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A SKETCH OF CAMBODIAN HISTORY

LAWRENCE PALMER BRIGGS

CAMBODIAN history begins in the delta of the Mékong. It naturally divides itself into five periods of unequal length and importance: (1) the *Funan* period, from early in the first century A.D. to near the middle of the sixth century; (2) the *Chenla* period, from then to 802; (3) the *Kambuja* or *Angkor* period, from 802 to 1432; (4) the independent *Cambodia* period, from 1432 to 1864; and (5) the *French protectorate*, covering the period since 1864.

THE FUNAN PERIOD¹

At the dawn of history in this region, in the early centuries of the Christian era, three peoples occupied the delta and lower valley of the Mékong. (1) The *Funanese* extended up the river to a little above the mouth of the Tonlé Sap and up the coast — probably to Camranh bay. (2) The *Chams* were above the Funanese, up the river to about the mouth of the Sé Mun and up the coast to the Col des Nuages. (3) The *Khmers* were above the Chams on the river. In the early years of the Christian era, the Khmers conquered the Chams of the Mékong valley, drove part of them to the mountains or through the passes to the coast and amalgamated with the remainder. These early inhabitants have generally been designated as Indonesians,² but they were probably mixed and have continued to mix

¹No reliable, detailed, up-to-date general works are available on the first three periods of this article. The knowledge and chronology of these periods have been greatly changed by the studies of a group of French scholars during the last forty or fifty years. Their scholarly and detailed studies, to be found in *Bulletin de l'école française d'Extrême-Orient*, *T'oung pao*, *Journal asiatique*, and a few other Oriental journals, are too numerous to cite in detail in this article. These first three periods are, therefore, based on the author's study of *The ancient Khmer empire*, now ready for publication, which uses all the available sources and lists and cites more than 200 inscriptions and about 650 titles, mostly of the scholarly studies mentioned above.

Recently, however, there have been written by distinguished scholars, small general works on Southeast Asia, which contain valuable chapters on ancient Cambodia. These works are: Nguyen-van-Que, *Histoire des pays de l'union indochinoise (Viet-nam—Cambodge—Laos)* (Saigon, 1932); R. C. Majumdar, *Hindu colonies in the Far East* (Calcutta, 1944); and George Coedès, *Histoire ancienne des états hindouisés d'Extrême-Orient* (Hanoi, 1944).

²The term "Indonesians," as used in this article, is applied to a people who occupied Indochina before the coming of the Mongoloids, and remnants of whom are still found in the mountains. It has nothing to do with the conglomeration of peoples, probably mostly Mongoloids, whom newspaper and magazine writers have recently begun to call "Indonesians," simply because they live in Indonesia.

with various other peoples. The Funanese apparently spoke one of the Austro-Asiatic languages — either Khmer or a closely related branch — for inscriptions in Khmer are found in the delta dating from early in the seventh century, about the time of the annexation of Funan by the Khmers.

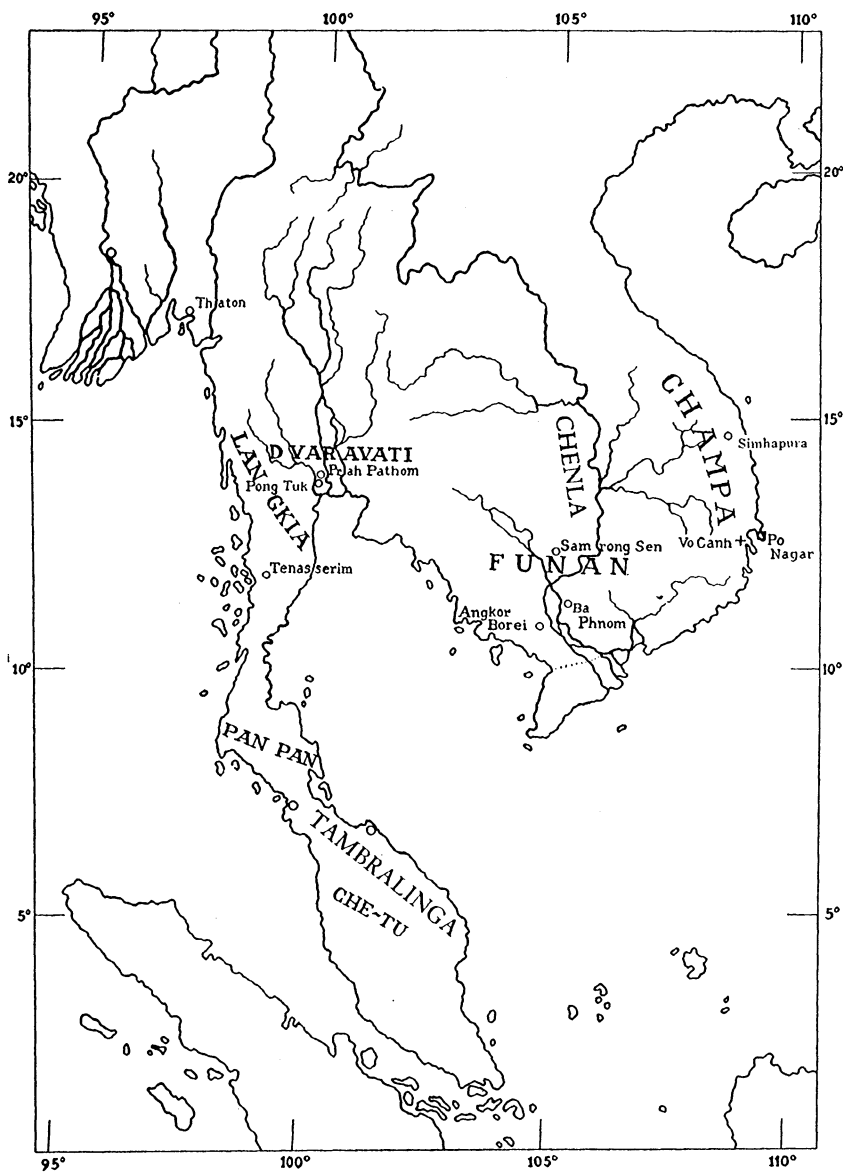
According to the accounts of two Chinese envoys who visited Funan early in the third century, an Indian brahman named Hun Chen (Kaundinya) conquered the native queen, "Willow Leaf," about the middle of the first century, married her and established the first Kaundinya dynasty. Early in the third century, Fan-man, or Fan Che-man, came to the throne, conquered the neighboring maritime countries, and extended his boundaries to include much of the present Malay peninsula — an extent of empire in this direction not again reached until late in the twelfth century.³

