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## Lexicon

### of Angkor-related architectural, cultural, historical and religious terms

Khmer (kh), Sanskrit (sk), Pali (pl), Chinese (ch), Thai (ta)

#### A

**Acharya** (sk 'He who knows the sacred writings' kh អចារ្យ ធម៌): knowledgeable person. In modern Cambodia, the **Achar** assists the monks performing rituals for the community.

**Adit** (sk **aditya**): the sun.

**Agni**: the god of fire. Guardian of the Southeast.

**Ahimsa**: (sk 'harmlessness'): the ethic of non-violence adopted by many of the ascetics of North India to counter the aggression of the new states.

**Airavata, Ayravata, Airavana** (kh អ៊ែរវត្តា): sacred elephant, vehicle of **Indra**, generally represented with three heads. Also one of the elephants supporting the four quarters of the world.

**Akusala**: 'unskillful' or 'unhelpful' states, which will impede the quest for Enlightenment.

**Alangkar** (sk alamkara, kh លង្ការ): ornament, in a king's name.

**Amitabha**: Buddha of the higher spirit, represented on the headdress of bodhisattvas.

**Amrita**: elixir of life, the nectar of immortality created from the **churning of the Ocean of Milk**.

**Anatta**: 'No-Soul', the doctrine that denies the existence of a constant, stable and discrete personality.

**Ananta**: the multi-headed serpent on which **Vishnu** reclining during his withdrawal from the world. Also called **Cesha**.

**Anantasayin, Anantasayana** (sk 'sleeping on the Ananta'): epithet of **Vishnu** when resting on **Ananta**.

**Anastylosis**: archeological method used in Java since 1903 by the Netherlands Indies Archeological Service, by which ruined monuments were rebuilt by assembling the original stones one by one in their original order. Applied by Henri Marchal to Angkorean structures in the 1920s and 1930s, and modified by B.P. Groslier later, adding backup reinforced masonry behind the original construction.

**Angada:** the monkey warrior son of **Valin**.

**Ang, Angka** (sk anga, kh ឡង់): body, person. **Preah Angka** (kh ព្រះឡង់ក្រុង): a king's name.

**Angkor, Anghor** (sk nagara, kh ឡង់រាជ្យ): capital city, royal town. The word also exists in Khmer as **nokor** (នគរ្យ).

**Anjali** (kh ឡង់ជ័យ): 'grand salute', dance motion-posture expressing reverence, devotion, adoration.

**Anicca:** the state of 'impermanence', constant and fleeting change.

**Antarala** (sk): a small corridor linking the god's shrine to the **mandapa**.

**Antefix:** pinnacle or other ornament that stands on a parapet. Also called **Acroter**.

**Apsara** (kh ឡង់ស្រី): celestial dancer, portrayed dancing in the skies. These celestial water nymphs and sacred dancers are often depicted as the consorts of the **Gandharvas** (celestial musicians).

**Arahant** (kh ឡង់រាជ្យ): an 'Accomplished One,' who has attained

**Nibbana. Arana** (sk 'place of stillness'): a garden dedicated to meditation.

**Arcature:** niche.

**Ardhamandapa:** shallow porch over a **mandapa**.

**Areca palm** (sk puga kh ឡង់ ឡង់ ch 檳榔 fr aréquier): also known as 'betel tree', *Areca catechu*, in Khmer 'flowered palm tree'. Palms, flowers and nuts are often used in ancient and modern Khmer religious rites.

**Arjuna:** central character in the **Mahabharata**, the king of the Haihayas, of the Pandava tribe. **Pandu**, his real father, chose **Indra** as his 'godly' father. Also, the tree *Terminalia Arjuna* (arjun tree) symbolizing the achievement of enlightenment in **Theravada** Buddhism.

**Arogyasala** (sk 'sickness-free pavilion', 'health pavilion', kh ផ្ទះសង្ឃ័យ, មន្ទីរសង្ឃ័យ, 'medical house'): Ancient name of the hospitals built in Angkor and across the Khmer Empire, especially at the end of 12<sup>th</sup> century, under the rule of Jayavarman VII.

**Arthashastra** (sk 'The Treatise on Profit'): probably written in the second century AD and attributed to **Kautilya**, it expounds all aspects of practical action, including technology, economy, and public and military administration.

**Asana:** the correct position for yogic meditation, with straight back and crossed legs.

**Asrama, Ashram** (sk): a kind of monastery or retreat to which men retire when they consider that their active life is over, in order to prepare for their future existence.

**Ascetic:** sage who practiced austerity.

**Asura** (sk): a class of 'demons-monsters', the **devas**' foremost enemies.

**Atman**: the eternal, unchangeable Self sought by the yogins, ascetics and followers of the Samkhya philosophy. For the **Upanisads**, identical with brahman status.

**Avalokiteshvara** (sk 'The Lord who looks down'): the most famous of all **bodhisattvas**, also called Lokeshvara. Pictured with four arms and carrying the **amitabha** (attributes) on his head-dress: a lotus, a rosary, a bottle and a book.

**Avatara, Avatar** (sk 'descent'): the word is most frequently used to refer to the various incarnations of Vishnu, as he descends to earth to save the world from some danger.

**Avasa**: rural settlements, often built from scratch each year by Buddhist monks for monsoon retreats.

**Ayatana**: successive meditative planes achieved by a really advanced **yogin**.

**Ayodhya, Ayodhya** (sk a+yodhya, 'not to be fought, invincible'): the capital of **Ramayana's Kosala** kingdom which was ruled by Dasharatha, Ravana's father. Currently a city of India's Uttar Pradesh, with an ongoing interfaith dispute (Hinduists and Muslims) over a sacred site.

## B

**Bhaisajyaguru** (kh បដិស្ឋានស្រព្វពុទ្ធិ) : the Buddha of healing and medicine in Tantric Buddhist tradition. Also called the **Medicine Buddha**. Often represented with two Bodhisattva, his representative disciples.

**Balaha**: the horse who saved the merchant Simhala and embodied one of the previous incarnations of the Buddha.

**Balang** (kh បាលីង្គៈ): pedestal.

**Balarama**: an avatar of Vishnu in human form, and Krishna's elder brother. He is portrayed holding a ploughshare.

**Bali**: a king of the demons. The '**green monkey**' (kh ស្លា អប្បៈ) in **Ramayana** tradition.

**Baluster**: a cylindrical column, often forming the 'rails' or windows.

**Balustrade**: railing or similar in which balusters are the uprights surmounted by a beam.

**Bana**: the asura who fought against Krishna. Son of **Bali**.

**Banteay** (kh ប្រាសាទ ប្រាសាទ ប្រាសាទ): Khmer term for citadel, fortress or fortified palace.

**Bantul** (kh ប្រាសាទ ប្រាសាទ): Royal word or order.

**Baray** (kh បារាយណ៍): artificial reservoir enclosed by raising dams and/or dikes. Rectangular and of varying dimensions, the largest one being the **West Baray** (kh បារាយណ៍ ខាងលិច) at Angkor.

**Barmeisaur** (sk parama + isvara): 'The Sovereign', honorific names of Siva, Brahma, and Vishnu.

**Barom** (sk parama): the supreme one, honorific name of a king.

**Baromintea** (sk paramendra): honorific name of a king.

**Bat** (sk pada, kh បាតៈ): foot, in the name of kings.

**Beng** (kh ប៉េង): a natural pond.

**Bhikkhu**: an 'almsman,' a mendicant monk who begs for his daily food; the feminine form is **bhikkhuni**, nun.

**Bhu** (sk): the Earth goddess, a spouse of Vishnu. She is portrayed at Vishnu's feet as he sleeps on the primeval ocean.

