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The Malay Peninsula

Crossroads of the Maritime Silk Road

by
Michel Jacq-
Hergoualc'h
*Translated
by Victoria
Hobson*



THE MALAY PENINSULA

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THE MALAY PENINSULA



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CROSSROADS OF THE MARITIME SILK ROAD

(100 BC - 1300 AD)

BY

MICHEL JACQ-HERGOUALC'H

TRANSLATED BY VICTORIA HOBSON



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On the cover: Head of a statue of Avalokiteśvara. Ph. MJH. Courtesy of the Director of the Songkhla National Museum.

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*To all those who have gone before me in approaching this impossible
subject*

and to Maman

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104. Wat Phra Barommatham: basement, south-east corner. Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bricks with some stones and stucco. Ph. MJH.
105. Mi So'n B6: basement, west side. Mi So'n, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam. 8th-9th c. AD. Bricks. Ph. MJH.
106. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered near Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 63 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.
107. Avalokiteśvara (head of the previous statue).
108. Avalokiteśvara. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 76.7 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.
109. Avalokiteśvara (head of the previous statue).
110. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Tekaran, Wonogiri, Central Java, Indonesia. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Silver- and gold-plated bronze. H. 98 cm. Jakarta National Museum. Ph. MJH.
111. Tārā. Discovered at Ban Hua Khu, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 18.5 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.
112. *bodhisattva*. Discovered in the vicinity of Chaiya, Chaiya District, Surat Thani province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 17 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.
113. *bodhisattva*. Discovered at Khuan Saranrom, Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 8 cm. Somdet Phra Narai National Museum, Lopburi. Ph. MJH.
114. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at a unknown place in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. H. 36 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.
115. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at a unknown place in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 21.5 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Somchai Vorasat.
116. Cuṇḍā. Discovered at a unknown place in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 18 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Somchai Vorasat.
117. Avalokiteśvara. Possibly discovered in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 48 cm. Private collection. Ph. Wattanavrangkul 1975: Fig. 52.
118. Avalokiteśvara. Possibly discovered in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 46 cm. Private collection. Ph. Wattanavrangkul 1975: Fig. 53.
119. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 28.7 cm. Kamphaeng Phet National Museum. Ph. FAD.

120. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Thuy Cam, Thua Thien-Huế, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 36 cm. Vietnam Historical Museum, Ho Chi Minh City. Ph. Boisselier 1963: Fig. 35.
121. Buddha. Tham Khuha Sawan, Kanchanadit District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Second half of the 9th c. AD. Dried clay. H. ca. 100 cm. *In situ*. Ph. FAD.
122. Votive tablet. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 9 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.
123. Votive tablet. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 9 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.
124. Votive tablet. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 10 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.
125. Votives tablets. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. D. a. 4 cm. Thalang National Museum, Phuket. Ph. MJH.
126. Votive tablet. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 11.5 cm, l. 9 cm. Somdet Phra Narai National Museum, Lopburi. Ph. MJH.
127. Head of a Buddha. Discovered at Na San, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 29 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. FAD.
128. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Na San, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Late 8th-9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 18 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.
129. Avalokiteśvara (detail). Discovered at Satingpra, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 8th-9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 13.5 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. MJH.
130. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Nong Hoi, Ban Wat Khanum, Muang District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 9th-early 10th c. AD. Bronze. H. 18.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.
131. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Khuan Maphrao, Muang District, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 34.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.
132. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Bang Keo, Khao Chaison District, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 17 cm. Wat Phuphaphimuk Museum, Phatthalung. Ph. FAD.
133. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Ban Kradangnga, Satingpra district, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 20.3 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.
134. Śyamtārā. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 12 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.
135. Jambhala. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 16 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. MJH.
136. Mould for Jambhala. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 5.7 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. MJH.
137. *bodhisattva* (head and torso). Removed from Wat Chedi Ngam, Ranot District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Gilded bronze. H. 9.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.
138. *bodhisattva* (head and torso). Discovered at Ban Kradangnga, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 16.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.

139. Buddha. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze with traces of gilding. H. 10.5 cm. Ph. MJH.
140. Gaṇeśa. Discovered at Na San, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 9th-10th c. AD. Stone. H. 40.5 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.
141. Agastya. Discovered at Phang Phra, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 22.5 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. FAD.
142. Śiva. Discovered at Nong Hoi, Ban Wat Khanum, Muang District, Songkhla province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 36 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.
143. Buddha. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 27 cm. Collection of Wat Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala. Ph. FAD.
144. Votive *stūpa*. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 16 cm. Collection of Wat Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala. Ph. FAD.
145. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered near Betong, Betong District, Yala province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 22 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.
146. Votive tablet. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 6 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.
147. Votive tablet. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 7.6 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.
148. Votive tablets. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. D. 3.7 to 4.5 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.
149. Votive tablet. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala province. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. D. 9 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.
150. Votive *stūpa*. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Slightly baked clay. D. 6 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.
151. Viṣṇu. Discovered near Khao Phra Narai, Takua Pa District, Phangnga Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 235 cm. Thalang National Museum, Phuket. Ph. MJH.
152. Head of the previous statue. Ph. MJH.
153. *ṛṣi* Mārkaṇḍeya. Discovered near Khao Phra Narai, Takua Pa district, Phangnga Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 112 cm. Thalang National Museum, Phuket. Ph. MJH.
154. Head of the previous statue. Ph. FAD.
155. Viṣṇu. Cave XI (Trimūrti Cave), Mahābalipuram, Tamiḷnāḍu, India. 7th c. AD. Stone. *In situ*. Ph. MJH.
156. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Tirrukaravayil, Tamiḷnāḍu, India. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 175 cm. Art Gallery, Tañjāvūr, India. Ph. MJH.
157. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Kottur, Tamiḷnāḍu, India. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 189 cm. Art Gallery, Tañjāvūr, India. Ph. MJH.
158. Votive tablet. Discovered in Gua Berhala, Kelantan, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Fired clay with blue pigments. H. 9 cm. Muzium Negara, Kuala Lumpur. Ph. MJH by courtesy of the Muzium.

159. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered on sites PB 4/5 (21/22w), South Kedah, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Fired clay, H. 4.5 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.
160. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Bidor, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 79 cm. Muzium Negara, Kuala Lumpur. Ph. Courtesy of the Muzium.
161. Head of the previous statue. Ph. MJH by courtesy of the Muzium.
162. Throne of a sacred image. Discovered at Pengkalan, near Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 21 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.
163. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Sungai Siput Utara, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 28 cm. Location unknown today. Ph. after Wales 1940: Pl. 80.
164. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Sungai Siput Utara, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. H. ? Location unknown today. Ph. after Wales 1940: Pl. 81.
165. Votive *stūpa*. Discovered in Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 16 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.
166. Agastya. Discovered at Jalong, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 52.5 cm. Muzium Negara, Kuala Lumpur. Ph. Courtesy of the Muzium.
167. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered in the sea near Pulau Ketam, near Klang, Selangor, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 140 cm. Private collection. Ph. after Haji Taha 1987: Pl. 4.
168. Votive tablet. Discovered at Mingyaung Monastery, Thanbo Quarter, Mergui, Taninthayi, Myanmar. Second half of the 11th c. AD. Fired clay. 17.7 x 13.2 cm. Location unknown today. Ph. after Luce 1969/70: Pl. 12a.
169. Votive tablet. Discovered in the vicinity of Mergui-Tenasserim, Taninthayi, Myanmar. 11th-12th c. AD. Gilded baked clay. 9.6 x 7 cm. Museum of the Monastery Paya Theidawgyi, Mergui. Ph. MJH.
170. Votive tablet. Discovered in the vicinity of Mergui-Tenasserim, Taninthayi, Myanmar. 11th c. AD. Fired clay. 15 x 9.5 cm. Museum of the Monastery Paya Theidawgyi, Mergui. Ph. MJH.
171. Top arch of a stone inscription. Discovered at Maunglaw, near Mergui, Taninthayi, Myanmar. Dedicated by King Solu (1077-1084). Stone. Destroyed during the Second World War. Ph. in Luce 1969-70: Pl. 15a.
172. Bowl. Discovered in the Sungai Merbok estuary, South Kedah, Malaysia. 10th c. AD. Yue ware, Shanglinhu. D. 21, H. 5.5 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.
173. Votive *stūpa*. Wat Phra Borromathat compound, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Ph. MJH.
174. Pedestal. From Site UM1 (24w), South Kedah, Malaysia. 10th c. AD. Stone. 127 x 127 x 49.5 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.
175. Buddha. Removed from the eastern porch of Wat Keo, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Stone. H. 68 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.
176. Buddha. Unknown provenance. 10th-11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 13 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. FAD.
177. Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Barommthath, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. End of 11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 21.7 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.

178. Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. End of 11th c. AD. Stuccoed and gilded stone. H. 146 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.
179. Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 11th-early 12th c. AD. Bronze. H. 28 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.
180. Buddha. Discovered in the region of Yaring, Pattani Province, Thailand. 11th c. AD. Stuccoed and gilded stone. H. 60 cm. Wat Pasi, Yaring District. Ph. MJH.
181. Viṣṇu. Discovered in the region of Chaiya, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Khleang style, Cambodia (c. 965-c. 1010). Bronze. H. 39.5 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.
182. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Ban Wat Khanun, Muang District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 10th-early 11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 22.3 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.
183. Bhairava. Discovered at Wiang Sa District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Stone. H. 51.5 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.
184. Bhairava. Discovered in Tamiḷnāḍu, India. 11th c. AD. Stone. H. 93 cm. Art Gallery, Tañjāvūr, Tamiḷnāḍu. Ph. MJH.
185. Viṣṇu. Discovered in Wiang Sa District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 11th c. AD. Stone. H. 51 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.
186. Sūrya. Discovered at Wat Sala Tung, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Stone. H. 71 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.
187. Head of a divinity. Discovered in the crypt of Wat Suthawat, Muang District, Chumphon Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 14 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.
188. Divinity. Discovered on site PB 4/5 (21/22w) in South Kedah, Malaysia. 10th-11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 8 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. Courtesy of the Muzium.
189. Votive tablet (central) of Mañjuśrī. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Fired clay. D. 6 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.
190. Votive tablet of Vairocana. Discovered in Yala Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 5.8 cm. Private collection, Yala. Ph. FAD.
191. Votive tablet of Prajñāparamitā. Discovered in Yala Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 9.5 cm. Private collection, Yala. Ph. MJH.
192. Votive tablet. Discovered in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 8 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.
193. Votive tablet. Discovered in Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 13 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.
194. Votive tablet. Discovered in Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 8 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.
195. Votive tablet. Discovered in Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 12.5 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. FAD.

196. Prajñāparamitā. Discovered in Tha Rua District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th c. AD. Bronze. H. 11 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.
197. Prajñāparamitā. Discovered in Songkhla Province, Thailand. 13th c. AD. Bronze. H. 19 cm. Wat Phuphaphimuk Museum, Phatthalung. Ph. after O'Connor 1975: Fig. 9a.
198. Gaṇeśa. Discovered in Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 12th-early 13th c. AD. Bronze. H. 6 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. FAD.
199. Hevajra. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 13th c. AD. Bronze. H. 14 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. FAD.
200. Buddha. Discovered at Wat Nangtra, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th c. AD. Bronze. H. 43 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. FAD.
201. Votive tablet. Discovered at Khao Chom Thong, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 10 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.
202. Khmer ware. Footed urn. Found off the coast of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. 11th-12th c. AD. Yellowish green and dark brown glazed stoneware. H. 29.3 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.
203. Celadon dishes. Discovered in Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th-13th c. AD. Greenware. D. 27.7, 28.8 cm. Man Lilabhan and Kae Thamsoonthorn Collections, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. FAD.
204. Covered box, jarlets and miniature vase. Discovered at Ban Tha Rua, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th-13th c. AD. White ware. H. 3-15 cm. Kae Thamsoonthorn Collection, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. FAD.
205. *kendi*. Discovered at Koh Moh, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 12th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 17.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.
206. Wat Phra Borommathat: great *stūpa*. Nakhon Si Thammarat. 12th-13th c. AD. (reconstructed in 1493 AD). Ph. MJH.
207. *stūpa* Sapada, Nyaung U, Pagan, Myanmar. Early 13th c. AD. Ph. MJH.
208. *stūpa* at Wat Khieng Bang Keo, Khao Chaison District, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. 12th-13th c. AD. Ph. MJH.
209. Reliquary. Discovered at Wat Phraphut, Takbai District, Narathiwat Province, Thailand. 12th-13th c. AD. Gold and silver. H. 13 cm. Wat Phraphut Collection. Ph. FAD.
210. Element of a former building. Discovered at Tha Rua, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 14th c. AD. Stone. 130 x 40 x 25 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.
211. Phra Buddha Sihing. Ho Phra Sihing, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. 13th c. AD. Bronze. H. 41 cm. Ph. FAD.
212. Buddha. Discovered in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 14th c. AD. Bronze formerly lacquered and gilded. H. 65 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.
213. Buddha. Removed from Wat Wiang, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 1183 AD. Bronze with some traces of gilding. H. 162 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.

214. Head of the previous statue. Ph. MJH.
215. Buddha. Discovered in the basin of the Tha Chin River, Central Thailand. 12th c. AD. Bronze. H. 38 cm. Collection of H.R.H. Prince Bhanubandhu Yugala, Bangkok. Ph. after Wattanawrangkul 1975: Fig. 43.
216. Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 12th-early 13th c. AD. Stone with stucco, lacquer and gilding. H. 35 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. FAD.
217. Buddha. Tham Khuha Sawan, Kanchanadit District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 13th c. AD. Painted stucco. H. 25 cm. *In situ*. Ph. MJH.
218. Stone pillar bases on the surface of the *vimāna*, site SMK 1 (8w), S-E angle, South Kedah, Malaysia. 12th c. AD. Granite. *In situ*. Ph. MJH.
219. Poera Tamansari Temple at Khungkung, Bali, Indonesia. Ph. MJH.
220. Some figures from the reliquaries of temple site SMK 1 (8w), South Kedah, Malaysia. Ph. MJH.
221. Dishes. Discovered in the Muda River, Sidam District, South Kedah, Malaysia. 14th c. AD. Greenware. D. 42 & 35 cm. Alor Setar Muzium, Kedah. Ph. Courtesy of the Muzium.
222. Arabic glass lamp. Discovered on site PB 1 (18w), South Kedah, Malaysia. 12th c. AD. Glass. H. 11.4 cm. Singapore National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
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| <i>BCAI</i> | Bulletin de la Commission Archéologique Indochinoise |
| <i>BEFEO</i> | Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient |
| <i>BKI</i> | Bijdragen tot de Taal-, land- en Volkenkunde van de Koninklijk |
| <i>BSEI</i> | Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises |
| <i>CEFEO</i> | Cahiers de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient |
| <i>FAD</i> | Fine Arts Department (Bangkok) |
| <i>FMJ</i> | Federation Museums Journal |
| <i>EFEO</i> | Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (Paris) |
| <i>EPHESS</i> | Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris) |
| <i>IAL</i> | Indian Arts and Letters |
| <i>JAM</i> | Jurnal Arkeologi Malaysia |
| <i>JASB</i> | Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal |
| <i>JCBRAS</i> | Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society |
| <i>JESHO</i> | Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient |
| <i>JFMSM</i> | Journal of the Federated Malay States Museums |
| <i>JGIS</i> | Journal of the Greater India Society |
| <i>JMBRAS</i> | Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society |
| <i>JRAS</i> | Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society |
| <i>JSBRAS</i> | Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society |
| <i>JSEAH</i> | Journal of the South-East Asian History (Singapore) |
| <i>JSS</i> | Journal of the Siam Society |
| <i>JSSS</i> | Journal of the South Seas Society |
| <i>MBJ</i> | Muang Boran Journal |
| <i>MHJ</i> | Malayan Historical Journal |
| <i>MIH</i> | Malayan in History |
| <i>MISI</i> | Majalah Ilmu-Ilmu Sastra Indonesia |
| <i>MJH</i> | Michel Jacq-Hergoualc'h |
| <i>MJTG</i> | Malayan Journal of Tropical Geography |
| <i>NBG</i> | Notulen van de Bataviaasch Genootschap |
| <i>SMJ</i> | Sarawak Museum Journal |
| <i>SPAFA</i> | Seameo Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts |
| <i>TBG</i> | Tijdschrift van de Bataviaasch Genootschap |
| <i>TOCS</i> | Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society |

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INTRODUCTION

No doubt it was ambitious to undertake a study on a subject that so many researchers before me had laboured to clarify through diligent work and from differing points of view; but I have not felt presumptuous in doing so, since it has come about as the natural outcome of my research. Certain opportunities led me to begin this study in South Kedah almost ten years ago, and once the work was completed, it seemed a logical next step to go to Southern Thailand to see what I might find there that would correspond to the picture that had emerged in this part of Malaysia: a civilization of entrepôt ports developed within the framework of a movement of international trade involving every Asian culture beginning in the first centuries of the Christian era. I found elements that were very similar to those I had just studied, and others that were very different; I believe that including these in the study adds depth and richness to the subject.

I realized at the very outset of this project that the centres of commercial exchange that had evolved from this international trade were so diverse and so unevenly distributed that the civilization as a whole could not be explained without recourse to both physical and climatic geography. Their only common denominator was the entrepôt ports that received the ships. I therefore focused my study on archaeological remains of a commercial order linked to these ports.

Because the second important type of remains encountered in this study consists of a jumble of religious works of entirely Indian inspiration, it seemed necessary at a later stage to specify what is intended here by the use of the overworked and variously interpreted word 'Indianization'.

It was then appropriate to undertake a stylistic and chronological assessment of these remains, placing them within the framework of the political entities that either created or received the original works. In this connection, the Chinese texts provided some useful information. This investigation then made it possible to examine different sites, one by one, considering periods which, though sometimes relatively long, reveal historic rhythms. These rhythms, while totally foreign to the Peninsula itself, since they are related to the succession of Chinese, Indian and Middle Eastern dynasties, were nonetheless

indispensable to the prosperity of the Peninsula. Indeed, unlike certain other regions of Southeast Asia such as Cambodia, the Menam Chao Phaya Basin, or Central Java, whose chiefly rural activities sheltered them somewhat from the great upheavals of Asian history, the Malay Peninsula was a crossroads open to every influence, and thus, *a priori*, exposed to every repercussion. At one time or another, inevitably, all the tradespeople of the Asian world passed through the Peninsula as they followed the different itineraries of what can be called the Maritime Silk Trade Route that linked the two extreme points of Asia. The history of these different peoples was therefore bound to have vital consequences for the destiny of the Peninsula.

In the local context, we encounter the political entity represented by Śrīvijaya, persuasively defined at the beginning of this century as an all-powerful thalassocracy that had managed to dominate the banks of the Malay Peninsula for more than five hundred years, from the end of the seventh century. Here I felt it was important to discuss this political concept in the light of a recent reinterpretation of the texts that gave rise to it. Among other things, a detailed stylistic study of the numerous works of art discovered along these banks should permit an informed opinion on the equally widespread idea of a distinct Śrīvijayan artistic style, a concept which may be as much open to question as the previous one.

CHAPTER ONE

THE IMPACT OF GEOLOGY, RELIEF AND CLIMATE ON THE HISTORIC DESTINY OF THE MALAY PENINSULA

The Malay Peninsula is a long stretch of land reaching from the southeast corner of the Asian continent to the Indonesian Archipelago, separating the Bay of Bengal from the South China Sea, and, more generally, the oceanic complex of the Indian Ocean from the Pacific Ocean. These circumstances determined its role as a point of contact between the two outer limits of Asia.

If we accept the latitude of Tavoy at 14° north latitude as its northern limit, the Peninsula stretches in one direction, first south, then southeast, for a distance of about fifteen hundred kilometres, coming to an end at a distance of 1° north of the equator.¹ (Doc.3).

The northern half of the Peninsula is narrower than the southern, with the shorter distances from one side to the other variously measured, depending on whether or not the estuaries of the rivers are taken into account (strictly speaking, about forty kilometres from the latitude of the Isthmus of Kra). But even at its broadest point, in the southern section, it is hardly wider than three hundred kilometres. The result is that no region of the interior is more than about a hundred and fifty kilometres from the sea. This is a feature which,

¹ Nevertheless, for ancient and recent geopolitical reasons, we will not use these exact outer limits for our study. As it happens, from as early as the seventh century, the northernmost shores of the Peninsula at the far reaches of the Gulf of Thailand were part of a brilliant civilization, but one which, historically speaking, has been poorly defined: the civilization of Dvāravatī, whose remains interfere with those resulting from contacts generated by international trade; we have therefore decided not to include them in this study. Also, at the present time, Burma (Myanmar) remains nearly closed to research and archaeological exploration, although this situation may be changing. It was therefore with great regret that we were obliged to abandon the whole section of the coast stretching from Tavoy (Dawei) to Ranong, including Mergui-Tenasserim (Myeik-Taninthayi). We were able to visit the area recently, however, but with infinite constraints, which made it impossible to carry out the archaeological investigations we had planned. The following study will therefore cover the Malay Peninsula in only its Malay and Thai sections, these having been cut off from the narrow fringe of coast stretching north of Chumphon to the region which was that of Dvāravatī; to this day, nothing has been uncovered there that is related to our subject.

rightly or wrongly, has been generally considered to be determinant in the destiny of the Peninsula.

Many islands fringe the shores, especially to the west, as this coast was affected in the late geological period by a phenomenon of submergence that gave rise to the Archipelagos of Mergui, Phuket, Langkawi and, less than forty kilometres from the southern tip of the Peninsula, the Archipelago of Riau. On the east coast, which, rather than being submerged, was elevated, there are many fewer islands, though we must not overlook Tioman and its neighbouring islands, and, farther to the north, the island groupings of Redang and Samui.

We will briefly examine the geological history of the Peninsula and the broad zones of relief resulting from it, because in our view, this is the only way to explain certain features of the countryside, and to understand why some regions were more involved than others in the civilization examined in our study.

As we consider the climate, or rather, climates, of the Malay Peninsula, we will concentrate more on the rhythm of the winds than on temperature and rainfall measurements, because the winds play a key role in the history of this part of the world. In fact, it was an early knowledge of these winds and of the ocean currents associated with them that enabled local populations to launch out on the seas quite early, opening the way for Indian, Chinese and Muslim ships of our historic period, without whose arrival the entrepôt civilization would never have existed.

A. GEOLOGICAL HISTORY

I. The Position of the Malay Peninsula in Relation to the Continent of Asia (Doc.1)

Structurally speaking, the Malay Peninsula is part of a grouping in the southeastern part of the Asian continent consisting of:

- a pedestal or platform, that of the Sunda, which is directly attached to the line of formation of the Himalayan massif, which itself extends to the east towards the China Sea, and forms the Nanling Chain in Southern China. This chain of folded mountains of the alpine type is the geographical boundary between Southeast Asia and the rest of the Asian continent.

- a shelf of similar morphology to that of the previous pedestal, but considered geologically rather to be an extension of the

Australian continent washed over by the Sea of Arafura—the Sahul Shelf.

- a line of young rugged mountains (4,500 metres) forming a vast arc that both borders and separates the two formations mentioned above. The broader of these is under the sea; the higher of them emerges in the form of the various islands of the Indonesian Archipelago. Volcanic activity is considerable here. Only the first of these structural elements, the Sunda Platform, is of real interest to us, as it is to this formation that the Malay Peninsula belongs.

II. The Sunda Platform:

The Geological History of the Malay Peninsula

A pedestal, or platform, can be defined as a region that was exposed very early to folding, followed by long periods of erosion, so that almost every trace of folding has completely disappeared—and in which the terrain is almost exclusively crystalline (composed of granite or metamorphic rock like gneiss and micaschist). Above this eroded terrain there may or may not be a horizontal or subhorizontal layer of sediment.

This was the case of the Sunda Platform, whose granitic substratum was covered by successive deposits of sediment at the bottom of the oceans from the Cambrian (Primary Age). During the Secondary Age, and possibly continuing into the beginning of the Tertiary, these sedimentary rocks underwent strong folding, accompanied by the uplifting of granite, which is therefore younger than the sedimentary rock covering it. The resulting structures, while exhibiting minor variations from place to place, are positioned in a generally north-south direction. It is the vestiges of these mountain systems—with crystalline cores exposed by the prolonged erosion of the folded sediments covering them—that constitute the modern relief of the Malay Peninsula. A west-east geological cut through the central part of the Peninsula provides a clearer understanding of this geological formation which, all things considered, is akin to that of our Alps. (Doc. 2). These remnants are still prominent at times, because the original mountains from which they emerged were high, probably of the Himalayan type. Nevertheless, the peaks here no longer reach altitudes above two thousand two hundred metres.

Most of this Sunda Platform is now flooded, and thus appears fragmented. This would be very different if there were a slight emergence: if the land rose by fifty metres, or if the level of the seas

receded by about the same amount, the Indochinese Peninsula would be attached to Borneo and the Malay Peninsula, and the whole stretch of terrain would form a block with Sumatra and Java. The present state of fragmentation is recent, since it is believed that human beings circulated on foot between Indochina and Java in both directions; the immersion was a phenomenon of the Quaternary.

This platform, of which the Malay Peninsula thus forms the western part, is free of all volcanic activity and earthquakes, though traces of former seismic disturbances are found here.

III. The Rocks and Soils of the Malay Peninsula

1. The ancient rocks resulting from this geological history can be divided into the following categories:

- Limestone, and shale mixed with limestone. The former rocks are massive and resistant. After contact with the intrusive granite from the ranges, they metamorphosed into marble. These partially metamorphosed banks resist erosion and produce significant sharp peaks in the form of isolated hills that echo the characteristic relief of karsts. The structures formed of shale mixed with limestone suffered greatly from equatorial erosion; low in height, they are covered with alluvial deposits.

- Quartzite, conglomerate and shale, which usually rise above the other formations, and may constitute the lines containing the highest peaks (Mount Tahan – 2,137 metres, is formed of these); but more often they disappeared from the peaks to confine themselves to the sides of the ranges, in hills whose strong resistance to erosion leaves them sheer. When there was extreme folding, the lower parts of the folds created valleys of great depth, even precipices.

- Scattered volcanic rock found primarily in the Malaysian part of the Peninsula to the east of the Main Range, with the exception of several small clusters to the west. These are a mixture of volcanic cinders, fragments of volcanic bombs, and different coloured lavas. Several of these were metamorphosed into highly resistant rock. These rocks are older than the granite. Their origin has yet to be thoroughly studied. They are found inside the beds of the first two groups of rocks, and are therefore of more recent date than those formations. Nevertheless, no active or extinct volcano exists in this part of the Peninsula, and these rocks have no connection with the volcanoes of Sumatra. It is also difficult to link them with the long-

extinct volcanoes of Borneo because of the distances separating them.

- Granite rocks, primarily coarse. These constitute the structural framework of the Peninsula, appearing as outcroppings in the form of low hills, as at the extreme southern end of the Peninsula, but also forming the highest peaks, which rise to above two thousand metres. They contain veins of quartz and various metals, which are the primary raw materials for mining in the Peninsula. These blocks of granite, as we have said, are younger than all the formations already described. They create the blunted contours and gentle curves of the landscape, which are accentuated by the thickness of the products of erosion that invariably cover them.

2. From the period after the era of the formation or appearance of these rocks, that is, the Secondary, and perhaps the beginning of the Tertiary, it is important to note:

- The presence of large alluvial deposits carried by the streams flowing from the earlier formations. These come together along the valleys in rings of varying widths, as well as at the foot of the hills and along the coasts. The rings can reach a thickness of a hundred and twenty metres. The nature of these deposits is of course a function of the type of rocks from which they come. They consist chiefly of fine, sticky clays with a high percentage of vegetal content, but their primary contribution to the fertility of the area is less in their composition than in the fact that the network of waterways flowing through them can be tamed and used by man.

- Soils formed *in situ*, consisting of only a few centimetres of humus covering a thick substratum of laterite whose characteristic colour is exposed by the slightest working of the soil, even at a shallow depth.

Under tropical climatic conditions, iron-containing rocks generally weather into a typical red-brown hardpan of nodular to spongy structure, or laterite. Laterization is envisaged as a process of leaching of silica and basic oxides while concentrating hydrated iron and aluminum oxides. The formation of laterite appears to require prolonged geologic periods of subaerial weathering, as its absence upon Quaternary deposits implies. (Gobbett & Hutchinson 1974: 13).

The fertility of these soils is almost always mediocre.

We will now examine the different forms of relief which have resulted from this geological history, and notably the mountain ranges which, as we shall see, occupy the major part of the surface.

The compartmentalizing of the Peninsula that they inevitably caused was determinant, historically speaking, as we will show later, preventing any one political entity from dominating the whole region.

B. THE GREAT RELIEF ZONES (DOC.3)

I. The Mountain Ranges

The nine ranges that constitute the backbone of the Malay Peninsula stretch out one by one, and give it its form in the clear shape of an arc, thin in the middle, wider at the end.

1. *The Tenasserim Range*

This northernmost chain with its line of peaks (1,000 to 2,000 metres in the north, 700 to 1,000 metres and even higher to the south) constitutes the present border between Thailand and Burma. This chain is attached to the hills of the Shan country that form the eastern part of Burma, a region that could be described as a plateau, averaging around a thousand metres in height, deeply hollowed out by gorges, yet also marked by folding from north to south, in pleats formed from rocks similar to those of the Sunda Platform: limestone massifs, sandstone, metamorphic and granitic rock creating structures not unlike those found in Malaysia, with peaks of around two thousand five hundred metres. These features are accentuated within the chain itself, where alternating low corridors separated by lines of granitic peaks, occasionally flanked by pitons of limestone, produce a landscape that resembles karst.

To the north of the latitude of Prachuap Khiri Khan, the general direction of the range is north-northwest – south-southeast; south of this town, on the other hand, it becomes north-northeast – south-southwest. It is at this last latitude (around 10°) that the Isthmus of Kra is narrowest (about forty kilometres, as we have indicated). Finally, the last section of the range takes a generally north-south direction, coming to an end at the island of Phuket. Altitudes here can reach almost 1,400 metres (Khao Lang Kha Tuk, 1,395 metres, to the north of Takua Pa), but hardly exceed five hundred metres at Phuket (529 metres). As with all the other chains, it is theoretically negotiable, by means of the river valleys cutting through it to one side or the other from the line of the peaks. These passable areas, however, have always seemed to us much more difficult than has

been readily acknowledged. We will have occasion to return to this question.

The western slope of the chain falls abruptly to the sea through the effect of submergence: here the coastal plain does not extend very far, and the banks are bordered with infinite islands and islets (the Mergui Archipelago). Waters are dangerous in this area because of currents and sandbars resulting from recent alluvial deposits, but with its irregular shoreline, the coast offered many places of shelter to ships of low or medium tonnage, notably the port of Mergui, which was always considered an exceptional stopping-off place, and that of the island of Ko Kho Khao opposite Takua Pa, which harboured a major entrepôt port in the ninth century.

The eastern slopes of the chain are no less abrupt, but the phenomenon of the smoothing of the shoreline that occurs along this coast because of emergence gives it a less fragmented appearance. This smoothing of the shoreline has also favoured the development of a coastal plain that increases in width up to the latitude of Surat Thani, from which point rise the first hills of the following range, forming the backbone of the central part of the Peninsula.

2. The Nakhon Si Thammarat Range

This range begins in the Bay of Bandon with an island grouping whose principal island is Samui. Initially north-south in direction up to the latitude of Phatthalung, it then assumes a north-northwest south-southeast direction, coming to an end in the Langkawi Archipelago in a south-southwest curve. In earlier geographies of the region it was described as the beginning of the major mountainous axis of the Malay Peninsula, which is not the case. Its southern extremity forms part of the border between Malaysia and Thailand.

As in all the ranges of the Peninsula, there is a mixture of granite and coarse limestone with astonishing karst forms. The culminating point is at the latitude of Nakhon Si Thammarat, 1,835 metres at Khao Luang; and again 1,350 metres at Khao Chong at the latitude of Phatthalung, but only 932 at that of Hat Yai and 881 at Pulau Langkawi.

This range is much more fragmented than the previous one; crossing it has never presented a problem, because of numerous areas of saddling along the line of peaks filled by the traces of many rivers. These flowed from the chain into the Gulf of Thailand, where, through alluvium borne along by the coastal currents, they

contributed considerably to the smoothing out of the shoreline and the creation of a coastal plain. This plain, narrow at first in the region of Sichon (twelve to fifteen kilometres), increases in width towards the south-southeast all the way to Hat Yai (fifty kilometres). In the southern section, a substantial portion of its surface is taken up by a series of large lakes (Thale Sap Songkhla, Thale Luang and Thale Noi, from south to north)—lakes, or in fact lagoons, especially in the period that concerns us, which came into being through this smoothing process along the shoreline; the phenomenon is ancient, however, as is attested by the presence of archaeological remains from the early period along the spit of Satingpra that closes them off.

The phenomenon continues towards the north at the level of Nakhon Si Thammarat, where a spit of about sixteen kilometres lines the coast. The first Western maps of the region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in describing the spit of Satingpra as an island, failed to recognize this feature.

The western slope of the range and its piedmont vary in width, because it faces in the opposite direction from the previous chain. The two ranges are linked to each other in the south by a series of fan-shaped pleats through which rivers flow in a roughly north-south or south-north direction, like the Menam Tapi. In the early period, this pattern of evacuation flow seems to have favoured commercial relations between the two coasts, as is indicated by the existence in the centre of this zone, at Wiang Sa, of the only noteworthy archaeological site in the interior of the Peninsula.

3. The Kedah-Singgora Range

The Kedah-Singgora Range is highly fragmented, and low in altitude, its highest point corresponding to the region of the border between Thailand and Malaysia at around eight hundred metres. The lines of the peaks are formed primarily of quartzite and schist, with inclusions of granite that determine the highest peaks; the most elevated point is an isolated core, the Gunong Jerai (1,217 metres) in South Kedah. Similar granitic inclusions are found in the structure of the Island of Penang at the end of the chain, as well as in the southern part of the Malay state of Seberang Perai (the rocky spurs and rocks of Cherok Tokun) facing it. This southern portion of the chain, which also corresponds to the southern part of the state of Kedah, saw the development of an original civilization from the beginning of the fifth century of our era. Morphologically speaking, the region is now very different from what it was in the early period;

in particular, the coastal plain to the north of Gunong Jerai, then only a lagoon, is a rich land of rice paddies today. It is the product of sedimentation, which is strong in this part of the west coast, borne by the rivers that flowed down from the mountains, and also formed from the alluvium carried northward by the coastal ocean currents; this is the beginning of the Strait of Melaka, which provides favourable conditions for sedimentation because of the protection offered by the Island of Sumatra.

4. *The Bintang Range*

The Bintang Range is larger than the preceding chain, and also more continuous and less fragmented. It originates in Thailand to the southwest of Pattani, continuing into Malaysia, in a direction parallel to the previous chain, up to the west coast of the Peninsula, which it reaches at the latitude of the Dindings; off the coast, after disappearing temporarily under the sediment, it emerges again in a group of rocky islets. The chain is like the preceding ones, because of their common origins, and consists of a mixture of quartzite, shale and limestone penetrated by cores of granite. The ridge of its principal summits forms another part of the border between Thailand and Malaysia. At this level, altitudes frequently exceed a thousand metres, once even reaching 1,266 metres (Lata Papalang) north of Betong. Farther to the south, the range is clearly individualized, and its peaks rise: 1,801 metres for Mount Inas, 1,657 for Mount Bubu to the south of Taiping.

The low-altitude regions at the foot of this chain are different in appearance and present different features of interest. The western slope is crisscrossed by many rivers, the first being the Sungai Muda, which rises in the massif on the Thai-Malay border and flows north-south before adopting an east-west direction to the south of Gunong Jerai, from which it falls rapidly into the Strait of Melaka. It is only 113 kilometres long, but absorbs many streams, in particular those flowing from the Bintang Range, including the Sungai Ketil which, because of a drop in the height of the chain, enables water to penetrate far into the interior of the Peninsula, as far as the source of the Menam Pattani, which flows south-north towards the Gulf of Thailand.

Another small river to the north of the Sungai Muda, the Sungai Merbok, runs in a parallel course, and flows around the Gunong Jerai; its estuary is disproportionately wide in relation to its length

(29 kilometres); the Sungai Merbok is rightly considered to have been the natural mouth of the Sungai Muda in the early period.

At the foot of the eastern slope of the Bintang Range runs one of the major rivers of the Peninsula, the Sungai Perak. The play of waters of its upstream tributaries provides access to the regions overhanging the hydrographic system of Menam Pattani. Altitudes here do not exceed three hundred metres. The town of Gerik, far upstream about twenty kilometres from the border, is only 116 metres high. Nevertheless, the entire valley, up to the place where it opens on a rather large delta (about 65 kilometres), is marked by a landscape of spectacular karst peaks.

5. The Kledang Range

The Kledang Range runs parallel to the preceding chain, bordering the Perak River on its left bank and the Kinta on its right, a valley that today shelters the city of Ipoh, which owes its fortune to local tin mining. The extraction of tin has exposed several archaeological remains in the form of important statues of Buddha which it has been impossible to link to any architectural remains; the discovery of any such vestiges is unlikely today because of the destruction of the natural landscape by the mining industry. This short chain, pressed between the preceding and the following chains, is interrupted north of Ipoh by the low-lying valley of a tributary of the Perak, the Sungai Pelus (80 metres), whose source waters rise in the peaks of the Main Range.

6. The Main Range

The Main Range, four hundred and eighty kilometres long and fifty to sixty kilometres wide, is the most impressive chain on the Peninsula. Its line begins in Thailand, to the south of Pattani and to the east of Narathiwat, in peaks that can reach more than one thousand five hundred metres at the border; then, describing an arc, it curves towards the western portion of the Peninsula, embracing one of the culminating peaks of the Peninsula, Gunong Kerbau or Korbu (2,183 metres); five other peaks in the chain also exceed two thousand metres.

Starting at the latitude of Ipoh, as we have already indicated, an alluvial plain (twenty to thirty kilometres wide on average) borders the coast, gradually widening towards the south; altitudes are very low here, and the rivers reach the sea with difficulty. Here and there, quartzite and granite forms stand out in relief, and also, especially

near Ipoh, projections of sharp limestone spurs hollowed out by caves. Swamps are frequent in this area (26 kilometres south of the Estuary of Sungai Perak), and can be deep.

7. The Mount Benom Range

Still called the Mount Ophir Range, this is the least individualized of all the chains on the Peninsula. Pinned between the Main Range and the Tahan Range, it is distinguished only by two granite massifs, Benom (2,107 metres) and Ledang (Mount Ophir, 1,276 metres).

The low-altitude regions surrounding these fragmented massifs are crisscrossed with numerous rivers that flow down from the preceding chain and the range just beyond. One of these is the Sungai Muar, which skirts around Mount Ophir and empties into the Strait of Melaka.

8. The Tahan Range

The Tahan Range extends from the east coast (the Malay state of Terengganu) to the southern extremity of the Peninsula, from which point it continues in the Archipelagos of Riau and Lingga. It encompasses the highest peak of the Peninsula, the Gunong Tahan (2,187 metres)—which is composed of quartzite and altered shale rock—, and continues towards the south in the form of a well-individualized, though not very high, mountain chain. It is interrupted by the courses of many rivers, the largest of which is the Sungai Pahang, whose hydrographic basin is principally a tributary of the slopes of Gunong Tahan. Initially north-south, its course suddenly becomes west-east. It is thought that in another era it moved towards the south and the Strait of Melaka through the course of the Sungai Muar.

Another hydrographic basin, likewise a tributary of the massif of Gunong Tahan, is the Sungai Kelantan, which flows north-south, creating along the east coast an unusually broad alluvial plain for the scale of the region.

This chain displays the same range of rocks as the previous chain, with the addition of ancient volcanic rocks.

9. The Eastern Range

This last range brings to an end the succession of stepped corridors that form the backbone of the Peninsula. It is the least well known of all. It borders the east coast at the extreme limits of the Peninsula, and its peaks are not always easy to distinguish from those of the preceding chain. It is relatively high to the north, in the northernmost

region of Malaysia (nearly one thousand five hundred metres), but quickly decreases in altitude; the massifs that make it up are extremely fragmented. It is formed principally of granite, with rich deposits of tin. The coastal plain at its foot is a series of deltas, sometimes involving areas twenty to thirty kilometres wide, and separated by the remaining peaks of the chain. Here, low offshore bars (*permatang*) enclose marshes that can extend for eight kilometres towards the interior.

This complex of nine more or less well-delineated corridors thus forms the bone structure of the Peninsula. Only four of them are clearly defined: the Tenasserim, Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Bintang Ranges and the Main Range. Only sections of the ridgelines of the others are clearly demarcated. As such, they indicate the lines along which the rocks were folded, metamorphosed and altered through the intrusion of igneous rocks (granite, volcanic rocks).

In spite of the lines of the peaks, however, the overall configuration of the geography of the Peninsula to the south of the Isthmus of Kra is of a low-altitude region from which the chains suddenly emerge; and indeed, as we have already indicated, they are often separated by wide depressions punctuated by scattered buttes. Let us not forget that Bentong, to the northeast of Kuala Lumpur on the eastern slope of the Main Range, is only 98 metres high, that Raub, in a similar position a bit farther to the north, is 140 metres high, and Gerik, far upstream, at the edge of Perak, almost on the Thai-Malay border, only 116 metres high.

II. The Plains

In spite of the impression of low altitudes, the authentic plains, whether interior or coastal, constitute the smallest part of the relief of the Peninsula.

One of the most interesting plains is coastal, and corresponds to the shore of the Gulf of Thailand between Chumphon and the Malaysian border. We have already defined this stretch of shoreline as an emergent coast along which the rivers and ocean currents had deposited sediments on the rather shallow bottom of the sea, and also as a smoothed shoreline, composed of many littoral spits. Among these are the former spit of Satingpra, which evened out the shoreline for a hundred kilometres to the north of Songkhla and played a key role in the creation of the great lakes; the still-evolving spit of

Nakhon Si Thammarat (16 kilometres long) which prolongs the preceding one; and the spit of Pattani (15 kilometres).

In contrast, we have shown how the west coast differs because, geologically speaking, it corresponds to a zone of submergence, and therefore its coastal plain is always narrow, flanked by the slopes of neighbouring mountains, which in some cases drop straight into the sea. As a result, the shoreline there is very irregular, fringed with numerous bays, islands and islets. The estuaries are often very large, as a result of the submergence of the coast. The estuary of the Ranong River is a veritable *ria*, four and a half kilometres wide at the mouth and about seventy kilometres long. An identical geological phenomenon affected the estuary of the River of Takua Pa (Thailand), although on a smaller scale.

The coastal plains on this side extend slightly, but only to the south of the latitude of the northern point of Sumatra, because the protection afforded by the mass of the island, which, as we have seen, provides shelter from the winds of the southeast monsoon, allows for a more continual deposit of alluvium. The plain of Kedah, which developed from these conditions, was almost totally formed in the historic period, as we have already indicated. An identical phenomenon occurred in the neighbouring coastal region of the Sungai Perak estuary and beyond, along further sections of the coast to the very end of the Peninsula.

III. The Rivers

In equatorial or tropical climates like that of the Peninsula, which we will discuss later, the course of the rivers varies significantly depending on the time of year, but in general it can be said that their waters are abundant, considering their length and the relatively small size of their hydrographic basin. Their outflow, however, alters rapidly from hour to hour and from day to day, necessitating the use of protective levees in the low-lying regions.

When the dry season becomes more marked in the north, the flooding associated with the rainy season begins, in an annual phenomenon that causes significant amounts of alluvium to be deposited in their lower streambeds, leading to frequent shifting in the position of some of their branches. In recent times, certain settlements established near the estuaries have been totally erased from the map by surges of alluvium. Such cataclysmic examples have been cited, "rather too gratuitously," according to P. Wheatley (1973:

XXV), in order to provide grounds for theories according to which entire human settlements had disappeared in early historical times. This was the view of Q. Wales in particular, who suggested that great cities could have developed, primarily in the valleys of the Sungai Perak, and especially in the Sungai Kinta Valley, and then totally disappeared, "their remains perhaps rooted up and disseminated over square miles of river basin." (Wales 1940: 49-50). Wheatley wisely does not rule out this idea, but limits himself to mentioning it only as a last possibility, stressing that most of the relevant examples of flooding leading to phenomena of total submersion under mud date only to the nineteenth century at the earliest, when deforestation, mining and extensive agriculture disturbed the natural system of evacuation of the rainwater in numerous watercourses.

For example, it was mining operations that modified the course of the Sungai Selangor, north of Kuala Lumpur, with dramatic consequences for the town of Kuala Kubu. And at the beginning of the twentieth century, the extensive planting of heveas, far upstream from the Sungai Batang Padang (near the Kinta), caused the river to fill up with mud until it could no longer hold its traditional course and flooded the whole region for twelve thousand hectares, rendering it unusable. In the same way, periodic flooding in the low-lying areas of the Ipoh District, and the silting up of the Kinta at certain points, have no other cause than uncontrolled mining at the end of the nineteenth century.

In spite of the profusion of the alluvium they carried, the rivers did not develop normal deltas because of the seasonal coastal winds, which spread the sediments out in spits and sandbars beyond the banks, particularly along those coasts that are not part of the Strait of Melaka.

The tracks of the rivers are the result of a complex of factors that vary in degree from one point to another:

- The tectonics of the chains tends to produce longitudinal courses between them, with waters often flowing along roughly southern or northern lines. This is what occurred between the two Thai ranges (Tenasserim and Nakhon Si Thammarat), in the Malay states of Kelantan and Perak, with their rivers of the same name, and in Pahang, in the upper part of its homonymous river.
- However, the natural slope of these chains leads to the development of numerous downward, often capricious, tracks.

- Finally, in general, these rivers appear insignificant in relation to the low-altitude regions through which they flow. They are slow, sinuous, and often adopt a course marked by frequent right-angle elbow turns, necessitated by the fragmented character of the chains between which they wind.

The combination of all these factors created the complex hydrographic basins alluded to earlier, among which stand out those of the three largest rivers of the Peninsula:

- The Sungai Pahang (420 kilometres): There is no doubt that this river once flowed into the Strait of Melaka through the course of the Sungai Muar, following the general direction of the relief, and then, in the middle of the Peninsula, adopting an east-west orientation towards the South China Sea.

- The Sungai Perak (350 kilometres), which follows a roughly north-south course between the Bintang Range and the Main Range before emptying into the Strait of Melaka.

- The Sungai Kelantan (280 kilometres), whose south-north course, beginning at the water tower of the southern part of the Peninsula, the Gunong Tahan (2,187 metres), also conforms to orography.

Less significant in size in the spread of their fluvial basin and the length of their course, but perhaps historically more important than the preceding rivers, are three others we have already mentioned:

- The Menam Tapi (230 kilometres), which flows east-west, then south-north, between the Tenasserim and Nakhon Si Thammarat Ranges;

- The Menam Pattani, which is first wedged between the peaks of the Bintang Range and the Main Range, then pursues its north-west path towards the Gulf of Thailand;

- The Sungai Muda (113 kilometres), which, like the preceding river, rises in the Bintang Range, but farther to the north, and whose north-south, then east-west, course leads it finally, abruptly, into the Strait of Melaka.

C. THE CLIMATE

As we suggested in the introduction, winds played the most important role of all the climatic factors in shaping the historic destiny of the Malay Peninsula. They are part of a vast process of air movement involving all of South Asia, Southeast Asia and Eastern Asia: the monsoons. The principal characteristic of the monsoon winds is that

they reverse themselves at different periods of the year, almost always at the same time, a feature which is of great importance for long-distance navigation.

I. The System of the Monsoons

The principal features of the general system of the monsoons are simple.

In summer, pronounced low pressure rules, not over Southeast Asia, but much farther to the north, over Central Asia. Because of overheating, these low-pressure areas create a demand for air. The high-pressure areas are likewise situated outside of Southeast Asia, over Australia, where, during the Australian winter, they prevail over the whole northern part of the continent, with extremely high pressure that can reach 1,030 millibars. This produces a flow of air which, attracted by the low pressure areas of Central Asia, becomes a monsoon. When crossing the Equator, the monsoon winds assume a roughly southwest-northeast movement. Usually dry at the outset, they ride over the warm oceans, gathering humidity, which then becomes the summer monsoon rains.

In winter, the situation is reversed. Marked high pressure areas due to the cold settle over Central Asia and Eastern Siberia. At the same time, particularly in northwest Australia, the southern ocean mass, which has been overheated during the southern summer, now corresponds to low-pressure zones that draw air towards the previous high pressure areas. This is the winter monsoon. This monsoon is dry, coming as it does from the Asian continent, but it picks up humidity locally, especially over the South China Sea. It will therefore also bring abundant rains to certain very southern sectors of the Asia of the monsoons, and especially to the Indonesian Archipelago.

The Malay Peninsula occupies a unique position in the heart of this system of seasonal winds. Surrounded on all sides by the seas of the two oceans it divides, it could be expected to be uniformly watered throughout the year. This is not the case, however, because it is protected from the summer monsoon in the southwest by the Island of Sumatra, and from the winter monsoon in the northeast by the overhang of the peninsula of Cà Mau, the extreme point of the Indochinese Peninsula, a set of circumstances whose effect on alluvial deposits along the coasts has already been mentioned.

These seasonal winds, in addition to the rains which they may or may not bring, have a decisive influence on the surface movements of the local waters, because, as we have already indicated, the water is not very deep above the Sunda Platform (the Bay of Bengal, the Strait of Melaka and the South China Sea). The great systems of the neighbouring ocean currents have no influence here. As a matter of general interest, the relative isolation of the large nearby ocean masses by the encircling garland of the Indonesian Archipelago—and this in latitudes where the equatorial rains are copious—leaves the local waters with a weak salinity, and an abnormally lukewarm temperature throughout the year.

Let us now consider the local effect of the general system of the monsoons on the pattern of the winds and on the creation of surface currents.

II. A Breakdown of the System of the Monsoon Winds and Ocean Currents

These winds and currents were carefully studied by W. L. Dale (1956) in an article from which we have also borrowed a selection of maps. (Doc. 4).

1. *In April*, because it is the month of transition between the two monsoons in the latitudes of the Malay Peninsula, the southwest monsoon is heralded by west winds rising far away in the Indian Ocean. These winds approach the coasts of Sumatra between the Equator and 5° north latitude. During the same period, weaker west winds coming from the northwest cover the northern part of the Bay of Bengal. The northeast monsoon still prevails over the South China Sea, but it begins to weaken here, and undergoes changes in direction; in fact, there is a less than fifty percent constancy in the direction of the winds, and below 5° north latitude, the sea is calm.

2. *In May*, the southwest monsoon advances into the Malay Peninsula and beyond, into Thailand and Indochina; the northeast monsoon is in full retreat. At the same time, the southern winds gain in strength and stability of direction. The movements of the surface ocean currents conform to the direction of the prevailing winds. The situation is similar to what occurs in October when the northeast monsoon advances and the southwest monsoon retreats.

3. *In June*, the northeast monsoon has completely withdrawn from the South China Sea, by around the middle of the month. The prevailing air currents come from the south and the southwest. Between them, they form a front situated at around 5° north latitude. The southwest monsoon, after passing the Malay Peninsula, takes a south-north direction in the northern part of the South China Sea. At the level of the Peninsula itself, the stability of these winds is about seventy-five percent or more. The surface ocean currents, moving in the same direction, are strongly established.

4. *In July and August*, the situation remains the same as in June; the strength and stability of the winds, however, increases.

5. *In September*, the northeast monsoon reappears, but only in the northern part of the China Sea. South of 15° north latitude, that is, in the Malay Peninsula, the winds come from the south or the southwest. Their strength diminishes, but their stability of direction remains strong at the level of the Peninsula (fifty percent and higher). The southwestern and southern winds meet, forming a front at the level of Singapore. The ocean currents are troubled here.

6. *In October*, the whole Peninsula is still under the influence of the southwest winds, but these come up against the implacable forward movement of the flow of the winds from the northeast, added to those remaining from the south. These southwest winds are light and variable (there are calms on nine to fifteen percent of the days of the month). On the surface of the South China Sea, a vast northeast current builds up again.

7. *In November*, the southwest currents disappear, yielding to the west winds, which cover the whole Peninsula to the south of the Isthmus of Kra, creating a front with the winds of the south at the latitude of the Sunda Strait. The confrontation of these winds with the advancing northeast monsoon over the Peninsula takes place in the open sea off the eastern shores. The ocean currents from the northeast are firmly established.

8. *In December*, the northeast monsoon covers the whole of Southeast Asia, including the Malay Peninsula, to about the latitude of the Equator. The strength of the winds is great, and their stability of direction is higher than seventy-five percent. Southern Sumatra and Java are under the rule of the west winds.

9. *In January*, the situation is the same as in the preceding month. To the north of the tenth parallel, the force of the winds tends to diminish slightly, while it strengthens in the south.

10. *In February*, the system is the same, but the strength of the winds is ebbing.

11. *In March*, there are no major changes, but south of 7° north latitude, the stability in the direction of the winds is below seventy-five percent. Towards the end of the month, their withdrawal is palpable: the southern current pushes a little farther to the north, without, however, affecting the Peninsula, and calms increase to the south of 10° north latitude. The surface ocean currents become disturbed from these effects. It has been noted that the movement of these currents has always been very unusual in the Strait of Melaka.

As we have said, a knowledge of the rhythm of these winds and currents is at the origin of the commercial exchanges that permitted the flowering of the forms of civilization along the coasts of the Malay Peninsula that we will be studying. Because these commercial exchanges involved a whole range of animal and vegetable products found chiefly in the forests of the interior, we must now briefly examine the other elements that make up the local climate of the Peninsula.

III. Other Features of the Climate (Doc. 5)

1. Because of its latitude between 14° and 1° north latitude inclusive, the whole of the Malay Peninsula is affected by very high temperatures at all times of the year. Naturally, the mountains experience cooler temperatures, but these were never zones of human settlement in the period that concerns us.

2. It is therefore the rains that make the difference between one area and another, and these are generated by the displacement of the masses of air that we have just discussed.

- South of 6° north latitude, the rains are abundant and steady throughout the year, with maximum levels generally occurring from October to December, that is to say, at the beginning of the northeast monsoon, which affects especially the east coast and the mountains. This is the humid tropical climate; no month receives less than 6.5 centimetres of rain, and—another significant detail—it is here that

the thermal amplitude is the weakest between the hottest and the coldest months.

- To the north of 6° north latitude, a dry season begins that becomes more and more pronounced the farther north one goes. The amount of water that falls, however, is still sufficient to permit the development of a humid tropical forest, and there are no drought zones similar to the one, for example, that affects the centre of Burma. The water is primarily carried in by the southwest monsoon, which hits the west coast with full force, unimpeded in its progress by the obstacle of the Island of Sumatra. The dry season usually corresponds to the boreal winter, that is, to the period during which the northeast monsoon blows without bringing the rain it carries farther to the south after passing over the South China Sea, blocked here by the overhang of the Indochinese Peninsula ending in the presqu'île of Cà Mau.

These observations on climate present only a general outline to which there will be many exceptions in matters of detail concerning temperature and precipitation, and therefore in the resulting natural landscapes. Thus in South Kedah (at 6° north latitude), at the meeting point of the two zones just described, the rains are mainly brought by the southwest monsoon beginning in April, with maximum rainfalls early in the season, in October, a rhythm that increases towards the north along this western coast; in Takua Pa, for example, the rains fall abundantly from March to November, with the maximum rainfall in September. On the other hand, across the Peninsula in the region of Pattani, almost at the latitude of South Kedah, the maximum rains are carried by the northeast monsoon; thus they begin in October, with maximum rainfalls in December, followed by a rapid decrease; conditions are similar along the whole southern part of this eastern coast for the same reason. In contrast, the rains from the same monsoon are much less abundant on the northern part of the coast, for example in Satingpra (between 7° and 8° north latitude inclusive), where they fall between the end of September and mid-January; they are not matched by those brought by the southwest monsoon because of the barrier of the Nakhon Si Thammarat Range; farther to the north, the Tenasserim Range plays the same role.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF THE MALAY PENINSULA: OBSTACLE OR SOURCE OF CONTACTS AND PROFIT AMONG THE ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS?

After examining the different geographical and climatic conditions of the Malay Peninsula, we must now ask who the human beings who peopled it were, and how they made use of it. Given what we have seen of its relief, it should not be surprising that we must distinguish clearly between the larger group living in the most fertile coastal plains, and the minority whose habitat was limited to the interior of the Peninsula and to the least favoured shores. The first were confronted by a major evolution in their mode of life in the course of the first centuries of the Christian era, because in this period, early contacts with the other worlds of Asia were strengthened, bringing more and more Indians, Muslims and Chinese to their coasts. These foreigners, especially traders, gradually learned how to understand the Peninsula and appreciate it for its resources and the possibilities it presented to them for the conduct of their business. We will see that the destiny of the most numerous and best organized of the human groups was definitively determined by these circumstances.

A. THE PEOPLES OF THE MALAY PENINSULA

The origin of the peoples of the Malay Peninsula seems still to be a subject of passionate debate among concerned researchers, since the geography of the region has hardly facilitated the investigation: accessible from all sides by sea, at least on its coastal fringes, the Peninsula was also effectively a bridge stretching between the Indochinese Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago, leading to many speculations. Among the plethora of theories that have been formulated in the last decades, we subscribe to that of P. Bellwood, recently updated in a new edition (1997) of his book on the *Prehistory of the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago* (his geographical term covering the Indonesian Archipelago, the Moluccas and the Malay Peninsula to about 7° north latitude). He writes:

It is traditional to claim that the populations of the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago belong to two of the major geographical races of mankind: the Austro-Melanesians (or Austroloids) and the Mongoloids (or more specifically, Southern Mongoloids). (Bellwood 1997: 70).

But he goes on to say: “The vast majority of the inhabitants of this region today are of Southern Mongoloid phenotype” (Bellwood 1997: 71), among whom are the Malays of the Peninsula, which nonetheless also harbours “other populations that although small in number, are of great significance from a historical viewpoint,” that is, the aboriginal populations of the *Orang Asli*. He speculates about these groups:

The Southern Mongoloid populations, now numerically dominant in the region, are all speakers of Austronesian languages [...]. All share considerable physical, cultural and linguistic homogeneity despite the complex overlays of 2,000 years of Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese and Islamic civilization [...]. A greater degree of Austro-Melanesian inheritance can perhaps be seen amongst those populations that were once called Proto-Malays, as opposed to the Deutero-Malays, who are still considered by some authors to represent a second and later migrations into the region. (Bellwood 1997: 74).

It would seem reasonable to hypothesize—given patterns of trait distribution—that the ancestors of the Indo-Malaysian Mongoloids have moved southward into a region previously settled by Austro-Melanesian populations. These two groups have since hybridized to varying degrees. The diachronic data from ancient skeletal remains should, in theory, allow evaluation of this hypothesis. In practice, however, skeletal remains tend to be fragmentary, often quite poorly dated and ambiguous in terms of racial correlations. (Bellwood 1997: 82).

Taking this skeletal material at face value, as described in the literature, the most likely hypothesis is that Southern Mongoloid populations have entered the archipelago from the north, mainly via the Philippines as far as Austronesian expansion is concerned, but perhaps also via the Malay Peninsula to some extent as well, and have been present since at least 1,000 B.C. in most areas where they are found now. (Bellwood 1997: 87).

Here the author adds, as quoted above: “Almost all the peoples of Indo-Malaysia speak languages termed Austronesian.” (Bellwood 1997: 97). These languages number around one thousand two hundred; one of them is Malay, spoken by some eighteen million people in Malaysia. However, in the geographical limits of our study—those of the Malay Peninsula, which serves as the northern limit of Bellwood’s research—other languages than Austronesian

were spoken, and in some cases still are. Mōn was one of those that belong to the family of Austroasian languages, and it is linguistically close to Khmer. In the period of our study, the Mōn people, today confined to the delta of the Irrawadi and Tenasserim, possessed a vast domain extending from lower Burma to the basin of the Menam Chao Phraya, where the brilliant civilization of Dvāravatī thrived, and it is more than probable that at least the northern part of the Malay Peninsula was generally included in their territories.¹ This could explain why two of the *Orang Asli* peoples—the Negritos and the Senoi—whom we will discuss later, speak languages (Aslian) that are related to Mōn. In addition, of course, there is the Thai family of languages, dominant today in Peninsular Thailand, but progressively infiltrated into the region from the end of the thirteenth century, and now the national language of Thailand.

What were the occupations of these dominant Southern Mongoloid populations in the period of our study? It is striking to note the divergence of opinion expressed in the scientific literature devoted to this question. Clearly agriculture was practised, and it seems that rice was cultivated very early, not to mention numerous other cereals or back-up crops. Bellwood indicates, however, that “although millet has survived ethnographically amongst the Senoi of Central Malaya, there is a chance that it may be a relatively recent introduction.” (Bellwood 1997: 245). The conditions in which these crops were grown is also a subject of debate. The existence today of a certain number of coastal plains in the Malay Peninsula where irrigated rice is cultivated has sometimes led to excessive generalizations. In the period covered by our study, these plains, which, as we have shown, are often the product of a recent topographic evolution, did not present the same possibilities as those available today; we must not rule out alternative types of agriculture, which are of greatest value in dry or more or less itinerant types of cultivation. The effects of such cultures have been carefully studied in relation to South Kedah. (See below, Chapter Eight.)

¹ J. Stargardt reports in one of her articles (1979: 37) that a linguistic study in the region of Satingpra, where Thai is spoken today, indicated that thirty percent of the daily vocabulary of the local inhabitants had Mōn origins. In the course of the succeeding chapters, we will also indicate the presence of artistic works directly linked to the art of Dvāravatī, found as far away as Yarang.

When it comes to the populations of the interior forests of the Peninsula, we have even less certainty for the proto-historic and historic periods that concern us, despite the fact that an essential part of the economy of the region, within the framework of the entrepôt ports civilization, was based on their close collaboration with the Southern Mongoloid populations. We can only suppose that to a greater or lesser degree, these peoples were similar to contemporary aborigines, who are commonly designated today by the modern Malay expression *Orang Asli* ('indigenous', 'original', or 'autochthonous people'). At present, because of the rapid evolution of the countryside in Peninsular Thailand, which has led to the near disappearance of the primeval forest, they are primarily concentrated in Malaysia, where they numbered 46,000 in 1965 (Jimin 1968: 45) and 53,000 in 1969 (Carey 1970: 155); today they number about 92,000 (Shuhaimi (ed.): 1998: 46), a figure that includes the groups located in insular Malaysia.

The *Orang Asli* type has always lived in close association with the forest, and as F. L. Dunn writes with a certain lyricism:

It is not 'his' forest but 'the' forest. Indeed he is apt to regard himself and his kinsmen, and certainly his village and its surroundings, as being in some respects 'parts of the forest'. (Dunn 1975: 22).

This perfect adaptation to life in the tropical forest made these the only people capable of exploiting its resources ecologically, through hunting, and food-gathering, fishing and—thanks to a system of successive way-stations—dispatching them towards the coasts, using the complex network of fluvial waterways. (Bronson 1977). This activity enabled them to acquire by barter, at the end of the chain of middlemen, without a single word being uttered (a phenomenon that has been observed today)—a range of objects that were probably no different several centuries ago from what they were at the end of the nineteenth century (Skeat & Blagden 1906: I, 229 & II, 89-116): quivers, knives, combs, various pieces of jewellery—chiefly made of beads—, different ceramic objects, Chinese or other, though in small quantities, as archaeology has uncovered only a few, and, in the Peninsula, such objects were not buried in tombs as they were, for example, in the Philippines, since the *Orang Asli* apparently remained faithful to traditional vegetable containers.

The three great ethnolinguistic divisions established by W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden remain valid. They distinguish between the Negritos, the Senoi and the *Melayu Asli* (aboriginal Malays). Of

these three groups, the Negritos, still called 'Semang' ('debt slaves') in the Malay states of Perak, Kedah and Pahang—and 'Pangan' ('forest people') in those of Kelantan and Terengganu, are the least numerous: around two thousand (Shuhaimi (ed.) 1998: 46), and the only ones still living partly in Thai territory in the mountainous region separating Thailand from Malaysia in the sixties. (Le Bar *et al.* 1964: 182). They include several sub-groups, and may occasionally practise agriculture. They speak dialects (Aslian) derived, as we have seen, from an Austro-Asiatic linguistic pool, but their history which, it seems, has been of great interest to ethnologists, tends to show that they have "local ancestries that long predate those of the Southern Mongoloid Indonesians, Filipinos and Malaysians," and also that "it [...] seems likely that [they] have adopted their present Mōn-Khmer (Aslian) languages from their agriculturalist Senoi neighbours." (Bellwood 1997: 131). These Senoi, still called Sakai, are found only in Malaysia, where they constitute the most numerous group of the *Orang Asli*. They have always maintained links with the preceding group, and thus speak dialects related to the same Austro-Asiatic linguistic pool; these dialects include many Malay words, the result of former commercial contacts, but also of raids against the coastal populations for the purpose of procuring slaves from among them, from which a reciprocal suspicion developed (the name 'Sakai' is pejorative in Malay). Most of the Senoi communities are permanent or semi-permanent, and practise a secondary agriculture that is added to the resources from hunting, fishing and food-gathering. The third group, that of the *Malayu Asli*, formerly called the Proto-Malaysians, live in the southern half of the Peninsula (the Pahang, Johor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka states); they speak dialects belonging to the Malay-Polynesian language pool, with numerous borrowings from Malay because of their former contacts with the Malaysian coastal populations. Their habitat, which is permanent or semi-permanent, favours the upper courses of rivers. They cultivate both irrigated and non-irrigated rice, but are still engaged in gathering products from the forests, in particular camphor.

Exploitation of the natural resources of the Malay Peninsula, both vegetable and animal, was also practised by other local populations, in this case groups located on the edges of the shores of the Strait of Melaka and in the Archipelago of Riau, but at a distance from the main populations. These groups are the *Orang Laut* ('people of the sea'); ethnologists seem to remain divided about their origins. Thus

they distinguish between several groups without agreeing on their origins, common or otherwise. D. E. Sopher (1977) believes he can place them in the Archipelago of Riau, but criticism of his sources leads C. Pelras (1972: 134-136) to write:

We don't know in fact whether we have to do with a multitude of little groups that are quite distinct from each other, but have kept archaic traits that were once common to the whole region or whether it is a question of scattered fragments of the same original ethnic group, whose fundamental characteristics are still recognizable in spite of a process of differentiation influenced by the isolation of each group and by the diversity of the local conditions in which they live.

For Sopher, the common ancestors of these groups would have been:

Vedîq strand collectors [...who] became differentiated from the river-bank, and forest hunters and gatherers, acquiring mobility by the use of small boats, before the southward infiltration of Mongoloid Proto-Malays. Intense mixing of the two stocks took place, particularly on the Sumatra side, but despite the introduction of agriculture and probably of new fishing techniques [...], the earlier differentiation persisted, so that side by side with the evolution of the Malays [...], a much more primitive and sparse population of persistently nomadic sea people continued to live in places acquiring the appearance of a scratched and murky facet of the Malay themselves. (Sopher 1977: 366-377).

C. Pelras does not think it necessary to attribute a Vedîq background to these populations, because the occasional absence among them of Mongoloid types is also shared by the Malays themselves; he believes that it is no longer necessary to consider them to be the last tenants of a culture predating the arrival of the Austronesians—with the pretext that today the Malays possess an 'advanced' civilization in relation to theirs—, as he is convinced that this may not necessarily imply a different origin. He therefore advances the following theory:

On these coasts in the swampy back-country, wooded, and, everything considered, rather inhospitable, [...] lived peoples who were related to each other [...]. In the places where the first ports were established, relationships of exchange must also have been established between the new arrivals and the indigenous peoples, from which the latter—the first ancestors of the Malays—were able to profit. First serving as intermediaries in providing products of the forest, they themselves would have turned little by little towards maritime commerce, and their language would quite naturally have become the easiest means of exchange between foreigners of different origin and indigenous peoples with different dialects. Moreover, the Malay has always

remained linked to maritime trade, and the Malays are still the inhabitants par excellence of areas along coasts and downstream from rivers.

Other populations in less favourable locations will have remained more or less removed from these commercial activities, continuing to subsist on local products. Their mode of life will have become specialized in relation to their particular habitat: the interior of the islands, strands, estuaries, swampy deltas. These material differences, accompanied by a certain turning in upon themselves, could only accentuate the differences in dialect that would surely have been established already. This would be the origin of these innumerable mini-ethnic groups of the Archipelago of Riau and the coasts of Sumatra and Malaysia. (Pelras 1972: 167-168).

All these factors involve only one aspect of what might have been the racial origin of the dominant population of the Malay Peninsula at the dawn of history. But as Bellwood suggested in a passage quoted earlier, this substratum—considering its implantation in a place exposed to outside influences—will have been confronted during the last two millennia by the (usually peaceful) onslaught of radically different populations arriving in particular from the world of India, China and the Middle East: we cannot rule out the notion that, beyond the influences these peoples will have brought to bear on the civilization, they will also have contributed to a certain racial evolution. The tradesmen, to mention only one group, were frequently obliged to wait in the entrepôt ports between two monsoons, as we will see—and after all, surely basic human needs had to be satisfied... To take the measure of this factor in the evolution of the races, one has only to look around today and see the variety of physical types that can be encountered along the coast of the Malay Peninsula (admittedly, the racial mixes were increased by the Chinese diaspora with its well-known levels in the Peninsula as elsewhere, and the fact that English colonizers of Malaysia brought a substantial work force from South India).

Whatever the racial origins of these different peoples, it was their abilities and intimate knowledge of their environment that placed them in a position to offer to foreign traders the wide range of highly sought-after natural products the region contained in abundance. As a result, from the first centuries of this era, the Peninsula became a choice destination for merchants from all over Asia, as well as the place where the entrepôt ports necessary for the smooth development of this international trade could be established.

With this in mind, we can try to imagine how this strip of land some one thousand five hundred kilometres long was originally perceived by navigators and merchants. Was it a barrier travellers could choose to cross over, or must they be resigned to go around it? The idea of its practicability is attractive, and was generally adopted by archaeologists and historians of the Peninsula early in the modern period to explain the apparently simultaneous expansion of certain sites located on one or the other shore at corresponding latitudes. The narrow width of the Peninsula, especially in its mid-section, its relatively low relief, the existence of numerous rivers cutting through the mountain slopes in courses running in opposite directions from the lines of the summits—all this contributed to the idea that instead of going around the obstacle, tradesmen had preferred to cross over it for greater ease, and to avoid the awkwardness, inconvenience and risks of a long sea voyage through the Strait of Melaka.

And so we must now examine the feasibility of these two concepts: the idea of the regular use of transpeninsular routes for trade in the Malay Peninsula in the early period, and the dissenting view that circumpeninsular navigation was the primary means of transport in the commercial exchanges between the two extreme points of Asia.

B. THE MALAY PENINSULA AS OBSTACLE

I. The Transpeninsular Routes

The first 'official' crossing of the Peninsula, which is also the first crossing mentioned in a dated text, took place in the Western Han period under the reign of Emperor Wudi (140-87 B.C.). The written history of these Han (*Qian Hanshu*) does in fact report that this emperor sent a mission to a kingdom of Huangzhi, which contemporary writers generally agree in locating on a shore of the Indian Ocean, very likely in India. It was said to be the source of certain superfluous products that had become indispensable to the privileged members of the Chinese court, such as glass objects (which must have been transported from the Middle or the Near East), pearls and precious stones (some of which surely originated in Śrī Laṅkā).

The text, studied in depth by P. Wheatley (1973: 8-13) (Doc. 6), allows us to recreate the trip that took the Chinese envoys along the coast of the Indochinese Peninsula, all the way—we can conjecture—to the farthest reach of the Gulf of Thailand. From here on,

things become clearer: the travellers had to plant their feet on the ground and entrust themselves to the indigenous people's knowledge of their territory in order to pass over the 'obstacle' of the Peninsula, which took ten days; next, the 'barbarians' on the other shore undertook to transport the Chinese in commercial boats to their final destination, a journey of two months, which gives us a new picture of what transoceanic travel had become for the local peoples by that time. Place names are given, but it is totally impossible to identify them. Many researchers have attempted, to no avail. In this realm of rather subjective research, Wheatley's conjectures on the very northern location of this successfully traversed passage across the Peninsula seem quite plausible, somewhat discrediting the more southern routes proposed by other writers.

In this early period, then, the Peninsula was apparently looked upon—at least by the Chinese—as an obstacle to be crossed in a hurry. Analyses of this first text immediately gave prestige and currency to the idea of routes alleged to permit this transpeninsular crossing, though no subsequent text, Chinese or other, made the slightest allusion to them. Later, when the first archaeologists working on the Peninsula at the end of the nineteenth century began to discover significant Indianized remains (temple ruins, statues, statuettes, inscriptions, etc.), primarily coastal, the question surfaced again as to what role such routes might have played in the early period. Some even wondered whether they were one of the chief factors accounting for the appearance of these remains, especially of vestiges found on the isthmus, because of the relatively short distance of the routes. Many researchers offered a wide selection of conflicting and sometimes exaggerated opinions, some even paying a price for their views in their own persons, during exploratory expeditions they undertook on the basis of contemporary and modern accounts: Gerini (1905), Hamilton (1922), Giles and Scott (1935) and Wales (1935) were all determined to prove that the use of these routes—in spite of the physical obstacles they presented (some of which have increased in the modern period)—were widely used from earliest antiquity.

Archaeological proofs of their use, however, remain slim along the whole length of their supposed trails: a few Chinese ceramics here and there in some spots at a remove from the coasts, several small religious images in bronze representing the gods of Buddhism or Hinduism—all of them pieces that could simply represent

exchanges between the coastal populations and the *Orang Asli* of the interior, great purveyors of “the strange and the precious”² from the tropical forests—and the wooden remains, of uncertain date, of ships sunk in the mud in the back country. In recent years, therefore, attention has turned more appropriately to the astonishing similarity in the types of remains of a commercial origin found at certain coastal archaeological sites on the Isthmus of Kra that can be considered twin sites, separated as they are only by the narrow width of the Peninsula at these latitudes; here, then, the existence of transpeninsular routes widely used in a network of international trade in the early period would initially appear feasible.

Opinions about their actual use, however, have been and remain divided. Those who considered these routes to have been important in the past used to advance the idea that they greatly reduced the distance in both directions for commercial contacts between the two coasts, especially at the level of the isthmus, and that the courses of the rivers they generally used are very different today from what they were then. At the same time, others stressed the difficulty of ascending these rivers with often volatile waters that were surrounded by dense, tropical vegetation differing greatly from the sparser vegetation of today. All agreed, however, that the use of the rivers must have varied through the centuries, depending on the possibilities of circumpeninsular navigation in waters that were known to be inhospitable in different periods because of pirates, and remained so into modern times. Nevertheless, the present tendency, because of the similarities described earlier between certain archaeological sites from one coast to the other, would be to consider their use established. We will now attempt to formulate an opinion on these numerous routes and their uses.

Wheatley (1973: Fig. 4) made an inventory of eleven routes from north to south, a figure that could be increased. We will not examine them all, leaving aside in particular those southern routes in the widest part of the Peninsula which to this day have not been linked with any important archaeological remains, either at or near their points of departure and arrival, or along the length of their course.

² These are the terms used by the Chinese in the *Suishu* (Ch. 82, f. 1 verso) (Sui: 581-618), compiled from the seventh century, to designate the particular products of the tropical forests of the Peninsula: spices, rare woods, resins, ivory, exotic birds, etc., about which we will speak later.

This suggests that they were either not at all or hardly involved in international trade in the early period, even if ports of call were operating along the shores of the southern part of the Peninsula that are responsible for several of the objects that have been discovered. We must also leave aside the two northernmost routes, because today their end-points on the west coast are in Burmese territory, and therefore difficult, if not impossible, to study at the moment. (Doc. 3).

One of these northern routes, which begins at Ratchaburi at the far end of the Gulf of Thailand, ascended the network of rivers ending in this formerly coastal site (among which is the famous River Kwai), and led through Three Pagodas Pass, either to Tavoy or to Moulmein. Because of its geological situation, it is hardly a part of the Peninsula. The other, from Kuiburi on the Gulf of Thailand, led through the Mawdaung Pass and the Tenasserim River as far as Mergui in the Bay of Bengal. This was the route used by the French in the seventeenth century: initially by the first missionaries, from the *Société des Missions Etrangères*, who reached China from Paris in 1662, and, after what proved to be a perilous crossing, lingered in Siam; next it was used by Claude Céberet, one of the envoys *extraordinaires* of the second French 'embassy' to King Phra Narai of Siam, in 1687. On leaving Siam, Céberet had received instructions to travel to Mergui, which the king had ceded to France. He followed this route, and in spite of all the precautions taken along the way to assure that he had a pleasant trip, the journey proved to be difficult, and even dangerous. We have accounts of both crossings. (Bourges 1666, Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992, Smithies 1993, 1995).

The routes we will examine in particular are in the narrow middle section of the Peninsula, the part usually referred to as the Isthmus of Kra, although strictly speaking the name refers only to a tiny zone in this section.

As we have already explained in our study of the relief of the Peninsula, the configuration of the mountain chains, because of their fragmented structure and their position relative to each other, and because of the valleys of the rivers flowing down their slopes, allows for the possibility of passages through them. It has also been demonstrated that a few centuries ago, the courses of these rivers were much more navigable than they are today; the present topography of the different coastal archaeological sites located to date enables us better to appreciate this negative evolution. Most of them, as we will see, are sunk in mud at the far end of estuaries so narrow that it is

difficult to imagine them ever being ascended by anything other than small boats; or else they are isolated at the edge of such insignificant watercourses that only an examination of satellite and aerial photographs permitting the restoration of features lost after major morphological changes makes it possible to believe that an entrepôt port prospered here in the past.

1. *Various accounts concerning the real possibility of the use of transpeninsular routes*

Because of the basic geographical context, whenever the idea of a transpeninsular route was proposed, emphasis was always placed on the use that must have been made of the courses of rivers flowing in opposite directions towards one coast or the other from the ridgeline of the chains. It was aptly pointed out, however, that these watercourses, which were even less silted up then than they are today, had never been anything but very difficult to use. This was the opinion of B. A. V. Peacock:

River routes through the interior may often look attractive on the map, but first-hand experience soon teaches the hard fact that the peninsular rivers, usually shallow, fast flowing, and barred by frequent and dangerous rapids, offer fair going to bamboo raft traffic, but in one direction only—downstream. Short stretches can, it is true, be poled against the flow in specially designed, narrow, and highly unstable dugouts, moved at great expenditure of physical effort and capable of carrying three or four persons at the most, with minimal baggage. Before the advent of the modern outboard engine, counter-current boat traffic was slow, exhausting, and often hazardous in the middle reaches, and all but impossible in the headwaters even of the largest river systems.

And he added:

For upstream movement along all or most of the river routes beloved of the historical geographers and others, the river would have to be abandoned and the traveler would be obliged to resort to his feet. Nor would the river banks facilitate his passage, for it is here, paradoxically, that the vegetation is at its densest and most impenetrable, its growth stimulated by the air and light reaching the jungle floor unimpeded by the tree canopy. Such traffic would have to depend on trackways over the less obstructed floor of the primeval forest, but it would always be arduous and unhealthy, and would rely entirely on the local knowledge of the jungle dwellers.

Nevertheless, he concedes:

A search for transpeninsular routes must always have been an attractive proposition. While [he recognizes] the circumnavigation of the

peninsula presents no special difficulties, the long coastline makes it a time-consuming business even at the present day, as the continued interest in a Kra canal bears witness. In ancient times, knowledge of the narrow width of the peninsula must have greatly increased the incentive to establish suitable crossing places and associated ports. Such a need was presumably felt early in the growth of inter-regional trade. (Peacock 1979: 200-201).

These remarks, which seem reasonable at first, are contradicted in other accounts apparently written in an effort to prove that such routes were already essential to the circuits of international trade in the early days. One route that linked the region of Takua Pa to the Bay of Bandon by passing through the valleys of two rivers with opposite courses, attracted considerable attention, because in the first stages of research in the Malay Peninsula, the location of Ptolemy's³ Takola was a matter of great interest to researchers, who thought that in Takua Pa, to the north of Phuket, they had identified the site.

a. Among authors persuaded by the idea of a previously significant use of these routes, and particularly of this last one, W. W. Bourke, in the beginning of the last century, emphasized that the site of Takua Pa, protected from the open sea by islets with passages between them (among them Ko Kho Khao, where an entrepôt port has since been located), is, and therefore all the more, *was*, the best-protected port site of the whole west coast of the Isthmus of Kra. (Doc. 28). He goes on to say:

The inland water communications afforded, before the Chinese silted up the rivers with tailings during the last 30 years, great facilities for water transport; it having been possible within the memory of men now living, for good sized boats to go right up to Pong [present-day Kapong], which is situated at the foot of the mountains right in the interior.

³ Ptolemy wrote in the middle of the second century A.D., and the *Geography* attributed to him was therefore dated to this period. Research has shown, however, that in its present form, the work was compiled by an unknown Byzantine author of the tenth or eleventh century, who took into account the principles laid down by Ptolemy himself, and incorporated into his text several passages from the original work. As for the map associated with the text, it could not have been drawn up before roughly the end of the thirteenth century. Takola is the first name mentioned in the *Geography* as an emporium in the *Golden Khersonese*, which has been identified as the Malay Peninsula.

And a little later, in support of the theory he is advancing, he writes:

About 40 years ago, in the course of working a mine at Pong, an old ship was discovered buried about 12 feet under ground; this ship was about 11 *wah* or 74 feet long, and there were the remains of an iron chain and iron anchor attached to the ship on the upstream side; the natural supposition is that this old ship was in some manner sunk while at anchor in the former channel of the river, which at that time must have run in a different bed, and the ship was gradually covered up and buried by silt. The size of this ship is very suggestive, and points to the supposition that at the period this ancient ship ascended the Takuapa river, the river was navigable for large boats for a much greater distance from its mouth than it has been within, say, the last 50 years. (Bourke 1905/86: 15, 19).

b. This is also the opinion of two other authors (Giles & Scott 1935: 80, 83), who point out how short the passage was between the upstream of the two rivers with symmetrical courses on both sides of the Tenasserim Range, the Takua Pa and Khlong Sok Rivers: “only a few miles.” One of them adds:

As regards the land connection between rivers navigable by boats on the east and west coasts, I may mention that in one day I have walked from a place on the main branch of the Takuapa River (I think it is called Tahun) to Ban Sok on a branch of the Bandon River [the present Khlong Phum Duang], spent three or four hours there, and walked back again. The distance cannot be more than twelve miles, and I estimate the maximum elevation of the track above sea-level at 500 ft.

c. Another Englishman, in exactly the same period, Q. Wales, an archaeologist to whom we owe many works that are extremely useful, though full of assumptions about the history of the Malay Peninsula, was at pains to prove—at some personal cost—that this route was the means by which the Indian colonists had crossed the Peninsula to spread their civilization throughout Southeast Asia. (Doc. 28). This was the major idea of his life. Here is what he wrote:

After leaving Takuapa we followed the route of the old Indian colonist across the Peninsula. Such is the extent of the silting process that the Takuapa River, even in its lower reaches, is navigable only by sampans in the dry season, and by small motor-launches in the rains. But that it was formerly navigable by ships of considerable burthen is proved by the discovery at Pong some seventy years ago of the timbers of an old ship 74 feet long, while it may be mentioned that a European female figure-head about 3 feet high which had recently been dredged up was shown to me in the grounds of a Buddhist monastery at

Takuapa [he specifies in a note that an evaluation of this piece by a specialist in London yielded an estimate dating it between 1820 and 1830, and the opinion that it belonged to a ship of 200 tons drawing about 10 feet of water]. The difficulty of navigating this river in the dry season decided us to walk for the first part of the journey. The branch of the river which leads to the pass dwindles to a narrow stream as it approaches the watershed, and we waded across it a number of times before, finally, our path became the almost dry boulder-strewn bed of the stream itself, over which we scrambled for some distance and then left it to make a short but steep climb which, after three days' march, brought us to the summit of the pass.

We began our descent and, leaving the cool damp shade of the virgin forest behind us, were soon wending our way through a smiling valley. At the first village, Ban Sok, at which the east-flowing river became navigable, we entered into negotiations for obtaining boats [...]. Having obtained three diminutive boats at Ban Sok, the boatmen poled us down the river for six days, progress being very slow owing to the many shallows that had to be negotiated, the boatmen laboriously digging out the channels for the boats to pass [...]. So few and far between were the villages and so dense the jungle that came down to the water's edge that it was often difficult to find space to camp [...]. At Ta Khanom the river widens and deepens, and we were able to charter a motor-boat for the last stage of our journey [...]. Leaving the mountains behind, the river widens out, joins the great Menam Luong [modern-day Khlong Phum Duang], which flows from the south, and as a broad sluggish stream pours its waters into the Bay of Bandon. (Wales 1935: 16-17).

It seems that this troublesome and exhausting journey across the Peninsula took at least nine days, but its numerous difficulties did not discourage Wales from thinking he had followed the ancient route of his Indian colonists towards the east, "towards Angkor, in the footsteps of the Indian invaders," as he described it in 1937 in the title of one of his first books on the subject. Should we deduce from the problems he encountered that if it could be relatively simple to go down the rivers, going back up them, even with more abundant and less muddy waters, presented a number of difficulties, especially during the low-water period corresponding to the dry season?

d. In the same vein, and for neighbouring regions, we possess an account dating from 1876—this one containing no foregone conclusions. It was written by a British officer, W. E. Maxwell, who had been sent from the Island of Penang—which had been under English control since the end of the eighteenth century—to seize a rebel sultan in a remote corner of Perak, one of the large states that make up the Malay Federation today, which had just been forced to receive

a Resident British minister. The territory of this state corresponds to the hydrographic basins of one of the largest rivers of the Peninsula, the Sungai Perak (three hundred and fifty kilometres long), mentioned in the previous chapter.

At this close of the nineteenth century, the region of North Perak (at the latitude of Mount Inas—1,801 metres, in the Bintang Range), where the rebel had found a place of refuge, was still almost entirely unknown to the Europeans:

Rapids rendered the Perak river almost altogether unavailable for the transport of stores in this part of its course, and the nature of the country, thick forest with a very sparse population on the river banks, was not favourable for the operations of civilized troops. (Maxwell 1882: 2).

To capture the rebel from behind, it was decided, on leaving British territory (the Island of Penang and what was then called Wellesley Province, which has since become Seberang Perai), to travel to the mouth of the Kerian River and go up it by boat to the latitude of Mount Inas. The small craft used beyond the estuary could only have been little Malay boats,

as the bed of the river is much obstructed higher up by fallen trees and sunken logs [...]. The Kerian boatmen are skilful polers and know every bend of the river and every snag in it, so, notwithstanding the darkness [they were navigating by night], our progress was tolerably rapid. (Maxwell 1882: 5).

They travelled in this way up to the confluence of the river and its tributary, the Selama, thirty kilometres' distance from the sea as the crow flies, the distance travelled on the river being infinitely more taxing because of its sinuous course. From Butterworth, the crossing took a day and a half. Next, they elected to cross the Bintang Range by climbing up the valley of the Selama on foot:

The narrow path winding along between lofty trees and flanked on each side by a thick undergrowth of brushwood, palms, ferns and creepers might be matched in any State in the Peninsula, and probably in Ceylon, Sumatra and Borneo. Though the forest has many beauties, its density and stillness are depressing, and the general impression left on the mind after much jungle walking is one of monotony. We met no one during our first day's journey and saw little sign of man's presence, except here and there traces of charcoal burning and sometimes long lines of rollers by means of which some dug-out canoe fashioned in the jungle had been dragged down to the river; not a bird

was to be seen or heard, except perhaps when the curious cry of the hornbill (*enggang*) broke the silence.

In the course of the day we crossed two streams, tributaries of the Selama [...]. In the afternoon we reached Ulu Selama, a small hamlet near the foot of the mountains where the river takes its rise [Mount Inas]. (Maxwell 1882: 11-12).

In the camp, in the evening, "large fires were kept burning under the cocoanut trees all night to keep away tigers."⁴ It took the travellers two more days to reach the pass that would enable them to descend into the valley of Sungai Perak along the other slope. Progress in the middle of a jungle crisscrossed with mountains and rivers seems to have been particularly trying. It would appear that for strategic reasons, they chose to ignore a possible passage through the valley of a more southern tributary which, with its twin on the other side of the chain, creates an area of saddling along the line of the ridge. Today, a road runs along this passage, while the path they followed is still virgin. They were promised elephants, which never arrived, but which had probably always been used along these routes.

Once the pass had been crossed:

Then began the descent on the eastern side of the range, which was easy work compared with yesterday's climb. Lofty trees obstructed the view on all sides, and though we were traveling over high ground, not a glimpse of the surrounding country could be seen. About midday we reached the foot of the range, and emerging from the forest found ourselves at a small *kampong* [village]. (Maxwell 1882: 17).

It had therefore taken them three and a half days on foot to cross a rather insignificant distance: some thirty-five kilometres as the crow flies, but much longer, apparently, along the routes they had taken. At this latitude the course of the Perak River was as dangerous as they had foreseen. Maxwell "started up the river in a dug-out canoe poled by a Malay in the bow and steered by another in the stern." (Maxwell 1882: 22). The ascent of the river began in the direction of the supposed refuge of the rebellious sultan.

⁴ At the end of the nineteenth century, tropical luxuriance apparently went hand in hand with dangerous fauna. The missionaries from the *Missions Étrangères* in Paris, and Louis XIV's *envoyé extraordinaire* to the King of Siam, Claude Céberet, also had time to assess the wildness of the fauna of the Peninsula along the Mergui-Kuiburi route they followed. Their accounts do not speak very favourably for the intensive use of these routes.

The *anak jeram* (children of the rapids), as the boatmen of this part of the world are called, standing in the bow, took us into midstream with a few vigorous strokes of their light bamboo poles, and as we glided along against the current [...], [t]roubled water betokened that we had commenced the passage of the rapids called Jeram Kling, and the exertions of the polers were redoubled. Every effort was required to keep the head of the canoe against the stream, and nothing but marvellous intimacy with the different passages could have kept us clear of the rocks over which the river was bubbling and boiling. (Maxwell 1882: 22-23).

The rebellious sultan having packed up and left, it was necessary to pursue him farther to the north, this time by an overland route, along the valley of the Perak, which was more manageable at this latitude because inhabited and cultivated here and there, but still very close to its original state. The author noted traces of the existence of some Semangs (or Negritos): "It was a path or small clearing, [...] it was a hole dug at the foot of a tree from which an esculent root had been taken, and so on." (Maxwell 1882: 34). The rebellious Malay continued to elude them, and after an expedition of six days, Maxwell, who had arrived as far as the confluence of the Sungai Rui and the Perak, decided "to return to Penang through Kedah territory, traveling down the Muda river to the sea." (Maxwell 1882:47). The party therefore undertook to go up the valley of this tributary:

After leaving Gerik, we entered the forest and struggled for some hours over one of the worst jungle paths that I can imagine possible even in a Malay jungle. It may be described as a network of roots of trees separated from each other by deep elephant tracks which the recent rains had filled with water. There was hardly a square yard of sound footing in a mile of it. (Maxwell 1882: 52).

Apparently demoralized and exhausted, the author wrote on the twentieth day of the expedition:

Truly, Malay traveling, if one travels as a Malay, is a rough experience. The jungle abounds in traps for the unwary, tangled nets of roots which catch the feet and disturb the centres of gravity, long graceful fronds of the *rotan* cane armed with a series of claws which claim a portion of everything in which they fix their hold, fallen logs which have to be climbed over wearily and painfully when a break in the pace is an additional exertion. Here the torrents of the rainy season have worn the path into a minor watercourse, high and slippery on the sides, rough and uneven at the bottom; would you walk on the sides you can get no footing and slip at every step; you follow the center of the track, and the result is a series of jars decidedly trying to vertebræ.

Rivers and streams must be crossed by wading, except when a bridge or, perhaps, a single narrow log, offers a dry passage. While in the forest you are stifled for want of air, when you emerge into the plain you are roasted for want of shade. (Maxwell 1882: 55).

After having gone up most of the length of this valley, Maxwell and his band turned off towards the northwest to cross the Bintang Range, which was narrow and low at this latitude, and go down to Baling on the border of the Sungai Ketil, where he embarked on “a covered boat, large enough to convey my whole party of 20 men, with the requisite number of polers.” (Maxwell 1882: 63). This detail is interesting, because the town is located some fifteen kilometres from the present border between Thailand and Malaysia, which follows the line of the dividing of the waters, beyond which the basin of the Menam Pattani, which leads to the Gulf of Thailand, begins.

The Ketil is terribly obstructed in the whole of its course by fallen timber. The conservancy of rivers is not understood in Malay forests, and where every successive rainy season, by the undermining of the river-banks by floods, causes the fall of numbers of trees into the stream below, the state of the navigable highway may be conceived. Just enough is cleared away to permit boats to pass, but in going downstream, even by daylight, the most skilful steering is required to avoid contact with snags, and a night progress is almost impossible except in very small boats. Ours was one of the largest boats in use on the river, and the bumps which she received in the course of the day were so numerous and severe that it was wonderful how she held together. Before the day was over we had lost a great part of the framework in the stern, which formed a sort of deck-house and supported a palm-thatch roof or awning. After a very winding course of a good many miles, the Ketil joins the river Soh and from the junction of the broad placid stream which flows down to the sea is known as the Muda river. (Maxwell 1882: 64).

The author then described how the descent to the Strait of Melaka was accomplished in a day and a night, thanks to the placidity of the Muda River, along which, at times, the soldiers took over the paddling to relieve the boatmen.

2. How were the transpeninsular routes used?

We may conclude from the preceding accounts that, apart from the rivers that might possibly have provided a route (though more likely a descent than an ascent), with ever-risky courses even in the early period, because of their general condition (shallows, rapids, wrecks), and also because of the pronounced low-water period during the dry

season (at least in their upper courses where the hydrographic basin is not large enough to supply them adequately through the year), it would have been extremely difficult to travel in the geographical environment of the Peninsula. This would seem to vindicate Peacock, whose ambivalent views on the use of these routes we cited earlier.

Today, the relative increase in population on the Peninsula along certain favoured main routes certainly makes overland transportation much easier than it must have been in the early period, and it seems to us that a number of tracks that are recognized today as traces of transpeninsular routes, and appear to be the heirs of an ancient tradition, actually had a relatively recent, and therefore essentially overland, origin, even if river transport could have existed at certain points.

As we have already said, no archaeological remains found along the supposed courses of such routes indicate an intensive use. Unless and until there are proofs to the contrary, we can state either that such remains do not exist or that they are extremely rare, and the interpretation of such evidence as there is, is doubtful. On the other hand, finds made on the two shores, in those areas of the entrepôt ports that seem to have been the end- or starting-points of the suggested transpeninsular routes, might appear to justify our believing in, and at first glance even seem to confirm, the use of such routes, at least during the period when the ports were in service. Paradoxically, however, we are not convinced that the very similar archaeological objects found at the beginning- and end-points of the routes could necessarily have been transported along them, in either direction.

Among the most significant objects found at these sites, attesting with certainty to commercial exchanges over great distances, and to possible transport from one coast to the other, are the ceramics and glassware, which we will discuss at some length in the following chapters. The ceramics can have varied origins (Southeast Asia, the Middle East), but most of it originated in China. As for the glassware, it is of almost exclusively Middle Eastern origin. Many questions have been asked about how these wares, mostly broken, reached these shores, the Chinese ceramics in particular on the west coast, the glassware on the east. The idea that at a certain point, transpeninsular conveyance played a part is undeniably appealing, but is it realistic? Today, thanks to observations made of the wrecks

of ships that have been excavated recently here and there in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, we know that the preponderance of Chinese stoneware was carried in the bottom of the holds of the ships, and because of its weight, served as ballast on vessels transporting other, more perishable, and certainly more costly merchandise. For this reason, we find it difficult to believe that goods as cumbersome and fragile as these could have been transported across the Peninsula in the conditions described in these travellers' reports—even accounting for the deterioration of the routes since the early period. And in spite of the similarity of the sherds dug at the two supposed ends of certain routes—in particular the one said to have linked the two entrepôt ports of Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho—which could encourage us to believe such transport took place, we still consider it highly improbable. In passing, might there not be a parallel in the overland silk route that crossed Central Asia in equally difficult conditions and seems to have transported very few Chinese ceramics to the Middle East, with the great majority of ceramic wares arriving by sea? (Rouguelle 1996: 160). It therefore seems entirely conceivable that as they skirted around the Peninsula, the Chinese or Middle Eastern ships (the latter being numerous along the Chinese coasts), nearing the Persian Gulf, could have made a stop in one or another of its ports, such as Laem Pho or Ko Kho Khao, and, before continuing their voyage, thrown overboard any wares broken during the first stages of the trip, or when goods were being transferred from one vessel to another.

Such speculations, however, in no way belie the existence and use of transpeninsular routes; but we believe these routes were used primarily for small goods, or for products requiring no special precautions because of fragility, as, for example, such heavy goods as certain ores like tin, concentrated into ingots. In addition, within the framework of international trade and the entrepôt ports necessary to it, these routes, fluvial along the major part of their course, constituted the unavoidable way out of the hydrographic basin along which the *Orang Asli* had collected and assembled the whole range of significant products from the Peninsula's forests, goods that represented a decisive percentage of the value of the trade, and required the use of river passages for practicable transport towards the coast. (Bronson 1977).

We might add that these routes probably served certain travellers using them at their own risk, but it is also worth noting that none of

the Chinese pilgrims Yijing speaks of, who used the sea route to travel to India in the seventh century, seem to have taken them. (Chavannes 1894).

3. *What were these possible routes across the isthmus?* (Doc. 3, 8)

a. The northernmost route in the geographic limits we have assigned to this study linked the region of Ranong-Kraburi on the west coast—which was thoroughly penetrated by the sea, as we have observed—to that of Chumphon, where the River Tha Thapao comes to an end. It is on the border of the estuary of the Tha Thapao, some six kilometres from the sea today, that an archaeological site, Khao Sam Keo, was discovered (see below, Chapter Three) whose remains go back to a time around the beginning of the Christian era. The distance from one coast to the other at this latitude is the shortest of the whole Peninsula (about forty kilometres); we are at the exact location of the Isthmus of Kra. It might be expected that such a short passage would give rise to intensive use. This may have been the case in the beginning of the era, but if so, it did not last. No archaeological remains of an Indianized type, or linked to the great international trade that saw the sherds of Chinese ceramics scattered along the shores of the Peninsula from the ninth century on, have come to light here. This example emphasizes the fact that the short distance of a transpeninsular crossing did not necessarily guarantee a sustained use, or, at the very least, enable such a use to continue.

b. The second route that we should mention, to which we have already alluded, linked the region of Takua Pa to the Bay of Bandon and vice versa, using the Takua Pa River and then, after a brief overland passage, the Khlong Sok, tributary of the Khlong Phum Duang, which flows down the other slope of the chain to empty into the Gulf of Thailand through an estuary it shares with the Menam Tapi. (Doc. 28). Two major entrepôt ports in the archaeological history of the Peninsula were discovered at the two ends of this route, as we have already indicated. The port of Takua Pa was located on the Island of Kho Khao, which closes off the estuary of the river. Its collection of local, Chinese and Middle Eastern ceramic sherds discovered in association with beads, as well as fragments of glassware from the Middle East, is found in an almost identical form on the east coast, at Laem Pho: the Laem Pho site, which came to light more recently, is situated not at the outlet of the rivers in the Bay of Bandon but in the northern part of this bay, as if to prove to

archaeologists that all these ceramic wares had never in fact crossed by the transpeninsular route, even if that route had played a role in providing rare commodities, gold and tin. Consequently, an explanation for the similarity in the two archaeological deposits can only be found in the interest the two sites represented to enterprising navigators frequenting one or the other of them after skirting around the Peninsula and stopping along the way at other spots on either coast, such as Kampong Sungai Mas in South Kedah, and probably Yarang (in the region of Pattani).

This second route, until the invasion of the kingdom of Ayutthaya by the Burmese in the second half of the eighteenth century, was the route used to transport the local tribute of tin to the Gulf of Thailand and the capital of the kingdom (Gerini 1905: 65-66); tin had been mined along the whole length of the coast for centuries, as is attested by numerous and ancient traces of mining operations and metallurgy. (Bourke 1905/86: 11-14). When this sombre episode of Thai history came to an end, another route was improvised, beginning in 1804, which had the advantage of crossing in less uneven terrain and using more navigable rivers; this route began at the end of the Gulf of Phangnga and followed the line of the eastern side of the Tenasserim Range. (Gerini 1905: 67).

c. The third complex of possible routes in the high period is found in the zone between the Tenasserim and Nakhon Si Thammarat Ranges, an area of low but poorly differentiated relief which nonetheless admits of many north-south passages and vice versa, because of the many valleys running through it, and also offers a certain number of possible crossings towards the east through the Nakhon Si Thammarat Range, which is highly compartmentalized, as we have already indicated.

- Khuan Luk Pat, a site on the west coast near Krabi, which will be discussed in some detail in Chapter Three, has revealed archaeological objects that confirm the existence of an entrepôt port and a centre devoted to the manufacture of products made of tin and glass (beads), as well as engraved seals and beads made of semi-precious stones. This collection of objects dating from the early years of the Christian era is very similar to that of Oc-eo in the Mekong Delta, and it may be supposed that links existed between the two centres, perhaps across the Peninsula along a track between the two chains. Such a route would have been made easier, along half of its distance, by the presence of the Menam Tapi, with its very practicable course.

It is in the immediate proximity of the Menam Tapi, at about midpoint between the two coasts, that the archaeological site of Wiang Sa is located, an atypical site in the history of the first centuries of the Peninsula because it is the only site of some importance that is not coastal (it is about eighty kilometres from the Bay of Bandon), and that can by itself justify the idea that the Peninsula was well penetrated in the early period by populations other than the *Orang Asli*. It did indeed yield some important pieces (in particular stone statues of the mitred Viṣṇu from the sixth century) that leave no doubt about its antiquity and its importance as a centre of transit from one coast to the other, or as an ancient place of human habitation affected by Indianization, with an agricultural base (we are in the middle of a small plain)—or both.

- From this possible north-south route, it would have been feasible to reach the coast of the Gulf of Thailand and the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat and the surrounding area across the range of the same name. This part of the east coast possesses a stratified sampling of archaeological pieces from the fifth century of our era—with no period that is not represented. The sampling is very similar to that of Wiang Sa, whose importance was probably due more to its relations with this coast—as an integral part of what was initially the city-state of Panpan (to be discussed later), and later Tambralinga—than with the region of Krabi. But in this sphere of possible contacts between different parts of the Peninsula, it is impossible to systematize: the caves of the region of Krabi have in fact also revealed ancient votive tablets (from the end of the fifth century) that can be linked to a small high-relief Buddha of the same period discovered at Wiang Sa.

- Farther to the south, on the same coast, the region of present-day Trang was also a crossing point, which is confirmed by the existence in local caves of votive *Mahāyāna* Buddhist tablets dating from after the eighth century. It is worth noting in this connection that the presence of these votive objects in places that are sometimes well into the interior of the Peninsula, and are often very difficult to reach, attests to the use that was made of these routes, at least for domestic or religious purposes.

- To this day, the region of Trang has revealed nothing further; however, it was probably linked at one time or another to Nakhon Si Thammarat and to Phatthalung by relatively easy tracks that are used by roads today. The access to this last city in the early period provided opportunities and ease of contact, since at the time, the large

lakes were a lagoon opening onto the sea, not only at Songkhla, where this is still the case, but also in their northern section, the then neighbouring region of Nakhon Si Thammarat. (Doc. 37). Large entrepôt ports existed at this latitude, and were active in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Among these are Tha Rua, a few kilometres to the south of Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Satingpra, on the spit that closes off the present lakes.

- The extreme limit of the Nakhon Si Thammarat Range that ends in the coastal Archipelago of Langkawi accommodates another passage between it and the neighbouring Kedah-Singgora Range, one of the least well-defined chains of the whole Peninsula, as we have indicated. Today, in addition to the railroad track, roads lead through this passage, as may have been the case in the high period. It is impossible to link the existence of the ancient archaeological remains from the region of Songkhla (of which, incidentally, there are very few) to this route. On the other hand, the votive *Mahāyāna* Buddhist tablets from the Perlis caves in Malaysia (ninth to tenth century) could well have been left there by pilgrims in transit.

d. The last possibility for transpeninsular conveyance that we will consider is the route that could have linked the two coasts: Jiecha (present-day Kedah) on the west coast, and Langkasuka (the present-day region of Yarang-Pattani), on the east. (Doc. 7). The classic route is supposed to have followed the Sungai Muda from the west coast, then its tributary the Ketil, which as we have seen was still navigable at the end of the nineteenth century, then a necessary overland route from Baling to Betong, before it joined the Menam Pattani, whose south-north course led to the Gulf of Thailand, passing very near to the archaeological sites of the region of Yala. It was often said by those who wished to advance the existence of other, more or less well-attested routes, that its overland passage was difficult, and that the flow-rate of the Pattani River was always capricious.

The easiest of the proposed alternate routes seems to have ascended the Merbok River, leading to Kuala Nerang in the low-lying region separating the highly fragmented Kedah-Singgora Range from the Bintang chain. From Kuala Nerang the route went up the Sungai Kedah, the river that flows up to the dividing of the waters, which could be crossed through a narrow pass called Genting Pahat. Beyond this point, the route descended rapidly onto the plain through Ban Khuha to Yarang. This route was described in detail at

the beginning of the century. (Hamilton 1922). It is reputed to have yielded archaeological pieces (ceramics, Chinese coins, a bronze statuette of Avalokiteśvara), which have never been studied because they passed into private hands; it apparently also includes some eleven potential archaeological sites of which nothing is known.

Whether or not they were linked by transpeninsular routes, these two regions on opposite coasts have provided archaeological material that goes back to the very first centuries of Indianization, that is, to the fifth century in Kedah, and the sixth at the Yarang site, where digging has only just begun. As for the site of Kampong Sungai Mas in Kedah, it corresponds to a prosperous entrepôt port of the ninth century that operated in the same period as the port of Ko Kho Khao-Takua Pa: furthermore, our recent investigations with Thai researchers in Yarang give us reason to believe that an entrepôt port existed in the early period at the level of the site, which would correspond to a position at the far end of the estuary (the Menam Pattani has been greatly silted up since then). It is to be hoped that archaeological digs will provide more precise information in the years to come.

We have speculated (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1995: 62) that at least some of the Indian artistic influences from the Post-Gupta period, which can be seen in the architecture of the Yarang monuments that have been excavated to date, may have passed through this or these overland and fluvial passages between the two regions. This, however, in no way rules out the existence of the circumpeninsular routes attested in the seventh century in the Chinese pilgrim Yijing's accounts of the travels of the Buddhist monks of the Middle Empire: they stopped over in the city-state of Langkasuka (present-day Yarang) before heading for Palembang-Śrīvijaya at the southern tip of Sumatra, skirting around the Peninsula, then going up the Strait of Melaka to Kedah, from which point they set out for India; the return trip was undertaken in the same conditions. (Chavannes 1894).

A second large entrepôt port of later date than the preceding one has come to light in Kedah, the port of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, which was active in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Because of the nature of its remains from international trade (in particular, sherds of Song, then Yuan ceramics), it had been suggested that there might have been some overland links with Satingpra, on the east coast, where identical archaeological evidence has emerged, and all the more because a type of local pottery made in Satingpra (the

kendis) has been found there on occasion. Nevertheless, for reasons we have already given, we do not think it conceivable that the supposed route between Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao could have been used for this type of product.

e. We will add by way of reminder that other possible means of crossing over are supposed to have existed:

- Theoretically, it would have been possible to go up the course of the Menam Pattani to its source and then pass through the upper valley of the Sungai Perak, which flows roughly north-south, and empties into the Strait; the valleys of two of its tributaries, the Kinta and the Bidor, have revealed important archaeological objects which it has been impossible to link to any structural remains.

- Theoretically, another valley could have been used, the valley of the Sungai Kelantan, which flows south-north from the centre of the Peninsula. Votive tablets were discovered recently in caves located in the upstream part of its hydrographic basin at about a hundred and forty kilometres from both coasts. This basin admits of possible contacts with those of many other rivers: the Sungai Pahang, which flows first north-south, then west-east towards the South China Sea; the Sungai Muar, which flows north-south towards the Strait, and must in the early period have been the course of the Pahang; the Sungai Bernam, which flows east-west towards the Strait.

In our view, it would now be appropriate to cease to say everything and anything about the use of transpeninsular routes in the early period. The relief of the Malay Peninsula is difficult, in spite of the low altitudes in its mid-section; the vegetation, which totally covered it, was barely penetrable, and infested with ferocious animals; the numerous rivers crisscrossing it were very dangerous along their whole course, since they were often interrupted by rapids; their waters were scarce in the upper and middle courses—especially in the low-water period of the dry season—and they were only easy to use in their lower courses. In spite of all these impediments, the routes were used by man, but within limits—and these limits, we believe, imply that by far the greatest amount of tonnage from international trade linked to the coasts skirted around the Peninsula by ship. This was at the origin of the fortune of Śrīvijaya, at Palembang, southeast of Sumatra.

The Chinese ceramics or Middle Eastern glassware, typical products of this trade—with spectacular concentrations of sherds,

understandably of great interest to archaeologists, found at the sites of former twin entrepôt ports almost facing each other on the opposite coasts of the Peninsula—were never, in our opinion, transported along these pathways, however attractive such routes may appear on a map. These goods were at one and the same time too fragile and too heavy to withstand the difficulties of transport on rivers with courses that were often very risky, and along awkward trails. Nevertheless, transport from one coast to the other could have been used for merchandise that was less fragile and cumbersome, and, above all, the routes had a key role in facilitating the movement of the ‘strange and precious’ products of the interior forests towards the ports. Nor can we rule out use by ordinary travellers, some of whom may have preferred facing dangers from jungle and river rapids to the hazards of travel along the coasts of the Peninsula, where, quite apart from ordinary risks on the sea, pirates were always active.

The conclusion that can be drawn from these observations is that the flowering of Indianized city-states in the mid-section of the east coast of the Malay Peninsula from the beginning of the Christian era to the fourteenth century, and only on this side (the west coast at the same latitude having never known anything but less-evolved political organizations of the chiefdom type), must be explained by reasons other than the alleged ease of overland crossing of this isthmus. We will speak of this again.

If, as we strongly suspect, the Malay Peninsula was seldom traversed, it will have been skirted. Doubtless this was a very long journey, but necessary to the period of glory of the entrepôt ports, beginning in the ninth century.

II. Circumpeninsular Navigation

Just as it contains the first literary mention of a Peninsular crossing by a transpeninsular route, the *Qian Hanshu* may also contain the first mention, regrettably not as long as the preceding one, of its first circumnavigation. The text relates that under the Emperor Ping (1-5 A.D.), a rich ambassadorial mission was sent to the sovereign of Huangzhi, and it is clear that travel was only by sea, at least for the return trip. The problem is less in identifying the points of departure and arrival (Annam and a probable point along the Indian coasts) than in determining the location of the stopping-off place mentioned

in the account, which has generally been identified as an island of the southern coasts of the Peninsula. (Wheatley 1973: 11-12).

Things become more explicit at a later date. The Peninsula was circumnavigated above all with little concern for the rhythm of the monsoon winds. This is clearly implied in several Chinese texts belonging to the period that concerns us.

And so it was with the journey of the Chinese pilgrim Faxian, in 413-14 A.D. Returning to China from India, where he had arrived overland in 399, he travelled in a series of merchant ships of heavy tonnage. The first one he embarked on was transporting “two hundred souls,” and furnished with one small lifeboat. The trip was turbulent. Interpretations diverge as to the route taken. We accept the itinerary proposed by Wheatley (1973: 37-41). (Doc. 9). The ship would have left Śrī Laṅkā in September 413, pushed by the winds of the southwest monsoon: it appears that the captain intended to reach the northwest tip of Sumatra and enter the Strait of Melaka. Alas, after two days under sail, the vessel encountered a cyclone in the middle of the Bay of Bengal (Wheatley specifies that at this period of the year, cyclones almost invariably form north of 12° north latitude). The ship was therefore caught in strong southwest winds blowing over the southern part of the eye of the cyclone, which lasted “thirteen days and nights,” causing considerable damage to the hull, which sprang a leak, and driving the ship far to the north:

They [the account is in the third person] arrived alongside [...] an island, and then, at ebb-tide, they saw the place where the vessel leaked and forthwith stopped it up, after which they again proceeded on their way.

The island in question could only have belonged to the Andamans. The next phase of the trip, to the northwest of Borneo, where there was a small Indianized kingdom at that time, took more than ninety days, through seas infested with pirates, and “in cloudy and rainy weather” that impeded their efforts to maintain a steady forward movement. They arrived, nonetheless, in January, 414.

The circulation of the winds within the Strait, whatever the season, is always unusual, as we have explained, because of the protection afforded by the Island of Sumatra, but the ship, during its more than three months of travel in the Strait and at the southern end of the South China Sea, experienced the weakening winds of the

southwest monsoon, which sometimes stop altogether in October; then in November came the rush of the west winds, and in December-January, the well-established wind of the northeast monsoon, which prevailed from then on, right to the equator; in addition, there may also have been strong windstorms throughout the whole three months' period. The pilgrim remained in Borneo for five months, then set sail for China in mid-May 414 on another merchant ship, apparently of the same tonnage as the first, because it, too, could transport two hundred people for fifty days—that is, the optimum time for the long crossing to Canton. This is the only date mentioned in the account, but from it, the other dates can be established. “A north-east course was set in order to reach Canton,” runs the narrative. At this date the vessel was clearly expected to benefit from a certain constancy in the equatorial wind-currents from the south, which at that time move far into the South China Sea, driving the dying northeast monsoon far back into the north. In the following month, the incipient southwest monsoon would have been sufficiently established to allow the ship to reach the coasts of China without difficulty.

But unfortunately for the pilgrim, after thirty days of smooth sailing, his ship was caught in a typhoon in mid-June (which suggests that it had reached at least 18° north latitude). This episode caused the vessel to drift far to the north, still driven by the southwest monsoon, until the sailors, apparently unable to determine their latitude, decided to change course and sail towards the northwest. Wheatley considers it likely that they changed direction when they encountered the southeastern wind-currents that prevail at about 30° north latitude.

Faxian, then, was dogged by ill luck during his voyage; but the guiding principle of the trip was well-founded—if one could avoid cyclones and typhoons:

- On leaving Śrī Laṅkā in September, the ship would have crossed the Bay of Bengal on the still-active winds of the southwest monsoon.

- Next it would have taken advantage of the short season when the northwest winds blow along the western coasts of the Peninsula (essentially in November) to skirt around the Peninsula.

- Once Faxian arrived in northwest Borneo, his decision to delay his departure until the following May can be explained by the fact that only the start of the southwest monsoon could have carried him back

to China over the major part of his route (in fact, he left on the winds of the south before the southwest monsoon had fully begun).

There is evidence of this application of knowledge of the seasonal winds to ocean navigation in the account written—after their visit—by the emissaries from the court of the Sui to the city-state of Chitu (607 A.D.), which has been located with some probability in the region of Kelantan. (Wheatley 1973: 26-36). (Doc. 10). This time it was not a matter of skirting around the Peninsula, but of reaching it and returning from it in the best conditions. According to the report, the emperor's envoys left Canton in November or the beginning of December, and "for twenty days and nights they sailed before a favourable wind." It was of course the northeast monsoon, which had just settled off the Chinese coasts in the northern part of the China Sea. In this manner they reached the coast of Campā, pursuing their way from here along the banks of the Indochinese Peninsula to present-day Cambodia. From there they crossed the Gulf of Thailand, reaching the Archipelago of Samui off the Bay of Bandon. At last, plying the length of the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, they reached Chitu.

The date of their return journey is not specified, but "after voyaging over the sea for more than ten days, they reached the south-eastern, mountainous part of Linyi [Campā]," which allows us to believe that they experienced a regular crossing of the southern part of the Gulf of Thailand, on a ship driven forward by the winds of the southwest monsoon, at a time when these were well established (an unspecified period of the boreal summer). Finally, they sailed along the coast until they arrived in Tonkin.

The most interesting information about circumpeninsular navigation is contained in Yijing's accounts of the voyage of the Chinese pilgrims who travelled to India and returned during the second half of the seventh century. (Chavannes 1894). Of the sixty monks whose trip is briefly recounted, at least thirty-seven travelled by sea on merchant ships, and none seemed to have given any thought to crossing the Malay Peninsula, even if some of them stopped off there, notably in Langkasuka. (Doc. 11)

Yijing also provides an account of his own journey. "In the period when the monsoon begins to blow," he wrote, "we set sail towards the south." In other words, he left the port—Canton, in his case—

when the northeast monsoon was beginning, that is in October-November, and reached his destination, Palembang, a month later. He stayed there for six months, then went on to Jambi, near Palembang, surely taking advantage, sometime around May, of the strong currents of the winds from the south-southeast that can steal into the Strait at this time of year, when those of the northeast monsoon retreat, and the nascent southwest monsoon is still weak. He stayed there for two months, then reembarked, in order to profit from the winds of the southwest monsoon, which by now were firmly established, to reach Kedah (Jiecha). He did not leave this region for India until the beginning of the following year, when the northeast monsoon was well established. He reached the Nicobar Islands in ten days, and fifteen days later arrived at Tāmralipti, in Bengal. This was clearly the most direct route to the holy places of historic Buddhism.

Twelve years later, Yijing returned by the same route, travelling on the winds of the northeast monsoon to reach Kedah; this trip, however, required two months, when the outward journey had taken only twenty-five days. Sailing against the wind, it seems, was a well-tried technique, but it took much longer than being carried along on the prevailing winds. During the first or second month of the Chinese year, he set out from Jiecha on a ship from Śrīvijaya that took him to Jambi in a month's time, then to Śrīvijaya—that is, on winds still corresponding to those of the northeast monsoon. From there (Yijing stayed on for many more years), it would have been necessary to wait until mid-May to reach China by taking advantage of the winds of the new southwest monsoon.

One of the voyages recounted by Yijing has the unusual distinction of lasting only the time of one monsoon: the pilgrim Wuxing left China “in the period of the east winds,” in other words, when the northeast monsoon began to blow, in October-November. He arrived in Śrīvijaya at the end of a month and, after a stop in Jambi, spent another month reaching Jiecha. From there, he left for Negapatam in South India with the same winds, before they began to wane towards the end of March. The account, however, also records journeys that turned out very badly because a pilgrim had started out at the wrong time of year. In all these descriptions, as with the earlier ones, it emerges clearly that the only way to travel safely and rapidly was to make intelligent use of the alternating currents of the monsoon winds, which, nonetheless, did not eliminate certain risks.

Of course this system of prevailing seasonal winds was never absolute. It was always more or less possible to sail along the coasts against the prevailing wind, while the Strait of Melaka, sheltered from the two monsoons, was navigable in every season, throughout the year. The technique of navigation against the wind was the subject of much commentary in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century navigation manuals, but until the birth of the steam engine, the exigencies of the rhythm of the monsoons continued to be of vital importance.

And so, the ships of the French diplomatic missions that arrived in Siam in the seventeenth century still had a major concern: they must not miss 'the season'. Because they knew it took seven months on average—give or take a few days—to sail from Brest to the estuary of the Menam Chao Phraya, it was imperative for them to leave Brittany in the last days of February or the very first days of March if they were to have a chance of starting to go up the Gulf of Siam—after passing through the Sunda Strait—in acceptable conditions. They arrived in the region in the second half of August, and after a necessary stop in Batavia, had only one desire—to leave again as quickly as possible to take advantage of the waning winds of the southwest monsoon before those of the northeast settled in and it became impossible to reach Siam.

We can see the urgency of the timing of these departures in Céberet's journal entry for the first of September 1687:

Monsieur de Vaudricourt was of the opinion that if the vessels waited fifteen days in Batavia [...], we would not arrive in Siam this year. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992: 50).

Meanwhile, the travellers needed almost a month to cover the distance, arriving at the mouth of the Menam Chao Phraya in the last days of September. When it was time to leave, they had the same problem again. They set sail in the last days of December or the first days of January at the latest, to profit from the winds of the northeast monsoon. Céberet, who had to leave for France from Mergui, had a similar worry. On 10 December 1687, he wrote:

I was however in considerable distress, because the season was approaching to join Coromandel, and if I did not leave in a few days, I ran the risk of staying a year in the Indies, and of missing the season on the ship the *President*, which was waiting for me in Mergui. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992: 132).

He took two weeks to reach the town from Bangkok, across the Peninsula, as we have already said, and left there on the 4th of January for Pondichery, which he reached on the 25th, that is, in three weeks' time, thanks to the still prevailing winds of the northeast monsoon.

For the heroic days of circumpeninsular navigation, we have no Chinese text that touches on the ideal conditions of navigation for travel from one side of Asia to the other. Topographical studies written later would record highly useful information on the Malay Peninsula (the *Lingwai daida* of Zhou Qufei, written at the end of the twelfth century, the *Zhufanzhi*, by Zhao Rugua, published in 1226, the *Daoyi zhilue*, compiled by Wang Dayuan in 1349), but we must wait until the fifteenth century and the Ming dynasty to see the Chinese send a series of systematic exploratory naval expeditions to the Indian Ocean, which coincided almost exactly with the first voyages of Westerners to the East. (Wheatley 1973: 108-113).

The Indians have left us no direct accounts of their travels towards the East; their knowledge of eastern regions must be deduced from often obscure allusions in Buddhist or Brahmanical literary works. (Wheatley 1973: 204-209).

The first Muslim work that describes travel to China is the famous text of 851, *Akhbār al-Šīn wa'l-Hind*. But as with a number of later texts of the same origin (encyclopedias and topographical works), the information it gives on the conditions of navigation on the high seas, strictly speaking, is very brief; there is hardly a mention of winds, currents, or tides; there is no discussion of preferred navigational directions, reefs to be avoided, points to be rounded, or bays where it might be possible to drop anchor. As with the Chinese, texts of this kind by Muslims do not appear before the middle of the fifteenth century. (Wheatley 1973: 233-251).

In spite of these lacunae, however, we have no reason to doubt that the efforts of both groups were directed towards a better knowledge of the Southern Seas, without which it was impossible to venture upon them without risk. Necessity creating invention, it was the thirst for gain that motivated the boldest initiatives. No texts, however, regardless of their origin—with the single exception of the *Qianshu* mentioned earlier—make the slightest mention of shipments from one side of the Peninsula to the other. It was a place where travellers went ashore almost systematically, whether from the east

or from the west—which explains the prosperity of the entrepôt ports—but afterwards, if they wished to go farther, they would sail around it.

Having considered conditions on the sea, we must now make a necessary digression on the features of the ships involved in these networks of long-distance trade.

III. The Merchant Ships of the Southern Seas

In recent years, many studies have been devoted to the structure of the merchant ships, in particular to the design of the small vessels belonging to a tradition that was unique to maritime Southeast Asia (the Malay Peninsula, the Indonesian Archipelago), because remains of these boats have been discovered in various places (Malaysia, Sumatra, the Philippines, Peninsular Thailand). (Manguin 1980, 1984, 1985, 1985a, 1989, 1996). But other ships plying these routes originated in the Middle East, and in India and China, and we must also ask what these were like. In fact, those involved with ship design from these different geographical sectors frequently borrowed techniques of naval construction from each other.

Thus, in the western Indian Ocean, the techniques of manufacture followed an ancient Arabic-Indian tradition. (Hourani 1951: Ch.3). The hulls were made of teak or coconut wood, materials that the Arabic-Persians imported from India. The planks were sewn to each other with a product derived from coconut or sugar palm fibres. This kind of construction probably went back to an indigenous method, perhaps originally from India. The vessels were not very resilient, shipwrecks were frequent, and if such ships sailed all the way to China, it was only thanks to the courage of the sailors and the determination of tradesmen avid for gain. The persistently maintained resistance to the use of iron nails in the construction seemed to be for fanciful reasons that were nonetheless deeply ingrained in the minds of the builders. The planks were caulked with a product of vegetal origin. There was no bridge, but a rudder, stone anchors, and lifeboats, as well as one or several masts and high triangular sails woven with coconut fibres or cotton thread. Navigation on the high seas necessitated a good knowledge of astronomy, but this was a realm in which the Arab and Persian populations of the desert, accustomed to cloudless skies, excelled, and would come to excel even more. It was in fact under the first Abassid dynasty, in particu-

lar under the reign of the caliph al-Ma'mūn (813-833), that the science of astronomy developed rapidly, chiefly because of timely translations into Arabic of Persian, Indian and Greek works. Treatises on navigation multiplied in this period.

The region of the western Indian Ocean, therefore, received much information from India. It is just as reasonable to assume that the neighbouring area, around the Bay of Bengal and Southeast Asia, which apparently we should agree to consider as a single entity (Manguin 1996: 190-192), shared with it a certain amount of technical know-how. In order to appreciate the general features of ocean-going vessels in this region, we can refer to the records of the Chinese pilgrims, including Faxian's, which we have already examined, and to archaeological remains (Manguin 1996: 186) that enable us to define certain characteristics of their structure. These Southeast Asian ships, which the Chinese referred to as *kunlun bo*, were of great size (up to fifty metres in length, and capable of carrying up to six hundred tons of cargo); some of the hulls had several layers of planks, which were assembled without nails according to a technique that combined the use of lugs and binding with vegetable fibres (the lashed-lug and stitched-plank technique). They were not equipped with outriggers like those seen on certain representations of ships destined for river or coastal use. Such an unusual feature would have struck the Chinese, and it is difficult to see how it could have been adapted to vessels of this size. On the other hand, they were rigged with multiple masts and sails, which is a good indication of the extreme demands of long-distance navigation. (Manguin 1996: 189).

With respect to the Chinese, it has often been written that the Chinese junk on the high seas owed its rapid development to the commercial policies of the Song, beginning at the end of the eleventh century. This flowering is considered by J. Gernet (1990: 287) to be "one of the most important phenomena of Asian history." He writes:

The accounts of European and Arab travellers in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries leave no doubt about this: the activity of the great ports of Fujian, Zhejiang and Guangdong in this period cannot be compared with that of the European countries. The importance of river and sea traffic in the Song and Yuan periods, the role of the fleets of war in the defense of the Southern Song in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and during the Mongols' attempts to invade Japan and Java at the end of the thirteenth century, the great maritime expeditions of

the Ming in the years 1405 to 1433, up to the Red Sea and as far as the eastern coast of Africa, obviously show that China was the greatest maritime power in history during the four and a half centuries between the consolidation of the Song empire and the great period of expansion in the Ming empire.

Nevertheless, what we now know about the commercial expansion of Southern China in the ninth century forces us to reconsider the date of this expansion.

This is not the place to analyse in depth the nature of the great seafaring Chinese junks of the tenth and eleventh centuries; we will merely describe a few of their features. Originating very probably in the estuary of the Yangzi, where the transition between river and ocean navigation is imperceptible because of the extreme width of the river (from ten to twenty kilometres to one hundred and fifty kilometres in the interior), the typical junk has a rectangular-shaped hull, with no stern or bow comparable to those on Western ships, and a bottom that is a perfectly round, without, however, requiring a true keel. It goes without saying that numerous variations existed: the structure of the wreck of a Chinese vessel from the end of the thirteenth century that was excavated in 1974 near the port of Quanzhou—once a merchant ship plying the Southern Seas (Salmon & Lombard 1979)—belies a number of the general characteristics we have described. The ship was thirty metres long and nine metres wide, with a prow and a V-shaped hull with a keel, and equipped with a central rudder. Because the frame of the vessel was formed primarily of thick crossbeams to which planking was fitted, the principal conditions were in place for the creation of watertight compartments: all that had to be done was to separate the vertical partitions dictated by the form of the ship. In the same way, the fitting of the rudder to the vertical axis was a natural outcome of the particular conception of the frame.

These vessels were furnished with from three to six masts equipped with canvas sails, and rigid stays that were used or not depending on whether there was a tailwind or a headwind, with pivoting sails that obviated the need to change the rigging, and numerous other technical innovations that were the fruit of some centuries of experience. The vessels had several decks that could shelter a considerable number of passengers. Since more than one type of ship existed, the dimensions and tonnage given in different Chinese texts vary greatly. The maximum tonnage seems to have

been 1,250 tons, which is high for the period. In addition to its cargo, such a ship could transport from five to six hundred people and a crew that could number from about two hundred and fifty to three hundred men. (Dars 1979). It is surprising to realize that these figures taken from texts from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries are hardly different from those mentioned earlier concerning the merchant ships that transported the first Chinese Buddhist pilgrims to sail the Southern Seas in the seventh century.

To these likely improvements in the construction of the ships, whose prototypes may have been older than we think, were added, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, a number of decisive changes for ameliorating the conditions of navigation. The application of the compass to the purposes of navigation (for some years it had already served for the calculations of the geomancers) increased the safety of travel on the high seas. The first mention of the use of the compass on Chinese ships is in the *Pingzhou ketan*, by Zhu Yu (preface 1119), which indicates that the instrument was being used on ships from Canton at the end of the eleventh century. (Gernet 1990: 289). Chinese cartography was in fact the best in the world in this period, based on—among other things—a deep understanding of the seabed and ocean currents, and on improved methods of orientation and the calculation of distances. All this technical progress made it possible for the Chinese to expand their activities on the seas, in a time when political conditions made such rapid development necessary. In the Southern Seas, and as far as the Middle East, Chinese ships now joined those of other peoples who, out of a need for long distance trade, had been involved much longer than they. These contacts led to the assimilation of technical influences and the elaboration of hybrid vessels on the Chinese side at the end of the period that concerns us. (Manguin 1984).

Nevertheless, although these vessels were often perfectly adapted to the conditions of navigation in the Asia of the monsoons, the voyages from one side of the continent to the other were long: it took eight months to sail from the Middle East to Canton. Of course, a considerable number of ships involved in this international trade did not venture beyond the shores of the Malay Peninsula—which opened up to them its abundant storehouse.

C. THE MALAY PENINSULA AS SOURCE OF CONTACTS AND PROFITS

We have seen how the Chinese, by the beginning of the Christian era, had ceased to regard the Malay Peninsula as an obstacle to cross over or get around as quickly as possible in order to reach other, vague places where 'the strange and the precious' were supposed to abound. Their opinion of the region must have evolved rapidly during the first centuries of the era, when it became apparent that it contained considerable riches, and that a large number of the desired products in fact came from there. The opinion of the other trading peoples evolved in the same way, and the Peninsula, which had been an obstacle, became a prized destination that navigators learned to know and appreciate for many reasons:

- first because it was easy for ships to draw alongside the Peninsula, and the local populations quickly learned to adapt to the presence of foreigners and respond to their needs,
- later because the region offered inexhaustible riches and rare products of the forests or tropical shores, as well as metals.

I. Landing Places

Because of their geological past, the thousands of kilometres of the Malay coasts undoubtedly presented many possibilities of access, by the deep or not-so-deep estuary of a river, or by some bay protected from the monsoon winds by a spit or an island. We will describe some of these sites later. Nevertheless, not all had the same destiny, because favourable conditions of access for landing were not the only element contributing to the making of a fortune in a particular place, or, rather, to the transformation of a site into a major entrepôt port associated with a city-state or chiefdom.

The fact that the most significant entrepôt ports were established at the level of the mid-section of the Peninsula—where the distance between one coast and the other is the shortest—has led many researchers to major on this geographical factor and make these ports out to be the natural beginning and end points of transpeninsular routes linking the two coasts. As we have said, we are not persuaded of an intensive use of such routes in the context of international trade; it therefore seems necessary to look elsewhere than to the question of ease of access to explain the concentration of these entrepôt ports on the isthmus.

For the east coast, there is no need to look elsewhere for an explanation of their presence at this latitude (between 6° and 10° north latitude) than the existence of the littoral plains discussed in the preceding chapter, plains where for some time advanced societies had been established: societies capable of organizing basic agricultural activities (irrigated rice in the best of cases), and in addition, of creating others on demand, such as procuring from the tropical forests goods that were beginning to be in great demand with the tradesmen, or exploiting mineral resources in the back country. We will return to these questions later.

The west coast at these same latitudes was not so blessed, but its geographical position in relation to the Indian subcontinent and the Island of Sumatra, which had to be circumnavigated if a ship was to enter into the Strait of Melaka, made it an almost necessary stopping-off-point for Indian, Muslim or Chinese vessels that had just crossed the Bay of Bengal, or, conversely, for ships preparing to set sail for India; this was the origin of the *kalāhs* of Arab literature, a somewhat vague designation for the various entrepôt ports that succeeded each other or were operating simultaneously through the centuries along this section of the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. These port sites made up for the near total absence of coastal plains, and met the tradesmen's need for basic sustenance through the dryland cultivation practised by the inhabitants in the hill regions near the shores. This more or less itinerant farming was totally dependent on the rain-pattern, and involved the practice of burning, because of the poor quality of the layer of available arable soil. This practice is still common in Southeast Asia, and its use in South Kedah (see below, Chapter Eight) during the period of our study came to light because the fields cultivated today according to this method still contain a significant quantity of wood carbon, which has the peculiarity of lasting for a very long period of time. The primary cause of the almost total disappearance of the primeval forest along the shores is the continual clearing necessitated by this non-irrigated cultivation.

To be dependable, these various landing places had to be capable of resupplying sailors and tradesmen who might have to remain in the area for many long months. In fact, it was often necessary for travellers to wait for a change in the direction of the monsoon winds in order to take to the sea in good conditions, as we learned from some of the details concerning maritime journeys made in the early period. Sometimes it was also necessary to take time out for ship

repairs, or to wait until cargo had been disposed of, reloaded or completed.

Muslim narratives are often sensitive to practical business details of this sort. For example, they provide some information, even if only briefly, about the way vessels were welcomed into Chinese ports. We know, therefore that once ships had safely docked, the Chinese port authorities would seize their merchandise, which could not be put up for sale until the last vessel coming in with the same monsoon had arrived, so as to establish a fair market price for the different imported goods. (Sauvaget 1948: 16). But even before the sale, the authorities, under the direction of a customs inspector or “commissioner of merchant ships,” a position established in Canton since the beginning of the seventh century—a personage who had authority over all matters related to imported goods, foreign ships, the state monopoly over foreign merchandise, and the collection of customs duties—deducted a tax of three-tenths of the value of the goods, leaving the rest for the merchants. (Sauvaget 1948: 16). It was then up to the merchants to inquire about the best conditions for the sale of the remainder of the stock. Once having accomplished the sale, they had to acquire cargo for the return journey and wait for a propitious wind. The result was that tradesmen from the Middle East who had already seen at least eight months fly by before they reached China—the farthest limit of their journey—could not make the complete trip in a year. (Sauvaget 1948: XXXIII). But whether or not they had chosen the Middle Kingdom as the end of their journey, they elected to stop over for a time in most of the countries where they docked. For all of these reasons, the length of their stay found these Muslim tradesmen mixing with the local populations, from whom they picked up an intimate knowledge of their ways, customs and laws, thus becoming reliable reporters, as Sauvaget showed. (1948: XXXIII). The Indians or the Chinese could just as easily have been reporters of this kind if they had taken the trouble to write on such subjects.

We have deliberately focused on the major sites of the entrepôt ports, but there were other places for docking along the coasts which, without ever reaching the same level of activity or providing a comparable level of resources or services, facilitated the life of foreign tradesmen and sailors. These have occasionally been identified by the presence of Chinese ceramics, and we will have occasion to mention them later.

Besides its almost unlimited possibilities for receiving ships, the Malay Peninsula also proved to be an inexhaustible source of rare goods.

II. 'The Strange and the Precious'

We deliberately return to this expression from the *Suishu* to refer to the whole gamut of tropical goods whose safe transport towards the various Asian markets assured the fortune of the tradesmen who procured them.

Because of the climate, the most extensive type of vegetation in the Malay Peninsula is that of the rainforest at Dipterocarps, between zero and nine hundred metres in altitude. It is a closed formation with two to three layers of superimposed wooded strata, tall trees with straight, free trunks spreading their branches in parasols forty or fifty metres above the mixed rolling hills of the intermingled peaks of the principal stratum. It is a dense formation of average height, to which epiphytes and creepers cling. No grass grows on the ground, which is littered with fallen trunks and shallow roots, except along the rivers where the sun penetrates, a scene that is well described in Peacock's account in the second part of this chapter. The trees are only periodically deciduous, so the forest is always green. In spite of this apparent uniformity, from nine to ten thousand species of different plants have been counted in this forest, among which eight to nine thousand are flowering varieties. (Dunn 1975: 38). This extraordinary diversity, unique in the world, is favoured in part by the fact that the Malay Peninsula, at the latitudes of its isthmus, is the meeting point between two great flora, the flora of the Asian continent strictly speaking, and that of the more southern world to which the Indonesian Archipelago belongs.

This forest is naturally the preserve of an equally rich fauna, including all the species of tropical mammals, from the least to the greatest, and, of course, an infinite variety of fowl. (Dunn 1975: 39-40). The richness of the forest in vegetal and animal species, added to the fact that it is relatively accessible because of the absence of lush tropical undergrowth, enabled the populations of *Orang Asli* to collect a large range of vegetable and animal products that were highly prized by traders in the period of our study. Among these goods could be found:

- rare and sometimes scented woods: gharuwood (also called eagle or aloeswood), ebony, lakawood, sapanwood;
- creepers (*ratan*), gums and resins (*dammar*), camphor;
- spices (pepper, cardamom);
- fruits (coconuts, areca-nuts, mangoes, bananas, rambutans, durians, jack-fruits, etc.), of which a considerable amount was grown, as it is today, on fruit trees planted in the villages of the coastal populations, or on the rows of raised earth between the rice fields. We should add that it was these same villages, on one coast or the other, that also furnished all the products of a local craft industry stretching back to a remote period in time, chiefly consisting of objects made by the weaving or braiding of vegetable fibres: mats, various types of containers, etc.;
- ivory and rhinoceros horns, hornbill beaks, bezoars stones, as well as tortoise and cowrie shells;
- decorative birds (parrots) or their feathers (kingfishers), beeswax;
- certain domesticable animals such as monkeys and elephants.

A list of these products has been drawn up, and is almost infinite. (Wheatley 1959).

Above nine hundred metres, this type of forest thins out and ferns become more abundant, but these parts of the Peninsula played no role during the period under consideration.

In the lower regions, dense forest yields to marshy, sweetwater forest. Here the trees are the same as in the dense forest, though smaller, and there are more palm trees. Animal life is abundant.

The west coast of the Peninsula is bordered with an uninterrupted fringe of mangrove swamps, which extends inward as far as nineteen kilometres at certain points along the coast of Perak, and penetrates deeper still into the interior because of the rivers along which the mangrove mixes with *nipah* palms. Aquatic animal life in this section is very rich. On the east coast, the line of mangroves is discontinuous and narrower, limited primarily to the regions of the estuaries, while sections of the sandy coasts are fringed with *Casuarina*.

III. Mineral Resources (Doc. 12)

In addition to the vegetable and animal products of its forests and shores, the Malay Peninsula has proved to be very rich in certain

metals, the result of its geological history. Their quantities are not negligible, and two of them are of particular interest:

1. *Gold*

In the early historical period, gold was highly coveted, in Asia as elsewhere, and its supposed abundance in the Malay Peninsula is said to be at the origin of the name *Golden Khersonese*, its designation in Ptolemy's *Geography* and in that of *Suvarṇadvīpa* ('the Golden Island' or 'the Golden Peninsula'). At present, the principal gold deposit extends sideways in a strip that runs along the southern part of the Peninsula from the region of Pattani to Melaka, but it can also be extracted by washing sand and gravel from the rivers; however, as Wheatley (1973: XXI) observed:

Today, although the Peninsula is probably exporting greater quantities of gold than ever before, it does not rank as an important producer.

Nevertheless, since the metal was infinitely rarer in the past than it is today, it is possible that early and painstaking methods of extraction have become profitable. It is still surprising to realize that the Chinese texts—which are the most informative concerning the region's past—make no mention of gold among its products. Quite to the contrary, reference is sometimes made of its export by China to the regions of the Southern Seas. (Wheatley 1959: 113). The Arab Ma'sūdī in the tenth century, however—in an account to which we will have occasion to return in a later chapter—mentions the existence of gold and silver mines in the neighbourhood of *Kalāh*, that is, on the west coast. (Wheatley 1973: 218). Gold, perhaps, but silver is represented in the Malay Peninsula only by impurities mixed with certain ores (galena). Wheatley (1973: XXIV) believed he could explain the mention of gold in Ma'sūdī's text by the fact that "the two metals, gold and silver, ought to be associated in any good fairy story," a genre that Muslims were known to appreciate.

2. *Tin*

Tin, on the other hand, is present all along the Peninsula, in granite as well as in the adjacent sedimentary rocks. It was extracted under the open sky or in galleries, and was undoubtedly widely exported from the Peninsula, in particular in the bottom of the holds of Arab vessels, beginning in the ninth century: Muslim texts make frequent reference to tin, whereas there is no mention of it in the writings of their Chinese counterparts. Traces of earlier extraction were pointed

out in the first part of the century by a British engineer, in the regions of Takua Pa, Phangnga, Phuket and Trang (Bourke 1905/86: 11-14), in the form of mineshafts and numerous ingots in characteristic shapes. It is the deposits in this northern part of the Peninsula that appear to have been most involved in the trade; at these latitudes, such deposits are limited to the west coast, while in what is Malaysia today, two rings can be seen, one on the east coast, one on the west. The western deposit is by far the most productive, and the most easily accessible by the rivers.

The local populations described in the first part of this chapter, confronted by the arrival of increasing numbers of foreign peoples who had come primarily to seek the natural resources harboured by the Peninsula, chose a model of organization that would last until the fourteenth century; B. Bronson's (1977) description of this is appealing, but we believe his analysis is somewhat limited. He proceeds from an *a priori* conviction, which we find simplistic, that the early-flowering coastal states that came to birth in this way along the shores of the Peninsula (and, for the purposes of his discussion, in other regions of the Southern Seas) "were and continued to be unimpressive," because, according to him, "they left few archeological traces of themselves." He grounded his argument at the time on the results of his research in Palembang (Bronson & Wisseman: 1976)—an argument that is no longer defensible today. He judged these nascent states to be 'unimpressive' because "their hinterlands were infertile, which limited cultivation," "their populations [...] were not large," and "their economic production [...] was specialized and, one suspects, small." (Bronson 1977: 40).

What we know about certain city-states on the east coast of the isthmus contradicts this view, but Bronson's model remains no less attractive as a description of the context of the Malay Peninsula as we have described it up to now. He wrote:

The model focuses on a single hypothetical class of ancient exchange networks, one which involves the control of a drainage basin opening to the sea by a center located at or near the mouth of that basin's major river. [...] It contains these elements [Doc. 13]:

- A, the center at the river mouth;
- B and C, second- and third-order centers located upstream and at primary and secondary river junctions;

- D, the most distant upstream center to participate in the A-based system of market exchange, and the initial concentration point for products originating in more remote parts of the watershed;

- E and F, the ultimate producers of these products [...] perhaps center[ed] on a separate exchange system based on non-market institutions, involving goods only part of which come from or go to the marketized system centered on A;

- X, an overseas center which serves as the main consumer of goods exported from A and the principal supplier of its imports; and

- A*, another river-mouth center some distance along the coast, controlling a hinterland similar to that of A.

This system is assumed to operate under several constraints. 1: The interfluvial countryside of the drainage basin is sufficiently marshy, forested, or mountainous to confine all movements of goods to water routes, rendering the economic pattern closely congruent with the dentritic pattern formed by the main stream and its tributaries. 2: X, the overseas center, is the economic superior of A, possessing a larger population and a more productive and technologically advanced economy. 3: The basin does not contain enough concentrated cultivable land to permit the development of a true peasant society, where wealth is extracted by an elite directly from a land-bound farming population, and where revenues derived from trade are consequently of less than central importance.

To us, this last point is debatable, because the system Bronson describes might have functioned in the interior of the best-endowed of the Indianized city-states of the east coast—but we believe these only achieved this status precisely because of the prior existence of a sufficiently large rural population.

He continues:

[...] It seems probable on *a priori* grounds that relations between A and D will be rather more egalitarian and less consistently coercive than is usual in relations between high- and low-order centers in an ordinary state. This follows from the assumptions that A needs a steady flow of exportable goods from D and that it cannot easily assure this through direct political measures. If D were one of a small number of specialized centers with spatially concentrated productive facilities and an immobilized work force, then A might find coercion feasible. However, when (as must generally be the case) D is a simple concentration point for forest-gathered and swidden-grown goods produced by populations which are inherently dispersed and mobile, any coercive solution will require an impractical expenditure of capital and military manpower. Non-political solutions must therefore be sought, among which the most obvious is to develop a trading system offering manufactured or maritime products capable of inducing D to enter the regional economy voluntarily. For A, the most satisfactory

sort of inward-bound trade items are those which it can produce itself but which D cannot make because of limitations imposed by scale factors of production, because of technological incapacity, or because necessary raw materials are lacking. [...]

D itself can obtain outward-bound goods from its own hinterland (from E) through a variety of mechanisms, most of them again non-coercive. D may be ethnically allied to this hinterland population or may be peopled by ethnic groups centered downstream at C or B. In any case, quasi-kinship institutions combined with clientship and trade-partner relationships, some perhaps verging on debt-peonage, should characterize most exchange transactions upstream from D. [...]

B and C may relate to A rather differently, since coercion becomes more practicable further downstream. A center like B or C is fixed to a given location (a major river junction), contains a larger and more concentrated population than a D-level center, and is physically more accessible, all of which alters A's chances of success in trying political methods of assuring the flow of trade material. We may expect that B- and C-level centers will sometimes be administered by or even colonized from A; they may well be bound to A through instruments of indirect rule, such as oaths of fealty, regular tribute, and assertions by A of rights to select or confirm local leaders. Collection and onward transmission of goods originating further upstream are likely to be in the hands of representatives of A, who may be the local government or may inhabit autonomous enclaves. As far upstream as the C level, either viceroys or garrisoned trading posts would seem to be possible solutions from an economic standpoint.

If B is a producer rather than a collector and distributor of goods produced elsewhere, its relations with A may shift. It might even hope to attain equivalent status and so become A's direct rival, provided that it has a number of C- and D-level centers under its own control and a productive population in its immediate vicinity. [...]

The relationship of X to A bears a superficial resemblance to that of A to B, both being relations of political and economic inequality. But there are critically important differences. For one thing, while A and B need each other almost equally, no such symmetry exists in the needs of X and A. X is essential from A's standpoint. It produces the major portion of governmental revenues in the form of export and import duties, state trading profits, and whatever service and protection fees can be extracted from traders en route to X from more distant centers. Further, X supplies goods which may themselves serve as political instruments, as emblems of rank or legitimation, and as gifts through which the loyalty of subordinate centers can be maintained.

A, on the other hand, may not loom large in X's scheme of things. The revenue-raising measures of A-level centers are likely to become a dangerous nuisance to the traders of X, while the products of such centers can probably be obtained from a variety of sources. As in the case of exporters of tropical products in the present world economy, in

the time of A's florescence a number of competing centers are likely to have existed in the same region, each possessing a hinterland capable of supplying X with the same kinds of goods. The situation encourages X's traders to bargain vigorously, periodically moving their custom from one A-level center to another without regard to the acute economic and political hardships suffered by a center temporarily deprived of foreign trade.

