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# **Kauṇḍinya, Preah Thaong, and the “Nāgī Somā”: Some Aspects of a Cambodian Legend**

## **Abstract**

Legendary reports about the origin of Cambodia and of its early ruling dynasties can be found in ancient Chinese texts, Cambodian royal annals, and folktales, all of which mingle various traditions and historical events and add mythical trimmings and motifs. These mythical aspects are both indigenous and Indian. Of central importance is the presence of a supernatural ancestress, in whom the indigenous concept of water spirits is overlain with that of the Indian *nāgas*, which in the course of Indianization gave the ancestress her name. In addition to the original native tradition, the Indian notions of a lunar race (*somavamśa*) and a solar race (*sūryavamśa*) are also important. But historical persons (Kauṇḍinya I, Kauṇḍinya II, Liu-ye, and perhaps Somā), personifications or symbols that cannot be identified (Preah Thaong, the *nāga* princess), and invented etymologies (Kambu, Merā) must be carefully distinguished. The last word on “the Nāgī Somā,” as it is called in the European literature on the subject, has yet to be spoken.

**Key words:** Indianization — Khmer migration — marriage in the underworld — *nāga* — lunar race — solar race

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## THE LEGEND

**T**HE following legend is found in the report of the Chinese official Zhou Dagan 周達觀, who traveled to the medieval empire of Cambodia (or Angkor) in the years 1296–97:

Inside the palace area is a golden tower at the top of which the king has a bedchamber. The natives say that in the chamber there resides a spirit in the form of a nine-headed serpent, which is the owner of all the soil in the kingdom. The spirit appears every night in the guise of a fair lady, and the king must spend the first part of the night with her. If she fails to appear, it is a sign of the king's death. If the king omits a night, the land is in imminent danger.<sup>1</sup> (PELLIOT 1902, 144–45; 1951, 12; CHATTERJI 1928, 6)

The part played in this medieval legend by the serpent lady is intriguing, for it reflects the importance of the *nāga* (serpentine water spirits) in ancient Cambodian tales about the origins of their land. Travel books on Cambodia mention several versions of a legend about the origins of the kingdom, especially those of the first ruler's dynasty. BASTIAN (1866, 393–96), for example, relates a tale about a prince he refers to as “Phra Thong,” who is expelled from “Myang Rom or Romavisei, not far from Takkhasinla” by his royal father because of his oppression of the people. He arrives at an island in the ocean named “Khok Talok” and there meets and marries “Nang Nakh” (Miss Naga), who regularly comes from the underworld to bathe in a lake. After a marriage ceremony in the subterranean realm, his father-in-law, “Phaya Nakh” (Dragon King), constructs for him the town of “Nakhon Thom, at that time named Kamphuxa, or ‘The Water-Born,’” as his new residence. His reign is followed by that of his son Samdeit Kamlong.

A variant legend (BASTIAN 1866, 397–98) says that in the beginning all the land was covered by water, from which the island of Khok Talok slowly rose above the surface. Phaya Nakh and his daughter Nang

Nakh used to go there from their subterranean realm in order to sunbathe. In this variant, the god Indra begets a son with the *nāga* princess. Named Ketumalea (or Ketmealea, Ket Mālā, Ketumālā), the boy is not allowed to live in heaven because of his human odor. Indra therefore has heaven's architect, Phra Pitsanukam (Viśvakarman), build the town of Inthapataburi for him on earth.

Quite similar—in parts even identical—versions are recorded by GARNIER (1873, 98–101) from the accounts of natives. Both Bastian and Garnier also give other variants, according to which Phra Thong is the son of the king of Burma. He banishes from the island of Khok Talok the Cham king who rules there.

The royal annals go into more detail. Here is a shortened version based on the French translations of these annals by MOURA (1883, II, 4–11; 1971, 1–7) and PORÉE-MASPERO (1950, 239–40):

A few months before his death, Buddha arrives at the island Kouk Thlok [land of the thlok tree] and prophesies that a trakuot [a kind of lizard] living there by a thlok tree would obtain rebirth as the son of the king of Intakpath [Indraprastha] and later become king of a new state at Kouk Thlok. In the year 1 of the Buddhist era [commonly beginning with Buddha's death in 543 B.C.], the king of the Chams is shipwrecked near the Dangrek Mountains, where he forms a new state and also becomes ruler over Kouk Thlok. In the year 100 of the Buddhist era, King Atichavong of Indraprastha hands over portions of his kingdom to his sons; to the fourth, named Preah Thaong, he gives the southern part. As a result of disobedience, Preah Thaong is later exiled together with his people. He arrives at Kouk Thlok, displaces the Cham ruler, and himself becomes king. Later he meets the daughter of the *nāga* king on the beach. A marriage ceremony takes place in the subterranean kingdom, after which the *nāga* king creates a realm on earth for his son-in-law by drinking up the ocean. The new land is named Kampuchea. After nine months a daughter is born. In the year 500 of the Buddhist era the Cham king comes with an army from Laos, but they are beaten back. The daughter of Preah Thaong and the *nāga* princess then become pregnant by the god Indra. Their son is Ketmealea, for whom Indra orders a palace to be built by Viśvakarman. In the year 600 of the Buddhist era Preah Thaong dies.

FINOT (1911, 31) cites another version in the royal annals:

Ādityavarmśa, king of Indraprastha, is discontented with one of his

sons, Praḥ Thong, and expels him from his kingdom. The prince arrives at Kouk Thlok, where a Cham ruler reigns. The prince usurps the throne. One day, the tide comes up sooner than expected and the prince has to pass the night on a sandbank. A *nāgī* of great beauty comes to play on the beach. Praḥ Thong falls in love with her and obtains her consent to marriage. The king of the *nāgas*, her father, enlarges the land area by drinking the water that covers the land, builds him a capital, and changes the name of the land to Kambujā.

LECLÈRE (1914, 31–33) mentions another legend, according to which “Chvéa-préahm or brahmanes from Java,” originally descended from “Paréanosey” (Varanasī), migrate to Kouk Thlok and there create a state named Srok Khmer, or “land of the Khmers.” Preah Thaong, the fourth of five sons of the king of Indraprastha, is expelled from his father’s kingdom for disobedience, together with his followers and their families. They come to Kouk Thlok and intermarry with the Chams already living there. Later, conflicts arise, and the Chams are pushed back into Champassak in Laos. After becoming king, Preah Thaong marries the daughter of the king of the *nāgas* and becomes ruler not only of the ancient Cham colony but also of the entire realm of his father-in-law, in this way becoming the first king of the Khmers.

Some variants of the story from different regions of the land were combined by PORÉE-MASPERO (1950, 240–46). Her first variant, A, is the same as that given by Moura, summarized above. Her fifth, E, is merely an elaboration of the traditional wedding ceremony. The other three variants can be summarized as follows.

*Variant B:*

The king of Rāckrús<sup>2</sup> has a son named Thaong who claims the throne. He sets out by ship with five hundred soldiers to do battle with enemies in the west, but turns back when half of their provisions are gone. Thaong again claims the throne. He is then sent out to overcome enemies in the east, leading five hundred soldiers and five hundred women and carrying seeds. They reach an island on which a thlok tree stands. There he settles and creates Nokor Kouk Thlok, “the kingdom [or the town (nokor from Sanskrit *nagara*)] of the island of the thlok tree.”

