete tangle of dense undergrowth and hanging vegetation, to clear a path with a thrashing stick. Everywhere the forest entwines and constricts, choking and encumbering. The immense trees, completing the destruction, have taken hold even on the summit of the towers which serve them as pedestals. Here are the doors - the roots, like an old mane, draping them with a thousand fringes."*

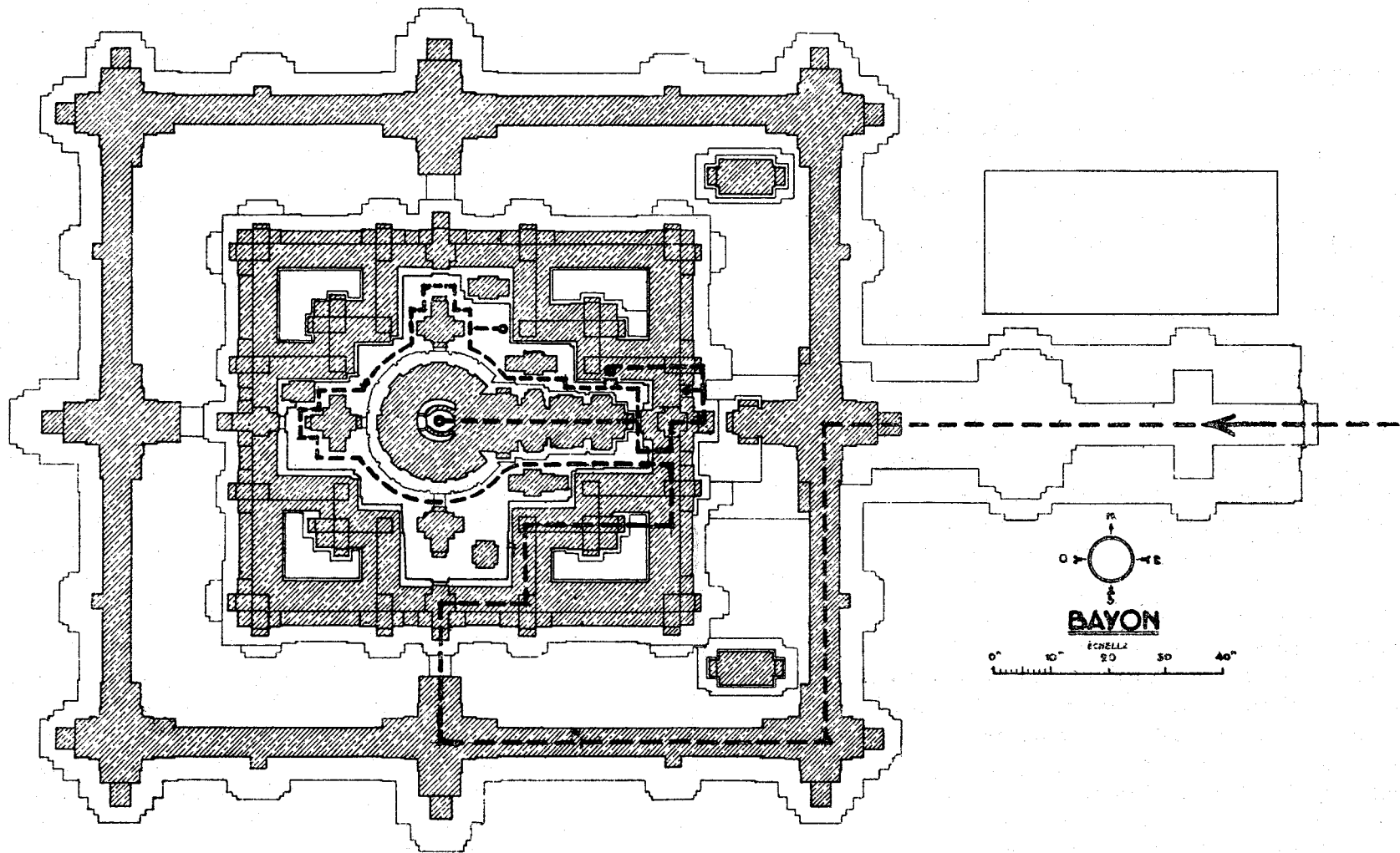
Like Commaille who effected the clearing works, we also mourn the loss of the *"natural state"* that contained so much potent charm. Alas *"Every month, perhaps every day, some stones would fall. The complete ruin of the temple was only a matter of time, and it was necessary to consider how to halt it without further delay."* - which did not stop Paul Claudel however from accusing the archaeologists of having given the Bayon the appearance of *"a sort of ugly game of skittles or a basket of bottles"*.

Separated by less than a century, the Bayon is the antithesis of Angkor Wat. While this latter sits at ease in its successive enclosure walls, realising according to a spacious plan a vast architectural composition through the harmonious equilibrium of its towers and its galleries, the Bayon, enclosed within the rectangle of 140 metres by 160 that constitutes its third enclosure (the gallery of the bas-reliefs), gives the impression of being compressed within a frame which is too tight for it. Like a cathedral built on the site of a village church, its central mass is crammed into its second gallery, of 70 metres by 80, in a jumbled confusion of piled blocks.

## the Bayon

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|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Date     | late 12th - early 13th century  |
| King     | Jayavarman VII<br>(posthumous name:<br>Maha paramasangata pada)   |
| Cult     | Buddhist  |
| Study    | H. Dufour and Ch. Carpeaux<br>(1901 - 1902 - 1904)  |
| Clearing | by Commaille 1911 to 1913<br>Consolidation of central tower<br>by G. Trouvé in 1933<br>Anastylosis of the four-faced towers<br>and of the central tower<br>by M. Glaize from 1939 to 1946 |



From a distance, with the only horizontal element being the last enclosure in the form of a base plinth, it appears as but a muddle of stones, a sort of moving chaos assaulting the sky. From wherever one views them - from the diagonal or from the fore - the fifty masked towers rear up on different planes to reinforce an impression of height.

On the upper terrace, however, calm returns. Dwarfed by the serenity of these stone faces, one no longer thinks of the vision of the whole or of the confusion in the plan. Wandering from one to another of the 200 masks - so distant from any normal proportion or architectural convention - one's attention becomes drawn by their image. Gradually the chaos becomes ordered, and one perceives the profusion of towers as being made from a combination of elements grouped at the centre in a sort of bunched sheaf. It's no longer the building that matters, but only its symbolism.

The Bayon is not so much an architectural work as the translation to reality of the spiritual beliefs of a grand mystic - the Buddhist king Jayavarman VII - with the four faces of each tower looking to the four cardinal points signifying the omnipresence of the bodhisattva Lokeshvara, the kingdom's principal divinity. If, as Mr Coëdes believed, they are also the portrait of the sovereign himself identified as the god - if, like the further suggestion of Paul Mus, the towers corresponded to the different provinces of the kingdom - then their multiplication becomes symbolic of the radiant power of the god-king flooding the country.

However, the masked towers were also sanctuaries - proven by the short inscriptions engraved on the jamb-stones of their door openings that mention a substantial number of divinities - both Brahmanic and Buddhist - which can be considered as emanations of the bodhisattva Lokeshvara. In the central tower was the idol itself of the kingdom - the "*Buddha-king*", corresponding to the royal *linga* or "*Devaraja*" of the Brahmanic temple-

mountains. Sitting on the coils of a naga, the features probably represented king Jayavarman VII himself.

Found broken in 1933 by G. Trouvé at a depth of 14 metres during excavation down the core of the central tower, this superb 3m.60 high statue has been completely restored. Solemnly presented to His Majesty Sisowath Monivong, the king of Cambodia, on the 17th of May 1935, it now sits on the south side of the road leading to the Victory Gate - not far from the royal square of Angkor Thom - sheltered in a small pavilion with a tiled roof.

The origin of the faced towers, a motif which did not in any case survive Jayavarman VII, remains to be discovered. Yi-Tsing, a religious Chinese of the 6th century, mentions brick towers in Nalanda (Bengal) crowned with "*heads the size of a man*". Later, as this was characteristic of the representation of Brahma, it was he who was at one time recognised on the towers of the Bayon. The theme in fact is the same - that of the omnipresent god.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The confusion in the plan of the Bayon and the intricacy of its buildings results no doubt from the successive alterations to which the monument was subjected, that are evident just about everywhere. These changes could well have been made either during the course of construction or at other times - so not all necessarily corresponding to the reign of Jayavarman VII.

In its present form the temple is composed; - of the level external gallery of the third enclosure, with four corner pavilions and four gopuras, - of a surrounding courtyard containing, to the east, two high libraries, - of the gallery of the second enclosure at varying levels with four corner towers and three intermediate towers on each side, the central of which forms a gopura, - of a system of galleries forming a redented cross with corner towers and four small square courtyards, - of an upper terrace, the outline of which follows at

a slight distance the plan of the cross-formed galleries below, which it clearly dominates, - and of a circular central mass, whose peak towers 43 metres above the surrounding city ground level and which is ringed with an arrangement of loggias, preceded to the east by a series of small halls and vestibules and, finally, flanked on each of its other axes by a high tower.

It would seem probable, according to research by Mr Parmentier and various archaeological excavations; -

1 - that the central block of the monument corresponding to the galleries of the second enclosure is part of a combination of galleries that once formed a redented cross surrounding a central sanctuary, perhaps raised, which was then adjusted to a rectangle by the addition of the internal galleries enclosing the four small courtyards.<sup>10</sup>

2 - that the upper crossed terrace carrying the central sanctuary was finally constructed by Jayavarman VII, when he decided to make the Bayon the temple-mountain of Angkor Thom - the siege of the Buddha king.

3 - that the present level of the surrounding courtyard corresponds to two successive in-fills, the sandstone base plinth of the second enclosure galleries continuing, with its cladding crudely cut, for 2m.50 below ground - excavation having revealed the presence of a first pavement in laterite at this lower level with another at an intermediate level 1 metre higher.

4 - that the galleries of the third enclosure and the two "*libraries*" were built on this filled ground, and therefore towards the end of the project.

5 - that the surrounding courtyard was divided into smaller courtyards by sixteen buildings which have now disappeared - four on each side - whose laterite foundations can still be seen at ground level joining the galleries of the

second and the third enclosures - just in front of each tower of the second enclosure and on either side of the axial towers.

There was originally an access stair to the upper terrace on each axis - the one to the east has been walled in at sometime to be replaced by two symmetrical others that are steep and slippery. Some narrower concrete stairs have been formed in part of their width, easing the climb to the north, the south and the east (the left-hand stairway).

Approaching the monument from the eastern terrace, one reaches the pillars of the cruciform gopura of the third enclosure, on which one can see the delightful motifs, sculpted in bas-relief within poly-lobed niches and set on a background decorated "*in tapestry*", of groups of two or three apsaras dancing on lotus flowers. From here, turning to the left, one enters the gallery of the bas-reliefs that one should follow according to the ritual manner of "*pradakshina*" (keeping the monument constantly to one's right) until reaching the south gopura.

This gallery is formed by a nave bordered to one side by a 4m.50 high wall - 3m.50 of which is sculpted - and to the other side by a double row of pillars forming a side-aisle. All the surrounding vaults have disappeared, as have those of the cruciform corner pavilions and gopuras.

The visitor with limited time should at least examine the reliefs in this south-east quarter gallery - the most interesting - pausing in front of each opening to the internal courtyard to enjoy the composition from different viewpoints.

From the south gopura, where there stood a curious statue of a hunchback and still is a delightful frieze of large apsaras above the north door, one enters the surrounding courtyard which one crosses to gain access to the axial tower-gopura, forming part of the system of galleries on varying levels.

The general north-south axis of the Bayon is considerably offset to the west, leaving the rectangle of the second enclosure wider to the east. Here, the external section of the galleries, while simulating a half-vault on their exterior, have on their inner side a full vault covering a series of bas-reliefs whose continuity is broken by each tower.

Turning right at the centre of the tower-gopura one follows, towards the east, the internal gallery with a side-aisle. At its far end - in the south-east corner tower situated at a lower level - one can see a statue of Buddha sitting sheltered by naga heads, set clearly against a background of light.

Bearing to the north, at the first encountered tower, one continues through the gallery of the redented cross that is bordered by a half-vaulted side-aisle. From here the view is blocked in less than a metre by the retaining wall of the upper terrace, added as an afterthought and which exactly follows its line, so completely masking the tympanums with scenes on each of the corner frontons. One descends to the small square courtyard of the south-east corner and gains - by the southern tower of the group of three which mark the eastern side of the second enclosure - the first stairs on the left, which lead up to the large terrace. This route gives a clear idea of the jumbled complication of the Bayon's plan and of its countless alterations. The courtyards which must have existed in the initial form of the monument have been reduced to gloomy passageways without light or air, and one feels a long way from the elegant simplicity of Angkor Wat.

On the upper terrace, mystery reigns. Wherever one wanders, the faces of Lokeshvara follow and dominate with their multiple presence, always countered by the overwhelming mass of the central core. These towers, rising everywhere to varying heights, are not in fact heads with four faces which could have been taken for some representation of Brahma, but simply a variation on the theme of the square *"prasat"*, with four upper tiers and a

crowning lotus, - but sculpted on each axis with human faces, varying from 1m.75 to 2m.40 in height, within the rising of the first two tiers.

Composed of a structure with a central chimney that had generally remained intact, and with facing blocks that are simply placed without any bonding in a manner that offers no resistance to roots, the towers appeared, after clearing, to be cracked from top to bottom - their vertical joints, stacked without any overlapping, having caused the mass of stones to split like an over-ripe fruit. Dismantled and reconstructed according to the process of anastylosis and now held together by invisible iron cramps, the composition was just saved from the imminent ruin that threatened it.

The central mass is - a rare thing in Khmer building - circular in plan (in fact slightly oval) measuring over 25 metres in diameter at the base. Above its moulded plinth, small triangular or rectangular loggias open to little porticoes with frontons forming a peristyle. Higher still is another level of small chambers, without access and lit by balustered windows, and then, marking the four cardinal points and their intermediaries, eight towers with faces - of which only a single face stands out in entirety - surrounded by a kind of circular walkway. Crudely cut or later hacked, they were perhaps covered in a plaster coating.

The high crowning motif is imprecise in form and ringed at its base with the few remaining elements of a final peristyle. It was perhaps itself also sculpted with four stone faces like the towers, or otherwise it simply served to support a tall light-weight structure. This is, with no doubt, the *"Golden Tower"* described by Tchou Ta-Kouan as *"marking the centre of the kingdom, flanked by more than 20 stone towers and at least one hundred stone chambers"*. Repaired and consolidated in 1933 - after first having raised a sturdy scaffolding - the whole of this upper part was disintegrating. The substructure having maintained its stability, it was sufficient to restore the architectural elements which, as a facing, served as strengthening.

Internally, the obscure sanctuary chamber of 5 metres in diameter is surrounded by a narrow passageway. It was here that the idol of the kingdom was set up - the large statue of Buddha mentioned above, whose remains were found down the central well. One gains access from the east side through a series of cruciform chambers, three with towers, that are separated by small vestibules. Two long rooms on either side, also towered, occupy the usual position of the "*libraries*". One should note, near the northern one and below the terrace at its returning north-east corner, an admirably preserved fronton which, for a long time protected and concealed by the paving, has a standing Lokesvara as its central figure. It was this which first drew attention to the Buddhist nature of the Bayon.

The ornamentation is very dense, in the usual manner of this final period of Khmer art, but remains nonetheless careful. On a base of foliated scrolls and organic decoration it has some delightfully delicate detail. Characteristic of this style are the false windows with partially lowered blinds concealing the height of the balusters, and the skirts with flowers and the belts with pendants of the smiling devatas whose head-dress is formed in small flaming discs set in a triangle - the deep relief has allowed their feet to be shown almost full forwards. We would also draw attention to the charming twinned apsaras, enlivening the window cills of the central mass, and to the interesting sculpted panel above the south stair that gives access to the terrace - probably a representation of the "*Elephant of Glory*", charged to find the man designated by Destiny to take the vacant throne.

Re-descending into the gallery of the second enclosure by the same stairway that was first climbed, the visitor who is pressed for time can get some idea of the bas-reliefs in this gallery by entering the recess situated between the east axial tower and the tower immediately to the north - where the legend of the "*Leper King*" can be seen.

Returning eastwards to the crossed gallery, one can then finally pay a visit to the covered well, of a dozen metres in depth, that is to be found on the left towards its middle, protected by a hand-rail.

#### THE BAS-RELIEFS

The Bayon is the only temple to have two concentric galleries sculpted with bas-reliefs; - the internal gallery is complete in its ornamentation and was almost exclusively reserved for mythological subjects of Brahmanic inspiration, while the outer gallery, accessible to the mass of the faithful, was dedicated both to scenes of everyday life and to certain historic episodes - processions and battles - from the reign of Jayavarman VII. Remaining incomplete, these were to have shown - according to Paul Mus - scenes of contemporary mythology under the aegis of Lokesvara, of whom the deified king himself was but an emanation, given life by the sculptor's chisel.

The Bayon bas-reliefs are less stylised and more deeply incised than those of Angkor Wat, and although often quite crude in execution and simplistic in form, they provide a source of documentation which is remarkable, both for the care taken in the representation of the smallest detail and for the qualities of observation which they show - and it is practically the only source we have that gives an idea of the customs and conditions of life in ancient Cambodia.

They are sculpted in superposed registers, with the lower panel representing, for the ancient Khmer who were ignorant of the laws of perspective, the foreground, and the upper panel the horizon. Starting from the eastern entrance, we begin with the southern section of the eastern side, keeping the monument to our right in accordance with the rite of "*pradakshina*".



## 1 OUTER GALLERIES (3rd ENCLOSURE)

### *EAST GALLERY, SOUTHERN PART*

Here, in three highly accomplished registers, is a military procession marching from the south to the north. The soldiers are armed with javelins and shields, and most have short hair and bare heads, while a group on the lower register wear goatee beards and strange hair styles pierced at the top. Musicians accompany them, with a small dancing figure beating an enormous gong with two sticks. They are flanked by cavaliers riding with neither saddle nor stirrups, while the chiefs are armed with bows or javelins and surrounded by parasols and banners in a forest setting. They sit on elephants guided by their drivers who brandish the usual hooks.

Towards the end of the line, enlivened with charming everyday scenes, one can see the army suppliers - the covered carts with axle-skates are exactly the same as those still in use today. On the upper panel, three princesses pass by, carried in rich palanquins. At the other end is the ark of the sacred flame, also to be found in the "*historical gallery*" of Angkor Wat.

Passing the door to the courtyard the direction of the march is reversed. The upper register, where one can see interior scenes and a few ascetics, has only its lower area remaining and shows again the same nature of procession, but where the elephants are only ridden by their drivers. The coconut-palms are treated in realistic fashion, while one can see to the extreme left of the upper register, tied to a tree, an ox probably destined for sacrifice.

Beyond, in four tiered panels, follow scenes of interiors. The roofs of the houses are shown with their finialed ridges on which several birds are perched. The particular nature of the hair-styles, the costumes and the objects suspended from the ceiling lead one to suspect that the figures represent some Chinese merchants in business discussion.

### *SOUTH EAST CORNER PAVILION*

The sculptures of this gallery remain unfinished, with the first panel giving a good indication of the working methods of the Khmer. Passing a wall that has first been prepared (and of which one should note the unlikely bonding), they proceed with the direct sculpting first drawn in sketch, - then slightly relieved, - then given volume - and finally finished. Two charming apsaras dance to the right, while to the left are outlined three towers surmounted by a trident. The central shelters a linga.

The other panels are dedicated to nautical scenes.

### *SOUTH GALLERY EASTERN PART*

This section, which is one of the best, relates to a naval combat that took place in the last quarter of the 12th century between the Khmer (whose hair is cut short) and the Chams (coiffed with a sort of upturned lotus flower). It shows a conflict of battleships with richly ornate prows - like galleys - where the line of oarsmen's heads is dominated by warriors armed with javelins, bows and shields. Bodies are thrown overboard, some to be devoured by crocodiles.

The larger king is sitting in his palace to the extreme right, presiding over preparations and giving orders, while below him a gambolling figure recalls the buffoons who rouse the oarsmen during water festivals in Phnom Penh. Numerous species of fish are shown, often amongst the trees - since the forest becomes flooded during the rainy season - faithfully reproducing the features of those that one can still find in the Great Lake today.

On the banks of the lake, as a lower register, events from everyday life are shown, depicted with much candour and humour; - market scenes, scenes of open-air cooking, of hunting or of attack by wild animals. A woman picks lice from one figure, while another plays with her children and a further mourns an invalid who lies in her arms. To the extreme left, a hunter,

preparing to shoot a buffalo, holds his crossbow - similar to the weapon still favoured in present day Cambodia.

Past the door is a fishing scene showing casting nets - a junk, apparently mounted by Chinese, displays the curious arrangement of its anchor and pulley - while the occupants of another, which is flatter, amuse themselves with various games. At the base are more familiar scenes including a cock fight that is superbly composed with a great intensity of expression.

Then come palace scenes - princesses surrounded by their servants, dances, conversations, games of chess - with wrestlers, gladiators and a wild boar fight below. The whole scene is surmounted by the faint outline of a larger reclining figure - this could perhaps be the king taking possession of his palace according to the rite, still in use, of the coronation ceremony.

The battle continues. At the bottom we can see the Chams arriving in their battle junks. They land and, above, they battle against the Khmer who, in the form of giants with short hair and their bodies coiled in ropes, clearly dominate. Peace returns and the king, sitting in his palace, celebrates victory amidst his subjects who perform their various trades - as carpenters, blacksmiths, cooks - in preparation for a banquet.

To the far left, next to the last door that one passes, a narrow panel shows three registers with scenes of conversation above scenes of wrestling.

#### *SOUTH GALLERY, WESTERN PART*

This section, where the lower register has been finished while the upper remains incomplete, is only of mediocre interest. There are more military processions with elephants playing an important role. The scene gives a precious indication of contemporary war machines, - one is a sort of large crossbow carried on the back of an elephant and manoeuvred by two

archers, the other is a catapult mounted on wheels. To the extreme west must be the bathing of the sacred elephants. They shelter under parasols and are being led to the river, represented below by a band of fish.

#### *WEST GALLERY, SOUTHERN PART*

Here again many areas have not been sculpted. On the lower panel, warriors and their chiefs mounted on elephants pass before a background of forests and mountains (indicated by a pattern of small triangles) while towards the centre, an ascetic escapes from an inquisitive tiger by climbing a tree.

Above, one can see some intriguing methods of construction - workers haul a block of stone on which a foreman stands with a cane, others carry materials and more are grinding the blocks that are suspended from a special frame. Further still are isolated scenes describing the life of the ascetics.

Beyond the door extends a long panel that Mr Coedes refers to as "*the civil war*". It shows a large crowd moving in front of a line of houses - perhaps a street - with men and women gesticulating and threatening, while others are armed ready for a fight. Above, a kneeling figure to whom two severed heads are being carried seems to present them to the multitude, while at the top, another in a palanquin approaches a prince who awaits him in his palace.

Further is the furious melee of fighters - semi-naked warriors with the usual hair style of the Khmer and with nothing distinguishing them from one another. Numerous elephants participate in the action.

#### *WESTERN GALLERY, NORTHERN PART*

Warriors armed simply with sticks seem to chase others protected by small round shields and preceded by elephants. They pass a pool where an enormous fish is swallowing a small quadruped. A short inscription identifies it, explaining that "*the deer is his nourishment*".

Another longer text, engraved under a large shrimp, indicates that *"the king pursues and overcomes the vanquished"*. The upper part of this panel, where the main characters would have been, remains unfortunately only in sketch outline.

Beyond the door, a last inscription tells us that *"the king then retires for a time to the forest where he celebrates the saint Indrabhisaka"*, drawing Mr Coedes to conclude that *"this peaceful procession through a backdrop of trees represents the king going to retreat in the forest before celebrating the Consecration of Indra"* - recalling an ancient vedite ceremony. At the end of the procession are women and children. Amongst others one will notice the king, always shown larger than those who surround him, standing on an elephant - and then, ahead, the ark of the sacred flame.

#### *NORTH GALLERY, WESTERN PART*

The wall is only sculpted on its lower part, and there some parts remain only in sketch outline. The first panel certainly follows that which precedes: - *"the games in which athletes, jugglers, acrobats and horses take part and which clearly constitute public merrymaking - one of the essential elements of the Indrabhisaka"* (Mr Coedes). Above the interior scene, over which the king presides, is a curious procession of animals, giving an idea of the Cambodian fauna. At the other extremity, ascetics sit in the forest and then, on the bank of a winding river, a group of women to whom presents are being brought, close to a larger figure in sketch outline.

Beyond the door are more combat scenes where the Chams reappear as the traditional enemies of the Khmer.

#### *NORTH GALLERY, EASTERN PART*

The wall has almost entirely crumbled, except for its two extremities where one can again find the same adversaries in battle. The Chams come from the west in tight ranks, but this time it is the Khmer who flee towards the

mountain without appearing to offer serious opposition. The eastern part is highly animated and treated with a curious realism.

#### *NORTH EAST CORNER PAVILION*

Processions of Khmer warriors and elephants without particular interest. In the centre of the pavilion is a fine circular pedestal of a type that is generally reserved for statues of Brahma. Its origin is unknown since its style differs to that of the Bayon and places it around the 10th century.

#### *EAST GALLERY, NORTHERN PART*

In a large deployment, Cham and Khmer forces are again in battle, forming a furious melee towards the centre with the elephants themselves also taking part in the action. One of them tries, with his coiled trunk, to pull a tusk from another who opposes him. Another is unusually represented from the front. Countless standards, banners and sunshades form a veritable back-cloth - and one can see, on the side of the Khmer who seem finally to dominate, some curious grilled panels that were perhaps designed to stop the arrows from the adversary without obscuring the view.

## 2 INNER GALLERIES (2ND ENCLOSURE)

Once again, for the purpose of the visit, we will adopt the usual mode of circulation whereby on leaving the principal east entrance the monument is kept always to one's right. Here we find, in fact, not one single surrounding gallery on a constant level, but rather a succession of independent chambers, cells and truncated galleries that are clearly separate. The various panels of bas-reliefs should be considered as a number of tableaux, with only some of them evidently relating in direction to the development of the subject represented - we will indicate where necessary those that will be contrary to our circulation.

### *EASTERN GALLERY, SOUTHERN PART.*

#### 1. *between the towers*

To the right, ascetics and animals in mountainous and forested scenery - in front (badly deteriorated) a palace scene dominated by a royal figure. To the left, another palace scene with the principal figure in sketch outline.

#### 2. *vestibule*

To the right, the king in a palace with some ascetics above rural and hunting scenes. In front, some Brahmans gather around a brazier within a temple surrounded by flying apsaras.

#### 3. *low gallery*

To the right of the door, a princess in a palace amongst her servants.

*- on the large panel in front and returning to the left.*

The army in the usual procession, but where Khmer and Chams (?) are mixed. A royal figure stands on an elephant, preceded by the ark of the sacred flame.

### *SOUTH EAST CORNER*

Marching warriors and a chief standing on an elephant.

### *SOUTH GALLERY, EASTERN PART*

#### 1. *lower gallery*

A panel that is badly deteriorated and unclear. A procession of warriors (Chams?), - a fight between two high ranking figures, - warriors coming from the opposite direction, apparently of the same nationality. A palace scene next to which one can see a man climbing a coconut tree, and then an enormous garuda and a gigantic fish symbolising the ocean into which the base of Mount Meru, represented as a mountain inhabited by

ascetics and animals, is supposed to plunge. The procession again, with another high ranking figure. Behind is the palace façade of a palace that seems to have some of its rooms empty but for a few accessories, and others occupied with princesses - one smelling flowers and another combing her hair in front of a mirror.

#### 2. *vestibule*

A large royal figure wrestles with a lion (?). To the left, he holds the rear foot of an elephant that he has just overpowered.

#### 3. *between the two towers*

Starting from the left-hand returning wall, above a line of warriors, a king leaves his palace that is decorated with a few accessories (a bow, a quiver and a fly swat) - its main hall remains empty, while a princess sits with her servants. In front and from the left to the right is a less developed scene showing a battle against another prince and his army - then a palace next to a pool with another building where several figures surround a fire.

Next come a group of musicians and men carrying an empty throne on their shoulders, leaving a palace that is occupied only by women - the lord being absent. On the lower register, a princess prepares to incarcerate a child in a chest - which looks as if it is destined to be dropped into the neighbouring pond. A fisherman in a boat throws his net in the presence of a richly dressed princess on a sumptuous boat with apsaras flying above.

From the pool grows an enormous lotus, serving as a pedestal for some idol or figure whose image has been defaced, close to a group of worshippers who pay him homage.

It is quite probable that this scene leads as a prelude to some others, sculpted on the panel to the right on the return, and which has been identified as the history of "*Pradyumna, the son of Krishna and of Rukmini, thrown into*

*the sea by the demon Sambara. The child is eaten by a fish which the fishermen catch in their nets, offering it then to Sambara. In gutting their catch, the fishermen find Pradyumna (who is none other than Kama, the god of love). A handmaid of Sambara, Mayavati (an incarnation of Rati, the wife of Kama) secretly rears the child who is to become her husband and who will later kill Sambara." (Coedes)*

One can see the living child sitting in the stomach of the fish which the king wants to gut, and then presented to Mayavati who greets him.

#### *SOUTH GALLERY, WESTERN PART*

##### *1. between the towers*

On the right hand returning panel, though badly deteriorated, one can distinguish a figure lying in a palace. His wife sits by his bed, seeming to lament.

In front, a Shivaite panel of appalling craftsmanship. The god is represented twice; - standing first on a throne and then on a lotus blossom with some figures in prayer, one of whom is stretched on the ground. A sort of coffin or shrine is carried on a cart.

To the left in the return is another Shiva, deformed and holding a trident over some apsaras dancing to an accompanying orchestra.

##### *2. vestibule*

To the right, in the return, at the base one can see an interior scene where pigeons perch on the roof. Higher, temple architecture, from where Vishnou with four arms seems to descend towards a standing Shiva who holds a trident. In front, a similar scene, but without the four-armed figure.

##### *3. lower gallery*

Apsaras flying and a standing figure (Shiva?) girdled with a Brahmanic cord, receiving homage from some Brahmans. Mountain scenery inhabited by wild animals (a tiger eating a man) serves as a backdrop for a temple with closed doors.

Princesses walk by a pool on either side of a charming group of apsaras dancing on lotuses - above is probably Shiva, sitting in his celestial palace and surrounded by his court.

Further is the temple of Shiva (shown standing) in the middle of a pool with ascetics and animals on the banks. A tiger chases an ascetic, while other religious figures converse in a palace and several worshippers bow before the god. In the centre of the panel stands Vishnou with four arms as a statue next to a pool, surrounded by flying apsaras. A crowd pays homage and one figure lies on the ground. They accompany the same coffin mounted on wheels mentioned above. Horses are shown in the procession, which comes from a palace shown on the left with its stair guarded by lions - an important figure seems to give orders, while numerous servants feverishly prepare for the departure. At the extremity, in the return, princesses walk in a garden beside a lake where one of them picks lotuses. We are perhaps witnessing the organisation of some royal pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the god.

#### *WESTERN GALLERY, SOUTHERN PART*

##### *1. lower gallery*

To the right, women in a palace, where the main room is empty. In front is Vishnou with four arms, equipped with his usual attributes and standing on Garuda - *"subduing, for his own sake or for the figure who stands behind him, an army of Asuras"*. (G. Coedes). Then is a scene in a partly empty palace.

2. *vestibule*

Another palace scene with apsaras dancing to an orchestra. To the left are women swimming and picking lotuses in a pool, near to an ascetic. Above, more dancers, and at the top, two wrestling figures.

3. *between the two towers*

To the right, the god Vishnou with four arms in a prayer scene over some episodes from the construction of a temple that are more detailed than those on the bas-reliefs of the external gallery; - workers haul a block of stone that slides on rollers, while more are rubbing and placing the blocks with the help of a special levering device. Others transport materials under the threat of a cane.

In front is Vishnou in another scene of prayer. His statue is seen above an evacuation hole for water disgorged from the interior of the monument. Apsaras fly and a crowd of servants carry trays in what is perhaps the inauguration ceremony of the temple. A nautical scene shows chess players in a richly decorated junk surrounded by other boats, and fighting cocks - the same subject as the "*Nautical festival of Dvaravati*" in the south-west corner pavilion of Angkor Wat. To the left in the return, under a palace scene (Shiva with Vishnou dancing on his right), are various scenes from the life of the ascetics, meditating in caves or swimming amongst lotuses close to a bird holding a fish in its beak.

*WEST GALLERY, NORTHERN PART*

1. *between the towers*

To the right in the return are some badly deteriorated palace scenes. In front on three registers, a line of warriors - mainly cavaliers - with two imposing figures, sit in their horse drawn chariots. To the left, in the return, the procession continues.

2. *vestibule*

To the right in the return, two lords talking in a palace, young princesses in the hands of their dressers and, to the left, a temple sheltering a canopy set on a tiered pyramid (perhaps an incineration pavilion). In front, in the middle of an assembly of Brahmans - of which some surround a sort of hearth under a roof - an archer shoots an arrow while another prepares his weapon.

3. *lower gallery*

Another archery scene with, to the left, a lord in his palace.

The large panel has crumbled for part of its length. It shows the churning of the Sea of Milk, and its remains display some fine modelling. First is an assembly of Brahmans, then, under a flight of birds and apsaras, the body of the serpent - with the asuras at the head and the devas, helped by Hanuman the monkey, at the tail. A replica of the serpent crawls at the bottom of the ocean, represented by fish. At the centre, the pivot is shown as a column resting on the tortoise (an incarnation of Vishnou). The shaft is held by the god in his human form with four arms, while another figure surmounts the scene, as at Angkor Wat, above the lotus-formed capital.

One can see the two discs of the sun and of the moon, as well as the flask destined to contain the Amrita - the elixir of immortality coveted by the gods and demons. To the left, a god sitting on a bird seems to want to appease the group of asuras in battle which terminates the composition. Their chief is standing on a chariot drawn by some superb lions.

*NORTH WEST CORNER*

A procession of warriors.

### *NORTH GALLERY, WESTERN PART*

#### 1. *lower Gallery*

Palace scenes on three registers. Then, on two registers, a line of servants seem to carry offerings and follow a large figure towards a mountain inhabited by wild animals (elephants, rhinoceros, nagas and other snakes), separated by a pool and crowned with a sanctuary. Its doors are closed. One can then see another more imposing temple. The doors are locked and guarded by two dvarapalas.

Some kneeling ascetics seem to receive another procession coming from the left and led by two tall figures carrying tridents. Perhaps they have just landed on the bank, since the scene becomes nautical, with a group of three large, richly ornate boats - the first two bear men with short hair and a lord holding a trident, the other, figures whose heads are covered with an upturned flower surrounding a central couple and entertaining themselves under a flight of birds. One returns, finally, to firm ground where, in a mountain palace and amongst the ascetics, sit several figures. At least one carries a trident (Shiva?).

#### 2. *vestibule*

In front, under a flight of apsaras and clumsily represented, is Shiva with ten arms dancing the "*tandava*" that sets the rhythm of the universe. Vishnou is at his right and Brahma with four faces at his left with Ganesha, while beneath is a devouring Rahu. On the returning panel of wall; - at the top of a mountain populated with ascetics is another aspect of the "*Trimurti*" - Shiva sitting between Vishnou and Brahma - above an enormous charging boar.

#### 3. *between the towers*

To the right in the return is Shiva, again seated, surrounded by ascetics and women, the first of whom must be his wife, Parvati. The bull Nandin can be seen close by.

In front, in mountain scenery where the ascetics are in prayer, a woman arranging her hair with a gracious gesture stands in the doorway between a prince or a god and an ascetic. On the lintel one can see a sort of lizard. This is, according to some, the legend, already represented at Angkor Wat, of Ravana taking the form of a chameleon in order to gain access to the ladies chamber in the palace of Indra. Others see the descent to earth of the goddess Ganga (the river Ganges). Then is the scene, also evident at Angkor Wat, of Kama, the god of love, shooting an arrow at Shiva who is meditating on a mountain with Uma at his side - the angry god strikes Kama, whom one can see lying on the ground with his wife Rati at his feet. Nandin the bull can be seen again, climbing the hill. The panel ends in an indefinite scene where a prince sits in his palace at the top of a hill.

To the left in the return is Shiva mounted on Nandin, of mediocre execution.

### *NORTH GALLERY, EAST PART*

#### 1. *between two towers*

To the right in the return is Shiva on Nandin with his wife Uma sitting on his lap, passing in front of a palace where one can see the king of the nagas with multiple serpent heads. Below are dancing apsaras.

In front seems to be the preparation for the incineration of the figure being carried by hand on the lower register. Above are the funerary urn and the cremation pavilion, surmounted by a head of Kala.

Then comes an episode from the Mahabharata - the "*duel between Arjuna and Shiva disguised as Kirata over a wild boar which both claim to have killed, and which is none other than the rakshasa Muka. Shiva wins and reveals himself, giving Arjuna the Pasupata, the weapon which is to serve him in his future exploits*" (G. Coëdes).

To the left of the door, a figure sits in a palace on top of a mountain, surrounded by women. Then is the *"legend of Ravana, half crushed by Shiva under the mountain that he tried to shake - well known from the Angkor Wat bas-relief. The sculptors took care not to forget the Pushpaka chariot"*, pulled by Hansas (G. Coedes).

On the returning panel, palace scenes in two registers.

2. *vestibule*

A procession of no particular interest.

3. *lower gallery*

Servants carrying offerings (?) - and then - above a panel of praying ascetics followed by a pool lined with steps - a rich palace with three towers surmounted by tridents, set against a backdrop of palm trees. The central throne is empty, and the sanctuaries to the side shelter statues of Vishnou and Lakshmi. Further on is Shiva blessing his worshippers under a flight of apsaras. A king, followed by his army, seems to come to beg a favour from the god. There is the usual procession of infantrymen with short hair, with musicians, elephants and horses. Princesses follow, carried in palanquins, as well as an enormous case and a cart with a canopy pulled by oxen. Passing in front of some deserted residences, one then sees the king climbing into his six wheeled chariot to leave his palace where some dancers enliven the leaving party.

*NORTH EAST CORNER*

Fragments of a procession without much interest.

*EASTERN GALLERY, NORTHERN PART*

1. *lower gallery*

A large army parade where one can see two different hair-styles - short-cropped and inverted-flower. Below pass musicians, infantrymen

framed by cavaliers, a prince's horse-drawn chariot and others with canopies pulled by hand. Above is a large litter with six wheels mounted on Hansas, carried or pulled on shoulders and occupied by a prince between two of his wives, - princesses in palanquins surrounded by children, - the ark of the sacred flame (?), - an empty throne and the king armed with a bow sitting on an elephant and followed by two other chiefs.

Passing the door, a small panel shows a prince - perhaps the king asking the god's favour before leaving for war (?). He stretches on the ground at Shiva's feet, near his empty throne.

2. *vestibule*

Two boats float on a pool lined with steps surrounded by fish, amongst which one can distinguish two with human heads. Divers seem to look for something precious - perhaps the shapeless object that one can see above, carried by shoulder on a sort of throne. A flight of apsaras and birds crowns the composition.

To the left, in the return, some see the representation of an act of vandalism - the iconoclasts seeming to want to topple and break the statue of a woman surrounded by ropes which are pulled simultaneously by men and elephants.

Dr Bosch however gives a preferable interpretation. *"Far from any attempt to topple or break anything, some people are occupied in trying to deliver a prisoner from her cell. Above her head, some prise open the rock with picks - and the elephants pull it apart. Below they apply the ancient method for splitting hard rock - by heating it with fire and then dousing it with water - or preferably with vinegar. It seems that the scene describes a popular legend - of a king or prince who passes by a mountain and hears the voice of a woman who is singing or crying. He opens the rock and releases the woman, (princess/nagi/nymph) whom he then marries"*.



Thus explained, the scene could have some relation to the preceding scene, which could therefore represent the liberated nymph becoming an object of adoration as a source of healing. In the same way, some would see a link with the legend of the Leper King that appears as an element of the neighbouring gallery - and Shiva in the last panel of the lower gallery would so become a simple Rishi healer, in front of whom the king, who has been saved by him, lies prostrate... - just a simple hypothesis...

3. *between the towers*

Here is the legend of the Leper King identified by Mr Goloubew, which one should read from left to right.

A king is throned in his palace near his wife and surrounded by his courtiers and dancers. He fights with a serpent, while below, the crowd looks on. Having been spattered with the monster's venom, he contracts leprosy. Sitting in his palace he gives orders to his servants who, descending a stair, seem to rush in order to consult with the ascetic healers in the forest. Women surround the sick king, examining the progress of the disease on his hands. One can see him finally at rest with an ascetic standing at his side.

Interesting to note, under the wrestling scene with the serpent, is a removable stone that serves as a plug for the opening of an internal channel for the evacuation of water.

#### AROUND THE BAYON

Around the quadrilateral of roads surrounding the Bayon, one can see - apart from the enormous gilded statues of the Buddha of a much later period which are to be found to the north and south - two modern commemorative monuments. The one in the south-west corner is the grave of Commaillie, the first Angkor Conservator, who was assassinated in 1916 by armed robbers. The other, in the north-west corner and not far from the sculpture depot of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient and the old house of Commaillie, is the stele erected in honour of Ch. Carpeaux, who died in service in 1904.

If one takes the other section of the route Carpeaux, one will find, halfway between the Bayon and the west gate of Angkor Thom - at 200 metres south of the road - a small monument that is unnamed but classified as number "486".

## Monument 486

A laterite terrace with lions precedes a platform, used as a Buddhist terrace, surrounded by steles or “*sema*”, at the far end of which one can still see the pedestal that carried the idol. Just behind, raised on a triple plinth of moulded sandstone and mostly ruined, is the principal sanctuary. This is a late construction, dedicated to the Buddha - whom one can see under the Bodhi tree on the eastern fronton - and seems to have taken the place of an original Brahmanic prasat, of which the primary laterite base has been heightened by the addition of two subsequent sandstone tiers.

The colonnettes and lintels are in rose coloured sandstone in the style of Banteay Srei (end of the 10th century). They are well preserved and finely crafted - some have been re-cut. One can recognise, to the east, Shiva on Nandin (the sacred bull) and to the north, Indra on an elephant.<sup>11</sup> The cruciform sanctuary chamber is 2m.00 by 2m.30 at the centre and open to the four axes.

Two other later sanctuaries opening to the east are aligned on the principal tower to either side of it. They are set on the same base-platform and therefore much lower, though only a few parts of crumbling wall remain - particularly of the southern. On the northern tower one can still see, above the false western door sculpted with a standing Buddha with a flaming “*ushnisha*”, the lower courses of a fronton with a sitting Buddha. The false southern door also remains almost intact.

Several frontons have been reconstructed on the surrounding ground. They are adorned with quite unusual motifs, - in particular a stylised floral decoration, an enormous head of Kala, and an ewer with a mouth in the form of a birds beak. The lines are generally rounded and the various elements badly deteriorated.

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*Date* late, with elements from  
the end of the 10th century  
*Cult* Brahmanic, then Buddhist  
*Clearing* by H. Marchal in 1918

## the Royal Square, Angkor Thom

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Just north of the Bayon, two parallel roads running north-south frame a long rectangle of 720 metres by 80, intersected towards their middle by a road that runs east from the axis of the ancient Royal Palace and leads to the Victory Gate (the east side of Angkor Thom). These roads serve, on the one side, the monuments to the west of the royal square so defined - the Baphuon, the Terrace of the Elephants with the Royal Palace and its temple the Phimeanakas, the Terrace of the Leper King, Tep Pranam and Prah Palilay - and on the other, the monuments situated to the east - the prasats Suor Prat, the two Kleang and Prah Pithu.