Some time in the first half of the third century, Funan received from China the envoys mentioned above, who wrote an account of the country and its inhabitants. At the court of Funan, these Chinese envoys met an envoy from some country of India. Funan had already sent an envoy to India and soon sent one to China. The accounts of these Chinese envoys have unfortunately been lost, but they were incorporated into Chinese dynastic histories and furnish our earliest information on the history of southern Indochina.

About the beginning of the fifth century another Indian brahman, who had or assumed the name of Kaundinya, came from "India," possibly via Pan Pan, a Funanese settlement on the Bay of Bandon on the Malay peninsula, to rule over the country and, according to Chinese accounts, "completely Indianized the customs of Funan." He probably (1) systematized and extended the worship of the Indian deities (doubtless introduced by the earlier Kaundinya), especially the state worship of the Siva-linga; (2) introduced and put into force the Laws of Manu; (3) introduced a central Indian alphabet; and (4) the honorific title of *varman*, which was suffixed to another name having a religious or political significance to form the name of a king or other person of exalted rank.

In the latter part of the fifth century, an Indian Buddhist monk, Nagasena, visited the capital of Funan and made a report to the Chinese emperor on the manners and customs of the people. His account and

³ The French sinologist, Paul Pelliot, collected all the references to this region he could find in Chinese works and published them in "Le Fou-nan," *Bulletin de l'école française d'Extrême-Orient*, 3 (April-June 1903), 248-303 (hereafter cited as *BEFEO*).



The Funan Empire Under Fan Che-man

those of the earlier envoys furnish the only direct testimony we have on early Funan by foreigners who had visited that country, until the visit of Chou Ta-kuan at the end of the thirteenth century. The information thus obtained was repeated for several centuries by Chinese dynastic histories.⁴

Funan was the head of an extensive empire, chiefly maritime states conquered and held in subjection by the "big ships" of Fan Che-man. Its chief vassal, however, was Chenla, above it on the Mékong. A little before the middle of the sixth century, Bhavavarman, son of a vassal king and probably of a daughter of the king of Funan, secured the throne of Chenla by marriage. Then he sent his brother, Sitrasena, to seize for him the throne of Funan. Henceforth, Funan was a vassal of Chenla, until it was annexed by that country early in the seventh century. The capital of Funan, called Vyadhapura in the inscriptions, was located in the delta during the entire period, probably at the site of the present Ba Phnom on the Mékong.

THE CHENLA PERIOD, 535 (?)–802 A.D.

The first capital of Chenla was on the Mékong, just below the mouth of the Sé Mun. Chenla was the early center of the Khmers, a people of the Austro-Asiatic language group, believed to be so closely related to the Mons both in language and blood that their early forbears are spoken of jointly as Mon-Khmers. Nothing is known of the Mon-Khmers as a historic people before their separation, but they seem to have come down the Mékong from the north. While one branch — the Mons — settled in the Sittang-Irrawaddy delta in what is now Burma and in the Mékong-Ménam delta in what is now Siam,⁵ the other branch — the Khmers — defeated the Chams on the Mékong and established their kingdom there, where Brahmanists from India soon found them and converted them to the worship of Siva.

According to their legends, which date after their conversion to Brahmanism, the Khmer kings were descended from the great hermit and seer, Kambu Svayambhuva,⁶ from whom are derived the names *Kambuja*, "sons of Kambu," and *Kambujadesa*, "country of the Kambuja." But these names are not found in the inscriptions until later. Chinese documents of the time call the country Chenla.

⁴ For accounts of Chinese envoys and travelers as a source of Cambodian history, see Larry Briggs, *A pilgrimage to Angkor* (Oakland, 1943), 66–68 (hereafter cited as *Pilgrimage*).

⁵ Lawrence Palmer Briggs, "Dvāravatī, the most ancient kingdom of Siam," *Journal of the American Oriental society*, 65 (April–June 1945), 98–107 (hereafter cited as "Dvaravati").

⁶ Svayambhuva means self-creating.

Three short inscriptions in Sanskrit are believed to belong to the Funan period. But many inscriptions of the Chenla period have been found and form one of the most important sources of the history of the period. They are mostly in Sanskrit, but inscriptions partly or wholly in Khmer begin to appear early in the seventh century.⁷

Bhavavarman and his brother Sitrasena, who succeeded him under the name of Mahendravarman, conquered the lower Sé Mun valley and the territory from the Mékong to the Great Lake. Isanavarman, son of Mahendravarman, established his capital at Isanapura, on a northern branch of the Tonlé Sap, and conquered all the rest of the present Cambodia, the middle and upper Sé Mun valley and the territory east to the Annamitic chain and west to the Ménam valley.⁸ A successor of Isanavarman conquered the territory north to Nan-chao (Yunnan).⁹ Thus, early in the Chenla period, the Khmers extended their boundaries to those of the present China.

Near the beginning of the eighth century, following a series of civil wars in the delta region, Chenla split into two divisions, known to the Chinese as Land Chenla and Water Chenla. Upland Chenla remained separate until early in the ninth century. It is known during this period only through its relations with China. Maritime Chenla consolidated to form the nucleus of the later Khmer empire.

