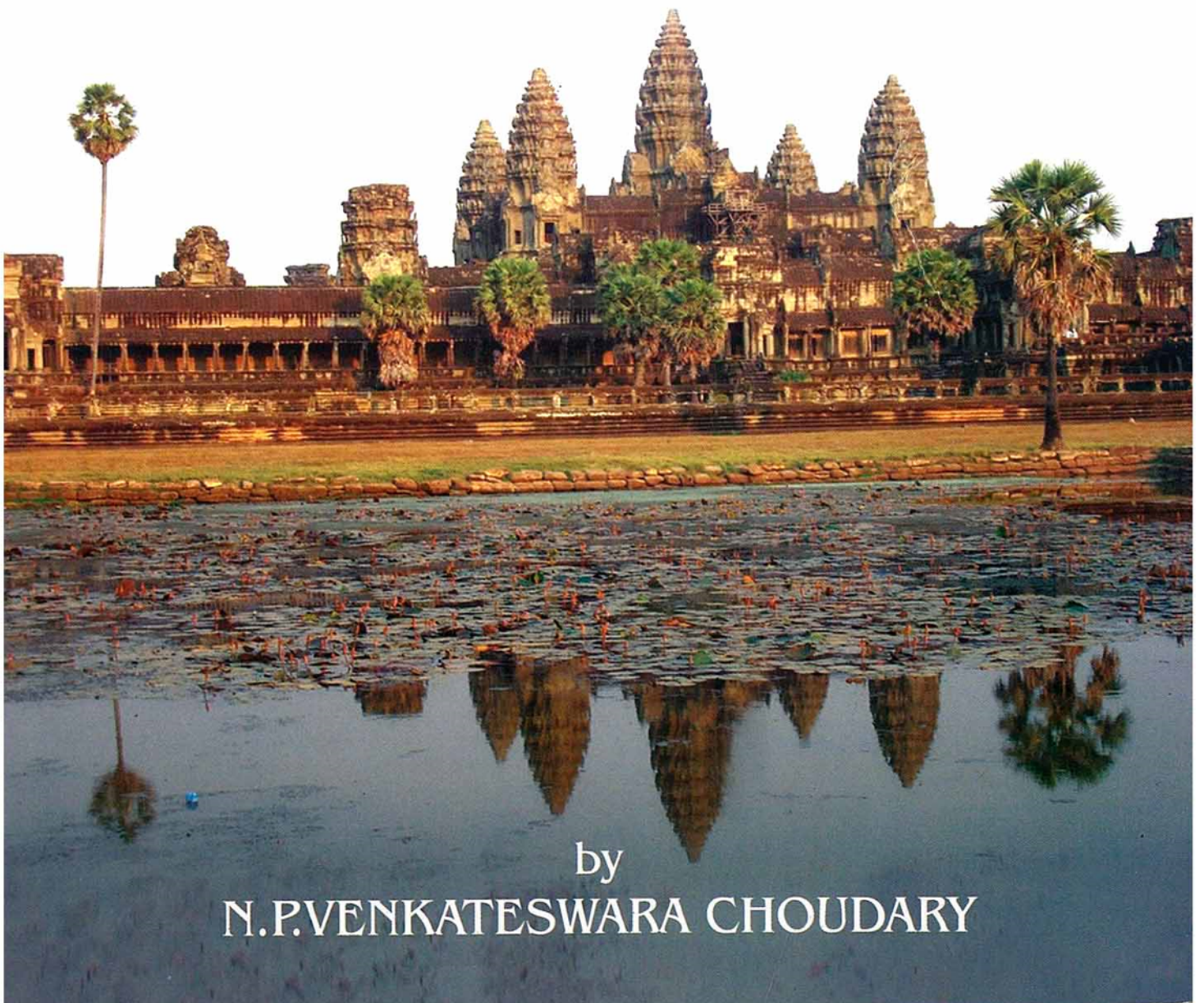


# Cambodia The Land Of Hindu Temples

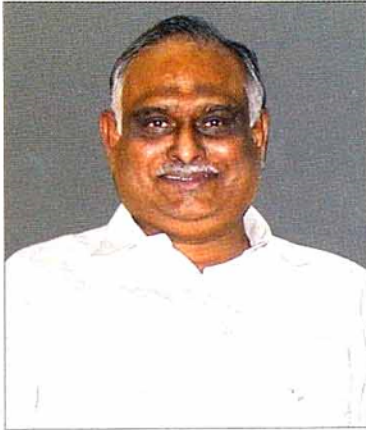
With the blessings of  
Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam Swamulu



by  
N.P.VENKATESWARA CHOUDARY

**First Edition:** 2009 October

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*Photographs in this book taken by the Author himself*

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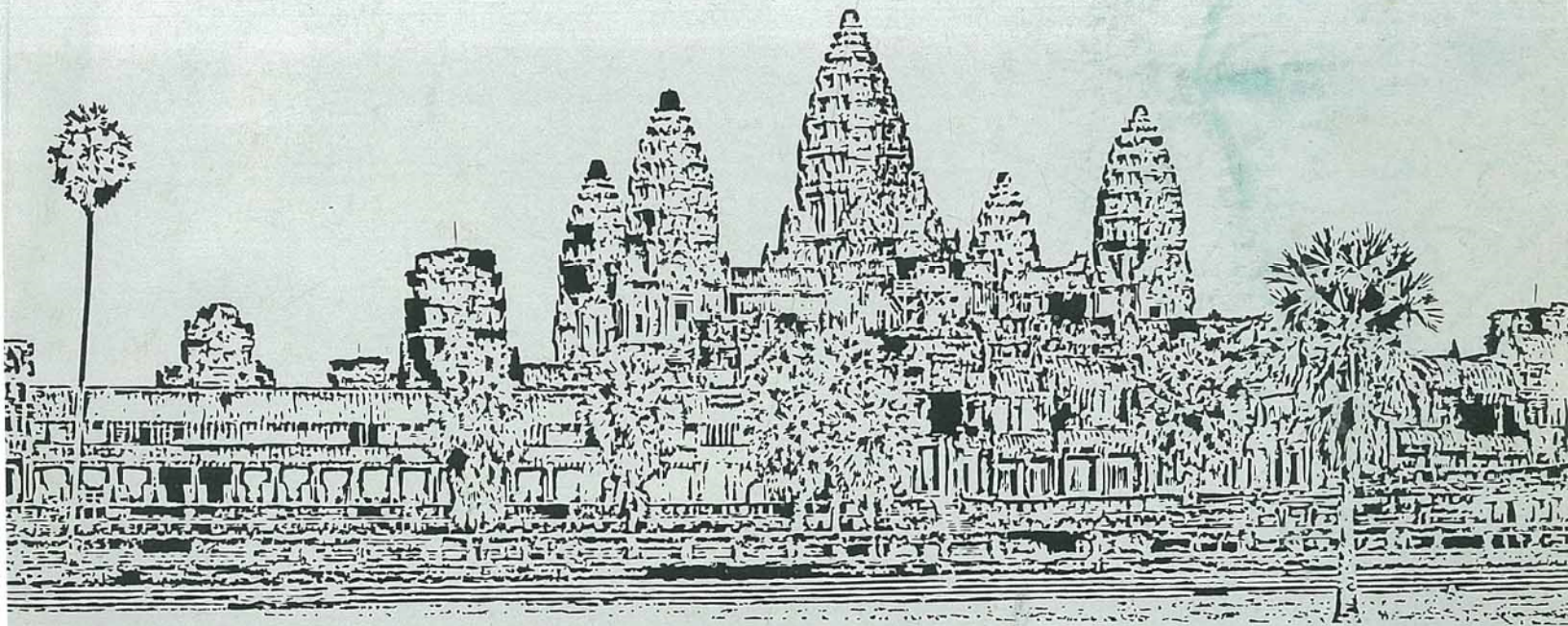
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# Cambodia The Land Of Hindu Temples

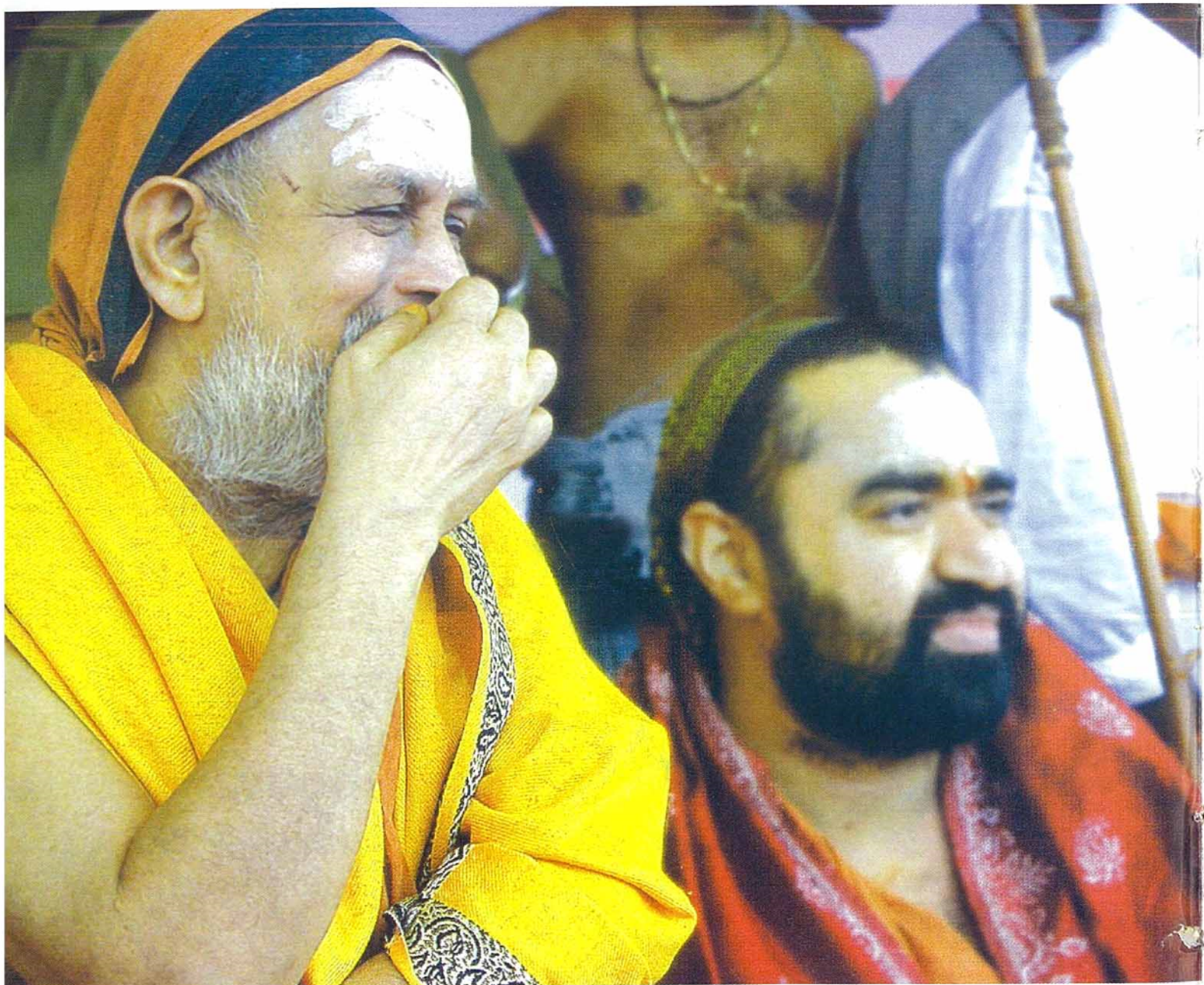
With the blessings of  
Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam Swamulu



by  
N.P.VENKATESWARA CHOUDARY



**Their holiness the 69th Pontiff  
Jagadguru Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Sankaracharya Swami  
and the 70th Pontiff  
Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swami  
of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam**





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Sri Chandramouleeshwaraya Namaha

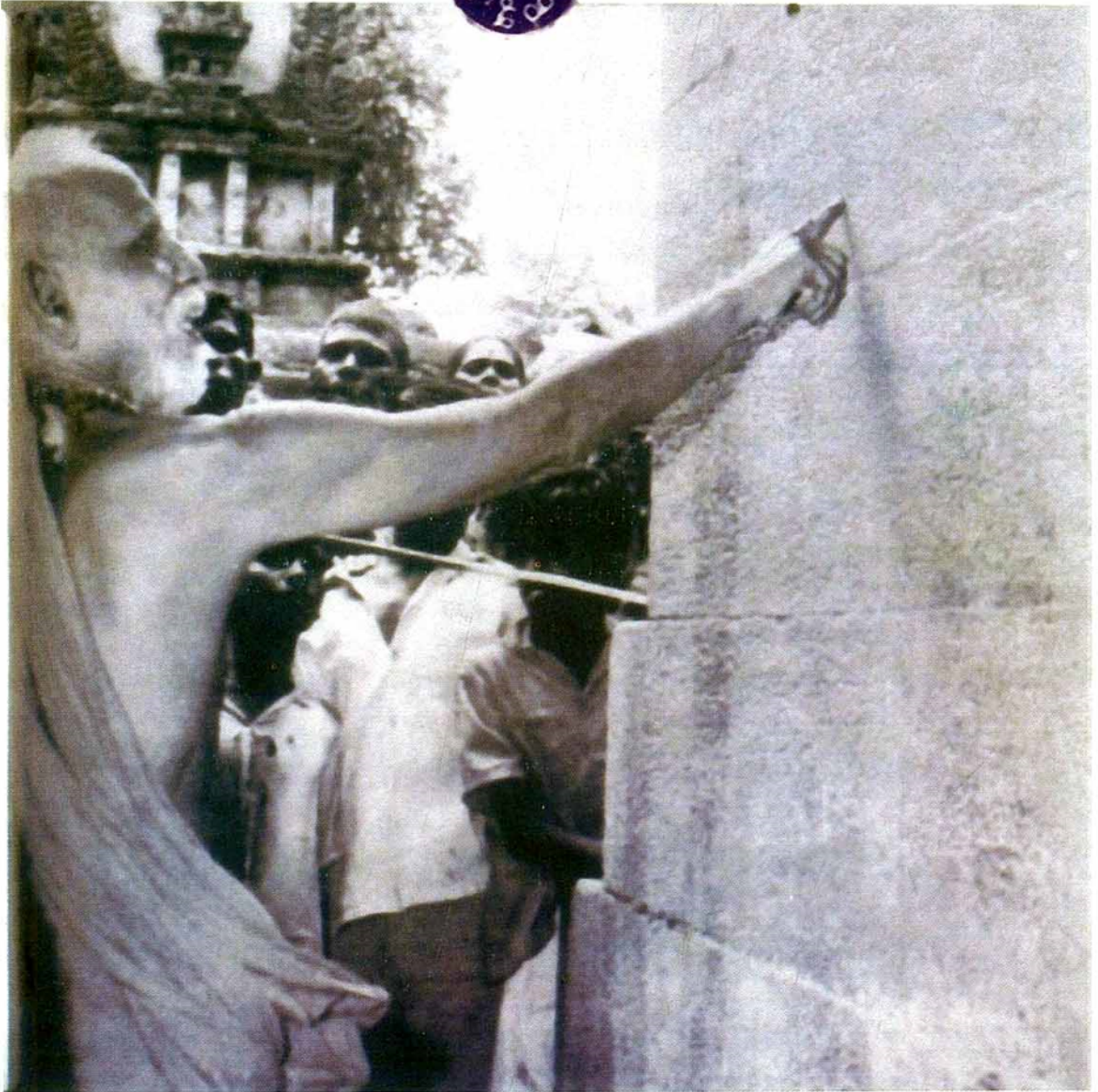
Sri Sankara Bhagavatpadacharya Paramparagata Moolamnaya Sarvajnapeetha

His Holiness Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peethadhipathi

Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal

Srimatham Samsthanam

No.1, Salai st, Kanchipuram - 631502



**His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Sankaracharya Swamigal**, the 68th pontiff of **Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam**, in a visionary speech given a few months before, India's independence, explains how in the ancient times, Indian culture was spread across, from Egypt in the west to Java in the east, and had attained an exalted position. In that speech, he stresses that brotherhood and unity among Asian nations should be promoted through the cultural relations that existed between India and these nations. Those words are very relevant today. As a culturally developed nation and an upcoming economic power, India should revive the old Indian culture present in these Asian countries and transform this into a region of peace and brotherhood. Cambodia (or Kamboja as it was called in the earlier days) is a classic example of a country in this region, in which Hindu culture flourished for nearly a thousand years. The temples found all over Cambodia even now are standing evidences of this. Though almost all are in dilapidated conditions, (despite international efforts to restore them), the idols, bas relief and the inscriptions found there give sufficient information on the flourishing Hindu society that existed in Cambodia.

Siva - Vishnu abedha is emphasized in many temples, the following sloka being an example. (Ang Pu, Trang dist., Stone inscription of Isanavaraman )

जयतो जगतां भूत्यै कृतसन्धी हराच्युतौ ।  
पार्वतीश्रीपतीत्वेन भिन्नमूर्तिधरावपि ॥



The following set of three slokas on the Aswatha tree yet another example of the culture Cambodia imbibed from India.(Phimanaka Angkor Thom, Bilingual Inscriptipn)

ब्रह्ममूल शिवस्कन्ध विष्णुशाख सनातन ।  
वृक्षराज महाभाग सर्वाश्रय फलप्रद ॥

O thou whose root is Brahma, trunk is Siva, and the branch is Vishnu, thou eternal king of trees, of great fortune, protector of all and giver of fruits.

मा त्वाशनिर्मा परशुर्मानिलो मा हुताशनः ।  
मा राजा मा गजः क्रुद्धो विनाशमुपनेश्यति ॥

May not thunder, axe, wind, fire, king or infuriated elephant destroy thee.

अक्षिस्पन्दं भ्रुवोः स्पन्दं दुस्स्वप्नं दुर्विचिन्तितम् ।  
अश्वत्थ शमयेत् सर्वं यद्विव्यं यच्च मानुषम् ॥

O Asvatta, mayest thou heal the effect of quivering eyes or eye brows, bad dreams and evil thoughts, both of divine and human beings.

There are evidences to show that there were strong ties between the mokshapuri Kanchi and Cambodia. There is a reference to Kanchi in a damaged inscription (not fully available) found in Tan Kran, in the district of Con Prei.( आकाञ्चीपुर.....)

Siva worship was dominant for several centuries in Cambodia. Following are some of the Siva deity names found temple inscriptions in Cambodia.

Amratakeswara, Bhadreswara, Girisa, Tribhuvaneswara, Siddheswara, Sambhu, Nrtyeswara, Vijayeswara, Kedareswara, Pingaleswara and Girisa.

We are happy that Sri Nalagampalli Papudesi Venkateswara Choudhary (Ex – MLA Chittoor), son of Sri N.P Chengalvaraya Naidu (Ex – MP, Chittoor) has written a book on the temples of Cambodia, giving details on their location, layout, architecture etc.. The book also has a good collection of photographs taken in these temples.

This book will be a good source of information to people from India and other countries visiting Cambodia, leading to the strengthening of the cultural bond, which Sri Mahaswamigal envisaged.

Invoking the blessings of Sri Chandramouleeswara on those who have contributed to this book and to those embarking on strengthening the unity and cultural bond among Asian nations.

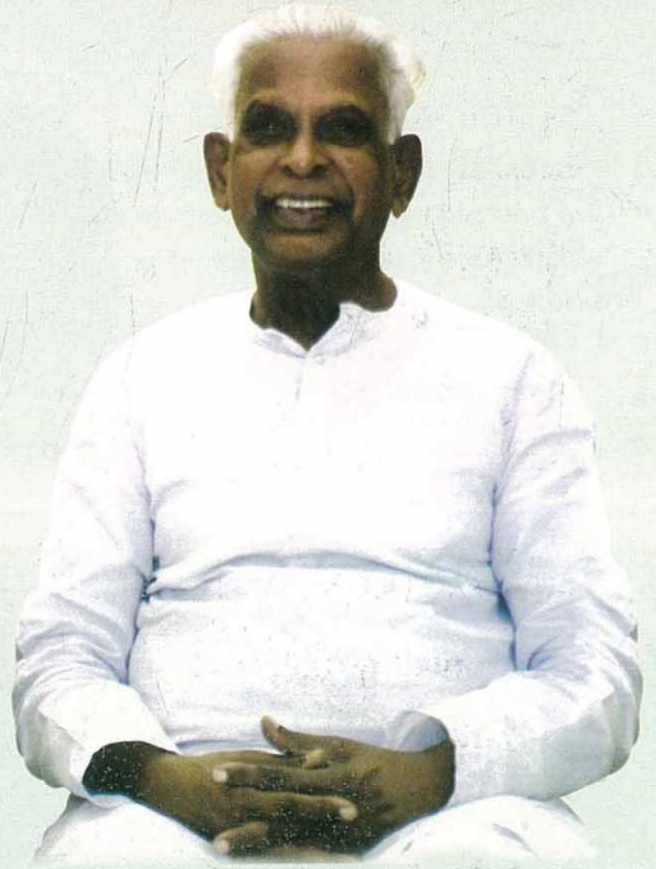
Sri Narayana Smruthi

Virodhi, Ashvayuja,  
Vijayadashami, Somavasara

Camp: Kanchipuram



**To my beloved parents**



**Sri N.P.Chengalraya Naidu**

(Former Member of Parliament)

&

**Late Smt. N.P.Savithramma**

(Founder Smt. N.P Savithramma Govt. Degree College for Women, Chittoor)



**Dr. A. ESWARA REDDI, D.Litt.**  
Former Speaker & Chairman (MAIPA)





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**Dr. AGARALA ESWAR REDDI**

M.A., B.L., Ph.D., D.Litt

Former Speaker, A.P. Legislature

Tirupati

Date : 28.05.2009


## **FOREWORD**

Mr. N.P. Venkateswara Chowdary, my colleague in the Legislative Assembly in 1978 in the State of Andhra Pradesh has brought out a narrative with mythological photographs and a general study on Cambodia : Its people and a land of Hindu Temples. Mrs. Vatsala and her husband Mr. Choudary, the author, extensively visited the Hindu Temples and taken number of photos painstakingly. Though it is not a depth study for research study on Cambodia. The Degree and PG Students will be lured by the pictorial study and makeup their mind to go in for depth study leading to a thesis.

It definitely carries a high academic standard and is used as reference material for P.G. Studies mainly basing on Hindu mythology. Mr. N.P.V. Choudary after taking benedictions from His Holiness Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam visited all the temples with keen interest. He found out a difference of Buddhist monasticism of Penang and the Hindu temples where the rituals are the same as in India.

The author could visit some temples and take good photographs. He could find the Sivalingam in bad shape and the present view of Prasant kravan is worthy to see. Angkor Wat is the largest Hindu temple in the world. This spectacular site is a proud accomplishment to Hinduism which spread from India to far East Asia. Angkor Wat is compared to Taj Mahal of India, the Great Wall of China with regards to its grandeur. Hinduism was at its pinnacle in Cambodia during this period. Angkor Thom which means grand city and it was built by Jayaraman VII.

The author has also provided the reader with a bird's eye view of the entire study in the form of summary. He richly deserves my compliments and admiration for his outstanding work which I wish Sri N.P.V.Choudary all success in his academic and cultural pursuits which I am sure would promote further an understanding of the Indo-Cambodia ties.

  
Dr. A. ESWARA REDDI, D.Litt. 20/5

Former Speaker & Chairman (MAIPA)







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## Preface

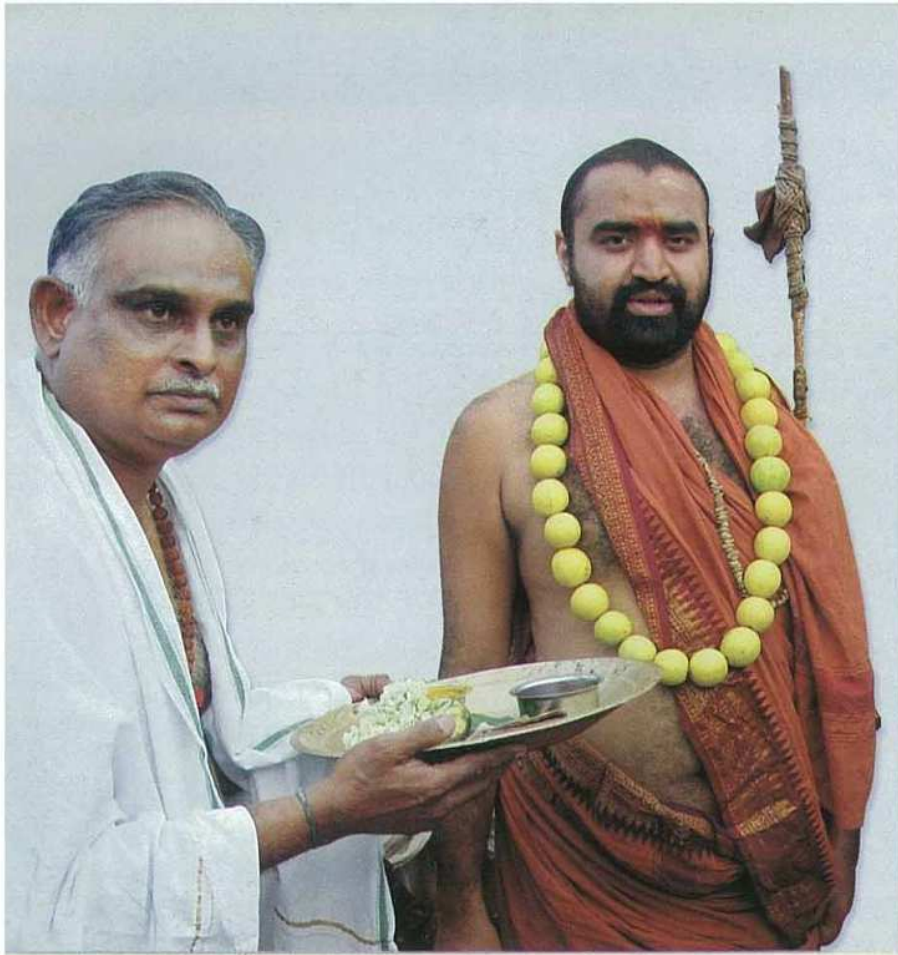
Cambodia, the ancient country, Khambuja, in South East Asia, where the age-old Hindu temples exist in a decayed condition, some of which are being restored by the United Nations and various countries including India, which I have dreamt of visiting, came true in my lifetime. Cambodia was not safe for visiting till 1990's. Since 1998, the number of foreign tourists visiting Cambodia have increased. Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom are the main attractions. Angkor Wat is the largest Hindu Temple in the world, set in an area of about 500 Acres. One should see it to witness how Hinduism has spread in foreign countries. The foreigners who visited Angkor Wat compare it to the Pyramids of Egypt and the Taj Mahal of India. Near Seam Reap in Cambodia besides these two temples, are located a large number of temples constructed by various kings. An ancient civilization created the Temple City for Gods in a 200 Sq. Km. area, which is supposed to be the largest religious complex in the world. Unfortunately, Angkor Wat was not selected as one of the new Seven Wonders of the World, even though it was in the preliminary list. I feel, it may be because most of the voters that chose the new Seven Wonders of the World might not have seen Angkor Wat nor heard much about it.

Well-prepared I intend to travel to Cambodia via Bangkok with my wife in February 2003. On 13<sup>th</sup> February 2003 His

Holiness Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham came to Chittoor. I had his darsan and informed him about my trip to Cambodia. He was happy that I was visiting Hindu temples in Cambodia and gave me few phone numbers in Thailand to contact if any assistance was required, and also was kind enough to tell me to contact him in case any help was required. I am grateful to him for his kindness. Sri Ramayanam Sreenivasan Swami, who was with Swamiji, asked me to bring some literature about the Hindu temples in Cambodia. Then it struck to me that I could write about our Hindu Temples in Cambodia, so that one who is unaware and unable to visit could know about the spread of Hinduism and our culture to other countries in South East Asia such as Cambodia. I hope my humble effort may be useful to some of the readers.