**Bhumisparsa Mudra**: gesture of the Buddha, left hand in his lap, right one touching the ground.

**Bishma**: a son of Santanu and 'grandfather' of Kauravas.

**Birun** (sk varuna): name of a god.

**Blind Door or Window**: while Khmer religious buildings usually open to the east, 'fake' windows and doors built on the other sides to ensure symmetry.

**Bodhisattva** (pl **Bodhisatta**): a man or woman called to obtain enlightenment but delaying it through compassion for suffering beings. One in the process of becoming a Buddha. The Khmers were most familiar with the *bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara* (or **Lokeshvara**).

**Bopitr** (sk pavitra): 'The Pure One', used in a king's name.

**Brah Dharani**: goddess of the Earth, who witnessed the Buddha's enlightenment.

**Brahma** (sk): the creator-god of the Brahmin 'trinity'. He was born from a lotus growing from **Vishnu's** navel, and is portrayed with four faces looking out to the cardinal points. Mounted on the **Hamsa** (swan or sacred bird.)

**Brahmasariya**: the holy life of chastity, the quest for enlightenment and liberation from pain.

**Brahman**: the fundamental, supreme and absolute principle of the cosmos in Vedic and Upanisadic religion.

**Brahmin**: a member of the priestly caste in Aryan society, responsible for sacrifice and the transmission of the Vedas.

**Buddha** (sk 'The Enlightened One' kh ព្រះពុទ្ធ): an enlightened or awakened person. The one who has achieved ultimate wisdom. The founder of the Buddhist creed was Siddhartha **Gautama**, an Indian prince living in the 6<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. In the **Mahayana** Buddhist tradition, there are an infinite number of Buddhas.

## C

**Capital Cities**: the centers of power for the various theocratic or semi-theocratic kingdoms that raised and disappeared in North Cambodia. Their historic sequencing has been established as follows: 1)

**Indrapura** (Jayavarman II, Thbong Khmom District) 2) **Hariharalaya** (kh ហិរិហរាលាយ) (Jayavarman II, in ហិរិហរាលាយ

the Roluos area) 3) **Amrendrapura** (Jayavarman II, West Baray area) 4) **Mahendraparvata** (kh មហេន្ទ្របុរី) (Jayavarman II, Kulen Mountain) 4) Both **Hariharalaya** and **Mahendraparvata** (Jayavarman II, III) 5) Extension of **Hariharalaya** to Indratataka, Bakong, Preah Ko (Indravarman I) 6) **Yasodharapura** (kh យសោធក្សត្រ) (Yasovarman I, Bakheng area) 7) **Angkor Thom** or **Nokor Thom** (Jayavarman VII). Prior to Angkorian dynasties, there was also **Isanapura**, the **Chenla capital city** at Sambor Prei Kuk (kh ព្រះសំបូរព្រៃកុក) (Isanavarman I, Kompong Thom area).

**Chakravartin**: Indian royal title meaning 'universal sovereign'. Also **Cakkavatti**, the World Ruler who in the Indian folklore would govern the whole universe and impose justice and righteousness by force.

**Cham** (kh ចាម): the inhabitants of **Champa**, kingdom of the Hindu civilization on the southern coast of contemporary Vietnam and Cambodia. The term also refers to the Malayo-Polynesian language spoken there. In modern Cambodia, the Chams are an important minority embracing the Muslim faith, also called 'Khmer Islam' (kh ខ្មែរឥស្លាម).

**Champa** (kh ចំពូ): a country which existed along the coastal strip of what today is central Vietnam. It consisted of several kingdoms sometimes united but often independent. There are many surviving vestiges of the original Cham architecture. Champa was progressively conquered by the Vietnamese from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

**Chan** (sk candra kh ចាន្ទៈ): the moon. Honorific in the name of a king or prince. Girl's given name.

**Chan** (sk candana kh ចាន្ទៈ): *Santalum album*, Indian sandalwood.

**Chandaka**: the Buddha's squire who accompanied him initially when he left the palace to seek enlightenment.

**Chandrasa** (sk 'the glittering scimitar'): **Ravana's** sword, which he received from **Shiva**.

**Chara** (sk): scout who also acted as a military spy.

**Charaka Samhita** (sk 'wandering healer's compendium'): the first treatise of **Ayurvedic medicine**, compiled between 100 BCE and 200 CE. This sum of eight books and one hundred twenty chapters was edited by **Dridhabala** in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The treatise includes recommendations on nutrition, physical exercise, sexual health and medical education. Along with the **Susrutha Samhita**, another ancient medical treatise, it has inspired **Khmer herbal medicine**.

**Chaturmukha** (sk catur + mukha kh ចតុរមុខ): the four faces (for the four rivers), a name for Phnom

Penh. **Chau** (siamese 'chao', lord): honorific title in the name of princes. **Chau Fa**, title of a high mandarin. **Chau ku**, 'my master', name given to a monk.

**Chedei** (Sk saitya, kh ដេតី): reliquary, funeral monument, **stupa**.

**Cella**: Inner part of a temple. This Latin word (or the Greek *naos*) is more often applied to Roman or Greek structures, yet some archeologists use it while describing Southeast Asian temples.

**Ceto-vimutti** (sk 'the release of the mind'): a synonym for enlightenment and the achievement of **Nibbana**.

**Chenla, Zhenla** (kh ចេន្ទ្រា): Chinese designation of a confederation of principalities upon which reigned King **Mahendravarman** and his successor, **Isanavarman I**. Originally a province controlled by the **Funan** rulers, Chenla conquered the Funan area around 627 CE.

**Chestha** (sk jyestha kh): 'the strongest, greatest, eldest', in the name of a king or prince.

**Chey** (sk jaya, kh ជ័យ): 'The Victorious', in the name of a king or

prince. **Chipor, Chivor** (sk civara, kh ជ័រ, ជ័រ): robe, priest's garb.

**Chitrlekha**: **Usha's** friend.

**Churning of the Ocean of Milk** (sk samudra manthana kh កំរើកមុខព្រះវិស្ណុ): one of India's greatest myths. Desiring to secure their immortality, the gods churned the Ocean of Milk to generate **amrita** - the elixir of eternal life. They turned the sacred mountain **Mandara** upside down and used it as a dasher, and for a rope they used the serpent Vasuki. Vishnu incarnated himself as the turtle Kurma to serve as a pivot at the base of the mountain. On Angkor Wat famous bas-relief, 88 *asuras* and 92 *devas* with crested helmets are seen churning up the sea.

**Citragupta**: the record keeper of human deeds and misdeeds.

**Colonette** (fr 'colonnette'): small column, usually decorative in Khmer architecture, standing at either side of a doorway.

**Corbel Arch**: the technique of arched **passageways** used by Khmer builders, less sturdy than the 'true arch'.

**Cornice** (fr 'corniche'): decorated projection that crowns or protects an architectural feature such as a doorway. The cornice level is the one immediately above the lintels.

## D

**Damrei, Dombrei** (kh ដំរី): elephant.

**Dasharatha**: king of Kosala and father of Rama.

**Davantaka**: a rakasha warrior.

**Deva** (kh ដេវតា): a deity. An inhabitant of the heavens, sometimes called 'angel'. Like men, the deva are created beings, but their faculties are more powerful and they live much longer.

