

**THE DECLINE AND FALL OF ANGKOR
(12th CENTURY TO 15th CENTURY)**

Miss Patmawan Buranamat

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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การศึกษาเกี่ยวกับปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อความเสื่อมและการล่มสลายของอาณาจักรพระนครในอดีตให้
 ภาพของปัจจัยหลักสี่ประการ คือ การรุกรานจากสยามซึ่งในเวลานั้นเป็นรัฐเพื่อนบ้าน ความล้มเหลวของ
 ระบบชลประทานที่หล่อเลี้ยงระบบการปกครองควบคุมประชากรของอาณาจักรทั้งหมด การเปลี่ยนลัทธิ
 ความเชื่อถือทางศาสนาจากศาสนาฮินดูมาเป็นพุทธศาสนาเถรวาท และการเจริญเติบโตของเส้นทาง
 การค้าทางทะเลที่เริ่มมากจากราชวงศ์ซ่งของจีน

จากการศึกษาที่ผ่านมาจะพบว่าไม่เคยมีการให้ความสำคัญกับปัจจัยภายในที่จะทำให้เกิดปัจจัย
 เฉพาะหน้าทั้งหลายที่กล่าวมาแล้วจนกระทั่งทำให้เกิดการละทิ้งเมืองโดยถาวรในคริสต์ศตวรรษที่สิบห้า
 ปัจจัยภายในซึ่งได้แก่ระบบบริหารราชการแผ่นดินของอาณาจักรพระนครที่เป็นเงื่อนไขพื้นฐานในการ
 กำหนดทิศทางการเมืองอยู่ตลอดเวลา วิทยานิพนธ์นี้พยายามจะศึกษาบทบาทของระบบบริหารราชการ
 แผ่นดินที่มีต่อการล่มสลายของอาณาจักรพระนคร

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
 จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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The study of the factors of the decline of Angkor to date has given us four main causes that triggered the fall: the invasion of the Siamese, the failure of the elaborate hydraulic system which caused the inability to maintain the human resource management, the change of the belief system due to the arrival of Theravada Buddhism, and the approaching of intense maritime trade initiated by the Sung Dynasty.

However, there has been little study focusing on the internal cause that allowed those immediate causes to trigger the abandonment of the city, namely the administrative system that had always been the underlying factor in the dynamic of changes in Angkor. This thesis will look at the role of the administrative system in the decline of the Angkorian kingdom (12th - 15th Centuries).

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CHAPTER I

THE FALL OF ANGKOR: MANY PERSPECTIVES

Angkor, a majestic city, a realm of the deities and an enigmatic ancient civilization of the world. The city that is believed to have hosted millions during her bloom left to only lone sanctuaries to sleep in the lush blanket of the jungle, at least until the 're-discovery' of its beauty by the West in the late nineteenth century.

How a vast kingdom as Angkor ceased being the center of the civilization within the land that is the mainland of Southeast Asia is a topic most often raised in the study of the history and civilization of the region. Speculations aroused many theories, each as convincing, and each flawed, as the others.

The first speculation comes from the conclusion of various sources, mainly a memoir of a Chinese diplomat and the annals of a 'rival' kingdom. During 1296 - 1297, Chou Ta-kuan took a journey to Angkor in the reign of Srindravarman (also known as Indravarman III). After he went back to his motherland he wrote a report based on his experience in the kingdom, a report which has become one of the most cited texts in the study of Angkor. The memoir did not make it to the public eye until 1819 when it was translated by J.P. Abel Rémusat and published in *Nouvelles annales des*

voyages Vol. III¹, and got more interest in 1902 when Paul Pelliot, a member of the École Française d'Extrême Orient, published his translation from Chinese to French². In that report later known as 'The Customs of Cambodia' he mentioned 'Siam' as the neighboring kingdom which had recently wedged war with Angkor³. The chronicles of Cambodia, as well as the *History of the Ming*⁴ later recorded many wars between the two polities until the kingdom of Ayudhya succeeded and forced Ponhea Yat, the Khmer king at that time, to completely abandon Angkor in 1431 on account of her exposed situation and the difficulty in defense⁵.

Supporters of this Siam invasion theory include Georges Cœdès himself at the early stage of his study⁶ and Louis Finot. Given the situation that the works of those scholars were the foundation in the study of ancient Cambodia, most history books took that date and only reported that the Khmer abandoned the city of Angkor due to the invasion of Ayudhya in the year 1431. The later cross-references are a clear evidence for the invasion over the city of Yasodhrapura, nevertheless, there is no evidence that this

¹ Chou Ta-kuan, "Introduction", *The Customs of Cambodia*, trans. Michael Smithies (Bangkok: Siam Society, 2001), p. 8.

² Chou Ta-kuan, *Mémoires sur les coutumes du Cambodge de Tcheou Takouan*, trans. Paul Pelliot (Bulletin du École Française d'Extrême Orient, II, 1902), pp.123-177.

³ Chou Ta-kuan, *The Customs of Cambodia*, trans. Michael Smithies (Bangkok: Siam Society, 2001), pp. 89-99.

⁴ J.P. Abel Rémuset, "Descriptions du royaume de Cambodge", in *Nouveaux mélanges asiatiques*, I, (Paris: 1829), pp. 89-97.

⁵ G.Cœdès, *The Indianized State of Southeast Asia*, trans. Sue Brown Cowing, (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 1968), pp. 136-137. See also the Annals of Ayudhya (Luang Prasroeth version).

⁶ Cœdès, *Ibid.*, pp.236-237.

battle was the trigger for the decision to abandon the city. Although the last Angkor-period inscription which came from the reign of Jayavarmaparameshvara was erected in 1327 and the claimed non-mythical part of the Chronicles of Cambodia began around the year 1350, just twenty years later, with a supposedly posthumous name of a king “Nirvanapada” (Nippean Bat)⁷, no one was able to link Jayavarmaparaneshvara with Nirvanapada⁸. Vickery remarked that even when there are no longer inscriptions against which to check the chronicles with, it does not mean that the latter automatically became more accurate⁹. Nevertheless, the “Luang Prasoeth” abbreviated version of the Annals of Ayudhya which was written in the reign of King Narai in the second half of the seventeenth century – about two hundred years after the war, mentioned another date, earlier than the one of 1430-1, which was the only time Siam captured the city of Angkor¹⁰. In 1948, L.P. Briggs seconded the Annals of Luang Prasoeth and confirmed the information, that Siam captured Angkor for a very brief period around the year 1394 during the reign of Ramesuan (Rāmeśvara), not in 1431¹¹. Almost twenty years after that, O.W. Wolters

⁷ G. Cœdès, The Making of Southeast Asia, trans. H.M. Wright, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 196.

⁸ Michael Vickery, “Cambodia After Angkor”, The Chronicular Evidence for the Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries. Vol. I and II, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1977), p. 4.

⁹ Vickery, *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰ O.W. Wolters, “The Khmer King at Basan (1371-3) and the Restoration of the Cambodian Chronology During the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries”, Asia Major, 7 (1), (1966), pp. 44-89.

¹¹ L.P. Briggs, “Siamese attacks on Angkor before 1430”, Far Eastern Quarterly, 8 (1), (1948), pp. 3-33.

published an article in which he stated that the King of the Khmer kingdom had, in fact, moved to an other location (Basan) before the year proposed in the studies. He re-examined Rémusat's translation of *Ming-shih* and found that Rémusat overlooked the fact that the Khmer king was not living in Angkor at least from 1371 to 1373¹².

Wolters had an explanation for this. In his bi-polar theory concerning the politics of the early Ayudhya period, he proposed that there were two rival dynasties within the city of Ayudhya and these two took turns in gaining power. The two dynasties were the U-Thong Dynasty, whose policy was to expand the power to the east and the Supanaphumi Dynasty, that preferred expansion to the north. Therefore whenever the U-Thong dynasty had control of power, they would try to establish the 'new center of the universe' by canceling the old one, which was the *Yaśodharapura* of Angkor, hence the attacks on the Khmers. Their waged wars, but that Ayudhya was not the only 'rivalry' the Khmers had (many inscriptions and bas-reliefs show the constant warfare between the Khmers and the Chams), nor did the evidence say that Ayudhya has overwhelmingly successful in the war. Moreover, Michael Vickery suggested that, at that time in the late-fourteenth to early-fifteenth century, Ayudhya and Angkor were not two monolithic competing entities with clearly distinct territories, and there was even the mixed Mon-Khmer-Thai aristocracy within the ruling court of both

¹² Wolters, *Ibid.*, p. 45.

kingdoms, and whatever warfare occurred between Siam and Cambodia fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was not serious enough to be noticed by the Chinese, even though at the turn of the century, when most of the chronicular wars are mentioned, relations between both Siam and Cambodia were especially active ¹³.

However, whatever year it was that Ayudhya seized the city of Angkor is not the focus of this study, what I am trying to present here is the inconsistency of the evidences, which leads to the skepticism about the claim that the invasion from Ayudhya was the key factor that destroyed the city of Angkor. The city must have been in a vulnerable state even before the battle (or battles) took place.

Then what were the causes for an 'empire' like Angkor to be so vulnerable?

Some scholars¹⁴ proposed, mostly in the 1960s, that it had to do with the extensive building programs from the Khmer kings, from Sūryavarman II to Jayavarman VII. The latter was the last 'great' king of Angkor and had ordered more than one thousand building programs for temples, reservoirs, hospitals, rest houses, and that brought about even more detachment between the king himself and the population to the point that the people did not obey the king anymore. Myths and folklore in a later period that made it

¹³ Vickery, *Ibid.* pp.510-511, 521.

¹⁴ Jan Myrdal and Gun Kessle, "Angkor: An Essay on Art and Imperialism", trans. Paul Britten Austin. (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).

into the Cambodian history textbooks tell of these revolts¹⁵ that may be only the fiction of the remnants of memories from the event that actually occurred.

The Marxist and socialist camp of scholars had certainly put this within the Marxian concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production¹⁶. Jitra Bhumisakra was one of the supporters of this theory. In the book published after his death, *The Legend of Angkor Wat*¹⁷, Jitra cited and translate the work of Malcolm MacDonald which said:

Yet if he (Jayavarman VII) was the greatest ruler that his people ever knew, he was also the most potent cause of their eventual downfall; if his court was the richest in the history of the Khmers, his extravagance was the origin of their later poverty; and if his Empire spread wider than it ever reached before, its very outsize was a reason for its subsequent crumbling. Jayavarman's conquest in war and constructions in peace called for an expenditure of money, energy and labour by his countrymen which, in a supreme effort, they maintained faithfully and gloriously during his potent rule, but which left them exhausted

¹⁵ David Chandler, *The History of Cambodia*, (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1983), pp. 118-119.

¹⁶ Marian Sawer, *Marxism and the Question of Asiatic Mode of Production*, (Amsterdam: Martinus Nijhoff-The Hague. 1977), pp. 40 – 81.

¹⁷ Jitra Bhumisakra, *The Legend of Angkor Wat* (Thai title: *Tamnan Hang Nakorn Wat*), (Bangkok: Amarin), 2002.

afterwards. He overworked, overtaxed and overstrained them, with the result that within a few generations his Empire collapsed. The wondrous, beautiful flower of Khmer civilization withered¹⁸.

Jan Myrdal and Gun Kessle also wrote about this 'tiredness' of the people in 'Angkor: An Essay on Art and Imperialism':

The Craftsmen were at work while the old masters sat in the shade talking. Now and then they came over, to keep an eye on the work. Then one of the apprentices comes running. He shouts: "Now he's dead!" At this, the craftsmen stopped hacking at the stone wall and put down their tools... and went off home¹⁹.

If there were any other persuasive methods used by the authorities apart from the fear factor, by the second half of the thirteenth century they had, more or less, started to die down. At this point, the opinions have been divided into two streams. The religion that might have been the force that

¹⁸ Malcolm MacDonald, Angkor and the Khmers, first published 1958, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 60.

¹⁹ Myrdal and Kessle, *Ibid.* p.140.

bound the citizen to hard work has lost its appeal²⁰. After years spent under the power of the authorities working without sufficient reward, the people finally revolted²¹.

In the other stream, L.P Briggs' monumental work, 'The Ancient Khmer Empire', also mentioned the "building frenzy" as the first cause in the decline and fall of Angkor and of the ancient Khmer civilization²². The building program was so great and vast in scale that 'the extant stone structures or their ruins equal in quantity those of the rest of the Angkorian kings in combination.²³' This 'frenzy' exhausted and discouraged the people and left them discontent and 'spiritless'²⁴. He, among many other scholars, mentioned the dissatisfaction among the people with their 'greedy gods', in this case the one practicing the authority of the gods, the Elite. They were "ripe for a new religion or philosophy of life."²⁵

That 'new religion or philosophy of life' was the relatively new Singhalese sect of Buddhism, known as Hinayana or Theravāda. Briggs stated that the religion spread into mainland Southeast Asia from Ceylon/Sri Lanka through Burma late in the twelfth century and probably reached the lower Menam before the middle of the thirteenth century. The

²⁰ Marilia Albanese, Angkor: Splendor of the Khmer Civilization, (Bangkok: Asia Books, 2002). p.48.

²¹ Jit Pumisak, *Ibid.*,

²² Briggs, Ancient Khmer Empire, pp. 258.

²³ I.W. Mabbett, "Kingship in Angkor", in Journal of Siam Society, 66 (2), (July 1978), p. 7.

²⁴ Mabbett, *Ibid.*, p. 259.

²⁵ Briggs, *Ibid.*, pp. 258.

people responsible for the blooming of this religious belief, according to Briggs, could be the Mons of Louvo (Lavo) and the Tais of the north – probably prisoners, laborers, merchants, and some accompanying monks²⁶. Later studies find that Theravāda Buddhism might exist in the region since the founding of Dvāravatī. With the expansion of Angkor under Sūryavarman I (r. c. 1002-50), Dvāravatī was brought within the Khmer Empire and therefore the spread of Theravāda Buddhism occurred much earlier than the twelfth century²⁷.

Whatever the case is, the simple, unambitious practice of Theravāda Buddhism seems to be in harmony with the taste of the Khmers at the turn of the century. Chou Ta-kuan, visiting the city around that time, mentioned the *chu-gu* whose description is in consistent with those of Theravāda monks. The monks during that period in Angkor even had the rights to their own palanquins and acted as the consultants for the king²⁸, a statement that tells us about the firm established status of Theravāda Buddhism. Briggs saw this as the greatest factor for the decline and fall of the Khmer Empire. He saw that it was an internal transformation. He mentioned the systematic mutilation of the images of the hated gods²⁹, though most of them are more

²⁶ Briggs, *Ibid.*,

²⁷ J.G. de Casparis and I.W. Mabbett, “Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia before c.1500”, in The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia vol.1: From Early Times to c.1800., ed. Nicholas Tarling, (Singapore: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 294-295.

²⁸ Chou Ta-Kuan, *Ibid.*, p.29.

²⁹ Briggs, *Ibid.*, p.260

likely to be the work of nature and the tomb raiders instead of the consequences from a revolt.

H.G. Quaritch Wales, in his lesser known work, 'Angkor and Rome' took this notion one step further and used it as the comparison point between the Roman Empire and the Khmer Empire, with Theravāda Buddhism in substitution for the early age of Christianity, he wrote

Hīnayāna Buddhism has much in common with early Christianity in its concentration on the improvement of the individual's lot in a future sphere, and its removal from the service of the State of a large proportion of the able-bodied male population who as monks depend on the charity of the rest ... If we look at the introduction of a new religion, as I think we ought to, in the framework of culture change, we must surely recognize that there is truth in the historians' conclusions as to the destructive effect that can be wrought by personal religion on the body politic, even if the moral standard is as high as that of Christianity or Hīnayānism; yet this does not get to the root of the matter or place the main responsibility where it belongs³⁰.

³⁰ H.G. Quaritch Wales, Angkor and Rome: A Historical Comparison, (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1965), p.155.

Quaritch Wales concluded that, though there are some similarities between the civilization of Rome and that of Angkor, when it came to the appearance of the new religion, Angkor took it with more grace than Rome. According to him, there might have been some resistance and conflicts between the old Khmer state religion and the new Hīnayāna Buddhism, same as happened between paganism and Christianity in Rome centuries before that³¹. However, as I quoted Casparis and Mabbett above, if Hīnayāna/Theravāda Buddhism had been in the kingdom for a lengthy period and the king himself accepted the religion, or might even have been the patron of the religion itself, the uprising or disturbance in the name of religion sounds not likely in the case of Angkor.

Although Quaritch Wales seems wanted to believe the change of religion as the main cause for the decline and fall of Angkor, he also presented another cause in parallel with what had been proposed by Briggs: the loss of revenue and, in consequence, the loss of labour supply³². During the thirteenth century there were many missions sent to and received from China from the state that was considered as 'vassal states' of Angkor. Lo-hu

³¹ Quaritch Wales, *Ibid.* pp. 156 – 157.

³² Briggs, *Ancient Khmer Empire*, p.259. and Quaritch Wales, *Ibid.* pp. 144-153.