X may even consider that A overprices the modest services it performs in protecting commerce and in concentrating and processing export items, and may therefore make efforts to bypass it so as to deal directly with centers at the level of B or C. [...] While one may doubt that many outsiders possessed sufficient resources to attempt such a solution in precapitalist times (the great Tamil merchant communities may be an exception), the fact remains that X is far from helpless even in A's immediate neighborhood. The determined attempts of X to evade what the rulers of A may regard as their legitimate perquisites, and perhaps the chief support of their domestic authority, must often have given rise to disproportionately drastic reactions. Such reactions might range from naval buildups and intensified diplomatic activity to all-out war with other A-level states.

The natural enemy of A, after all, is not X but A*, another coastal center distant by a few days' travel. A* probably has access to the same variety of potential exports in its own hinterland and may be as capable as A of providing the services needed to attract traders from X. We can imagine that either center might manage to supply all the requirements of X by intensifying production in its own hinterland if it were not for X's interest in maintaining several competing sources of supply. The situation where a number of centers, each producing well below capacity, are forced to take shares in a regional export trade is not satisfactory from the standpoint of the rulers of either A or A*. While the wealth may thus be spread over several centers, this is achieved at the cost of a boom-and-bust regional economy where each mini-state periodically experiences grave crises as the buyers' favour shifts from port to port. The political consequences of these crises makes it certain that preventing them will be a constant concern to local governments. Yet, assuming that diplomatic representations to X and attempts to form regional cartels are both unsuccessful, the rulers of A have few remedies. They can resign themselves to a ruinous price war. They can try to exclude X's traders from other ports through an increase in piracy and official naval activity, in effect through declaring a blockade. Or, as a seemingly less expensive alternative, they can attempt the direct neutralization of their competitors. (Bronson 1977: 43-47).

We realize that all the political entities we will be describing in the next chapters could fit into this model of society, though it goes

without saying that not all had the same degree of economic and political importance.

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CHAPTER THREE

CONTACTS BETWEEN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT AND THE MALAY PENINSULA BEFORE INDIANIZATION

It is no longer possible today to claim that during the first centuries of the Christian era the coastal populations of the Malay Peninsula—like their neighbours in the rest of continental and insular Southeast Asia—passed from a late neolithic culture to an advanced stage of social, political, economic and artistic development thanks exclusively to the teachings of the Brahmano-Buddhist Indian civilization. We do know that these teachings were widely disseminated in this direction at the same time that trade in the region of the Southern Seas was expanding, commercial exchanges which, let us not forget, involved other peoples than the Indians. Many writers throughout this century of research have gone to considerable pains in the effort to explain and describe the circumstances leading to this spectacular, yet complex, transfer of a civilization. At the same time they also attempted to analyse why this civilization had been welcomed and adopted with such apparent ease, when no other culture, however amply represented by tradesmen coming from China or the Middle East, ever had a chance of becoming established in this way.

This is not the place to examine the successive theories that were formulated about the supposed colonization of these peoples by the Indians or the subtler and less authoritarian ways by which they were said to be 'Hinduized' or 'Indianized'. But because it is difficult to forego the use of the term 'Indianization', which communicates a useful idea—especially since no one would dream of contesting the fact that the new civilizing concepts did indeed originate in India—we must simply try to find a less restrictive meaning for the word. This is what several writers have attempted to do in recent years, among them J. G. de Casparis and H. Kulke, whose key ideas, with which we are in complete agreement, we will present briefly here.

A. NEW DEFINITIONS OF INDIANIZATION

In his conclusion to an examination of the relations between the two parts of the Asian continent in question, Casparis (1983: 18-19) wrote:

Instead of the conception based on the principle of initial "Indianization", I propose to substitute the pattern of a lasting relationship between the Indian subcontinent and maritime Southeast Asia. The relatively simple, or perhaps simplistic, view of Indianization is replaced by a complicated network of relations, both between various parts of each of the two great regions and between the two regions themselves.

Kulke, picking up his predecessor's idea, focuses on recent archaeological discoveries in Southeast Asia that now oblige us to consider the degree of progress achieved during its prehistory as comparable to, indeed more advanced than, that of the most civilized regions of Asia—and points out a parallel development in the evolution of states on the two shores of the Bay of Bengal in the first millennium of our era. (Kulke 1990).

These two coasts had been in maritime contact for centuries, and when the first of these was won over to the Aryan culture of Northern India, for reasons and through processes that remain to be analysed, the other followed quite naturally, within no more than a generation or two:

It was this social nearness between the societies of both sides of the Bay of Bengal rather than the social distance between imperial Indian states and South-East Asian chiefdoms which made the Indian model so attractive to South-East Asian rulers. (Kulke 1990: 28).

From this we can conclude that they were confronted by problems of authority and social reorganization that their counterparts on the other shore of the Bay were experiencing at the same time.

B. INTER-REGIONAL CONTACTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
IN THE EARLY PERIOD

Indianization gained ground in the different parts of Southeast Asia only through infinite inter-regional contacts whose complexity presents a challenge to archaeologists and art historians attempting to unravel the tangle through the analysis of works of art. Later, we will have an opportunity to examine some of these contacts, such as those

between Campā and Panpan in the ninth century, as shown in artistic influences, or the contacts that led to the diffusion of so many works inspired by Pāla art from Java or Sumatra among the sites along the coasts of the Malay Peninsula. But it is likely that things would have moved at a much slower pace if the whole of the preceding period had not been marked by the establishment of great movements of exchange between pre-Indianized political entities—probably animist chiefdoms—which, far from being turned inward, enjoyed multiple contacts among themselves. Such contacts were certainly commercial, but they must also have involved an exchange of concepts of sovereignty which will have laid the groundwork for later influences from India.

Nothing better demonstrates the importance of these movements of exchange in Southeast Asia than the diffusion of bronze drums, called 'Dongson' drums, throughout the region. These prestigious objects are found everywhere, including the Malay Peninsula, where a number of them have been unearthed. The specimens from Malaysia have been the particular focus of study since their discovery, because the country in which they were found possesses relatively few ancient objects; the peninsular part of Thailand, however, is not lacking in them. Nevertheless, the many pieces from Thailand, though in better condition than their Malaysian sisters, have always passed unnoticed in the midst of the flood of ancient figurative works that have come to light, and occasionally still do, at different sites in the same area. A rapid listing of the discoveries should include specimens in Thailand: at Khao Sam Keo (Chumphon Province), on the Island of Samui, at Chaiya and Phunphin (Surat Thani Province), at Nakhon Si Thammarat; and specimens in Malaysia: at Batu Pasir Garam (Pahang), at Kampong Sungai Lang (Selangor), and at Kuala Terengganu (Terengganu).

Much has been written about bronze drums in general since the first works devoted to them appeared in the beginning of the century. It is not our purpose to enter into an iconographic analysis of those discovered in the Malay Peninsula, most of which belong to Type I, defined by F. Heger in 1902; nor do we wish to participate in a polemic concerning their very controversial dating, with opinions ranging from the ninth to the first century B.C. What is most important is to understand the deeper reason for their presence in the Malay Peninsula, from a geographical area that could be the region of Dongson, or, more generally, North Vietnam.

This being said, we must certainly report on the most recent studies on the question published by H. H. E. Loofs-Wissowa (1983, 1991, 1992), whose analysis of the objects appeals to us by its good sense and realism. What emerges from his study is that these drums can no longer be considered favoured instruments of shamanism, as had been suggested on the basis of far-fetched theories about possible religious influences of this sort between northern Southeast Asia and Siberia, or even northern Central Asia—preferred regions for such beliefs. This writer shows convincingly that the representation of the central ‘star’ common to all the drums—on which the hypothesis of shamanism largely depends—was not a star at all, but the result of the empty spot created by the concentric placement of one or several triangles—a ubiquitous motif in the decoration of these objects—in the middle of the drum. But even if they were not linked to a particular religion, the drums clearly had a meaning for the populations of the banks of the Malay Peninsula who had obtained them for themselves, for the specimens of Type I, at least, all originate in the same place. It has now been accepted that they could not have been made locally in the approximate areas where they were discovered: the level of development of the metallurgical industry in bronze in the Malay Peninsula, and for that matter, in Indonesia, where they were also discovered, would have made that impossible. Furthermore, the uniformity of their decoration speaks strongly for a single origin. This would not seem so obvious if any ‘imitations’ made in other places and based on ancient models had been found. Loofs-Wissowa showed that the two principal motifs of the decoration of these drums—the boat and especially the bird—were in fact related to an environment corresponding to that of the Northern Indochina Peninsula, in other words, to North Vietnam, and Dongson. The bird, which was very likely a heron, could have been a sort of heraldic animal for the populations of this region, an aquatic creature associated with the concept of fertility which, in Southeast Asia, is inseparable from water. As for the boats, they are clearly river craft, and the feathered personages they are transporting are probably participants in some fertility rite presided over by a politico-religious authority, a tradition perpetuated to the present day in several Southeast Asian kingdoms (Laos, Thailand).

These objects were therefore made in the same region and distributed throughout all of Southeast Asia by means of the networks of trade linking the different regions. Should we then assume that they

were just one object of trade among others (food products, pottery, various tools)? Loofs-Wissowa thinks not, proposing the 'Regalia Theory' to explain their distribution. According to him, these objects, as instruments of authority, would have been in essence too sacred to be a mere item of exchange. They would have been offered to Southeast Asian chiefs by a spiritual authority residing in some part of northern Indochina (not necessarily Dongson). He writes:

We might thus imagine the coming and going of embassies or missions from tribal chiefs in various parts of Southeast Asia who through the obtaining of a drum would seek to become kings in the then accepted sense of the term and thus be integrated into a wider politico-religious system, transcending their own relatively limited one. Or, alternatively, we may imagine the sending of emissaries from the "Holy See" to take these drums to far-away places for the same purpose. (Loofs-Wissowa 1991: 47).

Four bronze bells unearthed in Malaysia must have had an identical role (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1990: 121-122 & 1995c): the first three were found near Klang (Selangor), near the estuary of Sungai Klang (Linehan 1951: 8-11), at the beginning of the last century, and the fourth was discovered at Kampong Pencu (Johor) near the Sungai Muar (Haji Taha 1983: 61, Pl. 11) at the end of the seventies.

Just as with the drums, the bells would not have been considered ordinary objects of trade, but rather, as instruments of authority linked to rituals of power within what were probably developed chiefdoms. A sample taken from the clay core remaining inside the bell from Kampong Pencu and examined by thermoluminescence yielded 150 A.D. as the earliest possible date, which is surprising; until now, there has been a tendency to associate this type of bell (the Kampong Pencu bell is very similar in appearance to one of those found at Klang, and they are therefore probably contemporary) to the bronze drums uncovered locally, whose type, as we have said earlier, dated with extreme imprecision, of course, could nonetheless not be later than the first century B.C.

Such a late date makes of these bells objects that almost belong to the first historic period. This fact, when added to the great stylistic similarities between the Malaysian bells and another bell discovered at Battambang (Cambodia) (Malleret 1956: 311 & Loewenstein 1956: 37) suggested to Leong Sau Heng (1993: 8-9) that at least this section of the Malay coasts was in contact with the first Funan.

This theory has the advantage of recognizing that from this period there existed in Southeast Asia a network of political entities whose chiefs attempted to obtain recognition of their authority through the possession of emblems of power. Kulke (1990: 18-19) likewise admits that

during late proto-history and even in the initial phases of early history of South-East Asia, [the bronze drums] may have had [...] social functions [similar to] the early [Sanskrit] inscriptions. Thus these drums, too, would have to be interpreted as an indication of the emergence of “pre-Indianized” chiefdoms, a process which was then carried on smoothly, though accelerated, under Indian influences.

The picture that emerges, then, is no longer that of rather rough-hewn chiefdoms that had yet to break free of a sombre prehistory, but of primitive political entities open to the world of Southeast Asia, and very likely already open to that of the Indian Subcontinent, in search of a superior identity. With this purpose, they turned first towards certain Southeast Asian traditions before eventually adopting as their own a number of more sophisticated concepts coming from India. Beginning with these indicators of exchanges, notably the drums and the bronze bells, Leong Sau Heng (1990, 1993) posited the existence on the Peninsula, at least beginning in a late pre-history, of what she calls ‘collecting centres’, which would have been in some ways the ancestors of the entrepôt ports of the historic period. She wrote (1990: 23):

Such collecting centres functioned mainly as outlets for special local produce. The sites may or may not have been located at strategic points along a major trade route. The importance of these sites lay in their location in or very near important ecozones from which particular local products were obtained. Notable examples of prehistoric collecting centres in the Peninsula [her remarks, however, are chiefly directed to the peninsular territory of Malaysia] are Kampong Sungai Lang and Kelang on the Selangor coast [which, let us not forget, provided drums and bells] and Batu Buruk in Terengganu [still referred to by the name Kuala Terengganu, which yielded a drum]. These sites are located in areas rich in alluvial tin and/or gold, or along river routes that led to such areas.

The sites in peninsular Thailand that have also yielded drums (exclusively on the east coast) can probably be considered former ‘collecting centres’, or in any case, places with established developed chiefdoms which, in the case of the regions of Chaiya, Phunphin and

Nakhon Si Thammarat, were evolving into the status of city-states with entrepôt ports in the historic period.

Leong Sau Heng also identified the Island of Tioman (southeast of the coasts of Malaysia) as a 'collecting centre' belonging to the historic period (twelfth to thirteenth century), functioning in correlation with the entrepôt ports known at the time. We are less convinced of this identification. In fact it seems to us that this type of centre was closely linked to the period immediately prior to Indianization, in the context of a primarily inter-regional trade. When the conditions of trade in the Southern Seas evolved, especially with the increasing arrival of foreigners, in particular Indians, those 'collecting centres' that had the least favourable locations within the radically modified commercial networks lost their importance in favour of the new centres of exchange that now evolved from the entrepôt ports of the historic period; the centres with superior locations in the new setting, on the other hand, were integrated into the developing territories of the chiefdoms that had become city-states.

Leon Sau Heng (1993: 9), in the conclusion to one of her articles, describes the situation as follows:

During the time of intra-regional trade where Peninsular Malaysia was in quite regular trade exchange with areas in Mainland Southeast Asia, most of the major trading centres, such as the collecting centres found on the west coast, were located in the lower or more southerly part of this coast. It is evident that trade, especially the export of heavy commodities like tin, was conducted via sea-routes, and that the locations of these early collecting centres were all easily accessible to the Mainland traders via the southern entrance of the Straits of Melaka. It was only very much later, when entrepôts emerged on the Peninsula's west coast, this time at the northern entrance of the Straits, that we see the pattern changing. Direct trade with the Mainland probably ceased. The flow of local produce was then channeled to these major regional centres of trade at the northern entrance to the Straits of Melaka such as Sungai Mas and Pengkalan Bujang.

The presence of the bronze drums, like that of the bells, clearly emphasizes the existence of the networks of exchange proper to Southeast Asia within which local socio-politico-religious concepts were spread, before other concepts, originating in India, came to supplant them. It was these last concepts that a number of local chiefs eventually judged to be well suited to their internal problems; for there is no doubt that the two shores of the Bay of Bengal were linked very early through commercial relations which, well

established and honed over many centuries, would have favoured the spread of new concepts.

C. CONTACTS BETWEEN INDIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE EARLY PERIOD

These contacts, which preceded any Indianization, are revealed in a series of archaeological discoveries that unfortunately only provide evidence for relations between west and east, doubtless because the wealth of remains found in the sites on the east coast of India impeded the recognition and analysis of possible remains coming from Southeast Asia. Emphasis was placed on the origin of certain ceramic sherds or on fragments of bronze dishes, as well as on beads, and on seals in hard stone, with estimated dates for the oldest pieces going back to the third and second centuries before our era. It is unfortunate for our thesis that one of the oldest sites from this period, which is also one of the best excavated and most productive to date, should be just outside the limits of the Peninsula: Ban Don Ta Phet (Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand). (Glover 1990).

I. Ban Don Ta Phet

At Ban Don Ta Phet, a funerary site yielded some three hundred pieces of bronze vessels characterized by a high concentration of tin (between twenty-three and twenty-eight percent). Two types are represented: a vessel with an undecorated central cone, and others, poorly-represented (only three fragments), with elaborate decorations. Vessels that are similar to the first type, in ceramic as well as in stone or metal (copper), have been found in the Indian Subcontinent. The ceramic in which this type most commonly appears is fine, and is usually characterized by black, shiny surfaces; it belongs to the later stage of *Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW)*, whose estimated date is sometime in the last centuries before the Christian era (third to second century B.C.).

Taking everything into account, when we attempt to determine the origin of this form, we discover that it had a very wide distribution: from the Mediterranean world where it appeared in the third to second centuries B.C., it turned up in Asia, where it is found from Pakistan all the way to Southeast India, passing through the Valley of the Ganges, Bengal and Orissa. Furthermore, its presence in

Southeast Asia is not limited to the site of Ban Don Ta Phet, because bronze examples related to it have been discovered in Vietnam (Dongson). The author of some recent studies devoted to archaeological evidence of contacts between Southern Asia and Southeast Asia (Bellina 1997: 56, 1999) has concluded that it is not possible to consider this type of vessel with a remote origin as proof of a transfer of a typical form from one shore of the Bay of Bengal to the other.

The same site (Ban Don Ta Phet) also yielded the three fragments of bronze bowls mentioned above, decorated with scenes in which Indian stylistic influences are clearly discernible; but for the moment it has proved impossible to find the exact type of Indian vessel that could have served as a model. At first, the tin content of the fragments led researchers to believe that the metallurgy had been local, but this presented a stylistic problem. Since the technique of the motifs is of good quality, and since their supposed date (fourth century B.C., the date of the site) is prior to the date of the Indian pieces originating in Bhārḥūt and Sāñcī that had invited comparisons, we were in the presence of a paradox: the Thai site would then have furnished the oldest known witnesses to Indian figurative art. In reality, however, it seems that the radiocarbon dating of the site may be called into question, as the high tin content of the fragments may not be the absolute criterion for manufacture in Southeast Asia (India also made bronze with a high percentage of tin, perhaps taken from the shores of the Peninsula) (Bellina 1997: 62, 1999: 92); in that case, the stylistic comparisons suggested by the Indian pieces could tally, justifying an earliest possible dating to the end of the third century, and more probably to the second century B.C.

This new understanding would recognize in these pieces local imitations of Indian models that cannot be found today, but are undoubtedly ancient, so old that they would constitute one of the first examples of Indian figurative art. But given the fact that a metallurgical industry of bronze with a high tin content is not exclusive to Southeast Asia, the pieces could just as well have been imported from the Subcontinent.

The same site also yielded beads made of glass and hard stones (agate, carnelian, rock crystal, nephrite), and a carnelian pendant in the form of a lion. The most recent analyses of a sampling of these stone beads have not established whether the pieces are of Thai or Indian origin (Gorelick, Gwinnett & Glover 1996), but current

research (Bellina 2001) favours the Indian provenance. On the other hand, the examination did confirm the use of Indian techniques of manufacture, which would lead to the conclusion that the objects were imported, as the site has revealed no evidence of the manufacture of hard stone beads in this period. The agate and carnelian beads with etched geometric motifs that have been found in large quantities likewise originated in the Indian Subcontinent, where this technique goes back to a distant past. Among the sampling of glass beads from the site, the prismatic beads, though in the minority (only 8.5% of the total) seem more likely than the others to have been imported, and thus to have been manufactured at a considerable distance, a process which, in some cases, might have taken place in two stages: the hexagonal translucent green beads seem to have been made of glass with a composition like that of Mediterranean glass made in the first millennium of our era (Glover 1990: 14), and could have been carved in India by lapidaries accustomed to the manufacture of beads made of semi-precious stones. Some researchers, however, consider this theory unrealistic. (Bellina 2001).

The carnelian pendant in the form of a lion that was discovered in one of the burial places on the site—whose origin is almost certainly Indian—could be a symbolic representation of the lion of the Śākya clan from which Buddha descended (Glover 1990: 21), and therefore an example of the Indian tradition of aniconic art related to the Buddha, in a place that had not yet been won over to the precepts of Buddhism.

The site of Ban Don Ta Phet thus contains a wealth of information about the existence of networks of exchange between India (chiefly Northern India) and the Malay Peninsula, even though it is somewhat outside the limits of the Peninsula, as we have said. Other truly peninsular sites do exist, but unfortunately they have not all benefitted from such a meticulous analysis of their materials, as these have too often come to light outside of any archaeological context.

II. Khao Sam Keo

This site, near to Chumphon on the eastern shore of the Peninsula (10° 30' north latitude) was the object of an archaeological dig in 1981. (Srisuchat T. 1986a). It is situated on four low hills beside the Tha Thapao River, about five kilometres from the present riverbank as the crow flies. In the early period, it was an estuary site whose

position was later disturbed by the topographical evolution of the banks along this shore, and by the frequent variations in the courses of the rivers; at the time, the upstream course of the Tha Thapao may have been the waterway that provided access to the heart of the Tenasserim Range; from there it would have been possible to go down towards the west coast by the symmetrical network of rivers that came to an end in the estuary of Kraburi. It is interesting to note that this is at the exact latitude of the point on the Isthmus of Kra that was reputed to be easy to cross, which we continue to find implausible.

The site was brought to the attention of archaeologists by the accidental discovery of beads and bronze objects. It yielded a disparate collection of stone tools, local pottery, bronze objects (drums, figurines, tools, jewellery), iron tools (spears, adzes), earthenware figurines with strong sexual connotations, jewellery made of gold and semi-precious stones (bracelets), quantities of beads made of semi-precious stones, or of glass, of which uncut pieces were also found, and seals.

There are strong indications of a true indigenous culture here, but as the presence of the bronze drums and technologically evolved pottery demonstrates, it was also a culture that had wide contacts with other regions of Southeast Asia.

The links with India can be inferred from the presence of certain categories of beads whose technology belongs to the Indian Subcontinent (etched agate or carnelian beads) and from the likely existence of a glass bead industry. Furthermore, among the hard-stone seals that have come to light, at least one is inscribed with a Sanskrit word in a script that probably dates from the second century before our era. (Srisuchat T. 1986a: 395). According to the archaeologists from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand who examined the material, however, the date of the site corresponds to the very beginning of the Christian period, and it would not have been active beyond the fourth century A.D. Its population, an active prehistoric community open to the Southeast Asian world, probably because of its coastal habitat on the shores of a bay that was easy to cross, would have developed contacts with Indian merchants and artisans. Perhaps these contacts were facilitated by the existence of a transpeninsular route that crossed the isthmus at this latitude. Nothing could be less sure, however, because it is important to note that the supposed ease of this overland crossing of the Peninsula did

not lead to the later development of a more significant commercial entity. To be completely truthful, however, we should remember that in a similar period (*ca.* 100 B.C.), Chinese envoys are supposed to have crossed it, doubtless at a latitude close to this site. (See above, Chapter Two.)

III. Khuan Luk Pat

This site, near Khlong Thom (Krabi Province) in the Thai Peninsula, has attracted considerable attention in recent years. Like the Khao Sam Keo site, it was formerly situated at the far end of an estuary whose topography was radically modified by the natural evolution of the shoreline, and by the different variations in the courses of the local rivers along a low and swampy coast; nevertheless, the river that goes by the name of Khlong Thom, which today runs alongside the site, was certainly—at least in this section of its course—the river that originally led up from the sea.

The site was first studied at the end of the sixties, but it had always been known locally by the villagers, who for years had seen quantities of beads of every colour and shape rising to the surface of the ground after each bout of torrential rain. It is not by chance that Khuan Luk Pat means ‘hill of beads’ in Thai. At first the local people thought these small objects brought bad luck, and ignored them. It is unfortunate that they did not maintain this attitude, as it would have protected the site from vandalism in the following years, after they learned the market value of these tiny objects (more than eighty percent of the site has been destroyed). The pillage continues with impunity. The site has been visited and excavated many times since 1979, which has given rise to a number of publications offering interpretations of the results. (Viraprasert 1984, 1986, 1987, 1992; Srisuchat T. 1986b; Bronson 1990).

Like Khao Sam Keo, Khuan Luk Pat, in addition to the beads, yielded a disparate collection of archaeological material consisting of small objects, some related to indigenous activity, others resulting from contacts with the outside world which, by all accounts, brought not only merchants but also artisans to the area.

Indigenous productions are represented by fragments of local pottery, religious objects or tools in stone, clay, bronze or iron. Their number, however, does not indicate the presence of a very large indigenous population. The other objects that have come to light, which are linked with the presence of foreigners, provide the real

interest of the site. As at the sites of the entrepôt ports (which we will discuss later), they consist of a number of Middle Eastern and Chinese ceramic sherds, but in very limited quantities, which indicates that, contrary to what has sometimes been written, this site could not be classed in the same category; merchants were present, however, as is also shown by the stone seals they left behind them.

These seals, which have also been discovered in considerable quantities in India, were used to identify merchandise, as H. Ray explained (1991: 359). The *Arthaśāstra* mentions them in Book II, Chapter 21, Section 39, "The collector of customs and tolls":

The receivers of duty, four or five in number, should record in writing (details about) traders who have arrived in a caravan, who they are, from what place, with how much merchandise and where the identity-pass (was issued) or the stamping was made. For goods without the stamp, the penalty is double the dues. For those with a forged stamp, the fine is eight times the duty. For those with broken stamps, the penalty is distraint in the warehouse. (Kangle 1963: II, 162).

They could also be printed on the damp clay that sealed the opening of certain containers holding valuable goods, as described in the *Khadirāṅgāra Jātaka* (N° 40), which speaks of "brazen pots, with fastenings and seals unbroken." (*Jātaka Stories* 1969: I, 100). Broadly speaking, they made it possible to close a document and to be assured of its identification; an ancient Buddhist text (from the middle of the second century B.C. to around the fifth century A.D.), the *Milindapañha*, states: "The navigator puts a seal on the mechanism, saying: 'Let no one touch the mechanism.'" (Horner 1969: II, 249).

These seals have elicited great interest, and suggest a probable date for the site. Oval, square or rectangular, they are made of hard semi-precious stones (carnelian or green stone)—even gold, in one case. They are engraved or decorated with an *intaglio* or, occasionally, a cameo. The inscriptions on six of them were examined by a Thai epigraphist. (Weerapajak 1985: 131-133).

a. The first is from an oval stone seal. It is inscribed in *Brāhmī* script, common in the northern part of India, and of a type the epigraphist, Weerapajak, believes can be assigned to a period between the first and third centuries of our era. The language used is Prākṛit, or archaic Sanskrit. The legible word is apparently *rūjjo*, which could mean 'destroy'.

Various observations were made in response to remarks made by Weeraprajak during the SPAFA conference: C. Jacques stated that Brāhmī script was also known in Southern India, and therefore, that the seal could have originated there. J. G. de Casparis believed that the writing could have been the script used in Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, and so could be dated from the third to the fourth century A.D. The inscription, if its date is accepted—or even its dates—thus becomes the oldest ever found in Southeast Asia (including Indonesia).

b. The second inscription is from a square carnelian seal. The form of the writing is very similar to the Pallava script used in the Śivaskandāvarman inscriptions in the fifth and sixth centuries. The language is Sanskrit. The inscribed word seems to be *dātavyam*, which the author says can be translated as “suitable for giving.” Casparis links this script to the writing used on certain seals from Oc-eo.

c. The third inscription is from a seal made of green stone. The script is the same as that used for the preceding seal, as are the estimated date and the language. The word inscribed on the seal is apparently *apralasanasya*, which could mean “not to be moved,” or, more likely, “belonging to Apralasa.”

d. The fourth inscription is from a square seal of green stone that shares the same characteristics as the first two, as well as the same date. The inscribed word is *vīrabendhutrasya*, which, according to Weeraprajak, could signify “those who are valiant may proceed,” or, more likely, and more prosaically, “belonging to Vīrabendhutra.”

e. The fifth is inscribed on a round gold seal. The writing is again the Pallava script, but the author dates it between the sixth and seventh century. The language is Sanskrit. The inscribed word is *sarudharmmasya*, which Weeraprajak ventures to translate as “belonging to the Good law,” or “belonging to the delicate or transcendental Law,” but which, like the preceding seal, must just mean “belonging to Sarudharma.”

f. And finally, the sixth inscription is from an oval stone seal. Once again the script is Pallava, and is attributed to the sixth or seventh centuries; the language is again Sanskrit. The inscribed word is *srammano*, which the author translates as ‘happiness’, ‘joy’, ‘protection’ or ‘refuge’.

Most of these inscribed words appear to be in the genitive, indicating the name of the owner of the object, and thus of the merchandise whose outer wrapping was sealed by the stone found on it. It is

also conceivable that these genitives mean: “for Apralasana, for Virabendhutra, for Sarudharmma,” or, again, “gift from Apralasana, from Virabendhutra, from Sarudharmma,” though the first interpretation—an indication of the owner’s name—seems more likely to be the true meaning.

The inscription on the goldsmith’s touchstone found at the same site should certainly be read in this same way (Srisuchat A. 1996: ill. p. 250): written in Tamil, the text can be deciphered as *perumpadan kal*, which would mean “stone of Mr. Perumpadan (‘big feet’).” But both the claim to see Sanskrit in a *Brāhmī* script from the second century A.D., and the translation of the words: “[this inscription is] the emblem of Brahmā, Indra, Brahaspati and Gaṇeśa. Ignorance” (Noonsuk 1996), seem fanciful to us.

K. Weeraprajak makes the following point herself: the words inscribed on the seals are too brief to teach us much about the life, ideas or religious affiliations of their owners. Their dating by means of palaeography refers us back to Indian origins, but we cannot automatically assimilate this date to the moment the seals arrived in Southern Thailand in the hands of Indian merchants, though such a dating would be probable.

The seals decorated with figures have provoked much commentary. Some bear figures of animals, including an elephant, a lion and a pair of fighting cocks; others are images inspired from Græco-Roman mythology: the goddess of Fortune, Tyche, standing full length, holding the horn of plenty and dressed in a costume that J. Boisselier (Viraprasert 1992: 156) believed to be recognizable as a fashion from the reign of the Roman emperor Aurelius (161-180); Perseus, and the bust in profile of a female figure in cameo, to list the most photographed and discussed of the objects. For Glover (1990: 6), these pieces are of a Roman type dated from the end of the first through the second century of our era. According to H. Ray (1991: 360), they could have been made in the northwestern section of the Subcontinent in imitation of examples produced in Taxilā. She refers specifically to an incised piece found in this region of India that reproduces the theme of the goddess Tyche, which is commonplace on Indo-Scythian coins. B. Bronson (1990: 217) holds the same view, and mentions the popularity of ornamental Græco-Roman

themes in south India, and the important collection of seals preserved at Peradeniya University in Śrī Laṅkā.

In spite of all this, it is not possible to claim with absolute certainty that the estimated date of these seals, whether they are inscribed or engraved with figures, can be the date of their arrival at Khuan Luk Pat, or even of their manufacture, as ancient pieces could have served as models in India for long periods of time. Since none of these seals from the Malay site came to light in a scientific context that could have supplied information of a chronological order, we are reduced to theories and to dating projections based on more easily datable artefacts. The beads, however, cannot serve as such artefacts, as their quantity and variety present more problems than they solve.

These beads are made of glass or semi-precious stones. Whatever their composition, there will be many more disputes over the question of whether they were imported or manufactured *sur place* with a material produced locally, or brought in from elsewhere. The only hope for an eventual resolution to endless question of this kind is in an increase in physico-chemical tests on the materials.

B. Bronson (1990) closely analysed the problem of the glass beads found at Khuan Luk Pat and concluded that the site itself imported and manufactured both material and beads, basing his opinion on the unusual variety of the lumps of raw glass found there, and the accepted fact that the region around Khuan Luk Pat is well provided with sand suitable for such an industry. Likewise, the presence on the site of unfinished stone beads, or of beads that are not yet perforated, as well as a piece of carnelian of large dimensions (10 x 13 centimetres) “flaked in order to produce small pieces” (Viraprasert 1992: 156), tends to prove that this type of bead was also produced locally with material imported from India or from other regions of Southeast Asia. Among the pieces discovered locally that provide evidence of strong contacts with India, whether of a technical nature or merely connected with the import of material or goods, are:

- a. Beads in opaque black glass decorated with abstract or figurative white motifs (flowers, birds) that can also be found at Oc-eo and at U Thong; the bird theme is also encountered on round beads from Kauśāmbi in Northern India. (Dikshit 1949: 60, Fig. 10).

- b. Glass beads decorated with a human face, of a type that for the moment remains unique to this area. Their technique is similar to the process called *millefiori* in the Roman Empire.

c. A carnelian bead decorated with the *svastika* motif, a solar symbol; similar pieces have apparently been found in Northern India. (Dikshit 1949: 59, Fig. 13). The same motif, however, is found in Śrī Laṅkā on coins with multiple punch-marks dated from the third to the second century before our era, and, still on the Island, at Anurādhapura, Mantai and Kantarodai, from the beginning of the historic period. (Coningham & Allchin 1995: 153-173, Bellina 1997: 84).

d. Cylindrical glass beads like amulets, similar to those found at Oc-eo (Malleret 1962: Pl. LV, No. 1243), and in greater numbers in Iran.

It should also be noted that the site yielded a carnelian pendant which, though smaller in size, is reminiscent of the pendant with the figure of a lion discovered at Ban Don Ta Phet.

It therefore appears that the various technologies that oversaw all these creations owed much to the Indian Subcontinent. In a recent article, P. Francis (1996: 141) writes that he considers the Khuan Luk Pat site a direct heir to the site of Arikamedu, along with Mantai and Oc-eo, with the idea that the large Indian production site declined from the third century A.D. (a proposal that does not seem to have been confirmed). According to this view, he dates the Thai site to the earliest part of this period, and sees it losing its importance in around the sixth or seventh century in favour of Kuala Selinsing, a little farther south on the same coast. This dating, at least the most recent one, does not fundamentally contradict other datings, as it would appear somewhat excessive to propose the first and second centuries of our era on the sole evidence of pseudo-Roman seals which in all likelihood are only late copies. However, the seventh-century *terminus* also seems rather early in the light of certain Middle Eastern sherds discovered locally. These do not seem to have appeared along the shores of the Peninsula before the ninth century. B. Bronson also arrives at this final date (1990: 213).

IV. Kuala Selinsing

This other site on the western shore of the Malay Peninsula (Perak, Malaysia) drew the attention of researchers very early because of the ambiguous character of the remains found there. It is situated on low, very amphibious terrain invaded by mangrove swamps and affected by the rhythm of the tides. Among other things that were brought to

light in the first excavations, which were conducted by I. H. N. Evans (1928, 1928a, 1932), was a carnelian seal that N. Sastri (1936) considered with good reason to be that of a merchant who had had his name, Viṣṇuvarman, engraved on it in Sanskrit, in a script of the Pallava type that can be attributed to the sixth century. A gold ring bearing in relief a clumsy possible image of Viṣṇu on Garuḍa was also discovered. (Wales 1940: 55). These two objects, whose present location is unknown, gave rise to numerous commentaries on the role of the Indian Subcontinent in the destiny of the site, and on its date.

Excavations undertaken between 1987 and 1989 (Shuhaimi 1991) brought to light several new pieces of scientific information on the nature of the site and its great age. It belongs to the late prehistoric period, and was apparently occupied from the second century before our era, or even earlier. Its population, turned towards the sea, made considerable use of shells and fishbones; they buried their dead, sometimes in boats. They practised metallurgy, using such metals as tin, lead and iron, and also knew bronze, but continued to use stone tools. Pottery was also produced locally, usually of crude manufacture, in colours ranging from orange to various shades of brown. The examples of this pottery are in several different shapes, and decorated with a variety of motifs.

What distinguishes these probably animist people from their fellow human beings dispersed throughout the Peninsula is their aptitude for making glass beads as well as beads of precious and semi-precious stones; the semi-precious stones were the object of recent analyses (Tan & Samsuddin 1990), which revealed materials as diverse as beryl, sodalite, moldavite, plasma, jasper, aventurine, quartz, tiger's eye, analcima, agate, carnelian and rock crystal, the last three less well represented than the others. Aside from the jasper, these stones do not exist in the Malay Peninsula. On the other hand, beryl, plasma, aventurine and sodalite have been exploited for centuries in India, especially in Karnataka, Rājasthān and Kāśhmīr; Iran and Iraq also produce sodalite and aventurine, and the Chinese use plasma and aventurine as a substitute for jade. (Shuhaimi 1991: 149).

In addition to all these, Evans discovered beads of onyx, and, less frequently, of ruby, sapphire and lapis lazuli. The existence of stones in the rough, of unpolished beads and of blocks of agate and onyx led him to suppose that the material for these beads had been imported. (Evans 1932: 82, 85).

Evans (1932) mentioned glass beads found in the thousands, though the ones unearthed in the latest digs seem to be in a minority in relation to the preceding ones. (Shuhaimi 1991: 148). The majority of them were monochrome, but several more sophisticated examples came to light: beads of clear glass with a gold leaf added, multi-coloured beads, etc. The presence of uncut dark blue stone led Evans to speculate about the possibility of beads of this colour being manufactured locally, but he found no real trace of such an industry. P. Francis, however (1991), in the light of a reexamination of the remains, does not doubt that the site was a centre of production controlled by members of a community of Tamil craftsmen, and the heir of Khuan Luk Pat from the sixth century to the tenth, a period which thus belongs to the era of recognized Indianization along these shores.

A reexamination of pottery sherds reputed to have been discovered locally could provide some interest. Evans (1932: 100) had already put forward the theory that some of these could be of Indian origin. A recent work (Bellina 1997: 98-99) establishes a link between one of the sherds published by Evans (No. 4 on his plate No. XXX) and a piece of Indian pottery from the west of Deccan that is also characterized by motifs of beaded bands, which either served for decoration themselves, or were integrated into more complex designs in which their function was to delimit the spaces (ceramics from Ter and Koṇḍapūr illustrated in Begley (1992: 175, 176). To date, this type of ceramic has not yet been precisely dated, but it could belong to a type of production from the first centuries of the Christian era.

In any case, the site seems to have been visited, even occupied, by the Indians, without producing any particular effects of Indianization. Here, as at Khuan Luk Pat, the final phase of human occupation of the site might have lent itself to this; other points along the coasts of the Peninsula were becoming Indianized in this same period. The populations concerned were certainly not numerous enough or well enough organized for their later need for a radical modification of their socio-political system to require Indianization. Local chiefs continued to practise their rites and to associate with the Indians without worrying about imitating them.

These are the only sites about which we have information that enables us to imagine regular contact between them and the Indian

world before the process of Indianization was truly under way in the Malay Peninsula. Again, we have seen how Khuan Luk Pat continued to be active when city-states of the Indianized type were being born at other points along the shores of the Peninsula, and how Kuala Selinsing may not have developed contacts with the Indians until the sixth century, by which time Indianization had in fact definitively taken root at certain points along the same shores. These observations lead us to class these two sites in a particular category that Leong Sau Heng (1990, 1993), again in her classification of the ancient centres of trade in peninsular Malaysia, designates with the term ‘feeder points’, an expression that seems questionable, because these two places—like others of the same status that will appear later along the shores of the Peninsula—were not directly involved in supplying foreign merchant ships with food; most probably their tradesmen frequented these ships very little or not at all. According to the meaning Leong Sau Heng (1993: 4-5) gives to this term, the places were

small local supply centres dealing mainly in the special produce of particular ecozones. These were not points where foreign traders could come and pick up their goods, but rather places which regularly sent supplies of their local produce to the entrepôts. The emergence of feeder points, like that of the entrepôt, is a phenomenon of the proto- and early historic times. Their development was apparently linked with the rise of major regional centres of trade such as the entrepôts.

It is difficult to link the fate of Khuan Luk Pat with that of a specific entrepôt port; Kuala Selinsing, on the other hand, almost certainly worked with the port of Kampong Sungai Mas in South Kedah (Jiecha), which is relatively near it.

Leong Sau Heng (1993: 5) adds in connection with these ‘feeder points’:

This type of trading site may be found on the coast [as is the case with our two sites], or in inland riverine areas. In the inland areas the most likely locations for these sites were confluences of river tributaries draining a large resource base,

in other words, villages of type D, E and F in the Bronson model presented in the preceding chapter, which, as we have already explained, are very difficult to locate today because of the absence of datable archaeological material.

Let us close with a reminder of what has already been said in the preceding chapter: that these inter-regional contacts in Southeast

Asia, these relations between the two shores of the Bay of Bengal, which ended up overwhelming the Southeast Asian societies and transforming them to their very roots, were only possible because all the populations involved in these exchanges were seasoned by life on or near the sea.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE FIRST ACCOUNTS OF INDIANIZATION IN THE MALAY
PENINSULA

FROM THE FIRST CENTURIES OF THE ERA
TO THE END OF THE 4TH CENTURY

There came a moment, then, when the chiefs of certain tribes along the shores of the Malay Peninsula felt the need to authenticate their local ancestral authority by drawing on more sophisticated concepts than those to which they had previously turned—of which the bronze ‘Dongson’ drums could have been, as we have seen, one of the symbols.

The adoption of these new concepts was certainly facilitated by the increase in commercial relations between the two shores of the Bay of Bengal during the first centuries of the era, a period when, along the whole length of the eastern shores of the Indian Subcontinent, a series of political entities were being won over by the contagion of the socio-politico-religious concepts of Northwest India—in other words, ‘Indianized’. As we demonstrated at the beginning of the last chapter, because of ancient maritime contacts, the process was almost simultaneous from one shore of the Bay to the other—within one or two generations (to the advantage, of course, of the Indian Subcontinent).

For this process to develop, there had to be a combination of certain physical and human factors. Thus the existence of an agricultural plain that was wide and welcoming enough to accommodate a significant population of rice-growers was necessary from the outset. This farming community, directed by a chieftain, would have seen its wealth increase after technological advances had improved soil management; the value of the land increased, with the inevitable consequence that social inequalities appeared. The community would then have experienced the beginnings of social stratification, resulting in a need for governmental control and increased militarism.

Confronted with these circumstances, a sensible tribal chief could find a solution only in a new form of recognition that would confer

upon him the status of a divinely constituted sovereign; in such a role he would be able to impose his authority on a restructured society composed primarily of peasants dominated by an aristocracy from which could be drawn the two supports necessary for the new royal entity: warriors and priests. In addition, a need for the trappings of power inevitably resulted in the development of a fortified urban setting dominated by a palace, around which circulated a new class of craftsmen and tradespeople, some of whom would provide the material insignia of power.

The only available model, efficient, and proven by history, was the Indian one, refined under the rule of the successive dynasties of the Mauryas, the Kuṣāṇs, the Śātavāhanas or the Guptas, who had controlled Northern India and certain sections of central India in the past. This model was adopted progressively by the nascent principalities of the east coast of India beginning in around 400 A. D. H. Kulke (1990: 24) estimates that the shift to the new model culminated at the end of the sixth century, with the appearance of the first regional kingdoms, namely the Pallavas in Tamiḷnāḍu, and the Gangas and the Śailodbhavas in Kaliṅga. This evolution depended much more on the management of the soil and its surplus yields than on control of short- or long-distance maritime trade, but it is clear that the trade, too, played a role in the process of social, economic and political evolution in the new states. The chieftains, who had always procured certain symbols of power for themselves through trade, could not afford to lose their interest in this commercial outlet, even though it promoted the establishment of a new social class of merchants capable of threatening their power. Eventually, therefore, they desired to control, even monopolize commercial activity; the chapters that follow will emphasize the importance of certain Indian ports in commercial exchanges with Southeast Asia.

In the Malay Peninsula, several of the existing chiefdoms could only evolve towards becoming city-states by applying these same concepts, but the main feature of their prosperity lay almost exclusively in their ability to receive commercial ships from every corner of Asia, in several different entrepôt ports. These ships arrived in increasing numbers in a period that corresponds roughly to the third, fourth and fifth centuries of our era; and it seems that this intensification of the rhythm of the exchanges is principally due to the flowering of Buddhism in India. As is shown in a recent study (Ray 1994), Buddhism and commerce were closely linked.

For a long time, scholars believed that this new religious trend—in rejecting Brahmanical ideas about racial purity and contamination through commercial contacts—served to promote trade. In itself this is not false, but other factors must be taken into account if we are to arrive at an accurate picture of the situation. H. Ray rightly reminds us that if Brahmanical norms developed in a period of agrarian expansion in the valley of the Ganges, Buddhism developed in a milieu of commercial networks within which cities would play a key role from the very beginning. A recent study on the social origin of three hundred members of the *saṅgha* reveals that a majority of them came from cities. (Ray 1994: 124); furthermore, given the nature of the monastic rule established by Buddha, the existence of the community depended entirely on cities.

It was city-dwellers who provided the monks with their daily alms and who, in addition, gave them quantities of gifts that would become more and more diversified over the years. To their robes, food, places of rest and medicine were soon added many superfluous products that could only be supplied by trade, such as perfume, lamp oil, pastries, garlands of flowers, etc. We can well understand that the purveyors of all these products became by the same token ardent champions of Buddhism. This is what H. Ray (1994: 127) characterizes as “interaction with the laity.”

We must also remember that Buddha had initially conceived the *saṅgha* as a missionary organization; the monks and nuns were exhorted to go out into the streets and preach his teachings. Admittedly, they were forbidden to go out during the rainy season, but even here, exceptions were made for monks travelling in caravans or on ships. (Ray 1994: 132).

Nevertheless, because Buddhism was never concerned with social rules, its influence on developing societies was exclusively spiritual, and never entered into conflict with the model of social organization that Brahmanism had provided with considerable success. Thus in the small city-states of the Malay Peninsula, we see the two religious beliefs coexisting, and even when Buddhism carried the day, Brahmanical rituals, in particular those associated with the concept of royalty, were not abolished by it—much as in present-day Cambodia, for example, when much more information is available.¹

¹ The study of the statues of the mitred Viṣṇu of Southeast Asia (those found in the Malay Peninsula will be discussed in the next chapter) has led to some

It is therefore not surprising, in this context of different cultural influences emanating from India in the same period, that the two oldest archaeological remains from the historic period ever discovered in the Malay Peninsula should prove to be related, in one case to the adoption of apparently well-established Brahmanical practices, and in the other, to the undeniable existence of champions of Buddhism, in a much more blurred local context.

The first of these finds is an awkward sculpture-in-the-round of Viṣṇu. It may be the oldest representation of the god in Southeast Asia, and there is no reason to doubt that it was sculpted locally in the direct line of an iconographic tradition traceable from Kuṣāṇ, in Northwest India, all the way to the shores of the coast of Coromandel, through the valley of the Kṛṣṇa. Discovered in the immediate region of Chaiya on the eastern shore of the Peninsula, the piece has been dated to 400 A.D. (O'Connor 1972: 39). We will return to this statue later.

The second example is an inscription on stone found in South Kedah. This piece, which is generally dated to the fifth century, associates a Buddhist credo formula with the representation of a *stūpa*. It was commissioned by a certain Captain Buddhagupta, who lived in a region called Raktamṛtika, as an ex-voto to earn divine protection for his travels on the sea. The region has been identified as Rājbaḍidāṅgā in Bengal, to the north of Tāmralipti (Das 1968: 57-59), which reveals that the Captain was one of those Indian sailor-tradesmen converted to Buddhism who engaged in commercial exchanges from one shore of the Bay of Bengal to the other. And as it happens, this Sanskrit inscription is not the only one found in this region of the west coast of the Peninsula, and datable to the fifth century: another one very like it came to light twenty years ago at Kampong Sungai Mas (Kedah, Malaysia), and a tablet inscribed with nothing more than two Buddhist credo formulas, which is unfortunately missing today, had been discovered earlier on Bukit Meriam

reflections in the recent work of several authors (Dalsheimer & Manguin 1998: 107-110, Gutman 1999: 30). The role of the followers of the god in the spread of Indianization, whatever their geographical origin in India, was apparently as great as that of the Buddhist faithful in the first centuries.

The Viṣṇaites, with their belief in an absolute and universal god, were given to proselytism, and in addition, the early association within India itself of the god to royalty and political power could not fail to attract the local potentates along the shores of the Peninsula who were seeking a definite identity.

(Kedah, Malaysia), while a third (said to be from Cherok Tokun in Seberang Perai, Malaysia) can still be found *in situ* on the stone where it was engraved. We will return to these pieces as well.

A problem emerges, however, concerning these objects that bear witness to an early Indianization of the banks of the Malay Peninsula: they do not pre-date the fifth century. This would not be an issue if certain Chinese sources had not mentioned the existence of small Indianized kingdoms in this region whose destiny was ruled by Funan at the time.

Not the least of the paradoxes of this study is to have to recognize that India, which was in contact with the shores of the Malay Peninsula before the Christian era, provided almost no practical information of a geographical or historical nature about the region, yet on the other hand was the source of almost all of its archaeological remains, indisputable witnesses of its cultural influence and, occasionally, of visits by its nationals, whereas China—whose representatives seem to have gone to the Peninsula almost reluctantly—and which left as an indication of its presence only its ubiquitous ceramics (and these only from the ninth century on) provided the only historical information of interest concerning this region.

We owe this information about the first centuries to a precise circumstance in Chinese history, that is, to its division into three parts after the fall of the Western Han at the beginning of the third century. In this period, most of the territories located south of the Yangzi were part of an independent state, the state of Wu (221-280). Cut off from its contacts with Western Asia by the rival states of Shu (221-280) and Wei (220-265), Wu nonetheless had the good fortune to be largely open to the China Sea. It is not surprising, therefore, that the leaders sought to establish commercial relations on the sea with the faraway, vague but fascinating regions of the Southern Seas before anyone in China was aware that they contained quantities of rare and luxurious products that had become indispensable to the upper classes of society.

1. It is in the framework of this political situation that an ambassadorial mission was sent to Funan in the middle of the third century, led by two diplomats, Kang Tai and Zhu Ying, who recounted their voyage in detail on their return. The original report has been lost, but

the substance of many of its pages was preserved in later works, the oldest one written at the end of the fifth century, and one of the most useful, the *Liangshu*, in the first years of the seventh century.

The original text contributed greatly to a better understanding on the part of the Chinese authorities of the geographical, economic and political situation of these regions of the Southern Seas. No doubt one of their unofficial purposes was to assess what would be the appropriate attitude to adopt towards the extremely vague political entity called Funan within the framework of these commercial exchanges: at the time, Funan was perhaps perceived more as a relay point in the trade between East and West—which in fact it was—than as a place where certain of the highly desired rare products could be procured—which, however, it also was. In other terms, a decision had to be made about whether they should merely attempt to win the favour of Funan, or whether on the contrary it would be necessary to try to establish some kind of authoritarian control over it. The picture the envoys brought back from their stay, both about Funan itself and about the adjoining regions, leads us to believe that all thoughts of possible conquest were abandoned. It would not have been possible to establish political dominance over the several hundred kingdoms the two diplomats claimed to have visited or heard about.

2. Funan is described in the Chinese accounts as a true centralized kingdom directed by powerful rulers, a political concept familiar to the Chinese but totally unrealistic in the context of this part of Southeast Asia, then in full development, which corresponds roughly to the middle and lower courses of the Mekong. C. Jacques (1988: 68) writes:

In fact, we know very little about the political state of the Khmer country in the first centuries of our era: it seems nevertheless that this whole region had always been widely divided into small principalities or kingdoms, which we can conceive of as miniscule at times, ruled by princes who, from the first period for which we have accounts, were called *rāja* in Sanskrit, or *kurung* in Khmer, that is, “king”. These princes may have waged constant war against each other; the victor would make the defeated prince pay tribute, transforming him into a vassal until there was an eventual reversal. This is how it is possible to explain the way relatively large kingdoms could be formed, but at the same time it is remarkable that these “empires” never seem to have survived their founder, because each of these defeated kings—or, more likely, his descendants, to the degree that the losers had to be

eliminated—attempted to recover his independence on the death of the victor, at the latest. In any case, the inscriptions reveal that these kings, even minor ones, were absolute masters in their realm.

During almost the whole Pre-Angkorian period, it is noteworthy that no king seems to draw on his father's role to justify his position on the throne; on the contrary, in the texts of praises to kings, the names of their parents do not appear, except to underscore the fact that they were less important or less powerful than they; this may indicate the weak political structure of the country in this period, as well as the endless changes in its geography.

The political situation just described has been linked to the concept of the *maṇḍala*, a Sanskrit term used in manuals on Indian politics by certain writers working on a definition of the modes of social organization of the Southeast Asian 'states'. (Mabbett 1978: 36-37, Wolters 1982, Kulke 1986). O. Wolters (1982: 16-17), in particular, writes on this subject:

The map of earlier Southeast Asia [...] was a patchwork of often overlapping *maṇḍalas*, or "circle[s] of kings". In each of these *maṇḍalas*, one king, identified with divine and "universal" authority, claimed personal hegemony over the other rulers in his *maṇḍala* who in theory were his obedient allies and vassals [...]. In practice, the *maṇḍala* [...] represented a particular and often unstable political situation in a vaguely definable geographical area without fixed boundaries and where smaller centers tended to look in all directions for security. *Maṇḍalas* would expand and contract in concertina-like fashion. Each one contained several tributary rulers, some of whom would repudiate their vassal status when the opportunity arose, and try to build up their own network of vassals. Only the *maṇḍala* overlord had the prerogative of receiving tribute-bearing envoys; he himself would dispatch officials who represented his superior status.

It is in the framework of such a political situation that one of the first rulers of Funan, Panpan, who reigned during the first half of the third century, passed the responsibility of his affairs to his general, Fanman (or Fanshiman) who, when he in turn became king, launched out to conquer neighbouring kingdoms, which

all acknowledged themselves his vassals. He himself adopted the style of Great King of Funan. Then he ordered the construction of great ships and, crossing right over the Chang-hai [Zhanghai, identified by P. Wheatley as the Gulf of Thailand], attacked more than ten kingdoms...

These kingdoms were in a geographical region that appears to be the Malay Peninsula. (*Liangshu*, Ch. 54, f. 9r, quoted in Wheatley 1973: 15).

It has been suggested that Funan's interest in the Peninsula did not represent a blind desire for imperialism, but on the contrary, corresponded to a deliberate policy of control of the Southern Seas by this 'kingdom', one of whose entrepôt ports, Oc-eo, has been recognized as a major centre of commercial activity in these early centuries of the era. In this case, it was even said, the circumstances could have warranted a Wu mission to determine *in situ* the nature of Funan's power in the Southern Seas and the degree of its control over these regions.

3. It was during this same visit to Funan that the Chinese ambassadors met the envoys of the king of the Murunḍas, an obscure Indian dynasty from the Ganges valley, at the court, and interrogated them in detail about Indian customs. It is again to such journalistic labours that we owe the slim pieces of information that have been preserved concerning some of the nascent 'states' of the Malay Peninsula, which several generations of researchers have attempted to locate, with varying degrees of success. Some of these names have been linked with certain locations, occasionally in association with archaeological remains, but most of them remain obscure. We will briefly touch on just three from this ancient period, but two of them will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

DUNSUN: This is one of the ten states said to have been subjugated by Fanshiman, which is indeed presented as a dependence of Funan. (Wheatley 1973: 15-21). It is described in the third century as a great commercial centre where "East and West met together," and where it was possible to obtain all sorts of precious and unimaginable goods; but it was more than that. Families originating in the Subcontinent lived there, as well as "more than a thousand Indian-Brahmans." About these the report states:

The people of Dunsun practise their doctrine and give them their daughters in marriage; consequently many of the Brahmans do not go away. They do nothing but study the sacred canon, bathe themselves with scents and flowers, and practice piety ceaselessly by day and night.

In view of these 'activities', there is no reason to doubt that these were indeed Brahmans. A certain vagueness in the text about the

government of this 'kingdom' (there seem to be either one or five kings) could be explained by the notion of the *maṇḍala*, which we have already mentioned.

This fascinating region of the Peninsula, apparently won over from the first decades of the third century to Brahmanical Indian politico-religious practices, and even quite likely to Buddhism—to which an obscure term in one of the Chinese texts alludes (Wheatley 1973: Note 3, p. 17)—has not been satisfactorily located. From the various geographical notations in the texts, however, it appears that Dunsun—seen from Funan—was located beyond the Gulf of Thailand, and positioned in such a way as to form a barrier between the East and the West. This determined its role as a regional transit centre for commercial exchanges between India and Indochina. Only a location in the Malay Peninsula fits this description, an identification that has never been questioned; the single point of disagreement between researchers examining the issue has been the precise latitude of the city-state. The reference in the *Liangshu* of its position as a 'stepping-stone' in the sea led to the idea that its territory, which probably offered a crossing-place from one side of the Peninsula to the other, would have been in the northern part of the Isthmus of Kra, since the southernmost section was the zone of influence of another city-state, Panpan. Nothing in the information given in the report of the ambassadors of Wu (which was taken from later compilations) enables us to determine the ultimate fate of this city-state. The only thing we can be practically certain of is that it was active in the third century; however, the fact that it is mentioned in no original text from a later period—only in partial compilations of ancient works—leaves little room to hope that it existed for very long.

Wheatley (1973: 21) recommended associating certain archaeological remains found in the northern part of the Peninsula with this city-state. The thought of bringing them together was based primarily on the fact that in the first period of research, very early dates had been proposed for Buddhist remains discovered at Pong Tuk—a bronze lamp in the Græco-Roman style and a bronze statuette of Buddha (Cœdès 1928)—dates that have since been reexamined and revised to a later period. We have not included the analysis of these remains, as they lie outside the geographical zone established for our study.

PANPAN: This is another of the political entities of the Indianized type mentioned in the Chinese text. The reference to Panpan predates the objects found in the first archeological remains of the historic period, which date from the fifth century. Researchers who have studied these documents agree in locating the city-state in the immediate neighbourhood of the Bay of Bandon. We will discuss this site in detail in the next chapter, because of the abundant archaeological remains that came to light in the area of its presumed geographical location; for the moment we will simply indicate that its existence is recognized at the end of the fourth century in a passage from the *Liangshu* devoted to Funan that follows on from the observations in the extracts taken from the lost report of the envoys of the Wu. This section records the visit to the territory of a certain Kauṇḍinya, who “was originally a Brahman from India.” The text continues:

A supernatural voice [...] said to him: “You must go and rule in Funan.” Kauṇḍinya rejoiced in his heart. Once in the south, he arrived in Panpan. The people from Funan learned of it; the whole kingdom rose up with joy, came before him and elected him king. (*Liangshu*, quoted in Pelliot 1903: 269).

Kauṇḍinya is supposed to have inspired what has been called the ‘second Indianization’ of Funan. The fact that he chose to stay here on his way to Cambodia is an indication that in this period at the end of the fourth century, the little kingdom already possessed a certain Indian cultural veneer. It has even been suggested (Luce 1924: Note 1, p. 169) that it could have been founded in the third century by the Funan general Fanshiman, conqueror of these regions, as we have already reported; in this case, the name given to the kingdom would be that of the reigning king of Funan in that period.

It was in the territory of this city-state that the statue of Viṣṇu already described as the oldest Brahmanical work ever found in the Malay Peninsula—and indeed in all of Southeast Asia—was discovered (400 A.D.).

LANGKASUKA: This is another city-state mentioned in the successive compilations of Chinese texts that might have existed well before the fifth century. It can be quite plausibly located today in the region of Yarang (Pattani Province, Thailand), because several important archaeological remains have recently come to light in this part of the Peninsula; we will discuss these in a separate chapter. For the

moment we will simply mention that the first reference to this place is again in the *Liangshu*, in a passage that follows on from observations concerning Funan in the account of Kang Tai and Zhu Ying. In this passage it emerges that the 'kingdom' had been founded "more than four hundred years ago," which, in relation to the Liang, goes back to the very beginning of the second century of our era. Unfortunately, nothing in the archaeological remains from the historic period discovered so far in the presumed territory permits us to go back to this date; the remains are dated to the sixth century at the earliest.

It is therefore probable, in the light of these historic accounts, that Indianization began very early at certain points in the Malay Peninsula, in the third century, even the second. It is regrettable that these dates have not been confirmed by archaeology to this day. Should we draw the conclusion that the stage of cultural evolution achieved by this time in these nascent city-states did not yet allow for the creation of significant works of art or Sanskrit inscriptions to the glory of this or that potentate?

Perhaps future archaeological discoveries will enable us to answer this question with a definite no; after all, the inscription found at Vo Canh (Vietnam) was dated to the third century by several researchers, which made the Sanskrit text the oldest ever found in Southeast Asia. And yet the simultaneous appearance at various points in the Peninsula, as well as in the rest of Southeast Asia, of several remains (statues, inscriptions...) datable to the fifth century, provides some validation for the idea we have already broached, that before this date, nothing major had yet been produced. Perhaps this was because of a tenacious persistence in indigenous animistic practices, like the one described in connection with city-state of Dunsun, which, during an epidemic, dragged the cadavers of the dead outside the city limits to be devoured by birds. (Wheatley 1973: 17).

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CHAPTER FIVE

PANPAN

FROM THE 5TH TO THE 8TH CENTURY: HISTORY AND BRAHMANICAL RELIGIOUS REMAINS

A. HISTORIC REFERENCES TO PANPAN IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT

The very first references to Panpan, as we said in the preceding chapter, are contained in that part of the *Liangshu* that is devoted to Funan, and follow the sections taken from the account of Kang Tai and Zhu Ying describing Fanshiman's conquests in the Malay Peninsula; it is in connection with these that G. H. Luce speculated that this period might have been the time of the foundation of the city-state itself. If this were the case, it would mean that Funan was named after its reigning sovereign at this moment in the beginning of the third century. Such a connection would at least have the merit of giving to the region a certain historic veneer, something that is in general sorely lacking for the political entities of the Malay Peninsula. Beyond the account in Chapter Four of the arrival of the Brahman Kaundinya in the Peninsula, which, as it happens, is very uncertainly dated (to the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth), we possess very little precise information about Panpan.

It is questionable whether Panpan could have been a vassal state of Funan, other than nominally, perhaps. New assessments of the geopolitical reality of this entity and of its successor, Zhenla (see above, Chapter Four), now make it clear that throughout its history—except at rare moments like the period of Fanshiman's conquests—it was an aggregate of rival kingdoms and principalities which occasional rare sovereigns succeeded in bringing together under their authority for the duration of one reign, rather than the centralized kingdom many were pleased to invent on the model of the Chinese account, but which never existed.

It wasn't until the end of the fifth century, which in other respects, according to our Chinese histories, seems to have been relatively uneventful, that a king of Funan called Jayavarman appeared in the *History of the Southern Qi*. These annals record his quarrels with the

neighbouring kingdom of Linyi, ancestor of Campā, and of the help he solicited from China—but never received—in the hope of bringing an end to his troubles. Evidently Jayavarman's relationship with the Middle Kingdom did not suffer from this episode, because in their description of the mission he sent there in 503, the Chinese texts make much of the Emperor's great respect for the ruler of the faraway country of the Southern Seas, upon whom—with a panache equal to the ignorance and vanity of the Chinese of the day—he bestowed the title "General of the Pacified South, King of Funan." This brilliant sovereign (according to the Chinese) died in 514; his son Rudravarman, born of a concubine, succeeded him, having arranged for the assassination of the legitimate heir. Rudravarman apparently maintained relations with China, since at some point between 535 and 557 the Chinese, in the person of the sovereign Wudi of the Liang dynasty (502-557), who succeeded the Qi (479-502), even asked to have Buddhist texts and Buddhist masters sent to them from Funan; the request was granted.

It was during the sixth century, however, that the political situation in Funan took a negative turn, and that Zhenla, the ancestor of Cambodia, appears in Chinese history, in the *Suishu*. This political entity, which we have good reason to believe was initially centred in the southern part of present-day Laos (the region of Vat Phu), periodically imposed its rule on disparate territories that included the Korat plateau as well as the northern part of the former Funan—which were eventually totally subjugated under the rule of sovereigns named Bhavavarman and Citrasena-Mahendravarman; the names of these kings appear on various inscriptions. The second ruler was still reigning at the beginning of the seventh century, and his successors were of his own lineage. His son Īśānavarman I left inscriptions mentioning his 'vassal kings', and describing them as "the sole support of these creeping vines, [...] the other kings," which, as C. Jacques (1986: 70) wrote:

corresponds to the idea we might have of the ancient Khmer country, largely broken up, of which a greater or lesser number of kingdoms might from time to time be brought under the domination of one of their more powerful kings, only to divide up again as soon as they had the opportunity.

This splitting up into small political units reached its critical point at the beginning of the eighth century, because even the Chinese are

obliged to speak at this point of a ‘Zhenla of the earth’ and a ‘Zhenla of the water,’ which probably only accounts for what the representatives from the Middle Kingdom knew of it; the division into smaller geographical and political units was much greater.

In these conditions, it is difficult to understand how relationships of real suzerainty could have lasted for any length of time between Funan, later Zhenla, and even the minor political entities of the Malay Peninsula, and there is hardly any doubt that Panpan was a largely independent city-state—at least until the arrival of Śrīvijaya, whose exact role also needs to be reassessed.

Perhaps it was to affirm this independence that Panpan sent ambassadors to China during the fifth century, just as Funan did in the same period. The *Liangshu* mentions a whole series of missions under the dynasty of the Southern Song (420-479) and beyond, in 527, 529,¹ in 532 and in 534, that is, under the Liang dynasty (502-557), and especially during the reign of the sovereign Wudi (502-549), known for his great Buddhist piety. It was at the time of these last missions, as Ma Duanlin indicated in the *Wenxian tongkao*, that the ‘accredited envoys’ of the king of Panpan brought—among other things—some Buddhist symbols including “a tooth of the Buddha,” and “miniature painted *stūpas*, [and] leaves of the Bo tree.” (Wheatley 1973: 49). After this point, the missions became less frequent. Only two more are mentioned in the Chinese texts: one in 616, recorded in the *Suishu*, and a last one in 635, described in the *Jiutangshu*, when the envoys brought ‘local products’. (Wheatley 1973: 48).

The purpose of these ‘embassies’ sent to China from all the regions of Southeast Asia is a controversial subject. To give them a political connotation when they originated in the city-states of the Malay Peninsula makes little sense, except perhaps in a few rare cases that we will mention. They should rather be regarded as simple commercial missions that the Chinese, out of pure nationalistic pride, treated as humble tributes from ‘barbarians’ subjugated by the brilliance of their power. Since the Chinese alone provided accounts of these missions, we can only be grateful—for the purposes of our study—that they left such records, while being sure not to be taken in; it is useful in particular to recognize that very soon the mention of

¹ Ma Duanlin, who, in the thirteenth century, compiled the texts from before his time, in particular the *Tongdian* Encyclopedia by Du You (732-812), adds two other missions to this list, in 530 and 536.

these ‘embassies’ became a necessary feature of the succession of dynastic histories which, as we know, generally followed each other closely. It is certainly disappointing that the sovereigns of Funan, and later Zhenla, did not have their own chroniclers, and that their Indian counterparts did not think to either. We can take comfort from the fact that, had it been different, we would certainly have been treated to more of the same sort of accounts.

The China visited by the ‘envoys’ in the fifth century and the first half of the sixth is that of the southern Yangzi, reorganized from the beginning of the fourth century by the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420), who were fleeing from the famines and the political, economic and administrative chaos that were rife in Northern China until the Wei (386-532) took control. The new dynasty became established in Jian Ye—the former capital of the Wu—which then took the name Jiankang, and corresponds to the present site of Nanjing; it would be the capital of all the ‘southern dynasties’² for more than two and a half centuries, and thus the city towards which all ‘embassies’ from the kingdoms and city-states of the region of the Southern Seas would converge in this period.

At the time, beginning in the fifth century, Southern China was going through a period of economic and social upheaval that brought a radical change in the economy along with the marked increase in trade with the other Chinese regions (Sichuan and ‘the barbarous northern states’) as well as with the outside world. This evolution prefigured what J. Gernet has described as

the great economic flowering of the Yangzi basin and the maritime provinces of the South from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. Indeed, by the end of the fifth century it was noted that there was an increase in traffic on the Yangzi, and that there were many foreign merchants who had come from Southeast Asia and the Indo-Iranian world. The cities situated on the great river, as well as Canton in the extreme South, developed rapidly, and the State began to draw appreciable revenues from commercial taxes. (Gernet 1990: 163).

As in the north, Buddhism, which was well adapted to the social forms of the China of the Yangzi, was astonishingly successful here. It benefitted from almost uninterrupted imperial favour, particularly during the reign of sovereign Wudi of the Liang dynasty (502-549),

² Eastern Jin (317-420), Song (420-479), Qi (479-502), Liang (502-557), Chen (557-589).

whose great piety, as we have seen, attracted the visit of embassies from Panpan bearing Buddhist religious trinkets.

Should we consider the absence of these missions in the second half of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh as the consequence of the difficulties China was again experiencing, from the end of the Liang dynasty? Probably. It was in 589 that the first emperor of the new federating dynasty from the north, the Sui (581-618), took over the Chen empire, the last vestige of the dynasties that had succeeded each other in Nanjing since the beginning of the fourth century.

The annals of the Tang (*Jiutangshu* and *Xintangshu*) devote several reports to Panpan, which indicates that the region had retained a certain importance in the seventh century and beyond. It is the information in these reports that enables us to pinpoint its geographical position. We learn (Wheatley 1973: 48-50) that the city-state was located “to the southwest of Linyi [Campā] on a bay of the sea.” Quite early on, it was thought that this description designated the Gulf of Thailand (Pelliot 1904: 229), and that it was possible to reach it from Tonkin after forty days of navigation; and finally, that it was located to the south of the kingdom of Duoheluo (or Duheluo), which G. H. Luce (1924: 178-82) identified as the kingdom of Dvāravatī, situated in the lower basin of the Menam Chao Phraya. This set of precise geographical details enabled numerous researchers³ to place Panpan on or near the Bay of Bandon, and therefore exclusively on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula.

After this historical return to Dvāravatī, it is important to provide a few facts concerning the kingdom, as we will see that not only Panpan, but also the other city-states of the Peninsula, had contacts with it—commercial, of course—but also contacts which gave rise to reciprocal cultural influences that are attested by archaeology. What is problematic about this ‘kingdom’ is that, because it lacks inscriptions, we know nothing specific about it, and also, the first mention of its existence in the middle of the seventh century under the pen of the Chinese Xuanzang is only second-hand, since the pilgrim had never visited Southeast Asia. Yijing, whom we encountered in Chapter Two, also mentions this kingdom in his writings from the

³ P. Wheatley summarizes the historic research on Panpan in his book (1973: 47-51). The principal references to the Chinese texts are found in this volume.

end of the seventh century, but with no additional details, although in fact, unlike Xuanzang, he actually went to the Southern Seas, reaching the holy sites of India not across Central Asia, but by sea.

In other respects, this key account by Yijing presents us with a problem: it reveals absolutely no knowledge of Panpan, though the city-state was well known in the annals of its day, as we have seen, and in the *Tongdian* Encyclopedia compiled in the eighth century. This is all the more surprising because at the same time, Yijing refers to Langkasuka, which he describes as a favourite stopping-off place for pilgrims. (Chavannes 1894: 57). In an effort to explain this ‘oversight’, G. H. Luce (1924: 172) suggested that by the end of the seventh century, Panpan might have become primarily Brahmanist, and as such, would not have been of particular interest to a pious Buddhist pilgrim on the road to Bodh Gayā. The theory is attractive, and, as we will see later, is not disproved by an examination of the archaeological remains from the territory of the former city-state.

Though lacking in information on Panpan, Yijing’s well-dated texts do give us a rather clear idea of the maritime routes between China and India (see above, Chapter Two), and, most valuable of all, provide the first concrete information about Śrīvijaya, because the pilgrim eventually stayed there for several years. We will return to this in a later chapter.

Northern India, the destination of the Chinese pilgrims, had been ruled since the beginning of the third century by the empire of the Guptas, which was initially limited to Magadha and at least a part of Kosala, but expanded rapidly under successive kings, to become a mix of subject territories that were truly governed, and regions that were merely vassals. The kingdom reached its apogee during the reign of Candragupta II (*ca.* 375-413); the prosperity that prevailed at the time is confirmed by one of the first Chinese pilgrims in India, Faxian, whose return trip to China by sea in 413-414 has already been described. (See above, Chapter Two.) The situation deteriorated rapidly, however, with the upsurge of the Hephtalite Huns in the northwest, followed by provincial revolt in the west. This disintegration of the central authority continued throughout the sixth century, with the provincial chiefs, governors and viceroys regaining their independence, one after the other. The last burst of political vitality came from one of the kingdoms formed from the breaking up of the Gupta empire, led by its most eminent representative, Harṣa (*ca.*

606-647). For a description of the confused events of this period, we have the first-hand account of the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, who lived at the court from 629 to 645. Little by little, Harṣa managed to restore the Gupta empire almost completely, along with a de facto suzerainty over many neighbouring states. He also made incursions in the south, but without success, as powerful kingdoms had become established there, and he never crossed the Narmadā. This empire, which remained very feudal, did not outlast its creator or continue beyond his death. Political disintegration was the rule from then on, while in the south, rival empires were growing.

Many Chinese pilgrims reached India through the ports of the Coromandel coast, notably Negapatam (or Nāgapaṭṭiṇam), and even through Śrī Laṅkā. Xuanzang himself went to Dravidian country and Deccan during his long stay in India. The east coast, blessed with a fertile plain, and therefore rich in men and resources, was divided among a string of rival dynasties, some of which managed to impose their authority at one time or another. During the period covered in this chapter, from the fifth century to the end of the seventh, it was the Pallavas who had the upper hand. From their capital of Kāñchī, they succeeded in conquering vast sections of territory between the low valleys of the Kāverī and the Kṛṣṇa; nevertheless, they continued to dissipate their energies in endless wars with their neighbours, in particular the Cāḷukyas. This dynasty had originally been established in the region of Bādāmī (western Deccan), where they had achieved some prominence in the first half of the sixth century. Early in the seventh century, Harṣa had to contend with an assault from the sovereign Pulakeśin II (*ca.* 610-642), who also attacked the Pallava ruler, Mahendravarman I (600-*ca.* 630); this king saw his capital of Kāñcī besieged, but managed to retaliate, with equally temporary conquests in enemy territory. The Cāḷukyas of this early part of the seventh century eventually succeeded in controlling all of Deccan, from sea to sea, until the eastern part of the kingdom seceded in around 631 with the establishment of a dynasty of Eastern Cāḷukyas under Pulakeśin's dissident brother. Both of these parallel dynasties would be eliminated in the course of the second half of the eighth century as a result of the rise in power of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, who conquered both empires from their capital of Ellora.

The Pallavas, in spite of these incessant wars and quarrels, stayed in power longer (until the ninth century). The seventh century was a great moment in their civilisation; rumours of its fame were heard all

along the shores of the Malay Peninsula, as we will have occasion to demonstrate. It was doubtless Narasimhavarmān I (*ca.* 630–*ca.* 670) who created a port near present-day Mahābalipuram—one of the kingdom's most important cultural and religious centres—from which Tamil tradesmen launched out towards the markets of Southeast Asia and China.

After this digression on India—the destination of numerous Chinese Buddhist monks, to whom we owe some vital historical information—let us now turn to geographical details concerning Panpan found in the texts from the Tang period.

In a succinct but important piece of information, the *Jiutangshu* indicates that the city-state bordered on Langkasuka. (Wheatley 1973: 48); this fact concerning an ancient period of the history of the Malay Peninsula requires us to extend the geographical boundaries of these two states considerably, as the 'border' may have been located south of the present city of Nakhon Si Thammarat, perhaps even in the vicinity of Songkhla. (Doc. 8). This proposed geographical extension would lead us to include the region of Satingpra and Phatthalung in the area. At a later date, Satingpra emerges as the site of an active entrepôt port, but one that was never associated with a political concept; the Chinese annals are in fact silent on this portion of the Peninsula, and we are therefore inclined to consider it as a satellite region of the former Panpan, which became Tambralinga at a later period, as we will explain.

Likewise there is no reason to doubt that the territories controlled by the city-state also extended towards the north, perhaps as far as Chumphon, although in this direction, remains of an Indianized type soon become scarce. Finally Wiang Sa, the site located relatively far to the south—around a hundred kilometres south of Chaiya—which is also unique in its geographical location in the interior of the Peninsula (see above, Chapter Two) could only function in the orbit of Panpan, at the heart of a network of inland routes including those that linked the west coast from the latitude of Krabi and Trang, farther to the south, to the Bay of Bandon: these overland routes, even if we tend to minimize their importance as supposed transpeninsular trails, probably had their role to play.

It is apparent that all this concerns only territories belonging to the eastern part of the Isthmus of Kra, understood in its broadest sense, but nothing in the texts indicates that the city-state controlled the

whole of the isthmus, and thus the west coast, where nevertheless the region of Takua Pa deserves our attention because of several remains from the early period, as we will see later. The need to restore a coherent socio-political setting to Panpan is not the least of the challenges of this study.

It goes without saying that territories stretching so far from north to south could only be controlled by a political system like that of the *mandala* described in the preceding chapter in relation to Funan, and earlier. In the period we are examining, the centre of power was most likely located in the immediate region of the Bay of Bandon. (Doc. 27, 31). Beyond this original nucleus, the border regions were controlled through the creation of a play of alliances from suzerain to vassals that would have tightened and slackened with the passing years, depending on the degree of power of the successive sovereigns. The most loquacious of the Chinese texts on the habits and customs of Panpan is the *Wenxian tongkao*, by Ma Duanlin, inspired by the *Tongdian* Encyclopedia (Wheatley 1973: 49), but the two annals of the Tang provide additional information. In these we learn the names of two successive sovereigns, which is not of particular significance; we are also told that the king dwelt in a city without walls but surrounded by palisades made entirely of wood; that he received visitors while reclining on a gilded dragon-couch in the presence of kneeling vassals, had ministers (the name of four different ones are provided), and provincial officers, whom the text likens to Chinese prefects and sub-prefects. Nothing in all this contradicts what we have surmised about the political organization of the city-state. We are further told that the people—who lived mainly by the sea—were highly versed in Brahmanical writings, but in spite of this, also “greatly reverence[d] the Law of the Buddha,” that at the court were “numerous brahmans come from India in search of wealth,” who were “in high favour with the king,” but that at the same time, there were “ten monasteries where Buddhist monks and nuns studied their canon.” There follows a list of the Buddhist trinkets sent to the emperor of China under the Liang, which we have already discussed.

When all these pieces of historical information are brought together and interpreted, what emerges is a picture of a city-state that is not in principle very different, for example, from Dunsun, mentioned above, or others, like Chitu (see below, Chapter Eight), which have not been satisfactorily located. What is very different, however, is that this time these historical notes can be associated with a

number of archaeological remains that have been known for many years, and others that are still almost unknown—all of which are peculiar to the vicinity of the Bay of Bandon itself or to the bordering regions (especially the southern ones, which were to a greater or lesser extent controlled by the city-state). These remains are as much Brahmanical as Buddhist, which does not contradict what we have learned from the texts in question—although perhaps the Brahmanical remains from the area outnumber the Buddhist.

B. BRAHMANICAL RELIGIOUS REMAINS

I. Images of Viṣṇu

Many statues of Viṣṇu have appeared here and there, notably the one described in the preceding chapter as the oldest Brahmanical work ever found, not only in the Malay Peninsula, but in all of Southeast Asia (400 A.D.).

1. *The Chaiya Viṣṇu* (Fig. 1)

This piece, discovered in Chaiya itself (on the site of Wat Sala Tung), is mediocre in appearance. It is a small (67 centimetres) four-armed stone statue. The left rear arm is missing, and at the break, a section of the head is broken off on the corresponding side, where the symbol carried by the god would have been attached. Considering the symbols that were preserved in the other hands, the missing symbol must have been the lotus (*padma*), the circular symbol of the earth (*bhū*) or the disc (*cakra*). The arm raised in this way was intended to give an asymmetrical appearance to the image. On the same side, the forward arm is holding a conch (*śaṅkha*) pressed tightly against the hip. The two hands on the right side are almost identical; the rear arm, pointing downwards, holds a club with a broken upper part that may have originally counterbalanced the mass of the raised left rear arm; the other is in *abhaya mudrā*. Following are essential points from the description written by S. O'Connor (1972: 21), who recognized the importance of the piece:

The figure wears a tall mitre, decorated in bas-relief with an elaborate pattern of leaf and vine, with rosettes at the corners. The face is round and relatively small; the almond-shaped eyes are sharply incised, flat and without any interior definition of pupil or structure. They are extremely long and spread to the outer limit of the face. The ears are constructed in a remarkable fashion, presented in frontal view, and

joined to the mitre to secure them against fracture. In addition, the sculptor has greatly exaggerated their size, apparently in order to include the interior detail of the ear. From these large ears, and in the same charged scale, hang heavy rectangular earrings (*kundala*).

The torso is nude except for a flat torque, with an ornament of opposed S-shaped elements at the center. [...] In addition to the torque, the image wears simple armlets and bracelets.

The costume is a *dhōṭī*, a large rectangle of untailored cloth which can be draped in so many different ways that it is difficult to analyse this particular disposition with certainty. The same is true of the *kamarband* or waist-sash which holds the *dhōṭī* in place, and the broad sash which is looped through it. As well as we can make out, the pattern of circles and ellipses at the waist is the decorated upper edge of the *dhōṭī*; the lower edge encircles the legs between knees and ankles; and the heavy vertical fold of cloth that falls down in front between the legs is a pleated lateral edge of the *dhōṭī* (the other lateral edge is either combined with it, or more likely should be understood as forming a similar vertical fold in the rear). The more or less horizontal creases or pleats in the *dhōṭī* across the legs are rendered by means of incised lines. A narrow sash or *kamarband* encircles the waist twice; and as its two ends can be seen hanging down over the left thigh for a short distance we assume that it is distinct from the broad sash which is held in place by it. This broad sash appears to begin at the base of the statue near the left foot; though it is now broken, it evidently rose from there to the left hip, where it bulges out before passing under (?) the *kamarband*; then it falls in a semicircular arc in front of the thighs, passes under the *kamarband* at the right hip, re-emerges to form a puffed-out loop at the right hip, continues (across the back?) to the left hip, where it may have been tucked under the *kamarband*, and then presumably descended again to the base of the statue in the same mass of cloth in which it began.

This mass of cloth formed one of the three supports of the statue. On the right side the now broken club (*gada*) filled the same function. The third support is the main block of stone in which the legs and the heavy vertical fold of the *dhōṭī* between them are carved.

Considered overall, this is hardly a statue-in-the-round, since the rear portion of the image was really only sculpted to the level of the torso, where it is somewhat hollowed out, and extremely flat.

This piece had been variously evaluated and dated since its discovery (Cœdès 1928a: 25, Pl. X. Le May 1954: 80. Sastri 1949b: 92), and generally considered late and clumsy. P. Dupont (1955: 133-134) agreed with this assessment on the basis of a principle we have good reason to revise, that:

the statues that are closest to the Indian tradition in its most classic form are also the oldest [...], archaism therefore being seen as an expression of the greatest perfection in form.

At first, J. Boisselier (1959: 224) did not take exception to this view, because he considered the image to be “a work by mediocre artists” who had taken their inspiration from older models proper to the Peninsula and various works influenced by southern Indian art from the seventh and eighth centuries.

It took the efforts of S. O'Connor to do justice to this piece. He brought the statue together with works belonging to the art of the Kuṣāṇs of Mathurā, to the first Gupta art of the Bhinmāl region (Gujarāt), and to certain Brahmanical works from the valley of the Kṛṣṇa (the site of Yēlēśwaram). (O'Connor 1972: Ch. 3). The obvious relationship between all these pieces involving Northwest India as well as East India and—beyond the Bay of Bengal—the Malay Peninsula, gives reason to reflect on the complexity of the commercial networks behind this transfer of forms from one side of the continent to the other

2. *Viṣṇu images similar to the Chaiya Viṣṇu*

Three other statues of the same type were discovered in what we have surmised to be the territory of Panpan in the early period, two in the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat, the third in the area of Sichon. The first two are extremely close to the image of Chaiya in terms of technique, costume and iconography (Fig. 2, 3):

All three wear the same sort of high, decorated mitre. True, the figures from Nakhon Si Thammarat have taller mitres, which, unlike that worn by the Chaiya image, have inclined sides. But the differences are only relative and the similarities between the two are manifest. Again, all three images have earrings that rest on the shoulders, rendered on an almost oppressively heavy scale. All three images are nude to the waist, and all wear a similar long *dhoī*, marked with incised lines, and with a heavy vertical fold. All three have a similar, if not identical, system of sashes. (O'Connor 1972: 25).

These sashes are characterized in particular by a large loop of cloth in the front. In all three cases, the attribute of the conch is held tightly in the forward left hand, which is pulled down to the hip. The pieces are strictly frontal, and as O'Connor shows, their angular contours, which must have been even more marked when they were complete, are in clear opposition to their rigid, static, rigorously vertical appearance. Nevertheless, because of several minor

iconographic variants, O'Connor is inclined to propose a slightly later dating for these two statues than the date given to the Chaiya image—though still in the fifth century.

The third image (Fig. 4), found more recently in the region of Sichon, marks a slight evolution in relation to the preceding ones, while sharing with them many archaisms. In all three, the artists seem to have the same fear of passing from strict high relief to sculpture-in-the-round, but they have adopted different solutions. This image was initially furnished with a supporting arch at the level of the ears, which was intended to consolidate the position of the raised back arms: the left arm held the conch, now only a fragment; the right, which is almost entirely broken, must have been provided with the wheel or the lotus. Furthermore, the forward hands, which, however, are not detached from the hips, and are therefore unusually large, are both supported, the left one by the natural stay formed by the club resting on the base, the other hand by an artificial support matching the preceding attribute, though it is holding only a small ball representing the earth; but perhaps we need to see in the support a very stiff representation of a section of falling cloth. And finally, the feet are sculpted in high relief. However, the perfectly smooth *dhotī*, which preserves the archaism of the front loop, is given a more sober treatment than in the preceding images, and would have no front loop or section of cloth at the sides, unless we consider the support of the right forward arm to represent one of these. A vertical fold of cloth falls from the small almond-shaped knot of the belt, reaching the base, although it is not needed to provide support, because the feet are only sculpted in high relief. The mitre, like a flattened or truncated cone, is smooth, and the image wears no sculpted jewellery. These last iconographic features—aside from the loop of fabric at the front—give it a similarity to later images of Viṣṇu with which it also shares a certain approach to the rendition of the anatomy: for example, a tightly constricted waist set in opposition to large, round shoulders. In any case, this set of characteristics would tend to give the little statue (only 42 centimetres) a later date than that of the preceding ones: probably the end of the fifth century.

In addition to these four archaistically sculpted statues of Viṣṇu, others have appeared here and there on the periphery of Chaiya: at Khao Si Vichai, at Wiang Sa and all along the coast from Sichon to Nakhon Si Thammarat, and at Satingpra. Some of these—fortunately

preserved—works are imposing in size; others are only represented by fragments. Those that were discovered earliest were examined by P. Dupont in his study of the mitred Viṣṇu of Indochina, and particularly of Cambodia. (Dupont 1941, 1955). It is he who originally classified these works into three groups (A, B, C), a classification that remains useful, even if it has since become necessary to reassess the place of this or that statue within these groups, all of which are represented among the pieces we are considering.

Group A, the oldest (from the first half of the sixth century), contains images that wear a low, smooth mitre, which often flares at the top; the *dhotī* is long, and cinched in at the waist by an almond-shaped knot of cloth that draws the robe upward from the ankles and lets it fall in a vertical fold in the front; a horizontal sash encircles the hips.

3. *The Satingpra Viṣṇu* (Fig. 5)

This image, which was discovered at the southern limits of what may well have been Panpan, since it is from the region of Satingpra, has features that are unquestionably related to Group A, while preserving others that strongly link it to the preceding works, notably to the fourth Viṣṇu of this first series, which came to light near Sichon: the tightly cinched waist, the wide hips, and especially, at the level of the head, extra sections of stone disguised as a halo. The work is almost whole; only the feet and the lower part of the club are missing. We are inclined to date this image to the very beginning of the sixth century.

4. *Two Wiang Sa statues of Viṣṇu*

These two images also perfectly meet the criteria of Group A. One of them (148 centimetres high) (Fig. 6) is an already highly developed sculpture-in-the-round: the back of the statue was truly sculpted, and the feet are free from the mass. Nevertheless, the forward hands, though attached to the hips, were ‘held up’ by the club on the left side and the falling outer edge of the horizontal sash on the right, though this arrangement of the sash may merely have been conceived to match the club, since the hand only holds the symbol of the earth, as in the image from Sichon; another useless archaism is the end of the frontal vertical fold of cloth of the *dhotī*, which drops unnecessarily to the base. Both of the rear arms are broken, but they were not initially linked by a supporting arch, as there is no trace of an arch on the back of the mitre. The statue is particularly remarkable for the

sensitive rendering of the features of the face, which is smiling, and almost chubby, as well as the treatment of the body, which is beautifully proportioned, with a well-observed sense of volume, a rare characteristic in the statuary of the whole of Southeast Asia.

The other image from Wiang Sa⁴ (Fig. 7) is not a sculpture-in-the-round, but a high relief (131 centimetres tall). However, in spite of this feature, which enabled it to reach us almost intact, it reproduces unnecessarily the archaisms of the preceding image, which it resembles almost feature for feature: the forward hands on the hips, 'held up' by the club on the left and the section of cloth on the right, the frontal vertical fold of cloth of the *dhotī* that extends all the way to the feet. On the other hand, both rear arms are raised with no support from the head; they hold the conch on the left and the wheel on the right. The similarities between the two works, in both style and rendering, which suggest that they come from the same workshop, also justify our restoring the same two attributes to the preceding sculpture-in-the-round, as well as to the image of Viṣṇu from Sichon, of which only a remnant of the conch was preserved.

5. *The Khao Si Vichai Viṣṇu* (Fig. 8)

This statue, which also belongs to Group A, was discovered on the site of Khao Si Vichai some thirty kilometres south of Chaiya. The site is a small hill dominating the surrounding, very amphibian lower land of a delta that is linked with several rivers, among them the Menam Tapi, which comes up from the south, and the Khlong Phum Duang, which flows down from the heights of the Tenasserim Range. There is no doubt that there once existed on its summit an important Brahmanical sanctuary, of which several rare traces still existed in the past, but its remains, chiefly sculptural, were discovered in the vicinity. The fragment of statue is reduced to the torso and hips, but this is enough for us to make out the arrangement of the *dhotī*, cinched at the waist by an almond-shaped knot from which the frontal vertical fold of cloth comes down, with a horizontal sash at the level of the hips where the forward hands were joined, which features enable us to classify the statue it belonged to in Group A.

⁴ The origin of this statue, which is at present preserved in the National Museum of Bangkok, is no longer given as Wiang Sa, but as the province of Ayutthaya (it was formerly in the museum of this city); this is perplexing, as the first authors who studied it, right up to S. O'Connor, never doubted that it came from another Malay Peninsula site.

The absence of the head and all attributes in no way hinders the identification of the image with a Viṣṇu, since only the statues of this god were represented in this way.

6. *Bases of statues of Viṣṇu* (Fig. 9)

These were discovered in the near vicinity of Nakhon Si Thammarat. (O'Connor 1982). Reduced to the mere indication of the feet of the statue and three supports—the frontal fold of the *dhotī*, the end of the club, and finally, the hanging sash encircling the hips—the vanished images were almost certainly Viṣṇus, and what is more, they belonged to Group A; it is in fact in this group that the lower section of the hip sash usually reaches the base.

Group B as defined by Dupont contains the images of the god wearing a high, smooth cylindrical mitre, a long *dhotī* cinched at the waist with an almond-shaped knot from which the frontal fold of cloth falls, and a narrow belt of a wider fabric, tied in front in a little bowknot; the hips are encircled diagonally, from left to right, by another, wider sash that is tied on the right side in a large knot with loops and a falling section of material which, however, does not reach the base. The territory of ancient Panpan yielded two images belonging to this group.

7. *Two Khao Si Vichai images of Viṣṇu from Group B*

The first statue (Fig. 10), which is mostly preserved, is very large (170 centimetres). It is a sculpture-in-the round whose conception takes a further small step towards the complete freeing of the upper members in relation to the body. The forward left arm and hand, still attached to the hips, had leaned on the club, which has disappeared; however, the symmetrical member, which certainly had as its attribute the symbol of the earth, lacked a support, since the knot of the sash forming a single piece with the hand was not extended by a fold of cloth falling all the way to the base, though the frontal fold of cloth of the *dhotī* is attached to it. The rear arms have completely disappeared, but these were not supported (there is no trace of a reinforcing arch behind the mitre), and they surely occupied positions and carried attributes identical to those of the preceding images (the conch to the left, the wheel to the right). The statue gives a strong impression of slimness that is due to the lengthening of the legs and the treatment of the torso of the narrow waist; the features

of the face are rendered with expression. There are no jewels, but there are traces of gilding.

A second image (Fig. 11), sadly decapitated, and missing its rear arms, came to light at the same site. It is small in size (43 centimetres), but in spite of this, could have come from the same workshop as the previous image, given the strong similarity in the arrangement of the *dhotī*.

In general, the images in Group B are dated to the end of the sixth century, perhaps the beginning of the seventh.

Group C contains sculptures-in-the-round with a totally simplified costume that now consists only of the long *dhotī* cinched at the waist by an almond-shaped knot from which the folds of the gathered material fall; sometimes curved lines incised on either side of the statue indicate folds that are drawn up to the waist. The hip sashes have disappeared. The innovation in these statues is the treatment of the four arms, which from this period on are clearly separated from the body, in particular the two forward arms, which are no longer in contact with the hips. It is probable that this stylistic innovation, which came about through the slow evolution we have been observing, made the statues much more fragile, because the great majority of the Group C images that have come down to us have been reduced to bodies or to fragments of bodies.

8. *The Wat Chom Thong (Sichon) Viṣṇu* (Fig. 12)

This is the only image of the group that still has its head, which unfortunately is very eroded. The statue is small in size (58 centimetres), and in spite of stylistic traits that make it necessary to classify it in this group, it retains a derivative and not very dynamic appearance that hardly differentiates it from the fourth archaistic Viṣṇu found in the same region. (Fig. 4).

9. *The Wat Phra Narai (Tha Sala) Viṣṇu* (Fig. 13)

For the region, this is the most accomplished of the sculptural remains of this group, but it has neither feet nor arms nor head. The proportions of the statue are harmonious, with a sensitive rendering of muscles and body; the complete image must have been beautiful.

10. *Other vestiges from Group C* (Fig. 14, Fig. 15)

Besides the preceding statue, others even more partial and incomplete have come to light in various places: a torso on the same site

(Fig. 14) that is closely related to it, a fragment of slim hips (Fig. 15) under a *dhoti* that has the particular feature of replacing the long central fold of cloth with a smaller piece of material descending from under an almond-shaped knot and ending in a fishtail, very like the costume worn in certain Pre-Angkorian images (Avalokiteśvara from Rach-gia (South Vietnam), Viṣṇu from Chong Pisei (Cambodia)).

Another image, found at Khao Si Vichai (Fig. 16), which is reduced to the lower part of the body and an armless torso, belongs unquestionably to this group, though its generally heavy appearance and uncertain proportions (the pinched waist, the over-wide hips, and the enormous feet, which are not cut free from the mass of stone, but are protected from breakage by the unnecessary fall of cloth) leave us feeling that we are looking at a more archaic piece.

Of course we should bear in mind that beyond the obvious search for perfection and dynamism in the way statues in Peninsula workshops were rendered, which led to the stylistic evolution we have described, the least-gifted artists were hard put to reproduce the new designs, and remained attached to older, more cautious ways of working. The result is the very mixed quality of the pieces that have reached us, some of which preserve archaisms of a previous period. Thus an image that came to light in the region of Satingpra (Fig. 17), headless, lacking its four arms and its feet, undoubtedly belongs to this group (the torso is treated with a certain realism, the narrow hips, which show no trace of the attachment of forward arms, are draped in a long *dhoti* with a vertical fold of cloth in the front that is gathered at the waist by an almond-shaped knot); a belt has been added, consisting of two rolls of cloth with the ends tied at the front in a bow made of four symmetrically aligned loops.

11. *The Takua Pa Viṣṇu* (Fig. 18)

The most representative work of Group C was not discovered in the territory of the former Panpan, but on the west coast of the Peninsula, near the sites of Takua Pa—Ko Kho Khao, which we will describe at length in relation to the ninth century. These sites, at similar latitudes to those of Panpan, have been grouped with others in the region of Chaiya because of supposed transpeninsular contacts, which we have already claimed could not have had the importance that has been attributed to them. (See above, Chapter Two.) They will still be mentioned in this part of our study because the Takua Pa Viṣṇu is the

only work from this period found in the region, probably by mere archaeological chance, as there is little doubt that there were others.

This is one of the most impressive and accomplished of all of Southeast Asia's sculptures-in-the-round. In spite of its great height (202 centimetres), its arms, like its head, are largely separated from the body. The feet and ankles are also treated freely, with considerable realism. The only remaining archaism is the frontal fold of cloth of the *dhotī*, which falls all the way to the base, and, to a lesser extent, the support of the club that has disappeared from the left side. Sadly, the face is very damaged, but the torso and arms, which fortunately are preserved, enable us to appreciate their very natural rendering, while the long legs can be made out under the material of the clothing.

This spectacular image has been variously appraised by the art historians who have studied it since it was discovered by Lajonquière in the beginning of the last century (1909: 234). P. Dupont (1941: 239) saw it as a prototype of all other Southeast Asian images of Viṣṇu, directly influenced by the art of the Pallavas. He believed it to be an accidental work resulting from the influence of Tamil tradesmen in the region in the early period, whose presence is undeniable in the ninth century, as we will show. (See below, Chapter Eleven.) Dupont dated it to the sixth century. P. Krairiksh (1980: 28, Pl. 12) assigns the same date to it, seeing a link between the image and works of the Pre-Angkorian style of Phnom Dà A, and also because he considered the very realistic rendering of the body to be evidence of an early date. This view overlooks the coherent stylistic evolution of this production of Viṣṇu in the Malay Peninsula and the obvious heterogeneousness of the works within the three defined styles. In our opinion, there is no reason to go back on the assessment made by S. O'Connor (1968, 1972: Ch. IV). The author showed that the supposed affinities of the image with Pallava art were not strong, and that the statue fit perfectly into the coherent evolution of the images of the god in Southeast Asia that begin with the Chaiya representation and are intended to give a more and more dynamic appearance to the images; the Viṣṇu of Takua Pa is therefore not the prototype that some wished to see in it—in part, perhaps, because of its isolation—but rather the outcome of a development that O'Connor dates between 650 and 800 A.D., which brings it together with all the other images of Group C. We will offer some reservations concerning this dating in what follows.

Aside from the first three archaistic statues of Viṣṇu that we have discussed, it is noteworthy that none of the figures are wearing sculpted jewellery. The only explanation for this omission is the supposition that they were originally provided with removable jewels, a practice that still exists in India. (Filliozat & Pattbiramin 1966). The existence of these jewels in the early period is attested by an ancient inscription from Cambodia, found at Ponhea Hor, which dates from the time of Bhavavarman II, therefore to the middle of the seventh century. Dupont (1955: 143-146) describes it as follows: "In the section [of this inscription] in old Khmer figures a list, which is very incomplete today, of the jewels offered to the image of Viṣṇu Trailokyasāra, which constituted the principal object of the foundation." He quotes from G. Cœdès's translation of the text (1953: V, 5-6), which lists, Prévert-style:

Stones [precious stones] to adorn the diadem (*kirīṭa*): 13; to adorn the *phala*...stones for that: 31; 1 bracelet (*kaṭaka*), embossed, stones to decorate it: 54; bracelet...11; stone to embellish the *Śrīvatsa*: 1...embossed; stones to adorn the covering of the navel: 10; stones to adorn the ornament of the belt: 13; 1...of silver; 1 gold disk; 1 gold covering for the Earth; 1 embossed covering; 1 silver chain; x gold ankle rings; 7 gold *jmeḥ* flowers, 2 silver ones; ...94...; x silver *jmeḥ* flowers; 3 *saramābhū*; x candle-holders.

Here is written proof that the statues wore removable jewellery, and also sheaths of precious metal destined for the attributes that were sculpted in stone. This led Dupont (1955: 146) to emphasize that

the present appearance of a Pre-Angkorian statue-in-the-round is thus rather far from its ancient reality. Even setting aside the possibility that it had been painted, we must imagine the presence of gold-plated diadems or jeweled mitres, of armbands, of bracelets and rings, of one or two belts, of sheaths or coverings of precious metal. We even have reason to believe that there may have been [attributes] made entirely of metal, because the Hari-hara of Sambor Prei Kuk has its hands positioned for removable attributes to be placed in them.

We must also insist on the fact that the workshops of the Malay Peninsula produced aberrant statues of Viṣṇu in every period, and probably especially during the later period, because at that time, the artists had before their eyes the whole gamut of the creations of the past. For evidence of this, we need look no further than a stone statuette (Fig. 19) (39 centimetres) from a private collection in

Bangkok, which, although of unknown origin, could very well have come from a Peninsular workshop. If we go by its costume and the position of the rear hands on the hips, it should be classified in Group A; however, the treatment of the body and face are reminiscent of Javanese or Peninsular works from the eighth century, even the ninth, and it is wearing jewellery. It could be a late work in the production of mitred images of Viṣṇu, perhaps (given its size) made for a private chapel, for which an eighth-century sculptor would at least have copied a costume seen on older works, as well as jewellery, which was usually conceived as removable.

12. *The Wat Phra Phikanet head of Viṣṇu* (Fig. 20)

In the same vein, we should mention a small head of the god that came to light at Wat Phra Phikanet (Tha Chana), some twenty kilometres north of Chaiya. Its originality is as much in the rendering of the facial features as in the handling of the mitre. The mass of hair drawn across the brow, encircled with a diadem of jewels, is concealed under the mitre which, instead of being smooth and cylindrical, has a protruding upper edge, slightly rounded, surmounted by an unfortunately extremely damaged ornament that originally separated into diminishing tiers, probably suggesting the general shape of a lotus bud. In addition to this originality that sets it apart from all the other images, the features of the face are very distinctive: the joined line of the curved and protruding brows, the eyes with lowered lids and smooth contours, the wide mouth with raised corners and a slight smile, so many characteristics distinguishing this face from the chubbier and more hieratic features of the other local pieces. These features are in the Mōn tradition from the nearby region of Dvāravatī, but the style of the hair calls for comparisons with Pre-Angkorian art: the low relief image dated to the second half of the seventh century from the lintel of Tuōl Baset (Dupont 1955: Pl. XXVI A), and Cam art influenced by this tradition: the lintel of Mi So'n E1. (Boisselier 1963: Fig. 9; Le Bonheur 1994: Fig. 548). Based on these comparisons, a date at the end of the seventh century or the beginning of the eighth can be advanced for this head which, even so, retained an archaism that is almost unknown in the other works from the Peninsula, with the exception of the fourth archaizing Viṣṇu discovered in Sichon (Fig. 4): the supporting arch linking the head to the two raised rear hands, an archaism nonetheless found in Cambodia up to the Kulên style (ninth century). This piece,

discovered by chance during the seventies, is in private hands today and cannot be located, which is unfortunate, because it bears striking witness to the multiplicity of influences that fashioned the art of the Malay Peninsula, and also to the persistence throughout the centuries of sculpting techniques that defy all the art historians' efforts at logical classification and dating.

Eight hundred A.D. is probably a rather late date to assign to the most accomplished works of Group C, particularly to those found in the territory of the former Panpan (a reservation that excludes only the atypical image from Takua Pa); indeed, it was in the course of the eighth century, as we will discover (see below, Chapter Nine) that the city-state may have been subjected to the control of Śrīvijaya, and that this rising political entity may have imposed the teachings of the *Mahāyāna*—at least on the ruling classes. We can imagine that these circumstances could have constrained the local sculpture workshops to turn to a new type of production, because no major Brahmanical work seems to have been produced locally after this date.

II. *Liṅgas*

All the images of Viṣṇu that we have just examined, some of them spectacular, have concentrated the energies of art historians to the point of distracting attention from the fact that the territory of the former Panpan was also deeply involved in the cult of Śiva; in the absence of images, *liṅgas* from this cult have come to light there in considerable quantities. It is true that the immediate region of Chaiya—which, given the importance of its archaeological remains from the eighth and ninth centuries, we may suppose was the seat of government—hardly yielded any, while at least twenty have been counted along the coastal region between Sichon and Satingpra, in different states of preservation.

We know that although Śiva can be represented under anthropomorphic forms, his expression in the form of a *liṅga* is presented by the *Purāṇas* as superior to all others, whether because of their greater antiquity in relation to the images (Mani 1979: 727) or because the worship of these images is ineffectual if not accompanied by worship of a *liṅga*. The *Śiva-purāṇa* states in Chapter Nine in the clearest possible terms: “O dear sons, if a phallic emblem of this sort is

installed, I can be considered installed, though my idol is not installed”; and again: “The installation of the phallic image is primary and that of the embodied idol of Śiva is unfruitful if it has no phallic image.” (Shastri *et al.* 1969: 63).

1. All the *liṅgas* are conceived in the same way, in three distinct parts, of similar height: *brahmābhāga*, cubic, *viṣṇubhāga*, octagonal, and *rudrabhāga*, cylindrical or slightly turgid, with anatomical details rendered more or less realistically. Indeed, only one gives any real scope to the end part; it was initially conserved in the Śivaite temple of Nakhon Si Thammarat (the Ho Phra Isuan) (Fig. 21); today it is in the museum of the same town. The size of these pieces varies from 147 centimetres for the largest (Fig. 22) to 20 centimetres for the smallest (Fig. 23); seven stand (or stood) higher than one metre (two of these have lost their end section); six others are between 50 centimetres and one metre. Their sections at the base measure around twenty to thirty square centimetres. They have been the subject of several studies by O'Connor (1968, 1972, 1983), but their dating remains uncertain; however, there is no room for doubt that it should be roughly based on that of the mitred statues of Viṣṇu (fifth to eighth centuries), even if in certain parts of the Peninsula—we think in particular of Nakhon Si Thammarat, where a Śivaite cult has been maintained to the present day—some pieces may have been produced after these dates. Although we lack clear dating for them, we may have a better understanding of their chronology. After comparisons with similar pieces found in the territory of the former Funan, the following theory was advanced, in particular, and published, by L. Malleret (1959-63), I (texte): 377-378, I (Planches): Pl. LXXX, LXXXI): that the more naturalistic the rendering of the end part, the older the piece. This leads to the conclusion that the most realistic among the specimens could date from the fifth to sixth centuries, while those whose over-simplification shows them to be at the farthest remove from the probable original models would date to the seventh and eighth centuries. A thesis currently being written at the University of Paris III (Humbert-Droz) attempts to add several pieces of information to the iconography of these *liṅgas* by comparison with dated Indian pieces, and also through an intensive stylistic study of the lines figuring on the *rudrabhāga*; these, which represent the contour of the glans, link up in various ways to the frenum, which is itself depicted by two simple parallel incisions or by a bulge. This

work, then, singles out four typologies that would correspond to chronological stages in the development of the pieces, and would give them dates ranging from the fifth century to the beginning of the tenth century and beyond: 1. The lines of the glans form a triangular peak where they join with the frenum; 2. The lines form a dome encircling the top of the frenum; 3. The lines form a sharp angle with the frenum, which rises above them; 4. The lines describe half-arcs at their joining with the frenum that rises above them.

Among all these *liṅgas*, which are very similar, apart from the variations in the rendering of the details of their end part, and in their size, three are atypical. The first two (Fig. 23) are of similar conception and size (about twenty centimetres), each having a *rudrabhāga* that takes up two thirds of their height, treated in much the same way as the other *liṅgās*; the two other parts, cubic and octagonal, were of equal dimensions, and therefore small in size. The third piece (Fig. 24) consists only of a rounded end part, with no indication of a frenum, carved from the same block as the quadrangular ablution basin, from which all the *liṅgās* were originally inseparable, with only their end portion passing through an opening to the centre. We will speak later of these ablution basins, which have appeared in great numbers in the region. This one has no unusual features; it includes a copestone on its four sides, one of which was provided with a pouring spout to allow the liquids from the ceremonies to drain off.

2. *The Nongwai ekamukhaliṅga*

The only truly exceptional *liṅga* found in the territory of the former Panpan was discovered at Nongwai, a site located about twenty kilometres north of Chaiya. It is an *ekamukhaliṅga* (Fig. 25), that is, a *liṅga* with the face of Śiva on its end part, mostly hiding the traditional design of the frenum, of which only the tip is seen above the head; the head is also framed by the two oblique lines of the glans. In addition this piece is equipped with the two other parts, and all three are of the same dimensions. Its realism is weak, producing a disproportion in the parts to the advantage of the *rudrabhāga*, which then assumes a considerable size, but there is nothing simplistic about the treatment of the face of Śiva, which is broad and almost round, with almond eyes, a small mouth, and ears with distended lobes. The hair is pulled up towards the top of the skull, where it is drawn into a chignon (*jaṭā*) consisting of a group of curls (or braids)

raised up vertically, held tightly at the base by two rows of braids, and falling back weakly to the side. No realism has been applied to the rendering of this hair; a crescent is represented in light relief on the right side of the head. To top it all off, a necklace with a goldsmith's design adorns the neck.

S. O'Connor (1966b), after comparing the work with the pieces from Oc-eo and Cambodia, which he found more realistic in their treatment of the *rudrabhāga*—and which Malleret (1959: I, 379-380) has dated to the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth century—first proposed a relatively late date for it (seventh to eighth century), while nevertheless recognizing its relation to works of the Gupta period. Since then, P. Krairiksh (1980: 29, Pl. 14) has juxtaposed the hairstyle of the image with that of an Indian statue of Śiva from Rājasthān from the Gupta period, dated to the fifth century (Pal 1978: Cat. No. 21), and compared the composition of the whole piece to that of a sixth century *ekamukhalinga* from Madhya Pradesh (*Ibidem* Cat. No. 51)—noting in particular the presence on both statues of the crescent moon on the side of the brow and the string of pearls (*ekāvalī*). As a result of these similarities, the author proposed a sixth-century date for the piece from Nongwai, a date which has since been accepted by O'Connor in a subsequent article (1983/86: 161). This new assessment is not without consequences for the dating of *liṅgas* in general, as O'Connor indicates: if we accept the postulate that the more realistic the treatment of the *rudrabhāga* is, the older the piece is, then the *ekamukhalinga* of Chaiya, which shows little concern for this type of realism, would be nowhere nearly the oldest piece from the region, in spite of its estimated sixth-century date; in particular, the *liṅga* already discussed from Ho Phra Isuan from Nakhon Si Thammarat (Fig. 21) would now be older (fifth century?).

III. Ablution Basins and Pedestals

It has been impossible to show a specific link between any of the statues or *liṅgas* that have been discovered and one or another of the roughly twenty ablution basins with mortises that have come to light in various places in varying degrees of preservation.

These pieces are just like the basin (Fig. 24) described earlier in connection with a *liṅga*: square-shaped, with raised edges ending in a

copestone, one side of which is extended outward to form the overhang of the pouring spout. (Fig. 26). They originally constituted the upper part of a pedestal that was probably dressed with brick, into which fit, through a mortise, the tenon of the images, or the two first parts of the *liṅga*, of which only the *rudrabhāga* could be seen at the level of the basin.

Their size varies, ranging from about 54 x 54 centimetres for the smallest basin that is still intact (from Wat Hua Tung, now in the museum of Nakhon Si Thammarat) to 128 x 128 centimetres (the basin of the ruined Śivaite temple of Nakhon Si Thammarat). The stone is about 10 centimetres thick.

The central mortises are usually quadrangular, most often square, sometimes round, and they pierce vertically through the stone; their dimensions, which vary, are about 15 x 15 centimetres, in exceptional instances, more (28 x 28 centimetres for the mortise of the basin in the Śivaite temple of Nakhon Si Thammarat). They often fit into the centre of a light circular bulge in the stone, from another circle incised into it, or from a second, shallower, round mortise. As we can see, none of these arrangements or dimensions (with the sole exception of the piece just described) enables us to imagine that these basins could have been associated with one or the other of the locally-discovered *liṅgas*, whose sections are much larger (generally twenty to thirty centimetres). They must therefore have supported images we can imagine in any way we wish.

The only ablution basin that we can associate with a *liṅga* without a shadow of a doubt is found at Nakhon Si Thammarat, in the ruins of an ancient temple (to which we will refer later) that has been reconstructed and rearranged into a Śivaite place of worship. (Fig. 27). The unique feature of this basin is its octagonally-cut central mortise (of around 43 centimetres), into which the middle part of the *liṅga* devoted to Śiva would originally have slotted. Another unusual feature is that this basin is circular (125 centimetres in diameter); it has a wide border and is equipped with a large pouring spout. The Śivaite community of Nakhon Si Thammarat, which has apparently never ceased to exist in this city, and worships today in a place that may always have been a temple consecrated to this god, has brought this basin back into use, installing a *liṅga* in the middle of it (with only the end portion visible); the *liṅga* section of the *rudrabhāga* is much smaller than that of the octagonal mortise.

The last pieces from the territory of the former Panpan in the early period that are worth mentioning are three monolithic pedestals, one (Fig. 28) associated with the sanctuary of Khao Ka (Sichon), another with the Tha Khwai (Sichon) sanctuary, and the third with the site of Wiang Sa. We have already said that the ablution basins formed only the end section of these necessary supports for the images, most of which were probably clad with brick, the preferred building material of the region; indeed it is hardly likely that, as in Cambodia, for example, the middle sections were sculpted in stone and assembled. These monolithic pedestals include a base with sober mouldings (very high, as in the case of Khao Ka, where the base is also combined with a broken element that must have served as the support for a receptacle to collect liquids draining from the pouring spout positioned just above it), a central section with pilasters projecting out to a greater or lesser extent, or even just adorned with a simple decorative strip (Wiang Sa), and a small cornice that more or less merges into the ablution basin. The square central mortises of these three pedestals, all rather small, most certainly served to fix the tenons of statues, not of *liṅgas*.

IV. Gaṇeśa

The region of Satingpra yielded an image of this god that could well be the oldest representation ever discovered in the Malay Peninsula (the end of the sixth century), because of its naturalism and the simplicity of its ornaments. (Fig. 29). The right knee of the god is raised, and the left leg folded in front, in the attitude known as the position of royal ease (*mahārājalīlāsana*). It has four arms whose hands are equipped with barely identifiable attributes, as in the case of the lower right hand, which is drawn down and placed on the knee; the corresponding left hand holds the cake (*modāka*), symbol of supreme wisdom, which the elephant god nibbles at with its trunk; the two upper hands, at the level of the ears, may have held the conch (on the right side) and the noose (on the left). This, however, is pure conjecture. The image has neither hairdo nor indeed any jewels, only a string of pearls around its neck. The sacred sash (*vajñopavīta*) hangs down from the left shoulder. The belt of its robe is in the form of a serpent (*nāga*), which is the characteristic of the god. All of this is rendered quite cursorily from a reddish block of stone, so much so

that the work could be considered a mere high-relief. These features, added to the almost total absence of jewellery and a certain naturalism in the rendering, justify our considering it very old for the archaeological region of the Peninsula. In India, it would be placed in the Gupta period; several examples of Indian Gaṇeśas that are considered to belong to this period resemble it. Some Pre-Angkorian images of Gaṇeśa (Malleret 1959-63: I, Pl. LXXXVc) and others from Oc-eo and Tuôl Phak Kin (Dupont 1955: Pl. XXId) share the same simplicity. None of these images wear diadems or jewellery like those found on the later images from the Angkorian period.

V. Brahmanical Architectural Remains (Doc.14)

These Brahmanical religious objects were sometimes discovered in direct association with the ruins of brick temples in extreme states of deterioration. Thus the two major sites where the best-preserved statues of Viṣṇu came to light, Khao Si Vichai and Wiang Sa, have preserved no coherent ruins. The first revealed the traces of a sanctuary at the top of the hill of the same name (some twenty metres in height), consisting of brick mixed with several architectural elements in stone; the second also displayed brick remains, which were examined for the first time by Lajonquière, who even provided a plan of them (1912: 139-144, Fig. 29). Among them he describes

the ruins of a little temple made of brick, square—with the correct orientation according to the cardinal points—which has been reduced to about the level of the base of the vaulting. The earth, which is composed of clay and sand, completely covers what remains of it, and only several bases of the vaulting show through a very dense thicket. The cella certainly measured no more than two metres in width. (1912: 141).

When Q. Wales returned to the site in 1934 (Wales 1935: 17-19), he tried without much success to find the vestiges his predecessor had described, attempting several probes, perhaps in the neighbourhood of the sanctuary Lajonquière had indicated, but he rapidly gave up the effort,

owing to the rotten condition of the bricks, which could not with certainty be distinguished from the fallen broken bricks of the walls.

He had been told that these bricks had been more numerous “before the monks had removed them to build and repair their monastery.” This last factor, in relation to several sites that never went out of use

throughout the centuries, helps us to understand how their structures came to be definitively ruined.

The region of Chaiya similarly yielded a number of structural remains of this sort, which for the most part have not been formally identified and dated. Because this part of the former Panpan contained a great abundance of Buddhist material, as we will see, the tendency, probably misguided, in the absence of specific archaeological digs, has been to list them in this same category.

As might be expected from the distribution of the *liṅgas* and the many fragments of statues of Viṣṇu, it is the coastal region between and including Sichon and Nakhon Si Thammarat that has yielded the greatest number of temple ruins that can be attributed with some certainty to exclusively Brahmanical beliefs, since a number of objects related to Brahmanist religious worship were indeed found in close association with these ruins. In this way it has been possible to locate the sites of almost thirty ruins. Two of them are of great size, with plans of considerable complexity, the sites of Khao Ka (Sichon) and Mok Lan (Tha Sala).

The site of Khao Ka is located on a knoll some seventy metres in height that dominates the low valley of Khlong Tha Thon. Recent digs, incompletely reported to this day (Fine Arts Department 1997), have revealed four brick structures that have not been dated with certainty. Their reconstruction is being completed in spite of all the uncertainties left unresolved by digs carried out on very damaged ruins. A brick terrace, 49 x 37 centimetres at the level of the top of the hill, supported the principal structure (22 x 18 metres), opening out to the west through a central stairway beyond which, in our opinion, the reconstruction has failed to offer convincing solutions. It seems nonetheless that the building must have been of mixed construction, half in hard materials for the foundations, half in perishable materials, as is attested by the numerous stone pillar bases with a central mortise, which were distributed at regular intervals across the surface area of the structure; they have a somewhat flattened appearance, which causes them to be mistaken at times for ablution basins for use with *liṅgas* and statues. Such an architectural peculiarity makes this temple an exception on the east coast of the Isthmus of Kra. Until there is proof to the contrary, we can assert that only the structures of South Kedah, and probably of the island of Kho Khao (Takua Pa), systematically adopted this type of construction, which

appears to be linked to an architectural syncretism between the Indian and Malay traditions. These particular characteristics (the almost square plan at the ground level, the stone pillar bases distributed across the whole surface area) suggested to the Thai archaeologists a link with certain structures of the Western Cālukyas at Aihōḷe (seventh to eighth centuries), and particularly with the Ḳāḍ Khān temple, which is characterized by a vast quadrangular hypostyle surface. (Fine Arts Department 1997: 65-69). This link is not uninteresting, and could be justified from the point of view of dates, but it is questionable at the architectural level, since the Cālukya temples were built in hard materials from top to bottom, with refinements never known to the one at Khao Ka.

The Mok Lan site has been dug for ten years, resulting in a partial report from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand. (Fine Arts Department 1993). Severely damaged brick structures opening out to the east (18 x 18 metres in the case of the largest) have been uncovered. The site has never ceased to be occupied, in a religious as well as in a secular capacity, and the two aspects are intertwined, which makes interpreting them very difficult. There is little doubt that in the early period covered in this chapter, the site was already occupied by a sanctuary, about which we can say nothing, since it has not been clearly identified.

All the other architectural vestiges from the region of the former Panpan are small, and appear, or appeared (agricultural work, or local bridge and road repairs have got the better of them in recent decades) to be hillocks of limited scope (several metres in circumference at the most, by one to two metres in height), composed of large bricks (37 to 40 x 20 to 22 x 7 to 9 centimetres on average).

a. In addition to the bricks, other architectural elements that are often found on these sites are thresholds and doorframes, assembled in a way that seems to imitate in stone the techniques used for wood. (Fig. 30). This is why the doorframes—which are stones in one piece that can reach and exceed one metre by around 40 to 70 centimetres, with a thickness of 9 to 15 centimetres—include at their ends tenons that fit into the square mortises of the thresholds and probably also the lintels, although these could have been carved from wood. Certain thresholds did not have square mortises of this type, and the doors in question were therefore not fixed into doorframes, but all of

them were also hollowed out to produce round mortises in which the pivot pins of the double leaves of the door turned until the door came to rest against a slight rise in the sill. The difference in size between the various mortises of these thresholds is never very great (68 to 77 centimetres, but 118 centimetres at Khao Ka) for stones with very variable dimensions (they can reach two metres in width, 82 centimetres in depth, and some 15 centimetres in thickness). In spite of the considerable dimensions of these stones, which are all in one block (though not very thick), the doors were still rather low, and fit into modest doorframes, and unless a person were small, it would certainly have been necessary to bend over in order to pass through them.

b. The structure of the upper part of these doors remains problematical. Indeed, no significant stones have been found that could have served as lintels, unless we imagine that some of the pieces we are calling thresholds actually had the function of lintels. The existence of the tall doorframes with tenons seems to call for a lintel; otherwise, how can we explain their purpose?

Perhaps a mixed technique was used (bricks and integrated wood) with corbelled roofing, or, more likely, with a wooden roof frame. What is sure is that some of the temples had added refinements, with doorframes made of stone, while others did not, as brick was always the favourite material. The excavation of one of these temples made it possible at least to define the appearance of a floor plan on the ground, and to gain a sense of the thickness of the walls. In an article written in 1935 that has already been mentioned in connection with *lingas* and ablution basins, Q. Wales (1935: 22-23, Fig. 3, Pl. VIII) described the ruins of a Śivaite temple at Nakhon Si Thammarat. He did not think it very old, as, in his view, the remaining walls were made of reused bricks. The plan he drew of it, in its simplicity (a modest *cella* of 2.6 x 1.9 metres) with walls nearly a metre thick, which are slightly redented at the level of the two corners of their facades, could still correspond roughly to the plan of the temples whose remains we are examining. In our opinion, it is important to avoid attributing to these sanctuaries features that would indicate more refinement than they actually had. Indeed, these ruined structures give us the impression of entering into what B. Dagens (1994: 260), in a study on the Indian temple in Southeast Asia, calls the 'minimum programme of the temple,' which he defined as follows:

a habitation destined for a god whose permanent presence is assured by a regular service of worship executed around a material representation that may be an image or a symbol. We may add that this service is accomplished by an officiant who acts in favour and in the name of a community whose other members have the “passive” role of spectators and sponsors.

This ‘minimum programme’ implies the presence of a *cella*, that is, a room where the representation of the tutelary of the temple is installed; and we must remember that this *cella*, even in important temples, was never very large, and sometimes very small indeed. The same author writes:

This is easily explained, because it is not a place of meeting for the faithful: it is enough that it contains the representation of the god, and that the officiant may conduct a service around this representation, and before it. In the cases of cellas of modest dimensions, it is often from the door that the officiant carries out the rituals. The dimensions are based on those of the image (to which they are generally linked in a proportional relationship), possibly because of the requirements of the service, and finally because of architectural constraints. It is especially a question of constraints linked to the roof covering of the *cella*: the use of vaulting strictly speaking is totally exceptional, that of a frame made with roof timbers is very localized; the covering of the *cella* is thus generally assured by a flat roof (with limits in the weight it can carry implied by the almost general absence of intermediate supports) or by a mechanism of corbelling (or *tas de charge*), that is a mechanism as heavy as the space to cover is wide (which very often involves a thickening of the peripheral walls of the *cella* that support it. [...]) We might add that the interior mechanism of this *cella* remains very simple. Apart from the pedestal that bears the divine representation, the only element that is almost always present is the mechanism that makes it possible to evacuate to the outside of the *cella* the liquids poured on the god during the service. It is so important that these are found even in rock temples where setting it in place is hardly easy. (Dagens 1994: 260-261, text and Notes 3 & 4).

Dagens adds that:

the representation of the god is most often placed in the center [of the *cella*], that this room is not necessarily obscure, that it may have several cardinal doors, etc. In connection with this last point, it is nevertheless important to state that when there is only one door to the *cella*, it is always—except in rare cases—situated facing the god.

And the author concludes his examination of the ‘minimum programme’ of the temple with the following summary:

Therefore the cella is above all an interior space; its architectural dressing is more or less developed. At the very least it is presented as an assembling of four walls, one of which has an opening for a door, and which supports some sort of roof covering. The resulting building can be considered an elementary temple; we may add that statistically, this model is the most widespread in India, because most of the temples of the village divinities are limited to this. (Dagens 1994: 261).

What we see in the majority of the ruined temples we are discussing is nothing more than the minimum, elementary religious structure described by B. Dagens. These temples were certainly built in the earliest period, and probably continued to be constructed almost to the present day, to judge by the sanctuary in Nakhon Si Thammarat itself—the Buddhist city par excellence. Art historians have had a tendency even to the present day to give their attention only to works of a certain prestige. The result is an almost distorted view of the fundamental religious beliefs of the populations of certain parts of the Indian world as well as of the Indianized world, based on their artistic creations. The beliefs of the ruling class, in general the only group capable of building great structures, were not always those of the people, who nonetheless inspired a whole series of architectural and sculptural creations, certainly modest, but probably more highly honoured and more alive than the ‘official’ creations.

Q. Wales expressed a similar view when he visited the spot in the region of Tha Sala—a site that has since utterly disappeared—where the statue known as the Viṣṇu of Wat Phra Narai was discovered. (Fig. 13).

I believe it gives an idea of the sort of place in which these VIIth-VIIIth century images were often originally set up. The site is [...] on a rough road [...]. Most of the bricks from the site, roughly a hundred yards south of the road, had been used to make it up [...]. The place is an island in the padi fields measuring about forty by a hundred yards, insufficient for any habitation site, and there were no potsherds. Though so despoiled, the place was of interest because it indicated the sort of isolated spot at which I believe such small sanctuaries were often built. In India, besides town and village temples, ‘one finds many erected in isolated spots, in woods, on the highways, in the middle of rivers.’ (Dubois & Beauchamp 1905: 577).

In such cases we may never know the whereabouts of the villages whose people brought them their offerings, or perhaps they depended entirely on wayfarers. What seems evident, however, is that the whole of the fertile lands of ancient Tambralinga, from Chaiya southwards, must have been dotted with Indianized communities quite by the Vth or VIth century A.D. (Wales 1974: 40).

The site of Ban Hua Thon (Khlong Tha Chieo, Sichon), among others, is no different from the one described by Wales, isolated among the rice paddies at the foot of Khao Phrong.

c. Finally, let us take note of several other particularities of these ruined temples. First of all, a basin devoted to ritual uses is almost always found in their immediate proximity—usually to the east. It is doubtful that these basins were ever provided with facing, given the economy of means that seems to have governed the construction of the temples themselves. In other respects, the temples shared with their Indian or Indianized counterparts the existence of a deposit reliquary. One of them, the temple of Suan Por Iad (Khlong Tha Khwai, Sichon), recently yielded, by chance, in the course of the agricultural work that destroyed it, the remains of one of these deposits that must have been located in the middle of the *cella*. It consists of lotus flowers (Fig. 31), the largest of these made of silver (originally 7.5 centimetres in diameter), the smallest of gold (1.5 centimetres—three almost intact, the others reduced to petals), and a tortoise cut from a leaf of gold on which several lines are incised (5.5 centimetres long). It is of course impossible to suggest a date for such tenuous objects. Similar pieces have been found frequently in the deposit reliquaries of many temples in Southeast Asia (in Java and Sumatra in particular (Miksic 1990: 41-52, Fig. 46, p. 40), and at Oc-eo (Malleret 1959-63: III, Pl. III)). Most often these are just cut gold leaves on which certain details have been indicated by engraving or embossing. The lotus flowers are treated in the same very basic manner, which sets apart the examples discovered at the nearby site of Sichon as different, at least less ‘primitive’ than the types that are usually found. Two Brahmanical temples in South Kedah have also yielded objects of this sort. (See below, Chapter Twelve.) We should perhaps consider these small objects as being linked to the god who was honoured in the temple. Of course the god that comes to mind is Viṣṇu, whose tortoise Kūrma is one of the most famous avatars, and for whom the lotus is one of the possible attributes. Nevertheless, the literature of the *Āgamas*, which sets forth the true Śivaite doctrines, records the presence of the image of a tortoise in the deposit reliquary positioned over the stone of Brahmā that marks the middle of the *cella*, in the axis of the *liṅga* embedded in its pedestal. The presence of this tortoise emphasizes the assimilation of the *liṅga* to the centre of the world, just as the name *kūrmaśilā*, one

of the names given to the stone of Brahmā, also establishes this centrality. (Barazer-Billoret 1993-94: 59).

In any case, the construction of these temples, however modest, can never have been left to the whim of an architect. The building of an Indian temple is a serious affair, with a multitude of ritual operations that culminate in the installation of the sovereign god of the building in the *cella* made to house his image. Many treatises on Indian architecture describe these complex rituals. For an appreciation of this subject, we refer the reader to the translation and commentary of one of the best known of these, the *Mayamata*. (Dagens 1970 & 1976). It has been suggested recently (Srisuchat A. 1997) that the distribution of these places of worship linked to Śiva or Viṣṇu in the region between and including Sichon and Tha Sala was not left to chance, but had proceeded from a design whose rules were as complex as those governing the actual creation of a temple. According to this theory, the sanctuary situated on the hill of Khao Ka would have been the centre of a Śivaite *maṇḍala* or *śivabhūmimaṇḍala* in a geographical environment in which the other sanctuaries dedicated to Śiva or Viṣṇu would have been placed near one of the many rivers flowing down from the nearby mountain, in a location that left nothing to improvisation. The theory is attractive, but it seems to us inappropriate for the picture we have gained of the features of the temples and the ancient societies in this region. The builders were surely anxious to conform to the Brahmanical rules newly adopted by the secular authorities, but in our opinion they were still too unsophisticated to adapt the creation of their village sanctuaries to such complex notions.

Taken altogether, these vestiges, Viṣṇaite as much as Śivaite, show that Hinduism was heavily implanted in the region of the former Panpan in the early period. Nevertheless, as the Chinese texts cited in the beginning of this chapter showed, Buddhism is also attested there by several remains that can also be dated to this early period. These are nonetheless much rarer than the Hindu remains. They were discovered on the same sites as the ones we have just discussed, or on adjoining sites. Their dates have been much debated, because, as we will see, the stylistic influences they display are multiple, and difficult to analyse.

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CHAPTER SIX

PANPAN

FROM THE 5TH TO THE 8TH CENTURY: BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS REMAINS

The Buddhist religious remains of Panpan consist primarily of images, particularly of statues in different sizes, and also tablets and votive *stūpas*. The architectural ruins identified as Buddhist have always been attributed to later periods. Doubtless this is not accurate; surely there still exist in the territory of the former Panpan structures that painstaking archaeological excavation and research might enable us to assign to the period covered in this chapter. We must nevertheless take into account the fact that it is buildings, of whatever type, that suffer most from the passage of time, and that, in keeping with a Buddhist view of reality, these have never been maintained very carefully on a daily basis, but rather ‘touched up’ from century to century, when not abandoned and doomed to disappear or be replaced by a new structure.

A. IMAGES OF TRADITIONAL BUDDHISM

First we will examine a number of works that appear to be related to traditional Buddhism. Their iconography, their filiation, and thus their dating are not easy to establish.

1. *The Wiang Sa Buddha* (Fig. 32)

One of the oldest pieces that has come to light appears to be a small high relief representing the Buddha. Q. Wales discovered it in 1934 at Wiang Sa (Wales 1935: 18), near the brick structure he was attempting to excavate. He considered it to be from the Gupta period, probably dating to the sixth or seventh century, but thought it not very informative historically because its small size (16.5 centimetres) made it theoretically possible for it to have been brought from some distance to this site where images of Viṣṇu have been discovered. Convinced that the two great Indian religions had never been able to coexist, he imagined that the priests of the Brahmanical sanctuary had preserved it in the temple as a pious curiosity.

The right hand of the Buddha is lowered in *varadamudrā*, while the left, which is now missing, would have been raised to the height of the shoulder in a movement that lifted the robe. This robe covers both shoulders, an arrangement which, like the way the body is rendered through the nearly transparent fabric, is reminiscent of features of the statues from the school of Sārnāth under the Guptas. Nevertheless, a certain clumsiness in the execution (the right arm and hand are both too long) may leave the impression that the work is not Indian. A. Griswold (1966: 62-65), who studied the piece, also noticed the weakness of the bump of the *uṣṇīṣa* in contrast to its clear outline, and suggested that the work could have been the creation of a Peninsular workshop from the end of the fifth century or the beginning of the sixth, executed after the model of imported images that have disappeared today, like the one offered to Prince Damrong Rajanubhab by the Indian government, which is now in the Bangkok National Museum. This piece appears to have been the model used by the author of this little high-relief, so great is the resemblance between the two. We are personally inclined to date it to the same period.

The fragments of votive tablets representing the Buddha in the same attitude and wearing the same accoutrements can probably be dated to the same period. (Fig. 33). They would then be the oldest ever found in the Peninsula. They were discovered in a cave in the region of Krabi (Tham Khao Khanab), that is, on the west coast. If we speak of them here, it is not only because of this iconographic comparison, but also because this region seems to have been the point of departure for a transpeninsular route towards Panpan, for which the site of Wiang Sa would have been a way-station. We have already referred to this. (See above, Chapter Two.)

2. *The Sichon head of Buddha* (Fig. 34)

A small head of Buddha (9 centimetres) found in the vicinity of Sichon could be equally old (fifth century). Unfortunately, it is badly deteriorated, but its round face, its hairstyle with outsized curls and its barely indicated *uṣṇīṣa* suggest a link with the art of the valley of the Kṛṣṇa (India) (third to fourth century), which has often been cited as a possible explanation for the appearance of a number of works, in particular in bronze, that have been found here and there throughout Southeast Asia. In the last few years it has been acknowledged that if there were a true filiation between these scattered pieces and the

iconographic tradition known as Amarāvātī, the models, like their copies, could be much later than previously believed (seventh to eighth century) in comparison to the first works produced in this style. This little head, however, has an aura of antiquity that inclines us to see it as one of the first works in this style to have been produced locally.

3. *Statue of Buddha* (Fig. 35)

This is another Buddhist work of ambiguous style. It is a small stone statue of Buddha (60 centimetres high), unfortunately also badly damaged, with a Peninsular origin that has not been confirmed, but is probable. We mention it here because it is related to the preceding piece by the treatment of its head; this head, however, was provided with a halo, a feature which, combined with the position of the left hand placed on the chest, also suggests a link with the art of Amarāvātī. Nevertheless, the fact that the robe lacks any indication of folds implies an influence from Gupta art, and therefore a date that could not be earlier than the fifth century.

4. *Bronze head and torso of Buddha* (Fig. 36)

This head and torso of Buddha found at Khuan Saranrom (Phunphin, Surat Thani) is also very eroded. The round face, the hairstyle formed of wide curls with a weak *uṣṇīṣa*, the traces of a halo on the shoulder, the pleated robe, all speak once again for a link with the school of Amarāvātī, a connection proposed by P. Krairiksh (1980: Pl. 9), who was the first to publish a photograph of the work, dating it to the end of the fifth century. U. von Schröder (1990: Pl 42A) does not deny this possible filiation, but sees the piece as coming from a later period (sixth to seventh century). He does not rule out a parallel influence from the end of the Anurādhapura school, which we know to be iconographically very close to the preceding school. We are inclined to agree with his views.

5. *Bronze statuette of Buddha from Wat Chom Thong* (Sichon)

The iconographical examination of this piece also led to very contradictory datings, ranging from the fifth to the ninth century. (Fig. 37). The earliest date (Diskul (ed.) 1980: 21, 51, Pl. 1) takes into consideration the arrangement of the robe—including several indications of incised folds, which is in the Amarāvātī tradition—and the sensitive rendering of the svelte body through the piece of clothing, which is of Gupta inspiration. The later date (Krairiksh 1980a: Pl. 6) would be

justified by the fact that this composite rendering and the mixture of influences points to productions in the later style of the same school. We do not believe that the piece has the antiquity that some have wished to attribute to it, around the seventh century. U. von Schröder gives it this date, which he also extends to the eighth century (1990: Fig. 43F); he discerns a number of Singhalese influences in it, without specifying what particular details would justify this impression.

6. *Statue of seated Buddha from Wat Phra Barommathat (Chaiya)*

This stone figure of Buddha (Fig. 38) seated in *virāsana* and in *dhyānamudrā* on a lotus blossom is larger than the previous images (104 centimetres). It is intact, and remarkable for its polish, the likely result of a late lacquering, of which almost nothing remains. The beautifully proportioned head has almost no *uṣṇīṣa*, and leaves a strong impression of asceticism. After studying the piece, P. Dupont (1959a: 245, Fig. 477) expressed the view that it represented “an iconographic and stylistic tradition frankly foreign to that of Mōn art,” which was the object of his study; he saw in it an influence from the art of the valley of the Kṛṣṇa, as well as from the Anurādhapura School in Śrī Laṅkā during the fifth and sixth centuries. He was certainly thinking of a piece like the one found in Toluville (Anurādhapura), in the Colombo Museum. (Snellgrove (ed.) 1978: Pl. 96). The statue is also very close to a work of similar conception, unfortunately headless, discovered in the territory of the former Funan. (Vat Romlok, Angkor Borei. Ill. in Boisselier 1955: Pl. 89A) It may date from the sixth century and belong in the setting of a traditional Buddhist sect that used Sanskrit script, which was represented in Cambodia from the reign of Rudravarman (514-540). What we have said of the ‘political’ ties that linked Panpan with Funan a century earlier does not expressly contradict this theory.

7. *Stone statuette of Buddha from Satingpra (Fig. 39)*

This statuette (7 centimetres high) is much like the previous image: the attitude is the same, the *mudrā* and the robe are the same. The technique is nonetheless more awkward (a more massive head with earlobes reaching to the shoulders, and heavier features, notably a large jaw). The *uṣṇīṣa*, however, is almost entirely absent. A parallel could also be drawn between this statuette and works from Funan, such as the statuette discovered at Son Tho (Tra Vinh Province in Cochinchina. Ill. in Dupont 1955: Pl. XLVIA), or the one that came

to light in Phnom Thmei (Kong Pisei, Cambodia). Ill. in Snellgrove 1978: Pl. 117). It can be considered to be slightly later than the preceding one (from the end of the sixth century).

8. *Statues of Buddha in the Dvāravatī style*

The whole region of the former Panpan also yielded a series of works directly linked to the first art of Dvāravatī (seventh and eighth centuries), and therefore to a form of Buddhism that was close to its origins, and probably imported. These are statues of the standing Buddha, all seriously damaged and, sadly, decapitated, that share the same frontality, the same symbolic gesture of the two raised hands (undoubtedly in *abhaya mudrā*), and a similar rendering of the body through a transparent monastic costume that is only indicated by the folds of cloth that fall down the sides from the raised arms and by the characteristic loop of the lower edge of the *uttarāsaṅga* in the front.

a. The oldest statue (Fig. 40) seems to be the one found at Wat Huan Yan (Nakhon Si Thammarat), because of the realistic treatment of the body as seen through the robe; it could date from the very beginning of the seventh century.

b. Two other images (Fig. 41, 42), found at Wat Keo and Wat Wiang (Chaiya) can be considered more recent (from the middle of the seventh century) because the body is now rendered in a more simplistic fashion.

c. Another beautiful stone statue of Buddha (Fig. 43), found at Wat Yai, Ban Ko (Nakhon Si Thammarat), which is stockier in appearance, with a somewhat large head, and forearms that are barely detached from the body, can be dated to the eighth century. These same features are found on a small decapitated image discovered in the region of Kanchanadit, farther to the north. (Fig. 44). And finally, also datable to this period, a seated Buddha under a *nāga* flanked by two *stūpas* can be seen in the Museum of Wat Phra Borommathat in Nakhon Si Thammarat. (Fig. 45).

d. A head of Buddha (Fig. 46) belonging to this first Dvāravatī style survived at Wat Phra Phrom (Tha Chang, south of Chaiya). It is characterized by a broad face with full cheeks marked by the combined movements of the joined arches of the eyebrows, the eyes with undulating lids, and the lips; the hair is styled with large curls surmounted by a high *uṣṇīṣa*. Like one of the preceding statues, it can be attributed to the beginning of the seventh century.

9. *Wheels of the Law*

The influence of the art of Dvāravatī art is still attested locally by the existence of two fragments of the Wheel of the Law, a creation that is eminently characteristic of this civilization: one at Tambon Tung (Chaiya), in stone, the other in the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat, in terracotta. The first fragment, and the most interesting (Fig. 47), was originally part of a Wheel about ninety centimetres in diameter. Two spokes ending in sculpted capitals have partially survived; they are joined at the rim, which is decorated with an elaborate motif that is traceable to Khmer decorative elements corresponding to the vocabulary in use during the Prei Kmeng style, that is, in the seventh century, the period in which almost all the Wheels of the Law seem to have been made. (Brown 1996: 148). The second fragment does not warrant any comparisons, given its extreme simplicity. (Fig. 48).

The totality of these Buddhist remains, because of the multiplicity of stylistic influences they represent, corroborate in an almost more telling manner than the Brahmanical ones what we have learned in the historic Chinese texts: from the first centuries of the Christian era, the former Panpan was a crossroads region where citizens of India (Āndhra Pradesh), Śrī Laṅkā, Funan and Dvāravatī mingled together. From a religious viewpoint, as we have said, this presents no problem: at the same historical moment, the two great religions of Indian origin shared the favours of the local population. The Buddhism practised there, as has always been admitted, was an ancient form, or *Hinayāna* (the *Theravāda* school?), as represented in the neighbouring political entity of Dvāravatī. Nothing in the Buddhist remnants we have examined to date contradicts this theory, and we can therefore continue to accept that the *Mahāyāna*, a form of Buddhism that appeared in India at around the beginning of the Christian era, was unknown in the region until the turn of the eighth century, which in any case remains a rather vague date, because the only indication of the presence of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism to be dated locally with any degree of precision is a Sanskrit inscription from 775 A.D. known as the Ligor (Nakhon Si Thammarat) inscription, but which in reality is from Chaiya. (See below, Chapter Nine.) This eighth century date corresponds to the historical moment when the political entity of Śrīvijaya, which adopted the *Mahāyāna* tradition during this period, is supposed to have imposed its political control all along the banks of the Malay Peninsula and beyond, to Dvāravatī.

There is no doubt that this form of Buddhism was imposed on the population of Panpan in the course of the eighth century and beyond: the multiplication of *Mahāyāna* images and architectural creations in this period provides abundant proof of this. We will develop this point further. Nevertheless, several Buddhist works found locally, all of them images of the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara, again raise the question of when the *Mahāyāna* arrived on these shores. Indeed, contrary to what has often been written about these sculptures, when they are considered in the light of the historical facts presented in Chapter Five, it seems to us that they should be dated to a much earlier period than the eighth century.

B. MAHĀYĀNA IMAGES

1. *Stone statue of Avalokiteśvara from Chaiya* (Fig. 49, 50)

This is a standing representation in stone of the ascetic *bodhisattva*, with a marked inflexion (*tribhaṅga*) in the right leg; the arms, which are missing, were arranged along the body and partly attached to it, as can be seen from marks in the stone in the places where they were broken off: the right hand must have been in *varadamudrā*, while the left hand would have held the waterpot (*kamaṇḍalu*), or, more likely, the stem of a lotus. The body is lean and slender, with no apparent sculptural relief to indicate the muscles, in spite of the significant size of the shoulders. The statue is clothed in a *dhotī*, which clings tightly to the legs with no evidence of folds. It was drawn in over the left hip; a groove on the corresponding thigh seems to indicate that the fabric was pulled upward, with the extra material left free to fall with a certain realism. A belt at the edge of the upper border of the cloth reinforced the tightening effect; this belt appears to have consisted merely of a thin band of material, perhaps even a cord tied not below the navel, but in a small knot with loops to the left of the navel. The dead body of a deer is carried over the left shoulder, with its forward legs and head pointing downward. Like the tiger skin carried in later images of Avalokiteśvara, the body of this dead animal emphasizes the ascetic side of the *bodhisattva*.

Because of the lowered eyelids, the face, which is broad, with well-drawn features, conveys an impression of spirituality. The ears, with their distended lobes, wear no jewels, and form a block with the neck, which is short and massive, and marked by several beauty

folds. The hair, drawn up on the top of the head, is pulled into a high chignon (*jaṭā*) held together by two groups of three braids each, between which is a depiction of the silhouette of a Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*; the mass of curls falls to the back, down to the shoulders, in five regular rows of curls.

This image invites comparison with Gupta art (from the fourth through the sixth century). In particular, its posture, the probable gestures of the hands, the manner in which the *dhotī* is tied, the arrangement of the *jaṭāmukuta*, all seem to call for a comparison (Krairiksh 1980/81: Pl. 2) with a statue of impressive height (137 centimetres) (Fig. 51) of the *bodhisattva* found at Sārnāth at the beginning of the century. (Értel 1904-05: 82, Pl. XXVIII d). It is one of the only images to come to light at this famous site that J. G. Williams (1982: 79, Pl. 96) sets over against some four hundred representations of Buddha that were also discovered there. Since its discovery, it has been identified with Maitreya, solely, it seems, by virtue of the fact that the little seated Buddha on the chignon of the statue is said to be making the *abhayamudrā* (the figure would then be Amoghasiddhi). J. G. Williams herself recognizes, without drawing the necessary conclusions, that the state of preservation of this carved symbol makes it impossible to come to a clear decision between this *mudrā* and a possible *bhūmisparśa* or *dhyānamudrā*; the *bodhisattva* could just as easily be Avalokiteśvara. The work, which is not a statue-in-the-round but a high relief, as is frequently the case in Gupta art, is made with a softer, more realistic technique than the one used for the statue we are examining, but the relationship cannot be denied. It is dated to 450-460 A.D. Such a juxtaposition forces us to look again at the dating of our image, which could then be placed in the sixth century with some degree of likelihood; this would make it “probably the oldest stone statue of the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara known to Southeast Asia.” (Krairiksh 1980: Pl. 2).

2. Bronze Avalokiteśvara from Khuan Saranrom (Phunphin, Surat Thani) (Fig. 52)

Another fragmentary image of the *bodhisattva*, this time in bronze, and small in size (21.2 centimetres) presents the identical problem. The torso is well proportioned; the right hand is in *vitarkamudrā*, the left in *kaṭakamudrā* (the object held in this hand would most likely have been the ascetics’ waterpot, *kamaṇḍalu*). A sacrificial cord (*vajñōpavīta*) runs diagonally across the chest like a broad ribbon

widening into a loop at the right hip. The *dhotī*, which is pleated and gathered in by a knot on the left hip, had an added belt, apparently equipped with a clasp worn on the left side; U. von Schröder (1990: Pl. 60E) makes out the dead body of an animal, which is not incompatible with the image of the ascetic that is represented here, although there are a few discrepancies: the brow is encircled by a diadem in the form of a flat band that curves over the ears, where it is adorned with a fleuron; above it, the hair is drawn up into a high *jaṭāmukūṭa*, in an arrangement that is reminiscent of the style on the previous image, with curls falling to the back and down to the shoulders. A figurine of the Buddha Amitābha is placed in front.

