

A STUDY OF THE NAMES OF MONUMENTS IN ANGKOR (Cambodia)

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Introduction

This article aims at clarifying the concept of Khmer culture by specifically explaining the meanings of the names of the monuments in Angkor, names that have existed within the Khmer cultural community.¹ Many works on Angkor history have been researched in different fields, such as the evolution of arts and architecture, through a systematic analysis of monuments and archaeological excavation analysis, and the most crucial are based on Cambodian epigraphy.

My work however is meant to shed light on Angkor cultural history by studying the names of the monuments, and I intend to do so by searching for the original names that are found in ancient and middle period inscriptions, as well as those appearing in the oral tradition. This study also seeks to undertake a thorough verification of the condition and shape of the monuments, as well as the mode of affixation of names for them by the local inhabitants.

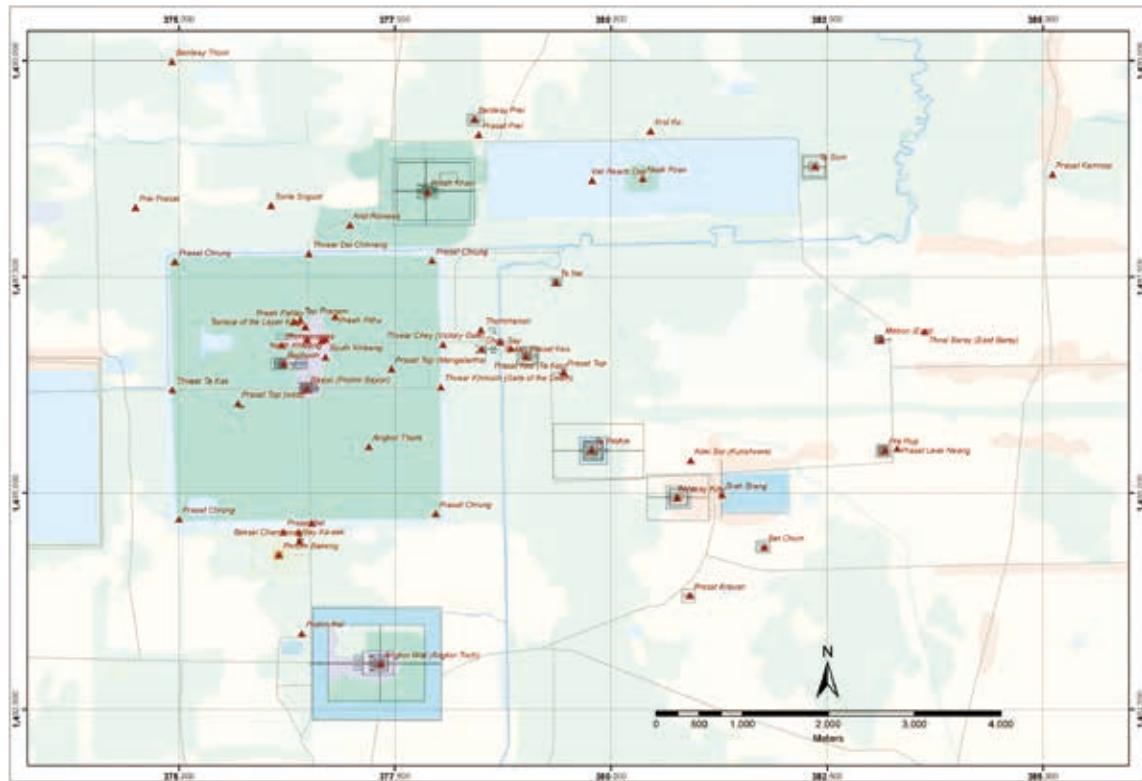
I also wish to focus on certain crucial errors, as well as the insufficiency of earlier studies on the subject. To begin with, the books written in foreign languages often have mistakes in the vocabulary involved in the etymology of Khmer temples. Some researchers are not very familiar with the Khmer language, and besides, they might not have visited the site very often, or possibly also they did not pay too much attention to the oral tradition related to these ruins, a tradition that might be known to the village elders.

For instance, the names of the five gates of Angkor Thom were either labeled or referred to by Foreign researchers as South Gate, North Gate, West Gate, and East Gate, and also the Barays were labeled as East Baray, West Baray, North Baray, and so on. This manner of naming is a phenomenon that has arisen in modern times due to the European researchers, since in the case of mapping, we observe that there is only “length and width” with no depth, and hence the upper end of the map would naturally indicate the north.

In general however all of such names were affixed by the local inhabitants, as for example with regard to the Gates of Angkor Thom, the South Gate is called the “Thvear Tonle Om = Tonle

* For this study, I owe an immense debt of thanks to my Professor Yoshiaki Ishizawa for always advice me in academic writing that I should explore the idea in Khmer original thought or concept. Also, he and Professor Masako Marui have always provided me a chance to participate every Sophia Mission and allowed me to do my own researches. This article is a part of the result I have conducted on-site research at Angkor. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Professor Cyril Veliah for his always kind to edit my English. I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Ang Choulean, who always advised and influenced me very much concerning this study. I would also like to thank my friends Pheang Sam Ourn, Phoeung Dara and Hun Chhanteng for their comments and always accompanying me to the monument sites, and Kim Samnang for always help to edit maps.

1 I have interested in this topic since I was a student in the 1990s at the Faculty of Archaeology, Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.



Source: MPWT & JICA 2003; Map Projection: WGS1984
Edited by KIM Samnang, 2017

Map 1 Angkor Park map (small and grand circuits)

Om Gate,”² which literal translates as “Gate of rowing (a boat on a river),” the North Gate is called “Thvear Dei Chhnang = Dei Chhnang Gate,” meaning “Gate of clay (that can produce) pottery,” the West Gate is “Thvear Ta Kav = Ta Kav Gate³”), and the East Gate is called “Thvear Khmoch = Gate of the Death.” As for the Barays, the East Baray is referred to by the villagers as “Thnal Baray,” which means “Road of Baray,” and the West Baray is called “Baray Toek Thla = reservoir with purified or clear water.”⁴ (Map 1&2)

Recently, there have also arisen certain controversial topics among the Khmer people, both scholars and others, related to the appellation of names to ruins and other places. The problem is concerned with phonetics, semantics, etymology, and even the writing of these names in the Khmer alphabet, and this controversy has affected or given rise to confusion or misunderstanding among the Khmers, both scholars and non-scholars alike.

I shall hereafter present a few examples:

- Spean Toep (sbān dibv) or Spean Toap (sbān dăb)? (Ph. 1&2)

Spean Toep is at present located in the Chong Kal district of the Oddar Meanchey province. It is

- 2 Tonle Om is generally called to refer to a pond or reservoir that located in front of the temple’s entrance; for example a pond, which is situated at the entrance of the Phnom Chiso temple in Takeo province, Prasat Preah Theat Baray at Srei Santhor in Kompong Cham province, and so on, is also called Tonle Om.
- 3 Ta Kav is the name of a person. “Ta” means ancestor, grandfather, or old man. “Ta” may mean a reference to a belief of animism, namely “Neak Ta,” and Ta Kav may mean “the gate that is protected by the ancestor spirit, namely ‘Kav.’
- 4 The names of Baray will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.



Ph. 1&2 Spean Toep, a view from south-east and south-west angles

the longest ancient bridge that was built during the reign of king Jayavarman VII, measuring 150m in length and 14.5m in width. It was mainly built with laterite blocks and sandstone decorations, stretching from the north to the south. In the Angkor period, this bridge was constructed along the royal road connecting Angkor to Phimai (present day, Thailand).

The name is generally written as “Spean Toap.” Yet, until now we have not learned its exact meaning and origin, though “Toap” can mean “soldier.” If we check the information provided in an old book published by French scholars in the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, we may learn its name and meaning. According to the classical work of Etienne Aymonier, *Le Cambodge*, volume 2, published in 1901, it was written as “Tœup” and translated into French as “Le pont divin,” which means “Divine bridge.”⁵ The name was written and translated by Aymonier, and its meaning makes sense.

- Beng Mealea (pen mālā) or Boeung Mealea (piñ mālā)?

Beng Mealea is a temple located about 60km northeast of Siem Reap town, in the Beng Mealea village of the Beng Mealea commune of Svay Loeu district, in the Siem Reap province. It was built during the reign of king Suryavarman II in the 12th century. Recently there have arisen many debates among Khmer scholars in relation to the meaning and spelling of the name.

First, we should understand the meaning of the word “Mealea, or Mālā,”⁶ which is generally confused with the meaning of “garland.” This name is used rather than the original name, which was recorded in a poem of the 17th century, namely “Lboek Nagarvatt, or the Foundation of Angkor Wat.”⁷ In that poem, mention is made of the name of King Preah Ketmealea (Brah Ketumālā),⁸ a half-human son of the god Indra. According to the legend, Indra took him to the celestial realms, but he could not stay there long since he was human, and had a different smell from that of the gods. Hence, Indra had to send him back to the earth. Before, he returned to the earth, however, Indra ordered the divine architect Viśvakarman (or Bisnukār) to build for him a city, namely Mahānagar

⁵ Aymonier 1901: 357

⁶ Mealea, in direct translation means “garland”.

⁷ Khing 1985; original Khmer text by E. Aymonier in 1878.

⁸ Preah Ketmealea is a name of a king in a well-known oral tradition.

Indrapraṣṭh, and a palace, namely Bejayant, the same as what existed in heaven.⁹ So far, the name of the Beng Mealea temple seems to bear the memory of that legendary king, namely Ketmealea.

There are other pieces of evidence that can account for the name Beng Mealea, such as for example the name “Beng Mealea,” which appeared in the poem “Nireas Angkor Wat,” which was composed by Oknha Suttantaprijā In in the early 20th century.¹⁰ Also, there used to be a pagoda in the temple compound, named “Wat Preah Ketmealea,” and another piece of evidence is the name of an ancient road, which is called “Phlov Beng = Beng Road,” which connects Angkor to the north-eastern area (There are temples along the road up to Bakan¹¹, such as Prasat Bat Chum, Chau Srei Vibol, and Beng Mealea).¹² We have observed so far that if we use the word “Boeung,” which means “Pond,” we see that it does not match, or renders meaningless, the name “Mealea”.

Moreover, studying the names of monuments would be a contribution to Angkor history, if we showed the evolution or transformation of the names. Most of the names in Angkor were transformed in the middle period, that is from the 14th to 19th century. Although when viewed from the political standpoint Angkor in the middle period had disappeared or had become weakened with reference to royal power, yet, its civilization had continuously survived within the spirit and heart of the Khmer people.¹³ It may be said that the Khmer civilization in the middle period formed a strong link between the Ancient period (Pre-Angkor and Angkor period) to the modern period of Cambodia (that is, from the 19th century up to the present).

The study of the names of monuments is not a new topic. It was already studied by Saveros Pou, in her work entitled “Les Noms des Monuments Khmers,” *BEFEO*, Tome 78, 1991, pp. 203-227. Her study was specifically based on linguistics and philology, where she extracted the original names from the inscriptions, and there were also some classical books in which were written the names of monuments by French scholars, such as H. Parmentier (*L’Art Khmèr Primitif et L’Art Khmèr Classique* 1937, 1939), E. Aymonier (*Le Cambodge* 1900-04), Lunet de Lajonquièvre (*Inventaire Descriptif des Monuments du Cambodge* 1902-11), and G. Cœdès (*Inscriptions du Cambodge* 1937-66).

In her methodological remarks, she pointed out the fact that the names of the monuments presented an appendix to the Khmer lexicon. Hence, the first thing that principally needs to be done is to analyze the semantic aspect, and second, because the majority of the names of the monuments have been transformed throughout these centuries owing to cultural changes, giving rise to phonetic changes within the language, the present-day forms of the names of the monuments must be accounted for both semantically and phonetically.¹⁴

For this study, I have adopted her methodology in examining the names of the monuments, yet, besides using the ancient and middle period inscriptions, old documents of folktales, reports and

9 This will be discussed below in relation to the names of the Angkor and Bayon temples.

10 Oknha Suttantaprijā In 1969: 77.

11 It is erroneously called “Preah Khan Kompong Svay” by researchers.

12 This information was communicated by Prof. Ang Choulean, a well-known Khmer scholar specialized in Ethnology and Khmer Civilization. The name of the Beng Mealea temple was also explained by Mr. Im Sokrity, an archaeologist, in the APSARA Authority’s Facebook page.

13 Nhim 2014-16: 33-107.

14 Pou 1991: 208.

notebooks by envoys, pilgrims, and travelers,¹⁵ and classical works of earlier studies by scholars, I have also used my own on-site investigation in order to check the actual condition of the temples, I have interviewed the old villagers about the legends that contained the names of temples, I have noted the accents of the villagers when they pronounced the names, and so on.

Notes on the written names:

Since this article is concerned with the written names of the monuments and places, we basically use the system of transliteration. The system of transliteration has been adopted to reproduce in roman letters commentaries written in Khmer, Pāli, and Sanskrit. The system of transliteration adopted for the Khmer script was created by Saveros Pou, who concluded the former works begun by G. Cœdès and F. Martini on this system of writing. The system of transliteration used for this study adopted the following work: Saveros Pou (Lewitz), “Notes sur Translittération du Cambodge”, *BEFEO*, LV, 1969, pp. 163-169, and the later revised Dictionnaire Vieux Khmer-Français-Anglais, Cedoreck, Paris, 1992.

In my present work, to write the names of the monuments, I sometimes wrote using both the systems of transliteration and phonetic transcription, and for well-known names, sometimes only using phonetic transcription. For example: the words ‘Preah,’ ‘Prasat,’ the name ‘Angkor,’ or the modern city ‘Phnom Penh.’ and so forth. These words and names are pronounced in this manner because of the French language. These words were written by the French, keeping in mind the Khmer pronunciation.

Notes on the photos:

For photos of the most well-known temples are not presented all here, excepted some special characteristics of the temples. The small temples that located far from the Angkor Park and in the forest are mostly shown in this article.

Chapter 1. A Brief Introduction to Angkor

In the early 9th century, the Khmer empire was centered in what is now known as the Angkor region. That was in the reign of king Jayavarman II (802-834). According to the Sdok Kak Thom inscription,¹⁶ the king proclaimed himself a universal monarch (or Chakravatin), and declared Cambodia’s independence vis-à-vis Java by instituting a new religious cult, namely the cult of Devarāja on the Kulen Mountain, represented by a sacred Linga. It was in 802 AD that the king completed the unification of the country under his rule, and this is marked as a turning point in Khmer history and a departing point of the Angkor civilization.

The capital of the Khmer kingdom was established in the Angkor region from the 9th to the 15th centuries. The extent of time that the capital remained in the same location is extraordinary, considering the fact of the Pre-Angkorian Period of instability and re-location. Those involved with the historiography of the region mark the “Angkorian Period” as coming to an end at around the

15 Zhou Daguan 1967, 2006; San Antonio 1914, 1998; Mouhot 1864.

16 Cœdès et Dupont 1943-46 (K. 235).

early 14th century, and this was followed by the “Middle Period.”¹⁷

The following is a chronological summary of the history of Cambodia:

- Ancient period: lasted from the 6th century to the 14th century
 - Pre-Angkor period: 6th – 9th centuries
 - Angkor period: 9th – 14th centuries
- Middle period: 14th – 19th centuries
- Modern period: 19th century – present day

The term Angkor itself is related to the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, with a long history of both phonetic and semantic evolution. It means that the term Angkor is not just an area where existed a lot of temples, but it includes the local inhabitants living around the area, who constitute a good means to evoke the memories of the past, for benefit of the present and future.

The name “Angkor” signifies the “Angkor region,” which consisted of many monuments, and “Angkor civilization” that represented the glorious Khmer empire. The prosperity of the Angkor civilization or Khmer empire is generally supposed by historians to be strongly supported by the agricultural economic base of the irrigation system,¹⁸ the system of taxation,¹⁹ and the mainland trade route networks that connected Angkor to the Bay of Bengal and South China Sea.²⁰

Some scholars, on the other hand, suggested that this prosperity was because of the cultural influence of Indian philosophy, namely concepts that were adapted, transformed, and expanded, to fit the ambitions of the local elite and social institutions, as G. Coedès describes in his classical work on “The Indianized States of Southeast Asia.”²¹

Based on the evidence of the inscriptions, the cultural influence from India came in the form of the two great religions, and the Sanskrit language. The two great religions are Brahmanism and Buddhism. The Sanskrit language also took root in the imperial courts of Angkor. The temples were basically built as representative of the residence of the gods, the symbol of Mount Meru, and symbolized the king’s power. G. Coedès expressed the view that each king was supposed to build his own temple-mountain, which would become his mausoleum when he died.

Several temples were built in the Khmer territory, which included present-day Thailand, Laos and South Vietnam, and especially the area called “Angkor” that spreads over around 401 square kilometers. There are around 80 main monuments in the Angkor region (see the list below) (Map 2). The question however arises as to why during the Angkorian period the Khmer kings built so many temples? The king was considered a God, and so when the country was faced with a war, the

17 It should be noted that the “Angkorian Period” began when the capital “Angkor” became the cultural and political center. While the era ended and gave way to a new “Middle Period,” the capital remained the same for almost another century and a half. There are several criteria that need to be considered for researchers to determine the change of a “period,” which amounts roughly to one concept, namely the change of a civilization.