The royal square as such, today cleared of the trees which once crowded it, forms a vast court of about 550 metres by 200 that must have lent itself admirably to the display of processions and military parades. From the reign of Jayavarman VII, the builder of the Elephant Terrace towards the end of the 12th century, the king and his courtiers were able to view these proceedings from the Terrace - that was probably embellished with elegant light-weight tribunes.

In 1296, towards the end of the period of glory, the Chinese envoy Tcheou Ta-Kouan wrote an informative description for us of some of these festivals:

*"In front of the royal palace a great platform is raised, sufficient to hold more than a thousand people, and decorated from end to end with lanterns and flowers. Opposite they construct a high timber scaffolding on top of which rockets and firecrackers are arranged. As night falls, the King is besought to take part in the spectacle. The crackers are touched off and the rocket, big as cannons, are fired - shaking the whole city with their explosions..."*

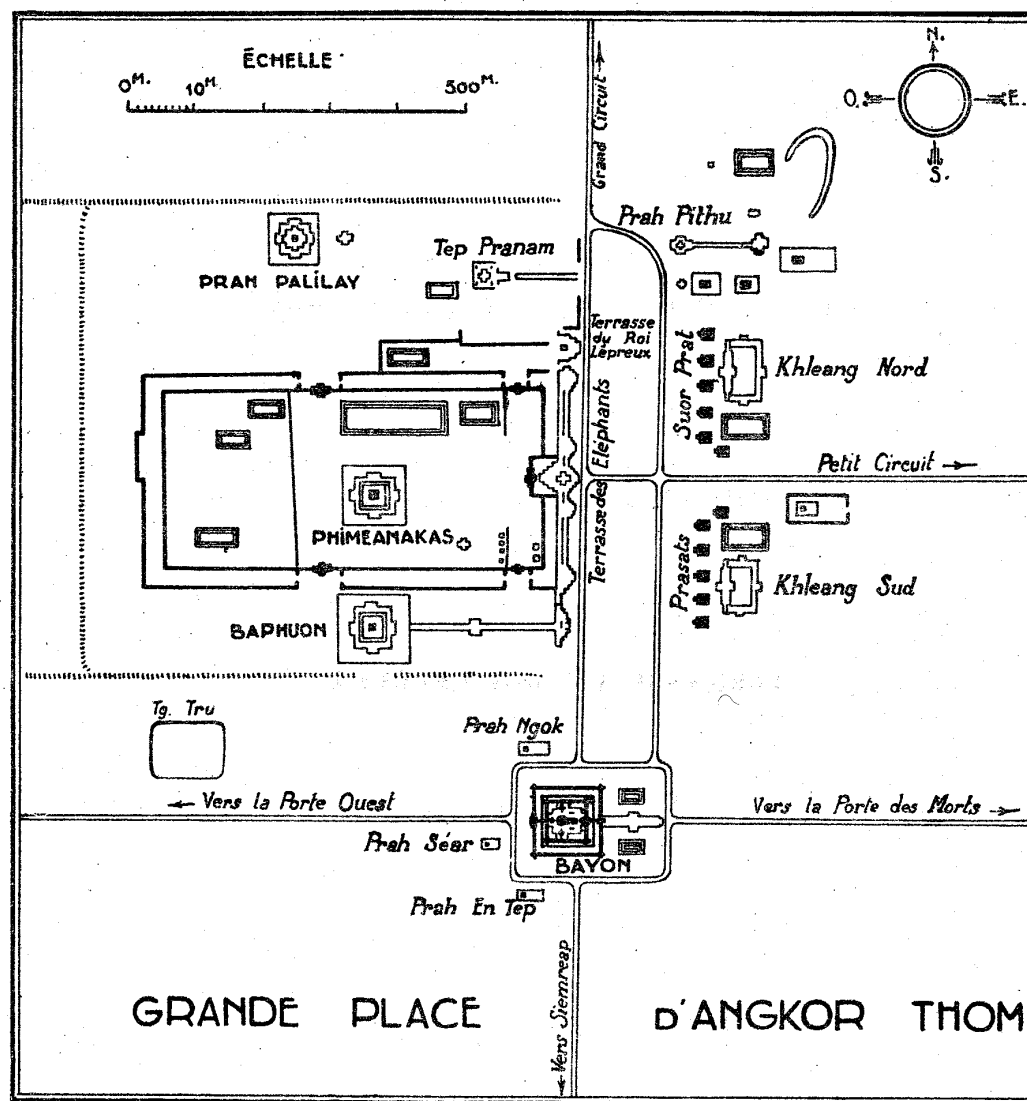
*"Every month a festival is held. In the ninth month the entire population of the kingdom is summoned to the capital to pass in review before the palace. With the fifth month comes the ceremony of "washing the Buddhas". Then Buddhas are carried from all over the kingdom, water is procured and the king lends a hand in the cleansing ...*

*"... When the King leaves his palace the procession is headed by cavalry - then come the flags, the banners and the music. Three to five hundred gaily dressed palace girls, with flowers in their hair and tapers in their hands, are massed together in a separate group. The tapers are alight even in broad daylight. Then come other girls carrying gold and silver vessels from the palace and a whole collection of ornaments, of a*

very particular design, whose uses were strange to me. Then come still more girls, the bodyguard of the palace, holding shields and lances. They, too, were separately aligned. Following them come chariots drawn by goats and horses, all adorned with gold. Ministers and princes, mounted on elephants, are preceded by countless bearers of scarlet parasols. Close behind come the royal wives and concubines, in palanquins and chariots, or mounted on horses or elephants, to whom are assigned at least a hundred parasols mottled with gold. Finally the Sovereign appears, standing erect on an elephant and holding the sacred sword. This elephant, his tusks sheathed in gold, is accompanied by bearers of twenty white parasols with golden shafts. All around is a bodyguard of elephants, drawn close together, and still more soldiers for complete protection, marching in close rank."

Can we not see such a parade represented on the bas-reliefs of the Bayon?

We recommend that a visit is best made in the morning to the monuments situated on the west of the main road, where one can wander along the Elephant Terrace - gaining access by its central stairway - to then visit successively the Terrace of the Leper King, the Buddha of Tep Pranam, Prah Palilay, the Royal Palace with Phimeanakas, to finish with the Baphuon. The monuments situated on the eastern side of the square should then be viewed in the afternoon, when the light is more favourable.



The terrace of the Elephants in its present form extends in length for over 300 metres - from the Baphuon to the terrace of the Leper King - though the two extremities remain imprecise in their layout and the terrace itself shows evidence of additions and alterations.

Along the square it presents five stairways, three of which dominate. The southern of these is framed by motifs, already found on the gates of Angkor Thom, of three elephant heads with trunks forming pillars tugging at lotuses.

The same arrangement can be seen on the two secondary stairways which frame the central stairway. As the most imposing, this has its side walls - as well as the walls of the terrace itself up to the secondary stairways - sculpted with lions and garudas "*as atlantes*". Above, the various changes in level are marked with lions sculpted in the round and naga-balustrades on blocks with garudas on their hoods, clearly in the style of the Bayon - except for a few earlier ones that have no garuda.

The northern extension has, rather than an axial stairway, two steep symmetrically arranged stairs. Another stairway on the northern façade is, like that on the southern, sculpted partly with garudas and lions "*as atlantes*", partly in a bas-relief of horizontal bands representing scenes of sport, wrestling, chariot racing and polo - which originated from India.

The other panels have been sculpted for their entire length in a high relief of elephants mounted with drivers. Represented in profile and almost full in size, they are depicted with some realism in hunting scenes and surmounted by a naga-balustrade on blocks.

The upper terrace - from where one can see the enclosure walls and the eastern gopura below of the earlier Royal Palace - has two levels with a four metre wide border towards the square and an upper platform of 10 metres, with a base sculpted with "*Hamsas*" (sacred geese). It certainly occupied by light-weight palatial pavilions, whose nature one can only guess at. The remains of some laterite blockwork lie just in front of the northern end which must have been clad with sandstone bas-reliefs.

An excavation undertaken just in front of this blockwork showed that the layout of this area had been altered. One can see - effectively in a kind of pit - a panel sculpted in high relief that can only have been part of an ancient façade, with expressive craftsmanship showing some remarkable modelling. It represents

## *the Terrace of the Elephants*

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*Date*      *late 12th century*  
*King*      *Jayavarman VII*  
                  *(posthumous name:*  
                  *Maha paramasangata pada)*  
*Clearing*   *by de Mecquenem in 1911 and*  
                  *H. Marchal in 1916*

a horse with five heads - the king's horse sheltered under tiered parasols - surrounded by apsaras and menacing genies armed with sticks who chase some terrified smaller figures. Finot and Goloubew suggest that this was a representation of Lokesvara in the form of the divine horse Balaha.

On the second southern stairway of the central group, another excavation has revealed some superb garudas and lions "*as atlantes*" in perfect preservation and aligned with the front of the main façade. This would seem to prove that this stairway was an addition.<sup>12</sup>



The terrace of the Leper King lies just to the north of the Terrace of the Elephants, aligned with it but standing separate.<sup>13</sup> As a mound of masonry about 25 metres across by 6 high, it forms a redented bastion with sides that are lined in sandstone and entirely sculpted with figures in a high relief, juxtaposed and separated in seven registers - the uppermost of which has almost entirely disappeared. Although now standing isolated - joined only at its north and south by the start of some returning walls - it is probable that this motif was previously but one element in a vast composition, perhaps complemented with pools, that has evidently undergone some later alteration.

The clearing work has revealed the existence, at two metres behind the outer face and following its line, of a second system of walls, also sculpted in bas-reliefs that are identical in composition - the void between them was filled with laterite that had to be extracted by pick. The fact that some of the sculptures on the internal wall remain in rough form and that the start of its north-south return towards the Elephant Terrace seems to align with it leads one to suspect that there must have been a simple modification to the plan, perhaps decided during the course of the work by a sovereign who was little concerned with practicalities of construction. It is not impossible, however, that this curious arrangement was a response to some symbolic preoccupation with the concept of Mount Meru, - with the buried wall representing the underworld of the cosmic mountain, balanced by its volume visible in elevation.

Whatever the reason, both the internal and external bas-reliefs are intentionally monotonous in presentation. They show only lines of seated figures, apparently representing the various fabulous characters - Naga, Garuda, Kumbhanda - which haunt the flanks of Mount Meru, shown as giants (sometimes with multiple arms), sword or club bearers, and women with bare torsos whose costume and triangular head dress with flaming discs relate to the style of the Bayon. To appreciate the exterior reliefs, the visitor should not forget to examine the north side - the best preserved - and its northern return that runs parallel to the road, where the start of some palace scenes are treated in quite a different spirit. One can see here in particular a sword swallower and some followers wearing a curious side-chignon.

Returning to the south side, one enters the internal corridor where the decor, set on a lower frieze of fish, elephants and the representation of a river running vertically, follows with the same elements as the exterior but is here enhanced with apsaras. Long protected, the sculpture remain very well preserved. At the end of the scene some laterite steps allow access to the upper level of the terrace.

## *the Terrace of the Leper King*

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*Date*      *late 12th*  
*King*      *Jayavarman VII*  
                 *(posthumous name:*  
                 *Maha paramasangata pada)*  
*Clearing*   *by de Mecquenem in 1911 and*  
                 *H. Marchal in 1917*

Surrounded by three smaller decapitated statues carrying clubs on their right shoulders, the *"Leper King"* sits in the *Javanese* manner with his right knee raised. Resting on a simple stone slab just where he was found<sup>14</sup> and which perhaps corresponds to his original position, he offers the peculiarity that he is entirely naked - a unique phenomenon in Khmer art - though with no indication of any genitalia. He also has no sign of leprosy other than a few patches of lichen - his celebrity being more literary than artistic. Uninspired in craftsmanship and a little foppish in nature, he must rank amongst average works without attaining the first order.

The statue of the *"Leper King"*, held by some to be a representation of *"Shiva ascetic"* is perhaps, in fact - if one is to believe a short 15th century inscription on the base - a *"Dharmaraja"*. This name is sometimes given to Yama and sometimes to one of his assessors - *"the Inspector of Qualities and Faults"* - the supreme judge in the hour of judgement. Cœdes considers that the hair-style - which is quite particular to this individual and formed of thick coils starting from the front and covering the nape of the neck - emphasises, like the two *"fangs"* near the corner of the lips, his demonic character. For Cœdes, the *"Terrace of the Leper King with its superimposed levels of fabulous figures is without doubt a representation of the 'Meru', and the fact that it occupies an area to the north of the Royal Palace - the area in Phnom Penh as in Bangkok reserved still now for royal cremations known as 'Val Prah Men' (the name of the pavilion prepared there for the funeral pyre) - leads one to suspect that the Terrace of the Leper King was none other than a permanent Men, which would explain why, at a time when this cult was still remembered, images of Dharmaraja, the 'god of the Dead', were placed there"*.

From the north-west corner of the Terrace of the Leper King one can then reach the Large Buddha of Tep Pranam along a track - without having to re-descend the stair on the south side or take the road again.





From the road, a hundred metres north of the Terrace of the Leper King, one can see the large sitting Buddha of Tep Pranam at the end of a long cutting through the forest. One gains access along a laterite pavement of 75 metres by 8, after which is a typical Buddhist terrace delimited with *"sema"*, or doubled steles, placed at the corners and on the axis.

Fifty metres long by fourteen wide, the western end of this terrace terminates with a cruciform platform of 30 metres by 30. The moulded walls of its plinth are in sandstone, as is part of its paving. Two lions in the style of the Bayon precede it to the east side, while the nagas of its balustrades date from an earlier period.

A stele inscribed on its four sides, found in the vicinity but whose true origin is unknown, tells of its ancient Buddhist monastery or *"asrama"* (Saugatasrama) founded by Yasovarman towards the end of the 9th century. The text defines the various rules of organisation - that are almost identical to those of the Shivaïte *"Brahmanasrama"* and of the *"Vairnavasrama"* founded by the same king to the south of the eastern baray. The buildings were certainly constructed in light-weight materials and one can find, on either side, the remains of funerary monuments or *"cedeï"*, as well as two stone tanks.

Set on a 1m.00 high moulded base, the statue itself is formed in assembled blocks and reaches to a height of 6m.00 - an enormous Buddha, sitting on a lotus and *"calling the earth to witness"*. Constructed from a number of re-used stones, the body has the look of a rough-formed model whose head - with its *"ushnisha"* topped by a flame - is certainly of a late period.

Just to the west of Tep Pranam are the remains of a pool with laterite steps, next to which it has been possible to reconstruct another large standing Buddha, over 4m.00 in height and making the ritual gesture of *"absence of fear"*. His face has not been found.

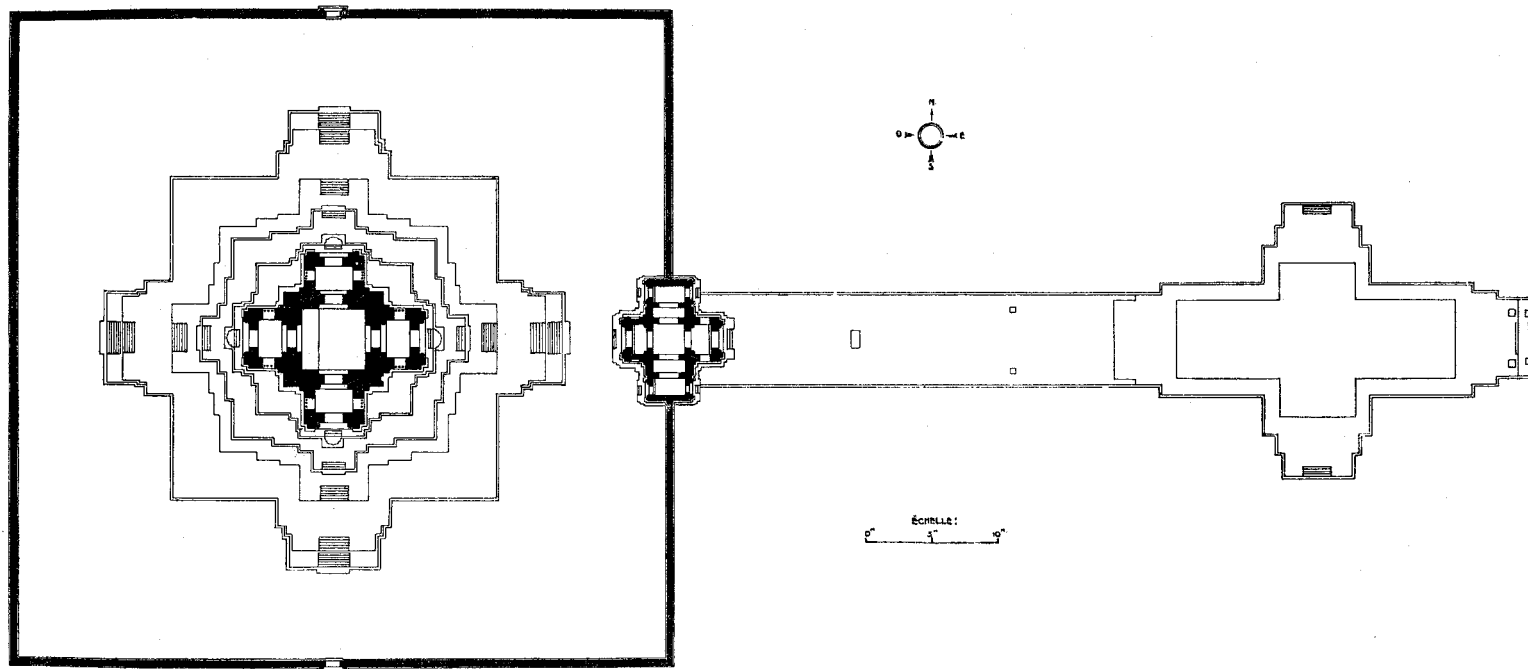
## Tep Pranam

*"The adoring god"*

*A large Buddha of a late period  
(15th and 16th centuries)*

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*Clearing by H. Marchal in 1918*



Setting off down the oblique path behind Tep Pranam, towards the north-west, one comes in 150 metres to the foot of a small terrace from where one can see the Buddha preceding the entrance, the gopura, and the sanctuary itself of Prah Palilay, surrounded by the soaring silk-cotton trees which provide a particularly dramatic setting.

This cruciform terrace, of about thirty metres in length by 8m.50 in width on its upper level, is in a remarkable state of preservation, constituting one of the finest specimens of this kind of work from the classic period, where the broadly crested seven-headed nagas of its balustrades are refined in line and carry no excess of material. Two dvarapalas or guardians, now decapitated, preceded it on the east side with two crouching lions, only one of which remains.

The terrace is linked to the gopura by a thirty three metre pavement, once bordered with "Hamsas", or sacred geese, sculpted on sandstone blocks, similar to those on Terrace of the elephants. A large Buddha of a late period, who for a long-time was missing his head - found in 1934 entwined in the roots of a tree - has been erected in front of the monument. Three metres high, including the base, he sits on a lotus "calling the earth to witness". His "ushnisha" finishes in a flame like that of the Buddha of Tep Pranam.

The laterite enclosure wall forms a square of 50 metres each side and is divided by a single gopura to the east. Before its restoration in 1937 nothing existed of this but a precarious and unstable structure - the fruit of all the usual problems inherent in the buildings in the style of the Bayon. It is now presented as the elegant silhouette of a cruciform building with three passageways, slender in proportion and crowned at the centre by a single storey square tower with a barrel-formed vault and double gable end.

Its main interest lies in the frontons, sculpted with Buddhist scenes that have extraordinarily managed to avoid being defaced by the iconoclasts. One can see, on the eastern side of the north wing "the offering of the animals in the forest" with elephants, monkeys and peacocks in a scene that could have been the origin of the name of Prah Palilay by the altering of "Parilyyaka", the name of the woods to which the Buddha retreated in solitude after leaving Kosambi. To the west is the seated Buddha receiving the "offerings from Sujata", and, on the gable end, the "calming of the furious elephant Nalagiri".

The sandstone sanctuary has a five metre square chamber that opens to its four sides with as many vestibules. It stands on a base which is itself set on a three tiered plinth of 6 metres in overall height.

## Prah Palilay

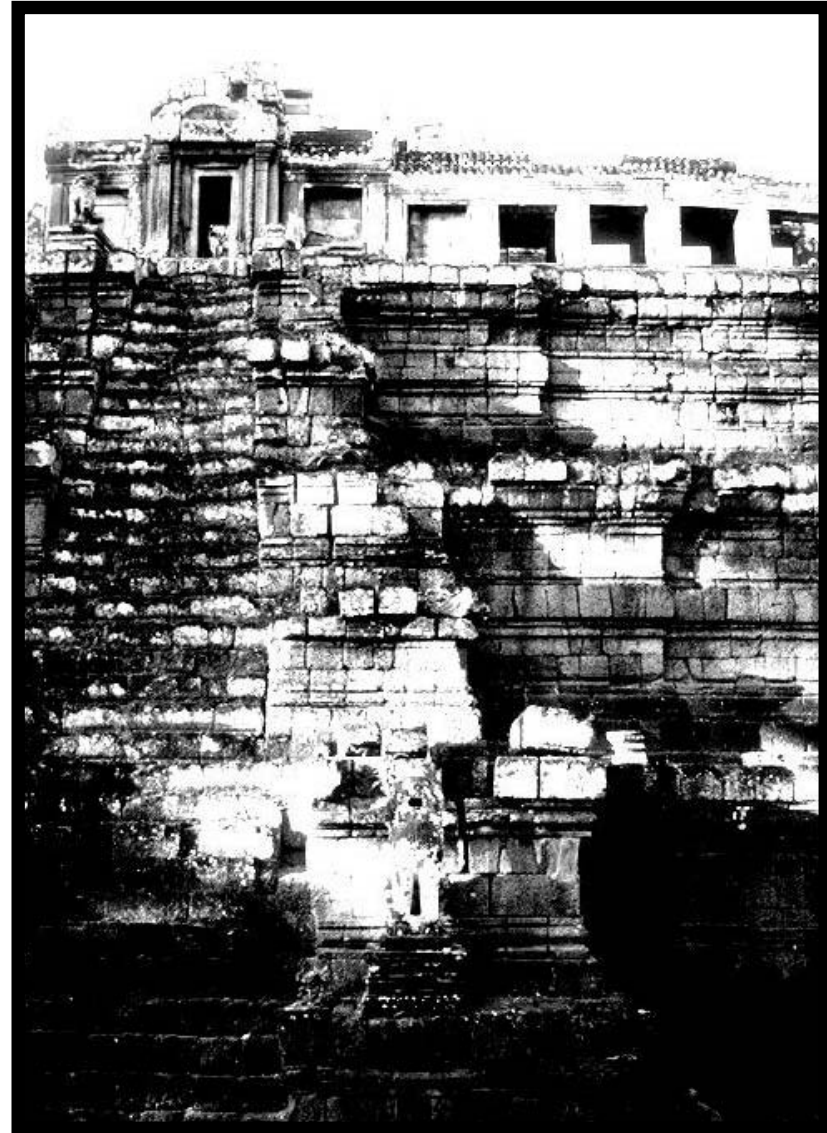
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|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Date     | sanctuary - first half of the 12th century<br>gopura - late 12th, early 13th century     |
| Cult     | Buddhist   |
| Clearing | by H. Marchal in 1918 - 1919<br>Anastylosis of the gopura<br>by M. Glaize in 1937 - 1938 |

Breached on each axis by a stairway with intermediate landings, these tiers are unfortunately badly ruined - as are the vestibules - which is all the more regrettable since their ornamentation, close in style to that of Angkor Wat, is from the best period of the classic art (the first half of the 12th century). Above stands a high, truncated pyramid forming a sort of rugged-faced chimney. Filled with re-used stone blocks it certainly forms an addition, and could only have served as a frame - like the towers with faces of the Bayon - for some form of light-weight covering.

Inside, hardwood beams doubling the lintel once gave support to the stonework above the doors. Completely decayed, they had to be replaced by elements in reinforced concrete over the north and west openings. A large Buddha of a later period but of some quality leans in the western opening, close to which can be found the fine torso of a standing Buddha.

Some excellent pieces of sculpture from the frontons have been taken to the Bayon storeroom for safe-keeping, while others have been placed around the monument - some representing Buddhist scenes and others Brahmanic divinities. One will see, in particular - on either side of the gopura within the enclosure - an Indra on a three headed elephant and *"the assault of Mara and his army of demons"* against the Buddha, whose image has not been found. This syncretism is not uncommon with the Khmer, and one suspects that if the Buddhist images of Prah Palilay have managed to escape destruction by the successors to Jayavarman VII, of an intransigent Hinduism, it was maybe due to the proximity of the Tep Pranam monastery (Saugatasrama) on which it perhaps depended and whose official status, situated in the shadow of the Royal Palace, could have endowed these saintly images with some particular immunity.



## the Royal Palace enclosure

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Leaving Prah Palilay on its axis through the breach in the south side of its enclosure wall - dramatically framed by silk-cotton trees - one makes one's way through the forest for about 200 metres. This is a pleasant walk, which can be extended by taking a path to the left, towards the east, that follows the external enclosure wall of the Royal Palace. In less than a hundred metres one comes to the remains of an ancient basin which must have been a part of the whole composition of the Leper King Terrace, and whose western lining wall is sculpted on its east side with some interesting nautical scenes.

Retracing one's steps, one gains access to the interior of the Royal Palace through the western gopura of the 5 metres high northern laterite wall. This solid wall is doubled by a second of more recent construction, separated from it by a 25 metre wide moat, defining a vast rectangle of 250 metres by 600.

The northern and southern sides of this 15 hectare enclosure each have two similar sandstone gopuras, the best preserved being the one through which we have just come. Cruciform in plan, it is formed of a square towered-passageway with reducing upper tiers and two barrel vaulted wings that terminate with voluted frontons. Careful and restrained in their decoration these have all the purity of the classic period. On the corners of the upper cornices, the perfectly preserved tower miniatures still remain in place. The floor level in the gopura more or less corresponds to the level at the base of the Phimeanakas pyramid, at the centre of the enclosure. It is 1m.20 higher than the external ground level with the difference made up on this side by a double base plinth.

One can then, if the access track is passable, take a path to the right - that is to say to the west - where there is an ancient pool of 50 metres by 25 with steps and a laterite surround, which was perhaps part of the area of the palace reserved for the women. Following the north side, one comes to a small terrace that has its retaining wall sculpted with bas-reliefs showing a line of figures, elephants and horses, under a frieze of "Hamsas" (sacred geese).

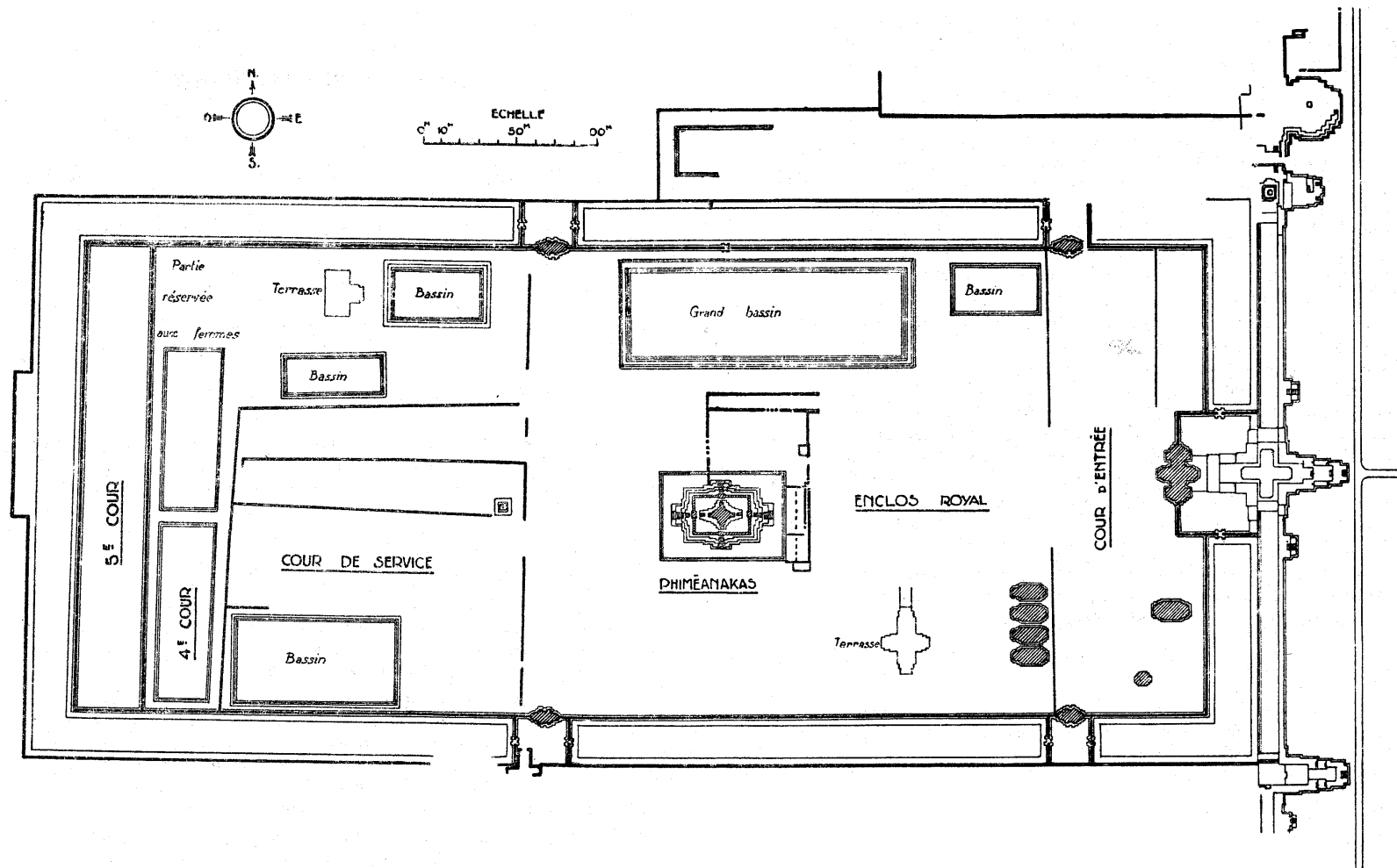
Retracing one's steps and continuing east, or, if one has not made the detour, turning immediately left on leaving the gopura, one then arrives at the north-west corner of a large 125 by 45 metre pool, excavated in the 10th century and filled two centuries later during the vast filling work that was to raise the general ground level of the capital. Having since been neglected, it seemed appropriate to re-establish its original condition - an excavation undertaken on the north side revealed thirteen sandstone steps,

## *Phimeanakas*

*Akas - Vimana*  
*"Celestial Palace"*

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|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>late 10th - early 11th century</i>   |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Rajendravarman</i><br><i>(posthumous name: Shivaloka)?</i><br><i>Jayavarman V</i><br><i>(posthumous name: Paramaviraloka)</i><br><i>Suryavarman I</i><br><i>(posthumous name:</i><br><i>Paramanirvanapada)</i> |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>originally Brahmanic</i>   |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by Commaille in 1908 and</i><br><i>H. Marchal from 1916 to 1918</i><br><i>Excavation of the north Basin</i><br><i>started by M. Glaize in 1944</i>   |



remarkably finished, of which seven were moulded and six were plain, giving an overall depth of 5m.32 down to a laterite base.

A pavement separates it from the northern enclosure wall and from another smaller pool situated to the east - which is about 40 metres by 20, and 4m.50 deep.

On its western, southern, and a small part of its eastern side, the large basin is bordered, above a frieze of fish and aquatic monsters, by two broad, high steps sculpted with bas-reliefs; - below are nagas in animal and human form surrounded by nagi-princesses similar to those on the Terrace of the Leper King, - and above, where the height varies, male and female garudas and winged figures. Clearly in the style of the Bayon, the composition must have been crowned with a naga-balustrade and probably served as a tribune for the king and other court dignitaries during the display of nautical events staged here in this delightful setting.

Descending to the lower level, the visitor can examine all the sculpture in detail by following the western side, and then the southern nearly to its centre, where some blocks of stone have been placed to give access to the upper level.

Here, the history of the Royal Palace presents one of its more enigmatic mysteries. It would appear that these steps, whatever their apparent decorative importance, in fact mainly performed an utilitarian function - which was to retain the enormous mass of earth-fill which covered, in layers of varying thickness, the major part of the original ground level within the enclosure - and in particular the central area occupied by the chapel of Phimeanakas where, at 2m.50 in depth, it masked half the lowest tier of the pyramid.

The clearing of the area surrounding Phimeanakas by Mr Marchal, and other more recent excavations in the vicinity, revealed the existence of an intermediate level between the present ground level and the original base level, at 0m.80 above the latter. The general filling had, therefore, been undertaken in at least two stages. Each lower level - and in particular the intermediate level - corresponds to various remains of walls, of foundations and of paved areas relating no doubt to the layout of structures in light-weight materials - particularly on the eastern side of the temple. This must have stood in quite a crowd of buildings and was perhaps sited within a special enclosure. The fact is confirmed by the nature of the fill which contains brick and tile debris, and even traces of charcoal from fire-damaged construction timbers.

The timing of these successive in-fills remains a mystery - except for the intermediate level where two inscribed steles dating from the reign of Jayavarman VII prove that this was gained after the end of the 12th century. The last stage, given the present level, corresponds therefore at the earliest to the last years of the reign of this king.

The first of the two steles, known as "*of the fig tree*", is interesting in the proof that it gives of the religious syncretism practised by the Khmer - the "*Bodhi*" tree is in fact here identified with the Brahmanic "*Trimurti*" - Brahma for the roots, Shiva for the trunk and Vishnou for the branches. The second stele gives "*the panegyric of a queen who reached nirvana after having performed numerous good deeds around her and practised the virtues of the ascetics*". (V. Goloubew).

In its present state it is therefore impossible to know exactly where within the Royal Palace the various buildings - and in particular the private dwellings of the sovereign - were sited, since they were all built in perishable materials. One cannot be guided here by rules of symmetry, - anyone in our day who has visited the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh before its alterations in





1942 will have some idea of the results of several centuries of work by different monarchs. Unlike the temples, here there is no desire to make a lasting work according to the unchangeable rules of monumental architecture. With enlargements, alterations and modifications made at will to suit the tastes, whims and comforts of each, how does one then interpret with any success the various remains which are often reduced to some foundations of walls and impossible to place in time?

Based on the existence of enclosures still visible in elevation, Mr Marchal was, however, able to divide the royal enclosure into five zones. These are, from east to west; - an entry court of 70 metres in depth served by three gopuras, - the royal enclosure, of 280 metres, surrounding Phimeanakas and the large pool, served by two gopuras, - the area reserved for the women, of 150 metres, with, to its south, the latrine yard, neither of which have any link to the outside, - a fourth court opening onto the preceding and reserved perhaps for the service girls - and finally a last court, completely enclosed and of uncertain use.

Valuable clues to the character of each of these enclosures were provided by the nature of the objects found during excavation - in bronze or pottery and for cultural, decorative or utilitarian use.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PHIMEANAKAS

Before the identification of Phnom Bakheng, the small pyramidal temple of Phimeanakas was thought by some to be the *"Central Mountain"* of the late 9th century capital of Yasovarman. However, it soon became considered as a sanctuary of the second order - partly because its rectangular plan and single prasat do not accord well with the idea of Mount Meru, the siege of the royal linga, located at the heart of the city itself - but also because it seems rather to justify its role as a private chapel, situated as it is within the palace.

This is the *"golden tower"* described by the Chinese envoy Tcheou Ta-Kouan that was found *"in the private dwellings of the sovereign"* - which gives their precise location and explains the large number of remains which appeared during the course of excavation at the foot itself of the pyramid. *"The local people"* - he adds *"commonly believe that in the tower lives a genie in the form of a nine headed serpent, which is the Lord of the entire kingdom. Every night this genie appears in the shape of a woman, with whom the sovereign couples. Not even the wives of the King may enter here. At the second watch, the King comes forth and is then free to sleep with his wives and concubines. Should the genie fail to appear for a single night, it is a sign that the King's death is at hand. If, on the other hand, the King should fail to keep his tryst, then disaster is sure to follow..."*.

Phimeanakas appears as a pyramid with three diminishing laterite tiers forming an overall height of 12 metres. Rectangular in plan it measures 35 metres east-west by 28 metres north-south at the base and 30 by 23 on the upper platform. The axes are marked by steep, wide stairways framed by powerful side walls that rise in six steps - two for each tier - and are embellished with lions. Small elephants, standing on ornate sandstone bases, mark the corners.

The plainly moulded tiers are narrow and inaccessible, appearing almost pelagic under their thin sandstone capping. This forms a low, narrow gallery with balustered windows around the perimeter, its corners simply marked by small pavilions. The towered passageways of the gopuras are flanked by two wings.

We can see here the first attempt - albeit quite restrained - of a continuous vaulted gallery in sandstone surrounding a terrace, which, together with the detail of the ornamentation, allows one to place it in time from the late 10th century to the early 11th.

The visitor, having climbed the pyramid by its western stairway - the only one that is practically manageable - should notice the quite particular construction of the ovoid vaults of these small one-by-two metre galleries. Rather than having been made in two curved half vaults they are instead topped by a capping stone, whose underside is simply hollowed to suit.

The upper terrace forms an inner courtyard from where one gets a superb view over the neighbouring temple of the Baphuon. One can still distinguish the original base outline of a rectangular building and, set on a 2m.50 laterite plinth, the ruined remains of a cruciform sanctuary - in laterite and sandstone - with four vestibules opening to the four cardinal points. The upper sections have completely disappeared. This structure is not in keeping, and must have been the result of some alteration - no doubt replacing, in the mean time, Tcheou Ta-Kouan's "*golden tower*" that probably had its superstructure constructed in light-weight materials.

It seems that some original form of Phimeanakas existed already during the reign of Yasovarman, since an inscription dated 910 engraved on the jamb of the eastern opening of the present sanctuary describes the setting of a statue of Vishnou-Krishna, invoked under the vocable of Trailokyanatha.

This seems quite reasonable, since Phimeanakas aligns with the axial northern avenue of Phnom Bakheng - Yasovarman's masterpiece - and so explains its somewhat curious location within the present royal enclosure, constructed later and with its principal entrance on the east side considerably offset with respect to the temple. This is not, however, the opinion of Louis Finot, who saw in the inscribed door jamb of Phimeanakas just re-used stones that had simply been transferred here from one of the sanctuaries at Phnom Bakheng when this latter became redundant.

Leaving the temple by the south through a breach formed in the enclosure wall, one can gain access straight to the eastern entrance of the Baphuon - at the foot of the monument - and skirt its north-east corner by a footpath. But it is preferable to leave the royal enclosure by its eastern gopura. In so doing one will see, to the right, an elegant cruciform sandstone terrace with a surrounding cornice supported on columns - a later construction since it is built on filled ground - and then, lining the length of the north-south wall that separates the royal enclosure from the entrance courtyard, the remains of four pavilions in brick, laterite and sandstone, opening to the west and badly ruined, which are probably older - and finally, in the south-east corner of the enclosure, two sandstone structures of a later period. The more imposing of these has two entrances, windows to the south and a large vault with an undulating profile similar to both the "*library*" type of buildings and the shelters for pilgrims.

The single eastern gopura - constituting the principal entrance to the palace behind the central stairway of the Terrace of the Elephants - is grander than those on the north and south sides since it has two lateral passageways. Except for the central part forming a tower, it is vaulted in brick and is noteworthy for the purity of its proportions, the elegance of its internal cornice and the quality of its colonnettes and lintels - which have a head of Kala as the central motif. The inscriptions on the door jambs, dating from 1011 during the reign of Suryavarman I, reproduce the fidelity oaths of the dignitaries of the kingdom. The text is very close to that which is still in use today.

## Baphuon

The Baphuon adjoins the southern enclosure of the Royal Palace.<sup>15</sup> Its outer eastern gopura lies on the same longitudinal axis as the Elephant Terrace, which also aligns with the central tower of the Bayon, located just to the south. The two temples differ in age and are not, however, related, but rather juxtaposed in an apparently aimless manner that suggests no ancient connection. On its three other sides the temple is surrounded by a moulded enclosure wall, constructed unusually in sandstone which, to the north, becomes a retaining wall since the embankment has been filled. The dimensions of this rectangle are 425 metres by 125.

Measuring 120 metres east-west by 100 metres north-south at its base, the temple-mountain of the Baphuon stands between the royal palace enclosure and the earth embankment which, bordering to the south, probably constituted the north bank of the moat surrounding the capital of Yasovarman, centred on Phnom Bakheng during the ninth century. Its considerable size would make it without doubt one of the more imposing of the Angkor monuments - were it located on a less restricted site. This is *"the Copper Tower higher even than the Golden Tower (the Bayon) - a truly astonishing spectacle"* described by Tcheou Ta-Kouan at the end of the 13th century.

The Inscriptions of Lovek and Prah Ngok, found at the very foot of the Baphuon, enabled Mr Coëdes to identify this as the *"golden mountain"* (svarnadri) *"an ornament of the three worlds"* erected by Udayadityavarman II at the centre of his capital, and where, in a temple of gold, there stood a Shiva linga.

Before its clearing, the Baphuon was but a vegetation covered mound that had suffered destruction by both natural and human forces. It appears today as a collection of crumbling structures, carried on powerful foundations, from which the gopuras emerge at mid height with their remarkably preserved sculpted walls and bas-reliefs. It is the first realisation in Angkor of a building with concentric stone galleries enclosing a central tower - formed of an artificial earth mound retained by rough laterite walls clad in sandstone. Subsidence caused by water action has been unavoidable, despite some precautionary drainage.

The monumental three-part entrance, bordering the royal square, is composed of cruciform gopuras joined by galleries, all set on a decorated base platform, and is a precursor of the western entrance to Angkor Wat. Three lingas were found at the fourth enclosure on leaving the centre of the monument, where only some wall bases and dangerously leaning porticoes remain - one in each passage.

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>middle of 11th century</i>  |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Udayadityavarman II</i>   |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic (Shiva)</i>   |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by Commaille from 1908 to 1914</i><br><i>Protective works</i><br><i>by H. Marchal, 1916 -1918</i> |

There is then a sandstone causeway - about 200 metres long - formed as a sort of bridge with long paving stones laid on three lines of short columns, followed - perhaps as a result of some miscalculation - by a 5.5 metre wide dike, formed as an embankment between two lateral walls.

At about two thirds of the way along this causeway, a badly ruined cruciform pavilion, which must have been decorated with bas-reliefs, intersects the pathway. Two terraces extend to the north and south, the latter of which leads to a 37 by 28 metre pool surrounded by sandstone steps.

The temple itself is formed as a high, five tiered pyramid in sandstone which, in contrast to those of the 9th and 10th centuries, is rectangular in plan rather than square - with the superimposed upper tiers not decreasing but practically constant in height, almost certainly so that the view of the top was not obscured by the galleries. These galleries surround the first, third and the fifth tiers. The top terrace is about twenty metres above ground level. The base walls, though powerfully moulded, are not sculpted.

The outer gallery of the third enclosure has almost entirely disappeared, its materials having been used relatively recently to construct the outline of an enormous and almost shapeless reclining Buddha, on the western face of the upper levels, from a pile of blocks. Fortunately the gopura with bas-reliefs situated at mid height has simply been incorporated into this masonry without being demolished. The corner towers have been rased, as have almost all of the north and west gopuras.

Entering the monument by the eastern gopura, where three passageways are served by steep stairs, one can see, over the connecting door between the central section and the north wing, evidence of a practice peculiar to this period of Khmer art and which often caused structural failure; - that of cutting a channel in the sandstone lintel in order to set in a secondary wooden beam, whose time-worn remains are still visible.

This gopura is larger than the three others of this entrance, having a central tower and doubled wings with barrel-formed vaults. The façades are richly ornate with foliated scrolls, with devatas, with small animals treated with much vitality and simplicity, and with a pattern of lotus flowers set in squares - a decorative motif "*in tapestry*" found already at Banteay Srei.