He discovers the subterranean realm of the *nāgas*, courts the *nāga* king’s daughter [Neang Neak], and leads her to Nokor Kouk Thlok. The *nāga* king follows them and a marriage is arranged. The ceremony must take place in the subterranean kingdom of the

*nāgas*, to enter which Thaong must hold on to the clothing of the *nāga* princess; he also receives a garment with a *nāga* picture on it. [There follow details of the wedding ceremony observed today by the Khmers and supposedly adopted from that of the *nāgas*.] Later the couple return to Nokor Kouk Thlok. Neang Neak and a second wife of Thaong become pregnant by a double incarnation of Indra. The son of the first wife is Ket Mālā; the son of the second wife obtains from Indra a case containing tools with which he builds marvelous monuments before the rule is assigned to Ket Mālā.

*Variant C:*

This variant begins with the above-mentioned prophecy of the Buddha, but the trakuot in this case is reborn as Preah Thaong in the royal family of the Mons. On the island of Kouk Thlok a Cham king arrives about 610 or 620 of the Buddhist era. Later Preah Thaong comes by ship with a hundred soldiers from the Mon land and expels the Cham king by a ruse. On the beach Preah Thaong meets Nāñ [Neang] Tavottei, the daughter of King Phuv Coñ Nāk from the underworld, transformed into human shape. After their marriage, to which her father has consented at her request, the *nāga* king changes the water-covered area to mainland, gives his son-in-law the name Atticavom̄sā, his daughter the name Tāvoththidar, and the land the name Kāmpucā Thipdei. [In reality, this is a king's title, the Sanskrit *kambujādhipati*.]

*Variant D:*

Preah Thaong is the eldest of five princes. Because of the jealousy of his brothers, he voluntarily goes into exile with five hundred attendants, finds asylum in the "Cham Cvār"<sup>3</sup> from Angkor, and expels the Cham king of that place. A *nāgi* gives birth to a daughter in human form, named Sak Ap (odorous hair). She lives in a house on earth because the *nāgas* would die from her constant presence in the underworld. Preah Thaong marries her. From Indra she receives her son Ket Mālā. . . . [etc.]

All these versions betray their late redaction, the Pāli forms of the names showing that they cannot have originated before the fourteenth century. The dates, especially the "round" ones given by Moura, are, like the names, "erudite" additions. Only Kouk Thlok is a Khmer name: *kouk* means "dry land, higher land" (in contrast to the sea or land that is often inundated), and *thlok* is the name of a tree, *Parinarium*

*anamense.*

Cambodian books for official use in middle schools during the 1960s, based for the most part on research by French scientists and often quite sketchy, generally present the beginnings of Cambodian history in this way:

Formerly, all the land that presently forms Kampujā (Kampuchea) and South Vietnam was covered by the sea. The water extended in the east to the Truong Son or Annam Highlands, in the north to the Dangrek Mountains, and in the west to the Kravanh or Cardammon Mountains. From the sediments of the Mekong there came into existence near the present Angkor Borei [a town in the south of Cambodia] the island of Kouk Thlok, “land of the thlok tree.” The Chinese called this land Fu-nan 扶南. The people had a queen, called by the Chinese Liu-ye 柳葉. In [or about] the year 68 A.D. a Brahman by the name of Hun-tian 混滇 arrived by ship from India. He conquered Kouk Thlok, married Liu-ye as his queen, and gave her the name Somā, i.e., “moon daughter” or “moon born.” The land was given the name Kambujā. Hun-tian is also called Kauṇḍinya, and, in ancient Khmer narratives, Preah Thaong; Queen Liu-ye is called Neang Somā or Neang Neak. The land is also called by the names Takkasīlā, Indapattayasodhara, and others.

Actually, this is an eclectic summary that cobbles together different sources and names. But it is worth noting because it shapes the ideas of many Cambodians about their country’s beginnings.

The description of the land as an “island” is linked with the idea that all of the country was formerly underwater. Determining the geographical location of the above-mentioned Kouk Thlok is impossible, particularly since it is variously said to be situated near the Dangrek Mountains, near the town of Siem Reap (where, indeed, the classical metropolis of Angkor Thom was located), or far to the south at Angkor Borei—its supposed location evidently depending upon the place of origin of the respective narrator. The source for the notion that the country was originally undersea is, as NEVERMANN (1956, 82) correctly points out, to be found in the widespread floods that from ancient times have annually inundated it. In analogous legends other places also “originally” lay under the sea, such as Prome in Burma/Myanmar (BASTIAN 1866, 20). Furthermore, elements of local sagas and historical events (contact with the Chams, for example) are everywhere interpolated. Sometimes a connection is made with the legend concerning the con-

struction of the temple of Angkor Vat, but this cannot possibly be the way things were "originally": Angkor Vat is said to be the work of the heavenly architect, *Viśvakarman*, built by order of Indra as a palace for his divine son, *Ketumālā*, conceived by a queen impregnated by a beam of light emitted by Indra. *Ketumālā* corresponds to King *Sūryavarman II* (first half of the twelfth century), the real builder of the temple of Angkor Vat.

What remains as the nucleus of the legend is this: a stranger arrives in the outer Khmer country from over the sea by ship (or, in a local, untypical variant, from over land) and marries a native "*nāga* princess," after which land is gained by drainage. The question arises, then, of a possible historical basis. To answer this we must search for older sources.

#### ANCIENT SOURCES

Such sources are provided by ancient Chinese texts. These speak of a land called *Fu-nan* that was the first of the so-called Indianized states of Indochina at a time corresponding to the beginning of the Christian era. *Fu-nan* was the cultural-historical as well as, in part, the territorial ancestor of a land known to the Chinese as *Zhenla* 真腊.<sup>4</sup> A legend about its first Indian ruler is given, with a few differences, in several Chinese dynastic chronicles (PELLIOT 1903, 254, 256, 265). These accounts go back to the Chinese official *Kang Tai* 康泰, who visited *Fu-nan* in the middle of the third century (PELLIOT 1903, 275, 303). Perhaps the most faithful account of his reports is preserved in the tenth-century encyclopaedia *Tai-ping-yu-lan* 太平御見 (PELLIOT 1925, 245-46; English translation in MAJUMDAR 1944, 17-18). The account runs as follows:

The sovereign of *Fu-nan* was originally a female called *Liu-ye*. There was a person called *Hun-tian*<sup>5</sup> of *Mo-fu*.<sup>6</sup> He was a staunch devotee of a Brahmanical god who was pleased with his piety. He dreamt that the god gave him a divine bow and asked him to take to sea in a trading vessel. In the morning he went to the temple of the god and found a bow. Then he embarked on a trading vessel, and the god changed the course of [the] wind in such a manner that he came to *Fu-nan*. *Liu-ye* came in a boat to plunder the vessel. *Hun-tian* raised his bow and shot an arrow which pierced through the queen's boat from one side to the other. The queen was overtaken by fear and submitted to him. Thereupon *Hun-tian* ruled over the country.

