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The Early State

MOUTON



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From the purely chronological point of view the Angkorian period in the history of the Khmer people can hardly be called 'an early childhood'. The appearance on the historical map of the, in many respects, unique and, in others, typical state of Angkor was preceded by a prolonged formative period of emerging statehood of the Khmer tribes that began in the first century A.D. and eventually culminated in the establishment of the early state in its purest form that was Angkor. This process cannot be described in any detail here for reasons of space and because of the scarcity of data in general. It seems useful, however, to sketch at least a picture of what went on in the territory of the future state of Angkor during this period.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The beginning of the new era finds the Khmer tribes at the stage of the Iron Age culture. The population, sparse as it is, is made up of tribal clan communities with strong internal kinship ties and living relatively isolated from each other, though mutually at peace.

This situation changed radically after the coastal regions in the Mekong Delta came under the influence of the highly developed Indian civilization. Indian immigrants, colonists and traders brought with them their own ideas of government, 'customs and fashions', and religious symbolism. They acquainted the aborigines with various new techniques, including methods of land reclamation, and with handicrafts and the art of war. However, the main changes in the life of the people of this coastal region were connected firstly with the introduction of writing, that major tool of civilization, and secondly with the

drawing of the coastal communities into the broader sphere of international trade. These two factors radically changed the nature of the existing community of agriculturists and hunters transforming it into a *nagara*, or clan community with a state-like character. Trade and the crafts serving this trade became the chief occupation of the populace of this *nagara*. And the war craft acquired a place of honor among the other crafts, corresponding to a similar place of honor of the slave trade in the commercial structure.

We shall not dwell on the social characteristics of the *nagara*, referring the reader to the work by M. Kozlova, L. Sedov and V. Tiurin for this (1968, pp. 524–28). For our present purpose it is necessary only to say a few words about the nature of the relations between the *nagara* and the periphery which as yet lacked a state organization. This periphery served as the chief source of slaves, valuable commercial commodities and, partly, foodstuffs. At least, that is what Chinese travellers of the period stated in their reports (Giteaux 1958; Malleret 1960). All these commodities were secured in the form of tribute or as war spoils and prisoners. Only in this sense can we speak of a Funan military expansion and of the emergence of the first 'empire' on Cambodian soil. What, in fact, it amounted to was the domination of trade routes, or in other words the subjugation of other competing *nagaras*, and the political and military exploitation of the inland areas.

The impact of the *nagaras* on the life of the interior regions, with their clusters of relatively small, autarkic communities, would not have been so radical if it had not been for the slave trade, that is, military plundering. It was precisely this plunder that stimulated the creation of a political and military apparatus of resistance among the peacefully stagnating communities of the interior. In the space of 300 years primitive state formations cropped up where once peripheral 'wilderness' had been, enabling the communities in question to defend themselves against Funanese slave raiders. The process was facilitated by the migration of some Funanese to the interior regions, which played the same role as the earlier migration of Indians had played for Funan itself. At any rate the conquerors of Funan — the Chenla kings Bhavavarman and Chitrasena — were such immigrants (Pelliot 1903). The wish to profit from the wealth of a refined but ageing Funan played no small part in the newer states' thrust forward.

The center of gravity gradually shifted to the interior. New states no longer were based on trade, like Funan; nor were they as yet of the 'irrigation' type, like Angkor. Chenla, which had gained in strength and vigor in the course of her struggle with Funan, continued the policy of outward expansion, that is, of plundering other communities.

Formally these communities were incorporated into the new 'empire', but in actual fact they preserved their autonomy. Precisely this situation characterized Isanavarman's state, which astonished even the sophisticated Chinese with its splendor, but proved only an ephemeral phenomenon existing for no more than fifty years. Descriptions left behind by the Chinese help us to discern in Isanavarman's state an overgrown tribal confederacy (comprising about 20,000 people), having come to specialize in the business of war ('all the inhabitants of the country bear weapons and armour so that the slightest quarrel will end in bloody fighting') and subjugating thirty other large tribal units of which it is known that they continued to be ruled by their own rulers (Hervey de Saint-Denys 1883). It seems that the use of slave labor assumed larger proportions in Isanavarman's state than in Funan. At any rate, the development of construction in stone attests to this.

The dominance of Isanavarman's clan over other tribes and clans, based as it was on purely military and political superiority, without being strengthened by other factors, could not be stable. In fact, for the subsequent 200 years we see incessant warring between kingdoms or principalities which in actual truth were neither but were all exactly the same kind of tribal communities passing through an identical process of 'primitive' state formation and plunged in a situation of war 'of all against all'. Similar periods of intertribal warfare can be observed in ancient Egypt during the period of internome wars preceding the establishment of the southern and northern kingdoms, and in China during the so called 'Warring States' period.