In the large surrounding courtyard one can see, in the north-east corner, the result of a recent collapse. Continuing past the remains of two cruciform "*library*" type buildings with four vestibules - once linked to one another by a narrow walkway raised on columns similar to those at the second level of Angkor Wat, and which one can find again, though less developed, on the western side - one reaches the south gopura. This is in a better state of preservation, and has a decoration, as before, of foliated scrolls, flowers and animals and of charming "*hipped*" devatas. There is also, in an unusually small panel, an ascetic who seems deliberately to depart from the austerity of his normal life.

Concrete steps alleviate the southern stairs where the treads, richly ornate and much worn - as on the other sides - are of a difficult height to negotiate and climb, there being no intermediate landing between the tiers.

The second level has its enclosure of narrow galleries almost intact, with windows on the two sides walled in and decorated with balusters to the exterior. The vaulted roof, in contrast to that of Phimeanakas, has a central joint, and the piers are treated decoratively as pilasters.

The corner towers have disappeared except for some remnants of wall supported by props in the south-east corner. The gopuras have a central tower with two upper tiers and three wings - the walls of which are sculpted in remarkable bas-reliefs that are worth a close look (see the following description). The lotus bud crown of the south gopura is almost preserved in

its entirety, and its purity of line makes it one of the best examples of this type of motif to be found throughout the various periods of Khmer art.

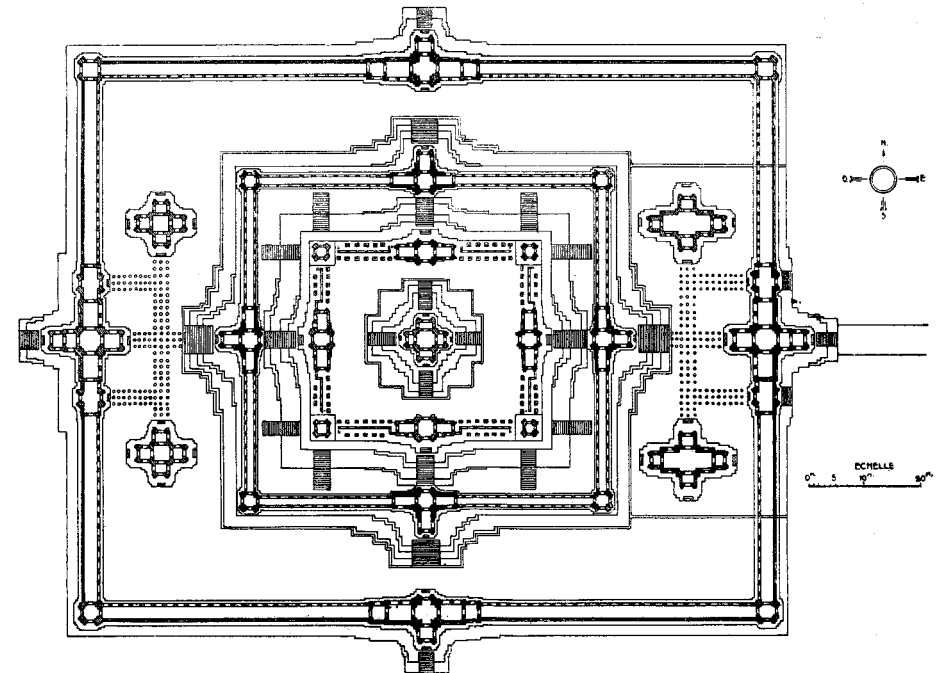
The proximity of the following tier makes the internal courtyard of the second level more of a narrow corridor that is further reduced by the presence, on each side, of the three access stairs to the third level, which again climb the height of two tiers. To avoid the steep steps one can take, just to the west of the southern gopura, an easier stairway, amongst the rubble of the south-west corner of the pyramid's upper tier.

The top platform, of 42 by 36 metres, has suffered a number of slides, and there now only remains a small part of the gopuras with their central tower and two wings - their walls beautifully sculpted with a decoration animated with figurines. Here, a remaining part of a tower in the north-east corner and some bases of wall and gallery pillars give the only indication of the layout. These galleries have the peculiarity of being divided in two along their longitudinal axis by a partition pierced by balustraded windows - a unique arrangement that must have given the illusion of a gallery on pillars, which was a formula still unknown at that time.

The view - to the eastern access causeway, - to Phnom Bakheng to the south, to the Phimeanakas on the same axis to the north and out over the forest of Angkor - is particularly pleasant. Nonetheless, one should not forget to admire the architectural qualities of the base platform of the central sanctuary, whose superstructure must have been constructed in light-weight materials and golden in colour in accordance with descriptions of the time.

This base platform is doubled - one square in plan enclosing another that is cruciform - with each having an ornamentation of a quality that puts them with the very best of the classical art. The existence of this hidden base platform was perhaps caused by an alteration in the setting-out that was designed to increase the volume of the central tower - or else - as we have

seen at the Bayon - in order perhaps to emphasise in symbolic form the character of the temple-mountain as mount Meru, which continues under the ground in equal proportion to its elevation above.



#### THE BAS-RELIEFS.<sup>16</sup>

*"At the Baphuon", Mr Cœdes tells us, "the small scenes which decorate the four entrances to the internal gallery are drawn from the same sources as are those at Angkor Wat. If we are looking for scenes from the Ramayana, for example, then we can find them here on the four doors to the east with scenes from the Mahabharata, and to the south with scenes from the legend of Krishna. The order in which the tableaux are placed apparently corresponds neither to the pradakshina nor to the prasavya, but rather to a purely decorative intention."*

The bas-reliefs here follow the first attempt at a narrative scene sculpted at Bakong towards the end of the 9th century, followed thereafter by isolated scenes on lintels and frontons. They are arranged in superposed panels, reading generally from bottom to top like the registers and are, as such, small pictures, skilfully treated with a naive realism, full of charm and relating to various episodes of everyday life. The composition is always spacious and the separate figures minutely detailed.

#### *SOUTH GOPURA, SOUTH SIDE.*

On the western part can be seen - besides various scenes of daily life including a tiger chasing a hermit who is seeking refuge up a tree, a hunter shooting a bird with a blow-pipe, fighting bulls, ascetics in prayer and a woman playing with a child, - scenes from the childhood of Krishna; - the exchange with another child that was to save the life of the young god, the children's slaughter, then Krishna tearing naga in two and wrestling with human-faced bulls.

To the east are scenes from the life of the ascetics, one of whom carries a human head shot by an arrow that apparently belongs to the person in prayer directly below - with scenes of wrestling between animals and scenes of single-armed combat.

#### *SOUTH GOPURA, NORTH SIDE.*

To the east, on the lower part, are scenes from the life of the ascetics, - one is stirring the contents of a jar, another suffers from indigestion while a further seems to be ill or dying. Above are scenes from the Ramayana showing combat between monkeys and giants, and a meeting between Hanuman and Sita who sit under an asoka tree. Another higher panel describes the life of Vishnou - twice shown with his usual attributes.

To the west - where the wall is truncated - are forest scenes with ascetics, men and animals and scenes of single-armed combat.

#### *EAST GOPURA, EAST SIDE*

To the south are scenes from the Ramayana - the ordeal of Sita, suffering to prove her purity. One can see the young princess sitting on Rama's knee - then Sita on her pyre, her hands clasped above her head and Agni the god of fire at her side - then Mahesvara on his bull. Above are Rama and Sita on their respective thrones. Next is an episode from the Mahabharata - the duel between Arjuna and Shiva over a wild boar - a form taken by the rakshasa, Muka.

To the north is another scene from the Mahabharata - which one can find again represented on the southern section of the western gallery at Angkor Wat - but outlined here in the single action of some of the main actors; - above a group of musicians is the chief of the Pandavas going to battle with the Kauravas - then his duel against their chief, Bhishma, and the death of the latter - whom one can see first falling from his chariot and then lying dead, lanced with arrows. Note how the figures are out of scale, larger than their horses - with the body of the vanquished too large for the palace that shelters him.

Beside are other parts of the battle, with some small scenes including one in which a man undresses a woman by unfurling her *"sarong"*.

*EAST GOPURA, WEST SIDE.*

To the north is the capture of a wild elephant with the help of some tame elephants - then a parade of chariots and servants and scenes from the life of ascetics with, to the left, an archer shooting an arrow at a woman. Further is wrestling between men, monkeys and an elephant. To the south, above a person hunting a tiger, is a duel over a woman, or a scene of decapitation. To the right, men struggle with animals. There are ascetics in the forest, women and archers and a king enthroned amongst his wives.

*NORTH GOPURA, NORTH SIDE.*

To the east are scenes from the Ramayana (the battle of Lanka); - Rama on his horse-drawn chariot, Ravana with multi heads and arms drawn by monsters with human heads - Ravana's fight against the monkeys Hanuman and Nila - Sugriva against a chief Rakshasa - and Ravana against Rama carried by Hanuman. Sita, captive in the palace of Ravana, meets Hanuman the monkey in the grove of asoka trees, returning the ring to him that is to prove the success of his mission, while along the first window of the gallery are some charming animal motifs.

To the west, beside similar motifs of animals and figurines, is once again the battle of Lanka; - one of the sons of Ravana, Indrajit, shooting Rama and his brother Lakshmana with magic arrows which turn into snakes and encoil them both while the monkeys, their allies, lament. Garuda swoops from the sky to free them, healing their wounds by touching them, - Rama, mounted on the chariot Pushpaka, harnessed with "Hamsas" (sacred geese), returns to Ayodhya after having taken leave of the monkeys, - still further, under two elephants in confrontation and an ascetic, churning, is the alliance of Rama and Lakshmana with the monkey Sugriva who, exiled by his brother Valin to mount Mayala, is lamenting. Next is the wrestling between the two brothers and the defeat of Valin, thanks to the intervention of Rama, who unashamedly shoots him in the back with an arrow.

*NORTH GOPURA, SOUTH SIDE.*

To the east are bulls and horses in confrontation, and then again the alliance of Rama and Lakshmana with Sugriva. To the west are scenes of wrestling between men and animals - in one corner is Sita in the asoka grove.

*WEST GOPURA, WEST SIDE.*

To the north, single-armed combat and animals, then, above musicians, a warrior on an elephant preceded by an archer - and another on his chariot crossing a flight of arrows. To the south, again above musicians, is a person whirling an elephant which he holds by a leg, and, above, an airborne palace carried by "Hamsas", where a god with three heads and four arms sits throned. Then, more scenes of single combat - in a chariot and in front of a palace - and Arjuna receiving weapons from the hands of Shiva.

*WEST GOPURA, EAST SIDE.*

To the north are scenes of wrestling and single-armed combat interspersed with animals. To the south one can see a mixture of men and monkeys with, in the centre of the panel, a very large dying person carried by a very small elephant. Beyond; - a wild boar fight, - an archer shooting an arrow at a monster with a human head - and two remarkable horses in confrontation.

## Prasats Suor Prat

*"The towers of the tight-rope dancers"*

The Prasats Suor Prat are the twelve rugged looking towers in laterite and sandstone which line the eastern side of the royal square in Angkor Thom and the start of the road leading to the Victory Gate, on either side of which they are symmetrically arranged.

Their function remains unknown, since their romantic name, which corresponds to the local belief that they were used to support a high wire stretched between them for acrobatics during certain festivals, is probably irrelevant. The explanation of their use given by Tcheou Ta-Kouan, though picturesque, is also hardly adequate:- *"In front of the palace there are twelve small stone towers. When two men dispute over some unknown matter, each of the contestants is forced to sit in one of them while the relatives stand watch at the base. After three or four days, he who is wrong shows it by suffering some illness - ulcers, or catarrh, or malignant fever - while the other remains in perfect health. Thus right or wrong is determined by what is called 'divine judgement'..."*

The character of these towers is all the more puzzling since, with balustered windows on three of their sides, they do not correspond to the usual form of sanctuary, even though several statues were found there during clearing works. Their exact use remains therefore a mystery.

Square in plan, they were built in laterite, crudely finished inside and have two upper tiers, the higher of which is covered in a barrel-formed vault and has two gable ends. Only the frames of the openings, the lintels and the frontons are in sandstone, though they remain in rough form with only some of the frontons having the sketched outlines of nagas' curves mounted on flaming leaves and foliated scrolls decorated with the small lions which are typical of the 12th century. There is no trace of any plaster, and the collection gives the impression of being unfinished, which is only typical of later buildings. Antefixes sculpted with ascetics or nagas - which are not so typical - have been found in several places. The entrance doors, opening towards the royal terrace and the road to the Victory Gate and situated at a lower level than the interior of the towers, have been adjusted during the forming of a kind of raised terrace which partially blocked them for the length of the square. This embankment must have been formed at a later date.

On either side of the road leading to the Victory Gate, in a corner defined by the Prasats Suor Prat, is a large pool of 80 metres by 60 bordered with steps. Behind the southern is a well-preserved Buddhist terrace, modified to take the large statue of the *"Buddha-King"*, discovered by Mr Trouvé in 1933 down the central well of the Bayon.

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*Date* late 12th century  
*King* Jayavarman VII  
*Cult* Brahmanic (Vishnou)  
*Clearing* by Mr Commaille in 1908  
and Mr H. Marchal 1919-20  
*Restoration of prasat no.4* 1955 - 6



Just behind the Prasats Suor Prat towers and nearly opposite the extreme northern and southern limits of the Elephant Terrace, running parallel to the long side of the royal square, are two imposing sandstone buildings whose central core, preceded by vestibules to the east and west, is flanked by galleries and then smaller annexes at a lower level. These are the north and south Kleang, the name of which, “storeroom”, does no justice to the monumental character of the buildings, to the rich perfection of their decoration or to the care taken in their construction. Of an unusual width - 4m.20 for the south Kleang and 4m.70 for the north Kleang - each rather gives the impression of being some kind of palace, destined perhaps for the reception of foreign princes or of visiting dignitaries.

If at first sight the two Kleang appear similar, they are in fact noticeably different, - the southern, remaining unfinished, seems later than the northern - though both date from the period between Pre Rup and the Baphuon (late 10th - middle of 11th century) being of the same period as the gopuras of the royal enclosure. Their decoration is slightly later than the style of Banteay Srei. Two inscriptions in the north Kleang date from Suryavarman I (1002 - 1049) while two others from the south Kleang reproduce the formula of the oath of servants, inscribed during the reign of the same king (1011) on the door jambs of the east gopura of the Royal Palace.

#### SOUTH KLEANG

Set on a plain moulded base platform, the 0m.90 thick walls are decorated at the base and at the cornice and are entirely of sandstone - pierced on the two main sides by large square windows, each with seven balusters. The east and west porticoes have four windows - their wooden and tiled roofs have completely disappeared. The large internal gallery, as a single space, extends overall for 45m, with, on the axis, two projections corresponding to the porticoes. Their only decoration is a frieze under the cornice. The two small annexes at either end, at a lower level, are finished externally with a false door and open to the west side with a window, while to the east a small door linked them to a system of partial galleries, at least in light-weight materials, enclosing an internal rectangular courtyard of about 50 metres by 30, itself divided into two by another north-south gallery. Virtually nothing remains of this arrangement.

#### NORTH KLEANG

Preceded to the west by a cruciform terrace of a late period, built on filled ground and with a balustrade in nagas of various styles, the north Kleang is the more imposing building and the more carefully executed - its plinth has its entire surface sculpted with a classic profile of opposing diamonds, with a central

## *the Kleang*

*“The storerooms”*

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|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>late 10th century - beginning of 11th century</i>  |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Jayavarman V<br/>(posthumous name: Paramaviraloka)<br/>or Suryavarman I<br/>(posthumous name:<br/>Paramanirvanapada)</i> |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by Commaille in 1908 and<br/>H. Marchal from 1919 to 1920</i>  |

band of foliated scrolls which is one of the finest in Khmer art. Its colonnettes have four large bands instead of the eight of the south Kleang - which so dates them earlier - and are therefore more sturdy, while the lintels and frontons, with the head of Kala set on a background decoration of large vegetal scrolls, show characteristics of the 10th - 11th centuries.

The walls are also thicker - 1m.50 - and support within the bare interior a false upper storey which, due to the bad practice of supporting the stonework above the deep reveal of the openings with doubled wooden beams, has inevitably collapsed. Sandstone was only used as an external face to the laterite blockwork.

In the centre, at a later date, the long gallery with its tiled roof was split by a masonry construction forming a tower, which has today mostly crumbled. This divided it into a square middle room of 4m.50 flanked by two others of 18m.70 by 4m.70. In the passage one can still see the doubled wooden beams in place above the connecting doorways. Two remarkable bronze statuettes were found in these galleries - one of Vishnou, the other of Lokeshvara.

Towards the east extends the same arrangement of surrounding galleries that one finds at the south Kleang, but here it was possible to rebuild some elements of the external walls, with their cornice and long horizontal windows, after having found them on the ground. The centre of the courtyard is marked by a small cruciform sanctuary which approaches the style of Angkor Wat. Its sculpted base platform, of which only the main level remains, must have been connected to the galleries by light-weight passages forming a cross. The 2m.00 by 2m.00 sanctuary chamber is open to the four axes with as many small doors. One can see in the north-east corner of its base a "*somasutra*" - an evacuation channel for lustral water.

#### THE SMALL MONUMENT TO THE EAST OF THE NORTH KLEANG.

Just to the east, a small group of structures opening to the west has been found to form a complete monument - relating in style to Banteay Srei and slightly predating the Kleang. A laterite wall forms a square of some thirty metres each side, enclosing the remains of a 2m.10 square prasat that has three false doors, two "*library*" type buildings and a miniature cruciform gopura of 1m.80 by 2m.00. In front, one of the lions marking the entrance still stands. Of the sanctuary, only the bases of the corner piers remain - decorated with devatas in their niches which are similar to, but slightly larger than those at Banteay Srei. The miniature sanctuary towers from the upper corners are arranged on the ground - as are the frontons of the two "*libraries*". Within the southern library, eleven small lingas of 0m.47 in height were found curiously aligned in three rows.

One refers, in the name Prah Pithu, to a collection of five small temples and terraces situated at the extreme north of the royal square on the east side, just in front of Tep Pranam. Arranged without any apparent order they are unfortunately badly ruined, but their high base platforms and that which remains of their principal levels - their superstructures having disappeared - reveals the excellent quality of their ornamentation and places them in the best period of classic art, - that of Angkor Wat (the first half of the 12th century).

From the road, one reaches THE FIRST TEMPLE by means of an elegant cruciform terrace on two levels, whose corbelled edges are supported by channelled columns and surmounted by balustrades with particularly fine, sweeping nagas - comparable to those preceding the monument of Prah Palilay.

The sandstone boundary wall, with its coping curiously treated in imitation of gallery vaults, then encloses an area of 45 metres by 40. It is intersected to the east and west by small gopuras with a central core and two wings, remaining rough in form.

The sanctuary, set high on an ornate three-tiered base platform - each with a central band and which reach six metres overall - has four axial stairs with a single landing on the first tier. It encloses a three metre square sanctuary chamber, open on its four sides to as many two windowed vestibules, that contains a large one metre linga on its pedestal.

The walls are truncated at the top of the niches for devatas, which are particularly pleasing - despite their feet being represented in profile - and surrounded by bands of decoration enhanced with dancing figurines. It is notable that their skirts are decorated with small flowers, a motif that became general in the style of the Bayon. The lintel of the western opening shows a highly stylised depiction of the scene from the churning of the Ocean, while the colonnettes are densely ornate and sixteen sided, making them seem almost cylindrical.

The SECOND TEMPLE is set on the same axis as the first and placed in an enclosure of 35 metres by 28, defined by a sandstone wall constructed on a moulded base. There are no gopuras but only simple doors framed with rough pilasters.

## *Prah Pithu*

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>early 12th century</i>  |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic except for<br/>one Buddhist sanctuary</i>           |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by Commaille in 1908 and<br/>H. Marchal from 1918 to 1920</i> |

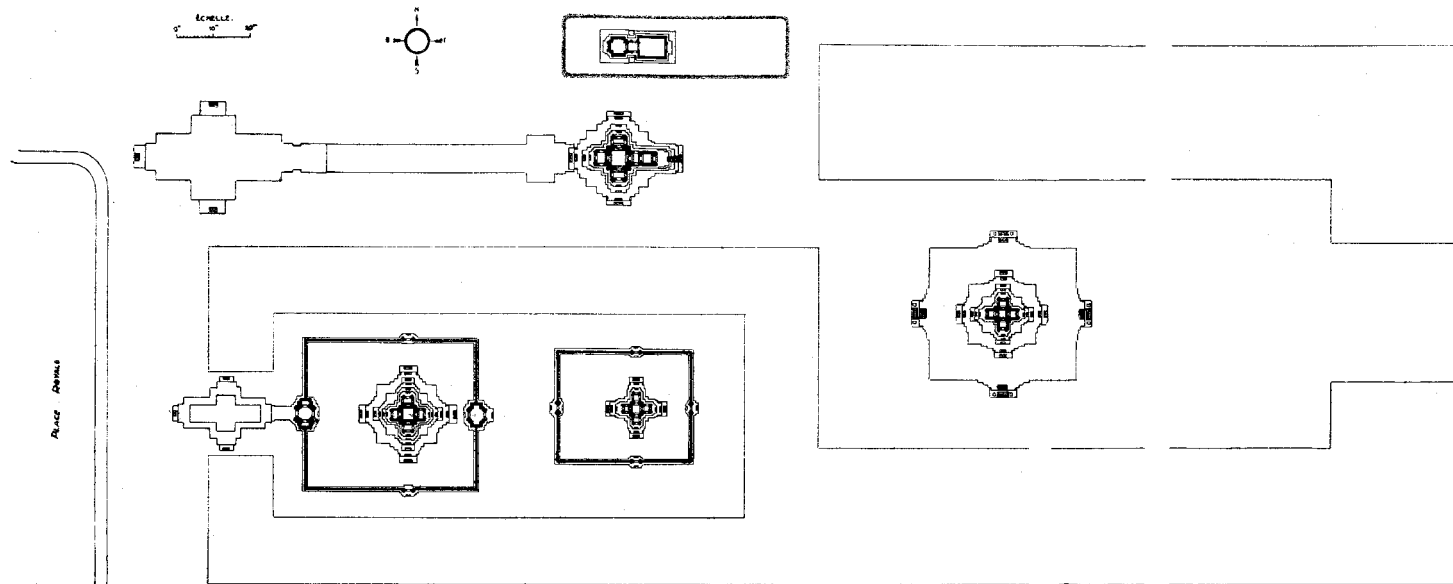


The sanctuary, presenting the same characteristics in plan as the first but reduced in dimension, has but a single sanctuary chamber of two metres. The walls have been entirely sculpted, and the devatas - small in stature and with their feet forwards - are replaced on either side of the entrances with dvarapalas. Small scenes with figures have been sculpted in blind arches at the base of the pilasters - as was customary at the time of Angkor Wat.

The colonnettes remain unfinished, as does the southern lintel showing Krishna standing on a head of Kala. The northern lintel is dedicated to the churning of the Ocean, and the western to the "Trimurti" or Brahmanic Trinity - mounted again on a head of Kala is Shiva with multiple arms dancing between Vishnou and Brahma.

Crossing an ancient moat, one reaches the THIRD TEMPLE, located behind the two others and off axis by thirty metres towards the north. Conceived again according to the same plan, it is set on a terrace of some 40 metres in width by four in height, with moulded retaining walls breached by stairways embellished with lions.

The two storey sanctuary on its moulded base platform is quite plain, with no decoration and blind windows with balusters. Remaining unfinished it seems to be of a later period, and must have been Buddhist. Within the 2m.20 high sanctuary chamber runs a double frieze of Buddhas of a late period - with flaming "ushnisha" - and on its eastern lintel are sculpted three other representations of the Sage surrounded by figures in prayer, all of which are probably later than the architecture. The remains of other more interesting frontons - including a remarkable "Cutting of the Hair", which is now in the Bayon storeroom - have also been found in the vicinity.



Continuing towards the east after having skirted the moulded laterite wall of a Buddhist terrace - surrounded by steles or "*semas*" defining the sacred area and bordered by some remains of a balustrade with nagas - one comes to an ancient "*srah*" (pool) into which descends a stairway guarded by two small elephants sculpted in the round.

Retracing one's steps, one finds, to the north of the second temple, a FOURTH TEMPLE, distinguished from the others by the absence of any enclosure and the existence, to the east, of a double vestibule accentuating its orientation. Here, the more imposing square sanctuary chamber (3m.80 each side) was set on a base and a sculpted double plinth, sheltering a large 1m.50 linga whose sixteen-holed sacred deposit stone has also been found. Externally the mural decoration has only been started, but one can recognise the principal characteristics of the Angkor Wat style - also evident in the ornamentation of the pilasters, with elements in the form of a lyre.

Finally, again further to the north and raised on a simple earth mound, is a FIFTH TEMPLE which, differing from the others, appears to be placed in time between Angkor Wat and the Bayon. It is composed of two main buildings linked by a vestibule. The sanctuary, to the west, is closed to the west with a false door. The pilasters are ornate with foliated scrolls finishing in the heads of birds. The 3m.00 by 3m.50 sanctuary chamber is formed as three false aisles and encloses a linga of 0m.95 in height.

The larger chamber has mostly collapsed. Measuring 7 metres by 8, on its western side one can still see the two half frontons that flanked the adjoining vestibule. To the north, the victory of Krishna mounted on Garuda on the asura Bana - to the south, the "*Three Strides of Vishnou*". The dedication of this temple, which in some ways resembles the buildings for the shelter of pilgrims to be found at the entrance of various other monuments, remains a mystery.

One regains the westwards path by skirting a charming pool to the north - always full of water and reminiscent of some rural French scene - and then a cruciform terrace bordered, like that on arrival, by colonnettes.



Access to this temple is gained along a 250m forest track leading south from a point 900 metres east of the royal square in Angkor Thom, on the road to the Victory gate.

Its principal interest lies in the fact that it is the last of the Angkor monuments to have been dated with any precision - for a four sided inscribed stele places it towards the end of the 13th century, with some information on the period which followed the death of Jayavarman VII. It also mentions that it was dedicated to deified figures - the Brahman Mangalartha, assimilated to Vishnou, and his Mother. Its architecture, which shows indication of the re-use of some materials, differs little to that of various examples from the last part of the style of the Bayon.

An isolated sandstone sanctuary, it opens to the east and is raised on a double base plinth. Moulded and decorated this is breached by four projecting axial stairways - the super-structure has disappeared. Cruciform in plan with four avant-corps, it is preceded to the east by a vestibule, with false windows ornate with partially lowered blinds. The false doors are plainly moulded, as are the entrance colonnettes. One of the door jambs is inscribed, and the sanctuary chamber, of 2m.20 across measured at the centre, sheltered the two statues whose pedestal is still in place.

It has been possible to reconstruct most of the frontons on the ground. To the east is "*Vishnou reclining on the serpent Ananta*" - to the south "*the Three Strides of Vishnou to gain the world*" - to the north a "*Shiva dancing*" with four arms, surrounded by apsaras and with his "*sakti*" sitting on his knee, as well as a lintel of the "*Churning of the Sea of Milk*" - and finally, to the west, a lintel showing "*Krishna lifting the mount Govardhana to shelter the shepherds and their flocks*".

## *Monument 487 (Mangalartha)*

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*Date* late 13th - beginning  
of the 14th century  
*Cult* Brahmanic  
*Clearing* by H. Marchal in 1924





Leaving Angkor Thom by the Victory gate - on the axis of the eastern gopura of the Royal Palace - one finds, in just under 500 metres on either side of the road known as the "Small Circuit", two charming temples of modest proportions - Thommanon to the left and Chau Say Tevoda to the right - whose situation and similarity in plan render them inseparable. Although they have not been dated with any precision, their state of ruin has left sufficient architectural and decorative elements remaining to allow one to place them in time between the Baphuon and Angkor Wat - they appear to be therefore from the best period of classic art - the late 11th or the first half of the 12th century - and represent two variations on a particular theme of composition which is also evident in the central core of Beng Mealea and Banteay Samre, dating from the same period.

THOMMANON is essentially composed of a sanctuary opening to the east onto a rectangular room, with two differing gopuras to the east and west, and a single "library" on the southern side.

Crossing the surrounding moat on a causeway, one passes the remains of the base of a laterite wall that enclosed an area of about 45 metres by 60.

The sanctuary tower has four upper tiers and clearly dominates, as much by the prominence of its finely sculpted 2m.50 high base plinth - which has the foliated scrolls of its central band enlivened with tiny figures - as by the bold proportion of its corner piers. These are entirely decorated and rise uninterrupted to the full height of the frontons. There are four avant-corps, three of which have ornate false doors that are amongst the finest in Angkor. The highly stylised devatas are no less remarkable.

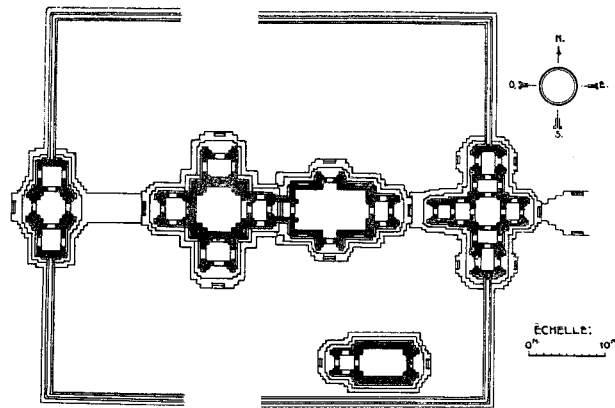
With a change in level, a small vestibule joins the eastern avant-corps to the long room with its false upper storey - whose corbel-vaulted roof ends in a simulation of stop-tiles in the form of garudas instead of the usual lotus petals. Its base is only 1m.80, and the walls, which are more restrained in their decoration, each have a door in addition to the entrance corresponding to the eastern vestibule. The frontons are badly deteriorated. Above the southern door one can see Ravana with multiple heads and arms trying to shake the mountain where Shiva is enthroned and, inside, above the door towards the adjoining vestibule, the death of Valin after his fight with Sugriva. The dimensions of the long room are 3 metres by 6 metres overall. A linga of 0.95m in height was found in the sanctuary chamber, which is 3 metres square. Its eastern lintel shows Vishnou on Garuda.

## Thommanon and Chau Say Tevoda

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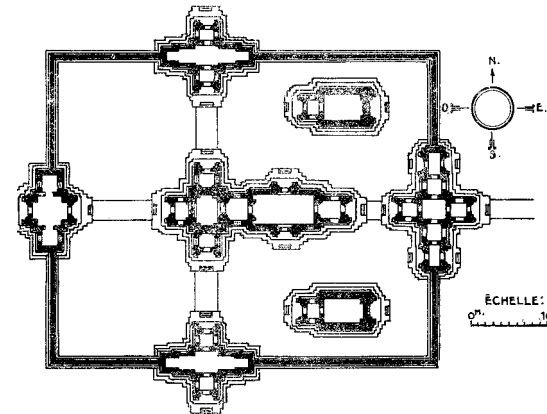
|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>late 11th to<br/>first half of the 12th century</i>  |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic</i>  |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by H. Marchal in 1919 - 1920<br/>and from 1925 to 1927<br/>Anastylosis of Thommanon<br/>gopura west from 1961 to 1966<br/>by B.P. Groslier</i> |

The eastern gopura is adjacent to the long room with which it is connected by the arrangement of its foundations. It has three independent passageways - the linking openings having been walled in.<sup>17</sup> The central tower measures 3 metres each side internally and has four *avant-corps* with a door towards the west. Its single reduced upper storey is in the form of a barrel vault. The decoration is quite restrained and the eastern fronton remains unfinished, while on the northern fronton, Vishnou overcomes two of his enemies whom he holds by the hair. On the southern side, another representation of the same god has been reconstructed on the ground.



The single *"library"* is conceived in the same spirit and has, like the long room, a false upper storey with long balustraded windows that have been walled in. The base plinth is only 1m.10 high, and the room of 3 metres by 3m.70 overall. It is lined with laterite and opens to the west by a small portico with two windows, while the east end is closed with a false door.

The western gopura is similar but composed only of a central passage and two wings without windows. It differs from the other annexe buildings by the absolute purity of its lines and the care taken in its decoration - which is limited to some superb details shown on a clear background. The west fronton shows Vishnou on Garuda fighting with the Asuras. The pilaster bottoms are decorated with small scenes with figures - a motif that was typical in the period of Angkor Wat. The false tiles which terminate the vaults are in the form of small lions.



CHAU SAY TEVODA is in a more advanced state of ruin, evident by the numerous remarkable fragments of sculpture in the vicinity. This temple has the same plan as Thommanon, but with four gopuras and two *"libraries"*.

Of the 40 by 50 metre enclosure wall there remains only the moulded laterite base. The north and south gopuras are cruciform in plan and have been almost entirely razed to their base plinths and sculpted stairways - as

have the *"libraries"*, opening to the west by a vestibule, of which only the bases of some walls still remain standing.

The central sanctuary has retained only a part of three of its four upper tiers, and the composition is less majestic than Thommanon since the corner piers are cut by the horizontal line of the cornice at the height of the springing of the vault of the long room. The general decoration, which is based on the covering of every available bare space, is also less architectural - though the ornamentation is no less remarkable, with its more animated devatas, - the false doors where foliated scrolls replace the vertical patterned motifs, - the pilasters with horizontal diamonds and fleurons, - and the bands of foliated scrolls enlivened in places with small figures. The junction vestibule and the long room are covered with a motif of rosettes set in squares delicately sculpted in the surface of the stone - like those one can find at Banteay Srei and the Baphuon. The sanctuary chamber forms a square of 2m.80 each side, and the long room, whose vault has collapsed, measures 6m.80 by 3m.60. It is preceded by a door opening that links with the eastern gopura by means of a pathway raised on three rows of columns.

This gopura with three passageways is similar to that of Thommanon, except that the side entrances are no longer independent from the central core. It has received the same decoration as the long room and was linked to the river, which is just to the east, by means of a pavement raised on three rows of octagonal-sectioned supports - that are later than the monument - and a terrace. Of the badly damaged frontons, two at least relate to the Ramayana; - to the south of the lateral passage is the combat between Sugriva and Valin, while to the east of the northern passage are other monkeys. Generally in the monument the Shivaïte and Vishnouïte scenes alternate, which one can see in the various frontons reconstructed on the ground at the south side. Here one can recognise notably Shiva and Uma on Nandin, with other familiar scenes and some apsarās.

All that remains of the western gopura with its central body and two wings is the central section with its single barrel-formed upper tier. As elsewhere in the monument, the presence of double wooden beams has caused the masonry to collapse

A rather gaunt and not particularly impressive Nandin, the mount of Shiva, was found to the south of the northern library.

## Spean Thma

*"The stone bridge"*

Two hundred metres east of Thommanon, just before crossing the river - which here has been diverted from its original course and whose bed has become more deeply cut since Angkorian times - the road passes the remains of a sandstone bridge on the left, built no doubt at a later period if one is to judge by the number of blocks that have been re-used in the composition of its masonry.

The original foundation is now much higher than the level of the water even during times of flooding, indicating the extent to which the hydrology of the region has changed over the centuries since the abandonment of the ancient barrages.

The need to vault in successive corbels in the same manner as in the galleries of the monuments has forced the Khmer to be content with narrow arches between massive piers - which required the doubling of the width of the river as it passed under the bridge in order to obtain sufficient flow. The remains of 14 arches of 1m.10 in width are separated by piers of 1m.60.

The Spean Thma was cleared by H. Marchal in 1920.

## *the Hospital Chapel*

Having passed the Spean Thma and then the bend in the road towards the south (7 kilometre marker stone), there is, on the right, a sanctuary tower similar to Ta Prohm Kel (in front of Angkor Wat). The discovery of a stele reproducing the well-known text of the edict of Jayavarman VII relating to hospitals confirmed its identification as the chapel of one of the 102 establishments founded by the king and mentioned in the inscription of Ta Prohm.

Passing the remains of the cruciform gopura with its eastern door and two small wings - in laterite and sandstone - one reaches the foot of the prasat. This is preceded by a pavement of about twenty metres and is practically complete, with four upper tiers, though it stands a little precariously. It is a cruciform building with three false doors, opening to the east by a two-windowed vestibule and enclosing a square sanctuary chamber of 2m.00 each side. The decoration, on a base of foliated scrolls, is very poor, - the devatas are quite mediocre, and on the frontons the image of the Buddha has been defaced.

In front of the door is an unusual pedestal with vertical bands. Mr Goloubew also noted a fronton *"where one can distinguish a representation of the bodhisattva Lokeshvara associated with the figure of a patient - apparently suffering from nervous leprosy - of whom an attendant is preparing to massage the hand"*.

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*Date* late 12th century  
*King* Jayavarman VII  
(posthumous name:  
Maha paramasangata pada)  
*Cult* Buddhist  
*Clearing* by H. Marchal in 1920

Skirting Ta Keo by its western and southern boundary, one leaves the small circuit at the crossing corresponding to the south-east corner of the temple to take the *route Batteur* to the left. The simple, massive form of the monument then appears framed by the large trees at the end of the axial causeway. It is quite different in appearance to the other temples constructed so far, since the building remained undecorated. It also distinguishes itself by the unusual emphasis placed on the arrangement of the various horizontal elements of the pyramid in the composition - in elevation, the towers themselves, arranged in a quincunx, appear as the silhouette of a single group, seemingly joined by the projection of their avant-corps.

It is not known why work on this temple - which might have been included with the best - was abandoned just after the start of its ornamentation. Perhaps the successor to the founding king did not want to detract from the religious merit of his predecessor by completing the task and taking credit for himself - or maybe he had some other personal work of his own that was of more interest to him. Whatever the reason, the style and the quality of the partial decoration is sufficient to place the monument in time, and close study undertaken by Madame de Coral-Remusat and Messrs Goloubew and Cœdes, from differing points of view, has allowed them to place it between the extreme limits of Banteay Srei and the gopuras of the Royal Palace of Angkor Thom. It appears therefore to be from the period between the end of 10th century and the first years of the 11th. The inscriptions engraved on the door jambs of the eastern gopuras, relating to donations made to the temple but not to its foundation, date from 1007.

Ta Keo is a pyramid of five levels reaching a total height of 22m.00 - the first two form the base of two enclosing courtyards, one surrounded by a simple wall and the other by a gallery, while the last three, with their various elements conforming to the usual rule of proportional reduction and so narrow that one can barely walk around them, are but a massive artificial plinth for the quincunx of sanctuaries.

This is the first realisation in sandstone of such a structure - generally dedicated to some deified nobility - after the temple of Bakheng which crowned a natural hill that served as its base. Its construction was consequently far more delicate and has been undertaken with much more care in the systematic cutting and placing of the enormous blocks of stone, whose arrangement, in the absence of any moulding or decoration, remains perfectly clear. The gallery, on the other hand, must be practically contemporaneous with the somewhat restrained sandstone gallery of Phimeanakas - but here one will see that there are no remains of any stone vault. It is probable, to judge by the rubble found during clearing works and the

## Ta Keo

*"The ancestor Keo" or  
PRASAT KEO  
"The crystal tower"*

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*Date*      *early 11th century*  
*King*      *Jayaviravarman*  
*Cult*      *Brahmanic (Shiva)*  
*Clearing*   *by H. Marchal in 1920*

existence of corbelled brick vaults on the wings of the gopuras - a technique similarly used at Banteay Srei and on the entry pavilions of the Royal Palace - that the galleries at Takeo were themselves also vaulted in brick, rather than in any light-weight structure.

The access to the monument from the east is gained across a moat by means of a paved causeway, preceded by lions in the style of the Bayon and lined with bornes. If one follows its extension to the east for 500 metres to the bank of the eastern baray one comes to a terrace on two levels.

The external enclosure wall forms a rectangle of 120 metres by 100 and is in sandstone on a laterite base. The gopura - all in sandstone and partially sculpted - has three independent passageways and a central tower with reducing upper tiers. Frontons reconstructed on the ground show the style of the purely ornamental decoration. From the courtyard - open to the faithful - the view of the pyramid was entirely masked by the gallery of the next high tier. To the east, on either side of the axis, long rooms of 22 metres by 2m.75 served perhaps to shelter pilgrims. Preceded by a portico and followed by a smaller annexe, each was covered in wood and tiles and illuminated by a series of windows on either side with slender balustrades.

The second terrace dominates the first by 5m.50 in height with an imposing moulded laterite base and four axial sandstone gopuras. It is gained by steps of 0m.40 in height. To the east, the stone has received the beginnings of an ornamentation on the upper elements. The surrounding sandstone gallery, of 80 metres by 75 and 1m.40 in width, has no external openings and is only lit by windows towards the interior - the exterior being decorated with false balustered windows. There remains no trace of vault nor roof covering - only the corner pavilions, which are less prominent, are vaulted in sandstone.

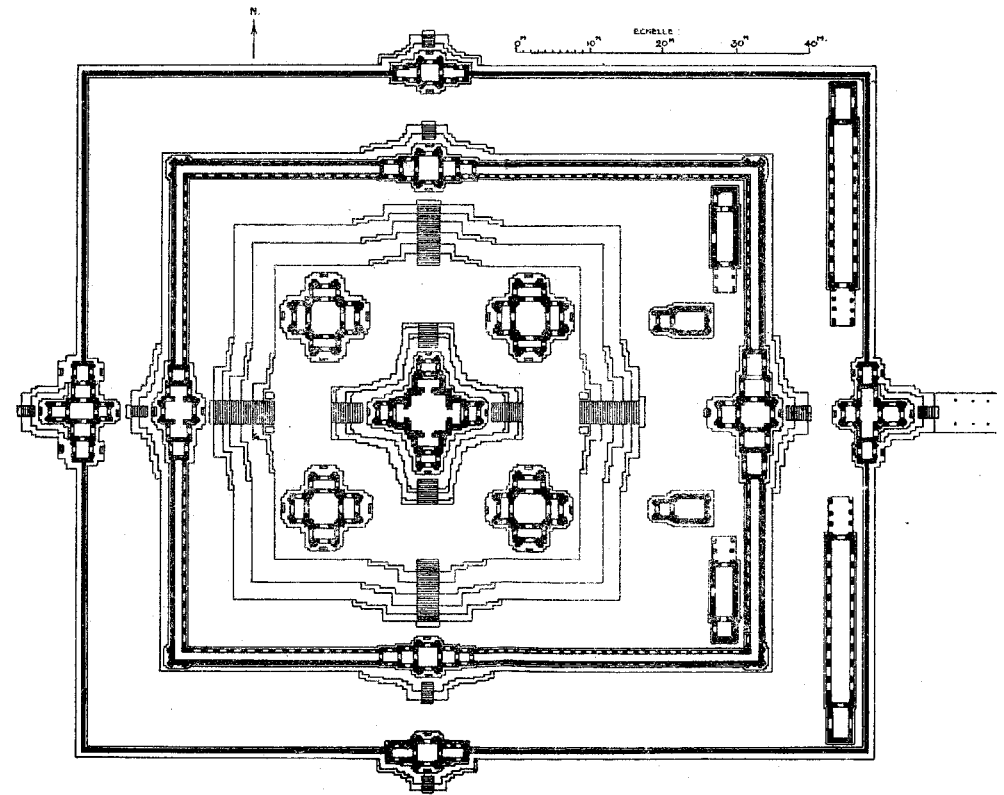


The offsetting of the pyramid's axis towards the west has enabled the placing on the eastern side of two buildings, similar to the long rest rooms on the first terrace, though much less developed and poorly lit, and also of two "*libraries*" which open to the west and have a false upper storey pierced by long horizontal windows. Again there remains neither vault nor roof covering.