The comparison between this image and another one, also in bronze, found in the delta of the Kṛṣṇa (Āndhra Pradesh) (Fig. 53), is striking. In the second image, however, the absence of the meditating Buddha in the chignon, which has been replaced by a floral motif, prevents us from identifying it formally as Avalokiteśvara; it may perhaps be Maitreya. This fragment of statuette presents a problem in dating, because according to the authors, it could belong to a period between the fifth century (Sivaramurti 1963: Pl. 2b) and the second half of the seventh century (Schröder 1990: Pl. 60A), passing through the sixth century on the way. (Snellgrove 1978: 128, Fig. 88). It seems nevertheless that we can consider the image to belong to the first Pallava art, and to be one of the oldest representations of the *bodhisattva* in South India. U. von Schröder, who does not disagree with this filiation, believes, however, that if the image had been found elsewhere, it might have been judged to be Singhalese, and considers that its Malaysian counterpart could have been imported from Śrī Laṅkā or South India during the seventh to eighth centuries. This cannot be ruled out, given the size of the piece, but neither can the theory of local manufacture, if we keep in mind the existence of the preceding statue, with which this statuette shares stylistic affinities, in spite of their supposed very different geographical origin. We are therefore inclined to consider it a local production from the sixth century.

3. Stone head from Khao Nam Ron (Chaiya) (Fig. 54)

It is impossible to identify this head with certainty, but the expression of the face suggests a Buddhist work. Since it could not be a Buddha because it wears a diadem, it could only be a *bodhisattva*, probably Avalokiteśvara. The head was originally covered with a

jaṭāmukūṭa, which would doubtless have had an image of Buddha Amitābha in the front. The diadem is a simple band embellished with fleurons, one in front, two others above the ears, and two smaller ones in the spaces between them. The face is full and almost square, lit by a delicate inner smile; the eyelids are lowered. These features, although damaged, are not unlike those of the stone statue of the same *bodhisattva* examined earlier. (Figs. 49, 50). G. Cœdès, who was the first to publish a photograph of the work, did not fail to notice the resemblance, arranging for it to be printed on the same plate as the head of the statue (which had not yet been brought together with its body, discovered separately at another time.) (Cœdès 1928a: Pl. XIII). We believe we can attribute the same early date to it: the sixth century.

In our opinion, two other statues of Avalokiteśvara discovered in the region of the former Panpan again raise the question of when the *Mahāyāna* arrived in the Malay Peninsula.

4. *Stone statue of Avalokiteśvara* (Fig. 55)

The left leg of this standing image assumes a slight inflexion (*tribhaṅga*). Most of the right arm is lost; the corresponding hand must have adopted one of the three classic *mudrās* of the representations of this *bodhisattva*: *vitarkamudrā*, *varadamudrā* or *abhaya-mudrā*. The attribute of the left hand is broken, but it must have been a waterpot (*kamaṇḍalu*). The state of the robe, a *dhotī* clinging to the legs, without a trace of pleats and with no method of fastening the fabric at the waist (only its upper edge is lightly indicated there), led to the speculation that the statue might have been unfinished, and that at least some engraving was missing.

It is the treatment of the upper part of the body and the head that particularly give rise to this view. The shoulders are wide, the chest narrow, the waist slim and the arms broad. The face is large and flat, the arches of the eyebrows are separated over almond-shaped eyes, the nose is big and slightly aquiline, the mouth, which has fleshy lips, is smiling. The ears, with their stretched lobes, are adorned with heavy pendants, a type of jewellery that is rarely worn by the larger Peninsular images, even the most accomplished and highly decorated. They form a block with the thick neck, which is not marked with any beauty folds. The hairstyle is a *jaṭāmukūṭa*, with an arrangement similar to that of the stone statue examined earlier, though not as high; four, not five, rows of curls fall to the back, down to the shoulders. (Fig. 50). G. Cœdès (1928a: Pl. XI) proposed a

comparison with the face of the Harihara of Maha Rosei (now in the Musée Guimet). When P. Dupont (1955: 66-68) was seeking a filiation for the art of Funan outside of southern Cambodia and Cochin China, he considered this statue to be “the only image for which an undeniable contact with the style of Phnom Dâ can be detected,” and saw in it “an external derivation” of this style. He was thinking in particular of the treatment of the head, and of the hairstyle, similar to that of such works as Harihara of Maha Rosei, the head of Harihara of Angkor Borei (in the Musée Guimet), or the great Harihara of Phnom Dâ (in the Phnom Penh Museum). Furthermore, “the construction of the torso with a narrow thorax, shoulders and thick arms without any evident sculpted relief to suggest the muscles” led him to compare this statue to the Avalokiteśvara of Rach-gia (now in the Musée Guimet).

The dating of all these Cambodian works has evolved since P. Dupont’s study, which placed them in a period as early as the end of the sixth century. The present tendency is to date them at least a century later, which is not without complications for the art historians involved. (Le Bonheur 1989). We ourselves are inclined to keep an early date for this piece—not later than the beginning of the seventh century.

5. *Stone statue of Avalokiteśvara from Wat Phra Barommathat (Chaiya)* (Fig. 56)

This is the last statue of the *bodhisattva* in the region of Chaiya that we believe presents a problem for dating. The standing image includes all the clumsy features of execution that revert back at least to the sixth century (to the Viṣṇu images already studied), and decorative refinements that bring to mind works from the end of the eighth century at the earliest, even the ninth (especially the Javanese statues inspired by Pāla art). Among the similarities between this statue and the first (earlier) group of images are the very heavy proportions of the statue, combined with the characteristic caution used in its execution: the whole lower part of the body is treated in high relief; the right hand, in *varadamudrā*, is not detached from the hip, and also leans against an extra section of cylindrical stone; the left hand is hardly visible, lost in a mass of decorative moulding intended to represent a lotus bud with a very thick stem, which provides symmetry for the prop supporting the other hand, and forms a block with the robe and the base.

The principal feature linking this statue with the second, later group of images is the superabundance of jewellery: the image is wearing a jewelled necklace that lies low on the chest, with shoulder ornaments hanging down from it, a belt for the torso, jewelled arm-bands and bracelets, and a decorative belt with a large metal clasp. Completing these are two additional accessories which, added to the figure of Buddha Amitābha on the front of the chignon, establish the identification of the image with the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara: first, the sacred cord (*vajñōpavīta*) that crosses the chest diagonally from the left shoulder, with the image of an antelope at the level of the shoulder, which is reminiscent of the whole body of a dead animal worn by ascetics, like the one on the first image we examined (Fig. 49); second, the dead body of a tiger girding the hips, another symbol of asceticism that would appear in numerous other images of Avalokiteśvara belonging to the region of the Southern Seas. Furthermore, the treatment of the body and the face is also related to that of the preceding images.

From these facts, one might be tempted to adopt the latest date for this piece—the ninth century—on the grounds that the precautions taken during its execution were those of a provincial workshop not yet accustomed to the new religious tendencies (which, however, were perfectly established by this date). We admit the cogency of this argument, which we adduced in connection with the images of Viṣṇu, but in this case we find it unconvincing. In our opinion, the image could be related to a statue of the same *bodhisattva* discovered at Rach-gia (South Vietnam), which shares with it the treatment of the hands (less heavy in this case, however), certain features of the *dhotī* (the gathering of folds in the middle and at the sides), and the wearing of jewellery. The jewellery on the Cambodian statues is less abundant and less exuberant, but the fact that this unique piece—which in our view, cannot be dated later than to the seventh century—has these same features rules out the possibility that the Chaiya statue could be from a radically different period. For us, the work is another indication of the early arrival of the *Mahāyāna* in the Malay Peninsula.

6. *Fragment of a statue from Khao Si Vichai (Phunphin)*

Finally, we will mention a fragment of statue (Fig. 57), illustrated with a photograph by S. O'Connor (1972: Fig. 26), that can no longer be located today. It was discovered at Khao Si Vichai, Phunphin, which yielded several stone representations of Viṣṇu that

we have already discussed. It represents the torso and the hips of an image with a rather strong inflexion. The *dhōtī* is drawn in at the waist by a belt whose ends are wound together in the front and fall in loops, with folds that are executed with great realism and softness. As such, they remind us strongly of the arrangement—different, but just as realistic—of the *sampot* worn by the great Harihara of Prāsāt Andet in Cambodia (from the end of the seventh century?). The hips are girded with the dead body of a tiger, whose head appears on the right thigh, while a clawed paw is visible in the back. This detail implies an identification either to Śiva (although anthropomorphic representations of him are extremely rare in the Malay Peninsula), or, more likely, to Avalokiteśvara. This too would then be another early *Mahāyāna* image (seventh century?) to compare to the previous ones.

C. VOTIVE TABLETS

Other works that bear witness to the early presence of Buddhism in the territory of the former Panpan are the votive tablets that have been discovered, sometimes in considerable quantities. Those found in mountain caves are usually the best preserved: at Tham Khao Pra Song (Tha Chana), at Tham Khao Krom (Chaiya), at Khao Chom Thong (Nakhon Si Thammarat, at Tham Phra (Phatthalung), at Tham Khao Ok Thallu (Phatthalung), at Tham Khuha Sawan (Phatthalung), at Tham Malai (Phatthalung). Their presence in these places that in most cases have yielded nothing else, and are often remarkably difficult of access, has resulted in the formulation of several theories, none of them totally convincing. (O'Connor 1974: 82-84). Other tablets have also come to light near the temples of the plain, notably at Wat Doem Chao and Wat Long (Chaiya), at Ban Hua Khao (Khao Si Vichai), at Ban Bon Khuan (Phunphin), at Wat Chom Thong (Sichon), as well as at sites in the region of Tha Sala and Nakhon Si Thammarat and Wat Rang (Phatthalung); they are usually less well preserved here because of the often continuous use of these places of worship over long periods, unless they were preserved inside a ruined *stūpa* and discovered recently.

These tablets are always very fragile, as they are nothing more than the impression of a mould stamped on fresh clay and allowed to dry in the sun, or, at the very most, baked for a few hours. As a result, they are often broken, reduced to fragments, or simply worn

out by the natural deterioration of the clay through time, when not nibbled by rodents attracted to the vegetal fibres contained in the original material. Made in series, they were certainly cheap, which is surely the explanation for their great popularity with the poorer people, who could use them to express their devotion according to their means. There is great variety in these pieces; it is often difficult to make out what they represent, as the motifs are often blurred, both for the reasons given above, and also, doubtless, because the moulds used to make them, whether in stone, terracotta or bronze, wore out too, as is attested by specimens found in various places.

It was nevertheless possible to classify these tablets in several categories, after studies initiated by G. Cœdès (1925, 1926), and eventually completed by others. (Lamb 1964e, Boisselier 1968a, O'Connor 1974, Chirapravati 1994, 1997). The first of these categories is the only one of interest to us here, because it is the oldest (perhaps dating from the end of the sixth century through the seventh century); three local types can be placed in this group; the first is the most widely distributed throughout the Malay Peninsula.

The main image in these tablets is a seated Buddha in *pralambapadāsana* on what appears to be a raised throne (Fig. 58); he wears an *uttarāsaṅga* that leaves the right shoulder uncovered, and seems to be making a *vitarkamudrā* with his right hand, while the left one rests in his lap. His feet are placed together on a double lotus. At his sides, standing upright, also on a lotus, are two figures with a strong inflexion wearing long *dhotīs* and high *jaṭāmukuta* hairstyles. In both cases, the hand that is closest to Buddha is raised, very probably holding a lotus with its stem pointing upward. Above this scene, engraved in the arch of the tablet, are the figures of three seated Buddhas in *dhyānamudrā*.

An enlarged variant of this tablet—which, because of its greater size, is represented by few intact specimens or pieces that are not severely worn—adds two other standing figures on either side of the Buddha; like the central figure, all three stand on lotuses with their stems held up by kneeling figures (doubtless *nāgas*, deities from the aquatic world); the scene is surmounted by haloed figures in flight flanking a single Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*.¹ (Fig. 59).

¹ An intact example (9 centimetres in height), in the Bangkok Museum, was discovered at Wat Rang (Trang) on the west coast in a region that to this day has

This tablet and its enlarged variant were initially interpreted as an illustration of the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī, in spite of the absence of Buddha in some of his traditional positions. (Cœdès 1925: 152, 1926: 7). This interpretation was not contested until P. Krairiksh (1980: 33) proposed that it be recognized as an illustration of the episode in which Buddha preaches the Law before an assembly consisting of Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, as the scene is described in a Sanskrit text of the *Mahāyāna* tradition, the *Saddharma-puṇḍārika sūtra* or *sūtra* of the Lotus; Khairiksh dates both the small and the enlarged tablet to the seventh century, and we are inclined to accept both his attribution and his dating. The presence of these two tablets on Dvāravatī territory, at this unquestionable date in the *Hinayāna* tradition, raises the problem of iconographic contamination between regions. In the context of commercial—and thus also cultural—exchanges in the Asia of the monsoons, these tablets could in fact have been created from the end of the sixth and throughout the seventh century by artists from the Dvāravatī region borrowing features from the works of *Mahāyāna* Indian counterparts. If this were the case, their iconography could have been interpreted according to the *Hinayāna* criteria operative in the actual region of Dvāravatī influence, and then imitated by the followers of the new expression of Buddhism in the Peninsula. But the process might have worked in reverse: the two forms of tablets, created in the workshops of Panpan in the spirit of the early *Mahāyāna* cult, would then have influenced the followers of the *Hinayāna* in the basin of the Menam Chao Phraya. This would just be tit for tat, because as we have noted, there are statues and representations of the Wheel of the Law in Dvāravatī style in the territory of the city-state of Panpan.

A third type, of which one intact specimen has reached us (the lower half of another is preserved in the Chaiya Museum) definitely represents the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī (Fig. 60) as recounted in the Sanskrit text *Divyāvadāna*. Three levels can be distinguished on the intact specimen, which is rectangular, and almost as high (13 to 14 centimetres) as it is wide: the Buddha occupying the middle level is seated in *virāsana* and doubtless in *vitarkamudrā*, on a throne with a backslab equipped with two fly-whisks; to his right is represented a *stūpa*, to his left a Wheel of the Law, and both symbols are flanked

yielded nothing else but votive tablets in the caves of the rocky escarpments scattered through it.

by standing figures identical to those seen in the preceding type and its variant; they can be recognized as the gods Indra and Brahmā. The *stūpa* and the Wheel surmount two other figures seated in *vīrāsana*, without *uṣṇīṣa*, which could be the two disciples of Buddha, Maudgalyāyana and Utpalavarṇā. In the middle of the lower level are three vases for offerings and four figures, two of them crouching in an attitude of worship—no doubt the *nāga* kings Nanda and Upananda—and two standing, identifiable, with the aid of the same canonical text, as King Pasenati, the figure turning towards the Buddha, and the heretic Purāṇa-Kassapa turning away. On the upper level are a number of representations of the Buddha perched on lotuses attached to stems with a pivoting central stalk rising out of the halo of the central Buddha. Five can be made out: three seated Buddhas in the centre in a pyramidal arrangement, with the middle Buddha sitting under the hanging branches of the traditional mango tree, surrounded by two flying figures (*vidhyādara*); two Buddhas standing to the side, each flanked by a disc depicting a figure in a chariot, the Sun god and the Moon god providing light for the event. Finally, the lower part of the tablet bears an inscription of the Buddhist credo, *ye dhammā hetupprabhavā...*, which P. Dupont (1959: 49) judged to be in correct Pāli, except for the *hetupprabhavā*, which he believed to be influenced by Sanskrit. P. Krairiksh (1975: 334, 1980: 34) sees in it an illustration not only of the Sanskrit text *Divyāvadāna*, but also of the Pāli *Mahāvastu*, whose influence he discerns in the representations of the mango tree and the gods of the Sun and Moon.

In our opinion, this third type of tablet—which, like the previous tablets, could have been manufactured either in a Peninsular centre or in Dvāravatī—is not later than the seventh century.

D. VOTIVE *STŪPAS*

Alongside these votive tablets, and sometimes found in association with them, are some small-sized votive *stūpas* (4 to 20 centimetres in height or more) that have turned up in various spots (notably at Wat Doem Chao (Chaiya), at Khuan Phunphin and in the region of Phatthalung); these, too, are made of clay, and are therefore just as fragile as the tablets. The most elaborate were made from a mould (O'Connor 1975); the rest were simply fashioned by hand, and therefore were of more crude manufacture. (Fig. 61). By themselves,

these pieces are undatable. At times, however, some of them depict the skillful moulding of vanished structures, and are marked on their rims, at the cardinal points, by the silhouette of a *stūpa* (Fig. 150); in addition, their bases may also include seals engraved with a Buddhist credo. We do not believe that these sophisticated pieces could be from an earlier period than the end of the eighth century. On the other hand, all the other *stūpas* could just as easily belong to the ancient period examined in this chapter as to later periods.

At the end of these two chapters devoted to the religious remains found in Panpan, we cannot help but acknowledge their extraordinary diversity. In our view, these objects are an unquestionable proof of the economic flowering of the region in this early period, through the medium of international trade. There is a paradox, however, in the fact that archaeological discoveries that bear witness to this trade—though such commerce is at the origin of the creation of the artistic works—are rare. They do exist, certainly, but they have not elicited much interest because they are difficult to define. Indeed, no Chinese ceramic sherd—which would be of great use in locating the entrepôt ports of the later period—has been discovered in relation to these first centuries that could at the same time point to other remains with less obvious origins, and help in locating the places of exchange. This is true for the site of Laem Pho, which would therefore have known no previous commercial activity, like the port of Ko Kho Khao, its supposed twin on the west coast in this period, which we might have expected to have had an existence prior to the ninth century that could have linked it to the presence on a neighbouring site of the great Viṣṇu known as the Takua Pa Viṣṇu. (See above, Chapter Five.) The only ceramics that have attracted any interest are some pieces of pottery decorated with red bands and motifs found in the region of Chaiya: a complete piece was found at Ban Monthon, decorated with alternating red and white bands. (Fig. 62). Sherds of a similar texture (now in the Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum) with a decoration of thin lines and simple foliage in browns and reds also appeared at Wat Wiang (Chaiya). This type of pottery invites comparison with the ceramics of Mōn. Similar specimens were discovered in Chansen (in the province of Nakhon Sawan) that have been dated to a period ranging from the beginning of the seventh to the end of the eighth century. We would be inclined to assign the earliest date to them if we accept the comparison made by the archaeologists who discovered them to supposedly identical, but

unpublished, specimens found by B.-P. Groslier at Sambor Prei Kuk in Cambodia (from the first half of the seventh century).² This would then indicate that these creations, with their problematical origins, knew a significant development, going back—in the direction suggested by their diffusion—to an even earlier period, that of the bronze drums of the Dongson culture. We are disappointed, however, by the absence, or rather by the unproved existence, of any real archaeological evidence of a commercial nature that could attest to contacts between India and the Malay Peninsula in this period.

² Bronson & Dale 1970: 44 & Fig. 13. The upper part of a vase (neck and flared rim) is similar in form, decoration and dimensions to the complete piece discovered at Ban Monthon (Chaiya).

CHAPTER SEVEN

LANGKASUKA

FROM THE 5TH TO THE END OF THE 8TH CENTURY

If Panpan was the dominant city-state of the middle part of the Malay Peninsula from the fifth to the eighth century (and we will see that it remained so beyond this period)—incorrectly associated with a probable chiefdom of an advanced type on the west coast, in the region of Takua Pa—the more southerly shores of this isthmus, between five and seven degrees north latitude, also saw the appearance of places of such activity: in particular, the city-state of Langkasuka, to which we have already alluded (see above, Chapter Four), which occupied the region of present-day Pattani on the east coast. (Docs. 8, 15).

A. LANGKASUKA IN THE ANCIENT TEXTS

For a long time, Langkasuka was only the eponymous designation of a former Indianized city-state in the Malay Peninsula, referred to in various literary sources in words that correspond to the respective transliterations of each of the languages concerned, since ‘Langkasuka’ is nothing more than the present Malay form of the name. There was much debate about its geographical location. The recent discovery of major archaeological ruins at Yarang, fifteen kilometres south of Pattani, justifies those researchers, including P. Wheatley (1956b, 1973: 252-265), who had already located it in this region.

The oldest and most detailed literary sources concerning Langkasuka, though imprecise in their geography, are once again Chinese. The *Liangshu*, already cited in relation to Panpan, speaks of a kingdom of Langyaxiu “situated in the Southern Sea.” We learn in the report that “its climate and products are somewhat similar to those of Funan.” Once again, we owe the mention of this kingdom to these annals (see above, Chapter Four), and to the many references to the city-state taken from the now-lost reports of the Chinese envoys,

Kang Tai and Zhu Ying, after their mission to Funan in the middle of the third century of our era.

Details are also provided about the manner of dress of the local people, from the king to the man in the street. We learn that the “kingdom [city-state] is surrounded by walls to form a city with double gates, towers and pavilions,” and that the king only makes appearances surrounded by impressive ceremonial and protected by “well appointed” soldiers; and finally, we are told of a dynastic legend that may very well represent a historic reality: the kingdom is said to have been “founded more than four hundred years ago” (which, relative to the Liang (502-557), takes us back to the very beginning of the second century of our era, that is, to a period well before the estimated foundation of Panpan); its antiquity had apparently led to a certain decadence, against which a member of the royal family had attempted to react. The resulting conflict of persons is said to have been temporarily settled by the exile of the rebellious prince, who “fled to India,” where a king “gave him his eldest daughter in marriage.” When the king of Langyaxiu died shortly afterward,

the chief ministers welcomed back the exile and made him king. More than twenty years later he died, and was succeeded by his son.

In the year 515 of our era, this son sent an ambassadorial mission to China, the first of its kind, which was followed by others in 523, 531 and 568.

Since compilation was frequently practised in China by certain lettered people, these details—which in the end provide the only precise information we have on Langkasuka—are found in a number of other works: in the *Tongdian* (eighth century), a political and historical encyclopedia, the *Taiping huanyu ji* (from the end of the tenth century), the universal geographical encyclopedia, and finally, a work compiled in the beginning of the fourteenth century by Ma Duanlin, the *Wenxian tongkao*, completed in around 1317, which is the sequel to the *Tongdian*. In addition, the three encyclopedias state in their accounts of the mission of the Sui to Chitu (see below, Chapter Eight), which was first recorded in the *Suishu*, that the envoys’ ships, which are thought to have sailed along the east coast of the Peninsula from the Archipelago of Samui, passed by the mountains of Langkasuka before reaching the city-state.

A brief observation from the *Jiutangshu* (repeated in the *Xintangshu*) (see above, Chapter Five) adds the useful piece of information that Langkasuka bordered on Panpan, which leaves us with a picture of the two city-states stretching out over a wide geographical area along the east coast. During our research on Panpan, we calculated that the ‘border’ could have been located in the vicinity of the present site of Songkhla. Moreover, the *Zhufanzhi* (*A Description of the Barbarians*) by Zhao Rugua, published in 1226, states that a certain Lanyaxu, which could only be Langkasuka—could be reached from Tambralinga “in six days and nights.” (Langasuka was the descendant of Panpan from the tenth century, located in what is now Nakhon Si Thammarat. See below, Chapter Twelve). Zhao Rugua adds that “there is also a land route.” (Wheatley 1973: 68).

We can see that the original form of the name underwent a series of changes in these works over the years, probably because of scribal errors or errors in transliteration from an indigenous name that might also have evolved over time.

Other writings devoted to edifying biographies of the Chinese Buddhist monks who set out for India and the holy sites of Buddhism, or of monks who had travelled from India to China, provide several additional details concerning Langkasuka. Thus the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, compiled in the second half of the seventh century, informs us that the Indian monk Paramārtha (Zhendi. 500-569), who had spent some time in Cambodia, and had been summoned from Canton to Nanjing by the emperor Wudi of the Liang dynasty in 548, had wanted to sail to Langkasuka. Along the same lines, at the very end of the seventh century, the monk Yijing, to whom we have already referred, in his memoir concerning *The Eminent Monks who Sought the Law in the West during the Great Tang Dynasty* (*Datang xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan*) mentioned three monks (Yilang, Zhian and Yixuan), who, after embarking on a merchant junk at Wulei, a small port located near Pakhoi in the Gulf of Tonkin, were confronted by turbulent seas, made a stop at Funan (an anachronism for Zhenla, which had succeeded Funan), then went on to Langkasuka, where the King welcomed them “with the rituals granted to distinguished guests.” (Chavannes 1894: 57) One of them, Zhian, the twenty-third of the thirty-seven monks mentioned by Yijing, “fell ill and died there” (Chavannes 1894: 57), and another, the thirty-seventh, Yihui, from Luoyang, “caught the illness and died

at the age of over thirty years.” (Chavannes 1894: 78). And finally, a fifth one from the list provided by Yijing, a monk named Daolin, also visited the country on his way to India.

In any case, all these works, including those that are presented as geographical encyclopedias, are frustratingly imprecise. All that can be deduced from the extracts taken from them is that Langkasuka was located somewhere on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula. The only geographical work that proposes a specific location is a very late text, the navigation chart included in the *Wubeizhi* (*Notes on Military Preparation*), dated 1628, but whose sources, in particular those related to maps, date at least to the second or third quarter of the fifteenth century, and very likely to an even earlier date. This document unquestionably locates Langkasuka to the south of Songkhla, in the vicinity of the Pattani River.

Apart from these Chinese texts, the other ancient sources of foreign origin—Arab (a text from the beginning of the sixteenth century), Indian (the inscription of Rājendra Coḷa I at Tañjāvūr, from the beginning of the eleventh century), and Javanese (the text of a court poet in the fourteenth century)—are full of lacunæ, and a meticulous examination of them yields only the following indications for the position of Langkasuka: 1. a location on the east coast between Kelantan and the region of Songkhla (the Arab source); 2. the vicinity of Saiburi (the Javanese source); and 3. a vague conquered region (the Indian source). In addition to these, there is the mention of “two ports of Suvarṇabhūmi, Laṅkāśobha and Kaṭahadvīpa” in the *Jātakamālā Tīkā*. (Skilling 1992: 131). Since we know that in Indian literature, ‘Suvarṇabhūmi’ is a generic term designating Southeast Asia, Laṅkāśobha can reasonably be identified as Langkasuka and Kaṭahadvīpa as Kedah. Nothing further is said concerning these places. The *Jātaka* in question would not have been written before the fourteenth century, but is said to have drawn on much older material.

In spite of the brevity of the information they supply, most of these sources do agree on the general location of Langkasuka. The only contradictory information is found in Malaysian literature, in this case in the *Hikayat Marong Mahawangsa*, or *Annals of Kedah*, which present Langkasuka as a kingdom on the west coast of the Peninsula (the predecessor of modern-day Kedah), whose sovereign nonetheless had some sort of association with Pattani. But this text is very late (the end of the eighteenth century), and the legend of

Marong Mahawangsa recounted in it, which describes the arrival of the Indians in the course of the first centuries of our era, is very probably a traditional version that had passed into folk memory among the peasants of Kedah. The chronicle, which is nothing more than a collection of tales, cannot be compared with the relative precision of the maritime indications of the Chinese and the Arabs, who never confused Langkasuka with Kedah, which they also speak of as a perfectly distinct geographical entity.

By bringing together all the information furnished in these different sources and relating them to what is known of the political situation in Southeast Asia in the early period, we can paint the portrait of a city-state that was perhaps founded in the beginning of the second century of our era. P. Wheatley (1983: 233) believes that the use by the Chinese writers of the character that signifies 'capital', or simply 'city',

reflects the nature of the political unit: a polity in which a focally situated settlement exercised direct control over a restricted peripheral territory and exacted whatever tribute it could from an indefinite region beyond.

This concept is very close to that of the *maṇḍala* described in relation to Funan. (See above, Chapter Four.) The city-state experienced a period of decline in the first half of the third century that was probably due to the imperialistic activities of Fanshiman, the Funan general who had become king, and who had doubtless made Langkasuka one of his conquests "over the Zhanghai," though this is not recorded in the *Liangshu*. In the second half of the fifth century, after a dynastic revolt, apparently stirred up by Indian influence, the fortunes of Langkasuka were restored, and four missions were dispatched to the Chinese court during the sixth century. It is tempting to see in these diplomatico-commercial missions a proof of the independence of the city-state in relation to Funan—to which it would previously have been subjugated—, but which was now caught up in grave internal problems of its own that would eventually lead to its disappearance; however, the situation we have examined concerning the actual state of power in the Khmer country before Angkor (see above, Chapter Four) makes it impossible to defend this idea. Probably since the disappearance of Fanshiman himself, Funan had not laid claim to political authority over any region that was so remote.

It is certain that in the seventh century, Langkasuka was an important entrepôt port where ships crossing back and forth along the maritime routes linking China and India called in. After this period, the absence of any allusions to the city-state in the histories of the Tang could leave the impression that its importance had declined, but this judgement needs to be tempered by further archaeological research in the region of Yarang, because, as we have noted earlier, the name of the city-state was still present in a Chinese text of the seventeenth century.

Finally, it was during the eighth century, and even earlier, at the end of the seventh, that Langkasuka, like all the political entities along the shores of the Malay Peninsula, apparently fell victim to the imperialistic manoeuvres of Śrīvijaya, whose existence is sorely in need of a reappraisal. (See below, Chapter Nine.)

B. ON THE SITE OF LANGKASUKA: REMAINS LINKED TO RELIGIOUS RITES

I. The Site of the Ancient City

It was surely after the labours of P. Wheatley that several archaeological campaigns were undertaken during the sixties in the region of Pattani, and especially in the vicinity of Yarang, a village located fifteen kilometres to the south of the port. (Doc. 15). Teams of Thai, then English, Malay and American archaeologists came to work on the site, without significant results. The only real difference was that a little more attention was paid to the archaeological discoveries that were occasionally made there.

This heroic period in the history of the archaeological exploration of Langkasuka marks the beginning of the considerable interest shown in the vestiges of some concentric earthwork ramparts near Yarang, in a place called Ban Prawæ, which were thought to be part of the city described in the *Liangshu*. It turned out later that two of the three recognized ramparts were only levees resulting from the hollowing out of irrigation canals, and that the narrowest enclosure, doubled by a ditch, was indeed authentic, but of a much later date (the end of the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century) than the period in which Langkasuka existed. In any case, the region was hardly (or not at all) explored during the seventies and early eighties,

because of the political agitation that reigned there, and the resulting insecurity.

It was not until 1989 that The Fine Arts Department of Thailand undertook the first excavation of a site in Yarang, and the inventory of the sites was not published until 1993. (Yukongdi & Puntukowit). (Doc. 16). The result of this work is a list of thirty-three archaeological areas, distributed throughout a zone of around 3.5 kilometres in length from north to south and 1.8 kilometres in width from west to east, in the vicinity of the village of Yarang. The zone in question is traversed by the tortuous courses of many rivers with a distinct low-water period in the spring and early summer; it is also hollowed out by the fossilized tracks of numerous other watercourses which come back to life from time to time—the maximum rains come, as we have seen (see above, Chapter One) with the northeast monsoon—, or which have been transformed into rice-fields; the altitude is low. Added to this is a dense network of canals or former canals that undergo the same annual variations in flow-rate, and link the rivers to each other. They are recognizable in aerial photographs by their lines, which are more rectilinear than those of the rivers.

Twenty of the ruins on this list, that is, the majority of them, are located in the southern part of the archaeological zone, in the vicinity of a hamlet called Ban Wat (BW). Eleven others are spread out a little farther to the north, at Ban Jalæ (BJ), while only two, which we have already referred to, are located within the enclosure of Ban Prawæ (BP). Traces of earthwork ramparts that could correspond to the fortifications described in the *Liangshu* can be made out, less at Ban Wat than at Ban Jalæ. Ban Wat, because of the great concentration of ruins listed there, seems to have been the original nucleus of the former city whose temples were nonetheless scattered as far as Ban Prawæ from the very beginning. It is also possible to make out a network of canals that are denser here than elsewhere, and that appear to describe large quadrangular perimeters, which could correspond to the outline of former moats doubled by earthwork ramparts that are quite flattened out today. This initial site is said to have been broken up over the centuries, and what appears to be a play of rectilinear tracks (levees and former canals) in the zone of Ban Jalæ could correspond to the site of a second town established on higher land, perhaps to enable the inhabitants to flee from progressive flooding in the zone of Ban Wat. Traces of levees, especially on the north side and, to a lesser extent, on the south and in the southeast

corner, attest to this; a careful examination of these suggests that they are later than the sanctuaries, because they are almost on top of them.

As described above, this archaeological zone is unique in the Malay Peninsula because of the density of its potential ruins. The zone of South Kedah, which we will discuss later, could be compared to it by virtue of the number of its recognized archaeological structures (forty), but these are spread out over a much wider surface area (eighteen by ten kilometres at the narrowest point); they are also smaller in size than the three structures excavated at Yarang to date, and their conception is unusual. In order to find other concentrations of archaeological ruins of such importance, it is necessary to go much farther north, to the *Dvāravatī* sites of Ku Bua (Ratchaburi Province) and U Thong (Suphan Buri Province).

For the past ten years, then, we have been confronted with the existence of a former city with very promising archaeological ruins, but which has continued to confound us as we tried to understand it in the context of the civilization of city-states linked to the entrepôt ports of our study, for when all is said and done, the city-states could not have existed without the ports, and vice versa—and from the very outset, we have been hard put to find a port site for this city located fifteen kilometres from the sea.

A topographical study of the region based on aerial and satellite photographs that can be confirmed on the site has enabled us to solve this problem by reconstructing a geographical configuration for the early period that is very different from that of today. The position of the former city-state then begins to make sense.

II. A Possible Geography of Langkasuka in the Early Period

The analysis that follows is the result of an examination of aerial and satellite photographs, which alone can indicate—after confirmation on the ground—what the topographical evolution of the region over the centuries might have been. (Doc. 17).

1. The capital of Langkasuka was built on a former delta created by the alluvial deposits of many rivers flowing down from the mountainous back-country. This delta was formed in at least two stages at the time of the lowering of the sea-level that affected the whole east coast of the Peninsula. (See above, Chapter One.)

2. Within this delta, the city was built on the highest elevations of land, with numerous rivers winding in meandering courses between them. In spite of a coastline that is quite different from the one we know today, the city was not located by the sea, but at least ten kilometres from it.

3. The natural network of communication formed by the rivers was improved by the carving out of many canals. These can be recognized today by their tracks, which are more rectilinear than those of the rivers they are connected to. (Doc. 16). On the aerial photographs, they are indicated by regular levees of earth resembling the ruins of ramparts, which are only the result of the accumulation of the earth removed at the time the canals were hollowed out. It is these levees of rectilinear earth, therefore, that misled the first archaeologists, who thought they could recognize in them a series of concentric enclosures, especially around Ban Prawæ—which has some authentic ones. Some of these, however, which are associated with a canal, could have had a defensive role. Nevertheless, from the examination of this extremely complex network of canals, we are left with the impression that they were dug more for utilitarian purposes than for defence.

4. The city's principal contact with the sea was through the estuary of the present-day Menam Pattani, which rose to the latitude of Yarang from a shore that would have looked quite different from what we know today, but which, aside from the recently created spit of Pattani, was not fundamentally different. On the other hand, the section of coast located to the west of the estuary must have been very low, consisting mainly of a lagoon sheltered by the offshore bars that were forming at that time.

5. It is therefore on the banks of this vanished estuary that the various entrepôt ports of the city-state were located. No doubt there were several of these, spaced out at intervals up- and downstream because of the alluvial deposits that ultimately led to the total disappearance of the estuary. The ineluctable problem of silting always limited the duration of the possible activity of these entrepôt ports, whatever their position along the coasts of the Malay Peninsula. Aerial and satellite photographs reveal the lines of former canals that linked the city to this estuary. An investigation on the site in 1995 confirmed their existence and gave reason to hope that there may be

concentrations of ceramic sherds in at least two points corresponding to the former outlets where the canals emptied into the vanished estuary, at Kru Se and at Ban Bara O. Excavations will of course be necessary to substantiate these speculations and provide dates for the sites.

6. These locations do not rule out the existence of other ports, also at the end of the estuary, but closer to the sea. The site of Ban Di, near Yaring, would be a possible position for one. It is attested today by large quantities of sherds linked to the existence of kilns which will have functioned at least until the period of Ayutthaya. Sherds from the Tang period are reported to have been found here, although totally by accident.

7. Such geomorphological speculation in no way brings into question the existence of a large alluvial plain, stretching out on all sides around Yarang, where rice was grown, as it is today—the indispensable agricultural basis for the harmonious development of a city-state endowed with a political, religious and military hierarchy elaborated on the Indian model, just as it is all too briefly described in the *Liangshu*.

This agricultural activity produced more than enough for local consumption, thus opening the way for commercial activity through the welcome afforded to foreign traders (Chinese, Indian and Middle Eastern). During a monsoon, these tradespeople came to seek shipboard provisions of food for the journey, to exchange the contents of their cargoes, and to procure all the valuable and profit-making goods that flowed so unstintingly from the forests of the Peninsula. In this way the city, like others of its kind, played the role of a terminal collecting centre at the end of a network of secondary collecting centres spread out along the whole middle and upper valley of the Menam Pattani and its tributaries. The back country of the city-state stretches out in flat land for thirty kilometres along the river towards the south, up to the first karstic hills, which are the forerunners of the foothills of the Main Range. These are limestone spurs that contain caves where important Buddhist cultural artefacts have been found (Tham Khuhaphimuk, Tham Sin).

Our examination of the archaeological remains from the region will therefore take into account not only specimens from the former city, where they are unquestionably the most numerous, but also some from its immediate or somewhat more remote surroundings,

since in reality Langkasuka was not limited to the city established in Yarang itself, but included extensive territories, at least 'officially', as we have already surmised, which could only be governed by the system of the *maṇḍala* already described.

III. Archaeological Remains Linked to Religious Rites

ARCHITECTURE

Of the three sites that have been excavated within the limits of the former city, two, the first one (BJ2) and the third (BJ8), have provided abundant information ; the second (BJ2) has furnished some information, but the structure there has turned out to be badly deteriorated.

1. The building brought to light on the BJ3 site (Doc. 18, Fig. 63) is a square structure made of bricks (laid one upon each other without any apparent mortar) 13.5 by 13.5 metres, which today only reaches a height of around 4.7 metres. Its corners are redented, and it has a central fore-part on each side; the one on the east side is wider than the others. A stairway led up from it to a height of 2.5 metres to a terrace that surrounded the main body of the central sanctuary. This sanctuary also has a central fore-part on each side, extending the structure to a width of 9.5 metres from west to east, 9.8 metres from north to south. It also opened to the east, and was reached by a second stairway, now mostly destroyed, which overlapped with the floor of the surrounding terrace. The floor of the *cella*, which is approximately square (5.2 x 5.2 metres) was initially about sixty centimetres below the level of the sill, which brought it to about the same height as that of the terrace. It turned out to be very damaged, but its west side, facing the entrance, still consists of three levels, on a width of 1.4 metres, which must have served as platforms for holy images.

The structure that covered this sanctuary has collapsed; however, the very thick walls (1.7 to 2.5 metres), must have made it possible for the building to support a roof of corbelled construction, reproducing a more or less pyramidal form analogous to that of the tower-sanctuaries so often seen in the architecture of India and Southeast Asia. The great variety of bricks with mouldings discovered at the time of the excavation leads us to believe that this roofing was decorated with numerous sophisticated mouldings.

These mouldings, in the preserved sections of the building, restore an outline formed from different elements: horizontally, from various recesses, the thick torus (with a width of three bricks), and a frieze in which the small end of one recessed brick alternates with the small end of another in normal position; and vertically, from several projections produced by half-attached colonnettes and twinned pilasters.

The brick-paved surrounding terrace was uncovered, as is shown by the drainage grooves (two on each side) carved in the stone, which allowed rainwater to flow towards the outside; these grooves were included in the thickness of the walls (around ninety centimetres to one metre) which, in fact, formed the only structural element in this terrace whose centre was nothing more than a block of earth, sand and crushed stones; this frequently-used technique, added to the fact that there was no other foundation than packed earth, explains why the walls tended to lean outward. Their upper part, which formed a parapet, has almost entirely disappeared, and it is therefore totally impossible to guess its height. One theory was that each indented corner of the terrace was crowned with a small *stūpa*; some significant bricks of a different type came to light that could be used to advance this thesis, perhaps because the Thais may have had an unconscious desire for this structure to conform to that of Wat Phra Barommatham in Chaiya, the only ancient construction in the Malay Peninsula that has come down to us intact, where bricks of this kind were used. The size of those on this terrace, which are slightly larger than the ones used for the sanctuary itself, gives reason to believe that it might have been built after the fact, perhaps as a replacement for a previous terrace ruined by use. The clearing of the east side strengthens this impression, because the access stairway to the temple found along that side appears to have been built in at least two different periods.

The building was a Buddhist sanctuary, as is confirmed by the objects found there, primarily *stūpas* and large quantities of clay votive tablets, which we will discuss in detail later. The plan of this building as a Buddhist sanctuary (*pratimagṛha*) is no different from that of the Indian temples of the same confession whose remains have come down to us. (Mitra 1971). Indeed, we know that in the lands of its birth, Buddhist architecture (*stūpa*, *caityagṛha*, *pratimagṛha*, monastery) is known more for buildings hollowed out of rock than for free-standing edifices, of which most often the only

remains are traces on the ground. This is particularly true of the type of temple whose sole remaining example of quality still in use is the *Mahābodhi* in Bodh Gayā. But we have only to visit all the great Indian Buddhist sites to find vestiges of ancient temples of a conception similar to the one under consideration. The *cella* of the sanctuary that sheltered the statue of the Buddha was always very small in relation to the rest of the building, and gave the impression of being drowned inside the thick walls. This feature suggests, of course, that the walls served as a foundation for a massive structure, a tower in the shape of a pyramid whose general form must have resembled the tower of the temple of *Mahābodhi*, which, in spite of its many and late restorations (the most recent at the end of the nineteenth century), seems to have preserved its first silhouette as it appears on numerous votive tablets. The Buddhist temple in its most reduced form could be limited to this, with the opening to the east usually created by a flight of stairs, but most often the sanctuary included a terrace that delineated a ritual ambulatory (*pradakṣiṇāpatha*), which was reached by a stairway that was sometimes preceded by a colonnaded porch.

2. Excavation of the third site at Yarang, BJ8, also revealed a brick structure rather similar to that of BJ3, both in conception and in dimensions. It is a massive quadrangle about thirteen metres wide, surmounted by a severely damaged sanctuary (9 x 9 metres) that has lost its crowning. The walls had a number of mouldings and projections, and in addition, the excavation unearthed enough bricks with mouldings to lend weight to the idea that the ridgepole of the building, also covered by means of a corbelling technique, had a very basic outline. The similarities end here, and there are differences in the two structures. For example, the north side of the parapet of the surrounding terrace is partly preserved, and its height raises the question of whether or not this part of the building was covered. It appears that it was, because in the first place, no stone drainage groove for rainwater (like the one at BJ3) was found, and secondly, at two of the four outer corners of the sanctuary, preserved *in situ*, are stone pillar bases that could by all appearances have provided support for a roof made of perishable materials. (Fig. 64). This theory is strengthened by the discovery of iron nails; no tiles or tile fragments were unearthed, however, which gives reason to believe that the roof was thatched. The nearby example of the temples of

South Kedah, which we will discuss later, proves that this type of roofing, even for a sanctuary, was in no way extravagant in the Malay setting.

The major difference between the two buildings lies in the fact that the one we are examining opens to the west and not to the east, and that it is preceded along this side by a flight of three consecutive access ramps—the two latter ones massive, and originally furnished with stairways—which doubles its west-east extension.

The monument yielded thick calibrated stones in the centre of the entrance, which served as a threshold or doorframe, a common use for these stones, which has already been mentioned in connection with the temples of Panpan. In recent years, Yarang and its surroundings have yielded numerous examples of these pieces, which seem to be the only preserved remains of heavily damaged structures whose bricks had disintegrated or were reused through the centuries. A number of questions concerning the religious purpose of this building will be addressed later.

3. The second excavated site, BJ2, today consists only of a simple, very basic square structure without mouldings, 6.3 metres wide and about 1.7 metres high, faced with bricks to a depth of about a metre, that corresponds to the former terrace (around 0.8 metres high) of a central sanctuary that is now almost totally levelled. At some point after the founding of the sanctuary, its east and south sides were provided with stairways; the second of these was not constructed along the main axis of the building. The initial purpose of the monument was undeniably Buddhist, as is attested by the fragments of votive *stūpas* unearthed in the excavation.

Before ending this discussion of the architectural features known today in Langkasuka (we will date them and draw connections with other known monuments a little later), we should mention the fragments of decorative stucco that came to light by chance in Yarang; we believe, with reservations, that they might have come from the site of BW20. Oddly, the three excavated sites yielded nothing like them. There is no doubt, however, that these other sites must have had the feature in the beginning. The treatment, which consisted of the application of a smooth, thin layer of coating embellished with elaborate decorations, was found in all the brick constructions in the Indian and Indianized worlds. Examples are sometimes found *in*

situ—as in certain monuments in the Dvāravatī region (Ku Bua, Si Thep)—in the form of *kuḍus*, abstract or figurative friezes (flowers, animals, human beings).

The material used here was not very sophisticated; it was mixed with thick sand, which must have ruled out any significant refinement in the mouldings. Nevertheless, the friezes have considerable power. They are associated with fragments of *kuḍus*, whose original dimensions must have been around twenty centimetres in height by thirty in width (Fig. 65); their arch, enclosing a floral motif, is surmounted by a finial, and its outer edges are rolled up strikingly into another vegetable motif composed of bold crossed branches of foliage.

The discovery of these stuccos, justifiably, caused certain researchers to detect some stylistic links with Gupta art, and we will see farther on that these structures, especially BJ3, do not belie such a connection. Before proposing a date for these temples, however, we must examine the archaeological material found in them, in order to settle this question. Most of the pieces are objects of Buddhist devotion, along with several much rarer sculptures; pieces corresponding to both of these have been found in the territory of the former Langkasuka, and we will examine them at the same time.

OBJECTS OF BUDDHIST DEVOTION

By objects of Buddhist devotion, we mean all the votive *stūpas* and tablets placed in remarkable quantities by the Buddhist faithful as pledges of their piety, in temples BJ3 and BJ2; surprisingly, BJ8 yielded none of these. We must compare these with similar objects found in various places elsewhere.

1. *The votive stūpas*

Langkasuka's speciality seems to have been the production of votive *stūpas* made of baked clay. Fragments of this type of production have been discovered by chance here and there, in Yarang itself, as well as in neighbouring areas, from the very first years of archaeological research in the region. They are most intriguing, because it has been impossible to find any link between this material and productions from other regions. The excavations have confirmed their originality, because the site of BJ3 alone has yielded more than five hundred thousand fragments, which were found inside the *cella* (Fig. 66) and on the surrounding terrace, at either side of the entrance stairway, while BJ2 yielded more than two thousand, scattered all

around the structure. What is original about this is that these are not full votive *stūpas* in a reduced size, like those discussed in the preceding chapter on Panpan, of which identical pieces can be found at almost all Buddhist sites (the Tham Khuhaphimuk cave, near Yala, about twenty-five kilometres south of Yarang, yielded quantities of this type). These particular *stūpas* are raised and complex forms, turned on a wheel, and hollow. They were of course baked, and their quantity suggests that there must have been at least one centre of specialized manufacture in the region, as the fragility and height of certain pieces would have made it impossible for them to be produced elsewhere and transported for long distances.

These unusual votive *stūpas* faithfully reproduce the different parts of a true *stūpa*: *adhovedikā*, *jaṅghāvedī*, *aṇḍa*, *harmikā*, *yaṣṭi* with *chattras*. They differ from each other in size, general appearance and decoration. The largest pieces are broken into numerous fragments, but by a process of successive comparisons based on elements that are more or less intact, we made a painstaking effort to reconstruct what would have been their appearance and size, and to propose a reasonable classification. This was possible because of the many representations of *stūpas* that figure on the votive tablets found in association with the *stūpa* fragments, and other illustrations of *stūpas* that appear as decoration on the fragments themselves. (Doc. 19).

a. A first group consists of small pieces with different joined sections, of which three were found cut off only from their end section (the piled-up *chattras*), which, once restored, gave them a height of about twenty centimetres. (Doc. 19. 1-3). Their bases are wide. One bears an engraved inscription that is also found written in red pigment inside the hollow base. (Fig. 67). It is the Buddhist credo in Sanskrit, *ye dharmā...* We will return to an examination of this later, along with inscriptions related to certain votive tablets. The general form of these pieces appears to be close to those of the *stūpas* inscribed on two engraved steles from South Kedah that we examined recently. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1994). At the time, we considered their general appearance to be very similar to that of the Gupta models from the fifth century (the period estimated for the inscriptions accompanying them). The comparison does not seem exaggerated, in the first place because South Kedah and Langkasuka, without overland contacts through the supposed transpeninsular routes, were integrated into the same system of commercial relations in the

same period; and secondly because a given type of *stūpa* appears to have lasted over several centuries, which enables us to make some adjustments in dating. It is also worth noting that this type of *stūpa* figures on certain votive tablets from the same site, which we will speak of later.

b. Another type of votive *stūpa*, represented by the only example recovered practically intact at the time of the dig, seems to serve as a transition between the group we have just discussed and the other group. (Doc. 19. 4, Fig. 68). The form is elongated (it measures 36 centimetres); the *yaṣṭi*, with nine *chattras* fused to each other and attached to the body of the piece, could be the very type we provided for the previous examples when we attempted a reconstruction. There is a marked difference, however: the base, *adhovedikā*, no longer looks the same, because it barely increases in size in relation to the *jaṅghāvedī*, and therefore resembles the lower part of a baluster. It is a precursor of all later production, and accounts for the majority of the pieces on the site.

c. This production is represented by pieces of ever-increasing size. We estimated that some of them reached and exceeded a metre (perhaps 1.25 metres in one case). (Doc. 19. 16). The first three parts—*adhovedikā*, *jaṅghāvedī*, *aṇḍa*—were raised all in one piece or reassembled after cutting; the *harmikā* was also fused to the *aṇḍa*. Only the *yaṣṭi*, with its multiple parasols, was treated in separate sections. Quantities of *chattras* of varying sizes, which had originally been piled one upon the other, were found on the site, as well as some terminal points (*varṣasthālī*, *yaṣṭihāśīrṣa*, *uṣṇīṣa*). We reproduced seven from the examples we reconstructed—basing our estimate of their height on this number—influenced, perhaps, by the examples of the steles from South Kedah; but the *stūpas* figuring on certain votive tablets show nine *chattras*, even eleven. Such a structure certainly involved a wooden frame, or in any case an extension on which the *chattras* could be piled up. Also characteristic of this series are some elaborate decorations, though at times these are limited to simple recessed mouldings or mouldings in relief. (Doc. 19. 5-8, 10, 12). Those in relief are concentrated at the level of the *vedikā* (the section between the *adhovedikā* and the *jaṅghāvedī*) and at the level that serves as a transition between the *jaṅghāvedī* and the *aṇḍa*; it appears that the latter was never decorated. Very often the mouldings are accompanied by a frieze consisting of rows of diamond-pointed motifs, short moulded pilasters, stylized lotus flowers,

birds positioned face to face, even personages seated in the position of royal ease. It is however the *jaṅghāvedī* that are always the most elaborately decorated: on one of them, highly ornamented false doors alternate with balustraded windows (Doc. 19. 9, Fig. 69); on others, rows of crouching lions, very 'Dvāravatī', alternate with standing personages with their arms raised. (Doc. 19. 19). The height of sophistication in matters of decoration, however, consisted in the application of motifs from votive tablets alternating with pilasters or silhouettes of *stūpas*, even garlands, always on the sides of the *jaṅghāvedī* (Doc. 19. 16-18, Fig. 70); these tablet motifs belong to the end of the seventh century and to the eighth, as we will show later.

As has already been emphasized, this production was not limited to the BJ3 site, because fragments of the same type were also found on site BJ2, and, by chance, in the archaeological zone of Yarang, and on certain other sites of the neighbouring province of Narathiwat. On the other hand, this type appears to be nonexistent or extremely rare outside the region, at least up to the present time. Nevertheless, the Dvāravatī site of Ban Ku Muang (In Buri District, Sing Buri Province) yielded two of a similar conception, also in terracotta, in a form that is halfway between the first two types in our series, but whose size (43 and 48.5 centimetres) is close to examples in the first group. (Krabuanseng 1983).

It has been suggested recently (Chirapravati 1994: 237-238) that the large quantity of these unusual votive *stūpas* was probably linked to the presence in Yarang of one of the sects that appeared in the Buddhist community during the first centuries of its existence, the Caityakas, mentioned in the beginning of the third century of Nirvāṇa, among the Mahāsāṅghikas. (Renou & Filliozat 1947-53: II, § 2320). The latter, who appeared less than a century after Nirvāṇa, soon split up into several schools, including the Lokottaravādins (from the end of the second century after Nirvāṇa), who were prosperous in the region of Bāmiyān in the seventh century A.D., according to Xuanzang. The existence of these Caityakas, whom some authors (N. Dutt 1970: 53, 60) assimilate to the preceding ones, is attested in the Āndhra country from the second century of our era in inscriptions of Amarāvati, and the same Xuanzang indicated their presence there five centuries later. Because, as we have already pointed out, artistic influences emanating from this region of India were strong in the Malay Peninsula, it would not be out of place to think that this sect might have spread as far as Langkasuka; members

of the sect would have attached a particular value to the offering and worship of votive *stūpas* for the acquisition of merits. In the *Mahāvastu*, the first volume of the *Vinayapiṭaka* of the Lokottaravādins, which gives an account of the Life of the Buddha and of the organization he provided for the first *saṅgha*, the “erection, decoration and worship of *caityas* find prominence,” an idea that is also implicit in the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa inscriptions. (N. Dutt 1970: Note 2 p. 123). Nevertheless, A. Bareau (1955: 88), in presenting information on the doctrines of this sect, quoted a precept said to be peculiar to it: “The act of venerating (*pūjākāra*) a reliquary (*stūpa*) does not produce much fruit (*mahāphala*).”

2. The votive tablets

The Yarang sites are reputed to have yielded quantities of votive tablets, which are totally dispersed today; one other strong concentration of these modest religious objects in the region is in the caves around Yala, and particularly at Tham Khuhaphimuk, where some are preserved in a small museum under the aegis of the Wat of the same name. The site of BJ3 alone yielded 5,820 fragments. These numerous tablets, whether baked or not, belong to many different groups. (Doc. 20). They are essential in the context of our subject, because as we will see, an examination of them enables us to propose several possible datings.

a. The oldest tablets belong to site BJ3. There are not many of these; they are small, and come in various different shapes. Sometimes rectangular, tall (around 8 centimetres) and narrow (3 to 4 centimetres), they can also be oval or ogival, and very small in size (3 to 4.5 centimetres high at the most, and about three centimetres wide) (Doc. 20. 1-5, Fig. 71); they were sometimes baked. They represent either one or three *stūpas* with silhouettes like those of the first two types of votive *stūpas* we studied, or again a seated Buddha meditating alone on a lotus, or surrounded by two *stūpas* like those of the second type, or by a *stūpa* and a column on which a Wheel of the Law is represented in profile.

Several examples of this series of small tablets are marked with an inscription corresponding to two Buddhist credos written with a certain freedom of expression that varies from piece to piece. One is *ye dharmā hetuprabhavā...* (“The Buddha has told the causes of all things...”), which P. Skilling, in a recent article (1999: 181), considers to be written neither in Pāli nor in Sanskrit, “but in a Sanskritized Middle Indic closely related to Pāli” that he eventually named

“hybrid Pāli.” It is found on tablets containing only a single *stūpa*, and on the base of the votive *stūpa* mentioned earlier.

The other credo is expressed as follows: *Khasamanāya nirod-harmāge ye va...* (“On the path of the Annihilation [of the causes] in accordance with the method [told by the Buddha]....”) Sometimes this credo appears on tablets bearing the image of the seated Buddha, or that of the three *stūpas* lined up on the same plane. Of the two credos, the first is the most common.

These inscriptions were examined and dated to around the seventh century. (Weeraprajak 1990). This dating is based on comparisons between the letters used in them and the characters found in other inscriptions attributed to this period by the author. The fact that other authors have dated the group used for comparison to the sixth, even the fifth, century gives reason for caution concerning the proposed dating. We are therefore inclined to add at least a century to our texts, and to date them to the sixth century at the latest.

To our knowledge, no other site in Yarang or the region of Yarang has yielded votive tablets comparable to these, with the exception of Tham Khuhaphimuk, where there is a meeting of the three types, the isolated *stūpa*, the Buddha meditating between two *stūpas*, and the Buddha meditating between a *stūpa* and a column surmounted by a Wheel of the Law. Other types of ancient tablets have also been found here, in particular some whose largest examples are very fragmented—representing either the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī or the Buddha preaching the Law in front of an assembly of Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, depending on the interpretation given to them. We have already encountered these in Panpan, and have affirmed that they can be identified as belonging to one or the other expression of Buddhism. They could date from the end of the sixth or from the seventh century. We are also inclined to assign this date to an unusual type that we have only encountered at Tham Khuhaphimuk. Represented on a quadrangular tablet (9 x 5.5 centimetres) is a figure of a Buddha standing on a lotus, framed by two attendants (Brahmā and Indra, and therefore perhaps also two *bodhisattvas*), wearing a garment draped in the Amarāvati or Anurādhapura style, topped by a parasol that is itself framed by two Buddhas seated in meditation. (Fig. 72).

b. The largest of the votive tablets unearthed at the BJ3 site is represented by some much larger examples (11.5 x 6.5 centimetres, even 12.5 x 8 centimetres); these tablets were usually unbaked, or only very slightly baked, which explains why they have come down

to us in a fragmented state. One of the most frequently discovered types, which is of a beautiful light yellow, and represents a Buddha seated in meditation on a lotus between two *stūpas* under a parasol adorned with garlands and lotus buds, exists in a complete form only in the decorations on certain votive *stūpas*. (Fig. 70). A variant depicts a simpler, undecorated parasol above the Buddha. Another, rarer type represents the Buddha in the same attitude, but seated on the coils of the snake Mucilinda, framed by two attendants in symmetrical positions, with long *dhōṭīs* and high *jaṭāmukūṭas*, each holding a lotus in one hand. (Fig. 73). Above, a row of three meditating Buddhas alternate with engraved representations of votive *stūpas*. This type of tablet was also depicted in the decoration of the votive *stūpas*, on which it is sometimes associated with the preceding type, which shows them to be contemporaneous.

This second group of votive tablets dates at the earliest to the end of the sixth century, and more probably to the seventh or even the eighth century. This date is suggested to us by the identification of the two personages who flank the Buddha on some of them. From the perspective of early Buddhism, these figures might have been Brahmā and Indra, but they are more likely to be Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, as represented on a stone bas-relief of about thirty centimetres in height that was discovered by chance at the Yarang site, which we can no longer examine except in a poor photograph reproduced in an article by Q. Wales (1974: Pl. 6). Wales recognized the two *bodhisattvas* in the standing figures flanking a Buddha seated in an attitude of meditation, all in a style that is very close to that of the votive tablets. It is true that the figure standing to the right of the Buddha wore the image of a Buddha (Amitābha) at the front of his chignon. The production of these last tablets would then be linked to the renewal of missionary activity stirred up by the propagation of the *Mahāyāna*, which, after our examination of the ruins of Panpan, we estimate to have begun at the beginning of the sixth century.

The argument in favour of the existence of this missionary activity, which is of key importance for an artistic understanding of works from the Malay Peninsula, is based chiefly on the account of Yijing recorded at the end of the seventh century, to which we have already alluded. In one of the two memoirs he wrote in Palembang after his return from India in 685 and sent to China in 692, *An Account of the Buddhism sent from the Southern Seas* (*Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan*), he specifies (Takakusu 1896: 10) that “in the islands of the Southern

Sea—consisting of more than ten countries—the *Mūlasarvāstivādanikāya* has been almost universally adopted [lit. ‘there is almost only one’],” but that there are members of the *Mahāyāna* sect in Malāyu (Jambi). In the same work, he states that this Malāyu has now become “the country of Śrībhoga [Śrīvijaya],” this change having therefore taken place between 672, the date of his departure from Palembang for India after a stay of six months, and 685, the year of his return and of the beginning of a ten-year sojourn in that city-state. Also dated to the end of the seventh century is the inscription of Talang Tuwo (684 A.D.), in the region of Palembang, which contains precise references to the *Mahāyāna*, and thereby constitutes the oldest dated account of the existence of this school of Buddhism in the region. The same references give reason to believe that the form of *Mahāyāna* practised from this period on was strongly marked by Tantrism, which we know developed in Bengal towards the middle of the same century.

The *Mūlasarvāstivādins* are not found in the ancient lists before the seventh century, as A. Bareau noted (1955: 153). Yijing is the first to mention them, apparently without distinguishing between them and the *Sarvāstivādins*, an important sect of early Buddhism that kept separating into distinct and more or less rival schools, which leads us to believe that the *Mūlasarvāstivādins* were one of these. Again according to Yijing’s account, these *Mūlasarvāstivādins* were numerous in Magadha, the region of several Buddhist holy sites, and were well represented in Bengal; they used Sanskrit for their literary language.

And so, two distinct forms of Buddhism coexisted in Śrīvijaya at the end of the seventh century. The rapid development of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism with Tantric tendencies led to its predominance over the earlier form of Buddhism. As it happens, we have good reason to believe that in the framework of the commercial exchanges of the Southern Seas, the various types of Buddhism spread very rapidly among the populations, and therefore, that those practised in Langkasuka in this period could have been the same as those in use in Śrīvijaya. This political entity, as we have already said, had begun to impose its political dominance over the neighbouring regions by means of methods that remain largely obscure. At one time or another, these methods must have involved control over the commercial activities of the subjugated territories, with a payment of tribute. Once again from the account of Yijing, in a later work than those cited earlier, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-ekaśatakarman*, written

after his return to China in 695, we know that South Kedah “belongs to” Śrīvijaya at the end of the century. (Wolters 1961: 419). There is no evidence to confirm it, but it is probable that at around the same time, Langkasuka was in a similar situation for an indeterminate period, and that as its ties with Śrīvijaya grew closer, its culture also evolved in a similar direction.

In short, the early form of Buddhism, the *Mūlasarvāstivādin*, which may have been the dominant form, was practised in Langkasuka up to the end of the seventh century, without inhibiting the presence of the *Cāityakas*; no doubt from this time on, and perhaps earlier, along the lines of what was starting to happen in Śrīvijaya, the Tantric form of the *Mahāyāna* began to spread. This brief outline of the religious development in the region enables us to attribute all the votive tablets belonging to the first group, and marked with inscriptions, to the early, *Mūlasarvāstivādin* form of Buddhism. The fact that these inscriptions were written in Sanskrit is compatible with the practices of this sect, and given the origins of the group, the characters used must have had affinities with those in use in Northern India. On the other hand, the votive tablets of the second group belong to *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, perhaps with the different nuances that might be expected in a move from one cultic expression to another; therefore we would favour a dating to the period from the seventh to the eighth century for these pieces.

BJ3 yielded no other types of tablets, but the site of Tham Khuhaphimuk contained quantities belonging without doubt to *Mahāyāna* Buddhism with strong Tantric connotations, which we will discuss later.

SCULPTURE

A number of the pieces that we are classifying under this heading are really only objects of devotion like the votive *stūpas* and tablets, but the total recorded number of sculptures in Langkasuka is so insignificant that we wished to expand it somewhat by including them. In fact, researchers have occasionally reported the discovery of a statue and statuette, in particular in bronze, but we have no information about these, and the works whose traces have been preserved have come to light only by accident; to date, no important statue has been discovered during excavations. This paucity of statuary in the region is similar to the situation in South Kedah, which is even worse; we will return to this question later. The fact that so few statues have been found there can be attributed in part to the waves of iconoclasm

that followed upon the arrival of Islam in the region in the fourteenth century. It must have been somewhat the same in Langkasuka, which to this day has a high proportion of Muslims in its population. The sculptures found in the region are chiefly Buddhist works, but two *liṅgas* were discovered, as well as a Nandi.

1. *Buddhist works*

a. A medium-sized statue of Buddha (60 centimetres) can still be examined, as it is preserved in a local monastery (Wat Taninarasamosan, in Pattani). It was apparently discovered in the immediate vicinity of Yarang. (Fig. 74). The statue has all the marks of Dvāravatī: a perfect frontal treatment, a robe that covers both shoulders and falls in symmetrical folds across the whole body, the hands in *vitarkamudrā*. It could belong to Group E as defined by P. Dupont (1959a, 194-197, Fig. 392-398), and date from the eighth century.

b. A finely-wrought bronze statue of Buddha was discovered earlier, but in an outlying area of Langkasuka (Sungai Kolok, Narathiwat Province, on the Malaysian border). Because of its style, it constitutes an important milestone in the artistic development of this part of the Peninsula. (Fig. 75). A. B. Griswold, who examined the piece, considered it a fine example of a series of standing statues of Buddha belonging to the style known as Amarāvati, which were found here and there in Southeast Asia and also in Śrī Laṅkā.

The draping of the pleated robe, the position of the arms and hands, with the left hand holding the outer edge of the *uttarāsaṅga*, the right in *vitarkamudrā*, are absolutely identical to those in the representations of Buddha on a votive tablet from Tham Khuhaphimuk belonging to the first group studied above. (Fig. 72). Griswold believed that the statue could be linked with the school of Amarāvati itself, but was nonetheless inclined to consider it a production from Śrī Laṅkā. He dated it to the fifth century. Since his study and Dupont's (1959), historians of art have tended to see statues of this type as of more recent manufacture, assigning to them dates ranging from the sixth to the eighth centuries, depending on the greater or lesser degree of development or interpretation in relation to their models. The date proposed by Griswold seems somewhat early to us; we are more comfortable with the sixth century date.

c. Another, somewhat similar statue of Buddha, also in bronze, was found in the region of Songkhla, which enables us to link it to the artistic productions of Langkasuka. The image is more svelte

than the preceding one, with a slight inflexion of the left leg. (Fig. 76) The right hand is in *vitarkamudrā*, but it is a modern replacement, like the corresponding foot (Griswold 1966: 57, Note 25); this very convincing restoration was probably inspired by the preceding statue, as it belongs to the same collection. The position of the left hand, however, which is also holding a section of the robe, is slightly different, with the palm turned towards the shoulder in a gesture that this sculpture shares with numerous statues from Śrī Laṅkā belonging to the late period of Anurādhapura. (Schröder 1990: Pl. 33). The monastic costume, worn in the same way as the costume on the Buddha of Sungai Kolok, has no folds; the sensitive rendering of the body can be seen through the fabric, in the tradition of Gupta and Post-Gupta art; in addition to the lower border, the *antaravāsaka* is indicated by a groove at the waist. The hair, composed of large ringlets, is similar to the hair in the preceding statue, but its *uṣṇīṣa* is slightly fuller. Such as it is, with the play of different stylistic influences and its superior technique, the image is similar to the Wat Chom Thong (Sichon) statuette of Buddha mentioned in the preceding chapter. (Fig. 37). We are inclined to date it to the end of the seventh century.

In addition to these statues, the forms of Buddhism practised locally yielded smaller works or fragments that are sometimes merely ex-voto.

d. Among these, we should highlight a bronze statuette of Avalokiteśvara (10 centimetres high), found at the BJ3 site, which unfortunately is missing its two arms, and is quite eroded. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1995a) (Fig. 77). The hieratic aspect of this work, with the head disproportionately large in relation to the rest of the body, and topped with a *jaṭāmukuta* displaying a recognizable representation of the Buddha Amitābha, the long *dhotī* with central folds gathered at the hips by a belt from which a section of cloth hangs down, link it closely to some similar examples found in Palembang (Schnitger 1937: Pl. VI, Scheurleer & Klokke 1988: Pl. 54), in the neighbourhood of the site that yielded the Talang Tuwo inscription, dated 684 A.D., which we have already mentioned. It is also very similar to another statuette of Avalokiteśvara discovered on site No. 17 at Ku Bua by J. Boisselier (1972: Fig. 36). Another statuette of the same type appeared on the art market recently. (Chutiwongs 1991: Pl. 21). Boisselier tends to see a Pallava origin in the arrangement of the *dhotī* worn by these statuettes, and distinguishes between these pieces and those from Campā to which they have sometimes

been compared. (Boisselier: 1957). What we may be seeing in these images is an indication of the propagation in the Malay Peninsula and beyond, in the area of Dvāravatī, of the economic, political and cultural influence of Śrīvijaya from the end of the seventh century and throughout the eighth.

e. A bronze head of the same *bodhisattva* (Avalokiteśvara) was discovered at the time of the excavation of site BJ8, at the southwest foot of the surrounding terrace. (Fig. 78). Given its very fine workmanship, it is regrettable that the image was not found intact. The broad features of the face are finely chiselled; the end of the nose, which is almost an extension of the brow, is distinctly hooked. The hair, pulled up in waves to the top of the head, forms a high *jaṭāmukuta* with horizontal braids surmounted with a triple row of falling ringlets; other, wider loops of hair hang from these, as well as two long, wavy locks that fall behind the ears. The front of the chignon bears the image of the Buddha Amitābha. The back of the head is severely damaged. The proportions of the face and the treatment of the hair are in the tradition of Śrī Lankā art, from the late school of Anurādhapura. In particular, the piece can be compared to several standing images of the *bodhisattva* belonging to this school, illustrated with a photograph, by U. von Schröder (1990: Pl. 61), especially those numbered C. and D. The dating to the seventh and eighth century proposed by von Schröder for the Sinhalese images is also appropriate for our piece.

f. In addition to these pieces, some small bronzes have come to light here and there. One of the most appealing (Fig. 79) is a statuette of Maitreya (16.2 centimetres high), found at Ban Lan Kwai near Yaring, with certain characteristics (the acute inflexion, the elaborate hairstyle, the manner in which the *dhotī* is fastened) that are also reminiscent of iconographic treatments from South India, perhaps from Śrī Lankā (seventh to eighth centuries). (Schröder 1990: Pl. 67B, C). Another was discovered at Tham Khuhaphimuk (Fig. 80), and is preserved in the nearby Wat: it is a severely eroded statuette of Buddha (29.5 centimetres) with an acute inflexion in the left leg; its smooth costume reveals the body underneath; the missing hands must have been in identical positions to those of the larger images described earlier (*vitarkamudrā* and *kaṭakamudra*). For all that, this statuette with its unobtrusive *uṣṇīṣa* seems to us to be closely related to the statue of the Buddha discovered in the region of Songkhla. (Fig. 76). We believe it can be dated to the eighth century.

g. Finally, still in the realm of Buddhist sculptures, a Wheel of the Law (33 centimetres high and 20 centimetres wide) was found in Yarang, in an unspecified area of Ban Wat. (Fig. 81). Of course Dvāravatī comes to mind immediately, because of its association with this type of sculpture in Southeast Asia, but, as with the previous stone Buddhas (Fig. 74), it is astonishing that its influence—at least artistic—could have spread so far south. Unfortunately the rustic nature of the piece (it has absolutely no decoration) makes any effort at dating it impossible, even using the debatable principle that the more sober a piece is the more likely it is to be old. (Brown 1996: Fig. 38).

2. *Brahmanical works*

a. Two *liṅgas*, quite different from each other, were discovered at Yarang. This type of archaeological object, as we have already said in relation to the pieces found in Panpan, is never easy to date. But if we accept that when the end section (*rudrabhāga*) is treated in realistic fashion and is larger than the two others—the *brahmābhāga* (the square section) and the *viṣṇubhāga* (the octagonal section)—the piece is old, then one of the *liṅgas* (44 centimetres high) could date to the sixth century (Fig. 82), while the other (59 centimetres), with almost equal parts but a certain realism in the treatment of the *rudrabhāga*, would be a later work belonging perhaps to the beginning of the seventh century.

b. A stone statue of Nandi, the vehicle of Śiva, was discovered in association with site BJ8 (96 centimetres wide, 43 centimetres high), right on the flight of stairs leading to the temple entrance, perhaps *in situ*. Sadly it is very weatherbeaten, and has no particular characteristics that make it possible to date it. Because a Buddhist piece, the head of Avalokiteśvara mentioned earlier (Fig. 78), was found in the immediate vicinity of the same structure, we are somewhat at a loss to provide a formal identification.

It seems that what we have here is a building which, while initially Buddhist, was probably reused for Śivaite worship at an indeterminate period, and perhaps altered at the time. The total absence of votive tablets and *stūpas*, the original conception of the building—though it opened to the west—as well as the position and state of preservation of the objects found inside (the head of Avalokiteśvara and the Nandi), lead us to conclude that the two religions succeeded each other in this way in the structure. The deconsacration of a sanctuary was always feared in Southeast Asia, and

it was usually only possible to contemplate reusing a temple for another religion after a long period of abandonment; but perhaps we should not be surprised by this situation in a place that owed its wealth to commerce, and in order to increase and perpetuate its prosperity, welcomed and tolerated widely divergent communities holding a broad spectrum of religious beliefs.

These are all the archaeological remains linked with Brahmanism that Langkasuka has yielded to this day. What conclusions can we draw from them after an initial examination? We believe that the structure that is currently the best documented, site BJ3, which is undatable on its own, can be dated through the pieces that have been found in it (tablets and votive *stūpas*, and a statuette of Avalokiteśvara); these pieces suggest a foundation in perhaps the sixth century, and an activity that could have continued at least until the eighth century, and probably until the ninth, as is confirmed by two sherds of Middle Eastern ceramics that we will discuss later. The BJ2 structure was likewise founded in the sixth century, but it is impossible to determine how long it was used. As for the BJ8 temple, the head of Avalokiteśvara dates it at the earliest to the seventh to eighth century, but its foundation might have been earlier, since the removal of every trace of Buddhism from the interior of the building might well have eliminated votive tablets of the same age as those on the BJ3 site.

This chronology established from the results of the excavations tallies with the one pieced together from the witness of the texts examined above. The written accounts give reason to believe that the sixth century was a period of great prosperity for Langkasuka, as is suggested by the ambassadorial missions to China, which could then have led to the building of temples; beyond this date, the city-state apparently benefitted from the regular arrival of foreign ships. But the later centuries of the history of the area still need to be documented by indisputable archaeological evidence. At the end of this description of the archaeological remains of Langkasuka linked to the different religious practices found there, we need to take a look at the artistic influences that were brought to bear on them.

ARTISTIC INFLUENCES ON LANGKASUKA

During our examination of works of art from Lankasuka that are available to us today, we have emphasized their resemblance to the productions of near and faraway civilizations: Śrīvijaya, Dvāravatī,

Northeast India, South India, and also Śrī Laṅkā. The combination of influences is very complex; in particular, questions arise concerning the origin of the architectural works we have described, because the estimated date for temple BJ3, the sixth century, is too early for there to have been links with Dvāravatī in the sense of any direct artistic influence from this civilization on Langkasuka. And yet the style of the construction is reminiscent of that of numerous structures in Ku Bua, U Thong, Nakhon Pathom, and even Si Thep. We must therefore try to find another origin for the influences that inspired the building of this sanctuary.

For this very early period, it seems to us that only an almost direct link with India along the pathways of international commerce could explain the arrival of these cultural influences in Langkasuka. As we have already explained, however, we do not believe—in spite of the obvious appeal of such an idea—that any significant use could have been made of transpeninsular routes at this latitude, between South Kedah and the east coast, to facilitate exchanges and avoid the passage through the Strait of Melaka.

Of the two possible Indian origins (Northeast India or South India), we tend to favour the first, in our effort to explain the general appearance of the two large structures cleared at Yarang, especially the one on the BJ3 site. Two of the temples of the great Buddhist site of Nālandā (sites Nos. 13 and 14), sadly very badly damaged, consisted of a central sanctuary that opened to the east, surrounded by a terrace ambulatory. Their height (around 40 x 40 metres) is much greater than that of temple BJ3, but there are great similarities in conception between them. On this site, and on others that are also among the high places of historic Buddhism (we think particularly of Vaiśālī and Sārnāth), the structures that most invite comparison with those of Langkasuka are the votive *stūpas* and the small sanctuaries, doubtless because they are small in size, and also because, for that very reason, they have sometimes come down to us in very satisfactory states of preservation, unlike the major structures. (Figs. 83, 84, 85). They were raised in brick, and the outlines of their bases are very similar to those of sanctuary BJ3, with thick torus, set-backs, and alternating bands of recessed and projecting bricks. In addition, the decorative complexity of some of the surviving superstructures of these *stūpas* and small sanctuaries give some idea of the possible use of the very varied moulded bricks found on sites BJ3 and BJ8.

We only dare to make these comparisons, which some might find risky, because contacts really did exist between these regions, as is

attested by historic accounts and sculptural remains, and also because some of the structures on the sites under discussion belong to the Gupta and Post-Gupta periods (fifth to eighth century), which fit our time-frame perfectly. In our view, the combination of these two sets of givens explains how a structure like the one on site BJ3 could have been constructed in Langkasuka as early as the sixth century. We might then wonder whether the same influences had not also affected the territory of Dvāravatī, first reaching as far as Langkasuka, then spreading from there towards the north. This would explain certain architectural similarities. If this is what happened, it would only have been tit for tat, because the civilization of the valley of the Menam Chao Phraya influenced all the eastern shores of the Peninsula in turn, at least by providing works from its artistic production (stone statues of the Buddha, the Wheel of the Law, decorative themes), as we have seen, and which have been the subject of recent studies. (Puntokowit 1987).

At about the same time (the seventh to the eighth centuries), artistic influences coming out of South India and Śrī Lankā arrived in Langkasuka, a fact that is attested, as we have shown, by the presence of some small bronzes which were probably only imported works.

After examining these various works, we can measure the pointlessness of the expression “the art of Śrīvijaya,” by which all the heterogeneous material found along the shores of the Peninsula—material possessing no artistic unity—has been classified to this day. Besides, we tend to believe, until we see evidence to the contrary, that the form of art developed in the region proper to Śrīvijaya itself, the southeast of Sumatra, had no more intrinsic originality than art forms ‘born’ in the city-states of the Peninsula. Too many artistic influences of different origins mingled there to generate, even over the long run, an original and homogeneous artistic style. Such art is fostered primarily in agrarian civilizations within which, little by little, a harmonious blending of artistic influences can develop, but these would of necessity be less cosmopolitan than those that reached as far as the shores of the Peninsula.

C. ON THE SITE OF LANGKASUKA:
REMAINS FROM COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

Up to this point, we have often described trade as the activity behind the fortunes of Langkasuka, but we have yet to mention any remains from this activity. Paradoxically, remains from this early period are still rare, a situation like the one we have already discussed in connection with Panpan.

1. Coins have been discovered, always by chance, in various spots in the region of Yarang-Pattani.

a. The most ordinary of these are Chinese coins made of bronze found in bucketsful along the shores when shrimp farms are being developed; today these farms are one of the resources of the region, and they necessitate the digging of vast reservoirs near the shore. They have yet to be studied; some go back to the Tang period.

b. Equally commonplace are the Arab coins made of bronze; these, too, have not been studied.

c. The Sassanid silver coins are more interesting (Fig. 86); we know two examples of these, which are in private hands. It appears that their attribution to the fifth century (the reign of Peroz I—457-483)—is appropriate. (Ghirshman: 1962 Fig. 318). These coins, of whatever type, do not permit us to assign a date to the places where they were found, as they were evidently in use over a very long period.

2. No local or foreign ceramics have come to light that could point to a commercial activity in this period before the ninth century.

This paucity of archaeological material linked with trade is frustrating, as we can only repeat that there would never have been a prosperous city-state in Langkasuka if there had not been one or more entrepôt ports capable of receiving foreign ships; but it will probably be very difficult to characterize these sites, for reasons already given in the discussion on Panpan. (See above, Chapter Six.)

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CHAPTER EIGHT

JIECHA (SOUTH KEDAH):

FROM THE 5TH TO THE END OF THE 8TH CENTURY.

CHITU: AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 7TH CENTURY

JIECHA (SOUTH KEDAH)

A. SOUTH KEDAH IN THE EARLY TEXTS

Names and brief bits of information appear here and there in the old texts concerning what is thought to have been South Kedah in the early period. These texts may be Greek, Chinese, Indian or Muslim. In the past, the effort to identify these names produced a flood of detailed studies, which always seemed futile to us, and often appeared to have been conceived in order to allow distinguished researchers to argue among themselves about the identification of this or that place name.

What can it matter to us to know, for example, whether the names Kāḷagam, Kaḍāram, Kaṭāha, which appear in ancient and medieval texts, are synonymous, or whether they refer or do not refer to South Kedah, when the only details they could furnish about the place are as fragmentary as a few vague indications about merchandise originating there, or observations about a social life so brilliant that the only term deemed adequate to describe it was “seat of all felicities,” a hyperbole that was a great success in the specialized literature. (Braddell 1950, Wheatley 1973: 279-280). We are fortunate that more useful material than this exists.

Thus the Chinese place name Jiecha, perhaps a synonym for the earlier names, is without doubt the name by which the representatives of the Middle Kingdom designated South Kedah in the seventh and eighth centuries. It appears in this form in Yijing’s text devoted to the life of *The Eminent Monks who sought the Law in the West during the Great Tang Dynasty* (*Datang xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan*) (Chavannes 1894), a text mentioned in the preceding chapters. Jiecha, situated along the maritime route that linked China and India, is portrayed in this account as a frequent stopping-off place for ships

that went up the Strait of Melaka from Palembang-Śrīvijaya and stopped there to wait for the northeast monsoon before crossing the Bay of Bengal, or reached it from the east coast of India after crossing the Bay, assisted by the winds of one or the other monsoon. Of the sixty monks whose biographies are included in Yijing's text, at least thirty-seven used the sea route to travel to India or return, as we have already explained, and many of these stopped in Jiecha; according to the report, one of the monks, Fashen, even died there.

Nevertheless, in spite of what appears to have been Jiecha's near monopoly over the sale of armaments to the ships crossing the Bay of Bengal, the place is known only from Yijing's perspective, and seems not even to have been considered important enough to be mentioned by the official historians of the Tang. P. Wheatley (1973: 46) stated that he was unable to find other references to this name under the spelling used by the Chinese monk, but that Ma Duanlin, who always took his inspiration from texts from much earlier periods than his own time, related that a state called Jiazha had sent an ambassadorial mission to the imperial court in 638; although there are no indications about the location of this state, it is generally assimilated to Jiecha, an identification which we call into question, as it is unlikely that this chiefdom, which we will describe later, ever wished to enter into official relations with China. As we have said, it is Yijing again, in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-ekaśatakarman*, a later work written after his return to China in 695, who writes that South Kedah "belongs to" Śrīvijaya at the end of the century. (Wolters 1961: 419). This information inspired numerous speculations about the hold the political entity of Śrīvijaya had over the shores of the Peninsula. We will return to this subject in the next chapter.

Since the region of South Kedah has long been a propitious area for archaeological discovery, or at least, open to considerable research by the English who were in control of it, scholars have often been tempted to identify it with many other Greek, Chinese, Indian or Muslim place names. Thus the Takola of Ptolemy's *Geography*, which was spelled Takkola in India, and, among other names, becomes Geguluo to the Chinese and Qāqullah to the Arabs (Wheatley 1973: 268-272), was identified by R. Braddell as Kedah (1936: 35). This was hardly acceptable, and the author later changed his opinion.

A certain ambiguity also reigned in connection with Langkasuka, as we have noted, because the *Hikayat Marong Maha Wangsa* (the

Annals of Kedah) considers Langkasuka to be the ancestor of Kedah, and places the palace of this kingdom at the foot of Gunong Jerai, the mountainous massif that dominates the region. But both Braddell (1958) and Wheatley (1973: 260-263) have shown that this assimilation should be ignored, since it emanates from a late text (the end of the eighteenth century, in Wheatley's view), and the 'facts' supplied in it cannot be compared with the information gleaned from the Chinese texts.

The last assimilation to which South Kedah has been subjected concerns the place name Kalāh, said to be the equivalent of the Chinese Geluo. (Wheatley 1973: 59). These two place names, especially the first, are well documented. Details about their location exist, but as usual these are vague and imprecise, opening the door to every possible speculation and identification. Geluo appears in the Chinese archives from the early days of the Tang dynasty. It is described as a city with walls of crushed stone, towers, a palace, and houses with thatched roofs. Its army consists of 20,000 foot-soldiers equipped with bows, arrows and spears, as well as many elephants used by the infantry in wartime. (Wheatley 1973: 55-58).

The Arab sources that refer to Kalāh go back to the ninth century and forward as far as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. What emerges from them (Tibbetts 1956) is a picture of a prosperous city located on an island somewhere on the west coast of the Peninsula (the idea of an island in such an amphibious region being somewhat relative...). Its port is "the general rendez-vous of the Muslim ships of Siraf and Oman, where they meet the ships of China." (Ma'sūdī). These ships come there to seek and exchange products as varied as "aloeswood, camphor [mentioned several times], sandalwood, ivory, tin, ebony, brazilwood, spices of all kinds, and a host of objects too numerous to count." (Abū Zayid). Tin is mentioned frequently, and the mine that supplies it is said to have no equal "in any other part of the world." (Abū Dulaf). The metal extracted from it is "very pure and bright, but merchants adulterate it after its extraction from the mine and take it away to other places." (Idrīsī). There are several references to "plantations of bamboo." (Sindbad, Mukhtasar al-'ajā'ib). The place was protected by "great walls," and had "numerous gardens and abundant springs" (Abū Dulaf), features which, in a Muslim account, could only be considered a vision of paradise. The native people lived there under a vaguely-defined authority capable of dispensing "justice, prison and fines" (Abū Dulaf), but they coex-

isted with “Muslims, Indians and Persians” (Abū’l-Fidā’), and there is no reason to think that the Chinese were absent in the heart of this community of foreigners, because it is specified that certain local practices were derived directly from Chinese customs. (Abū Dulaf).

On the basis of this information, the place has been identified with various sites on the west coast of the Peninsula, including Kedah. J. Allen (1988: 217-223), faced with the problem of identification, wondered whether it might not be useful to attempt several assimilations of names. Thus the references to Kalāh are only Chinese and Arab, and yet Indians were also said to have lived in the area; but the Indian sources are silent. On the other hand, the Indians and the Chinese speak of Kaṭāha, which has been identified as South Kedah, and is a place where Muslims were also known to go, though they did not mention it by that name. Allen therefore proposed that the names Kalāh and Kaṭāha must refer to a single place whose name had been incorrectly pronounced and transcribed; she then contested Wheatley’s admittedly rather vague arguments in favour of an identification of Kalāh-Geluo with the region of Mergui, because she considered that South Kedah corresponded more closely to the information supplied in the texts.

All of this, as we have said, is relative, and depends chiefly on the greater or lesser ability of the authors to defend their theories. Thus A. Lamb (1964f) showed persuasively, convincing J. Allen, that the Kalāh of the Muslims could be the site of the Island of Kho Khao beside Takua Pa.

In this whole matter, we tend to agree with Lamb, who, in the article cited previously, expressed the view that over the centuries the Arab term Kalāh could have designated not a specific place of exchange, but a type of place, which would have moved along a section of the west coast of the Peninsula according to the vagaries of circumstance. He therefore accepts that other places than Takua Pa could meet the criteria for an *entrepôt* port of the Kalāh type: an accessible port where ships from East and West could meet and wait for favourable winds; a place where they could be supplied with various commercial products, in particular tin; a place attested today by deposits of Eastern and Western ceramic sherds; and finally, a place whose phase of activity would have been relatively brief, and would have begun not long after the end of the Tang period (he draws this conclusion from Arab texts whose original versions he believes were written no later than this period (Tibbetts 1956: 22), in

spite of the fact that certain geographers, or perhaps, as we will admit, compilers, spoke of Kalāh much later). South Kedah (Jiecha) meets all of these conditions.

All these bits of information collected from different sources are very terse, but we can still draw from them the key idea that South Kedah lived exclusively by the trade brought to the region by merchants coming to its waters from faraway lands. These foreign merchants exchanged their products there, acquiring others to sell at a considerable profit after their return home. They did not all merely pass through this place of exchange; many stayed, doubtless between monsoons, like the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims described by Yijing. The political entity that presided over these activities remains vague, but we will be able to define it better at a later point by means of the oblique methods of archaeology. It is also important to realize that it controlled a geographical territory that is very different from what it is today.

B. THE POSSIBLE GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMY OF SOUTH KEDAH IN THE EARLY PERIOD

I. The Coastal Landscape of South Kedah in the Early Period (Doc. 21)

The landscape and coasts of South Kedah in the period that concerns us were very different from what they later became. One has only to walk along the shores of the estuary of the Sungai Merbok or along the neighbouring, very low coasts, to recognize that the process of sedimentation is still going on. In fact, this process is not limited to South Kedah, but affects a very large part of the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, in particular, as we saw in the first chapter, the area that is protected from the strong winds of the southwest monsoon by the mass of the Island of Sumatra, whose Peninsula-facing coasts, which run alongside the Strait of Melaka, also fill up with alluvial deposits.

In general, an analysis of these ancient offshore bars, the Malay *permatang*, is very useful for dating these processes of alluviation. Unfortunately, they have not been dated along these coasts. J. Allen (1988: 505) believes, however, that “the major bands of west coast ridges are relatively recent, and [...] reflect the early historic-period sedimentary changes.” Their low altitude, in particular, would be an indication of their recent date.

It seems, then, that we should conceive of South Kedah during the period of our study as almost totally lacking in coastal plain, and imagine an agricultural landscape very different from the present plains of submerged rice culture, whose appearance has certainly influenced some contemporary interpretations about the environment of the region in the early period. At the time, there was either no space or very limited space for this type of agricultural activity, since the thin strips of coastal plain that may have existed around the *permatang* and the hills would still have been composed exclusively of acid clays covered only by mangrove swamps or *nipah* [*Nypa fruticans*], like the vegetation seen today on the fringes of the banks or at the edges of rivers and estuaries. Since the local population, as well as the visitors, had to have food, we can only imagine that some sort of agriculture adapted to the environment existed during this period.

II. Agricultural Activity in South Kedah in the Early Period

The only alternative to the cultivation of rice is a more or less itinerant dry cultivation that would have depended entirely on the rain-pattern. This type of agriculture is not unusual in Southeast Asia in general, and in South Kedah in particular, where it is still practised just inland from the coastal plains. One of the methods in use is burning, and as a result, the cultivated fields still contain a significant quantity of wood carbon, which has the particular property of lasting for long periods of time. J. Allen (1988: 507-511 + soil profile B, p. 674-677), seeking traces of this sort, analysed a slice of soil more than two metres deep located along the side of the road from Merbok to the *Muzium Arkeologi*, at an altitude of about forty-six metres. Seven strata out of thirteen contained wood carbon, four of them in significant quantities. Stratum XIII, the deepest, located at a depth of 218 centimetres, yielded a radiocarbon dating. The test was done on a fragment of wood carbon collected at a depth of 228 centimetres, and the date arrived at falls in a relatively wide range of years—610-1020 A.D.—within which J. Allen favours the latest date, with a ninety-five percent probability. Once she had established this proof, Allen (1988: 573-586) attempted to estimate the real potential of this region for non-irrigated agriculture, and came to the conclusion that the information provided by analysis of the “soils and geomorphic

data suggests that dryland rather than irrigated cereal agriculture constituted the main subsistence base throughout Kedah until the 16th century or later.”

The use of this type of agriculture is confirmed by the type of vegetation covering the land today. Thus Allen (1988: 594) noted:

Small patches of primary upper dipterocarp forest still exist on Gunong Jerai. Other than these patches, I do not know of a single area more than a hectare in size within the project area¹ that is covered by primary forest. Few such patches exist west of the Bintang Range.

These, too, are a witness of what was once the vegetal covering in the region. She adds:

Every hill associated with the early historic-period sites of the Merbok and Muda estuaries is dominated today by *lalang* [a Malaysian term for a type of secondary vegetation characterised by high grasses] or, commonly, *belukar* [another Malaysian term designating secondary forest].

The disappearance of this primary forest can be attributed to the use of the wood for daily domestic purposes, or for more long-term ones (houses, boats, etc.), by the native inhabitants in particular, and to a lesser degree, by foreign merchants. But the major cause of the replacement of the forest by secondary forms of vegetation that is observable today is undoubtedly the continued clearing necessary for the practice of non-irrigated agriculture.

III. The Consequences of Agricultural Activity on the Morphology of the Landscape of South Kedah

There is no doubt that such agricultural practices contribute to the erosion of the soils and speed the natural evolution of the geomorphological appearance of the region. To gain an idea of the intensity of this erosion on the slopes, we can take J. Allen's site along the Merbok-Muzium *Arkeologi* route as an example. If layer XIII—in which, at a depth of 228 centimetres, she collected the fragment of wood carbon whose age she estimated by radiocarbon dating—goes back to the earliest date proposed by the analysis, that is, to the year 610, we can estimate the rate of alluvial deposits at one centimetre

¹ By this she means a surface of 361 km² extending from east to west, from the UM 2 (28w) site as far as Kuala Muda, and from north to south, from the SMK 3 (49m) site to the Sungai Muda. This is of course empirical, but it provides a basis for reflection. (Doc. 22)

every six years. If we choose the later date as a point of departure, that is, 1020, the rhythm becomes one centimetre every 4.2. years (Allen 1988: 510, 599-600). And yet because of its location, this site has certainly lost more soil than it has gained from the upper slopes of the Gunong Jerai. Bearing this in mind, we can considerably increase the figure for the height of the sediments deposited in the lower regions of the zone, and—on the basis of parameters it is unnecessary to present here after J. Allen's report—estimate that the final result of this combination of erosion and alluviation could have caused the shores of South Kedah to advance somewhere on the order of one kilometre every hundred years. At this rate, Allen concludes (1990-1991), "very little floodplain existed until some time after A.D. 1300, relatively late in the historic era."

IV. An Estimate of the Population of South Kedah in the Early Period

In this context of a geographical region still almost entirely devoid of agricultural plain, dominated by a landscape of partly-cleared hills, where non-irrigated agriculture was practised and fields were burned after a fallow period, we may wonder about the size of the population that could satisfy its needs by these means. J. Allen (1988: 589-593) introduces a number of parameters to help in making an assessment; one of these consists in evaluating the surfaces actually adapted to this type of agriculture in the zone she defines as belonging to this civilization. (See Note No. 1 of this Chapter.) The figure 21,500 hectares has been advanced to cover the easily-cultivable land in the regions nearest to the coast, but this estimate increases rapidly when "adjacent areas, easily approachable by river, are added, since the surrounding slopes for many kilometres are appropriate for dry-land cultivation, as well."

From this point, we need to establish the rhythm of plantings on a single plot of land, or, put differently, the number of years fields were left fallow; estimates could range from two to eight years; an intermediate length of four years seems reasonable. In that case, only 4,300 of the 21,500 available hectares would actually have been under cultivation in a given year.

Another question arises: how are we to evaluate the production of rice per hectare for soil cultivated in this manner? J. Allen proposes the figure of three hundred *gantang* per acre. A *gantang* is a Malaysian unit of measure equalling 3.1 kilos; three hundred would

then represent 930 kilos of rice for a surface of 0.4 hectare (1 acre). This yield, calculated at reasonable levels of measurement, gives 2,325 kilos per hectare. Rounding the figure upward, the annual production of the agricultural lands in the historic zone we are examining would then have been 10.5 million kilos of rice.

R. D. Hill (1977: 61), the author of a work on rice in Malaysia that is cited by Allen, estimated that the annual consumption per inhabitant in Kedah is a hundred *gatang* of rice per adult, which equals 310 kilos. The production estimated earlier would therefore have been able to feed almost 34,500 adults, a figure that seems too high to us. Indeed, the entire population of Kedah and Perlis combined was estimated at 50,000 inhabitants in 1835-36 (Newbold 1839/1971), which was considered very high by the authors cited by Allen.

Clearly the figure of 34,500 adults arrived at earlier is directly linked to very uncertain parameters: the estimate of the actually cultivable surface, the length of time the fields lay fallow, the yield per hectare, and finally, the consumption of rice per inhabitant—all factors that are infinitely relative. Accordingly, if we increased the number of fallow years to eight, a figure that seems maximal but not impossible, the surface actually cultivated each year would drop to around 2,400 hectares, producing around 5.6 million kilos of rice, which could provide food for only 18,000 people.

By way of comparison, since early historic sources give no estimates of the number of inhabitants in the coastal states they describe, the population of Melaka, the entrepôt port that could in some ways be considered the heir of the ports of South Kedah, has been estimated at well under 25,000 in the fifteenth century, while the figure for the beginning of the seventeenth drops to only 12,000. (Allen 1988: 592).

Elsewhere, D. R. Harris (1972: 248), quoted by J. Allen (1988: 593), has suggested that human densities associated with non-irrigated agriculture rarely exceed a hundred and fifty inhabitants per square mile, that is, around fifty-eight inhabitants per square kilometre. If this figure is applied to the 361 square kilometres of surface land that could have been used by this civilization (see Note 1 of this Chapter), the figure reaches around 21,000. This is reduced to 14,000 when we readjust the population density to a hundred inhabitants per square mile (39 inh./km²), following the same source.

These estimates assembled in an effort to arrive at a more concrete assessment of the population of South Kedah appear to bring the numbers down to a figure not exceeding 20,000 inhabitants.

In the all-too relative light of the preceding observations, the land and activities of South Kedah in the early period become a little easier to understand. The region, very different today from what it was at the time, is dominated by the silhouette of the Gunong Jerai, then located much nearer to the shore. The foothills encircling the massif and those spreading out farther to the south constitute the most favourable areas for agricultural activity, in the absence of what was once cultivable plain. The plain only begins to rise slightly from the water in the form of long bands of dunes parallel to the shore where villages are established that can be linked to each other by rivers with capricious courses and shores bordered with thick lines of mangroves and varieties of palms that grow in acid soils. These rivers divide into two larger, more substantial rivers, the Sungai Merbok and the Sungai Muda, whose middle and upper courses penetrate into the heart of a region covered with forests, the territory of the *Orang Asli*.

A first generation of ports developed near or in the estuary of these rivers, and soon began to receive foreign merchants. As with Panpan and Langkasuka, their location has not been revealed by the discovery of commercial remains, but other vestiges have appeared whose importance has been variously assessed since their discovery.

C. THE FIRST ARCHAEOLOGICAL VESTIGES OF SOUTH KEDAH²

From an archaeological standpoint, South Kedah has benefitted from unusual circumstances that set it apart from other regions in the Malay Peninsula. These are primarily related to the fact that the different states that make up Malaysia today were under British control up until a very recent period. Therefore, the first discoveries and the first systematic archaeological investigations sprang from an English fascination with the past of a Southeast Asian region that they governed, a situation not unlike that of the French in Indochina. Elsewhere (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: 15-19), we have traced the

² The sites, along with the whole range of archaeological objects discovered in South Kedah, are illustrated in Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a.

history of archaeological research in South Kedah. Here we need only remember that the major work in the area was that of Q. Wales in 1936-37 (Wales 1940), and again in 1941 (Wales & Wales 1947). Later it was another Englishman, A. Lamb (1958, 1959, 1960, 1961), who returned to these investigations in earnest, interpreting in a more objective and scientific manner material that had been examined somewhat rapidly, and according to a number of *a priori* assumptions made by his predecessor. Since the seventies, the Malaysians have completely taken over the archaeological development of the sites in South Kedah. It has turned out that these sites are all the more valuable because they are the only ones of their type in the whole of Malaysia. We should still bear in mind—and this in no way diminishes the interest of these remains—that if the fortunes of politics had kept the state of Kedah in Thai territory (it was part of Thailand until 1909), the sites would certainly never have received the attention that has been devoted to them, which would have been unfortunate for our understanding of the entrepôt port civilisation in the Malay Peninsula. As we shall see, however, the remains are actually not spectacular, cutting a rather sorry figure in comparison to those that have been discovered in Thailand, and even in the Malay Peninsula. (Doc. 22).

The majority of the remains are later than eighth century. A certain number, however, belong to the first centuries of Indianization, and it is these that we will examine in this chapter. These first vestiges—chiefly ruined structures, of which many have disappeared, but also several individual pieces—are exclusively Buddhist. This is undoubtedly the result of mere archaeological chance, however, and we refuse to conclude from it, as has been done, that Hinduism did not appear in the region until the ninth century, which is the earliest date attributed to a temple dedicated to Śiva (PB2 (19w)), a temple that in fact might not have been founded until the eleventh century.

I. Architectural Remains

Nine sites have yielded structural remains that have been identified as Buddhist; eight, in fact, as the first two correspond in reality to one and the same place. They are as follows, classified by zones: PB 4 (21w), PB 5 (22w), SB 1 (17w), SB 2 (2w), SB 3 (16 Aw), SB 14 (10w), NB 2 (1w), SMM 8 (37 m), SMM 9 (39m). Six have yielded at least one archaeological object that is undeniably Buddhist, from

which we can infer that the whole site was Buddhist. The three others (SB 1 (17w), SMM 8 (37m), SMM 9 (39m)) were placed in this category because of structural similarities with those on the previous sites. Elsewhere (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: 35-61), we have presented each of these sites in detail, indicating the manner of their discovery, their location, excavation, architectural description, and the archaeological discoveries made there. We will limit ourselves here to a few general observations drawn from this material.

1. If we set aside site PB 5 (22w), where there are two structures that must surely be considered dependent on the ruined building on site PB 4 (21w), which has a small quadrangular altar that is very similar to them (Doc. 23, 24), all the ruins (there are eight others) are constructions with a single full core.

2. These structures are quadrangular blocks, with the exception of the one on site PB 4 (21w) (Fig. 87), which assumes the form of a Greek cross, and the one on site SB 1 (17w), which is octagonal. (Doc. 25). They appear to have been the bases of edifices that we can easily imagine in descending storeys, in other words, as having the form of *stūpas*, considering the type of worship that was—or is supposed to have been—associated with them. Brick rings found in connection with sites PB 4/5 (21/22w) could have been possible elements of a *chattra*.

3. These block structures are small in dimension: four of them measure about four by four metres, the largest, seven by seven metres (NB 2 (1w)). The arms of the basic structure, which is in the form of a Greek cross (PB 4 (21w)), measure only five and six metres; only the octagonal structure (SB 1 (17w)) measured ten metres in diameter on the ground. These were therefore small buildings, so we should not be particularly surprised that they have almost totally disappeared.

4. The building materials were either brick: PB 4/5 (21/22w), SB 1 (17w), SB 3 (16Aw), SB 14 (10w); or laterite: SB2 (2w), NB 2 (1w), SMM 8 (37m), SMM 9 (39m). These materials, however, were only used as facing for walls of differing widths, as the body of the edifice was made only of a single block of earth and rough stone. Q. Wales does not specify the materials used for his sites SB 2 (2w), SB 14 (10w), no longer in existence, and NB 2 (1w) and SMM 9 (39m), which would benefit from being examined in depth, but in reality

there is no reason for doubt, as the technique has been confirmed for numerous other structures, as we will see. Other materials are sometimes associated with the brick or laterite, which are juxtaposed on site SB 1 (17w): schist flagstones for sites SB 2 (2w) and SMM 8 (37m), river pebbles for site SB 14 (10w).

5. No cement was used, and the materials were superimposed without alternating their length and width. When we realize that the foundations were always rudimentary, if not altogether absent, it is easy to understand why the monuments were unable to brave the centuries without major damage: subsidence, dislocation, collapse.

6. What remains of these constructions seems to have had little ornamentation.³ There are few mouldings, the materials are sometimes chamfered on one side, and some triangular bricks display a rounded edge. It does not appear that any stucco was applied; in any case, no trace of stucco was found. What might have been antefix bricks were found on sites PB 4/5 (21/22w), but no bas-relief was found anywhere. As for sculptures, those that have reached us remind us more of ex-voto than of master works, whose disappearance can be explained as the result of the ravages of time and a likely wave of Muslim iconoclasm, doubtless after the temples were abandoned.⁴

7. The dating of these ruined buildings was undertaken only from the perspective of various objects found in association with them, notably some inscriptions; indeed, inscriptions were found on three of the sites SB 2 (2w), SB 14 (10w), NB 2 (1w), and a fourth site, SB 3 (16Aw), revealed an interesting bronze statuette of Buddha. But epigraphically speaking, the dating of these inscriptions is subject to numerous controversies, and two of them were discovered in positions that do not enable us to affirm that they are absolutely contemporaneous with the foundation of the monument. In addition,

³ A staircase balustrade was, however, discovered at Kampong Sungai Mas (L. 80 cm, 1.34 cm), decorated along a third of its length with a quite finely-wrought head of *kāla* that is reminiscent of some Javanese works of the eighth and ninth centuries. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: Doc. 267).

⁴ Three unsophisticated and severely damaged ex-voto, two of them representing the Buddha seated in *bhūmiśparśamudrā* and the third the Blessed One standing, were discovered on site PB 4/5 (21/22w) (Ill. Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: Doc. 255-257). A fourth ex-voto, equally unsophisticated, which may represent Hārīṭi (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: Doc. 262 & 1995b) was found at Kampong Sungai Mas.

the sherds of Chinese ceramics found during the excavation of these structures point to a date no earlier than the ninth century, because it has been shown that no Chinese ceramics arrived in any significant quantity on the shores of the Malay Peninsula before that date. On the basis of these estimates, we are left with a very wide range of possible dates (from the seventh, even the fifth, century to the thirteenth), and the dating remains open to discussion.

a. Thus the twin sites PB 4/5 (21/22w) could have been founded in the ninth century, if we accept the results of an examination of the oldest sherds of Chinese ceramics found in their immediate environment: fragments of white Ding ceramics (Hebei) have indeed been authenticated there. These ceramics, sometimes called *Sāmarrā* because this ancient seat of the Abassids in Mesopotamia, which they occupied briefly between 836 and 883, yielded a number of them. Their presence, however, does not necessarily imply that the structures did not exist before this date; in the same way, the presence on these sites of Chinese sherds of much later date, from the Song (twelfth to thirteenth century) and Ming periods (fourteenth to fifteenth century) give reason to believe that the *stūpa* and its altars were in use until a relatively late date; but their existence here may merely be a sign of the ongoing use of the place where they were located, a residual ridge (*permatang*) overlooking the surrounding rice paddies, which are flooded regularly in the rainy season. Today this ridge continues to provide shelter for several houses.

b. Site SB 14 (10w) could belong to the period from the eighth to ninth century, or from the twelfth to the thirteenth, depending on the assessment of the inscriptions on the gold and silver discs discovered in its deposit reliquary, a location that is obviously the determining factor for its dating. (See below.)

c. On the other hand, sites SB 2 (2w), SB 3 (16Aw) and NB 2 (1w) are apparently datable to a briefer period, the seventh to ninth century, but, as we have already indicated, this estimate depends on the dates given to the inscriptions from the first and the last of these sites, and to the bronze statuette of Buddha from the second, since it has been impossible to prove from the position of these objects in relation to the structures that they were placed there at the time of the foundation.

d. Finally, sites SB 1 (17w), SMM 8 (37m) and SMM9 (39m) are undatable by themselves, except perhaps the second, but this dating would be as relative as that of PB 4/5 (21/22w), if we give some credit to Wales's estimates for the Chinese sherds he claimed to have

found there, which he believed to be from the Tang period (the ninth century at the earliest, as we have already noted).

8. These sites are spread out within the two most important zones of concentration of the sites in South Kedah: the valley of the Sungai Bujang (SB), and the area between the Merbok and Muda rivers (SMM). In view of the discovery in Zone SMM of some isolated Buddhist objects, which we will discuss later, an effort was made to depict this place as the favoured site for Buddhism in South Kedah. Nothing could be farther from the truth, however, especially since one of the sites (NB 2 (1w)) is the most remote of all the sites found in the zone to the present day, isolated as it is at the top of a small hill of about fifty-eight metres in height, the Bukit Choras, some twenty kilometres north of Gunong Jerai. This location in an outlying area is comparable to that of the Buddhist inscription *in situ* of Cherok Tokun (see below), roughly twenty kilometres south of the Sungai Muda.

II. The Inscriptions

We will first describe the inscriptions that are linked to the preceding sites, and then discuss four others that were discovered separately.

1. *Engraved stone from site NB2 (1w): 4th or 9th century*

This piece is the most important discovery made on the site. It was found in the roots of a tree on the edge of the platform. The inscription was lightly engraved on a small rectangular tablet of schistous stone of the same quality as that of the rock in the hillside; the tablet measures 6.6 centimetres in length, 1.45 centimetres in width at the broadest point, and 0.95 centimetres at the narrowest. One of the sides and the two narrow ends had been polished and engraved with four lines of writing identified by Q. Wales as South Indian characters. He entrusted the examination of this text, a Buddhist *credo*, to his usual advisor on such matters, J. Allan, curator of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, who deciphered the Sanskrit text as follows:

*Ye dharmmā hetu (prabhavā hetum teṣāṃ)
Thatāgato / hyavadat teṣāṃ ca yo /
Nirodho evaṃ vādī / Mahāśramanaḥ,*

specifying that the words in parenthesis had been left out.

For Allan, the form of the *c*, *g* and *m* could only imply a date after the second half of the fourth century. Wales (1940: 7) immediately related this date to that of the structure he had excavated, which accordingly became, in his opinion, “the earliest structure now known in Malaya,” adding that “it would be difficult to point to any older building elsewhere in South Eastern Asia.”

This date, since it did not agree with A. Lamb’s new attempts at dating on the sites of South Kedah, led Lamb to criticize Wales’s conclusions, and Allan’s along with them, quite rightly. “The tablet,” he wrote (Lamb 1962b: 67), “does not appear to have been found in a particularly meaningful relationship to the laterite foundations which made up the structural remains of Dr. Wales’ site No. 1,” which ought to have inspired Wales to apply greater prudence to his deductions. Lamb went on to state that “two authorities, Professor F. D. K. Bosch and Dr. J. G. de Casparis, have expressed opinions as to the date of this tablet which differ considerably from that advanced by Mr. J. Allan.” F. D. K. Bosch (1961: 489, Note 6) volunteered the opinion that “the script had to be considered as much the same as that in common use in the 8th and 9th century in Central Java.” Casparis (1956: 104) surmised that because the round form of the *va* in the oldest inscriptions always displayed a sharp angle in the lowest horizontal stroke and in the stroke of the *na* with no loop, the inscription was of later date. He considered that the fourth century date proposed by J. Allan should be rejected; he himself thought the piece could be dated to the ninth century. This illustrates the need for caution in using these inscriptions as a basis for dating a structure.

Before criticizing the proposed date for this tablet, Lamb, in another short article (1961f: 38), had made the same objection in relation to the tablet found by Wales on his site 2 (SB2); in his argument, Lamb reminded his readers that an inscribed tablet of this type, easily transportable, could have spent some years in pious hands, and then, in a subsequent period, been placed in the deposit reliquary of a much later temple, which it would then considerably pre-date; or, it might have been brought to the temple as an offering at a later time. In this same article, Lamb also cited Casparis’s opinion that the inscribed texts could have been copied from manuscripts of some age featuring written forms that bore no relation to the script in use in the period when the tablets were engraved; here, then, is another reason to apply caution when attempting to estimate the date of a building. Today, however, in the light of the new assessments

concerning the civilization of South Kedah, it seems reasonable to accept the ninth century as a plausible date, both for the tablet and for the site associated with it.

2. *Inscribed tablet from site SB2 (2w): beginning of the 5th or first half of the 7th Century*

When one side of the base course of the ruin on this site was cleared, an object of considerable importance came to light that Wales suspected “had probably been embedded in the *stūpa*.” It is a rectangular tablet

of what appeared to be hard, sun-dried clay measuring 13.6 x 2.85 x 2.85 centimetres, slightly tapered from these measurements at each end. Each of three faces bore two lines of a Sanskrit inscription, well preserved except for slight damage to the first line. (Wales 1940: 8).

Wales asked four people to give their opinion of this inscription, providing each with J. Allan’s transcript and translation. (Wales 1940: 8-9):

*Balāni daśa catvāri vaiśaradyāni yāni ca
Aṣṭādaśa ca Buddhānām dharmmā āveṇikā hi ye
Ye pratīyasamutpannā na te kecī svabhāvataḥ
Ye ‘svabhāvān na vidyante teṣāṃ saṃbhavah kvacit
Jānīte ya imāṃ koṭiṃ akoṭiṃ jagatas samam
Tasya koṭiṃ gataṃ jñānam sarvvadharmaṣu varttate.*

There are ten *balas* (powers), four *vaiśaradyas* (assurances, extraordinary skills) and eighteen *dharma āveṇikas* (independent qualities) of the Buddhas. The *dharmas* (moments of consciousness) which arise from co-operating circumstances have in no case real existence; there can nowhere [be] any (*dharmas*) which do not exist in a state of unreality. Who knows this summit of the universe to be at the same time no summit—his knowledge, having reached the summit, extends over all *dharmas*.

Wales (1940: 9) states that this inscription is:

concerned with the doctrines of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The script is Pallava *grantha* and all the scholars who have studied it are agreed to a dating of fifth or sixth century. Dr. Chakravartin considers it to be of early sixth century. It is in any case much earlier than the dated seventh century Sumatran inscriptions which were previously considered to be the earliest inscriptions in Southeast Asia including clearly Mahāyānist references.

Apparently, according to Wales, the origin of the inscription puzzled researchers for some time, as it did not seem to have been taken from

any ordinary Sanskrit text; it was finally found in some Chinese translations of *Mahāyāna* texts.

Lamb (1961f: 38) criticized the dating of this tablet, basing his opinion on arguments put forward by Casparis (1956: 51, 104)—who dates the inscription to the first half of the seventh century at the earliest—arguments we have already mentioned in connection with the tablet from site NB2 (1w). Lamb also reminded his readers that the value of this sort of find, small and easily transportable, should be relativized as a method of dating a building, the more so because in this particular case, the tablet was not found in direct association with the structure, but beside it.

3. *Deposit reliquary of site SB 14 (10w): 8th-9th or 12th-13th century*

Digging in the interior of the sanctuary on this site to a depth of about sixty centimetres below ground level, Q. Wales found seven discs, one gold and six silver, each about 3.8 centimetres wide; they were smooth on one side, and bore an inscription on the other. Four researchers presented opinions on these engraved discs. Wales himself solicited the opinion of N. P. Chakravartin, who transcribed and translated the inscriptions on four of the six silver discs (Wales 1940: 23):

1. *Sarvv-āpayā-jaha*. (i.e., one who has removed all devils)
2. [*A*] *moghadarśi*. (of unfailing vision, i.e., infallible)
3. *Gandhahastī*. (musk elephant)
4. *Varjr-ā[m*]gabandha*. (of diamond build)

The two other discs presented problems, and Chakravartin was only able to identify a few letters from each of them. In the end, the inscription on the golden disc remained indecipherable. J. Allan of the British Museum, who examined it in person, was able to decipher at least the syllable *om* in the middle. Chakravartin informed Wales that these inscriptions could correspond to epithets of the Buddha, but were more likely to be names of *bodhisattvas*. He also expressed the view that if they had been discovered in South India—since it seemed to him that their script was related to the script of that region—he would have dated them before the eighth century, but that their location in the Malay Peninsula implied a later date: the eighth or even the ninth century. In his opinion, a script introduced in the eighth century in this region had every chance of still being used a century later.

F. D. K. Bosch, to whom Wales also appealed, offered some conclusions that differed somewhat from Chakravartin's. He gave an absolute dating for the inscriptions, to the second half of the ninth century. For Disc 4, he came up with a slightly different reading from that of his colleague; in it he was certain he could read *Vajrabandhe*, which, as this meant nothing, gave him the idea that at least one syllable was missing from the word—perhaps *śvara*—, which made it possible to reconstruct a name, *Vajrabandheśvara*, “the Lord of the diamond bondage.” Eventually one of the two silver discs that Chakravartin had not deciphered suggested to Bosch a reading that Chakravartin himself has since confirmed: *Samantabhadra*, the name of a *bodhisattva*. To conclude, Bosch believed that the texts on the discs could correspond either to names of *bodhisattvas*, or to those of pious devotees who had adopted the names of saints or *bodhisattvas*.

When F. D. K. Bosch was asked to study the inscriptions on the discs in 1937, he thought that they could in no way be related to Indo-Javanese archaeology; such a conclusion delighted Wales, who was a convinced believer in a Pallavan colonization in South Kedah (1940: 24). Since then, Bosch has modified his opinion in the light of discoveries made by Lamb on site SMK 1 (8w) that gave weight to the theory of a possible Javano-Sumatran influence in South Kedah. This then led him to seek Casparis's opinion on the inscriptions. Casparis confirmed the ninth century date, on the basis of similarities between certain syllables in the script (for example, *-sta* and *-ndha*) and their Javanese equivalents in this period (in Bosch 1961, Note 6, p. 490). This conclusion corroborated his new opinion that the inscriptions had nothing to do with the Pallavas. But if one wished to be a purist, one could argue, as Casparis himself did, that these inscriptions might have been recopied at a much later date, from ninth-century manuscripts.

This argument corresponds with another theory that was formulated along the same lines concerning the date of the structure. In a joint article (1975), F. E. Treloar and G. J. Fabris proposed dating the site to the twelfth or thirteenth century, like Candi Bukit Batu Pahat (site SMK 1 (8w)), which Treloar claimed to have successfully dated to this period (1968, 1972a), perhaps arriving at a correct conclusion for the site, but by means of reasoning which we consider to be somewhat fallacious. Both authors are totally convinced of this dating, and go to considerable pains to back up their theory by demonstrating the similarity they believe exists between certain

archaeological finds at the two sites: on the one hand, the golden disc from site SB 14 (10w), which bears an inscription on which only the middle syllable, *om*, could be identified, and on the other, the golden discs contained in the deposit reliquaries of Candi Bukit Batu Pahat, which were all inscribed with a sign that was identified on one of them—the disc from the S.-W. deposit reliquary)—as the syllable *om*; this disc found in the reliquary is the one referred to by Treloar and Fabris (1975: 75).

From here they go on to describe the two discs as “identical in size and shape, although the gold is of a different thickness” (Treloar & Fabris 1975: 75), providing a detailed analysis of the two objects that does indeed reveal great similarities, and explaining the slight disparities by the fact that in the case of site SMK 1 (8w), the disc was found in a reliquary, and at site SB 14 (10w) it was found in the ground, where it must have undergone some alterations. At the conclusion of their analysis, they express their conviction that “the two discs formed part of the common stock of a dealer or maker of religious objects” (Treloar & Fabris 1975: 76) who used the same quality of gold and the same gauge for pieces of this type. They explain the differences in the characters used for the syllable *om* (forgetting that for site 10 it is only one among others, unlike site 8, where it is the only one of its kind), and propose that these inscriptions were probably made in the course of temple consecration ceremonies, and thus by different people.

The fact that it has been proven that Candi Bukit Batu Pahat was dedicated to Śivaite religious worship with Tantric connotations (see below, Chapter Fourteen), and that site SB 14 (10w) was definitely Buddhist, does not disturb their calculations. They propose that a merchant community like that of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, on which, they believe, the two temples would have depended, must have included at the same moment in time adherents of the two great Indian religions, and that “to think otherwise, that is, in terms of a Buddhist period and then a Hindu period, would be a gross oversimplification.” (Treloar & Fabris 1975: 77).

Taking everything into account, we fully subscribe to this idea, which obviously served the purposes of their demonstration: how else could they have explained how two temples so close to each other (only three kilometres apart), dedicated to different systems of worship, could have belonged to the same period? The flaw in this beautiful reasoning is the *a priori* assumption that Candi Bukit Batu

Pahat dates to the twelfth to thirteenth century, on the strength of arguments that we find weak, even if new information now available concerning the dating of this temple corroborates them. In the end, then, the two religious structures could be contemporaneous, if we wish to attribute to the scientific analysis of archaeological materials a reliability it may not always have; in that case, the engraved discs, as well as the SB 14 (10w) structure, would only date to the twelfth to thirteenth century.

One of the four other inscriptions found locally that can be attributed to the historic period treated in this chapter, which is known as the Bukit Meriam inscription, was also found in association with a ruined building. The discovery was made in around 1840, however, and the site, imperfectly described at the time, can no longer be found today. One of the three other inscriptions, because it was engraved on a rock, is still *in situ*; the two others, especially the one found earliest, are the most important inscriptions to have appeared in South Kedah to date.

4. *The Cherok Tokun inscription: 5th century*

This inscription was discovered by J. Low (1848a: 62-63) during the 1840's, with all the picturesque qualities associated with archaeological research in this heroic period, in a region that was covered by jungle at the time. In his short article Low admits to having been disappointed in his hopes of discovering "ruins and other marks of temples and an ancient population" associated with the inscription: the surveys he had arranged were indeed totally unproductive. The place that gave its name to this inscription is situated at the foot of a hill, the Bukit Mertajam, in Seberang Perai, some twenty kilometres to the south of the Sungai Muda.

The inscription is carved on a vast granite stone some three metres long, which was not found in association with any archaeological structure. J. Low thought he could make out "a group of seven inscriptions," with letters in a style that seemed to him to be of "Indian origin." He left his name and the date of his visit, 1845, thus paving the way for other fanatical devotees of the practice of leaving proof of one's passage with a signature; since he had no means of taking an impression, he wrote out the inscription and had it sent to London. J. Laidlay offered a translation of the text, which is in Pāli, without a transcription (1848: 66-72). I. H. N. Evans, in a brief

article accompanied by two photographs, described the state of the inscription at the end of the twenties. (1930: 35-36, Pl. VI).

Since that time, many archaeologists have referred to this inscription, but it was not really reexamined, and in 1985, local researchers were still wondering (Collective 1985: 125) whether it was written in Pāli or in Sanskrit.

A. Lamb, who wrote an article in 1963 in which he made a first attempt to review the situation concerning the inscriptions linked to the civilization of South Kedah, had to be content merely to comment on the text from the translation published in 1848; he describes the inscription in this period as having become illegible as a result of the addition of names carved in Chinese and English, following the example of Low himself...

Today's epigraphists no longer have this excuse: the inscription has been protected in a specially-built case since the end of the 1980s, and its text restored and thrown into relief; it now only remains for researchers to study it again. Following, for lack of anything better, is the original translation according to J. W. Laidlay:

- a. I acknowledge the enemies of the contented king Rāmaunibha and the wicked are ever afflicted.
- b. This is said by Maṇikathā, the protector of all great Buddhas.
- c. In every form of life, knowledge becomes manifest everywhere and in every way.
- d. *karma*, which sports with passion, is the cause of transmigration.

As Lamb points out, the last two verses (c and d) are very similar in substance to the first verse of the inscription on the stele of Buddhagupta, and to the second part of the inscription of the Bukit Meriam inscription (see below), a fact that is of some interest.

No epigraphist has studied this inscription directly in our time, but we can deduce from the work of Casparis, who alludes to it in a study of Indonesian inscriptions, that it must be from the last half of the fifth century. (Casparis 1975: 19-20).

5. *The Mahānāvika Buddhagupta inscription: 5th century* (Fig. 88)

This inscription was also discovered by J. Low, in 1834 (1848a: 63-65), when he was "engaged in excavating some old ruins on a sandy side in the northern district of this Province [Wellesley]." We may marvel at the vague nature of the details he gives about the location of the inscription, but everything that this colonel and amateur lover of antiquities writes about his research in South Kedah is cut from

the same cloth. Guesses about its location abounded; the Waleses in particular (1947: 6), who carried out excavations in 1941 in what today is Seberang Perai, theorized that the place described so succinctly by Low could correspond to their site 1 [Gua Kepah; SMM 8 (37m)]; the site is indeed sandy, and is located on the edges of the Sungai Muda, which serves as the northern limit of the state. This hypothesis, of course, fit with their project: they believed that a *stūpa* had been raised on this spot, which is not unlikely, in view of their report, and as we will see later, the stele includes the silhouette of a building of this type.

The text and the silhouette are engraved on a slab of schist eight to nine centimetres wide and sixty-six centimetres high, carved across a space that varies in width from twenty-nine to thirty-four centimetres. The stone was sent to the Museum of Calcutta, where it remains today. The inscription appeared incomplete to the Colonel (Low 1848a: 64), who wrote that the fragment of stone he had discovered “appears to have been the upper portion of one of those pillars which are set up in the areas of Buddhist temples.” A facsimile of the piece had been made and published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* thirteen years earlier. (*JASB*, IV, 1835: Pl. III).

One of the sides of this stele, then, bears the engraved image of a *stūpa*. This *stūpa* consists of an almost spherical dome (*aṇḍa*) ending in a point (*yaṣṭi*) into which melt a series of parasols (*chattras*) of diminishing sizes. The number of these parasols varies in the architecture of the *stūpas* in India and in Southeast Asia; here they number seven, topped by a final point. On the base of the spire or point is the outline of a representation of the *harmikā*, a sort of balcony with a balustrade represented by a horizontal support that extends out slightly at the sides, and two outer balusters; the middle balusters are missing, and seem to have been rubbed out. The dome rests on a lotus blossom whose petals assume its shape. The lotus is itself supported by an elevated base (*jaṅghāvedī*) on which can be made out the silhouettes of three pillars which might more likely be pilasters decorating a massive base, with capitals composed of bulbous forms. The rest of the representations on this *stūpa* have been lost where the stone has broken away. In a recent article (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 1994), we attempted to restore the missing sections of this representation by comparing it to the almost identical representation of the same *stūpa* on a stele that was recently discovered in

South Kedah, which we will speak of later. The text of the inscription is engraved on either side of the representation, from top to bottom, as well as on both sides of the stele and on its upper border.

B. Ch. Chhabra (1935: 16-20) transliterated the text after H. Kern (1883, 1907), who had made some sound observations about it, which are repeated by Chhabra:

1. *ajñānāc=cīyate karmma janmanah karmma kāraṇa[m] jñānān=na cīyate [karmma karmmaābhāvān=na jāyate]*
2. *mahānāvīkabuddhaguptasya raktamṛttikavās [tavyasya?]*
3. *sarvveṇa prakāreṇa sarvvasmīn sarvvathā sa[r]vva...
siddhayā[r]ṣ[ṣ] santu*

The author provided the following translation:

1. Through ignorance, *karma* is accumulated. The cause of birth is *karma*. Through knowledge *karma* is not accumulated. Through absence of *karma* one is not reborn
- 2 & 3. Of the great sea-captain Buddhagupta, a resident (?) of Raktamṛttika...by all means, in all, in all respects...all..., be [they] successful in their voyage!

B. Ch. Chhabra considered that the script, derived from that of South India, was very similar to the writing used in the inscription of the sovereign Pūrṇavarman at Jawa Barat (West Java), and that it could be dated to the fifth century. On the other hand, from the use of the expression *siddhayātra*, Chhabra saw parallels with the inscription in Old Malay of Kedukan Bukit in Sumatra, dated to the last part of the seventh century. The place called Raktamṛttika ('land of red earth'—*Tanah Merah* in Malay) was assimilated to the Chitu of the Chinese sources by H. Kern (1907: 98). Chhabra concurred in this identification. Since then, an Indian researcher has identified Raktamṛttika with Rājābādīdāngā in Bengal, where an excavation in the former bed of the Bhāgīrathī River, now dry, yielded three distinct sequences beginning in the second to third centuries A.D. (Das 1968).

6. *The Kampong Sungai Mas inscription: 5th century* (Fig. 89)

The inscription was found at the beginning of 1980 in this village already blessed with many discoveries, by some villagers digging an irrigation canal. It was during the time when J. Allen had undertaken a project to locate the sites in the region, and the villagers asked her to examine their find, which was later deposited in the *Muzium Arkeologi*. (Allen 1986/87). The place where the discovery was made

roughly corresponds to the site Allen later numbered 53 (1988: 394-396, site map 46, p. 768). Indeed the digging of this canal revealed not only a number of objects, but also, and most importantly, a significant concentration of imported ceramic sherds, fragments of glass, and beads; it was the point of departure for an increased interest in this zone of South Kedah, which has since been considered the location of an *entrepôt* port that existed prior to the port of Kampong Pengkalen Bujang. (See below.)

The villagers' find is a rectangular stele forty-two centimetres high, twenty-two to twenty-five centimetres wide, with a thickness of five centimetres; its upper part is missing, and the edges are rather crude. The stone is grey-green on the surface; it is a type of schist that could come from a quarry in Bukit Meriam; this hill is the nearest to the site of Kampong Sungai Mas (some three kilometres to the north).

One of the surfaces of this stele is taken up by the lightly-incised representation of a *stūpa* that is very similar in appearance to the *stūpa* that figures on the Buddhagupta stele. It also has a dome, but one that is more semi-spherical than spherical, topped with a spire of which only the lower part remains. In this section it is possible to make out the mere outline of a *harmikā* surmounted by a first parasol; there could have been seven of these, as in the case of the Buddhagupta stele, or fewer, or more, but the similarity in the conception of the two representations gives reason to believe that there may have been the same number. This dome also rests on a lotus blossom, less luxuriant than the preceding one, which itself leans against a raised base (*jaṅghāvedī*) underlined by the silhouette of three pillars or pilasters, in this case topped by a more clearly defined entablature than the one in the other representation; the whole structure is supported by a large tiered base (*adhovedikā*) that grows progressively larger, with the first level consisting of a rounded outline that may suggest a circular shape. On the Buddhagupta stele, this last part was broken off and lost.

The question arises as to whether the style of the two *stūpas*, which, all things considered, are very similar, reveals something about their date, and at the same time, the date of the steles. J. Allen (1986/87: 50) compared their silhouette to that of the *stūpa* that figures in the form of a bas-relief on the façade of cave 19 in Ajañṭā, and we have added other points of comparison related to this site. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1994). The Ajañṭā site, which had been

frequented from the second century B.C., was progressively abandoned and forgotten in the course of the sixth century A.D. Its long period of activity, however, was marked by only a few brief moments of artistic creation, during which the most significant caves were hollowed out and decorated. Those whose *stūpa* figures (bas-reliefs or monoliths) are the closest to those on our two steles all belong to the great phase of creative activity that unfolded under the reign, and during the years following the death, of the sovereign Hariṣeṇa of the Vākāṭaka dynasty, allied with that of the Guptas, that is, between around 462 and 486. (Spink 1975). This provides us with a date—the end of the fifth century—that is not incompatible with the dates assigned to the first stele on the basis of its inscription, and also to this last *stūpa*, as we will explain later.

The incised drawings of the figures of the *stūpas* on these two steles, with their pure style, would then correspond in their general features to the aesthetics of such constructions in the India of the fifth century, that is, the century of the Guptas, the dynasty whose influence begins before and ends after this date (320-647). But since it seems that the identical silhouette of a *stūpa* was perpetuated, remaining almost exactly the same over long periods of time, it is very tempting to see in the two incised Malay drawings the simplified image of the *stūpas* built in the Gupta period, of which there remain only vestiges or very damaged ruins.

The inscription on this second stele, lightly incised in the stone, is incomplete, because of the missing portions of stone in the upper section and the poor state of preservation of its edges; nevertheless, the essential part of the text, leaving no doubt as to its contents, is still legible. It runs along the borders of both sides of the *stūpa*, with the first line running from the lower left corner of the image of the monument to the top, and the second running in the opposite direction; in this way, the inscription unfolds in the same direction as the ritual walk around the ambulatories surrounding a *stūpa*, called the *pradakṣiṇa*.

J. Wisseman Christie considers that the type of script used “is very similar to that used on the Buddhagupta stone,” and therefore that it displays strong affinities with the inscriptions of King Pūrṇavarman at Jawa Barat (West Java), which have been dated to the end of the fourth or the fifth century. “The Kampong Sungai Mas inscription,” she writes (1988/89: 42), “although more crudely inscribed, probably dates to the same general period.” She continues:

It appears to be a somewhat clumsy copy of another stone or manuscript, but given the absence of any anachronistic forms in the script, there is no reason to believe that it was engraved very much later than the Buddhagupta stone. It is not, however, a copy of the Buddhagupta stone or of the one other inscription of this type [that of Bukit Meriam] so far found in Kedah.

A little farther on, she expresses her opinion (1988/89: 51) that the two inscriptions are “the products of at least two copyists, possibly separated by a generation or more.” The stanza, written in Sanskrit, contains four sentences divided two by two on either side of the representation of the *stūpa*. Wisseman Christie (1988/89: 42) specifies that at the end of the last sentence, that is, on the lower right section of the stele, “the remains of at least three further *akṣaras* (syllables), none of which is recognizable,” can still be made out. She adds that “this stanza is already known from the two other fifth century inscriptions of similar type found in the Muda valley area, and from others found elsewhere” in the geographical context of maritime Southeast Asia. She transcribed the text as follows:

1. *ajñānāc= cīyate karma, janmanah karma kāraṇam/*
2. *jñānān= na cīyate karma, karmmaḥbhāvān= na jāyate//*

This is an established Buddhist formula, from a credo that is identical to the one on the Buddhagupta stele:

1. Through ignorance *karma* is accumulated. The cause of birth is *karma*.
2. Through knowledge *karma* is not accumulated. Through absence of *karma*, one is not reborn.

On examining these last three inscriptions, we recognize that only two of them—the Buddhagupta inscription and the one from Kampong Sungai Mas—contain the stanza *ajñānāc-cīyate karma*, but in fact, the second section of the inscription from Cherok Tokun contains the idea that is expressed in that stanza.

7. The Bukit Meriam inscription: 4th-5th century

Q. Wales (1940: 41-42) advanced the theory that one of the inscriptions discovered by Low in the 1840s was found in relation to the site that he numbered 26 (SMM 2); indeed we find in one of Low's papers (Low 1849: 247) a note indicating that he had found an inscribed schist tablet:

lying under the centre of the foundation of a ruin of an ancient brick building in Kedah, near Bukit Meriam. This building had been very small, not more than 10 or 12 feet square [3 or 3.5m²].

As J. Allen points out (1986/87: 51), this vague description of the location of the piece “might also include sites in Kampong Sungai Mas.”

The inscription, sent to Calcutta by Low, appears to be lost today; however, a copy of it was made by the Colonel, who stated that he had been unable to restore all the letters because the stone tablet was covered with “a tenacious film of carbonate of lime, produced by the coral stones of the foundation having decomposed.” Nevertheless it was studied, transcribed in *Devanāgarī* script, translated and commented upon by J. W. Laidlay, then secretary of the *Asiatic Society*, all in the same installment of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1849: 247-249, Pl. X). In this connection, B. Ch. Chhabra (1935: 15) observed that Laidlay’s work contained “a few minor defects, the hand-copy being inadequate.” He added:

Later on, however, Prof. Kern was able to restore the contents in their entirety and to interpret them aright. There are but two stanzas in Sanskrit [...] covering four lines. The first comprises the so-called Buddhist creed: *ye dharmā hetuprabhavāḥ*, etc., which appears frequently on Buddhist votive tablets, pedestals of Buddhist statues, etc. The second verse is uncommon.

Chhabra provides Kern’s transcription and its translation, which correspond exactly to those for the inscription of Kampong Sungai Mas and the Buddhagupta stele. Taken as a whole, then, the inscription consists of the following verses:

1. *ye dharmmā hetuprabhavā hetun=teṣān=thatāgata uvāca/
teṣāñ=ca yo nirodha evamvāñ mahāśramaṇaḥ//*
2. *ajñānāc=ciyate karmma, janmanaḥ karmma kāraṇam/
jñānān=na ciyate karmma, karmmbhāvān=na jāyate//*

Which, translated, gives:

1. The Buddha has told the causes of all things which spring from a cause, and also how things cease to be; this is what the great monk proclaims.
2. Through ignorance *karma* is accumulated. The cause of birth is *karma*.

Through knowledge *karma* is not accumulated. Through absence of *karma*, one is not reborn.

On considering the last four inscriptions, we recognize that all of them, with the exception of the one from Cherok Tokun, contain the line *ajñānāc=cīyate karmma*, which in the case of the Buddhagupta inscription is associated with personal considerations relating to the captain of the same name, and in the Bukit Meriam inscription, to the stanza *ye dharmmā hetuprabhavā*. Nevertheless, as we have said, the Cherok Tokun inscription, especially in its last line, also carries the idea contained in this stanza.

What information can we derive from these inscriptions?

a. They may be dated on the basis of epigraphy, with all the uncertainty implied in this method, and also from the perspective of iconography, in the case of the two that include representations of *stūpas* in bas-relief: the Buddhagupta and Kampong Sungai Mas steles. These last two have been dated to the fifth century; the two others, discovered in the same region—the Bukit Meriam and Cherok Tokun inscriptions—have also been dated to the same period.

Outside of this group of four inscriptions, only two others can actually be classified in this category by virtue of their inclusion of entire inscribed sentences; these are the inscriptions from sites NB 2 (1w) and SB 2 (2w), the first one dated from the fourth to the ninth century, and the second from the beginning of the fifth to the first half of the seventh century.

b. If we keep to the proposed dates, setting aside the fact that these inscriptions could have been engraved in a much later period, copied from ancient manuscripts with archaic scripts, we arrive at the conclusion that there existed in South Kedah in the fifth century communities or a community, indigenous or foreign, that was practising Buddhism. Apart from the Cherok Tokun inscription, however, which was carved on a rock *in situ*, but whose dating is in some need of reconsideration, the other inscriptions were drawn on easily-transportable materials, which raises difficulties for determining their origins. It is easy to imagine that they were made in another region at the estimated date, but only brought to South Kedah much later by monks or the devout. This type of practice is common for objects linked with religion, and therefore venerated.

We have already raised this question in analysing some of the inscriptions. J. Allen (1986/87: 38-41) is so convinced of its importance that she is at pains to demonstrate, in her article on the

Kampong Sungai Mas stele, that all the materials on which the texts discovered in South Kedah were inscribed could have been found locally. This is of course not to be dismissed, and is even probable, but the assessment remains risky, inasmuch as no precise analysis has been done.

c. What is almost certain for all these inscriptions, with the sole exception of the one found at Cherok Tokun, which, according to J. Low, was linked to nothing, is that in the places where they were discovered, they were found in association with a plausibly religious structure that must have been the one in which they were placed for the last time, though not necessarily the original structure for which they had been created.

The problem did not actually become a burning issue until the discovery of the Kampong Sungai Mas stele in 1980. We can indeed accept that the structures that were associated with the Buddhagupta inscriptions and those of Bukit Meriam (somewhat blurred because of their discovery in the nineteenth century), of Bukit Choras [NB 2 (1w)] and the SB 2 (2w) site (more exact because the information was provided by Q. Wales), were of the same date as the inscriptions, but it is more difficult to accept for this last inscription, since it was found mixed with datable archaeological objects. Indeed, if it had been linked to no early structure, although there were several unexplored ruins nearby, the archaeological zone in which it came to light is dated with some certainty to the ninth century because of the quantities of ceramic sherds of Chinese and Middle Eastern origin found there. (See below, Chapter Ten.) The result is a hiatus of four centuries between the date of the stone and that of its archaeological context. J. Wisseman Christie (1988/89: 41) concluded that it was “very likely that the stone was transferred to Kampong Sungai Mas from an earlier port settlement, which has yet to be located, somewhere in the immediate region.”

d. The existence of entrepôt ports on the shores of the Malay Peninsula, where at least Buddhism was practised as early as the fifth century, is conceivable. Wisseman Christie (1988/89: 49-52) pointed out that inscriptions whose contents bore similarities to the Buddhagupta, Kampong Sungai Mas and Bukit Meriam inscriptions (which include the *aññānāc=cīyate karmma...* formula), dated to the same period, had been discovered in similar geographical contexts in Brunei and the western portion of Kalimantan, and that this very likely indicated the existence in this period of communities versed at

least in the form of Buddhism attested by this credo, and practising a certain type of international commerce.

Furthermore, the references in the Buddhagupta stele to the captain of that name, a native of Raktamṛttika, who sought blessing and success in his travels, support the idea that the local group of practising Buddhists was a community of merchants. What these communities were is also suggested by the inscriptions themselves, especially those of Buddhagupta and Kampong Sungai Mas. The rough quality of manufacture would imply that they were made locally by craftsmen with little experience of this type of creation, who were totally ignorant of the language used in the inscriptions they were reproducing. This is important, as it would mean that the community was in no way an Indian colony, as was too easily imagined in the period of the first explorations, but a free zone within which coexisted merchants from elsewhere, and native people who tolerated their presence, doubtless for their own profit. We might add, as J. Allen does, that if the materials on which the inscriptions were carved were of local origin—as she seriously believes—they could only have been made available to the Buddhist communities through the good will of the locals, who alone would know the possible quarries in an impenetrable jungle environment that would of necessity have only a remote relationship to the landscape of these regions today.

III. Other Archaeological Objects

The Buddhist sites, as we have said, yielded few figurative objects worth mentioning, because, as also for the PB 4/5 (21/22w) site, they consist of crudely-made and totally undatable ex-voto.

The only interesting piece that has ever been discovered in South Kedah and that belongs to the early period before the ninth century is a bronze statuette of Buddha found, as we have already indicated, on site SB 3 (16Aw), excavated by the Waleses in 1941.

1. *Statuette of Buddha from site SB 3 (16Aw)* (Fig. 90)

This is a standing image of Buddha of rather heavy manufacture, with an acute inflexion. It is in a good state of preservation, in spite of several signs of wear at the back of the right leg, and the fact that several small pieces—part of the lobe of the right ear and four fingers of the right hand—are missing. The head, with its broad features and very short neck, is not the part of the statuette that gives the best

indication of its ancestry. The *uṣṇīṣa* is low, and the ringlets of the hair are quite wide, reminding A. B. Griswold (1966: 59-60) of certain Śrī Laṅkān works, while other features, chiefly the arrangement of the robe, reminded him of Post-Gupta art. The robe is made up of two visible sections: the *antaravāsaka*, or under-robe, of which only the lower edge is seen, with the thickness of the cloth at the waist indicated by an incision, and the outer coat, or *uttarāsaṅga*, whose arrangement, while similar to that of Buddhist images discovered in Panpan and Langkasuka, nevertheless reveals a great deal about the ancestry of the work. Held up at the top by the left shoulder, this outer coat, with one of its upper edges grasped by the corresponding hand, passes under the right arm, leaving the right shoulder uncovered; then, with the upper edge crossing the chest diagonally, the second end of the upper border falls down the back, while the other end, instead of forming a free fold down the side, is clutched in the left hand, describing a curve along the front lower border of the robe; here, however, there is no indication of the place where this curve of material starts at the back of the robe, as there ordinarily would be, which indicates a certain lack of understanding of the way the cloth would actually have been draped at this level. The result is that on this back section, there is a confusion in the rendering of the lower borders, so that the edge of the coat is mixed up in the border of the skirt of the under-robe.

The coat is perfectly smooth, except for the section of cloth at the back, which displays a series of awkward folds that apparently gave A. B. Griswold the impression that they were pre-pleated. Because of the clumsiness of these folds and the awkwardness in the representation of the lower rear borders of the robe, Griswold was inclined to see in this statuette the work of a sculptor influenced by Post-Gupta productions: these do, in fact, display similar arrangements, but since they were chiefly bas-reliefs, the author of the statuette who was inspired by them, having no model for the back, would have had to invent one, and committed several errors of judgement in the attempt. In addition, the significant gesture of the right hand, in *varadamudrā*, is also very common in the works of the Post-Gupta period.

All these observations enabled Griswold to date the statue to the sixth century, and to attribute it to a possible workshop located in the Peninsula, which would have worked from the fifth century on with masters from India, whose iconographic designs would have been

mixed with those of other artists arriving later, and thus heirs of different traditions. We subscribe to this evaluation, without ruling out the possibility that the work was not cast until the seventh century, and originated in the Indian sub-continent.

2. *Head of Buddha* (Fig. 91)

This is the single other sculpture from South Kedah that could have been compared to the preceding statuette from the standpoint of quality; unfortunately it is badly damaged. It was discovered by a villager from Kampong Sungai Mas when he was digging a well. It is almost life-sized, and in a region where no Buddhist or Brahmanical image of any importance has been found to this day, one can only deplore the fact that the features of this head, whose workmanship must have been very fine, should today be almost impossible to make out; indeed, the whole upper part of the face, the nose, and almost the whole of the mouth have been lopped off, the ears have disappeared, along with the back of the head, unless the work was never a statue-in-the-round but only a high relief. Could this have been the result of an accident at the time of its discovery? This is what has been suggested, or, more likely, a misdeed, some centuries ago, perpetrated by some sort of vandal? This destruction would have been all the more easy to achieve because the stone is green schist, which flakes easily.

The face is a fine oval, though the chin is a bit marked. The horizontal pupils are lowered over eyes that are sharply angled towards the temples. The hair is styled in large flat ringlets that curl from left to right, with the *uṣṇīṣa* in the middle indicated by a slight bulge, but not clearly differentiated from the rest of the skull, as on a number of Singhalese images. We think in particular of a head illustrated by U. von Schröder (1990: 33b), which in his opinion belongs to the late period of Anurādhapura (seventh to eighth century). This might well be the origin of the work.

The existence of these two pieces should cause us to regret the disappearance of all the works that once adorned the various places of worship, because without doubt they existed, and nothing remains of them but this mutilated face, or the pedestals that held them, like the one also discovered at Kampong Sungai Mas.

3. *The Kampong Sungai Mas pedestal* (Cf. Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: Doc. 268)

This imposing granite pedestal (1.05 x 0.59 x 0.38 metres) was found by chance, like almost all the pedestals from Kampong Sungai Mas. It is damaged, but it is still possible to recognize that it was intended to stand against a wall, as its semi-circular frontal section is decorated with a frieze of rough pilasters separated by some distinctly hollow spaces. The mortise that was hollowed out at its centre consisted of two sections: a first section several centimetres deep, which followed its outline, and a second, smaller, quadrangular one that passed through the whole width of the stone.

4. *Top of a bronze reliquary* (6.7 centimetres high) was discovered in the bed of the Sungai Bujang by workers from a plantation "a short distance below site 4 [SB13]," at the time of Q. Wales's excavation of the site (1940: 13-14). (Fig. 92). He made much of the discovery, and, still hoping to place the civilization of South Kedah in direct relationship with South India, stated that reliquaries of this type, though in a later style, existed in the museum in Madras, where it is accepted that they were used in connection with domestic rituals; such a use, he suggested, could therefore be envisaged for this object.

To Wales, the design of this reliquary lid suggested a link with the architecture of the "wagon-roofs of the Bhīma and Gaṇeśa *rathas* at Mahābalipuram," backing up this proposal in his report with a photograph (Pl. 19). These two *rathas* do indeed share with the top of the reliquary "a horse-shoe shaped gable-window at each end of the roof." He was nevertheless obliged to acknowledge important differences in the decoration, as well as the existence, never seen in India, of figures of *ṛṣi* seated at each corner of the roof, implying Śivaite worship. When the Sambas discovery (Borneo) was made (Tan Yeok Seong 1948), Wales perceived similarities of style between the top and the lid of a perfume-burner found in the collection (Tan Yeok Seong 1949: 20, 21); this resemblance is not obvious to us. The composition of the bronze as given by Wales is: 80% copper, 4.7% tin, 11% lead, 0.3% zinc. The Mahābalipuram *rathas* are dated to the seventh century, and this piece could certainly date from around the same time.

5. *The Ipoh Buddha* (Fig. 93)

This work in bronze comes from a region outside of South Kedah, the valley of the Kinta, a tributary of the Sungai Perak in the Malay state of the same name; we will have occasion to return to this location in another chapter because of other finds made during operations to extract tin, which is plentiful in the region. The isolated image has a place in the present discussion because of its date. Found in Pengkalan, near Ipoh, in 1931, it represents a standing Buddha (46 centimetres in height). The body, draped in an *uttarāsaṅga* that covers both shoulders, with indications of several incised folds, can still be sensed entirely through the material, yet there is no indication at the level of the waist of the *antaravāsaka*, which, however, appears on a level with the ankles. This way of representing the body and draping the robe is similar to examples belonging to the Gupta school of Sārnāth (fourth to fifth centuries). Of the two raised hands, the left holds a section of cloth, somewhat in the manner popularized by the school of Amarāvati; the right hand has disappeared, but must have been in *abhaya mudrā*, a gesture found frequently in the school of Sārnāth. The round head with firmly drawn features has hair styled with very large ringlets that barely allow the *uṣṇīṣa* to peep through, features that are as reminiscent of the art of Amarāvati, once again, as they are of Śrī Lankā art of the second to third centuries. The work therefore appears to be the fruit of various influences, but the undeniable connection with Gupta art would lead us to give it a date sometime around the beginning of the sixth century, a period in which the influence of Post-Gupta works is not yet apparent. The piece disappeared during the Second World War, and is known today only through photographs, and by a single, very poor copy in the *Muzium Negara* (Kuala Lumpur).