**Devadatta**: envious cousin of the Buddha.

**Devaputtas**: flying male celestial beings.

**Devaraja** (sk 'god who is king'): the God King, the essence of royalty, supposed to reside in the royal **linga**. Also, the divinity ruling the country. The Sanskrit word corresponds to the Old Khmer phrase **kamrateng jagat ta raja**.

**Devata, Tevoda** (kh ដេវតា): female deity. Often misnamed as **apasara**, celestial dancer.

**Devi** (sk 'goddess'): title given to Parvati, wife of **Shiva**. Used as a suffix in Khmer queens' names, i.e. Indradevi.

**Dharana** (sk 'concentration'): yogi term defining the process of internal visualization, during which the yogin becomes conscious of his own consciousness.

**Dharma**: originally, the natural condition of things, their essence, the fundamental law of their existence. By extension: religious truth, the doctrines and practices that make up a particular religious system.

**Dharmasala** (sk 'house of fire' kh ផ្ទះភ្លើង sala chhortien): shelter for the free use of wayfarers or pilgrims, still a feature of Khmer villages. Originally, the 'fire shrine' was used to safeguard the Sacred Fire which was always carried in procession by troops on their campaigns and by the retinue of kings on royal progresses. They are often of laterite or sandstone.

**Dhyana Mudra**: meditative posture of the Buddha with hands crossed in the lap.

**Doem** (kh ដំរី): plant, trunk.

**Dvarapala**: A guardian of the temple (**deva** or **asura**), mainly found at the entrances.

**Durga** (sk 'The Unapproachable'): name of a goddess of terrifying aspect, sometimes characterized as one of the spouses of Shiva. She is however often venerated as a separate deity in her own right, notably as Mahishasuramardini, 'She who crushed the asura Mahisha'.

**Dukkha** (sk 'flawed, unsatisfactory'): the suffering inherent to human condition. The **Pali** canon defines no less than thirteen forms of '**dukkha**', from the physical strain inflicted by natural causes to the spiritual 'unease' of the one fighting his or her negative pulsions.

## F

**Face-Tower** (kh ប្រាសាទមុខ៤ 'tower with 4 faces') : tower with four faces, the "artistic revolution", "invention with no past nor future bridging sculpture and architecture" in Khmer temples from the 9<sup>th</sup> until the 13<sup>th</sup> century", according to George Groslier. Held as the apex of **Tantric Buddhism** architecture.

**Faux vaulting**: the stones of opposite terraced wall sections that reach each other at the apex.

**Ficus Religiosa** (kh ដើមដេង doem por): sacred tree in Buddhism.

**Funan** (kh ព្រះវិហារ, ch 扶南): name of a compound of Indianized states preceding the Angkorian kingdom, on the coast of modern Cambodia and Vietnam. First conquered by Chenla's King Isanavarman I around 627 CE. It has been interpreted as a Chinese transliteration of the Khmer word '**Phnom**', mountain. Also known as **Nokor Phnom** (kh នគរភ្នំ 'Mountain Kingdom') in Khmer.

## G

**Gajasimha**: lion with a snout.

**Gambhiresvara** (sk 'Lord of the Depths'): one of Shiva's many names.

**Ganesha, Ganesh, Ganapati**: (sk 'Lord of obstacles'): **Shiva**'s son, the fat-bellied elephant-headed god with a broken tusk. An important deity in the everyday lives of the people, since he is also the god of intelligence. According to one tradition, **Shiva** had beheaded his son by mistake; upon realizing his error, he could only save his son's life by quickly using the head of a nearby elephant.

**Ganga**: one of the wives of Shiva, goddess of the Ganges River.

**Garuda** (sk, kh ក្រព័ន្ធ krut): a mythical being, half-man, half-bird, enemy of the **nagas**. **Garudas** are often portrayed on Khmer monuments as telamons, holding up the world of the gods, and nowadays supporting the pagoda roofs. As a proper noun, **Garuda** is the name of the 'vehicle' of the god **Vishnu**.

**Garbhaghra** (sk 'womb house'): inner chamber of a shrine. In a Khmer sanctuary, it is usually a square cell.

**Gautama** (fr Gotama): original name of the 'historic' Buddha.

**Giants** (kh យក្ស yak): an imaginary or mythical being of human form but superhuman size.

**Gopura** (hybrid of sk and tamil): the entrance pavilion or gateway to an Indian or Khmer temple. Often topped with a tower.

**Govardhana** (sk): the mythical mountain lifted up by **Krishna** to safeguard his shepherds and flocks who were threatened by the furious storm unleashed by **Indra**.

**Gupta**: a dynasty which ruled northern India in the fourth and fifth centuries. Also, the period which saw the development of one of the finest styles of Indian sculpture, named after that dynasty. **Gupta** style had a profound influence on the early art forms of Indianized Southeast Asia.

**Guru** (sk kh ព្រឹទ្ធ): 'master', especially as 'spiritual guide'.



## H

**Hamsa**: sacred goose, the mount of Brahma.

**Hanuman** (kh ហ្សូណ៍): 'The White Monkey' (kh ហ្សូណ៍ រូ), chief of the monkey army in the **Ramayana** epic.

**Harihara**: a god unifying in the same figure Hari (**Vishnu**) and Hara (**Shiva**).

**Hevajra**: Tantric divinity.

**Hinayana** (sk 'The Lesser Path'): a name given by Mahayana Buddhists to one of the two main Buddhist traditions, **Theravada** Buddhism. Also known as 'the little vehicle' as opposed to the Mahayana, 'the Great Path'. It is preferable to use the term **Theravada**.

## I

**Iddhi**: The dominion of spirit over matter; the miraculous powers supposedly bestowed by proficiency in yoga, e.g. levitation or the ability to change shape at will.

**Ihana** (sk dhyana): a yogic trance happening in four distinct stages.

**Iina**: a 'conqueror', honorary title of Buddha.

**Indra** (sk, pl **Inda** or **Sakka**): 'king' of the gods, most often portrayed astride his 'vehicle', the three-headed elephant Airavata. **Indra** is the god of extreme weather, causing torrential rains. He is also the 'Regent of the East'. Also '**Mahendra**', the great Indra.

**Indriya** (pl): faculty, capacity.

**Indiprasth, Intoprasth** (Sk Indra + prastha): name of a capital city.

**Isanapura** (Kh: ព្រះវិហារ): capital city built by King **Isanavarman I** (7<sup>th</sup> century, kh ព្រះវិហារ, pre-angkorian kh ព្រះវិហារ) also known as **Ksatriya Isana**) as the center of the **Chenla** (Kh: ជ័នឡា) confederation of principalities.

**Isar, Içar, Eisaur, Issur** (Sk isvara): Lord, attribute of Shiva.

## J

**Jataka** (sk and pali 'birth'): important collection of tales and stories related to **Gautama Buddha's** previous births and lives. Part of the collection are the **Mahanipata Jataka** (kh ព្រះបាទព្រាហ្មញ្ញត្ថិត្តិកៈ toutsak cheadok), *The Ten Great Birth Stories of the Buddha*.