From the courtyard, standing in front of the three tiers that form the 14 metre high central pyramid, one is struck with a powerful impression. The stairs are, abnormally, of a constant width and rise in a single flight with steps from 0m.40 to 0m.30 in height, while their retaining walls to either side ascend in six steps. The strong moulding of opposing diamonds with a broad central roll gives a sense of force without detracting from the other elements of the decoration. Though only applied on the eastern side, and there badly damaged, this is remarkable in its composition, sculpted on a base of large flaming scrolls and horizontal diamonds. A rather scrawny Nandin (sacred bull) was found at the foot of the eastern stairway, confirming the Shivaite destination of the temple.

The upper platform is 47 metres square and almost entirely occupied by the quincunx of towers in their unfinished form. These open to the four cardinal points by means of as many projecting vestibules which are doubled for the central sanctuary. The corner towers are set on a 0m.80 plinth and are clearly dominated by the central tower. This is raised by 4 metres, with the further development of its porticoes and frontons adding to its grandeur. The internal sanctuary chambers measure 4m.00 and 3m.50 each side respectively. They are remarkably constructed and have the inside of their upper tiers carefully faced, with no decoration other than an elegantly sculpted internal cornice. Fragments of pedestals and of lingas have been found both in and around the towers, as have several statues.

Because of its orientation, a visit to Takeo should best be made in the morning, and early so that its abrupt stairs do not appear too daunting.







## Tanei

From Takeo, the visitor who has the time will find in a trip to Ta Nei the pretext for a pleasant walk through the forest. A path to the north continues the *route Batteur* and leads directly in 800 metres - having crossed several mounds and ditches - to the western gopura of the temple, on the western side of the road.

The monument is built 200 metres west of the western dike of the eastern baray, and though it has been left untouched, overall it is relatively well preserved. Its style, from the second half of the twelfth century, is consistent throughout - only the two gopuras (east and west) of the external (or third) enclosure, whose wall has disappeared, would seem to be slightly later than the rest of the monument.

These two small gopuras, in sandstone and partially ruined, are cruciform in plan and covered with a crossing of barrel-formed vaults. Quite crude in construction, with decoration based on foliated scrolls, false windows with blinds and devatas, they relate to the end of the style of the Bayon. A decorative cornice surrounds the interior. On the east side of the eastern gopura - which is joined to the temple by the remains of a terrace and a pavement - one can see a curious fronton in place; - a Lokesvara, standing on a lotus surrounded by apsaras and flying figures, dominates a lower line of other kneeling figures with large bellies who seem to be pleading with him. Are these the sickly who seek healing, or perhaps the damned "*rice thieves*" who appear on the Hell bas-relief of Angkor Wat? It is difficult to say.

A pavement joined the western gopura to a small sandstone portico which cuts the laterite wall of the second enclosure, most of which has collapsed. Similar porticoes were to be found on the north and south sides, simulating gopuras as the walls themselves simulate galleries. In fact, above one of the doors in the south-east corner (east side) and on the plain wall of the north-west corner (west side) one can still see triangular sandstone frontons which, from the exterior, seemed to abut internal galleries of which there remains no trace. If they ever existed they were probably constructed in light weight materials - the Khmer architects having accustomed us to such tricks. This second enclosure, of 47 metres by 55, was bordered to the north and south by pools.

The temple as such had four gopuras joined by galleries with corner pavilions, a central sanctuary and, in the eastern part of the internal enclosure, a single "*library*" on the southern side - the whole arrangement forming a rectangle of 26 metres by 35. At some time, the eastern gallery was moved out to the wall of the second enclosure, blocking this side of the surrounding courtyard and transforming the original

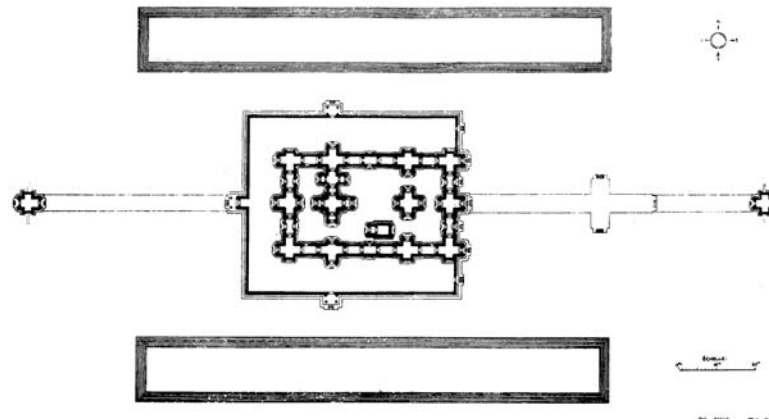
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|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <i>Date</i> | <i>late 12th century</i>   |
| <i>King</i> | <i>Jayavarman VII</i><br><i>(posthumous name:</i><br><i>Maha paramasangata pada)</i> |
| <i>Cult</i> | <i>Buddhist</i>  |

eastern gopura into a second isolated sanctuary within the enclosure - extending it from 35 metres to 46.

The sandstone gopuras form towers with two upper tiers. They are cruciform in plan and crowned with lotuses. The central sanctuary, also forming a cross but additionally with four small vestibules, had four storeys, was open to each side and joined to the north gopura by a passage. Its sanctuary chamber forms a square of 2m.75 each side.

The frontons are for the most part interesting, of reasonable craftsmanship and of Buddhist inspiration. One can see; - on the north side of the southern gopura, - above a line of figures in prayer - a kneeling figure blessing two children in a palace surrounded by apsaras, - on the south side of the northern gopura, an elegant cavalier brandishing a weapon above two lines of figures, - and on the central sanctuary, north side, a person standing in a boat, surrounded by flying figures carrying parasols, making a gesture of benediction.



The surrounding gallery has laterite walls and sandstone vaults with a stone finialed ridge-line. To the east and the west each element forms a secondary passageway, while to the north and south they have simple door openings to the internal courtyard and false doors to the exterior. The sandstone corner pavilions are cruciform in plan with a simple crossing vault, like the extreme eastern gopura which, as an adjustment, has not been treated with a multi-levelled tower like the other gopuras. The laterite and sandstone "library" has mostly crumbled - it opens to the west and is preceded by a vestibule. Generally the false windows have balusters sculpted into them without blinds.

Some lintels on the ground remain intact; - in the western gopura, one on which two figures present offerings above a head of Kala - an image of the Buddha is sculpted on only one of the branch motifs, which is separated into four quarters, - while in the south-west corner pavilion, there are three Buddhas on a head of Kala, one in the centre and two on the lateral motifs.<sup>18</sup>

Short inscriptions on the door jambs give the names of the idols set up in the temple.

*Note: - the traverse of the monument can be made in totality either from west to east, or from east to west, by sending your driver to wait for you at the gate opposite your entry. The western gate of Ta Prohm is to be found a kilometre south of the crossing leading to Ta Keo.*

*"Nature," - wrote Aldous Huxley - "if you water and feed it too well with that strong tropical sun and rain, it will lose control..."*

Even though the relentless force of the vegetation is the cause of so much damage, the École Française d'Extrême-Orient felt obliged to leave at least one temple in Angkor as an example of the *"natural state"* that so marvelled the early explorers, while also showing by comparison the importance of the effort already achieved in its work to safeguard these ancient stones. It chose Ta Prohm - one of the most imposing and the one which had best merged with the jungle, but not yet to the point of becoming a part of it - as but one specimen typical of a form of Khmer art of which there were already other models. The concession to the general taste for the picturesque could be made, therefore, with not too much reluctance, in order to enable each to give free rein to their own imagination and emotion.

Our work here was first limited to clearing in order to gain access, and then to preventing further ruin by seeking to reconcile the creepers and the roots with the survival of the structure and the architecture. In return, we ask the visitor to submit to the charm of Ta Prohm, to give it longer than just a few minutes and to thrill to it as the mood dictates.

Ta Prohm should be visited either in the afternoon or the early morning, and crossed from west to east according to the itinerary that we have traced on the plan. This precaution will prevent the visitor with limited time from becoming disorientated, due to the relative simplicity of a clearly marked route. In contrast, those who wish to spend several hours exploring the monument will find here the potential for an adventure - but without danger of ever getting lost, since the main axis is clearly defined from place to place by an uninterrupted line of rooms and vestibules, almost always made inaccessible by their collapse but providing nevertheless a good point of reference. We would advise, however, not to wander but with extreme caution in the areas of crumbling vaulted galleries remote from the normally frequented passageways.

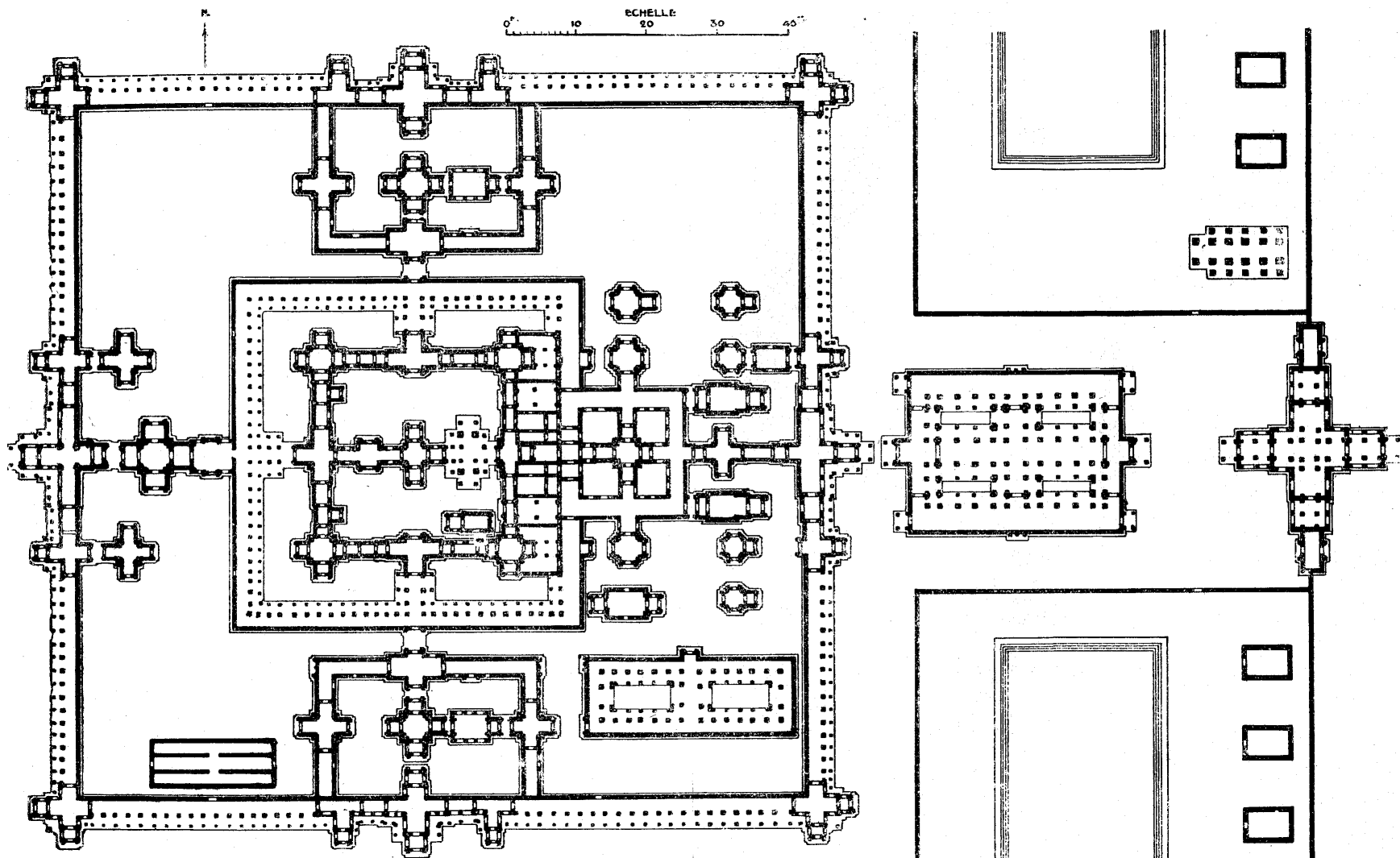
Ta Prohm is a Buddhist monastery typical of the last formula of the Khmer temples in which the ensemble, laid out on a single plane, no longer followed the principle of multiple levels, but where the notion

## Ta Prohm

*"the Brahma ancestor"*

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>middle of 12th to<br/>early 13th century (1186)</i>                   |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Jayavarman VII<br/>(posthumous name:<br/>Maha paramasangata pada)</i> |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Buddhist</i>  |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by H. Marchal in 1920</i>   |



of elevation was rather expressed by the rising of the towers and predominant central sanctuary from within an arrangement of concentric galleries. Here these number three, and the principal east-west axis, formed by a succession of towers and passages, gives a sort of 'sacred vista' straight to the heart of the monument. The "*horror of the void*", a sentiment particular to the Khmer, has unfortunately favoured the proliferation on this framework of numerous parasitic buildings which, particularly to the east, either enhance or detract without any apparent logic.

The overall site is enclosed by two successive walls, the outer of which measures 600 metres by 1000. It may seem surprising that the temple as such with its three concentric galleries, consisting of all the elements of a grand composition, has been crowded into a meagre square of 100 metres each side which is itself lost in a park of 60 hectares. One should not forget, however, that - if one is to believe the inscription - there were 12,640 people living within the interior of the enclosure, including 18 high priests, 2,740 officiants, 2,232 assistants and 615 dancers...

While for some time all the various temples in the style of the Bayon were attributed to a single king - Jayavarman VII - during his twenty or so years reign, today it seems more likely that he could not, in such a short time, have done more than just transform, extend or complete already existing religious establishments with his mark. A monument as intricate as Ta Prohm, as Mr Groslier observed, was not built in a single throw, and shows traces of numerous alterations and adjustments. Some parts, in terms of style, are quite close to Angkor Wat, while others are to the Bayon - and only a deeper study after clearing the temple would allow one to classify the various elements with any certainty.

The stele of Ta Prohm is inscribed on its four sides and was found in a part of the gallery preceding the eastern gopura of the second enclosure. It gives the date of 1186, later by five years than the accession of Jayavarman

VII, and describes the placing of a statue of the king's mother in the form of Prajnaparamita, the "*Perfection of Wisdom*", considered as "*mother of the Buddhas*", so classifying Ta Prohm in the category of temples consecrated to the glory of deified parents. After a listing of ancestors and the description of a victorious expedition to Champa, it attributes to the prince the setting of 260 statues of divinities, as well as the one of his "*guru*" or spiritual master, and the construction of 39 pinnacled towers, 566 groups of stone habitations, 286 in brick, and 2,702 metres of laterite enclosure wall.

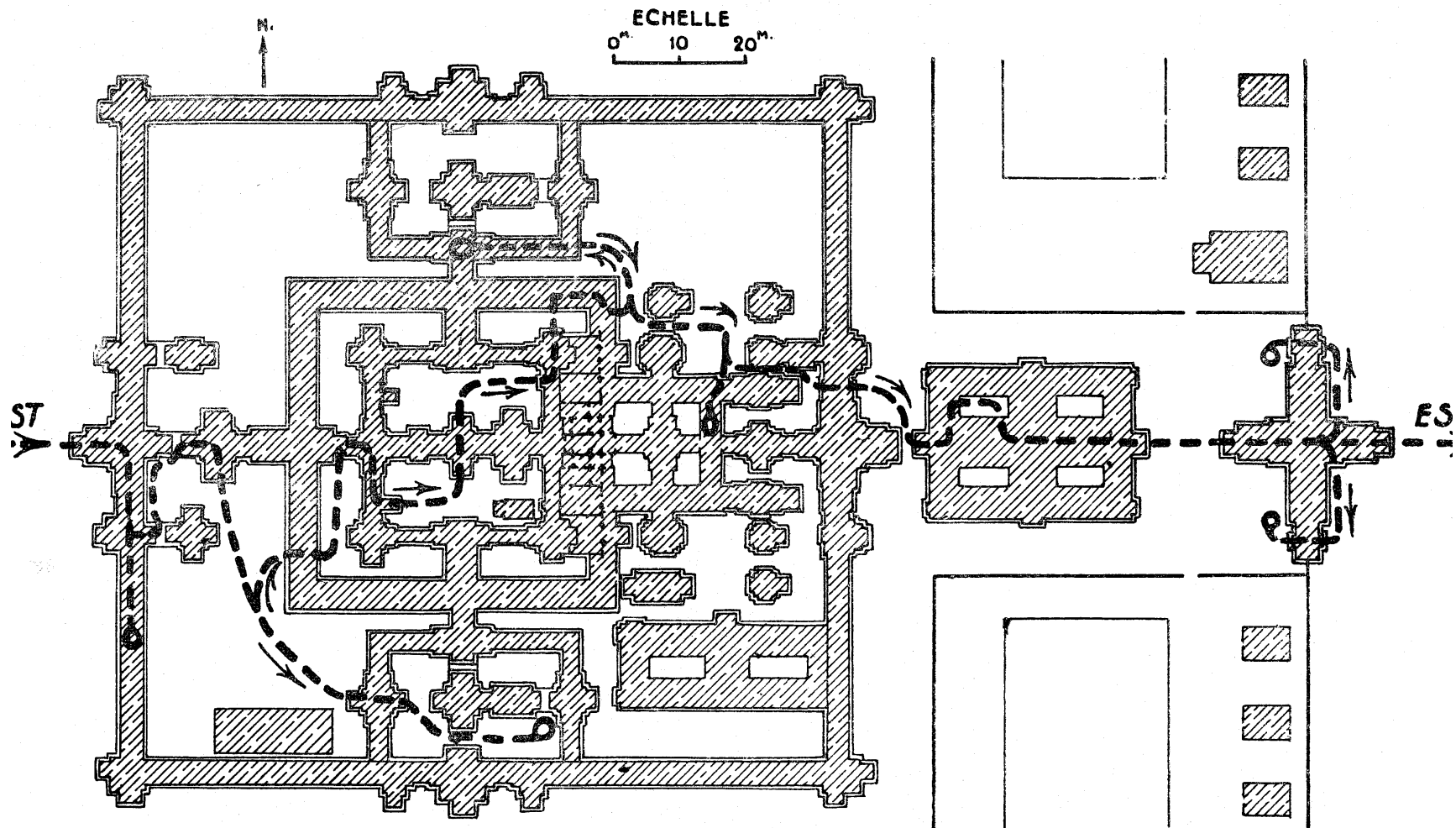
3,140 villages and 79,365 people were involved in the service of the temple, whose particulars the text lists with a great delight for detail - including notably the existence of 5 tons of gold plates, 512 silk beds and 523 parasols. After defining the celebration of certain festivals it then also describes the foundation in the kingdom of 102 hospitals.

#### DESCRIPTION

Only the western of the four gopuras relating to the external laterite enclosure is well preserved - except for its corner motifs with large garudas which have almost entirely disappeared. It is, clearly in the style of the Bayon, a tower with four faces of Lokeshvara on a crown of devatas in prayer, with two smaller wings to either side.

From here, a 350m track through the forest leads to the fourth gopura. This is preceded by a cruciform terrace forming a causeway across the moat, on which are the remains of some lions, dvarapalas and of naga-balustrades in the style of the Bayon with their straddling garudas. The laterite and sandstone building is itself badly ruined, but the areas of wall which remain standing give an indication of its original grandeur.

With the view to the internal courtyard that follows, one is plunged into a surreal world. On every side, in fantastic over-scale, the enormous pale trunks of the silk-cotton trees soar skywards under a shadowy green canopy,



their long spreading skirts trailing the ground and their endless roots coiling more like reptiles than plants. A cruciform paved terrace with naga-balustrades in the style of the Bayon, serving some of them as a base, leads to the next enclosing gallery - which is the third from the centre of the monument.

A single dvarapala armed with a club guards the axial entrance to the gopura. This has three towered passageways and extends considerably in breadth with walls abundantly decorated and sculpted with devatas. Turning to the right, one enters the gallery that has a double row of columns to the exterior and its interior wall, which remains without openings, decorated with large images of the Buddhist trinity sheltered in shallow niches - which have been systematically destroyed during the religious reaction of the 13th century. The light under these vaults - which are admirably preserved and show clearly the technique used by the Khmer of successive corbelling on horizontal beds - is a gentle, serene green.

Returning to the southern lateral entrance of the third gopura, one emerges to the right in a large surrounding courtyard with vegetation-capped towers, and, circulating around the narrow verge formed by the projecting base plinth of the building's east side, one returns to the axis where, from the west, one enters the sanctuary wherein lies a reclining Buddha. Then descending the few steps of its southern stairway, one crosses the right-angled courtyard of the south-west quarter. Through the southern tower, at its eastern extremity, one can penetrate to the internal courtyard of a small ensemble, enclosed by galleries, whose centre is marked by a sanctuary tower preceded by a long room to the east. Opposite is a fine fronton showing a group of divinities holding the hooves of the future Buddha's horse in order to muffle their sound during the *"Grand Departure"*.

Returning to the right-angled courtyard, one enters the small door that pierces the southern part of its western side to pass through the laterite and

sandstone gallery of the second enclosure, with its double row of pillars towards the interior. These are held by the roots of a tree growing on the vault itself which so appears to be suspended - held aloft by its grasping tentacles that hang to the ground like the limbs of a massive, slumbering beast. Turning again towards the axis one enters - by its western door - the western gopura of the first enclosure which one follows to the right towards the south, to then exit by the second opening - which is preceded by a small portico - into the central courtyard of the temple. This measures 24 metres each side.

Here one can see that an excavation carried out in the south-west corner revealed a 1m.10 high sculpted base plinth, completely buried, which must previously have considerably lightened the composition. Here stands a solitary square pillar with a top tenon, supporting no doubt some small light-weight altar, while a *"library"*, opening to the west with a vestibule, is set in the south-east corner. The walls of the gallery are covered in sculpture, like a continuous embroidery, and while the execution is perhaps a little crude, the decor remains nonetheless charming, with its frieze of pendants, its foliated scrolls animated with figurines and its devatas sheltered in niches - their hair-styles, with small flaming discs set in a triangle, are in the style of the Bayon. The vault itself is channelled to represent false tiles and decorated with a repeating vertical motif.

Forming a quincunx with its corner towers strongly accentuated, the shapeless mass of the central sanctuary, which one traverses from the north to the south, seems incongruous in its undecorated form - the stone has been hacked in order to receive a plaster covering, some traces of which remain, that must have been painted or gilded. Internally, the regular small holes suggest the existence of a lining in wood or metal.

Leaving the northern part of this courtyard by its eastern gallery - after having first stopped to admire the finesse of the devatas on its walls - one passes through a door that is eerily framed by the roots of a gigantic tree.





Then turning left into the gloom of the first gallery, one emerges at the north door of its north-eastern corner tower to turn right into the second gallery, with its lower side-aisle on doubled pillars, which one leaves towards the east by a small avant-corps.

Finding oneself in the large courtyard of the third enclosure in front of a lone sanctuary tower, one turns left towards the north to take a look at the small group of structures with a surrounding gallery and central tower which is symmetrical to the one already encountered on the south side of the main axis. Returning towards this axis, one passes between two rows of matching towers - and just by the one which has the west fronton sculpted with a row of feminine figures with naga heads, one squeezes into a tight passageway leading to the stele, which is found in part of a gallery close by, not far from which is a fronton showing, under a palace scene, a figure taming a horse.<sup>19</sup>

Emerging from the same narrow opening, one climbs over some fallen blocks to walk through to the third gallery. Here one passes through a vestibule joining the central mass of its gopura to its northern wing. On the main axis a young tree has grown on the frame of the eastern entrance, enveloping each of its jamb stones in its roots with perfect symmetry.

In front, the main entrance opens to a large rectangular enclosure of 20 metres by 30, surrounded by high walls decorated only to the north and south with magnificent false doors. This forms an internal cloister with four small courtyards formed by a crossing of galleries with side-aisles. The composition, situated outside the sacred enclosure and quite different to the other buildings of the monument, perhaps related to the *"Royal Palace"* mentioned in one stanza of the inscription - unless it was reserved for ritual dancing - since apsaras form friezes above the openings.

In the north-west corner one can see a curious freak of nature; - a tree, having dislodged the stone pillars, has substituted instead one of its roots

which supports the whole weight of the galleries architrave. Passing through this unfortunately badly ruined crossing cloister from end to end, one arrives at the imposing eastern gopura of the fourth enclosure. Cruciform in plan with internal pillars, four wings and two lateral passageways, the enormous capping stone at the crossing of the roof vaults has fallen to the ground - where it still lies, intact.<sup>20</sup>

Restrained in style and fairly close to that of Angkor Wat, this gopura is decorated on two sides along its lateral passageways with remarkable panels of bas-reliefs. To the north, beyond a laterite wall, one can see a hall of closely placed pillars - similar to the ones at Prah Khan and Banteay Kdei - which must have carried an upper storey in light-weight materials. Its use remains a mystery. Further beyond, all the way around the inside of the fourth enclosure wall, stand the remains of small rectangular cells.

The moats are crossed by a vast sandstone-paved terrace, whose central area is cruciform in plan and slightly raised. It was decorated with lions and with naga-balustrades of which the hoods, without garudas, are certainly earlier than the style of the Bayon. Further - to the north of the axis - is a typical shelter for pilgrims. Half collapsed, it has its thick walls decorated with windows that have a double row of balusters. Its central sanctuary must have been consecrated to the bodhisattva Lokeshvara, represented on the south fronton. A shaded path leaves the temple, whose fifth and final enclosure is encountered 400 metres towards the east; - its gopura is similar to the one to the west, but is reduced to some sections of wall where there still remain traces of the corner garudas.

## Kutisvara

Leaving Ta Prohm by the east gopura, one takes the *route Demasur* to the right, to then turn left onto the Small Circuit - here bordered to the south by the external enclosure wall of Banteay Kdei. Just after its north gopura, where a large fronton reconstructed on the ground shows the Earth wringing her hair to drown the army of Mara,<sup>21</sup> one walks across the fields on the left for two hundred metres to find the remains of Kutisvara in a small copse. It can be difficult to reach even in the dry season.

Although situated just 500 metres east of Ta Prohm and quite close to a village, this little monument was surprisingly only discovered in 1930 - and while not particularly spectacular, it is of undeniable archaeological interest since it marks the site of Kuti, founded during the reign of Jayavarman II in the 9th century and mentioned in the inscriptions of Bat Chum and Tep Pranam. Until then this had been associated with the site of Banteay Kdei, where the re-used jambs of the door openings mention the placing in Kutisvara of a Brahma to the south and of a Vishnou to the north by Shivasarya, one of the priests of the Devaraja or Royal Linga, during the reign of Rajendravarman in the 10th century.

The temple presents itself in the form of three half-ruined sanctuary towers in brick, aligned north south and opening to the east, standing on a small hillock that was probably surrounded by a moat. The central tower is very close to the art of Roluos. Set on a brick base platform, it is preceded by a double stairway with *"accolade"* formed base steps - the first being enclosed within the remains of some wall which formed a sort of internal area that was probably a later addition. The door assembly is in sandstone with a straight-jointed frame, octagonal colonnettes with four bands and a lintel that is practically defaced. The 2m.80 wide sanctuary chamber contained a pedestal for a linga with a sacred base stone.

The lateral sanctuaries are slightly later in style and set on a laterite plinth. With no trace of false doors or decoration on their external surface, the frames of their openings are almost intact and assembled with half-mitred joints. Their colonnettes are ringed with four bands. The lintels - topped with a small frieze - have slender branches, large terminal scrolls and small figures crowding the decoration. Central on the southern lintel is a seated Brahma, and on the northern, the usual Vishnouite scene taken from the churning of the Sea of Milk - the pivot braced by the god and resting on the tortoise. The inscription of Banteay Kdei is thus confirmed. Moreover, within the southern sanctuary chamber - which, with the northern, is slightly rectangular - the statue itself of Brahma was found, with four faces and four arms, standing on the circular pedestal ornate with lotus petals that was generally reserved for this god and similar to those at Phnom Krom and Phnom Bok. Although of mediocre craftsmanship, the idol has been returned to the storeroom.<sup>22</sup>

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*Date* 9th - 10th century  
*Cult* Brahmanic (Shivaite)  
*Clearing* by H. Marchal and  
H. Parmentier in 1930

*Note: - like Ta Prohm, the traverse of this temple can be made from end to end, by sending your vehicle to meet you at the gate opposite to your entry.*

Leaving Ta Prohm by the east gopura, one can get straight to Banteay Kdei by the route *Demasur*, which crosses the Small Circuit and leads, in 600 metres, directly to the temple's western entrance.

Here one finds another example of the spirit of confusion, although less so than at Ta Prohm and Prah Khan, that is characteristic of the monuments built, transformed or completed by Jayavarman VII - and of the crowding of the sacred enclosure, which here is 63 metres by 50, set within a vast overall enclosure (700 metres by 500).

At least two different styles are evident, relating to the periods of Angkor Wat and the Bayon, and the additions are clear, in many places masking the already existing sculptures. The various sanctuary towers were also apparently joined only after their construction by a system of galleries and vestibules which exploit the use of the cloister to its extreme. The scheme is reduced to an ensemble on a single level, in the usual manner of the Buddhist monastery, and consists, within two successive enclosure walls, of two concentric galleries from which emerge a veritable profusion of towers, preceded to the east by a crossing cloister.

The ruin is quite advanced, as much due to the numerous defects inherent in the buildings of this period as to the low-grade, friable sandstone that has a tendency to fail. After the delight of Ta Prohm, Banteay Kdei might seem less enchanting - perhaps because of its presentation. Although the vegetation has been entirely cleared, the monument has been left until now in its partially ruined state with no attempt at restoration.

We have no information concerning the dedication of this temple, and so are ignorant of its consecration. An inscription found in the western gopura of the second enclosure has been recognised as having been sculpted on re-used stones. Dating from the reign of Rajendravarman in the 10th century, it would seem to have come from the neighbouring temple of Kutisvara, and contains an invocation to Shiva. It also mentions the placing of two statues - Brahma and Vishnou.

## Banteay Kdei

*"The citadel of chambers"*

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>middle of the 12th to the beginning of the 13th century</i>                                       |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Jayavarman VII<br/>(posthumous name:<br/>Maha paramasangata pada)</i>                             |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Buddhist</i>  |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by H. Marchal and Ch. Bateur<br/>from 1920 to 1922<br/>Partial anastylosis at the end of 1946</i> |

The frontons and lintels of this Mahayanist monastery are interesting and of reasonable craftsmanship. Some have escaped destruction during the religious altercations of the 13th century. Until clearing work began there was still a pagoda on the site.

#### DESCRIPTION

The external laterite enclosure wall (fourth enclosure) has four gopuras which are exactly the same as those at Ta Prohm - an upper tower with the four faces of Lokeshvara and corner motifs with garudas. They are evidently of the Bayon period, like the narrow cruciform terrace which, on the west side - at 200 metres from the entrance - crosses the moat and is decorated with lions and naga-balustrades with straddling garudas.

The gopura of the third enclosure is cruciform in plan, has internal pillars and is covered with a crossing of vaults. It appears to be older and has three passageways - those at either extremity are independent and adjoin the 320 metre by 300 metre laterite wall. Their walls are sculpted quite crudely with foliated scrolls enlivened with small figures and with large devatas standing in niches. In the internal courtyard is a frieze of Buddhas which have been defaced by the iconoclasts.

Another pavement bordered with nagas leads to the gopura of the second enclosure, formed as a gallery with a wall to the exterior and an internal double row of sandstone pillars opening onto the courtyard. Some parts of this have been walled in, leaving only the lower side for covered circulation. The gopura, which is flanked by two secondary doors cut in the wall at the back of the gallery, forms a tiered tower. The ornamentation is in the style of the Bayon, with balustered false windows with lowered blinds and devatas with head dresses in the form of small flaming discs set in a triangle. The vault of the galleries, since constructed in both laterite and sandstone, has lost all homogeneity and so in places has collapsed.

The four gopuras of the first enclosure, like the corner towers, form prominent tiered towers linked by galleries. This ensemble would seem to be earlier than the style of the Bayon. The central sanctuary, which still carries some traces of sculpture, must have been hacked in order to receive a plaster covering. It has four avant-corps and a 2m.75 square sanctuary chamber where there still remain, resting on the cornice, traces of a wooden ceiling.

The galleries and halls linking it in a cross to the four gopuras seem to be additions. One should notice the fine fronton with banded scenes on the eastern side of the first western gopura - and also the one on the south side of the first northern gopura, where one can see a sitting Buddha above a figure standing between two elephants.

The two small western courtyards, formed by the crossing of the galleries, each contain one of the isolated standing pillars with a top tenon which, like those in Ta Prohm and Prah Khan, must have supported some altar or lantern in light-weight materials. In the two other courtyards, two buildings opening to the west - the so called "*libraries*" - are in the style of the Bayon and were found to shelter in their main section - which forms a tower - two admirable female statues with neither heads nor arms, probably of the 10th century and originating from some other monument. With rounded breasts, a markedly "*hipped*" stance and flat buttocks, they have their torso naked and wear a long skirt with fine vertical pleats.

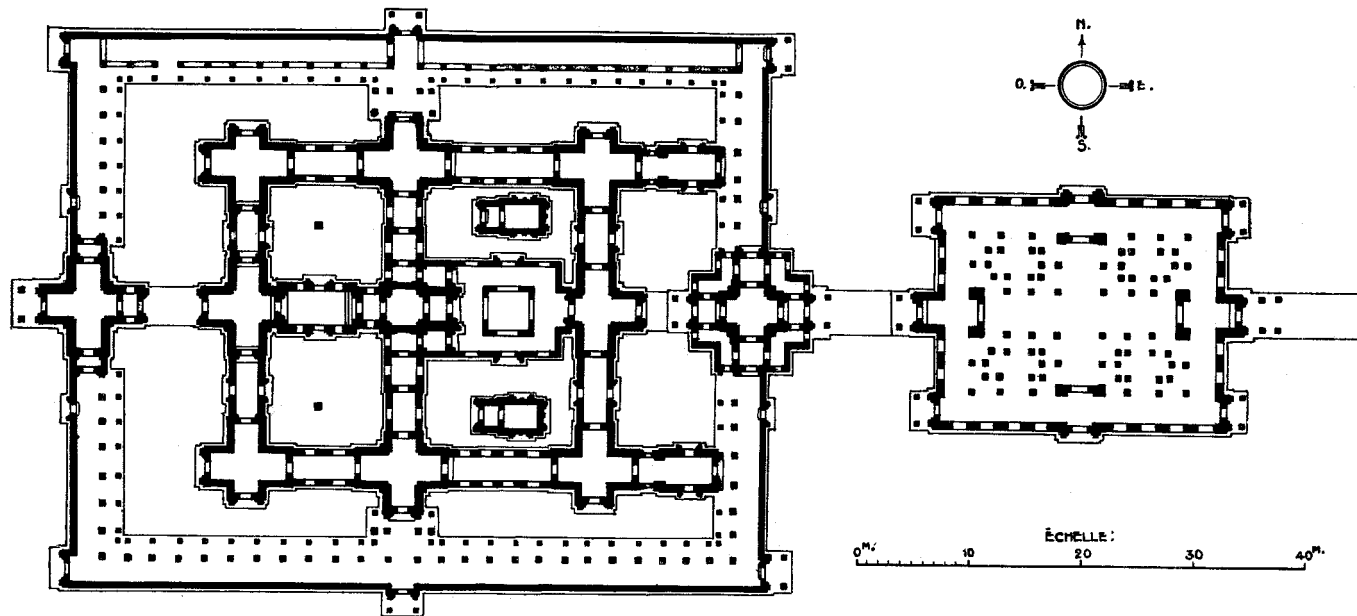
The north-east and south-east corner towers of the first enclosure have been joined to the second gallery where one can see, forming a silhouette, a statue of a sitting Buddha, framed impressively against the sky beyond. Further on is, as at Ta Prohm and Prah Khan, the vast rectangle of a crossing cloister forming four smaller courtyards which served perhaps as a hall for ritual dance or as a "*palace*". The pillars, like those at the entrances to the Bayon, are animated with charming apsaras - dancing individually or in pairs - sculpted in slight relief on the surface of the stone. Dvarapalas treated

in bas-relief precede the entrance, surrounded by devatas. The upper sections have disappeared.

To the north of the pavement which follows, one can find the same hall of large, closely set columns which are also to be found in the two temples mentioned above. Although their function is unknown, they must have carried some light-weight upper storey. In the gopura of the third enclosure is the statue of Buddha sitting in meditation - previously described - which is reasonable in craftsmanship. One crosses the moats again on a large terrace that has its cruciform central area is slightly raised. The naga-balustrades here are again in the style of the Bayon, while the lions, which are quite squat, have their hind legs treated in an unusually decorative manner.

Symmetrically placed to the north and the south of the principal axis stand the remains of two buildings in laterite and sandstone, formed of a central square room between two vestibules and opening to the east and the west. The southern one is the more imposing - its central crossing section and the joining of its two lateral wings being more developed. These must have been small sanctuaries, and one can see, reconstructed on the ground at the foot of the northern one, a fronton depicting the "Grand Departure" with the divinities supporting the horse's hooves with their hands.

One leaves the temple by the east gopura of its fourth enclosure, whose tower with faces is better preserved than are the wings - its corner garudas remaining almost intact.



## Srah Srang

*"The royal bathing pool"*

Leaving Banteay Kdei by the east gate and crossing the road near the 11 kilometre marker stone one gains, in a few paces, an elegant embarkation terrace, axial on the temple and dominating the area of water known as the Srah Srang. This measures 700 metres by just over 300 and, slightly off axis, was without doubt excavated before the reign of Jayavarman VII. It has a border of laterite steps with an outer margin of sandstone. Its centre is marked by a small island on which some jointed stone blocks perhaps formed the base for a small light-weight pavilion.

Entirely surrounded by large trees and always full of water it provides, in the fading light of day, one of the most delightful settings in the Angkor Park - its majestic calm particularly recalling certain views in Versailles, such as the Pièce d'eau des Suisses or the Grand Canal. The terrace, with a moulded sandstone base on laterite foundations, must have supported some light-weight construction which, to judge by the plan of doubled small courtyards, consisted of a large rectangular room with surrounding galleries. An axial stairway flanked by two lions divides into three branches with an intermediate landing - a pleasing arrangement which has allowed the naga-balustrades to be set out in a particularly decorative manner. The rich ornamentation remains refined in style despite the profusion of its elements. To the fore, an enormous garuda rides a three headed naga while the other heads serve to frame it, - to the rear, again the three headed naga with the thighs of the garuda clearly indicated and its stylised tail ornate with small naga heads. The body of the naga rests on blocks sculpted with monsters standing *"as atlantes"*. This is undoubtedly the triumph of a formula which, although perhaps questionable, is nonetheless characteristic of the Bayon style.

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*Date* (embarkation terrace)  
late 12th century  
*King* Jayavarman VII  
(posthumous name:  
Maha paramasangata pada)  
*Clearing* by H. Marchal in 1920  
Excavation and restoration work by  
B.P. Groslier between 1963 and 1965

Returning towards Siem Reap by the Small Circuit, one sees, to the left between the 12th and 13th kilometre marker stones, a line of five crumbling brick towers set at an angle to the road. One should not hesitate to stop here, since within their barren exterior they hide a phenomenon unique in the art of Angkor; - sculpture in the brickwork of the sanctuary interiors.<sup>23</sup>

Surrounded by a moat, which is crossed in its north-western corner by a small access causeway, these towers are set quite close, built on a single terrace and open to the east - though the absence of any access stairway to the very high thresholds is surprising. Their state of ruin has been caused mainly by the presence of several large trees, whose roots have disintegrated the brickwork.

We recommend that the visit starts with the central tower, the only one still retaining any of its upper tiers. These remain perfectly visible, particularly from inside where the brickwork has been constructed with remarkable care; - the mortar-less joints, which have only a thin vegetal binder, remain absolutely tight.

Externally, the eastern side is sculpted with dvarapalas set in shallow niches, while the pilasters show a decoration of chevrons and small framed figures. Only the lintel with its line of small heads set in a frieze above and the octagonal colonnettes with their four ringed bands are in sandstone. All are very well preserved. The jambs of the door openings are inscribed, mentioning the placing of a statue of Vishnou in 921.

The 3m.50 square sanctuary chamber sheltered a linga on a pedestal and must once have contained a hanging velum, the stone suspension hooks for which can still be seen. To the left of the entrance one can see a large figure of Vishnou, whose four arms carry the usual attributes - a disc, a sphere, a conch and a club. One of his feet rests on a pedestal next to a figure in prayer, while the other stands on a lotus blossom being held by a female figure on a background of undulating lines (waves of the Ocean). This is clearly a representation of the *"three strides of Vishnou"*, with which the god won possession of the world. To the right is a Vishnou mounted on the shoulders of Garuda between two seated figures in prayer. In front, another Vishnou with eight arms is framed by six rows of standing figures in prayer which multiply in number from bottom to top and are for the most part masculine, above all of which there is a frieze of other praying figures and an enormous lizard.

## *Prasat Kravan*

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|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>first quarter of the 10th century (921)</i>  |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Harshavarman I<br/>(posthumous name: Rudraloka)</i>  |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic</i>  |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by H. Marchal from 1929 to 1931 and<br/>G. Trouvé in 1935<br/>Further restoration by B.P. Groslier<br/>from 1962 to 1966</i> |

The extreme northern tower, although unfortunately truncated at their midriff, is also sculpted internally with figures, replicating the female aspect of the central sanctuary and perhaps consecrated to Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnou. A pedestal was found there during clearing works, ornate on three sides of its plinth with small figures in prayer.

The three other towers have their walls bare. In places one can see again the remains of their false brick doors, and on the middle northern tower some fragments of sculpted pilasters. The best preserved of the lintels (Vishnou on Garuda) is to be found on the extreme southern tower. Internally, the secondary towers measure only three metres across.





## monuments on the grand circuit

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Situated 2.3 kilometres east of the junction between the Grand and the Small circuit at Srah Srang, just after the right-angled northwards bend and 500 metres south of the southern dike of the eastern baray - indicated by the 16th kilometre marker stone - the temple of Pre Rup unfortunately presents itself from insufficient distance. It would surely have gained by being re-united with the avenue of bornes which precedes it to the east.

An impressive work of impeccable proportions, constructed almost entirely of warm coloured materials (laterite and brick) at a time when sandstone was only used sparingly, Pre Rup needs to be visited either early in the morning or at sunset. Its relatively recent clearing required particular attention, the brick monuments needing special care in the removal of the soil, the fallen materials and the entangling roots. Any anastylosis being impossible, the restoration work was limited to some brickwork repairs and consolidation.

Later by a few years than the eastern Mebon and identical in style, Pre Rup is the last realisation of the *"temple-mountain"* that preceded the advent of the continuous surrounding galleries - which had their antecedent in the line of long rooms around the base. This is the *"Meru"* in the form of a pyramid, crowned with a quincunx of towers and dedicated to the deified nobility, with twelve small sanctuaries sheltering lingas on each of the tiers, as at Bakong. The inscription, after listing the genealogy of Rajendravarman, gives the foundation date (961) and names the monument as Rajendrabhadresvara, after the linga placed in the central sanctuary. There is then the designation of the statues placed in the corner towers - their cult corresponding to that of the king himself (Shiva) - identified as one of his maternal ancestors (Vishnou), his maternal aunt (Uma) and his half brother, king Harshavarman (Shiva), the son of this maternal aunt. The text explains that the royal essence or *"spirit"* of the sovereign was incorporated in his image, which was erected during his lifetime.

Axial on the eastern Mebon and dominating the wide cultivated plain irrigated by the baray, the temple-mountain of Pre Rup was certainly the centre of an important settlement - the *"eastern City"* referred to by Philippe Stern that developed on the return of the capital city from Koh Ker, to where it had moved between 921 and 944. This does not imply, however, that Rajendravarman established the royal City to the detriment of the former Yasodharapura, centred on Phnom Bakheng.