In the meantime, a Malay kingdom had grown up in Sumatra, with its capital probably at Srivijaya (Palembang). By the latter part of the eighth century, it had become an empire ruled over by a maharaja, had conquered nearly all of Sumatra, western and central Java, and the Malay peninsula to the Bay of Bandon, and had ravaged the coast of Indochina. According to an Arab account it took the Khmer capital, beheaded the king, and set up a minister to rule until a suitable successor could be found and trained.¹⁰

How long the Khmers remained subject to the Malay maharaja is not known. An inscription relates that a Khmer prince, Paramesvara¹¹ (post-

⁷ For the three short inscriptions referred to, see George Coedès "Etudes cambodgiennes, XXV: deux inscriptions du Fou-nan," *BEFEO* (1931), 1-12; Coedès, "A new inscription from Fou-nan," *Journal of the greater India society* (July 1937), 117-27. For inscriptions as a source of Cambodian history, see *Pilgrimage*, pp. 68-72.

⁸ "Dvaravati," p. 102.

⁹ Ma Touan-lin, *Ethnographie des peuples étrangers à la chine... méridionaux*, translated by Marquis d'Hervey de Saint-Denis (Paris, 1883), 461.

¹⁰ For a brief account of the Malay conquest and the return of Jayavarman, see *Pilgrimage*, pp. 68, 70-72.

¹¹ Kings are called by their posthumous names in the inscriptions.

humous name of Jayavarman II),¹² returned from "Java" to rule over the Khmers, apparently as a vassal of the maharaja. After ruling briefly at several places, he erected his capital on the top of Mahendraparvata, identified as Phnom (Mount) Kulen, about 25 miles northeast of the present Angkor. Then he sent to "Jambudvipa"¹³ for a brahman named Hiranyadama, who was skilled in magic science, to make a ritual in order that Kambujadesa should have a *chakravartin*¹⁴ king. This brahman made a ritual and established a *devaraja* or king-god. This took place in 802. This date is considered as marking the beginning of the independence of the Khmer empire.

THE KAMBUJA, OR ANGKOR, PERIOD, 802-1432:

A. JAYAVARMAN II TO JAYAVARMAN VII, 802-1181

This is called the Kambuja period because the people were called Kambuja in the inscriptions. The capital was at or near Angkor — called Yasodharapura or, more rarely, Kambupuri — during the entire period.

Jayavarman II's next step was to appoint a chief priest or *purohita*, to learn the ritual for establishing a new *devaraja* on the accession of a new king. For this purpose, he chose his royal chaplain or *hotar*, Sivakaivalya, and had Hiranyadama teach him the magic ritual. Sivakaivalya took the oath as *purohita*; and the office was made hereditary in his family, following female lines. The *devaraja* was the eternal abstract essence of the king confounded with the divine essence, and was worshipped in the form of a linga under the vocable of the first part of the king's name plus *esvara* (Isvara=Siva). Thus the *devaraja* established in 802 was called *Jayesvara*.

Jayavarman II ruled until 854. Early in his reign, he reunited his empire, including Upland Chenla, and Khmer territory again bordered Nan-chao. It included all the present Laos and all of present Siam except the then Mon kingdoms of Louvo and Haripunjai.¹⁵ An inscription of the latter part of the ninth century says Kambujadesa extended from China to the sea.¹⁶ In the latter years he moved his capital to a place now called Roluos, not far from Angkor, where he died and where his two immediate

¹² French epigraphists and historians continue the enumeration of the kings of Chenla (but not those of Funan) in the Kambuja period.

¹³ India, possibly Java or Sumatra.

¹⁴ *Chakravartin* here apparently means simply independent or sovereign.

¹⁵ "Dvaravati," pp. 103, 104.

¹⁶ Abel Bergaigne, "Inscriptions sanscrites de Cambodge, LV: stèle inscription (digraphique) de Loley, stanza 56," *Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres. Notices et extraits des manuscrits* (Paris, 1885).

successors — Jayavarman III (854–77) and Indravarman I (877–89) — reigned and died. His third successor, Yasovarman I (889–910), founded a new capital, Yasodharapura, which name clung to all later capitals in the Angkor region.

Every great Khmer ruler, if he lived long enough, built himself a new capital. This called for a new central temple to house his *devaraja*. This temple was the shrine of the state worship during that king's reign and his mausoleum after his death. Thus, nearly all the great Khmer monuments were funerary temples.¹⁷ The central temple was generally built on a pyramid, natural or artificial, and was considered the symbolic center of the kingdom, in imitation of Mount Meru, center of the universe in Hindu cosmology.¹⁸ Yasovarman I erected his central temple on Mount Bakheng, just outside of the south gate of the later Angkor Thom. This temple, containing the *Yasodhariesvara*, consisted of five towers arranged in quincunx on the summit of the mount, in five gradins with stairways at the four cardinal points. The capital and city below were surrounded by a palisade and moat, about four kilometers square. It was one of the largest enclosures of ancient Cambodia¹⁹ and included about one-half of the area now enclosed by the walls of Angkor Thom, while the central temple is far outside of those walls. This was the original Yasodharapura. Yasovarman I straightened the course of the Siemreap river and constructed the East Baray, the immense artificial reservoir on the east side of the river.

Yasovarman I's two sons ruled at Yasodharapura (910–28). An uncle, Jayavarman IV, got possession of the throne and established a rival capital at Chok Gargyar (now called Koh Ker), about a hundred miles northeast of Angkor, and he and his son reigned there (921–44). Rajendravarman II (944–68) brought the capital back and erected Yasodharapura II (Angkor Thom I), where he and his brother Jayavarman V (968–1001) reigned. Their central temple was probably the Phimanakas, near the center of the present Angkor Thom. Their enclosures were small, entirely outside of that of Yasodharapura I. The Grand Plaza, with its terraces and buildings, and the Avenue of Victory, were evidently designed, if not com-

¹⁷ Later, especially during the reign of Jayavarman VII, some of the largest Khmer monuments were funerary temples of the king's father (Prah Khan), mother (Ta Prohm), or a son (Bantay Chmar).