18 Groslier 1979.

19 Ishizawa 2012: 44-47.

20 Ishizawa 1999, 2013: 649-665.

21 Coedès 1968.

king had to go to the front lines to fight the enemy. Many kings died in battle. When the next king ascended the throne he never completed the building of the temple of the previous king. The new king had to construct his own temple for the God to whom he was dedicated, and this became his royal temple. Hence, the construction of most of the Khmer temples had never been finished.

1.1. The Name “Angkor”

The name ‘Angkor’ was recorded by European travelers since the 16th century, with different written approaches to the names they heard from the local inhabitants. In the record of Diogo de Couto, a Portuguese, who came to Angkor around 1550, what is written is Angar, and the following is the record from the 17th century, by people such as San Antonio (a Spaniard) who wrote “Angkor and Anchor,” Jacque, who wrote “Angor,” J. Dos Santos, who wrote “Angor,” and Arrgensola, who wrote “Angkon.”²² All these written names are very close to the present-day name of “Angkor.” In the 19th century, in the account of Henri Mouhot (a French naturalist)²³ who traveled in the Indo-Chinese countries during the years 1858, 1859, and 1860, the name of Angkor was written by him as ‘Nokhor, or Ongcor.’ In later centuries the name was found in transcriptions, written in almost the same way as it is done at present. This indicates the evolution of the Khmer pronunciation.

The name of Angkor however is originally derived from the Sanskrit word ‘nagara’, which was a factor in its evolution into Khmer pronunciation. As it was noted, the accentuation of the pre-syllable is absent, which is an uncommon Khmer trait.²⁴ The Sanskrit term *nagara*, in Khmer *nagar*, or *nokor*, means ‘city or capital,’ and it has been applied to two sites, namely Angkor Thom, or “Grand City,” in Sanskrit *mahānagara*, which signifies the 12 kilometers enclosure, where the Bayon temple is located at the center. It contrasts with the neighboring Angkor Toch, or “Small City,” called so by the local inhabitants to express the dimensions of enclosure existing on the inside of a temple, which was built by king Suryavarman II in the first half of the 12th century (1113-1150?). Another well-known appellation is Angkor Wat. The name is difficult to translate; it seems that the written way was probably in Pali or Sanskrit style, and it may translate as “the city that became monastery” or “the city with the monastery.” In case of the name of temple Wat Nokor, where is located in the Kompong Cham province, simply mean “the monastery of the city”. The latter indicates the establishment of Theravada Buddhist monasteries by the Khmer kings, from the 16th century onwards.

The appellation Nokor, or Angkor, moreover, has flourished all over the country, as the name of places, cities, temples, and especially villages around the Angkor area. The city named ‘Prei Nokor,’ the ‘city that has a lot of forest,’ was changed to ‘Saigon’ (the city of South Vietnam). We also have Angkor Borei, or *angor purī*²⁵ (the town that is a city), in the Takeo province; Prasat Kuk Nokor, or *prāsād guk nagar* (the city which has a temple in the form of the *guk*²⁶), in the Kampong Thom

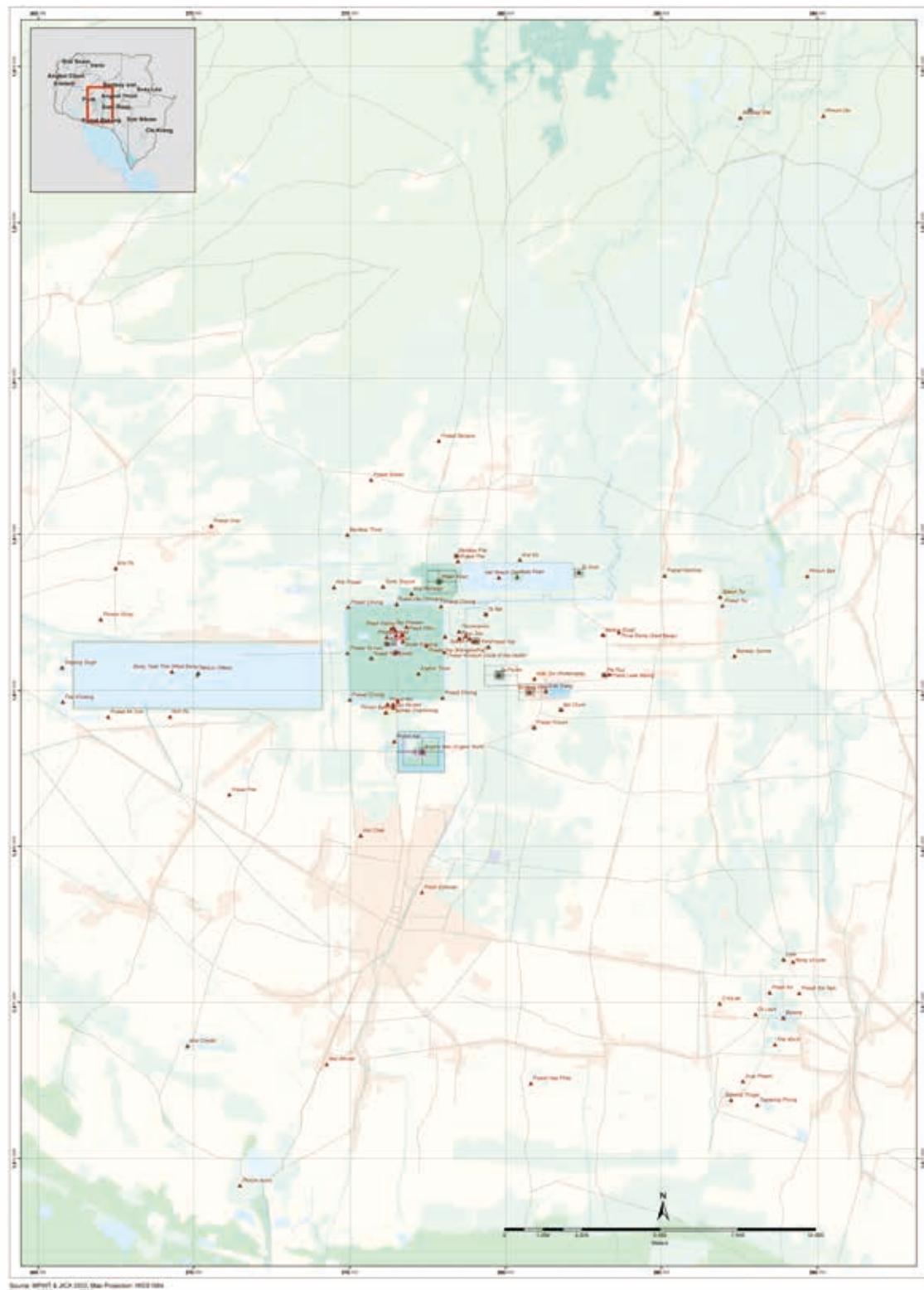
22 Groslier 1958: 101, San Antonio 1998: 6.

23 Mouhot 1986: 278.

24 Groslier 1958: 101; See also Pou 1991: 217.

25 The modern term ‘Borei’ derived from ‘pura’ or ‘puri,’ which is found in many inscriptions as the name of a place. It means, ‘enclosure of the locality, that is, a town, city, or village.’

26 *guk*, or *Kuk*, signifies the small form of the Khmer temples, or the interior of a small temple with a dark inside (see also the Chapter 4).



Map 2 General Map of Angkor region

province.

Names of other villages or districts located around the Angkor area are: Phum Angkor Krau, Angkor Krau village (the village which is located outside the city); Sruk Angkor Thom district (the

district of the grand city); Sruk Angkor Chum (the district which surrounds the city); Phum Angkor Pheas (a village name meaning someone who escaped from the city); and so on.

1.2. The Name “Angkor Wat”

We have no record of the original name of Angkor Wat during the reign of king Suryavarman II (1113~1150?). However, after the death of the king, especially from the 13th century onwards, based on the inscription found on the wall of the southern gallery of Angkor Wat, the name was probably “Visṇuloka”, which was in the later century written as “Bisṇuloka”, pronounced “Pisnulok” (Ph. 3). Bisṇuloka was the posthumous name of king Suryavarman II.

The evolution of the name has been noted in history. The name “Bisṇuloka” appeared especially in the inscriptions of the 16th and 17th century at Angkor Wat. For example, as evidence from an inscription in the 16th century, the name Angkor Wat was called “...pān sāñ braḥ mahānagar indrapraṣṭh nu braḥ **bisnulok**...”²⁷ In another inscription from the 17th century dated 1632 AD, it is called “...indipath mhānagar srīsudhar pavar **bisnulok**.²⁸

Mahānagar srīsudhar is an echo of the ancient name of Śri Yaśodharapura, established by king Yasovarman I at the beginning of the 10th century.

Bisnulok bears the memory of the posthumous name of king Suryavarman II, namely “Paramaviśṇuloka,” the founder of the Angkor Wat temple in the 12th century.

Indrapraṣṭh or *indipath* has been found as an element in a certain title of the city at that time. It is also a well-known name of the capital of northern India, namely Indrapraṣṭha (located a few kilometers south of Delhi).²⁹ The two forms of the names contained in the Indo-Aryan language, both in Sanskrit and Pāli, have the same meaning of ‘City of Indra’.³⁰ The name *indipath* was found also in a letter of the king of Cambodia to the Shogun or military governor of Japan, that was dated 1605, from the following Chinese translation:

“samdec braḥ raja oṅkār paramabitr kambujādhipati **srī yasodhar braḥ mahānagar indapraṣṭh.**” The high majesty of the king of Kingdom of Cambodia, srī yasodhar braḥ mahānagar



vrah pāda
kamrateñ
añ parama
viśṇuloka

Ph. 3 Inscription of the 1st gallery at the southern wall of Angkor Wat

27 Pou 1970: 111.

28 Pou 1972: 239.

29 Leclère 1914 : 29.

30 Pou 1991 : 219.

indaprasth.³¹ The name Sri Yasodhar is also in memory of the old city of Sri Yasodhara, indicating that the Khmer king always kept the first city's name of Angkor in history. As an example, after Angkor was invaded by the Siamese army (Ayutthaya) in 1431, the capital was shifted to the south, and the name of the capital was “Srei Santhor (srī sandhar)” where is now located in Kompong Cham province.

These names, moreover, have been seen in historical legends, as in a poem in the Khmer middle period. The legend, which is still widely known, speaks of a heavenly abode on the earth, in which the temple Angkor Wat was built, not for Indra, but for his half-human son *Ketumālā* (as mentioned above, as the name of a temple in the same period as Angkor Wat, and which is called “peñ mālā, Beng Mealea”). Indra ordered his divine architect, Bisṇukār, to construct a replica on the earth of his own palace in the heavens, and to call it Indrapraṣṭha. The name *indrapraṣṭha or indipath*, used in the middle period, still commonly takes as an example the names of the two pagodas in the Angkor Wat compound, their respective names being, “Indrapath Purī Khān Tbūn (the southern Indrabath Borei) and Indrapath Purī Khān Joeñ (the northern Indrabath Borei).”

There is more evidence related to the name of Angkor Wat in the middle period, as seen in inscriptions carved on pillars and walls at Angkor Wat. The inscription, registered as IMA 2,³² of the queen mother Mahākalyāṇavattī Śrīsujātā, written in 1499 śaka (1577 AD), describes the honor given to her king son who had a great devotion towards restoring the ancient temple of Braḥ Bisṇulok (Angkor Wat). The inscription also mentions her participation in the restoration work by providing Buddha images for honoring within the gallery of Bakan. As recorded in the inscription of IMA 3, king Satthā intended to restore the wall enclosure of Braḥ Bisṇulok by keeping to the traditional way, from this period of his reign.³³

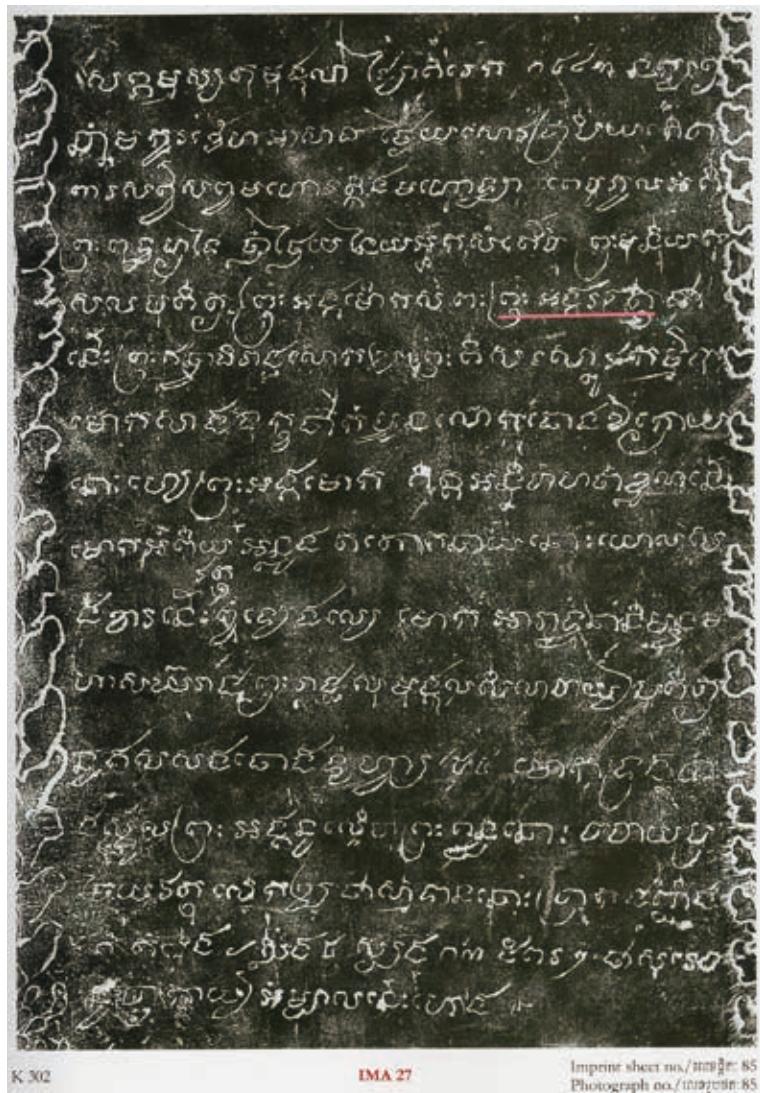
In fact, the name “Angkor Wat” itself has been called since the 17th century, judging by what is found in inscription IMA 27, dated 1583 śaka (1661 AD), which mentions a monk named Samdec Preah Muniyakusal, who came to pay homage at Preah Angkor Wat. The inscription declares the following: “(1) Sabbhassatu muñgulā jaiyātirek 1583³⁴ naksatr (2) chnām kūr khaeh āsādh thiñai sov prāmpīy koet (3) bār sarbv sabvamahorattī maholā becc bhūl aṁpī braḥ (4) braḥ buddhahṛdai thlā thlai naiy anak sañdaec braḥ muniyakusal (5) bubitr braḥ aṅg mok saṁbeḥ **braḥ angkar vatt...**” (Ph. 4). Therefore, the name of Angkor Wat has maintained its phonetic and semantic evolution since the 17th century, and it was not (as some researchers have suggested) that the name was the result of influence received from the Romanized writing of European travelers in the 19th century.

31 Péri 1924 : 128.

32 There are 40 inscriptions in Angkor Wat, and they were provided with the name “IMA, meaning Inscriptions Moderns d’Angkor” by E. Aymonier, and these names are recognized by means of registered numbers from “IMA 1 to IMA 40”. Cf. Pou 1970; see also, Aymonier 1900. All the inscriptions in Angkor Wat were recently created by rubbing, and they were published by the APSARA Authority and the CKS, under the title, “Inscriptions of Angkor Wat,” 2013.

33 Pou 1970.

34 The year was written by S. Pou as 1593 śaka. However, I verified again in the original inscription and found that the date was 1583 śaka (1661 AD), which was published by APSARA & CKS 2013. See also Pou 1973: 209.



Ph. 4 Inscription IMA 27 mentions the name of Angkor Wat (see at the red line), clef. APSARA & CKS 2013, p. 73.

The power of Angkor Wat over the Khmer imagination was such, that even this mythical architect, his name blending phonetically with *Bisnulok* to become *Bisnukār*, was transformed into the God of all constructions. One thing is certain, and it must now be stressed. In the consciousness of the Khmer people, Angkor will forever remain the focal point of their culture and identity. Hence, the name Angkor in the point of view of the Khmer symbolizes the sacred object that has preserved the value of Khmer identity since ancient times, and which is worshipped even to the present day. In brief, Angkor is their soul.

What is referred to as the “Abandonment of Angkor,” is simply the abandonment of a capital and not a culture. Also, later rulers came back to settle there, as least for a time. It is not for nothing that the Khmer national flags feature Angkor Wat as an emblem, a symbol that no revolutionary regimes dared to remove.

Other material facts also point in this direction: the name of Srei Santhor (Srī Sandhar)³⁵ is the mere reproduction of the name of the Angkorian capital Srī Yaśodhara. This shows that the abandonment of Angkor as capital was not the death of the Angkorian soul, but the transference of a cultural depth that stands the test of time.