### *Pre Rup*

*"Turn the body"*

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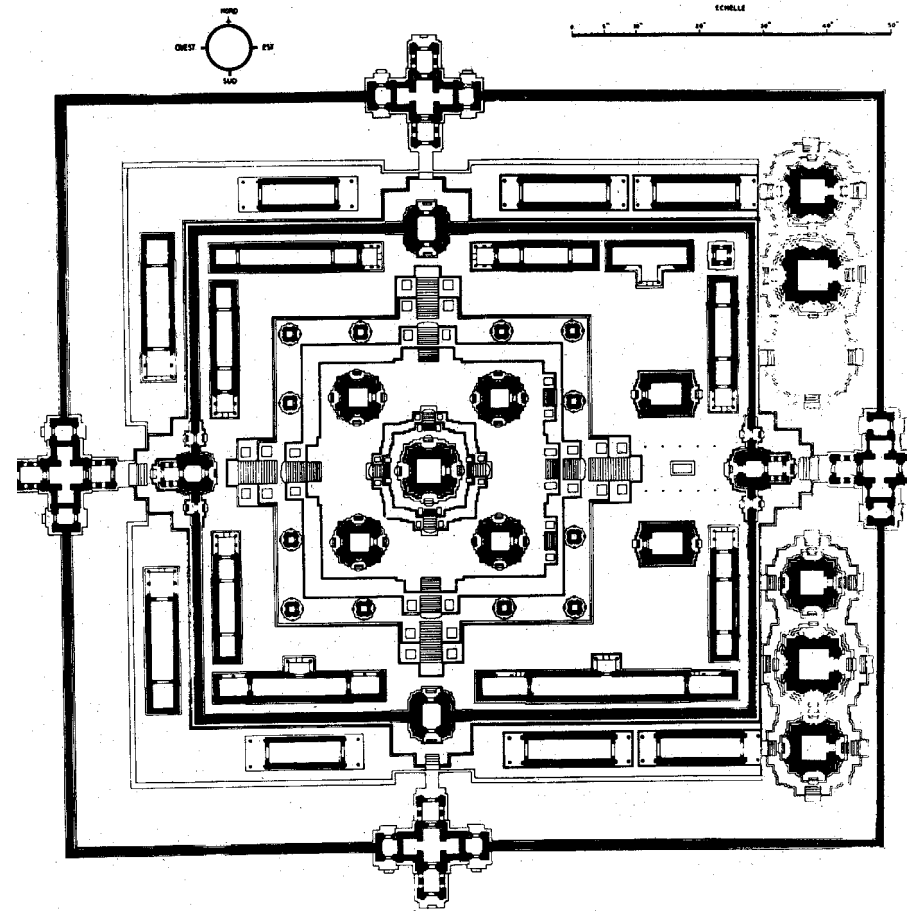
|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>second half of the 10th century (961)</i>         |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Rajendravarman</i>                                |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic (Shivaite)</i>                          |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>H. Marchal and G. Trouvé<br/>from 1930 - 1935</i> |



It is not known why the Cambodians have always attributed a funerary character to this temple. The name Pre Rup (*"to turn the body"*) recalls one of the cremation rites, where the silhouette of the corpse in its bed of cinders is successively turned to different orientations. A large tank at the base of the east stair to the pyramid is considered by some to have been used in such ceremonies - and the funerary link continues in the legend of the careless King whose passion for sweet cucumbers caused his untimely death at the hands of his gardener.<sup>24</sup>

Architecturally, Pre Rup is composed of two enclosures, each with four gopuras, and a pyramid of three narrow tiers, conceived as a simple pedestal for the five towers of the upper platform. The eastern part of the last enclosure is occupied, unusually, by two groups of three towers aligned symmetrically with respect to the axis, set on a common plinth. One of these - the first to the north of the entrance - remains unbuilt, although its base platform has been prepared - unless perhaps the bricks have been re-used elsewhere following its demolition. The central tower of each group of three predominates and is more developed than usual, with a square sanctuary chamber of 5 metres each side and upper tiers which reduce slightly but are particularly high - their colossal dimension causing the upper sections of brickwork to crack, and in places collapse. The bricks are larger than normal - 300 x 160 x 85mm - and laid as usual without mortar but with a thin vegetal adhesive placed in the horizontal joints after the bricks had first been ground together.

These towers are not mentioned in the inscription and are presumably subsequent since they remained unfinished. The false doors in sandstone, surmounted by their lintels, remain in rough form with only some outline traces of decoration. The most complete lintel is on the east side of the southern tower, showing Vishnou in his manifestation as a lion clawing the king of the Asuras, who had claimed the same honour as the god. The octagonal colonnettes with four bands give a forceful impression of strength.



Approaching from the road, the badly ruined access gopura is preceded by a small lion in the style of the Bayon, brought from some other monument. Its central brick section between two sandstone vestibules is formed of three adjacent rooms flanked by two independent passageways. The enclosure wall, of 120 metres by 130, is in laterite, and the surrounding courtyard has preserved but a few remains of the long rest rooms accessible to the pilgrims. Constructed with sandstone pillars in the eastern part and laterite walls with variously arranged balustered windows elsewhere, these were roofed in wood and tiles.

The laterite enclosure which follows is divided by four small single-roomed brick gopuras which are preceded by a sandstone vestibule and supplemented by two lateral doors pierced in the walls at either side. Long galleries, reserved for the temple servants and differing only in their manner of ventilation or lighting, surround the whole arrangement - their laterite walls and sandstone porticoes generally remained standing. Numerous fragments of tiles were found in the rubble, including some highly decorative stop-tiles.

In the north-east corner is a curious little building, square in plan and made with large blocks of laterite, that has been entirely restored. Of the type which usually shelters a stele, it is open to the four axes and topped with a *"priests cap"*. On the ground is a sort of ablution vessel with a drain for water. The temple's large foundation stele has both sides inscribed and was found in part of a specially designated neighbouring gallery.

On either side of the eastern axial entrance are two buildings which open to the west. Of the *"library"* type, they have been built as high rectangular towers with reducing upper tiers. They sheltered respectively a *"stone of the nine planets"* and a *"stone of the 7 ascetics"*. In the middle, between two rows of slender sandstone columns with top tenons, was found the dressed stone tank mentioned above. It measures 3m.00 by 1m.90. Not at all watertight and grooved on its upper edge, it would seem that it must

have served as a base for some light-weight pavilion or statue of Nandin the bull, the sacred mount of Shiva, rather than as a sarcophagus in accordance with the legend. At the base of this tank were found the remains of a pedestal and a sacred foundation stone with a large linga, all of which perhaps came from the central sanctuary.

The elegant three tiered pyramid stands over a dozen metres in height, measuring 50 metres across at the base and 35 at the summit. Each axis is marked by a stairway, rising in constant width, while the stair-walls and the sitting lions which adorn them obey the usual laws of proportional reduction. The two lower tiers, around which the narrow verges of 4 and 3 metres barely allow any circulation, are formed in laterite. The first is twice the height of the second, both being treated as simple retaining walls with a moulded base and cornice. The third is all in sandstone, as are the steps cut into it, and appears in contrast as a decorated plinth with a central horizontal line of symmetry. Two secondary stairways framed with lions - a simple device of composition rather than of any practical use - animate its eastern side with their incision, while a dozen small sanctuary towers with lingas, opening to the east, stand around it on the first tier.

From the upper platform one can see the mound of Phnom Bok to the north-east and the dark chain of the Phnom Kulen beyond - the view then plunging down to the towers below. The central sanctuary clearly dominates, raised by more than 4 metres on a double plinth of moulded sandstone - but whose decoration is badly deteriorated. Its stairways are flanked by lions. The sanctuary chamber measures 4m.20 each side and only shelters two standing Buddhas of a later period.

The five sanctuaries open to the east. To the other orientations, false sandstone doors are sculpted with delightful figurines set in a vertical band in a lattice-work surround. The lintels are simplistic in style, lack much

originality and are not particularly well preserved. All the brick elements still stand, though the detail of the superstructure has disappeared.

The walls were originally covered externally with a lime based plaster coating, which can still be seen in places - particularly on the tower of the south-west corner. The ornamentation was sculpted in the plaster itself, on a brick background which, for the more important decoration such as the figures in arches, was first sculpted in outline. The style is close to the motifs of the classic art but with some recollection of previous styles, such as in the representation of palaces and flying figures over the devatas.

It can be seen that the figures decorating the corner piers are feminine on the two western towers and masculine on those to the east - as they are on the central tower. One should also note; - on the south-west corner tower, a devata with four faces and four arms - the wife of Brahma, - and on the eastern side of the north-east corner tower another with four arms and a hog's head - the "*sakti*" of Vishnou in the form of a boar - who is to be found on the west face of the south-west corner tower.





## Prasat Leak Neang

*"The sanctuary of the hidden woman"*

This small tower, constructed in bricks which are smaller than those used at Pre Rup, is situated slightly to the north-east of this monument at about 100 metres from the road. With simple mouldings it shows no trace of any decoration or plaster. The false doors are in brickwork and the sanctuary chamber, of only 2m.30 in width, opens to the east. The sandstone lintel shows Indra on a three headed elephant surmounted by a frieze of small figures in prayer. Behind is a double timber beam.

The inscriptions on the door jambs describe various donations and gives the date of 960 - which is earlier than Pre Rup by one year. This temple could therefore have formed a part - with others that have since disappeared - of its external enclosure.

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*Date*      *second half of the 10th century (960)*  
*King*       *Rajendravarman*  
              *(posthumous name: Shivaloka)*  
*Cult*        *Brahmanic*



## *the Eastern Mebon*

Five hundred metres north of Pre Rup, the 16th kilometre boundary stone stands at the southern edge of the large expanse of water known as the eastern baray. Measuring two kilometres north-south by seven kilometres east-west, it is enclosed by an earth embankment and marked at each of its four corners with a stele set in a shelter. Identified as the *"Eastern Lake"* by Tcheou Ta-Kouan and the *"Yasodharatataka"* on the inscriptions, it was realised during the reign of Yasovarman towards the end of the 9th century and supplied by the Stung Siem Reap.

This vast reservoir, that served to regulate the flow of the river and to irrigate the surrounding plain, is today given over to rice fields, though if one is to judge by the laterite steps which surround the small island of the Mebon, its original depth was three metres and its volume must have been 40 million cubic metres. Since a large part of it is now silted up there must have been some disaster or rupture of a dike to have caused its rapid choking rather than its slow sedimentation. Whatever the cause, its centre was marked by a small island of 120 metres across where the temple of the Mebon was raised - on which the main entry pavilion of the Royal Palace of Angkor Thom and the Victory Gate were subsequently aligned.

The Mebon has all the characteristics of a *"temple-mountain"* symbolising the Meru - but where there should have been the tiered pyramid inside two concentric enclosing walls, here there is instead a simple three metre high platform carrying the quincunx of towers. Perhaps the builders were wary of putting too much burden on such a small mound of earth entirely surrounded by water? Whatever the reason, in allowing a more open composition and in reducing the movement of pilgrims to a minimum - since it was only accessible by boat - an arrangement which must have considerably eased the circulation.

Several inscriptions found in the vicinity as well as the foundation stele - dated 952 and so only nine years before Pre Rup - describe the placing in the various sanctuaries of the linga Shri Rajendresvara, of several idols - notably of Shiva and Parvati *"in the likeness of the mother and the father"* of king Rajendravarman, and of Vishnou with Brahma - and of eight lingas of the god in eight forms (in the eight small towers of the surrounding court). The Mebon belongs therefore to the series of temples consecrated to the memory of deified parents, - and a very fine statue of a feminine divinity found during the course of clearing and returned to the sculpture storeroom would seem to be the Parvati of the inscription.

Each axis is marked by a laterite embarkation terrace, framed by two sitting lions and forming projections from the retaining wall, itself supported on tiers. A border of five metres surrounds the external

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>second half of the 10th century (952)</i>                                   |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Rajendravarman</i><br><i>(posthumous name: Shivaloka)</i>                   |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic (Shivaïte)</i>  |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>and restoration by H. Marchal and</i><br><i>M. Glaize from 1935 to 1939</i> |

enclosure wall which, by the pleasing arrangement of its setting back, leaves sufficient space in front of each of the four gopuras. These are in laterite and sandstone - with no remains of either vaults or roofs - and cruciform in plan with three passageways and central sandstone porticoes. The inscribed stele is to be found on the right on entering.<sup>25</sup>

A series of galleries with laterite walls pierced by variously arranged balustered windows and with sandstone porticoes follows the interior of the enclosure wall, serving as meditation or rest rooms. They are, as at Pre Rup, the precursor of the continuous galleries that were soon to make their appearance in the monuments. Except for in the southern part, there are but a few remains of these buildings, whose roof covering was in timber and tiles. Perhaps the materials were put to some other use after their demolition.

A 2m.40 high laterite retaining wall with a 2m.00 surrounding border defines the next level (first enclosure) which carries a low enclosing wall. One should not forget to admire, standing at the four corners of the platform of the first and second enclosures, the handsome monolithic elephants, treated in realistic fashion and showing every detail of their harnesses. The best preserved are to be found to the south-west, and are more impressive than those at Bakong.

Ahead of the axial stairways, flanked by lions, a return in the enclosure wall again frames each gopura - except for the western where the border has been left wider. The building itself, in laterite and brick, formed a towered passageway, though this has virtually collapsed. The western lintel of the east gopura shows Krishna wrestling with the naga.

Within the large courtyard of the first enclosure, eight small brick towers - two on each side - open to the east. Each sheltered a linga. They have finely detailed octagonal colonnettes with two bands, and lintels with figurines incorporated into a foliate decoration. To the east are three

rectangular buildings in laterite - two to the south of the axis that contained in one a "*stone of the nine planets*" and the other a "*stone of the seven ascetics*"; and a single one to the north. They open to the west like the "*library*" buildings, and traces of brickwork remaining above the cornice suggest that they were vaulted in brick despite their width. In the north-west and south-west corners are two similar buildings - without windows - but opening to the east.

The upper platform carrying the five towers is surrounded by a sandstone wall forming a plainly moulded base of 3m.00 in height. Another plinth of 1m.90, but which is ornate, allows the central sanctuary to dominate the four others. Lions embellish the stairways.

The towers are built in bricks which are much smaller than those at Pre Rup - 22cm x 13cm x 5.5cm - and constructed without mortar in the usual manner. Figures - all masculine except for the two western towers - are outlined on the corner piers. All were covered with a sculpted lime-based mortar that is mentioned in one of the inscriptions, but of which there remains no trace, despite the measure taken of boring small holes in the brickwork to aid adhesion.

The towers open to the east, with the other three false doors in sandstone. The sanctuary chamber measures 4m.00 in the central and 2m.80 in the corner towers. The one to the south-east still contains an interesting circular pedestal of the type already found at Phnom Bok and at Phnom Krom, where it carried a statue of Brahma.

The ornamentation is similar in many ways to Pre Rup, and all the sculpted sandstone elements are remarkable - even though the decoration remains slightly affected and is occasionally reminiscent in its complexity of certain failings in the Baroque style. The false doors are delightful with their lattice-work pattern and banded motifs set with tiny figurines.

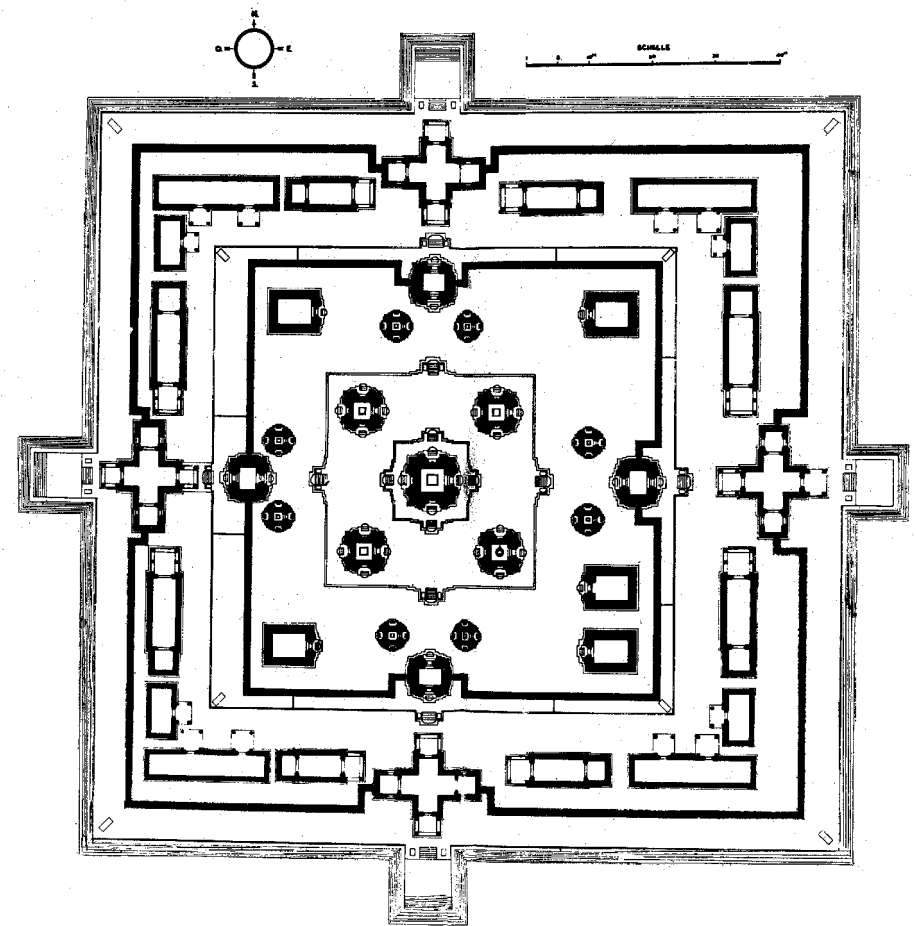


It has been possible to secure the lintels in place nearly everywhere during the course of the works. These are far better than those at Pre Rup and are handled with real craftsmanship, vigour and imagination.

On the central tower, one should particularly note; - to the east, Indra on a three headed elephant with small cavaliers on the branches and flights of figures being disgorged by makaras, under a small frieze of figures in meditation, - to the west, Skanda the god of war on his peacock with a line of figures holding lotus flowers - and to the south, Shiva on the sacred bull Nandin.

Then on the tower of the north-west corner, east side, - the curious motif of Ganesha sitting astride his trunk that he has transformed into a mount.

On the tower of the south-east corner, north side, - the head of a monster devouring an elephant. On the west gopura of the first enclosure, east side, - Vishnou in the form of a man-lion, clawing the king of the Asuras who dared to challenge him. On the building of the north-east corner of the first enclosure, west side, - Lakshmi between two elephants who, with their raised trunks, spray her with lustral water.



## Ta Som

*"The ancestor Som"*

From the eastern Mebon, Ta Som appears on the right, a little after the 13th kilometre marker stone, as a tower with four faces of Lokesvara entwined within the roots of a giant Ficus tree that crowns it perfectly. Several of the roots have pierced the vault and descend straight to the ground, obstructing part of the passageway.<sup>26</sup>

Cruciform in plan, this gopura is flanked by two small rooms and adjoins the 200 by 240 metre laterite wall of the external (the third) enclosure. Its western lintel shows the standing bodhisattva surrounded by worshippers. There is a similar gopura to the east with the same fronton, preceded externally by a small terrace bordered with naga-balustrades - the temple having a double entrance.

Ta Som lies on the extension of the Prah Khan-Neak Pean axis, and must represent, in its diminutive size, a single unified development typical of the monuments appearing in the last period of the style of the Bayon. It appears to be exactly like the external enclosures of Ta Prohm and of Banteay Kdei. In all its parts the same elements recur - false windows with lowered blinds, small devatas - which are rough and rustic - and an embroidery of organic decoration on a background of foliated scrolls in profusion on the walls.

In an advanced state of ruin, the various buildings which still stand have been the object of some provisional consolidation and basic clearing work. The internal courtyard remains littered with fallen blocks and the ensemble is, in its verdant setting, quite charming.

After the first gopura, a pavement bordered by nagas with large garudas crosses the moat. The laterite wall of the second enclosure is divided to the east and west by cruciform sandstone gopuras, each with small wings to either side and open only to the outside with balustered windows. Preceded by porticoes, they are covered by a crossing of barrel-formed vaults.

The first enclosure is formed by a gallery of 20 metres by 30. These are built in laterite and sandstone, as are the corner pavilions with their crossing vaults and moulded false doors. The four gopuras, entirely in sandstone, are in the form of a tower with two reducing upper tiers topped with a crowning motif. The plan remains the same as the other enclosures, as does the mural decoration.

Walking around the exterior one passes successively the north-west and north-east corners - the latter of which has completely collapsed - to gain access to the internal courtyard by the small door in the

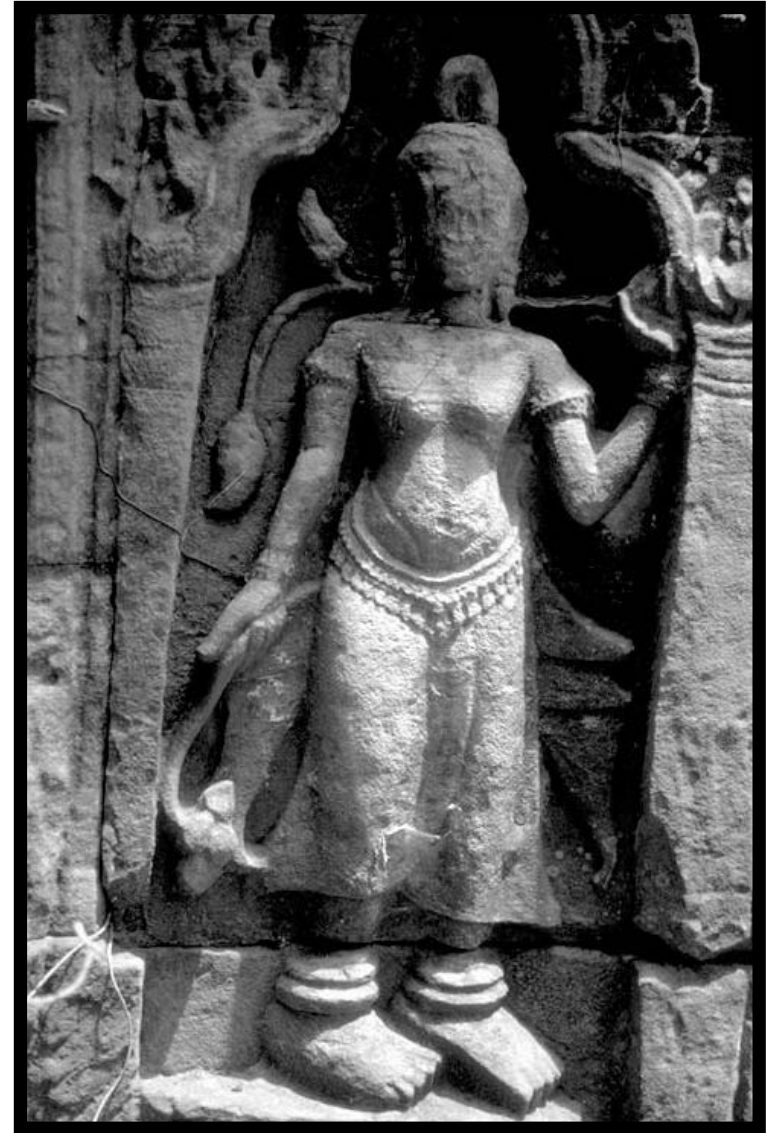
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*Date* late 12th century  
*King* Jayavarman VII  
(posthumous name:  
*Maha paramasangata pada*)  
*Cult* Buddhist  
*Clearing* by H. Marchal in 1930

gallery, situated on the south side between the south-east corner and the gopura.

Climbing over the fallen blocks, one will see the two *"library"* type buildings on the right, opening to the east - the northern of which is badly ruined - and then the imposing mass of the central sanctuary, cruciform in plan with four vestibules. The sanctuary chamber, which is open on its four sides, has an ornate cornice and is decorated *"in tapestry"* at the base of the walls.

The tympanums of the gopuras, sculpted with banded scenes, are not without some interest - particularly that on the south side of the north gopura, where four figures in prayer frame a fifth who stands. Defaced at the time of the 13th century Brahmanic reaction he was carried, as are the others, on a lotus and surmounted by flying figures. In the south-west and north-west corners of the courtyard stand two sandstone pillars with a top tenon that are similar to those at Prah Khan, Ta Prohm and Banteay Kdei.



## Krol Ko

*"The oxen park"*

About 2 kilometres beyond Ta Som, just after the 11th kilometre marker stone and 100 metres to the right of the road, stands the little temple of Krol Ko - the access track preceding by a hundred metres the *route Trouvé* which leads to Neak Pean.

From the east, one enters the second enclosure through a simple opening in the external laterite enclosure wall. The internal court is defined by a 25 by 35 metre wall - again in laterite - which is itself surrounded on three of its sides with a moat lined with steps.

Some frontons have been reconstructed on the ground on either side of a small cruciform terrace. Two of them on the right represent the bodhisattva Lokesvara - to whom the temple seems to have been dedicated - standing amidst some figures in prayer. To the left, of Brahmanic inspiration, is Krishna raising the mount Govardhana to shelter the shepherds and their flocks - with another Lokesvara.

The upper section of the cruciform sandstone gopura has collapsed - it is preceded by a vestibule to the east and has two small wings on either side. Within the internal enclosure stands the sanctuary. It is reasonably sized and clearly in the style of the Bayon, with a general embroidery of decoration and false windows with blinds. A *"library"* precedes it to the south of the axis. Open to the west and constructed in laterite and sandstone, this has a false door on its eastern side. The rest of the ornamentation is generally basic and without much interest.

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*Date* late 12th - early 13th century  
*King* Jayavarman VII  
(posthumous name:  
Maha paramasangata pada)  
*Cult* Buddhist  
*Clearing* by H. Marchal from 1922 to 1924

Just beyond Krol Ko, the 300 metre *route Trouvé* leads to the small island of Neak Pean. This is the “*Meban*” of the Prah Khan baray (the “*Jayatataka*” of the inscription) measuring 3,500 metres by 900 - the two monuments being aligned on the same axis. The island, of 350 metres each side, was defined by a system of laterite steps with pavements set on the axes. Small elephants must once have stood at the four corners since there is still one in place - to the north-east.<sup>27</sup>

King Jayavarman VII, the Prah Khan stele tells us, placed the “*Jayatataka*” - the “*Northern Lake*” of Tcheou Ta-Kouan - “*like a mirror, coloured by stones, gold and garlands. The pool shines, illuminated by the light of the golden prasat and coloured red with lotus blossom, evoking an image of the pool of blood spilled by the Bhargava: inside is an eminent island, charmed by the pools which surround it, cleansing from the stain of sin all those who come into its contact and serving as a vessel to cross the Ocean of Existence*”.

The symbolic character of Neak Pean is so established. Already in 1877 Delaporte saw there a building consecrated to the Buddha attaining the glory of Nirvana, with a series of pools cleansing the pilgrims of their sins and lifting them to supreme perfection. After research by Mssrs Cœdes, Finot and Goloubew, we can recognise in the central basin a replica of lake Anavatapta, to be found in the region of the Himalaya at the summit of the world and venerated in India for the healing powers of its waters. It is the source of the four large rivers of the Earth that flow through as many sculpted gargoyles, corresponding to the four cardinal points, which one can also find here with some slight variation.

“*An expanse of water and a lotus which arises from it, carrying the supreme god. It is a schema of the Pure World, closely related to the theme of Vishnou reclining on the waters emitting the lotus of Brahma*”. Paul Mus’ beautiful image could be considered as the very definition of this sacred water and of its sanctuary.

In the middle of the now dry northern baray, Neak Pean itself is but a series of “*srahs*” (pools) - some with stone surrounds - whose outlines were found within the limits of the laterite enclosure. In plan, a large square pool of 70 metres each side is bordered by steps and has at its centre - surrounded by similar steps - a circular island of 14 metres in diameter on its upper level with a small sanctuary. Four secondary pools of 25 metres each side flank it on the axes, marked by four chapels set into the common surrounding bank.

Two nagas surround the base of the circular island with their tales entwined to the west - from where derives the name *Neak Pean*. Their heads - separated in order to allow passage to the east - are treated in

## Neak Pean

*“The entwined serpents”*

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|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Date     | <i>second half of the 12th century</i>  |
| King     | <i>Jayavarman VII</i><br><i>(posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)</i>            |
| Cult     | <i>Buddhist</i>   |
| Clearing | <i>by H. Marchal from 1922 to 1924 with anastylosis by M. Glaize from 1938 - 1939</i> |

the manner of the naga Mucilinda which shelters the statues of the Buddha. These are, with their axial head coiffed with a *"mukuta"*, a representation of the two large Nagarajas - Nanda and Upananda - often associated in Indian literature with lake Anavatapta.

The upper platform appears as the enormous corolla of a lotus blossom, a motif repeated at the base of the prasat by a row of 16 opposing petals, undercut with a groove and particularly pleasing. The Buddhist sanctuary, although the idol had disappeared, has two upper tiers crowned with a lotus and frontons dedicated to the life of the Buddha, - the *"Cutting of the Hair"* to the east, - the *"Grand Departure"* to the north, - and Buddha (defaced) meditating under the Bodhi tree to the west - while the southern tympanum has been defaced. The plan is cruciform with an east door - the three others having been walled in and then sculpted with three fine panels containing large images of Lokesvara, the compassionate bodhisattva.

The process of anastylosis revealed other transformations, showing that the construction was undertaken in at least two stages. It appears that the sanctuary itself, originally open to the four cardinal points, had its entrance stair enlarged to form a cross - with a banal decoration of devatas - and was rounded by the addition in the inward corners of the three headed elephant which one also finds at the gates of Angkor Thom, but here surmounted with a rearing lion instead of the figure of Indra.

In similar fashion, on the circular island, an earlier system of steps in laterite and sandstone with a stairway to the east was covered with the present surfacing, which is ornate and all in sandstone. It is possible that these additions and alterations corresponded, as Mr Coedes has suggested, to a change in cult or destination. Neak Pean, though dedicated to the Buddha at the time of its construction, would have been avowed to Lokesvara only towards the end of the reign of Jayavarman VII, at the time when the pools were arranged for healing ablution or purification.

Whatever the reason, the ornamentation of the initial prasat - and notably of its pilasters and frontons - places it in that part of the 12th century subsequent to Angkor Wat, while the unity of style and conception of the monument confines it to a limited period.

The four chapels are set into the steps of the central pool just to the base of their frontons, and are all similar. Each is open to the secondary pool, with the line of the opening arch following the full tympanum of the gable end wall. Composed of a continuous nave whose oval formed corbelled vault is decorated internally with lotus coffers and with, at the back, a mid height platform serving as a base for a mascarons gargoyle and a plinth for an idol, each has the external appearance of a groin-vaulted central core, square in plan and surmounted by a pinnacle, which is extended, on its main axis, by two gable ended avant-corps - the whole then flanked laterally on each side by three similar but less dominant projections. The decor is remarkably fine, and the scenes with figures are without exception consecrated to Lokesvara.

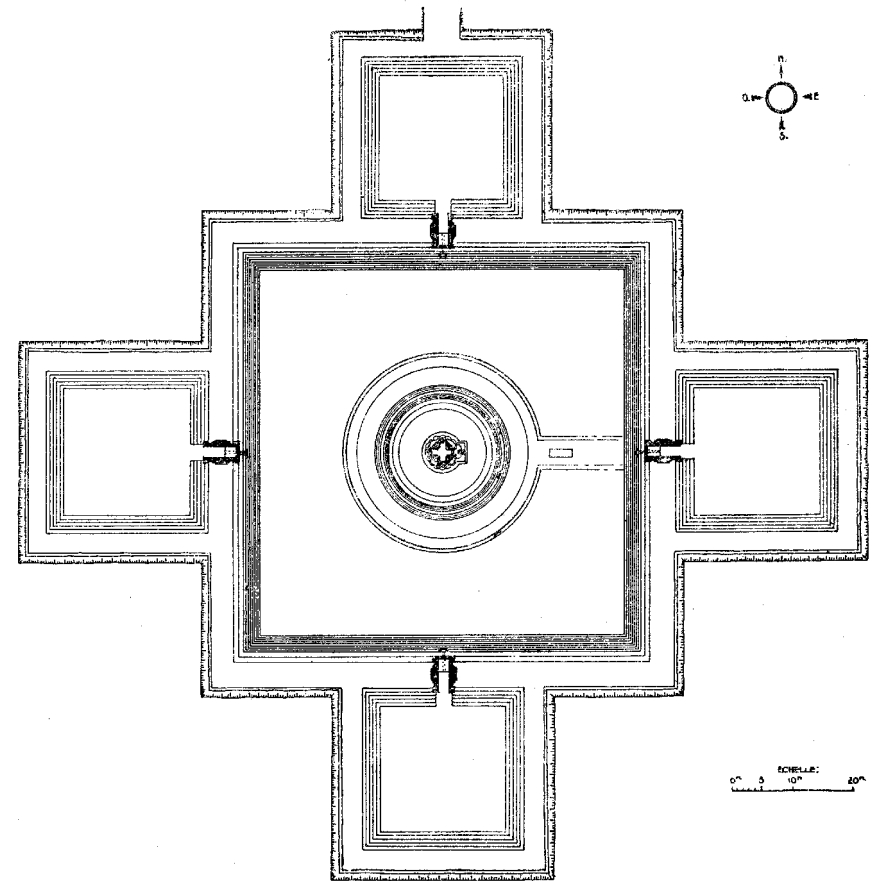
The four buildings served for the ablution of the pilgrims who, to judge by the motifs on the frontons, hoped to be cured of their illnesses or afflictions. Crouched on a circular lotus base bearing the imprint of two bare feet, and thus elevated symbolically above the level of their physical reality, they showered themselves with water flowing from the gargoyle that was fed from the exterior by a channel. This channel terminates at the large pool in a sort of ornamental stone bowl, also in the form of a lotus blossom, surmounted with a feminine bust with her back to the steps, where the officiant would have practised the rites.

The mascarons gargoyles - in the form of an elephant's head to the north, a horse's head to the west and lion's to the south - are mediocre in execution - with the exception of the human head to the east, which is truly a work of real craftsmanship.

Sculpted images must once have embellished four axial platforms forming redents at the base of the island. Only to the south has it been possible to identify some blocks of lingas in a multiple setting - no doubt part of the *"thousand lingas"* described in the inscription of Prah Khan - while to the east is the horse Balaha, investigated by Mr Goloubew. It is a form taken by Lokeshvara, as the saviour of men. Heading towards the sanctuary as if to safety, the flying animal - the major part of whose body is unfortunately missing - carries the merchant Simhala and his companions in misfortune who, hanging to its flanks, are being rescued from their shipwreck on the island of the rakshasis (Ceylon), where the resident ogresses were in the habit of awakening their obliging hosts of the previous night with their gnashing fangs. The group, hanging from the tail of the horse, is remarkable in its composition and craftsmanship.

Until it was damaged by a storm in 1935, the central sanctuary of Neak Pean was crowned by an enormous Ficus, the sacred tree. In an extraordinary arrangement, its overhanging branches gave a haunting charm to the composition of the monument. Having become its living skeleton, it had formed a rigid foundation with the sinews of its roots framing the sculpted panels and overshadowing the water - but in return, however, managing to crumble much of the superstructure and dislodge that which remained.

In its renovated form Neak Pean is quite different, and although the part played by nature may no longer prevail, the work of man wins in clarity. Situated in a delightful setting and reflected sometimes during October or November in the water of its basins - the filling of which relies on the flow from the neighbouring river - this temple is like no other. It is undoubtedly one of the *"delights"* of Khmer art, bringing to mind, with the processional way lined with bornes at Prah Khan on which it depends, ideas of *"Le Notre"*, with his decorative compositions of landscape and pools.<sup>3</sup>



## Prasat Prei

*"The forest sanctuary"*

After the 9th kilometre marker stone and just beyond the *route Fombertaux* leading to the eastern entrance of Prah Khan, one takes a forest track to the right. At about 100 metres on the left, perched on a hillock, stands Prasat Prei.

Enclosed within a single laterite wall - most of which has collapsed - all that remains is a gopura in laterite and sandstone with a sandstone sanctuary opening to the east, forming a tower with four upper tiers preceded by a restored vestibule. The sanctuary chamber, with three false doors - moulded on the exterior - is cruciform in plan and 2m.90 in width.

The decoration is linked with no peculiarity to the style of the Bayon (dense ornamentation, devatas, false windows with lowered blinds) while the frontons have been defaced.

In the courtyard - where on the southern side a badly ruined laterite and sandstone "library" has a moulded false door to the east - an interesting chariot being pulled by oxen was found, set on a base. It has been removed to the Bayon sculptures storeroom.



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Date late 12th - early 13th century  
King Jayavarman VII  
(posthumous name:  
Maha paramasangata pada)  
Cult Buddhist  
Clearing by H. Mauger in 1934



One hundred and fifty metres north of Prasat Prei, an opening in what is left of the external laterite enclosure wall of Banteay Prei gives access to the remains of a terrace, bordered by naga-balustrades, crossing a moat.

A small and low sandstone gopura, covered in a crossing of vaults, presents all the characteristics of the Bayon style. It divides the laterite wall of the 75 by 65 metre second enclosure to the east. Further on, a 30 by 25 metre sandstone gallery surrounds the internal court. Its four gopuras - still in the same style - form towers with a single upper tier and a crowning motif. They are flanked by secondary doors, while the corners are marked by small low pavilions. The gallery vault has a short span and is particularly shallow. The walls, in terms of decoration, are restrained.

Only half of the central sanctuary superstructure, with its four upper tiers, remains standing. Cruciform in plan it has four vestibules which are increased in width externally by the presence of false half-vaults to either side. The cruciform sanctuary chamber is 1m.90 across at its centre and open to the four cardinal points. The frontons have been defaced and the false windows here have balusters without blinds.

In the south-west quarter of the courtyard stands one of the isolated standing pillars with a top tenon, such as one finds in most temples of this period. In the south-east corner, where the "library" would normally be found, a small rectangular pit has been excavated and lined with laterite. Its function remains a mystery.

## *Banteay Prei*

*"The forest citadel"*

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>late 12th - early 13th century</i>  |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Jayavarman VII</i><br><i>(posthumous name:</i><br><i>Maha paramasangata pada)</i> |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Buddhist</i>  |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by H. Mauger in 1934</i>  |



*Note: - The traverse of the monument can be made in totality either from east to west or inversely. Send your vehicle to meet you at the gate opposite to your entry, or if you only have a little time, straight to the north gate. The three are to be found on the Grand Circuit, the way leading to the east gate (route Fombertaux) is just a little after the 9 kilometre marker stone, to the north gate after the 8 kilometre stone, and to the west gate at 7 kilometres.*

The large ensemble of Prah Khan, forming a rectangle of 700 metres by 800 surrounded by moats, covers an area of 56 hectares. It is, like Ta Prohm with which it has many analogies, an example typical of the formula adopted by Jayavarman VII; - all the elements of a vast composition compressed into a relatively small space (the third enclosure contains all of its buildings in only 175 by 200 metres), - the transformation of an elegant initial plan into a veritable architectural chaos by the multiplication of additional buildings placed at random - all then enclosed within a vast habitation zone that was probably covered with huts and timber houses.

For Prah Khan, things can easily be explained. On the one hand, the jambs of the sanctuary door openings give proof in short inscriptions of the multiplicity of the pious foundations - naming the idols which represent as many deified dignitaries and giving the monument the character of a kind of temple of remembrance, rather like a necropolis. On the other, the stele discovered in 1939 reveals that it was here the king won victory (personified in the name of Jayasri) and founded a city of the same name: *"Nagara-Jayasri"*.

It is also quite likely that Prah Khan was a city, since, according to Mr Coedes, the ancient name of Jayasri and the modern name of Prah Khan are but one and the same - *"the sacred sword - the palladium of the Khmer kingdom - still being called Jayasri in Thailand: - "Nagara Jayasri", which meant in fact "the city of victorious royal Fortune", which became in popular usage the city of the sacred sword - or in Cambodian, Prah Khan"*.

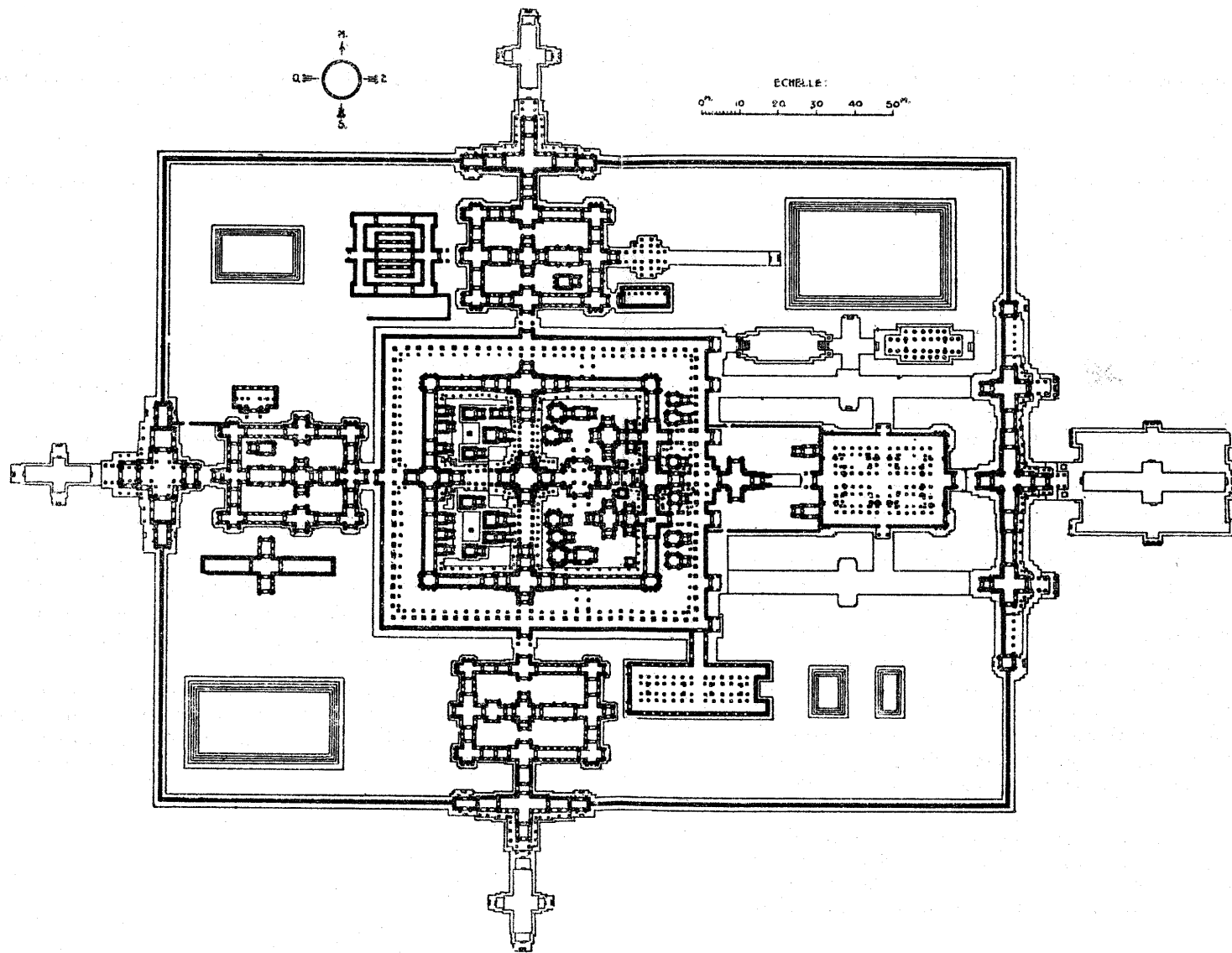
In contrast to Ta Prohm or Banteay Kdei - other foundations of Jayavarman VII - the four access paths crossing the moats are here bordered by the same lines of giants holding the naga which also precede the gates of Angkor Thom, whose architectural symbolism we have studied in previous chapters. At Prah Khan, as in the distant city of Banteay Chmar where they can again be found, this element was the mark of a royal city, further confirmed by the planning of the entrances that are set on level ground, in contrast to the usual

## Prah Khan

*"The sacred sword"*

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|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Date     | <i>second half of 12th century (1151)</i>  |
| King     | <i>Jayavarman VII<br/>(posthumous name:<br/>Maha paramasangata pada)</i>   |
| Cult     | <i>Buddhist</i>  |
| Clearing | <i>initiated by H. Marchal<br/>from 1927 to 1932<br/>Continued with partial anastylosis<br/>by M. Glaize in 1939<br/>Various consolidation and restoration<br/>work carried out since 1946</i> |



arrangement, in order to allow the passage of carts and elephants. Prah Khan, where one finds no faced towers like those at the Bayon, or outer enclosures as at Ta Prohm, Banteay Kdei, Ta Som or Angkor Thom - and which must therefore have preceded them - quite probably served as the provisional residence of Jayavarman VII during the reconstruction of his capital, devastated by the Chams in 1177.