**Jaya** (kh ជ័យ): 'The Victorious'.

**Jomneang Pteas** (kh ជំនឿផ្ទះ): the female spirit of house.

## K

**Kabandha**: **asura** (demon) slain by **Rama**.

**Kailasa**: sacred mountain, abode of **Shiva**.



**Kala:** face commonly appearing over doorways, perhaps representing **Rahu**.

**Kalanemi:** an **asura** enemy of the gods.

**Kaliya:** **naga** wounded by Krishna.

**Kalpa:** a cycle of time.

**Kama:** god of love.

**Kambu** (sk kamboja kh កាំបូ): A 10<sup>th</sup> century Khmer inscription states that the Indian hermit **Kambu Swayambhuva** and the celestial nymph **Mera** united, thus establishing the Cambodian royal dynasty (Kambu-Mera), that begins with the **Chenla** ruler **Srutavarman** and his son **Sreshthavarman**. In the Vedic tradition, Kambu Swayambhuva was the ancestor of the Indian **Kambuja** tribe and king of **Aryadesa**.

**Kampuchea, Kambuja** (sk kambuja, kh កម្ពុជ): name of the people and country before the **Chenla** and **Funan** kingdoms. The ancient name for Cambodia, lit. 'offspring of **Kambu**', the country's mythical founder.

**Kamrateng jagat ta raja** (kh កាណៈតា): 'the god who is king', reigning over all the local divinities, whether that of a kingdom or the deity of the whole Khmer empire. According to other interpretations, celestial equivalent of the earthly king.

**Kamsa:** uncle of Krishna who attempted to kill him when he was young.

**Kanaka:** king of Mithila, father of Sita.

**Kandha** (pl 'heap', 'lump'): the five constituents of human condition in the Buddhist concept of **anatta**: body, feelings, perception, volition and consciousness.

**Kandrajit:** son of Ravana.

**Katayus:** the king of vultures.

**Kanthaka** (kh កណ្តក កៈ): the Buddha's horse.

**Kantuy Krapoe** (kh កន្ទុយក្របី: *Aquilaria Aloexyle*, aloes wood. The Khmer name means 'crocodile tail'.

**Karma** (sk karman pl **Kamma** kh កាម kam): actions or deeds which determine one being's subsequent existences.

**Kaundinya** (pl kondañña ch hun tein): the first Indian prince to set foot in Cambodia, according to an oral and written tradition. Smitten by the daughter of the Naga King whom he saw dancing on the sand, he married her (**Neang Neak**) and the Khmer people are their offspring. Eponym of a famous brahmin among the first disciples of Gautama Buddha, or perhaps his reincarnation. See also **Preah Thaong**.

**Kauravas:** the tribe who fought the **Pandavas**.

**Kavindrarmathana** (kh កវិន្ទរមាតាណា: a Buddhist minister of King Rajendravarman, in charge of the construction of several temples around Angkor in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. He is the only "architect" namely mentioned in inscriptions that have come to our knowledge.

**Kbach** (kh ក្បាច់): decorative elements in Cambodian architecture and sculpture, mostly inspired by natural motives (flowers, etc...). Also, in Khmer classical dance, any dance gesture, distinct style or rhythm: **Kbach Rongvoel** (kh ក្បាច់រង្វង់) 'slow', **Kbach Banchos** (kh ក្បាច់ប្រថង់) 'fast', **Kbach Lea** (kh ក្បាច់លា) 'farewell', **Kbach Choet** (kh ក្បាច់ចិត្ត) 'flying', **Kbach Smeu** (kh ក្បាច់ស្ទើរ) 'entering and leaving', **Kbach Mul** (kh ក្បាច់មូល) 'gods' round dance'.

**Keo Fiy:** title of the king's eldest son.

**Ker** (kh ក្រុំត្រី):

glory.

**Ketu:** a monster who creates comets and meteors, born from the tail of Rahu.

**Khandha** (sk 'heaps, bundles, lumps'): the constituents of the human personality in the Buddha's theory of anatta, The five 'heaps' are body, feelings, perception, volition and consciousness.

**Khmer or Angkorian Architecture** (kh ក្បួនស្ថាបត្យកម្មខ្មែរ): architectural styles and techniques developed by the Khmer people from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, with three main building materials: bricks, laterite and sandstone.

**Khnyum** (kh ក្មួយ់ក្រមុំ khnyom bomrer): slave, especially 'slave of the gods' when in temple service.

**Kinnara, Kinnari** (sk, kh កិន្តរិក, កិន្តរិកី kenor): male and female flying demiurges often depicted as a frieze of winged human figures, as at **Banteay Chhmar** (kh ប្រាសាទប្រាសាទប្រាសាទ). In Indian art, they are shown as winged horses. In Cambodia's **Reamker**, they often appear in dance tableaux.

**Kiyr** (sk kara): act, deed.

**Kiratas:** hunters.

**Kok** (kh កុក): numerous.

**Koh** (kh កោះ): island.

**Kompong, Kampong** (kh កំពង់): bank of a river. Riverside town or village.

**Kosala:** the legendary kingdom in **Ramayana** epic.

**Krei, Krei Sneung** (kh ក្រែ, ក្រែស្នែង): palanquin, sometimes carried on the shoulders.

**Kresna** (kh ក្រែស្នែង): *Aquilaria Agallocha*, eagle wood.

**Krishna** (sk): the eighth and best-known of Vishnu's **avatara**, Krishna is a god who has many human adventures. In the **Mahabharata**, he is the one who recites the great Hindu devotional poem, the **Bhagavadgita**.

**Krong, Kurung** (kh ក្រុង): king, capital city, kingdom. **Kurung** was the title used by the kings of the Angkor period to refer to previous Khmer monarchs.

**Kru** (kh គ្រូ): teacher.

**Kru Baramey** (kh ក្រូបារមី, Rub Memot): someone who acts a medium between human beings and spirits, helping to connect and communicate with each other.

**Ksatriya:** The caste of warriors, noblemen and aristocrats responsible in Aryan society for government and defense.

**Kubera:** Lord of Wealth, Men and Genii. Guardian of the North.

**Kukkucca** (pl): remorse, afterthought after doing something negative or missing the opportunity of a good deed.

**Kumbha:** rakshasa, son of **Kumbhakarna**.

**Kumbhakarna:** rakshasa, brother of **Ravana** who attempts to kill **Rama**.

**Kuoy** (kh កួយ): an ethnic group speaking a language related to Khmer and living mainly in the region of Kompong Svay, some 90 kilometers east of Angkor. They specialized in ironwork.

**Kurma:** king of tortoises, one of the **avatars** of **Vishnu**.

**Kusala:** The 'skillful' or 'helpful' states of mind and heart that Buddhists should cultivate in order to achieve enlightenment.

## L

**Lakhon, Lokhon** (kh លក់): Khmer ceremonial dance dating back to the reign of Jayavarman II, Angkor sovereign also named **Preah Ket Mealea** or **Paramesvara**.

**Lakshmana:** one of **Rama**'s brothers and his chief companion in his exile and battles.

**Lakshmi** (sk.): spouse of Vishnu, the goddess of beauty, fortune and wealth. She automatically became a 'wife' of the Khmer kings when they accessed to the throne.

**Lanka, Langka** (kh លង្កា): kingdom ruled by **Ravana**, a rival of Rama.

**Laterite:** porous, reddish, easily extracted rock containing iron.

**Li** (ch): a unit of length which varied over time. In the third century AD it is estimated to have measured about 375 meters, whereas Beal, in his translation of the early fifth century 'Pilgrimage to India' of the Chinese Buddhist, Fah Hian, calculates it as circa 322 meters.