Chapter 2. Prefixes Me/Ba (Pā) and the Names of the Monuments

The terms ‘me and pa’ are accepted in Khmer society as being derived from the old Khmer words *me* and *vapā*, meaning (mother and father). The compound *me-pā* means “parents,” and this is revealed in a Khmer inscription belonging to the beginning of the 11th century. This inscription is as follows:

“bhūmi me vapā añ ti uttara ti jvan ta rūpa “me añ,”

“the land of my father and mother, situated at the north, has been offered to the image of my mother.”³⁶

We have found the same level of signification in the middle period, in the Cpāp.’ For example in the Cpāp’ kerti kāl, “treaty on the defense of the patrimony,” we find:³⁷

Kūn oey ker (ti) me-pā Cūr raksā ga’n git grain

Thae dām cām ruos rai Prūn prayatn prayoj (ana) yūr

“O my children! The heritage (given) your parents (me-pā), you must watch over and protect it, take care of it with vigilance, preserve (it and it will) benefit (you) for a long time.”

The terms were also described by Zhou Daguan, a Chinese envoy who visited Cambodia during the years 1296-97. He wrote a long report on the society and conditions in Cambodia, and this presents a valuable account of life among the Khmers at the end of the 13th century. A part of this report described the primitive people or servers, who referred to their master as “pa-t’o” (father) and their mistress as “mi” (me, mother). The Chinese envoy translated the term *pa-t’o* as signifying father, and *mi* as meaning mother.³⁸

In Thailand, the parents, in the presence of their grown children, refer to themselves as *po/me* (father and mother) and they may address each other as *po man* and *me man* (literally, ‘it’s father/it’s mother’). In the other Southeast Asian countries they use these terms with a similar meaning and pronunciation as in Malay, and called their father ‘pa’ or ‘bapa.’³⁹ There is no doubt that the words ‘me’ and ‘pā’ have been constituted in terms of the Austro-Asiatic languages.⁴⁰

F. Martini suggested the following, “if we consider the fact that the primitive Mon-Khmer societies have been of the gynecocratic type (believing in the political supremacy of women), it is not surprising that the word ‘me’ “mother” was used to qualify the leader.”⁴¹ On the other hand, in the classification of the prefixes, ‘me’ can be raised to the original “the mother, the female element,

35 Name of the one of Khmer capitals in the Middle Period.

36 Coedès 1953: 202.

37 Pou & Jenner 1978: 379

38 Zhou Daguan 1967: 28.

39 Wijeyewardene 1993: 190.

40 It is a family of languages of South and Southeast Asia, including Mon-Khmer.

41 Martini 1951: 202.

the principal,” and ‘pā’ may signify “the father, the male element, the highest.”

In this regard, F. Martini also considered Me and Ba as being connected with “Water” and “Land,” in which the river was female and mountain male. Martini subsequently emphasized this by presenting some names of rivers and mountains, such as “Me” linked to Me Kong, Me Nam, etc.; and “Ba” accompanying the names of Ba Phnom, Ba Set, Ba Yang, Ba Tep, and so on.⁴² However, some of his interpretations of the prefixes ‘Me, Ba’ with regard to certain names, reveal errors in the hypothesis. For example, he tried to convince people that “Baray” the well-known name of the sacred reservoir name in Angkor, was derived from the Sanskrit word *pārāyana*.⁴³

With reference to the prefix “Ba-” in relation to place names or names of monuments, S. Pou pointed out that it reflected the weakened or corrupted form of the ancient word Brah, the sacred prefix.⁴⁴

The theory of dualism is related to the Austro-Asiatic language of Khmer, with reference to the conception of the prefixes Me “female, water” and Ba “male, mountain,” and these appellations can be seen on the monuments. However, does this theory present a significant explanation as to the names of the monuments? Hence, the current chapter will draw on the morphological names of monuments, which are related to the prefixes *me/ba* towards the real meaning, whether the prefixes ‘me’ and ‘ba’ provide a sense to the names of the Khmer monuments or not.

Bakong (Pāgañ)

Bakong is located within the Roluos group of Bakong district. According to the stele of the foundation, this temple was built in the reign of king Indravarman I, in 881, and dedicated to the god Shiva, and a Linga was installed, named Śrī Indreśvara.⁴⁵ The ancient name of this temple was Indreśvara, the same as the name of the Linga and the name of the founder.

īśvara means lord, or king. It is the name of Shiva and his Linga. A simple expression in modern Khmer is *isūr*. The name -īśvara has been found in the inscriptions, with nearly 50 divine names,⁴⁶ of which most belong to the god Shiva. Therefore, the ancient name Indreśvara can be translated as the ‘lord of the king Indravarman.’

The modern name of Bakong was analyzed the first time for its morphology by F. Martini, through the theory of the prefixes *me* (female, water) and *pā* (male, mountain), where he separated the name through the circumstances of “ba and kong,” which signified “mountain-father kong.” However, this interpretation does not make sense with regard to the real meaning of its semantics.

The modern name of Bakong was proposed in view of the ancient name of “vakon,” which appeared in the Khmer inscriptions.⁴⁷

- An inscription dated to the 11th century, K843, declares:⁴⁸

“.... (3) ...prasap ta bhūmi vakon saptapa[rnna] bhūmi sre ta...”, “to the limit of the

42 Martini 1951: 206.

43 To be discussed below.

44 Pou 1991: 205.

45 Cœdès 1937: 34.

46 Vickery 1998: 140.

47 Au Chhieng 1968: 187 ; See also, Pou 1974: 147.

48 Cœdès, *IC*, VII, p. 111.

land (bhūmi) of Vakon̄ saptaparna.”

- K. 844, in the 10th century states:⁴⁹

“...ta gi phlu vrek phlu mvāy dau vakon̄ phlu mvāy cva (7) l vnur sramo toy attara phlu vakon̄ gol thmo dau (8)”, “until the fork in the road, one to Vakon̄ and another penetrates into Vnur Sramo to the north of the road to Vakon̄, where they have a good stone”.

- K. 809, in ninth century states:⁵⁰

“(22)...◎ ta gi sruk vakon̄”, “to the village of Vakon̄.”

These sources of the inscriptions have indicated the place name *vakon̄*, which is located around the Siem Reap province, and possibly make sense with regard to the origin of the modern name Bakong. On the other hand, the old Khmer place name *vakon̄* is now still the name of the village near the Bakong temple, namely “Phum Vakong.” This temple, which not long ago was called by the local inhabitants “Bayon,”⁵¹ has the same name as the Bayon located at the center of Angkor Thom.

Phnom Bakheng (Bhṇam Pākhaeñ):

This temple is located on the top of the natural mountain ‘Phnom Bakheng,’ along the road between Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. It was built in the beginning of the 10th century, during the reign of king Yashovarman I, who accepted Brahmanism under the posthumous name Paramaśivaloka.

The present name of Bakheng is a Khmer word meaning “force, or power,” and it also means the “male reproductive organ that is effective.” Perhaps this word indicates the Shiva Linga, which was adapted by the local people in memory of the 10th century royal Linga of Yaśodharapura, namely Yaśodhareśvara (the lord of Yaśovarman).⁵²

The word “Kheng, or Khaeñ” has rarely been used in the Khmer language, but it is currently used in the Thai language. However, the word Kheng is found in the Khmer Rāmakerti, in the scene of the giant Kūkhan, “ri Kūkhan khaeñ mohhimā rūp rū pabbata”, “Kūkhan force, colossal, form similar to a mountain...” and “khluon khloh khlāmī kheñ beñ bāl, “youthful, force, power.”⁵³ Bakheng could be equivalent to the old Khmer *vraḥ kheñ*, if the two particles *braḥ* and *pā* are interchanged for writing as place names. We can say that *braḥ* which is equivalent to *pā*, indicates a sacred vocabulary, and it could be equal to the word “khaeñ”, or it may have the meaning of the Linga.

There are several names of Phnom Bakheng in the ancient period, which are found in the inscriptions. In the inscription of Sdok Kak Thom, it is clearly affirmed that Yaśodharapura (the name of the ancient city of Angkor) was established on the top of Phnom Bakheng by the king Yashovarman I (889-910 AD). The name of this mountain was also *Yaśodharagiri* (mountain of

49 Cœdès, *IC*, V, p. 173.

50 Cœdès, *IC*, I, p. 41.

51 Ang 2007: 368. Ang Choulean noted that the name “Bayon” is a generic term that designated a certain kind of the term “Prasat”.

52 Pou 1991: 214.

53 Martini 1951: 207.

Yaśovarman), *Indrādri*, and *Madhyādri* in the 12th century, and it was also called by the old Khmer name *Vnaṁ Kanṭāl* (central mountain).

The inscription of Sdok Kak Thom mentioned the following:⁵⁴

“ (16)... vraḥ pāda paramaśivaloka oy vraḥ liṅga dvihasta saṁnal=ti sthāpanā āy vnaṁ kanṭāl gi [t]i sthāpanā āy bhadrapattana... (17)”, which mean “The majesty king Paramashivaloka gives (him) two cubits high of unused (stone) from construction at Vnaṁ Kanṭāl for establishing royal Linga at Bhadrapattana.”

Paramashivaloka⁵⁵ established the royal city of Śri Yaśodharapura, and took the Devarāja from Hariharālaya to this city, and he subsequently established the *Vnaṁ Kanṭāl* (Central Mountain) and installed a Linga in the center.⁵⁶ The Phnom Bakheng inscription, K. 684,⁵⁷ informs us of the purchase of a piece of land for two people (loñ) who were the devotees (pādamūla) of *Vnaṁ Kanṭāl*:

“(8) loñ prāṇa pādamūla kamrateñ (9) jagat vnaṁ kanṭāl ti vraḥ kamrateñ”

The name of *Vnaṁ Kanṭāl* (Central Mountain) moreover clearly indicates the representative Mount Meru, if we study the Sanskrit text. The temple itself that was built on the top of the mountain (Phnom), presents the symbol of the mountain in the center of the world, Meru or Sumeru of Indian cosmology.⁵⁸

In sum, the modern name of Phnom Bakheng used to be *Vnaṁ Kanṭāl* (Phnom Kandal, Central Mountain) in the ancient period, which mountain was located in the center of Yaśodharapura (the city of Yaśovarman). It was also called Yaśodharagiri (the mountain of Yaśovarman) wherein was installed the linga on the top of the mountain, named Yaśodhareśvara (the lord of king Yaśovarman). Hence, the meaning of the modern name Bakheng has the same sense as installing the Royal Linga, and it means “force, power, or the male reproductive organ.” It was also a symbol of the king’s power at that time.

Baphuon (Pā Bhuon):

The Baphuon temple exists within the Angkor Thom enclosure, close to the royal palace to the south. This temple was built in the second half of the 11th century, in the year 1060, under the reign of king Udayadityavarman II, who was devoted to Hinduism.

The name “Baphuon, or Pā Bhuon” was supposed to derive from the original name of Tribhuvanacūḍāmaṇī,⁵⁹ and later the name was shortened to “Bhūvan”, and eventually came to attain the present name of “Bhuon, or Phuon.” According to the inscription of Longvek, it is mentioned that King Udayadityavarman II built a golden mountain, named Hemādri, (Meru). The inscription declares, “In the middle of Jumbudvīpa, the abode of the gods, constructed a golden mountain

54 Cœdès & Dupont 1943-46: 113.

55 Paramashivaloka is the posthumous name of king Yashovarman I.

56 The regular custom of the Khmer kings in the Angkor period, especially from the time of king Indravarman I in the second half of the 9th century, was to build two types of temples, one dedicated to ancestors, and another pyramid temple dedicated to their own cult by installing the Royal Linga. The pyramid temples represented the temple mountain (the mountain of the gods, or Mount Meru).

57 Cœdès 1937: 106.

58 Filliozat 1954: 528.

59 Pou 1967: 403.

(Hemādri=Meru), he (Udayadityavarman II) did make, by the imitation, a golden mountain (*svarnādri*) in the center of the city...”⁶⁰ Reference to the golden mountain was also made by Zhou Daguan in his report, which researchers suggested indicated the Baphuon temple.⁶¹

The mountain that is mentioned in the inscription symbolized the three universes, which are called in Sanskrit ‘trailokyatilaka’.⁶² G. Coedès suggested that the name *Trailokyatilaka* in the stele of Longvek could be a technical term designating an edifice of the pyramid type, and it was probably synonymous with the *Bhuvan-tilaka* (or *brah bhuvan*), which was also mentioned in the same inscription, since *ba* (or *pā*) is a corruption of the sacred prefix word *brah*, weakened into [pra > pa > ba].

Bayon (Pāyan)

The Bayon temple has been an object of numerous descriptions from pilgrims and visitors. As evidence there is the ancient report that was made by the Chinese envoy Zhou Daguan, who visited Cambodia during the years 1296-97. In his report, he described the customs of Cambodia during that time, and the splendor of Angkor. He said, “at the center of the Kingdom rises a Golden Tower (Bayon) flanked by more than twenty lesser towers, and several hundred stone chambers.”⁶³

B. P. Groslier translated the documents of the Portuguese and the Spanish who came to visit Cambodia in the 16th century, and their description of the monuments in the Angkor region. One description states, “at the center of the city we have seen an extraordinary temple, and unfinished.”⁶⁴ In 1860, the first French visitor H. Mouhot traveled in Cambodia and visited the Angkor ruins, and he described the Bayon very briefly.⁶⁵

The date of the Bayon has been discussed by several scholars, owing to confusion arising from the Phnom Bakheng or the ancient name of *Vnam Kāntāl* (see supra), found in the inscriptions of Sdok Kak Thom and the inscriptions of Longvek. Although, Coedès had strongly identified the Bayon as having been established by King Jayavarman VII at the end of the 12th century,⁶⁶ yet he clarified the exact date of the Bayon through the acceptance of P. Stern’s thesis of “Le Bayon d’Angkor et l’Évolution de l’Art Khmère,” and the precise evidence of the inscriptions.

On the other hand, the name of Bayon also varies considerably according to the writings of European visitors, such as: Baïon, Banh Yong, Bayân, and so on. However, E. Aymonier added that sometimes the name was written as ‘Pāyant’ by the local inhabitants. He affirmed, “if we extend our concepts to the point that is not clear, like the prefix *pā*, then it may have been a corruption of the sacred word *brah*. The name ‘Pāyant’ could be a deformation of Prah Yant, and this expression is also a corruption of the name of the celestial palace of Indra, ‘Vaijayanta’ or ‘Prah Vaijayanta’ (saintly palace of Indra).”⁶⁷

60 Coedès 1931: 19.

61 Zhou Daguan, 2006: 19.

62 Coedès 1931.

63 Zhou Daguan 1967: 21.

64 Groslier 1958: 71.

65 Mouhot 1864.

66 G. Coedès 1929: 81-112.

67 Aymonier 1904: 142.

The name was also mentioned both in the inscriptions and in the historical legend of *Lpoek Nagarvatt*, “the foundation of Angkor Wat.” It has been found as the Sanskrit ‘Vaijayanta,’ in the Khmer ‘Vejayantaratna or Devavajayanta,’ and in the Pāli ‘Vejayanta’ or ‘Bejayant.’⁶⁸ The name appeared in the poem of Lpoek Nagarvatt in the 17th century.⁶⁹

Here is a portion of the poem from the original Khmer text of E. Aymonier, published in 1878:

“Kit kan oy yak Bejayant noh mak
sān oy putrā yań yal thom khbas
ban yoj soh sā as tamí devaṭā
sňap sňaeń dīdai”⁷⁰

In the poem, it is stated that Indra ordered Brahma Bisnukar to create a replica of the palace of Bejayant on earth, as a souvenir for his son Ketumālā. This was because his son (Ketumālā) was a half human-god, for which reason he could not live in Heaven. Hence, the name of the Indra palace in the legend from the 17th century presents the idea of the Khmer people, that the name was a deformation of Bejayant > Bayon.⁷¹ It is the same with the name Indrapath or Indrapraṣṭh.

In addition, the inhabitants of Angkor sometimes call this temple “Prohm Bayon.” Prohm being the Khmer pronunciation of the name of the god Brahma. Prof. Ang Choulean remarked, “the Bayon and its projection on the five gates of Angkor Thom convincingly show images of Prohm,” and he added, “traditionally we do not say ‘Prohm Bayon’ to describe the faces on both the central temple and the gates of the old city?”⁷²

Baray (Pārāy):

The name “Baray, or Pārāy” has recently been discussed on account of its significance and function with regard to the origin of the term. Many different points of view have arisen from the analysis of this term. The first was studied by F. Martini who presented a deep meaning to the concept of *pā/me*.⁷³ He expressed the view that depending on the orthographic transliteration, the word Baray ‘pārāyaṇa’ was derived from Sanskrit, and it meant ‘the act of passage,’ while the Mebon temple located in the center of the Baray meant the ‘mother of the favor.’

Through this view, it was said that in order to reach Mebon one had to cross the Baray (the sacred reservoir) to get rid of bad luck. Therefore, the combination of the Baray and the Mebon represented the religious meaning of purified water. It is the same meaning as the concept of Linga and Snanadroni (which represented the belief that the energy of Shiva and his wife Uma created human beings). This concept includes also the belief that when someone got sick, they came to take the water which flowed from the combination of the Shiva Linga and the Yoni of Uma, to drink or wash their faces in order to take away bad luck. As evidence of this, thousands of Linga-Yoni were found carved at the bottom of the Siem Reap river, flowing from the top of the Kulen mountains.

68 Pou 1991 (See Glossary).

69 Khing 1985 (See Preface).

70 Khing 1985: 41.

71 In the Khmer dictionary the word Bayon is written as *pāyān* and this writing is still used today.

72 Ang 2007: 368.

73 Martini 1951.

It means the water that flows over the Linga symbolizes holy water (purified water). Therefore, the Siem Reap river has been said to be a representative of sacred rivers, as the Ganges in India.

