

ARCHITECTURE OF THE BUDDHIST WORLD

THE GOLDEN LANDS

CAMBODIA, INDONESIA, LAOS, MYANMAR, THAILAND & VIETNAM

VIKRAM LALL

A GROUNDBREAKING STUDY OF THE BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

ABUNDANT NEW COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHY ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL MODELS

Over the course of its 2,500 year history, Buddhism has found expression in countless architectural forms, from the great monastic complexes of ancient India to the fortified Dzongs of Bhutan, the rock-carved temple grottoes of China, the wooden shrines of Japan, and the colourful Wats of Laos and Thailand. Architecture of the Buddhist World, a projected six-volume series by the noted architect and scholar Vikram Lall, represents a new multi-disciplinary approach to this fascinating subject, showing how Buddhist thought and ritual have interacted with local traditions across the Asian continent to produce masterpieces of religious architecture.

The first volume in the series, The Golden Lands, is devoted to southeast Asia, home to many of the most spectacular Buddhist monuments. Following a general introduction to the early history of Buddhism and its most characteristic architectural forms (the Stupa, the temple, and the monastery), Lall examines the Buddhist architecture of Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. For each country, he provides both a historical overview and case studies of noteworthy structures. Lall's concise and accessible text is abundantly illustrated throughout with new colour photography, as well as original architectural models that make even the most complex structures easily comprehensible.

The monuments that Lall considers in The Golden Lands range from the modest Bupaya Stupa, constructed in Pagan, Myanmar, in the third century, to the vast complex of Borobudur in central Java, the world's largest Buddhist monument; his achievement is to place them all within a single panorama of history, religion, and artistic innovation.



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The architect, Vikram Lall asserts his moral right to be identified as the originator of all the 3-dimensional architectural models in this work.

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ARCHITECTURE OF THE BUDDHIST WORLD

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VIKRAM LALL

Editorial Direction Joan Foo Mahony

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The study of the architecture of the Buddhist world spanned over many years, during which I have had to divide my time between academic research and professional practice. For this, I am grateful to my studio, Lall & Associates, which allowed me to pursue a truly reflective practice, enabling me to bridge the proverbial gap between theory and practice. During my teaching of architectural history and theory over two decades, I have discussed my study with my colleagues and students, and have refined my views on the subject.

The study, demanding the long and tedious process of developing and documenting drawings of the numerous buildings, was made possible by the effort of several architects who have worked in my studio. I remember them all fondly: Bibhu Kalyan Nayak, Anju Bhar, Ashwani Dhiman, Udaideep Jaidli, Jaideep Acharya, Preeti Nair, Himanshu Bansal, Yogesh Sood, Mohsin Khan, Arpit Prakash, Karan Gupta, Aditi Yadav, Mannu Yadav, Suryakant Daksh, Aayushi Rashmi, Pranav Mandal, Karandeep Singh, Farah Wahaj, Mohit Gupta, Manisha Singh, Manisha Jindal, M.Amir Equbal, Pallavi, Daniel Pavanan M., Karishma Rai, Chandan Sharma, Ankita Agarwal, Mahwish Perwez, Satakshi Singh, Aditya Pratap Singh, Mukesh Kumar, Rajdev Mishra, and finally Vasudha Varma who steered the entire process till the very end. I would also like to acknowledge the seminal works of several scholars, listed in the Bibliography whose drawings have served as references for developing my own 3D architectural models and drawings.

This book is a product of a remarkable collaborative effort. I am grateful to Mark Schlossman, Nicolas Cornet, Matthew Niederhauser, Jean Chung, Erich Rechsteiner, Michael Tarr, the various contributing photographers and Natasha O'Connor for bringing to life buildings from obscurity through their skillful photography; the Editors, Joan Foo Mahony, Sudha Swamy, and Vishal Nanda for their efforts to render an architectural study into an engaging story, and to the book designer, Imaya Wong for efficiently capturing all this information with the page limitations of a book. This ambitious project would not have been possible without the constant enthusiasm and encouragement of Joan Foo Mahony. I am grateful to her, as much for supporting the cause of Buddhist architecture, as for her enduring friendship.

I want to remember my family and friends without whom this research would not have been possible. My parents have been a source of silent encouragement while my wife Anne and daughter Tara have patiently accompanied me on numerous research trips. I would particularly like to thank my friends, Vivek Sekhar and Subhash Malik, for their constant support and advice.

Finally, I am indebted to many scholars whose work in the subject has informed my own research.

Vikram Lall

FRONT COVER Viewed through its distinctive brick archway, the massive Dhammayangyi temple, 12th century, Pagan, Myanmar

BACK COVER The muilti-armed Bodhisattva, Quan Am, Tay Phuong temple, 17th century, Thach (near Hanoi), Vietnam

ENDPAPERS Buddha seated on a lotus flower,

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interior of Pahto-thamya temple, c. 11th century, Pagan, Myanmar

To my parents હવ To Anne and Tara

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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

According to Cambodian legend, Jayavaram VII (r. 1181-1218), the Khmer king who built some of the most enduring Buddhist monuments during his long reign, when asked why he ceaselessly erected temple after temple, he replied that he did so because he was 'full of deep sympathy for the good of the world'; that he possible in a spelling which will be easily recognizable for English wanted to 'bestow on mankind the ambrosia of remedies to win them immortality'; and that 'by virtue of these good works would that I might rescue all those who are struggling in the ocean of Lao for temple, but to avoid our readers reading it as a possessive existence'.

About seven years ago, my good friend, Vikram Lall, the well-known international architect and academic shared with me his lifetime of research and study on Buddhist architecture. His profound knowledge and passion shone through. Buddhism already was a subject very dear and close to my heart, and I agreed that it was indeed timely to publish a book covering all aspects of Buddhist architecture - complete with text, original architectural models and new photography. With this book and the other volumes to to the Glossary whenever it is necessary. follow in the series, both Vikram Lall and I hope that Buddhist architecture as a subject will finally come out of the shadows and stake a commanding place of its very own together with Buddhist art, literature and religion.

Vikram Lall has written an extensive scholarly text on the entire scope and span of Buddhist architecture. In addition, he has also provided us with rare and unseen architectural drawings. As the Publisher and Managing Editor responsible for the editorial direction of the book series, I am extremely grateful to Vikram Lall for sharing with the readers his lifetime of knowledge, work spellings, then we do not change them. and meticulous studies on the subject.

In the editing process, we agreed that The Golden Lands and the entire series of books on the Architecture of the Buddhist World would give to not just architects, but to all our readers, enough to have a full appreciation of this immense subject. Vikram Lall has provided us with copious material, and while organizing and editing the flow of the chapters with the unavoidable page limitations, our editorial team has tried not to lose his vision and his scholarship.

To complement the information already in this book, we have a dedicated website www.architectureofbuddhism.com, and we hope that you will be able to thereby enhance your enjoyment of The Golden Lands.

Joan Foo Mahony Publisher & Managing Editor

EDITING NOTES

Foreign names:

With six diverse countries in The Golden Lands, each one with its own distinctive language and cultural heritage, the general rule which we have adopted for the book is to render names whenever speaking readers. For example, in the case of the many non-English names throughout the book, the word 'That' or 'Tat' is pronoun, we have standardized the use of the word to 'Tat' because the words are used interchangeably in Laos as 'Tat' or 'That'.

Places, the names of temples, monuments, and all words in the Glossary are not italicized nor are they bolded; instead they are in their title case. This is to avoid distracting the reader with too many words in italics or bold. We have an extensive Glossary at the back of the book and it will be self-evident for the reader to refer

Measurement units:

In the case of measurement units, we have tried to use the metric system and we have rounded up most of this unless it is strictly necessary for architectural measurements.

We have used the UK English spelling style as far as possible. However, although, we use the UK English style, if certain words are already the more common forms and use '-ize/-izing/-ization'

With respect to dates, this book covers periods before and after the Common Era (CE). We use BCE for BC and CE for AD. All dates in BCE have BCE written consistently for the years of knowledge, understanding and detail on Buddhist architecture that era. However, in the case of post BCE dates, we have used the first year of the second millennium (1001) of the Common Era as the cut-off date. In other words, a temple constructed in 956 CE might, for example, have been destroyed in 1089. The 2nd century before the Common Era will be 2nd century BCE but when referring to the written form of the century after the Common Era, we would only indicate it as 2nd century.

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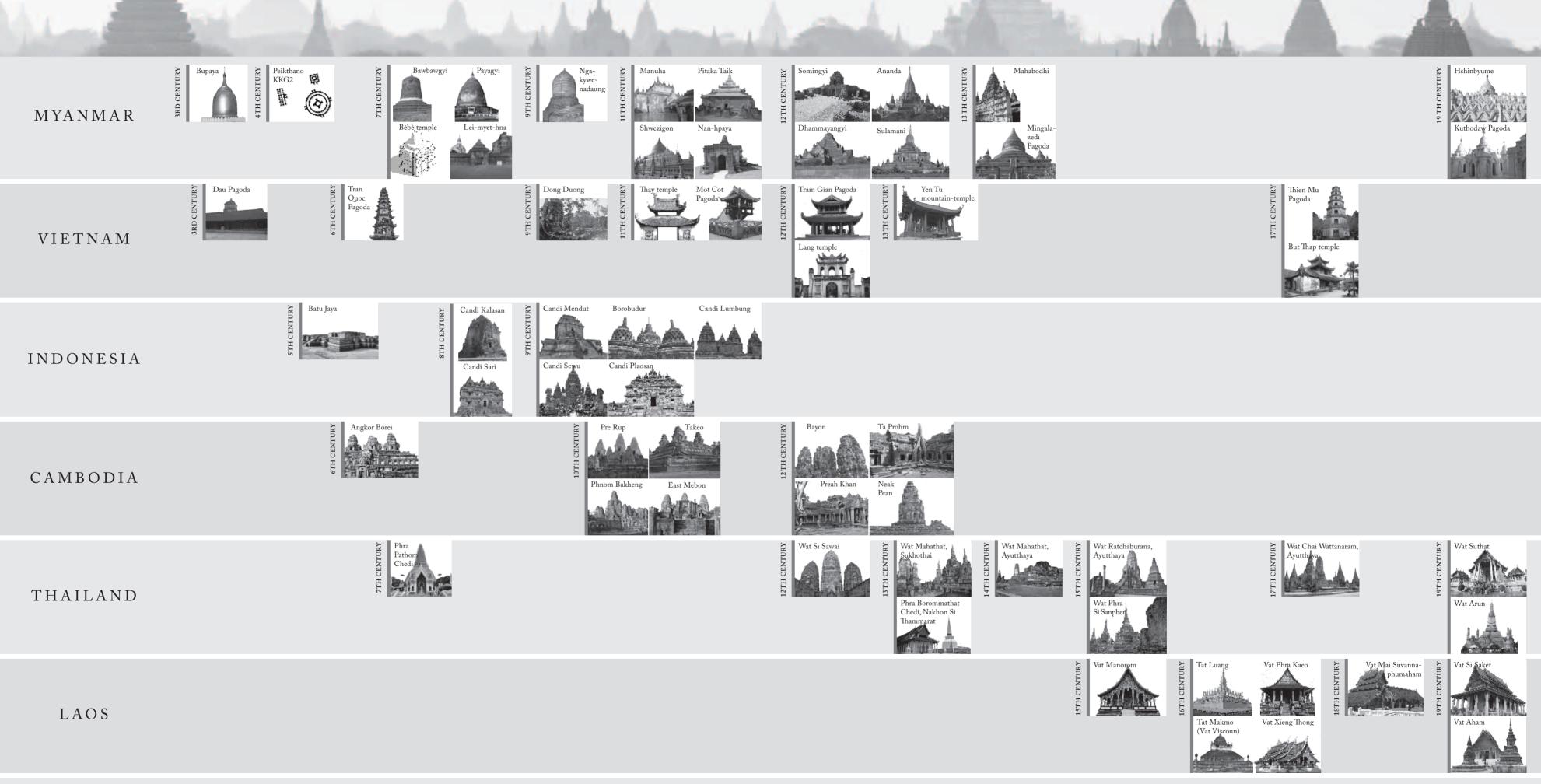
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A CHRONOLOGY OF SELECTED BUDDHIST MONUMENTS



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PREFACE

Commencing with The Golden Lands, the series of books on the Architecture of the Buddhist World is my journey into the history and theory of architecture as a response to Buddhism. Over several years of research and teaching I have made numerous visits to various Buddhist sites, many of which are covered in this book, in order to develop not just a deeper understanding of their architecture, but also of the cultural context of their production. This research has been enriched by the works of many scholars in various disciplines of Buddhist studies; to them, I am greatly indebted. Their works have served as the foundation for my own research; to this, I have added my personal insight and understanding of the subject, hopefully expanding the discourse, and creating a comprehensive study of the architectural diversity of the entire Buddhist world.

WHAT IS THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE BUDDHIST WORLD?

Just as there is no single and comprehensive definition of the words 'architecture' and 'Buddhism', there is no one definitive answer to this question. However, within the broad understanding of both terms, I have attempted to create a complete narrative about Buddhist architecture, spread over time and space. The books in this series attempt to explain the theoretical reasoning, organizing principles and symbolic representation that lie behind the forms and spaces of Buddhist architecture. I have tried to develop the history of Buddhist architecture within a comparative framework, tracing its evolution through the ages across different geographical regions.

The distinction between painting and sculpture, and architecture is sharply defined in Buddhist studies by the abundance of material on the former, and the abject lack of it on the latter. A lot has been written about Buddhism, its philosophy, history and art. Yet, books dedicated exclusively to the architecture associated with Buddhism are few and far between. Architecture of the Buddhist World attempts to fill this gap and provide a fresh insight and approach into the world of Buddhism by focusing exclusively on the architectural forms and spaces associated with the faith. It intends to comprehensively demonstrate the architectural patterns that emerged in response to the philosophy and practice of Buddhism, and their manifestations in diverse regions of the world, evolving over two and a half millennia. As the name suggests, the series covers the history of the entire Buddhist world that includes the countries where Buddhism is or has been a dominant religious and philosophical force. The study includes over twenty countries spread across Asia, east Asia, southeast Asia, central Asia, and finally some parts of the western world. When seen in a global context, the variety of buildings that could be associated with Buddhism are far more diverse in form and style than that which is found in other religious architecture.

The constant rhetoric about what constitutes architecture has been ongoing amongst architects and historians, and is brought into sharp focus particularly when considering Buddhist architecture. Can the Stupa, which does not provide any shelter, be considered as an architectural example, or is it merely a sculptural form? Can rock-cut caves, which are not constructed employing the principles of structural design, be considered architecture? While, in general, there is little ambiguity in differentiating between sculpture and architecture, there are many structures associated with Buddhism, which cannot be clearly categorized as an example of one or the other. And yet, the intentions and designs of these structures have been informed by a combination of functional and symbolic requirements of Buddhism. Numerous such buildings come together to create a complete built environment of Buddhism. Buildings which may appear different and isolated actually bear a close relationship with

OPPOSITE PAGE Ying Xian Pagoda, 1056, the oldest extant wooden Pagoda, Shanxi, China

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each other in Buddhist architecture, and it is only when they are grouped together that each becomes legible and comprehensible. Therefore, a Buddhist structure, whether it is a Stupa or a monastery or a temple, cannot be fully understood in isolation, but only in the larger setting of its built environment. The books hope to articulate a context within which the architectural meaning of different types of buildings associated with Buddhism is best comprehended.

In writing history, the challenge is often to establish accurately the beginnings of architectural patterns. I have adopted the current understanding of Buddhism as having begun in India sometime in the 6th century BCE and have developed the historical narrative from around that time. Early Buddhism borrowed architectural concepts from already existing building traditions and transformed them, creating a set of architectural typologies such as the Stupa, caves, monastery and temple that became closely associated with the faith. Over time, Buddhism spread from its core area in the Gangetic plains of India to other regions, where it once again incorporated the local cultural traditions, resulting in a further transformation of its architectural forms. It is not surprising that the modest Stupa from India could become for example a Pagoda in China, a Tahoto in Japan or a Chedi in Thailand. In the course of its long history, Buddhist architecture constantly combined universal concepts with local building traditions to produce a variety of architectural forms that have become distinctive representations of the faith in those regions. This diversity of architecture produced across different cultural and geographical regions makes it almost impossible to identify a singular pattern of architecture that could be said to represent Buddhist architecture. Indeed, the diversification of the architectural form is one of the unique features of Buddhist architecture, and is best appreciated when viewed in a comparative framework that highlights the themes and variations seen across different regions, and in fact, even within a single cultural or geographical region. Buddhist architecture is manifest in over twenty countries spread all across Asia and, more recently in some parts of the western world too.

Indeed, an important object of my work has been to go beyond the architectural discourses of functional and technical determination, formal characteristics of buildings and their symbolism, and have attempted instead to locate Buddhist architecture as a product of deeper cultural processes. The study explores in particular, the importance of interactions between the local cultural environment with global contexts, patronage, indigenous building traditions and symbolism in the shaping of buildings. The book explores the spaces and forms associated with Buddhism by illustrating its evolution of Buddhist architecture in a universal perspective. Buddhist buildings have been studied in a comparative framework by juxtaposing examples from different regions to understand their development in a broader cultural background. This cross-cultural study of enquiry allows us to understand the constants and the changes in the themes of architecture as a response to Buddhism.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

As specific cultures are not necessarily confined within the borders of a nation state, I have organized the material of my research by cultural landscapes – cultural regions that share similarities of architectural traditions and customs. The six cultural landscapes I have identified are:

The Golden Lands – Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand & Vietnam The Heavenly Lands – China, Japan & Korea
The Ancient Lands – Bangladesh, India, Pakistan & Sri Lanka
The Mountain Lands – The Himalayan Mountains & Plateau
The Hidden Lands – Central Asia, Outer Mongolia & The Silk Route
The Modern Lands – Contemporary Buddhist Architecture

Architecture of the Buddhist World focuses on just the cultural landscape of the Golden Lands, much appreciated for the richness, abundance and diversity of its Buddhist architecture. However,

it is my (undeniably ambitious) intention to cover in the future books of this series, the history of the architecture of the entire Buddhist world, which includes the countries where it is or has been a predominant religious and philosophical force. When seen in a global context, the buildings that could be associated with Buddhism are far more diverse in form and style than those found in other religious architecture. However, due to the inevitable limitations, I have had to be selective about what to include and what not to, while yet attempting to be exhaustive enough to demonstrate the particularity and diversity of the architecture that exists in the Buddhist world. I have striven to go beyond the architectural discourse of technical and functional determinism, formal characteristics of buildings, and their symbolism. I have attempted instead, to locate Buddhist architecture as a product of deeper cultural processes. The study particularly explores the importance of interaction between cultures, patronage, local building traditions, and symbolism in the shaping of buildings. Buddhist buildings have been studied by juxtaposing examples from different locations to better their development. This cross-cultural study of enquiry allows us to understand the constants and the changes in the themes of architecture as a response to Buddhism.

While it has been my intention to maintain a certain consistency of interpretations in the course of presenting a comprehensive view of architectural history spanning over 2500 years and spread across numerous countries, it has not always been easy to do so. Firstly, because the information available about many buildings is limited or even non-existent, collecting and collating the architectural information in such cases became more important than any interpretations. Secondly, wherever it went, Buddhism responded greatly to the local context, and Buddhist architecture in different regions was very much influenced by local traditions, practices and materials. This has made it necessary to interpret or decode the design differently – in some cases it is the technical features that stand out, whilst in others, symbolism was paramount. While there is an attempt to render in a simple fashion the underlying principles and concepts of architecture, care is taken to ensure that they are not diluted in essence.

Hence, each country dealt with in each of the books in the series has been organized into three sections. The first section on Architectural History is the narrative of the collective development of Buddhist architecture in the region; the second section illustrates Architectural Characteristics; and the third section on some Selected Examples is a small selection of significant illustrations of monuments. This allows for the book to be read in more than one way – either as a continuous narrative or as a selective reading of significant buildings.

During my research on the subject over the years, I have had to make exhaustive primary surveys of the buildings in the various cultural landscapes. My findings were combined with existing academic and scholarly works on the subject. In the course of the research, considerable new material such as photographs, drawings, ideograms and sketches was generated. I used the information collected to produce novel parametric three-dimensional models of the monuments through cutting-edge Building Information Modelling software. These unique illustrations of the buildings succinctly explain their architectural principles. The absence of the traditional system of measured drawings of plans, elevations and sections is in no way an attempt to undermine their importance in architectural studies; rather, I have attempted a new paradigm of visual illustration for making legible the complex world of architecture through a method that is both informative as well as accessible. The large body of drawings that has been developed over many years has been employed, in conjunction with photographs, to bring to stunning life the world of Buddhist architecture.

I hope that the book can therefore be enjoyed – as much by reading it, as by looking at the visual material.

PAGES 12-1:

Songgwangsa temple-monastery, one of the three jewels of Korean Buddhism, c. 9th century, Mount Songgwangsa, Jogyesan Provincial Park, South Korea

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THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The foundations of Buddhist architecture were laid in India, and the functional, technical, and symbolic requirements of its built environment were defined during the first few centuries of the development of the faith. The spread of Buddhist philosophy across the world and its transformation into distant cultural and social contexts created distinct vocabularies of design of buildings and spaces. The historical process of expansion spanned over 2500 years and covered vast regions of northwest India, southeast Asia, central Asia and east Asia.

The transmission of the architectural notions of the faith and the encounter with local traditions led to a complex process of interaction between imported concepts and indigenous traditions. Never aggressive as a religion, Buddhism was tolerant of prevalent religious beliefs and practices in the regions it spread to, and therefore co-existed rather than contested with local traditions. The architecture of Buddhism that emerged in each of these regions therefore constantly created novel design concepts through a process of juxtaposition and transformation of exogenous ideas with local traditions. This has led to the development of a diverse vocabulary of architectural forms that can be seen throughout the Buddhist world.

This diversity of architectural designs makes it difficult to identify a single evolutionary idea of Buddhist architecture that is universal to all the regions. And yet, there are universal concepts that govern Buddhist architecture which are embedded in diverse architectural forms that appear across the Buddhist world. Buddhist architecture therefore has to be understood as a flexible system where universal governing principles are constantly manifested into novel architectural forms.

ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGIES

Much of Buddhist architecture can be classified into three fundamental architectural typologies – the Stupa, the Caitya-griha (temple) and the Vihara (monastery). These can be said to correspond with the three jewels of Buddhism, which are the Buddha, the Dhamma (the teachings of the Buddha), and the Sangha (the monastic or spiritual community). The Stupa, can be understood as an ideation form that represented the Buddha; the Caitya-griha, as the place where the Dhamma is practised; and the Vihara, as the abode of the Sangha. Some of the fundamental principles and governing concepts that informed the design of these architectural forms, patterns and processes of the Buddhist world are described below.

THE BUDDHA AND THE STUPA

REPRESENTING THE BUDDHA - FROM ICONOGRAPHY TO ARCHITECTURE

For the early believers and followers, the Buddha himself was the symbol and embodiment of the faith. The monastic fraternity followed the example of the Buddha, living their lives in contemplative retreat and poverty. The ascetic life of the Buddhist monk as a wandering preacher did not allow much scope for buildings and architecture, and during his lifetime, the Buddha discouraged the creation of any images of himself for worship.

However, after his demise or Mahaparinibbana, the Buddha was deified by the lay worshippers, firstly in an aniconic form using established symbols, which led to the development of a complex Buddhist iconography – a tradition that, much later, was replaced by the iconic image of the Buddha.

Buddhist iconography has been studied and elaborated on by many scholars, and a detailed explanation is beyond the scope of this book. I will only touch upon some symbols which represent certain pivotal events of the Buddha's life – birth, enlightenment, preaching the first sermon, and death.

Birth – the lotus and the elephant:

The lotus is a pervasive Indian symbol of spiritual growth, since the lotus seed germinates at the (muddy) bottom of a pond, but as the stem grows, it rises above the surface of the water, symbolizing transcendence of earthly circumstances.

The elephant is connected with the story of the Buddha's birth¹, according to which, his mother, an Indian queen, became pregnant when a white elephant appeared in her dream.

Enlightenment – the Bodhi tree:

The Bodhi tree symbolizes enlightenment. It was under a Bodhi (Ficus Religiosa) tree that the Buddha sat down to meditate and was enlightened in Bodhgaya (in present-day state of Bihar in India). Hence, Bodhi saplings were planted all over the Buddhist world, and the Bodhi tree venerated.

Preaching the first sermon – the wheel:

The eight-spoked wheel (Dharmacakra in Sanskrit and Dhammacakka in Pali, meaning the Wheel of Truth) symbolizes the Buddha's teachings. His first sermon at Sarnath, near modern Varanasi, represents the 'first turning of the wheel', the third great event of the historical Buddha's life when the Buddha preached his first sermon which included the Four Noble Truths. The eight spokes correspond to the Noble Eight Fold Path.

Mahaparinirvana – the Stupa:

The Stupa symbolizes the Buddha's passing, and indeed the Buddha himself. At the age of eighty, the Buddha's life came to an end and he attained Mahaparinibbana. In anticipation of this, he had directed his followers to cremate his body and enshrine his ashes in a Stupa, a tradition of relic worship that had already existed in ancient India. Upon the Buddha's demise, his cremated remains were divided into several parts, and enshrined within earthen mounds or 'tumuli', serving as memorials. The word Stupa is derived from the Pali 'thupa' having its roots in the word 'stup' meaning 'to heap'. The Stupa thus became the most dominant form of the aniconic representation of the master.

Stupas in Buddhist architecture have been grouped into different categories according to the relic object that it contains or the purpose that it serves – the relic or Saririka Stupas contained the bodily relics of the Buddha; the commemorative or Paribogika Stupas enshrined relics that were utilitarian objects used or touched by the Buddha; the symbolic or Uddesika Stupas contained objects sacred to Buddhism such as commemorative objects or objects that served as reminders of the revered person; and the Votive Stupas were those constructed to gain merit (spiritual benefits).

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THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 1

^{1.} The account of the Buddha's birth highlights the miraculous elements — the future Buddha emerging from his mother's side, rather than via a normal delivery; and soon after birth, the Buddha taking seven steps toward the east and announcing that he would be enlightened in that lifetime.



The Stupa with all its variations has become the most identifiable, and undeniably the most important, architectural monument of the Buddhist world. The early form of the Stupa comprised an egg-shaped mound or dome known as Anda, raised over a square base known as the Medhi. The structure was solid and completely filled in, and in the case of Saririka Stupas, enshrined a relic chamber housing sacred relics. The Anda or mound was topped with an umbrella form known as Chattravali. A space for circumambulation known as Pradakshina was defined around the dome by a stone balustrade known as Vedika. Since then, this basic form has been transformed into a variety of shapes in different regions.

It went through a process of elongation by raising the hemispherical form over a drum as in the Dhamekh Stupa at Sarnath in India and the early Stupas of the Pyus in Myanmar. In the attempt to create a sense of verticality, the umbrella was elongated with an increased number of discs, diminishing in size going up, in a conical formation. The simple square base was gradually transformed into a multi-tiered step-pyramid, with terraces at each level. The plan of the terraces too, changed from a square to a more complex geometry of a redented square, the rising tiers creating a circumambulation path. The base of the Stupa went from being a low structure to an elongated cylindrical form, and eventually became the most visible feature of the Stupa, dominating the dome. In some variations, the dome was dispensed with altogether. With the development of the Buddha image, projecting niches were added to the external face of the base of the Stupa to create spaces for the installing of sculptural images of the Buddha.

Buddhism arrived in Sri Lanka in the third century BCE and the early architectural form of the Stupa was transferred to the island where it is known as the Dagoba. The word Dagoba is derived from the words 'dhatu' meaning substance or relic, and 'garbha' meaning womb. The popularity of relic worship led to the construction of monumental Dagobas, as seen at the monasteries of Anuradhapura. According to ancient Buddhist literature, there are six types of Dagobas according to the architectural form of the dome: pot-shaped, bell-shaped, bubble-shaped, heap-of-paddy-shaped, lotus-shaped and Amla-shaped (Amla being the Indian gooseberry). A distinct form that developed in Sri Lanka was that of the Dagoba enclosed within a large dome, known as Vatadage. The roof of the Vatadage was supported by columns arranged concentrically around the Dagoba, their heights descending outwards. The architecture of the Vatadage recalls the designs of the early Stupa shrines of India at Bhairat and Junnar. Many Vatadages were constructed in Sri Lanka - one of the most important being the Thuparama, which houses the collarbone relic of the Buddha.

When the practice of worship of relics was transferred eastwards to China, the Stupa that emerged there was in the form of a tower or Pagoda, with an emphasis on verticality, and the complete elimination of the Anda or dome. The BELOW

Dhamekh Stupa, c. 500 BCE, Sarnath, India

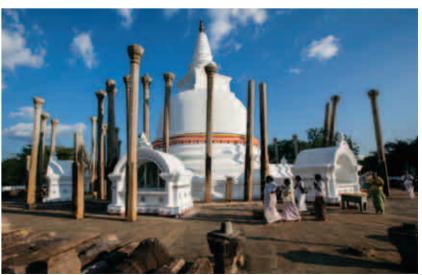
BELOW (BOTTOM)

The ancient Thuparama Vatadage showing concentric columns with heights descending outwards, c. 250–210 BCE, Anuradhapura, Sri

OPPOSITE PAGE

Ruwanwelisaya Dagoba, one of the world's tallest extant Stupas, 140 BCE, Anuradhapura, Sri







ABOVE Big Wild Goose Pagoda, 652 CE, Xian, Shanxi, China

Chinese combined the principal features of the Han tower and the Indian Stupa to produce the architectural typology of the Chinese Pagoda, which was called Ta. In Korea, it was Tap, and in Japan, To. The connection with the ideas of relic worship of the Stupa is reflected in the etymology of the words Ta, Tap and To, which can be traced to the Pali word Thupa. The term Pagoda seems to be adopted from the Portuguese word 'pagode' that is derived from the Persian term 'butkada' or from Tamil, 'pagavadi'. The Pagoda, with its multi-storied tower form, overhanging roofs, and rising spires, is perhaps the most visible symbol of Buddhism in the Sinosphere.

Stupas of diverse architectural forms were constructed in southeast Asia. They were known by different names in the different regions – Zedi in Myanmar, Tat in Laos, Chedi in Thailand and Candi in Indonesia. The first set of extant remains of architectural monuments in durable material begin to appear in the mid-7th century brick Stupas of the ancient Pyu city of Sri Ksetra in Myanmar and the stone Stupa-temples or Candi of the Dieng Plateau in Java.

The term 'Candi' in Indonesia could denote a Stupa as well as a temple. It represents the typology of Javanese architecture that was to form the basis for the design of various Buddhist Stupatemples during the flowering of Mahayana Buddhism on the island in the succeeding centuries. The function of the Candi has been associated with both the funerary practices of ancient Javanese societies and a shrine or temple of Indic origin, and it combines the two notions to establish the prototype of distinctly Javanese architecture. The modest Candi eventually evolved into the monumental form of Borobudur from the 8th to the 9th centuries as the grand finale of the development of Buddhist architecture in the region. The architectural scheme of Borobudur embodies multiple layers of meaning associated with Buddhist cosmology and proselytizing, and the Stupa rising through the terraced formation represents the mythical Mount Meru or Mount Sumeru, the sacred mountain and centre of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual universe in Buddhist and Hindu cosmology. The enigmatic character of the monument has made it difficult to categorize it, and it is perceived both as a temple and as a Stupa.

In Myanmar, the remains of early Stupas in Pagan, the Bupaya and the Nga-kywe-nadaung show the Pyu influence in their bulbous forms, the rising domes recalling the cylindrical profile of the Stupas at Sri Ksetra. A typical Stupa at Pagan comprised a square pyramidal base of receding terraces surmounted by a bulbous dome on top, with each level accessed by staircases provided in the middle of each face. The walls of the terraces are lined with bas-reliefs of Buddhist Jatakas serving the dual purpose narrating the Buddhist faith while performing the ritual circumambulation, or Pradakshina. The profile of the dome of the Stupa evolved from the convex and vertical shape to an increasingly bell-shaped concave profile. The transformation of the early Pyu forms into the distinct form of Pagan Stupas is seen in the Shwesandaw Stupa. In place of an Indian Harmika, the bell-shaped dome is crowned by a distinct Burmese finial called the 'hti', formed like a tiered umbrella made of metal.

The original Stupas in Thailand at the beginning of the Buddhist architectural traditions there were based on Sri Lankan models. As in other regions, these underwent changes over time. The ideation form of the Stupa or Chedi that was adopted in the beginning of the Buddhist architectural traditions of the Thais, was of Sinhalese extraction. The design of the Chedi consists of a bellshaped dome that rests on a tiered base and is capped with a cuboid structure from which rises the conical spire in diminishing tiers. In Thailand, the three tiers of the base specifically represent the notions of the three worlds² as mentioned in the Buddhist texts of the Trai Phum Phra Ruang. The form of the Chedi also underwent various modifications to its general architectural theme according to its regional and historical context. The form of the Chedi during the Sukhothai period remain faithful to the Sinhalese typology and, among others, this can be seen in the design of Wat Mahathat in Nakhon Sri Thammarat whose large domed form follows the design of the Ruvanweli Dagoba at Annuradhapura in Sri Lanka. But, a distinct variant of the form emerged in Ayutthaya at the Wat Phra Si Sanphet where, to the main body of the Chedi, are attached porches in the cardinal directions creating small accessible chambers. A very different conception of the Chedi where the top of the dome is entirely missing, is seen in the form of Wat Kukut in Lamphun, a form again derived from Mon and Sinhalese influences.

THE RELIC CULT AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SACRED GEOGRAPHY

The significance of the Stupa as an ideation symbol and the spread of the practice of relic worship mapped a sacred geography of Buddhism soon after the Buddha's demise. In the Buddha's instruction to his disciple Ananda, upon the demise of the Buddha in Kusinara, his cremated remains were divided into eight parts and distributed to each of the eight kings in whose territories the Buddha had lived. These regional kingdoms were Magadha, Licchavis of Vaisali, the Sakyas of Kapilvastu, the Koliyas of Ramagrama, the Bulayas of Allakakappa, the Brahmin of Vethadvipa and the Mallas of Pava and Kusinara. These remains were then enshrined within Stupas constructed of earthen mounds in each of the eight regions. A further two Stupas were erected over the urn that had contained the remains and the embers. The Buddha had also instructed two other disciples, Trapusa and Bhallika to build a Stupa over his hair and nail relics given to them during his lifetime. Canonical reference to the veneration of relics is found in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta³, which is considered as part of the word of the Buddha, and therefore carries the full weight of his authority.

The relics of the Buddha are regarded as not merely symbolic representations, but as the living presence of the Buddha himself. Bodily relics known as Saririka Dhatu are believed to have

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^{2.} The three worlds or three realms in Buddhist cosmology are the Tri-loka which consist of Arupaloka, Kamaloka and Rupaloka. See Glossary for further decription.

^{3.} According to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta – the biographical account of the last few weeks of the Buddha, comprising important instructions by the Buddha to Ananda detailing the process of cremation and enshrining his remains in a Stupa at the intersection of the four great roads.

living energy because they contain his elemental essence. Referred to as Saririka Dhatu, they mean the 'essence of the Buddha's body.' The building of a Stupa and enshrining the relics of the Buddha is therefore understood to be an act of 'place making' of living religious significance. The dispensation of Stupas is therefore the act of creation and development of a sacred geography embedded with the presence of the Buddha. The practice of veneration of Stupas, although having its roots in earlier Indian traditions, led to the development of the Buddhist relic-cult where the architectural form of the Stupa became the single most important symbol of the Buddhist faith. The continuing presence of the Buddha after his demise was perpetuated by this relic-cult.

Two hundred years later the Mauryan emperor Asoka (r. 270–232 BCE) excavated the eight Stupas and further redistributed the relics into 84,000 Stupas across the Buddhist world. This paradigmatic action became the first of its kind, where the spread of Buddhism became associated with the act of redistribution of relics from old Stupas across an expanding Buddhist world. The Stupa and the Stupa relic-cult, therefore, played a seminal role both in popularizing the faith as well as spreading the Dhamma. With ever-increasing multiplication and dispensation of the Buddha's relics, arose the inevitable concern about their authenticity; this resulted in the management of the relics being confined to the monastic community, and the building of Stupas within the settlements of the monks or monasteries. The creation and dispensation of Stupas led to the development of a sacred geography embedded with the presence of the Buddha.

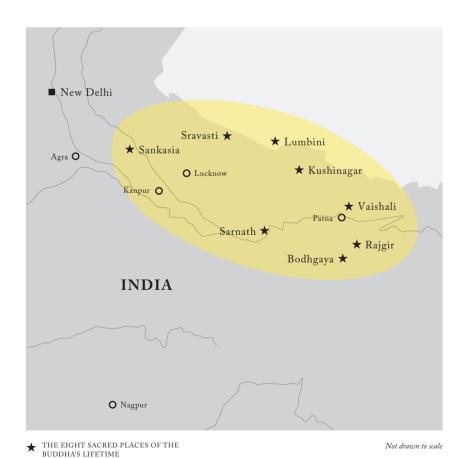
The Buddha travelled to many places, but four places, all lying in the Gangetic basin of India, are of special significance on account of being associated with the key events of his life. They are: Lumbini,

the birth place of Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha; Bodhgaya, the place where Buddha achieved Nibbana, or enlightenment; Sarnath, the place of his first sermon or 'turning of the wheel of Dhamma'; and Kushinagar, the place of his demise, or Parinibbana. When his disciple Ananda expressed concern that after the master's demise, his disciples would not have the benefit of associating with the Bhikkus who came to see him, the Buddha mentioned that these four places should be revered and visited.⁴

It was their relevance to his life, as well as the canonical authorization from the Buddha himself, that led to these four places becoming the first set of pilgrimage destinations for the Buddhist world. Besides these four sacred places, there are four others connected with miracles in the Buddha's life that are also important: Sravasti, where his remarkable feats won over the followers of the six heretical philosophers; Rajgir, where he tamed the elephant, Nalagiri, which was set upon him by his jealous cousin, Devadutta; Vaishali, where he was offered honey by a monkey; and Sankasia, where he descended from the Trayastrimsa heaven.

These eight sites known in Pali as Atthamahathanani, or Eight Sacred Places comprise the primary centres of pilgrimage of the Buddhist world.

Detailed map showing Buddhism's Eight Sacred Places of pilgrimage in India.



4. The Mahaparinibbana Sutta.

DIVINE KINGSHIP AND THE LAND OF THE BUDDHA: THE BUDDHAKSETRA

Since the early history of Buddhism, there has been a symbiotic relationship between the ruling elite and the Buddhist Sangha. This established a mutually supportive system where the patronage of Buddhism was reciprocated by appropriating spiritual supremacy to the ruling elite, and legitimizing their rule. This was exemplified by the reign of the Indian emperor Asoka of the Mauryan dynasty two centuries after the demise of the Buddha, and became a model that was emulated across the Buddhist world. In Buddhist history, Asoka is portrayed as a universal ruler or Cakravartin, who is the embodiment of the Dhamma and the ten royal virtues or Dasavidharajadhamma, namely, Dana (charity), Sila (morality), Pariccaga (altruism), Ajjava (honesty), Maddava (gentleness), Tapa (self-control), Akkodha (non-anger), Avihimsa (non-violence), Khanti (forbearance) and Avirodhana (uprightness).

Asoka (r. 270–232 BCE) was the son of King Bimbisara of the Mauryan dynasty and ruled from the city of Pataliputra (site of present-day Patna) in the Gangetic plains of north India. After a violent war with neighbouring Kalinga (in present-day Orissa state), he was filled with remorse at the death and destruction caused by war and converted to Buddhism. His conversion and patronage of Buddhism marked an important turning point for the expansion of Buddhism across south Asia and northeast Asia. His conversion to Buddhism was followed by the act of distribution of the Buddha's relics collected from the eight Stupas. As a consequence of this act, Asoka, so far referred to as Candasok, or 'Asoka the Fierce', was henceforth known as Dhammasok, or 'Asoka, the Saviour of the Dhamma'. For the rest of his life Asoka remained a devoted patron of the religion and did much to spread the Dhamma - through architectural projects such as construction of Stupas, pillars and edicts, thereon and elsewhere, across his kingdom. He sent missionaries beyond his kingdom, notably his son, Mahinda and daughter, Sanghamitta to Sri Lanka, and organized the third council of Buddhism to reform the Sangha. Asoka, thus, has come to be known as the model monarch, representing the historical embodiment of the first Cakravartin in the service of Buddhism.

By emulating him, various Buddhist kings in different regions legitimized their reign in their location. All these kingdoms that were governed through the rule of divine kingship attempted to define a sacred and idealized land, the Buddhaksetra, where the ideals of the Buddhist faith could be upheld. The urban schemes and architecture of these lands of the Buddhaksetra were designed in different ways to embody the principles of the faith.



Bas-reliefs panel at the Shanti Stupa, 1972, Dhauligiri, Odisha, India, showing emperor Asoka lamenting the corpses on the battle field where the Kalinga war was fought.

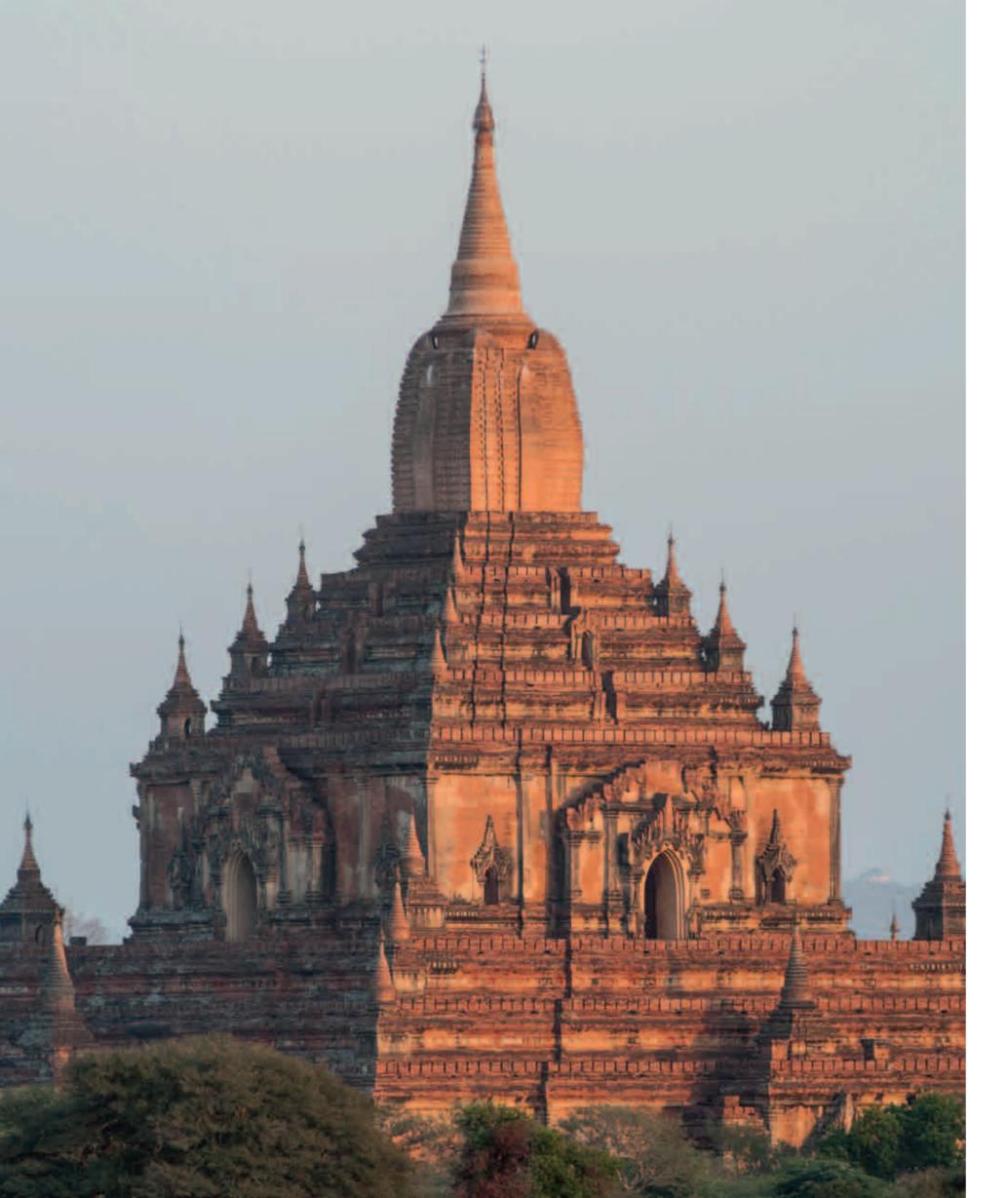
BELOW (BOTTOM)

Bas-reliefs panel at Bayon, late 12th or early 13th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia, showing the divine king with his subjects.





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THE DHAMMA AND THE CAITYA-GRIHA

WORSHIP OF A SYMBOLIC IMAGE AND CREATION OF THE BUDDHA IMAGE

A turning point in the history of Buddhism was the creation of the Buddha's image in the 1st century. No longer was it necessary to represent the Buddha through aniconic symbols such as the lotus, Bodhi tree, wheel and Stupa; the Buddha could now be portrayed in human form. This development of the iconic image of the Buddha, and the practice of rituals led to the conception of temples, known as 'Caitya-grihas'. Caitya-grihas housed the Buddha image and provided the assembly with shelter. Originating from India, the architecture of these early Caitya-grihas, and even Buddhist temples today, inevitably share the vocabulary of design with the Hindu and Jain temples of India. In their plan, form and arrangement, Buddhist temples are rarely distinguishable from Hindu and Jain temples. What sets them apart, however, is their particular iconography.

The earliest architectural forms manifesting worship in Buddhism were the shrines enclosing Bodhi trees, dating to the period 175 BCE to 225 CE. These were designed for the veneration of the Bodhi tree that served as an iconic symbol for the Buddha. Also worshipped in the Bodhigara was the Vajrasana, the stone seat that the Buddha was supposed to have been sitting on when he received enlightenment. Though no original structures of Bodhigaras have survived, their architecture can be interpreted from the numerous bas-reliefs vividly depicting the architectural form and rituals of tree worship. Eleven bas-reliefs from Bharut, Mathura, Sanchi and Amravati in India have been identified that reveal the various architectural designs of the Bodhigaras. All of them belong to the period of four centuries between 175 BCE to 225 CE and have varied plans – circular, square, apsidal and octagonal.⁵ The consecration of the tree and the Vajrasana was achieved by defining a sacred enclosed space called the 'Bodhi-manda', or wisdom space, by an encircling wooden gallery. The enclosed space was open to the sky and along with the encircling wooden gallery, formed the hypaetheral temple. The gallery was raised on wooden pillars, which comprised an aerial corridor for circumambulation, or Pradakshina. The structure was constructed of wood and was designed to support the weight of several persons. The gallery was designed to serve the rituals⁶ and ceremonies, called the 'Bodhi-maha', associated with the worship of the Bodhi tree and the Vajrasana.

The spread of Buddhism by the Emperor Asoka was marked by the planting of saplings of the Bodhi tree across the Indic region, and it can be safely presumed that many Bodhigaras would

have been erected until, with the popularity of the iconic image of Buddha, emerged the design of the Caitya-grihas or temples, with the sanctum sanctorum housing the image of the Buddha.

One of the earliest surviving examples of Buddhist temple architecture is the Temple No. 17 at Sanchi in India, built in the Gupta period (320-550 CE). This temple comprises a square sanctuary with a front porch of four pillars. A single opening leads into the sanctuary from the porch, and the whole form is covered with a flat roof. This architectural arrangement of a cuboid form with a front porch is regarded as the generic model from which developed more elaborate temple designs.

Temple No. 17, built in the Gupta period, 320-550 CE, Sanchi, India

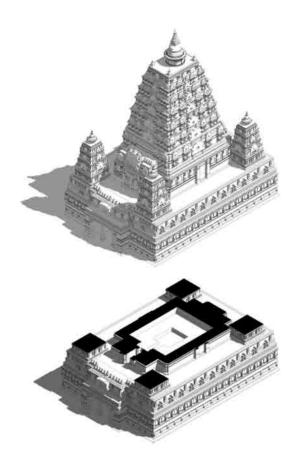
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The two storied Sulamani temple complex, with its elaborate brickwork, 12th century, Pagan,

5. The nature and use of such structures have been described in various texts such as the Ashokavandana, Diryadana, Mahavamsa and the Jatakas which establish the relationship between architectural forms and functions of

6. The rituals comprised pouring water from the raised platform, offering flowers and garlands, and prayers within enclosed space.





A significant development that soon followed was the addition of a pyramidal tower, the Shikhara, over the Cella or inner chamber of the temple. The temple attached to the Monastery No. 45 at Sanchi, built in the 10th century, is an example of such a temple. A similar one is seen at Ratnagiri, where the roof is crowned with a typical Shikhara.

The pyramidal tower, the Shikhara over the Cella housing the image, was further elaborated into a Pancayatana-type temple with the addition of four additional complementary towers making a total of five towers known as the Pancayatana. The oldest remains in India of this typology are seen in Nalanda and Sarnath, dating from the 4th century. A century later, the Mahabodhi temple was constructed at Bodhgaya with a single tower, but later, four more were added to the central tower displaying the formal architectural qualities of the Pancayatana-type temple. Since it was considered immensely sacred in India, attempts were made to build exact copies of this architectural form in other Buddhist regions of Thailand, Myanmar and China. The five-pyramid temple form was further transformed when it was exported into the cultural landscapes of southeast Asia. Candi Sewu (9th century) in Indonesia employs the geometry of the Mandala to distribute 249 temples around a central temple having a Pancayatana architectural form. The Bayon temple (12th century) in Cambodia elaborates the Pancayatana form on a Mandala plan through a stepped-terrace formation commonly referred to as a mountain-temple. The idea of the terraced mountain-temple was also employed in India at Vikramshila, Lauriya Nandangarh in Bihar, and at the Sompura temple in Bangladesh.

ABOVE

Architectural model of the pyramidal tower, Mahabodhi temple, 7th century, Bodhgaya,

BELOW

Architectural model of one of the first fortress monasteries, Simtokha Dzong, 16th century, Thimphu, Bhutan

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The monumental mountaintemple complex of Borobudur, 9th

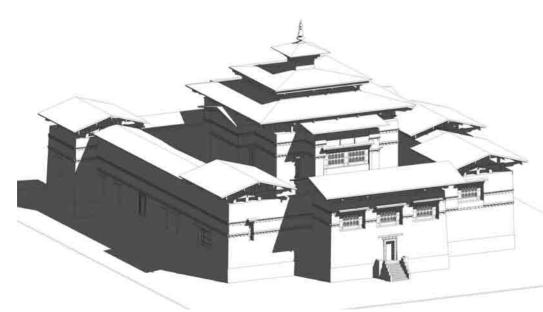
century, central Java, Indonesia

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The mountain-temple of Bayon,
12th century, Siem Reap,
Cambodia

Over time, temple complexes grew in size as their monumental scale was conceived to represent the idea of the cosmic mountain, Mount Sumeru.

Numerous types of temples or Caitya-grihas were conceived in different cultural regions reflecting the diverse range of design ideas – in the Indic region they were built of stone or brick with a vertically rising spire; in southeast Asia, they emerged as monumental mountain-type temples; in the Sinosphere regions, they were derived from the secular wooden architecture of the region, and are developed along the horizontal plane; and in the mountain regions of the Himalayas, they adopted characteristics of fortified architecture as can be seen in the Dzongs of Bhutan.









THE SANGHA AND THE VIHARA

TEMPORARY STRUCTURES OF THE ANCHORITE TRADITIONS - AVASAS AND PERMANENT STRUCTURES DONATED BY FOLLOWERS - ARAMAS

Buddhist architecture is extensive and widespread today. Yet, it is ironic that, in his lifetime, the Buddha forbade the construction of permanent buildings for the Sangha or monastic fraternity. The early Sangha were a community of wandering monks with no permanent dwellings, and spent the day collecting alms, retiring to temporary shelters at night⁷. However, during the monsoon season, the monks also withdrew into forests and caves to rest from their wanderings in a defined place. This was the practice of the annual rain retreat known as Vassavasa. The act of defining some habitable space during the Vassavasa, even though regarded as temporary could thus be considered as the first act of architecture in the Buddhist world, and the precursor of the Buddhist architecture that was to emerge later. Buddhist records have defined two distinct architectural typologies manifesting the requirements of the Vassavasa - Avasas and Aramas.

Avasas were temporary structures erected by the monastic community and were usually of perishable material such as bamboo and thatch. It is believed that the Buddha spent many monsoon Vassavasas in temporary shelters such as the bamboo forests in Rajgir, known as Venuvana, at Ambapalivana in Vaishali, and at Sravasti.

The permanent structures of the Aramas on the other hand, were buildings built by followers of the faith as donations to the Sangha, an act of gaining merit, and these were constructed of more durable materials and can be considered the first structural monasteries. There are records of the Buddha accepting donations of monastic buildings for the Sangha at Sravasti, Kaushambi, and Rajgir. Buddhist records mention that a follower, Ananthapindika, built a monastery complete in every respect, with various types of spaces designed for different activities at Sravasti, ranging from dwelling rooms, store houses, cloisters, bathing places, pavilions and so on.8 Ghosita, a banker at Kaushambi, is supposed to have built a monastery identified as 'Ghositarama'. At Rajgir, the Buddha is believed to have accepted the donation of a structure to be used for the Sangha from a leading physician of the city, Jivaka, which is known as 'Jivakarama'. The ruins of Jivakarama reveal the architecture of the oldest Arama that was built to be used as congregation space, and designed as a large pillar-less rectangular hall with semi-circular ends. The elliptical hall typology was also copied in rock-cut caves, and can be seen in the Barabar and Nagarjuni caves near Gaya

district in Bihar, India. The caves were excavated in the form of rectangular halls with Apses at the ends. The roof was shaped as a vault and an entrance was provided at the face of the longer side. Besides the elliptical plan buildings, remains of early Buddhist buildings having circular and quadrilateral plans have also been found, both in rock-cut caves, as well as structural forms, such as the Junnar caves in Maharashtra, India, and the Bairat temple in Rajasthan, India. The practice of periodic retreats gave rise to the notion of fixed habitats for monastic communities, and articulated the spatial requirements for the design of later monasteries as the Sangha transformed from following Cenobitic traditions.

Ruins of Jivakarama monastery, 4th-3rd century BCE, Rajgir,

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The fortress type monastery of Rinpung Dzong, 17th century,

7. They were referred to as the 'Catudisa Bhikkhu Sangha', which literally meant 'monks of the four quarters' and their pattern of living is described in early Buddhist records as: "... They stayed here and there: in forest glades, at the roots of trees, on hillsides, in glens, in mountain caves, in cemeteries, in the open air, on heaps of straw...'

8. The names of these spaces are: dwelling rooms (Vihara), cells (Parivena), gate chambers (Kothaka), service halls (Upatthanasala), halls with fire places (Aggisala), store houses (Kappiyakuti), closets (Caccakuti), cloisters (Caricama), rooms for walking (Cankamasala), wells (Udapana), sheds for wells (Udapanasala), bathing places (Jantaghara), bathrooms (Jantagharasala), tanks (Pokkharani), and pavilions (Mandapa).



Some time after the demise of the Buddha, the Sangha changed from a community of wandering monks to a more settled community precipitating the development of the Buddhist monastery known as Lenas or Viharas. This development of a defined community from a sporadic coming together of monks created specific temporal and spatial requirements. From a temporary retreat for monks living in communal spaces, the monk habitat changed into permanent buildings for monks living in individual spaces. The habitation now had to be designed for more complex requirements that were both secular as well as ritualistic. The requirements of permanent living included spaces for individuals for isolated meditation; for communal activities to accommodate the congregation and ordination ceremonies; for elaborate religious practices, such as training (Nissaya), debates (Abhidhamma), and rites (Upposatha, Parivena and Kathina). The ancient Buddhist texts, the Cullavagga and the Mahavagga record details of various buildings built during the early phase of Buddhism in India. There are five types of buildings listed - Vihara, Addhayoga, Pasada, Hammiya and Guha, of which only the Vihara and the Guha have survived today. The Vihara, or monastery, refers to structural buildings and the Guha stands for rock-cut caves. Numerous architectural remains consisting of the Asokan pillars, edicts, apsidal temples and Stupas have been discovered among the remains of ancient Buddhist sites at Taxila, Sirkap and Sirsukh. Over time, numerous shrines, Stupas and Viharas were constructed around it in a random manner serving as an early example of monastic settlements having an organic pattern of planning and design.

Ruins of monastery 6, c. 5th century, Nalanda University, Bihar,

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM) Monks' quarters and interior courtyard of a typical Dzong fortress, Trongsa Dzong, 16th century, Trongsa, Bhutan

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9. This was further expanded to a larger academic tradition that followed a wider pursuit of knowledge. New disciplines were added as essential bodies of knowledge to study, such as the five Vidyas (knowledge) -Sabdavidya (grammar & philosophy), Cikitsavidya (medicine), Heluvidya (logic), Silpasthanavidya (fine arts), and Adhyatmavidya (metaphysics).

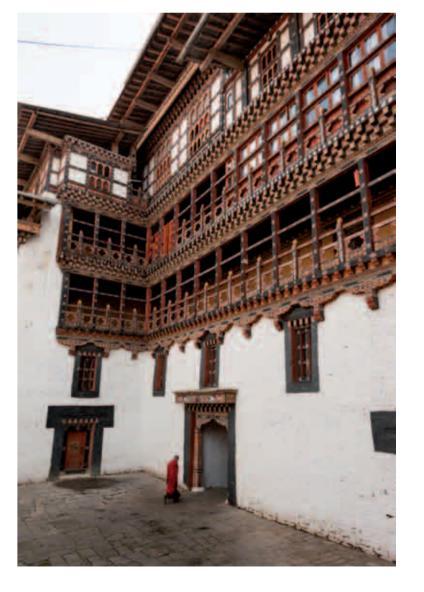
After the initial development of architectural spaces for the Sangha in the Gangetic belt, the next phase of the development of the architecture of the rock-cut caves or Guhas shifted to the Sehyadari Hills in India where over a thousand rock-cut caves emerged along the north-south trade route, the Dakshinapath, and this was followed in the Gandhara regions (which corresponds today to Pakistan and Afghanistan) where the design of the monastery or Vihara was further refined. The Gandhara regions, being away from the core region of Buddhism in the Gangetic belt, were relatively free of the existing orthodoxy and therefore provided an unconstrained atmosphere for the development of new ideas for the architecture of Buddhist buildings. A new typology of Viharas, following the pattern of quadrangular plans that had already been conceived in the rock-cut caves in the Deccan in India, emerged as built up structures in the Gandhara regions. Constructed of bricks these Viharas comprised of rooms for individual monks arranged around a quadrangular courtyard. Over time, this basic plan incorporated the changing secular and religious requirements of the Sangha into a well organized and ordered architectural design that defined a distinct pattern of the quadrangular courtyard type monastery. A few important examples are the Buddhist ruins in Pakistan of Takht-i Bahi (c. 1st century BCE), the Jaulian monastery in Taxila (c. 5th century) and the Mohra Moradu (c. 2nd to 5th centuries). This architectural typology was finally transmitted back to India where it was further refined and can be seen at numerous sites such as Nalanda, Ratnagiri and Sanchi, and travelled further to Myanmar where it is evidenced in the monastery of Somingyi.

During the Gupta period the Vihara evolved from the simple monastic complex to large centres of learning, the Maha-vihara or the 'great monastery', such as Nalanda in India and Taxila in Pakistan. By now the character of the Sangha changed from an introvert institution to a more open and inclusive institution, which asserted the faith by encouraging a larger engagement with the laity by opening up the monasteries to them as centres of learning. The ancient concept of 'Nissaya' where a student is attached to a monk-teacher for years of learning had already established the tradition of scholarship in Buddhism. The effect of the liberalization of learning – from the study of the faith to the study of knowledge, was manifested in the transformation of the

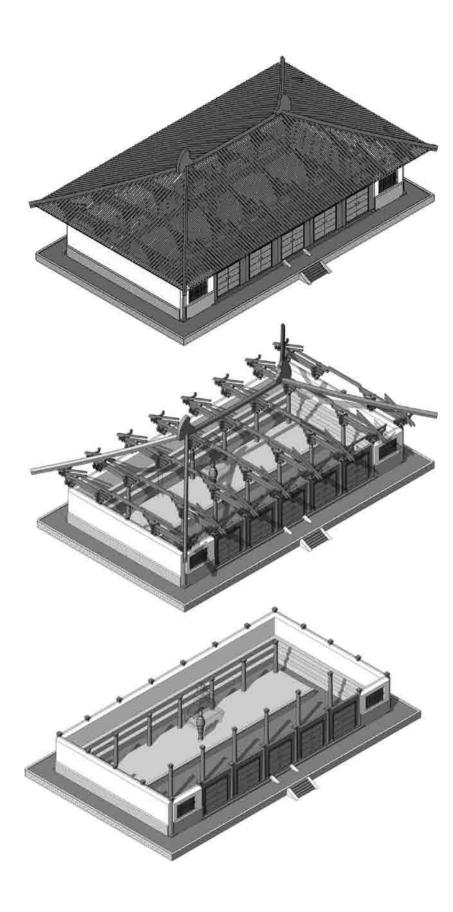


quadrangular monastic plans into larger educational complexes that functioned much like the university campuses of today. Such Maha-viharas comprised of buildings for varied functions ranging from residential, religious to academic, which were all arranged within a larger enclosed precinct forming a distinct architectural typology of a university campus.

With time, another variation of the Maha-vihara emerged in India: the centralized monastery-temple complex. The plans of these monasteries integrated the building typologies of the Stupa and Vihara together with the temple, into a new architectural concept. The plan comprised of rooms arranged around the edge of a large courtyard defining an enclosed monastic precinct. The main ideation form produced by the fusion of the Stupa and the temple in a cruciform architectural plan was located at the centre of the courtyard. The planning was introvert with all the cells opening only into the courtyard while the outer wall had no openings, transforming the entire complex into a fortified monument. Numerous monumental monasteries of this typology were constructed in India and Bangladesh such as Vikramshila, Odantpura and Sompura. The second part of their name, 'pura' meaning city, suggests the monumental scale of these university monasteries. The design principles of centralization and fortification of these monasteries were later adopted by the Jokhang temple, in the Himalayan mountains and plateau region. The centralized cruciform plans developed



THE GOLDEN LANDS THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 29



Architectural model of wooden bracket system – Jian

further in southeast Asia in the monumental architecture of Indonesia (Borobudur and Candi Sewu) and Cambodia (the Bayon temple).

Another important typology of building associated with the monastic community emerged from the ritual of Uposatha. The ritual of Uposatha consisted of the recitation of the Patimokkha followed by the declaration of the Parisuddhi. This ritual was practiced fortnightly during which the assembly of monks was held within a demarcated area, defined by marking the corners of the area by boundary stones called Simas. This tradition of marking the boundaries of a demarcated space by Sima-stones, continues to be practiced in the design of the ordination halls of Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia today.

Buddhism was gradually transmitted to the Sinosphere region, first to China through central Asia; from there further to Korea; and finally reaching Japan by the 6th century. Here, the monastery developed a distinct vocabulary comprising of numerous wooden buildings each dedicated to different functions and distributed in a hierarchical pattern within an enclosed precinct. The distinct features of the Sinosphere monastery can be listed as the Pagoda, the hall, and the surrounding galleries delimiting a sacred precinct of the courtyard.

While the significance of the Pagoda in the practice of Mahayana Buddhism in China changed over time and its central position was finally replaced by the image hall, the changing hierarchal relationship between them produced a variety of layouts of Buddhist monasteries. This gallery-Stupa-hall-courtyard combination became the format for the development of Buddhist architecture in the entire Sinosphere region for the next thousand years. Their architectural form was governed by the local building traditions of wooden architecture that defined modular spaces known as Jian through a system of wooden bracketing.

Two new forms of Buddhist practice lead to the emergence of distinct architectural forms in the Sinosphere. The first was Chan or Zen Buddhism. An ideal Zen monastic complex in Japan is prescribed as being 'Shichido Garan' or a 'seven hall Sangharama', indicating that the complex consists of seven buildings – the four most important being the Pagoda, the golden hall, the lecture hall and the monks'

quarters.¹⁰ The Pagoda is the variation of the Indian Stupa that was transformed to its present form through Chinese influence. The golden hall is the building that houses the image of the Buddha and corresponds to the Indian Buddha shrine or temple. The lecture hall is a building for assembly and study, and can be seen as a variation of an assembly hall or a Mandapa of the Indian monastery. The monks' quarters is a residential building and corresponds to the Vihara in India. Besides these, other buildings such as the gate house, bathrooms, and drum towers are often added to the buildings.

The second type was Pure Land Buddhism, a form of devotional Buddhism which gained immense popularity and introduced two new hall types, one in which the statue of the Amida Buddha was enshrined, and the other to house the founder of the school. Both the halls were designed to accommodate large congregations of believers who assembled to hear sermons, thereby increasing the scale and size of wooden monastic buildings.

The diversification of the faith in Japan created further opportunity for new architectural patterns – the mountain-type monasteries, and monasteries in aristocratic residences. The mountain-type monasteries abandoned the older system of symmetrical layouts and adapted to the mountain terrain, while the other type was patterned after the Shinden type residences of aristocrats.

The Zen garden of Kennin-ji temple, early 13th century, Kyoto, Japan

10. However, there are variations due to sectarian differences. Broadly the seven buildings comprises Ta (the Pagoda), Kondo (the golden hall), Kodo (the lecture hall), Shoro (the bell tower), Kyozo (the library), Sobo (the monks' quarters), and Jikido (the refectory).



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Buddhism was manifested in a wide range of architectural forms in the kingdoms of southeast Asia. The Buddhist architecture of the Khmers was the result of syncretism between Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. Their monastic layouts comprised of concentric enclosures enclosing a central sanctuary, which was further surrounded by four ancillary sanctuaries in the four corners, forming a Quincunx. The composition of concentric enclosures was finally surrounded by a moat with entrances along each of the cardinal directions. The entire composition is an architectural manifestation of the symbolism associated with representation of the universe in accordance with Hindu and Buddhist cosmology.

At Pagan, the most basic form of a monastery comprised a single room building with a pavilion attached at the front, bringing together a combination of two construction systems where the room is constructed of brick masonry, while the pavilion is made of wooden columns supporting a gable roof with tiles. The quadrangular monastery of Somingyi recalls the architectural typology of brick monasteries of Gandhara and India. Another unique typology of monasteries witnessed in Myanmar are the underground monasteries, comprising of meditation cells excavated under the ground which were connected with a network of tunnels that are accessed through a sunken courtyard. The integration of all the components of monastic requirements into a single building was achieved in the wooden monasteries of Myanmar that emerged after the 13th century. With the appearance of wooden monasteries, Buddhist architecture completed its process of indigenization by abandoning design concepts of Indian origin and embracing the local traditions of wooden construction.

The monasteries in Thailand are enclosed precincts with spaces demarcated for rituals and secular activities. The buildings are centralized towards the main Chedi or Prang with the main hall, the Wihan, aligned usually along the east-west axis and enclosed by a surrounding gallery, the Rabiang. Various buildings such as the ordination halls, Ubosot, pavilions, Mondops, monks' quarters, library and so on are distributed around the main central structure.

In the Himalayan mountains and plateau, a distinct form of traditional architecture was adopted for the construction of Buddhist monasteries. The limitations of building materials at high altitudes determined the construction of buildings, using mud bricks and rubble in combination with timber frames in the upper floors. Early monasteries were constructed on the flat ground of the plateau such as Samye and were inspired by the designs of the Vajrayana monasteries of Odantpura and Vikramshila in Bihar that were based on the cosmic diagram of the Mandala. Such monasteries consisted of a large temple, four colleges and other buildings, all enclosed within a large encircling wall with gates along the cardinal directions. Buddhism in the Himalayan mountains diversified into various sects and fierce rivalry between them led to the construction of fortified monasteries strategically positioned on hill tops such as the Jokhang monastery. The design of the fortress type monastery was adopted in Bhutan and are known as Dzongs, where they have been strongholds housing both religious and political power from the 17th century onwards. The word Dzong literally means fortress or castle, and combines the functions of religion and administration within one unified architectural form. These huge building structures are developed from traditional architecture of fortified towers or 'khars'. The core of the Dzong is a multi-storied, tower-like structure called the 'utse' in the centre of an enclosed stone courtyard known as 'dochhen'. The utse comprises a large prayer hall called the 'tsokhang' and further beyond is the sacred hall which houses the images of Buddha and Guru Rinpoche called the 'lhakang'.

THE GOLDEN LANDS

The Golden Lands, covered in detail in this book, refers to the geographical region of southeast Asia that includes the countries Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos. Political divisions conceal the many ethnic groups and cultures that have historically inhabited these lands. Located between the cultural behemoths of China and India, this region has been influenced by its dominant neighbours, with India having a greater impact (with the exception of Vietnam). Historically, their political and social beliefs have been largely influenced by Indian cultural, political and religious thought. This strong influence notwithstanding, these lands have forged their own cultures with the syncretism of ethnic beliefs and foreign influence. The resulting cultural diversity might challenge any attempt to treat the entire region as a single unified area of study but for the fact that the material culture of these lands has common roots in the shared religious concepts adopted from India. The thematic continuity of the philosophy and its manifestations across the region allow us to treat these countries as one cultural landscape – the Golden Lands.

The introduction of Hinduism and Buddhism into southeast Asia can be traced back to the beginning of the Common Era, although there have been contacts with India for much longer. The advent of these two faiths was accompanied by new political notions and customs, and infused a new material culture. Hindu and Buddhist ideologies were manifested in diverse architectural forms according to the varied building traditions of the numerous ethnic groups of southeast Asia. The interaction between faith and building traditions thus became the source for the development of religious architecture in the region.

The present study is an attempt to describe the architectural history of Buddhism in the region, from its introduction in southeast Asia at the beginning of the first millennium of the Common Era up to the modern period.

Located at the centre of ancient trade routes between India and China, southeast Asia became a natural stop-over point, which exposed it to cultural influences from India. Intimate trading connections were established from early times between the two peninsulas of India and southeast Asia across the Bay of Bengal. The pattern of maritime trade was determined by the semi-annual monsoon seasons on both sides of the peninsula. The early trading routes across the sea were along the coastline from the eastern Indian ports to the western shores of Myanmar, defining what has been referred to as the 'trading arc'. Boats would set sail with the monsoon winds and return when they changed directions in the next season. However, by the second century, the Indian maritime industry had gained sufficient experience to abandon sailing along the coastline. Buddhism therefore reached both mainland southeast Asia as well as the islands and, can be seen as a part of the process of spontaneous cultural colonization of the region by India.

The earliest extant remains of Buddhist art and architecture in southeast Asia date to around the 5th century, and bear close similarity to Indian art and iconography. They are seen in the mainland in the settlements of the Pyus, Mons, Khmers and the Chams. The Pyus settled in extended regions in central and northern Myanmar within walled cities (Sri Ksetra) and built brick Stupas, while the Mons of southern Myanmar and Thailand founded the Dvaravati empire between the 6th and 11th centuries, producing among others, the brick architecture of the Stupa at Nakhon Pathom. With the decline of the Pyu civilization, the region was ruled by the Burmans, whose prolific building of Buddhist monuments filled the landscape of Pagan (present-day Bagan).