6. *The Tanjung Ramboutan (Perak) statuette of Buddha*

At the beginning of this century (Wales 1940: 50), the same region of the valley of the Kinta (understood in its widest sense), in a place called Tanjung Ramboutan, also during operations to extract tin, yielded a bronze statuette of a standing Buddha that has passed into private hands and is now only known through a poor photograph. (Wright 1908). As far as we can judge, it could also be a sixth-century work influenced stylistically by Gupta art.

7. *Presentation bowl* (Fig. 94)

We now come to a bronze presentation bowl (20.9 centimetres in height), which is in the possession of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, following its purchase from Christie's in 1975. The object is presented, with splendid imprecision, as perhaps originating in Malaysia. It has a squat baluster form with a waisted and flared foot; the lower section of the body is incised with large lotus leaves, the top section cast with a continuous frieze depicting two scenes: one of a military procession leaving a citadel, the rear section with foot soldiers, horsemen, and elephants with makouts, the central section with foot soldiers holding weapons and standards escorting a chair with seated figures, with equestrian figures flanked by foot soldiers, one holding a canopy, one figure kneeling; the second scene is situated in a palace courtyard with two musicians at the left playing drum and cymbals, separated by a pillar from a prince and his consort seated on a couch attended by servants holding platters and fly-whisks, being entertained by a dancer and three musicians, two of them playing lyres, overlooked by figures on a balcony above; between bands of beading, a row of conch shells is depicted around the top of the rim; there is a hinge at one side, and an eye below the opposite rim, originally for a lid attachment; the base displays eight free-standing atlas figures between bands of beading, and a flared and ridged foot with a single line of beading.

The Museum dated the piece to the seventh to eighth century. J. Guy, who published a photograph of it (1992: 106, Fig. 19), considers it to be "one of the earliest examples [of ceremonial objects in bronze] to survive in prestige material from Indianized Southeast Asia," seeing in its reliefs a South Indian influence.

All that we have said of the geography of Jiecha, of its place in texts from the early period, of the population resulting from it, and the activities they might have engaged in, compared to the religious remains that we have just described, does not justify our imagining in Jiecha, from the fifth to the eighth century, a city-state comparable to those of Panpan and Langkasuka in the same period. The religious structures, as far as it is possible to judge, are too modest to have been commissioned by a superior authority; the several religious images that remain, occasionally of fine workmanship, are in truth too rare, and especially too obviously influenced by Indian schools of art, not to have been imported rather than created locally.

From this we must conclude that Jiecha must have been nothing more than a chiefdom, granting favours to foreign merchants, and allowing them to build temples and install statues to their gods. In this role, it will not have been unique along this coast, whose geography would not have permitted the establishment of any population in significant numbers. The valley of the Kinta in Perak sheltered such a chiefdom, of which we know nothing, and we will soon see the appearance of another, at the turn of the ninth century, in the region of Takua Pa, whose existence as a place of welcome was brief. As for Jiecha, it was able to perpetuate this type of activity in its territory, which was ideally situated at a point along the coast that merchant ships would have had difficulty avoiding. We will see it acquire an active entrepôt port in the ninth century, and a restored, intense commercial activity on a new site in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But as we will indicate, no major religious structure was ever associated with this activity, confirming that the region had an inferior political status, that of a simple chiefdom. We will return to this idea after examining in Chapter Fourteen those ruins from the region that can be attributed to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

CHITU

We must now speak of a political entity that is mentioned only by the Chinese: Chitu. It enters into contact with China for the first time under the Sui (581-618), at an unspecified date. In return, the Chinese honoured it with an ambassadorial mission in 607 A.D. The oldest and most detailed record of this mission is preserved in the *Suishu* (compiled in the first half of the seventh century). This description was later cited in various Chinese encyclopedias and topographical works, as late as in the *Wenxian tongkao*, by Ma Duanlin, written in the thirteenth century, by which time the city-state had ceased to exist many centuries before. Indeed everything leads us to believe that its existence was of the briefest.

The text, with a translation by P. Wheatley (1973: 27-30), from which we will take our quotations, has inspired much speculation as to the location of the mysterious Chitu. Wheatley (1973: 32) provided a brief and instructive account of it; we have always found the proposals he made in relation to it (1973: 33-36) most convincing, even if he has changed his views somewhat since then. (Wheatley 1983: 234, Note 24, p. 251).

The fact that in order to reach this place, the Chinese envoys had coasted along a shoreline that could only be that of the Malay Peninsula, on the east side, and that they saw the mountains of Langkasuka to the west before arriving, gives us no choice but to situate Chitu to the south of that city-state. The detail about traveling up the rivers before reaching the capital suggests the valley of the Sungai Kelantan, which is indeed navigable very far into the interior, right up to the neighbouring territory of the auriferous regions of Ulu Pahang in the middle of the Peninsula. The length of time for this trip up the rivers had originally been translated as “more than a month,” which created a problem; Wheatley himself has since revised the translation (1983: n. 105, p. 161 & n. 24, p. 251), proposing as a new reading: “more than one day.” Finally, as he demonstrated—and as we mentioned in an earlier chapter (see above, Chapter Two)—the return trip, which involved a crossing of ten days to reach the mountains of Campā, could only refer to the crossing of a single stretch of the Gulf of Thailand, leaving from a section of the east coast of the Peninsula. We therefore remain very much attached to this location, even though no archaeological discoveries have emerged since then to confirm it.

It is certain, in light of the contents of the original Chinese texts, which were repeated later in almost identical terms, that the city-state of Chitu did not last very long, in spite of the importance it seems to have had in the eyes of the Middle Kingdom at the beginning of the seventh century, which went so far as to send an ambassadorial mission to it. The reference to Funan, of which Chitu is described as “another part”—perhaps following upon some new political combinations inspired by the report about the regions of the Southern Seas written by the Chinese ambassadors Kang Tai and Zhu Ying after their trip to Funan in the middle of the third century (see above, Chapter Four)—clearly points to the one aspect of the city-state that was of interest to the Chinese: the commercial one. It has therefore been conjectured that at the beginning of the seventh century, during which the territory of the former Cambodia experienced several political difficulties, the Chinese could have considered this city-state to be a kind of spare trade partner. In any case, it was honoured by the sending of this mission, which saved it from falling into oblivion.

The picture that can be gleaned from the rather disorganized remarks of the Chinese annalists and geographers is that of an

Indianized city-state, perhaps rather turned in upon itself—it is said that the sovereign “knows nothing of adjacent or distant countries,” but nonetheless that he has three wives chosen from among the daughters of local potentates, is blessed with a principal ‘city’ that has three surrounding walls, doors decorated with garlands and bell-shaped flowers, and painted with images of *bodhisattvas* (which would imply, if the translation is exact, that there was a truly precocious arrival of the *Mahāyāna* on these shores)—and immortals gliding through the air.

The king, who is only seen surrounded with grand ceremonial, which is described in painstaking detail by the Chinese narrators, is assisted in his task of running the kingdom by high-ranking government officials, and each minor ‘city’ is placed under the authority of two principal mandarins; this centralization is probably illusory, since we learn, in connection with certain habits of dress, that the “wealthy families are largely independent of authority,” which suggests a mode of government of the *maṇḍala* type.

The city-state, thanks to a uniformly warm and rainy climate, which assures that “there is no special season for planting,” cultivates padi, millet, white beans, sugar cane, black hemp, etc. But it is also a place of international commerce, which explains why China sent ambassadors to it; at one point it is stated that “thirty ocean-going junks” went out to welcome the ambassadors in the estuary of the river leading to the capital.

Finally, this city-state “worships the Buddha, but greater respect is paid to the brahmans,” who seem indeed to be very present at the court, because “several hundreds” of them attend the royal audiences, and it is they who serve as masters of ceremonies during the ambassadors’ visit.

We would hardly have mentioned Chitu if its name had not been associated with so many revealing details about the functioning of an Indianized city-state in the early period, as no archaeological ruins have come to light in connection with its probable location in the valley of the Sungai Kelantan. The picture of it provided by the Chinese could have led us to expect to find ruins of sanctuaries comparable to those found in neighbouring Langkasuka; it is doubtful that any such will ever appear. The discovery of religious images is even less likely in the context of a region won over to Islam, and practising it today so fanatically that it creates problems for the central government of Kuala Lumpur.

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CHAPTER NINE

ŚRĪVIJAYA AND THE MALAY PENINSULA

FROM THE END OF THE 7TH TO THE 8TH CENTURY

We must prepare ourselves for the likelihood that Śrīvijaya, though not entirely a myth, will prove to have been quite different from the way we have imagined it. (Bronson 1979: 405).

A. ŚRĪVIJAYA: MYTH OR REALITY? (DOC. 30)

1. Śrīvijaya, about which we have said little up till now, is the vague supposed thalassocracy that owes its deliverance from the oblivion to which it had sunk to a celebrated study by G. Cœdès (1918), then at the start of his career, in which he took another look at some theories formulated before him by S. Beal (1883/86). Taking the measure of a ‘kingdom’ of Śrīvijaya mentioned in the Kota Kapur inscription (Island of Bangka; end of the seventh century),¹ he linked it with another place with the identical name that figures in an inscription discovered much farther to the north, on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, known at the time as the Wiang Sa, later as the Ligor, inscription, when in fact, as we will later explain, it originated in Chaiya. Could these have been “one and the same country?” he asked at the time (Cœdès 1918: 3); if this were the case, “the existence of a kingdom that had left tangible traces in two places as far removed from each other as Bangka and Vieng Sa and bearing a name that had hitherto been unknown” was a new fact of sufficient importance to justify additional research. He pursued his investigations, turning up the name ‘Śrīvijaya’ in two texts of Indian epigraphy of the Coḷas, to which we will have occasion to return: one referred to the founding by the king of Śrīvijaya of a Buddhist monastery at Negapatam in 1005 A.D; the other, to the conquest by

¹ Later, the same name appeared on two other inscriptions discovered in the south of Sumatra, one at Kedukan Bukit (Palembang), the other at Karang Brahi (the back country of Jambi).

the sovereign Coḷa Rājendracoḷa I, around 1025 A.D., of the land of Śrīvijaya and of various places that he linked to the country, which he attempted to identify with several areas in Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, but which, however, he cautiously suggested could be “either vassal states of the king [of Śrīvijaya], or different cities or provinces of his kingdom.” (Cœdès 1918: 5). In addition, he had no illusions about the permanence of this conquest, as the sovereign Coḷa, “once he had returned to his states,” whatever he had been able to accomplish or impose, “obviously [found] himself too far away for his victory to have any greater political consequences than a vague recognition of his suzerainty.” (Cœdès 1918: 8). What remained was the question asked by Cœdès himself: “What country was formerly designated by the name Çrīvijaya?” (Cœdès 1918: 23).

He therefore emphasized the fact that until that time, the name of this kingdom of Palembang,² already recognized through earlier work on Arabic (‘Sribuza’) and Chinese forms ‘Fo-che’ (Foshi), ‘Che-li-fo-che’ (Shilifoshi), ‘Fo-ts’i’ (Foqi), ‘San-fo-ts’i’ (Sanfoqi), had been reconstructed as ‘Çrībhoja’, a term that appears nowhere, which gave him cause “to wonder whether, instead of Çrībhoja, the real name of the kingdom of Palembang could not in fact be Çrīvijaya,” whose supposed importance he had revealed earlier; he rejected the linguistic argument that might have called into question the identification of Śrīvijaya with Shilifoshi and Sanfoqi, considering the “*fo-che* [*foshi*], *fo-t’si* [*foqi*] = *vijaya* equivalence[...] more plausible.” (Cœdès 1918: 23-24).

This brilliant analysis sealed the historic fortune of what became the kingdom or empire of Śrīvijaya for the rest of the century. In the conclusion to his article, Cœdès wrote:

The identification of Çrīvijaya makes it possible to answer the question we asked at the beginning of this study. We now know to which kingdom we should attribute the Malay inscription of Bangka and the Sanskrit stele of Vieng Sa: the kingdom of Palembang. (Cœdès 1918: 25).

Farther along in his closing remarks, absolutely convinced that the Coḷa inscription of Rājendracoḷa I had provided him with an authentic statement concerning the territorial possessions of Śrīvijaya, he added:

² Palembang because the sovereigns of the political entity located there had a title that was found both in the inscriptions already cited, and in the Chinese texts and certain Arab texts linked with this region of southeast Sumatra.

But above all, this investigation sheds light on the role played in the Far East by this Indianized Malay kingdom whose influence spread, from Sumatra, to the two shores of the Peninsula. If it left behind only an insignificant number of archaeological monuments and epigraphies [things have evolved somewhat since this period, as we will show], this is apparently because its kings were more occupied with keeping a watchful eye on the commerce in the Straits than in building temples or causing their panegyrics to be carved in stone. From this perspective, the neighbourhood of Java, covered with archaeological ruins, certainly did it a great wrong in the eyes of history. (Cœdès 1918: 25).

The statements of Zhao Rugua, writing in the beginning of the thirteenth century, who was still attributing to Śrīvijaya a list of possessions that partly tallied with the list on the epigraphy of Rājendracoḷa I, along with several other texts or epigraphies that we will speak of in due time, only confirmed for Cœdès—in this period of the early beginnings of archaeology in the Malay Peninsula—that in the absence of “effective colonization of the Peninsula by the kings of Palembang [an idea that did not rule out for him the possibility that an examination of other documents could later reveal that such colonization had taken place] [...], they possessed coastal settlements very early, and in any case had had political influence there for a very long time.” (Cœdès 1918: 27).

2. The existence of Śrīvijaya as the dominant thalassocracy of the Southern Seas during an incredibly long period, from the seventh to the thirteenth century, that is, for more than six centuries, has practically never been questioned up to the present time. On the contrary, new epigraphic discoveries in Palembang itself and in the south of Sumatra confirmed researchers in the idea that this maritime empire, emerging from the oblivion to which history had unjustly relegated it, had enjoyed considerable fortune, and had proved quite willing to be bellicose towards its neighbours, which did not prevent it from being—as we learn from certain passages in the books of the Chinese pilgrim Yijing, dated to the end of the seventh century (Chavannes 1894, Takakusu 1896)—an important centre of Buddhist scholarship.

3. In the absence of any real challenge to the idea of the existence and power of this new imperialist entity on the already congested political chessboard of Southeast Asia, different researchers still expressed doubts about the location of its centre of operations in the southeast of Sumatra, Palembang. A case was made concerning the topographical difficulties of the site, which are undeniable. The

present city of Palembang, which covers the site of the former city (a circumstance that greatly complicates contemporary archaeological research), is established on the edge of the northern bank of the Musi River, on low and swampy land where submerged forest and mangroves hold sway all the way to the sea. This zone, writes P.-Y. Manguin (1987: 344), is “very flat,” and

allows the tide to engulf right into the interior, which makes it possible for large ships to go up the Musi as far as the city. Certain geologists, basing their opinions on poorly-interpreted cartographic documents, believed that this formation was very recent, and that at the latitude of Palembang, the coast had advanced by eighty kilometres [roughly the distance separating the site from the Straits] in the space of a thousand years: in so doing, they transformed Śrīvijaya-Palembang into a coastal port. The re-examination of the Chinese sources from the fifteenth century, and of various sixteenth-century Portuguese sources, proved that the coastline had in fact not budged for half a millennium, and therefore that there was no chance that it could have moved these eighty kilometres in less than five centuries. Clearly what we must think of when we consider Palembang in the Śrīvijaya period is of a site built at the edge of a river.

4. Even more than the site, which appears impractical, it is the very small number of archaeological remains it has yielded that has given other researchers reason to doubt the very existence of Śrīvijaya, at least during the period that concerns us. Q. Wales (1935) in particular, always generously supplied with sensational historico-archaeological theories, sought to locate the capital of this thalassocracy in the places described in Chapters Five and Six, such as the city-state of Panpan (in the region of Chaiya on the Bay of Bandon), which he believed contained significant archaeological ruins equal to its power. He thus drew down the wrath of G. Cœdès, who refuted his arguments most effectively in an article published in 1936, more convinced than ever (he had translated the new inscriptions discovered in Southern Sumatra in 1930) that Palembang had been the capital of the maritime empire he had resurrected. None of this prevented certain Thai researchers from returning to the idea put forward earlier by Wales (Khairiksh 1980, Chand Chirayu 1987), even assimilating Dvāravatī to Śrīvijaya. (Wright 1985). This was a rearguard action, perhaps dictated in some cases by considerations that were more nationalistic than scientific. As G. Cœdès (1936: 8) wrote:

The apparent wealth of C'aiya [to a large extent at the origin of the controversy], which as a matter of fact cut a rather poor figure next to certain sites in Champa, Cambodia, and even in central Siam, is perhaps due to the fact that this location was the subject of extended excavations, following on the discovery by Prince Damrong of the Bangkok Museum's beautiful bronze Bodhisattvas.

He was not mistaken, and we can even regret, with the hindsight of over half a century, that this archaeological ardour in Chaiya was not more positively sustained. In any case, the "wealth of Chaiya" has today been largely offset by the recent archaeological investigations in Palembang, begun in 1979. These were probably in response to a joint campaign on the disputed site by the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania and the Indonesian Archaeological services in the early seventies. The result of this campaign was published in 1976 by B. Bronson and J. Wisseman. These authors took pains to demonstrate—perhaps somewhat rapidly—that the vestiges of Palembang and its region were too rare for the early period (seventh to tenth century) not to call into question the very reality of a presence of Śrīvijaya in this region, as the several objects that had been discovered there (chiefly the inscriptions) could only have been "brought in from somewhere else during the 14th-17th centuries" (Bronson & Wisseman 1976: 233), the period to which they had attributed "two substantial settlements in the vicinity of Palembang." (*Ibidem* 1976: 232).

In a later article, from which we quoted in our epigraph to this chapter, Bronson (1979) qualified his proposals, while remaining faithful to the idea that—in spite of more thorough archaeological research—we should be prepared to reconsider our view of Śrīvijaya; to this end, he advanced arguments to which we will have occasion to return.

5. Nevertheless, the efforts of the archaeologists during the eighties and to the present day have borne fruit, and P.-Y. Manguin (1987) showed convincingly that the analysis of the Chinese ceramic sherds on the Palembang sites by B. Bronson and J. Wisseman had been a little too rapid, and that in the collection of samples that had been used to argue for an absence of early material, "numerous pieces that must be dated with certainty to the Tang dynasty, between the eighth and ninth centuries, were found in Palembang." (Manguin 1987: 341). Once the fact that the site had been occupied in the early period had been confirmed in this way, the claim that the inscriptions and

ancient statues discovered locally had been brought there during later periods no longer held water. Recent digs have established this fact, at the same time revealing traces of ancient religious structures (Manguin 1992, 1993), and even if many questions remain to be answered, it now seems irrefutable that

the early capital of Śrīvijaya was at Palembang. Ceramic evidence [...] clearly indicates a densely populated and commercially active harbour city as early as the 8th-10th centuries, *i.e.*, soon after the formative stages of Śrīvijaya state in the 7th century [...].

The settlement pattern revealed so far in Palembang confirms the evidence provided by written sources. A riparian pattern, as expected, is by now clearly discernible: the multiple hubs of activity (some of them seemingly short-lived) have been found scattered along some 12 km on the northern bank of the Musi river and its smaller tributaries—there is so far no solid evidence for early sites on the southern bank. (Manguin 1992: 71-72).

6. Śrīvijaya, then, during the first centuries of its existence (from the seventh to ninth centuries at least) would indeed have been the active and expansionist entrepôt port that has been described since the work of G. Cœdès. This is not the place to go into detail about the history of Śrīvijaya, except when it intersects with that of the chiefdoms and city-states of the Malay Peninsula. Let us remember briefly a number of facts extracted long ago from the Chinese texts or from inscriptions found locally.

The first of these, which are reliably dated, take us back to the beginning of Śrīvijaya's rise in power; once again, these details are drawn from the writings of Yijing, whose works we have cited frequently. At the time of his first trip to the holy places of Buddhism in 671, the pilgrim stopped in Śrīvijaya for six months to study Sanskrit grammar. (Chavannes 1894: 119). "In the city of Foshi," he wrote,

there are more than a thousand Buddhist priests whose minds are turned to study and good works. They examine and study every possible subject, just as in Madhyadeśa [India]; the rules and ceremonies are identical. If a Chinese priest wishes to go to the West to hear and read [the original Buddhist texts], he would do better to stay in Foshi for a year or two and practice the appropriate rules; then he could go on to central India.

It is this passage from the writings of Yijing that gave rise to the thought that the capital of Śrīvijaya, far from being merely an

important entrepôt port, was also a key centre of Buddhist scholarship, on a par with the greatest Indian universities.

On his return from India, where he had spent ten years at the University of Nālandā, Yijing again stayed in Śrīvijaya, this time for four years, from 685 to 689, during which time he copied and translated Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Chinese. In 689, after a brief trip to Canton, where he had gone to fetch four assistants, he returned to set himself up in Śrīvijaya, writing his two memoirs there. (Chavannes 1894, Takakusu 1896). In 692 he sent his manuscripts to China, returning there himself in 695. This was also the year in which Śrīvijaya sent its first ambassadorial mission to China (Pelliot 1904: 334). During his second stay in Palembang, Yijing noted, in his second work, that Malāyu, where he had made a stopover for two months in 671, “is now the country of Śrībhoga [Śrīvijaya]” (Takakusu 1896: 10), a brief sentence that has caused much ink to flow in the effort to interpret it, but which undeniably marks the imperialistic advance of Śrīvijaya among the rival principalities still sharing the southern part of the island of Sumatra at the end of the seventh century. The seven inscriptions discovered locally, some of them dated,

appear to fall into two classes: commemorative stones inscribed to record certain royal gifts or victories, and oath stones designed for use in ceremonies performed to ensure political loyalty. Both classes provide information concerning the polity. The commemorative stones (all of which have been found in Palembang, with the exception of the single line added to the Kota Kapur oath stone) tell us not only that the polity bore the Sanskrit name of Śrīvijaya, but also that the ruler had taken the Sanskrit name and epithet Śrī Jayanāśa. The ruler’s title, however, was a local one: *punta hiyang*. This was, moreover, a religious title rather than a political one. Jayanāśa’s activities for which he commissioned commemorative inscriptions included: his performance (in A.D. 683) [Kedukan Bukit inscription (Palembang)] of a ritual to ensure success before leading a military expedition upstream to annex part of the interior; two other military campaigns against internal rivals; the dedication (in A.D. 684) [Talang Tuwo (Palembang)] of a garden for public use as part of a programme of Buddhist good works; a visit to a Buddhist monastery; and (in A.D. 686) [Kota Kapur inscription (Bangka)] the dispatch of a military expedition against “Bhūmi Jāwa” (apparently referring to Java), which was not submissive to Śrīvijaya. (Wisseman-Christie 1995: 265-266).

The result of all this is that the period of time covered by the historical and dated documents we have been speaking of does not extend

beyond the last quarter of the seventh century, and that after this, historically speaking, we possess only brief allusions in the Chinese annals to some diplomatic missions from Śrīvijaya to China in 702, 716, 724, 728 and 742.

In these, Śrīvijaya emerges more as a place of Buddhist scholarship than as a centre of international trade; nevertheless, some observations of an imperialistic nature give reason to believe that the practice of Buddhism did not preclude the basely materialistic concerns of a young state wishing to secure revenues without commercial competition.

G. Cœdès (1964: 159) was not the last to emphasize and to repeat that

the expansion of Çrīvijaya in the northwest towards the Strait of Malacca [the conquest of Malāyu], and to the southeast towards the Sunda Strait [the expedition against Java], [was] a clear indication of its intentions for the two great passages between the Indian Ocean and the China Sea, the possession of which would assure it of commercial hegemony in the Islands of the Southern Seas for several centuries.

The note had been struck, and the idea gained ground that it was in order better to strengthen its control over commerce in the Southern Seas that the rising thalassocracy progressively imposed its hegemony over all the chiefdoms and city-states of the shores of the Malay Peninsula, and farther afield, over the territory of Dvāravatī in the valley of the Menam Chao Phraya.

What proof do we have, in fact, of this economic domination in the seventh and eighth centuries?

B. ŚRĪVIJAYA'S HOLD OVER THE PENINSULA: LITERARY AND EPIGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS (7TH TO 8TH CENTURIES)

Such indications are infrequent, but they are nonetheless instructive.

I. In South Kedah (Jiecha)

As we have already shown in the preceding chapter, Yijing, who alas was concerned above all with Buddhism and very little with history, nevertheless reveals, in a work written after his return to China in 695, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-ekaśatakarman*, that Jiecha 'belongs' to Śrīvijaya at the end of the seventh century, a control imposed between 685 and 689, thinks O. Wolters (1961: 419), on terms that

are unknown to us, and will remain so. This information seems to be confirmed, but only in the ninth century, by an Arab text to which we will return in the next chapter, the *Account Concerning China and India* (*Akhbār al-Šīn wa 'l-Hind*), about a *kālah* (see above, Chapter Eight), which at this date, could plausibly be identified with South Kedah; it is clearly stated in the text that "it is a kingdom belonging to al-Zabāj [= Śrīvijaya]." (Wheatley 1973: 216, Sauvaget 1948: 8).

In view of the role that the entrepôt port of this politico-commercial entity played as a stopping-off point for ships crossing the Bay of Bengal, whether towards Northeast India or towards southeast India and Śrī Laṅkā, we can admit that such control was indeed enforced with the intention of establishing hegemony in the Strait of Melaka. Let us not forget, however, that Yijing, on his return from India, took a full month to arrive at Jiecha in Malāyu, and still longer to reach Palembang, distances in the order of at least 1,200 kilometres. (See above, Chapter Two.) (Doc. 11). This gives an idea of the length of these voyages in the Southern Seas, and forces us to ask some questions about how effective imperialistic controls in such conditions could actually be.

II. In Panpan

Such control would have been completely natural over Panpan at an unspecified date, bearing in mind, however—to bring things back to their correct scale—that at least 1,650 kilometres of sea separate Palembang from Chaiya. We are informed about this control in an inscription, one of the most famous from Greater India. It is known as the Ligor (Nakhon Si Thammarat) inscription, dated to 775, that is, to a period when the supposed thalassocracy had had a century to establish itself in the nascent region of the Southern Seas mentioned by Yijing and referred to in the Palembang and Southern Sumatran inscriptions at the end of the previous century.

The text of this inscription, dissected by generations of epigraphists, has surely furnished all the information it could bring to our knowledge of the political events that marked the South China Sea, not only at the end of the eighth century, but perhaps also in the ninth, as we will see. The only point that does not seem to have overly troubled well-informed commentators to any degree is that of its origins, which are, however, very uncertain.

The so-called Ligor inscription figures for the first time in the list established by L. Finot (1910: 149), following indications provided by Lajonquière, under the number 15; Finot states that “according to the officials of the National Library, it comes from Viengsakadi [Wiang Sa], formerly in the mu’ang Sri Thammarat (Ligor).” G. Cœdès, in the first edition of his *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam*, refers to it by this name. In the second edition of this work, he wrote:

In 1926, an investigation carried out on site convinced me that there never had been an inscription at Vieng Sra. Moreover, because a monk from Nagara Çrī Dharmarāja (Ligor), passing through Bangkok, thought he recognized in this stele a stone found in Vat Sema Muong [Wat Semamuang] in Ligor, it has been catalogued under this name ever since, and cited among the works related to the history of Çrivijaya. But it has recently been claimed that it might have come from Vat Vieng [Wat Hua Wiang] in Chaiya, and that the inscription that originated in Ligor is Inscription XXIV [from the same place, dated 1230 A.D.].

But in view of the tendentious nature of this last hypothesis, it would seem premature once again to modify the name given to the stele. (Cœdès 1929/61: 20).

What was perhaps still ‘tendentious’ to G. Cœdès in 1961 no longer seems so to us, considering the results of the investigation conducted by Chand Chirayu Rajani (1974a: 292-294) about the particular circumstances of the transfer of this inscription from the Peninsula to Bangkok, along with others, including the one dated 1230. We even wonder, quite apart from the information provided by this author on the circumstances of the transfer and the uncertainties concerning their identification, why it was not considered obvious, after the study of the contents of both inscriptions, that the one said to be from Ligor in fact belonged to the archaeological context of the region of Chaiya, and the one described as from Wat Hua Wiang in Chaiya, issued by a certain Candrabhānu, sovereign of Tambralinga, quite naturally belonged to Nakhon Si Thammarat, where, moreover, the presence of this monarch was clearly attested.³ This shilly-shallying is all the more distressing, from the standpoint of logic, because reversing the respective origins of these two inscriptions in no way alters the main facts of the history of this region; to the contrary, by placing the stele dated 775 in Chaiya, we give to the establishment of

³ Boribal Buribhand Luang and A. B. Griswold (1950/86: 59-60) had, however, expressed reservations about the origin of these inscriptions.

Śrīvijaya on the east coast of the Peninsula a political base that agrees with what we have said about the city-state of Panpan. As for the inscription dated to 1230, it confirms what we know from other sources about the political situation of the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat in the thirteenth century. Between the two dates, the power base along this section of the coast only moved from north to south, benefitting a new city-state named Tambralinga, located in Nakhon Si Thammarat. But in the two different periods, both regions were under the same local political control, which, at least in 775, may have been subject to the oversight of Śrīvijaya.

Let us therefore keep in mind a number of facts related to this so-called Ligor inscription, and allow G. Cœdès to speak. The stele,

which is of sandstone, is 1 m 04 in height; its width, which is 0 m 40 towards the bottom, increases to 0.50 on the upper part, which ends in a motif in the form of an accolade. It is engraved on both sides. The first is composed of 29 lines of Sanskrit, framed on each side by a double line. On the second side is a text in Sanskrit that is missing four lines. The inscription on the first side, which makes up a complete text, is dated 697 *çaka* = 775 A.D. After extolling a king of Çrīvijaya, whose name seems to be Dharmasetu, it lists the following foundations: three brick sanctuaries erected by the king and dedicated respectively to the victorious Buddha of Māra, and to the two Bodhisattvas Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi; - three *stūpas*, built on the order of the king by his chaplain Jayanta; - two *caityas* raised by Adhimukti, disciple of the first one. The text ends with the astronomical elements of the date. The inscription on the second side was independent of the first, and the writing seems somewhat more recent. It is unfortunately unfinished, and only consists of the beginning of praises for the King Çrī Mahārāja, head of the Çailendra dynasty. This four-line text has been the subject of numerous discussions and inspired various hypotheses, which I summed up in 1959 in an article to which the reader is referred. (Cœdès 1929/61: 20).

In this article, Cœdès took care to work out all that had been written about this inscription, and gave his final conclusions concerning it.

1. He considered that the inscriptions on the two sides of the stele were independent of each other, as R. C. Majumdar (1933: 122) had originally thought, and that, while the inscription on side A, dated 775, was issued by a king of Śrīvijaya, the one on side B is later, and is from the Śailendra dynasty (F. D. K. Bosch had maintained in an article (1941) that the B side was in reality the unfinished beginning of the text written on side A).

2. The king of Śrīvijaya mentioned on side A, patron of some Buddhist foundations in 775, is almost certainly King Dharmasetu. His name is not directly mentioned, but an allusion is certainly made to it in one of the hyperboles the text abounds in. The identification was first proposed by N. H. Krom (1938), picked up again by F. D. K. Bosch (1941), and adopted by G. Cœdès in 1951 in a report to the Twenty-second Congress of Orientalists in Istanbul, which was not published until 1957. The fifth stanza does indeed say that the King of Śrīvijaya “was deliberately created by Brahmā as if this god intended only the stability of the praiseworthy Dharma.” G. Cœdès (1959: 44) thought it possible to believe, “without being accused of being too subtle,” that the *dharmasthiratā* referred to could be the primary goal of a Dharmasetu who was a “defender of the Law”; and yet this King Dharmasetu of Śrīvijaya is known in another inscription originating in Nālandā, the region of the Pālas, where his name figures in one of the inscriptions on copper (*tāmraśāsana*) that are proper to this dynasty, which provide information about the kings and their ancestors on occasions when gifts are being offered. (Huntington & Huntington 1990: 78). The reference in question is from the charter (Aiyer 1933-34, Shastri 1923-24, 1942) in which King Pāla Devapāla, in the thirty-ninth year of his reign (around 850-860), donates several villages to the monastery built on this site by a certain Bālaputra, sovereign of *Suvarṇadvīpa* (a vague term that could be identified here with Śrīvijaya), whose genealogy indicates that he was the younger son of a king of Java, “ornament of the dynasty of the Çailendras.” (Cœdès 1964: 175).

3. Cœdès abandoned the theory he had formulated in a paper given at the twenty-first Congress of Orientalists (1948), according to which side B of the inscription mentioned not one king but two. This king, whether or not he was named Viṣṇu, belongs to the Śailendra family, and is described there as the “killer of enemy heroes.” Following other authors, Cœdès considers that this Śailendra is identical to the one who appears with the same epithet in the Kelurak inscription, and in the previously mentioned inscription of Nālandā.

The inscription from Kelurak (782) (not far from Kelasan in Central Java) does indeed mention a sovereign Śailendra described as the “killer of enemy heroes” (Cœdès 1950), crowned under the name Saṅgrāmadhanañjaya, during whose reign, in 782, a master named Kumāraghoṣa from the country of Gauḍī (Western Bengal)

consecrated, not far from Kelurak, therefore in Kelurak, an image of the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī. This king, although he had the right to assume the imperial title of *rājadhirāja* ('king of kings'), assumed or restored the title of "Śrī Mahārāja, to indicate that he originated in the Śailendra family" (these are the terms of the inscription), whose traditional title it seems to be (Cœdès refers to the title by which the Arabs knew the sovereign of the Southern Seas).

4. Cœdès thus manages to deduce the date of this second side of the stele of Ligor from the following facts: the Śailendra referred to must be from after 775 A.D., the unequivocal date of the inscription on side A. He thinks he is also from a later period than the Śailendra who appears in 778 in an inscription in Kalasan, because this one is not characterized in that inscription as the "killer of enemy heroes." This sovereign, named Panangkaran, holder of the title Mahārāja, founded, on the request of his spiritual masters, a sanctuary dedicated to the Buddhist goddess Tārā; Cœdès (1964: 169) specifies that this is the present monument of Candi Kalasan located in the plain of Prambanan, east of the city of Yogyakarta. The sovereign ruled under the suzerainty of the Śailendra dynasty. The first dated mention of a Śailendra "killer of enemy heroes" is not found until 782, in the Kelurak inscription mentioned earlier; so the earliest date at which we can place the Śailendra referred to on side B of the Ligor inscription is between 778 and 782; it is possible to narrow this date down even further if we accept, with J. G. de Casparis (1950), that the inauguration at Kelurak of an image of Mañjuśrī has some link with the arrival of the Śailendra who is the "killer of enemy heroes" and with his *abhisekha*, his consecration, under the name Saṅgrāmadhanañjaya, by which he is named there; in this case, 782 is the earliest date by which side B could have been engraved.

The date must be appreciably later, if the unengraved part of the stele contained a reference—as was suggested by J. Krom (1938), and later by F. D. K. Bosch (1941)—to the successor of Saṅgrāmadhanañjaya, his son Samaratuṅga. This name appears in the Karang Tengah inscription, and is found again under the form 'Samarāgravīra' in the inscription from Nālandā, where this sovereign, the son of the Śailendra who is the "killer of enemy heroes," is mentioned as having married Princess Tārā, the daughter of Dharmasetu, the sovereign of Śrīvijaya. There could then have been

a cause and effect relationship between this union and the unfinished engraving of side B of the Ligor stele.

5. Another possible interpretation exists, suggested by Boechari (1982). From the marriage of Samarāgravīra and Tārā were born children including a younger son named Bālaputra. This son entered into conflict with one of his brothers-in-law, as J. G. de Casparis demonstrated (1950: 107-109, 133. 1956: 294-297); his defeat in 856 apparently motivated his departure for Śrīvijaya, his mother Tārā's country; we learn from the charter of Nālandā (around 850-60) that at this date Śrīvijaya was governed by the 'younger son' (*bālaputra*) of Samarāgravīra. In this case, the inscription on side B of the Ligor stele would be later by at least eighty years than the one on side A. Boechari believes it would be more acceptable, historically speaking, to consider that the inscription on side B was promulgated by Bālaputra. As the first Śailendra sovereign of Śrīvijaya, he could have felt obliged to affirm his rights over the peoples of the Peninsula by having his genealogy written on the back of the inscription promulgated by his grandfather, perhaps on the occasion of the gifts made to the sanctuaries built by that same grandfather. Boechari advances criticisms of an epigraphical order that could be made concerning this inscription by acknowledging that the type of script on side B is much more archaic than the one used for inscriptions in Old Javanese from the middle of the ninth century, but he relativizes the importance of this point by citing the wide variations that may exist between contemporary inscriptions and, on the contrary, the slight variations that can exist between inscriptions that are however separated by some three quarters of a century.

This theory, attractive because it adds several additional facts to the history of a region that possesses practically none, has been recently contested by an author (Jordaan 1999) who expresses in his conclusion his conviction that the inscription on side B "must have been made between 775 and 778." We are swayed by his argument that the foundation of three brick temples by the sovereign of Śrīvijaya need not be considered an imperialist activity, but could actually be compared to similar initiatives that led other Śrīvijayan sovereigns to build Buddhist temples, notably in India (in Nālandā and Negapatam) in a political context that no one ever dreamed of considering as anything other than thoroughly peaceful.

Here again, the purely imperialistic interpretation that has prevailed up to the present time concerning this inscription is the direct consequence of the warlike and expansionist character given to the founding texts of the Śrīvijaya concept from the very outset. G. Coëdès and his contemporaries are solely responsible. It might be appropriate to reconsider the inscriptions, too, in a different light.

III. In Langkasuka

No mention by Yijing, no inscription, enables us to pin down the date at which this city-state passed under the control of Śrīvijaya, but the specific points of comparison provided by neighbouring South Kedah and Panpan leave no room for doubt that its destiny may have been different from the first decades of the eighth century if the thalassocracy had a real hold along these very northern shores. Its influence would have been felt in the area of religion. We have already raised the question in an earlier chapter by referring to a number of artistic works that could relate to the region, in particular the statuette of Avalokiteśvara from site BJ3 (Fig. 77), whose twins, it would seem, mark the progress of the *Mahāyāna* along the shores of the Southern Seas, thus perhaps at the instigation of Śrīvijaya. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1995a). Let us not forget that during Yijing's sojourns in Palembang, the *Hīnayāna* of the *mūlasarvāstivāda* school "[had] been almost universally adopted (lit. 'there is almost only one')," as he wrote (Takakusu 1896: 10), but that sect members of the *Mahāyāna* existed in Malāyu; and the inscription (684) from Talang Tuwo, west of Palembang, the first dated evidence of the existence of the *Mahāyāna* in Greater India, also provides evidence that, notwithstanding Yijing's claims, the new form of Buddhism also existed in Śrīvijaya from the end of the seventh century.

This is the only historical, epigraphical and archaeological evidence from which we can infer that Śrīvijaya ruled the shores of the Malay Peninsula at the end of the seventh century and during the eighth and even the ninth century. The importance of the inscription of 775 for this assessment will be recognized, but as we have intimated, the imperialist interpretation that was made of it from the beginning could benefit from a reexamination in the light of a number of realities (of which distance is not the least), and also from a reappraisal of the content of the founding texts of the existence of Śrīvijaya, that is,

Yijing's writings and the succinct inscriptions from Southern Sumatra.

C. TOWARDS A REAPPRAISAL OF ŚRĪVIJAYA'S HOLD OVER THE MALAY PENINSULA

Two writers, H Kulke (1993) and O. Wolters (1986), recently devoted themselves to this task.

1. Kulke (1993: 160) observes accurately, from the outset, that:

the assumption of a strong Śrīvijaya state and statehood with a hierarchically structured central administration and a system of territorial divisions is based mainly on the famous Malay inscriptions of the late 7th century [...]. They all contain a strange compendium of imprecations against refractory local rulers and disloyal members of the court of Śrīvijaya.

He then singles out the detailed description found in the longest and most important of these inscriptions, the Sabokingking inscription, still called the Telaga Batu (Palembang) inscription. It does in reality contain a detailed list of the officers and servants of the court of Śrīvijaya, headed, of course, by the sovereign himself. "At first sight, this list seems to depict a highly developed and hierarchically structured administration," he writes (Kulke 1993: 162), an impression that the translations made of it do not bely, as such terms as 'kingdom' and even 'empire', whose acceptance Kulke criticizes, are used in them as equivalents to Malay words. To him, *vanua Śrīvijaya* cannot mean 'empire', or 'country of Śrīvijaya', but designate "a spacially rather clearly defined locality, that is, the semi-urban surrounding of the kraton [royal palace] of the ruler of Śrīvijaya." (Kulke 1993: 163); *kadātuan*, rendered as 'empire' by J. G. de Casparis (1956: 15-46) should be translated "the place of the *dātu* [prince]," or the kraton (Kulke 1993: 163), this last interpretation having been confirmed in Kulke's opinion by the content of three of the other inscriptions discovered in the south of Sumatra near Palembang.

This analysis of the terms of the inscriptions in relation to the question of territoriality leads the author to conclude "none of them contains any expression which can be clearly equated with 'empire' (Kulke 1993: 164), or give us the authority to see Śrīvijaya in this

period (although this has nevertheless been done) as “a strongly centralized empire.” This negative observation does not bring Kulke’s demonstration to a close however; he then undertakes a redefinition of the political entity of Śrīvijaya on the basis of the content and the information contained in the Sabokingking inscription, which to him mirror each other.

At the heart of the system was the sovereign (*dātu*) of Śrīvijaya himself, unique among the other *dātus* of Sumatra over whom he had prevailed—and in consequence earned a religious title that implicitly assured his familiarity with the gods, lending particular force to his imprecations against eventual traitors

The dangers threatening the palace (*kadātuan*, *keraton*) of this *dātu* and its immediate environs constituted by the agro-urban zone (*vanua*) surrounding it are enumerated in the inscription, and consist first of all, potentially, of all the social categories that could approach the sovereign from near or far: princes and commanders of the armed forces, of course, but also simple palace officials, servants, and even slaves, not to mention sailors and merchants. But the dangers could also come from farther afield, in this instance, from what is known as the *samaryyāda*. For the first translators and commentators of this text, the term could only mean ‘frontier region’, ‘frontier province’, ‘real [*dātu*]’, in other words far-off frontier regions from the perspective of a grandiose vision of what Śrīvijaya had been since the end of the seventh century. H. Kulke (1993: 168) calls it “the neighbourhood of the *vanua* Śrīvijaya itself,” that is, a territory shared between small local chiefs (*dātus*) brought to heel by the sovereign of Śrīvijaya, but who nonetheless must have constituted an almost permanent threat to his security. They certainly had nothing to do with ‘provincial governors’, a concept implying the existence of a strongly organized and centralized state, which Śrīvijaya seems never to have been. Kulke (1993: 169) described how this system might have worked:

Most of the *dātus* of Early Śrīvijaya thus might have been allodial leaders who, after their defeat, had only been reinstalled and recognized in their previous position by the more powerful *dātu* of Śrīvijaya on the condition that they recognize his authority.

Apart from the *samaryyāda*, the threat, clearly spelled out in the inscription, could also come from even more peripheral regions (*maṇḍalas*) within which were found other *dātus* not ‘recognized’

(*sanyāsa*) by the prince of Śrīvijaya like the previous ones, but ‘brought up’ or ‘raised to their responsibilities’ (*nisaṃvarddhiku*) by him. It would appear, in light of the terminology used, that there existed two groups of *dātus*: “one was represented by local chiefs who had been ‘recognized’ by the *dātu* of Śrīvijaya, whereas the other group consisted of royal and non-royal princes who had been installed in the outer regions by the centre.” (Kulke 1993: 170). The existence of these *maṇḍalas* implies conquests, and therefore an army, to which there are allusions in two inscriptions: the Kedukan Bukit (Palembang) inscription, which refers to a force of 20,000 soldiers, and the Kota Kapur (Bangka) inscription, which mentions an expedition against Java. And so, finally, it appears that the *dātu* of Śrīvijaya did actually have control over some territories (*vanuas*, *samaryyādas*, *maṇḍalas*), with an overall political vision that could doubtless be summed in the Sanskrit word ‘*bhūmi*’ in an inscription issued by one of the *maṇḍala* of Sumatra threatening “disloyal people inside the land (*bhūmi*) [which is] under the order of [my] *kadātuan*.” (Kulke 1993: 175).

Kulke (1993: 174-175) therefore summed up his conception of the structure of Śrīvijaya in the seventh century in these terms:

The state of Early Śrīvijaya was characterized by a strong centre or nuclear area which was surrounded by a series of concentric rings of decreasing authority and political control. The power was absolute though not uncontested in the *kadātuan* and its immediate semi-urban hinterland, the *vanua*. In the same *samaryyāda*, the riverine network upstream and around Palembang and the lower course of the River Musi, Śrīvijaya still seems to have shared its authority with local and princely *dātus*. Here the balance of power certainly was in favour of Śrīvijaya. But its direct control, though not trade relations, most probably ended very abruptly in the jungles and the mountains which encircled the extended core area of the Musi river system. The *maṇḍalas* which surrounded this core area were situated in the neighbouring river systems and in strategically important areas, for example, at the Sunda Strait, on the Island of Bangka and in the Batang Hari-Malāyu region where the *maṇḍala* inscriptions of Early Śrīvijaya have been found. These *maṇḍalas* remained most probably under the control of ‘loyal’ local *dātus*, although Śrīvijaya must have tried to post some of their own princes there.

Later he adds:

From the little we know about Śrīvijaya’s internal history, it is evident that its control over these *maṇḍalas* remained precarious throughout the centuries. Obviously Śrīvijaya never succeeded or even tried to

annex the *maṇḍalas* fully and to treat them as 'mere' provinces of a territorially more clearly defined state or 'empire'. They all seem to have been able to retain their own autonomous polity as a smaller replica of Śrīvijaya with their own *vanuas* and *samaryyādas*. What distinguished Śrīvijaya from its surrounding *maṇḍalas* was certainly the greatness of its 'urban centre', its administrative staff, its army and its international trade relations. But from a structural point of view only one point mattered, that is, the control over, or at least the good and undisturbed tributary relations with, surrounding *maṇḍala* polities. Once Śrīvijaya lost this advantage of controlling some important outposts, it lost its position as a *primus inter pares* amongst the various *maṇḍalas* of Sumatra and their *dātus*. It might then in turn have become a *maṇḍala* of one of its former *maṇḍalas*. (Kulke 1993: 175).

The author is fully conscious that this notion of an informal 'state' that could break apart and simultaneously come together again on almost the same terms, almost indefinitely, depending on local vicissitudes, is difficult to accept, for Western sensibilities accustomed to more clear-cut political and territorial concepts, in which a strong core must inevitably absorb the weaker ones surrounding it, in a more or less brief period of time. Does this represent an incapacity on the part of Śrīvijaya to achieve such a conceptual reality, or a deliberate wish to avoid it? In his conclusion, Kulke (1993: 176) leans towards the second option:

It is not unlikely that it was Śrīvijaya's reluctance to become an Imperial Kingdom which enabled it to survive for more than five hundred years and to play several times, perhaps often for generations, a dominant role in the history of Southeast Asia and thus to outlive many of the more centralized 'empires'. In fact, one may even argue that the longevity and the flexible greatness of Śrīvijaya was based on the very non-existence of those structural features which historians regard as a prerequisite of a genuine empire.

We are fully persuaded by Kulke's analysis. It seems to resolve all the 'problems' presented by the supposed attachment of the chiefdoms and city-states of the Malay Peninsula to Śrīvijaya, in which, as we intimated in the first two sections of this chapter, we absolutely do not believe. The political structure of the Hanseatic type proposed by Kulke for the end of the seventh century would last, of this there is no doubt, and he recognizes this implicitly himself in his conclusion. With such a combination of political circumstances, it was materially impossible that this entrepôt port, certainly favoured by its geographical position, but nonetheless totally isolated, could control, even superficially, chiefdoms and city-states located

hundreds of kilometres—and thus weeks of ocean travel—away from its centre of operations.

That there could have been vague ties from suzerain to vassal between them that would have depended on occasional expeditions of intimidation is probable (and would explain the inscription from 775 A.D. in Chaiya), but on both sides they would have been too wise, and thus too concerned for their respective commercial interests, to give such links more importance than they actually had. Finally, these links seem to us to have been almost as vague as those that H. H. E. Loofs-Wissowa imagined between a possible Vietnamese entity and chiefdoms-in-the-making in the world of the Southern Seas during the proto-historic period (see above, Chapter Three) in his attempt to explain the spread of the bronze Dongson drums as far as the Malay shores. Apparently the Chinese, steeped in political concepts totally opposed to those that regulated Śrīvijaya, could only perceive an apparent centralizing imperial suzerainty on the one hand and a no less apparent subservient vassalage on the other—the only idea they could entertain on the subject of government. They were equally misled, as we pointed out (see above, Chapter Four) about the political organization of Funan. In their defence, it is also possible that the leaders of Śrīvijaya, wise but also vain, could have boasted that they were uncontested masters of these regions.

What we intend to say in the following chapters concerning the destiny of the chiefdoms and city-states of the Malay Peninsula in no way contradicts the reductionist but realistic view of what Śrīvijaya was and was not, throughout a history that was certainly long, but terribly drab. Archaeological research during these last years has revealed no more architecture and sculpture related to Śrīvijaya than what can be found in the city-states of the Peninsula, and we are practically sure that this situation will never be contradicted by some spectacular discovery. There is no art of Śrīvijaya; this was a concept made out of whole cloth by historians of art in search of labels, a concept that was unfortunately inspired by that earlier, erroneous concept of an empire of Śrīvijaya that never existed. Onto it has been piled, higgledy-piggledy, a whole jumble of artistic works—some of great quality—that have nothing to do with each other stylistically, and have in common only that they came to light in places over which Śrīvijaya was said to have tight control. We might add that in the area of epigraphy, nothing has been discovered beyond the

inscription we have discussed. Everything is unfolding as if all had been said and done by the end of the seventh century, for the five centuries to come. In the light of H. Kulke's analysis, this is less astonishing; it even becomes understandable.

2. Although Kulke's fascinating article was not published until 1993, it was written in 1985. At about the same time, O. Wolters (1986) was arriving at similar conclusions based on a reappraisal of the Chinese sources, in this instance the writings of Yijing. He set to work to provide a commentary on the monk's use of the two Chinese territorial terms *chou* and *kuo*.

Kuo can mean 'a kingdom/state' or 'a country', and it is this meaning that has been favoured up until now in translations of the passages relating to Śrīvijaya, but it can also mean "a specific place in the form of a 'capital city'." As for *chou*, Yijing uses it with the double meaning of 'islands' and 'political entity' when he speaks of the "islands of the Southern Sea—consisting of more than ten countries—[political entities]" (Takakusu 1896: 10), which are enumerated. Later in the same text, he explains that the Malāyu *chou* "is now the country of Śrībhoga [Śrīvijaya]" (in Takakusu's translation it actually read: "one of [...] Śrīvijaya's many *kuo*." (Wolters 1986: 19)). These observations led Wolters to see a parallel with the contents of the Sabokingking inscription, and to suggest an equivalence between the Chinese term *kuo* and the Sanskrit term *maṇḍala* used in the same inscription: "Śrīvijaya's many *kuos*" would then have the same meaning as "all the *maṇḍalas* of the *kadātuan* [Śrīvijaya]," and, as Wolters writes (1986: 20):

We can suppose that the Śrīvijaya ruler possessed his own *maṇḍala* (regarded by I-ching [Yijing] as a *kuo*) and was also the overlord of the other *maṇḍala* in his *kadātuan*.

Kulke (1993: 178), commenting on Wolters' study, concluded: "Thus [he] came to a very similar definition of Śrīvijaya's polity [to mine] in the present paper."

He distances himself from Wolters, however, when the latter (Wolters 1986: 18) expresses the view that Śrīvijaya "would have been one of a number of *kuo*," and places it on the same level as Langkasuka, specifically defined by P. Wheatley (1983: 233) as a *kuo*, that is, "a polity in which a focally situated settlement exercised direct control over a restricted peripheral territory and exacted whatever tribute it could from an indefinite region beyond," a model he

considered too simplistic and too restrictive to be assimilated to what he himself had described on the basis of the facts in the Sabokingking inscription. Kulke suggests in conclusion—and in order to bring the two parallel studies of the same problem, each starting from a different corpus, a little closer together—that the Sanskrit term *bhūmi* should be compared to the Chinese *chou*, and that the word *kuohsia*, which in Yijing's writings designates the place where the monks lived, in the outskirts of the town of Śrīvijaya, be assimilated to *vanua*. (Kulke 1993: 179-80).

We cannot repeat too often what a heavy weight these two studies have lifted from our shoulders, the burden of a political entity—Śrīvijaya—described since its resurrection in 1918 as a powerful, invasive thalassocracy whose traces researchers bent over backwards to find in the Malay Peninsula—traces that were never equal to our hopes...

3. To complete this re-evaluation of the facts, we will draw from the work of our predecessors another idea struck from the coin of good sense. We know that Śrīvijaya, in addition to being portrayed as a highly imperialistic political entity on the strength of its extensive commercial interests, is depicted by Yijing as a major centre of Buddhist scholarship (see above), but our Chinese source “is a not altogether disinterested witness when describing the splendour and doctrinal authority of the place where he received his training.” (Bronson 1979: 403). “I-ching [Yijing] had a motive for exaggerating. He was supposed to go to India to study Buddhism and to collect scriptures. When he returned to China having spent most of his time in Southeast Asia rather than India, he was bound to be asked why. Did this mean he had failed in his mission? He would therefore have been forced to emphasize the importance and the doctrinal orthodoxy of Shi-li-fo-shih. He might have done so even if that ‘city’ was in reality no more than a small and backward village.” (Charoenwongsa 1985: 106).

In conclusion, we return to the quotation from B. Bronson that, exceptionally, we used as an epigraph for this chapter. This author, on the basis of observations that only partly overlap with ours, that is to say, a very negative, and no doubt somewhat rapid, assessment of the archaeological vestiges of Palembang, suspected that Śrīvijaya was not exactly what the first researchers on the question had written

about it. A rereading of the fundamental texts, and the confirmation through archaeology of the mediocrity of the remains (when there are any) oblige us to make this reassessment. The task is all the more satisfying because it relies primarily on nothing more than the very materials that served as the point of departure for the renaissance of Śrīvijaya at the beginning of the last century by researchers whom P.-Y. Manguin (1987) calls the 'veterans'.

The ninth century opens on this social, economic and political context. The century will constitute a turning point for all the places of exchange in the region of the Southern Seas. It was during this period that the first entrepôt ports to be found in this region of the Asia of the monsoons unmistakably appeared in the archaeological landscape—discovered, as others will be for later periods—thanks to spectacular concentrations of ceramic remains labelled 'local', and more significantly, ceramic remains of Chinese and Middle Eastern origin. It is these, mostly reduced to sherds, and associated with fragments of glassware from the Middle East and with beads, that have enabled us to characterize accurately these early places of exchange that nothing particular until the ninth century—in any case nothing identified as of foreign origin and dated—has permitted us to locate, to this day, for the earlier centuries.

It is therefore important to attempt to understand the reasons for this turning, bearing in mind that none of the archaeological remains we have described would have appeared if maritime commerce, from the first centuries of the Christian era and up to the ninth century, had not already been one of the mainstays of the economies of all the political entities in the region of the Southern Seas.

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CHAPTER TEN

THE TURN OF THE 9TH CENTURY IN THE MALAY PENINSULA

THE ASIAN POLITICAL CONTEXT AND THE ENTREPÔT PORTS

The ninth century is a turning point for us, because it is to this century that the first entrepôt port sites ever discovered in the Malay Peninsula are dated. There is no doubt, as we have repeated in the preceding chapters on Panpan, Langkasuka and Jiecha in the early centuries, that such places of commerce existed, or had previously existed; but these so-to-speak first-generation entrepôt ports have not been located to this day, and probably never will be, in the absence of any identification of their archaeological material. The entrepôt ports of the ninth century, on the other hand—and those that succeeded them—which at first were ignored by archaeologists interested chiefly in architectural and sculptural remains, have imposed themselves on the archaeological landscape of the Malay Peninsula in the course of the last forty years, ever since it was finally understood that the enormous concentrations of Chinese ceramic sherds that characterized them were of great significance. The question remains, however, as to why these entrepôt ports, perhaps already in use much earlier—indeed we cannot rule out the idea that some of them overlapped with first-generation sites of commercial activity—developed so rapidly in this period. This question inspired the analysis in the following chapter, of the sites of Ko Kho Khao near Takua Pa, Laem Pho near Chaiya, and Kampong Sungai Mas in South Kedah, in anticipation of the further studies that will doubtless need to be made on the site or sites of the city-state of Langkasuka, located in Yarang, and the probable fief of a chiefdom in the region of Mergui-Tenasserim (Myeik-Taninthayi) on the Burmese coast. In our view, the question can only be approached if the Malay Peninsula is included in the framework of trade that, in fact, involved all of Asia.

A. THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF ASIA IN THE 9TH CENTURY

I. The Middle East (Doc. 26)

In the Middle East, the Arab conquest favoured more than it compromised the smooth development of trade with China by the traditional overland routes of Central Asia. These were the routes used for a number of diplomatic missions to the Middle Kingdom under the dynasty of the Umayyads (660-750), missions we know little about, but which were recorded by the Chinese. (Chavannes 1904). These contacts were helped at the time by the fact that the Tang had temporarily knocked out the Turkish tribes that constituted a threat for these routes. The events were all the more natural for the representatives of the first dynasty of the caliphs of Islam, whoever they may have been, because the seat of operations of the caliphate—Syria, with Damascus—was the natural end-point of the overland silk route to the Near East. But in 750, the political situation of this empire was turned on its head: the Umayyads were overthrown by the Abassids, whose preferred lands, for political reasons, became much more oriental, and were now centred in Mesopotamia. Missing no opportunity to mark the rupture with its former masters by an outward sign, the new dynasty determined to establish itself in this region. The capital was first transferred from Damascus to Kūfa, then to Baghdād, in 752, by the second Caliph al-Mansūr. He chose the setting of the future capital

along the major route that joined the Persian Gulf to Upper Mesopotamia and the northern boundaries of Syria, at the outlet of the route to Iran, and at the very place where the Tigris and the Euphrates, as they drew closer, were brought together by a system of canals that constituted at one and the same time a natural defence and a remarkable means of communication. (Sourdel 1983: 59).

The town where the caliph and the members of his family lived was founded as a royal city, displaying all the characteristic traits of royalty (the meticulous design, the circular double walls with four monumental doors, the caliph's palace and mosque in the centre...), and rapidly saw a larger and larger population streaming in (among whom were found a number of dignitaries and military figures of Iranian or Turkish origin, accustomed to the luxurious products of Asia), who were to make of it an economic and intellectual centre of the first order. This displacement of the centre of gravity of the

Muslim Empire, without calling into question the importance of the traditionally dominant trade routes through Central Asia, was nevertheless beneficial to the maritime pathways that ended in the ports of the Persian Gulf into which the Tigris and Euphrates flowed, routes with easy connections to the capital. The temporary displacement of this capital from 836 to 883 to Sāmarrā, a hundred kilometres to the north on the shores of the Tigris, did not change the local social-economic situation.

There is no doubt that the new circumstances were determinant for future relations between the two outer limits of the Asian world, but it is noteworthy that this maritime route had never been neglected, because of the important trade in spices from the Malay world (the Peninsula and the Archipelago), and from South India. This trade had been controlled by Sassanid Persia, and the presence of representatives of this empire, whether true Persians or peoples under their rule, is undeniable in Śrī Laṅkā in the fifth century. (Wolters 1967: Chapter V). On the morrow of the Arab conquest, these people merely intensified their activities to profit fully from the new socio-economic circumstances, together with the Indians, and also the Chinese, whose role in the period prior to the ninth century may have been underestimated. It is hardly possible to say which group at that time, the Arabs or the Persians, played the most important role in this maritime trade with the Far East. In the period that concerns us, the population of the Gulf had become very mixed. Nevertheless, in the light of an assessment of the quantities of Chinese ceramics imported through various ports of the Persian Gulf, it appears that its west coast, at least, was less involved in this international trade than its eastern counterpart. (Rougeulle 1996: 164). The reasons for this are complex, but primarily related to the fact that the coastal populations in Arabia were more scattered and also poorer than those on the Iranian coast, and in addition, were hostile in several respects (piracy, high taxes, religious preferences). In fact, the only port of any importance in Arabia in the ninth century (and right up to the year one thousand) was Sohar, on the Gulf of Oman. Its prosperity rivalled that of Siraf, source of the oldest Muslim literary evidence concerning the circumstances of international maritime trade with the Far East, which is dated very precisely to the year 851, and provided with a sequel by Abū Zayid, a

merchant, also from Siraf.¹ The geographical position of Siraf seems aberrant at first sight, located as it is on the edge of a particularly dry and inhospitable coast; in fact, the port is located on the shore at the end-point of one of the trails that linked this coast to continental Iran, notably to Shiraz, through the mountains of Zagros. (Rougeulle 1996: 62). In addition, because the high floor of the combined delta of the Tigris and the Euphrates made navigation at the far end of the Persian Gulf difficult for large ships, most vessels taking part in Far Eastern trade had to be unloaded in order for their cargoes to be moved to Basrah and beyond, towards the cities of the interior. The site of Siraf has been visited and excavated numerous times, and its Chinese ceramic sherds, principally from the ninth century, have been thoroughly examined and listed. (Whitehouse: 1968-74). The good fortune of the tradesmen in this area was undeniable, deriving chiefly from the benefits of such trade with the Far East. It was particularly notable in the ninth, and again in the tenth century.

This first Muslim text and its sequel are full of information concerning conditions of navigation in the Southern Seas, the stopping-off places used during these long voyages, and the manner in which trading was conducted along the way; we shall have occasion to return to all these aspects of maritime trade later. The goal to be reached was undoubtedly China, and thanks to the two texts, we possess additional, very useful—if regrettably brief—details. One of these, the most frequently commented on, concerns the sacking of Canton in 879 by the rebellious bands from Huang Chao (in Abū Zayd's sequel to the account); we will also return to this.

This maritime route in the Southern Seas towards China will have been used all the more in the ninth century because travel along the

¹ The two texts, which are of great historic interest, were translated, commented upon and published as a single work by J. Reinaud: *Relation des voyages faits par les Arabes et les Persans dans l'Inde et la Chine dans le IX^e siècle de l'ère chrétienne*. Paris, Imp. royale, 1845, 2 vol. (rééd. à Osnabrück, Otto Zeller Verlag, 1988, 1 vol.). The text and its commentary were picked up again by G. Ferrand: *Le voyage du marchand arabe Sulaymān en Inde et en Chine rédigé en 851, suivi de remarques par Abū Zayd Hassan (vers 916)*. Paris, Les Classiques de l'Orient (vol. 7), 1922. It is however to J. Sauvaget that we owe the best-informed critical study; it treats only of the first part of the text, attributed by Sauvaget's predecessors to the merchant Sulaymān of Siraf, whom the author shows to have been only one informant among other sources of the anonymous editor of this account: *Relation de la Chine et de l'Inde rédigée en 851. Texte établi, traduit et commenté par...* Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1948, XLI-79p., carte, index.

traditional overland route on the Muslim side was largely compromised by attempts at provincial secession in the eastern territories of the empire. First it was the Tahirids, the family that had governed Khurāsān since 821 when the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (812-833) had named their chief Tāhir as its governor (he was retained in this role until 873), then the Saffarids, who, from 867 until 900, stirred up what was undoubtedly the most serious rebellion.

Directed at the outset by a former boilermaker named Ya'kūb al-Saffār, this movement of emancipation assumed a popular character that enabled it to spread very rapidly across the whole of Sīstān, which at the time was part of the domain of semi-autonomous governors, the Tahirids. The bands of al-Saffār and of his successors then succeeded in gaining possession of Khurāsān, even carrying off several victories against the Caliph's troops, at the very moment when they in turn were being forced to bow before the forces of the Samanids. These Samanids were established in Transoxian [from 875 on], where they had taken over from the Tahirids. (Sourdel 1983: 70).

The Samanids set themselves up in Khurāsān beginning in 900, forming a dynasty of autonomous emirs who "continued to recognize the supreme domination of the caliph, but gave virtually no account to him, and had their own administration, their own armies and their own financial autonomy." (Sourdel 1983: 70).

All these quarrels over precedence certainly did not favour trade by overland routes, although it is probably necessary to relativize this somewhat. It is true that Ma'sūdī, in the middle of the tenth century, gives the example of an old merchant in Balkh, on the eastern borders of Khurāsān, who travelled overland to China on several occasions; the author does indicate, however, that this was rather rare. (Ma'sūdī 1861-77: I, 349). Conversely, he also tells the story of another merchant, a resident of Samarkand (in the middle of Transoxian) who, in order to move his goods towards China, made use of the sea route through Basrah and the Persian Gulf (*Ibidem*: I, 307); from here, he stopped in Kalāh, a port whose identification is uncertain, but which scholars have generally agreed to locate on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, and which Ma'sūdī placed at a point "half way to China," describing it as "the general rendez-vous of the Muslim ships of Siraf and Oman where they meet the vessels from China." (*Ibidem*: I, 308). At the time, this place could just as well have been the Island of Ko Kho Khao (in the region of Takua Pa), Kampong Sungai Mas in South Kedah (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992),

or even an entrepôt port which will very likely be discovered one day in the region of Mergui-Tenasserim (Myeik-Taninthayi, Myanmar), and surely all three, as the word *kalāh* is probably nothing more than a generic term used to designate the stopping-off places used by the Muslims along this coast.

Whatever difficulties the unrest in the eastern parts of the Abassid empire may have created for merchants attempting to use the overland route, there would have been even more serious consequences from the political situation in Central Asia. Initially stable because of the Chinese peace under the Tang, it had become very precarious in the second half of the eighth century.

II. Central Asia (Doc. 26)

In this period, the Middle Kingdom had been greatly weakened from within by the rebellion led by General An Lushan, which began in December 755 and continued, after his death in 757, under the direction of Shi Shiming, until 763. The capital, Chang'an, was captured and pillaged. These circumstances incited the Tibetans to advance, since the central power had been obliged to withdraw the largest contingents from its garrisons in Central Asia in order to contain the rebellion. Under the reign of the sovereign Khri-sroṅ Ide-brcan (756-797), therefore, the Kingdom of Tibet extended its power from Gansu in the east as far as Khotan in the west. In 763, Chang'an was pillaged, and in 764 the fall of Liangzhou cut off the western centres of administration from Central China and forced the regional command from that military region (Hexi) to withdraw to the west and to set up in Dunhuang in 781. Ganzhou and Suzhou would fall in 766, Anxi in 776 and Dunhuang in 787. This last city was vital, as it controlled the region where the Silk Road from China split into two routes, north and south, to circumvent the desert of Taklamakan; the oasis was once again under Tibetan administration for over a century, until the rebellion of Zhang Yichao, the Tibetan Prefect of the city, who, in the spring of 851, notified the court of the Tang that he had evicted the Tibetan general, and wished to place the city under the control of China. (Beckwith 1987). This control, however, was not without problems, if we are to believe certain archival documents left by a Chinese governor of Dunhuang under the Tibetan occupation, who describes repeated revolts; it took no fewer than three treaties between the Tibetan authorities and the inhabitants of

Dunhuang before they were willing to submit. (Collective 1995a: 195). Shortly after the capture of Dunhuang, the oasis of Khotan on the southern branch of the Silk Route fell in turn, increasing the Tibetans' hold over the region. Along the northern branch, they had seized Khocho (near Turfan), and were laying siege to Kucha, when they themselves came under attack from the Uyghurs, who defeated them. The 'border' between the two peoples was then located around Khocho, which changed hands several times. When the Uyghurs were in a position to oversee the passage of merchants or Chinese officials, they exacted exorbitant tolls. Nevertheless, at the end of years of incessant ambushes, peace treaties between the two peoples were signed in 822, while the Tibetans and the Chinese signed another in 823. These treaties were to restore peace along the Tibetan border for almost twenty years. Then in 840, the Uyghur empire broke apart, a victim of plotting by small neighbouring tribes, and Tibet, for its part, entered a period of internal unrest that led to the loss, in around 866, of all the territories previously conquered in Central Asia.

There is no doubt that all this unrest disturbed commercial activities along the traditional pathways of the Silk Route, and that beginning in 763, the China of the Tang was largely cut off from its contacts by land. Nevertheless, these difficulties for overland travel should probably be nuanced. Tradesmen continued to use the routes at risk of death, or of paying heavy ransoms; the officials did the same. In this way, the ambassadorial missions to China under the Abassids were succeeded by new embassies sent out under the Umayyads (Chavannes 1904), and the caliphs of the new dynasty—in spite of the Battle of Talas (July 751), which ended in defeat for the Chinese—were sufficiently mindful of their neighbours' problems to establish real political links with them. We know that a contingent of Persians and Iraqis was sent to Gansu in 756 in aid of Emperor Suzong, then under threat from the An Lushan revolt, and that less than fifty years later, the Tang and the Abassids formed an alliance to counter the attacks of the Tibetans in Central Asia (a mission from the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-809) arrived in Chang'an in 798 (Gernet 1990: 250)). And finally, travellers wishing to cross from one side of the continent to the other could always take more northerly routes than those that circumvented the oasis of the Desert of Taklamakan; these other routes, however, have not yet benefitted from a detailed study.

The local wars along the Silk Route were contemporary with the rapid development of the maritime route, whether they were coincidental to it or its primary cause: the success of this passage by sea from the West was undeniable, and remained so into the modern period. The goal to be reached was the faraway land of China, which was depicted as the source of all that was exotic. And for their part, the Chinese, no less connoisseurs of 'the strange and the precious', soon began to use every means to reach the direct sources of such goods in the hope of doing away with the need for intermediaries. The wider and more regular use of these maritime routes must have given to the Chinese, as also to other groups, a better idea of the source of these rich goods, giving to the mythical lands of the Southern Seas, including the Malay Peninsula, the recognition they deserved.

III. China (Doc. 26)

The first recorded mission of the Chinese by sea to a region that has been reliably identified as the east coast of India was sent out during the reign of Emperor Han Wudi (141-87), as we mentioned earlier. (See above, Chapter Two.) (Doc. 6). To a large extent, initiatives of this type were taken up by the southern dynasties when the China to the south of the Yangzi, cut off from the China of the north after the fall of the eastern Han in the beginning of the third century, separated into independent kingdoms. Until then, the maritime routes had been an alternative to the overland routes across Central Asia; they now became a necessity for the south, and private and official expeditions, recounted in the dynastic histories of these southern kingdoms, began to multiply. It is these texts that today provide information about what the regions of the Southern Seas were like in this period. (See above, Chapter Four.) When the two Chinas were reunited, as first the Sui and then the Tang took over the Empire at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, the traditionally oppressive policies of the dynasties of the north, by which they established certain 'rights' over the southern territories, were reintroduced. The Tang continued to exert pressure in an effort to extract the maximum amount of resources. They were sufficiently wary, however, to avoid establishing large military garrisons, for fear that, as in the past, these might become independent of the central power and appropriate the vital economic resources of the region.

When revolts broke out, therefore, an army was sent to put them down, then dismantled as soon as peace was restored, and the civil governments disposed only of weak forces, and only for use in dealing with minor unrest. (Twittchett (ed.) 1979: III, 687). This one-way economic policy did not prevent South China from prospering, however, and the ports continued to grow, in particular Canton (Guangzhou), from which we know many Chinese pilgrims including Yijing (Chavannes 1894) embarked on merchant ships for Northeast India in the seventh century. Although the city was pillaged in 758 by Iranian and Arab pirates, based, it appears, at a port on the island of Hainan, and victimized by the greed of the eunuch “superintendents of the merchant ships” (*shibosi*), who had been named to this post in the second half of the eighth century—which caused some of the traffic to be rerouted to the north of Vietnam and the region of Chaozhou near the border with Fujian (Gernet 1990: 251)—the port of Canton continued to grow in importance, favoured in the early ninth century by the establishment of more honest administrative practices. The digging of a canal in 825 linking the river of pearls to Xian Jiang, which provided direct access to the north, must also have contributed to the rapid development of the region of Canton. (Lombard 1992: 68). When the itinerant rebellion of Huang Chao (874–883), which had begun on the outer edges of Shandong, Henan and Jiangsu beginning in 874—and which contributed greatly to the final shaking of the Tang dynasty—reached Canton and sacked it in 879, we know from the merchant Abū Zayid of Siraf that “the inhabitants were put to the sword.” He continued:

Those who are informed about the events in China report that 120,000 Muslims, Jews, Christians and seers who had been established in the city and practiced business there died on this occasion, not to mention the native people who were killed.

The author of this celebrated account, to which we have referred several times, added the following information:

The precise number of people from these four religions who lost their lives was indicated because the Chinese government taxed them according to their numbers. (Reinaud 1845: 64).

This gives some idea of the considerable commercial success of the region throughout the ninth century. From the same source we also know that Chinese coins made of copper—the preferred metal for money in China until the appearance of bank notes under the Song—

bearing “words written in Chinese,” were found on the shores of the Persian Gulf, “in Siraf” (Reinaud 1845: 73). Such a hemorrhaging of coins worried the Chinese authorities, who were short of metal, in much the same way that Roman emperors worried over the gold and the silver of the empire as it drained away towards the east. An edict of 809 forbade the removal of the coins to South China beyond the Lingnan Mountains (north of Canton). (Twitchett 1963: 79 & Note 144).

This commercial boom in the south, therefore, was due in large part to the exchange of products originating in the Southern Seas for the Chinese copper coins, but also, of course, for typically Chinese products, among which silk always played a vital role. Nevertheless, beginning in the ninth century, another typically Chinese product made a decisive appearance in the holds of the ships: ceramic wares, whose vestiges, already mentioned in connection with the shores of the Persian Gulf, pointed to the presence of other, similar ceramics on certain coastal sites of Southeast Asia and India. It is in connection with these ceramics that the archaeological sites of the Malay Peninsula reveal themselves at their best. The recent analysis of sherds at Laem Pho (Chaiya) and Ko Kho Khao (Takua Pa) has made it possible to indicate for the first time the considerable importance of the tableware originating in the ovens of Southern China. These centres of production seem to have experienced a period of striking expansion from the ninth century on (Ho 1991, 1991a, 1994; Ho *et al.* 1990), and, within the limits of this southern part of China, production sites multiplied in the area of present-day Guangdong (in particular the region of Canton and the neighbouring area of the Peninsula of Leizhou): Ho Chuimei has estimated that “there are more sherds of Guangdong wares at Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho Payang than of all other Chinese wares combined.” (Ho 1991a: 298). We will return to this in detail when we analyse the remains from the two sites.

We must therefore understand that at the extreme limits of Asia, the economic situation favoured maritime trade, which was intensified by the increase in demand in the two regions in question. Southern China had always been turned towards the sea; the Middle East of the Abassids had been relocated around the Persian Gulf; Central Asia had experienced unrest since the middle of the eighth century: all these circumstances could only lead to the development of this

trade in the ninth century. The regions of the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean experienced the consequences of this development, and the shores involved—among them those of peninsular and insular Southeast Asia, which are of particular interest to us—saw the birth of centres of trade, entrepôt ports destined to provide for the influx of trading ships in need of places of exchange. The fortune of these places is chiefly due to their privileged geographical positions, which made of them inevitable stopping-off places for ships following the rhythm of the monsoons, whatever technologies had gone into their conception. One of these stopping-places at the gates of China was Campā, of which unfortunately we know very little.

IV. Campā (Doc. 30)

This former 'Indianized' kingdom occupied a part of the east coast of present-day Vietnam, from the gate of Annam (Hoành So'n) in the north to the latitude of Phan Thiết (the region of the Phō Hải sanctuaries) in the south. But these were the extreme positions between which the centre of the kingdom was constantly moving. In fact, the geographies of the littoral, composed of a series of small coastal plains that were relatively isolated from each other, favoured the establishment of small, often rival principalities which nonetheless generally recognized the suzerainty of one or another of them, a suzerainty whose sign was the existence of a holy place where the god Śiva, master of the kingdom, resided.

Campā was established from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the ninth century in the southern provinces of Kauṭhāra (the plain of Nha Trang) and Pāṇḍuraṅga (in the region of Phan Rang). Here a new dynasty appeared whose sovereigns venerated the holy place of Po Nagar in Nha Trang, where the sanctuary harboured a *liṅga*. The Chinese called this kingdom Huanwang. From 854 on, we have no information about this kingdom, and it is only in 875 that epigraphic documentation reappears, though on a site in the former province of Amarāvati (the present Quang Nam, in the region of Đà Nẵng). From then on, the Chinese speak of this place as Zhan Cheng (that is, the 'city of Zhan' = Campāpura). This change in geographical location is a return to the situation that existed before the middle of the eighth century. The inscription from 875 is issued by a sovereign, Indravarman II, who is at pains to make it clear that he does not owe his royal condition to his ascendants, but that it has been conferred upon him in recognition of merits acquired in the course of

his previous existences: he is a Buddhist of the *Mahāyāna* school (from this time on, the holy place of the kingdom is *Dōng Du'o'ng*), but this does not prevent him from reviving the Śivaite traditions of his predecessors, the northern sovereigns. He sent an ambassadorial mission to China in 877; others followed. Campā's contacts with China seem always to have existed, undoubtedly because when ships headed off by sea from Canton or other ports on the southern coasts in the direction of the fascinating regions of the Southern Seas, it was almost inevitable for them to enter into contact with one or another of the principalities that constituted this heterogeneous and unstable kingdom—either because the vessel had navigated up the coast, or because it had crossed the China Sea in one run.

The *Relation de la Chine et de l'Inde* (*Akhbār al-Ṣīn wa'l-Hind*) (*The Account of China and India*) (Sauvaget 1948) informs us that in the middle of the ninth century this practice of stopping over had always been a regular habit of Muslim navigators. Beyond the Tioman Island leg of the trip, along the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, “the ships cast off for a place called Pāṇḍuraṅga,” which can be reached in ten days, and where it is possible to find “fresh water if one wants some.” The text continues:

The ships then go to a place called Champa: ten days of travel; fresh water is found there. It is from here that the so-called ‘Champa’ eagle wood comes [...]. Having taken on water, sail is set for a place called the Island of the Chams, which is an island in the sea: ten days; fresh water is found there. Then the ships cast off for a sea called Tchang-khai [Zhanghai], passing through the Gates of China, which are reefs in the sea, separated from each other by a passage that is practicable for ships: [...] one month. (Sauvaget 1948: 9).

The times indicated for these travels, as is often the case in this type of text, are somewhat fanciful. Apart from this, the information supplied for Pāṇḍuraṅga (in the region of Phan Rang), mentioned earlier, is straightforward. The fine distinction that was assumed to exist between Pāṇḍuraṅga and Campā, of which Pāṇḍuraṅga was only a part, was certainly related to general political problems that had always been known in this kingdom, and perhaps more particularly to the change in the dominant dynasty, the capital and the official religion in the middle of the ninth century. What Sauvaget identified as “the Island of the Chams” had earlier been erroneously identified with Pulau Condore (Côn Dao, off the coast of the Peninsula of Cà Mau), which, absurdly, would have required the

ships to double back on their course; Sauvaget (1948: Note 4, p. 45) showed that it was in fact a small island facing the river that watered the new capital, Indrapura, 518 metres high, and thus easily visible from the sea, providing good protection from the northeast monsoon. The 'Zhanghai Sea' is the Chinese name for the part of the China Sea between the island of Hainan and the Straits; finally, the Gates of China would be the Paracels, fearsome reefs whose dangers warranted a detour if one wished to reach Canton.

From this well-dated text, it emerges that Campā was almost a required stop for ships heading for China or returning, but that this did not originate in the ninth century. Nevertheless, the great influx of both Muslim and Chinese ships during this period gives us at least a partial understanding of the mechanism by which certain religious influences particular to this region were disseminated. The *Mahāyāna* Buddhism that became established there with pomp was certainly brought to the region by the merchant ships on which the Buddhist monks travelled from India as well as from China. The situation with Islam was similar. The first organized Muslim communities became established in this period, and were able to achieve recognition by the local authorities. However, it is not until 958 that we find the mention of an envoy of the king of Campā named Abū Hasan (Tasaka 1952) among the Chinese, and 1039 when we see the first inscription providing confirmation, along with another, undated one that is nonetheless certainly from the same period, of the existence of a very well organized Muslim community in Campā. (Ravaisse 1922).

We stress the importance of the stop-off in Campā deliberately, for, as we will see in the next chapter, the Temple of Wat Keo in Chaiya, and several other ruins from the same region, possess a number of stylistic characteristics of the Cam art of the ninth century that it is very difficult to explain—at least in the case of the works of sculpture—other than as the result of sustained contacts between the two regions, stimulated by the rapid development of trade. They are mentioned in no text, and yet the archaeological indications are intriguing. Up to the present day, nothing comparable has been discovered in the most southern sections of the same coast, but the Yarang sites (Langkasuka), now under exploration, may hold some surprises.

V. Śrīvijaya (Doc. 26)

It has often been said that the commercial activity of the entrepôt ports of Panpan and Langkasuka, which in principle were well away from the major trade route linking the remotest corner of the Malay Peninsula to China, had been chiefly encouraged in this region of the Southern Seas during this period by the thalassocracy of Śrīvijaya, whose very *raison d'être* was the control of trade passing through the Strait of Melaka and the Sunda, and through the South China Sea. We know nothing of Śrīvijaya in the ninth century, apart from some indirect details on its dynastic succession, linked to that of the Śailendras of Central Java, which have been gleaned from the Nālandā Charter inscription on copper. We have already discussed this in the preceding chapter concerning the Chaiya inscription. In connection with this inscription, Boechari's idea that the sponsor on side B, in the middle of the ninth century, could be the grandson of the sponsor on side A, is appealing. Nothing could be less sure, of course, especially since our expectations of what this supposed thalassocracy might have been have now been greatly diminished. Certainly the archaeological remains of a commercial origin that recently came to light on the site of Palembang leave no reason to doubt that this place was an active entrepôt port in the ninth century, but its cultural influence, however brilliantly Yijing may have represented it at the end of the seventh century, is supported by no outstanding or original remains from which the Malay Peninsula sites could have inherited anything. The 'art of Śrīvijaya', as we have said, is an invention of art historians in search of classifications, and the few works found locally merely reflect the multiplicity of commercial contacts uniting the southeast corner of Sumatra to India, in particular to northeast India, and also to the region of the Śailendras of Java, where an abundance of Buddhist works (in particular bronzes), among others, can be found, also copied from or inspired by Pāla art.

VI. The Pālas (Doc. 26)

We are not very well informed, however, concerning the commercial activity of the Pālas, or of the rest of India, for that matter, as we have stated in the preceding chapters. (See above, Chapters Three and Four.) The Indians, unlike the Chinese, were never particularly given to historical narrative. We can therefore only acquire an idea of the interest in trade held by the different dynasties that ruled over

the subcontinent through possible indications of their contacts with other peoples, as with Śrīvijaya in the Nālandā inscription, and then be content with the few conclusions we can draw from them. There remain the archaeological vestiges, some of which we have already described, which always reveal the undeniable links between India and the other regions of the Indian Ocean, but only allow us to guess what might have been the nature of the relations, in particular those of a commercial order, that were established between these regions, as no systematic identification of Indian ceramics after the fifth century has been made. And yet the entrepôt ports of the Malay Peninsula or Sumatra, so rich in Chinese sherds, probably possess similar remains of Indian origin, but the appearance of these pieces has inevitably caused them to be classified in the very vague category of 'local pottery'. The situation is somewhat different for certain archaeological sites located to the west of India (on the coasts of Iran and Arabia), where several characteristic types of Indian ceramics have been identified that bear witness to continued maritime contacts between the different shores of the western Indian Ocean from the beginning of the Christian era to the modern period, with a prosperous era corresponding to the time of Abassid rule. (Kervran 1996).

In the absence of precise information of this kind, we must attempt to prove the existence of these commercial contacts between the two shores of the Bay of Bengal from the traditional, indirect approaches of both art history and the more or less informative literary record. Concerning the Pālas, a verse from the *Rāmacarita* describes the second sovereign of this dynasty, Dharmapāla (*ca.* 775-812), the almost-immediate predecessor of Devapāla, author of the inscription on copper mentioned above, as

the light of (Samudra's [Ocean's] race, whose fleet of stone-boats appeared splendid when it crossed the sea (floating) like bitter gourds, (and) whose pure fame also became resplendent after having crossed the sea. (Huntington & Huntington 1990: 197).

It does not appear, however, that the political ambitions of the Pālas and the other dynasties governing portions of Bengal included the control of the maritime routes. They seem only to have been concerned with the safety of their territories and the control of the lucrative trade along the valley of the Ganges and its tributaries. This did not preclude private initiatives, of course. One of the large ports of

the Pāla region was Tāmralipti (Tamluk) in the delta of the Ganges, a docking place that served over extended periods of time for the merchant ships on which a number of Chinese pilgrims including Yijing himself, and others whose life he described, had booked passage. (Chavannes 1894). In any case, the commercial impact of a region of India can be measured by the importance of the artistic and religious influences it inspired. The India of the Pālas, as we will see in the next chapter, played a key role. We must acknowledge, however, that this commercial activity was not directly related to the great trade route of the ocean-going vessels that linked China to India and the Middle East and vice versa.

VII. South India (Doc. 26)

The material we possess for South India is in principle not very different from our information on Śrīvijaya and the Pālas as we attempt to assess the importance of the commercial contacts between this very out-of-the-way portion of the subcontinent and peninsular and insular Southeast Asia. In the ninth century, the region was dominated by wars between rivalling dynasties: certainly Pallava, but also Cālukya, Coḷa, Pāṇḍya, though this does not seem to have greatly impeded the blossoming of some brilliant civilizations. Among these, the Pallavas have a special place along the eastern shores of Deccan. They are present in Indian history since the first centuries of the Christian era, to the end of the ninth century, the period in which they were definitively defeated by the Coḷas. Their importance in the history of South India from the seventh to the ninth century is roughly comparable to that of the Guptas in the north in the fourth and fifth centuries. Q. Wales (1940, 1950), one of the pioneers of archaeology in the Malay Peninsula, was so persuaded of this that he reconstructed the whole past of South Kedah in relation to the waves of Pallava colonization that swept through the shores of the Peninsula. Nevertheless, as with the other Indian dynasties, the role of the Pallavas beyond the seas can only be evaluated through the artistic influences inspired by their art, because here, too, we have very little historical material.

We do, however, have the good fortune to possess an inscription from one of the entrepôt port sites we will be describing shortly. This inscription, in Tamil characters, and dated to the ninth century, was found on the site at Takua Pa-Ko Kho Khao on the west coast, and

appears to have been issued by a guild of merchants from South India, the *Maṇigrāmam*, who were active in the region at the time, a circumstance that seems to be consistent with what we hope to demonstrate. The text has given rise to many sometimes contradictory commentaries. (Hulzsch 1913, 1914; Sastri 1949; Mahalingam 1969). It mentions the digging (or construction) of a reservoir called *Śrī Avani Nāraṇam*, by a person of royal lineage whose first name ends in *varman*, which was placed under the protection of the members of the guild and men of its guard. The use of a proper name, Nāngūr, was interpreted, depending on the author, as part of the name of the sponsor (Sastri 1949), as his place of origin (Mahalingam 1969, who identifies Nāngūr as Tirunāngūr near Tañjāvūr), or as the name of the place where the reservoir was dug. (Hulzsch 1914). The name of the reservoir, *Avani Nāraṇam*, about which everyone is in agreement, was compared with a title given to one of the last Pallava sovereigns, Nandivarman III, in a laudatory poem, the *Nandikkalambakam*. (Sastri 1949: 29). The dates attributed to this king run from 812-844 (Frédéric 1987 & 1996: 758) to 846-869 (Mahalingam 1969), with 826-849 (Gopalan 1928: 136) and 844-866 (Sastri 1966) in the middle. A dating to the second quarter or the middle of the ninth century, therefore, includes the views of all the authors, and is not in contradiction with the Pallava style of the writing. All these interpretations, then, take us back to South India. The most interesting element in the inscription, however, remains the identification of the “members of the *Maṇigrāmam*” (*Maṇikkirāmam*). This name was derived from the Sanskrit term *vanik-grāman* (guild of merchants), which designates “a powerful mercantile corporation often mentioned in South Indian inscriptions.” (Sastri 1949: 30); this corporation seems to have been identical in its functioning to a similar corporation of this type discussed in another article by the same author, in which he analysed one of its inscriptions in Sumatra, dated to 1088 (Sastri 1932); he also assembled a number of scattered texts about these guilds in another work. (Sastri 1935-1937: 595-598). After the ninth century, the presence of such guilds is attested in Burma, at Pagan; in the thirteenth century, at Nakhon Si Thammarat in the same period; and in China, notably in Quanzhou, in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, in this last case by an inscription and by some Brahmanical religious remains. (Subramaniam 1978; Ray 1989a). The study of the guilds shows that these corporations of merchants had considerable power,

and that they won over the political and religious authorities in the regions where they were active by means of large gifts, including the construction of works for the public good such as irrigation reservoirs. A recent book is devoted to two of these. (Abraham 1988). The allusion to a protective guard in the Takua Pa inscription gave N. Sastri the idea that the establishment of these Tamil merchants had been accompanied by a significant and permanent military operation; he went so far as to propose that Nandivarman III could have extended his rule to “parts of the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, at least for some years.” (Sastri 1949: 30). We believe that this is going a bit too far, even if the sovereign is characterized in the *Nandikkalambakam* as “*Avani-nāraṇam* [Viṣṇu on Earth] with the crowned naval force,” and described as “the unrivalled lord of the four seas with white foaming waves” (Mahalingam 1969: 209), and such important ports as Mallai (Māmallapuram), Mayilai (Mylapore), etc., are mentioned. After all, more than two thousand kilometres separated the two shores. Because elsewhere Sastri stressed the power of these merchant organizations in medieval India (Sastri 1935-37: 595-598), we are amazed that he can propose an extremely risky hypothesis concerning the possible political and military role of the Pallavas in the Malay Peninsula. We need only remember that these guilds in India benefitted from an autonomous status, and that they probably received similar privileges wherever they became established abroad. Their wealth made protection necessary, and they had at their disposal regiments of mercenaries to safeguard their possessions, though they could use them for this purpose alone. They likewise obtained the authorization to build temples to their god wherever they set themselves up in business; at a later point we will examine the religious remains they left in the region of Takua Pa.

This trade from India obviously meant reciprocity on the part of the regions of Southeast Asia that were involved. The present tendency, as we have said, is rather towards promoting the idea of the capacities of navigators from these regions, primarily the Malays, to launch out on the seas. (See above, Chapters Two & Three.) Unfortunately there are few accounts of contacts in this direction. We need to remember, however, that beginning in 1005, a sovereign of Śrīvijaya, Chūlāmaṇivarman, who was succeeded by his son Māravijayōttuṅgavarman, both of them direct heirs of those who had issued the inscription of 775 A.D. in Chaiya, had a Buddhist temple

built in Negapatam, an important port on the coast of Coromandel, which bore the name of the first of them, the *Chūḷāmaṇivar-mavihāra*. King Coḷa Rājarāja I (985-1014), in spite of his inclination towards Śivaite religion, offered the revenues of a large village to maintain this temple, an act of beneficence that was perpetuated by his successor, Rājendracoḷa I (1014-1042). (Aiyer 1933-34; Majumdar 1933-34). This fact has always been considered a proof of ongoing contacts uniting the two regions in spite of the distances—commercial contacts certainly (the monastery could serve as a shelter for the merchants)—but also cultural: Negapatam, in a South India that had been won over to Hinduism, was an active Buddhist centre. (Paranavitana 1944).

VIII. Śrī Laṅkā (Doc. 26)

When we examine the role of the Indian subcontinent in the framework of international trade in the early period, we think primarily of India, and very little of the island of Sri Lanka which extends it to the south. However, Śrī Laṅkā also had a role, which was all the more determinant in these maritime contacts on the high seas between the east and the west sides of the Asian continent because, along with the ports of South India, it had become a necessary stopping-off place for these trips. Recent studies of trade in the region (Bopearachchi 1996, 1999) draw conclusions concerning its great age, but one of them can still state:

There is no valid reason to believe that during the first three centuries of our era, Roman traders had direct connections with Sri Lanka: it may be a question of distance, as also the fact that dependence on the monsoons for sailing limited the time gap available between the two monsoon winds. (Bopearachchi 1996: 69).

Because the ships set sail from Egypt, there was not enough time to profit from the monsoon winds to reach the island in a season, and “during this period the South Indian traders may have played the intermediary role between Roman traders and Sri Lankans.” (*Ibidem*). However, at the turn of the fifth century, the maritime activity of the ports of Arabia and Persia was revived, perhaps in connection with the official foundation of the Eastern Roman Empire (395). This change in the points of departure for ocean trade, which had become more southern, as well as technical improvements that increased the speed of the ships, reduced the time of the voyage and made it easier to reach the island of Śrī Laṅkā. The picture of Śrī

Laṅkā presented by the Greco-Egyptian Cosmas Indicopleustes in the sixth century is that of an essential relay point between East and West:

The island is a great resort of ships from all parts of India and from Persia and Ethiopia, and in like manner it dispatches many of its own to foreign ports. And from the inner countries, I mean China and other marts in that direction, it receives silk, aloes, clove-wood, sandalwood and their products.

The island then sent these goods and products on towards western markets. "Receiving in return the traffic of these marts," and disseminating them towards the Far East, "the island exports to each of these at the same time its own products [...] and thus becomes a great *emporium*." (Bopearachchi 1996:70).

These commercial relations between the island and Western Asia did not wane at the time of the Muslim conquest. On the contrary,

besides a great number of literary sources and inscriptions, archeological evidence, such as ceramics and especially coins, bear witness to the presence of Muslims in the island as early as the 7th century. (Bopearachchi 1996: 72).

This new phase in the commercial activity of the island fitted well into the politico-economic context of the ninth century: the Śrī Laṅkān traders apparently had no difficulty in adapting to the new demands; they were the heirs of an ancient tradition that was fully capable of accommodating itself to this one; and like their neighbours the Indians, they seem to have been relatively little affected by the vicissitudes of local politics. In the ninth century, however, the first decade of the reign of the sovereign Sena I (833-853) was marked by the invasion of the Pāṇḍyas, an episode which was finally concluded with the payment of a heavy tribute. The sovereign's successor and nephew, Sena II (853-887), saw an opportunity to avenge his kingdom by invading the Pāṇḍya territories, with the probable collusion of the Pallavas; the campaign, in around 862, was a success, and the reign of this sovereign is thought to have been prosperous. Nevertheless, in the beginning of the tenth century, the rise of the dynasty of the Coḷas in South India led to a reconciliation between the two peoples, as they attempted to face the new danger together.

Apart from all these political risks, it is likely that, as in South India, the commercial organization at the heart of the guilds provided

considerable stability for trade in this period. An inscription issued by one of the guilds was discovered on a rock in Tiriyāy some fifty kilometres north of Trincomalee on the east coast of Sri Lanka (Paranavitana 1933-34), written in Sanskrit (which is unusual for this traditionally Pāli island), in a script that can be attributed to the end of the seventh or the first half of the eighth century. The text refers to the presence of “companies of merchants,” who are

skilful in navigating the sea, engaged in buying and selling, and who [possess] a display of goods laden in sailing vessels of divers sorts.

The mention of a sanctuary devoted to Avalokiteśvara, and thus to *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, probably indicates the presence of groups of tradesmen that included Indians from Negapatam, since the regions of the southeast of India continued to practise this form of Buddhism, which was poorly represented in Śrī Laṅkā. The presence on the site of this inscription *in situ* is significant. This port in the ninth century was one of the most steadily frequented ports of the island, along with Mantai, at the extreme northwest corner, on the edge of the Strait of Palk. This last site has been excavated on numerous occasions, and again recently. (Carswell & Prickett 1984; Carswell 1992). From these digs it emerges that

from approximately the eighth century A.D. onwards [a date which, at least for the Chinese ceramics, as we will stress later, should have at least a century shaved from it], there is an abundance of imported ceramics, glass and other artifacts, testifying to Mantai’s far-reaching contacts with the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, East Africa, South Arabia, India, China and the Far East. That this *floraison* should have occurred at the moment of the expansion of the Islamic world to the east and the rise of the Tang dynasty in China is significant. (Carswell 1992: 199-200).

Given the position of this port on the eastern side of Adam’s Bridge, (which, because of its high ocean floor, could only be crossed by boats that drew very little water), it is obvious that it could only have been used as a port from which to transfer stock for the exchange of merchandise from one ocean system to another, and vice versa. (Carswell and Prickett 1984: 15). The alternative route would have required a complete circumnavigation of the island. The same authors add:

The near equal quantities of Near Eastern and Far Eastern ceramics clearly confirm that during its heyday [from the end of the eighth to

the eleventh centuries], Mantai served as a pivotal entrepôt and trans-shipment center in the maritime commercial networks of the Early Medieval Period. (Carswell & Prickett 1984: 60).

In light of this report, it appears that a large portion of the remains of Chinese origin are in principle similar to the ninth century remains found in Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao, which we will discuss later. In addition, the links of the site with India are attested by the presence of Indian ceramics (notably red polished ware). An activity that was clearly specific to this place, however, was the making of beads of precious and semi-precious stones (a traditional and well-known product of the island), in particular, round polished quartz stones. It is all the more interesting to discover remains of this type in Mantai, because the sites of Tamiḷnāḍu and the coast of Kerala, contrary to all expectations (Kerala is mentioned as a stopping-off place in the Muslim text of 851), have yielded no ceramic sherds from before the eleventh century, and the bulk of the finds of this type belong to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. (Subbarayalu 1996). Similarly, J. Carswell and M. Prickett (1984: 16-17) emphasize

the total unsuitability of most of the ports [of the same southern coasts of India, and they add “almost the whole perimeter of Sri Lanka”] in terms of natural features. Where one might have expected a natural harbour or inlet to have formed the basis of subsequent development, none such existed.

Mantai, until the eventual discovery of similar sites, thus appears to be the missing stopping-off-place in the heart of the Indian Ocean in the trade between China and the Middle East in this period. When the north of the island was invaded by the Coḷas, and Anurādhapura was captured and sacked at the beginning of the tenth century, Mantai experienced the after-effects, and some have theorized (Carswell 1992: Note 2, p. 197) that the merchants left it for Negapatam, which seems to have been the advanced port of the Coḷa region in Southeast India. This dynasty, after maintaining the good relations with Śrīvijaya that we have already described, finally challenged it for the commercial control of the region of the Southern Seas, as the next chapter will show.

Thus we can see that the growth of maritime trade fostered in the ninth century by the politico-economic situation of the two extreme limits of Asia (China and the Middle East) had its counterpart in the Southern Seas, where for many years the populations involved had

carried on long-distance trade, for lack of any other means to make contact with each other. There is no doubt that the influx of the Chinese and the Muslims was determinant in the ninth century, and gave impetus to this trade. The opening of such entrepôt ports as Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao, whose existence is limited to the ninth century at most—and surely only to several decades of that century—is sufficient proof of the impact of this trade pursued by widely divergent nationalities. We have mentioned only the best known of these ports, but along the whole length of the long sea route that linked the two outer limits of Asia, other peoples and other places of which we know nothing were involved in these commercial activities.

In view of these politico-economic circumstances, therefore, we must try to reconstitute the major routes of maritime activity, to which a good number of secondary routes were attached. From the Middle East, the vessels taking the shortest route left the ports of the Persian Gulf and crossed the western Indian Ocean to Śrī Laṅkā in one stretch, to the ports where merchant ships coming from all the other Indian ports—but particularly from Tamiḷnāḍu, and very likely also from Northeast India—came together. Nevertheless, other vessels must certainly have chosen the coastal shipping route. From Śrī Laṅkā, these ships would have crossed the Bay of Bengal in one run to the shores of the Malay Peninsula, landing at various points designated by the Muslims by the generic name *kalāh*, which, in the ninth century, would necessarily include the island of Ko Kho Khao, Kampong Sungai Mas in South Kedah, and a likely entrepôt port site, yet to be located, at Mergui-Tenasserim. From these docking places, some of the ships headed into the Strait of Melaka to Palembang, where they sailed in a northeasterly direction off the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, with a possible stop at the islet of Pulau Tioman. From this point, some of these would have headed straight for Southern China, possibly stopping off at Campā, while a good number of them went up the coast of the Peninsula to Yarang, then Laem Pho and probably other ports at the far end of the Gulf of Thailand linked with the region of Dvāravatī, such as the port of the town of Ku Bua, the starting- or end-point of a possible route across the Peninsula by way of the rivers and Three Pagodas Pass. Of course these routes could be taken in the opposite direction.

B. THE ENTREPÔT PORTS OF THE 9TH CENTURY

I. LAEM PHO

1. *Discovery, location, excavation* (Doc. 27, 31)

The present site is located on the banks of the estuary of a small river, the Khlong Yai Phum Riang, which empties into the sea to the north of the Bay of Bandon. In the ninth century, however, the appearance of the coast and the courses of the rivers were different from what they are today. An examination of aerial and satellite photographs enables us to evaluate the topographical evolution that has taken place here: the spit that now stretches towards the north of the Bay was not yet formed, and a small bay was developing at the latitude of Chaiya, into which many little watercourses flowed. These carried alluvial deposits that contributed further to the silting up of the shoreline along that side of the coast, which, particularly because of the geological phenomenon of emergence, was undergoing a process of straightening or smoothing, the opposite of what was happening to its western counterpart. (See above, Chapter One.) For these reasons, the entrepôt port of Laem Pho would most certainly have been established at the edge of the outermost shore, on a high residual dune probably already crossed by a river that would eventually have been widened by other watercourses, tracing a clean cut across the dune and partially disturbing the former accumulations of ceramic sherds that are spread out today along the shore and tossed about by the ebb and flow of the tides. Although these sherds are ubiquitous, the area was not spotted and recognized as a major entrepôt port site until the seventies. The first excavation of the site took place in 1981; the most recent, in conjunction with the excavation of Ko Kho Khao, was carried out by a Thai-American team in December 1988 and January 1989; we will be drawing on the results of this latest excavation. Like the previous digs, it involved a spot along the left bank of the estuary that looks like a small cape, which is at the origin of the local name Laem Pho that is associated with the site (*laem* means ‘cape’ in Thai); but

a second site, Payang, has recently been found on the west side of the Khlong, opposite and just south of Laem Pho. A cursory investigation carried out in March 1990 indicates that it is contemporary with Laem Pho and almost as large and densely settled. (Bronson 1996: 183).

2. *Archaeological discoveries*

- Large quantities of ceramic sherds were found and inventoried. They were either of local origin (though by far the most numerous, these have been studied very little or not at all, and are therefore difficult to date), or of Middle Eastern origin (this group has been relatively well described, but has not yet been the object of a major study), or, finally, of Chinese origin (from 9 to 36% of all the ceramic sherds, depending on where they were found). It is these last, which have been thoroughly analysed, that have made it possible to establish a date for the site. Because of their presence, in deposits in which there is no sampling of Chinese sherds from before or after the ninth century, though the statistics include the findings in both the lower and the upper levels of the probes, it is impossible to conceive that the entrepôt port was active for longer than a few decades during the ninth century. All of these ceramic pieces were found in conjunction with numerous fragments of glassware in different colours ranging from green to blue, whose provenance is undoubtedly the Near or Middle East, but for which, also, no studies have yet been done; we will return to these in connection with Ko Kho Khao. Beads, especially of glass, were also found in their hundreds (they have yet to be analysed, and the results of future studies will remain forever unsure because of the pillaging to which they were subjected, and are still being subjected, as at Khuan Luk Pat). Finally, several Chinese copper coins going back to the reign of the Tang emperor Gaozu (618-626) (Thepchai 1982) have been attested.

Ten distinct types of Chinese ceramic sherds have been authenticated (Srisuchat T. *et al.* 1989; Ho *et al.* 1990; Ho 1991, 1991a, 1994; Bronson 1996), all dated to the ninth century. Among these types, four are related to known sites (*Changsha* (Hunan), *Yue* (Zhejiang), *Ding* (Hebei), *Northern White Ware* (Henan)), whose production was exported either by Yangzhou (Jiangsu) or by Ningbao (Zhejiang). The six other types, on the other hand, have not been identified to this day outside of Chinese territory, and, surprisingly, five of them come from kilns located in Guangdong (*Meixian* (northwest of Shantou [Swatow]), *Yanggan*, *Gulao*, *Fengkai*, *Guangdong Coastal Green Ware* (the lower course of the Xijiang River and north of the Peninsula of Leizhou)); the provenance of the sixth type, a green and white splashed ware, is not yet known.

The great contribution of these last excavations at Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao (where the sampling is the same) is to have

demonstrated the importance of the export of ceramics from this Chinese province beginning in the ninth century, when it had been thought until then that this trade had not really begun before the tenth century at the earliest. More of the ceramic sherds on the two peninsular sites originate in Guangdong than from all the other recognized kilns put together. This ceramic ware, however, was of inferior quality to the wares from the kilns in the north and east of China, but its success was indisputable, and its presence is attested as far as Siraf. This implies that there was considerable dynamism within this region, for if some of the recognized sites of production are coastal, others are more continental (such as *Meixian* and *Fengkai*), which presupposes the existence of a network of internal, primarily river, communication facilitating their passage to the coast, where the ports of Guangzhou and Shantou (Swatow) certainly played a key role in their export.

- As we have said, the dig also disclosed smaller quantities of sherds of Middle Eastern ceramics. Three types have been described, including wares made of friable clay with a fragile monochrome glaze in two shades of turquoise blue, one on each side; this type, which is easy to recognize, was carried from the ports of the Persian Gulf to Japan, via numerous other peninsular sites and China. The fragments belonged to a whole series of jars, vases and goblets. In addition to the different tones of turquoise blue, the limestone-alkaline glaze could also be a strong green colour. These pieces of ceramic ware had already been made by the Parthians, the Sassanids and the Umayyads; their continuing presence is attested on all the Abassid sites. They are known by several vague designations (Basra turquoise, Sassana Islamic, etc.). A number of jars belonging to this type of production were discovered intact in the region of Suse (Iran); the Museum of the Louvre possesses one example (53 centimetres in height), dated to the seventh to eighth centuries. (Soustiel 1985: Fig 11).

The decoration [of these jars] is at times incised, at times done in slight relief, occasionally brightened up with lozenges of appliqué work aligned in friezes or in groupings of three; but it is chiefly characterized by garlands of barbotine, often twisted in cables that curve and wind at the level of the shoulder in imitation of lacing, and by large medallions. (Soustiel 1985: 30).

Because this type of ceramic ware continued to be made throughout the Middle East, with several variations, until the fourteenth and

fifteenth centuries, the sherds, while easily recognizable, do not constitute a very reliable means of dating the sites themselves (colour illustration in Bronson 1996: 215). Added to these are sherds of two other types of Middle Eastern ceramics that Ho Chuimei (1991a: 293) designates by the names “tin white ware” and “green splashed ware,” without further description. The first name probably designates ceramics of siliceous paste covered with an opaque white tin oxide glaze; the second very likely refers to models which, apart from decorations that are similar to the Chinese *sancai*, are embellished with engravings or incisions that have occasionally led to their being designated by the somewhat ambiguous name of “splashed-sgraffiate ware.” We will not debate about the possibly Far Eastern origin of this type of decoration. On the intact or almost whole pieces that have been discovered in the Middle East, such ornamentation figures on silver goblets and plates that were adorned, over a white slip, with glazes of green copper oxide, purple-violet brown manganese oxide, and russet yellow iron oxide, the three glazes mixing together to create an effect of jasper.

The drawing of the incised motifs is almost always executed “independently of the colored design,” and presents either triangular areas, or series of concentric motifs, scales, half-palettes, rosettes, and very often a frieze of arcatures around the rim, framing a reticulated decoration that covers the bottoms of the goblets. (Soustiel 1985: 42, color Fig. 22; Collective 1992: color Figs. 115, 117, 118).

In addition, B. Bronson (1996: 214) provides a colour illustration of a fourth type of Middle Eastern ceramic at Laem Pho, which he classifies in a “green and white group,” whose decorative technique seems very close to that of the earlier group: greenish-yellow copper oxide glaze over a white slip.

II. Yarang (Doc. 17)

On the same east coast, but in Langkasuka, foreign ceramic sherds are still rare, and it appears that when the discovery of some of these is mentioned in a report, they are in fact late Chinese ceramics (Ming), or late Thai (Sawankhalok). Some villagers digging a canal in Mayo, a town fifteen kilometres east-southeast of Yarang, discovered (Chamoraman 1983: 260) sherds of ‘blue and white’ Chinese ceramics at a depth of 1.5 metres; these sherds were associated with several broken or intact pieces that belonged to the Song and Ming

periods. Unfortunately, they were sold before an archaeologist could examine them, and the place where they were discovered can no longer be found today.

The three large excavations carried out in Yarang, and other, more selective digs at Ban Prawæ and Ban Wat, yielded many potsherds that at least attest to an undeniable human presence near the temple ruins. They have been given the hasty label ‘Dvāravatī’ or ‘Śrīvijaya’; there are also some *kendi* spouts, perhaps from kilns in the region of Satingpra, but from a much later period (11th to 12th century) (see below, Chapter Thirteen), and a few terracotta oil lamps with few distinguishing marks (also said to be ‘Dvāravatī’); but no sherds of foreign origin came to light during these excavations, with the exception of two fragments of Middle Eastern ceramics found on site BJ3. Their delicate glaze in two shades of blue (turquoise on the outside and a lighter colour on the inside) is characteristic of pieces of their provenance, and they resemble the sherds from Laem Pho described earlier, and those from Ko Kho Khao and Kampong Sungai Mas that we will describe shortly. They may belong to the general period of the ninth century. We should add that no pieces of Middle Eastern glass have come to light, and only a few rare beads, particularly in cut stone. The potential entrepôt port sites of the city-state (see above, Chapter Seven) should fill in these gaps when they have been explored and excavated.

III. Ko Kho Khao

1. *Discovery and location* (Doc. 28)

The Ko Kho Khao site, located on the west coast of the Peninsula, at a slightly lower latitude than that of Chaiya, has undergone fewer topological changes than the one at Laem Pho. Alluvial deposits spread out along the shores by the rivers and coastal sea currents have of course altered the shape of the coastline, and even created several small islands, but the site, although set back from the contemporary one by about two kilometres, still corresponds to the southern part of a small, low sandy island that closes off the estuary of the Takua Pa River and therefore also provides a sheltered stopping-off place for ships, protected as it is from the winds of the southwest monsoon; a small new port, in relatively deep water, still harbours several fishing boats. Unlike Laem Pho, the site of Ko Kho Khao was recognized from the beginning of the twentieth century

because of the ruins of brick buildings and the traces of reservoirs² that came to light in a particular spot called ‘Thung Tuk’ in Thai (‘the plain of brick—or stone—houses’). (Bourke 1905/86: 17). Q. Wales bent his attention on this in 1934 (Wales 1935)—we will return to it in the next chapter—but the ceramic sherds strewn across the ground, mixed with fragments of glassware and beads, were of little interest to him, and it was not until the work of A. Lamb (1961) at the end of the fifties that the importance of these apparently insignificant vestiges was really appreciated.

2. *Archaeological discoveries*

- The excavation of part of the site, which therefore followed on the Laem Pho excavation of 1989, yielded the same sampling of Chinese ceramic sherds, but in lesser quantities. Whereas in Laem Pho, each cubic metre of volume that was dug provided 176.3 of Chinese sherds, the figure drops to 23.1 here, giving a proportion of three to eight percent of all the ceramics represented on the site (Bronson 1996: 184); the variety of types of ware is also less great here. Of the ceramics of the Yue type alone, which however are in a minority among the other types (3.8% of the Chinese sherds at Laem Pho, 8.4% at Ko Kho Khao), Laem Pho yielded nineteen different rims and twelve different types of base, and Ko Kho Khao only thirteen altogether. (Ho 1994: 196).

- Nevertheless, five types of oriental ceramics, not three, were counted, because the numbers of the Laem Pho types were swelled by sherds of yellow enameled luster white ware (Bronson 1996: col. ill. p. 214), about which we know nothing further, and sherds of cobalt-blue-and-white ware. These two types, as well as the green and white ware already mentioned in connection with Laem Pho, had apparently never before been located on any site east of Śrī Laṅkā. B. Bronson adds (1996: 185):

[...] the presence in Southern Thailand of cobalt blue-and-white sherds closely resembling sherds found at Sāmarrā and other 9th century sites in Iraq, is likely to be of interest to those studying the origin of the blue-and-white ceramic decoration in the Far East.

² The Thai-American team of 1988-89 made out what appeared to be traces of the reservoir dug by the guild of merchants of Southern India that figures in the Takua Pa inscription we have already mentioned. It is “about 800 meters in circumference. One of its walls is 200 meters long, 30 meters wide and 5 meters high. It is the largest ancient earthwork thus far discovered in Southern Thailand. Moreover, its design is South Indian, not Southeast Asian.” (Srisuchat A. 1989: 36).

The appearance in the Middle East of the first 'blue and whites' goes back to the eighth century; the cobalt seems to have originated in the region of Kāchān (northeast of Ispahan), and the Arabs surely had a monopoly at first, because they exported it to China, where it is known by the name 'Mohammedan blue'. (Soustiel 1985: 46). After several trial and error attempts, the potters succeeded in applying this cobalt blue in the form of several different motifs (palm tree, garnet, palmette, floweret, rosette, epigraph) on an opaque white tin oxide glaze (stanniferous glaze or enamel), generally shiny and creamy, to which the blue is sometimes lightly fused. The sherds from Ko Kho Khao that have been mentioned, though not illustrated, surely belong to this type of ceramics. (Ill. in Soustiel 1985: Fig. 24 (Louvre), 40).

- In connection with the glass, about which we have said nothing in relation to Laem Pho, B. Bronson provides the following information:

Middle Eastern glass, in the form of pieces of broken glass vessels, is found in all parts of Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho, in quantities averaging about 0.04 kg per cubic meter of near surface soil [it is not specified whether the proportions are the same from one site to the other; our superficial examination of the two sites would lead us to believe, however, that Laem Pho has smaller quantities than Ko Kho Khao]. Considering the thinness of the pieces involved, which often have walls less than a millimeter thick, this is equivalent to a very large number of complete glass vessels. About 90% of the vessels are cups or small bowls, rather like shallow tumblers or cocktail glasses. Only a few percent of the vessels are bottles.³ Most are undecorated and coloured a light transparent blue or green. A few sherds come from enamelled and stained glass vessels; these closely resemble pieces found at Fustat in Egypt. The low percentage of bottles and possible jars argues against the hypothesis that glasswares were traded chiefly as containers for valuable substances such as perfume and medicine. We know from historical sources [Wong 1979] that medicines and cosmetics in glass bottles were indeed imported into China by Arabs during the 11th century and probably during earlier centuries as well. However, there can be no doubt that in this case the bulk of

³ And yet the only two pieces of intact glass that we know along the whole Malay Peninsula are bottles. One, in amber glass, globular and with a high, narrow neck, comes from Laem Pho, and has been illustrated by B. Bronson (1996: 215), with no indication of its dimensions (probably about 5 cm high), nor of the place where it is preserved. The other, more squat, with a lower and wider neck, is said to have been found at Phangnga (4.3 cm high, 4.3 cm in diameter); it is preserved in the museum of Lopburi. As they were probably found outside of any archaeological context, their attribution to the ninth century is debatable.

the glassware was shipped empty and intended for use at its destination. One Chinese source of the Song period, the *Zhizi Tongjian*, comments that Arab glass cups are as suitable for serving hot wine as cups of ceramic or silver. It seems possible that these earlier cups would have been used similarly if they had reached China. (Bronson 1996: 185-186).

It was A. Lamb (1961i) who first raised the question of these fragments of glassware at Ko Kho Khao, because they reminded him of the fragments that he had found in surprising quantities on the site of the entrepôt port of Kampong Pengkalen Bujang in South Kedah. (Doc. 29). It is regrettable that nothing has been undertaken on the subject since then. When comparing the bases of the small containers, he soon noticed that the techniques of manufacture were different: the first were bases for small bottles, relatively flat or slightly concave, displaying a pontil mark in the form of a small disc of rough glass, as well as a marked thickness of glass in the centre, with an outer shape that rose rather abruptly; the others were very likely the bases of small bowls including a support formed by a double thickness of the leaf of glass, and, beyond this, a pontil mark that was identical to the one on the other bases. He added:

The Takuapa specimens are all slightly irregular in profile and seem to have been blown without the use of any form of mould. Hence, perhaps a need to make the bases as wide as possible so as to ensure a relatively even support for the vessel. The pontil marks in the Takuapa specimens are not always exactly centered. (Lamb 1961i: 58).

The quality of the glass used on the two sites was also different: glass from Takua Pa contained more bubbles, and in general was more transparent than the type of glass from Kampong Pengkalen Bujang.

A. Lamb (1961i: 60), like B. Bronson, also indicated the presence on the site of: “some small pieces of an opaque dark green glass with a stained decoration on both sides,” of Egyptian origin (Lamb 1966: 76, Pl. 3), but unlike Bronson, he also mentions the presence of fragments of tableware in different shades of dark blue, in what he estimates represents twenty percent of all the surface sherds (we, too, collected some of these). In addition, he illustrates “a fairly large (at least six inches in diameter) glass vessel” (1961i: 60, Pl. 88); these last two observations, somewhat contradicting the statements of B. Bronson, show clearly how much work remains to be done on this archaeological material.

Lamb set out to analyse five fragments of glass in different colours from Ko Kho Khao in order to compare their composition with that of five specimens from Kampong Pengkalan Bujang. It appeared that their composition differed from one site to the other, but was quite homogeneous within each site; also, the almost total absence of lead (with a few traces in the specimens from Ko Kho Khao), combined with the presence of barium, indicate an incontestable Middle Eastern and not Chinese origin.

- As for the beads, the same problem exists at Ko Kho Khao as at Laem Pho: many have been pillaged, and the pillaging continues to this day. It will therefore never be possible to gain an accurate idea of them. It is again to A. Lamb (1961h) that we owe a study of some of them, collected from the surface in a period before they were adopted as amulets by Asian populations nostalgic for animism. The seventeen examples in his study could in no way be considered representative of the original, very broad range of beads on the site. They are all in glass of different colours: opaque yellow, dark blue, opaque grey, opaque red-orange, opaque dark red, translucent light blue, black and white stripes with five eyes of yellow on red, amber (false gold-glass bead), and their forms as well as the techniques of manufacture are equally diverse. The chemical and spectroscopic examination of three of them undertaken by the author revealed nothing new, because of the marked variations in composition from one bead to another.

It is unfortunate that nothing more could be done in the period before the systematic pillaging began. Bronson (1996:186) had the same regret. He provided some further information about this material from the site:

Ko Kho Khao is said to have yielded a large number of onyx (banded agate) beads and of glass eye beads [two examples of the latter, discovered on the site, were illustrated by A. Lamb (1961h: Figs. 84, 85, 1965a: Fig.9, 1966a: Fig. 18)]. Two broken eye beads and two imitation onyx beads [were] immediately recognized by the inhabitants of the island, who had names for both types and evidently had seen many in the past. The site has also yielded an undetermined quantity of round carnelian beads. The orange and carnelian beads may well be Indian in origin, but the source of the eye beads has not yet been determined.

In the last few years, P. Francis has undertaken to put some order and coherence into our understanding of the thousands of beads that have

turned up in various Asian sites. His numerous publications contain references to the sites that concern us in the Malay Peninsula. The problem they present is complicated by the fact that many of the sites where they were discovered were also the production centres where some of them were made. A. Lamb became aware of this (1965: 36) during his visit to sites including Ko Kho Khao, when he encountered: "a raw material which contained a high proportion of melted-down Middle Eastern glass scrap."

Among the specimens in this ocean of beads, P. Francis was especially interested in the most plentiful type, those he calls 'Indo-Pacific beads', an abbreviation of the term 'Indo-Pacific Monochrome-Drawn Glass Beads,' which defines their distribution, colour, manufacturing type and material." These "small monochrome glass beads [were] made by cutting a tube and reheating the resulting sharp segments; beads made this way are called drawn beads." (Francis 1991a: 98-99). They have always aroused considerable interest, and the commonly accepted view is that the technique of their fabrication comes from India itself, which is not a very original idea—from Tamiḷnāḍu, to be more exact; the mother site of this industry is said to have been Arikamedu, from which point it would initially have spread towards Mantai (Śrī Lan̄kā), Khlong Thom (peninsular Thailand) and Oc-eo (Vietnam), thanks to "the existence of something like a nomadic bead making group." (Lamb 1965a: 95). P. Francis (1991a: 112) provided some information and expressed some thoughts about this group:

The beadmakers are conservative and hand their craft down through generations. Moreover, the process for making the beads, especially the tube-drawing, is so complex that it is virtually non-transferable unless carefully taught. It is unlikely that a small expatriate community would have taught their secrets to others, threatening their own industry through competition. There are two scenarios one might suggest where this could happen. One is if the beadmakers became wealthy (instead of just a few individuals controlling the industry), they might abandon the hard work and hire others, the other is if the community became too small numerically and was forced to hire outside help, who eventually learned the system and ran it themselves.

Francis (1991a: 103) believes that "Oc-eo and Khlong Thom were both abandoned in the late 6th or early 7th century," stating that "the next two Indo-Pacific beadmaking centres chronologically are Kuala Selinsing and Satingpra, Thailand." He goes on to say:

In the 10th century there is another shift in the beadmaking sites. Kuala Selinsing and Satingpra were abandoned [...]. The next two Indo-Pacific beadmakers in Malaya were Takua Pa and Sungai Mas in Kedah. The Satingpra beadmakers might have gone to Takua Pa, while the Kuala Selinsing beadmakers are likely to have gone to Kedah.

The author believes these two sites to be “the last two known Indo-Pacific beadmakers in Southeast Asia.”

We find certain aspects of this chronology questionable, since the Takua Pa site only functioned for several decades in the ninth century, and the author’s suggestion that bead-making activity ceased in Kampong Sungai Mas during the tenth century seems quite late for this site, about which we will speak later.

The Indo-Pacific beads of Ko Kho Khao seem to have been the most hastily made of these beads on all the sites:

One characteristic helps identify the beads of one site. When the tubes are cut, the segments are packed in ash and reheated to smooth them off. The longer they are heated the more rounded they become. While it is very difficult to quantify this, I use a scale of from 0 to 3 to indicate the degree of roundedness. (Francis: 1991a: 106).

The higher the figure, the rounder the bead. Out of a sampling of forty-nine beads at Ko Kho Khao, 59.2% are R1, 34.7% R2, and only 6.1% R3. The comparable figures for Kampong Sungai Mas are respectively 18.5%, 51.9% and 29.6% for what is acknowledged to be a much smaller sampling of only twenty-seven beads. The author continues:

Although the samples are admittedly small, they are representative. I have never seen so many R1 beads at any other Indo-Pacific beadmaker, and as for importing sites, I actually noticed this first at Laem Pho Chaiya. (Francis 1991a: 107).

We possess no information about this site.

Most of the sites that manufactured Indo-Pacific beads made other types as well, and Ko Kho Khao is no exception. Francis recognized “drawn beads with stripes along their sides,” as did Lamb, and also like him, saw imitations of

the famous gold-glass beads, which are made by coating a glass tube with gold foil (or tin for a silver effect), putting that tube inside a larger one, heating the whole and constricting it along its length, then cutting apart the bulges into single or multiple beads. [...] These false

gold-glass beads have been found at Sungai Mas, Laem Pho, Chaiya, Kuala Selinsing...(Francis 1991a: 108).

Two other special types also appeared on the site:

Eye beads are so called because they have designs which resemble eyes and are often used to avoid the Evil Eye. Eye beads of dark translucent blue or green glass with irregular and irregularly placed white spots with blue 'pupils' are fairly common at Takua Pa. I call them 'Takua Pa eye beads' because even if they were not made there, they were first reported from there [see above]. They are found in the upper levels of [...] Sungai Mas and Laem Pho Chaiya. They are quite numerous at Takua Pa, and they are often found broken. This does not prove manufacture, but it is suggestive.

Also suggestive for the same reason are the large number of fragments of a mosaic eye bead found at Sungai Mas. These were made by fusing glass canes (rods) which have a design running through them of one or two concentric white circles in a dark translucent blue field. They are found also in Indonesia and at Takua Pa. (Francis 1991a: 108-109).

This author dates to the tenth to eleventh centuries a series of other beads he presents as originating in the Muslim world. This dating, acceptable for Kampong Sungai Mas, seems to us less appropriate for Takua Pa, a site whose period of activity—it cannot be repeated too often—was short, and limited to several decades of the ninth century. The presence of these beads on the island of Ko Kho Khao could therefore only mean that they were brought there earlier than P. Francis believes. Francis also speaks of a type of bead produced by the 'segmenting' technique. This process was

used for the gold-glass beads (and the Takua Pa false gold glass beads). A thin glass tube was reheated while on a wire and constricted with some tool along its length. This produced bulges which were cut apart as single beads or left in multiples. There is a great variety in colour, size and shape of segmented beads at Sungai Mas and Pengkalan Bujang. Perhaps the most popular were segmented melons (gadrooned oblates), especially at Sungai Mas [...]. Segmented beads are also found at Takua Pa and Laem Pho Chaiya [...].

A second technique was to fuse mosaic canes [...]. Mosaic canes are made by forming a gather of glass with a design which can be viewed on end [...]. Fused mosaic cane beads are made by joining short segments of canes together, which preserves the design all over the surface and even into the perforation. Again, these are numerous at Sungai Mas and found at Pengkalan Bujang, Laem Pho, Takua Pa. (Francis 1991a: 109-110, Ill in Lamb 1961h: Pl. 84, 1966a: Fig. 18).

This set of similarities and differences between the sites of Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao initially led those who undertook the latest excavations to a number of conclusions which we do not necessarily share. Among these, the idea—which has gained too much credence, in our opinion—that the Malay Peninsula was easily crossed at this latitude because of its narrow width, seems greatly exaggerated, especially when associated with the idea that the wares we have just discussed were transported from one side of the Peninsula to the other. It is obviously a tempting conclusion, given the similarity in the archaeological material on the two almost twin sites, but in our opinion, it is totally unrealistic.

These transpeninsular routes that were supposed to follow the watercourses flowing from the crests of the summits towards one coast or the other, were in reality hardly practicable, as we have attempted to show (see above, Chapter Two, Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2001): because the rivers were barely navigable beyond their lower courses—even in the period in which they were less silted up than they have become since; because the vegetation in the first centuries of the era was very dense, and inhabited by dangerous animals; and because it was extremely difficult, even if the distances were relatively short, to cross a pass that led from one hydrographic network to another. This being so, we cannot imagine that the fragile Chinese or Middle Eastern tableware could ever have travelled along these routes. These products were transported solely by sea, and, we know from recent excavations of wrecks along the Asian coasts that in the case of the Chinese ceramics, this meant in the bottom of the hold, where their weight served as ballast.⁴ The differences in quantity from one site to the other can therefore be explained quite naturally by the fact that the ships, whether they came from China or from the Middle East, before rejoining one or another port, had to sail around the Malay Peninsula, stopping at other places, if only—in this period of the ninth century—at Kampong Sungai Mas in South Kedah, Palembang in Sumatra, and in all likelihood, Yarang (see above, Chapter Seven), in the city-state of Langkasuka (Doc. 30). It is therefore easy to understand why there would be more ceramic ware

⁴ The oldest wrecks that have been excavated along the Thai coasts, however, are not older than the 12th century, but there is no reason to believe that the Chinese ceramics could have been transported in another way in earlier periods.

of a certain origin and more glassware on one side of the Peninsula than on the other.

B. Bronson (1996), in the latest published article on the Thai-American excavations of 1988-89, is far less convinced of the reality of these transpeninsular routes, not so much because of the material difficulties they present as because of certain findings deduced from an examination of the native archaeological material of the two sites. So he can write:

Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao, in spite of their intimate commercial relationship, do not appear to have been closely connected in a cultural sense. The unglazed earthenwares at Laem Pho are quite different from those at Ko Kho Khao: more limited in variety, more similar to those of Central Thailand, and dissimilar in size and design. On the assumption that these earthenwares represent the everyday cooking, storage and serving containers of the majority populations of the sites, it follows that those populations did not move freely from one site to another. The earthenwares from both sites do bear a generic resemblance to contemporary earthenwares from late Dvāravatī sites in Central Thailand, and this may indicate that most of the inhabitants of Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho were Southeast Asians rather than foreigners. However, their pottery is too different for one to believe that individuals often migrated from one site to the other, that they obtained their domestic wares from the same sources, or that they traded many locally produced utilitarian goods with each other. In terms of local as opposed to imported goods, the economies of Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho seem to have been quite separate. (Bronson 1996:189).

All this leads us to doubt even further the reality of these transpeninsular routes, and to agree with a similar view expressed by P.-Y. Manguin (1983) in some "brief comments on the concept of transpeninsular routes" that he made at an SPAFA conference.

And finally, a last observation on these items of international trade, related in particular to the Chinese ceramics: their rarity outside the specific sites of two entrepôt ports and several others along the coasts of the Peninsula leads us to believe that they were not imported for local use, but bartered among merchants on site because some of the wares had not survived the hazards of the voyage, and had been thrown overboard in pieces. Building on this observation, Ho (1994: 195) suggested that

the assemblage of the Yue and other Chinese exports unearthed in Southeast Asia do not appear to be too different from those recovered in Sri Lanka and West Asia. There seems to have been a standard export package or assortment of Chinese wares during the ninth and

tenth centuries, and this may have been basically targeted to the wealthy South and West Asian Markets.

And, it appears, almost exclusively to these markets.

As we will see a little farther along, however, the immediate environment of the two sites offered possibilities for local use of these products: at the time, the Chaiya site was very probably the site of the capital city of Panpan; the Takua Pa site, although merely the territory of a local chiefdom, harboured the activities of resident members of the *Manigrāmam* Indian guild of merchants. But these sites, until there is any evidence to the contrary, have produced no significant Chinese sherds. Basing his view on what has been discovered to date, therefore, Ho Chuimei (1994: 196) proposes that the only places in Southeast Asia that made use of the Chinese ceramics exported during this period were Central Java and the northern part of Mindanao (Philippines): these two regions have indeed yielded sherds from the ninth century and beyond the tenth, although neither is situated along the pathways of the maritime routes leading from one side of Asia to the other.

It is striking that after this peak of activity in the ninth century, our two sites cease all commercial activity, to the benefit of other places of trade. But we will show in the next chapter how the tenth century corresponds to a kind of low-water mark in the export of Chinese ceramics, which will not take off again until the end of the century; and even then, no port known to this day in the Malay Peninsula experienced a dynamism comparable to that of Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao in the ninth century. It was not until the excavation of twelfth century sites that important new concentrations of Chinese sherds appeared here and there.

IV. Kampong Sungai Mas

1. *Discovery and location* (Doc. 22)

This *kampong* is located on a *permatang* about two metres high that stretches out parallel to the shoreline about four kilometres from it to the north of Kota Kuala Muda. This residual dune was surely coastal in the historic period. In pedological terms, J. Allen (1986/87: 37) describes it as a composition of quartz sand and fragments of pebble-sized rock fragments of fluvial and marine origin. Elsewhere, she explains that unlike other dunes, this one was not formed “in a protected situation,” but in direct contact with the shoreline that

faced the open sea, adding that “there is no evidence that it became more protected before the sites were constructed.” (Allen 1988: 406). This *permatang* is crossed lengthwise by a river, the Sungai Terus, which at this level is part of the fluvial network of the Sungai Muda, but joins the estuary of the Sungai Merbok farther to the north; the part of the dune that stretches along the eastern shore of the Sungai Terus, where Kampong Seberang Terus was established, is thus identical to its western counterpart.

Bearing in mind the topographical evolution of the shores during the historic period, to which we have already alluded, we should probably imagine Kampong Sungai Mas as a coastal port of the ninth century soon condemned to inactivity by the rapid silting up of its shoreline. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that it was fluvial, linked to the sea by the Sungai Muda and a portion of the Sungai Terus, the tributary along which it was set up. Indeed it turns out that during most of the historic period that concerns us, the Sungai Muda, the region’s largest river, had a very different course from its present one. It is even more natural to come to the conclusion that the port had a fluvial connection, because this river is still linked to the Sungai Merbok, its northern neighbour, by the Sungai Terus. There is almost no doubt that during the major part of the period under consideration, the Sungai Simpor, a present tributary of the Sungai Terus, which becomes the Sungai Matang Pasir farther up its course, was linked to the Sungai Muda, whose waters, instead of emptying east-west into the Strait of Melaka, cutting off the residual dune as it does today, followed the tortuous traces of these secondary rivers—whose flow towards the sea was somewhat impeded by the presence of the *permatang* running parallel to the shore—eventually to reach the Strait in what was then a little bay shared by numerous watercourses, including the Sungai Merbok.

The result of all this for the Kampong Sungai Mas was a bivalent geographical position that provided direct access to the sea as well as indirect river access, which could have enabled the port to prolong some of its commercial activities after the probable silting up of its shoreline towards the end of the ninth century. It will however be necessary to undertake excavations to investigate these questions before we will be in a position to come to any final conclusions.

In 1980, an irrigation canal was dug in the village of Kampong Sungai Mas, which, along with several objects linked to religious worship, brought to light a deposit of imported ceramic sherds,

fragments of Middle Eastern glass, and beads, indicating the location of an entrepôt port. In the same year, Nik Hassan Shuhaimi pinpointed six potential locations of archaeological structures in the village, describing these in his thesis (1984: 219-220). During the same period, J. Allen located twelve such areas, some very likely duplicates of the earlier ones, and found five more in Kampong Seberang Terus. Eleven years later, we were unable to find a quarter of these locations. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a).

2. *Excavation*

In March 1981, Nik Hassan Shuhaimi (1984: 221-227) decided to excavate a square of three metres by three metres in this promising village:

The area chosen was situated on flat land behind the back part of a house. It was on the eastern side of the laterite road which runs through the middle of the village. It was about 60 meters from the house and 100 meters from the western bank of the irrigation canal. (Shuhaimi 1984: 221).

Prior investigation revealed that this site had never been used, in human memory, for the establishment of a house or as a rubbish dump.

3. *Archaeological discoveries*

The 1981 dig (Shuhaimi 1984: 222) yielded the disparate sampling that might be expected at an entrepôt port site: sherds of unglazed pottery and foreign ceramics (Chinese and Middle Eastern), fragments of Middle Eastern glass in various colours, beads, etc. These results were confirmed by excavations begun in 1991, which by 1993 consisted of 92 squares of two metres by two metres, dug to an average depth of 40 centimetres (230 centimetres in two cases), and spread out over a surface of almost one hectare. (Shuhaimi *et al.* 1993: 78).

- The sherds of pottery represent by far the greatest proportion (85% of the total in the 1981 dig. (Shuhaimi 1984: 222)).

These earthenwares can be classified as the undecorated or plain types and the decorated. Both types range from coarse to medium paste with sand and organic tempers. The decorations are bound-paddle decorations in the forms of cord-mark, net-pattern, mat-mark, basket-mark and shell-mark; carved paddle decorations in the forms of rib-mark, basket-mark, criss-cross, mat-mark, linear line with geometric design, concentric-circles, wavy-lines with linear lines; growing and gouging

and incising. Incisions can be categorized as dots, point series of lines, geometric designs, and curvilinear designs. (Shuhaimi *et al.* 1993: 78).

- A study of the Chinese ceramic sherds found on the site was less exacting than the studies done on the two previous sites. Furthermore, the fact that Kampong Sungai Mas continued to function after the ninth century, though at a reduced level of activity, considerably complicates the quantitative and qualitative assessment of this material, in a place where human occupation has not ceased up to the present day.

In 1981, Nik Hassan Shuhaimi (1984: 222-223) made a brief and not very precise inventory of several types of ceramics, in which only two types of sherds are distinguished, those made of a whitish paste and enhanced by a transparent glaze, which could have been produced in the kilns of Ding (Hebei), and others made of grey paste with a grey-green glaze, decorated with incised motifs, which could belong to the Yue category; both of these types of Chinese ceramics, as we have seen, were represented on the two Thai sites. The only publication related to the excavations undertaken in 1991 (Shuhaimi *et al.* 1993) gives no further details on the subject. Everything still remains to be done. Nevertheless, when Nik Hassan Shuhaimi visited the Thai-American digs of Ko Kho Khao in 1989, he was persuaded that the sampling of Chinese sherds unearthed there was very similar to the sampling he had attempted to establish for Kampong Sungai Mas (Shuhaimi *et al.* 1989), and therefore that the two sites had every chance of being contemporaneous. On the basis of what we ourselves observed in 1991, we are of the same opinion.

- From the equally superficial examination of the sherds of Middle Eastern ceramics made by the archaeologists who excavated Kampong Sungai Mas (Shuhaimi 1984, Shuhaimi *et al.* 1990, 1993), it emerges that the two types of wares that are the easiest to identify are represented here as well, that is, the “Sassana-Islamic ware” and the “splashed sgraffiate ware,” to give them the names that have been assigned to them by the authors; there are probably others like those at Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao.

- The fragments of glass found at Kampong Sungai Mas, which can still be picked up from the surface of the ground, reduced to the size of lentils, have figured in no study to date. Their origin could only be Middle Eastern, and their characteristics comparable to those found in the Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho material.

- Thousands of beads came to light on the site of the new excavations:

They came in various forms, sizes and colours and made from glass, gem stones, bones and gold. A very interesting bead found in the excavation is a decorated bead [of what seems to be the crude representation of a quadruped, in intaglio]. The major shapes of the beads are capped, cylinder, ring, pyramid and multi-faceted. The main colors are various shades of red, blue, green, black and yellow. Some of them may be classified as eye-beads.

Scholars are unsure of the exact original source or sources of the materials and factories that manufactured them. But besides the discoveries of manufactured beads, unfinished beads and material for making glass beads have been found in the excavation. (Shuhaimi *et al.* 1993: 80).

P. Francis, as we have already seen, has no doubt that the entrepôt port was a centre of bead manufacture, the probable heir of Khuan Luk Pat and Kuala Selinsing along this west coast of the Peninsula. According to him, the site produced “Indo-Pacific beads,” to use his terminology again (see above), but also “segmented, folded and mosaic eye beads.”

Segmented beads are made by constricting a heated tube of glass along its length and cutting the resulting bulges apart into single or multiple beads. Folded beads are made by folding a heated ribbon or plaque of glass around a wire or other mandrel and joining the two ends together, usually leaving a seam. Mosaic eye beads of this type are made by joining fancy glass canes with polychrome decorations visible through their cross sections together, usually without the aid of a core. These beads are the products of the Islamic West, that is the lands of the Early Islamic Period around the Eastern Mediterranean. (Francis 1996: 143).

He goes on to say that the “glass beads from the Islamic West have limited distribution in South and Southeast Asia [...]. Segmented, folded, and mosaic eye beads are common only at Sungai Mas.” (Francis 1996: 144).

Finally, we can add that several thousand carnelian beads (often confused with agate) were discovered and are presently being studied. (Bellina 2001). The specific analysis of their techniques of manufacture may enable us to come to some conclusions about the networks of trade to which they belonged.

In spite of the uncertain and approximate nature of all this archaeological information, we are of course very tempted to consider Kampong Sungai Mas to be an entrepôt port of the same type and period as those of Laem Pho and Ko Ko Khao. If this should prove to be the case, it would provide a further reason to question the theory we have already discussed, which holds that the two Thai sites were linked, for reasons that have not been assessed, by the peninsular route 'rediscovered' some time ago by Q. Wales, and not by the maritime route that is said to have become predominant again only after the ninth century. (Srisuchat T. *et al.* 1989: 18). If the merchant ships took the trouble to stop at one or another port along the west coast, they could just as easily have continued their voyage to Palembang-Śrīvijaya and beyond, to the entrepôt ports of the east coast. As we have seen, the port of Laem Pho has been confirmed absolutely, and the port of the city of Yarang (Langkasuka) should likewise be confirmed in the next few years. We also do not give much credence to the idea that a transpeninsular route could have linked Kampong Sungai Mas to the east coast, and thus to Yarang (Doc. 7), even if such a scenario could be imagined along the pathway of the route that links Sungai Pattani (Kedah) to Yala and Pattani (Thailand) through the valley of the Sungai Ketil, a tributary of the Sungai Muda, and the route of the Menam Pattani, or by other indirect routes.

The idea of the predominance of the maritime routes over the transpeninsular overland routes will probably be reinforced over the next years when the entrepôt port that also existed in the region of Mergui-Tenasserim in southern Myanmar is located. We went to Mergui (Myeik) in February 1999, but were unable to go as far as the small town of Tenasserim (Taninthayi), near the likely site of the entrepôt port of the trading centre (probably a chiefdom) that existed there. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2001b). Concerning its existence, we possess only the very superficial and 'literary', rather than archaeological, account of M. Collis (1953), who lived there between the two wars, and was primarily interested in collecting intact pieces of Chinese ceramics, although he came upon spectacular concentrations of sherds during his explorations. (Collis 1953: 219). The Englishman was rewarded in his search, because he notes that by the end of his quest, thanks to his beaters, he had assembled "over 250 unbroken specimens of Chinese ceramics ranging from the T'ang period

(618-906) to the eighteenth century.” (Collis 1953: 227). Therefore, we have every reason to hope...

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE TURN OF THE 9TH CENTURY
IN THE MALAY PENINSULA

RELIGIOUS REMAINS

To date, of all the parts of the Malay Peninsula, it is undoubtedly the territory of the former Panpan—in particular around the Bay of Bandon—that has yielded the most prestigious remains from the period of the ninth century, taken in its widest sense, that is, to include the end of the eighth century or the first decades of the tenth, if necessary. As we have said, the reputation of these remains—though they are modest when compared to those of Central Java, for example, or Cambodia, in the same period—has even led certain researchers to push for a location of the centre of Śrīvijaya in this area. We will discuss these remains, without ignoring those from the more southern territories of the city-state on the same coast, and those of Langkasuka, of which unfortunately we know very little related to this century.

On the west coast, architectural creations are rare and always modest, but sculpted works, sometimes beautifully rendered, have appeared here and there, as we will indicate.

A. ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS

I. The East Coast of the Peninsula (Doc. 31)

A number of architectural remains have appeared here and there since the beginning of the century in the territory of the former Panpan. Nevertheless, today the great majority of these, which consisted only of several foundations or sections of wall, have completely disappeared, as they were never scientifically excavated, consolidated and effectively preserved; from now on we can only know them through several hastily-produced published descriptions, sometimes accompanied by a sketch or photograph. The chances of finding any new remains are slim, and even then, any that were found would only be flattened foundations.

We will first discuss the three sites in the nearby region of Chaiya—the supposed centre of the city-state—whose present state provides favourable conditions for observation. These are the neighbouring temples of Wat Keo, Wat Long and Wat Phra Barommathat. The first two have been linked with a third, Wat Wiang, several vestiges of which still existed between the two World Wars.¹ It was tempting to link them, because they are almost equidistant from each other (about 400 metres), along the same roughly north-south line, and their positions could not help but bring to mind a key passage in the inscription of 775 that we have already mentioned in some detail. It states, as we will remember, that the sovereign of Śrīvijaya, who had ordered the inscription, “had raised” “three beautiful brick buildings, resting places for Kajakara (= Padmapāṇi), for the destroyer of Māra (= the Buddha), and for Vajrin (Vajrapāṇi).” (Cœdès 1929/61: 23). Added to this is the fact that their immediate environment, in particular the nearby site of Wat Phra Barommathat, which, unlike the other three, had never ceased to be maintained, yielded important Buddhist statues that could just as well have originated there, and could perhaps even be those mentioned in the inscription. Their style, like the style of the buildings, in no way belies such a comparison.

1. Wat Keo (Doc. 32, Fig. 95) today is a ruined brick structure, too damaged for us to imagine what its upper part looked like (the present height of the building is no more than twelve metres); it was only cleared and consolidated at the end of the seventies, in an operation that finally made it possible to evaluate its different parts. The temple was built in the form of a Greek cross with redented inside corners (a large cusp framed by two smaller ones), about 17.5 metres in size; it stands on a square terrace twenty-four metres wide and one metre high. Each arm of the cross has a corresponding chapel; these chapels, identical in conception and of similar

¹ Ph. in Collective 1986: III, 1069. There were also traces of an earthwork fortification in a roughly quadrangular shape (about 800 m wide) in the general area of Wat Wiang. Wales (1976: 106, Fig. 7) had no doubt that this was the ancient city, contemporary with the monuments. Obviously nothing could be less sure, as is shown by the erroneous suppositions that were made concerning the identical traces in Yarang (Pattani) (see above, Chapter Seven). It is impossible to say today with any certainty where the political center of Panpan was, and whether or not it was fortified.

dimensions, are on the north, south and west sides of the temple. The chapel on the east side, however—the main chapel—is of a different conception, because it occupies the exact centre of the building (about 4.2 metres by 4.2 metres), and is preceded by a vestibule. All of these inner halls were covered according to a technique of corbeling in four sections, which is preserved only in the chapel on the south side. This arrangement is reminiscent of the architecture of Central Java, and in particular the *caṇḍi* Kalasan (Prambanan, from the end of the eighth to the ninth century), all things being equal.

Since it was impossible to evaluate the architectural subtleties of this design before the edifice was cleared, it is what remains of its decoration that has elicited the most significant commentaries. One of the earliest and most relevant of these, in spite of its brevity, is that of Cœdès (1927: 65), in which the author proposed a resemblance to the Caṃ towers of Phō Hài in Campā—dated, with reservations, to the seventh to eighth century, doubtless because of superstructures that have disappeared today, but which we know through photographs and drawings (Claeys 1931); the conception of these superstructures was similar to that of the principal tower of Phō Hài (Fig. 96, 97). The decoration of the redented corners (Fig. 98) and that of the fore-part are similar to the decoration of the temples belonging to the territory of Campā, or of pre-Angkorian Cambodia: in the sections of the structure that still exist, it is possible to make out the play of pilasters that are hollowed from bottom to top, and rest on a base formed of flat bands framing a torus in a semi-circular shape, with a matching entablature of a similar composition; the decoration of the fore-part, still discernible in the southwest corner of the south entrance (Fig. 99), takes up the themes of the decoration of the redented corners, compressing them and adorning them with thick superimposed pilasters modified by a strong inner batter, and incorporating blind arcades resembling *kuḍus*. Some have seen links between these decorations and the Hoà-lai style (around the end of the eighth century to the first half of the ninth) (Fig. 100), that of Đông Du'o'ng (around the second half of the ninth century), and that of certain monuments of Phnom Kulên, in Cambodia, perhaps influenced by Caṃ art (Pràsàt Damrei Krap and Pràsàt Kraham), which belong to the period of the first half of the ninth century. (Claeys 1931: 380; Boisselier 1979: 43). These similarities in style—at least in the area of ornamentation—on monuments at a far remove from each other geographically, cannot help but be puzzling and difficult to explain.

In addition to this, the different entrances to Wat Keo were framed by colonnettes decorated with mouldings (Fig. 101) that Boisselier (1979: 43) claimed were never associated, in Campā, with blind arcade applications; but the decoration of the door and of the false doors of Sanctuary F1 of Mi So'n (the end of the eighth century?) proves the contrary in an astonishing manner. (Fig. 102). In addition, certain ornamental details of the base caused Boisselier (1979: 42) to see a link with the art of Central Java, and Diskul (1980: 1) with the art of Dvāravatī.