In other texts the story is repeated with additional details, one of which is that Hun-tian first marries Liu-ye before ruling over the country. Elsewhere, a text called the *Liang shu* says that Liu-ye was naked, and that Hun-tian, offended, teaches her to cover herself with a piece of cloth.

These accounts undoubtedly reflect historical events from the first century A.D. (that is, two hundred or more years before Kang Tai's visit) relating to the process of Indianization: the influx of Indian religion, folklore, political and legal theories, and other cultural elements brought by Indians into Southeast Asia in connection with social changes and the formation of states there. "Liu-ye" may be either a translation ("willow leaf" according to the Chinese characters) or, as in all other such cases, the transcription of a native name. "Hun-tian" surely represents the Indian name Kauṇḍinya. A clan (*gotra*) of this name—a "highly distinguished Brahman clan in South India" (KULKE 1982, 174)—could indeed have played an important role in the Indianization process. Representatives of the clan are named throughout the centuries in various sources, from the *Mahābhārata* to inscriptions on coins, as politicians, statesmen, scientists, poets, or priests, and some authors specifically regarded them as "civilizers . . . of the Hindu colonies of the east [where they] only continued to perform . . . tasks to which they as a clan were already accustomed for centuries in the home country" (SASTRI 1961, 406; see also JAYASWAL 1933, 169–70; SARKAR 1985, 111, 211). In the sixth century, a Kauṇḍinya was ruling over a state at Kalimantan (PELLIOT 1904, 283–84). Thus both the "queen" Liu-ye and the Brahman Hun-tian/Kauṇḍinya can be regarded as historical personalities and not, like the *nāgī*, as symbols.

Furthermore, the chronicle of the Liang dynasty for the end of the fourth century speaks of a King Jiao-chen-ru 橋陳如:

[He] . . . was originally an Indian Brahman who received a divine fiat to reign over Fu-nan. [He] rejoiced in his heart. He arrived at P'an-p'an 盤盤 to the southward.<sup>7</sup> When the Funanese heard of him, they all welcomed him with delight, went before him, and chose him as their king. Once more he modified all the laws to conform with the usage of India. (PELLIOT 1903, 269; English translation WHEATLEY 1964, 48.)

The name "Jiao-chen-ru" is, like the name "Hun-tian," a Chinese transcription of Kauṇḍinya. Jiao-chen-ru is the second person of this name in the Chinese chronicles of Fu-nan. To one of his successors the chronicles give the family name Qiao-chen-ru 橋陳如<sup>8</sup> and the per-

sonal name She-ye-ba-mo 闍耶跋摩<sup>9</sup> (PELLIOT 1903, 257, 269). Here the lines of Chinese tradition and native epigraphy meet; the only three extant inscriptions from Fu-nan (end of the fifth century; Neak Ta Dambang Dek st. I, Ta Prohm of Bati st. V, Pram Loveng st. II) refer to this king as “Jayavarman”—in Chinese transcription, She-ye-ba-mo. And the inscription of Pram Loveng (st. VII) designates him as *kaunḍ-inyavamśasaśin*, “Moon in the clan of Kauṇḍinya.” This surely expresses a real relationship: Kauṇḍinya Jayavarman (about 475 to 514) was a descendant—perhaps a great-grandson—of Kauṇḍinya II (end of the fourth century).

Kauṇḍinya is also mentioned as a dynastic ancestor in stone inscriptions from Zhenla and Angkor. A heavily damaged Sanskrit inscription from the Phnom (mountain) Bayang (st. I) contains the fragment *kaunḍ-inyasya mahiṣī* (the royal wife of Kauṇḍinya). The context permits the supposition that only Kauṇḍinya II of Fu-nan is meant. Some inscriptions mention a Prince Bālāditya, “[born] in the Somā-Kauṇḍinya race” (Preah Enkosei st. V = Prasat Komphus st. VI: *somākaunḍinyavamśa*), “ornament in the sky of the race of Somā and Kauṇḍinya” (Eastern Mebon st. VIII: *somākaunḍinyavamśāmvaratalatilako*), and “belonging to the Somā-Kauṇḍinya race” (Pre Rup st. VI: *somākaunḍinyavamśyo*).

So here a couple, Somā and Kauṇḍinya, are named as the founders or originators of a dynasty. But this is only found in the genealogy of King Rājendravarman (944–968) and his son King Jayavarman V (968–1001). Although these four inscriptions have different objects, they were all written within the space of only some twenty years, and genealogically they are largely identical, so they were probably written by the same biographer. Bālāditya, we are fairly certain, was born about 600 or earlier and ruled a realm in the south of Cambodia (DUPONT 1946, 18–22). But he is unknown outside of this genealogy, meaning that the above-mentioned couple is known from only a single source. And the Somā that appears here is not characterized as a *nāgī* at all.

Inscription no. III of Mison in Champa<sup>10</sup> links Kauṇḍinya with a serpent princess. The content of the inscription can be summarized as follows:

Prince Jagaddharma of Champa goes to Bhavapura [in the early seventh century, according to the context] and marries the Zhenla princess Śarvāṇī. Their son, Prakāśadharmā, is crowned in 653 as King Vikrāntavarman of Champa. The city of Bhavapura is said to be the place where Kauṇḍinya planted a javelin that he had received from Aśvatthāman, son of Droṇa (st. XVI). The serpent

king's daughter (*bhujagendrakanyā*, st. XVIIa) was the foundress of a race on earth (*vamśakarī pṛthivyām*, st. XVIIb). In this (her human) form (*āśritya bhavē*, XVIIc) she inhabited a human residence (*manusāvāsam*, XVIIId). The Brahman Kauṇḍinya took her in marriage (XVIII).

Bhujagendra, the serpent king, corresponds to the Phuv Coñ mentioned in Porée-Maspero's variant C; the name is simply the Sanskrit *bhujāṅga* (= *bhujaga*): serpent, serpent demon, or *nāga*. Stanza XVIIb offers a special difficulty: *someti sā vamśakarī pṛthivyām*. It is not possible to distinguish whether *someti* is a compound formed from *soma* (moon)+*iti* or from *somā* (the *soma* plant; name of an Apsaras). The correct translation of this stanza would be: "The latter, named Somā, founded a royal race on the earth"<sup>11</sup> (FINOT 1904, 901 n. 2; COEDÈS 1909, 477). We shall return to this question.

There is another composite noun that is ambiguous. Of Rājendrarvarman's mother the inscription of the Eastern Mebon says (st. XI) that she was born in that family (*kula*) "having Somā as first [or ancestress]"<sup>12</sup>—*somādyā* understood as *somā+ādyā*. A connection with *somākauṇḍinyavamśa*, only a few lines earlier in the same text, is strongly suggested. But the translation "having Soma . . ." is also possible, particularly since the text goes on to say that the family is "related to the most noble gods" (*suravarais saṅgata*)—namely, Rudra, Upendra (= Viṣṇu), and Indra. At this level, Soma the god is surely more plausible than an Apsaras *somā*.

