Mainland Southeast Asia After Angkor: On the Legacies of Jayavarman VII

Ashley Thompson

> Using sacred knowledge from the past, the king has built this bridge to ultimate happiness for someone else – a bridge which he regards as the continuity, long interrupted, of the Dharma. As the first to safeguard this continuity, he says this to kings yet to come, who will safeguard this continuity in the future:
> […]
> I have done these good works with the greatest devotion in memory of my parents […]. For kings who likewise acknowledge their indebtedness to the past, it is enough that they safeguard these good works of mine to obtain the abundant rewards of one who propagates the Dharma.
> Kings will in any case put into effect the work of protecting the foundations of their predecessors without being asked, as they are bound by precept to do so. I am aware of this, yet I request you, kings of the future, to be – of your own accord – insatiably zealous in protecting my foundations.'
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> (*K. 908*, st. 173-6, from Preah Khan temple, Angkor. Translation by T. Maxwell, 2007, pp. 103-5, with minor stylistic modifications)
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> A monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event.
>
> (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, pp. 176)

Conceptualising Angkorian Legacies

The reach of Angkor will always exceed the territorial and temporal delimitation which scholars and politicians alike seek to give it; indeed, attempts to pin down dates and borders shed light on the very uncontainability of empire which defines empire, so to speak, at its core. While historians continue to debate if Angkor qualified, empirically, as an empire, and if so, when exactly it did so during the five centuries that the capital was centered on

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Cambodia's Tonle Sap plain (Bourdonneau, 2014; Mikaelian, 2015; Thompson, 2016, esp. pp. 59-65; Lowman et al,this volume), the reach of Angkorian constructs beyond Angkor in space *and* time demonstrates how it finished quite literally in reaching beyond itself, making it, metaphorically and retrospectively, always an empire. As our day and age so vividly and urgently attests, here and there, empires loom large in their own aftermath. We find ourselves stumbling over their ruins—material and immaterial remains alike.

This essay will look beyond Cambodia as we know it today in geographic terms, and beyond the early thirteenth century, to highlight legacies of Angkor beyond Angkor on the Southeast Asian mainland. To begin this exploration, allow me to point up the discreetly deceptive premises of this essay's title: that we all, author and readers alike, share established understandings of what *Angkor* was as of what a *legacy* is. Alas, we cannot pretend to stand on such firm ground. Instead, with reference to the opening epigraphs, I propose a working definition of Angkor *as* legacy. The conceptual assimilation of 'Angkor' and 'legacy' is of course another temporizing gloss on empire: where the present, commemorating what has been as a means of heralding what will be, is always already gaining time for itself.

The first epigraph is extracted from the closing stanzas of a Sanskrit *praśasti*, or praise poem, recording the foundation of Preah Khan temple at Angkor in the late twelfth century. In its content, the text celebrates the temple and its founder, King Jayavarman VII (r. 1181-1220), as well as the King Father to whom the temple is dedicated and for whom it serves as a posthumous abode. In its form, the text celebrates its own composer, the first-born son of Jayavarman VII's first wife as he makes himself known at the poem's end - effectively giving himself the last word. The 'bridge' of the text is the temple of Preah Khan conceived as a realization or embodiment of the Buddhist Dharma, where the deceased father, embodied in a statue of the compassionate bodhisattva Lokeśvara, is to find 'ultimate happiness.' The appearance of the term *sthiti*, translated here as 'continuity,' thrice in quick succession performatively conveys the purpose of the highly wrought architectural and poetic constructions. Jayavarman VII makes much of having vanquished Cham occupiers of Angkor and a challenger to the throne, and so knowing first-hand the risk of interruption; his abundant works, recorded and thus supplemented by his son, were conceived as the means of ensuring continuity from father—past and present—to son, as from king to king. Apostrophizing kings-to-come as protectors of the Dharma, the future is explicitly and officially heralded in these commemorative works. To pursue Éric Bourdonneau's reminder in his work on early Southeast Asian state formation, that the word 'state' derives from the

Latin *status* designating 'that which stands' (Bourdonneau, 2005, p. 419), I note that the 'state' and *sthiti* both stem from the proto-Indo-European root, **stā*, 'to stand firmly'—the 'State' being the outcome, the exemplar and the insurer of stability as continuity. What *sthiti* conveys, in and of itself and the more so in its insistent repetition in the voice of Jayavarman VII's eldest son as he prepares to ventriloquize his father, is that though leaders may come and go, if they are meritorious in preserving the Dharma, their State endures.

The way in which the 'Dharma' famously holds together two apparently mutually incompatible modalities is instructive here. The Dharma is at once descriptive and prescriptive; it is Natural Law (a description of the way things are) and moral or juridical law (a prescription of the way things should be). It endures, always; yet, in equal measure, it must always be activated. Dharma is a model of legacy, where the same old enduring unchanging thing reappears, preserved, yet always necessarily transformed in the (re)activation process. Channelling Deleuze and Guattari's terms in the second epigraph above (1994, p. 176) to our purposes here, Dharma embodies the present moment, that is the moment of its embodiment, as much as—if not more than—the past. Inseparable from its monumentalisation, that moment of reactivation is to be heard, sensed, experienced in its very reactivation by future generations. At the heart of Angkor's legacy will be this model of legacy which by definition confounds any simple understandings of history as linear progression of time.

