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TOWARDS ANGKOR

TOWARDS ANGKOR

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE INDIAN INVADERS

BY

H. G. QUARITCH WALES

FIELD DIRECTOR OF THE GREATER-INDIA RESEARCH COMMITTEE
AUTHOR OF "SIAMESE STATE CEREMONIES" ETC.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

K.C.S.I. K.C.I.E.

And with Forty-two Illustrations from Photographs and Several Maps



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TO

D. C. W.

FOREWORD

As Chairman of the Greater-India Research Committee I have great pleasure in writing a foreword to the present work of our Field Director. Dr Wales knows intimately Siam, French Indo-China, and Indonesia, and belongs to that younger school of explorers who have learned to combine history and geography in their researches. After serving at the Court of Siam for several years, and thereby receiving a thorough grounding in Hindu and Buddhist institutions, he undertook two archæological expeditions under the auspices of the Committee. The first, during the season 1934–35, with the distinguished patronage of His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, was undertaken for the purpose of investigating the overland route across the Malay Peninsula by which, some fifteen hundred years ago, Indian cultural influence spread to the shores of the Pacific. The second, in the following year, was made possible by the generosity of Mrs C. N. Wrentmore, a member of the India Society. On this occasion Dr Wales was able to penetrate regions never before visited by a European archæologist, and discovered the earlier vestiges of the original Hindu art which found its culmination in Angkor.

The study of the culture of Greater India is still in its infancy, and a rich field awaits the patient investigator. But the author of the present volume has made a first contribution of undoubted importance. Moreover, he has written his account in a manner which will appeal not

only to the student but also, I think, to the general reading public by a skilful blend of scholarship and the art of the narrator. His is an entrancing tale of the peaceful invasion of a great sub-continent by the ancestors of our Indian fellow-subjects of to-day.

FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

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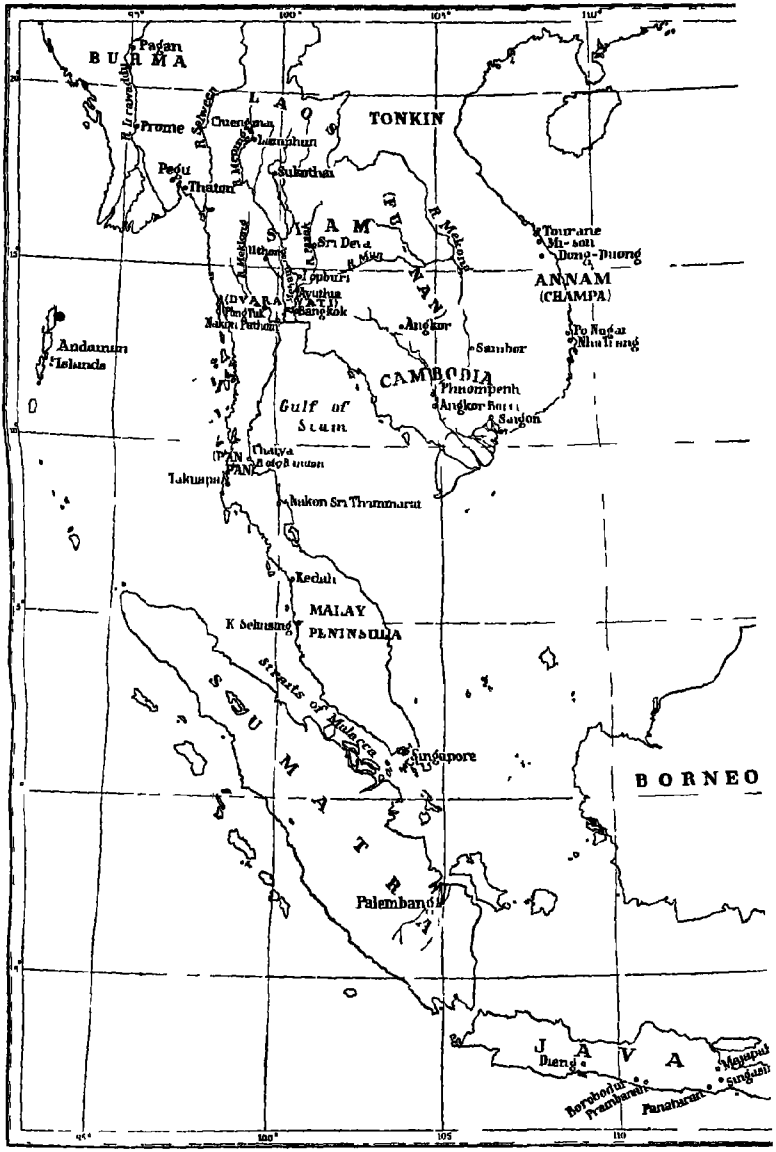
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MAP OF GREATER INDIA, SHOWING THE PRINCIPAL ANCIENT SITES

CHAPTER I

THE LURE OF THE UNKNOWN

ACROSS the steaming lowlands of eastern Central Siam a train of heavily laden bullock-carts was laboriously wending its way. The country it was traversing was not the luxuriant evergreen forest which clothes so much of Indo-China, for there cart travel is impossible; this was the shadeless, thin jungle of poor deciduous trees and tall grass, the haunt of tiger and deer, and though in the dry season it allows the use of carts instead of porters or elephants, it is by far the more trying to the traveller.

This particular caravan, with its screeching wooden axles and jingling bells—the true music of the jungle track—differed little from those one might see on any of the well-beaten trade routes which still form for many towns and villages in the remoter parts of Siam their only link with the railway and the capital. But for this route, which ran eastward from Lopburi towards the little-known Pasak valley, the remarkable thing about the caravan was its size: no less than eight carts, not to mention several armed men mounted on ponies. For the fact is that in A.D. 1936 this was really no trade route at all, and two or three men with pack-ponies or with a couple of carts were all that one might expect to find peddling cheap wares to the few squalid villages of this poor and undeveloped part of the country even at the very height of the dry season. But had it been just fifteen hundred years earlier, A.D. 436

(and unless one draws close enough to inspect the *personnel* in detail there is nothing to suggest that it might not be), it would have been a common experience to pass within an hour a dozen of such caravans of merchants, bearing eastward the products of the rich lands of the Menam valley to exchange them for goods from India at the great emporium of Śri Deva. This was the name of the city that guarded the pass at the point where the route left the plateau of the kingdom of Fu-nan and made its way to the lowland vassal states of the west. But on looking closer one sees that the bullock-drivers are Siamese peasants, that two Europeans clad in dusty shirts and shorts—the author and his wife—are tramping in the rear, and that what looks at first sight like any other caravan is in fact a scientific expedition on its way to probe one of the most enthralling mysteries of the ancient East, of which at that time the unrevealing heart of Indo-China still held the solution. The 'mystery' was no less than that of the origin of Angkor and the Khmer civilization.

The bullocks plodded patiently on their way, a track barely marked by cuts on the trunks of the trees, and so indistinct that there was at times a diversity of opinion as to which was the direction to be followed, while the sun, now sinking low in the west, yet beat implacably on our backs. For we were, in truth, on the march long after a halt should have been called and camp pitched for the night; but the necessity of reaching an ample water-supply, to quench the thirsts of bullocks and men, obliged us to press forward to a village on a stream which, according to those of our party who were reputed to know the route, should long since have been reached. It was useless to question them, for Siamese peasants have vague ideas



A Halt by the Way

on time and distance, and the only reply would be "*Pradeo.*"[1]

Then almost suddenly, for there is no twilight in these latitudes, the shadows closed in, and the worst dread of jungle travellers was upon us; we were overtaken by black night. The oxen began to show signs of fear: their instinct and the strange movements in the grass beside the track told them of the proximity of tigers which might at any moment spring on to their backs; they began to low fearfully, each pair nuzzling up to the cart in front and increasing its pace in a manner surprising to those who are acquainted only with the normal solemn tread of these patient beasts. At last there came a sudden break in the jungle, and we felt rather than saw that we were in the open stretch of *padi* land that tells of approach to a village. Almost at once the foremost driver gave a shout, to signify that he had seen the light of the westernmost homestead, and a series of delighted exclamations passed down the line. Even as we bumped over the low mounds that formed the borders of the various rice-fields the villagers, having heard the jingle of the bells and the screech of the axles, were on their way out to meet us and guide us to the *sala*, or open caravanserai which stands in the temple courtyard of every Siamese village of any size. These people have inherited the spontaneous hospitality that belongs to dwellers on trade routes, even dead trade routes like this one; and in these days of schedules and hotels was for us, benighted in the jungle, an impressive experience of old-time travel all at once to see the bobbing lanterns of the villagers and receive their simple and unquestioning welcome.

[1] "Presently."

As the expedition moved onward village temple rest-houses gave place to a site whereon to pitch our tent; and I shall not soon forget our camp on the evening after we had crossed the rocky divide separating the Menam and Pasak valleys. Here we found a stream with a few houses, forming one of those really old-fashioned Siamese villages such as nowadays one must go far afield to see, where the girls were husking *padi* and weaving brightly coloured cloth, while the old women worked until dusk at a primitive sugar-press operated by a buffalo. The villagers told us that though they still had this animal, all their oxen had been killed by tigers. That night our men took special precautions, forming the carts into a square for the protection of our oxen, and lighting huge fires, around which they prepared to sleep. But my wife and I, preferring to be alone, had our tent pitched some distance away, trusting to the fear which tent-ropes are said to inspire in wild beasts. Just as we were about to sit down to a meal that our Chinese cook had placed on our camp table two of our ponies that had been grazing near by dashed into our tent veranda, overturning the table with its load of the eternal chicken. The men explained that the ponies had scented the proximity of tigers, and were seeking human protection in their fear.