¹⁸ See Robert Heine-Geldern, "Conceptions of state and kingship in Southeast Asia," *Far Eastern quarterly*, 2 (November 1942), 16–17.

¹⁹ The enclosure of Angkor Thom is about three kilometers square; that of Prah Khan de Kampong Svai, in the forest about 70 miles east of Angkor, is about five kilometers square.

pleted, while the Phimanakas was the central temple (see plan of Yasodharapura).²⁰

At this time, the Khmers seem to have had some sort of a claim on the Sipsong Pan-na region on the upper Mékong, in what are now Yunnan and the Burmese Shan States.²¹

Early in the eleventh century, a (Mahayana) Buddhist prince named Suryavarman, said to be a son of a king of the Tamil-Malay state of Tambralinga in the Malay peninsula, fought his way to the Khmer throne (1002–11), to which he seems to have had a vague claim through his mother. He seems to have conquered and annexed the Mon kingdom of Louvo, including practically all of what is now Siam proper, but not Haripunjai.²² As Suryavarman I he continued to reign until 1049. His Buddhist central temple, in light material, occupied the site of the later Bayon. Its enclosure was just a little less than that of the present Angkor Thom, and its axial causeways, running in all four cardinal directions, gave Yasodharapura III (Angkor Thom II) something of the aspect of the present Angkor Thom. It was he more than any other ruler who gave the capital its marvellous system of waterways, basins, channels, and fountains which made it the wonder of all visitors, even to the end of the sixteenth century.

Udayadityavarman I (1049–64) returned to the worship of the Sivaite *devaraja*. To house his *Udayadityesvara*, he built the Baphuon. Traces indicate that the enclosure of Yasodharapura IV (Angkor Thom III) extended a little beyond that of the later (present) Angkor Thom on the north and west. Again civil war followed. A dynasty, apparently spawned by Suryavarman I, from the upper Sé Mun valley, won the throne in 1090 and furnished some of the greatest emperors. Suryavarman II (1113–52) was Vishnuite. His temple, the incomparable Angkor Wat, is outside the enclosure of Angkor Thom. It is surrounded by a moat and a stone wall, like a city, and may have been a fifth Yasodharapura with its capital on its grounds. Like his Buddhist namesake, Suryavarman II does not seem to have followed the state worship to the extent of joining with Siva in a *devaraja*.²³ Perhaps a *Vishnuraja* was substituted. Thirty years of civil war followed the death of Suryavarman II. In the confusion, the Chams cap-

²⁰ For a brief description of the terraces and buildings surrounding the Grand Plaza, see *Pilgrimage*, pp. 49–51 and Plan 4.

²¹ Georges Maspero, "La géographie politique de l'Indochine aux environs de 960 A.D.," *Etudes asiatiques*, 2 (Hanoi, 1925), 79–125.

²² "Dvaravati," p. 104.

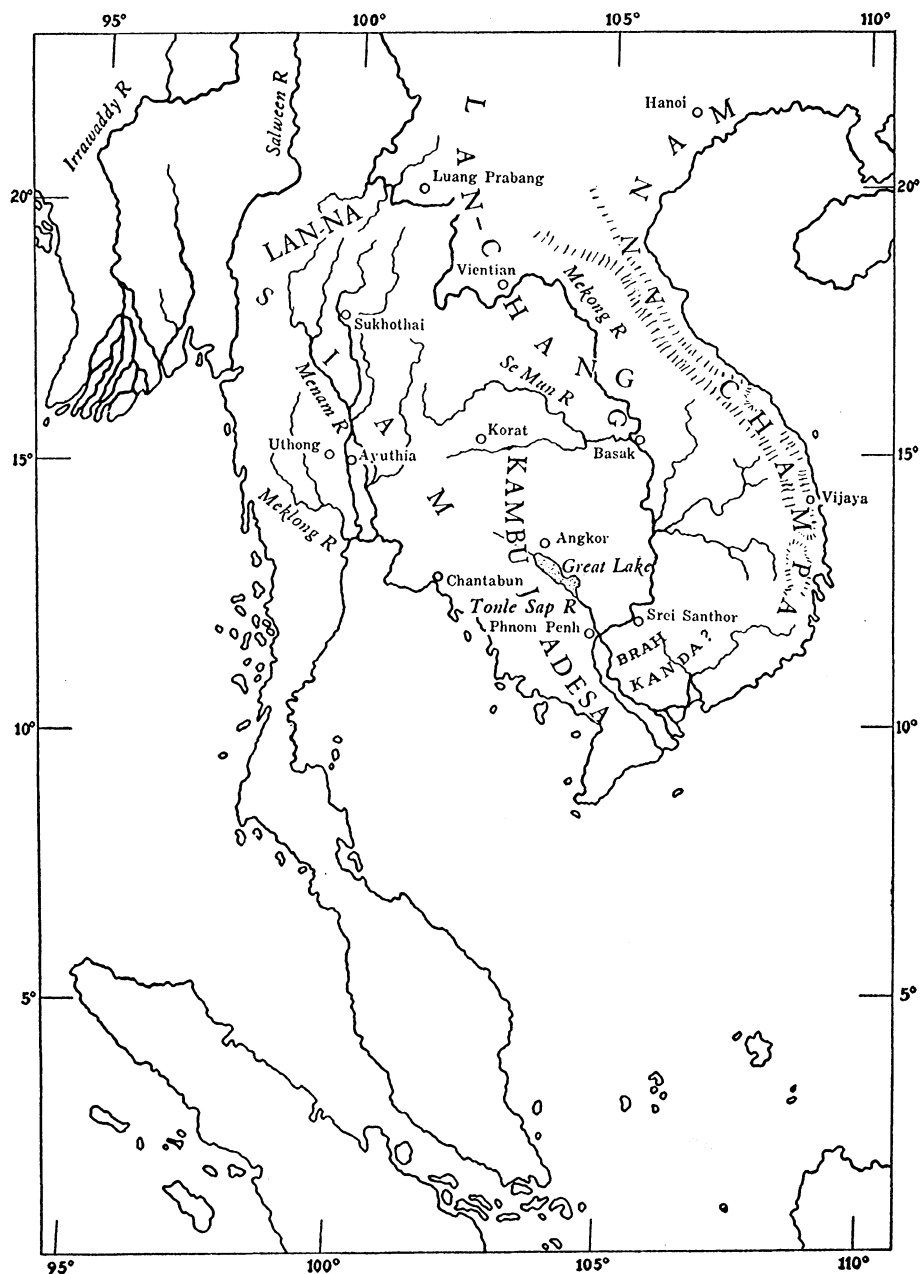
²³ No inscription mentions a *Suryesvara* in either case.