The same problem can be cited in connection with the word *somānvaya*. Princess Sarvāṇī is *somānvayaprasūtā*, or "*somānvaya-born*" (Mison III, st. XXIII); does this mean in the family (or race) of Soma or in that of Somā? The Han Chey inscription says (A3) that Bhavarvarman of Zhenla was *somānvaye prasūtasya somasyeva payonidhau*, "born in the race of Soma as Soma [is born] from the ocean,"<sup>13</sup> and (B3) *somānvayanabhassomo*, "moon in the sky of the moon race."<sup>14</sup> Here the author of the inscription was not thinking of an Apsaras but of the "moon race," or *somavamśa*, often named and well known in the *Mahābhārata* tradition. "The descendants of the Moon and those of the Sun," says BARTH (1882, 225), "are the two major royal races of epic legend. Many dynasties claim to be descended from the one or the other."<sup>15</sup> And this was true not only in India proper.

The arrival [in Indochina] of persons belonging to the priestly class, who were adepts in the magico-ritualistic rites, especially impressed the native people through the utterance of their awful mantras and writings of unknown import. They were wooed to become royal

chaplains, who in gratefulness clothed the rulers with royal pedigrees from solar and lunar dynasties of India or from sages connected with them. (SARKAR 1985, 138)

The earliest relevant reference in Indochina dates from the seventh century. A badly damaged inscription from Phnom Bayang speaks (st. XXIII) of *somavamśyaprasūtānām*, “these, born in [or belonging to] the lunar race”—probably referring to the descendants of Kauṇḍinya from Fu-nan. In other references, Jayavarman I (r. from 650/655 until after 681) is said in the inscription of Ang Chumnik or Kdei Ang st. B7 (= XI<sub>d</sub>) to be a *somavamśāmavalavyomasomas*, a “full moon in the spotless sky of the moon race,”<sup>16</sup> and Rājendravarman was a *somavamśāmvarabhāskara*, “a sun in the sky of the lunar race” (Eastern Mebon, st. CCVI). On the basis of these and similar examples, FINOT (1904, 901 n. 2) says of the above-mentioned term *someti*: “It quite clearly refers to the lunar race.”<sup>17</sup> He consequently translated (1904, 923) the passage from the Mison III inscription cited above as “founded on earth the race that bears the name Soma.”<sup>18</sup> For him Kauṇḍinya is—together with the *nāgī*—the founder of the *somavamśa*, or lunar race.

The inscription of Baksei Chamkrong (st. XVI) gives an interesting variant. It designates the Khmer kings in general as *kauṇḍinyasomaduhitṛprabhavāḥ*: “descending [or they who descend] from Kauṇḍinya and the Soma-daughter.” This term seems to be a kind of connecting link between *kauṇḍinyavamśa* and *somavamśa*. The same term also occurs in the genealogy of King Rājendravarman, but since the inscription is

TABLE 1

Pram Loveng	Fu-nan 5th c.	<i>kauṇḍinyavamśasaśin</i>
Han Chey	Zhenla 7th c.	<i>somānvaya (soma + anvaya)</i>
Phnom Bayang	Zhenla about 640	<i>kauṇḍinyasya mahiṣī</i> <i>somavamśya</i>
Mison	Champa (concerning Zhenla) 658	<i>kauṇḍinya</i> <i>someti sā</i> <i>somānvaya</i>
Ang Chumnik	Zhenla 7th c.	<i>somavamśa</i>
Preah Enkosei	Angkor 944	<i>somākauṇḍinyavamśa</i>
Baksei Chamkrong	Angkor 948	<i>kauṇḍinyasomaduhitṛ</i>
Eastern Mebon	Angkor 952	<i>somākauṇḍinyavamśa</i> <i>somādya . . . kula</i> <i>somavamśa</i>
Pre Rup	Angkor 961	<i>somākauṇḍinyavamśa</i>
Prasat Komphus	Angkor 972	<i>somākauṇḍinyavamśa</i>
Trapeang Run	Angkor 1006	<i>somānvaya</i> <i>someśvara</i>

written roughly at the same time as that of Preah Enkosei and the others, it is once again possible that the biographer/author is the same for both inscriptions.

The relevant references can be summarized as in table 1.

Of course, the family or line of Somā is also the line of Soma. But the opposite cannot be said, for the line of Soma is not necessarily the line of Somā. Consequently, where there is no direct reference to Somā in a text, in general we can take it to be Soma. For instance, in the inscription of Trapeang Run (st. XV), Jayavarman II (802–ca. 850) is said to be “a lamp in the *somānvaya*” (*somānvayapradīpo*, undoubtedly synonymous with *somavaṃśapradīpo*) and “always devoted to Someśvara” (*someśvara sadā bhaktas*). Someśvara is another name for Kṛṣṇa, who is an important figure in the lunar race (DOWSON 1953, 68–69, 161). Let it be noted, too, that Somā only appears together with Kauṇḍinya, and only in a strictly limited context: as ancestress of King Rājendravarman (except perhaps in the Mison inscription, which is the only one that designates Kauṇḍinya’s wife as a *nāgī*).

At this point one might logically wonder whether the counterpart of the *somavaṃśa*, namely, the solar race or *sūryavaṃśa*, is known. Here I might mention another figure, the Rṣi, or Maharṣi, Kambu Svāyambhuva. The inscriptions repeatedly present him as ancestor of the Khmer kings, and identify these kings, and in a wider sense all the inhabitants of the country, as his descendants: *kambu-ja* (Kambu-born, offspring of Kambu). This word is commonly expressed in French as “les Kambuja”: the Kambujas or Cambodians. The name of the land, Kambujā (Kampuchea, Cambodia, Cambodge, Kambodscha, etc.), is believed to derive from this ancestor, Kambu. But this traditional etymology is unproven. Perhaps, rather, it was the name of Kambu that was fabricated in order to explain a previously existing term *kambuja* (PELLIOT 1902, 126; COEDÈS 1909, 473; 1964, 127; FINOT 1925a, 614).

Indeed, the term “kambuja-king(s)” does not occur before the ninth century, and was probably coined at the time of Jayavarman II for political expediency in the process of unifying the kingdom. But that is a different matter and cannot be discussed in detail here.<sup>19</sup> I wish only to stress that the figure of Kambu is probably pure poetry. This is surely true of the “Apsaras Merā,” the “wife” of Kambu, “given” to him by the god Śiva according to the Baksei Chamkrong inscription, but elsewhere not mentioned at all. It is an invented etymology grown on Khmer (or Cambodian) soil and not imported from India. DUPONT (1946, 24–25, 49–50) points out that the “Apsaras Merā” is an invention of the “mythographers” and genealogists of the eleventh century (*sic*; should be tenth century). Dupont believes that

Kambu himself belongs to an older tradition, though his legend has suffered some changes. It was a frequent practice to insert mythical or allegorical Indian couples—Agastya and Yaśomatī, Viśvarūpa and Sarasvatī, and others—into the genealogies. Following these Indian examples, new couples were invented, of whom Kambu-Merā is one example. This couple, says Dupont, has all the marks of a late fiction.<sup>20</sup>

Relevance to our topic derives from the fact that these “Kambu kings” or “Kambuja kings” are considered to belong to the solar race or dynasty. This we find in the legendary names mentioned early in this study, Atichavong (Moura) and Atticcavomsā (Porée-Maspero’s variant C), which are nothing else but *Ādityavamśa* (Finot)—*āditya*, like *sūrya*, being the sun (in Sanskrit both are masculine). This designation, used with regard to both Preah Thaong and his father, is not a true personal name but simply an expression of supposed affiliation to the solar dynasty.