As a temple, the stele tells us that in 1191 a statue was consecrated in Prah Khan to bodhisattva Lokeshvara, named Jayavarmesvara, who was none other than an image of the father of Jayavarman VII, Dharanindravarman - in the same way that Ta Prohm was dedicated to his mother represented in Prajnaparamita.

It also refers to the existence of 515 other statues, to one of the 102 royal hospitals of the kingdom (which has not been found), and to a house of fire or stage-post. The attendants and servants numbered 97,840 men and women, a thousand of whom were dancers. Eighteen major annual festivals and ten days public holiday a month give evidence of the taste that the Khmer have always had for leisure and their religious ceremonies.

#### DESCRIPTION.

Prah Khan, like most other temples of Jayavarman's reign, is not uniform in style. It shows evidence of numerous alterations and additions - and although a Buddhist monastery, there is nonetheless an abundance of Brahmanic iconography.

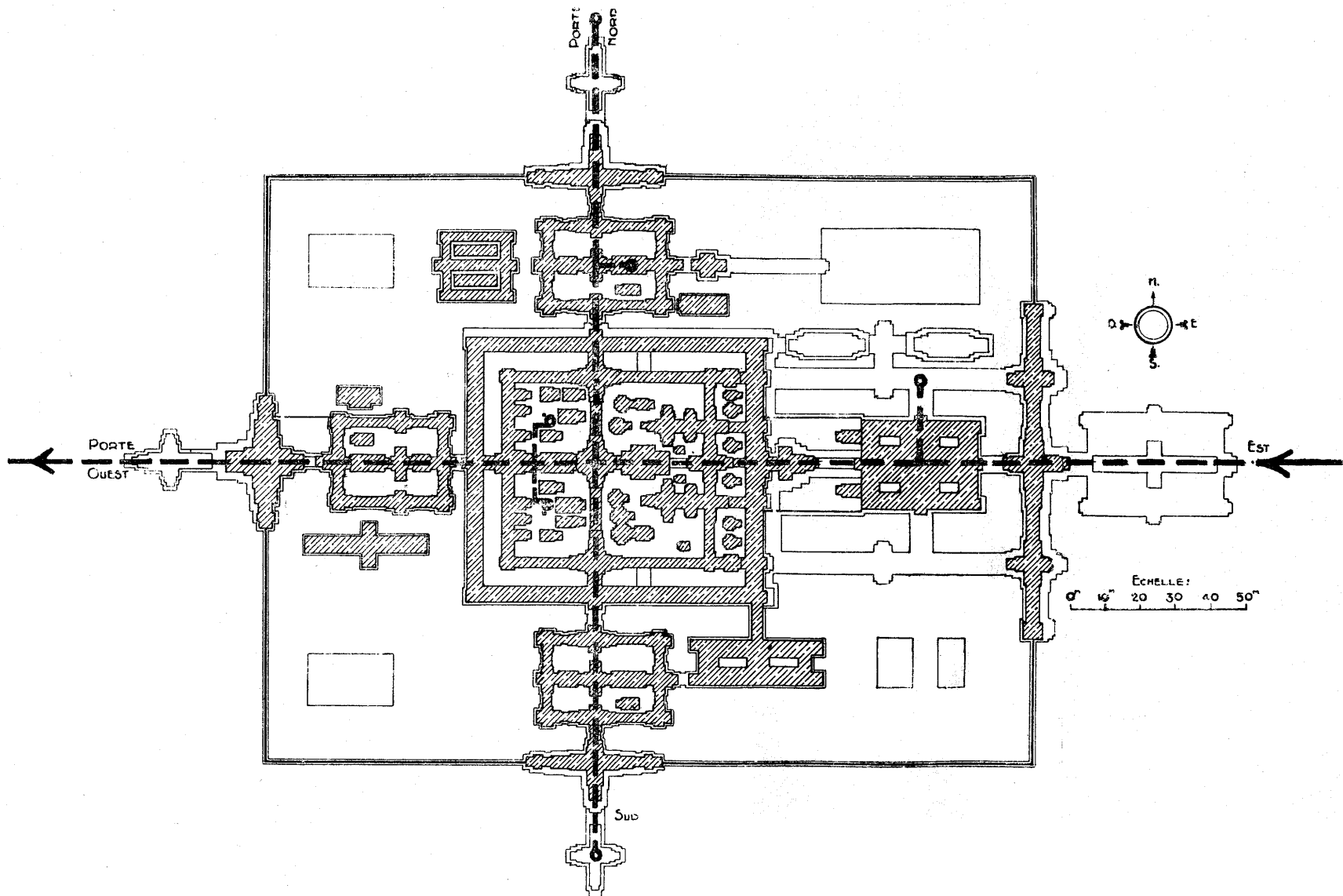
It has two concentric galleries and, similarly, two enclosures formed by simple walls - the closest to the centre containing important groups of galleries and sanctuaries on the axes which, as a crossing cloister to the east, become veritable temples in reduction in the other orientations.

The visit is easy since recent clearing works have opened the axial circulation by clearing the fallen rubble. From the east to the west, as from north to south, is a long line of door openings, vestibules, rooms and galleries - and we recommend that one follows the central route while making as many deep forays on either side as possible.

The temple was previously overrun with a particularly voracious vegetation and quite ruined, presenting only chaos. Clearing works were undertaken with a constant respect for the large trees which give the composition a pleasing presentation without constituting any immediate danger. At the same time, some partial anastylosis has revived various buildings found in a sufficient state of preservation and presenting some special interest in their architecture or decoration.

The *route Fombertaux*, leading to the eastern entrance, ends at the ancient terrace which served as a landing for boats on the western bank of the "*Jayatataka*" - the large reservoir of 3,500 metres by 900 - which is axial on Prah Khan and has the tiny island of Neak Pean at its centre. Of the original arrangement there remains but some foundations and steps in laterite, preceded towards the lake by two beautiful "*gajasimha*" lions.<sup>29</sup>

From here, the perspective of the ensemble must have been magnificent, responding to the natural partiality of the Khmer for grand schemes. The avenue with decorative bornes followed by the pavement bordered with giants carrying the naga across the moats, leading to the external enclosure, is one of the finest realisations in Angkor, and irresistibly brings to mind the noble presentations of Versailles or of the Grand Trianon. It is only regrettable that the two lines of bornes are set closer together than are the two chains of giants, so masking rather than complementing them - a fault in the composition that could easily have been rectified.



One hundred metres long and ten metres wide, the avenue is repeated to the west with a little less dimension, while to the north and south there are only the chains of devas and asuras. Each borne has its shank sculpted with monsters, standing *"as atlantes"*, and the square top decorated with four niches containing a seated Buddha. The image of the Sage - systematically butchered during the Brahmanic reaction of the 13th century - unfortunately only remains on two of them - at the return to the western end on either side of the axis.

The external gopura of the fourth enclosure has three towers, the central of which has four upper tiers and forms a clear passage at ground level, so dominating the two others which have only two tiers and secondary doors. Here one can clearly see all the characteristics of the Bayon style - the general decoration of the walls that are embroidered on a base of foliated scrolls, small devatas and false windows with partially lowered blinds. Large garudas brandishing the naga, over five metres in height, stand with their backs to the laterite wall on each side of the building - a motif that is repeated every fifty metres along the surrounding three kilometre external enclosure. At the corners they are more developed, and stand in their full glory - we would particularly draw attention to the one in the north-east corner, which has been fully restored and is accessible from the north gate by skirting the outside of the wall.

One of the finest works of Khmer statuary, a kneeling Prajnaparamita with a divine purity of expression, was found in this gopura during the clearing works. The original is now in Paris at the Musée Guimet, although there is a copy at the National Museum in Phnom Penh.

To the north of the forest track leading to the third enclosure and still practically intact stands the *"house of fire"* for the pilgrims, mentioned in the inscription. It is similar to the one at Ta Prohm, with particularly thick walls and windows with a double line of balusters. Its multiple corbelled vault,

which undulates like the framing line of a fronton, allows the principal room an exceptional width of 4m.70 overall.

A vast terrace on two levels with lions and naga-balustrades in the style of the Bayon allows access to the five-doored gopura, which aligns its three towers and its two extreme pavilions on a front of nearly a hundred metres, the whole being linked by galleries with pillars to the outside and a rear wall ornate with false windows with balusters towards the courtyard. To the south of the axis, a pair of large trees, resting on the vault itself of the gallery, frame its openings and brace the stones in substitute for pillars in a caprice of nature that is as fantastic as it is perilous.

From here to the interior of the third enclosure, contained within a laterite wall, there is the usual cruciform court forming four small courtyards surrounded by galleries with side-aisles on pillars. Certain elements of the half vaults, carefully coursed and dressed, are still in place, with their ornamentation of lotus blossomed coffers. Above the openings, the presence of several remarkably fine apsara friezes confirm the probable use of this area as a hall for ritual dance.

Leaving by the north one can see, to the side of a pavement bordered with nagas, the curious arrangement of massive closely set pillars which also exists at Ta Prohm and Banteay Kdei - with the exception that here they stand as large cylindrical columns - the only example in Angkor in this dimension. They serve to support a first floor in masonry, whose window frames have been reconstructed on the ground, though no trace of any access stair has been found. Opposite is a long raised terrace with laterite retaining walls.

Returning to the principal east-west axis of the monument, one then passes through the ritual dance hall, which one leaves by a courtyard enclosing two *"libraries"* within its walls, opening to the west, and a pseudo-gopura that forms a tower.

The cruciform gallery that follows seems to be slightly later. Its ornamentation is excellent, with the *dvarapalas* and *devatas* in high relief framing the openings, its frieze of sculpted - though defaced - Buddhas separated by gracious winged figurines and its corner *garudas*. Up at the back, barely visible in the half-light, the eastern fronton on the *gopura* of the first enclosure is quite particular in nature with its palace door motif framing two figures - male and female - mounted on a base and elegantly dressed.

To the left, the first small courtyard has been cleared. It must have been delightful, with its surrounding cloistered gallery ornate with gracious *devatas* - until one of the towers, still in rough form, came as an unfortunate addition to obstruct its near totality.

The stele, discovered miraculously intact under a pile of rubble, has been replaced in its original location in the western vestibule of the first *gopura*.<sup>30</sup> Practically identical to that at Ta Prohm and of the same size, 2m.00 by 0m.60, it is inscribed on each of its four sides with 72 lines of angular writing that is characteristic of the late 12th century.

Two minuscule "*libraries*" with a particularly dense ornamentation frame the western door, whose imposing fronton - consecrated to the glory of the triumphant king - has been repositioned. Surrounded by large trees which so far it has been possible to spare, a vast cruciform hall with pillars separates the north-east and south-east quarters from the internal courtyard which, not yet cleared, is choked with more or less ruined buildings. Its walls are peppered with small holes and it must once have been covered, like the interior of the central sanctuary that follows, with wooden or metal panels. The sanctuary is clearly offset to the west and so divides the court into two unequal parts.

The main tower is cruciform in plan and has four *avant-corps*, and externally would seem to have been sculpted and then pitted to receive a

covering of mortar. Within its eastern vestibule was erected - in 1943, after having been found in the neighbouring undergrowth - a large statue of a standing *Lokesvara* with eight arms that would seem to correspond to the "*Lokesa called Shri Jayavarmesvara*".<sup>31</sup> According to the foundation stele this should have been found in the main tower, and is in the image of the father of Jayavarman VII. Clearly in the style of the Bayon, the countenance is inspired with the same serene spirituality as the statue of the kneeling deified princess represented in the aspect of the *Prajnaparamita* (discovered in 1929 in this temple and mentioned above) - the two seeming to be by the same artist. The whole effect is concentrated in the expression of the face that glows with an imperceptible smile and an intense vitality. The simply modelled body stands firmly on oversized legs and has the peculiarity of being "*irradiating*" - it is covered with tiny figures of the Buddha from the toes, ankles and wrists to the chest, shoulders and the small curls of the hair. The only two hands which remained holding the disc and the rosary were broken off and stolen in 1945, during the Japanese occupation.

The central sanctuary is now occupied by the crowning motif of a stupa, the elements of which were found in the rubble of the sanctuary chamber. Unusual in form with its slender, banded shaft (tiered parasols?), it is no doubt of a later date. From here, the four lines of rooms and galleries which stretch to the four cardinal points can be viewed with their delightful play of shadow and light.

Taking one of the monumental galleries with double side-aisles which leave it on three of its axes, the visitor with a little time can explore either to the south, where from the avenue of giants (which no longer stand), the perspective stretches through a clearing in the forest to the moats of Angkor Thom - or, better, to the north, where the chains of *devas* and *asuras* have been re-established on either side of the pathway leading to the 8th kilometre of the Grand circuit.



The third gopura north is surrounded by some delightful trees, the "sralaos" with their white channelled trunks, which frame it beautifully. Its principal entrance is preceded by two enormous dvarapalas and a cruciform terrace, and has an interesting fronton; - it shows a lively scum which is probably an episode from the battle of Lanka (Ramayana). Passing through the small cloister that forms a complete temple between the second and third gopuras, one can find a Ganesha in the central tower<sup>32</sup> and, on its eastern axial gallery, two superb frontons of Brahmanic inspiration - the "Reclining Vishnou" and "Shiva between Vishnou and Brahma".

Leaving the central sanctuary towards the west, one should visit the north-west and south-west quarters of the internal courtyard of the first enclosure - which have been entirely restored - with their numerous buildings sited without order and sometimes juxtaposed, which Mr Cœdes sees quite justifiably as "funerary chapels - or family tombs". Some of them are vaulted, unusually, with a cloistered arch. The centre of the courtyard is marked by one of the isolated standing pillars with a top tenon, similar to those in other temples of the same period and which perhaps carried a miniature wooden temple containing some offerings. Each corner of the first enclosure gallery is marked by a high tower with reducing upper tiers - the one to the south-west has been reconstructed. It is interesting that, on the walls of the two symmetrical pavilions closest to the central sanctuary, the ascetics in arches on the north-western quarter remain unscathed, while on the south-western, the images of the Buddha have all been defaced.

Passing the first and second gopuras and continuing through the small temple in reduction with cloistered galleries like those encountered to the north and south, one can see a fronton representing "Krishna raising mount Govardhana" to shelter the shepherds and their flocks. It should be noted that all the tympanums with scenes in this part of the temple are dedicated to Vishnou and his various manifestations, in accordance with the convention for images of this god, so closely associated with the west.

The large gopura of the third enclosure - presenting a front of nearly 40 metres and entirely restored - has its central core formed in a crossing of aisles with groined vaults supported on pillars, with half vaulted side-aisles. It is quite close in style to Angkor Wat, though the external decoration, crowded with numerous figurines on a base of foliated scrolls that covers the entire surface of its panels, is very much in the style of the Bayon.

Among the fine frontons one can see; - to the east, on a royal embarkation, the "chess players" which one can also find in the south-west gallery of the bas-reliefs at Angkor Wat - and to the west, an episode from the battle of Lanka (Ramayana). The western door is found with its two dvarapalas and its access terrace guarded by lions, once again practically intact.

A long cutting through the forest creates a dramatic vista that accentuates the monumental character of the composition and finally allows one to exit the temple through the three towered gopura of its fourth enclosure - whose restoration intervened just in time to save the ruin of its crumbling structures whose vaults only remained in place by a miracle of balance. The pavement bordered with giants that crosses the moat was restored to its original condition, with complete success on the side of the asuras, as was the avenue of decorative bornes with defaced Buddhas that joins the road of the Grand circuit at its seventh kilometre.

## *Krol Damrei*

*"The Elephant Park"*

Eight hundred metres after the 7th kilometre marker stone indicating the western entrance to Prah Khan, a path on the left of the road leads to Krol Damrei, which can be found 75 metres into the forest. This curious ruin, discovered in 1924, forms an elliptical arena of about 45 metres by 55 that is entered by two large openings at either extremity of the longer axis. A broad laterite retaining wall of 3m.00 in height surrounds it, restraining a large embankment that must have allowed the construction of a platform - the wooden poles of which would have been held in the vertical slots that can be seen located around the perimeter at two metre intervals. This arrangement, where one can still see a drainage channel for foul water towards the north, must have formed a place for taming the elephants.



The miniature temple of Banteay Srei is located twenty kilometres north-east of the Bayon as the crow flies, not far from the right bank of the Stung Siem Reap, the river that descends from the Phnom Kulen to flow into the Tonle Sap. Situated in the middle of the forest, small in scale and in a region lacking in archaeological remains, one can understand why it escaped general attention for so long - its discovery by lieutenant Marec, an officer in the geographic service, was in fact only made in 1914. It was not cleared until 1924, following the theft and ensuing scandal the previous year of some important stones. These were eventually recovered and restored to their original positions during the course of restoration work.

The total success of the anastylosis, undertaken by Mr Marchal, caused the general adoption of this technique for the restoration of the monuments by our archaeological service, directly inspired by methods used by archaeologists in Java - and although the task at Banteay Srei was eased by the diminutive volume of the buildings, by the small blocks of stone cut from a durable sandstone which retained its sharp profiles and by the abundance of a remarkably well preserved and clearly visible decoration, the achievement of Mr Marchal is no less impressive since he was obliged to employ his skill on a particularly distant site with difficult access and with minimal means - and with an unskilled and inexperienced work force who had first to be trained from scratch.

Negotiations by Japan in 1941 ended the hostilities between Thailand and France, ensuring that Banteay Srei would be left to Cambodia - even though situated to the north of the 15th degree that marked the new frontier - by the creation of a triangular enclave which was effectively in part of Thailand. This provisional solution was unconditionally reversed by Thailand's restitution at the end of 1946.

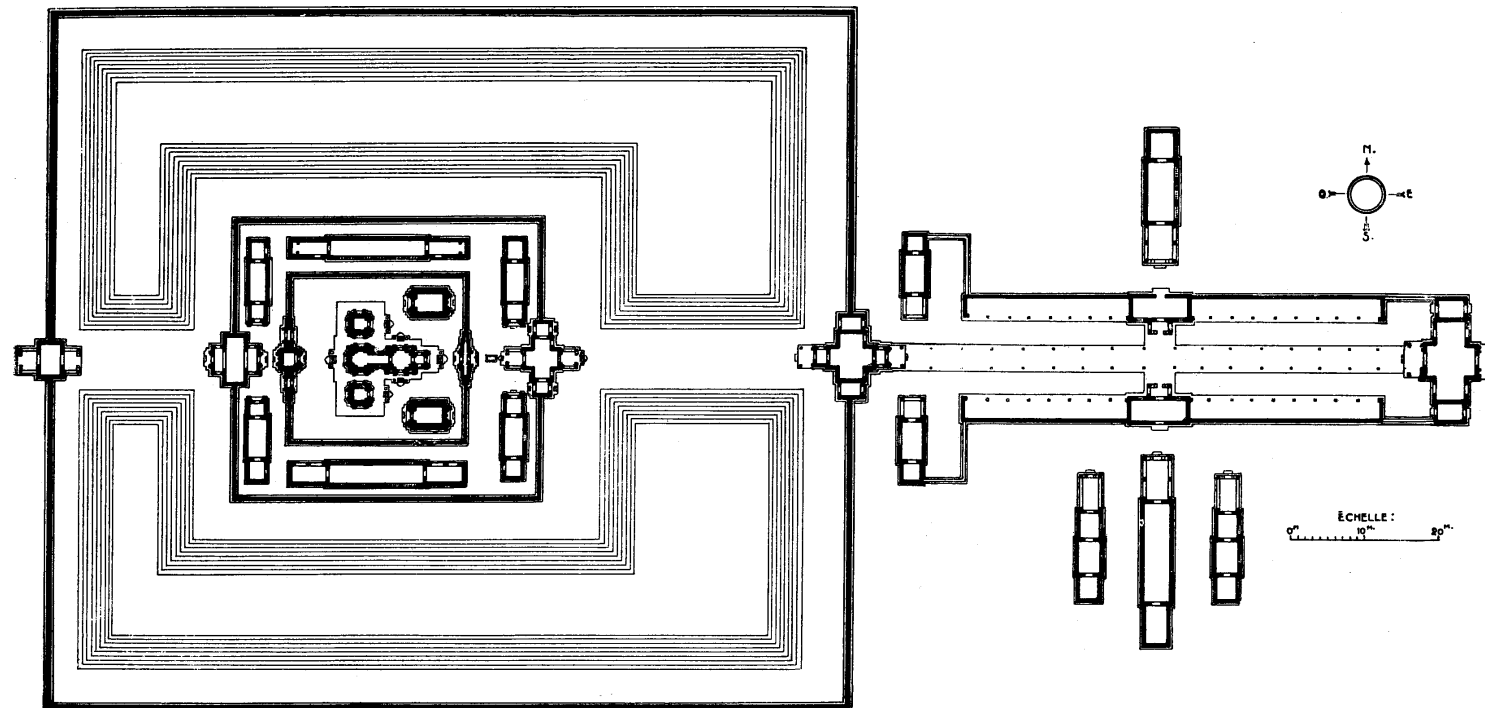
The track to Banteay Srei, though sandy in places, is always passable by car, except for three or four weeks from September to October when the rains are particularly heavy. It leaves the Grand Circuit between Pre Rup and the eastern Mebon to head east through the delightful village of Pradak, where it forks to the north, at two kilometres from the point of its departure, to skirt, after another ten kilometres, the village of Khna - where those with a taste for coconut milk will be able to refresh themselves on their return. After six more kilometres it leads to a parking area. Walking from the river, which here cuts deep and is cleared by a foot bridge, one finally gains, by the road straight ahead and at the first fork, the eastern entrance to the temple - after some 500 metres.<sup>33</sup>

## *Banteay Srei*

*"The women's citadel"*

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|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>2nd half of the 10th century (967)</i>   |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Yajnavaraha under the reign of Rajendravarman II and Jayavarman V</i>                          |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic (Shivaïte)</i>   |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by H. Parmentier and V. Goloubew in 1924 with anastylosis by H. Marchal from 1931 to 1936.</i> |



Given the very particular charm of Banteay Srei - its remarkable state of preservation and the excellence of a near perfect ornamental technique - one should not hesitate, of all the monuments of the Angkor group, to give it the highest priority. Although, in our opinion, there is no gain in trying to classify the quite different monuments of Angkor Wat, Banteay Srei or the Bayon in order of merit - nevertheless, Banteay Srei is by popular consensus a "*precious gem*", the "*jewel of Khmer art*". This commendation, however, also carries with it the only justifiable criticism - which is that the work relates more closely to the art of the goldsmith or to carving in wood than to sculpture in stone. The very nature of the material used - a hard red sandstone that can be worked like wood - has inspired the artist not to carve in volume, but rather, in the reduced scale of the composition and the proximity of the buildings - whose bare walls have disappeared under a dense overall decoration - to have made the temple itself like a half scale model, to the detriment of any architectural theme or monumental character.

The proportions of Banteay Srei remain unexplained and always amaze - it is a sort of "*caprice*", where the exquisite and abundant detail is more impressive than the mass. And while it is generally true that the outlying sanctuaries never attain the grandeur of the capital temples, and that the Khmer, used to seeing the Meru in a pyramid, the ocean in a moat and chains of mountains in the retaining walls, readily accepted small things for large - here, nevertheless, all the usual devices are distorted, with gopuras the usual thickness of a large wall and minuscule openings where the priest could not enter but by crawling.

This anomaly is particularly marked in the sacred enclosure, contributing at one time, following the erroneous interpretation of certain epigraphic data, to the assignment to the buildings of a later date - it was thought that the three sanctuary towers were not constructed until nearly the year 1300 in replacement of a single sanctuary of the normal grandeur - of the 10th century as the other enclosures - which occupied the same space.

It is now known, with the discovery in 1936 in the eastern Gopura of the fourth enclosure of the temple's foundation stele, that Banteay Srei formed a whole, whose style proves quite homogenous. Inscribed in 968, the first year of the reign of Jayavarman V, the inscription gives, with the position of the sun, the moon and the planets, the date of April-May 967 - the last year of Rajendravarman's reign, under whom at least some of the construction was probably started. After the invocation of Shiva and of his "*Sakti*", the text contains an eulogy of Jayavarman V and of his "*Guru*", Yajnavaraha, who founded Banteay Srei with his younger brother, erecting the linga of Shiva Shri Tribhuvanamahesvara in the central sanctuary. Other inscriptions engraved on the jambs of door openings mention the placing of another linga in the southern sanctuary, and of a statue of Vishnou in the northern.

#### DESCRIPTION

The temple is presented to the east with a cruciform laterite gopura. This is flanked by two small side doors and probably corresponded to an external enclosure (fourth enclosure) formed as a timber palisade. The eastern door, with its sandstone pillars, the fine ornament of its pilasters and the fronton of Indra on a three headed elephant, give a taste of the internal decoration to come - and of the beautiful rose tint of the stone. The location of the beams which carried the tiled roof still remains visible in the masonry.

A processional way bordered with decorative bornes - that were toppled conscientiously every year by the wild elephants - leads to the third enclosure. Lining either side are galleries, with foundation walls in laterite and pillars in sandstone. These are intersected towards their middle by small buildings, like gopuras, which lead, to the south, to three long rooms orientated in parallel north-south, and to the north to a single-roomed building. Here one should notice the superb fronton where Vishnou in the form of the god-lion (Narasimha) is holding Hiranya-Kasipu - the king of the Asuras who has dared to challenge him - upside-down below him while cleaving his chest with his claws. On the ground near the entrance is a long

stone representing seven feminine divinities, facing forward on their mounts - then, to the side, a Ganesha and an unidentified figure. The remains of two other buildings can be seen before arriving at the third enclosure, near to which, on the north side, the fronton of the eastern door of the third gopura east has been reconstructed on the ground. It shows, mounted in a decoration of foliated scrolls with animals and small figures, the abduction of Sita - the wife of Rama - by the Yeak Viradha.

The temple as such is composed of three enclosures defined by simple walls that measure respectively 95m.00 by 110m.00 - 38m.00 by 42m.00 - and 24m.00 by 24m.00.

The third enclosure from the centre is formed by a moat surrounded by laterite steps, with a border to both sides, divided to the east and west by a causeway that leads to the two gopuras. The wall is in laterite and the eastern gopura, whose plan is the same as that of the fourth gopura east, dominates the western. Preceded by small lions, it has a superb *"acolade"* formed base step, a pedestal and three passageways. The fronton of its west portico was not replaced but sent instead to the Musée Guimet in Paris. It shows the *"story of the apsara Tilottama, created by the gods in order to cause discord between the two brothers, Sunda and Upasunda - formidable asuras who wrought havoc in the universe. The sculptor has reproduced the moment where the two, each seizing the apsara by a hand, are in dispute over her possession"*. (G. Coëdes). This scene, taken from the Mahabharata, is very simple in composition but perfectly balanced - with the clear background between the figures further enhancing the modelling.

The second enclosure is also surrounded with a laterite wall and intersected by two gopuras of differing size. Offset towards the west with respect to the third, it contains six building annexes in laterite - the tiled coverings of which have naturally disappeared. These are rest galleries divided into three sections. The two longest are to the north and south, while

the others flank each of the gopuras. The east gopura, again cruciform in plan with three passageways, has each of its double-pillared porticoes set with superb superposed triangular frontons which follow the slope of the roof, recalling architecture in timber. Their bordered frames in large terminal volutes are crowned with deeply cut motifs of a refined elegance which, like their tympanums, are purely ornamental in decoration. Frontons treated in similar spirit are to be found at Koh Ker (10th century) and Preah Vihear (11th century), in the northern part of Cambodia - conceded in 1941 to Thailand and regained at the end of 1946. A small Nandin, the mount of Shiva, lies facing the temple to the west of the gopura.

The buildings of the first enclosure have undergone complete anastylosis, restored in every detail to their original condition. The integrity of the decor - even in its excess - is further enhanced by the numerous antefixes and corner stones in the form of the prasat which, on the sanctuary towers, line the cornices of the four upper tiers. Crowned with a *"Kalasa"*, or a symbolic water jar, these are particularly slender in proportion - they seem to shimmer in the light, and bring to mind the dense complexity of Hindu art. This is no longer the monotonous *"uniform density"* inherent in the architectural method of the Khmer. However, nowhere is there chaos - the profiles are as sharp as the lines are everywhere decorous - nor any lack of style.

The enclosure wall is in brick, as is its western gopura. This has a central room forming a sanctuary flanked by two passageways. The eastern gopura, all in sandstone and with a single passage, is so narrow that a man can barely squeeze into its wings.

On either side, two *"libraries"* open to the west and have their long façades in plain laterite and sandstone under a corbelled brick vault. Opposite is the central group, presented on a single 0m.90 high platform in a simple T form. Three towers are aligned to the front in an arrangement

reminiscent of Prah Ko, Phnom Krom and Phnom Bok. The two lateral towers are 8m.34 in height while the central is 9m.80. The sanctuary chambers are 1m.70 and 1.90 metres each side respectively. By a kind of anticipation - in accordance with an arrangement which one will often find in the 12th century - the central sanctuary is preceded to the east by a long room, or more exactly here by a square chamber with lateral doors between a portico and a junction vestibule. All are roofed in corbelled brickwork like the "*libraries*", and the interior is as bare as the exterior is ornate.

Banteay Srei, apart from its diminutive form, has also the particularity that it is both a reflection of the past - but not to the point of regression - and an advance to the future in its innovation. Through refinement it takes the best of all that had preceded - its affinity with the art of Roluos is clear - and submits it to new creation in a dynamic form of high art.

The arrangement of the plan - the stacking of superimposed frontons and the variety of the terminal motifs of their framing curves, - the appearance of bas-reliefs with scenes on the tympanums which until then were reserved for the representation of isolated figures, most often in hieratic poses, - the wall tapestry with squares and motifs with foliated scrolls, - the multiplication of heads of Kala, treated in purely decorative fashion, - the replacement of lions on the stair-walls by human figures with heads of monsters; - all of these are the mark of a general reconsideration, the majority of whose elements will be found time and again during the classical period, though often treated with considerably less skill.

The enchanting decoration requires detailed study. Besides the moulding of the profiles, the false doors, the frames of the frontons and the bands of foliated scrolls - which indicate a veritable "*renaissance*" several centuries before the Renaissance in Europe - we would also generally draw the visitor's attention to the following:-

#### *1ST GOPURA EAST*

The superb sculptural work on the east lintel, and the central motif on the west lintel where a divinity with four arms and the head of a horse overcomes two Yeaks whom he is holding by the hair - and the west fronton, where the goddess Durga with eight arms, helped by her lion, wrestles with a demon buffalo which a serpent entwines in his coils.

#### *SOUTH LIBRARY*

The two frontons, dedicated to Shiva; - To the east (Ramayana) is the giant Ravana, with multiple heads and arms, trying to shake the mount Kailasa - represented by a tiered pyramid similar to the mount Meru of the temple-mountains and set on a stylised forest background. At the summit sits Shiva with his wife Parvati crouching beside him in a delightfully abandoned pose. The different tiers are populated by animals that flee in terror, by figures with animal heads and by ascetics.

To the west, in a similar composition inspired by the Kalidasa, is Kama the god of love, shooting an arrow at Shiva - close to whom is Parvati, giving him a rosary and trying to disrupt his meditations.

#### *NORTH LIBRARY*

The two frontons, inspired by the legend of Vishnou.

To the east (Harivamsa) is the "*Rain of Indra*", or beneficial rain, indicated by parallel lines which fall on a stylised forest inhabited with animals and through which pass the child Krishna with his brother Balarama. The god, mounted on a three headed elephant, dominates the clouds - represented by many undulating lines. On the axis stands the naga, the symbol of water.<sup>34</sup>

To the west is the murder of king Kamsa by Krishna. The scene, inspired by the Bhagavata Pourana and the Harivamsa, takes place in a





palace, giving a precise indication of the contemporary wooden architecture - mounted on poles with reducing superstructures like the prasats in stone. The two principal figures, in their oversize, give an appearance of perspective that is rare in the reading of the bas-reliefs.

The four frontons, representing the first appearance of tympanums with scenes, are works of the highest order. Superior in composition to any which followed, they show true craftsmanship in their modelling in a skilful blend of stylisation and realism.

Other interesting frontons include the one on the west gopura, second enclosure, east side, which has been restored. It shows the duel of the two monkeys, Valin and Sugriva - the ally of Rama - who dispute the Royalty (Ramayana), - and from the same gopura but returned to the sculpture storeroom at the Conservation Office, another depicting the wrestling between the Pandava Bhima and the Kaurava Duryodhama (Mahabharata) in the presence of Krishna with four arms and his brother, Balarama, armed with a ploughshare. Both compositions are light and restrained, showing similarities in their execution to the history of the "*apsaras Tilottama*" described previously.

#### *SANCTUARY TOWERS*

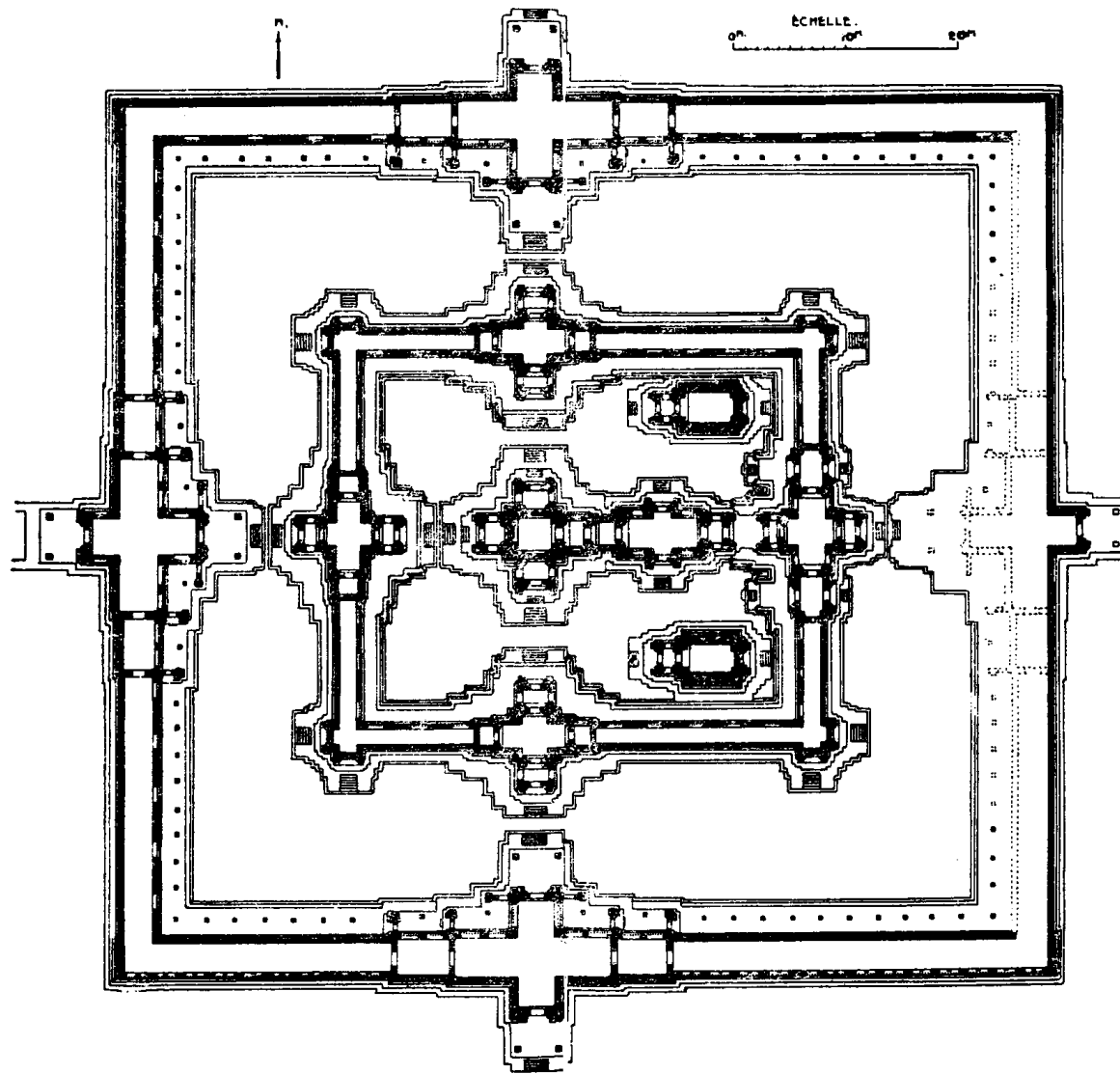
The delightful statuettes of devatas under arches of the corner piers of the north and south towers and the gracious young "*guardians*" of the central tower.

The male figures stand elegantly in a slightly "*hipped*" stance with their hair set in a cylindrical chignon. They gracefully hold a lotus bud in one hand and their lance in the other. The female devatas, standing similarly, have their torsos naked and play with flowers. Their hair is set in plaits and they are richly adorned. Above, separated from a head of Kala by a lotus, female figures playing cymbals give rhythm to a female dancer with a large bell

dress, like those one can see in the art of the Bakheng, and particularly of Phnom Krom.

Of the lintels enhanced with figures one should note, on the central sanctuary; - to the north, the duel between the monkeys Valin and Sugriva, - to the west, the abduction of Sita, - and to the south, a wild boar, viewed from the front, who is perhaps an allusion to the founder of the temple, Yajnavaraha ("*the sacrificial boar*"). On the north Sanctuary, north side, a god cleaves his enemy from head to navel.

Excavation revealed several interesting pieces of sculpture in the round, worthy of narrative or ornamental sculpture and, like the temple itself, small in scale. Six male and female statues in two groups were found close to the east gopura of the third enclosure, - Shiva and Uma from the central sanctuary are now in the National Museum in Phnom Penh. There were also figures crouching on the stair-walls with bodies of men and heads of monsters; - monkeys in front of the south entrance of the long room, lions in front of the south tower, garudas in front of the north tower and a kind of negroid in front of the west side of the central sanctuary.



A visit to Banteay Samre can be combined with an excursion to Banteay Srei, which it should precede if possible. The whole trip takes perhaps half a day and is best made in the morning.

From the Grand Circuit a track, which can often be sandy and difficult on a bicycle or rickshaw, leads from a point at 14 kilometres from Siem Reap, between Pre Rup and the eastern Mebon, straight in five kilometres to the path giving access to the eastern causeway of the monument. Two kilometres from its point of departure, in the village of Pradak, one passes the road to Banteay Srei to the left. 1700 metres further on one crosses an earth embankment forming the eastern dike of the ancient eastern baray. After another 500 metres, the first road right leads to the temple's north entrance, while the second, 300 metres further at the signpost indicating the crossing of the tracks, takes one to the extreme eastern end of the access causeway. One's car can then wait in front of the north gate.

The Samres are an indigenous people of uncertain origin - they populated the region at the foot of the Kulen hills, and the inhabitants of Pradak are considered as their descendants.

The monument itself has its own story, related with particular relish by Mr Baradat. It tells of the accession to the throne of a poor farmer of Samre origin named Pou, who specialised in the cultivation of sweet cucumbers - the seeds of which he had received in some supernatural manner. He made homage of his first harvest to the king, who found them so succulent that he quickly secured exclusive rights, ordering Pou to kill anybody, man or beast, who should enter his "*chamcar*" (field).

In the season of the rains when the cucumbers were scarce, the sovereign, impatient for their taste, went himself to visit his gardener - but, arriving after nightfall, was mortally wounded by the farmer with a blow from his lance, being mistaken for a thief and buried as such in the middle of the field.

The king had no direct descendants, and the dignitaries of the kingdom, unable to agree on the choice of his successor, resorted to divine intervention, calling for the "*Victory Elephant*" to designate the new king. Stopping just in front of the sweet cucumber farmer, it "*saluted him, lowered its trunk between its feet, kneeled and, encircling him with its coiling trunk, placed him gently on its back*".

## Banteay Samre

*"The Samres' citadel"*

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>towards the middle of the 12th century</i>                              |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic (Vishnou)</i>   |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>cleared in 1930.<br/>Anastylosis by Mr Glaize<br/>from 1936 to 1944</i> |

So becoming king, the cucumber farmer exhumed the corpse of his predecessor to celebrate the funerary ceremony at the Mebon, followed by the rites of cremation at Pre Rup. The court dignitaries, humiliated at being governed by a Samre, soon expressed their discontent by neglecting to show any respect. The king, unable to discipline them with either kindness or cruelty, left the Royal Palace and went to live at some distance from the city - at Banteay Samre - where he *"remained shut away like a frightened tortoise with its head in its shell"*. There, he summoned his ministers who remained loyal to the attributes of the royalty and the regalia of the old king rather than to the Master himself and, when he could take no more, resolved to punish them. Calling for the commode of his predecessor, he decapitated all those who chose to humiliate him by rather showing their devotion to this miserable relic of the previous dynasty. His reign followed from thenceforth in harmony amongst his followers who, overcome by his compassion, became faithful to him.

Banteay Samre, overrun with vegetation and cluttered with fallen blocks from its upper parts, had all the usual charm of ruins lost in the forest, but was no more than an object without form or personality. Anastylis has transformed it into one of the finest monuments of the Angkor group, and one of the most complete. Its ornamentation, exceptional in quality and very well preserved in its entirety, became thereafter presented in its unified integrity - it is a pure specimen of the classic art from the finest period where the decoration, shown to its best advantage on a clear background, is itself a function of the architecture.

Following the resurrection of Banteay Srei, this first attempt at the restoration of a monument of any considerable size proved that the new method of work was justified and the confidence placed in its success well founded. Although undated, since no inscription was found - unlike other monuments in the same style - Banteay Samre is without doubt very close in time to Angkor Wat, and perhaps a little later.

Its slender proportions - though not fully appreciated before the clearing works since the horizontal lines of the truncated buildings barely emerged from their verdant covering - are impeccable, with an internal layout similar to the central part of Beng Mealea or Chau Say Tevoda, with which it is approximately contemporaneous; - enclosed by galleries with four gopuras and a surrounding courtyard, its central sanctuary is preceded to the east by a long room flanked by two *"libraries"*.

Arriving from the east, a 200 metre causeway paved in laterite and bordered by a naga-balustrade in the style of Angkor Wat - which unfortunately barely remains - passes between two *"srahs"* (pools), to end at one of the stairways embellished with lions and supported on colonnettes. On two levels and bordered by nagas - similar to those in front of the entrance to Prah Palilay - this was joined to another terrace that stretched in width to either side of the axis. Its retaining wall, with rich decoration of a quality rarely achieved even during this period, ends in two stairways. These have disappeared, and their absence - which no doubt results from some later use of the materials - detracts considerably from the majesty of the composition. They are followed by the beginnings of two right angle returns, evident by the remains of their laterite foundation walls.