We left India from Chennai to Bangkok, Thailand on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2003 and stayed in Bangkok for three days. Even though we had been to Thailand before, we visited some of its interesting places again. The official religion in Thailand is Buddhism but earlier it was Hinduism. Even now in most of the road crossings within the city, one can see the figure of Brahma. Their Kings were called Rama I, Rama II and so on, whatever may be their given name. The old capital of Thailand is known as Ayothiya, which can be visited even now. Even today, there is a big Brahma temple in Bangkok.





Author with Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham



Bramha in Bhangkok

The offerings to the God differ from ours, because they include chicken etc. Dances are conducted in the temple.

The agriculture season starts with a big ceremony in Bangkok. The King presides over the function and with the permission of the King, the agriculture minister ploughs the land with bullocks and the girls sow the seeds symbolizing fertility. You can understand the importance of agriculture even in this century of high-tech gadgets and advancement, as agriculture is the backbone of every country.

Performing dance in temple premises





In Thailand, even though there is an elected government, the King is the supreme authority and the citizens like him and respect him very much. Disrespect to the King is not tolerated.

The new airport in Bangkok is called Suvarnabhoomi Airport. Ayuthaya Bank is the name of their bank. A restaurant is called as Ramayana Restaurant. These are some examples to show that Hindu mythological names are very much a part of their daily life because of their Hindu background.



Apsara dances

Apsara dances





On 19<sup>th</sup> February, we left to Seam Reap in Cambodia by Bangkok Airways. We stayed in the Angkor Century Hotel. Our trip to visit temples in and around Seam Reap started on the 20<sup>th</sup> for a period of three days with a local guide and a separate vehicle. We could not visit many temples in just these three days but I think we covered the important temples. One has to buy a pass to visit temples and so we bought a three-day pass. We witnessed dance performances in the hotel. The dances include the traditional dances supposed to have been performed by Apsaras in the olden days as well as contemporary dances.

It is said that in Cambodia there are about 1016 temples of which the Angkor province itself has 294 temples and the Angkor area

has 198 temples. In the province of Battambang, near the Thai border, there are about 340 temples. There are also many temples in the Thai territory bordering Cambodia. We could see only some important temples in those three days in Seam Reap and some temples near Phnom Penh in the other two days. The temples we saw in the first day around Seam Reap include the world famous Angkor Wat, the temple which was dedicated to Lord Vishnu, and the city of Angkor Thom where the magnificent Bayon Temple dedicated to Buddha is located as well as the Hindu Temple Phrom Bakheng, which means the temple on Bakheng Hill.

On the second day, we saw Prasant Kravan, a Hindu temple, Bantey Seri, again a

Author with his wife Vatsala in Angkor Century Hotel Lobby







Houses on lake

Hindu Temple and Phnom Kulen, the sacred mountain where there is a beautiful waterfall, flowing charmingly over a thousand Lingams carved underneath the Seam Reap River. The reclining Buddha in the active Pagoda on the hill is worth visiting. In the afternoon, we visited the jungle temple of Beng Melea which is still largely over run by vegetation, which is away from Seam Reap and only reachable by a bad road.

School on the lake



On the third day we saw Banteay Kdei, which was originally a Hindu Temple that later functioned as a Buddhist Monastery; Snas Srang, where the remains of a temple can be seen in the middle of a lake; Ta Prohm, a



Volley ball court

Buddhist Monastery that has been partially cleared off the jungle that has grown over it; Ta Kea the Siva Temple; Preah Khan a Buddhist one; Neak Pean (Coiled Serpents) a small Island Temple; Ta Som, a Buddhist temple; East Mebon, a Siva Temple and Pre Rup a Hindu Temple.

In Phnom Penh we saw Wat Phnom, the place from which Phnom Penh got its name. The Silver Pagoda which is located in the Royal Palace, the National Museum where amazing



Khmer arts are displayed and the terrifying Toul Sleng Genocide Museum, where one can witness the cells where the prisoners were kept and tortured by the Democratic Kampuchian Regime, more commonly known as Khmer Rouge Regime and where the skulls of the dead prisoners are displayed for visitors to view.

Near Phnom Penh, we visited the 12<sup>th</sup> century temples of Ta Prohm and Preaek Teay Peo, built near Tonle Bati Lake. We also visited Phnom Chiso (Temple Suryagiri) of the 11<sup>th</sup> century situated on a hilltop. Regarding all these temples, which I visited, I have tried to describe them with the aid of the photographs I took, so that the readers can better understand.

It took me almost six years to write this, but I am not satisfied with the information and details of what I described. So, I wanted to make another trip to Siem Reap. On March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009, I returned to Siem Reap for a period of four days. Once again I stayed in the same hotel. On this trip I only visited a few temples including some that I had visited earlier. The main purpose of this trip was to acquire more information and photos of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. Apart from these, I visited Baphuon and Preah Pithu Group temples in Angkor Thom City and Prasat Krol Ko, Chau Say Tevods, Tomanon and Banteay Samre. I also visited the great lake Tonle Sap. This is one of the biggest fresh water lakes in the world. The area of the lake is around 2500 sq. km. in the dry season and as much as

12000 sq. km. in the rainy season. The unique feature of this lake is that in the dry season water from the lake drains into the Tonle Sap River and merges with the Mekong River, whereas in the rainy season water flows into the opposite direction from the Mekong River and the great lake swells. The lake is only 15 km. from Siem Reap.

The lake possesses more than 100 varieties of water birds and more than 200 varieties of fish apart from crocodiles, turtles etc. In the lake, there are many floating villages. I visited one near Siem Reap travelling by speedboat. People live in boats only. Even the shops, school, playground like a volley ball court, are all floating in the lake. It is a different site. People working, cooking, studying, playing, catching fish and what not, whatever we do on the land they live similarly in the lake.

I am thankful to my guides who gave me the detailed information and showed me around the temples. I gathered more information by referring to the books "Sacred Angkor" written by Vittorio Roveda and "Angkor" by Dawn Rooney. Vittorio Roveda wrote a detailed study of Angkor Wat and the carved reliefs. Dawn Rooney an American, wrote about the temples near Siem Reap and about Khmer history. I could also get some information from the Lonely Planet book on Cambodia and from the visitor's guide in Siem Reap.



## **Travel Tips**

### **How to reach**

Fly to Bangkok from any metros of India by Air India or Thai Airlines. From Bangkok fly to Seam Reap by Bangkok Airways which is the only airline that directly connects Bangkok and Seam Reap. Most of the temples are near Seam Reap. The best season to visit is between November and February when it will be dry and cool. One can also reach Seam Reap by road or by train. From Bangkok there are air-conditioned buses to the Cambodian border. Transit to Aranyapretet by bus takes around 4 hours, whereas transit by train takes around 6 hours. From there one has to reach Rongklua market, which is about 7 km. by Tuk Tuk (similar to Indian autorikshaws) or motorbike. There you have to clear Thai and Cambodian immigration and customs. After crossing Poipet border there are shuttle buses to the transport depot. From there one can take a shared taxi or bus. Taxis take about 4 hours and a bus takes 6 hours to reach Seam Reap. In rainy season, it may take more time.

### **Visa**

Visas to Indian nationals are granted in Seam Reap airport on arrival by paying USD 20 for a visitor's visa. A passport size photo is required along with a valid passport whose expiry should not be less than six months. The tourist visa is valid for 30 days. One has to pay USD 25 towards international departure tax while leaving Cambodia.

### **Around Seam Reap**

From the airport the city centre is 7 km. Taxis for USD 25 and Tuk Tuks for USD 5 are available to the city.

To visit the main temples, there are two tours available. The Grand circuit tour is around 26 km. and covers Pre Rup, East Mebon, Ta Som, Neak Pean, Preah Khan and so on. The small circuit tour is about 17 km. and includes the city of Angkor Thom including Bayon temple, Angkor Wat, Banteay Kdei, Ta Phrom, Ta Keo and Bakheng hill.

Apsara Authority maintains all these temples. Passes to visit these temples are available for USD 20 for one day, USD 40 for three days and USD 60 for 7 days. A one-day pass is enough to see the important temples like Angkor Wat and the Angkor Thom city. However, a three-day pass is advised to see all the main temples.

To tour the temples a Tuk Tuk can be hired for an amount between USD 10 to 15 per day. A taxi can be hired at the rate of USD 25 per day. An additional USD 25 per day is required for a guide. Even motorbike taxis, where you can sit in the back as pillion rider, are available apart from bicycles.

### **Where to stay**

A wide range of hotels and guesthouses are available. Hotels range from the luxury 5 star hotels to regular comfortable hotels. Sofitel Royal Angkor Golf & Spa Resort or Raffles Grand Hotel D'Angkor are available for around USD 200 to 250 per day. A number of 4 star hotels are available for around USD



100 per day. Guesthouses and hostels are available at around USD 10 to 20 per day.

#### **Where to eat**

You have a very good choice of restaurants where you can get good food for reasonable price. Indian restaurants like Curry Walla, East India Curry, Kama sutra, Little India and Maharaja can cater to the needs of Indian travelers. Apart from Indian food, traditional Khmer food, Chinese, French, Thai, Japanese, Irish, Asian, Western and Khmer Vegetarian cuisines are also available.

#### **Money**

Even though the official currency is Riel, US currency is commonly accepted. One US dollar is equal to about 4000 Cambodian Riels. Credit cards and travelers cheques are accepted by major hotels only.

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### **INDIA ASEAN Car Rally 2004**

“To draw dramatic attention to our geographical proximity, we could consider the idea of an India ASEAN Car Rally. A possible routing could be from Guwahati in North-east India, through Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia to Hanoi in Vietnam. Such a rally would draw in commercial interest in infrastructure along the route. It can promote tourism and development. There could be a long-term impact on economic co-operation in the region.”

Sri Atalbihari Vajpay

Prime Minister of India

Bali, Indonesia, October 8, 2003

This great ambition was fulfilled in November 2004 in the UPA Government. The rally started from Guwahati and passed through Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore and completed in Batam, Indonesia.

Rally route.

**India.** Starts from Guwahati and passes through Kohima and Nov Moreh.

**Myanmar.** Arrives At Tamu and passes through Mandalay, Loilem, Kengtung and Tachilek (Border).

**Thailand.** Arrives at Mae Sai and passes through Phitsanulok, Nong Khai and Friendship Bridge.

**Lao PDR.** Arrives at Friendship Bridge and passes through Vientiane, Paksan and Densavanh (Border).

**Vietnam.** Arrives at Lao Bao and passes through Hue, Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh City and Moc Bai (Border).





**Cambodia.** Arrives at Bavet and passes through Neak Loeng, Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Poipet (Border).

**Thailand.** Arrives at Aranya Prathet and passes through Bangkok, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Dan Nok.

**Malaysia.** Arrives at Kayum Hitam and passes through Putrajaya and Johor Bahru.

**Singapore.** Arrives at Singapore Check Post and passes through Orchard Street.

**Indonesia.** By arriving at Batam the rally concludes.

The highlights in this rally are the official flag-off by the Prime Minister of India on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2004 at Guwahati and a ceremonial flag-off at Vientiane, Lao PDR on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004 by the Prime Minister of India and Heads of state / Government of all ASEAS countries, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-INDIA Summit. In the rally schedule the participants got one day off at Siem reap to visit the famous Angkor Wat. This emphasizes the importance of this great monument.



# Introduction

## About Cambodia

The present Cambodia in South East Asia (Indo-China), with Thailand and Gulf of Thailand on the West, Laos and Thailand on the North, Vietnam on the East and Vietnam and Gulf of Thailand on the South, with 1,81,035 Sq. Km., with a maximum of 580 Km. East West and 450 Km. North South and with a population of about 13 Million people is a small country still limping towards modern civilization. Once a civilized country, at its best in Angkor period, with parts of Thailand, Vietnam and Laos in its control, became a protectorate of French in 1864, got independence in 1953, again in the war with Vietnam and after that the horrifying Khmer Rouge regime and then the elections in 1993, with the king as its head, after which the country started to progress slowly. Even today the rural area is very backward, mainly depending on agricultural activities, depending on rains and river water, without electricity, living in high raised thatched houses, human in the upper portion and animals in the ground level. Even the road in the rural area is very bad without asphaltting or even without metal.

## Myth

There are so many versions about how Cambodia was born. One version is that a Brahmin or a king of Cholas from India crossed over the ocean and got married to the daughter of a Naga King and ruled Kambhoja.

According to an inscription, Kaundinya is the founder of the new kingdom and as he travelled he met princess Soma, daughter of Naga King and married her.

As per Khmer legend, they are the descendents from Kamu, the mythical ancestors of the Khmers. His descendent Preah Thong left India and sailed for Cambodia in exile after he was thrown out by the King. One night he saw a beautiful Nagini and married her. Her father the King of Naga drank the water that covered the land and constructed a capital for them and gave the country to them naming it as Kambhoja. In any version the Nagini is common and the king married her and ruled over the country. Another version according to the inscriptions is that the origin of the Royal family is due to the marriage of a hermit by the name of Kampu Svayambhuva with a nymph Mera who was given to him by the God Shiva and so the country was called as Kampu Mera from which the name Campuchia was derived.

## Hinduism in Cambodia

Hinduism spread in Cambodia by practice and not by force. It is relevant that after the countries were invaded, foreign religions were forced on the natives. Contrary to this, Hinduism or Buddhism spread over other countries without invasion. Now the only Hindu country in the world is Nepal, which is also in trouble of keeping its identity as a Hindu country. Buddhism is still practised in many countries like Sri Lanka, Yangon (Burma), Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, China and many other countries.



The trade between India and China was established by sea. The first trading ships from India sailed to the Malay Peninsula, crossing the Bay of Bengal, and the merchandise was taken to China by land through Thailand. Later the ships reached Cambodia in South East Asia and then the merchandise was taken to China by land. The Indian sailors had to stay there in the docks for long periods till the return merchandise arrived from China. The lifestyle of the Indians and the practice of Hinduism attracted the local Khmers. They learnt about Hinduism and practiced it with the help of Hindu priests, in a manner becoming Indianised. Many of these groups settled in the Mekong delta where water is abundant and lands are fertile.

In the third century, Chinese travellers noticed Funan as one of the Indianised settlements in the mainland. More influence of Hinduism came in the 5th century due to the Hindu ruler at the Funan settlement. Sanskrit was adopted at court levels and writing in Sanskrit was practiced. Astronomy, legal systems and literature were also taught.

According to history the Funan Empire was conquered by the Chenla rulers in the middle of the sixth century. The Chenla kingdom was on the southwest of Lin-li or Champa. The family name of the king is Cha-li, which means Kshatriya and the name of the king is Cha-to-seu-na, or Chitrasena. Before they conquered Funan, the Chenla capital was near a mountain called Ling-ka-po-p'o-to-li, which means Bhadreswara. It seems for this God, the king used to offer human sacrifice every year during the night.

Rudravarman was the last king of Funan dynasty who belonged to the Lunar dynasty founded by Kaundinya and Soma.

Bhavavarman, the elder of the two brothers who fought against Funan, had become the king of Chenla by marrying Princess Lakshmi of the Kamba- Mera dynasty. Viravarman is the father of Bhavavarman and his grandfather is Sarvabhauma who belonged to the Solár dynasty. Through the marriage of Rudravarman the Khemer, royal traditions were established with a claim to both the Lunar and Solar dynasties.

Chitrasena is the younger brother of Rudravarman, who succeeded him in 600 AD, naming himself Mahendravarman. He was described as a hero and conqueror, as he won many wars. He established Lingam dedicated to Girisa the lord of the mountains. His son Isnavarman who succeeded him, finally completed the conquest of the Funan kingdom. A prince named Baladitya, a descendent of the Koundinya-Soma line was ruling over Funan in the valley of the Tonle Sap River. His kingdom was known as Baladityapura. This kingdom was conquered by Isnavarman, following which a new capital was built in the Stung Sen valley, called Isanapura. Even after he conquered Funan, he maintained a friendly relationship with Champa. He also married a Champa princess.

Isnavarman I was succeeded by Bhavavarman II, who was succeeded by Jayavarman I who ruled over for about forty years. He had no children and his wife Jayadevi ruled after him.



The Khemers became strong over the lower Mekong and around Tonle Sap. They built many brick towers, like Hindu temples. Hinduism was flourishing particularly with the Ling cult of Siva. The inscriptions indicate that the Saivite and Vishnavite sects formed in India. The worship of Harihara, Siva and Vishnu united in a single form which appeared first in India on the rocks of Badami and Mahabalipuram in the Pallava period, was reflected here. Most of the inscriptions are in Sanskrit and some are in the Khemer language. They describe the Hindu mythology of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and the puranas. After the death of Jayavarman I, the Lunar dynasty of Aninditapura under the king Isvara of the Baladitya family and the Solar dynasty of Sambhupura struggled for supremacy.

### **Angkor Period**

After Jayavarman II conducted the God King ceremony in Mount Mahendra Parvatha (Phnom Kulen) and declared himself as a universal monarch in 802 A.D., it was the commencement of the Angkor period. There were inscriptions in Pali, Sanskrit and Khemer that tell about the history. Jayavarman II was in the court of the Sailendras dynasty in Indonesia and then returned to Cambodia. Another version is that Rajendravarman I who was ruling Cambodia was defeated and killed by the Sailendras who took the young prince as a prisoner and this was Jayavarman II, who came back to Cambodia and regained his kingdom and ruled the country with Hariharalaya (Roluos) as his capital.

It is said that about 39 kings ruled the country in the Angkor period. Some of them were famous and contributed much to the Khemer culture, architecture and temple construction. Indravarman I built the temple Preah ko and the lake Indratataka at the capital Hariharalaya. His son, Yasovarman I, built a temple in the middle of the lake that his father had built. Then he moved his capital to Yasodharapura (Angkor), which was the capital for Khemers for another 500 years. He built Bakheng, a temple mountain on a natural hill. He also built some smaller temples Phnom Bok and Phnom Krom in smaller hills. He also constructed a large lake Yasodhara Tataka (East Bary). He was followed by his two sons and then Jayavarman IV ruled over the country. He constructed another capital at Koh Ker. His rule was followed by that of his nephew Rajendravarman II, who moved the capital back to Yasodharapuram. He built East Mebon and Pre Rup.

He was succeeded by his son Jayavarman V, who built Banteay Seri and Ta Keo. After few kings, who were not noteworthy, Suryavarman I ruled the country during 1002-1050 A.D. During his regime the Khemer empire expanded to a greater extent. Again after few unimportant rulers, Suryavarman II became the king, around 1113 A.D. and ruled till 1150 A.D. He built the great temple of Angkor Wat. He established good relations with China. He fought several times with Chams. In 1145 A.D. he attacked and defeated the Chams King. Recently I read in an article that Suryavarman II offered to send a block of stone to Kulottunga I, the Chola king for the construction or enlargement of the famous Siva temple in Chidambaram. Kulottunga I agreed to



accept the gift and Suryavarman II sent the block to India all the way from Cambodia. The stone was installed in the temple and engraved that the stone is from Cambodia. Even though I visited Chidambaram four or five times, I was not aware of that stone from Cambodia.

The last major king was Jayavarman VII, who ruled between 1181 A.D. and 1220 A.D. He undertook a massive construction program. He was a follower of Mahayana Buddhism. Before he came to power the Chams occupied Cambodia by defeating Khemers. They attacked them from the sea when they were unaware of the attack. After four years Jayavarman VII fought the Chams and regained the capital. It seems he became the king at the age of 55 and then ruled for 40 years. During his period the Angkor Thom and Bayon temples were built. Then during Indravarman III (1295-1307) period Theravada Buddhism was the official religion of Cambodia.

Jayavarman VIII ruled the country after Indravarman III. Then came the reign of Dharmarajadhiraja. He was succeeded by his eldest son Srei Sukonthor. He was murdered by his brother in law Kan who then became the king. Ang Chan, the descendent of Dharmarajadheiraja with the members of the Royal family, escaped to Pursat. After becoming strong, he fought Kan and killed him. Ang Chan became powerful and ruled the country for fifty years. He was succeeded by his son Barom Reachea I in 1566. There was Burmese presence when Barom Reachea's son Satha was ruling the country. Then a new Siamese leader Pra Naret began to buildup the country to resist against Burmese raids. King Satha asked the help of Spanish and Portuguese. But the Siamese invaded Cambodia and King Satha fled to Srie Santhor, leaving his younger brother Soryopor to defend the capital. But the capital was conquered and kept under Siamese Military Governor's control.

After the Thai invasion in 1431 the capital was shifted to Phnom Penh. There is another version for shifting the capital. One reason is that there was a great famine and due to scarcity of water the capital was shifted. Angkor Wat was rediscovered in 16th century by the Europeans. During 16th century with all the wars and invasions, new countries were formed or to say realigned. Kingdom of Ayuthaya (Thailand) expanded to the north and east with modern Laos in its control, Daiviet (Vietnam) expanded to the south taking over the remaining territory of Champa and the south most region of the Kingdom of Lovek (Modern Cambodia) and Tomgoo was formed which is the modern Myanmar now. Till 19th century invasions were taking place between Thai, Cambodia and Vietnam, that almost destroyed Cambodia.

In 1863 France was invited by the Cambodian King to assist them. France took over Cambodia as their protectorate country. France ruled the country for about 90 years protecting the country from Thailand and Vietnam. Vietnam was also under French control, but they developed Vietnam more than Cambodia in that period. During their control the French did not disturb the monarchy, Buddhism and the rural life in Cambodia.



During the Second World War Japanese entered Cambodia, but left in 1946 leaving it to French. After that, communist guerillas fought and gained much of the country but King Sihanouk gained independence peacefully in 1953.

In 1955 Sihanouk gave the throne to his father and started public career by starting Sangkum Reastr Niyum (People's Socialist Community). They won all the seats in 1955 elections and he served as Prime Minister till 1960 and when his father died he became head of the State again.

In March 1970, the Cambodian Assembly deposed Sihanouk, when he was away from the country. General Lon Nol, the then Prime Minister assumed power. He was pro western and anti Vietnamese. He asked the military to fight North Vietnamese Communist forces, but was defeated by them.

In 1970 October Lon Nol declared the country as Khmer Republic. He awarded death penalty to King Sihanouk, even though he was away in China in asylum. With Chinese and North Vietnamese support King Sihanouk established a Government in exile. Lon Nol government was fighting with Vietnamese which was in U.S. control and also with Khmer Rouge (in French meaning red Khmers). U.S. was bombing Cambodia till 1973. By then Lon Nol government lost most of the country side which was destroyed by U.S. bombing, from its control. Most of the people from country side came to the cities for their livelihood. In 1975 despite U.S. bombing Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh and Khmer Republic was collapsed. Lon Nol fled to Hawaii.

Khmer Rouge was organized by Cambodian gorilla forces commander Saioth Sor, who is also known as Pol Pot. After defeating General Lon Nol of Khmer Republic, his communist regime continued till 1979. He named his government as Government of Democratic Kampuchea. Soon after he assumed office, he ordered all the people living in cities to leave to country side and do farming. In this process Pol Pot killed around seventeen Lakh people, including monks, women, children, intellectuals, merchants and bureaucrats. Chinese and Vietnamese were also murdered. It is estimated that one fifth of the Cambodian population was killed.

In 1979 Phnom Penh was captured by the Vietnamese. They installed Heng Samrin as president of Peoples Republic of Kampuchea. The country was under the verge of collapse, as there was no food, no currency, no postal system, no telephones, no sanitation, and no electricity. There were very few doctors in the country, only 45 doctors were remaining and only about 7500 teachers survived, but there were no schools and no books as the books were burnt by Khmer Rouges.

In 1982 a coalition government was formed with Democratic Kampuchea Khmer People's National Liberation Front and United Front for an Independent, peaceful and Co- operative Cambodia led by Sihanouk. The coalition was named as Government of Democratic Kampuchea. In 1984-85 there was fighting between People's Republic of Kampuchea and Democratic



Kampuchea, which was still led by Pol Pot. The Democratic Kampuchea forces spread and started guerilla warfare. Result of this more people left to Thailand as refugees.

In 1989, Peoples Republic of Kampuchea came out with liberal democratic constitution. The state of Cambodia was established with Hun Sen as Prime Minister. The Vietnamese troops withdrew from Cambodia. Buddhism was then retained as national religion.

In 1991, Paris peace agreement was signed by all the groups. A supreme national council was established with Prince Sihanouk as the chairman. In 1992 United Nations established a transitional authority in Cambodia. About three lakhs sixty thousand Cambodians reached the repatriation camps in Thai border from Thailand. The Khmer Rouge withdrew from this process.

In 1993, elections were conducted, but the Khmer Rouges did not participate in these elections. A coalition government was formed with Prince Norodom Ranariddh as first Prime Minister and Hun Sen as second Prime Minister and with King Sihanouk as Head of the State, thus paying way for constitutional monarchy. This government was recognized internationally. But then again the fighting resumed between the government and the Khmer Rouge. In 1996 with the rumor of Pol Pot's death, the Khmer Rouge split into groups and some surrendered to Cambodian government. But in 1997 Pol Pot was captured by a faction of Khmer Rouge group. Surprisingly the second Prime Minister Hun Sen staged a coup when the first Prime Minister was not in the country at that time. Hun Sen took control of the government. Even with this coup, elections were conducted as scheduled in 1998. In the elections no one got the full power and so again by an agreement, power was shared and as a result Hun Sen became the sole Prime Minister and Prince Ranariddh became president of the national assembly. Pol Pot died of heart attack in 1998. With that by early 1999 most of the remaining Khmer Rouge guerillas surrendered to the government. With the establishment of this government Cambodia had cordial relationship with ASEAN countries and the country became stable making way for safe tourism.

In 2003 elections Cambodia people's party won most of the seats but has to form a coalition government. In 2004 Prince Norodom Sihamoni succeeded the king after Nordom Sihanok retired. Again in 2004 Cambodia People's Party won an overwhelming victory in the general elections.



# Temples near Seam Reap

## Beginning of Angkor Period

I would like to write about the temples we saw, in the order of the year of construction, so that it can give a clear picture about how the culture has progressed. The period of Jayavarman II is the beginning of Angkor culture. He held the God King ceremony at Phnom Kulen in 802 A.D. which marks the beginning of the Angkor era.

The third level waterfall in Siem Reap River







Lingams Carved in Siem Reap River

## Phnom Kulen

The Khmers considered this temple as the most sacred mountain in Cambodia. It was from here that Jayavarman II proclaimed independence from Java, giving birth to Khambhuja. He established a new religious belief, the Devaraja (God King) cult. He wanted people to treat him as next to God. He also established the Lingam worshiping cult. A

thousand Lingams were carved in the bed of the Siem Reap River. The water flowing from the hill creates three waterfalls. The carved Lingams are situated at the top, above the first waterfall, and the water that flows over the carved Lingams was treated as holy water. The King bathed under the first waterfall and held the God King ceremony marking the beginning of the Angkor era. The ministers and priests used the second waterfall for cleansing, while the third and final waterfall was used as a public bath. The water ultimately went down the hill and was used for the cultivation of paddy. They believed that the use of this water to grow paddy leads to an exceptionally good yield.

At present, the road to the hill is not good. Sadly, the public is permitted to walk on the carved Lingams while crossing the stream or while observing the carved Lingams. The natives are unaware of the fact that they are walking on the very symbols of Hindu worship. The culture of their ancestors has been forgotten. Neither instructions nor a notice board is displayed to caution the public against walking on the Lingams.

Reclining Buddha on the rock







Monks performing Puja

After Buddhism came to be practiced, a reclining Buddha statue was erected at the top of a huge rock on the hill, reachable by wooden steps. This is supposed to be an active Pagoda and monks pray there even today. Many native Cambodians visit the Pagoda.