Another opinion concerning the word “Baray”, the well-known sacred reservoir of Angkor, has been suggested by the S. Pou, namely that the word probably came from the old Khmer expression ‘vrah anrāy’.⁷⁴ This was because she thought the affix ‘vrah’ was a sacred term that was equivalent to the meaning of the word Baray (sacred reservoir), but this suggestion is still being questioned.⁷⁵

However, the analysis of the term has not clarified its definition, because their study focused on only one aspect of the knowledge of linguistics. In my view, another aspect should consider the oral tradition, which has long been practiced in traditional village life, so much so that names such as toponymy, are now spread all over the country.

According to the Khmer Dictionary the name of *pārāy (aṇa)* is translated as a ‘space,’ a ‘large field of water.’⁷⁶ For example: Sruk Pārāy (*aṇa*) (the name of a district in the Kompong Thom province along National Road No. 6), is so called on account of its geographical situation, because in the rainy season it contains a large amount water in the form of a reservoir (Baray). Other place names are, Boeng Pārāy (*aṇa*) (the lake of Baray), Pārāy (*aṇa*) Tik Thlā (Baray with pure water), Thnal Pārāy (*aṇa*) (the road of Baray).

a. Khmer Views Concerning the Name “Baray”

In Khmer thinking, the name Baray is remembered from the accounts of the ancestors through a famous legend, which probably appeared in the middle period of Cambodia. According to the legend, the Barays are called ‘Baray Pros, or Baray of the male’ and ‘Baray Srei, or Baray of the female.’ Baray Pros signifies the Thnal Baray which has no water, in contrast to Baray Srei which still contains lots of water, that is the Baray Toek Thla.

There are the same stories of the female always being ahead in Khmer society at that time. The story of ‘Phnom Pros’ (the mountain of the male) and ‘Phnom Srei,’ (the mountain of the female), is found in the Kompong Cham province. Geographically, Phnom Srei is higher than Phnom Pros. Another story presents the same idea, namely that the large pond belongs to Srah Srei (pond of the female), and the small pond is referred to Srah Pros (pond of the male). These two ponds are located within the royal palace of Angkor Thom, close to the Phimeanakas temple.

This idea probably refers to the Austro-Asiatic society conception, that the female or ‘Me’ means ‘mother, or leader’.

The legend of Baray Pros and Baray Srei is as follows:

[A long time ago, according to the Srok Khmer (Cambodia) custom, the women had to ask the men for marriage. This tradition was criticized by those women who did not have sufficient beauty to engage the men. For this reason, all the women challenged the men to a game, where if one of the groups could dig a Baray deeper than the other, it meant that the successful group was the ‘winner.’ The losers had to promise that they would ask the winning group to marry them. Before playing the game they made a condition, namely, “we must dig only one night until the morning star rises, and

74 Pou 1991: 205.

75 Pou 1967: 426.

76 Institut Bouddhique 1981: 568; First edition was in 1967-8.

then we stop.” While they were playing the game, the women cleverly created a paper lantern flying in the sky, and immediately the men saw this and thought the morning star had arisen. They stopped their digging and slept. In the morning, the men knew that they had lost the game, and so the men had to ask the women to marry them. Since that time, the men had to ask the women for marriage, and after marriage the man moved in to live in the woman’s house, a custom that survives until the present day.]

Through this legend the name of the Baray probably came to be used by the local inhabitants since the middle period of Cambodia, when the legend appeared in Khmer society. Therefore the word Baray designated a reservoir that is surrounded by an embankment, and it was man-made, in order to preserve water for daily use. It was also representative of the religious purpose and prosperity of the state.

b. Vocabularies Associated with the Sacred Pond

Here we should consider all the elements of the water systems that have the same significance as the word “Baray,” the sacred pond or reservoir. There are many names designating that particular form of water storage, such as *Pradak*, *Lpoek*, *Rohal*, *Srah*, and others.

Pradak, or *Praṭāk* is a derivation from the Sanskrit *taṭāka*, which is found in the ancient inscriptions. It was used as a suffix, as the name of a large pond or reservoir in ancient times, and it is still used as a place name. The term *taṭāka* appeared for the first time under the reign of Indravarman I (877-889). In the inscription of Phnom Bayang it is stated as follows:

“Informed by the chief of the monastery, the king Śrī Indravarman had a large pond (*taṭāka*) constructed by the people who were living in the district.”⁷⁷

This large pond was named “Indrataṭāka” (pond of Indravarman). When king Indravarman I received his royal power, he began to build a large reservoir, measuring 3.8 kilometers by 800 meters, and he promised the following: “within five days from today, I shall begin to dig.”⁷⁸ The pond is located in the ancient city of Hariharālaya (Roluos group), which has the temple of Lolei (lalai)⁷⁹ at the center.

Following this huge work, king Yasovarman I, who was the founder of the first city of Angkor (Yaśodhara), reigned between (889~910 AD).⁸⁰ He also built another Baray, measuring 7km × 2km, named Yaśodharataṭāka (pond of Yaśovarman), and the present name given by the villagers is “Thnal Baray.” This name is still used to refer to the name of the village wherein the Baray is located at the center, called “Phum Pradak, or Phum Praṭāk.”⁸¹ The name Praṭāk is now used not only in the Angkor area, but also everywhere else to indicate water storage. For example, there is a large pond, called “Pradak,” or “the pond,” situated at the Bakan (Prah Khan of Kompong Svay).

77 Cœdès 1937: 259 (K. 853).

78 Cœdès 1937: 25 (K. 713).

79 The name “Lolei, or Lalai” is a corrupted form of the name of the city Hariharālaya (Harihara + Ālaya > ālaya > lalai); in a linguistic view, Siem Reap inhabitants usually say word that begins with ‘ā’ to ‘la’. This temple was entirely built by King Yasovarman I in the late 9th century.

80 Cœdès 1943-46: 12-16.

81 The name “Praṭāk” is derived from the first (*taṭāka* > t’ ṭāka > ṭāka). It is now erroneously referred to as “Preah Dak,” due to a legend created during the early 1980s.

Other sources of words that have been identified in the inscriptions are Kuṭitaṭāka (Baray of Kuṭī), and Jayataṭāka, which was constructed in the 12th century in the reign of King Jayavarman VII, and which means ‘the pond of Jayavarman.’ The modern name of this pond, as called by the local inhabitants, is ‘Veal Reach Dak’ (Väl Rāja ṭāka), but it has maintained the same meaning. In E. Aymonier’s book,⁸² he translated it as ‘the field of the king to dismount,’ and he remarked that the word ‘Dak’ in normal language means ‘put, put a yoke on, parking place or to park.’ However, his translation was not correct, and he probably confused the words *Dak* (pond) and *Dak'* (to put).

- Veal, Väl means “field, open field, plain”, that is, Veal Sre “rice field”.
- Reach, Rāja means the king, probably an echo of the memory of king Jayavarman VII, who established this Baray.
- As for Dak, ṭāka, I believe there is no doubt that this is a deformation of the Sanskrit *taṭāka*.

Therefore, the name “Veal Reach Dak” means “The Baray (taṭāka), which was built by the king, which is arid and has no water, and has now become a field.” The name of the Baray has now been changed to ‘Baray of Prah Khan’ or ‘North Baray’ (compared to the other West Baray and East Baray) by modern researchers. I am of the view that this erroneous appellation will be confused or forgotten in the next generation, if they don’t pay attention to finding the real name, and conduct research on the place by asking the people.

Rohal, *Rahāl* also refers to the sacred place names related to water storage, that we have found in some place names in the Angkor site.

‘Phūm Rahāl’ (Rohal Village) is located in the Angkor complex, next to the Banteay Kdei (West of Srah Srang village).

‘Phūm Rahāl’ is situated on the top of Phnom Kulen.

‘Rohal’ is located in the Koh Ker area, where king Jayavarman IV established a new city about 105km to the north of Angkor, and he reigned between 928 to 942, during the time of chaos in the country, after the death king Yasovarman I. This Baray is still used by the local villagers, as a water source for rice fields or other needs.⁸³

S. Pou suggested that the word Rohal is derived from the Pāli *rahada* ‘pond, lake,’⁸⁴ and it exists in the Khmer lexicon as *rahāl* which mean ‘stretch, open’.

Lboek, lpoek is similar in meaning to Baray. We have also found that the name in the Angkor Area refers to the artificial pond that remains from ancient times, and which was created by the people. Lboek is located in Sruk Pouk (west of the Baray Tik Thlā) and situated in the direction of Phnom Kulen (northeast of the Tani Kiln site, Angkor). The word ‘Lboek’ is a noun that was born from the verb ‘loek,’ meaning ‘to lift up, to build, to dam,’ as for example, to lift up the dam or to build the dam. Therefore, Lboek means lifting the dam in order to preserve the water.

Srah is translated as ‘pool’, and it signified the sacred pool of Angkor. Srah Srang is located in the Angkor complex (east of Banteay Kdei), and means “the bathing pool of the king.” It is also called after the two villages near the pool, namely “Srah Srang Khang Choeng, or Nothern Srah

82 Aymonier 1904: 59.

83 Ishizawa 2000: 13.

84 Pou 1967: 428.

Srang” and “Srah Srang Khang Tbong, or Southern Srah Srang.” Srah Srei and Srah Pros are located in the royal palace of Angkor Thom. Srah Don Rik, “the pool of the female ancestor Rik,” the name that appeared in the legend of Ta Trasak Pha-em, is an ancient pool that is located in the Banteay Srei district (north of Phnom Bok). Srah Tim, “twin pools” is located on the top of Phnom Kulen.

Chapter 3. Designation of Names

Designation of names refers to names of monuments related to the natural environment, forms of temples, legends, names of persons, names of trees, and so on. Some of these names are the same as the ancient ones and some have changed, probably in the middle and modern periods. Some names are now unknown to researchers of the 21st century.

3.1. Names Associated with the Generic Term “Banteay”

The generic term *Banteay* (or *Pandāy*) is derived from the verb “Phday” in old Khmer, meaning “carry or support.” The term “Banteay” designates “enclosure of the locality, defended place, or way to defend.”⁸⁵ This word has been used in the middle Khmer language to indicate an enclosure or embankment, as for example, Banteay Longvek, which was the capital of Cambodia in the 16th century.⁸⁶

The term *Banteay* is also equivalent to “Kampeng, or Kambeñ,” meaning “enclosure, important wall, or rampart,” and it also has the meaning of “fortress.” The present use of the word “Kambeñ” is an evolution of the old Khmer word “Kamveñ,” which was discovered in old Khmer inscriptions, as for example, in K. 760 and K. 56 in the 10th century, and K. 235 in the 11th century. A corruption of the alphabet from ‘v’ to ‘b’ was used, and it was found in inscriptions from the 17th century. In the middle period, the word was adopted for use in the Thai language, by changing it from *kamveñ* to *kampheen*, and is now pronounced as *Kamphaeng*. The Thai pronunciation has been imposed on the modern Khmer language, and hence the Khmers who forgot the original word, sometimes use *kambeñ* (Kampeng) and sometimes *kamphaen* (Kamphaeng).⁸⁷

The term *Banteay* indicates an enclosure in-between two corner walls, which marked the access, and was surrounded by the Khlong Thvear (Gopura). The term is also used as an appellation for the names of the temples, which are shown with the enclosures. Precise examples are Prasat Prei and Banteay Prei (Ph. 5&6),⁸⁸ which differ only in the fact that one has an enclosure, and is called Banteay Prei, and the other which has no enclosure is Prasat Prei, which is located to the south of the Preah Khan temple.

The other temples related to *Banteay*, are the grand temples such as the Banteay Srei, Banteay Kdei, Banteay Samre, Banteay Ta Som (Ta Som), Banteay Ta Prohm (Ta Prohm), and others.

As described above, the term “Banteay” designated temples, cities, or villages that are surrounded by an enclosure of stone, wood, or soil.

85 Pou 1991: 215.

86 Nhim 2014-16: 77.

87 Kamphaeng is commonly used by inhabitants of the Batdambang province, or the area that used to be under Thai occupation in the 19th century.

88 “Prei” is the name of a kind of vine or climbing plant, namely “Voal Prei, or Valli Prī).



Ph. 5 Prasat Prei shows without enclosure



Ph. 6 Banteay Prei shows with laterite enclosure

Banteay Srei (Pandāy Śrī):

This temple is located along the road to Phnom Kulen, about 35km to the north of the Angkor complex. The inscription of Banteay Srei is dated to 967, the first year of the reign of king Rajendravarman II, and it states that the temple was built by the Yajñavarāha,⁸⁹ a *guru* (preceptor) of the king.⁹⁰

The inscription shows that the foundation of the temple is located in a region named Iśvarapura (the city of Shiva). The temple was devoted to a Shiva Linga, under the title Tribhuvanamaheśvara,⁹¹ which was installed in the central tower. The name “Tribhuvanamaheśvara” is also found to be the name of the god of Lingapura or Chok Gargyar⁹², and the name seems to have been identified with the cult of Devarāja, who is the god of that region.

The small and beautiful temple which is rich with decorations, can be said to be the “precious gem,” or the “jewel of Khmer art.” Maurice Glaize stated:

“Having a special charm, the Banteay Srei temple is in a remarkable state of conservation and has an excellent ornamental technique, bordering on perfection, among all the monuments of the Angkor complex.”⁹³

The name of the Banteay Srei temple in the most guidebooks written in both Khmer and foreign languages, has been translated as “fortress, or citadel of the women.” In fact, the term “Srei” is written in Sanskrit and Khmer as śrī, śrī, srī, and has different meanings. It was found in the inscriptions as follows:

- **śrī:** In ancient Cambodia this word was used as an honorific appellation for males or females who were high ranking persons, from gods and kings to various dignitaries, and includes their residences and places. For example: śrī kamranteṇ jagat ta rāja (Devarāja

⁸⁹ The inscription also states the name of another founder named Visṇukumāra, who was the younger brother of Yajñavarāha.

⁹⁰ Coedès 1937: 148 (K. 842).

⁹¹ Tribhuvanamaheśvara is a Sanskrit name, meaning “the great lord of the three worlds”. Clef, Pou 1992: 231.

⁹² “Chok Gargyar” was an ancient name of the capital of the king Jayavarman IV in the 10th century (K. 235), which is now called Koh Ker. The ancient name “Chok Gargyar” is a combination of the word ‘Chok’ which means “Pond”, and ‘Gargyar’ is a kind of the tree’s name in Khmer “Koki” and in Latin name is *Hopea Odorata Roxb.* The present name “Koh Ker” is probably corrupted from the ancient name “Gargyar”.

⁹³ Glaize 1963: 228.



Ph. 7&8 Banteay Srei and its rich with decorations

in Sanskrit), *śrī jayavarmadeva* (the name of king Jayavarman), *śrī yaśodharapura* (the ancient capital city of Angkor, which was founded by the king Yashovaraman I).

- **śrī:** Name of the goddess of fortune, who is a consort of the god Vishnu, and is named “Śrī, or Lakṣmī”.
- **śrī:** The royal sacred sword, which is related to the ancient name of *jayaśrī* in Sanskrit, or *vraḥ khan* in old Khmer, and *braḥ khan* (*Preah Khan*) in modern Khmer (the temple which was built by king Jayavarman VII at the end of the 12th century). It means ‘the sacred sword’.⁹⁴

In her dissertation, S. Pou remarked that some of the Cambodian words have the problem of whistling, which was brought over from the Sanskrit whistles ś, ś, s and these have been graphically attested in the inscriptions.⁹⁵ For example, the two original Sanskrit words which have different meanings, are *śrī* “beauty, glory, or superb” and *strī* “woman.” However, these words have sometimes been deformed into *srī* “beauty” and *strī* or *srī* “woman,” which have been found in the inscriptions of the middle period.

Both *strī* and *srī*, mean “woman,” and these words have been used both orally and in literature such as the epics, and they are also currently used in popular literature. Therefore, the words *śrī* and *strī* are Sanskrit, but have been transferred to Khmer, and are pronounced in the same way and signify the same thing.

So far, the name of Banteay Srei can be signified in an abstract sense as, “fortress (Banteay) of beauty, glory, or superb.” In this sense, it seems to reflect the temple structure itself, as in the expression “precious gem, or jewel,” or “the gem of Khmer art.” (Ph. 7&8)

Banteay Samre (Pandā Samrae)

Banteay Samre is located in the east, 2km away from Pradak village. The chronology of this temple is linked to the 12th century, through the evolution of its architecture and arts. It is considered to belong to the reign of king Suryavarman II, who established the Angkor Wat temple and dedicated it to the chief god Vishnu (Brahmanism).

94 Pou 1992: 536.

95 Pou 1967: 395.

There is no doubt that the term “Banteay” indicates enclosure, and “Samre” is the name of one of the ethnic groups in Cambodia. The Samre people still live in Phnom Kravanh (Cardamom Mountains), and in the Angkor area in Kvau village. According to the Cambodian dictionary, the term “Samre” signifies a black line (Chnūt Khmau), for example we have: *me samre, sambur samre* (black skin). The term is also shown in relation to the word *sre* (rice field), as for example *anak sre*, “the people who cultivated rice.”