Everything, then, seems to make of this temple an example of composite architecture. The different influences that have been discerned here—Indonesian, Cam, Dvāravatī—make it impossible to identify this building as a copy of any particular structure, or to refer to possible borrowings from specific monuments spread out in space and time. The only idea that can be advanced is that such possible borrowings are linked with constructions whose dates appear to cover a period stretching from the end of the eighth century to the end of the ninth. On this basis, Boisselier (1979: 44) dated the building, at the earliest, to the ninth century, “the earliest date that could be envisaged for innovations associated with the Dōng Du'o'ng style,” whose influence is perceptible here. We may add that this date, which we find acceptable, does not compromise the date of the foundation or of the first state of the building, which could have been much earlier. By way of comparison, let us remember that the *caṇḍi* Kalasan in Central Java, whose architectural plan, as we have shown, presents similarities with the design of Wat Keo, is supposed to have been founded in 778, but was reconstructed twice in the course of the following decades. In the same way, certain minor monuments still standing (votive *stūpas*), integrated into the enclosures of contemporary temples in the region of Chaiya, reveal in their design and their general appearance an ancient origin belied by decorations that were continually ‘updated’ through the years (in Wat Palelai and Wat To, for example). The situation was probably similar at Wat Keo, which may have been altered, at least in its decoration, in the middle of the ninth century, that is, in the period thought by certain authors (see above) to be the period of the B side of the 775 inscription, perhaps commissioned by Bālaputra, a prince of Javanese origin on his father's side, Śrīvijayan on his mother's, who became king of Śrīvijaya at around this time, and who appears to have been pleased to use this means to reaffirm his

authority over the territories controlled by his grandfather Dharmasetu, sponsor of side A of the inscription, and perhaps also of the temples whose original state we are describing. The idea is attractive.²

2. Wat Long invites fewer commentaries. Immediately to the north of Wat Keo, the roughly square mound about four metres in height, full of bricks, which constituted the site, and on which, at one time, the villagers had gathered all the fragments of sculptures discovered in the area, was not excavated until the beginning of the eighties, and did not inspire any serious publications. (Wongwichien 1983). This dig was followed by a reconstruction of what was supposed to have been brought to light and analysed, that is, the first foundation of the building, with a height of about five metres. The architectural plan (that of a Greek cross whose arms led to chapels, the east one occupying the centre of the building), and the restored outline, strongly call to mind those of Wat Keo and Wat Phra Barommthat. Given the initial state of the ruins, however, we could not help but wonder whether the architect-archaeologist in charge of the operation had not had some fun for himself. Nonetheless, several rare published photographs from this dig, in particular those of the mouldings of the foundations (Collective 1986: IX, 3632), leave no doubt that this was indeed a monument from the same period as the two other nearby temples.

3. Wat Phra Barommthat (Doc. 33, Fig. 103), the third temple we wish to describe, is situated about six hundred metres to the west of the Wat Long. Today the sanctuary is in the centre of a cloister built in the beginning of the century at the time of its last major restoration, and integrated into a modern *wat* provided with all the usual buildings. Apparently it never ceased to be maintained, unlike the other structures, which must have been abandoned at the time of the Burmese invasions of 1767 and afterward, which also affected the region and brought an end to the period known as Ayutthaya. The restoration of the building cleared its foundations, and the difference

² Q. Wales, after working in the region, and on this building in particular, held to the idea of an alteration of the building: a rapid dig in 1934 (Wales 1935: 21), which he only mentioned in a much later work (Wales 1976: 107-108, Pl. 10A), had persuaded him, rightly or wrongly (the idea was not brought up again at the time of the more recent excavation of the monument) that the temple had known at least two different states.

in level between the former ground level and the present level made it necessary to create a basin; today the temple rises in the middle of this basin.

The foundation, which is about two metres in height, measures 9 x 9.7 metres across (it is widest on the north and south sides). It is adorned with embedded columns (Fig. 104) with strong mouldings (doucines, smooth string-courses, torus) which are entirely in the spirit of the mouldings that decorated various Mi So'n (Fig. 105) and Đông Du'o'ng monuments in Campā (ninth century); it is our good fortune that Parmentier (1909/18: Pl. CXXX, CXXXI) has preserved the memory of the foundation in very precise drawings. Four *stūpas* on moulded pedestals adorn its corners. In the centre rises the sanctuary itself, raised on a design of a Greek cross with a short span, and with redented corners decorated with pilasters modified by a strong inner batter as at Wat Keo. The fore-parts are covered with high closed vaulting on the outside by tympana decorated and crowned with a *stūpa*, but only the section covering the fore-part on the east side is true vaulting, as it is in this direction that the only chapel situated in the very middle of the building (covered in the four-section corbelling technique) opens out. The other fore-parts are closed by false doors. This single entrance is preceded by a stairway that cuts across the east façade of the foundation; its steps are fixed between two stringboards hollowed out with niches and crowned by a *stūpa*. Above the main body of the building, three storeys of diminishing size reproduce more or less exactly the same characteristics, with an abundance of decorative elements: antefixes, *kuḍus*, *stūpas*, right up to the terminal point summing up the whole.

The detail of these decorative elements, in particular the decoration of the tympana and the antefixes, cannot be considered original, but the conception of the whole monument, in its plan and elevation, justifies the comparisons that have been made for a long time. Parmentier (1925: 210) saw a similarity between the temple and the silhouettes of temples visible on the bas-reliefs of Borobudur; Claeys (1931: 380) saw resemblances between it and the nearby reliquary of Wat Phra Borommathat in Nakhon Si Thammarat, which he considered an example of a first stage of the great *stūpa*, dating from the ninth century and influenced by the art of Central Java (see below, Chapter Thirteen); certain particularities in the decoration that we have already indicated call for a comparison with those of the Cam monuments of the Đông Du'o'ng style (from the second half of the

ninth century). As we can see, all of these comparisons reveal that this temple, like the temple at Wat Keo, is a composite construction with an extremely complex architectural inheritance. After what we have already said of the contacts maintained between this part of the Malay Peninsula and the rest of Asia, there is no reason to be surprised: in the ninth century the city-state of Panpan and its entrepôt port, Laem Pho, welcomed traders and travellers from a wide range of different nationalities.

4. As we have already suggested, the region of Chaiya had other architectural ruins of which little or nothing remains. Thus there was a sanctuary situated on a hill of about fifty metres in height, about one and a half kilometres south of Wat Keo—Khao Nam Ron—whose very deteriorated ruins were never excavated. We possess one photograph of this ruin from before 1927 (Collective 1986: III, 1069), and a sketch by Claeys (1931: Fig. 45b) accompanied by a commentary (Doc. 34), both of which make it possible to recognize a section of wall whose foundation is decorated with mouldings including a semi-circular torus above a plinth, surrounded by smooth string-courses. On this foundation about fifty centimetres high stands the base of the pilasters that rise at the level of the razed section of wall; this base picks up the mouldings of the foundation (torus and string-courses), adding a play of gorges and doucines, with a particularly large inverted doucine serving as the base of the pedestal. The outline is of course very similar to those of the monuments we have just examined, and there is hardly any doubt that the sanctuary that stood here was from the same period.

5. Other hills to the southwest and east of Chaiya, Khao Nang Hi and Khao Sai Samo, were described by Q. Wales (1935: 19-20) as “dotted with *cedis*” from the same period as Wat Keo and Wat Phra Barommatham. We found nothing on the first site, but the second does in fact preserve uncleared ruins that have been the object of unauthorized excavations.

6. The surrounding territory of the former Panpan has yielded several other architectural remains. Thus the hills of Phunphin in the immediate neighbourhood of the city of Surat Thani, aside from the Buddhist material (tablets and votive *stūpas*, statuettes), contained the ruins of a *stūpa* on a square plan about seven metres wide which, when J. Boisselier visited the area in 1965, had recently been cleared

(Ph. in Collective 1986: IX, 3647); influenced by the research he was then conducting at U Thong and in the basin of the Menam Chao Phraya, he detected in these vestiges strong links with the art of Dvāravatī, which should not be ruled out, but the restoration he provides for the contours of the foundation (Boisselier 1969: Fig. 28) could just as well suggest a link with the composite art of the monuments we have just discussed. Almost nothing remains today of the ruins of this building.

7. Monuments related to this composite ninth century style existed here and there along the east coast of the Peninsula to the farthest southern limits of Panpan. They have not been preserved, or else they have been excavated and the digs have not been followed up by any published reports; or they have sometimes been anastylosed in a rather mercenary manner. We think in particular of the ‘restored’ ruins of *chedis* (the term used by the Thais) of Wat Nangtra (Tha Sala) and of Wat Sop (Nakhon Si Thammarat); a little farther south, at Wat Si Yang (Ranot), the ruin of a little *stūpa* that we had recently seen in its ‘untouched state’ was ‘restored’ in the same way in 1994. At least we were able to observe, before this radical operation, that, happily, the outline of the pilasters of the foundation that constituted its principal decoration had been preserved or restored correctly; this outline is also similar to that of the Chaiya monuments, and the *stūpa* can probably be dated to the ninth century.

Still on the east coast, the city-state of Langkasuka has to this day yielded no architectural remains that could be attributed to the ninth century, but there is no doubt that they exist, and that some at least are to be found among the approximately thirty potential sites still to be excavated at Yarang. (See above, Chapter Seven.)

II. The West Coast of the Peninsula (Doc. 28)

The architectural creations of the east coast were certainly important, but only an insignificant number of them still exist; their western counterparts are nothing more than extremely modest structural remains.

1. “The plain of brick (or stone) houses” (Bourke 1905/86: 17) (Thung Tuk in Thai) on the island of Ko Kho Khao, as we said in the preceding chapter, received considerable attention in 1934, from Q.

Wales (Wales 1935), who located three mounds in its centre that corresponded to ancient buildings. In this connection it is noteworthy that the archaeologists of the excavation of 1988-89 describe having located "7 ancient brick structures, all unfortunately destroyed by looters." (Srisuchat A. 1989: 36). Wales excavated the central and southern mounds he had found, without significant results. It was impossible for him to reconstitute the form of the building or buildings they covered, and his conclusions are laconic:

One could only imagine some kind of rather perishable shrine with a stone-paved floor, timber walls, and a tiled roof standing on the central brick platform [the whole corresponding to the central mound], opening to the south-south-west by an antechamber, probably of light construction, or possibly by merely an open brick approach, since no tiles were found in connection with the south mound [corresponding to this part of the building]. (Wales 1935: 13).

We should specify in connection with these tiles that the Thai-American mission of 1988-89, which undertook six test pits, including one on the vestiges of a building, discovered

numerous unusual roof tiles [...] which are round at one end, hooked at the other, and very narrow. Most are more than 14 cm long, 1 cm thick and only 5.5-6 cm wide. (Bronson 1996: 187 and Note 5).

Although Wales provided an approximate plan for this ruin, he did not date it (Wales 1935: Fig. 2), having failed to find any of the objects that were to give him satisfaction in his dating of the sites of South Kedah some two years later, and also having no particular interest in commercial remains. In 1988-89, according to the Malaysian archaeologists who participated in the Thai-American excavation:

The trial trench at the monument site produced the Persian blue glazed ceramics sherds right down to the depth of about 2.61 meters, which is the original layer on which the monument was built. (Shuhaimi *et al.* 1989: 95).

This implies a date identical to that of the entrepôt port itself, that is, the ninth century we are considering in this chapter. However, even more than in 1934, the immediate surroundings of the monument were much too disturbed for it to be possible to assess its shape, its dimensions and its style; nevertheless, the same Malaysian archaeologists indicated the presence of stone pillar bases; we will see a systematic use of these at the sites in South Kedah.

Apart from this, the same section of the coast yielded nothing very spectacular. The hill of Phra Narai (some forty metres high), located on the left bank of the Takua Pa River at about sixteen kilometres from its mouth and immediately to the east of its confluence with a small tributary, the Khlong Pong (the Tamil inscription mentioned in Chapter Ten and a group of statues we will discuss later were discovered at the foot of this hill)—still possessed at its summit in the beginning of the last century (Bourke 1905/86: 18) the remains of a small sanctuary opening to the east and possessing a *cella* of about three metres in inside width. It was constructed of brick and furnished with several flat stones that served as a threshold, lintel or piedroit that Lajonquière (1912: 167) and Wales (1935: 14) were still able to observe in a superficial inspection. Nonetheless, the information that would have been gleaned after a more careful examination of the ruins would hardly have been more instructive than what the authors left us concerning the building that sheltered the great statue known as the Takua Pa Viṣṇu (see above, Chapter Five), at the top of the hill of Phra Noe facing the island of Ko Kho Khao at the mouth of the Takua Pa River. Culminating at about sixty metres in height, its summit had been razed to a surface of about 25 x 10 metres, on which the sanctuary had been built; of this sanctuary there remained a platform of laterite and earth 6.35 metres square and about 60 centimetres high; it opened to the northeast for reasons of convenience, as only this slope of the hill provided relatively easy access by an arrangement made of brick steps that Bourke (1905/86: 16) described and Q. Wales (1935: 9) measured. The archaeologists of the 1988-89 mission tried in vain to find these structural vestiges, in a natural environment that had hardly evolved since Bourke described it at the beginning of the century as ‘densely wooded’.

It is probable that other structures like these existed in the Takua Pa region, but nothing comparable to those we have described on the east coast was ever built here.

2. In South Kedah (former Jiecha), it is likely that several of the structures (see above, Chapter Eight) that we have designated as *stūpas* from the first historic period (from the fifth to the eighth centuries) could date to the ninth century, as we have suggested. The largest of the buildings that could have been raised then would have been located to the south of the Sungai Muda and in the immediate region of the entrepôt port of Kampong Sungai Mas. The site of this

port, as we have said, is difficult to evaluate in its different elements because of the continuous human occupation that has affected and still affects it. The Malaysian archaeologists who were bent on opening excavation sites in 1985 and again in 1991 became aware of the damaging effect on potential monuments of the constant disturbances to which they had been exposed.

B. SCULPTURAL REMAINS

The two sides of the Peninsula have yielded a number of works that can be dated to the ninth century, including some exceptional pieces. Their sometimes limited number can be explained in part by the pillaging they have been subjected to. It is important to realize, for example, that a number of small Buddhist bronzes, notably from the Chaiya region, known since early times by enthusiasts for the quality of its remains, have passed into private hands, and we have lost the memory of their precise origin; in the best of cases, this consists of a vague 'Southern Thailand', or a pseudo-scientific term, 'Śrīvijaya art', which means precisely nothing, as we have emphasized several times.

I. Remains on the East Coast

In the region of Chaiya, which has yielded the most beautiful pieces, the works are exclusively Buddhist and almost solely of *Mahāyāna* inspiration. The doctrine was not new in this region, as we proved to ourselves during a rapid examination of those of its religious remains that predate the ninth century, but from this time on it seems to take the lead over all the other religious beliefs, which are attested by no archaeological discoveries from this period. This will cease to be the case beginning in the tenth century.

1. One of the major pieces is a bronze bust with two arms, a representation of the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara, which came to light on the site of Wat Phra Barommatham. (Fig. 106, 107); the piece is remarkable for the rendering of the facial features, the modelling of the body, which is marked by an acute inflexion, and the luxuriousness of its finery: a diadem of jewels that was once topped with a high hairpiece (*jaṭāmukuta*), whose curls still fall to the shoulders, earrings, double necklace, armbands and a double *yajñopavīta*

crossing the chest, one in cloth, the other in braided metal adorned with a jewelled clasp and, on the shoulder, the image of a deer in profile; this animal may be associated with the dead body of a tiger worn by certain other representations of the *bodhisattva*, both intended to evoke the ascetic aspect of the divinity, which is contradicted here by the superabundance of finery. The extreme sophistication of this unique work, not only for the region of Chaiya, but also for all of Southeast Asia, both continental and insular, has led certain authors to propose a comparison with one of the images that must have been installed in 775 in one of the sanctuaries raised in Chaiya by Dharmasetu, the sovereign of Śrīvijaya, sanctuaries which, as we have seen, may have corresponded to the temples of Wat Keo, Wat Long and Wat Wiang. (Krairiksh 1980: Pl. 30, Fontein 1990: 211).

2. Another statue of the same divinity was also discovered in Wat Phra Barommatham. (Fig. 108, 109). The image had eight arms, all damaged today, but, unlike the previous statue, it has an undamaged *jaṭāmukuta*, and the lower part of the body is intact to the knees. It is perfectly frontal, and was initially smaller than the previous statue, but aside from this, it has the same characteristics of rendering and modelling, the same superabundance of jewels (chignon clip, diadem, double-necklace, armbands, *vajñōpavīta*); added to these, on this image—over a fine cloth that encircles the hips—are two golden belts with heavy clasps, and a third in a material adorned with pendant drops.

These two works are very similar to several pieces that have appeared in the world of the Indian Archipelago, and notably to an Avalokiteśvara in silvered and gilt bronze, equipped with four arms, discovered in Central Java, at Tekaran (Wonogiri) (Fig. 110) (Fontein 1990: 210-211, Collective 1995: 34-35), but also to two other bronze images (one of Avalokiteśvara, the other of Maitreya) (Schnitger 1937: Pl. VIII) that were discovered near Palembang. These comparisons clearly highlight the cultural contacts that linked the Śailendras of ninth-century Central Java with the sovereigns of Śrīvijaya and certain regions of the Malay Peninsula, among which were the territories of Panpan. Let us not forget also that the world of the East Indies was in direct relationship with India, and notably with the India of the Pālas, which explains the stylistic similarities (the treatment of the body, the superabundance of jewels) between the

wealth of religious material of this brilliant Indian school of art and the works which we have just described.

3. These stylistic links are even more obvious when we examine the small *Mahāyāna* Buddhist bronzes (usually Avalokiteśvaras, but sometimes Tārās or Cuṇḍās, even simple Buddhas) that have been discovered in the region, or which we have reason to believe came from there. It is sometimes impossible to determine whether these works were created locally or imported from Pāla India of the Northeast, even Central Java, but it is important to keep in mind that from the end of the fourth century and into the modern period, the region of Chaiya never ceased to produce a wide variety of works, of which a large part certainly came from local workshops that had sprung into being because of the prosperity of the region.

a. The first work we will examine is an eight-armed statuette of Tārā (18.5 centimetres in height) found between Wat Keo and Wat Long. (Wales 1935: 20). The figurine (Fig. 111) is seated in *lalitāsana* on a lotus blossom resting on a square pedestal. It is leaning against a chevet in the form of an oval halo (*prabhāvalī*) with a border decorated with a moulding (including beading) and several highly stylized flames (*jvālā*); it is crowned with a jewel that originally reinforced the shaft of a parasol that no longer exists. The divinity is clothed in a long skirt (*paridhāna*) that drops to the ankles, held in by a belt with a jewelled clasp. The hair, difficult to make out because it is very worn, was drawn into a high chignon secured at the base by a jewelled diadem matched by a necklace, armbands and bracelets. Because of damage from wear, it is difficult to identify the attributes or *mudrās* of the radiating hands, and only the *varadamudrā* of the lower right hand on the knee can be made out clearly. The iconography of this image is very close to that of the ninth century pieces discovered in the Pāla region of Northeast India.

b. In the same tradition is a decapitated statuette of *bodhisattva* (Fig. 112) (17 centimetres in height) found in Chaiya (currently in the museum in Songkhla) which initially had four arms, and whose perfectly frontal general appearance shows it to be a work in the line of descent of the Wat Phra Barommathat Avalokiteśvara already discussed.

c. Another statuette of a *bodhisattva* (8 centimetres in height) in the same tradition (Fig. 113), found at Khuan Saranrom (Phunphin), which is currently in the museum of Lopburi, in spite of its worn

condition, shares with the two others some undeniable stylistic resemblances; this time the piece has an inflexion.

d. It is regrettable that today the most beautiful pieces are of indeterminate origin, although they probably come from the region of Chaiya itself and its immediate surroundings: these are a beautiful two-armed statue of Avalokiteśvara (34 centimetres in height) in the museum of Bangkok (Fig. 114); another one of the same *bodhisattva* (21.5 centimetres in height), but with four arms, in the same museum (Fig. 115); a Cuṇḍā with six arms (18 centimetres in height), also in the Bangkok museum, seated on a pedestal with a golden chevet (Fig. 116), whose principal *mudrā* is the meditation expressed by the two main arms.

All this is rather insubstantial, and we are therefore reduced to mentioning certain pieces from private collections, like those illustrated in a single work by S. Wattanavrangkul (1975): numbers 42, 52, 53, 54 are very evocative. (Fig. 117, 118).

Two other local pieces that belong to the same period deserve some commentary because of their possible stylistic filiation.

4. The first is a standing, two-armed bronze statuette of Avalokiteśvara found in the region of Phunphin (Surat Thani). This time the god, very hieratic, is represented in his strictly ascetic mode, therefore, without jewels. (Fig. 119). The modelling of the body and the face is similar to that of the other works, but the treatment of the chignon (*jaṭā*) and the handling of the long *dhotī* enveloping the lower part of the body are unusual. The rendering of the chignon is very stylized, like that of the image with the hair drawn up on the top of the head. It is gathered in by a braid at the base, while two identical braids are stretched horizontally across the mid-section; from a fourth braid on top of the *jaṭā* fall two series of long curls on each side that frame the the base of the silhouette of Buddha Amitābha seated on the top of the head. This arrangement, which is an extreme simplification of a certain type of hairdo, is similar to the arrangement on a statue of the same *bodhisattva* (Fig. 120) discovered in Central Vietnam. (Boisselier 1963: 80 & Fig. 35). The cloth of the middle section of the *dhotī* is gathered into a group of folds that draw it up between the legs and attach it at the belt, leaving the excess material to fall down the front in an unnatural fishtail shape. The folds suggested by this bunching of the material are sketched in regular concentric lines, and the middle section of cloth, represented by two parallel bands, pulls the bottom of the robe

upward, revealing what resembles the lower border of a petticoat that does not exist in reality. This type of robe originates in Southeast India, as we have already shown (see above, Chapter Seven), and is found in all of Indianized Southeast Asia and as far as Yunnan. Its style here is again very close to that of the *dhoti* worn by some Cam images. (Boisselier 1963: Fig. 38).

5. Another image from the region (probably from the second half of the ninth century) deserves our attention. It is part of a group of unfortunately severely damaged high relief sculptures in clay, of which it is the principal figure. These sculptures decorate the upper parts of the entrance to one of those dozens of caves in the Malay Peninsula that have been transformed by popular piety over the centuries into places of Buddhist meditation and provided with many representations of the Blessed One; in this case it is from Tham Khuha Sawan (Kanchanadit – Surat Thani).

The image (Fig. 121), which is surrounded by many others, is that of a Buddha of unsophisticated manufacture, whose major originality is that it is seated in European fashion (*pralambapadāsana*), the left hand placed flat on the knee, while the right hand, which is broken, must have been in *vitarkamudrā*, like that of other Buddhas around it. This inhabitual *mudrā* of the left hand never fails to surprise; associated with the *āsana*, it has invited comparison with certain Cam works of Đông Du’o’ng, in particular with the great Buddha of Đông Du’o’ng in the Đà Nẵng museum (1.54 metres in height at the neck) (Ill. in Collective 1997: Fig. 20, Boisselier 1963: Fig. 44), which shares the *āsana* with it, as well as the *mudrā*, but whose present head does not seem to be the correct one. This *mudrā* is the same as the one in three figures of *arhat*, likewise from Đông Du’o’ng. (Boisselier 1963: Fig. 46). P. Dupont (1947-50) saw a Chinese influence (the art of the Sui) in this unusual feature, as well as in the unconventional manner in which the robe is draped. The idea of such an influence cannot be ruled out, but it has always seemed to us to have been prompted more by the desire to find some stylistic parallels with Campā in the region of Chaiya—beyond those already mentioned in connection with Wat Keo—than by any evident demonstration of a real stylistic inheritance. In particular, it was too easily forgotten that at least one Dvāravatī work reproduced an identical *āsana* and *mudrā*: the colossal Buddha of Wat Phra Men of Ayutthaya whose two hands lie flat on the knees. (Dupont 1959: Fig. 500). Apparently the image has been much restored, but Dupont

(1959: 276-277) judged that if the right hand was originally in *vitarkamudrā*, the gesture of the left hand was authentic. It is also worth noting that the head of the Tham Khuha Sawan Buddha with vaguely Negroid features can certainly be compared with various Caṃ works, but also with Dvāravatī models belonging to group C as defined by Dupont. We are therefore inclined to see in the execution of this high relief influences from that region, rather than from Campā. Around this main image, other representations of Buddha seated on a throne surrounded by the foliage of the Bodhi Tree and provided with a halo with a beaded border (a characteristic Pāla influence) tend to give weight to this comparison: they are almost identical to those that figure on some votive tablets found at Wat Phra Men in Nakhon Pathom (Dupont 1959: 49, Fig. 41-45), the heart of the Dvāravatī region.

6. These last productions are as numerous and varied in this period as they were during the earlier period. Most of them can be dated either to the end of the eighth century or to the ninth century properly speaking; the predominance of the *Mahāyāna* images is undeniable. Most often these are representations of *bodhisattvas* with multiple arms, and carrying attributes that do not always enable us to identify them with certainty, because of practical problems related to their production, as we have already explained. (See above, Chapter Six.)

a. One of the most typical of these images—roughly round in shape, with a large rounded edge (9 centimetres in height on average)—represents Avalokiteśvara in *vajrāsana* on a lotus (Fig. 122); the lower right hand is in *varadamudrā*, the corresponding upper hand holds the rosary, the lower left hand holds the stem of a lotus whose blossom opens at the level of the head, while the corresponding upper hand holds a book. The body, which is not strictly frontal, is treated like those of the great statues of Avalokiteśvara in bronze that have been found in the region. The head, which is slightly tipped, has no discernible features, but the hair is arranged in a high *jaṭāmukuta* and surrounded with an ovoid halo topped with a *chattra*; matching the lotus flower at the same level is a *stūpa* with a large *aṇḍa* crowned with a *harmikā* and a terminal point. A Buddhist credo formula is carved above this arrangement. In spite of the wear evident in these pieces, it is usually possible to distinguish clearly the *vajñōpavīta* crossing the chest and the traces of numerous jewels (diadems, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, armbands, belts). Another version of this tablet (Fig. 123), in a more ovoid shape but in similar

sizes, represents the same *bodhisattva* in the same position, with the same attributes and the same accoutrements, but in a strictly frontal position; the *stūpa* is no longer represented, but in this case the Buddhist credo encircles the representation.

b. Several tablets also in a circular shape represent a *bodhisattva* in *lalitāsana* bearing a lotus in the left hand, while on the right side another lotus, whose stem emerges from the lotus on which the figure is seated, supports a *stūpa*, which may enable us to identify the image with Maitreya.

c. Avalokiteśvara is also represented standing on a double lotus, with an acute inflexion, and equipped with two, four, six or twelve arms, on circular or ovoid tablets (of around 9 centimetres in height), in general very worn, because they were unbaked. Relatively rare in the region of Chaiya outside the site of Khao Krom, they are found in Wat Ruang (Phatthalung) and at Khao Chom Thong (Nakhon Si Thammarat). At the foot of the *bodhisattva* are two kneeling figures recognizable as Tārā and Bṛhkuṭī. We will describe a magnified form of this tablet in Tham Khuhaphimuk (Yala). (See below.)

d. Jambhala is frequently represented in *lalitāsana*, leaning against a high triangular chevet (Fig. 124); the tablets then assume the shape of a teardrop (10 centimetres in height).

e. The majority of these representations are *bodhisattvas*, but they also include some images of Buddha, in *dharmacakramudrā* flanked by two *stūpas* on small round tablets (around 4 centimetres in diameter) (Fig. 125); some are in *bhūmiśparśamudrā* and in *vajrāsana* on tablets of different sizes and shapes; they also appear in the silhouettes of *stūpas* (examples of these are rare), or round, in varying sizes.

f. We will mention one last type of tablet, ovoid in shape (12 centimetres in height, 9 centimetres wide) that stands in sharp contrast to all the others because of its iconography; it illustrates the *maṇḍala* of Vairocana. (Fig. 126). The Jina of the zenith is represented in the centre, surrounded by eight *bodhisattvas* known as *aṣṭamahābodhisattvas*, an iconographic motif said to come from a text called *Aṣṭamaṇḍalakasūtra*. (Pal 1972/73, Woodward 1988: 79). Vairocana, the oldest of the Dhyāni Buddhas, is recognizable by the hands in *dharmacakramudrā*. He is seated on a raised throne resting on a lotus; the quadrangular chevet of this throne edged with beading and flames ends in a rounded section treated in the same manner, which serves as a halo (Pāla influence). From the lotus where the

throne rests, two lotus stems emerge sideways, bearing a flower that is hard to make out, on which sits a votive *stūpa* whose two silhouettes frame the central figure.

The six kneeling *bodhisattvas* at the sides are facing Vairocana. In the upper and lower right corners of the tablet the two *bodhisattvas* are in *abhayamudrā* with their right hands, while the left hands rest on the corresponding knee. The corresponding Bodhisattvas on the left side perform the *tathāgathavandanamudrā* with their right hands, while the left hands rest on the corresponding knee. The *bodhisattva* to the right of the Buddha holds his right hand on his chest, palm open, with the left one held away from the body. This could be Mañjuśrī. The *bodhisattva* to the left of Vairocana holds the left hand in *varadamudrā* and the right perhaps in *abhayamudrā*. The one above the central image is seated, the legs in *vajrāsana*, the right hand in *varadamudrā*, the left hand perhaps holding a lotus. There is a *stūpa* to the right of the head. This could be Maitreya. The *bodhisattva* below Vairocana is seated in *mahārājilāsana*, with the right hand placed on the knee in *varadamudrā*, the left hand on the corresponding knee, holding a lotus flower. This is Avalokiteśvara.

The *Nāgarī* characters of the *ye dharmā* formula (in Sanskrit) are divided among all the free spaces between the figures; this formula is repeated on the back of the tablet in the form of a seal stamped in five different places. Since the roles of the Buddha Śākyamuni and Vairocana are interchangeable, it is nevertheless possible that the eight *bodhisattvas* are part of the *maṇḍala* of Śākyamuni and represent: Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, Akāśagarbha, Kṣitigarbha, Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra and Sarvanivāraṇa-Vishkambhi. (Granoff 1967/68).

Here it is no longer a question of *Mahāyāna*, but of Tantrism, which arrived very early along the shores of the Peninsula, as we have said (see above, Chapter Seven), doubtless through the mediation of the India of the Pālas, whose artistic influence is perceptible in certain details of the tablet.

To this Buddhist material issuing from the near region of Chaiya, it is appropriate to add a number of works discovered farther to the south along the coast between Sichon and Songkhla, and therefore still in what we have presumed to be the territory of the former Panpan.

1. Votive tablets have appeared, unfortunately outside of any archaeological context, which can nonetheless be attributed to this period. Their themes are identical to those of the preceding tablets.
2. When it comes to sculpture strictly speaking, one of the most important pieces is a beautiful stone head of Buddha found at Wat Khanaram in Na San, south of Nakhon Si Thammarat. (Fig. 127). At first glance it closely resembles the art of Central Java, and is reminiscent of the beautiful Buddha heads of Borobudur (end of the eighth to the beginning of the ninth century). However, the rectangular shape of the face and the progressive manner in which the moulding of the piece moves from the skull to the *uṣṇīṣa* are distinguishing features, and indicate that it is definitely a work created in a local workshop that took liberties in relation to the new iconographical tendencies influenced by Pāla art or the art of Central Java, which was itself marked by the aesthetic canons of Northeast India.
3. The site where this head was found also yielded a four-armed bronze statuette of Avalokiteśvara standing on a double lotus (18 centimetres high), some of whose stylistic traits, which can still be made out in spite of the worn condition of the piece, are found on related works discovered here and there in the Malay Peninsula and in the Indonesian Archipelago. (Fig. 128). The statue is identifiable because of the figurine of Buddha in meditation on the front of its chignon; this elaborate arrangement of the hair is hardly visible, but it is nonetheless possible to detect locks of hair falling to the shoulders. The head originally had a halo, as can be seen by traces where something has been torn off at the level of the shoulders. The attributes of the hands (very likely the lotus, the rosary and the book) have disappeared, or can no longer be identified. The robe, aside from the sash that crosses the torso diagonally from the left shoulder, has a long skirt clinging to the legs, with lateral sections that flare downwards in a distinct movement that is found in many statues from the region of the Southern Seas belonging to the same tradition. There appear to be two belts, a functional cloth one that can be sensed from two symmetrical horizontal loops, and an ornamental one that includes a clasp at the front. The originality of this garment is in the tiger skin decorating it on the right thigh. This feature, which we have already seen on a badly damaged stone statue discovered at Khao Si Vichai (Surat Thani) (Fig. 57), on an image of the *bodhisattva* discovered at Wat Phra Barommatham (Fig. 56), and on

another image of uncertain provenance (Fig. 114), is found on other representations of Avalokiteśvara in Java (Le Bonheur 1971: 157-161), Sumatra (Schnitger 1937: Pl.X), Borneo (Tan Yeok Song 1948: Pl. 3), and on images from the east coast. (See below.) The symbol, usually associated with Śiva or Harihara, is surprising (Lamb 1961, Shuhaimi 1977), and some have seen a kind of syncretism in the symbols associated with the two most popular forms of worship in Southeast Asia, which, beginning in the eighth century, often coexisted—the cult of Śiva and the cult of Avalokiteśvara—with each cult considering its divinity supreme, and identifying its god with kingship.

From this, Nik Hassan Shuhaimi advanced the idea that “the images with a tiger symbol [Śiva or Avalokiteśvara] may indicate that they are the spiritual portraits of kings.” (Shuhaimi 1977: 26). The custom, as we know, became very popular in Southeast Asia. Since the statues in question all originate in a zone that is supposed to have been controlled or influenced at one time or another by Śrīvijaya, it has also been suggested that it was a matter of a stylistic—and thus perhaps political—feature, transmitted by this supposed empire. We do not give much credence to this idea. Since this feature is totally foreign to the Indian world, but represented in Tibet, A. Lamb (1961: 90) suggested that what we have here is probably “a fact of some significance in the interpretation of Tantric beliefs in Greater India,” an opinion that is shared by Nik Hassan Shuhaimi, who identifies these representations of Avalokiteśvara with that of Amoghapaśa, one of the Tantric forms of the *bodhisattva* that may or may not wear a tiger skin. (Getty 1914: 63). Let us remember that close contacts united the lower valley of the Ganges, where the Pālas ruled, and Śrīvijaya, and that it was from this part of India that a form of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism with strong Tantric connotations spread, principally in Greater India, beginning certainly in the eighth century, and becoming systematized in Nepal, from which point the Buddhist reformer Atiśa struck out for Śrīvijaya in the eleventh century, dwelling there for twelve years, from 1011 to 1023. (Sastri 1949: 78).³

³ He had been preceded there three centuries earlier by another monk from South India, Vajrabodhi, who, in the beginning of the eighth century, chose to leave from Śrī Laṅkā to reach China (Pelliot 1904: 336). He stopped for five months in Śrīvijaya with his disciple Amoghavajra, who accompanied him. They are credited with introducing Tantric Buddhism to China.

A twin of this statuette is now in the museum of Wat Machimawas in Songkhla (Fig. 129); discovered at Satingpra, this second statuette is slightly smaller (13.5 centimetres high) because it has lost its pedestal, but their iconographical characteristics are very similar, and, coincidentally, both of them have been subjected to similar wear and have almost the same fractures (in particular the broken nimbus). The relative simplicity in the arrangement of the costume and in its ornaments speaks for an early date sometime around the end of the eighth century.⁴

4. A complete bronze statuette of a four-armed standing Avalokiteśvara was discovered at Nong Hoi (Ban Wat Khanum, Muang District) near Songkhla (Fig. 130); it is not without interest, in relation to our recent observations, that this site also yielded a statuette of Śiva, which we will discuss later. The image is richly adorned with jewels (golden *mukuta*, diadem, ear pendants, necklaces, armbands, bracelets, belts for torso and waist, ankle rings), and the abundant material of the *dhotī* is held up by two sashes forming two large loops in the front and bunches of material at the sides. Aside from the lower right hand in *varadamudrā*, the three other hands share or shared the usual attributes: rosary, book and probably lotus. The mannerism affecting this representation suggests a date at the very end of the ninth century, not excluding the first decades of the tenth century.

5. Two other two-armed standing bronze images of Avalokiteśvara found in the region of Phatthalung—one at Khuan Maphrao (34.5 centimetres in height), which is in the museum of Songkhla (Fig. 131), the other at Bang Keo (Khao Chaison District) (17 centimetres in height), in the museum of Wat Phuphaphimuk in Phatthalung (Fig. 132)—are very similar aesthetically, and at the same time similar to the Phunphin image we described earlier. (Fig. 119). In both cases, it is the ascetic aspect that has prevailed: the *dhotī* is no more than a piece of cloth with incised folds encircling the hips and gathered at the waist—on one side, in the case of one of the statues, and in the front on the other—with a section of excess cloth serving as a stay, as in the Phunphin image. No jewels are worn, and only the curls of the chignon where the silhouette of the Buddha Amitābha stands out

⁴ A similar example, but more easily discernible, is illustrated in the book by Scheurleer *et al.* 1988: Pl. 7, p. 59.

adds a little refinement to the representations. Only on the image of Khuan Maphrao is the right arm preserved intact; its hand holds the rosary.

6. The museum of Songkhla, and its counterpart, Wat Machimawas in the same city, share a whole series of small bronzes, most of which come from Satingpra. Among these more or less whole (and more or less worn) pieces, we will consider:

a. A delightful image of Avalokiteśvara (20.3 centimetres in height) seated on a double lotus in *lalitāsana* with the right foot, corresponding to the unbent leg, resting on the lotus blossom that emerges from a quadrangular moulded pedestal. (Fig. 133). The right hand rests on the knee in *varadamudrā*, while the left holds the stem of a lotus that opens at the level of the shoulder. The head with its smiling features has a *jaṭāmukuta* hairstyle; ear pendants, a necklace, the *yajñopavīta*, can all be made out. This image, one of the most graceful known to us in the whole Peninsula, leans against a circular chevet edged with flame motifs which were originally crowned with a *chattra*.

b. The feminine counterpart of this image, in this case a representation of Śyamtārā, is also found in the museum of Songkhla's collection. (Fig. 134). The image is represented in the same position, with the same *mudrā* and the same attribute, leaning against an identical chevet, which has preserved a part of its *chattra*. The chest is bare and the hair is styled in a chignon encircled by a diadem. In spite of all these similarities, the position of the statue, instead of being supple and flowing like the position of the previous image, is very stiff.

c. A statuette of Jambhala (Fig. 135) also deserves some commentary (16 metres in height). The god of wealth is represented sitting in *lalitāsana* on a high throne with a back decorated with two fantastic atlas lions (*vyāla*) leaning on the silhouettes of crouching elephants, a frequent decorative arrangement on bronzes from the Pāla period in Northeast India; the back of the throne was originally topped with a beaded halo, which gave an aura to the head of the god, and probably crowned with a *chattra*. Jambhala, obese as is usual in these representations, holds a lemon in his right hand; the left hand grasps a mongoose from whose mouth hangs a string of jewels. His right foot rests on an inverted jar from which other jewels are flowing, and jars of silver are placed at the foot of the throne. The god is

obviously wearing jewellery (necklace, bracelets, ankle rings); the hair is arranged in the *kirīṭamukūṭa* style, with a jewelled diadem.

d. A bronze mould of votive tablets (5.7 centimetres high) representing the same god in an identical position was recently found locally. (Fig. 136). Its details are quite blurred, but it is possible to make out bags of gold at the feet of Jambhala, who leans against a trefoiled chevet. P. Krairiksh (1980: 52) claims that a votive tablet corresponding to this type of mould was discovered in Central Java and is now found in the Sono Budoyo Museum of Yogyakarta.

e. To these small ninth-century bronzes we must add others originating in the same region, now in badly eroded fragments: for example, the head and bust of a two-armed Avalokiteśvara (9.5 centimetres in height), originating in Wat Chedi Ngam (Ranot), which, in spite of its worn condition, preserves traces of gilding (Fig. 137); its accoutrements (*jaṭāmukūṭa*, diadem, necklace, armbands) place it in the line of the great works of the same type that we have described from the region of Chaiya. Another image of the same *bodhisattva*, this time with four arms, all missing (the statuette—16.5 centimetres in height—has also lost its entire lower half) was found in Satingpra (Ban Kradangnga), and presents characteristics and affinities similar to those from the preceding fragment. (Fig. 138). Still others exist, which we cannot describe here.

7. Finally, in the category of Buddhist works from the most southern regions of Panpan, we will mention a small, still partially gilt bronze image of Buddha from the ninth century (10.5 centimetres in height). Found in Satingpra, it is somewhat atypical compared to those we have been examining. (Fig. 139). The Blessed One is seated in *vīrāsana* and in *dhyānamudrā*. The smooth *uttarāsaṅga* leaves the right shoulder uncovered; there is no trace of *saṃghāṭi* on the other shoulder. The features of the face are full, the eyes open, there is an intense impression of meditation, doubtless because of the slight forward inclination of the body. The curls of the hairstyle are large; the *uṣṇīṣa*, barely indicated, is topped with a flamelike radiance. These last two features are in the Southern Indian and Śrī Laṅkā tradition. Nāgapattīṇam (Negapatam) yielded a similar, though much larger, piece. (Ramachandran 1954: Pl. XIX, 3). The site of the Girikaṇḍaka Vihāra in Tiriyāya (in the district of Trincomalee) in Śrī Laṅkā recently yielded images of a similar size and identical manufacture (Schröder *et al.* 1991: Fig. 5-7), which are attributed to the

second period of the Anurādhapura style (eighth to ninth centuries), the absence of the *saṃghāṭi* implying that they cannot be of a later date. Later images, from the Coḷa period, in Negapatam, pick up the theme of the Buddha in meditation or in *bhūmisparśamudrā*, and some independent pieces, or pieces that are part of bronze votive *stūpas*, display similar features, but the third element in the monastic costume is still present at this time. (Ramachandran 1954: Pl. I, IV 2, XII; Sivaramurti 1963: Pl. 62a). The traces of gilding preserved by the image provide another proof of a Southern Indian or Śrī Laṅkā heritage, a tradition in which the enrichment of the idols was heavily practised.

The major difference that seems to exist between these more southern regions of the former Panpan, and in particular the region that constituted its heart, the area around the Bay of Bandon, seems to derive in part from the fact that Brahmanism had not been entirely set aside there. As we will remember, many of the Viṣṇus we described in Chapter Five are dated to a rather long period (650-800 A.D.), which therefore includes the end of the eighth century.

8. In addition, the site of Na San, south of Nakhon Si Thammarat, whose Buddhist pieces we have already mentioned, also furnished a stone representation of Gaṇeśa, unfortunately badly damaged (Fig. 140), which must have had four arms. It is difficult to date, because representations of the god are infrequent in the Malay Peninsula during the first centuries. The image is definitely more recent than the Satingpra image already described, because of its ornaments (diadem, bracelets, armbands), and its more naturalistic treatment. S. O'Connor, comparing this piece to Cambodian images, dates it to the ninth or tenth century. (O'Connor 1982: 60-61).

9. Along the same lines, a bronze statuette representing Agastya (22.5 centimetres in height) was discovered near Satingpra, in Phang Phra. (Fig. 141). It is very difficult to define this entity that some believe to have been historic (Sastri 1936): in Tamil literature, he is said to have taught the sciences and the arts to the people of the south, in short, to have brought them Brahmanical culture; others consider him to have been a secondary divinity linked with the cult of the *linga* of Śiva, of which he would have been the high priest, notably in Java, where his representations are designated by the name Śiva-Guru. (Gangoly 1926, Jacq-Hergoulac'h 2000a).

The image wears a long *dhōṭī* cinched in at the waist by a belt that buckles at the front, which creates a large gathering of material with a falling frontal section. Jewels are discernible (necklace, bracelets, armbands). The hair is styled in a high *jaṭāmukūṭa* secured at the base by a jewelled ring. The *yajñōpavīta* crosses the chest. The rendering of the body and the features are in conformity with the canon that seems to have controlled the representations of the wise man: marked features, pointed beard, prominent belly. Finally, the right hand, the only remaining one, is raised towards the shoulder, and holds the rosary.

10. Still farther to the south, the site of Nong Hoi near Songkhla, whose image of Avalokiteśvara we have already examined, also furnished a four-armed bronze statuette of Śiva (36 centimetres in height). This is the only anthropomorphic image of the god known in the Malay Peninsula. (Fig. 142). He is represented standing on a double lotus and wearing a long *dhōṭī* held in by a belt with a buckle. A tiger skin is draped around his hips and knotted in front by two of the paws; the head of the animal can be clearly distinguished over the right hip; the tail hangs down over the other. A sacred sash is worn across the well-proportioned torso. The lower right hand was probably in *vitarkamudrā*, and the corresponding left hand held an object that has disappeared. The two upper hands carried a rosary on the right side and a fly-swatter on the left. The head, with its rounded features (the hollow eyes were probably originally inlaid), has a hairstyle in a high *jaṭāmukūṭa* with falling braids, on top of which can be seen the crescent and the top of the head; the general shape of the chignon is that of a bell crowned with a rounded ornament, and its base is surrounded by tubular rings that do not appear to be made of hair; a diadem encircles the brow, matched by a pendant necklace, armbands and bracelets. Finally, the head sports a nimbus halo decorated around the rim with beading and flames.

The worldly and ascetic aspects of the divinity are therefore combined, as they were in the images of Avalokiteśvara that we have examined, which contributes to the confusion between the two divinities that seems to have been common in the region of the Southern Seas. A date as relatively late as the tenth to eleventh centuries has been suggested for this image (Shuhaimi 1984: 392), which, for purely stylistic reasons, we would prefer to consider contemporary with the others: nothing in its appearance distinguishes it from them in a decisive way.

To conclude this examination of the most significant cultural remains of the eastern shore in the ninth century, we will now turn to a number of works that have appeared in the territory of the city-state of Langkasuka, where, as in the region of Chaiya, many pieces have disappeared, dispersed in the antique market by those who discovered them. The best we have is one poor photograph that appeared in *Rusemilae*, a Thai cultural journal published in Pattani (*Rusemilae* 2525 (1982): 6, 1, on the cover, for example). In general, these were small Buddhist bronzes reflecting a style that is entirely derivative of the art of Northwest India at the time of the Pālas, or the art of Central Java, which interpreted the aesthetics of this region of India in this period. Of the pieces that escaped the antiques market, we know:

1. A small bronze, eroded but whole (27 centimetres high), found in the cave of Wat Khuhaphimuk (Yala), representing a Buddha sitting in *vajrāsana* and in *bhūmisparśamudrā* on a double lotus with a beaded upper edge, which is itself supported by a quadrangular terraced platform. (Fig. 143). The image leans against a chevet that serves as a halo, adorned with a beaded border and flames, and topped with a parasol surrounded with garlands. The piece has stylistic links with Pāla works of the same type. (Mitra 1982: Figs. 11-18). It is always difficult to determine whether these small works were imported from Northeast India or manufactured locally in imitation of known models. This image, which is larger than usual, is similar to a work found in Java that was recently dated to the first half of the ninth century. (Scheurleer *et al.* 1988: Pl. 19). In the tradition of Tantric *Mahāyāna* as it was then represented in Langkasuka and other places along the shores of the Peninsula, the figure could be considered a representation of Akṣobhya.

2. A bronze votive *stūpa* (16 centimetres in height) was discovered in the same place. Its characteristics (Fig. 144): a globular *aṇḍa* accented by four figures of a seated Buddha in various *mudrās* under decorative arcatures, resting on a double lotus blossom; a quadrangular *jaṅghāvedī* adorned with a frieze and incorporating central staircases on all four sides; a strongly moulded *harmikā* (without its *chattra*, which has disappeared), are like those of the Pāla works (Ranjan Ray *et al.* 1986: Fig. 98) belonging to this same period in the ninth century.

3. A bronze eight-armed statuette of the standing Avalokiteśvara (22 centimetres in height) came to light in the vicinity of Betong, quite far into the interior of the Peninsula. (Fig. 145). The piece is badly worn, and is missing the four arms on the right side, but its accoutrements—a *dhōī* with flared lower borders and multiple jewelled belts forming a loop, a high *jaṭāmukuṭa*, *yajñopavīta*, and many jewels (diadem, earrings, necklaces, probably armbands and bracelets)—are those of the small Pāla bronzes of the same period. Among the attributes held up by the image, only the water jar (*kamaṇḍalu*) on the lower, and therefore left, hand is easily recognizable.

4. The territory of Langkasuka also furnished a series of votive tablets similar to those from Panpan that we have described, although these are often original in conception and were previously unknown. It is in Tham Khuhaphimuk in particular that they have been preserved, but we can expect discoveries from the Yarang sites in the near future.

a. Numerous Avalokiteśvaras have been found, treated in a number of different ways, seated in *vajrāsana*, with two, four or six arms, the rosary and the lotus almost always detectable. (Fig. 146); but the *bodhisattva* can also be represented in *lalitāsana*, even in *mahārājāḷāsana*. These medium-sized tablets (5 to 10 centimetres maximum), are circular, ovoid, tear-shaped, or round with serrated edges.

b. Jambhalas also appear, in *lalitāsana*, always recognizable by the prominent belly and the throne with a chevet on which they sit. (Fig. 147).

c. This proliferation of *Mahāyāna* images makes the representations of Buddha, of which, however, some original tablets do exist, seem almost rare by comparison. The tablets are circular in shape, small in size (3.7 to 4.5 centimetres in diameter), and represent the Buddha seated in *vajrāsana* and in *vitarkamudrā* on a lotus borne on a stem framed by two seated figures of *bodhisattvas* in *añjalimudrā* on lotuses whose stems join the stem of the previous lotus. (Fig. 148).

d. The most sophisticated type of tablet that we know from the region in this period of the ninth century is a single circular piece (around 9 centimetres in diameter), discovered at Tham Khuhaphimuk. (Fig. 149). Like others encountered on the previous sites of Panpan, it represents the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara standing on a double lotus, with a pronounced inflexion, and a great wealth of

details. The image is perfectly recognizable because of the figurine of the Buddha Amitābha placed in the front of its high *jaṭāmukūṭa*. It is clothed in a pleated *dhotī* knotted at the front, and wears many jewels: a probable diadem (the face is ruined), necklace, armbands, bracelets and a jewelled belt. A long sacred sash crosses the torso to the hip. The right hand must have been in *varadamudrā*, and the left holds the lotus. The head with its halo is framed by two *stūpa* representations, below which appear three lines of inscribed letters. Finally, the image is flanked at its feet by two female figures each with one knee kneeling on a lotus, and in *añjalimudrā*; these are Tārā and Bṛhkuṭī, who often accompany the *bodhisattva*.

5. In conclusion, the same caves have also yielded a whole series of votive *stūpas* in small sizes (5 centimetres in diameter on average), some rather crude, others skillfully moulded with *stūpa* motifs of the four cardinal points (Fig. 150), like other examples encountered in the region of Chaiya.

II. Remains on the West Coast

These are much less numerous than the others, but they are not lacking in exceptional, or in any case unexpected, pieces. Nevertheless, because of the rarity of works of any kind on this shore, we will also list some works of a type that we did not think it necessary to mention in discussing remains from the other side of the Peninsula.

The region of Takua Pa only yielded a very few objects of worship, as was the case for the period preceding the ninth century.

1. The major pieces are a group of three statues sculpted in high relief, with a totally flat back section. Their presence near the hill of Phra Narai, on the shore of the Takua Pa river, which has already been mentioned in connection with architectural ruins, was noted from the beginning of the last century. Initially preserved in the sanctuary on the hill, they were apparently taken out by the Burmese at the end of the eighteenth century and placed at the foot of the hill until they could be carried to Burma, as reported by oral tradition. (Lajonquière 1912: 167). Propped up against young trees and forgotten, they became progressively entwined in the bark and roots; they remained in this state until recently, when the authorities decided to remove them to a place where they would be sheltered from vandalism.

The principal image (Fig. 151, 152) is that of a standing male divinity, larger than life-size (2.35 metres in height), framed by two other kneeling divinities, one male (Fig. 153, 154), the other female. They are not attached—though they are carved from the same material—but the fact that they belong to the same group has never been contested. They were dispersed, however. Today the main image is preserved in the museum of Phuket; until recently, the male image was in the museum of Nakhon Si Thammarat, and the female one apparently preserved on the original site at Wat Narainikaram (Wat Le). There is some thought of bringing them together in the museum of Phuket. In addition, the face of the male image was broken off, a circumstance that led to the removal of the pieces, and at an indeterminate but probably recent period, this face had been the inspiration for the face given to the central image. At the time when the main image was extricated, fragments of the left side of the original face appeared, which made it possible to reconstruct the whole head, which is therefore different today from what it was in the old snapshots. (Fig. 152). A cut-off face that was thought to be the recovered face of the vandalized image was recently given to the Thai authorities by an English antiques dealer, but it turned out not to be the correct face; on the other hand, this face closely resembles that of the female divinity, about which we have no precise information.

Much ink has flowed in the effort to identify these images, and until the present time there has been a general acceptance of the identification proposed by Wales (1935: 15), who compared them to the Pallava bas-relief from the upper cave of Tiruchirāpaḷḷi representing Śiva in Gaṅgādhara receiving the Gaṅgā on his head, framed by various smaller figures. (Ill. in Sivaramamurti 1992: Fig. 34). Surely it would be more appropriate, however, to recognize in them a position of the god Viṣṇu in *yōgasthānakamūrti*, according to the indications given by T. A. G. Rao (1914/16: I, 80-81), who illustrates his proposal with a plate XVII representing one of the bas-reliefs of Cave XI, called the cave of the Trimūrti in Mahābalipuram; the iconographic similarities between this bas-relief representing Viṣṇu and our image are striking. (Fig. 155). The author specifies that in this position, the god may be flanked by two figures kneeling on the knee of the goddess Bhūdevī and the *ṛṣi* Mārkaṇḍeya, as on the Pallava bas-relief, which would at the same time provide names for the two other statues of the Takua Pa group. T. A. G. Rao adds in conclusion that in the absence of images of Śiva and Brahmā, which

may have been the case here, an image of Viṣṇu would be said to belong to the *madhyama* class.

In their general appearance—their modelling, their positions, their clothing—as well as in their adornments, these three images call for comparisons with South Indian works. O'Connor (1972: 53-54), who examined them in connection with some sculptures from this region, proposed that the images reflect late Pallava art from between 750 and 850, a period of time comparable to the date given to the Tamil inscription that we have already mentioned (see above, Chapter Ten), which was also discovered locally, and reminds us of the activity of the merchant guild of the *Maṇigrāmam* in Takua Pa. We share O'Connor's view, after a recent visit to the *Art Gallery* of Tañjāvūr, which possesses two stone images of Viṣṇu (Fig. 156, 157), comparable to ours in style and dimensions, which the museum dates to the end of the Pallava dynasty (eighth to ninth century): the images are similarly sculpted in high relief, with a rough-hewn back, the same frontal position, the same distribution of gestures, and they wear costumes and adornments from the same religious tradition.

It is impossible to determine whether the works were imported from India or sculpted locally by an Indian craftsman, but it is certain that no local artist created them, since the liberties taken with the canon of Indian art are insufficient to justify such a claim. It would also be incorrect to cite a lack of sculptural ability in the native artists. The works that we have already discussed are sufficient proof that there existed during the eighth century in the Malay Peninsula, and in particular around the Isthmus of Kra, highly competent sculpture workshops capable of producing an image as accomplished as the great Viṣṇu discovered on the hill of Phra Noe (Takua Pa), that is, in this very region. O'Connor (1972: 58-60), in attempting to explain the phenomenon, has suggested that the spread of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism on the shores of the Malay Peninsula under the supposed influence of Śrīvijaya had forced the artists' studios to forget the canons of representation of the Brahmanical figures in order to concentrate exclusively on the production of Buddhist sculptures. The idea is interesting, and is in no way contradicted by an examination of the available remains along the east coast, where we have found these sculptures to be rare. The next chapter will contain a description of the Brahmanical works that appeared here and there on the isthmus after the ninth century, notably at Wiang Sa, Chaiya and Chumphon; all of these appear to be imported works, or to have

been created locally by non-native artists, or artists who had been poorly initiated in Indian iconography.

The Takua Pa region also yielded several eclectic sculptural remains, among which we should indicate:

2. A stone Gaṇeśa (72 metres high), at Muang Thong (Ko Kho Khao), of crude manufacture, which only partially obeys the iconographic rules in use concerning the representation of the god in one part of the Indian world or another. The existence of a high *jaṭāmukuta* speaks for a South Indian origin, which would tally with what we have said of the earlier pieces. (Ill. in Collective 1986: III, 1222).

3. A stone bas-relief, also found in Ko Kho Khao, representing a woman and child in a style similar to that of the high-reliefs of Phra Narai. It could be part of a group of statues from Somāskanda. (Ill. in Collective 1986: III, 1221).

4. An eroded and decapitated bronze statuette of Buddha (22 centimetres in height), from Muang Thong (Ko Kho Khao). The Blessed One was seated in *vajrāsana* and in *bhūmisparśamudrā* on a lotus of which nothing remains. The *uttarāsanga* leaves the right shoulder uncovered, and there is no *saṃghāṭī*, which suggests a date not later than the ninth century. The piece probably originated in Northeast India or was inspired by Pāla works; however, we cannot rule out a South Indian or Śrī Laṅkā origin, however, because the absence of the head makes it impossible to form a final judgment. (Ill. in Collective 1986: III, 1221).

5. Finally, some small circular votive tablets (around 3 to 4 centimetres in diameter) were discovered at Ko Kho Khao; their severely worn state makes it almost impossible to study them. They appear to represent a standing Buddha flanked by two *bodhisattvas*. (Ill. in Collective 1986: III, 1221).

The caves of the Trang Region (notably Tham Khao Khao and Tham Khao Sai), farther to the south along this west coast of the Peninsula, have yielded many votive tablets, most of which belong to the end of the eighth and the ninth centuries, although not exclusively. They belong to types we have already encountered on the east coast: Avalokiteśvara with two arms in *lalitāsana*; the same *bodhisattva* in *vajrāsana* on a double lotus and provided with four arms; the same

image again, standing, with twelve arms, but in a strictly frontal position and no longer with an inflexion; Jambhala in *lalitāsana* on a throne, with a prominent belly, Vairocana in the middle of his *maṇḍala*. Votive *stūpas* have appeared in association with these tablets. Let us not forget that no satisfactory explanation has yet been supplied for the presence of these tablets in such remote places.

Two caves in Perlis (Malaysia), Gua Berhala and Gua Kurong Batang also yielded votive tablets of this kind in 1961. (Lamb 1962a, 1964e). The same types as those from the Trang region are found there, as well as the type representing the standing Avalokiteśvara with a pronounced inflexion and multiple arms (usually twelve). Added to these are tablets that merely bear the imprint of a circular seal illustrated with sixteen lines of a Buddhist credo.

The Perlis caves, like those of the Trang region, are near the shore. Another cave, also called Gua Berhala, is in a completely different position, located in the heart of Kelantan (Malaysia); this remote cave yielded votive tablets in 1992 (Haji Taha 1993: 77-78, Fig. 9, 10); in fact, the spot is some hundred and forty kilometres from the western, and nearest, coast as the crow flies. Most of the tablets found here are ovoid, varying in height from six to twelve centimetres. The majority of them represent either the *maṇḍala* of Vairocana, or a standing Avalokiteśvara with two arms and an inflexion (a version already encountered at Tham Khuhaphimuk), or with twelve arms (Fig. 158) (a less sophisticated version compared to those of the earlier Perlis sites and the region of Trang), or the Buddha in *bhūmisparśamudrā* flanked by two standing *bodhisattvas*. All are severely worn, and, in a peculiarity that has yet to be explained, they were frequently painted with a dark blue pigment that has mostly disappeared.

South Kedah has yielded almost no sculpted works that can be attributed to the ninth century, except for a single votive tablet and a miniscule thanksgiving plaque. The tablet (around 5 centimetres in height) came to light at Kampong Sungai Mas (Ill. in Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: Doc. 260); it is damaged and badly worn, but because of the prominent belly, the seated silhouette it portrays can be none other than Jambhala. The second (4.5 centimetres in height) is a sort of tablet in baked clay, plainly quadrangular, but with a vaulted upper section, representing an Avalokiteśvara seated in

lalitāsana and in *dharmacakramudrā* on a double *padmāsana*. (Fig. 159). The extended left leg rests on a lotus, while two other flowers frame the figure, with the stem of one winding around the left arm. The extremely worn condition of the piece makes it impossible to furnish many details concerning the accoutrements of the *bodhisattva*, whose hair can nevertheless be seen to be arranged in a high *jaṭāmukūṭa*. This small work, atypical because of its support, does, however, obey the aesthetic canons proper to the India of the Pālas in the ninth century.

The more southern state of Perak, and in particular the valley of the Kinta, a tributary of the Sungai Perak, yielded several bronze images, during operations to extract tin. We have already mentioned two of these. (See Chapter Eight & Fig. 93.) It is very frustrating that the works came to light in such conditions, that is, outside of any archaeological context that could have revealed traces of the monuments that had sheltered them, and of the necessary entrepôt ports that would have received foreign ships, notably Indian ones. The significant silting up of this region that corresponds to the low valley of one of the most important rivers of the Malay Peninsula, and the devastation caused locally by the anarchic exploitation of the tin mines (see Chapter One), make any hope of future archaeological discoveries concerning this probable chiefdom with its openness to international commerce seem illusory.

1. The most important piece ever discovered in this part of the country is a bronze representation of Avalokiteśvara, standing, with eight arms (79 centimetres in height), discovered at Bidor. (Fig. 160, 161). The *bodhisattva*, like many similar images we have already described, is wearing a long *dhotī* with folds that flare at the bottom; it is adorned with a belt that has a gilt buckle, and—especially—encircled with a tiger skin that we have seen worn by two other, smaller images from the east coast (one at Na San, Nakhon Si Thammarat (Fig. 128), the other at Satingpra (Fig. 129)), and by the statuette of Śiva (Fig. 142) found at Nong Hoi (Songkhla); this detail of the costume has raised many questions, as we have already indicated. (See above.) The hair is worn in a high *jaṭāmukūṭa*, with the image of the Buddha Amitābha standing out in the front; it is topped with a metal button, and its curls fall to the shoulders. The brow is encircled by a jewelled diadem. The other jewels consist of arm-bands and bracelets. The chest, rendered according to the Indo-

Javanese aesthetic canons in force for all the statuary of the period, is crossed with the *yajñopavīta*. Of the eight radiating arms, only the principal member on the right side has lost its forearm and hand. The attributes or the *mudrās* run from top to bottom on this side, the rosary (*akṣamālā*), the trident (*tridaṇḍī*) and the *varadamudrā*; and on the left side, the book (*pustaka*), the flowing knot (*pāśa*), the lotus (*padma*)—with the main hand holding the stemless flower resting on the left shoulder—and the water jar (*kamaṇḍalu*).

In both its aesthetics and its size, this statue is very like a similar image discovered at Palembang that does not, however, wear the tiger skin (Schnitger 1937: Pl. VIII, Fontein 1990: Fig. 59), and has lost all but one of its arms.

2. A small throne (21 centimetres high, 15 centimetres wide, 12.5 centimetres deep) was found near Ipoh. (Fig. 162). It probably belonged to an image of Buddha seated in *pralambapadāsana*, with the feet resting on the double lotus situated on the platform supporting the throne. The back of the throne has lost much of its decoration, which must have consisted of atlas lions mounted on crouching elephants at the sides, and on its upper section, of a halo topped with a parasol. The sixth-century date initially proposed for this fragment and later repeated (Wales 1940: 50, Shuhaimi (ed.) 1998: 109) is much too early. Connections exist between this piece and whole or fragmentary pieces that all belong to the ninth century: a seated Buddha of Javanese origin in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (Scheurleer *et al.* 1988: Fig. 24); another Buddha also discovered in Palembang (Schnitger 1937: Pl. VII; Scheurleer *et al.* 1988: Fig. 57; Fontein 1990: Fig. 41); the bronze chevet of a throne discovered in Central Java. (Fontein 1990: Fig. 40). It can also be compared with the small Buddhas seated in *pralambapadāsana* that have appeared here and there without their thrones. (Fontein 1990: Figs. 38, 39).

3. Two other images of which we have lost all traces, and which are known today only through two poor photographs, also appeared in this region, at the edge of the Perak river, in Sungai Siput Utara. One (Fig. 163) was a four-armed statuette of Avalokiteśvara (28 centimetres high) standing on a lotus, leaning against a chevet with a flambé edge. (Wales 1940: 51, Pl. 80). The other (Fig. 164) was a representation of the same *bodhisattva* with eight arms, but sitting in *lalitāsana* on a double lotus supported by a throne with an oval chevet topped with a parasol. (Wales 1940: 51, Pl. 81). Whatever has

been said in the past, and again recently (Shuhaimi (ed.) 1998: 109) concerning their artistic filiation and their age, it must be admitted that they are neither more nor less than works in the straight line of the productions of Pāla India in the ninth century, or Central Java in the same period.

4. We will now add to this list of objects of worship the base and attached dome of a votive *stūpa* in stone (16 centimetres high) discovered in an indeterminate spot in the same state of Perak, and preserved today in the Muzium Arkeologi in Merbok (Kedah). (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1997b). The interest of the piece (Fig. 165) resides almost exclusively in the sculptures on the base (*jaighāvedī*), which present, two by two, facing each other, four large decorated niches each framing a seated Buddha in *vajrāsana* and in various *mudrās*. The pedestal (*adhovedikā*) and end section (*harmikā* and *yaṣṭi* without a *chattrā*) are missing from the piece. Its style is that of many votive *stūpas* preserved on the site of Bodh Gayā, and it is not inconceivable that it could date from the ninth century, in spite of the difficulty in dating these pieces whose iconographic tradition lasted for a long time.

5. Finally, the same Malay state, but at a much more northern site (Jalong), yielded a most interesting bronze image (52.5 centimetres in height) that stands out from all the others (Fig. 166) because it is a Śivaite work, probably of Agastya, which must be compared with the one found in Satingpra (Fig. 141), although the two pieces are very different in appearance. Here the wise man is dressed in a short, knee-length *dhotī* with the *yajñopavīta* flowing down it. The hair has been pulled up on the top of the head, perhaps braided, and falls in long locks onto the back and shoulders. The features are those of an old man; the image has a beard and a prominent belly. The right hand is lost; it may have held the rosary, as it did on the other image. The left hand, which is intact, is holding a vase of water that is typical of the ascetic aspects of Śiva, but also, as we have seen, of Avalokiteśvara. A. B. Griswold (1962) dated this piece to the ninth century. We have no reason to question this date, in spite of the concomitance of the Buddhist works we have already described.

Finally, at the end of the eighties, an important bronze statue (Fig. 167) (140 centimetres in height) became entangled in the nets of a fisherman about two kilometres from the island of Pulau Ketam, near

Klang (Selangor, Malaysia), in the Strait of Melaka. (Haji Taha 1987: 32-33, Pl. 4). We may be amazed that a statue of this importance was left in the hands of the one who discovered it, apparently a man of Chinese origin, who took it upon himself to clean off the various encrustations caused by its long sojourn under the sea. As far as it is possible to judge from the poor published photograph, it is a representation of a four-armed Avalokiteśvara standing on a double lotus, with a slight inflexion. The image probably wore a long *dhōṭī* whose folds can still be seen along the legs, decorated with several jewelled belts at the waist; the *yajñopavīta* is still visible, as are several jewels: bracelets, armbands, necklace, probably a diadem. The *jaṭāmukuta* has vanished, but the features of the face still appear to be quite visible. The hands on two of the four arms are missing, and the two others have lost most of their fingers. These arms and hands must have shared the attributes and the most frequent *mudrās* of the *bodhisattva*: the rosary (probably in the upper right hand), the lotus (probably in the upper left hand), the water-pot (*kamaṇḍalu*) (probably in the lower left hand), and the *abhayaṃudrā* in the lower right hand, judging from raised position of the arm (the *varadamudrā* is more frequent with this divinity, but requires a lower arm, usually the right one).

This then, is the rapid accounting that we can give of the religious remains belonging to the ninth century or the decades preceding or following it in the Malay Peninsula. The preeminence of the sites on the eastern shore is indisputable, though we have only provided a glimpse of them, while the rarity of the ruins on the west coast caused us to mention works that we would have ignored if they had appeared on the opposite shore. There is only one explanation for this inequality; we have already put it forward in the conclusion to Chapter Eight devoted to Jiecha (South Kedah), and will repeat it in Chapter Fourteen. The entrepôt ports of the west coast—in this case Ko Kho Khao-Takua Pa and Kampong Sungai Mas in South Kedah, to mention the only two that are well known to this day—were never integrated into city-states like those on the east coast: Panpan and Langkasuka. They were merely part of chiefdoms that were doubtless animist and that—probably out of a well-conceived self-interest—allowed their territory to serve as a transitory refuge for foreign merchants. The Indians at least, concerned for their beliefs, whether Buddhist or Brahmanical, but always superstitious—the Buddha-gupta inscription is there to remind us of that (see Chapter Eight)—

raised temples to their gods with the means possible in each local situation. These buildings were therefore always modest, adapted to local conditions, in a word, perfectly opportunistic. To endow them with images was undoubtedly easier, either because it was possible to call upon an artist belonging to a workshop on the opposite shore or in their country of origin, or because they could bring the necessary images over from India—as well as from the east coast of the Peninsula and also, of course, from Central Java. This is the most plausible explanation for the existence along the coast of the Strait of Melaka of sometimes surprising remains which could in no circumstances have been created locally, for nothing in the social structure of these chiefdoms would have permitted it. Several centuries earlier they had imported bronze drums and bells from North Vietnam; they allowed their temporary guests to import their own idols, no matter whether these were Buddhist or Brahmanical; no superior political authority was there to impose its choices; and we have seen how, even on the east coast, the local potentates allowed the two great streams of Indian religious thought to coexist.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

THE SITUATION IN THE MALAY PENINSULA IN THE 10TH AND 11TH CENTURIES

THE APPEARANCE OF TAMBRALINGA

If we do not question the new dating of the Chinese ceramics discovered in Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao, which restrict the activity of these two entrepôt ports to several decades of the ninth century; if we add to this the conviction that the Kampong Sungai Mas site, less thoroughly excavated than the other two, but nonetheless revealing, probably belongs to the same brief period of commercial activity; if, finally, we suspect that the forthcoming digs on the potential sites of entrepôt ports in Langkasuka will reveal nothing further than the exact same Chinese and Middle Eastern sherds found on the other sites, we are confronted with the problem of the absence to this day in the Malay Peninsula of entrepôt port sites that can be dated with certainty to the tenth and eleventh centuries, using the same indicators, when nothing major in what we know of the politico-commercial situation in Asia justifies such an absence on shores that seem to have been neither deserted nor inactive at the time.

Certainly, just as with their precise identification, the dating of Chinese ceramics must unfortunately be approached with caution, as it is affected by the ups and downs of research in China itself, and as far as China is concerned, the author on whose work we principally rely, Ho Chuimei, has herself expressed some reservations, which we have already noted (1994: 191); but it is difficult to understand how a period of two centuries could be so poorly represented in quantity, if not in quality. Here and there, indeed, Chinese ceramics have been found and dated to this period, and the sites of the next generation of entrepôt ports (Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, Satingpra, Tha Rua) are reputed to have yielded sherds belonging at least to the end of the tenth and to the eleventh century, though in infinitely smaller quantities than the sherds from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that best characterize them.

We have no answer to this problem. Entrepôt ports were certainly active; what we have to say concerning the imperial activity of Tambralinga at the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh leaves no room for doubt on the subject. Where were they located? That is the question. Do the sherds of Chinese ceramics that alone can help us to properly characterize this type of archaeological site merely exist in smaller quantities, or do more sherds remain to be discovered? At times, a brief comment from certain Thai researchers gives us cause for reflection. Does A. Srisuchat (1994: 221), in enumerating the Thai sites that have yielded Yue and Longquan ceramics, speak too briefly of

Tha Muang, a residential site near the coast [some twenty kilometers north of Chaiya, near Tha Chana (Doc. 27)] dated to the tenth through twelfth centuries. Sherds of contemporary Yue wares have been recovered in large quantities from the surface.

Naturally we would wish to have further information, but the site has never been excavated, and was only explored superficially after local peasants discovered a number of sherds.

Before going on to examine the peninsular archaeological remains from this period, we will give a brief glimpse of the politico-economic context of Asia in general and Southeast Asia in particular.

A. THE POLITICO-COMMERCIAL ASIAN CONTEXT IN THE 10TH AND 11TH CENTURIES (DOC. 26)

I. China

The Tang dynasty disappeared in name in 907 with the foundation of the empire of the later Liang (907-923), who set themselves up in Kaifeng, a strategic position that would preserve the four other dynasties that succeeded this empire right up to the restoration of the Song in 960. But real power had no longer been in the hands of the Tang since at least 885. The power belonged to the military commissioners (*jiedushi*) assigned to the command of the military regions (*fanzhen*). This group had seen their power, as well as their numbers, increase after the great Huang Chao rebellion that ravaged China in the last quarter of the ninth century. (See above, Chapter Ten.) This rise in power of provincial personalities eventually provoked a new division of China into small sections, an arrangement that was to last for almost a century. Opposed to the Five Dynasties of the north,

which succeeded each other in Kaifeng and are considered to be the heirs of the Tang, were the Ten Kingdoms to the south of the Yangzi, which in the end outlasted them; these kingdoms, emerging from the military regions, more often than not corresponded to the great natural regions of China. This is particularly true of those kingdoms that are of greatest interest to us in connection with our subject, because they are coastal, and thus involved in the trade of the *nanhai*: the kingdom of the Han (911-971), centred in Guangdong, that of the Min (909-978) in Fujian, and that of Wu-Yue (907-978) in Zhejiang. The economic dynamism of these regions in the ninth century, which we have described, was never interrupted, to judge by the production of ceramics, which continued to expand. The kilns of Zhejiang are a case in point:

The Quian princes of Wue-Yue were active patrons of the Yue kilns during the Five Dynasties period. The excellence of the decorated celadon produced at that time is evidence of this. The new decorative technique brought Yue celadon to the fore, displacing the mostly undecorated white ware of the north. [...] They were to establish a precedent for the superior decorative motifs of the Northern Song wares. (Satō 1981: 85).

Along the same lines, it has been suggested that because this state of Wue-Yue paid tribute to the imperial court of Kaifeng, a tribute consisting chiefly in great quantities of ceramics,

the presence of Yue ware in the north must have been quite considerable, and it would not be far-fetched to say that both Yaozhou and Ding kilns [two major groups of kilns in Shanxi and Hebei under the Song of the north] had picked up the Yue ware style of decoration. (Feng Xian Ming 1983:29).

The importance in quantity of the Yue wares is nonetheless negligible compared to that of the Guangdong kilns, whose expansion, there is no reason to doubt, will have continued at the same time as that of the production centres in other southern provinces of the Yangzi—Anhui, Jiangxi, Hunan, Sichuan—during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

When the new dynasty of the Song, established in Kaifeng in 960, reconquered one by one all the territories south of the Yangzi, the economic expansion of these regions did not fail to follow. The Chinese administration favoured improvements in the cultivation of rice that had been begun in the eighth century (the adoption of transplanting, the development of new instruments of cultivation and

irrigation) by the systematic diffusion of early varieties of rice from Campā, which, coming to maturity in winter, made a double harvest possible. A corollary to these advances in agriculture was the increase in population throughout the empire, and the rapid development of craft industries—in particular of ceramics, about which we have acquired some information related to the south of Fujian (Kee Long 1994)—as well as sea traffic, thanks to the development of naval construction. In Chapter Two we have already described the probable circumstances of the birth of the Chinese junk and its rapid expansion, not only in the Southern Seas, but well beyond, towards the farthest shores of the Indian Ocean. Here we need only remember that the increase in international maritime trade in the ninth century, along with the massive exports of Chinese ceramics, have led us to believe that even if Malay, Arab, Persian and Indian vessels were ubiquitous in the Chinese ports in this period, the first Chinese junks on the high seas were already challenging them for preeminence. We should also remember—what no historian doubts—that the Chinese navy reached its full development under the Song, very probably having begun under the Kingdoms of the South, which were born in the tenth century as a result of the dismantling of the Tang Empire.

Nothing, then, on the face of it, in the economic situation of a China that was admittedly subject to a number of political changes, can explain why its ceramics become scarce in the tenth and eleventh centuries along the shores of the Malay Peninsula. What was happening, during this same period, at the opposite end of Asia?

II. The Middle East

Officially, the dynasty of the Abassids remained in power until 1258, but apart from this façade of permanence, it was in fact subjugated from the beginning of the tenth century to the emirs (Buyids), sultans (Seljukids) and provincial governors. As in China, however, this rise in power of regional identities did not affect the rapid development of maritime trade begun in the end of the eighth century and continuing in the ninth, as we have said (see above, Chapter Ten), at least not immediately. This is in any case what seems to emerge from a first glance at the numerous Arab literary commentaries.

It is indeed to the tenth century that the most informative of the Arab texts on long-distance seafaring trade with Southeast Asia and the more distant China are dated; several stopping-off places and

centres of trade in the Malay Peninsula are mentioned in the accounts, giving rise to many more or less fruitful attempts at identification. (Tibbetts 1956, 1957, 1979, Wheatley 1973: 210-232). For the most part, the authors of these texts were mere compilers, which takes nothing away from the interest of their compilations. In order to accomplish their task, they had to have at their disposal a number of first- or second-hand accounts, all of which apparently bore witness to the success of Muslim commercial activities in Southeast Asia in their time. G. R. Tibbetts (1957: 22), in the light of the information provided in the texts, which he analysed, commented: "It is possible that the tenth century saw the peak of Arab trade with South-East Asia."

Among these Muslim writers, let us mention Abū Zayid, the editor of the *Akhbār al-Ṣīn wa'l-Hind*, who produced a sequel to it in the beginning of the century, probably around 916. We have already cited this work in connection with the information it provided about the China of the ninth century (see above, Chapter Ten); in completing this text, he is the first to speak of Kalāh. In 940, more certainly in the tenth century, Abū Dulaf, who lived at the court of the Samanids in Bukhara, travelled as an ambassador through Central Asia to China. He is supposed to have returned by way of the sea, and therefore speaks pleasantly of Kalāh and its prosperity in the portions of his account that were preserved by later authors. G. R. Tibbetts (1957: 20), however, expresses the doubt that he ever made this return trip by sea, as the point of view from which he describes the mythical port of the western shore of the Peninsula is more that of a Chinese (suggesting that he obtained his information on Southeast Asia in China itself) than that of an Arab; this in no way detracts from the interest of his account, as his descriptions are of a Malay entrepôt port in full activity. Another writer, Ma'sūdī, towards the middle of the tenth century, likewise gives many details about commercial activity in the Southern Seas. He never went to these regions himself, however, though he pretends to have done so, and his information on them comes from the *Akhbār al-Ṣīn wa'l-Hind* and other sources, including the account of Abū Zayid, whom he met. More details of interest concerning Muslim commercial activities in Southeast Asia are provided by another compiler, Buzurg, in the *Kitāb 'ajāib al-Hindī* (*The Wonders of India*), the date of which, however, is disputed by these authors, but which G. R. Tibbetts

(1957: 21) nonetheless considers to be from the end of the tenth century.

At first glance, then, there is no reason to doubt that the tenth century was a period of intense commercial activity for the Muslims in the realm of the Southern Seas, as G. R. Tibbetts claims. When we realize, however, that none of these Muslim writers actually went to the Malay Peninsula, and that they restricted themselves to compiling the accounts of their predecessors or gleaning information in other parts of the world than their own (China, India), we might be tempted to suggest that they were in reality only speaking of a gone-by period, that of the ninth century.

When we add to this realization that our only source of important information concerning the eleventh century is Bīrūnī (text from around 1030), who did not travel beyond India, and who only mentions Southeast Asia briefly in details clearly picked up during his stay on the subcontinent, we might ask whether commercial activities from the Arab world in the direction of the Southern Seas had not in fact experienced an eclipse in the tenth and eleventh centuries, perhaps following on some political problems in the Abassid empire.

In addition to this, careful analysis of all these texts leads to the conclusion that the Arabs had only a very partial view of the geography of the Malay Peninsula, or that the compilers we have just described had done a sloppy job and were misinformed. Indeed, the docking ports are almost systematically described as islands, and “nowhere do we get the idea that there is a large peninsula containing several states or kingdoms.” (Tibbetts 1956: 43). Tibbetts believes that the very incomplete view communicated in the texts is due to the way the Arab sailors travelled: the ships sailed towards the ports of the west coast, most often only to its northern section, and then continued on into the Strait of Melaka, stopping in Palembang-Śrīvijaya. When they chose to head for China, they went around the southern extremity of the Peninsula, eventually stopping on the island of Tioman, then continued their voyage:

Of the east coast the Arabs knew nothing except that strange savages paddled out in canoes from that direction to attack their ships. There is just a vague hint that they knew that *Kalāh* could be reached by crossing the mountains from the homes of these savages. (Tibbetts 1956: 44).

Such an assessment, however, is in apparent contradiction to what we have said about the archaeological situation of Laem Pho, to mention only one site, where the existence of Middle Eastern ceramic sherds and glassware almost necessarily implies the presence of tradesmen from the Muslim world, at least in the ninth century; however, the possibility that others than they had distributed their commercial trade markers at points along the coast cannot be entirely ruled out.

It is therefore very difficult to determine with any certainty the actual impact of Chinese and Muslim trade along the shores of the Malay Peninsula in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Nothing fundamental in either world prevented the great commercial enterprise so brilliantly launched in the ninth century from continuing in its forward movement. This, however, for reasons that are unclear, is what seems to have happened, although it did not affect the prosperity of a certain city-state of the Malay Peninsula, as we will show.

We must now attempt to evaluate the economic circumstances in the same period in India and in the Southern Seas. We have no information about the relations that Northeast India may have maintained with the Malay Peninsula during these two centuries, but we do have several reference points in connection with South India because of the rivalry that sprang up between this region and Śrīvijaya in the eleventh century.

III. South India, Śrīvijaya and Java

In the tenth century, the Coḷas, former vassals of the Pallavas, whose power we saw declining in the ninth century, asserted their authority over all of Dravidian India, not without several reverses, notably in a confrontation with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, who defeated them in 949 and continued to dominate them until around 968. The reign of the great Coḷas did not begin until the sovereign Rājārāja I (985-1014), who was succeeded by his son Rājendra I (1012-1044), the son having been brought into the administration of the empire by his father during the last years of his life. The dynasty embraced the politics of commercial expansion on the seas that had been encouraged by the Pallavas. In the beginning of the eleventh century, this seems to have led to an open conflict with the supposed Sumatran thalassocracy. This conflict, however, must have been preceded by a period of

peaceful relations, because we know that in around 1005, Chūlāmaṇivarmadeva, the king of Śrīvijaya, imitating the foundation of his predecessor Bālaputra in Nālandā, had a Buddhist temple bearing his name, the *Chūlāmaṇivarmavihāra*, built in Negapatam, to which the sovereign Coḷa Rājārāja I offered the income from a large village (Aiyer 1933-34, Majumdar 1933-34), a circumstance that we have already described. (See above, Chapter Ten.) Beyond his motivations of enlightenment, there must surely have been the desire to furnish for his subjects a possible place of welcome in a region of India that they must have frequented regularly.

These good relations were maintained during the reign of the son and successor of Rājārāja I, because the inscriptions known by the name “Larger Leiden Plates” (Aiyer 1933-34: 222) again inform us that the new king Rājendra I had an edict composed for the village his father had offered for the maintenance of the Śrīvijayan temple. Māravijayōttuṅgavarman, son of the founder of this temple, is described in it as “born in the Śailendra family [...], lord of the Śrīvijaya [country], conducting the rule of Kaṭāha.” (Aiyer 1933-34: 257). According to G. Cœdès (1964: 261) this text, in the manner of the Arab geographers, emphasizes the importance to Śrīvijaya of maintaining control over the two shores of the Straits, a rather imperialistic view that we have said (see above, Chapter Nine) should certainly be relativized.

We have little information concerning the supposed thalassocracy during the tenth century—at least, little that is very precise. The Arab texts do indeed speak of it, but only in a vague and excessive manner, and we have already indicated our opinion of their accounts. Only the Chinese, with their customary precision, give an account of visits by a number of ambassadors in the course of the century under discussion, first in 904-905, then considerably later, in 960, 962, 971, 972, 974, 975, 980, 983. (Cœdès 1964: 244). Sometimes the names of the kings who sent them are given, and of course it is a matter of a vassal paying tribute to a suzerain, which for once, in the political context of the Southern Seas at the end of the tenth century, may have made some sense. The last mission mentioned in this century, in the *Songshi*, in 988, is the most instructive. The ambassador, on his return route to Palembang, apparently learned that his country had been invaded by the Shepo (the kingdom of Matarām in Java); as a result of this event, he spent a year in Canton. In the spring of 992, he went to Campā with his ship, but since he did not receive good

news there, returned to China, where he asked for a decree to be promulgated placing Śrīvijaya under the protection of China.

This very muffled echo of a Javanese-Sumatran war was nonetheless confirmed in the same year 992 by the arrival at the Chinese court of ambassadors from Java itself, mentioning the continual hostilities between the two countries, without, however, giving any details about the aggression of one against the other. We know nothing more. The sovereigns of Śrīvijaya continued nevertheless to dispatch ambassadors towards the restored Empire of the Middle Kingdom:

In the year 1003 the king Sê-li-chu-la-wu-ni-fu-ma-tiau-kwa [Chūlāmañivarmadeva] sent two envoys to bring tribute; they [...] [said] that in their country a Buddhist temple had been erected in order to pray for the long life of the emperor and that they wanted a name and bells for it, by which the emperor would show that he appreciated their good intentions. An edict was issued by which the temple got the name of Ch'êng-t'ien-wan-shou [Chengtianwanshu ("Ten thousand years to receive from Heaven")] and bells were cast to be given to them. (Groeneveldt 1877: 65, Ferrand 1922a: 19, Cœdès 1964: 259).

Other missions followed, in 1004, 1008, 1016, 1017 or 1018, the last of which probably corresponded to a desire on the part of Śrīvijaya to appease possible Chinese discontent after it had engaged in an act of revenge against Java, in 1016. This date coincides with the destruction of the capital of the kingdom of Matarām and the death of the king, in circumstances that remain obscure, but behind which the previous generation of authors were tempted to see a Śrīvijayan plot.

From these slim pieces of information, it emerges that Śrīvijaya, during the last decades of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh, probably had a number of serious difficulties with some of its neighbours, which led it to undertake diplomatic rapprochements with the two great powers of the time, the China of the Song and the Dravidian India of the Coḷas. These problems might not merely have been linked to its quarrels with the Javanese kingdom of Matarām, but could also have been the consequence of a loss of influence in the Malay Peninsula over which it might still have had some primacy. Information on the political situation of the Peninsula's east coast can be drawn from a study of two groups of texts: Pāli chronicles written in Chieng Mai in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and Chinese texts from the Song period. All of these documents refer

us back to a city-state, the heir of Panpan, whose sovereign's 'international' initiatives at the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh rule out the thought that the region had entered a period of economic stagnation linked to the increasing shortage of foreign merchants along its shores

IV. Tambralinga Seen through the Texts

1. *Chronicles written in Pāli*

These were studied by G. Cœdès (1925a), and in spite of their late date, provide information on the growth of Khmer influence in the basin of the Menam Chao Phraya and, at the same time, on the probable origin of certain Cambodian sovereigns at the very beginning of the eleventh century. For us, the key episode is the one that records the wrangles between the sovereigns of Lopburi and Lamphun in this period. In the account we indeed learn that a king of Haripuñjaya (Lamphun) named Atrāsataka, came to attack Lavo (Lopburi), whose ruler was a certain Ucchiṭṭha. Just as the two sovereigns prepared to enter combat, a king of Siridhammanagara, identified with Nakhon Si Thammarat, named Sujita (or Jivaka or Vararāja, according to the chronicle), arrived at the gates of Lavo with a considerable army and a fleet. The two kings fled before his advance in the direction of Haripuñjaya. Ucchiṭṭha arrived first, proclaimed himself king and married the wife of his adversary, who retired on a ship towards the south. Sujita, the king of Nakhon Si Thammarat, established himself as the master of Lopburi. At the end of three years, Sujita's successor—who according to one of the chronicles was his son, named Kambojarāja—set out after Ucchiṭṭha at Haripuñjaya, but was defeated there. At first G. Cœdès recognized in this Kambojarāja the Cambodian sovereign Sūryavarman I (1002-1050), who seized the throne of Cambodia in the first years of the eleventh century, and was tempted to make him out to be a Malay prince of the ruling dynasty at Nakhon Si Thammarat contending for the throne with the legitimate representative, the sovereign Jayavīravarman (1002-*ca.* 1010). This identification was appealing, as Sūryavarman I is one of the greatest sovereigns among the rulers of Cambodia, founding a dynasty that directed the destiny of this kingdom throughout the eleventh century. Let us remind ourselves briefly of the situation in Cambodia during this period. In 1001, the sovereign Jayavarman V, who had come to the throne in 968, died, and was succeeded by his nephew Udayādhityavarman I (1001-

1002). This event appears to have stirred up controversy, because, beginning in the following year, we find two other pretenders to the throne: Jayavīravarman, who ruled in Angkor at least from 1003 to 1006, and Sūryavarman, who had positions in the eastern part of the country and waged a war of devastation against the capital from 1005 to 1007. Altogether, this duel lasted nine years, and the installation of Sūryavarman at Angkor must date from around 1010; nevertheless he later moved his accession back to 1002, that is, to the time of the disappearance or death of the designated successor of Jayavarman V, Udayādityavarman I, and his genealogists created a new line for him, linking him to the Cambodian sovereigns. These are the facts.

After an analysis of the contents of the stele of Prāsāt Ben, G. Cœdès revised his assessment of this troubled period in the history of Cambodia:

I have been led to consider Sūryavarman I [whom he still assimilated to the Kambojarāja of the chronicles] no longer as a Malay prince, but as a Khmer opponent of Jayavīravarman [whom on the other hand he identifies with the Sujita of the chronicles], this last having come from the Malay Peninsula to seize Cambodia following on the departure on a faraway mission of King Udayādityavarman I [the Ucchiṭṭha of the chronicles]. (Cœdès 1964a: 171-172).

The father-son relationship first established between Kambojarāja and Sujita, and then between Sūryavarman and this prince from Nakhon Si Thammarat, rests on nothing more than the account in one of the chronicles, “the one whose historic value is the least sure,” according to Cœdès (1964a: 169); the others do not mention it. Having settled this point, he proposed the identifications we have reported.

The Khmer sovereign Jayavīravarman, who ruled briefly at the very beginning of the eleventh century over a disputed Cambodia, would then have been the sovereign Sujita of the chronicles, prince of Nakhon Si Thammarat, who would have taken this new name only after having seized the throne of Angkor. Jayavīravarman presents no genealogy, and the kings who succeed him never refer to him, following the example of Sūryavarman I, whom we mentioned earlier. This eviction from the dynastic lines squares rather well with the fact that he was a prince of foreign origin who had no family link with the dynasties of Cambodia, and had relinquished power in

Angkor, either to die, or to return to the country of his birth after the reverses described in the stele.

For the purposes of our study, this new fact is less appealing than the earlier one: instead of having on the throne of Cambodia in the eleventh century the descendent from a line issuing from Nakhon Si Thammarat, we merely have an adventurous prince who remained in power for only several years at best (he is well attested in the region of Angkor between 1003 and 1006)—before being evicted by a perhaps more legitimate pretender, in any case, one luckier on the battlefield. In spite of the brevity of his reign, this Jayavīravarma-Sujita left his mark in the Khmer epigraph, and the inscription of Prāsāt Trapeang Run, in particular, vaunts his virtues. In order to strengthen his power, he sought the support of high dignitaries, granting them real estate, or confirming earlier attributions. Indeed, several influential figures, concerned to preserve advantages acquired under preceding reigns, rallied to his cause. These gifts were surely contested, for on several occasions, the inscriptions mention that it has been necessary to restore boundary markers that had been torn out. The foundation of the Phimeanakas of Angkor has been attributed to him, but J. Boisselier (Giteau 1974: n. 1, p. 38), in an unpublished study, expresses the view that it is more legitimate to associate him with Tà Kèv [Ta Keo], a temple that was never completed, which might be a more likely candidate for the foundation of an evicted sovereign. Indeed, there is no doubt that this temple is a royal foundation, given its appearance, although it has yielded no stele that can be attributed to this monarch.

If we accept all these facts, we can conclude that political power at the end of the tenth century on the east coast of the Peninsula was centred in the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat (Siridhammanagara). At this date, the sovereign of the new city was sufficiently sure of his power to embark on adventures of conquest: first Lopburi, then Angkor, where he ruled for at least three years before being set aside. If we hold to the traditional view of an imperious thalassocracy that has prevailed to this day, he could have started out as one of those governor-sovereigns, a *dātu* of Śrīvijaya, set in place by the *mahārāja* in Nakhon Si Thammarat, who, like some others, would have freed himself from the authority of Palembang. This was a situation with which the central government was often confronted, if we remember the threats formulated against disobedient governors in the Telaga Batu (Sabokingking) inscription in old Malay found in

Palembang, which dates to the end of the seventh century. J. G. de Casparis (1956: 17-18), still from the same perspective, proposed that the governors could have come from the royal family, and as a result, that the rulers of Nakhon Si Thammarat could have had family ties with the Śailendras of Palembang. What was appealing in these ideas was that they gave to the history of these regions a wide scope that corresponded to the taste of European historians for visions of empire, and for kingdoms made and unmade in other parts of the world, particularly in Europe. We repeat that these seem poorly adapted to the Southeast Asian context. We do not believe that Śrīvijaya, at the height of its prosperity, was ever able to prevail in anything other than a vague nominal suzerainty over the chiefdoms and city-states of the Malay Peninsula.

In any case, for this adventure to have been possible, the new city-state had to be rich and powerful, and its sovereign well informed of the political situation in Southeast Asia; this is not incompatible with the destiny of a prosperous city-state in the Malay Peninsula at this time, a city-state that would therefore have moved its vital centre from the region of Chaiya, where it was known under the name of Panpan, to the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat, progressively freeing itself from the authority of Śrīvijaya, in keeping with the political context of the moment in the region of the Southern Seas and also, changing its name. It must be the one referred to in various Chinese texts of the Song period, in different forms that could be close to the word Tambralinga.

2. *The Chinese texts*

In his study of Tambralinga, O. W. Wolters (1958) made considerable use of the Chinese texts. In particular, he analysed some information contained in one of them, published late, in 1936, the *Songhuiyaogao*, from which the *Songshi* borrowed. The work includes several details about a Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei) during the period from 970 to 1070, and gives the impression that at the time, this kingdom was an independent state, because it sent a first ambassadorial mission to China in 1001. This term Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei) could be a satisfactory rendering of the word Tambralinga. The difficulty lies in the fact that its precise location is not given. Other late Chinese texts refer to kingdoms whose names are quite similar to it: Danmeiliu (Tan-mei-liu) in the *Songshi* and Zhoumeiliu (Chou-mei-liu), at the end of the thirteenth century, in the work of Ma

Duanlin, but because these two 'new' kingdoms also sent a mission to China in 1001, described in terms that are very similar to those of the mission of Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei), there is hardly any doubt that these two last texts refer to the same state.

The entire interest of this Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei) is in the ambassadorial mission of 1001, because this is a key date for an understanding of the events we described earlier in relation to Cambodia. The name of the king is given (Duoxuji), along with those of his first two envoys (there were nine in all). Among other things, they brought with them elephant tusks and scented wood; this tribute was noticed in the Chinese court, which delivered to the envoys a letter destined for their sovereign, a clear indication of imperial esteem. Following this, in 1016, at the court of the Song, it was decided that the envoys of Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei), who had returned, would be escorted into the presence of the sovereign accompanied by an escort of a maximum of ten people, which shows that this city-state was nevertheless considered a second-rate commercial power. After this period, it was not until 1070 that Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei) sent a new mission to China. These facts give it an existence of about a century, but we can consider that if the kingdom were known to China in 970, it had already become somewhat established by then.

O. W. Wolters wondered whether the date 1001 did not have a profound significance. Considering what we learned through the reconstruction of events in Cambodia, this date seems to be a year before the disappearance or death of the Cambodian sovereign Udayādhityavarman, the Ucchiṭṭha of the Pāli chronicles, victim of the plotting of a king of Nakhon Si Thammarat named Sujita; the 1001 mission might then be seen as an attempt by Sujita, the future Jayavīravarman, to gain the sympathy of the Chinese court before taking dramatic action against a kingdom long known to China. Indeed Wolters (1958: 596) believed that

[o]ne reason why Southeast Asian States sent embassies to China at that time was to obtain diplomatic support after some violent action had been perpetrated which upset the established order and therefore might alarm the Chinese government which, under the Sung dynasty, had a considerable vested interest in uninterrupted international trade.

At about the same time, as we have seen, the Javanese kingdom of Matarām had sent a mission to China in 992, a date that coincides

with a time when this kingdom had a confrontational policy that led to its invasion of Palembang. (Cœdès 1964: 244-245). This context may also make it possible to understand why the sovereign of Tambralinga found himself with a free hand to act outside his own geographical region. Wolters also theorized that by sending this mission, Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei) was protecting itself against a possible attack from Java. Indeed, in ousting a representative of the legitimate Cambodian line, he might have reason to fear reprisals from a kingdom with ancient ties to this dynasty.

Given the small amount of available information about these regions in the period, how can we imagine the consequences of the eventual failure of the Cambodian adventure? It is hardly likely that the city-state of Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei)-Tambralinga, relatively new, then, but warlike, had to endure reprisals from Cambodia right away, for if we accept what is said of it in the *Songhuiyaogao*, it was still independent in 1016. Perhaps it was not totally independent, if we allow ourselves to imagine a Khmer suzerainty. Wolters has no doubt about it, considering that the term Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei) is also identical to the term Dengliumei (Teng-liu-mei) found in the *Lingwai daida* by Zhou Qufei, dated 1178, then at the beginning of the thirteenth century in the *Zhufanzhi* by Zhao Rugua, and finally in the *Songshi*, dated to the first half of the fourteenth century. As it happens, this Dengliumei (Teng-liu-mei), an important producer of the best quality gharuwood on the market, is presented as a vassal region of Cambodia. If a juxtaposition with the first two texts is conceivable, it is more questionable in connection with the *Songshi*, which, as we have seen, also speaks of a Danmeiliu (Tan-mei-liu), already assimilated to Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei). P. Pelliot (1904: 233) combined them, because of the similarity of the situations of these different kingdoms in relation to Cambodia, but P. Wheatley (1973: 65-66) rejects this assimilation for linguistic reasons, and also because Zhao Rugua states that the Chaiya region was dependent on Śrīvijaya, and that it is therefore very unlikely, in this context, that a dependence of Cambodia could be located to the south of this region. Furthermore, this same text by Zhao Rugua mentions a third state, Danmaling (Tan-ma-ling), which for a long time has been assimilated to Tambralinga, as we have said, and which is described as a vassal of Śrīvijaya. These observations led Wheatley to place Dengliumei (Teng-liu-mei), which he assimilates to Danmeiliu (Tan-

mei-liu) and Zhoumeiliu (Chou-mei-liu), far to the north of the Isthmus of Kra.

As we can see, all of this is the subject of many disagreements. The chief interest in Wolters' theory is that it adds other specific events to the history of this region, and in addition, makes of it a vassal region to Cambodia, not Śrīvijaya, from the beginning of the eleventh century, which for us would be in keeping with the picture of a supposed thalassocracy with declining powers on the Peninsula after a period of prosperity in the eighth and ninth centuries. But it is possible to dissociate the toponyms, because Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei)-Danmeiliu (Tan-mei-liu)-Zhoumeiliu (Chou-mei-liu) can still be considered identical to Tambralinga, while Dengliumei (Teng-liu-mei) becomes another vassal state of Cambodia, located farther to the north.

It is highly likely that in an early period, Sūryavarman I, victor over his Malay rival, let us suppose, had as his chief concern the desire to consolidate his power over Cambodia. We cannot, however, dismiss the idea that in the next years he had planned to take revenge on the ambitious sovereign of Tambralinga. This is what can be sensed behind the information given in a group of Indian inscriptions on copper written in Sanskrit and Tamil, dated to the eighth year and the hundred and seventh day of the reign of the sovereign Coḷa Rājendra I, that is, a date corresponding to 1020-21. (Collective 1949-50: 3-4). In them we learn that at a given point the King of Cambodia feeling threatened, appealed to the monarch for assistance by offering him the gift of his chariot. According to R. C. Majumdar (1961: 341), the danger came from the king of Śrīvijaya, but in the light of a reinterpretation of the relations between Cambodia and Tambralinga by G. Cœdès, we could conceive that it is this city-state that was implicitly concerned in the appeal for help. Sūryavarman I, whether or not he was in danger, needed outside help to take revenge on his antagonist. The sovereign of the rival maritime empire at the time was indeed likely to offer it to him, and did so, although indirectly, as we will show later.

By and large, these observations lead us to imagine a Tambralinga appearing during the course of the tenth century in the immediate region of Nakhon Si Thammarat. It was certainly a creation in more than one sense, for until that time, the political centre of this part of the east coast of the Peninsula had been located farther to the north,

in the region of Chaiya (Panpan); but it is likely that a probable topological evolution bearing on the possibilities for receiving foreign ships could have progressively favoured the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat, beginning in the tenth century, thus provoking the birth of a 'new' political entity. From the end of the tenth century, this 'new' city-state considered itself strong enough, and sufficiently free from its ties of suzerainty with Śrīvijaya, for its sovereign to nurture imperialistic designs on Cambodia, and to send a precautionary advance mission to China in 1001. This monarch would be the Jayavīravarman of the Khmer inscriptions. At the end of the adventure, that is, between 1006 and 1010 at the latest, Tambralinga returned to its earlier positions and sent a new mission to China in 1016. At around this time, Śrīvijaya, which was just beginning to emerge from its difficulties with Java, might have reaffirmed its suzerainty in one way or another, since it was not until 1070 that Danliumei (Tan-liu-mei)-Tambralinga sent a new mission to China. But the hypothesis only works if we consider Śrīvijaya to be the strongly imperialistic entity that it doubtless was, if only briefly.

V. The Coḷas in the Malay Peninsula

It would seem that the good relations mentioned earlier between the sovereigns of Śrīvijaya and those of South India, and the context of a tacit sharing of the benefits of international trade in the Southern Seas, did not withstand the dreams of conquest of the great Coḷas. From 1007 on, Rājārāja I boasted of having conquered twelve thousand islands (Majumdar 1937-38: I, 171), which have been identified with the Maldives. (Sastri 1935-37: I, 220 & 1949a: n. 13, p. 79). Ten years later, in 1017, his son Rājendra I may have attempted a first raid against Kaṭāha [Śrīvijaya] (Majumdar 1937-38: I, n. 2, p. 171, 172 & 1961); the reality of this is nevertheless challenged by N. Sastri (1935-37: I, 254 & 1949a: n. 13, p. 79), who stresses that this would be in contradiction to what is said of the good relations between the two entities in the "Larger Leiden Plates" (see above, Chapter Ten & Aiyer 1933-34), which describe the confirmation by Rājendra I of the gift of a village by his father (who died in 1014) to the *vihāra* built in Negapatam by the sovereign of Śrīvijaya; he concludes: "1017 appears altogether too early a date for a Coḷa expedition against Śrīvijaya, and there is, in fact, no evidence for it." (Sastri 1949a: n. 13, p. 79). If nevertheless we accept the idea of this

expedition, we could with some imagination interpret it as a response by the sovereign Coḷa to the appeal of the king of Cambodia, Sūryavarman I, in a framework of relations that might have been deteriorating, for reasons that we cannot know.

In any case, whether or not this expedition actually took place, it would only have been the prelude to the great raid of 1025, which is mentioned in an inscription of Rājendra I on the south wall of the Rājārājeśvara Temple in Tañjāvūr, dated to the year 1030-1031. (Hultzsch: 1891: II, 105 & 1907-08: 231. Cœdès 1918: 4, 5, 9 ff. Sastri 1940: 286) which has been considered “unique in the history of India” (Majumdar 1961: 340) because of the unusually precise information it provides. It reveals that “[Rājendra] having dispatched many ships in the midst of the rolling sea and having caught Saṅgrāma-Vijayōṭṭuṅavarman, the king of Kaḍāram,” took possession of a number of territories, which are enumerated, in Sumatra and on the Malay Peninsula. These have always been considered possessions of Śrīvijaya, doubtless rather hastily, contributing to the idea that this political entity really was an empire. It is not certain that the order of this listing corresponds to the chronology of events; if this were the case, however, it would show that after the attack on the insular capital, Śrīvijaya-Palembang, and the capture of its sovereign, King Coḷa occupied several points along the east coast of Sumatra, then various territories on the Malay Peninsula, among them Ilaṅgāśōka (Langkasuka), “undaunted in fierce battles,” Mādāma-liṅgam (Tambralinga), “[capable of] strong action in dangerous battles,” then Aceh and the Nicobar Islands, and finally Kedah (Kaḍāram), “of fierce strength, which was protected by the deep sea.” (Wheatley 1973: 199-200).

This expedition, whatever its causes and results, does not seem to have had lasting political consequences. The whole width of a bay (more than two thousand kilometres at the shortest point) separated Dravidian India from Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. We know that later, a new king in Palembang sent a mission to China in 1028. (Groeneveldt 1877: 65. Ferrand 1922a: 20). It is possible, besides, that the two rival Indonesian kingdoms had reached an agreement and that, in around 1030, the new Javanese sovereign, Airlanga (1016-1049), who mounted the throne after the ‘debacle’ (*pralaya*) of 1016, which had perhaps been the work of Śrīvijaya, married the daughter or wife of the king of Palembang after he had been overthrown by the Coḷa expedition of 1025. (Cœdès 1964: 265-268).

Beyond this, the sources are silent for several decades on what was happening in Śrīvijaya and in the realm of the Southern Seas. We must wait until 1068-69 to learn that the sovereign Coḷa Virarājendra (1063-1070), grandson of the Rājendra I who had led the expedition of 1025, “conquered Kaḍāram on behalf of a king who had come in search of his aid and protection, and [...] afterwards handed over the conquered kingdom to his *protégé*.” (Sastri 1940: 289). The name Kaḍāram, we know, is extremely ambiguous, because, in the only inscription from Tañjāvūr, which recounts the Coḷa raid on 1025, according to the interpretations that have been given, it designates both South Kedah and the territory of the sovereign of Śrīvijaya. In the past, South Kedah has been described as a veritable kingdom, and P. Wheatley, attempting to find a meaning for this new expedition, speaks of it as “the chief peninsular possession of Śrīvijaya,” in an effort to separate it from the thalassocracy of which it would have been one of the first places of anchor on the Peninsula. (See above, Chapter Eight.) We have already stressed the importance of this place, but have also insisted that in no case did it ever correspond to a city-state comparable to those on the east coast, and that it was only a Malay chiefdom. (See above, Chapters Eight & Ten.) We therefore have difficulty in seeing this Kaḍāram confront Śrīvijaya in such a way that Śrīvijaya should prove unable to bring an end to the situation by its own means. G. Cœdès (1964: 272), in his interpretation of events, speaks only of an intervention intended to “put down a revolt or an attempt at secession on the Peninsula,” without identifying Kaḍāram specifically. We are inclined to see things from this broader perspective, in which the term designates Śrīvijaya as well as its supposed possessions in the Malay Peninsula, or more precisely, in certain cases, in South Kedah itself.

Of all the chiefdoms and city-states in the Peninsula that were supposed to be vassals in the eleventh century, only Tambralinga could have nurtured ideas of independence towards a Śrīvijaya in the role of a demanding suzerain. If these events actually took place, the city-state survived the expedition, because it was in 1070 that it sent an ambassador to China, as we have already mentioned. (See above.) Because these diplomatic expeditions are usually interpreted as evidence of independence on the part of city-states, we are hard put to give a meaning to all these incompletely described and dated events.

Finally, Śrīvijaya, which had also sent a mission to China in 1067, one of whose members, Devakula, was probably from the Coḷa family, and a minister in the court of Palembang before returning to Dravidian country to rule there beginning in 1074 under the name of Rājendra Kulōttuṅga I (1074-1118) (Cœdès 1964: 271-272)—is presented by Ma Duanlin (Wheatley 1973: n. 2, p. 203 for a translation) as suzerain of the Coḷas, which of course does not agree with what we have already described of the relations between the two political entities. N. Sastri (1949a: 84) wrote on this subject:

This can only be explained as the result of wanton misrepresentation on the part of the envoys of Śrīvijaya, who perhaps represented the party that gained the upper hand for a time in that country and against whom the other side had appealed to the Coḷa emperor Virarājendra.

G. Cœdès (1964: 272), in an effort to explain this obvious confusion, posits “the presence of a Coḷa advisor at the court of Śrīvijaya, and the readiness of the Coḷa king to oblige by reconquering territories on behalf of this country.” The Coḷa kingdom in turn sent a mission to China in 1077.

In any case, the “Smaller Leiden Plates” (Aiyer 1933-34a: 268, 279) bear witness to the restoration of amicable relations between the two empires. In around 1090, at the request of the sovereign of Śrīvijaya, who sent ambassadors to him, the Coḷa King Kulōttuṅga I renewed the charter related to the *Chūḷāmaṇivarmavihāra* built at the beginning of the century in Negapatam. Furthermore, a fragmentary inscription in Tamil, found in Lobu Tua on the west coast of Sumatra and dated to 1088, tells of the existence in this place of a powerful corporation of merchants from South India. (Sastri 1932). Their presence in this region allows us to imagine that the two political entities were living in harmony, and therefore that the Malay Peninsula was experiencing the same peace, though a threat may have appeared from the north, in this case from Burma, which really only enters into history at this time, in the eleventh century, with the sovereign Anōratha.

VI. Burma in the Malay Peninsula (Doc. 35)

Anōratha (1044-1077) is the first historic king of the kingdom of Pagan, and the most famous monarch of the dynasty he founded. He was the first to achieve political unity in Burma, by integrating into his empire the fruit of his conquests, including lower Burma, that is,

the country of the Mōns. The consequence of this last conquest, on the cultural and religious level, was the conversion of Pagan to the *Theravāda* Buddhism formally practised by the Mōns. The circumstances and limits of this expansion towards the south are unclear. Burmese chronicles provide details of the capture of Thaton in 1057, but make no mention of conquests farther to the south. Nevertheless, certain archaeological remains suggest that the Burmese armies conquered territories much farther to the south, probably drawn by the reputation for wealth of certain trading centres on the Isthmus of Kra. We are of course thinking especially of the site of Mergui-Tenasserim (Myeik-Taninthayi), which, as we have already indicated, harboured an entrepôt port in the ninth century (see above, Chapter Ten), and others, very probably, in later periods, as we will show.

It was in Mergui itself, at the Monastery of Mingyaung (Thanbo quarter), according to G. H. Luce (1966: 59, 1969-70: I, 27) that a votive tablet in good condition, signed by Anōratha (Fig. 168), was discovered. Generous in size (17.7 centimetres in height, 13.2 centimetres in width), it belongs to a type found frequently in Burma, and presents a scene of fifty Buddhas in *bhūmisparśamudrā* in six rows. (Ill. in Luce 1969-70: Pl. 12a, b, d). A line inscribed in Pāli and in *Nāgarī* writing is found at the bottom of the tablet, and declares: "This blessed one was made by the great king Śrī Anōratha the divine, donor of the mould." The small museum of the central monastery of Mergui, located on the hill facing the sea, contains two other tablets found in the region; these belong to the same period of the eleventh century, one of them perhaps to a slightly later period (twelfth century).

This last one (Fig. 169), squared below and arching to a point above, (9.6 centimetres in height, 1.7 centimetres in width) with traces of gilding, displays on a limited surface the Eight Great Events with an Earth-Touching central Buddha under a pyramidal construction with three arcatures. This is comparable to some tablets illustrated by Luce (1969-70: Pl. 69-71, 74), but on our tablet there is the addition of six small Buddha figures distributed in two columns, one on each side of the central image. These supplementary figures of the Buddha, combined with the central one, represent the Seven Stations spent at Bodh Gayā after the Enlightenment. This addition gives to the tablet a strong similarity with the iconography of some of the 'andagu' steles (Bautze-Picron 1999), but the absence of the two

standing *bodhisattvas* usually positioned on each side of the central Buddha must be noted.

The other tablet (Fig. 170), in the same shape (15 centimetres in height, 9.5 centimetres in width), represents an ascetic Buddha seated in the same position under an arcature of the same type, surmounted by the decreasing levels of a temple that could only be that of the Bodhi at Bodh Gayā. Tablets related to the previous type were found (Luce 1966: 59, 1969-70: I, 100) in the Shin Mōkti Pagoda ten kilometres south of Tavoy (Dawei), signed in Mōn by two governors under the reign of Kyanzitttha (1084-1113) (Ill. in Luce 1969-70: Pl. 20), as well as in the region of the Bay of Bandon. (See below.)

A still clearer indication of this upsurge of Burmese influence in the south is the discovery in the beginning of the century (Lajonquière 1909: 237, Fig. 28) of the upper part of an inscription at Maunglaw, about sixteen kilometres southeast of Mergui. (Fig. 171). The vaulted upper part of the stele is decorated with a bas-relief representing the Buddha in *vajrāsana* and in *bhūmisparśamudrā* surrounded by the luxuriant vegetation of giant lotuses. The several lines of the inscription in Pāli that remain contain the name Mahārāja Śrī Bajrābharaṇadeva, which was the title of Sōlu (1077-1084), the son and successor of Anōratha. This inscription, which had been transferred to the hall of the Library of the University of Yangon, did not survive the Second World War.

This, then, is the historical context behind the destiny of these city-states and chiefdoms of the Malay Peninsula in the tenth and eleventh centuries. In spite of the many uncertainties, which will probably never be removed, these events contain rich information, and do not suggest that the shores of the Peninsula suffered some sort of economic stagnation, even if in fact Muslim and Chinese traders probably went there in fewer numbers. Although we lack entrepôt port sites like Laem Pho, Ko Kho Khao or Kampong Sungai Mas to help us pinpoint the commercial activities of the period, we can nonetheless propose several theories about them, and mention a number of archaeological remains.

B. ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS THAT BEAR WITNESS TO THE 10TH AND 11TH CENTURIES IN THE MALAY PENINSULA

I. Theories Concerning Commercial Activities in this Period

1. Our observations about the activity of Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao do not leave much room to hope for significant commercial activity in these places after the ninth century. In addition, what we have to say about the foundation of the great *stūpa* of Nakhon Si Thammarat likewise refers us back to a period that corresponds at best to the first decades of the tenth century.

These points of reference, however approximate, still enable us to imagine a scenario that nevertheless applies only to the port on the east coast, since for the moment the west coast seems to have fallen into oblivion, with no known entrepôt port heir but the sites of South Kedah. According to this scenario, the port of Laem Pho, deserted by the Chinese and Muslim traders, perhaps because of international circumstances, and—equally likely—as a result of the progressive silting up of its site (silting that every port along the Malay coasts experienced sooner or later) was replaced by more southern trading places on the same coast. (Docs. 14, 37). These have often yielded Tang ceramics in small quantities; they include Sichon, Tha Sala, Tha Rua (five kilometres south of Nakhon Si Thammarat, Ban Thai Samphao (next to Tha Rua), and the Peninsula of Satingpra (Ban Ram near Hua Sai, Wat Chedi Ngam, Satingpra itself). But none of these potential sites of entrepôt ports reached its full development before the twelfth century, and this rediscovered activity, at least with China, chiefly involved the last three (Tha Rua, Ban Thai Samphao and Satingpra), as far as we can judge from the present state of research on these archaeological sites. At Satingpra, however, out of the total of the Chinese ceramics dated between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries, 8.5% belong to the tenth century (Ou stoneware, Jingdezhen and Dehua porcelains), and 14.3% belong to the eleventh century (Longquan stoneware, Jingdezhen and Dehua porcelains), that is, 22.8% of the total during the two centuries. (Stargardt 1997: appendix 3). From the same source we learn that the South China containers, predominantly represented in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, do not appear before this period.

It is probable that similar percentages, even more significant, would be found on the site of Tha Rua if it were excavated. Such a situation would be in keeping with the political evolution of the city-

state of Tambralinga, which, as a result of its development, had an entrepôt port near its new political centre. C. Ho (1991a: 293-294), in an account of the sites in peninsular Thailand that occasionally yield sherds from after the ninth century and before the great period of exportation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, speaks of Nakhon Si Thammarat, and therefore of Tha Rua as:

the largest site with the richest variety. The concentration comes from the area of the Drama College, south of the town. The Chinese wares recovered there include: 1. Yue-type green wares: Bowls and ewers are the most common vessels. Some of them are probably not of Yuyao make; they could have come from Chaozhou and Xicun in Guangdong, or from kilns in Fuzhou. 2. Qingbai wares: Good-quality Jingdezhen product[s] wares are rare. Most of the qingbai in Southern Thailand is either greyish white or very pale green, and is fairly heavily potted. These would have come from the Xicun and Chaozhou complexes in Guangdong. 3. Black wares: These are mainly small bowls from the Chaozhou and Xicun kilns. 4. White wares: There are at least two groups of Song white wares: a few bowls of Ding ware quality, and a number of greyer and coarser pieces from Xicun and Chaozhou. Sometimes the color of the glaze can be confusing: otherwise similar sherds can have white, grey qingbai or pale green glazes. 5. Large green storage jars: The origin of this group of green jars is unclear to the writer. Their glaze and general shape suggests a southern, perhaps Fujian, origin. Although it is tempting to say that the Guangdong kilns might have continued to produce jars similar to those of the 9th century, the 10th-11th century pieces found in Southern Thailand tend to be larger, better fired and more slender in shape than Guangdong examples. 6. Brown jars: The glaze of these medium size storage jars peels off easily. A few of them have impressed designs like those made at the Qishi kiln in Guangdong. The Houshan kiln at Cizao in Fujian might have been another source. 7. Underglaze painted bowls: Only 1 small fragment with rusty painting under pale green glaze has been collected in Southern Thailand. Xicun kiln is possibly its origin, but kilns such as Wanpinglun at Dehua are also candidates.

We can now have an even greater appreciation of the importance of the productions coming from the more southern provinces.

In addition to this, the region of Songkhla yielded a number of Chinese coins from the eleventh century: “*jingde yuanbao* (1004-1007), *tiansheng yuanbao* (1023-1031) and *yuanfeng tongbao* (1078-1085).” (Ho 1991a: 293). According to the same author (Ho 1991a: 293), “no Middle Eastern objects have been reported so far” for this period. Farther to the south, the region of the former Langkasuka has yet to reveal anything along these lines from the period.

2. The west coast of the Peninsula at the same latitude has revealed nothing more significant. All activity at Ko Kho Khao has in principle stopped, which is easier to understand than at Laem Pho, because in fact the region near the site has revealed nothing of an archaeological nature that is later than the ninth century. The destiny of Kampong Sungai Mas in South Kedah is less clear, because the site is very near the Kampong Pengkalan Bujang site, which is without doubt its successor in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A less exacting study of the Chinese and Middle Eastern sherds than the one carried out at Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao does not give us enough information to confirm that this port was deserted after the ninth century, though this was very likely the case. Besides this, the more detailed research conducted at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang leaves a slight doubt about the actual date of the beginning of commercial activities in this port. A. Lamb, commenting on work we will describe at some length in Chapter Fourteen, did not believe that the role of the entrepôt port of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang could have begun before the end of the eleventh century. Leong Sau Heng, however, from the study of two sherds belonging to her excavations (1973: 248), was inclined to increase the age of the site in this role to the end of the Tang period (that is, to the beginning of the tenth century). She was nevertheless aware that these two sherds, found at her point PB I in the lowest levels of a very unclear or inexistent stratigraphy—even if they were revealed to be from a much earlier period than the Tang—could not signify a commercial activity beginning in the tenth century. It seemed to her, however, that a significant proportion of the sherds from A. Lamb's dig corresponded to a kind of ceramic of the Yue type that could also be dated to the tenth century (Leong Sau Heng 1973: 249). A celadon bowl (21 centimetres in diameter), intact but encrusted with shells, found in the Sungai Merbok estuary, could be a production from the Yue kilns from the same period. (Fig. 172). Its horizontal rim is clearly marked, and lined with several thin concentric ridges on the inside. The bottom is etched with a fine foliage design. An almost identical bowl, though slightly larger, found in the Philippines, was identified as a Yue ceramic from the Shanglinhu kilns in Zhejiang and dated to the tenth century. (R. M. Brown (ed.) 1989: Pl. 118). We must keep in mind that ceramics of this type present a real problem of identification and dating, as was clearly shown from the work discussed in a recent colloquium. (Ho (ed.): 1994).

3. Finally, we must report in connection with the very promising site of Mergui-Tenasserim, that we possess nothing specific concerning commercial remains from the tenth and eleventh centuries. The one and only example, already mentioned in relation to the ninth century, is that of M. Collis (1953: 218 ff), who, in his desperate quest for Chinese ceramics in this region, in 1933-34, acknowledged having assembled many whole pieces (the only ones that interested him) from the Song period; these were added to even rarer pieces from the Tang period, which we have already described. He supplied no description, no photographs; everything remains to be done. Although unable to go to the nearby region of Tenasserim in February 1999, we did manage to see in the museum of the central sanctuary of Mergui a small Chinese ceramic jar (6.4 centimetres in height) found in the region. It has a beautiful celadon glaze, and could only be dated to a later period (twelfth to thirteenth century) than the one that concerns us in this chapter. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2001b: Doc. 5).

After setting forth these archaeological facts, we realize that in principle everything would seem to lead to the conclusion that these two centuries were a transition period in the commercial activities of the shores of the Malay Peninsula, but as our glance at the historical context of the tenth and eleventh centuries showed, nothing could be less sure. Certain port sites were doubtless very active, which is difficult to establish, either because archaeological research has not yet enabled us to locate them, or because, although recognized, they have yielded fewer Chinese and Middle Eastern sherds than their predecessors, a situation that evolved rapidly from the twelfth century on.

In the other parts of the world of the Southern Seas that were involved in this trade, as far as it is possible to form a judgement based on advances made in archaeological research, the situation seems roughly the same. Palembang yielded infinitely fewer Chinese sherds from this period than from the previous period. (Manguin 1987, 1993). The Banten Girang site in northwest part of Java yielded a fairly significant percentage (25%) of Chinese ceramics attributable to the eleventh century (40% for the three following centuries) (Dupoizat 1992: 57), a percentage that is comparable to the percentage in Satingpra.

The estuary of the Mae Khlong River (the river of Ratchaburi) at the end of the Gulf of Thailand, which harboured several likely entrepôt port sites linked to the region of Dvāravatī, also yielded numerous more or less intact pieces of Chinese sherds from the tenth and eleventh centuries, along with later ones, although there has never been any quantitative assessment for either of these types of ceramics. (Khambhirayanon 1984, Chandhavi P. 1984, Gumpera-yarnnont 1985, Chandhavi N. 1986, 1994).

The exception to all these sites that seem to take off only in the tenth to eleventh centuries—and more markedly in the eleventh—before they yielded their full measure in the following centuries, seems to be Lobu Tua in Barus (Dupoizat 1996), but it is certainly not unique; the stretch of time between the end of the ninth century and the end of the eleventh seems to be the main period of acquisition for ceramics. The Chinese kilns involved in this trade are those of Guangdong (Xicun, Chaozhou, Meixian), as well as Hunan (Changsha) or Zhejiang (Yue) and Jiangxi (Jingdezhen). Middle Eastern sherds from the tenth to eleventh centuries have also appeared here. The occupation of this site seems clearly to precede the great period of exportation of ceramics from the southern provinces of China to Southeast Asia, because no specimen of the typical Chinese productions of the twelfth century has turned up.

In light of this fragmentary information, we can appreciate the importance of the work that remains to be done if we are to come to a more exact understanding of the commercial landscape of the Southern Seas in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

From an artistic viewpoint, the remains are essentially Buddhist, as for the ninth century, but they do not totally exclude Brahmanical pieces, which is not surprising in the context of a cosmopolitan entrepôt port civilization. Thus Nakhon Si Thammarat, the Buddhist city par excellence, at least from the tenth century on, has preserved a temple dedicated to Śiva right up to the present time, as we have indicated (see above, Chapter Five), and we will show that judging from the religious structures of the *vimāna-maṇḍapa* type that have been found there, South Kedah was primarily Hindu from the twelfth to the fourteenth century.

II. Architectural Remains

1. The Chaiya region, so rich in ninth century architectural remains, has yielded no known ruins for the two following centuries. We cannot conclude from this, however, that it was deserted, as the region of Takua Pa seems to have been, because a number of images of Buddhist inspiration, which we will examine, have appeared there.

As we have already surmised, it is very likely that the centre of local power deserted the region of the Bay of Bandon to become established in the Nakhon Si Thammarat region, which was principally Brahmanical up to the very end of the eighth century, and that possible influence from Śrīvijaya might have contributed to tipping the balance in the region towards Buddhism during the ninth century. With the establishment of the capital of a city-state on the site of present-day Nakhon Si Thammarat that would thereafter be known as Tambralinga—whose imperialistic plottings and fluctuating fortunes we discussed earlier—architectural creations necessarily came to the fore. The additions made to the buildings, as well as their reconstruction in the context of a major and definitive rallying of the region to Buddhism, has left no structure that can be attributed to this transitional period.

The primitive appearance of the great *stūpa* of Nakhon Si Thammarat, however—which was probably constructed towards the middle of the tenth century in the heart of the new capital, in conformity with the architectural styles of the moment—may be preserved in the form of a reduced edifice near the present construction. (Fig. 173).

The first to be interested in this building was J. Y. Claeys (1931: 374-377, Figs. 39, 40, Pl. XXXVIII), who explains:

A tradition that seems to have been vested with a certain authority dictated that when modifications were made to a reliquary or *stūpa*, or when the primitive monument was wrapped up within the body of a larger edifice, the overseers of the works had the habit of erecting a reduced model nearby, a sort of scale model of the primitive form.

This building reduction at Nakhon Si Thammarat

is composed of a sort of large redented pedestal of slightly more than 2 m in height. Two projections jut outwards on the central cubic form. On each side, precisely positioned, is a niche containing a leaning statue of a standing Buddha. The center block becomes narrower in successive stages set back from each other and roughly equal, ending in a very elegant circular bell whose form is derived from the

Sinhalese stūpa. On each projection of the base is a small reduction of a building, adorned with a niche and surmounted by a small pointed stūpa. The entire piece is of great delicacy, and is reminiscent of colonial Indian architecture. We find the plan of a great monument, reduced to the dimensions of a little kiosk, suggesting the Candi Kalasan of Central Java [eighth to ninth century], or the Cham towers of Đông-du'ông and Mi-so'n [second half of the ninth to the end of the tenth century]. The base of the upper stūpa bell seems to rest on a lotus flower, symbolized by a cylindrical moulding decorated with lance-shaped, vertical leaves.

2. So far, the city-state of Langkasuka has yielded nothing on the architectural level that could be attributed to the tenth to eleventh centuries. But future digs in one or the other of the approximately thirty potential sites still to be explored may reveal some monuments from this period.

3. In South Kedah, too, few things can be attributed to this period. (Doc. 22).

a. Only one of the sites that has been excavated to date might eventually be linked to this period, although this would probably be chiefly due to the obviously very relative dating of some Middle Eastern ceramics found nearby during a 1978 excavation. (Shuhaimi 1984: 191-193 & Shuhaimi *et al.* 1990: 24-27). The particular appearance of these remains, which stand out among the others, also causes us to set them apart from the rest. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: 65-74, Doc. 37-51). The site was first excavated by Q. Wales (1940: 39-40), then again in 1974, and it is at the end of this last dig that it was reconstructed *in situ*. What remains of the temple today appears as a rather massive structure (9 x 5.5 metres), consisting of a *vimāna* and a *maṇḍapa* (Doc. 36), closely linked and entirely of brick construction, which originally rested on a single base composed of small pebbles that served as a foundation. In fact, the distinction between the two parts of the temple is only perceptible from the outside, in a projection of about ten centimetres in the verticality of the north and south walls that affects all the mouldings of these walls, and gives the *maṇḍapa* a slightly narrower width than the *vimāna*.

We can therefore consider that the outline of this *vimāna* forms a square of 5.5 metres per side, with, at its centre, a *cella* of 2.7 square metres. The walls have been restored to a height of 1.52 metres, which seems excessive to us, given the damage done to the remains before they were excavated. We have the same doubts about the

accuracy of the restorations done to the mouldings of these walls; these consist of a series of projections and a wide string-course consisting of six layers of brick, the two middle ones framed symmetrically by four others with their edges cut on a forty-five degree angle. There is no doubt that bricks of this type existed on the site, but the way they have been set in place seems debatable, in the light of the outlines drawn by Wales.

The *maṇḍapa* forms a quadrilateral of 3.5 by 5.3 metres at ground level, and the walls, according to the plan of the restoration, are finished with the same mouldings as the *vimāna* at the same level. On the inside is a hollowed-out room whose maximum wall surface dimensions are 3.05 square metres, but which, because of the play of a series of mouldings that widen the walls progressively towards the bottom, reaches the same inner dimensions at ground level as those of the *cella* of the *vimāna*, that is, 2.5 by 2.5 metres.

The opening providing communication between the *vimāna* and the *maṇḍapa* is 1.02 metres wide at the top of the walls. It has a sill some thirty centimetres high. The door of the *maṇḍapa* is directly in line with the *maṇḍapa* door, and is the same width.

This temple was probably covered with brick vaulting that would doubtless have been made by means of the corbelling technique, and may have been crowned with the *stūpika* that was discovered on the site. The fact that nails were also found gives reason to believe that a roof structure had been built somewhere; Shuhaimi *et al.* (1990: 25) speculate that this might have been used to support the brick vaulting, but this idea seems bizarre to us.

These successive excavations of the monument have produced a number of archaeological finds, including a *liṅga* and a statuette of Gaṇeśa, both in very poor condition, which nonetheless allow us to attribute to this temple a form of Śivaite religious worship.

In any case, the temple remained in use well beyond its possible foundation date, since Chinese sherds of the Song, Yuan and even Ming (probably fourteenth century) periods were also discovered at the time of the excavations.

b. Still in South Kedah, but south of the Sungai Merbok, at the level of Kampong Sungai Mas some nine kilometres to the interior, is an isolated site (UM 1 (24w)), irretrievably damaged on the eve of World War II and therefore not very informative, but which nonetheless yielded the lower part of a pedestal that may have been destined

for a *liṅga*, since the fact of the prior existence of one of these phallic symbols on the site (61 centimetres in height) is attested.

The pedestal is a single block of fine sandstone, 1.27 square metres wide, 49.5 centimetres high. (Fig. 174). Its sides are adorned with a series of elaborate mouldings formed of pilasters and counter-pilasters, framed by a smooth plinth and cornice. Its surface is almost flat, though the outer edge is slightly raised by 0.6 centimetres on a width of 22 centimetres. A depression 36.2 centimetres wide and 13.4 centimetres deep was created in the very centre, extending outward from the middle of each side in the form of the arm of a cross 10 centimetres long and 8.2 centimetres wide.

When this object appeared on the surface of the ground after some clandestine excavations during the 1930's, local tradition made it out to be the base of the mast of the flag of Rāja Bersiong (Raja Maha Prit Durya), a Malay monarch of Kedah, who would have reigned at the end of the fourteenth century or the beginning of the fifteenth, and whose memory was still sufficiently alive in the region for the creation of a number of reputedly ancient remains to be attributed to him: a fort, a *kraal*, a tomb, etc.

The villagers reported that an inscription in Siamese characters had existed on the cornice of the piece; nothing of this remained, and M. Sullivan (1957) theorized that it might have been erased because of the local peasants' habit of sharpening their scythes on the edge of the stone, which does in fact show traces of such activity. The author's purpose in studying the piece (Sullivan 1957: 290) was to find answers to three questions:

The identification of this pedestal, its date and possible connection with the art of other areas in Southeast Asia in the first millennium A.D.

This led him to resurrect some old ideas on the role of Kedah as a relay point for the Indianization of Southeast Asia, and on its possible links with these other regions. If we hold to his stylistic analysis of the object, we can note:

- That nothing comparable to this pedestal exists in pre-Angkor art or in Java.
- That it does, on the other hand, resemble a number of similar objects that can be found in Campā art, with, however, certain reservations: some Mi Thanh and Mi So'n pedestals also have smooth plinths and cornices, and among them is a whole series of

mouldings of the same type as those of the Kedah pedestal, but in these this space is also decorated with highly elaborate bas-reliefs that appear to have been applied to the moulded bottom.

He also wanted to find out what this piece had been used for. Q. Wales (1940: 41) had put forward the idea that it must have been either a Hindu fire-altar (*vedikā*), or the pedestal of a lost statue. He had apparently not thought of a *līṅga*, according to M. Sullivan, because there was no trace of *somasūtra* on the surface of the stone; Sullivan held to this theory nevertheless, on the basis of a comparison with the image of a *līṅga* from Tra Kieu illustrated by H. Parmentier (1909/18: Pl. 117); this piece includes not only a pedestal, but also a *līṅga* resting on a kind of drum (*avadēyar*) in two sections, representing the gods Viṣṇu and Brahmā, separated by a frieze of lotuses; from the upper drum emerges the pouring spout of the *somasūtra*, which allows the purifying waters to flow away from the pedestal. Sullivan was thus led to imagine a similar reconstruction for this piece, whose central section, we remember, includes not only the geometric depression, but also a slight difference in level in relation to the outer edges, where the supporting casings of the final *līṅga* could have been installed.

Sullivan is obviously at a loss to explain why this pedestal resembles the Campā pedestals. No link other than a commercial one ever existed between South Kedah and this kingdom, but Sullivan, faithful to the grand historical theories of his time—as if offering a possible explanation—reminds the reader that Campā experienced a punishing reversal at the hands of Annam at the end of the tenth century, and that this could have led to the emigration of certain Cam people to the Malay Peninsula. In spite of this romantic hypothesis, he is more inclined to believe that these resemblances were due to a common South Indian origin in the artistic influences that marked the two regions; why not?

The several Cam pedestals that served for his demonstration belong to the period from the seventh to the ninth century; the Tikam Batu pedestal with its much simpler manufacture could not be older than they. On the other hand, Sullivan gives to the Coja raid, which is supposed to have affected the region in 1025 (see above), a role in the destiny of the region that cannot be justified. This enabled him to conclude that the piece could not have been produced in South Kedah after this date. The date of the pedestal remains uncertain, therefore. But it would appear that its purpose has been proven by M.

Sullivan's demonstration: it must have been the elaborate base of a *linga*.

III. Sculptural Remains

No major work datable to the tenth and eleventh centuries has been found, but all along the shores of what was Panpan, then Tambhalinga, and to a lesser extent, Langkasuka, a number of pieces, notably of Buddhist inspiration, have appeared. Their style is always very composite, which again goes along with the multiplicity of artistic influences experienced by the Peninsula, and they are sometimes pure products of importation. The region of Chaiya in particular has yielded a number of these, which is enough to prove that, even if the area had been deserted by the authorities in power, as we suspect, it continued to be active.

1. The most significant find confirming such continuing activity is the image of Buddha found *in situ* in the northern niche of the east fore-part of the Wat Keo sanctuary, which, as we will show, is not contemporary with the foundation of the building (about 775 A.D.) or of its probable restoration during the ninth century. The image (Fig. 175) is very unusual in the context of the works of art that have come to light in the Malay Peninsula. The figure, unfortunately decapitated, is seated on a throne in *vīrāsana*, and leaning on a stele, a feature that is as much Indonesian as Cam. The position, as J. Boisselier notes (1979: 45), is not particularly significant, since it is the most widespread representation in the Indochinese Peninsula from Campā to Thailand, passing through Cambodia, because Indonesia preferred it to the position in *vajrāsana* inherited from Northeast India.

The gesture is a *bhūmisparśamudrā* treated in a distinctive way. The right hand, in fact, instead of reaching to touch the earth with the end of the fingers, is placed flat on the right knee; the left, which has disappeared, certainly rested, palm open, in the lap. This special feature can be compared with the *mudrā* in certain productions of Cam art; these are decapitated *arhats*, seated on thrones with the two hands placed flat on the knees; they come from Dōng Du'o'ng (the end of the ninth to the beginning of the tenth century). The gesture, unknown in Indian statuary, is well represented in Sino-Japanese art. (Dupont 1947/50). In any case, the *bhūmisparśamudrā* of this image is the same as that of two bronze statuettes in private collections

(Wattanavrangkul 1975: Figs. 28, 30) that J. Boisselier (1979: 45), perhaps somewhat gratuitously, believed could have originated in the Chaiya region and be dated to the same period as Wat Keo; their *āsana*, however, is in *vajrāsana*, which appears to be directly linked to the Indonesian tradition.

A special feature of the image is the naturalistic rendering of the body, which J. Boisselier (1979: 45) compares to Pre-Angkorian Buddhist statuary.

The costume provides little information. It is a smooth *uttarāsaṅga*, apart from some piping on the border, and leaves the right shoulder uncovered. The section of cloth of the *saṃghāṭi*, also smooth, falls from the left shoulder. This arrangement does not contradict that of the Caṃ Buddhas, although the robe in those images is usually pleated. From his examination, J. Boisselier (1979:46) concluded:

Therefore, with no direct links to any of the known Cham images, the Wat Keo image no less clearly presents a whole group of characteristics that show it to have a closer relationship to Cham art than to any other art of Southeast Asia.

We do not contradict this conclusion, given the architectural context to which this work belongs, but we nevertheless find the comparison somewhat weak, because in the end it rests only on the position of the right hand, which P. Dupont has shown is not Caṃ, but Sino-Japanese. We may therefore imagine that the tradition also reached the Bay of Bandon, and more generally the Gulf of Siam, without being relayed through Campā. This, finally, is what the bronze statuettes of the Dvāravatī type mentioned earlier would tend to prove.

The pedestal is no more informative than the robe, because its type was previously unknown. It is decorated on its two parallel sides with two bas-relief images of mythical lions, and, on the front, with a double *vajra* whose horizontal handle has been cut off. These decorative elements lack smooth frames, but the decoration of the *vajra* is adorned above and below with a band of lotus petals.

A study of the lions on the parallel sides is not very instructive; although they are represented in the same position, there are differences in their execution that caused J. Boisselier (1979: 46) to observe: “the lion to the right of the Buddha seems to be a poor copy of the lion to the left”; he found no model or direct equivalent, and

only his desire to find a Caṃ line of descent for them led him to compare them to certain atlas lions in the Tra Kieu style.

From all these comparisons, Boisselier concluded that the image bears only remote affinities with Caṃ art, but also that it has nothing Indonesian or Singhalese about it. On the basis of the comparisons he had suggested, he was inclined to attribute to it a date a century later than the date proposed for Wat Keo—rather gratuitously, in our opinion—in other words, to the tenth century, but the beginning of the tenth century is also the date that other authors (Krairiksh 1980: 49) have given to the monument itself.

These Peninsular works are the product of such a mixture of influences that it is practically impossible to attribute to them a date within a century. P. Krairiksh (1980: Pl. 38) identifies the image as Akṣobhya, Immutible, Immovable, the second of the five Dhyāni Buddhas from the school of *vajrāsana* Buddhism; this is the Buddha of the east; its *mudrā* is the same as the *mudrā* of our image, and its symbol is the *vajra*. By partially destroying this symbol on the plinth of the statue, it seems the iconoclasts wished to eliminate the original purpose of the monument and its representations, in other words, the *Mahāyāna*, which, as some pieces of archaeological evidence show, often assumed the Tantric form of *vajrāsana* in the Malay Peninsula. We will explain later how from the end of the eleventh century, and certainly in the beginning of the twelfth (see below, Chapter Thirteen), the east coast of the Peninsula experienced the influence of the original form of Buddhism coming from Śrī Laṅkā; and in any case, the region of Dvāravatī, relatively near to Chaiya, had never abandoned it.

2. A whole series of bronze statuettes of Buddha in Thai museums or in private collections share an unmistakable family resemblance, and are reputed to come from the region of Chaiya. (Fig. 176). We believe them to be attributable to the tenth and eleventh centuries. They represent a Buddha standing in a very rigid position making *vitarkamudrā* with the upraised right hand, while the left is in *varadamudrā*, which does not prevent the two arms, which are bent at the elbows, from being held at the same level.

The costume is rendered in a simplistic manner, falling in stiff pleats suggested by grooves, but the three elements are very distinct. The *uttarāsaṅga* leaves the right shoulder bare, following the body closely in a rather confused way; its front edge, with the engraved

pleats suggesting that it is pulled tightly up over the left shoulder, and falls down the back, covers only the upper part of the arm, allowing the sculptor to represent the empty space between the arm and the body. This rising movement uncovers most of the lower part of the *antaravāsaka*, which flares slightly at the sides with a gathering of sketchily rendered central folds between the legs, corresponding to the tightening of the waist of the under-skirt (its presence at this level is indicated by a slight effect of relief under the *uttarāsaṅga*). The *saṃghāṭi*, on the left shoulder, consists of a narrow band of smooth cloth that includes several engraved folds, and falls to the waist.

The faces are square and smiling, the hair voluminous and conical. The *uṣṇīṣa*, which is treated in different ways (on one of the representations we know, it even takes the form of a sugar loaf), adds considerably to the volume.

P. Dupont (1942: 112), who was the first to publish photographs of three of these statuettes, compared them with the Buddha of Grahi and a gilt stone head of Buddha in Chaiya, seeing in the group a possible late production of a ‘Chaiya Workshop’ that would have produced them in around the fifteenth century (he dated the two other works to the fourteenth century). These comparisons, which we consider risky—J. Boisselier (1974: 103) also believes that the pieces are too dissimilar to constitute the production of a single workshop—were perhaps suggested to Dupont by the presence on the head of Buddha, on the head of the Grahi Buddha, and on one of the statuettes of the standing Buddha, of an ornament for the *uṣṇīṣa* in the shape of a leaf from the Bodhi Tree. This ornament appears to have been authentic only on the head of the Grahi Buddha, since the individual head lost its ornament at the time of its move to Bangkok (Boribal & Griswold 1950/86: 54), and the ornament on one of the statuettes (which had belonged in the collection of Rāma VI) has likewise disappeared—after Dupont saw them in 1936—during a perhaps rather drastic cleaning of the works. (Boribal & Griswold 1950/86: 51).

Boribal Buribhand and A. B. Griswold did not question Dupont’s datings, and proposed considering these sculptures to be part of the development of a ‘Chaiya School’ that would have produced numerous standing Buddhas, which they dated to the seventeenth century (a recent reassessment of these pieces places them more reliably in the fourteenth century). The dating of these statuettes, which were

apparently reproduced with slight variations on a grand scale, remains problematical. P. Krairiksh (1980: 66) and Nik Hassan Shuhaimi (1984: 258) have suggested that the faces may be compared to certain Khmer Buddhist works of the tenth century (the Pré Rup style), on which a conical *uṣṇīṣa* is a direct extension of the hairstyle or is somewhat distinct from it, but retains the same conical appearance. (Boisselier 1955: Figs. 91, 92A & 1966: Fig. 65A, Pl. XLII, 1). The comparison does not seem totally inappropriate, especially since, in another detail, a moustache (a frequent feature in the Khmer style we are dealing with) seems to appear on the upper lip of some of the statuettes we are examining. This, added to the fact that the faces are sometimes very Mōn in appearance (Krairiksh 1980: 66), speaks of a kinship with the later Dvāravatī productions of Buddha from the regions of Nakhon Pathom and Suphanburi in the basin of the Tha Chin river; in addition, the combination of the two *mudrās* is also of Mōn influence, with the robe retaining a clear echo of the adjustments that came in with the art of South India and Śrī Laṅkā and the Post-Gupta era (aberrations in the rendering of the belt and the superfluous central fold of cloth that we will analyse in connection with other contemporary images are not yet in evidence in this period); and finally, the fact that the *saṃghāṇi* appears here when it is not present in the oldest examples—all of these facts incline us to date these images to the end of the tenth century or the very beginning of the eleventh. They would then be the productions of a local workshop, or imitations of images from this workshop, which might have been located in the region of Chaiya.

3. The region of Chaiya has also yielded a number of works that still bear the mark of the aesthetic canons of the school of Dvāravatī, a region that was definitively subjugated by Khmer influence in this period. All of them come from Wat Phra Barommatham, a sanctuary founded in the eighth century, which, as we have indicated, never ceased to be active right up to our era.

a. The first of these is a bronze statuette of the standing Buddha (Fig. 177) with an unusual appearance because of the pronounced inflexion and the distance of the left arm from the body, features that led P. Dupont (1959: 225-226, Fig. 467) to speculate that it had “doubtless been manufactured in a defective way,” and that as a result, it was not possible to “use its example properly.” We know of no line of descent for this particular position of the body. On the

other hand, an examination of the treatment of the head and the body, and of the costume, makes it possible to compare it with other bronze images of the standing Buddha.

The head has a hairstyle covered with a low *uṣṇīṣa* that P. Dupont (1959: 226) thinks could have been topped with a lotus blossom. The curls are small and alternating. The features are blurred, but it is still possible to see that the face is full, the eyebrows clearly drawn but not joined, the lids lowered, the nose prominent, the lips edged without exaggeration and raised at the corners; the earlobes are very large, assuming a very simplistic curved form; they are of a piece with the neck, which is marked with beauty folds, but very short. The body copies the rather ordinary form, with wide, massive shoulders combined with a narrow chest, undifferentiated pectoral muscles, and a pinched-in waist.

It is the costume that attracts the most comment. The three traditional elements of the monastic vesture are represented: the *antaravāsaka*, the *uttarāsāṅga* and the *saṃghāṭi*. The lower edge of the *antaravāsaka* can be made out in spite of the break in the bottom section of the statuette; at the waist, the upper border is also visible, but in an unusual form, resulting from a misunderstanding of the original models, in which its presence under the *uttarāsāṅga* was only indicated with a furrow or a slight edge that usually curved above the navel. Here it is reproduced mechanically, and becomes a scalloped motif expressed by a strongly accented double curve that reveals the abdomen and ends in a point under the navel. P. Dupont (1959: 225) observed correctly that this “arrangement, setting aside the point, reminds us of the Khmer statues of the Bāpḥuon style, that is, from the second half of the eleventh century.” Added to this feature are two others, equally aberrant: the belt and the frontal fold of cloth, whose beginnings in the statuary of the Dvāravātī region were closely analysed by Dupont (1959: 219-221). From this analysis it emerged that it became more and more usual to double the edge corresponding to the border of the *antaravāsaka* with a furrow that effectively corresponded to the lower edge of a real belt. This furrow eventually became a distinct, symmetrical relief at the upper edge, and from there, took on the appearance of a totally confused belt that was sometimes found in conjunction with the preserved initial upper edge of the undergarment.