It so happened that the scant population of this remote little village included a number of young and attractive girls, and this was perhaps the reason that our cart-drivers were not so ready for sleep as was usual after a long day's march. Among them was a rhymester who had already proved to be a source of entertainment on the march, and the fortunate combination of circumstances at this village provided an excellent opportunity for the young men and



House of Siamese Villagers

maidens to indulge in the old Siamese pastime of rhyme-singing. This is a form of courtship in which the leader of the young men composes and sings extempore rhymes of a more or less erotic character, to which the leader of the young women must at once reply with a suitable rhyme of her own, repulsing or encouraging her mock suitor as she thinks fit, the situations that arise leading to much daring badinage and imitation love-making, which every one thoroughly enjoys. After the harvest, when many families have come together to share the work, this form of entertainment is apt to go on all night; but on this occasion the reminder that an early start next morning was on the programme brought these charmingly spontaneous revels to an end after an hour or two.

Quiet fell upon the camp, the girls having returned to their homes; but though we had forgotten the tigers they had evidently not forgotten us. Just about midnight we were awakened by every animal—ox, pony, and dog—in the neighbourhood, each setting up its own particular noise to the best of its ability. Presumably this pandemonium, coupled with the blazing fire, to which the men hastened to add new fuel, was too much for the tiger, since no untoward incident occurred. And tiger it certainly had been, for next morning several of the men told us that just at that time they had detected the unmistakable coughing sound of the beast, prowling a few yards beyond the firelit circle.

Some days of travel, the monotony broken occasionally by such unexpected incidents as I have just described, brought us to the Pasak river, which runs southward in a steep gorge, and is rendered practically unnavigable by the presence of boulders and turbulent rapids. We negotiated

it by making oxen and ponies swim across, while the men hauled the carts through the water by means of leather thongs. Now we were but a few miles from our goal—the ancient and unknown city of Śri Deva. The Pasak valley bears an evil reputation for fever: they say that no one who is not born there can survive its atmosphere for long, and no part of this remote valley is more feared than the immediate neighbourhood of the ruined city. Perhaps the place is ill-omened, for local legend has it that the city was destroyed by a hermit's curse.[1] At any rate, the dwellers in the valley dread the old city like the plague, and but for the help of the Government official who accompanied us we might have found difficulty in persuading any of the local people to lead us there. As it was, all went well; and those who have explorers' blood in their veins may imagine the pitch of our excitement on the morning we broke camp and began the short final march which was to bring us to our goal!

The carts remained behind, to follow by a longer but for them an easier route, while the headman of the village we had just left led us by a more direct way through the jungle. The fresh early morning air stimulated our spirits, as excitedly we followed close behind the Siamese headman. Then suddenly he pointed ahead through the bamboo thickets. Following his gaze, we were able to discern, looming up before us, a vast green embankment, and in front of it a wide moat, which stretched across our path and barred the way. We pushed past our guide, our eyes eagerly devouring the scene, for we had reached the ramparts of Śri Deva. In the moat lotuses held up their gorgeous blossoms towards us. No doubt they had always

[1] See Chapter VII.

been there, though the quiet waters were no longer disturbed by the movements of the insatiable crocodiles that were wont to lurk in the moats of all ancient Indian cities. Presumably they had long since starved to death. On the other hand there was still a dense growth of thorn-bushes on the mound, probably the descendants of the very ones that the Indian colonists had originally planted there, to be, with the crocodiles, a deterrent to the unauthorized intruder. And they certainly looked as though, unless we could find an unguarded gate, they might be as effective a defence against the imminent attack of Western science as doubtless they had been against the invaders of old. So much the eye took in at a glance; but it needed only a flash of the imagination to complete the picture of past splendours: a vision of painted parapets topping the ramparts, with here and there a gilded turret from which fluttered bright pennants; while the murmur of an Eastern market within the city and the tramp of Indian soldiery without seemed for one moment to break the silence of the jungle.

Those who have read of Henri Mouhot's emotion when in 1861 he found himself face to face with the gigantic monuments of Angkor will understand something of what we felt when we, the first European archæologists to reach this remote valley, found ourselves before the ramparts of a city which, from certain fragmentary objects brought to Bangkok on the instigation of His Royal Highness Prince Damrong, who had located the site in 1905, we knew to be the oldest city in Indo-China, a Hindu stronghold that flourished seven hundred years before the Khmers built Angkor Wat. Perhaps, indeed, it was our realization of all that the discoveries awaiting us within the city might mean

for the history of India's achievement beyond the seas and the understanding of the origin of the Khmer civilization that sharpened our curiosity to a pitch which that of the naturalist Mouhot can hardly have attained as he gazed uncomprehendingly upon the towers of Angkor. And so, before we frank the portals of Śri Deva, let us pause on the threshold to recapture, from what old records and our earlier explorations have taught us, something of the atmosphere of the now shadowy forms of those meñ of yore who, like ourselves, felt the lure of the unknown—those ancient Indian Argonauts and other adventurers of the Southern seas, whose rightful place in history has been too long denied them.

CHAPTER II

THE LAND OF GOLD

FROM references in the great Indian epics it is clear that Indian traders were already making sea voyages, as apart from mere coasting, several centuries before the Christian era. But it is in the Buddhist Birth Stories, many of which certainly do not date from later than the third century before Christ, that we first read of voyages to the Land of Gold, "Chryse the Golden" of the Greeks, which we too prosaically call the Malay Peninsula. The object of these voyages was always the acquisition of wealth, and such undertakings are represented as fraught with the utmost danger, from which the Sea Goddess sometimes saved the deserving. For example, we hear of a certain Brahman from Benares, named Samkha, who was renowned for his charity, since he had founded several alms-houses in the city and gave away large sums of money to the poor every day.

But one day he said to himself, "When I have exhausted all the money that I have in my house I shall be able to give nothing more; therefore, before it is exhausted, let me go in a boat to the Land of Gold and bring home wealth." So he had a ship built for him, filled it with merchandise, and told his wife and children to continue giving alms without interruption. Then, escorted by his slaves and followers, he took his umbrella, put on his shoes, and towards noon left for the port. After seven days at sea his ship sprang a leak, and could not be emptied of water. The crew, trembling for the fear

of death, invoked each his own god and made a great noise. But the holy man and one of his servants took the practical precaution of rubbing their bodies with oil and eating as much sugar and melted butter as they could. They climbed the mast, and the Brahman, observing the horizon, remarked, "It is on this side that our city lies." Then, in order to avoid the fishes and tortoises which swam around the ship, they jumped a distance of several cubits. The other seafarers perished, but the great saint began to swim across the water with his servant. Seven days passed in this way, after which the Sea Goddess, who had been disporting herself elsewhere, noticed them and made a magic ship on which she sent them to their destination.

A similar story concerns a prince named Janaka, who lived in exile with his mother, who had managed to save some of the Crown jewels. "Mother," he said, "give me this wealth. I will take half of it and go to the Land of Gold; I will bring from there much wealth, and will recover my throne." He took half of his fortune, stocked himself with merchandise, and embarked on his boat in the company of other merchants who were going to the Land of Gold. Before leaving he bowed unto his mother and said, "Mother, I am going to the Land of Gold." His mother said, "My child, a voyage does not always succeed; there are many obstacles; better not go. You have enough wealth already to recover the throne." "No, I will go there, Mother," and he saluted her as he went out to go on board the ship. Seven hundred merchants had embarked on the ship. In seven days she had done seven hundred leagues, but on account of her high speed she could not hold out, the planks cracked, water poured in everywhere, and she foundered in the deep ocean. The men wept, and cried, and invoked all kinds of deities. But Janaka, who had filled himself with sugar and butter and oiled his robes, sprang

over the fishes and tortoises who were eating up the merchants. For seven days he swam, and then the Sea Goddess, who as usual had been disporting herself elsewhere, noticed him. She took him in her arms, and, pressing him to her bosom like a cherished child, she shot forth through the sky. He fell deeply asleep through the touch of the goddess, and she carried him to the Land of Gold.[1]

Whether or no Janaka obtained the wealth he set out for and then returned to claim his kingdom we do not know, but it is certain that there were princely adventurers who were unable to resist the attractions of a permanent residence in the Land of Gold or the countries and islands beyond the Peninsula. Thus the Chinese chronicles tell us of an Indian prince called Kaundinya, who dreamed that a god gave him a bow and told him to embark at once for the East. Obeying, he came at last to the shores of Indo-China, where the native queen, Willow-leaf, saw his ship and attacked it with her fleet of war canoes. Kaundinya raised his bow and shot an arrow which, passing miraculously through the side of a canoe, struck some one in it. Queen Willow-leaf was frightened and submitted. Kaundinya married her and wrapped her in a piece of cloth, as she had no garments.