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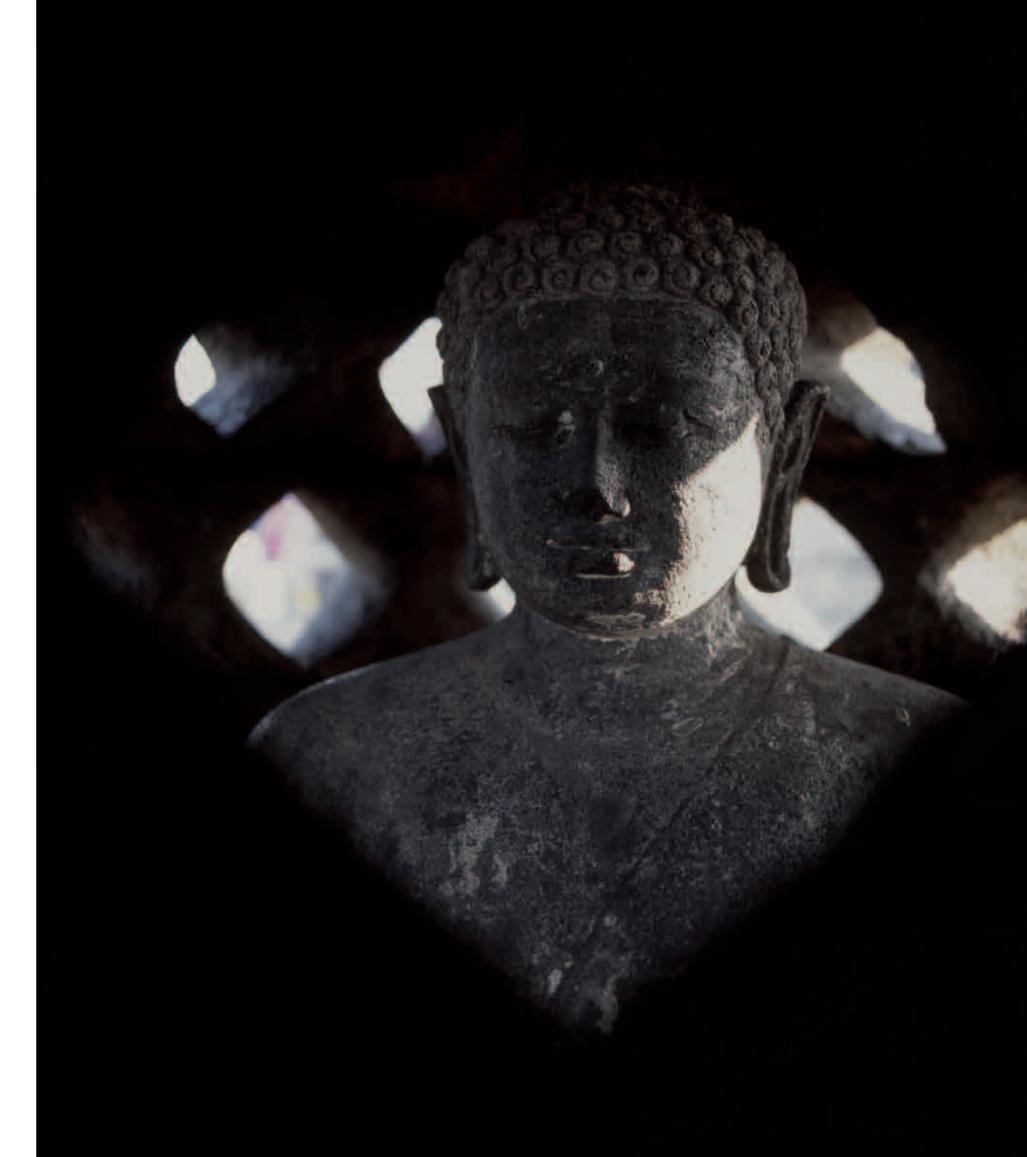
The Khmers lived in present-day Cambodia, the northeastern part of Thailand, and the delta of Vietnam. They followed both Hinduism and Buddhism until the 12th century when Buddhism was given an impetus under the Khmer king, Jayavarman VII, a devout Buddhist who built many monuments such as the Bayon in Angkor Thom. The Chams settled in central and southern Vietnam in the ancient kingdom of Champa from the 2nd century. They followed Hinduism but Buddhism became the dominant religion around the 9th to the 10th centuries. During this period the Chams also built the acclaimed Buddhist monastery in Indrapura or Dong Duong in Quang Nam, Vietnam. This monastery complex built around the 9th century, is sadly now in ruins and only bear some traces of the Chams' use of structured space.

The Srivijaya style emerged in the southern area of the Thai peninsula between the 7th and 12th centuries, located around Chaiya and Nakhon Si Thammarat. Around the 13th century, new cultural influences emerged with the rise of the Thai groups who syncretized the existing schools of art and established Buddhist centres in the cities of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Bangkok. In the islands of southeast Asia, the earliest Indian influence can be seen in the Hindu kingdoms of Java and Borneo in the 5th century. These two kingdoms disappeared with the emergence of Indianized states in central Java in the 7th century. However, during the Sailendra dynasty in central Java, at their peak during the 8th to the 9th centuries, many monumental Buddhist structures were built in brick and stone such as Borobudur and Candi Sewu showing close similarity with the Buddhist architecture of the Pala kingdom (8th to the 12th centuries) of India. Buddhism mixed with Shaivism¹¹ continued in the eastern Javanese kingdoms from the 10th to the 15th centuries.

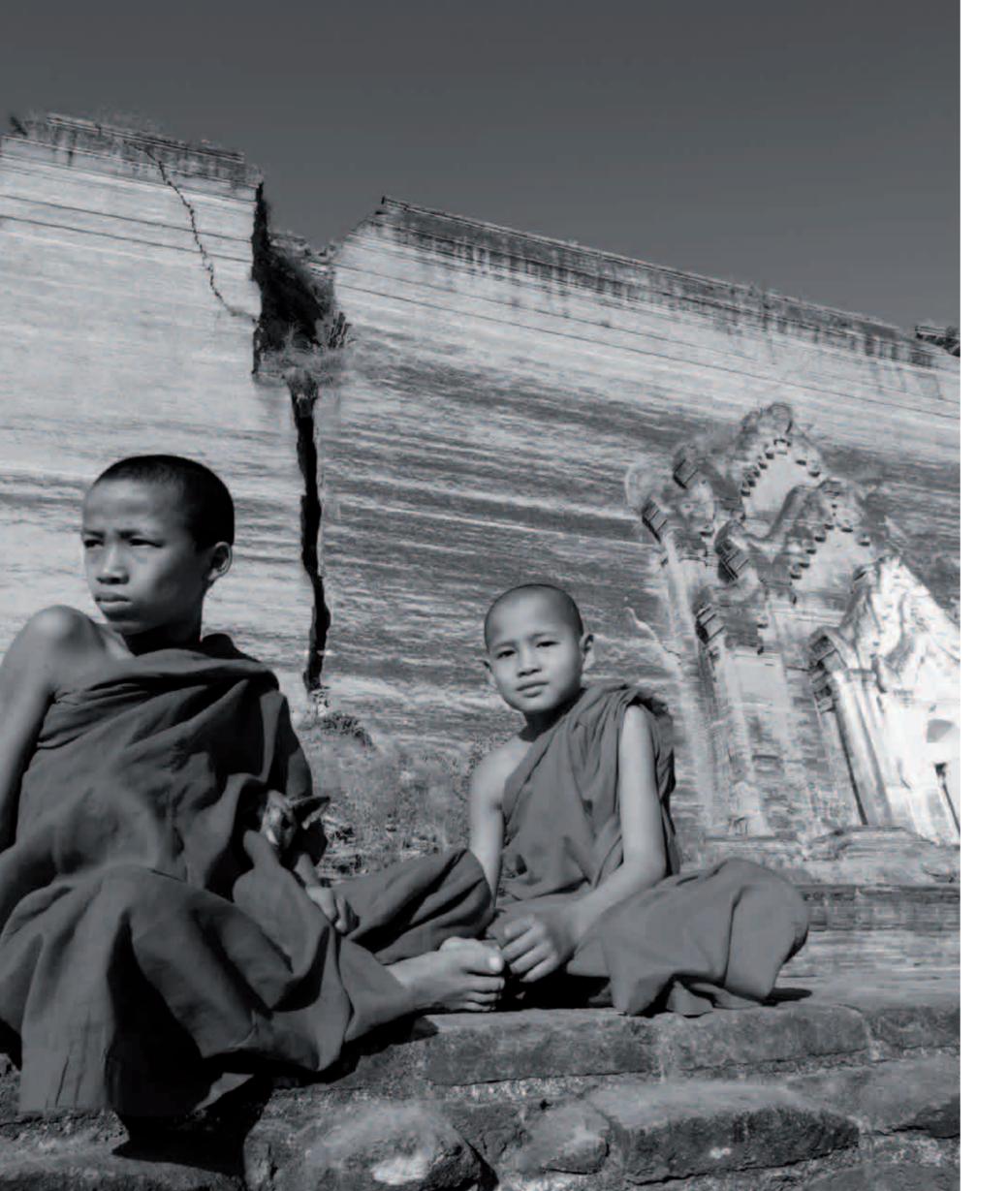
OPPOSITE PAGE
Close up of one of the 72 life-size
Buddha statues seated inside a
Stupa in Borobudur, 9th century,
central Java, Indonesia

The historical development of southeast Asia can be seen in the rise and fall of political powers and the incorporation of foreign religions, art and architectural forms. With the adoption of Hinduism and Buddhism, Indian notions of divine kingship and cosmology were embraced. The symbiotic relationship between the ruler and religion is evident in the practice of the kings supporting Buddhism to legitimize their rule, and the Buddhist monastic fraternity, the Sangha, bestowing upon them the divine status of a Cakravartin or a Buddharaja. This reciprocity was kept alive by the royal patronage commissioning large religious building projects, and the faith in return constructing religious symbolism that glorified the king. The southeast Asian monarchs modeled themselves on the paradigmatic ruler of Buddhist history, the emperor Asoka, which extended legitimacy to their own rule not only in their own kingdoms, but also locating themselves within the historical narrative of Buddhism. Like Asoka, they too built Stupas, both for the popular belief of the relic-cult as well as to serve as symbolic centres of their domain as a Buddhist state, the Buddhaksetra. The Indianization process led to the act of building cities and monuments based on Indian cosmological concepts of the Mandala and Mount Sumeru, and dedicated to the notion of divine kingship.

The history of the architecture of the Buddhist world of southeast Asia started with the process of 'Indianization', where Indian notions of design were adopted, and with time transformed into a process of 'Indigenization', where the borrowed design ideas were localized and took on distinct architectural forms in various locations. I have attempted to illustrate this through selected examples from the different regions of southeast Asia in the following chapters.



^{11.} Shiva and Shaivism focus on the Hindu God, the Destroyer Shiva and Shaivism refers to those who worship Shiva as the supreme being.





MYANMAR



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ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Myanmar¹, formerly known as Burma, is the single largest and oldest region supporting Buddhist cultural traditions in mainland southeast Asia. Located at the crossroads of trade between India on the west and Indochina on the east, Myanmar owes her cultural diversity to a history of complex movements of different ethnic groups such as the Burman, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Mon, Pyu, Rakhine and Shan peoples that crossed her lands. In the most part, these migrations followed the north-south orientation of the river Irrawaddy, and settlements were established in both the upstream and downstream areas of the country, the settlers articulating their material culture as it transformed from a Bronze-Iron age to Hindu-Buddhist walled cities.

EMERGENCE OF EARLY SETTLEMENTS

The early settlement patterns were determined by the interaction of man with existing landscapes, and were guided by the principles of survival and ecological adaptation: the seasonal monsoons and the geography of mountains ('yoma'), streams ('chaung'), seasonal lakes, ('in-gyi') and ponds ('in-aing') in Myanmar influenced greatly where people put down roots. Settlements emerged in areas characterized by contrasts in rainfall that would be suitable for rice cultivation, and walled 'cities' developed along the smaller tributaries of rivers to avoid seasonal flooding from main rivers. Initially, the local topography had a significant bearing upon the urban patterns and shapes of the walled enclosures, but over time, these were influenced by the Indic cosmological symbolism that began to be adopted in the region.

The sites of upper Myanmar are referred to as Pyu sites and are distributed in the valley of the middle and lower Irrawaddy, Mu, Samon and Myit Nge rivers and Inle lake, while the sites of the lower Myanmar regions are collectively called the Mon sites.

THE ADVENT OF BUDDHISM: MYTH AND REALITY

It is not certain exactly when Buddhism came to Myanmar, but local traditions² claim to the unmediated purity and historicity of the Dhamma in the region.

The Buddha himself is believed to have visited the region many times in his lifetime: according to the Sasanavamsa, a Chronicle written by a Bhikku, the Buddha accompanied by five hundred Arahants 'flew' to Sudhammapura in Ramanna region (lower Myanmar) in 536 BCE; he is believed to have visited Aparanta where he left his footprint at Shwesettaw near Saccabandha mountain; on his visit to Arakan he is said to have created the Mahamuni image of himself, which is preserved today in the Arakan Pagoda in Mandalay.

Another legend states that two merchants, Tapussa and Bhallika, met the Buddha in person, and he gifted them eight strands of his hair, which are now enshrined in the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon.

The Chronicle tradition of some monks in upper Myanmar make claims of a mission in 523 BCE, and of a holy sage who received the teachings of Buddha in person. Upper Myanmar also claims to have received a full mission from Asoka.

Identification with the protagonists of early Buddhist missionary movements is seen in the attempts to associate with emperor Asoka of India and the councils of Buddhism. Arahants Sona and Uttara, along with five others, are believed to have been sent as missionaries from the kingdom of emperor Asoka to Suvannabhumi or Thaton after the third Buddhist council held under his supervision at his capital Pataliputra. Upon arriving in the region, they established

the Dhamma and preached the Brahmajala Sutta. Another account states that Buddhaghosa, an eminent Pali commentator on Buddhist philosophy and the author of the Vissudhimagga in Sri

Lanka, was a son of the soil who returned to his homeland to promote the religion in the region.

Although such legends may lack historical authenticity, they serve to reinforce Buddhist authority in the region and establish traditions of pilgrimage and rituals that articulate the sacred geography and architecture of the place. The legendary accounts also preserve the rivalry between the early Theravada Buddhist kingdoms, the Pyus and the Mons, along with the distant Sinhala Buddhism that was to define the early history of the region.

While the introduction of Buddhism in the region is couched in legends and myths, it is indeed probable that the faith was in fact, introduced by traders who sailed the cyclical monsoon winds to reach Myanmar from India.

Legends suggest that it was a pure Theravada form of Buddhism that was present in Myanmar. However, Mahayanist, Hindu and animist influences were present too. The syncretization of early Buddhism in Myanmar with the local Nat culture remains to this day, and Nats continue to play an important role in the everyday life of the Myanmese.

EARLY MATERIAL EVIDENCE

The traditions of Buddhism in Myanmar are said to go back to as early as the last few centuries before the Common Era, and distinct architectural manifestations of Buddhism from around the 6th century can be seen in the excavations of the early walled cities. These include Stupas, temples and monasteries.

The architectural heritage of Myanmar has its roots in the various political and cultural settlements that emerged during the early history of the region. The successive

BELOW Map of modern Myanmar



ot drawn to scale

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Young monks at the ruins of Mingun Pahtodawgyi, late 18th century, Mingun, Mandalay, Myanmar

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Elaborate Burmese teak carvings of the multi-tiered roofs at Shwenan-daw wooden monastery, 19th century, Mandalay, Myanmar

1. Myanmar is the current internationally recognized legal term for the country that used to be called Burma during the colonial period. It derives from Mranma or Myanma in Old and Modern Burmese script respectively, and is actually an adjective that qualifies the noun after it; Burmese speakers would refer to their country as Myanma Pyay (or Pyi).

2. Much of what is known about ancient Burmese history is from various chronicles. Examples include the Sasanavamsa, the Glass Palace Chronicle, etc.

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infiltrations of the various ethnic tribes, each pushing its predecessor further down south, have left their testimonies of the rich building traditions of the region in the remains of the urban settlements of the Pyus, Mons, Arakans and Burmans.

Evidence of the spiritual engagement of settlement patterns with Buddhist symbolism can be seen to have emerged and developed between 200 BCE and 900 CE. The established principles of habitation, based on the needs of ecological adaption were overlapped with urban symbolism, creating walled cities that were typified by artefacts and forms symbolic of Buddhism and Hinduism.

Limited archaeological evidence of urban settlements before the 5th century BCE survives to be able to discern definite urban patterns, but two distinct cultural regions can be seen to have flourished between the 5th century BCE and the 8th century, preceding the Pagan period (dealt with later in the book): the middle regions of Myanmar were inhabited by the Pyus, and lower Burma by the Mons. Though the material culture of both the regions was based originally on that of eastern India, they took on different courses of development, eventually merging to produce the architectural patterns of the Burmans in Pagan.

In the sections that follow, the cultural influences and early building patterns of these peoples – the Mons and Pyus – and their legacy to the Burmans, of building forms, styles and practices, is explained.

THE CULTURAL INFLUENCE OF INDIA

Although the indigenous people of Myanmar are descended from those who came from Mongolia in successive migrations, their traditions, rather than being Chinese in nature are distinctly Indian. Myanmar has been influenced by the social and political culture of India since the beginning of the first millennium of the Common Era. Myanmese chronicles and folklore are constructed largely out of the Indian cultural traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism. This may perhaps be because of the influence of Indian immigrants, who travelled overland through the eastern Indian state of Assam, or by sea from the eastern ports of the Indian peninsula. It is indeed possible that in a number of locations, these immigrants from India formed a significant proportion of the population.

In fact, the word 'Talaing' which was used to refer to the Mon people (more about them later in the book) is believed to have been derived from 'Telangana', a region in south India not far from the Coramandel coast. Ancient Talaing writings often mention the Hinayana Buddhist centre of Conjeveram (present-day Kanchipuram, near Chennai in India) and the earliest Talaing inscription is in the Pallava alphabet used there at the time.

Architectural influences on the building form in the regions of Thaton, Prome and Pagan in lower and upper Myanmar can be traced to the ancient Buddhist cultures of the Indian states of Bihar, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. The plain, undecorated and very simple form of the Stupas in Prome, such as the still surviving historical Bawbawgyi, Payama and Payagyi at Sri Ksetra the old Pyu city state are similar to the early Stupas in Orissa; brick monasteries excavated at Peikthano bear close resemblance to the monastic architecture in Bihar. The tradition of brick construction techniques using arches that were nominally seen in the Indian ruins of Nalanda and Ratnagiri found their finest architectural expression in the Buddhist buildings of Myanmar.

THE PYUS - THEIR CULTURE, CITIES AND BUILDINGS

The Pyus, also referred to as 'Tircul' were people of Tibeto-Burman descent who are believed to have migrated from southwest China into the Irrawaddy valley. They settled in walled cities and developed a sophisticated material culture of city planning, art and architecture. Their elaborate urbanism has been documented by Chinese chroniclers in the description of a Pyu city by a Chinese official serving in Yunnan and Annam during the end of the Tang dynasty:

'(The people of the P'iao kingdom) use green bricks to make the walls surrounding their city. It takes one day to walk around it. The common people all live within the city walls. There are twelve gates. In front of the gate of the palace where the king of (this) kingdom dwells, there is a great

image seated in the open air, over a hundred feet high, and white as snow... The people's nature is friendly and good... They revere the law of the Buddha. Within the city there is absolutely no taking of life. Also, there are many astrologers who tell fortunes by the stars. In the 6th year of Ta-ho (832 CE) Man (Nan-chao) rebels looted and plundered the P'iao kingdom. They took as prisoners over three thousand of their people. They banished them into servitude at Chetung, and told them to fend for themselves. At present, their children and grandchildren are still there, subsisting on fish, insects, etc. Such is the end of their people.'

The Man Shu by Fan Ch'o (863 CE)

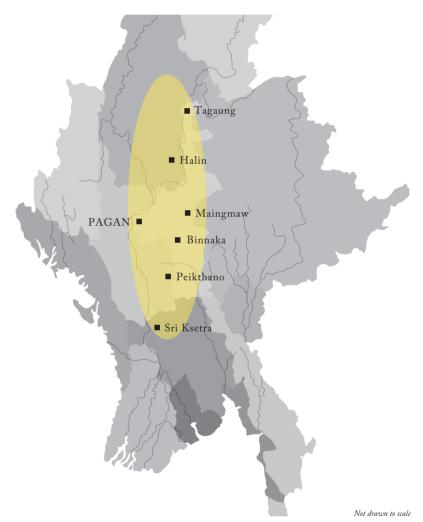
Significant urban settlements of the Pyus have been found in the ancient sites of Peikthano in central Myanmar, Thayekhittaya near the city of Prome, and Halin, north of Peikthano. The city of Peikthano is believed to have flourished from the 1st to the 4th century while those of Thayekhittaya (Sri Ksetra) and Halin followed from the 4th to the 8th century. The Pyus appear to have practised Buddhism, although there are indications of the presence of Hinduism too.

Excavations of the extant remains of the Pyu cities establish the existence of the basic architectural types associated with

Buddhism: the Stupa, temple and monastery. Most significantly, two distinct architectural types of temples, the Bèbè and the Lei-myet-hna, appeared for the first time in Thayekhittaya; these established the paradigm of temple design, serving as models for temples that, in the following years, led up to the grand temples of Pagan.

The Pyus appear to have been vanquished by the Nan-chaos from the north sometime in the early 9th century, and gradually merged with the Burmans of upper Myanmar, imparting their culture to the latter as they did so.

Map of the Pyu kingdom showing city states within the present-day borders of Myanmar



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PEIKTHANO

The ancient Pyu city of Peikthano, also known as Peikthanomyo or the city of Vishnu, is in the Yin valley, just north of the village Kokkogwa. It is strategically located for easy access to water from both rivers and lakes, and proximity to the rice producing areas of the west. Habitation at the site spans over eight hundred years and dates as far back as 200 BCE.

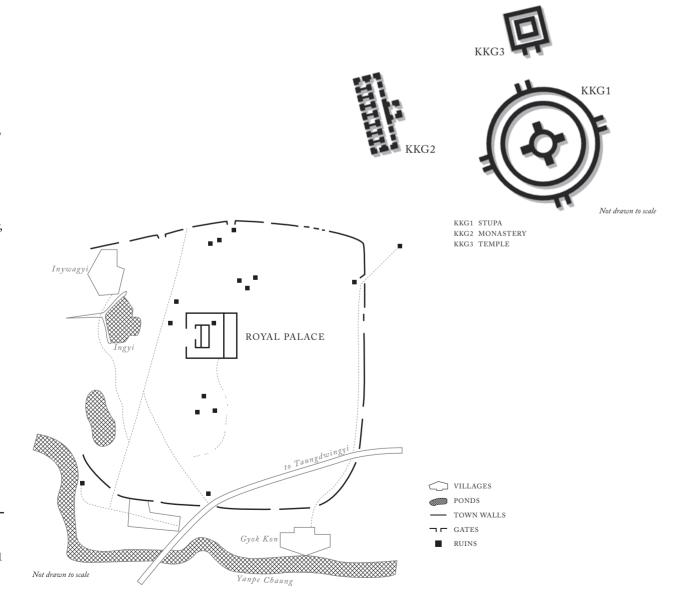
Excavations at Peikthano have unearthed various kinds of structures that were built during this large span of time. There appears to have been a brick enceinte wall, each side of which had three gateways. A number of low mounds with terracotta funerary urns have been unearthed, as have some burnt-brick structures that might have been a palace. The presence of the remains of a group of Buddhist buildings including a number of Stupas and a monastery dating between the 1st and the 4th centuries establishes that Buddhism was being practised here.

The Stupas are cylindrical in form, and have been linked with those found at Nagarjunakonda in India and the Mohra Moradu Stupa (2nd to 4th centuries) at Taxila. The remains of an excavated building named KKG2³ appear to be those of a monastery. The architectural pattern of the structure bears close similarity to monasteries excavated at Nagarjunakonda in India. The rectangular plan comprises a single row of rooms used as living and meditation spaces by monks, all of which open into a corridor.

RIGHT
Plan of the ancient city of
Peikthano

Plan of the Peikthano excavations, KKG1, KKG2 and KKG3, c. 4th century, Peikthano

OPPOSITE PAGE
Bulbous form of the Nga-kywenadaung Stupa, early 12th century,
Pagan, Myanmar



3. The Peikthano sites excavated around the village Kokkogwa from 1958–1963 were named serially KKG1 to KKG25.

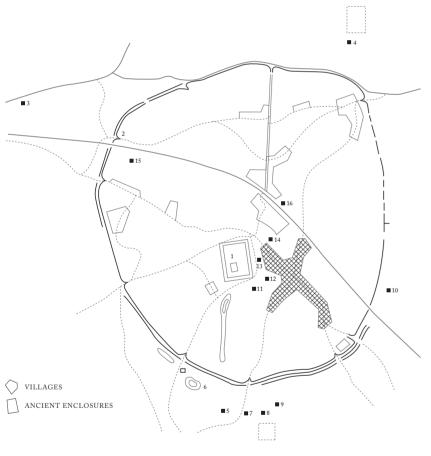


SRI KSETRA

According to textual records of the Chinese Tang dynasty, Thayekhittaya, or Sri Ksetra in the south of Myanmar (see map), was a flourishing city consisting of over one hundred Buddhist monasteries. It is also referred to as Yathet-myo, or the 'city of the hermit'. Considered one of the largest Pyu cities excavated, it covers an area of about 30 square kilometres and has a circumference of 14.6 kilometres. The city was circular in plan and enclosed within a brick wall, which was surrounded by a moat.

Various Buddhist monuments have been excavated both within and outside the city walls. The Lei-myet-hna and Bèbè temples or Caitya-grihas, and the Bawbawgyi Pagoda (Stupa) located outside and to the south of the city walls are some examples of early Buddhist architecture in the area. Others include the Payagyi and Payama Pagodas, two large cone-shaped Stupas that have been found located outside the city walls in the north. This pattern of location of Buddhist structures outside the precincts of the city during the early period of Buddhism is witnessed in other regions also.

BELOW
Plan of the ancient city of
Sri Ksetra, 7th to 9th centuries



THAYEKHETTAYA (SRI KSETRA)

- 5TH TO 9TH CENTURIES

 1. ROYAL PALACE
- 2. SHWEDAGA ('GOLDEN GATE')
 3. PAYAGYI STUPA
- 4. PAYAMA STUPA
- 5. BAWBAWGYI STUPA 6. YAHANDUGU TEMPLE
- 7. BÈBÈ TEMPLE 8. LEI-MYET-HNA TEMI
- 8. LEI-MYET-HNA TEMPLE 9. 'PEIKTHANO'S NECROPOLIS'
- 10. MATHIGYAGON STUPA 11. WEST ZEGU TEMPLE
- 12. EAST ZEGU TEMPLE
 13. SHWENYAUNGBINGON TEMPLE
- 14. PYATAUNG TEMPLE
- 15. NECROPOLIS
- 16. RAILWAY STATION OF HMAWZA

These remains appear to be of a form that can be traced back to the Amaravati school in south India, and to the eastern Indian regions of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. They served as models for the architecture of the Pagan kingdom that came later.

STUPAS IN SRI KSETRA

Dated to around the 7th century, the three Stupas mentioned earlier are all constructed of large bricks strengthened with rice husks. Almost devoid of moulding and other ornamentation, they appear to be rather early types of Stupas.

The Bawbawgyi is about 46 metres high, and cylindrical in form, resting on a base of five circular terraces. It has a conical finial that converges to a point at the crown. The Harmika found in the Stupas of India and Sri Lanka is absent. The structure is made of brick masonry and was finished with plaster on the outside. The Payagyi and Payama Stupas, in contrast, are conical shaped.

SRI KSETRA TEMPLES – CENTRAL SPACE AND CENTRAL CORE TYPES

The Caitya-griha remains found in Sri Ksetra may also date to the same period as the Stupas – the 7th or 8th centuries. Two distinct types are seen – the central space or vaulted Cella type and the central core type as exemplified in the Bèbè and Lei-myet-hna temples respectively. These temples appear to be prototypes of the temple architecture of later years found in Pagan.

Bricks were used as the primary building material and indeed, this material dominated religious architecture in Myanmar. Brick arches and vaults featured extensively in early religious structures, and these architectural features developed to a very sophisticated level in Myanmar, but nowhere else in the whole of southeast Asia. These techniques honed by the builders of Myanmar made it possible to build the massive imposing structures that today draw many a visitor to Myanmar.

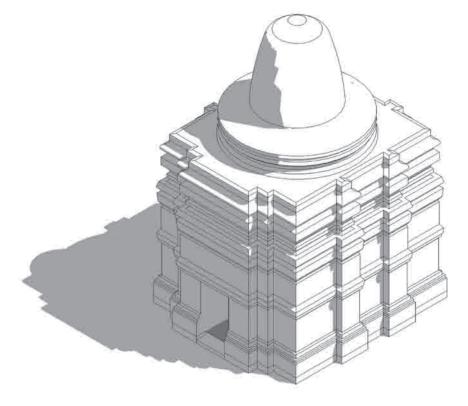
Bèbè temple – a 'central space' type

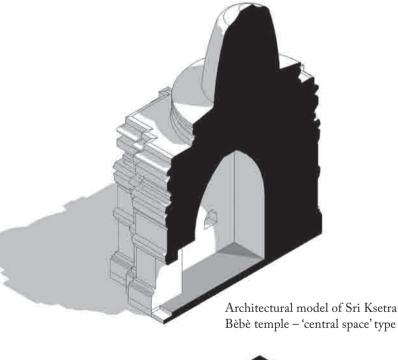
The first typology of the 'central space' or 'central vaulted space' or 'vaulted Cella' type, seen in the Bèbè temple, is a simple building form comprising a square space enclosed by thick brick walls that rise up to form a vaulted roof that supports the superstructure of the spire. The entire load of the superstructure of the temple is transferred through the vaulted roof to the walls. The external form of the vaulted roof is defined by the form of a tiered pyramidal roof that connects to the spire rising above. A single opening from the east side is provided, leading directly into the inner central space. The three other sides contain false doors. In the back of the square room is a stone plaque carved with a relief of the Buddha. On the side walls are two niches which once contained statues.

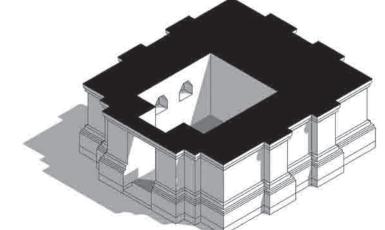
The Bèbè temple is a modest size with dimensions of 5 metres width on each side.

Lei-myet-hna temple – a 'central core' type

The second typology of the 'central core' type, seen in the Lei-myet-hna temple, consists of a square masonry core in the centre surrounded by corridors. The core rises up to form the spire above in the superstructure, while the surrounding corridors are covered by a masonry vaulted

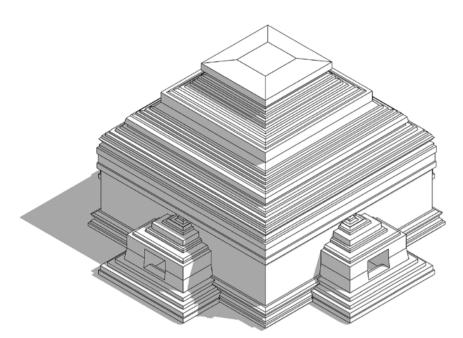


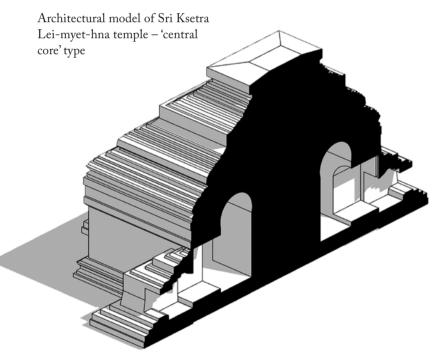


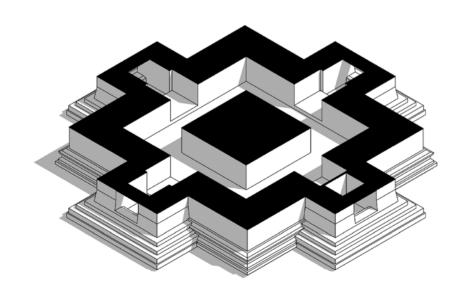


THE GOLDEN LANDS

MYANMAR – ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY 47







roof that rests on the central core and the external walls of the corridors. In this case, it is the core that supports the load of the superstructure. The form of the vaulted roof of the internal corridors is conspicuously concealed on the exterior by adding elevated terraces above them, which reduce in size in a pyramidal formation as they rise towards the central spire from all four sides of the structure.

Four entrance porticos, of smaller proportions, are positioned in the centre of the four facades leading directly into the encircling corridor. The square masonry core in the centre is provided with large niches which house the images of the four Buddhas of this temporal cycle: Kakusandha, Konagamana, Kassapa and Gotama, facing towards the four cardinal directions, and hence the name Lei-myet-hna meaning 'four-faced' in Burmese. The temple is constructed entirely of bricks and is of modest dimensions with the main cuboid body measuring only 6.7 metres in width. It is dated to approximately the 7th century, and the influence of Gupta art from India can be seen in the images of the Buddhas.

THE MONS OF LOWER MYANMAR

In the delta regions of the Irrawaddy, Sittang and Salween rivers of lower Myanmar and stretching all the way to the Chao Phraya river in Thailand, emerged the indigenous settlements of the Mon people. The areas occupied by the Mons have been variously referred to as Suvannabhumi ('land of gold') and Ramannadesa. As mentioned earlier, legend has it that the Buddha himself visited this region. Mon settlements have been excavated at Thaton that are believed to have existed since the 5th century and at Pegu, their other important historical settlement dating back to the 9th century. Interestingly, the earlier name of Pegu was Ussa, which is the ancient name for the state of Orissa in India, establishing beyond doubt the strong cultural ties that existed between the two regions of India and Myanmar across the Bay of Bengal. Both Thaton and Pegu were flourishing ports at the time and traded actively with foreign lands.

There is evidence of the use of laterite, one of the earliest uses of that porous material in Myanmar. Unfortunately, there are virtually no building remains of those times both at Thaton and Pegu, and it is difficult to establish the architectural patterns followed by the early Mons.

The Mons appear to have been staunch followers of Theravada Buddhism. In the 11th century, Thaton came under the control of the Pagan kingdom, and as we shall see later, it was from here that the Tripitaka was seized and taken, along with the king and many citizens as captives, to the kingdom of Pagan. The presence of a number of skilled workmen and artisans amongst the captives ensured that the Mon influence and culture made itself felt in Pagan and its architecture. The Mons remained subject to the kingdom of Pagan until the latter's collapse in the 13th century.

THE CULTURAL REGION OF THE RAKHINES

The ancient state of Rakhine, known in colonial times as Arakan, is situated to the west along the Bay of Bengal, and is separated from the rest of Myanmar by the mountains called Rakhine Yoma (previously Arakan Yoma). With its extensive coastline providing easy access to various Indian ports and land access to the Bengal region of India, Rakhine was 'Indianized' early on. According to the Chronicles, Buddhism is supposed to have been practised here since the early centuries of the first millennium. From the 13th century, Islam too was prevalent here.

Two of the earliest cities were Dhanyawadi or Dhannavati (mid-4th to early 6th centuries) and Vesali (6th to 8th centuries). Dhanyawadi was a walled city, with walls made of brick, enclosing an area a little over 4 square kilometres. There was a wide moat beyond the walls. Within the city was the palace enclosed within its own walls. The city plan was not dissimilar from that of contemporaneous Pyu cities. Dhanyawadi was the original site of the Mahamuni shrine – the image that the Buddha created of himself. Some of the sculptures in the area bear comparison to the Gupta art of India.

Vesali was named after the city of Vaisali in India that is of great significance in Buddhism. Vesali too was a walled city, the walls enclosing an area of 7 square kilometres and surrounded by a moat. In the centre of the city was the palace site. Vesali appears to have had contact with the Pyus and other cultures to the east. There was a large temple complex in Vesali, and remains of a Buddhist monastery and ordination hall have been found in the vicinity.

Mrauk-U, the city that was the capital from 1433–1785 has a number of extant monuments including Pagodas and temples. The architecture of this period drew on the styles of eastern India, the Mons and the Burmese (Pagan kingdom and beyond).

THE BURMANS AND THE KINGDOM OF PAGAN

Around the area where the mighty Irrawaddy river changes course from southwest to south, is a large historical site that was home to some of the finest examples of Buddhist architecture, the remains of many of which stand even today.

The Burmans, tribes who originated from the north, established there the glorious kingdom of Pagan with the city of Pagan (or its present-day name Bagan) as the capital. The Pali name for Pagan is Arimaddanapura or 'the city that tramples its foes'.

Some Chronicles have it that the Pagan dynasty was founded as early as the 2nd century with the combining of nineteen villages. With the decline in the 9th century of the state of Sri Ksetra, which was composed of indigenous Pyu settlements, the Burmans intermixed with the Pyus

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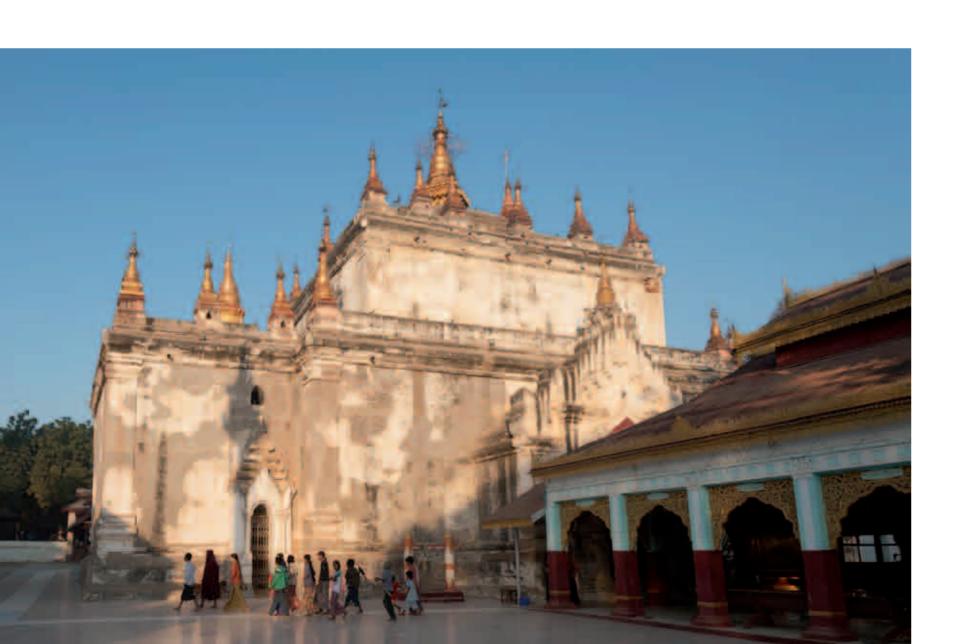
and absorbed their culture. During the reign of the 42nd king of the kingdom, Anawrahta or Aniruddha (r. 1044–1077), Pagan became a political and cultural centre. The golden years of this kingdom lasted about 250 years from the 11th century to the late 13th century.

The Theravada school of Buddhism is believed to have been introduced in Pagan by the monk Shin Arahan, also called Dhammadasi. Shin Arahan hailed from Thaton in the state of Ramannadesa, founded by the indigenous people, the Mons, described earlier. Upon winning the confidence of King Anawrahta, he became the greatest evangelist of the religion in the region.

The desire to purge the religion of incorrect practices and re-establishing the religious law, prompted Anawrahta and Shin Arahan to seek out the correct rules and rituals from authentic scriptural sources of Buddhism. During that time in Myanmar, written texts on religion were few and far between, and Shin Arahan persuaded Anawrahta to procure copies of the Tripitaka (the three baskets), the canon of Theravada Buddhism that was in the possession of the Mon court at Thaton.

BELOW Exterior view of Manuha temple, 11th century, Pagan, Myanmar showing distinct Mon artistic characteristics

King Manuha of Thaton turned down Anawrahta's request, leading to a war between the two states, and the ultimate destruction of Thaton (in 1056). Anawrahta returned to Pagan victorious, with the Tripitaka (over thirty elephant loads of Buddhist scriptures were brought back), and Manuha as a prisoner of war. A number of other Mon natives including scholars, monks, scribes and craftsmen were brought to Pagan too. It is believed that King Manuha built the temples of



Nan-hpaya and Manuha in Pagan while in captivity, which accounts for their having distinct Mon characteristics.

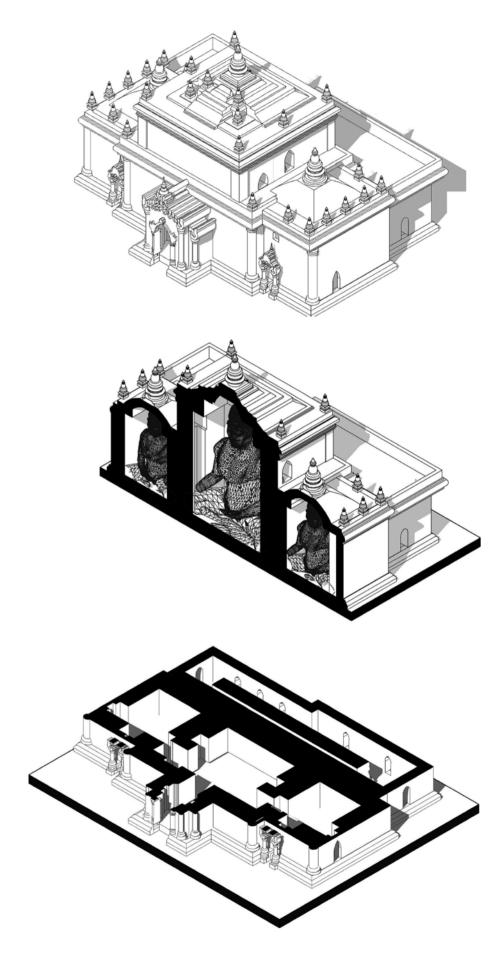
The influx of Mon captives from Thaton injected new cultural ideas and ways of thinking into Pagan society. Theravada Buddhism superseded the existing Mahayana beliefs and Nat or spirit worship; Pali replaced Sanskrit as the popular language, and the Burmese, after adopting the Talaing alphabet, had their own script.

Most significant, from the point of view of architecture, was the introduction of new building styles in the kingdom of Pagan. With the building boom in the years that followed, it was to change the landscape of Pagan forever.

The religious frenzy that seized the people of Pagan, while producing some of the most enduring and diverse architectural examples of the Buddhist world, also succeeded in exhausting the resources of the region, and the already weakened kingdom finally collapsed under the Mongol invasion of Kublai Khan in 1287.

In later years, the capital of the kingdom shifted from Pagan to Ava, and there was a sharp decline in the number of monuments built at Pagan. Many monuments suffered from a lack of maintenance. Renovations have since been carried out in many buildings in Pagan.

Much of what follows in this section on Myanmar is a discussion about the interesting architectural features that characterize the monuments of the golden years of the Pagan kingdom. There is also mention of some events and monuments that belonged to the post-Pagan period.



Architectural model of Manuha temple

II. ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE IN MYANMAR, MAINLY OF THE PAGAN PERIOD

The Burmans of Pagan imbibed the best of the architectural principles, techniques and artistic styles of the Pyus and Mons, infused them with their own genius, and produced what was perhaps the widest range of architecture in the Buddhist world.

MONUMENT CATEGORIES

During the reigns of successive kings of Pagan over two centuries, several thousand Buddhist buildings were constructed in the kingdom of Pagan. These included Stupas, temples (Caityagrihas) and monasteries (Viharas) - the three main structures associated with the religious architecture of early Buddhism - and also ordination halls and libraries.

Bupaya Stupa, c. 3rd century, Pagan, Myanmar

BELOW (RIGHT) Shwe-san-daw Stupa, early 11th century, Pagan, Myanmar

STUPAS

The remains of early Stupas (or Pagodas) in Pagan - the c. 3rd century Bupaya and the Ngakywe-nadaung - show the Pyu influence in their bulbous forms, the rising domes recalling the cylindrical profile of the Stupas at Sri Ksetra. In later years of the Pagan period, a generic form of the Stupa with specific design characteristics began to emerge.

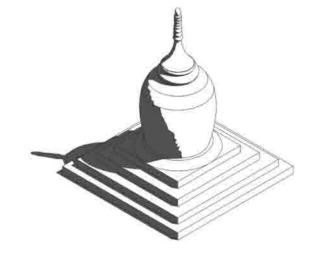


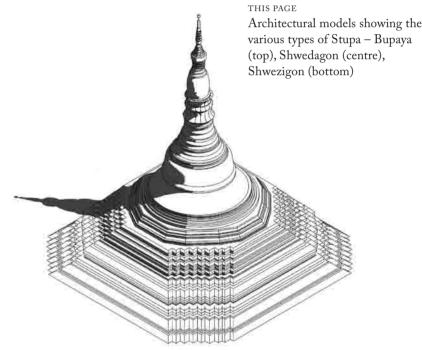


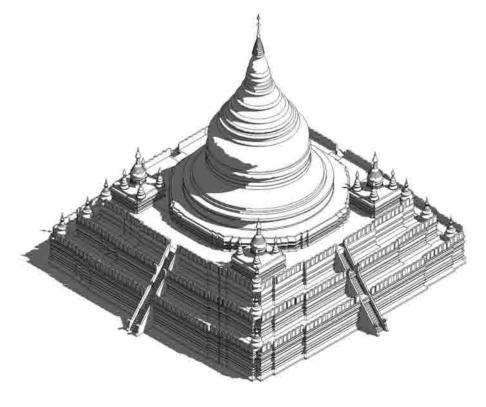
The typical Stupa at Pagan comprised a square pyramidal base of receding terraces, surmounted by a bell-shaped dome, with each level accessed via staircases provided in the middle of each face. The walls of the terraces were lined with bas-reliefs of the Buddhist Jatakas, allowing the devout to learn something about their religion as they perform the ritual circumambulation or Pradakshina. The profile of the dome of the Stupa evolved from the convex and vertical shape to an increasingly bell-shaped concave one.

The transformation of the early Pyu forms from the bulbous convex shapes (Bupaya) into the distinct Pagan structure is seen in the early 11th century Shwe-san-daw Stupa. The Shwe-san-daw, built by King Anawrahta to enshrine a sacred hair relic of the Buddha brought back from Thaton, is considered to be one of the first to have adopted the bell-shaped form. Its five square terraces have flights of steps on each side, reaching up to the base of the bell-shaped dome. The dome sits on two receding octagonal terraces, and is topped by thick ringed bands. The Harmika, a box-like structure on top of the dome, serving as a reliquary casket and a staple in Indian Stupas, is absent. The dome is crowned by a distinct Burmese finial called the Hti, formed like a tiered umbrella, made out of metal; this is a later addition.

This typology was further refined in the design of the Shwedagon (c. 6th to 10th centuries; rebuilt in the 14th century) in Yangon, and the Shwezigon (12th century) in Pagan. All the Stupas enshrine various relics of the Buddha. In the case of the Shwedagon and Shwezigon, they are considered two of the most sacred monuments of the Buddhist world. Shwezigon is described in detail in the Selected Examples section.





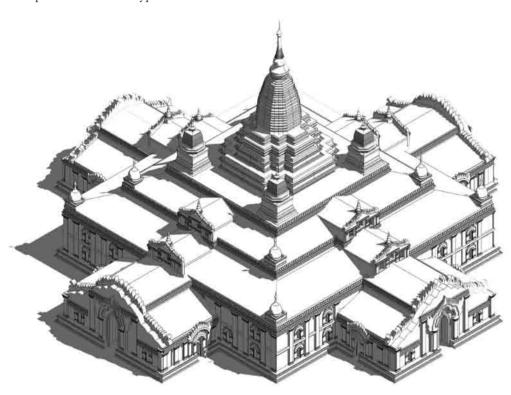


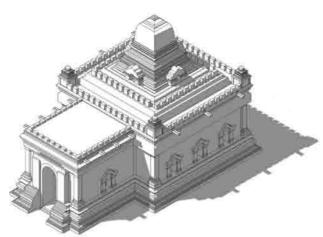
BELOW

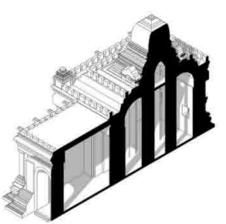
Architectural model of Ananda temple – 'central core' type

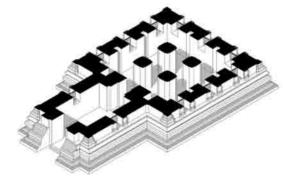
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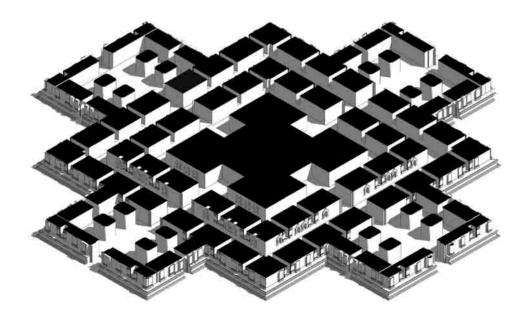
Architectural model of Nan-hpaya temple – 'intermediate' type











TEMPLES - TWO DISTINCT PLAN TYPES

Pagan temples can be categorized in several different ways, and plan type is one of them. The two temple typologies of the Pyus – the 'central core' and the 'central space or vaulted Cella' types were translated into monumental temples of exceptional size and proportions in Pagan. The Bèbè temple of the Pyus was the prototype for the central core type, and the Lei-myet-hna for the central space type. The temples of Sulamani and Ananda belong to the 'central core' type, while the temples of Pahto-thamya and Nagayon come under the category of 'central space'.

A structural solution that was an intermediate type was also experimented with as in the temple of Nan-hpaya, where the load of the tower is transferred onto the four free-standing columns of the Cella. There were a number of variations on the basic theme – for instance, some temples had corridors around the central Cella; others did not. In some, the shrines receded into the central core; in others, the images were placed against it.

The shrine in a central space temple was usually against the wall opposite the entrance, and in the central core type, shrines were placed against each side of the core. These were invariably the four Buddhas of this temporal cycle.

Some temples had a cruciform plan, some were square-shaped; still others were elongated. As we shall see later, there were even pentagonal forms. There was only one entrance to some temples, others could be entered from all sides. Temples as a rule had receding square terraces, and were topped by either a tall Shikhara or a Stupa-like dome.





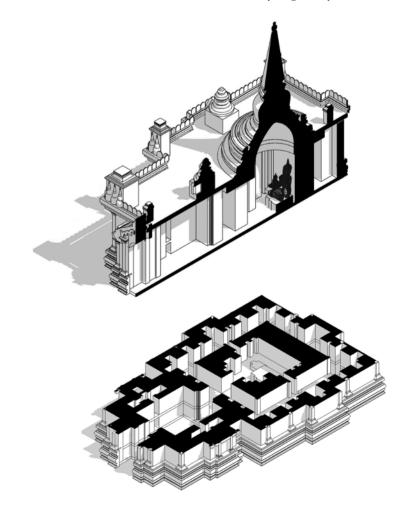
ABOVE

Interior view of Minnanthu Lei-myet-hna, 'central space' type, 13th century, Pagan, Myanmar

BELOV

Architectural model of Pahtothamya temple – 'central space' type

BELOW (LEFT)
Pahto-thamya temple, c. 11th–
12th century, Pagan, Myanmar



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TEMPLES - INTERIORITY

The placement of the image of the Buddha was on the central core itself, on all four of its faces, in the case of the 'central core' type, whereas in the other 'central space' type, it was attached to the rear wall, opposite the entrance. The reluctance to disengage the image of the Buddha from the wall of the building and place it in the centre as a freestanding statue eventually disappeared with increased confidence in building and sculptural art.

The temples in Pagan varied in style – the earliest were considered to be of the Mon type (simple plans, single storey and inscriptions in the Mon language), and in later years, these were gradually replaced by the Burmese style (more complicated plans, multiple storeys and inscriptions only in Burmese).

The dimly lit interiors of Nagayon temple, with small window openings allowing light to fall directly on the face of the Buddha, 11th-12th century, Pagan, Myanmar

One of the characterizing features of the early Mon style temples was the dimly lit interiors. They were fashioned as mysterious, dark, cavernous spaces by allowing limited light through small, latticed windows, positioned carefully to guide filtered light to fall directly on the face of the Buddha image. This play with light was an attempt to create a distinct spatial experience in the interiors – the temples were intended to evoke the atmosphere of the Buddhist caves in India.

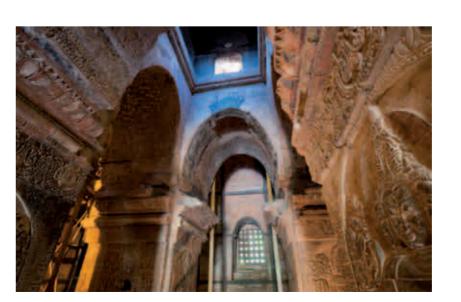


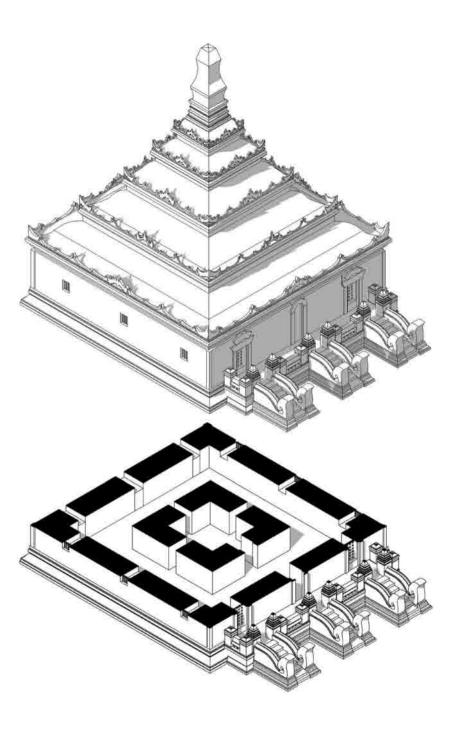
'GU' - THE NOTION OF THE CAVE

Caves in ancient India had long been associated with devotion, worship and meditation. Hermits and sages made their homes in caves, often on mountains, and caves hold a special place in the heart of not just the devout Buddhist, but also Hindus and Jains.

Architectural designs of Buddhist temples in Pagan intended to simulate the forms and spaces associated with Buddhism in India. Two spatial and formal paradigms from India – those of the symbolism of the mountain, the cosmic Mount Meru, and the interiority of the cave, became the foundation of this development. It is not surprising that the temple in Burmese is called Gu, literally meaning cave, explaining the desire to create a cave-like interior environment, with rather dark, cavernous spaces, exuding a sense of mystery. The overall scheme recalls the ambience of the Karle caves in India, with dimly illuminated spaces, and the object of worship lit through a latticed window on one side. Pagan temples of later years were more brightly lit, and latticed windows were no longer a key feature. The Nan-hpaya temple also known as Nanpaya, is a good example of Pagan's Gu style temples.

The Gu concept was not restricted to temples alone. To house the copies of the Tripitaka brought back from Thaton, King Anawhrata needed a structure that would protect the delicate and precious scriptures from fire and rain, and not permit too much light that might be harmful. The Pitaka Taik, or scripture-house, featured in the Selected Examples section, was built expressly for this purpose. It has the features of a Gu building.





Architectural model of Pitaka Taik, a Gu (cave) style temple

The cave-like interior of Nanhpaya temple, c. 12th century, Pagan, Myanmar



The Gu, as a metaphor for caves, found yet another manifestation in the design of large underground monasteries in Pagan. Excavations of various underground monasteries have revealed a planning pattern wherein a large rectangular court is dug down into the earth emulating the quadrangular courts of brick monasteries. The court appears to have been used for congregation and is reached by a flight of steps leading down from the entrance hall which is the only building built above ground. Tunnels are dug through the vertical face of the court deep into the ground, leading to a network of interconnecting tunnels and cells.

Although simpler configurations of underground monasteries in Pagan do exist, their designs are best represented in the monasteries of Taung-Kyanzittha Umin and Kyanzittha-Umin.

ABOVE

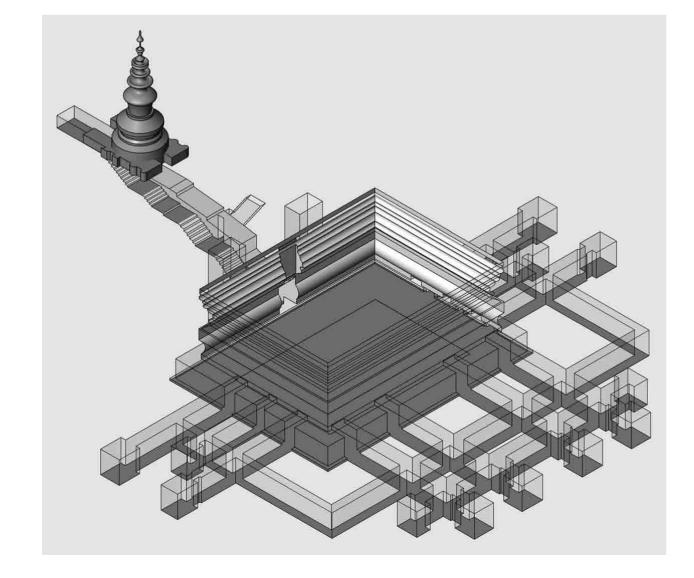
The entrance hall to the underground caves of Taung-Kyanzittha Umin, 14th century, Pagan, Myanmar

RIGHT

Architectural model of Kyanzittha-Umin

OPPOSITE PAGE

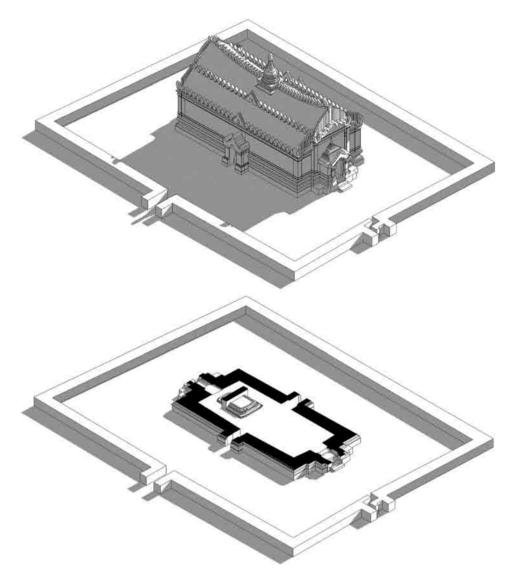
The long, dimly lit corridors of Kyanzittha-Umin underground monastery are decorated with frescoes, 13th century, Pagan, Myanmar





ORDINATION HALLS

Temples as ritual centres become the focus around which other buildings serving the requirement of the monastic traditions of the faith emerge. A wide range of buildings catering to the secular and congregational requirements of the Sangha are found amongst the temples of Pagan.



The ordination hall in Myanmar was called Thein and corresponds to the Ubosot or Bot of Thailand. The Upali Thein in Pagan, first built in the 13th century and reconstructed in the 18th century, is a rare building specifically designed for the function of ordination of monks, in accordance with Theravada practices. It was built to establish the correct ordination practices of the reform movement introduced from Sri Lanka.

The Upali Thein stands within a demarcated enclosure and entry into the Thein is gained through doors provided in the middle of each wall of the rectangular plan. The building is made up of a large central hall, oriented east-west, with the main entrance on the eastern face. At the western end of the hall is a screen wall against which there are two seated Buddhas, one facing east (i.e. the entrance to the hall) and the other, on the other side of the screen wall, facing west. The roof of the hall is vaulted, with its entire surface, and the walls filled with colourful frescos. The design of the building embodies the requirements of the ordination ritual by providing a space with the main entrance at one end, and the Buddha as the focal point at the other, thereby allowing the congregation to be aligned in a definite direction, the whole scheme recalling the layout of the Karle caves in India.

ABOVE Architectural model of Upali Thein, an ordination hall

This building, like most monuments in Pagan, stands in isolation today, but it would not be wrong to assume that the space around the main ritualistic buildings in such an enclosure would have been filled with other structures serving the secular needs of the monastic establishment. It was not uncommon to find numerous single-roomed structures, serving as monasteries, spread across the spaces between the temples and other buildings in monastic complexes.

MONASTERIES

The oldest remains of Buddhist monasteries in Myanmar are found in the ancient Pyu cities. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, at Peikthano, the remains of a small monastic establishment dating from the 4th century have been found, comprising a monastery building, a Stupa and a shrine. The monastery, referred to as KKG2, is constructed of brick and is a rectangular structure having a row of eight cells opening into a corridor, with an entrance hall located in the middle of its length. The simple morphology bearing close similarity to the monasteries at Nagarjunakonda in India was succeeded by many other typologies of monastery designs in Myanmar.

Pagan had the widest range of building types constructed for the Buddhist monastic institution, the Sangha. They varied in design from single-room monastic structures to large, consolidated wooden monasteries. The Indian courtyard-type monastery is also seen in some instances: examples include the Somingyi monastery, the monastery north of the Myinkaba Kubyauk-Gyi and the Tamani group in Pagan.

SINGLE-ROOMED STRUCTURES

Dotted across large monastic enclosures, or sometimes present as stand-alone units, a single-roomed structure at its most basic was a rectangular brick building with a flat roof. Attached to the front wall was a wooden porch with a sloping tiled roof. On the front wall, which was one of the longer sides, there was a niche in the centre, which housed an image of the Buddha. Two doorways were placed symmetrically on either side of this niche. Each lateral wall had a single doorway.

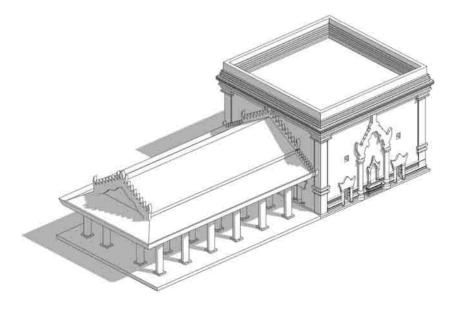
Such a structure served as a monastery that housed a single monk or maybe a small number of monks. The wooden porch was used for congregational activity such as preaching to the laity. This design facilitated the monk and the laity coming into contact without the latter encroaching on the privacy of the monk.

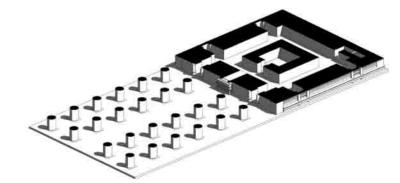
This model was unique to Pagan and served as the architectural prototype for development of many variations of the theme: for example, the building in some cases became larger to accommodate more than a single room, and sometimes, it was built as a two-storied structure.

Architectural model of Shin-bome Kyaung monastic building

One of these variations can be seen in the monastic building Shin-bo-me Kyaung of the Shin-bo-me complex. A central Cella is introduced within the single room creating a corridor space around the central space. The central cell perhaps served as a shrine or a storage space for scriptures, much like the library building of Pitaka Taik. There are two floors to the brick building, with the floor of the upper storey constructed in timber and reached through a narrow staircase enclosed within the wall. The structure is supported by a system of masonry arches and vaults. Wood as a construction material was often used in masonry structures – the front portico of several monastic buildings including the Shin-bo-me Kyaung was constructed in timber.

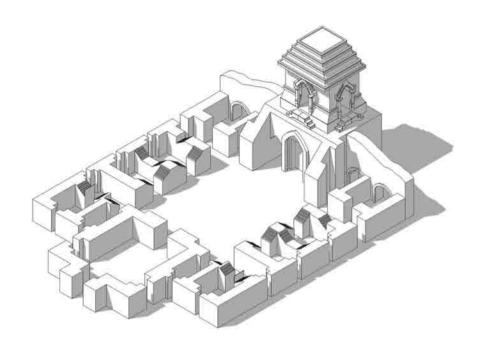
In some monasteries the central Cella rose up to another floor over the flat roof of the terrace in the form of a masonry tower derived from the wooden spire form of a Pyatthat (a tower made up of a series of roofs, diminishing in size going up).

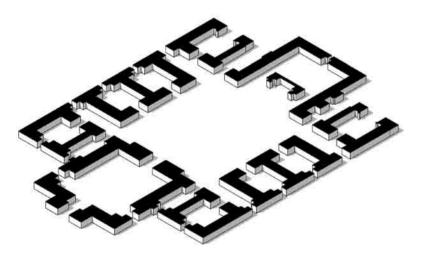




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ABOVE Architectural model of Somingyi monastery

BELOW (LEFT & RIGHT) The ruins of Somingyi monastery, 12th century, Pagan, Myanmar



THE COURTYARD PLAN

Pagan also had several monasteries with a courtyard plan, similar to the ancient monasteries at Gandhara (in present-day Pakistan-Afghanistan) and Nalanda in India. The Somingyi monastery is an example of this.

It is configured around a rectangular courtyard lined with rooms along its periphery, which open directly into the courtyard with no other openings towards the outside. A larger room is provided at the entrance along the longer axis that was perhaps used for congregation. Directly opposite the entrance, across the courtyard, is the main shrine encircled by a circumambulation space, the Pradakshina path.

Though the design is similar to the monastery layouts at Nalanda, there are certain variations in the plan.

The courtyard-type monasteries in Pagan share the architectural morphology and construction techniques of those at Nalanda and Ratnagiri in India: they are brick structures with monastic cells distributed around an opento-sky courtyard. Such brick monasteries in Pagan were referred to as Kala Kyaung, or 'Indian monastery', the literal meaning of Kala being 'dark', referring to the dark complexion of Indians, who either built or lived in them.

An architectural typology of brick monasteries thus indicates the transfer of ideas and techniques of brick construction across cultural and geographical divides the architectural scheme of the Somingyi in Pagan, its dimensions, and construction system, were governed by the traditions of brick construction that existed in far-off Gandhara, Ratnagiri and Nalanda.



THE PHENOMENAL USE OF BRICK

Brick as a preferred choice of construction material was popular all over southeast Asia, but it dominated the construction of religious monuments in Pagan. Finger-marked bricks that were used for the construction of their city walls and buildings have been excavated from the early settlements of the Pyus. The lack of easy availability of stone, and the plentiful supply of resources to make bricks, promoted it as the principal building material in Myanmar. Brick coated with stucco was the norm. Brick continues to be made in present-day Pagan, and there are large kilns located near the Irrawaddy and elsewhere too.

Resin from a local tree was used as the bonding material in brick buildings. Sandstone was used, albeit sparingly, usually for structural reinforcement or for external facing. Laterite was also used in Pagan. Brick sizes varied quite a bit, and it was not uncommon for bricks of more than one size to be used in the same monument. At the height of the building frenzy in Pagan, a few million bricks were produced per day by some accounts!

Bricks lent themselves to use in sophisticated arches and vaults, and indeed, as mentioned before, the vaulting techniques employed in Pagan were nonpareil. These architectural features figured extensively in the early religious architecture of Myanmar (and almost nowhere else in the region). With these highly developed vaults that could span large spaces and support huge masonry super structures, distinct interior spaces that could be modulated in scale and height to create spaces for specific doctrinal needs could be designed.

Also, the ability to use a wide variety of vaulting systems over corridors around a central core allowed the Burmese to experiment with yet another type of monument design in Pagan - the very unique pentagonal monuments, described in the following section.



Sulamani temple, 1183, the brickwork throughout is considered some of the best in Pagan, Myanmar





PENTAGONAL MONUMENTS

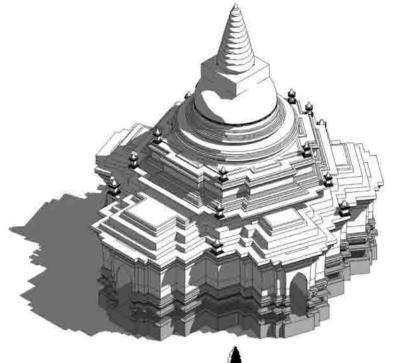
Most monuments in Pagan were based on square or rectangular plans. Temples based on the old Pyu Lei-myet-hna or four-faced type allowed for the placement of four Buddha images - these represented the images of the Buddhas of the present world cycle that have already attained enlightenment - Kakusandha, Konagamana and Kassapa of the distant past, and the historic Buddha Gotama, each facing one of the four cardinal points.

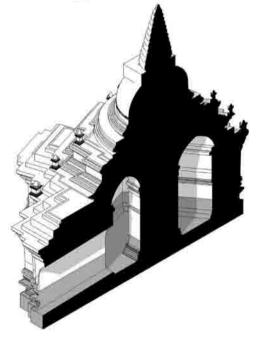
To allow the Buddha of the future, Maitreya or Metteya, to also be represented, the architects of Pagan came up with a very unique solution monuments based on a hitherto unseen pentagonal plan. Such monuments were not seen elsewhere in Myanmar, and indeed, remain rather exceptional in the world of architecture. These were known as the Nga-myet-hna or five-faced monuments.

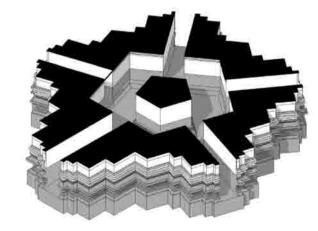
The superior brick vaulting techniques that had been perfected by the builders of Pagan made it possible to translate religious concepts into these amazingly ingenious architectural forms.

Various examples of pentagonal monuments of differing scales and sizes such as the Dhammayazika and Ein-yar Kyaung are found in Pagan. Two different structural types – the high-vaulted corridor and high-vaulted shrine – exist.

In some monuments, although the pentagonal form is followed, there is only one principal Buddha image instead of the usual five.



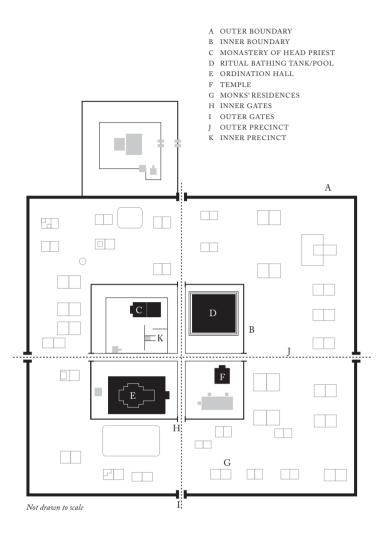




Architectural model of Ein-yar Kyaung

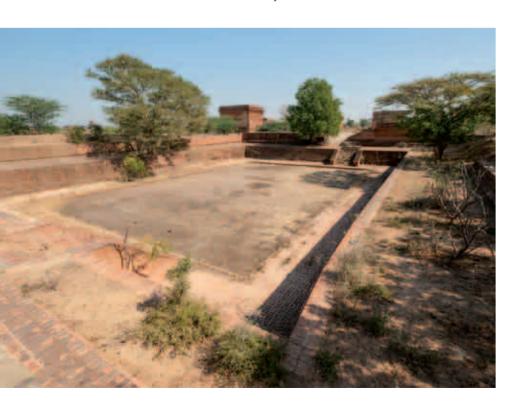
OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) Ein-yar Kyaung, c. 1242, Pagan, Myanmar

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM) Ein-yar Kyaung, a five-faced monument allowed for the placement of five Buddha images (two shown here) on each of the five sides or wall faces



ABOVE Plan of Hsin-byu-shin monastic complex

The ritual bathing tank or pool in Hsin-byu-shin monastic complex, 14th century, Pagan, Myanmar



THE SRI LANKAN INFLUENCE

In 1070, King Vijayabahu of Sri Lanka managed to defeat the invading Cholas of south India, in the process freeing Buddhism in the island kingdom from Hindu persecution. In order to cleanse the ritualistic practices and restore Buddhism to its former glory, he asked king Anawrahta of Pagan for monks and scriptures. Anawrahta gladly obliged and in return asked for the Buddha's tooth relic. As the holy relic is believed to miraculously multiply on its own, a copy of the holy relic was sent to Pagan, which was enshrined in the Shwezigon Pagoda.

The renewed relationship between the two Theravada kingdoms of Sri Lanka and Pagan was an enduring one. In the ensuing years of the Burmese period, the Mon influence waned while the Sinhalese influence increased. Modelling monastic complexes such as the Hsin-byu-shin on the Pabbata-vihara model of Sri Lanka was one manifestation of this. The Pabbata-vihara are enclosed monastic precincts.

The monastic complex of Hsin-byu-shin in Pagan consisted of two large rectangular enclosures, one within the other, with two axial pathways running in both directions from the centre dividing the central enclosure into four quarters. The inner enclosure constituted the ritual precincts within which important buildings such as the temple, ordination hall, the abbot's monastery and the ritual bathing tank or pool were located. The outer enclosure was the secular space, where numerous monasteries with wooden porticos serving as residences for the monks were located.

Unlike the random layouts of monasteries around principal Stupas and temples, which was the practice earlier, the planning of this type of monastic compound establishes a formal precinct with a distinct hierarchy of spaces.

MAHABODHI - COPY OF AN INDIAN PARADIGMATIC MODEL

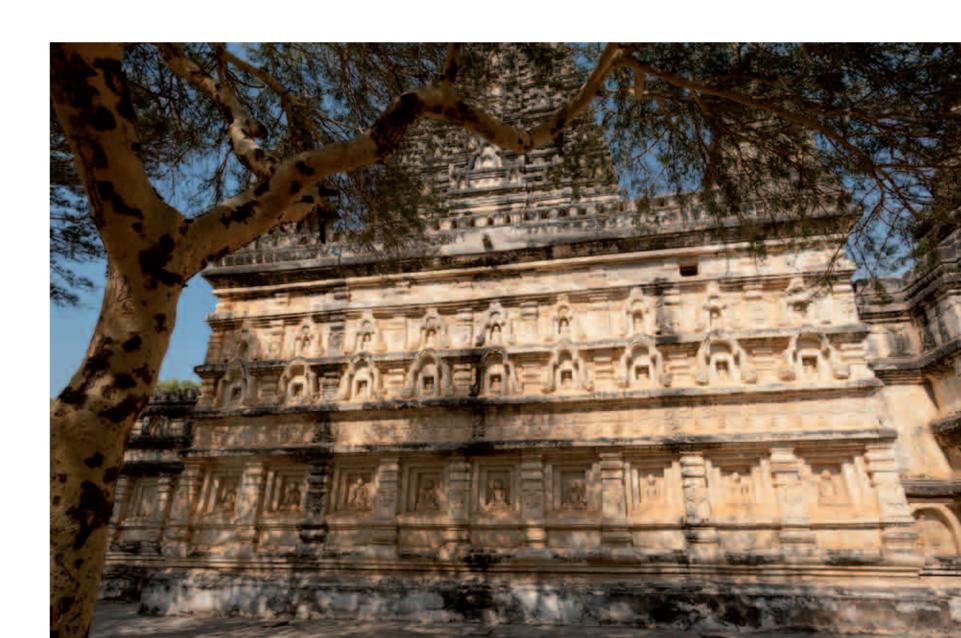
The Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya, India, commemorates the place where the Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment under a Bodhi or ficus tree. It is a revered monument visited by Buddhists from all over the world. The temple was originally built in the 3rd century BCE by emperor Asoka, and the present structure dates from the 5th or 6th century.