If the Preah Khan text is exceptionally florid, its closing appeal to the perpetuation of the founder's legacy couched in the promise of perpetually reactivated religious and political order is a hallmark of the Angkorian *praśasti* serving to gloss a temple's purpose regardless of sectarian orientation. Simply put, Angkor would not have been Angkor without this singular focus on legacy, producing Dharma in the concrete form of statues, temples and texts in stone erected far and wide. Of course, the very plea to future kings implicitly foresees the founder's demise and feeds on the threat of that of the foundation. Read in retrospect and for its stunningly prolific production, the reign of Jayavarman VII appears to sense this threat intensely. Even as it distinguished itself from its predecessors in manifestly and systematically striving to integrate further and further outlying areas into the centre's fold (Bourdonneau, 2014), the reign betrayed Angkor's foundational, motivational fears. Together, the over-abundant works in stone of this period stave off the end of Angkor they nonetheless foretell. And yet they remain—as remains and reminders, enduringly inspiring new developments on their age-old theme.

'Thailand' and 'Cambodia' after Angkor

The region which is now central Thailand   can be said to have cultivated the legacy in a particularly sustained manner, contributing ultimately to a significant politico-cultural shift on the mainland placing Ayutthaya as a privileged if contested Angkorian heir (see Krajaejun, this volume; Hall, this volume). The region hosted disparate Mon polities well before Angkorian extension this far west. The 'Mon' ethnonym (*rmañ* in Old Khmer, *rāmanya* in Sanskrit) appears in 10th-11th-c. Angkorian epigraphs in ways that suggest this 'western' region, as seen from Angkorian eyes, to have been understood as inhabited by the Mons but not as a singular entity competing with Angkor. The polity of 'Lavapurā' (today's Lopburi) stands out in this context: named on seventh-century medals found in the region, Lavapura became an Angkorian outpost, governed by Khmer envoys, from at least the early 11th century (Lowman, 2011, pp. 51-75).

Apparent ethno-linguistic differences between this or that post-Angkorian polity—in Cambodia or in Thailand—can pale in comparison to the shared Angkorian legacies evidenced in monuments, sculpture, ritual, language and associated political structures, with the ancient politico-aesthetic mould variously underpinning and undermining borders often made to appear natural by colonial and national historiographies. In this regard scholars today are indebted to the œuvre of historian Michael Vickery, whose early work focused on Cambodian and Thai historical Chronicles. In the few years before his death in 2017, Vickery revised a series of essays on early Thai history. A note added to one essay originally published in 1979, crystallizes the broad interpretive shifts which he in part engendered: 'I have become [nearly forty years on] less convinced that the relations between Angkor and the central Menam basin were relations of conquest and subordination rather than assimilation of two areas of similar ethno-linguistic identity and culture' (Vickery, 1979 unpublished revised, p. 5, n. 29). Vickery is not arguing that Thai and Khmer share ethno-linguistic roots; but rather that the Angkorian legacy came to be shared by the two groups to such an extent as to structure politico-cultural developments on what would become two sides of a border. If connectivities between Angkor and Mon polities in the Menam Basin evolved in response to the incursion of Tai peoples from the north, the adoption of Angkorian constructs by Mon *and* Tai populations participated in diverse ways in the coalescing of political identity in the Menam basin

As should be apparent by now, contemporary interpretive explorations themselves comprise a legacy of the still-evolving historiographical matrix from which emerge particular sensitivities to the epistemological effects of European colonization and of those nationalisms to which decolonization gave way across the Southeast Asian mainland in the twentieth century. The consequences for understanding the legacies of Angkor are multiple. First, benefiting from our twenty-first century hindsight, we see a certain artificiality in those borders drawn on past places and times in response to the needs of the modern era; this is not to deny in any way another hard reality periodically experienced of those same borders, which have at times meant the difference between life and death. This vision sheds light on relations often obscured by historiographies obeying, wittingly or not, political directives to portray, on the one hand, the collapse of once-glorious Angkor, and on the other, the enduring cultivation of the autonomous modern Thai state from indigenous roots, with the 'indigenous' of the latter historiographical paradigm referencing alternately Tai or Mon (which is to say *not* Khmer) ethnic groups at the origins of Thailand on the problematic and now outdated premise that ethnicity itself exists short of culture. The narrative of collapse and rise has equally given shape to cross-border appropriations of Angkor as Thai heritage in the modern era, where the Thai state purports to act as conservator-in-chief (Keyes, 1991; Denes, 2011). What we can see now in between the cracks of the stories viewed as an ensemble is that Angkor reverberated in both 'Cambodia' and 'Siam,' with the twelfth-thirteenth-century Angkorian Buddhist turn comprising a formidably creative moment of transformation with reverberations across the Southeast Asian mainland up to the present day. As the historical materials discussed in some detail in this essay will demonstrate, the tension between rejection and appropriation is not strictly modern; nor are the two phenomena incompatible, with shades of violence lurking at the heart of both. In fact, rejection and appropriation go hand in hand as Angkor's rather motley crew of descendents establish varying degrees of independence on the back of its legacy and as part of it. Our day has indeed brought to light previously unseen legacies of Angkor, which at its greatest extent in the mix of this major transformation, likely reached to Vientiane in modern-day Laos in the north, to today's central and southern Vietnam to the east, to the Malay peninsula to the south and west, to the limits of western Thailand.

Religion plays a leading role in the historiographical drama I have just evoked. Angkorian political and social order is generally understood to have been structured by Shaivism and Vaishnavism, with Buddhism playing an increasingly critical role from the late eleventh

century (XXX, this volume). Sanskrit, the self-proclaimed 'language of the gods,' consistently partnered with Khmer to underpin the evolving Angkorian border (Thompson, 2016). Theravada Buddhism associated with the Pali language, on the other hand, is understood to have predominantly shaped political and social order in ancient Burma, Siam and Laos (Blackburn, forthcoming; Berkwitz and Thompson, forthcoming). In this well-established interpretive frame, the Sanskritic Brahmanic/Buddhist and the Pali Buddhist are set in an opposition embedded in and consolidating the other operative oppositions between ethno-linguistic groups and historical periods. Most importantly, perhaps, the binaries convey perceived civilizational hierarchies on the one side and the other. From certain French colonial and Cambodian nationalist points of view, the spread of Theravada Buddhism across the mainland from the thirteenth century coincided with, or even determined, a decline of politico-cultural prowess with which the Sanskritic religious complexes were identified (Cœdès, 1958). From other Thai perspectives, Theravada Buddhism is seen to have enabled a politico-cultural prowess which the Sanskritic religions had proven unable to sustain; Siam, in this vision, would become the source of the spread of Theravada Buddhism into Cambodia itself.

