

Beyond Ganga

the influence of Indian civilization in Southeast Asia
the case of Cambodia

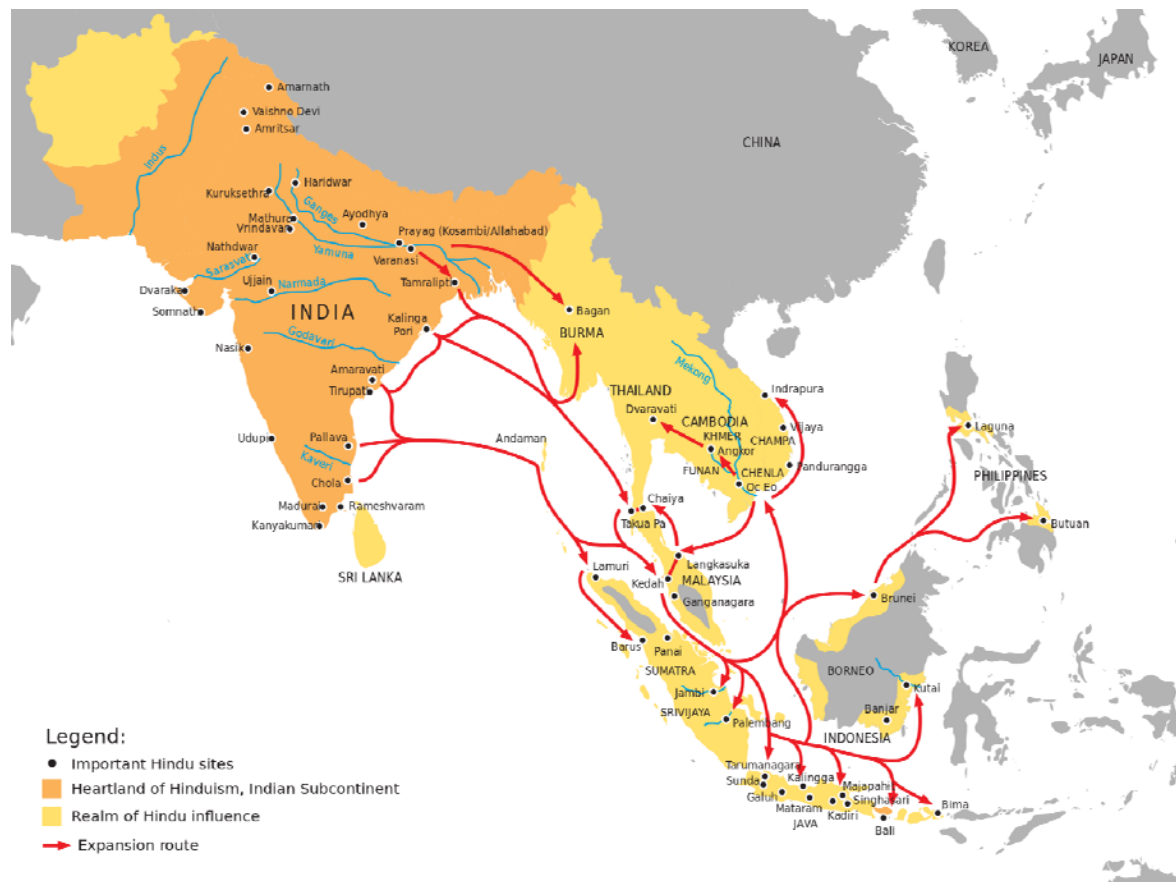


‘the history of the great cultural efflorescence from India that spread throughout South and Southeast Asia’

‘link us to the greater India, in cultural terms that lies far beyond our shores’

Karan Singh (annual meeting of the Indian History Congress, December 2001)

Hinduization / Indianization



Outer or Greater India Indianization of Southeast Asia

An overall influence India exerted on peninsular and insular Southeast Asia

A process that took place between the 1st – 2nd and the 15th century AD

New trade developments seem to have been among the main reasons of that Indian move eastward

Commerce and gold

- Suvarnabhumi, Survarnadvipa, golden Chersonese...
- India used to buy gold from Siberia, and it was transported through Bactria
- From the 2nd century BC, due to population movements in that part of Central Asia, that gold road was cut



- India then imported huge quantities of gold coins from the Roman Empire (Javana) till the emperor Vespasian (69 – 79 AD) forbade their export
- Development of Indian and Chinese merchant fleets
- Development of Buddhism
- The golden Chersonese