The examples that are farthest from the original models add a real belt outside the robe. This is what appears on the statuette. The

frontal fold of cloth has also evolved from a series of misunderstandings that, like the belt, can only be detected in an examination of the successive copies of models derived from Gupta art. In this school of art, the material of the *uttarāsaṅga* clings tightly to the body, describing at the groin a kind of upside-down triangle marked at the top by the *antaravāsaka* underlining the waist under the thickness of the *uttarāsaṅga* and in the lower section by two lines following the folds of the groin and extending into the space between the legs. From this original pattern, it became usual to blunt the point of the triangle and to suggest the clinging of the cloth with two distinct parallel lines rounded only at the top of the thighs, without ever joining, in this way marking a narrow vertical band filling the space between the legs. This band, which initially represented the section of the *uttarāsaṅga* that did not cling to the legs, was later interpreted as a separate element and attached to the belt; at first lightly depicted behind the space between the legs, it soon appeared in relief; this is the case with our example, in which the border is still set off with piping. Of its original form, the frontal fold of cloth retains only the flared appearance of its upper section.

Aside from this, it can be seen that the lower border of the *antaravāsaka* leaves the right shoulder bare, folding back over the opposing shoulder, and that the left arm, in an unusual gesture, draws the cloth away from the body, creating a fold of material with a wavy edge marked by piping. Finally, the *saṃghāṭi* is worn on the left shoulder in a simplified manner; it is nothing more than a plain band with an uneven end section suggesting, at least sketchily, the existence of the folds that were usually represented.

The hands are missing, and we can only guess at what their *mudrā* might have been. The left hand was probably limited to holding a piece of the robe (*kaṭakamudrā*), while the right one was either in *vitarkamudrā* or in *varadamudrā*.

P. Dupont (1959: 223-226) classed this image in his group Q, which was a series of the last representations in bronze of the standing Buddha in the art of Dvāravatī. As was his habit, he provided no dating. Nevertheless we remember the comparison with a detail of the costume of the statues of Bàphuon (the second half of the eleventh century), and the evocation of affinities between this statue and works of the Mōn style from Lamphuon (from the end of the thirteenth century). The unusual position of the statuette led to comparisons with the walking Buddha of the Sukhothai style (thir-

teenth to fifteenth centuries). (Bowie 1972: 112, No. 68). Apart from the general appearance of the head, the analysis we have just made of the garment does not permit us to accept such a theory. Therefore, along with P. Dupont, we are inclined to see it as a late and awkward production of Dvāravatī art, probably from the very end of the eleventh century.

b. Another image with the same origin, a beautiful statue of the standing Buddha on a two-tiered pedestal, which must initially have been a double *padmāsana* (Fig. 178). The image is perfectly frontal and symmetrical, and the two hands, slightly damaged, are making the *vitarkamudrā*. It would be a rather ordinary statue of the Dvāravatī type if the robe did not include a gilt belt and a frontal vertical fold. P. Dupont (1959: 204-205, Fig. 421), who examined it, saw it as a special case, along with three other pieces, because of the particular treatment of the mouth and the characteristics of the robe; nevertheless, in relation to the robe, he did not rule out the theory that because of the significant amount of lacquering, this belt and the small band could have been “added after the fact, at an indeterminate date”; he thought this thesis ‘improbable,’ however, because other characteristics of the sculpture indicated a later period, and “bronzes attributable without question to the last phase of Mōn art also wear the belt and the little band which, in these cases, were not added.”

The very elongated body is similar to those of the statues of Dupont’s group C, and fits almost exactly into a rectangle, with, however, the parallel borders of the *uttarāsaṅga* flaring lightly towards the bottom. Other usual details appear: the front border of the *uttarāsaṅga* describing a half-circle on the outside, the rectilinear rear border, the *antaravāsaka* indicated sideways by two triangles under the semi-circular fall of the preceding one, ridges marking the tibias and extending to the shins. The stele on which the feet and ankles are sculpted is almost as wide as the *uttarāsaṅga*.

As we saw earlier when considering the standing statuette of Buddha, Dupont presented a clear analysis of the process by which the belt and the frontal fold of cloth evolved, but these additions hardly appear on the stone statues of the Dvāravatī style. In his book he is only able to show a single image wearing a belt that has been incorporated as an added piece (1959: 203-204, Fig. 420). The statue we are analysing is the only one that combines the belt and the frontal fold of cloth. The section of cloth is represented as a strip of material attached to the belt, slightly enlarged at its lower extremity, that does not flare at the waist. This small strip is edged with piping,

and only features on the surface of the *uttarāsaṅga*, while on the examples of later statues, it reappears on the lower visible edge of the *antaravāsaka*. The gilt belt is placed over the upper part of the hips, leaving the light band of the upper edge of the *antaravāsaka* visible; this then goes up into a point under the navel in a line that will later be taken up in the bronze productions. The existence of these ornaments, which are systematic in the art of Ayutthaya, were at first considered by P. Dupont to be a borrowing from the Khmer style from Bāyon, but an examination of the late productions of the art of Dvāravatī, to which the statue belongs, led him to consider this belt and the frontal fold of cloth to be borrowings from Mōn art that may have previously influenced Khmer art (the Thais are only supposed to have reached the lower Menam at the beginning of the fourteenth century).

The head with its heavy features, perhaps thickened by stucco and gilding, displays the characteristic features of Dvāravatī art: from the oval shape of the face to the barely indicated chin, the arched eyebrows joined over a short, flat nose, the lowered eyes, the ears with lobes hanging down to the shoulders, and the neck marked with beauty folds. The hairstyle is voluminous, the *uṣṇīṣa* substantial; the round and voluminous curls alternate with each other.

This image should be considered a late production from the end of the Dvāravatī style (end of the eleventh century). P. Dupont (1959: 204), however, does not rule out the possibility that Mōn traditions lasted for a long time in the Malay Peninsula, far from the former centres of power that had passed under Khmer control: “perhaps up to the thirteenth or fourteenth century.”

c. We will mention a last Buddhist work, represented by the remains of a bronze image of Buddha that was originally seated. (Fig. 179). Given the position of the open left hand in the lap, the right hand must have been in *bhūmisparśamudrā*.

The *uttarāsaṅga* leaves the right shoulder bare; the *antaravāsaka* is distinctly visible at the waist; the *saṃghāṭi* consists of a band of cloth draped over the left shoulder with no indication of folds, and a slightly flared lower border. The features of the head, which is neither too large nor too small, seem to derive from a mixture of influences, or from a style in full evolution, in this case that of Dvāravatī: the lowered eyelids, with, just underneath, a wavy line suggesting the curved edges of lotus petals; the rounded ridge of the eyebrows, joined over a very long hooked nose that comes down over a rather small mouth, but with distinctly edged lips raised at the

corners, the small chin, which is slightly set back. These features are set in a broad face in the shape of an oval. The lobes of the ears, with a profile in the form of an arch, go down to the shoulders, to which they are attached, though the neck is still distinct from them, and marked with beauty folds. The hair, which is not very full, consists of small curls that cover the head with no excess. From the hair emerges, abruptly, an almost cylindrical *uṣṇīṣa* that must originally have been topped with a lotus bud.

Some of these traits are undeniably Mōn, in particular the eyes and the eyebrows; but the lower part of the face is reminiscent of the technique used in the treatment of the face of the Buddha of Grahi (see below, Chapter Thirteen): the chin in particular is weak and set back, the mouth smaller than in the art of Dvāravatī. The hairstyle is echoed in examples of the same art, but with the bud intact. (Boisselier 1974: Fig. 17). The arrangement of the robe is found on the later images in the Mōn style (see the previous bronze statuette), and also on the Grahi Buddha, whose date is incontestable (1183 A.D.). The combination of all these features leads us to favour the end of the eleventh century, perhaps the beginning of the twelfth, as the likely date for this image.

d. To this list we must add a stone statue of Buddha which, although it was discovered much farther to the south, in the province of Pattani, and is preserved today in Wat Pasi (Yaring), belongs to the same tradition of works inspired by the art of Dvāravatī or imported from the lower valley of the Menam Chao Phraya (Fig. 180). It could date from the eleventh century, although it is difficult to study its original details, since stucco and gilding were applied to it, doubtless in the period of Ayutthaya. Added to the late feature of a frontal fold of material falling from the waist—here combined with the u-shaped loop formed by the lower part of the *uttarāsaṅga*, as on all the standing statues in Dvāravatī style—is the unusual feature of the combination on the same statue of two *mudrās* that are rarely associated: the *varadamudrā* of the right hand and the *abhayamudrā* of the left. At least one statue, from the National Museum of Bangkok, which was illustrated by P. Dupont (1959: Pl. 392), shared this original feature; that image has lost its left hand, but the missing gesture could only be an *abhayamudrā* or a *vitarkamudrā*.

4. Since nothing is simple in the realm of archaeology and art history, the region of Chaiya, in the midst of the Buddhist context we have just described, yielded a bronze statuette of Viṣṇu from this

period, which is found today in the museum of Wat Phra Borommathat in Nakhon Si Thammarat. (Fig. 181). The four-armed image (39.5 centimetres high) is complete but for the attributes, which are hard to discern (only the wheel in the rear right hand is easy to identify). The body is clumsily rendered, with short, spindly legs, a pinched-in waist, an over-large head. The costume is a pleated *sampot* with double anchor-shaped folds in front and a loop of cloth draped in a pocket over the left thigh; the gathered cloth is held in at the hips by a belt with a square gilt buckle above which a section of the double falling loops opens up modestly. The hair is arranged in a high *jaṭāmukūṭa* formed of overlapping horizontal braids; the brow is encircled with a raised diadem made of a large band decorated with floral motifs arranged in alternating diamond-shaped and half-diamond lozenges; it is surmounted by a leafy border.

The piece is unmistakably Khmer. Both its costume and its hair-style invite comparisons with works of the Khleang style (around 965 to 1010) (Boisselier 1955: Pl. 53, 54A), and there is no reason to doubt that it was imported from Cambodia, probably in the period from the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, during which time, as we have shown, the sovereign of Tambralinga was attempting to become master of Angkor.

5. The peninsula of Satingpra, specifically at Wat Khanum (Muang District, Songkhla Province), yielded a standing bronze statuette of Avalokiteśvara of a rather rare type (Fig. 182): it has eleven heads and eleven pairs of arms. The first heads are arranged above the principal one in two rows of seven heads and three heads, while the twenty-two arms radiate out from the principal pair, which has missing forearms. The hands, with open palms and extended fingers, depending on their position, are executing a *varadamudrā* or an *abhayamudrā*. The aesthetics of this little image and its costume, leave no room for doubt about its Khmer origins. The pleated *sampot* includes the large fold of cloth hanging over the belt, combined with a double anchor-shaped fall of cloth down the front (the highest section of the material is also the shortest) in the Koh Ker style; nevertheless, it preserves a loop of cloth draped over the left thigh, a characteristic of the Bakheng style. The image, imported from Cambodia, probably dates to the second half of the tenth century.

This representation of the *ekadaśamukha* (eleven-headed) Avalokiteśvara, still known by the name *samantamukha*, “the ‘All-

sided One'—the god who looks in every direction to save all creatures" (Getty 1914: 67)—is extremely rare in ancient Khmer art. It is known later in the art of Bâyon, at Banteay Chmar (from the end of the twelfth to the beginning of the thirteenth century) (Boisselier 1964: Fig. 1), with other aberrant representations (up to thirty-two arms).

The pedestal of this statuette, which is made of a different quality of bronze, is surely not original. Represented on it is a lotus blossom with only one row of petals, on which the image stands.

The later period is represented by other small Khmer bronzes. Like the preceding period, it should be considered in connection with what has been said about the political relationships that existed between the shores of the Gulf of Thailand at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries.

6. Still in the category of imported works, we must now discuss a grouping of pieces originating in Dravidian India, whose presence must be directly related to the Coja initiatives in the realm of the Southern Seas, and particularly in the Malay Peninsula, at the beginning of the eleventh century. Two of these pieces were discovered at Wiang Sa, an atypical site that had yielded nothing striking since the discovery of the beautiful statues of the mitred Viṣṇu that we have already described (sixth century). (See above, Chapter Five, Figs. 6, 7.) Their discovery is evidence that in the tenth and eleventh centuries, this site in the interior of the Peninsula was still a place of passage and of trade, which we believe can be explained, as we have said, by the existence of a very large plain used for rice cultivation, which could provide enough food to welcome a significant population; the site was also linked to the outlying regions by a network of rivers and passageways through the Nakhon Si Thammarat Range. Another image of the same type was found in Chaiya, and a fourth at Wat Suthawat (Chumphon) a little farther to the north. Nevertheless, although scattered, these works can be considered to belong to one and the same city-state, Tambralinga. And finally, we should add that a statuette of the same origin was discovered on a site in South Kedah.

a. One of the images from the Wiang Sa region, a sculpture in high relief, represents one of the terrible aspects of Śiva, known under the name of Bhairava (Fig. 183), who was called upon during rituals designed to defeat and destroy enemies. The representation of

this aspect of the god was widespread in the Coḷa period, as is attested in the decoration of the outer niches of the great temples of Tañjāvūr (Bṛhadīśvara), Dārāsūram (Rājarājeśvara), Gaṅgaikoṇḍa-coḷapuram (Bṛhadīśvara), and many others still standing or destroyed, whose former decorations are preserved in the *Art Gallery* of Tañjāvūr. (Fig. 184). The god is depicted with four arms, standing naked, and leaning against a grimacing dog, the animal that accompanies him when this side of his character is represented. In spite of its nakedness, the image wears the *yajñopavīta* and several jewels (necklace, bracelets, a belt with bells); among these stands out a long bell chain (*vanamālā*), which hangs almost to the ankles, in a style found from the early days of the Coḷa period (Harle 1963: Note 1, p. 118) and beyond. The fan-shaped halo of hair spreading out around the head is a feature of the representations of Bhairava used in the earliest images from the Coḷa period. This hairstyle indicates a date sometime between 850 and 1000. (Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1957: 15). A similar hairstyle is worn by several images discovered in a temple built during the reign of the Coḷa sovereign Parāntaka I (907-955). (*Ibidem*: 15-16). Comparisons can also be made with an image found in Śrī Laṅkā dating from the period of the island's occupation by the Coḷas (993-1070). (Collective 1960: Pl. 1A, B, 74-75). Among the attributes, the trident in the rear left hand is easily identified, and the third eye is clearly visible on the forehead. This statue in high relief some fifty centimetres in height lacks the quality of the ninth-century Pallava works from the region of Takua Pa that we have already described. In particular, the correct proportions of head and body are not respected.

b. The second image found in the Wiang Sa region represents a four-armed standing Viṣṇu. (Fig. 185). It, too, is a statue in high relief, and the techniques of its manufacture leave the impression that it was made by the sculptor of the previous piece; in particular, the effort to give it the appearance of a statue-in-the-round caused the artist to pierce the stone in four places. The god is wearing a short *dhotī* ending at the knees, adorned with piping and held in place by belts, including a cloth one from which previously rolled-up sections of material fall down the hips on either side. The *yajñopavīta* winds in a curving line across the chest, as in the image of Bhairava, and the jewellery is plentiful: a large necklace, armbands, bracelets and ankle rings, belts for the torso. The over-large head wears a massive *kirīṭamukuṭa* hairstyle. The hands of the two raised back arms hold the conch to the right and the wheel (represented frontally) to the

left, on the tips of the outstretched fingers. The hands of the forward arms are not holding attributes: the right hand is in *abhayamudrā* and the left is drawn down to the thigh.

c. The third image in this style was found at Wat Sala Tung (Chaiya). It represents the sun god, Sūrya (Fig. 186). Like the previous images, it is strictly frontal; its two hands and its feet are missing. It, too, is not a true statue-in-the-round: although the back is not totally smooth, it is a high relief that is hardly clear of its support.

The identification with Sūrya has been established on the basis of the halo against which the head stands out. The wide halo is decorated with beading on the front side and concentric rays at the back. This last feature, combined with the *yajñopavīta* that winds in a wavy line across the chest, calls for a comparison with more complete images of the god, notably a bronze image from South India (Sivaramurti 1963: 55a), and another from Śrī Laṅkā (Sivaramurti 1963: 55b); both of these are dated to the eleventh century (the period during which the Coḷas occupied the island (993-1070)). This comparison makes it possible to assume that the missing hands, in identical fashion, were both holding a blossoming lotus flower, symbolizing the creative role of the god. The hair is worn in a smooth *kirīṭamukuṭa*; at the bottom is a gold ring with an ornament in the front; in addition, a diadem with a central jewel is worn across the brow. The badly damaged facial features are characterized by protruding eyes and fleshy lips in the style of the two previous faces. The thin body is badly proportioned: the shoulders, especially, are too wide and the chest too large in relation to the hips and legs, which appear atrophied. The single article of clothing is a short *dhotī* adorned with hip belts, its material falling in lateral folds; all of this is awkwardly executed, but here again, the piece is sculpted according to the principles of Coḷa Dravidian India of the eleventh century (notably the tight, narrow belt in the front). The jewellery consists of several necklaces, jewelled biceps bracelets, and a belt under the breast; to all of these were certainly added wrist bracelets and ankle rings. This is an obviously clumsy piece whose general appearance and awkward features are similar to those of the two other images discovered at Wiang Sa.

S. O'Connor (1972: 60-63), who was the first to study these three pieces, dated the first two to the tenth or eleventh centuries, the second more certainly to the eleventh because of similarities between it and a Coḷa piece in bronze. (Sivaramurti 1962: Pl. 39). It is very difficult to be more specific, because the three pieces are remarkably

clumsy, and for this very reason, difficult to compare with some probably similar statues that could serve as points of reference for Indian art, but which no one has considered worth reproducing or studying in detail among the flood of more sophisticated works that can be found in South India.

d. A probable head of Viṣṇu was discovered in the crypt of Wat Suthawat in Chumphon. (Fig. 187). The piece is too worn and too incomplete to be dated with accuracy, but in quality, its initial techniques of workmanship are on a par with those of the most accomplished pieces from South India, from which it was imported. The *kirīṭamukūṭa* hairstyle worn by the divinity is clearly in the shape of a truncated cone surmounted by a sort of ornament with a rounded lower edge and a lotus bud on the top. The surface of the *kirīṭamukūṭa* is decorated with a net with crest ornaments rising on the front and sides.

The brow was originally encircled by a band that can hardly be detected today. This type of hairstyle was found in South India over a very long period. Sivaramurti (1963) illustrates some images that wear it, give or take a few details, which belong as much to the Pallavas of the eighth and ninth centuries (Fig. 14a) as to the Coḷas of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Figs. 39a, 71a, 85), or again to the Pāṇḍyas in the tenth century. (Fig. 91a). P. Krairiksh (1980: 55) proposes an apt comparison with a Coḷa work from the tenth century, a Viṣṇu from Tiruchcherai. (Barrett 1965: Pl. 47-48). It would not be stretching the point to identify this face as a Viṣṇu, but given the diversity of the divinities represented in South India, it could be something altogether different.

The proposed datings are always influenced by our knowledge of the Coḷa raid on the Malay Peninsula in the beginning of the eleventh century and the existence of the stone statues we have already studied.

e. Finally, a standing four-armed bronze statue (Fig. 188), which is extremely eroded, was discovered in South Kedah on site PB 4/5 (21/22w), a Buddhist site that in addition yielded several crude images of Buddha. (See above, Chapter Eight.) This association led certain authors (Shuhaimi *et al.* 1990: 48) to seek only a Buddhist identification for this image, and the name of Bṛḥkūṭī, a feminine emanation of Avalokiteśvara, was advanced. To us this is difficult to accept. The statuette, with a pronounced inflexion and a severely pinched-in waist, wore a long *dhōṭī* including a frontal fold of cloth and wavy sections of material at the sides. Added to this were hip

belts altered by wear until they took on the appearance of a sort of short skirt. The *yajñopavīta* crosses the chest in a line that curves in the manner of the statues of South India. The head, which is disproportionately large in comparison to the body, was probably arranged in a voluminous *kirīṭamukūṭa* style. The jewellery included a necklace, earrings, armbands, bracelets, a torso belt and a gilt belt at the waist. The raised hand of the right rear arm holds what looks distinctly like a conch, with the attribute held up on the hand in the manner of the images we have already studied. The attributes or the gestures of the three other hands can no longer be identified, but the likely presence of the conch makes it possible to propose an identification with Viṣṇu. The Dravidian origin of the piece is incontestable, but its exact date is more problematical. It is tempting, however, to date it to the tenth to eleventh centuries, as for the previous images, even if an earlier date (eighth to ninth century, the Pallava period) cannot be totally ruled out, or even a later date, although this would seem improbable.

At the conclusion of this examination of the sculptural remains, it would appear that with the exception of the Coḷa works and the small Khmer bronze, which are obviously imported, and reflect Brahmanism, all the other pieces are Buddhist. To complete this chapter, we must mention the output during these two centuries of a whole gamut of new votive tablets.

7. Votive tablets

It is sometimes quite difficult to put into perspective certain tablets from the eighth and ninth centuries and those that can be attributed to the period we are considering in this chapter, and the authors who have studied them. Chirapravati, in particular (1994, 1997), hesitates too often for our liking between the ninth and tenth centuries when dating certain pieces. It is of course reasonable to suppose that certain themes remained popular over several centuries, and that the *Mahāyāna* motifs, which usually emphasized Avalokiteśvara, the most popular of all the *bodhisattvas*, were produced for a long time. A tendency that became established in the tenth century was the creation of representations of Tantric inspiration, which, however, had already been present in the ninth, since the *Vajrāyana* was known in the realm of the Southern Seas from the beginning of the eighth century, and had experienced considerable success, probably because of the magical aspects of its rituals. Nevertheless, the end of

the tenth century, and certainly the eleventh, saw the reappearance of tablets representing the Buddha in the orthodox manner, which should probably be linked to the reestablishment, particularly in Nakhon Si Thammarat, of a traditional form of Buddhism originating in Śrī Laṅkā. We will discuss this in the next chapter.

Let us emphasize that an iconographic examination of these pieces highlights the numerous artistic influences that will have featured in their creation, deriving primarily from Northeast India, the India of the Pālas, either directly, or by way of Java or even Burma, whose sovereign Anōratha, as we have seen, in about 1060, began to press his conquests in the Malay Peninsula. (See above.)

a. The representations of the *Mahāyāna* deities, therefore, at least in the tenth century, are disseminated widely throughout the Peninsula, extending the presence of the representations we have already described from the ninth century: the many-armed standing Avalokiteśvara, the seated Avalokiteśvara, sometimes in *mahārājāḷilāsana*, with two or four arms, Jambhala in *lalitāsana*, *maṇḍalas* of Vairocana. Added to these, especially at Tham Khuhaphimuk, were previously unknown representations of Maitreya seated in *lalitāsana*, recognizable by the *stūpa* of the chignon, the right hand in *varadamudrā*, the left holding the stem of a lotus; of Mañjuśrī in *mahārājāḷilāsana*, the right hand in *varadamudrā*, the left holding the blue lotus (Fig. 189)—its position, gesture and attribute hardly distinguishing it from other representations of *bodhisattvas*, particularly of Avalokiteśvara; what marks the difference is the hairstyle, which is composed of five knots of hair (symbolizing the five Dhyāni Buddhas). We also find representations of Vairocana seated in *vajrāsana* and in *dharmacakramudrā*, the head surrounded by a halo (Fig. 190), and four-armed images of Prajñāpāramitā seated on a double lotus in *vajrāsana*. The upper hands are in *dharmacakramudrā*, while the two others hold, to the right, a rosary, to the left, the stem of a lotus flower. (Fig. 191). Finally, tablets including the impression of a *stūpa* with a voluminous *aṇḍa* and *chattras* decorated with garlands that stand out against a background of the engraved letters of an inscription, appeared in Tham Khuhaphimuk, and also in the region of Trang.

b. Another tendency in this transition period, as we have indicated, seems to be related to the production of tablets that restore the image of the historic Buddha to a place of honour, probably in a *Theravāda* perspective.

Thus P. Chirapravati (1994: 276-278) points out a series of tablets in varying shapes (round, ovoid, tear-shaped, with a stand...) and different sizes (5 to 15 centimetres in height), representing the Buddha on a double lotus in *bhūmisparśamudrā* and in *vajrāsana*. They come primarily from the site of Khao Krom (Wiang Sa), but also from Tham Khao Prasong (Chaiya); an example that is in good condition is kept in the museum of Nakhon Si Thammarat (Fig. 192), and a bronze mould used to reproduce one of the tablets was found in the region of Kanchanadit (Surat Thani Province). (Chirapravati 1994: 278). The aesthetic slimness of the body is strongly reminiscent of Nālandā art of the tenth century: the halo with a beaded edge surrounding the head and the decorated chevet against which the figures lean also call to mind this Pāla tradition. The reverse side of these tablets may or may not bear the impression of a seal reproducing the Buddhist credo, *ye dharmā*. Akṣobhya makes the same gesture, but because the lion and the *vajra* are absent, it is probably impossible to identify the image from a Tantric perspective. It would then be a representation of the historic Buddha, who, all things considered, was very popular in this position and with this gesture during the Pāla period.

Illustrating the same tendency, we believe, another type of tablet on a quadrangular clay plaque with a rounded top (*ca.* 13 centimetres in height) represents four rows of four Buddhas with blurred outlines seated in *vajrāsana* and in *bhūmisparśamudrā* on a stylized double lotus (Fig. 193); the Buddhas are separated from each other by the silhouette of a votive *stūpa*. Some whole or fragmentary examples of these tablets have appeared in the region of Chaiya, as well as in the Phatthalung region (Khao Ok Thalu). Their aesthetics should be juxtaposed to that of similar Burmese productions, which themselves have been influenced stylistically by Pāla art; we have described an example of one of these, from Mergui (Fig. 168).

Another type of tablet that illustrates the same tendency features a seated Buddha in *vajrāsana* and in *bhūmisparśamudrā* on a double lotus which itself sometimes rests on a platform with redented edges. (Fig. 194). The museum of Chaiya possesses two related examples. Tablets of this type have also been found in the regions of Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Phatthalung. They are quadrangular in shape, with a ribbed upper section in the form of an arch.

In general, because of the worn condition of the pieces, it is impossible to make out facial features or characteristics of the

costumes; the treatment of the shape of the body is similar to that of Pāla images. The figure is incorporated into a structure with vertical uprights (sometimes ringed), surmounted by a broken trefoiled arch; this arch is itself topped with the silhouette of a *śikhara* ending in a *chattra*. The border of the arch, like that of the *śikhara*, seems to be adorned with waving greenery. Two overlapping votive *stūpas* are arranged at the top of each of the uprights of the structure. A Buddhist credo may be featured at the base of the image.

This tablet is an illustration of the Buddha at Bodh Gayā just before he reached Enlightenment. The structure depicted at the top is the temple of the Mahābodhi, and the foliage represents the Bodhi Tree. This type of image was popularized by the pilgrims who travelled to Buddhist holy sites and brought back similar tablets. Those that we are now considering are therefore not necessarily productions from Bodh Gayā. P. Chirapravati (1994: 68-72) sees in them derivative productions of the Pāla/Pagan type, created, doubtless locally, after foreign Pāla or Burmese models. The specimens that are authentically Pāla are dated to between the tenth and the eleventh centuries (Lawson 1988); the Burmese models in the same style do not date from before Anōratha's time (1044-1077). A specimen of these from Mergui has been described above. (Fig. 170). As a result, the examples that are of interest to us probably belong to a similar period, and can very likely be linked to the southern conquests of the great Burmese sovereign and his successor, Sōlu (1077-1084) at the end of the eleventh century.

A last type of tablet (oval, 12.5 centimetres, with an intact example found in the Chaiya region) also illustrates the new expression of Buddhism. (Fig. 195). It represents a Buddha seated in *pralambapadāsana* and in *dharmacakramudrā* with his feet on a lotus blossom; just below is a representation of a wheel beside two gazelles. This central figure is part of an architectural structure formed of two pillars supporting a broken trefoil arch surmounted with a sort of *śikhara* that is itself topped with a *chattra* from which two garlands hang. On each side is a systematic arrangement of *stūpas* of different sizes, which are hard to count because it can be difficult to distinguish between *stūpas* and *chattras*. It appears that there are nine of them, two of which are of great size. A Buddhist credo is inscribed on the lower part of the tablet.

There is not the slightest doubt that this is a representation of the Buddha teaching, here in the context of his first sermon at the Park

of the Gazelles in Sārnāth, with, however, a reminder of the place of his Enlightenment at Bodh Gayā (the *śikhara* of the temple of the Mahābodhi). P. Chirapavati (1994: 74-76) classes this type of tablet in the same category as the previous type. She nevertheless sees a greater resemblance to the Burmese models, which, as we have said, do not date from before the middle of the eleventh century. This type of tablet could therefore also belong to the second half, even the end of the eleventh century.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE COMMERCIAL BOOM IN THE MALAY PENINSULA IN THE 12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES

IN TAMBRALINGA

Chinese ceramics, which were more rare along the shores of the Malay Peninsula in the tenth and eleventh centuries—or at least not concentrated as exclusively on several major sites as they had been during the preceding period—greatly increased in quantity beginning in the twelfth century and especially all through the thirteenth. Now, usually in fragments, but quite often represented by intact pieces—especially on the east coast—they became abundant in certain sites, as before in the ninth century: Laem Pho, Ko Kho Khao and Kampong Sungai Mas.

The situation in the Southern Seas in the tenth and eleventh centuries that we described in the preceding chapter makes it impossible to link the plentiful reappearance of these ceramics with a restored prosperity of the *nanhai* trade: this trade, with or without the ceramics, had apparently never ceased to thrive, probably established on sites that we can imagine have not been properly identified, or in any case, not properly excavated. But from the twelfth century on, the entrepôt port sites linked with an abundance of these materials from that time can no longer be ignored. These are Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, Kampong Simpor Tambang and Kampong Sireh in South Kedah, Tha Rua, Ban Thai Samphao, Wat Rang, in the immediate region of Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Satingpra to the south of Nakhon Si Thammarat. All have yielded similar combinations of commercial remains: Chinese ceramics, yes, but also—from sites located on the western shore—Middle Eastern ceramics associated with fragments of glassware of the same origin, and beads.

As in the ninth century, these entrepôt port sites obviously functioned in the socio-political context of city-states or, at the least, of a city-state, the one known as Tambralinga, whose birth and major historical events we have described. Like their predecessor Kampong Sungai Mas, the ports of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, Kampong

Simpor Tambang and Kampong Sireh could only have developed, as we will show, in the context of a local chiefdom.

Of course the immediate environment of all of these sites yielded a group of architectural and sculptural remains that we must examine in their own right. But, as with the previous periods, before proceeding to this archaeological analysis, we will discuss the impact the general history of Asia at this time could have had on the prosperity of these shores.

A. THE ASIAN POLITICAL CONTEXT IN THE 12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES

I. China

The China of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is that of the southern Song, before becoming that of the Yuan beginning in 1279. These politico-territorial circumstances alone explain the reappearance of Chinese ceramics in great quantities on the Malay sites.

Indeed it is in this early part of the twelfth century that the Jin tribes, initially allied with the Song against the Liao empire (which, weakened by economic difficulties and internal dissension, collapsed in 1125), turned against their allies and attacked Henan and Shandong, taking Kaifeng in 1126. Their successive attacks penetrated as far as the Yangzi and the north of Zhejiang, where a part of the royal family took refuge, establishing in 1127 what has been called the dynasty of the southern Song. Between 1126 and 1135, most of the cities and southern regions were put to the fire and the sword. Nankin and Hangzhou were besieged in 1129 and Ningbao, at the northeast end of Zhejiang, was hit in 1130. A preliminary agreement was not reached until 1138, the year in which the Song established their provisional capital at Hangzhou, but a lasting peace would not be signed until 1142; this agreement would establish the border between the two states and subject the Song to an annual tribute like the tribute they had paid to the Liao. The lost territories would never be reconquered, in spite of numerous counter-offensives, all of which failed.

Because of these events, the Song empire, always favourable to maritime commerce, which was seen as the source of a considerable percentage of their revenue, was led to increase the volume of this trade, since China was once again cut off from its connections with

Central Asia. This is how this activity, which brought in 1.78% of the global revenues to the treasury between 1102 and 1111, suddenly exploded, and the proportion rose to 20% in 1128, stabilizing during the second half of the twelfth century at around 5%. (Wheatley 1959: 24). From 971 on, in response to the demands of trade in the Southern Seas, the Song established a superintendence over the merchant marine at Guangzhou, controlling trade and all those involved, Chinese as well as foreigners, in order to reap the greatest profit. The success of this initiative led to the creation of similar structures in Hangzhou and near Ningbo before the end of the century; others followed, and when northern China passed under the control of the Jin, two new superintendences were created, in Wenzhou in 1131 and in Jiangyin in 1146. (Wheatley 1959: 26).

Along the same lines, the Song were interested from the outset in the ports of the southern coasts, and increased their involvement there in the twelfth century. This is how the port of Huating, sacked by the Jin armies, was rebuilt during the Qiandao period (1169-73) and rebaptised Shanghai. New ports were established at the time to promote trade in the Southern Seas, including one at Tongzhou at the entrance to the Yangzi. In a parallel movement, inland ports were opened in Huangzhou at Hubei, and in Quzhou at Zhejiang. The island of Hainan, the southernmost territory of China and an essential stopping-off place for coastal navigation, received a port in 1188, at Shajin, in the northeast corner of the island, in spite of local problems with silting and the tides. (Wheatley 1959: 27).

The power of the foreign merchants, who, as we have shown, were already influential under the Tang, increased in relation to the wealth they gained through this trade. From the Chinese texts, it appears that the majority of them were of Muslim origin.

This ineluctable evolution did not take place without a certain reticence that was closely linked to principles of a Confucianism that was deeply rooted in the mentality of the ruling classes. Thus the emperor Gaozong proclaimed in 1127 that foreign merchandise constituted an unnecessary luxury; this may also have been the virtuous and autarkical reaction of a state that was attempting to reestablish itself on a new basis. This resulted for several years in the establishment of a system of quotas for the importation of goods from the Southern Seas, but economic necessity led the emperor to modify his edict and to recognize that the profits of maritime trade were essential to the equilibrium of the state budget.

Naval construction, which, as we have indicated, was in full development during the tenth and eleventh centuries, (see above, Chapter Two), experienced an increase in activity that is attested at the beginning of the Mongol period by the first European witnesses of the situation in China, Marco Polo and Odoric de Pordenone. Marco Polo, in particular, mentions several types of ships, and reports that the largest were built only in the cities of Zaitun (Quanzhou) and As-Sin (Canton), that is, in southern China, however, in the period when this part of China had been reunified by the Yuan. (Hambis 1955: 251-262).

These were the ships—heavily ballasted with the ceramics being produced in increasing quantities in kilns to the south of the Yangzi—that set sail for the Southern Seas and beyond, towards India and western Asia. This is the picture that emerges from meticulous studies carried out in China, notably on the kilns of the southern part of Fujian. (Kee-Long 1994).

The second part of the thirteenth century in Southern China, however, is marked by numerous upheavals that would eventually get the better of the Song dynasty. The Mongols were responsible for this. The Jin empire was the first to be confronted by the new arrivals: in 1214, the Mongols forced the Jin to evacuate Manchuria and transfer their capital from Peking to Kaifeng. Fifteen years later, the Mongol offensives resumed, leading to the end of the Jin empire in 1234. The forward thrust did not stop here. From 1236 to 1239, the Mongols carried out a first offensive in Sichuan, followed by a second from 1253 to 1259, which also saw them penetrate as far as Yunnan, in northern Burma (where they brought an end to the Pagan dynasty), and Vietnam. Xiangyang was first besieged in 1257, but fell in 1272-73, during the real conquest of South China, from 1272 to 1279; Hangzhou followed (1276), then Canton (1277). The year 1279 is the year traditionally cited as the end of the dynasty of the Southern Song.

The restored unity of the Chinese empire from the north to the south of its outer limits, the growing use of the great trade routes across Central Asia that ended up in Peking, the new capital—routes that many Europeans were now taking (Marco Polo was just the best known of them)—had no effect on the rapid development of maritime trade towards the regions of the South throughout the period of the dynasty that disappeared in 1368.

II. The Middle East

International trade did not suffer from the political troubles that continued to agitate this part of Asia, behind the façade of longevity of the power of the Abassids (who were in fact subjugated, as we have shown, by the emirs (Buyids), sultans (Seljukids) and provincial governors). The second half of the thirteenth century is marked by the arrival of the Mongols, who took Baghdād in 1258 and brought a definitive end to the dynasty of the Abassids, replacing them in Iraq, Iran, eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus with an Ilkanid empire (from Il-Khān, the title of the Mongol chiefs descended from Genghis Khan in these western regions of Asia), which began to break apart after the beginning of the fourteenth century, to disappear altogether in 1353.

III. India

In Dravidian India, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were still marked by the domination of the Coḷas, whose power, however, was increasingly counterbalanced by that of the Pāṇḍyas of Madurai, who imposed their suzerainty on them in the middle of the thirteenth century. The princes of Śrī Laṅkā became mixed up in these quarrels, with varying results. Later, we will examine the surprising Malay involvement in these disputes.

Concerning the Pāṇḍyas, we possess the account of Marco Polo, who visited their kingdom and reported (Hambis 1955: 251-262) that the country was extremely rich (especially in precious stones and jewels of every sort, with which the sovereign was bedecked), and that numerous foreign ships, coming in particular from the West, but also from China, approached the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel, bringing horses, among other things (many of the animals dying for lack of proper care). Marco Polo also indicated that the king had a gynaeceum of five hundred women, that the practice of sacrificing widows (*satī*) was common, that there were dancers (*devadāsī*) in the temples, that he thought the army poorly equipped. It seems, in addition, that Arabs were admitted to certain administrative posts, in particular as customs officers.

The other part of India that is important for our subject is the northeast. During the first part of the twelfth century, it was still controlled, at least nominally, by the Pālas, who, like all the Indian dynasties, wore themselves out in wars with their neighbours. The

dynasty disappeared in the middle of this century, to be succeeded by that of the Senas from Bengal, whose empire was unable to resist the Muslim Turkish conquest that gained possession of the holy sites of Buddhism beginning at the end of the twelfth century; it maintained its power over certain very eastern territories of Bengal until around 1260.

IV. Insulinde (the East Indies)

As G. Cœdès observed (1964: 306), “the history of the States of Insulinde during [the greater part of the twelfth century] is singularly pale,” “beside the wars of the Khmers and the Chams and the Burmese dramas,” consisting only of references to missions sent to China by the Sanfoqi and lists of Javanese kings written out in the foundation charters. The date of the last mission to Śrīvijaya mentioned in the *Songshi* is 1178. Since scattered notes in the *Lingwai daida* by Zhou Qufei, also dated to 1178, seem to indicate that the former Malāyu (in the Jambi region), annexed by Śrīvijaya at the end of the seventh century, had regained a certain independence by the end of the eleventh—enough to warrant several missions to China, and also since an inscription from the Malay Peninsula, dated specifically to 1183, which we will examine later, refers to a sovereign who could be a king of this Malāyu, we might have reason to ask whether the political centre of Śrīvijaya had not moved in this period from Palembang to Jambi.

In any case, this political entity, according to statements in the *Lingwai daida* that are reproduced in the *Zhufanzhi* by Zhao Rugua (1225), is still described as “an important thoroughfare on the sea-routes of the foreigners on their way to and from [China]” (Hirth & Rockhill 1911: 26), which is compatible with the rapid development of international maritime trade in this period. In addition, the *Zhufanzhi* attributes to it many vassal states, notably in the Malay Peninsula, which is difficult to accept other than as a stylistic device which, though often repeated, never actually corresponded to reality. The fact that Palembang is mentioned among these Sumatran possessions tends to confirm the idea that this city was no longer the capital. What we will have to say in the sequel to this chapter concerning the imperialistic initiatives of the city-state of Tambralinga also gives reason to believe that Śrīvijaya exercised absolutely no authority over the Malay Peninsula, whatever might have been the new

political order in the heart of territories that were perhaps subject to its control for a brief period from the end of the seventh century.

V. Other Regions of Southeast Asia

1. *Burma*

In the northern part of the Bay of Bengal, the third quarter of the twelfth century was marked by a Śrī Laṅkān attack against Burma, which is mentioned in a Burmese inscription from 1165, and in the *Cūlavamsa*, a Singhalese historical text from the thirteenth century. G. H. Luce (1969-70: 117-128), in an effort to restore the historical facts, interpreted the circumstances of this raid, which apparently involved Pagan, as an attempt by Śrī Laṅkā to counter the supposed Burmese hegemony over the Isthmus of Kra, a very imperialistic view of the relations that linked the various political entities of the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.

A recent reinterpretation of the same texts (Aung-Thwin 1998: Ch. I.) showed convincingly that the raid had not involved Pagan, and on the other hand, that Lower Burma had been the object of a Singhalese attack in 1165 or 1169, in an area near Tenasserim (unless, however, this attack could have occurred in a region of South India...). This theory would in fact be in agreement with G. H. Luce's original idea of an economic rivalry between the two regions, in the light of information we have already provided (see above, Chapter Twelve) concerning the plottings of the Pagan sovereigns in the region of Mergui-Tenasserim at the end of the eleventh century, probably linked with the control of international trade passing through the area.

If indeed this expedition took place, it will not have had significant consequences, since in 1196-98, as we will show later, the sovereign Narapatisithu (1174-1211) attributed to his kingdom southern limits that seem to include Peninsular territories that are very far to the south.

2. *Cambodia*

The beginning of the twelfth century in Cambodia is marked by the accession to the throne in 1113 of Sūryavarman II, the founder of Angkor Vat, who reigned until the middle of the century, bearing arms to the east as well as to the west, with varying degrees of success. He was unable to defeat Dai Viet, subjugated Campā for only a brief period, from 1145 to 1149, and failed to overcome the Mōns of

the Upper Menam. But all these events had no appreciable effect on the Malay Peninsula; we only refer to them briefly in order to establish the Peninsula in the political context of the period.

The direct succession of the sovereign is obscure, and the Cambodian kingdom, poorly governed, fell victim in 1177 to a *Caṃ* invasion that reached as far as Angkor itself. *Campā* took its revenge, but only briefly, because the future Jayavarman VII, who had been kept out of power until this time, liberated the kingdom in four years, and turned Cambodia's eternal rival into a Khmer province, from 1203 to 1220. His reign, which was brought to an end by his death in around 1218-1220, deeply marked Khmer history. At the time, the at-least nominal suzerainty of the Khmer kingdom extended as far as the Malay Peninsula, and of course also took in the whole Menam basin and the plateau of Korat. It was these territories of the Khmer suzerainty, 'liberated' as a result of the death of Jayavarman VII, that would see the rise of the political and warlike entity that would bring an end, at least theoretically, to the civilization of the city-states and entrepôt ports in the Malay Peninsula. In the middle region of Menam, the Thais, known to their neighbours, and notably to *Caṃ* and Khmer epigraphy, by the name of *Syāṇ*, proclaimed their political independence.

A Thai leader, doubtless a member of the princely family of Sukhothai under the Khmer suzerainty, had been raised by the sovereign of Angkor to the dignity of *Indrāditya*, and had married a Cambodian princess. Following on some obscure events, doubtless provoked by the death of Jayavarman VII, he entered into conflict with the Khmer governor of Sukhothai, who was expelled from the region. In his place he installed his ally and had him crowned king, conferring upon him the title 'Indraditya' that he himself had received from the Cambodian chancellery, thus giving to this revolution a semblance of legitimacy by appearing to act in the name of the court of Angkor. As G. Cœdès emphasizes (1958: 390), "The loss of the territory of Sukhothai was not in itself a great catastrophe for Cambodia. But the new kingdom thus created did not waste any time in demonstrating towards its former suzerain an expansionist policy that would bear fruit at the end of the century." It was the second son of *Indrāditya*, *Rāma Khamheng*, who would seize *Tambralinga* during this period, as we will show. Before reaching the shores of the Peninsula, he had achieved a sort of hegemony over a large number of Thai tribes, and considerably aggrandized his territory at

Cambodia's expense. At the end of the thirteenth century, his states stretched from the north as far as Luang Prabang, to the east as far as Vientiane, and to the west all the way to Pegu.

In the political context of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that we have been describing, events in China, in our opinion, are clearly the driving force, leading to a revival of Chinese trade along the shores of the Malay Peninsula, which will then experience a time of immense prosperity, in total independence. What we can reconstruct of the history of Tambralinga during this period does not contradict this: the city-state acted as a completely independent political entity responsible for its own destiny.

B. TAMBRALINGA IN THE 12TH CENTURY

I. Historical Facts Related to the 12th Century

From what we have said of Tambralinga in the preceding chapter, it emerges that the city-state, from the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, was a political entity that did not fear imperialistic designs on Cambodia. Such initiatives could only be conceived of in the framework of a prosperous economy, and therefore of flourishing commercial activity.

Most of the eleventh century, as we have seen, is poor in historical information about the city-state, and after the year 1070, which corresponds with a mission to China, we lack specific details for the period between that time and the very end of the twelfth century. Several researchers, however, have shed light on this rather obscure period of the history of the region in the end of eleventh and the twelfth centuries, including Wyatt & Bastin (1968), whose research on the subject is unfortunately unpublished; K. R. Hall refers to it on several occasions in his own publications. (Hall & Whitmore 1976: 313. Hall 1985: 202-203). It would appear that at the extreme northern part of its territories, even to the west of them, the neighbour of the city-state was Burma, which, from the end of the reign of Anōratha (1044-1077), as we saw, was extending its conquests at least as far as Mergui and even farther, in around 1060. More than a century later, the sovereign Narapatisithu (1174-1211¹),

¹ The dates of this reign are based on the research of Aung-Thwin (1976).

in an inscription dated 1196-98,² lists as the southern limits of his kingdom some regions that G. H. Luce (1959: n. 360, p. 61 & 1969-70: I, 27) believes correspond to a point far down on the Isthmus (Tenasserim, Takua Pa and perhaps Phuket (Junk Ceylon)), although he has some reservations about this. In a perhaps too imperialistic perspective inspired by the historic tendencies of his time, Luce saw in this thrust towards the south a visionary initiative of Anōratha, which would have been taken up by his successors, to control the Isthmus of Kra, enter into contact with the Buddhist city-state of Nakhon Si Thammarat, and perhaps control the commercial activities that passed through this point along the Peninsula.

Wyatt & Bastin (1968: 13-14) and Wyatt (1975: 72), from an examination of the chronicles of Nakhon Si Thammarat³, estimated that Narapatisithu's conquests had reached as far as Tambralinga, over which he would have imposed his suzerainty in 1176, in agreement with the king of Śrī Laṅkā. This observation takes into account the fact that for almost half a century (from 1130 to 1176, still according to Wyatt), Tambralinga would have been under the control of Śrī Laṅkā. The author bases his theory on information contained in the Nakhon Si Thammarat chronicles, in the Pāli literature of Śrī Laṅkā, which views Tambralinga ('Tamalingamu') as an important centre of Buddhist studies in the twelfth century, and on an inscription of Polonnāruva's dating from the reign of Vikramabāhu (1111-1132).

The Nakhon Si Thammarat chronicle (Wyatt 1975: 66-71) speaks of the flight to Śrī Laṅkā of a prince and princess, children of the sovereign of Tambralinga, after the victorious attack of a southern neighbour who wished to seize the Holy Relic of the Tooth that was in the possession of the city. During the time of their exile, this relic was greatly honoured by the sovereign of the island, who eventually presided over the exiles' return to their country, where the precious Tooth was reinstalled with great ceremony. Wyatt places this episode in 1130. He therefore believes that at this time, in 1176 (the estimated date of Narapatisithu's expedition), Tambralinga, whose autonomy had been restored, passed under the suzerainty of Śrī Laṅkā.

² Stone inscription at Dhammarājaka, West Pwazaw, Pagan (*Inscriptions of Burma* I, XIX).

³ The oldest version of these chronicles does not appear to go back beyond the second half of the sixteenth century, but it was inspired by previous versions.

The theory is attractive; it would enable us to understand why, when and how this section of the Peninsula was won over to *Theravāda* Buddhism. In this connection, the Polonnāruva inscription mentioned above (Paranavitana 1935) refers to a holy person named Ānanda, described as a great dignitary of the *saṅgha* of the island, who would have had some links with the dignitary of a country known as Tambarattha. S. Paranavitana proposes identifying this country with Tambralinga, though the term could also—with less pertinence, however—be applied to a region of the Coḷa kingdom near Tañjāvūr (since the *saṅgha* of Coḷa country is also described in the inscription as having ties with the same Ānanda). From there to believing that this holy person had come to preach the doctrine of the *Mahāvihāra* tendency of *Theravāda* Buddhism in both Tambralinga and in South India at the very beginning of the twelfth century is a leap that S. Paranavitana makes (1944: 24-25 & 1966: 80). The period from 1070 to the end of the twelfth century would therefore have been much more agitated than it has seemed in light of the absence of information in the Chinese sources, which are usually better informed. The city-state would first have continued to be independent before passing under the suzerainty of Śrī Laṅkā and then that of Burma. It does not seem reasonable to add to these successive suzerainties that of Cambodia, since Jayavarman VII does not appear to have become established farther south in the Peninsula than the territories north of the Isthmus of Kra that were controlled by his kingdom. The chronicle of Nakhon Si Thammarat supplies another piece of information related to the history of the city-state: it presents the list of its supposed tribute-paying dependencies at a time that Wyatt & Bastin (1968: 14-15) and Wyatt (1975: 84-85, 115) believe to be around 1200. This list includes the whole section of the Peninsula that will later be considered Thai, from Chumphon in the north to Kedah in the south, regions that all participated in the construction of the great *stūpa* of Nakhon Si Thammarat. This information, however (as we said in the introduction) should be received with reservations.

It is here that research on the texts and inscriptions can help us to advance in our understanding of the fate of Tambralinga from the end of the eleventh to the end of the twelfth century. Let us examine what archaeology and the study of topological evolution can teach us concerning the same period.

II. Archaeological and Topological Facts Related to the 12th Century

Few iconographical remains can be attributed to this period, and, apart from the region of Chaiya, what there is usually consists of small, non-indigenous imported pieces.

1. *Khmer statuettes in bronze*

In the preceding chapter, we mentioned a bronze statue of Avalokiteśvara with eleven heads and twenty-two arms (Fig. 182), which we dated to the second half of the tenth century, and another statue of Viṣṇu, also in bronze, from the end of the tenth century or the beginning of the eleventh (Fig. 181), both of Khmer origin. Other small pieces from the same source have appeared here and there along the shores of the east coast of the Peninsula from Tha Rua to the region of Phatthalung, and it is likely that numerous others have been found elsewhere that have not taken the road to the museums. They all belong to the Bāyon style or its immediate successor, that is, to a period running from the end of the twelfth century through the first decades of the thirteenth. Their presence, combined with the presence of votive tablets and ceramics of the same origin, at least bears witness to the unquestionable ties that existed between the two shores of the Gulf of Thailand, even if no effective political control over the Isthmus was established by the Khmer empire, at least at this level, though the personality and conquests of Jayavarman VII could have caused us to think otherwise.

a. Statuette of Prajñāpāramitā (11 centimetres in height) (Fig. 196)
Found in the region of Tha Rua, this figure has two arms, and its general appearance is like that of the statuary of Bāyon. The pleated *sarong* (by now it would usually no longer be pleated) includes a free section of material at the front that folds over itself and extends downward in a point. It is held in place by a gilt belt with pendants over which the upper edge of the material is folded. The image wears a conical *jaṭāmukuta* hairstyle, with a diadem encircling the brow. There are numerous jewels: a large necklace pointing downward between the breasts, earrings, armbands, bracelets, ankle rings. The goddess holds a broken lotus in her right hand, and probably a book in her left. P. Krairiksh (1980: Pl. 69) finds in this piece artistic affinities with the statues of the divinity belonging to this style that were found in central Thailand. Prajñāpāramitā was very popular in Cambodian sculpture in-the-round beginning in the twelfth century;

she also appears on numerous votive tablets, which we will have occasion to discuss later, in association with Avalokiteśvara, of whom she is an emanation.

b. Another bronze statuette of Prajñāpāramitā (Fig. 197) of indeterminate origin is kept in the museum of Wat Phuphaphimuk in Phatthalung (*ca.* 19 centimetres in height). There is every chance that it was found in the region. S. O'Connor (1975a/86: 146) was the first to bring the piece to the attention of scholars. The standing image is of crude manufacture. Her originality is that she has ten arms and four faces. The pleated *sarong* was draped vigorously around the hips, which are only very faintly indicated, and drawn in at the waist, with the excess material falling in two short sections towards the feet in fishtail form. A belt with a buckle is placed over the *sarong*. The heads wear a jewelled, conical ornament over their chignons, and the foreheads are encircled with diadems. Necklaces, bracelets, earrings and ankle rings are added to these ornaments. The attributes brandished in the hands are no longer recognizable. The general appearance of this statuette leaves no doubt that it is a Khmer work or of Khmer inspiration, probably belonging to the thirteenth century, to judge by the costume, which appears to interpret erroneously the styles of draping that appeared in the twelfth century (Angkor Vat and Bāyon styles). Representations of this divinity with several arms and heads are not rare in Khmer iconography.

c. Gaṇeśa (6 centimetres in height) (Fig. 198)

This statuette was found in the region of Songkhla, probably on the peninsula of Satangpra, like numerous other, similar objects. Its Khmer origins are undeniable. Gaṇeśa is one of the most popular of all the Brahmanical divinities, and one of the most frequently represented, because of his power to enable the one who invokes him to overcome difficulties. He therefore continued to be represented, for example in Cambodia, during the Post-Angkorian period.

He is figured here in a position that is infrequent in Khmer iconography, kneeling, with the right knee raised (a position called "seated in the Javanese manner"). The piece is very worn, which makes it difficult to detect the individual features, but what can be made out of the *sampot* with the lower edge folded back over the belt, the hairstyle consisting of a jewelled diadem curving around the temples and a tiered conical *mukuṭa*, leave no room for doubt about its date: the statuette is in the Bāyon style (from the end of the twelfth to the beginning of the thirteenth century). It is wearing other

jewels: armbands, necklace, bracelets, torso belt and ankle rings, in addition to the *yajñopavīta*. It could certainly be compared with numerous other Khmer works in the same style, with two or four arms, whether or not it is seated in this manner. (Wattanavrangkul 1975: Figs. 88, 89).

d. Hevajra (14 centimetres in height) (Fig. 199)

This statuette, discovered in the region of Satingpra, was first pointed out by S. O'Connor (1975a/86: 146-147, Fig. 10), who did not identify it. P. Krairiksh (1980: Pl. 71) recognized in it a representation of Hevajra, a divinity with a poorly-defined personality, whose cult, deriving from Tantrism, has remained somewhat obscure. Hevajra was an esoteric representation of Vajrasattva, who is himself an emanation of the supreme Buddha, Ādi-Buddha.

Hevajra is usually represented in a dancing position, with four legs (which are joined two by two in the statuettes), eight heads and six arms. The piece we are examining has only one head and two arms, but it has four attached legs which can only be seen to be double when one looks at the feet. The legs are bent, which gives an impression of rhythmic movement. The right hand is holding a bell (*ghaṇṭa*), the left a thunderbolt (*vajra*). In addition, the arrangement of the *sampot* is atypical, reproducing a floating section of cloth in front and in back, but it seems to take its inspiration from a model in the Bāyon style. The hairstyle consists of a *mukūṭa* equipped with a neckpiece and a diadem with the addition of a simple bead necklace. The work has an unquestionable appearance of kinship with Khmer art. It would seem reasonable to date it to the thirteenth century.

e. Apart from these Khmer or Khmer-inspired statuettes, the region has yielded, and still yields, religious objects or bronze ornaments of the same origin (our own on-site investigation in the region of Sichon gave us the opportunity to hear villagers speak of objects of this type that had been found recently). S. O'Connor (1975a/86: 141-143, Figs. 3-6) devoted himself to making an inventory of a number of these: ornaments for chariots or palanquins and ornamental fittings, whose exact position in the decoration of the vehicles could be rediscovered by means of an examination of the bas-reliefs from several large Khmer temples (Angkor Vat, Bāyon, Banteay Chmar) (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1979: 215-226); support pieces, attributes of divinities (*vajra*), etc.

f. The only piece that does not give the impression of having been imported from Cambodia—and that suggests a syncretism of artistic

influences, at once Mōn, Khmer and Indonesian—is a bronze Buddha (Fig. 200) found in the region of Tha Sala at Wat Nangtra (43 centimetres in height). It stands on a double lotus, with the two hands raised to the same level, in *vitarkamudrā*. The image rests on a pedestal with a redented edge equipped with a finely-wrought chevet with a cracked upper section that must originally have included a parasol. In an unusual detail, the frontal section of the pedestal is occupied by the grimacing figure of a *yakṣa* holding a stick in each hand at chest level.

The manner in which the costume is worn and rendered is in the tradition of the art of Dvāravatī. The presence of both the belt adorned with a large rosette and the front section of material is the result of a misunderstanding of the way the two principal pieces of the monastic vesture were initially intended to be rendered. We have already analysed the genesis of these aberrations on pieces from the end of the eleventh century (see above, Chapter Twelve); these innovations would know considerable success, picked up by Angkor art and then by the art of Ayutthaya; numerous Thai bronzes, classed under the heading ‘the art of Lopburi’, reproduced these arrangements. The features of the face are also reminiscent of Dvāravatī art; the head is crowned with a large *uṣṇīṣa* originally topped with a jewel.

The pedestal and its finely-wrought chevet adorned with jewels and curving greenery seem to us to come straight out of the tradition of Indonesian art, even if P. Krairiksh (1980: 69, Pl. 67) detects in them an influence from the art of Bāyon. The presence of the *yakṣa*, whose appearance is also very Indonesian, is more unusual. Krairiksh (1980: 69) is reminded of bronze Tang altars, somewhat gratuitously, it seems to us. The presence of a mount or a mythical creature on the front section of the pedestals of bronze statuettes is rare in Indonesian art, but does exist. The Rijksmuseum of Leiden possesses a standing Viṣṇu with accoutrements identical to those of our image, whose pedestal has an image of Garuḍa on the front. (Collective 1994: Pl. 740). In view of an analysis of the costume in particular, the image seems to us to be datable to the twelfth century and to blend a strong Dvāravatī influence, perhaps by way of Cambodia, with stylistic traits from the Indonesian tradition.

2. Votive tablets

A new type of tablet appeared in the twelfth century on many sites of the east coast of the Peninsula from Chaiya to Yala, passing through Nakhon Si Thammarat and the peninsula of Satingpra. These tablets vary in size, usually measuring around nine centimetres in height by six in width. They have square bases, but the upper part is ribbed, sometimes trefoiled. All are characterized by marked architectonic qualities that go hand in hand with a concern for symmetry and the geometric distribution of the motifs. They are presented as Khmer, even though Cambodia itself has yielded very few of them. To give them the label 'Lopburi' would be more appropriate, because it was after the Khmer empire imposed itself politically on the ancient realm of Dvāravatī in the lower valley of the Menam and on the northeast plateau beginning in the eleventh century that votive tablets of this style began to appear: a probable response by the local workshops that had been producing them for centuries—in an eminently Buddhist context—to the new aesthetic canons imposed by the invaders. The workshops on the shores of the Peninsula, which had never been submitted to Angkor power, probably imitated some of the most popular types, modifying some details; indeed, the variations are endless.

a. The most frequent type, in the light of our investigations in the museums that hold a number of such pieces, represents the historic Buddha in *bhūmisparśamudrā* on a double lotus placed on an elevated throne with a bottom pedestal that sometimes incorporates a row of atlas creatures. (Fig. 201). The image is framed in an opening like those of the Khmer tower sanctuaries, but simplified, consisting of the play of columns and pilasters surmounted by the rampant arch of a pediment whose lower extremities are more often than not raised in the form of the heads of a polycephalic *nāga*. Above rises the silhouette of the *prang*, with an indication of the tiered succession of decreasing levels. This *prang* is usually framed by several branches of foliage that symbolize the branches of the Bodhi Tree. In its composition, this central section of the tablet is therefore very similar to the representations we have described on the tablets from the end of the eleventh century that come from Bodh Gayā either directly, or by way of Burma. (Fig. 170, 194). This central figure is framed by two smaller representations of the Buddha seated in *dhyānamudrā*, which are also incorporated into ribbed architectural openings that sometimes cause the tablet to assume the form of a trefoil. These

probably represent Dīpankara (a Buddha of the past) to the right and Maitreya (the Buddha of the future) to the left. We can reasonably date these tablets to the twelfth century; their longevity was great, however, and the style may spill over into the thirteenth century.

b. Another tablet of the Khmer type is said by P. Chirapravati (1994: 452-456 & 1997: 43-44) to be common in several provinces of continental Thailand, but also to be represented in the provinces of Surat Thani and Nakhon Si Thammarat, where we personally have never seen one. It depicts an ornate Buddha seated in *vīrāsana* and in *dhyānamudrā* on the coiled rings of a *nāga* and sheltered by the hoods of its heads (usually five or seven). On either side, two standing figures represent, on the right, Avalokiteśvara with two or four arms, and on the left, Prajñāpāramitā. Arches rise above the three figures, giving this type of tablet an identical shape to that of the previous tablet.

These pieces may have started to appear in the twelfth century, possibly continuing into the thirteenth.

3. *Khmer ceramics*

Sherds, and sometimes intact or almost intact pieces, have been found all along the east coast of the Peninsula from Chaiya as far south as Songkhla. A group of over a dozen more or less complete large pieces, earthenware storage jars with flat bottoms as well as footed vases, is preserved in the museum of Wat Phra Borommathat in Nakhon Si Thammarat (Krairiksh 1980: Pl. 80. Brown R. M. 1988: 53-54, Fig. 40, 41). These wares were unearthed accidentally by villagers or caught in nets along the shore by fishermen; in former days, according to widespread popular belief at the time, they were brought to the temple for the evil spirits in them to be neutralized by the holiness of the place. It is regrettable for the preservation of pieces that have been discovered more recently—pottery as well as statuettes—that this belief has not lasted in the minds of the local populace; the museums of the Wat would have been much better provided, and the art historians would be kept happy.

Khmer ceramics never constituted an export article. We must therefore consider the remains that have been found in the Peninsula as nothing more than evidence of the passage of Khmer tradesmen along this shore. The storage jars must have served for storing water or basic foodstuffs during voyages. The use made of the footed vases with narrow necks, sometimes called ‘baluster-shaped ewers’, is less obvious. (Fig. 202). On their original sites (present-day Cambodia, of

course, but also the plateau of Korat) they are generally classed in the category of 'worship vessels,' as their general appearance seemed in principle to be the farthest thing from utilitarian; they must also have had ordinary uses, however. Decorated with incised motifs and covered with a brownish-black glaze with varying nuances that tended to disappear, these ceramics could be dated at the earliest to the end of the eleventh century, since their production involved the whole twelfth century, and very likely, the first decades of the thirteenth.

All the remains of Khmer origin that we have mentioned were brought to the Malay Peninsula exclusively in the context of the trade that linked the shores of the Gulf of Thailand. This regional trade was incorporated into the more general context of the international commerce of the time, attested here and there by a great abundance of Chinese ceramics coming primarily from the kilns of Southern China.

4. *Chinese ceramics*

As in the great era of the ninth century, Chinese ceramics in this period are of course represented in the form of sherds, but also by a rather large number of intact pieces. Of particular interest to us are several sites from the former Tambralinga, where entrepôt ports were located from the beginning of the twelfth century. These are—to the south of Nakhon Si Thammarat—the site of Ban Thai Samphao, and especially the site of Tha Rua, to which we must add Wat Rang (Bo Phong) to the southeast of Tha Rua, and finally Satingpra, much farther to the south, but which in our opinion could only have functioned, like the others, within the orbit of the city-state centred in Nakhon Si Thammarat.

It is very difficult to imagine today how any of these sites could ever have been a port, even if none of them are very far from the sea. Only a study of the topographical evolution of the region by means of aerial and satellite photographs can enable us to understand their positions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. (Doc. 37).

At that time, Tha Rua, like Ban Thai Samphao, was located at the bottom of a light depression zone situated between two mounds of residual dune stretching in a roughly north-south direction (it is on one of these that the city of Nakhon Si Thammarat is built). This

zone, occupied at the time by the sea, of which the large, still-existing lakes were an extension, offered a sure place of shelter to ships that could then easily sail around the promontory that had protected them from the open sea. Indeed, at the level of today's valley of the Pak Phanang river, a passage opened into the Gulf of Thailand, which was bordered on its southeast coast by a series of hills a little over a hundred metres high, among them Khao Phrabat (the highest, at 168 metres); at its foot, on the northeast side, is Wat Rang (or Wat Bo Phong), which at the time was a port of call for foreign ships.

The present peninsula of Satingpra, which was already broken at the latitude of Songkhla, thus offering ships another entrance through which they could go to find shelter, was only an island at the time, and it is under this name and in this capacity that it was known to the Westerners who first mapped the region in the sixteenth century. And yet by this date, the topography of the region had already evolved considerably. A slight lowering of the level of the sea, added to the natural alluviation along this coast, had led to the near closing off of the northernmost passage. This is the geographical situation that the honourable Lamare, architect of Louis XIV, found and mapped in 1686, having passed over into the service of the king of Siam, Phra Narai, following on the French mission to this kingdom in the previous year. One of his maps, like his hand-written commentary of it, is clear: the spit of Nakhon Si Thammarat does not yet exist, but the old northern passage to the sea has been replaced by the winding course of a river, the Menam Pak Phanang. The former site of Wat Rang was totally silted up at the time, since the neighbouring hills served to anchor the present spit. In spite of this, the French architect, who, however, had made a thorough and careful visit of the region, bursting with projects for Vauban-like fortifications at Songkhla, Phatthalung and Nakhon Si Thammarat, nonetheless speaks of the "island of Singor [Songkhla]" in connection with the Satingpra peninsula, probably influenced by what local tradition would have reported of the former geographical status of the region. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1993: 185, Doc. 26).

The site of Tha Rua, in spite of the importance it assumes from the twelfth century on, is ancient, as has been attested by the discovery nearby (at Ban Ket Kai) of a bronze drum, and it began to receive Chinese ceramics from the ninth century, although in much smaller quantities than at Laem Po. Sherds from this period, as well as a

number of whole pieces, have been discovered either in the river, the Khlong Tha Rua, which today passes across the site, flowing over a residual dune, or on solid ground, in the neighbourhood of the present College of Dramatic Arts. It is these same places that still yield some Chinese ceramics from the tenth and eleventh centuries, as we have already shown (see above, Chapter Twelve), and that demonstrate that there was an important resurgence of commercial activity beginning in the twelfth century, to judge by the quantities of sherds and whole pieces of the same origin from that period that have been collected there.

Unfortunately, no systematic excavation has been carried out on the land site that could be compared with those that were conducted at Laem Pho, which is a pity, because in the absence of such an investigation, it is altogether impossible to assess the exact proportion of Chinese sherds from different periods and their significance in relation to those commonly designated by the name 'local ceramics', not to mention the precise identification of the different Chinese kilns involved in these exports

As a result, only very general evaluations have been made on the site, which refer to the existence of numerous 'late' Song ceramics—by which we should understand the Song from the south—and beyond, the Song from Yuan (1279-1386). (Srisuchat T. *et al.* 1989: 17. Srisuchat T. 1990: 9-10. Srisuchat A. 1994: 222). Photographs of intact pieces have sometimes been published (Chandavij N. 1994) that enable us to appreciate the role of certain kilns. Those from Longquan (Zhejiang) are represented by bowls, plates, small storage jars, small vases with a celadon glaze of different hues in considerable quantities. (Fig. 203). Their decoration consists most often of lotus petals on the outer surfaces and impressions of twin-fish in the centre of dishes.

The kilns of Dehua, Anxi and Quanzhou, in Fujian, can be recognized by the presence of small vases and boxes of the *qingbai* type with tops (and glazes ranging from very pale blue to ivory). Their moulded decoration consists of more or less realistic foliage and flowers. (Fig. 204).

These rather prestigious places of origin, which immediately attract our attention, may cause us to forget that the kilns of Guangdong were the most important suppliers of this trade, in particular of everyday ware with celadon glazes, imitations of earlier ones, and of storage jars in different sizes, usually large, finished with a brown glaze.

The sites of Ban Thai Samphao and Wat Rang have not benefitted from any detailed research, and therefore in attempting to describe them, we can only repeat very similar information. It was at Ban Thai Samphao, however, that the largest celadon dish ever discovered in the Peninsula (35 centimetres in diameter), decorated in the middle with two fish, was found. (Longquan kiln, Zhejiang, twelfth to thirteenth century). (Ill. in Krairiksh 1980: Pl. 75).

On the other hand, the site of Satingpra has given rise to many investigations and digs in recent years. (Stargardt 1979, 1981, 1982, 1983a, 1997, 2000; Srisuchat T. 1986i). The Satingpra site is ancient, as is confirmed by the many sculptural remains that have been found there, and by those from its immediate environment; which we have mentioned in previous chapters: these consist of mitred Viṣṇu, *liṅgas* and bronze statuettes. When J. Stargardt first became interested in the site and the surrounding region in the beginning of the seventies, she emphasized the existence in Satingpra itself of a 'city' formally fortified by levees of earth (a moated site) in the centre of which rose a 'citadel' protected by a quadrangular surrounding wall made of brick, which led her to speak of the 'royal' capital city. From the outset, she linked the existence of such a city (some 1600 metres long by 900 metres wide) in the general area of today's peninsula of the same name, to a thriving agricultural operation cultivating irrigated rice by means of the establishment and regular maintenance of a large network of irrigation canals radiating out from the 'capital', and to reservoirs whose traces and locations she set out to find. (Stargardt 1973, 1973a, 1973b, 1976, 1976/77, 1977, 1986). It is the study of this environment, which to her revealed vanished agricultural practices, that has monopolized most of her research to this day. In 1984 she synthesized her research in a work entitled *Satingpra I. The Environmental and Economic Archaeology of South Thailand*; two other books were announced which have yet to be published: *Satingpra II. The Culture and Chronology of the Satingpra Complex*, devoted to the site itself, and *Satingpra III. The Regional Context of the Satingpra Civilization*, devoted to the place of this site in the regional context.

The author's study of the canals is of unquestionable value:

Thanks to a systematic program of core sampling in the sediments of the canals, undertaken since 1974, it was possible to determine that all were navigable. They not only linked the dependent sites to the center,

but likewise linked the Gulf of Siam to the great lakes of the isthmus, by means of eight points of entry to the sea and thirteen points of entry into the lakes. Most of the canals were dug in such a way as to permit the circulation of ships from the high seas [...]. The central canal cut the city [the capital city, at Satingpra] into two almost equal parts before continuing on towards the isthmian lakes; in crossing the city, it also served as the southern moat of the citadel. (Stargardt 1979: 34).

In a more recent communication (1997), Stargardt explained:

[T]his Central Canal of the Satingpra navigational canals was only 4.2 km long, 15 m wide and just over 4 m deep [...]. By clever exploitation of gradients and natural sand bars, the canal builders succeeded in preventing the penetration of saline waters into the canal beyond 400 m. Our coring sequence into the canal sediments just above the original bed of the canal, which went from the ancient sea entrance to the 500 m mark, established this. The rest of the water in the Central Canal derived from the great lake, Thale Sap, to the West and from groundwater, which never drops below 1.5 m below the surface. The canal water from these two sources was higher for most of the year, according to our experimental rehabilitation of a sector of the ancient system.

This assessment of the importance of the role of the central canal is incontestable, all the more so, as we will explain later, because it is along the sides of the canal, at the level of the 'citadel', that the majority of the Chinese ceramics have been found. What is perhaps less exact in Stargardt's analyses is the way she closely linked the prosperity of this 'city' of Satingpra to that of the cultivation of irrigated rice that is supposed to have been created from the digging and maintenance of these canals. This idea was strongly contested by J. Allen (1988/89) in a meticulous review of Stargardt's book of synthesis, *Satingpra I*:

No data suggest that large rice surpluses either were or could have been produced on Satingpra's soils until relatively late in the historic period; no data support the association of the agriculture stages with either the Urban Phases or calendar dates. The author's study of aerial photographs, while an important contribution, cannot establish pre-historic or early history dates for either the fields or the hydraulic works; nor can it clarify any chronological relationships that may have existed among the agricultural fields, the hydraulic features, and the urban evidence. The available evidence suggests nonagricultural and even noncultural roles for many tanks and canals at Satingpra. (Allen 1988/89: 170).

This idea seems to have been shared by other authors cited by Allen (1988/89: 169), according to whom “the hypotheses relating to the existence of ‘intensive’ agriculture based on a sophisticated hydraulic system are incompatible with the existence of an island.” (Trebuil *et al.* 1983: 21, also p. 17). In fact, the practice of dryland cultivation (rice, millet) would automatically have been used mainly to meet the food needs of the local population; and the prosperity of the region as seen in the architectural and sculptural remains, in the ‘industrial’ activities (tin work and production of ‘local’ pottery of which we will speak later), and, of course, in the regular maintenance and coordination of the canals, would have been the direct consequence of a very considerable involvement on the part of the local population in the international trade of the realm of the Southern Seas.

Nevertheless, we do not believe, as we have already explained, that this indisputable entrepôt port ever functioned independently. What we said of Tambralinga and its capital, Nakhon Si Thammarat, and what we will say again for the period of the thirteenth century, makes it impossible for an independent city-state to have existed, even a hundred kilometres farther to the south along the coast, especially in the topological context that we have described for this period. In addition, no Chinese text has ever been convincingly associated with this location: all the variants for the names used in these accounts in connection with this period and this section of the east coast of the peninsula refer back to a Tambralinga, of which Nakhon Si Thammarat was unquestionably the political centre.

Satingpra was no less active for being a minor entrepôt port in the context of this powerful city-state, as is confirmed by the 50,000 Chinese ceramic sherds assembled by J. Stargardt during her investigations, to which must be added a number of whole pieces discovered here and there. The author, in a recent communication to which we have already referred (Stargardt 1977, 2000) has refined her evaluations concerning these ceramics and now attributes a slightly earlier date to their origins:

The Chinese ceramics trade with Satingpra began during the period of transition from the Five Dynasties (906-960) to the beginning of the Northern Song (960-1126) and continued without a detectable break until the early Yuan (1279-1367).

She adds:

[T]he peak of technical quality and quantity of Chinese ceramics traded at Satingpra was reached during the Southern Song period, from the late twelfth to shortly after the mid-thirteenth century. (Stargardt 2000: 340).

On the basis of a graph (1997 version: Table 1) attached to the first version of this communication, we can indeed observe that the sherds attributable to the tenth century represent only 8.5 percent of the whole, those from the eleventh, 14 percent, and those from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by far the largest majority: 77.5 percent (31.5% for the twelfth century and 46 percent for the thirteenth).

The identifications of the Chinese kilns proposed by the author (like all researchers involved in this work, she seems conscious of the fact that these may need to be modified depending on discoveries and detailed studies being made on Chinese territory) have led her to the following conclusions:

[T]he main production centres sending ceramics to the Satingpra coast, based on analytical sherds-counts of controlled stratigraphic samples, were the Longquan kilns (Zhejiang Province) [29.5 percent of the sherds from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but already imported in the eleventh century, although in lesser proportions], followed by the Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) [14.8 percent of the sherds from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries], and the Dehua kilns (Fujian Province) [7.5 percent of the sherds from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but already imported in lesser proportions in the tenth and eleventh centuries]. [...] In addition, there were numerous fragments of Chinese container jars. Among them were fortunately two containers datable to the eleventh/twelfth century, made near Guangzhou, at the Xicun kiln. Three others, datable to the thirteenth/fourteenth century, were made in Fujian near Quanzhou, specifically at the Jinjiang kiln-group [48 percent of the sherds from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and, in the light of the graph, not imported earlier]. (Stargardt 2000: 341).

We should add to this list the productions from the kilns of Ou (west of Wenzhou in Zhejiang), which until recently were confused with those from the Yue kilns. They were imported to Satingpra in the tenth century. (Stargardt 2000: 342-344). After describing these ceramics, the author observes:

[T]he early Northern Song, high quality Longquan green-glazed deep bowls, ewers and shallow bowls found at Satingpra [...] were among the most beautiful ceramics of their time. (Stargardt 2000: 344).

“Like Longquan ceramics,” she writes, “Jingdezhen porcelains were of a very high quality.” They included “only elegant monochrome wares of fine paste and glaze in slightly greenish-white (*Qingbai*) colour without contrasting colour.” (Stargardt 2000: 349-350). She added that the porcelains from Dehua received at the port, consisting of small pieces (flagons, boxes with tops, etc.) decorated with foliage in relief under a white or cream glaze, also belonged to the best of the productions of these Fujian kilns.

After this enumeration, J. Stargardt came to the conclusion that the ceramics received at this entrepôt port of Satingpra do not correspond to what is usually meant by ‘trade ceramics’, and that for the most part, and exceptionally, they were of superior quality. (Stargardt 2000: 357). This is to forget rather rapidly the forty-eight percent of ordinary jars from Guangdong from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; Stargardt seemed to desire at all costs to associate the other ceramics found at the site with “a southern royal port-city” that was dear to her heart, but whose very existence we contest. What we were able to collect on the surface at the Tha Rua and Wat Rang sites leads us to believe that their samplings will turn out to be very similar to those at Satingpra. Beyond this difference of opinion about the status of this centre of trade, the late but meticulous publication of her sampling of Chinese ceramics strongly and opportunely emphasizes the importance of the kilns of South China in the production of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

These entrepôt port sites are not the only ones to have yielded Chinese ceramics. Sherds and intact pieces of superior quality belonging to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and similar in type to those mentioned in connection with Satingpra, have appeared across the whole territory of the former Tambralinga, which leads us to believe that the local use of these ceramics was considerable, and that they were not simply reexported. We are reminded of the very different situation in the ninth century. At that time, most of the importations of Tang ceramics were concentrated at the entrepôt ports of Laem Pho, Ko Kho Khao and Kampong Sungai Mas, and even if intact pieces appeared here and there—including on the sites just mentioned—the quantity is minimal compared to the numbers involved in the Song and Yuan productions.

To concentrate first on the southern part of Tambralinga that we have been examining, we need to refer to a number of places where

discoveries have been made. (Srisuchat T. 1985. Srisuchat A. 1994). (Docs. 14, 31, 37).

a. First the great lakes, where numerous ceramics from a period beginning in the eleventh century and extending to the thirteenth and beyond, have been brought back in the nets of fishermen. Some of these are preserved in the museum of Songkhla, and in the Wat Machimawas museum in the same city.

b. Wat Si Yang, some fifteen kilometres to the north of Satingpra. The area immediately surrounding the former site of the ninth-century *stūpa* (now held in the enclosure of the present monastery) has furnished sherds of Chinese ceramics dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

c. The Phatthalung region on the western shore of the great lakes.

d. Muang Phra Wiang. During work on the foundation of the present museum of Nakhon Si Thammarat in the early seventies, this site of the former city of Nakhon Si Thammarat, which we will examine later, fortuitously yielded a large quantity of intact pieces from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These are now preserved in the museum. The site of this museum corresponds to that of the monastery of Wat Suan Luang, which no longer exists today. In addition, the museum of Wat Phra Borommathat in the same city also preserves pieces found here and there in the region.

Other sites located to the north of Nakhon Si Thammarat have also yielded sherds and intact pieces:

e. Tha Sala, a site we have already mentioned, where digs at a judiciously chosen spot will surely confirm the minor role of this entrepôt port.

f. Wat Long (Chaiya), where the excavation we have already referred to brought numerous Chinese pieces to light, many of them intact, in particular, small, narrow-necked jars used for the ashes of the dead.

g. Wat Wiang (Chaiya), which we have already discussed.

h. Laem Pho itself has yielded Chinese ceramics from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in small quantities, to be sure, in the locality of Phayang on the right bank of the Phum Riang river, which cuts through the site (we should not forget that the left bank is the principal location of the ninth-century entrepôt port).

In addition, Q. Wales (1935: 20) described the discovery in Chaiya several months before his arrival, of “some thousands of bowls of Sung type, many in perfect condition,” found by the owner

of a banana plantation in the locality of Ban Hua Khu as he was digging a ditch. Wales wrote: "By the time of our arrival, these had been distributed all over the countryside, but I was able to secure one, which I brought to London for identification, and Mr. R. Le May informs me that it originates from Than-hoa in Tonking."

This information is very terse. The identification, which is only given geographically, is the likely consequence of a chance discovery in this period (the twenties and thirties) of the site of Thanh Hoa, which was excavated at that time, with varying degrees of success, and from which several pieces were exposed in Paris, at the Musée Guimet, in 1931. (Brown R. M. 1988: 13). But the site covers a very long period, from the Eastern Han to the Song. The reference to these suggests that the specimen that Wales had had authenticated belonged to the production of the period corresponding to the last phase of this dynasty (twelfth to thirteenth century), a phase during which many imitations of the Song celadons were produced in Thanh Hoa and widely exported. (Brown R. M. 1988: 22).

During his visit, the discovery on the same site of a bronze statuette of Tārā (which today is in the Bangkok museum) (Fig. 111) inspired Wales to undertake a rapid dig, which was nonetheless sufficient "to show that the site was the former sandy bed of a small stream which had now shifted its course a few yards to the north." He went on to describe what he found there:

At a depth of about 2 feet were the brick foundations of a small building. Many fragments of good Sung celadons and of wares of Sung type were found, together with a number of beads, a pierced stone ornament, and a fragment of a Chinese mirror of a type known from the seventh to the twelfth century A.D. (Wales 1935: 20).

i. Tha Muang (Tha Chana), to the north of Chaiya, has also furnished Chinese ceramics from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries in the form of plentiful surface sherds.

An atypical site along the eastern shores of the Peninsula that is a source of Chinese ceramics is the island of Tioman, at an isolated point some thirty kilometres off the coast of the Malay state of Pahang (at about 2° 50' latitude). The island is very mountainous, and sparsely inhabited, but the shelter offered by the estuaries of several rivers made it into an international stopping-off place in the Southern Seas. The passage of the ships is attested by the existence

of whole, or, more usually, broken pieces of ceramics. (Medway 1962; Collective: 1985). The majority of these are of Chinese origin, the oldest going back no farther than to the eleventh century, with a distinct peak between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries for products originating in the kilns of Southern China (Fujian, Zhejiang). This role as a stopping-off-place continued, because other fragments dating from later centuries, and in certain cases from the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, are likewise found there, pointing to the passage of the Chinese, of course, but also of the Thais and Europeans.

In Chapter Three, we indicated that Leong Sau Heng (1990, 1993) had identified this site as a 'collecting centre'. Its situation as an isolated island, mountainous and sparsely inhabited, leads us to consider it only as a simple place of occasional stopovers.

In view of the regrettable sketchiness of this information, we are persuaded that much remains to be done before we will be able to assess the importance of this trade in Chinese ceramics in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and also before we can take the measure of the popularity of the vessels along the eastern shores of the Peninsula, because in recent years, the majority of the chance finds have made their way into private collections.

At the same latitude as Tambralinga, the western side has provided only very few traces of ceramics of equivalent types: several Longquan sherds at Tha Han (Kapong), not far from Takua Pa, an almost whole plate of the Longquan type also at Ban Sapam (Phuket Island), and several sherds at Chong Talad (Ao Luk District, Krabi Province). (Srisuchat T. 1985. Srisuchat A. 1994).

Alongside these imported ceramics, the pieces from the Malay Peninsula called 'local' have hardly been studied, as is well known and often repeated. There is nonetheless an exception to this state of affairs that is linked to the existence, south of the peninsula of Satingpra, in the locality of Kok Moh, of local kilns that produced pottery of a superior quality during the period we are considering.

5. The Local ceramics of the kilns of Kok Moh (Songkhla Province)

What remains of the site (the major part was destroyed and converted to rice paddies) is located at the southern limits of the Peninsula of

Satingpra. It was excavated in 1972 and 1973, and the results were published in several installments by J. Stargardt. (1972, 1973, 1983). These kilns, during the days of their glory, produced fine-quality *kendis*. The *kendi*, as is known, is one of the most intriguing categories of receptacles; its origins are ancient, and controversial. With its globular body equipped with a pouring spout and its high, narrow neck, it could have served as a water gourd or as a vessel for use in religious ceremonies.

The potters of Kok Moh used very fine clays which, according to Stargardt, were largely imported from nearby regions. "Some [of the pieces] are notable for their high kaolin content, and all of the fine textured ware are strikingly free of grit." (Stargardt 1972: 203). The author described the productions of the Kok Moh kilns in some detail:

All Kok Moh *kendis* (Fig. 205) possess narrow high necks, relative to body width and height, and flaring globular bodies. Although absolute size of these vessels varies, the relative proportions of neck rim, neck, shoulder, belly and base remain rather constant. Some changes are to be seen from one vessel to another in the angle of curvature from neck, over shoulder to belly. This may not be entirely deliberate but due in part to settling in the kiln during firing. While little variation is to be found in the form of the neck rim—which remains an important diagnostic feature of the Kok Moh *kendis*—some considerable variation is to be seen in spout forms. Spouts include both hand-formed and mould-formed types. The majority of the *kendi* sherds reveal flat bases with a neatly turned low footring. A minority have a redented and elevated footring.

The colour range in Kok Moh *kendis* includes yellow, red, white, blue, black in that numerical order. The yellow and red colours result from the same paste and are a function of different degrees of oxydization in the kiln atmosphere during firing. White-bodied wares are exceptionally fine, smooth and beautifully formed. They were made from a clay with a high kaolin content. (Stargardt 1983: 212).

Thermoluminescence testing, combined with the dating of the Chinese ceramic sherds found in association with *kendi* fragments, notably at Satingpra, have made it possible to recognize that the great period of activity of the kilns of Kok Moh corresponded to the second half of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century, without excluding the later, but poorer, productions that continued until the end of the thirteenth century. Stargardt (1983: 216) gave an overview of the likely operations of the kilns during this period:

[T]he community of potters who set up the Kok Moh kiln came from somewhere else, with fully-developed skills, to begin production at this site. The history of Kok Moh is one of high-quality and numerous production for approximately 70 years, followed by a gradual disappearance of the finest wares from the repertoire and the end of all ceramic production at this site.

These wares were primarily exported. In the nearby region, first of all, sherds or intact pieces have been found at Satingpra, Wat Phra Koh, Wat Si Yang, Wat Chedi Ngam and Phra Wiang on the site of the former Wat Suan Luang; but productions from these kilns have also appeared in remote sites: in Sumatra (Muara Jambi and Kota Cina), in Śrī Laṅkā (Mantai, the Aruvi Oya river route leading to Anurādhapura), and “further finds of Kok Moh type Kendis have been recovered from the old harbour at Gresik in East Java, from the Troluwan excavations, [...] and through chance finds at Butuan in the Southern Philippines.” (Stargardt 1983: 217).

6. *Middle Eastern ceramics and glass*

Ceramic sherds and fragments of glass from the Middle East are the poor parents of the archaeology of the Malay Peninsula. Laem Pho, as we have seen, yielded some of these for the ninth century, as did Ko Kho Khao and Kampong Sungai Mas. In addition, gold and silver Arab coins dated to an earlier period, from 685 to 705 of our era (Srisuchat T. 1986i), have appeared on the sites of Wat Chedi Ngam and Wat Si Yang (the Satingpra peninsula). But after the ninth century on this eastern coast, nothing points to the presence of Muslims, or at least nothing that bears their mark in the realm of international trade. As we will explain later, however, the site of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang in South Kedah, on the west coast, has yielded quantities of fragments of Middle Eastern glass in association with southern Song and Yuan Chinese ceramics, which caught the attention of A. Lamb in the sixties.

Does this mean that the Middle Eastern traders lost interest in so dynamic a city-state as Tambralinga in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, or that fragile ceramic sherds and glass fragments of Middle Eastern origin remain undiscovered there to this day? This last theory seems illusory to us, and we can offer no coherent explanation for the anomaly, which we have already mentioned in Chapter Eleven when discussing information from the Arab texts (after careful analysis of these) concerning the knowledge Middle Easterners had of the Peninsula. G. R. Tibbetts (1956: 43-44)

observed that in the end, the Arab texts “show that the majority of places known to them were on the west coast and, moreover, only in the northern part of that coast from Pegu to Kedah, or perhaps as far south as Klang.” He wrote:

If the Arabs went further, and they seem to have travelled quite often to Śrīvijaya, then they sailed down the east coast of Sumatra (crossing over from Malaya somewhere in the latitude of Klang), for it is of that coast that they give information, and not of Malaya. When they travelled the whole way to China, they still sailed down the Sumatran coast and then turned east to skirt the extreme southern tip of the peninsula to call for water at Tioman, or to leave it on the west.

The Arabs, therefore, seem to have known nothing of the east coast. Let us add, nevertheless, that this Tioman Island mentioned in their accounts, which must therefore have been an occasional stopping-off place for their ships, has revealed no trace of their passage, though Chinese ceramics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as we have shown above, are plentiful there.

C. TAMBRALINGA FROM THE END OF THE 12TH TO THE BEGINNING OF THE 13TH CENTURY

I. Historical Facts

1. A new historical reference point can give us an idea of the political situation of Tambralinga at the end of the twelfth century—the year 1183, to be exact. This date comes from an inscription engraved on the base of a bronze statue of Buddha found at Wat Hua Wiang (Chaiya).

The brief Khmer inscription mentions the casting of a statue on the orders (or during the reign) of a personage named Kamrateñ Añ Mahārāja Śrīmat Trailokyārāja Maulibhūṣaṇavarmadeva, in a year corresponding to 1183. (Cœdès 1929/61: 29-31). The text adds that the order was transmitted to the sculptor by the “Mahāsenāpati Talānai who governs the country of Grahi,” a place that corresponds to the region of Chaiya.⁴ However brief, this inscription has raised many questions, in particular to do with the use of written Cambodian in some of the characters, which, according to P. Dupont

⁴ The identification, which has not been contested since, was made by G. Cœdès. (1918: 33-36).

(1942: 107) are “totally foreign to Khmer palaeography,” but “on the other hand, very close to that of Java.” There are also questions concerning the use of a Khmer title (*kamrateñ añ*) in conjunction with the term *mahārāja*, which evokes Indonesia, to designate this personage. Finally, we need to ask about the name of the sponsor of the statue, which is reminiscent of the names of two kings of Malāyu who are attested respectively in 1286 and 1347, as well as the name *Mahāsenāpati* Talānai, which we likewise encounter in the former country of Malāyu. (Cœdès 1941: 61-62).

To sum up what we can learn from this inscription: we are in the presence of a foundation executed through the good offices of an intermediary, a governor (*mahāsenāpati*) named Talānai, from the region of Grahi, an area that is under submission to a Sumatran dynasty and strongly influenced by Indonesia, though doubtless speaking Khmer. Cœdès (1964: 336) eventually assimilates this dynasty to that of Candrabhānu, sovereign of Tambralinga, but we find it difficult to accept this identification, if only for chronological reasons. We do not see how the same sovereign, in one lifetime, could have caused this inscription to be engraved in 1183, and still be fresh enough to invade Śrī Lankā twice, in 1247 and 1262, as we will see him doing later.

All this is not in total contradiction to our previous understandings, however. Tambralinga, of which the land of Grahi formed the northern limits at the end of the twelfth century—in spite of the evidence of independence shown by its interference in Khmer affairs at the beginning of the eleventh century—is still perceived by the Chinese to be part of the zone of influence of Śrīvijaya. Zhao Rugua indicates exactly this in 1226 when he continues to depict this city-state as a tribute-paying dependency of Sanfoqi, along with the land of Grahi (Jialuoxi), which is specifically mentioned in the same list of dependencies of the supposed thalassocracy. Some authors, however, have expressed the opposite view concerning the identification—since O. W. Wolters’ study of Tambralinga (1958)—of Dengliumei (Teng-liu-mei), vassal of Cambodia, according to Zhao Rugua (Cœdès 1964: 329), with Danmaling (Tan-ma-ling), and thus with Tambralinga. But as we said earlier, (see above), these two names cannot be assimilated, and we go along with the opinion of P. Wheatley, who rejects the assimilation and places Dengliumei (Teng-liu-mei) well into the northern part of the Peninsula. This region must therefore be the immediate neighbour of the land of

Grahi, since the *Songshi* specifies that the southern frontier of Cambodia (understood in the broadest sense) was Jialuoxi (Grahi). (Cœdès 1964: 296). The farthest we can go is to say that during the very imperialistic reign of Candrabhānu, in the middle of the thirteenth century, which we will discuss in the pages that follow, the land of Grahi, which until that time was more or less distinct from Tambralinga, certainly became an integral part of it.

2. The next date, 1230, is supplied in another inscription that we have already mentioned when speaking of the 'Ligor' inscription. (See above Chapter Nine.) It is Number 24 in the inventory of G. Cœdès (1929/61: 25-28), said to have originated in Wat Hua Wiang (Chaiya), but more likely discovered at Nakhon Si Thammarat. The text of this inscription, which is engraved on a piedroit, is in sixteen lines of correct Sanskrit, of which only the first are really legible:

It begins with an elegy in verse dedicated to a king, Çrī Dharmarāja, of the Padmavamça dynasty and sovereign of the country of Tāmbra-
liṅga. His personal name, Candrabhānu, appears for the first time in a
play on words. This name and the titles that precede it are then rewrit-
ten in an elegy in prose. Next appears the date kaliyuga 4332 (= 1230
A.D.). The few legible words in the rest of the text seem to indicate
that the purpose of the inscription was to commemorate gifts given to
a Buddhist sanctuary. (Cœdès 1929/61: 25).

This King Candrabhānu became a legendary figure of the city-state of Tambralinga, whose reality was somewhat exaggerated by the best authors, as we saw earlier.

3. The different versions of the chronicle of Wat Phra Borommathat in Nakhon Si Thammarat also speak of this king. (Wyatt 1975). From the jumble of narratives full of inconsistencies and inaccuracies, we can extract the fact that a sovereign of the city of Indapatapuriya ("the city built by Indra," whose identification has been the subject of much debate) named Śrī Dharmāśokarāja, fleeing an epidemic with his wife and his subjects, reached the vicinity of the former city of Nakhon Si Thammarat, which he took over, at the same time enriching the great *stūpa* that harboured the holy relic of the Tooth of Buddha (Wat Phra Borommathat, whose first version could have been built in around the middle of the tenth century. (See above, Chapter Twelve.) A brief history of this relic and the past of the city is supplied above. The chronicle provides the additional

information that the sovereign invited monks from Śrī Laṅkā and Pegu to come and reconsecrate the reliquary.

According to the text, when the sovereign died, in a year corresponding to 1278 (which we reject as being too late), his brother Candrabhānu became king. Here we are told that the new king settled to the south of the great *stūpa*, in Phra Wiang, where he established a fortified city. (Wyatt 1975: 95). An identification of this city with the formerly fortified city known by this name, immediately to the south of the modern city of Nakhon Si Thammarat, has been proposed; Nakhon Si Thammarat was established on what must have been the first site, near What Phra Borommthat. (Doc. 38). The north-south axis of the city and its site, corresponding to the general direction of the residual dune parallel to the shore at the time, is also that of the present city that prolonged its existence without providing for architectural continuity after the disappearance of the ramparts built beginning in the seventeenth century. N. Suthiragsa (1971) drew up a rough plan that restores the dimensions of the city to around a thousand metres in length by six hundred in width. Certain sections of the former earthworks fortification are still visible. Suthiragsa located the probable site of the royal palace (to the southwest) and that of several abandoned or still functioning Buddhist temples whose sites had been cut off by the main artery that passes through Nakhon Si Thammarat from north to south: Wat Suan Luang and Wat Phetcharik, still active, but only in the west sections, and without any traces of old remains; Wat Phra Sadet, Wat Baw Phrong, Wat Kuti and Wat Phra Wiang, abandoned.

Nothing very spectacular has been found in this very urbanized perimeter, aside from votive tablets and Chinese ceramics. The reason for this is that no significant excavation has been undertaken there; nevertheless, as we explained, the majority of the Chinese ceramics discovered on the site of this former city were found during the construction of the city's new museum, on the east side of the former site of Wat Suan Luang

The Candrabhānu founder of the city of Phra Wiang is perhaps the same person as the one who attempted to conquer Śrī Laṅkā in the middle of the thirteenth century, and if so, it is likely that this foundation took place in the beginning of the same century, but there is some room for doubt, because the name Candrabhānu, if we refer to the chronicles, is only a title, very likely designating the heir to the throne. So we read, concerning the Śrī Dharmā-śokarāja we have

already mentioned, that his “youngest brothers were called *dav* Candabhānu and *dav* Baṇṣasurā”; and a little later, in reference to the same sovereign, that when he died, “*brahṇā* Candabhānu became ruler, and *brahṇā* Baṇṣasurā became *brahṇā* Candabhānu.” (Wyatt 1975: 87, 95).

4. The religious contacts with Śrī Laṅkā and Pegu referred to in the chronicles could only be the continuation of ties established during the historic period we discussed earlier.⁵ They may help us to understand the particular course that caused the sovereign Candrabhānu to become so interested in the faraway island of Śrī Laṅkā, an interest that would lead to his ruin and that of his city-state at the end of the thirteenth century. We can get some idea of his plottings against the remote island through accounts from Singhalese historical texts written in Pāli, and also from some Pāṇḍya inscriptions. The principal historical text is the *Cūlavamsa*, a continuation of the *Mahāvamsa*. In it we learn that Candrabhānu attacked the island on two occasions during the reign of Parākramabāhu II (1236-1270). Candrabhānu is designated in the text by the name *Jāvakarāja* (“king of the Jāvakas”). H. Kern, as G. Coëdès tells us (1929/61: 25), had translated ‘Jāvaka’ as ‘Javanese’; G. Ferrand, after him (1922a: 172), saw in the word the original of the Arab transcription ‘Zābag,’ and since he identified the country of Zābag with Śrīvijaya, he was led to make of Candrabhānu a king of Śrīvijaya. This analysis became obsolete when G. Coëdès published the inscription dated 1230. He wrote:

Indeed, if Candrabhānu had been sovereign of the great Sumatran kingdom, he would probably have followed the example of the sovereign who had [the stele dated 775] engraved, and mentioned his title “Lord of Çrīvijaya” (Çrīvijayecvara), instead of simply calling himself “Lord of Tāmbraḷiṅga”. Besides this, the title Çrī Dharmarāja, which figures in no document connected with the kings of Çrīvijaya, seems to be associated in particular with the princes reigning over the region of Ligor. [Nakhon Si Thammarat].

The mysterious Candrabhānu of the Singhalese texts, then, became the uncontested sovereign of Tambralinga in a Malay inscription,

⁵ The Burmese presence in the region of Mergui-Tenasserim is still attested in 1269 by an inscription dating from the reign of the last sovereign of Pagan, Narathihapati (1254-1287) (*Inscriptions of Burma* III, CCXXV). It was not translated, and was destroyed during World War II. (Luce 1969-70: I, 27, 46-47).

and is also spoken of in local chronicles. G. Cœdès later explained (1927a: 463) that the term *Jāvaka* used in the Singhalese text, while corresponding phonetically to 'Zābag', as Ferrand had indicated, was not the geographical equivalent of Zābag,

in that for the Arabs, this name designates the Empire of the Mahārāja, that is, the kingdom of Palembang. It is merely an ethnic name referring to the Indonesians, with roughly the same meaning as the modern Cambodian word *javā*, which applies as much to the Malays of the Peninsula as to those from the islands and to the Javanese. (Cœdès 1929/61: 26).

In addition, some of the Singhalese texts that speak of this historic episode mention the country of origin of the invading king: Tambaliṅgam, Tamaliṅgamu. (Sirisena 1978: Ch. II).

We may wonder, of course, what could have been the reasons for such expeditions. They are not clearly explained. The *Cūlavamsa* specifies that the invaders came under the pretext that as followers of Buddha, they were interested in the Buddhist relics. This seems excessive, but it is hard to see what other reasons could have pushed two regions at such a far remove from each other to go to war. Candrabhānu, if we are to believe the Nakhon Si Thammarat chronicles, already controlled the whole Peninsula, at least nominally, though the Chinese texts from the same period (particularly Zhao Rugua's) continue to portray his kingdom as a vassal of Śrīvijaya. It is inconceivable that he could have aspired to political domination over two regions so different and at such a far remove from each other.

Nevertheless, we repeat, all this implies contacts predating the invasions, in particular, contacts established by the monks who travelled from one region to the other and made Śrī Laṅkā famous for its Buddhist relics. W. M. Sirisena advanced the theory that the relics might have had some political significance. (Sirisena 1978: 40). They were supposed to possess magical power that would bring prosperity and security to the kingdom, and to strengthen the power of the sovereign. Such a reason seems to us to be more in keeping with the warlike energies expended; besides which, it is impossible to prove that there were any economic reasons for these expeditions: Śrī Laṅkā was significantly involved in international trade, part of which moved through the Peninsula, but it is difficult to see how

control of the peninsula could have had any real influence on the great trade routes of international commerce in this period.

The *Cūlavamsa* dates the first invasion to the eleventh year of the reign of the Sinhalese sovereign Parākramabāhu II. The dates proposed for this ruler (1236-1270) have undergone some changes. Since it now seems generally accepted that he began to reign in 1236, the date of this first invasion would then be 1247. Using the sources we have mentioned, W. M. Sirisena (1978: 42-43) demonstrated convincingly that the invasion was launched from the southern ports of the island. Candrabhānu, in spite of his superiority in military techniques, was defeated by Parākramabāhu II's larger defending army, and took refuge in an independent kingdom in the northern part of the island. He soon became the sovereign of this kingdom, in circumstances that remain obscure. It was as ruler of this northern kingdom that he was confronted by a Pāṇḍyan invasion in 1258, which resulted in his being forced to pay tribute to the Pāṇḍyas. Once this arrangement was established, it was therefore as sovereign of the northern kingdom of Śrī Laṅkā that Candrabhānu launched his second attack against the southern kingdom, which was still ruled by the same king. It appears that this time around, the desire to appropriate the relics was mixed with territorial ambitions, which would be understandable in the political context that has been reconstructed for the period. W. M. Sirisena (1978: 50), with the help of the Pāṇḍyan inscriptions, proposed to date this invasion to the end of the year 1262. At the time, Candrabhānu had at his disposal a formidable army made up, among others, of Coḷa and Pāṇḍya soldiers, more probably recruited in Śrī Laṅkā than in Southern India. He was defeated again, and died in battle, having apparently failed to secure his rearguard. Indeed, his suzerain, the Pāṇḍya sovereign Vīra Pāṇḍya (1253-1275), fought against him, perhaps at the request of Parākramabāhu II, who was probably also the Pāṇḍyan emperor's vassal.

The Pāṇḍya inscriptions indicate that a son of Jāvaka, who had been present in Śrī Laṅkā during all these events, became the new sovereign of Candrabhānu's kingdom, doubtless because the Pāṇḍya sovereign wished to divide in order to rule. He or his successors appear to have remained on the throne for only a brief period (until the beginning of the fourteenth century at the latest).

5. It is not easy to reconcile the information in these Singhalese and Indian sources with details from one of the chronicles written in Chieng Mai in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the *Jinakālamālī*, which we mentioned in connection with Tambralinga's political intrigues against Cambodia. (See above, Chapter Twelve.) The *Jinakālamālī* describes for the same period as the *Cūlavamsa* a peaceful expedition sent to Śrī Laṅkā by the king of Tambralinga, Siridhammarāja, and a certain Rocarāja, prince of Sukhothai, who has been identified with Indrāditya, founder of the dynasty of the same name, and father of several sons, including the great Thai sovereign Rāma Khamheng. (Cœdès 1917: 43-44). The *Jinakālamālī* places this episode in the same period the *Cūlavamsa* assigns to it. The purpose of the expedition was to bring back a famous statue of Buddha, the first one ever made in his image in Śrī Laṅkā, which, according to the chronicle, was nonetheless given away. At a later point, we will speak of this statue, which is known in Thailand by the name of Phra Sihing.

Unless there has been an error in dating, this expedition could only have been a second effort after the first abortive attempt to remove the statue by force. With this in mind, W. M. Sirisena has proposed that the mission would necessarily have been carried out by the second sovereign rather than the first, who was already established in Śrī Laṅkā.

The involvement of the sovereign of Sukhothai from this point on is interesting. The chronicle even records that, wishing to see the sea, he himself travelled all the way to the kingdom of Siridhamma (Tambralinga). It is difficult not to see in this the preparation for an invasion that did in fact take place at the end of the thirteenth century during the reign of Rāma Khamheng, and the beginning, at the very least, of a relationship of suzerain-to-vassal. Sirisena (1978: 49) therefore suggested that in these circumstances, Candrabhānu would have been encouraged to seek another region or create an independent kingdom: in addition to the religious reasons, the threat from the kingdom of Sukhothai would have been a further incentive for the sovereign of Tambralinga to seek his fortunes elsewhere. After all, hadn't one of his predecessors managed to insinuate himself into the role of sovereign of Angkor for several years in the beginning of the eleventh century?

II. The Archaeological Facts

This historic context makes it possible to see why the territory of the former Tambralinga has provided a number of remains that were directly influenced by the civilization of South India of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It also helps us to understand the way in which distinctly perceptible Singhalese influences reached as far as Tambralinga: doubtless directly, from the twelfth century on, but also indirectly by way of Burma, which maintained complex relations—particularly of a religious nature—with the island, and which, as we have shown, was probably present in Tambralinga at the end of the same century.

I. A. B. Griswold (1964: 76-77), when considering the *stūpa* of Wat Phra Borommathat (Fig. 206), with its “unusually large *harmikā*,” its modern *chattra*, but its “dome and *harmikā* [which], in spite of repairs, preserve the forms of the early 13th century,” was “inclined to regard this monument as the oldest full-sized emblem of the Sinhalese sect surviving in Siam.” He provided some historical background concerning this *stūpa* and the Singhalese sect:

Its peculiar proportions and contour strikingly recall the Chapaṭa [Sapada] Stupa at Pagan in Burma (Fig. 207), which was built in the early 13th century to commemorate the establishment of the Sinhalese sect there some years before. As we know from a long 15th century inscription at Pegu [the Dhammazedi inscriptions at Kalyāṇī], this sect had been established at Pagan in the late 12th century by five monks who had studied in Ceylon. Their leader was the Mahāthera Chapaṭa, a Mōn, and the other four were, respectively, from Cambodia, Bengal, Kāñcī, and Ceylon. Later on, Rāhula, the monk from Ceylon, fell in love with a nautch girl and decided to retire from the monkhood to marry; whereupon, so as to avoid a scandal, he was urged by his companions to leave Burma and settle far away, “in Malayadīpa”. Having arrived there, he found the king of that country was “desirous of learning the *Vinaya*,” so he gave him a course of instruction before actually quitting the yellow robe. The “Malayadīpa” of the inscription is usually identified with Southern Sumatra; but I wonder if the name had not come to mean the Malay Peninsula by the time the inscription was composed; and the story of its conversion to the Theravāda around 1200 would fit Nāgara Śrī Dharmarāja very well.

He adds:

That city, formerly a possession of the Sumatran empire of Śrīvijaya and impregnated with Hindu and Mahāyāna culture, had recently gained its political independence, which it perhaps wished to authenti-

cate by a change in religion. If the conversion was aided by Rāhula, who had resided for some years at Pagan, the resemblance between the two stupas would be only natural.

If we are not to think that it was Rāhula who converted the region to this form of Buddhism, we could imagine, on the basis of what has already been said, that the Burmese Buddhist monks could have advised Rāhula to go to Tambralinga, as to a country professing the same religion as his. If this were the case, Rāhula would merely have contributed to the propagation of Singhalese influences in this city-state, from which they will have reached the kingdom of Sukhothai, which, as we have seen, was in close contact with Tambralinga.

The Nakhon Si Thammarat *stūpa*, the largest and holiest of the edifices of this type in the region, is not the only one to have adopted this Singhalese aesthetics, which may have come by way of Burma, just as the Sapada *stūpa* (Fig. 207) is not the only structure of its type in Pagan to have embraced it; we could mention Paya Pebinkyaung, Mahākassapa, and so many other small edifices that, in line with the the present politics of restoration, are being returned to their supposed original configuration. (Gatellier 1978). There is at least one in the former Tambralinga whose dome, *harmikā* and *chattra* are very like those of Wat Phra Borommathat, if not identical; it is at Wat Khien Bang Keo (Fig. 208), a monastery located fifteen kilometres to the south of Phatthalung, near Thale Sap, northeast of Chaison. It is twenty-two metres high. According to a local legend, (Collective 1988: 66), it, too, was built in the eighth to ninth centuries (commonly known as the Śrīvijaya period), then modified later when *Theravāda* Buddhism arrived in the region.

Other *stūpas*, located on the former territory of Tambralinga, more or less preserve these architectural features on core structures that were probably built in much earlier periods. By way of example, we can mention the Wat Khao *stūpa* (Tambon Chaiburi, Muang District, Phatthalung Province), whose *harmikā* is nonetheless greatly reduced, but whose dome is faithful to Singhalese aesthetics; the *stūpa* of Wat Phra Koh twenty kilometres north of Satingpra, with an octagonal *harmika*; and the *stūpa* of Satingpra village itself, with an original core that is definitely old, but that was also exposed to the Singhalese aesthetic influence from the twelfth century on, until new aesthetic canons, notably in the Ayutthaya period, came along, as with the other structures, to progressively modify the purity of styles imported during this or that earlier period.

Finally we will describe a reliquary in the form of a *stūpa*, in gold and silver, which is closely related to the ones we have been discussing, and therefore, to a Singhalese tradition, probably of the twelfth or thirteenth century. (Fig. 209). It was found at Wat Phraphut (Tak Bai, Narathiwat Province), and therefore quite far to the south, beyond the geographical region of Tambralinga, in the region that would logically be Langkasuka, about which unfortunately we know nothing in connection to that period of its history. The piece could also be imported—its small size (13 centimetres in height) could justify this theory—or constructed locally after architectural works built in the Malay Peninsula in this period.

A miniscule golden *stūpa* containing a relic of Buddha fits inside another one in silver, with a removable upper part. It is especially this silver one, with its bell-shaped dome (*aṇḍa*), its wide, square *harmikā* and its *chattra*, at once massive and slender, that calls for a comparison with the monuments we have just described. In addition, in this particular case, the three end sections of the *stūpa*, as in Śrī Laṅkā, are set on a triple circular base (*trimāla*) that is itself sitting on a quadrangular foundation.

2. As for the inscriptions, a very revealing one was discovered at Nakhon Si Thammarat, and is preserved in the Museum of Wat Phra Borommathat. Its existence was indicated by E. Aymonier (1901-1903: II: 76) in the beginning of the century, but it was incorrectly identified and dated until G. Cœdès (1929/61: 38-40) showed to E. H. Hultsch the impression that had been made of the characters. Hultsch recognized in the writing some Tamil letters that he believed to be from a later period than those on the Takua Pa inscription (ninth century), and probably attributable to the period of the Coḷa dynasty. The text contains a reference to Brahmins, and to a certain Dharmasenāpati. The inscription has been reexamined since that time (Weeraprajak 1985: 134), and it appears that the second part of it is written in Old Khmer, using Sanskrit letters; although it has not been totally decoded, it seems to contain a definite reference to Tambralinga. It can apparently be dated to the thirteenth century, a date that fits perfectly in the context of the cultural and commercial relations—as well as the warfare—that have just been described in connection with Tambralinga in this period.

3. A half dozen building elements found on the site of Tha Rua are now preserved in the museum of Nakhon Si Thammarat. (Fig. 210).

These consist of cut stones 1.3 to 1.6 metres in length, and around 40 centimetres in height and 25 in width, rough-hewn, except on their ends, which are finished in a plant motif with two large stems, one ending in a bud. The end sections of two of these stones are missing; one has a circular floral motive suggesting a lotus blossom on one of its very level sides. Q. Wales (1974), who published the first photograph of them, initially confessed his inability to figure out what they were used for, but soon afterward clarified their purpose. (Wales 1974b). They were corbels that formerly surmounted pillars and supported the architrave of temples; G. Jouveau-Dubreuil (1914: I, 59-60) called these 'Dravidian brackets'. Their style is incontestably that of the early art of Vijayanagar (the beginning of the fourteenth century), which influenced the whole of Southern India, and Śrī Laṅkā beyond. The most probable explanation for the presence of these remains in Tha Rua is that they belonged to a Buddhist temple built with a Singhalese influence that was itself strongly marked by the contemporary styles of the kingdoms of Southern India. We cannot rule out a direct influence from this part of India, because Negapatam was an important centre of Buddhism that was not ignorant concerning the *Theravāda*. (Paranavitana 1944).

4. The site of Mok Lan also contained the vestiges of a structure that could have been built under the same influences. The elements that were found are stones for doorframes, with rather blurred decorative motifs that could correspond to the decorative vocabulary of Śrī Laṅkā or Southern India in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. These stones, which served as supports for local dwellings, and were therefore placed in an upright position, created quite a stir; their decoration was first compared with that of Cambodian monuments of the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. Loofs-Wissowa (1977), who proposed this comparison, asked many unnecessary questions about the nature of the temple the stones belonged to, in light of the *lingas* found on the same site, since the Cambodian sovereign of the period, Jayavarman VII, was known for his Buddhist faith. Independently of the fact that we do not believe in a Khmer suzerainty over Tambralinga, as we have already indicated, the site of Mok Lan is vast and complex, and none of the city-states of the Peninsula, including Tambralinga, ever ceased to practise at one and the same time all the Indian forms of worship, and doubtless many others from elsewhere, with merely a preponderance of one

over the others, depending on the period. It is therefore impossible to say what type of temple, Buddhist or Brahmanical, these stones belonged to.

5. *The Nakhon Si Thammarat school of sculpture*

All the preceding archaeological evidence seems pertinent in the historic context we have described, but leaves a feeling of frustration. We might have expected, in particular, that local statuary would be influenced primarily by the art of Śrī Laṅkā. This expectation is the more seriously disappointed because a well-attested local tradition, which we mentioned in connection with the Chieng Mai chronicles, holds that the most famous statue of Nakhon Si Thammarat, a bronze image of Buddha known as the Phra Buddha Sihing, originated in Śrī Laṅkā. It is admittedly an honour it shares with two other images, also in bronze, one in Bangkok, the other in Wat Phra Sing of Chieng Mai, in spite of what is said in the *Jinakālamālī*. Indeed, its arrival, according to the Chieng Mai chronicle, took place at the time of King Candrabhānu, and the statue would merely have passed through Nakhon Si Thammarat before reaching the kingdom of Sukhothai. Nevertheless, from the point of view of style, there is absolutely nothing Singhalese about it. (Fig. 211).

The Buddha is seated in *vajrāsana*, the soles of both feet turned up and very visible, and in *bhūmisparśamudrā*. The body is plump, almost chubby, with wide shoulders and an almost feminine chest which as J. Boisselier (1974: 152) points out when discussing images in the Chieng Saen style, “translates details of the texts that give the Buddha a body ‘with the forward half of a lion, full armpits, the girth of a banyan tree...’” The face is round, the lids lowered, with the pupils still visible under distinctly arched eyebrows; the prominent nose is hooked, the mouth is of normal size, the lips rimmed, but not to excess; the chin is fat, with a carved line underneath it. The hair, in ringlets of medium size arranged in regular rows, includes a marked *uṣṇīṣa*, surmounted with a smooth, bulbous ornament. The fingers, on hands that are treated with roundness like the rest of the body, are unequal in length, gracefully sinuous. The *uttarāsaṅga*, the principal piece of the costume, leaves the right side of the chest mostly uncovered, and is suggested only by several engraved lines across the torso, as well as on the back and at the level of the ankles and the left knee. The *antaravāsaka* is lightly depicted by a thin rounded strip at the waist, and only over the stomach. The carefully

folded *saṃghāṭi* is draped over the left shoulder, with most of its length falling down the back; the figure is in fact sitting on it (one of the ends of this third piece of the costume appears in the front between the folded legs); the ordered way the folds are draped over the shoulder, with the arrangement of the cloth slightly disturbed, provides an elegant motif.

All these stylistic features, especially the treatment of the body and face, and the presence of the bulbous ornament surmounting the *uṣṇīṣa*, give the image a marked similarity to works in the Chieng Saen style, a school of sculpture that developed in Northern Thailand beginning in the middle of the thirteenth century (perhaps earlier), strongly influenced by a Pāla-Sena tradition, which is very likely to have been relayed through Burma.

The similarity between these images of Buddha in the Chieng Saen style and those from Nakhon Si Thammarat is striking. G. Cœdès (1928a: 31) explained this by the fact that Pāla influences gained the outer sections of India by various routes, one of which was obviously the shores of the Peninsula. Nevertheless, the supposed date of these images (the oldest dating from the middle of the thirteenth century according to present assessments), implies that they were created after the disappearance of the Pāla-Sena dynasty, at the very end of the twelfth century, under Muslim assaults. B. Boribai and A. B. Griswold (1950/86: 78) even see in these circumstances an additional reason for the increase in Pāla influences in this period:

The flight of the monks, scholars and artists to the north, east and southeast from Nalanda when the university was destroyed brought with it a wave of influence which recalls, in a lesser degree, the effect of the flight of the learned men to Italy from Byzantium when the latter fell to the Turks in 1453.

The only awkward problem raised by these ideas of artistic influence lies in the specific nature of the two forms of Buddhism involved. The Bihar form reflected a *Mahāyāna* Buddhism with strong Tantric connotations, while it was the primitive Buddhism originating in Śrī Laṅkā that was established in the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat during the twelfth century (perhaps reinforced by way of Burma, as we have suggested). In any case, whether the statues were created in the context of one or the other expressions of Buddhism, none of the

pieces possesses the slightest iconographic feature that could rule out the possibility of a connection with *Theravāda* Buddhism.

In addition, B. Boribal and A. B. Griswold wondered what relationship should be established between the Buddhas of the Nakhon Si Thammarat region in this period and those from Chiang Saen, while fully acknowledging, along with G. Cœdès, that the resemblances between these two schools might have come about merely through a common Pāla influence that could have reached both by different routes. The relations between the kingdom of Sukhothai and that of Tambralinga that are described in the chronicles make it plausible for the Chiang Saen style to have been disseminated as far south as the Peninsula. But it is also possible to imagine the reverse scenario: because, according to B. Boribal and A. B. Griswold (1950/86: 83-84), the image of Phra Buddha Sihing from Nakhon Si Thammarat is closer in certain details—chiefly in the treatment of the *saṃghāṭi*—to the Pāla prototypes than to the bronzes from the north: “The Sinhalese Hinayana Buddhism perhaps came to Chiengsaen by the same route by which it came to Sukhothai, that is, *via* Nakhon Sri Thammarat,” accompanied by a number of iconographic precepts developed in that region. Whatever the origin of this type of Buddha, the images created from the thirteenth century on—among which we must therefore include the oldest, the Phra Buddha Sihing—exercise a powerful influence on the later productions of the style called the Nakhon Si Thammarat school.

Boribal and Griswold mention the existence in this region of numerous bronze images of Buddha, “possibly several hundreds,” illustrating many of these with photographs. These images:

reproduce more or less faithfully the chief peculiarities of the ‘Sihing’ of Nakhon: legs crossed with both soles turned up and visible; right hand performing the gesture of *Māravijaya*; more or less round face; *rasmī* in the general form of a lotus bud; scarf in multiple pleats falling over the left shoulder and stopping above the left nipple. (Boribal & Griswold 1950/86: 84-85, Figs. 19, 21-27.)

We might add that, as with the Sihing pieces, they were often cast in an alloy with a high percentage of copper, which gives them a particular reddish colour that is also found in certain images of the Chiang Saen style.

The two authors found it difficult to date these images of Buddha, and finally expressed the view that “even if it is later determined that some of these images are actually contemporary with the ‘Sihing’, it

is certain that the great majority of them are from the Ayuthya period.” (Boribal & Griswold 1950/86: 86). The museum of Nakhon Si Thammarat owns one specimen which, formerly lacquered and gilt, may date from the fourteenth century. (Fig. 212).

6. *The Chaiya school of sculpture*

At this point, in order to complete our examination of the archaeological remains found on the former territory of Tambralinga and datable to the period covering the years from the end of the twelfth century to the end of the thirteenth, we must speak of a number of particular works that belong to the immediate environment of the Bay of Bandon. The most important of these is a large bronze Buddha called the Grahi Buddha already mentioned in this chapter, which bears on its pedestal an inscription dated 1183 A.D.

a. The Buddha of Grahi (Figs. 213, 214)

This is one of the major works of art of the Malay Peninsula, and certainly the one that has provoked the most controversy, since the authors who speak of it cannot agree on a stylistic assessment of the piece, and therefore, on a date. These discussions turn on the same questions, endlessly repeated:

- Is not the date of the inscription on the pedestal (1183 A.D.) a century late (Casparis 1967), and, in that case, wouldn't the Buddha be from the end of the thirteenth century? (Boisselier 1974).

- Since the *nāga* and the Buddha were cast separately (the *nāga* itself was cast in two pieces: the coils and the hoods), were they really cast in the same period? Certain details would tend to confirm this idea (the *mudrā* considered unusual for the episode of Buddha's life evoked by the statue, the very ornate *nāga* that should have called for an adorned Buddha). (Dupont 1942). J. Boisselier (1974: caption Doc. 67), however, finds this idea of a separate operation unacceptable.

The image is seated in *vīrāsana*, but as P. Krairiksh (1980: 67) observes, with knees forward and ankles blurred according to the canons of a certain mannerism that is characteristic of the works of the twelfth century. The hands are in *bhūmisparśamudrā*. The costume is represented with a certain realism, even a certain refinement: the *uttarāsaṅga* leaves the right shoulder bare; the top edge of the frontal fold of cloth is draped over the left shoulder. The upper edge of the *antaravāsaka* is clearly indicated at the waist, and its lower edge is very visible at the level of the ankles, along with the bottom

edge of the *uttarāsaṅga*; the *saṃghāṭi* is folded over the left shoulder in a regular arrangement of pleats. The entire body can be sensed under the costume; the breasts and the nipples are particularly marked. The face, with its square upper contours, is beautifully proportioned: the striking eyebrows are joined above a fine, slightly aquiline nose; the eyes with their lowered lids are stretched towards the temples; the mouth is drawn with an imperceptible inner smile; the ears have distended lobes which, however, do not reach to the shoulders, and are not attached to the neck, which is marked by many beauty folds. The head is covered with a mass of hair that looks almost like a wig; the alternating ringlets are of medium size; the *uṣṇīṣa*, cylindrical and voluminous, is smooth, and decorated in front with a jewel.

This figure is seated on three spiraling coils of the *nāga*, whose volume and width increase from the lower section towards the top; the whole creature is resting on a low base that is squared off in the front, where the inscription is carved. The heads of the multicephalous *nāga* (seven in all) rise up, forming a parasol over the Buddha; the anatomical details of the serpent are rendered with a certain realism, especially the scales. This *nāga* is adorned with jewels that separate each coil in the front, decorating the chest of the raised heads, and in particular, the small cushion on which the figure is actually sitting; one of its decorative motifs is reminiscent of the petals of a double lotus blossom that comes to a point in the front.

As is apparent, this is a carefully executed work, delivered intact through one of the occasionally happy accidents of archaeological discovery (it was found in a rice paddy near Wat Wiang in Chaiya during the reign of Rāma V), with only a few traces of wear.

P. Dupont (1942: 109) could not conceive that the episode of the Life of Buddha that is linked with the presence of the *nāga*, that is, the time when he meditates until he is awakened, protected by a serpent that shelters him from a flood brought on by seven consecutive days of rain, could involve the *bhūmiśparśamudrā* and not the usual *dhyaṇamudrā*. Furthermore, in his view, the *nāga* adorned with jewels seemed incompatible with this image of the Buddha in monastic garb. It is these two observations that gave him the idea that the image should be dissociated from its support. The comparisons suggested by P. Krairiksh (1980: 67) prevented this theory from ever getting off the ground. The second author, rightly considering that

the Buddha and the *nāga*, technically speaking, are in perfect harmony, offered the following reminders:

- That the Buddha in *bhūmisparśamudrā* sheltered by a *nāga* is not unknown in late Mōn sculpture.

- That above all, this representation is common in the Khmer art of the basin of the Tha Chin. (Wattanavrangkul 1975: Nos. 43, 62). The example illustrated under No. 43 (38 centimetres in height) is particularly striking (Fig. 215): the appearance of the *nāga* is identical, the *āsana* and the *mudrā* of the Buddha are the same.

Since in the light of these comparisons, it seems possible to reconcile the Buddha and its support, there is no reason to doubt that the date of the inscription (1183) is the date of the whole piece—all the more so because the stylistic comparisons adduced also point back to the twelfth century. The resemblance of the piece to the art of Sukhothai (Dupont 1942: 109. Boisselier 1974: 102) would then be fortuitous.

There remains the theory of J. G. de Casparis, who offered a different date for this inscription. His idea appealed to J. Boisselier (1974: 102, 103), who, clearly unaware of the images cited above, considered that the manner in which the costume of the Buddha was draped existed only in the early art of Sukhothai, and that the treatment of the *nāga* was “only inspired from Khmer art and very loosely interpreted.” What is involved in Casparis’s theory? (1967). It was based on three factors: the style of the Buddha, which was similar to that of the images from Sukhothai, the Old Javanese in the inscription, and the fact that the region where the image was discovered shows evidence of early Tamil settlements. Added to all this were several abnormal features in the way the date is expressed. Basing his views on these anomalies in the writing of the inscription, and backed up by Dupont’s impression that the Buddha and the *nāga* were not contemporary—though troubled by the fact that someone had replaced the image without mentioning this in a supplementary inscription—Casparis attempted to prove that the estimated date of the inscription was off by a century, thus reconciling the two parts.

This new date, which the author admitted to be conjectural, can no longer be entertained, in the light of new stylistic comparisons. As a work, the ‘Grahi’ Buddha is unique not for its iconography, but for its quality. In addition, adding a century to its date with all the implications suggested in the admittedly brief terms of its inscription does

not tally with today's attempts to reconstruct the political history of the region.

A head of Buddha in stone found in the same region invites comparisons with this bronze statue.

b. The head of Buddha from Wat Phra Barommatham (Chaiya)

This head (Fig. 216) has undergone a series of ups and downs. Its early history is unknown, but its more recent existence can be traced. (Boribai & Griswold 1950/86: 53-55). It belonged to the Wat Phra Barommatham collection in Chaiya when Luang Boribai Buribhand went to the area in 1928, at the request of Prince Damrong, to look for remains of 'Śrīvijaya' sculptures. The quality of this head struck him. It was attached at the time to a lacquered and gilt cement body of recent fabrication (probably executed when the Wat was restored in 1901). A decision was made to move the statue to Bangkok. During transport, the body was broken, and since it was without artistic value, it was thrown away, and only the head preserved, still bearing on the rear section traces of cement from the wall against which the reconstructed image had leaned at Wat Phra Barommatham. Before it was installed in the museum in Bangkok, Prince Damrong ordered a small leaf of the Bodhi Tree, in imitation of the one worn by the Buddha of Grahi, to be made of plaster and placed at the front of the *uṣṇīṣa*; the leaf was lacquered and gilt along the same lines as the head. The photograph illustrating P. Dupont's article on "the Grahi Buddha and the School of Chaiya" (1942) was taken in this period. Several years later, the plaster leaf came off and was not replaced. The spot where it had been attached is still visible, and it is doubtful that there ever was an original motif in this place where the ringlets of the hair of the *uṣṇīṣa* are broken. The head has therefore regained its original appearance, though nothing allows us to affirm that the lacquering and gilding of the surface are original and not the work of a modern craftsman.

The face is a handsome oval; the barely curved and separated brows are extended in a fine, long nose, slightly hooked, which has probably been restored; the eyes with half-closed lids are underlined with a wavy incision that takes the form of the edge of a lotus petal; the mouth, with an inward smile, is subtly drawn, and the lips are lightly rimmed; the lifted corners of the mouth are clearly marked; the chin is slightly cleft; the brow is adorned with an *ūrṇā*; the lobes of the ears are distended without reaching the shoulders (they have been repaired); the scalp is covered with thick hair made of non-

alternating ringlets of medium size; the hair is surmounted by a small, almost cylindrical *uṣṇīṣa*.

This piece has been evaluated and dated in a number of different ways. P. Dupont (1942: 111) felt that it resembled “Indian or Indo-Javanese models,” and compared it to the Buddha of Grahi, which, “although with a somewhat different face, presents the same particularities in the *uṣṇīṣa* and the hair, and the same triangular fleuron.” We know what has happened to this fleuron imitating a leaf from the Bodhi Tree since that time. He added other works to these comparisons (bronze statuettes of Buddha found in the vicinity of Chaiya to which we have already referred) in order to define a ‘school’ of sculpture in this region. Taken as a whole, these pieces, according to Dupont, although they were “not necessarily contemporaneous, and their quality [was] very dissimilar,” “considered as a group,” fit “the notion of a school,” which he defined as a “grouping of objects made in the same centre, having in common a number of typological details, and conforming to the same aesthetic tendency.” He attributed to this school a late line of descent coming out of Śrī Laṅkā, and dated it at the earliest to the fourteenth century (the ‘Grahi’ Buddha and the head we are examining), and to the fifteenth century in the case of the other works mentioned, since the propagation of *Theravāda* Buddhism from the island had played a determinant role in Southeast Asia from the thirteenth century on.

All of these comparisons are no longer appropriate, especially those concerning the statuettes that we have dated to the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century. To keep our observations to this head alone, and to its possible likeness to the Grahi Buddha, we can accept that there are great similarities in the treatment of the hair itself, but the *uṣṇīṣas* are different; the one on the Grahi Buddha is more voluminous than the one on the head, and perfectly smooth, as if a net had been placed over the chignon, adorned with a jewel in the front. The features of the faces also have undeniable similarities, though evaluation of these varies depending on the light in the photographs we possess. The presence of the *ūrṇā* does not invite any comparison. P. Krairiksh (1980: 67) sees in this head a resemblance to the late Mōn images, and proposes that the cleft chin could have been inspired by the Khmer images in the Bâphuon style (eleventh century), and as a result, dates the work to the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century. We are inclined to accept that the piece is contemporaneous with the

Buddha of Grahi, and therefore to think in terms of the end of the twelfth century, perhaps the beginning of the thirteenth.

c. Finally, certain stuccoed ornaments from one of the walls of the cave of Khuha Sawan (Kanchanadit, Surat Thani Province), including the large figure of the seated Buddha we have already referred to (see above, Chapter Eleven) invite comparison with the works under discussion. (Fig. 217). These ornaments were formed of beaded arches with a decoration of flambé motifs and topped with a jewel, which framed the head of Buddha seated in *vīrāsana* and in *bhūmisparśamudrā*; the space between two arches was decorated with a figurine of Buddha in the same attitude and performing the same *mudrā*, haloed with the heads of a polycephalic *nāga*. Only two of these remain. The appearance of the large seated Buddhas give the impression that they were restored and at the same time reinterpreted (at least in their features) many times—although the attitude and the gesture will surely not have been modified—but the little figurines of these decorations must be quite close to their original state. In them it is easy to see features associated with the Buddha of Grahi, including the appearance of the half-cylindrical *uṣṇīṣa*. The polycephalic *nāga* is reminiscent of the style of Bāyon.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE COMMERCIAL BOOM IN THE MALAY PENINSULA IN THE 12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES IN JIECHA (SOUTH KEDAH)

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the chiefdom of Jiecha in South Kedah entered into a new period of commercial activity like the one it had enjoyed in the ninth century. This reinsertion into the circuits of international trade in the Southern Seas is attested only on the archaeological level. No inscription, no text, makes any allusion to this part of the west coast of the Malay Peninsula—but the archaeological remains that have come to light are abundant and significant.

The first of these is of a major entrepôt port, Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, which was associated with two minor ports, Kampong Simpor Tambang and Kampong Sireh; in addition, there are fifteen ruined structures—including thirteen Brahmanical temples—whose size, conception and locations indicate that they cannot be placed in the framework of a city-state of the Indianized type, but only in a chiefdom, as in the ninth century.

In the pages that follow, we propose first to examine these archaeological remains, which have received more attention than all the others on the Malay Peninsula, for reasons we have already given in the chapter concerning Jiecha during the early centuries. (See above, Chapter Eight.)¹

A. THE ENTREPÔT PORT SITES

As we pointed out for the period of the ninth century, these sites are not the first remains to attract our attention. Q. Wales, who initiated the major part of the archaeological research in South Kedah, made a point of ignoring them, devoting all his energy to the discovery of

¹ The sites, along with the whole range of archaeological objects discovered in South Kedah, are illustrated in Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a.

the temples whose presence confirmed in his eyes the boldest of preconceived theories.

I. Kampong Pengkalan Bujang (Doc. 22)

1. *Discovery and location*

This *kampong*, on the right bank of the Sungai Bujang, corresponds to the place where Wales discovered his site PB 1 (18w); sites numbered from 19 to 23 (PB 2 to 6) are situated on the other bank. In 1958, site PB 1 (18w) was revisited by archaeologists seeking the location of the temples excavated by Wales twenty years earlier. (Wang Gungwu 1958: 220). They realized that very little remained from the ruins, but A. Lamb, who participated in this rapid inspection of the region, noticed the large number of sherds scattered across the ground that had been brought to the surface by the construction of a mosque in the village. He also saw that the course of the river cut through important deposits of archaeological debris of this type. The results of an examination he had made of some of them persuaded him of the importance of the site. Indeed, they turned out to be Chinese, most of them datable to the dynasty of the Southern Song.

2. *Excavation*

a. The hope of finding some specimens that were intact or could be restored led Lamb to conduct a dig in April and May of 1961, then in August of the same year. (Lamb 1961e & 1961m). He located fifteen areas in the same village or around it in which sherds or fragments of bricks could be found. He pointed out, however, that the quantity of sherds was very variable from one spot to another, and that only the areas numbered B, C and P were really productive, and in particular the first two, which were located to the south of the village on either side of the Sungai Bujang. "On both banks," he wrote, "the deposit appeared to be over three feet thick, with no clear signs of internal stratification. It began between two and four feet beneath the present surface." (Lamb 1961e: 23). Wherever they dug, the deposit appeared to be "a very closely packed mass of ceramic fragments mixed up with broken glass beads and other small artifacts." Because the site was near the river, it was very hard to excavate. At first it was dug in a somewhat crude manner, then—after a small dam was built around the deposit in the east bank—in successive layers, but

Lamb seemed convinced that there was no significant difference between the various levels of the deposit; this observation, however, appears to allude to a report that has never been published. The one from which we are quoting seems to be related especially to finds from site C on the right bank of the river.

b. Ten years later, in 1971, Leong Sau Heng undertook a new dig at two points in Kampong Pengkalan Bujang. The first was located along the right bank of the Sungai Bujang, in the immediate vicinity of points C and D dug by Lamb in 1961. This is site PB I. It was chosen with the idea that it might have been less exposed to the distorting action of the river currents on the ceramic deposits than the sites chosen by Lamb. The second was about twenty metres south of site PB 2 (19w), which has since been excavated and reconstructed *in situ*; this is site PB II. The results of Leong Sau Heng's excavation, combined with her study of part of Lamb's discoveries, which are deposited in the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Malaya, constitute her research for her *Master of Arts* degree. (Leong Sau Heng 1973).

c. J. Allen (1988) returned to the site in 1980 and relocated six of the sixteen places that had been catalogued by Lamb, assigning numbers to them. They still corresponded to the presence on the surface of sherds of ceramics or fragments of bricks and other materials in considerable quantities. The sites that Lamb had called A, D, F to H, J, and L to O no longer corresponded to anything on the surface, which did not rule out the possible presence of sherds at a deeper level.

d. When we went to the area in 1991 (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: 205-210), we had no difficulty in finding the spot catalogued by A. Lamb; today it corresponds to a rice paddy which, outside the rainy season, displays quantities of Chinese ceramic sherds, beads and fragments of Middle Eastern glass mixed with the earth that is regularly turned over by workers; what might once have been a building is still attested by a concentration of bricks and other materials, but it would doubtless be vain to hope to find anything coherent there. The place marked with a C by Lamb, which he considered important, is no longer attested by anything visible on the surface, but its counterpart B, on the left bank of the river, displays numerous Chinese ceramic sherds.

3. *Archaeological finds*

A. Lamb's excavation mentions several thousand pieces, which he classed in twenty-one categories, to which he added five others after a further dig in August 1961. In the overview that follows, we will group these into types of finds, either ceramics, Middle Eastern glass, or beads and other objects:

a. Ceramics: The following categories were enumerated:

Good quality celadons of Chinese origin. These are primarily bowls, cups and smaller plates. Most of the pieces are not decorated; a number, however, display a decorative motif of lotus petals on the outside. The paste is white, with a glaze that ranges from grey to olive green, but is predominantly pale blue and blue-green. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 27-32). It seems reasonable to attribute these celadons to the Southern Song, and to assign them to the productions of the Longquan kilns in Zhejiang, which made pieces of this quality in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Celadons and other pieces in the same category made of grey or fawn paste with a texture quite similar to that of stoneware. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 33-42). The pieces in this category are primarily bowls and plates. Several specimens show a poor quality of both glaze and paste. A number of fragments are marked under the glaze with an engraved floral design of a type that is associated with the celadons of the Northern Song (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 36-39). A. Lamb had the impression that this category of celadons was an imitation of the previous one, and was inclined to link them to productions associated with Tonkin or Thailand. In fact, they, too, come from the kilns of Longquan, but belong to a later period (from the end of the thirteenth to the beginning of the fourteenth century) marked by a massive output of mediocre quality that was widely exported from the port of Wenzhou and very likely also from Quanzhou, one of the largest ports exporting goods from Southern China to Southeast Asia and beyond, to India and the Middle East. It is not inconceivable that part of this production came from the Guangdong kilns and was exported from the port of Guangzhou.

Glazed white ceramics, slightly tinted with white, pale blue and pale green, on a fragile and usually very white paste. Several of the fragments of this type were pieces of small bottles (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 44) or little boxes with tops. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 43). There were also

pieces of small cups, bowls and plates. Some of these were decorated: a lotus petal in slight relief, incised floral or abstract motifs. Many of the fragments covered with white glaze had unglazed edges, and were so thin as to be translucent. A. Lamb linked a number of these sherds with similar productions found by T. Harrisson in Santubong (Sarawak). They are *qingbai*, very probably originating in the kilns of Dehua in Fujian, and dating to the thirteenth century.

Ceramics with glazes ranging from dark brown to deep violet, that may include iridescent effects, sometimes called *temmoku*. These ceramics were produced in the kilns of Southern China, probably Jian, in Fujian, in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Only a few small, very fragile fragments were found.

Stoneware: Quantities of stoneware sherds were found, especially rims and necks (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 46); the necks often included handles that were sometimes decorated with faces, mythical beasts or lotuses. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 47-49). Often these pieces came from good-sized jars (30 to 50 centimetres in height) that had frequently been made in the kilns of Guangdong (Xicun). Many other fragments came from somewhat crude conical bottles (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 45); these same bottles are found in Sarawak. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 106). Q. Wales found sherds of them on his site 18 (PB 1) (Lamb 1961e: Fig. 5); an almost complete one was discovered on site PB 2 (19w), and an intact specimen was found in the estuary of the Sungai Bujang. This type of pottery, dated in general to the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, apparently comes from the Fujian kilns. This sampling of Chinese ceramics, as we can see, is very much like the well-inventoried collection from Satingpra, and probably also to the samplings from the other entrepôt port sites of Tambralinga in the same period.

Earthenware: This type is the best represented of the sherds in the deposit. The pieces, which come from many different types of crockery, show a wide variety of decorations made by impression or incision. A number of *kendi* spouts were found (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 56) which, as J. Stargardt once observed, could come from the kilns of Kok Moh (in the peninsula of Satingpra).

Several ceramic fragments of Middle Eastern origin found at Kampong Sungai Mas, Lam Pho and Ko Kho Khao, with dark blue or green glazes, like the ones from the ninth century that we have

already described (see above, Chapter Ten); the paste is white, and similar in consistency to quicklime. A. Lamb was inclined to consider them less as examples of a type of manufacture made for export than as the remains of pottery brought by Middle Eastern merchants for their personal use. This is still the prevailing theory. The fact that pieces from the period we are examining are also encountered at Kampong Penkalan Bujang proves that they were produced over a long period of time, as we have already emphasized.

b. Glass

Thousands of fragments of glass have been discovered. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 70-76). The glass is generally of poor quality, full of bubbles. Most of the pieces seem to be from small bottles, and perhaps in the case of one or two of them, from a lamp like the broken one found by Wales on his site 18 (PB 1). Many of these fragments seem to have been melted or distorted by fire. A. Lamb distinguishes:

- the tops and bases of small bottles, usually of less than 6.5 centimetres in diameter, in brown, amber, green and pale blue glass, undecorated and rather transparent glass; several examples, however, include a ribbon or indented decoration; some of the tops have an added rim of blue or green glass; finally, almost all the bases had a characteristic marked hollow and a pontil mark. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 70, 71, see also Doc. 29 of this book);
- bases, found in much smaller quantities, with a kind of foot or bottom mounting, perhaps belonging to bottles or cups and other vessels. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 72, see also Doc. 29 of this book);
- several fragments of uncoloured glass with an engraved decoration of fish. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 76);
- fragments of clear or very faintly coloured glass, with dark blue blobs applied to the exterior to make a relief decoration;
- a fragment of clear glass with a decoration of lozenges that are themselves topped with another light blue lozenge;
- fragments of yellowish glass with a decoration applied to the outside in the form of dark blue bands creating a net-like pattern. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 75).

Several fragments of dark green glass with one side decorated in what appears to be a floral motif executed in a mosaic of inserted red, yellow and pale blue glass. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 80). These fragments have not been studied since Lamb researched them.

Here we must emphasize that this product is almost totally absent from the sites on the east coast during the same period.

c. Beads

A. Lamb found several thousand beads during his excavations at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang. The great majority were glass, some were of terracotta, agate and probably carnelian (the two qualities of stone were easily confused). The most numerous types were small (less than five millimetres in diameter), and cylindrical, coloured dark red, dark blue and black. Some had more complex colours and shapes (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 63), but appeared only in several rare examples. All told, these deposits contained at least a hundred and fifteen different types of beads. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 57-65). We will return to the problems raised by this glass and these beads.

d. Miscellaneous objects

Among other things, Lamb's excavations yielded a number of unclassifiable objects: fragments of glass bracelets and rings, fragments of crumpled gold foil, carnelian seals, bronze fragments. (Lamb 1961e: 28).

4. *Observations*

a. These copious finds inspired Lamb to make the following observations:

- The Chinese ceramic sherds seemed to him to be datable to a period from the twelfth to the beginning of the fourteenth century, and more particularly to the latter part of this period. To him, the absence of Yuan or Ming blue and whites seemed especially significant for the attribution of a *terminus ad quem*.

- The very fragmentary and varied character of the débris also inspired Lamb with a whole series of theories: perhaps this could indicate that the deposits corresponded to the dumping of goods from some sort of market, which would later have been disturbed by the fluctuations in the course of the river or by the tides; also, the idea that an entrepôt port that was eventually filled in to become a land site, Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, was the former river bed, did not seem improbable to him. This was the idea worth holding onto, as his later research confirmed.

- He also found in the composition of these archaeological deposits certain resemblances to those in maritime Southeast Asia; he was struck first by their resemblance to the Santubong deposits in

Sarawak (Harrisson: 1954, 1955a, 1958, 1959); later, he linked these deposits to those of Satingpra (Lamb 1964b), as J. Stargardt would do after him. A connection with the island of Kho Khao also seemed possible, but the deposits would not be contemporaneous.

- A. Lamb had promised a more detailed report of his excavation based on a stratigraphic study he had undertaken at a later period. For reasons we do not know, this report never appeared.

b. The results of Leong Sau Heng's excavation (1973) confirmed those obtained by Lamb:

The ceramics found in PB1 made up eighty percent of the total find. Beyond this, several fragments of glass were discovered there, as well as beads and fragments of metal and brick. Among the ceramics, earthenware was in the majority, making up seventy-two percent of the whole (ninety percent of the earthenware pieces were crude and undecorated); the rest of the find consisted in imported ceramics.

PB II yielded ceramics reaching ninety-five percent of the totality of the find. These were either local earthenware pieces or imported ceramics. A few pieces of glass were found, as well as beads and fragments of metal. Ninety-one percent of the ceramics were earthenware, the vast majority of which were rough in texture and undecorated. The remainder were imported ceramics.

An analysis of these sherds showed that the majority of the imported ceramics were Chinese celadons from the dynasty of the Southern Song. In addition, the fragments of glass were also Middle Eastern. It therefore seemed that Kampong Pengkalen Bujang had been a former port as A. Lamb had defined it. If we are to judge from the relatively widespread locations of the places holding finds of this type, we must conclude that the site of this former port was spread out in a space that, as A. Lamb had already surmised, could have corresponded to the first section of solid ground after the stretches of mangrove of the Sungai Merbok estuary. (Lamb 1961e: 33).

The minimal quantity of ceramic deposits in the excavations of 1971, especially in PB 1, near the river, caused Leong Sau Heng to suspect that in this sector, Lamb had encountered a somewhat artificial deposit resulting from a phenomenon of concentration of the sherds under the effect of river currents; the sherds, however, showed no trace of wear and breakage that could be attributable to the persistent effect of water.

Like Lamb, Leong Sau Heng recognized the absence of 'blue and whites' in the stratigraphies, and also came to accept the end of the Song-Yuan period (the middle of the fourteenth century) as a *terminus ad quem* for the activity of the port of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang. The oldest blue and whites, which were discovered on the surface of the ground, were separated from the Song-Yuan archaeological layer by a layer of sterile earth with a thickness of twenty centimetres, which suggests that the site might have been abandoned for a long period (Lamb thought three or four centuries).

c. Lamb did not believe that Kampong Pengkalan Bujang's role as an entrepôt port could have begun before the end of the eleventh century. After studying two sherds belonging to her own excavations, however, Leong Sau Heng (1973: 248) was inclined to age the site in this capacity to the end of the Tang period (the beginning of the tenth century). She was aware nevertheless that these two sherds, found at point PB 1 in the lowest layers of the stratigraphy—even if they were revealed to be much older than the mass of Song sherds—could not signify a commercial activity beginning in the tenth century. But it also seemed to her that a significant proportion of the sherds from A. Lamb's dig corresponded to a type of Yue ceramic that could likewise be dated to the tenth century. (Leon Sau Heng 1973: 249). We should keep in mind that the ceramics of this type present a real problem for identification and dating. (Ho (ed.) 1994).

In any case, it seemed that the site had been an entrepôt receiving merchandise in transit from India, China and the Middle East. It could also be conceived as a centre of inter-regional trade. In this connection, Leong Sau Heng repeated some observations that had been put forward by A. Lamb, who very early compared Kampong Pengkalan Bujang and Satingpra on the basis of an examination of certain ceramics found on the two sites, as we have already indicated. (Lamb 1964b).

Another site in South Kedah, Kampong Simpor Tambang, yielded a sampling of sherds that seemed on a first examination to be comparable to the sampling found at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang.

II. Kampong Simpor Tambang (Doc. 22)

1. *Discovery and location*

The site is located within a meander of the Sungai Simpor, a tributary of the Sungai Terus that links the two large rivers of South

Kedah, the Sungai Merbok and the Sungai Muda. It is recognizable by the emergence of a wall of laterite several metres long and fifty centimetres wide, running in a west-east direction; this wall is quickly lost from view, though no bend can be seen. No traces of this structure, however—though it was known to certain people who had worked at the *Muzeum Arkeologi* of Merbok—could be found on any map, and it seems not to have been visible on the surface of the ground until recently, when it was very likely exposed by the planting of the oil palms that take up the whole surface today. This site, which we have numbered SMM 6 (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 1992a: 191-192), was mapped before us by J. Allen (1988: 368-370, site map 32, p. 758). It has not been excavated to this day. There had been a plan to undertake a dig at the time of our stay in Malaysia in 1990-1991. The project did not materialize.