(Lavo – Lopburi) had direct contact with China from the 1280's³³ around the same time that 'Hsien', the polity later known as Ayudhya, made its first appearance in the Chinese records and continued to deal with China under that name³⁴. For Briggs and Quaritch Wales, those were the signs that Angkor was losing her territory. The two scholars obviously wrote their thoughts during the time in which the West was equipped with the concept of 'The Empire' and therefore believed that the 'Angkor Empire' must had an exact territory. However, from the studies from later period pioneered from O.W. Wolters, we come to realise that the polities of Southeast Asia's ancient kingdoms do not work like those of European. In the *mandala* system found in ancient Southeast Asia, fixed boundaries did not exist and smaller centres tended to look in all directions for security³⁵. Lavo could be sending an envoy to Chinese at the same time that they sent one to Angkor, which we know Lavo did³⁶. And although the list of states/towns from all around the area of present day Thailand and Laos was written in the inscription of Ram Khamheng which is dated 1293³⁷, that did not mean all the towns/cities on the list actually 'belonged' to Sukhothai.

³³ Cœdès, The Making of Southeast Asia, trans. H.M. Wright, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 107.

³⁴ Michael Vickery, *Ibid.*, p. 516.

³⁵ O.W. Wolters, "Historical Patterns in Intra-Regional Relations", in History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982), p. 17.

³⁶ Cœdès, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³⁷ The First Sukhothai Inscription: The Ram Khamheng Inscription. (Silajarak Sukhothai lak tee nueng, Jaruk Poukhun Ramkhamheng), (Bangkok: National Library, 1990).

However, there is no arguing that the strength of Angkor, *mandala*-wise or not, was weakening. There are many scholars focusing on the inability to maintain the resources, namely the human resources in connection to the water management system. The legend of 'Angkor: the hydraulic state' probably goes back to the end of the 19th century, but begins to take on its fullest expression in the 1930s and 1940s with the writings of Trouve and Goloubew. The chief proponent of the paradigm, however, has undoubtedly been Bernard Philippe Groslier³⁸. Greater Angkor Project (GAP) was a collaborative project between the University of Sydney, the Ecole Française d'Extreme Orient (EFEO) and Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap (APSARA). Using the satellite photo taken from the Endeavor Space Shuttle, the program was able to discover traces of the diversion of the flow of the Puok river towards the East Baray, the channels for the incoming and outgoing waters into and from the baray to use in the canal network. The Greater Angkor Project has even announced that the most likely cause for the end of the Angkorian civilization at Siem Reap came from the Angkorians themselves for not taking care of their complicated hydraulic system³⁹. All the new findings using this new technology seem to support

³⁸ Philip Stott, "Angkor: Shifting the Hydraulic Paradigm", in The Gift of Water: Water Management, Cosmology and the State in South East Asia, ed. Janathan Rigg, (London: SOAS, 1992), pp. 47-55.

³⁹ Fletcher, Evans and Kummu, "The Dynamics of Water Management of Angkor, Cambodia 9th to 16th Century", paper presented at the 3rd conference of IWHA, 2003.

the old idea of Bernard Groslier who believed Angkor to be a "cité hydraulique" (hydraulic society) for the landscape of the area provided the opportunity to control the southward flow of water⁴⁰. The system established by Yaśovarman should provide the advantage from perennial rivers in bringing water from the Kulen Plateau to fill the reservoirs and, therefore, feed the rice fields⁴¹ for the Angkorian state was underwritten by the production of rice. Chou Ta-kuan's note on agriculture that "three or four harvests are gathered each year⁴²" led to the assumption that all the water in the four major barays and other minor ones were entirely for agricultural purposes. Groslier even went as far as to propose that, at its pinnacle, Angkor could have had a population of almost two million, all of whom were fed almost exclusively by the produce from a massive and sophisticated irrigation system⁴³. The system did not only control the water, but also was used in the controlling of man power in Angkor. Jacques Dumarçay made an interesting remark in his *The Sites of Angkor* that:

Unfortunately the baray of Neak Pean reservoir very soon revealed faults in its design. At first an attempt was

⁴⁰ B.P. Groslier, "La cité hydraulique Angkorienne. Exploitation ou surexploitation du sol?", Bulletin du École Française d'Extrême Orient, 66 (1979), pp.95-117.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Chou Ta-kuan, Ibid., p. 55.

⁴³ Groslier, Ibid.

made to improve it, as had been done in similar cases before, by raising the dykes, but this was not enough. Jayavarman VII then completely changed the hydraulic policy, making use of bridges which acted as dams that could be closed or opened according to irrigation needs. This transformation was radical, for instead of using gravity to flood the rice fields, canals had to be dug to bring water to where it was required, and more seriously, this dispersal of the water reserved cause a weakening of central power which derived from the control of the distribution of water. Indeed this change in irrigation policy was one of the main causes of the lessening of central Khmer authority and the disappearance of Angkor⁴⁴.

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⁴⁴ Jacques Dumarçay, The Sites of Angkor, trans. Michael Smithies, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.7

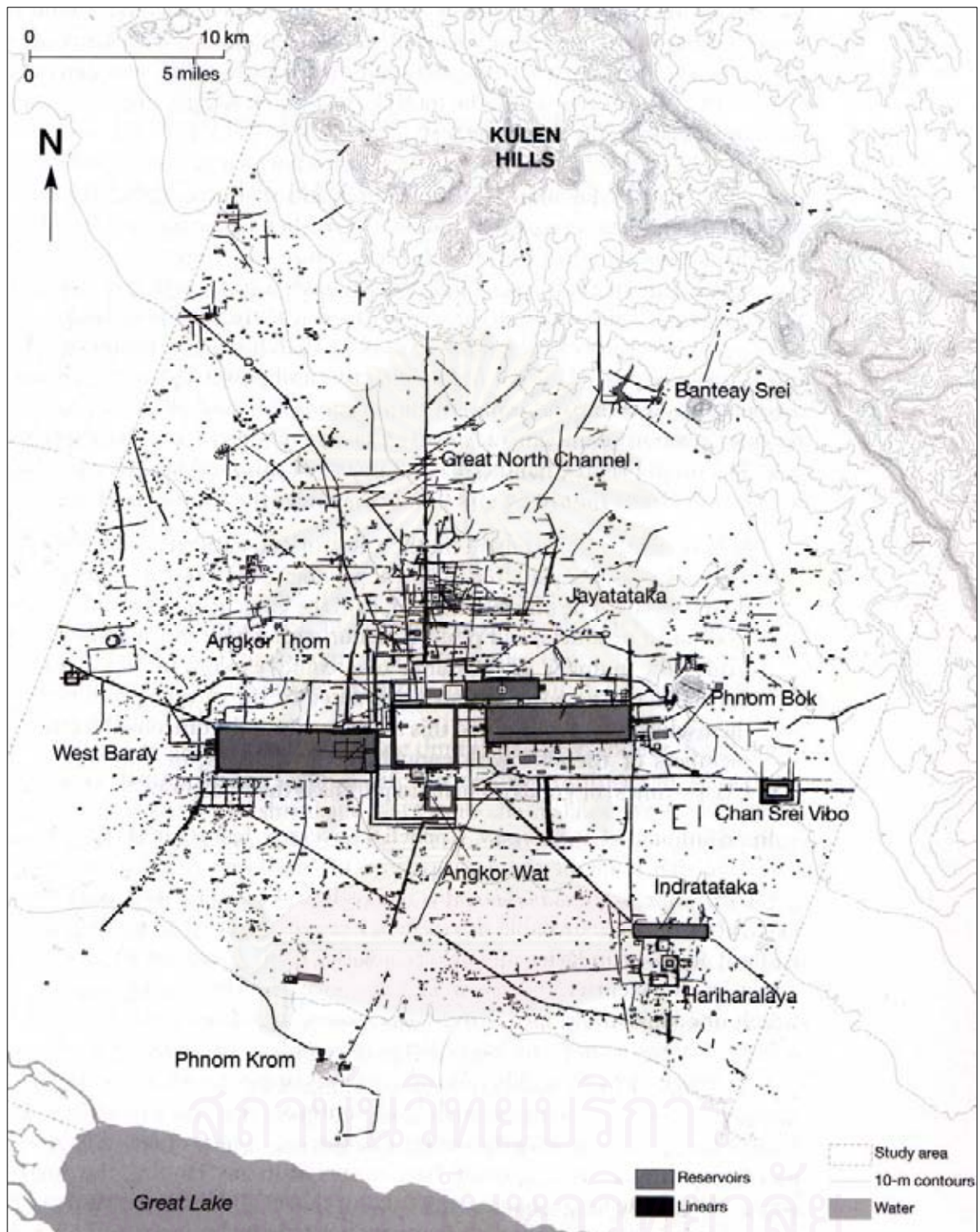


Figure 1.1

The megacity of Angkor, based on AIRSAR remote sensing and ground survey

The linear features are canals, dikes and roads; along with the great barays, they generally conform to a grid pattern orientated to the cardinal directions. The myriad small reservoirs are probably ponds belonging to local shrines, hamlets and extended families, and are randomly distributed between the Kulen and the Great Lake's high water mark.

Although the irrigation system operated in many different ways depending on local factors such as slope and the qualities and volumes of water available, for the society that has sharp seasonal differences in rainfall and waterflow like that of Angkor, a small-scale irrigation development would have transformed the general situation, before irrigation, of marginally effective subsistence agriculture, into one where the degree of access to irrigation water varied from one landholding to another⁴⁵. The result would be that differences between the "haves" and "have-nots" were then much more sharply drawn than under unirrigated, subsistence agriculture. One can, again, look into the Asiatic Mode of Production theory proposed about by Marx⁴⁶ and exemplify by Wittfogel in his *Oriental Despotism*. He believed that such "hydraulic civilizations" – although neither all in the Orient nor characteristic of all Oriental societies – were quite different from those of the West. He believed that wherever irrigation required substantial and centralized control, government representatives monopolized political power and dominated the economy, resulting in an absolutist managerial state. Moreover, there was a close identification of these officials with the dominant religion and an atrophy of other centers of power. The forced labour for irrigation projects was directed by the

⁴⁵ Janice Stargardt, "Hydraulic Works and Southeast Asian Polities", in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to the 14th Century*, eds. David G. Marr and A.C. Milner, (Singapore: Research School of Pacific studies, Australian National University, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), p.35.

⁴⁶ Marx first brought about the model on "Asiatic Mode of Production" in a letter to Frederick Engels, dated 2 June 1853 in *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*, ed. S. Avineri, (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), p. 450-451.

bureaucratic network⁴⁷. Although Wittfogel did not list ancient Angkor as one of the ancient civilizations for this model, the inference that Cambodian rulers in earlier times were like oriental despots who possessed religious and political authority that gave them power over the structure of society itself can be seen and is based upon various beliefs⁴⁸. In fact, though he refused to base his own work on the theory of Wittfogel, Michael Vickery admitted that “Angkor is a better example of his hydraulic society than many of the polities he studied.”⁴⁹

However, there are two major problems regarding this school of thought. The first question is that if the barays were used in irrigation and agriculture and the change in the distribution system had so much impact on all the administration system of Angkor, then how come there is not a single recorded instance of officers responsible for the maintenance of the sophisticated irrigation system in inscriptions? The inscriptions which mention the Angkorian reservoirs do not describe irrigation. There was a reference to an estate at Hariharālaya that cites the Indratataka as a boundary marker but does not mention the managing of water⁵⁰. Although the inscription of Sdok Kak Thom, an account of a high class Brahman

⁴⁷ Karl A. Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism: a comparative study of total power, (New York: Random House), 1957.

⁴⁸ I.W. Mabbett, “Varṇas in Angkor and the Indian Caste System”, Journal of Asian Studies: Vol. XXXVI, No.3. p. 440.

⁴⁹ Vickery, *Ibid*, p. 514.

⁵⁰ Charles Higham, Early Cultures in Mainland Southeast Asia, (Bangkok: River books, 2002). p.345.

family serving as the rāja-kūru of Khmer kings since the reign of Jayavarman II, mentions the digging of ponds and tanks and the dams and barrages, not once is the use of water for agricultural purposes mentioned⁵¹. No doubt the ponds and tanks were not meant to be used in agriculture but in religious service of the temples and for domestic usage. The inscription also has many records on the digging of reservoirs, and it seems to confirm the idea of Dumarçay about the function of the baray as being for the prevention of flood⁵², for it is said

(48-50) In the village of Bhadravasa he consecrated (the statues of) gods, gave (them) all kinds of (necessary) things, prepared (lit. made) fields and parks, dug tank (and) constructed (lit. made) a barrage. In the village of Bhadragiri he consecrated (the statues of) gods, re-established the village, constructed (lit. made) a barrage, a round enclosure wall and a cow-pen. He gave completely (i.e. in full proprietary right) holy cow to the gods. In the village of Stuk Ransi he consecrated the gods, gave (them) all kinds of (necessary) objects, dug a pool, constructed (lit.

⁵¹ Adhir Chakravarti, The Sdok Kak Thom Inscription Part I: A Study in Indo-Khmer Civilization, (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1978), p. 197.

⁵² Dumarçay, *Ibid.*

made) a pond, dug a reservoir and (erected) a
barrage.⁵³

Adhir Chakravarti, in his analysis of the inscription concluded that “A natural corollary of this operation was the erection of barrages to prevent inundation caused by the surplus monsoon rains.⁵⁴” This inscription also tells us that the activity of digging ponds and reservoirs was undertaken both by royal authorities and private initiative⁵⁵. Chakravarti remarks that this may be one reason why despotism of the king in ancient Cambodia could not in practice be as severe as sometimes imagined⁵⁶.

The second question focuses on the products of agriculture itself: rice. James Goodman raised an observation from two recent studies of the groundwater in the Angkor plain. The survey found that there is a 50- to 66-feet (13-20m) layer of sand at the geological surface that rests on sandstone. The groundwater is very close to the surface in this same layer and is free to move, rising the falling over the annual cycle by an average of 8 feet (2.5 m). During the monsoon the ground is generally flooded, producing ideal

⁵³ Chakravarti, The Sdok Kak Thom Inscription Part II: Text, Translation and Commentary, (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1980), p. 157-158.

⁵⁴ Chakravarti, The Sdok Kak Thom Inscription Part I: A Study in Indo-Khmer Civilization, (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1978), p.197

⁵⁵ Chakravarti, The Sdok Kak Thom Inscription Part II: Text, Translation and Commentary, (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1980), p. 157.

⁵⁶ Chakravarti, The Sdok Kak Thom Inscription Part I: A Study in Indo-Khmer Civilization, (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1978), p. 197.

conditions for growing rice⁵⁷. He also remarks that the present condition of the ground has remained comparatively similar to that from a thousand years ago. Then why would the Khmer need more irrigation? Chou Ta-kuan mentioned the habit of bathing all day long of the Khmer and recorded that “each family has a pool.⁵⁸” There pools could possibly use the benefit of this groundwater permeated from the sandy ground. However, the use of pools instead of deep wells indicated that the water was easy enough to find one does not have to dig too deep, all the more reason for the irrigation system to be irrelevant. If there was no need in controlling the irrigation for the people, how would it be possible that the collapse of the system would also bring about the collapse of the whole administration of the kingdom? Additionally, there was a record from the sixteenth century when the Khmer king temporarily ‘moved back’ to Angkor saying that five or six thousand men were able to clear the blockades of the water way swiftly. That means by the sixteenth century “even the physical damage to the ancient capital was not yet irreparable” and “Angkor still had sufficient water supplies to make it a suitable royal base.⁵⁹”

The theory of Angkor’s fall by the collapse from the irrigation system might seem like the newest theory from the way is presented through new

⁵⁷ James Goodman, “Angkor: Geography and Hydrology of Cambodia”, in Angkor: Celestial Temples of the Khmer Empire, ed. Jon Ortner, (New York, London: Abbe-Ville Press, 2002), pp. 256-263.

⁵⁸ Chou Ta-kuan, *Ibid.* p. 95.

⁵⁹ O.W. Wolters, “Khmer King at Basan”, p. 87.

means of experiments and excavation. But in fact, as I demonstrate above, the basic idea has been proposed for more than a hundred years ago.

Of all the theories presented, Michael Vickery wrote in his Ph.D. thesis that:

As for the earlier explanations for the “fall of Angkor,” they were not really explanations at all. If Angkor fell because of Ayutthayan invasions, there must be an explanation of why Ayutthaya had at that particular time become militarily stronger. The “subversive” influence of Theravāda Buddhism is inadequate, since it requires the further explanation of why Ayutthaya with Theravāda Buddhism was becoming stronger while Angkor was weakening. Epidemic malaria following destruction of the water works has also been proposed, but then some explanation of why the water works were allowed to decay is also required. Excessive forced labor for monumental construction has been proposed as a cause of massive disaffection of the population, but large-scale construction of monuments was no longer undertaken after the reign of Jayavarman VII, seventy years before the visit of Chou Ta-kuan, and Briggs’s “exhausted spiritless people” would have had time to recover well

before the even later date at which we can speak of the downfall of Angkor⁶⁰.