B. JAYAVARMAN VII TO THE FALL OF ANGKOR, 1181-1432

[illegible]

and by the Avenue of Victory, he erected five immense gates, surmounted by four-faced towers. In the center of this enclosure, on the site of Suryavarman I's wooden sanctuary, he built a new Bayon in stone. Although not as imposing as Angkor Wat or Bantay Chmar,²⁴ it is probably the world's most unique temple, being surmounted by more than fifty four-faced towers, in apparent disorder, which seemingly arise out of solid rock — apparently the work of sculptors rather than of architects. These faces represent Lokeshvara, and the gates and temple were at first intended to be dedicated to this Bodhisattva. But the Bayon was finally altered and dedicated to the Buddha under the lineaments of Jayavarman VII — a sort of *Buddharaja*, apparently to replace the Sivaic *devaraja*.

²⁴ Bantay Chmar, the ruins of which stand in a now arid and nearly deserted district about 100 kilometers to the northwest of Angkor Thom, was the rival of Angkor Wat as the world's largest religious structure. It was built during the reign of Jayavarman VII.



Cambodia in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

it. He seems to have exercised some sort of overlordship or hegemony over part of the Malay peninsula and the Sittang-Irrawaddy delta. In many ways he was the greatest of Khmer emperors, but his building frenzy left the people impoverished and embittered; it was one of the chief causes of the ultimate downfall of the empire.

On Jayavarman VII's death, the Khmer empire began to fall apart. Champa regained its independence in 1220. The Tai, who for some time had been filtering into the empire from the north, began to establish themselves in the Ménam valley. Their invasion was given additional impetus by the conquest of Nan-chao by the Mongols in 1253-54 and was aided by a democratic religion — Hinayana Buddhism — which for some time had been coming from Ceylon into the half-Khmerized Mon settlements on the lower Ménam. By the end of the thirteenth century, the Khmers had abandoned the upper Ménam and Mékong valleys. It was during this period that Angkor received a visit from a Chinese embassy. Chou Ta-kuan, who accompanied this embassy (1296-97),²⁵ wrote an instructive account of Khmer manners and customs.

The Khmers continued to defend Kambuja proper against Tai raids for some time. Finally, in 1430-31, aided by treachery from within, a raid from the new Tai capital of Ayuthia on the lower Ménam seized the Khmer capital and ended the magnificent Khmer civilization. Although the Khmers recaptured Angkor next year, it was abandoned as a capital, largely because of the change of religion and the burden of the maintenance of the old temples. A new capital was established on the other side of the kingdom, near the junction of the Mékong and the Tonlé Sap.

THE CAMBODIA PERIOD, 1432-1864:

A. TRANSITION FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN CAMBODIA

The fall of the ancient Khmer capital and its civilization made such a change in the character of the country and its history as to lend credence to the fable of the mysterious disappearance of the people who created the civilization and built the monuments; but though the character of the history changes, its continuity can be traced. From this time on, the history of Cambodia is largely a record of struggles with its neighbors and of its relations with Europeans. The sources undergo an almost complete change. Instead of inscriptions, iconography, architecture, sculpture,

²⁵ Paul Pelliot (tr.) "Mémoires sur les coutumes du Cambodge, par Tcheou Ta-kouan," *BEFEO*, 2 (April 1902), 123-77.

etc.,²⁶ there appear chronicles of Cambodia and its neighbors, writings of missionaries and early travelers, treaties of European powers affecting Cambodia, and studies of scholars.

During the independent period (1432–1864), the history of Cambodia is largely an account of efforts to avoid subjugation by its aggressive neighbors, Siam and Annam. Siam claimed suzerainty over Cambodia after the capture of Angkor in 1431, and by interfering in disputed successions, attempted at various times during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to make its claim valid, but without great success. During much of the sixteenth century, Siamese designs were thwarted by Burma, which thrice invaded Siam and twice took the capital, Ayuthia, and unseated its king.²⁷ In 1593–94, the Siamese again captured the capital of Cambodia — this time Lovek, on the Tonlé Sap, a little above Phnom Penh. Again the Cambodians drove out the Siamese and recovered their capital. Then followed ten years of civil war, during which Siam tried to seat a submissive candidate on the throne of Cambodia, which she considered a vassal. The Cambodian monarch, to save his throne, sought aid of Spain and Portugal. Twice Spain tried to intervene from Manila, while Portuguese and Spanish missionaries attempted to get a good foothold in Cambodia.²⁸

Once, during the wars with Siam near the end of the sixteenth century, a Cambodian king moved his capital temporarily to the Angkor region. Some attempts at restoration were made at Angkor Wat, and long inscriptions again began to adorn its walls and pillars, this time in Pali, the sacred language of the Hinayanists; its corridors became the depository of rude stone and wooden images of the Buddha, which have remained to the present day. All this is a graceless travesty on the incomparable works of the ancient Brahmanic and Mahayanist period. The weak attempt at a revival of Angkor corresponded with the period when Portu-

²⁶ See *Pilgrimage*, pp. 66–95, for the sources of ancient Khmer history.

²⁷ On the Burmese invasions of Siam, see G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma* (London, 1925).