Such categorical sectarian distinctions may have proven expedient in historical political contexts as well as modern academic ones; the extent to which they maintain on the mainland Southeast Asian ground at a given place and time is however questionable. Albeit messier, consideration of the permeability of religious and broader politico-cultural affiliations, along with permutations of these in diachronic and synchronic terms, appears, today, more often than not to be in order. To understand the transformations of Angkor from the thirteenth century—those accomplished by Angkor, along with those made to it—it is crucial to measure the importance of the politico-cultural production of Jayavarman VII's reign with reference to this famous Buddhist monarch's ancestral origins. Jayavarman VII descended from an aristocratic Buddhist family from what is now northeast Thailand which imposed itself at the capital of Angkor in the late eleventh century. The perpetuation of this line through periodic renewal at the helm of Angkor for well over a century effectively integrated an outlying region into the centre while transforming an outlying religion into the very shaper of the Angkorian mould. In a give-and-take process, as Jayavarman VII's Angkor further spread its reach into established Buddhist cultures underpinned by Mon, Pali, Sanskrit and ultimately also Tai usage, so did 'Angkorian' culture continue to evolve within these cultural complexes—continuing even more so as the political power structure long based on the

Angkor plain shifted south on the one 'Cambodian' hand, and west and north on the other 'Thai' one.

Of note for ongoing conceptual innovation in interpretation of these and other related historical processes is the recent work by Éric Bourdonneau and Grégory Mikaelian on the long history of the Angkorian *devarāja*. In tracking links between a set of statues known as the *pañcaksetr* housed today in Phnom Penh's Royal Palace grounds and the more famous Angkorian *devarāja*, the authors draw from historiographic theorisation striving to hold together in dynamic balance the apparently incompatible terms of change and continuity. In their own words: '*Pañcaksetr* and *devarāja*… share a same history, not by virtue of a strict identification of the one with the other over centuries but as related elements within a larger structure whose successive warpings (what could be called "vibrations" of the structure) ensure at once transformation and continuity over the long term (Bourdonneau and Mikaelian 2020: 85, with reference to Lepetit 1999: 295. My translation).

This examination of 'warpings' (*gauchissements*) of a larger structure is explicitly posited as a means of transcending dominant interpretive paradigms 'illustrating [transmission of] "the Angkorian Brahmanic heritage"' to later royal courts or 'bridging the supposed caesura between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries to find on either side the monolithic blocks of historiography's grand narratives' (Bourdonneau and Mikaelian, 2020: 85). Note that the story these two authors tell, about the warpings of a foundational Angkorian cult over centuries, has Sukhothai playing a key transformational role. While the authors are concerned with the history of Cambodia 'proper,' from ancient Angkor to modern Phnom Penh, their telling seamlessly weaves in this 'Tai' polity which historiography frequently posits to have effectively posited itself as the cradle of the Thai state. The Sukhothai matrix gave birth to Thai writing in support of the melding of Pali Buddhist and Tai politico-cultural structures overcoming Angkorian ones, before giving way to Ayutthaya, a new Tai polity in ancient Mon Pali Buddhist heartlands, which ultimately bore modern Bangkok as the beating heart of the modern Thai Buddhist Kingdom. Or so one version of the story goes (Wongthes, 1996; Thammarungruang, 2008; Krairiksh, 2012 [2010]) and "Revisioning Buddhist Art in Thailand" (2014); ; Peleggi, 2015, pp. 79-93; Krajaejun 2016).

For those prepared to lend an ear, other stories can be heard resonating as 'vibrations' of the larger structure of Angkor at once on this and that side of today's borders. This is how we might hear K. 489, a fragmentary post-Angkorian inscription found at Vihear Prampil Laveng

inside Angkor Thom. (Cœdès, 1951, pp. 229-30) The remaining legible text is in Khmer with well-integrated Sanskrit vocabulary along with a smattering of Pali. It contains an optative vow in the first person, an elaborate expression of a Buddhist wish to reach a level of enlightenment enabling knowledge of one's own past lives and ensuring a long, powerful and prosperous future life. Vihear Prampil Laveng is the most elaborate of the 'Buddhist terraces' inside Angkor Thom. These structures were modest by Angkorian standards and were set within the urban form definitively shaped by Jayavarman VII. Along with select Angkorian temples, they appear to have served as focal points of Theravadin Buddhist expression in the centuries leading up to and then following the move of the Khmer capital from the Angkor plain. That the sculptural remains at Vihear Prampil Laveng have been shown to evince close relations with Ayutthayan art supports Michael Vickery's speculation that the first-person voice of K. 489 belonged to the Ayutthayan royal purported to have taken Angkor in 1431/1432, and that the lost portions of the text recounted that very conquest. (Polkinghorne et al*.,* 2018; Vickery, 1976, pp. 227-30). The royal title which appears in variants in K. 489, *rājadhirāja*, or 'king of kings,' is the same as that used for an early fifteenth-century monarch of Ayutthaya recorded in Thai-language epigraphs found at both Ayutthaya and Sukhothai as well as in the seventeenth-century Thai *Luang Prasoet Chronicle* in its account of the ephemeral yet monumental fifteenth-century Ayutthayan occupation of Angkor. The Khmer (-speaking) voice of the (presumably Ayutthayan) royal at Vihear Prampil Lavaeng tells us that the remains of Angkor—temples, sculptures, language and epigraphic practices associating the ones with the other—served indeed as a 'bridge' embodying the continuity of the Dharma on the order of that envisaged in Jayavarman VII's plea recorded by his son at Preah Khan. Of course this post-Angkorian response would have sounded warped to Jayavarman's ears had he heard it across the centuries—and this despite his own much vaunted ancestral origins in the Buddhist lands of what is now Thailand.