Having said that, after a lengthy of comparison study between the Cambodian Chronicles and the Annals of Ayudhya, he comes up with his own theory regarding the fall of Angkor. He argued that what we was proposing was not the “fall of Angkor,” but rather a gradual shift of power from Angkor to two new centers, namely Ayudhya and Phnom Penh (Lovek) both on the lower course of river and nearer to the sea⁶¹. Using Chinese references and basing his proposal on the model that O.W. Wolters used in his *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History*, Vickery comes to the conclusion that the shifts in the center of administration of the Khmer kingdom were connected with the flexibility of the ‘new blood’ in Khmer royalty in collaboration with the change of Chinese maritime trade initiated by the Sung Dynasty. The Chinese government started to allow the private sector to do business overseas instead of wait for the goods from the official junks. That brought about the rapid expansion of the maritime trade system that affected not only Angkor but other hinterland civilizations as well. Meanwhile, Angkor’s own policy changed. It is possible that the old economic system of Angkor which relied heavily on the taxation and

⁶⁰ Vickery. Ibid. p. 511.

⁶¹ Vickery, Ibid, p. 512.

surpluses of agricultural products that were supported by the 'sophisticated' irrigation system had come to its decline. Angkor needed to change, and the Sung's new policy enabled that change. Between 1317 and 1419, in the early Ming dynasty, more than a dozen tributary missions were sent from Cambodia to China, which were more than throughout the Angkorian period put together.⁶² The purpose of most of those tributary missions was not to pay tribute, but to trade. The change in the nature of trading could affect the nature of the productivity system, for the declining surplus system would no longer work if they would like to do a major scale trade. The trading route also put a new emphasis on the southern cities as the new 'centers' of the Khmer were all situated by or near the sea.

As to how credible the new theory is, Vickery left questions at the end of his Ph.D. dissertation: If his speculation is correct and the main cause for the shifting of the center of power from Angkor to Basan and later to Lovek and Phnom Penh is the change in economic policy, why now in the thirteenth-fifteenth century? Angkor had long prospered and accumulated extreme wealth as an agrarian polity. What made the Angkorian elite think it would be worthwhile to shift from that to the trading network? If the traditional Angkor system had not already been weakening, the new trade might not attract the interest of the elite to the point that they decided to 'abandon' the old center.

⁶² Vickery, *Ibid.*, p. 515.

Hence this study.

David Chandler wrote “Cambodia was becoming post-Angkorian well before the abandonment of Angkor”.⁶³ All of the traditions or beliefs that contributed to the existence of Angkor – namely the constructions of stone sanctuaries, the erections of inscriptions, the extensive irrigation works – seem to have changed, faded, weakened even before the time the Ayudhyan troops marched into the city in 1352 or 1431 or before Angkor entered the trading system between China and Southeast Asia. Perhaps, like Wolters remarked “we have become too ready to regard the decline of Angkor in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as being on a catastrophic scale”⁶⁴ Perhaps to have the full insight of the decline and fall, we have to look at the rise and development, to understand the fluctuation that created what we called the civilization of Angkor.

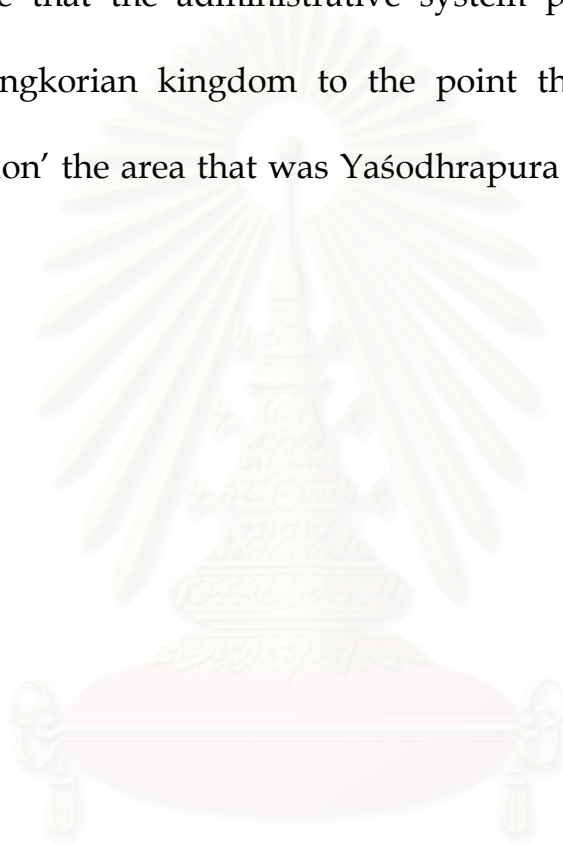
One of the key factors associated with the rise or the management of the kingdom is its administrative system, the factor that which, strangely, has been neglected in studies regarding the decline and fall of Angkor. It is probably due to the lack of the sources, for the Angkorian sovereigns tended to record many things, but leave ambiguous the rules and the administrative system. However, recent studies regarding the rise and fall of kingdoms and civilization are turning more and more into the study ‘with a more

⁶³ David Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1983), p. 78.

⁶⁴ O.W. Walters, “The Khmer King at Basan”, p. 46.

synchronic character’ – one of which is the study of political institution, namely the administrative system as exemplified in Victor Lieberman’s study of Burmese administrative system⁶⁵.

This thesis will be following the same line of analysis. It will try to look into the role that the administrative system played, if any, in the decline of the Angkorian kingdom to the point that King Ponhea Yat decided to ‘abandon’ the area that was Yaśodhrapura and move the capital southward.



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⁶⁵ Victor B. Lieberman, Burmese Administrative Cycles: Anarchy and Conquest c.1580 – 1760, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984).

CHAPTER II

ANGKOR GREATNESS: THE REFLECT OF CONTRAST

Since the “re-discovery” of Angkor by the west, the discussions concerning Angkor normally take the turn of how ‘great’ Angkor was before the city was left abandoned to the jungle. Titles of books on the subject often stress this idea with words like ‘glories’, ‘splendor’, ‘magnificent’, ‘celestial’, ‘great’, ‘enormous’, et cetera ¹. Even Henri Mouhot, the French naturalist and explorer who is often credited with bringing Angkor out into the spotlight of European attention, exclaimed that Angkor was ‘The work of giants!’ after hearing the explanation regarding the origin of the ancient ruins from the local people².

Throughout the time that Angkor has been studied, this ‘Angkor greatness’ is demonstrated through various common characteristics of the civilization of Angkor. The most obvious characteristic would be the

¹ Helen Churchill Candee, Angkor the magnificent: The wonder city of ancient Cambodia, (New York: Stokes, 1924); H.W. Ponder, Cambodian glory, the mystery of the deserted Khmer cities and their vanished splendour; and a description of life in Cambodia to-day, (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd, 1936); Michael Freeman and Roger Warner, Angkor, the hidden glories, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990); 石沢良昭, アンコール・ワット—大伽藍と文明の謎 (English Title: Angkor Wat: Mysteries of the Enormous Sanctuary), (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1996); Thierry Zéphir, Khmer: Lost empire of Cambodia, trans. Francisca Garvie, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998); Marilia Albanese, Angkor: Splendor of the Khmer Civilization, (Bangkok: Asia Books, 2002); Jon Ortner ed., Angkor: Celestial Temples of the Khmer Empire, (New York, London: Abbeville Press, 2002); James Barrat, Der Glanz von Angkor Wat (English title: The Glory of Angkor Wat), National Geographic video series, 2003; 谷 克二, アンコール・ワット—密林に眠っていた巨大遺跡 旅名人ブックス (English Title: Angkor Wat: Enormous Ruins Slept in the Jungle, Traveling Expert Book), (Tokyo: Nikkei BP, 2002).

² Henri Mouhot, Travels in the central parts of Indo-China (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos, during the years 1858, 1859, and 1860, vol.s I, II, (London: John Murray, 1864).

enormous number and scale of the Angkorian monuments as they are the most concrete evidence of what remains of Angkor that the eyes can see. In fact, Angkor is one of the few ancient archaeological complexes that can actually be seen from outer space (China's Great Wall is another)³. Scholars are so overwhelmed by the size of the city that the studies from the last century are more or less focusing on the significance of the architectural structures. The 1,000 square kilometers area with approximately 200 square kilometers being the core area where the ancient monuments are concentrated makes Angkor one of the largest archaeological sites which have survived time. Even the Calakmuls, the largest ancient Maya site, is said to be able to fit within the bounds of Angkor and have some space to spare⁴. Angkor was not only 'great' by size, but also number, for by the end of the 12th century when the city was still at its peak, the core area might have been covered by about 3000-3500 temples⁵.

The size of those grandeurs raised the question about Angkor's population. After all, to finish the monument the scale of Preah Ko in two years⁶ required an enormous number of laborers. That applies to most

³ Michael D. Coe, Angkor and the Khmer Civilization, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), p.11.

⁴ Michael D. Coe, *Ibid.*, p.11.

⁵ Hermann Kulke, "The Early and the Imperial Kingdom in Southeast Asian History", in Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries, eds. David G. Marr and A.C. Milner, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp.257-263.

⁶ Lawrence Palmer Briggs, The Ancient Khmer Empire, (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1999), pp. 99-101. Indravarman III, builder of Preah Ko, took the throne in 877 AD, Preah Ko – the ancestral temple of the reign, was finished in 879 AD.

gigantic monuments and construction programs during the course of Angkor's history. James Goodman made an observation regarding the labor that the largest baray, the West Baray, which is a staggering feat of engineering measuring five by two miles (eight by three kilometers), with dykes over thirty-three feet (ten meters) high built in the reign of Sūryavarman I (1011-1050 AD), would have taken forty-thousand people over three years to construct if we are to use the modern rules of thumb for manual labor⁷.

With those vast construction programs, the estimated number of Angkor's population at its peak was at 1.9 million citizens, according to Groslier based on his study of and speculation about Angkor as a 'hydraulic society'⁸. Using the model of Ayudhya, Groslier viewed Angkor as another Venice with the size of the population that exceeded that of London in the contemporary time. However, recent studies have shown that Groslier's estimated number could be quite exaggerated and that the real number of Angkor's population could be much more modest. Robert Acker did the recalculation based on Groslier's figures and finds that:

⁷ James Goodman, "Geography and Hydrology of Cambodia" in Angkor: Celestial Temples of the Khmer Empire, ed. Jon Ortner, (New York & London: Abbe-ville Press, 2002), pp.257-263.

⁸ B.P. Groslier, "La cité hydraulique Angkorienne. Exploitation ou surexploitation du sol?", Bulletin du École Française d'Extrême Orient, 66 (1979), pp.95-117.

...of which 600,000 were supported by 86,000 hectares of irrigated rice field. In the dry season, a hectare would require 15,000 cubic metres of water. Assuming all the major barays at Angkor were full to a depth of three metres, they could have supplied 7,000 hectares. At an optimistic yield of 1.46 tonnes per hectare and annual consumption of 220 kg of rice per capita, the dry season yield would have maintained about 44,500 people, about 2.5% of Groslier's estimate population.⁹

The number of this calculation is based on the amount of water available when the barays are at least three metres deep and under the assumption that all the barays were being employed at the same time, a situation that could only be put into practice during the reign of Jayavarman VII and his successors, not before that¹⁰. Additionally, the reservoirs accidentally mask each other from potentially irrigable rice field. The Yaśodharatataka could not have irrigated all the potential land below it because of the carved Siem Reap River would have made it impossible¹¹. To say that the water resource available in Angkor at that time would be

⁹ Robert Acker, "New Geographical Tests of the Hydraulic Thesis at Angkor", South East Asian Research 6 (1): 1996. pp. 5-47.

¹⁰ Charles Higham, Early Cultures in Mainland Southeast Asia, (Bangkok: River books, 2002). p.345.

¹¹ Acker, *Ibid.*, pp. 5-47

sufficient for almost two millions population would be a misleading assumption.

Another recent study focusing on Angkor as a hydraulic society, as mentioned in the last chapter, The Greater Angkor Project (GAP) led by Roland Fletcher¹² used the ground survey, radar imagery and aerial photography and comes to a conclusion that, estimatedly, the area of what can be called 'Angkor' would have occupied a space of 1,000 square kilometres with the resident of the population scattered within 20-30 kilometres from the center in all direction, the density of the residential area would be less as the distance from the center increased. He wrote 'Angkor was therefore a low density, dispersed urban complex with housing along linear features and scattered across the landscape in patched and on isolated mounds.' Although the Greater Khmer Project has not presented a new estimated number of Angkor population, it is quite certain that Groslier's number was not possibly correct.

Apart from the size of the population, scholars sometimes regard the irrigation system of Angkor itself as the representation of 'Angkor greatness'. To be able to manage the complex irrigation system that spanned through the 1,000 square kilometers area would indicate that the Angkorian people reached the peak of civilization, according to Charles Redman's

¹² Roland Fletcher, "A.R. Davis Memorial Lecture. Seeing Angkor: New Views of an Old City", Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia, 32-33, 2000-2001, pp. 1-27.

theory on primary and secondary characteristics of civilization¹³. According to Redman, the ability to create monumental public works and the standardize of monumental artwork, both should featured in the hydraulic system of Angkor, are two secondary characteristics of the 'developed' civilization that should come after the kingdom has achieved all primary characteristic, namely the permanent settlements in the form of city, full-time specialization of labour, concentration of surplus, class structures and state organization; without any of these characteristics an advanced civilization would not exist. The reclining Vishnu in West Mebon, at the center of the West Baray attests to the speculation that Angkorian people had the required hydraulic technology. The mechanism that allows the water to come out from the bronze status should be a concrete evidence that the Khmers clearly knew how to deal with water. The circuit of what scholars suspect to be a sophisticated canal system from the open canal leading in and out of the Western baray recently discovered by the Greatest Angkor Project also stands as another confirmation that the water in the baray was used by the population, whether it was for irrigation or just for the daily usage.

Not only the size of the monuments, the size of the population, and the size and the sophistication of the irrigation system has been taken to

¹³ Charles Redman, The Rise of Civilization, (San Francisco: WH Freeman, 1978), p. 251; Redman re-configured the ten characteristics of civilization first proposed in Vere Gordon Childe in The Dawn of European Civilization, 1929

accord with the 'greatness' of Angkor, the kings who made possible the large scale projects and systems like this are often praised as being the key element in the rise of Angkor civilization. Scholars credit Jayavarman II as the king who 'united the kingdom'¹⁴ by conquering the minor kingdoms and found the *devarāja* cult in 802. Yaśovarman I is given the credit for building the Angkor city, Yaśodharapura. Sūryavarman I is regarded as 'a man of vision'¹⁵ who expanded the realm in every direction. Moreover, there were the two most glorified Kings of the whole Angkorian period, Sūryavarman II and Jayavarman VII, the former's glory is intensified by being the creator of Angkor Wat and the latter being the 'savior' of Angkor, the builder of Angkor Thom and the king who succeeded in expanding the territory of Angkor like no other kings had ever attempted, or succeeded.

The question which arose from this glorious royal history of kings is: have those kings the glory scholars gave them? Wolters gave some thoughts back in 1973 regarding the military force of Jayavarman II. The former theories about his campaign of uniting the kingdom and found himself as king on Mount Kulen comes from the Sdok Kak Thom inscription, written around the reign of Sūryavarman I, 250 years after the actual date of the foundation of Angkor. Wolters then raised a speculation from inscriptions

¹⁴ Briggs, *Ancient Khmer Empire*, p. 91.

¹⁵ Charles Higham, *The Archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia (Cambridge World Archaeology)*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.330.