Such is the semi-legendary story of the foundation of what was afterwards to become the great Indianized kingdom of Fu-nan; but it is more than just a symbol of the union of the cultural inspiration of India with the latent genius of native races, which in later centuries was to produce the wonderful monuments of Cambodia and Java.

[1] Summarized from *Manimekhala, a Divinity of the Sea*, by Sylvain Lévi, in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. vi (December 1930). *Manimekhala* and other articles by Sylvain Lévi have since been collected and republished in *Mémorial Sylvain Lévi* (Paul Hartmann, Paris, 1937).

It is indicative of the manner in which Indian colonies began to be founded early in the Christian era, after the way had been prepared by centuries of peaceful exploration and trading. Javanese tradition places the coming of the first Indian colonists at A.D. 75, and the Alexandrine geographer Ptolemy in the second century of the Christian era mentions the names of tribes in Indo-China which seem to be Indian. No doubt it was the constant disturbances in India and the pressure of conquerors from the north and west that encouraged the more adventurous to seek new homes by following in the footsteps of the merchants. They sailed in ships of considerable size, which, according to Mr J. Hornell, an authority on Indian boat designs, were "square-rigged, two-masted vessels, with raked stem and stern, both sharp, without bowsprit and rudder, and steered by two quarter-paddles." Reaching the Land of Gold, they looked about for a suitable river valley in which to settle, where they could form trading and agricultural settlements, and where, above all, they could set to work to mine the tin and gold that they knew abounded there. Like Prince Kaundinya, the new arrivals did not always receive a very warm welcome from the people of the country. These natives belonged to various branches of the Mongolian race, and had, in coming south from China, driven the aboriginal negritoes and other primitive peoples into the hills, but now they were themselves in danger of extermination.

Not long since, while excavating an early city in the north-west corner of the Gulf of Siam, I unexpectedly made the acquaintance of the physical remains of just the sort of people that the Indian colonists had to subdue on their arrival in Indo-China. A little over four feet below

ground-level I unearthed a number of Mongoloid skeletons of men who had obviously been killed in battle, and had then been laid out roughly with their heads pointing towards the west, no doubt their land of departed spirits. Many of the skeletons grasped the remains of iron weapons in their bony hands, and on one skull (which, by the way, is now in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons) was a small copper earring. From their depth beneath the surface I was able to date these skeletons as round about the beginning of the Christian era. Their possession of iron weapons suggests that they had already had trading relations with Indian merchants, but it is very likely, from the period at which they lived, that they died fighting in defence of their homeland against Indian colonists who were seeking to wrest it from them. It needed a few centuries, the enticements of a few more Willow-leaves on the one hand and the coming of "the Light of Asia" on the other, to lead colonists and colonized to understand one another and to weld them together.

The Indian colonists themselves kept no written records of their doings, and archæology can tell us nothing before the second century of the Christian era. Even so, in the wet tropical climate of South-eastern Asia none but the most durable objects can survive, and the earliest Indian settlers probably built houses and temples only of wood. But they were a religious people, and, besides their priests, they brought with them either sacred images or at least skilled craftsmen who were able to make them when the new settlements had been founded. Thus it is that, though no settlements of this early period have as yet been located, here and there at scattered points on the shores of Sumatra, Java, even Celebes, and the coast of Indo-China, as far as

Southern Annam, have been found, exceedingly rarely, Buddhist images or portions of images in bronze or stone. These are of purely Indian workmanship, having been actually made in that part of Eastern India which lies between the Kistna and Godaveri rivers or by Indian craftsmen who hailed therefrom. The style of these images is known as that of Amaravati, dating from the second century of the Christian era, and is particularly characterized by the elaborately folded garments, showing that Greek influence was still strong in Indian sculpture of that period. The wide expanse of South-eastern Asia over which these sculptures have been found is remarkable, because it shows that even as early as the second century Indian influence had spread right through all that part of the world that was afterwards to form Greater India, even as far as Celebes, an island on which Indian colonization did not succeed in establishing itself permanently.

The majority of these very early Indian colonists were certainly Buddhists (of the Southern school), but in Southern Annam an inscribed stone has been found which dates from the third century and suggests that a colony of Brahmanical Hindus had already established itself in one of the isolated valleys that were later to form the kingdom of Champa. A little later, about A.D. 400, the indications of Indian colonization grow plainer, and indicate that the petty Indian states that were establishing themselves wherever they could obtain a foothold were becoming more numerous and more enduring. The Chinese chronicles mention several such little states in the central part of the Malay Peninsula, and one of these they call by a name meaning "Red Earth," which appears to have occupied the position of the modern Malay state of Kedah;



BRONZE BUDDHA OF THE AMARAVATI STYLE

South India, 3rd–4th century

The Trustees of the National Museum



BRONZE BUDDHA OF THE GUPTA STYLE

The figure (6th–7th century) was found in Kedah, Peninsular Malaysia

The Trustees of the National Museum, Peninsular Malaysia

and it is a remarkable coincidence that about a hundred years ago an inscribed slab was picked up in Kedah bearing a Buddhist inscription of the beginning of the fifth century and signed by a sea-captain named Buddhagupta, who described himself, in Sanskrit, as a resident of the Red Earth kingdom. Not far away, on Kedah Peak, are the remains of a Buddhist stone shrine of the same period; and Buddhist images of about the fifth century have been found at various places in the Malay Peninsula and near the coasts of the East Indian Islands and of Indo-China. These Buddhist images differ from those I have spoken of above in that the robes no longer show the Greek folds, but resemble a transparent garment, through which the shape of the body can be clearly seen. They are a reflection of the great Gupta age of art in India, among the best-known products of which are the magnificent sculptures and paintings of the Ajanta caves. During the Gupta period the impulse to found colonies overseas became increasingly active, and the adventurers were accompanied by many monks who wished to spread a knowledge of Buddhism. The Chinese records tell us in particular of an Indian monk named Gunavarman who arrived in Java in the fifth century and succeeded in making many converts. But, though Buddhism seems to have been predominant in the Gupta age, some fifth-century inscriptions show that the worship of the Hindu god Vishnu also existed in Java. At the same period inscriptions show that Buddhists and Śiva-worshippers had settled side by side in Borneo, while the kingdom of Champa, in South Annam, tended to the cult of Śiva. On the whole the early colonists seem to have been fairly tolerant of each other's religion.

Though the Indians had the monopoly of colonization

in South-eastern Asia, they soon had to share the profits of ocean trading with those peaceful seafaring peoples the Arabs and the Chinese, both of whom cultivated the habit of keeping written diaries, and so have handed down to us much more illuminating information about the conditions of trading to and from the Golden Land than have the Indian Argonauts. The Arabs, however, have left us no written accounts earlier than the ninth century, though we know that as early as A.D. 300 they had founded a commercial establishment as far east as Canton. The Western author of the *Periplus* in the first century A.D. remarks on the peculiar construction of the Arab dhows, of which the planks were sewn together instead of being nailed. And hence it is that we know that Marco Polo's account of the Arab merchant ships, of which he had but a poor opinion, will do as well for the early centuries of the Christian era as it did for the thirteenth:

> Their ships are wretched affairs, and many of them get lost; for they have no iron fastenings, and are only stitched together with twine made from the husk of the Indian nut. They beat this husk until it becomes like horse-hair, and from that they spin twine, and with this stitch the planks of the ships together. It keeps well, and is not corroded by the sea-water, but it will not stand well in a storm. The ships are not pitched, but are rubbed with fish-oil. They have one mast, one sail, and one rudder, and have no deck, but only a cover spread over the cargo when loaded. This cover consists of hides, and on the top of these hides they put the horses which they take to India for sale. They have no iron to make nails of, and for this reason they only use wooden trenails in their shipbuilding, and then stitch the planks with twine as I have told you. Hence 'tis a perilous business to go a voyage in one of those ships, and many of

them are lost, for in the Sea of India the storms are often terrible.[1]

In the fourth century A.D. Chinese junks began to reach India and, being larger and more seaworthy than other vessels, they soon came to win a large share of the ocean trade from the Indian and Arab merchants. Knowing the conservative character of the Chinese, we may also trust Marco Polo's description of the Chinese junks of his time as applying equally to the early period with which we are now concerned:

> These ships, you must know, are of fir timber. They have but one deck, though each of them contains some 50 or 60 cabins, wherein the merchants abide greatly at their ease, every man having one to himself. The ship hath but one rudder, but it hath four masts; and sometimes they have two additional masts, which they ship and unship at pleasure. Moreover, the larger of their vessels have some thirteen compartments or 'severances' in the interior, made with planking strongly framed, in case mayhap the ship should spring a leak, either by running on a rock or by a blow from a hungry whale.[2]

Thus we see how the Chinese were already making use of a system of watertight compartments, with us a comparatively modern invention.

But though we must go to Marco Polo for the earliest description of the construction of a Chinese junk, we are happily in possession of a vivid account of the type of voyage made by these Celestial merchantmen almost as soon as they began to brave the dangers and terrors of the

[1] *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, Sir Henry Yule's translation (John Murray), second edition.