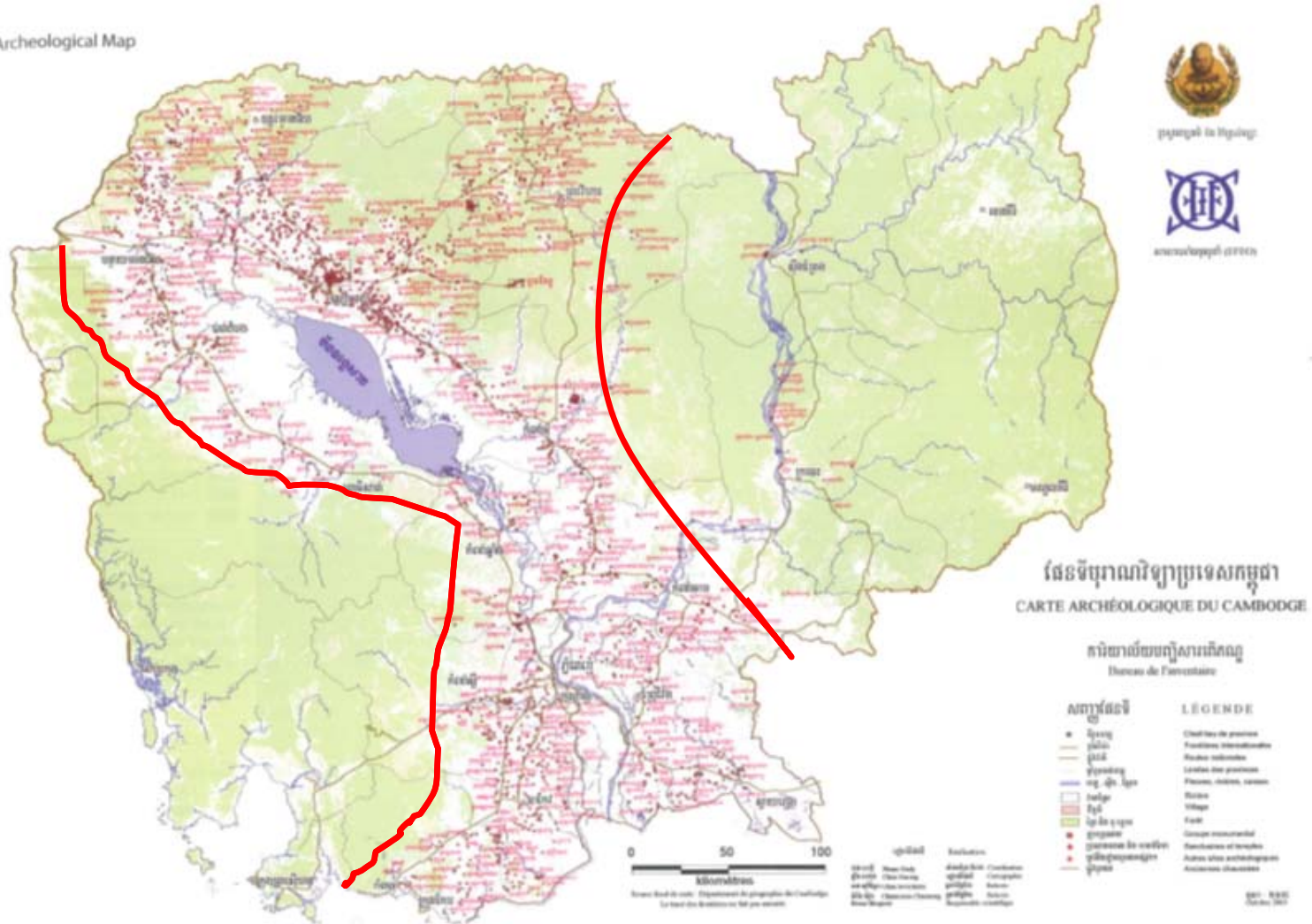
A new concept of state

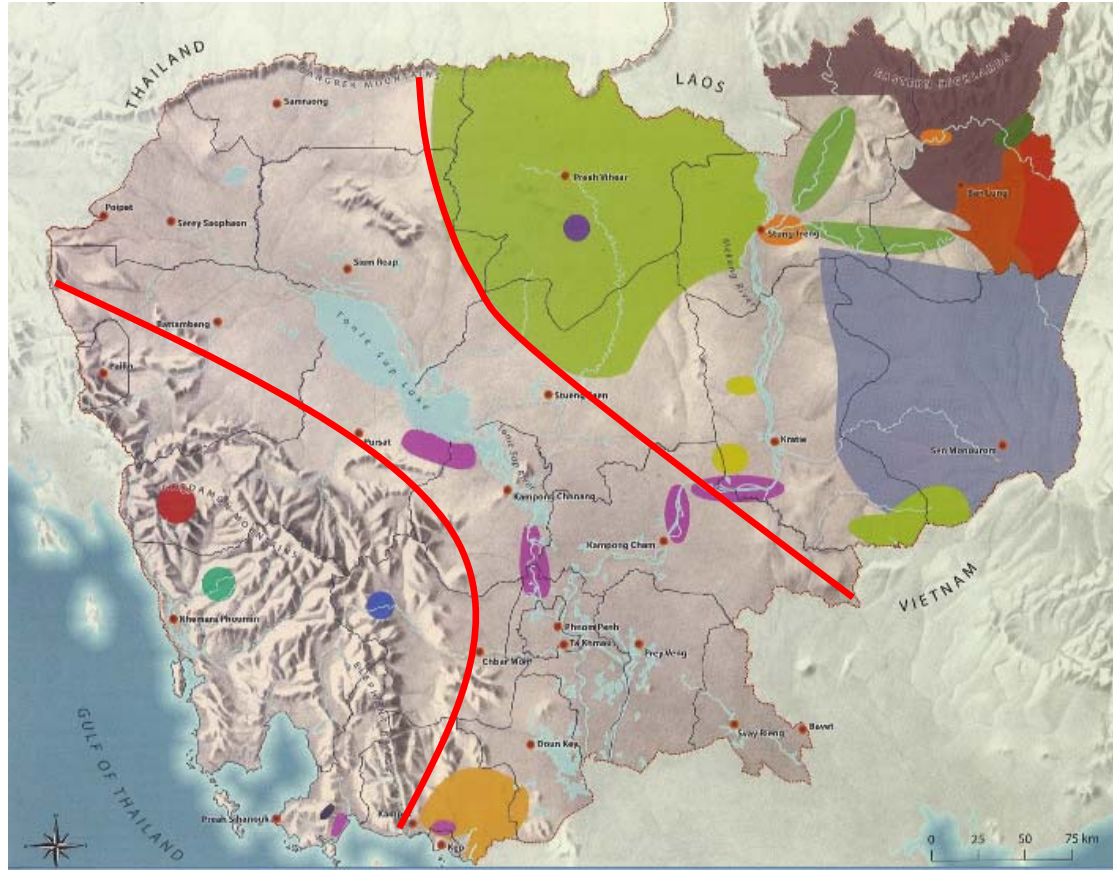
Religious practices

Script and language

The Mountain Temple

Archeological Map





A new concept of the state

From the village
to larger administrative / political units

The birth of the first Southeast Asian states



New religious practices

Local religion(s) / Hinduism and Buddhism

Hinduism

Shiva (1st – 11th century)



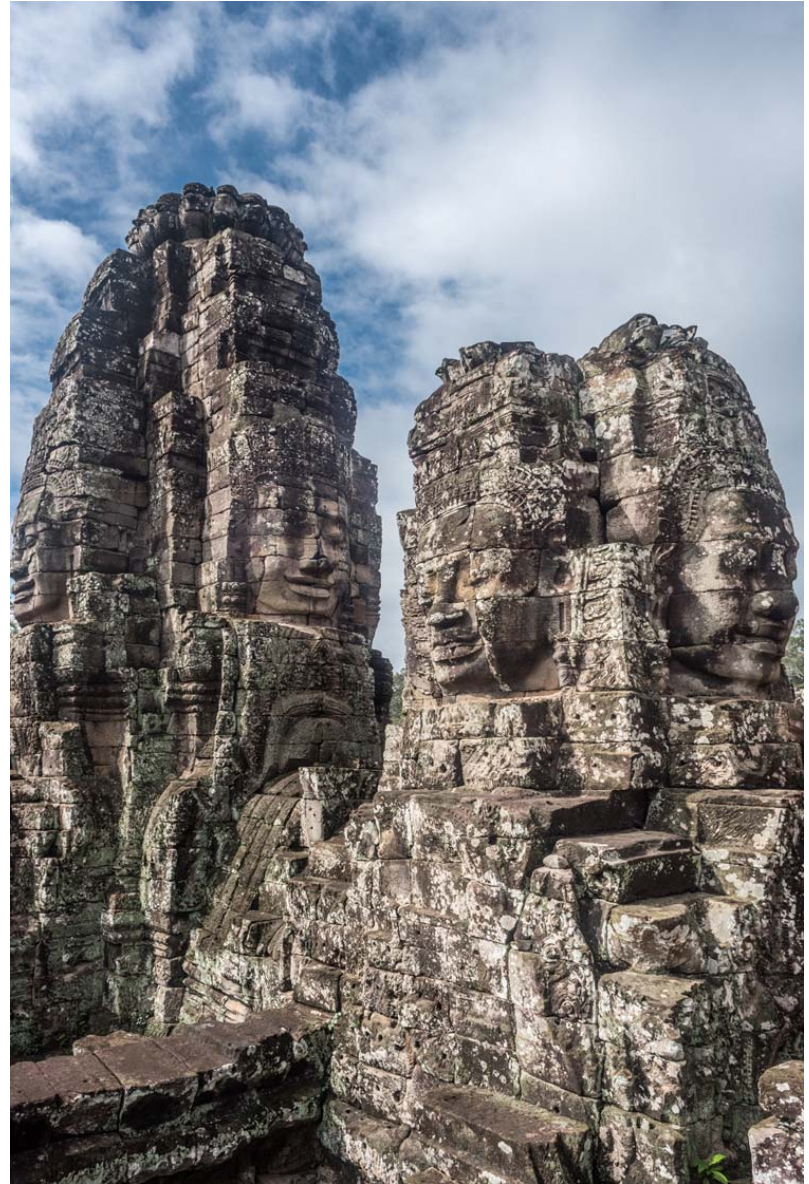
Hinduism

Vishnu (11th – 13th century)



Mahayana Buddhism

(13th century)



Hinayana Buddhism

(14th century...)