**'Libraries'** (kh ប្រាសាទ): structures separated from the main buildings, usually found in pairs in front of the main entrance leading to the temple to a yard. More probably shrines than storage places for sacred texts, they almost always open to the west. It seems that these structures served, at least partly, as 'Fire shrines'. Called 'hotrai' in Thai.

**Lintel:** stone or masonry block bridging two entrance pillars, either structural or purely decorative element. The **structural lintel** is the load-bearing upper member of a stone doorframe, usually concealed for the most part.

**Linga, Lingam:** phallus symbol representing the procreative essence of Shiva. Adopted by the Khmer kings as the palladian of the kingdom.

**Linga** (sk.): an icon in the shape of a stylized phallus, worshipped as a deity symbolizing Shiva but also as the pillar which shores up the earth.

**Lingaparvata** (sk 'the mountain of the linga'): the sacred mountain at **Wat Phu** (modern Laos).

**Lok** (Sk loka, Kh លោក): man, lord. In modern Khmer, 'Mister' or 'Sir', or priest.

**Lokapalas:** guardians of the cardinal directions.

**Lokeshvara:** another name for **Avalokitesvara**, preferred by the Khmers.

**Lokeshvara** (sk 'Lord of the World'): an alternative name for the bodhisattva **Avalokiteshvara**.

## M

**Mahabharata** (sk): one of the great Indian epic poems. Its 120,000 stanzas contain a myriad of different tales but the main theme is the power struggle between the five Pandava brothers and their cousins the Kauravas.

**Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī** (pl, sk **Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī**): the Buddha's adoptive mother and first **bikkhuni**.

**Mahaparinirvana**: attainment of extinction of the self and cessation of the cycle or becoming.

**Maharajadhiraja** (sk 'Supreme King of Kings'): title first adopted by Jayavarman II in 802 AD and used by all subsequent Khmer kings.

**Mahayana** (sk 'The Great Path'): in Buddhism, it contrasts with 'Hinayana' (**Theravada**) code which preceded it historically. Mahayana is a development of the Buddhist creed in which the **Buddha** and the **Bodhisattvas** are venerated with rituals which are close to those of Hinduism.

**Mahendra** (sk ma+Indra): 'the great Indra'.

**Mahii, Mohii** (sk, pl): 'great'.

**Mahiparvata**: sacred mountain.

**Mahishi** (sk 'cow-buffalo'): the enigmatic title given in some inscriptions to refer to the senior wife of the Khmer king.

**Mahout** (sk 'Mahamatra', ta Kwan Chang): the man who drives the elephant.

**Makara** (sk kh មក្រា): crocodile (or fish-based composite monster), sometimes characterized as the 'vehicle' of Varuna, god of the oceans. Sculptural motive largely present at Banteay Srei.

**Mandapa** (sk): antechamber, pavilion preceding the temple's main shrine, sometimes connected to it via the antarala passageway. In **Shiva** temples it may house the god's 'vehicle' - the bull Nandi.

**Mandara**: mythological mountain of the gods, the king of mountains at the center of the Ocean.

**Mara**: the god who rules over the world of desire, enemy of the Buddha.

**Mariea**: the demon transformed into a deer or gazelle to distract **Rama**.

**Mayavati**: the reincarnation of Rati, the wife of Kama.

**Mebon** (kh ដេប៉ូណេប៊ុន): Ceremonial place, always built as an artificial island in the center of a water reservoir.

**Meru, Mount Meru** (kh មេរុ): in the Hindu worldview, the center of the universe, home of the gods. This mountain of Indian cosmology has five peaks, hence the five towers of **Angkor Wat**.

**Methea** (sk medhii): wisdom.

**Metrey, Maitreya** (sk maitreya kh ដេត្រៃ): name of a famous bodhisattva.

**Modaka**: a sort of sweetmeat favored by **Ganesha**.

**Mohodara**: a rakshasa from the Battle of Lanka.

**Mokot** (sk mukkuta kh មុក្កុត្តៈ ឬ មង្គុត្តៈ): conical head-dress worn by the apsaras. Crown, tiara.

**Mon** (pl ramanna kh មន): large ethnic group initially inhabiting parts of modern Burma and Thailand.

**Mon-Khmer** (kh មន-ខ្មែរ) is a linguistic group of Austroasiatic languages.

**Montrei** (pl, sk **Mantrin**, kh មន្ត្រី): minister, or some sort of high-ranking office. Via the Portuguese language, it gave the Western idioms the word 'mandarin'.

**Muchalinda**: The **naga** king who sheltered the Buddha while he meditated.

**Mudra**: hand or body gesture.

**Muka**: a demon.

## N

**Naga** (sk naga, kh នាហ្មឺន): mythical serpent-guardians of the nether regions and eternal foes of the garuda. The most prominent enjoy semi-divine status such as Shesha, companion of Vishnu, and Vasuki who acts as the rope in the **Churning of the Milk Ocean**. Ubiquitous in Khmer art, the naga is portrayed as a cobra with five or seven heads. Their female equivalents are the nagi (water-nymphs with human bodies and snake-tails).

**Nalgiri**: mad elephant sent to kill the Buddha by his jealous cousin.

**Nandi**: the sacred bull of **Shiva**.

**Naraka**: a demon slain by **Indra**.

**Narantaka**: one of Ravana's sons.

**Navagraha** (sk "nine celestial bodies of the Universe"): the nine celestial bodies-deities in Hindu astrology: **Surya** or Ravi (the Sun), **Chandra** or **Soma** (the Moon) **Mangala** (Mars), **Budha** or Budh (Mercury), **Dev Guru** or **Brihaspati** (Jupiter), **Shukra** (Venus), **Shani** (Saturn) **Rahu** (Ascending Lunar node), **Ketu** (Descending Lunar node).

**Nbom** (pl): name of a prince.

**Neak** (kh នែក): human being. **Anak sanjak** (men) seems to be a specific term to describe some sort of 'royal praetorian guard'. Angkorian kings' female guards are called in Khmer អ្នកម្ចាស់ (chhman srei).

**Neak-ta** (kh នែកតា): local deities associated with particular places.

**Neang Neak** (sk soma ch liuye kh នេងនែក): in Khmer mythology, the daughter of the King of the Nagas whose union with **Preah Thaong** (**Kaundinya**) gave birth to Cambodia. According to Chinese chronicles, as Queen Soma or Liu Yeh in Chinese, she was the first ruler of **Funan**.

**Nikumba**: rakshasa son of **Kumbhakarna**.

**Nikaya**: 'Collections' of discourses in the **Pali** Canon.

**Nilaphat**: the monkey general of **Sugriva**'s army. 'Black Monkey' (kh ល្អិត ដង្កូវ) in the Reamker.

**Nirrti** (Kh និរ្រតិ): god of misery, guardian of the Southwest.

**Niyamas**: The bodily and psychological disciplines which are a prerequisite for yogic meditation.

**Nokor** (sk nagara kh នគរ): town, royal town, Angkor.

## O

**Obareach, Oppariij** (sk upa+rrija kh ឧបារិយ): title of the elder brother of the king, or second king.

**Oknea, Oknya** (sk ukna, kh ឧកញ៉ា): title of a grandee.

**Ongkiir, Ongkara** (sk om + kiira): sacred word, royal order.

**Ong, Ang** (sk 'oil'): title of a grandee.

**Outey** (sk udaya, kh ឧទ័យ): sunrise, name of a king or prince.

## P

**Pa** (sk Pii kh ប៉ា): father.

**Pabbajja**: 'Going Forth', the act of renouncing the world in order to live the holy life of a monk. Later, the first step in Buddhist ordination.