[2] Sir Henry Yule, *op. cit.*

Southern seas. Fa-hien, who travelled abroad from A.D. 399 to 414, was one of the earliest of a stream of pious Chinese Buddhist monks who made the pilgrimage to India with the object of receiving instruction in the Buddhist religion and bringing home copies of the Scriptures to China. Fa-hien had reached India by the land route through Central Asia, and after completing his studies at the holy places in Ceylon he

> took passage on board a large merchant vessel, on which there were over two hundred souls, and astern of which there was a smaller vessel in tow, in case of accident at sea and destruction of the big vessel. Catching a fair wind, they sailed eastwards for two days; then they encountered a heavy gale, and the vessel sprang a leak. The merchants wished to get aboard the smaller vessel; but the men on the latter, fearing that they would be swamped by numbers, quickly cut the tow-rope in two. The merchants were terrified, for death was close at hand; and, fearing that the vessel would fill, they promptly took what bulky goods there were and threw them into the sea. Fa-hsien also took his pitcher and ewer, with whatever else he could spare, and threw them into the sea; but he was afraid that the merchants would throw over his books and his images, and accordingly fixed his whole thoughts upon Kuan Yin, the Hearer of Prayers, and put his life into the hands of the Catholic Church in China, saying, "I have journeyed far on behalf of the Faith. Oh that by your awful power you would grant me a safe return from my wanderings."
>
> The gale blew on for thirteen days and nights, when they 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 sea is infested with pirates, to meet whom is death.

The expanse of ocean is boundless, east and west are not distinguishable; only by observation of the sun, moon, and constellations is progress to be made. In cloudy and rainy weather our vessel drifted at the mercy of the wind, without keeping any definite course. In the darkness of night nothing was to be seen but the great waves beating upon one another and flashing forth light like fire, huge turtles, sea-lizards, and suchlike monsters of the deep. Then the merchants lost heart, not knowing whither they were going, and, the sea being deep, without bottom, they had no place where they could cast their stone anchor and stop. When the sky had cleared they were able to tell east from west and again proceed on their proper course; but had they struck a hidden rock there would have been no way of escape.

And so they went on for more than ninety days, until they reached a country named Java, where heresies and Brahmanism were flourishing, while the Faith of Buddha was in a very unsatisfactory condition.

After having remained in this country for five months or so Fa-hsien shipped on board another large merchant vessel which also carried over two hundred persons. They took with them provisions for fifty days, and set sail on the sixteenth of the fourth moon, and Fa-hsien went into retreat on board the vessel.

A north-east course was set in order to reach Canton; and over a month elapsed when one night in the second watch [9–11 P.M.] they encountered a violent gale with tempestuous rain, at which the travelling merchants and traders who were going to their homes were much frightened. However, Fa-hsien once more invoked the Hearer of Prayers and the Catholic Church in China, and was accorded the protection of their awful power until day broke. As soon as it was light the Brahmans took counsel together and said,

"Having this Shaman on board has been our undoing, causing us to get into this trouble. We ought to land this religious mendicant on some island; and it is not right to endanger all our lives for one man." A 'religious protector' of Fa-hsien's replied, saying, "If you put this religious mendicant ashore you shall also land me with him; if not, you had better kill me, for, supposing that you land him, when I reach China I will report you to the king, who is a reverent believer in the Buddhist Faith and honours religious mendicants." At this the merchants wavered and did not dare to land him just then.

Meanwhile the sky was constantly darkened and the captain lost his reckoning. So they went on for seventy days, until the provisions and water were nearly exhausted, and they had to use sea-water for cooking, dividing the fresh water so that each man got about two pints. When all was nearly consumed the merchants consulted together and said, "The ordinary time for the voyage to Canton is fifty days. We have now exceeded that limit by many days; must we not have gone out of our course?" Thereupon they proceeded in a north-westerly direction, seeking for land; and after twelve days and nights arrived south of the Shantung promontory, where they obtained fresh water and vegetables.

And now, after having passed through much danger, difficulties, sorrow, and fear, suddenly reaching this shore and seeing the old familiar vegetables, they knew it was their fatherland.[1]

As Fa-hien's port of embarkation was in Ceylon he must have passed south of the Nicobars, and thus, while mentioning the danger from pirates in the Straits of Malacca, he is silent about the Andaman Islanders, who constituted

[1] *The Travels of Fa-hsien*, retranslated by H. A. Giles (Cambridge University Press, 1923).

one of the greatest dangers to navigators sailing south-eastward from Indian ports. As savage cannibals who devoured all those who were so unfortunate as to be shipwrecked and cast ashore there in a storm, these islanders are notorious in the annals of mariners of all nations from the days of Ptolemy almost down to modern times. In good weather, however, it seems that merchantmen did not neglect to call at these islands and barter with the natives. I-ching, another Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who voyaged to India to prosecute his religious studies, gives the best account of the Andamans (which he calls "the Country of the Naked Men") as they were towards the end of the seventh century A.D.:

> Looking towards the east, we saw the shore for an extent of one or two Chinese miles, with nothing but coconut-trees and betel-nut forest, luxuriant and pleasant [to be seen]. When the natives saw our vessel coming they eagerly embarked in little boats, their number being fully a hundred. They all brought coconuts, bananas, and things made of rattan-cane and bamboos, and wished to exchange them. What they are anxious to get is iron only; for a piece of iron as large as two fingers one gets from five to ten coconuts. The men are entirely naked, while the women veil their person with some leaves. If the merchants in joke offer them clothes they wave their hands [to tell that] they do not use them. . . . If one refuses to barter with them they discharge some poisoned arrows, one single shot of which proves fatal.[1]

Since it thus seems to have been the habit of the ancient navigators to call at the Andamans to barter if the weather were fine, and to have been the fate of some, if the weather

[1] *A Record of the Buddhist Religion (A.D. 671–695)*, translated by J. Takakusu (Oxford, 1896), pp. xxx, xxxi.

were rough and they were unlucky, to be shipwrecked and eaten there, most voyagers, whether Indian Argonauts and colonists from the Kalinga region or Chinese or Arab merchants bound for the Golden Land or beyond, must have passed through the Ten Degree Channel, that deep waterway between the Andamans and the Nicobars. So at least I was thinking a few years ago, as I happened to be sitting in my armchair in England with a map before me pondering over the movements of these ancient mariners. Then rather aimlessly I pushed my finger, which was resting on Ten Degree Channel, eastward and slightly southward, half consciously wondering what land it was that would first greet those who had survived the terrors of the sea and escaped the clutches of the savage Andamaners. And as my finger crept uncertainly south-eastward my eye wandered up and down the coast of the Peninsula searching for a suitable harbour that might have offered a refuge to those who had safely passed through their ordeal and would be in need of food and water. It was with something of a shock that both my finger and my glance came to rest at the same spot, and I realized its immense historical possibilities. This spot was marked Takuapa, and it looked the finest natural harbour on the whole west coast of the Peninsula, though now just an unimportant village on the lovely but little-known and unfrequented western coast of Peninsular Siam. My interest was increased when I remembered that this village, which the Malays called Takopa, had been identified by one or two scholars as none other than the Takola Mart mentioned by Ptolemy in the second century A.D.

Here, then, we were able to point on the map to what seemed to be the haven where the earliest Indian Argo-

nauts and colonists may well have landed—the great mart at which, during the centuries that followed, Indian, Arab, and Chinese merchants met to exchange their wares. It appeared to be just the place which, under the searchlight of modern scientific investigation, might tell us so much that we wanted to know about one of the most stirring chapters in human history, for our knowledge of which up to the present we had been content to rely on tantalizingly vague references in the Chinese chronicles and the scant help afforded by occasional chance finds. Throwing aside my map and rising determinedly from my armchair, I resolved that there must be no more delay, that such a practical investigation must be carried out in the field before it was too late.

CHAPTER III

TAKOLA MART

On the last day of 1934 the diminutive coasting steamer *Matang* from Penang cast anchor just within the islands at the mouth of the Takuapa river, and the notes of her siren reverberated among the jungle-clad hills of the mainland in an effort to attract the attention of those on shore to the fact of her arrival. The half-dozen passengers, bound for one or other of the little tin-mining stations on the Siamese west coast, which are served by this weekly steamer, leaned idly over the rail. Only my wife and I displayed any keen sense of interest in our surroundings, for we were the only ones due to land here, and our adventure had begun!

The coastal scene which lay before us was one of placid beauty. Across the calm waters of this magnificent natural harbour, protected by the islands from the rollers of the Indian Ocean, there rose above a fringe of mangrove swamps the green foothills among which the silvery ribbon of the Takuapa river could be seen sluggishly wending its way through a valley rich in tin-bearing alluvium, while in the background towered the lofty ranges of the interior, grey and indistinct in the morning mist. Just as we had lost ourselves in contemplation of this tropical loveliness our attention was ruthlessly distracted by a hurrying motor-launch that came bounding towards us from the mainland, and a few minutes later our genial host of the next few weeks, the Australian manager of a

well-known British-owned tin-mine, was shaking hands with us on deck and giving orders for the transfer of our baggage to his craft. Then, as we were about to descend the ladder ourselves, a rowing-boat load of Siamese Customs officials appeared, who, aroused by the sound of the steamer's siren, had hastily put off from their station on the island. The officer-in-charge having recognized the beaming face of our host, bows and smiles were exchanged on all sides, and the necessary business was transacted without delay. As for ourselves, an hour's run in the motor-launch, across the estuary and thence some distance up a creek among the mangrove swamps, followed by a short, jolting ride in a Ford, brought us to the veranda of the mine manager's comfortable bungalow.