Buddhism in early Khmer history

Mahāyāna



Hīnayāna (Theravāda)



Hinayana (Theravada) and Mahayana Buddhism

Hinayana

- The Pali Tripitaka (Tipitaka) from the first council 3 months after the death of the Buddha (480 BC)
- The individual can only count upon himself and the acquisition of merits
- Only the historical Buddha is acknowledged

Mahayana

- Various other sources of which the origin is not always clear: various sutras
- Many other ways such as mantras, music and above all meditation
- A number of other Buddha and Bodhisattvas are also worshipped

Important differences with India

Relationships between Hinduism and Buddhism

- Hindu religion: official religion till the early 13th century
- No caste system (varna) in Cambodia
- Hindu religion visible only at the top level of the power
- Buddhism was ruling people's everyday lives

The local religion

- Local gods pre-existed hinduization / indianization
- Very important part at all levels of society

Local gods: Tevoda and Lok Ta

Overall importance of that kind of cult in Cambodia

Former Chtonian deities

Protection of village and land

Link between rice field and forest

A psychological geography of the land



Between the known and the unknown

- Inside the village
- The rice-field – sraε - ត្រែស
- mi:r
- Outside the village
- The forest – prεj - ត្រែជ
- Bri:



Three Lok Ta with their attributes guarding the entrance of a Pre-Angkorian 7th century temple



The altar of Lok Ta Kry in the Cardamom Mountains



The altar of Yiey Mao built by the Khmer Rouge in the central part of the Cardamom Mountains

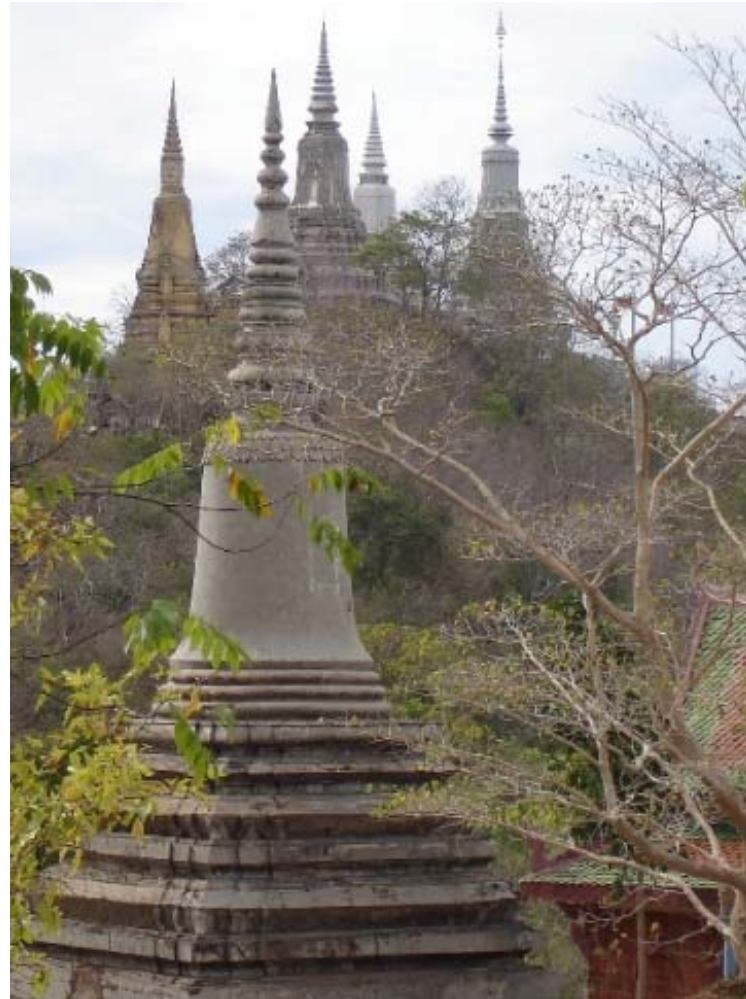


The local deities:

the core of a
popular religion

but

also a symbolic
protection for the
kingdom



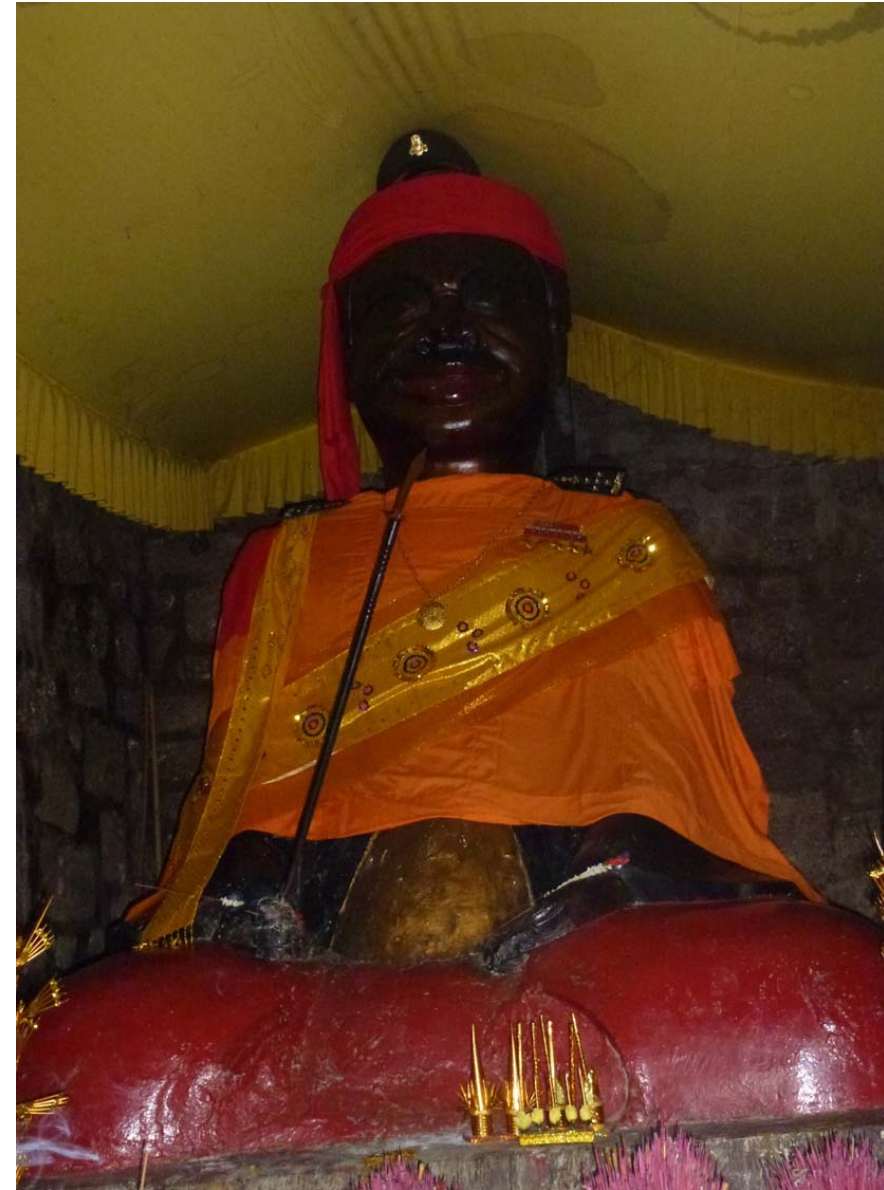




The Lok Ta with the precious stones stick guarding King Ang Chan's (1529 – 1566) stupa in Oudong