The religious significance of the Mahabodhi temple makes it a paradigmatic symbol of the faith, and its presence in far-flung lands was established by transplanting its original architectural form into those regions.

In Myanmar too, the Buddhist devout were familiar with Bodhgaya and the Mahabodhi. In fact, the Buddhist fervour in Pagan actually benefitted India, the home of Buddhism: at a time that saw the decline of the faith in the country of its birth, King Kyanzittha of Pagan (r. 1084–1112) is credited with having helped in the restoration of the Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya.

The Mahabodhi temple in Pagan was built possibly in the early 13th century, and it was an attempt at the faithful transfer of the form of the original in India. This trend continued and more Mahabodhis were built in Myanmar and elsewhere in the region. One was in Pegu sometime around 1470. A more recent one was in the precincts of the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. Whilst the accuracy of the form of the Mahabodhi temple built in distant regions is often lost in translation, it succinctly defines the global character of the sacred geography of the Buddhist world.

Mahabodhi temple with niches containing over 450 images of the Buddha, early 13th century, Pagan, Myanmar



RESURGENCE OF WOOD AND WOODEN MONASTERIES

Wood as a building material in Myanmar was used in very early times, as early as perhaps the 2nd or even 5th century BCE. The archaeological ruins of the Pyu settlements bear evidence to its use along with bricks, and interestingly, it re-acquired its pre-eminence after the 13th century.

Wooden monasteries known as Hpon-gyi Kyaung are indeed the most native buildings of Buddhist architecture in Myanmar, built by the Buddhist community in both rural and urban areas. The native design elements of wooden monasteries and the indigenous plan of the single roomed monastery with a front portico, delineating private and public spaces along a linear axis, evolved into the plans of the wooden monasteries that were built across Myanmar during the years following the decline of Pagan.

The design of the Hpon-gyi Kyaung consolidates all the functional components of Buddhist monastic life into a single unified plan. Spaces for functions of ideation, meditation, ritual and living are distributed in a linear fashion as shrine chamber, halls and smaller rooms on a floor that is raised above the ground on stilts. The building form comprises elaborately carved wooden structures with distinct pyramidal multi-tiered roofs, creating a skyline of soaring wooden spires. Though the building is a single composite unit, its form appears to be constituted of several wooden structures arranged in linear fashion. Among the several wooden monasteries constructed, the Shwe-in-bin and Shwe-nan-daw, both in Mandalay, are outstanding examples of buildings carved out of Burmese teak.

The architecture of the wooden monastery signals the return of traditional systems of architecture in the region: buildings raised on wooden stilts and built entirely of wood. The architecture of Buddhist monasteries in Myanmar can be seen to have gone through a process of Indigenization, where Indian concepts of the courtyard-type brick monasteries were eventually abandoned for the vernacular vocabulary of the local wooden structures.

Shwe-in-bin, 1895, Mandalay,

OPPOSITE PAGE

Myanmar

Interior view of gilded wooden pillars, walls and roofs adorned with carvings, Shwe-nan-daw, c. 19th century, Mandalay, Myanmar





HSINBYUME - A REPRESENTATION OF MOUNT MERU

In Buddhist cosmology, Mount Meru or Mount Sumeru was at the centre of the universe, which was surrounded by seven seas and seven mountain ranges in concentric rings. In the design of many a Buddhist monument, the symbolism of Mount Meru played a big role. This is borne out by the design of many Stupas and temples in the Pagan period.

The Hsinbyume Pagoda represents a late variation of the theme of Mount Meru. Located in Mingun in Mandalay and built by King Bagyidaw (r. 1819–1837), in memory of his favourite wife Princess Hsinbyume, it was restored in the time of King Mindon (r. 1853–1878).

Mount Meru and its seven mountain ranges are represented as seven circular terraces rising towards a central Pagoda. The terraces decrease in size as they rise up, and are topped with large parapets in the shape of undulating arches, possibly symbolizing the seven seas separating the mountain ranges. The rhythmic formation of the arched parapets moving upwards is interrupted by stairways with entrance doorways.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Hsinbyume Pagoda, c. 19th
century, Mingun, Mandalay,

BELOW

Myanmar

Hsinbyume Pagoda, close-up of its seven stunning white wave-shaped



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KUTHODAW - SCRIPTURES IN STONE

The symbolism of the architectural form combined with the significance of the sacred scriptures of Theravada Buddhism to produce a unique monument – the Kuthodaw Pagoda, part of a complex built in Mandalay around 1859.

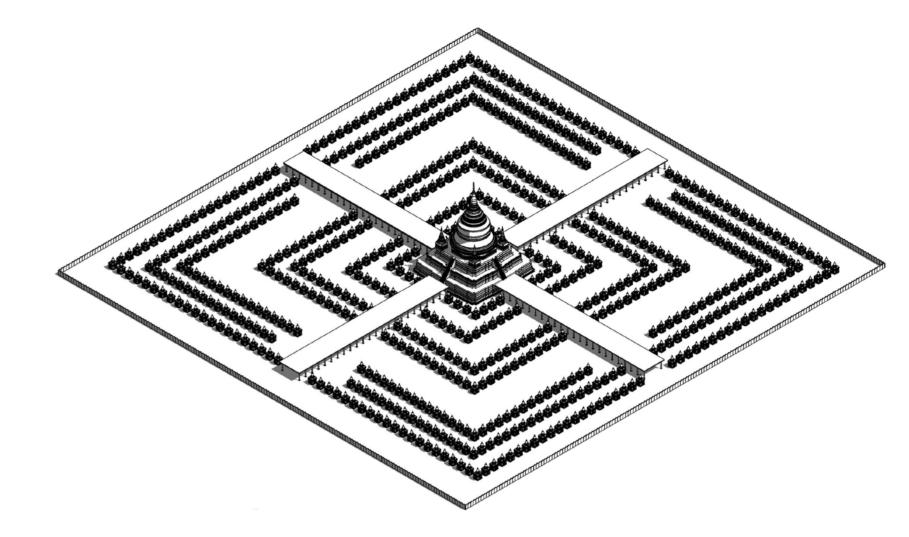
Although there are several relics interred within the Stupa, the Kuthodaw is best known for the 729 marble slabs on which is engraved the complete Tripitaka. The complex comprises 729 temple shrines, arranged in Mandalic formation, within three concentric square compounds around the main Stupa. Each shrine houses a marble stone slab on both sides of which are incised characters, originally filled with gold but now with ink. The set of 729 represent the complete text of the Tripitaka. The slabs run in a clockwise order, the same direction as ritual circumambulation. It took over 7 years to engrave these 729 marble slabs.

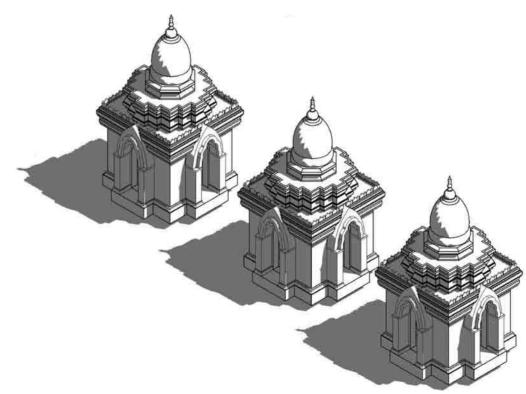
The arrangement of the shrines recalls the Borobudur and Candi Sewu temples in Indonesia, where there is a similar arrangement of shrines in a Mandala-like formation.

The complex was sponsored by King Mindon (r. 1853-1878) in order to gain merit, and is considered the world's largest 'book'; very likely the world's heaviest too!

Kuthodaw Pagoda complex, surrounded by star flower trees, c. 1859, Mandalay, Myanmar









Architectural model of Kuthodaw Pagoda complex its shrines arranged in a Mandala-like formation

Architectural model of shrines

Some of the 729 individual shrines housing the marble stone slabs – the set of 729 representing the Tripitaka

PAGES 74-75 View of Pagan's sacred landscape, dotted with Stupas and monuments



MANUHA

11TH CENTURY PAGAN

The story of the Manuha temple is linked to the historic war between the Burmese kingdom of Pagan and the Mon kingdom of Thaton in 1057. The king of Pagan, Anawrahta invaded the Mon capital Thaton, to acquire the Pali Buddhist canon, the Tripitaka and returned victorious to Pagan, bringing along as prisoner the Mon king, Manuha, and a number of craftsmen, scribes, monks and scholars. Though the Mons were defeated, their material culture was introduced into Pagan and numerous monuments were built, drawing upon Mon traditions. Pyu influences were already present at the time in Pagan. The construction of the Manuha temple is attributed to the Mon king, Manuha, during his time of captivity in Pagan.

The Manuha temple consists of three halls in the front and a long and narrow hall at the rear, each enshrining large statues of the Buddha in different hand postures, or Mudras. A large central hall with a smaller one on either side, make up the three halls in the front. The central hall is an approximate square with a high vaulted ceiling, while the side halls are similar but only slightly smaller. Each of these halls houses large statues of the Buddha in Bhumisparsha Mudra that fills up almost entirely the interior space. Small windows provided high above in the vaulted ceiling filter light onto the statue. The rear hall, directly behind the three front halls, is long and narrow with a low vaulted ceiling, extending to the combined width of the three front halls. A huge statue of the Buddha in the reclining position depicting the Parinibbana scene, is enshrined along the length of the hall. The size of the halls is just enough to accommodate the statues: the interior space is almost entirely filled with the statues of the Buddha, and this creates the sense of a constrictive space. According to the 'Glass Palace Chronicles', this constrictive space is supposed to have been intentionally created by Manuha to convey the sense of captivity.

The external form of the temple is resolved by two cuboids placed over each other, the smaller one above the other. The roof is crowned with a finial and the parapets of the cuboids are lined with smaller towers and Stupas. The pediment over the main entrance is in the form of a Makara-torana.



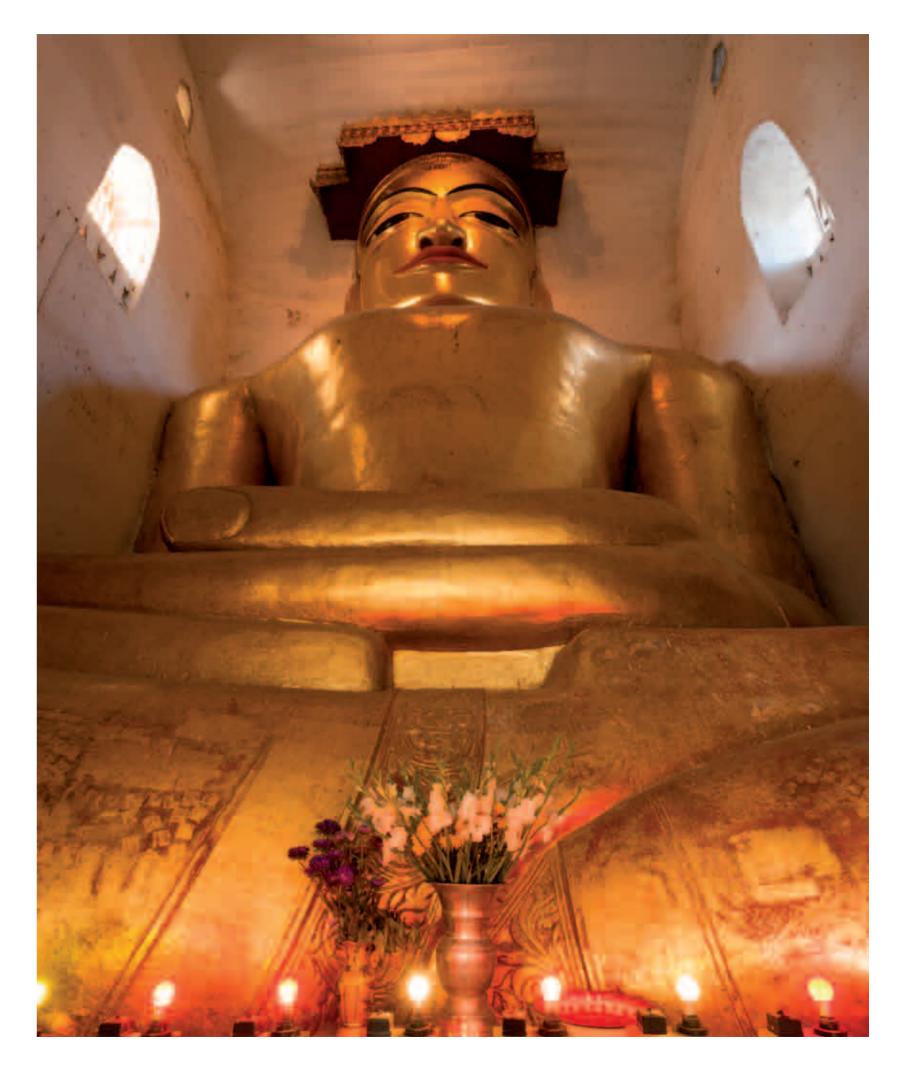


ABOVE (TOP)
Exterior view of Manuha temple

ABOVE

Reclining Buddha in the rear hall of Manuha temple

OPPOSITE PAGE
The gigantic seated Buddha in the central hall of Manuha temple



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PITAKA TAIK

11TH CENTURY DUKKANTHEIN, PAGAN

The significance of the Pitaka Taik is that, as the repository of where, in order to aid in the preservation of the sacred Buddhist the Tripitaka over which the Burman-Mon war was waged, it Sutra woodcuts it stored, several architectural features were stands as the architectural symbol of the historic episode as well expressly incorporated. as marks the first library building among the thousands of other Buddhist monuments in Pagan. Pitaka Taik, literally means the Pitaka Taik was extensively renovated in the 18th century. 'library of Buddhist scriptures'. It was built by King Anawrahta to house the 30 sets of the Tripitaka that he brought back from the conquest of Thaton in 1057. Shin Arahan, the main Buddhist evangelist in Pagan is credited with promoting the idea of the construction of the library.

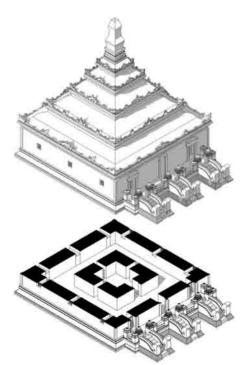
This was the beginning of scriptural traditions in Pagan, and Buddhist manuscripts were scarce and expensive. It has been said that the cost of building the library was less than that of procuring the manuscripts. Besides being scarce, the manuscripts were written on palm leaves making them extremely delicate and easily perishable. The building for housing them therefore had to be designed to create a suitable environment for their preservation. Appropriate protection from the elements, rain and harsh sun, as well as the periodic outbreaks of fire, were the essential requirements of a library structure.

The design response to the demanding requirements is adapted from the cave-type structure, or Gu, of the Pagan architectural tradition. A central square Cella for the housing of the scriptures is surrounded by an ambulatory space. Access into the building is gained via three entrance doors provided in the wall on the eastern side. On each of the north, west and south facing walls, which form the external walls of the ambulatory space, three openings made of ornamentally carved and perforated stone slabs regulate the amount of light entering the building.

Each side of the square plan, including the central Cella and the ambulatory space, measures about 15.5 metres. The building rises in the exterior in a stepped pyramidal formation that is capped with a tower at the top.

It is probably worth mentioning that the Pitaka Taik, though intended to be a safe repository of precious manuscripts, was designed using the very same building typologies applied to other buildings of the time in Pagan. This is in contrast to the storage halls in the Haeinsa temple in South Korea for instance,

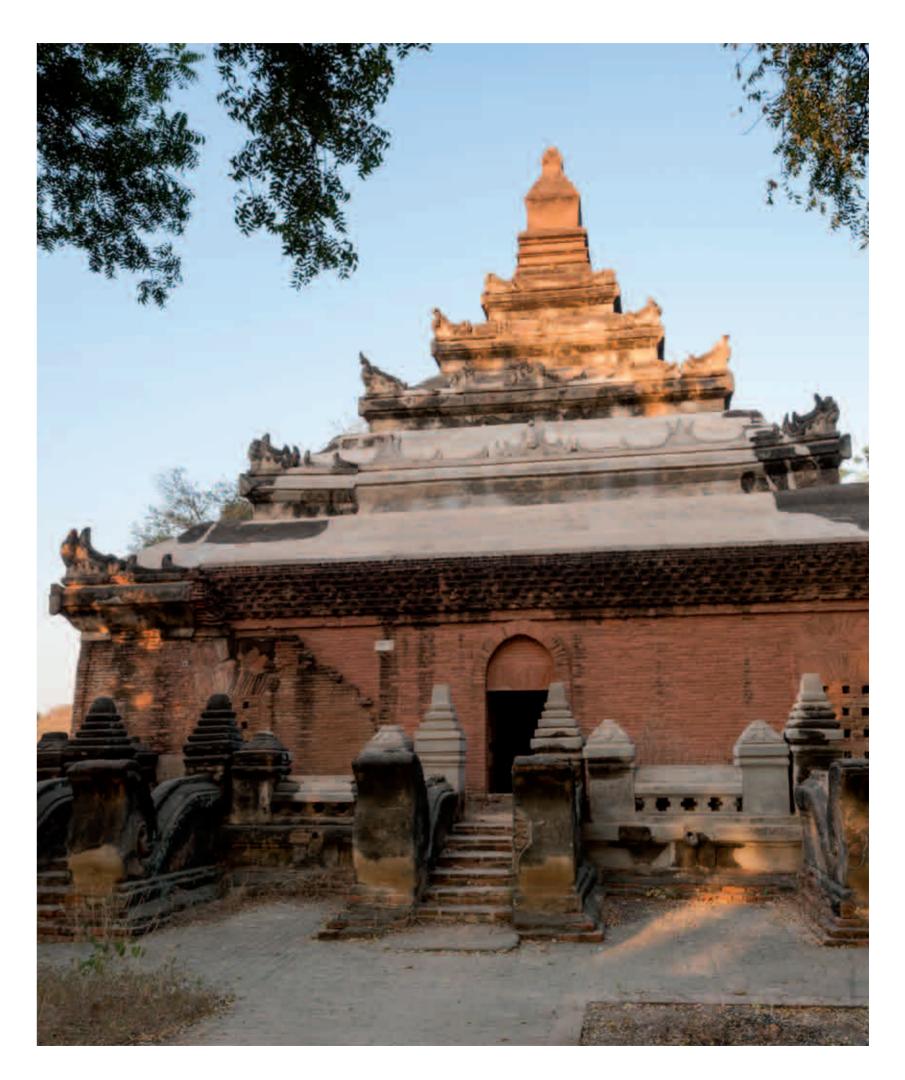




Close-up of interior Cella, Pitaka Taik

Architectural model of Pitaka Taik

Pitaka Taik, the Gu style library, the repository of the Buddhist



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ANANDA

LATE 11TH OR EARLY 12TH CENTURY PAGAN

Mon and Pyu systems of temple design where a central core rises to form the superstructure, successfully achieves the perfect Of all the construction systems that evolved in the building of balance of beauty, utility and strength in its design.

Its architecture is also the finest example of unity in design of achieved in Myanmar. The structure of the Ananda temple uses form, technology and art coming together to embody ritual, devotion and narration of the Buddhist faith in a building. The halls, some of them spanning spaces as large as 8 metres. Ananda, through the symbolic form of its design and visual imagery of its art, also served as an instructional medium for Over the corridors are half-barrel vaults with diaphragm arches Theravada Buddhist proselytization in times when there was a that pass the thrust of the superstructure to the ground through general decline in the following of Buddhism in southeast Asia. the thick masonry walls. The vaulted structure of the corridors, Simultaneously, as was the case with a number of monuments and the central core support the main superstructure above, in Pagan, the narrative program of the building attempts to comprising the pyramidal form of receding terraces surmounted establish the king as the upholder of the law, and the purifier by the main spire, or Shikhara. and recorder of the doctrine, thereby attributing to him divine kingship. Finally, the design intention to combine the notions The three levels of terraces along with bridging arches help of the cave, Gu, and the mythical mountain, Meru or Sumeru, contain the thrust of the Shikhara above. Externally, what into a single building form in Pagan Buddhist architecture is one observes are the lines of terrace mouldings. The terraces achieved in the building of the Ananda temple.

1783, and rebuilt once again in 1975 after it was damaged in buildings in Pagan.

Udayagiri hill in Orissa, India. An alternative version says that beauty of the structures in the monks' narration that he decided diminish in width from bottom to top. to construct the Ananda temple as an inspired translation of the idea of the caves.

The plan of the temple is based on a cruciform shape, consisting of a square central core surrounded by two square ambulatory

Arguably the best known of the thousands of Buddhist corridors with porticos or entrance halls extending outwards on monuments in Pagan, the Ananda temple is significant both for all four sides as the four arms of the cross. The central core is a its architecture and place in the cultural history of Buddhism in square masonry block that rises above to support the main spire, the region. The culmination of the early Buddhist architectural or the Shikhara. The two concentric corridors encircling the centraditions in Myanmar, the Ananda, drawing from the ancient tral core create double circumambulation or Pradakshina paths.

> monuments in southeast Asia, the extensive and sophisticated use of arches and vaults - to majestic effect, one may add - was only vaults over the spaces of the double corridors and the entrance

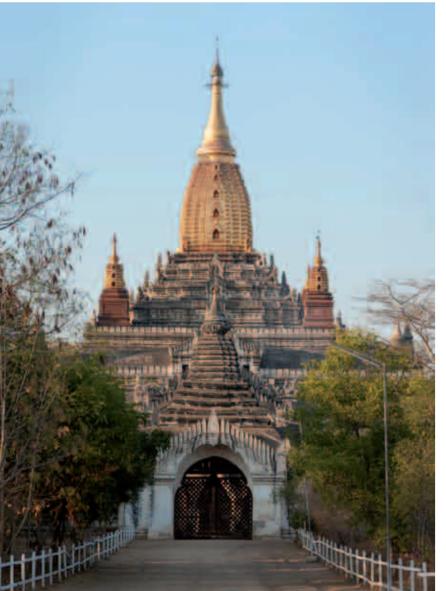
encircling the main spire decrease in height from bottom to top while the corner spires remain the same size making Built in the late 11th or early 12th century in old Pagan, possibly them appear larger, a perspective effect employed often in the by King Kyanzittha (r. 1084–1113), the Ananda was restored in architecture in Pagan. Each exterior facade thus formed is a balanced composition of pediments, moving up through the an earthquake. Since then, it has been one of the best preserved terraces to meet the tower spire. Secondary spires of smaller sizes are placed at the corners of the encircling terraces. The forms of the spires can be traced to two distinct traditions: the Legend has it that eight monks from India who were hosted by main spire or Shikhara is square in plan rising as a pyramidal the king in his palace described to him the cave temples of the form with horizontal ribs articulating the surface, recalling the Shikhara from Indo-Aryan temples, while the secondary spires it was the sacred Nandmula cave in the Himalayas that they recall the Buddhist bell-shaped Stupa. The Shikhara consists talked about. In any event, the king was so fascinated by the of five niches on each of its four sides and its horizontal bands

> OPPOSITE PAGE The main spire, or Shikhara of Ananda



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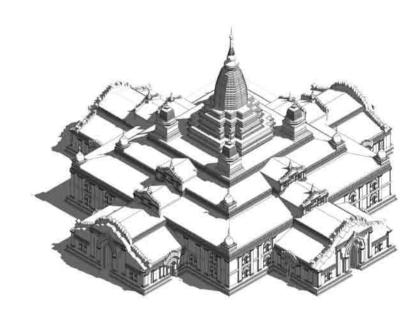


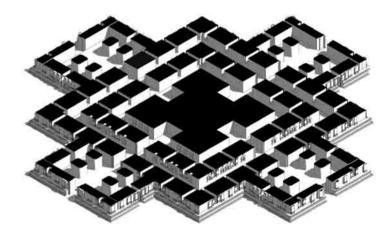
The scale of the Ananda temple is monumental: the main temple building is positioned at the centre of a large square enclosure surrounded by a wall. The width of the cruciform plan excluding its entrance porticos is nearly 60 metres and the height to the top of the spire is about 55 metres. Though the temple is designed as a large monument of grand proportions, its architectural character lies not so much in its dimensions, but in the composition of its parts and the relationship between its vertical and horizontal elements.

The large central core dominates the interior space and on each of its four sides is a colossal image of a standing Buddha, in a recess. The Buddhas, made of wood, are about nine metres high and represent the four Buddhas of this temporal cycle: Kakusandha, Konagamana, Kassapa and Gotama. Two are thought to be original, whereas the other two were restored in the 18th century. The original two, representing Kakusandha and Kassapa are in the Dharmacakra Mudra. Windows are positioned above in the body of the Shikhara such that a beam of light is dramatically diffused down onto the face of the Buddhas.

Elaborate visual imagery was applied to both the interior and exterior surfaces of the temple, with the intent to represent and promote the faith. Indeed, the Ananda temple was built to reaffirm the establishment of Theravada Buddhism as the state religion of Pagan. There are 552 plaques, showing the army of Mara and the procession of the gods, set at the base of the outer wall on all four faces of the temple, while nearly 1000 indented panels containing glazed terracotta plaques showing the Jataka scenes are set on the outer wall at the higher levels of the terraces. There were many stone images inside the temple, and the interior walls, now white washed, were once covered with extensive wall paintings. The overwhelming amount of art attached to the building, arranged in a narrative sequence, combined with the architectural form of the temple serve as an instructional and proselytizing tool.

Though the Ananda temple is regarded as one of the most refined examples of Buddhist temples, there are in Pagan various other splendid temples too, of similar design typology, employing a similar architectural vocabulary, construction details and intent, such as the Sulamani, Thatbyinnyu and Gawdawpalin. However, the Ananda is unique in its perfectly symmetrical plan. It was also probably the first temple to be built in Pagan on such an immense scale.





Architectural model of Ananda

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) Exterior view of Ananda temple, late 11th or early 12th century, Pagan, Myanmar

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM LEFT) The perfectly symmetrical and immense structure of Ananda

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM RIGHT) One of the four imposing standing Buddhas in the interior of Ananda temple

SHWEZIGON

11TH-12TH CENTURY PAGAN

the shrines of the entire pantheon of the thirty-seven Nat and then covered with a green glaze. spirits within its enclosure, symbolizing the synthesis of native the construction of the Stupa is believed to have justified only stone Stupa in Pagan, all others being made of brick. the inclusion of the Nat shrines in Buddhist monuments by declaring 'men will not come for the sake of a new faith. Let Four small shrines referred to as 'perfumed chambers', or purification of Buddhism that was initiated by the early kings of Pagan.

by King Anawrahta (r. 1044-1077) around 1059-1060, and when a white elephant carrying the tooth relic on its back was The Ananda temple is an excellent example. let loose, it chose to rest there, and that spot was interpreted as an auspicious location.

the architecture of the Shwezigon embodies the cosmological symbolism of Mount Sumeru. The form of the Pagoda is composed of three square terraces, an octagonal terrace and a circular terrace rising pyramidally, on top of which rests the dome in the form of an inverted bell capped by a finial, the Hti. The square terraces recede as they rise upwards, creating space for circumambulation, or Pradakshina, at each level. The octagonal terrace provides the transition from the geometry of the square terraces to that of the circular one on which the dome rests.

The receding square terraces are reached by median stairways located at each of the four cardinal directions. Smaller spires

The Shwezigon Stupa is one of the most sacred Buddhist with circular form articulate the corners and increase in size monuments built in Myanmar. It has special sanctity in the with each rising terrace. The walls of the three square terraces Buddhist world because it houses the holy relics of the Buddha are lined with niches that house plaques depicting the Jataka including a tooth-relic from Sri Lanka and his frontlet bone tales of Buddhism in bas-relief. There are 597 niches and 420 from Prome. The Pagoda is also revered because it incorporates surviving plaques. They appear to have been carved out of stone

Burmese religious beliefs with Buddhism. King Anawrahta The width of the Stupa at the base is about 48 metres which who is credited by the Chronicles as having commenced equals its total height. The Shwezigon is unique in that it is the

them come for their old gods and gradually they will be won Gandhakuti, are located along the cardinal directions right over'. It was also seen as the symbol of the triumph of the opposite the median stairways. The shrines open outwards and have a tall roof in the form of a temple Shikhara. Housed within these structures are 3.3 metre-high gilded metal standing statues of the four Buddhas of this time era - Kakusandha, Konagamana, It is believed that the construction of the Stupa was started Kassapa and Gotama, in the posture of Vitarkamudra, one statue in each shrine. This arrangement of the 'perfumed chambers' is completed only after his death by King Kyanzittha (r. 1084– a refinement over the earlier Stupa, Shwe-san-daw, where the 1112). It was originally named 'Nirbbana-mula-bajra-parya- chambers were placed at random. This arrangement of four mahaceti', or 'the great Caitya, circle of Adamant, Nirvana's root.' Buddhas, facing each of the cardinal directions around a square Legend states that the site for the Stupa was chosen because structure was a recurrent theme in the monuments of Pagan.

Various shrines and Stupas have been added over the years within this compound. The architecture of the Shwezigon The Shwezigon is located in the centre of an enclosed precinct created a vigorous and archaic form that became a prototype that has four gates, one on each side. Like other Buddhist Stupas, for most large Stupas that were built in Pagan in later years, till around the mid-13th century.

> OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) Shwezigon Stupa, with its refined bell-shaped dome; the only stone Stupa in Pagan

OPPOSITE PAGE (CENTRE LEFT) Close-up of lion statues at the

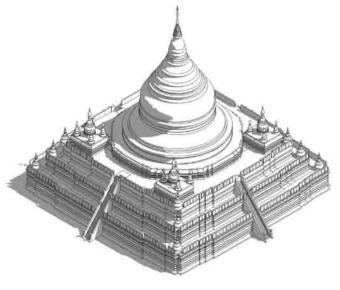
OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM LEFT) Median stairway leading up to the top terrace

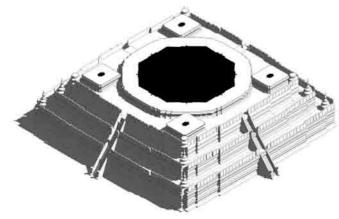
OPPOSITE PAGE (RIGHT) Architectural model of Shwezigon











THE GOLDEN LANDS





VIETNAM



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THE 13TH TO THE 15TH CENTURIES CE – THE TRAN DYNASTY

THE 15TH TO THE 16TH CENTURIES – THE REVIVAL OF CONFUCIANISM THE LE AND MAC DYNASTIES

THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES – THE RESTORED LE DYNASTY

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BELOW Stylised map of Vietnam

★ NATIONAL CAPITAL

O OTHER CITIES

1. See next page. Thai Nguyen O Dien Bien Phi Bai Tu Long Hai Phong • Halong & Cat Ba RED RIVER DELTA **VIETNAM** CENTRAL HIGHLANDS Buon Ma Thuot o Nha Trang SOUTH Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) • Biên Hòa MEKONG Can The

INTRODUCTION

Vietnam has been known by many names including Giao Chi, Jiaozhou, Lam Ap, Zhenla, Van Lang, Nam Viet, Dai Nam, Ai Lao, Dai Viet, Champa, Tonkin, Annam, Cochin China and Indochina. Names such as Cochin China and Indochina were given by the French and the western world. Indochina literally means 'the land between India and China', and Indochina was perceived by outsiders as a region defined by external cultures. However, local names such as, Dai Viet, given by the Vietnamese themselves meaning 'Big Viet', shows the local population's perception of their country as having a distinctly unique identity of its own. The two dialectical perspectives represent Vietnam's unique position as a land of cultural interchange, and as a region of distinct indigenous traditions, both of which engaged to define its cultural identity, in spite of the years under an external power, first the Chinese in ancient times and later the French in colonial history.

Vietnam's location makes it a unique site of intersection where southeast Asian and Chinese cultural landscapes are joined by land, and Indic cultures are connected by the sea. A narrow and long 1,000 kilometre corridor separates two very fertile river mouths, the Red river delta in the north and the Mekong delta to the south – cradles of the two dominant ancient civilizations of Vietnam – the Viets in the north and the Chams in the south. While the mountains along the land corridor serve as a natural border between Vietnam's eastern neighbours, Laos and Cambodia, its northern border next to China has led to the long ten centuries' period of Sinicization – from the rules of the Han to the Tang dynasties. Maritime trade brought Indic ideas with monks and scholars who travelled with the traders.

While there are many ethnic groups that inhabit the land, the Viets and the Chams, have played the most dominant role in the history of Vietnam. The Viets were influenced by Chinese traditions and adopted the Chinese script, political systems, Confucianism, Taoism, Sinicized Buddhism, art and architecture. The Chams followed Indian cultural traditions and adopted Sanskrit, Hinduism, Buddhism, Indian art and architectural traditions. Over time, the Viets gradually marched southwards and incorporated the southern cultures into their own. The religious and material culture of Vietnam has hence emerged from the complex layering of Chinese, Indic and southeast Asian traditions upon their own indigenous traditions, forging a distinct Vietnam identity.

Indian missionaries including many Theravada monks from India and Sri Lanka landed in Luy Lau¹ (the ancient capital of Nam Viet close to present-day Hanoi) before proceeding onwards to China – to the ancient silk road cities of Yunnan and Luoyang. As a result, Luy Lau became a well-known Buddhist centre. While there is existence of both the Theravada and Mahayana form of Buddhism in Vietnam, it was really only the Mahayana

form of Buddhism, which took firm root in Vietnam. Unlike the other countries of southeast Asia where the Theravada form of Hinayana Buddhism flourished and gave legitimacy to the rulers of empires ranging from the Srivijayan to the Khmers to the Ayutthaya, it was the Mahayana form of Buddhism (from northern Asia) which distinguishes Vietnam from the rest of southeast Asia. From the 6th century, Mahayana Buddhism was brought to Vietnam by Chinese scholars and Bonzes. The influence of Chan Buddhism² and Pure Land Buddhism³, which developed in China became the foundations of the Buddhist philosophy of Vietnam. The Chinese scholar monk, Yijing mentioned in his writings that the city of Thang Long (present-day Hanoi) was already a great intellectual centre of Mahayana Buddhism by the 7th century.

The Red river delta area in the north was the earliest Vietnamese state and in the 2nd century BCE, it was invaded by Chinese armies and absorbed into the Chinese Han empire and Vietnam became its vassal state of JiaoZhi or Nam Viet. The land known as the Bac Ninh province around the ancient citadel city of Luy Lau situated partly in the hills and lowlands of north Vietnam near present-day Hanoi flourished and was the cradle of Vietnamese civilization. Archaeological evidence shows that ancient Vietnamese already lived here thousands of years ago. During this long period of over 2000 years in Vietnam, although not many survive today in their original state (due to the many wars), numerous monuments were built that represent the manifestation of the faith through the distinctly Chinese traditions of design infused with some of the Vietnamese own distinct architectural traditions which developed abundantly in Vietnam.

The architectural traditions derived from Indic sources have been demonstrated in other southeast Asian cultural landscapes, such as Cambodia and Indonesia. Hence, this chapter focuses more on the distinctly Sinic or Chinese traditions of designs that predominantly influenced Buddhist architecture in Vietnam.

BUDDHISM DURING THE MILLENNIUM BEFORE 10TH CENTURY AND INDEPENDENCE

The oldest information about buildings associated with Buddhism is from epigraphic evidence of a monk known as Kusadra who built a temple in the form of a grass hut with bamboo and thatch. The use of impermanent material for construction is the reason that there are no architectural remains of the period surviving today. Among the limited archaeological remains of the first millennium of the Common Era are the foundations of the Stupa known as Nhan Stupa in Hong Long commune, Nam Dan district, Nghe An province. The Stupa was built with bricks and has a square plan with a platform around it, perhaps for circumambulation. Brick tiles with bas-reliefs showing Buddha in different postures found at the excavation suggests that the surface of the brick structure was covered with decorative tiles. The discovery of a relic box establishes the existence of relic Stupas during the early development of Buddhism in Vietnam. Both India and China have shaped the religious culture of Vietnam and by the middle of the millennium, Buddhism was fully integrated into the lives of its people. Vietnam was a popular stop-over for pilgrims travelling between India and China to study Buddhism. Many other Indian monks arrived and introduced Indic religious ideas in Vietnam. While there is no concrete evidence to collaborate this, it has been suggested that the early temples and Stupas in Vietnam may have adopted the square plan that was commonly used in Buddhist monuments in India.

- 2. Chan comes from the Sanskrit word 'dhyana' which means 'meditation' or 'meditative state' and is a school of Mahayana Buddhism developed in China from the 6th century onwards, becoming dominant during the Tang and Song dynasties. After the Song, Chan more or less fused with the Pure Land school of Buddhism. From China, Chan spread south to Vietnam and east to Korea (where it is known as Seon) and, in the 13th century, to Japan, where it became known as Zen.
- 3. Pure Land Buddhism oriented practices and concepts are found within basic Mahayana Buddhist cosmology and form an important component of the Mahayana Buddhist traditions of China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam.

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The Chinese, of course, had the largest and most significant influence on the religious culture of Vietnam and the Chinese brought Confucianism and Taoism along with the Chinese form of Mahayana Buddhism to Vietnam. In Vietnam (as in China), all these three Chinese beliefs are fused together with local indigenous animist beliefs and this is referred to as 'Tam Giao' or the Three Teachings.4 In the 5th century, a Buddhist monk from China, Tan Hong, introduced the Pure Land school of Buddhist practice to Vietnam.

The 6th century saw the first appearance of Vietnamese Thien⁵ Buddhism which is the Vietnamese name of Zen Buddhism and which became by the 10th century, the most influential Buddhist sect in Vietnam. The Thien Buddhist school was founded by an Indian monk, Vinitaruci who travelled to China in 574 CE and then to Vietnam in 580 CE and is associated with the ancient and iconic Dau Pagoda.

Statue of the Lady Dau, Dau Pagoda, c. 3rd century, Bac Ninh, Vietnam

4. Tam Giao, which includes Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, plays a key role in Vietnamese religion.

5. Thien Buddhism is the Vietnamese name for the school of Zen Buddhism. Thien is ultimately derived from the Chinese Chan Zong school. Thien is the same as Chan in Chinese, Dhayana in Sanskrit and Zen in Japanese.

The most ancient Buddhist temple is the Chua Dau or the Dau Pagoda built around the 3rd century. The Dau Pagoda existed among the many structures of the ancient city of the Luy Lau citadel in Bac Ninh province in the north, about 30 kilometres from Hanoi. As in other southeast Asian regions, Buddhism combined with existing local beliefs to develop into a syncretic form of religious practice. The integration of Buddhism with indigenous beliefs and folklore is reflected in an ancient legend regarding the history of the origins of the Chua Dau which associates a Buddhist monk from India with a local maiden. The monk known as Kalacarya or Khau Da La arrived at the ancient city of Luy Lau for some missionary work. While there, this monk accidentally stepped over a sleeping lady and as a result this lady, Man Nuong, became pregnant and gave birth to a girl. Before he returned to India, the monk blessed the baby and placed her inside the trunk of a banyan (or could have been a mulberry) tree by the river. He then told the villagers that there would be a great drought but that the people would be saved if Man Nuong planted his wooden staff into the earth. He gave the staff to her. Then came the great drought and



much suffering. Man Nuong did as she was told and the relieving rains came. After that, the tree fell across the river, right in front of the Dau Pagoda, blocking all passage, but no one was able to move the trunk. However, when Man Nuong came to the river to wash her hands, the tree trunk miraculously moved and drifted ashore to the banks of the Dau Pagoda. From this miracle, Man Nuong asked the villagers to carve out from the tree trunk, four statues as Buddhist guardians. When they did so and cut the tree, the spot where the baby had been placed became a stone slab. The villagers threw this slab out to the river and unfortunately were immediately killed. Realizing this stone was actually the Buddha, they retrieved it from the river, placed it in the Dau Pagoda and asked for mercy. The four statues were named after the local goddesses of cloud, rain, thunder and lightning. The statues were placed in the various pagodas with the statue of the cloud divinity placed at the Dau Pagoda. Later four temples were constructed nearby for all the four goddesses where they were worshipped as Buddhist divinities, confirming the integration of Buddhism with local animist traditions. Rebuilt several times on its ancient site, the first time in the 11th century under the Ly dynasty which probably gave the temple its current distinctive architectural features, and later more extensively under the Tran and the Mac dynasties in the 14th and 16th centuries respectively, the Dau Pagoda, located in a complex of many historic buildings by the Thien Duc river is preserved and restored as a great cultural site.

The design of the temple follows traditional Chinese architectural planning of the Cong typology in which three separate but interconnected halls - the outer front hall, the middle hall and the main upper hall - are enclosed by galleries on both sides (see discussion under Architectural Characteristics where the architectural typology, the Cong and the Noi Cong Ngoai Quoc are described in detail). The entrance to the complex of buildings of the Dau Pagoda was through a traditional three-door gate that does not exist anymore. The main or upper hall houses the statue of Lady Dau, the goddess of the cloud along with her attendants. In front of the temple buldings there is a separate brick tower, known as the Hoa Phong tower, which was built around the 18th century on the remains of an older tower dating back to the 6th century. This tower originally rose up to nine storeys of which only three storeys remain. Rising from a square plan with a width of 7 metres, the tower recedes with each storey and there are arched openings on each of its faces. A bronze bell and a brass gong from the late 18th century to the early 19th century hang inside the tower. Inside, at the four corners are statues of the four guardians or Dvarapalas.

In the 9th century (c. 820 CE), another school of Mahayana Buddhism was founded by a Chinese monk, Wu Yan Tong also known as Vo Ngon Thong in Vietnamese. The Vo Ngon Thong school literally means 'understanding without words' or 'wordless realisation', and evolved from the meditation practice of the Indian monk Bodhidharma, who had established the Chan school in China in the 6th century. Vo Ngon Thong achieved spiritual insight through this silent contemplation and, Bu Yu Tong or 'the transmission of the lamp', is derived from the concept of the study of emptiness, or Shunyata in Sanskrit, a notion which is closely associated with Mahayana Buddhism. The meditation technique of this school is also known as wall contemplations or Biguan, and the school is also known as the school of wall contemplations or Quan Bich. This Vo Ngon Thong school of Buddhism is closely associated with the Kien So temple, which became an important base for the propagation of Buddhism during the 9th century. The name of the temple translates as 'place of the first encounter' and encapsulates the founding of the new school. This temple was also where the founder of the most important Vietnamese dynasty, the Ly dynasty, Ly Cong Uan, studied as a boy. The monks had earlier predicted that he would be a future king and in 1009, Ly Cong Uan did indeed establish the Ly dynasty as King Ly Thai To. Although



My Son temple ruins, c. 4th century, Quang Nam, Vietnam

L DOUR

6.Amaravati was located in presentday Quang Nam province.

7. Indrapura (the City of Indra) in historical ancient Champa was the capital of Champa from about 875 CE to about 1000 CE. It was located at the site of the modern village of Dong Duong, near the modern city of Danang, the port of Hoi An and the valley of My Son where a number of ruined temples and towers can still be viewed.

8. See the chapter on Indonesia.

the present building mostly dates to the 19th century, this temple represents an important stage in the development of Buddhist architecture in Vietnam during this period and the existing buildings are reconstructions from the 19th century that have been built over the original structures.

In the south-central region of Vietnam, between the Quang Binh and the Binh Thuan province called Champa, an ancient Indianized kingdom emerged. Its history goes back to the 2nd century when the Chams, a seafaring people, founded the Kingdom of Champa in south-central Vietnam and parts of Cambodia and Laos. Indian traders reached Vietnam by sea as early as the first century and introduced Indic social and cultural ideas to the Cham regions. The close links between Champa and India can be seen by the names of the ancient Cham cities that are derived from the names of cities of south India, such as Amaravati, Vijaya and Panduranga. The religious culture of Champa was similar to the other Indianized states of southeast Asia such as those in Cambodia and Indonesia

where they practiced Hinduism, spoke Sanskrit and adopted the political ideology of divine kingship which was a Hindu-Buddhist concept. There is evidence of Cham kings already building religious monuments since the 4th century when the king, Bhadravarman, constructed the first Cham-Hindu complex of temples at My Son in Amaravati⁶ with a Shiva Linga. The succeeding kings, all believers in Hinduism, built numerous temples dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, and their architecture was inspired by temples of the Sailendra dynasty in Indonesia and India.

Though the Cham kings were predominantly followers of Shiva, inscriptional evidence also suggests the presence of Buddhism. Among others, this is attested by the finding of the Andra inspired bronze statue of Buddha from the 4th century at Indrapura⁷ (present-day Quang Nam) and the writings of the Chinese monk Yijing who wrote that Theravada Buddhism was already practiced in Champa in the 7th century. In fact, Buddhism emerged as a dominant force with the reign of King Indravarman II (r. 875–898 CE), who was a follower and champion of Mahayana Buddhism. He founded the most important Buddhist monastic centre in Champa called the Dong Duong monastery in 875 CE at his capital city of Indrapura. Emulating divine kingship, he dedicated it to Lakshmindralokesvara, modelling himself in the image of Lokesvara as the divine king or the Buddharaja.

Unfortunately, the ancient complex of Dong Duong was completely ruined by the many wars and the vicissitudes of time and little remains of the superstructure. The building ruins however reveal the close relationship of design with Indonesian, Indian and local traditions that were incorporated in its planning and architecture. The basic architectural unit of the design of the complex is the structure of a single temple known as the Champa Kalan. The Kalan is similar to the isolated temple form or the Candi of Indonesia and the Khmer Prasat found in Cambodia, and has a cuboid body upon which rises the pyramidal roof form receding in tiers. However, unlike the Indonesian Candis, large monuments were not created by the agglomeration of Candis as seen in the temple complex of Candi Sewu⁸ in central Java. Instead, the Champa Kalan stands

alone and is organized in a flexible manner along with other building forms to create a monastic complex. The Dong Duong temple reveals some distinct architectural features that are unique to the Buddhist architecture of the Chams. The architectural forms of the structures show that they are of Indian extraction but are planned in an axial arrangement with buildings arranged in a sequence indicating the strong Chinese influence in the planning.

THE 10TH CENTURY - BUDDHISM UNDER EARLY INDEPENDENT KINGDOMS

After one thousand years of domination under successive Chinese rules of the Han, Sui and Tang dynasties, Vietnam seized its independence in 939 CE. Buddhist monks as the literate elite of society actively supported and participated in the struggle for independence and they played a critical role in the formation of the independent kingdom of Vietnam in the 10th century, continuing to exercise significant influence in the political and social life during the rule of the subsequent dynasties of the Ngo (939–965 CE), and the Dinh (968–979 CE) kingdoms when Buddhism flourished. The kings of the Ngo and Dinh dynasties were great supporters of Buddhism and during their rule, major steps for the expansion of Vietnamese Buddhism took place throughout all regions of Vietnam from the Red river delta in the north to as far south as Ai Chau and Hoan Chau (former Thanh Hoa and Nghe An territory). The newly established state, while faced with numerous problems of consolidation of territories, economic growth and protecting its territories from invasions, found consolation in Buddhism. The influence of the faith was not limited to the religious culture, but contributed to the social and political development of

the state. The Buddhist Sangha comprising of monks and Bonzes, as scholars with language skills, played an important role in building the social and political fabric of the newly independent kingdom. In the late 10th century, Buddhism was declared as the official religion, further enhancing its reach and influence in Vietnamese society.

The new capital city was established by the Dinh at Hoa Lu, in Nich Binh province which emerged as another centre of Buddhism. Along with the construction of a citadel, numerous temples such as Dai Van temple, Van Tuc temple, Thap temple, Ba Ngo temple and Nhat temple were also built. Buddhism also continued to develop at the older centres of Lay Lau, Ha Bac province and at Thang Long (present-day Hanoi). At these centres, many more Buddhist temples were built such as Kieno Duong in Hoa Lam, Kein-So in Phu Dong village, Cam Ung on Mount Ba Son, while other older temples such as Khai Quoc or Tran Quoc in Hanoi continued to be restored and enlarged.

The growing social influence of Buddhism is evident by the formation of these new Buddhist centres and the construction of hundreds of temples and towers during this period. As Buddhism grew, it also retained the strong syncretic character while frequently accommodating older Pagoda of Tran Quoc temple, 6th century, Hanoi, Vietnam, the oldest Pagoda in the city



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indigenous popular beliefs. Unfortunately, most of the temples have been destroyed and there is no evidence of their planning and architectural characteristics.

Besides temple and towers, over a hundred Sutra pillars were also built in Hao Lu. The Sutra pillars are stone columns that are erected to record important scriptures or Sutras of the Buddhist faith. The Sutra pillars at Hao Lu are 70 centimetres in height with octagonal shapes, having inscriptions in Chinese on their surfaces. Many of them are inscribed with the Usnishavijaya Sutra, suggesting the presence of the Tantric form of Buddhism. The spread and consolidation of the faith laid the foundations for its further growth in the succeeding period of the Ly and Tran dynasties.

FROM THE 11TH TO THE 13TH CENTURY – THE LY DYNASTY AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF BUDDHISM

The period from the 11th to the 13th centuries under the kingdom of the Ly Dynasty (1010–1225) or the Dai Viet (the 'Great Viet') ushered in the golden age of Buddhism when Buddhist architecture and art, especially statuary and ceramics, blossomed. This kingdom was founded by King Ly Thai To, mentioned earlier. He had been brought up in the Buddhist temple, Kien So, and he further reinforced his personal relationship with the faith by spreading it across his kingdom. He actively promoted the faith, encouraging (by royal decree) citizens to become Buddhist monks. Upon ascending the throne, he shifted the capital to Thang Long in 1010, which is the present day Hanoi. He established the capital city by building a citadel along with several Buddhist monuments. His successors were also ardent Buddhists who actively supported Buddhism by sponsoring the construction of numerous large temples and towers. These state temple complexes served as centres for cultural and educational activities and had a large community of monks. The entire establishment of the temple and the Sangha were supported through endowments of rice fields donated to the temples by the state. Wherever there was beautiful scenary, temples were built and the royal temples were further categorised as great, medium and small according to the setting and landscaping of the temples.

While there are no complete architectural remains of Buddhist monastic buildings of the Ly dynasty, literary evidence records that practically every king during the Dai Viet period commissioned the construction of Buddhist monuments during their reigns⁹. King Ly Thai To, is said to have built as many as 150 temples including Tu Thi Thien Phuc on Mount Yen Tu in 1041, and the unique Dien Hu temple in Thang Long, also popularly known today as Chua Mot Cot or the One Pillar Pagoda in 1049, that was later enlarged in 1105.

The worship of Avalokiteshwara in the female form of the goddess Quan Am or Guanyin (similar to the Chinese instead of the Indic male version) continued to be popular and was manifested in a unique design of the Mot Cot temple. The temple was commissioned because the king, Ly Thai Tong, in a dream saw Avalokitesvara sitting on a lotus throne inviting him to join him. This was perceived as an inauspicious omen by the monks and as a result he was asked to construct a temple similar to the one he saw in his dream around which monks would circumambulate and pray for the king's longevity. Thus its original name, Dien Hu, which translates as 'prolong longevity'. The temple was constructed in 1049 and subsequently reconstructed to its present form.



OPPOSITE PAGE Chua Mot Cot, 1049, Hanoi, Vietnam

^{9.} Various large temples that were sponsored by them across their land are recorded in annals such as Thien Uyen Tap Anh, Dai Viet Su Luoc and Dai Viet Su Ky Town Thu.

Unfortunately, very few Ly period temples have survived intact and only limited architectural details about them can be ascertained. The surviving remains of most temples have undergone several reconstructions through the centuries, further making it difficult to ascertain their original architectural characteristics. However, the archaeological remains of the foundations of a temple built around 1115 known as the Lang temple, also called Vien Giac temple or Huong Lang temple, in Minh Hai commune, My Van district, Hai Duong has revealed the scale and some architectural features of the temples of the Ly period. The excavations show the building comprising of three square-shaped floors of diminishing sizes; the first is 20.2 metres by 23.6 metres, and the second measures 15.2 metres by 18.8 metres. The third floor served to house the altars of the Buddha statues and statues of lions holding aloft the Buddha's throne sitting on a stone platform. There are four doors at all four cardinal directions of the square plan, a feature characteristic of Ly architecture.

Such archaeological remains indicate some of the architectural characteristics that governed the designs of temples during this time. The buildings were planned on the geometry of the square and followed a strong sense of centrality and symmetry. Epigraphic evidence further collaborates this sense of centre and symmetry that followed the designs of temples. A surviving stele at Dien Phuc temple describes the temple where the Buddha hall is set in the centre with corridors running on all four sides. In front is the bell tower and the stele distributed on either side of the central axis with the three door gate is located further beyond. Two ponds are located on either side of the axis at the front. The Bach Mon temple in Tien Son district, Bac Ninh, although reconstructed many times, shares the same features, revealing the characteristics of the square plan and symmetry that was followed by temples of the Ly dynasty.

Besides temples, multi-storied towers were also popular during this time. Dai Thang Tu Thien tower of the Bao Thein Pagoda, Thang Long, was 12 storeys high. The Sung Thein Dien Linh tower in the Doi Pagoda was 13 storeys. The tower at the Phat Tich Pagoda, Ha Bac, was 10 storeys and 8.5 metres wide on each side. The Van Phong Thanh Thein tower in Chuong Son was built on a pedestal 19 metres wide and was much higher than the Phat Tich tower.

This period also saw the emergence of a new school of Buddhism known as the Thoa Duong sect. The Thoa Duong school of Buddhism was founded in 1070 by a Chinese Bonze, Caotang, and the king, Ly Thanh Tong (r. 1054–1072), was the first head of the school. Although it failed to achieve wide popular appeal, the school had the blessings of the king and the aristocracy and it established as its base, the ancient Khai Quoc temple, also known today as the Tran Quoc temple.

The Khai Quoc or Tran Quoc temple is said to be one of oldest temples in Hanoi, and its name translates as 'the foundation of the kingdom'. It is believed to have been built in 545 CE by King Ly Nam De (r. 545–548 CE), but since then the temple has undergone several restorations, and most of the existing buildings date from the 19th century. Steles located in the temple precincts record the history of the temple. It was originally located at the banks of the Red river but due to a mud slide in 1615, it was transferred to its present site on the lake island. It has been renamed as Tran Quoc which means 'the defence of the kingdom'. Extensive restoration was again undertaken on the temple in 1815 and today, the intricate beauty of the temple on an island, reflected by the quiet waters of the West Lake and the Truc Bac Lake in Hanoi is a compelling sight.

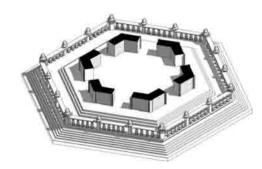
The present temple complex comprises three halls or buildings: the front or lower hall (Tien Duong), the upper or main hall (Thuong Dien) where the main altars are located, and connecting these two halls in the middle is the incense burning hall (Thieu Huong). There is also a separate bell tower and numerous Stupas or towers are built in the front courtyard housing the relics of famous monks while at the rear, a Bodhi tree from India was planted in the 20th century.

THE 13TH TO THE 15TH CENTURIES – THE TRAN DYNASTY

The early kings of the Tran dynasty (r.1225–1400) were ardent Buddhists and continued to support the state temples that they had inherited from the Ly period. However, the expense of managing the conflict with the Mongols in the 13th century did not allow the Tran kings to incur lavish expenditure on temples and there are limited records of temples built by them. However the lack of state support in building of Buddhist monuments did not deter the construction of various local and village temples such as the Thieu Long temple or Mieu temple in Tam Hiep commune, Phuc Tho district, Ha Tay.

One significant development at the time was the founding of another sect of the Thien school of Buddhism in Vietnam, the Truc Lam Buddhist sect, one of the most important. By the 13th century, the older schools of Buddhism had declined and the Truc Lam sect which means 'the forest of bamboos' emerged as the dominant school of Buddhism, and has been regarded as the first truly Vietnamese Chan sect. It was founded by King Tran Nhan Tong (r. 1258-1308) who, after many wars where he managed to defeat the Mongol invaders, with his kingdom secure and in his quest for enlightenment, abandoned his throne to become a monk and the first patriarch of the school. He retreated to the picturesque Yen Tu mountains in the northeast province of Quang Ninh which became a famous centre of the Truc Lam School of Buddhism. Supported by both the royal family and nobles, Mount Yen Tu emerged as a wealthy and powerful Buddhist centre and a place of pilgrimage for the believers whose objective was to walk all the way up to the summit (at 1068 metres) to pray at the famous and massive 70-ton bronze Dong Pagoda.







OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP)
Architectural model of Tran Quoc
Pagoda

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM)
Tran Quoc temple island on
West Lake, 17th century, Hanoi,
Vietnam

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The temples of the Yen Tu mountains are today still the biggest and most important Zen monastery complex in Vietnam and a very important Buddhist pilgrimage site since the 13th century. This architectural complex of eleven main Pagodas is spread over the slopes of the sacred mountain from its base to the Dong Pagoda at its peak at an altitude of over 1068 metres. The summit of the mountain is mostly always hidden in clouds, hence its other name of 'Bach Van Son' or the 'mountains of the white cloud.' Today, most of the original monuments have been restored or rebuilt. The temples and Pagodas, with panoramic views which are built all along the way to the summit, through clear streams, lush flora and green forests of bamboo, pine and fir (some trees are hundreds of years old) are linked with the events that occurred in the path of King Tran Nhan Tong's first pilgrimage. Some of these temples are:

Linh Nham temple or Chua Cam Thuc (literally translated as 'abstention from eating') – rebuilt in the 19th century, this temple at the base of the mountain, is said to be constructed at the place where the king began his ascetic lifestyle and had his first vegetarian meal on his way up the mountain. It is 30 metres in length and is divided into six compartments or rooms.

Long Dong temple or the Lan Pagoda – this temple rebuilt in the 18th century was much larger in the past, with 25 towers or Stupas. Today it has been totally rebuilt.

Giai Oan Pagoda (purgatory Pagoda) - according to legend, court-ladies threw themselves into the adjoining river in despair after the king became a monk. It was at this temple that he welcomed the souls of these ladies.

Thap To or Hue Quang tower (tower of the patriarch) – from the tower, a narrow passage leads to an arched entrance eventually opening onto an original square enclosure from the Tran period. In the centre of this enclosure is the tomb of the king. A lotus throne created from 102 petals in six tiers, is supported over a pedestal made of a large stone block. The Stupa is pyramidal in form, about 10 metres high, and at its top is a lotus bud. The Stupa has a statue of King Tran Nhan Tong in meditating position but the date of its origin is uncertain. Around the Stupa and its enclosure are 44 other towers. This place is also the resting place of other Yen Tu monks from the Tran dynasty.

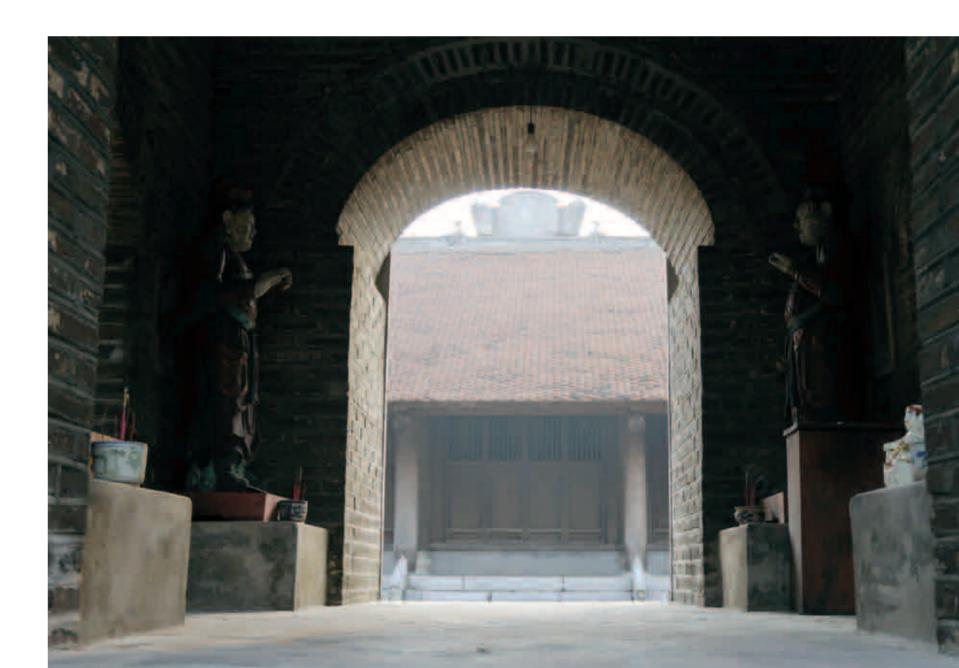
Hoa Yen Pagoda (Pagoda of cloud and mist) - this was the place where the king meditated, preached and received his successor and court officers. Originally it was a monastery complex complete with many buildings including a Pagoda, bell tower, drum tower, monks' residence and a reception hall. Today, not many of these 13th century buildings have survived. Numerous statues of monks were worshipped in this temple, the largest being the 1.2 metre high statue of King Tran Nhan Tong. There is a stone stele called the 'three patriarchs' at the terrace of the Pagoda bearing the details of the donors for the Pagoda.

By 1299, with the formation of the Truc Lam sect, King Tran Nhan Tong achieved the unification of the Buddhist clergy. During the 13th century, Buddhism had developed with many sects. Although it was the continuation of the branches of the Wu Yantong sect, the Truc Lam sect had developed a complete Vietnamese character. Discarding the traditions imported from abroad, it became a manifestation of the development of a 'national consciousness'.

The immense popularity of the Truc Lam sect led to the growth of the monk fraternity across the country. It has been suggested that the second patriach of the Truc Lam sect, Phap Loa, himself initiated as many as 15,000 monks and nuns. This prompted the construction of temples and the restoration and enlargement of older temples like Bao An in Sieu Loai, Bac Ninh and Quynh Lam in Dong Trieu, Quang Ninh. A great number of Pagodas and towers were built in Phap Loa's lifetime and by 1329, in addition to five towers and 200 monasteries, he had built two big Pagodas - Bao An Pagoda and Quynh Lam. He also built smaller Pagodas such as Ho Thien, Chan Lac, An Ma and Con Son to name but a few. The wealth of the Truc Lam temples grew through the active support of the aristocracy who donated large amounts of land to the temple. The growing influence and the large endowments given towards construction of Buddhist monuments lead to resentment by followers of Confucianism, leading to the eventual decline of the Truc Lam school in the 14th century.

Though numerous temples were constructed during the Tran period, many were laid to waste during wars and others were left in ruins over time. However, some evidence of their architectural characteristics can be seen in the ones that have remained. Some of the most important surviving temples restored by the Tran dynasty during the 13th century are Vietnam's ancient Dau Pagoda in Thuan Thanh district, Bac Ninh; Thai Lac temple in My Van district, Hai Duong; and the Boi Khe temple in Thanh Oai district, Ha Tay. See also Architectural Characteristics for a description of the wooden architecture of the Tran period.

The view from within the bell tower with the Dvarapalas standing guard, Dau Pagoda, c. 3rd century, Bac Ninh, Vietnam



THE 15TH AND 16TH CENTURIES – THE REVIVAL OF CONFUCIANISM THE LE DYNASTY AND THE MAC DYNASTY

During the next century under the Le dynasty (r. 1428–1527) Confucianism became the state religion. Although Buddhism lost its privileged position in the royal court, it remained popular in the villages and Buddhism survived because of its integration with local beliefs. Some temples continued to be built, but eventually King Le Thanh Tong banned their construction in 1464.

However, Buddhism gave solace at times of political uncertainty especially during the civil wars of the 16th century. Buddhism therefore, saw a brief revival during the Mac dynasty (r. 1528–1592). For this short period, the kings once again commissioned the construction and management of Buddhist monuments. The Buddhist architecture of the Mac period inherited the design legacy of their predecessors and its buildings are similar to the Tran period.

An important development of the 16th century was the appearance of a distinct planning concept of Buddhist temples where the halls are arranged in the shape of the letter T', with enclosing verandahs or galleries at both ends, forming a square for the temple complex. This typology is a variation of the Cong typology and is known as Noi Cong Ngoai Quoc (see further discussion under Architectural Characteristics). The numerous halls of the temples were now defined with specific locations and functions in this arrangement. The key halls or buildings in a Buddhist temple comprised the front hall, incense burning hall, upper hall and rear hall attached to two connecting side galleries. This typology would eventually lead to the design of many important temples in the later development of temple designs in Vietnam.

Along with the increase in the number of halls, there was also an increase in the number of statues installed within the temples. Different sets of statues, mostly in sets of three appeared, such as the statues of Buddha of the three epochs – past, present and future; the set of statues of Amitabha along with Mahasthamaprapta and Avalokitesvara. The worship of Avalokitesvara continued and was manifested in large statues of Avalokitesvara with multiple arms. Many other statues were also installed within the temples, such as those of the Sakyamuni Buddha, guardian spirits and the genies of the earth.

A tradition of canonising monks that had started earlier led to the development of deifying them and placing statues of monks in Buddhist temples. This led to exploring the arrangement of the statues of monks in relationship to Buddhist deities that informed the designs of temples. A pattern of arrangement that was popular was that of placing the statues of the saints at the rear of Buddhist statues, which was known as 'Buddha in the front – saints at the rear' type of arrangement. This is seen in Tram Gian temple and Boi Khe temple in honour of Saint Boi.

THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES - THE RESTORED LE DYNASTY

In the 17th century, Vietnam was divided into two regions of the north and the south between the two dynasties of the Trinh and the Nguyen respectively. In both regions, Buddhism continued to flourish. Some of the largest Buddhist monuments were constructed or restored during this period in the north. Most of the temples were sponsored by the state, particularly the royal ladies. Most of the Buddhist monuments that remain today have been reconstructed or rebuilt during this time and it is the building activity of this period which has left the most concrete evidence of architecture that is associated with Buddhism in Vietnam.

During this period, the planning of temples became more complex and their scale increased to accommodate many more buildings within its grounds. Several new architectural elements were introduced within the halls such as the revolving lotus tower that recall the designs of the revolving Sutra towers in China. The number and arrangement of statues became more elaborate within the temple halls. Some of the important architectural examples of temples are But Thap temple, Keo temple, Min temple and Thay temple.

Several temples planned during this time show the popularity of the planning typology known as Noi Cong Ngoai Quoc, where the letter 'I' is surrounded by a square (as earlier described). This is manifested as two long galleries linking the front and the rear halls on either sides, within which are enclosed the main halls. This design is also referred to as a 'hundred compartment' temple because of its large scale and possibility to create multiple rooms within its modular layout of columns. The Tram Gian temple in Ha Tay province, first built in the 12th century and known as 'the 100 rooms temple' is a good example of this. The Tram Gian's name is derived from its architectural

characteristics of having over 100 spatial units defined by the building module, each having four wooden columns. There is a bell tower which is a fine architectural example of wooden architecture. Said to have been constructed in the 17th century, it houses a copper bell that was installed in the 18th century during this period.

The generic design of this typology of planning could be developed into many variations by altering the architectural details of the halls. This typology can be seen in the But Thap temple, Thuan Thanh district in Bac Ninh, which is considered a fine example of the architecture of this period. The temple planning consists of a number of halls arranged along an axis that is 100 metres in length. This group of halls are further encircled by a gallery similar to the shape of the letter 'I' enclosed in a square.

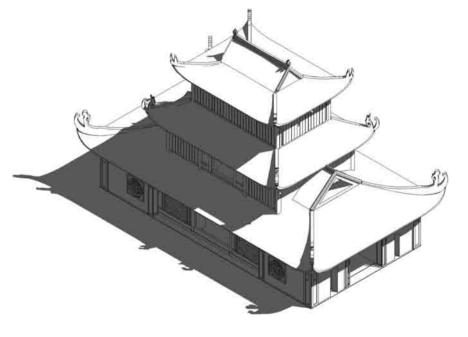
A unique feature seen in the northern temples of the 17th century was the design of a hall to house a revolving tower. The tower had a tall cylindrical form having six or eight sides. Built with a wooden framework, they would be hinged to the floor and the roof beams of the hall. The height of the tower was divided into sections as vertical storeys and the faces of the tower were filled with bas-reliefs of Buddhist iconography carved in wood. The wooden hall housing the tower would rise up a tiered-roof formation to accommodate the tower within the building. This can be seen at the But Thap temple where the roof of the hall rises in three tiers to house a nine-storied revolving tower within it.

The growing complexity of ritual and worship during this time led to many statues being installed within the temple BELOW

Architectural model of But Thap lotus tower hall

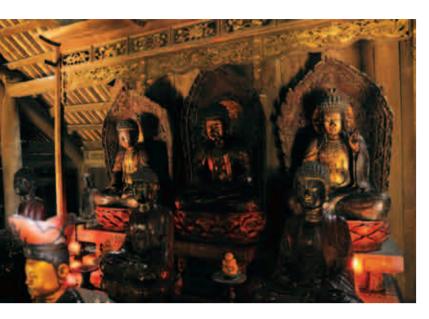
BELOW (BOTTOM)

The revolving tower, But Thap temple, 17th century, Bac Ninh, Vietnam





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ABOVE (TOP)
Altar of Amitabha trinity, But
Thap temple

ABOVE Hall of donors and patriarch in Thay temple ranging from those of various deities to patriarchs and donors. The number of halls of the temple complex as well as their size increased to accommodate them. The distribution and arrangement of the statues did not follow any rigid system and was flexible. However, some distinct features about their selection and arrangement within the different halls can be seen to emerge during this time.

Statues in sets of three which had become favoured in the 16th century with different groups of deities placed in combinations within the temples on altars were now firmly established. Sets of statues of the Amitabha trinity became popular during this time consisting of Amitabha in the centre with Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta to the right and Avalokitesvara to the left. One of the earliest examples of such an arrangement of statues can be seen at the Thay temple. Similarly sets of statues of the trinity of Buddha of the three epochs having the statues of the Buddha of past, present and the future were placed on elaborate altars in the main hall of the temples, as seen at the But Thap temple.

The most distinguishable statue at the But That temple was that of the Avalokitesvara statue with its multiple arms and eyes in each palm. The statue of Avalokitesvara at But Thap temple, known as 'one-thousand-eyes-one-thousand-arms' Avalokitesvara has 42 large arms and 952 smaller ones. It is made of wood with a lacquer finish and rises to a height of about 4 metres from the pedestal base. Several other multi-eyed-multi-armed statues were installed at Buddhist temples during this time, such as at Tram Gian temple and at Tam Son temple. Various other deities such as Manjushri, Samantabhadra and Dvarapalas were all distributed within the temple complex. Besides the statues of deities, statues of people who had sponsored the construction of the temple and

the leaders of the faith were also installed inside the temples. At times, there would be so many donors that this required the construction of separate halls dedicated to the installation of statues of the donors and patriarchs. This can be seen at But Thap temple and Thay temple.

Beyond northern Vietnam, the Nguyen kings who established their territories in the south during the 17th and 18th centuries also constructed many Buddhist temples as they marched as far south as the Mekong delta, building Buddhists temples everywhere. However, it was at Hue where they built the imposing Thien Mu temple which stands out for posterity.

New schools of Buddhism – Linnji and Caodong Chan from China – were introduced in the south providing the impetus for further construction of temples. Numerous temples were built at the initiatives of the monks of these sects. Among the temples of the Linnji sect are the Thap Thap Di Da temple in Binh Dinh; Phuoc Thanh temple in Huong Phu; and Thien Tho temple or Ba Quoc temple, An Ton temple and Tu Lam temple in Thuan Hoa. One of the temples of the Caodong sect was Tam Thai temple in Quang Nam.

The temples of the south followed another planning pattern with the Chinese ideogram '□' for mouth. In this planning, four halls are arranged around a central court. The hall in the front is the

main hall, while the others are for meditation, monks' residence and a hall for guests. The main hall is the principal shrine hall housing the statue of the Buddha. The open spaces in the temple have elaborate landscaping.

The other planning typology seen in the temples of the south is that of the Chinese ideogram ' \equiv ' of the numeral 3 similar to the northern temples. This typology comprises three parallel halls. The halls are the main hall, the auditorium and the dining hall. The main hall houses the statues of Buddha as well as those of the patriarchs. See further discussion under Architectural Characteristics below.