That afternoon our host took us for a stroll down to the valley below, where we watched with interest the great dredge working backward and forward in the pond of its own creation. And in response to a query which came into my head as I watched the giant buckets revolving on their endless screeching journey our host replied, "Well, yes, bits of bronze Buddhas and suchlike do sometimes come up in the buckets, but the Chinese coolies usually chuck them back over the side. They're a superstitious lot, and think such things are bad joss. If I'd known anybody was interested in the stuff I'd have kept them; and, besides, I never knew this part of the world had any history." With regard to the last proposition he was to change his mind before our visit was concluded, but he was certainly right about the superstitious nature of the local people. In all my travels I think I have never found fear of evil spirits of all kinds more deeply ingrained than among the mixed Siamo-Chinese-Malay population of the west coast

of Peninsular Siam. And the very next day this fact was to be strongly brought home to me!

More than thirty years ago an English Inspector of Mines in the service of the Siamese Government had reported, mostly on hearsay evidence, the existence of ancient ruins on the islands opposite the river-mouth. That evening, as we sat on our host's veranda, imbibing the customary *stengah* and discussing our plans for investigating these places, a rather curious occurrence took place which had the effect of postponing for twenty-four hours the researches on which we had just decided. The Chinese 'boy' announced, rather awkwardly, that an unusual type of visitor had arrived, in the shape of an old Buddhist monk who had tramped from the village and insisted upon seeing us. This sounded interesting, and we hurried downstairs to make the acquaintance of a yellow-robed old man squatting on the floor, with his little acolyte in attendance. It seemed that the news of our arrival had already spread through the district, and with it the story that we had come to look for ancient treasures. But by almost everybody at Takuapa, both then and ever afterwards, we were merely put down as some new kind of gold- or tin-prospectors, only a few of the more intelligent ones having some understanding of the true nature of our quest. Among these last was this old monk, who had come from his monastery in the village to tell us about the existence of a cave which, though now sealed by the collapse of the entrance, was full of ancient treasures, or so he had heard from his father, who had once entered it before it was closed by the fall of rock more than eighty years ago. The monk said he had always wished to know what was inside, but, of course, unlike us, he had no permission

from the Government to dig there, even if he had the means; and, besides, there were the *phi* (evil spirits) to be considered. However, he would like to show us the place, and perhaps we should be able to do something about it. Accordingly we agreed to call for him at his monastery as soon as possible.

Next day our host put his car at our disposal, and a short ride over a bumpy track brought us to the little market-place at Takuapa, with its straggling street of Chinese and Siamese shops leading up from the river. By the temple gate we found our old monk awaiting us, but before starting for the cave he wished to show us a Christian Madonna which he said had been found in the river near the village landing-place a few years ago. The monk's identification proved to be incorrect, but the reverence with which the painted wooden female figure had been placed on an altar all to itself was at least a tribute to Siamese and Buddhist religious tolerance. The object was, in fact, the figurehead of a European ship of some two hundred tons, dating from about 1820–30. Such a ship would have drawn about ten feet of water, and the fact that she could have come up to Takuapa, which is two or three miles from the river-mouth and can now be reached only by very small craft, is one of several indications of the extent to which this river has been silted up by Chinese mining operations even within the last hundred years.

Our interest in this preliminary exhibit obviously pleased and encouraged the monk, who led us without delay to the river landing, near which there rose a huge outcrop of schist, into the depths of which, he said, ran the cave. First we went up to the top of the mound and made some soundings on the rock with a crowbar. A distinctly

hollow sound came back. Then we went down to examine the former mouth of the cave, which, as we could see, was blocked by a heavy fall of rocks. Looking round to question the monk further, we found, to our surprise, that he had disappeared. We never saw him again. However, one of the village headmen, who lived near, saw us and came up to inquire if he could be of service. Learning of our project, he gladly lent us a couple of the hoe-like instruments that are used for most agricultural labours in the Far East, but when we asked him to find labour as well to clear the entrance he said that no one would embark on such a hazardous undertaking for love or money.

I did not feel like abandoning such an interesting scent without an effort; and I hoped that if we could make a start ourselves our personal example might overcome the local superstition of the villagers, who had now begun to collect around us. Accordingly my wife and I, aided rather half-heartedly by the Siamese 'boy' whom we had brought from Bangkok, and who said he did not fear the local genii, set to work to try to remove some of the fallen blocks of stone and *débris*. By this time the news had spread that we were trying to open the haunted cave. The market became deserted, and what I suppose was almost the whole population of the neighbourhood, including mothers and newly born babies, came to stare at us, not intelligently, of course, nor yet even rudely, but just in fixed, open-mouthed amazement as only Asiatic peasants can.

They kept at a respectful distance, though perhaps the respect was less for us than for the terrible demon that they really believed would at any moment issue forth and gobble us up. After three-quarters of an hour of this

form of exercise, fully exposed to the morning sun, which was now beginning to get unpleasantly hot, I paused for a moment and fixed my eye hopefully and encouragingly on a stalwart young Chinaman in the front of the crowd. But his fear of the evil eye was such that he at once turned about and pushed his way rapidly to the back row.

Just as I was beginning to think we must abandon the quest without even so much as a real effort the local official, who had slipped away unnoticed while we were at work, reappeared. I think he had been worried by the thought that his failure to obtain help for us might bring trouble for him from a higher authority. At any rate, we were relieved to see that he was accompanied by two of the vilest-looking creatures that could have been dragged from any Siamese gaol, and who would obviously have been only too glad to cut throats or do anything else that might be required of them for the price of a few pipes of opium. Gladly indeed we handed over our implements to these new arrivals, who expressed themselves willing to do a day's good work for the generous pay offered, but, realizing the nature of their failing, I was prepared to find that an hour or so was as much as we should get out of them. Accordingly I decided to try for a quick victory, instructing the men to clear a narrow passage sufficient for one man to enter. After a time this had been done, and, having obtained an electric torch, I succeeded in wriggling through the aperture that had been created. Horror, I am told, was written on every face as my heels disappeared into the abyss. My inspection revealed another and much heavier fall of rock a few yards in, and I realized that without proper tackle further attempts at such excavation would be dangerous. What sort of treasure may be there?

did the whole harbour and the approaches to the river. Retracing our steps down the hillside, we again boarded our launch, and a few minutes later had reached the mangrove swamps that bordered the inner shore of the island. Through these it was necessary to wade ashore, but the journey, though sufficiently unpleasant, was short, for the belt of mangroves proved to be quite narrow, and we were soon on dry land with the Plain of the Brick Building stretching before us.

This so-called Plain proved to be an open sandy space, extending about 375 yards in a north-north-east direction, with a breadth of about 225 yards. On every side except that bordered by the mangrove swamp the Plain was hemmed in by the same thin jungle that covered most of the island; but on the Plain itself the ground was too thickly strewn with brick fragments and potsherds for anything but grass to grow. Near both the southern and northern ends of this area little streams, one of which appeared to have been hollowed out to form an artificial tank, had dug for themselves deep channels in the sandy soil; and the way in which the potsherds of whatever period were mixed up together and here and there piled up in drifts was evidence both of the disturbing action of the Chinese miners who had turned over most of the ground and of the boisterous action of the elements in the very heavy rainy season that this coast experiences during the south-west monsoon. Nevertheless it was this mixed aggregation of potsherds that told us the story of the place, and at once confirmed the truth of the records I have quoted in the last chapter, as well as the precision with which my finger had come to rest on a certain spot on the map in my study in London. For in addition to much



rough domestic pottery and coarse painted ware, which may probably be attributed to the Indian settlers, there was a yellow-glazed Chinese ware of the period of the Six Dynasties (A.D. 220–589); there was a particularly widely travelled type of greenish-glazed Chinese ware of the eighth century which has previously been found at Brahminabad, in Sind, and in the rubbish heaps of Cairo; and, lastly, there was a blue-glazed Islamic ware which probably originated in Southern Persia, and was brought here by Arab traders, also about the eighth century. Thus, though there was no archæological evidence that would definitely confirm that we were on the site of Ptolemy's second-century Takola Mart, the evidence of the potsherds alone confirmed that the place flourished between the third and eighth centuries A.D. A further find of interest was gold-dust in the sand. According to a competent mining engineer, the gold could not have been natural, but must have been used by the ancient people as a medium of exchange.

These finds are sufficient in themselves to enable us to reconstruct a good deal of the ancient history of Takuapa. One can imagine the fringe of mangroves giving place to wooden wharves and the estuary dotted with Chinese junks and Arab dhows at anchor. Then, as in almost modern times, much of the trade would have been carried on by barter from one craft to another, and only those goods were landed which were required by the Indian traders whose wooden houses and stores must have stood in rows on the Plain of the Brick Building. Porcelain from Eastern and Western Asia, as well as silks and many other perishable goods of which no traces can remain in this climate, the Indian traders evidently required both for

themselves and for the people of the interior with whom they traded. And no doubt they gave in exchange both gold and tin, for ancient ingots of smelted tin are frequently dredged up, and there are the remains of many old shaft workings on the mainland opposite. But if these houses and stores were built of wood, what was the nature of the brick building which gave its name to the place? Three mounds, situated near the western edge of the plain, seemed to offer the answer to this question, for it was from them that all the brick fragments scattered about the place appeared to emanate.