Lok Ta with the iron stick



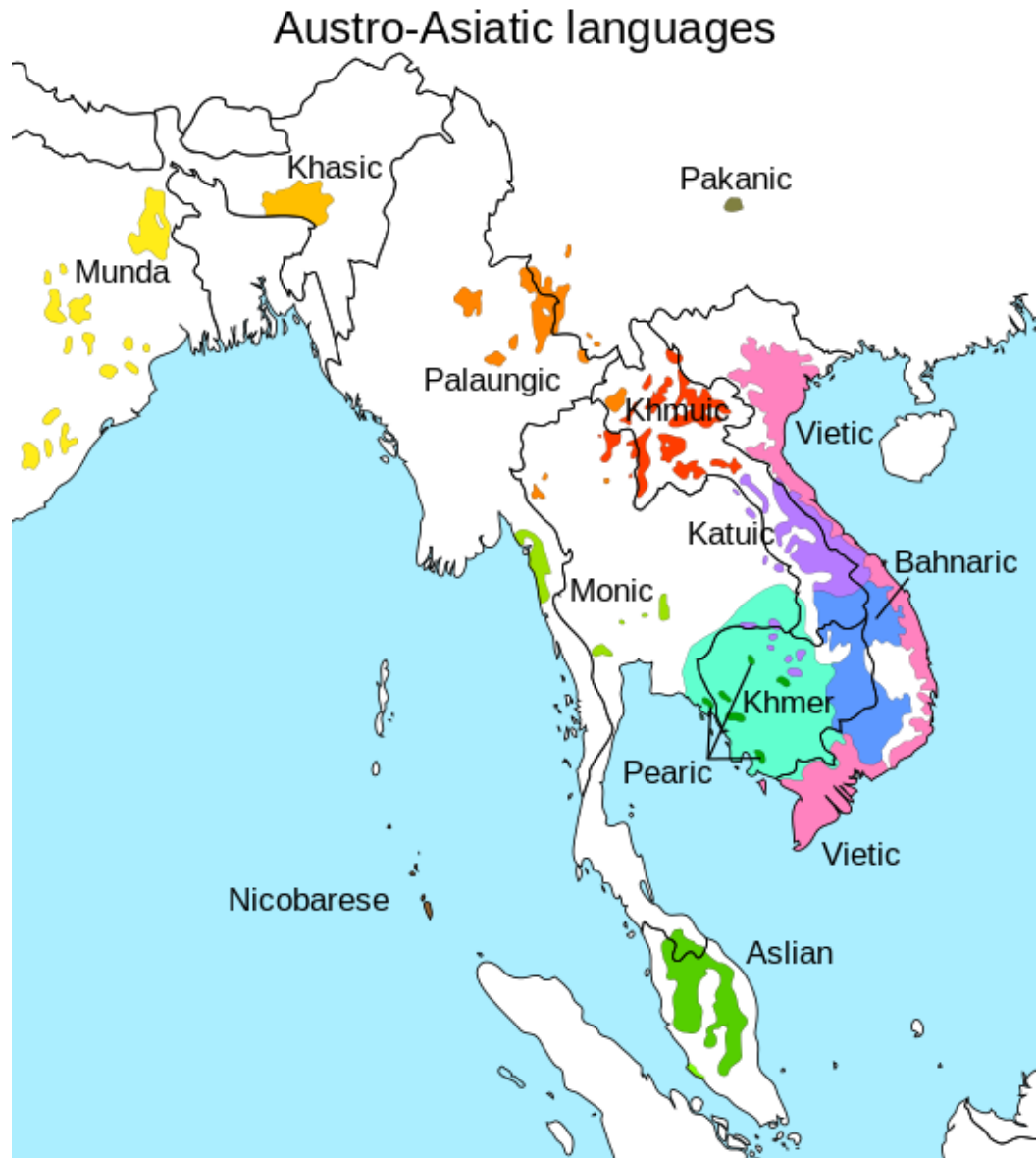


The stupas of Kings Sisowath (1927), Ang Duong (1860) and Soriyopar (1619) in Oudong guarded by the Lok Ta with the iron stick

Script and language

From Sanskrit to Old Khmer inscriptions

- About 140 Austro-Asiatic languages
- Originally Mon-Khmer language group (Mason 1854)
- Austro-Asiatic = Mon-Khmer + Munda
- Austric = Austro-Asiatic + Austronesian (Schmidt 1905)
- Nowadays: Austro-Asiatic



The Vo Canh inscription
(3rd century AD)