This typology of three parallel halls is also seen in the north at Kim Lien temple or Dai Bi temple located at Nghi Tam, in Hanoi. The existing temple is a reconstruction of an ancient temple that was done during the reign of Quang Trung in 1792. The planning of the temple has three halls arranged parallel to each other along an axis. The hall in the centre is shorter than the other two and the wooden columns support sloping roofs through rafter beams. The corners of the roofs are curved like lance blades.

Octagonal seven-storied Phuoc Duyen tower in Thien Mu temple, 17th century, Hue, Vietnam

THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

The 19th century saw a mixed response towards Buddhism as the Nguyen dynasty either imposed proscriptions on the construction of Buddhist monuments or were indifferent towards their development. King Nguyen Ann (Gia Long), 1802–1819 decreed the ban in the construction of Buddhist monuments, organization of festivals, colouring of statues and casting of new bells. King Thieu Tri (r. 1841–1847) actively supported the construction of a tower at the Thien Mu temple in Hue. During the reigns of Minh Mang and Thieu Tri many temples were built and huge amounts of money was donated for repairing old temples. However, King Tu Duc (r. 1847–1883), again put a ban on the construction of Buddhist monuments.

Vietnam went through dramatic changes in the 20th century as it first went through a period of French colonization, then World War II and the Vietnam War and finally independence. Sadly, much of the material

heritage of Vietnam's rich Buddhist architecture has been obliterated by the wars, but the varied and rich architectural heritage of Buddhism in Vietnam that developed over two millennia still remains relatively unexplored.



II. ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

SITE SELECTION

The location and the setting out of the temple was determined by searching for an auspicious site that confirmed to the principles of geomancy, a tradition that was adopted from China. There are various considerations in geomancy that was practiced in Vietnam for selecting a suitable site for the construction of a temple. Some geographical features sought in a site was its location

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at the foot of a hill, proximity to water bodies and beautiful natural landscape. The symbiotic relationship of the Sangha with the community further required that the temple be located at close proximity to the village.

The elaborately carved wooden trusses or Bo Vi, Dau Pagoda, c. 3rd century, Bac Ninh, Vietnam

BELOW (BOTTOM)

The wooden columns or Cots supporting a system of beams, trusses and roofs, Dau temple complex



The surviving Tran period (13th to the 15th centuries) temples of the Yen Tu mountains reveal for the first time the construction details of wooden halls of Buddhist temples in Vietnam. Their superstructures not only demonstrate the architectural characteristics of the Tran period but also indicate the possible architecture of the temples of the past whose superstructure have perished. The architecture of the halls of a temple is derived from traditional wooden construction systems where multiple building components come together to define the complete building form. The

> structural frame of the building consisting of a grid of wooden columns supports a system of beams and wooden trusses, 'Bo Vi', upon which the roof of the building rests. The spacing of the columns follow traditional modules that are derived on the possible length of the wooden beams and trusses. The system of wooden trusses are the most important component of the construction system of wooden halls in Vietnam. Hence the beams and the members of the truss are elaborately carved with sculptural details.

The traditional material of construction of Buddhist or 'Hue'. Each of these components are joined together whole structure. The columns do not have any foundations and rest directly on the floor on stone bases and the roof is

temples has primarily been timber, the construction possibilities of which has determined the architectural character of the buildings. Wooden buildings are composed of numerous parts that are assembled together through wooden joinery systems to create the complete building. The main components are the columns or 'Cots', beams or 'Xa', wooden truss or Bo Vi, purlin or 'Hoanh' and rafter through wooden joinery details and play a role as part of the covered with tiles.

THE TEMPLE AND ITS DIFFERENT HALLS

A Buddhist temple or Chua Viet in Vietnam is not a single building but an agglomeration of various different buildings arranged together to form a complex. The many buildings in a Chua Viet are categorized according to the function or the deity statues which are housed within. Elaborate and conscious landscaping is provided within the temple grounds to establish close integration with nature and the premises of a Buddhist temple will have at least a garden and a pond with sacred turtles.

The archaeological remains of the Lam temple in the northeastern Quang Ninh province provides some clues about the planning patterns of the temples of the 13th to 15th centuries. By then, Buddhist temples had become more elaborate and consisted of a cluster of buildings. These buildings were combined together to form the temple complex. The principle building was the main hall housing the shrine of Buddha and the other buildings were arranged symmetrically along an axis in a sequential order. To the main hall was added the front hall and rear halls, and the temple complex was entered through a three-door gate that was located in front.

Several planning arrangements were adopted for the halls and one of them consisted of three buildings arranged parallel to each other along a central axis. This plan corresponds with the Chinese ideograms or characters as will be discussed below. The principal buildings in a Vietnamese temple complex would consist of the following:-

The main hall (Nha Thu Thuong Dien or Chua Thoung):

The main hall is also known as the upper hall or the hall of the principal altar. The altar and statue of the Buddha is housed in this hall and this is the principal building of the Chua Viet complex.

Front hall, hall of the guardians, Dvarapala hall (Bai Duong or Chua Ha): The front hall is the first or lower hall of the temple approaching from the front and houses statues of the guardian deities or the Dvarapala.

Architectural model of Tram Gian bell tower

The middle hall or the incense burning hall (Nha Thieu

The incense burning hall is the hall that links the front hall to the main hall and houses the statues of various deities or Bodhisattvas.

The hall of the patriarchs:

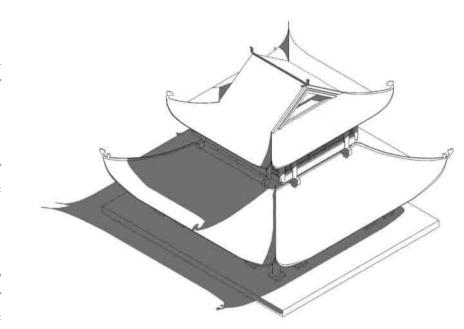
The hall of the patriarchs houses the statues of the many Zen Buddhist patriarchs, monks and Bonzes who have been associated with the temple.

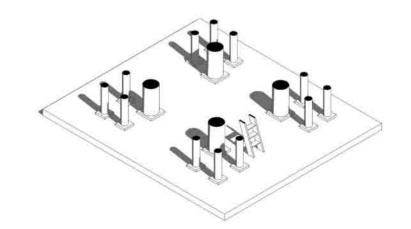
The three-door gate (Cong Tam Quan):

The three-door gate is located at a building at the entrance to the temple complex. This building is located independently at the front and, as its name suggests, comprises of three doors. Some three-door gates are more elaborate and could consist of two pairs of three doors gates. Usually these doors are open only for important religious festivals.

The bell tower:

The bell tower is a significant feature in many Vietnamese buildings such as Tram Gian temple. They are built to house huge bells, some weighing up to 70 tons, for example, the great bell at the bell tower at Bai Dinh Pagoda. The bells installed in these bell towers often had inscriptions describing the benevolence of the king.







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ABOVE (TOP) Side gallery at Dau Pagoda which houses the statues of Arhats

ABOVE (CENTRE) The stone steles with inscriptions within the Dau temple complex

Stone carvings of dragons or 'Loong' of the Stupa tower at But Thap

The linking galleries:

The linking galleries or verandahs are a feature of the Noi Cong Ngoai Quoc typology. The side galleries of the temple are colonnaded corridors walled towards the outside but opening towards the inside. They house the statues of the Arhats and Buddhist deities. At the Dau Pagoda, aside from the usual statues, the galleries contain many steles dating back to the 16th to 18th centuries, a bronze gong cast in 1774 and a bronze book (in ten bronze slats) with Chinese characters engraved on both sides.

The Stupa tower:

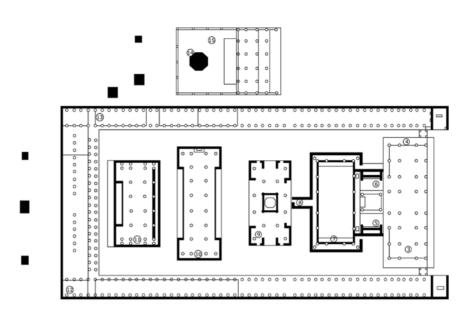
Many temple complexes had multi-storied towers, some exceeding 12 storeys. These towers were decorated with stone carvings in the form of spherical statues and exquisite bas-reliefs. The statues were representations of animals and birds and the decorative elements include designs of dragons, lotus leaves and waves carved both on the walls and on the floor. In fact, Chua Viet are different from Theravada temples by their use of the dragon or Long or Loong (just as in Chinese temples) instead of the Naga.

PLANNING TYPOLOGIES OF TEMPLES

The different halls or buildings are arranged together to form a complex that together is known as the Buddhist temple. The Buddhist temple is known as Chua or a Pagoda in Vietnam and includes both the secular and religious buildings within it. Thus the temple may consist of the prayer halls, Stupas and the residence of the monks. In addition temples in Vietnam also include halls for the worship of local deities, patrons and patriarchs.

The different arrangement of the halls give rise to various planning typologies of Buddhist temples. There are three basic patterns of planning of the halls which are classified according to the various shapes of the Chinese character or ideograms. This generic planning allows for many variations in the planning of temples in Vietnam.

The three basic planning typologies are the Dinh, the Cong and the Tam. The Dinh typology is the simplest architectural form and the plan follows the pattern of the Chinese letter '天' which looks like a 'T' layout. The main sanctuary or Nha Thu Thuong Dien is at the back and is composed of a main hall housing the principal altars. The front hall most commonly referred to as the Bai Duong



- 1. 3 ENTRANCE GATE (TRAM QUAN)
- 2. BELL TOWER (GAE CHUONG
- 3. INNER HALL/LOWER HALL (TIEN DONG) 4. 2 DVARAPALA & GIANT GUARDIANS
- 5. INCENSE BURNING HALL
- 6. LINKING BRIDGE
- 7. UPPER SANCTUARY
- 8. CURVED STONE BRIDGE
- 9. PRACTISE CHANTING CELL 10. CENTRAL PALACE MEETING HALL

- 12. REAR HALL
- 14. 5 STOREY STONE TOWER 15. HALL OF PATRIACH

is perpendicular to it called Nha Tien Doung. The front hall houses the statues of the guardian deities. This typology is seen in the design of the Phat Tich temple in Bac Ninh province.

The Cong typology comprises three halls - the front hall, the incense burning hall and the main hall. The front hall and main hall are parallel to each other, and the incense burning hall is positioned perpendicular connecting the two halls in between. A variation of the Cong typology is created by adding two galleries on either side and a rear hall enclosing the Cong configuration. This typology is known as Noi Cong Ngoai Quoc (which translates literally as 'work inside, nation outside'). The interior reflects the shape of the Chinese character for work or '\(\pi\'\) while the exterior is patterned after the character 'E' for nation. This is a very common typology of Vietnamese temples. Two examples of this typology are the Chua Dau and the But Thap temples.

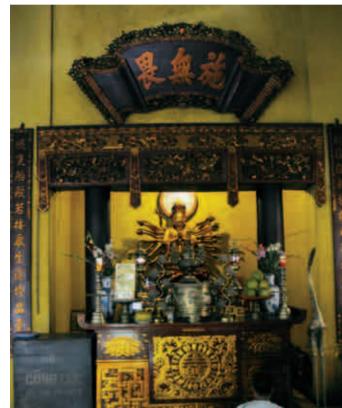
The Tam typology, similar to the Chinese ideograph for the numeral 3 or '\(\equiv \) comprises of three parallel buildings that are arranged along an axis that runs through the centre. The three buildings are the front or lower hall (Chua Ha), the second is the middle hall (Chua Trung), and the last is the upper hall (Chua Thuong) which houses the main shrine of the Buddha. This typology can be seen in the Tap Phuong Pagoda in Ha Tay province. The groups of three buildings are separated by a narrow courtyard before the next group of buildings. This entire ensemble is enclosed by galleries which run on both sides, and the rear hall at the end, which is the hall of patriarchs. All the halls are arranged along a central longitudinal axis defining the symmetrical composition of planning. The buildings are packed compactly and the space between each successive building and at the sides, is narrow.

In south Vietnam, there is as mentioned earlier, a further variation, which is a planning pattern with the Chinese ideogram '\(\sigma'\) for mouth. In this variation, the four halls (with the main hall in front) are arranged around a landscaped central court. Along this axis in front of this entire ensemble of buildings but detached and at a distance is the three-door gatehouse, defining the entrance to the sacred precincts of the temple. In the forecourt could be two other buildings, the bell house and the drum house, symmetrically distributed on either side of the axis. Ideally there would also be two front ponds of water on either side of the axis. Numerous towers are distributed around the Pagoda.

Plan of the Noi Cong Ngoai Quoc typology of But Thap temple

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ABOVE (TOP) The trinity of Buddhas, Dau Pagoda, c. 3rd century, Bac Ninh, Vietnam

ABOVE

Altar of the multi-armed Quan Am Chuan De, Quan Su temple, 15th century, Hanoi, Vietnam

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) Offerings and prayers to the General Quan Cong, Keo temple, 17th century, Thai Binh, Vietnam

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM) Colourful statue of patriach, Chua Mia, Son Tay province, near Hanoi, Vietnam

PAGES 112-113 The open pavilion in the middle of a lake at Thay temple, 11th century, Hanoi, Vietnam

ARRANGEMENT OF ALTARS AND STATUES

The syncretic nature of Buddhism and its integration with local beliefs in Vietnam have created the need for a diverse set of statues that are installed within the temple. There are various statues of the different Buddhas and Buddhist divinities, local gods, saints, patriarchs, ancestors, heroic figures and donors. The highest level of the altar in the main hall houses the statue of the trinity of Buddhas:-

The A Di Da or Amitabha, the Buddha of the past. The Thich Ca Mau Ni or Sakyamuni, the Buddha of the present. The Di Lac or Maitreya, the Buddha of the future.

In the course of the development of the architecture and planning of Buddhist temples, many different combinations of arrangement of the altars of statues within the temple have emerged. Two distinct typologies of planning of temples emerged according to the arrangement of statues: 'Tien Phat Hau Than' with the Buddhas in front and the various local gods at the rear; and 'Tien Phat Hau Thanh' with the Buddha in front and the Arhats (La Han) and Bodhisattvas (Bo Tat) at the rear.

The tendency to combine different faiths and schools of practice produced an agglomeration of various statues within temples such as those of Amitabha and Avalokitesvara. Avalokitesvara, like the Chinese Guan Yin, is manifested as a benevolent goddess known as Quan Am, in Vietnam. There are many variations of Quan Am in Vietnam and the statue occupies a distinct position in Vietnamese temples. There is the statue of Quan Am holding a baby (Quan Am Tong Tu), the Quan Am of the eastern sea (Quan Am Nam Hai) and the multi-armed Quan Am (Quan Am Chuan De).

As mentioned, the statues are further grouped together in sets of three such as the trinity of Buddhas - from the past, the present and the future and the trinity of Amitabha comprising of Amitabha with Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta on the left and right sides respectively.

This diverse group of statues set on various altars have specific locations within the different halls of the temple. The design of the altars vary from independent altars for single statues to large altars with many statues, to even larger and more elaborate multi-level altars. Vietnamese statues are very colourful and elaborate, depicted as royal princes and princesses with beautiful robes and headgear. Local folklore is seen in the statues of the General Quan Cong and the rosy-cheeked General Cahua Xuong and his mandarin attendants, complete with trusty steed and groom.







DAU PAGODA

C. 3RD CENTURY THUAN THANH DISTRICT, BAC NINH PROVINCE

the Dau Pagoda, has been called by several names such as Thanh Dao Tu, Phap Vu Tu, Chua Vua (king's Pagoda) and Chua Ba Dau (Pagoda of the Lady Dau). The origin of the temple dates important and well known Buddhst centre situated at the ancient Luy Lau citadel, where the famous Indian monk Vinitaruci taught on his way back from China, and was perhaps the initial source of Mahayana Buddhism in Vietnam. Inscriptional evidence suggests that its present architectural typology was constructed during the Ly dynasty in the 11th century and subsequently the Chua Dau been reconstructed several times, the most significant being during the Tran dynasty in the 14th century and the Mac dynasty in 16th century and finally in 17th century, when it reached its current size.

The name of the temple is steeped in local legends and derived from the principle deity, Lady Dau, the goddess of cloud, who is worshipped here along with other Buddhist deities. Local deities have been associated with Buddhism in Vietnam such as goddesses of cloud, rain, thunder and lightning. The goddess of cloud or Lady Dau is worshipped in another temple with the same name located in the Bac Nich province. This temple represents the architectural manifestation of the integration of local beliefs with the original Buddhist teachings.

The planning of the temple follows the Noi Cong Ngoai Quoc typology (discussed earlier) comprising of three halls: the front hall, the incense burning hall and the main hall. The front hall and main hall are parallel to each other and the incense burning hall is positioned perpendicular connecting the two halls in between. All this is enclosed in a square with two galleries on either side. The three-door gate house opens onto a large courtyard, which is flanked by two buildings on its sides. These are single storey halls that served as rest houses for pilgrims. Opposite the gate across the court is the front hall which is followed by the incense burning hall that eventually links it to the main hall, within which are installed the Buddhas and also the statue of Lady Dau. The front hall is linked by two side galleries to the hall of patriachs at the rear, thereby enclosing the ensemble of front hall - incense burning hall - main hall, forming the Chinese character of 'I' enclosed in a square.

The historic and most ancient Buddhist monument in Vietnam, There are several stone steles within the temple complex that are engraved with inscriptions. The temple also housed the preserved mummies of two important monks from the 17th century, Vu Khac Minh and Vu Khac Truong. In front of the Pagoda, there back to around the 3rd century when the Chua Dau was an is a three-storied (used to be six storeys) Hoa Phong brick tower which houses a large bell dating back to the 18th century and a big bronze Gong dating back to the 19th century.



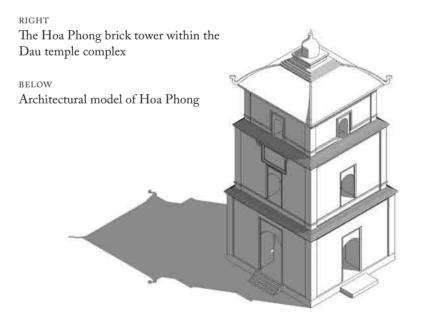


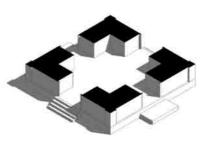
The altar of Lady Dau in the main hall

The bronze bell inside the Hoa Phong brick tower



The peaceful ancient courtyard, Dau temple grounds







MOT COT

1049 HANOI

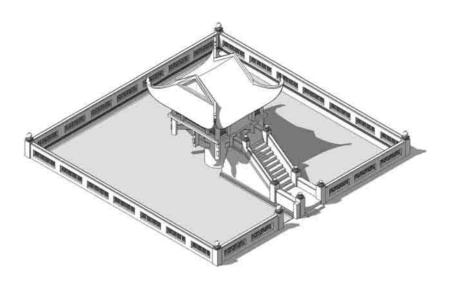
Chua Mot Cot or the One Pillar Pagoda in Hanoi manifests the popularity of the worship of the goddess Quan Am, who is the female manifestation of Avalokitesvara, the (male) Bodhisattva of compassion. The popularity of the Bodhisattva spread to China where the Bodhisattva was transformed into the feminine goddess of compassion known as Guan Yin. From China it reached Vietnam, gaining immense popularity during the Ly dynasty.

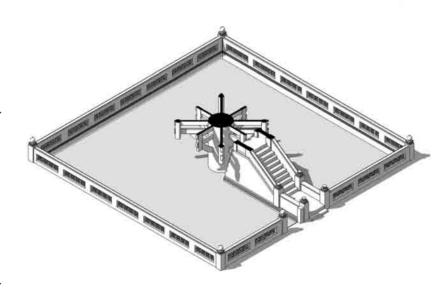
There are many versions attributed to the origin of the design and building of this unusual Buddhist temple. It is believed that in 1049, King Ly Thai Tong dreamt of the Quan Am, who, seated on her lotus throne at her lotus palace, invited him to join her. This was perceived as a bad omen by the monks who advised him to construct a temple fashioned as her lotus throne, where they could offer their prayers for the king's longevity. The original name of the temple, Chua Dien Hu in fact means 'lifelengthening' reflected this idea. Another account suggests that the temple was built by King Ly Thai Tong in gratitude towards Quan Am, who appeared in his dream to grant him a male heir.

The architectural design of the Mot Cot temple is conceived as a lotus flower emerging from a pond, representing the lotus palace of the goddess Quan Am. The temple is a small wooden structure that is set on a single cylindrical column through a system of supporting wooden brackets. The column rises out of a square-shaped pond, the Chieu pond, and is approached by a flight of steps from one side. The wooden temple structure has a square plan of 3 metres on each side and is covered by a sloping roof having four upturned corners.

According to the inscriptions, the original structure had a column built of two cylindrical stone blocks with a capital in the form of a 1000 petaled open lotus flower, in the middle of which was the dark red temple housing the statue of Quan Am.

Since its first construction, the Mot Cot temple has been reconstructed several times, in 1105 during the Ly rule and later in 1249 during the Tran period. It was totally rebuilt on the same site in 1955, and in 1962, was recognized by the Vietnamese government as a national historical and cultural relic.





Architectural model of Mot Cot

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) The One Pillar Pagoda rising from a pond, representing the lotus palace of Quan Am

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM) The multi-armed statue of Quan Am





BUT THAP

17TH CENTURY THUAN THANH DISTRICT, BAC NINH PROVINCE

But Thap is one of the largest Buddhist temples in north Vietnam of four wooden columns in each corner, above which are eight and is a fine example of the architectural and sculptural traditions sloping roofs, at two levels. of Buddhist temples in the 17th century. The temple is popularly called Nhan Thap temple. But Thap means 'brush-shaped tower,' The first of the seven halls that are grouped together is because when founded it included a Stupa tower in that shape. appropriately called the front hall or lower hall, Tien Dong. It houses over 50 statues and some of the masterpieces of 17th This is largest building and it houses two huge statues of the century woodcarving, including the largest statue of the Quan Am, the female depiction of the male Avalokitesvara, with one thousand eyes and a thousand arms.

But Thap is located near the dyke of the Duong river, Thuan Thanh district, Bac Ninh province, Vietnam. Founded in 1037, the temple was renovated and enlarged during the reign of king constructed in wood and is supported through wooden beams Le Than Tong. According to the inscription on a stele in the that have sculptural carvings of dragons and phoenix. The hall temple, the temple was sponsored by the women from the royal also houses an elaborately carved wooden altar. The main hall family and Trinh Thi Ngoc Truc, the mother of the king, Trinh also known as the upper sanctuary is the principal building or Trang, is said have prompted the extensive development of the shrine hall of the entire temple complex. It is a large hall raised temple along with two princesses - Le Thi Ngoc Duyen and on a higher plinth surrounded by a stone parapet with bas-Trinh Thi Ngoc Co, in the 17th century.

house statues of various deities and serve different Buddhist rituals. The halls have rectangular plans but vary in size and centre is the historical Shakyamuni Buddha with the Buddha architectural character according to the function that they serve. of the past, Amitabha, to his left and the Buddha of the future, All the halls are arranged symmetrically along a 100 metre long Maitreya, to his right. In front stands a second triad known linear axis in sequence, with their longer sides facing the front. as 'the three bodies', or Tam Than, and are the three mystical With the exception of the first two halls, the other seven halls bodies of the Buddha. Two exemplary statues of Quan Am and are grouped together and enclosed by a gallery running on both Sakyamuni Buddha are also installed in this hall. The Quan Am sides connecting the end halls. The planning of temples in such statue is 2.5 metres high and represents one thousand eyes and a manner produces a configuration that resembles the Chinese a thousand arms. character Cong enclosed within a square and is known as Noi Cong Ngoai Quoc as earlier described under architectural A curved stone bridge links this hall to the next hall in the typology.

The first hall in the sequence of this planning typology is the three-door entrance gate hall known as Tam Quan. This building outside world into the sacred realm of the temple. The building iconography carved in wood on its eight faces. consists of a rectangular hall with three doors on both the front and rear walls. This is followed by the bell tower hall or Gac Chuong. This building consists of two storeys and houses the bell on the upper floor. The first floor is supported by a group

guardians of the temple, known as Dvarapala in Sanskrit.

The next hall along the axis is a smaller hall called the incense burning hall. This hall is attached to both the front hall and the main hall of the temple which appears next in the sequence, thereby serving as a linking hall. The entire structure is reliefs to distinguish it from the other halls. This hall houses the set of statues of the trinity of the Buddhas placed on a wooden The temple comprises an ensemble of nine principle halls that altar that is centrally positioned at rear of the hall. This set of statues consists of the Buddhas of the three epochs - in the

sequence which is called the 'practise charity cell' known as Tich Thien Am in Vietnamese. This building has a roof that rises in three tiers. Within this building is housed a revolving octagonal tower having a height of 7.8 metres. The tower is hinged on is the gate house that serves as the symbolic transition from the the floor with wooden roof beams, bas-reliefs of Buddhist

> OPPOSITE PAGE The curved stone bridge links the main hall to the next hall

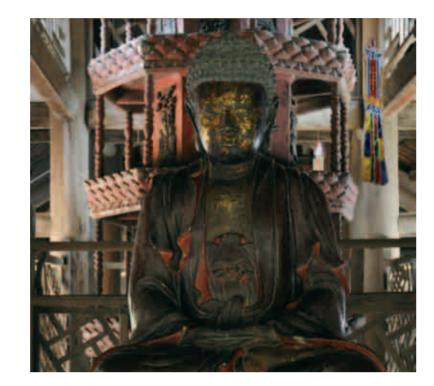


118 THE GOLDEN LANDS VIETNAM – SELECTED EXAMPLES 119 The next hall in the sequence is separated by a narrow open space and is called the central palace or meeting hall. This hall is used for assembly of monks.

This is again followed by a slightly smaller hall, that is separated by a narrow open space and is called the sanctuary. This building serves as the donors' hall where the statues of the three women from the royal family who sponsored the construction of the temple are housed. They are the queen mother, Trinh Thi Ngoc Truc, and the two princesses - Le Thi Ngoc Duyen and Trinh Thi Ngoc Co.

The last hall along the axis called the rear hall is also separated from the previous hall. However this hall is joined at the ends by the two galleries that connects it to the front hall. This hall is used for the worship of various patriarchs whose statues are installed here.

The house of the patriarch Ven Chuyet Chuyet is located outside this enclosed ensemble of the temple. Several towers constructed in stone are also found there. The Bao Nghiem tower is five storeys high and houses the statue of Ven Chuyet Chuyet while the stone tower at the rear of the temple houses the statue of Minh Hanh who was the Abbot of the Pagoda from 1644–1659.



A unique octagonal revolving tower at the rear of the Buddha statue

BELOW But Thap enclosure with its Stupa tower at the far end of the halls along the axis

OPPOSITE PAGE Front gate to But Thap





THAY TEMPLE

C. 11TH CENTURY OUOC OAI DISTRICT, HA TAY PROVINCE

Shui. The temple buildings which total around 17 represent the galleries that run on both sides. head of the dragon. On this same mountain side can be found the legendary meditation cave, the Cac Co cave.

The Thay Pagoda meaning the 'Pagoda of the master' is also called Chua Thein Phuc or the 'Pagoda of the celestial blessing.' It is also known as the Huong Hai hermit cell, being one of the wooden roof supported on circular wooden columns. many caves here used by the Zen master Tu Dao Hanh when he went into seclusion. However, the popular name is derived from the name of the Sai Son mountains which is colloquially called Thay mountains. The Stupa at the Thay temple complex is a commemorative monument built as an outside enclosure in memory of the Zen master Tu Dao Hanh.

The temple is believed to have been built during the reign of King Ly Thai Tong (r. 1072–1128) of the Ly dynasty in the early 11th century. However, the buildings have been restored several times since then.

The temple complex faces a large lake, the Long Chieu or the Dragon lake. An open pavilion is located in the middle of the lake aligned in front of the temple. The open pavilion is used for the distinctive water puppet performances of Vietnam. The presence of such structures as part of the temple complex demonstrates the cultural role of Buddhist temples in Vietnam. The pavilion rises on masonry walls and supports two tiered roofs with upturned corners.

The architectural design of the temple is the Tam typology and comprises three rectangular buildings that are laid out parallel to each other along an axis and sitting within an overall structure shaped like the Chinese character for three ('\(\exists'\)), or in Vietnamese, Tam. Two enclosing verandahs run along the sides. Each of the three buildings are differentiated with three different sizes of roofs and are raised on plinths of different heights. The lower or front hall is known as Ha Pagoda and is used for ritual and ceremonies. The middle hall is called the

The temple is located at the foot of Sai Son mountains in Sai Trung Pagoda and houses the statue of Buddha. The main hall Son commune, Quoc Oai district, Ha Tay province. The site or the upper hall called Thuong Pagoda is a 40 metre by 60 nestling between rocks and the 16 summits of the surrounding metre rectangle, and is dedicated to the memory of monk Tu hills, represents the dragon's back and is considered very Dao Hanh where his statue is set on a rectangular stone pedestal auspicious according to Chinese geomancy known as Feng with elaborate carvings. The three main halls are enclosed by

> Two pedestrian bridges, built around the early 17th century called the sun bridge or 'Nhat Tine' and moon bridge or 'Nguyet Tine' span over the pond on either side of the temple complex. The bridges are curved gently rising at the centre and has a



The front hall or Ha Pagoda of the Tam typology



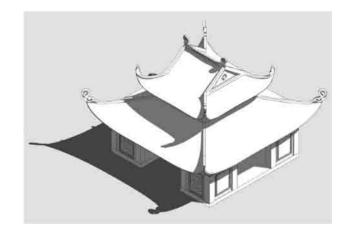
Overall view of Thay temple site with its auspicious Feng Shui

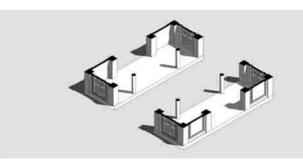
Architectural model of the open pavilion

Steps leading to the middle hall or Trung Pagoda

BOTTOM (RIGHT)

The wooden structure of the upper hall or Thuong Pagoda













INDONESIA



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HINDU KINGDOMS
DIENG PLATEAU
BATUJAYA

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CANDI KALASAN
CANDI MENDUT
BOROBUDUR

I. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Located between the two immense geographical regions of India and Australia, the world's largest archipelago of Indonesia consists of more than 17,000 islands, the main ones being Sumatra, Java, Bali, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, the Nusa Tenggara islands, the Moluccas Islands, and Irian Jaya. Straddling the equator, Indonesia is also between the eco-zones of both Asia and Australia. With landscapes ranging from fertile plains, lakes, mountains and to the highest number of active volcanoes in the world, Indonesia combines a variety of rare flora and fauna, such as the Komodo dragon.

CO-EXISTENCE OF HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM

Today, the main religion of Indonesia is Islam but up until the 13th century, the popular religions in the Indonesian islands, particularly in Sumatra, Java and Bali, were Hinduism and Buddhism, both Indic religions. Both religions shared the archetypal form of the Candi in their temple designs and both built their monuments at close proximity to each other in the island of Java where the Buddhist Borobudur temple complex is complemented by the neighbouring Hindu temples of the Prambanan complex. As such, Hinduism and Buddhism co-existed peacefully, and the rituals and practice of the two faiths were syncretized with the existing indigenous local beliefs of ancestor worship and animistic religious practices. The Indic god, Shiva the destroyer, practiced in the form of Shaivism, was integrated with popular mountain cults, and the symbolism of the Hindu cosmic universe and sacred mountains easily found expression in the Hindu and Buddhist temples of Indonesia.

PAGE 124 Wesak Day pilgrim at Candi Mendut, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Close-up of a Buddha statue in Borobudur, 9th century, central Java, Indonesia

Map of central Java showing main Hindu and Buddhist temple sites



Not drawn to scale

In the case of Buddhism, it was the Indian form of Mahayana Buddhism which first took firm root around the 8th century during a period referred to as the golden age of Buddhism in Java from the 7th to the 13th centuries. Mahayana Buddhism later transformed into the tantric form of Vajrayana Buddhism from the 10th century onwards. Evidence of both the Mahayana and Vajrayana forms of Buddhism can be found in the sculptural heritage of the Buddhist deities such as Avalokitesvara, Tara, Manjushri and Prajnapamita which can be seen in most of the Buddhist temples of Indonesia.

Not only did the cultural influence of India indelibly shape the religious structures of Indonesia, local religious tolerance and

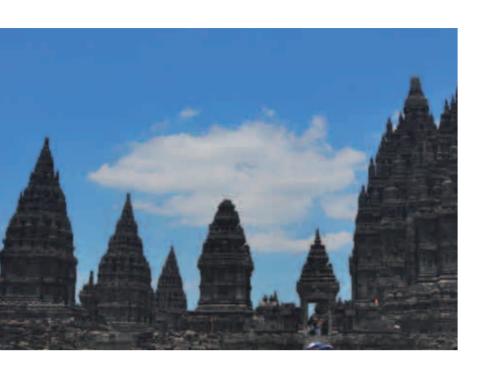
affinity meant that both the Hindu and Buddhist kings of Indonesia built their temples and monuments at close proximity to each other, especially in central Java. This is the unique feature which greets pilgrims and tourists when they visit the temple complex located at the Prambanan valley in central Java where, located in the same park area, they will be able to see not only the imposing Hindu monuments of the Prambanan temple complexes, dedicated to the Hindu trinity of gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and their respective goddess consorts, Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati; but also in the same compound, be astounded by the Buddhist temple monuments of Candi Sewu (which in fact adjoins the Prambanan temple) and nearby at the same Prambanan valley, Candi Kalasan, Candi Sari, Candi Lumbung and Candi Plaosan.

HINDU KINGDOMS

The Indianized kingdoms which first emerged in the Indonesian islands initially followed Hinduism. One of the oldest recorded Hindu kingdoms in Indonesia was the kingdom of Taruma or Tarumanagara, an early Sundanese Indianized kingdom which was centered around the area of modern Jakarta in Java and existed from around the 4th century to around the 7th century.

The main temple of Candi Sewu, 9th century, Prambanan Valley, central Java, Indonesia





The Hindu Prambanan temple complex, 9th century, central Java, Indonesia

DIENG PLATEAU

Although it is believed that the Indic faiths from India could have taken root in the Indonesian islands as early as the 1st century, the earliest material archaeological evidence can be found in the 2,000 metre-high Dieng plateau near Wonosobo in central Java. 'Dieng'in Sanskit means 'the abode of the Gods' and this explains why the temples were built at this altitude in spite of the volcanic activity. Here, at the inhospitable caldera of the still active Dieng volcano can be found the remains of eight Hindu temples (it is believed that there could have been as many as 400 temples at one time) dating from between the 7th and 8th centuries. Temple inscriptions indicate that the temples were probably built by the Sanjaya dynasty of the Hindu Mataram kingdom. These Hindu temples which are in the Dravidian and Pallava temple style of south India are perhaps the oldest standing stone Hindu temples in Indonesia. Dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, these remaining eight temples are of very modest proportions, with only a width

of about 15 metres at the sides, but nevertheless these early Hindu temples of the Dieng plateau possess the architectural vocabulary that was later to define the larger Hindu Prambanan temple and Buddhist temples in central Java.

BATUJAYA, WEST JAVA

Although Indic religions had taken root in the region from the 1st century, the earliest comprehensive material evidence of religious buildings in Indonesia dates from the 7th century. However, the recently excavated Batujaya Buddhist complex located on the north coast of Java, west of Karawang has pushed back this archaeological evidence to the 5th century. At the Batujaya site can be found the archetypes of Buddhist architecture – Stupas in the form of structural earthen mounds called 'unurs' and bricks made of clay and rice husks. These are rather poor remains; primarily archaeological ruins, and do not give a complete picture of their building forms. The Batujaya complex consisting of over 20 structures were constructed during the oldest Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Java, during the Tarumanagara period. The structures, believed to have been temples, reveal an architecture that shares the vocabulary of designs of brick structures found in India, and also what was once the ancient Dvaravati regions of Thailand. The excavated structures consist of brick foundations which are square in shape with median stairs. There are no remains of the superstructure, but it has been suggested to have been built of wood.

THE SRIVIJAYA KINGDOM AND THE EMERGENCE OF BUDDHISM

Its strategic location as a trading outpost along the ancient maritime trade route between China and India, brought enormous wealth and prosperity to the Indonesian islands, in particular to Sumatra centred around the capital city of Palembang during the era of the Srivijayan kingdom from around the 7th to 13th centuries. Early archaeological records go as far back as the 3rd century, but actual proof through historical records show Srivijaya as the centre of trade and cultural influence in its heyday around the early 7th century where its influence spread north to the Straits of Malacca, to Kedah in the Malay Peninsula, all the way up to Chaiya in southern Thailand and westwards to the island of Java.



Though there is no certainty as to when exactly Buddhism came from India to the Indonesian islands, it is believed that the Theravadan monk Gunavarman, from Kashmir, carried the Buddhist faith to the islands around 420 CE when he came to Java, translated Buddhist scriptures, gave teachings and converted some members of the royal families to Buddhism. According to Chinese records, the king built a monastery for him although no material evidence of the building has been found so far. The pivotal role of the Srivijayan kingdom as a vibrant centre of Mahayana Buddhism in southeast Asia is evidenced in the records of well known Chinese scholars and missionaries. The earliest written record came from the monk Faxian (337–422 CE) who travelled to the Indonesian islands and recorded the co-existence of both Hinduism and Buddhism in the islands. This information was later reinforced by other well known Chinese missionaries, the monks Xuanzang (602–664 CE) and Yijing (635–713 CE). In fact Yijing of the Tang dynasty who travelled extensively from China to the ancient Nalanda University in India, visited the Srivijayan kingdom in 671 CE, and again from 685 to 689 CE, wrote then that Sriviyaya was an important Mahayana Buddhist centre for thousands of scholars and pilgrims from the various Buddhist

SRIVIJAYAN CENTRE OF POWER
SRIVIJAYA EXPEDITIONS
IMPORTANT SITE
MAXIMUM EXTENT OF SRIVIJAYA
SEA UNDER SRIVIJAYAN CONTROI

ABOVE

Map of Srivijaya kingdom showing strategic maritime position

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schools of Mahayana, Theravada and Vajrayana. In the 11th century, the famous Indian Buddhist monk Atisha who was responsible for bringing Vajrayana Buddhism to the Himalayan mountains and plateau region, also studied there. The regional influence of the Srivijaya kingdom across the ancient Buddhist world can also be seen in the endowments made by Balaputra, a Srivijayan king from the Buddhist Sailendra dynasty in the 9th century who apparently contributed funds for the construction of a monastery and temple as far away as the ancient Nalanda University in India around that period. This is evidenced by inscriptions excavated at the Nalanda University site. Buddhism started to wane by the 13th century when Srivijaya was subjugated by the kingdoms of Singasari and Majapahit, and later by the advent of Islam.¹

SRIVIJAYA'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Unfortunately, as already mentioned, there is scant evidence of its material culture, making it difficult to reconstruct the precise details of Srivijaya's Buddhist architectural heritage. Among the few extant examples is the Phra Boromthat at Chaiya, Thailand, with its Chedi built in an architectural style that was characteristic of Srivijaya which drew from Indian sources namely the Gupta, Pala and Amravati school of art and architecture. This usually has an agglomeration of smaller elements such as Shikaras that are multiplied to create a complete form of the temple, similar to the temples of south India as will be discussed under Architectural Characteristics. Phra Boromthat was originally built around the 8th century as a brick structure, recalling the architecture of the Javanese temples in its form. Other Buddhist temple remains in parts of Thailand and Indonesia which can be attributed to this early Srivijaya temple architectural style can be found in the ruins of Wat Kaew in Chaiya and the excavated ruins of the Candi Gumpung at the Muaro Jambi temple complex in the province of Jambi in Sumatra which date back to around the 11th and 13th centuries and was built by the Melayu kingdom.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF BUDDHISM IN JAVA

THE SAILENDRA DYNASTY (760-850 CE) AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

It was during the era of the Hindu-Buddhist Srivijaya kingdom that Buddhism expanded and flowered and it was indeed the golden age for Buddhist thought, art and architecture in the region. Although not much of Srivijayan architecture remains in Sumatra, it was during this golden age that the Buddhist Sailendra kingdom that ruled central Java, at first as a vassal state of the Srivijaya empire, built the magnificent Buddhist monumental temple complexes of central Java such as Borobodur and Candi Sewu which survive to this day.

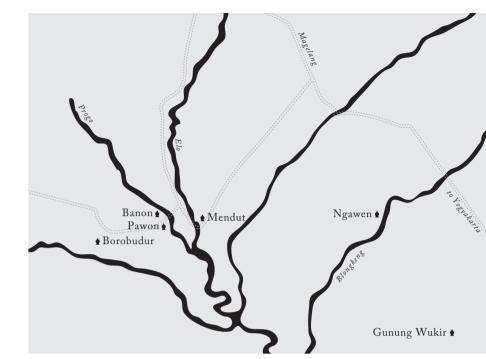
Under their royal patronage of Mahayana Buddhism in central Java, the Buddhist rulers of the Sailendra dynasty, extended their territory from Palembang in Sumatra to central Java, driving out the ruler of the Hindu Mataram kingdom which centered around the ancient town of Mataram in the Prambanan valley near modern Yogyakarta in central Java. The Hindu Mataram kingdom had seen its full glory during the reign of king Sanjaya (717–760 CE) of the Sanjaya dynasty.

Originally, the Sailendras along with the rest of the Javanese population were worshippers of the Hindu god Shiva, but once the rulers converted to the more benevolent religion of Buddhism, they became active promoters of the faith. Connected by dynastic marriages, there was perfect harmony in central Java between the Hindu Sanjaya kings who ruled the northern part of central Java and who built the biggest Hindu temple complex, Prambanan temple in southeast Asia, and the

Buddhist Sailendra kings who controlled the rest of central Java. The Sailendras were all active promoters of Mahayana Buddhism and built some of the finest ancient Buddhist monuments in the world, including Candi Sari, Candi Mendut, Candi Pawon, Candi Plaosan and the monumental Borobodur and Candi Sewu.

The remains of these very important Buddhist temples and monuments are distributed very closely across two adjacent areas in the Javanese heartland, the Kedu plains and the Prambanan valley - the fertile area between the Progo and Opak rivers. While evidence of Buddhist architecture at Batujaya in west Java establishes the early presence of archetypes of Buddhist architecture in the form of Stupas and temples, they are primarily archaeological ruins and do not give a complete picture of their building forms. A comprehensive idea of this only begins to emerge in central and eastern Java, where distributed across these two areas, the Kedu plains and the Prambanan valley, are important extant remains of Buddhist monuments. Constructed in over just a very short, remarkable period between the beginning of the 8th century to the 10th century, these temples and monuments are considered to be the first complete evidence of Buddhist architecture in southeast Asia as well as being some of the finest and largest examples of Buddhist architecture in the world, the crown jewels of Buddhist architecture. It is indeed intriguing that complex architectural concepts were manifested into such magnificent building forms without much precedent and within such a short period of just over two centuries of the Sailendra dynastic rule. This enigma is further enhanced due to various uncertainties over the historical authenticity of the origin of the Sailendras and the nature of their engagement with the architectural production process.² It has been suggested that the Sailendras were minor dynasties from the Amaravati region who fled India due to the rising power of the Gupta empire. It is therefore not surprising that the early material culture that sprang up in Java shows distinct influences from the Indian Amaravati and Gupta styles and also that of the Indian Buddhist centres such as Ajanta and Ellora.

Although constructed within a short span of just around 200 to 250 years, it is significant to observe that many of these Buddhist temples varied significantly in scale and complexity of design. The wide contrast of architectural proportions is seen in the comparison between the dimensions of the very small Candi Sari with its foundations measuring just 24 square metres, to that of the monumental scale of Borobudur with its foundations measuring a staggering 123 square metres.





Not drawn to scale

ABOVE (TOP)
Plan of Kedu plains showing main
Buddhist temple sites

ABOVE

Plan of Prambanan valley showing Hindu and Buddhist temple sites

2. See R. Jordaan, 'The Sailendras, the Status of the Ksatriya Theory and the Development of the Hindu-Javanese Temple Architecture'; *Bigdragen tot de taal - en volkenkunde* 155 (1999), No. 2, Leiden, 210–243.

1. After 928 CE, the dynastic centre of the Buddhist Sailendras shifted from central Java, where they ruled from the 8th to the 9th century, to east Java, where Vajrayana Buddhism survived but started to wane in the dynasties of the Kediri, 1050–1221, Singosari, 1221–1293 and the Majapahit dynasties 1293–1530. Thereafter, Buddhism was overrun by the wave of Islam.

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II. ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

By the 7th century, a comprehensive idea of temple architectural forms had begun to emerge in the regions of central and eastern Java. Architecturally, both the Hindu and Buddhist structures in Indonesia shared the same typical Hindu architectural traditions in their layouts, hierarchy of zones, structure and temple designs, all according to Hindu cosmology which was then complemented by local Indonesian culture and beliefs.

CANDI - A SINGLE SHRINE STRUCTURE

The religious Buddhist architecture of Java has developed primarily from the Candi, an Indian type single-celled isolated shrine structure with a pyramidal tower on top along with an entrance portico. The architectural form of the Candi can be traced as far back to the Nagara type Shikhara towers of northern India, in particular to the Hindu temples of the Indian Gupta empire (320-550 CE); the Buddhist temples of the Indian Pala empire (750 CE-1174); and the monolithic Dravidian Pancha Rathas carved out of granite, of the Pallava dynasty (between the 2nd to the 9th centuries) in Tamil Nadu in south India.

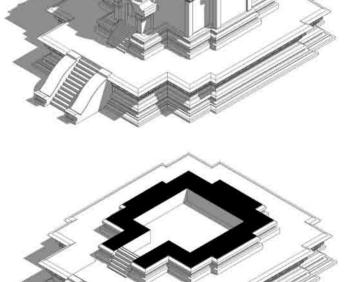
Although the form of the Candi is of Indian extraction, in Indonesia it has incorporated a distinct Javanese variation to the theme. The function of the Indonesian Candi has been associated with both the funerary practices of ancient Javanese societies and as a shrine or a temple of Indian origin, whereby it combines the two notions to establish the prototype of a distinct Javanese architecture.3 The association of Candis as repositories of ashes of deceased kings with Buddhist Stupas enshrining relics is merely an unintentional correspondence between the two architectural types.

Unlike the Rathas of the south Indian Pallava empire which carry the memory of timber construction in stone, in Indonesia there are no traces of timber construction evident in the forms of the Candis. This suggests the possibility that the Candi was imported as a mature form into the region without going through the evolutionary process of first fashioning native wooden architectural traditions into stone.

The term Candi is said to be a derivative of the Hindu goddess, Chandika, an incarnation of Durga, the consort of the god, Shiva the destroyer. The term Candi has also been variously argued to have been derived from the Sanskrit words 'candida' and 'sandhi' (to think). The generic architectural form of the Candi is shared by both Hindu and Buddhist architecture and often there is little to distinguish between Candis on the basis of religion. However, certain features such as the presence of miniature Stupas on the roof of the Buddhist Candi later developing into the more complex and cylindrical Dagobas, and the sculptural scheme of the walls comprising Buddhist deities distinguishes Buddhist Candis from their Hindu counterparts. The Candi can be further classified stylistically into central and eastern Javanese types based on their architectural form and the profile

The terraces ascending to the top of the main Stupa, Borobudur, 9th century, central Java, Indonesia

Architectural model of Candi Mendut, 9th century, central Java, which represents a typical Candi single-shrined structure



3. Soekmono, R, The Javanese Candi.

4. Mark Long; Lokesh Chandra, 'Candi Mendut'.

of their bases revealing regional preferences. As a generic name for religious structures, Candi, has been freely applied to both the Hindu and the Buddhist architectural lexicon of Java and the term is loosely applied to various non-religious buildings such as gateways and bathing places in Indonesia.

According to both Hindu and Buddhist cosmology, the Candi itself represents the sacred Mount Meru and the Candi temple layout is a model of the sacred cosmic universe. The layout thus contains a hierarchy of three zones. The lowest zone or realm, of mortal humans, animals and demons is the world of desire or lust (Kamadhatu or Kamaloka). The outer courtyard of a Candi and the foot of each temple represent this. The second zone is the world of form (Rupadhatu or Rupaloka) which is the middle world of holy people, ascetics and lesser gods. The inner courtyard and the body of each Candi symbolize this. Finally, there is the ultimate zone or realm, the world without any form (Arupadhatu or Arupaloka). This is the holiest and highest realm, and is represented by the roof crowned with a Ratna, Vajra and Linga-yoni in Hindu temples, and with a Stupa or Dagoba in Buddhist temples.

As mentioned, the Candi can be further classified stylistically into central Java types (from around the 7th to the 10th centuries) and eastern Javanese types (from the 11th to the 15th centuries) based on their architectural form and the profile of their bases revealing regional preferences. The main differences are most obvious in the shape of the Stupas, geometrical shapes and location of the temple sanctuaries.

5. Diagoro, Chihara, 'Hindu Buddhist Architecture in southeast Asia'.

Bajang Ratu, a typical east

Java, Indonesia

BELOW (BOTTOM)

Indonesia

Javanese Stupa, Trowulan, east

Borobudur, a typical central

Javanese Stupa, central Java,





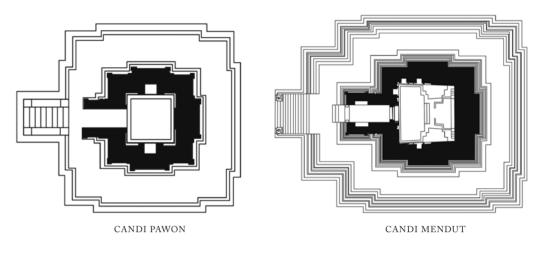
The Stupas of central Java temples are bulky. They are onion-shaped with bulbous-shaped Harmikas whereas east Java temple Stupas are slim and slender. Geometrical shapes are arranged vertically in central Java temples but along step-like horizontal lines in east Java temples. The sanctuary in central Javanese temples is located in the centre but in east Java temples, usually at the back of the temple compound. This is because the layout of central Java temples is in the Mandala plan style (see the discussion below), and it is concentric, symmetrical and formal with the main temple in the middle. In the east Java style the temple layout plans are linear, asymmetrical and following the topography of the site, with the main temple located right at the back and furthest from the entrance.

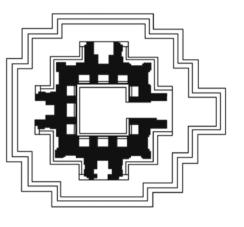
The Javanese Buddhist temple at its most basic is this single-shrined structure or Candi. This comprises a square plan over which rests the main cuboid body of the shrine with entry provided through a single doorway. Above this, rises the roof tower in a pyramidal formation defining the verticality of the form. The entire structure rests on a plinth in the form of a molded base raised from the ground and is embellished with pilasters, cornices, niches and sculptural elements.

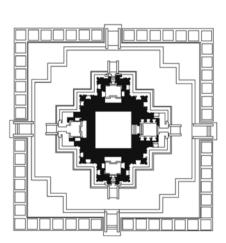
Although there are some surviving Candis in east Java with the east Java style such as Bajang Ratu, Penataran, Jawi, Jago, Kidal and Singhasari temples, none of them have the popularity and fascination of the temples of central Java.

THE SQUARE PLAN

The basic form of the Candi served as an archetype for the development of Buddhist architecture in Java, the variations of which have generated other architectural forms of the temple. The square plan is transformed towards a cruciform plan with the addition of deep niches, porches or secondary chambers on all the four faces of the square. Unlike the plans of the Indian temples where the elaborate architectural form of the Mandapa with its elaborate porch-like structure leading up to the temple proper emerges along the approach axis in front of the door of the main shrine, Javanese temples retain the formal symmetry of the square by the addition of the secondary structures on the three faces of the square to balance the provision of a single door on one of the faces. The attempt to create balance evenly on all the four faces of the square structure bears a distant conceptual similarity to the design of the four-faced temples of Myanmar, known as the Lei-myet-hna and can be seen in the Minnathu Lei-myet-hna temple in Pagan (as further described in the Myanmar chapter). Numerous variations to the square plan of the temple shrine have been observed, where due to the provision of openings on one side of the square, architectural elements have been added on the other faces to balance the overall symmetry of the form.

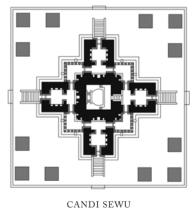






CANDI LUMBUNG

CANDI KALASAN



ABOVE Development of square plans

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THE MANDALIC PLANNING AND MOUNTAIN TEMPLES

THE SACRED COSMOLOGY

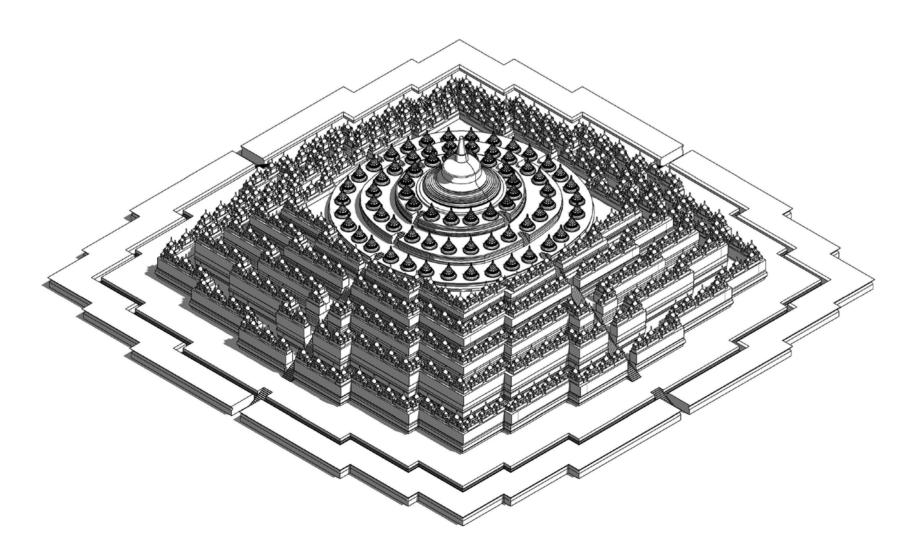
Buddhist architecture and planning are derived from the principles of Hindu-Buddhist cosmology and follow plans based on the geometry of the Mandala which is a symbolic representation of the cosmos in the form of geometric diagrams.

It is the two Buddhist monumental complexes, the Borobudur temple complex and on a smaller scale, Candi Sewu, that incorporate most stunningly and dramatically, all these elements of the Mandala plan so clearly. At eye level, one sees that Borobudur is built as a single enormous Stupa but viewed from above, taking the aerial view of Borobudur, one sees that the shape of Borobudur is in the form of a gigantic tantric Buddhist Mandala.

With its Mandala plan, the architectural scheme of Borobudur embodies the multiple layers of meaning associated with Buddhist cosmology and proselytizing, and combines this with local notions of ancestor worship to create a unique architectural form. Rising through a terraced formation, the top represents Mount Meru, the abode of the gods as a temple-mountain, the symbolic sacred mountain of both the Hindu and Buddhist faiths. The different levels of the terrace walls which have extraordinary well-carved stone bas-reliefs panels (more than 1,400 of them) with narrative Buddhist Jataka stories and the Lalitavistara (Buddha's life and teachings), enable Borobudur to function as an instructional medium. The enigmatic character of the monument has made it difficult to categorize, and it is perceived both as a temple and Stupa.

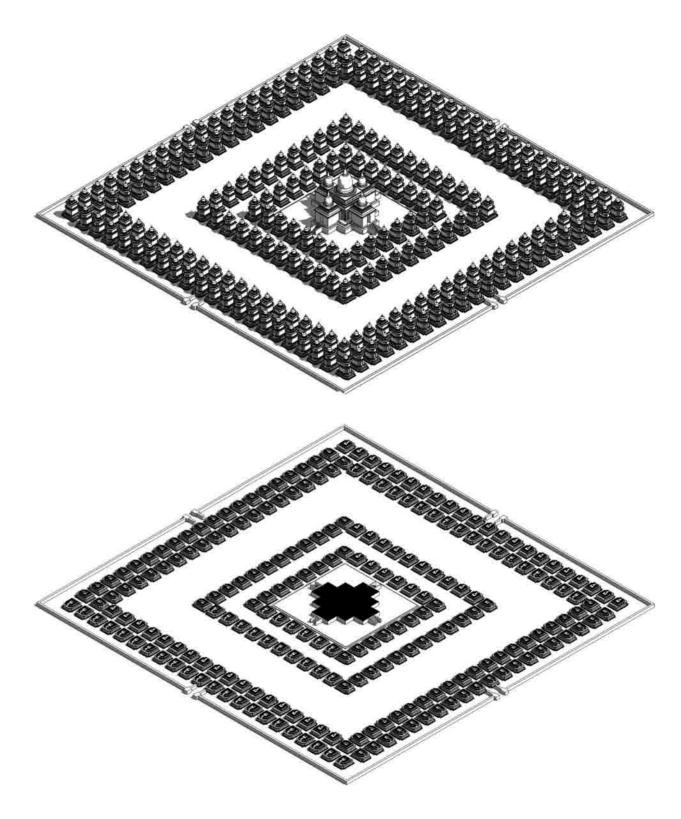
Architectural model of Borobudur

– the Mandala plan



In the case of Candi Sewu which was built shortly after, all the 250 to 253 buildings (an exact total figure is not known because so much of the temple is in ruins), are arranged in a Mandala pattern on rectangular grounds. Around the central main mother temple, the smaller ancillary guardian temples or Perwaras (around 240 Perwaras), and some larger Perwara temples known as Perwara Utama, are laid out in four rectangular concentric rows surrounding the main temple within the square frame. The main temple is very large and imposing and there are five other bigger temples close to it. The layout of Candi Sewu is almost a square measuring 185 metres by 165 metres. With irreparable damage caused by the 2006 earthquake, today almost all of Candi Sewu is in ruins with only the main temple and three larger Perwara Utama standing. However, the effect of the monumental symmetry of Candi Sewu is still quite impressive.

Architectural model of Candi Sewu – the Mandala plan



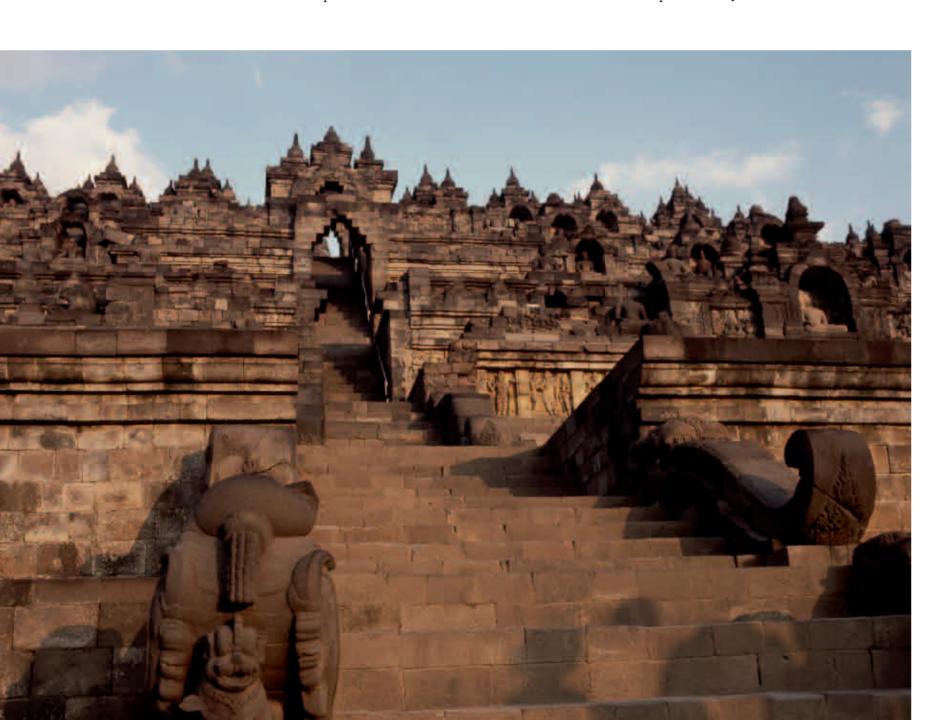
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Borobudur, the architectural manifestations of Mount Meru as temple-mountains, 9th century, central Java, Indonesia

6. R. Jordaan, 'The Sailendras, the Status of the Ksatriya Theory and the Development of the Hindu-Javanese Temple Architecture'; Bigdragen tot de taal - en volkenkunde 155 (1999), No. 2, Leiden, 210-243.

The construction of Buddhist monuments in Java during the early period comprised of brick foundations and base with a timber superstructure, possibly inspired by the Gupta monuments of India. The brick construction method was followed by stone masonry construction around the late 7th century. Walls were built of andesite stones that were abundantly available in the volcanic terrain. The masonry was held together with dowels and tenon-mortice joints and was cladded with dressed stone on its surfaces that was finally finished in a fine plaster. The buildings employed corbelling of stones to span spaces and unlike Myanmar, the use of arches and vaults had not been discovered in Java. The presence of foreign construction supervisors and craftsmen has been suggested in the production of architectural forms and construction that could faithfully embody Indic cosmological percepts.6

In a predominantly Hindu Indonesia, Buddhism, although flourishing only for a brief period, has left a significant presence on the material culture of the region. The architectural manifestations of Mount Meru as temple-mountains in Java remain a crucial link between similar monuments in India such as the Kesaria Stupa and the grand temples of the Khmers that followed. The efflorescence of Buddhist architecture gradually declined with the end of the Sailendra dynasty leaving an indelible mark on the architecture of the Buddhist world as well as becoming a source of inspiration for the later Hindu architecture that developed in east Java.



MULTI-SHRINED TEMPLES IN THE MANDALA PLAN

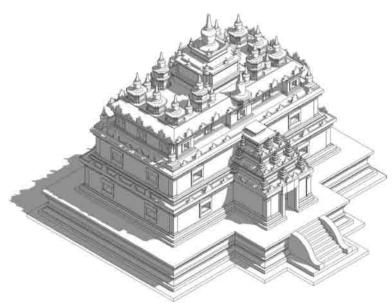
The multi-shrined temples are seen almost exclusively in the Buddhist-Hindu architectural traditions of Java. In this architectural scheme, the main central temple is surrounded by multiple shrine structures arranged in a geometric order based on the cosmic diagrams of the Mandalas. The shrines in the forms of the Candi and the Stupa are the basic architectural units that are repeated across space to configure different ground plans ranging from random to formal organizations. The diagram of the Mandala governs the overall distribution of the shrines where the Candis and the Stupas are arranged around the main temple, which as the religious and architectural focus of the composition, is a larger and more complex building. All Candis and Stupas and the smaller ancillary temples at the temple's periphery, also referred to as Perwaras, are placed in a hierarchical relationship to the main temple.

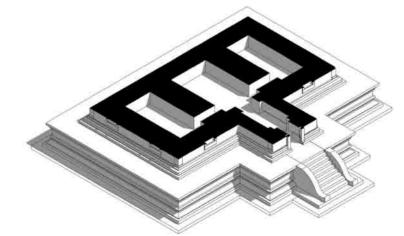
The ensemble of temples structures is enclosed by a surrounding wall to define the sacred precinct that is entered by gates aligned along with the main axis of the geometrical composition. Movement within the sacred precinct is guided by the introduction of the axial arrangement, orientation and alignment of the buildings. The arrangement of the basic unit of the shrine structure in combinations of all these factors therefore creates the possibility for the design of many types of multishrined complexes that address specific ritualistic and symbolic requirements. It is important to remember that though the various multi-shrined temple complexes appear to be similar in design, as is the case with Hindu and Buddhist shrines, subtle variation in the arrangement, alignment and orientation of the shrine structure could be embodying the underlying differences between the religious doctrines and Mandalas they represent.

Although it may not be possible to bring out the precise differences between Hindu and Buddhist shrines within this book, certain planning characteristics specific to Buddhist multi-shrined complexes have been identified. Both faiths share the cosmology of the Mandala and Mount Meru but Buddhist temple complexes tend to have a clearer articulation of the Mandala with a greater centrality accorded to the main shrine. This is seen in the layouts of Candi Lumbung, Candi Sewu and Candi Plaosan.

As mentioned, the spatial layouts of all of these temples are based on the notions of centrality, where the main temple is positioned at the centre while the rest are arranged in concentric rings around it, with the movement towards it governed by

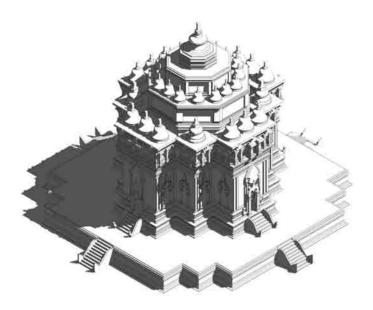


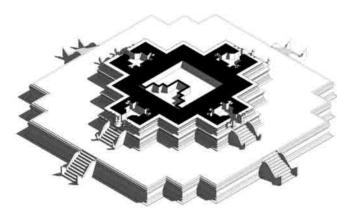


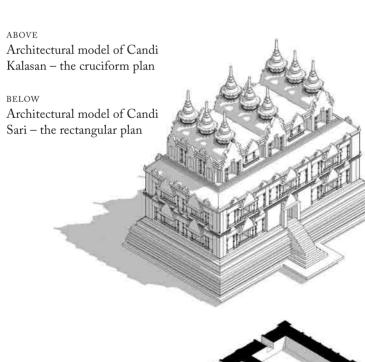


ABOVE (TOP) Candi Plaosan, 9th century, Prambanan valley, central Java, Indonesia

Architectural model of Candi Plaosan – a multi-shrined temple







the defining axis. The intent of the design is to both guide the movement and rituals within the complex as well as establish the symbolic manifestation of the cosmic diagram of the Mandala. Influenced by the Mahayana monuments of the Indian Pala dynasty such as Paharpur and Vikramshila, the multishrined Javanese monuments further develop the architectural patterns of centralized planning and can be seen as a precursor to the monuments that appeared later in the Khmer dynasty in Cambodia.

Both simple and complex architectural designs of multi-shrined types of temple designs can be seen in Candi Sewu and Candi Plaosan. While their designs show different stages of architectural development, they were in reality constructed within a very short period indicating no evolutionary development from single to multi-shrined temple plans. Indeed it is an intriguing feature of the history of religious architecture in the islands, particularly in Sumatra, Java and Bali, as so magnificently attested by Borobudur, that such striking architectural monuments appeared in their mature form without traces of evolutionary development.

Just as in the case of the later and nearby Candi Plaosan, Candi Sewu follows the architectural typology of a multi-shrined temple complex in the concentric formation of the Mandalic plan. The layout of the temple on the geometry of the Mandala is further refined and enlarged, while the central temple plan further develops the cruciform plan of Candi Kalasan. The design of Candi Sewu explores the cosmological precepts of the Mahayana Mandala at a monumental scale not yet attempted, to configure a religious temple complex through the repetition of the basic unit of a Candi. The monumental Buddhist architecture in the form of Borobudur and Candi Sewu can be said to be the grand finale of the development of Buddhist architecture in the central Java area and in the entire region.

THE RECTANGULAR PLAN

The rectangular plan too has also been explored in the design of Buddhist temples in Java. By changing the square shape plan into a rectangle, the builders were able to create more space for a larger congregation, and to accommodate more chambers for images of Mahayana deities. The very small Candi Sari is a perfect example of the use of the rectangular plan. The layout of Candi Sari is a simple rectangular plan measuring 17.3 metres by 10 metres by 17 metres, facing east with stairs at the east entrance. On each side of the temple there are window openings.



Built in the early 9th century, Candi Plaosan is one of the last Buddhist buildings built during the classical period of Buddhist architecture in central Java. Together with Candi Sewu and Borobodur, it ranks as one of the largest and most ambitious architectural schemes attempted to manifest the faith on the island. The twin temples of Candi Plaosan share a similar design of a rectangular plan with the same internal arrangement of rooms as in Candi Sari. Departing from the single isolated temple form, Candi Plaosan with its two twin groups of temples, the north Plaosan temple and the south Plaosan temple is a Buddhist temple complex formed by the agglomeration of over 100 small stupas and 58 temples. The structures are geometrically distributed in a rectangular formation around two central temples with each ensemble enclosed within a rectangular precinct. The layout was inspired by the Mandala which was translated into a three dimensional multi-shrined complex of concentrically arranged Stupas and temples. The Mandalic plan of the multi-shrined temple complex of Candi Plaosan was to reach its final form in the design of Candi Sewu.

ABOVE

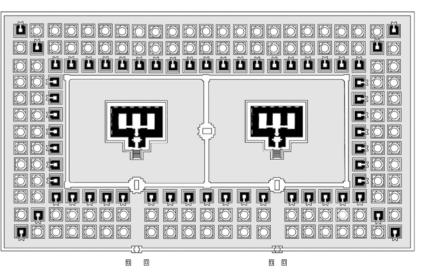
Candi Sari, c. 8th century, Prambanan valley, central Java, Indonesia

BELOW

Candi Plaosan – the twin temples' rectangular plan

PAGES 144-145

The view from the upper terrace of Borobudur, 9th century, central Java, Indonesia



PLAN OF THE TWIN TEMPLES OF CANDI PLAOSAN

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CANDI KALASAN

C. 778 CE THE PRAMBANAN VALLEY

Candi Kalasan is located in the Prambanan valley, the first concrete evidence of Buddhist architecture to be built in a sacred area that was later to include the monumental Hindu Prambanan temple complex and other unique Buddhist structures such as Candi Plaosan, Candi Sari and Candi Sewu. Candi Kalasan was probably built around 778 CE according to an inscription of the same date at the Candi.

Candi Kalasan is dedicated to the goddess Tara of the Mahayana Buddhist pantheon and is believed to have been constructed by a Sailendra king to invoke the blessings of Tara, who is also considered, by merchants and sailors to be their patron saint: 'May she, seeing the world enclosed in the ocean of existence, may she, the only guiding star of its world, grant your desires.'⁷ A monastery was also built along with the Candi and the entire establishment was supported by donations from the village of Kalasan to the Buddhist Sangha.

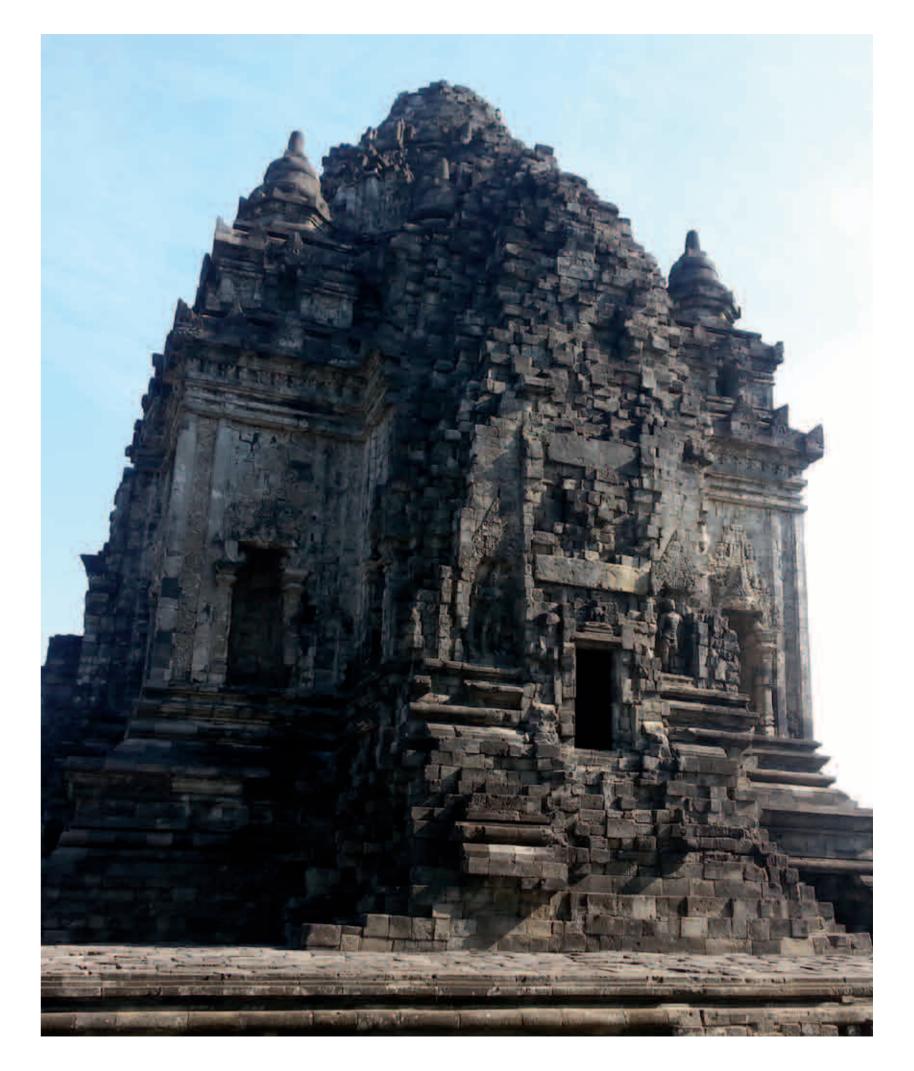
The building comprises an ornately molded base upon which rests the main body of the temple. The temple design is similar to the Hindu Candis found at the Dieng Plateau, except that the square central shrine now has four subsidiary chapels attached to its sides transforming the composition into a cruciform plan. A single-storied structure rests above the cruciform plan with a roof-tower rising above in a pyramidal formation. The roof supports several Stupas and niches with different images of the Buddha. Access is gained into the temple only through the chapel on the east side, while the other three sides function as independent shrines within which were housed statues of Buddhist deities. The external facade of the building is articulated through niches and alcoves that are profusely ornamented with sculptures of the five Dhyani Buddhas of Vajrayana Buddhism and the entryways are protected with sculptures of the half terrestrial animal Kala-makara of Hindu mythology.