The excavation of these mounds occupied us for a fortnight, and revealed the rectangular brick platform of a temple, the temple itself having probably been built partly of timber and roofed with small tiles, of which many were found. On one side a brick approach, bordered by low balustrades and having two small brick antechambers, led up to the temple platform. The latter appeared to have been paved with large flat schist slabs which lay scattered around the main mound. But it was rather disturbing to find no objects in our excavations other than a few Indian beads, and it looked as though the temple must at some time have been looted. Our mortification on this score, however, was short-lived; for, when we thought we had learned all the island had to tell us, in response to certain information we went up the river to a place twelve miles from its mouth, where one of the most curiously interesting sights I have ever experienced awaited us. There in the jungle, a few yards from the river-bank, at the junction of the main river with a tributary, were three large Hindu images, one female and two male, which were partly engulfed by the twin stems of a great forest tree. Pre-



THE THREE IMAGES IN THE TREE ON THE BANK OF THE TAKUAPA RIVER

sumably they had at a remote period been laid on the bank, and at a later time some one had propped them up against the stem of a sapling, which had subsequently grown up and partially enveloped them.

The figures were made of schist, and the smaller male figure certainly represented Śiva, as one could tell by the style of the headdress and the presence of a sculptured human skull, pendent from the right ear. They were all South Indian in style, of purely Indian craftsmanship, and could be dated from the seventh or eighth century. Near the images were lying two or three schist slabs, which I noticed with surprise were of exactly the same size and appearance as those which I had seen at the temple site on the island, and nowhere else. Moreover, one of these slabs bore an inscription in eighth-century Tamil, and commemorated the digging of a tank by a benefactor who had placed it under the protection of a well-known guild of Indian merchants, as well as of the soldiers and the cultivators—that is to say, the three classes of people whom one would expect to find at any early Indian settlement. But this desolate spot in the jungle so many miles up the river, where there was no trace of a settlement, hardly seemed an appropriate place for a guild of merchants to have established themselves in, and one could not imagine anybody's thinking it worth while to build a tank at the junction of two rivers! On the other hand there would seem to have been every need for a tank to store the water on the densely populated island, and, in fact, we had found evidence that one of the streams there had been artificially hollowed out. Moreover, the images were of just the sort that one might have expected to find in the temple by the market-place. There could be no reasonable doubt but

that both the images and the inscription had originated from the island settlement; and they evidently dated from near the close of its long history—perhaps just when it was at its richest, and there were Indian merchants wealthy enough to take delight in improving their adopted home by making presents of tanks to the municipality.

But why, it will be asked, and by whom, were these heavy stone images transported twelve miles up the Takuapa river? The answer to that question, as we shall see, largely supplies the key to the understanding of the greatness of India's cultural achievement beyond the seas; *for if these images had not been carried twelve miles up the Takuapa river, Angkor, in Cambodia, would never have existed!*

CHAPTER IV

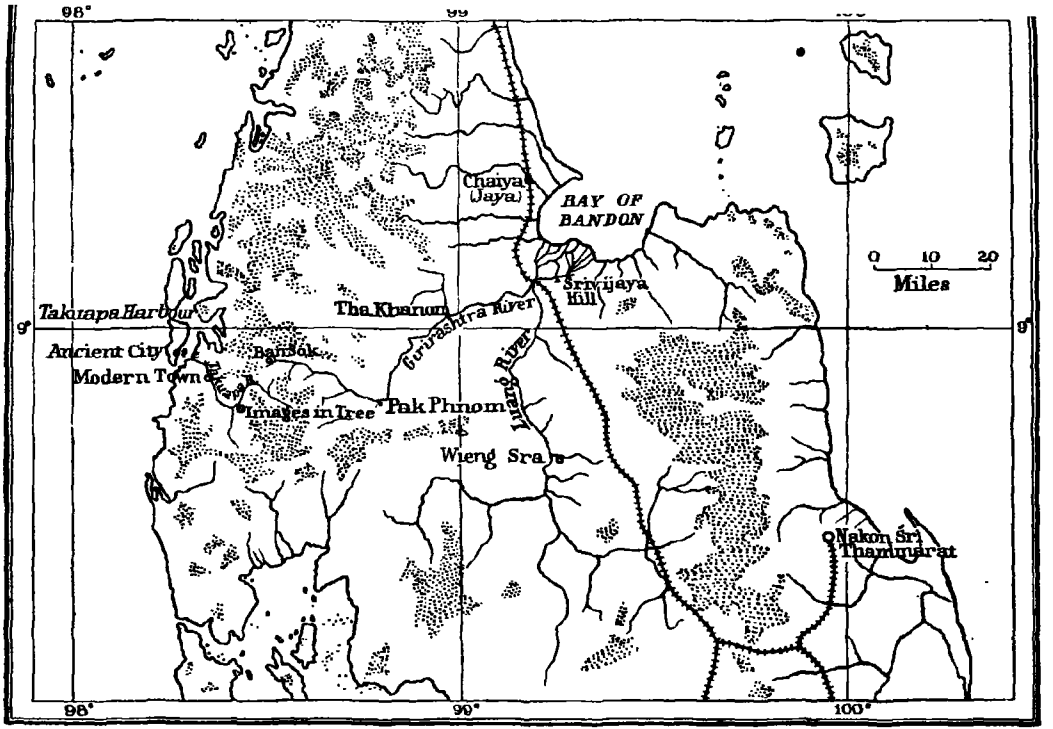
THE TRANSPENINSULAR ROUTE

THE earliest Indian adventurers, as we have seen, made their way to the Malay Peninsula in search of gold and tin, and in course of time they formed mining settlements in the little river valleys. From the first they found it necessary to undertake a certain amount of agriculture for their support, and as the population increased in succeeding generations the necessity of finding room for expansion began to make itself felt. The west coast valleys themselves afforded little relief, hemmed in as they were by towering mountain masses clothed with forbidding jungle, which was repulsive to the Indian dweller in the plains. Quite early, Indian merchants had found their way through the Straits of Malacca, and in their wake there followed the more hardy colonists, who formed settlements as far away from their motherland as the shores of Indo-China and the islands of Indonesia. To some extent these more distant colonies must have offered a means of relieving the congestion in the older settlements on the west coast of the Peninsula. But the relief was only temporary. The brisk traffic that had sprung up through the Straits of Malacca since the arrival of the Indians had proved an incentive to the Malays to develop their naturally predatory instincts at the expense of the peaceful merchantmen; and Fa-hien tells that at the time when he made his homeward voyage to China, early in the fifth century, the quiet waters of the Straits already swarmed

with pirates. Ships were often becalmed there, and then no doubt they were an easy prey to the swarms of piratical *praus* that sallied forth from their lairs in the creeks and mangrove swamps of both the Sumatran and Malay coasts. The Chinese, with their larger and better-built ships and more numerous crews, might succeed in repulsing such attacks; but it seems quite clear that the Indian merchantmen were not equal to the task, and by the end of the fifth century A.D. the pirate menace had obtained a stranglehold on Indian overseas trade and colonization that bid fair to destroy them almost at their inception.

Only thus, it would seem, can we account for the archæological evidence which tells us that by the end of the fifth century the early Indian settlements that had taken root with such promise in the farther Indonesian islands had all died out, temporarily in Java, permanently in Borneo and Celebes. Their communications with their motherland had been cut, and they were not yet strong enough to stand alone. Only the discovery of an alternative route saved Indo-China from sharing the same fate, and ultimately led to Java's receiving a second chance.

The discovery of this alternative route which saved the fate of India beyond the seas seems to have been due to one of those fortuitous sets of geographical circumstances which have more than once played their part in shaping the destiny of mankind. For example, some authorities tell us that the birth of civilization itself was due to the fact that the Nile alone among rivers flooded its banks at the time of year when irrigation made possible the cultivation of the wild barley that grew on its banks and thus induced the earliest Egyptians to forsake their nomadic habits. In the case of the Malay Peninsula the necessary



MAP SHOWING THE TRANSPENINSULAR ROUTE FROM TAKUAPA TO BANDON

and most remarkable combination of circumstances was as follows: Takuapa, as has been mentioned, afforded the best anchorage for ships on the whole west coast, and it was the first point of land reached by east-bound vessels after leaving the Ten Degree Channel. Moreover, it lies exactly opposite the Bay of Bandon, which is the best harbour on the east coast of the Peninsula, sheltered by several large islands from the full force of the north-east monsoon. An even more remarkable fact is that only in this latitude do two rivers run respectively east and west from the watershed, being separated by little more than five miles at their sources, and thus affording an almost continuous waterway across the Peninsula.

An essential condition for the early Indian settlers was sufficient land on which to grow their crops, and if this was the case for the earlier comers in the comparatively limited area of the Takuapa valley, still more was there room for their descendants who crossed over to the fertile plains around the Bay of Bandon—plains watered by more than one broad and navigable river. On the other hand it would appear that the other early Indian settlements which had grown up in the west coast valleys farther south were denied the possibilities of such expansion by reason of the lack of a suitable transpeninsular waterway, and in most cases by the hindrance offered by the great central mountain chain of the Malay Peninsula.