କ କି,ଖି ଗ ଘ ଙ ଛ ଞ ଜ ଝ ଞ

ka kha ga gha ṅa ca cha ja jha ṅa

ଟ ଠ ଡ ଢ ଣ,ଣ ଚ ଢ ଡ ଢ ନ,ଢ

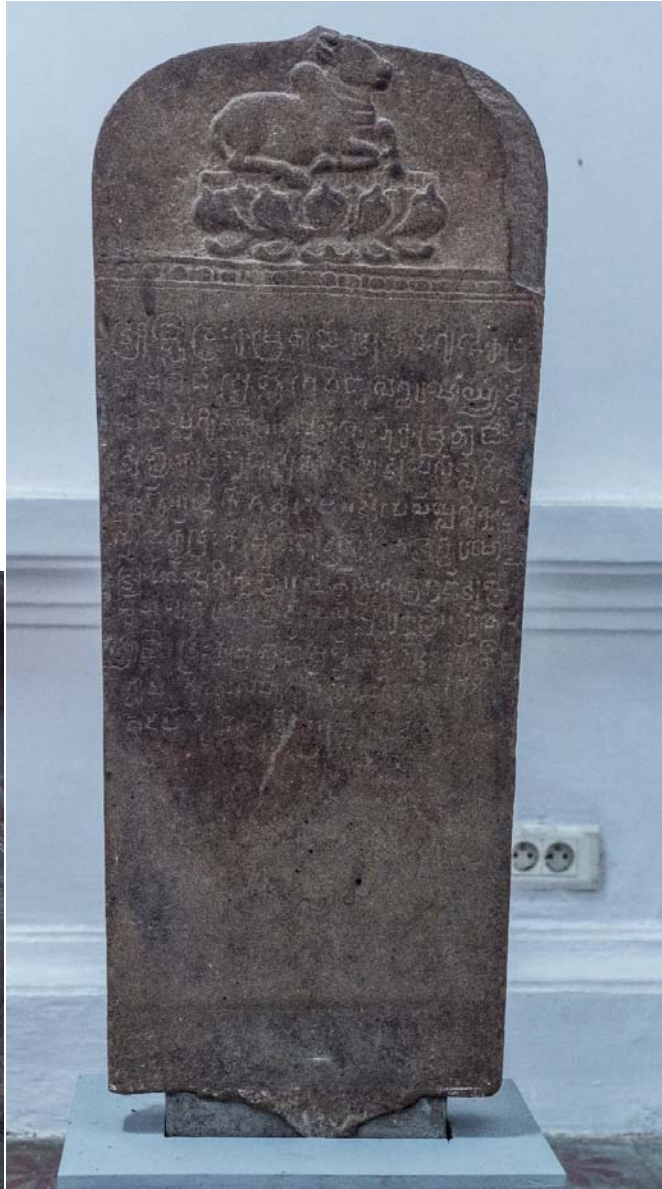
ta tha ḍa ḍha ṇa ta tha da dha na

ପ ଫ ବ ବ ଧ ଯ ଋ,ୠ ଡ,ଢ ଠ

pa pha ba bha ma ya ra la va

ଶ ସ,ଷ ସ ହ

śa śa sa ha

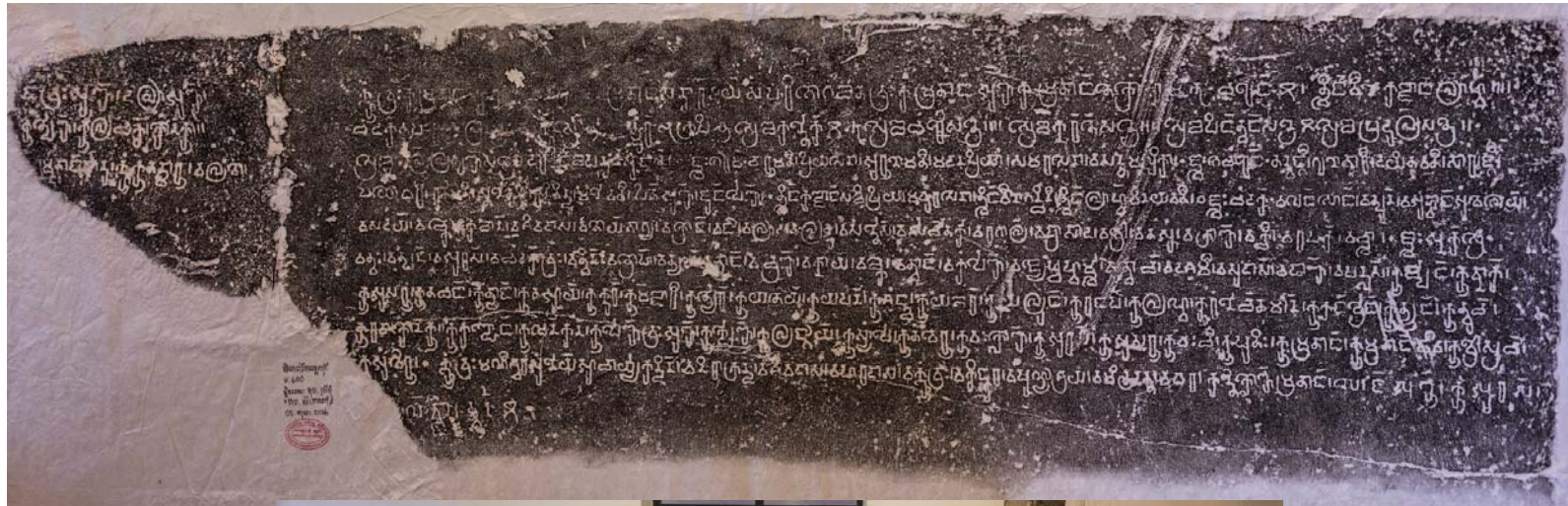


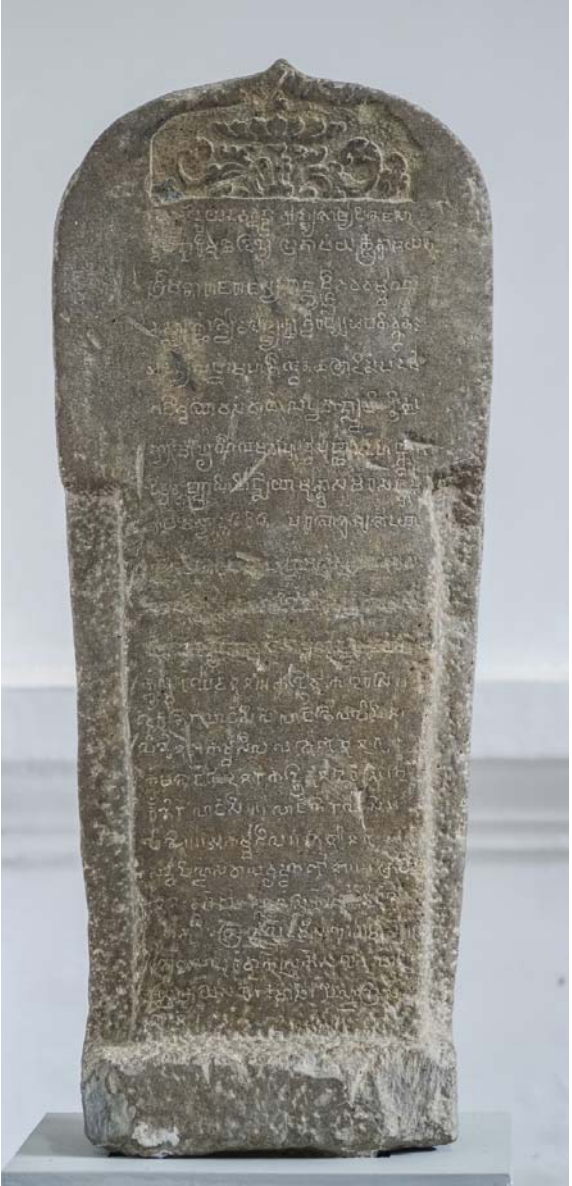
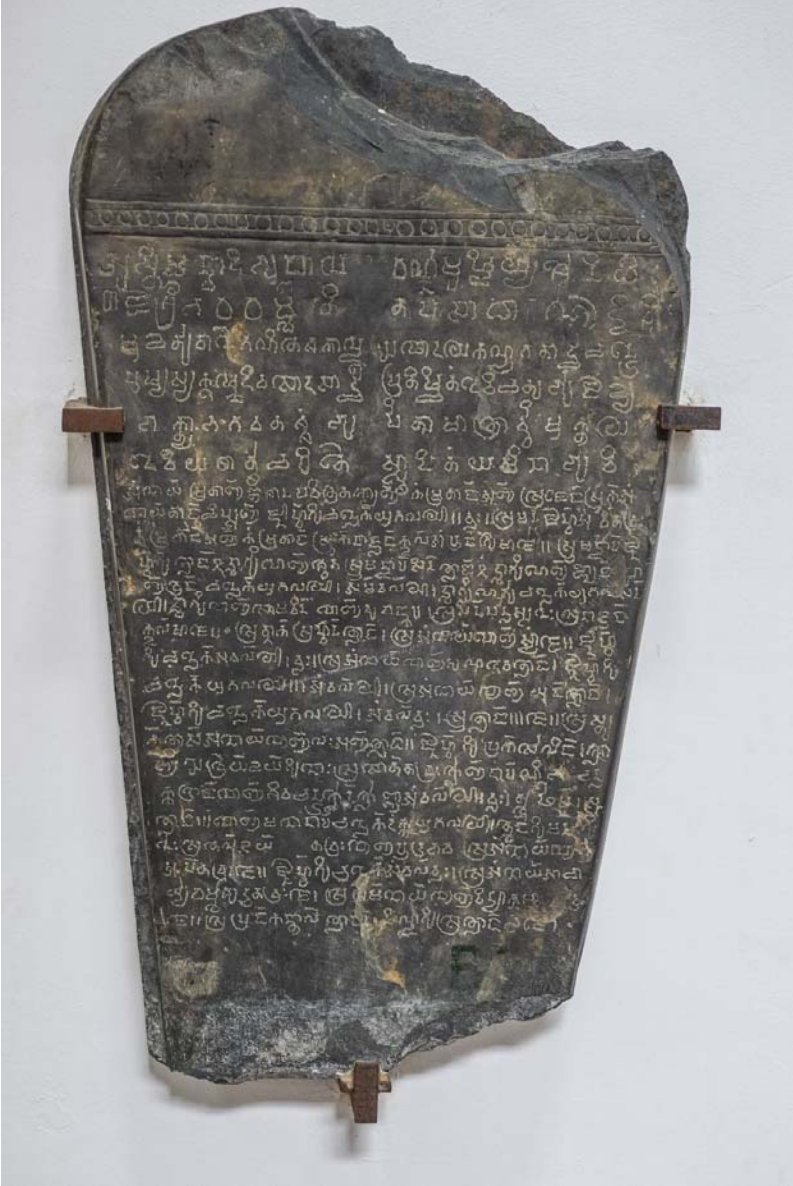


ਗੁਰੂ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਰਪਣ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ
ਮੈਂ ਸਦਾ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹਾਂ
ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਕੋਈ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ
ਮੈਂ ਉਸਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹਾਂ
ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਕੋਈ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ
ਮੈਂ ਉਸਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹਾਂ

The Angkor Borei inscription (611 AD)