The intestine strife as well as external (Javanese) aggression made the problem of integrating the warring communities into a unified state especially pressing. Such unification was besides more or less natural given the ethnic similarity of the communities, their linguistic affinity and the homogeneity of the environment and of their socio-economic level. However, all previous attempts at achieving unity by strictly political and military means had failed. Only Jayavarman II managed to find a new basis for integration on which his successors could gradually build a mighty centralized state. This integrative basis was the cult of *devaraja*, of the phallic symbol of the king and the kingdom in which were welded together the Indian religious symbolism, high in ascendancy from the heyday of Funan, and local practices such as the worship of land elevations, faith in the mystical connection between the tribal head and the fertility of the land, and the ancestor cult. The king's personality became sacral to an extent unknown to the rulers of the pre-Angkorian states or communities. The authority of Jayavarman, ruler of a small territory to the northeast of Lake Tonlé Sap that he was, was also greatly enhanced due to special political

circumstances, to his bold challenge to the Sailendra kings of Java and to his proclaiming himself *chakravartin*, or universal monarch. These steps brought him wide renown.

But an especially important feature of Jayavarman's policy was that, unlike the earlier claimants to the emperorship, he began to integrate the most influential clans into the unified political system, admitting their prominent members to the ruling elite and transforming clan communities into so-called *varnas* and temple communities (Sedov 1965). Thus, the central cult of the king was supplemented with those of the magnates and their ancestors, and theocratic and state functions came to be closely interwoven. This process is clearly discernible from the famous Sdok Kak Thom inscription (Finot 1915), describing the rise to power of the clan of the king's *purohita* (chaplain) Sivakaivalya. At the end of the process in the twelfth century, there were some 20,000 statues of divinities in the country (Coedès 1941), or in other words, conjecturally about 3,000-3,500 temples, all fulfilling important ritual, administrative and economic functions. That is how the local integration of self-sufficient, archaic agrarian communities ('communal microcosms') was realized (Marx 1881: 405-20).

Unification of the country continued along the lines laid down by Jayavarman in the reigns of his successors, Indravarman and Yaśovarman. Under them the king's power received an even more solid basis of legitimacy due to clever dynastic marriages which allied the clan ruling at Angkor both to the 'lunar' dynasty that has reigned over Funan and to the 'solar' race of kings that had ruled in Sresthapura; undoubtedly a holy place for all Khmer tribes from time immemorial (Porée-Maspero 1950). Finally, one of the major factors in the successful integration was the drawing of the economic sub-system of the society into the integrative process. It was Indravarman who laid the foundations for the irrigation system of Angkor, thus providing for the rapid economic development of the region. Irrigation furnished the state with a large reserve of newly reclaimed lands which it could distribute among its staunchest supporters, and concentrated in it a new and important social function—the construction and maintenance of an extremely complex hydraulic system—which at the same time provided an additional basis of legitimacy.

Thus the social and political system of Angkor had assumed definite form. We shall now pass to a more detailed description of the system.

2. THE KING

It is logical first to characterize the apex of the state hierarchy, that is, the king's authority. As we have already said above, Angkorian kings

were deified and shown divine honors by the fear-stricken populace, which believed in their miraculous powers. It should be noted, however, that this divine character was at first assigned not so much to the actual occupants of the throne as to the royal power as such; the kings themselves coming to be regarded as personified gods only later (Dupont 1946). It was believed that the king's power resided in the royal *linga*, the symbol of masculine generative power in the form of a phallic image. In the *linga* kings merged with Siva, as it were. This idea is most clearly expressed in the inscription of Práh Nôk, in which a general addresses King Udayadityavarman II (1050–1067) as follows: 'let me present the trophies to your invisible 'I' that is Siva residing in the golden *linga*' (Barth et al. 1885–93: 166).

The idea of the merging of the king's power with that of the gods of the Indian pantheon (Siva, Vishnu, or Buddha) was introduced by Jayavarman II, assisted by the Indian *brahmana* Hiranyadama. This priest initiated a special rite consisting in part of the recital of appropriate Tantric texts and special sacrifices. Later, each successive monarch had to be confirmed in office, and his mystical divine power was conferred upon him by the royal chaplain (*purohita*), whose post was hereditary in one of the *brahmana* clans. It should be emphasized that during their lifetime Angkorian kings were considered not so much as gods, but rather as mystical intermediaries between gods and men. According to a popular legend transmitted by Tcheou Ta-kouan, the king was obliged to sleep every night with a nine-headed serpent — the owner of all the land — who appeared to him in the form of a woman. The king could not shirk this responsibility even once, as this would have brought down great harm to the people. The kings were not held to be descendants of gods, but were believed to become gods (or merge completely with gods) posthumously.