It is interesting to note that the probability of the Indian colonists' having found their way across the Peninsula by some land route or other had occurred to more than one scholar in recent decades. Their methods of arriving at the probable location of such a transpeninsular route were crude in the extreme. The favourite one

seems to have been to glance at the map and fix upon the narrowest place—namely, the much-maligned Isthmus of Kra! But let it be said once and for all that, narrow though it may be, the Isthmus of Kra was no more suited for the passage of ancient Indian colonists than it is or ever will be for the much-talked-of but quite mythical ship canal.

The reason for this emphatic statement is simply that on neither coast does the Isthmus of Kra afford a sheltered anchorage, nor is there sufficient flat ground to have enabled the settlers to grow their crops; for it must be understood that the Indians were not looking primarily for a trade route and means of rapid transhipment of merchandise, but rather for a means of expansion—a much slower and more deliberate process. The fact that there is a road across the Kra Isthmus at the present time, under entirely different conditions and with different objects in view, has no bearing on the matter, and the search for ancient remains that was made in this neighbourhood some years ago proved entirely fruitless.

Other scholars have suggested the use by the Indian colonists of a more northerly route, the well-known Mergui–Prachuab route, which was constantly used by French missionaries and others on their way to the Siamese capital in the seventeenth century; but, although it is true that Mergui affords as good an anchorage as one could desire, the route is lacking in other essentials, has been found to be devoid of all trace of ancient remains, and is much too far north to have attracted the Indian pioneers.

It was about the end of January 1935 that we started eastward from the town of Takuapa, with the intention of following in the footsteps of the Indian colonists. We had

decided that it would be useless to attempt to navigate the river, as the silting process resulting from the activities of the Chinese tin-miners, coupled with the emergence that this part of the Peninsula has undergone in the last thousand years, has made the river impracticable even for the smallest boats except in the height of the rainy season. There is abundant evidence of this shallowing process in the remains of old ships of considerable size that have been found embedded in the mud quite high up the river from time to time, not to mention the figurehead which we had seen in the precincts of the temple at Takuapa. We had therefore decided to cross the watershed on foot, using a jungle path which in places followed the river, but elsewhere cut off corners and necessitated the crossing of several low hill ranges.

We had collected a man who said he knew the way, together with a motley dozen or so of porters and a single baggage elephant. We should have preferred more elephants to the inexperienced porters on whom we had to rely, but these animals are very little used on the west coast, and we were unable to find others. As it was, the elephant was always far in the rear, being the first of its species to follow this track for many years, and the presence of many fallen trees obliged it to make frequent *détours*.

The journey over the watershed occupied three days, and was almost without incident except for the necessity of sending back one of the men who proved to be an opium-smoker, and who collapsed with his load at the first gradient. Some of the other Chinese were much troubled by the leeches which lay in wait for them along the path. Even we, bringing up the rear, did not entirely

escape, but found the application of lighted cigarette-ends a sufficient deterrent. After crossing two or three ranges of foothills we began to make the fairly steep ascent to the summit of the watershed, and here our path eventually became the rocky bed of the almost dry upper reaches of the Takuapa river itself, and we scrambled for half a day over slippery boulders in the twilight of the all-enveloping jungle. Finally our guide led us abruptly aside, and a short but steep climb brought us to the summit of the pass, whence we enjoyed some magnificent views over the jungle-clad heights of the mountainous backbone of the Malay Peninsula.

This was the luxuriant evergreen jungle so dear to the hearts of novelists. Giant forest trees arose on all sides of us, towering above a dense undergrowth, their mighty stems clothed with ferns, orchids, and other epiphytes, their branches festooned with serpent-like lianas, while far above our heads their crowns formed a leafy canopy inhabited by swarms of chattering monkeys. Through this canopy the sun's rays could barely filter, and the coolness of the air was a welcome relief from the burning plains. Game no doubt abounded, but the noise created by our party was calculated to frighten away any animal other than the ubiquitous monkey. Now and then we heard the howling of gibbons, and once or twice caught sight of this agile anthropoid swinging from bough to bough at no great distance.

No sooner were we over the pass than we began a steady descent, and soon the jungle cleared, giving way to an open park-land carpeted with tall grass interspersed with scattered trees. Casting our eyes backward at the forbidding mountains behind us, and then turning once more



The Author's Wife wading across an Upper Reach of the Takutapa River

to the smiling valley spread before our gaze, we could well imagine that the ancient Indians must have rejoiced at what would no doubt have seemed to them to be a Land of Promise. We were now near the sources of the east-flowing river—a river which to this day is called the Giriṛashtra river, a Sanskrit name meaning "the River of the Kingdom of the Mountain," the historical suggestiveness of which we shall see in a later chapter. A few hours' rapid march brought us to the first village on this river and the place at which it becomes navigable.

The name of the village we found was Ban Sok, and we immediately entered into conversation with the headman who had come out to meet us, especially inquiring whether there were any antiquities in the neighbourhood, as I thought it quite possible that, even if no large settlement could have existed so high up the river, there might in ancient times have been something in the nature of a half-way resthouse in the vicinity. One of the porters who accompanied us had already led us up to a large boulder which lay beside the path outside the village, and on which he said there was an inscription, the characters of which resembled those of the eighth-century Tamil inscription at Takuapa; but our examination had proved unavailing. The headman now confirmed that there had, indeed, been an inscription on a stone somewhere in the neighbourhood, but that some years ago it had miraculously disappeared into an abyss! Possibly he knew more about the matter than he cared to say. Nothing else appeared at the time, but I have since heard from a mining inspector that gold-dust, similar to that found on the island at Takuapa and not of local origin, had recently been found near Ban Sok, and this may quite likely have been dropped by traders of old.

That evening we pitched our camp on an open patch of grass near the river-bank and beneath a majestic limestone crag. Soon after we had devoured the usual evening meal of the inevitable chicken the village headman appeared, with an invitation to accompany him to the village, just a few hundred yards away, where a theatrical entertainment was being given at the house of a man who had engaged a wandering troupe of players. I do not remember the nature of the occasion, but probably, as so often happens, the man was fulfilling a vow that if certain circumstances came to pass as he desired he would celebrate by giving a free entertainment to all his neighbours.

The performance was taking place, as we found when we arrived, in the host's garden, and we were invited to take seats on the back stairs of the stilted wooden house, whence we had a good view of the players performing in the centre of a torch-lit ring, around which most of the villagers seemed to have gathered. It struck me as a remarkably fitting introduction to this land of the ancient Indian colonists that no sooner had we crossed the watershed than we were welcomed by this very tangible souvenir of the early contact of this part of the Farther East with the culture of India. For the Lakhon Manora, or simply Nora as it is more frequently called in these parts, is undoubtedly the most ancient form of the theatre surviving anywhere in Greater India, and just as it is definitely the ancestor of the various later evolved forms of the theatre and masked drama, of which every tourist has seen something in Cambodia and Bangkok, so also it is beyond doubt the connecting-link between these and the theatre of India.



LOOKING BACK FROM NEAR BAN SOK AT THE MOUNTAINS OF THE DIVIDE

The Nora now survives in all its purity only in the region around the Bay of Bandon, especially at Nakon Śri Thammarat, and the troupes of players still retain the ancient custom of strolling through all the villages in that neighbourhood. In this way one such troupe had on the occasion of our visit reached even so remote a place as Ban Sok, much to the joy of the villagers, and of us, who had the opportunity of witnessing a theatrical treat rarely seen by Europeans. The Nora troupe always consists of three actors, in addition to a master, who seldom acts himself. It was formerly the rule for men only to act in these troupes, but to-day the rule is often broken, and there was in fact an actress among the trio we witnessed at Ban Sok. Besides the actors there are always the accompanying musicians and an equal number of singers, who form a semicircle around the mat on which the action takes place. There is a total absence of any effort at scenic effects, but the players wear crowns and other highly decorative attire, including long, pointed, false finger-nails, which, except for the latter speciality, found only in the Nora troupes, are somewhat reminiscent of the well-known dancing costume of Siam and Cambodia, though far more primitive in character. In the same way the dances are also of a very primitive type: in fact, only a dozen different postures are known, but these require an immense amount of early training. Far nearer to ancient India did I feel that evening as I sat before this quaint village entertainment than I had ever done when witnessing the more elaborate and highly evolved displays of the royal dramatic troupes of the capitals of Siam and Cambodia; and here is the theme of the play, an episode of which they acted, *The Story of the Lady Manora*:

Once upon a time King Adityavamsha and Queen Chandradevi were reigning in the country of Uttarapanchala. They had a son who was none other than an incarnation of the Bodhisattva [Buddha in one of his earlier births]. The son was called Sundara Kumara because he possessed a precious bow. Now in this country near a lake there opened a cavern which was the entrance to the underworld, and the King of the Nagas [serpents of the nether regions] used to come up and indulge in fasting and meditation on the banks of this lake under the shade of a great tree. The frequent presence in these parts of the Naga King was a source of prosperity to the country, and every year, in his honour, the people celebrated solemn ceremonies. The neighbouring country, on the contrary, was struck with a cruel dearth of rice and betel, and the King, whose name was Panchala, being smitten with jealousy, meditated the capture of the Naga King, hoping thus to secure the benefits of his presence for his own domains. A Brahman who was clever at the art of sorcery was charged with this difficult undertaking, and, going to the mouth of the cavern, he pronounced some incantations which had the effect of bringing the Naga King to the surface. On seeing the Brahman the Naga understood at once the nature of the former's intentions, and quickly returned to his subterranean empire; but he was unable to resist the Brahman's charms, and, obliged to return, he profited by the momentary absence of the Brahman to turn himself into a hermit. He then installed himself, in a meditating posture, on the bank of the lake.