ABOVE
Side entrance with fearsome Kalamakara at Candi Kalasan

OPPOSITE PAGE Candi Kalasan, 8th century, Prambanan valley, central Java, Indonesia

7. De Casaris, J.G. Prasati Indonesia, Banding; Nix (1956), Vol II.



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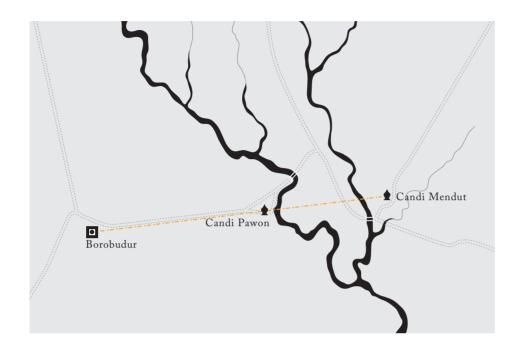
CANDI MENDUT

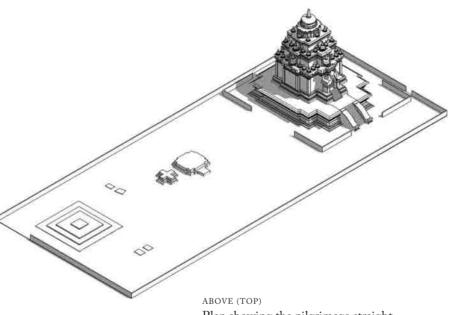
C. 824 CE Magelang district of Yogyakarta

Built around 824 CE by King Indra of the Sailendra dynasty, Candi Mendut is slightly later than Candi Kalasan and shows further variation in the typology of the design of the Buddhist shrine as a Candi. Candi Mendut was built at the height of the golden age of Buddhism during the Sailendra dynasty but at least ten years before the huge temple complex of Borobudur itself was actually built. However, it is believed that when Candi Mendut was built, this was done specifically with the prospect of a monumental temple complex such as Borobodur in mind. It was part of the builders' grand design. Candi Mendut faces west and is located 3 kilometres from Borobudur to the east and is considered to have been connected to it with a pilgrimage processional path in a straight line that passed through a smaller temple, Candi Pawon, lying almost mid-way between the two temples. While the theory of the existence of a physical route has been contested, it has been argued that there existed a geometrical relationship between Borobudur and Candi Mendut, where both are representations of a pair of Mandalas, Vajradhatu-mandala and Mahakaruna-garba-shambala-Mandala, aligned in a straight line.8 A pilgrim in those days who travelled to see the wonders of Borobodur would thus be travelling along this straight line arriving first at Candi Mendut, then to the next temple, Candi Pawon before finally reaching Borobodur. To do so, the pilgrim would cross the two rivers of the Kedu plains, the Elo and Progo, the waters of the rivers symbolically purifying them.

Candi Mendut is located at the southern side within a rectangular compound of 100 metres by 50 metres that is enclosed by a double brick wall. The remains of a large Stupa have been found on the northern side along with those of other smaller Stupas distributed between the two structures. Some remains of a wooden monastery have also been found indicating that Candi Mendut was part of a larger monastic establishment. The monument was excavated around 1834 and this has revealed that the present structure was built over an earlier structure in the tradition of enlarging existing sacred forms.

Candi Mendut is a small but absolutely exquisite temple; a standalone single structure. As a single structure, Candi Mendut differs from the other temples of Borobodur and the Yogyakarta region as most are clusters of temples or a complex of temples. It is as



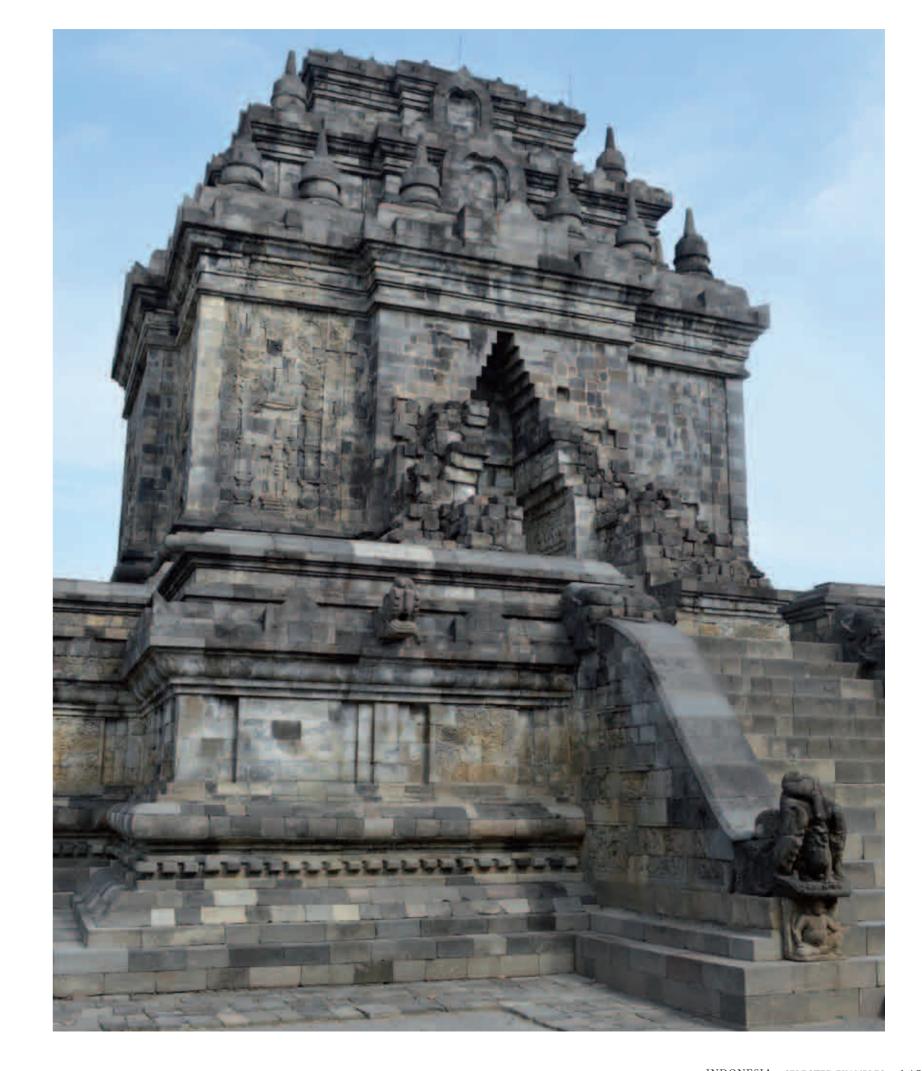


Plan showing the pilgrimage straight line 'route' from Candi Mendut to Candi Pawon and to Borobodur

ABOVE Architectural model of Candi Mendut

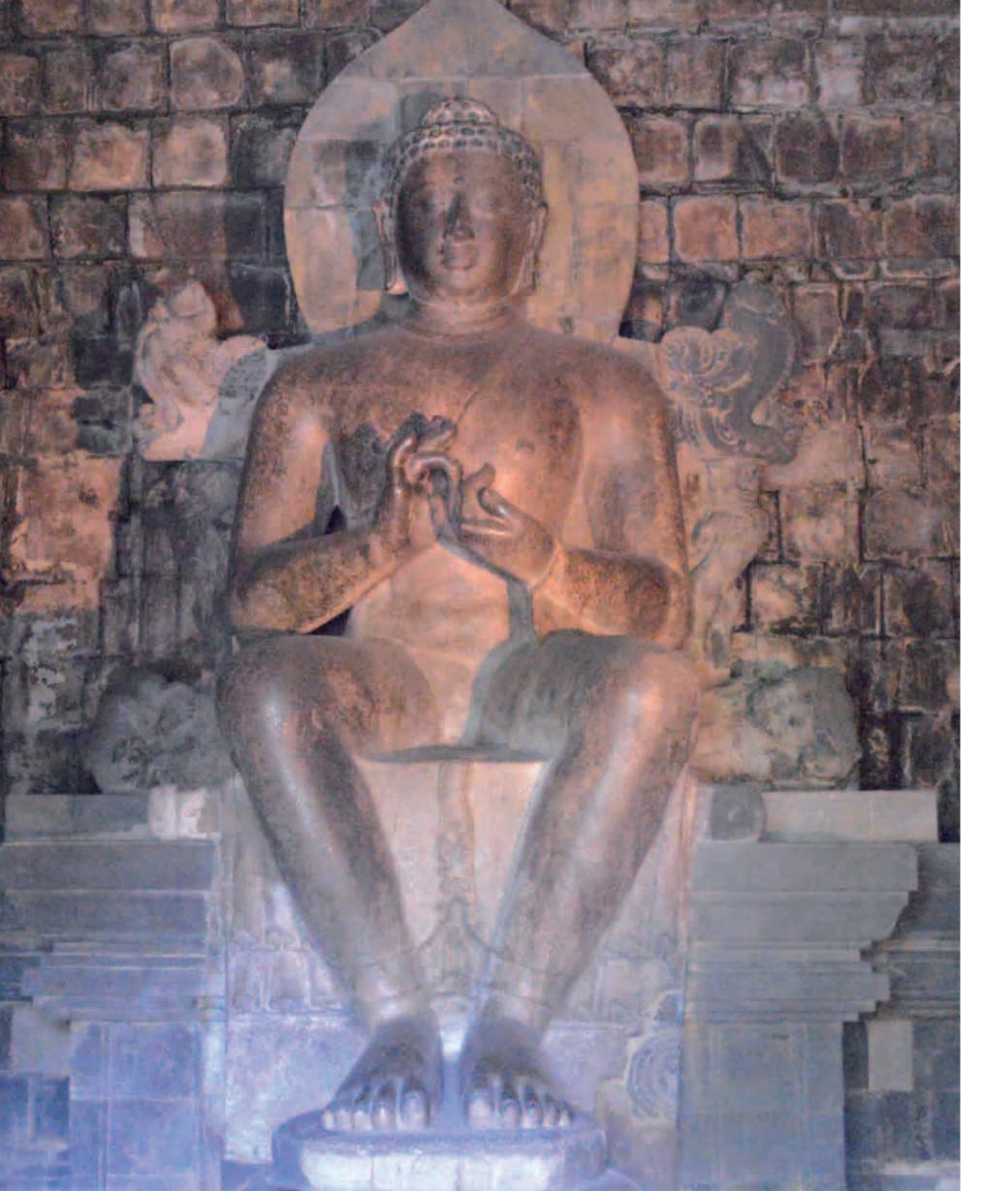
OPPOSITE PAGE Candi Mendut, c. 824 CE, Yogyakarta, central Java, Indonesia

8. Diagoro, Chihara, 'Hindu Buddhist Architecture in southeast Asia'.



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a single structure that accounts for Candi Mendut's simplicity and form, perfectly balanced and symmetrical. The structure of the Candi is raised on an ornamental square base that is accessed by a wide flight of steps from the northwestern side. A singlechambered temple rises above the base at the centre leaving space all around on the raised base for circumambulation. Externally, the chamber is resolved in the form of the main cuboid body that rises into a pyramidal roof with diminishing storeys, each defined by cornices. The roof is also a square and terraced. Today, the top of the Candi which was probably a Stupa has been destroyed but one can imagine how beautiful it once must have been.

Although the façade comprises plain surfaces that contrasts with the ornate base and the horizontal bands of the roof, the exterior walls also contain numerous stone panels or bas-reliefs, all finely carved with borrowed Indian elements of Nagas, demigods, deities and Bodhisattvas in the Jataka tales.

However, unlike the other ancient Buddhist temples of Indonesia, one of the most enduring features of Candi Mendut is that inside the Candi, there still remains in place originally as it has stood for centuries, three very large well-preserved Buddhist stone statues which reveal the high standard of sculptural art in central Java already prevailing in the 8th and 9th centuries. The interior Cella of the temple contains a beautiful 3 metre stone Buddha. Against a leaf-shaped halo behind him, the stone Buddha is seated on a simple throne with his feet resting on lotus petals. The Buddha wears no special garments and is sculptured in the northern Indian style. The hand Mudra is turning the wheel of Dhamma, the preaching Mudra. This Buddha said to represent the historical Sakyamuni Buddha and purported to be the finest of such stone statues still in its original place, stuns in its simplicity; its serenity reflected in the pure smooth stone it is made of. The statue has been resting unmolested inside Candi Mendut for more than 1,000 years and it is believed that this is perhaps the reason why there seems to be no Buddha statue higher than 3 metres tall created by the Sailendras after this. On both sides of the Buddha sit the two Bodhisattvas, Vajrapani and Avalokitesvara.

Over time, with the decline of the Sailendras and the advancement of Islam, Candi Mendut, just as in the case of all the ancient Buddhist temples of the Kedu plains and the Prambanan valley was partly destroyed by neglect, earthquakes, volcanic activity, overgrown jungle and other natural disasters. It was not until 1834 that it was discovered and excavated; its

restoration commenced only around 1897 and completed only around 1927. Today, Candi Mendut is used as a religious temple especially during Wesak Day when Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world gather to begin their very important spiritual and historical walk from Candi Mendut via Candi Pawon and then to their final destination, the very top of Borobodur.





Bas-reliefs panel depicting Jataka tales, exterior wall of Candi Mendut

ABOVE

The Bodhisattva stone statue in Candi

The supreme Buddha stone statue in Candi Mendut

BOROBUDUR

C. MIDDLE 8TH CENTURY TO EARLY 9TH CENTURY MAGELANG AT THE KEDU PLAINS, CENTRAL JAVA

It was in the Kedu plains of central Java almost a century after the construction of the early Hindu temples of the Dieng plateau, during the most productive period from the 7th to the 10th centuries, the golden age of Buddhist architecture in Java, during the Sailendra dynasty, that Borobudur, the largest monumental Mahayana Buddhist temple complex in the world was built from around 760 CE. Although there is no written record of the exact date of construction, it is safe to say that Borobudur was built around the middle of the 8th century to early 9th century by the Sailendra dynasty. The construction probably took around 70 years and was probably completed by around 830 CE. Borobudur was built by the architect, Gunadarma. There is not much known about him except from popular local folklore. There is a small mountain directly facing Borobudur and the locals believe that this mountain represents the sleeping body profile of Gunadarma. He certainly deserves this accolade and respect as the architect of an incredible masterpiece which was built, using the terraces of the natural hill, stone by andesite stone (two million stone blocks in total), all carved, stacked and assembled with a highly sophisticated interlocking system and laid without mortar. These monumental terraces and Stupas are all in perfect symmetry and total harmony in a perfect Mandala plan.

From the foundations and base to the pinnacle of the main Stupa, the height is a towering 42 metres. The main entrance to Borobudur is at the east. The Borobudur complex is an open monument; there are no chambers and it has no roof, unlike Candi Sewu, the other great Buddhist monument. The complex is built in the form of a giant pyramid-shaped Mandala with ten ascending levels representing the ten levels of life that a Bodhisattva must go through to become a Buddha. Ascending from the square base measuring 118 metres on each side, there are six square terraces and a courtyard, followed by three round terraces and then at the summit, there is a central main or mother Stupa which measures 9.9 metres with a pinnacle on which is a three layered parasol or Chatra similar to the Sarnath temple in India.

On each level, there are small Stupas, 504 in total, which are not just a mass of stones but intricately carved and built. Each of the 504 Stupas enclose a life-sized stone Buddha. However, many are now empty due to pillage. Remarkably, no Buddha image is





ABOVE (TOP)
Stupas enclosing the Buddha in the upper terraces of Borobudur

ABOVE Celebration of Wesak Day at Borobudur OPPOSITE PAGE
View of the square terraces of the
Borobudur complex

9. The Avatamsaka Sutra, one of the most influential Mahayana Buddhist Sutras describes a cosmos of infinite realms upon realms, mutually

containing one another. The vision expressed in this work refers to the ten levels of attainment or Bhumis for a Bodhisattva to become a Buddha.



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the same, each Buddha image faces one of a variety of directions apart the stones and putting them back again. The restoration and with different hand Mudras – all the six types of Mudras represented. The three upper terraces have 72 Buddhas; the lower terraces have 432 making a total of 504. All the numbers add up to the number 9 (the largest single digit integer). The UNESCO between 1975 and 1982. But this time, they put in Stupas have the stocky bulbous central Java shape. Each Stupa consists of the top or Harmika which holds holy relics and the main body or Anda sits on a lotus base. Furthermore, not all the Stupas in Borobudur look the same. The Stupas in the upper and lower terraces are differentiated by the shape of the Harmika and the Anda. The Stupas of the lower terraces have octagonal shaped Harmika while each Anda enclosing a Buddha have many tiny square shaped openings. However, the Stupas of the that sadly, many beautifully carved panels on the base had to be upper terraces have a square shaped Harmika with diamondshaped openings in the Anda. The base of each Stupa equals In any event, the restorations have hopefully preserved the site the height of the Stupa. All this is in perfect symmetry. In fact, for all posterity. the measurements from every corner and the height of all the Stupas of Borobudur are governed by this impeccable symmetry. The champions of Buddhism, the Sailendra dynasty, were chased The main central mother Stupa at the very top represents the Buddha so this Mandalic plan of Borobudur which is in the shape of a giant lotus shows the Buddha sitting on a giant lotus flower. The pinnacle of this mother Stupa containing the Chatra is missing and is in the process of restoration.

A unique feature of Borobudur is the amazing stone bas-reliefs panels beautifully and intricately carved on the temple walls at each of the ten levels. Each terraced gallery is an absolute by then Buddhism had began to wane. masterpiece of Srivijayan and Gandharan art. No one panel is the same; the galleries at each layer are all different. The galleries at the top terraces show instructional Buddhist Mahayana teachings of the Buddha and his life (the Lalitavistara), while the galleries at the lower terraces depict Jataka stories about Javanese village and royal court lives. As one goes further up the galleries, the Jataka stories brought to life by the panels move from the ordinary to the more conceptual and spiritual Lalitavistara.

Borobudur was abandoned around 938 CE. No one quite knows why except that it could have been a massive volcanic eruption when 1.3 metres of ash covered everything. Borobudur was hidden by this ash and the all-pervading silent jungle. It was not until 1907 when Theodore Van Erp discovered and first restored Borobudur that it has been preserved through various restorations. As the Borobudur complex was restored, archaeologists discovered that it could have been revised as many as three times from the original plan. In any event, there were no blueprints then and restorers could only surmise by taking

which began in 1907 by Theodore Van Erp was quite thorough and each stone was removed, cleaned, numbered and replaced. This was again redone by the Indonesian government and place a comprehensive drainage system and this has hopefully helped to permanently preserve the Borobudur temples from further water damage. In the UNESCO restoration process, a false footing had to be built all around the base because they discovered that the stacks were so unstable; there was imminent danger that the entire complex could cave in. As a result, the base was broadened with a false stone footing. This has meant sacrificed and covered over with the reinforced new stone base.

out of Java in 825 CE and this meant that for the next 30 to 40 years thereafter, the royal patronage for Buddhist temples in Java was lost. After the Sailendras were removed, the Sanjayan dynasty from the Hindu Mataram kingdom was restored to power. However, their kings as a result of marriages with Buddhist Sailendra princesses, continued to support Buddhism, as can be seen in the construction in the late 9th century, of Candi Plaosan, the last of the great Buddhist monuments. But

> OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) Arch with fearsome Kala-makara

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM LEFT) Stone bas-relief panels at the galleries of Borobudur

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM RIGHT) Multiple Stupas at Borobudur





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Lokesvara in profile with contrasting silhouette of a modern-day tourist admirer, Bayon, Angkor Thom, late 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia

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Alternating Garudas and lionheaded figures at the Elephant Terrace, Angkor Thom, late 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia

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Map of Cambodia

OTDAR MEANCHEY PREAH VIHEAR STUNGTRENG RATANA KIR BANTEAY SIEM REAP MEANCHEY Siem Reap BATTAM/BANG PAILIN MONDOL KIR CAMBODIA KAMPONG CHAM KAMPONG PURSAT KOH KONG KAMPONG SPEU KAMPOT TAKEO SVAY RIENG SIHANOUK KEP

- ★ NATIONAL CAPITAL■ REGIONAL CAPITAL
- REGIONAL CAPIT
 OTHER CITIES

Not drawn to scale

INTRODUCTION

The ancient kingdoms of Cambodia were among the first to have been influenced by the religions and culture of India and to have retained the effect for over 1,000 years. Referred to as 'Kambujadesa', the Khmer empire primarily comprised Hinduized states that adopted the Brahmanical polity. They stretched over present-day Cambodia and parts of Thailand, Vietnam and Laos, from the plains of the Mekong to the Korat plateau, going up to the Wat Phu site and beyond, including cities such as Hariharalaya (near Roluos) and Angkor Thom. Kings bore Sanskrit names and fashioned their rule by identifying themselves with the gods, evoking the cult of the Devaraja, or the divine king. Hinduism, with the worship of the gods Shiva and Vishnu, as well as the combination of the two in the form of Harihara, was the dominant faith during most of the Khmer rule between the 6th and 13th centuries. Buddhism occupies a paradoxical position in Cambodian history: it marks the beginning and the end of the grandest historical period in the region, while for most periods, remaining in the shadow of the dominant Shaivite and Vaishnavite religious movements. The final triumph of Buddhism over Hinduism coincided with the glorious period of the Khmers under the rule of king Jayavarman VII in the 12th century.

LEADING UP TO ANGKOR

FUNAN, OC-EO AND EARLY MATERIAL EVIDENCE

The areas described as Khmer territory have probably had human inhabitation since the 8th millennium BCE. From about the 1st millennium BCE, there were trading links between the coastal regions and far-off lands. Information about these regions documented by Chinese traders has been invaluable in understanding life in those distant times.

One of the earliest kingdoms in the region as mentioned in the Chinese accounts was that of Funan which originated in the Mekong delta region. Its capital was Vyadhapura thought by archaeologists to be near Ba Phnom in what is now the Prei Veng province in Cambodia. The Funan period lasted from about the 1st to the 6th century. Oc-Eo, a former port, and now about 30 kilometres from the sea, was an active trading centre.

Though there have not been very clear insights into the architectural details of Buddhist buildings from the Funan period, the presence of Buddhism in the region has been confirmed by a combination of archaeological and literary evidence.

Various objects of Hindu and Buddhist origins from the Funan civilization have been found in Oc-Eo. Numerous statues of the Buddha found in the region bear the distinct stamp of the Gupta style of northern India. Buildings of those times appear to have had stone bases and wooden superstructures. Timber was used extensively, possibly due to the relative scarcity of stone in the lower Mekong deltaic region. According to a Sanskrit inscription from the time of Rudravarman's (r. 514–545 CE) reign, a Buddhist structure was constructed – this was the first historical record of such a building in Funan. A stele mentions the construction of a Buddhist monastery during the reign of Yasovarman I (r. 889–900 CE). In addition to buildings, moats and embankments, networks of canals have been discovered that appear to be the precursor to the elaborate water management system that was developed later by the Khmers. Remains of artefacts, city walls and moats have also been found in the site of Angkor Borei near present-day Takeo. Angkor Borei was probably a capital of Funan at one time and has been mentioned in Chinese accounts of the period. Phnom Da, near Angkor Borei is the site of a brick tower with Hindu sculptures dating to the 6th to 7th centuries.

Understandably, no wooden structure from those early times has survived, and there are very few extant samples of Buddhist architecture pre-dating Jayavarman VII's reign.

Inscriptions in Sanskrit dating to the 2nd century are the earliest to have been found at Oc-Eo. The first inscription in Pali, the language of Theravada Buddhism, was from 612 CE. Chinese literary records of YiJing, a Chinese Buddhist monk and pilgrim who lived in the latter half of the 7th century and Ma Touan-Lin, who lived in the 13th century, but wrote about events of the 7th century, mention both the flourishing and persecution of Buddhists at different times. There are Sanskrit inscriptions that mention a mission in 484 CE from the Funanese king to China that included three Buddhist monks, one of whom was Nagasena.

CHENLA AND THE BEGINNING OF THE KHMER EMPIRE

In the 6th century, Chenla, another Indianized state situated near the border of present-day Laos and Cambodia, came to prominence and eventually absorbed the kingdom of Funan by the mid-7th century. The Khmer kingdom had its origins in the kingdom of Chenla. The Sanskrit name 'Kambuja-desa' (and the Khmer name 'Kampuchea') originated from the name of an Indian sage Svayambhuva Kambu who was supposed to have been the ancestor of the Khmer people. Over time, Chenla was broken up into smaller kingdoms and it was King Jayavarman II who united the country.

THE ANGKOR PERIOD

King Jayavarman II ruled from about 790 CE to 850 CE from Roluos. In 802 CE, he was crowned 'Cakravartin' or universal sovereign of the Khmers in a ceremony performed by a Brahmin, and assumed the title 'Maharajadhiraja' or 'supreme king of the great kings'. A significant event was the creation of the cult of the Devaraja or god-king – the Devaraja who was the manifestation of the Hindu god Shiva and his divine incarnation on earth in human form. From Jayavarman II

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onwards, the king was worshipped as a Devaraja and acquired the status of a god. The society was hierarchical, with the king reigning supreme. Below him were the Brahmins or priestly classes and high officials, then the common man and finally, the slaves who were the workforce toiling away at the marvellous stone wonders that this period produced. The foundations of Hindu polity of divine kingship, were carried forward by the Khmer rulers and eventually absorbed into the socio-political structure of the Buddhist kingdom of Jayavarman VII. The reign of Jayavarman II marks the start of what was the Angkor period in Khmer history, which lasted some five centuries.

Rulers from the area around the region of Angkor, were primarily Hindu, though Buddhism, essentially Theravada in nature, was present too. It was King Jayavarman VII (r. 1181-1220) who embraced Mahayana Buddhism and, under his active patronage, transformed Khmer society from a Hindu to a Buddhist one.

The Angkor period can be thought of as the golden age of Khmer civilization. The spectacular monuments and temple towns of that period bear testimony to this fact. The kings who followed Jayavarman II built a system of canals and reservoirs or Barays that made it possible for abundant rice production without undue dependence on the monsoon. Suryavarman II (r. 1113-1150) extended the empire greatly and was responsible for the construction of the temple complex of Angkor Wat¹, which is a magnificent architectural creation.

KING JAYAVARMAN VII

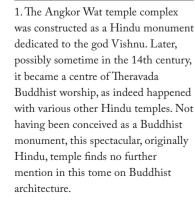
When Jayavarman VII came to power in 1181 he drove out the Chams who had invaded Angkor in the preceding years. Being a fervent patron of Mahayana Buddhism, he was responsible for the transformation of the Khmer state from a Hindu to a Buddhist one. Modelling himself on the paradigmatic Indian emperor Asoka, Jayavarman VII embarked on a number of projects for the welfare of his people. He launched a massive construction drive - an enormous number of Buddhist monuments were constructed in his reign. Seeing himself as a manifestation of the Buddha in human form, he was responsible for the cult of the Buddharaja replacing that of the Devaraja.

Unlike most of his predecessors, King Jayavarman VII (r. 1181–1218) was an ardent Buddhist and a devotee of Lokesvara. Though Suryavarman I (r. 1010-1050) and some other Khmer kings too had followed Buddhism, the faith did not have a significant presence until the reign of Jayavarman VII. He is believed to have been exposed to Mahayana Buddhism at Champa, where he had spent several years before his coronation. Mahayana Buddhism therefore became the dominant faith replacing Hinduism (and other forms of Buddhism which had co-existed with Hinduism) in the reign of Jayavarman VII between the 12th and 13th centuries, giving rise to the worship of the Bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokitesvara or Lokesvara, the material manifestation of which was permanently established in the temple of Bayon.

Following his coronation at the age of 56 years, after prolonged conflict with the Chams, Jayavarman VII embarked on a Buddhist-monument-building frenzy, hitherto unprecedented in the building traditions of the Khmers, that was to last for the remainder of his lifetime. In an orgy of construction, he erected numerous monuments of varying kinds as a means to gain merit: hospitals and guest houses, the temple-monasteries of Ta Prohm and Preah Khan, the temples of Banteay Kdei, Neak Pean, Ta Som, Banteay Chhmar, Sam Yot at Lopburi, Wat Phra Phai Luang

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) Ruins of Preah Khan templemonastery, late 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM) Some Buddhist monks at one of the courtyards at the Angkor Wat temple complex, early 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia







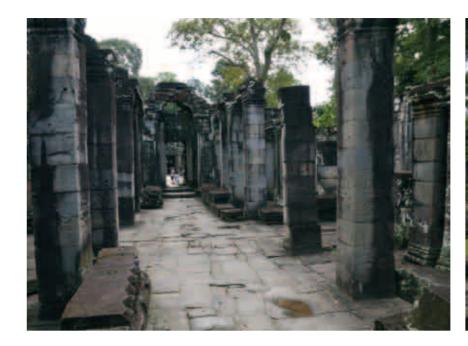
and Prasat of Wat Si Sawai, the latter two at Sukhothai; and the city of Angkor Thom with the temple of Bayon in the last stage of his architectural forays where he experimented with the manifestation of divine kingship in building form with the iconic face-towers.

The early projects of Jayavarman VII – the temple complexes of Banteay Kdei, Ta Prohm and Preah Khan – heralded a shift from traditional Hinduism towards a syncretic form of Mahayana Buddhism. However, the Hindu cult of the deified ruler was by no means abandoned, and was carried forward in the designs of temples incorporating the local traditions of ancestor worship. These three temples were dedicated to members of the royal family, and whilst the dedication of the first temple is unclear, the latter two temples were dedicated to his parents. The temple complexes of all three comprise large precincts that could be likened to temple towns consisting of temples and other associated structures enclosed within the concentric rings of enclosure walls. The architectural morphology of the layouts borrows from the existing traditions of Hindu temple plans that were built earlier. However the Buddhist notion of divine kingship is manifested in the form of the towers that were fashioned to represent the royal family as Buddhist divinities.

The spatial planning and form of the monuments are manifestations of the syncretic mixture of indigenous beliefs with those of both Hinduism and Buddhism that were adopted in the region. The cult of Lokesvara with its architectural manifestations of the face-tower appeared only in the later periods of Jayavarman VII's rule. In fact, this change in cultic preferences has been identified as the cause for the transformation of the design of some of the monuments built in his reign, either during the course of construction, or after they had been built. For example, Neak Pean was originally dedicated to the historical Buddha, but at a later date its dedication was changed to Lokesvara.

The formal and spatial compositions of the designs were directed towards creating monumental scale to overwhelm the viewer. Combining the notions of the Devraja or god-king and religious cosmology, the temple forms represent the relationship between political authority and sacred geometry. The fact that Jayavarman VII began to consider himself a living Buddha is attested by the inscription of the Preah Khan temple which mentions the consecration of 23 statues called Jayabuddhamahanatha or the great saviour, in distant parts of the empire that have been identified with him. The association of divinity with the king and his family had not been entirely unknown, as seen in the ancestor temple of Ta Prohm and Preah Khan, but the final transformation to the Buddharaja was established in the design of the face-towers of the temple of Bayon. The change in the cultic preference and the adoption of the Buddharaja during the later stages of his rule is attested by the transformation of the Bayon into a temple-mountain during the course of its construction, and confirmed by the finding of an enormous statue of Buddha under the tower.

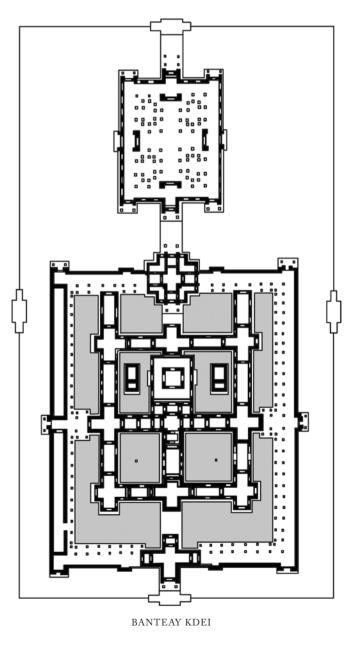
As the protector of the faith, Jayavarman VII initiated various construction projects across his kingdom to spread the Dhamma. During the next 30 years, he ruled to transform his kingdom by integrating the notions of Cambodian kingship with Buddhist ideals. Driven by both compassion and the desire to accrue merit for himself, he initiated large building programs of public works comprising of the building of roads and various secular buildings in addition to the building of temple-mountains. While the public works of earlier kings were usually limited to reservoirs, roads and bridges, the inscriptions at Ta Prohm state that Jayavarman VII built many hospitals, some as far north as present-day central Laos, and west of Angkor. He is said to have provided an elaborate system of medical facilities to alleviate the suffering of his people. Accordingly, the inscriptions





invoke the Buddha as well as eulogize the king: 'He suffered from the maladies of his subjects more than from his own; for it is the public grief which makes the grief of the kings, and not their own grief.' Over 100 hospitals in the various provinces of his kingdom were built to extend medical assistance to all, cutting across all castes and creeds. The hospitals were dedicated to Bhaisajyaguru, the Buddha of healing and medicine in Mahayana Buddhism and were supported by the community living in the adjoining regions, who in turn were given special privileges. The inscriptions here give elaborate details about the administration of the hospitals.

Jayavarman VII covered his kingdom with a network of highways, along which he constructed rest houses spaced 12 to 15 kilometres apart. Besides serving as roads for movement of the military and goods, the highways were also pilgrimage routes linking centres of pilgrimage such as Preah Khan, Neak Pean, Phimai, Ta Prohm and others. The rest houses called Dharamsalas, were long halls placed laterally along the roads, often with a small shrine at one end and served as rest stops for pilgrims. The inscription of Preah Khan records a total of 121 rest houses, giving details of their distribution along different highways that connected important places of the empire - there are 57 Dharamsalas along the highway connecting Angkor with the Cham capital and 17 along the road to the temple of Phimai in northeastern Thailand. By developing an urban system of pilgrimage routes and temples, Jayavarman VII articulated the kingdom of the Khmers as a Buddhaksetra, and took it to its greatest extent, stretching as far as Vientiane in Laos and parts of Thailand and Champa.



Ruins of Banteay Kdei temple complex, mid-12th to early 13th centuries, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Opposite Page (RIGHT) Plan of Banteay Kdei temple complex

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP)

THE GOLDEN LANDS

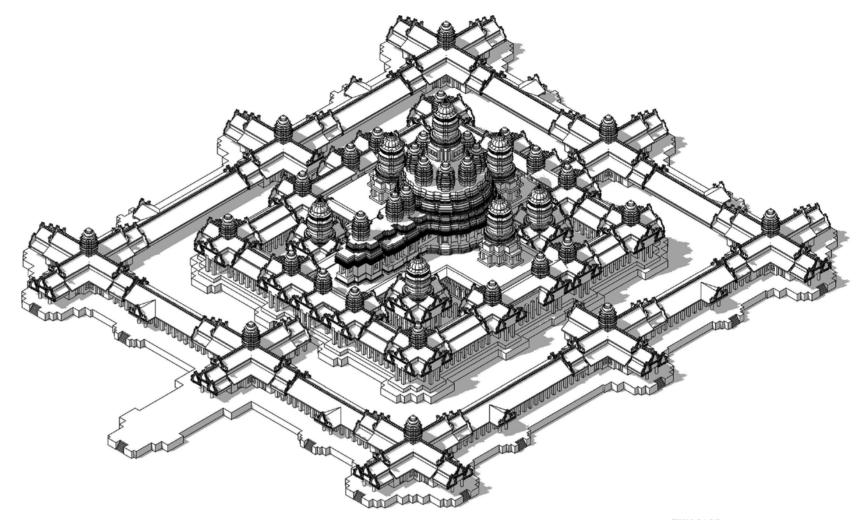
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King Jayavarman VII's kingdom was conceived as a sacred sphere, the Buddhaksetra, with the Bayon temple located at the centre of the enclosed precincts of Angkor Thom. From the centre emanated the power of the divine king, represented by the face-towers of the Bayon radiating outwards towards the outreaching periphery of his domain which was marked by the various other buildings, guesthouses, temples and roads that he built to bind together his extended kingdom.

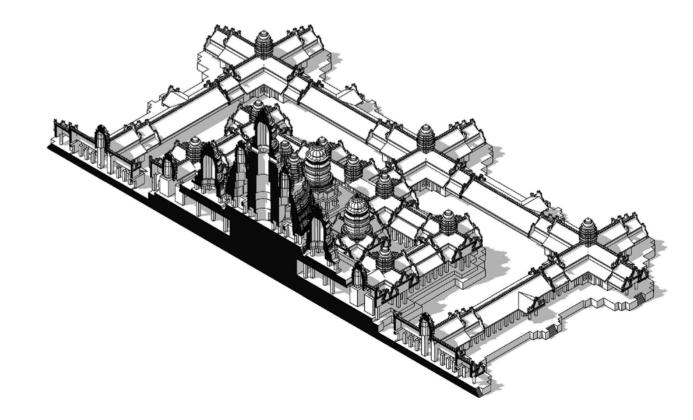
The architecture of the period has been referred to as the 'Bayon style' and departs in several ways from the existing architectural traditions of the Hindu period with the incorporation of Buddhist themes: the form of the Prasats developing into face-towers and the iconography emphasizing the presence of the Mahayana Buddhist deity Lokesvara or Avalokitesvara in bas-reliefs.

Bayon, late 12th or early 13th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia





Architectural model of Bayon





THE DECLINE OF THE KHMERS

After Jayavarman VII, the Khmer empire went into decline. The popularity of Mahayana Buddhism with its associated cult of divine kingship and its social structures declined as well, and Theravada Buddhism took over in the 13th century - a century of invasion and change, perhaps under the influence of other Buddhist regions such as neighbouring Pagan and Sri Lanka. Theravada Buddhism assisted in breaking down the belief in the divine cult and its hierarchical social structures, freeing the population and reaching deeper into the lives of the people by involving the common man as never before. It was no longer possible to command armies of slaves to build the sort of grand edifices that Angkor had been dotted with. Also, the effort and resources expended in the building mania had weakened the kingdom. The Thais invaded several times and after 1431, the glory of Angkor was a thing of the past. However, the Khmer cultural influence was disseminated to the new principalities that emerged in Ayutthaya, Sukhothai, Lanna Tai and Lan Xang where Buddhist art and architecture was again given a new life by the Thai people in the 14th century.

II. ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

THE TEMPLE-MOUNTAINS

The planning and architecture of monuments constructed for Buddhism were derived from the existing traditions of design manifested in the Hindu monuments built earlier in the region. Religious architecture in Cambodia had a long period of evolution starting from the Funan period

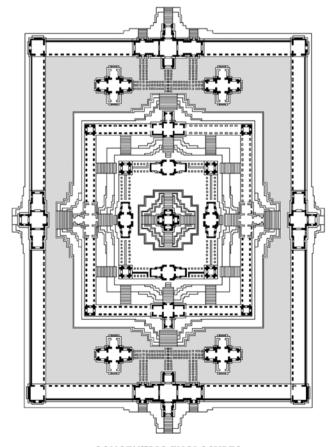
and developed stylistically during the pre-Angkor (until 8th century) and Angkor (between 9th and 12th centuries) periods of the Khmer, during which time various design patterns were explored. The layouts of temples at their simplest consisted of single shrines enclosed by a quadrilateral boundary wall that was further surrounded by a moat. The plan was orientated on the east-west axis and entry into the enclosure was from the east, through a causeway.

Over time, the religious architecture of the Khmers developed a distinct morphology of temple layouts and a typology of architectural components to represent cosmological concepts and cater for ritualistic requirements. The generic theme of temple design comprises enclosed rectangular precincts within which are placed an agglomeration of architectural forms and buildings, all governed by the principles of centrality, axis and symmetry. The layouts are geometrically planned along the cardinal axes and are centred on a main temple. The precincts are defined by single or multiple galleries running around the rectangular plan creating enclosed spaces. The entire complex is encircled with a moat and entry is gained by crossing the moats over paved bridges along the cardinal axes. This theme could be laid out on a level plane with concentric enclosures as 'flat-temple' designs, or the enclosures could be arranged in a multiterraced pyramidal form as a 'temple-mountain'. The architectural form of the central temple could be a single-shrine tower, or the single shrine

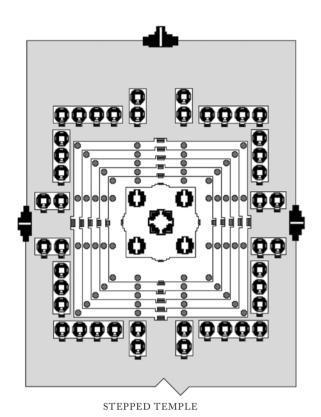
Overgrown jungle vegetation merging with temple ruins at the inner courtyard, Ta Prohm, late 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia

BELOW

Plan of typical temple type in Angkor – with concentric



CONCENTRIC ENCLOSURES



Plan of typical temple types in Angkor – the stepped temple

could extend on all four sides to form 'cruciform' plans, or could consist of a central tower surrounded by four other towers forming a Quincunx.

An efflorescence of Hindu temples had preceded Buddhist architecture, influencing greatly its architectural planning, with the result that there was little distinction in the religious architecture of these two faiths. The Hindu concept of divine kingship was transferred to the Buddhist kings, and royal authority continued to hold sway in Buddhist religious architecture. The design intent of religious architecture, to manifest Mount Sumeru, continued to be explored in Buddhist buildings through the design of stepped temples or 'temple-mountains'.

PRASATS AND GOPURAS

The fundamental elements of the layouts of religious complexes are the sanctuary tower or Prasat, the entrance pavilions or Gopuras and the galleries.

The Prasat, at its most basic, is a square chamber with a cuboid superstructure over it, which rises as a tower of three to five storeys, which reduce proportionally in height and width in a tiered-roof formation. Four doors open into the chamber, within which is housed the sacred idol. On occasion, the opening is only on the east façade while the other three sides consist of false doors. The form of the Prasat is similar to the Javanese Candi, but is slightly elongated, emphasizing the vertical axis and like the Candi, is divided into three parts - the base, the body and the head - representing the three levels of existence in Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, Kamaloka, Rupaloka and Arupaloka.

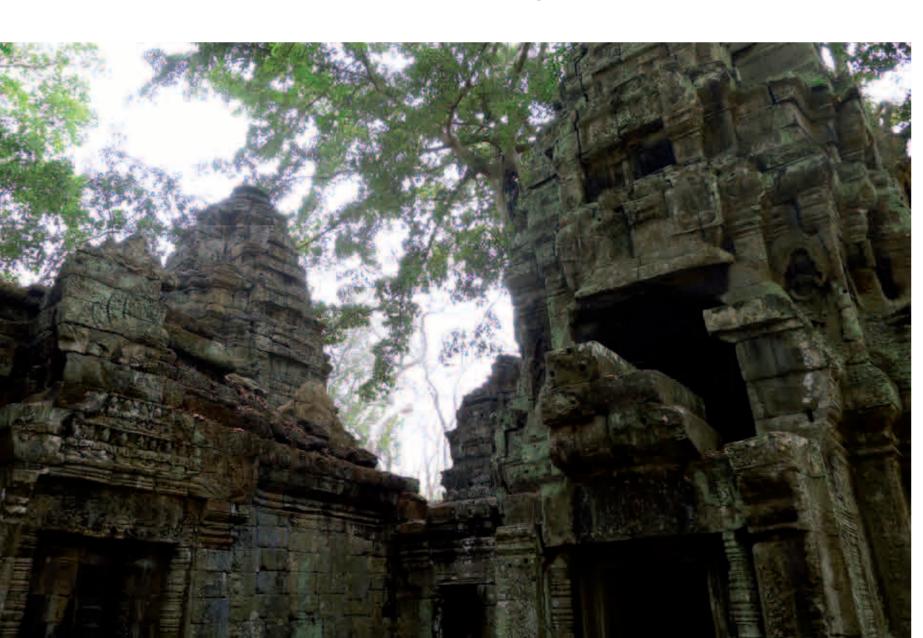
The square plan is often transformed into a cruciform plan by the addition of vestibules on all four sides. The most distinctive feature of the Prasat is the detailing around the doorways. Identical on all four sides, it comprises decorative colonnettes, pilasters and decorative lintels. The basic plan of the Cella is a square, but occasionally variations of rectangular plans are also seen in the temple complex. Starting with a simple square Cella and tower of pyramidal or ogival form, the Prasat evolved into the iconic face-towers of the buildings of Jayavarman VII, where images of the human face are embedded into the form of the towers, as seen in the temples of Preah Khan, Ta Prohm and the Bayon.

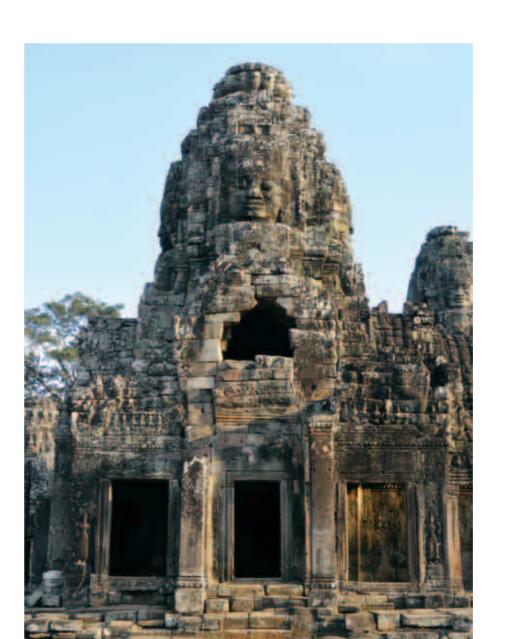
BELOW (LEFT)

Iconic face-tower at Bayon, late 12th or early 13th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia

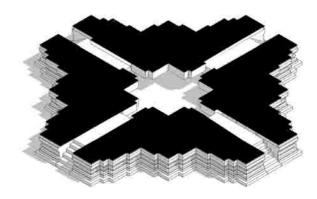
Architectural model of typical

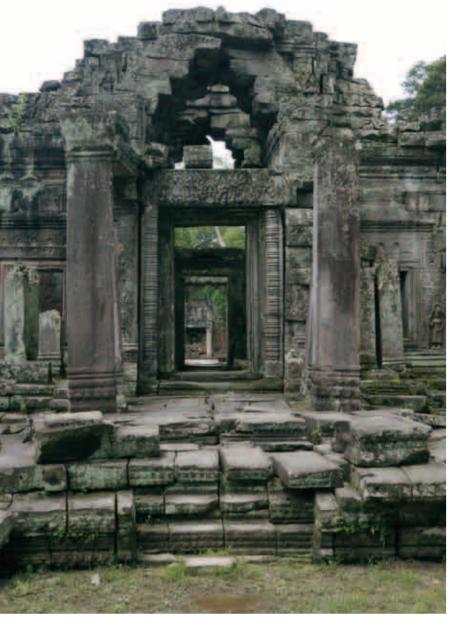
OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM) Prasat at Ta Prohm, late 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia



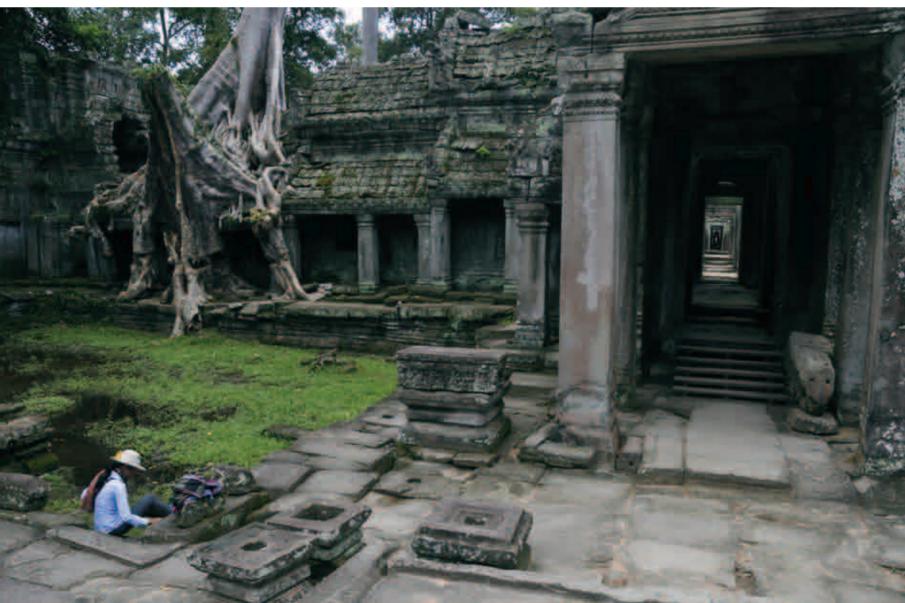










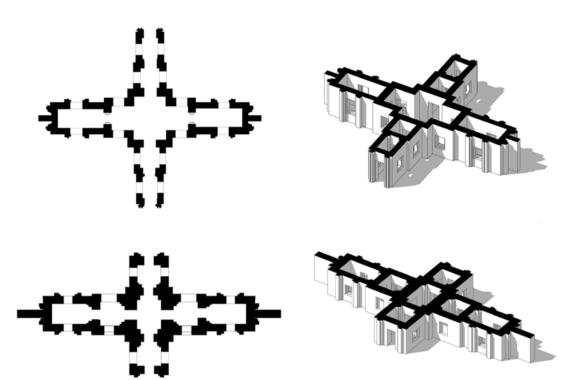


The Gopuras are entrance pavilions consisting of a central core in a cruciform plan with extended vestibules and porticos, with the roof rising in the form of pyramidal towers reducing in a tiered formation.

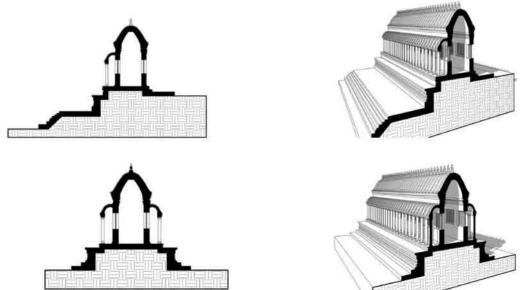
The galleries serve as both covered corridors and the boundary defining the enclosed spaces or sacred precincts within which the sanctuary towers are housed. Multiple galleries are laid out surrounding the central Prasat creating successive symmetrical enclosures. At its simplest, the form of the galleries comprises two adjoining walls of a corridor covered by a corbelled vault. The vaulting system is not a true vault, but is comprised of over-sailing masonry courses, the interiors of which were often covered with wooden false ceilings while the exterior consisted of a roof ridge

with a row of stone finials. The side facing the enclosing cloister is often replaced by a line of pillars or joined by a second row of pillars forming a side aisle that is supported by a half vault. The connecting galleries running on the main axis in most cases have side aisles.

The galleries and the Gopuras were arranged to create a composition of radiating enclosures from the central Prasat, enclosing sacred precincts with clearly defined axes running along the cardinal directions connecting to the Gopuras on each of the four sides.



CRUCIFORM PLANS



TYPES OF GALLERIES

Architectural model of cruciform structures and galleries

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP LEFT) Gopura at Preah Khan, late 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP RIGHT) Gopura at Banteay Kdei, mid-12th to early 13th centuries, Siem Reap, Cambodia

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM) Galleries or covered corridors at Preah Khan

TRANSFORMATION OF PRASAT INTO FACE-TOWER

The Khmers adopted the concept of Mount Sumeru from India and Java and developed it further in a distinctive fashion. The cosmology of Mount Sumeru – located at the centre of the universe, separating as well as connecting heaven above and earth below, surrounded by seven concentric rings of mountains and oceans, and expanding outwards in all four cardinal directions.

The composition of the temple-mountain, at its most basic, consists of a central structure in tiered pyramidal formation reducing proportionately in size as it rises upwards, all surrounded by rings of enclosures and moats. The central structure represents Mount Sumeru while the moats and wall enclosures symbolise the surrounding oceans and mountains. The Khmers developed it further to manifest the cult of Buddhist divine kingship or Buddharaja, where the towers of the temple developed as face-towers, consisting of the facial image of the king, as in the Bayon temple. This transformation of the traditional form of the Prasat into a face-tower was first seen in the temple of Prasat Preah Stung (located at the Preah Khan Kompong Svay), and later on the gates of the city of Angkor Thom and finally, on the iconic Bayon.



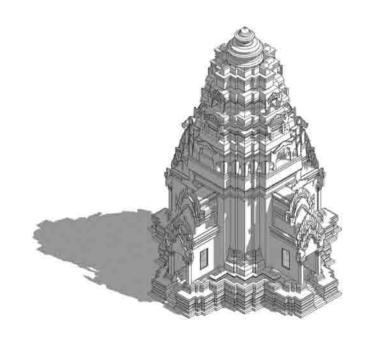
Architectural model showing the development from Prasat to the face-tower

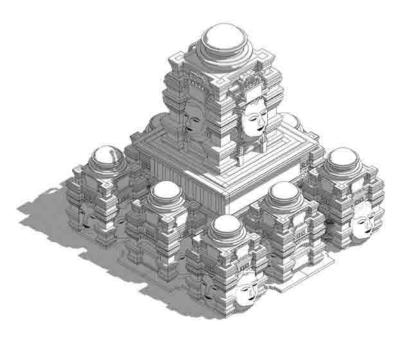
BELOW (RIGHT)

Face-tower on the gate of Angkor Thom, late 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia

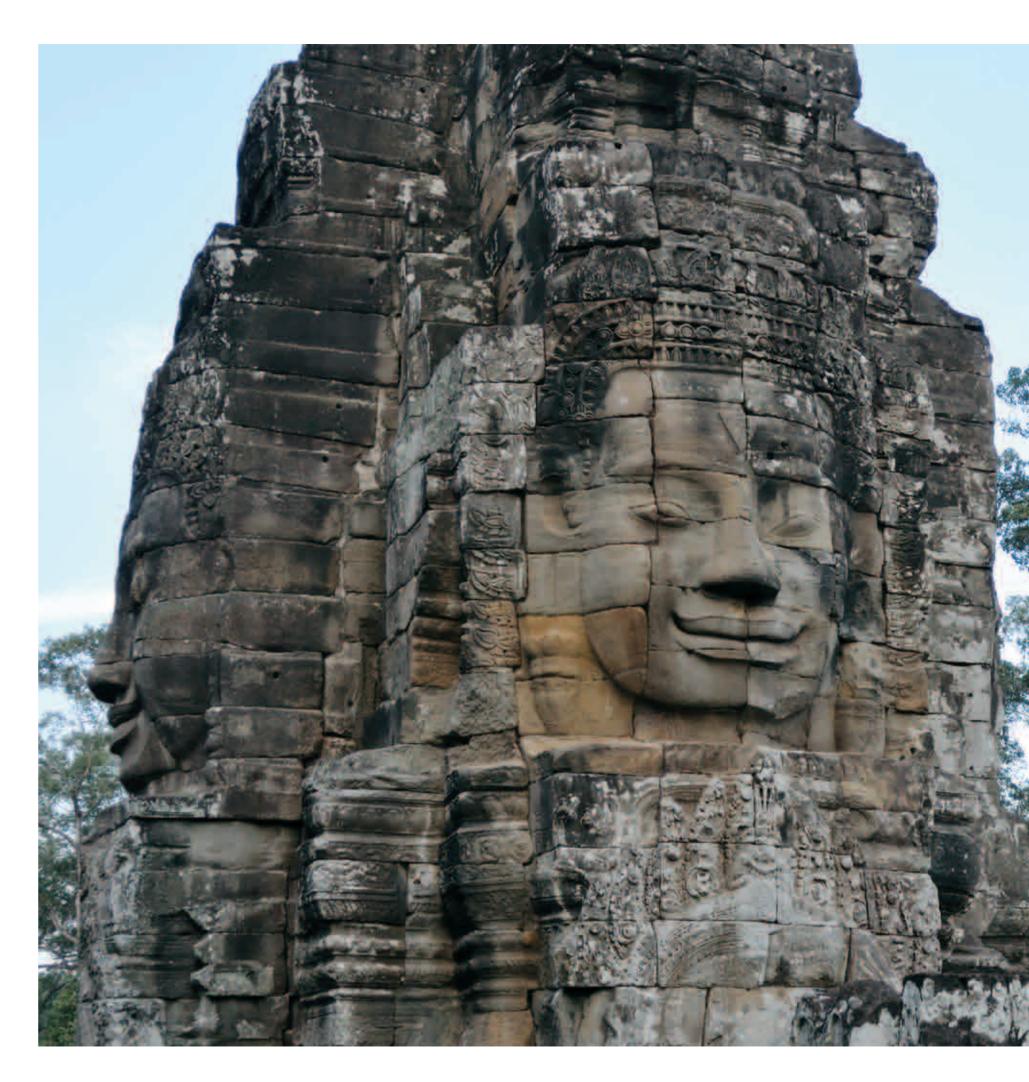
OPPOSITE PAGE

Close up of the monumental facetower on the iconic Bayon, late 12th or early 13th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia



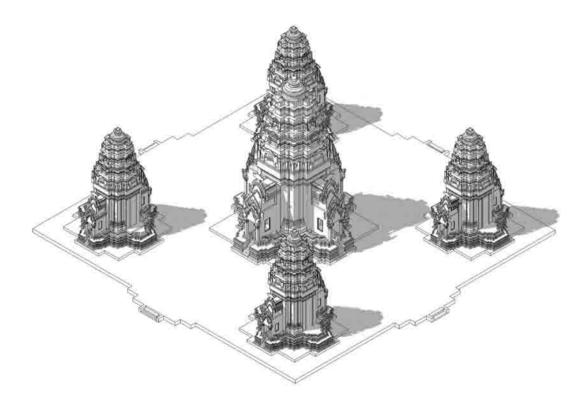




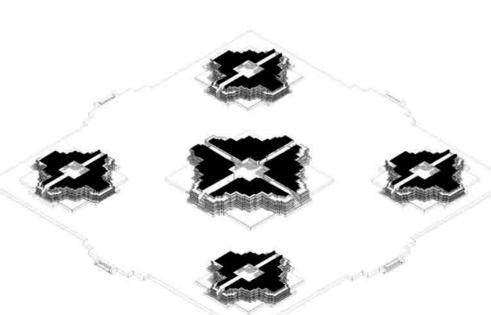


THE QUINCUNX

By the 10th century, a new architectural form began to represent Mount Sumeru in Khmer architecture. The design of the central shrine evolved into a five-towered composition or a Quincunx, representing the five peaks of Mount Sumeru. Surrounding a larger central tower, were four smaller towers on the four corners of the square-tiered base. From each of the four cardinal directions, staircases led up to the central shrine. Many examples of this type were built, such as Phnom Bakheng, East Mebon, Pre Rup and Takeo; the Quincunx is often considered a characteristic feature of Khmer temples. Walls and moats that surround the composition along with other water-bodies further reinforce the symbolism of the Quincunx as Mount Sumeru. The evolution of the design of the Quincunx type of temple-mountain was amply manifested in the monumental architecture of the temple of Bayon built by Jayavarman VII in his city of Angkor Thom.



Architectural model of Quincunx

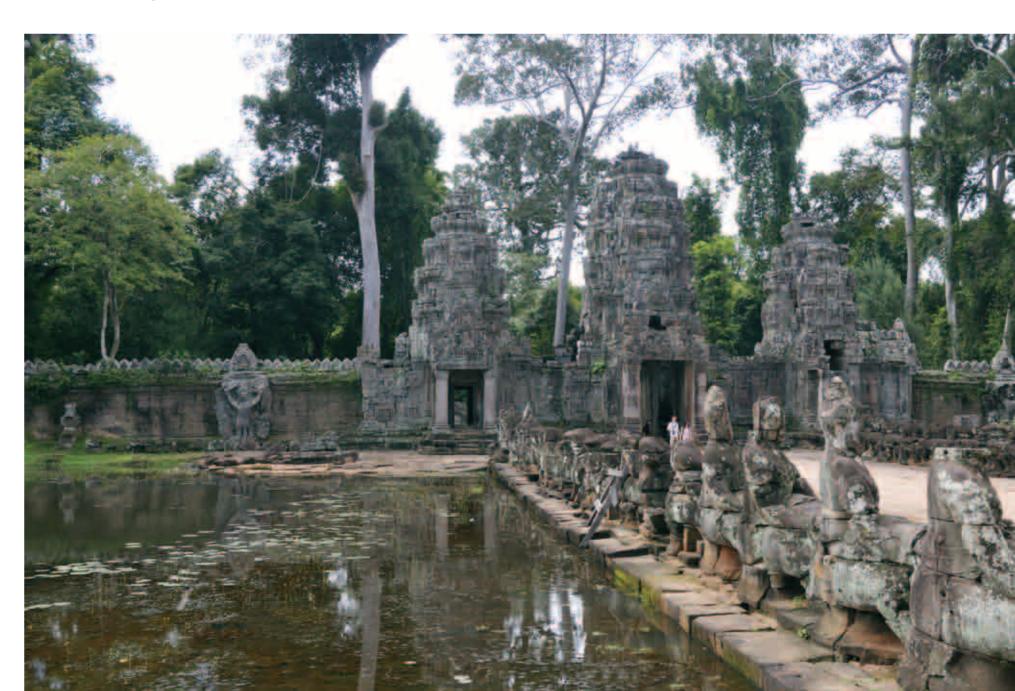


WATER IN CAMBODIAN RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

The integration of water with the architecture and planning of religious buildings of the Khmers played an important role in the development of the cosmological theme of Mount Sumeru. Water, while being an integral part of Cambodian agrarian culture, became a conspicuous part of the urban landscape and architecture in the form of lakes, moats and water tanks. Architectural schemes were configured in conjunction with a network of water systems that served both functional and symbolic purposes. Existing traditions of managing water to ensure a steady supply for agriculture as well as to control flooding of the plains, created an engineered landscape of water systems through a network of canals leading to large water reservoirs called Barays. This network was further extended to the temple complexes in the form of moats surrounding the temple precincts, basins lining the main causeway and pools or Srah, located on the east side of the temple along the main entrance axis. Across the moats surrounding temple complexes were wide paved causeways aligned along the axis. Stone balustrades in the form of the celestial serpent, Naga, bordered the causeways which, leading up to the temple, often terminated in cruciform terraces.

This complex network of water systems was a significant feature of the sacred landscape of towns and religious architecture in ancient Cambodia. Among others, Neak Pean bears testimony to the sophisticated interpretation of cosmological concepts through the integration of water and building forms into a unified whole.

Moat surrounding Preah Khan, late 12th century, Siem Reap,



OTHER BUILDINGS IN A MONASTIC PRECINCT

Also located within temple precincts were various other buildings for both ritual and secular functions. A long rectangular building was often attached to the main Cella with a vestibule towards the eastern side, serving as a gathering place similar to the Mandapa of Hindu temples in India. Other buildings, such as libraries and stores, could be located in the eastern precinct of the temple enclosure. These buildings too had rectangular plans and vaulted roofs but, unlike the buildings attached to the main sanctuary, are entered from the western side. The sidewalls were punctuated with narrow horizontal windows and the barrel-vaulted roof form terminated in the form of frontons.

One of the few Stupas (later additions from the 16th–17th centuries) found in Preah Khan, late 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia



It is indeed interesting to note that the Khmers were comparatively inhibited in constructing the Stupa. Unlike in neighbouring Pagan where numerous Stupas filled the landscape, only a few have been found in the Khmer region. The Khmers preferred to construct Prasats and temple complexes, the planning and form of which was already established by the more pervading Hindu traditions. The presence of a few Stupas in some temples like the Preah Khan are later additions from the 16th to 17th centuries under the Sinhalese and Thai influences.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The construction materials and techniques of the Khmers evolved from modest huts on piles made of timber to temple structures constructed of bricks, that finally gave way to the monumental architecture of stones. The easily available timber was the main material for construction to begin with, but with the popularity of more durable materials such as bricks and stones, its application became limited and it was used in combination with the more permanent materials for temple roofs, doors, panelling and ceilings. It must be mentioned that wood however continued to be the main material used in the construction of buildings that were not temples or the dwellings of the gods. All buildings for lay people and even palaces were built of timber. Durable materials were reserved for constructing temples.

Brick replaced timber as the construction material (for temples) during the early period of architectural development, and buildings constructed between the 6th and 10th centuries were built almost entirely of brick walls and plastered with lime based mortar that was sculpted with decorative finishes. Stones such as laterite and sandstone gained popularity as more durable construction materials for conceiving monumental architecture. Locally quarried sandstone, Thma Puok, or literally 'mud stone' replaced

the surrounding elements of the door and was employed in the construction of all parts of the building. Laterite or Bai Kriem, translated literally as 'grilled rice', abundantly found in the region, is a porous stone and was effectively used in construction of foundations and as an infill material. The porosity of laterite allowed the Khmer buildings to endure the contact with water that was an integral part of their architectural schemes where buildings are closely associated with water systems of moats and Barays. While the choice of materials evolved from wood to stone, features employed in the construction of wooden huts continued to survive in stone buildings in the form of parallel cornices, tori, moulding forming high plinths, terracotta tiles fashioned in stone for roofing and the steep staircases of temples similar to wooden ladders.

The change in material to dry masonry of bricks and stone led to the use of corbelled arches with over-sailing courses for spanning spaces. Unlike the building traditions of Pagan where the true arch was employed, the Khmers preferred to restrict their building construction to the corbelled arch. It is unlikely that the Khmers, with all their organizational resources of building construction, could not design and build with other sophisticated structural systems of arches; rather, it appears that they consciously adopted simpler building systems. Indeed, their approach to architecture appears to have been focused more on achieving the symbolic content of religious architecture. The need to explore other building systems and come up with unique technical solutions was probably considered an unnecessary exercise. The overriding consideration in the design of religious architecture was to manifest religious symbolism in form and space and adhere to the notions of the Mandala as the ordering formula for the human world of communities, rituals, urban settlement patterns and architecture, fashioned in the likeness of the world of the gods.

Corbelled arch, gate of Angkor Thom, late 12th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia

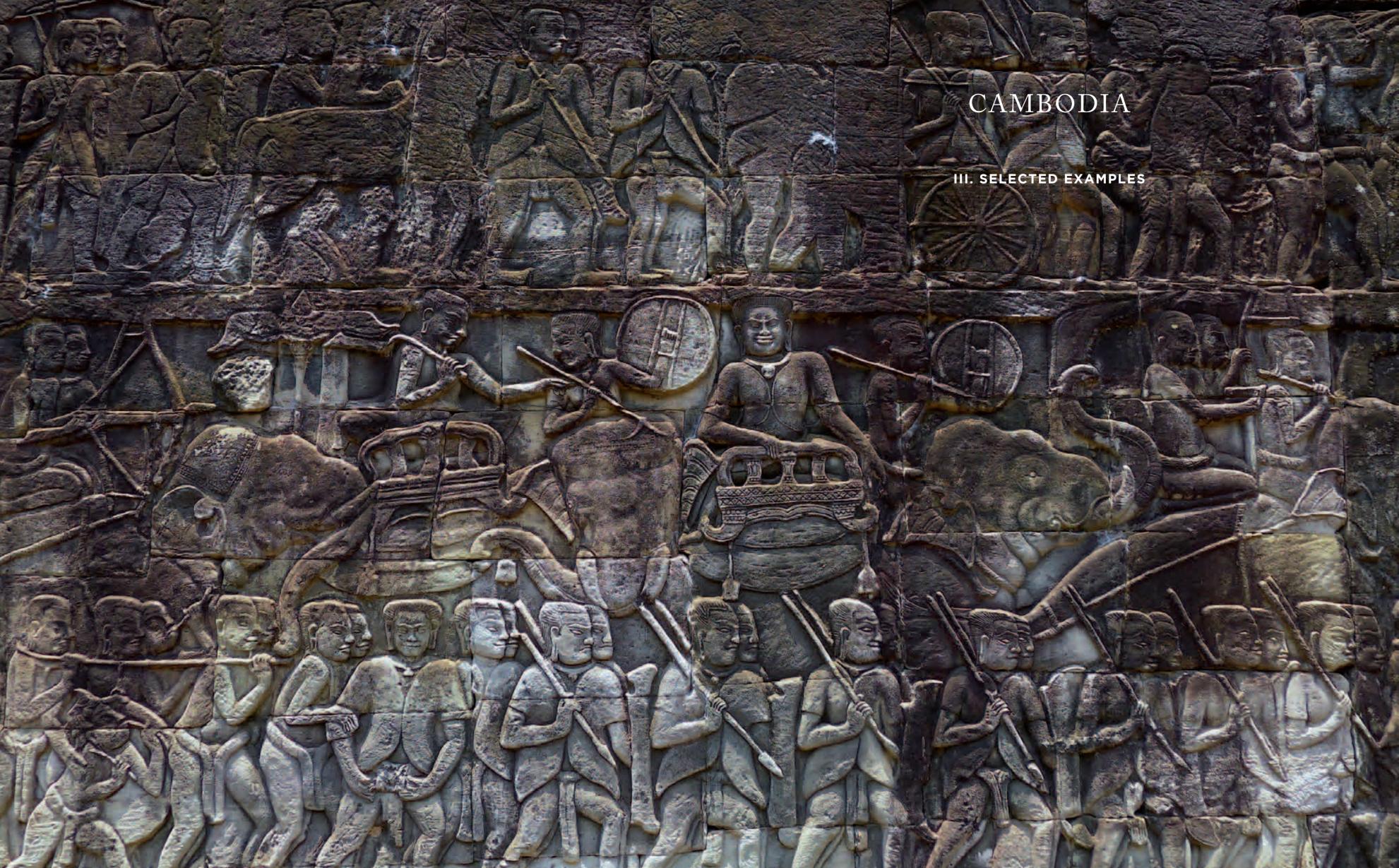
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Close-up detail of bas-reliefs along one of the galleries in Bayon, late 12th or early 13th century, Siem Reap, Cambodia



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TA PROHM

LATE 12TH CENTURY EASTERN ANGKOR

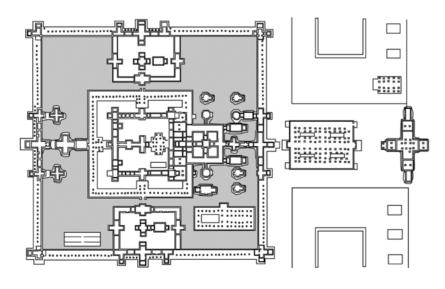
The temple of Ta Prohm, which means 'Ancestor Brahma', of the temples of the Khmers. Ta Prohm was discovered in the was built by Jayavarman VII in the late 12th century. 19th century and it was consciously decided to leave it in its According to inscriptions on a stele in the temple premises, natural, overgrown state, to show how the Angkor buildings the main deities in this temple were consecrated in 1186 looked when they were discovered. Trees, mainly the silk-cotton and the temple was constructed as a dedication to the king's and the strangler fig, overrun the ruins of the temple complex. mother, Jayarajachudamani. The main deity in this temple, Prajnaparamita or the 'perfection of wisdom', who was supposed to be the spiritual mother of the Buddha, was carved in her likeness. There was also an image of the spiritual Guru of the king, Jayamangalartha, and another of his elder brother, Jayakirtideva. The original name of the temple was Rajavihara, or 'the royal monastery'.

This large Buddhist monastic complex in the Bayon style comprises concentric galleries with towers, Gopuras and several other buildings in a walled enclosure. The temple owned 3,140 villages around it, and 79,365 people helped to keep it functioning. The outer enclosure measures 1000 metres by 650 metres. Within this there are four other enclosures (numbered from the centre outwards). The fourth enclosure measures 250 metres by 220 metres and contains three concentric galleried enclosures within a moat; the third enclosure measures 112 metres by 108 metres; the second enclosure measures 50 metres square; and the first enclosure, 30 metres square. Within the first enclosure is the central sanctuary. Each enclosure has Gopuras at the cardinal points. Axial galleries connecting the concentric galleries are punctuated with cross-shaped towers. There were several clusters of four-faced towers, depicting the Bodhisattva Lokesvara, but most have collapsed completely. Several small shrines are located within the enclosures. It is quite likely that there were wooden buildings in the complex, but these have not survived.