## Phnom Bakhang

Yasovarman I built this temple in the late 9th and early 10th century. It is a Hindu Temple constructed on a small hill (Bakhang Hill). This was the first major temple constructed in the Angkor area. Yasovarman I constructed this state-temple at the centre of a new city named Yasodharapura, which replaced Roluos as a new capital of Cambodia. His predecessors ruled the country from Roluos. The basement of this

Sunset from the hill top



A Steep foot-path with seated lions on both sides





temple was cut out of rock and the temple was constructed over this natural basement with sandstone. Being a soft stone that crumbles easily the work is not precise. The temple consists of seven levels, to symbolize the seven heavens in Hindu mythology. The seven levels comprises of the ground level, five tiers and the upper terrace. It seems that originally there were 108 towers. Now, however most of the towers have collapsed and only four towers exist besides the central sanctuary where a Lingam was once present, as the temple was dedicated to Lord Shiva. Even in the other four gopurams, Lingams were present. At the foot of the hill, figures of lions can be seen on either side of the footpath. The footpath to the temple is very steep.

From the top of the hill, the view of Angkor Wat with its five towers looks magnificent. The sunset, from the top of this hill is supposed to be fabulous. Sadly, we visited the temple on a rather cloudy day on the first time. On my second visit, I could get a beautiful photo of the sunset. However my second visit was besmirched by an unfortunate experience.

A Cambodian family was posing for a photo, making their child sit on the lingam and the family members sitting on the base of the Lingam. Seeing our plight, a Sinhalese tourist came forward, told the Cambodian family that there were two Hindus watching what they were doing, and explained to them that they were sitting on a Hindu God. He introduced himself as a Buddhist and asked them to

The top terrace with gopuram





Sivalingam in a bad shape



respect other religions. The Cambodian family immediately climbed down from the Lingam. I felt that the Cambodians having been Buddhists for a long time, are no longer aware of the Hindu religion or culture, one that their ancestors proudly practiced. At least now they should be educated about their past.

Central Sanctum on top of the hill





## Prasant Kravan

King Harshavarman I built this temple in the early 10th century. This is a reconstructed Hindu temple that has been built with bricks. Even the details are carved from bricks. The five brick towers, all facing the east, were built for Hindus in 921. This temple is away from the capital. Out of the five towers, only the central tower is intact and the other four towers are in a damaged condition. The image of Vishnu depicted with eight arms, is carved on the back wall of the central tower. In the centre is a

Lingam on a pedestal. On the left side of the wall, Vishnu is depicted with four arms carrying Sanku, Charka, Gada and the universe. It seems Lord Vishnu, in the vamana avatar, is said to place one foot on the universe. One sees this depiction here. On the right side of the wall, Vishnu is shown sitting on the shoulder of Garuda as two worshippers sit on either side of Him. The northern tower, is dedicated to the Goddess Lakshmi, consort of Vishnu. Here her four arms hold her symbol of power. There are servants kneeling before her on either side

Front view of Prasant Kravan





Outside the Southern tower, the exterior wall is decorated with Vishnu on Garuda. Inside the temple, the walls are bare. Both Hari and Hara are in the same temple showing that there is no enmity between Shivites and Vaishnavites. This shows that the Khemers absorbed Hinduism as a whole and they did not discriminate between the Gods.



Vishnu on Garuda

Vishnu with four hands

Goddess Lakshmi







Main Tower

## East Mebon

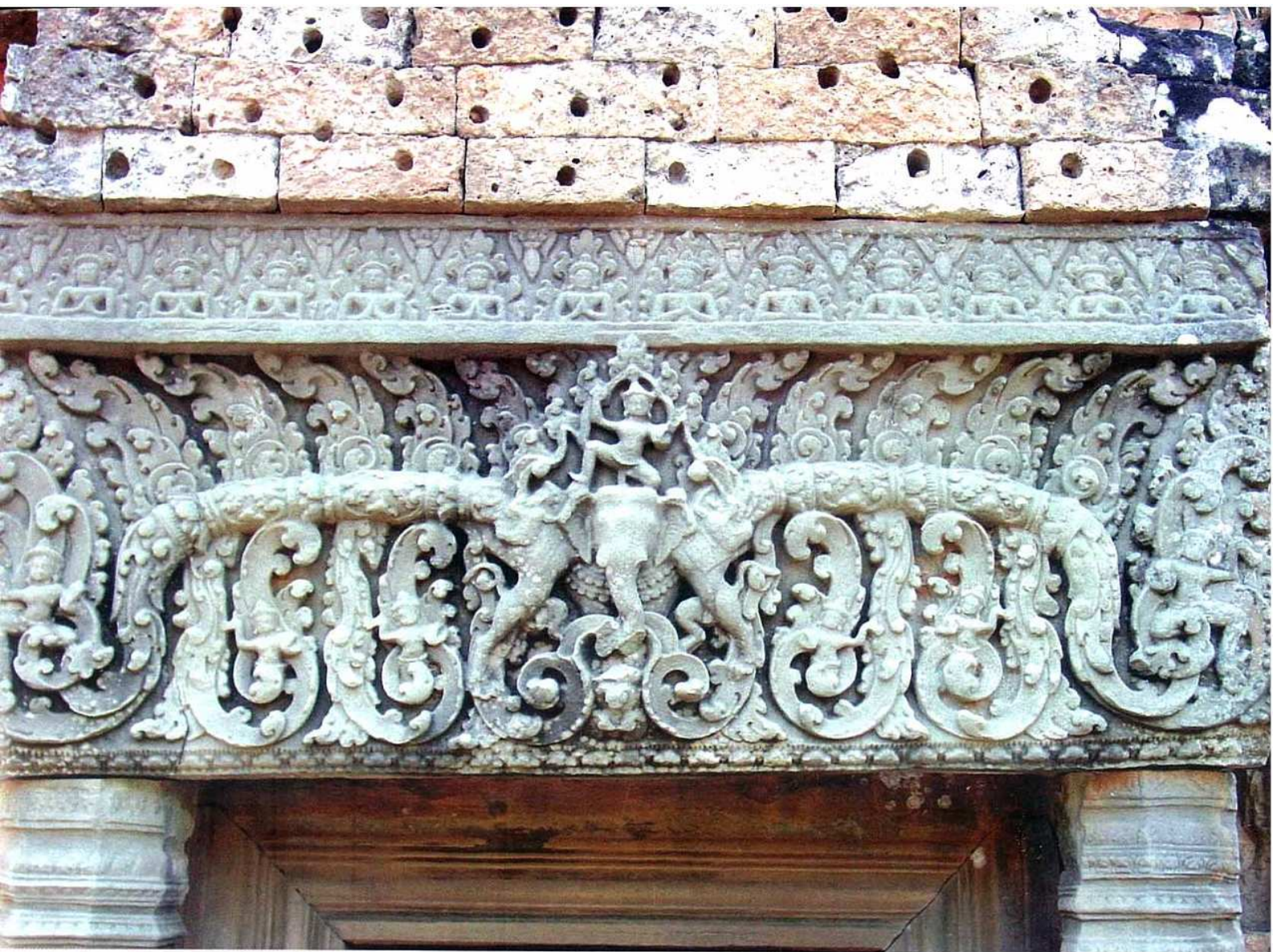
Rajendravarman II built this temple in the late 10th century (952 A.D.). This is a Hindu Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva in honour of the king's parents. The same king within a span of nine years built both East Mebon and Preah Rup, each resembling one another in construction and plan. In the earlier periods, when East Mebon was built, there was abundant water and so the temple was built on a small island

surrounded by water that flows from the excess water of the Seam Reap river. Today one can see only paddy fields around the temple.

Jayavrman IV moved the capital to Koh Ker while he was on the throne. After 16 years, Rajendravarman II returned to construct East Mebon.

East Mebon has three tiers and on the main platform, there are five towers. The construction was with Latinate, brick, sand-





Indra on Iravatham carved on doorway

stone and stuccowork. For the most part, brickwork dominates. On the outer wall, a pair of lions flanks each side of the landing and on the corners, stone elephants stand majestically. The second platform consists of eight small brick towers, two on each side. The Sivalingam is present in all the towers.

On the doorway of the west gopuram, Vishnu is carved in Narasimha avatara. On the northeast gopuram, Lakshmi is carved with two

Skanda on Peacock







View of Preah Rup from East Mebon

elephants on either side of Her. The five towers on the upper platform were built with brick. The entrance faces eastwards. Either side of the tower contains false doors, made of sand stone.

In the central sanctuary, on the door way is a carving of Indra with Iravatham his vahanam. On the west side, a carving of Skanda (the God of War), son of Shiva on a peacock is seen. We know Skanda as Subramanyam swami. On the south side of the wall, a huge figure of Shiva is carved. From this hill, one can see the beautiful view of the temple Preah Rup, which the king built later.



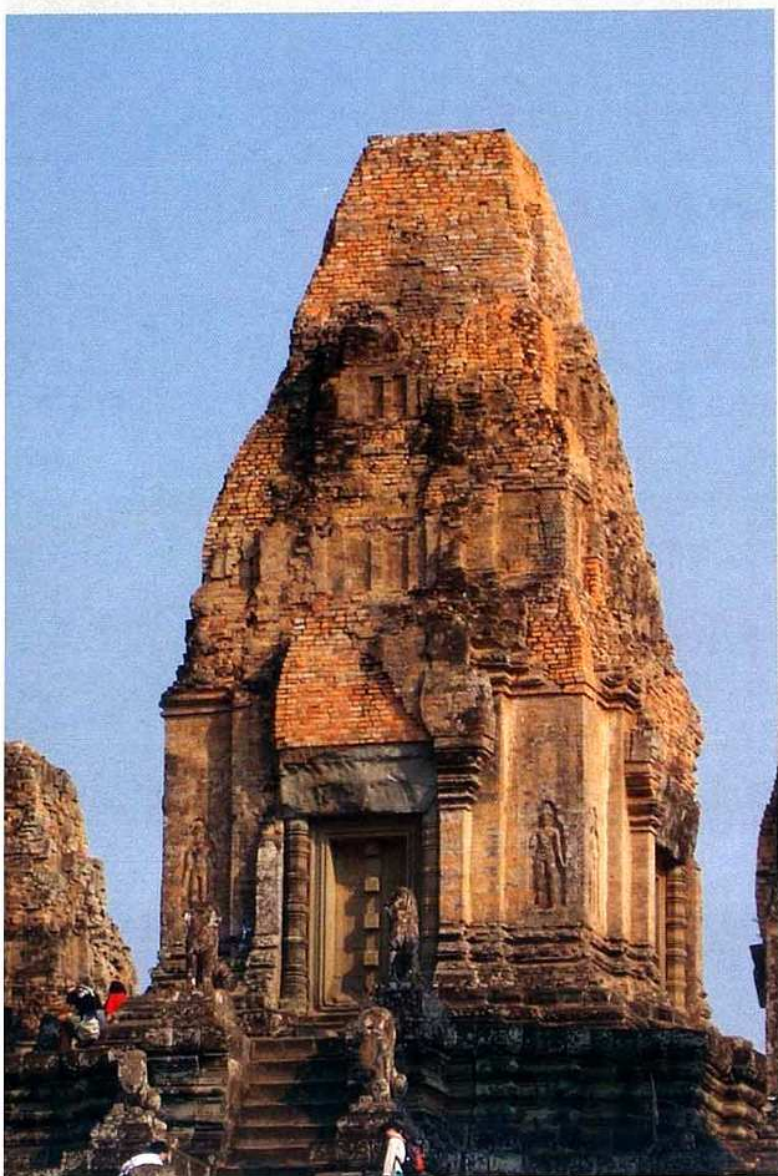
## Preah Rup

This is a Hindu temple constructed in the second half of the 10th century (961A.D.) by King Rajendravarman II. This temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. As mentioned earlier this temple resembles East Mebon. This is a temple on a hillock symbolizing Mount Meru. Cambodians believe that funeral ceremonies were conducted in this temple. Preh Rup means transforming the body, which conforms to the traditional method of cremation. This temple was built with brick towers. The layout is square with three platforms. The main entrance faces to the east. There are five towers

View of the temple







Central Sanctum

on the ground level at the entrance, three towers towards the south and two towers the north. The three towers on the south are dedicated to the ancestors of the queen. There are also supposed to be three towers to the north, but one of these towers seems to have been left incomplete. The two towers are dedicated to the ancestors of the king. On the first level, there are two brick buildings on the

eastern side. These buildings are supposed to be royal crematoriums, one for the women and the other for the men of royal family. In the second platform, there are twelve small brick towers. They are supposed to have been used as crematories to store the ashes of the royal family. In between them, there is a vat. The three-tier platform can be climbed from all the four sides. The first two platforms are simple with supporting walls, the third platform was built with sand stone, and stone lions on each side guard the staircase. There are five central towers on the top platform and they face to the east. The central tower is dedicated to Siva. Of the front two towers on the eastern side, the one towards the south is dedicated to Bramha and the one towards the north is dedicated to Vishnu. The tower on the west side, behind the main tower on the south side, is dedicated to Bramhi (Saraswathi) and the tower on the north side is dedicated to Lakshmi. The figure of Brahmi, the feminine aspect of Brahma is carved with four faces and four arms. The figure of Vishnu is with four heads and four arms. There is also a room that was used to wash the ashes after cremation.



## Phimeanakas

Phimeanakas is located in the Angkor Thom area. It is also known as the aerial palace or the palace of heaven. This temple was built in the late 10th century and early the 11th century by the King Rajendravarman II. This is a Hindu temple. It is a huge structure 600 mt. long from east to west and 215 mt. wide from south to north. In each corner of this structure there are three elephant statues one on each level. The pyramid-like structure has four staircases, one

on each side, and each staircase has twelve lion statues. Surrounding the central sanctuary there are narrow corridors on all four sides. It is believed that a serpent with nine heads lived inside the golden tower and that it transforms itself into a woman in the night. The king had to sleep with the woman every night before he went to his wives or concubines in his palace, which was on the west side. As it was constructed with wood, nothing is seen now except the platform. If the king missed even a

View of Phimeanakas







Steep steps

single night, it was believed that disaster would befall, both on him and his kingdom. There are two ponds near the palace, the smaller one for the women and the larger one for the men to bathe.



## Banteay Srei

A Brahmin of royal descent who was also a spiritual teacher in the second half of the 10th century built this temple. It is said that the temple was earlier called Iswarapura. The construction began in the period of Rajendravarman II and was completed in the period of Jayavarman V. Bantay means citadel and Srei means women. It was also called Tripurameswara.

This temple was constructed using red sand

stone, and is richly carved with Khmer art. In the rainy season, the red sand stone is covered with green algae and looks beautiful during sun rise and sun set. Even though the temple is dedicated to Shiva, there is a temple for Vishnu and Brahma too. That is why it is called Tripurameswara.

The layout of this temple is rectangular with a moat and three enclosure walls. There are six annex buildings, which are supposed to be the rest houses for meditation. There are libraries on both the sides of the central courtyard.



Entrance

Scenes from Ramayana



Door carved in stone



Lord Krishna on the doorway



Goddess Lakshmi on the doorway





One of the Gopuram with algae







Battle between Vali and Sugreeva



Siva with Parvathi on Nandi

In the central part of the temple, there are three shrines laid out in a row from north to south. Both the main central shrine and the southern shrine have Lingams, while the northern shrine has Vishnu as the deity. The doorways are richly decorated with carvings. On the main entrance a depiction of Indra riding on the Iravatham, the three-headed elephant can be seen. On one doorway, the carving depicts the abduction of Seetha by Ravana. On another doorway, it is Galadhara supposed to be transformed and in another doorway, we can see a carving of the Goddess Lakshmi with two elephants and a lot of decoration. In another doorway, Shiva and Parvathi are on Mount Kailash, which Ravana is said to have tried to lift. On another doorway the battle between Vali and Sugreeva, the monkey kings is depicted. On another, it is Lord Krishna on a serpent supposed to be Kaliyamardhanam. Yet another doorway has a carving of Shiva and Parvathi on Nandi and on the doorway to the north, Vishnu is depicted in Narasimha avatara. On all doorways, we see rich carvings done in red sand stone. Many scenes are from the Hindu epics, mainly from Ramayana.



## Ta Keo

Jayavarman V constructed this temple in the late 10th century. This temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. This temple has not been completed, perhaps due to the death of the king or as a result of an ill omen such as lightning striking the temple.

Overall view of the Temple





This temple is different from the other temples as there are not many decorative carvings and the design is simple. The central portion of the temple was constructed using huge blocks of sand-stone and lack decoration. This was the first temple to be constructed wholly from sandstone, mostly red sandstone.

It is observed that this temple is the replica of Mount Meru. This is a great temple mountain at Angkor. It was believed that this is a mountain with golden peaks. This is a three-tiered temple with a

Entrance of the Temple





height of about 40 feet. It has two enclosed walls with sand stone gopurams on the four sides of the temple. At the eastern entrance there is a causeway on the moat flanked on either side by lions. There are long halls on two levels meant for the pilgrims to rest. There are two libraries on the east side. A statue of Nandi is in front of the main gopuram. The steps are very steep.

Steps to the Main tower





## Baphuon

Baphuon is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. Udayadityavarman II constructed it in the mid 11th century. He ruled the country between 1050 and 1066 A.D. It is located in the Angkor Thom area. It is a Temple Mountain. It is in a deteriorated condition. At the time we visited, this temple was undergoing restoration and visitors were not permitted inside. The entrance gate and the elevated walkway, however were open to visitors. On my second visit, only a part of the temple was open to visitors as the renovation work was still in progress. The site was closed for almost 25 years.

View of the temple





Second level



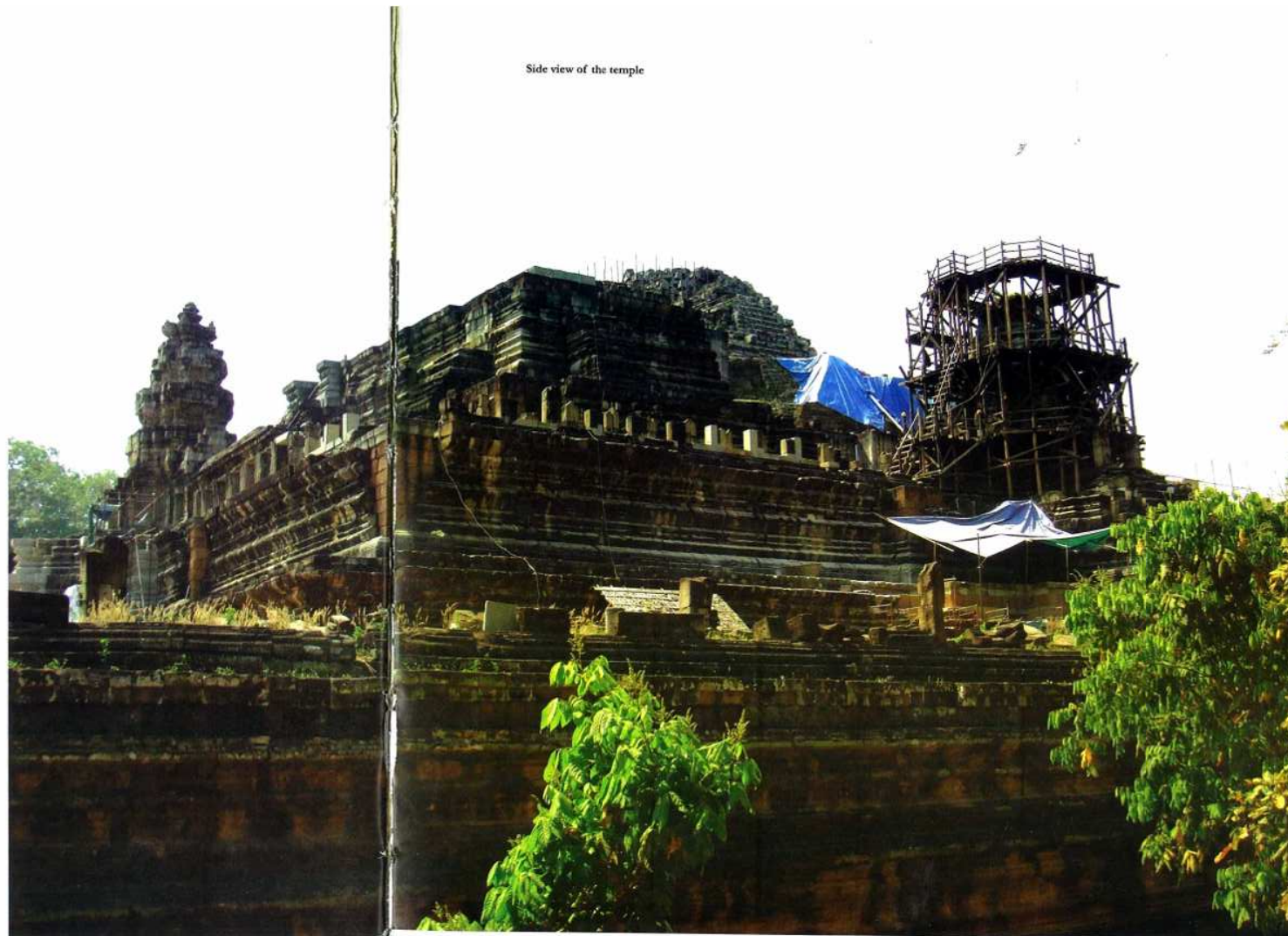
Baphuon was constructed on a high platform and the temple looks like a mountain symbolizing Mount Meru. A 200 mt. long 2 mt. wide and 1.5 mt. tall walkway is there to approach the temple. Earlier there seems to have been a naga hand-railing, which is not there now. The walk-way is supported by rows of short, round columns and each row consists of three columns. Beyond the walkway, there is a pavilion of cruciform shape with two terraces. On the south side of the pavilion, there is a pond called Seva Pond. The temple is structured as a pyramid with three levels. It seems after the construction of this temple, the city of Ankor Thom developed around it.



This temple was constructed on a sand pyramid. The construction was with volcanic stone and the outer part with sand stone. Due to the increase of stress or excessive weight, water penetrated into the sand embankment making the structure lose its load-bearing capacity and ultimately collapsed. During the renovation they covered the surface with concrete and then with volcanic stone and sandstone.

A short distance beyond the pavilion lies the second enclosure. In the second enclosure, there are two libraries on either side. At the entrance to the temple in the second enclosure, there are three staircases. They are very steep. The king used the central one. Beyond this point, visitors are not allowed as renovation work is in progress.

There is another tower in the second level and attached to it is a corridor. There are towers on all four sides with steps. Again, it seems there is another enclosure and on the third level is the central sanctum. The layout of the temple, which is exhibited there, shows that there are steps on all the four sides of the temple till the main sanctum and hence the shape looks like a pyramid. Viewing the temple from the rear, the whole temple is constructed in such a way that it looks like the image of the reclining Buddha. As it is still under renovation, the image is not clear.



Side view of the temple



# Temples built by King Suryavarman II

## Beng Malea

King Suryavarman II built this temple. It is located about 60 Km. from Seam Reap. The road is very bad. The dirt road is full of potholes and it took about 3 hours for us to reach there. By the time we reached, it was lunchtime.

We ate in a small roadside restaurant, which is similar to our dhaba hotels. Stray dogs are abundant around the hotel.

This temple is on the ancient highway, between Thailand, Northern Cambodia and Vietnam. Beng Malea has been recently opened to tourists after demining the area. However, tourists are not permitted beyond the temple area because of land mines planted by the Khmer Rouge regime,

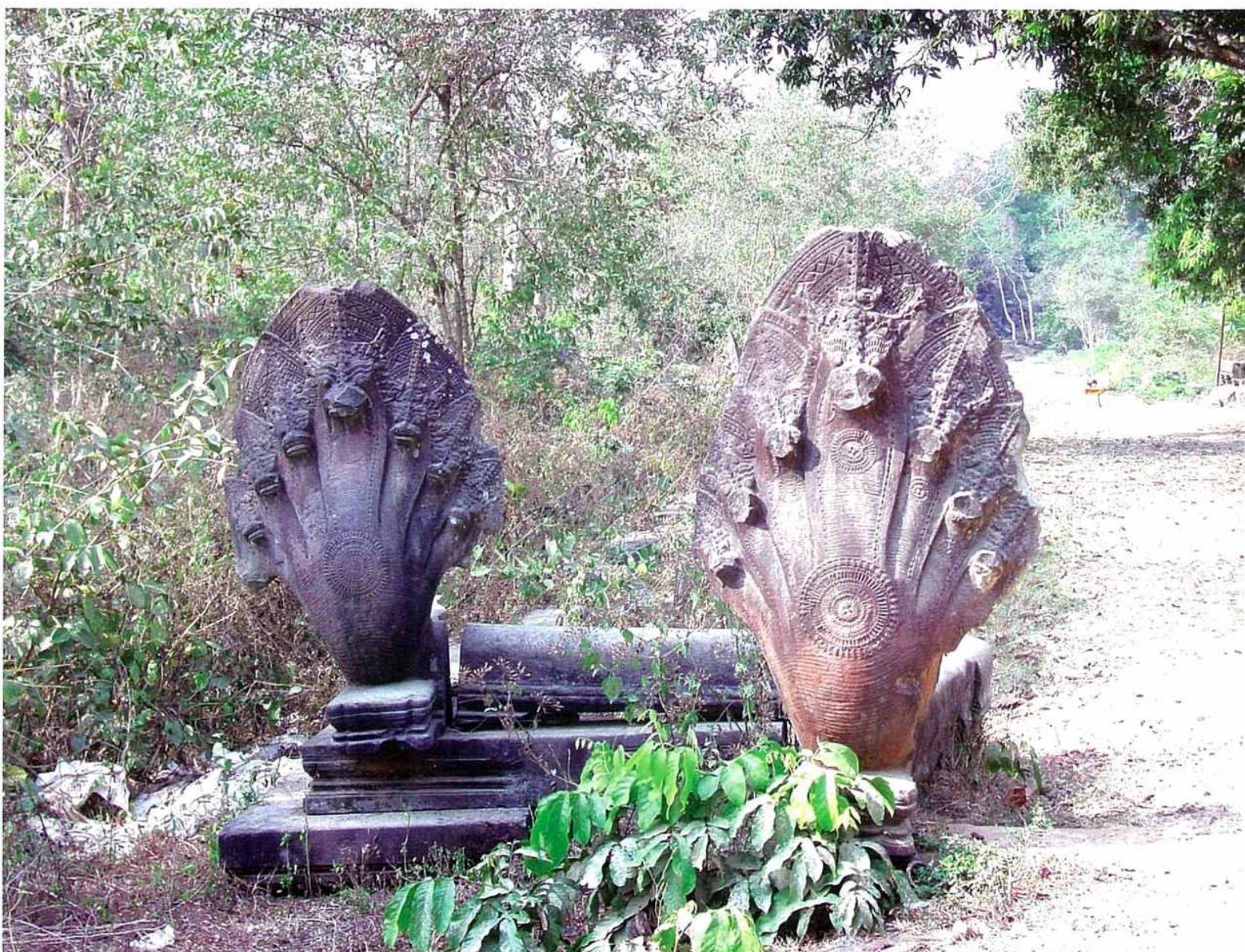
Caution board on the tree





during the war with Vietnam. Even after the war as the land mines are not defused, many of the peasants while farming or on their daily routine have stepped on the land mines and many of them have lost their lives and majority of the people have lost their limbs, whom we have witnessed all over. Even today, land mine clearance programs are going on with the assistance from the US State department, Ireland and so on.

Serpent heads at the entrance







Land mine clearance project



Project funded by U.S.A. & Ireland

Ruins of the temple



Entrance of a Temple







Indra on Iravatham on the doorway

Caution boards are displayed that this temple area is still mined and warn tourists to stick to the marked path or follow a local who knows the area. We followed the instructions of our guide, as there was no pathway built. This temple came into light for visitors in the late 1990s.

We had to walk a short distance from the main road to reach the entrance of the temple. On both sides of the road, large serpents are carved with their huge heads facing towards the approach. The temple is not yet cleared of the jungle. There is no restoration work done. You can see the temple ruins covered by wildly growing trees. The temple occupies an area of around one sq. Km. This temple is modeled in the style of Angkor Wat. I could see quite a few carvings on doorways in the ruins. Indra is seen riding on Iravatha. Some of the buildings have trees grown on their tops. There are beautifully carved windows on the buildings. Big blocks of granite stones used for the construction are seen to have collapsed in many places. Beautifully carved doors and the carvings on the doorways represent the glory of what it was in the Angkor period. The lost temple, which was covered by dense forest, is now attracting the visitors.