**Pali** (kh បាលី): best-known among a group of Indian languages known as the **Prakrits**, **pali** is the religious language in the canon of Theravada Buddhist scriptures used in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.

**Palmette** (fr palmette): a motif in decorative art resembling the fan-shaped leaves of a palm tree.

**Pandava**; found in the name of a king; also the name of Srei Santhor.

**Pandavas**: the tribe who fought the **Kauravas** in the Battle of Kurukshetra.

**Pandita, Pandit** (sk): sage, man of letters.

**Pandu**: father of **Arjuna**, head of the **Pandava** tribe.

**Panha** (pl pañña kh ប្រាណៈ): knowledge, wisdom.

**Parashurama** (sk 'Rama with an axe'): **Vishnu**'s sixth avatara and the brother of **Rama** and **Balarama**. He descended to earth to put an end to the oppression of the Kshatrya (the 'nobles' caste). His weapon is the axe, a gift from **Shiva**.

**Parinibbana**: the 'Final Nibbana', the ultimate rest of an enlightened person achieved at death, since he or she will not be reborn into another existence.

**Parvati** (sk 'She from the mountains'): daughter of Himavan, god of the Himalayas, Parvati, also known as **Uma** or **Devi**, is Shiva's main consort.

**Patimokkha** (pl pati 'protect' + mokkha 'liberation'): Summary in form of 227 rules of the **Vinaya**, the Theravada canon. Also, a ceremony whereby the early monks came together every six years to recite the Buddhist Dhamma; later, after the Buddha's death, this became a recitation of the monastic rule of the Order and a confession of transgressions, which was held once a fortnight.

**Pancha Yatana**: in Hindu religious architecture, a temple with a main central sanctuary surrounded by four other shrines and connected to them by cloisters.

**Pediment** (fr 'fronton'): triangular structure above a lintel, the external, decorated surface of which is called **tympanum**.

**Phkeak** (kh. ផ្អាក): a billhook, characteristic Khmer weapon, long handled club with two blades inserted at an angle.

**Phnom** (kh. ភ្នំ): mountain, hill, hillock.

**Phum** (kh. ភូមិ): village.

**Pilaster**: square- or rectangular-sectioned pillar that is actually engaged in the wall, becoming a projection.

**Pinda** (sk): ball of rice offered to the ancestors.

**Plauv, Plu, Pleuh** (or Thnal) (kh. ផ្លូវ): road – or street in modern Khmer -, Old Khmer term ascribed to the royal roads leading from Angkor to other parts of the Khmer Empire, such as **Pimai** to the north-west and **Wat Phu** to the north-east.

**Ponhea, Pnhea** (kh ព្រះបាទ ): princely title, referring to pre-Angkorian times.

**Portico**: a columned hall at the entrance of a building.

**Pradakshina** (sk): ritual circumambulation of a temple or statue, in India and Southeast Asia, always keeping the venerated object to one's right.

**Pradymna**: son of **Krishna** and **Rukmini**, the goddess of fortune.

**Prahasiteshvara**: (sk 'The Smiling Lord'): one of **Shiva**'s many names.

**Prajnaparamita** (sk 'prajna' (wisdom) 'paramita' (perfection), kh ព្រះបាទ ): the 'Perfection of Wisdom', a collection of some 40 **sutras** considering the transcendent wisdom and its personification as 'God Mother'. Among the oldest known **Mahayana** sutras. **Prajnaparamita** was revered as a goddess.

The **Ta Prohm** temple near Angkor Wat is dedicated to her, and her representation there is believed to reproduce the facial traits of **Jayaraçudamani**, Jayavarman VII's mother.

**Prajiaparamita**: the female version of the **bodhisattva**.

**Prajnyaparamita** (sk 'Perfection of Insight'): the female personification of the Bodhisattva's qualities.

**Praktri**: Nature, the natural world.

**Pralamba**: a mystic mountain.

**Prali**: Roof finial.

**Pranayama**: the breathing exercises of yoga, which induce a state of trance and well-being.

**Prang** (kh ព្រះបាទ ta prang): tall spire, usually intricately carved, characteristic of Khmer devotional architecture. With its many niches ornated with devotional statues, the **prang** is characteristic of the rise of Theravada Buddhism in the Angkorean sphere. Several **prasats** (Brahmanic temples) have been modified into **prangs** in the last centuries of the Angkorean era (end of 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries).

**Prasat** (sk prasada kh ព្រះបាទ ): sanctuary in form of a tower, architectural style from South India widespread around Southeast Asia.

**Prasathani** (sk raja + dhani): royal town, in the name of a king.

**Prasavya**: a funerary rite.

**Pratyahara**: in yoga, a 'withdrawal of the senses,' the ability to contemplate an object with the intellect alone.

**Preah, Prah, Pra** (kh ព្រះ ): pertaining to anything sacred, holy. As a noun, associated to 'Put' in 'Preah Put', the Buddha's name in Khmer.

**Preah Ket Maelea** (kh ព្រះកេតម៉េលា ): 'Blossoming Light', name given to the first sovereign of Angkor, Jayavarman II who, according to a Khmer legend, was sired when Indra let drop a 'rain of flowers' over the body of his childless mother, fecundating her.

**Preah Noreay** (sk niiriyana kh ព្រះនរោយណ៍): name of Vishnu (kh វិស្ណុ), a king or a prince.

**Preah Thaong** (kh ព្រះផាង 'the Prince of Faraway Land'): In some Khmer traditions, name of an Indian prince who came to a new land called **Chroy Sovannapumi** (kh ជ្រៃសុវណ្ណបុរី 'Cape of The Golden Coast'), Kampuchea or Cambodia), which was originally known as **Norkor Kok Tlok** (kh នគរក្រក់ត្រក់ 'Kingdom of the Dry Tlok Tree').

**Proh** (kh ព្រះ ): man.



**Prolang** (kh ព្រលាំង): soul or spirit (according to Cambodian tradition there are 19 major and minor souls which inhabit the human body).

**Purohita** (sk 'superintendent'): the king's closest assistant. Also, the **brahmin priest** in charge of royal rituals.

**Purusa**: The Absolute Spirit that pervades all beings in the philosophy of Samkhya.

**Put** (sk **buddha** kh ព្រះ): the Buddha.

## Q

**Quincunx**: architectural arrangement of five objects in which four occupy the corners and the fifth the centre. Also **Pancha Yatana**.

## R

**Rahu** (kh រ៉ាហូ): mythical demon said to cause eclipses of the sun or moon by eating it, assuming the shape of a meteor.

**Raja** (sk 'King', kh រាជ ៈ): as used by the Khmers, it refers to a minor potentate.

**Rajaputra** (sk 'king's son'): used to designate the male offspring of the supreme king as well as that of other royal lineages.