To judge by the remains of a large number of tiles found during clearing works, this vast esplanade was topped with light-weight structures extending to the limit of the eastern enclosure wall, obscuring its 1m.20 high moulded substructure. Excavation carried out during the clearing works discovered some remains of the walls of an ancient terrace, though unclear in plan, which indicated that the arrangement of the immediate surroundings of the temple on the east side must have been altered. The external laterite enclosure wall in its imposing proportion of 6m overall height must have formed, as on the other sides, one of the walls of a tile-covered gallery joining a gopura that would have been far more impressive than the existing projecting entrance with portico. This meanly proportioned arrangement

could not reasonably have constituted the principal entry to a temple as important as Banteay Samre - and its style is in any case of the Bayon, which is later than the monument.

Internally the impression is confirmed - the galleries and gopuras of the second enclosure must either have been demolished or remain incomplete on the eastern side - and a laterite terrace has also been identified just at the outcrop of the projection serving as the plinth for the first gopura. The gallery of the second enclosure, of 83m.00 by 77m.00, encloses a surrounding courtyard at a lower level with a border forming a continuous portico in elegant sandstone pillars. Its side-aisle was once covered in a double-curved tiled roof - the holes for locating the carpentry still being visible in the walls. The main gallery, also with its roof once tiled, has no openings to the exterior except on the south side where long horizontal windows are placed high, while to the courtyard it gains light through numerous windows, each with seven balusters. Those to the south are walled in.

The height of the walls forms a very effective enclosure, corresponding well to the defensive role given to it in the legend of *"the King of the sweet cucumbers"*.

The three north, west and south gopuras are all similar - cruciform in plan with two wings that lead to galleries and two porticoed doors. They are in laterite and sandstone and far more imposing than those of the first enclosure, - the anastylosis has, apart from the tiled roof, enabled the complete restoration of their powerful masonry framework. The pictorial tympanums of the frontons and half frontons, in a composition that stands clearly apart from the usual pattern, are set in very high relief - the figures are larger in scale than those within the temple and differ in technique, showing a superior quality in their modelling. It would seem that, like Angkor Wat, the last enclosure with its gopuras was realised later than the rest of the monument, though maintaining an undeniable unity.

One should particularly note the large frontons on the porticoes, which have had to be supported by a reinforced concrete frame. Inspired by the Ramayana, they describe various episodes of the battle of Lanka where the monkeys play a primary role. The best preserved panel - and one of the finest specimens in Khmer art - is on the north gopura, northern side. It represents, in a high relief standing out from the confusion of monkeys and asuras, the fight between Rama and Ravana, each mounted on his war chariot.

All the others should also be seen:

On the north gopura, southern side, is the charge of the monkeys under the command of Rama, mounted on Hanuman, and Lakshmana, on Angada.

On the south gopura, northern side, the construction by the monkeys of the causeway in rocks that is to enable them to attack the island of Lanka, and, on the half fronton to the right, Vishnou holding an Asura by the hair.

On the south gopura, southern side, Hanuman carries the summit of mount Kailasa (whose magic plants will serve to revive them) to Rama and Lakshmana who have been wounded by Indrajit.

On the west gopura, western side, the ferocious battle between the monkeys and the rakshasas and, on the eastern side, Vishnou overcoming two asuras whom he is holding by the chignon, with, on the half-fronton to the right, a line of gods on their mounts; - Vishnou with four arms on a lion, - Skanda, the god of war, with ten arms and multiple heads, on a peacock, - and Yama, the god of the Dead, on a buffalo.

The internal enclosure (the first enclosure), of 44 metres by 38, is poorly defined by a low and narrow gallery in laterite which, like the other, is

set high with respect to the surrounding ground-level. It has small corner pavilions, and the monotony of its line is fortunately relieved by the crested ridge of sandstone finials which it has, unusually, been possible to partly reconstruct.

The corner elements of this gallery that link the four axial gopuras are closed to the exterior and have no doors, opening only to the internal court with balustered windows - some of which have been walled in - giving a general impression of being prison cells or stores rather than places of meditation or of rest.

The works revealed that these galleries were in fact but an addition, having taken the place of an ancient enclosure wall, the original line of which could be identified on the gable end walls of the gopuras. The sandstone pavement surrounding the interior of the courtyard - with its steps and its balustrades of nagas on blocks with their remarkable five headed terminal motifs - is evidently also not original since, behind its unfinished sculpted plinth, there appeared to be another corresponding to the layout of the entrance pavilions. It would seem, however, that this *"change of mind"* was not a happy one, since the first arrangement in fact left far more space around the buildings, and in particular around the two libraries that now are practically wedged into the corners.

The overall dimensions of Banteay Samre are sufficiently small that, no matter from where, one gets the impression of the whole as being a complete composition of impeccable proportions, and all the more slender since the buildings are all perched high on a platform leaving the courtyard at a lower level. The decorative moulding of the plinth is of the usual design with opposing diamonds and with an horizontal axis of symmetry. It is particularly deeply cut and perfectly executed, embellished on the central band with delightful figurines, trimmed with lotus buds and standing proud from their background. Others are to be found in elevation around the base of the

pillars and the frames of the openings - or, in accordance with the 12th century practice, grouped to form small scenes.

The four gopuras are all similar - formed of a central core with a false upper storey and crossing vaults with two smaller wings which, on the eastern gopura, form secondary passageways. They enclose a cruciform room preceded by projecting vestibules with tiered frontons.

From the eastern gopura, an exposed earth platform gives access to the long room preceding the central sanctuary that is framed by two vestibules and complemented on each of its broad sides by a slightly projecting entrance corresponding to a stairway. The thickness of the walls is accommodated in a false half-vault that has allowed the closing of the windows with a double row of balusters to very good effect. Internally, a delicate relief decoration has been started in places.

The sanctuary is considerably offset to the west and opens only to the long room, enclosing a square chamber of 3m.00 in width. The four avant-corps, three of which correspond to false doors, project to the four cardinal points - their doubled frontons are set in tiers just to the height of the cornice of the principal level, whose corner piers *"reveal the background"*, rising uninterrupted to the full height of the frontons. Above, the four tiers are surmounted with a circular lotus crown capped with a double hat from which must have projected a timber or metal pole, reaching 21m.00 in height in relation to the courtyard ground-level. The numerous antefix stones set on the cornices intensify the play of light and shadow, giving this tower, more so than Angkor Wat, the aspect of a slender latticed cone.

It is interesting to note that many scenes on the frontons of the upper levels have been identified as episodes from the Vessantara Jataka. The presence of Buddhist scenes in a Hindu temple and the fact that in some places certain sculpted motifs - probably also Buddhist - have been mutilated

(notably on the pilasters) makes a curious statement about the religious tolerance of the monument's patron.

Within the eastern part of the courtyard, on either side of the long room, two elegant "*libraries*" open to the west preceded by a vestibule forming a portico. Slender in proportion and with barrel-formed vaults, they have false side-aisles and a false upper storey punctured by horizontal windows, with gable ends forming frontons. Like the central sanctuary, the ornamentation of their false doors is remarkably fine.

Although in places defaced and differing in size, the door lintels and the tympanums of the frontons on the various buildings, either in single or tiered composition, are all interesting and merit being considered in some detail. Few temples present an iconography so complete in such a state of preservation, and we would draw particular attention to the following: -

On the east gopura, east side, the lintel over the secondary southern entrance (Krishna wrestling with the serpent Kaliya), with its fronton showing the "*Churning of the Ocean*" presided over by Brahma and, above the northern entrance, the "*apotheosis of Vishnou on Garuda*".

On the west side "*Vishnou Trivikrama astride the world*" (south entrance), "*Krishna raising the mount Govardhana*" (north entrance), and "*the aerial attack of Indra by the Rakshasas*" (middle vestibule).

On the central sanctuary, the four lintels - almost intact and highly accentuated in relief - the southern of which shows, above a head of Kala, Vishnou with four arms overcoming two figures whom he holds by the hair (a motif which is repeated many times in the temple).

On the north gopura, southern side, a panel of apsaras dancing to the sound of a harp, and Shiva and Uma on Nandin.

On the west gopura, the conjunction of the sun and the moon (east side) and a line of divinities on strange mounts (west side).

On the north library, western side, "*the birth of Brahma*" carried by a lotus, whose stem grows from Vishnou's navel as he reclines on a serpent.

The absence of any devata may seem peculiar. However, on two of the narrow corner piers of the central sanctuary one can see some traces of figures, simply indicated in outline on the stone, as proof again that the sculpture on this temple, like so many others, remained unfinished.

Excavation has revealed only one statue in the round within the temple, of a superbly executed masculine torso, dressed and in a sitting position. Outside the second enclosure, close to the north-west corner, four large standing divinities (dvarapalas?) were discovered lying broken on the ground. In ignorance of their place of origin they have been set in the neighbouring second north gopura.<sup>35</sup> A delightful stone tank, the only in Angkor to still have its lid, with a hole pierced in the top of it and with a drainage channel in the bottom, has also been restored and placed in the large room adjacent to the central sanctuary. Mr Coëdes considers it to be some form of sarcophagus, enabling the procedure of periodic ablution of mortal remains which may have been entombed here.<sup>36</sup>

To finish, we recommend that you leave the temple by the south and walk around the external wall towards the right to the north gate, the parking place for vehicles. On the way one can then also admire, if not having already done so, the frontons of the three gopuras of the second enclosure. To the west, the construction of an axial cruciform terrace remains in its early stages - from where an avenue of 350 metres then leads to the east dike of the baray, forming in the last part of its stretch a wide paved causeway lined with elegant sandstone bornes of which unfortunately only a few remain. They recall the arrangement at Beng Mealea's eastern causeway.

## THE ROLUOS GROUP

The Roluos group lies 15 kilometres south-west of Siem Reap and includes three temples - Bakong, Prah Ko and Lolei - dating from the late 9th century and corresponding to the ancient capital of Hariharalaya, from which the name of Lolei is derived.

When king Jayavarman II came from Java to take power at the beginning of the ninth century, he settled twice at Hariharalaya - already an existing city, - first before his investiture on Phnom Kulen (Mahendraparvata) where the cult of the "*Devaraja*" was inaugurated, and then again afterwards, dying there in 850 after a reign of 48 years. His successors remained until Yasovarman founded the first Angkor, centred on Phnom Bakheng.





## Bakong

Bakong is to be found down a sandy track, at about 1,500 metres from *route 6*. The turning is indicated by a signpost 13 kilometres from Siem Reap in the direction of Phnom Penh. The track initially approaches from the north on the same axis as the central sanctuary, which reveals itself at the far end, to then skirt the north-east quarter of the monument's second enclosure and lead to the end of the eastern causeway, just before the remains of the second gopura.

In its pyramidal form - the third after the restrained attempts at Ak Yom to the north-west of Siem Reap and Rong Chen on Phnom Kulen - Bakong presents itself as having been the main temple of Hariharalaya, where the cult of the god king was practised. Here the idol could be elevated in dignity above the plains bordering the great lake, and here the Khmer royalty came to affirm itself - indeed it is not impossible that the construction of this *"temple-mountain"* was initiated by Jayavarman II on his descent from the Kulen hills.

Of all the temples on stepped terraces of the Angkor region, Bakong is perhaps the one which most closely responds to the idea of the cosmic Mount Meru on five levels, corresponding, from bottom to top respectively, to the world of the Nagas, the Garudas, the Rakshasas, the Yakshas, and then to the Maharajas of the four cardinal points with their court.

In the proportion of its tiers, it is the only pyramid that makes allowance for processions and festivals, and being more human in scale than the usual *"stairway to heaven"*, it also responds the best to our western principles. Finally it is also the first realisation in sandstone of a large architectural ensemble, a fact indicated by the founder himself - the king Indravarman - who called it *"the stone house of Isa"*.

The inscribed stele, discovered in 1935 by G. Trouvé, is remarkable in its calligraphy. After the invocation and eulogy of king Indravarman, it describes the foundation in 881 of the linga Shri Indresvara, and then the setting up in the temple court of eight images or *"murti"* of Shiva - probably either in the eight brick towers surrounding the base of the pyramid or on the pedestals which flank the axial stairways. Other statues in *"stone sanctuaries"* are listed, as are several idols - the cult of some being associated with the deceased nobility. Finally it also mentions the excavation of the Lolei baray, the *"Indratataka"*.

Before restoration the temple of Bakong was little more than a mound of earth. Having been the object over the centuries of systematic destruction and subject to various alterations, its sandstone elements had been completely rased and their stones scattered at the base of the pyramid. In particular nothing

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|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>late 9th century (881)</i>   |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Indravarman I</i>  |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic (Shivaite)</i>   |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>Clearing work started by<br/>Henri Marchal in 1936<br/>Anastylosis by M. Glaize, 1936 - 1943</i> |



remained of the central sanctuary - built after the other towers - except for the external outline of its base on the paving of the upper platform. From a pile of rubble it has now reassumed its entire silhouette - from the base to the crown, - a "resurrection" that indeed validates the interest, both aesthetic and documentary, in the methods of anastylosis.

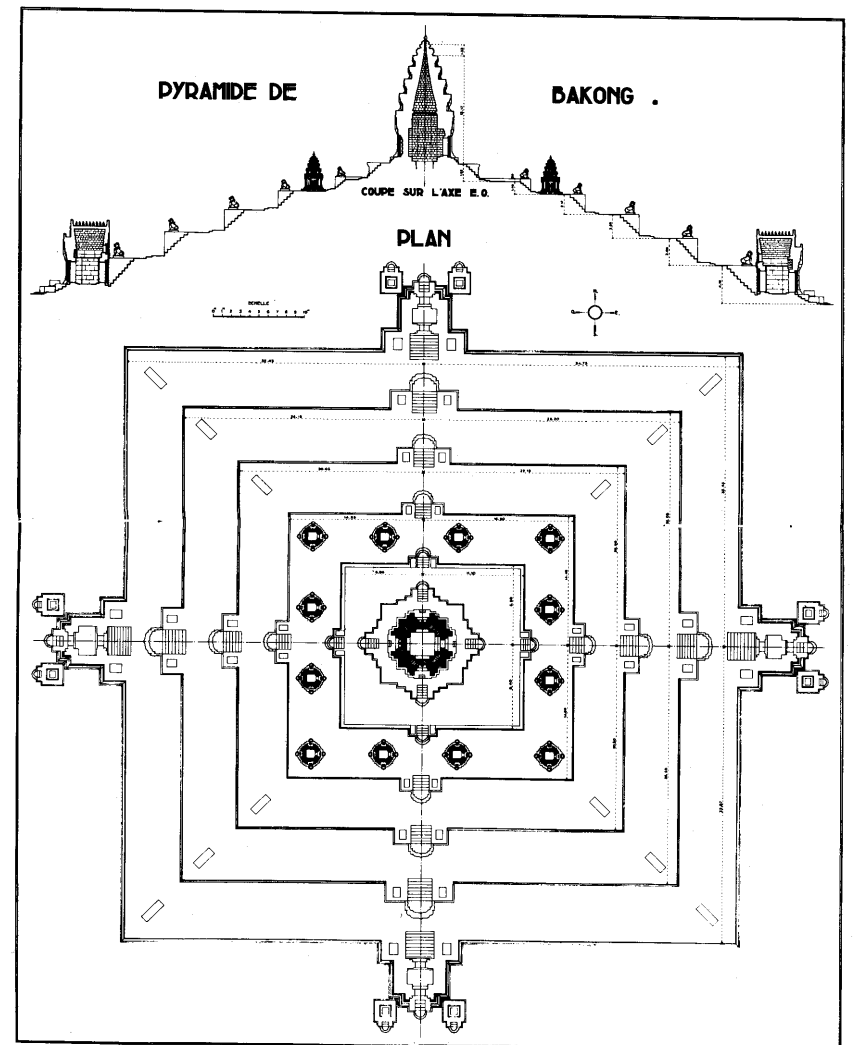
While other restored monuments still stood perhaps ruined but with their crumbled elements lying at their feet, Bakong however presented nothing but chaos, with no clue to the number or nature of the missing components. Only by grouping the stones in categories according to their moulding or decoration could one determine their respective positions.

#### DESCRIPTION

The track to the temple penetrates the third enclosure - an area of some 900 metres east-west by 700 north-south formed by a moat that only remains visible in places - leaving to the left, on the north side and close to the north-east corner, a group of three brick towers aligned north-south of which only one still stands.

Similar remnants of wall stand just to the south of the main axis, close to the eastern gopura of the second enclosure, - the remains all part of a series of brick buildings, generally badly ruined, that surround the monument. They number 22 in total - six on the west side, four on each of the other sides and four at the corners. Mostly they stand as isolated towers grouped in twos or threes, except in two cases, opening some to the east and some towards the pyramid - with which they are contemporaneous. Their clearing has enabled the discovery not only of some interesting architectural elements (lintels, colonnettes, "accolade" formed base steps) and several lingas, but also of some remarkable statues of Shiva and Vishnou.

The second enclosure is defined by a laterite wall of 400 by 300 metres that is partially buried and divided to the east and west by laterite and



sandstone gopuras - cruciform in plan but badly ruined - and others to the north and south that are similar in nature but more modest in proportion. A deep, wide moat - though now partially dry - occupies most of the immediate surroundings, while the remainder accommodates the light-weight buildings of the local monks under the shade of large trees. Just to the north of the axis stands a modern pagoda, whose absence would give no cause for regret.

The moats are crossed, to the east and west, by long paved causeways - their monumental character emphasised by enormous nagas whose bodies rest on the bare ground and whose massive seven headed terminal motifs are quite different to the elegant naga-balustrades on supporting blocks that were to become general in the 12th century - the one to the east on the southern side is the best preserved. The whole temple indeed has a sense of grandeur achieved through simple means - it presents a restrained and disciplined art founded upon logic.

Another low laterite wall forms the first enclosure - a large rectangle of 60 metres east-west by 120 north-south - with four gopuras evident only as the bases of laterite walls on a moulded plinth. Although identical in plan - cruciform rooms, two wings forming secondary passageways and two porticoes - those to the east and west are more developed, while the northern and southern, centred on the pyramid, are offset to the west. Within the enclosure to the east, two large statues of Vishnou with four arms stood opposite one another. In the style of the Bayon - and therefore much later than the monument - they were discovered during excavation work.

To either side of the eastern entrance, continued as a pavement lined with standing bories, one passes successively; - the remains of two rigorously symmetrical long rooms with large balustered openings, preceded by porticoes and followed by small annexe rooms of slight proportions which were perhaps rest galleries, - then two buildings in laterite, the southern of which sheltered the temple's foundation stele, - and finally two longer

buildings all in sandstone but with walls filled with re-used blocks. Certainly late, they give the impression, with their single avant-corps opening to the pavement, of having been utility buildings for use as store-rooms.

The north-east and south-east corners of the enclosure are each occupied by two juxtaposed square brick buildings - nearly intact on the south but crumbling to the springing of the vaults on the north. Open to the west with an aperture sculpted from a monolith of sandstone, they receive daylight only through a pattern of small round holes. One of them - the most southern - has, on the brick corbelling of its upper tier on the northern and southern external sides, a sculpted frieze of ascetics set in niches. The presence of a fragment of stone from the nine planets found during the clearing work appears as one of the first manifestations of a cult that was to become general thereafter in the *"temple-mountains"*, symbolising Mount Meru.

The north-west and south-west corners have only one building of the same type, but opening to the east and now completely ruined.

Eight sanctuary towers in brick - two on each side - originally coated externally in the sculpted paste of a lime based plaster, are arranged around the pyramid. Of the four to the east of the north-south axis, which dominate those to the west, only the tower on the north side remains standing. The two to the east are, unusually, set on a double sandstone base, moulded and decorated in the style of the monument, with some evidence of a reshaping of the entrance motif - notably to the colonnettes.

Square in plan with redents, these towers all open to the east with four axial stairways that form a double flight, embellished with lions squatting at their bases. The only sandstone elements are the frames of the openings with their richly decorated banded cylindrical colonnettes, and the lintels that are particularly high and surmounted with a frieze. Above these the plastered frontons, with solitary figures set in niches, must have looked weak.

Doors and false doors are uniformly sculpted from a single monolithic block from which the void of the opening is hewn, which explains their reduced proportion with respect to the whole. The ornamentation of the false doors is remarkable, with a mascarons on each panel perhaps recalling the motif of door handles on wooden panels. The lintels, with those of the Kulen style (the first half of the 9th century), are amongst the finest to be found in Khmer art - the rich decoration, enhanced with a multitude of figures in a great variety of detail, is without affectation and remains purely decorative. We especially recommend those on the western towers which remain in a perfect state of preservation. On the corner piers, the dvarapalas and devatas in stucco alternate according to the orientation, sheltered within niches in the form of palatial arcature.

Above, the false upper stories reduce only slightly and have become shapeless. They apparently carried miniature sandstone towers at the corners of their cornice, several of which were found during clearing work.

Practically abutting the southern part of the enclosure wall stretches the long body of a building in three parts, forming a gallery with a portico that is axial on the eastern towers. Completely demolished, it seems not to have had its twin on the northern side.

The five tiered pyramid is almost square and entirely clad and paved in sandstone. It extends 67 metres east-west by 65 metres north-south at the base, and 20 by 18 metres at the summit, forming verges of 5 and 6 metres in width. When clearing work began, the upper level had its sandstone retaining wall enclosed in brickwork and it supported a kind of wooden hangar containing some fragments of sculpture, the ancient stone prasat having been completely rased. A central well was found to be filled with earth and assorted rubble. Excavated by Mr Marchal to a depth of 20 metres, the equivalent to 6 metres below external ground level at the base, nothing of any

interest was found, since a long breach had previously been cut in the base of the sanctuary by treasure hunters in order to gain access from the side.

The fourth and fifth levels were built on a thick bed of laterite which has not moved, while the three others, founded on earth fill, have settled by some twenty centimetres. The upper level dominates the surrounding ground level by 14 metres and the tiered retaining walls, which are massive and thick-set, have a uniform cladding with a plain moulded base and a crowning band.

The four axial stairways, in five flights, obey, as do the tiers themselves, the principle of proportional reduction that so gives an illusion of perspective. They have at each landing a superb "*accolade*" formed base step set between the two side walls, which are themselves sculpted with dvarapalas and devatas and embellished with lions. At their base is quite an unusual type of building. Entirely reconstructed on the northern side, it precedes the first flight and forms a redent in the tier for the full height of the retaining wall. Flanked by two large stone blocks that must have carried some monumental statue, and with sculpted gargoyles to take the water flowing down the steps, each was complemented with a reclining Nandin (the sacred bull) on a pedestal, facing the temple. The presence at the four cardinal points of Shiva's mount is symbolic of the omnipresent power of the god and suggests that the original sanctuary was open to the four axes, like Phnom Bakheng.

These unusual buildings have their roofs formed in two sandstone slopes made up of horizontal courses, corbelled to form a triangular section that was then crowned with a crested ridge of sandstone finials, this being the natural transition between a covering in tiles and a vaulted stone arch. One can also see here the first realisation in stone of frontons with figures. Facing the sanctuary they crowd the whole surface, framing a small opening with round colonnettes that lights the gable end - quite unusual in Khmer art. The figures fly or are framed in palatial architecture, set apart on a clear

background, much like the motifs sculpted in the plaster coating of contemporary or earlier brick tympanums. This sobriety contrasts with the abundant vegetal or figurative ornamentation that prevailed thereafter.

The corners of the three lower tiers of the pyramid are marked by monolithic elephants which decrease in size, though they are unfortunately badly ruined. The fourth tier was in turn lined with a dozen small regularly placed sandstone *"prasats"*, each sheltering a linga - though nothing remained of them but the foundation bases, buried under the rubble. Ten of them were reconstructed, the remainder mostly being incomplete in their superstructure. They date from the time of the pyramid.

The fifth level is 1m.90 in height and has around its entire perimeter, framed by a finely decorated moulding, a continuous frieze with figures sculpted in bas-relief. The first of its kind in Khmer art, it is sadly in such a state of erosion that one can distinguish only but a few outlines, mostly scenes of battle or of the court. Four or five of the better preserved panels - notably those on the south side - show a group of asuras in combat, and are sufficient to cause considerable regret for the ruin of the whole.

The central sanctuary, contrary to what is found in other pyramid temples, is visible from each level, due to the unusual width of the tiers. In restoration, despite the use of a large number of replacement blocks, it remains true to the original, due to the similarity of the various composite elements of the upper levels. If one studies the ornamentation in detail one finds evidence of a veritable collection of different styles ranging from the art of Prah Ko to that of Angkor Wat or to the start of the Bayon. Bearing in mind that the sculptors had only Lolei or Bakong itself as previous models, one is therefore justified in drawing the conclusion that the prasat must have been constructed about two centuries later than the rest of the monument, and in any case could not have been earlier than the Baphuon (second half of the 11th century). This is evident in the lintels, pilasters and colonnettes. Some

of the devatas with their hair set in tiaras under the miniature towers are, however, inspired by models from the ninth century, while other decoration, like the frontons with decorative scenes - Shiva dancing to the east, the Churning of the Ocean to the south, reclining Vishnou to the west and Lakshmana amongst the monkeys, entwined by the serpents of Indrajit to the north - is in the style of Angkor Wat.

Of Indravarman's previous scheme for the central sanctuary only the base platform remains. Perhaps the king had no time to finish the construction which was then realised by his successors - or perhaps the prasat was demolished and rebuilt... Whatever the reason, the present tower - of a redented square in plan with four vestibules, three of which have false doors - encloses a 2m.70 wide sanctuary chamber. Fifteen metres in height it has four upper tiers lined with numerous standing stones and a lotus crown.

Among the sculptures of the 9th century found during the course of the excavation, apart from several finely sculpted and simply treated female figures and the separate heads of masculine and feminine divinities, we found several examples of statues with a backing that must have been encased in the brickwork of the towers. Common during this period, they represent a sitting figure with one knee raised and its naked torso clad in jewellery.

Finally, on a pedestal in the crumbling brick tower to the north, on the east side, stands a curious group of three statues cut from a single block of stone, but of which only the bodies remain.<sup>37</sup> Mentioned on the inscribed stele this represents a Shiva *"Umagangapatisvara, having the small of his back caressed by the reaching arms of Uma and of Ganga"*, his two wives. The torso of the female to the right of the god, in a long, plain dress, is quite superb, with a serenity and purity of line that one encounters only during this period. The hands can be clearly seen placed behind the thighs. Apparently the group had many replicas, since similar elements of another collection and the rough-hewn remains of a third have also been found.

**P**rah Ko, the funerary temple of Jayavarman II and of the ancestors of his second successor, Indravarman, is to be found just to the west of the track leading to Bakong, at 500 metres south of *route 6*. Sited in the eastern part of the vast square of 500 metres east-west by 400 metres north-south formed by its moats, its buildings were perhaps but a complement to a temple-mountain project which was superseded by the pyramid of Bakong, or else to some light-weight construction, long since disappeared, that was part of the city of Hariharalaya, the capital of Indravarman - perhaps for example an ancient royal residence, as Mr Cœdes suggested.

The temple's foundation stele was found in the gopura of the first enclosure and is admirably preserved.<sup>38</sup> After a homage to Shiva it gives a brief genealogy of Indravarman, and then his eulogy in accordingly grand terms *"the right arm of the prince"* reads the Sanskrit text *"is long, strong, and fearsome in battle as his flashing sword falls on his enemies, defeating kings in every direction. Invincible, he can be appeased by two enemies only - those who have their backs turned, and those who, valuing life, put themselves under his protection"* (G. Cœdes). The inscription is followed by a reference to the cult of Devaraja, or the *"god king"*, instituted on mount Mahendra (Phnom Kulen) and ends by giving the foundation date (879) of three statues of Shiva and of Devi. The other side, written in Khmer, dates from 893 under the reign of Yasovarman and prescribes certain gifts to Paramesvara, the divinity of the middle eastern row of sanctuaries, and to Prithivindresvara in the southern.

Another stele dating from the beginning of the 11th century (1005) gives the eulogy of King Jayaviravarman who reigned from 1002 to 1010 and was ousted by the usurper Suryavarman I.

The east gopura of the third enclosure, three quarters of which have collapsed, has its sandstone portico just by the access track. In laterite but with sandstone windows - each with five large balusters - it is cruciform in plan and has two wings forming secondary passageways. Originally tile covered, it must have had - to judge by the various elements found during excavation - triangular frontons embellished with large volutes corresponding to the two slopes of the roof.

The west door opens onto a laterite pavement that marks the axis of the wide causeway dividing the enclosing moat. It was flanked by two parallel galleries of which nothing remains but the foundations. A small terrace leads to the gopura of the second enclosure - analogous in plan to the preceding one but not

## *Prah Ko*

*"The sacred ox"*

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>late 9th century (879)</i>                      |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Indravarman I (posthumous name: Isvaraloka)</i> |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic (Shivaïte)</i>                        |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by G. Trouvé in 1932</i>                        |





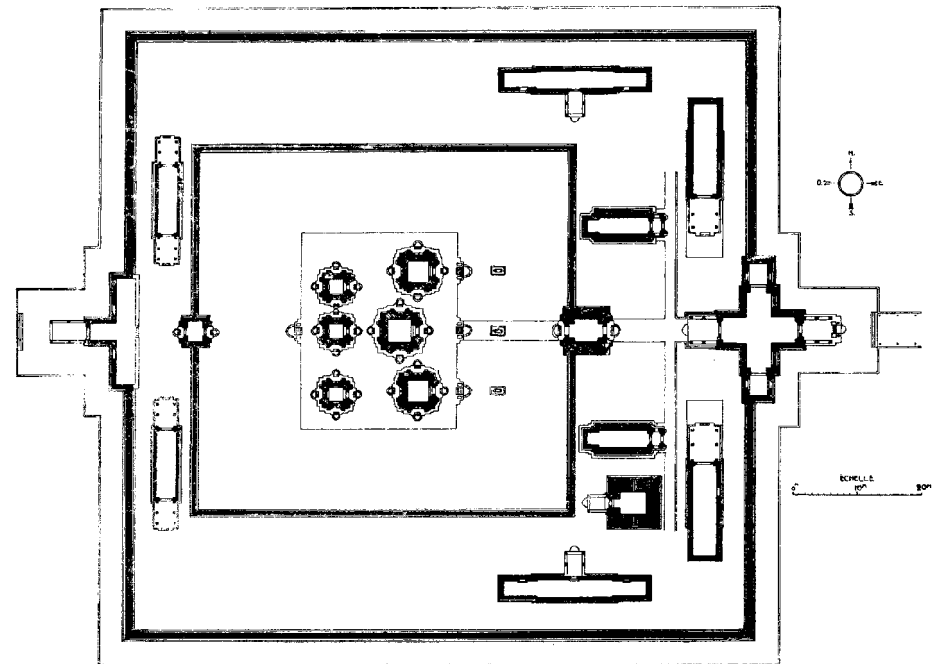


as wide - and joins with the 97 by 94 metre laterite enclosure wall. Only the outward side has windows, each with 7 balusters. A fine "accolade" formed base step at its eastern door.

The surrounding courtyard of the second enclosure is wider to the east, and was once occupied on this side by two symmetrical long rooms running parallel to the wall that had porticoes facing one another - and then by two others lying perpendicular and opening to the east onto a small path running north-south. Two buildings forming galleries, but which are entirely ruined, are again aligned east-west against the north and the south enclosure walls, each with a portico to its main side. Finally, a square brick building with an upper tier, similar to those at Bakong, remains standing - due to the considerable thickness of its walls - between the two long rooms to the south. It opens to the west with a portico and is ventilated by lines of holes. Above are figures of ascetics sculpted into the brickwork, while below, a series of niches shelter other figures moulded in stucco. On the western side the courtyard is fairly tight, and was occupied by two long north-south galleries set symmetrically with respect to the axis of the monument, which is marked by a partially collapsed gopura.

The wall of the 58 by 56 metre first enclosure is in brick, like its two gopuras - simple square buildings with a single room, and cylindrical colonnettes with fine lintels that have Vishnou on Garuda as their central motif. The eastern gopura is more imposing than the western and encloses a 3m.60 wide chamber that sheltered the foundation stele.

The moulded sandstone plinth forms a common platform for the six sanctuary towers. On the east side it is breached by three stairways whose side walls are ornate with dvarapalas and devatas and set with squatting lions. In front of each is a reclining Nandin (the sacred bull), the mount of Shiva. On the west side there is a single axial stairway.



The brick sanctuary towers are arranged in two rows and vary in size - to the east, the middle tower is set back slightly and dominates. The three prasats behind are similar but less developed - and the one in the north-west corner of the platform is, for no apparent reason, offset with respect to the corresponding sanctuary of the first row.

The six towers open to the east. Each has four upper tiers that become increasingly deformed. They were covered with a coating of lime based mortar which was remarkably sculpted and is still preserved in places - particularly on the tower of the north-east corner - after eleven centuries in existence. On the eastern side, the frames of the openings and the motifs of the false doors are in sandstone, with some superb octagonal colonnettes that are undeniably the finest to be found in Khmer art. The door panels have mascarons as at Bakong. The frames are in four parts with mitred joints, as if in timber, and are preferable to those at Bakong, where the door openings are crudely cut from a monolith.

The lintels are also in sandstone and of the same merit as those at Bakong, being treated in similar spirit but perhaps with less variety. One should particularly note those above the doors of the three towers with their relief ornament of small cavaliers and figurines mounted on nagas - and the ones, more restrained but as new, of the false doors of the middle tower that have a central garuda holding the branch, above which is a charming frieze of small heads set in a row.

The square chambers - of 3m.40 across and 3m.70 in the main sanctuary - were reserved for masculine divinities. The corner piers were also ornate with imposing dvarapalas set in blind arches which, in contrast to those at Bakong, are in sandstone and set into the brickwork. They are quite distinctive in style - the one to the north-east corner, north side, of the central tower standing particularly proud, and very different to the graceful guardians of Banteay Srei.

The three towers behind, reserved for feminine divinities and of only 2m.50 inside, were less developed. Reduced in proportion they are entirely in brick with the exception of the sandstone door frames and devatas on the corner piers, which replace the dvarapalas of the eastern towers and already herald those in the Bakheng style. Everywhere the decor is sculpted in stucco, even the colonnettes, the false doors - which here are without mascarons - and lintels, where the motifs were first rough-formed in the brickwork.

As at Bakong, several fine pieces of sculpture - dating from the 9th century to the style of the Bayon - were found during the course of our work. Of these, only one of Shiva in the south-east corner tower and a feminine divinity without a head in the rear central tower were left in place.<sup>39</sup> Both of these statues date from the period of the monument.

The temple of Lolei is situated on the northern continuation of the track to Bakong, at 500 metres north of *route 6*. Its access track is taken therefore towards the north-west, on the left of the road from Siem Reap, just beyond the 13 kilometre marker stone and 400 metres after the track to Bakong. The turning is marked by a sign, at which one crosses 600 metres of rice fields on a dike that is usually passable by car.

Lolei is comparable in situation to the Mebon of the eastern baray, forming an island in the middle of the Indratataka - a large reservoir of 3,800 metres east-west by 800 north-south - whose excavation started, so the inscriptions tell us, five days after the consecration of Indravarman I, in order to provide the capital city (Hariharalaya) with water and to irrigate the surrounding plains.

The stele explains that the temple was dedicated to Indravarmesvara in memory of Yasovarman's father - it constituted, according to Mr Cœdes, the foundation charter of a series of identical hermitages, all with the name Yasodharasrama, which were constructed by order of the king in the year of his accession.

The appearance of the monument is marred by the unfortunate presence of various pagoda buildings. In the middle of these stand the towers, though the monks have taken the liberty of making a number of alterations and demolitions, mainly to the arrangement of the terraces, that render the original layout barely visible.

The composition is formed of two tiers whose laterite retaining walls are breached by four axial stairways. These have their side walls embellished with lions and flanked with gargoyles that evacuate the rainwater from the upper terrace.

The first tier is 9m.00 in overall width, leaving a surrounding verge of 2m.00 to the exterior - its edge is trimmed with a half-cylindrical surround that recalls the body of the nagas lying on the ground. The second, of 90m.00 east west by 80 north-south and 2m.40 in height, with its 2m.40 wide border, is defined by an enclosure wall. Having been back-filled, this has now become the retaining wall for the platform that carries four brick towers - which must originally have stood on a common plinth that is now buried.

Arranged in two rows, the towers to the east dominate - though they all have four upper tiers. Their coating of stucco in lime based mortar has completely disappeared. The best preserved is the tower in the

## *Lolei*

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|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <i>Date</i> | <i>late 9th century (893)</i>                                 |
| <i>King</i> | <i>Yasovarman</i><br><i>(posthumous name: Paramasivaloka)</i> |
| <i>Cult</i> | <i>Brahmanic (Shivaite)</i>                                   |

north-east corner - the upper part of the south-west tower has crumbled. The siting of the two northern towers, that are axial on the east-west stairways, suggests an original arrangement consisting of two lines of three towers like those at Prah Ko - two of them either remaining unbuilt or having already been demolished - like the annexe buildings, if there ever were any.

All the characteristics of Prah Ko can be found again at Lolei, except that here the door openings are cut, as at Bakong, from a monolith. The motifs of the corner piers are the same - with dvarapalas on the east row and devatas on the west, sheltered within "*palatial*" arcature and sculpted in a block of sandstone that is set into the brickwork. The devatas are quite close in style to those of the Bakheng, with which they are almost contemporaneous - and the one in the north-east corner, east side, of the north-west tower is remarkably well preserved. The decoration of the panels and of the false doors, with their multiple figurines, is already more detailed than those which one finds at Bakong and Prah Ko, while the mascarons have disappeared.

The lintels are as good as those on the other two temples, and still present fine qualities of composition, craftsmanship and animation - though several have deteriorated or disappeared. One can see on the north-east tower; - above the opening, Indra on an elephant with tiny figures crowding the decoration and a branch of nagas disgorged by small makaras, and then, on the north and south façades, (the latter being quite deteriorated) a divinity above a head of Kala, with the curious motif which one also finds at Baksei Chamkrong and the eastern Mebon of the branch terminating in a Ganesha riding his own trunk that has been transformed into a mount, - on the south-east tower,<sup>40</sup> above the east opening, Vishnou on Garuda with a branch ending in a naga motif, and, to the north, a divinity on a head of Kala, some small riders, and a branch terminated by makaras disgorging lions, - on the north-west tower, the east lintel, with its deeply cut ornamentation, is surmounted by a minutely detailed frieze.

The sanctuary chambers are large and square in plan, each side measuring 4m.50 for the first row and 4m.00 for the second.

The door openings have their jambs inscribed. Their colonnettes - similar to those at Prah Ko - are starting to become complicated by the multiplication of leaves that decorate the bands.



At Phnom Bakheng we have seen how king Yasovarman crowned each of the three Angkor peaks with a temple, thereby dominating the surrounding plain. This trio included - apart from the "Central Mountain" - Phnom Krom on the shores of the Tonle Sap, 16 kilometres south-west as the crow flies and 137 metres in height, and Phnom Bok, 14 kilometres to the north-east in the middle of an area of rice fields. Of the three monuments, the temple of Phnom Krom remains the most complete in silhouette, with only the top tier on its northern and southern towers and the two top tiers on its central sanctuary missing. It is also the most threatened with destruction by the wind storms blowing in from the Tonle Sap on to its walls, built as they are in a friable and porous sandstone that has a tendency to exfoliate, and that consequently have retained but a few traces of decoration on their facing.

The climbing of Phnom Krom would perhaps not impose by its archaeological interest alone, but the pleasure of the walk is such and the panorama of the Great Lake with the surrounding plain so extensive and tranquil that we have no hesitation in recommending it - and with preference at the end of the day. It is, with the western baray, truly relaxing after the effort inherent in a visit to the monuments. From the top, if one is able to ignore the quite regrettable presence of the unsightly pagoda and the military buildings recently established in the south-west corner of the monument,<sup>41</sup> the view extends without obstruction to the far horizon, taking in, when the waters are high, the vast surface of the surrounding flood-lands. Towards the south, the clusters of straw huts easily dismantle to follow the rising water line - to establish themselves for part of the year at the foot of the hill and for the rest at the far end of the diked road, forming a lakeside village during the fishing season.

Phnom Krom is accessible by car all the year round. From the market in Siem Reap<sup>42</sup> the road follows the right bank of the Stung for 7 kilometres with which it meanders through luscious scenery, shaded by coconut palms and mango trees and opening every now and then to the water. There follow 4 kilometres of barren plain to the eastern base of the hill, where the road contours the south-east flank, leaving the access track to the Great Lake to the left, to take a series of steep, sharp bends that finally get one to the top. It is also possible to walk up the hill taking a stairway that forms a short cut from the fork in the two roads at the bottom.

The monument is enclosed within a fifty metre square laterite wall - carefully constructed this is well preserved and has a verge to the exterior. Entry is gained from the east. Four cruciform gopuras are complemented with two small side rooms and a portico to the courtyard, though there remain only a few

## Phnom Krom

*"The lower mountain"*

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>late 9th - early 10th century</i>                                       |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Yasovarman I</i><br><i>(posthumous name:</i><br><i>Paramashivaloka)</i> |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic</i>   |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>by M. Glaize in 1938</i>  |

bases of laterite walls and sandstone pillars. On the north side of the hill, the ground seems to have been prepared for a large staircase corresponding to two "srahs" (pools) on the plain below - but no trace of any steps makes one doubt that this was ever finished.

Internally, nothing remains of the surrounding laterite long-rooms - forming rest galleries and separated from the enclosure wall by a narrow one-metre passageway - except for the platforms and foundations with some isolated remnants of wall. Differing in size, there are four to the east and two on the other three sides, varying in width by two or three metres overall - with the symmetry not observed to the east of the north-south axis. They were capped with timber and tiles, and a single fragment of wall shows the remains of a rectangular window with five laterite mullions.

Within the eastern part of the internal courtyard four annexe buildings stand in a line, coupled on either side of the axial passageway and opening to the west. Remaining standing, though quite precariously so, they are 3m.10 by 3m.50 overall and surmounted by an upper tier and a barrel-formed vault that terminates in two gable end walls. Those to either extreme are in brick, the two others in sandstone, and they are plain but for a row of diamond shaped ventilation holes.

Three sanctuary towers set on the same north south axis stand opposite, presented on a common platform that is formed in laterite and faced in sandstone. This plinth is moulded but not ornate, and is breached on its two main sides by three stairways with side walls set with lions.

These towers form a simple redented square in plan and differ in size - with a sanctuary chamber of 4m.00 in the central tower and 3m.40 in the two others. Set back from the axis by a dozen metres on the axis they have two openings (east and west), so that only the north and south sides have false doors. Each must have had four upper tiers of superstructure and a circular

crowning motif. The dominance of the central tower is expressed only in the size of its frontons, which are practically square. On the two lateral towers they are much reduced in height.

Of the scarce remains of decoration still legible we would draw attention; - to the dense ornamentation on the plinths, with the stair-walls ornate with the same small figure dancing within an arch that exists already in the art of Roluos, - to the pilasters treated in meticulous detail, like the panels of the false door, with a covering of tiny figures and interweaving foliage, - to the moulding at the base of the cornices, that is more in scale with the architecture and more vigorous in conception, - to the bands of foliated scrolls on the corner piers, - and to the niches with devatas, that are hieratic and quite serene, having the face slightly turned, a high slender waist, a long skirt with small vertical pleats as at Bakheng and the torso naked. They rest one hand on the staff of a kind of fly swat while the other hangs to the side holding a lotus.