If, symbolically, the royal power was embodied by the *linga*, practically, it was represented in the royal clan. As opposed to certain textbook notions of the unlimited despotism of oriental monarchs, the royal power of the Angkor rulers was greatly restricted by tribal and clan traditions and norms. The clan as a whole fulfilled the function of a stabilizing core for the Angkor ruling elite. Along with every other noble clan, the royal clan was vitally concerned with its numerical growth. That is why the rule of hypergamy obtained with respect to such clans. Accordingly, married women belonging to a noble clan remained in it together with their husbands of more humble origin and their children. We see princesses' husbands appointed to the highest state functions alongside princes and relatives of the queen. This particular method of recruiting the top echelons of the power structure was noted by Tcheou Ta-kouan who wrote: 'In the majority of cases princes are appointed to the higher posts, or those appointed bring

their daughters to the king's harem' (Tcheou Ta-kouan 1951: 14). In the majority of genealogies of noble families that have come down to us in the inscriptions, the progenitors were relatives of the kings' wives (or concubines raised to an alleged status of legal wives by their descendants).

Stable as a whole, due to its numerical strength and cross-ties with other grand families, the royal clan proved less monolithic during periods of change at the top. Because of the coexistence within it of two different principles of inheritance — namely the matrilineal and the patrilineal one — the clan often became split after the king's death, with the various factions engaging in a bitter struggle over the vacant throne involving wider strata of the population. Of the twenty-seven kings of the Angkorian period, eight came to power subsequent to a contention with another claimant. A direct transfer of power from father to son is recorded in nine cases out of thirty-two (Chenla and Angkor), while of this number only twelve kings were former royal princes. In almost as many cases (eight) the power passed to brothers or cousins (the Old Khmer did not make a difference between brothers and sister's children, and designated both by the same term) (Coedès 1964: 157 n. 3), or to a wife's nephew, to grandsons or even to husbands of first cousins once removed. The choice among these many candidates was determined 'by their age and virtue'. Matrilineal descent was especially important and the authors of royal genealogies attached prime importance to the elucidation of the origins of kings' mothers and wives.

Some kings backed their claim to the throne exclusively with their wives' genealogies. Thus Suryavarman I emphasized the fact that his wife Viralaksmi belonged to Indravarman's clan, and Jayendravarman claimed a right to the throne as the husband of Indravarman I's daughter, Jayendradevi.

The high social status of women and their position in the power structure corresponded with their role in matters of descent and inheritance (Sedov 1966: 44–46). Chinese writers noted that Cambodian women sometimes were famous for their knowledge of astrology and political sciences and that some held high offices, including that of judge. The Lovêk inscription informs us that one of the wives of Radjendravarman II, named Prana, served under his son Jayavarman V as chief of the latter's staff of private secretaries.

Because of the enormous tension around the problem of the succession and the dangers posed by the numerous male claimants, Angkorian kings sought support and protection from the female members of the court, who acted as a kind of counterweight to the explosive male environment. The harem was of particular importance as a symbol of royal prestige and an instrument of the king's power. In

addition to five wives, one of whom was the principal one, kings had from 3,000 to 5,000 concubines and maids of honor. The harem was recruited from among the daughters of dignitaries and officials of all ranks, and hence fulfilled the function of a link between the king and the aristocracy of the royal service clan, being a symbol of the kinship between them, as well as a kind of hostage institution. Besides, the king's entourage included from 1,000 to 2,000 female courtiers possessing the exclusive right to enter the inner palace chambers. The king's personal guard was also made up of women bearing spears and shields.

Angkorian kings (except those of the latter period of the empire) would take this entire retinue with them on their regular tours of inspection of the country and on pilgrimages to distant shrines. Every temple and *aśrama* had special royal bedchambers serving the king as temporary residence during such tours. Special officials responsible for their maintenance and security (*chmam vrah krala phdam*) are mentioned recurrently in the inscriptions.

The construction of roads for the sake of efficient tax-collection and military movements also remained one of the major preoccupations of monarchs. By the time of Jayavarman VII the country possessed a well-developed network of highways running on a level above that of the floodwaters, crossing rivers by means of stone bridges, and provided with inns at ten-mile intervals (Parmentier 1936).

The utmost attention was paid to the security of the king. Neither armed guards nor the divine aura surrounding the person of the king were considered sufficient protection. So one of the inscriptions informs us that though the king (Yaśovarman I) 'knew everything that is knowable . . . he used spies' eyes to protect himself from possible attempts on his life' (Barth et al. 1885: 413, 425). Generally speaking, the actual relationship between the king and the people and the king and his courtiers was far removed from the paternalistic ideal as formulated in Indian theories of the state and reflected in Khmer panegyrics to their kings (Sahai 1970: 33-34).

3. THE NOBILITY

In spite of its numerical strength, power and key position in the state structure, the royal clan naturally did not constitute the sole component of the ruling stratum. The above-mentioned process of integration of rural communities into a unified state system was completed by the tenth century, with the establishment of a system of rural communities, that is characteristic of an early class society. In Angkorian Cambodia this system took the specific form of a combination of *varnas*, *vargas* and religious institutions (temples and *aśramas*).