**Rajahota**: royal priest.

**Rajalalisatana**: a way of sitting with one knee propped up, used mainly by princely people.

**Rakshasa**: demon.

**Rakshini**: female rakshasa, demoness.

**Rama** (kh រាម Ream): the seventh and one of the best known of Vishnu's **avatara**.

**Ramayana** (sk kh 'Reamker' រាមកេរ្តិ៍): Major Indian epic poem which remains very popular in Southeast Asia, narrates the adventures of **Rama** and his spouse **Sita** whose kidnapping by the demon **Ravana** and imprisonment in (Sri) Lanka sparks a ferocious war with Rama and his monkey army commanded by its semi-divine general, **Hanuman**. Generally attributed to Maharisi Valmiki ('Adi Kavi', 'the first poet'), it is one of the two major Sanskrit epics with the **Mahābhārata**.

**Rambha**: a nymph with whom **Viradha** fell in love.

**Rapala**: guardian deities of doors and entrance ways.

**Ravana**: the demon king of **Langka**. As a powerful demon-king he is depicted with six, eight or ten heads and twelve, sixteen or twenty arms. Brahma had granted him immunity from the gods but he had been too proud to ask also for immunity from men and animals. This was to prove his downfall, dramatically narrated in the Ramayana epic.

**Rattha** (pl rattha, sk rastea, kh រត្ថ ៈ): country, land, kingdom.

**Reach, Reachea** (sk raja, kh រាជ្យ, រាជ ៈ): kingdom, king.

**Reamea** (sk rama kh រាមា): **Rama**. Also, name of a king or prince.

**Reamker, Ramakerti** (kh រាមកេរ្តិ៍ 'the glory of Rama'): Khmer version of the **Ramayana** epic.

**Redenting**: architectural treatment of a structure in plan whereby the corners are indented (cut back) into successive right angles.

**Rig Veda**: collection of sacrificial hymns dedicated to a pantheon of gods, composed from 1200 BCE.

**Roloeng** (kh រលួង): **uprooted**.

រលួង

**Rolung** (sk ralun): **grand, imposing**.

**Rishi**: a great sage or illuminated being.

**Rudra**: a Vedic god from the **Rig Veda**.

**Rup** (pl rupa sk riipa kh រូប): form, shape.

**Ryodhalla**: the wicked eldest son of King **Ritarashtra** who precipitated a major battle with Bhima.

## S

**Sabha** (sk): The general word for an assembly, of whatever nature.

**Sacred Furrow** (kh វិធីប្រតិបត្តិការដាំដុះ): an annual Khmer ceremony in which the monarch ploughs the first furrow to bless and symbolise the beginning of the paddy-sowing season. The rite is also performed in India.

**Sak** (sk sakti, kh ភាព): rank, honor.

**Saka**: the Indian era most commonly used in the inscriptions, preceding the Christian era by 78 years.

**Sakhi** (sk sakha): monk. Also from sk **saktisiddhi**, 'endowed with spiritual power'.

**Sakra**: the wheel of the Buddha, signifying immortality and power.

**Sakti**: the female consorts or feminine energy of the Hindu pantheon.

**Sakyamiini**: 'The Sage of the Republic of Sakka,' a title given to the Buddha.

**Samiidhi**: yogic concentration; meditation; one of the components of the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment.

**Samkhya** (sk 'discrimination'): a philosophy, akin to yoga, which was first preached by the sage **Kapila** in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

**Samdach, Sdach** (kh សម្តេច, ស្តេច): powerful, power holder. Royal title preceding the name of a dignitary or eminent person.

**Sampati**: The vulture brother of **Jatayus**.

**Samphea** (kh សំព័រ): salutation, for instance in 'Pithi Samphea Kru', the salutation to the dance masters before a performance.

**Sampot** (kh សំពត់): short skirt worn around the waist. Also **sarong**.

**Samsara** (sk 'Keeping going'): the cycle of death and rebirth, which propels people from one life to the next; the transience and restlessness of mundane existence.

**Sangreach, Sangkhareach** (sk samgha+raja, kh សង្ករាជ្ជ): chief Buddhist monk.

**Sangha**: Originally a tribal assembly, an ancient governing body in the old republics of North India; later a sect professing the dhamma of a particular teacher; finally, the Buddhist Order of Bhikkhus.

**Sankhara**: (sk 'formation'): the formative element in **karma**, which determines and shapes one's next existence.

**Sanskrit** (kh សំស្ក្រឹត្យ): considered the 'perfect' sacred language of India. The Khmers used it in preference to their native tongue to address the gods.

**Sarabhanga**: ascetic group visited by **Rama**, **Sita**, and **Lakshmana**.

**Sarasvati**: spouse of Brahma.

**Sarnma Sambuddha**: 'Teacher of Enlightenment', one of whom comes to humanity every 32,000 years; Siddhatta Gautama is the **Sarnma Sambuddha** of our own age.

**Sastra** (often in kh ស្កត្តរិក្ខ 'sloek rith'): dried palm leaf manuscript, a medium used since medieval times to write down oral traditions, medicinal treatises. In 2009, there were about 4,000 sets of palm leaf manuscripts at the Saravovan Techo pagoda, 2,000 in the National Museum and 2,500 in the National Library, and many more in pagoda or private libraries around the country.

**Satha, Sadha** (sk satar, pl sattha kh ស្តា ថា): 'he who governs', name of a king.

**Satyabhama**: wife of **Garuda**.

**Satyavati**: step-mother of **Bishma**.

**Satyabhama**: wife of **Garuda**.

**Satyavati**: stepmother of **Bishma**.

**Sedei, Stupa**: a funerary or commemorative monument usually containing the remains of incineration.

**Sek, Seksa, Ses** (sk sisya): disciple, novice.

**Serna, Sema** (sk sima, kh សីមា): boundary stone, frontier.

**Shambara**: the demon of drought, enemy of **Indra**.

**Shastra** (kh ស្កត្តរិក្ខ): Indian architectural treatises.

**Shikara**: pointed tower in Indian architecture; a tapering superstructure to the chamber of a sanctuary originating from Orissa.

**Shiva** (sk 'The Auspicious One' kh ឥសានៈ): god of the ascetics, of cosmic destruction and creation. The Hindu god who creates through destruction, particularly revered among ancient Khmer people. Part of the Brahmanic trinity, the Creator and Destroyer, mounted on **Nandin** (the sacred bull), generally with a third frontal eye and a crescent on the chignon, worshipped in the form of the **linga**.

**Shuddhodama**: King Father of the future Buddha.

**Shurpanakha**: rakshini, sister of **Ravana**.

**Shuddhodama**: King Father of the future Buddha.

**Sinha, Singha, Singh** (sk 'lion blood' (bravery), kh សិង្ហ, ch 獅 (shī): The Guardian Lion, a stone sculpture adorning many palace and temple entrance).

**Sita** (sk 'The Furrow' kh សីតា): wife of **Rama**, daughter of **Janaka**.

**Skanda:** the god of war, son of Shiva.

**Soma:** god of the moon, guardian of the Northeast.

**Somasutra:** gargoyle, or spout, through which lustral water runs outside from the shrine. Often ending with a carved *makara* head at the spout. Indicative of a **Saivite** temple.

**Soryotei** (sk siirya + udaya, kh ឥសិរយោធា): honorific name of a king or prince.

**Soryopor** (pl siiryabar, sk surya + varman, Kh ឥសិរយវរ្ម័ន): name of a king or prince. **Spean** (kh ស្ទឹង): bridge.

**Srah** (kh ស្រះ ta 'sa'): pond, water basin.

**Srau** (pl sriy, kh ស្រូវ): rice before germination; **sreu loeng tam tuk** (kh ស្រូវ លើង តម្កល់) rice which rises with the water.