Carved door



## Thommanon

This is a small temple. Suryavarman II built this temple in the late 11th century and in the beginning of the 12th century. This temple resembles the other temple Chou Say Tevoda, which is across the road. This is almost in the same period when Angkor Wat was constructed. This temple is in good condition, because it was restored in the 1960's by archaeologists. The carvings are also mostly free of damage. Algae covers the age-old sandstone temple, and it looks great in the sunshine. This temple was constructed on a flat surface. It comprises of one main temple and in

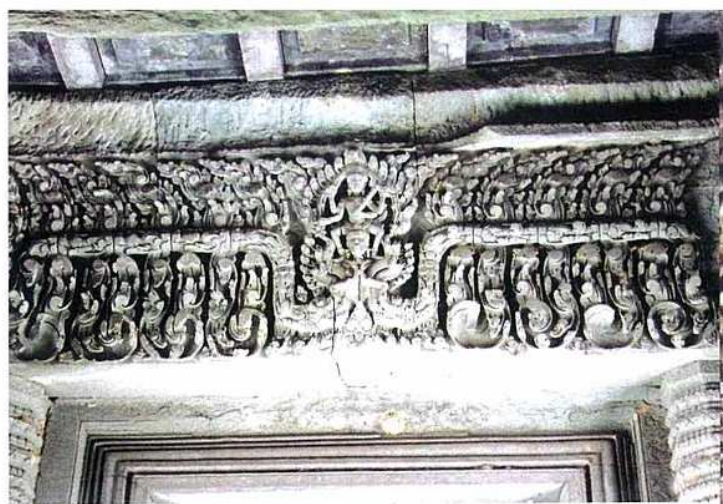
View of the temple







Siva on the Gopuram



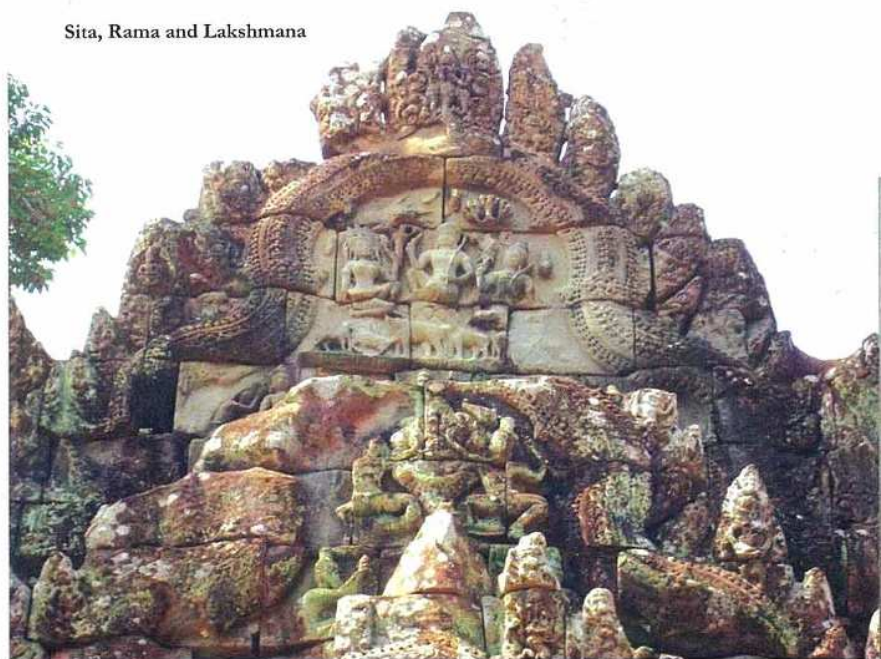
Carved Doorway Vishnu on Garuda

front with small temples facing the main temple. The main temple is on a cruciform shaped platform. A wall, which does not exist now, surround the temple but the foundation is visible. There are two entrances to the temple. A moat surrounds the wall. Inside the enclosure there is a library building on the south side. The pediment on the gopuram is of four levels. On the west pediment on the first level there is a carving of Vishnu on garuda. On the south pediment is the carving of Siva meditating. This was decorated with beautiful carvings. Goddess Lakshmi is on the north pediment. The carvings of Rama and Sita are on the Eastern entrance. The figure of Apsara carved resembles the one in Angkor Wat. On one doorway Indra on the elephant was carved. All the doorways and the gopurams are with beautiful carvings. In the central sanctum on the lintel of the doorway is the carving of Vishnu on garuda and garuda is holding naga. The carving of Sita is also there.

Apsara



Sita, Rama and Lakshmana





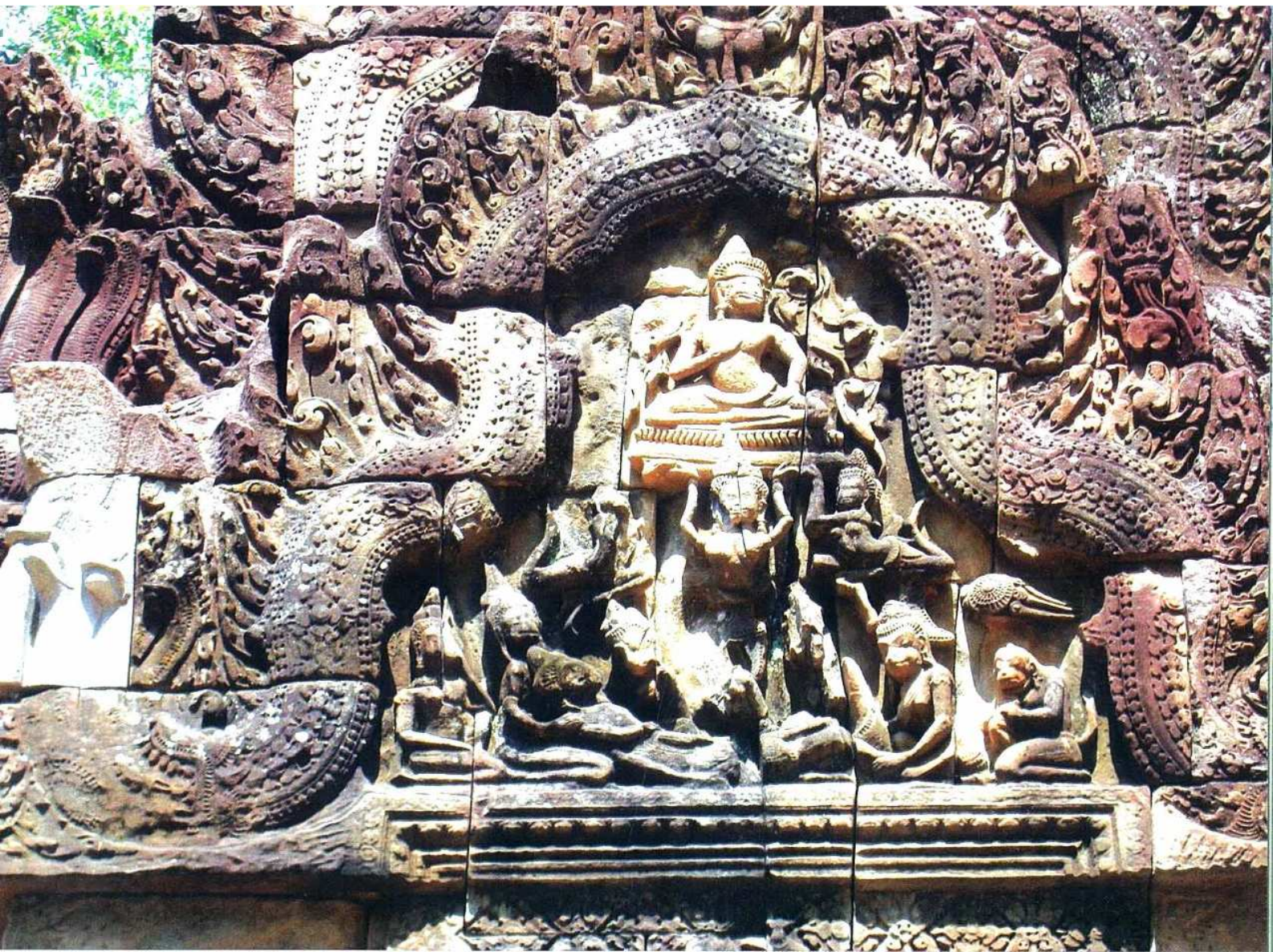
## Chau Say Tevoda

Chau Say Tevoda and Thommanon are same in design and construction. They are called as brother and sister temples. Built by Suryavarman II by the end of 11th century or in the beginning of 12th century, these are Hindu temples. These were used as rest houses for pilgrims. This temple is more damaged than Thommanon. Most of the sculptures are defaced probably in 13th century, when the country is changing from Hinduism to Buddhism.

Overall view of the temple with south, west and east entrances







Sugreeva on the east gopuram

There are entry towers on the four sides, but walls are not there. The main sanctuary is facing to East. The east gopuram is connected to a raised platform by a raised causeway. From the platform, the way leads to the nearby Seam Reap River. Inside the compound wall on the eastern side there are two library buildings on either side of the room that connects to the central sanctuary. Out of the few sculptures that are left without damaging are some dancing apsaras on the main tower and Sugreeva on the eastern tower.

The library has one real door in the front and one blind door in the back. The real door opens to west and the blind door faces to east side. Even though the reliefs are Hindu themed, there are some about Buddhism also.



## Preah Pithu Group

This group consists of five small temples. These are inside Angkor Thom city, opposite to Leper King Terrace and adjacent to North Kleang. Out of these five temples, four are Hindu temples supposed to be constructed by King Suryavarman II in early 12th century. The other temple is Buddhist and may be, constructed in 14th century.

The entrance to the first temple has railings with naga heads and their bodies. Before the steps of the central sanctuary, there is a base of Siva Lingam. The temple is having one tower with outer wall. However, all of them are collapsed. The tower and the pediments are kept on the ground.

The second temple is also in a bad shape. There is nothing worth to describe. In the third temple, there is a Siva Lingam with different shape. Top of the Lingam is of round shape like any other Siva Lingam. However, in the middle instead of the round shape, it has eight faces representing eight faces of Vishnu and in the bottom; it is having four faces representing Brahma.

The fourth temple has a wall that has collapsed within. The fifth temple is a Buddhist temple which has a lintel with Buddha image.



First temple

Sivalingam with different shape





## Banteay Samre

The temple was constructed by King Suryavarman II in the middle of 12th century. This is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu. Banteay means citadel and Samre refers to the name of a tribe living in the hills of Kulen. Probably later, they have migrated to the area of Phnom Kulen. They may be related to Khmers.

Main entrance of the temple from east side





The temple has two enclosures. The first enclosure, which is elevated from the ground level, has four entrances, one on each side. The second enclosure is connected to the first enclosure on all sides by an elevated pathway. Inside the second enclosure, beside the main

sanctuary, there are two library buildings on the east side, one towards the south and the other one towards the north. The main sanctuary is connected to the second enclosure gopuram by a hall. Both the enclosures and the main sanctuary are elevated and a moat-like

View of the library building with elevated corridor and central tower







Chandra and Surya with hermits and gods

structure is seen, where you have to climb to the next level.

The first enclosure with entrances has towers decorated with scenes from Hindu mythology. The temple was constructed with lava stone and sandstone. All the entrances in the first enclosure are with four pillared terraces leading to the entry towers.

On the north side, on the terrace, the scene of the battle between Rama and Ravana is depicted. Rama on the chariot driven by horses and Ravana on the chariot driven by singha is depicted along with Vanara and demon soldiers' fighting. From the entry tower the scene of Indra riding on Iravatham can be seen. The central tower is surrounded by two different corridors as walls, each side measuring about 70 meters. The inner corridor that is connected to the outer corridor through entry towers is also decorated. On the north side towards central sanctuary, the pediment is decorated on the top with the carving of Krishna killing asura and the bottom is carved with Rama and Sita. On the outer side, the scene from the Ramayana can be seen.

Another scene of Kubera riding on rakshasa can also be seen. On the other side a scene of Parvathi killing asura with javelin is seen.

On the inner enclosure, the scene of Skanda on the peacock can be seen from the western tower. On the other side, Chandra and Surya are seen with hermits and divine Gods below them. The central sanctuary has only one entrance facing the east. On the southern and northern sides there are blind doors carved in stone. On another tower, Siva on Nandi can be seen. From the other side of the gopuram, the scene of Krishna lifting Govardhanagiri can be seen. The central sanctuary is connected to the corridor from the eastern side. A tomb made of sandstone is constructed in the hall in front of the central tower.

There is no statue inside the temple. The main entrance to the temple is on the eastern side and is connected to the river by a raised platform decorated with Naga statues.

Parvathi killing Asura with javelin



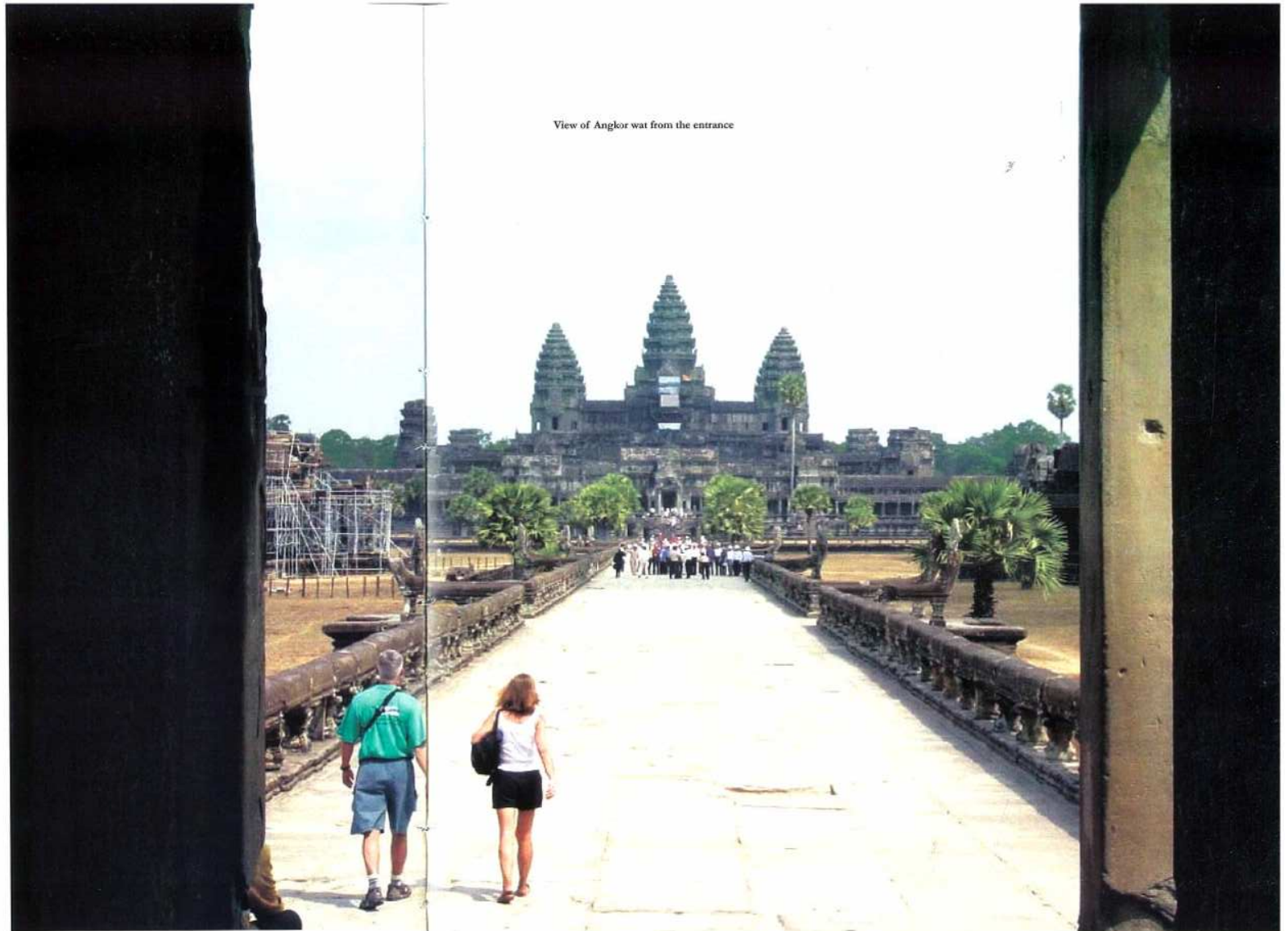


## Angkor Wat

Angkor Wat is the largest Hindu Temple in the world and also the second largest temple in the world. Angkor Wat is the largest in the sense that the total area comprises of 500 acres and is 213 feet in height from the ground level, and it is a little less than the height of the gopuram of the Tanjavur temple and is equal to the height of the cathedral of Notre Dome in Paris. Recently another gopuram was constructed in Murudeshwar, near Udipi in Karnataka State, which is higher than the gopuram in Tanjavur. "This spectacular site is a proud accomplishment to Hinduism", which spread from India to the Far East Asia. Angkor Wat is compared to the Taj Mahal of India, the Great Wall of China, with regard to its grandeur. "Angkor Wat is the greatest existing monument of the ancient world". Hinduism was at its pinnacle in Cambodia during this period. A Chinese diplomat visited this temple in 13th century. In 1866 an Englishman who visited this temple, described Angkor Wat as the symbol of Mount Meru. The three platforms are earth water and wind. The water in the moat represents the ocean and the temple mountain represents earth.

Angkor means capital city and Wat means temple. Earlier they used to call it as Nagara. This city was also called as Yesodharapura as Yesovarman I built his capital at this ancient city Angkor. Suryavarman II constructed this temple in the 12th century. This massive Hindu temple was dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It is believed that the construction of the temple took 30 years and the king died before its completion.

View of Angkor wat from the entrance





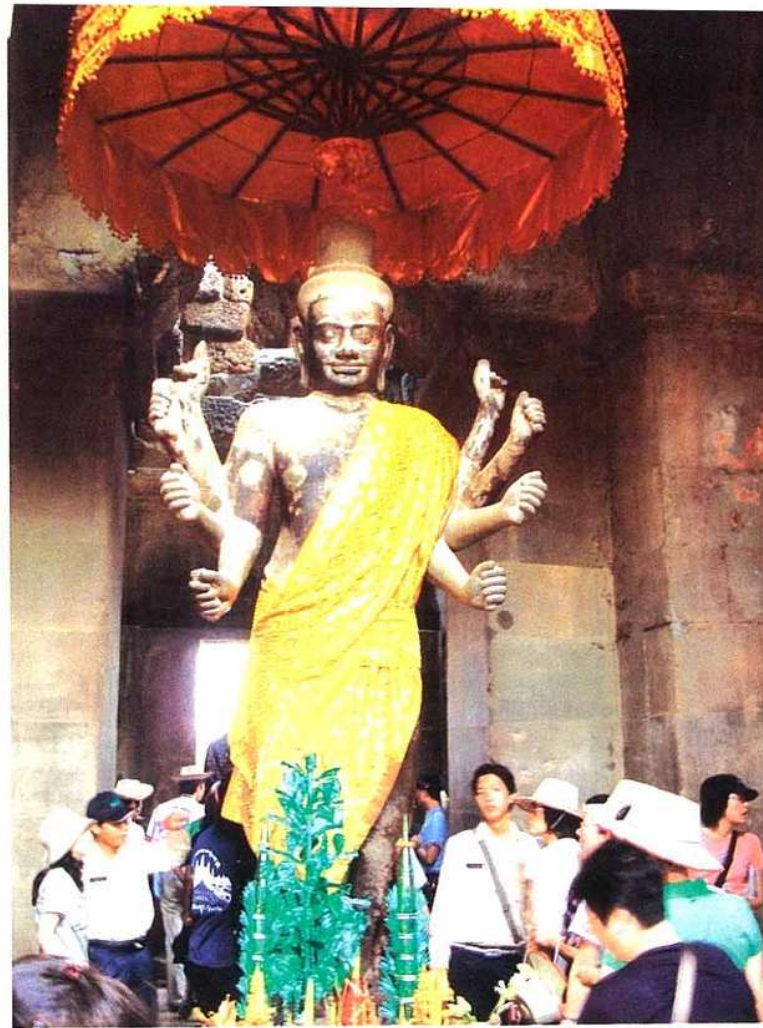
Angkor Wat from the elevated walkway





Contrary to the Hindu temples, this temple faces the west and the carvings on the corridor walls (bas-reliefs) are to be seen from left to right and in the process, one has to walk anti clockwise, which means 'apradikshanam' ('Prayasa'). This raised some doubts about the temple after the death of the king, whether it was used as his tomb to serve as his residence after death. Ashes were found 27 meters deep from the third floor of the central sanctuary which were kept later in the mausoleum.

Figure of apsara



Vishnu

Originally, this temple was called as Angkor, but after Buddhism was adopted, and when the image of Buddha was erected there, then it was called as Angkor Wat. Khemers believe that Viswakarma, the architect of the Gods, built this temple. However, there is also a belief that Divakara Pandita, the chief advisor and minister of the king, who was a Brahmin, designed it. Angkor Wat with its five towers symbolizes the Mount Meru at the centre of the universe; the outer wall signifies the edge of the world and the surrounding moat, the ocean. The temple itself is of one Sq. Km. area and the length of the compound wall is about 5.5 Km. The moat is 1500 meters on east and west side and 1300 meters on the northern and



southern sides. It is believed that 2000 people lived in this temple city. Ordinary people were only allowed to the first enclosure where the walls are decorated with bas-reliefs. It is a kind of enlightenment to the common people about the ancient Hindu mythological stories like Ramayana, Mahabharatha, the war between Devas and Asuras, about the judgment of Yama and so on. The second level is for the priests and the third level is for the king and the high priests. Angkor Wat was described as "the work of power and reason".

We entered from the west side crossing the moat by a causeway and through the entry tower. The moat is about 12 meters wide 250 meters long and 7 meters high. The causeway was built with sandstone blocks. The entrance has three towers of different heights and a terrace. The central tower is higher than the other two towers. The upper section of the tower has collapsed. The entry towers or the gopurams have three passages. The middle one

Corridor



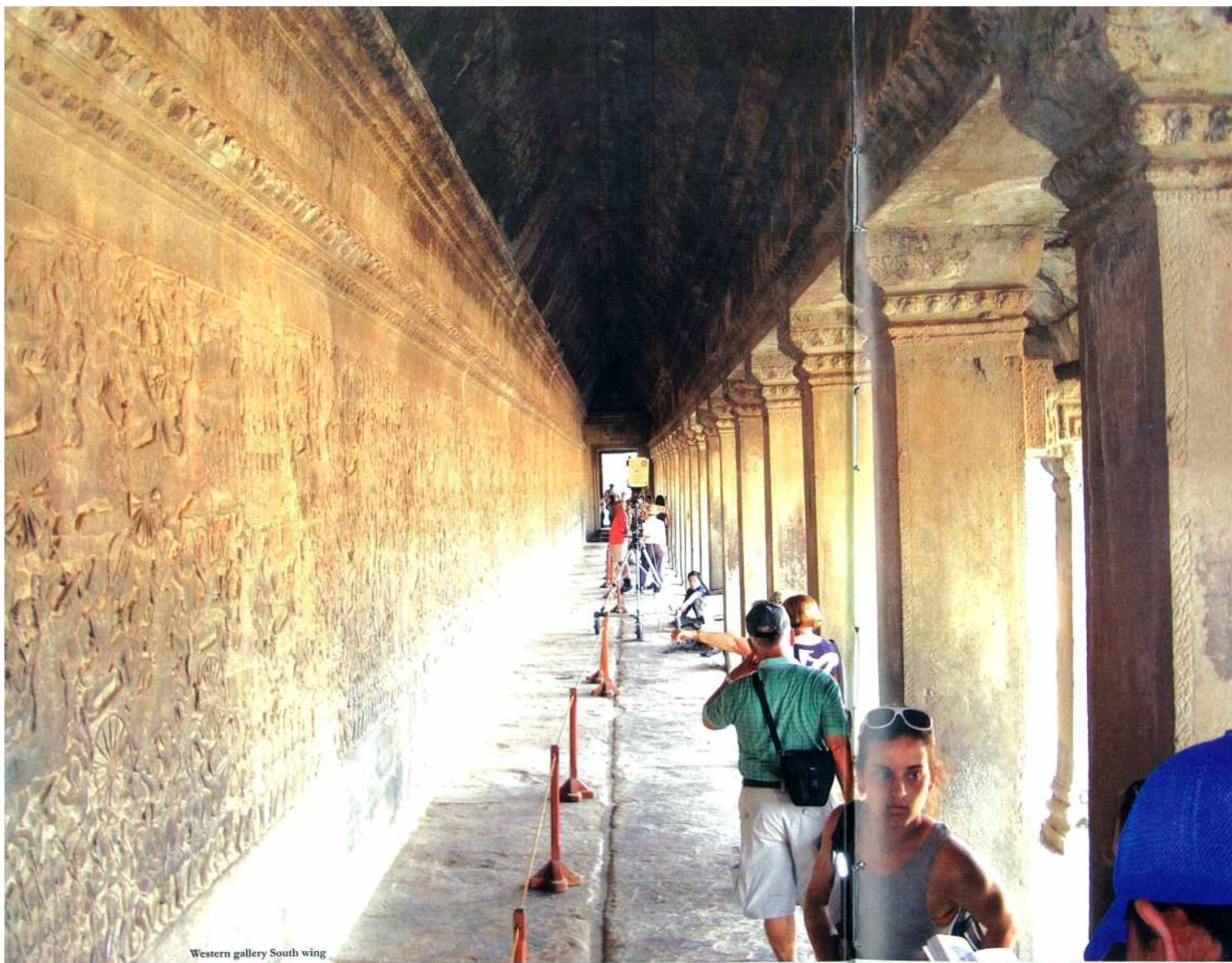
Apsaras

is so high that even elephants can pass through and the side passages are meant for pedestrians. There are galleries on both sides. The galleries are beautifully carved with divine figures and animals.

It seems that about 3.86 Lakh workers worked to construct the temple. About 6400 sculptors were engaged for carving and about 40,000 elephants carried sandstone from Phnom Kulen hills, which is about 50 km. away. Apart from elephants, 700 bamboo ramps (boats) were engaged to carry sand stone through Seam Reap River. At that time, it was believed that there were 1300 dancers in Angkor Wat.

Five-headed Naga figures are there on both sides of the entrance towers. One tower depicts, a scene of Rama fighting Ravana with the help of monkey soldiers. On another lintel of the second doorway, Bramha was carved. There are galleries on both sides. The galleries are beautifully carved with divine figures and animals. From the right side of the gallery, an extraordinary view of all the five towers of Angkor Wat can be seen. During the civil war,





Western gallery South wing

fierce battle took place in Angkor Wat and the bullet holes on the pillars are also visible.

The statue of Vishnu is kept in the first corridor, and this statue was recovered and brought back in 1993. There is another statue of a lady without head and hands and is supposed to be the statue of Lakshmi. There are many Apsara carvings. There are about 1500 carvings of Apsaras (Dancing girls) in Angkor Wat with about 36 different hair dresses and different earrings. The figure of each Apsara is different from the other in one way or the other, in their pose, hairstyle, nails, or earrings etc. It is believed that the Apsaras were born from the churning of the ocean of milk.

From the entry tower the walkway to the main temple is about 350 meters and it is a raised walkway. On both sides, Naga (Serpent) figures boarder the walkway. The pathway is 9 meters wide and 1.5 meters high from the ground level. On either side of the courtyard, there are two buildings, which are supposed to be Libraries. The Library building consists of a central hall with two rooms on both sides. Carvings in the library buildings are unfinished.