Rural communities continued to form the foundation of the society, though in the course of the integration process they had lost their territorial clan nature whereby a large stretch of territory was occupied by a group of people belonging to one and the same kinship group, and had become territorially more restricted extended family communities (Maretin 1974: 60–66). The different territorial units now became administrative divisions of the state (*praman*, *visaya* or *deśa*) ruled and taxed by the center though preserving certain vestiges of communal self-government. The clan unity had been destroyed and various clans (*kula*) now saw themselves divided into different branches inhabiting territories lying far apart from each other and integrated into a new system of more limited territorial ties. However, clan ties had not lost all their importance, the clans, even in this divided and ‘dismantled’ form, preserving their individual organizational structure and rules and customs governing the relations between clan members. At the lower level of the village (*sruk*, *grama*) the kinship structure remained altogether intact, each village being an extended family settlement. As a result, the society came to resemble a piece of fabric, with the vertical clan ties, forming the warp and the horizontal neighborhood ties, intertwined with the thread of administrative subordination, the weft.

In the formation of the vertical structure the differentiation of clans into noble ones, belonging to the *varna* category, and common ones, named *vargas*, was of a decisive importance. *Varnas* were those clans that possessed the hereditary privilege (and obligation) to delegate certain of their members to fulfil particular secular and sacerdotal functions in the capital. It should be noted that the word *varna* was used indiscriminantly to designate an individual clan endowed with such a privilege, as well as the entire corps of individuals and clans exercising these particular functions. This ambiguity sometimes makes the interpretation of some of the inscriptions quite difficult. Thus the inscription on the Kómpong Thom stele (Coedès 1942: 62–68) tells of the creation of two new *varnas* by King Jayavarman V on the occasion of his completing his studies in 974. The relevant decree instructs the royal preceptor (*Vrah Guru*) to select from among the priest-representatives of the already existing seven *varnas*, two groups of twenty persons each to be made the founders (*Mula*) of the new *varnas*. The newly created *varnas* were given ‘villages, lands and paddy-fields’ in ownership, and were exempted from all obligations other than that of sending śivaite priests (*pamnvās*) into the royal service. ‘Those of the priests who will distinguish themselves by their bearing, high morality and exemplary conduct will be appointed to *acharya* (teacher) posts in the capital’, says the inscription. It can be concluded then, that in Jayavarman V’s time there existed seven such

privileged, hereditary functional bodies, each representing an unknown number of individual clans, and that then two more such bodies were established, each representing twenty clan branches (in accordance with the number of founders stipulated by the king). In later inscriptions we often come across representatives of these two *varnas* in high offices in the capital, the royal service (*râjakârya*) being at once a privilege and an obligation.

We furthermore learn that the women belonging to these new *varnas* were obliged to marry only men from the three highest *varnas*, supplying the court with the three topmost categories of officials, who had a parasol with a golden handle as their insignia. From what we know of the Angkorian system of titles (Sedov 1967: 107–108) we may conclude that only three of the seven *varnas* existing before the reform produced officials with the title of *mratan* or higher. The reform raised the number of these *varnas* to five. Taking the figure twenty as the hypothetical average number of clans represented in each *varna*, we can conjecture that the ruling stratum of Angkor was made up of about 100 clans. The rank and file of these *varnas* remained in agriculture, and only the chosen higher representatives served in the capital or in prominent local functions. They were known by the general designation of *tamrvâc*, meaning ‘inspectors’ or ‘overseers’. The famous oath of officials under Suryavarman I (Coedès 1951: 205–216) lists about 200 names of *tamrvâc* with the titles of *mratan* and *mratan khlon*, which means that each clan of the *varna* rank delegated about two of its members to the corps of titled officials. These dignitaries did not receive regular salaries, but, only periodically, gifts from the king, including lands, villages, serfs (*khnum*) and various valuable objects. The chief source of their livelihood was constituted by their clan lands, worked by their rank and file kinsmen. This arrangement is mentioned clearly in the Sdok Kak Thom inscription (Finot 1915: 90), which speaks of people serving the king and depending on the resources of their clan (*anak, vrah râjakâryya gi ná ayatta kulopâya*). The titled officials were regarded as the heads and guardians of their respective clans. Many names of officials are followed by the name of their relevant clan villages (e.g., *mratan Sri Viraparâkrâma sruk Karom Thnal* (Coedès 1951: 213)). In their capacity as clan guardians the court officials were designated *anak sanjak* (Sedov 1967: 163). The *varna*’s property often took the form of the property of a clan temple, where an ordinary clan member served as priest. The patrons of such temples were also high court dignitaries. For example, it is recorded about Suryavarman I’s general Sri Nrpasimhavarman that he came from a lineage ‘from time immemorial famous for its devotion to Siva’s lotus-like feet, and therefore enjoying in perpetuity the possession of its clan town of Graiveya,

rich with sacrifices to Siva' (Coedès 1953: 243). The concern with the maintenance of clan temples, which constituted the foundation for the well-being of the entire clan, is reflected in a passage of the oath to Suryavarman I, viz: 'If we are unwaveringly constant to the oath, may His Majesty give orders for the upkeep of the religious foundations of our localities and the provision of our families with all the necessary means'.