²⁸ Fray Marcelo de Ribadeneyro, *Historia de las islas de archipelago y reynos de gran China, Tartaria, Cochinchina, Malaca, Siam, Camboxa y Jappon* (Barcelona, 1601); Fray Gabriel (Quiroga) de San Antonio, *Breve y Verdadera relacion de los sucesos del reyno de Camboxa* (Valladolid, 1604); Pedro Sevil, *Conquista de Champan, Camboja, Siam, Cochinchina y otros paises de Oriente* ([Valladolid], 1603. Translated by A. Cabaton as "Le mémorial de Pedro Sevil," *Bulletin de la commission archéologique de l'Indochine* [1914–16], 1–102); Christoval de Jaque de los Rios de Mancaned, "Voyages aux Indes orientales et occidentales..." ([Valladolid], 1606), in H. Ternaux-Compans, *Archives des voyages...* (Paris, 1840–41), 241–350; Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola, *Conquista de las Islas Molucas al rey Felipe III* (Madrid, 1609).

guese and Spanish missionaries and adventurers were trying to gain a foothold in Cambodia. Their activity brought Cambodia, and with it Angkor, to the attention of Europeans for the first time. European writers at the beginning of the seventeenth century showed an interest in this region (see note 28) which did not reappear until the middle of the nineteenth century. However, none of these writers had seen the monuments, and their accounts are not very accurate. Their sources were first- and secondhand reports of natives and of Portuguese and Spanish Dominican and Franciscan friars, some of whom had visited Angkor. The ten years of strife finally ended in 1603 when a king was seated on the throne of Cambodia who was wholly under the domination of Siam, and who put an end to Christian missionary enterprise in Cambodia.

B. THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN SIAM AND ANNAM FOR SUPREMACY IN CAMBODIA

The period from the accession of Soriyoppor to the throne of Cambodia near the end of 1603 to the establishment of the French protectorate in 1864 saw a series of struggles between Annam and Siam for domination in Cambodia.²⁹ Some new elements had appeared. The Japanese had begun to trade in Southeast Asia and the Philippines early in the sixteenth century and continued to do so until 1636, when Japan itself was closed to foreign trade except under the closest restrictions, and Japanese subjects were forbidden to leave their country. As Cambodia was one of the few countries of this region open to free trade with Japan, it became a favorite trading place for that country.³⁰ The Dutch also were becoming interested in Southeast Asia. They conquered Malacca from the Portuguese and were engaged in subduing the East Indian archipelago. They established trading posts in Siam and Cambodia. They secured a monopoly of the foreign trade of Japan and tried to maintain a post in Cambodia, which however was destroyed by Malays in 1643 with the connivance of the Moslem king of Cambodia, and again in 1667 by Chinese pirates.³¹

While Cambodia and Siam were governed by weak kings, the energetic Nguyen rulers of southern Annam were getting possession of the Donnai-Mékong delta. Early in the seventeenth century, they secured the right

²⁹ Lawrence Palmer Briggs, "The treaty of March 23, 1907 between France and Siam and the return of Battambang and Angkor to Cambodia," *Far Eastern quarterly*, 5 (August 1946), 441-43.

³⁰ Noel Peri, "Essai sur les relations du Japon et de l'Indochine aux 16 et 17 siècles," *BEFEO* (1923), 1-136.

³¹ W. J. M. Buch, "La compagnie des Indes néerlandaises et l'Indochine," *BEFEO* (1936), 92-196 and (1937), 121-237.

to make settlements in the delta and to establish a customs house at Saigon. When, in 1658, they were called in to help expel the Moslem king of Cambodia, there were already flourishing Annamite settlements in the delta. Before they withdrew their troops, they forced the Cambodians to recognize the titles of these Annamites to their land and to give Annamite settlers the rights of nationals. Thus, by infiltration and by occupation, the Annamites acquired most of the lower delta, early in the seventeenth century. From that time, Cambodia was forced to pay Annam a regular tribute.³² By the end of the century, the Annamites had absorbed all the lower delta east of the Mékong and had organized it into Annamite administrative units.³³ In 1758, they completed the occupation of the entire delta and fortified it.³⁴ This was the first loss of territory that had been a part of the ancient Kambujadesa. Although the delta area had been the seat of ancient Funan, the Cambodians had never occupied it in the same manner as the Annamites, who are a tidewater people.

Siam, which had never given up its claim to Cambodia, did not make any effective protest. But when civil war broke out in southern Annam and the Tayson pretenders temporarily drove the Nguyen kings from the throne, the first king of the new Chakri dynasty in Siam took advantage of the confusion in Annam and began an aggressive policy against Cambodia. However, the fugitive young Nguyen heir, Nguyen-Anh, aided by the French, not only triumphed over the Tayson pretenders and the Trinh of Tonkin, but deposed the decadent Lê emperor and was himself crowned emperor of Annam under the name of Gialong.³⁵ Thus, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Annamites were again able to confront the Siamese.

The Cambodian king Ang Chan (1806-34) adopted the policy of playing Siam and Annam against each other. Siam had seated him on the throne and had crowned him; but when he did homage to Annam also, Siam encouraged his brothers to depose him. Whereupon Gialong reseeded him on the throne (1813)³⁶ and maintained him there. Once again, two decades later, the Siamese drove him out, and the Annamites brought him back (1833).³⁷ Through the defection of Cambodian governors, Siam

³² J. Moura, *Le royaume du Cambodge* (Paris, 1883), vol. 2, pp. 61-62; Adhémar Léclère, *Histoire du Cambodge* (Paris, 1913), 351-52.

³³ Charles Maybon, *Histoire modern du pays d'Annam (1592-1820)* (Paris, 1919), 121.

³⁴ Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 81-85; Léclère, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

³⁵ Briggs, "The treaty of March 23, 1907," *op. cit.*, pp. 442-43.

³⁶ Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 100-04; Léclère, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-11.