There are ponds in front of the libraries. I took a picture of the reflection of the Angkor Wat towers in the water of the left pond. This is supposed to be a post card picture. The picture looks beautiful even in night times with the lights on. At the end of the walkway, there is the Terrace of Honour, also called as Grand Terrace. It is a cross shaped structure. This was earlier covered by a wooden structure. This was used by the king as a meeting hall and as



well as Apsara dances were conducted there. The dances conducted on Cambodian new-year day (13th to 15th April) have more importance as the king attends with his family. This terrace is provided as a link between the first and the second levels. At the entrance tower, the stone windows look like carved wooden windows. The figures of apsaras are carved at the bottom of each column. On many of the pillars, the inscriptions are either in Sanskrit or in Khmer. From the centre, we walked towards the main temple. On the second level, in the third enclosure there are galleries where one witness the bas-reliefs. The corridors are richly carved. They are divided into eight parts, four parts on each side and the other four in the corners. The outer rectangular corridor from the tower is where the galleries are there and the inner walls and the corners are carved with bas-reliefs. The total length of the corridor is about one km. and the entire corridor is covered with bas-reliefs. The carvings are not deep but even the minute details were intricately carved. Even the roof is carved with decoration. But some parts of the roof are damaged. Each side of the corridor is divided into two parts by a central hall which has a passage to outside as well as towards inside to approach the main towers. Sixty evenly spaced columns provide light and support the galleries of the inner walls, which are decorated by bas-reliefs.

As we entered, we turned to our right side towards the south. The battle of Kurukshetra is carved throughout on the half of the west gallery on the southern side. In the southwestern corner, scenes of Ramayana are

carved. The southern wall on the western side it is carved with the army of king Suryavarman II and then the eastern side is carved with the judgment of Yama, which depicts heaven and hell. The beliefs of Hindus about 37 heavens and 32 hells is described. After the judgment of Yama people going to heaven are carved on the upper side and the people going to hell are carved on the lower side. And as we turned to left, we are in the east gallery. On the south side of the east gallery the churning of the ocean of milk was elaborately carved with gods and demons on each side holding the serpent vasuki and churning the ocean. There are some inscriptions in the middle of the gallery and then the victory of Vishnu over the demons is carved on the northern side of the east gallery. This work was supposed to be done in the 16th century by the Buddhist monks. These carvings are in unfinished stage. Even though Buddhist monks had done the work, it belongs to Hindu mythology. If we turned to the left to the northern gallery, the first half of the north gallery on the east side, is carved with the victory of Krishna over Banasura. These scenes are also believed to be carved by Buddhist monks. The second half of the north gallery on the west side is carved with the battle of the Gods with demons. In the North West corner, there are scenes from Ramayana and along the west gallery on the north side, a depiction of the battle in Lanka can be seen.

I have taken some photographs of the bas-reliefs, so that I can describe with the help of the pictures.



## West gallery- Southern side

### Kurukshetra war scenes

The scenes show the battle between Pandavas and Kouravas in Mahabharatham.

On the southern side of the west gallery, the reliefs are about 160 ft. in length. The Kaurava army is on the northern side towards the entrance and the Pandava army is towards Southwestern corner, both marching towards the centre of the panel, where the battle scene is sculptured. The army is with their leaders on chariots and other warriors on horses and on elephants. Solders are marching on foot on the lower side of the panel.

One hundred Kouravas with their army in the battle field







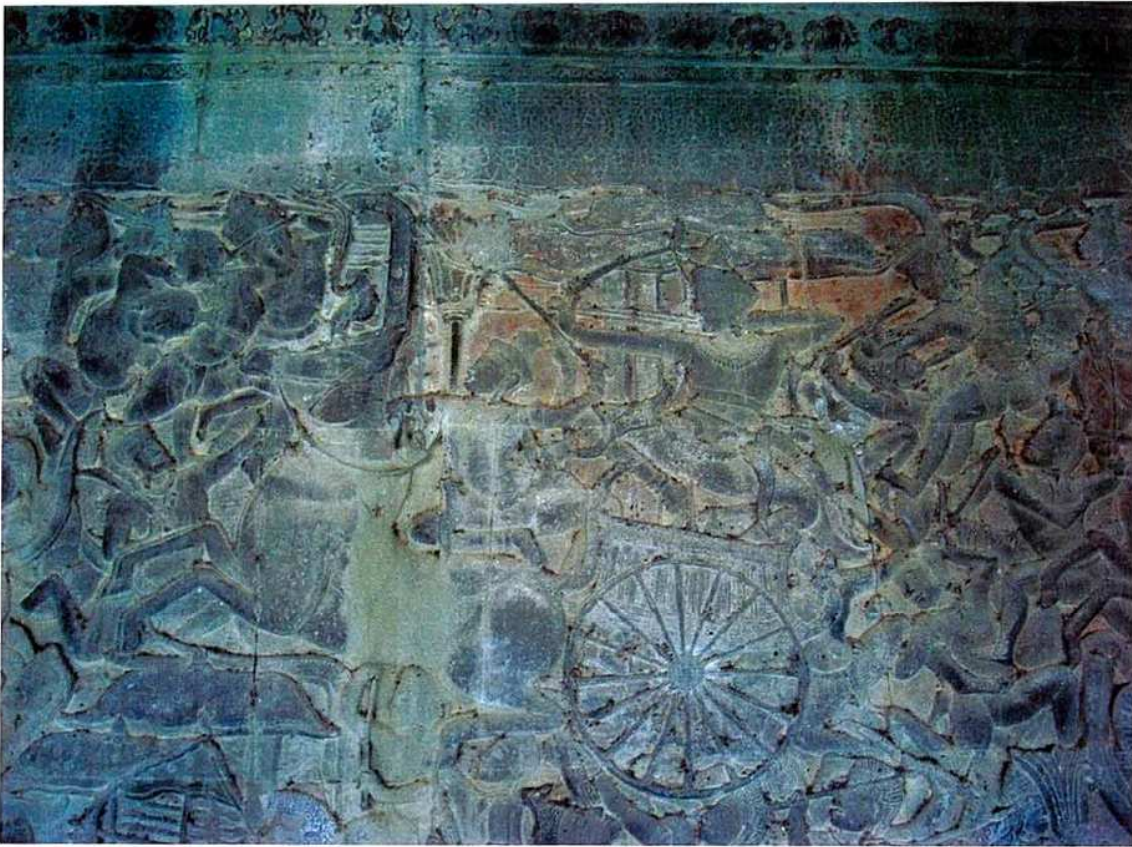
Teacher Drona on the chariot in the battle field

Bheeshma is seen wounded in the battle field, resting on the bed of arrows which Arjuna has provided, because as a noble warrior his body should not touch the ground. Bheesma lays on the bed of arrows until 'Uttarayanam' begins, the auspicious time, when he can die.

The teacher of the Kauravas and the Pandavas, Drona is also seen on the chariot fighting on the side of the Kauravas. He can be differentiated from the other leaders, as he doesn't wear any headgear.

In the middle of the panel, Krishna and Arjuna are seen on a chariot. Krishna is driving the chariot while Arjuna is seen with a bow and arrow. When Arjuna refuses to fight with Kauravas, Krishna preaches Geetha to Arjuna to convince him to fight with the Kauravas. The teachings are popular known as 'Bhagavat Geetha'.





Arjuna and Krishna on the chariot in the battle field

Pandavas in the battle field





## South west corner Gallery

### Scenes from Hindu Mythology

There are scenes like the Hindu God Rama chasing the golden deer.

Krishna lifts Govardhana giri with his brother by his side. Cows and villagers take shelter under the mountain.

#### **Ravana shaking mount Kailasa.**

Siva is seen meditating in the forest on a hill. On the top of the panel, Apsaras can be seen all around him and at the bottom of the panel is Ravana can be seen with his many hands. His legs bear the weight as he lifts Mount Kailasa. His surroundings are carved with dense forest. This is a scene from Uthara Kanda of Ramayana.

Siva and Parvathi were in Kailasa Parvatha and Nandi was guarding the mountain. Ravana in his Pushpaka Vimana was coming on that way and Pushpaka Vimana could not cross Kailasa Parvatha. On seeing Nandi, Ravana abused him, because he told Ravana that Kailasa Parvatha is a forbidden area for him. Nandi provoked by the abuses, cursed him that one day he and his race would be destroyed by the race of monkeys. Ravana became more furious and tried to lift Kailasa Parvatha. But Siva pushed the mountain down with his toe and Ravana's hands were crushed under the mountain. With agony, Ravana cried so loud that it was heard in all the three worlds. But, with the pleadings of Ravana, Siva released him. Then Ravana asked for a boon from Siva, wishing that neither the gods, the rakshasas, nor monsters, should kill him, thinking that the race of men could never defeat him Siva granted him the boon.

Ravana lifting Kailasa giri and Siva is seen on top of the hill





### Churning the sea of milk

Here Mount Meru, which was used as a churning pole, is in the form of a long pole instead of being shaped as a mountain. Devas and Rakshasas are on two sides holding the huge serpent Vasuki. Apsaras are on top of the panel and Surya and Chandra are on the two sides of the churning pole.

### Kamadeva shooting Siva

Siva is seen meditating in the pine forest when Kama deva came to spoil his concentration by shooting him with an arrow of love. This scene is from Siva Puranam. The asura Taraka obtained a boon from Bramha that he should not be killed by any Gods, but only by the offspring of Siva. As Siva was meditating in the forest, to distract him from the meditation, Indra sent Kamadeva, the God of love. Kamadeva went to the forest and tried to hit Siva with the arrow of love, so that Siva will be attracted to Parvathi. Siva became angry with Kamadeva and with his third eye he turned Kamadeva into ashes. Rati, wife of Kamadeva begged Siva to pardon him, and with the pleadings of Parvathi, Siva again gave life to Kamadeva.

In this relief, Siva can be seen meditating at the top of the panel. He has a grown beard and to his right is Parvathi with a three-pointed crown. On the left are 'Pramada ganam'. Above this are Apsaras. In the middle of the panel are sages and in the bottom is Kamadeva seen with his bow and arrow pointing towards Siva.

Kamadeva shooting Siva

Churning of the sea of milk. Chandra and Surya are seen





### Fight between Vali and Sugreeva

This scene is from Kishkinda Kanda of Ramayana where Rama kills Vali. This relief contains of two scenes. In the top portion, Rama is seen shooting with an arrow from Vali's back and on the right side Vali and Sugreeva fighting with each other. Rama is seen with a bow in one hand and arrows in another hand. Behind him Lakshmana is there and on both sides other monkeys are watching the battle.

Fight between Vali and Sugreeva on the top portion and bottom Vali with Tara

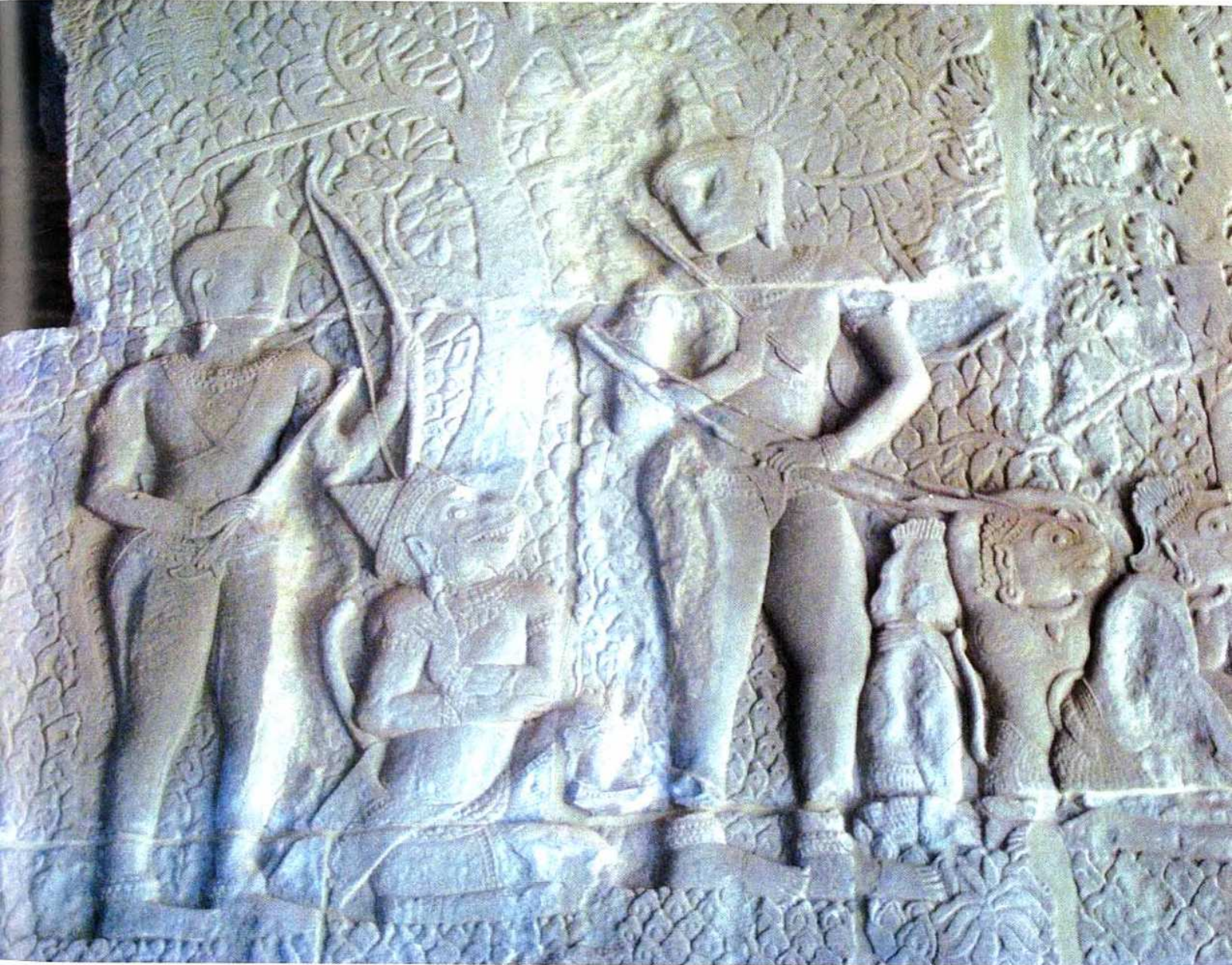




On the lower part of the panel is Vali is struck with an arrow on his chest lying on the ground and his wife Tara holding him. Other wives of Vali and other monkey soldiers are surrounding them. On the other side, Rama and Lakshmana with Hanuman in the middle are watching.

Apart from this there is a scene of Siva receiving homage and some daily life scenes like people watching cock fight and parents holding their children are seen.

Rama and Lakshmana with Hanuman





## South Gallery- Western part

### Procession of King Suryavarman II

This was supposed to have been carved after the death of Suryavarman II. The scenes are mainly depict the procession of King Suryavarman II.

King Suryavarman II can be seen sitting, with ministers and fortunetellers. In the procession, commanders are leading the procession riding on elephants. Soldiers are following with different headgears. Spear group, arrow group of soldiers are in the procession. Concubines are also in the procession. Apart from them, magicians are also there to give entertainment to the soldiers. Some

King Suryavarman II







Leader of the tribal people with his army

of the soldiers are riding on horses. Tribal people are also in the procession with their leaders leading them. Suryavarman II was believed to have about seventy thousand soldiers in his army. The King is leading the battle riding on the royal elephant with commanders in front and behind him. Soldiers are carrying the sacred ark on the elephant.

Soldiers on horses





## South gallery Eastern Part

### Judgment of Yama

The entire east part is about the life after death. As per Hindu belief people who have done good deeds will go to heaven and the bad people will go to hell. It is believed that the punishment in the hell is only for the sins committed, but not for the soul. After the sufferings in the hell the soul is purified and released from sin. The suffering of a person in the earth is

People going to heaven and hell







Scene of torture

different from the sufferings in the hell. It seems in “Padma Puranam”, it is defined about those who deserve heaven. It is for those who lead a life according to moral and religious practice.

The beginning of the relief is shown with good people going to heaven on horseback, on the upper side of the wall in two rows and the bad people going to hell are shown in the bottom portion of the wall. There are descriptions about how the people are treated in hell. Guide was able to show me some of the scenes in different hells like Avicil hell, Nirucchvasa hell, Yugmaparvata hell, Taptalakshamay hell, Kshuradharapavata hell, Kriminkaya hell, Maha Raurava hell, Shita hell and so on. There are also some scenes about how they were punished, like pulling them with a rope tied to their nose, punishing them with Rhino, Water buffalo and snake. On the other hand, slaves carry





Noble people are carried to heaven

noble people to heaven as Khmer nobles lead the procession followed by women and noble men. Common people are walking and some of them are with children. In the middle Yama and Chitragupta are also seen. Yama is seen with many hands. He is seen sitting on a buffalo and Chitragupta is seen pronouncing the sentences. "Vrah Dharma Vrah Chitragupta". Dharma is none other than Yama and Chitragupta reads out the bad deeds of the

people who are brought to hell. As per Hindu belief, there are 32 hells and 37 heavens.

The King and queen can be seen sitting while other noble men and women are there in the heaven.

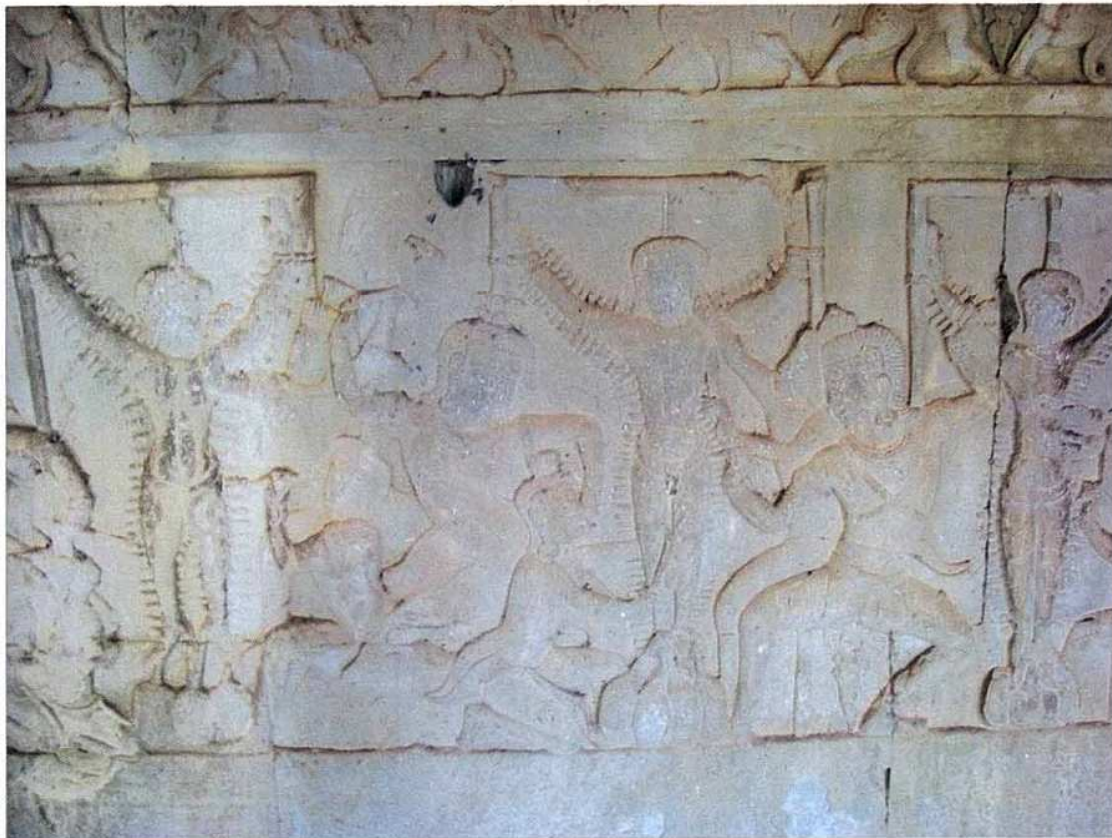
In the hell, the sinners are punished by being nailed, suspended in air and pulled down by their weight.





Yama on buffalo

Maha Raurava Narakam. They are punished with nails, suspended and pulled down with their weight





King and queen are seen sitting in heaven while other noble men and women are there





## East Pavilion Southern side

### Churning the sea of milk

The entire scene is about the churning of the ocean of milk by devas and asuras. This scene is sculptured on the wall whose length is about 160 ft.

In the centre of the scene, Vishnu is in front of mount Mandara (Meru Parvatham) which was used as a churning pole. The mountain is resting on a huge turtle (Kurmavatharam of Vishnu).

Vishnu in the centre and Indra on top





Vishnu is seen with four arms (Chaturbhuja). Two arms are holding chakra and sword and the other two hands are holding Vasuki, the gigantic serpent, which was used as rope for churning. On the top side of mount Meru is Indra. The head side of Vasuki is held by asuras and the tail side is held by devas. The differentiation of devas and asuras is significant by their headgears. The characters of Ramayana are shown in the churning of the ocean of milk, even though as per Hindu mythology this occurred much earlier to Ramayana period. On the head side is asura Bali or Kalanemi, holding the head and other asura kings are holding the body of the snake. On deva's side, Vibhushana is identified in the centre as his head gear differs from that of the other devas. There is another version shown that might be Siva or Rahu. In the middle, Bramha is shown with four faces, and at the tail end is Hanuman or Sugreeva. At the top of the panel is apsara figures who are supposed to be born by churning of the ocean of milk. At the bottom of the panel, ocean is shown with different sea creatures, where some of them are crushed completely when the churning took place.

It seems in Cambodia, small metal tortoises are found in the foundation of old temples showing the importance of Kurmavathara, where Kurma supports the mountain Meru on its back, so that the huge structure of the temple can be supported. In the central part of the east side there is a plank, which is in Pali language. In the backside of the temple, there is a cemetery of a Buddhist monk.

Bramha on the side of Devas



Hanuman





## East Pavilion Northern side

### The Victory of Vishnu over Asuras

This side it is about the battle of Devas with asuras. The Buddhist monks carved this in 16th century. In the war are Vishnu, Varuna, Skanda, Yama, Agni, Indra, Surya, Shiva and others are on Deva's side. On asura's side Banasura and others are there. The asuras are moving towards the centre from the southern side and Vishnu with four arms mounted on Garuda is facing south. Groups of warriors mounted on gigantic birds can be seen.

Warriors mounted on gigantic birds





## North gallery Eastern part

### Victory of Krishna over Banasura

In this part, Krishna appears six times riding on Garuda. This is also about the battle between the devas and the asuras. It is mainly about Srikrishna's victory over Banasura. Along with Srikrishna are Balarama, Pradyuman, Indra, Varuna, Agni and others.

The army of the devas can be seen marching from the left of the panel to its centre and Banasura and his army can be seen marching from the right side towards the centre. Krishna is seen with eight arms. Pradumna and Balarama can be seen on his side. Banasura is seen on a chariot drawn by two lion dragons. Banasura can be seen with several arms. Krishna fought with Banasura to save Anirudha who is captive of Banasura. When Krishna along with Pradumna, Balarama and others went to Banasura's capital, and a wall of fire halted them. To extinguish the fire, Garuda brought water from Ganga. Banasura had a boon from Siva and so Krishna went to Siva and prayed him.

Krishna on Garuda



Banasura



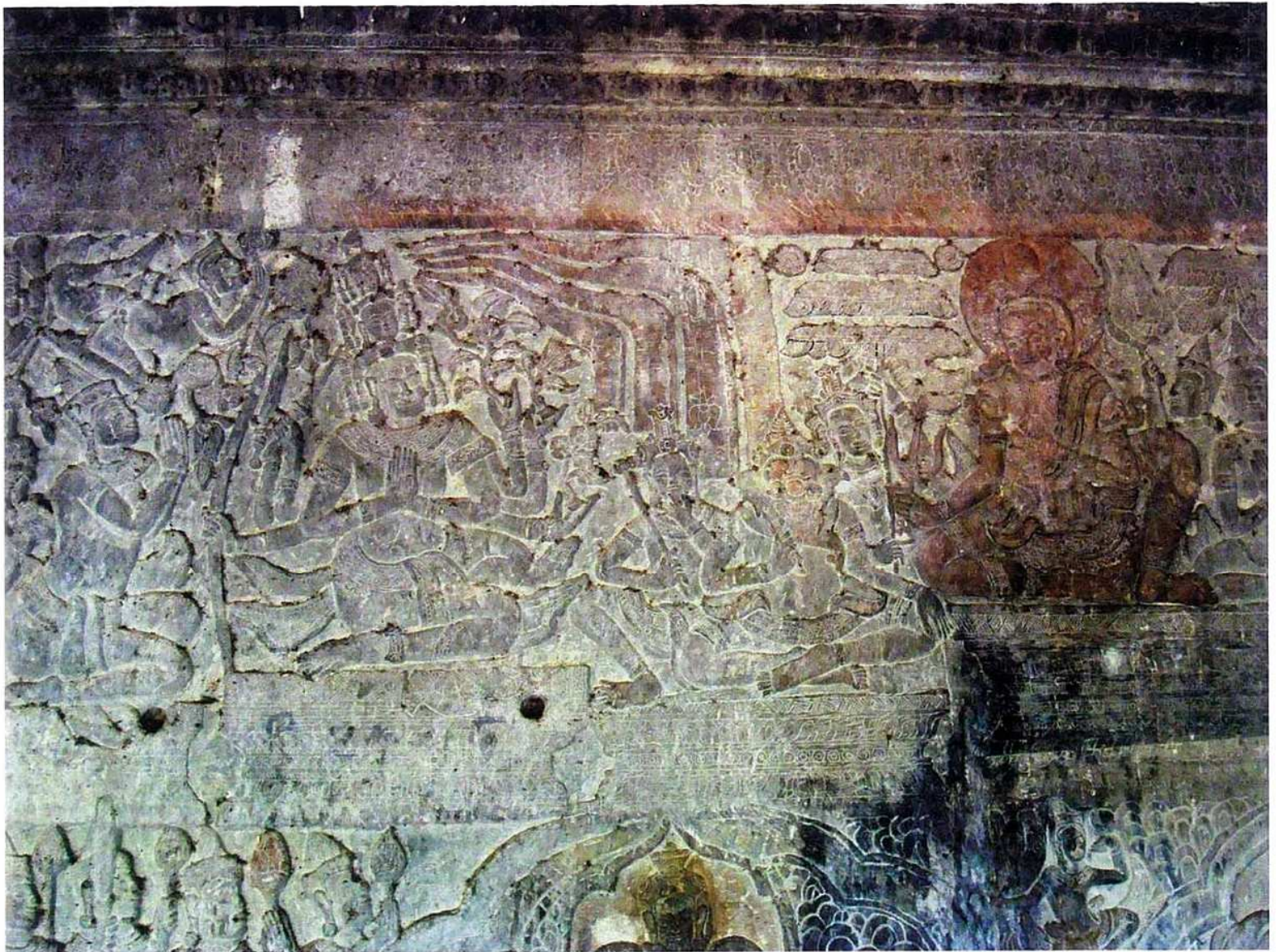


With the consent of Siva, Krishna cut the hands of Banasura with his sudarsana chakra. Siva interfered and asked Banasura to leave the battle field and saved him from Krishna. Krishna returned with Anirudha. This story is sculptured as different scenes on the gallery.

In another relief Srikrishna is seen praying to Siva.

There is also a scene of half-human and half-animal figures of male and female genders. The male one is called as Mohora and the female one is called as Mohouri in the Khemer language.

Krishna praying Siva





**Norh Pavilion Western side  
Battle between Devas and Asuras**



Agni on Rhino

This side is also about the battle between Devas and Asuras. In the battle Devas like Kubera, Agni, Shanmuga, Indra, Vishnu, Yama, Surya, Siva and others can also be seen.

Kubera the God of Wealth is seen riding at the shoulders of Yaksha. Skanda the God of War is mounted on the peacock. Also seen fighting asuras are Indra on Irvatham, Vishnu on Garuda, Agni on rhinoceros, Yama on his chariot that is drawn by buffalos, Bramha on Hamsa, Surya the God of Light on his solar disc, Varuna the God of Water on a five-headed Naga and Siva on a chariot driven by Nandi; all are seen fighting with asuras.