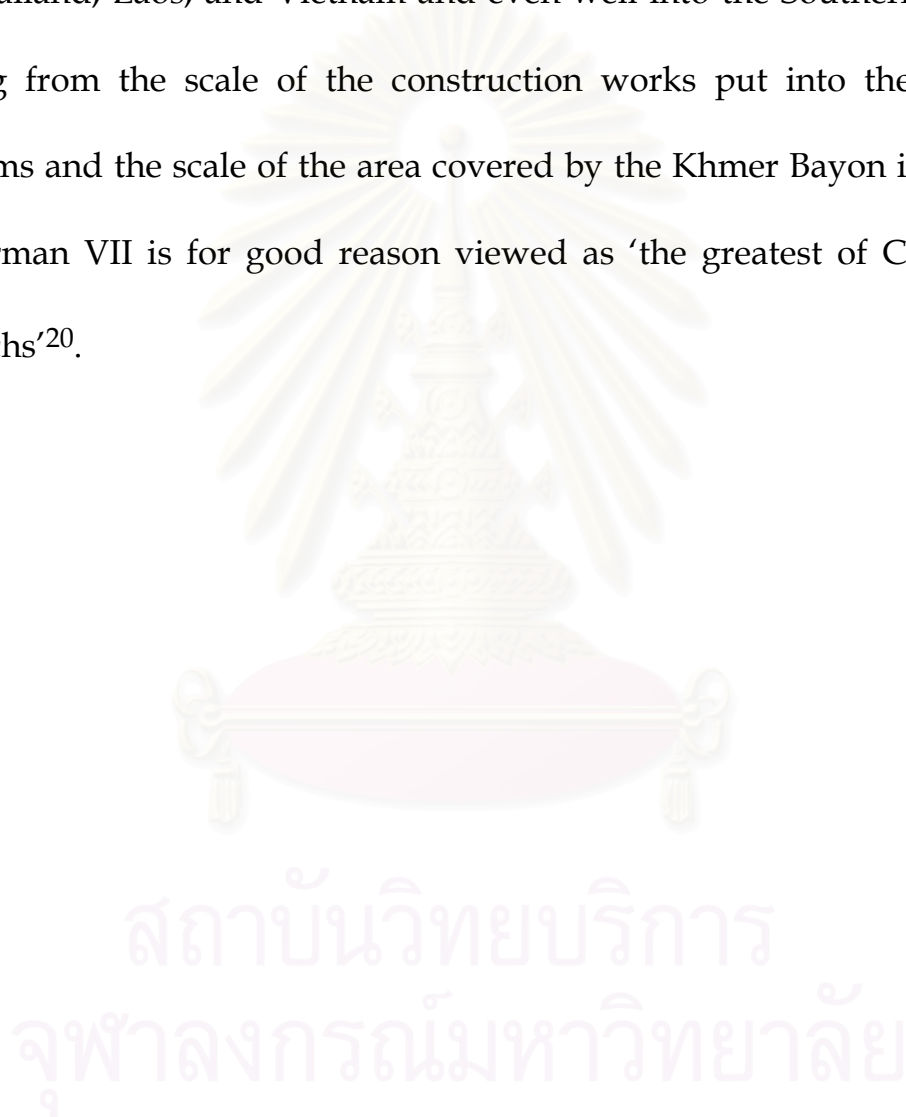
other than the Sdok Kak Thom, often dated into the pre-Angkorian period, that Jayavarman II's campaign might not have relied only on his own military power, but the military power of other polities given to his disposal when female members of the overlords' family were married to him¹⁶. The intention of the *devarāja* cult ceremony performed at Mount Mahendra could only be the means to formulate a measurement of the power that he received in religious terms, hence the name *chakravartin* – king of kings.

The 'greatness' of Angkorian kings continues to be explained through the various achievements of the kings, and it reached the pinnacle in the reign of Jayavarman VII. He was a Prince in exile in Vijaya, the capital of the Chams before he came back to Angkor to rescue Yaśovarman III, a relative, from a usurper but to no avail. He then had to return to Champa and bide his time for several more years only to return shortly after the Chams conquered the city of Angkor¹⁷. Nevertheless, at about the age of fifty, he took the throne and 'rescued' the kingdom from the invader. After he came to the throne he changed the official religion of the state into Mahāyāna Buddhism and started his 'building frenzy' periods which were responsible

¹⁶ O.W. Wolters, "Jayavarman II's Military Power: The Territorial Foundation of the Angkor Empire", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1, 1973, pp. 21-30.

¹⁷ Michael Vickery, in a personal communication, suggests that the historical evidence concerning this period of Angkor was still very obscure. We do not know the exact reason of his 'voluntary exile'. Having a Cham army (or various Cham armies) at his disposal and have a Cham prince as his *yuvārāja* only makes Jayavarman VII's motive in re-capturing the city of Angkor more curious. To call Jayavarman VII 'the Savior' is probably exaggerated. There might have been several sectors of Chams, like there was surely several sectors of Khmers, and instead of the 'war between kingdoms', the battle that was depicted on the bas-relief of Bayon could possibly be the battle between political groups.

for the construction of so many monuments some scholars even said that ‘the stone moved in this period alone is more than in previous reigns combined’¹⁸. The monuments in various size found in the ‘Bayon’ art style are scattered throughout the ‘empire’ well into that area that is the present day Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam and even well into the Southern China¹⁹. Judging from the scale of the construction works put into the building programs and the scale of the area covered by the Khmer Bayon influences, Jayavarman VII is for good reason viewed as ‘the greatest of Cambodian monarchs’²⁰.



¹⁸ I.W. Mabbett, “Kingship in Angkor”, *Journal of Siam Society*, 66 (2), July 1978: pp. 1-58.

¹⁹ Michael C.Doe, *Angkor and the Khmer Civilization*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), p.195.

²⁰ Briggs, *Ancient Khmer Empire*, p. 236.



Figure 2.1
The Royal roads and main sites of Angkor

However, as Srisakara Vallibhotama remarks²¹, the style and period of art history might not be consistent with the political history of the region. He suggests that historians who concluded, from the finding of monuments built in the Khmer art style and the inscriptions involving the history of ancient settlements that is in present day Thailand, that the Khmer had political influence over the area to the degree that the ancient kingdoms in Thailand were the 'tributary states' of Angkor are too hasty in their conclusions and perhaps those historians use too much of the 'victory theories' line of thinking. In fact, having Khmer artifacts and monuments in Thailand does not prove anything but the fact that there was an interaction of cultures between the people living in Thailand and the Khmers of Cambodia. Many of those artifacts and monuments were built to resemble those in Angkor, but somehow failed to present the usual standard of the contemporary arts found in Angkor. Also, Srisakara has looked at the settlements with Mahāyānist temples scattered across the Chao Phraya Valley, the temples which are categorized by scholars to be the towns of Jayavarman VII because the art style of the decoration of the temples has the influences of the Bayon style, and makes a point that there are no two religious structures that are alike, whereas, in the case of Jayavarman VII's

²¹ Srisakara Vallibhotama, "Koh kad yeng keaw kab prawattisart Thai (The Discussion on Thai History)" and "Amnaj tang karn maung khong Jayavarman tee jed" (The Political Power of Jayavarman VII), in Koh kad yeng keaw kab prawattisart Thai (The Discussion on Thai History), (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 1981). pp. 5-14 and 15-26.

temples and hospitals, almost every minor construction has the same pattern. Moreover, even though the decorations show the Bayon style, the lintels, which are the key elements in a Khmer sanctuary, are nowhere to be found. There are only a few imitation ones with the use of stucco instead of sandstone, a minor difference, but very out-of-character if one would like to assume those temples were of the Khmer king's²². Even the record in the inscription from the period of Jayavarman VII stating the connection between the kingdom and some ancient states in Thailand is not enough evidence to say that those states were under the 'protection' of the Khmer kingdom. From the inscription of Preah Khan we learn that Jayavarman VII gave several of his daughters to be married to those in his patronage as well as princes and overlords from the countries afar²³. This could indicate some scale of connection and influence, but does not put the finger on whether Jayavarman VII had those 'countries afar' at his disposal or not. Whatever the case, it is clear that the political influence is undeterminable by merely the factor of artistic influence.

The bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat also fall into this same line of discussion. Some scholars argued that the depiction of procession parade on the south-western gallery were the representation of the 'vassal states' of

²² Srisakra Vallibhotama, "Political and Cultural Continuities in Dvāravatī Sites" in Southeast Asia in the 9th to the 14th Centuries, eds. David G. Marr and A.C. Milner, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 229-238.

²³ Preah Khan Inscription, pp. 159-215.

Angkor at that time. Chief argument being that the first troops on the parade is accompanied with an inscription that read 'ne, Syam Kuk' followed with an army from Lavo, which situated in the area that is now Lopburi province of Thailand, led by 'Sri Jayasinhavarman'²⁴. Apart from the lengthy debates whether 'Syam Kuk' was the 'Siam' army or the army of some other polity²⁵, the other assumption made from this depiction is that Lavo was 'conquered' by Sūryavarman II.

Lavo, in fact, as we see from the inscriptions, was one of several semi-autonomous polities in the Angkorian kingdom, at least since the reign of Sūryavarman I when the name comes up first in the inscription of Phimanakas in which recorded the names and origins of Sūryavarman I's officers²⁶. However, shortly after the bas-relief was depicted at Angkor Wat, Lavo sent its own emissary mission to China in order to state its independency²⁷ just to 'fall into Angkor's grip' again during the reign of Jayavarman VII when it is known that he sent a son to be the governor of the

²⁴ Eleanor Mannikka, *Angkor Wat: Time, Space and Kingship*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), Appendix B, Table 3: Procession of King Sūryavarman and His Ministers.

²⁵ Most articles concerning this topic are in Thai. However, one book from The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Sciences and Humanities Textbook Project has published an English/Thai translation from Bernard-Philippe Groslier's "Les Syam Kuk des bas-reliefs d'Angkor Vat" in Charnvit Kasetsiti, editor, *Nee, Syam Kuk* (Syam Kuk), trans. Benedict Anderson; Kulaphat Manityakul *et al*, (Bangkok: The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Sciences and Humanities Textbook Project, 2002)

²⁶ George Cœdès, *Inscription du Cambodge II*, pp. 205-216. (K. 292)

²⁷ Cœdès, *The Making of Southeast Asia*, trans. H.M. Wright, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 107.

city²⁸. What failed to be included into the discussion was the fact that during the period of Sūryavarman II or Jayavarman VII, there were no such countries as Cambodia or Thailand. There was not even 'Siam' yet. Using the concept of military occupation might lead us to the misinterpretation of the connection of Angkor and those cities/towns whose names appeared in the inscriptions, pictures depicted on the bas-reliefs, or whose monuments and artifacts resemble those of Angkor.



Figure 2.2
Major sites in Classical-Angkor

²⁸ Briggs, *Ancient Khmer Empire*, pp. 204-209.

All the five characteristics used in defining the 'greatness' of Angkor make it easy to convince anyone to see Angkor as an 'Empire' especially when all the characteristics were seen through western eyes with the imperialism concept. The size of the monuments was great. The size of the population was great. The size of the irrigation system was great. The size of the territory were great. The kings were great. And therefore, Angkor was a great empire. Little inquisitions were raised regarding the greatness of the kingdom. Wolters might wrote an analysis about the military power of Jayavarman II but his conclusion did not propose much new light on the subject, only that the king's military might comes from different sources through the women he married, but he still gives the credit to the king as he introduced several centuries of Khmer history when the institution of kingship retained its prestige in the wake of his military victories²⁹.

Nevertheless, if one looks closely into the whole 'picture of greatness' of Angkor and compare it with the history as appeared in the form of inscriptions and the analysis of the inscriptions, one would see that the grandeur explanations somehow contradicted its own political history. Since Jayavarman II proclaimed himself 'king of kings' (*cakravartin*) and founded the city of Hariharālaya since 802, the political atmosphere of Angkor was rarely peaceful. The founding of the *devarāja* cult, according to the Sdok Kak

²⁹ Wolters, Jayavarman II's Military Power. Ibid.

Thom inscription, only founded to protect the city from the invasion of Java³⁰, but did not include the protection from Angkor's own territory. Although it depends on what is considered to be the rule of succession that we can identify the 'usurpers' from the legitimate successor of the previous kings³¹, notwithstanding how ambiguous Khmer royal genealogies can be. According to Michael Vickery³², he remarks that the succession might fall to the male member in the same generation of the family before going to the later generation, namely the son of the king. Therefore the succession is not necessarily from father to son and that makes the descent 'ambilateral'. This remark is somehow similar with what had been proposed by A. Thomas Kirsch who studied the stories of Eveline Porée-Maspero and George Cœdès³³, the two scholars equally knowledgeable in Khmer studies who proposed two theories that cannot be more different from one another. Porée-Maspero suggested that the succession strictly follows the matrilineal principle, while Cœdès believed that the Khmer royalty used the patrilineal

³⁰ Adhir Chakravarti, The Sdok Kak Thom Inscription Part I: A Study in Indo-Khmer Civilization, (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1978), p. 197. However, scholars in the later periods start to question whether Java was the real enemy of Jayavarman II, and therefore the threat to the Khmer, or whether it was the imagination from the author of the Sdok Kak Thom inscription, since it was written in the reign of king Sūryavarman I, whom we know for sure came from Tambralinga, a polity near Java.

³¹ Michael Vickery, "The Reign of Sūryavarman I and Royal Factionalism at Angkor", Journal of Southeast Asian Studies 16 (1), March 1985, pp. 226-244.

³² Vickery, "Some Remarks on the Early State Formation in Cambodia", in Southeast Asia in the 9th to the 14th Centuries, eds. David G. Marr and A.C. Milner, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 95-115.

³³ A. Thomas Kirsch, "Kinship, Genealogical Claims, and Societal Integration in Ancient Khmer Society: An Interpretation", in Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays Presented to D.G.E. Hall, eds. C.D. Cowen and O.W. Wolters, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976), pp. 190-202.

line in securing the throne. Kirsch himself prefers the theory proposed by Kevin O'Sullivan that leans towards the matrilineal succession theory of Porée-Maspero but does not dismiss the patrilineal claims of Coèdès completely. He concluded that the normal succession might be patrilineal, for there was a *yuvarāja* position created for the prince that would be the next king. However, the polygamy practice of the society, especially within the royal court, would complicate the situation, for if a king has more than one wife, which is the case of every Angkorian king, and has several children from different wives, which son should he choose to be the next king? Therefore we often see the genealogy claims tracing through the maternal line of the family more often than the paternal lines, since if all the rivals have the same father, tracing the same line would not benefit anyone's campaign to the throne³⁴. Vickery also added that the attempt to pass the kingship from father to son instead of relinquishing it to the next branch of the family would more or less have destabilized the system and create turmoil³⁵. Adhir Charavarti, in his book 'Royal Succession in Ancient Cambodia' comes to similar conclusion. He observed that the kings attempted to perpetuate their dynastic rule in the male line: Jayavarman II to Jayavarman III, Jayavarman IV to Harshavarman II, Rejendravarman II to Jayavarman V, and Jayavarman VII to Indravarman II, did not succeed for

³⁴ Kirsch, Ibid.

³⁵ Vickery, Ibid.

more than two successive generations. Each time, the line was interrupted by the new sovereign who claimed the right to the throne via the matrilineal connection, namely Indravarman I, Jayavarman IV, Sūryavarman I, Sūryavarman II³⁶. It is seemed that the matrilineal succession practice in the pre-Angkorian period somehow finds its way into the Angkorian period.

If we are to conservatively count the starting year of Angkor at 802 AD and the end at 1432 AD, there were at least three obvious usurpations during the course of six hundred years³⁷. Now that the rules of the succession have been examined, let us look at the real Angkor succession lines. According to the traditional chronology of Angkor kings presented in almost every book concerning the topic: First there is Indravarman I who seized the throne from Jayavarman III, the son of Jayavarman II, by claiming the lineage through his mother to King Rudravarman of pre-Angkorian times. Then there was Jayavarman IV, uncle and probably the regent of young King Harshavarman I and Īsānavarman II, who did not just found himself King, but established a new center of power at Koh Ker. His son, Harshavarman II then got ripped from the throne by Rājendravarman II who shifted the capital again back to the Angkor area. Those transitions are sometimes counted as usurpations, but other times are not. A few kings has passed without the real usurper until Sūryavarman I came into the picture.

³⁶ Adhir Chakravarti, Royal Succession in Ancient Cambodia, (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1982), p. 105.

³⁷ See Appendix I.

Historians still debate the origin of this king why he was from Tambralinga³⁸, a tamil-malay state on the Malay Peninsula, or from the eastern part of Angkor³⁹, but what is certain is that there was a struggle for power between him and Jayaviravarman. Here is the reign that we see the most of Angkor royal 'factionalism' as termed by Michael Vickery⁴⁰. Then we have Jayavarman VI who started the Mahidharapura dynasty from which would spring another two 'great' kings: Sūryavarman II and Jayavarman VII.

If we look into only three 'obvious' usurpers, namely Indravarman I, Sūryavarman I and Jayavarman VI, we would see that all three had a strong base of power from the outside of Yaśodharapura (or the Hariharālaya area, in the case of Indravarman I). Indravarman I is suspected of being descended from the ruling family of Indrapura, the first capital of Jayavarman II which did not appear on the map of the Angkor kingdom before his reign⁴¹. Sūryavarman I's origin, as said above, is still ambiguous. However, an inscription from Robeng Romeas, near the present Sambor-Prei Kuk, tells us that he reigned there during 923 *saka* (1001-1002 AD)⁴²

³⁸ O.W. Wolters, Tambralinga

³⁹ Briggs, *Ancient Khmer Empire*. pp.

⁴⁰ Michael Vickery, "The Reign of Sūryavarman I and Royal Factionalism at Angkor", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 16 (1), March 1985, pp. 226-244.

⁴¹ Briggs, *Ibid.* p. 98.

⁴² Cœdès, "Ta Kev: III. Épigraphe", *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 34, 1934, pp. 417-427. Also in R.C. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Kambuja*, (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1953), p. 310.

therefore scholars have speculated that Sūryavarman I began his campaign in the east and then moved westward toward Angkor. Jayavarman VI, on the other hand, appears to have been a vassal prince from the upper Mun valley near Phimai, as most of the early inscriptions of his reign come from that region⁴³.

Those three 'usurpers' did not only seize the throne, but also change the personal in the royal service and brought in their own people. We receive this idea from the inscription that after these kings took the throne, they not only wiped out the old administrative officers of the old kings, but most of the times they appointed their own men who probably fought alongside them or served them in other occasions into office. The most dramatic case would be the reign of Sūryavarman I, whose reign allows us to see a number of non-royal inscriptions, mostly records of high-ranking officials making land claims⁴⁴.