Zhou Daguan, in his report, wrote as follows about the ethnic groups:

“The wild men from the hills can be brought to serve as slaves. Families of the wealthy may own more than one hundred slaves, those of lesser means content themselves with ten or twenty, and only the very poor have none. These savages are captured in the wild mountainous regions, and are of a wholly separate race called *Chouang* (brigands). After being brought to town, they dare not venture out of their owners’ houses. In the course of a dispute, they called their adversaries ‘Chouang,’ they hate them to the marrow of their bones, and looked down on them as wretches.”⁹⁶

The report has also mentioned all the activities of the ethnic group who played an important role in Angkor. Otherwise, the ethnic Samre have been thought to have functioned in the Angkor period as servants, or to do other jobs. This ethnic group are now found in Khmer society, which serves as a good evidence to reflect upon the understanding of the Khmer civilization of the Angkor time.

As R. Baradat⁹⁷ noted, in 1909 when King Sisowath visited the villages around Angkor, he made a speech that also mentioned the names of the ethnic groups, who remained in some of the ancient villages around Phnom Kulen (Srah Daun Rik of the Kvau Village). Baradat also quoted from the work of J. Moura, who stated that, “the Samre are the original habitants who still existed as a grand majority in the Angkor province, and who provide real evidence of the Khmer civilization of the past, but they have not yet attained considerable urban development, and their villages are not composed of more than about a dozen small huts or more.”⁹⁸

According to the local inhabitants, the name of the “Banteay Samre,” is thought to be related to an ethnic man named *Ta Trasak Pha-em* (Sweet Cucumber Ancestor), an ethnic *Samre* who occupied the throne after the king was killed by his spear. After he became king, most people, ministers and officers were not happy with him, because he did not belong to the royal family and was just an ethnic person. When he realized that it was impossible to be a king in Angkor city, he decided to leave the city and came to hide in a sacred place.

His hiding place at that time is believed to have been at the Banteay Samre temple that is located outside the royal palace, and he built a high enclosure surrounding the temple in order to protect himself. For this reason, the local inhabitants used the word “Banteay Samre”, to signify the enclosure surrounding the temple “Banteay”, where the king Samre and his family lived (Ph. 9&10).

The legend of Ta Trasak Pha-em was also mentioned in the Cambodian Royal Chronicle (Chronicle of Vāmīn Juon).⁹⁹ According to the chronicle, Ta Trasak Pa-em was the father of king

96 Zhou Daguan 1967: 27.

97 Baradat 1942.

98 Baradat 1942: 8.

99 V. Juon 1933.



Ph. 9&10 Banteay Samre and its high enclosure

Nibbānapad, who reigned from the year 1346 to 1351; and Ta Trasak Pa-em was a usurper of the Angkorian throne. The legend is not only known in Cambodia, but it is also mentioned in the Burmese chronicles. In the Burmese chronicle it is stated that a famer became a king after he killed a king named “Thy” when the king ate his cucumber. His name is Nyaung-u Sawrahan, who reigned from 931-964 AD.¹⁰⁰ However, it is said that the history itself is very antiquated, and was most likely subjected to historical exaggeration. The creator of this legend most likely fabricated the report during the time when Angkor became powerless, or during a strain in Angkorian supremacy.¹⁰¹

Although the legend appears as untrue or exaggerated, and not so glorious when viewed from the standpoint of western people, yet it reveals a popular understanding of the oral tradition that is difficult to grasp, and it is used in Khmer society as evidence related to its religion and culture. Despite its simplicity the temple certainly belonged to the 12th century, and it is of the Angkor Wat style, which is dedicated to Brahmanism.

Banteay Kdei (Pandāy Kṭī):

This temple is located in the Srah Srang village, and lies opposite the Srah Srang pond. From the viewpoint of the evolution of art and architecture, Banteay Kdei was built under the reign of king Jayavarman VII at the end of the 12th century, and was dedicated to Mahayana Buddhism. Although some parts of the temple’s structures were confirmed as belonging to the 10th century, from the excavation of the Sophia Asia Center for Research and Human Development, it has been discovered that the earlier ground of the temple was built before the 12th century. The discovery has suggested that Banteay Kdei was related to Kuṭī (or Kdei) village, during the reign of king Jayavarman II in the 9th century.

Furthermore, the name “Banteay Kdei” has been proposed as being the same as the name ‘Kuṭī’, which finds mention in the inscription of Sdok Kak Thom.¹⁰²

“... (68) pāda parameśvara thāpp nu amarendrapura cat sruk jmaḥ bhavālaya yok kule khlahra mok aṃvi sruk **Kuṭī** paṅgvay ta gi...”, “...received the land of the king in the eastern district, which is a place to establish a village named ‘Kuṭī’ and also create a

100 Pe Maung & Luce 1923: 58.

101 Nhim 2014-16: 50.

102 Finot 1915: 71.

family...”.

The inscription of Prasat Bat Chum in the old Khmer language also mentions the name Kuṭīśvara (the temple located to the west of the Rahal village and about 500m to the south of Banteay Kdei) (Ph. 11).¹⁰³ The inscription states that king Rajendravarman of the lunar dynasty, who reigned in 941 AD, erected the two Buddhist statues of *devi* (feminine divinities) at Kuṭīśvara in 949 AD.¹⁰⁴

The name ‘Kuṭī’ which was mentioned in the inscriptions, was related to an area where king Jayavarman II ordered the new families to create a new village, named ‘Kuṭī’, after he had already established the capital city on the top of the Kulen mountain. The name of the village ‘Kuṭī’ has now been suggested as that which is located around the Banteay Kdei, and the Kuṭīśvara temple (Kdei Sor).¹⁰⁵

The word ‘Kuṭī’ is Sanskrit, and in old Khmer it means “cell or hut of an ascetic or monk, a niche in the temple.”¹⁰⁶ It is also used in the modern Khmer language with the meaning of Banteay Kdei, Phum Kdei (Kdei village), and Kdei Ang (the name of a pagoda), and it was transliterated as ‘Ktī.’ On the other hand, in the modern Khmer language it has often been used with the same meaning as the word *kuti* (kot), meaning “cell, or small shelter of the monks.”

For instance, in the inscription of Brai Syay (the forest of mangoes), was clearly mentioned the word ‘Kuṭī,’ which means “cell, or the shelter of the monks”:

“pre silpi laṃtap sañ brah kuṭī vihāra kamlūn brai svāy ta mān toy...”, “(the king) ordered an architect of the construction to build a monastery (Kuṭī vihāra¹⁰⁷) to be located in Brai Svay (the forest of mangoes).”¹⁰⁸

In sum, the name of Banteay Kdei is the original name from the 10th century, which found in



Ph. 11 Kdei Sor (Kuṭīśvara) or Prasat Kok Khmoch

103 The temple referred to as Kuṭīśvara, or in Khmer pronunciation simply “Kdei Sor,” is also called by the local inhabitants as “Prasat Kok Khmoch or burial mound”.

104 See the inscription of Prasat Bat Chum, K. 266. See also, Aymonier 1904: 11-13.

105 Kuṭīśvara means “Lord of the hall or cell,” and it came from the words *kuṭī* and *-īśvara*. The word ‘-īśvara’ means ‘lord, king,’ and it is the name of the god Siva, and in modern Khmer *īsūr* (Iso). Clef., Vickery 1998: 24.

106 Pou 1992: 102.

107 Vihāra, or Vihear is the main building of the Buddhist monastery, always facing the east.

108 Pou 1978: 343.

the various ancient inscriptions.

Banteay Ta Prohm (**Pandāy Tā Prohm**), or Ta Prohm

Banteay Ta Prohm is situated along the small circuit, and it is attached to Banteay Kdei's enclosure wall on the southeast corner. According to the stele of the Ta Prohm temple, which is found on the second enclosure of the east Gopura, it is dated to 1186. The temple was built by king Jayavarman VII, after five years of his coronation. The inscription also states that the king erected a statue of his mother in the form of the principal divinity "Prajñapāramitā,"¹⁰⁹ which was surrounded by two hundred and sixty divinities in the various sanctuaries of the temple complex.¹¹⁰

Ta Prohm was a grand monastery temple in the lists of monuments, after king Jayavarman VII came to the throne in 1181. This temple, therefore, used to be named *Rājavihāra*,¹¹¹ meaning "monastery of the king," and it was surrounded by an enclosure measuring 700×1000 meters.

The temple however, is nowadays sometimes referred to as "Banteay Ta Prohm," or "Banteay Prohm," or "Prasat Ta Prohm," meaning "the fortress of the ancestor Prohm." The term Prohm is a name given by the local inhabitants, who realized the features of the four faces of "Prohm" (the Khmer pronunciation of the Sanskrit word "Brahma" or Brahma God). The four faces of "Prohm" are related to either Brahmanism or Buddhism (Ph. 12&13).

There are three major of gods in Brahmanism: Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma. Brahma is the one among the three gods who has four faces. This god has also been accepted by Buddhist believers, since Theravada Buddhism had penetrated Khmer society from the 14th century onwards. This evidence was described in the Khmer poem, "Lboek Angkor Vatt", or the "Foundation of Angkor Wat," and was also mentioned in the epic Rāmakerti (the Buddhist version of the Rāmayana) in the 16th and the 17th centuries. This god is referred to as "Preah Prohm" in Khmer, and he is also believed to have four faces.

The monuments of king Jayavarman VII were consecrated on Mahayana Buddhism, where the principal god Lokesvara, is thought to represent the bodhisattva of benevolence, looking towards the four cardinal points. This representation was used on the decorations of the towers along with the



Ph. 12&13 Banteay Ta Prohm and its four faces entrance tower

109 Prajñapāramitā is the name of a Buddhist deity, and the word means "perfection in wisdom."

110 Jacques 1990: 133.

111 Cœdès 1906: 44-86.

four faces, and is presented in most of his temples. The four-faced towers represent the characteristics of the art and architecture of the king Jayavarman VII, as for example, Bayon, Banteay Kdei, Prah Khan, Banteay Ta Prohm, Banteay Thom and the others of his reign.

Hence, the gate towers of the outer enclosures of Banteay Ta Prohm has the four faces of Lokeśvara, which are now thought by the local inhabitants to represent the four faces of Preah Prohm, as in the case of Buddhist believers. That is to say, the local name is used for the god. The name Ta Prohm is also thought to be related to the legend of Prohm Kel (see the detailed explanation of the name Prasat Prohm Kel below), and which is a well-known legend for most people who live around that locality.

Therefore, the name of the temple is Banteay Ta Prohm, Banteay Prohm, or Prasat Ta Prohm, all of which are used by the local inhabitants to indicate the four faces of Lokeśvara, or Brahma, which had been changed to the Khmer name, Preah Prohm.

Banteay Ta Som (Pandāy Tā Som)

Banteay Ta Som is located in the grand circuit, to the north of the Thnal Baray. The temple was built in the reign of king Jayavarman VII between the late 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries, and was dedicated to Mahayana Buddhism.

The temple is sometimes called by local inhabitants as Ta Som, and sometimes as Banteay Ta Som. There is no doubt that Banteay Ta Som is a name used to indicate the surrounding enclosure, and it means “fortress of Ta Som.”

According to local inhabitants, the name Ta Som is thought to be the name of an old man who used to guard this temple. The particle ‘Ta’ means “old man, or ancestor”, and ‘Som’ is his proper name. Therefore, this temple has sometimes been called “Banteay Ta Som,” which means “fortress of Ta Som.”

E. Aymonier suggested that the name “Ta Som” seemed to commemorate the name of a Brahman, ‘Sivasoma, or Somasiva,’¹¹² who was an important person in the 9th century.¹¹³ The name *Sivasoma* has been found in the inscription of Prasat Kandal Dom, which is dated to the 9th century.¹¹⁴ The inscription mentioned that Sivasoma was a “Guru, or a Brahman,” a preceptor of king Indravarman I, who held power from the year 877 to 889.

In the same sense, the name ‘Som’ is also the name of a god, namely ‘Somaśvaman, or Someśvara’, who is an incarnation of the god Siva.¹¹⁵ The word ‘Som’ is a proper name which is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Saumya, or Soma’, and means “pleasant, or gentle.”¹¹⁶

The name ‘Som’, however, is also used as a place name, as for example: Ang Ta Som, which is the name of a district in the Takeo province, and we have the name of the temple in the Angkor area “Banteay Ta Som.”

The name of the temple “Banteay Ta Som,” therefore, could be an echo of the name of a

112 ‘Sivasoma means “pleasant like Siva, or the auspicious moon”. Clef. Pou 1992: 533.

113 Aymonier 1904: 59.

114 Cœdès 1937: 41 (K. 809).

115 Bhattacharya 1966: 276.

116 Pou 1967: 402.

Brahman Sivasoma, or a god with the name Someśvara, and has the same meaning as the expression “pleasant like Siva.”

Banteay Thom

This temple is located about 2km to the north of Nokor Kraw village. It was made of sandstone with three towers, facing east. This temples was built in the reign of king Jayavarman VII during the late of 12th and beginning of the 13th century, and it was dedicated to Mahayana Buddhism. The main complex was bounded by a high enclosure made of laterite (3m in height, 130m in length), and is surrounded by a moat. ‘Thom’ means “big, great” and ‘banteay’ has already been explained above. Hence, the name “Banteay Thom” means “the big citadel or fortresses”. (Ph. 14&15)



Ph. 14&15 Banteay Thom and its enclosure

3.2. Names Associated with the prefixes “Brah” and “Tā”

Brah (Prah, Preah): The word ‘Brah’ is often used for place names that are written in the form of the transcription *Preah, Prah*, and also the old Khmer *Vrah*. According to S. Pou, the word *brah* means “a sacred being or object such as a god, king, temple, statue, etc.”¹¹⁷ She also noted that the word *brah* or *preah* derived from *rah*, or *reah*, which means “illuminate or shine.” For example: *brah buddh*, or *Preah Puth* means “Lord Buddha,” *brah aṅg*, or *Preah Ang* means “king,” *brah nagar*, or *Preah Nokor* means “Sacred City of Angkor,” and so on.

The prefix *brah* is affixed to the terms of the sacred vocabulary, and is meant to signify superiors, such as *brah aṅg*, “saint corps, persons of Buddha, or king.” In summary, it becomes applied equally to sacred entities and persons such as the Buddha, saints, monks, and kings.

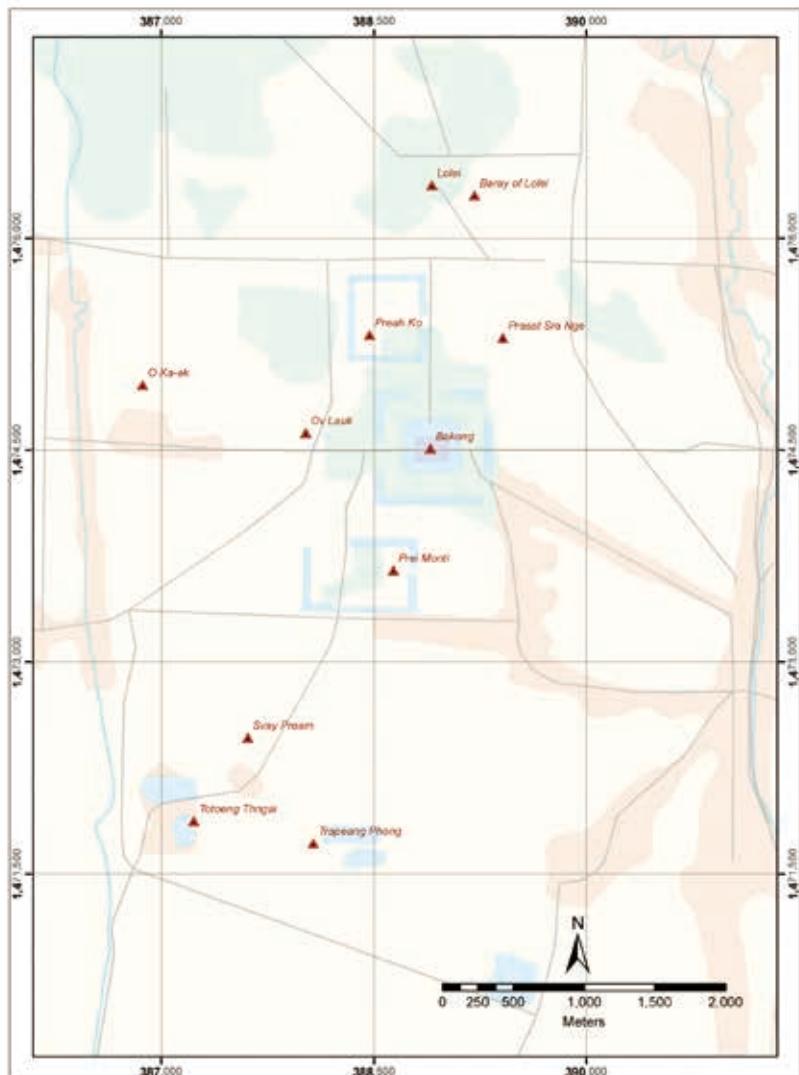
Here are some examples of the particle ‘brah’ that are used for the names of monuments.

Preah Ko (Brah Go)

The Preah Ko temple is located in the ancient city of Hariharalaya (present-day Rolous)¹¹⁸ about 500m from the National Road No. 6 to the south (Map 3). The temple was built in the reign of king

¹¹⁷ Pou 1992: 462.

¹¹⁸ The modern name for the village and the river, are Rolous Village and Rolous River, about 13 km to the east of Siem Reap town along the road to Phnom Penh.