³⁷ Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 109-10; Léclère, *op. cit.*, 416-19.

had secured control of the northwestern provinces of Cambodia (Battambang and Angkor) in 1795 and of the northeastern provinces (Melu Prey, Tonlé Repu, and Stung Treng) in 1815.³⁸ When Ang Chan died in 1834, the Annamites seized the rest of Cambodia, secured the election of Ang Chan's daughter, Ang Mey,³⁹ changed the name of the capital to Nam Viang, organized the country into *phus* and *huyens*, and compelled Cambodian officials, including the queen, to adopt Annamite names, customs, and dress⁴⁰ Cambodia now was governed by three Annamite dignitaries.

The harsh rule of the Annamites led the Cambodians to ask aid of the Siamese. The Siamese were Hinayanists like the Cambodians⁴¹ and did not seize their lands nor occupy their territory. A Siamese army seated Ang Duong, youngest brother of Ang Chan, on the throne at Oudong (1842).⁴² The war continued for four years, with the Annamites in control at Phnom Penh and with Ang Duong, supported by the Siamese, ruling at Oudong. Peace was made in 1846. The next year Ang Duong was crowned by representatives of both governments,⁴³ and Cambodia resumed its vassalage to both countries.

Cambodia was now in a deplorable condition. Poverty was widespread, and commerce was at a standstill as a result of Annamite seizure of cultivated lands and of Siamese raiders, who damaged property and often carried the inhabitants into slavery.⁴⁴ About this time the Annamites began to dispossess the Cambodian landholders in the delta and to shut off completely Cambodia's access to the sea.⁴⁵ Ang Duong set out to rehabilitate the country as far as this could be done with an empty treasury. By *corvées* he built a highway to the sea at Kampot and tried to improve that little port. Several visitors to Cambodia at this period, particularly the Abbé Bouillevaux and Henri Mouhot, give a picture of conditions.⁴⁶ In his dealings with Annam and Siam, Ang Duong adopted the policy his

³⁸ Briggs, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

³⁹ Ang Mey was the first woman since the legendary "Willow Leaf" to occupy the throne of Cambodia in her own right.

⁴⁰ Lécère, *op. cit.*, pp. 421-24; Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 111; Alfred Schreiner, *Abrégé de l'histoire d'Annam* (Saigon, 1906), 122; Paulin Vial, *Les premières années de la Cochinchine française* (Paris, 1874), vol. 1, p. 70.

⁴¹ The principal Annamite religion is a form of Mahayanist Buddhism derived from China.

⁴² Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 114-15; Lécère, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

⁴³ Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 120; Lécère, *op. cit.*, pp. 434-35; Vial, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 71.

⁴⁴ Lécère, *op. cit.*, pp. 438-39; Briggs, "The treaty of March 23, 1907," *op. cit.*, pp. 444, 447; Vial, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 71, says they carried off 40,000 Cambodians in 1845.

⁴⁵ Lécère, *op. cit.*, pp. 434-38.

⁴⁶ Abbé C. E. Bouillevaux, *Voyage dans l'Indo-Chine, 1848-1856* (Paris, 1858); Henri Mouhot, *Travels in the central parts of Indo-China* (London, 1864).

brother had attempted to follow — that of maintaining a balance between his aggressive neighbors. But he feared these two rivals might agree to divide up the remainder of his territory,⁴⁷ hence he looked around for the protection of a stronger power. Great Britain was at that time pursuing an aggressive policy in Tenasserim and the Burmese delta. France seemed less dangerous. Ang Duong made overtures to the French emperor; but Montigny, who was ordered to make contact with him, bungled the matter and exposed his plans to his dangerous Siamese neighbor.⁴⁸ Soon (1858), Annam became involved with France. Meantime, the Chams and the Malays in Cambodia had revolted and taken refuge at Chaudoc in Annam. When the governor refused to give them up, Ang Duong decided to invade Annamite territory. He thus became the uninvited ally of the French,⁴⁹ an act entirely out of accord with the whole previous policy of his reign. But before the revolt was settled, Ang Duong died (November 1859).⁵⁰

The Council of Ministers met next day according to an ancient Cambodian custom,⁵¹ and, in accordance with the wishes of the deceased king, unanimously chose Ang Duong's eldest son, the Yuvaraja Ang Vodey, and proclaimed him uncrowned king under the name of Norodom.⁵² Notice was sent to the king of Siam.⁵³ Annam, at war with France and Cambodia, was not notified. Siam approved the choice but, apparently wishing to draw some profit from keeping Cambodia in turmoil, sent back with Norodom his discontented and turbulent young brother, Si Votha,⁵⁴ who soon raised a revolt (1861) and drove Norodom out of Cambodia. Norodom fled to Bangkok, taking with him the crown, the sacred sword and the royal seal.⁵⁵ The second brother, Sisowath, as Prea Keu Fea — the position next to Yuvaraja — helped to put down the revolt.⁵⁶ On the

⁴⁷ Lécère, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

⁴⁸ Lécère, *op. cit.*, pp. 443–44; Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 128–32.

⁴⁹ Lécère, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

⁵⁰ Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 135–37; Henri Russier, *Histoire sommaire du royaume de Cambodge* (Saigon, 1914), 110; Lécère, *op. cit.*, p. 447, says, wrongly, in November 1860.

⁵¹ Russier, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 94; Paul Collard, *Cambodge et les Cambodgiennes* (Paris, 1925), 181–83; R. G., in *Indochine hebdomadaire illustré* (Hanoi), Nov. 20, 1940.

⁵² Lécère, *op. cit.*, p. 448, says the king of Siam gave him the name of Norodom when he was made Yuvaraja in 1856. Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 136, says he did not receive that name until he was crowned in 1864. Both, however, call him Norodom after his election in 1859.

⁵³ Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 136–37.

⁵⁴ Lécère, *op. cit.*, p. 448.

⁵⁵ Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 141.