There is also a scene of Vishnu decending and another scene of Krishna with Nanda Parvatham

Indra on Irvatham





### **North west corner pavilion**

Here the scenes are mainly from Ramayanam. A scene is about Sita's ordeal of fire and another is about Hanuman meeting Sita. Some of the scenes like Rama on Pushpaka chariot, Rama killing Kabanda, Syamvaram of Sita are carved.

#### **Sita swayamvaram**

Rama is the central figure of this pediment. Sita sitting on a throne and surrounded by

royal women can be seen on his left side. To the right side Viswamitra can be seen with a beard and Lakshmana on his back. On the register below this, is King Janaka, the father of Sita, seen sitting on a throne with other royal personals. In the lower register are warriors.

#### **Hanuman meeting Sita**

In this relief Sita is seen sitting under a tree and Hanuman on his knees and with folded hands, in front of Sita, Ravana's servant maids surrounding them can be seen.

Sita Svayambaram





## West Pavilion Northern side

### Battle in Lanka

This side it is mainly about the battle in Lanka. Fighting scenes between Asuras and monkey warriors are there. Some war scenes like Sugreeva killing Kumbha, Hanuman fighting Nikumba, Angada fighting Narantaka, Angada assaulting Vajradanstra, Angada killing Mahodara and Nala killing Prahasta can be seen. Rama is seen on Hanuman with Lakshmana and Vibhshana by the side. Ravana is seen on his chariot entering the battlefield.

After seeing the bas-reliefs around the corridors, we entered into the rectangular building connecting to the fourth enclosure. The rectangular building has a cross- shaped pathway in the middle surrounded by a corridor on the outer side, thus creating four small stone pools, which are empty. The southern corridor is called as the Hall of 1000 Buddha (Prah Peon) and the northern corridor is connected to a small hall, which is known as the Hall of Echoes or the Echo chamber. It is believed that once there were a thousand images of the Buddha, but now only a few of them

Rama on Hanuman -Lakshmana and Vibhushana are also appears





can be seen. In the Hall of Echoes, one can hear their voice echo through the chamber and hence the name. On the door ways there are many carvings such as that of Vishnu defeating asur. Krishna killing Kaliyya, Krishna killing Amista, the churning of the sea of milk, Vishnu sleeping on Anantha and Krishna killing Kamsa. Figures of apsaras can be seen on the roof.

From there we entered to the second level, which is surrounded by a corridor making it as the fourth enclosure. As soon as one enters, two small library buildings can be seen, on each side. Then is the main third level with steep steps, called as Royal steps, which is on the west side. The common people were not allowed into the third level. Only the King and the royal priests were allowed. There is a plank in the third level. It is written" that originally the principal sanctum of Angkor Wat's upper most terraces, called Bakan, was open to four cardinal points, and probably sheltered a statue of Vishnu. Later when Angkor Wat became a centre of the newly constituted walls, it was then sculptured with a relief of the standing Buddha. The 20th century investigations inside the sanctuary reveals multiple statue and pedestrian fragments, of which two pieces are of

Ravana on his chariot





particular note, a statue of Buddha seated on naga, which is now venerated in Bakan's eastern gallery, and a rectangular stone object which is thought to have served as a sarcophagus. A number of such objects where corpse have been placed in a foetal position, have been found in other Angkorian temples.”

To go to the main gopura you have to climb steep steps, which are very difficult. The main deity was Vishnu. At present there are some statues of Buddha seated on the Naga. There are standing and reclining Buddha statues also. On the top of the third level, there are five towers. The center tower is for Vishnu, the northern side one is for Siva, the other one is for Uma (Parvathi), on the southern side one is for Bramha and the other one is for Saraswathi. From the top level, the lower part of Angkor Wat shows the layout clearly. The middle central tower is of 42 mt. high from the second level. From the main causeway, this tower is of 62 mt. High.

The hall of 1000 buddha with the stone pool in the foreground







View of the side tower with steps





Buddha in uppermost terrace



Statue of Buddha



View of Angkor Wat







Apsara figures



Reclining Buddha





Steps to top of the terrace

Panoramic view of Angkor wat



**បាកាន**

កាលពីដើមឡើយ ប៉មកណ្តាលជាកំពូលហេដ្ឋារចនាសម្ព័ន្ធនៃប្រាសាទវត្ស ហើយប្រហែលជាមានតម្កល់បដិមាព្រះនារាយណ៍។ ក្រោយមក ពេលដែលព្រះរាជអាណាចក្រខ្មែរបានធ្លាក់ចុះទៅជាប្រទេសខ្មែរ ហើយមានកិត្តិយសខ្មែរឡើងវិញ ពោលគឺចាប់ពីសតវត្សទី១១ គេបានជួបទៅនឹងនោះវិញដូចជាដើម ហើយសាងសង់ប្រាសាទឡើងវិញនៅតាមទីនោះ។ ដោយយកសំណៅកែលម្អប្រាសាទប្រាសាទបាកាននេះ អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវខ្មែរ ទៅពេលគេបើកជញ្ជាំងខាងត្បូងនៃប៉មកណ្តាលនេះ គេបានឃើញប្រាសាទដ៏ធំមួយនៅក្នុងប្រាសាទនោះ។ ក្នុងប្រាសាទនោះមានវត្ថុដ៏ដ៏ល្អ គឺរូបភាពសំណាកដ៏ល្អ។

១. ព្រះពុទ្ធប្រកបដោយមុខងារអង្គ ដែលសព្វថ្ងៃតម្កល់នៅលើដានបាកាននេះដែល (បែរទៅកើត គឺទៅច្រកទៅកណ្តាល)។

២. អាងថ្មមួយចំនួន ដែលអាចប្រើប្រាស់ទៅនឹងអាងមួយទៀតមានគម្រប ហើយដែលឃើញមាននៅបន្ទប់សម្រាប់ ឬក៏ស្រាវជ្រាវនេះយល់ថា អាងប្រភេទនេះជាម្ចាស់ ឬក៏ជាដំណាក់កាលដែលគេបញ្ជូនផ្គត់ផ្គង់ទឹក ក្នុងកំឡុងពេលដូចគ្នានៅក្នុងផ្នែកនេះ។

**Bakan**

Originally, the principal sanctuary of Angkor Wat's uppermost terrace, called "Bakan", was open to the four cardinal points, and probably sheltered a statue of Vishnu. Later, when Angkor Wat became a center of Buddhist pilgrimage, the four entranceways into the central sanctuary were filled in with sandstone, each of the newly constituted walls was then sculpted with a relief of the standing Buddha. 20th-century investigations inside the sanctuary revealed multiple statue and pedestal fragments, of which two pieces are of particular note: a statue of the Buddha seated on a naga, which is now venerated in Bakan's eastern gallery, and a rectangular stone object thought to have served as a sarcophagus. A number of such objects, in which the corpse would have been placed in a foetal position, have been found in other Angkorian temples.

A plank in Angkor wat



View of the corridor



View of the Entrance Towers and the library buildings from Top Tower







Angkor Wat Entrance Towers in night

Reflection in night







Arial view of Angkor Wat

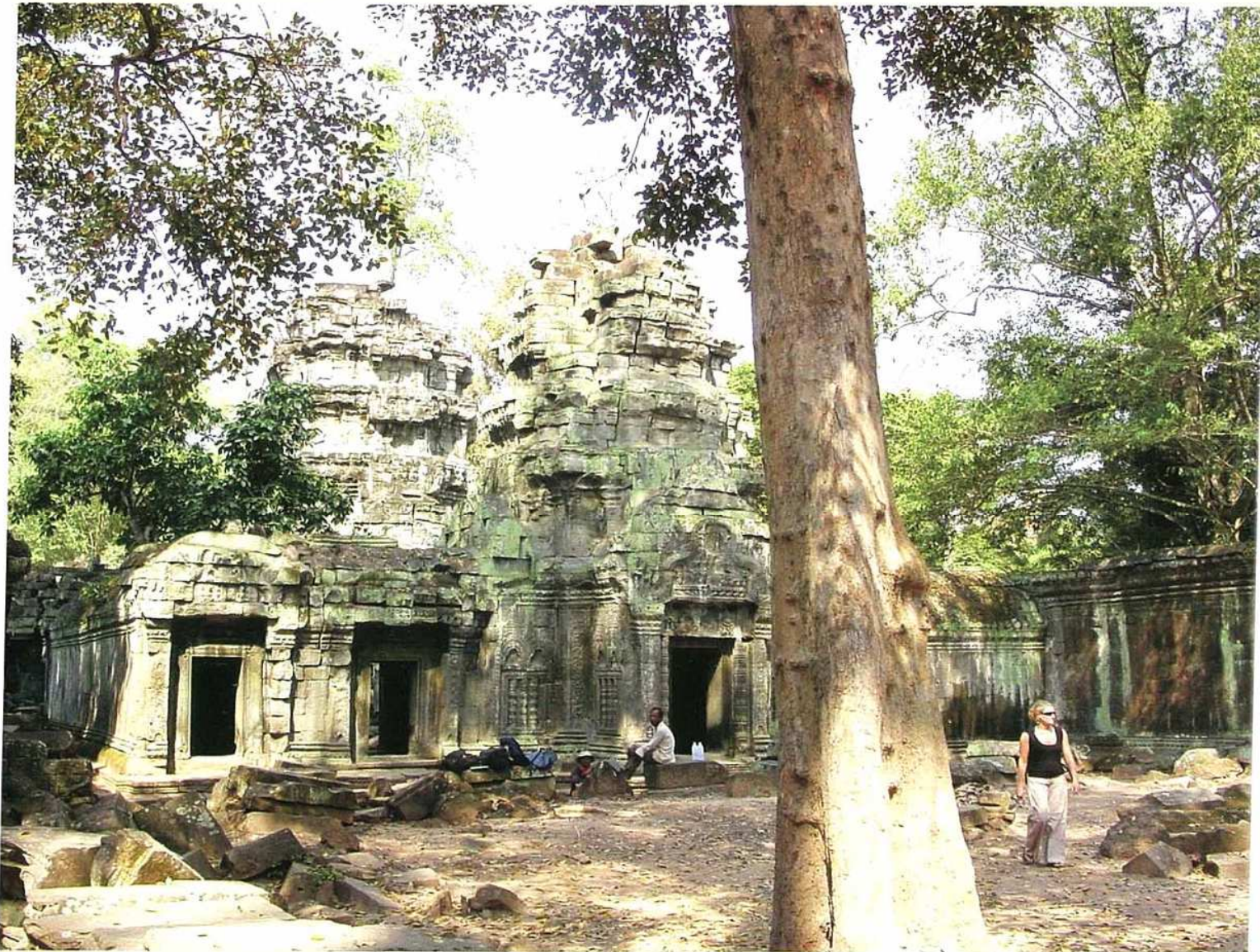


# Temples built by King Jayavarman VII

## Ta Prohm

King Jayavarman VII constructed many temples towards the end of 12th century and during the early 13th century. All the temples which Jayavarman VII constructed and which we have seen are Buddhist. It is said that Buddhism had surpassed Hinduism in the 12th century under the rule of Jayavarman VII. He constructed more temples than any other king did. He constructed many roads and bridges as well and the country prospered well under his rule.

Entrance Tower







Tree covering the temple

Jayavarman VII built Ta Prohm in 1136 AD. It is a Buddhist temple dedicated to the king's mother. The temple is not fully restored yet. The French took up the restoration work. The clearing of the jungle, to an extent and the renovation of the pathway that leads to the temple have been completed. A Sanskrit inscription in the temple tells about the size and the functioning of the temple. Ta Prohm controlled about 3,140 Villages, with a population of about 80,000 people. It had 18

priests, 2740 officials, 2202 assistants and 615 dancers. The temple had a set of gold vessels weighing about 500 Kgs, 35 diamonds, 40,000 pearls, 4500 precious stones and silk beds etc. I feel that this may be exaggerated in the inscriptions, but it was certainly a rich temple.

Ta Prohm is just like Banteay Kedi with huge fig and silk-cotton trees with their roots covering the walls and the gopurams, clamping together. The work of Mother Nature is wonderful. Some buildings have collapsed as a





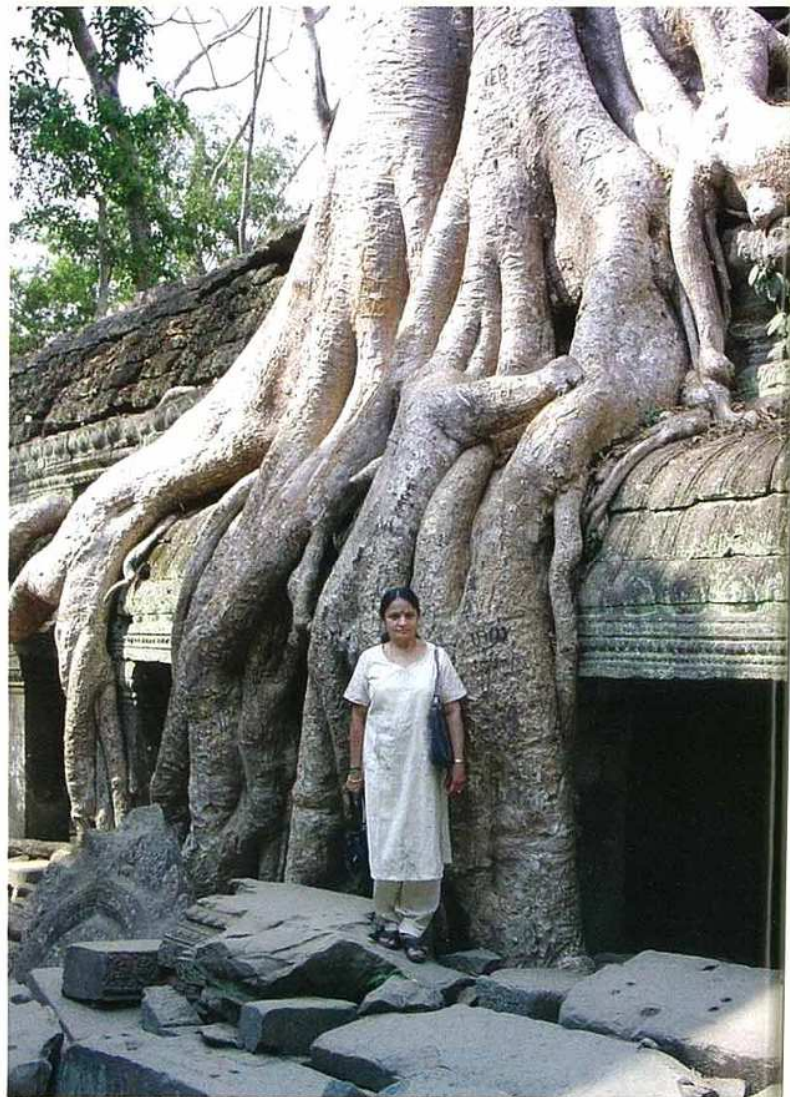
Apsara carving on the wall

result of the growth while others are held intact by the roots. The entrances are on the eastern and western sides. We entered from the eastern side, which has only one gopuram, and then passed through an elevated sand stone terrace and through another gopuram. The doorway of this gopuram is decorated but damaged. After we passed this gopuram on the north side, we came across a sand stone hall known as The Hall of the Dancers. This might have been used for performing dances in the olden days. The walls are decorated with dancing apsaras. In the central area, there are galleries and shrines, decorated with female divinities. Buddhist scenes and apsaras were

carved on the library building. The central courtyard has carved doors and windows in stone.

I took quite a few pictures where you can notice how the jungle has covered the ancient temples for centuries together, before it could be brought back to the civilized world.

Tree clamping the temple







Huge trees holding the temple and the wall





## Banteay Kdei

Built by Jayavarman VII in the late 12th century the Banteay Kdei is a Buddhist temple. This temple was built with sandstone of an inferior quality. Further, the quality of the construction is also poor. As a result, this temple is in a rather bad shape. Even this temple has not been completely restored. It was used as a Buddhist monastery and the monks occupied it for a long period. A moat encircles the complex. The central sanctuary is surrounded by three enclosures. The entrance is from the east side and the tower has four faces.

Entrance tower with four faces





There is a huge Garuda carved at the entrance. Then we entered a rectangular terrace, which is surrounded by lion figures, and it is known as the Hall of Dancing Girls. Then we entered the gopuram of the second enclosure. The carvings on the gallery are partially damaged. Then through a passage, we entered into the central sanctuary. There are two libraries on either side of the central sanctuary. Beautiful apsara figures were carved inside the galleries of the central sanctuary. In the western side the galleries are covered by huge trees with their roots holding the building together. The cotton- silk tree roots are so huge and strong that to restore the building is difficult without actually causing more damage to the structure by trying to remove the roots.



View of the temple



Apsara figures on the temple walls



Tree holding the temple





## Neak Pean

Built by King Jayavarman VII in the end of 12th century, it is a Buddhist temple constructed in the centre of a man made pond called Jayatataka. At the time of construction, it was called as Rajasri, but later was known as Neak Pean, which means coiled serpents. It is said that the temple has served the pilgrims by offering holy water. They say that the central pond is a replica of the lake Anavatapta in the Himalayas from where four rivers are born and which are represented by four points from which water comes out from the mouths of an elephant, a horse, a man and a lion. The elephant represents water, the human face represents earth, the lion represents fire, and the horse represents air, which are the four elements of life.

A wall measuring about 350 mt. on each side surrounds the temple. There are four small ponds surrounding the central pond. In buildings adjacent to each small pond, the four faces are located. The face of the elephant is on the north side the face of the man on the east side, the face of the lion on the southern side and the face of the horse on the western side are located. Thus, the four

Temple in the centre of empty lake







Avalokiteswara on the gopuram

Water Supposed to come out of human mouth



Water supposed to come out of Elephant mouth

elements represent to four directions. The pilgrims used to wash off their sins symbolically with the holy water that comes out of the mouth of the four faces. When we visited the temple, there was no water in the chambers or in the pond.

At the centre of the pond is a small island where the main temple is located. The central pool is of 45 mt. on each side. This temple is dedicated to Lord Avalokiteshvara. At the centre of the pool is a small platform with a tower and the tower is with a base looks like lotus. The two bodies of the serpents encircle the elevated platform of the island, and the tails are twisted on the west side and their heads are at the entrance on the east side. In the central sanctuary, carvings on the life of Buddha may be seen. There is a three dimensional horse head, which symbolizes that Lord Buddha in the avatar of a horse named Balaha that saved his disciples from the shipwreck off the coast of Lanka (Sri Lanka).



## Prasat Ta Som

King Jayavarman VII built this temple towards the end of 12th century. It is a small temple built on a flat surface. It is a Buddhist temple and dedicated to the king's father. It seems that it was later converted into a Hindu temple. Many parts of the temple are in a bad shape. This temple is similar to Bentay Kedi. This was constructed with volcanic stones and sand-stones. In all, there are three enclosures. The first enclosure has four entry towers, one on each side. The towers are in the shape of a cruciform. The gopurams has four smiling faces of Avalokeswara, symbolizing the king's face. Even though the gopurams are small, the four faces on it distinguish it from the other temples.

Entrance to temple



Slide view of the gopuram







Ruined second enclosure



Tree covering the gopuram

There is a statue of Avalokeshwara in a standing pose in the front. There are also lots of dancing apsaras standing on lotuses. The second enclosure has two entrances, one on the east side and the other on the west side. There are carvings of apsaras in the second enclosure also. There is a pool in between the two enclosures.

The third enclosure has four entrance towers with cruciform base, with conical stone towers and are connected to one another by corridors. Over the east entrance of the third enclosure, a figure of Avalokeshwara was carved on the pediment above the lintel. There are also figures of apsaras. There are two library buildings on the east side of the central tower in the third enclosure.

The central tower is of cruciform shape. In the central sanctum, there is no statue but only a pedestal exists. On both sides of the central tower only the base of the Siva Lingam are there.



Apsaras in different poses







On Sivaratri when people gather near the lake

## Srah Srang

Srah Srang means sacred lake. This lake is opposite to the east entrance of Banteay Kdei. The architect who built Preah Rup originally constructed this in 10th century. However, it was remodeled in 12th century by Jayavarman VII. It is said that the remains of the old temple may be seen in the middle of the lake when the water is low in summer. It resembles the lakes that are near our temples in South India. There is a majestic platform where one can sit and watch the lake and its surroundings. The decorated platform with sand stone serpents, lions and a Garuda looks majestic. The steps leading to the lake are immersed in water, as the lake is full when we visited.

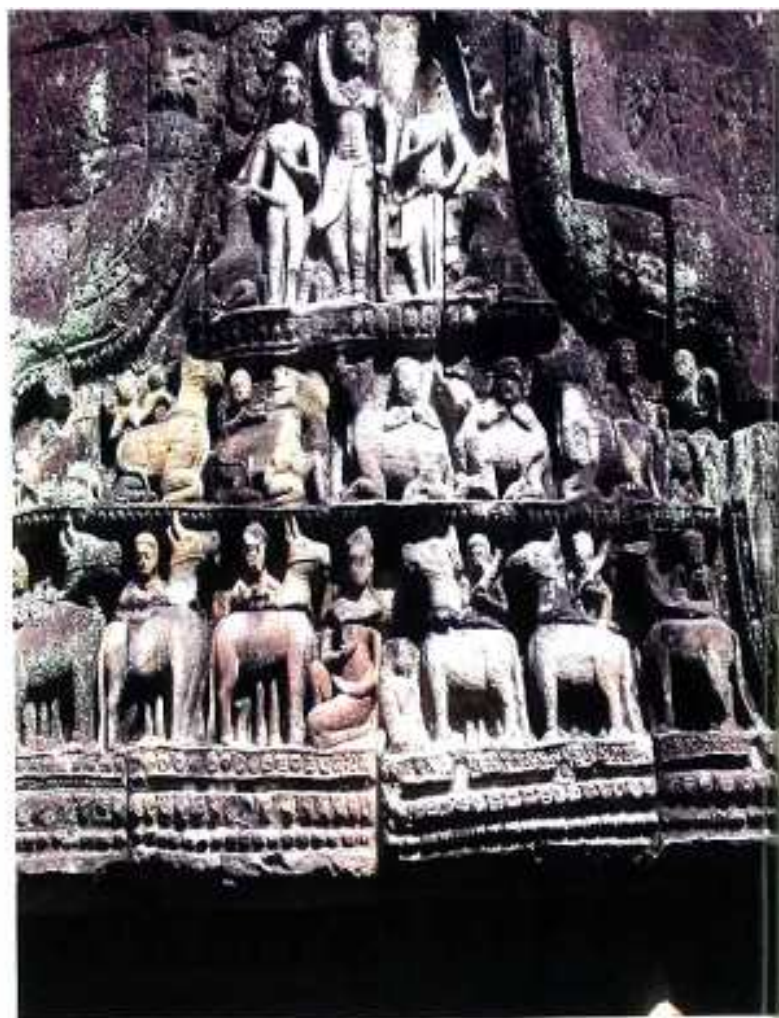
Place where the King sits





## Preah Khan

King Jayavarman VII built this temple in the late 12th century. It is a Buddhist monastery and school, which was dedicated to his father Dharmindeva. It is said that the king also lived here for a short period during the reconstruction of his permanent home in Angkor Thom. Preah Khan means sacred sword. This complex was built in a vast area of 56 hectares. It is surrounded by a two meter high stone-wall on all sides, which is why King Jayavarman VII chose this as a temporary residence. It is also written on the walls that this structure was built on the battlefield where Jayavarman VII finally defeated the Chams.



Snake at the entrance of the temple



Main temple







War scenes on the tower

There are four enclosures for the main structure and the outer one is surrounded by a wide moat. Inside the outer enclosure are the living quarters of the monks, students and attendants. In the second enclosure, there are temples. The central complex is of Buddhist. On the northern and western sides, they are dedicated to Siva and Vishnu. On the eastern side is the entrance to the central temple. The southern side is supposed to be the site for ancestral worship.

Krishna lifting Govardhanagiri







Tree overgrown on the wall



Hindu priests



Dancing Apsaras

Garuda on the outer wall



Siva lingam





Before entering the temple complex there are sand stone images of Garuda carved on either side of the gopuram. It is believed that the Garuda figures holding Nagas, are the protectors of the air and water. There are sixty eight of such figures on the outer wall that together serve as the guardians of Preah Khan.

While crossing the moat to the eastern gopuram, on either side the figures of demons and divine men are depicted carrying two large serpents. Inside the first tower, beautiful carvings are seen. On one of the Gopurams is the carving of Krishna holding Govandhanagiri, which is carved with minute details. Then we passed through the hall of dancers where there were many beautiful carvings of apsaras in different poses. There is a huge stupa in the central sanctuary belonging to the 16th century.

This temple was rediscovered in the 19th century as it was forgotten and covered with huge trees that had grown over the temple complex. Even today, one can see trees that cover certain portions of the temple as well as the walls. This temple has a unique architecture, supposed to be the library building with two stories resembling the Greek architecture.

Greek style two storied building



Trees damaging the temple





## Prasat Krol Ko

This temple is near Neak Pean. King Jayavarman VII constructed this in the late 12th century or in the beginning of 13th century. This is a Buddhist temple, built at the same time Bentay Kedi and To Som were constructed. This temple was constructed on a flat but unelevated platform.

This temple has two enclosures. First enclosure is about 260 meters by 350 meters and having two entrances. The second enclosure also has two entrances, one to the east and the other towards the west like the first enclosure. The entrances have small towers. There are two pools outside the second enclosure, one on the southern side and the other on the northern side.

The central sanctum is in the shape of a cruciform. There is one library building on the southern side, inside the second enclosure. Most of the temple has collapsed. The central tower has also collapsed and the blocks were kept on the ground inside the enclosure. The main sanctuary has an entrance to the east and blind doors on all the other three sides. There are a few carvings of dancing apsaras. Of interest are the available two sculptures, one of Avalokeshvara standing on a lotus flanked by devotees and the other one of Krishna lifting Govardhangiri, giving shelter to the villagers and cattle, together with Balarama.

I saw a huge silk cotton tree growing on the enclosing wall, reminding how the temples were covered by over-growth of the forest when they were neglected and abandoned.