In probing the post-Angkorian material heritage of the central Menam basin, Krajaejun's work joins other contemporary scholars in complicating the Sukhothai-to-Ayutthaya story of the Siamese state, as well as the ancillary narrative of Siam as the source of post-Angkorian Pali Buddhism in Cambodia itself. Insofar as the Buddhist materials of central Thailand are as much post-Angkorian as they are pre-Ayutthayan, Angkor—writ large as it was from the twelfth century - comprised a formidable matrix of post-Angkorian Theravadin Buddhist Cambodia as well (Thompson, forthcoming). In the following I will highlight a few other specific instances of Jayavarman VII's Dharma (re)activated beyond the worlds of its most

privileged heirs. [Insert Map. I would think a fairly schematic one on the model of Map 1.1, p. 33 in Holt's *Spirits of the Place*, but adding Sri Lanka and Pagan, Pegu, Mrauk-U, Amarapura (Mandalay). A map legend on the 'mandala' of 13th-18th c. mainland would supplement what I say here.] With the exception of central and northern Vietnam, as well as in some highland areas, Theravadin Buddhist principalities and kingdoms grew across the mainland in the wake of Angkor. Twelfth-century Buddhist institutional reforms in Sri Lanka, along with Mongol pressures on more northerly regions of the subcontinent, contributed to this Theravadin dynamism in mainland Southeast Asia (Gornall 2020). The evolution of maritime trade and associated monastic exchange networks furthered this process (Blackburn 2015a-b). In the process Sri Lanka became a reference competing with or supplementary to Angkor or other local historical polities such as Pagan (Burma) or Haripunjaya (northern Thailand) in the development of the multiple religiously-anchored and interlinked polities of mainland Southeast Asia. By the nineteenth century and under the further influence of colonialism, these would coalesce into the Theravadin Buddhist nation-states of Laos, Siam, Burma and Cambodia (Blackburn forthcoming). Embodying the Angkorian ancestry in its own distinctly cosmopolitan Buddhist political idiom, Jayavarman VII's legacy was embedded in these developments in various ways.

Building on the Dharma of Jayavarman VII: the Reach of Empire

As noted in opening, the Preah Khan inscription is exemplary of the Angkorian Sanskrit epigraphic model. Like its closing plea cited above, the inscription's celebratory account of the marvelous prowess of the King, including enumeration of religious foundations and the attribution of land, personnel and abundant supplies to each temple site, follows in established tradition. Among the ways in which the Preah Khan text does stand out from the standard, however, is its pairing with the inscription of Ta Prohm (K. 273) celebrating the foundation of that temple in honor of Jayavarman VII's mother embodied in a statue of the Goddess of Wisdom, Prajñāpāramitā, and their shared affirmation of Angkorian presence across an exceptionally extensive territorial range (o'Naghten 2011 and 2015). The distribution of 'staging posts with fire' recorded in the Preah Khan text and proven in remains along roads radiating out from the capital at Angkor, along with 'hospitals' scattered across the land and named in both texts, attests to a programme of public works expanding in both territorial and conceptual terms on those known in earlier phases of Angkorian development

(Maxwell, 2007, pp. 42-5; Lowman et al, this volume). Much the same can be said for the distribution of images. For their timing, for their tentacular reach not limited to but still emphasizing ancestral territorial attachment, *and* for their particular forms, the works of this period both ensured and inflected Angkor's impact after Angkor. This section takes seriously the import of the latter dimension of the works in question: their forms. A review of the range of scholarly speculation on the identification of a particular image type named in the epigraphic corpus cited above – the Jayabuddhamahānātha – highlights a group of closely related sculptural forms which embody a spectrum of iterations of the concomitant personalization and Buddhicization of power characteristic of late Angkor which came to mingle in the subsequent development of regional Buddhist states.

The Jayabuddhamahānātha is one of many images—or image types—specifically named in the Preah Khan text. To be exact, the text records the distribution of twenty-five Jayabuddhamahānātha across the land. A number of the toponyms of the installation sites can be identified with sites in modern Thailand, including Lopburi, Suphanburi, Ratchaburi, Kanchanaburi, Phetchaburi and likely Sukhothai (K. 908, st. CXV-CXXI, CLIX; Maxwell 2007: 80-2, 95; Multzer o'Naghten 2015: 412). We find a sort of mirror image of this radiating distribution at the Bayon temple, where the name is inscribed on the door jambs of two cellae; one is of Ratchaburi, the other of Petchaburi. This temple honouring Jayavarman VII at the centre of his capital comprised a microcosm of the kingdom, with a Buddha image associated with the king surrounded by small sanctuaries housing provincial divinities presumably embodied by replicas of the provincial 'originals'—unless of course it was the other way around, with the 'originals' installed at Angkor and their replicas at provincial sites (Groslier 1973: 86-7; 105-6). The Sanskrit compound Jayabuddhamahānātha can be translated as '*Jaya* (after the King's name which means 'victory'), the Great (*mahā*) Protector (*nātha,* a divine epithet commonly translated as 'Lord') Buddha,' or 'Buddha, Great Lord of Victory,' or 'The Great Lord Buddha of Jayavarman,' with the ambivalence of the genitive in the last formulation rendering the ambivalence of the Sanskrit phrase, which allows for interpretation of the image as representing at once the Buddha venerated by King Jayavarman and the King as the Buddha himself.