Source: MPWT & JICA 2003, Map Projection: WGS1984
Edited by KIM Samnang, 2017

Map 3 Map of Roluos Group

Indravarman I, according to the stele foundation of the temple in 877 AD.¹¹⁹

According to the inscription of the Preah Ko temple (K.311),¹²⁰ king Indravarman I built this temple in 877 AD, and dedicated it to Parameśvara, which was the posthumous name of king Jayavarman II. This means that king Indravarman I built the temple not dedicating it directly to his ancestors, but to the grand king Jayavarman II, and the central place was occupied by a statue, deified into the form of Shiva. Parameśvara was also the ancient name of the Preah Ko temple.

This temple was sometimes referred to by local inhabitants as *brah go* (Preah Ko), and sometimes *pā go* (Ba Ko), meaning the sacred bull ‘Nandin’ (mount of Siva) placed in front of the temple, that probably first appeared in this construction style in the late 9th century (Ph. 16&17).

In the old books¹²¹ the name used was Preahkon, or Prea kou by Doudart de Legree and Garnier,

119 Coedès 1937: 18.

120 Aymonier 1901: 441.

121 Briggs 1951: 101. See also, Aymonier 1901: 439.



Ph. 16&17 Preah Ko temple and Nandin statue

Bakou, or Bakou by Aymonier and Bergaine, but these appellations do not make sense with regard to the meaning of the name, probably, because they seem to have confused the name with the name of the person ‘Pākū’, or Bakou, who was in charge of certain rites and ceremonies in the Royal Palace.

There is no doubt that *brah go* means the Nandin (sacred bull), the mount of Shiva. It is presented sometimes without Shiva and sometimes with Siva-Umā (husband and wife), and normally it is presented in temples that are dedicated to Shiva. The name “Preah Ko” therefore gives a meaning to the sacred ox as the symbol of god or a superior.

Preah Palilay (Brah Pālilay)

Preah Palilay is located inside the northwest enclosure of Angkor Thom, facing Thvear Dei Chnang, behind the Tep Pranam temple.¹²² With reference to the evolution of architecture and artistic treatment, the tower and terrace belonged to the 12th century according to Henri Marchal, and he also indicated that the Gopura and Theravada relief belonged to the 13th century.¹²³ (Ph. 18&19)

There is no doubt that the temple of Preah Palilay was originally dedicated to the Buddhist



Ph. 18 Preah Palilay, views from the east



Ph. 19 Lintel and Pediment show the scenes of Buddha

122 Tep Pranam means “the place where the god sits and prays.” An inscription of King Yaśovarman I (the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century) described the Buddhist monastery named ‘Saugatāśrama’ as meaning “shelter of Sugata (Buddha).” The name ‘Saugathāśrama’ is frequently identified with the sites of Tep Pranam and Preah Palilay. See Cœdès 1932.

123 Marchal 1922: 101-134.

religion in the reign of king Dharanindravarman, who was the father of the great king Jayavarman VII. As evidence, the pediments and lintel figures of Buddhist scenes have indicated that this temple was a site of Theravada Buddhism, in the 12th century.

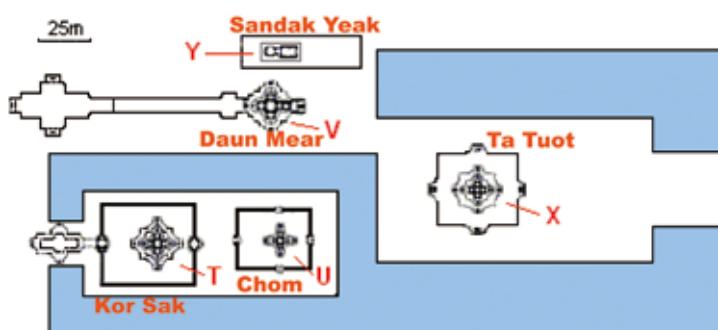
The origin of the name Palilay is unclear, but it probably came from the alteration of the name “Pālilayaka”, a name of the forest where Buddha lived after he went away from the Palace of Kosambi, and where he was served by two elephants, named “Pālilay.”¹²⁴ This hypothesis is based on a certain portion of the pediment showing the scene of the Buddha in the forest, receiving offerings from elephants (a fronton of the East Gopura faces the north) (Ph. 20).

The phonetic of the name Palilay was probably influenced by the Thai language, since in Thai they use ‘Pa’ instead of ‘Ba, or Pā written in transliteration. In fact, the word “Pālilay,” was a Khmer deformation of the Pāli word “Pālilayaka.” The name Preah Palilay means “sacred forest of Pālilay.”

Preah Pithu (Brah Ḫidhū):

Preah Pithu is the name given to a group of temples, some of which have different names such as Ta Tuot (ancestor Tuot, grandfather Tuot), Kor Sak (to shave the head), Chom (an offering of areca placed in a piece of banana-tree trunk), Daun Mear¹²⁵ (name of the grandmother Mear, related to the legend of Neang Kongrey), and Sandak Yeak (?).

According to the architectural elements of these temples, they were built in the early part of the 12th century, and were dedicated to Brahmanism. However, all temples were converted to Theravada Buddhism in the middle period. In the case of the Prasat Ta Tuot, there remains the evidence of the Buddha figure, which manifests the early influence of Theravada Buddhism at Angkor in the 14th century.



Sketch plan of Preah Pithu, Wikipedia
The names of temples were edited by the author

124 Marchal 1922: 103.

125 Daun Mear refers to a pond, which is located in Angkor Thom, behind the Baphuon temple.



Ph. 20 Relief of the pediment depicts the scene of Buddha receiving offerings from elephants

The word ‘Bidhū’, pronounced Pithu’, is derived from the Pāli word ‘Vidhu.’ The consonant V was often used in the old Khmer words, and it is transformed into B and used in modern words, like the word ‘Brah’, which came from the old Khmer ‘Vrah’. The name ‘Vidhu’, or ‘Bidhū’ as found in the Khmer dictionary, refers to the name of a scholar in form of a Bodhisattva, as narrated in the Vidhū Jātaka, or in the legend of Brah Vidhu (Preah Pithu).¹²⁶

The Khmer word ‘Bidhū’ means “scholar,” or “people who have deep knowledge of the Buddhist doctrine.” The name “Preah Pithu” therefore has the meaning of a man who has a high knowledge, and it is also used as “Bidhū Panṭit” or “Pithu Bandit,” meaning “scholar.” This name is directly connected to Theravada Buddhism and the Pāli language, which spread over the Khmer territory in the middle period.

Preah Enkosei (Brah Inda Kosī)

Preah Enkosei is located to the north of Siem Reap town, along the river and opposite the Angkor Conservation Office. It was constructed of brick with three towers, but there are now only two towers remaining (Ph. 21&22). One of these two towers has conserved two Khmer inscriptions on the frame-doors (K. 262), and one stele contains inscriptions in Sanskrit and in Khmer (K. 268).

The two groups of inscriptions describe the foundation of the temple of *Dvijendrapura* (the town of the lord of the Brahmans), where was located the ancient site of Preah Enkosei. G. Cœdès suggested that in the inscription (K. 262) is mentioned the name of the temple of Dvijendrapura, which is dated to 968 AD, and was under the reign of king Jayavarman V.¹²⁷ The same date as this temple has also been found in the inscription of the temple of Prasat Kampus, whose ancient name was Madhuvana (in Khmer Vrai Ghmum, or Prei Khmom), and was founded in 968 AD by the same Brahman Divākarabhaṭṭa, who had married the princess Indralakṣmi, the daughter of king Rajendravarman II (944-968 AD).

The name Preah Enkosei, or *Brah Inda Kosī* means “Indra of fortune” (*kosī* is equivalent to the Sanskrit *kośavant*), another name of Indra.¹²⁸ *Indakosī* is the name of the Buddhist Indra, who appeared in the middle period texts and also in folklore. The name *kosī* is an important name to



Ph. 21&22 Preah Enkosei temple and its inscription on the doorframe

126 Buddhist Institute 1981.

127 Cœdès 1952: 108-139.

128 Pou 1967: 424.

know the Preah Enkosei temple, which was related to Theravada Buddhism in the middle period. The modern name of this temple undoubtedly dates back to its early Buddhist transformation, like the other temples in the Angkor region.

Ta (Tā): The word ‘Tā’ means “ancestor, grandfather, or old man”. The word is also used as a sacred word to indicate the ancestor spirit or the local spirit “Neak Ta.” For example, the west gate of Angkor Thom is called “Thvear Ta Kao” (see the above explanation). The four entrance gates of the third gallery of Angkor Wat temple are named Guk Tā Rāja (Kuk Ta Reach), located at the western entrance; Guk Tā Beja (Kuk Ta Pich), located at the southern entrance; Guk Tā Līk (Kuk Ta Lik), located at northern entrance; and the one at the eastern entrance is named Guk Gū (Kuk Kou). The four names of the gates are so called to indicate the ancestor spirits who used to protect the ancient city of Angkor Wat. In each ‘Guk’ exist statues that local inhabitants believe to be spirits of ‘Neak Ta.’ One of the four gates, Guk Tā Rāja, is popular because of a grand statue of Vishnu with eight arms, which is the strongest spirit to believe in.

Furthermore, the word Ta has been used for the name of monuments such as Ta Prohm, Ta Som, Ta Tuot, Ta Nei, and so on (for Ta Prohm, Ta Som and Ta Tuot already mentioned above).

Ta Nei (Tā Nai)

This temple is located about 800m to the north of Prasat Keo. It was built in the reign of king Jayavarman VII, in the late 12th century, and dedicated to Mahayana Buddhism. We do not know the original name of this temple. According to the local inhabitants, the name of this temple is so-called because of an old man named Nei, who was possibly the temple’s keeper.

Chapter 4. Other Designated Names of the Monuments

This chapter is meant to introduce some other names of monuments that are mostly those of small temples and certain big ones as well, that is, those where the names are not linked to a prefix as in the case of the temples mentioned above. I shall begin with the temples located in the “Small Circuit,” and then the “Grand Circuit,” and finally those outside the circuit.

First, I shall introduce the generic term “Prasat, or Prāśād,” which generally exists as the headword of the proper names of temples, such as Prasat Bei, Prasat Top, Prasat Chrung and so on. The word “Prasat” is of Sanskrit origin and appears in many old Khmer inscriptions, and it has maintained its semantics and phonetics. In the Khmer context, “Prasat” is considered as a sacred word and represents sacred residences, both human and divine. The term itself has a deep meaning and is difficult to translate into foreign languages, but it is often translated as and used in the sense of “temple, sanctuary, or palace.”

From the exterior view of its horizontal level, the term “Prasat” is also equivalent to the word “Phnom” (*Vnam*, in old Khmer), which means “Mountain.” It alternately means “temple, or sanctuary,” having the same significance as the ancient Khmer expression *Kloñ Vnam*, which meant “one who is responsible for the sanctuary.”¹²⁹ However, in the interior view, the term appears as a

¹²⁹ Pou 1991: 210.

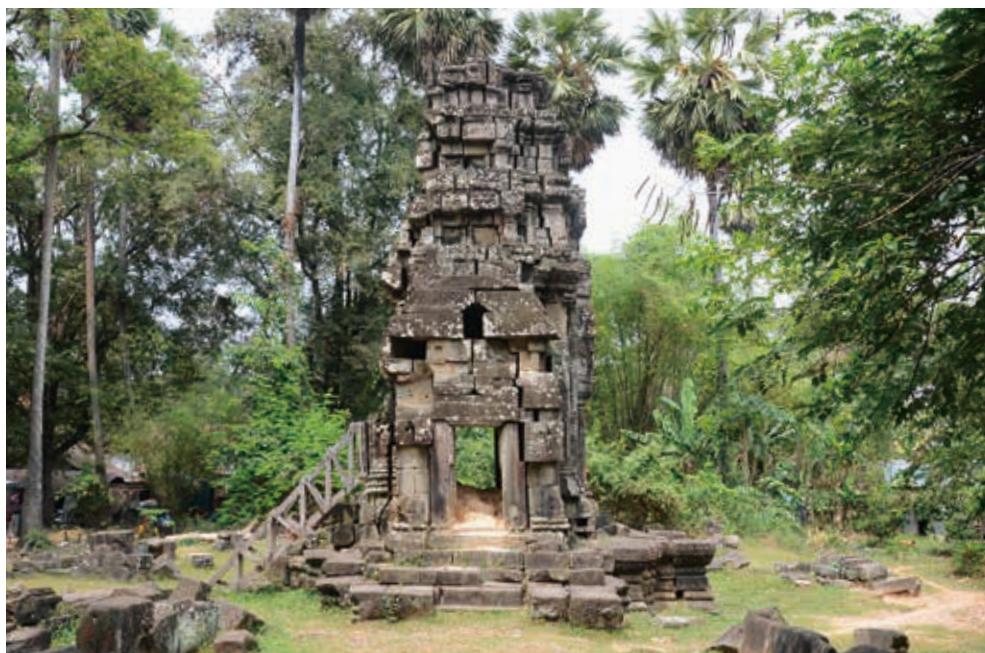
cavity, a chamber, or a cave, having the same meaning as ‘guk’ (Kuk), or ‘guhā’ (Kuhea). The word ‘guk’ is referred to as “Prasat,” but it has no surrounding moat or ponds. It is a part of the temple’s structure, which has the form of small or big gates with a dark inside. It also indicates something that forms a “niche, or hole,” as for example ‘guk thnot’ (oven or hole dug in the ground for cooking sugar palm). Many temples are referred to by using this term, such as Kuk Nokor (Guk Nagar), Sambor Prei Kuk (Sambūr Brai Guk), the fours gates of Angkor Wat, namely, the Western Gate which is called Kuk Ta Reach (Guk Tā Rāja), the Eastern Gate which is Kuk Kou (Guk Gū), the Northern Gate which is Kuk Ta Loek (Guk Tā Līk), and the Southern Gate which is Kuk Ta Pech (Guk Tā Pec), and so on. All these names are called by the local inhabitants.

Prasat Prohm Kel (or sometimes Ta Prohm Kel)

This temple is about 300m from the western causeway of Angkor Wat, along the road to Angkor Thom. It is a sandstone sanctuary that faces to the east, which was built in the reign of king Jayavarman VII. This small temple is in the form of a hospital of the king Jayavarman VII, one of the 102 hospitals, which mentions in the inscription of the Ta Prohm temple. (Ph. 23)

Prohm Kel is a composed term of ‘Prohm’ and ‘Kel’: For the words ‘Prohm’, I have already discussed above, here I shall only introduce the word ‘Kel’. ‘Kel’ is derived from the Sanskrit origin and means “column” or “post” to limit a border or boundary such as ‘Sima Kel’, ‘Sasar Kel’, ‘Bankol Kel’, to limit a place. Khmer use the word ‘Sima Kel’ to indicate a piece of stone in the center of ‘Khan Sima’, and this is also called ‘Sima Indrakel’.

We are not sure the real meaning of this temple whether the word ‘Kel’ as mentioned here related to the meaning of ‘Sima’, for naming this temple. However, the name Prohm Kel is also thought to be related to the legend of Prohm Kel (Prohm who crouches as a legless cripple), and which is a well known legend for most people who live around that locality.



Ph. 23 Prasat Prohm Kel, a hospital in the reign Jayavarman VII

The following is a summary of the legend of Prohm Kel:

[The legend concerns a certain king named Tambang Kranhong. A fortune-teller warned him about a lucky man who was yet to be born, and who would usurp his throne. It was also revealed that the contender was nine months old, in his mother's womb. The king then ordered the arrest of all the women who were nine months pregnant, in order to search for that man. At that time, they found a woman who was pregnant with the fortunate baby, and they took her away to put her in a pan of boiling water. While the water was boiling, a baby suddenly emerged with twisted limbs and almost out of breath. The guards thought that the baby would surely die, and so they took him and left him in the jungle. Fortunately, the baby was found by a farmer who resuscitated and cured him, and raised him until he had grown up. When this boy wanted to move, he had to move on his buttocks. Therefore, his foster-father named him "Prohm Kel" (a man 'Prohm' who moved by his buttocks). Once, there was a bad omen which was seen, and the king asked the fortune-teller to predict future. The fortune-teller said, "there will arrive a fortunate man who will usurp the throne in the windy season, when the moon is full." Many people were anxious to see this event. Prohm Kel wanted to see too, but he found it difficult to move. By chance, the god Indra disguised himself as an old man with a horse, with some rice, and a pack of clothes. Indra tied Prohm Kel to the horse, and when this was done his limbs became free and normal. He became strong and powerful, and killed the king. He himself became a marvelous king. To commemorate this event he built the towers and gave them his name. The features of the towers recall the memory of this name, up to the present day].

Baksei Chamkrong (Paksī Camkruṇī)

Backsei Chamkrong is located about 150m to the north of Phnom Bakheng. It is a pyramidal temple made of brick, and faces east (Ph. 24). It was built by king Hashavarman II in the beginning of the 10th century, and is dedicated to Brahmanism. Baksei Chamkrong directly means "a bird that



Ph. 24 Baksei Chamkrong

spreads out its wings to shelter, or protect.” The name is simply connected to a well-known legend, namely “Baksei Chamkrong.” The legend states that there was a bird that was looked after by a crown prince who was still young, but he did not as custom demanded get on the throne, and tried to avoid the pursuits of his predecessors who attempted to kill him. This legend is not only known in Angkor but has also spread out in other regions, especially in the present-day Kandal and Kompong Cham provinces.

Thma Bay Ka-ek

This is located close to the moat of Angkor Thom, about 125m to the north of Baksei Chamkrong. Its builder is unknown, but according to the architectural elements it was probably built in the 10th century. Thmor Bay Ka-ek means “a rock that is used as a place to put food for crows.” There is no detailed information related to this small temple (Ph. 25).