⁵⁶ Lécère, *op. cit.*, pp. 451–52; Vial, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 171–73. Lécère calls him, wrongly, Ang-Sor.

invitation of Bishop Miche and the French consul at Bangkok, Siam sent troops to restore Norodom to his throne.⁵⁷

Although Norodom had been chosen king, he had not yet been crowned. This annoyed him, because his crown and insignia of office were in Siamese hands, and the Siamese king considered that, as Yuvaraja, Norodom was simply his viceroy. Siam, disregarding Annam, claimed the right to crown him alone. France seized three delta provinces of Annam, confronted Siam with a claim of Annam's rights in the matter, and "persuaded" Norodom to give France a protectorate over Cambodia. The French protectorate was solemnly proclaimed in April 1864 and immediately put into force. Norodom was crowned two months later in the presence of representatives of France and Siam. Siam recognized France's protectorate over Cambodia three years later.

THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE, 1864

The early years of the French protectorate were taken up largely with exploration of the country and a study of the monuments. The descriptions of Mouhot and those of the French administrators Doudart de Lagrée, Moura, and Aymonier, of the German scholar Bastian and others, and the work of Harmand, Kern, Bergaigne, and Barth in the decipherment of the inscriptions began the scientific study of the monuments, which is continued in the present day by l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient. The explorations of some of the administrators and scholars in Cambodia and of Mouhot, the Lagrée-Garnier expedition, and the Pavie missions in eastern and central Indochina have added immeasurably to our knowledge of the peninsula and themselves form an interesting chapter in the history of the region.

The protectorate of 1863-64 gave France control over external affairs only. This proved unsatisfactory, and a new "treaty" was made in 1884. The arrangement of 1864 had been primarily protective. But 1884 was in the period of the most intense commercial imperialism in Indochina — the period when Great Britain annexed upper Burma, and Siam, nursing the doctrine of Pan-Thaism, attempted to seize upper Laos and upper Tonkin. While avoiding annexation and carefully preserving native institutions, France established a protectorate over Tonkin and changed those of Annam⁵⁸ and Cambodia into protectorates of the imperial type, giving

⁵⁷ Moura, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 145; Lécclère, *op. cit.*, p. 452.

⁵⁸ The first French protectorate over Annam was established in 1874.

France almost complete control over those countries, practically equivalent to annexation.⁵⁹

These protectorates had grown up separately and were under the administration of different ministries in Paris. For greater unity of action the Union of French Indochina was formed (1887), consisting of these three protectorates and the colony of Cochinchina. The Siamese attempted to seize upper Laos and upper Tonkin; this led to a war between Siam and France (1893) and to a French protectorate over Laos (1894), which soon joined the Union of French Indochina (1899).⁶⁰

Cambodia had lost the whole Mékong-Donnai delta to the Annamites in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and much territory to the Siamese since 1794. The length of time that had elapsed and the nature of the Annamite occupation made it useless to think of restoration from that quarter.⁶¹ Many of the Cambodian inhabitants had been dispossessed, sometimes deported; new land surveys had been made, old land marks had been obliterated; new titles had been granted under a new system of local laws and government; and the delta had been settled by Annamites and Chinese under Annamite grants, much more densely than it had ever been by Cambodian.⁶² The Siamese seizures, on the other hand, were more recent, had never been acknowledged by treaty or other grant, contained practically no Siamese settlers, and were inhabited chiefly by Cambodians, pre-Khmer Khas, and later Laotians.⁶³ By the convention of 1904,

⁵⁹ A protectorate, according to Oppenheim (*International Law* [London, 1912], vol. 1, p. 145), "is a sort of international guardianship." It is the *hope* of tutelage and restoration to, or ultimate attainment of, a place as an independent, or at least an autonomous, nation that distinguishes it from annexation, even when its actual share in its own administration is reduced to a minimum.

⁶⁰ Briggs, "The treaty of March 23, 1907," *op. cit.*, pp. 444-60; Paul Le Boulanger, *Histoire du Laos français* (Paris, 1931), 319-39.

⁶¹ The Annamites simply moved in, took possession of the land and remained there. The Siamese claimed the country from a distance and subjected it to intermittent raids, carrying off property and inhabitants. Their chronicles and those of their neighbors are full of accounts of these raids.

⁶² According to *Annuaire général de l'Indochine, 1926*, the population of Cochin-china was 4,111,077, constituted as follows: Annamites (and mixed), 3,499,158, Cambodians 294,680, Chinese 165,344, Mons 27,480, Malays and Chams 9,365, Europeans 12,558, others, mostly natives of India, 2,453.

⁶³ According to the source cited in note 62 the population of the northwestern provinces of Cambodia — Battambang, including Sisophon, and Siemreap (Angkor) — was 321,285, constituted as follows: Cambodians 287,851, Chinese 11,337, Annamites 7,209, Laotians 6,315, Siamese 2,700, Malays 1,717, Burmese and Shans 2,516, Europeans 29, others 1611. The population of the northeastern province of Stung Treng (Mlu Prey and Tonlé Repu are not given separately) was 42,856, constituted as follows: Cambodians 10,470, Laotians 12,479, Khas 16,239, Kuis 2,662, Annamites 328, Chinese 652, Europeans 14, Burmese-12.

France secured for Cambodia the return of its northeastern territories, and by the treaty of 1907 that of its northwestern territories.⁶⁴ These territories were duly added to Cambodia, thus giving it the most extensive boundaries it had had for more than a century.

During the early days of the recent war, Siam, inspired by her war-partner, Japan, and taking advantage of France's helplessness, once again seized some of the territory of northern Cambodia, not however including the ancient capital, Angkor. The matter has not been settled. But Cambodians hope that France does not again agree to Siam's spoliation of a part of their heritage, as she did in 1867.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Briggs, "The treaty of March 23, 1907," *op. cit.*, pp. 448-52.

⁶⁵ Lawrence Palmer Briggs, "Aubaret and the treaty of July 15, 1867 between France and Siam," *Far Eastern quarterly*, 6 (Feb. 1947), 122-138.