Vickery does not make any assumption out of this fact, but if those high-ranking officials were the ones serving at Angkor from the previous reigns, should not they already have the ancestral land and do not have to re-claim it? Would it be safe to conclude that the new land-claims were recorded because they, like their king, had just arrived and started to settle down in the area? Surely most of those inscriptions featured the genealogy

⁴³ Briggs, *Ancient Khmer Empire*, p. 178.

⁴⁴ Vickery, *Reign of Sūryavarman I*, p. 232.

of the bureaucratic family tracing back to the reign of Jayavarman II, but, as Vickery noted⁴⁵, those ancestral lines rarely figure in the contemporary records of the earlier reigns. He also quoted L.A. Sedov's suggestion on the expansion in terms of the population which caused the city to expand and the officials to find more lands⁴⁶. If the officers have followed the king from the outside, it suggests that when it is time to change the reign, it was not only the king that was changed, but the whole governmental bureaucracy changed as well.

On the other hand, the king was probably being cautious in having his own men in high status with him, since the transfer of the highest royal power was rarely smooth. Apart from the three quite obvious usurpers as explained above, there are cases of the relatives of the king seizing, or attempting to seize, the throne from him. It was normal for the Khmer kings to have 'fought their way' to the throne. Yaśovarman I had to 'fight with his own blood' (probably his brothers or half-brothers) before he was king. Rājendravarman II, who was also of the royal family, seized power from his own cousin, Harshavarman II and moved the capital back to Yaśodharapura. Sūryavarman II dethroned Dharanindravarman I, his 'grand uncle', with the charge of being 'too submissive' for the throne. Dharanindravarman I did not hunt down the remaining power bases from

⁴⁵ Vickery, *Ibid*, p. 232.

⁴⁶ L.A. Sedov, "Angkorskaia imperita"; Quoted in Vickery, Reign of Sūryavarman I.

the line of Harshavarman III, which Sūryavarman II did. These incidents showed that, whatever the rules or customs of succession were in the old Khmer kingdom, they were often neglected.

In fact, it was so common for a king to seize the throne that even when a king did not fight anyone for power, the artist or poet who composed the inscription decided to add the struggling scene for him. Jayavarman V who comes into power after his father, Rājendravarman, die when he was young, might never 'inspire terror in his enemies⁴⁷' for there was no record of any war in his reign. Actually, his was the 'only' reign during the six hundred years course of Angkor's existence when there was absolute peace in the realm.

The familiarity with wars and disruption of the royal lines in the Khmer kingdom makes one question the 'continuity' of the period. More importantly, it makes one start to see the contrast between the 'image' of greatness as seen from the five elements presented and the 'reality' of the discontinuity in the administrative power. When a system allows the power to be taken from its holder quite readily, it was the sign that the system was having a problem. One could not avoid looking in detail into the administrative system of the 'empire' to see the procedure of the changing

⁴⁷ Briggs, The Ancient Khmer Empire, pp. 134.

and shifting of the power and political matrix that would, ultimately, bring about the decline and fall of the kingdom.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER III

ANGKOR ADMINISTRATION: CONTINUUM OF DISCONTINUITY

When one looks at the administrative system of an ancient kingdom, one of the first things one has to notice is if that administrative arrangement is a centralized one or a decentralized one. If it was centralized, the system would have the means to keep the power base within the center by way of using laws or other measures in the division of labour. The discussion that Angkor was a hydraulic society seems to take this as the indicator that Angkor was a centralized state. For, in order to maintain the elaborate hydraulic system they created, they would have had to appoint the people to their posts and therefore by maintaining the water resources, the bureaucracy would have had control over the people. However, as I demonstrated above, the evidences for Angkor being a hydraulic society are still elusive and nothing, yet, can confirm that the system really worked, or if there was a system at all.

One may argue that in order to build such great monuments as exist across the plain today one would have to have a very good system of organization. To arrange the working period of the laborers and artisans must require a complex system of corvée management. That might be true. Nonetheless, if there was a system to organize people to build monuments, how come there was no evidence of it left? All we have in the form of

inscription would be a record of the king ordering his civil servants to build the monument¹. And that was all. No record whatsoever on how those servants managed to carry out his wishes. There is no evidence to see Angkor as a state which was as centralized as Ayudhya, whose laws, regulations and policy survive for us to see until this day.

If Angkor was not a centralized state, what, then, could be the measures that the Angkorian king uses in ruling the realm? The answers lie within three elements of the Angkor administrative system: the beliefs, the connections, and the rituals.

What made Angkor distinct from other polities from the pre-Angkorian period seems to be the ceremony that Jayavarman II ordered the Brahman Saivakaivalya to perform on the top of Mount Mehendra, the cult that would later be known in all Southeast Asia as the *devarāja* cult. With that ceremony, the king would become the *cakravartin* –the king of kings – ruler of the lower world, as he would believe it. The Hindu beliefs allow him to think that his realm is the parallel ‘lower realm’ of the deities who reside on the higher realm centered by Mount Meru. And by pronouncing himself *devarāja*, the divine essence of kingship would embody itself into the actual king². With the ancestral worshipping and the genius loci cult

¹ Cha-em Keawklai, *Jaruk Prasat Prae Roop (The Pre Rup Inscription)*, (Bangkok: National Library, 2000).

² Robert Heine-Geldern, “Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia”, Data paper number 18, (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1956), p.3.

established well since the pre-Angkorian time, adopting Hindu concept of *cakravartin* was adapt it to the local context. All the factors combined to found the earthly sovereign and Śiva united, and formed power poles evolving around the mountain³, and to enhance his sacredness in claiming that the king is a part (*amśa*) of Śiva. As Kulke wrote:

Their “subtle inner self” (Suksma-antara-ātman) met with the “royal self” (niyoktra-ātman) of the god Śiva in the personal royal lingas on top of the temple mountains erected by the respective kings⁴.

The complete unity of the god and the person of the king is a sure sign of the concentration of power in the hand of the king⁵. Ian Mabbett also agrees with this, although he suggests another meaning for the word *devarāja*, and therefore a slightly difference in the meaning of the whole cult. Mebbett believed that *devarāja* meant primarily the king of the gods -not necessary, but often believed to be, Indra or Mahendra - although in the form of *devarāja*, this ‘king of the gods’ also is the chief of ancestors who had

³ Marilia Albanese, *Angkor: Splendor of the Khmer Civilization*, (Bangkok: Asia Books, 2002), pp. 94-95.

⁴ Hermann Kulke, “The Devarāja Cult”, Data Paper Number 108, (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1978).

⁵ Adhir Chakravarti, *The Sdok Kak Thom Inscription Part I: A Study in Indo-Khmer Civilization*, (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1978), p. 232.

power over all the ancestral spirits⁶. Nidhi Aeusrivongse comments on this meaning of *devarāja*, the king would “channel the “life-force” of these powerful individuals down through the age into the Kambuja of his own day” and “By doing so through himself, the king demonstrated his personal capacity to receive this “life-force”, thus legitimizing his claim to the throne.⁷”

Nonetheless, there are still many uncertainties about this ceremony and the Brahmin family that erected the inscription of Sdok Kak Thom which is the most important source regarding the cult⁸: if it was really practice throughout history since the reign of Jayavarman II, how come it did not appear anywhere before the inscription of Sdok Kak Thom, which was erected during the reign of Sūryavarman I. Why was there some overlapping information regarding the position of *purohita* and the rivalry between different Brahman family if there was only one family responsible for the function of *purohita* for two hundred years? And as Kulke doubts, “if it should turn out that, once the inauguration of the empire had been enacted, the *devarāja* was only one of the various regalia of royal might in

⁶ I.W. Mabbett, “Devarāja”, *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 10 (2), 1969, pp. 202-223.

⁷ Nidhi Aeusrivongse, “The Devarāja Cult and Khmer Kingship at Angkor”, in *Explorations in Early Southeast Asian History: The Origin of Southeast Asian Statecraft*, eds. Kenneth R. Hall and John K., (Whitmore, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1976), pp. 107-118.

⁸ The main scholar who raises question about the inscription of Sdok Kak Thom is, of course, Michael Vickery in *The Reign of Sūryavarman I and Royal Factionalism at Angkor*.

the Angkorian kingdom, can this assessment of the Sivakaivalya family be sustained in its entirety?⁹”

The cult of *devarāja* has a close connection with the ‘ritual’ performed at the beginning of every reign. This ritual, as well as other rituals, has become another key element in the system of administration, especially since the reign of Sūryavarman I, in which he initiated the rituals that were carried on throughout Angkor’s history, and even up until this day in Cambodia and Thailand: the ‘Oath of Allegiance’ that all the *tamrvac* had to give to the king. As the inscription recorded:

In 933 *saga* (AD 1011) the 9th of the waxing moon of Bhadra (August-September), Sunday. Here is the oath which we, belonging to the body of *temrvac* (lectors) of the first, second, third, and fourth categories, swear all of us without exception, cutting our hands, and offering our lives and grateful and stainless devotion to His Majesty Sri Sūryavarmanadeva, who has been in complete enjoyment of sovereignty since 924 *saga*, in the presence of the sacred fire, the holy jewel, the Breahmans, and the acaryas. We shall not honour any other king, we shall never be hostile (to our king), we shall not be the accomplices of any enemy, and we shall not seek to

⁹ Kulke, *Ibid.*, p. 4.

injure him (our king) in any way. We pledge ourselves to perform all actions which are the fruit of our grateful devotion towards His Majesty. If there be war, we pledge ourselves to fight faithfully in his cause without valuing our lives. We shall not fly from the battlefield. If we die a sudden death, not in war, or ever if we commit suicide, may we obtain the reward due to the person devoted to their lord. As our lives are dedicated to the service of His Majesty up to the day of our death, we shall faithfully do our duty to the king, whatever may be the time and circumstances of our death. If there be any affair, for which His Majesty orders us to go abroad, to learn everything about it, we shall seek to know it in detail. If all of us, who are here in person, do not keep to this oath of allegiance to His Majesty, may he reign long yet, we ask that he may inflict punishment of all sort on us. If we hide ourselves, to escape carrying out the oath, may we be reborn in the thirty-two hells as long as there is the sun and moon. If we carry out loyally our promise, may His Majesty give orders for the upkeep of the pious foundations of our country, and for the maintenance of our families, as we are devoted followers of our lord His Majesty Sri Sūryavarmanadeva who has been in

complete possession of the sacred royalty since 924 saga,
and may be obtain the reward due to the faithful servants
in this world and in the next¹⁰.

The reason this reign is raised here is not because there was no other ceremony apart from the *devarāja* cult in the earlier stage, but because there was no concrete evidence in the use of those rituals to institutionalize the solid power of the king and reinforce the extraordinary status of the king by stating that if anyone should displease 'His Majesty', punishment would be inflicted upon that person, not by the king in any physical way, but by the gods.

The restatement of the divinity of the king is not only found here, but on almost every single inscription that has anything to do with the king. The building of the monuments itself confirms the status of the king as a 'supra-natural' being. However, by seeing the king presented as supra-natural, one see another factor regarding the Angkorian administration. It means that there was no system to support the person, as the king had to resort to the divinity to do it. The greatness that the Angkorian king can impose upon his subjects was not the greatness of the institution of the king or the 'good governance' that he can achieve, but rather the greatness of his own

¹⁰ Cœdès, *Inscription du Cambodge II*, p. 205- 216. With reference to the translation of R.C. Majundar, *Inscription of Kambuja*, (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1953), pp. 341-342.

personality combined with the greatness of the gods or the ancestors that were supporting him, and therefore supporting the realm. Both the *devarāja* cult and other rituals follow suit and are the means to state the *glorification of the individual*. There is not much, if any, interest in the 'institution'. Whatever was built, whatever created, whatever worshipped, whatever celebrated, was done for the sake of individuals, whether it was the gods, the ancestors, the king himself, or the king as a part of – or the incarnation of – the god. The monuments in the Roluos group were not built for the 'dynasty' of the king or to glorify the city of Hariharālaya but to glorify the ancestors of the king. Angkor Wat was not built to celebrate the greatness of the 'nation', but to glorify the king Sūryavarman II, who identified himself with Vishnu, all the symbolic measurement and the bas-reliefs there tell us that much¹¹. Even the Bayon was built to glorify king Jayavarman VII as the Buddharaja that is the incarnation of Bhodhisattva Lokesavara. It is true that the *devarāja* would accept the offering from basically anyone, but would only reside with the supreme king, not the other members of the royal family. The other individual would have the divinity elements only when the king allowed it, or when he himself performed the ceremony of the *devarāja* elsewhere.

I have already touched on the next key element of Angkorian administrative system in the previous chapter: the importance of kinship

¹¹ For the very detailed information about the symbolism measurement of Angkor Wat, see Eleanor Mannikka, *Angkor Wat: Time, Space, and Kingship*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1996).

and the level of the king's trust in those with 'close ties' to him. The patron/client relationship that flourished since the Angkor period was firmly installed within the Khmer, and Southeast Asian, culture even in the nineteenth century when the French stated their occupation of the Indochina, as a French scholar, Adhémard Leclère wrote¹²:

Ces 'forces' ou comlang qui, aujourd'hui, ne sont que des clientele impuissantes, pouvaient être autrefois des 'forces' militaires considérables entre les mains des mandarins et des moyens d'action puissants à l'aide desquels un homme habile et hardi devait souvent pouvoir acquérir une grande influence dans l'état. C'est probablement pour cela que les lois les ont subdivisées puis si bien amoindries qu'elles sont auhourd'hui Presque de'truites.

These 'forces' along with the bond between the superiors and those under him which, as we see today, is a weak influence on the system, could be considerably strong military 'forces' at the disposal of the overlords in the ancient times. It could provide the means for the skillful and bold leader to achieve great influence in the state. It is possible that this is the real reason why they have to

¹² Adhémard Leclère, Recherches sur le droit public des Cambodgiens, (Paris: Challamel, 1894).

establish the law to separate them into different divisions, reduce the connection to the point that they almost do not exist today.

Leclère was right to suspect that a 'bond' of this kind would give considerable forces to those 'superiors'. Although the patron/client relationship in modern Cambodia might be slightly different from the kinship tie from the Angkorian period, still, the basis of it was the same. As Mabbett notes: "it was natural for a ruler to surround himself as far as possible with favourites and the children of his father's favourites, to hold such people to himself with honours and dignities and the grant of rights to the fruit of the land, to set them to work in all offices closest to his own person and in positions of authority over the various departments of his teeming household.¹³" The king would use personal connection to determine the status of the individual. The 'family connection' is one of the important characteristics the king seeks of his servants, apart from the age and the ability¹⁴. What would be a better way to have a good 'family connection' than to get themselves 'connected' by marriage into the royal

¹³ Mabbett, "Varnas in Angkor and the Indian Caste System", *Journal of Asian Studies* 36 (3), 1977, pp. 429-442.

¹⁴ I.W. Mabbett, "Kingship in Angkor", *Journal of Siam Society* 66 (2), July 1978, pp. 1-58.

family¹⁵. The members of the family whose female members married to the king would be able to raise them up on the staircase of *varnas* in Angkor. In exchange, the king, or the overlord that would-be king, would get the support on the wealth, supply or the resources needed in order to achieve his goal.

This 'marriage alliance' as well as the matrilineal succession discussed in the last chapter are somehow interconnected. It was the utilization of female linkage in order to achieve the high objective practiced since the pre-Angkorian time. The importance of women presents itself in the two 'genesis' myths of the Khmer; both involve high-ranking women. One recorded by a Chinese diplomat visiting the state of 'Funan' around 230 being a story of an autonomous queen 'Liu Ye' that ruled the area until an Indian Brahman 'Hundien' (Kaundinya) sailed into her country, married her, and assumed the status of king¹⁶.

This Chinese-recorded myth can also be found in an inscription from the third century in the area that Ian Mabbett and David Chandler believe to be a key site of the Chams. The myth refers to Kaundinya, who received a

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However, the ancient Khmer concept of 'the royal family' somehow differs from that of the Chinese. According to Wolters, the royal family would not be separated completely from other families in the inner circle of the king/ruler. Wolters suggested that "There were only the ruler, and even he and his closest relatives would identify themselves with various kinship groups when the occasion requires them to do so. See Wolters: *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1983). p.19-20.

16

P. Pelliot, "Le Fou-nan", *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 3, 1903, pp. 252-267. The summarization of the myth can also be found in G.Coedès, *The Indianized State in Southeast Asia*, trans. Sue Brown Cowing, (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 1968), p. 37.

spear with magical power when he encountered a *Nāga* (serpent) king and married the princess Somā, whom the Nāga regarded as his daughter. The serpent princess, or *nāgi*, is ‘an important figure of magic and power.’¹⁷

Also the Chinese record of this myth could have derived from a standard version of a Southeast Asia myth of genesis¹⁸, both ‘Liu Yi’ and ‘Somā’ are presented as active and autonomous. ‘Liu Yi’ even arranged the warship and tried to fight the invasion; Somā, being the daughter of Nāga, played some mother earth part in establishing a race on earth before she ‘adopted’ the human form.