[Figure 1: Composite image, including a/ radiating bodhisattva – Ratchaburi image or Muang Singh, Kanchanaburi (NMBKK); b/ Bayon Period Buddha 'w JVII traits' – Guimet cat., p. 275-276 (MG17482) c/ One of two Phimai pieces in Moore and Siribhadra 1992, p. 142-3 (or Guimet head from catalogue (new acquisition: MA 6844), cat. p 274-5: (note that this piece thought to come from a naga-protected image)) d/ Phimai JVII (or NMC JVII or

Taking into account this distinctive name, as well as the wide geographic distribution claimed in the epigraphy and the implication of replica production, scholars have sought for over a century to identify the Jayabuddhamahānātha with known image types. Hiram Woodward has proposed to identify the named figure with a singular group of the Jayavarman VII period Bayon-style statues known amongst art historians as 'radiating bodhisattvas' (Figure 1a). These are standing eight-armed Lokeśvara figures adorned with an effusion of small Buddhas in low relief on the torso as well as, for some, the upper portions of the arms and hair, a larger image of what is thought to be the Prajñāpāramitā goddess emerging at the center of the chest, and a ring of seated figures encircling the waist (Woodward 1994; for a review of the image type with bibliography, see Zéphir 2008: 282-287). The distinct corporeal iconography of this 'radiating Lokeśvara' is unique in the Indic world, but has been associated by scholars with Sanskrit texts. Other hypotheses have honed in on images which are seen to more explicitly emphasize in formal terms an assimilation of the king and the Buddha (G. Cœdès, 1943, pp. 198-199; 1958b and 1960; Zéphir 2008, pp. 274-75; Lorillard, 2014, pp. 70-71) . These are all seated, subdued figures; in conception, they are likewise unique to the art of Jayavarman VII.

For some, the Jayabuddhamahānātha can be identified with those Buddhas in the Bayon style which harbour facial traits strongly resembling those featured in the monarch's supposed portraits (Figure 1b). Others single out a sub-type of these particular period Buddhas; the sub-type is demarcated by a notably modest treatment of the Buddha's characteristic cranial protuberance or *uṣṇīṣa*; the slight pointed and smooth rise at the summit of the head of these figures is distinguished from the pronounced and decorated protuberance typical of the common period Buddha as illustrated in Fig. 1b, and is seen to enhance the liminal dimensions of this figure as if representing the King (with a hair chignon now replaced by the barely emerging *uṣṇīṣa*) in the very process of becoming a Buddha (Figure 1c). For others still, the Jayabuddhamahānātha can be seen in the supposed statue-portrait itself, an image of a man seated in *virasāna* with hair pulled tautly into a chignon and hands clasped in veneration. Examplars of this image type have been found from the Angkor plain up to Phimai in modern Thailand (Figure 1d). Lastly, the name has been seen to best designate an intriguing iteration of this statuary complex associating the Buddha with the particular reigning king: an intensely hybrid piece which mimics the 'portrait' of the monarch in body

and face but with a number of distinguishing features including a transformation of the statue-portrait's posture of meditative veneration into a posture of venerable meditation, the *dhyānamudrā*; and of the statue-portrait's hair, normally combed into a chignon atop the head, into the same slight *uṣṇīṣa* noted above (see also Pottier 2000). These have been found from the Angkor plain up further north even, to Sukhothai in Thailand and Vientiane in Laos (Figs. 1e-f).

There is of course a manifest difference between the 'radiating Lokeśvara' and the range of other images noted above: the first is a bold figure exuding the cosmic power of the divine; the others exude the power of human religiosity even when emphasizing that obtained by the Buddha. Yet, each of these forms contributes to a distinct political function. Produced in multiple copies, distributed with apparent precision across a wide territorial range, these image types can all be said to embody the uniquely personalized paradigm of Angkorian reach at this crucial moment in time. To understand the process of replication at work in this period, it is important to note that in and of itself the Bayon style subtly integrates the presumed facial features of the reigning king. In each of the image types we see a different iteration of the king-and-the-Buddha at once—or even as one, be it in the body of the bodhisattva effectively producing Buddhas, a figure associated with Jayavarman's father and consequently the King himself on the path to Buddhahood, or in the quintessentially hybrid figures which explicitly challenge definitive physical distinction between the sovereign and the Buddha.

Each of these image types answer to the name Jayabuddhamahānātha insofar as they share in the productive ambivalence by which the king is made to mingle with the Buddha to render the transformative regal power of Buddhist devotion across the land. As a group anchored in some sense by the famous statue-portraits of the king, they embody a transformative introduction of realism into the Angkorian politico-aesthetic repertoire. Prior to Jayavarman VII's reign, statuary known to conceptually assimilate historical figures with gods largely rendered the god's ideal features in material terms and with posthumous intent; against this backdrop the particular statuary of Jayavarman VII's reign in question evinces, in both conceptual and material terms, a mingling of the living and the posthumous as of the historical figure and the god. In making with these images a vivid and encompassing mark on traditionally Buddhist territories beyond the Angkor plain, Jayavarman VII could be seen to have accomplished his own duties in reactivating the Dharma of past kings to expand distinctly Angkorian reach. .

Sukhothai: 'liberated' from Angkor?