Ph. 25 Thma Bay Ka-ek

Prasat Bei (Prāśād Pī)

This is situated to the west of Thma Bay Ka-ek. There are three brick towers facing east. It was built in the 10th century, and was dedicated to Brahmanism. We have very little information about this temple. The name however simply indicates the three towers, because ‘Bei’ means “Three.” (Ph. 26)



Ph. 26 Prasat Bei

Prasat Chrung (Prāśād Cruṇī)

There are four temples with the name Prasat Chrung, which are located at the corners of the wall of Angkor Thom. These small temples were constructed in the reign of king Jayavarman VII, at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th century. The name of these temples simply refers to their geographical settings, for ‘Chrung’ means “corner.” (Ph. 27)



Ph. 27 Prasat Chrung

Prasat Top (Prāśād Tup)

There are several temples named “Top” in the Angkor area. “Prasat Top” is so called to specify the temple or ruin where the upper part was fallen down, and the shape of the temple is rather small.

1) Prasat Top (West)

This is situated to the west of the Bayon, on the middle road and on the left side of the road from Bayon to Thvear Ta Kao (Ph. 28&29). This temple was made of sandstone, embellished with pink sandstone lintels, which are suggested as being in the Banteay Srei style of the 10th century, and it was originally dedicated to Brahmanism. This temple was also used as a Buddhist monastery in the middle period, probably in the 14th or 15th century, and it was called “Buddhist Terraces” by French scholars.¹³⁰



Ph. 28 Prasat Top (west)



Ph. 29 Prasat Top (east) or Maṅgalārtha, a last Brahmanic temple in the 13th century

2) Prasat Top (East)

This temple is situated about 900m to the south of the road to the Thvear Chey (Victory Gate) (Ph. 29). It was built in the late 13th century. According to the inscription (K. 481), this temple was built and dedicated to the worship of two people who were considered gods or priests. One of them was Maṅgalārtha and the other was his mother.¹³¹ The word ‘Maṅgala’ means “happiness” and ‘Artha’ means advantage or merit gained from a good deed.¹³² This temple is considered the last Brahmanic temple to be built at Angkor in the late 13th century. This temple was almost an anomaly in Angkor, because the new faith there was already widespread.¹³³ Maṅgalārtha was also considered the ancient name of this temple.

3) Prasat Top

This temple is situated to the north of Prasat Keo and at the corner of the Ta Prohm temple. There are several pieces of sandstone having a color similar to the sandstone at Prasat Keo. We know very little about this temple.

4) Prasat Top

This temple is located about 500m to the north of Bor Em village. Local inhabitants reported that this temple is also called Prasat Damkal Sap (corpse keeping temple). It is said that the name of

130 Marchal 1918.

131 Coedès 1936: 15.

132 Pou 1992: 359.

133 Nhim 2014-16: 51.

this temple is connected to the legend of Ta Trasak Pa-em that was mentioned above.

5) Prasat Top

This temple is situated on the east of Phnom Bok. It was made of brick, and is now in a very poor condition. However, in the classical book of L. de Lajonquière, it was written as “Trapeang Cham Bak,” which directly translates as “Cham Bak tree with a pond.”

Phimeanakas (Bhimān-ākās)

This temple is located to the north of the Baphuon temple, and is located in the center of the ancient royal palace. It was built at the end of the 10th century during the reign of King Rajendravarman II (944-968), and was completed in the reign of King Suryavarman I (1002-1050). The architectural construction is considered to be the same as the Khleang style (late 10th – beginning of the 11th century). This temple was mentioned by Zhou Daguan as the “Golden Tower,”¹³⁴ and he also wrote as follows, “concerning the golden tower inside of the palace, [it is said that] the sovereign goes to sleep at its summit at night. All the natives maintain that in the tower is a spirit, which is a snake with nine heads, and is the possessor of [all] the land in the whole kingdom. This guardian spirit appears every night in the form of a woman. It is with this that the sovereign sleeps first of all and couples. Even the wives of the kings dare not enter this place. The king leaves at the second watch, and can then sleep with his wives and concubines. If one night the spirit does not appear, then the time has come for the barbarian king to die. If the barbarian king fails to come just one night, misfortune will surely befall him.”¹³⁵

Phimeanakas is a combination of the word ‘Phimean, or Bhimān’ which is derived from the word ‘Vimean, or Vimān,’ meaning “palace;” and ‘Akas, or Ākās’ meaning “Celestial, Sky.” So Phimeanakas or Vimeanakas means “Celestial Palace,” or is considered to be a “flying palace”.

Prasat Suor Proat (Suor Brātra)

Prasat Suor Proat indicates the twelve towers lined up north to south, located to the east of the royal palace in Angkor Thom. These towers were built during the reign of King Jayavarman VII, in the late 12th century. The function of these twelve towers is still obscure. Zhou Daguan just mentioned that in front of the royal palace, there are twelve small stone towers, which were used for dispute settlement among the Khmer people of that time.¹³⁶

Prasat Suor Proat in modern Khmer can mean the “towers for tight-rope walking or dancing.” Mouhot mentions that the Khmers believed that ropes were tied from one tower to another for performances in the front of the king, and that he sat in front of the palace to watch the acrobatics.¹³⁷

Prasat Keo (or Ta Keo)

This temple is located along the small circuit across a bridge, which is called Spean Prasat Keo

134 Zhou Daguan 2006: 20.

135 Zhou Daguan 2006: 23.

136 Zhou Daguan 2006: 49.

137 Mouhot 1864: 8.

(or Prasat Keo Bridge). It was built of sandstone, the blocks of which are very large; and the color, quality of sandstone, and the construction itself are very different from other temples. This temple was built in the reigns of Jayavarman V and Suryavarman I, in the beginning of the 11th century, and dedicated to the Brahmanism. This temple is called by French scholars “Ta Keo” and called by the inhabitants as “Prasat Keo”, and has several different meanings. For the name “Ta Keo” can be meant “the ancestor Keo”, or alternatively “Prasat Keo” is meant to the quality and color of the sandstone, because ‘Keo’ means “glass, or precious crystal”. This name is supposed to designate the color of sandstone and its good quality.

Thommanon (Dhamma Nanda)

This temple is located along the road from Thvear Chey (Victory Gate, Angkor Thom) to Prasat Keo (Ph. 30). It was built in the early of the 12th century, and was dedicated to Brahmanism. According to the reliefs of this temple, it was probably built to worship to the god Vishnu. Although, there have very few reliefs related to the Buddhism carving on the temples of Brahmanism, some reliefs on the pediments of this temple show the scenes of the Buddha’s story. As for example, there is a scene depicting about Jujaka of the Vessantara Jataka on the pediment of this temple (Ph. 31).¹³⁸

The original name of this temple is unknown; even the meaning of the name “Thommanon” is uncertain. Thommanon seems to be related to the Buddhist name. According to the santhi rule in Pali and Sanskrit, we can divide “Thommanon” (that equals *dhammānanda*) into two: *dhamma* and *ānanda*. *dhamma* is Pali language (Dharma in Sanskrit), which is a basic laws or instincts to govern living creature. *ānanda* is the name of a disciple of the Buddha, namely Preah Ananda. This is a presumption on the author’s part.



Ph. 30 Thommanon temple, 12th century



Ph. 31 A pediment depicts the story of Jujaka of the Vessantara Jataka

Chau Say

This temple is situated at the opposite side of Thommanon. It was built in the 12th century, the same period of Thommanon, and was dedicated to Brahmanism. The name Chau Say is Thai

¹³⁸ Siyonn Sophearith, “Relief of Jujaka at Thommanon temple”, *Khmer Renaissance*, in www.yoshothor.org (in Khmer language).

language.¹³⁹ We are not sure when the name was called or designed. In Thai language “Chau” means “highest, lord” and “Say” is used both in Khmer and Thai language, which mean “to disperse, to disfuse, to spread”.

Bat Chum (Pāt Cūm)

This temple is located to the south of Srah Srang village, about 300m away on the old road running to Beng Mealea, north of Kravan village. This temple consists of three towers of brick, facing east. According to inscriptions carved on the doorframes of this temple, it was built during the reign of king Rajendravarman, by his royal architect named “Kavindrārimathana” in 953, and was dedicated to the worship of the Buddhas, Lokeśvara and Prajñāpārmitā. This royal architect also built the temples of Mebon (east) and Pre Rup for the king, and Bat Chum for himself. He was a Buddhist believer, and died around 960. This temple was named “Saugataśrama” at that time.¹⁴⁰

The name of this temple is uncertain in meaning, but if we translate directly, ‘Bat’ means “sole” and ‘Chum’ can mean “round, circuit, circle, or surrounding,” and so “Bat Chum” can mean “round or circle sole.”

Prasat Kravan

This temple is located in Kravan village along the road of the small circuit, when approaching from the eastern side of Angkor Wat. It consists of five brick towers. Based on the inscription on the doorframe of this temple, it was constructed in 921, and dedicated to Brahmanism, to the god Vishnu.¹⁴¹ The inscription mentions three high-ranking persons, namely Kamsteñ Añ Mahindharavarman, Jayavīravarman, and Mratāñ Khloñ Vīrendrādhipativarman, but does not mention the name of the king. However, if we consider the year of the construction, it was built during the reign Harshavarman I, one of the two sons of king Yashovarman I.

The original name of this temple is unknown, but the modern name “Kravan” is the name of a flower, the scientific name being *artabotrys odoratissimus*.

Pre Rup (Pre Rūp)

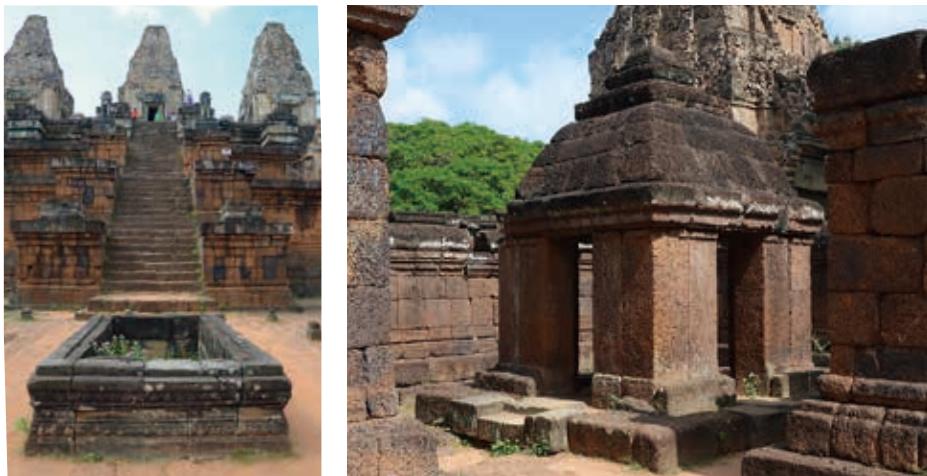
The Pre Rup temple is located to the northeast of Srah Srang village, along the way to Pradak village and Banteay Srei. As mentioned above in the case of the Bat Chum temple, this temple was built during the reign of King Rajendravarman by his minister or royal architect in 961, and dedicated to Brahmanism, to the god Shiva. King Rajendravarman’s posthumous name was Shivaloka.

The name of this temple is now believed by local inhabitants to be that of the king’s crematorium, which is linked to the legend of Ta Trasak Pha-em. Villagers claimed that the rectangular form, placed in front of the stair to the central five towers, was a place for cremating the corpse, and another small tower which is located at the northeast corner, was a place for washing the ashes (Ph. 32&33). In fact, the rectangular block of stone placed in the front of the main towers, is the pedestal of a statue of Nandin (Shiva’s vehicle). Local inhabitants believed that the name “Pre Rup,”

139 This information was communicated by Prof. Ang Choulean.

140 Aymonier 1904: 11-13.

141 Aymonier 1904: 13-14.



Ph. 32&33 Pre Rup temple shows the pedestal and northeast corner laterite tower

which means “to turn the corpse, or body”, is related to the legend where the king was killed by the sword of Ta Trasak Pa-em, and the corpse of the king was brought to be cremated at this place. In Cambodian belief, when they cremate the corpse, normally they turn over the corpse so that the body can be transformed and reincarnated to the next life.

In contrast however, it was suggested that the name of this temple was based on the inscription of Pre Rup (K. 806). The name was derived from a divine statue representing the god Vishnu, namely “Viśvarūpa,” abbreviated from “Rājendraviśvarūpa,” and the name was also mentioned in a part of the inscription that is devoted to the praise of a Brahman ancestor of the king, called “Viśvarūpa.”¹⁴² In the beginning, the name was probably corrupted from *viśvarūpa* > *vrah Rūpa* > *brah rūpa*, and then it seems to have been re-created by the local inhabitants to Pre Rup, by linking it to the well-known legend of Ta Trasak Pa-em.

Mebon (Mepunya)

Mebon is the name of temples that generally existed at the center of the Baray. For instance, one is located at the center of the Thnal Baray (where the ancient name was Yaśodharataṭaka), called Mebon (east), and another is situated at the center of Baray Toek Thla, called Mebon (west). Mebon (east) was built in the reign of king Rajendravarman, in the 10th century, and the Mebon (west), according to the art and architectural elements of the temple, was built in the reign of kings Suryavarman I (1002-1050) and Udayadityavarman II (1050-1066), though the date of the temple is not clearly known.

The name of this temple is unclear with regard to its meaning. In the classical book of E. Aymonier sometimes it was written as “Mi Boune,” and sometimes as “Mé Boune.” However, he described nothing of its root.¹⁴³ The villagers who live near the temple say that the name is connected to the legend of Ta Trasak Pa-em who murdered the king, and the king’s body was taken to conduct a ceremony, before his cremation at Pre Rup. Because the word ‘Bon’ means “ceremony

¹⁴² Pou 1991: 213.

¹⁴³ Aymonier 1904: 44.

or festival” they believe that the name Mebon came from the place for celebrating the festival, and for generations people have called this temple “Mebon.”

Krol Ko

This temple is located 3km away from Banteay Ta Som, and about 900m to the right of the grand circuit road. It was built at the end of the 12th century in the reign of king Jayavarman VII, and dedicated to Mahayana Buddhism.

The direct translation of the name of Krol Ko is “cattle stable.” The name of this temple is originally from the legend of Preah Ketmealea, mentioned in the 17th century poem of Lboek Angkor Wat, or the Foundation of Angkor Wat. In the poem it is stated that this temple was a residence of Preah Ko, the sacred bull, for the protection of the world of Indraprasth.¹⁴⁴

Neak Poan (Nāga Băñ)

This temple is located at the center of Viel Reach Dak (the ancient name Jayataṭāka), about 300m from the road of the Grand Circuit, and stands almost opposite to Krol Ko. It was built at the end of the 12th century in the reign of king Jayavarman VII, and dedicated to Mahayana Buddhism.

This temple is believed to represent the Lake Anavatāpta.¹⁴⁵ As G. Cœdès noted, “the lake is located in the confines of the Himalayas, and its waters gush out of gargoyles in the form of the heads of animals.”¹⁴⁶ Cœdès also described Neak Poan as “an eminent island, deriving its charm from its lake and cleansing the impurity of sin of those who come to it.”¹⁴⁷

Neak Poan was named after the two Naga statues that twist their tails on the western side with their faces to the east, with their bodies encircling the main shrine. ‘Neak’ is the Khmer pronunciation of the Sanskrit word “Nāga”, and ‘Poan, or Băñ’ means “entwine, or twist.” So far, Neak Poan has been simply translated as “the entwined Nagas or serpents.” (Ph. 34&35)



Ph. 34&35 Prasat Neak Poan shows the entwined two Nagas (Neak)

144 Khing 1985.

145 Finot & Goloubew 1923: 401-5, Cœdès 1939: 33-34. The recent discussion in detail about Neak Poan., See Siyonn 2009.

146 Cœdès 1968: 174.

147 *Ibid.* The description concerning Neak Poan also mentions the inscription of the Preah Khan temple (K. 908), stence 170; See Cœdès 1941.

Prasat Tonle Snguot (Tonle Snuot)

This temple is located in Nokor Krau village, about 500m to the north of Dei Chhnang Gate (Angkor Thom). It was built in the reign of King Jayavarman VII during the late 12th and beginning of the 13th century. This temple is considered as one of the 102 hospitals of King Jayavarman VII.