The other myth evolving around ‘Kambu’ and ‘Merā’ appeared in the inscriptions of Angkor for the first time in the reign of Rājendravarman II (944-968). Merā, though not as active as Liu Ye or Somā, was described as ‘most renowned of beautiful deities’¹⁹. Trudy Jacobson suspected that the later myth, was created in the time that the Khmer had already received some influential ideas from India²⁰. By having Merā ‘given’ from Śiva to Kambu, the role of the autonomous queenship existed during the 1st to 9th century via figures like Kulaprabhavati of Jayavarman I or even Jayadevi,

¹⁷ Ian Mabbett and David Chandler, *The Khmers*, (Chieng Mai: Silkworm Books, 1995), p. 71.

¹⁸ Mabbett and Chandler noted the parallel of this myth with the one in the Pallava kingdom of Southern India, the Thai myth of Phra Ruang and another Scythian legend. All three of them involved a magic bow or spear. Mabbett and Chandler, *Ibid*.

¹⁹ The Paksri Chamkrong Inscription, G. Cœdès, *Inscription du Cambodge IV*, Paris, EFEO, 1953, pp. 88-101. (K. 286)

²⁰ Trudy Jacobson, “Autonomous Queenship in Cambodia, 1st – 9th”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 13 (3), November 2003. pp. 357-376.

before she became the queen of Jayavarman II disappeared quite literally when Jayavarman II anointed himself the *cakravartin* of the realm²¹.

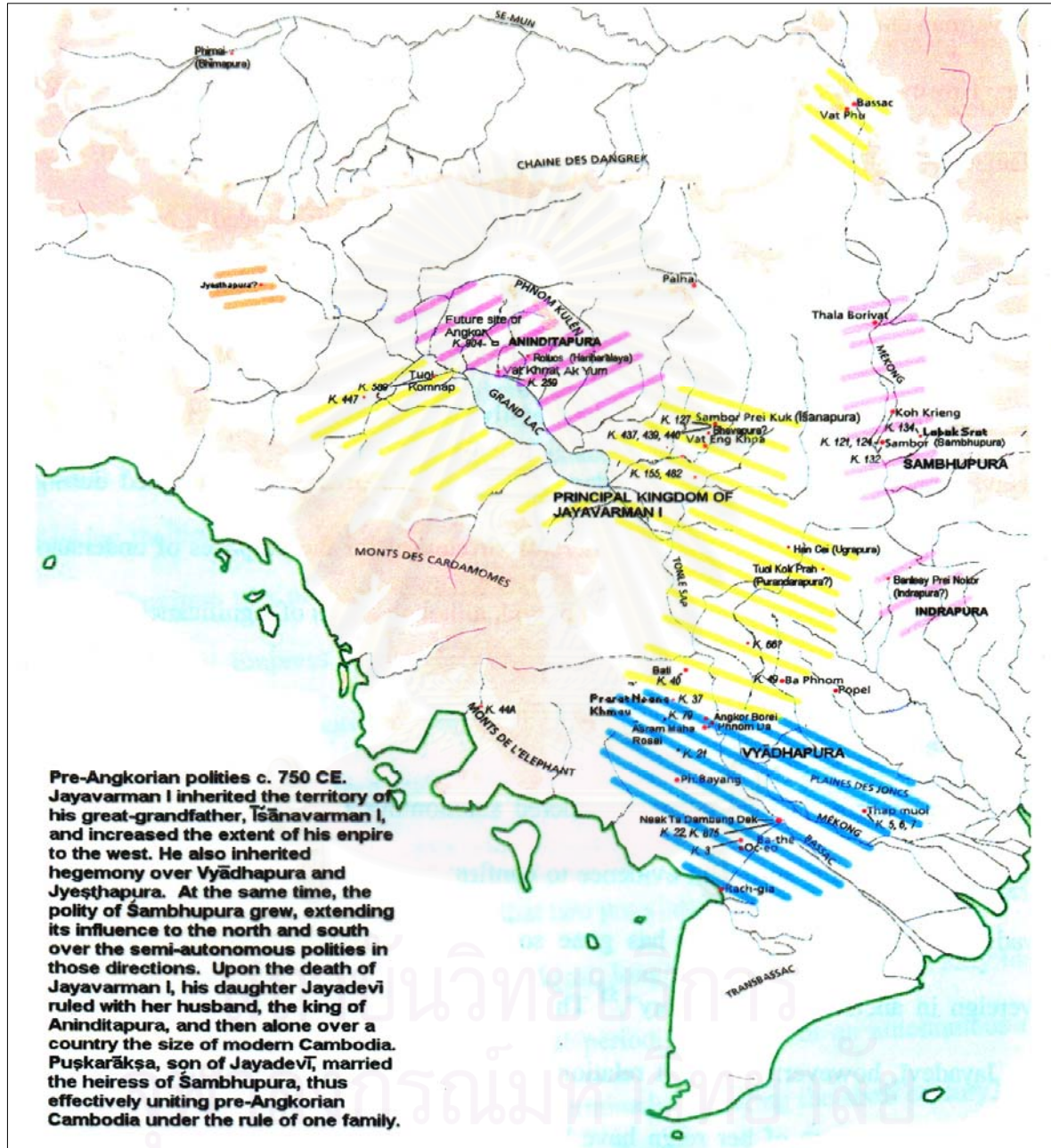


Figure 3.1
Pre-Angkorian polities c.750 CE.

²¹ Jacobson, *Ibid.*, p. 366.

Despite the lack of autonomous queens during the Angkor period, one cannot deny that women still were an important part in the Angkor socio-political entity. Most of the kings when they come to the throne have to erect an inscription and cite their genealogy, through the matrilineal connection more often than the patrilineal connection. Three kings (Rājendravarman II, Jayavarman V, and Jayavarman VII) traced their genealogy line back to Merā herself. Jacobson noticed that the succession of both Rājendravarman II and Jayavarman VII had gone through some difficulties, and Jayavarman V, being the son of Rājendravarman II, had no options but to follow the genealogy that his father created²². Citing the relation to the 'deities' in the myth might provide them with more solid legitimacy over the throne.

Apart from the importance of the succession claims, ambitious men would also marry into powerful non-royal families in outlying, semi-autonomous area in order to gain the financial, political, military and religious support of their patrons. There are several records regarding this circumstance: Narendradevi, chief queen of Rājendravarman II, was described as 'in possession of a land with all its ornaments' and 'in possession of a land with all of its appointments'. Sūryavarman I, after conquering the throne, married a daughter of Jayaviravarman in order to

²² Jacobson, *Ibid.*, p. 361.

provide a connection to the land. She was then made 'queen' and her brothers were showered with riches and given important positions and status²³.

This is the creation of the integration of society through marriage alliances between influential family groups: the alliance that expand into the network of relatives underlying the Angkorian administration, similar to what O.W. Wolters called a 'network of loyalty'²⁴ based on the same concept as the *mandala*, a Sanskrit term first used in the context of Southeast Asia by Wolters himself²⁵.

A. Thomas Kirsch noticed that the network of relatives plays an important part in controlling the outlying areas as the king's centralization implicit in the *devarāja* system is diminished as the distance between the area and the capital increased²⁶. He, like Srisakara Valliphotama²⁷, believed in the 'multi-center of power' in one area and suggested that the semi-autonomous centers of power potentially posed the threats to the central

²³ Trudy Jacobson, "Threads in a Sampot: A History of Women and Power and Cambodia", Ph.D. Thesis, University of Queensland, 2003. pp. 105-106.

²⁴ O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1983), p.19-20.

²⁵ Sunait Chutintaranond, "'Mandala," "Segmentary State" and Politics of Centralization in Medieval Ayudhya', *Journal of Siam Society* 78 (1), 1990. pp. 89-100.

²⁶ A. Thomas Kirsch, "Kinship, Genealogical Claims, and Societal Integration in Ancient Khmer Society: An Interpretation", in *Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays Presented to D.G.E. Hall*, eds. C.D. Cowen and O.W. Wolters, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976), pp. 190-202.

²⁷ Srisakra Vallibhotama, "Political and Cultural Continuities in Dvāravatī Sites", in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to the 14th Centuries*, eds. David G. Marr and A.C. Milner, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 229-238.

authority of the king. Therefore, to ensure their loyalty and provide the link from their realm to the center, high-ranking officials, priestly families, and semi-independent kings or princes would marry their womenfolk to the king. The power that spread through various branches of the network is another evidence to say Angkorian administration is a decentralized one.

Nevertheless, it is not that anyone could have walked into such alliances. If the king, or the would-be king, did not have the ability or characteristics that would enable him to rise to power, no one would want the alliance. Without the *network of loyalty*, he would not be able to anoint himself the *cakravartin* and he would not be able to command the belief of the people in the deity-state that circle around his persona.

In order to achieve that, it is crucial that the would-be sovereign must 'have what it takes', what Wolters would call 'prowess' but Sunait Chutintaranond preferred the term '*barami*' (charisma): the attribute that comprises of basically the leadership, combatantship, and relationship. In the normal circumstance, these characteristics would be looked for in the persona within the branches of the ruling clusters. But in 'special circumstances' outsiders could also be perceived as possessing attributes of leadership and ability to enlarge their entourage.²⁸ Those 'special circumstances' normally come in the form of the internal conflict between

²⁸ Wolters, "Again a Cultural Matrix", in History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asia Perspective: Revised Edition, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 112.

branches of the ruling clusters, and sometimes as an external threat. Sūryavarman II came onto the throne not only by dethroning Dharanindravarman II, but also by challenging, and winning over, the remaining connection of Harshavarman III. In fact, he overthrew the dynasty of Harshavarman III before he despoiled Dharanindravarman in a combat that only last a day²⁹. The same goes to Jayavarman VII, who ‘drove the Cham away’ and ‘united the kingdom under one parasol.’³⁰ The anomaly events enable the new character to rise, especially if that character comes with the new promise of peace and prosperity as opposed to the previous ‘chaotic’ time. This line of thought leads back to the ritualistic element of the king in which he, as the *avatar* of the deity would be able to end the people’s suffering. The symbolic evidences of this present themselves everywhere we look in the Angkor culture. The choosing of certain of episodes in Hindu myth strengthens the idea. Eleanor Mannikka interestingly interpreted the connection of the measurement scale of the Angkor Wat’s bridge and the Brahmanical cosmology, the Churning of the Sea of Milk that occurs only during the *krta yuga* (The Chaotic Era) and she finds that all the symbolism figures “lies in the belief that a good king can eradicate the *kali yuga* and install the *krta* age when he comes to power, that

²⁹ Briggs, *Ancient Khmer Empire*, p. 187.

³⁰ George Cœdès, “La Stèle du Práh Khñn d’Angkor”, *Bulletin du École Française d’Extrême Orient* 41, 1941, pp. 255-301.

is, at the time of his *Indrabhiseka*. When a king is not quite that able, the era may change to the *trata yuga*. A barely good king might manage the *dvapara yuga*.³¹ Within Angkor Wat there also is a scene of *devas* and *asura* pulling the *nāga* Vasuki in the process which would produce the *amarita* (the Elixir of Life). After the episode of dispute between the *devas* and *asura*, in which the ‘good guy’ won, and Indra was installed as the ‘king of the gods’. Vittorio Roveda remarks that this is very important in terms of Khmer mythology since “it could be related to a peaceful installation of the king of the Khmers.”³² The scene of the Churning of Milky Ocean myth did not just appear on bas-relief and bridge of Angkor Wat, but on the *nāga* bridge incorporated into almost every monument from the reign of Sūryavarman I. The other most prominent representative of this myth are the bridges that lead from four axis into the city of Angkor Thom itself. With the Bayon as the state temple of the city, some scholars suspect even that the symbolism of the myth did not stop at the victory gate, but ran straight into the Bayon, with the four faces of Bodhisattva Lokeshvara serving excessively as the faces of Indra, therefore give another ‘divinity’ characteristic to link Jayavarman VII with³³.

³¹ Eleanor Mannikka, *Angkor Wat: Time, Space and Kingship*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1996), p. 51.

³² Vittorio Roveda, *Khmer Mythology: Secrets of Angkor*, (Bangkok: River Books, 1997), p. 54.

³³ Alexandra Haendel, *Jayavarman VII and the Spiritual Background of the Re-Founding of the Khmer Empire*, MA Thesis: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1999, p. 20-34.



Figure 3.2

Angkor Thom, south bridge across moat, view to southwest

When one has the administrative system that was based on the cult and rituals focusing on the *glorification of the individual*, the network of loyalty that circled around a *person*, and the *personal* attributes, what one sees is not an ‘actual’ system that would have had rules and regulations, but a system that evolved, developed, and encircled around a *person* only. When the king is ‘master of all from the highest to the lowest³⁴’, it leaves little room for the development of the ‘institution’. It gave little importance to the ‘system’ of administration. The kinship network that helped strengthen the degree of the centralization of power can simply be turned, and seek another network to participate in, in the instant that the central power is

³⁴ Robert Heine-Geldern, Conceptions of State and Kingship, p.3.

weaking. When the base of the functional administration was from one person alone, it could not be very permanent. No matter how 'great' the king is, he is still a mortal who would eventually die. At that point, all that he had created would be lost, no matter how big a monument he built.

It does not help that no matter how much the king wants it, the 'prowess' or '*barami*' that he has cannot be passed through to his son, his appointed *yuvārāja* or anyone. As Wolters wrote, this 'prowess' those 'great kings' possessed was always "a personal quality and not capable of being transmitted in order to perpetuate the existence of a particular *mandala*.³⁵" Sunait Chutintaranond takes this idea to another level by suggesting that "At the death of each strong and warlike king the loosely integrated kingdoms would collapse, and ironically enough, none of the administrative measures introduced by dead king and his predecessors seemed to enable his young successor to uphold the reputation, recognition and controlling power of the kingdom.³⁶" The examples of the Angkorian kings certainly fit with this explanation. The reign of 'great kings' is often followed with the shorter and less productive reign. And in every case, the 'network of loyalty' shifted completely before the third reign (counting from the first reign of the 'overlord' of that network) ends.

³⁵ Wolters, *Ibid.*, p.112.

³⁶ Sunait Chutintaranond, *Ibid.*, p. 98.

To portray a more concrete picture, see Appendix B. Although I realize the year each king spent on the throne alone cannot represent the 'productivity' of the reign and the year of succession in some cases are still very much ambiguous, but at least the chart might provide a picture for what I perceive as the 'several rises and falls' in the Angkorian time. In terms of the 'durability' of the king, the same conclusion with what is stated above can be drawn from the chart. At the 'rising' point, no king was able to pass on the power to his successor. Or if we put it in other words, the successor - receiving the power without working his way up on his own *barami* - cannot maintain it. The only king who managed to 'rise' yet again after his father was Jayavarman V as he followed Rājendravarman II in the succession line. However, the explanation is that Jayavarman V did not only rely on his father's *network of loyalty*, he successfully enhanced the network by marrying daughters of other semi-autonomous polities, one example being the daughter of the family of Sreshthapura, and had the service of her brothers in return.³⁷ He gave his younger sister to other powerful families. And he continued ruling with the supervision of Prāna, one of Rājendravarman II's queens, whose family was so influential her relatives held important religious and administrative posts all through the reign³⁸.

³⁷ L.P. Briggs, *The Ancient Khmer Empire*, (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1999). p. 134.

³⁸ Briggs, *Ibid.* p. 134.

This structure of Angkorian administration gives us only one conclusion. It does not support the centralization of power. It does not even enable those with the power, but who did not work for it, to *keep* that power. What we saw at a glance as the kingdom of grandeur, whose magnificence reached both sides of the sea, with the majesty so great that we had to wonder how it could possibly disappear, is in fact the *continuum of the discontinuity*. The unity of the kingdom, the authority that the king might have are so unstable they can completely disappear within a life-time or two, at most. In the end, the fractured and decentralized administration led to the downfall of the whole kingdom.



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CHAPTER IV

THE FALL OF ANGKOR: CONCLUSION

The previous chapter explains how the Angkorian kingdom was a state that lived on the ups-and-downs rhythm. The center that prevailed for more than six hundred years was merely a stage on which the key players come and go. Sometimes his remaining stage troop was able to find a new 'hero' and the show could continue. Other times, most of the time in fact, the troop broke up and the members of the troops all scattered to find a new 'hero' that would lead them back onto the center stage.

The last, and perhaps the greatest, hero of the stage that was Angkor comes with the name of Jayavarman VII, the mythical figure whose face is known throughout the world as the representative of 'Angkor', yet whose real story is more or less shrouded in darkness. He was credited for the whole 'Bayon' art style and, of course, the Bayon itself, the city



Figure 4.1
Head of Jayavarman VII

of Angkor Thom as well as the victory gates, the city - as well as the center temple - of Ta Prohm, the city - as well as the center temple - of Banteay Chhmar, Preah Khan - the sanctuary that is believed to be the first

'university' in mainland Southeast Asia, The baray Jayatataka and the central monument – Neak Pean, Ta Som, Ta Nei, Banteay Kdei, Prasat Tor, *et cetera*. He is also credited with the restoration and addition of almost every single monuments/constructions which existed already in the realm, and was responsible for several hundreds of *arogyasaya* – the hospital and one-hundred and twenty-one houses of fire that was sometimes believed to be *dhammasala* or resting-places for travelers along the road¹ that scattered across mainland Southeast Asia.