Originally 260 divinities and Bodhisattvas were planned, and many more were added to the complex later. From the inscription on the stele, we learn that the king hoped that his good deeds would earn his mother merit and deliver her from the 'ocean of births'.

Laterite and sandstone were used in the construction of Ta Prohm. Quarried locally in the Kulen Mountains, sandstone was suitable for the extensive carvings that adorned the walls





ABOVE (TOP)

Close-up of sandstone bas-reliefs

Plan of Ta Prohm templemonastery complex showing the concentric enclosures

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP & BOTTOM LEFT) Trees and undergrowth overunning at Ta Prohm

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM RIGHT) Prasat, showing decorative colonnettes, pilasters and lintels







PREAH KHAN

LATE 12TH CENTURY NORTHEASTERN ANGKOR

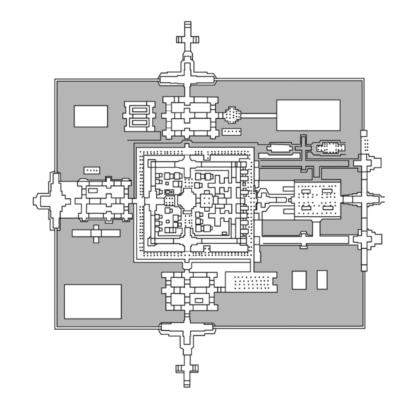
deity in this temple built in 1191 in the Bayon style. The were no fewer than 430 statues in the Preah Khan complex. statue represents the Bodhisattva Lokesvara as Jayavarmesvara. Lokesvara represents compassion (or Karuna) which is highly The Buddhist temples of the Khmers have to be understood the Buddharaja. The 'parent' temples were to the southeast and also been a Buddhist university with over 1,000 teachers. northeast of the Bayon.

The temple was located in Jayasri, literally the 'holy city of victory', which Jayavarman VII built after the conquest of the Chams in 1191. Located north of Angkor Thom, it acts as a focal point for a larger group of buildings including Neak Pean and Ta Som.

Like Ta Prohm, Preah Khan is constructed on a flat plan, and comprises concentric enclosures linked in places by axial galleries. As with Khmer temples in general, it is oriented eastwest. The city walls measuring 800 metres by 700 metres are enclosed within a moat. The third enclosure measuring 200 metres by 175 metres is bounded by a laterite wall and has four Gopuras in the cardinal directions, the one on the east being the grandest. This Gopura has three towers with pavilions at both ends, connected by galleries. It is 100 metres in length. The second enclosure measures 85 metres by 76 metres. In the space between the third and second enclosures are various structures and ponds in the four corners. In the innermost or first enclosure, which measures 62 metres by 55 metres, is the central sanctuary with four axial galleries leading out from it. Several small shrines and other buildings crowd the first enclosure making it very difficult to understand the layout. Many of these were later additions to the complex. The central sanctuary, cruciform in plan with porticos on the four sides, originally housed the statue of Dharanindravarman II and now there is a small Stupa here,

The temple of Preah Khan which means 'sacred sword', was dating from the 16th century. Between the second and third built by King Jayavarman VII as a dedication to his father enclosures are three other temples: one dedicated to Shiva, one Dharanindravarman II, just as Ta Prohm was to his mother. to Vishnu and one to deceased kings and queens. According to A statue in the likeness of Dharanindravarman II is the main an inscription on the stele found in the temple premises, there

symbolic because in Mahayana Buddhism, wisdom (Prajna) not as isolated monuments, but as large temple complexes, or and compassion (Karuna) came together to give birth to even temple towns, that functioned as centralizing powers, enlightenment, that is the Buddha himself. Ta Prohm as incorporating large extensions of the domain into their fold. A mentioned earlier was dedicated to Prajnaparamita representing huge retinue and revenue from the villages surrounding these Jayavarman VII's mother; Preah Khan was dedicated to his temples helped support the maintenance and complex functioning father; and it is thought that the Bayon made up the third in of these temples. According to an inscription, 306,372 people the trinity, with its image representing Jayavarman VII himself, from 13,500 villages worked in Preah Khan. It appears to have

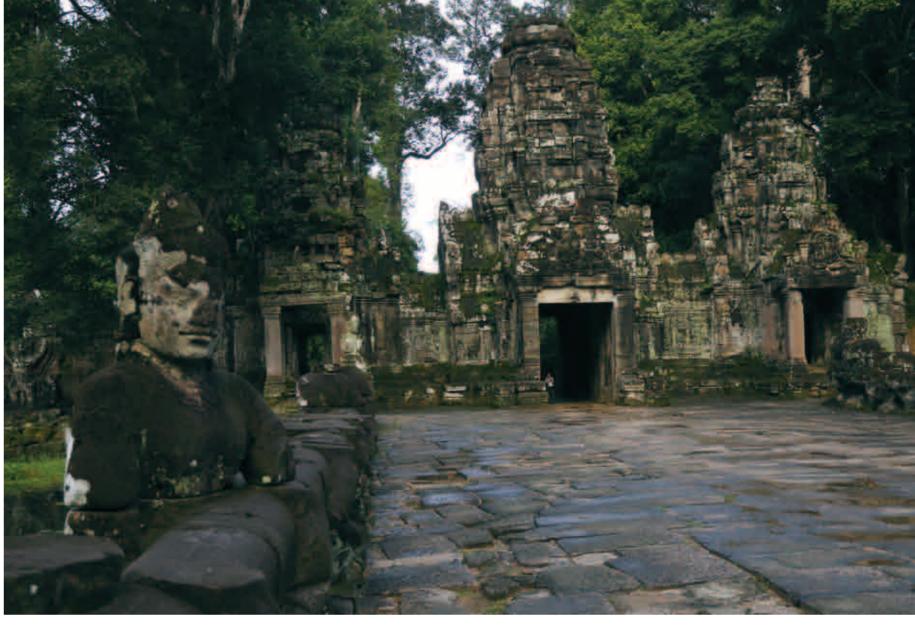


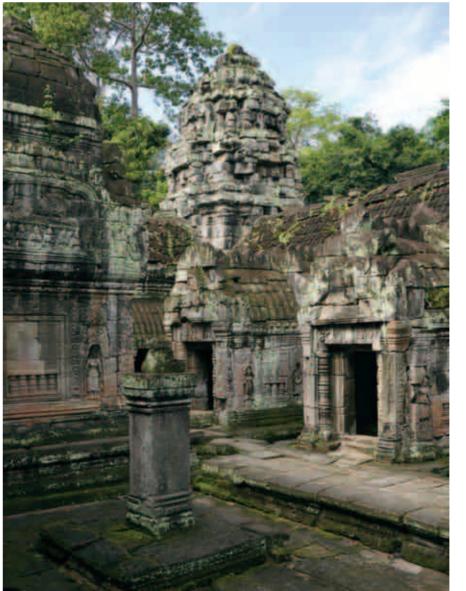
Plan of Preah Khan templemonastery complex

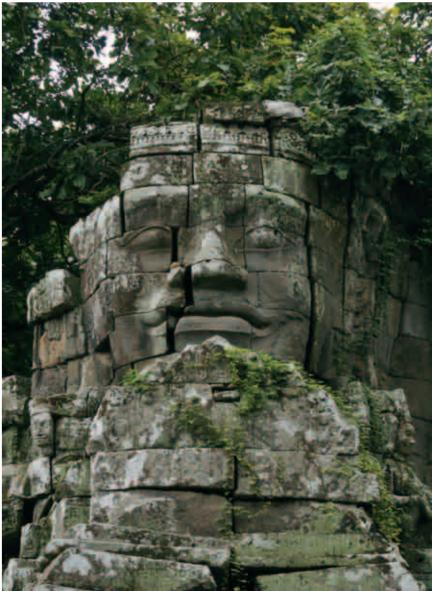
OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) The grandest Gopura at the eastern end of the 1st enclosure with the three towers

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM LEFT) Inner courtyard of Preah Khan temple complex

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM RIGHT) Close-up of a face-tower







NEAK PEAN

LATE 12TH CENTURY NORTHEASTERN ANGKOR

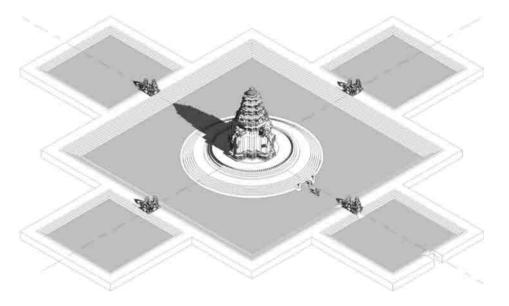
Neak Pean, which means 'entwined serpents' was originally known as Rajyasri or 'fortune of the kingdom'. This unique island temple was another of Jayavarman VII's creations in the Bayon style. Since there is a reference to it in the Preah Khan inscription, this temple must have been erected definitely by 1191.

300 square metres built in the centre of an artificial lake (the after the inability of the Hindu gods to protect Angkor from Baray Jayatataka) and surrounded by a series of Srahs or pools, the Cham invasion of 1177. Neak Pean's design symbolizes the mythical Himalayan lake Anavatapta of Buddhist cosmology. The lake was said to consist of sacred waters with healing properties which is located in the Himalayas, and from which place emanates four sacred rivers through the mouths of a lion, an elephant, a horse and an ox. The architectural scheme is made up of a central square pond, 70 metres on each side, flanked by four smaller square ponds, each measuring 25 metres square, which are further surrounded by eight other ponds that are now dry. A dip in those pools was said to have curative benefits.

At the centre of the composition, right in the middle of the main pond is a circular island having a diameter of 14 metres, upon which rises a shrine dedicated to the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara or Lokesvara. This circular island is encircled by two Nagas or serpents, representing the kings Nanda and Upananda of Hindu mythology, with their tails entwined in the west and their heads in the east, separated to allow for passage. The shrine is of a modest scale having a single opening to the east, with blind doors on the other three faces. Originally, the cruciform temple had doors on all four sides, but later, probably after the time of Jayavarman VII, three of the openings were walled in. Standing Lokesvaras are carved on these blind doors. The tower of the shrine is ogival, and it is topped with a lotus bud.

Four small buildings – chapels – link the main pond to the four smaller square ponds. Inside each of these is a gargoyle in the various forms of a man's face, a lion, a horse and an elephant. Water spouting through these fountainheads symbolized the four rivers of the Anavatapta legend mentioned above, with the difference here, of course, being that the ox's head of the original legend has been replaced by a man's. On the eastern side of the circular island, there is a statue of a flying horse. This

is Balaha, one of the forms of Lokesvara and he is helping to rescue shipwrecked sea-faring merchants. Stone statues are also present on the other three sides of the circular island - Vishnu, Shiva and a third unrecognizable one. Neak Pean also appears to stand for political symbolism: the central position of the Buddha (in the form of Balaha), with the surrounding Hindu A beautiful architectural composition comprising an island of gods seems to represent the rise of the Buddha as the saviour,

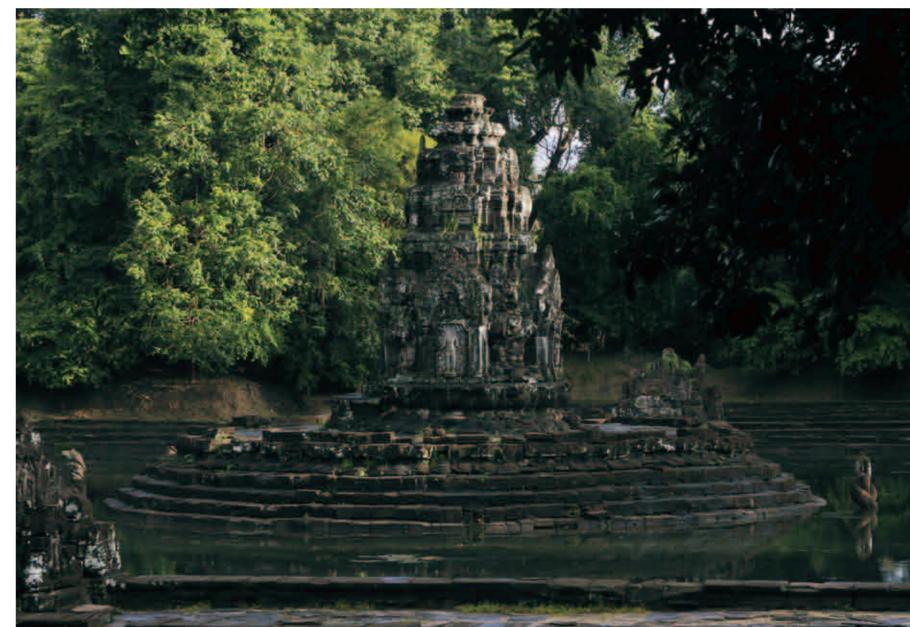


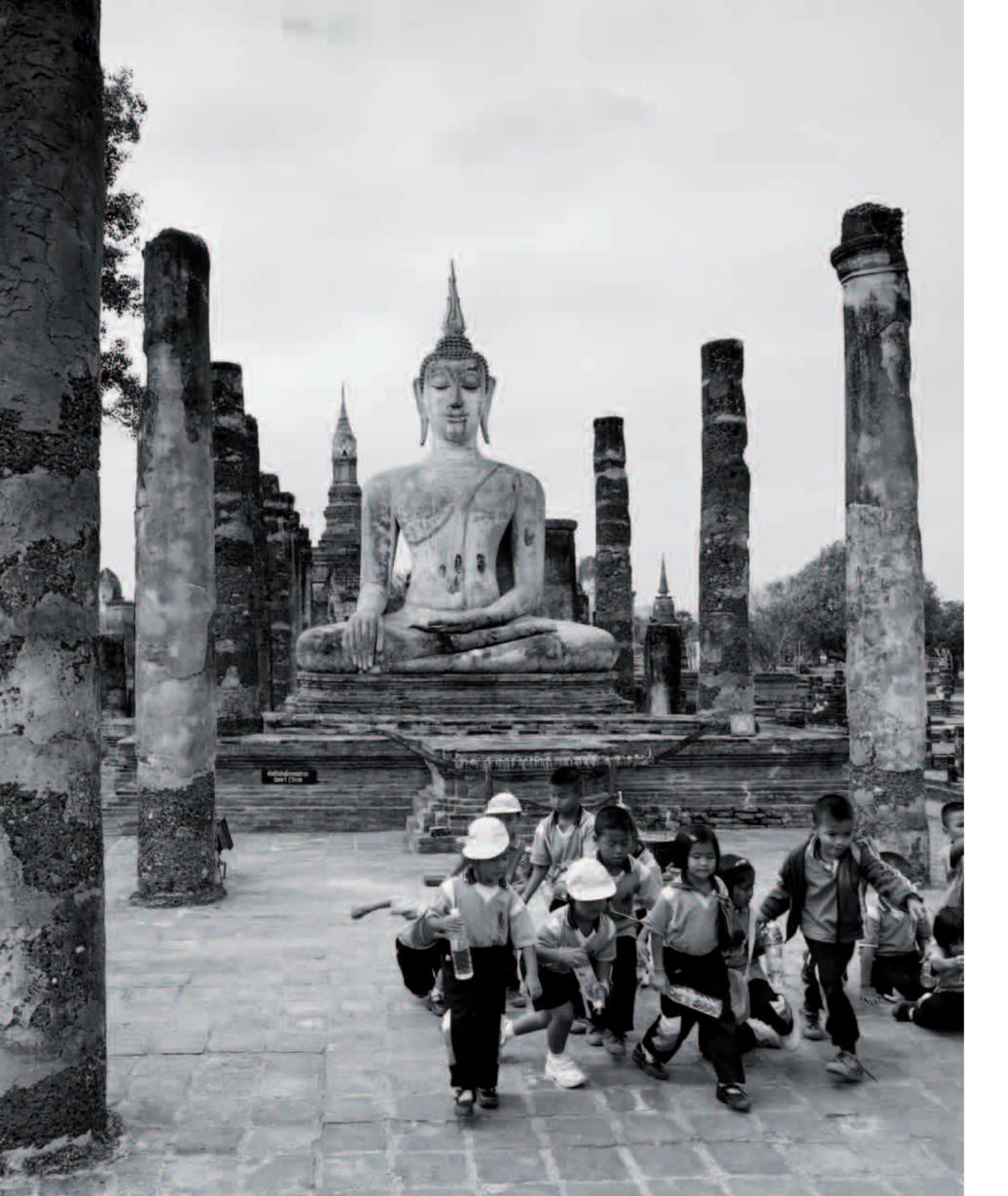
Plan of Neak Pean's unique architectural composition

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) Neak Pean built on an artificial lake

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM) The shrine on the circular island in the middle of the main pool of Neak Pean









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Golden Buddha images in the gallery of Wat Suthat, 1807–1843, Bangkok, Thailand

BELOW
Stylised map of Thailand

1. George Coedes. The Indianized states of Southeast Asia.



INTRODUCTION

The name 'Thailand' derives from the dominant Tai ethnicity that rose to prominence in the 13th century. The country was for most of its history an enmeshed, layered land, defined by the many civilizations that traversed, occupied and emerged in southeast Asia. With its long coastlines and many rivers, Thailand is a natural trade node, with east to west communication facilitated by the sea, whilst north to south movement is made possible by the Mekong, Salween and Chao Praya river systems, hence its great ethnic diversity and multicultural history.

The country was located at the very heart of the many civilizations that emerged in southeast Asia. The region was a true melting pot of cultures – of the Tai tribes in the north, the Mon regions in the west towards southern Myanmar, the Khmer regions in the east, extending from Angkor

and the Srivijayan regions of Java which extended to the southern Thai peninsula near Chaiya.

The occupation of various regions of Thailand also witnessed the introduction of foreign ideas and religious beliefs — Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism from the Khmer and the Srivijayan empires respectively and Theravada Buddhism from the Mons. The Tai ethnic group in the course of their gradual migration along the great rivers, the Irrawaddy, Mekong and Red, waded through these indigenous people. Displaying a facility for cultural borrowing, they adopted and syncretized the traditions of the existing civilizations that they encountered and through this journey they forged a distinct Siamese culture. The material culture of the Tais has thus been influenced by the cultures of the Mons, the Khmers, the Srivijayan and indirectly from India and China. After the rise of the cosmopolitan Ayutthayan empire, the indirect foreign influence of the European civilization can also be witnessed.

According to Sinhalese chronicles, Theravada Buddhist traditions were brought to Sri Lanka and to Thailand as early as the 3rd century BCE by the Arahant Mahinda, who is believed to have been the son of the Mauryan emperor Asoka. Throughout southeast Asia, Buddhism spread as part of a process of 'Indianization' through trade, which began around 100 CE and continued for the next 1,000 years. The cultures of the regions known today as Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Indonesian archipelago were all shaped, to a greater or lesser degree, by India. The accomplished maritime culture of India distributed cultural notions and physical commodities, mixing the various cultures of the region. Sailors brought with them the

Indic paths of Buddhism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism along with scholars, artisans, trade goods, deities, laws and their written language of Sanskrit. Thus, despite Thailand eventually becoming predominantly Theravada Buddhist, the shared forms of both Hinduism and Buddhism can still be seen in the architecture of Buddhist temples in Thailand.

Buddhism was inherited by the Tai people through the existing civilizations of southeast Asia who had practiced the faith such as the Mons, Khmers, Burmese and the Chams as well as through contacts with Sri Lanka and India. Buddhism, however, did not completely replace the existing beliefs of animistic worship and spirits of the place, Phi, but often co-existed with them. It is believed that various early architectural monuments of Buddhism such as Stupas or temples were built upon places or structures with existing spiritual significance. The cultural influences of their predecessors who had inhabited the region as well as neighbouring kingdoms can be seen in the architecture of the early Buddhist monuments in the region.

Among others, Buddhist architecture in Thailand has been influenced by the Hindu temples of the Khmers who had occupied the region for over six centuries. The architecture produced during the Khmer occupation of Thailand is commonly referred to by the name of their core area (in central Thailand) of occupation, 'Lopburi', distinguishing it as a derivative of the main style of architecture of the Khmers. While the Tais inherited architectural concepts of the Khmer Hindu temples that were built as a model of the cosmic universe, they practiced Theravada Buddhist beliefs that were passed on to them from the Mons and the Sinhalese. The influences of existing architectural traditions and religious beliefs were combined and transformed to produce a wide diversity of designs of the basic typologies of Buddhist monuments of the Stupa, Chaitya-griha and the Vihara. This is further differentiated by the regional and cultural diversity of Thailand – through the northern tribal and vernacular traditions to the dominant kingdoms of its history.

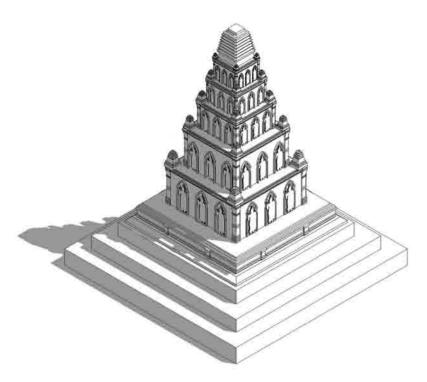
Buddhist architecture in Thailand can be said to be the most comprehensive blending of the various different Buddhist architectural influences that emerged in southeast Asia. Stylistically, religious architecture in Thailand has been classified into eight distinctive types: Dvaravati (6th–11th centuries), Srivijaya (8th–13th centuries), Lopburi Lanna (11th–18th centuries), Sukhothai (1240–1438), U Thong (12th–15th centuries), Ayutthaya (1350–1767), and Rattanakosin (18th–20th centuries).

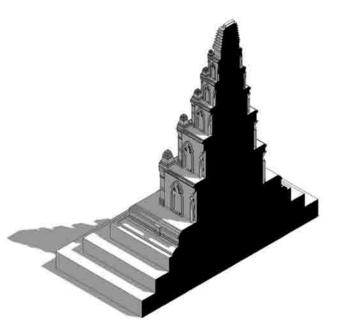
Of these, the history of Buddhist architecture has been traced through the two most important historical periods of Sukhothai (1240–1438) and Ayutthaya (1350–1767). Each period shows distinct architectural characteristics reflecting their strategies of engaging with the existing architectural heritage and Theravada Buddhist beliefs. During the Sukhothai period there was an attempt to limit the influence of Khmer architecture in the pursuit of seeking out a distinct identity for a newly formed kingdom articulated through the socio-political ideology of Theravada Buddhism. The subsequent Ayutthayan period, however, was more accepting of their Khmer material heritage leading to a revival of the Khmer influence on architecture but with these inherited architectural concepts revitalised into a distinct Thai Buddhist architecture that sought new ways of manifesting Theravada Buddhism.

The long presence of Buddhism in Thailand has led to the construction of numerous Buddhist monasteries and temples all over the country. This is in contrast to the short appearance of Buddhism and the relatively limited architectural presence of the faith in the history of some other southeast

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ABOVE
Architectural model of Wat
Kukut, 13th century, Lamphun – a
distinct form of Chedi popular in
Dvaravati architectural traditions

2. Also known as Wat Chamma Thewi, the Wat once had a golden roof, which has since been lost, giving rise to the name Wat 'Kukut', or 'Wat without top'. The original structure is believed to date from as early as the 8th century.

Asian countries such as Indonesia and Cambodia. Many of the Buddhist ruins that have been discovered have been restored through efforts towards architectural conservation and some have also been converted into historical parks.

MON AND DVARAVATI

The ancient kingdom of the Dvaravati is one of the earliest empires in Thailand, the first discovered to have built Buddhist structures. Emerging after the decline of the state of Funan, the Dvaravati kingdom comprised of a loose confederation of city states, covering an area that stretched from lower Myanmar to northeastern Thailand and stretching across the two great river valleys of the Mekong and the Chao Phraya. Archeological evidence of Bai Sema stones as well as clay images of the Buddha have been uncovered in central Thailand: radiocarbon dating the relics from 345-700 CE, with occupation of such settlements continuing to the 12th century before being abandoned. Much of what we know of the Dvaravati comes from unearthed coinage, with the discovery of coins at the city of Nakhom Pathom in central Thailand, inscribed with the Sanskrit words 'sridvaravatisvarapunya' which is translated as 'the meritorious deeds of the king of Dvaravati.' The word 'Dvaravati' itself means 'which has gates'. The people of the Dvaravati used the Mon language, with actual Mon settlements in the central and the northeastern regions of Thailand emerging as early as the 3rd century and continuing until the 13th century. Lumphun, the capital of the northern province of Lumphun, is thought to be the site of the ancient capital city of the Mon kingdom of Haripunchai.

Among other Mon Buddhist monuments there is a recently restored Chedi at Wat Kukut, rebuilt in 1218². Constructed entirely of bricks, it has a square plan which rises into five storeys of superimposed squares that diminish with each storey in a stepped, pyramidal formation. The finial tapers at the top and is repeated in the four corners of each receding terrace. The face of each storey has niches with statues of the standing Buddha. The form of the Chedi is popular in Dvaravati architectural traditions and is distinct for not having a typical bell or dome-shaped form. Similar Chedis have also been found at Amphoe Muang, Changwat Lamphun, and in Chiang Mai with the Wat Chedi Si Liem, thus giving some indication to the design of Dvaravati religious architecture.

The Phra Pathom Chedi (its name means 'the holy Chedi of the beginning') in the ancient city of Nakhon Pathom, about 56 kilometres south from the capital city of Bangkok, is the tallest (at 127 metres) Buddhist Chedi in the world and is also the oldest existing and most sacred Buddhist structure in Thailand. Through the centuries the Chedi has been conserved and restored many times and is now - as in the case of most Thai temples – a blend of the various types of architectural influences as will be further described in this chapter. Today, its architectural blend includes a very powerful visual reminder of the architecture of the Dvaravati civilization. Archaeological findings date the original Chedi to the 4th century and it is first mentioned in Buddhist scriptures in the 7th century. However, it was only in the 11th century that the current Phra Pathom Chedi was built on the exact location over the remains of the original Chedi, this time as a Khmer style Prang. It was left in ruins by the jungle and rebuilt over a period of 17 years and finally completed in 1870 in the form of the magnificent Chedi it is today by two Thai kings, Mongkut (Rama IV) followed by Chulalongkorn (Rama V).

SINHALESE AND SRIVIJAYAN INFLUENCES

The ancient city of Chaiya, in the province of Surat Thani in southern Thailand, located on the land trade route that

emerged as an alternative to the sea routes through the Straits of Malacca to the South China Sea, was an important urban settlement during the Srivijayan empire. Wat Ratanaram and Wat Keo in Chaiya and the Surat Thani province are temple ruins of structures which bear close similarity to the architecture of the neighbouring Srivijaya in the south and the Chams in the east.

Nakhon Sri Thammarat, the capital city of the district of Nakhon Sri Thammarat in southern Thailand located about 610 kilometres south of Bangkok, bears testimony to the influence of both Srivijayan and Sinhalese architecture. The Wat Mahathat Woramahawihan of Nakhon Sri Thammarat, a UNESCO protected site, is as its name in Pali suggests 'the great noble temple of the great noble relics Stupa'. As the centre of Theravada Buddhism from the 13th century onwards at the time of the Ayutthayan empire, the Wat Mahathat Woramahawihan of Nakhon Sri Thammarat is one of the most important and historic Buddhist temple compounds in Thailand.

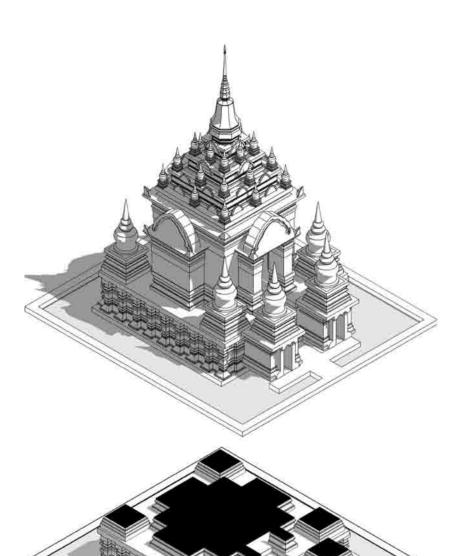
Among its numerous Buddhist buildings in the sacred precinct are the remains of its oldest, most important and sacred building, the Chedi of Wat Phra Boromathat that bears a close resemblance to the Candis of Indonesia. The Thai name Wat Phra Boromathat means 'the great noble relics Stupa' and this was built in the early 13th century by King Sri Dhammasokaraja, not just to house the holy relics of the Buddha (the Buddha's tooth), but to serve as the Theravada Buddhist symbol of the Buddhaksetra, the secular righteous king blessed by the spiritual righteous king, the Buddha. (See further discussion on the Buddhaksetra below).



ABOVE Phra F

Phra Pathom Chedi, c. 7th century, Nakhon Pathom,
Thailand, the tallest and oldest Chedi in Thailand. The photograph shows the Chedi partly hidden by scaffolding during an extensive restoration process

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Architectural model of Wat Phra Boromathat, early 13th century, Chaiya – the Chedi or Stupa bears a close resemblance to the Candis of Indonesia

3. The Tais come from the ethnic group in central Thailand. In etymology, the Tais were later referred to as the 'Thais'.

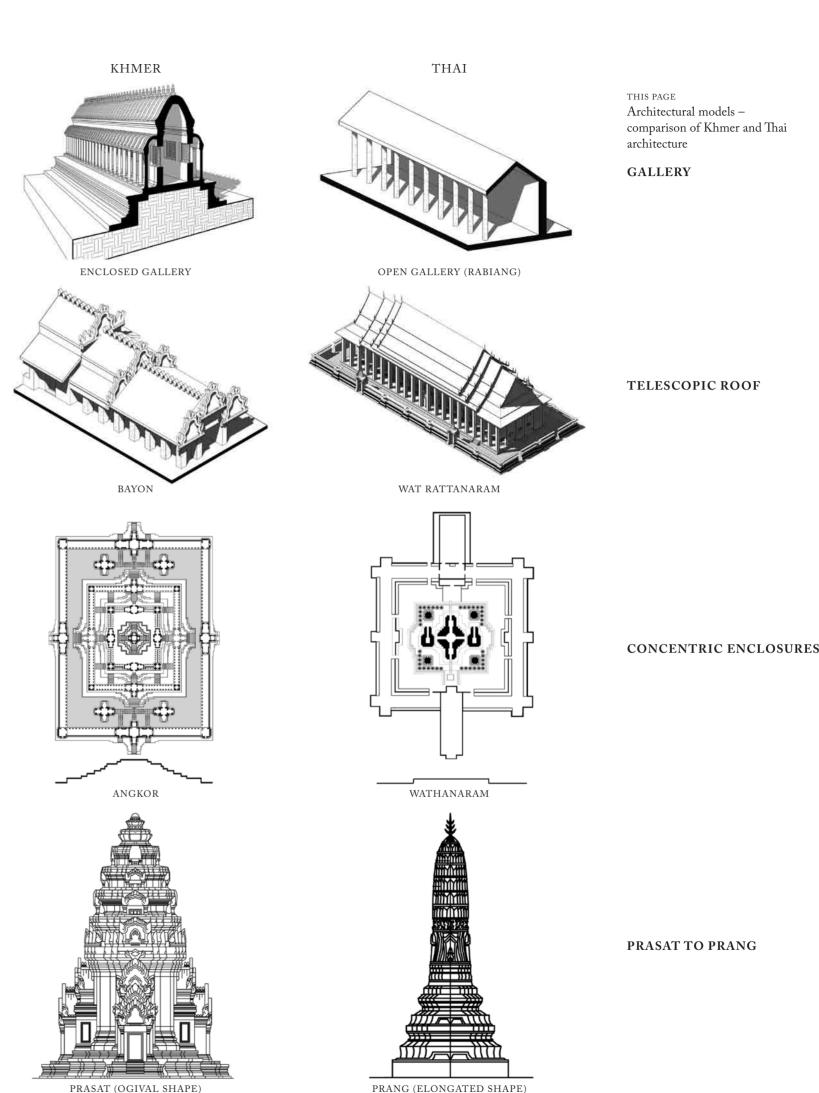
4. In Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, Mount Sumeru or Mount Meru is at the centre of the cosmic universe, made up of thirty-one planes of existence and the three realms of formlessness, form and desire.

The bell-shaped Stupa of Wat Phra Boromathat was first built in the early 13th century prior to the other buildings in the temple compound which followed in the late 13th century and restored and conserved through each century until the last great restoration undertaken from 1994-1995. The restored structure is constructed of bricks and also bears resemblance to the ancient building traditions of the Chams in the east. It has a square plan over which rises a tiered superstructure in a pyramidal formation. Stupas, known as Chedis in Thailand, are repeated on each floor at the corners. The temple is surrounded by an enclosing wall and moat. In the early 13th century, the Sri Lankan style structure of the Chedi was built upon the remains of the then existing Javanese Srivijayan style Candi. The form of the dome and spire was inspired by the bellshaped Stupas or Dagobas of Sri Lanka. The Chedi is raised on a terrace which has many elephant heads in niches similar to the Buddhist architectural traditions of Sri Lanka. The terrace can be accessed by a stairway for circumambulation. (See further discussion under Architectural Characteristics – the Chedi).

THE KHMER LEGACY

The great power in the region, before the founding of the first Tai³ kingdoms, were the Khmers, whose architectural traditions were inherited, adapted and transformed by the Tais for the design of their own religious monuments. The Khmers had extensively explored in their own temple architecture, the concept of Mount Sumeru and the surrounding cosmology⁴. Although the Khmers followed a rigid geometry to interpret the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology the Tais would, in contrast, be more flexible in the layouts of their monastic precincts and the conception of architectural forms, while still utilizing many elements from the Khmer planning and architecture.

There was a continuity of the use of some of the elements of the Khmer temples, but each of these elements was adapted and transformed uniquely into the architectural design of the Buddhist monuments of the Tais. The Khmer temples' use of the mythical serpent, Naga, that represents the guardian of the cosmic waters were adapted as balustrades along the access stairs of Tai temples. Moats that surrounded the Khmer temples symbolizing the cosmic oceans surrounding Mount Sumeru were also adopted. Another variation of the use of water bodies within the design of temple complexes is in the use of water ponds within monastic complexes, which is derived from the Theravada Buddhist traditions from Sri Lanka.



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The ponds were used for ritual bathing during ordination rites where the ordination hall is located at the centre of the pond. The galleries of the Khmer temples were also adapted in Tai temples, transformed into Rabiangs that were open towards the insides. The overlapping roofs of the Khmer galleries that were built in stone to cover small areas were creatively readapted as telescopic roofs constructed of timber, capable of holding larger groups of people. The Khmer sanctuary towers,

> or Prasats, were transformed from the ogival-shaped relic chamber to the elongated towers known as Prangs. Access into Khmer temples was limited to royalty and therefore the interior space of their Mandapa was not large. Buddhist rituals of congregation necessitated the design of buildings which could accommodate a large assembly of people. This was achieved in Tai temples through the use of lighter materials such as timber, as well as a post-lintel construction system, which allowed for modular expansion.

> Unlike the relatively limited ornamentation of Khmer buildings, the Tais emphasized the ornamental and decorative aspect of the design of Buddhist monuments to express cosmological symbolism. The architectural form of Tai temples is embellished with sculptural art to express the meaning of the three levels which are the abodes of celestial, terrestrial and subterranean beings. Some examples of these are the Kinnaris, the Yakshas, the Nagas and other mythical creatures⁵ who are represented in Buddhist temples in sculptural forms.



ABOVE Finely decorated mythical figures at the base of Wat Arun, c. 19th century, Bangkok, Thailand

5. Some examples of celestial beings and mythical creatures are the Kinnari and Kinnara (bird like humans), Indra (also shown along with his weapon Vajra, or thunderbolt on his three-headed elephant), the Yaksha (demon guardian), the Naga (mythical serpent), the Garuda (half-man and half-bird), and the Narsingh (half-man

6. 'Sayam' or 'Siam' was also the name refering to the Tai kingdom. The origins of the word are unclear. Today, Thailand is also sometimes referred to as Siam.

and half-lion).

THE TAI ASCENDANT - SUKHOTHAI

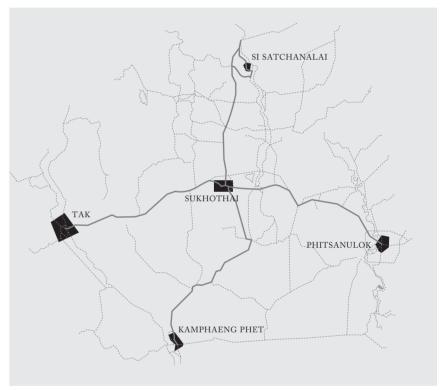
Although distinctly Tai historic sites only emerged after the 13th century, the influence of other cultures, interactions among them, conflicts and trading relations led to the creation of a unique Tai identity, manifesting in their religious architecture and the first Thai kingdoms, first of Sukhothai and then Ayutthaya. With so much diversity and inter-mingling, Buddhist architecture in Thailand is the most comprehensive blending of various architectural influences that emerged in southeast Asia. By the 11th century, a distinct 'Thai' identity begins to emerge that is witnessed through the early use of the term 'Sayam'6 in inscriptions found in Vietnam and the bas-reliefs of Angkor. While they were influenced by the diverse cultural heritage of southeast Asian civilizations that preceded them, the Tais continually sought to carve out their own identity. Breaking free of the Khmer hegemony, they adopted Theravada Buddhism instead of the Mahayana and Hindu practices that were already prevalent in the other countries of the region. This led to the development of the cultures that became characteristic of the new state of Thailand, where Theravada Buddhism mingled not only with Hindu Brahminical concepts and architectural forms, but also did not completely replace the existing beliefs of animistic worship.

Several independent states emerged under the Tais in the 13th century of which the two most important were the Lanna and the Sukhothai. The principality of Lanna, called Lanna Tai, was located in the north and was founded by Mengrai (1231-1311) while that of Sukhothai was established in the upper Chao Phraya valley in the south by Si Intrathit (1238–1270). Both kings declared the domination of the kingdom by the building of new capital cities, Chiang Mai in the north in 1296 by the Lanna kings and Sukhothai in the south in 1240.

BUDDHAKSETRA - THE IDEAL LAND OF THE BUDDHA

The Tai quest for a new identity through a Buddhist belief system was manifested in distinct urban and architectural patterns. The new kings sought fresh principles to legitimise their rule that was drawn from the Buddhist belief of rebirth as a ruler, a Dhammaraja in the Buddhaksetra, due to good Karma achieved in previous lifetimes or rebirths, rather than the Hindu concept of Devaraja, where the king was considered a living god on earth that was practiced by the Khmers. The emergence of Thai culture with the ascendance of Sukhothai, followed by the decline of the Sanskrit-Hindu culture and the spread of Sinhalese Buddhism, along with this revised notion of kingship as the secular righteous ruler and a manifestation of the spiritual righteous Buddha, resulted in the search for new paradigms of spatial planning and architecture. This notion of an ideal land of Buddhism, the Buddhaksetra, thus determined the pattern of urbanism in which the capital city was perceived as the cosmological centre and was linked to outlying cities by a network of Stupas.

New capitals such as Sukhothai were conceived as the cosmological and temporal centres of their entire kingdom. At the centre of these cities was located the most important spiritual structures, the main temple known in the Thai language as a Wat Mahathat, which served as both the spiritual and political nucleus of the urban composition, from which point emanates spiritual and political power, extending its control to the outlying territories, binding together the capital, the province and the vassal states. Mahathat is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Mahadhatu' where 'Maha' refers to 'great' and 'Dhatu' to substance or relic. In ancient India, Stupas enshrining relics were called 'Dhatugaba'. By extension, the word 'Mahathat' is used for the Chedis or Stupas that contain the holy relics of the Buddha. The capital city was literally thus conceived as the centre of the entire kingdom with the main temple or Wat Mahathat at the core of this composition from where emanated the sacred spiritual power extending across the divine lands of the idealized Buddhaksetra. This cosmic interpretation can be seen in the spatial and geographical relationship of the four important cities to the capital city of the kingdom of Sukhothai. The kingdom was marked from its centre by the capital city of Sukhothai and around its periphery by the four cities in the cardinal directions by Si Satchanalai in the north, Kampheng Phet in the south, Phitsanulok to the east and Tak to the west.



Not drawn to scale

Sukhothai as the capital city and cosmological centre of the Buddhaksetra, linked to the four cities of Si Satchanalai (north), Kamphaeng Phet (south), Phitsanulok (east) and Tak (west)

PAGES 200-201

The remains of the ancient city of Sukhothai at the Sukhothai historical park, a UNESCO heritage centre, with its many temple structures reflected in the surrounding moats, c. 13th century to 14th century, Sukhothai, Thailand

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THE CAPITAL CITY AS THE SPIRITUAL, POLITICAL AND CEREMONIAL CENTRE

The capital city of Sukhothai was founded in 1240 on the banks of the Yom river, south of a Khmer outpost of Jayavarman VII. Although it is difficult to ascertain who the earliest settlers of Sukhothai were – either the Mons, Khmers, or Tai – what is known is that it was the Khmers who first left their indelible, architectural mark on the city that would come to be known simply as Sukhothai. They occupied the city for less than a century, from the 12th century until the middle of the 13th century, ruling from Angkor during the zenith of the Khmer empire under Jayavarman VII. The ruins of the Khmer city remain, north of the walled Tai city.

It was sometime around the middle of the 13th century when two Tai chieftains, following king Intharathit's declaration of independance from the Khmers, marched on Sukhothai, conquering it with their troops and thus founded the first notable Tai kingdom, which is still regarded by some Thais as the first founding of an independent Thai nation. The legends surrounding the Tai conquerors are extensive, such being their cultural significance. They are accorded impressive, mythological feats, which although quite unbelievable, do indicate their importance. Nonetheless it was under their rule that a new city was built, south of the existing Khmer structures, along with an impressive series of concentric earthen ramparts, interspersed by moats oriented towards the cardinal directions. Similar triple ramparts with moats surround numerous ancient Tai settlements (known as 'Tripun'). The plan for the new city was derived from the formally laid out designs of the of the royal Khmer cities at Angkor, but were aligned using geographical landmarks rather than astronomical measurements and thus all of the Tai additions face slightly to the northeast.

7. He is also known as Pho Khun Sri Indraditya (r. 1238-1270), who is credited with founding the Phra Ruang dynasty, the first historical Siamese dynasty.

RIGHT

Plan of the Sukhothai historical park showing (in bold) the main temples

- 1 WAT CHEDI SUNG
- 2 WAT CHANG LOM
- WAT TRAPHANG THONG LANG
- 4 PRATU KAMPHAENG HAK 5 WAT TRAPHANG DONG
- 6 RAMKAMHAENG NATIONAL MUSUEN
- 7 KING'S PALACE
- 9 WAT MAHATHAT 10 WAT SI SAWAI
- 11 WAT TRAPHANG NGOEN
- 12 PRATU OA 13 WAT SRA SI

16 WAT MAI

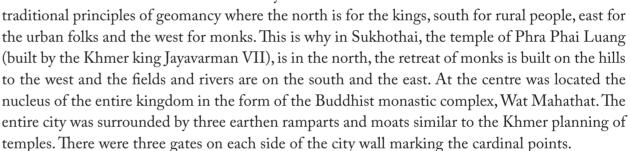
- 14 LAK MUANG 15 WAT CHANA SONGKHRAM
- 17 PHOR KHUN RAMKAMHAENG
- 18 WAT TRAKUAN 19 SAN TA PHA DAENG
- 20 WAT SORASAK 21 WAT SON KHEO
- 22 PRATU SAN LUANO
- 23 WAT PHRA PAI LUANG 24 POTTERY KILNS
- 25 WAT SI CHUM 26 WAT PA MAMUAN
- 27 WAT DEUK 28 HO THEWALAI
- 29 MAKARA CLOISTER
- 30 WAT SAPAN HIN 31 WAT PHRA BAT NOI
- 32 WAT CHEDI NGAM
- 33 WAT TAM HIP 34 PHRA RUANG DAMM
- 35 WAT PHRA BAT YAI 36 WAT CHETUPHON
- 37 WAT CHEDI SI HONG
- 38 WAT PICHIT KITTI KALANYARAM
- 39 FLOWER NURSERY
- 40 ASHOKARAMA



Not drawn to scale

The founding of the city heralded the spirit of a new kingdom based on the ideals of Theravada Buddhism. The name Sukhothai, derives from the sanskrit word, Sukhodaya, where 'Sukh' means happiness and 'Uday' means dawn - 'the dawn of happiness', perfectly epitomising the spirit of the new kingdom. The planning attempts to articulate the capital city of Sukhothai as a spiritual, political and ceremonial centre of the ideal land of the Buddha is embodied by the numerous monuments that were built within its walls.

The city of Sukhothai was laid out to a rectangular plan about 2 kilometres stretching from east-west and 1.6 kilometres from north-south, that was oriented towards the cardinal points with the longer side along the east-west axis, as dictated by Theravada Buddhism. The orientation of the city follows





Dusk at the tranquil ancient city of Sukhothai and the imposing Buddha at Wat Mahathat

THE TEMPLE AS THE SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL CENTRE

The salient aspects of Buddhist architecture of the Sukhothai period can be seen in the design of its most important monastery, Wat Mahathat of Sukhothai. The temple complex located at the central zone at the centre of the city is considered as the spatial and temporal centre of the entire kingdom. The temple is also built on a rectangular plan, surrounded by enclosing walls, representing the rocky mountain enclosing the universe. There are gates at the cardinal directions. Within the complex are numerous religious structures. The focal building is Wat Mahathat's large Chedi, that occupies the centre of the enclosed space. The design of the Chedi is unique as it attempts to combine the varied architectural influences of the region into a single form. A Wihan or assembly hall which also houses an enormous statue of Buddha is aligned along the east-west axis next to the Chedi.

Other than this formal arrangement comprising of the core of the monastic complex, a variety of buildings for both secular and ritualistic requirement are distributed across the surrounding area, relatively freely and independent of one another. These include a plethora of assembly halls (Salas), ordination halls (Ubosots), shrines, Wihans, Mondops, Prangs and the library (Ho Trai). It can be safely conjectured by the large vacant spaces between these structures that there once could have been other smaller buildings made of perishable materials such as wood that have not survived. All the buildings associated with the monastery, the Chedis and the various assembly halls were further enclosed within a large monastic precinct by an encircling gallery called a Rabiang.

202 THE GOLDEN LANDS THAILAND - ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY 203 The designs of the galleries were developed out of the galleries of the Khmer temples, modified by replacing the inner wall with an open colonnade and replacing their vaulted telescopic roofs with a straight pitched roof. The insides of the gallery walls were further lined with Buddha statues facing the inside precincts.

However, contrary to the architectural principles of their Khmer predecessors, the Tais did not adopt the rigid spatial plans of the temple complexes which comprised concentric enclosures and pyramidal mountain-temple formations, but followed a freer distribution of buildings within a geometrically enclosed sacred space of the monastic compound. This freedom from the rigid rules allowed them to assimilate forms from various architectural traditions of the region and combine them to create syncretised planning of architectural forms that are distinctly their own and yet, the cosmology of Buddhism is manifested in the design of the temple complex: the central Chedi with its nine subsidiary towers representing Mount Sumeru and the moat, the cosmic ocean.

In the quest for a new cultural identity, the Tais of the newly founded Sukhothai kingdom, rejected the architectural notions of their oppressor, the Khmers and searched for new paradigms of monastic layouts and temple designs that could manifest the beliefs and practice of Theravada Buddhism. Yet a complete break with Khmer architectural precepts did not occur and instead, existing design ideas were selectively adapted and transformed by the Tais. The planning of the ancient monasteries of Sukhothai can be studied from the remains of about 45 monastic complexes in the region. The Buddhist architecture of the Sukhothai period reflects this search for identity through the invention of novel architectural forms by adapting, syncretising and transforming existing architecture examples of the region.

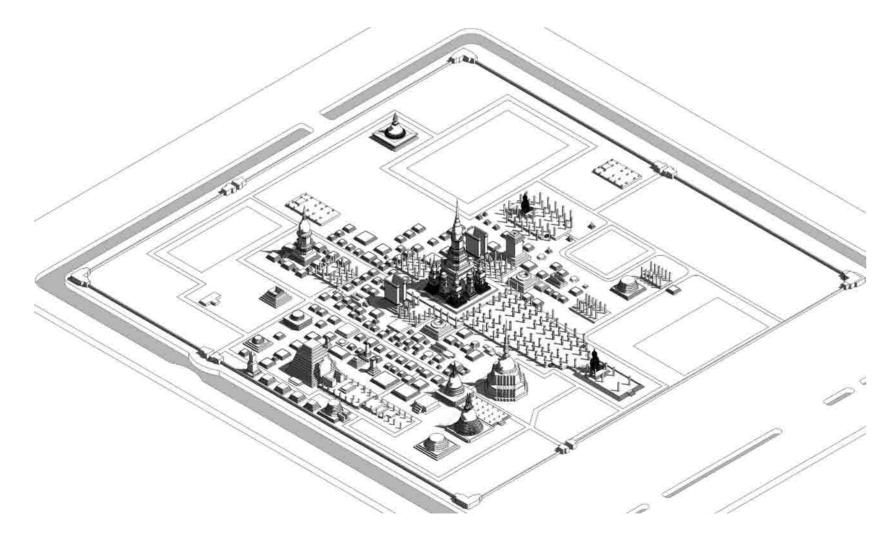
Mahathat, Sukhothai monastic complex OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP) The ruins of the Sukhothai monastic complex with its plethora of buildings, c. 13th century to

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM) The unique and imposing lotus bud Chedi of Wat Mahathat in the Sukhothai monastic complex

14th century, Sukhothai, Thailand

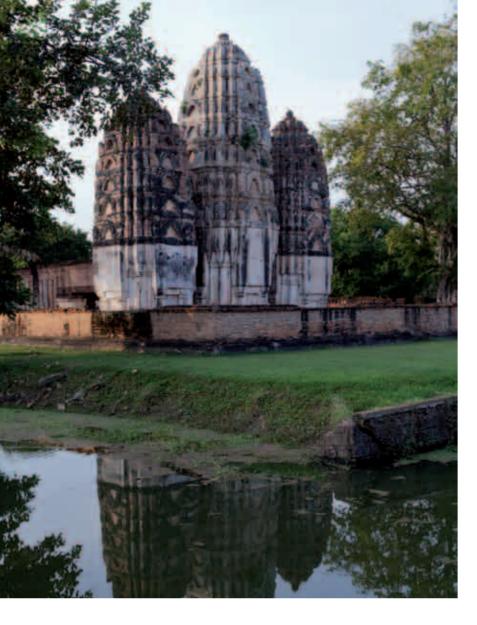
Architectural model of Wat

BELOW









ABOVE The Khmer-styled temple of Wat Si Sawai, circa 13th century, Sukhothai, Thailand

ADAPTING KHMER ARCHITECTURE

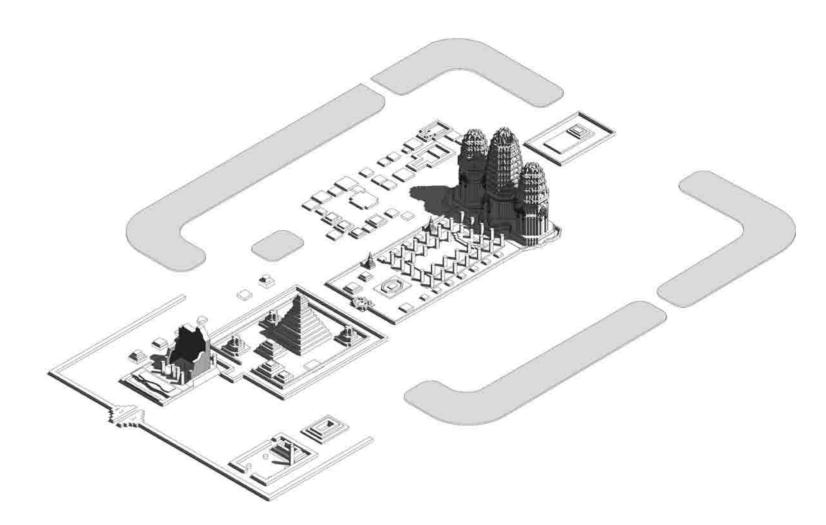
The quest of the Sukhothai rulers to seek a new identity based on the political and social ideology of Theravada Buddhism in the divine land of the Buddha, the Buddhaksetra, did not immediately result in the production of novel architectural forms. Instead, the earliest examples of Buddhist architecture involved adapting existing temples which were built during the Khmer cultural and political dominance.

The existing monuments built by the Khmers were not always abandoned, but were transformed to suit the requirements of Theravada Buddhist practices, such as in the case of Wat Phra Pai Luang and Wat Si Sawai. The origins of the Thai tradition of transforming Khmer sanctuary towers to serve as the central relic chambers of Buddhist temples (instead of the Chedi), can be seen to have started during the Sukhothai period that eventually influenced the design of the distinct form of the Thai Prang as it further developed during the Ayutthayan period as we shall see here in this chapter. Both monuments were originally built in the architectural traditions of the Khmers to serve the practice of Mahayana Buddhism but were later adopted by the Thais and modified to their requirements of Theravada Buddhist practice.

The triple shrine-towers or Prangs of Wat Phra Phai Luang located in the north zone of Sukhothai, is one of the earliest Buddhist buildings of the region built during the rule of Jayavarman VII pre-dating the founding of Sukhothai. These Khmer style Prangs were raised along a straight line on a single platform aligned east-west and were built with laterite stone, finished with a layer of stucco plaster. Of these, only the northern one has survived while the others are in ruins. During the Sukhothai period when Wat Phra Phai Luang was converted into a Theravada temple, a new pillared hall, or Wihan, raised on a stone platform was added to the front of the eastern facade along the north-south axis. The hall was lined with a row of small bell-shaped Pagodas built in laterite stone and covered with plaster. It can be deduced, by the arrangement of the row of columns, that the Wihan would have had a pitched wooden roof. A square multi-layered and stepped pyramidal Chedi, comprising of niches with Buddha images similar to Wat Kukut, was built at the other end of this arrangement. During the Khmer rule, the towers were originally dedicated to three Mahayana deities, the Buddha, Avalokitesvara and Prajnaparamita but were subsequently changed to relic chambers and incorporated as a Theravada Buddhist monument representing the triad of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

A similar process of transformation of Khmer structures dedicated to Mahayana Buddhism was adopted with the temple, Wat Si Sawai, that lies just to the south of Wat Mahathat in the central zone. This temple too was built during the rule of Jayavarman VII and has three towers to which a Wihan at the eastern front was added during the Sukhothai period.

The origins of the Thai tradition of transforming Khmer sanctuary towers instead of utilising the Chedi as the central relic chamber of Buddhist temples can be seen to have started during the Sukhothai period that eventually influenced the design of the distinct form of the Thai Prang.



AYUTTHAYA - REVIVAL OF THE KHMER LEGACY

By the middle of the 14th century there were numerous Tai principalities or city states, known as Mueangs, across southeast Asia. Most of the principalities governed a small region and only a few of these such as Sukhothai and Lanna Tai⁸ were large enough to be called kingdoms. Rising out of the smaller kingdoms, Ayutthaya emerged as an empire in the 14th century. This was a radical change from the existing social and cultural character of small states whose concerns were limited to their immediate local context and rarely reached out to the larger, international stage. For the first time the ambitions of the leaders of Sayam aspired to reach the scale of a powerful empire and Ayutthayan architecture thus sought to express this imperial grandeur.

While Sukhothai is considered by some as the first Thai kingdom, it was Ayutthaya which emerged as the first empire, becoming the source for development of the cultural identity of a modern Thai state. Both were founded by the Tai people who built their cities over existing settlements of the Khmers, and both were influenced by the Indian cultural traditions and adopted the Sinhalese form of Theravada Buddhism. However, in comparison to Sukhothai which consciously attempted to carve out a distinct Thai identity, Ayutthaya adopted a more accepting attitude towards the existing Indianized Mon and Khmer heritage. Even the name Ayutthaya itself is derived from 'Ayodya', the place of birth of lord Rama, venerated in the Hindu epic, the Ramayana. The architecture of Ayutthaya was more open to accepting the influence of the existing building and artistic traditions from central Thailand, as well as international influences. It adopted these architectural traditions willingly, forging a distinct aesthetic character that influenced the subsequent architectural development of the Thais.

ABOVE

Architectural model of Wat Phra Pai Luang, showing the distinct Khmer adapted triple shrinetowers or Prangs

8. Lanna Tai was located in the north of Thailand and known as 'the kingdom of a million rice fields'. By 1297 Lanna Tai, under the rule of prince Ram Khamhaeng's brother, Mangrai, Lanna ruled over an extensive region that included Chiang Saen, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and the previously Mon-dominated region of Lamphun, previously known as Haripunjaya.

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THE CITY OF AYUTTHAYA

Founded in 1350 by U Thong (who adopted the name Ramathibodi), a local prince from Chiang Saen (who vanguished his political contemporaries from the Mon states and Sukhothai), Ayutthaya was established as the capital city of the new kingdom on a river island, about 50 kilometres upriver from modern day Bangkok. Ayutthaya was encircled in the south and west by the Chao Phraya river, to the north by the Lopburi river and to the east by the Pasak river. Ayutthaya was the second capital established after Sukhothai and the kingdom of Ayutthaya, over the next four centuries, grew into one of the most powerful empires of Southeast Asia, subjugating the Khmers and Angkor to the east in 1432 and annexing Sukhothai in 1463 during the rule of King Borommatrailokanat.

BELOW Detailed plan showing the city of Ayutthaya

9. At its peak, by late 17th to early 18th century, Ayutthaya was glowingly described by European traders and emissaries such as Tachard. La Loubere, and Karmpfer in their dispatches and books published across Europe.

Spanning over four decades and thirty-five kings, Ayutthaya developed into one of the grandest cities in southeast Asia. Its political strength, economic prosperity and trading potential attracted people from across the world. By the 17th century, during the beginning of western maritime expansion, Ayutthaya was a prosperous and densely populated city, to which flocked traders from all over the globe. Outside of the city proper, beyond the rivers encircling it were extensive foreign settlements. It was without a doubt one of the most cosmopolitan cities of its time. Besides Khmer, Mon and Indian influence, the Chinese between the 13th to the 15th centuries introduced

> The Ayutthayan monarchy was at the top of the social order and of the political system. The ideology of divine kingship practiced in Sukhothai continued but was further reinforced. The requirements of a more elaborate political system of an emerging empire further enhanced the absolute power of the king. The combination of Tai beliefs, Theravada and Hindu Brahminical

lacquer painting and Chinese ceramic roof tiles to existing structures. Architectural elements from Europe and Persia such as the Acanthus leaf motif and the lancet form of the arch were incorporated into their own designs. By the 16th and 17th centuries many officials and diplomats of foreign origin lived in the city the prime minister, Constantine Phaulokon was of Greek origin and European engineers were employed for the design of state monuments. The city has been described in glowing terms by numerous contemporary sources9 and is thought to have been even more vibrant than the London and Paris of the times. Ayutthaya housed the royal palaces and some of the most important Buddhist monasteries. The cultural inheritance of Mon and Khmer traditions along with Sinhalese Buddhism is reflected in the architecture of their Buddhist monuments.

concepts of Devaraja and Buddhist notions of

Dhammraja deified the king as a Cakravartin where the king was perceived as a god among men. The planning of cities and architecture interpreted the absolute temporal and spiritual power of the king as well as empowered him. This is manifested in the commissioning of royal temples such as Wat Phra Si Sanpet which while serving both as a Buddhist temple as well as a royal reliquary, aimed to represent the absolute power of the divine king.

Sadly, the natural insulation provided by the rivers could not completely protect the city of Ayutthaya, which finally succumbed to the Burmese in 1797. The city was ravaged and the numerous Buddhist buildings that existed there were left in ruins, providing limited information of their complete architectural character. Despite the destruction of Ayutthaya in 1797, a new Thai kingdom was founded, first in Thonburi and then, in 1782, in what is now known as Bangkok. General Chakri ascended to be king, and founded the present Chakri dynasty. 'Bangkok' literally translates to mean the 'marshy village of the wild olive', and originally was a small township across the river from the busy trading town of Thonburi, which has since been encompassed into the modern city. From the founding of Bangkok as the capital of Thailand to the present, began an era known as the Rattanakosin period which involves building programs on a grand scale, including Buddhist architecture, with the restoration of Ayutthayan temples along with many new monuments. Over the span of the Chakri dynasty, impressive efforts were made to restore older temples and propagate new Buddhist monuments, such as Wat Suthat, construction of which began in 1807. It was built at the very centre of the new capital, acting as a spiritual nexus, as a Mount Sumeru, in the same way Wat Mahathat had been for Sukhothai, centuries earlier. See further description of Wat Suthat under Selected Examples of this chapter.

The three main Chedis that contain the relics of the deceased kings of Ayutthaya, Wat Phra Si Sanphet, c. 1448, Ayutthaya,



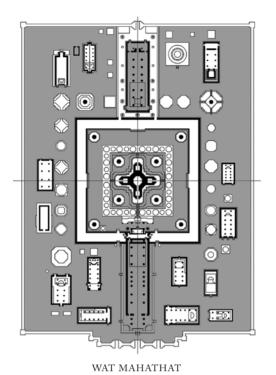


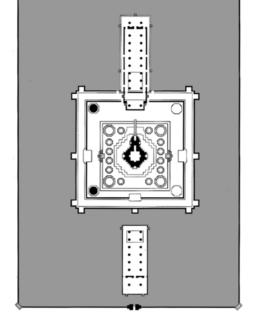
11 WAT PHU KHAO THONG

Not drawn to scale

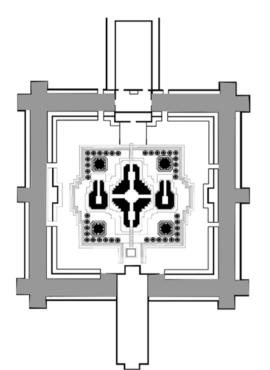
5 WAT RATCHARBURANA

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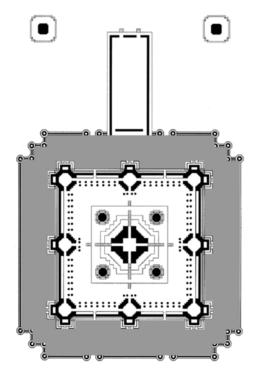


WAT RATCHABURANA

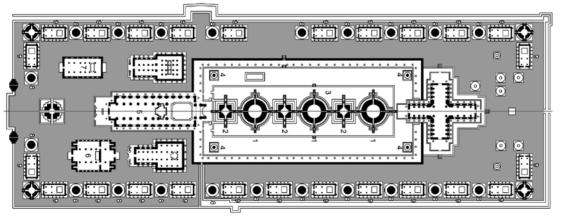


WAT PHRA RAM

Planning of temples of Ayutthaya



WAT CHAI WATTHANARAM



WAT PHRA SI SANPHET

MONASTIC ARCHITECTURE OF AYUTTHAYA

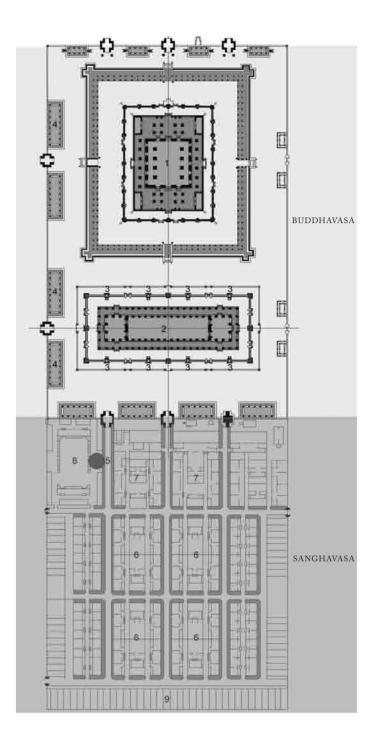
The pervasive influence of Buddhism in the four centuries rule of the Ayutthayan empire can be ascertained by the fact that out of some 550 important monuments in the city, over 400 were Buddhist. Numerous Buddhist monasteries with a variety of layouts were built that manifest the presence of the faith and associated notions of divine kingship, cosmology, accumulation of merit and belief in Karma. Unfortunately, most buildings are in a state of ruin and do not reflect the architectural glory of this important period in the Buddhist history of Thailand.

Some of the important monuments through which we can understand the planning and architectural designs of Buddhist monasteries during the Ayutthaya period are Wat Mahathat Ayutthaya, Wat Ratchaburana, Wat Phra Ram, Wat Chai Watthanaram and Wat Phra Si Sanphet. Though there is no single architectural and planning pattern that can be singled out as a dominant design typology of the time, some generic patterns of design strategies can be discerned by the study of these examples.

PLANNING OF TEMPLE AND MONASTIC PRECINCTS: CENTRALIZED, LINEAR PLANNING AND RIGID PLANS

Unlike the relatively flexible planning of the Sukhothai period, Buddhist monasteries during the Ayutthayan period were developed on the symmetrical and centralized planning principles of the Khmers. The emphasis on centrality was enhanced through the arrangement of buildings to a rigid geometry and by the hierarchy of scale ascending towards the focal architectural form. The centre of the plan is dominated by the principal monument which was the Thai Prang or Chedi, and the entire planning was developed in a geometrical formation to accentuate the centrality of the principal building. The Chedi is surrounded by a gallery, the Rabiang which is a popular feature of the Ayutthayan period and other buildings such as the Wihan, Bot and smaller subsidiary Chedis are distributed in a geometrical order around it. Galleries became a popular feature of monastic architecture during the Ayutthayan period.

The orientation of the pillared halls followed the east-west alignment and the assembly hall or Wihan was usually attached to the gallery. The ordination hall, the Ubosot or the Bot was either arranged on the same axis as the Wihan but on the opposite side of the central monument, or at times was located independently within the sacred precinct. The entire ensemble of buildings is finally enclosed by a boundary wall defining a sacred precinct. (See further discussion on Bots and Wihans later in this chapter on Architectural Characteristics).



- 1 WIHAN 2 UBOSOT 3 BAI SEMA
- 4 FUNCTION HALL
- 5 BELL TOWER
- 6 MONK'S QUARTER 7 KUTI
- 8 MEETING HALL
- 9 ROWS OF HOUSES

Detailed plan showing a typical Thai temple precinct

210 THE GOLDEN LANDS THAILAND - ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY 211 Some linear planning of temple precincts too are seen where the Chedis and Prangs are arranged in a line with the main shrine as can be seen in Wat Phra Si Sanphet. The assembly hall, Wihan was arranged along a linear axis to the surrounding gallery.

The Wat Mahathat of Ayutthaya is located to the east of the palace and is believed to have been built by King Boromaraja I, (r. 1370-1388). The temple planning demonstrates the geometrical composition emphasising the centrality of the Prang that gained popularity in the Ayutthayan period. The Prang of the temple of which only the base remains today, is considered one of the earliest examples of Ayutthayan monuments showing the influence of Khmer architecture. It was originally constructed of laterite and was later expanded in brick construction rising up to about 50 metres.

The layout of Wat Ratchaburana built in the mid-15th century also follows a centralized planning where a relic tower, Prang, as the central architectural form is enclosed within a rectangular temple precinct defined by a boundary wall. It is placed on the raised terrace of the inner courtyard which is encircled by a roofed gallery, the Rabiang. Four additional Chedis mark the four corners of the terrace. The Prang itself is set on a large redented base and rises as a tower in an elongated corncob form. The four porches as seen in Khmer designs are contracted inwards to enhance the accent of height. The architectural form of the elongated relic towers is yet another Thai adaptation of Khmer origins which become a typical feature of Buddhist architecture in Ayutthaya. The main Wihan is attached on the east side of the gallery while the Ubosot is detached from the gallery and located on the western side along the east-west axis. Other buildings of halls and Chedis were

The Prang of Wat Ratchaburana, 15th century, Ayutthaya, Thailand



also built within the enclosed temple precinct. A crypt has recently been discovered inside the Prang which houses a colourful mural showing the Buddha while meditating and walking.

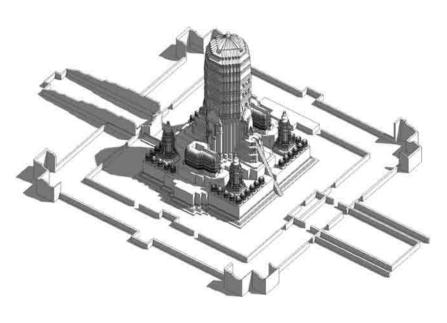
Another temple planning which follows centralized planning with the Prang located in the centre of the composition is Wat Phra Ram. The inner core of the temple precinct is defined by an encircling gallery to which two pillared halls, Wihans, are attached along the east-west axis. The entire temple precinct is enclosed by a boundary wall with gates along the cardinal directions. A water pond along with various smaller Chedis and Wihans are also located within the temple

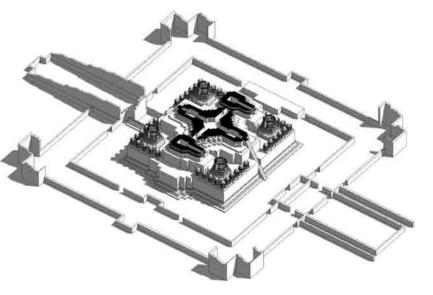
precincts. The temple, located south-east of the palace complex is believed to have been founded in the late 14th century and the Prang was constructed to mark the location of the cremation of the first king of Ayutthaya. The Prang is raised on a stepped terrace and is surrounded by Chedis.

The most important temple in Ayutthaya is Wat Phra Si Sanphet which acted as the magical centre of the capital of the kingdom of Ayutthaya similar to Wat Mahathat at Sukhothai. It was constructed as a royal temple over the palace of the first king of Ayutthaya, Ramathibodi, by King Tailok. The temple was used for royal ordination as well being the royal reliquary where the remains of successive divine kings were enshrined. The three Sinhalese style Chedis and the three Mondops derived from Khmer architecture, containing the relics of Tailok and his two succeeding sons are arranged axially along the east-west axis and are enclosed by a surrounding gallery. The Wihan is attached to the gallery on the eastern side while the Ubosot is located in the southeast corner. As a royal monastery it was used exclusively for royal ceremonies which accounts for the absence of the monks' residence within the sacred precinct.

CONSERVATION OF OLDER BUILDINGS

The last phase of Ayutthayan architectural development which commenced with the coronation of King Borommakot in 1732 and ended with the destruction of Ayutthaya by the Burmese in 1767, coincides with the peak of Ayutthaya. The longevity of the empire allowed them to reflect on their own heritage built over the last four decades. Numerous temples were rebuilt during the rule of King Borommakot who was keen to restore older monuments, and the Chedi with redented corners and multiple tiers become the most popular architectural form. This can be seen in the architectural form of the Chedi at Wat Phu Khao Thong and Wat Amphoe Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya. See further discussion in this chapter under Architectural Characteristics and the various Chedi styles.





Architectural model of Wat Phra Ram, Ayutthaya



II. ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

SYMBOLISM: HINDU - BUDDHIST COSMOLOGY

MOUNT SUMERU AND THE TRAIBHUMIKATHA

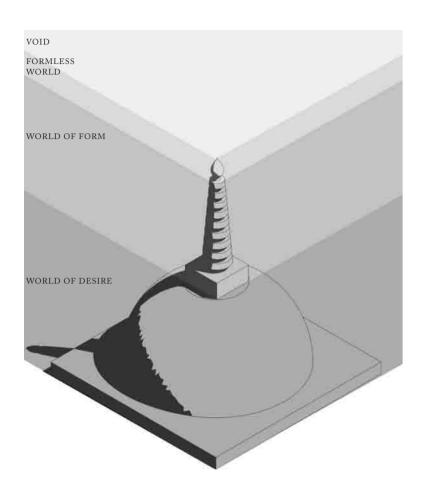
The many varied structures of Thai Buddhist architecture, including the temples, Stupas, Viharas and fantastic ornamentation are all expressions, in architectural form, of cosmology - of an individual's place within the universe, his relation to the gods and spirits within it, and the nature of the universe itself. Buddhist architecture in Thailand has been influenced both by Hindu and Buddhist cosmology with the concept of Mount Sumeru and the Traibhumikatha, the ancient Buddhist belief about the three ascending worlds of existence, as the prime motifs.

It is believed that our universe is a flat disk and at its centre rises an infinitely high mountain - Mount Sumeru or Mount Meru, the abode of the gods and guardian deities, around which the sun, moon, stars and planets revolve, just as a devotee would circumambulate a structure. The metaphysical geography of Mount Sumeru is that the mountain itself is encircled by four concentric ranges of mountains (in the Hindu tradition) or seven concentric mountain chains (in the Buddhist tradition) that diminish in size - a design that can be seen in many Thai temples. This cosmology of Buddhism is manifested in the Wat Mahathat Sukhothai temple complex with the central Chedi, its subsidiary towers, and the towering Prangs of Wat Arun in Bangkok. The cosmic mountains are thought to be separated by seas composed of various delectable and jewel bearing liquids, and beyond these mountain ranges is the great cosmic ocean, on which four major continents face the four cardinal points of the mountain. These seas are represented by moats in the temple complexes. Beyond all of that is a boundary wall of rocky mountains enclosing the universe - represented, for example, in the case of the Wat Mahathat complex of Sukhothai, by a boundary wall.