The Jayavarman VII statue-portrait-Buddha featuring in Fig. 1e and now in the Ramkamhaeng National Museum at Sukhothai was found at Wat Phra Phai Luang, an Angkorian temple stylistically dated to Jayavarman VII's reign with annex structures suggesting affinity with early 'Buddhist terraces' at Angkor and Pali Buddhist practices (Gosling 1991: 7-19). The long-dominant historical discourse alluded to above, by which Sukhothai was posited as the cradle of the Thai state, drew from readings of the area's epigraphic and architectural materials to posit 'liberation' from Angkor as a foundational act in the thirteenth century, and to emphasize the polity's subsequent development through exchange with Sri Lanka and other related Pali Buddhist centers to the southwest, to the north and ultimately in a determining manner, with Ayutthaya (Cœdès 1921, 1958; Griswold and Prasert na Nagara 1968;1972; Gosling 1996). The more recent scholarship largely by Thai scholars cited above has revisited the complexity of these understandings of relations to Angkor, and points to the need for further examination of both the materials and the early scholarship on them. While the Sri Lankan model was explicitly celebrated and instrumentalized in the development of Sukhothai from the fourteenth century (Skilling, 2008; Blackburn, forthcoming), the polity was to build on the Angkorian material legacy and its conceptual underpinnings in more discreet yet profound ways. The Buddhist ruler (to come) embodied in the statue-portrait-Buddha was in fact a ready-made prototype for the rulers of Sukhothai.

The late thirteenth-century Tai prose of Sukhothai's *Inscription One*, also known as the Ramkamhaeng Inscription, is at first glance a far cry from the formal Sanskrit verse of Jayavarman VII's reign. A first clue to the entanglement of Sukhothai's development on Khmer forms lies nonetheless in the very form of the text. With *Inscription One* King Ramkamhaeng famously, self-consciously and performatively invents Tai writing—for posterity, as part and parcel of his invention of the Tai Buddhist state; yet the novel writing system is based on Khmer script. The gist of the text likewise betrays a family resemblance. Recording the king's right to the throne through a dynamic combination of genealogical descent and proven prowess, promoting his commitment to the public good and his care for the Dharma in building new monuments to house ancient venerated relics and naming the very geographical reaches of his expanding kingdom, Ramkamhaeng can be seen to portray

himself in this text as much on the model of Jayavarman VII as on that of any Pali Buddhist monarch past or then present. While *Inscription One* stands out in the corpus of Sukhothai inscriptions for its celebration of a whole territory rather than of a specific religious foundation, in its grand and proudly Buddhist political-territorial ambitions it speaks to Jayavarman VII's own corpus. Writing in stone, the two monarchs—and their offspring— share an address to posterity. The model is nonetheless transformed in the very process of its reactivation. *Inscription One* concludes: 'All the people who live in these lands have been reared by him in accordance with the Dharma, every one of them' (Cœdès, 1924: 37-48; Griswold and na Nagara, 1971; Blackburn, forthcoming, ch. 2). If Jayavarman VII entrusted the preservation of the Dharma in kings, Ramkamhaeng took up the torch, preserving the Dharma to entrust it in the people of what are now his lands.

The fabrication and celebration of links with Angkor through marriage, titles or possession of sacred objects comprise another legacy of Angkor in its extra-Cambodian reach. While in the Preah Khan text we learn of the King's generosity in offering his daughters in marriage to political allies gained through conquest, in later accounts from Sukhothai and the proto-Lao kingdom Lan Xang, we hear local voices re-citing such links as a means of affirming power. Sukhothai's *Inscription Two*, written in Tai some 50 years after Ramkamhaeng's text, contains an account of the tumultuous establishment of Tai suzerainty at Sukhothai and neighboring regions leading up to Ramkamhaeng's reign (Inscription Two, Side 1, ll. 20-35, Griswold and na Nagara, 1972; Blackburn, forthcoming, ch. 2). The original royal ancestor is said to have wedded a daughter of the ruler of Angkor, who bestowed him also with a royal title and sword. A challenger bearing a lower Angkorian title is distinctly identified in the text as a *khom,* or 'Khmer'; this *khom,* as he is repeatedly called, was defeated by a third man serving the first who subsequently transferred his own Angkor-bestowed title to his victorious ally. It is this man who would become Ramkamhaeng's father. On the one hand this is a story of Tai defeating Khmer; on the other, it demonstrates the power of the Angkor name as it were, conferring legitimacy even at a remove and even as the gesture of Angkorian entitlement itself endows a Tai leader with the very authority endowed Angkorian rulers (Wongthes 1996, pp. 152-3; Baker and Pasuk, 2017, p. 35).

The contours of 'extra-territorial' use of the Khmer language is further shaped and demonstrated in a triad of epigraphic texts celebrating the arrival of a Lankan-trained monk and the Buddhist ordination of the reigning King in Sukhothai's 'Mango Grove' (*Brai Svāy* in Khmer, *Pa Mamuang* in Tai) in 1361 (Cœdès, 1924, pp. 103-16; Griswold and na Nagara,