Although the *varnas* of lower status than the above-mentioned five did not supply titled nobility, they also enjoyed certain special rights. The *varna* of the goldsmiths (*cāmīkarakāra*) evidently constituted a kinship-cum-professional group of such a privileged kind.

The majority of the population was organized in common, unprivileged clans, called *vargas*. Many of these, like the *varnas*, sent into the state service professionals of specific occupations, which were hereditary per *varga*, such as artisans of various kinds, shepherds, gardeners, court servants (e.g. parasol bearers), entertainers, and so on.

4. THE COMMONERS

Such was, so to speak, the vertical structure of Angkorian society. It was knit together by clan relations from top to bottom. We shall now take a look at the horizontal structure. On the horizontal plane—the territorial one—a cluster of village communities, tightly cemented by territorial neighborhood ties and state administrative bonds, came into being. In each of the territorial communities segments of various clans, *varnas* as well as *vargas*, existed side by side and entered into complex relations with each other, with other territorial communities and with the unifying totality, namely, the state. We shall now try to outline these relations.

The clan segments were headed by clan elders designated by the Sanskrit term *mula*, meaning 'the root'. Usually, this was a hereditary type of function descending from the founders of the clan branch in question. Thereupon, these segments became divided into secular and religious divisions. The guardian-founder, who settled a given segment in a certain area, also as a rule founded a clan temple and decreed which division of the segment had to 'enter religion', i.e., become the hereditary priests of that temple. The temples in many instances were exempted, wholly or partially, from state duties and were drawn into a different system of economic ties, namely, with the central temples. The priests fulfilled not only religious but also, probably, arbitrarional functions (Sedov 1969; Coedès 1964: 117).

The secular division of the clan was headed by *mulas* and other elders known as 'the first among the people', or *puruśapradhana*

(Sedov 1968: 78). From their midst local dignitaries, designated by the term *valadhyakṣa* ('overseers of the people') and *śresthin* ('the first', 'the best') (Sedov 1967: 108–109), were appointed by a procedure combining the principles of election, heredity and appointment. This stratum was semi-communal and semi-governmental. At any rate, the government did its best to integrate it into the centralized apparatus with its system of titles and insignia. Of these people Tcheou Ta-kouan wrote that 'below those who have a parasol with a golden handle, there are those who have a parasol with a silver handle; there are also those who use a silver palanquin . . . Officials entitled to a silver parasol are called *sseu-la-tin* (*śresthin*)' (Coedès 1918: 9). For Tcheou Ta-kouan, accustomed as he was to the bureaucratic institutions of his native country, there was nothing about them that made them any different from ordinary officials (Tcheou Ta-kouan 1951: 13–14). It should be remembered however, that his evidence relates to the late thirteenth century, when clan and kinship ties had already become substantially transformed in the course of the evolutionary process.

On the lowest step of the hierarchy under discussion there were the village notables (*amcas*, or *mai-tsie*, as Tcheou Ta-kouan called them, regarding them also simply as local clerks) and elders (*grammavrdhi*) (Sedov 1967: 109). Higher up there were 'population chiefs' (*Khlon vala*) subordinated to the regional chief (*khlon visaya*). To the same rank belonged the numerous lesser treasury officials, tax-collectors and administrators of duties and obligations such as the *khlon karya*, *khlon glan*, *khlon bhutaśa*. They were subordinated to higher state officials responsible for taxes and revenues namely the *tamrvac rajakarya* (Sahai: 71–84). These in their turn were employees of the relevant central departments (for example, the central court department, *vrah sabha*, or the central department of stored goods under the *khlon glan*, this time not the local but the principal one). The departments were subordinate to the king and his five (or four) ministers (Migot 1960: 40; Wales 1934: 79) fulfilling the function of general counsellors without specialized tasks.

The members of the clan who 'had entered religion' and become the personnel of the clan temple had their own administrative organization. It comprised the *khlon vnam* (literally, 'the chief of the mountain'), known also by the names of *adhikarinah*, *kulapatir*, *purohita* or *bhagavan* (in the case of *aśramas* the head was also the teacher of holy texts or *adhyapaka*) as well as numerous priests (*hotars* or *smins*) and financial administrators similar to the secular ones (*khlon glan*, superintendents of the fields or *khlon ksetra*, etc.). The fields belonging to such a temple were either divided up between the personnel or were worked as a single complex of 'cult fields', producing sacrificial rice for distribution among the personnel (Sedov 1963: 78). The lands were

worked by serfs or *khnum* belonging to the temple. The *khnum* had their own 'food fields', which they received from the temple (as the Trapan Don On inscription shows, the fields were not sufficient for their subsistence), or they lived entirely on a share of the harvest which in its totality belonged to the temple. About sixty per cent of the rice they produced was consumed by the temple and only forty per cent by the *khnums* themselves. The standard amount consumed by them was about 400 g. of husked rice a day, as against 3 kg. a day by the priests (Sedov 1967: 172–173).