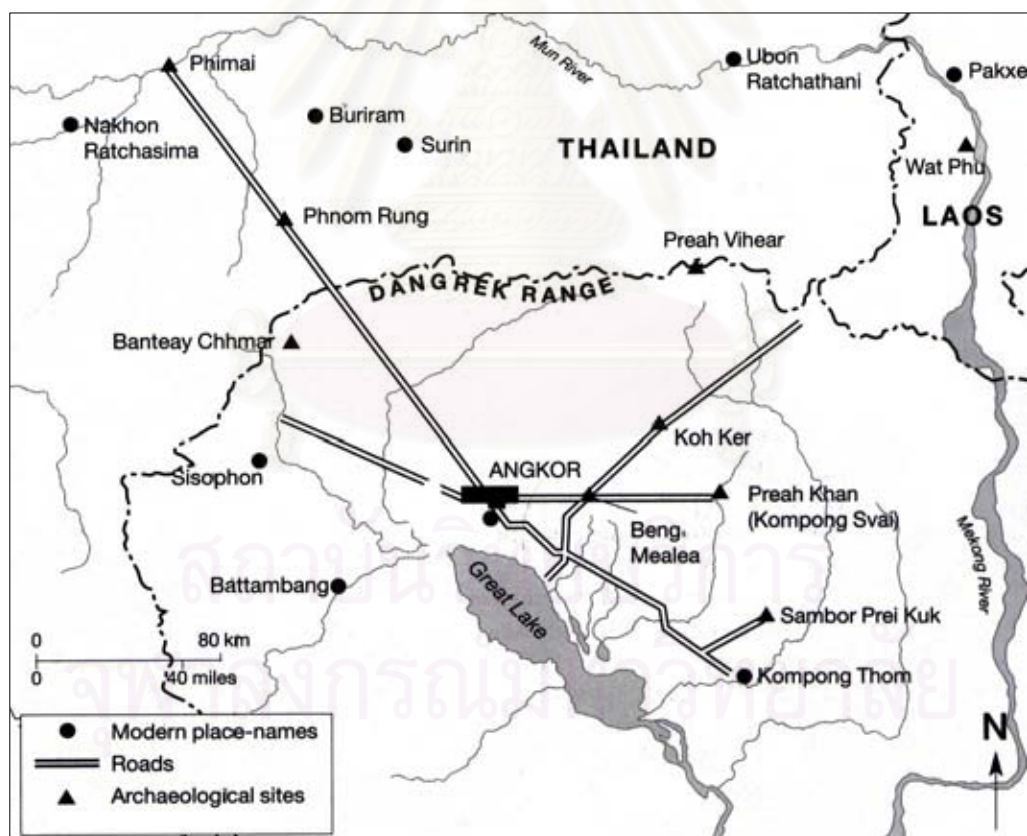


Figure 4.2
The road system of the Khmer Empire

¹ Claude Jacques, *Angkor: Cities and Temples*, (Bangkok: River Books, 1997). pp. 205-271.

All we know about him from the time before he was king is that he was the son of Dharanindravarman II, a cousin of Jayavarman VI who reigned briefly after Sūryavarman II, and Jayarajacudamani, daughter of a King Harshavarman who should not be confused with Harshavarman of Angkor, but was descended from Sreshthevarman and Bhavavarman, that lineage suggested the link to Sreshthepura and Bhavapura. At a young age he went to Vijaya, the capital of the Chams in 'voluntary' exile, came back to help his cousin Yaśovarman II against Thibhuvanadityavarman just shortly before the Chams invaded the city. He then bided his time and waited for twelve years before raising the campaign and drove the Chams away in 1179. He crowned himself King two years later in 1181, when he was fifty-one years of age².

With the extensive building programs, the expansion of territory following the supervise of Jayavarman VII, his reign was counted as the greatest in numbers of monuments and the scale of the area governed.

Jayavarman VII is the most obvious example of the extensive use of all elements in the Angkorian administrative system. Although he changed the state religion from Hinduism to Mahāyāna Buddhism and therefore changed the status of *devarāja* to *buddharāja*, but in fact, there is relatively little metaphysical difference between the old concept of Sivaism and

² Lawrence Palmer Briggs, The Ancient Khmer Empire, (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1999), pp. 204-209.

Mahāyāna Buddhism³ that one does not have to focus on the differences between the point of view towards the Hinduist king and the Mahāyānist king at all. By incorporating himself with Bodhisattva Lokeshvara – the Bodhisattva of Compassion, he too, became that image of sacredness. He also is the creator of the twenty-three Buddha images ‘Jayabuddhamahanatha⁴’ to distribute to the semi-autonomous states under his influence⁵. The manner that obviously stressed the deification of the king was presented in every preceding reign. Consequentially, it emphasizes the *glorification of the individual*, which in this case is the king as the Bodhisattva⁶. He also builds up the new *network of loyalty* and initiates the quest to conquer various parts of the land. Even more so, he marched his army to the capital of the Chams and incorporated it ‘under his parasol’. As for personal attributes, the inscription of Preah Khan by his son ‘Virakumara’ who was born of his chief queen Rājendradevi describes him

³ Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, “Religions of Ancient Cambodia”, in *Sculpture of Angkor and Ancient Cambodia: Millennium of Glory*, eds. Helen Ibbison Jessup and Thierry Zephir, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1997), p. 51.

⁴ Briggs, *Ancient Khmer Empire*, p. 229; George Cœdès, “La Stèle du Práh Khăñ d’Angkor”, *Bulletin du École Française d’Extrême Orient* 41, 1941, pp. 255-301. Briggs also noted Cœdès analysis of the name that *Jayabuddha* means Jayavarman VII himself apotheosized as Buddha and *Mahanatha* means “the great savior”, an epithet which could be applied to him when he was the one winning over the Chams and drove them out from the realm.

⁵ The names of those polities in the inscriptions included Lavo, Vamayapura (Phimai), Suphanpura, and other various ancient names of settlements in the present day Thailand. George Cœdès, “La Stèle du Práh Khăñ” [CXVI – CXXI]

⁶ Cœdès, in “La Stèle du Práh Khăñ”, believed that this is the transformation of the ritual from Hinduism to Mahāyāna Buddhism, naming the Buddha of his reign in the same manner that the old kings named the linga of his reign.

as he ‘killed the chief of the enemy with *Catakori*⁷(the bow of Indra)’ that also describes him as having the deity’s characteristics. The inscription describes more of him as follows:

(XXI.) Aimant le bien, ayant sa conscience augmentée par l’accroissement des bonnes vertus, habile, perfectionnant les usages des castes, détruisant l’ennemi, digne du respect des maîtres, il fut dès sa jeunesse considéré comme un véritable Pānini.

(He) attracted the good, more and more come to him with the increasing of his good virtues: the improvement of his skill, and as he improved the uses of the castes (*varnas*), destroying the enemy, worthy of the respect of the Masters, he was regarded since his youth as a true Panini.

As the king who possessed every virtue counted for a great reign in the Angkorian administration. No wonder that the reign of Jayavarman VII prospered as it was. With the expansion of the territory of influences to almost include every part in mainland Southeast Asia at that time, no one

⁷ Cœdès, in “La Stèle du Práh Khăn”, p. 286.

would doubt that the reign would be regarded as the pinnacle of the Angkorian era.

Nevertheless, Jayavarman VII's reign could also be counted as the reign which marked the beginning of the end. After the reign, there would be no more large scale building program initiated. There would be fewer and fewer inscriptions announcing the greatness of the king. There would be more and more semi-autonomous polities formally in the Angkor *network of loyalty* that announced their full autonomy. There would be attacks from the up-rising neighboring kingdoms. And there would be no other king able to achieve what Jayavarman VII and those great kings before him could.

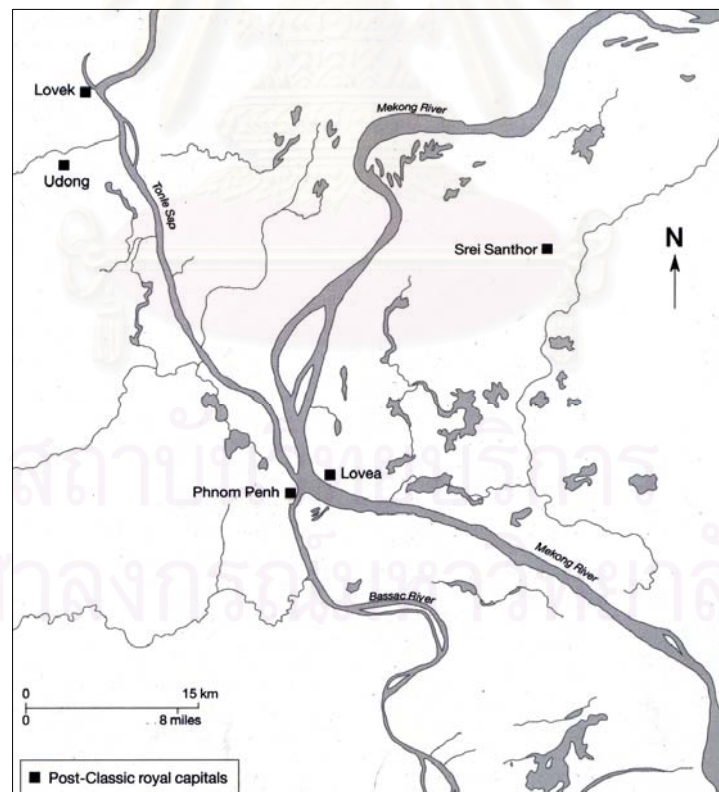


Figure 4.3
The Quatre Bras region and Post-Classic capitals

This is not to say that the later kings did not 'have what it takes' to become one of the great kings, according to the Khmer administrative system. But we have to realize that the system that had existed since Jayavarman II announced himself *cakravartin* in 802AD, the system that had been through a lot of changes, yet retained all its major characteristics, had somehow run its course. With the coming of the fifteenth century, the condition of the administration changed. The new atmosphere of the regional history no longer supported the long-serving de-centralized, *network of loyalty* system that the Khmer used. Ayudhya, the new state appearing at that time had a stronger sense of centralization. Although the newly rising kingdom received some features of the administration from Angkor, as H.G. Quaritch Wales mentions that after the sacking of Angkor, many Khmer officials were brought to Ayudhya and instructed the king to change "the basis of the feudal system from a territorial to a personal one⁸", but in fact, the custom of a would-be sovereign 'marrying into the family' and creating his own network of loyalty existed in Ayudhya well before that time. Charnvit Kasetsiri used the same factor in explaining the coming to power of Uthong, the first king of Ayudhya⁹. He noticed that Uthong's claim to the throne was not different from the patterns of early kings in the

⁸ H.G. Quaritch Wales, Ancient Siamese Government and Administration, (New York: Paragon Book, 1965), p. 70

⁹ Charnvit Kasetsiri, The Rise of Ayudhya: A History of Siam in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 69-70.

Menam Basin, and that he “strengthened his case by his marriage alliance with the houses of Suphanburi and Ayodhya, Lopburi or Kambuja Pradesa.¹⁰”

However, though the two shared many characteristics, the Ayudhya administrative system is not identical with that of Angkor. The stronger, more centralized administrative polity paved its way into the *continuum of the discontinuity* and the de-centralized system of Angkor administration could not prevail. In conclusion: though the Angkorian kingdom did not fall because of the Ayudhya ‘invasion’, the growing threat and challenge from the new state obviously influenced the moving of the city. Ultimately, it is the failure of the administrative system that put an end to what we call ‘the age of Angkor’.



¹⁰ Chamvit Kasetsiri, Ibid. p. 70.

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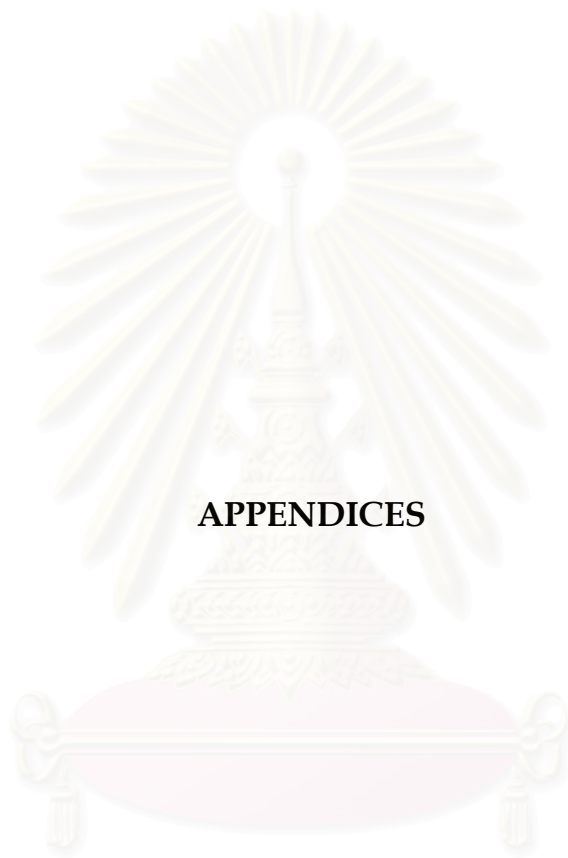
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APPENDICES

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

APPENDIX A

THE LIST OF ANGKORIAN KINGS

Name	Year	Origin & Connection(s)	Achievement	Remark
Jayavarman II - Post. – Paramesvara	802 – 850 (48)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Married – Dharanindradevi - a niece of Rudravarman, old ruler of Dhiradapura - Married – Nripendradevi – younger sister of Sivakaivalya - Married – Prana (Kambujalakshmi) – related to Mratan Sri Prthivinarendra - Married – principle queen Hyang Pavitra of Haripura - Married – Bhas-svammini – a daughter of a Vishnu Brahman - Married – Sarasvati – connected with Anindrapura - Married – Sten Deviki – connected with Anindrapura - Married – Teng Ayak – from Bhavapura 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Found - the capital of Hariharālaya on Mount Mahendra in the Kulen Moutain - Committed to the cult of devarāja - Reign - at Mahendraparveta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - purohita – Sivakaivalya - servant – Nasa - chief of the army - Nadh
Jayavarman III - Pre. - Jayavardhana - Post. - Vishnuloka	850 – 877 (27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fa. - Jayavarman II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin - the building of shrines in Hariharālaya - Reign - at Hariharālaya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - purohita – Suksmavindu - great elephant hunter – prob. lost his life in the chase - post. Name indicate Vishnuite
Indravarman I	877 – 889 (12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patrinal aunt - Jayavarman II's queen (one mentioned above) - maternal grd. fa. – Rudravarman - maternal grd. fa. – King Nripatindravarman (prob. The vassal ruler of Indrapura) - father – Prithivindravarman of a kshatirya family - married – Indradevi daught. of Mahipativarman (prob. the one lose his head to Maharaja) - . - Claim the throne using the maternal genealogies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reign - at Hariharālaya - Ancestral temple - Preah Ko, comp. 879 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rudresvara – maternal grd. fa. - Paramesvara – Jayavarman II - Prithivindresvara – fa. - Narendradevi – wife. Rudravarman - Dharanindradevi – wife. Jayavarman II - Paternal aunt - Prithivindradevi – wife. Prithivindresvarman mo. (?) - State temple – Bakong, comp. in 811 - Baray – Indratataka (begin) - Build - Kok Po - Begin – Loley - Expand - to the foothills of Danreks and across into Khorat Valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Usurper (?) - purohita – Suksmavindu (same) - purohita – Vamasiva (after) - guru – Sivasoma – grandson of King Jayendradhipativarman [98] - guru – Vamasiva - hotar - Sikhasanti - “in five days, I will commence to dig”
Yaśovarman I - Pre. - Yasovarshana - Post. - Paramasivaloka	889 – 910 (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fa. - Indravarman I - fought his way to the thorne against brother(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reigh – at Hariharālaya & Yosodhrapura - Found – Yasodharapura - Ancestral temple – Lolei (finished work from prev.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indravramesvara – fa. - Mahipatesvara – maternal grd. fa. - Indradevi - Rajendradei – maternal grd. mo. - State temple – Phnom Bakeng (Vnam Kantal) - Baray – Yasodharatataka (East Baray) - Finish – Indratataka - Built – <i>ashramas</i> - Built – Phnom Bok 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - purohita – Vamasiva (vrah guru) - hotar – Sikhasiva - abundance of evidence that other forms of the Brahmonic worship were tolerated and protected - the death of this king triggered the first 'leper king' story