**Srei** (sk sri, kh ស្រី): woman, girl, princess.

**Stele:** stone slab standing vertically, with sculptural designs or inscriptions.

**Stucco:** ornamental plaster covering wall surfaces. Also called **render**, it is a construction material made of aggregates, a binder, and water, which is applied wet and hardens while drying.

**Stung** (Kh ទន្លេ): river.

**Stupa** (kh ព្រះស្តុប្ប): Buddhist reliquary shrine in the shape of an upturned begging-bowl.

**Sugriva, Sukhreeb** (kh ព្រះរាជ): a monkey king – 'Red Monkey' (kh ព្រះរាជ) who allied himself with **Rama** to attack **Ravana**. His half-brother **Valin** had deposed him, but Sugriva regained power by killing him in hand-to-hand combat - a popular episode in the Ramayana, often shown in Khmer and Southeast Asian art.

**Sujata:** the young girl who presented a gift to the Buddha before his enlightenment.

**Sukhonthor** (sk Sugandha kh ព្រះស្រីព្រះ): 'The Fragrant One', in the name of a king.

**Sumadei** (sk sumati, kh សុមាតី): 'The Benevolent', in the name of a king.

**Sunda:** the asura who fought with Upasand and caused havoc on earth.

**Surya** (kh ឥសិរយ, ឥសិរយ): god of sun, father of

**Sugriva. Sushena:** monkey general, father of **Tara**, **Valin's** wife.

**Sutta** (pl **Sutta**, sk **Sutra**): a discourse, a reasoning. In Pali language, literally means 'the common thread'

**Swayamvara:** a ceremony where a bride can choose her consort.

## T

**Tanha** (pl kh តណ្ហា តណ្ហា តណ្ហា): the 'craving' or 'desire' which is the most powerful cause of suffering.

**Tantric Buddhism** (also called **Vajrayana**, **Tantrayana**, Mantrayana, and in Japan Mikkyo 'secret teachings'): originated in medieval India, esoteric spirituality focusing on meditation and visualization of deities and Buddhas. King Jayavarman VII was a preeminent follower. **Cakrasamvaratantra** is one of the main roots texts of the Buddhist esoteric wave.



## U

**Uccaishrava:** the white horse of **Indra**, bred from the **Churning of the ocean of milk**.

**Uma:** daughter of the god Himavan, wife of Shiva. Also known as **Parvati**.

**Upanisad:** The esoteric texts that developed a mystical and spiritualized understanding of the **Vedas**, and which would form the basis of Hinduism.

**Upasunda:** an **asura** who fought with **Sunda**.

**Upiidiina:** 'clinging', attachment; it is etymologically related to upadi, fuel.

**Uposatha:** the days of fasting and abstinence in the Vedic tradition.

**Usha:** beautiful daughter of **Bana**.

## V

**Vahana** (sk 'vehicle'): a term which indicates the animal or avian mounts or vehicles of the gods, e.g. Skanda's peacock, Shiva's nandi...

**Vaisya:** The third caste of farmers and stockbreeders in the Aryan system.

**Vaisravana** (sk vaisravana, pl vessavana): one of the 'Forth Heavenly Kings'.

**Vajra** (sk "weapon"): ritual weapon manifesting the purity and strength of the diamond and thunderbolt. **Vajrayana**, the 'Diamond or Thunderbolt Way', is the main spiritual trend in Tantric Buddhism.

**Valin:** in the **Ramayana**, king of the monkeys, son of **Indra**, half-brother of **Sugriva**, and husband of **Tara**.

**Valmiki:** the sage who compiled the **Ramayana**.

**Vantail:** leaf of a door.

**Varman** (kh វរ្ម័នៈ): 'Protector'. **-varman** (sk 'protection, breast-plate') is a suffix for the royal names of

almost all the Khmer kings; thus 'Jayavarman' means 'protected by Victory', 'Indravarman' 'protected by (the god) **Indra**'...

**Varuna:** God of the ocean and guardian of the West.

**Vasana:** The subconscious activities of the mind.

**Vasudeva:** Father of **Krishna**.

**Vasuki:** great king of the nagas.

**Vault:** arch extended in depth.

**Vayu:** guardian of the North West.

**Veda:** the inspired texts, recited and interpreted by the brahmins, in the Aryan religious system.

**Vibhishana:** 'The Terrifying', rakshasa brother of **Ravana**, who left Lanka to join **Rama**.

**Vihara, Vihear** (sk and pl 'secluded place', kh វិហារៈ): an ascetic's cave or retreat, and also a name given

វិហារ

to temples or monasteries in Theravada Buddhism. Rectangular building housing a Buddha image.

**Vimana:** celestial palace of the gods.

**Vinaya:** the monastic code of the Buddhist Order; one of the 'Three Baskets' (Ti-pitaka) of **Pali Canon**: **vinaya-pitaka, sutta-pitaka, abhi-dhamma-pitaka**.

**Viradha:** Rakshasa who attempted to abduct **Sita**.

**Vishnu** (sk 'The Pervader', kh វិស្ណុ): one of the main Hindu deities, Maintainer of the Universe. Hinduism's supreme deity, yet less widely-worshipped than **Shiva** by the Khmers. He is the Divine Preserver of the earth and heavens, whose extent he measured in three giant steps. Through his **avatara**, he intervenes to restore order when there is chaos. His mild and peaceful nature the perfect counterbalance to Shiva's destructive wrath. In Khmer art he is portrayed with four arms, the upper two holding the god's 'attributes' of the *conch* and the *discus*, the lower two the *orb* (symbolizing the Earth) and the *club*.

**Vishvamita:** a sage.

## W

**Wat** (or **Vat**) (sk vastu, pl vatthu, kh វត្ត): temple, pagoda, Khmer Theravada monastery consisting of the religious buildings and the monks' cells. **Angkor Wat**, originally dedicated to **Vishnu**, has since become known as 'the city which is a (Buddhist) monastery'.

**Wiang** (ta វៀង): fortified temple. In Lao language, a city, like in *Wiang Chan* (lao ວຽງຈັນ), Vientiane, the capital city of Laos.

## Y

**Yaksha:** half-human and half-godlike being, associated with **Kubera**.

**Yama:** The 'prohibitions' observed by yogini and ascetics, who were forbidden to steal, lie, have sexual intercourse, take hallucinogens, kill or harm another being.

**Yama** (kh យមរាជ): king of the Dead, son of **Surya** reigning over the subterranean world, guardian of the South.

**Yasoda:** Krishna's adoptive mother.

**Yassa** (kh យ៉ាស៊ា): the spiritual retreat during the monsoon rains, from June to September.

**Yatra** (sk 'journey'): Hindu procession or pilgrimage.

**Yekagrata:** In **yoga**, the concentration of the mind 'on a single point.

**Yoga** (kh យូហ៍): The discipline of 'yoking' the powers of the mind in order to cultivate alternative states of consciousness and insight.

**Yogin:** A practitioner of **yoga**.

**Yoni** (pl gabbhaseyya 'womb', sk yoni, kh យ៉ូនី): womb, female genitalia and by extension the female sexual principle, holding the **linga** in Brahmanic representations. When the **linga** is ceremonially lustrated, the water thus becoming holy, runs down the **yoni** and flows out through its spout(s), allowing

**Yuga** (kh យូគៈ): an age of the world.



**Yuvaraja** (sk): crown prince.

*Sources: **Angkor Database Team** research, and lexicons from various books at  
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