Local inhabitants sometimes call this temple “Tonle Snguot,” and sometimes they call it “Prasat Top.” “Tonle”¹⁴⁸ means “River” and ‘Snguot’ means “dry,” and Tonle Snguot simply means “dried river, river with no water.” (Ph. 36&37)

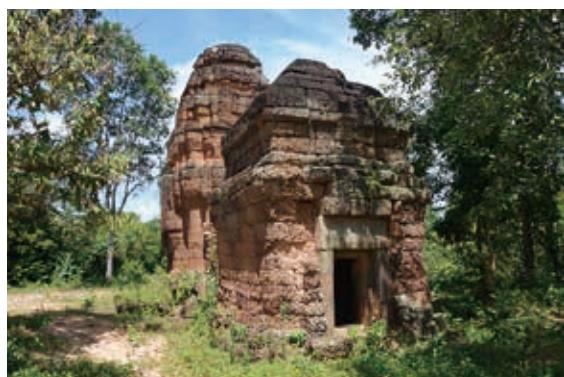
Prasat To (Prāśād Tū)

This temple is located to the northeast of the Thnal Baray. It has two brick towers and faces east (Ph. 38&39). According to the Sanskrit inscription of Prasat To, G. Cœdès suggested that this temple was built in the reign of king Jayavarman VII in the 12th century, and probably dated to the year 1189 AD or 1195 AD.¹⁴⁹

The original name of this temple is uncertain. ‘To, or Tū’ means “aqueduct, gutter, channel.” According to G. Trouvé, who went to this temple in 1930s, the villagers called it Prasat To, probably



Ph. 36&37 Prasat Tonle Snguot, a hospital during the reign Jayavarman VII



Ph. 38&39 The laterite towers of Prasat To

148 Tonle laso represents of the ocean that this meaning is still used in Thai language.

149 Cœdès 1937: 227.

to indicate a channel named O To (or To channel).¹⁵⁰ Also, there is a laterite bridge called Spean To,¹⁵¹ and surrounding this area there are some watercourses named ‘To.’ The same Sanskrit inscription also mentions the irrigation system, and especially a pond that was dug by the king.¹⁵² So far, the name Prasat To can mean “the temple of the channel, or aqueduct.”

Prasat Leak Neang (Prāsād Lāk' Nāñ)

There are many temples named “Prasat Leak Neang” in the Angkor region as well as in Cambodia. There are three temples named Leak Neang in Angkor Park, and one in the Koh Ker site. In Angkor Park, one is located near Prasat Keo and close to Spean Prasat Keo (Prasat Keo bridge), while another is situated just opposite Pre Rup temple, and the last is located to the north of Phnom Bok (Ph. 40).

The name “Prasat Leak Neang” means “sanctuary of the concealed or hiding beautiful girl.” The local inhabitants call it “Prasat Leak Neang,” in connection with the well-known folktale, namely “Neang Sak Kra-op, Neang Ton Satra, or Sdec Damrei Sar (the white elephant king).” This folktale is known not only in Cambodia, but also in Thailand and Laos.

There is a temple called Prasat Ban Phluang (Ph. 41&42), which is located about 35km from the Khmer-Thai border at O Smach, in the Ban Phluang village of the Prasat District, in the Surin province of Thailand. This temple was probably built in the 11th century. The villagers who live in this area said that every year in April (New Year’s Day), people come to conduct the ceremony related to the folktale of Neang Sak Kra-op or Sdec Damrei Sar. Also, there is another temple named Nang Ing located close to the border of Khmer-Laos, in the Champasak province of Laos (Ph. 43&44). This temple was probably built in the 11th century, based on the architectural elements. The people residing in villages near the temple said that the name of the temple “Nang Ing,” is related to the folktale of Neang Sak Kra-op. The folktale seems to be spread all over the ancient Khmer territory.

Here, I shall briefly introduce the narrated folktale as follows:

[One day, a long time ago, it is said that a woman named Neang Peou dug for potatoes in the forest. She saw the water in a small pond, and drank it, as she thought it was rainwater. After she drank that water she got pregnant. In fact, that water was the White Elephant’s urine. When she returned to the village, the villagers panicked and were stricken with fear, and they chased her out of the village. They said that she was a shrew and had become pregnant without a husband. She left the village for the forest and met the White Elephant King. After she had given birth to a child,



Ph. 40 Prasat Leak Neang, north of Phnom Bok
(Photo: Phoeung Dara)

150 Trouvé 1935: 207.

151 It has been suggested that the laterite bridge was constructed around the 15th or 16th century. The communication with Prof. Jacque Dumarçay.

152 Cœdès 1937: 243 (stance XXVII).



Ph. 41&42 Prasat Ban Phluang, Surin province, Thailand



Ph. 43&44 Prasat Nang Ing (in Laos)

whose name was ‘Romsay Sak’ (let down the hair), she died. Neang Romsay Sak grew to become a beautiful girl and many men wanted to marry her. Accordingly, the White Elephant King (her father) took her and hid her in a temple (people now call it, Prasat Leak Neang, or “Sanctuary of the Concealed Girl”). Whenever the king went to find the fruits, he always told his daughter to listen for three loud sounds, and then to open the door. One day, after White Elephant King left for the forest, she met a man who was walking nearby and fell in love. They met often in the temple. When the king came back and saw his daughter have an affair with a man, he was very angry., He then took a tree trunk to strike the temple, and demolished some parts of the tower].

Prasat Char (Prāśād Cār)

This temple is located in Char village, about 5km northwest of Thvear Dei Chnang, in Angkor Thom. This temple is in a ruined condition, and there remain only two doorframes carved with inscriptions (Ph. 45&46). The two inscriptions were registered as K. 257 and dated to 979 AD, which was in the reign of king Jayavarman V.¹⁵³

The original name of this temple is uncertain. This temple was called “Prasat Char,” and this was meant to indicate the name of a kind of tree.

153 Cœdès 1937:140.

Prasat Sralao

This temple is located in Svay Chek village, about 4km northwest of Thvear Dei Chnang (Ph. 47&48). We have very little information related to this temple. E. Aymonier and L. De Lajonguière in their classical books provide very little information. It was built in the second half of the 10th century and dedicated to the god Shiva (or Tribhuvanamaheśara, meaning Lord of the three worlds). The name of this temple, “Sralao,” refers to the name of a kind of tree, which has the scientific name *lagerstroemia calyculata* or *angustifolia*.

Prasat Sra Nge

This temple is located in the forest about 1km to the east of Preah Ko temple (Roluos group, see Map 3). It was probably built in the 9th century. It is a brick temple with some decorations of sandstones such as lintels, doorframes, etc. The condition of this temple is very bad. The name of this temple “Sra Nge” refers to the name of a kind of weed. (Ph. 49&50)



Ph. 45&46 Prasat Char and its inscription on the doorframe



Ph. 47&48 Prasat Sralao



Ph. 49&50 Prasat Sra Nge

Prei Monti (Prai Mandī)

This temple is located not far from Bakong temple, to the southwest. It was built in the reign of king Jayavarman III (834-877), who was a son of king Jayavarman II (802-834?). During the archaeological excavations conducted in 2007 and 2008 by the EFEO, they found many artifacts that suggested that this place was a royal palace of king Jayavarman III.¹⁵⁴

The original name of this temple is uncertain, and even when the present name of “Prei Monti” was used is unclear. However, the word “Mandira, pronounced Monti” is found in the 10th century inscriptions (K. 157 and K. 291). The word “Mandira” means “royal palace, or a building in the compound of the royal palace.” Judging by the results of the findings by the EFEO and the words in the inscriptions that mean “royal palace,” we may conclude that the name of this temple is “Prei Monti.” (Ph. 51&52)

Prasat Totoeng Thgnai

This temple is located about 2km from Prasat Prei Monti to the south. It is almost ruined; it still remains some fragments of lintels, doorframes, and block of sanstones. We don’t know the exact date of this temple, but it was probably built as the same time of Prei Monti temple.

The name of Totoeng Thgnai is simply called to indicate the geographical location of the temple itself where stretched out a north-south direction. (Ph. 53&54)

Prasat Trapeang Phong

It is located not far from Totoeng Thgnai (Ph. 55&56). According to the decoration of lintel and other architectural elements, this temple was probably built during the reign of king Jayavarman III in the 9th century. It is a brick temple and remains in a good condition. The name of this temple is simply called by designing the nature surrounding the temple. “Trapeang” means “pond” and “Phong” is probably meant, “to sink in”.

Prasat Kok Chak

This temple is located to the north-west of the Siem Reap town. It was built in the second half of the 11th century. According to the inscriptions carving on the doorframes of this temple, the original name of this site was Vishnugrama (Viṣṇugrāma).¹⁵⁵ Vishnugrama means “village of the god Vishnu”. However, the modern name of this temple is called Kok Chak. “Kok” means “dry (of land), land”, and “Chak” refars to the name of certain small aquatic plants (or Duckweed). (Ph. 57)

¹⁵⁴ I received this information because of Mr. Phoeung Dara, to whom I offer my thanks. Mr. Phoeung Dara, is a technical staff of APSARA Authority, used to participate at that time in the excavations at this temple, with the EFEO.

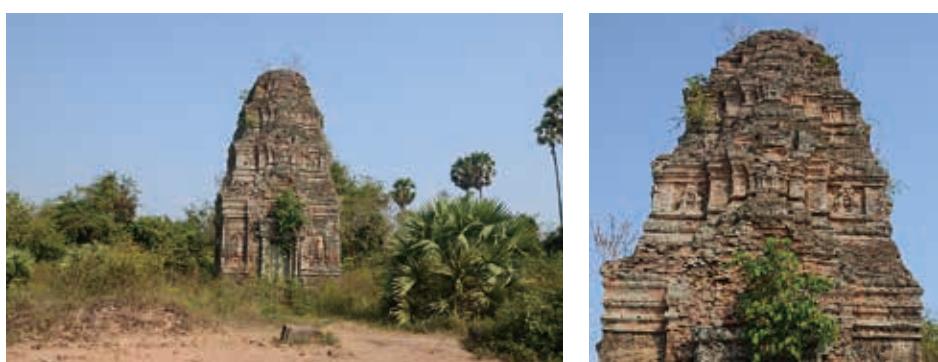
¹⁵⁵ Cœdès 1937: 167-170 (K. 521).



Ph. 51&52 Prasat Prei Monti



Ph. 53&54 Prasat Totoeng Thgnai



Ph. 55&56 Prasat Trapeang Phong



Ph. 57 Prasat Kok Chak

Conclusion

A study of the names of monuments as presented here, even though they are of a limited number, provides many cultural facts concerning various different periods of history. Some have disappeared and some are still used, and they are part of the cultural framework of Cambodia. I have noted here that there have been some differing views or concepts, in understanding or interpreting Khmer culture and heritage.

As for the local inhabitants, they have understood or interpreted the names of monuments as well as place names, by the legends, folktales, or memories that were narrated or memorized and passed on through the generations, and also by indicating the actual conditions and surrounding geographical aspects. However, recently old local villagers, who remembered their customs or traditions and who could pass on their memories to their children, have died. Hence, this tradition, or what we may perhaps call this intangible cultural heritage, is gradually being lost or forgotten. As a good example of this, we have the fact that the 17th century poem of Lboek Angkor Wat, which was composed for the narration on Angkor Wat, was well known earlier, but now only a few people in this era of globalization know about it. Hence, these collective memories need to be preserved and compiled.

These should be simplified and preserved within two different concepts or mental areas that still exist in Khmer society, namely those of the scholars and those of the local traditions. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, the names Thnal Baray, and Baray Toek Thla, which have been called so by the local inhabitants, are also referred to as East Baray and West Baray by modern researchers. This is also true in the case of original names that are being used as Khmer place names. For example, the Baray “Viel Reach Dak, or Vāl Rāja Ṭāk,” is a corrupted form of the original name “Jayataṭāka,” and the village’s name “Pradak, or Praṭāk,” is a deformation of *taṭāka*, meaning pond or reservoir.

Besides this, some Khmer researchers as well as tour guides have used the word “Gopura” to indicate the entrance gate of Khmer monuments, though in fact there also exists a Khmer name, that is, “Khlong Thyear.” This indicates the influence of French researchers, who use the term “Gopura” in their scientific writings (I owe my knowledge of this fact to Professor Ang Choulean).

To sum up, in this study I have found that monuments are generally named by utilizing the names of gods, marvelous objects, founders, forms of temples, names of ancestors, geographical aspects, and so on. This is a limited study on the names of monuments in Angkor, but a study of the monuments outside the Angkor region and other historical sites also need to be carried out and the facts compiled, in order to avoid confusion and controversy in their naming.

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Abbreviations:

APSARA: Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap, Cambodia.

BEFEO: Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême Orient, Hanoi-Paris.

CEFEO: Cahiers de l’École Française d’Extrême Orient

CEDORECK: Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur la Civilisation Khmère, Paris.

CKS: Center of Khmer Studies

EFEO: École Française Extrême Orient, Paris.

IC: Inscriptions du Cambodge, Paris-Hanoi.

JA: Journal Asiatique, Paris.

JSAS: The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies, Tokyo.

JSS: Journal of Siam Society, Bangkok.

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List of the Names of Monuments in English and Khmer

No.	Names in English	Names in Khmer
1	Angkor	អង្គរ
2	Angkor Wat (Angkor Toch)	អង្គរវត្ស (អង្គរកំចា)
3	Angkor Thom	អង្គរធំ
4	Bakheng (Phnom Bakheng)	បាទេខែង (តូចបាទេខែង)
5	Bakong	បាត់ង
6	Baksei Chamkrong	បកសីមំប្រុង
7	Banteay Kdei	បន្ទាយកើត
8	Banteay Prei	បន្ទាយបី
9	Banteay Samre	បន្ទាយសំម្រោ
10	Banteay Srei	បន្ទាយស្រី
11	Banteay Ta Prohm (Ta Prohm)	បន្ទាយតាប្រហុ (តាប្រហុ)
12	Banteay Ta Som (Ta Som)	បន្ទាយតាសោម (តាសោម)
13	Banteay Thom	បន្ទាយធំ
14	Baphuon	បាបុន
15	Bat Chum	បាទដុំ
16	Baray	បាកយ (បាកយណ៍)
17	Baray Toek Thla	បាកយទឹកថ្វាតា
18	Bayon	បាយន
19	Beng Mealea	បេងមាលា
20	Cau Say	ចោសាយ
21	Daun Mear	ដួនមារ
22	Kdei Sor (Kutivara) or Kok Khmoch	កីសិរិ (កិដិសិរិ) ឬ គោកខ្មោច
23	Koh Ker	កោះកេរី (កោះកេរ)
24	Khleang (North)	ឃ្លោង (ខាងជើង)
25	Khleang (South)	ឃ្លោង (ខាងក្បង)
26	Krol Ko	ក្រលោគ
27	Lolei	លូលោ
28	Mangalartha (Prasat Top - East)	មង្គលរ័យ? (ព្រោសទេសបុ, ខាងកើត)
29	Mebon (East)	មេបុណ្យ (ខាងកើត)
30	Mebon (West)	មេបុណ្យ (ខាងលើច)
31	Neak Poan	នាកព័ន្ធ
32	Phimeanakas	ភិមានអាកាស
33	Phnom Bok	ភ្នំបុក
34	Phnom Krom	ភ្នំក្រោម
35	Phnom Kulen	ភ្នំគូល់នឹន
36	Pradak	ប្រជាក
37	Prasat Ak Yum	ព្រោសទេសយំ
38	Prasat Bei	ព្រោសទីបី
39	Prasat Char	ព្រោសទារ
40	Prasat Chom	ព្រោសទេសម
41	Prasat Chrung	ព្រោសទេសឃុង
42	Prasat Keo (Ta Keo)	ព្រោសទេសកៅ (តាកៅ)
43	Prasat Kok Chak	ព្រោសទេសកៅចក
44	Prasat Kon Khlaeng (Prasat Prei Prasat)	ព្រោសទេសកូនខ្លោះ (ព្រោសទេសព្រោសទេស)
45	Prasat Kor Sak	ព្រោសទេសកោសក់

46	Prasat Kravan	ប្រាសាទក្រវាន់
47	Prasat Leak Neang	ប្រាសាទលាក់នោង
48	Prasat Ov Lauk	ប្រាសាទខីឡូក
49	Prasat Prei	ប្រាសាទបី
50	Prasat Prohm Kel	ប្រាសាទព្រហ្មគិល
51	Prasat Sandak Yeak	ប្រាសាទសណ្តុកយក្ស
52	Prasat Suor Proat	ប្រាសាទសូរព្រាព
53	Prasat Sralao	ប្រាសាទស្រឡាហ៍
54	Prasat Sra Nge	ប្រាសាទស្រាំង
55	Prasat Ta Tuot	ប្រាសាទតាតុត
56	Prasat Tonle Sgnuot	ប្រាសាទទន្លេស្អួល
57	Prasat Totoeng Thgnai	ប្រាសាទទឹះថែង
58	Prasat Top	ប្រាសាទគុប
59	Prasat To	ប្រាសាទទុ
60	Prasat Trapeang Phong	ប្រាសាទត្រពោងផងដើម
61	Preah Enkosei	ព្រះអេនកូសីយ៉ែ
62	Preah Ko	ព្រះគោ
63	Preah Khan	ព្រះខោន
64	Preah Palilay	ព្រះបាលិលេយ្យ
65	Preah Pithu	ព្រះពិធី
66	Prei Monti	ព្រៃមន្ត្រី
67	Prei Prasat	ព្រៃប្រាសាទ
68	Pre Rup	ព្រៃរុប
69	Srah Srang	ស្រែប៊សង់
70	Spean Prasat Keo	ស្ថានប្រាសាទកែវ
71	Spean Toep	ស្ថានទី
72	Spean To	ស្ថានទុ
73	Rohal	រហាល
74	Ta Nei	តានី
75	Tep Pranam	ទេពប្រណាមួយ
76	Thommanon	ធម្មនន្ទី
77	Thnal Baray (East Baray)	ធ្វូល់បាកយ
78	Thvear Chey (Victory Gate)	ទ្វាងជី
79	Thvear Dei Chhnang (North Gate)	ទ្វាងជីឆ្លាំង
80	Thvear Khmoch (Gate of the Death)	ទ្វាងខ្មៅច
81	Thvear Tonle Om (South Gate)	ទ្វាងនេះអំ
82	Thvear Ta Kav (West Gate)	ទ្វាងតាការ
83	Viel Reach Dak	វិលរាជិដាក

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