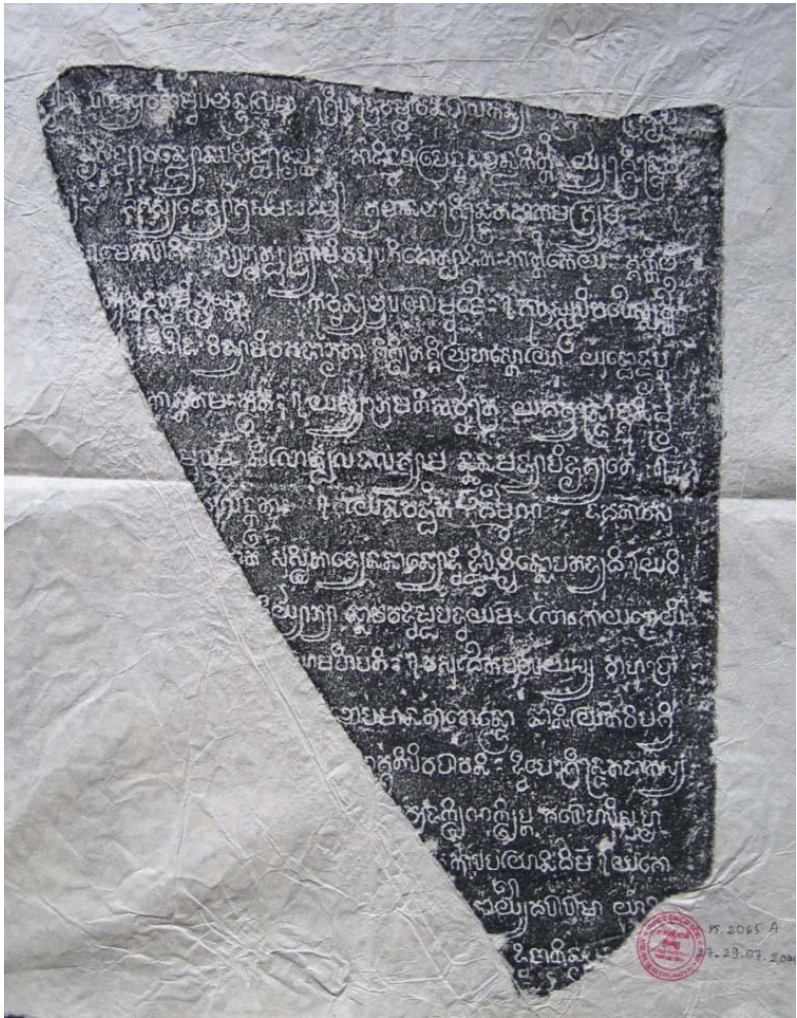






Problems pertaining to scripts in Indianized SEA

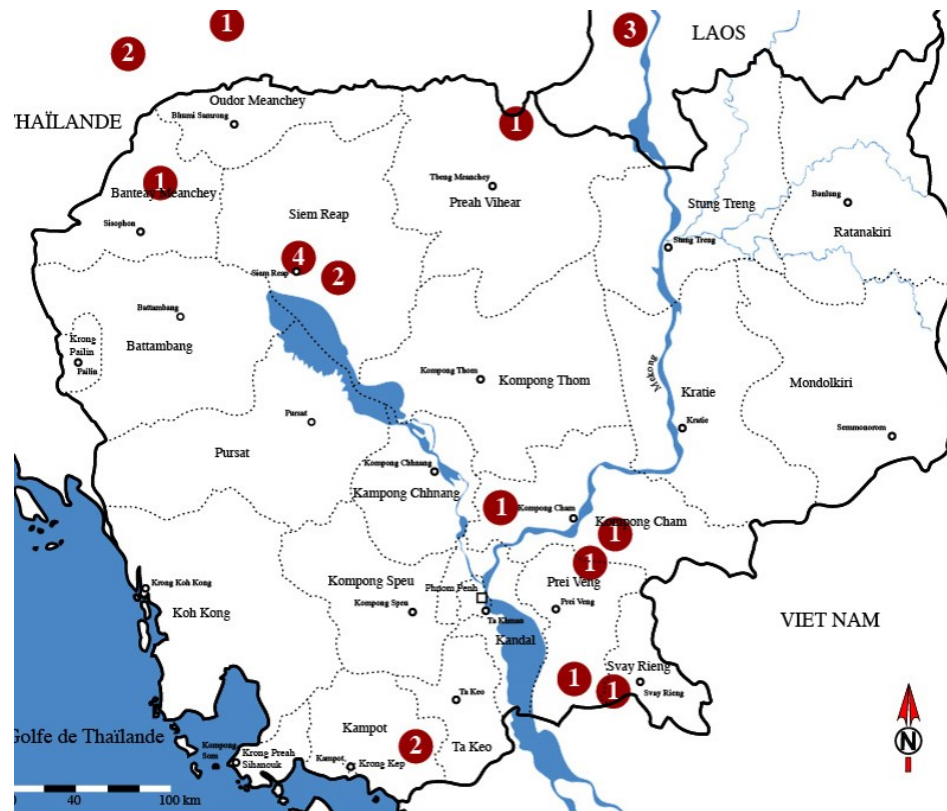
- Where exactly are they from?
- Before the name Pallava script was used in reference to the Pallava Dynasty (275 AD - 897 AD) BUT SEA Sanskrit scripts and inscriptions were much more developed than the Pallava script inscriptions in India.
- Now it seems more accurate to talk about Pallava - Chalukya script. (Chalukya dynasty: 6th – 12th century in south –central – west India)
- Although the SEA scripts comes mainly from the south of India, there are only very few words and inscriptions from south Indian(Dravidian) languages found in the inscriptions.
- As a rule scripts come from southern India, BUT there is still an exception...





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The digraphic inscriptions of Yaçovarma I



The abode of the gods

From temple mountains to
mountain temples

The mountain temple

A step pyramid crowned by a tower that shelters the representation of a god (generally Shiva)