The towering Prangs of Wat Arun, 19th century, Bangkok, Thailand

Buddhist architecture in Thailand has been informed by the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology of Mount Sumeru and the ancient Buddhist belief about the three ascending worlds of existence. These beliefs are further espoused in the classical text of the Traibhumikatha in Pali or the Traiphum Phra Ruang in Thai (translated as 'the story of the three worlds according to King Ruang') – one of the oldest Theravada Buddhist texts in the Thai language written by King Lithai (r. 1347-1368) of Sukhothai. The Traibhumikatha explores the Buddhist ethics that should be followed to ensure rebirth into progressively higher planes of existence as a reward for moral conduct and a meritorious life led in each rebirth. The three realms of the Traibhumikatha correspond with the ascending levels of Mount Sumeru - Kamaphum, the world of desire, Rupaphum, the world of form and finally, Arupaphum, the world without form. These are further divided into 31 ascending planes of existence according to Buddhist cosmology. The cosmology illustrates the egress of man from the lowest realm of hell though the realm of man and desire to those of celestial beings devoid of desire, and eventually Nirvana. Each of these are described in detail, illustrating the nature of the place and its inhabitants. The philosophy of Traibhumikatha though complex is understood by both the monk and lay practitioner through the belief in the relationship between good Karma and subsequent rebirth at a higher level.

The concept of the three worlds therefore always manifests in the Buddhist architecture of Thailand. The design of the Stupa - Chedi - Prang embodies the levels in physical form as it



rises up from a square base representing the mundane world to a point, representing the supra mundane world. Inhabitants of the different levels of the Traibhumikatha as well as Mount Sumeru are expressed in the architectural structure and its ornamentations, arts, sculpture and painting. The mythical serpents, Nagas, that reside in celestial waters are manifested on the balustrades of the temple. The demon guardians of Mount Sumeru are transformed into guardians of the temple and the half-man and half-bird creature, Garuda, that resides in Mount Sumeru is represented on the gable boards of the pillared halls of Buddhist monasteries.

The idealized king, Cakravartin, who rules the four corners of the earth can therefore be compared to that of Indra, king of Tavatimsa heaven, the abode of the gods. A Cakravartin, who attains supreme powers by being reborn as a king through meritorious past lives became the model on which the 'Buddha kings' legitimized their rule. (See earlier discussion on the Buddhaksetra). The principal means of attaining merit as a king was manifested through the building of monumental temples and monasteries. Thus, Buddhist monuments became a medium for the empowerment of rulers, as well as being material manifestation of religious cosmology.

ABOVE
Drawing of cosmology – the
Traibhumikatha as seen in a Stupa,
rising from a square base (the
world of desire) to the point (the
formless world)

THE CENTRAL SHRINE - THE PRANG AND THE CHEDI

The four hundred year rule of the Ayutthayan empire provided the opportunity to experiment with architectural styles existing in the region – in particular with the revival of Sukhothai and Khmer styles to hybridization with Sinhalese, and (to a lesser degree), Srivijayan influences. Unlike the Sukhothai period during which novel architectural forms free of Khmer influence were sought, there was a revival of Khmer designs during the Ayutthayan period. Hence there was once again a revival of the Khmer tower, which was redefined into a form called the Phra Prang (which literally means the Thai tower). This period of revival can be seen to have begun in 1630 and sustained during the rule of King Prasat Thong (r. 1629–1656) until the coronation of King Borommakot in 1732. This architectural development can be seen in Amphoe Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Nakhon Si Ayutthaya and Wat Chai Watthanaram, founded in 1630.

The architecture of the Ayutthaya period was also influenced by the U Thong style which had already combined architectural elements from Lopburi, Sukhothai and Srivijaya. Buddhist architecture of Ayutthaya evolved over distinct characteristic periods, each corresponding with the development of a preferred planning and architectural themes. The various stages of this architectural periodization is best understood through the development of the central architectural form of the temple – the Thai Prang or Phra Prang and the Chedi.

THE PRANG

KHMER LEGACY - SANCTUARY TO RELIC CHAMBER

The Khmer inspired towers known as Prang were built as the principal structure at Buddhist sites, and are a distinctly Thai conception. The original Khmer towers known as Prasats, that

were used as sanctuaries to house idols of Hindu gods, were transformed by the Thais into towers housing relics in Theravada Buddhist traditions. The form of the original Khmer Prasat was transformed by increasing and elongating the height and raising it on a tiered base that was redented at the corners. With the intention to create a sense of verticality, the extending porches seen in Khmer towers were contracted inwards, further integrating them into the sweeping form of the tower. The ogival form of the Khmer towers or Prasats was thus modified to emerge as the elongated tower with a corn-cob form of the distinctively Thai Prang. This adaption is seen in the principle structure of various temples such as at Wat Phra Ram, Wat Rachaburana and Wat Chai Wattanaram in Ayutthaya and magnificently, at Wat Arun in Bangkok.

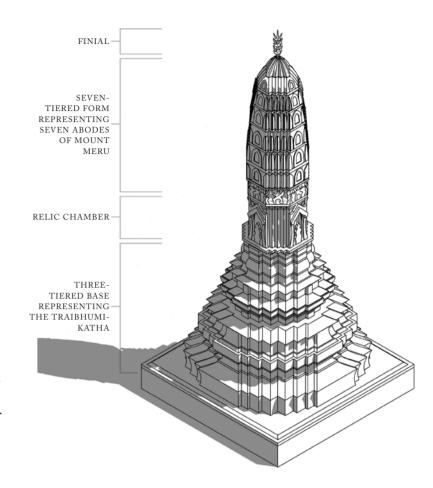
From the founding of the capital in 1350 by Ramathibodi I to the end of the rule of King Borommatrailokanat or Trailok in 1488, Buddhist architecture of Ayutthaya was influenced by the Khmer and the U Thong style. The U Thong style was a combination of architectural elements from Lopburi, Sukhothai and Srivijaya.

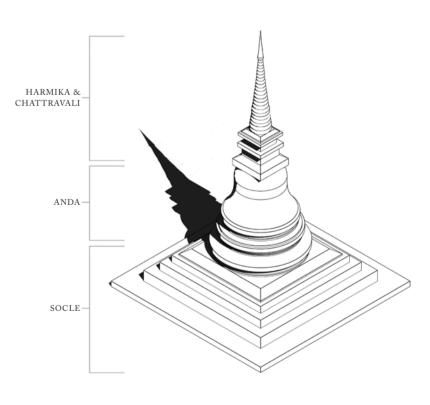
THE CHEDI

HYBRID ARCHITECTURAL FORMS

The Thai variation of the Stupa is a Chedi, the symbol of ideation in Buddhism. The numerous cultural influences of the region have informed the architecture of the Chedi, breeding a wide variety of Chedis all across Thailand. Drawing from these influences, the form of the Chedi was often transformed by the Tais by modulating the size and details of its parts. For example, the square base could be increased in height, tiered and redented. The redentation could be extended upwards to the bell-shaped dome, thus accentuating the verticality of the entire form. The four faces of the base were at times comprised of niches and pilasters with statues housed within them.

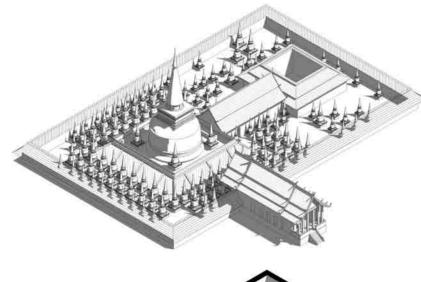
As already mentioned, it is believed that the Chedi manifests the cosmology associated with Buddhism. Its architectural form symbolically representing Mount Sumeru and the three realms of existence of the Traibhumikatha or the Traiphum Phra Ruang. The base of the Chedi usually built in sets of three signify these three worlds. The cuboid form on top of the dome known as the Harmika represents the throne of the Buddha and the conical spire comprising of multiple tiers represent the many heavens. The form of the Chedi also underwent various modifications to its general architectural theme according to its regional and historical context.

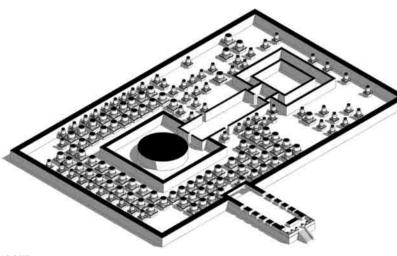




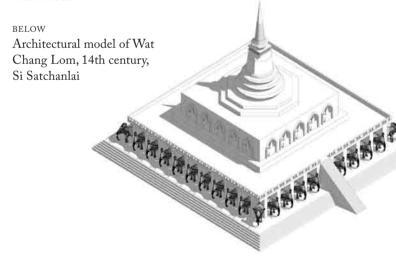
ABOVE (TOP)
Architectural model showing components of a Thai Prang

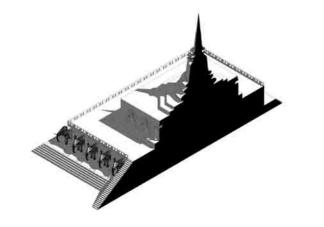
Architectural model showing components of a Chedi





Architectural model of Wat Mahathat in Nakorn Sri Thammarat





SINHALESE INFLUENCE

The Prang was replaced by the Sinhalese inspired form of the bell-shaped Chedi as the principle architectural form of the temples. As already mentioned earlier, the ideation form of the Chedi was first of Sinhalese extraction; a bell-shaped form which was also derived from the Mon. The design of the Thai Chedi consists of a bell-shaped dome that rests on a tiered base and is capped with a cuboid structure from which rises the conical spire in diminishing tiers. Among others, this typology of the Chedi can be seen in southern Thailand in the design of the monumental Chedi of Wat Mahathat in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, whose large domed form closely resembles the architectural design of the Ruvanveli Dagoba at Annuradhapura in Sri Lanka.

The Chedi at the temple of Wat Chang Lom, located in one of four regional towns along the cardinal points of Sukhothai, Si Satchanlai, illustrates the influence of Sinhalese architectural traditions of Theravada Buddhism. Built in the 14th century over the remains of an older structure, the Chedi is believed to house the relics of the Buddha. The architectural arrangement of the temple is the central form and is constructed of bricks and laterite. The architectural scheme consists of a large circular bell-shaped dome capped with a spire or Harmika that rises over two receding square terraces. The lower terrace has thirty-six elephants that have been built into the four faces of the square. Paths for circumambulation are defined around both the lower as well as the upper terraces, accessible by stairs. The four sides of the upper terrace have niches, each of which houses a statue of the Buddha. A distinct variant of the form was to emerge later in Ayutthaya in Wat Phra Si Sanphet, where to the main body of the Chedi, are attached porches at the four cardinal directions creating small accessible chambers.

THE REVIVAL OF SUKHOTHAI

The redented Chedi

Following the reign of King Borommatrailokkanat or Trailok for almost the next 200 years, Buddhist buildings in Ayutthuya were influenced by the architecture of Sukhothai. This is best exemplified by Wat Si Sanpet built as a royal reliquary. King Trailok's son Ramathibodi II built the eastern tower in memory of his father and the central tower for his elder brother Borommaracha III. Trailok's

son Borommaracha IV built the third and the last tower in memory of his father after his death in 1529. The Prang was replaced by the Sinhalese inspired form of the bell-shaped Chedi as the principal architectural form of the temples. One of the most impressive temples, Wat Phra Si Sanpet has a row of three bell-shaped Stupas. The top of the stupa consists of the Harmika which is supported by vertical pillars, a feature that became characteristic of the Ayutthaya period. The Ayutthaya Chedis also distinguish themselves from the Sukhothai examples of bell-shaped Chedis because they have four entrance porches along the cardinal directions allowing access within the domed form.

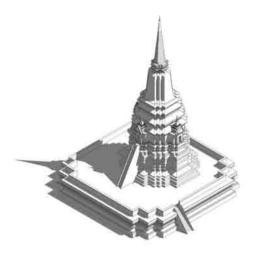
The redented added angled Chedi

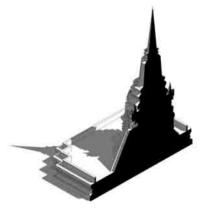
A second typology of the central form of the Thai Chedi which emerged during the middle of this sub-period was in the form of a redented added angled Chedi which is best seen in the Chedi Phoem Mum. This redention was formed by extending the plan of the square base such that odd numbered corners are created. This typology was to later emerge as one of the most identifiable forms of Buddhist architecture in Thailand. Examples of this type of Chedi can also be seen in Chedi Si Suriyothai and Wat Suan Luang Sop Sawan.

Lotus bud Chedi – a distinct architectural form of Sukhothai

The most distinct lotus bud Chedi of the Sukhothai period is found in the central tower or Prang of the Wat Mahathat at Sukhothai. The distinct form emerged out the synthesis of the various regional architectural influences (described earlier) that were composed to represent the cosmology of Mount Sumeru with the surrounding mountains where the central tower surrounded by eight smaller towers of the central shrine is believed to represent Mount Sumeru.

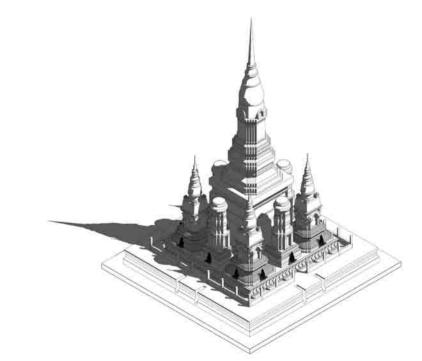
The central tower or Prang of the Wat Chedi Tong was developed from a Khmer Prasat that had been sufficiently altered by creative superimposition of form and manipulation of proportions into a unique form, one of a distinctly Thai conception that became the architectural identity of Sukhothai architecture. Referred to in Thai as the Phum Khao Bin and popularly known as the lotus bud Chedi, Wat Chedi Tong was built to house the relics of the Buddha acquired from Sri Lanka and comprises of a square

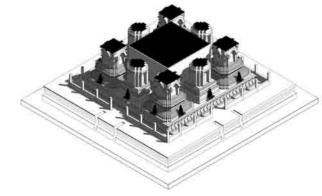


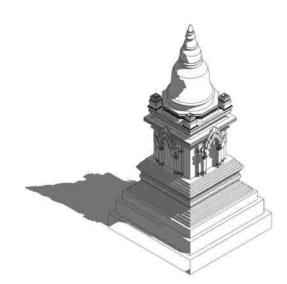


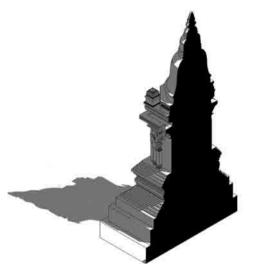
Architectural model of Chedi Si Suriyothai – redented added angled Chedi

Architectural model of Wat Chedi Tong – lotus bud Chedi









ABOVE Architectural model of Wat Chedi Ched Thaeo in Si Satchanlai, an example of Srivijayan influence

and octagonal platform on which rises a tall redented and fluted tower in three tiers, topped with a finial in the shape of a lotus bud tapering into a spire.

THE KHMER REVIVAL

The rabbeted angled Chedi

The redented added angled Chedi of the earlier period further developed into the rabbeted angled Chedi where three angles were introduced into each corner of a square plan. This form can be seen at Wat Chai Watthanaram, Amphoe Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya and Wat Chumphon Nikayaram.

SRIVIJAYAN INFLUENCE

Another architectural variation of the Chedi is seen in the Chedi of Wat Chedi Ched Thaeo at Si Satchanlai. The Chedi is composed of a stepped base upon which is raised the main square body with niches on all four sides. Images of the standing Buddha are placed in the niches. On top of this structure is placed a bell-shaped form which is crowned with a finial. Smaller Stupas of similar design are placed in the four corners of the cuboid main body of the structure recalling the agglomerated forms of Srivijayan inspiration.

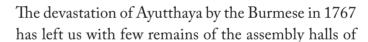
THE ASSEMBLY HALLS - UBOSOT OR BOT AND WIHAN

The most identifiable architectural form of Buddhist architecture of Thailand are the Chedis and the Prangs that prominently define Thailand's unique temple and monastery skyline. However, these vertically soaring structures are also surrounded by numerous rectangular assembly halls of various sizes that spread horizontally within the monastic precincts. The halls are designed as large covered spaces for assembly required in various Buddhist rituals both for the monks and laity. The generic form of the assembly hall, with multiple telescopic sloping roofs, ending with decorated gables and curved sky hooks can be seen in most of the Buddhist monasteries of Thailand.

A distinct architecture for assembly halls developed from the post and lintel construction system of vernacular timber houses with sloping roofs having gable ends in Thailand. The modest scale of secular buildings was amplified to create large assembly halls which was made possible by the technique of post and lintel construction and use of timber trusses for roofs. Unlike the stone monuments of the Khmer, where the size of the interior spaces were modest due to the inherent limitations in constructing corbelled roofs of stone, the Thais used lighter materials such as bricks and laterite for columns and timber for roofs enabling them to enclose larger gathering halls. Most pillars were round, square or octagonal and were constructed of laterite. Evidence of such structures can be seen in the ruins of the pillared halls of Sukhothai, where the wooden roofs of the halls have perished leaving the rows of stone columns standing in straight lines. The assembly hall designs have rectangular plans that are divided into naves and aisles by rows of stone columns that supported a wooden trussed roof. The plinth of the hall was raised nominally in the earlier,

but increased in the later buildings. The outer face of the raised plinth had designs that ranged from plain to moulded. In some cases, the rectangular plan would include vestibules in the front and the rear as well as porches as seen at Wat Ashokaram.

The distinct pitched roof was telescopic in form spanning over the stone pillars with a wooden gable end that was ornately carved. Most of the weight of the roof structure was supported by the columns making it possible to have halls without external walls or occasionally introduce a series of narrow slit windows on the external wall. However, examples of pillared halls that do not have an external wall and are open on all sides are also found in the northern and northeastern parts of Thailand. The rectangular buildings are in most cases aligned along the eastwest axis and the presence of an altar in the west suggests that the entrance was from the east.

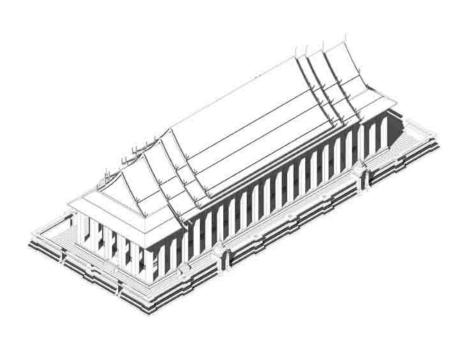


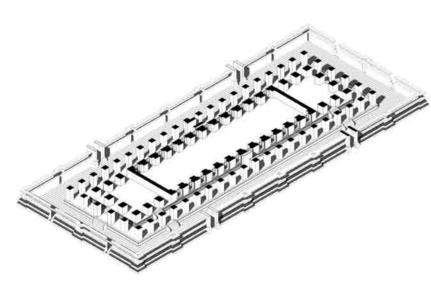
this period to fully understand the architectural features of their design. From an examination of the ruins one can assess that the basic architectural pattern of rectangular halls dividing the interior space into nave and aisle continued to be practiced. However, a significant change appeared with the increasing use of external walls being built, first as non-load bearing, and later as load bearing walls to enclose the hall. This affected the design of the openings in the external wall where slit openings perforated the walls in late 15th century, but gradually became load bearing, and by the 17th century windows started to be adopted instead of the slit openings. A new design of opening in the form of a pointed arch or lancet-type openings was also introduced, most probably through the presence of Persians who were also resident in the cosmopolitan community of Ayutthaya. Another distinct feature of the halls that emerged at this time was the shape of the outer base of the plinth which was curved in the form of a boat. However, the roof continued to be constructed with wooden member and were roofed by terracotta tiles.

There are two principle assembly halls in the Theravada Buddhist traditions of Thailand – the Ubosot or Bot and the Vihara, Viharn or Wihan. Though both are similar in appearance they are clearly distinguished by their function and physically differentiated by the presence of boundary stone markers. A Bot is an ordination hall used by the Sangha for the ritual ordination of monks. Its area is defined by boundary markers – stone tablets known as Bai Sema, that are erected at the cardinal and the sub-cardinal points around the ordination hall to demarcate a sacred precinct within which the building is built. Elaborate rituals are followed for the consecration rites before the construction of the Bot. Eight large round stones known as Luk Nimit are buried at the four points of the boundary and a ninth stone under the centre of the building. The eight Bai Sema stones, in the shape of the leaf of the Bodhi tree, are erected above ground over the Luk Nimit stones.



ABOVE
Ruins of the the stone columns
and pillared halls of Sukhothai





Architectural model of Wat Suthat's Ubosot

OPPOSITE PAGE Wat Suthat, 1807–1843, Bangkok, Thailand

PAGES 224-225 Ancient Buddha statue at Wat Mahathat temple complex in Sukhothai A Wihan on the other hand is an assembly hall used by the laity for religious gatherings and does not have any boundary markers. The earliest halls at Sukhothai were mostly assembly halls used for religious gatherings of both the laity and monks. The presence of the ordination hall or a Bot, was limited in the early Sukhothai period and only started appearing since the mid-14th century. The construction of wooden halls as Wihans and Bots that were developed during the Sukhothai period was established as the basic architectural model for the construction of assembly halls and was followed in the subsequent periods of Thai Buddhist architecture.

SUMMARY

The principles of planning and design of Buddhist monastic precincts and monuments that were established during the major formative periods of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya have continued to flourish in today's Thailand. Despite the stylistic variations, there is a continuity of the generic character of Buddhist temples and monasteries in Thailand. The monasteries are enclosed precincts within which various buildings are distributed. Over time, two distinct spatial zones have emerged comprising of the sacred realm, the Buddhavasa; and the monks' realm, the Sanghavasa. Buildings that are included in the Buddhavasa are the assembly hall (Wihan), ordination hall (Bot or Ubosot) the central shrine (Stupa, Chedi and Prang) and the image hall (Mondop). The Sanghavasa houses the teaching hall (Sala Kanparian), the pavilion (Sala), library (Ho Trai), the monks' quarters (Kuti), bell tower (Ho Rakhang) and the drum tower (Ho Klonk).

Theravada Buddhism has been and still is the principal religion of Thailand and it has continued to be practiced across its different regions uninterrupted till today. Within its varied regional milieu are found variations to the architectural themes. Various sects and practices which are different from the mainstream Buddhist practice have added to the architectural diversity in Thailand in the form of forest monasteries and buildings housing relics of important monks. It is important to note that Buddhism is a living religion in Thailand and its architectural history continues to inspire the numerous modern monastic buildings that are built today.





WAT MAHATHAT IN SUKHOTHAI

C. 13TH TO 14TH CENTURY SUKHOTHAI

The Wat Mahathat of Sukhothai is one of the best examples of the hybridization of regional influences. Its style is mainly of Khmer architecture, fused with the forms of the Theravada Buddhist kingdoms of Sri Lanka and Myanmar. Mon and Sri Lankan Chedis, Khmer Prasats and both Singhalese and Burmese artwork are all borrowed by the Tais and mixed in an attempt to develop an architectural vocabulary of their own. At a metaphysical level, the adaption of different regional architecture can be interpreted as the symbolic empowering of the centre with spiritual significance from all known Buddhist regions.

Wat Mahathat is located in the centre of the walled city of Sukhothai, the city itself having been the heart of the Sukhothai Mueang, located at the heart of a larger urban network of subsidiary cities that extended in four cardinal directions. It was the focus around which the governing Sangha was established, representing the core structures that made it both the ceremonial as well as the political centre of the settlement from where the power of the Dhamma extended to all four corners of the Buddhist kingdom. From this complex, radiated the spiritual energy and magical authority of the Mueang.

It is believed that construction was begun by the first king of the Sukhothai dynasty, King Si Indraditya (r. 1240–1270), and later expanded by his son King Ram Khamhaeng (r. 1279–1298) and the fourth, King Loe Thai (r. 1298–1346).

Wat Mahathat is also the most significant illustration of the syncretized design of a central focal point of the main shrine in temple designs in Thailand. Within Sukhothai, according to the Sangha, as a result of the reciprocal relationship and patronage between monarch and monks, royalty were viewed as reincarnation of holy men and therefore their remains were enshrined in the numerous Chedis built within the temple precincts.

The many structures of the Wat Mahathat temple are clustered within an enclosed rectangle measuring 260 metres by 220 metres. The area contains about 10 Wihans and 200 Chedis of varied design spread over an area of 10 acres. Standing on a 7 metres thick earth fill, the central core of the temple is surrounded by brick walls and a moat symbolizing the outer boundary of the universe and the cosmic ocean respectively.



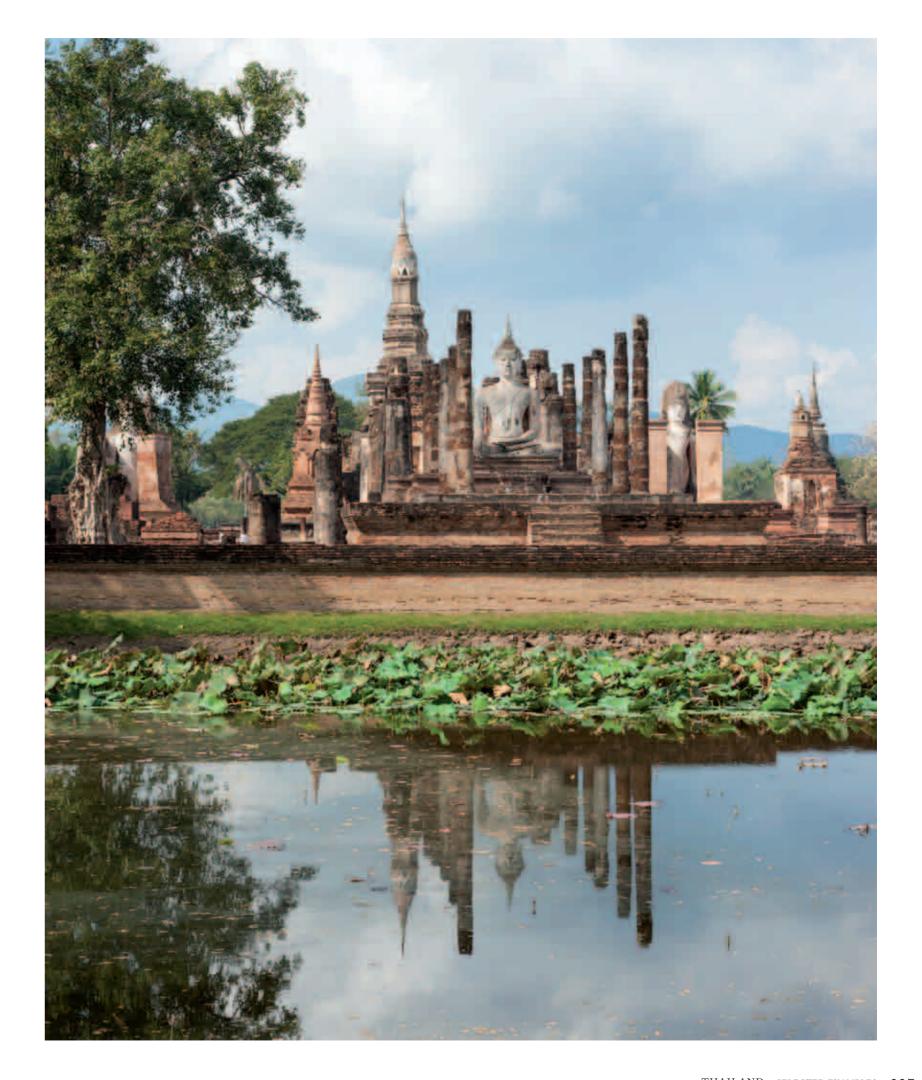


ABOVI

The remains of the many structures, Wat Mahathat temple

OPPOSITE PAGE

Wat Mahathat surrounded by stone columns, beautifully reflected by the large water body of the moat



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The orientation of the structures follows the traditional four sides, with the eastern side having a more extended set not lie at the geometrical centre of the enclosed space, it does axes along the cardinal points.

Three large water bodies are located in the three quadrants with the Ubosot, or the ordination hall, located in the northern sector became more conspicuous in the architectural arrangement of Sukhothai architecture. other Buddhist complexes.

The original form consisted of a central tower raised on a twotiered square platform with four smaller towers recalling the form of Khmer towers, located along the cardinal directions, thus forming a Quincunx. King Loe Thai later added another group of four towers at the four corners of the platform, a total of nine towers. Unlike the older Khmer towers, the corner towers were in the form of the bell-shaped Chedis of the Sinhalese style. As mentioned, the composition of the central structure is set in a square. Buildings adjoin on the axis, on all

orientation of Khmer-Hindu temples that preceded them, of buildings. The square, central shrine is raised on a platform and are accordingly aligned on an east-west axis. But formal 7 metres in height and consists of a central tower surrounded by geometric layouts of Khmer temples are abandoned as the eight smaller structures. The main Chedi in the style of the lotus buildings are built more freely in an informal manner around bud (Phum Khao Bin) marks the centre of the composition and the main structure. However, although the main structure does is surrounded by four smaller brick Sri Lankan style Chedi at the corners, alternating with four Khmer style Prangs, built of enforce a sense of centrality with its formal design and radiating laterite at the cardinal points. The central tower or Prang is also a transformed Khmer Prasat, set on a square base with a redented three-tiered shaft rising to its finial, housing the relic chamber enshrining the remains of the Sakyamuni Buddha. This form of the finial comprising that of a lotus bud Chedi (Phum Khao of the complex. Over time this building gained importance and Bin) on the tiered shaft has become a characteristic feature of

> The main Chedi in the style of the lotus bud, surrounded by alternating Sri Lankan style Chedi and Khmer style Prangs

Architectural ruins of Wat Mahathat



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WAT ARUN (WAT ARUNRATCHAWARARAM RATCHAWORAMAHAWIHAN)

C. 19H CENTURY BANGKOK

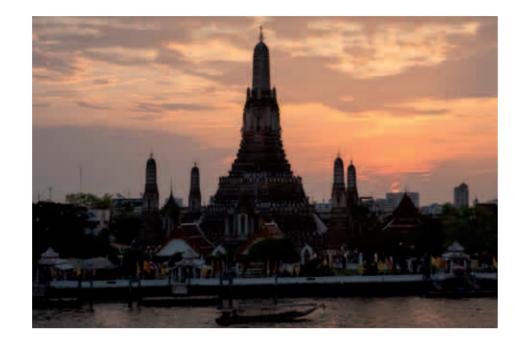
One of Thailand's best known landmarks, Wat Arun, or the Temple of Dawn, is located at the banks of the Chao Phraya river in Bangkok. During the Ayutthaya period a temple existed on the site called Wat Makok which was included in the planning of the new capital by King Taksin, which was to be in the Thonburi district of Bangkok, and was renamed Wat Chaeng. In 1806 King Rama II started the construction to increase the size of the Prang, a project finally completed in the reign of King Mongkut, Rama IV, in the mid-19th century.

 $Mount\,Sumeru\,is\,represented\,in\,Wat\,Arun\,through\,a\,symmetrical$ and centralized architectural composition. The soaring, central Prang, rises steeply in seven diminishing levels to 70 metres, and represents the axis mundi of the cosmic mountain. The whole architectural ensemble surrounding the central Prang is raised on a terrace that consists of four Mondops located at the cardinal points, along with four corner Prangs housing the guardians of the four directions. One can walk a limited way up - progress to higher levels of existence is difficult.

The central Prang was constructed of brick and finished with about the nature of the universe, and a marvellously coherent colourful stucco and multi-coloured Chinese porcelain, rising syncretization of the variety of cross cultural influences that in four receding tiers – the first tier is decorated with tree and have been absorbed and adapted by the Thai. flower designs in Chinese ceramic; the second and third tiers form niches housing Kinnara and Kinnari figures and the niches of the fourth tier house figures of Brahmins. The Prang is topped with a three-dimensional nine-pointed finial, Fak Pega, Indra's weapon, the Vajra thunderbolt. The design is meant to evoke the lush vegetation of the fantastical realms of Mount Sumeru and the Himaphan forest.¹⁰

On the eastern side lies a low structure having porches at the front and back, known as Bot Noi where King Taksin spent time as a monk. Adjacent to this Bot is the Viharn Noi which contains the Chulamani Chedi, an artefact cast in metal with four earth-protectors, Jatulokaban, at the corners to exercise control over the cardinal directions.

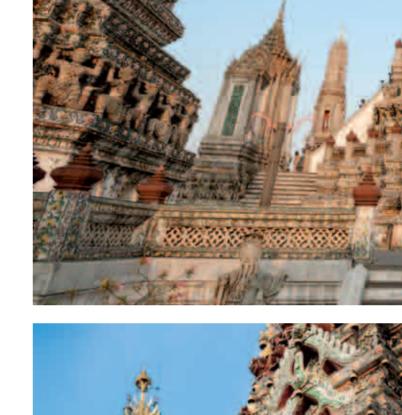
Wat Arun illustrates the transformation of the Chedi and the Prang, where the two forms are syncretised, redented and elongated along the vertical axis to create an architectural



form on a monumental scale that is a distinct Thai conception. This great series of towers has justifiably become an instantly the Prang - the very steepness of the access staircase is symbolic recognizable symbol of Thailand. Those familiar with the rich history of Thailand will recognize Wat Arun as an embodiment of that history. It is a fusion of Buddhist, as well as Hindu beliefs

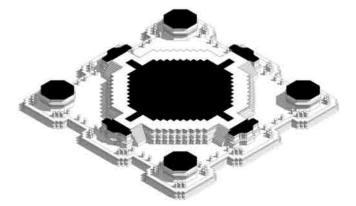
> Wat Arun glowing at sunset on the banks of the Chao Phraya

10. The Himaphan Forest is a fairytale land supposedly existing in our world. Ordinary mortals are unable to reach this place, as it is a region of bliss. Rice grows abundantly without the need for cultivation. Fantastical, beguiling creatures inhabit this realm, such as the Singh and the Narsingh, Kinnari and Kinnara. Situated there is the great lake Anotatta, the ultimate source of all the world's great rivers, the Ganges included.









ABOVE (TOP) The majestic, soaring 70 metres high central Prang with its steep staircase

Close-up of a Prang, decorated with multi-coloured Chinese porcelain

Architectural model of Wat Arun

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WAT SUTHAT

1807-1843 BANGKOK

Wat Suthat was established in 1807 by Rama I (r. 1782–1809), founder of the Chakri dynasty, in the tradition of the historical by Rama III (r. 1824–1851).

The royal monastery of Wat Suthat complex was built at the paintings depicting the life of the Buddha. centre of the artificial island of Ratanakosin, which covers an area of 10 acres. The layout is designed on a symmetrical plan, clearly divided into two distinct zones, the Buddhavasa and the Sanghavasa. The Buddhavasa area consists of a Wihan and a Ubosot or Bot enclosed by a gallery, while the Sanghavasa comprises of the monastic living quarters, the Kutis. The Wihan and the gallery encircling it are oriented towards the north, the Ubosot, oriented on an east-west axis, is located in between the Wihan and the Sanghavasa.

The Wihan is constructed on two levels of terraces, rising 6 metres in height and surrounded by an encircling gallery. Four smaller halls housing Buddha images are located at the four corners of the second terrace. The Wihan has a two-tiered roof, with the front and back porches sharing similar roofs along with gables depicting Vishnu riding on Garuda and Indra riding on Erawan. The roofs resemble an extended telescope, with multiple extending levels, supported by a peristyle of columns on the exterior, whilst the interior has two rows of columns dividing the space into nave and aisles. A 13th century Buddha image from Sukhothai, measuring over 8 metres high was moved and enshrined in the Wihan. The ashes of Rama VIII, brother of the current king, are contained in its base. The large gallery surrounding the Wihan contains more than 150 Buddha images along the outer wall. There are 28 Chinese Pagodas evenly spaced along the boundary walls at the bottom level.

The Ubosot is located to the south of the Wihan and is aligned on the east-west axis. Its construction was started by Rama III (r. 1824-1851) in 1843, taking 10 years to complete. The main hall is built over a base comprised of three levels, surrounded by a boundary wall within which are built eight Bai Semas in the shape of Mondops with metal Chedi roofs. A total of 68 columns

consisting of an external peristyle are aligned in rows and rise up to support a telescopic tiled roof in four tiers, reaching a total kingdoms of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, by marking the centre of height of about 72 metres. Windows open in the walls along the the kingdom with the construction of a royal temple. After his longer side with double doors for entrances along the shorter death it was continued by Rama II (r. 1809–1824) and completed two sides. Inside the Ubosot is housed the large reclining statue of Buddha, Phra Phutatrilokachet, along with 80 attendants. The walls are beautifully and extensively decorated with mural



Fervent Thais praying at Wat Suthat. Theravada Buddhism is the principal religion in Thailand

OPPOSITE PAGE

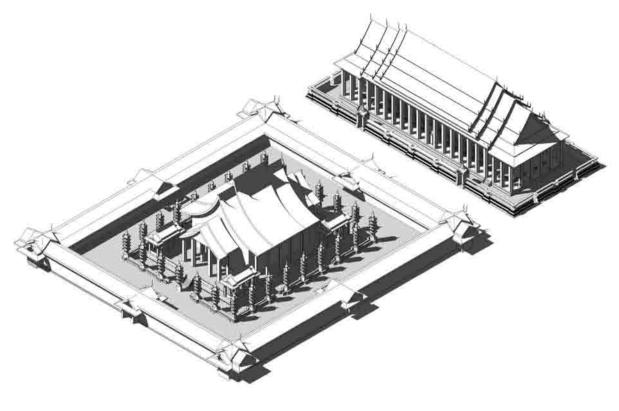
The Wihan of Wat Suthat, with its two-tiered roof supported by many columns, and with its 28 Chinese Pagodas all along the bottom boundary walls

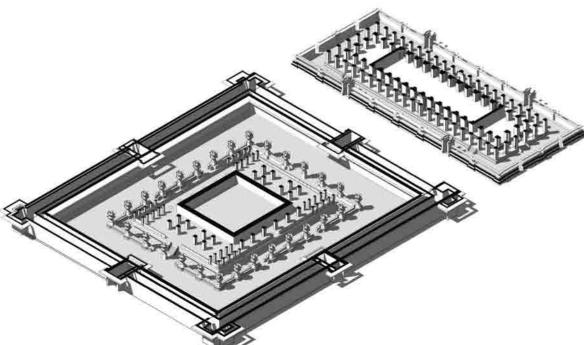


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TOP (LEFT)

The royal monastery, Wat Suthat complex

TOP (RIGHT)

Side doors to the Ubosot

LEFT

Architectural model of Wat Suthat

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP)
The Buddha image of over 8 metres, originally from Sukhothai, was enshrined in the Wihan

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM LEFT)

Close-up of the Wihan's two-tiered roof, with gable depicting Indra riding on Erawan

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM RIGHT)

Monks at the monastic living quarters or Kutis











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TAT LUANG

VAT XIENG THONG

VAT MAI

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Novice monks having their daily meal, Wat Manorom, Luang Prabang

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The roof of Vat Mai, 1891,
Luang Prabang, showing distinct
architectural characteristic and
heritage

BELOW Map of Laos

INTRODUCTION

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), referred to as Laos, is a small land-locked country surrounded by China to the north, Myanmar to the northwest, Thailand to the southwest, Cambodia to the south and Vietnam to the east. Its location at the cross roads of trade between powerful kingdoms brought prosperity at times, but at other times the lack of access to the sea led to the decline of its ancient kingdoms. The two important features of its topography are the mountains that cover most of its land mass and the mighty Mekong river. The mountains insulate the region, and the Mekong river which also forms the natural boundaries between Laos and Thailand, links it to the rest of the world. Laos is inhabited by diverse ethnic groups ranging from the Lao Loum or lowland Lao that form half of the population, the tribal Lao Tai, Lao Theung from the lower hills and to the Lao Soong from the mountains.



The religious foundation of Laos uniquely comprises spirit worship or Phi and animist beliefs that over centuries have been layered by Indic religions from the neighbouring empires of the Khmers, Thais, Burmese and the Vietnamese. Although, the introduction of Buddhism into Laos is commonly credited to King Fa Ngam who established the kingdom of Lan Xang in 1353, the discoveries of remnants of Khmer Buddhist statuary dating back to the 8th century at Luang Prabang, indicate that Buddhism was established in Laos well before the 14th century. However, it is certainly true that it was only in the 14th century that Buddhism as an organized religion played a significant role in the formation of the early Lao kingdoms, uniting diverse peoples of the region within a common cultural and political framework. The complex weaving of indigenous beliefs and Buddhism has moulded a unique interpretation of Buddhism that is manifested in Lao cultural traditions. Laos shares a similar historical experience of interpreting Buddhism through its local cultures as seen in other regions of southeast Asia - just as with the Neak Ta of Cambodia and the Nat of Myanmar - the Lao Phi cult combined in complex ways with Indic faiths to produce its own distinct Buddhist culture.

In Laos, the development of Buddhism reinforced the formation of the social and political order of its early states and principalities. According to local traditions, their rulers were descendants of divinities as articulated in their legends of creation in Nithan Khun Borom ('the story of Khun Borom') and the Phongsavadan ('chronicles of the lineage of kings') where rulers are bloodline descendants of the first mythical king, Khun Borom, the original ancestor of all Tai people. Buddhist traditions on the other hand articulate the notion of divine kingship, the right of kings to rule as a result of the merits accrued in their previous lifetimes, in particular, by their generous support for the establishment of the faith. Increasingly, the rulers of the Lao kingdoms became fervent supporters of Buddhism and the Sangha in turn legitimized their rule by declaring them as divine kings, Chakkaphat in Lao or Cakravartin in Sanskrit. In this manner, numerous Buddhist monuments were sponsored by the rulers in the process of their active support and propagation of the faith.

Aside from traces of 8th century Buddhist statues and further early evidence of Buddhist remains of the Khmer empire in Laos, a 12th century stele found in Vientiane attests to the presence of one of the many hospitals built there by the Khmer king, Jayavarman VII. However, the architecture of the Buddhist world of the Lao conventionally appears with the emergence of the kingdom of Lan Xang in the 14th century and develops along with the vicissitudes of the various kings and political empires that followed King Fa Ngum until the 19th century. During this long period, numerous monastic complexes called Vat or Wat, shrines and ordination halls called Sim or Phihan and Stupas called Tat or That were constructed. Their architecture illustrates the historical development of the land of the Buddhaksetra in Laotian history as well as form a part of their rich architectural heritage. The development of the architecture associated with Buddhism in Laos can be classified into three distinguishing phases:-

The articulation of the Buddhist notions of space and form

The efflorescence of Buddhism and architecture

The revival of a Buddhist identity

THE ARTICULATION OF THE BUDDHIST NOTIONS OF SPACE AND FORM

14TH CENTURY - BUDDHISM AND EMPOWERMENT OF A POLITICAL IDENTITY

The 14th century was a point of inflection in the political and cultural history of Laos. It heralded the change from the smaller political entities of principalities known as Muangs to the larger southeast Asian political model known as Mandalas along with the ascendance of Buddhism over local animistic and spirit worship. A Mandala state does not conform to the modern idea of a state with defined territorial borders. As a circle of power, the Mandala political entity corresponds to the Hindu-Buddhist world-view with the radiation of power from the centre. The Mandala state was often non-exclusive and any area could be subject to several powers at the same time. In southeast Asia, some notable Mandala overlords or empires at the centre of power radiating out were the Khmer empire of Cambodia, the successive Srivijaya, Mataram, Majapahit kingdoms of Java and the empire of Ayutthaya in Thailand. The most notable suzerain states under this Mandala were post-Angkor Cambodia, the Lan Na state near Chiang Mai and the kingdom of Lan Xang in Laos which was later succeeded by Vieng Chan.

In popular history the appearance of Buddhism as a dominant faith directly coincides with the origins of this first Lao kingdom of Lan Xang and with the reign of King Fa Ngum. However evidence suggests that the faith was existing from before, with the Mons and Khmers who had inhabited the region. His own grandfather, Phraya Khamphong, as the ruler of the state Muang Swa (present-day Luang Prabang) also bore the title of 'Phraya' meaning 'one who upholds',

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suggesting his Buddhist affiliation. King Fa Ngum along with his father, was banished by his grandfather, the king of Muang Swa, to the Khmer kingdom of Angkor, where he was raised by the Khmer royal household. In 1349, Fa Ngum, marched back towards Muang Swa from Angkor with an army of 10,000 Khmer soldiers, Theravada monks and a Khmer princess as a wife, conquering and organizing the region north of Angkor into a network of provinces or Muangs which together formed the Mandala of Lan Xang Hom Khao, translated to mean 'the land of a million elephants and the white parasol'. In 1354, Fa Ngum declared himself as the king of this Mandala and established his capital at Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong, now known as Luang Prabang.

Fa Ngum escorted the sacred image of Buddha, the Phra Bang from Angkor, the significance of which was central to the Buddhist polity of Lan Xang. The Phra Bang, translated as the embodiment of Buddha and is thus perceived as the very presence of the Buddha. By associating with it, kings legitimized their rule as divine rulers and the image's presence sanctified the realm of their divine kingdom, the Buddhaksetra. The Phra Bang, as described in Phongsavadan Phra Bang, has been traced to the ancient city of Pataliputra in India, from where it is believed to have travelled to Sri Lanka and then to Angkor before it finally reached Laos. Its history links the sacred lands of Buddhism and by anchoring it in Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong, King Fa Ngum was also locating his kingdom within the universal world of the Buddhism of his time.

15TH CENTURY - CONSOLIDATING DIVINE KINGSHIP TAI ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCE

While Fa Ngum is credited to have paved the way for Buddhism to be integrated into Lao social and political structures, it was not until almost 70 years later that a distinct Lao world-view interpreted through Buddhism began to emerge. This period, beginning with the rule of King Phaen Phaeo (r. 1438–1479) and his successors, Suvanna Banlang and La Saen Tai, witnessed the consolidation of Buddhist ideology conspicuously into Lao culture. Kings adopted titles of Chakkaphat and Phra, both having the Buddhist association, the influence of the Sangha increased and it was integrated into the larger network of the Theravada Buddhist monastic world of southeast Asia. These had a profound effect on the material culture of art and architecture of Laos as it came under the influence of the neighbouring Buddhist Mandala states, particularly of the kingdoms of Lan Na and Ayutthaya. King

Phaen Phaeo (r. 1438–1479) became the first king of Lan Xang to adopt the title of Chakkapat, a Lao

transformation of the Pali word, Cakravatin, meaning the universal monarch in the Buddhist semantic of politics and was hence referred to as Chakkapat Phaen Phaeo or King Xainya Chakkapat. With this act he identified himself with the paradigmatic Buddhist monarch, Emperor Asoka, and located his rule within the universal history of Buddhism. Buddhism flourished during his rule when he strengthened and unified the Sangha, who in turn legitimized his status as a divine king. The monastery became a centre of learning where ordinary people could aspire to study and rise up the social ladder. The Sangha gained political influence as monks were invited to participate in the political affairs of the state and were given titles such as Raxakhru, Rajaguru or 'teacher of world'. The head monks of three monasteries, Vat Keaw, Vat Manorom and Vat Pasman were given judicial powers and the monasteries served as rehabilitation centres for convicts.

BELOW Vat Manorom, 1919, Luang Prabang, Laos

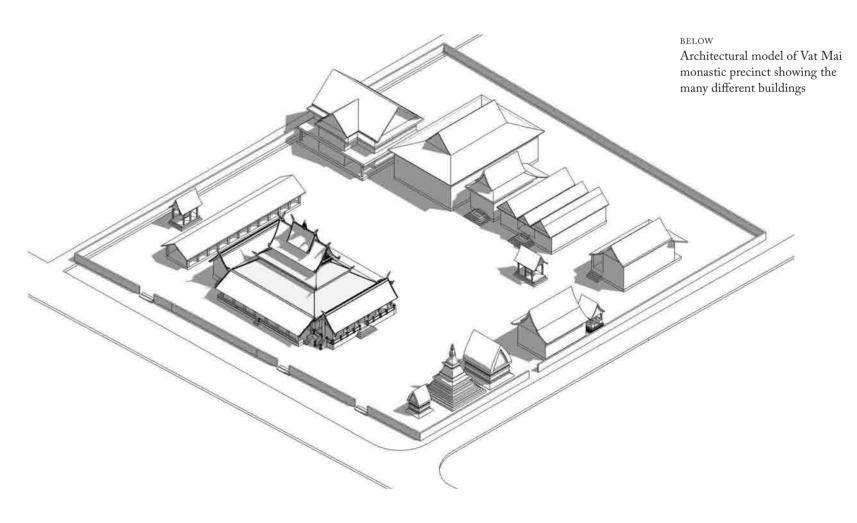


This period also witnessed wars with the Le dynasty of Vietnam in 1479. The Vietnamese destroyed the capital Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong and its political structure, but spared the Buddhist monasteries and temples. The Sangha played a seminal role in the reconstruction of Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong, thereby further consolidating their position and importance in Lao society. Chakkaphat Phaen Phaeo had enlisted the support of the Tai Kingdom of Lan Na to counter the Vietnamese assault. This opened channels of cultural association with the Tai Mandalas and cemented the links of the Lao Sangha with those of Lan Na and Ayutthaya with whom they shared their belief in Theravada Buddhism. Their material culture, particularly of Lan Na thus began to exert a greater influence on the architecture of Buddhist temples in the kingdom of Lan Xang, more so than the much older Khmer influence.

EFFLORESCENCE OF BUDDHISM AND ARCHITECTURE

16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES - EMERGENCE OF A LAO BUDDHIST IDENTITY

With the foundations of Buddhism firmly laid over the last 150 years, the 16th century witnessed the efflorescence of the faith, its art and its architecture in the Lao Mandala. This was spearheaded by three generations of kings – Viscoun (r. 1501–1520), Phothisarat (r. 1520–1550) and Setthathirat (r. 1550-1571). During this period Buddhism played a substantial role in articulating the cultural traditions of Laos and as a result, Buddhist literature, art and architecture flourished. Supported by generous donations from royalty, numerous monasteries were built by the three kings. The role of the monasteries expanded as they became cultural and literary centres. The planning of the Vats thus became more elaborate to include a variety of new buildings such as a library ('ho tai'), an assembly hall ('sala'), and a boat pavilion to house the canoes used by the community during festivals. This is seen in the plans of several Vats such as Vat Mai and Vat Viscoun in Luang Prabang.



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King Viscoun or Viscounalat (r. 1501-1520), who ascended the throne of the kingdom of Lan Xang in 1501, was an ardent Buddhist. According to inscriptional evidence found on a stele in Luang Prabang, King Viscoun is also considered the first ruler who sponsored a monastery. Not only did he sponsor the construction of numerous Buddhist monuments, but he was also a patron of the arts and literature. Monks were invited to stay in the monasteries for extended periods to engage in the development of philosophical and literary traditions of Buddhism. Religious texts were copied and translated, such as the Jatakas called 'Ha Sip Xat', Panchatantra and the Lao version of the Ramayana called Phra Lak Phra Lam. Viscoun also commissioned the writings of Nithan Khun Borom, which till then had been an oral tradition. Of these, the Vessantara Jataka and the Phra Lak Phra Lam become popular forms of visual depiction on temple walls through paintings, gilding and sculpture. The embellishment of the interiors of the central shrine hall or Sim were not arbitrary decorative patterns, but were provided with the purpose of informing the faithful of the contents of the various sacred texts through an elaborately worked out scheme of paintings. Illustration could also be done through sculptural and inlay work which were applied to both the interior as well as the exterior of buildings. This treatment of the building form as an instructional medium is a shared tradition across southeast Asia and is manifested in different ways ranging from the complex forms illustrating the Laliltavistara in Borobudor to the simple wall murals of Buddhist Jatakas in Lao temples.

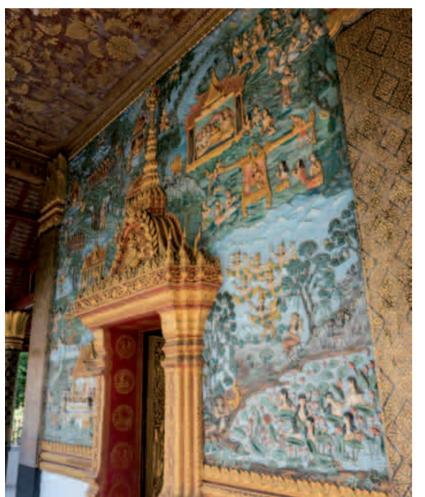
As a devotee of the sacred image of the Buddha, Phra Bang, King Viscoun perpetuated the worship of the Phra Bang by transferring it to the capital, Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong and established it there as the palladium of the Lao kingdom in 1502. This important moment of history was manifested in

BELOW

Relief murals in the frontal portico of Vat Phra Mahathat, 1550, Luang Prabang, Laos, depicting popular Laotian legends and stories from the Phra Lak Phra Lam

BELOW (RIGHT)

Brightly illustrated Buddhist Jataka paintings on the exterior walls of Vat Manorom, c. 15th century, Luang Prabang, Laos





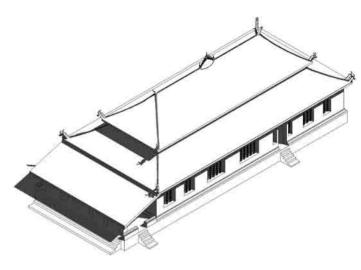
the construction of a Buddhist temple, Vat Viscoun that the king built exclusively to house the statue of the Phra Bang, where it remained for almost two centuries (1513–1707), after which it was taken to Vieng Chan (present-day Vientiane).

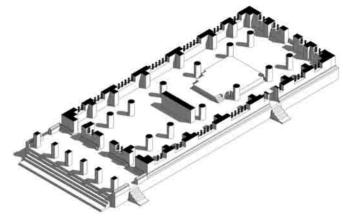
Vat Viscoun or Vat Visunalat is considered one of the oldest functioning Buddhist temples of Luang Prabang. Its principal building, the Phihan or the Sim was originally constructed entirely out of wood but was later rebuilt in masonry with an attempt to emulate the original architectural design. From the woodblock print of the original Vat Viscoun, done by Louis Delaporte, one gets an idea of the elaborate timber architecture of the structure befitting a royal temple. Over 4,000 trees were felled to construct the Sim. The design consisted of 12 pillars, each 28 metres high (a possible exaggeration) made of entire tree trunks that supported a two-tiered roof structure. The walls were also constructed of timber and curved outwards towards the roof. The original structure was unfortunately burnt down by raiding Chinese Haw in 1887. The Sim was rebuilt later in 1896 by King Sakkarin Kamsuk in an attempt to retain the original architectural form. Unfortunately, the building walls were rebuilt with bricks and mortar instead of wood. This meant that it lost the original character of the wooden curved walls. However, the wooden roof construction has retained some of its tiered pattern.

A Stupa or Tat or That, referred to as Wat Thakmo was built in front of the Sim aligned along the northeastern axis. The form of the Tat comprises a rounded dome raised on multiple terraces and appears to be of Sinhalese extraction. Because of its unusual form it is commonly called the 'watermelon' Stupa. The Tat is believed to have been built by the queen of King Viscoun in 1504. It was destroyed by Chinese Haws, who broke into the structure and stole numerous Buddha statues that were inside the monument. Since then it has been restored in 1898 and again in 1932.

Viscoun was succeeded by his son Phothisarat (r. 1520–1547), whose fervent faith in Buddhism made him intolerant of local

religious traditions of spirit worship. He ordered the destruction of shrines for spirit and ancestor worship and promoted Buddhism through various strategies. He acquired the Tripitaka texts from the Lan Na kingdom, organized Buddhist councils, was inducted as a monk at Vat Viscoun, and was the first to inscribe in stone, his acts of merit for the Buddhist Sangha during his life time, re-affirming his status as a divine Buddhist king, a Chakkapat. He worked to establish Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong as a centre of Buddhism and a seat of learning in southeast Asia. His legacy led to the building of so many Vats in the city over successive rulers that the entire city is now listed as a world heritage site. Since the city was established as the capital of Lan Xang in the 14th century by Fa Ngum, about 65 Buddhist monuments were constructed within its small area. Many were destroyed by wars and fire and most of the remaining temples were renovated in







ABOVE (TOP)
Architectural model of the Sim of
Vat Viscoun

ABOVE

Wat Thakmo – the 'watermelon' Stupa, 1504, Luang Prabang, Laos

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the 20th century. Today, the city of Luang Prabang which was formerly the ancient city of Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong has numerous Buddhist monuments of high architectural significance.

King Phothisarat also perpetuated the tradition of ancestor worship by sponsoring royal Buddhist monasteries for deceased ancestors. Upon ascending the throne he immediately built the monastery, Wat Aham, dedicated to his father in 1527. The monastery was constructed right next to Vat Viscoun and the two are linked through a gateway.

The Sim of Wat Aham is designed as a hall with masonry walls without any internal columns. Both the front and the rear have verandahs that are framed by four circular columns having golden lotus capitals. The three-tiered tiled roof is supported on a framework of timber posts and beams and the entire roof structure is supported just by the masonry walls.

The gable ends of the roof on both the front and rear are ornately decorated, the rear depicting a scene of the Buddha preaching while the front has golden geometrical motifs. Roof gables are called Dok Huang Pheung and the triangular gable ends of the roofs with its exquisite wooden carving are the most elaborately decorated architectural element of Wat Aham's Sim. The rear gable ends depict a scene of the Buddha preaching while the front has golden geometrical motifs. As the most visible aspect of the front facade, they are filled with religious iconography that could range for example, from the life of the Buddha, to the Lao Ramayana (Phra Lak Phra Lam), to Traiphum Phra Rang and to the Dharmachakra symbol. The artwork is rendered through exquisite wooden carving of the gable boards. The outside columns of the verandahs or porticos support carved wooden pelmets, hanging under the pediment between the external columns of the porch, in the form of two arches similar to two eyebrows joined together, a feature found in Lan Na as well. The surface of the arched pediments is covered with decorative motifs in a honeycomb design known as Houang Pheung, literally meaning a 'hive'. The altar for the image of the Buddha is placed abutting the rear wall and the internal walls are filled with paintings of

RIGHT
Architectural model of Vat
Viscoun, Wat Aham and Wat
Thakmo – combined layout

Buddhist iconography. This architectural scheme without any internal columns is categorized as Luang Prabang Style III which is further described below in Part II Architectural Characteristics. Other significant examples of this style are Wat That Luang and Wat Meunna.

The rule of his son King Setthathirat that followed, between 1548 to 1571, ushered in the golden age of Buddhism. In 1560, as a strategic move to offset invasion from the Burmese, Settathirat shifted the capital southward towards the centre of the country, from Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong to Vieng Chan. Despite numerous upheavals, wars and the move to Vieng Chan, this period witnessed the building of even more Buddhist monasteries. Setthathirat, despite his preoccupation with the Burmese wars, was a prolific builder who sponsored some of the most important Buddhist monuments in the history of Lao Buddhism, the most notable of which are the enormous Stupa of Tat Luang in Vieng Chan and the exquisite Vat Xieng Thong in Luang Prabang.

The new capital Vieng Chan became the site for the construction of several new building projects. The new city was laid out along the river Mekong and the construction of a defensive wall and moat, a new palace and several monasteries were started. It is believed that a woman, Sao Si, sacrificed herself by throwing herself into the construction pit of the first pillar. Her sacrifice led her to become the tutelary guardian of Vieng Chan and a Buddhist temple, Vat Simeuang, has been constructed around the ancient pillar that can still be seen today.

Several Buddhist monuments were built at Vieng Chan that aimed to locate the new capital at the centre of Lao Buddhist polity. Two of the most significant temples were Vat Phra Kaeo and the other, the largest Stupa or Tat in Laos, known as Tat Luang.

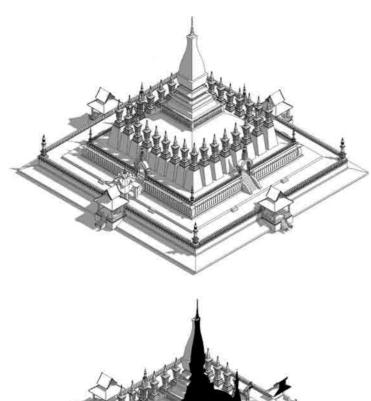
Vat Phra Kaeo, last reconstructed in 1942, Vientiane, Laos

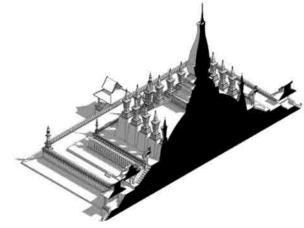
When he moved the capital Setthathirat also brought with him from Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong to Vieng Chan, the Phra Kaeo, known as the Emerald Buddha, the most revered Buddha image, signifying the increased belief in the power of the statues of Buddha in articulating the centre of the Lao Buddhist world. He commissioned the construction of Vat Phra Kaeo to house the Emerald Buddha, Phra Kaeo. The statue remained in the temple for just over two centuries, until 1779, after which it was taken to Bangkok by the Thais when they destroyed Vieng Chan, and where it has remained ever since. The temple served as the royal temple for the Laotian kings until it was destroyed by the Thai invasion in 1828. The present structure of the temple which is now a museum, was last reconstructed in 1942.



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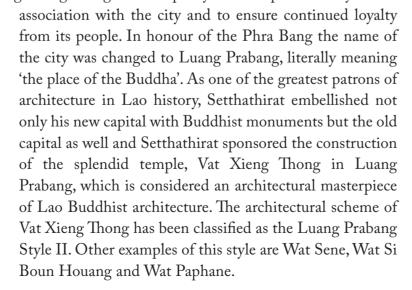


ABOVE Tat Luang, 1566, Vientiane, Laos

ABOVE (RIGHT)
Architectural model of Tat Luang

Vat Xieng Thong, 1560, Luang Prabang, Laos In the new capital city of Vieng Chan, Setthathirat also built the great Stupa, the Tat Luang. Located to the east of the city at Vieng Chan, the current Stupa is believed to have been built over an older shrine that contained the relics of the Buddha. It was conceived to serve as a political symbol of unification for the Lao Mandala as well as the religious icon for Lao Buddhism. The architectural form of the Tat Luang is distinctly Lao and is now the national monument for the state of the Lao PDR. See further description below.

Setthathirat, while shifting the capital to Vieng Chan, however, left behind the sacred statue of the Buddha, the Phra Bang, in Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong. This was partly out of respect for its symbolic





Another significant temple that was commissioned by Setthathirat was Vat Phra Mahathat or Vat That in Luang Prabang. Built around 1550, the temple has been rebuilt several times – in 1907, in 1963 and in 1991. The Sim of the temple has a hall surrounded by a verandah on all sides. The side verandahs have short rectangular columns while the front has four tall columns that rise to support the large gilded gables. There are no columns within the hall and the three-tiered roof is supported by the masonry walls of the hall. The plinth of the Sim is raised and approached by stairways having balustrades in the form of Nagas. Right behind the Sim is a large Stupa, or Tat, that is aligned to the Sim along its longer axis which rises in three tiers. This alignment of the Stupa behind the Sim recalls a similar arrangement in Thai architectural traditions. Several other Tats were constructed within the precincts of the Vat,

which are believed to enshrine the ashes of other members of the royal family.

This period also witnessed the deepening of cultural ties with the Thai Mandala of Lan Na and its influence on the material culture of Lan Xang. Setthathirat and his father had Thai wives from Lan Na that built a close bond between the two kingdoms. The cultural influence of Lan Na was further intensified with the exodus of Thai people from Lan Na to Vieng Chan after the sacking of the Thai city by the Burmese. The influence of the artistic traditions of Lan Na can be seen in the temples of this period with their characteristic high roofs that sweep down in multiple tiers, best exemplified by Vat Xieng Thong.

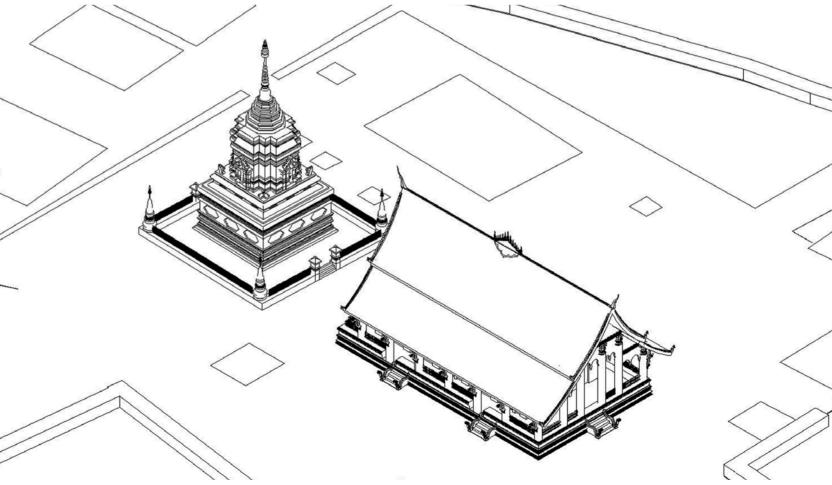
BELOW Vat Phra Mahathat, 1550, Luang Prabang, Laos

BELOW (BOTTOM)

Architectural model of Vat Phra

Mahathat and its Stupa or Tat





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18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES - PEACE AND DISINTEGRATION OF THE EMPIRE

In contrast to the previous period, the 18th century was a period of peace which allowed for the continued development of political and cultural life articulated through Buddhism. The wealth of the kingdom of Lan Xang was directed towards the glorification of Buddhism through the construction of many more Buddhist monuments, especially in Vieng Chan. The Buddhist monasteries of Vieng Chan became famous centres of learning that attracted scholars from across the region. The intangible heritage of music, dance and literature also flourished during this period. The 57 years of the long and prosperous rule of King Surinyavongsa (r. 1638–1695) established Vieng Chan, the new capital city of the kingdom of Lan Xang, as indeed the centre of the Buddhist spiritual and cultural world.

However the balance of power was shifting towards the southern Thai region. The kingdom of Lan Xang as a land-locked region became increasingly more isolated, and following a series of succession conflicts upon the death of Surinyavongsa, the Lan Xang kingdom was fragmented into three smaller and separate Muangs or principalities: Luang Prabang in the north; Vieng Chan in the centre, just by the Thai Border; and Champassak in the far south. In moments of crisis in the early 18th century, the statue of the Phra Bang at Luang Prabang was shifted to Vieng Chan to serve as a unifying symbol for the fragmenting Muang. The powerful Buddhist symbols of the Phra Bang and the Phra Keao (the Emerald Buddha), both now in Vieng Chan, became attractive targets for the rising Muangs of the Thais. In the late 18th century Ayutthaya conquered Vieng Chan and the Thais took back with them these two Buddhist statues. The powerful Chakri dynasty that appeared in Bangkok in 1782 established the Phra Keao as their own palladium in Bangkok, where it has remained today at the Wat Phra Keao in Bangkok. However, the Phra Bang statue was eventually returned to Laos where recently, the Phra Bang has been installed in a new temple within the royal palace grounds in Luang Prabang.

THE REVIVAL OF BUDDHIST IDENTITY

THE LAST OF THE CHAKKAPHAT KINGS

The 19th century opened with the reign of King Anuovong (r. 1805–1828) who struggled to free Laos from the yoke of the powerful Thai neighbours and to revive the previous splendour of the Lan Xang kingdom. Like his predecessors, he too tried to empower his rule through Buddhist symbols of divine kingship and to this end, he declared himself as a Chakkaphat or Cakkavartin king, organized a Buddhist council and commissioned the construction of several large Buddhist monuments. Anouvong embarked on an ambitious building programme in the capital city of Vieng Chan which included the renovation of Vat Phra Keao and the expansion of the Tat Luang with another surrounding cloister. In an attempt to restore the past glory of Laos, he commissioned a new jade Buddha to replace the Emerald Buddha, the Phra Kaeo, that had been removed to Bangkok by the Thais in 1779 and established it in the refurbished Vat Phra Keao in 1816.

This was followed by the construction between 1819–1824, of Vat Si Saket, a grand new temple near the royal palace. The temple built in a distinct Lao adaptation of Thai architecture was the only structure that was spared during the Thai invasion in 1828. Today, Vat Si Saket serves as a repository for Buddha statues found all over Laos and was perhaps Laos' first unofficial museum, housing all these broken and discarded Buddha images, including two of Laos' oldest Buddha images. The inner courtyard of the Vat which is enclosed by galleries is full of Buddha images.

II. ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

THE MONASTIC PRECINCT - THE VAT

The term Vat or Wat in Lao is often ambiguous and although usually refers to an entire monastic complex, could also loosely refer to the main shrine and ordination hall or Sim within the monastic complex. Since Buddhism in Laos is not merely a religion but has played a significant role in defining the political, social and cultural institutions of Lao society, a Lao Vat or a Buddhist monastic compound therefore embodies all these diverse dimensions in its design. It serves several functions: as a place of worship, as a site for political ritual, as a centre for education and a cultural space for the community. Thus, in a Vat, both religious and secular buildings are located inside a compound that is enclosed by a boundary wall. These are often low walls demarcating the sacred precincts which are also known as Phuttakhet, clearly referring to demarcated monastic space as the sacred space of the Buddha. Over time, the temples of Vientiane were also enclosed by galleries similar to those in Thai temples known as Phra Rabiang as can be seen at Vat Si Saket.

The religious buildings located inside the compound of the Vat often consist of a main shrine or ordination hall (the Sim or Phihan), the Stupa (That or Tat), chapels, a bell house, a drum house (Hor Kong), an assembly hall (Sala), a library (Ho Tai) and as a recognition of its animist ancestry, a Vat usually also contains a spirit house (Ho Phi). Most Lao Vats do not have the encircling cloisters or galleries predominant in Khmer Buddhist architecture. The secular buildings are the monks' residential quarters (Koutis), dining hall, kitchen and in the case of the Wats of Luang Prabang built by the river, also a boat pavilion. The plans of the monastic precincts of Lao, unlike the Khmers and the Thais, do not follow strict geometry and adopt shapes that are rough approximations of rectangles. The distribution of the structures also do not follow the rigid geometrical principles of Khmer or Thai monasteries. Instead, the buildings of a Vat in Laos are distributed relatively freely. However, some distinct characteristics, specific to Lao Buddhist monastic planning and architecture can be discerned within this apparently loose distribution of buildings. The shrine hall or Sim which houses the image of the Buddha and is the main space for worship and rituals, is built with the most elaborate architectural details showing its importance. This is further emphasized by its prominent location, close to the centre of the sacred precinct. The Sim faces east and the Stupa or Tat are aligned along its east-west axis. The secular and

religious buildings are arranged such that they are grouped together. The secular buildings particularly are grouped in close proximity along one side of the enclosed compound. The residential quarters, the refectory and kitchen are usually located along one side of the enclosed compound close to each other.

Unlike the monumental scale of architecture and planning of other Southeast Asian Buddhist architectural traditions, the size of the planning and architecture in Laos is distinctly modest and its scale, human. The architectural experience relies on the intimate scale and the decorative art that is layered on the surface of the monastic buildings. In fact, the distinguishing aspect of Lao religious architecture is that of rendering the structure as an ornamented form.

Galleries at the courtyard of Vat Si Saket, 1819–1824, Vientiane, Laos



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The relative simplicity of the building forms contrast with their elaborate decoration. Buildings are perceived as ornamented artifacts and all its parts are rendered with a variety of decorative treatment such as sculptural forms of parts, gilding, painting, carving and inlay work. The art of stenciling, that came originally from China, has been mastered by Laotian craftsmen. Gold stenciling is the most popular form of decoration that is applied to various building parts in Lao Buddhist architecture. Such rendering attempts to evoke the character of the embellished celestial buildings of Indian traditions that were shown as jewel studded forms.

ABOVE Exquisite gold stenciling on the exterior walls of Vat Xieng Thong, 1560, Luang Prabang, Laos

THE MAIN BUILDING OR CENTRAL SHRINE HALL - THE SIM

The principal structure in a Vat in Laos is the building used for worship by the monks and the laity. It is variously referred to as Sim or Phihan, a variation of the Sanskrit word, Vihara or Ubosot or Bot. Although there is inscriptional evidence that several buildings existed having these names, there is not much clarity whether they represent the same or different functions as is the case in Thai Buddhist architecture. However, it has also been postulated that a distinct building did exist purely for the purpose of ordinations known as Rong Upoposot in Lao.