1973; Pou, 1978). The first text is in Khmer; the second is a near replica of the former, but in Tai; the third, with different but related content, is in Pali written in Khmer script. The three stelae share also in material form, with a notable difference; they are four-sided with pyramidal tops, though the Khmer stela stands out from the other two for its larger size. The evolving legacy of Angkor is evidenced in intriguing ways in the Khmer-Tai tandem in particular. Mirroring the relatively larger size of its stone support, the Khmer text is the most elaborate, with its Tai replica omitting telling details and filling the gaps with others. The Khmer text opens with an account of the military campaign led by the reigning King to take back the Sukhothai area, presumably following troubles at the death of his father. His victory and royal consecration are sealed with the repair and/or installation of a set of Brahmanic statues whose identity derives from Angkor (Bourdonneau and Mikaelian, 2020). The Tai text, on the other hand, opens with a brief history of the Mango Grove, originally planted by Ramkamhaeng; this sets the scene for an abbreviated account of the royal consecration before falling into line with the Khmer text. These slight differences point up simultaneous appeals to two different politico-cultural constructs—militaristic prowess and Angkorian divinity on the one side, and peaceful Tai royal descent on the other. In terms of language use, they show how Khmer has taken the place of Sanskrit as the cosmopolitan or prestige language in the bilingual cosmopolitan-vernacular tandem once operative at Angkor. In post-Angkorian Cambodia 'proper' the Sanskrit composition known at Angkor is effectively replaced not by Pali composition but rather by development of Khmer literary production (Thompson 2016: chapters 1 and 4). In other words, while Khmer can be said to have taken the place of Sanskrit in both contexts even as Pali language usage develops, the ways and means of this transformation are different here and there. In reproducing bilingualism at the heart of Tai state-building, Khmer is transformed from a vernacular to a cosmopolitan language, while Tai takes the place of the Khmer vernacular. Pali accompanies this process but does not simply play the role of Sanskrit at Angkor as *the* cosmopolitan language. The Mango Grove author's savvy manipulation of bilingual composition to convey slightly different messages mirrors Angkorian textual strategies. In the gaps between languages we can detect sensitivities inherent to the politico-cultural developments at hand. Here, at Sukhothai and when addressing a Tai readership it would seem somehow best to remain silent on the Angkorian gods underpinning royal power, and to trumpet instead another style of territorial delimitation, planting a grove where one's descendants will cultivate Pali Buddhism. Still, perhaps more important than the divergence of the two narratives is the very fact that they were recorded together in fourteenth-century Sukhothai.

Lan Xang: born of Angkor?

Angkor, by way it would seem of Jayavarman VII's material legacy, left an otherwise enduring trace in Lao historiography (Tambiah 1970: 29; Holt 2009: 40-53; Lorillard 2001, 2008, 2010, 2014). Legend likely first recorded in early sixteenth-century chronicles from the north of what is now Laos, and widely known today, effectively recounts how the Lao Buddhist state was born of Angkor. According to this strand of the tradition and its popular interpretation, a mid-fourteenth-century Lao prince exiled in Cambodia was married to an Angkorian princess. Leading an army provided him by his father-in-law the Khmer king, the prince united disparate Lao principalities under the name of 'Lan Xang.' In bringing home from exile a Lankan Buddha image gifted by the Khmer king, the prince and his Khmer wife are credited with bringing Buddhism itself to Laos. This is the famous Phra Bang Buddha statue, whose name, often popularly interpreted today as Khmer meaning 'August Older Brother' or 'Brother Buddha' to emphasize familial relations, has lent itself to the ancient royal city in which the statue is housed, Luang Prabang. Research probing any historicity of this legendary account at once disproves its detail and affirms the strategic importance of yoking Angkorian and Sri Lankan Buddhist constructs in the narrative reconstruction of the birth of the state, whereby an image of the Buddha could be imbued with the personality of a historico-legendary figure as a microcosm of the territory at large This discursive appeal to Buddhist Angkor in the wake of Angkor at the foundation of Lan Xang has reverberations in the material record beyond the famed Phra Bang image in a diffuse presence of Angkorian Buddhism on the Vientiane plain prior to the development of Lan Xang as a Buddhist state.

Historian Michel Lorillard suggests that Vientiane's monumental stupa, That Luang, which has become, on the order of Angkor Wat for Cambodia, a privileged emblem of the state, appears to have been built on an Angkorian site dating to Jayavarman VII's reign—possibly the chapel of the 'hospital' whose foundation was recorded in a Sanskrit inscription found at nearby Say Fong, one of the one hundred and two 'hospitals' enumerated in the Ta Prohm epigraph. It is here, amongst a homogenous collection of Bayon style sculpture at That Luang that we find displayed today the northernmost exemplar of the Jayavarman VII statue-portrait-Buddha (Fig. 1f). This statue is outshone in the national historical consciousness by the Phra Bang image supposedly brought from Angkor in the fourteenth century. Neither can be taken as evidence of an Angkorian hand in the foundation of Lan Xang. Nor do they attest

to any full-fledged Angkorian 'occupation' of this region. Angkorian statuary, like statuary stylistically influenced by Angkorian forms, is in fact dwarfed in the region by an art associated with that of the neighbouring Lanna region (now northern Thailand) from the fifteenth century (Giteau 1968-1969; 2001). Yet, read together for their multiple real, strategic and phantasmatic relations to Angkor, the two statues tell a compelling story of how Angkor lived on well beyond Angkor. Literally or metaphorically stumbling over twelfth-century Angkorian remains in the Vientiane plain, sixteenth-century Lao chroniclers would have taken inspiration in reactivating the Angkorian Dharma to *imagine* Lan Xang.

Angkor as Dharma: Enduring Claims in Burma

Let me leave readers with one final multidimensional example of this phenomenon of Angkorian legacy tied up as it is in an all-consuming concern for legacy. Contrary to the other examples discussed above from Sukhothai to Vientiane, the last lasting trace of Jayavarman VII in Burma does not stand as evidence of the actual physical reach of the Angkorian empire in its day; nor does it comprise a seminal component of the development of this modern Southeast Asian state—be it in the order of the real or the phantasmatic. Reflecting the order of relations between the Angkorian world in its heyday and its immediate aftermath with the multiple polities which will become Burma, it is on a more distant, subtle and humble order.