The inscription of Baksei Chamkrong says that “the descendants of the highly renowned Kambu Svāyambhuva” had achieved “the union of the solar and lunar races” (st. XI: *arkasomakulasanḡati*; *arka*=*sūrya*, *kula*=*vamśa*). The inscriptions of Preah Enkosei (st. V) and Prasat Komphus (st. VI) call Bālāditya a “unique moon by contacting the lotus flowers of the families”<sup>21</sup> (*kulakamalākuñcanāya ekacandra*). This expression is typically Eastern, and its sense is a bit unclear, but the message is factual and has no reference to any mythical ancestor—it refers to real historical events. In the sixth century, members of the ruling house of Fu-nan and those of Zhenla must have had familial relations. Some later texts give as ancestors Śrutavarman and Śreṣṭhavarman from Zhenla while on the other hand simultaneously giving Rudravarman from Fu-nan.

Some Angkor kings actually did have family or genealogical connections to King Jiao-chen-ru/Kauṇḍinya II of Fu-nan, though very distantly. It is certain that the inscription of Pram Loveng originating in Fu-nan refers to him. Likewise, the name Kauṇḍinya in Angkor epigraphs surely indicates him and not Hun-tian/Kauṇḍinya I, who lived three hundred years earlier. King Rājendravarman is linked with him through Prince Bālāditya. Another of his ancestors is Puṣkarākśa, a member of the same family who lived at the beginning of the eighth century. Since none of the known inscriptions links Puṣkarākśa with Kauṇḍinya, the simplest explanation is that no such link existed.

Finally, it must be emphasized that in the epigraphs the name Kauṇḍinya disappears after the time of Rājendravarman. This is not an accident. The legitimate king, Rājendravarman’s third successor, was ousted from power by a usurper who was not related to the former

family. Thus references to Kauṇḍinya are quite dynasty-tied. Even the use of the terms “lunar race” and “solar race” was evidently not as widespread as is commonly believed. The inscription of Pram Loveng calls Kauṇḍinya Jayavarman “a moon in the clan of Kauṇḍinya.” But this is a quite ordinary metaphor, since calling a person a “moon” is simply a form of praise. The term *somavaṁśa* was not yet used; it only appears in inscriptions from Zhenla, and for the first time in the inscription of Han Chey. No doubt it came to Zhenla directly from India together with the epics, and in Zhenla it was inserted into the genesis of that country’s dynasty. Its use was limited; after the tenth century it occurs only once, in the Trapeang Run inscription for King Jayavarman II, to whom Rājendravarman was distantly related.

In several of the legends summarized at the beginning of this article Indraprastha is named as Preah Thaong’s land of origin. This is a pure Indian import: Indraprastha is the mythical residence of Indra, and the capital of the Pāṇḍavas in the *Mahābhārata*. In our legend it is certainly a later insertion based on the mix-up, mentioned earlier, with the story about the origin of the temple of Angkor Vat. An indirect link does exist, as the ancient capital Angkor Thom, founded as Yaśodharapura at the end of the ninth century, was also known in the fourteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries under the name Mahānagara Indraprastha (LECLÈRE 1914, 196; AYMONIER 1904, 288–89). But a connection between Preah Thaong and another town is conceivable. The Preah Thaong legends repeatedly mention that the land of Kouk Thlok originally was inhabited by the Chams, or that a Cham king was ruling there and then ousted from the region. This surely has a historical basis in a clash with the Chams during the rise of the Khmer state. The region of Champassak along the Mekong (lower Laos) was a center of early Khmer civilization. Prior to the Khmers, however, the Chams had settled there, and this region belonged to the sphere of influence of Champa. It was not until the second half of the fifth century that the Khmer residence Śreṣṭhapura was built there. This foundation “could have followed the conquest of this land from the Chams. And this would confirm the oral tradition according to which the Khmer kingdom was formed at the expense of Chams already established in the area” (COEDÈS 1962, 89).<sup>22</sup> The city’s founder, Śreṣṭhavarman, and his father, Śrutavarman, are the first historical kings of Zhenla. From this point of view, is it not plausible that Preah Thaong might appear under the guise of Śrutavarman?

There is another possibility. Whether Preah Thaong’s homeland is Indraprastha, a Mon kingdom, or Myanmar (Burma), whether he goes

into exile voluntarily or is forced to go, he always arrives at Kouk Thlok from a foreign country together with "his people." Perhaps this aspect deserves more attention. Could we be talking here about the migration of a whole people or tribe? It is an acknowledged fact that the Khmers are not an indigenous Indo-Chinese people. Their immigration as an ethnic group probably took place at some unknown time before the fifth century, and probably from the southern part of China. Is it not possible that our legend describes the immigration of the Khmers or their immediate ethnic ancestors as a whole, perhaps under the leadership of Śrutavarman? With him their history in the Mekong valley begins, and the name can indicate a single person or a series of leaders.

We do not know exactly where the first center of Khmer authority was.<sup>23</sup> It is quite certain, however, that after the first Khmer settlement a phase of expansion of this new state (or its kings) followed. This includes both the foundation of a town and the ousting of the Cham ruler. In view of all these considerations we might look for Kouk Thlok in the region of Champassak. And indeed, there is a large island in the Mekong River nearby. An argument against this hypothesis might be the fact that Preah Thaong is said to have arrived by ship. But none of the variants—in contrast to the Kauṇḍinya stories—explicitly speaks of the ocean. Variant C says that he came by ship from the Mon land. This could have been "via the valley of the Mun" River that BRIGGS (1951, 38) postulates as the Khmer's migration route. It is well known that the so-called north-south movement that was involved in the migration of peoples to Indochina and even further to the Indonesian Archipelago mainly took place along the large river valleys.

PORÉE-MASPERO (1950, 267) suggests that Preah Thaong represents a series of kings who "settled toward the end of the second century of our era in the south of the Dangrèk [mountains] and were dominant there until the end of the seventh century."<sup>24</sup> By the phrase "in the south of the Dangrèk" she does not mean the Zhenla region but Funan. In her view, Hun-tian of the Chinese records and Kauṇḍinya of the dynastic legends on the one hand, and Preah Thaong of the modern Cambodian legends on the other, refer to one and the same person. Consequently, according to her theory, Liu-ye, the alleged "Nāgi Somā" in the epigraphs, and the *nāga* bride of Preah Thaong are also the same. On this basis she formulates a theory regarding totem, matriarchy, and succession to the throne (a theory that has been disproved by COEDÈS [1951], but this topic does not fall within the parameters of the present discussion).

COEDÈS (1964, 76) regards "the Chinese version of the dynastic origins of Fu-nan" as "the distortion of an Indian legend,"<sup>25</sup> namely, the

one concerning the origin of the Pallava dynasty from Kāñcī (Kantschi) in South India. For this Pallava legend he quotes two references from Indian epigraphs (1911, 391). In one of these, Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman himself marries a "serpent wife" (*dvijihvāṅganā*) and becomes the ancestor of a dynasty (instead of, as in Mison III [page 341, above], merely giving a javelin to the Brahman Kauṇḍinya, who is the one who then goes on to marry a *nāgi*). The other is cited by JAYASWAL (1933, 179) as well: "Virakūrcha, the founder of the Pallava Dynasty, was invested with the insignia of full sovereignty by his marriage with the Nāga Princess, daughter of the *nāga* emperor (*phanīndrasutā*)." According to Coedès, the Mison inscription is a true reproduction of this Pallava legend. The decisive argument in support of this opinion is the marriage of a Brahman with a serpent wife or princess at the start of the dynasty.