But this potential buried structure is in fact only part of a much vaster whole characterized by a great abundance of different sherds that we have recognized, after J. Allen, as the definite location of a former entrepôt port: the finds include local ceramics, but also and especially, imported ceramics, fragments of glass, and beads. J. Allen (1988: 369) estimated that the zone involved in this surface scattering, and therefore this deposit in depth, measured forty-eight metres from north to south, and a hundred and ten metres from east to west.

The site of this entrepôt port is not directly threatened, especially since the oil palms have been planted there, which is the lesser of two evils, but its westernmost limit was certainly disturbed recently at the time of the construction of a new elevated road, which was justified by the fact that the place is at a very low altitude; we must remember that it is located in a meander of the Sungai Simpor whose banks are bordered with nipah and mangroves, and it is probable that it is flooded in the rainy season. Along the south side of this road, on the road itself, and in the ditch on its north side, which separates it from the actual site, we were able to collect many imported Chinese ceramic sherds.

2. *Archaeological discoveries*

a. J. Allen briefly mentions imported ceramics that “include not only Chinese types probably dating to the 10th century A.D., but also 10th to 13th century Vietnamese and 11th to 12th century Middle Eastern

wares.” (Allen 1988: 369). She adds that here as at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, she found no blue and white ceramics.

On the other hand, she was able to pick up fourteen sherds of Middle Eastern glass and two beads. Four of the pieces of glass she collected were fire-affected, suggesting either a fire on the site or a process of fabricating beads that made use of reused imported glass. The bases of small bottles that we picked up appear to be similar in every way to those from Kampong Pengkalan Bujang.

b. What we were able to collect from the ground, especially around the oil palms (many sherds were brought to the surface at the time of their planting) did not seem to us as old as J. Allen wished to make them. The sampling reminded us strongly of the sampling from Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, and did not seem to be from an earlier period than the eleventh to twelfth centuries.

3. *Observations*

J. Allen considers that this entrepôt port probably served as a relay point for Kampong Pengkalan Bujang for the transfer of products from the forests that had reached the coastal plain by the Sungai Muda route, to be traded for imported products from China, the Middle East, and other regions of Southeast Asia.

III. Kampong Sireh (Doc. 22)

1. *Discovery and location*

In 1936-37, Wales developed an interest in this village located on the right bank of the Muda, at a fort that we have chosen to overlook, because, like the fort located near site UM 2 (28w), it is much later than the period that is of interest to us. Furthermore, he did not dig the site, but was content merely to point out certain peculiarities, calling it Kota Aur. This name, however, refers to a *kampong* located on the opposite bank of the Sungai Muda.

In June 1957, Sullivan (1958a: 216-217), accompanied by other researchers, including Lamb, went to the spot again and proceeded to undertake several investigations.

Lamb (1961d) came back to the site in April 1961, and made a number of observations. In March 1980, J. Allen (1988: 365-368, site map 31, p. 757) clearly and correctly distinguished between what could be recognized as a former fort (Wales's site 29, strictly speaking) from nearby ceramic deposits that she located in four different

places. The most spectacular of these was the one that had been exposed by the erosion of the banks of the Sungai Muda.

This last site was still visible at the time of our visit to the area during the first trimester of 1991. By then it was much less spectacular, but the erosion of the river is considerable in this spot, and from the collapsed bank, which was now covered in water, the children of the village brought us sherds that had recently been torn from this ancient deposit.

In what follows, we will discuss only the archaeological discoveries (principally ceramics) that were made on the site on these different occasions.

2. Archaeological discoveries

a. Wales (1940: 44) briefly examined the deposit of ceramics cut through by the river. It had a thickness of around ninety centimetres,

betokening a considerable duration and density of occupation. Besides much rough pottery, there appeared to be a fairly high percentage of provincial Yuan celadon fragments and, towards the top only, Ming blue and white which has been identified as dating from the XVth to the XVIth centuries.

b. M. Sullivan (1958a) undertook a probe of the site around the northern limits of the fort, and examined the bank of the river. He claimed that no clear stratification appeared. In his account of the discoveries made in these two areas, at a depth of about ninety centimetres, aside from fragments of local pottery that were undatable, stylistically speaking, there appeared only sherds of late Chinese ceramics that were for the most part dated to the end of the eighteenth or to the nineteenth century.

c. Lamb theorized that the deposit Wales had observed in 1936-37 had been carried off by the river, as he found almost nothing all along the bank. On the other hand, a little bit to the north of this point, he discovered what appeared to be an important deposit of ceramics. There were a variety of different sherds, even though they had only been collected on the surface of the ground: local earthenware, grey-green celadons over a paste of good quality, Sawankhalok celadon sherds, blue and whites; a grey-blue glass bead was also found. (Lamb 1961e: Pl. 25).

d. In 1980, J. Allen (1988: 367-368) seemed especially interested in the deposit along the bank that presented a stratigraphy, but she also gathered sherds in her three other areas. Her finds are extremely

varied, because, in addition to ceramics that are habitually called 'local', but whose origin it is in fact impossible to specify, she mentions "Chinese and Middle Eastern wares dating to the 11th or 12th to the 14th centuries," Khmer sherds from the eleventh to twelfth century, "Southern Song celadons," "13th to 16th Vietnamese" pieces, "14th to 15th Sawankhalok," Ming ceramics, and finally, some European productions from the nineteenth century.

e. As far as our own explorations are concerned, we had no difficulty in identifying Chinese celadons, blue and white Ming, and Vietnamese and Siamese productions in the deposit of the riverbank. We did not collect a single fragment of glass.

3. *Observations*

The thickness of the deposit of ceramic débris and the variety of the sherds it contained convinced Q. Wales that the site had formerly been occupied, and over a long period of time.

In 1961, the same thought led A. Lamb (1961d: 20) to go to Kampong Pengkalan Bujang to excavate the deposit of ceramics there; the fact that the sherds on this site seemed to be from a later period led him to believe that the centre of activity in this region of South Kedah had perhaps moved towards the south, passing from the estuary of the Sungai Merbok to the estuary of the Sungai Muda, "at some period between the 13th and 15th centuries," in order to accommodate possible variations in the courses of the rivers.

This is in fact what had happened: it is true that it is impossible to attempt to reconstruct the state of the region of Jiecha in the early period without taking into account its topographical evolution over the last centuries. We have already addressed this question in relation to Kampong Sungai Mas. Here we must add certain facts in order to establish the links that existed between these three interdependent entrepôt ports.

IV. Evaluation of the Topographical Evolution of the Region from the 12th to the 14th Century

As we have already emphasized in Chapter Eight, the topographical situation along the coasts of Jiecha in the early period was very different from what it is today. When we restore to the Sungai Muda its former course, which was very different from the present one, and when we replace the outsized estuary of the meagre Sungai Merbok with a small bay into which most of the watercourses we know

today—though not its tributaries—emptied, the geographical positions of the three entrepôt ports that we have just mentioned begin to become clear.

Kampong Sungai Mas apparently experienced an ineluctable decline during the tenth and eleventh centuries, primarily because its topographical situation was developing in a negative direction. The natural relay point for this situation would have been Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, but not until the end of the eleventh century. We are not opposed to the idea of a long intermediate period during which Kampong Sungai Mas was in a state of decline, and could only be truly replaced in the network of international trade by a port with a slowly-developing activity, especially given the general context that we have described for this period in Chapter Twelve.

We have stressed that the great period of prosperity in Kampong Pengkalan Bujang took place in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that afterwards its situation, too, declined, and that proofs of any significant activity from before that time are lacking. Leong Sau Heng did in fact identify certain sherds from the tenth century in her dig, but their small quantity reveals no real activity.

At the end of the eleventh century, the waters of the Sungai Muda emptied into the little bay that today, reduced to its minimum, is the 'estuary' of the Sungai Merbok; these waters helped to clear the river, and to keep its shores from becoming encumbered with mangroves or silting up, which explains the great freedom of action for Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, which at the time, located as it was at the end of the estuary of the Sungai Bujang, could offer clean and deep water to visiting vessels.

At the same moment, Kampong Simpor Tambang, on the edge of what was then the course of the Sungai Muda, served as a minor entrepôt port for Kampong Pengkalan Bujang (otherwise known as Center B, in Bronson's terminology (see above, Chapter Two)), that is, a collecting or redistributing centre—in a region that was not accessible through the relay point of the Sungai Merbok.

The role of Kampong Sireh in the overall picture, like that of Kampong Simpor Tambang, only comes into focus if we take into account the evolution of the hydrographic network within which it was active. We must remember that in the early period, the course of the Sungai Muda that borders the site today did not reach the sea, though it came very close; instead, its waters, either through the Sungai Terus or through the Sungai Simpor, flowed towards the

north. The entrepôt port, then, like Kampong Simpor Tambang, was linked to Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, of which it too was a type B centre. J. Allen (1988: 526) proposed that at the time, a present-day tributary of the Sungai Simpor, the Sungai Reba, could have reached the Sungai Muda at the level of Kampong Sireh, thus reducing the distance towards the major entrepôt port. The theory seems plausible to us.

B. THE ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS

The territory of the former Jiecha yielded thirteen Brahmanical structures from the period covered in this chapter, as well as several other structural vestiges whose state of preservation or particular appearance has not enabled us to identify them with certainty. No Buddhist structure has been positively dated to this period; in Chapter Eight on Jiecha from the fifth to the eighth century, we merely mentioned site SB 14 (10w), which might belong to the period from the twelfth to the thirteenth century. Such an observation, however, will not lead us to propose periods defined on the basis of religious beliefs for South Kedah, for reasons that we will explain later.

I. Brahmanical Architectural Remains

The Brahmanical architectural remains that can be catalogued as such, thanks to details they provide in themselves or by analogy, number thirteen, as follows:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. SB 4 (16w) | 8. SB 12 (13w) |
| 2. SB 5 (14w) | 9. SB 13 (4w) |
| 3. SB 6 (15w) | 10. SMK 1 (8w) |
| 4. SB 7 (50m) | 11. SMK 3 (49m) |
| 5. SB 8 (5w) | 12. SMM 7 (31w) |
| 6. SB 9 (6w) | 13. UM 1 (24w) |
| 7. SB 10 (11/3w) | |

1. All of these, with the exception of site UM 1 (24w), for which our information is too fragmentary, and site SMK 3 (49m), confused because extremely damaged, unquestionably possess *vimāna-maṇḍapas*, that is, sanctuaries preceded by a structure to welcome the faithful. (Doc. 39). Of course, in the case of site SB 5 (14w), the *vimāna* was not found, but there is no doubt that it existed, to the

west of the *maṇḍapa*. In the same way, on sites SB 6 (15w) and SB 9 (6w), it is the *maṇḍapa* that is missing, either because it was ignored or because it has disappeared, but here, too, there is almost no doubt that the sanctuary originally included one.

The *cella* of the *vimānas* always opens to the east, or a direction near to the east, and the *maṇḍapa* is therefore situated facing this eastern entrance. There is one exception: the principal temple of site SB 7 (50 m) opens to the west, and, in addition, on site SMK 3 (49m), no opening has been clearly established.

2. The position of the *vimāna* and the *maṇḍapa* in relation to each other varies.

a. With some of the temples, the two structures are distinctly attached to each other. This is the case of sites:

- SB 4 (16w), even if the anastylosis of the temple restored a kind of separation (Doc. 40).

- SB 8 (5w) (Doc. 41)

- SB 13 (4w)

- SMK 1 (8w)

b. With others, the available documents show clearly or suggest that there was a separation between the *vimāna* and the *maṇḍapa* of the temple. This is the case for the following sites:

- SB 5 (14w)

- SB 6 (15w)

- SB 12 (13w)

c. In three cases, the *maṇḍapa* is linked to the *vimāna*, but in a less clear-cut manner than with the first type. These are sites:

- SB 7 (50m): The anastylosis of the structures clearly linked them, but it appears that initially a sort of antechamber, which was part of the *maṇḍapa*, separated it from the *vimāna*. (Doc. 42).

- SB 10 (11/3w): The anastylosis of the temple on this site was irregular, but it is possible that the temple's *maṇḍapa* was originally laid out in the same way as the one on the previous site. (Doc. 43).

- SMM 7 (31w): The two structures on this site may also have been linked by an arrangement involving a sort of antechamber. (Doc. 44).

d. Finally, with two of the temples, it is not possible to determine the way the two structures were related to each other. These are sites:

- SB 9 (6w), whose *maṇḍapa* was carried away by erosion from the former course of the Sungai Bujang.

- SMK 3 (49m), whose collapsed ruins on granitic rock in place does not permit the exact restoration of a *maṇḍapa*, if there was one.

3. All of these temples were small in size. The largest *vimāna*, the one on site SMK 1 (8w), the Candi Bukit Batu Pahat, measures 10.7 square metres; all the others are in smaller dimensions; the smallest, on site SB 8 (5w) measures only 4.6 x 4.6 metres. They tend to be square, but there are exceptions; the difference in length between the two sides, however, is never very great. The height of the base on which the sanctuary proper was raised also varies, but is never more than 1.5 metres; it is impossible to judge the height of the walls of the *cellas* because of the collapsed state of the buildings, but we will indicate a little later what it is reasonable to assume.

The *maṇḍapas* are of the same width as the *vimānas* or, most often, slightly narrower. They are longer, however, except on sites SB 4 (16w) and SB 13 (4w), and therefore in general, they constitute a rectangular platform. Their height is always less than that of the base of the *vimānas*.

4. These temples were built with a wide variety of materials, usually whatever was found in sufficient quantity near the place chosen for the building: cut granite (SMK 1 (8w) or laterite (SB 7 (50m), river pebbles (SB 10 (11/3w)), bricks (SB 12 (13w)); quite often two or three of these materials are used on the same structure, but one is always dominant, and the other or others are then used only to distinguish this or that part of the construction. Occasionally the thresholds of the *cella* are made separately of a hard stone, and equipped with mortises. This stone is usually granite, as on sites SB 7 (50m) and SB 13 (4w).

The core of the structures of both *vimāna* and *maṇḍapa* is always made of a block of fragments of different types of stone or pebbles, held together with earth. Only the perimeter of the structures, on sections of varying thickness, and their surfaces, were faced with the chosen materials; and even still, the surface of the *maṇḍapas* was often made only of a sort of cement composed of crushed stones. And finally, the walls of facing could sometimes be doubled, with the centre formed of a block of rough material (the *maṇḍapas* of sites SMK 1 (8w) and SMM 7 (31w)).

It appears that no cement was used, and the bricks or blocks of stone were piled up without any particular concern to alternate the longer and the shorter sides.

5. The buildings conceived in this way rested only on poor foundations or on none at all. In the best of cases (SMK 1 (8w) in particular), large river stones were arranged under the structures. The ruined state of these edifices when archaeological excavations bring them to the light is hardly surprising. The absence of foundations, as well as the fact that there was no solid and homogeneous central core, often caused the walls to fall towards the middle and the facing to cave in. In addition, large cracks also formed along the walls, inside which materials of similar length were often placed on top of each other, with no alternation of the longer sides with the shorter, which contributed to their gradual dislocation.

6. Aside from site UM 1 (24w), which furnished no clear structure, all the others had stone pillar bases (Fig. 218) (the excavation of sites SB 4 (16w) and SB 9 (6w) did not reveal any, but they are credited with having them by analogy with the other sites). Often only a few of these bases remained, because after the temples were abandoned, most were reused by local people to build houses.

The archaeologists did not immediately recognize how useful these bases could be in reconstructing the original appearance of the temples, though they showed an interest in studying them. (Lamb 1961g). Candi Bukit Batu Pahat (SMK 1 (8w)) possesses some very sophisticated bases, but in spite of this, some people initially amused themselves by imagining that there could have been a tower with decreasing storeys above the *cella* or its *vimāna*, which would have been surrounded by a wooden veranda, because it was necessary to explain the existence of the bases. On the other hand, to imagine *maṇḍapas* covered by a roof frame resting on the same bases was less complicated.

A. Lamb himself, who excavated Candi Bukit Batu Pahat with success (Lamb 1960), although he had had an intuition about the methods of roofing used for these former temples of Jiecha, was nonetheless attracted by this vision of sanctuary towers that would have confirmed a relationship between the sanctuaries of South Kedah and those of the prestigious civilizations of the neighbouring regions.

The true conception of what the superstructures of these temples had been was put forward for the first time in 1974 by B. A. V. Peacock, in particular in connection with Candi Bukit Batu Pahat, where efforts to reconstruct its original form were stirring up some

debate. After having emphasized the weaknesses of the arguments in favour of a tower above the sanctuary (doubts about the origin of a *stūpika* discovered nearby, doubts about the purposes of some damaged stones with different mouldings that had been found during the excavation, and about the significance of the collapsed debris pointed out by Wales (1940: 19)), he underscored the importance of the play of the stone pillar bases divided around the *cella*, and again drew attention to the weaknesses of the foundations of the building, which had been pointed out by Lamb himself. This enabled him to advance with some force the theory that the *vimāna* could only have been covered with wooden roofing, and that the walls of the *cella* had probably been no higher than they were in the present reconstruction after anastylosis.

Lamb had opened the way for this theory by proposing parallels between this edifice and the Caṃ sanctuaries that were partially conceived in the same way. B. A. V. Peacock believed that the significant size of the bases and the sophistication of their mortises implied the existence of a fairly complex roof frame (Doc. 45) that he could easily imagine having multiple decreasing roofs like the *merus* of Bali. (Fig. 219). In this connection, he provided a number of convincing examples, stating, however, that it would always be impossible to determine the actual number of these roofs, if they existed, and what their possible arrangement would have been. He was inclined to believe there would have been eleven, the number ritually prescribed for Śiva.

We are totally won over to this author's conception, even if not all the temples of South Kedah were actually furnished with this type of roof. The ridgepoles of the walls were doubtless adorned with a material with chamfered edges, as discoveries on certain unidentified sites seem to indicate. (PB 6 (23w). See below). A roof frame, surely more or less sophisticated according to the temple, rose above these, supported by a varying number of wooden pillars that themselves rested on stone bases.

These stone bases are usually square, but sometimes circular; they are of different sizes according to the site, and also on the same site (the most common are 30 x 30 centimetres). Their height also varies. They have mortises, which can be round, triangular, or often square, and also vary greatly in size, even on the same site.

They are distributed around the perimeter of the structures (the perimeter of the *cella*, the base of the *vimāna* and the *maṇḍapa*), but

in the single case of the *maṇḍapa* of site SMK 1 (8w), other bases were arranged on the structure itself, in four additional rows, suggesting the likelihood of a two-tiered roof. Another exception, the *cella* of the *vimāna* of site SB 6 (15w), had bases at the bottom of its inner walls, but not on the outside, an arrangement that could have been shared by some other temples (the bases having disappeared), and is attested in Bali.

It is to be noted that these bases were rarely sophisticated in their conception, but always cut with care, and in stone, usually granite. Since most of the sites lacked this material, its use would have implied the transport of the stone over sometimes great distances. This realization underscores the value placed on these elements of construction for the architecture of the period. Their importance has not diminished over time, because the traditional Malay houses still rest on stone foundations, a noble material increasingly replaced today by moulded cement.

The roofs must have been thatched or covered with a vegetable fibre, as in Bali, since none of these structures has yielded a single tile. The use of tiles, however, was known in South Kedah: some exist on Buddhist sites PB 4/5 (21/22w); others are found on some unidentified sites, notably in Kampong Pengkalan Bujang.

A wooden door closed the *cella*, as is attested by two granite thresholds that were found (sites SB 7 (50m) and SB 13 (4w)), pierced with a mortise on each side. This indicates the presence of a frame or, more likely, of the tenons of hinged double doors of a somewhat crude conception.

Large stones found on other sites (especially PB 1 (18w); see below) would seem to indicate that these doors had lintels that would sometimes have been carved in granite.

7. These *vimāna-maṇḍapas* were often provided with adjoining structures that were very likely devoted to the cult of divinities associated with the principal divinity:

- site SB 10 (11/3w) has one,
- site SB 12 (13w) had 3,
- site SB 13 (4w) had 2, with a third outside the enclosure of the main temple,
- site SMK 3 (49m) certainly had one, which was a little too rapidly identified with a *maṇḍapa*,

- site UM 1 (24w) surely did not lack one; it is even likely that the small square structure that came to light there was one.

All these adjoining structures seem to have been no more than simple platforms built in the same way as those of the *mandapas*, with at best several mouldings, and in the case of the largest ones, definitely covered with roof frames supported by stone pillar bases; some of these were found *in situ* on one of the adjoining structures on site SB 12n (13w).

The one exception to this simplicity is the structure of the south annexe on site SB 7 (50m), whose plan and elevation are much more sophisticated than those of the *vimāna* of the main temple, indeed, than those of all the other *vimānas* that have been discovered. (Doc. 46). It must have been built in the same period as the main temple, because the level of the first foundations is the same. Its outline on the ground is a quadrilateral of 5.70 metres by 4.80 metres. These are the dimensions of the foundation, which includes five superimposed courses on a base fifty centimetres high; the last three are set back five centimetres from the first two, which form a plinth. Two steps have been restored along the north side, one outside the structure, the other set in the wall. In each corner of the base course stands a stone pillar base in granite with a square mortise that has the same dimensions as those in the main sanctuary; two others are placed in the spaces on each of the four sides.

The *cella* takes up the central space of this structure, at 1.05 metres from the edges of the base course, thus forming an outer quadrilateral 3.50 metres by 2.60 metres whose north side, where there is an entrance, is recessed in the middle to a depth of 30 centimetres and a width of 2.20 metres. One side of the walls that have been restored, perhaps a little too generously, to a height of 1.60 metres, is adorned with a series of complex mouldings; the design of their lower sections seems to correspond to the reality as it can be made out from the photographs of the excavation. The holy of holies is a small rectangular room of 1.50 metres by 2.40 metres that one steps down into; in fact, there is a difference of 10 centimetres between the bottom step of the entrance and the ground.

8. Another characteristic shared by all these temples, then, is the extreme simplicity of their decoration. We have already pointed this out in connection with the Buddhist sites: aside from several simple mouldings, sometimes involving bricks or chamfered stones, nothing has been found that suggests any sort of sophistication. A head of

kāla was discovered on site SB 7 (50m) that might perhaps have been placed over a doorframe, but it is of rough manufacture and not particularly inspiring. Also, as with the Buddhist structures, no trace of stucco was found. Faced with such a paucity of decoration, it is difficult not to suspect the local populations of destructive acts in these temples that meant nothing to them after they had been abandoned. The discovery of two stair balustrades adorned with *kāla* heads, which we will discuss later, one on site PB 1 (18w), the other at Kampong Sungai Mas, give reason to believe that other things might have been destroyed.

But in fact, we believe that the decor of these religious constructions of the Indian type, which seem so remarkably well adapted to the local milieu, could also have been adapted to this milieu. It is probable that the decorations were made of wood, like the superstructures of the buildings, and were inserted into the superstructures, as they are today in traditional Malay houses. The skill of the Malay wood carvers is great, and in this case its exuberance must in no way have come behind the vitality displayed in the sculpted stone decorations of the *caṇḍis* of Java, for example. Obviously, in this sort of climate, nothing has survived.

9. All these temples were brought together under the label “Brahmanical sites,” even though some did not yield a single religious object related to Hinduism. Only sites SB 7 (50m), SB8 (5w), SB 13 (4w), SMK 1 (8w), SMK 3 (49m) and UM 1 (24w) yielded any: crude *liṅgas*, pedestals of statues and ablution basins, *somasūtra*, statues of divinities linked to Śiva (Gaṇeśa, Nandi).

Nevertheless, it is accepted that when the plan of a sanctuary reveals a *vimāna* preceded by a *maṇḍapa*, the temple is devoted to Hinduism, and in the particular case of South Kedah, to the cult of Śiva.

In addition, intact reliquaries were found in association with the structures on sites SB 4 (16w) and SMK 1 (8w), and the *vimāna* of site SB 6 (15w) had a deposit reliquary to the right of the door, which had disappeared by the time Q. Wales excavated the temple; however, they provide no more information about the exact nature of the cults practised in these sanctuaries than the liturgical objects already mentioned, and only permit us to guess at Tantric practices.

a. The reliquary on site SB 4 (16w) was a small circular bronze receptacle (max. diameter 12 centimetres, height, 6.7 centimetres)

equipped with a top with two opposing hinges, which was found by Wales in a reliquary chamber beside the entrance to the *vimāna*. A large quantity of earth had filtered into this receptacle, but it still contained a series of figurines cut from metal sheets: animals (a golden lion, a silver bull, a copper horse), arms (bow and arrows, a sabre and short sword, a shield, a lance, etc., in gold), tools (in gold and silver), various utensils (a golden bowl, a silver bell), etc., as well as gems (diamonds, zircons, amethysts, sapphires, pearls, etc.).

b. The reliquaries on site SMK 1 (8w) were discovered by Wales and Lamb (1960: 74-90 & 1961a). Wales discovered two of these among the debris outside the temple. He believed that they had been found and then thrown there when the temple was pillaged. Both were in granite, badly damaged, and lacking their tops. In 1959, when clearing the *mandapa*, Lamb recovered two other fragments of the main part of one of the two reliquaries and a third of its top. In addition, the clearing and then the excavation of the temple, which he undertook in February 1958, enabled him to find six other reliquaries, to determine their original positions, and to figure out where the two examples Wales had discovered had been placed. They were located inside the walls of the sanctuary, at a level that would have corresponded to that of the floor of the *cella*; four had been placed in the corners, and four others in the middle of each of the walls, including one under the sill of the entrance. Lamb suggested that a ninth reliquary could have been positioned in the centre of the sanctuary. This is highly probable.

The eight reliquaries are made of the same material as the stones used to construct the temple, and all, including the tops, measure 18 x 18 x 18 centimetres; they are extremely simple in appearance, with no decoration but the cut-off corners of the upper edges of the top, which has a hole pierced through the centre, and four squat legs.

The six discoveries made by Lamb in 1958-59 had not been vandalized, but aside from the three from corners E, N and W, which were in good condition, the others were damaged in different ways, from breaks, and from penetration by roots and water. In addition, the hole made in the tops had allowed different materials to pour in and fill them up completely; sometimes these materials formed a conglomerate mass inside the reliquaries.

The clearing out of the substances that had infiltrated the reliquaries revealed the arrangement of their interiors, which were always similar. The thickness of the block of granite had been

hollowed out in a square depression with nine circular cavities at the bottom, a central cavity 5 centimetres in diameter with eight others, arranged around it, one at each corner, each one with a diameter of 1.9 centimetres and a depth of 1.3 centimetres. All eight of the small cavities held semi-precious stones and other objects of ritual significance, while the ninth, the central cavity, contained silhouettes cut from sheets of gold (Fig. 220) (*lingas*, half-circles marked with a symbol, seated female figures), from silver sheets (bulls, squares engraved with five starred symbols) and from copper (tortoises, lotus flowers); in addition, each contained a small undecorated beaten copper pot (5 centimetres high), with a slightly rounded bottom and a narrow neck, filled with various objects (semi-precious stones, a disc cut from a sheet of gold), and different organic or other substances. The contents of the reliquaries were very similar; only slight variations in the arrangement of the different objects could be detected.

What are we to say of all this? The eight representations of female divinities (there is no doubt that the two reliquaries discovered by Wales contained them as well) must correspond to a Tantric representation of the Eight Great Mothers. The gold sheets had been altered in ways that Lamb was unable to account for. An explanation for this began to be glimpsed when F. E. Treloar (1967a, 1968) proceeded to make a chemical analysis of a number of elements from the reliquaries. It appeared that many of the objects, though not all, had a high mercury content—from fifteen to thirty percent. Mercury is used for various purposes, in particular to amalgamate metals; this could not have been its purpose here, however, since all the elements were originally distinct from each other. The use of mercury for one object rather than another, and in such concentrations, must have had a ritual significance. This observation led Treloar to conduct a literary study on the uses of mercury in certain Hindu cults. The most useful reference he found (Treloar 1972a: 237) was from a treatise on Indian alchemy, in particular in the following passage:

Take a gold-leaf three *niskas* in weight and quicksilver nine *niskas* and rub them with acids for three hours. Make the amalgam into a phallus...the phallus to be worshipped in due form. By the mere sight of the phallus of mercury, the sins accumulated by the killing of 1,000 brahmins and 10,000 cows are redeemed. (*Rasaratnasamuccaya*, (VI), 19-22, cited in P. C. Ray 1956: 186).

A related procedure must have been used for the making of the *liṅgas* and the inscribed half circles from Candi Bukit Batu Pahat. The microscopic analysis of the ones in the preceding example showed that the crystals created when mercury is used were only formed after the motif was completed.

Why the use of mercury? Its importance to Hinduism is linked to the fact that the metal is considered to be the “semen of Rudra” (Daniélou 1964: 186), or the seed of Śiva (Mircea 1962: 133), since, like mercury, the god is reputed to possess five principal attributes (Daniélou 1964: 206-207). According to Indian alchemical treatises, including a twelfth century work quoted in a collection of treatises of this kind: “[M]ercury is composed of the five elements and represents Śiva himself.” (P. C. Ray 1956: 140). These elements are earth, fire, water, air and space. (P. C. Ray 1956: 43). As it happens, Cinnebar (the mineral from which mercury is extracted), is found in the earth, burned in fire to extract mercury, a liquid metal (‘water’); and when mercury is burned, it becomes a gas (‘air’), in space.

The identification of the inscribed gold semi-circles presented a problem for Lamb. In the article already cited, Treloar proposed a highly convincing explanation based on references to Tantric treatises. These half-circles can be identified as half-moons representing the *maṇḍala* of the *cakra* located in the area of the sexual organs. (Pott 1966: 8-9, table 1). This identification assumes some validity when we consider the motif inscribed on the half-circles. It is a rough representation of an erect male sexual organ with the two testicles. We can then understand more easily why these objects, like the *liṅgas*, were subjected to the same mercury treatment; and also, why they were placed next to each other in the circular depressions.

The engraved silver squares were also treated with mercury, which led Treloar to suggest an identification with the earth: the signs would represent the sun in the centre, and the stars at the four corners. In connection with Śiva, Treloar cites A. Daniélou’s explanation (1964: 196) that “in alchemy, mercury, believed to be ‘solar heat’ stored between the layers of the earth, is called *rudra-vīrya*, “the semen of Rudra”.

If there is one main idea to retain from these facts, it is that the use of mercury confirms Tantric practices in Candi Bukit Batu Pahat that can be detected in other sites and at other places in the Peninsula. In the case of this temple, the information is confirmed by the significance that has been attributed to the internal structure of the

reliquaries, and to their number and position inside the building, which makes it possible to consider them individually as *maṇḍalas*, eight of them, with the missing central image of the sanctuary constituting a ninth. To date, however, no text has been found or translated that gives us a more complete picture of the ritual that governed the foundation of this particular temple, and perhaps others that have been less well excavated.

10. These temples have not always been datable by themselves. Sites SB 7 (50 m), SB 10 (11/3w), SMM 7 (31w) and UM 1 (24w) yielded Chinese ceramic sherds or fragments of Middle Eastern glass that have enabled us to assign them to a period corresponding to the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. The nine other temples have not in themselves provided any element that makes it possible to assign an absolute date to them, and the rare sherds found at the time of Wales's digs can no longer be re-examined. The similarity in their conception, however, leads us to believe that they were all built during the same period, that is, beginning in the twelfth century, and that they continued to be active at least until the thirteenth.

11. These temples are spread out in particular to the north of the estuary of the Sungai Merbok, along the rivers that flow down from the Gunong Jerai. Two temples, however, which must not have been unique, are located between the Sungai Merbok and the Sungai Muda (SMM 7 (31w) and UM 1 (24w)). It is nevertheless of interest that in this region, the neighbouring zone of Kampong Sungai Mas has not revealed a single one to this day, and is chiefly characterized by Buddhist remains.

II. Unidentified or Unexcavated Remains (Doc. 22)

The sites classed in this category in Jiecha are found in all the zones of concentration of archaeological vestiges and for all periods, even if more often than not their dating is problematical. We have personally counted seventeen, which places them in the majority in relation to the categories of sites called Buddhist or Brahmanical. They clearly tend to be located in zone SMM, which includes the regions between the Sungai Merbok and the Sungai Muda, as well as the left bank of the latter river. This is because until recently, the zone had received very little attention from archeologists. Wasn't the civiliza-

tion of South Kedah too often wrongly called the civilization of the “valley of the Bujang”?

The interest of the sites that have been excavated is very relative, and only a few of them have yielded results of comparable importance to those of the other categories of sites. If they have not been classed in either of the other categories, it is because the appearance of their structures could not be classified, and also because they yielded no object made for use in religious rites. In the absence of any theories as to their origins, they have been considered, perhaps a little too rapidly, to be secular buildings.

This is the definition given to two sites near the entrepôt port of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang (PB 1 (18w) and PB 6 (23w)), and a third located four miles to the north in the valley of the Sungai Bujang (SB 11 (12w)).

1. The construction brought to light on site PB 1 (18w), now altogether gone, was in principle unusual in its architectural conception. It was a rectangular structure of about 6.80 metres by 9 metres, oriented towards the cardinal points, encircled by walls fifty centimetres wide formed of three foundation layers of laterite blocks, the last of which was bordered with bricks of different sizes. Roughly the north third of these ruins was separated from the rest by a horizontal wall, also of laterite, which isolated a structure 2.70 metres wide (including the walls) with a brick floor that must have been on a level with the lower foundations of the walls. The other two thirds had no brick flooring. Cut stones, apparently of granite, were also found by Wales, and since then, a threshold and a granite balustrade 1.4 metres long, including a rather crudely-made head of *kāla* (45 x 35 centimetres) on one end and a whorl on the other.¹

This structure was covered with a roof-frame, as can be seen by the stone pillar bases with open square mortises, as well as nails; the roof was covered with tiles; Wales appears to have found a whole one, measuring 18.4 x 5.24 centimetres, including a hook for attaching it.

Although there was a complete absence of religious objects, many fragments for sophisticated use came to light: good-quality ceramics,

¹ Another stone balustrade of the same type was found at Kampong Sungai Mas (80 cm long minus the tenon, which lengthens it by 1.34 cm at most). The head of *kāla* that adorns it over a third of its length, although damaged, is of finer workmanship than the head on the piece from Kampong Pengkalan Bujang.

a lamp and tableware made of glass, a mother-of-pearl spoon, bronze dishes. These discoveries caused Wales to see in this structure a non-religious edifice, built for royal or manorial use, which fit perfectly into the context of his favourite theory of an Indianized kingdom located in South Kedah.

The only serious possible dating is what we can deduce from the sherds of Chinese ceramics, notably some Longquan celadons from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which corresponds to the period of prosperity for the nearby entrepôt port of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang (only a few dozen metres away), for which this structure could have been one of the principal dwellings, since it was not one of its temples.

2. Site PB 6 (23w) has been the scene of recent excavations, in which we took part in 1991. Like the preceding site, it is located in the immediate proximity of the former entrepôt port of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, but if possible, it is even more difficult to interpret. Indeed, in order to restore an appearance to this structure, it was necessary to reconstitute entire sections of wall that had sometimes disappeared right down to their foundations, leaving at best, as the only remaining traces, a few scattered bricks at ground level. In the same way, every trace of walls has disappeared from its northwest and southwest corners. This situation is not exceptional in South Kedah, since the ruins of temples have too often served as quarries for building materials for the local populations, especially in regions like that of this *kampong* that have always been inhabited.

The principal structure (Doc. 47) that can be restored is a quadrangular construction that measures about eleven by nine metres; its orientation does not correspond exactly to that of the four cardinal points: its long sides are positioned in a southwest-northeast direction. As such, it brings together some features of construction that are seen on other sites: double outer walls encasing a block of rough materials, reinforcing walls in the structure of the floor, but no foundations. This construction, whatever its function, was covered with a roof-frame resting on stone pillar bases that were positioned at least on the inside floor. The existence of nails and fragments of tiles again confirms this type of roof covering.

At about 2.5 metres from the southwest corner of this main building, in the extension of the west wall, the excavation exposed a square structure (2.5 x 2.5 m) that included nine consecutive layers

of brick (about 45 centimetres in height), forming four mouldings. The surface of this platform was originally covered with bricks, which were found in a very disturbed state. The core of the building was composed of rough materials, as was usually the case, with the bricks around the perimeter providing facing of varying widths, depending on the thickness of the layers of bricks.

No religious object, statue or statuette was found in association with the main structure, whose plan and dimensions do not invite comparisons with the two types of religious buildings known in South Kedah. The smaller structure on the south side, however, was definitely an altar of the kind found on other sites, and it would be wrong not to mention the immediate proximity of other religious sites in the same *kampong*: (PB 2 (19w) and PB 4/5 (21/22w)).

The date of this whole assemblage of buildings can be determined according to the Chinese ceramic sherds (Longquan, *qingbai*, common earthenware jars) and Middle Eastern glass found during the excavation in a number of the squares. All of these sherds and fragments belong to a period corresponding to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the great period of activity of the entrepôt port of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, which, as we have said, is located several dozen metres away.

3. Today, site SB 11 (12w) no longer exists, and the description of it provided by Wales, who examined it superficially (1940: 26-28), is of no help in determining what it consisted of. He was only interested in certain of the archaeological finds he made there. In fact, the site yielded many objects of a certain sophistication, which supported his identification of it as a secular building, but the structure is nevertheless very similar to the Brahmanical temple of site SB 12 (13w). Among the objects found there were:

a. A piece of an iron sword with a bronze hilt (max. length 13.3 centimetres, width 9.3 centimetres). On both side of the hilt, which has an attractive patina, are what appears to be rough snake heads. The hilt is attached to the iron handle—whose upper part is missing—by a bronze ring in the form of a lotus.

b. Fragments of tableware in very corroded bronze.

c. Fragments of two bronze Chinese mirrors; enough of one of these remained to reconstitute the original decoration of the mirror (original diameter: *ca.* 13.5 centimetres). Comparisons with published illustrations or photographs of Chinese mirrors made it

possible to choose nine very similar ones. Their type is simple. The decorations are of six blossoms arranged symmetrically around a central perforated protuberance; several have a seventh flower in the middle. The most frequent form of the flower resembles the image of a heraldic rose. In fact, the Chinese term for this type of mirror refers to the rose, although some of these mirrors are decorated with a flower that cannot be identified as a rose.

The author of this study, Professor W. Percival Yetts, then compared his reconstruction of the decoration of the mirror with Wales's discovery of the reconstruction of a Chinese mirror in the former Manchu imperial collection in Peking. He still remained cautious, acknowledging in particular that the very eroded character of the fragments could have led him to miss certain peculiarities of the decoration, or on the contrary, that his knowledge of mirrors of this type could have caused him to imagine details that might not have been there. Furthermore, one particularity of the Kedah mirror is that it has a smooth edge, whereas all the examples juxtaposed to it have a scalloped or foliated border, like the one presented by way of comparison. In any case, according to Yetts himself, this mirror, which was being treated *a priori* as a product of the Tang period (618-907), should be evaluated with caution: it is unfortunate that it has no inscription, and that nothing but its style can be adduced to put forward this date. But even if it were dated very accurately, it still could not be used to date the building: this sort of object was of great value, and the mirror could have been acquired and preserved well before the construction of the building where it was found. The location of the site, in the valley of the Bujang, near numerous Brahmanical temples, would tend to indicate a date in the period when they were built, that is from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries.

We refer the reader to our book on South Kedah (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: 161-197) for an assessment of the facts related to the other sites in the region that belong to this category.

C. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

I. The Inscriptions

The most important inscriptions from the former Jiecha, as we have already seen, date from well before the period discussed in this

chapter, unless we give credit to the varying opinions offered for the date of the engraved discs found in the *stūpa* on site SB 14 (10w): eighth to ninth century, or twelfth to thirteenth century. (See above.)

We will discuss only the six engraved discs from the reliquaries found on site SMK 1 (8w), to which we referred earlier. As we explained, the copper pot in each reliquary contained, among other things, a disc of about 3.8 centimetres in diameter cut from a flexible sheet of gold. All of these discs were inscribed in the centre with a single mark that gave rise to a number of glosses. L.-C. Damais saw in the mark similarities with the scripture of Central Java, and proposed an eighth to ninth century date. (Lamb 1960: 79). F. D. K. Bosch (1960: 487-488) thought he detected a clumsy graphist's effort to imitate a well-known model of Old Javanese script that reminded him of the late inscriptions from Central Java; J. G. de Casparis shared this view; the date proposed by L.-C. Damais suited everyone. The mark on the disc found in the S-W reliquary could represent the mantra *om*.

Since we now have reason to believe that Candi Bukit Batu Pahat dates from the twelfth to the thirteenth century, and that there is every chance that these discs were actually made at the time of the foundation of the temple, we can get an idea of the very relative value of epigraphic dating based on such slim evidence.

II. Sculptures

It is possible that several very sketchy pieces, rough-hewn rather than sculpted, that have come down to us could belong to the period under discussion. We think in particular of an intact but rough stone image of Gaṇeśa, a bas-relief of Durgā sur Mahiṣasura, and another of *dvarapāla*. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: 244-245). Nothing particular can be said about them, and we can only regret the pieces that have disappeared.

In our search for indications of the presence of significant statuary in the former Jiecha, we were intrigued by some notes in M. Sullivan's report on his examination of the remains of site SMM 3 (35/36m) (a site that no longer exists, and was never very precisely identified, but that we know to be late (thirteenth to fourteenth century)). At Kampong Batu Lintang, near the site, the village chief described the situation in the early years:

Years before, he and other men while fishing had brought up many pieces of some statues, big and small, in the water between the village and the bend of the river to the Southwest, and had tossed them back. He remembered that one fragment was the life-size leg and foot of a human figure. (Sullivan 1958: 208).

It was also on this site that Sullivan picked up some small fragments of bronze measuring up to 2.5 centimetres in length that he thought might have come from the casting of one or several bronze objects. This may be completely gratuitous, but we are nonetheless inclined to wonder whether these objects could have been statues from Brahmanical or Buddhist temples abandoned by the faithful. In addition, when the *University of Malaya Archaeological Society* undertook to find new sites in May 1958 (Wang Gungwu 1958: 222), they were able to follow up on Wales's investigations of 1936-37. The village chief of Kampong Batu Lintang—near which a gold belt was discovered (it has since disappeared) (Wales 1940: Pl. 75-77)—told the archaeologists that all through the years, many objects had been found on a promontory (*tanjong*) above the river, facing the *kampong*: in particular a Gaṇeśa and other stone images, of which not a trace remains today.

How was it possible to reach such a state of affairs in this region of the Peninsula? It is obviously tempting to blame Islam. Nevertheless, in this compilation of scattered notes about works that no longer exist, drawn from different accounts (there are others), we do not wish to depict a scene of new Islamic converts rushing off to destroy the temples of Jiecha in conformity with Islam's well-known taste for iconoclasm; no, the temples of this region must have been deserted for economic reasons well before the faithful of the new religion understood the sacrilege they represented in the eyes of Allah and perhaps determined to remove them and destroy any images that had not already been ruined by the natural process of destruction that affects every abandoned building.

What we must nevertheless recognize is that the housekeeping was remarkably complete, and that it would surely have been less systematic in the regions to the north of the present border with Thailand, which in the main have kept their belief in Buddhism up to the present day.

III. Imported Ceramics (*Cf.* Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1992a: Doc. 274-284)

We have already devoted considerable time to a discussion of imported ceramics in our study of the entrepôt port sites. We will limit ourselves here to the small number of rare intact or nearly intact pieces that have come down to us from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries.

Only one piece in the small collection of a dozen or so preserved in the *Muzium Arkeologi* of Merbok (Kedah) was discovered specifically at Kampong Sungai Mas, a hundred metres from site SMM 4 (33m); the others have been found in other parts of the region in a somewhat confused manner, either discovered by peasants, or caught in the nets of fishermen from the little port of Tanjong Dawai on the estuary of the Sungai Merbok. In addition to this, there are three other pieces: the first two are the celadon plates found in the Sungai Muda during the thirties, which have been associated with site UM 2 (28w) ever since the era of Q. Wales, even though they have nothing to do with it; the last piece is a small *qingbai* found by M. Sullivan on site SMM 3 (35/36m).

a. Small, low round pot (8.5 centimetres in height, maximum diameter, 11.5 centimetres), with a small opening. This is the piece that was found in Kampong Sungai Mas in 1985. The glaze is white, over a fine, clear paste. It is decorated with two facing rows of lotus petals engraved in the paste in very light relief. It is a *qingbai*, very likely from one of the kilns from the Dehua region in Fujian, which produced large quantities of wares for export through the nearby port of Quanzhou. The piece could also have come from a kiln in Xicun, near Guangzhou (Canton) in Guangdong, which also produced many pieces for export from the port at Guangzhou; the lotus petal decoration would tend to indicate a Xicun rather than a Dehua origin. This little pot can be dated to the twelfth to thirteenth century.

b. Round box decorated with a floral motif in light relief surrounded by beading, with a light grey-blue glaze; the bottom is concave; the top has been restored from three fragments (4.5 centimetres in diameter). The piece was discovered by Sullivan in the excavation of his site SMM 3 (35/36m). It is in *qingbai* porcelain. It was only of middling quality, to judge by a photograph (the box can no longer be located). This average quality suggests that it did not come from the great production zone of *qingbais*, the Jingdezhen kilns in Jiangxi, but from the kilns mentioned in connection with the previous piece. It can be attributed to the Southern Song

dynasty (thirteenth century), but could also be later, as Sullivan, who dated it to the Yuan dynasty (fourteenth century) believed.

c. Small vase (9.5 centimetres in height) with a moulded decoration in a light-coloured paste and a bluish white glaze. Like the previous piece, it is a *qingbai* similar to examples found almost everywhere in the Malay Peninsula and Southeast Asia. These vases are usually attributed to the kilns of Dehua, and sometimes dated rather to the Yuan period (the end of the thirteenth to the beginning of the fourteenth century) than to the period of the Southern Song. This one was found on the left bank of the Sungai Bujang, at the level of Bukit Tupah, that is, far upstream. A large number of similar pieces have been found in the regions of Nakhon Si Thammarat and Satingpra.

d. Small bowl (12 centimetres in diameter, 4.5 centimetres in height) with a rather high, thin base. The glaze is bluish-white over a light-coloured paste. The decoration was limited to a spiral in light relief at the bottom of the bowl, with four light vertical ribs dividing the body of the piece into four equal parts whose traces can be seen on the slightly flared edge. This is also a *qingbai* that probably came from the kilns of Dehua, and can be dated to the twelfth to thirteenth century.

e. Bowl with light celadon glaze (12 centimetres in diameter, 4.5 centimetres in height). The general shape of this piece is reminiscent of the form of the *qingbai* bowl just described, with which it shares the four vertical ribs at the edges and an abstract motif in the middle (in this case, two large comma-shaped curves); their dimensions are identical. In spite of its celadon glaze, this bowl could have the same origin as the *qingbai* bowl, and date to the same period. It is reputed to have been found on the banks of the Sungai Bujang at the level of Bukit Tupah, like the preceding piece.

f. Bowl with celadon glaze (22 centimetres in diameter, 6 centimetres in height). The glaze is badly cracked, and is missing altogether in a few places. It covers a dark paste with a moulded decoration on the inside in the form of a central floral motif surrounded by radiating grooves around the edges. It seems to us that this piece could have come from a relatively late production of the Yuan period (the end of the thirteenth to the fourteenth century), from a Longquan kiln in Zhejiang. It was apparently discovered at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, on the banks of the Sungai Bujang.

g. Small, pear-shaped vase with a broken neck (15 centimetres in height, max. diameter 11.5 centimetres) covered in a glossy dark grey glaze of the *temmoku* type, with an abstract motif engraved on the side. Its shape links it to certain productions from the Longquan kilns in Zhejiang from the end of the thirteenth and the fourteenth century; the glaze is not similar, but the piece could still come from the kilns of this region or from Fujian, and date to this period of the Yuan dynasty.

h. Unglazed pottery (20 centimetres in height). This piece belongs to a type that is well known all over Southeast Asia, and is said to have been used to transport mercury, which was one of the elements in the *nanhai* commerce in the period we are examining. Its paste is thick and heavy, of a characteristic grey colour; it shows obvious traces of its manufacture; this type of pottery is usually dated to the twelfth to thirteenth century; it originated in the Fujian kilns and was widely exported from the port of Quanzhou. This piece is the only intact example found in South Kedah, where sherds of this type of pottery are not rare. A similar specimen with missing pieces was found on site PB 2 (19w).

i. Two plates with a celadon glaze (42 centimetres and 35 centimetres in diameter). (Fig. 221). At the time of their discovery, they were intact, as can be seen in the report and the photograph by Wales (1940: 44, Pl. 78); today, the largest of them has been restored along a whole section of its upper edge, after having been broken. After examining them, Wales dated them to the fourteenth century at the earliest. This is also our opinion.

B. A. V. Peacock (1959), who studied them, had referred to the Longquan kilns in Zhejiang province as the possible origin of these plates. We know that these kilns, active under the Song, continued to produce under the Yuan and beyond, under the Ming, ceramics of the celadon type designed primarily for export, and in particular these good-sized plates of which an intact specimen also appeared in the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat.

As we can see from this inventory, this group consists chiefly of intact or almost intact pieces of *qingbai* or of celadons. During the Song and Yuan periods, as we know, these two categories constituted the main output of the somewhat elaborate ceramics exported from Chinese ports to the Southern Seas and beyond. Very few complete specimens have come down to us, because unlike the

populations of Borneo, the Celebes and the Philippines, the non-Indianized local populations of the former Jiecha, as well as the *Orang Asli* from the interior of the Peninsula, were not interested in these pieces for domestic or funerary uses.

IV. Middle Eastern Glassware

It was A. Lamb, as we have seen, who first showed interest in the study of the fragments of Middle Eastern glass that had appeared on several sites excavated by Q. Wales in his time, and especially the pieces found on the site of Wales's excavations at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang. Since the sixties, when Lamb was writing, two new deposits of glass fragments have appeared that correspond to the sites of former entrepôt ports, one at Kampong Sungai Mas, the other at Kampong Simpor Tambang. We referred to all these locations in our study of the sites.

In the course of several articles, Lamb attempted to clear up some of the problems raised by these discoveries, at the same time asking a number of questions that have for the most part gone unanswered for lack of research. The subject seems not to attract interest. We need no further proof of this than the recent example of the excavation on the island of Kho Khao, which resulted in several reports in which the Chinese ceramic sherds are carefully analysed and the glass fragments almost totally ignored.

At Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, as we reported when examining this entrepôt port area, Lamb collected thousands of glass fragments. A short time after this excavation, his visit to the site on the island of Kho Khao, where he was able to pick up quantities of similar fragments from the surface of the ground, inspired him to try to compare the different finds. The study he made of the different types of bases from the broken vessels on both sites resulted in an article (Lamb 1961i) that had the virtue of putting some order into this welter of material. We have already mentioned this publication. (See above, Chapter Ten & Doc. 29.)

He began by separating out from the deposits he had excavated at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang two distinct categories of base, the first one round with a deep, concave indentation in the middle, outlined with a circle of rough glass corresponding to the pontil mark, the other with a support formed from a fold in the sheet of glass, but, apart from this, exhibiting the same indentation and pontil mark. He

found no specimens of these two categories of bases among those he collected on Ko Kho Khao in 1961. Here the quality of the glass turned out to be very different from that of the fragments from Kampong Pengkalen Bujang, as much in their appearance—the glass from Ko Kho Khao is full of bubbles, and in general more transparent—as in the chemical composition and the colours; some of these, like the dark blue, are rare in Kampong Pengkalen Bujang, whereas with the dark brown, the situation was reversed. It seems from the analysis made of the two types of glass, however, that they were unquestionably made in the Middle East, since Chinese glass always contained a high lead content (rare here) and barium content (totally absent here).

The two sites, then, definitely held glass of different qualities corresponding to different periods of production: the ninth century, the glass from the Ko Kho Khao site, the twelfth and thirteenth, glass from the site of Kampong Pengkalen Bujang. Since that time, therefore, we possess a new criterion for dating when fragments of glass are found on other archaeological sites, but it has hardly been used since then.

In order to complete his demonstration, Lamb then searched through the collections in the museum of Singapore for specimens of the glass Wales had found on some of his sites in the valley of the Sungai Bujang. In particular, Wales's site 4 (SB 13) had produced a number of fragments that he had dated to the Tang period. Lamb was surprised to realize that this dating could be accurate according to the criteria he himself had established, because some of the fragments turned out to be similar in every way to those from Ko Kho Khao, and therefore bore no relationship to the ones found somewhat lower down at Kampong Penkalen Bujang. And yet site SB 13 (4w), which no longer exists, and is difficult to date, is probably not from the Tang period.

Nevertheless, we believe that Lamb's demonstration is not without interest. It would merely need to be taken up again and expanded to include comparisons with other sites, in particular with the fragments from Kampong Sungai Mas that are associated with the Tang Chinese sherds from the ninth century. As for the sherds on site SB 13 (4w), Lamb himself observed that there are too few samples from this site in relation to those of the two sites of reference for it to be possible to draw definitive conclusions; furthermore, the

sherds were found in unclear circumstances, like most of the archaeological remains brought to light by Wales.

Several years later, A. Lamb devoted a new article to the fragments of glass from Kampong Penkalan Bujang, in which he re-examined the samples available on the site and looked for similarities with those from other sites in Southeast Asia. (Lamb 1965c).

Thousands of fragments of glass bottles had been found. Among these:

Easiest to identify were base and neck fragments, the analysis of which suggested that most of the bottles stood about 7.5-10.0 centimetres high and were 7.5 centimetres wide at their widest point. The base fragments were all characterized by a marked concavity and a circular pontil mark. (Lamb 1965c: 36).

This last feature, all things considered, was one of the major characteristics that had enabled him to distinguish the bases from this site from those from Ko Kho Khao, as we saw earlier. A little later he added:

I was much puzzled as to the original shape of these bottles until I was fortunate enough to come across an intact specimen in the Locsin Collection in Manila [...]. Most of the bottle fragments from Pengkalan Bujang were of plain, transparent brown, green or pale blue glass. A few fragments, however, were decorated. The undecorated fragments were of four main types: a. mould blown dimples; b. trails, generally of dark blue or brown; c. blobs, again generally of dark blue or brown, though there were a few colourless blobs and, in one fragment, tiny blobs of a beautiful turquoise; d. cut decoration, generally rather roughly executed. (Lamb 1965c: 36).

Lamb added to his classification various fragments of glassware “such as very small bottles (scent bottles?), bowls and jars,” usually in smooth glass, and very rare in comparison to the category of bottles described earlier. He also listed glass bracelets with round, semi-circular, or, rarely, rectangular, sections coloured yellow or brown. He wrote: “There were a few fragments of opaque turquoise blue bangles,² some of square section of the kind so common in the Philippine burial sites.” (Lamb 1965c: 36, 38). To this list were

² A. Lamb (1965a: 100-102) analysed a portion of one of these opaque turquoise blue bracelets, as well as a fragment of an opaque white bracelet of the same origin, and found that the glass contained a very high lead content (from 40 to 60%), which could have indicated a Chinese origin.

added possible rings, which might only be the edges of bottles, and small lamps that had already featured in an earlier article. He then discussed the examples of this type of object that had been found on site PB 1 (18w) by Q. Wales.

Wales had restored one of these lamps (1940: Pl. 68), a restoration that has been criticized since, and taken up again by C. A. Gibson Hill, as we learn from Lamb (1966: Pl. 1). The glass as described by Wales was of a greenish tint with a narrow black border surrounding the upper part of the lamp. In the article we have already cited, Lamb states that the glass is more or less transparent, and full of bubbles. The lamp was apparently destined to be suspended by chains passed through six handles; traces of several of these remain. Inside the lamp are some sections of the glass tube attached to the base and intended for the wick. The piece is 11.4 centimetres high. (Fig. 222).

This lamp is found today in the Singapore museum. In the same article, Lamb speaks oddly of the remnants of several (not just two) lamps from this site, “of a shape well known from Medieval Egyptian and Syrian mosque lamps” (Lamb 1966: 75); he describes the upper edge of these objects as dark brown or dark blue, not black, as Wales had indicated. He also published a photograph of the base of another lamp (Lamb 1966: Pl. 2), which may be the second lamp referred to by Wales (the diameter of the base is 4.5 centimetres). It is in fact true that the edge of the restored lamp is brown, and that other fragments we know to be in the Singapore museum are also brown; we ourselves found an identical piece in the excavation of site PB 6 (23w).

Added to all these categories of Middle Eastern glass as defined by Lamb are several fragments of opaque dark green glass with an inlaid polychrome decoration in yellow, red and blue. (Lamb 1965c: 38, Fig. 9). We do not know for sure whether this is the same type of glass as that of the fragments he collected at Ko Kho Khao; in another article, he presented a photograph of one of these, describing it, however, as made of brown glass tinted to create a yellow and green decoration on both sides. (Lamb 1961h: 48, Pl. 86). He speaks again of these fragments in an article published in 1966, in which he describes them as being of an opaque dark green glass, adding that in the British Museum, where they are preserved, a certain Ray Smith identified them as being “of Egyptian origin,” explaining that they

were pieces of “the base and neck of a roughly shaped glass flagon of perhaps two quart capacity.” (Lamb 1966: 76). We believe that he illustrated this last piece with a photograph in the article published in 1961 from which we have already quoted. (Lamb 1961h: Pl. 88). To return to the fragments of tinted glass, we found the samples from the two sites to be similar, and therefore of the same provenance. A. Lamb (1965c: 38, Fig. 10) compared them to two objects he had an opportunity to examine in Manila: a small jar decorated with polychrome chevrons, which he illustrated with a photograph, and the handle of a knife or similar object.³

To Lamb’s list of the different types of glass found at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang we must finally add “a large number of fragments of glass slag or fire-distorted glass including glass drops,” and strange-looking fragments of rough glass that he immediately thought were only waste scraps from a glass-manufacturing operation; the question was then raised as to what these scraps were doing in this spot, since it was improbable that such an operation ever existed in the Malay Peninsula. At that point he speculated that they could have been brought there on purpose as the raw material for a local production of beads, which are found in great quantity on the two sites we are discussing, and on many others. This would provide an explanation for the similarity in chemical composition between these beads from the Peninsula and the Middle Eastern glass. (Lamb 1965c: 38-39). As Lamb indicated in two of his articles, he was able to conduct a chemical analysis of the beads from Kampong Pengkalan Bujang and Ko Kho Khao as well as the fragments of glass from the two sites. (Lamb 1961h: 55 & 1961i: 61). In spite of variations, particularly in the beads, the glass in all these cases is characterized by an almost total absence of lead and a complete absence of barium, which are characteristic components of glass of Chinese origin.

In his 1966 article, Lamb returned to the problem of these fragments of rough glass and identified them as leftover scraps from pontils. After examining them, he was able to detect the places where

³ The two objects belong respectively to the Locsin and Santos collections, both of which contain at least two other pieces of the same quality (Note 4, p. 39 of this article). He promised a forthcoming article about them (Note 3) that appears never to have been published.

they had been torn away from the completed object for which they had been the raw material. (Lamb 1966: 77, Fig. 10,11).

From this point, it was tempting to ask whether the glass fragments from manufactured objects that we described earlier had not also been simple raw material brought from the Middle East in the same manner as the blocks of rough glass. If this theory is not to be thrown out completely, it also cannot be totally accepted. There is in fact no doubt that whole glassware arrived on the shores of the Malay Peninsula, even if we know of only very few intact pieces. (See above, Chapter Ten.) This is sufficient, along with others found in the Philippines, to prove that in spite of its fragility, this type of object could circulate, for uses that remain to be defined, but are probably as simple as the packaging of luxury products like perfume that were destined for the Chinese market; there is no confusion about the likely use of the lamps.

It is therefore certain that a market existed between the Middle East and the Far East, through the relay point of Southeast Asia, which saw great quantities of glass arrive in at least two forms: finished products (bottles and jars, usually small, and lamps), and raw materials resulting from the manufacture of the first, which were then used locally for the manufacture of beads.

V. Beads

As we saw clearly during our study of the sites and regions of the entrepôt ports in the earlier periods, beads are not a rarity in Jiecha. If all the other sites yielded only a handful at best, with all periods taken together, they have been picked up by the thousands at Kampong Sungai Mas, and Kampong Pengkalan Bujang has delivered its fair share.

Lamb is the first to have studied beads in the archaeological zone of South Kedah, precisely because his excavations at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang turned them up in great quantity: in 1961, a square of 4.30 x 3.50 metres dug to a depth of two metres produced 4,525 glass beads, to which we must add the small quantities of terracotta beads and beads made of semi-precious stones: agate, rock crystal, carnelian, etc.). (Lamb 1965, 1966a).

If we merely go by the superficial analysis of the glass beads, they appear to come in a surprising variety of colours and shapes (forty-

eight shapes were distinguished by H. C. Beck (1928 & Sleen 1975), and many of these are represented on the sites of South Kedah).

Nevertheless, the most ordinary, and thus the most numerous, of these beads are small and monochrome; they were produced as follows: a glass tube stretched along a metal wire was cut into sections, then, after the glass had cooled and contracted, the pieces were removed from the wire. The edges of the resulting beads were then polished mechanically, or smoothed by reheating. P. Francis (1991a: 99) suggested calling this category of beads, which are scattered over a wide area, 'Indo-Pacific beads'. We have already discussed this name in connection with Takua Pa in the ninth century. (See above, Chapter Ten.)

Among the monochrome beads (primarily beads of this type) that Lamb studied at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, which he stresses are the vast majority of the 4,525 beads collected:

- 32.5% were of an opaque red,
- 30% were light or dark blue, opaque or transparent,
- 17.5% were black,
- 14% were of an opaque yellow.

The others were divided between colours ranging from orange to turquoise, passing through green. Lamb was very much interested in the group of monochrome red beads, for which he reserved the name *mutisalah* ('false beads' in Indonesian) that had been given to them. (Lamb 1965: 37 & 1965a: 114).

Of course in this Kampong Pengkalan Bujang collection, there were beads whose shapes stood out from the others: beads with fluted edges, 'melon type', cornerless cubes, etc., but as Lamb emphasized, in the whole Malay Peninsula to which he was referring, they were "rather rare in the assemblages which I have had the opportunity to study." (Lamb 1966a: 89).

Some were also polychrome, but out of the 4,525 he had counted at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, only forty-five belonged to this category, that is, only one percent of the total.

Lamb made an attempt to provide a better description of the red *mutisalah* beads by submitting some twin samples for analysis. In order to do this, he took pains to select beads that were as close to each other as possible in shape, size and colour. He noticed that although their general composition was similar, there was still a great variety in details. The percentage of silicate, in particular, varied from 60.5% to 69.5% in the sample from Kampong Pengkalan

Bujang that he presented when he published the results of his study. As he explained, he had arranged to have

a number of pairs of this kind analysed, and the result suggested that, as far as the Kuala Selinsing and Pengkalan Bujang sites were concerned [the analyses of the red beads from the two sites were being compared], there were variations between pairs as great as there were variations between sites, so that chemical analysis could not be used, by itself, as a criterion for distinguishing individual Kuala Selinsing beads from individual Pengkalan Bujang beads. (Lamb 1965: 36).

Nevertheless he estimated that an average composition for one or the other site could eventually be determined if several hundred samples were analysed.

However, beyond the variations in composition, it emerged from this study, and from others he compared to it (analyses of similar beads from India as well as Southeast Asia (Lamb 1966a: 86-87)), that the glass was basically of the same quality, and “fell into the glass category which might be described as Middle Eastern or Roman-Hellenistic-Byzantine, a glass with a very low lead content and an absence of barium” (Lamb 1965: 36). With these features, the Middle Eastern glass contrasts with Chinese glass from the same period, which always contains a high proportion of lead, as we have explained.

This observation, combined with information gleaned from fragments of rough glass with the same type of composition from Kampong Pengkalan Bujang and other Malaysian sites, led Lamb to suspect that the major part of the collection of beads came from a local industry using raw products imported from the Middle East. The strong similarity of the beads on the two sites was explained at the same time, as well as the variations, which could be attributed to slight modifications in the manufacture of the raw materials, which must have come from regions as varied as Iran, Iraq, Arabia or Egypt. The question remains whether the thousand fragments of glassware that were also found were merely the result of breakage that took place in the framework of an intense commercial activity involving sophisticated but fragile objects, or rather, a simple raw material imported from the Middle East like the pieces of uncut glass.

Such an activity, turned towards local demand as much as towards foreign markets, certainly did not preclude the importation of beads from India or the Middle East, in particular the most sophisticated.

What conclusions are we to draw from all these archaeological facts concerning the former Jiecha in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the context of a region that, we must not forget, was geographically and humanly very different from what it is today? (See above, Chapter Eight.) Nothing less than what we have already formulated in connection with the earlier remains, and much more, in fact, because the religious structures that we have been able to date to that period are infinitely more instructive than the previous ones.

It was particularly these structures, within the framework of a markedly different ancient geography that was not yet fully understood, that enabled Q. Wales to settle on his theory of an Indianized kingdom dominated by emigrants from South India. Such a conception was strongly influenced by the analysis that had already been made of the great Indianized civilizations of Southeast Asia, and particularly those of Cambodia and Central Java. But it is only possible to compare what can be compared. We have described the Brahmanical temples of this region. Obviously, for their construction, none of these buildings needed a large work crew directed by a politico-religious elite obeying the designs of an all-powerful sovereign imbued with the teachings of one or the other of the Indian religions, and desiring to reproduce in an earthly kingdom the image of the kingdom of the gods into which they were more or less integrated.

No, to the contrary, these buildings are modest constructions, raised at minimum cost on a small scale, and according to very similar plans. Nevertheless, they were probably built under the supervision of a Brahmin or bonze who knew a number of basic principles and rites. All were built with the materials that were the most easily accessible to their immediate neighbourhood, with the exception of several stones cut in granite (the pillar bases and thresholds), which had to be obtained from farther afield.

Apart from the religious structures directly associated with the areas of the *entrepôt* ports, these other religious buildings seem always to be set apart, near the river that provided access to them. To this day, no trace of a village community for which these temples could have been centres has been found. Of course it can be argued that there has never been any systematic research of this kind, especially in Wales's day. Nevertheless, in the geographical background we described in the first chapter, most of these places of

worship seem to us to be in situations that are incompatible with the locations of villages whose inhabitants, won over to Buddhism, and especially to Hinduism, would have been sufficiently numerous and sufficiently concerned with religion to commission the building of a temple. Indeed, if these religious structures had to be assimilated to centres of commerce and trade as B. Bronson defined them (see above, Chapter Two & Doc. 13), it would be at best to centres of type B, and for the great majority, centres of type C, D or even E.

Aside from the cleared land necessary for agriculture that used slash-and-burn techniques and left fields fallow over long periods, let us remember that most of the countryside during the period we are considering was covered with a thick natural vegetation that caused these temples to be more like hermitages than places of worship surrounded by a community of the faithful.

This idea can help us to see in these religious structures something as simple as a domestic temple sponsored by a merchant or a group of merchants of Indian origin to give thanks to the gods for good fortune, or to seek to win their favour.

Since everything would lead us to believe that the foreigners who were welcomed to these ports did not leave them without permission, we must imagine cordial relations between the indigenous Malays and the Indian tradesmen, which made it possible for the visitors to build—near the entrepôt ports, or even in the entrepôt ports, but especially outside them, and in remote places—temples of their choosing. In the geographical context of the period, guides were necessary to lead visitors to these places, as well as workmen, all of whom were necessarily Malay. We should therefore not be surprised that the Brahmanical temples had the composite appearance of a classic Indian plan covered by an essentially Malay superstructure. Local constraints for the building of a religious structure involved the adaptation of traditional Indian patterns of construction. The temples of the former Jiecha were, we realize, profoundly opportunistic buildings.

Because these temples could never have been sponsored by an indigenous political authority, it is impossible to imagine any other local political structure, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, than a non-Indianized Malay chiefdom that would however have included a local elite that was sufficiently enlightened to tolerate on its territory the presence of foreign merchants, out of a well-

considered self-interest, going so far as to accept and favour their non-commercial initiatives—that is, a situation identical to the one we have already suggested for the ninth century. In these conditions, the effort to propose for the history of Jiecha periods defined on the basis of religious beliefs can no longer be defended. Because these temples merely represented offshoots of the beliefs of Indian tradesmen passing through the heart of the entrepôt ports, merchants who coexisted with the Chinese (perhaps Confucian) and Muslims, there is no reason to believe that the two Indian religions could not cohabit intelligently under the watchful eye of the Malays. In addition, we are absolutely convinced that there were Chinese temples and mosques, at least in the immediate vicinity of the entrepôt ports, as in all the places of trade along the coasts of the Malay Peninsula. The fact that there are no longer any traces of these merely proves that these buildings were only built of perishable materials, as they are today—or were—until a very recent period. Is there in Malaysia a single mosque that goes back to the first centuries of Islamicization? No, the oldest must date to the eighteenth century. It was another thing altogether, of course, with Indian temples, which, through secular tradition, were always built of hard materials, the only ones capable of defying the centuries for the glory of the gods—and, in the case of the temples of South Kedah—for the interpretations of archaeologists...

CONCLUSION

This is the picture we can present today of the forms of civilization linked with international maritime trade that developed in the Malay Peninsula from the very first centuries of the Christian era to the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Why have we chosen to stop at this point? For two major reasons, with consequences that will continue to extend their influence beyond this transitional period.

1. As we saw in Chapter Thirteen, which was primarily devoted to Tambralinga, that city-state had worn itself out in remote and unrealistic wars against Śrī Lankā at a time when, in the middle basin of the Menam Chao Phraya, a dynamic and ambitious political entity was coming into being that would soon give other regions every reason to fear: the kingdom of Sukhothai. Its most famous sovereign, Rāma Khamheng, in a very imperialistic view of his role, enumerated in the postscript to his celebrated inscription of 1292, doubtless engraved after this date, every one of his conquests in all directions. Nakhon Si Thammarat, which appears for the first time under this name, is mentioned in this list. The ties of friendly suzerainty that had been established during the reign of Candrabhānu had therefore not lasted very long. Thai expansionism was unstoppable at the time. G. Cœdès (1964: 373) places this conquest in ‘around 1294’, because in 1295 the *Yuanshi* relates that a Siamese envoy received an imperial order urging the Thais to live in peace with the Malays, suggesting that boundaries had surely been overstepped in this period. We know by cross-checking that Rāma Khamheng must certainly have been directing the operations from Petchaburi, to the north of the Peninsula, where he lived in 1294. From then on, the region of Nakhon Si Thammarat would dwell in the orbit of the kingdom of Sukhothai and later that of Ayutthaya.

Of course this does not mean that all commercial activities and artistic development ceased from that day on. It is even more than likely that Thai suzerainty was as vague and unstructured in these regions as that of Śrīvijaya in the eighth and ninth centuries may have been, but a page had definitely been turned. The negative

topographical evolution of the shores continued, and the major entrepôt ports that we have discussed became at best minor centres of trade within a commercial network that was still prosperous, certainly, but operating in other directions.

In order to illustrate this unavoidable fate that was entirely independent of all dangers from politics or war, we could mention the case of South Kedah, which we left at the end of the thirteenth century with a large entrepôt port, Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, and two secondary ports, Kampong Simpor Tambang and Kampong Sireh. (See above, Chapter Fourteen.) The sampling of ceramics from the first port seems to indicate that it experienced a distinct decline in this period, very probably because of heavy alluvial deposits (when we consider what the site is today, this is hardly a surprise). It appears that an alternative to the definitive disappearance of trade in this region was then presented by Kampong Sireh. This entrepôt port that had been of secondary importance up to this time then apparently became the heir of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, because of a radical change in the local topography. We explained that it was located along the banks of the Sungai Muda, and that at the time, the river emptied into what is today called the estuary of the Sungai Merbok. It was probably during the fourteenth century that its course changed, to flow directly into the Straits of Melaka, crossing the residual dune that had blocked its way until then, a happy coincidence, perhaps, but more likely the work of human hands. In a passage from the *Hikayat Marong Maha Wangsa* (*The Annals of Kedah*) there is a confirmation of this theory of a spectacular change in the course of the Sungai Muda, though the text, which it has been impossible to date very precisely, is in more ways than one a tissue of half-legendary fables. In it is the statement that officers of the Rāja were employed in the construction of a channel:

This new cut was made, because it would greatly shorten the distance from the sea to Kota Aur, Rāja Bersiong's fort, and at the same time straighten the course of that large river, which for ages had been rolling in a tortuous channel. It was also becoming obstructed through time. (Low 1849a/1908: 154).

These circumstances made it possible for Kampong Sireh, then located at the end of an estuary that was at least as wide as it is today—that is, quite substantial: the Sungai Muda, as we said in Chapter One, is a strong river on the scale of the Peninsula—to

receive ships directly from the sea, which was only five kilometres away, and to enter upon the role of a type A entrepôt port. The sampling of Chinese or Southeast Asian ceramics found on the site, which date to the fourteenth and fifteenth century, and even to the sixteenth, is evidence of the likely soundness of this theory and the enduring nature of a trade that continued to frequent this shore, though probably on a reduced scale.

At the turn of the century, the commercial activity would indeed desert the regions of the isthmus and become concentrated at the end of the Peninsula, at first on the site of Temasek (Singapore), which was probably favoured by the irreversible weakening of the political entity that was Śrīvijaya-Palembang-Jambi under the blows of the Javanese. In fact, among the kingdoms that had succeeded each other to the east of Java since the eleventh century, Singhasāri (1269-1292) had already imposed its suzerainty on Malāyu in 1275, and its successor, the kingdom of Majapahit—after having rid itself of a Mongol invasion in 1293—did the same. The rapid development of Temasek-Singapore is undeniable in the fourteenth century, but this prosperity was to be counterbalanced by the extraordinary growth of Melaka, which would be founded at the end of the century.

It is therefore an entirely different phase of the history of the entrepôt port civilization in the Malay Peninsula that opens up at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

2. The second reason that causes us to end our study in this period is the arrival of Islam in the Peninsula, a fact that is undeniable, but poorly documented. The earliest evidence of its presence as a belief system adopted by the local populations is the Terengganu Stone, which was discovered at the end of the last century in the state of the same name:

The inscription records an order to put into effect certain laws; a proclamation ordering the ruler and his ministers to expound and hold the Muslim faith and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. (Shuhaimi (ed): 1998: 128).

Dated 22 February 1303, this inscription predates the arrival of Islam in Melaka by at least a century. It is:

the first instance of Islamic writing, or Arabic, in the Malay language (known locally as Jawi) found in the Malay Archipelago. (*Ibidem*).

Nonetheless, the use in the text of a number of Sanskrit terms has led certain historians to suggest

that the introducers of Islam to Terengganu used language which was obviously adapted to the understanding of a population educated in Sanskrit religious terms. However, as the Arabic script was used as the medium for this message, substituting earlier Indian scripts, this proves that Islam was already well established in the Malay Peninsula during the time of the inscription. (Shuhaimi (ed.) 1998: 129).

This conversion of the Peninsula to Islam involved especially its most southern section, about which we have spoken the least. The region of the Isthmus—taken in its widest sense—was involved to various degrees, because the presence of the Thais, fervent followers of *Theravāda* Buddhism, necessarily put a brake on the progress of the new belief. In any case, the circumstances and causes of the adoption of Islam in regions that could not ignore it (the Muslim tradesmen, we should not forget, arrived in considerable numbers at certain entrepôt ports of the Peninsula beginning in the ninth century) are subjects for reflection that fall outside the limits of our study.

In conclusion, we would wish to remind the reader of a number of realities that have been presented throughout the chapters, which we consider to be of particular importance:

a. The most evolved of the societies we have described, in this case, the city-states, did not spring into life from nothing, touched by the grace of Indianization. All had already reached an advanced level of political, social and economic evolution when, one after the other, their leaders decided to claim as their own the most sophisticated cultural benefits of Northern India, in other words, to become Indianized, out of self-interest, of course. This was certainly deliberate, but progressive. The Chinese texts give us to understand that this could have been in the second century in Langkasuka, and in a rather similar period in Panpan, but let us keep in mind that the oldest archaeological remains, Buddhist or Brahmanical, date no farther back than the fifth century.

b. This Indianization of certain local societies involved only the eastern shores of the middle section of the Peninsula, the part that we could still label the Isthmus of Kra, because the coastal plains where the first evolved local societies developed are spread out along this

section. The same portion of the Peninsula, but on its western side, generated nothing comparable. The coastal plains, and therefore the populations that could settle there, were never sufficiently numerous to allow societies in the making to develop there; the local chiefdoms remained chiefdoms, probably animist, the best endowed among them being interested only in the profits that could come to them through international trade.

c. Contacts between these two kinds of societies were limited, in spite of the narrowness of the Peninsula at these latitudes. Contrary to appearances, the local relief did not permit easy contact from one coast to the other. The transpeninsular routes, whose existence has obsessed and still obsesses numerous researchers, were used to only a very limited degree. The tradesmen, whether they came from east or west, circumnavigated the Peninsula. This certainly added a considerable amount of distance, but presented no problem if the travellers submitted to the rhythm of the seasonal winds that obviously play an essential role in the destiny of this region.

d. We realize how important the role of geography in its different aspects has been to the development of the local societies. Whether they were chiefdoms or city-states, they finally offered the same services to the foreign tradesmen, even if the framework into which these visitors were received was necessarily varied. Each offered an *entrepôt* port where the travellers could relax, make repairs, trade, take on supplies, and pray, too; and for the tradesmen of Indian origin, this was not the least of their needs.

e. The history of the Malay Peninsula has been dominated right to the present day by the cumbersome presence of Śrīvijaya. We owe to the first researchers who worked in the region, and especially to G. Cœdès, the inculcation of this idea of an imperialist Sumatran thalassocracy based in Palembang, controlling the traffic through the straits, jealous of its commercial interests, and therefore imposing its control—this was how the logic went—at every favourable point along the coasts of the Peninsula. There is no doubt that this was its plan; otherwise the Chinese and Arab texts would not have been so obliging as to send back echos of it. That it managed to give concrete expression to this ambition at one time or another is even probable. But that for more than five centuries it had been able truly to impose itself as the sole mistress of the regions is completely unrealistic.

In our view, Śrīvijaya was nothing more than a city-state that was composed and re-composed at the mercy of local hazards over a long period of time. It was certainly somewhat better endowed than many others because it had a better situation, but it was equally limited in its ambitions by the reality of its particular environment—the south of Sumatra—or more generally, a location in an archipelago of many islands, along a peninsula whose shores stretched indefinitely across hundreds of kilometres.

Its sovereigns boasted freely of being the *mahārājas* of the Southern Seas, but there was certainly a great distance between their ambitions and the reality that they could actually enforce.

f. The single account of the Chinese pilgrim Yijing turned the capital of this supposed thalassocracy into a centre of Buddhist scholarship that was reputed to be the equal of the greatest Indian universities. From then on, it was only one step before it was transformed into a major artistic centre, peppered with prestigious monuments sheltering peerless images. The fact that archaeological research had great difficulty throughout the century in assembling a modest corpus of artistic works did not discourage generations of researchers from speaking grandiloquently of the art of Śrīvijaya; and this concerning not only pieces found in Sumatra itself, but also all the works that had appeared or were appearing along the coasts of the Malay Peninsula, so efficient had been the work of the first generation of historians in defining this thalassocracy.

There is no art of Śrīvijaya, any more, in fact, than there is an art of the Malay Peninsula, and this is unfortunate, because after all, we too like labels; they reassure... But how can we label works whose creations borrow from almost all the Indian artistic schools of the moment—without assimilating anything in depth, in the great majority of cases—when they do not purely and simply come from a region beyond the seas? The observation applies as well to architecture as to sculpture.

Once and for all, the most original works produced by the populations of this crossroads region of Southeast Asia, which was located so opportunely on the path of the maritime silk road, are also among the least prestigious found to this day; these, in our view, are the religious structures of South Kedah (and perhaps of some other, more remote places). We are thinking particularly of the Brahmanical *vimāna-maṇḍapa*, faithful in their conception to the

Indian models, but originally provided with elevations in perishable materials that owed everything to local genius alone.

If the quality of an art, its independence in relation to other arts, is to be measured by the yardstick of originality, then we have here a true Malay art, the fruit of a happy syncretism. Unfortunately, little remains of it. In any case, these disillusioned observations should not prevent us from appreciating all the artistic works that have appeared, and are still appearing, along the shores of the Malay Peninsula, whether or not we can determine if they were imported or created locally, and if so, under what influences.

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CHRONOLOGY

| | MIDDLE-EAST | INDIA | CHINA |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 550 | Achaemenids 550-331. Darius 522-486. Persepolis 500. Xerxes 486-465. | Buddha 560-480. | Confucius ca. 551-479. Warring States 453-221 |
| 350 | Alexander † 323. Conquests: 334-329. | | |
| 320 | Seleucids 322-44. (In Iran until 129) | Mauryas 322-185/83. Chandragupta 321-297. Asoka 273-237. | |
| 250 | Parthians 250 BC-224 AD. | Sungas 185/83-73. | |
| 220 | Arsacids 129BC-224AD. | Greeks in Bactrian occupy northwest India in the 2 nd c. (Independent of the Seleucids from 250) Kanvas 73-25. Conquests of the Sakas in the northwest. Gandhara art. Beginning of Kusans invasions ca. 50. Kusans 78-ca. 200. Kaniska. Mathura art. | Qin 221-206. Qin Shi Huang di † 210. Capital: Xianyang. Western Han 206 BC-8 AD. Wudi 140-87. Capital: Chang'an. |
| 100 | | | |
| 0 | | | Wang Mang's usurpation 9-23. Eastern Han 23-220. Capital: Luo Yan. |
| 100 | | Andhras (until ± 400). Amaravati art. | |
| 200 | | Beginning of the Pallavas . | Three Kingdoms: Wei 220-265 Shu 221-263 Wu 221-280. Western Jin 265-316. |
| | Sassanids 224-651. | | Eastern Jin 317-420. |
| 300 | | Guptas 320-647. Chandragupta 320-335. Samudragupta 335-375. Faxian's account. Chandragupta 375-414. | Northern Wei 386-532. |
| 400 | | Kumaragupta 414-455. Skandagupta 455-467. | Song 420-479. |
| 500 | | Hephthalite Huns attack in the N.-W. 475-534. | Qi 479-502. Liang 502-557. Wudi 502-549. Chen 557-589. |

| | SOUTHEAST ASIA | MALAY PENINSULA |
|-----|---|---|
| 550 | | |
| 350 | | |
| 320 | | |
| 250 | | |
| 220 | | Kuala Selinsing (until ± 1000 AD). Bronze drums of Dongson type in the Malay Peninsula. |
| 100 | Ban Don Thapet (until ± 0). | First "official" crossing of the Malay Peninsula (under Wudi). Bronze bell at Kampong Pencu. |
| 0 | | First "official" circumambulation of the Malay Peninsula: 1-5 AD. |
| 100 | Funan (until ± 600 AD). | Khao Sam Keo (until ± 300). Langkasuka foundation at Yarang? |
| 200 | | Inscribed seals at Khuan Luk Pat Panpan foundation around Chaiya. Dunsun . |
| 300 | Fanshiman's conquests in the Malay Peninsula. Chinese embassy to Funan with the two ambassadors Kang Tai and Zhu Ying. | Kaundinya in Panpan. |
| 400 | | Chaiya Visnu. Faxian in the South China Sea: 413-414 Panpan embassies to China. |
| 500 | Rudravarman of Funan: 514- ca. 540. | Buddhagupta inscription in Kedah. Langkasuka embassies to China: 515, 523, 531, 568. |

| | MIDDLE-EAST | INDIA | CHINA |
|------|--|---|--|
| 550 | | | |
| 600 | Beginning of the Muslim conquests. Umayyads 660-750. | Harsa 606-647. Xuanzang's account. Pallavas (until ± 900) Pandyas . Calukyas . | Sui 589-618. Tang 618-907. <i>Liangshu</i> . |
| 700 | | | |
| 800 | Abbasids 750-1258. Baghdad foundation 752. | Rastrakuta 757-973. Palas 765-1086, then Senas 1150-1199. | An Lushan & Shi Shim-ing's rebellion 755-763. Tibetans in Central Asia. |
| 900 | Samarra 836-863. <i>Akhbar al-Sin wa'l-Hind</i> 851. | Nalanda chart <i>ca.</i> 850-860. Pandyas in Sri Lanka and reverse. Colas (until ± 1200). Rajaraja I 985-1014. Rajendra I 1014-1042. | sack of Canton 879. Five Dynasties 907-960. |
| 1000 | | Srivijaya King founds Negapatam Buddhist monastery. Cola conquests in the Peninsula <i>ca.</i> 1025. | Northern Song 960-1127. |
| 1100 | | | |
| 1200 | | Nalanda destroyed 1197. Delhi sultanate. | Southern Song 1127-1279. |
| 1300 | Baghdad sacked by the Mongols 1258. | Candrabhanu's conquest in Sri Lanka: 1247, 1262. | Yuan 1279-1368. |
| 1400 | | Muslim conquest of Deccan : 1308-1326. | Ming 1368-1644. |

| | SOUTHEAST ASIA | MALAY PENINSULA |
|------|---|--|
| 550 | Zhenla (until \pm 700) | Sungai Mas (Kedah) inscription. Sungai Kolok & Ipoh images of Buddha. Nongwai <i>ekamukhalinga</i> . Satingpra Gaṇeśa. |
| 600 | Dvaravati | Chinese embassy to Chitu: 607. |
| 700 | Srivijaya at Palembang and then at Jambi (1 st Yijing's account: 671). Srivijaya embassies to China: 702, 716, 724, 728, 742. | Srivijaya in Jiecha: ca. 685-689. Takua Pa Visnu. Chinese Buddhist monks in Langkasuka and Kedah. |
| 800 | Kelurak inscription (Java): 782. | Ligor inscription (775). |
| 900 | Balaputra 1 st Sailendra king of Srivijaya. Indravarman III's inscription in Campa 875. Campa embassy to China: 877. | Manigramams inscription at Takua Pa Entrepôt ports at Laem Pho, Ko Kho Khao, Kampong Sungai Mas, Yarang. Wat Keo, Wat Phra Barommatham in Chaiya. |
| 1000 | Srivijaya embassies to China: 904-905, 960, 962, 971, 972, 974, 975, 980, 983, 988. Srivijaya-Java Rivalries. Jayavarman V 968-1001 Udayadhityavarman I 1001-1002. Suryavarman I 1002-1050. | Foundation of Tambralinga around Nakhon Si Thammarat. |
| 1100 | Anoratha of Burma 1044-1077. Solu of Burma 1077-1084. | Jayaviravarman, from Tambralinga?, in Cambodia: 1002-ca.1010. Burmese conquests in the Peninsula. Tambralinga embassy to China 1070. |
| 1200 | Suryavarman II 1113-1145. Narapatisithu of Burma 1174-1211 Cam raid on Angkor 1177. Javavarman VII 1177-ca. 1218/20. | Sri Lanka control of Tambralinga 1130-1176? Narapatisithu's conquests in the Peninsula. Wat Hua Wiang Buddha inscription 1183. |
| 1300 | Foundation of Kingdom of Sukhothai. Rama Khamheng's inscription 1292. | Candrabhanu's inscription (1230) and conquests in Sri Lanka: 1247, 1262. Sinhalese style <i>stupa</i> in Tambralinga. Rama Khamheng's conquest of Tambralinga. |
| 1400 | Kingdom of Ayutthaya founded 1350. | First Islamic inscription: Terengganu stone 1303. |

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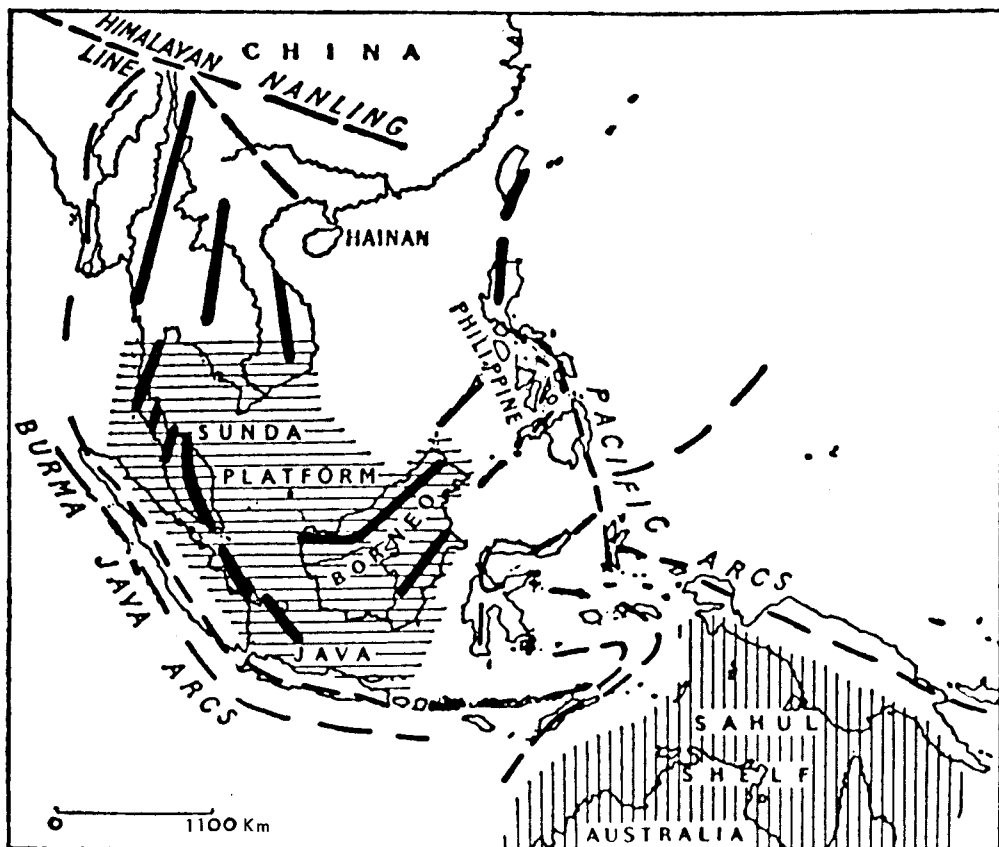
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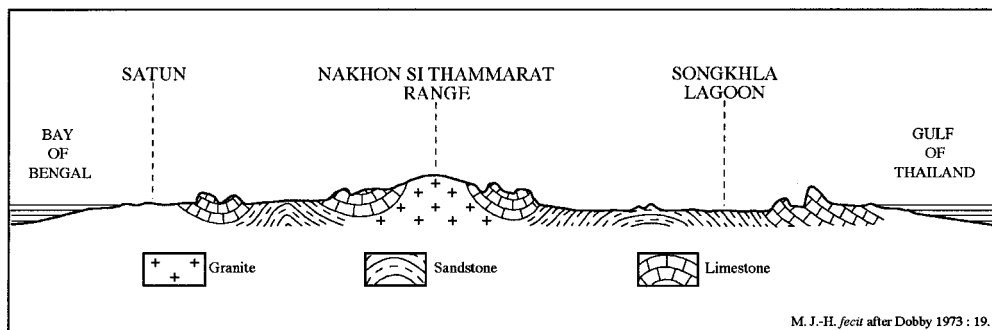
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DOCUMENTS

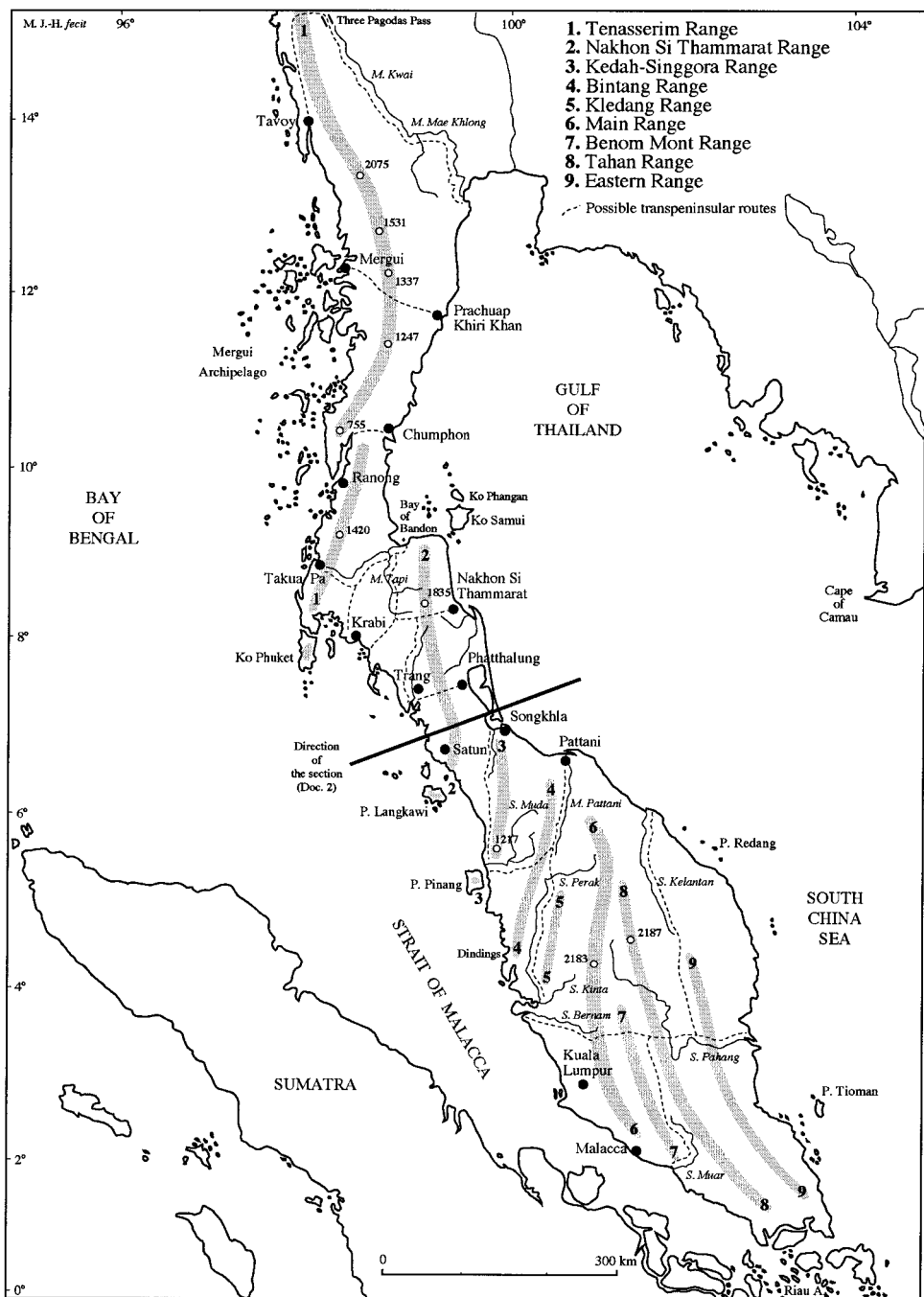
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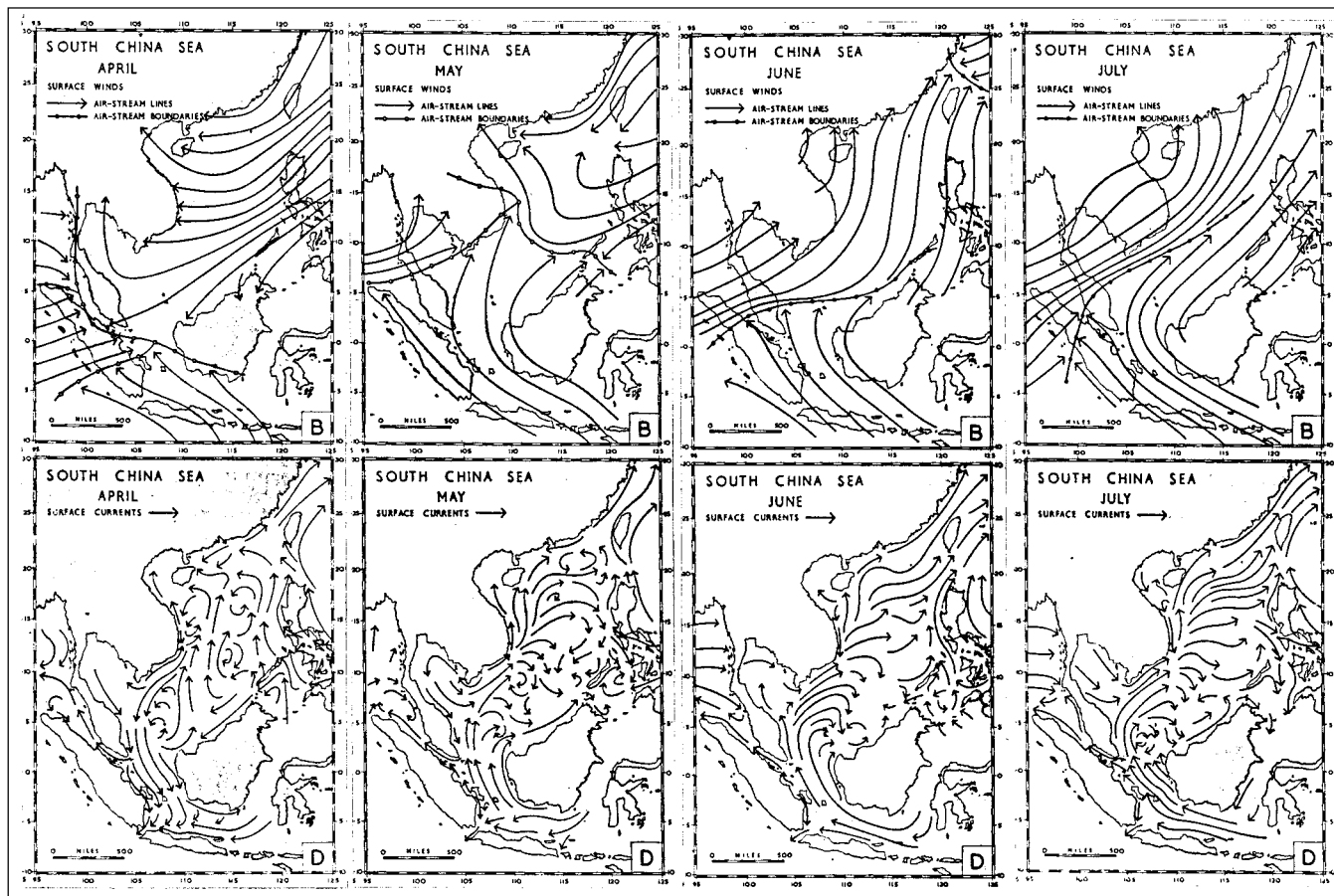
1. Landforms of Southeast Asia (Dobby 1973: 18)



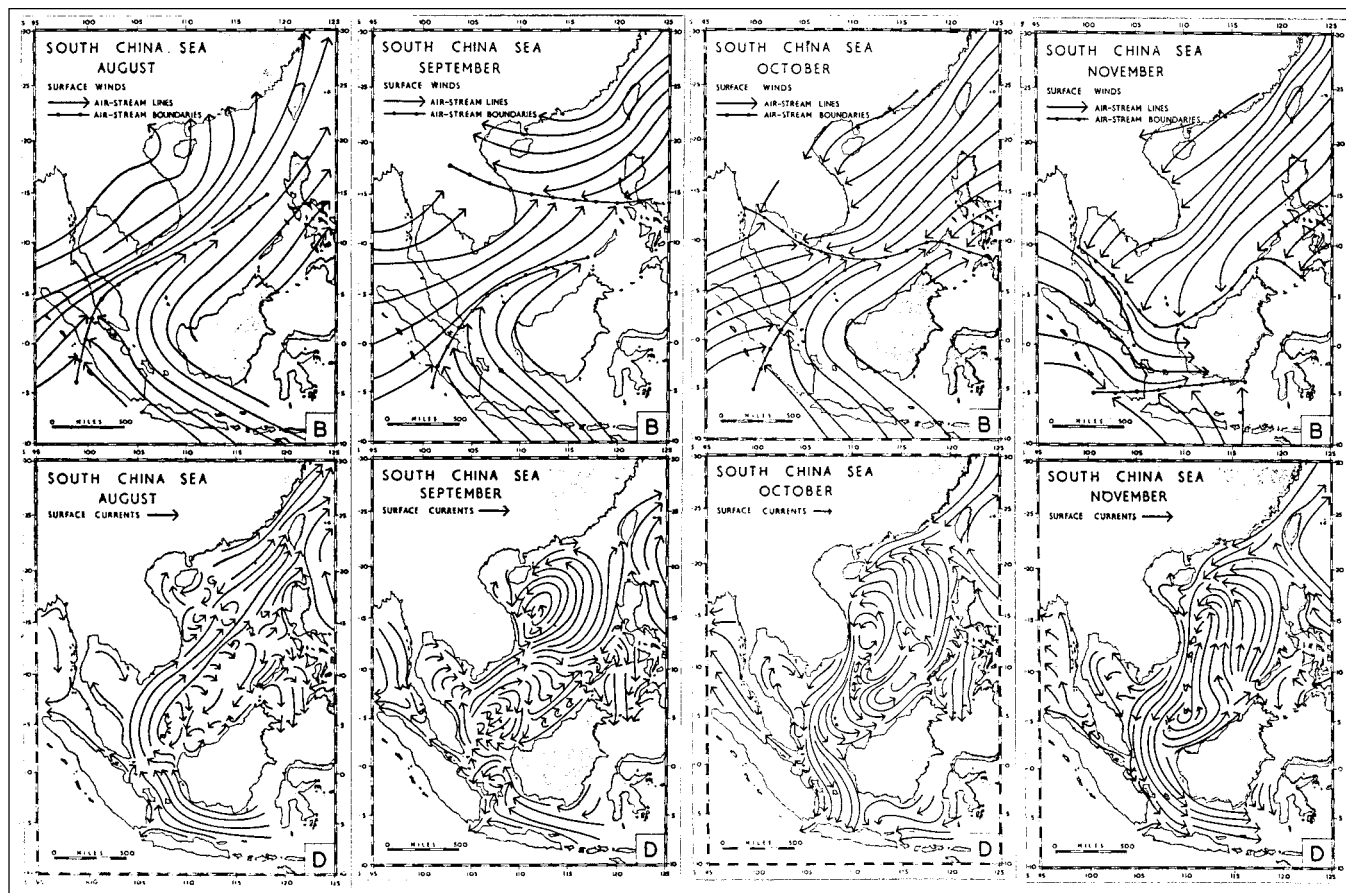
2. A section of the Malay Peninsula (MJH after Dobby 1973: 19)



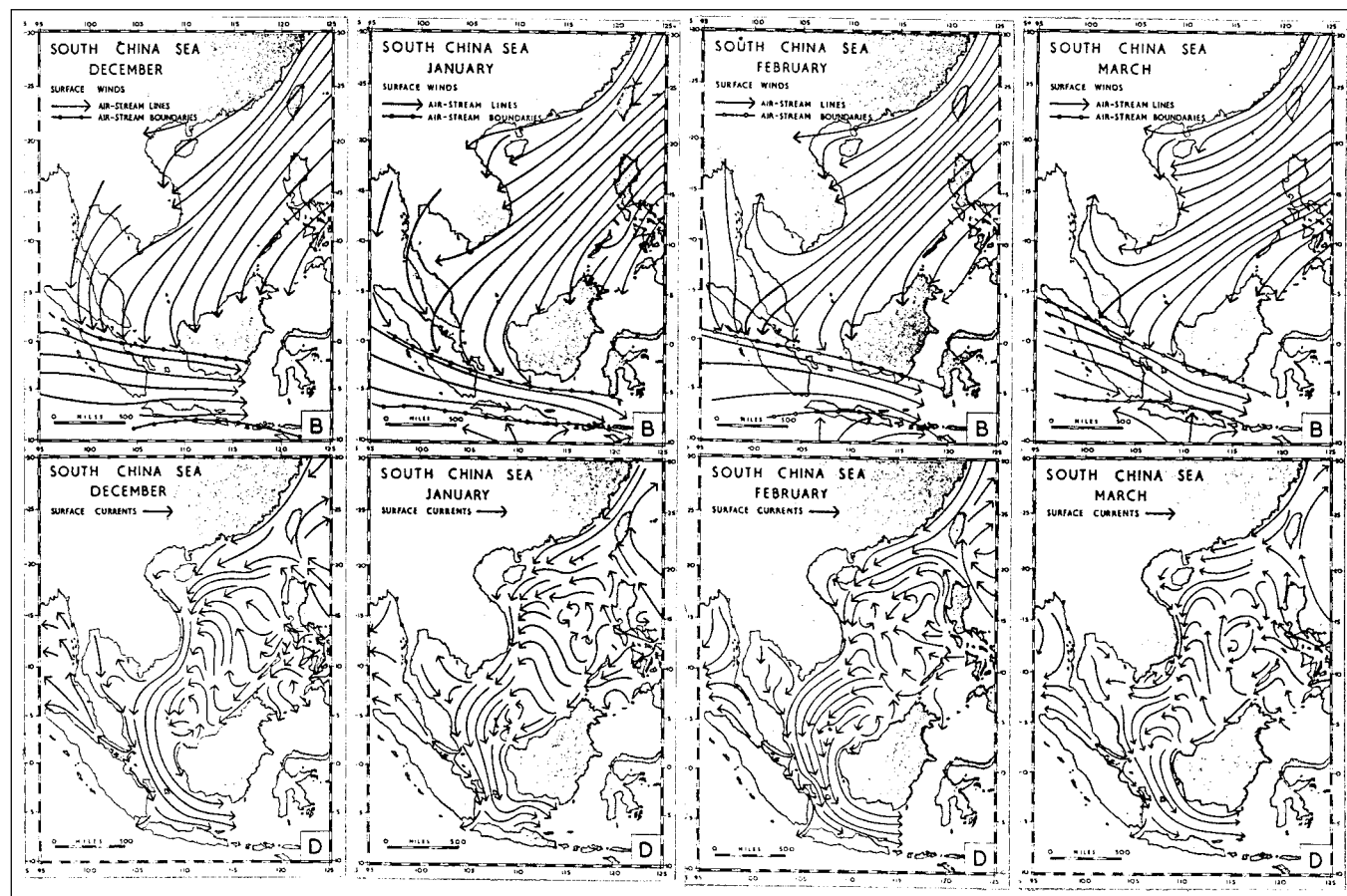
3. Relief and possible transpeninsular routes of the Malay Peninsula (MJH)



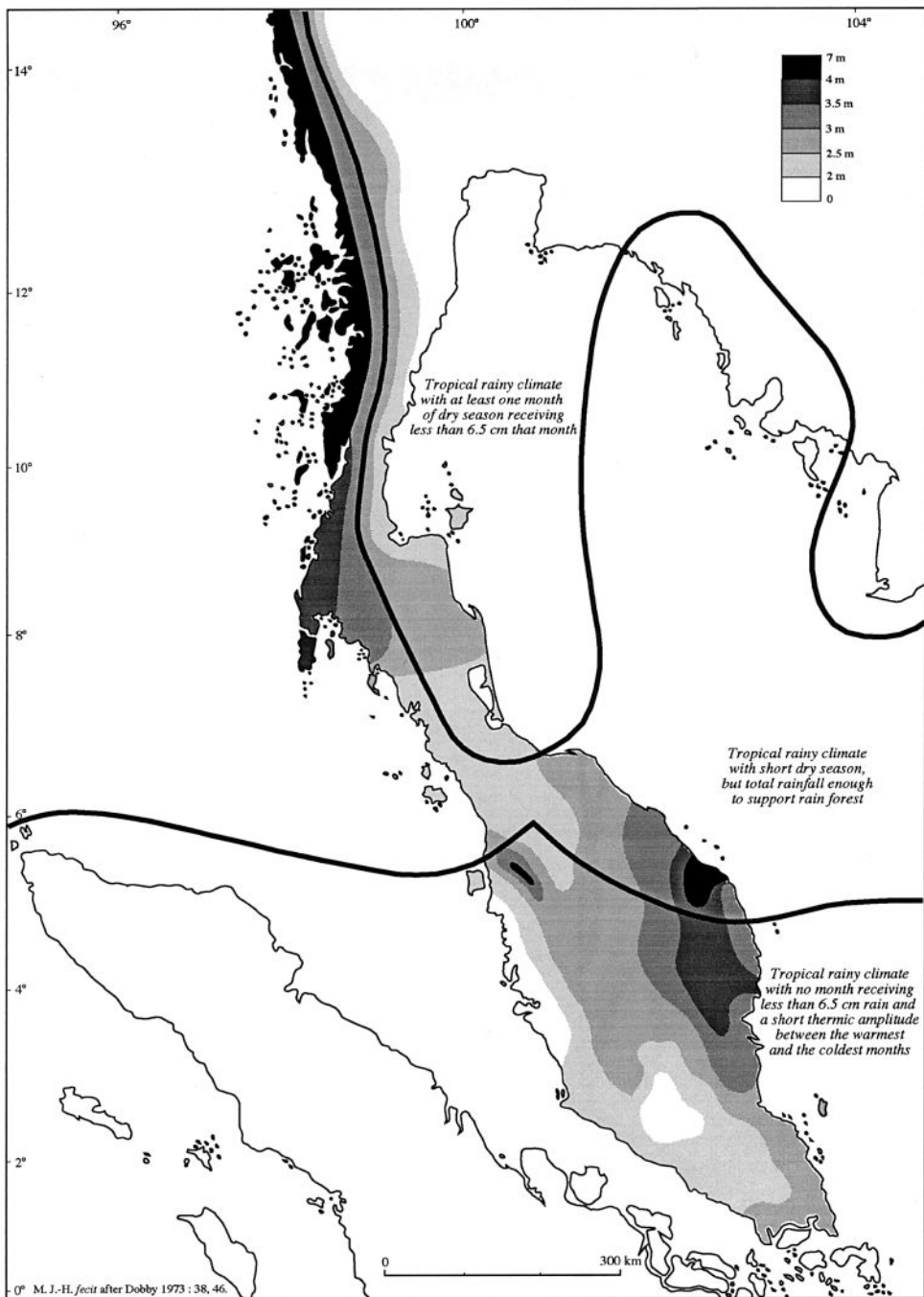
4. Surface winds and surface currents in the South China Sea from April to July (after Dale 1956)



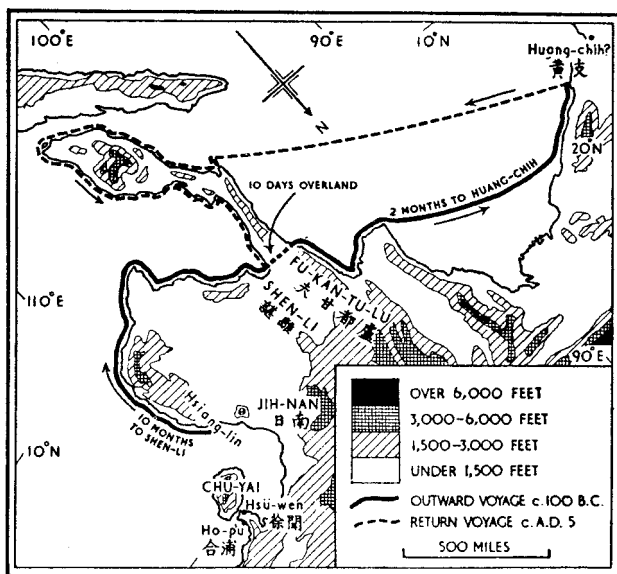
4. Surface winds and surface currents in the South China Sea from August to November (after Dale 1956)



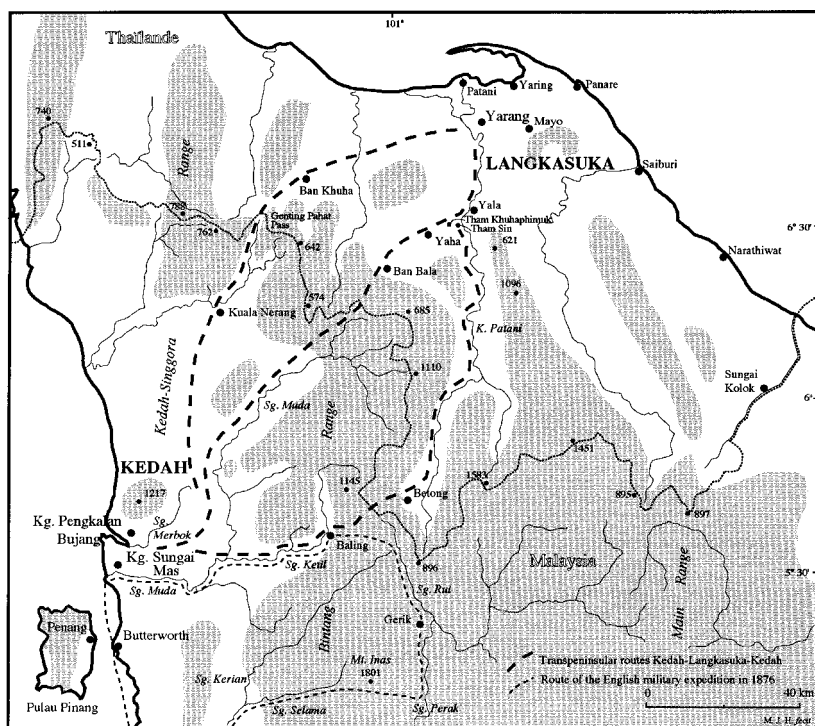
4. Surface winds and surface currents in the South China Sea from December to March (after Dale 1956)



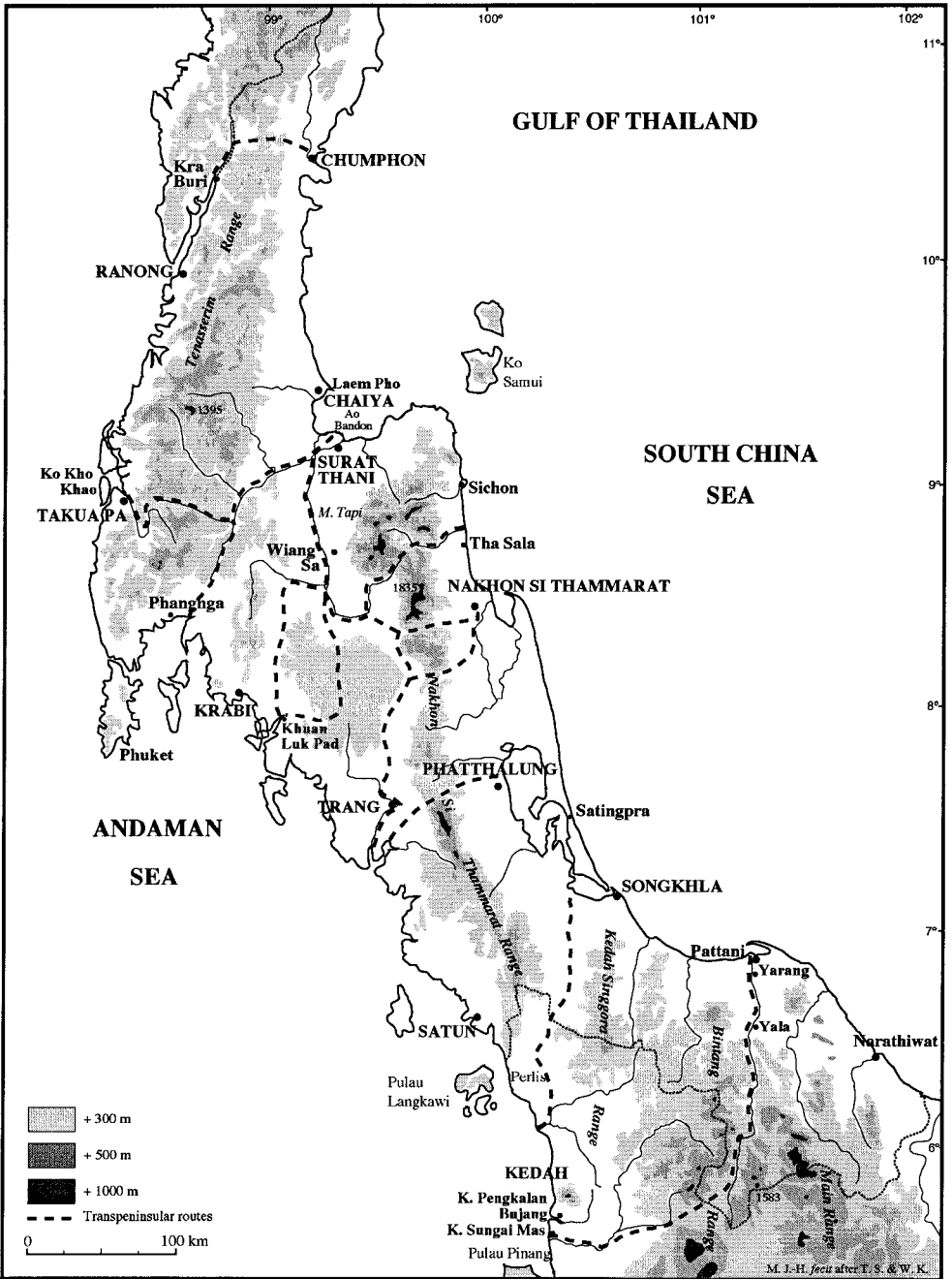
5. Annual rainfall and climatic regions in the Malay Peninsula (MJH after Dobby 1973: 38, 46)



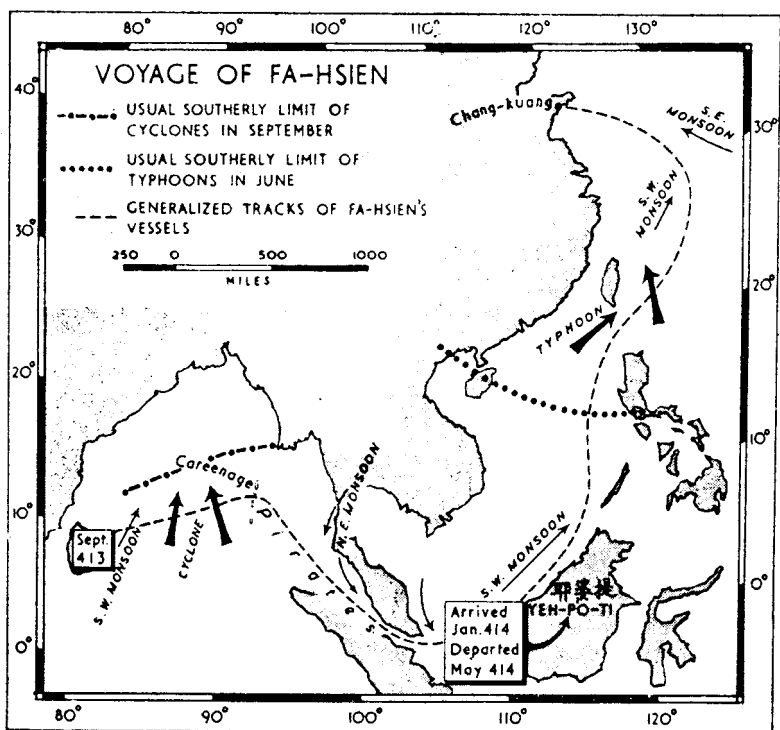
6. Possible voyages of the Chinese c. 100 BC and c. 5 AD. (Wheatley 1973: Fig 8)



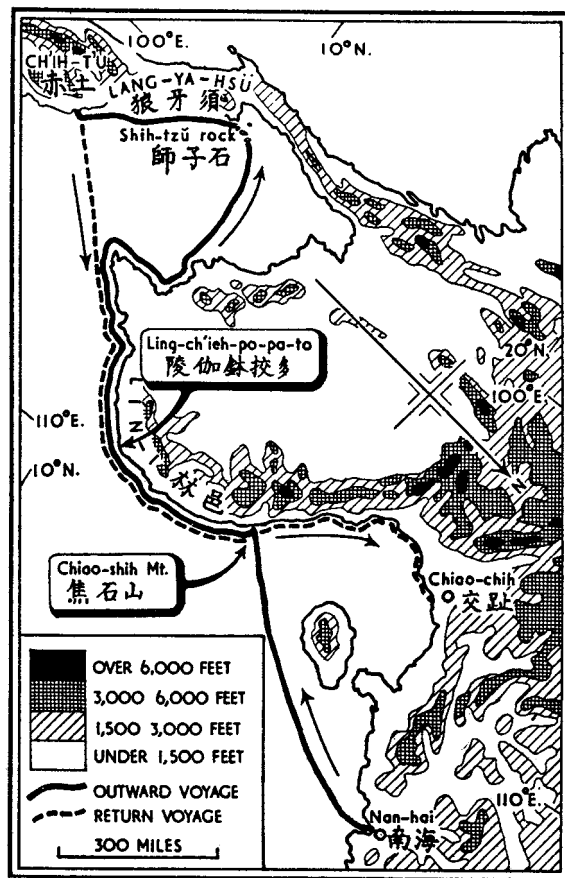
7. Possible transpeninsular routes between South Kedah and Langkasuka and route of the English military expedition in 1876 (MJH)



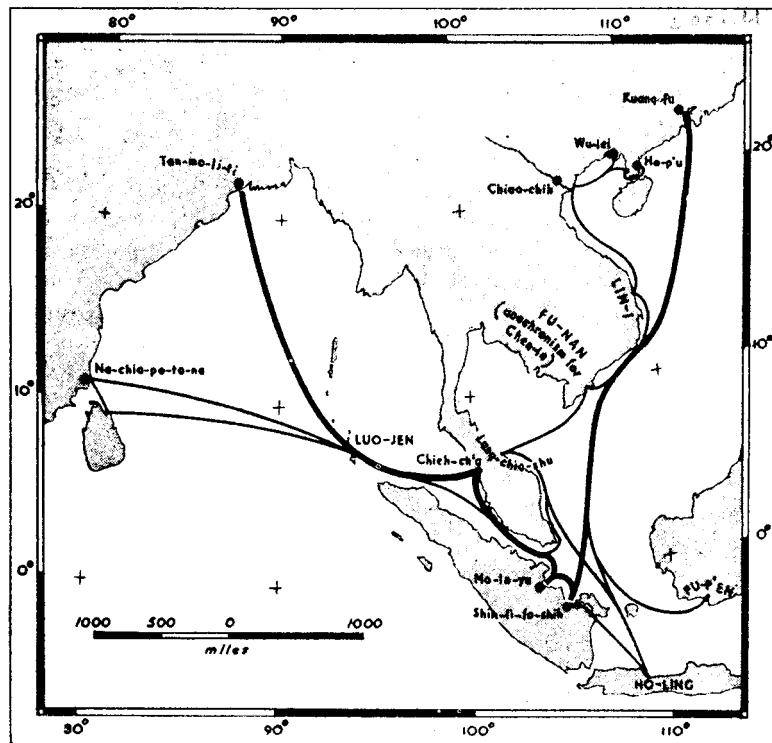
8. Possible transpeninsular routes in the middle portion of the Malay Peninsula (MJH)



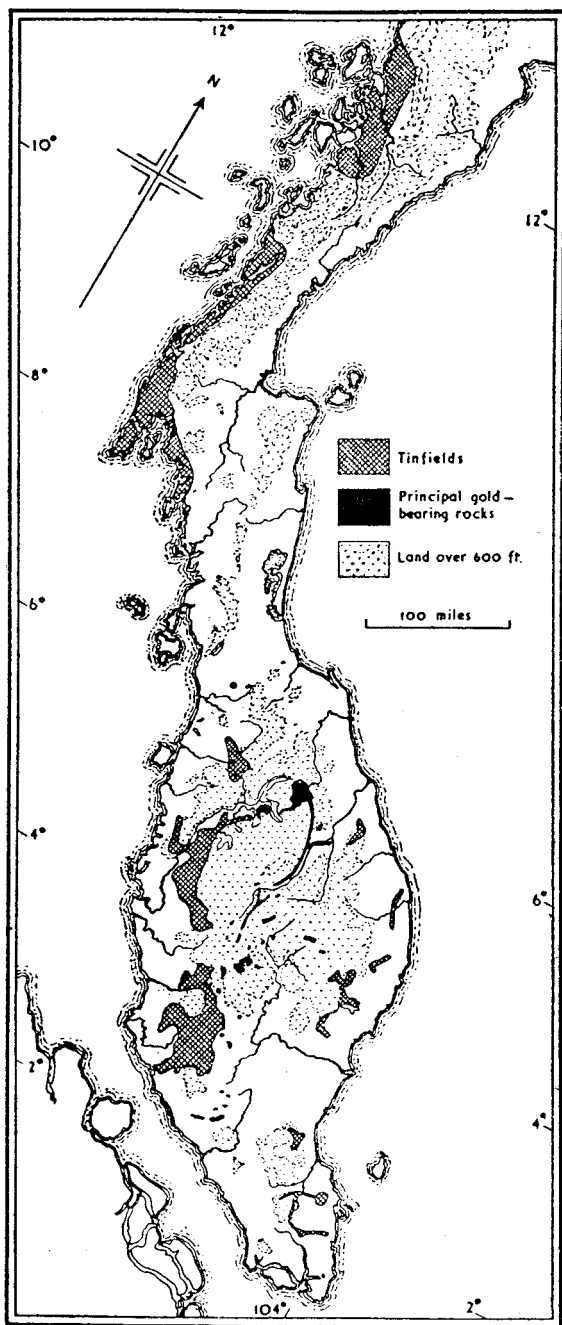
9. Voyage of Faxian, September 413-June 414 (Wheatley 1973: Fig. 10)



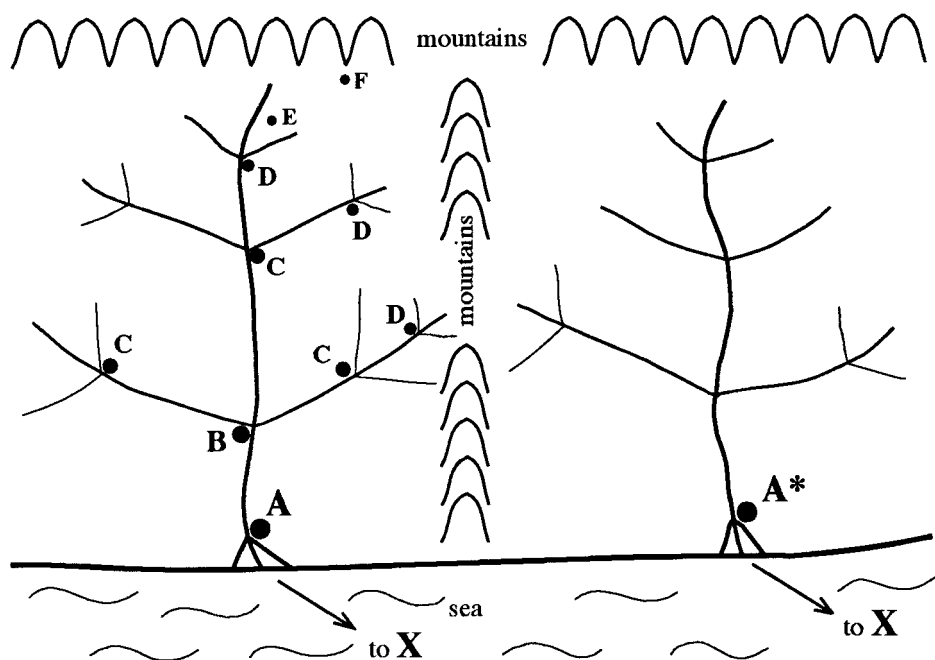
10. Voyage of the Sui envoys, 607-10 AD (Wheatley 1973: Fig 9)



11. Sailing routes through the Southern Seas in the 7th century. Yijing's route is represented by a thicker line (Wheatley 1973: Fig 11)

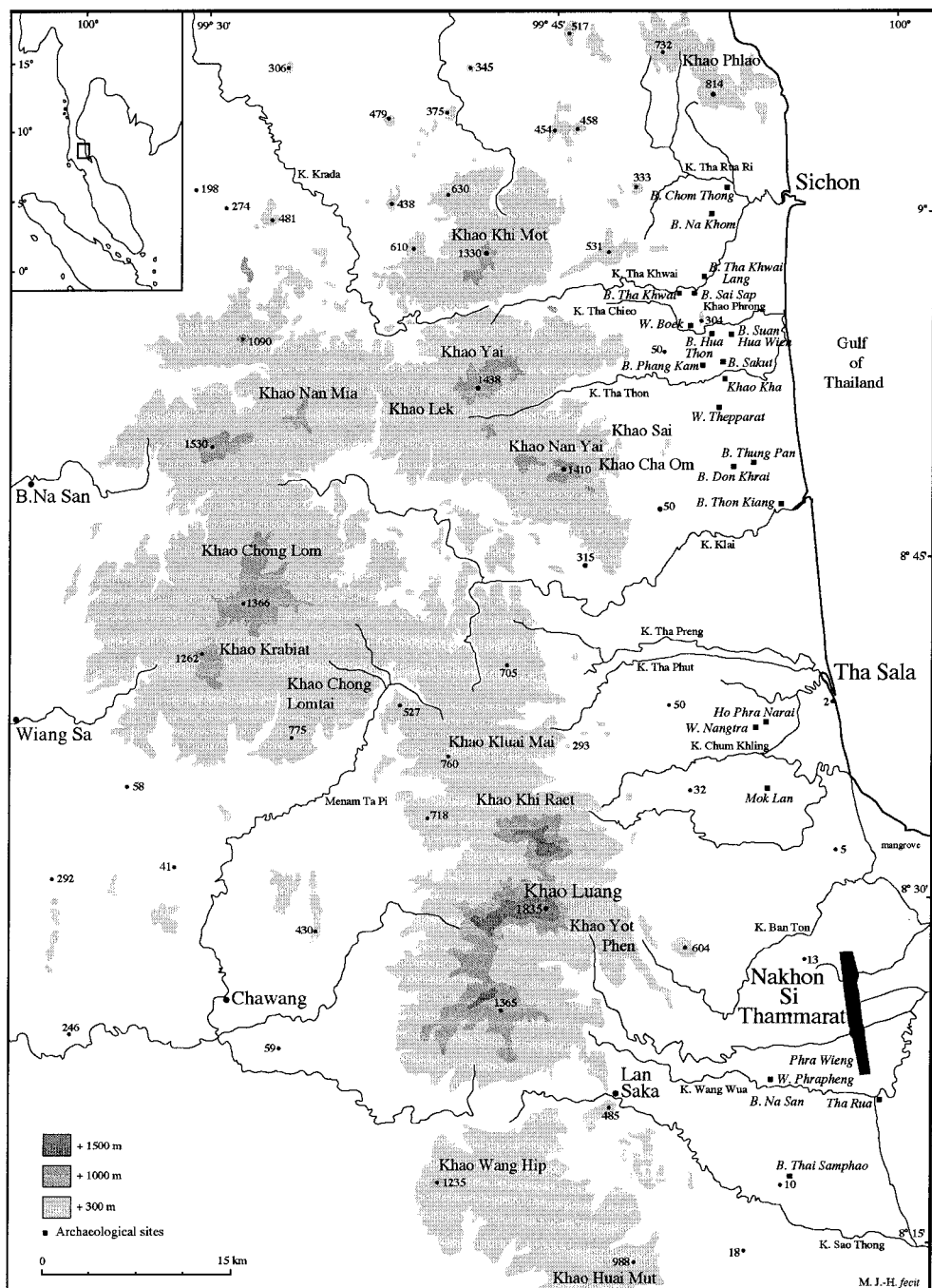


12. Gold and tin deposits of the Malay Peninsula
(Wheatley 1973: Fig 3)

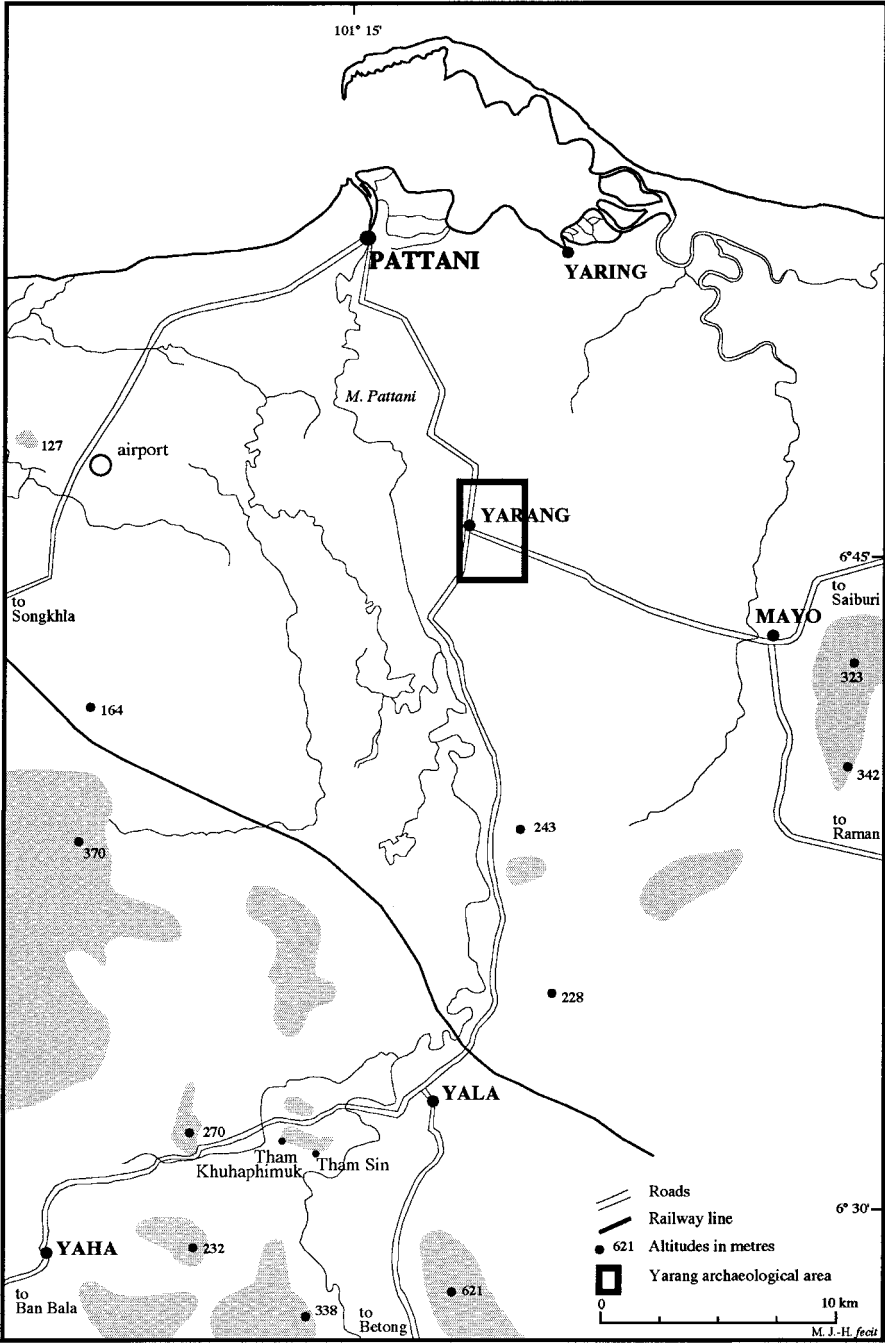


M.J.-H. after Bronson 1977: Fig. 1.