First, there is epigraphic evidence of a Khmer, Pali-based monastic presence at highly cosmopolitan Pagan in the wake of Jayavarman VII's death in the early thirteenth century; a veritable Khmer community seems to have been associated with this, developing most clearly after 1230. This textual evidence has given birth to a remarkable multilingual and multicultural line of textual production culminating, for the moment at least, in Historian Tilman Frasch's ongoing arduous attempts to distinguish fact from fiction in this complex narrative where Angkor meets Pagan. One Pali inscription dated 1248 CE records a Khmer monk leading a ceremony to 'purify' the Theravadin monastic order, and a Burmese princess according her patronage to his good works for which she is nicknamed the 'Khmer' princess. A second, recently discovered Pali epigraph likely from the 1270s mentions a monk— perhaps from Sri Lanka—having traveled to Cambodia before settling in Pagan [Frasch 2017; 2018; 2020]. By the late fifteenth century, this history appears to have become warped as Pali-Mon epigraphs at Pegu, the capital of a Mon polity in what is now Burma, identify a

certain influential Theravadin monk having ordained in Sri Lanka before settling in Pagan as being a son of the king of 'Kamboja' [Taw Sein Ko 1892: 5 (Pali); 51-52 (English)]. A further warping of the fifteenth-century records appearing in a nineteenth-century Burmese Chronicle ultimately incites Angkor's most influential modern historian, George Cœdès, to identify the said monk in late twelfth-century Pagan as being 'undoubtedly' the son of Jayavarman VII himself (Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1923: 143-144; Cœdès 1975 [French original 1944]: 178). As Pipad Krajaejun notes in his essay in the present volume, it is not known if the 'Kamboja' mentioned in these texts refers to Cambodia proper as it were, or to Khmer communities in what is now Thailand, namely in the area of modern Lopburi. In short, the call of Jayavarman VII to protect the Dharma is answered beyond the grave, but, in ever fainter Pali, Mon, Burmese—and even French and English… echoes of the original.

The effects of the thirteenth-century Angkor-Pagan tandem, with the one Sanskritic Buddhist power waning and the other Pali Buddhist power rising, are otherwise discernible in a group of large Bayon-style bronzes now venerated in the Mahamuni temple of Mandalay, upper Burma (Fig. 2: Mahamuni bronzes). Again, Angkorian territory at its greatest extent, under Jayavarman's reign, certainly did not extend to Mandalay, and the presence of these bronzes here does not attest to any other form of Angkorian reach at that time. It attests instead to another reach from beyond the grave. The sculptures are reputed to have been first taken to Ayutthaya in the wake of the taking of the capital at Angkor by Siamese forces in 1431/1432 CE. Successive wars saw them taken from Ayutthaya to Pegu, from Pegu to Mrauk-U (capital of the Arakan kingdom in what is now Burma), and then finally to Amarapura, now Mandalay, in the late eighteenth century. At each of their removes, further and further from Angkor, they comprised empowering war booty (FAD 1964 [1795]: 29; PKKSA 2010 [ca. 1767]: 325; Taw Sein Ko 1916 and 1917; Rajanubhab 1991 [1946]: 115-116).

The sculptural group includes seven pieces, an adorned tricephalous elephant, three anthropomorphic guardian figures and three lions. They have been dated, largely on stylistic grounds, to the Jayavarman VII period; for their iconography coupled with interpretation of passages in the Preah Khan and Phimeanakas inscriptions, they have been hypothetically identified as originally commissioned for installation at Preah Khan, Ta Prohm and the Bayon temples, the architectural triad forming the beating familial heart of Jayavarman VII's reign (Boisselier 1967; Vincent 2015). The gem of the collection, which is understood to have originally been more extensive, is the elephant. An intriguing and convincing if not yet fully developed hypothesis by Angkorian bronze specialist Brice Vincent, building on the work of

his predecessor Jean Boisselier, has it that this tricephalous elephant is the posthumous statue-portrait of Jayavarman VII's royal mount assimilated with the God Indra's famous elephant mount named Airavata. In its first remove to Ayutthaya, the bronze elephant appears to have been prized for its distinct embodiment of Angkorian royal power; this would be repeated in each successive move, with the palladia effect transferred to a new owner at every turn. Eighteenth-century Thai records suggest, for example, that when the raiding troops of King Bayinnaung took the Angkorian bronzes from Ayutthaya in 1569, they understood to be taking the palladia of Ayutthaya's founding King Ramathibodhi I otherwise known as King Uthong (PKKSA 2010 [ca. 1767]: 325).

This remarkable iteration of the Angkorian statue-portrait tradition appears to live on in a relatively literal manner in Bangkok's royal palace display of the statue-portraits of the elephant mounts of each of the Chakri rulers. If Burma, like the other Southeast Asian Buddhist states, all perpetuate in various ways the cult of the royal white elephant, in the Mahamuni temple of Mandalay today, the Angkorian bronze elephant and its entourage are perceived by local worshippers as possessing healing powers to the touch (Boisselier 1967; Vincent 2015). These bronzes have come a long way from Angkor in space and time. Yet, as objects of worship, they comprise a bridge to Jayavarman VII's Dharma still. The legacy of Angkor *as* legacy—vividly embodied in the royal statuary distributed far and wide in Jayavarman VII's day—endures, transformed. Those touching them today are not commemorating Jayavarman VII or his elephant mount in historical terms; yet they are reactivating a persistent sensation of history and power exuding from Angkor.

The import of the sculpture and texts discussed here has always exceeded the material realm – the stone of which they are carved, the geographic find spot, the dating derived from the style or the networks this data reveals. Their aesthetic dimensions imbue them with that power short of force or complementary to it that made Angkor extend beyond itself in space and time, and which continues to make it an enduring regional reference.

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