Legends do not arise until some time after the events upon which they are based. The house of the Pallavas is known since the fourth century, and its beginnings were presumably in the late third century (SMITH 1964, 219; JAYASWAL 1933, 178). The references cited are from the ninth century. This being so, the possibility of a "Chinese distortion" occurring already in the mid-third century is small. The assumption of a direct route in which the Pallava legend moves via Fu-nan (accompanied by the "dismythologization" of Liu-ye) to Zhenla and Champa (accompanied by the "reconstruction" of her status to that of a serpent) is hardly credible. True, there are connections, but only within an entire system of cognate or similar legends. In this system I would even include the meeting between Heracles and Echidna in a cave as reported by Herodotus (BASTIAN 1866, 400; GOLOUBEV 1924). This matter requires further intensive study and comparison. The starting point for explaining the legends that concern ancestresses in the form of serpents, fish, or other water creatures is among Austro-Asiatic peoples with an irrigation culture, from whom the legends could be propagated to China and India (PRZYLUKI 1925).

The decisive folkloristic motif in the account of Zhou Dagan, mentioned at the beginning of this article, is the notion of the necessity of understandings between human beings and the ghosts that are regarded as the true lords of the land. This understanding is achieved by a king's being linked with a supernatural person or power. The same animism is found also in Thailand, for instance in a Thai inscription from Sukhotai engraved in 1292 and dealing with a "master ghost" who dominates all the other ghosts of the region. Men must regularly bring gifts to him (COEDÈS 1964, 377). Such notions surely are indigenous and not imported from India. They are always connected with the existence of

sanctuaries on mountaintops (FINOT 1911, 20).

Porée-Maspero has collected considerable material dealing with the significance of water ghosts and other demons in the thought and superstition of the Khmers. In the course of Indianization they were either identified with the Indian *nāgas* or the name was transferred to them. The king of the *nāgas* for the Khmers is Krong Peali: the serpent that supports the Earth. People have to keep in mind his actual position (in regard to the cardinal points) on the occasion of an important undertaking, especially the construction of a house. Krong Peali (*kruñ bālī*) is the Bali of the Hindu myths who extended his authority over the three worlds (heaven, earth, and underworld), then was overcome by Viṣṇu and banished to the underworld, where he rules as king. In Cambodian folklore Viṣṇu's place is taken by the Buddha. Krong Peali also is the creator of the world, and the manner of his creation obviously reminds us of the rise of the island of Kouk Thlok. But these creation legends also contain Buddhistic ideas about the periodic destruction and recreation of the world from the primeval ocean (PORÉE-MASPERO 1961, 596–613).

The Buddhistic cosmology has to a large extent formed the Khmer philosophy of life. The notion of a mass of earth appearing from the sea is quite widespread. It is clear that it is also reflected in the Preah Thaong legends, especially since geography and climate encourage the idea. NEVERMANN (1956, 82), as already mentioned, rightly points out that Angkor Thom was situated in the flood area of the Tonle Sap River. So it is easy to understand how in some variants the sea stretches to Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, or even to the Dangrek Mountains (which today form the Cambodia-Thailand border). Perhaps the annual floods were once more extensive than they are today, so that some higher land jutted up like islands. Thus, to the immigrants—Khmers or their forefathers—the land on the other side of the Dangrek Mountains could indeed have appeared as lying across an expanse of ocean.

At first glance, the Mison inscription seems to be a kind of connecting link between epigraphy and folklore, because it mentions both Kaundinya and a serpent princess. According to FINOT (1911, 32) the inscription reproduces “the genealogical tradition officially accepted at the Cambodian court in the seventh century.”<sup>26</sup> Similarly, DUPONT (1946, 45) suggests that we here encounter that form of the Kaundinya-Somā legend that the sovereigns of Zhenla had officially adopted. So he also accepts that Somā is the same as Liu-ye of the Chinese records. But this is precisely the point in question. The Mison inscription, let it be noted, gives in detail the genealogy of the contemporary ruling king of Champa, at first beginning with his ancestors in Champa, up to his

father Jagaddharma, who “as a result of certain circumstances went to the city of Bhava(pura),” where Kauṇḍinya had planted his javelin. The inscription goes on to mention the Zhenla kings Bhavavarman, Mahendravarman, and Īśānavarman, but their mention is completely independent of the preceding story, and they are not included “among her [the *nāgī*’s] descendants,” as CHATTERJI (1928, 50) assumes. Īśānavarman’s daughter Śarvānī is married to Jagaddharma. Their son, Prakāśadharmā, is crowned king of Champa in 653. His religious foundations are the real object of the inscription. That is to say, the legend had reached the author of the inscription only in a roundabout way, and on the way the story had evidently undergone some alteration or transformation.

The “city named Bhava” (*puram yad Bhavasāhvayam*) can refer specifically to Bhavapura, capital of Bhavavarman, but it can also refer to the kingdom of Zhenla in general. In any case, Kauṇḍinya is the founder. This fact alone makes it clear that the text cannot be uncritically regarded as an authentic source. It is more likely to be a synthesis of different elements. The name of Kauṇḍinya from the Funan line is connected with the Zhenla tradition of a serpent or *nāga* princess as ancestress, as well as with the *Mahābhārata* hero Aśvatthāman. From Zhenla itself there is no literary link to confirm the tradition because the events had not taken place there. This explains why on the one hand, in the Mison inscription, Aśvatthāman appears as a javelin donor instead of as the ghost or god described in the Chinese annals, but on the other hand the motif of land reclamation by draining, a fundamental point in the Preah Thaong legend, is missing.

The name of Kauṇḍinya II’s wife, who was certainly a native woman, is unknown. Perhaps the name was mentioned in the portion of the Phnom Bayang inscription that has been destroyed. As to the contentious passage *someti sā*, COEDÈS accepts only the translation “the latter, named Somā.”<sup>27</sup> From this and the term *somā-kaunḍinyavamaśa* he concludes “the existence of a Somā, wife of Kauṇḍinya” (1909, 477).<sup>28</sup> FINOT, editor of the inscription, treats the genealogy as factual, not mythological (1904; 1925b, 310). According to his rendering, Somā is simply the (human) wife of Kauṇḍinya and not a *nāgī*. If we take this to its logical conclusion, we arrive at the possibility that the inscriptions call his wife Somā because Somā was indeed her name. The assumption is not absurd. Somā as the name of a woman is conceivable, and from the time of Kauṇḍinya only true proper names are recorded.