Once a clan temple was exempted from the majority of state duties it entered into a relationship of economic and, probably, administrative dependence on one of the central temples. In the tenth and eleventh centuries there were about ten such temples in the country. They were semi-state institutions fulfilling important economic functions alongside the religious ones (we use the word 'semi-state' because all the higher positions in these temples were also the prerogative of certain noble families). Their economy was closely interwoven with the state economy, in the sense that they developed large specialized industries supplying the state with particular products (e.g., the Vrah Pulinn, or 'Holy Island' supplied the state with butter). Their own requirements were met mainly by their own lands and *khnums* (e.g., the Ta Prohm temple had about 6,000 *khnums*), about one fifth of their needs being supplied by the dependent clan temples and other agricultural communities. State subventions were also provided but they were disproportionately small.

The tribute paid by clan temples to central ones was generally limited in extent, and, in fact, almost nominal, amounting to an average of 100 kg of rice a year, or 5.5 kg per member of the clan temple, including *khnums*. The figure is negligible in comparison with the clan temple's average annual consumption of 4 tons. But there were also cases of clan temples paying the central one a tithe (Coedès 1953: 130). It is also possible that the contributions of products other than rice were more considerable. There are instances known of *corvée* being exacted, whereby the people affiliated with clan temples were obliged to work the fields of the central temple (Práh Vihar). It is worth noting that even temples belonging to the king's kinsmen were not exempt from such *corvée* (Coedès 1954: 219–223).

The civil obligations of clan temples, if the latter had no immunity, were much more burdensome. We can deduce the extent of these obligations from the Phnom Bakhen inscription, which says that one third of the rice offerings of the clan temple of Rudrásrama went to the commissioner of state revenues. Other inscriptions are also eloquent in this respect. One of them says that a family to which a temple belonged had to fulfil certain civil duties (*thve rajakarya*). Another

inscription stipulates that four *aśramas* belonging to the clan of Yogisvarapandito need not render services to local authorities (*anak ta khlon visaya*), which represented a partial immunity, but were subordinated to the state tax-inspectors (Sedov 1968: 167–169).

The total corpus of the inscriptions does not provide us with exact data on the nature and extent of the duties to which clan temples and peasant communities were liable. Broadly generalizing, state duties fell into two categories, namely, gifts in kind (*cancula*) comprising agricultural and manufactural products of various kinds and the obligation to work on state construction projects or do military service (*karya, nar*). The primary state duty was connected with rice production. Here also, two forms of civil obligation existed; that is, the payment of tax in kind (*sru*) and corvée (*vriha*). Such obligations as supplying butter (*paryyan*), performing labor on the orders of local authorities (*visaya*), doing guard duty (*kandvar cralo*), and working on construction projects (*bhutaśa*) are often mentioned in the inscriptions (Sedov 1968: 149–152). Service at the court and the exercise of lower administrative functions were also compulsory. Special officers called *khlon kamyang pammre* were responsible for the recruitment of young men for court service.

Not only free commoners but also *khnums*, including those owned by clan temples, could be summoned to work for the state or serve in the army. This fact is attested by, among other things the smaller number of men than women occurring on the lists of temple *khnums*. Still, it is evident that the greater part of the state duties rested upon non-temple communities, the temple communities being immune from these and having obligations towards certain central temples. This relationship is expressed with especial clarity in the Pràsāt Kantop inscription (Coedès 1952: 126–132), saying that the lands and *khnums* which *sten* Mahendrani received from his clan (*gotra*) and passed on to his children and grandchildren, so that his progeny might continue to fulfil their civil obligations (*thve vrah rajakarya*) and provide their own livelihood (*aras*), were different from those presented to the Sivalinga temple, the clan temple of the same clan (L.S.), which was responsible to the Sivapada temple, one of the central temples (L.S.).

5. ECONOMY

The labor of free commoners constituted the main source of the social wealth of the Angkorian state, but not the only one. Throughout the whole period the unfree population or *khnums* played a major role in production. Being prisoners-of-war and their descendants, they differed little from slaves legally speaking and occupied an intermediate position between slaves and serfs in terms of the form of their

economic exploitation. *Khnums* possessed no legal personality (though their names are sometimes mentioned among the witnesses in connection with the demarcation of field boundaries (Finot 1928)) nor legal families, and could be sold, hired and inherited. They were exploited mainly through *corvée* in temple fields, where they worked in groups of three to five headed by overseers or *amrahs*. However, they resembled serfs in that they were allowed to own personal effects and even plots of land that might be sold or otherwise transferred together with their tillers. Towards the end of the Angkorian period a tendency towards a narrowing of the difference between common community farmers and *khnums* was noticeable. Gradually a homogeneous stratum of unfree peasants was emerging (Kozlova et al. 1968: 532).