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Built – Phnom Krom - Built – Prasat Rong Chen (on Phnom Kulen) - Begin – Preah Vihear - Introduce – new alphabet ‘nagari’ of North India (prev.ly the kingdom use ‘pre-pallava’ or ‘vengi’ and ‘pallava’ from South India) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prob. Mahāyāna influence 	
Harshavarman I - Post. – Rudraloka	900 – c.922 (22)	- Fa. – Yaśovarman I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Built - Baksei Chamkrong (prob. as funerary temple) - Built - Prasat Kravan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - purohita – hotar – Kumarasvamin
Isanavarman II - Post. – Paramarudraloka	c. 922 – 928 (?)	- Bro. – Harshavarman I	-	
Jayavarman IV - Pre. – (prob.) Jayasinhavarman - Post. - Paramasivaoada	921 – 941 (14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Married – Yaśovarman I's sister – Jayadevi - Old. Bro. (ma.) – Rajendravarman I (not to be confused with Rājendravarman II) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Found/Move - to Koh Ker (Chok Gargyar) (new gov. set up in 921) - State temple - Prasat Thom (?) - Baray – Rahal - Inscriptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thom - Krachap - Banteay Pir Chan - Chen - Neng Khmau - Damrei - Andong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prob. the regent during two prev. reign - Saivaite - purohita – Isamamurti
Harshavarman II - Post. – Vrahmaloka or Brahmaloaka	942 – 944 (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fa. – Jayavarman IV - Mo. – Jayadevi – young. sis. of Yaśovarman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reign – Chok Gargyar - The period of imperial disintegration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - purohita – Atmasiva – nephew of Isanamurti
Rājendravarman II - Post. - Sivaloka	944 – 968 (24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fa. – Mahendravarman - Mo. – Mehandradevi – prob. wife of Jayavarman IV, elder sis. of Yaśovarman - Cousin – Harshavarman II - Def. seize the throne from Harshavarman II - Married – Prana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move - back to Yaśodharapura (?) but moved a little bit to the south of East Baray - Ancestral temple – Baksei Chamkrong (restored) - State temple – Pre Rup comp. 961 (?) - Build – East Mebon - Build – Bat Chum (Buddhist shrine) - Build – Bayand - Build – Prasat Khna - Add – Preah Vihear - War – Chams (win) - Inscriptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baksei Chamkrong - Mebon - Bat Chum - Pre Rup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Usurper (?) - purohita – Atmasiva - hotar – Sankara, grd. nep. of Sikhasiva from Pranavatman family (check AKE p.124) - guru – Rudracarya - - Saivaite - prob. pro Mahayana - Other temple - Banteay Srei

Jayavarman V - Post. - Paramesivaloka	968 – 1001 (33)	- Fa. – Rejendravarman II - (step, ma.) – Prana w/ important post in this reign - Married – young. sis. of Senapati Rajapativarman from the family of Sreshthapura	- Begin – Ta Keo - Begin – Phimeanakas (devarāja – Jayesvara) - Begin – the Royal Palace - Add – Preah Vihear -	- purohita – Atmasiva - decendent of Hyang Pavitra of Haripura (see Jayavarman II) - support Buddhism
Udayadityavarman I	1001 – 1002 (1)	- Mo. – old. Sis. of Jayavarman V's queen - Transient ruler	-	* Usurper (?)
Jayaviravarman	1003 –	-	-	
Suryavarman I - Post. - Nirvanapada	1011 – 1050 (40)	- Fa. – King of Tambralinga, a tamil-malay state on the Malay peninsula - Married – Viralakshmi – from the line of Harshavarman I and Īśānavarman II - Himself – from the maternal family of Indravarman - Himself – believe to the Brahman house of Saptadevakula through this mother (-> check Prana in notes) - 923 saka – reign in Romeas (=1001/1002)	- Found - Royal Palace - Begin - West Baray - Finish – Phimeanakas - Finish – Ta Keo (Hemagiri) - Add - Preah Vihear - Established – Oath of Allegiance - Discontinued – the exclusive priniledge granted by Jayavarman II to the family of Sivakaivalya of furnishing purohita of the devarāja. (more on AKE 167) - Inscriptions - Ta Keo (wall) - Neak Buos (pillar) - Royal Palace (gopura) -	* Usurper (?) - purohita – Sadasiva. decendent of Hyang Pavitra of Haripura (see Jayavarman II) - guru – Yogisvarapandita – decendents of Bhas-svammini (see Jayavarman II) - himself – a Buddhist
Udayadityavarman II	1050 – 1066 (16)	- No clear connection but not appear like a usurper - Bro. (mo.) – Harshavarman - Sis. – married to Vasudeva Dvijendravallaha	- State temple – Baphuon - Build – dykes around West Baray - Build – West Mebon - Add – Preah Vihear - War – Champa - War – southern - War – Revolt of Kamvau (AKE 173) - War – Revolt of Sluat (AKE 175) (both revolt suppressed by Sankrama) -	- purohita – Sankrapandita - guru – Vagindrapandita - vrah guru - Jayendrapandita
Harshavarman III - Post. - Sadasivapada	1066 – 1080 (14)	- Bro. – Udayadityavarman II	-	- purohita – Sankrapandita - guru – Vagindrapandita
MAHIDHARAPURA DYNASTY				
Jayavarman VI - Post. - Paramakaivalyapada	1080 – 1107 (27)	- Fa. – Hiranyavarman - Mo. – Hiranyalashmi - Old. Bro. – Draranindravarman I - Young. Bro. – Yuvaraja - Young. Sis. – grd. ma. Of Jayavarman VII - A vassal prince native to the Mun Velley of Khorat Plateau - crowned by the priest Divakarapandita	- Build - Phimai (Vimayapura) - Build – Phnom Rung	* Usurper (?) - Vrah guru – Divakarapandita - guru – Vagindrapandita -
Dharanindravarman I - Post. - Paramanishkalapada	1107 – 1113 (6)	- Young Bro. – Jayavarman VI	- Begin – Beng Melea	

Suryavarman II - Post. - Paramavishnuloka	1113 – 1150 (37)	- Grd Nep. of Jayavarman VI - Grd. Nep. of Dharanindravarman I - Mo. – Narendralakshmi, grd. daugh. Hiranyavarman and Hiranyalashmi - Fa. – Ksitindraditya, son of Hiranyavarman and about wife -	- State temple – Angkor wat - Finished - Beng Melea - Finished - Phnom Rung - Build – Banteay Samre - Build - Thammanon - War – Champa - War – Đai Viêt - Re-established – Relation with China -	*Usurper – from his great uncle (?) - Vrah guru – Divakarapandita - guru – Vagindrapandita - defeated the house of Harshavarman III which was holding out in the southern part
Dharanindravarman II	c.1160	- Cousin – Sūryavarman II - Fa. – Mahidharaditya (Sūryavarman II's maternal unc.) - Mo. – Rajapatindralakshmi - Married – Jayarajacudamani, daugh. of a King Harshavarman: descended from Sreshthavarman and Bhavavarman -	-	- A Mahayana Buddhist - Father of Jayavarman VII
Yaśovarman II	c.1160 – c.1165 (5)		- Revolt – Rahun	* Usurper (?) - Mentioned in inscriptions of Phimeanakas, Prasat Chhng, Banteay Chhmar
Thibhuvanadityavarman	c. 1166 – c. 1167		-	* Usurper "A servant ambitious to arrive at the royal power" – Phimeanakas insc.
CHAM INVASION				
Jayavarman VII	1181 – 1219 (38)	- Fa. – Dharanindravarman II - Mo. – Jayarajacudamani - Married – Jayarajadevi - Married – Intradevi (Jayadevi old. sis.) - Married – Rejendradevi - Son – Samtac Srindrakumara (Banteay Chhmar) - Son – -indravarman (governor of Louvo) - Son – Suryakumara – insc. Ta Prohm (crown prince) - Son – Virakumara – insc. Preah Khan - [Son – Indrarvarman II] - Went to Vijaya (Champa)	- Ancestral temple – Ta Prohm - Ancestral temple – Preah Khan - State temple – Bayon - Found – Angkor Thom (Nagara Jayasri) - Build – Jayatataka - Build – Elephant Terrace - Finish – Banteay Chhmar	

List of abbreviation:

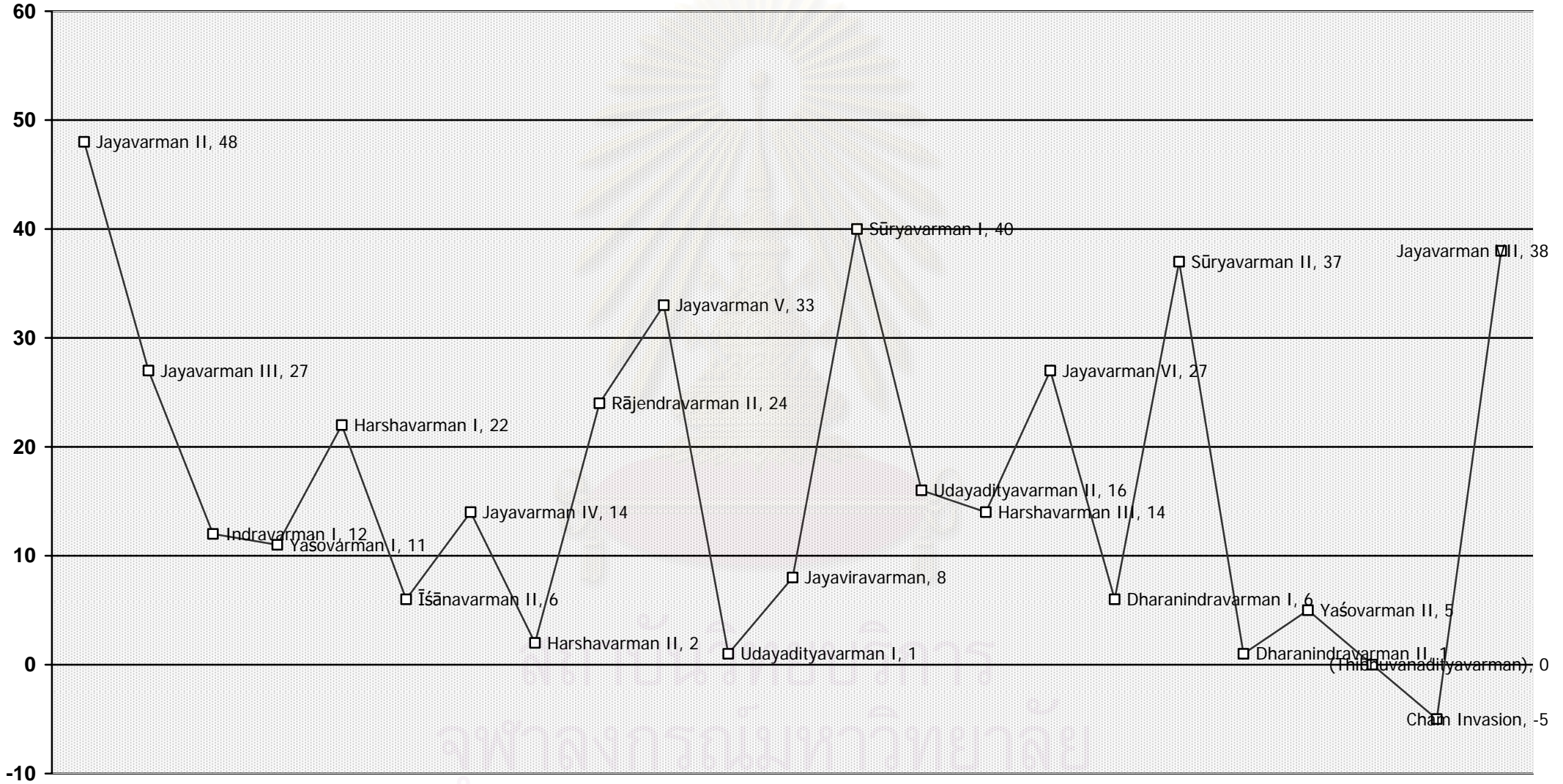
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|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| - Aun. – aunt | - Grd. – Grand | - Pre. – Pre-Succession name |
| - Bro. – brother | - Insc. – Inscription | - Post. – Posthumous name |
| - Comp. - complete | - Mo. – mother | - Prob. – Probably |
| - Daugh. – Daughter | - Nep. – nephew | - Sis. – sister |
| - Fa. – father | - Nie. – niece | - Unc. – uncle |

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APPENDIX B

COMPARISON CHART OF THE DURATION OF ANGKORIAN KING ON THE THRONE

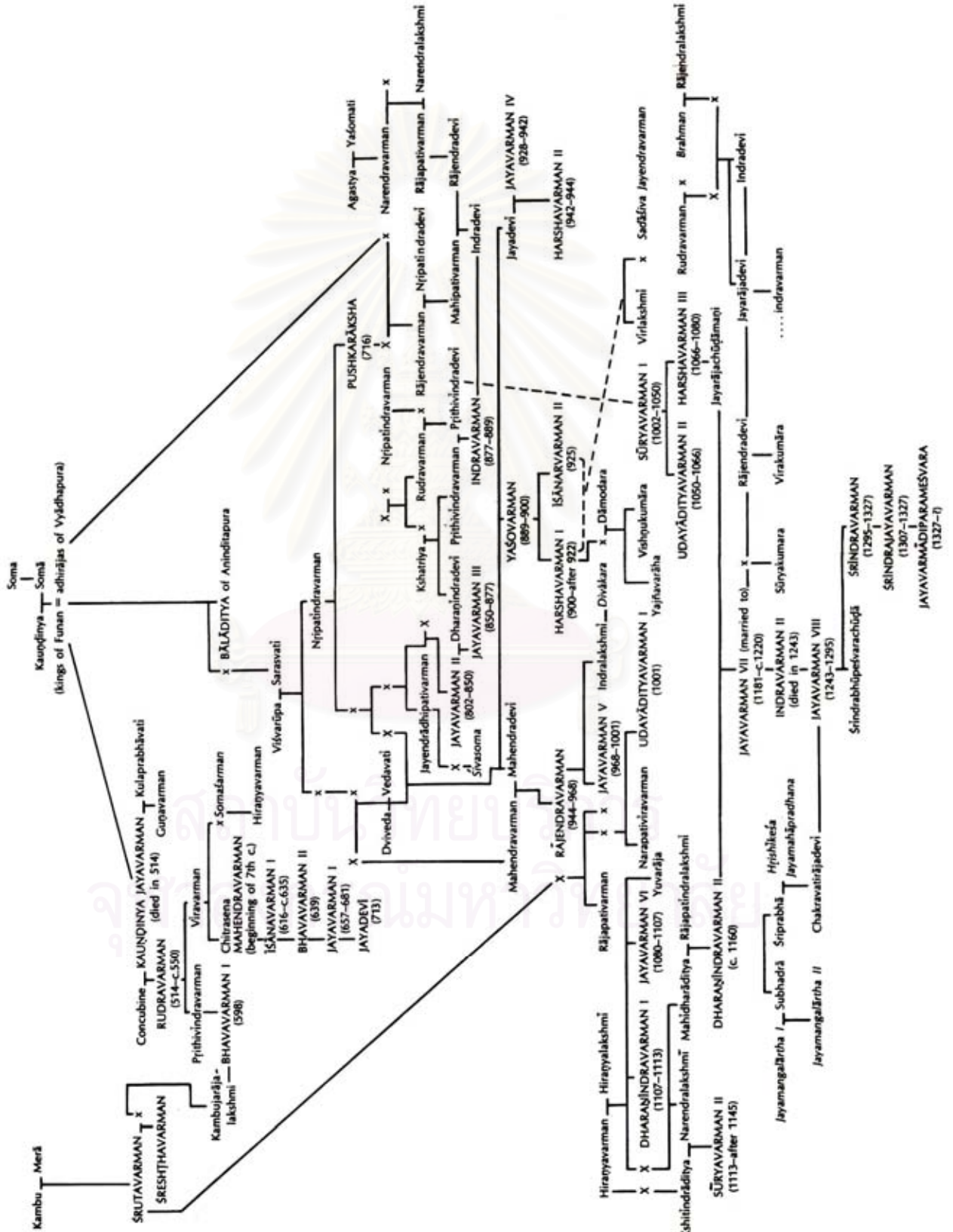


APPENDIX C

Genealogy of the Kings of Cambodia (from G. Cœdès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*)

GENEALOGY OF THE KINGS OF CAMBODIA

(The names of kings are in capitals; the names of Brahmins related to the royal family, in italics.)



BIOGRAPHY

Miss Patmawan Buranamat was born on July 31, 1979, in Bangkok, Thailand. In 2002, she graduated with honors from Thammasat University, Faculty of Liberal Arts with an English major and two minors in Journalism and English Literature. During the course of her bachelor studies she worked part-time as a translator and as an interpreter for Bangkok Rai exhibition ltd., in conferences such as the 4th ASEAN Energy Business Forum and the 40th Orient and Southeast Asian Lions Forum. Her interest in Southeast Asian cultures prompted her to further her study and enroll in the Southeast Asian Studies Program at Chulalongkorn University in June of 2003. During the academic year of 2004 she served as a teaching assistant in the subject of Southeast Asian Civilization and was in the sub-committee for the seminar “The Influence of Khmer Culture on Thai Arts and Performing Arts” held at Chulalongkorn University. Early in 2005 she attended the conference on “Contemporary Research in Pre-Angkor Cambodia” at the Center of Khmer Studies, Siem Reap, Cambodia.