This line of reasoning could explain why the Somā-Kauṇḍinya clan is mentioned only within the genealogy of Rājendravarman and only in regard to his ancestor Bālāditya. The memory of this ancestral couple has survived only in the branch of the ruling family that really originated

from it. Furthermore, it becomes unimportant to determine whether a person specified as belonging to the *somavamsa* had descended from an ancestress actually named Somā, or whether this name was a later fabrication designed to explain this classification. The coherence is obvious. One final question that cannot be settled is whether *somānvaya* is derived from Soma or from Somā. Either is possible and true: one who originates from Somā, the *somaduhitr*, logically has her “father” Soma as ancestor also. Such ambiguities in Sanskrit texts are very popular. An exception to this rule of thumb is the term *kaunḍinya-somaduhitr-prabhavāḥ*, because it seems to mean the Khmer kings in general. Perhaps this generalized meaning is due to the peculiarity of the inscription in which it appears: “It is the only one that gives a kind of résumé of the history of Cambodia from the origins until the reign of Rājendravarman” (COEDÈS 1952, 88).<sup>29</sup>

Is it more correct to identify Preah Thaong with Hun-tian/Kauṇḍinya, or with Jiao-chen-ru/Kauṇḍinya? Chinese tradition, epigraphy, and present-day folklore cannot readily be compared or equated with one another. First of all, we must separate Hun-tian and Jiao-chen-ru from each other. The legend in the Chinese rendering originally refers to Hun-tian, whereas Kauṇḍinya in the inscriptions means Jiao-chen-ru. Kauṇḍinya’s name is, like the terms “solar race” and “lunar race,” exclusively found in Sanskrit texts and so belongs principally to the courtly tradition. This tradition ceases to exist at the same time as the Sanskrit period in the land’s history. The folklore begins after this period, or at least its formation into its present shape certainly took place after the thirteenth or fourteenth century. This is apparent from the Pali names, from its Buddhist character, and from its “Siamese moral” (COEDÈS 1951, 118).<sup>30</sup> Even such an important element as the name of Preah Thaong is explained as the Thai word *thòṇ*, “gold”; no other possible etymology has even been suggested. The comparative list in table 2 may be of help for further research.

As can be seen from table 2, there are several significant differences between Hun-tian/Kauṇḍinya and Preah Thaong. The former becomes ruler in an existing kingdom by marriage with its queen,<sup>31</sup> and he is explicitly called the forefather of later kings and the founder of a dynasty. The latter, Preah Thaong, is a person in exile seeking asylum together with his wives and “people.” Weapons are not mentioned; the Cham king in most descriptions is expelled by ruse and not by armed force. But this already seems to be a later modification in the royal annals, whereas in the folklore the genuine pattern seems to be that a realm had to be created for Preah Thaong by the drainage of land. A son is mentioned only after a mingling with the legend on Angkor Vat, and apart from

TABLE 2

	Hun-tian	Preah Thaong
designation	“man,” Brahman, perhaps merchant	prince (fourth son of a king)
motif	dream, invitation by a ghost or god	exile, voluntary or forced
companions	—	500 soldiers with their wives, 500 families or people
conveyance	by ship over sea	by ship (in a variant, overland?)
weapon	bow (also spear)	—
meets	a native queen	(a Cham king, who is expelled, and later) a “ <i>nāga</i> ” princess
marriage	after submission	by love
realm	exists	must be created
successor(s)	son or “descendants”	?
others	—	father-in-law
result	brings culture or civilization: law, clothing, etc.	accepts native culture? (marriage in the underworld, i.e., according to the native customs?)
source	Chinese records, third century	folklore and royal annals, after thirteenth century

this no relationship to later rulers is mentioned. The line of these rulers begins in the annals with the semilegendary Trasak Paem. Preah Thaong stands completely outside this line. He cannot be connected only to mythology, because his story contains too many historical allusions, nor can he be identified as a historical person the way Kaundinya can.

#### CONCLUSION

The results of the above considerations might be summarized as follows. The couple Kambu + Merā is an invention and can be left aside. Hun-tian and his wife Liu-ye, as well as Jiao-chen-ru (and his likely wife, perhaps named Somā) are historical persons. The mythical trimming (dream, divine weapon) is a later addition to provide justification for the claim of power by a stranger—be it with the people or with the native nobility.<sup>32</sup> In what is only “secondhand” history, the inscription of Mison, Kaundinya is connected with a serpent lady, but she is nameless. This is a picture that mixed an ancient Fu-nan tradition with Zhenla notions of water spirits being able to take on human form, and added the *Mahābhārata* hero, Aśvatthāman. The authentic legend seems to be the one recorded by Zhou Dagan, the gist of which is that the king’s life and power, and together with them the survival of the state and the society, depend on the goodwill of the water spirits as the proper

and initial masters of the land.<sup>33</sup> These water spirits or serpents (crocodiles, according to Porée-Maspero) were, in the course of Indianization, named *nāgas*. Furthermore, these notions were connected with factual historical traditions about the genesis of the ruling dynasty. To them was added the idea of a solar and a lunar race.

In the folklore all of these strands, finally, were combined with the legend of the divine origin of the Angkor Vat, here replaced by the city of Angkor Thom (Mahānagara Indraprastha). Since this replacement could not have taken place at a time when the memory of the real architects had already faded, it must have occurred around the time that the royal annals were begun in the middle of the fourteenth century. By this time, more than one hundred years would have passed since the last temple was built. The motif of drainage by the *nāga* king to reclaim land for his son-in-law could have originated from the belief that the serpents not only bring rain but also are responsible for the receding of the floodwaters. A wet-field rice-growing society is faced with the recurrent need to control the annual water cycle for tilling the paddies. And year after year, everywhere in the country, people observe how "island" after "island" arises from the receding floodwaters (and are immediately used for planting vegetables), and how these "islands" join to form greater expanses of land. We have seen that the Khmers immigrated to Indochina from a geographical milieu that was probably quite different. They met an older population, with whom they had contacts, including, no doubt, both personal relations (marriages) and clashes with local rulers. CHAKRAVARTI (1978, 10) thinks that "the king of the *nāgas* was simply a tribal chief with no fixed territory." They learn the cultivation of rice with extensive irrigation, and they take over the belief in water spirits.

Simultaneously, or perhaps even earlier in their migrations, they came into contact with Indian ideas that modified and influenced their way of thinking. If we can regard Preah Thaong as a symbol or personification of the immigrating ethnoses, then the serpent lady was the symbol or personification of the people already living there, that is, "the *nāgas*."

Then the "marriage" represents the establishment of harmony and good relations between the two groups. And this remains the base for a Khmer marriage up to the present day (LEWITZ 1973; GAUDES 1977). In the traditional wedding ceremony the story of Preah Thaong is reconstructed again and again, beginning with a symbolic "snake skin" given the groom by his bride, to commemorate Preah Thaong's visit to the underworld. Every detail of the three-day ceremony has its own legend, and the only doubt that remains is whether such customs are

really based on historical events handed down in a legendary form, or are legends later fabricated to explain the customs.

#### INSCRIPTIONS CITED

Inscriptions are given in this order: Name of the site where the inscription is found. Number in the "liste générale des inscriptions du Cambodge," IC VIII, 76–225. Year or century of writing. Bibliography.

#### *Abbreviations used:*

BEFEO: Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient. Hanoi (Vols. 1–42, 1901–42) and Paris (from vol. 43, 1946).