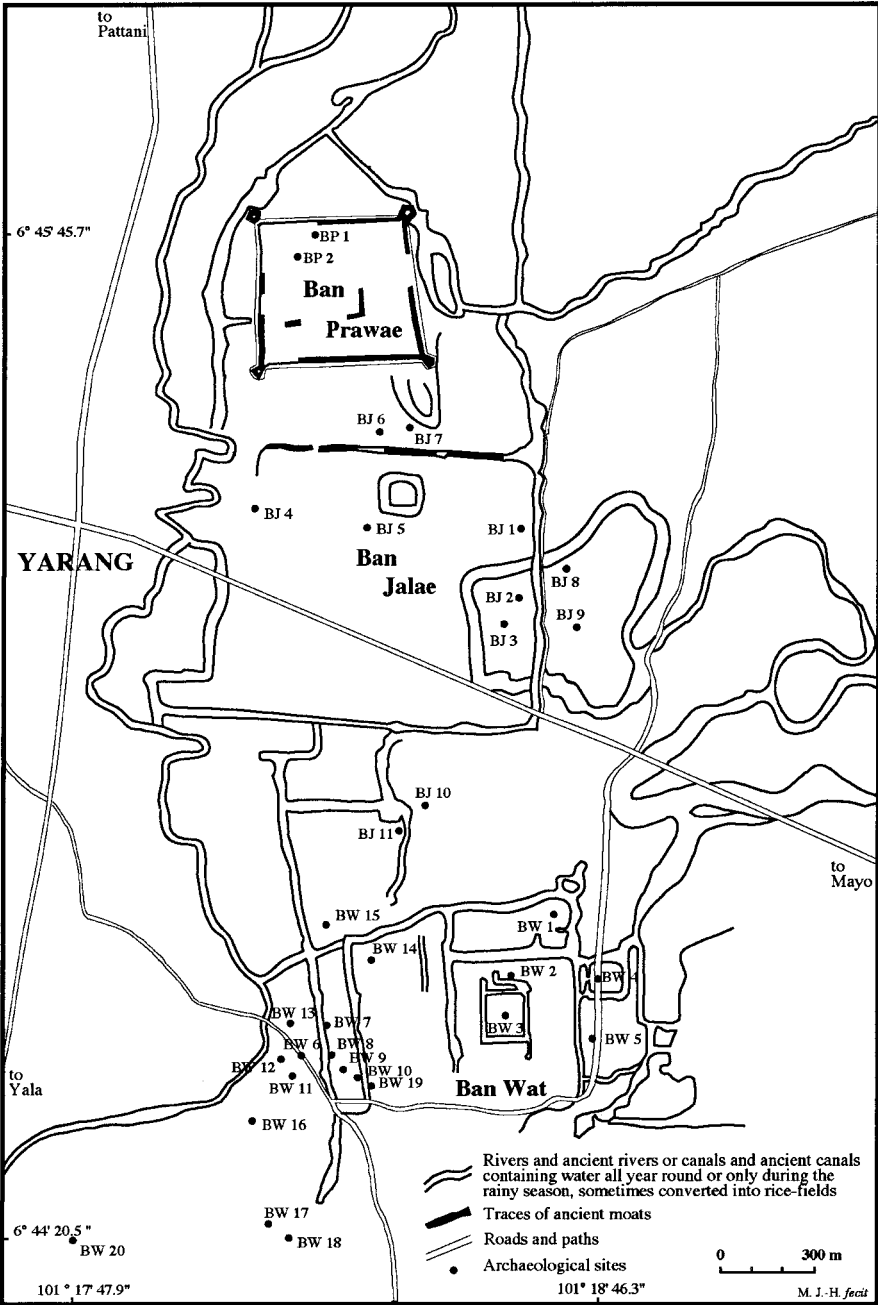
13. Abstract model for exchange between a drainage basin centre and an overseas power (after Bronson 1977: Fig. 1)



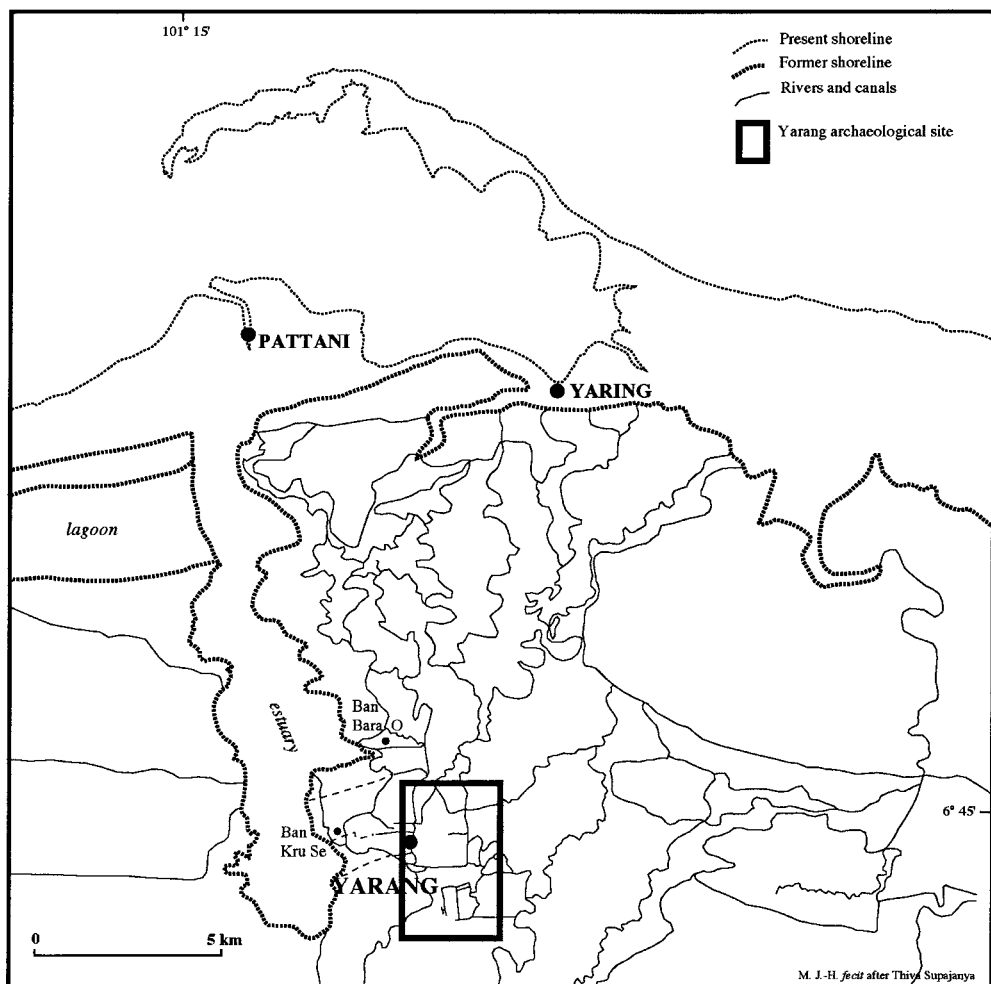
14. Archaeological sites in the vicinities of Sichon, Tha Sala and Nakhon Si Thammarat (MJH)



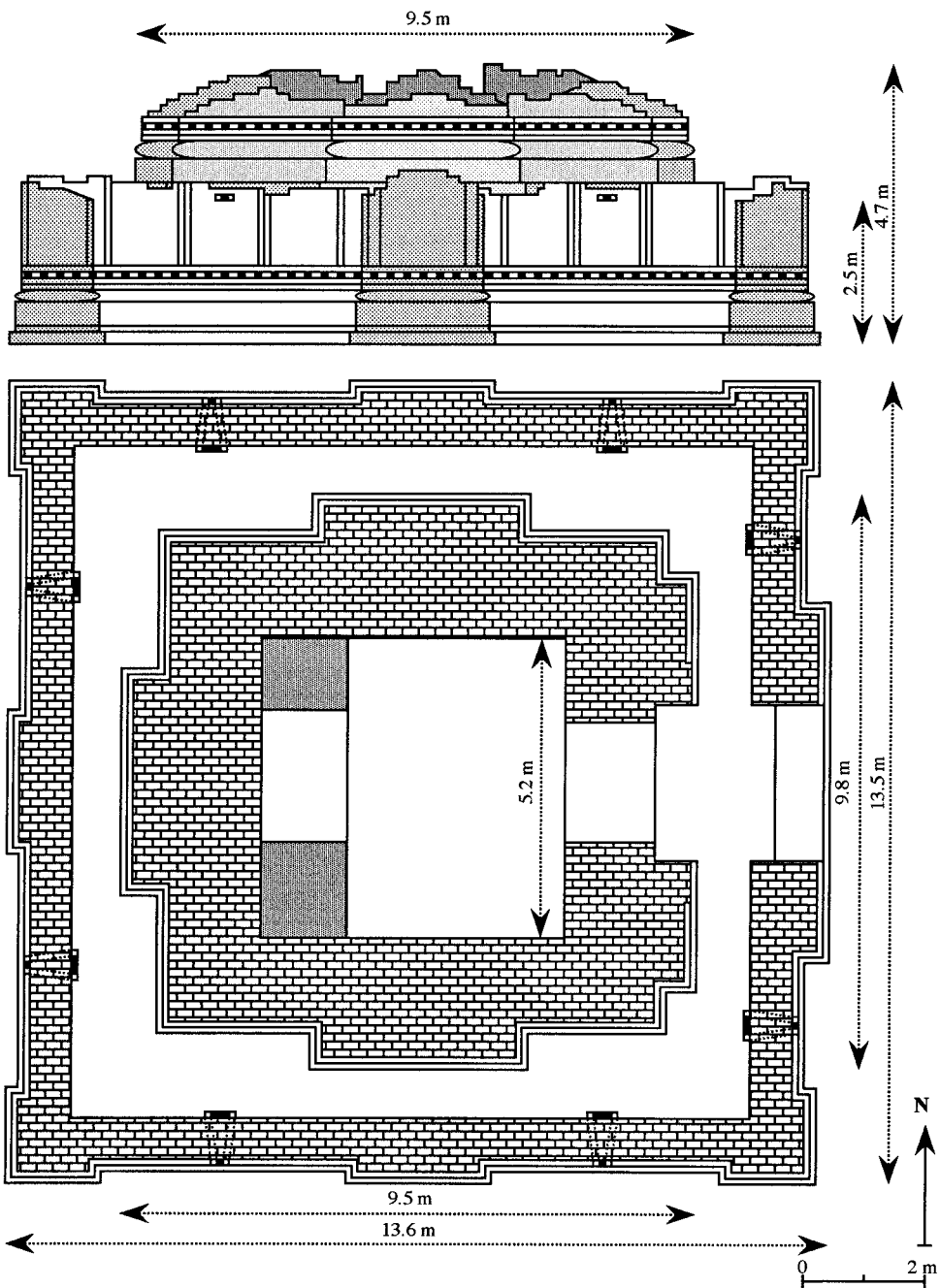
15. Situation of Yarang in former Langkasuka (MJH)



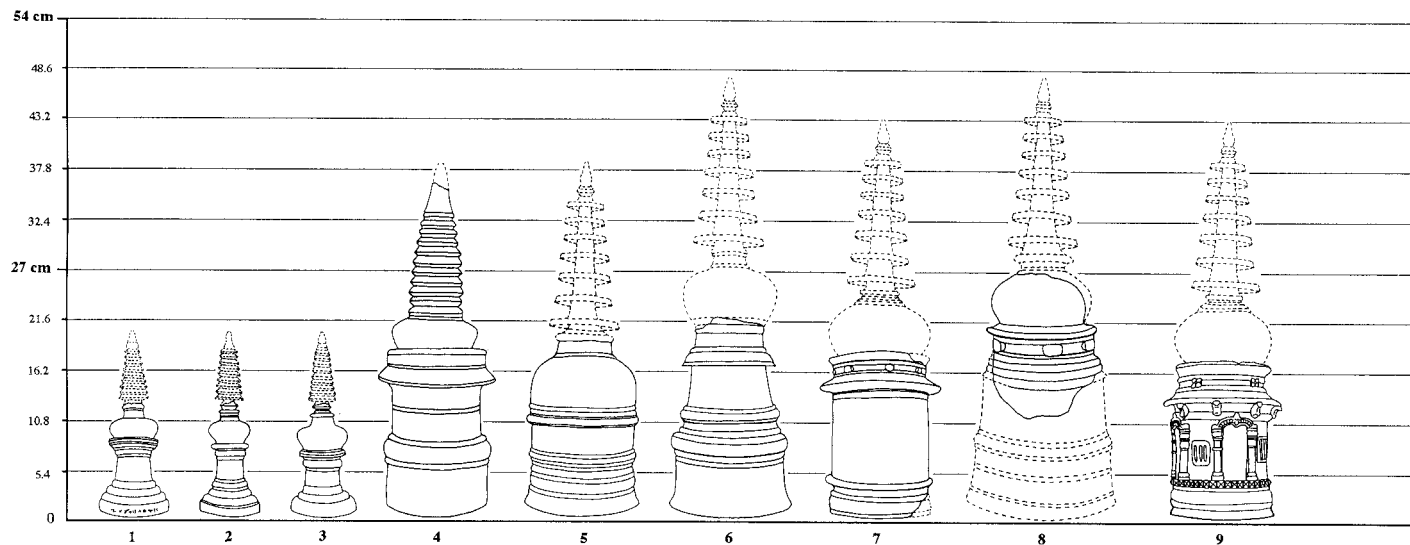
16. Yarang archaeological site (MJH after maps from the FAD)



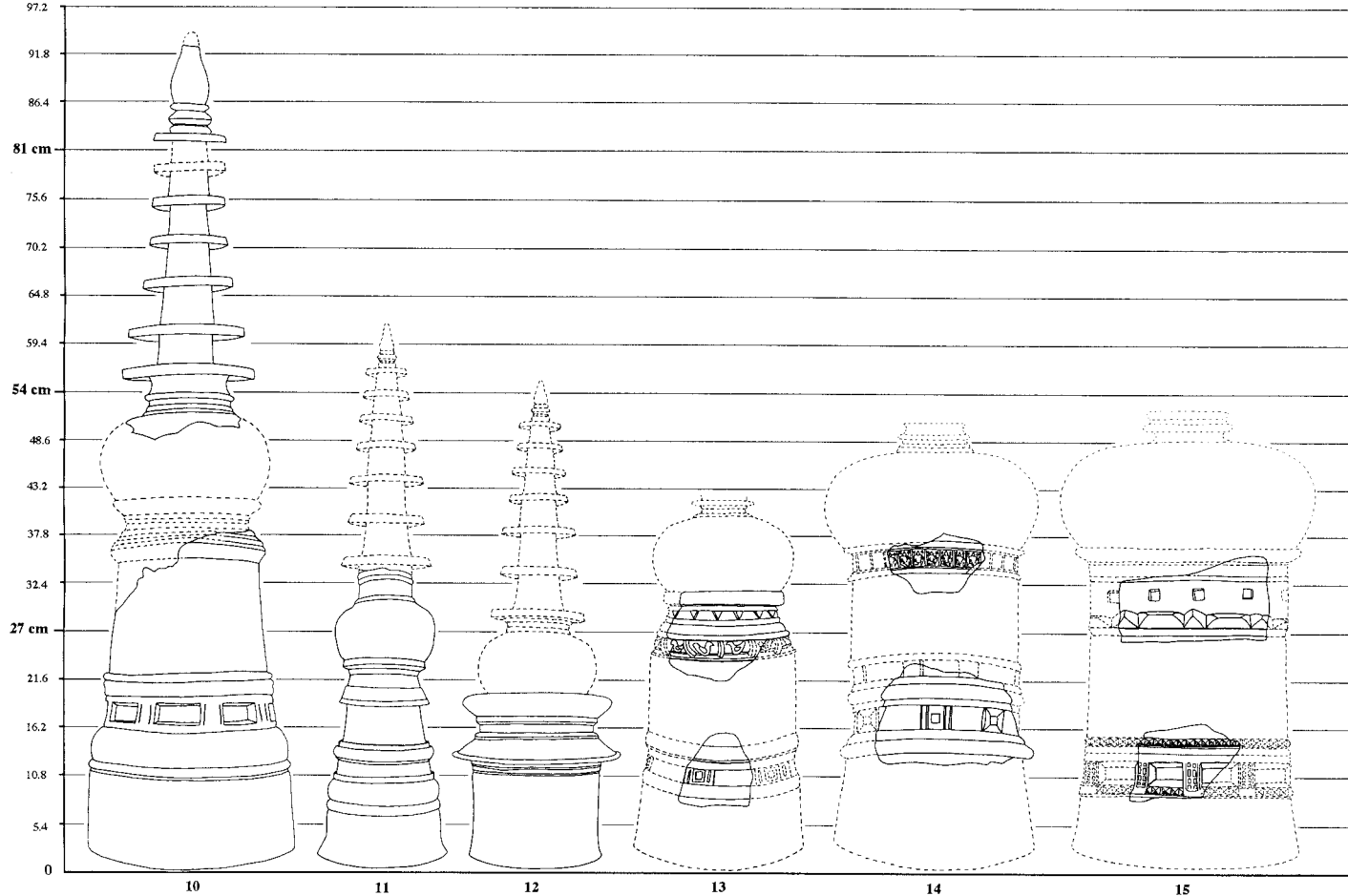
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18. Plan and elevation of BJ3 sanctuary at Yarang (MJH after plans from the FAD)



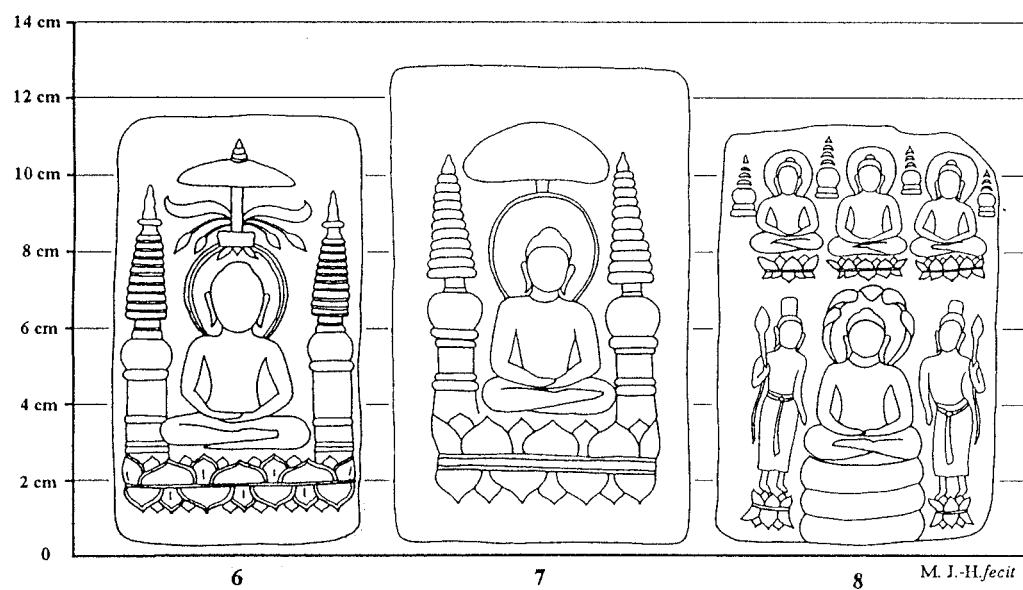
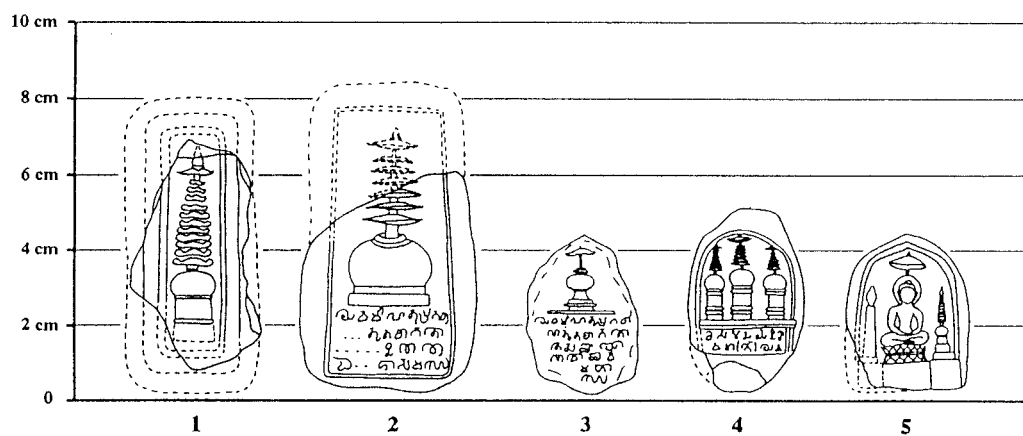
19. Restoration on the same scale of the votive *stūpa* from the Yarang sanctuaries. Existing pieces are drawn with plain lines (all from BJ 3, except Nos. 10, 18, 19, the lower fragment of No 14 and the upper fragment of No 15); dotted lines correspond to the missing parts; their forms are derived or copied from the existing pieces. An additional 7 *chattra* (30 to 50 cm) must be added to the height of the drawings that lack them (MJH)



19. Restoration on the same scale of the votive *stūpa* from the Yarang sanctuaries. Existing pieces are drawn with plain lines (all from BJ 3, except Nos. 10, 18, 19, the lower fragment of No 14 and the upper fragment of No 15); dotted lines correspond to the missing parts; their forms are derived or copied from the existing pieces. An additional 7 *chattra* (30 to 50 cm) must be added to the height of the drawings that lack them (MJH)

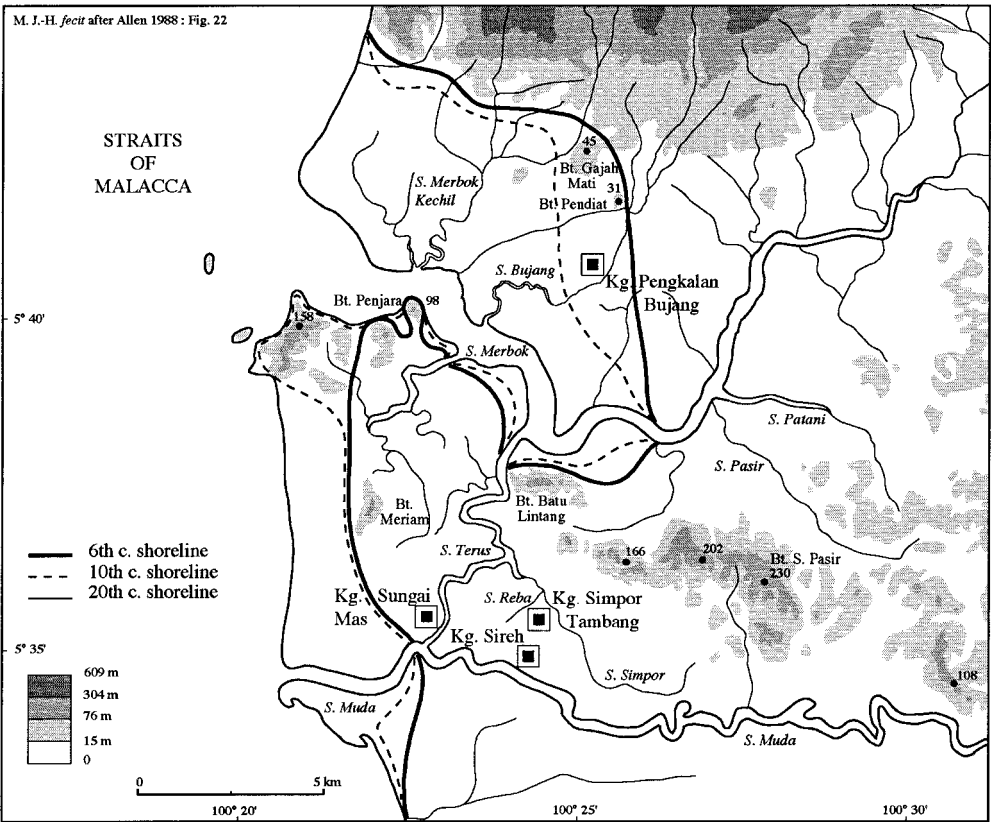


19. Restoration on the same scale of the votive *stūpa* from the Yarang sanctuaries. Existing pieces are drawn with plain lines (all from BJ 3, except Nos. 10, 18, 19, the lower fragment of No 14 and the upper fragment of No 15); dotted lines correspond to the missing parts; their forms are derived or copied from the existing pieces. An additional 7 *chattra* (30 to 50 cm) must be added to the height of the drawings that lack them (MJH)

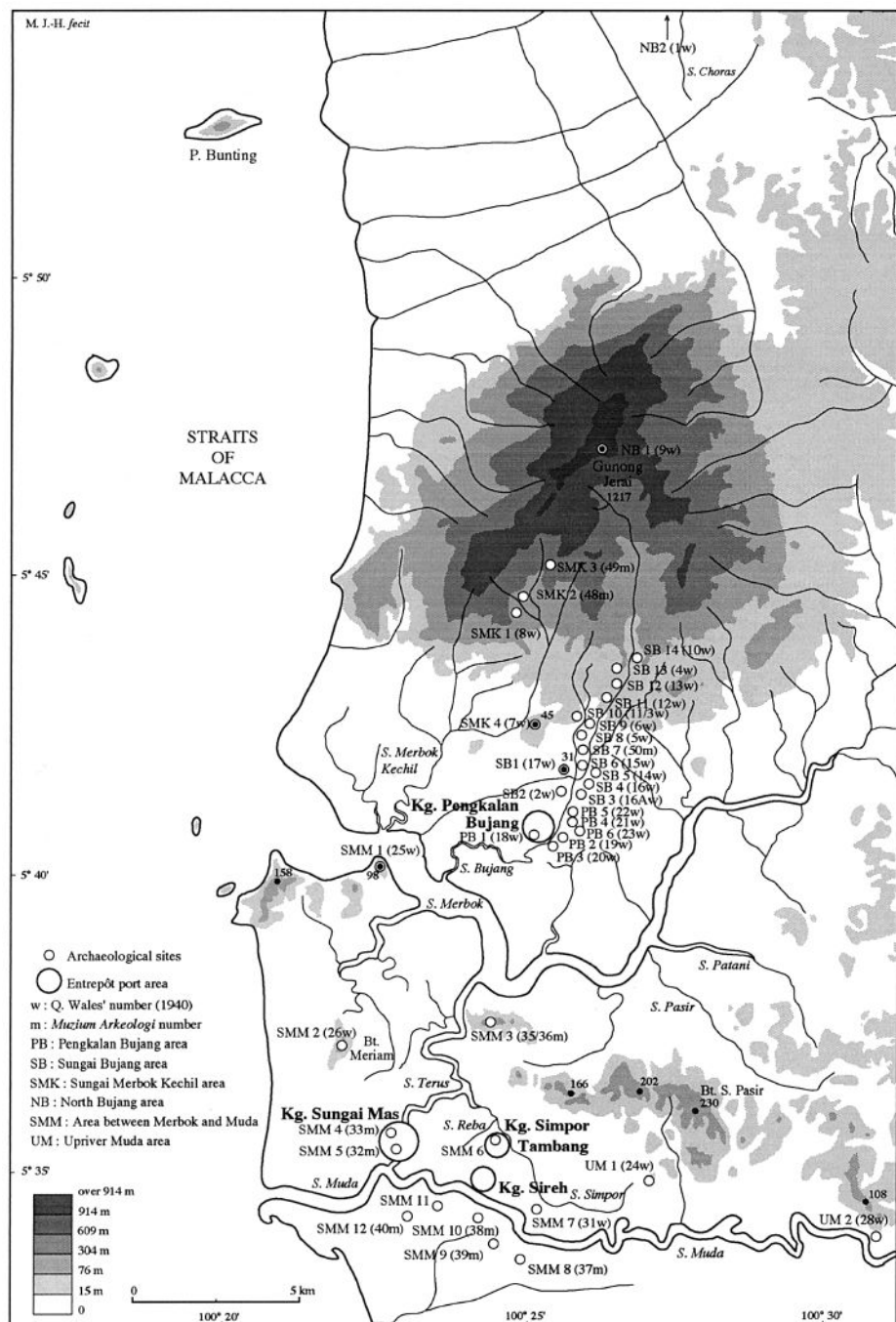


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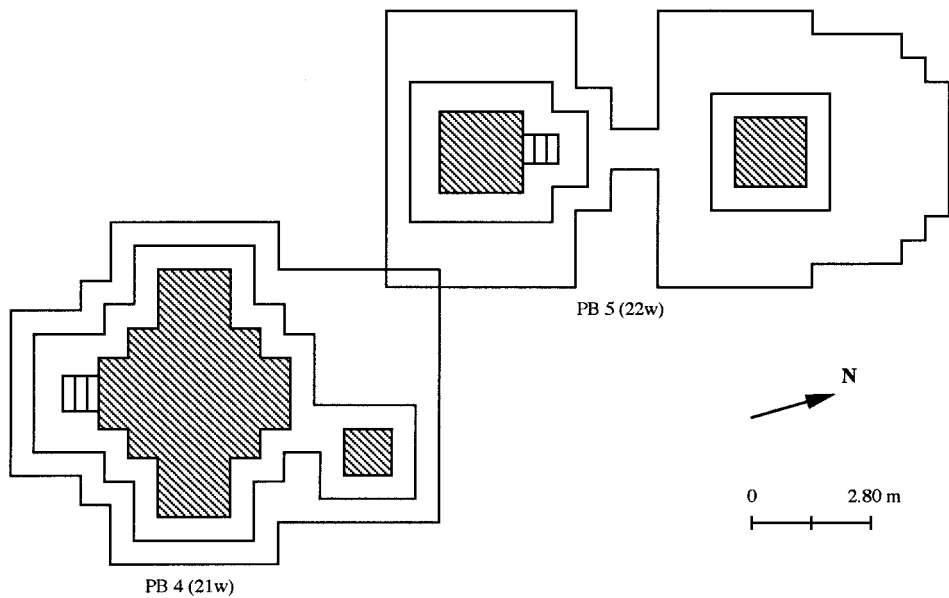
20. Different types of votive tablets discovered in BJ 3 sanctuary (MJH)



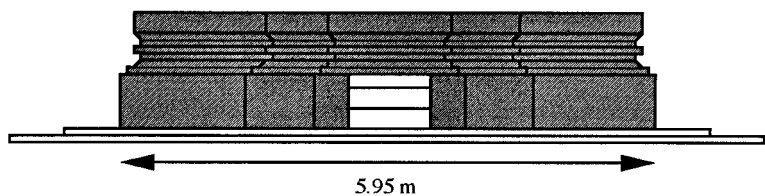
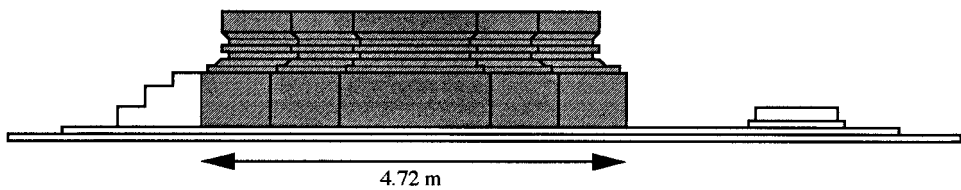
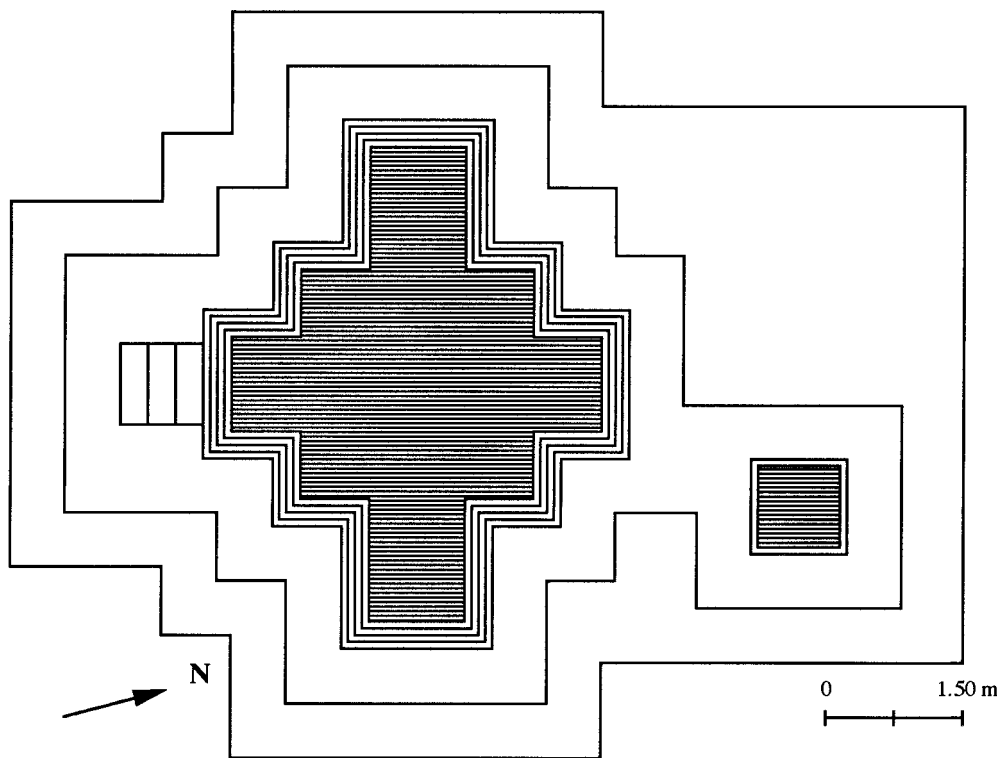
21. Evolution of the shorelines in South Kedah, Malaysia, during the early historic period (MJH after Allen 1988: Fig 22)



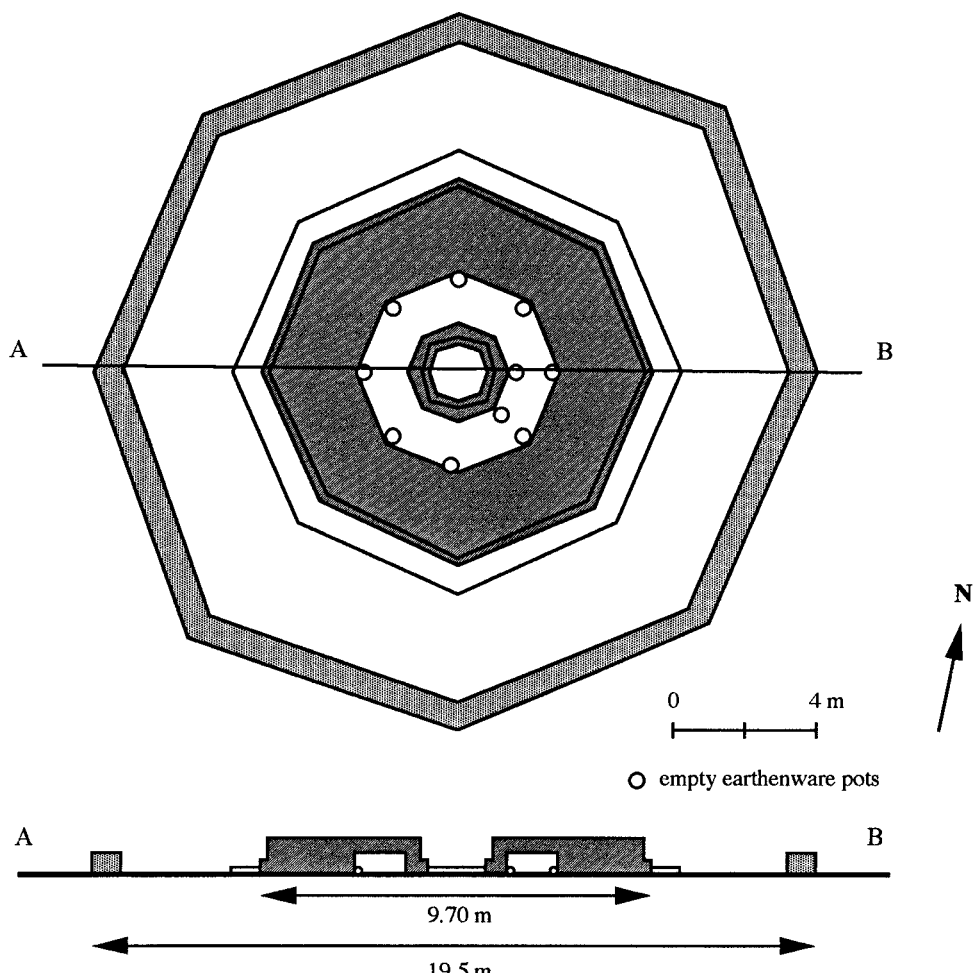
22. Archaeological sites and entrepôt port areas in South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH)



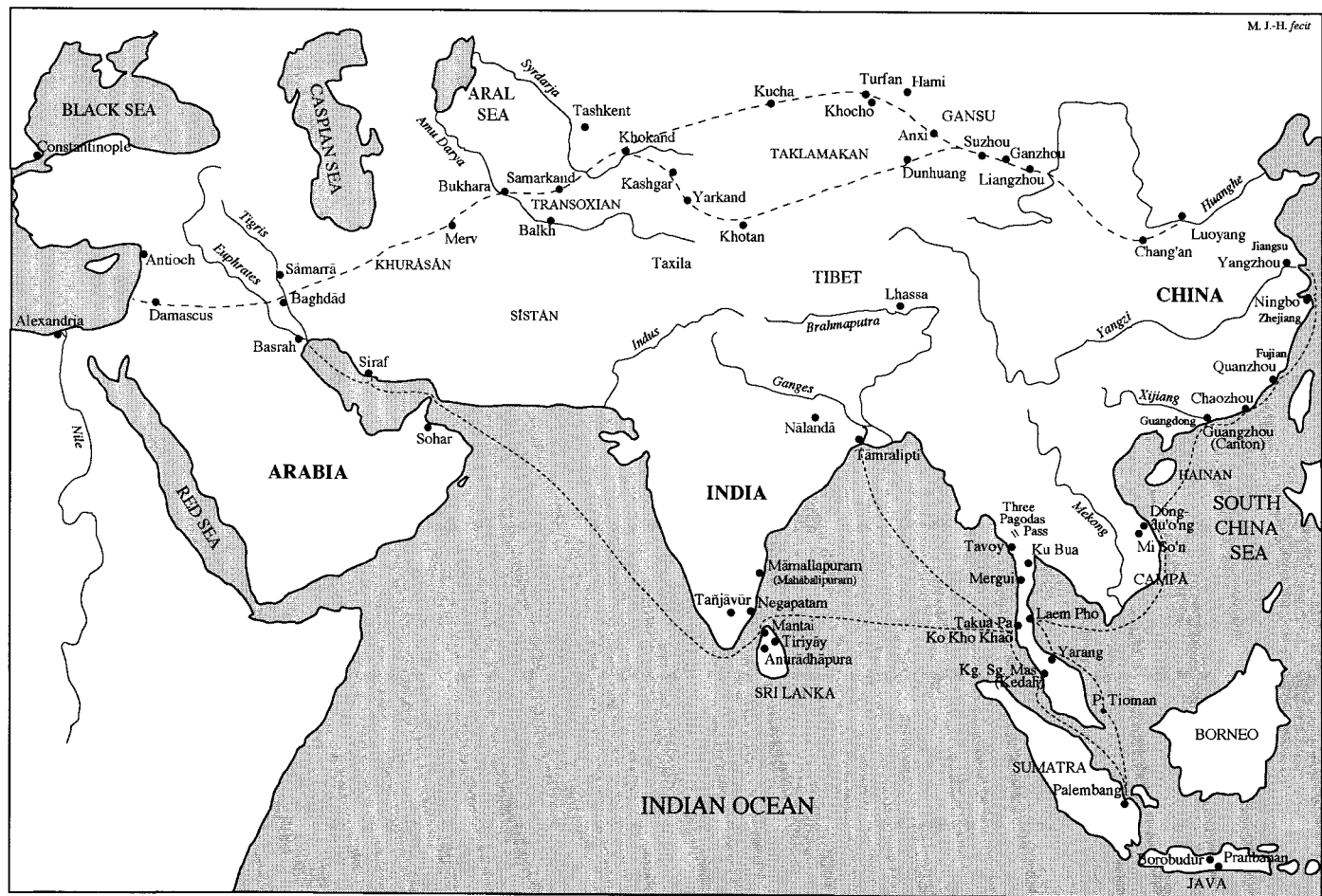
23. Plan of Buddhist structures on sites PB 4/5 (21/22w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of the Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



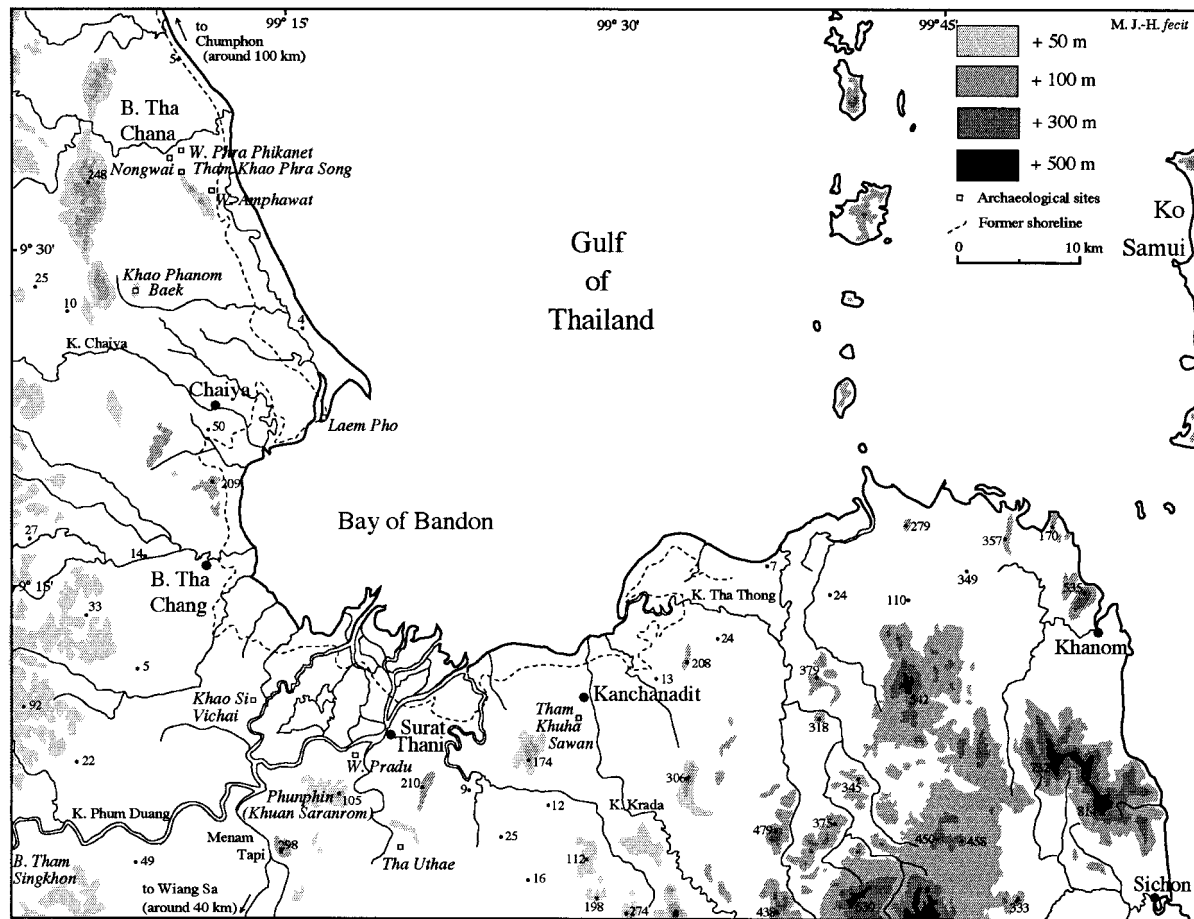
24. Plan and elevations of E and S sides of the structures on site PB 4 (21w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of the Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



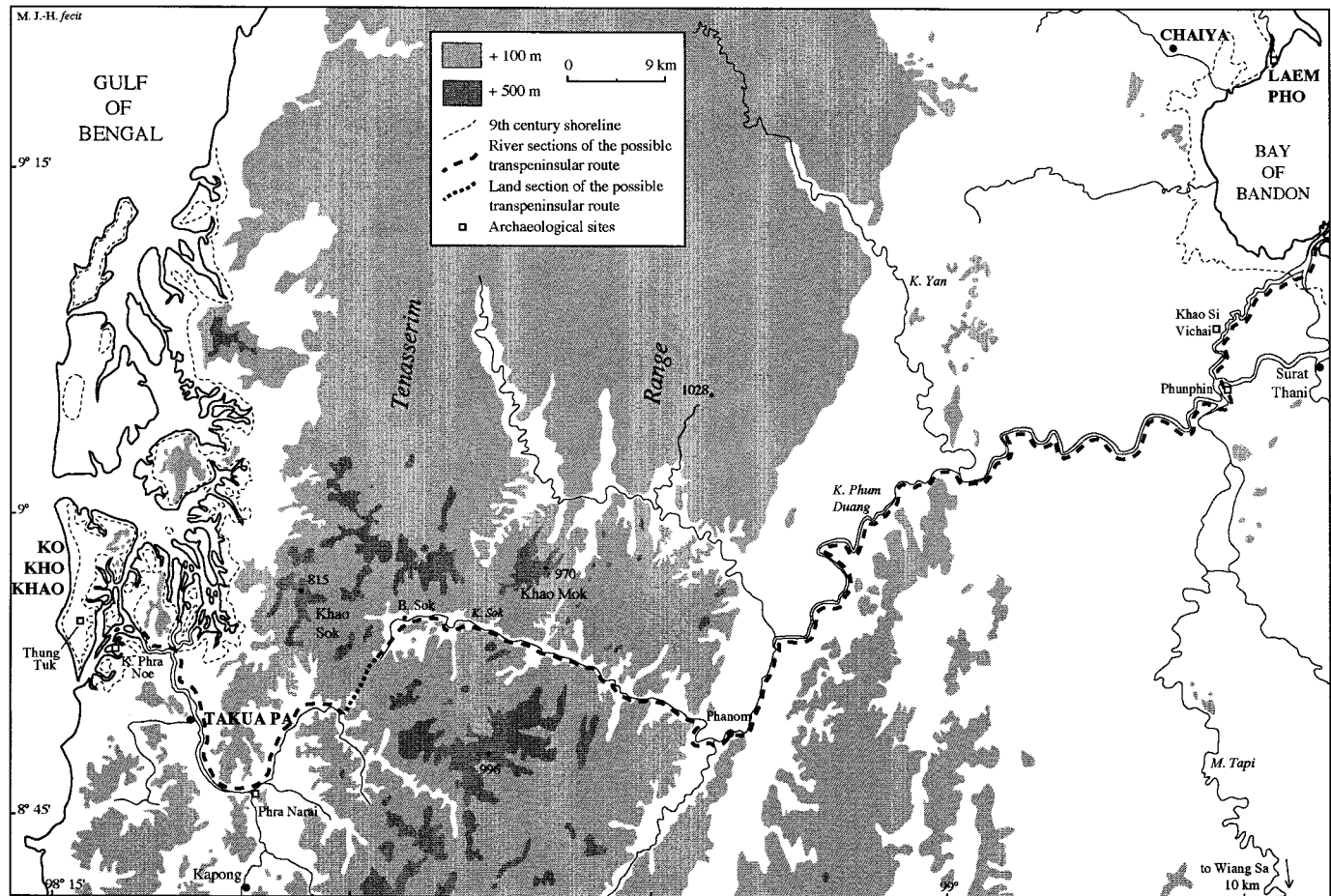
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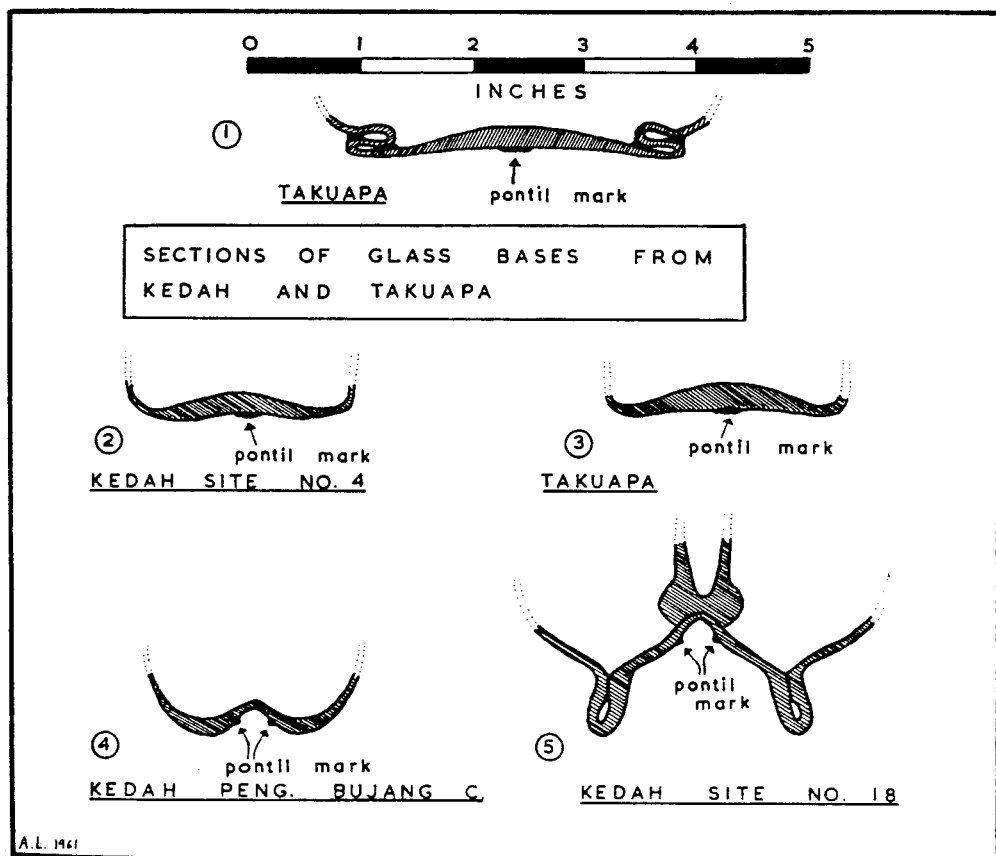
26. Trade routes in Asia during the 9th c. AD (MJH)



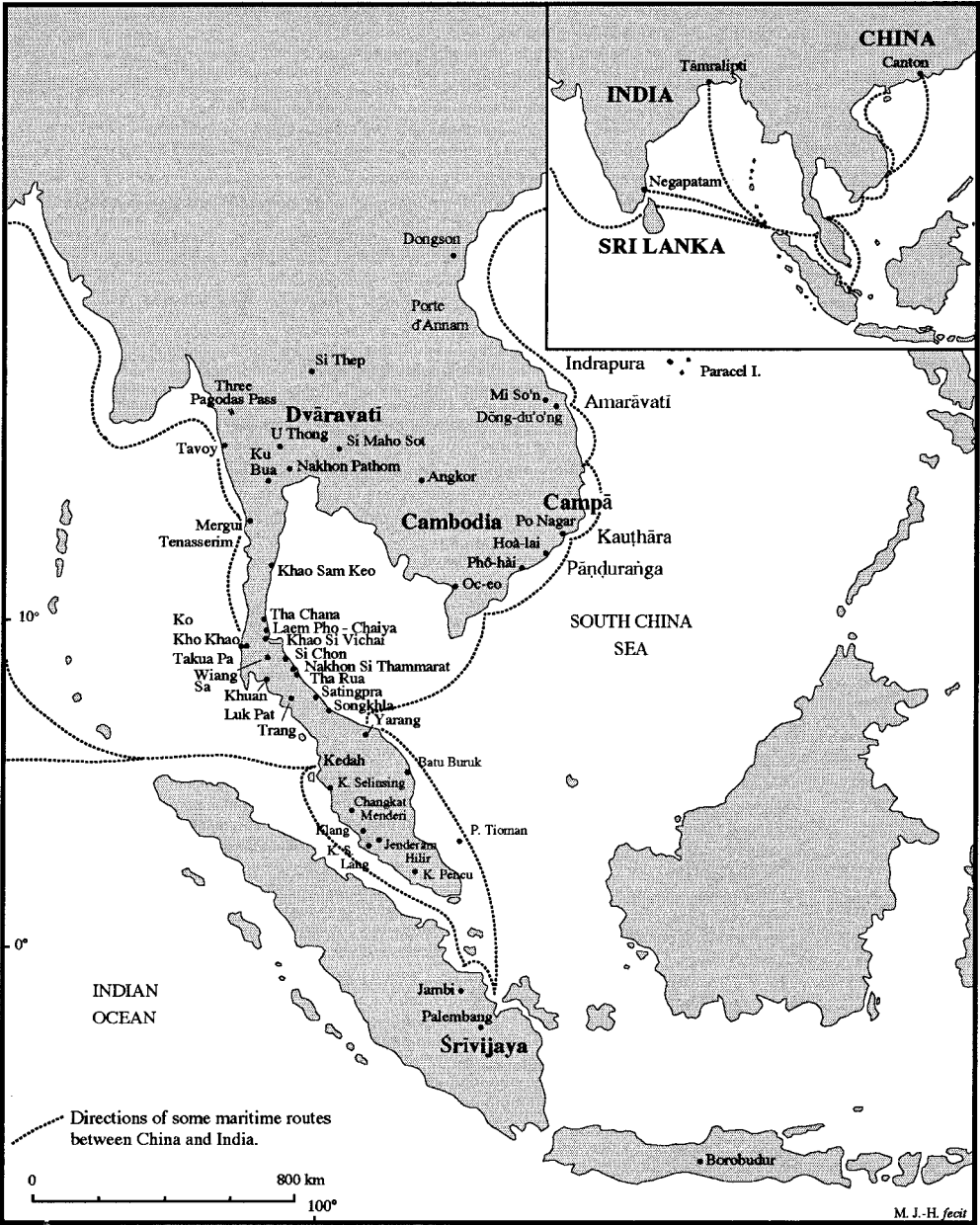
27. Archaeological sites in the vicinity of Bandon Bay (MJH)



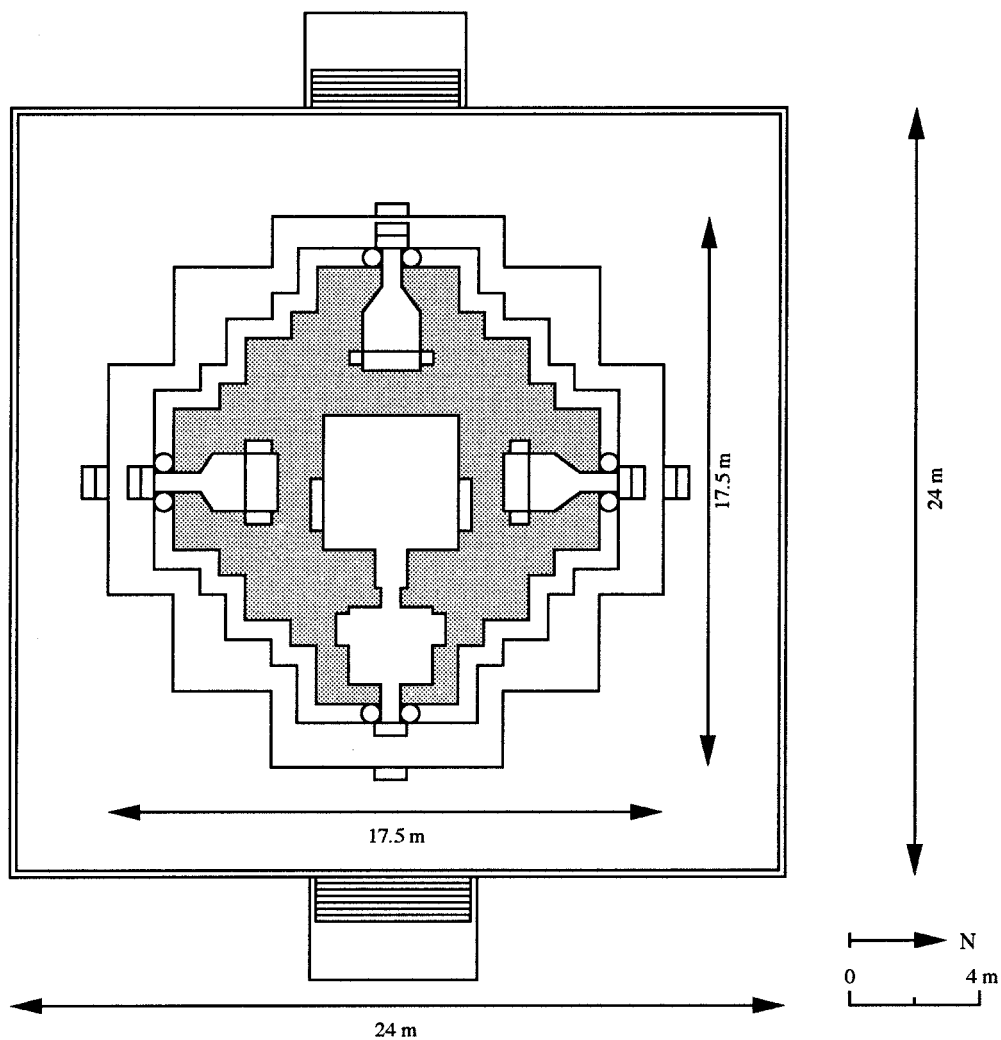
28. The southern section of the Isthmus of Kra: archaeological sites and possible transpeninsular route (MJH & Thiva Supajanya)



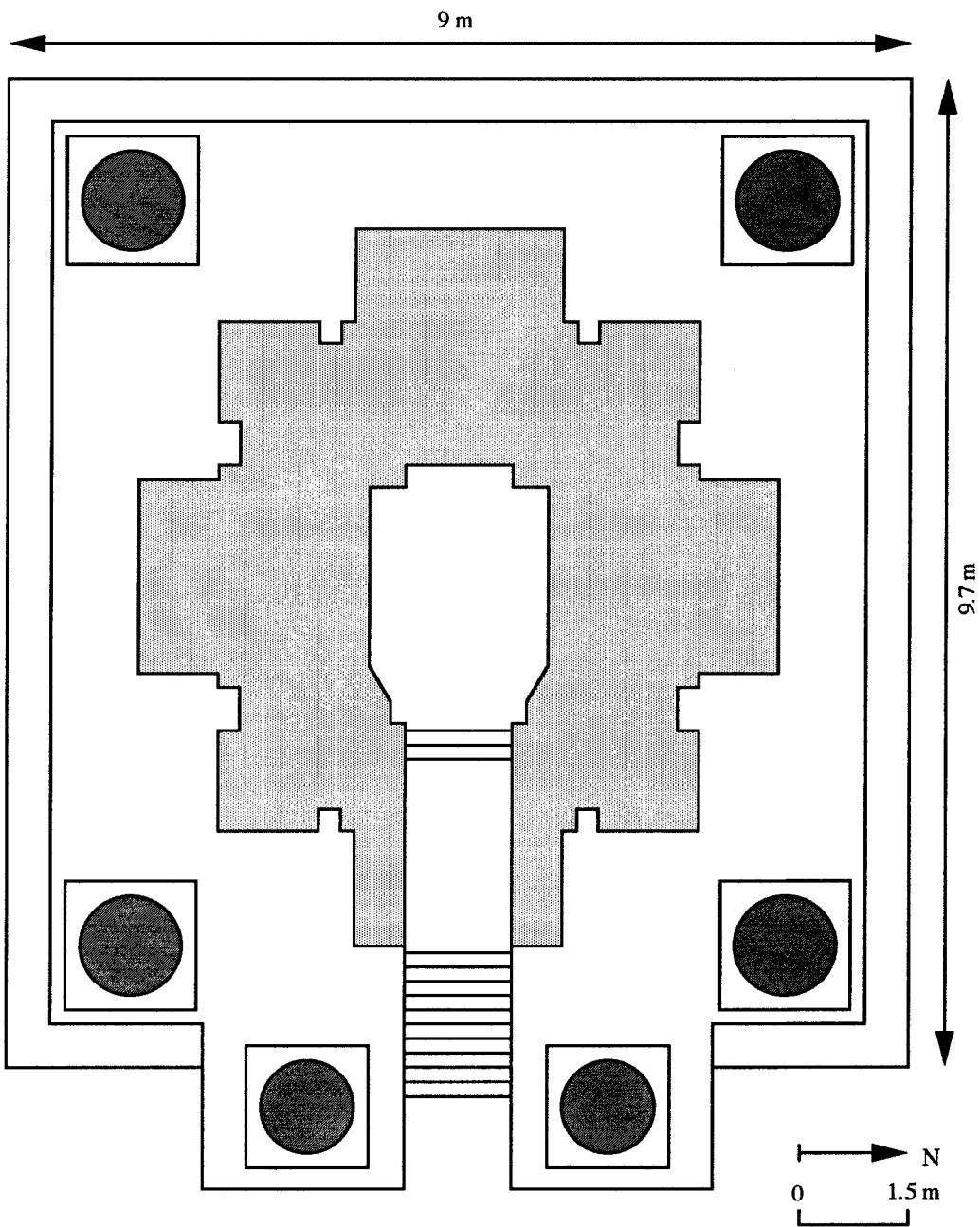
29. Section of glass bases from South Kedah and Takua Pa (Lamb 1961i: Fig. 21)



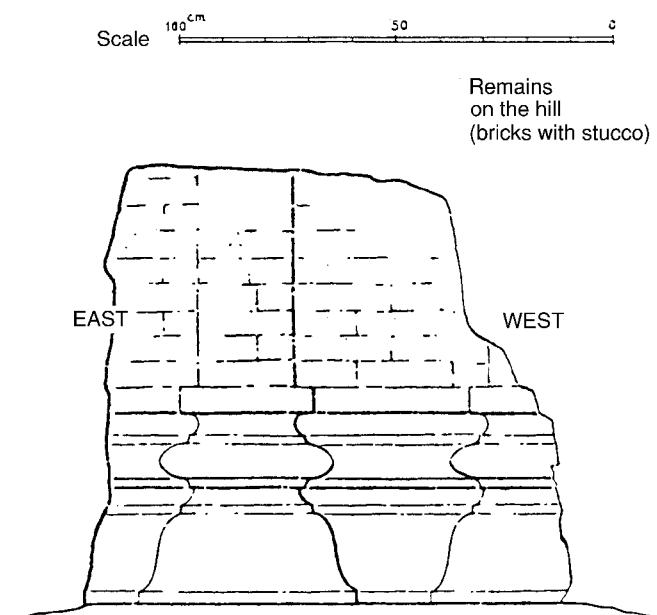
30. Archaeological sites in and around the Malay Peninsula. Maritime routes between China and India (MJH)



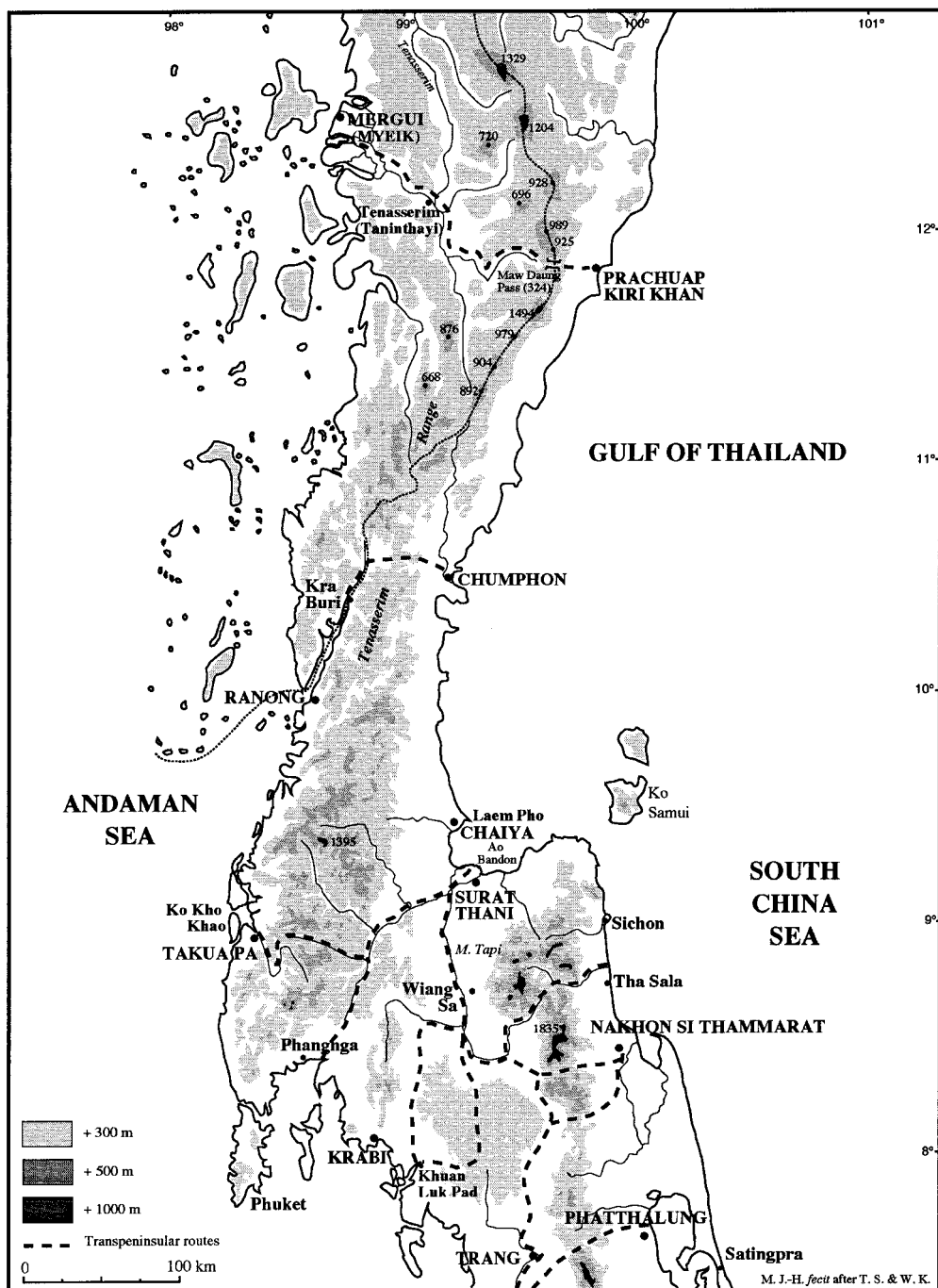
32. Plan of Wat Keo, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand (MJH)



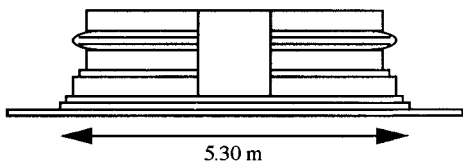
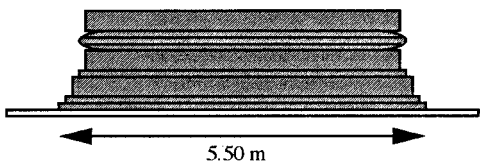
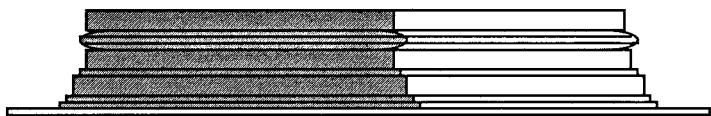
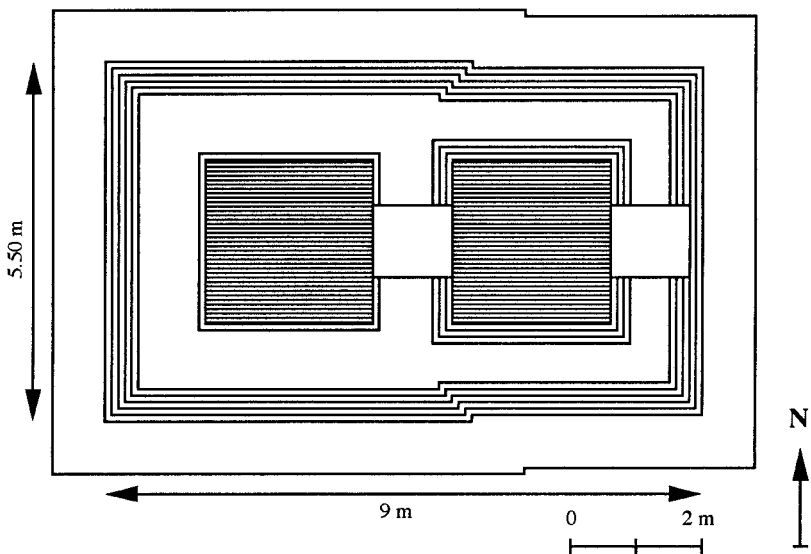
33. Plan of Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand (MJH)



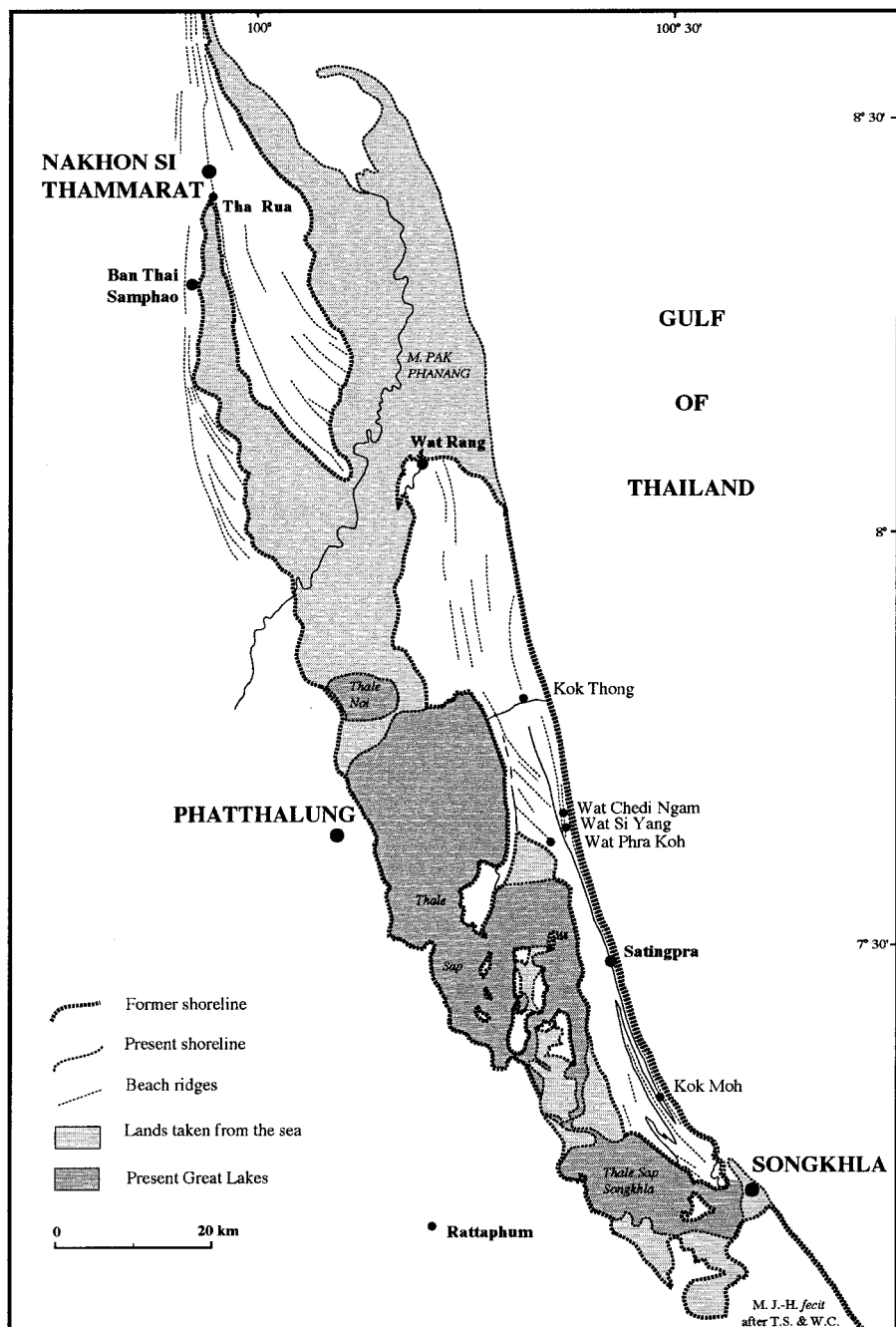
34. Drawing of a section of the ruins on Khao Nam Ron (Chaiya District, Thailand) during the twenties (Claeys 1931: Fig. 45B)



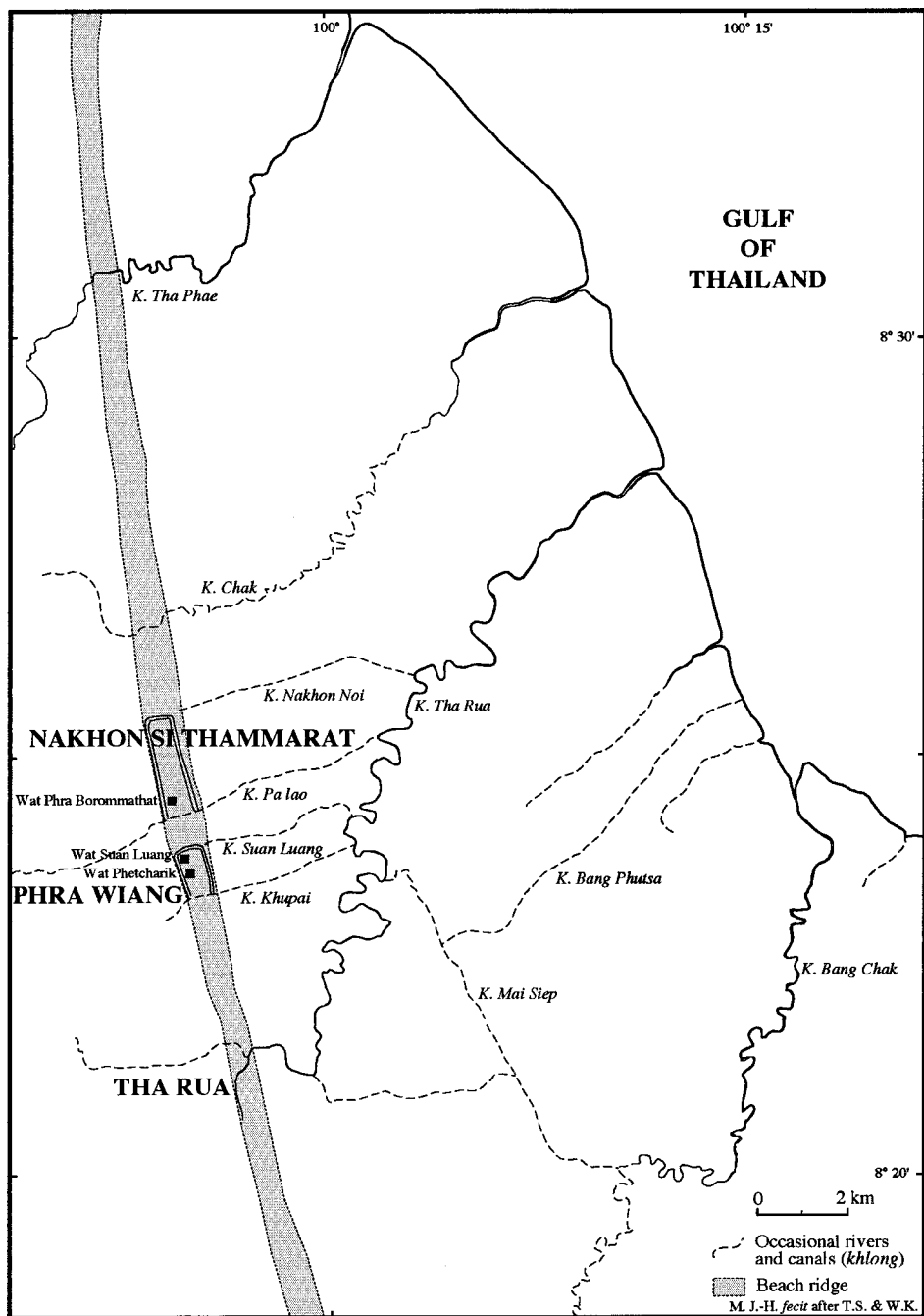
35. The northern part of the Isthmus of the Malay Peninsula (MJH)



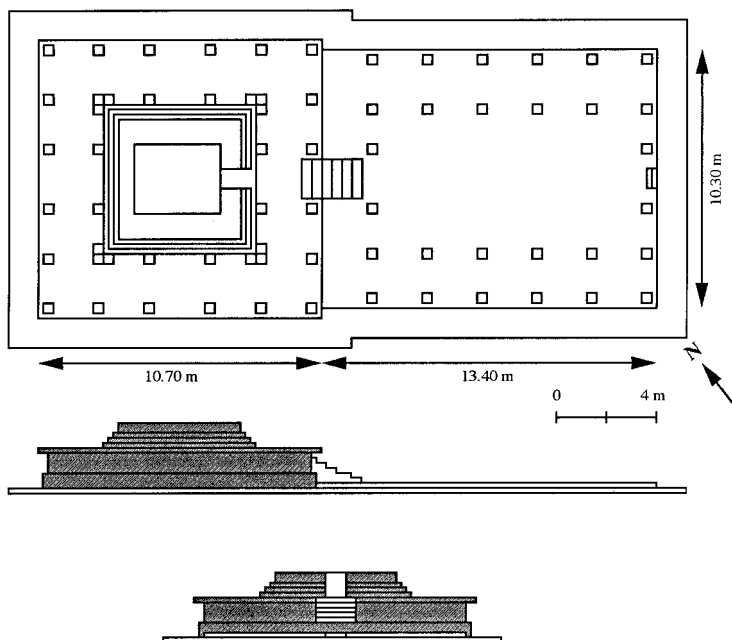
36. Plan and elevation of the S, W and E sides of the structure on site PB 2 (19w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of the Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



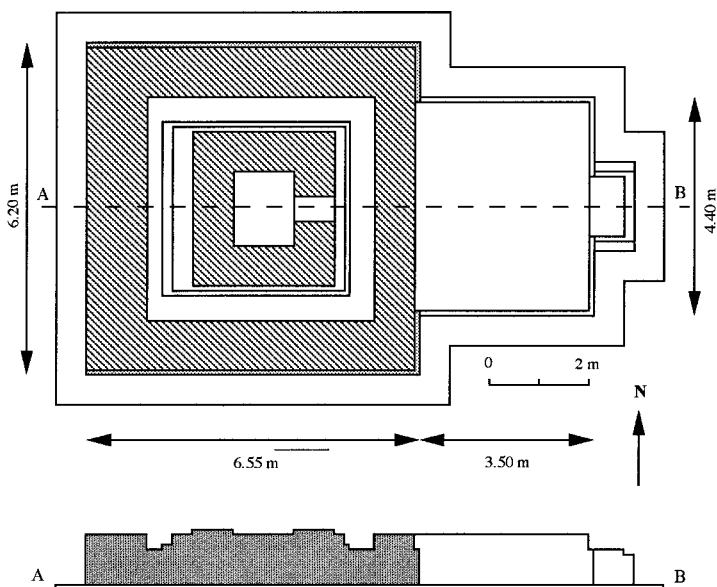
37. Topographical evolution of the E coast of the Malay Peninsula between 7° and 9° N latitude (MJH after Thiva Supajanya & Wichapan Krisanapol)



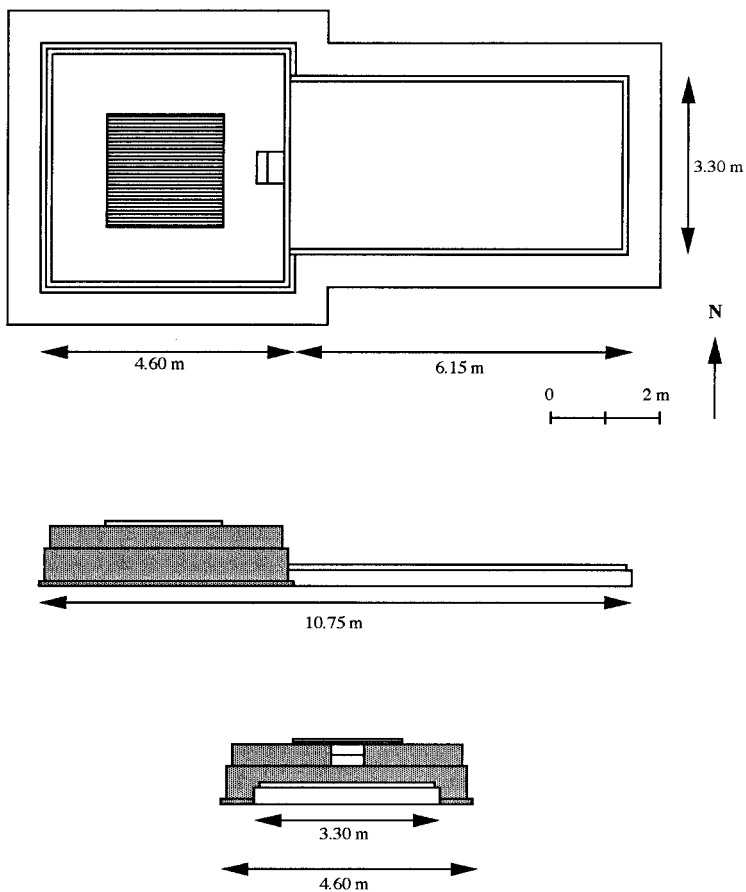
38. The topographical position of Nakhon Si Thammarat (MJH after Thiva Supajanya & Wichapan Krisanapol)



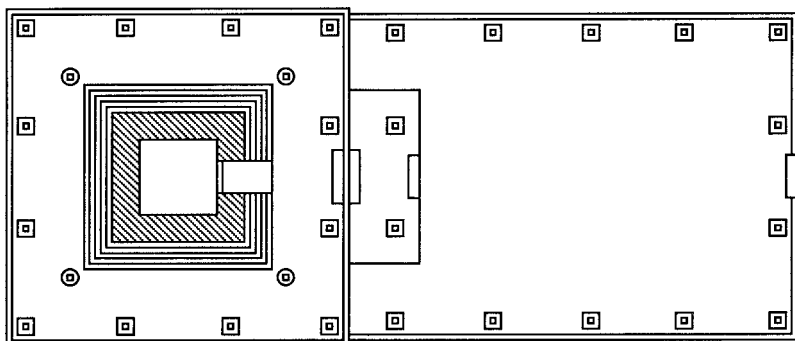
39. Plan and elevation of the S and E sides of the structure on site SMK 1 (8w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of the Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



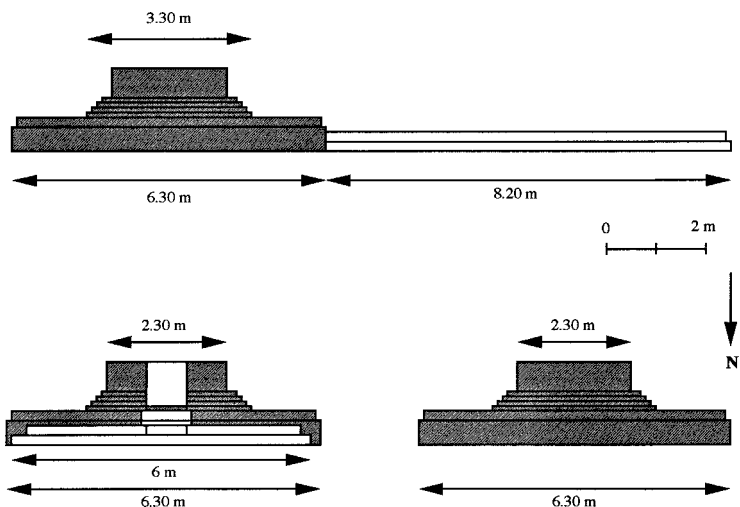
40. Plan and W-E section of the structure on site SB 4 (16w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of the Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



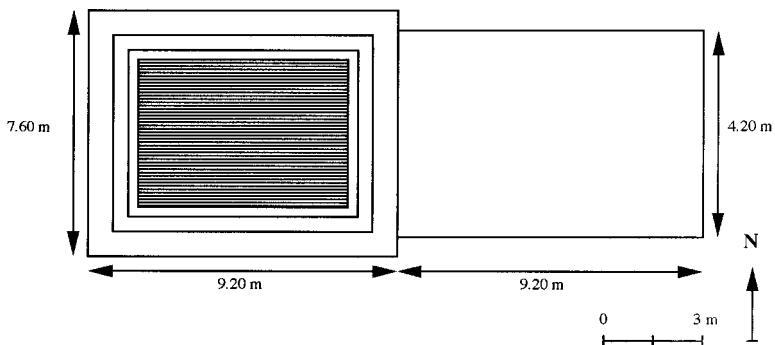
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(MJH after plans of the Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



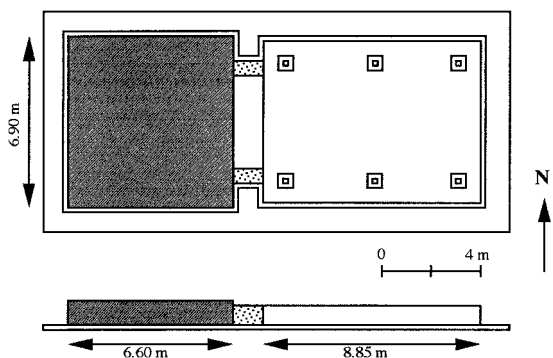
42. Plan of the structure on site SB 7 (50w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



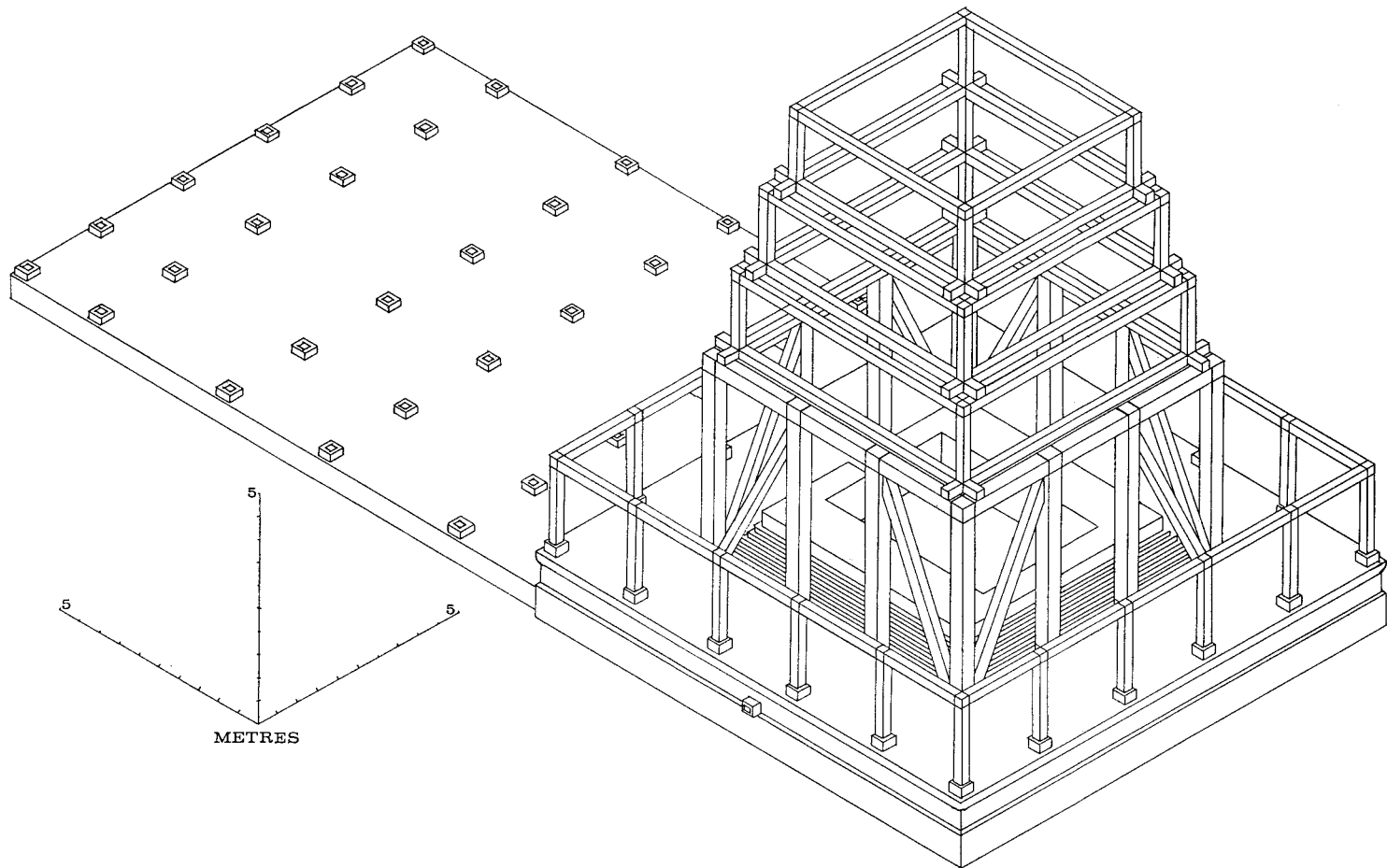
42. Elevation of S, W and E sides of the structure on site SB 7 (50w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



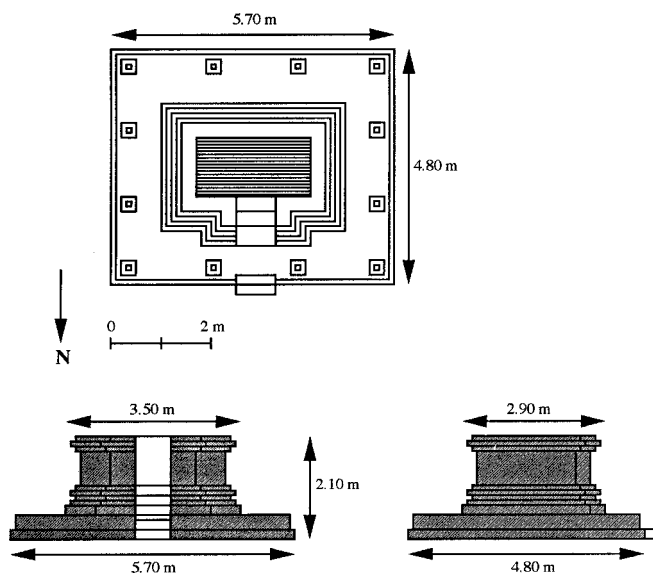
43. Plan of the structure on site SB 10 (11/3w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of the Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



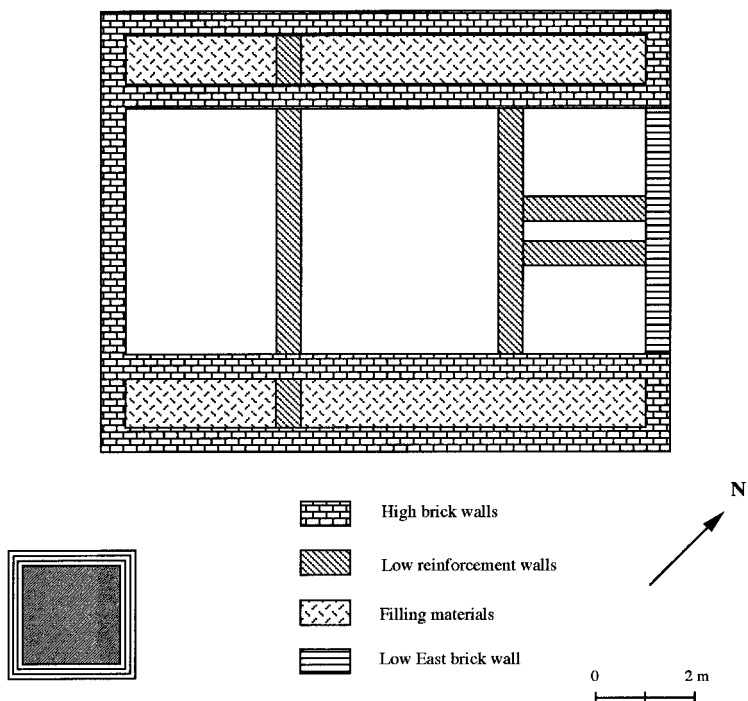
44. Plan and elevation of the S side of the structure on site SMM 7 (31w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of the Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



45. Isometric view of a possible arrangement of the main timbers of the roof structure erected over the sanctuary of site SMK 1 (8w), South Kedah, Malaysia (Peacock 1974: Fig. 9)



46. Structure adjoining main structure on site SB 7 (50m): plan and elevation of N and E sides, South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH after plans of the Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah)



47. Plan of the main structure on site PB 6 (23w), South Kedah, Malaysia (MJH)

ILLUSTRATIONS

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1. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Wat Sala Tung, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. ca. 400 AD. Stone. H. 67 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



2. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Nakhon Si Thammarat, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. 5th c. AD. Stone. H. 78 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



3. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Wat Phra-pheng, Ban Na San, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 5th c. AD. Stone. H. 65 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.



4. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Ban Phang Kam. Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Late 5th c. AD. Stone. H. 42 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



5. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Sala Lak Muang, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Early 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 75 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



6. Viṣṇu. Discovered in Wiang Sa District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. First half of the 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 148 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



7. Viṣṇu. Discovered in Wiang Sa District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. First half of the 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 131 cm. Bangkok National museum. Ph. MJH.



8. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Khao Si Vichai, Phunphin, District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. First half of the 6th c. AD. Stone, H. ? Location unknown today. Ph. A.B. Griswold in O'Connor 1972 : Fig. 25.

9. Pedestals of Viṣṇu statues. Discovered at Na San, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. First half of the 6th c. AD. Stone. 45 x 21.5 cm & 28 x 12 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.





10. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Khao Si Vichai, Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 6th-early 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 170 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



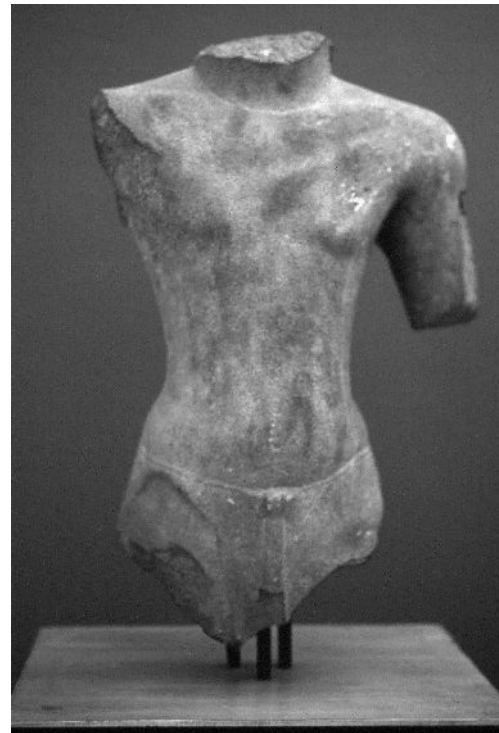
11. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Khao Si Vichai, Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 6th-early 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 43 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



12. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Wat Chom Thong, Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 58 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



13. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Wat Phra Narai, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 68.5 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



14. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Wat Phra Narai, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 52 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



15. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Tambon Sao Pao, Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 37 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



16. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Khao Si Vichai, Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. ? Location unknown today. Ph. A.B. Griswold in O'Connor 1972 : Fig. 24a.



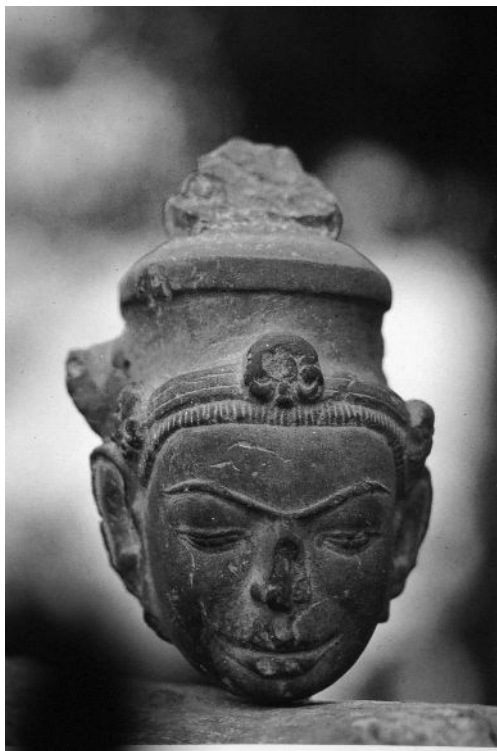
17. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Wat Khun Chang, Tambon Phang Yang, Ranot District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 61.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



18. Viṣṇu. Discovered on Khao Phra Noe, Takua Pa District, Phangnga Province, Thailand. 7th-8th c. AD. Stone. H. 202 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



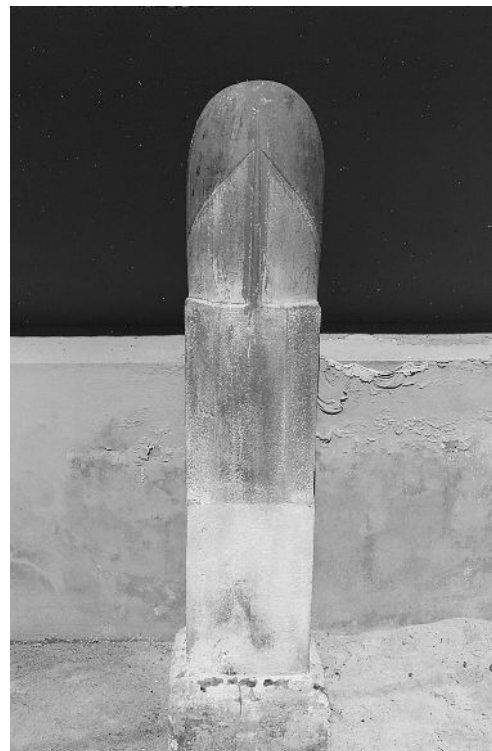
19. Viṣṇu. Unknown provenance. 8th c. AD. H. 39 cm. Collection of H.R.H. Prince Bhanubandha Yūgala, Bangkok. Ph. in Boisselier 1974: Fig. 66.



20. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Wat Phra Phikanet, Tha Chana District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 7th-early 8th c. AD. Stone. H. 15.3 cm. Private collection. Ph. FAD.



21. *liṅga*. From the Ho Phra Isuan, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 58 cm, section of the base: 18x18 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat Museum. Ph. MJH.



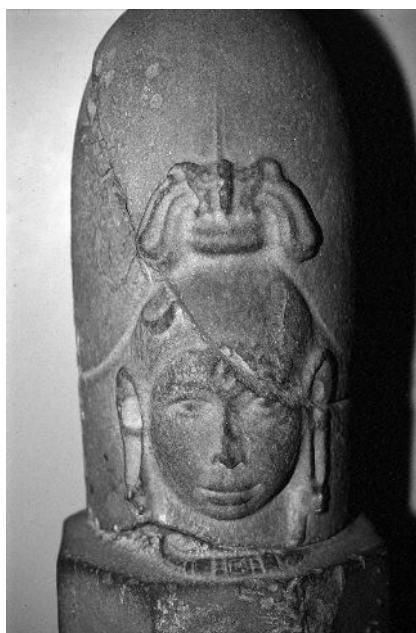
22. *liṅga*. Discovered at Sichon, Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 147 cm, section of the base: 32x32 cm. Wat Nantaram, Pak Phanang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. Ph. MJH.



23. *linga*. Discovered at Ko Chantare (Muslim Chapel), Tambon Tha Rua, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th-8th c. AD. Stone, H. 20.5 & 19 cm, section of the base: 13x13 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat Museum. Ph. MJH.



24. *linga* and abluions basin. From the Ho Phra Isuan, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th-8th c. AD. Stone, 40x40 cm, H. of the *linga*: 16 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat Museum. Ph. MJH.



25. *ekamukhalinga* (detail of the final part). Discovered at Nongwai Station, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 142 cm. Bangkok National Museum. PH. MJH.



26. Ablutions basin. Discovered at Wat Chuntaram, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. 78x79x14 cm, section of the mortise: 10x10 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat Museum. Ph. MJH.



27. Ablutions basin and *linga*. *In situ* in a Śivaite place of worship, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. D. 125 cm, D. of the octagonal mortise: 43 cm. Ph. MJH.



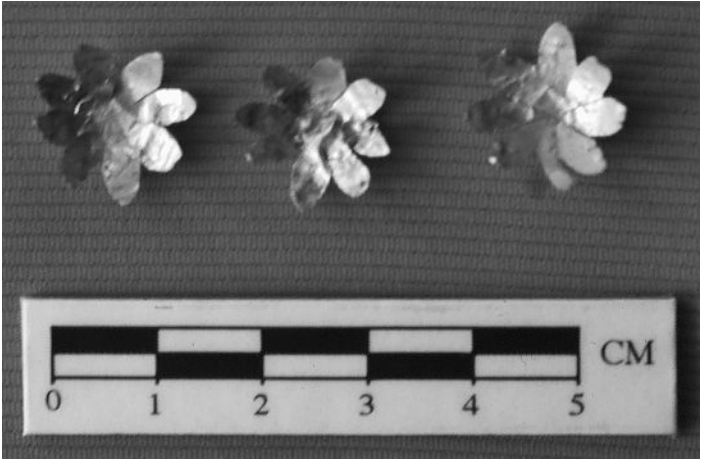
28. Pedestal. Discovered at Khao Ka, Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 73 cm, section of the base: 114x114 cm, of the mortise: 15x15 cm. Ph. MJH.



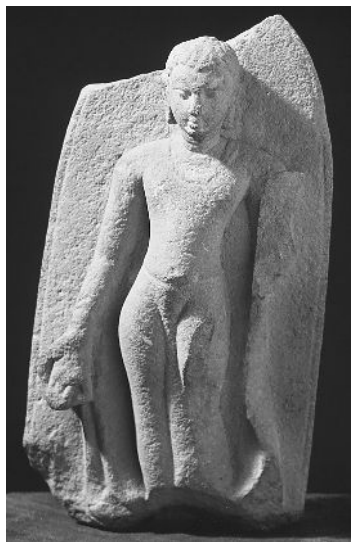
29. Ganeśa. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 35 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. MJH.



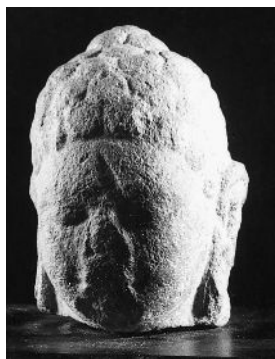
30. Threshold and doorframes. *In situ* at Suan Nai Khan, vicinity of Ban Tha Khwai, Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th-8th c. AD (?). Stone. 113x64x10 cm for the threshold, 171x42x10 cm for the doorframes. Ph. MJH.



31. Pieces from a temple deposit. Discovered at Suan Por Iad, vicinity of Ban Tha Khwai, Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th-8th c. AD. Gold and silver. Private collection. Ph. MJH.



32. Buddha. Discovered in the vicinity of Wat Wiang Sa, Wiang Sa District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 5th-early 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 16.5 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



34. Head from an image of the Buddha. Discovered in Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 5th c. AD. Stone. H. 8.9 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. FAD.



33. Votive tablet. Discovered in Tham Khao Khanab Nam, Muang District, Krabi Province, Thailand. Late 5th-early 6th c. AD. Unbaked clay. H. 14 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. MJH.



35. Buddha. Unknown provenance. 5th c. AD. Stone. H. 60 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



36. Head and torso from an image of the Buddha. Discovered at Khuan Saranrom, Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 6th-7th c. AD. Bronze. H. 10.5 cm. Somdet Phra Narai National Museum, Lopburi. Ph. MJH.



37. Buddha. Discovered at Wat Chom Thong, Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Bronze. H. 20.3 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



38. Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 104 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



39. Buddha. Discovered at Phang Fab, Ban Satingpra, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 21 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



40. Buddha. Discovered at Wat Hua Yan, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Early 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 105.5 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



41. Buddha. Discovered at Wat Keo, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Middle of the 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 139 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



42. Buddha. Discovered at Wat Wiang, Chaiya, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Middle of the 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 70 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



43. Buddha. Discovered at Wat Yai, Ban Ko, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 8th c. AD. Stone. H. 86 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.



44. Buddha. Discovered at Ban Tha Uthae, Kanchanadit District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 8th c. AD. Stone. H. 35 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



45. Buddha. Discovered in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. 8th c. AD. Stone. H. 102 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.



46. Head from an image of the Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Phrom, Tha Chang District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Early 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 32 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



47. Fragment of a Wheel of the Law. Discovered at Tambon Tung, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 27 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



48. Fragment of a Wheel of the Law. Discovered in Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Baked clay. H. 19 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



49. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Wat Sala Tung, Chaiya, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 114 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



50. Avalokiteśvara (head of the previous statue).



51. *bodhisattva*. Discovered at Sārnāth, Uttar Pradesh, India. ca. 450-460 AD. Stone. H. 135 cm. Sārnāth Museum. Ph. MJH.



52. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Khuan Saranrom, Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Bronze. H. 21.2 cm. Somdet Phra Narai National Museum, Lopburi. Ph. MJH.



53. *bodhisattva*. Discovered in the Kṛṣṇa Delta, Andhra Pradesh, India. 6th c. AD. Bronze. H. 13.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.



54. Head of a *bodhisattva*. Discovered at Khao Nam Ron, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 19 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.



55. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 6th-early 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 55 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. FAD.



56. Avalokiteśvara. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Stone. H. 100 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



57. Avalokiteśvara (?). discovered at Khao Si Vichai, Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD (?). Stone. H. (?). Location unknown today. Ph. A.B. Griswold in O'Connor 1972: Fig. 26a.



58. Votive tablet. Discovered in Tham Khuha Sawan, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. Late 6th-7th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 7 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat Museum. Ph. MJH.



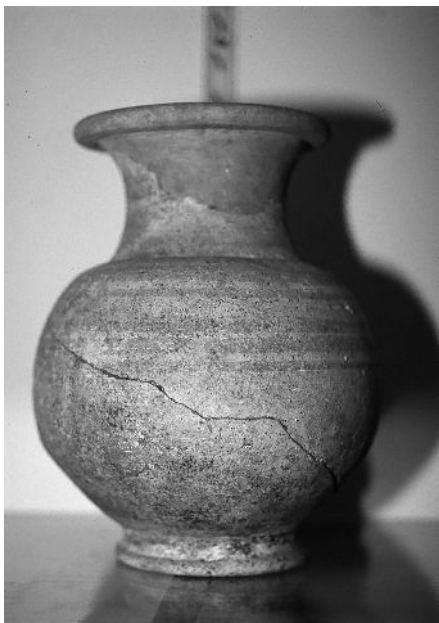
59. Votive tablet. Discovered at Wat Rang, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 9.2 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.



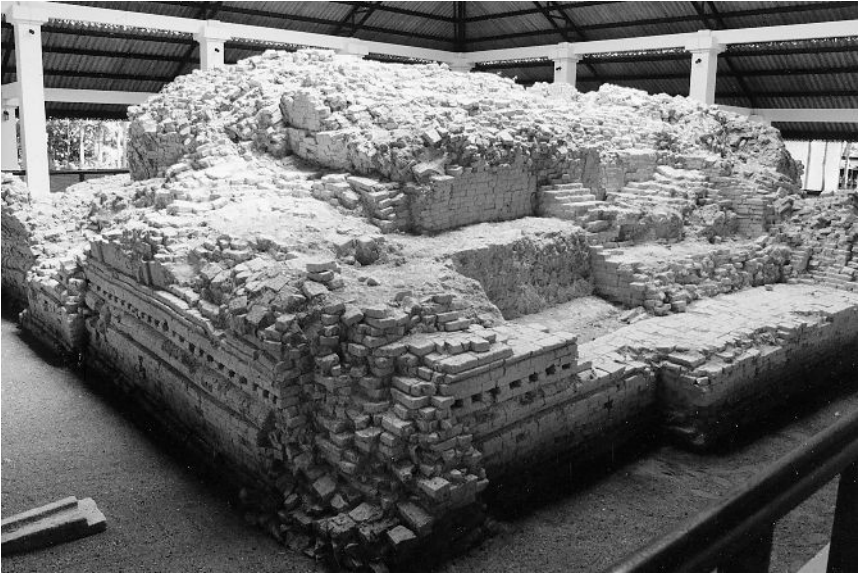
60. Votive tablet. Discovered in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 13 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



61. Votive *stūpa*. Discovered at Khuan Saranrom, Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD (?). Fired clay. Thalang National Museum, Phuket. Ph. MJH.



62. Flared-mouth jar. Excavated at Ban Monthon, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Red-painted earthenware. H. 23.5 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



63. BJ 3 sanctuary at Yarang after excavation, from the S-E. Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. Founded during the 6th c. AD. Bricks with some stones. Ph. MJH.



64. BJ 8 sanctuary at Yarang after excavation: NE corner of the central part (sanctuary itself) with a circular stone pillar base; ruins of the N side parapet of the terrace, on the right. Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. Founded during the 6th-7th c. AD. Bricks with some stones. Ph. MJH.



65. *kudu* fragment from Yarang archaeological site (BW 20 ?). Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD (?). Stucco. H. 18 cm. Museum of Centre for Southern Thailand Studies, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani. Ph. MJH.



66. *Cella* of BJ 3 sanctuary during excavation. Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. Ph. Courtesy of the Yarang Conservation.



67. Votive *stupa* with an inscription on the base. Discovered in BJ 3 sanctuary. Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 12 cm. Yarang Conservation. Ph. MJH.



69. Votive *stūpa*. Discovered in BJ 3 sanctuary. Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. Late 7th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 17 cm. Yarang Conservation. Ph. MJH.



68. Votive *stūpa*. Discovered in BJ 3 sanctuary. Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. 7th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 36 cm. Yarang Conservation. Ph. MJH.



71. Votive tablet. Discovered in BJ 3 sanctuary. Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Fired clay. 4.5 x 3 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Yarang Conservation.



70. Part of the decoration of the *jaṅghāvedī* of a votive *stūpa*. Discovered in BJ 3 sanctuary. Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province Thailand. Late 7th-8th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 11.5 cm. Yarang Conservation. Ph. MJH.



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72. Votive tablet. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. Late 6th-7th c. AD. Fired clay. 9 x 5.5 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum. Ph. MJH.

73. Votive tablet. Discovered in BJ 3 sanctuary, Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. 7th-8th c. AD. Sun dried clay or slightly fired. 11 x 7.5 cm. Yarang Conservation. Ph. MJH.



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74. Buddha. Discovered in the vicinity of Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. 8th c. AD. Stone. H. 60 cm. Wat Taninarasamosan, Pattani. Ph. Q. Wales 1974: Fig. 5.

75. Buddha. Discovered at Sungai Kolok, Sungai Kolok District, Narathiwat Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Bronze. H. 55.5 cm. Collection of H.R.H. Prince Bhanubandhu Yugala, Bangkok. Ph. Griswold 1966: Fig. 5.

76. Buddha. Discovered in Muang District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 7th c. AD. Bronze. H. 46 cm. Collection of H.R.H. Prince Bhanubandhu Yugala. Ph. Wattanavrangkul 1975: Fig. 36.



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77. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered on BJ 3 site, Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. Late 7th-8th c. AD. Bronze. H. 10 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of Yarang Conservation.

78. Head of a statue of Avalokiteśvara. Discovered on BJ 8 site, Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province. 7th-8th c. AD. Bronze. H. 15 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



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79. Maitreya. Discovered at Ban Lan Kwai, Yaring, Yaring District, Pattani Province, Thailand. 7th-8th c. AD. Bronze. H. 16.2 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Somchai Vorasat.

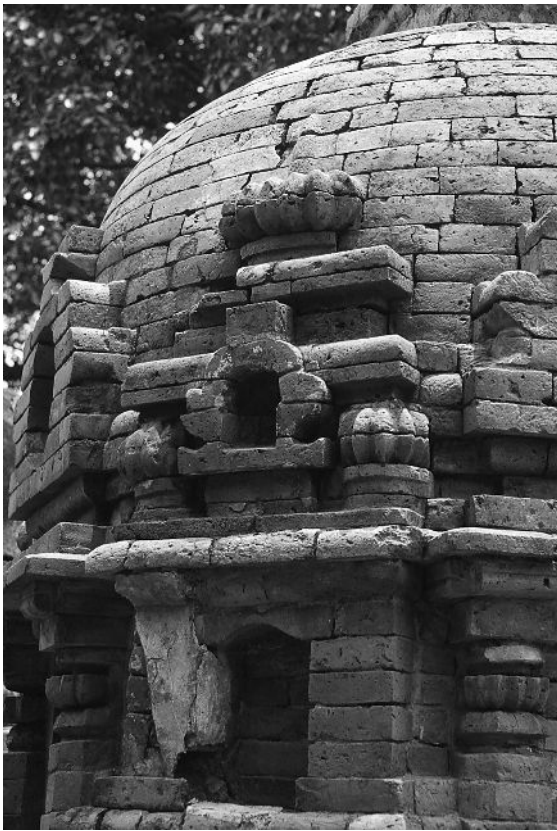
80. Buddha. Discovered at Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 8th c. AD. Bronze. H. 29.5 cm. Collection of Wat Khuhaphimuk. Ph. FAD.



81. Wheel of the Law. Discovered at Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. 7th-8th c. AD. Stone. H. 33 cm, D. 20 cm. Museum of Centre for Southern Thailand Studies, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani. Ph. MJH.



82. *linga*. Discovered at Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. 6th c. AD. Stone. H. 44 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



83. Top part of a votive *stūpa*. Nālandā, West part of site n° 3, Bihar, India. Post-Gupta Period. Bricks. Ph. MJH.



84. Votive *stūpa*. Vaiśālī, near Aśoka's column, Bihar, India. Post-Gupta Period. Bricks. Ph. MJH.



85. Votive sanctuary. Sārnāth, some 30 m to the N-O of Dhamekh *stūpa*, Uttar Pradesh, India. Post-Gupta Period. Bricks with some stones. Ph. MJH.



86. Sassanid coin. Discovered in Yarang, Yarang District, Pattani Province, Thailand. Peroz I's reign (457-483) (?). Silver. Private collection. Ph. MJH.



87. Excavation of site PB 4 (21w), W face. South Kedah, Malaysia. Founded during the 9th c. AD (?). Bricks. Ph. Courtesy of the Muzium Negara, Kuala Lumpur.



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88. Mahānāvika Buddhagupta inscription. Discovered in South Kedah, Malaysia. 5th c. AD. Stone. H. 66 cm. Indian Museum, Calcutta. Ph. MJH.

89. Kampong Sungai Mas inscription. Discovered at Kampong Sungai Mas, South Kedah, Malaysia. 5th c. AD. Stone. H. 42 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.



90. Buddha. Discovered on site SB 3 (16Aw), South Kedah, Malaysia. 6th-7th c. AD. Bronze. H. 21.6 cm. Singapore National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.



91. Head of a Buddha. Discovered at Kampong Sungai Mas, South Kedah, Malaysia. 7th-8th c. AD. Stone. H. 30.5 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.



92. Cover of a reliquary. Discovered in the Sungai Bujang near site SB13 (4w), South Kedah, Malaysia. 7th c. AD. Bronze. H. 6.7 cm. Singapore National Museum. Ph. courtesy of the Museum.



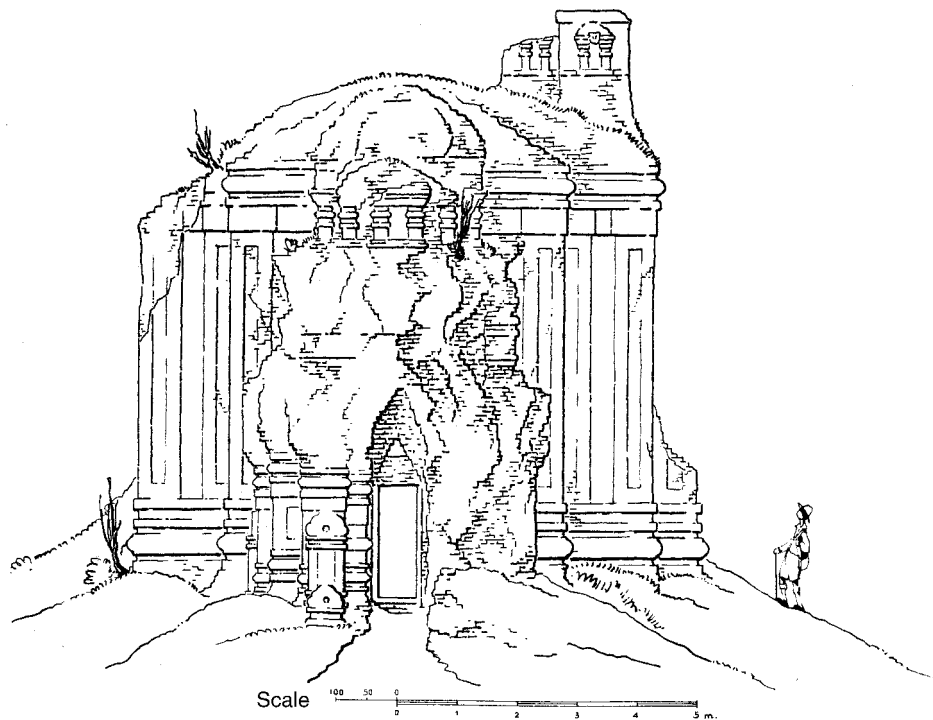
93. Buddha. Discovered at Pengkalan near Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia. Early 6th c. AD. Bronze. H. 46 cm. Disappeared. Ph. in Evans 1932a: Pl. XLII.



94. Presentation bowl. Discovered in Malaysia (?). 7th-8th c. AD. Bronze. H. 20.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Roger Fund, 1975 (1975.419). Ph. of the Museum.



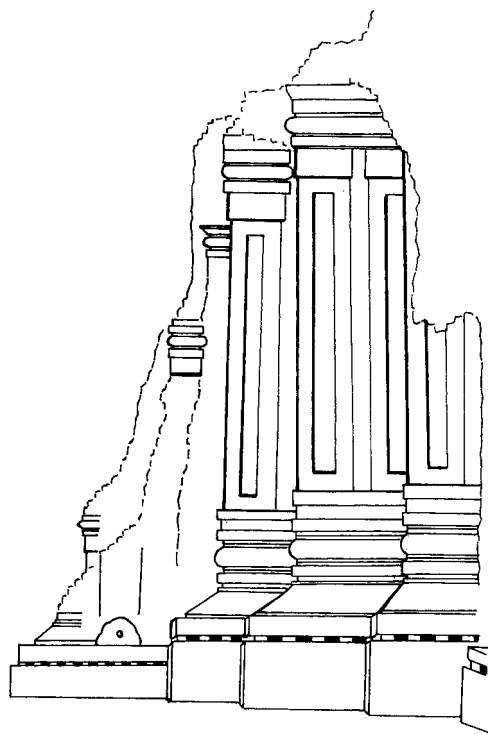
95. Wat Keo: south-east corner. Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bricks with some stones and traces of stucco. Ph. MJH.



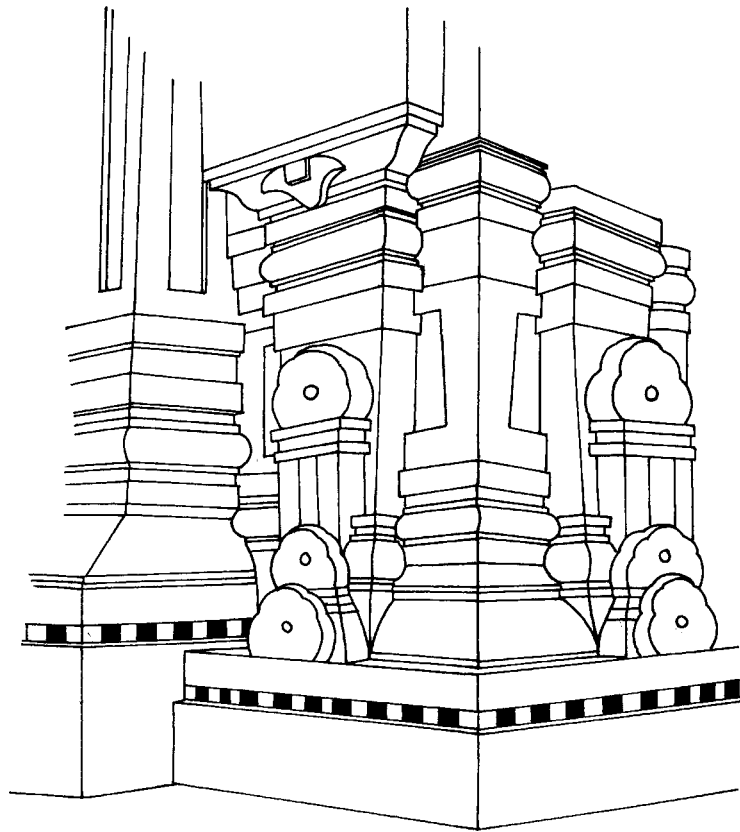
96. Wat Keo. Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. South face at the end of the twenties. Drawing by Claeys 1931: Pl. XLI.



97. Main tower at Phô-hài: south face. Near Phan Thiết, Bình Thuận Province, Vietnam. 7th-8th c. AD. Bricks. Ph. MJH.



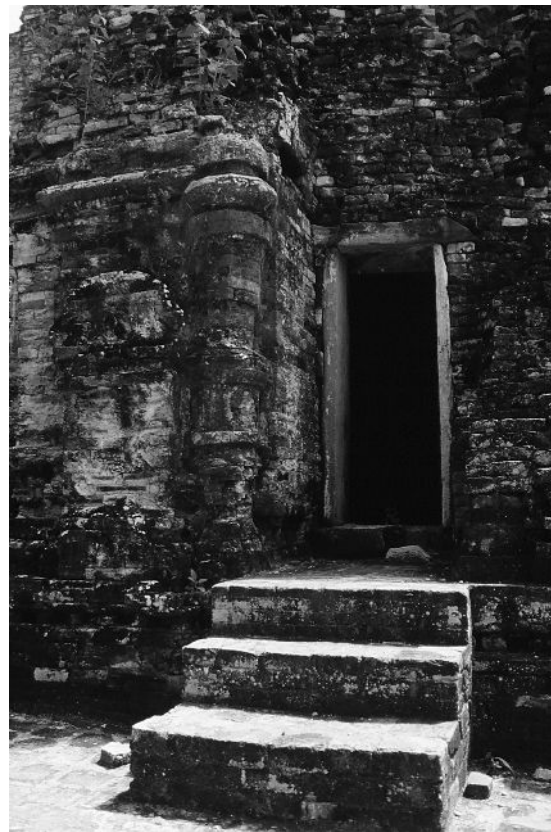
98. Wat Keo: south-east corner elevation. Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bricks with some stones and traces of stucco. Ph. & drawing MJH.



99. Wat Keo: south porch from the south-west. Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bricks with some stones and traces of stucco. Ph. & drawing MJH.



100. Main tower at Hoà-lai. Near Phan Rang, Ninh Thuan Province, Vietnam. Late 8th-first half of the 9th c. AD. Bricks. Ph. MJH.



101. Wat Keo: left part of the south porch and entrance of the south chapel. Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bricks with some stones and traces of stucco. Ph. MJH.



102. Mi So'n F1: decoration of the south false door. Mi So'n, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam. Late 8th c. AD. Bricks. Ph. MJH.



103. Wat Phra Barommatham: north-east corner. Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bricks with some stones and stucco. Ph. MJH.



104. Wat Phra Barommatham: basement, south-east corner. Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bricks with some stones and stucco. Ph. MJH.



105. Mi So'n B6: basement, west side. Mi So'n, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam. 8th-9th c. AD. Bricks. Ph. MJH.



106. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered near Wat Phra Barommathat, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 63 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



107. Avalokiteśvara (head of the previous statue).



108. Avalokiteśvara. Removed from Wat Phra Barommathat, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 76.7 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



109. Avalokiteśvara (head of the previous statue).



110. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Tekaran, Wonogiri, Central Java, Indonesia. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Silver- and gold-plated bronze. H. 98 cm. Jakarta National Museum. Ph. MJH.



111. Tārā. Discovered at Ban Hua Khu, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 18.5 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



112. *bodhisattva*. Discovered in the vicinity of Chaiya, Chaiya District, Surat Thani province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 17 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



113. *bodhisattva*. Discovered at Khuan Saranrom, Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 8 cm. Somdet Phra Narai National Museum, Lopburi. Ph. MJH.



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114. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at a unknown place in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. H. 36 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.

115. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at a unknown place in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 21.5 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Somchai Vorasat.



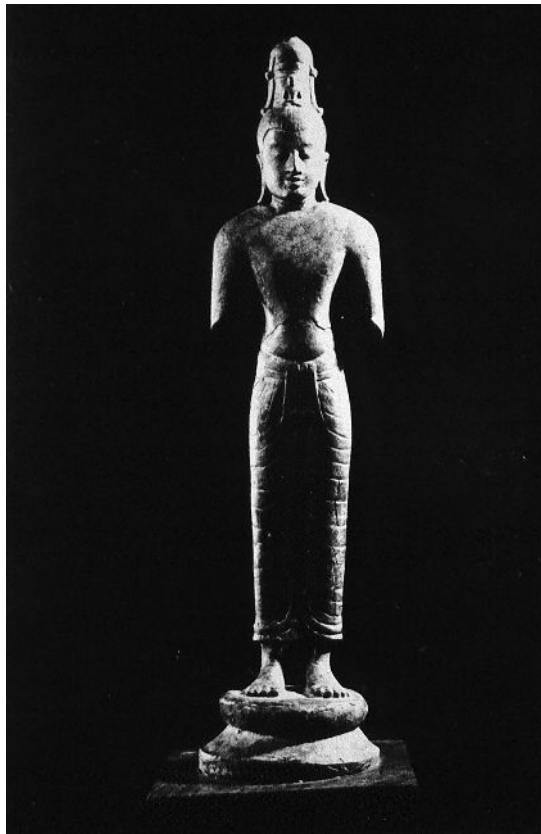
116. Cuṇḍā. Discovered at a unknown place in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 18 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Somchai Vorasat.



117. Avalokiteśvara. Possibly discovered in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 48 cm. Private collection. Ph. Wattanavrangkul 1975: Fig. 52.



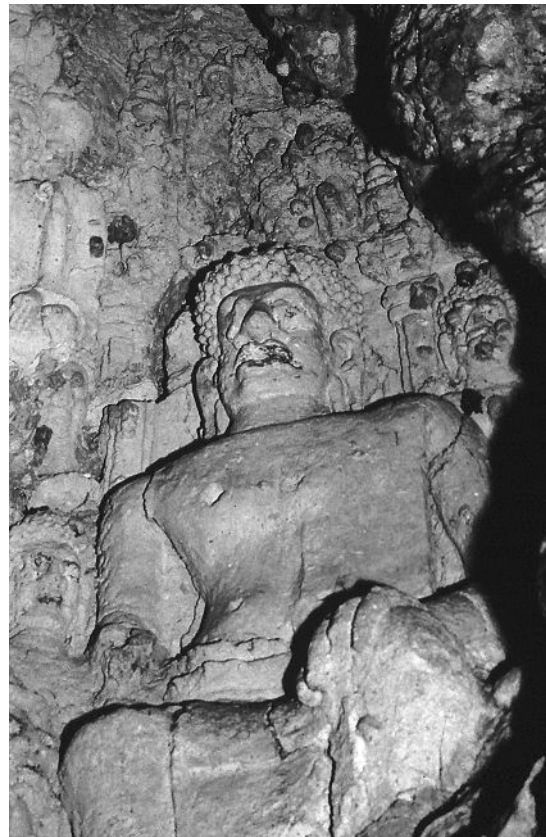
118. Avalokiteśvara. Possibly discovered in the Malay Peninsula. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 46 cm. Private collection. Ph. Wattanavrangkul 1975: Fig. 53.



119. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 28.7 cm. Kamphaeng Phet National Museum. Ph. FAD.



120. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Thuy Cam, Thua Thien-Huê, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 36 cm. Vietnam Historical Museum, Ho Chi Minh City. Ph. Boisselier 1963: Fig. 35.



121. Buddha. Tham Khuha Sawan, Kanchanadit District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Second half of the 9th c. AD. Dried clay. H. a. 100 cm. *In situ*. Ph. FAD.



122. Votive tablet. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 9 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



123. Votive tablet. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 9 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.

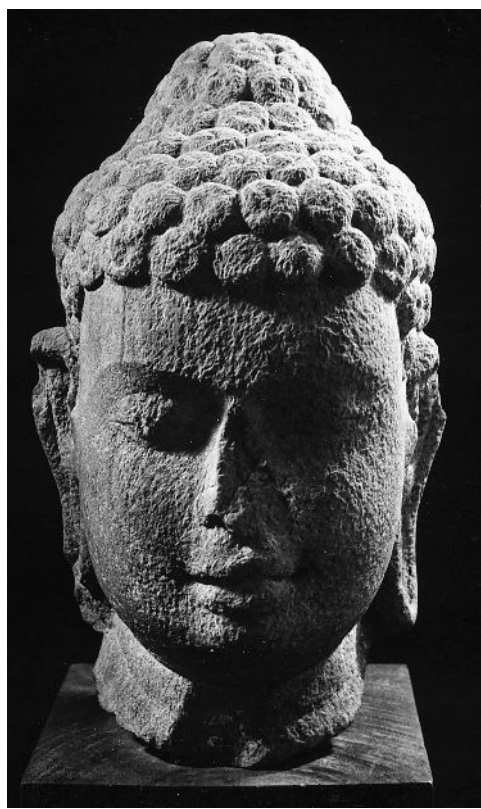


125. Votives tablets. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. D. a. 4 cm. Thalang National Museum, Phuket. Ph. MJH.

124. Votive tablet. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 10 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



126. Votive tablet. Discovered in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 11.5 cm, l. 9 cm. Somdet Phra Narai National Museum, Lopburi. Ph. MJH.



127. Head of a Buddha. Discovered at Na San, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 29 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. FAD.



128. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Na San, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Late 8th-9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 18 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



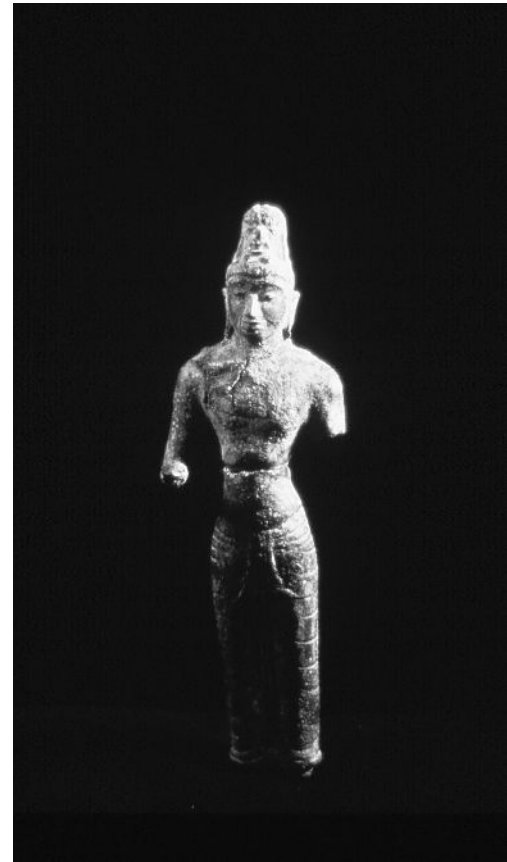
129. Avalokiteśvara (detail). Discovered at Satingpra, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 8th-9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 13.5 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. MJH.



130. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Nong Hoi, Ban Wat Khanum, Muang District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 9th-early 10th c. AD. Bronze. H. 18.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



131. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Khuan Maphrao, Muang District, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 34.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



132. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Bang Keo, Khao Chaison District, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 17 cm. Wat Phuphaphimuk Museum, Phatthalung. Ph. FAD.



133. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Ban Kradangnga, Satingpra district, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 20.3 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



134. Śyamtārā. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 12 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



135. Jambhala. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 16 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. MJH.



136. Mould for Jambhala. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 5.7 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. MJH.



137. *bodhisattva* (head and torso). Removed from Wat Chedi Ngam, Ranot District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Gilded bronze. H. 9.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



138. *bodhisattva* (head and torso). Discovered at Ban Kradangnga, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 8th-early 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 16.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



139. Buddha. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze with traces of gilding. H. 10.5 cm. Ph. MJH.



140. Gaṇeśa. Discovered at Na San, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 9th-10th c. AD. Stone. H. 40.5 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.



141. Agastya. Discovered at Phang Phra, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 22.5 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. FAD.



142. Śiva. Discovered at Nong Hoi, Ban Wat Khanum, Muang District, Songkhla province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 36 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



143. Buddha. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 27 cm. Collection of Wat Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala. Ph. FAD.



144. Votive *stūpa*. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 16 cm. Collection of Wat Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala. Ph. FAD.



145. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered near Betong, Betong District, Yala province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 22 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.



146. Votive tablet. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 6 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.



147. Votive tablet. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 7.6 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.



148. Votive tablets. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. D. 3.7 to 4.5 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.



149. Votive tablet. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala province. 9th c. AD. Fired clay. D. 9 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.



150. Votive *stūpa*. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Slightly baked clay. D. 6 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.



151. Viṣṇu. Discovered near Khao Phra Narai, Takua Pa District, Phangnga Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 235 cm. Thalang National Museum, Phuket. Ph. MJH.



152. Head of the previous statue. Ph. MJH.



153. *ṛṣi* Mārkaṇḍeya. Discovered near Khao Phra Narai, Takua Pa district, Phangnga Province, Thailand. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 112 cm. Thalang National Museum, Phuket. Ph. MJH.



154. Head of the previous statue. Ph. FAD.



155. Viṣṇu. Cave XI (Trimūrti Cave), Mahābalipuram, Tamiḷnāḍu, India. 7th c. AD. Stone. *In situ*. Ph. MJH.



156. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Tirrukaravayil, Tamilnāḍu, India. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 175 cm. Art Gallery, Tañjāvūr, India. Ph. MJH.



157. Viṣṇu. Discovered at Kottur, Tamilnāḍu, India. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 189 cm. Art Gallery, Tañjāvūr, India. Ph. MJH.



158. Votive tablet. Discovered in Gua Berhala, Kelantan, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Fired clay with blue pigments. H. 9 cm. Muzium Negara, Kuala Lumpur. Ph. MJH by courtesy of the Muzium.



159. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered on sites PB 4/5 (21/22w), South Kedah, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Fired clay, H. 4.5 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.



160. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Bidor, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 79 cm. Muzium Negara, Kuala Lumpur. Ph. Courtesy of the Muzium.



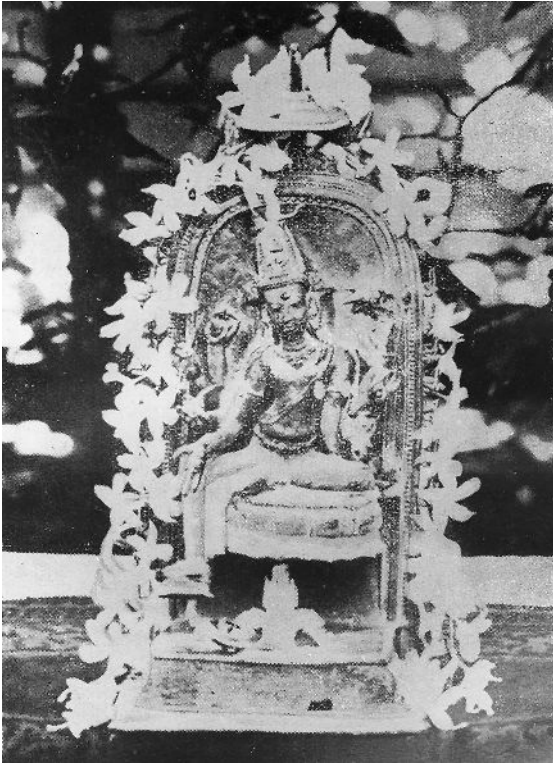
161. Head of the previous statue. Ph. MJH by courtesy of the Muzium.



162. Throne of a sacred image. Discovered at Pengkalan, near Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 21 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.



163. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Sungai Siput Utara, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 28 cm. Location unknown today. Ph. after Wales 1940: Pl. 80.



164. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Sungai Siput Utara, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. H. ? Location unknown today. Ph. after Wales 1940: Pl. 81.



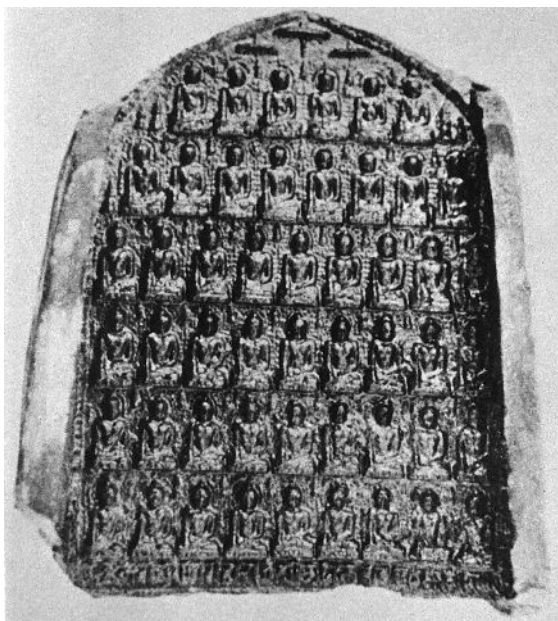
165. Votive *stūpa*. Discovered in Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Stone. H. 16 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.

166. Agastya. Discovered at Jalong, Perak, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 52.5 cm. Muzium Negara, Kuala Lumpur. Ph. Courtesy of the Muzium.

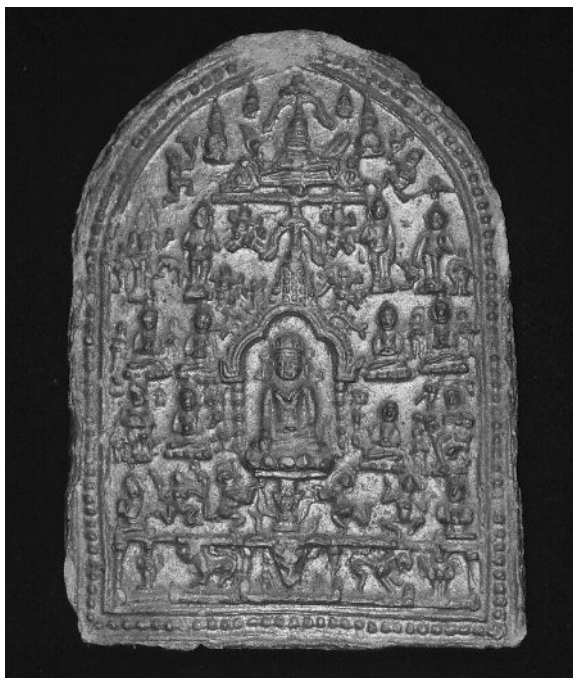


167. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered in the sea near Pulau Ketam, near Klang, Selangor, Malaysia. 9th c. AD. Bronze. H. 140 cm. Private collection. Ph. after Haji Taha 1987: Pl. 4.





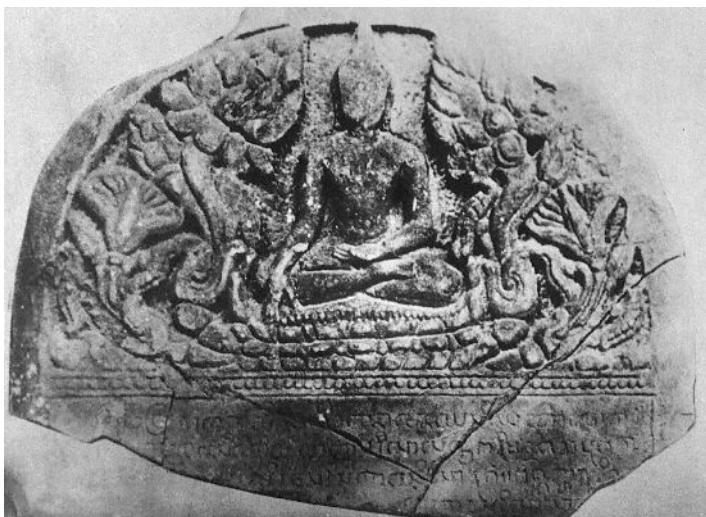
168. Votive tablet. Discovered at Mingyaung Monastery, Thanbo Quarter, Mergui, Taninthayi, Myanmar. Second half of the 11th c. AD. Fired clay. 17.7 x 13.2 cm. Location unknown today. Ph. after Luce 1969/70: Pl. 12a.



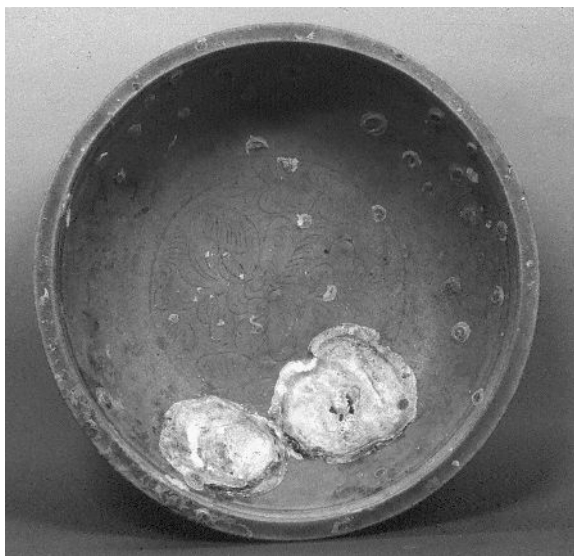
169. Votive tablet. Discovered in the vicinity of Mergui-Tenasserim, Taninthayi, Myanmar. 11th-12th c. AD. Gilded baked clay. 9.6 x 7 cm. Museum of the Monastery Paya Theidawgyi, Mergui. Ph. MJH.



170. Votive tablet. Discovered in the vicinity of Mergui-Tenasserim, Taninthayi, Myanmar. 11th c. AD. Fired clay. 15 x 9.5 cm. Museum of the Monastery Paya Theidawgyi, Mergui. Ph. MJH.



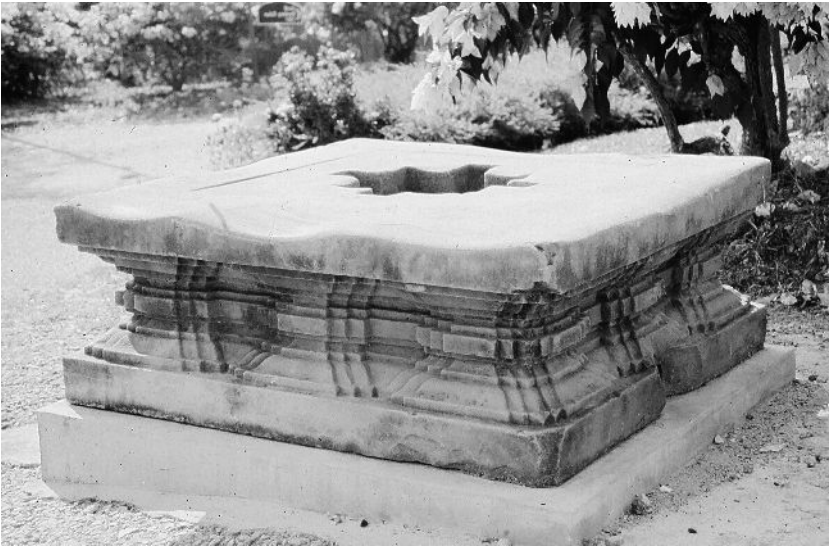
171. Top arch of a stone inscription. Discovered at Maunglaw, near Mergui, Taninthayi, Myanmar. Dedicated by King Solu (1077-1084). Stone. Destroyed during the last World War. Ph. in Luce 1969-70: Pl. 15a.



172. Bowl. Discovered in the Sungai Merbok estuary, South Kedah, Malaysia. 10th c. AD. Yue ware, Shanglinhu. D. 21, H. 5.5 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.



173. Votive *stūpa*. Wat Phra Borromathat compound, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Ph. MJH.



174. Pedestal. From Site UMI (24w), South Kedah, Malaysia. 10th c. AD. Stone. 127 x 127x 49.5 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. MJH.



175. Buddha. Removed from the eastern porch of Wat Keo, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Stone. H. 68 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



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176. Buddha. Unknown provenance. 10th-11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 13 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. FAD.

177. Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. End of 11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 21.7 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.

178. Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. End of 11th c. AD. Stuccoed and gilded stone. H. 146 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.

179. Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 11th-early 12th c. AD. Bronze. H. 28 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.



180. Buddha. Discovered in the region of Yaring, Pattani Province, Thailand. 11th c. AD. Stuccoed and gilded stone. H. 60 cm. Wat Pasi, Yaring District. Ph. MJH.



181. Viṣṇu. Discovered in the region of Chaiya, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Khleang style, Cambodia (c. 965-c. 1010). Bronze. H. 39.5 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.



182. Avalokiteśvara. Discovered at Ban Wat Khanun, Muang District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 10th-early 11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 22.3 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



183. Bhairava. Discovered at Wiang Sa District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Stone. H. 51.5 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



184. Bhairava. Discovered in Tamilnāḍu, India. 11th c. AD. Stone. H. 93 cm. Art Gallery, Tañjāvūr, Tamilnāḍu. Ph. MJH.



185. Viṣṇu. Discovered in Wiang Sa District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 11th c. AD. Stone. H. 51 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



186. Sūrya. Discovered at Wat Sala Tung, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Stone. H. 71 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



187. Head of a divinity. Discovered in the crypt of Wat Suthawat, Muang District, Chumphon Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 14 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



188. Divinity. Discovered on site PB 4/5 (21/22w) in South Kedah, Malaysia. 10th-11th c. AD. Bronze. H. 8 cm. Muzium Arkeologi, Merbok, South Kedah. Ph. Courtesy of the Muzium.



189. Votive tablet (central) of Mañjuśrī. Discovered in Tham Khuhaphimuk, Muang District, Yala Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Fired clay. D. 6 cm. Wat Khuhaphimuk Museum, Muang District, Yala. Ph. MJH.



190. Votive tablet of Vairocana. Discovered in Yala Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 5.8 cm. Private collection, Yala. Ph. FAD.



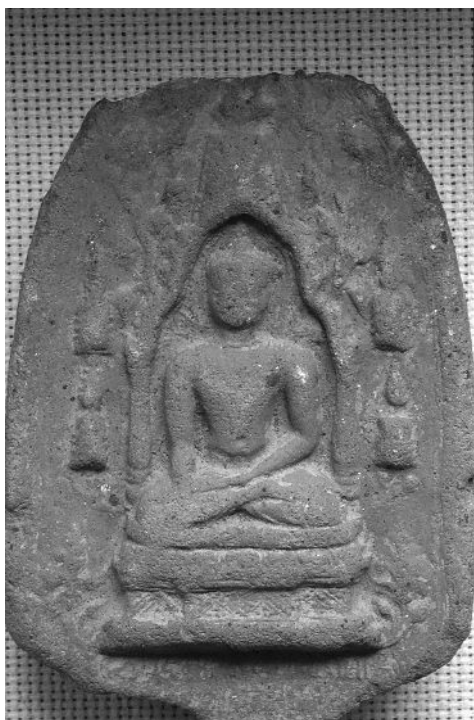
191. Votive tablet of Prajñāpāramitā. Discovered in Yala Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Fire clay. H. 9.5 cm. Private collection, Yala. Ph. MJH.



192. Votive tablet. Discovered in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 10th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 8 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



193. Votive tablet. Discovered in Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 13 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



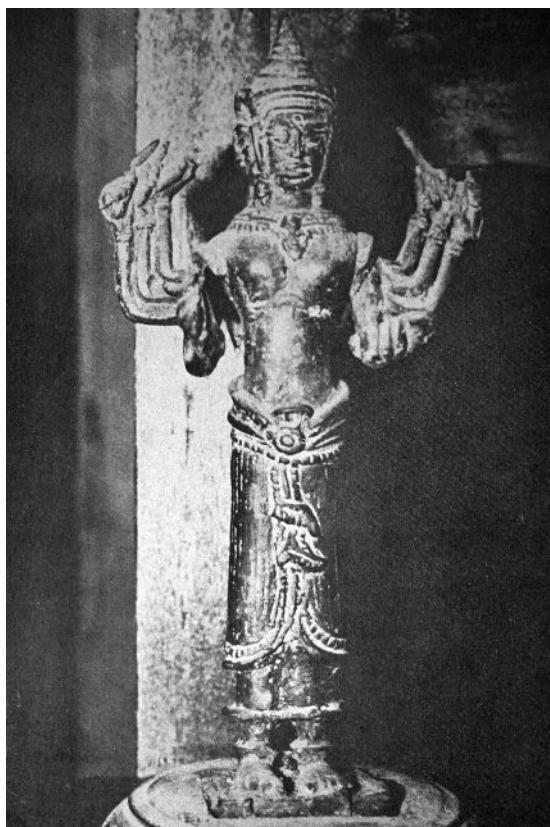
194. Votive tablet. Discovered in Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 8 cm. Chaiya National Museum. Ph. MJH.



195. Votive tablet. Discovered in Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 10th-11th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 12.5 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. FAD.



196. Prajñāparamitā. Discovered in Tha Rua District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th c. AD. Bronze. H. 11 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



197. Prajñāparamitā. Discovered in Songkhla Province, Thailand. 13th c. AD. Bronze. H. 19 cm. Wat Phuphaphimuk Museum, Phatthalung. Ph. after O'Connor 1975: Fig. 9a.



198. Gaṇeśa. Discovered in Songkhla Province, Thailand. Late 12th-early 13th c. AD. Bronze. H. 6 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. FAD.



199. Hevajra. Discovered in Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 13th c. AD. Bronze. H. 14 cm. Wat Machimawas Museum, Songkhla. Ph. FAD.



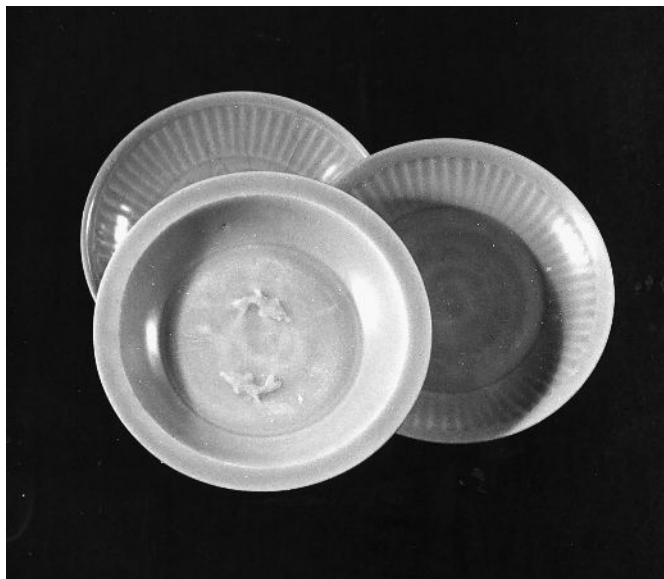
200. Buddha. Discovered at Wat Nangtra, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th c. AD. Bronze. H. 43 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. FAD.



201. Votive tablet. Discovered at Khao Chom Thong, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 10 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



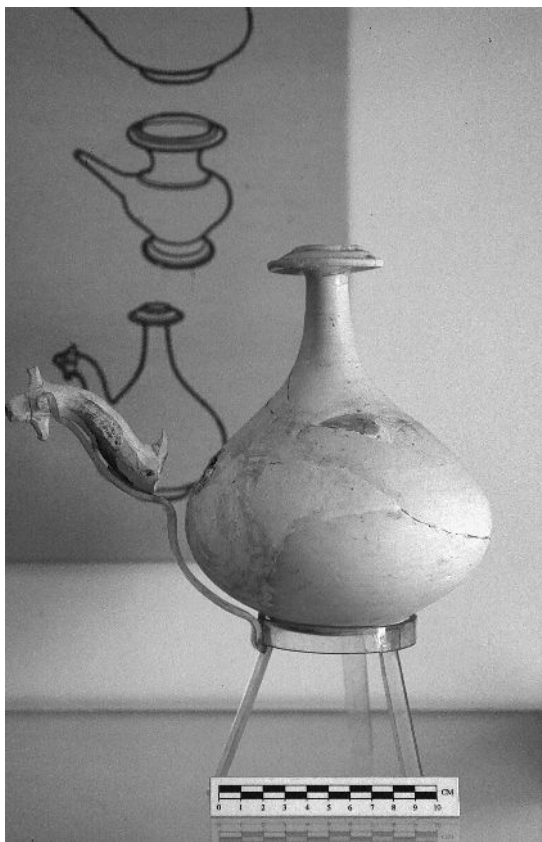
202. Khmer ware. Footed urn. Found off the coast of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. 11th-12th c. AD. Yellowish green and dark brown glazed stoneware. H. 29.3 cm. Wat Phra Borommathat Museum, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. MJH.



203. Celadon dishes. Discovered in Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th-13th c. AD. Greenware. D. 27.7, 28.8 cm. Man Lilabhan and Kae Thamsoonthorn Collections, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. FAD.



204. Covered box, jarlets and miniature vase. Discovered at Ban Tha Rua, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 12th-13th c. AD. White ware. H. 3-15 cm. Kae Thamsoonthorn Collection, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ph. FAD.



205. *kendi*. Discovered at Koh Moh, Satingpra District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. 12th c. AD. Fired clay. H. 17.5 cm. Songkhla National Museum. Ph. MJH.



206. Wat Phra Borommathat: great *stupa*. Nakhon Si Thammarat. 12th-13th c. AD. (reconstructed in 1493 AD). Ph. MJH.



207. *stūpa* Sapada, Nyaung U, Pagan, Myanmar. Early 13th c. AD. Ph. MJH.



208. *stūpa* at Wat Khien Bang Keo, Khao Chaison District, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. 12th-13th c. AD. Ph. MJH.



209. Reliquary. Discovered at Wat Phraphut, Takbai District, Narathiwat Province, Thailand. 12th-13th c. AD. Gold and silver. H. 13 cm. Wat Phraphut Collection. Ph. FAD.



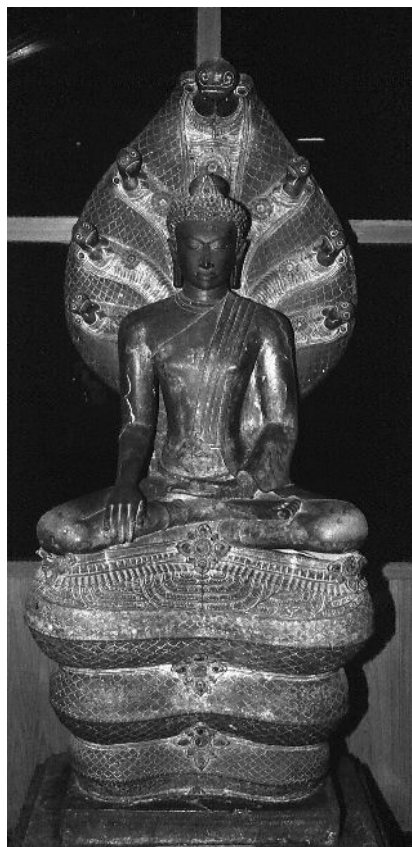
210. Element of a former building. Discovered at Tha Rua, Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 14th c. AD. Stone. 130 x 40 x 25 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



211. Phra Buddha Sihing. Ho Phra Sihing, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. 13th c. AD. Bronze. H. 41 cm. Ph. FAD.



212. Buddha. Discovered in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. 14th c. AD. Bronze formerly lacquered and gilded. H. 65 cm. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum. Ph. MJH.



213. Buddha. Removed from Wat Wiang, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 1183 AD. Bronze with some traces of gilding. H. 162 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. MJH.



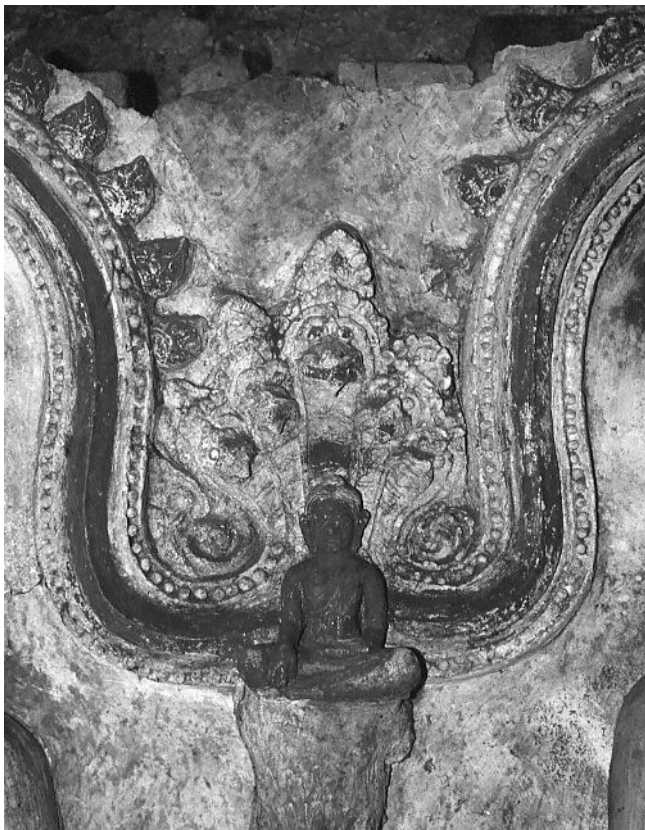
214. Head of the previous statue. Ph. MJH.



215. Buddha. Discovered in the basin of the Tha Chin River, Central Thailand. 12th c. AD. Bronze. H. 38 cm. Collection of H.R.H. Prince Bhanubandhu Yugala, Bangkok. Ph. after Wattanawrangkul 1975: Fig. 43.



216. Buddha. Removed from Wat Phra Barommatham, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. Late 12th-early 13th c. AD. Stone with stucco, lacquer and gilding. H. 35 cm. Bangkok National Museum. Ph. FAD.



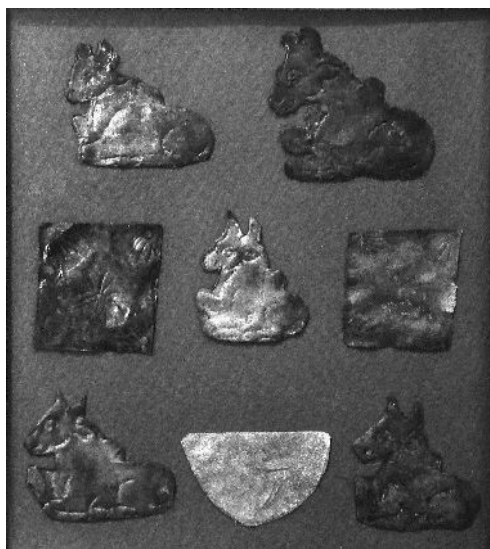
217. Buddha. Tham Khuha Sawan, Kanchanadit District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. 13th c. AD. Painted stucco. H. 25 cm. *In situ*. Ph. MJH.



218. Stone pillar bases on the surface of the *vimāna*, site SMK 1 (8w), S-E angle, South Kedah, Malaysia. 12th c. AD. Granite. *In situ*. Ph. MJH.



219. Poera Tamansari Temple at Khungkung, Bali, Indonesia. Ph. MJH.



220. Some figures from the reliquaries of temple site SMK 1 (8w), South Kedah, Malaysia. Ph. MJH.

221. Dishes. Discovered in the Muda River, Sidam District, South Kedah, Malaysia. 14th c. AD. Greenware. D. 42 & 35 cm. Alor Setar Muzium, Kedah. Ph. Courtesy of the Muzium.



222. Arabic glass lamp. Discovered on site PB 1 (18w), South Kedah, Malaysia. 12th c. AD. Glass. H. 11.4 cm. Singapore National Museum. Ph. Courtesy of the Museum.