The Angkorian period of Cambodian history was one in which the development of productive forces reached a climax that has not been surpassed till modern times. The blossoming of Angkorian civilization, which left behind numerous testimonies of highly developed techniques of stone construction and the large-scale organization of labor for the building of roads, bridges, water reservoirs, and religious and public works, had as its basis an advanced rice-growing economy of the irrigation type. The productivity of the average agricultural worker was fifty per cent higher than at present. Considering the fact that the personal consumption of the semi-slave laborers was extremely low, and the labor intensiveness per unit of production was less than in later periods (the Khmers of Angkor harvested two or more crops a year), we can understand what was the source of the colossal labor reserves and wealth that brought eternal fame to the rulers of Angkor and the civilization they represented (Sedov 1967: 172, 179).

It can be said that in comparison with later periods, Angkorian society was characterized by a much greater use of simple cooperative labor methods on the societal or the temple level. No division of labor had as yet evolved, and no intensive domestic industry for the market existed. The division of labor was only just making its appearance in autarkic peasant and temple communities. Skilled craftsmen, not engaged in agriculture, served the court as well as their communities. The towns were not centers of trade and industry, but rather administrative and cultural focuses, thriving due to heavy extortions from agriculture and the *corvée* labor of mobilized peasants. Architectural masterpieces were not so much the products of individual masters perfecting their methods and techniques from generation to generation as the results of a 'generalized craftsmanship', i.e., the work of the mass of unskilled villagers torn from their fields and families to toil under the overseers' lashes. This arrangement on the one hand provided for large-scale mobilization of labor, and on the other 'restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of

superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies'. (Marx 1858: 135).

This feature of the relations of production reveals itself in the construction techniques. The basic principle of construction involved the production of coarse stone masonry, with blocks of stone of varying sizes being hewn and trimmed right in their place of installation. This method corresponds best of all with a situation whereby the majority of workers are unskilled laborers, with only small numbers of trained specialists serving as team-leaders and executing the exterior decorations. Being permanent agriculturalists, the workers had no interest in perfecting their building techniques and had no opportunities for such perfecting, since participation in construction work was episodic in their life. The outstanding scholar of Khmer material culture, G. Groslier, noted that Angkor builders did not know what might be called the 'art of construction' (Groslier 1921: 174, 178). In the course of five centuries of active construction the techniques of construction underwent no evolution and mistakes arising from lack of knowledge of the nature of stone as a building material were recurrently repeated.

Monetary dealings were on the low level corresponding with the above-described conditions. Coins were not minted in Cambodia until the sixteenth century (Migot 1960: 251). Gold and silver in different units of weight and valuable objects (vessels, ornaments, etc.) were among the standard articles of exchange in transactions. However, other commodities such as rice, cloth, cattle, butter and *khnums* also played a role. Land was often bought and sold, though not in the form of private property for in most cases the parties to such transactions were groups of kinsmen, and the deals were subject to the strict control of both the communities and the state. The state in particular tried to prevent excessive enrichment of its members. Typical were such formulas as the one in the Pràsà Càr inscription, relating to the sale of part of their lands by the branch of a clan or *varga* of boxers to a high dignitary in exchange for silver, cloth and salt, whereas a declaration was made to the court confirming the transaction to the effect that

all the wealth derived from the *mratan khlon* is necessary to us in order to fulfil our state duties (*thve vrah rajakarya nu gi*) and the rest for our subsistence

(Sedov 1968: 83). Sometimes the sale of land was to some extent symbolic, masking something like a commendation. The sellers preserved their rights to the land, though also certain obligations to the temple which bought the land were imposed upon them (Sedov 1967: 148-49).

6. LAW AND ORDER

As we have already said, the most important function of the Angkorian state system was that of integration. Accordingly, the legal apparatus was one of the most highly developed components of the state structure. Angkorian epigraphs bear no evidence of the existence of any clearly formulated laws or law codes. The king was the highest court of appeal. As Tcheou Ta-kouan attested, 'all differences between the people, however slight, are always placed before the king'. But the king's decrees were not laws in the full sense of the word, and were not binding on his successors, except morally or for religious reasons. There are cases of kings, after their accession to the throne, giving orders for all the ordinances of their predecessor to be committed to writing, and for all those left unexecuted to be given effect.

Besides these collections of ordinances (as a source for case-law), another source of law was provided by the Indian *dharmaśāstras*, which Khmer court officials appealed to in trying cases. The inscriptions reflect a close knowledge of the *dharmaśāstras* on the part of Khmer jurists (Sahai 1970: 87–111). 'The reader of the *dharmaśāstras*' was a permanent member of every court, whose duty it was to find relevant Sanskrit texts. It can be said that India supplied Cambodia with the general ideas regarding the essence of law as well as the organizational aspects of jurisdiction. This explains why the terms in connection with legal processes were usually derived from Sanskrit. But legal cases were as a rule substantially conducted in Old Khmer.