Ak Yom

7th century



Bakong

End 9th century



Bakheng

Early 10th century



Koh Ker

10th century



Pre Rup

10th century



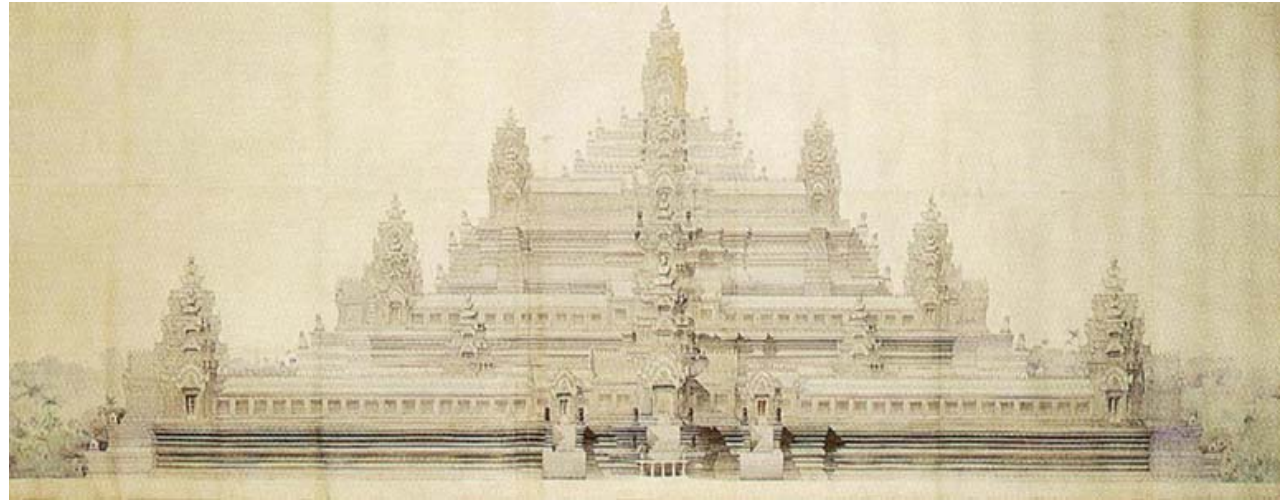
Ta Keo

End 10th – beginning 11th



Baphuon

11th century



Angkor Vat

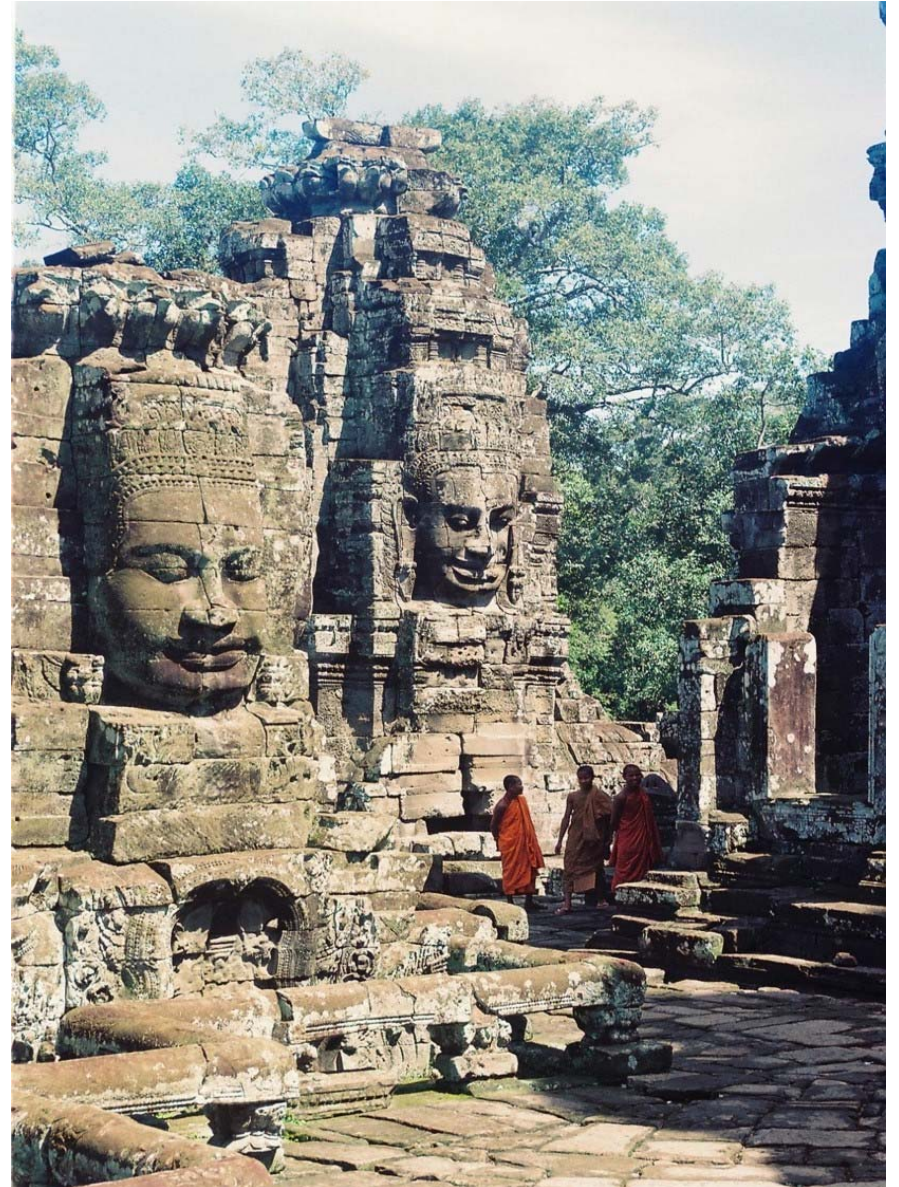
12th century





Bayon

13th century

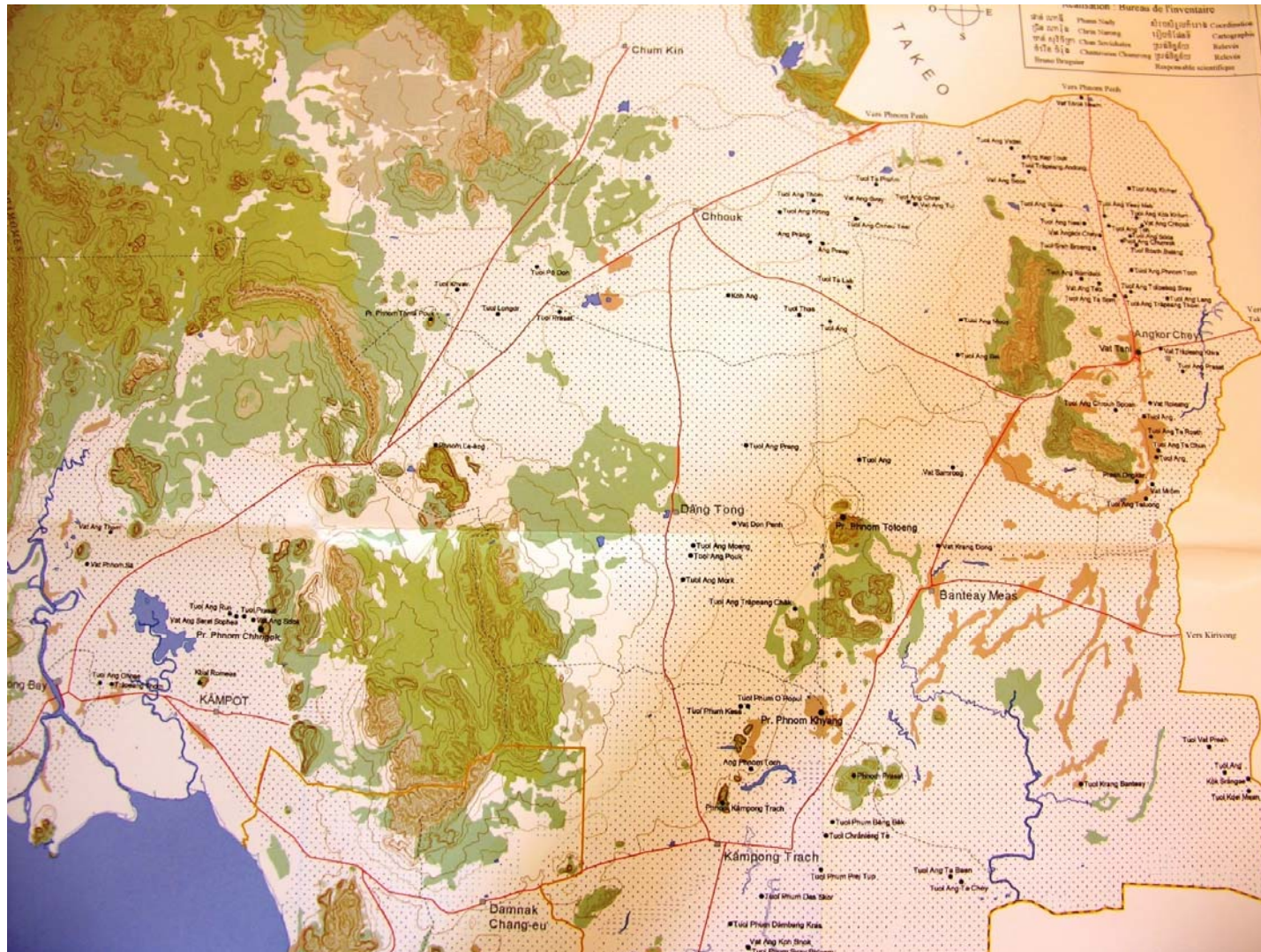


A paradoxical situation

- Mountain temple = the translation of an ancient Khmer (and Southeast Asian) relationship between the king and the mountain **INTO** an Indian structure
- “Devaraja” is the name of the local god (assimilated to the dead king) to which the temple is dedicated = Indian expression (that doesn’t exist in India) **BUT** to denote a local reality.
- The mountain temple exists in Hindu ideology **BUT** no mountain temples were ever built in India.
- The Khmer temple is in no way a copy of the Indian temple **BUT** a local implementation of Hindu sacred architecture.
- It follows that the Khmer temple is actually more Hindu than the Indian temples.