View of central sanctum



Krishna lifting Govardhangiri





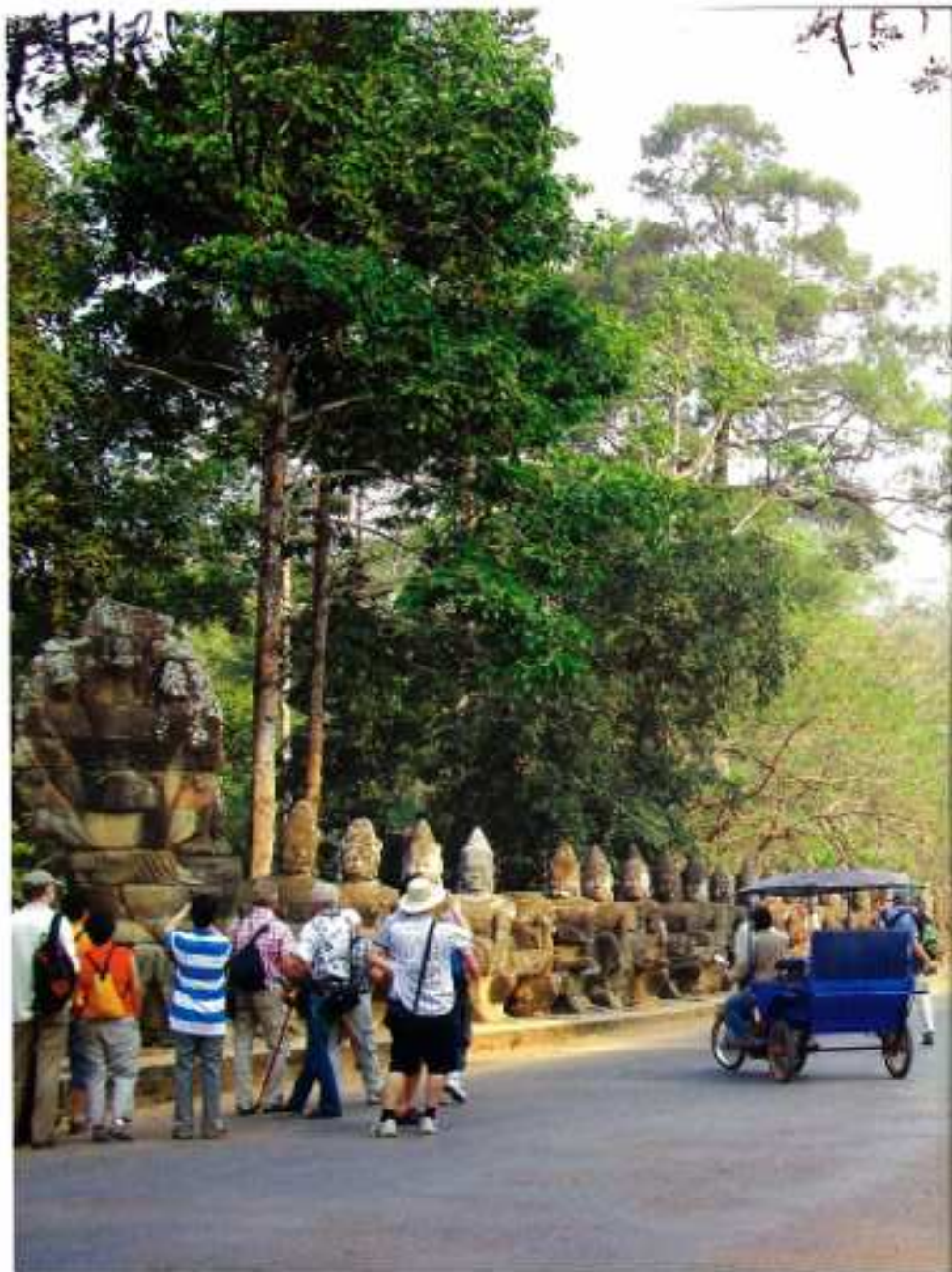
## Angkor Thom

Angkor Thom is as grand as Angkor Wat. Angkor Thom means grand city. The capital city was built by Jayavarman VII and was constructed in 1177 over the ruins where Udayadityavarman constructed the old capital in the mid 11th century. Angkor Thom was constructed after the defeat of the Champs by King Jayavarman VII. The Champ territory is also called Klingy country. Now the Champs are a minority community in Cambodia. The Champs were Hindus that later converted to Islam. The Champs constructed some temples in Vietnam. Even though some temples are damaged the remaining are worth visiting. The Vietnamese consider the area where the temples are located as Holy Land.

Entrance gate of Angkor Thom







The city is enclosed by an eight-meter-high wall, each side of which is about 3 Km long. The total area is about 30 acres. The moat is about 100 meters wide. The city has five gates, one in each direction as well as the victory gate to the east. There are four small temples in each corner called *Prasat Chum*. An earth embankment is present on the inner side of the wall of the city that is about 25 meters wide and serves as a pathway around the city. The king lived within the city walls, along with his family, priests, officials and military officers. The common men lived outside the walled capital. This was supposed to be greater than the European capitals of that century. It is believed that the *gopurams* and temple towers were covered with gold, including the tower of the king's residence. The merchants who visited from overseas have said that Cambodia was rich and prosperous.

*Gods and deities holding umbrellas on each side of the entrance*





Inside the city is the famous Bayon temple, which is the centre of attraction. The terrace of elephants, terrace of the Leper King and the earlier temples Phimeanekas and Baphuon, are the important structures. The king's residence, the Royal Palace, seems to have been built of wood and there is no trace of the palace except the two terraces. These terraces are adjacent to the terraces of elephants and the terraces of the Leper King. From the two terraces, steps lead to an even space from where the king used to view the troops, processions, festivals and ceremonies.

The causeways were built across the moats and they have huge gopurams. The magnificence of the entire structure is astonishing. On each side of the causeway there are 54 figures of Gods to one side and demons to the other side, holding a huge snake on either side. The snake has nine heads. Each of the gopurams is 75 feet high and is crowned by four heads. At the base of each gopuram is an elephant with three heads. On the top is a statue of Indra with his two wives on either side.

It is believed that Bayon temple in the centre is the link between Earth and Heaven. The wall enclosing the city resembles the mountains around Mount Meru. The moat surrounding the city symbolizes the ocean. The serpents held by the Gods and the demons symbolizes the churning of the ocean of milk.

### Terrace of the Elephants

Terrace of the Elephants







Horse with five heads



Garuda and monster figures holding the platform

The Terrace of the Elephants is about 300 meters in length and 14 meters wide with three main platforms. It is believed that there were wooden pavilions and the top was covered with gold. The main stairway is decorated with figures of Lion and Garuda.

The terrace is decorated with elephants, which is why it is called the Terrace of Elephants. The elephant heads are on both sides of the steps, and figures of elephants are carved all along the retaining wall. Scenes such as that of the king going into the jungle and hunting animals like water buffaloes have also been carved. Other scenes such as the elephant with the water buffalo, a tribesman praying to God when a tiger is attacking him, and soldiers atop elephants fighting the lion and water buffaloes are also carved.

Elephant figures all along the wall



Prasats Sour Prat towers from the kings platform





On one end of the platform, on the retaining wall, is a sculpture of a huge horse with five heads. The work is remarkable. The horse is decorated with an umbrella on its head, and that is why it is believed that this is the horse of the king. It is surrounded by apsaras and demons.

Out of the three platforms, the king sits on the middle platform when the festivals are celebrated. Figures of Garuda and the lion face monsters are carved continuously on the retaining wall of the central platform. There are sculptures of two Garudas and two monsters on the side of the central platform. Garuda is holding the tail of Naga.

Across the road there are ten small towers called Prasats Sour Prat. On these towers rope is tied and acrobats are conducted on festival days, when the king used to watch from the central platform. Behind these towers there are two structures, one on the north side and the other on the south side. The one on the north side is called as North Kleang, which was used as a storehouse. The other one on the south side is called as South Kleang. From the central platform there is a road leading to Victory tower. The road leads to between the towers of Prasat Sour Prat. The two towers on either side of the road are believed to have been used to hold the people in on-going disputes. The belief was that after a day, the person who is honest would remain healthy, but the person that committed the wrong would have been affected by a skin disease.

On the north platform is a fireplace where the candle is lighted. This resembles the Olympic torch. There are three headed elephants on the north platform also. On the retaining wall there are figures of female giants with apsaras on the top row. Another figure is of two giants with the head of a sailor in between them. The story concerns the ship that was caught in the troubled waters off the Ceylon coast, and says that when the sailors prayed to God, He appeared in the form of a five-headed horse and saved them.

Fire place where the candle is lighted on the north platform





## Terrace of the leper King

This is located next to the terrace of the elephants. It is named after the statue of the Leper King on the platform. There are many stories about the Leper King. Some say that King Jayavarman VII was a leper and that is why he had built so many hospitals in his country. Some say that this may be the statue of Lord Kubera, the lord of wealth, or that of Yasovarman I, both of whom are believed to have been lepers. The belief that Lord Kubera was a leper deviates from traditional Hindu mythology. Some people also say that it is so named because lichen grew on the statue and that is why they called it the Leper King. Another story is that one king punished his minister with his sword for not prostrating before him and the venomous spill that fell on the king made him a leper. Another story is that the king fought with a snake and the venom, which fell on him, caused leprosy.

Yet another story is that it is the statue of Yama. There are statues of four assistants on each side of the main statue of Yama. In Cambodian language Yama is referred to as Yumreaca. Surrounding the terrace on three sides there are carvings on outside of the retaining wall as well as on the passage walls inside the retaining wall. The carvings are of good quality. There is a figure of Naga with five heads and divinities on both sides. There are some unfinished carvings also on the retaining wall. There is a carving of Yama, but the face is chipped off. There are carvings of Gods riding on animals like elephants, snakes, crabs, fish, crocodiles, tortoise, etc.

Yama on terrace of leper king



Decorated wall in Terrace of the leper king





## Bayon

Jayvarman VII built this temple as the centre of his capital city Angkor Thom, to glorify his rule and to bring bright future to the Khmers. This grand structure was built 100 years after the construction of Angkor Wat. Even though it is different from the massive structure of Angkor Wat, if one looks on the whole of Angkor Thom with Bayon, it is an equally vast structure. Where Angkor Wat is a single big structure with small buildings surrounding it

Back view of Bayon temple





within a wall surrounded by a moat, Angkor Thom is with Bayon at the centre of the city which is itself enclosed by a compound wall and a moat with a palace, small temples and the terraces etc. The sculptures and the basreliefs here in Bayon are more deeply carved than in Angkor Wat. The four-faced gopurams are the main attraction of Bayon.

King Jayavarman VII constructed Bayon, a Buddhist temple on the base of a Hindu temple. But in the 13th century Jayavarman VIII converted this and many other Buddhist temples into

Gopurams of Bayon temple with four heads





Hindu temples. He removed statues of Buddha and chipped off some of the Buddhist carvings. He changed some of the faces on the gopurams of Bayon temple to look like the faces of Siva by putting a third eye on the forehead. Some of the faces are changed with the third eye and some were left unchanged as Avalokiteswara.

This temple Bayon is dedicated to Lord Avalokiteswara. It is believed that the temple was not built at one time, and it was built on top of an earlier monument as mentioned earlier. There were many additions and some parts of the temple are incomplete and we can notice the unfinished inscriptions on the galleries. The four faces on the gopurams are supposed to represent Bodhisatva Avalokiteswara. Some say it represents the king Jayavarman VII. The faces are with slightly curved lips and half closed eyes. There are 49 towers with four faces in the temple. In addition there are

Avalokiteswara face changed with third eye



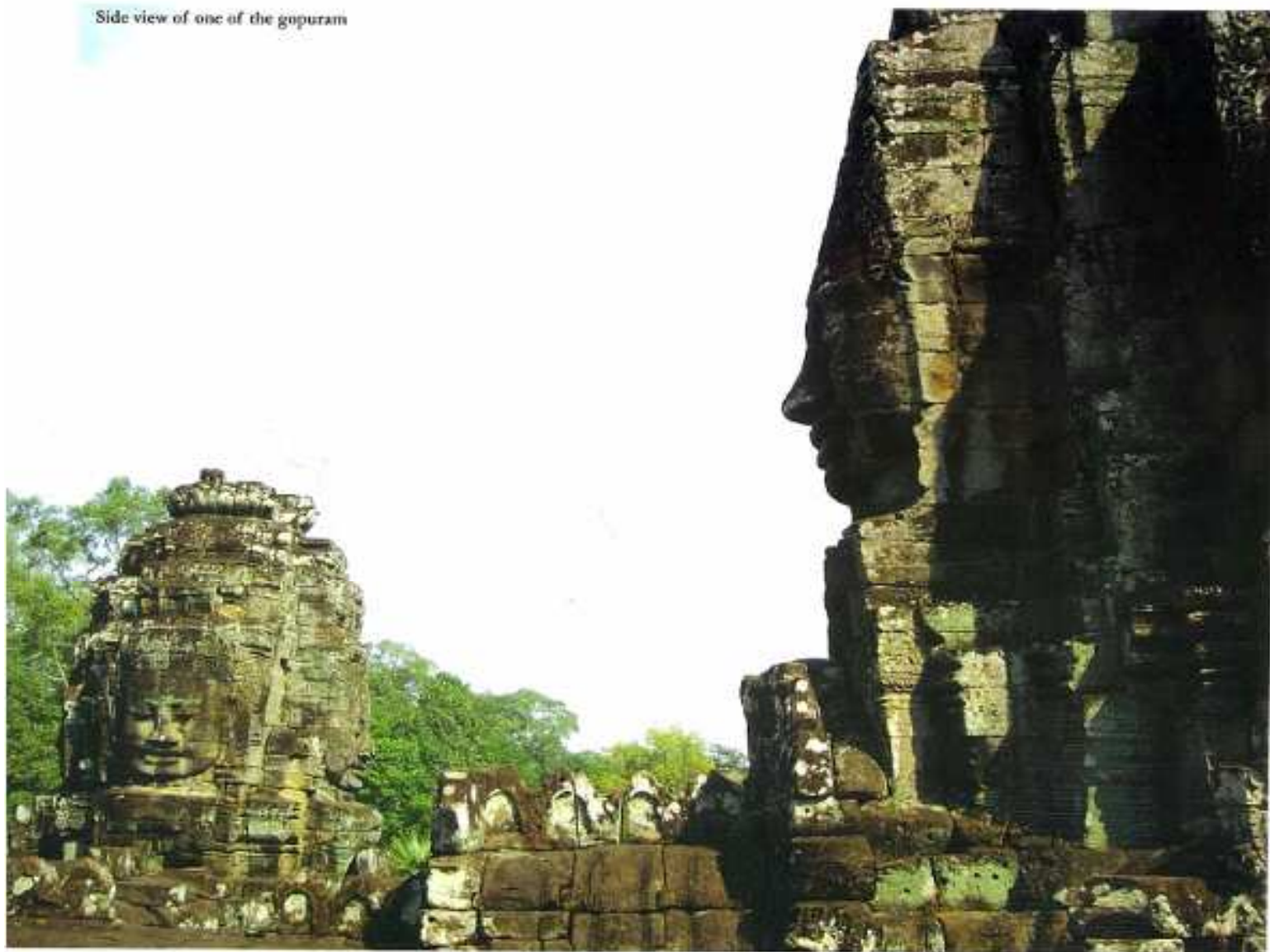


five entrance towers to Angkor Thom for a total of 54 towers with 216 faces altogether. At the time of the Khmer empire, it consisted of 54 provinces and the 54 towers were dedicated to the Gods of those provinces.

The reconstruction work of this temple was done by a team of Japanese archaeologists. At the depth of 17 meters a Naga Buddha statue (Jayabuddha Mahanatha) was found. This temple is compared as a pivotal mountain that serves in the churning of the sea of milk, around which is the coiled serpent Vasuki.

The temple consists of three levels and looks like a hill. According to Buddhist belief it represents Mount Meru but according to Hindu belief it represents Mount Kailas. The first and second levels contain galleries with bas-reliefs and the third level consists of the faces of

Side view of one of the gopuram





Avalokiteswara. The galleries consist of reliefs which reflect the mythological scenes as well as scenes from daily life. It is believed that the outer galleries were open for all worshipers, but to the other parts of the temple only priests and the king were permitted entry. The third level consists of eight shrines originally but later increased to 16 shrines.

Before the east entrance there is a statue of the reclining Buddha, but it is in a bad shape. The east entrance is flanked with guards and on the pillars are scenes of wrestling, boxing and apsaras dancing. The apsaras are dancing on lotus and are wearing heavy earrings and anklets.

In the outer gallery there are wonderful scenes of daily life and war scenes. The eastern side consists of a scene about the naval battle between Khmers with Champs, their neighboring enemies of Southeast Vietnam. On the bottom row, there are scenes of daily life on the shores of

View from west side







Minority group killing buffalo as sacrifice

Tonle Sap. Some parts of the gallery are still unfinished.

On the western side most part is unfinished and consists of some scenes of daily life in the streets. On the north side there are scenes of Khemer warriors and elephants going in a procession.

The inner gallery consists of mythological subjects. In the east gallery there are scenes of people hunting animals, a military procession, Siva going to battle and so on. There are also scenes of the leper king, like the king fighting with a serpent as the crowd watches him; the serpent spewing its venom on the king causing leprosy; the sick king sitting in the palace surrounded by women; and finally, the king lying on the ground. These scenes tell us the story of the leper king.

On the southern side, there are scenes of a military procession, a man climbing a coconut tree, Lord Siva standing on a lotus, dancing apsaras, Vishnu coming towards Siva, Vishnu with four arms surrounded by apsaras.

On the western side it is Vishnu sitting on Garuda, Vishnu looking at the construction of

a temple, again of Vishnu and Siva together. The most interesting scene on this side is the churning of the ocean of milk with the body of the serpent, demons holding the side with the head, the monkey god Hanuman with the gods on the tail side and the column resting on the turtle.

On the northern side are scenes of a procession of servants with offerings; a dancing Siva with ten hands; figures of Vishnu, Brahma, Ganesh and Rahu; Siva sitting between Vishnu and Brahma and so on. Another scene is where Kama shoots an arrow on Siva who is on the top of the hill with Parvathi and Nandi facing Siva. Another scene where Siva with Parvathi sitting on his thigh mounted on Nandi; Siva granting a boon to Arjuna; Ravana lifting Mount Kailasa and there are many more scenes that reflect Hindu mythology.

The central sanctuary in the third level has wooden lintels. There is an image of the Buddha in the centre with prayers being offered. Only the pedestal intended for Sivalingam is present and the Sivalingam itself is not there. Surrounding the central sanctum there are eight towers with four faces representing eight directions. The steps are steep to the third level. On the second level corridor one can notice the Buddha carving on the door way chipped off. There is one beautiful carving on the window; a silk curtain with strings to pull is clearly visible.

Apart from these I took many photos in the galleries, which I will explain and some of the photos are shown here.



## The Procession of King Jayavarman

King Jayavarman II was leading his army to liberate Angkor Thom city from Champs in 1881. The entire eastern side is carved with this procession and the carvings reveal even the minute details. The soldiers have short hair and armor to protect them. The Champ soldiers have beards and a different type of headdresses. They are followed by people of the minority group living in the jungle, conspicuous in their loincloth following the soldiers in the battle. In the background are different trees like gum, palm and silk cotton trees. Monkeys can be seen on the palm trees. Then there is a group of people following them in the procession including musicians playing the flute and beating drums. Behind them in the procession are bullock carts carrying food supplies to the soldiers. There are scenes of people killing a pig to cook. Elephants are also in the procession. The wife

Procession of the king



of King Jayavarman II is seen on one of the elephants. There is another scene where the minority people are killing a buffalo as sacrifice. The later part of the procession is on the reverse direction.

An elephant is seen carrying the king's crown. There is a market scene where the Champs are selling goods in the market.

Another scene is where an apsara is dancing while musicians are plying.

Another scene is where servants are attending the king.

The high priest is teaching the ministers as well as the king's sons.

The chief apsara is dancing with her two assistants. The apsara is dancing on the lotus. There are lots of scenes like this.

Another illustration is where the Khemer soldiers are on a boat in the great lake, the Champ soldiers killing a water buffalo, a soldier falling from the boat into the lake, and

Bullock carts carrying food supplies





then the crocodile eating the soldier who fell into the lake. These continuous scenes show how imaginative were the sculptors.

Scenes of daily life that I photographed include a scene where a tiger is attacking the people on their way to the market through the jungle, and another scene is that of the maternity hospital and a woman giving birth to a child.

Apsara is dancing while musicians are playing



Elephant carrying king's crown



People are watching cock fight



People are playing chess





Yet another scene shows a hunter killing a water buffalo.

In another scene the Khmers and the Champs are watching a cock fight standing on either side. Another scene is where the fight is between the wild boars.

Another illustration is about the naval battle between the Khmers and the Champs on the great lake, Tonly Sap. The captured Champ soldiers were forced by the Khmers to row the boat. A Khmer soldier is seen putting a hole in the Champs' boat from underneath the water in an effort to sink it.

The Champs and the Khmers are fighting on the great lake.

In another illustration King Jayavarman II can be seen celebrating the victory with his wife. Preparing for the feast a pig is seen fried and wine is served in the party.

After visiting Byon temple we left on the other side of the temple and across the road there is a huge stone statue of Buddha from the 16th century. The original roof was made with timber, which was destroyed, but now a new roof has been provided.

Serving wine in the party



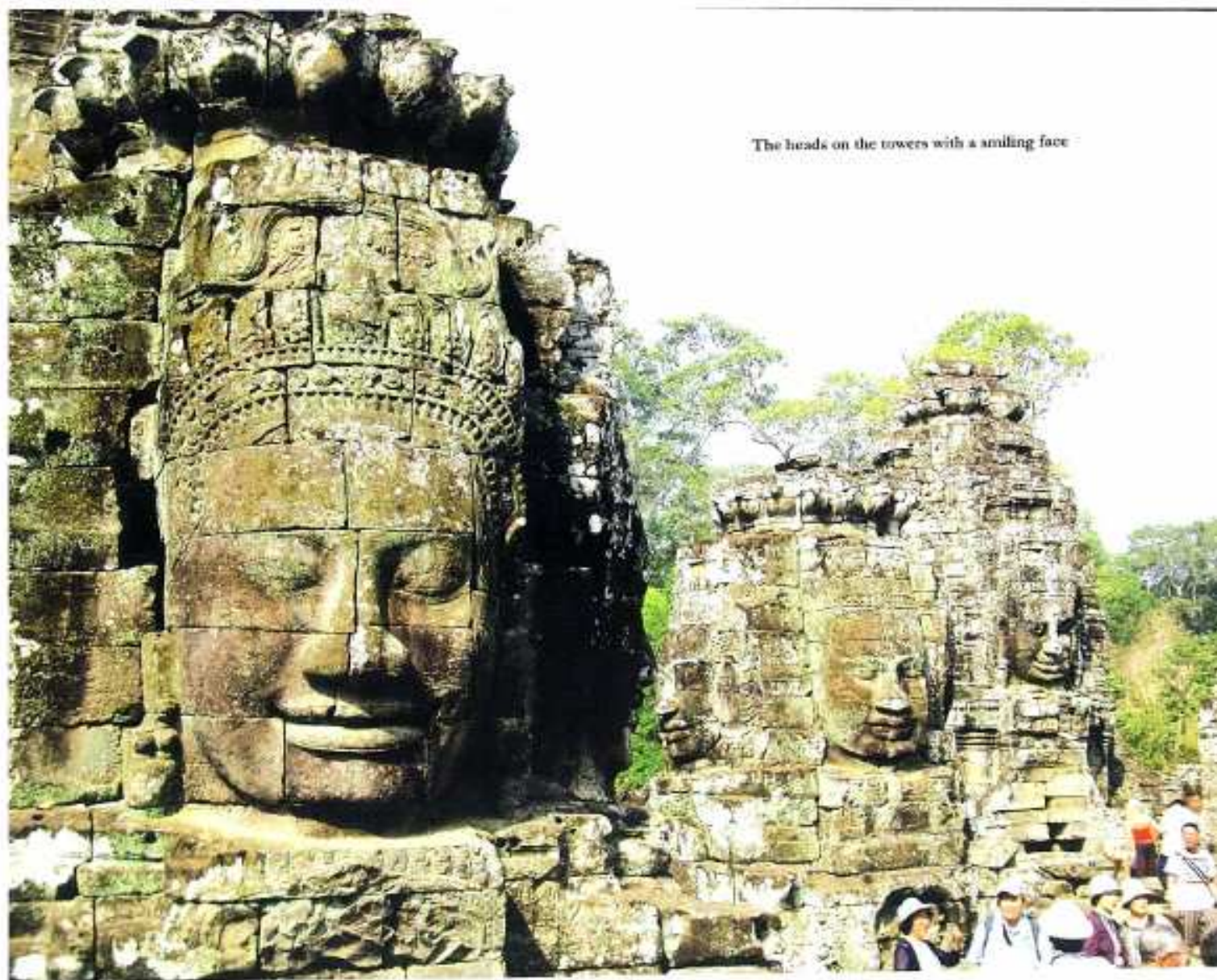
King Jayavarman II with his wife



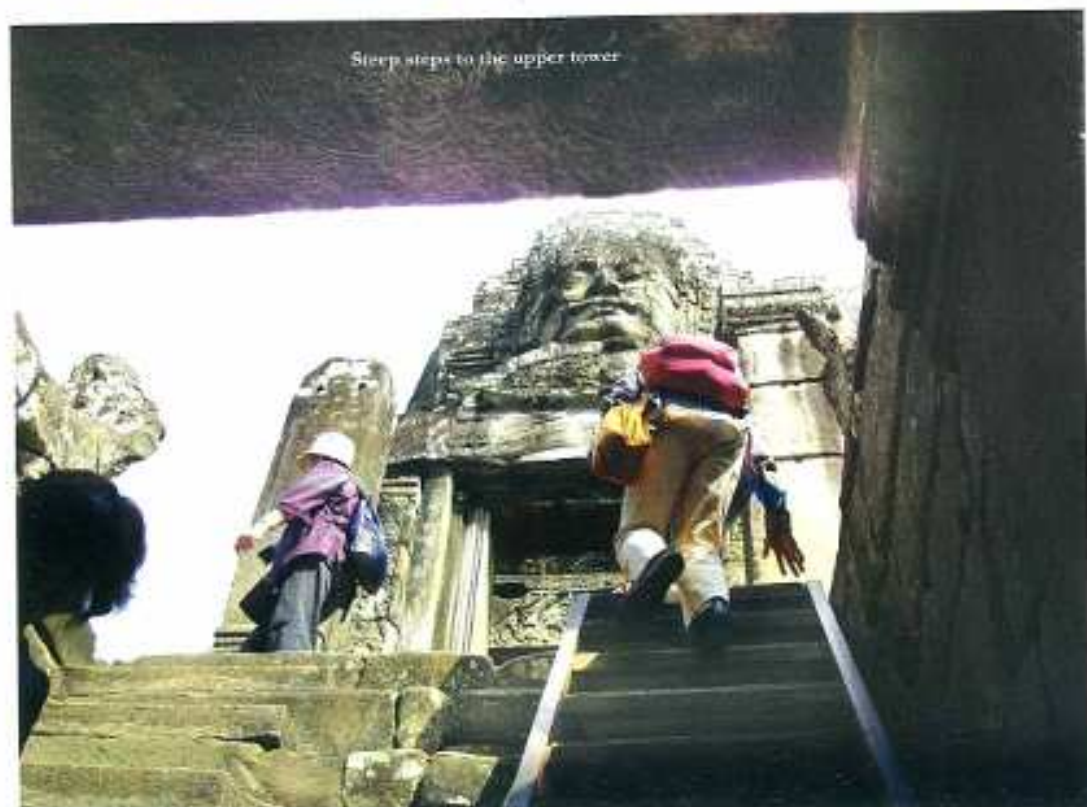
Frying the pig for the party







The heads on the towers with a smiling face



Steep steps to the upper tower



# Phnom Penh

From Seam Reap, we left for Phnom Penh by Seam Reap Airways and stayed in Sunway Hotel. This hotel is adjacent to Wat Phnom, for which the capital city is named. It is said that an old lady by the name of Penh found four Buddha images on the banks of river Mekong. She erected them on the small hill and a town developed around that hill and so the place is called as Phnom Penh, which means Hill of Penh. In 1430, the capital was shifted from Angkor to Phnom Penh due to the continuous threat from Thailand by the Siamese who had their capital in Ayuthaya. Another reason is that Phnom Penh is better located than Angkor to facilitate trade with China.

Phnom Penh was flourishing with traders from Indonesia and China in the 16th century. After seeing the glory of Phnom Penh, the Vietnamese came to Phnom Penh and took over the trade after driving away the Chinese. As a result Phnom Penh suffered from both the hands of Vietnamese as well as the Thais. In 1772 the Thais burnt Phnom Penh. Later in 1863 the French took over Phnom Penh. After the French came, Phnom Penh developed with a well planned layout. The city was divided into districts. By the time the French left Phnom Penh, many important buildings were constructed including the Royal Palace, National Museum, a vast market building etc. We visited the market building, which was

amazing. We heard that in Hampi in Vijayanagara period on the street sides they used to sell precious gems, gold and so on. But in the market of Phnom Penh we saw the open shops in the centre of the market where they were selling precious gems and gold ornaments in the open counters. Our guide cautioned us about the fake products. But one shop lady showed us an instrument where you can identify whether a gem is real or fake.

When Sihanouk ruled the country, the city was fast developed. He was thrown out of power in 1970 and after that with the Vietnam War spread into Cambodia; the city was full of refugees. Then the Khmer Rouge took over the city in 1975. They forced the refugees and most of the civilians to move out of Phnom Penh. The Democratic Kampuchea, headed by Khmer Rouge, killed many of the educated people as well as Buddhist Monks. Again the Vietnamese arrived in 1979. During the eighties there was not much development in Phnom Penh. Only after 1990 it began to develop with the help of aid provided by the United Nations.