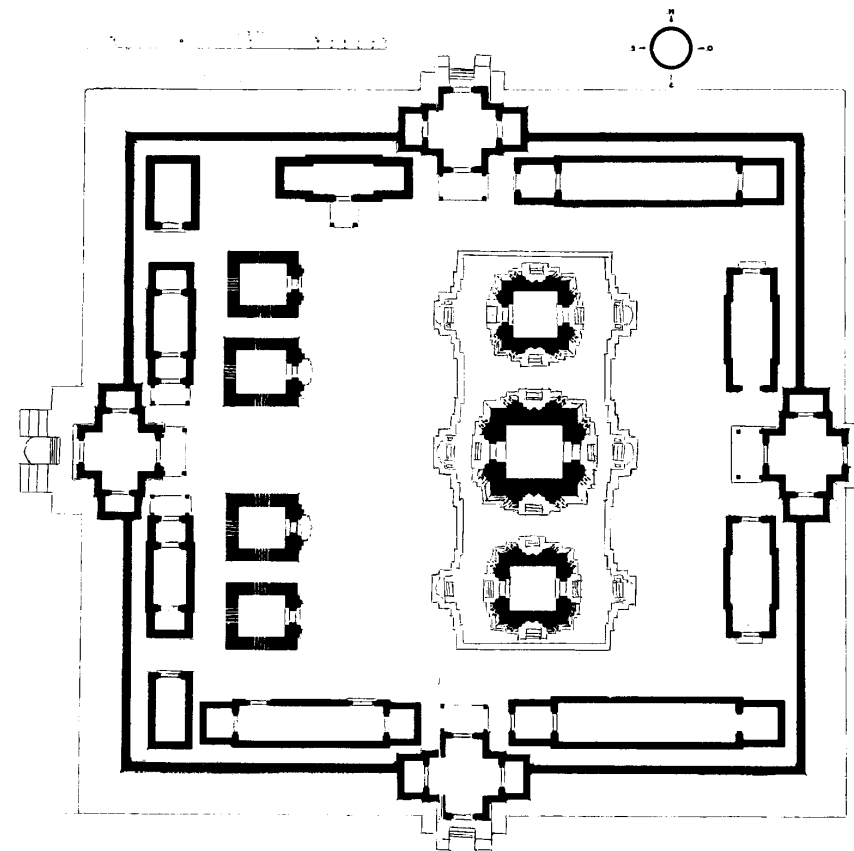
The tympanums of the frontons are the first important realisation in sandstone following those - which are more architectural than figurative - on the small buildings at the base of the pyramid of Bakong. They are, in their restrained execution, little more than panels "*in tapestry*" set above the doors in a muddle of juxtaposed motifs that have no relationship or dominant theme, where one guesses, despite the disintegration of the stone, that a central divinity is perched on a shaft and flanked by two large S forms of scrolling foliage, set on an organic background that has a capricious fringe of curves lined with a row of small heads.

Numerous tower miniatures and antefixes decorate the cornices of the upper tiers, on which one can see the curious motif of a dancer with a broad pleated bell dress, like one finds again in smaller scale on the mural decoration of Bakheng and Banteay Srei.

The *"Trimurti"* of Shiva between Vishnou (to the north) and Brahma (to the south) sheltered in the three towers has been restored to its rightful location.<sup>43</sup> Of an art which is quite coarse, angular and massive in style, these statues - which moreover were broken - are marred by the disproportionate width of their shoulders and the weight of their legs. Their pedestals, however, are quite beautiful - particularly the one in the southern tower, the base type of Brahma in its ritual location. Circular in form with a decoration of lotus petals and Hamsas (sacred geese) and crowned with stamens, it contained a circular sacred foundation stone with sixteen holes.

A badly deteriorated *"stone of the nine planets"* was found in the north sandstone annexe building, and a colossal dvarapala of 3m.20 in height was unearthed in front of the eastern side of the three towered platform. Later than the monument it is reasonable in craftsmanship and imposing in aspect, its rakshasa head curiously coiffed with a diadem and a tiered *"mukuta"* with a nape-cover.

The poor state of the stone has unfortunately rendered any repair or restoration work to the monument impossible.







**P**hnom Bok is a steep hill of 235 metres in height, and the third peak of the Angkor region after Phnom Bakheng and Phnom Krom chosen by Yasovarman on which to erect his sandstone temples.

In this systematic occupation of the summits, with all the problems inherent in carrying and assembling the tons of stone which had to be hauled by hand up their steep sides, this innovator king, in dedicating his capital to the cult of Devaraja or the royal linga, placed all of his subjects - both urban and rural - under the protection of the Brahmanic Trinity, or "*Trimurti*", of Shiva, Vishnou and Brahma. In the architectonic history of the Khmer, it is a trilogy characteristic of a time of exceptional unity.

The ascent of Phnom Bok should not be undertaken except by strong walkers who are undaunted by the climb, in full sunlight, up the exposed hill - one needs to start early in the morning with a guide who knows the path well. Eight kilometres of sandy road - the same to Banteay Samre which, parting from the grand circuit between Pre Rup and the Mebon at 14 kilometres from Siem Reap, turns to the east, passes through the village of Pradak and crosses the eastern dike of the baray - allows one to gain access by car, if the small bridge clearing the Stung Roluos is in condition, to the crossing of the road that leads left to the south-eastern base of the hill. A path from here, at first shaded and then climbing the barren, rocky southern slope, leads one to the top - gradually revealing limitless horizons barred only to the north by the long line of the Phnom Kulen. The beauty of the landscape rewards the effort.

The temple of Phnom Bok, the brother to Phnom Krom, is also undated since no inscription has been found. Nevertheless, their differences are so minimal that they have surely been conceived by the same architect, built to a common plan and sculpted by the same craftsmen. They are, with a difference of a few years, contemporaneous with Bakheng - whose motifs are identical.

The various buildings are similar in arrangement to Phnom Krom but with the difference that here the three sanctuary towers equal in size. They were found, following clearing, badly ruined and without their upper tiers, although the removal of the fallen masonry - completed to the east and only started to the west - revealed the mural decoration to be excellent in craftsmanship and far better preserved than at Phnom Krom, the stones here not having suffered the elements.

## *Phnom Bok*

*"The ox-hump mountain"*

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|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Date</i>     | <i>late 9th - early 10th century</i>                            |
| <i>King</i>     | <i>Yasovarman I</i><br><i>(posthumous name: Paramasivaloka)</i> |
| <i>Cult</i>     | <i>Brahmanic</i>  |
| <i>Clearing</i> | <i>Partial clearing by Glaize in 1939</i>                       |

The frontons are all practically similar, and several have been reconstructed on the ground. Though damaged, they clearly indicate tympanums with the superficial decoration that characterises the art of Yasovarman. Nearly square in proportion and slightly confusing in composition - but powerfully framed by the enormous makaras that finish the line of the arch - they have a central cheek adorned with a figure flanked by large flaming volutes, enhanced with figurines and fringed with a varying number of small heads of divinities.

Although the mural decorations on the towers to the north and south remained unfinished, everywhere one finds elements similar to those at Bakheng and Phnom Krom, but with slight variations in detail - the devatas' faces are here full forwards and the framing of the niches is more constricted - the complexity of the lintels, which are a little weak and rather banal in composition, contrasts with the elegant simplicity of the octagonal four-banded colonnettes. The two outer brick annexe buildings have crumbled, while the two others - in sandstone - are better preserved than those at Phnom Krom. Only the bases of the laterite galleries remain, but the enclosing wall is intact.

Apart from the tower miniatures and the antefixes so typical of monuments of this period, excavation has notably discovered; - in the north tower, a broken broad-necked pedestal with a linga, of a type generally classified as pre-angkorian, - at the foot of the central sanctuary, some major fragments of a very fine statue of Vishnou in an assertive stance that appears to be later than the monument, - three heads of the gods of the "*Trimurti*", removed by Delaporte in 1873 and now in the Musée Guimet in Paris, - and the large circular pedestal that carried the statue of Brahma in the southern tower, analogous to the one at Phnom Krom.

The temple suffers, once again, from the addition, just in front, of a modern pagoda. Sixty metres east are the remains of a deep rectangular pit

formed in brick, measuring a dozen metres by eight, with a stairway to its eastern side. It must have previously served as a water tank. At 150 metres west, a high laterite platform forms a square of a dozen metres each side and carries an enormous monolithic sandstone linga, of 4 metres in height and 1m.20 in diameter, now toppled and broken. The effort that must have been required to transport this unique piece - the weight of which has to exceed 10 tons - defies belief.



## *the Western Baray*

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Leaving Siem Reap by *route 6* in the direction of Sisophon towards the north-west, a branch in the road to the right after 12 kilometres, leading north, takes one in 500 metres to the south-west corner of the western baray. The view on arriving at this vast artificial lake is superb, particularly at the end of the day. The entire expanse of water is contained within a levee of earth which forms a dike, shaded by large trees and with the forest of Angkor as its backdrop - set against which is the verdant foliage of the western Mebon at its centre, with Phnom Bakheng off to the right. In the distance, Phnom Bok stands out in silhouette from the long line of the Kulen hills which bar the horizon. At sunset the whole is coloured in sweet pastel tones.

The baray forms a vast rectangle of 8 kilometres by 2. At its present level, the water only covers its western two thirds with, in places, depths of 4 and 5 metres - the remainder having been turned to rice fields. The water is quite clear, and the gently sloping sandy bottom allows very pleasant bathing - though one should always beware of the weeds that sometimes grow at some distance from the bank.

Previously filled only by the rains, it is now, since the construction of a barrage on the Stung Siem Reap not far from the temple of Ta Nei, replenished by a system of channels which make use of the north and part of the west moats of Angkor Thom.

To judge by the small temple of the western Mebon which marks the centre - in the same style as the Baphuon - the baray must have been realised in the 11th century, with its eastern dike corresponding to the western limit of "*Yasodharapura*", the first Angkor centred on Phnom Bakheng. It is, to the west of Angkor Thom, the replica of the eastern baray that is similar in size and was excavated to the east of the capital towards the end of the 9th century, during the reign of Yasovarman.

Traces of ancient pathways and the remains of buildings found in the baray - the bases of walls and the jamb stones of openings, brick steps, the remains of tiles and pots and copper jewellery - show that before the formation of the lake the region must have been inhabited. An eighth century stele (713) has been discovered, defining the rice fields offered to a certain queen Jayadevi, who seems to have been a daughter of Jayavarman I. The discovery of some pieces of sculpture - pedestals, a large statue of a badly decayed dvarapala and an exceptionally large round colonnette in primitive style - also shows that at least one important sanctuary was submerged which must have belonged to the "*city of the baray*" of Jayavarman II (9th century), investigated by Philip Stern.

Some think that the western baray, perhaps linked with the Great Lake by canal, could have served as a port for royal barges - besides its function as an immense reservoir and fishpond. On occasion, it has also provided an excellent landing strip for sea-planes.



The remains of Prasat Ak Yom are to be found on the south side of the western baray, at about one kilometre east from its south-west corner. Since the raising of the water level one can only get there by boat, on condition that the vegetation around the temple itself is cleared.<sup>44</sup>

While perhaps of little interest to the tourist, these ruins, though not entirely cleared, are of great archaeological importance since they are in fact the oldest in the region - older even than the first Angkor. Excavation work took some effort due to the amount of earth that needed moving - it was even necessary to blast the dike of the baray, under which the sanctuaries were buried.

Probably started in the 7th century but not taking final form until the beginning of the 9th - with alterations evident in the re-use of many of the stones - Ak Yom must have been partially buried when the axial road west from the first Angkor (the city of Bakheng) was established, to then completely disappear in the 11th century under the additional mound of the southern bank of the present baray when this was formed. Inscriptions on the jamb stones of the openings and on a "stone of the nine divinities" give respectively the dates of 609, 704 and 1001 and reveal that the temple was dedicated to the god Gambhiresvara.

Although not yet a true tiered pyramid like the "temple-mountains" dedicated to the cult of the "Devaraja" or royal linga, Ak Yom, with its terracing on three levels - the first of which is marked by a simple brick wall enclosing an earth embankment - already shows, however, clear analogies with this formula. One can assume that it must have been central to the "city of the baray" investigated by Philip Stern, the construction of which he dated between the departure of king Jayavarman II for Phnom Kulen and the accession of Indravarman in 877. Several other remains, evidently of pre-angkorian design, have been found in the surrounding area.

The monument is entirely in brick, with only the surrounds of the sanctuary openings formed in sandstone. On a base platform of a hundred metres each side, the two upper tiers were also paved in brick, with the retaining walls decorated with applied projecting motifs that recall the base elements of Cham towers. The second tier carries four corner towers and two others that are intermediate on each side, making a total of 12, while the third has a single tower raised high. Investigations have shown that this sanctuary - formerly opening to the east with three false doors and in the same style as the pyramid and the secondary sanctuaries - must originally have been covered with a timber framework - the holes for the supporting posts

## Prasat Ak Yom

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Date 7th to 9th century  
Cult Brahmanic  
Clearing by G. Trouvé from 1932 to 1935

of which can still be seen in the walls. These were then enclosed in a thicker skin of masonry capable of carrying a corbelled brick vault and pierced with openings to the four cardinal points.

The 5m.50 square sanctuary chamber contains a large pilastered pedestal of 2m.75 that probably carried a linga. Below it, a well has at its bottom a paved underground chamber at a depth of 12m.25 that is level with the surrounding plain. This chamber formed a square of 2m.70 each side, was vaulted in brick and must have contained some sacred deposit. It was the existence of this well that subsequently led G. Trouvé to undertake similar research at the Bayon and at Angkor Wat, and so to the discovery of the foundation deposit of this latter and the Great Buddha - the guardian of the kingdom's destiny - of the former.

The ornamentation of Ak Yom provides some rare evidence of the primitive art - the lintels, often re-used, are slim in height and simplistic in composition. In some places they incorporate medallions and pendants, while in others, branches and terminal scrolls with an invasion of foliage. The colonnettes have been made cylindrical with a relatively charged ornamentation of beads and leaves on the rings. The "hipped" devatas sculpted in the brickwork are still visible on the south-east sanctuary, where there is also a remarkable false door on the east side. On the panels, small lions in circular medallions are set on a band of leaves in a crossing motif.



The Mebon forms an island in the middle of the western baray and is only accessible by boat since the raising of the water level. To visit, one should be accompanied by a guide.<sup>45</sup>

In some ways reminiscent of the delightful ensemble of Neak Pean - built a century later in the middle of the Prah Khan baray - the Mebon was formed by a levee of earth that encloses a square of a hundred metres. This was then excavated as a basin and lined with sandstone steps. The centre is marked by a platform, also in sandstone, of a dozen metres each side joined by a laterite and sandstone causeway to the eastern dike. Some fragments of naga-balustrades on blocks have also been found.

The surrounding bank has three small entry pavilions on each side with two opposing doors, all in sandstone, set about 25 metres apart and in the form of a single tiered tower with a large eight-petaled lotus crown. Unfortunately badly ruined they now remain only as piles of rubble, except for the central eastern and southern towers which, crumbling and quite unstable, have been the object of some clearing and restoration work. The bases of some walls still stand on the north (central and eastern towers), south (central tower) and east (north tower) sides. Each pavilion is square in plan, measuring 2m.40 overall and 1m.28 internally.

The style is clearly that of the Baphuon, with nagas framing the frontons with their rounded form, the organic decoration crowded with small animals on the tympanums, the pilasters with their vertical "herringbone" line, and the vertical bands of the corner piers, ornate in some places with foliated scrolls and in others with small animals set in panels. The best preserved frontons are those to the north side (eastern tower), which are purely ornamental with a motif of superimposed vertical bands and large scrolls. The eastern lintel of the central tower, eastern bank, in which three figures grasp the branch at its centre and quarters, also shows remarkable fluidity. The door frames are constructed with a half-mitre, and some fragments of colonnettes show that they were of a type rarely used, with sort of vertical channels.

The towers were linked to one another by a sandstone enclosure wall pierced with numerous small openings rising just to the moulded and decorated cornice - which had a coping curiously treated in imitation of a gallery vault, with an edging band of lotus petals. Nearly the whole of this wall has fallen, and its ruin would appear to be caused primarily by the unfortunate combination - frequent in the 11th century - of stone and doubled wooden beams.

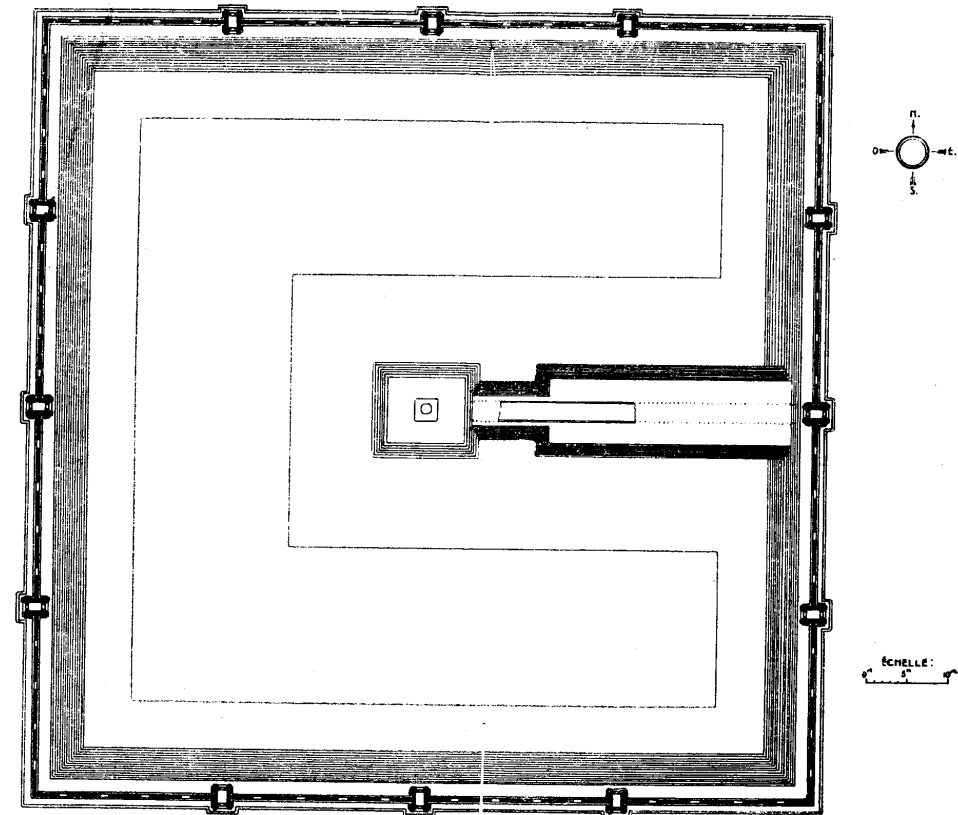
## *the Western Mebon*

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*Date*      *second half of 11th century*  
*Cult*      *Brahmanic*  
*Clearing*   *and partial anastylosis by M. Glaize*  
                 *from 1942 to 1944*

The platform situated at the centre of the basin must have carried some masonry or light-weight structure, though there remains no trace. The excavations detected the presence of a well, first octagonal in section and 0.55 across and then circular and a metre in diameter, with the base lined in sandstone at a depth of 2m.70, carefully dressed with radiating joints. Part of the facing had been detached, so enlarging the cavity wherein was found, in 1936 - following the premonition of a local to whom the Buddha had appeared in a dream - an important fragment (the head and part of the body) of a gigantic bronze statue. Now in the National Museum, Phnom Penh, this is a work unique in the art of the Khmer by virtue of its size. Representing a reclining Vishnou with four arms, once gilded and encrusted with precious stones and with an overall length that must have exceeded four metres, it appears to be contemporaneous with the monument. It was no doubt the *"recumbent bronze Buddha, from whose navel flowed a steady stream of water"* placed by Tcheou Ta-Kouan, perhaps mistakenly, at the centre of the *"oriental lake"* - relating more readily in association to the western Mebon than to the eastern. Immediately behind the well, to the east, is a 2 metre square tank lined with sandstone.

According to the legend, it was here that a young princess, the daughter of one of the kings of Angkor, was devoured by an enormous crocodile, who, after his mischief, escaped by digging a large hole in the bank of the baray - which one can still see to the west of the village of Svay Romiet. When captured and slain, the beast carried the still living victim in its belly.





A trip to Beng Mealea, which in itself demands an entire day, can be combined with a hunting party, since the region is rich in both small and large game and wild animals; - tigers, panthers and elephants, herds of oxen and wild buffalo inhabit the forest as far as Prah Khan of Kompong Svay in the east.

The track to the Beng Mealea turns right from the Grand Circuit between Prasat Kravan and Srah Srang at 10 kilometres from Siem Reap, a little after the 12 kilometre marker stone. Following an ancient Khmer road for 28 kilometres (a bridge with nagas is still visible at the 16th kilometre) it joins the road from Damdek to then head north, then east, and then pass through the village of Tuk Lich to end near the south-west corner of the monument. The journey, which is quite difficult and only possible in the dry season, is 40 kilometres and requires about 2 hours by car. Jungle enthusiasts can then continue on to Kompong Thom by passing the temple of Prah Khan (of Kompong Svay) on condition that they make camp at this last location.<sup>46</sup>

We recommend that the visitor to Beng Mealea follows the dotted line indicated on the schematic plan provided, which should give a general idea of the most interesting parts without proving too difficult. Entry is gained by the western causeway that starts from the Koh Ker track, where one will see some remains of naga-balustrades on moulded blocks. Their terminal motifs have a purity of line rarely achieved during the various periods of Khmer art, - their high crest is trimmed with a stylised and extremely delicate decoration that is like embroidery.

Beng Mealea is one of the largest ensembles in the Angkor region, covering an area - within its 45m.00 wide moats that cover a distance of 4,200m all around - of 108 hectares, and comparable therefore to the most imposing temples of the capital. Clearly of architectural character, it gains above all by the clarity of its plan, the harmonious equilibrium of its composition and the sense of the monumental, given effect by the large clear surfaces - the decoration is simple and animated only in certain areas, and so shown to particular advantage. Platforms, bases and capitals, - cornices underlined with a single frieze, - the tympanums of the frontons and devatas are the main elements of an ornamentation that is generally discreet while maintaining excellent quality.

Although undated like many temples of this period, Beng Mealea is, by virtue of its style, later than the Baphuon and very close to Angkor Wat. It is in totality the prototype on a single level of a building formula

## *Beng Mealea*

*"The Mealea pool"*

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*Date*      *late 11th - first half of 12th century*

*Cult*      *Brahmanic*

*Research by J. de Mecquenem in 1913*

which, combined with the principle of terracing, must have reached its peak in this latter monument. Unfortunately, its state of ruin is such that it is difficult to attribute the natural destruction to any single cause - although carefully constructed, in places it presents the appearance of a veritable chaos of fallen debris beside areas that remain absolutely intact - while everywhere vegetation reigns as master.

The external enclosure corresponding to the moats must have been formed in a timber palisade. Four axial pathways lead from the dikes - which are ornate with colonnettes as they cross the moat - to the cruciform terrace, also with colonnettes, preceding the gopuras of the third enclosure. These long avenues are paved and have lateral steps and naga-balustrades.

On the east side, like at Prah Khan of Angkor, the pavement is first framed by pools - one of which, lined with sandstone, always has water - and then extends beyond the external enclosure to a vast depression that was perhaps an ancient *"baray"*. This was dominated by a large laterite terrace with three stairways to the east and west, preceded by decorative bornes and surmounted by a sandstone platform with small internal courtyards which, as at Srah Srang, must have carried a light-weight pavilion.

The temple as such is composed of three enclosing galleries with four gopuras. The third from the centre, of 152m.00 north-south by 181m.00 east-west, has a large tower set on each axis and each corner - that of the eastern gopura being flanked by two smaller others corresponding to secondary entrances. The following enclosures are concentric and resolutely offset to the west to allow the positioning on the east side of two *"libraries"* and a large crossing cloister, as at Angkor Wat. They have no towers. The first enclosure, finally, forms in itself a single complete temple in a similar arrangement to Banteay Samre and Chau Say Tevoda, which are practically contemporaneous; - four gopuras and corner pavilions, two *"libraries"*, and a

central sanctuary (that has completely collapsed) are preceded to the east by a long room.

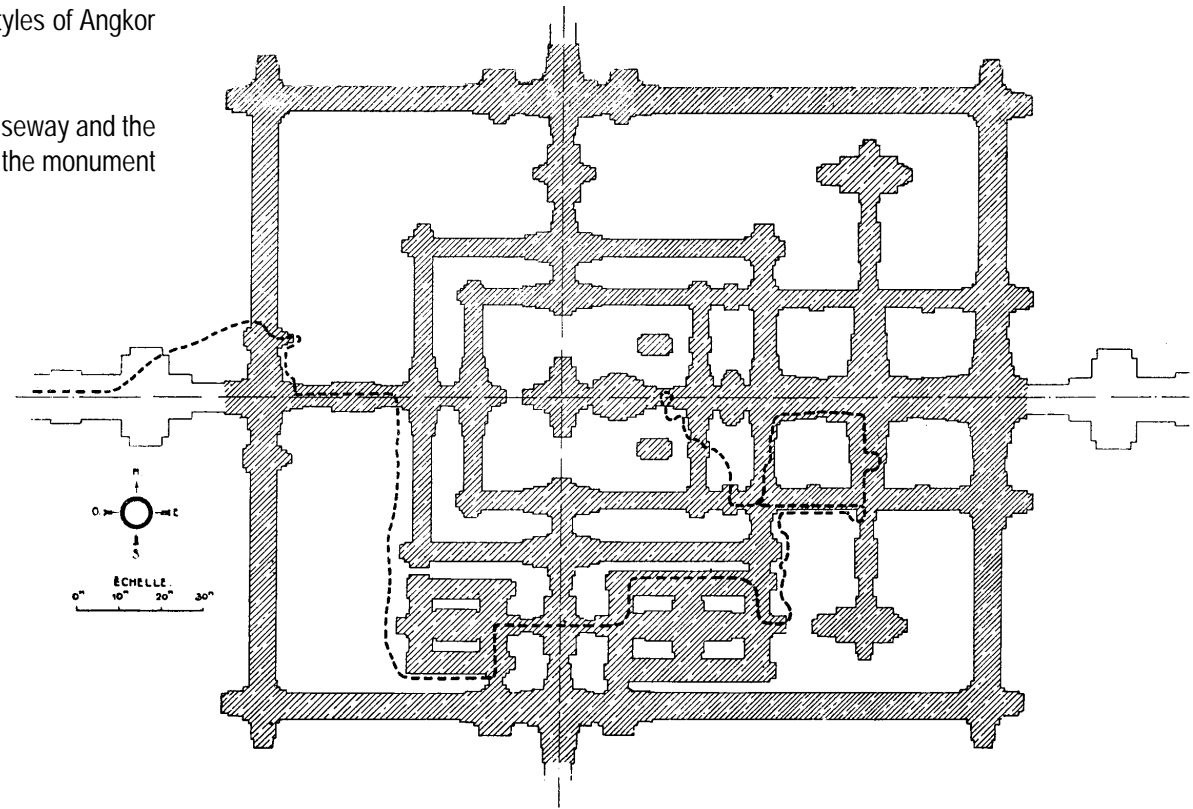
To the south, between the 2nd and 3rd enclosures and on either side of a connecting north-south gallery that is axial on the central sanctuary, two annexe ensembles have been built; - to the east, a crossing cloister with four small courtyards and surrounding galleries stands partially intact with the vaults and slender side-aisles in elegant proportion; - to the west is a similar arrangement but which is less developed with a central hall and two small courtyards. Monsieur de Mecquenem saw here a place reserved for sacred dance or for *"oration with or without the accompaniment of music"* and in the other, where he found traces of guttering and remains of pottery, halls for ritual ablutions.

At Beng Mealea the galleries appear for the first time with the vaults supported on one side by a back wall and on the other by rows of pillars - a particularly favourable arrangement for the execution of bas-reliefs in the best conditions of lighting and presentation - as at Angkor Wat and the Bayon. Here, however, the walls have not been sculpted, and the iconography is seen again in various scenes, for the most part Vishnouite, on the frontons or at the base of the pilasters, in a manner consistent with the 12th century. Recognisable in particular are; - the *"Birth of Brahma"* on a lotus emanating from the navel of Vishnou reclining on the serpent; - the *"Churning of the Ocean"*, - *"Krishna supporting the mount Govardhana"* to shelter the shepherds and their flocks from the storms, - the *"Wrestling of Krishna with the asura Bana"*, where the god is mounted on Garuda and his adversary is in a chariot drawn by lions, - some episodes from the Ramayana (the battle of Lanka), including the *"Ordeal of Sita"* which is well preserved and set on three tiers - and *"Shiva dancing"* between Brahma and Ganesha on his right and Vishnou on his left. The usual divinities are represented on the lintels; - Indra on a three headed elephant, - Vishnou on Garuda, - Lakshmi between

two elephants whose raised trunks hold lotuses rather than ewers, - and Shiva dancing between Ganesha and Parvati.

Again, the devatas wear long plaited skirts with the material falling to the front, held at the waist by a circle of pendants, and hair coiffed with a single disc and a single point that herald the more complex styles of Angkor Wat.

We would point out, finally, that to return to the east causeway and the large terrace at its far end, one can skirt the third enclosure of the monument by a path to its south.





## Glossary of commonly used terms

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|                |   |                 |   |
|----------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Asrama         | Monastery.  | Cham            | The inhabitants of Champa, kingdom of the Hindu civilisation on the coast of what is now Vietnam, earlier than the Annamites.   |
| Airavana       | Elephant, the mount of Indra.   | Shiva           | One of the gods of the Brahmanic trinity - the creator and destroyer, mounted on Nandin (the sacred bull), generally with a third frontal eye and a crescent on the chignon, worshipped in the form of the linga. |
| Amitabha       | Buddha of the higher spirit, represented on the head-dress of bodhisattvas.   | Shri            | Sakti of the god Vishnou (or Lakshmi).  |
| Amrita         | Elixir of life, from the churning of the ocean.   | Damrei          | Elephant.   |
| Ananta         | Serpent on which Vishnou reclines on the ocean.   | Deva            | A god.  |
| Angkor         | City.   | Devaraja        | Or god king, the essence of Royalty, supposed to reside in the royal linga.   |
| Apsaras        | Celestial dancers.  | Devata          | Feminine divinity.  |
| Asura          | Demon with power equal to that of the gods.   | Dharmasala      | House of fire or shelter for pilgrims.  |
| Avatar         | Incarnation (or manifestation) of Vishnou.  | Dhyana-mudra    | Meditative posture of the Buddha (with hands crossed in the lap).   |
| Avalokitesvara | Or Lokeshvara, the compassionate bodhisattva, responding to the idea of Providence, with four arms and carrying the amitabha on his head-dress: attributes; lotus, rosary, bottle and a book. | Durga           | One of the wives of Shiva.  |
| Balang         | Pedestal.   | Dvarapala       | A guardian of the temple (deva or asura).   |
| Banteay        | Citadel.  | Ficus Religiosa | Sacred tree (Buddhist religion).  |
| Baray          | An area of water enclosed within mounds of earth.   | Fou-Nan         | The Chinese name of an ancient Indo-Chinese empire preceding the kingdom of Cambodia.   |
| Beng           | A pool.   | Gajasimha       | Lion with a snout.  |
| Bodhisattva    | One in the process of becoming a Buddha.  | Ganesha         | Son of Shiva, god with the head of an Elephant.   |
| Buddha         | The Sage who has achieved ultimate wisdom.  | Ganga           | One of the wives of Shiva (goddess of the Ganges).  |
| Brahma         | One of the gods of the Brahmanic trinity - the creator, generally with 4 faces, mounted on the Hamsa (swan or sacred bird.)   | Garuda          | Divine bird with a human body, enemy of the nagas and the mount of Vishnou.   |
| Saka           | The Indian era the most commonly used in the inscriptions, preceding the Christian era by 78 years.   | Gopura          | Entry pavilion to the various temple enclosures.  |
| Sakra          | The wheel of the Buddha, signifying immortality and power.  | Guru            | Master.   |
| Sakti          | The wife or feminine energy of the Hindu gods.  | Hamsa           | Sacred bird, the mount of Brahma.   |
| Cedei          | Or stupa, a funerary or commemorative monument usually containing the remains of incineration.  | Hanuman         | The white monkey. Chief of the army of monkeys.   |
|                |   | Harihara        | A god unifying in the same figure Hari (Vishnou) and Hara (Shiva).  |

|             |   |                |   |
|-------------|---|----------------|---|
| Hayagriva   | Secondary god of the family of Shiva, represented with the head of a horse.   | Meru           | Mountain, centre of the world and residence of the gods.  |
| Hinayana    | Or small vehicle - a Buddhist sect.   | Mucilinda      | Naga sheltering Buddha in meditation.   |
| Ishvara     | One of the names of Shiva.  | Madras         | Symbolic gesture of gods or Buddha.   |
| Indra       | Brahmanic god, master of thunder and lightning; his mount is Airavana the elephant (usually three headed) and his attribute, the thunderbolt. | Mukhalinga     | A linga adorned with a face.  |
| Kailasa     | One of the mountain peaks of the Himalaya where Shiva resides.  | Mukuta         | Or mokot, the conical head-dress worn behind the diadem.  |
| Kala        | The head of a monster, supposed to represent one aspect of Shiva.   | Naga           | Stylisation of the Cobra - a mythical serpent, usually multi-headed. Genie of the waters who shelters the Buddha in meditation with his fanned heads. |
| Kali        | One of the names of the sakti of Shiva.   | Nagaraja       | King of the Nagas.  |
| Kama        | The god of love.  | Nagi           | Female naga.  |
| Ko          | Ox.   | Nandin         | Sacred bull, the mount of Shiva.  |
| Kompong     | A port or village by the water.   | Narasimha      | The God Vishnou, with the lower part in human form and the head of a lion.  |
| Krishna     | Manifestation of Vishnou.   | Neak-ta        | Popular idol, or the shelter that contains it.  |
| Kubera      | The god of wealth, dwarfed and deformed, mounted on a Yaksha or a rat.  | Nirvana        | The ultimate enlightenment and the supreme Buddhist objective.  |
| Lakshmana   | Brother of Rama (from the Ramayana).  | Pala           | Dynasty ruling in Bihar and Bengal between about <i>AD</i> 750 and 1196.  |
| Lakshmi     | The wife or sakti of Vishnou.   | Parinirvana    | The entry of the Buddha to enlightenment, the pose of the statues of the reclining Buddha.  |
| Lanka       | The island of Ceylon, home of the rakshasas.  | Parvati        | Wife or sakti of Shiva  |
| Linga       | Phallic idol, one of the forms of Shiva.  | Peshani        | Millstone intended for grinding.  |
| Lokapala    | Guardian of one of the four cardinal points.  | Phnom          | Mountain.   |
| Lokesvara   | Other name for Avalokitesvara, the compassionate bodhisattva .  | Phtel          | Bowl.   |
| Mahabharata | Grand Hindu epic.   | Pradakshina    | A circumambulation ritual always keeping the monument to the right.   |
| Mahayana    | Or Large Vehicle, a Buddhist sect.  | Prah           | Saint, sacred.  |
| Maitreya    | Future Buddha (a sort of Messiah).  | Prah patima    | A metal leaf stamped with the image of the Buddha.  |
| Makara      | Sea monster with the head of an elephant, who, in ornamentation, often disgorges the naga.  | Prajnaparamita | The mystical mother of the Buddhas, symbol of wisdom.   |
| Mara        | Evil spirit who tempts the Buddha.  | Prasat         | Sanctuary in the form of a tower.   |
| Men         | A light pavilion used for incineration.   |                |   |

|            |  |              |   |
|------------|--|--------------|---|
| Prasavya   | Circumambulation funerary ritual, in the opposite manner to the pradakshina.   | Surya        | God of the sun, haloed with a ring of light and mounted on a horse-drawn chariot.   |
| Prei       | Forest.  | Tandava      | Dance of Shiva separating the cosmic periods of the creation and destruction of the worlds.   |
| Pourana    | Historical Indian legend.  | Tantrism     | Buddhist sect from the Mahayana.  |
| Puri       | Town.  | Tara         | Feminine energy of Lokeshvara, similar to the Prajnaparamita.   |
| Rahu       | Head of the monster demon of eclipses.   | Tchen-La     | Of water and earth, ancient Chinese name for Cambodia.  |
| Rakshasa   | Inferior demon joining with the asuras against the devas.  | Tevoda       | Or devata, a feminine divinity.   |
| Rakshasi   | Feminine form of rakshasa.   | Thom         | Large.  |
| Rama       | A manifestation of Vishnou (Ramayana).   | Trapeang     | Sea.  |
| Ramayana   | Grand Hindu epic, the history of Rama and of Sita.   | Tricula      | Trident, the weapon of Shiva.   |
| Rati       | The wife of Kama, god of love.   | Trimurti     | Brahmanic trinity (Shiva between Vishnou and Brahma).   |
| Ravana     | King of the rakshasas, with multiple heads and arms.   | Tripitaka    | Sacred Buddhist texts.  |
| Rishi      | Brahman ascetic.   | Uma          | Wife or sakti of Shiva.   |
| Sarasvati  | Wife of Brahma, goddess of eloquence.  | Ushnisha     | Protuberance from the skull crowning the head of Buddha.  |
| Sarong     | A length of cloth wrapped around the lower body.   | Vajra        | Thunderbolt, the attribute of Indra.  |
| Sema       | Steles (inscribed stones) placed on the axes and corners of Buddhist terraces to define the sacred platform.                     | Valin        | King of the monkeys, brother of Sugriva and overcome by him with the help of Rama (Ramayana).   |
| Seng       | Lion.  | Varaha       | Manifestation of Vishnou (wild boar).   |
| Sita       | Wife of Rama (Ramayana).   | Vasuki       | The serpent in the churning of the Ocean.   |
| Skanda     | God of war, son of Shiva, mounted on a peacock or on a rhinoceros.   | Vat          | Pagoda.   |
| Snanadroni | An ablution slab with a beak, always orientated to the north, placed on the pedestal of the idols for the flow of lustral water. | Veda         | Brahman rules.  |
| Somasutra  | Channel for the evacuation of lustral water out of the sanctuary.  | Vihara       | Monastery.  |
| Srah       | Pool.  | Vishvakarman | The divine architect, son of Shiva.   |
| Srei       | Woman.   | Vishnou      | One of the gods of the Brahmanic trinity - the protector. His mount is Garuda and he generally has four arms that hold a disk, a conch, a ball and a club. Numerous manifestations. |
| Stupa      | Or cedei, a funerary or commemorative monument usually containing the remains of incineration.                                   | Yama         | God of death and the supreme judge, mounted on a buffalo.   |
| Sugriva    | King of the monkeys, dethroned by his brother Valin and ally of Rama (Ramayana).   | Yakshas      | Or Yeaks, genie of good or evil.  |

# Notes

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- 1 **chapter 4**  
The exact interpretation of the cult of Devaraja remains questionable - some suggest god-king, others king-of-the-gods.
- 2 **chapter 5**  
The original use of these stone tanks remains controversial - some archaeologists suggest that they were used only for offerings.
- 3 **chapter 6**  
*Le Notre* was Louis XIV's landscape architect of Versailles and others.
- 4 **chapter 8**  
Author's note: - The head of Kala is also known as the "*Head of Rahu*", the demon of the eclipses. The legend of Rahu is linked to the Churning of the Sea of Milk - the monster steals the amrita, the elixir of immortality, and is denounced by the sun and the moon to Vishnou who, with a cast of his disk, cuts his body in two. Ever since, both halves remaining immortal, he endeavours, in order to revenge himself, to devour the Sun and the Moon whenever one of them passes near by. It is still customary to "*shoot the moon*" at the time of an eclipse to scare the monster away.
- 5 **chapter 11**  
Author's note: - Jacques Lagisquet took up his position as Conservator again on the departure of Maurice Glaize in 1946, followed by Henri Marchal who held it until 1953. Jean Boisselier served first as assistant, then as scientific director until 1955. After Mr Laur the last French conservator was B.P. Groslier who was forced to resign by political events in 1972
- 6 **Angkor Wat**  
Only a few of the thousand buddhas remain.
- 7 The central stairway has since been improved.
- 8 Following the collapse of the heaven and hell gallery in 1947, Mssrs Marchal and Lagisquet started restoration work which finished in 1950. Mr Lagisquet then reformed the false ceiling in this gallery with concrete panels.  
Other general work undertaken from 1946 to 1972:  
Consolidation work continued with partial anastylosis, particularly of the libraries.
- 9 **Prasat Bei**  
This and the previous temple have been subject to restoration in the 'sixties, and this lintel can now be seen in its rightful location above the door.
- 10 **the Bayon**  
Author's note: - Mr Coedes rather sees, in the addition of the four corners of galleries masking the arrangement in a cross, an arrangement analogous to the one which blocked the initial cross of the Baphuon with an oblong base surrounding the line of the original cross - the architect wanting to emphasise in symbolic form the

representation of the Bayon as Mount Meru, which in Indian cosmology continues below ground in equal proportion to its elevation above.

- 11 **monument 486**  
The lintel is longer in place. This monument now stands badly ruined and is not often cleared of vegetation.
- 12 **Elephant Terrace**  
Further excavation by Mr Marchal in 1952 revealed more internal bas-reliefs at the northern end.
- 13 **Terrace of the Leper King**  
The Terrace of the Leper King was restored by the École Française d'Extrême Orient in 1995.
- 14 After an attempt to steal his head he was replaced with a copy - from which the head was then successfully stolen. He now sits in the centre of the National Museum, Phnom Penh.
- 15 **Baphuon**  
Restored by B.P. Groslier during the 'sixties in an ambitious programme of work for the monument which was abandoned in 1972. Partial work on the central pyramid was resumed in 1995 by the EFEO.
- 16 The elements of most of the bas-reliefs still lie methodically scattered in the surrounding forest.
- 17 **Thommanon**  
This is no longer the case since the walls have been removed following anastylosis work in 1965 by B.P. Groslier.
- 18 **Tanei**  
The south-west corner pavilion has since collapsed.
- 19 **Ta Prohm**  
The stele is no longer in position.  
It is no longer advisable to enter the fourth eastern gopura.
- 20 **Kutisvara**  
The fronton is no longer in position.
- 21 This temple now stands badly ruined.
- 22 **Prasat Kravan**  
All towers are now in a better state following extensive restoration work during the 'sixties. Replacement bricks are stamped with the mark CA.
- 23 **Pre Rup**  
This tale relates to the temple of Banteay Samre.
- 24 **the Eastern Mebon**  
The stele is no longer in place.
- 25



- 26 **Ta Som**  
This famous tree has long since disappeared.
- 27 **Neak Pean**  
These elephants are no longer in position.
- 28 Louis XIV's landscape architect of Versailles and others.
- 29 **Prah Khan**  
These and virtually all the other free standing statues described are no longer in place.
- 30 The two lions are no longer in position.
- 31 The Lokesvara is now in the National Museum, Phnom Penh.
- 32 Ganesha is no longer in place.
- 33 **Banteay Srei**  
Although the road has since improved, security has sadly deteriorated. Visitors to Banteay Srei should always first check the situation with the local police. These days one can park just by the eastern entrance to the temple.
- 34 The interpretation of this scene remains questionable.
- 35 **Banteay Samre**  
Only the feet remain...
- 36 Others propose its use as a casket destined to receive offerings or for water having served in ablution.
- 37 **Bakong**  
No longer in place.
- 38 **Prah Ko**  
The stele is no longer in place.
- 39 These statues are no longer in place.
- 40 **Lolei**  
The south-east tower collapsed in 1966.
- 41 **Phnom Krom**  
The camp has since gone but the pagoda grown.
- 42 The old market to the south, on the west bank of the river. The mud in the rainy season and the quarry on the side of the hill do not always allow easy access.
- 43 Only their broken pedestals remain.
- 44 **Ak Yom**  
Ak Yom is now visible, though badly ruined, just on the southern side of the track that surrounds the baray - a few hundred metres west of the sluice.
- 45 **the Western Baray**  
Not much remains of this site since it was used by the military during the '70s. Boats now leave from the concrete dam on the south bank of the baray.

- 46 **Beng Mealea**  
This journey to Beng Mealea is no longer possible, nor is the game hunting, nor the enthusing in the jungle.



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Drawings by EFEO (listed in caps)  
 Translation, photographs and presentation by Nils Tremmel  
 nils@theangkorguide.com  
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 www.theangkorguide.com  
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