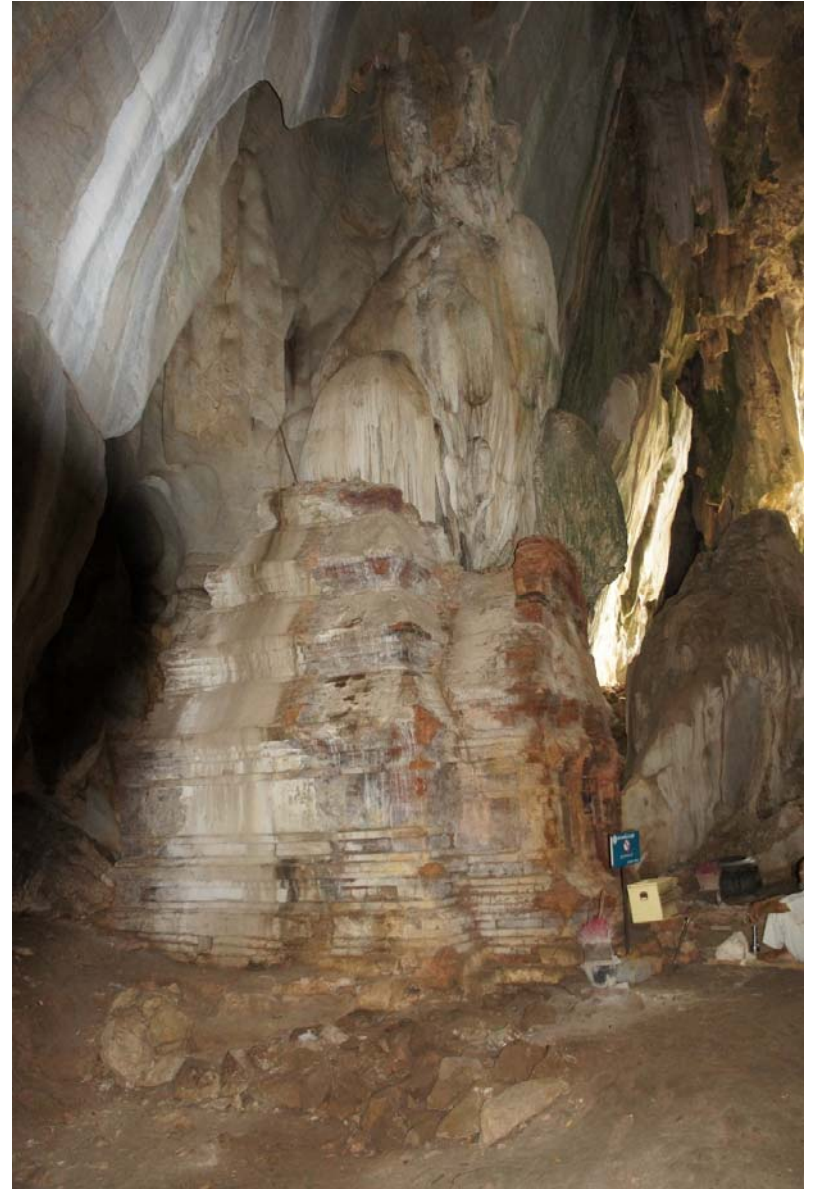
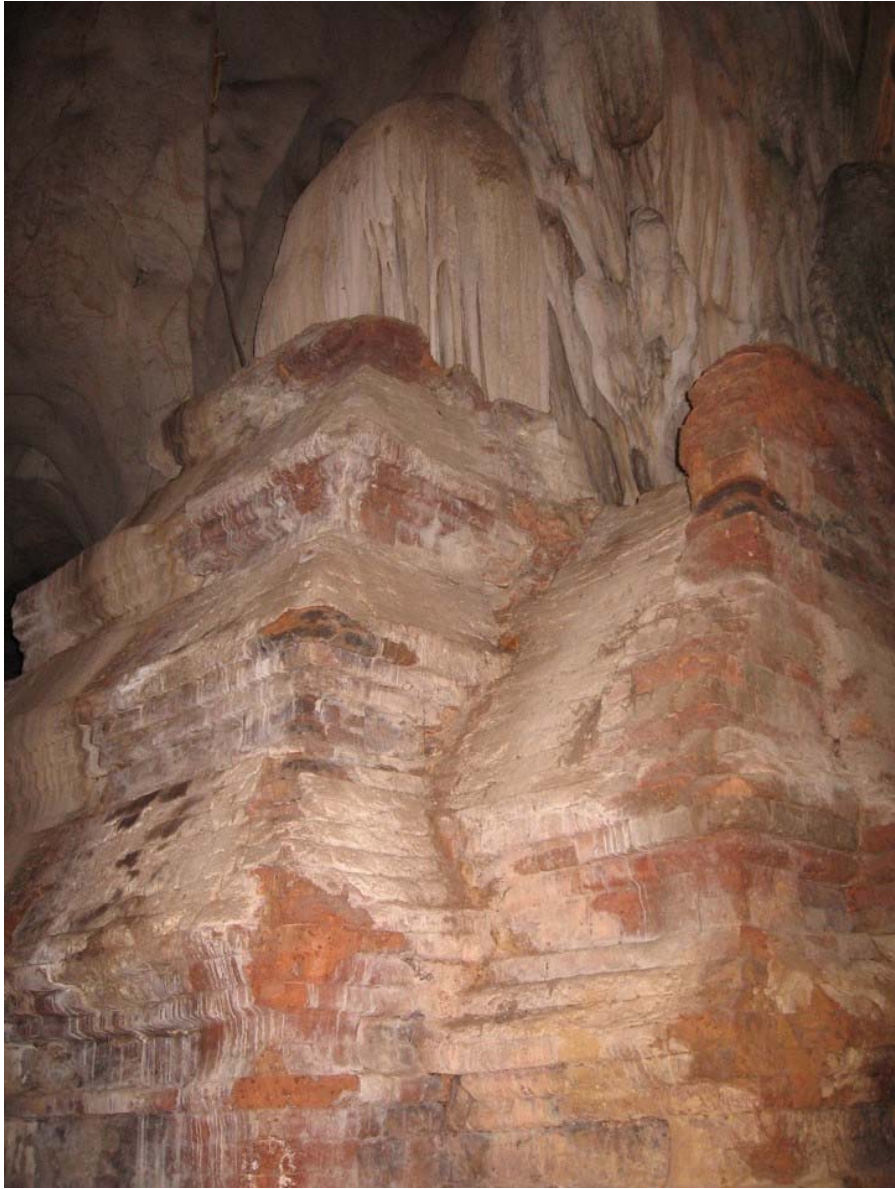
In the Kampot region the troglodyte temples

Three remaining “temples” inside caves



Phnum Chhngok cave temple







Phnum Totung cave temple

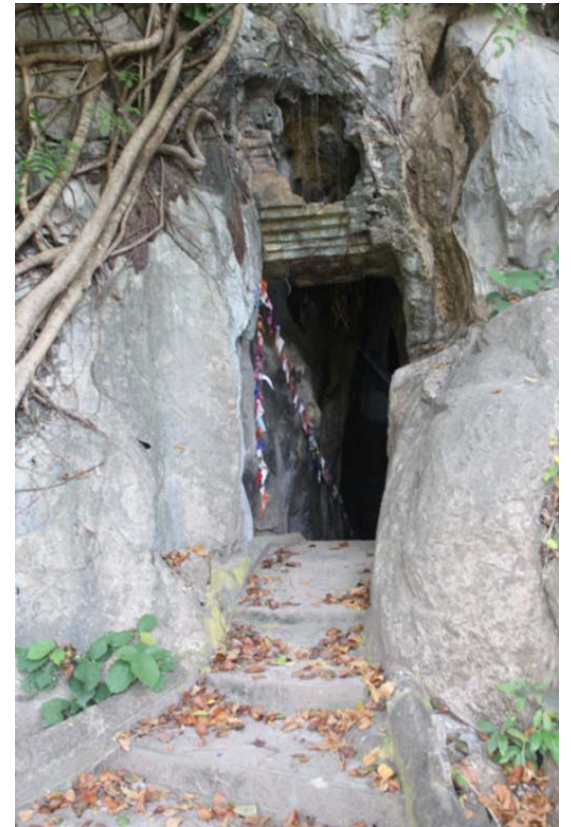
Entrance to the cave walled off with bricks:
the temple begins at the entrance to the cave



The view from the entrance: the sacred ponds can still be seen on the axis of the entrance to the cave



The entrance to the cella and the entrance to the cave are on the opposite axis



Temple = Mountain

K 44



- Saka year: 596 (674 AD)
- The Sanskrit part praises Iça and the king Jayavarman I
- The Khmer part praises Çri Utpanneçvara

The Phnum Khyâng cave temple

























The paradox of Indianization

- The Indianized Khmer (or SEA) space is not a local copy of India
- No pre-existing Indian centers that could have played the part of Athens and /or Rome as sources of civilization
- Hinduism/Indianism is a theoretical model and as such may influence a new land with general principles that may be adapted to an already structured civilization
- If gods, temples, art, scripts, state structures are Indian...their local (Khmer, Southeast Asian) realization has no real material equivalent in India