The design of the Lao Sim bears close similarity to the Thai Vihan; yet has a distinct character that is uniquely Lao. The generic design of the Sim comprises a rectangular plan having an entrance at one end and the altar of the image of Buddha at the opposite end. The hall is covered with a sloping roof that is supported in some cases directly on the external walls of the buildings, but most often on rows of columns that are placed inside the building. The placement of the columns in rows along the longer length within the rectangular hall divides the interior space into a nave and two aisles depending on the different arrangement of columns, roof forms that they support and the position of the altar. In the cooler regions of the north, the buildings consist of large roofs with deep overhangs supported over low external walls, while in the warmer regions of the south the walls are taller and support a smaller roof. There are usually two ways in which the altar of the Buddha image is placed within the building. In the first case it is placed abutting the rear wall with no space behind it, and in the second case it is placed with space for circumambulation between the image and the rear wall.

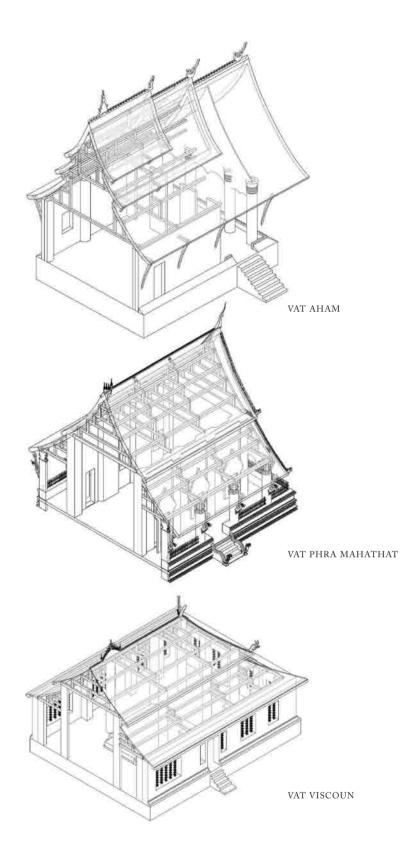
At first, buildings within a Vat compound were made entirely of wood with the exception of the Stupa or Tat. Indigenous building traditions of wooden vernacular architecture were directed towards the development of larger religious buildings, where both the building skin such as walls and the structural frames of column, beam and roofs were constructed entirely out of wood. Most buildings surviving today, however, consist of external walls constructed of masonry with internal columns of wood. Often the columns are made of entire tree trunks that are locally procured from neighbouring forests. Wood, usually teak, as a building material is expressively used in various parts of the building. Doors and window panels are elaborately carved out in wood and window lintels are single pieces of wood carving. The roof of a Lao Sim is built on a wooden framework of posts and beams that is covered with flat tiles. Sadly, there are very few ancient Sims surviving in their original architectural form as most have undergone several renovations over time. The

remains of the wooden roof of Vat Viscoun, however, reveal the architectural characteristic of religious buildings developed from the application of timber as the principle construction material. The wooden structural members of the columns, posts and beams are mostly left exposed on the inside but are rendered with expansive ornamentation. This typology of design is a tradition that is shared by the Lao and Lan Na temples in northern Thailand. The architectural vocabulary of typical wooden Sims consist of rectangular halls divided into naves and aisles with rows of wooden columns supporting multi-tiered wooden sloping roofs on a network of posts and beams. Earlier, the walls were made entirely of wood but over time, were replaced by brick masonry.

Vat Xieng Thong in Luang Prabang exemplifies the distinct features of the architecture of Lao Buddhist monuments that are shared with the Tai kingdom of Lan Na as well. The most dominant aspect of the Sim of this unique temple are the roofs rather than the walls. Elaborately conceived roofs in telescopic formation sweep downwards in multi-tiered layers to rest on low walls that are dwarfed in comparison. The details of the roof ornaments further distinguish the Sim's exterior.

The roof ridges end in curved hook-like formation in gold finish and are called So Fa, translated as sky hooks. At the centre ridge of the main roof there is a very elaborate sculptural element of metal known as the Dok So Fa translated as 'heavenly flowers' and are rows of miniature Pagodas with multi-tiered parasols in an ascending order with the central Pagoda being the tallest. The importance of the Vats can be denoted by how ornamental the Dok So Fa is and the number of parasols in the roof ornament, with royal Vats having as many as seven parasols on each side of the central point. Positioned at the centre of the ridge of the tiled roof of the Sim, it symbolically represents the axis mundi of the entire architectural composition, acting as a finial to the architectural form of the Sim.

The other very important ornamental design used in the roof is that of the Naga, a mythical Lao symbol that is a very important part of Lao folklore and design long before even the Indic religions came to southeast Asia. The Naga is Sanskrit for a water snake with magic powers, which is actually a cobra called Nak in Laos. In Lao architecture, the Naga is represented as a multi-headed (as many as five to seven heads) cobra and also as a dragon. At the Vat Xieng Thong's roof gables, two Nagas interlace as a spire.



Architectural models showing the wooden construction system of roofs as seen in various Sims of Vats

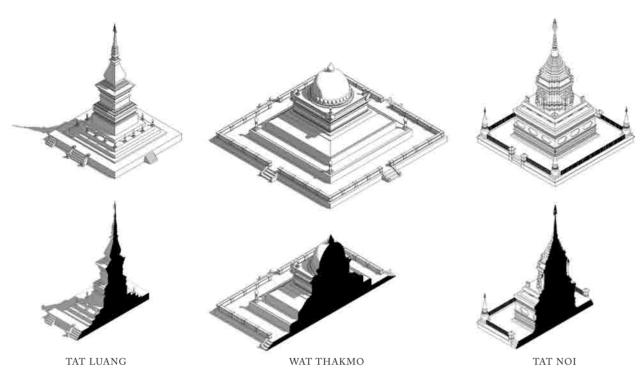
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THIS PAGE
The Dok So Fa and Nagas
interlaced as spires on the roof
ridges and gables of Vat Xieng
Thong, 1560, Luang Prabang, Laos

OTHER BUILDINGS IN A VAT



Architectural models showing comparative Tats

The Stupa or Tat:

The term Tat or That refers to a Stupa or Buddhist reliquary in Laos. It is constructed within the monastic precincts and is commonly located at the western end of the Sim. The architectural form of the Tat also manifests the symbolism of the three realms of Hindu-Buddhist cosmology – Kamaloka, Rupaloka and Arupaloka, as with the Stupas of other southeast Asian regions. In Laos, this can be seen in the three distinct parts of the form of the Tat – starting from a square base, the form transitions through a mid-section, and finally rising into a spire. Besides being built as commemorative monuments, Lao Tats are built to house the relics of members of the royal family. The tradition of making funerary Stupas as seen in Thailand and the Khmer kingdom continued in Laos as well.

Residential buildings or Koutis:

The Koutis are residential buildings for monks and their designs are derived from the vernacular architecture of dwellings in Laos. They comprise large rooms with small cubicles or partitions for the monks' quarters, are often raised on stilts and are covered with roofs having single or multiple gables. Constructed of local timber, they are of modest scale in comparison to the other religious buildings within the Vat.

Drum house or Hor Kong:

The drum houses are small open pavilions housing drums and are used to announce specific times for various activities in the monastery. Raised on stilts, a staircase leads to the raised floor that is covered by a pitched roof. Usually they are located on the northern side of the Vat and are believed also to possess the local spirit or Phi.

Library or Ho Tai:

The library is constructed to house Buddhist manuscripts that were written on dried palm leaves. It is most often raised on stilts to protect the manuscripts from floods and dampness from the ground.

Boat pavilion:

The boat shelters are long open simple pavilions built to house canoes that belong to the village and are used during festivals for boat races. Constructed with a simple pitched roof supported on posts, they are the most basic architectural buildings within a monastic precinct. However, they represent an important social role of Buddhist monasteries within the community as custodian of cultural assets of the community.

Assembly hall or Sala:

The Sala is large hall that is open on three sides and used as a space for large assemblies.

Chapel:

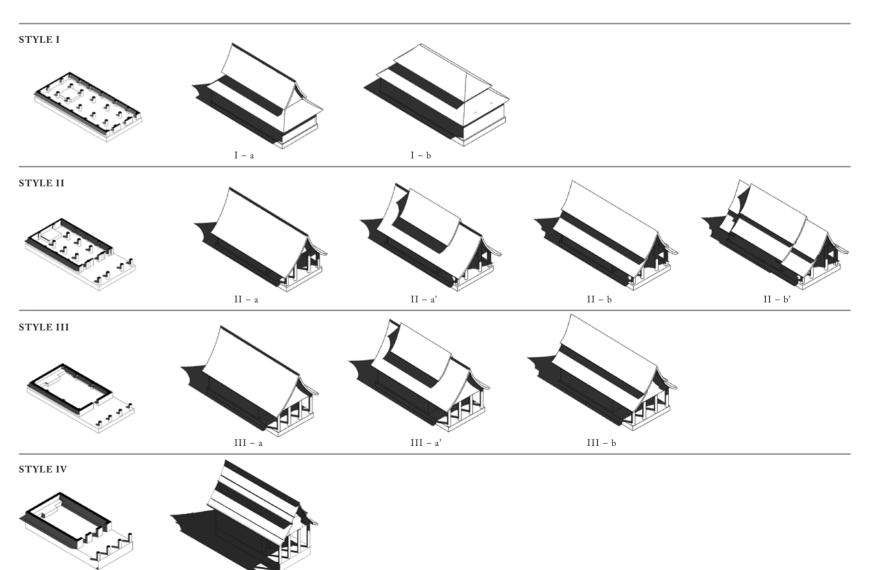
A chapel is a single room structure housing the image of a Buddha. It is a long and narrow building with walls that curve up to form a roof. It has a single door with an altar at the other end.

STYLISTIC CLASSIFICATIONS OF TEMPLES IN LUANG PRABANG

LUANG PRABANG AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

There have been several attempts to classify the temples of Luang Prabang into architectural categories according to the architectural characteristic of their roofs; column positions and height; nave and aisle arrangement; and position of the image altar.

Architectural models of UNESCO building classifications – Luang Prabang architectural styles



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The Buddhist monasteries of Luang Prabang define both the tangible and intangible heritage of the city. Their distinct architectural character and their crucial role in the living traditions of the city are of immense significance, which led to the city, with its more than 35 monasteries, being declared a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1995.

The city of Luang Prabang is a small peninsula located at the confluence of two rivers, the Mekong and Nam Khan. It stretches only a kilometre and has a width of 250 metres but is the home of 35 Buddhist temples. The centre of the city is marked by the hill known as Phou Si, around which the spatial plan of the city unfolds. The mound is considered sacred and has been likened to the sacred Mount Sumeru of Buddhist cosmology.

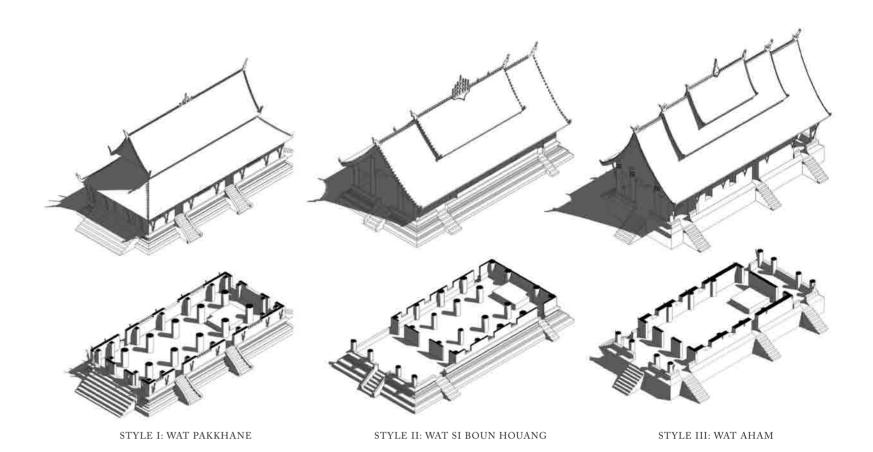
While they may appear to share similarities, Buddhist Sims in Laos and particularly in Luang Prabang can be grouped into different categories based on their architectural characteristics. The first classification of the typologies of Buddhist monasteries was done by Henri Parmentier between 1911–1927. His pioneering work, 'L'Art du Laos, 'lists over 100 buildings in Laos, referred by him as Pagodas, many of which have been destroyed or rebuilt. He classified them according to the design of the roofs and the floor plans. His work was further developed by Pierre-Marie Gagneux who published his classification in Luang Prabang, '600 Ans d'Art Bouddhique Lao', in 1974. He primarily referred to the design of roofing systems to classify Buddhist Sims or Vihans and named them according to the regions that they came from. There are three regional styles - the Luang Prabang style, the Xieng Khouang style, and the Vientiane style. Further in a later work, 'Art et Archeologie du Laos' in 2001 she develops the crucial distinction between type and style of a Sim. He distinguishes two types of Sims on the basis of the relationship between roof patterns and floor plans with their key components of walls, columns and shrine altar. His classification on the basis of style yielded only two categories – the northern style with large roofs sweeping down close to the floor with low walls, and the southern style with less overwhelming roofs and higher walls creating a sense of vertical movement.

The most recent study has been conducted by 'The Heritage House', an organization set up in Luang Prabang to develop architectural conservation guidelines for heritage management. Developing on the works of earlier scholars, they have classified four styles: three Luang Prabang styles and one Thai style.

The LUANG PRABANG STYLE I has columns dividing the interior space into nave and aisle. The nave is surrounded by the aisle on all four sides. The columns of the nave are higher than the columns at the periphery, and the image altar is separated from the rear wall. Examples of this style are Vat Viscoun, Vat Pakkhane and Vat Mai.

The LUANG PRABANG STYLE II also has columns dividing the interior space into nave and aisles. However, the aisles are only at the sides. The columns of the nave are higher than the columns at the periphery, and the altar is placed abutting the wall. There is also an entrance porch at the front. Examples of this style are Vat Xieng Thong and Vat Si Boun Houang.

The LUANG PRABANG STYLE III has no columns in the interior and therefore there is no nave and no aisle. There is a front entrance porch. Examples of this style are Vat Aham and Vat Sop.



The Thai Style is similar to the Luang Prabang Style III, but is different in the proportions of their form, which is elongated and taller. The hall is devoid of any pillars and has a new verandah at the front. Examples are Wat Pa Ke and Wat Pa Houak.



ABOVE

Architectural models of typical examples of building classification – Luang Prabang styles

BELOW

The Luang Prabang style I – Vat Mai, 1891, Luang Prabang, Laos

PAGES 260-26

Rows of Buddha statues at Vat Viscoun, Luang Prabang, Laos

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LAOS – ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS 259



TAT LUANG

1566 VIENTIANE

The Tat Luang is the single most important Stupa in Laos of The hemispherical form of the Stupa, the Anda, is unique and another name is 'Phra Maha That Chao Chiang Mai', petals. The total height of the monument measures 45 metres. establishing the connection with the Lan Na kingdom, where Setthathirat governed for a while. Located at the eastern side The first two terraces are enclosed by ordination stones along of the capital city of Vientiane, it has acquired its current form their edges. The second terrace supports 30 little Stupas known after being rebuilt many times over 2,000 years. Legends abound as Palami that surround the central hemispherical Stupa in the regarding the site of the Tat Luang and its origins. The Stupa is centre. Oddly, nine Palami are distributed on the east and west associated with the paradigmatic Buddhist emperor from India, side, while only eight are on the north and south sides, thereby Emperor Asoka, who is believed to have sent the relics of the decreasing the spacing between the Palami on the eastern and Buddha with monks who enshrined it at the Stupa around the western side. Further, the base of the Palami is not independent 3rd century BCE. However, the earliest extant remains from of the central dome, but is partially attached to it. A flat gold the site date it to around the 13th century, linking it to the plate inscribed with the words 'Ariyasat', meaning the four rule of the Buddhist Khmer king, Jayavarman VII whose statue noble truths of the Buddha, is located at the base of each of the found at the site can be seen within the precincts today. This and 30 Stupas. other material evidence found at the site suggests that it was the Khmer religious structure which eventually fell into ruin.

the Burmese, followed by the Thais, and then the Chinese in the 19th century. Nature added to the destruction when it French, first in 1901 and finally between 1929-1935 based on been fully and magnificently restored today.

The current architectural form comprises three receding terraces in a square shape mounted with a hemispherical Stupa and at its top, is an elongated spire that resembles an extended lotus bud. The first terrace is an approximate square of 68 metres by 69 by a pair of stairs on each side, and finally the third terrace of tradition that has endured until today. 30 metres by 30 metres is approached through four stairways defined by arched gates, again along the cardinal directions.

great architectural, political and religious significance to the as it rises directly from the square base thereby creating four Lao Buddhist identity. Its name is literally translated as the 'the ridge lines rising up from the corners of the square, an unusual great Stupa' and today serves as the spiritual heart and symbol transition from a square plan to the hemispherical Anda which of the nation of the Lao PDR. Its complete name is 'Pha Chedi is rarely seen. The spire in the form of an elongated lotus bud Lokajulamani' which means 'world precious sacred Stupa' rises on top of the Anda through a form that depicts open lotus

The Stupa is centrally placed within a space enclosed by a cloister, the Phra Rabiang, that measures 85 metres on each Tat Luang was damaged in the 16th century by invasions from side. The cloister has a high wall towards the outside with small windows while it is colonnaded from the inside. Entry within this enclosed precinct is gained through gateways aligned was struck by lightning in 1896. It was reconstructed by the axially along all four sides. The cloister was added later by King Anouvong in the 19th century to protect the Stupa from the drawings by Louis Delaporte from 1860. The Tat Luang has invasions. Four Vats were built around the large grounds of the enclosed precinct on each side of which only two survive today - Vat Tat Luang Neua to the north and Vat Tat Luang Tai to the south.

When the construction of Tat Luang was completed, King Setthathirat initiated an annual festival in the Tat Luang where metres which is accessed by four stairways that are attached to he gathered all the heads of the provinces of his kingdom to four prayer pavilions at the four cardinal directions. The second renew their oaths of loyalty to him, while also celebrating terrace that measures 48 metres by 48 metres is approached Buddhist religious practices. This festival has become an annual

> OPPOSITE PAGE The Tat Luang magnificently restored



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VAT XIENG THONG

1560 LUANG PRABANG

Vat Xieng Thong¹ is perhaps the best known and the most elegant Buddhist monastery in Laos, surviving basically intact the destruction of the city by Chinese pirates in 1887, and has been restored more recently in 1928 and 1960. Its graceful and splendid architecture epitomizes the best of Lao Buddhist architecture. Under royal patronage, the Vat was built by King Setthathirat following his decision to move his capital south from Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong to Vieng Chan in 1560. To ensure continued loyalty from the people of the city, it was then renamed Luang Prabang in honour of the Phra Bang, the sacred image of the Buddha, which had been brought to the kingdom of Lan Xang by Setthathirat's ancestor, King Fa Ngum.

The Vat is located strategically at the northeastern tip of the city, at the junction of the two rivers, the Mekong and Nam Khan. The temple also served as a gateway of entry to the city where important visitors could first alight from their boats and pay respects before proceeding further into the city.

Over 20 structures are distributed within the precincts of the Vat for both religious and secular purposes such as the beautiful main Sim, the monks' residential quarters or Kouti, the library or Ho Tai, drum house or Hor Kong, the boat house, chariot house, chapels and Stupas or Tats. The Vat is enclosed by a boundary wall having gate houses on all four sides. As in the case of Lao temple architecture, the distribution of the buildings do not follow a rigid geometrical arrangement although an order of orientation and grouping of buildings can be seen in their layout. The most important building, the Sim is positioned with suitable space around it to distinguish it from the others. It is oriented towards the east and two Tats, one in front and one at the rear, further define the east-west axis. Secondary religious buildings such as chapels and Tats are immediately clustered around this main religious axis of the Vat. The chapels are located towards the south and west of the Sim and include the chapel of the standing Buddha, the chapel of the reclining Buddha also known as the red chapel, and two other chapels. A library shaped like a tall tomb was built in 1880 to house the Tripitaka, while the drum house was added in 1961. The secular building consisting of monks' residential quarters, kitchen and meditation halls are all located behind the Sim towards the west. A large hall that houses the royal funerary carriage,





ABOV

The Sim, Tats and other buildings within the temple precints

OPPOSITE PAGE

The boat pavilion housing the canoes used by the community during festivals



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^{1.} Vat Xieng Thong means 'the golden city' but legend also says that its name is derived from the name 'thong' or the flame tree related to the legend of the foundation of Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong.

known as 'hor latsalot', is located in the southeast corner, and an the Buddha statue flows through a wooden Naga, known as a open pavilion housing boats used by the community is located 'haglin', into the elephant's head. in the north by the Mekong river.

cascade of nine roofs that together sweep downwards towards the ground. This unified composition of the roofs combines two spring from the walls to support the overhanging roofs.

on either side. The nave is defined by four circular columns that and abuts the rear wall. The aisles are further extended sideways the triple-tiered roof. The first and last bay of the interior space lotus petals. is supported by walls and lower columns that support the twoof the aisle and external walls are further shortened to support the roof that slopes downwards towards the sides. The system of roofs is carried forward into the front verandah.

supported by two tall and two short square columns with golden lotus petal capitals. The posts and beams frame rectangular Inside is a reclining Buddha dating to 1500 that is considered a surfaces that are ornately painted with Dhamma wheel designs. classic sculpture in Lao style with the graceful flow of the robes Between the gable and columns is a double arched tympanum curling outwards. distributed across all three bays.

masonry and finished with glazed tiles that cover its moulded vernacular architectural vocabulary. form. On the northern face is an elephant head that emerges from the plinth that is used as a water fountain during the Lao New Year, 'pi mai'. The water used in the ritual bath of

The external walls of the Sim are low in height and overwhelmed The architectural form of the Sim is dominated by the graceful by the large overhanging roofs that cover it and keep the Sim in shade. However, as one approaches closer to the buildings, the ornate details of the exterior walls start appearing - they double-tiered roofs at the front and one double-tiered roof at are painted black and completely covered with elaborate gold the rear with a single triple-tiered roof at the centre. They are stencil paintings of mythological figures and deities. The rear all interlocked in a telescopic formation with the central three- wall directly under the central gable end of the Sim's roof is tiered roof resting over the others and with the highest crowned framed with two golden columns within which is the depiction by a golden finial, the Dok So Fa. Together they sweep down of the tree of life, a motif symbolizing the axis mundi linking upon the walls of the building that are dwarfed by the sheer size heaven and earth. The remarkable art work is executed in glass of the roofs they supporting. Slender golden carved brackets mosaic of different colours pasted on a deep red backdrop, and is a recent work of local artists completed in 1960.

The roof covers a ground plan that comprises a nave with aisles The dimly lit interior walls are also filled with gold stencil painted over the deep red or black coloured walls, columns, roof divide the interior space into five bays. The altar is positioned beams and false ceilings. The elaborate decoration in gold stencil at the opposite end of the entrance in the last bay of the nave depicts mythological scenes, Jatakas, Traiphum Phra Rang, and various floral designs. The columns of the nave are circular and along the middle three bays such that the plan appears mildly have geometrical designs in gold stencil on a deep red backdrop, cruciform. The nave and the aisle continue outwards towards the while the columns of the aisle are square and have gold stencil eastern side to form an entrance verandah. The four columns that on a black backdrop. Both columns rise up to support the roof define the three central bays are the tallest and rise up to support beams and the false ceiling through a capital in the form of

tiered roof on both the eastern and western ends. The columns The chapel of the reclining Buddha, the 'Hwa Tai Pha Sai-Nyaat' is located to south of the Sim and is a small building that is beautifully proportioned and richly decorated. The rectangular columns with diminishing heights that support double-tiered architectural form of the pavilion is raised on a masonry plinth covered with green mosaic. Pastel red walls covered with an elaborate inlay of glass mosaic rise up from the base and support The eastern facade comprises an elaborately carved golden gable a sloping roof through richly carved golden brackets. Above this roof rises a double-tiered roof with elaborately gilded gable ends.

A chariot hall, known as 'hor latsalot' which houses the funeral The entire structure is raised on a plinth that is approached chariot and the cremation urn of King Sisavangvong was only through wide steps leading to the verandah and narrower steps built in the 20th century. Other secular buildings such as Kouti, on all the other sides. The base of the plinth is constructed of the boat pavilion and the dining hall follow a more modest

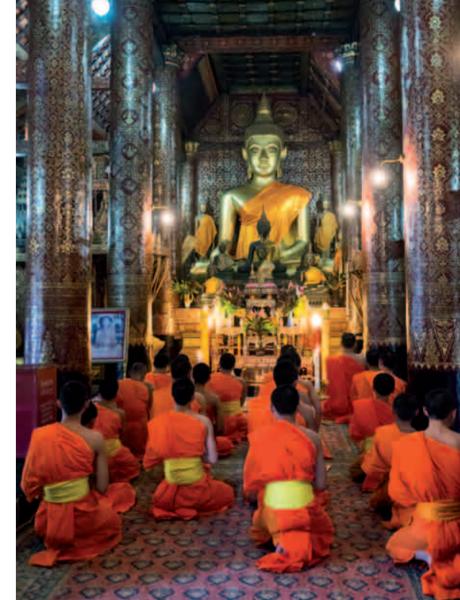




ABOVE (TOP) One of the richly decorated chapels at Vat Xieng Thong

Interior of the drum house

The Buddha image and monks at



VAT MAI SUWANNAPHUMAHAM OR VAT MAI

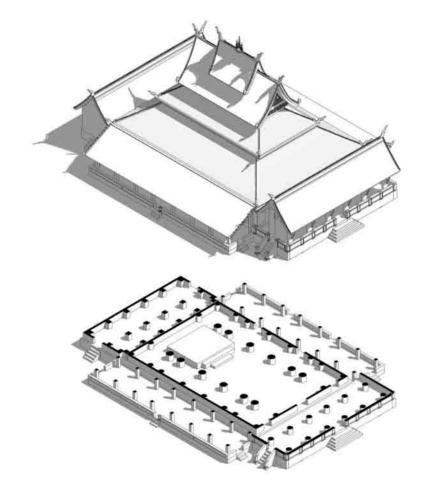
COMPLETED 1891 LUANG PRABANG

Vat Mai or the 'new monastery', besides being one of the most splendid royal monasteries in Luang Prabang, is also among the few buildings that was spared destruction by the marauding Chinese Haw hordes in 1880, presumably because they found it too beautiful to be destroyed. Supported by the kings of Lan Xang, it is a royal monastery and has served as the residence of the chief abbot. Vat Mai is of great religious significance as it also housed the golden statue of Phra Bang, the palladium of Lan Xang, between 1894 (after it had been moved there from Vat Viscoun) until 1947 when the Phra Bang was moved to its current location at the Royal Palace Museum nearby.

Vat Mai was built by King Anourouth around 1796 but after a long construction period, it was not actually finished until 1891 under the next king, Zakarine. At this time, in the 19th century, two colonnaded porches at the east and west were added to the main Sim and work on a library and other buildings continued. Several other structures were further added within the monastic precinct and more renovations were undertaken in the 20th century. The architecture of Vat Mai is defined by its imposing, low-swooping five-tiered roofs that rise gracefully to the golden roof finial having three parasols, the Dok So Fa symbolizing the central axis of the sacred Mount Sumeru.

Vat Mai as a Lao Buddhist monastic precinct has an enclosed boundary wall within which various buildings are distributed for different functions. Unlike the planning traditions of the neighbouring Khmers and the Thais, the Vat follows a more flexible distribution of buildings. However some distinct aspects of the building types and their planning can be discerned in the layout of Vat Mai. The main hall or Sim faces east, but is not positioned in the geometrical centre. It is distinguished by the provision of a large open space around it. At the front of the Sim along its longitudal axis, is a Stupa or a Tat. Two chapels, a library and a drum house are aligned by the side of the Stupa. At Vat Mai, the Koutis or the monks' living quarters follow various different architectural patterns that are derived from the vernacular architectural traditions of Laos and can be distinguished depending on the roof system and layout. One Kouti is raised on stilts and has a single gable roof covering a set of rooms and a verandah. Another Kouti also raised on low stilts, has halls that are distributed around a central space and is





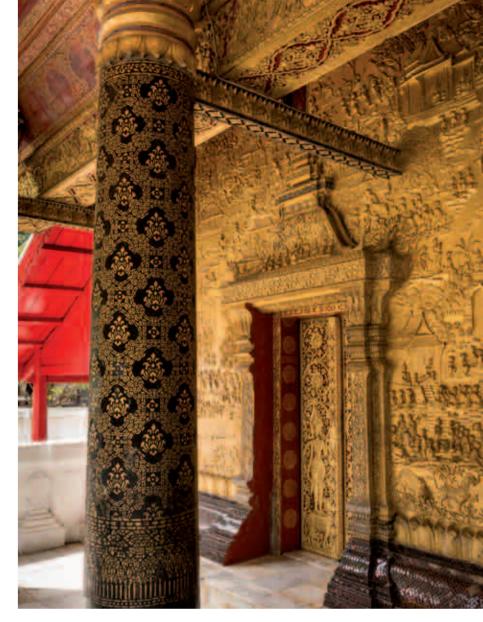
ABOVE (TOP)
Luang Prabang style II – the Sim and its five-tiered roofs, Vat Mai

Architectural model of Sim of Vat Mai

covered with three gable roofs. As a secular building, the Koutis are constructed parallel to the alignment of the Sim. Behind the Sim is an open pavilion that serves as a boat house for keeping boats that are used during various cultural festivals such as the Lao New Year, 'bun pi mai lao' in April, and during the water festival in October, 'Bun Bam'. The presence of such structures testifies to the significant role of Buddhist monastic precincts as cultural spaces for the community. These festivals which are held at the Vat are an indication of the monastery's role both religious and cultural, in the Lao community.

The rectangular plan of the Sim consists of a nave that has six wooden columns on each side that rise up to support the top three of the five-tiered roofs through a system of wooden beams that reduce in size as they rise up. The longitudinal distribution of the six columns are grouped in pairs such that the first and last pair of columns have less spacing between them. The altar of the Buddha image is positioned at the end opposite to the entrance. An aisle encircles the nave on all four sides, and its roof slopes down from the columns towards the walls of the Sim having engaged columns supporting the lower end. All four sides of the enclosing walls of the Sim have verandahs. The verandahs on the longer sides are unadorned and are covered with the final sloping roof that continues the profile of the tiered roofs above, but the front and side verandahs are vividly ornamented and have a gable roof. The columns of the nave rise up to support the roof beams through golden capitals of lotus petal design, and their black colour surfaces are covered with intricate gilding. The entire Sim is raised on a plinth and is accessed via steps at the verandahs.

The main building acquired an unusual form when King Zakarine added two more verandahs to the four verandahs. These were added as distinct outer verandahs at the eastern and western ends of the temple and these additional verandahs had their gable ends oriented towards the sides rather than to the front of the temple – a transverse nave perpendicular to the principal nave, perhaps inspired by the vernacular architecture of Lao houses. Yet, these added verandahs have become one of the most distinct architectural components of the Vat Mai Sim with its elaborately painted interiors. The walls, ceilings, beams and columns of the verandahs are covered with golden stucco illustrating various scenes from Buddhist mythology such as the Lao interpretation of the Ramayana, Phra Lak Phar Lam and the most popular Jataka tale in Laos, the Vessantra Jataka. The magnificently restored interiors were only completed in 1960.





ABOVE (TOP)
Intricate gold stucco and stenciling at the Sim's front verandah

Red interior nave with gold stenciling on columns, beams and walls with a variety of gilded Buddha images

PAGE 270 Buddha image, Borobudur, 9th century, central Java, Indonesia

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GLOSSARY

Abhidhamma Pitaka

The last of the three Pitakas (Pali for 'baskets') constituting the scriptures of Theravada Buddhism and is a detailed scholastic reworking of material appearing in the Suttas.

Acanthus leaf

The Acanthus is a common Mediterranean plant, the form of which is extensively used in Roman and Greek architecture to make foliage ornamentation. Usually carved into stone or wood to resemble the leaves of the plant.

Addhayoga

See Monks' Dwellings.

<u>Ajanta</u>

Comprises more than 300 rock-cut Buddhist caves dating from the 2nd century BCE. The caves with their Buddhist religious frescos, paintings and sculptures are the finest surviving examples of Indian art.

Amaravati

Amaravati is a small town situated in Andhra Pradesh, India and is famous for the Amareswara temple dedicated to the Hindu God, Shiva. The temple is one of the famous Pancharamas and was the site of a great Buddhist Stupa built by the emperor Asoka. The Amaravati school of art occupies an important place in Indian art history.

Amitabha or Amida

The principal Buddha in the Pure Land sect, a branch of Mahayana Buddhism practiced mainly in east Asia. Amitabha translates as 'infinite light' and Amitabha is often called 'the Buddha of infinite light'.

Anavatapta

A mythical Himalayan lake in Buddhist cosmology, the sacred waters of which were supposed to have healing properties, and from which place emanates four sacred rivers through the mouths of a lion, an elephant, a horse and an ox.

Literally means an 'egg' in Sanskrit and is the dome-shaped main body of a Stupa.

The Angkor period in Khmer history lasted five centuries from the beginning of the 9th century. Angkor also refers to the region that the Khmers ruled from

Angkor Borei

A city near present-day Takeo in Cambodia that might have been the

capital of Funan at one time. Angkor Thom

A city in the Khmer empire. **Aparanta**

Could mean Myanmar in general, or specifically a city on the western shores of the Irrawaddy.

In architecture, the Apse is a semicircular recess covered with a hemispherical vault or semi-dome.

Arahant or Arahat or Arhat

One who has attained the ultimate goal, and is therefore 'worthy'; one who has realized enlightenment.

Arakan

Former name of present-day Rakhine state in Myanmar; the Arakanese are an ethnic group, and their language is Arakanese too

Permanent structures built by followers as donations to the Buddhist Sangha for use by Buddhist monks to stay during rain retreats or Vassavasas. Arupaloka or Arupadhatu The 'world of non-form' in the three

worlds or three realms (Tri-loka or Tridhatu) described in Hindu-Buddhist cosmology. See also Kamaloka and Rupaloka, the other two realms. Arupaphum

See Traibhumikatha.

An Indian emperor of the Maurya dynasty, also known as Asoka the Great. He was born around 304 BCE and reigned from 268-232 BCE. Asoka embraced Buddhism after the deadly battle of Kalinga after which he was appalled by the terrible deaths and destruction caused. Asoka was responsible for propagating Buddhism over much of Asia and he was known and revered for his philanthropic good works.

Attha-maha-thanani

See Eight Sacred Places of Buddhist Pilgrimage.

Avalokitesvara

Also called Lokesvara, Kuan Yin in China and Ouam Am in Vietnam, Avalokitesvara is the Bodhisattva of compassion who liberates devotees from suffering.

Avasas

Temporary structures used as shelters by Buddhist monks during rain retreats or Vassavasas.

<u>Ayeryarwaddy</u>

The river Irrawaddy, Myanmar's

largest river and most important waterway, that flows across the north to the south of the country.

Avodhva

The home city of Rama in the Hindu epic, the Ramavana.

Avutthava

Derived from Sanskrit. Also known as Ayudhya, the capital and name of the Thai kingdom after Sukhothai, which existed from 1351 to 1767, a cosmopolitan hub and one of the great port cities of the world before being sacked by the Burmese.

Bai Sema or Sima Stones

Upright stone slabs that are boundary stones which designate the sacred area for an ordination hall within a Buddhist temple. Eight stones are placed at each of the cardinal and subcardinal points.

Lokesvara depicted as a horse, seen in the Neak Pean Temple in Cambodia.

> An artificial body of water, commonly found in Khmer architecture

Same as Peikthano

Bhairat A town in Jaipur district, India.

Bhaisajyaguru

Master of healing; the Buddha who gives relief to worshippers from troubles of this world.

A Buddhist monk.

Bhumisparsha Mudra

A hand gesture where the right hand is pointing down towards the ground; said to have been used by the Buddha when he called upon the earth to bear

'Wall gazing contemplation', a form of meditation initiated by Bodhidharma, a Buddhist monk who lived during the 6th century and who is regarded as the first Chinese patriarch of the Chan school of Buddhism or the Zen tradition. In Vietnam, the meditation technique of the Vo Ngon Thong school is the Biguan, and the school is therefore also known as the school of wall contemplation or Quan Bich.

The ficus tree or Ficus Religiosa. It was under one of these that the Buddha became enlightened. <u>Bodhgaya</u>

See Eight Great Places of Buddhist

Pilgrimage.

Bodhigara

A shrine enclosing a Bodhi tree. Rituals and ceremonies associated with the Bodhi tree were known as Bodhi-maha.

Bodhisattva

An enlightened being (literally, a being whose essence is enlightenment).

A Chinese or Japanese Buddhist

Ordination hall in Thailand; short for

One of the gods in the sacred Hindu trinity; the others being Shiva and Vishnu. Brahma is the creator.

Brahmajala Sutta

One of the sacred texts in Buddhism.

Buddhaghosa

A 5th century Buddhist commentator. most likely of Indian origin, author of the Vissuddhimagga.

Buddhaksetra

The 'pure land' in Mahayana Buddhism. It is considered the celestial abode of a Buddha or a Bodhisattva. There are multiple types of Buddhaksetras in Mahayana Buddhism.

Bu<u>ddharaja</u>

A 'buddha-king' or the living representation of the Buddha on earth: the Buddhist equivalent of the Devaraja cult which had Hindu

Buddhavasa

Literally means 'Buddha's place' and is that part of a monastery lined with Buddha images devoted to religious rites and ceremonies.

Burmese-speaking peoples who originated from the north and established the kingdom of Pagan around the 9th century.

The people of the kingdom of Pagan and its successors; ethnically, they comprised Burmans and those that had inter-mixed with them; also the main language of Myanmar; in a broader context, it stands for the people of Myanmar, or anything referring to the country.

Caitya-griha

Temple. 'Caitya' means an object of worship, and 'griha' means house, so Caitya-griha may be loosely translated as temple. There are a number of

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different terms in use in different countries that essentially mean a Chorten Caitya-griha.

Cakravartin or Chakkapat

A universal monarch who rules ethically and benevolently over the whole world. In Laos, the title of Chakkapat is a Lao transformation of the Pali word, Cakravartin. See also

Candi

A Candi is an Indonesian word used to refer to both Hindu and Buddhist Stupas and temples. Ancient nonreligious structures such as gates, urban ruins, caves and bathing sites are often called Candi

The inner chamber of a temple in classical architecture

Cenobitic tradition

A monastic tradition that stresses community life and to live as a hermit.

Today's Surat Thani in south Thailand. Chakri dynasty

The current ruling royal house of Thailand, founded in 1782 with Rama I when the capital of Siam shifted to Bangkok after the fall of Avutthava. Currently ruled by Rama IX.

Cham or Champa

An ethnic group in southeast Asia, found mainly in present-day Vietnam, Cambodia and parts of Thailand. The kingdom of Champa existed in the southern part of today's Vietnam. It was established in the 2nd century and had gone into decline by the end of the 15th century

Chan school of Buddhism

The Zen school of Mahavana Buddhism that developed in China during the 6th century. From China, Zen spread south to Vietnam, northeast to Korea and east to Japan. Zen emphasizes the attainment of enlightenment and the personal expression of direct insight in the Buddhist teachings. As such, it deemphasizes mere knowledge of Sutras and doctrine and favours direct understanding through Zazen (seated meditation) and interaction with an accomplished teacher. See also Biguan.

Chatra Umbrella.

<u>Chattravali</u>

Structure at the very top of a Stupa, of stylized umbrellas, a symbol denoting high spiritual status or royalty.

Name for Stupa in Thailand.

Chenla

An Indianized state that came to prominence in the 6th century and eventually absorbed the kingdom of Funan. The Khmer empire originated

from Chenla.

Name for Stupa in the Himalayan mountain and plateau region.

Various accounts, mostly written by monks, of places and periods in the history of Myanmar, drawing upon various legends. See also Glass Palace Chronicle

A Vietnamese Buddhist temple complex

Cullavagga

Includes an elaboration of the Bhikkhus' or monks' etiquette and duties, as well as the rules and procedures for addressing offences that may be committed within the Sangha. See also Mahavagga.

Dagoba

Name for Stupa in Sri Lanka Devaraia and divine kingship

Literally means 'god-king'; a Hindu-Buddhist concept of deified royalty where the king was considered a living

Dhamma (Pali) or Dharma (Sanskrit) The truth, the teachings of the

Dharamsala

A 'religious-sanctuary'. Also means a rest-house for pilgrims and other travellers

Dharmacakka (Pali) or Dharmacakra (Sanskrit)

'The wheel of dharma', it refers to the 8-spoked wheel that was one of the earliest symbols of Buddhism. The Buddha is said to have set in motion the wheel of Dhamma when he delivered his first sermon.

Dharmacakra Mudra

A hand gesture representing the turning of the wheel of the Dharma, it also represents the teaching gesture. Dhyani Buddha

The Five Dhyani Buddhas, or Great Buddhas of Wisdom are a central feature of tantric Buddhism. Each Buddha is believed to be capable of overcoming a particular evil with a particular good, and each has a complete system of iconographic

Dok Huang Pheung

Lao roof gables and the triangular gable ends of the roofs which are elaborately decorated architectural elements of the Lao Sim. See also Sim. Dok So Fa

Sky hooks on the roof gables of Lao

Dravidian architecture

Also known as Chola architecture, it was a style of architecture that emerged thousands of years ago in Tamil Nadu, south India. Its pyramidal structures

employed intricately carved stones in a step design, with all the deities of the Hindu pantheon represented. The same type of architecture can also be found in parts of north India and in various parts of southeast Asia. particularly at the Prambanan temple complex in Indonesia and Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

Dvarapala or Dwarapala

A Sanskrit word for the gigantic, very fearful looking door stone guardians found in Hindu and Buddhist temples.

Dvaravati

A culture, as well as an ancient kingdom in Thai history from the 6th to 13th century, situated in the lower Chao Praya river valley. Composed of a people who spoke the Mon language. Eventually overtaken by the Khmer empire.

(The) Eight Sacred Places of Buddhist Pilorimage or the 'Attha-mahathanani' in Pali are:

Lumbini (Buddha's birth place). Bodhgaya (Buddha's enlightenment), Sarnath (where Buddha taught the Dhamma), Sravasti (twin miracles), Rajgir (subduing of Nalagiri, the angry elephant), Sankassa (descending to earth from Tusita heaven), Vaishali (receiving an offering of honey from a monkey), and Kusinara or Kushinagar (Buddha's death)

Ellora

An archaeological site in Maharashtra, India. There are around 34 monumental Buddhist, Hindu and Iain rock temples hewn out of the vertical rock face of Charanandri hills. The Ellora 'caves' were built around the 5th century to the 10th century.

Erawan

Thai name for Airavata, a mythological elephant which carries the Hindu god Indra, depicted in Thai art as a huge elephant with three and sometimes 33

A nine-pointed finial found on the top of some Thai Prangs.

Literally translates from the Chinese as 'wind and water' in Chinese geomancy; a philosophical system of harmonizing the human existence with the surrounding environment.

A distinctive structure on the top of a building; an ornamental feature at the top of a spire.

Four Noble Truths

The essence of the Buddha's teachings is contained in the Four Noble Truths.

An ancient kingdom lasting from the 1st to the 6th century in the Mekong delta region that was a precursor of the Khmer empire.

Perfumed chamber

Gandhara

An ancient Hindu kingdom comprising areas around modern-day Peshawar in Pakistan, and Eastern Afghanistan, one of the important cities of which was Taxila.

Garuda

A mythical being that is half-man and half-bird. The Garuda is also the vehicle of the Hindu god Vishnu and appears in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology.

Glass Palace Chronicle

The Glass Palace Chronicle of the kings of Burma is the English language translation by Gordon Luce and Pe Maung Tin of part of the standard Chronicle of the Konbaung Dynasty of Burma.

Gopura

The entrance pavilion to a temple.

Literally a cave; temples in Myanmar were referred to as 'Gu'.

See Gu and Monks Dwellings.

Gupta empire An ancient Indian empire, founded by Maharaja Sri Gupta, which existed from approximately 320-550 CE and covered much of India. It was a prosperous and peaceful period, and arts, culture and science flourished.

This period is often called the golden

age of India.

Sanskrit for 'teacher' or 'master'.

Guru Rinpoche Translates as 'precious Guru': is also known as Padmasambhava or the second Buddha who transmitted Vairavana Buddhism to the Himalayan mountains and plateau region. He is also considered to have been an emanation of the Amitabha and Shakvamunu Buddha and also the Kuan Yin Bodhisattva.

Ha<u>mmiya</u>

See Monks Dwellings.

Harihara

A deity that was the combination of the Hindu gods, Shiva and Vishnu.

Hariharalaya

A city in the Khmer empire. Harmika

Part of a Stupa, it is a box-like structure that sits on top of the dome on which the Chatras were mounted as a symbol of honour and respect. See also Anda and Medhi.

Hinayana

Hinavana Buddhism is a Sanskrit term literally meaning: the 'inferior vehicle', and Hinayana is often contrasted with Mahavana, which

means the 'great vehicle.' There are a variety of interpretations regarding the terminology and it has also been used as a synonym for the Theravada tradition, which continues as the main form of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. See also Mahayana and Theravada.

<u>Ho Trai</u>

Thai word for library in a Buddhist temple, where traditionally the scriptures were stored.

Hti

The umbrella-like structure on top of a Stupa.

Indic

Refers to the Indian sub-continent: anything related to Indian art, culture, language and history.

The king of the Gods in Hinduism, Indra is the lord of heaven and the god of thunder, a symbol of courage and strength.

<u>Irrawaddy</u>

See Ayeryarwaddv.

Jain or Jainism

Is an Indian religion that prescribes a path of non-violence towards all living beings and emphasizes spiritual independence and equality between all forms of life. Jatakas

Birth stories of the Buddha, numbering around 547 stories. Jatulokaban or Thao Jatulokaban

The four guardians or protectors of the world seen in Thai Theravada temples.

A measure word in Chinese; a classifier or a count word, used along with numerals to define the quantity of a given object or objects.

Junnar

Ancient Indian city near Pune in the state of Maharashtra, India.

Kala-makara

Kala is a protective figure in the form of a fierce giant's face which scares away malevolent spirits, and a Kala-makara is a Kala or head with Makaras (mythical sea-creatures such as a crocodile) projected on either side. Used as decorative and symbolic elements in the Candis of Java.

The name given to the main temple of a religious temple complex in ancient Champa. The Kalan was the most important edifice as it symbolized Mount Meru of the sacred Hindu-Buddhist cosmology.

Kamadhatu or Kamaloka

The 'world of desire' in the three worlds or three realms (Tri-loka or Tridhatu) described in Hindu-Buddhist cosmology. See also Rupaloka and

Arupaloka for the two other worlds. Kamaphum See Traibhumikatha

Kambujadesa

The ancient name for the Hinduized states of the Khmer empire.

The Sanskrit word and refers to the principle of causality where intent and actions of an individual influence the future of that individual. Karma is closely associated with the idea of

A Buddhist festival which comes at the end of Vassavassa, the three-month rainy season retreat for Theravada Buddhists. See also Vassavassa. It is a time of giving, for the laity to express gratitude to monks.

Kauthara

An ancient Cham city located in the area of modern Nha Trang in Khanh Hoa province in Vietnam. Its religious and cultural centre was the temple of Po Nagar, several towers of which still stand at Nha Trang.

Khmer

The largest ethnic group in today's Cambodia, the Khmers moved into mainland southeast Asia from the north well over 3000 years ago. The Khmer empire, which was at its height from 802 CE to 1431, included parts of present-day Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. Khmer is also the language of the Khmers.

Kinnari (and Kinnara) Mythological creatures with both human and bird-like features.

Means a 'fire-house' and is a construction, typically with a saddleshaped roof, used to house the valuables belonging to the deity; also means to cook for the deity.

Kushinara See Eight Sacred Places of Buddhist Pilgrimage.

Kuti or Kouti Monks' living quarters.

A Buddhist religious complex or monastery in Myanmar which includes not just the ordination halls, Stupas and shrines, but also the monks' residence and also serves as a place for the local community during festivals and other merit-making occasions.

Lakshmi

The consort of the Hindu god Vishnu and the goddess of wealth.

Lakshmindralokesvara

Female deity of the Champa kingdom, the combination of two Hindu deities Lakshmi and Indra and the Buddhist Lokesvara.

Lalitavistara

A Mahayana Buddhist Sutra which relates the story of the Buddha from the time of his birth to the first sermon. The title Lalitavistara has been translated as 'the play in full' or 'extensive play,' referring to the Mahavana view that the Buddha's last incarnation was a 'display' or 'performance' given for the benefit of the beings in this world.

Lancet arch form

An architectural motif in western Gothic architecture, the lancet is an arch with an acutely pointed head, usually used to top a lancet shaped opening for a window.

Lei-myet-hna

Four-faced; an ancient Pvu temple type, the model of which was closely followed in Pagan; the Lei-myet-hna was the name of a central-core type temple in Sri Ksetra.

Linga-yoni

Lingam in Sanskrit means phallus and Yoni means vagina. The Lingayoni which has been found in ancient archaeological sites is a statue that symbolizes the balance of the male and female. The Lingam represents the lord Shiva and the Yoni, the goddess Shakti

Lokesvara

See Avalokitesvara Long or Loong

Vietnamese for dragon

Lopburi

A city geographically located in modern day central Thailand. Significant from the 7th century onwards. At times predominantly Mon; also used to refer to an art period in Thailand from the 11th century to 14th century when Lopburi was a Khmer provincial capital.

Luang

Thai word meaning 'royal' or 'venerable father' used respectfully for very senior monks

Luk Nimit

Sacred stone spheres buried underneath Bai Sema stones to demarcate consecrated ground. See Bai Sema. Lumbini

See Eight Sacred Places of Buddhist Pilgrimage.

Mahakaruna-garba-shambala-Mandala A type of Mandala in esoteric Zen Buddhism and tantric Vajrayana Buddhism.

See Parinibhana

Maharajadhiraja A title, the literal meaning of which is 'supreme king of the great kings'. Mahayana

Mahaparinibbana or Mahaparinirvana

Means 'great vehicle'; a type of

Buddhism, Mahayana adopted Sanskrit and Hinayana adopted Pali which is derived from Sanskrit. Mahayana followed a route through the Himalayan mountains and plateau to China, Vietnam and Japan. See also Hinayana and Therayada.

Mahasthamaprapta

One of the eight great Bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism. the Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattya represents the power of wisdom, often depicted in a trinity with Amitabha and Avalokitesvara (or GuanYin in China and Quan Am in Vietnam), especially in Pure Land Buddhism. The name literally means 'arrival of the great strength'. In Chinese Buddhism, the Bodhisattva is usually portraved as a woman, with a likeness similar to Avalokitesvara.

Mahavagga

Includes accounts of the Buddha's and his great disciples' awakenings, as well as rules for Uposatha days and monastic ordination. See Cullagga.

The Buddha of the future, the Buddha who is to follow the historical Buddha

Makara-torana

Sakvamuni.

A Torana (arched, carved gateway) decorated with Makara (a mythical sea-creature resembling a crocodile).

Malay or Malaya Peninsula The former name of modern day peninsular Malaysia.

Mandala which means 'circle' in Sanskrit is a geometric symbol that represents the cosmic universe in both Hinduism and Buddhism. The basic form of a Mandala is a square with four T-shaped gates, contained in a circle. Mandala is also a generic term for any plan or chart with a geometric pattern representing the cosmic universe. Mandalas have been used as the basis for Stupa/temple plans.

Mandalic Of a mandala.

Mandapa

A hall that preceded a temple. The Mandapa was usually flat-roofed and had pillars. Quite often, it was used for religious dancing and music. A large temple might have many Mandapas with pillars adorned with intricate carvings.

Manjushri The Bodhisattva of transcendent

wisdom in Vajrayana Buddhism. Manshu

8th century Chinese historical text.

The personification of desire and evil

in Buddhism; Mara was a demon who tried to distract the Buddha.

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Maurya

The Maurya empire (322–185 BCE) with its capital at Pataliputra (modern day Patna in India) was one of the most powerful empires in the ancient world and in the ancient Indian subcontinent and orginated from presentday Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh states in India. Its decline began 60 Naga vears after the end of Asoka's rule.

Medhi

The elevated circular path at the base of the Stupa used for circumambulation. Melavu

The Melayu kingdom was a small kingdom in Sumatra which came to power after the fall of the Srivijavan empire around 1025 when India's Chola kingdom attacked and destroyed Palembang, its capital city. During the 12th and 13th centuries, along the Batang Hari river, Melayu became the dominant economic power in Sumatra. The Melayu kingdom came to an end in 1278 when Java's Singhasari kingdom attacked the city.

<u>Meru</u> Mount Meru, another name for Mount Sumeru.

Metteya

See Maitreva

Also known as the Talaings; an ethnic group in Myanmar that occupied the coastal regions of southeast Myanmar much before the rise of the Pagan kingdom.

Mondop

Thai word for Mandapa, a pillared outdoor hall or pavilion used for public rituals; it may also be defined as a specific square-based building or shrine with a (seemingly) pyramidal roof carried by columns within a Thai temple complex that may house relics, sacred scriptures or act as a shrine.

Monks' Dwellings

According to Buddhist canonical texts. there are five kinds of dwellings Narsingh (Pancha Lenani) namely, Vihara, Addavoga, Pasada, Hammiva, and Guha as fit for monks. Of these, only the Vihara (monastery) and Guha (cave) have survived.

Mudra

Hand gesture: in Buddhist ritual practice, there are six in total which correspond to the flow of subtle energies activated in spiritual practice Neak Ta Mueang in Thai or Muang in Lao or

together with its dependent villages.

In the southeast Asian political model,

Muong in Vietnamese

Historical semi-independent citystates or principalities in present-day Thailand, Laos, and parts of northern Vietnam. It is a term for a town having a defensive walls and a ruler

smaller mueangs were subordinate to more powerful neighbouring mueang, which in turn were subordinate to the central king. Mueangs often shifted allegiance, and frequently paid tribute to more than one powerful neighbour - the most powerful of the period being the emperors of China.

Literally means cobra, and snake in Thailand and Laos. In general, the Naga is a mythical creature often considered divine, and associated with the underworld. Hindu Buddhist cosmology has the Naga lying coiled around the summit of mount Sumeru to support Vishnu. It is usually portraved as a five or seven-headed snake in Khmer art and architecture. In Laos, the Naga is a water snake. found in rivers with magic powers which is actually a cobra called 'Nak'. Nagara architecture

An Indian architectural style which portrays the beautiful craftsmanship of the artists. Nagara temples have two distinct features. In its plan, the temple is a square with a number of graduated projections in the middle of each side giving a cruciform shape with a number of re-entrant angles on each side. In elevation, a Sikhara or tower gradually inclines inwards in a Pagan convex curve

Nalanda University

Located in present day Bihar state in northern India, it was the ancient Mahayana centre of learning and was established during the Gupta dynasty from around the 4th to the 6th century. Nalanda was to become the largest and most influential Buddhist university for many centuries, with famous teachers such as Nagarjuna. The burning of Nalanda in 1193 by the Islamic Muhammad bin Khilii was the beginning of the decline of Buddhism in India

From the Sanskrit 'Narasimha', the name of a popular avatar or incarnation of Vishnu, often visualized as halfman, half-lion. Known primarily as a 'great protector' who defends his devotees in times of need.

spirits that were Indigenous worshipped.

Ancestral spirits or ghosts in Cambodia.

Nga-myet-hna

Five-faced; refers to the pentagonal monuments of Pagan.

<u>Nibbana</u>

Pali word meaning enlightenment ('Nirvana' in Sanskrit). The Buddhist concept of a state where one is released from suffering, delusion and the cycle of death and rebirth, attained whilst ctill earthbound

Nissava

The two wrong bases of morality are craving (tanha-nissaya) and wrong views (ditthi-nissava).

Nithan Khun Borom

The legends of creation in written form - the 'story of Khun Borom' which had been passed down as an oral tradition in Laos. Of these, the Vessantara Iataka and the Phra Lak Phra Lam become popular forms of visual depiction on temple walls, paintings and sculpture in Laos.

Noble Eight-Fold Path

This is the fourth of the Four Noble Truths; also called the middle way, it consists of the Buddha's prescription for the end of suffering.

A port and active trading centre in the ancient kingdom of Funan.

Pabbata-vihara

Monastery complex in Sri Lanka; refers to the archetypal monastic plan in Sri Lanka, with a sacred precinct surrounded by residential and other buildings.

Present-day Bagan in Myanmar; the capital of the Pagan kingdom in Burma

Name for Stupa in China, also used interchangeably with Stupa.

The remains of the Buddhist Vihara (Somapura or the great monastery) in the town of Paharpur in modern day Bangladesh is evidence of Mahavana Buddhism thriving in the area then known as Bengal from the 7th century to the 12th century. The simple artistic lines, general plan of the monastery and intricate carvings influenced Buddhist architecture in other parts of India such as Vikramshila in Bihar and even as far away as southeast Asia.

An Indian imperial power, during the middle kingdoms of India or the 'classical period' of India, that existed from 750 CE-1174. It was ruled by a Mahayana Buddhist dynasty from Bengal. They created a distinctive form of Buddhist art which came to be known as the Pala school.

The dynasty that ruled part of present day Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in India from around the 2nd to the 9th centuries.

A temple of five towers.

Pancha Lenani

See Monks' Dwellings.

Pancharamas

The five ancient Hindu temples of the Hindu God, Shiva located in Andhra Pradesh, India.

Panchatantra stories

The oldest surviving collection of Indian fables probably written around 200 BCE by the great Hindu scholar Pandit Vishnu Sharma.

The ancient Cham city of Panduranga located in the area around present-day Phan Rang in Vietnam. Panduranga was the last of the Cham territories to be annexed by the Vietnamese.

Parami

Pali (Paramita in Sanskrit) for 'nerfection' or 'completeness' In Buddhism, the Paramis or Paramitas refer to the perfection or culmination of certain virtues which are cultivated as a way of purification, purifying Karma and helping the aspirant to live an unobstructed life, while reaching the goal of enlightenment.

Parinibbana or Parinirvana

The death of a person who has attained Nibbana or Nirvana or complete enlightenment. The Buddha entered this state at the time he passed away.

Parusuddhi

Purifications, a verbal attestation delivered by Bhikkus to indicate that he has been purified. Parvati

The consort of the Hindu god Shiva and the mother of all the gods or the benevolent mother goddess. She is sometimes known as Durga, Chandrika or Chandika.

Pasada or Prasada

See Monks' Dwellings Patimokkha (Pali) or Pratimoksa

A list of rules governing the behaviour of Buddhist monks.

Present-day Bago; a Mon city in Myanmar.

The ancient Pyu city, also spelt Beikthano; also referred to as Peikthanomyo meaning 'Vishnu-city' (Vishnu is a Hindu god).

Indonesian word translated literally as 'waiting women'; it means a small ancillary temple.

Nature spirits in Thailand, such as of a mountain, lake, or forest.

Lao for Sim. See Sim.

Phnom Da

Archaeological site near Angkor Borei in Cambodia.

Thai and Lao honorific meaning 'venerable' or 'lord'. It is also used as the title of Lao kings. See also Chakkapat and Cakravatin.

Phra Lak Phra Ram

The national epic of the Lao people, and is adapted from Valmiki's Hindu epic, the Ramayana, but in Laos, it has lost the association with Hinduism and is instead considered a Jataka story about a previous lifetime of the

Phum Khao Bin

Lotus bud Chedi in Thailand.

Phuttakhet

In Laos, Vats or Wats are also known as Phuttakhet which refers to a demarcated monastic space as the sacred space of the Buddha. See also Vats and wats.

Pradakshina

Circumambulation.

Prajnaparamita

Meaning the 'perfection of wisdom' in Sanskrit, it is the body of Sutras and commentaries that represent Shunvata or the illusory nature of all phenomena, the oldest of the major forms of Mahavana Buddhism. It is also a Buddhist deity.

Prang

Thai version of the Khmer style towers, itself derived from Indian prototypes. Usually very richly carved and elongated.

Prasat

Temple tower in Khmer architecture; Thai and Cambodian term meaning palace or temple.

<u>Prome</u>

From the word 'pyay' which means 'the capital'; it was an ancient city of the Pvus. See also Pyay. Pure Land Buddhism

focused on the Amitabha Buddha.

Pure Land oriented practices and

concepts are found within basic

Mahavana Buddhist cosmology, and

form an important component of

the Mahavana Buddhist traditions

of China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and

Vietnam. In Japanese Buddhism,

Pure Land teachings developed into

independent institutional sects, as

can be seen in the Jodo-shu and Jodo

Spire composed of a series of roofs

which diminish in size, going up;

in modern Burmese, it could mean

a palatial building or multi-storied

Shinshu schools.

Pyatthat

pavilion.

A broad branch of Mahavana

Buddhism and one of the most widely practiced traditions of Buddhism in east Asia. Pure Land on a tower, usually a Shikara. is a tradition of Buddhist teachings

Sanskrit word for jewel or gemstone. A city in the Khmer empire.

Rong Upoposot

A Lao Sim used for ordinations only. See also Sim.

The 'world of form' in the three worlds or three realms (Tri-loka or Tridhatu) described in Hindu-Buddhist cosmology. See also Kamaloka and Arupaloka for the other realms.

Sakvamuni

the historical Buddha.

Samantabhadra

A Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism associated with Buddhist practice and meditation. He is the patron of the lotus Sutra and according to Zen and the Pure Land Buddhism, he is venerated as the protector of the lotus Sutra

Sangha

Sangharama Sanskrit word meaning temple or

The monastic community

Sanghavasa

monastery

The monks'living quarters; in Thailand, the Wats have the Buddhavasa housing the Buddha image and the temple and the Sanghavasa housing the various buildings of the residential quarters of the monastic order.

Sankassa

See Eight Sacred Places of Buddhist Pilgrimage.

Sanskrit or Sanskritic

An ancient language of India; the Sanskritic language is the language of the Vedas and of Hinduism; the official language of India although it is now used only for religious purposes.

Saraswati

The consort of the Hindu god Brahma and the Hindu goddess of music and the arts.

Saririka Dhatu

Bodily relics.

Sarnath

See Eight Sacred Places of Buddhist Pilgrimage.

Sasanavamsa A chronicle written by the Buddhist monk Pannasami in 1861.

Sehvadari or Sahvadri hills A mountain range at the western ghats in India, running north to south along the western edge of the Deccan nlateau

Shaivism and Shaivite

Followers of the Hindu god Shiva; Shaivites practiced Shaivism, See Shiva.

Shikhara or Sikhara

The main tower or spire of a Hindu

Shinden or Shinden-zukuri

Type of architecture which refers to the style of domestic architecture developed for palatial or aristocratic mansions built in Kyoto during the Heian period (794 CE-1185).

One of the gods in the sacred Hindu trinity, the two others being Brahma and Vishnu. Shiva is the destroyer. the god with the cosmic function of destruction. See Shaivism.

Shiva Linga

See Linga Yoni.

emptiness or voidness. Is the most sacred building in a Lao Buddhist temple where lavmen are ordained into monkhood and

Sanskrit for the Buddhist concept of

where Buddhist ceremonies take place. In Laos, this is also called the Buddhasimma. See Phihan and Rong Upoposot.

Sino or Sinosphere

Shunyata or Sunyata

Generally refers to China, the ancient to modern history of China, the culture of China, or the Chinese people. Sinicization, sinicisation, or sinification is a process whereby non-Han Chinese societies come under the influence of dominant Han Chinese state and society

Sirkap or Sirsukh (Urdu)

An ancient city built by the Greco-Bactrian King Demetrius after he invaded ancient India around 180

Socle

Base of the Prang.

Pond in Cambodia

Sravasti See Eight Sacred Places of Buddhist Pilgrimage.

Sri Ksetra

Capital of the Pyus. See Thayekhittaya. Stupa

A structure, mainly associated with Buddhism, that has its origins in Tumuli (an artificial mound, especially over a grave). Structurally, it could be solid without any interior space, or with a hollow space inside for storing relics. It is a completely sealed structure, and there is almost invariably no entrance into the interior. A Stupa is known by different names in the various regions. See Chedi, Chorten, Dagoba, Pagoda, Tat, and Zedi. The word Pagoda is sometimes also used generically for a

Stupa. Stupika

A small votive Stupa usually made of clay and containing Buddhist texts or images; this can be part of the topmost part of some Hindu or Buddhist temples.

Sudhammapura Ancient Thaton.

Sukhothai A city in north central Thailand; also a Tai kingdom around the city of that

kingdom existed from 1238 to 1438. Sumeru

Is also referred to as Mount Meru, the mountain that is at the centre of the universe in Hindu-Buddhist cosmology.

name. Also called Sukhodaya, the

Present-day Prome, on the bank of the Ayeryarwaddy river in Myanmar. An ethnic group, now extinct, that occupied areas of central Myanmar

Vietnamese for the Chinese Boddhissatva of compassion known as Kuanyin or Guanyin. See also Avalokitesvara

in the early centuries of the first

Quincunx

millennium

A geometric pattern consisting of five points arranged in a cross, with four of them forming a square or rectangle, and the fifth the centre.

In Thai temples, a cloister-like gallery.

Rajaguru or Raxakhru Sanskrit for 'teacher of the world'. See Eight Sacred Places of Buddhist

Present-day name for what was called

Pilgrimage.

A Hindu god, one of the incarnations of Vishnu. See Ramayana.

'Arakan' in colonial Burma.

Ramannadesa One of the names of the lands occupied by the Mon kingdoms.

Ramayana One of the two great ancient Hindu epics (the other being the Mahabharata). It is ascribed to the Hindu sage Valmiki. The name Ramayana translates to 'Rama's Journey' and consists of 24,000 verses in seven books telling the story of Rama (an avatar of the Hindu supreme-god Vishnu), whose wife Sita is abducted by Ravan, the king of Lanka (current day Sri Lanka).

The facet or vertical offset proection

Rupaloka or Rupadhatu

Rupaphum

See Traibhumikatha.

Another name for Siddharta Gautama.

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Sunda or Sundanese kingdom

Lasting from around 669 CE to 1579, it was the successor to the Hindu Taruma kingdom of west Java.

Sutra or Sutta

Buddhist scriptures.

Suvannabhumi or Suvarnabhumi

Translates to 'the golden land'; this was Mon country in Burma with Thaton as its ancient capital.

Word for Stupa in Korea.

Ta

Word for Stupa in China. <u>Tahoto</u>

Name for Stupa in Japan.

<u>Tai</u>

An ethnic group that migrated to Thailand in the 10th century. They came to prominence with the establishment of the first Thai kingdom, the Sukhothai kingdom. Talaing

Another word for the Mon people. Tang

The Tang period from 618–907 CE To was regarded as the golden age of Chinese civilization and during those 300 years brought great prosperity and cultural achievement to China.

Tantric Buddhism

See Vajrayana Buddhism.

Tara

A Buddhist goddess; a female Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism. She is known as the 'mother of liberation'. and represents the virtues of success in work and achievements.

Taruma (or Tarumanagara)

An early Sundanese Indianized kingdom in west Java from 358-669 CE centred around today's modern Jakarta. Its ruler, Purnavarman produced in the 5th century one of the earliest known inscriptions in Java. Tat or That

Word for Stupa in Lao and is derived from the Sanskrit word. Dhatu literally meaning substance that is used to refer to relics.

Tavatimsa (Pali) or Travastrimsa (Sanskrit)

Is an important world of the 33 Devas in Buddhist cosmology. The Tavatimsa heaven is the second of the heavens and the highest of the heavens that maintains a physical connection with the rest of the world. The Tavatimsa heaven and or Trayastrimsa heaven is located on the peak of Mount Sumeru.

<u>Taxila</u>

An important city in the ancient kingdom of Gandhara.

Thaton

The ancient Mon capital, also called Sudhammapura or Sudhammavati.

Thavekhittava

The ancient capital city of the Pyus, it was also known as Sri Ksetra ('the auspicious field', or the 'field of glory'). Located close to Prome. It is presentdav Hmawza.

Thein

Ordination hall in Myanmar. Theravada

The oldest surviving branch of Buddhism. The word is derived from the Sanskrit, and literally means 'the teaching of the elders'. It is relatively conservative and is closer to early Buddhism than other existing Buddhist traditions. Theravada is sometimes also referred to as Hinavana. The Theravada sect of Hinayan Buddhism reached southeast Asia from Sri Lanka. See also Mahayana, Hinayana and Vajrayana. Three Jewels

The Buddha, the Dhamma and Sangha are collectively referred to as the Three Jewels of Buddhism.

Word for Stupa in Japan. <u>Torana</u>

An arched, carved gateway. Traibhumikatha

A Pali word, the Thai equivalent of which is Traiphum Phra Ruang. In Buddhist cosmology, refers to the three worlds, which are further subdivided into 31 realms. From lowest to highest the primary three are: Kamaphum – the world of desire. Rupaphum – the world of form, and Arupaphum - the world without form. (See also Kamaloka, Rupaloka and Arupaloka). In Thai temples, it is also a title for the mural paintings behind the presiding Buddhist image in an Ubosot

Traiphum Phra Ruang See Traibhumikatha

Tripitaka

Literally 'three baskets'. Theravada Buddhist scriptures divided into three categories.

<u>Ubosot</u>

Ordination hall in Thailand, often Vat shortened to Bot.

Uposatha

The Buddhist day of observance for 'the cleansing of the defiled mind', resulting in inner calm and joy. On this day, the monks and the laity intensify their practice, deepen their knowledge and express communal commitment.

<u>Usnishavijaya Sutra</u> A Mahayana sutra from India.

Translated from Sanskrit to Chinese from 679-988 CE. It gained wide circulation in China. Also known as the Usnisa Vijava Dharani, it is associated with Mount Wutai, which in the Chinese Buddhist tradition is

considered the place of awakening of the Manjusri Bodhisattva. Sacred stone tablets with the Usnishavijaya Sutra carved into them have been distributed widely in some regions of the far east.

Vairocana Buddha

Vairocana Buddha is the celestial Buddha and in the Sutras, is interpreted as the bliss body of Siddharta Gautama, the historical Buddha. In Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, the Vairocana Buddha embodies emptiness and in the five Wisdom Buddhas, the Vairocana is depicted in the centre.

Vaishali

See Eight Sacred Places of Buddhist Pilgrimage.

Vaishnavite or Vaishnavism

Followers of the Hindu god Vishnu.

Vaira means thunderbolt in Sanskrit. It is a symbolic Buddhist and Hindu ritual object which symbolizes indestructibility, irresistible force and firmness of spirit.

Vajradhatu-mandala

The Vajradhatu-mandala is a type of mandala often referred to as the diamond world mandala of Vajravana Buddhism and esoteric Japanese Buddhism.

Vajrapani

Vajrapani, the Buddha of Spiritual power, liberates from the Karma of thought

The stone seat that the Buddha was sitting on when he was enlightened; it is also the 'thunderbolt' pose in yoga. Vajrayana Buddhism

Also known as Tantric Buddhism, esoteric Buddhism and the diamond way or thunderbolt way, Vajrayana Buddhism is one of the three vehicles to enlightenment, the other two being Hinavana Buddhism and Mahavana Ruddhiem

Vassavasa

Rain retreat

Word for temple in Lao. See Wat.

Vedika The stone balustrade around the Pradakshina pathway, a feature of early Indian Stupas.

Vessantara Jataka

Tells the story of one of Buddha's past Yin lives, about a compassionate prince, Vessantara, who gives away everything he owns displaying the virtue of perfect charity.

Vihara or Viharn or Wihan A Buddhist monastery

A city-state in the ancient kingdom of Champa in what is now the south central coast region of Vietnam. located in present-day Binh Dinh province. Vijaya was the capital and cultural centre of Champa for several centuries until it was conquered by Vietnam in 1471 and the area around Vijava was probably one of earliest landfalls of the Cham people in what is now Vietnam.

Vikramshila

The monastery of Vikramshila Mahavviha in Bhagalpur, Bihar, India was a much celebrated ancient university founded by the Pala king Dhamapala around the end of the 8th to early 9th century. The plan of this monastery resembles that of Paharpur in Bangladesh.

Vishnu

One of the gods in the Hindu trinity, the others being Brahma and Shiva, Vishnu is the Preserver, the god with the cosmic function of preserving or maintaining.

Visud<u>dhimagga</u> A Buddhist treatise written by Buddhaghosa; Visuddhi in Pali means purification, and Magga means path.

<u>Vitarkamudra</u> Hand gesture symbolizing elucidation. Vyadhapura

Capital of Funan

Wat

A temple, which may include not only congregation halls, but also a monastery, school rooms and sports grounds. Note that in Thailand, the term Wat may be applied to any religious centre, so Christian churches and Muslim mosques may also be referred to as Wats.

Wat Phu

Site in present-day Laos that was part of the Khmer empire.

Wesak Day or Vesak Day is celebrated in the Buddhist world as the Buddha's birthday.

Wihan or Viharn

Thai word for Vihara, as in a Buddhist monastery, a small shrine hall or retreat house, or an assembly hall containing an altar.

A Pali word referring to a class of celestial demons, usually benevolent and utilized as guardians in Thai architecture and art.

River near Peikthano, Myanmar. Name for Stupa in Myanmar.

Zen is a form of Mahayana Buddhism. It can be loosely translated as 'meditation Buddhism'.

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