Legal cases reached the king by way of many intermediate stages and authorities. According to the Tūol Prāsāt inscription, appeals to the court were drawn up in the form of Sanskrit verses (Coedès 1942: 97–114). They were first put before the central court of justice (*vrah sabha*) and the inspectors of morals (*gunadosadarsins*), and only after that before the king for his final judgement. From Rajendravarman II's till Djayaviravarman's time the king's tutor (*Vrah Guru*) invariably participated in jurisdiction. Besides the central court, or *vrah sabha* there were local courts in the provinces and villages such as for example, the village court of the Varada *sruk* (Coedès 1954: 292). The main task of the courts, as can be inferred from the inscriptions, consisted in the adjudication of land deals and the demarcation of boundaries. The parties involved paid the members of the court a fee in kind. The function of arbitrator, examiner and bailiff was also fulfilled by special officials, called *khlon samtap* (Sedov 1969), either on a federal or a local level. They were assisted by lower clerks or *ranvan*.

The actual trials presupposed a complicated procedure of interrogation of witnesses either in court or on the spot. The subsequent court

decision was then announced to the people concerned, the elders and village heads being summoned especially for this purpose. All the pertinent documents were kept at the central court of justice, in the so-called hall of *brahmanas* and with the officials of the section of holy ablutions (Sedov 1967: 124–125).

The Angkorian state had no codified system of penalties. The only documents representing any kind of attempt at such codification were Jasovarman's statutes on monasteries, in which a system of fines for offences committed at *asramas* was outlined. A salient feature here is a grading of fines, corresponding with the rank of the offender: nobles had to pay more for the same kind of offence than ordinary people. Other documents emphasized the impartiality of the court and the equality in law of all subjects before the king (Majumdar 1944: 90). Only *brahmanas* enjoyed immunities from certain kinds of punishment (Sahai 1970: 95–96).

The punishments themselves were extremely cruel. In the inscriptions of the tenth century we often come across mentions of floggings. The violation of land rights was punished by mutilation or torture. A group of people guilty of abducting female *khnum* belonging to a temple were sentenced to fifty stick strokes across the face (Coedès 1954: 49–67). Capital punishment took the form of burying the convicted person alive (Tcheou Ta-kouan 1951: 22–23).

As the emphasis fell on the development of internal functions those aspects of statecraft with a more outward orientation were less advanced. S. Sahai notes that the wars conducted by the Angkor Khmers were aimed not at the annexation of neighboring states but at their submission, as had been laid down in the so-called *dharmavijaya* policy (1970: 129–130). That is why the army as an instrument of conquest and occupation was underdeveloped serving instead the purpose of raiding neighbors and repulsing their retaliatory raids. The army had no professional generals. Its leaders—the *senapati* and *mahasenapati*—were the king's relatives (often the king's brothers), high officials and even high-ranking priests. It is worth mentioning that the *vamas*, i.e., privileged clans, did not supply hereditary military officials. Among the *vargas*, i.e., lower ranking clans, we find at least one hereditary military corporation, namely, that of boxers. In times of war an army was raised by conscripting men from the communities as well as *khnums* (Sahai 1970: 135). Peasant draftees received a rudimentary military training. On the bas-reliefs of the Bantay Chmâr temple a scene of a mock lance fight is depicted, the lances being provided with buttons at their points. Khmer soldiers used very primitive weapons, mostly a lance and a shield, while a belt was their only clothing during fighting. In the view of the Chinese, the Khmer army knew neither strategy nor tactics (Tcheou Ta-kouan 1951: 34).

The inscriptions record the recurrent participation of army detachments in internal struggles and conflicts and in the suppression of revolts and mutinies of noblemen. There were times when the army played a key role by taking the side of one or another claimant to the throne. The army was also used for dealing with popular uprisings (e.g., the Bharata Rahu uprising (Coedès 1929: 297–330) and the insurrections in Malyang province in 1182 (Majumdar 1955: 203)). Generals who won a victory over a rebellious nobleman received the land and other property of his clan into their ownership (Coedès 1953: 233). However, military leaders, especially those in charge of provincial military garrisons, could themselves pose a threat to the central authority (Sahai 1970: 151).

Angkorian kings often led their troops personally. The inscriptions reflect their direct involvement in battles. It seems that the practice of a single combat between rival kings in front of their armies was sometimes observed. The outcome of such a combat could be decisive for the entire battle (Sedov 1967: 68–69).

Before the commencement of a war or a campaign sacrifices were made in temples. So the Práh Nòk inscription informs us of the gifts of General Sangrama to Siva on Mount Prithusaïla on the eve of his army launching an attack upon rebel forces. The rich gifts he made consisted of gold, silver and elephants. After winning a victory he again came to the temple with part of his spoils (Barth et al. 1885: 166).

These are the very bare outlines of the structure of the society and state of Angkor. The most characteristic feature of this structure was the recent integration of independent clan communities into a strong, centralized body, together with the preservation of mighty clan traditions and ties. The key position of the temples in this structure is also worth noting. Accordingly we are inclined to consider Angkorian society as representing a definite phase in a developmental process which may be termed 'state-centered'. The phase itself may be named 'communal-theocratic'.

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