IC: Inscriptions du Cambodge. Editées et traduites par G. Coedès. Vol. 1, Hanoi 1937; vol. 3, Paris 1951; vol. 4, Paris 1952; vol. 8, Paris 1966.

IHG: Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta.

ISCC: Inscriptions Sanskrites du Campā et du Cambodge. Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale. Vol. 27, 1st Part, Fasc. 1: Auguste BARTH, Inscriptions Sanskrites du Cambodge, Paris 1885.

JA: Journal Asiatique. Paris.

JGIS: Journal of the Greater India Society. Calcutta.

#### *Inscriptions:*

Ang Chumnik or Kdei Ang. K. 55. 2nd half 7th. ISCC no. 9, 51–60; IC 3, 157–63.

Baksei Chamkrong. K. 286. 948. JA 1909, 467–502; IC 4, 88–101.

Han Chey. K. 81. Early 7th. JA 1882 (second half year), 208–30; ISCC no. 1, 8–21.

Kdei Ang s. Ang Chumnik.

Mison III.—. 658. BEFEO 4, 918–25.

Neak Ta Dambang Dek. K. 875. Late 5th. JGIS 4 (1937), 117–21.

Eastern Mebon. K. 528. 952. BEFEO 25, 309–52.

Phnom Bayang. K. 483. About 640. IC 1, 251–55.

Pram Loveng. K. 5. Late 5th. BEFEO 31, 1–8.

Prasat Komphus. K. 669. 972. IC 1, 159–86.

Pre Rup. K. 806. 961. IC 1, 73–142.

Preah Enkosei. K. 262. 944. IC 4, 108–39.

Ta Prohm of Bati. K. 40. Middle 6th. BEFEO 31, 8–12.

Trapeang Run. K. 598. 1006. BEFEO 28, 58–80.

## NOTES

1. This golden tower may be identified among the buildings of Angkor Thom—the classical metropolis—as the Phimeanakas, a trilevel pyramid about twelve meters high. On the upper platform stood the “golden tower” itself, built of a nondurable material, most likely gold-plated wood. The construction was probably started during the reign of King Yaśovarman (899–900) and continued by monarchs of the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is regarded as a sort of private chapel for the king (GLAIZE 1963, 143–49; MARCHAL 1964, 125–26). How and when it was linked with the legend reported by Zhou Daguan is unknown.

2. Khmer for Rājagṛha, capital of Magadha and home of the historical Buddha. Its name is more properly given as Rājagaha, because in Magadha the spoken language was Pāli.

3. This is like Leclère's *Chvéa*, the word *juār* in contemporary Khmer, meaning “Malay” and being somewhat synonymous with *Cham*.

4. Zhenla is the Chinese designation for the Khmer state from the seventh until the fifteenth centuries, whereas in European literature Zhenla is used only for the period until the eighth century; the common name during the classical period that followed (ninth to fourteenth centuries) is Angkor.

5. In fact, this text has Hun-shen 混慎; another variant is Hun-hui 混潰, but according to PELLIOT (1925, 245) and MAJUMDAR (1944, 18), the form Hun-tian 混滇 (KARLGREN 1923, nos. 466 and 1194 approximately Kuen-d'ien) is correct, the variants being copy mistakes.

6. I am unable to provide the characters for Mo-fu; in other texts this land is named Ji 激 and Jiao 徼, but none of these “states” can be identified.

7. P'an-p'an was at that time a state on the Malay Peninsula.

8. This is simply a variant of Jiao-chen-ru.

9. Variant: She-xie-ba-mo 闍邪跋摩; *ba-mo* is usually the Chinese transcription for *-varman*, a well-known Sanskrit suffix in kings' names meaning “guarded/protected by.”

10. Champa (Campā, Chinese Lin-yi) is the name of another Indianized state in the southeast of Indochina, founded in the second century and absorbed by Vietnam in the fifteenth century.

11. “Celle-ci, nommée Somā, fonda une race royale sur la terre.”

12. Finot: “ayant pour tige Somā.”

13. Barth: “né dans la race de Soma comme Soma est issu de l'océan.”

14. Barth: “lune du ciel de la race lunaire.”

15. “Les descendants de Soma, de la Lune, et ceux du Soleil, sont les deux grandes races royales de la légende épique. Beaucoup de dynasties se prétendent issues de l'une ou de l'autre.”

16. BARTH 1885, 59, and COEDÈS, IC 3, 163: “pleine lune dans le ciel sans tâche de la race lunaire.”

17. “Il s'agit donc bien de la race lunaire.”

18. “Fonda sur la terre la race qui porte le nom de Soma.”

19. See my article on this topic (GAUDES 1992).

20. “L'apsaras Merā est une invention de mythographes et de généalogistes du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le nom de Kambu, qu'il s'agisse primitivement ou non d'un ṛṣi, appartient à une tradition plus ancienne, mais le couple Kambu-Merā, constitue comme tel en exploitant peut-être des thèmes de folklore, a toutes les apparences d'une fiction tardive . . .”

21. Translated from COEDÈS, IC 4, 131: "une lune incomparable pour fermer les lotus des races hostiles."

22. "La fondation de Śreṣṭhapura pourrait avoir été consécutive à la conquête du pays sur les Chams, ce qui confirmerait la tradition orale ayant encore cours chez les Cambodgiens, et d'après laquelle le royaume khmèr se serait constitué aux dépens des Chams installés a Champasak."

23. Perhaps it was situated somewhere around the middle of the Mekong River south of the rapids of Khong, and in the plain to the west of it (COEDÈS 1956), yet Śreṣṭhapura seems to be the oldest Khmer town.

24. "Ainsi me semble-t-il avoir prouvé que Pràḥ Thòh représente une série de rois qui se sont installés vers la fin du II<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère, et qui auraient dominé au sud des Dañrèk jusqu'à la fin du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle."

25. "Telle est la version chinoise des origines dynastiques du Fou-nan. C'est sans doute la déformation d'une légende indienne."

26. "L'inscription reproduit donc la tradition généalogique officiellement acceptée à la cour cambodgienne au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle."

27. "Celle-ci, nommée Somā . . ."

28. "L'existence d'une Somā, épouse de Kauṇḍinya."

29. "Elle est la seule à donner une sorte de résumé de l'histoire du Cambodge depuis les origines jusqu'au règne de Rājendravarman."

30. "Affabulation siamoise."

31. The fact that a woman is ruling over the land where Hun-tian arrives is occasionally interpreted as expressing the existence of a matriarchal system there. Yet the "nāgi" needs the permission of her father for the marriage.

32. The Chinese historian Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, who wrote in the thirteenth century on the basis of older sources, records the story without any mythical overtones: The warrior Hun-hui attacks the young queen Liu-ye, subjugates her, and marries her. A French translation by HERVEY DE SAINT-DENYS (1883, 436) runs thus: "Jadis, il y eut une jeune reine de ce pays appelée Lieou-ye (Liu-ye) 柳葉, célèbre pour sa force virile et par ses exploits. Hoen-hoei (Hun-hui) 混潰, guerrier d'un royaume appelé Ki (Ji) 激, situé au sud du Fou-nan, attaqua Lieou-ye, la soumit et la prit pour femme."

33. This popular version probably was complemented and completed by a courtly version in the form of the lingam and devarāja cult.

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