We saw some interesting places in the city like Wat Phnom; Sisowat Quay; Independence Monument; Toul Sleng Genocide Museum; Silver Pagoda; Royal Palace; National Museum; Ounalom Monastery etc. m Monastery etc.



## Wat Phnom

Wat Phnom is located on a small hill in Phnom Penh. This is the only hill in the town. The temple was built there because this is the only elevated place. The main entrance to the temple is on the eastern side. The steps are guarded by lions and serpents on each side. It is believed that prayers are fulfilled if the worshipers pray in this temple. In the west side of the temple there is a stupa where the ashes of King Ponhea Yat are kept. He ruled the country between 1405 and 1467. There is a statue of Penh, located in the passage. Also there is a statue of Vishnu with eight arms. The hill is well maintained with beautiful garden and on the side, facing the main road, a floral clock is maintained. As our hotel was located beside Wat Phnom, we went there by walk.



Entrance to the temple

Floral clock near the temple

Wat Phnom temple

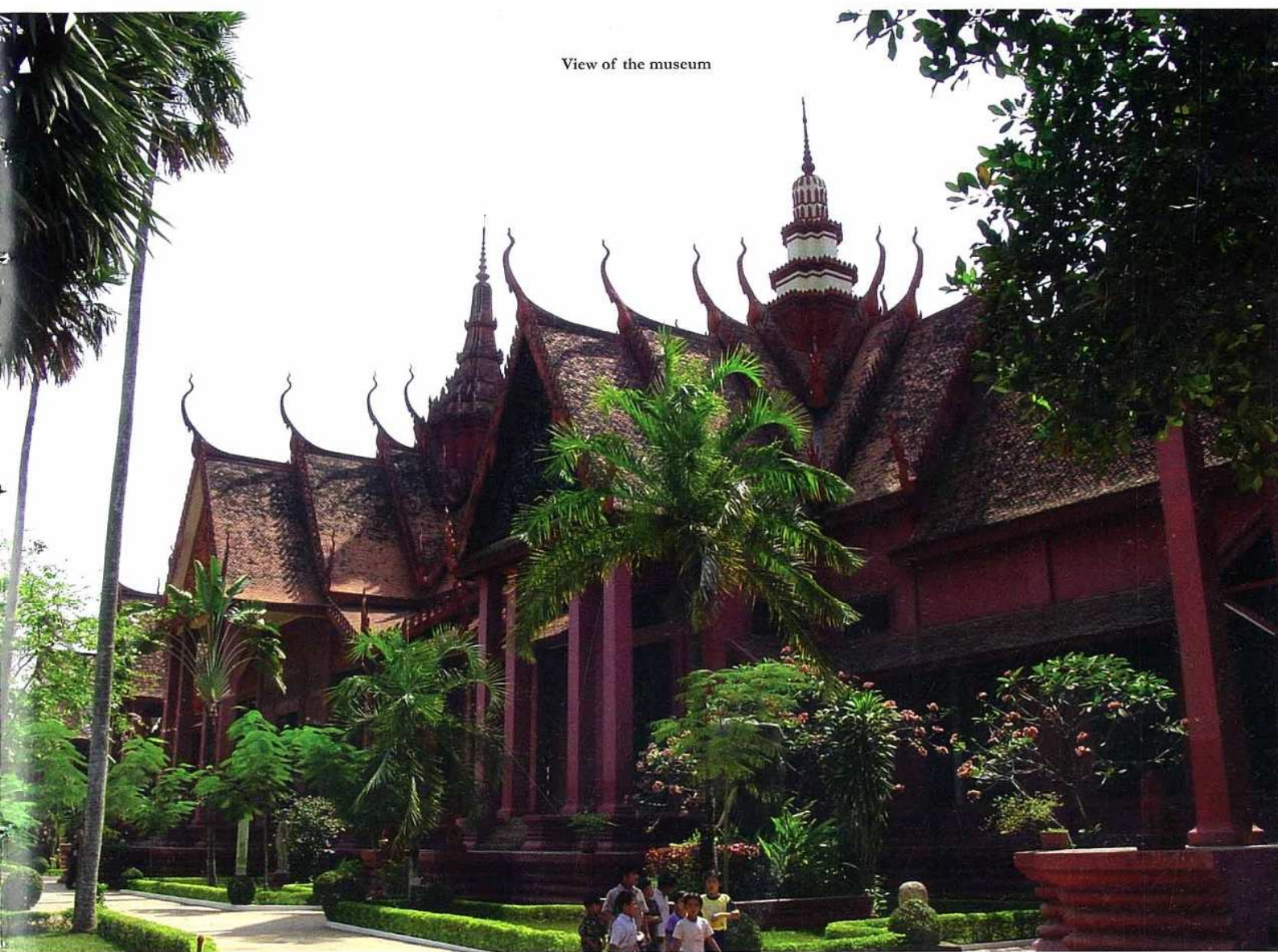




## National Museum

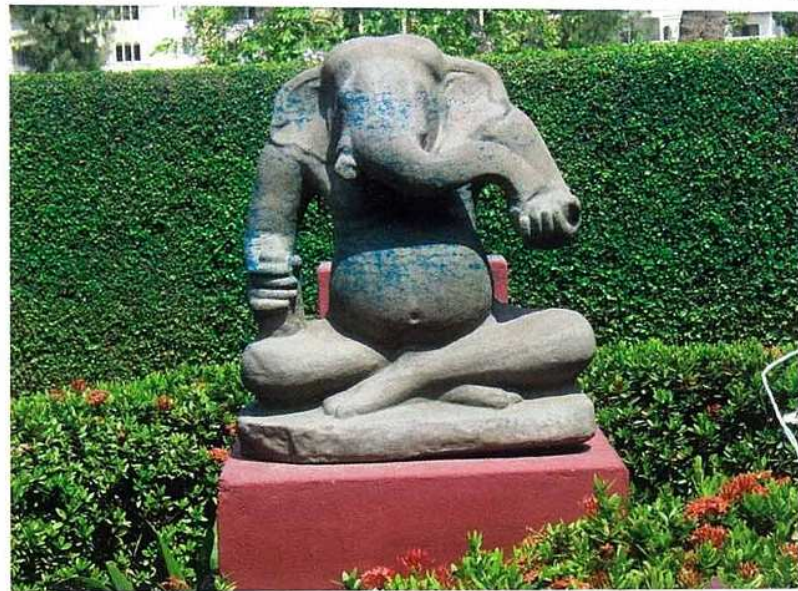
In the afternoon we took a taxi for half a day and we went around the city. First we went to the National Museum. It is a pink building north of Royal Palace. The museum building is surrounded by well-maintained garden. In front of the museum there is a statue of Ganesha. Under a tree there is a sculpture of a chariot where Krishna is with Arjuna. Unfortunately taking photos inside the museum is not allowed. There are four sections in the museum. There are pottery and bronze articles of Pre Angkor periods of Funan, Chenla and Indravarman periods. Statues made of sandstone, bronze and wood are on display. Statues of many Hindu deities are also on display. The

View of the museum





6th century statue of Vishnu with eight arms, a 7th century statue of Harihara (Vishnu and Siva in one form), an 8th century statue of Siva, a statue of Siva with his wife Uma on his lap, a statue of Vishnu in a reclining position are the highlights. Apart from this there are statues of Buddha in sand stone as well as in wood are on display.



Ganesha in front of the museum

Krishna and Arjuna on the chariot





## Silver Pagoda

The Royal Palace was built in 1813 on the site of a former temple, Banteay Kev. After King Sihanouk returned to the Palace, visitors are not allowed into the Royal Palace, but are allowed to go inside the compound wall where the Silver Pagoda is also situated. The roof of the Royal Palace is rich in decoration. The King and the Queen live in the Palace. Apart from these, there is Chan Chaya pavilion where the classical Cambodian dances are performed. Then there is the Throne Hall that was built in 1919 by King Sisowath, and which was used for coronation and other diplomatic functions.

Royal Palace





### Silver Pagoda

In Silver Pagoda the floor is tiled with silver tiles, each weighing about one Kg. It seems there are 5000 tiles like that. This temple is also known as Wat Preah Keo (Temple of Emerald Buddha). Inside the temple facing the dais, a gold Buddha decorated with diamonds is located. It seems the gold Buddha weighs about 90 Kgs, and the diamonds weigh about 25 carats. There is a miniature of a stupa made of silver and gold containing a relic of Buddha said to be brought from Sri Lanka. There is a statue of Buddha made of bronze on one side and on another side Buddha made of silver. To the back of the dais is a statue of Buddha in a standing position said to have been brought from Burma. There are some other small Buddha statues made of gold are located inside the temple. Under Pol Pot rule most of the area was destroyed. But still what we see today is amazing.

Along the wall of the Pagoda, the Khmer art; masks used in classical dances; solid and hollow Buddha figures are displayed. Scenes from the Ramayana as well as Sanskrit poems about Ramayana are also seen on the walls. A library building is located inside the temple complex where sacred texts written in palm leaves are kept. There is also a pavilion where a huge footprint of Buddha is kept, known as Phnom Mondap. There is a bell tower that was used for ordering to open and close the palace gates.

The Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, Throne Hall and Chan Chaya Pavilion are all located in the



Silver Pagoda

same compound and we bought the entry tickets to enter into the complex. The National Museum, which we visited earlier, is only next to this complex.



## Ounalom Monastery

This is also situated nearby Royal Palace. This is the headquarters of Cambodian Buddhists. The official religion of Cambodia now is Theravada Buddhism. Ninety percent of Cambodians follow this religion. This monastery was established in 1443. During the Pol Pot regime most of the Buddhist monks were either driven away from the capital or killed. A stupa containing a hair from the eyebrow of Buddha is behind the main building. There is an inscription in Pali at the entrance.

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## Independence Monument

This was built in 1958 in memory of the Cambodians who died during the war. It is also known as victory monument. Nearby there is another monument known as Cambodia- Vietnam Friendship Monument. This was built in 1979.

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## Toul Sleng Museum

During the rule of the Khmer Rouge in 1975, Pol Pot's security forces occupied Toul Svay Prey High School in Phnom Penh. They converted it to a prison. It seems more than 17000 people including some foreigners were kept as prisoners and later killed. They used to torture them in the prison, and the dead were given mass burials. Those that survived the torture were then transported to the place called the Killing Fields, the extermination camp at Choeung Ek, which is about 15 Kms. from Phnom Penh. The victims included men, women and children. About eight thousand skulls were recovered from the killing fields. The Vietnamese army liberated Phnom Penh in 1979.

A museum is kept for the visitors to see the photos of the victims and their details. As the Khmer Rouge used to keep a detailed record

Independence Monument





of the victims, now it is possible for visitors to see the records and the photos in the museum. In one room the skulls of the victims are also displayed. The inhuman rule of the Khmer Rouge under Pot Pol is exhibited in this museum.

When I visited Poland in October 2003, I went to the Nazi camp in Auschwitz. Auschwitz was earlier called as Oswiecim, but changed as Auschwitz in 1939, and the concentration camp was established in 1940. First the Polish political prisoners were kept there, but later Nazis began to bring prisoners to the camp from all over Europe, mainly Jews. Soviet

prisoners of war, Gypsies, Chzedes, Tungolars, men, women and children, were removed of their belongings like spectacles, suitcases, and physically handicapped equipment including their clothes and sent naked into the gas chamber, where they were killed together. The Nazis would take the valuable articles away. Some such articles are kept on display. But here in the killing fields, the Khmer Rouge soldiers used to kill the victims with sticks that has a bulge on one end, so that the bullets are not wasted. This shows how cruel they were even in 1970. We have to sympathize with the citizens of Cambodia who underwent such a horrifying period. Cambodia who underwent such a horrifying period.

School Building



Skulls on display





## Temples South of Phnom Penh

On the next day we took a taxi and went south of Phnom Penh to see some temples. On the way we could witness the public travelling in buses and vans fully packed. It is just like in rural India where people travels in overloaded buses and autos without any safety.

### Tonle Bati

Tonle Bati is at the front of a lake. It is a picnic spot. The place seems to be packed with vendors and visitors, mostly from Phnom Penh coming there to relax.

Nearby is a modern temple built with cement called Wat Tonle Bati. This temple was damaged by Khmer Rouge. Now there is one Pagoda with huge statue of Buddha.

Mode of travel



View from the take front





## Ta Prohm

This temple was built by King Jayavarman VII, on the existing site where an ancient Khmer shrine Preah Noreay of 6th century was there. Women go to this temple to pray for the children. The main temple consists of five chambers. In each chamber there is a Lingam. They were damaged may be in the Khmer Rouge regime. There are some bas-reliefs on the temple wall. One is of the king sitting with his wife on his right side; the king's wife is punished to death with a horse stamping her, because of her infidelity. There is also a carving of Vishnu with six hands. In another bas-relief, a mother who gave birth to a child is seen with her husband and the midwife. It seems the mother did not give respect to the midwife, and was made to carry the child in a box for the rest of her life. The husband was asking for forgiveness. The scene of Sagramadhanam is also carved.

Hindu god Preah Noreay - Women pray for birth of children



King's wife being punished



Temple entrance





## Prasat Yeay Pean

This temple is named after King Prohm's mother. This is north of Ta Prohm temple. There is a story behind these two temples. One Peau gave birth to a son by name Prohm . When he came to know that his father is King Preah Ket Mealea, he went to live with his father. After few years he came back to see his mother. As she was beautiful Prohm could not recognize her, and so he asked her to marry him. She told him that he is her son, but he did not believe her. To settle this Prohm suggested her that both will build temples and whoever completes the temple in that night itself will have their say. So, both of them started constructing the temples, with women assisting Peau and men helping Prohm. In the night Peau managed to show an artificial morning star and on seeing that Prohm and his men stopped working. Meanwhile Peau completed the temple and Prohm recognized his mother.

Remains of old temple with new construction in back ground





## Phnom Chisor

This is about 27 km to the north of Takeo town. From Tonle Bati, we went to this place. Phnom Chisor is an Angkor period temple, located on a hill in Takeo Province. The only way to reach the temple is to climb this hill. By the time we reached the place it was noon and it had become very hot. Even though the steps were made with cement, it was very difficult for us to climb the hill. This hill is also

known as Suryagiri. This is an 11th century temple. The temple is constructed with bricks and the lintels are of sand stone. The temple complex is surrounded by a wide wall that has windows. The main sanctuary is in the centre of the complex and the wooden doors are carved with figures standing on pigs. The main sanctuary contains the statue of Buddha.

Temple in the central court yard







Carving on the temple doors

Siva and Parvathi on Nandi



Indra on Iravatham



View from the hill shows entrance tower and the road leading to Angkor

There are beautiful carvings on the doorways, but they are not sharp. They include Indra on Iravatham, Siva and Parvathi on Nandi and so on. On the east side of the hill, there used to be an old path that leads to the direction of Angkor. On the plains you can see the ruins of Sen Thmol at the bottom of the hill and Sen Ravang further up and then the Lake Tonle Om, supposed to be a sacred one. In olden days during festivals the King and the Brahmins used to climb the hill Suryagiri from this side.

### Prasat Neang Khmau

This is a temple with two brick towers. It is on the way to Phnom Chisor from the highway. Prasat Neang Khmau means Temple of Black Virgin. This is also a 11th century temple. It is also believed to be the temple of Kali, the Goddess of destruction.

### Conclusion

After visiting all of these temples, we returned to Phnom Penh by evening. We returned to India next day via Bangkok, with unforgettable memories of Cambodia, the Land of Hindu Temples, where Hindu culture once flourished. On my second trip also I returned to India from Seam Reap via Bangkok. Even on my second trip I took a lot of photos, some of which have been included here. I am proud about our culture and to the extent to which it has spread in other countries. In Cambodia I could see the “world's greatest lost civilization”.

I sincerely hope that the cultural relationship and tourism will strengthen the friendship between India and other ASEAN countries.



## Some Shlokas from various Inscriptions of Kambuja

उत्पत्तिस्थितिसंहारकारणं जगतां पतीन्।  
नमन्तु मन्मथारातिमुरारिचतुराननान्॥

नमश्शब्दगुणायास्तु व्यतीन्द्रियवर्त्मने।  
विश्वतो व्यश्नुवानाय व्योमरूपाय शम्भवे॥

उन्मना या सती कान्ता नितान्तशिवसंगता॥  
जगद्धिताय शाशक्तु सा शक्तिरचलात्मजा॥

पान्तु वो वासुदेवस्य पादपंकजपांसवः।  
भुवनत्रितयोत्पत्तिस्थितिसंहारहेतवः॥

नमश्चतुर्भुजायास्तु चतुर्धाविष्कृतात्मने।  
निस्त्रैगुण्यगुणायापि चतुस्त्रैगुण्यधारिणे॥

येनाधिष्ठितमव्यक्तमलं सकलसृष्टये।  
पुरुषस्स यदीयांशः वासुदेवं नमन्तु तम्॥

जीयेन्नेत्रवरांगाभ्यां दधद्वह्निविधू भवः।  
कर्म कुर्वन्निव स्वैरं दाहाह्लादनशक्तिजम्॥



नमश्शिवाय यच्छक्तिराद्या पुरुषसंगता।  
प्रकृतिस्था द्वितीया वा याभ्यां व्याप्तमिदं जगत्॥

अभिव्यक्तो ययाप्येको दृश्यतेऽनेकधा शिवः।  
चन्द्रः प्रतिमयेवाव्यात् सा शक्तिः शाम्भवी जगत्॥

नमश्शिवाय यस्यात्मभावो भावेषु देहिनाम्।  
मोचकश्शक्तिबद्धानां ह्रियेव ज्ञातमत्रकः॥

विष्णुं नमध्वं यद्वक्षोऽनुकरोति सकौस्तुभम्।  
मध्यभागोप्तमाणिक्यमहानीलोपलश्रियः॥

अजन्नमामि यो वक्ति समं वेदांश्चतुर्मुखैः।  
चतुष्पयोधियुगपद्भानस्यानुकृतेरिव॥

दयात्यागधृतिक्षान्तिशौचसत्यादयो गुणाः।  
यस्तेषामेक आधारो विधात्रेव विनिर्मितः॥

येनाधीतानि शास्त्राणि भगवच्छंकराह्वयात्।  
निश्शेषसूरिमूर्धालिमालालीढांघ्रिपंकजात्॥



नमश्शिवायास्तु शिवाय यस्मात्  
ब्रह्मादिरंशः प्रतिभूः प्रभूतः।  
भिन्नोपधानात् बहुधैव भिन्नः  
नान्यः स्वभावादिव वारिभानुः॥

नमश्शिवायात्मविदां दधानं  
योगं मनो यत्र बिभर्त्यभेदम्।  
घटाम्बुधिन्यस्तमुदन्वदम्बु  
राशाविवानेकरसप्रभिन्नम्॥

निसर्गसर्गा न भवन्त्यभावाद्  
यस्या विरिञ्च्यादितृणावसानाः।  
दुर्बोधभावा विबुधैरभेद्या  
सा शक्तिराद्यावतु वश्शिवस्या॥

ऋग्भिर्वह्निशिखाकलापविसरव्यक्ताभिरैन्द्रीं दिशं  
प्रोद्यद्वायुसमीरितेन यजुषा यो दीपयन् दक्षिणाम्।  
साम्ना चन्द्रमरीचिरश्मिनिकरप्रद्योतितेनापरां  
कौबेरीं च विभाति तैस्समुदितैस्तस्मै नमश्शम्भवे॥



## Khmer Alphabets

| Khmer Symbol | Name         | Sound Before Vowel | Sound Before Consonant | Sound at End of Word |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| ក            | <u>kâw</u>   | k                  | k                      | k                    |
| ខ            | <u>khâw</u>  | kh*                | k                      | k                    |
| គ            | <u>koa</u>   | k                  | k                      | k                    |
| ឃ            | <u>khoa</u>  | kh*                | k                      | k                    |
| ង            | <u>ngoa</u>  | ng                 | —                      | ng                   |
| ច            | <u>châw</u>  | ch                 | ch                     | ch                   |
| ឆ            | <u>chhâw</u> | chh*               | ch                     | —                    |
| ជ            | <u>choa</u>  | ch                 | ch                     | ch                   |
| ឈ            | <u>chhoa</u> | chh*               | ch                     | —                    |
| ញ            | <u>nyoa</u>  | ny                 | —                      | ny                   |
| ដ            | <u>dâw</u>   | d                  | d                      | t                    |
| ត ថ          | <u>thâw</u>  | th*                | —                      | t                    |
| ឌ            | <u>doa</u>   | d                  | —                      | t                    |
| ល            | <u>thoa</u>  | th*                | —                      | t                    |



|   |             |     |   |   |
|---|-------------|-----|---|---|
| ណ | <u>nâw</u>  | n   | n | n |
| ត | <u>tâw</u>  | t   | t | t |
| ថ | <u>thâw</u> | th* | t | t |
| ទ | <u>toa</u>  | t   | t | t |
| ធ | <u>thoa</u> | th* | t | t |
| ន | <u>noa</u>  | n   | n | n |
| ប | <u>bâw</u>  | b   | p | p |
| ផ | <u>phâw</u> | ph* | p | p |
| ព | <u>poa</u>  | p   | p | p |
| ភ | <u>phoa</u> | ph* | p | p |
| ម | <u>moa</u>  | m   | m | m |
| យ | <u>voa</u>  | y   | — | y |
| រ | <u>roa</u>  | r   | — |   |
| ល | <u>loa</u>  | l   | l | l |



|   |            |              |                 |   |
|---|------------|--------------|-----------------|---|
| វ | <u>voa</u> | v            | —               | v |
| ស | <u>sâw</u> | s            | s               | H |
| ហ | <u>hâw</u> | h            | —               | — |
| ឡ | <u>lâw</u> | l            | —               | — |
| អ | <u>âw</u>  | glottal stop | (see help file) |   |

## **ភាសាខ្មែរ** Khmer alphab

### Origin

The Khmer alphabet is descended from the Brahmi script of ancient India by way of the Pallava script, which was used in southern India and South East Asia during the 5th and 6th Centuries AD. The oldest dated inscription in Khmer, found at Angkor Borei in Takev Province south of Phnom Penh, dates from 611 AD.

The Khmer alphabet closely resembles the Thai and Lao alphabets, which were developed from it.

### Notable features

- This is syllabic alphabet in which each consonant has two forms, one with an inherent /a/ (first series) and one with an inherent /o/ (second series)
- Vowels are indicated using either separate letters or diacritics, which written above, below, in front of, after or around consonants. The pronunciation of the vowels depends on whether a consonant they are attached to is of the first or second series.
- All consonants have a subscript form which is used to write the second consonant of a cluster.
- In a Khmer text there are no spaces between words, instead spaces indicate the end of a clause or sentence.
- In spite of efforts to standardise written Khmer, many words have more than one accepted spelling.

### Used to write:

Khmer (Cambodian), a member of the Mon-Khmer group of Austro-Asiatic languages, spoken by about 8 million people in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, China, France and the USA. Khmer shares many features and much vocabulary with Thai as a result of centuries of two-way borrowing. There are also borrowings from Sanskrit, Pali, French and Chinese in Khmer.



## Kambuja Inscriptions

### Names of Gods & Goddesses

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Achaleshvara            | Kapalesha               |
| Aja                     | Kapilavasudeva          |
| Amareshvara             | Kedareshvara            |
| Amrutakeshvara          | Kedareshvara            |
| Bhadreshvara            | Krishna                 |
| Bhadreshvaranivasa      | Kumara                  |
| Bhagavat                | Lakshmi                 |
| Bharati                 | Lingapura               |
| Bhimeshvara             | Lingapureshvara         |
| Brahma                  | Lingasadhana            |
| Buddha                  | Lokeshvara              |
| Campeshvara             | Madhava                 |
| Candi                   | Mahaganapati            |
| Chaturbhuja             | Maitrey                 |
| Dharmakaya              | Manishiva               |
| Dharmaraja              | Manishvara              |
| Durga                   | Mulasthana              |
| Gambhiresvara           | Naimisheshvara          |
| Ganapathy               | Nandin                  |
| Ganga                   | Navagraha               |
| Harihara                | Nrutyeshvara            |
| Indra                   | Parameshvara            |
| Indrani                 | Parameshvararyamaitride |
| Jagadishvara            | va                      |
| Jagannathakeshvara      | Pingaleshvara           |
| Jayakshetra             | Parahanteshvara         |
| Jayavarmeshvari         | Prajapatishvara         |
| Jayavira                | Prajnaparamita          |
| Jayavirashakti Mahadeva | Prithivindreshvara      |
| Kala                    | Pushkarakshadeva        |



## Names of Gods & Goddesses

Pushpavatasvami

Rajaguha

Shakabrahmana

Saralayatana

Sarasvati

Shikhareshvara

Shiva

Shivadevi

Sridaheshveri

Suvarnalinga

Trailokyanatha

Trailokyasara

Trailokyavijayagisvara

Tribhuvanaikanatha

Tribhuvanadeva

Tribhuvanamaheshvara

Tribhuvananjaya

Tribhuvaneshvara

Trivikrama

Tungisha

Utpanneshvara

Utsavamurthi

Vagindradeva

Vajrin

Vakakakeshvar

Vardhamana

Varmeshveri

Vidyadharini

Vijayeshvara

Vindveshvara

Vishnu

Vruddheshvara

Vrushabhadhvajeshvara

Yagnapatishvara

Yama







*Sagara Madhanam scene in Bangkok Suvarnabhoomi airport*







# BOOK RELEASE FUNCTION

*With the benign blessings of*  
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**SRI JAYENDRA SARASWATHI SANKARACHARYA SWAMI**  
**&**  
*His Holiness*  
*Jagadguru Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetathipathi*  
**SRI VIJAYENDRA SARASWATHI SANKARACHARYA SWAMI**

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*of*

**Cambodia - The Land Of Hindu Temples**

*authored by*

**N.P.Venkateswara Choudary**

*to be held on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009*

*at Mahati Auditorium, Tirupathi*

*at 4 p.m.*

*Programme Overleaf*



**Program 4 P.M. onwards.**

**Dr. A. Eswara Reddy**

Former Speaker and Chairman (MAIPA)  
will preside over the function

**Prof. Dr. S. Sudarsana Sharma**

Vice- Chancellor, Sri Venkateswara Vedic University  
will speak on Vedic Culture in Ancient Cambodia.

**Prof. Dr. Harekrishna Satapathy**

Vice-Chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupathi  
will speak on Sanskrit Sahitya in Cambodian Inscriptions.

**Prof. Dr. Vaidyanathan Shivkumar**

Vice-Chancellor, SCSVMV, Enathur, Kanchipuram  
will speak on The Indo South Asian relations over the centuries.

**Prof. Dr. R. Nagaswamy**

Former VC, SCSVMV, Former Director, Dept. Of Archeology, Tamilnadu  
will speak on Cambodian Temple Architecture.

**5.30 P.M.**

**Poornakumbha Swagatham to**

**HIS HOLINESS SRI JAGADGURU SRI KANCHI KAMAKOTI PEETATHIPATHI  
SRI JAYENDRA SARASWATHI SWAMULU.**

Speeches by

**Sri V. Rama Rao garu**

Former Governor, Sikkim

**Sri D.K.Adikesavulu Naidu garu**

Chairman, Tirupathi Tirumala Devasthanam

**Sri I.Y.R. Krishna Rao garu**

Executive Officer, Tirupathi Tirumala Devasthanam

Speech by the author

**The release of the book and Anugraha Bhashanam by**

**HIS HOLINESS SRI JAGADGURU SRI KANCHI KAMAKOTI PEETATHIPATHI  
SRI JAYENDRA SARASWATHI SWAMULU.**

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**SRI JAYENDRA SARASWATHI SWAMIJI ON THE DIAS**





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WELCOME SPEECH BY THE AUTHOR





SR JAYENDRA SARASWATHI SWAMIJI GIVING THE FRST COPY TO SRI N. P. CHENGALRAYA  
NAIDU GARU EX. M.P. CHITTOOR. (AUTHOERS FATHER)









Author presenting a memento to Sri JayendraSaraswathiSwamiji