Just at this time a hunter named Boon, an inhabitant of Uttarapanchala, was searching the jungle for game. He happened to come this way, and the false hermit revealed himself to him and asked for aid. Boon, like all the people of the country, was a strong devotee of the cult of the Naga; and so when the sorcerer came back he seized him, made

him break the spell, and then killed him. The Naga in gratitude invited the hunter to follow him to his subterranean empire, and gave him half of it. At the end of seven days' reign Boon felt homesick for his former life, and so he gave back to the Naga King his part of the kingdom and took leave of him. His host agreed to let him go, but not without covering him with riches, nor without promising him to come to his aid when he should have need of it. Boon returned to the land of men and continued his life of hunting and adventure.

One day, when pursuing his prey, he reached the forests of the Himavant [the Indian fairy land in the Himalayas], and arrived at a lake from which issued the sound of voices and laughter. He approached, hiding himself behind some mounds, and saw seven beautiful young girls sporting in the water. When their games were finished the seven virgins dressed themselves once more in plumage which made them look like birds. In fact, they took to flight and disappeared into the air. A hermit, who had his hut not far from there, told the hunter Boon that these strange beings were Kinnaris [bird-women], and that they came every seven days to bathe in the lake. Boon had been struck by their beauty; and as a loyal subject he thought of capturing one of them to offer as a bride to his master Prince Sundara. He told the hermit of his intention, but the latter was amazed at his temerity, because, he said, only a Naga could capture a Kinnari.

The hunter remembered the promises which the Naga King had made him, and, going back to the Naga's subterranean kingdom, obtained from him, not without difficulty, a kind of magic lasso made from the flexible body of a Naga. And then Boon returned to the forests of the Himavant to accomplish his design. Now these Kinnari maidens were the seven twin sisters, the daughters of King Lotus and Queen

Moon, who reigned on the borders of the Himavant. Their favourite pleasures were every seven days to fly to the lake to bathe in its cooling waters. But just at this time a divine had predicted some terrible dangers to be threatening Manora, one of the young girls. Her distracted mother, wishing to prevent her from leaving home, prayed her for once to give up her bathing in the distant lake. Prayers, menaces—nothing would break the obstinacy of Manora; so the Queen then took up a stick and forced the disobedient child to give up her plumage. But during the night, with the complicity of one of her sisters, Manora stole it from her mother's room, dressed herself, and flew towards the lake, where Boon was watching.

There was more playing, sporting, and laughing in the delicious water. Suddenly Manora felt herself paralysed, her legs were seized as in a vice, and she was sinking as she called her sisters to her help. But the first to come near saw above the water the head of a Naga looking at her with his red eyes. Terrified, she fled to the bank, followed by the other Kinnaris, who put on their wings and tails in haste and, abandoning their sister, flew towards their paternal home.

From the bank the hunter Boon observed his success with pleasure. He collected the feathery ornaments of Manora and put them in his bag, then he ordered the Naga to liberate the young girl, who, having reached *terra firma*, prayed the hunter to give her back her wings; she did all she could to persuade the hunter—tears, tricks, and promises. But Boon ordered her to follow him, and against her will she had to obey. She suffered cruelly on the journey through the thorny jungle, over the rough ground—she who was used to flying through the air. At last, after a long march through the forest, they arrived at the royal city. Boon went to offer his captive to Prince Sundara, who fell in love with her at first sight. The marriage was celebrated

with great magnificence, and the couple lived happily for some time to come.

Now there was at the royal palace a Brahman who held the office of Grand Almoner, and who wished his son to inherit the dignity; but one day he heard Prince Sundara promise this office to a young nobleman with whom he was playing chess. The Brahman from that time nourished a violent hatred against the Prince and resolved to avenge himself.

A war broke out, and Prince Sundara left at the head of his troops. While he was away, gaining victory afar off, his father the King had a dream in which he saw his entrails jump out of his body and surround the universe. Waking up with a start, he sent for the Grand Almoner and asked the meaning of his dream. The Brahman, instead of interpreting it, in accordance with the codes, as a presage of power and happiness, pretended to see in it the prophecy of some terrible calamities. The evil could only be averted, he said, by a great sacrifice: it would be necessary to sacrifice a hundred quadrupeds, a hundred bipeds, and a hundred human beings of every race; and he ordered that during the holocaust the King must retire into a solitary room and that no one must go near him. The frightened King agreed to all the conditions, and the Brahman then demanded that Manora be included in the sacrifice. Under the threat of these terrible misfortunes, the King, his spirit broken, gave his consent, and then isolated himself in accordance with the directions of the Almoner.

Now a servant by chance heard these proposals, and she ran quickly to inform Manora. The latter, terrified, ran to implore the protection of the Queen, who went and tried to change her husband's mind, but as the result of the orders that had been given no one could approach the King, and she had to resign herself. Manora, however, thought of a

ruse. She prayed the Queen to grant her a last boon: she wished before dying to make herself look pretty once more, and dress herself for the last time in the beloved ornaments and feathers which Boon had stolen. The Queen did not wish to refuse, and she had the Kinnari's attributes brought to her. Manora dressed herself up in them once more, and began to dance in her most graceful style in order to show her thanks to the Queen. But when the Brahman came to look for her in order to conduct her to the sacrifice she flew through the window and went off in the direction of her father's kingdom.

Before reaching there she stopped at the dwelling of a hermit, to whom she told her story and entrusted with a mission to Prince Sundara, because she realized that her husband would not fail to go and look for her. The hermit was to dissuade him of this design, and counsel him to return to his palace, forget Manora, and take other wives. But in case the Prince was obstinate, then the hermit was to give him Manora's ring and scarf as well as some philtres with which to triumph over the numerous dangers that awaited him.

Manora arrived at her parents' home, and they received her with joy. However, in order not to cause discord between the Kinnaris and his other subjects, the Gandharvas [heavenly minstrels], the King ordered the girl to wait outside the city for seven years, seven months, and seven days, and thus she would be able to get rid of the odour of humanity she brought with her. After this time she could join her sisters and live with them as before.

When Prince Sundara returned victoriously to his fatherland and learned of the flight of his spouse he resolved to go and look for her at once. He wandered for a long time, and arrived one day at the hut of the hermit, who did his best to dissuade him from his dangerous quest, but in vain. And

so he gave him the objects that Manora had confided to him.

After numerous adventures Prince Sundara came at last to the country of the Kinnaris just at the end of the seventh year, the seventh month, and the seventh day—that is to say, at the moment when Manora was able to re-enter her father's city. On seeing her husband she realized that she had always loved him, and she asked her father to consent to the union. The Prince had to submit to some difficult tests, over which he easily triumphed, in the presence of the assembled Kinnaris and Gandharvas. He bent without difficulty a bow which a thousand persons by a common effort were unable to bend; and he lifted without difficulty an enormous rock. But the last test was the most delicate: he had to recognize Manora from among the seven twin Kinnaris, all absolutely alike. The Prince hesitated for a long time, then in desperation he implored the god Indra to help him. The King of Gods came to his aid, changing himself into a golden fly, which hovered for a while and then alighted on Manora's hair. Thus Sundara was enabled to recognize his spouse, and the King of the Kinnaris allowed them to live together thenceforward.[1]

Of course, the play is too long to be enacted in a single evening; only an episode or two can be attempted on any one occasion. But what matters that, when every one is familiar with every incident in detail, has seen the play over and over again, and in most cases has seen no other play? To the simple dweller in the villages of this part of the Peninsula 'Nora' is synonymous with 'theatre'; and even in such a town as Nakon Śri Thammarat itself, where the competition of Western forms of entertainment

[1] *Le Lakhon Nora, ou Lakhon Chatri, et les Origines du Théâtre Classique Siamois*, by R. Nicolas, in the *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. xviii, Part 2.

has obtained a strong footing, Nora is far from being neglected, and the age-old tale about "the path of true love" still moves hearts both young and old, just as to the early Indian Argonauts this story which they brought with them meant the breath of adventure and of life itself.

CHAPTER V

A LAND OF PROMISE

As soon as we had arrived at Ban Sok I had been anxious to send back the men who had come with us from Takuapa, as no love is lost between the dwellers on either side of the divide, each having the very worst opinion of the other, and I was afraid that a dispute of some sort might arise if the men of Takuapa made a prolonged stay in this peaceful but to them highly objectionable little village. Accordingly I dismissed them as soon as I found that the village headman could supply us with boats and men with which to continue our journey. Next morning these were duly produced. There appeared to be only four boats available, and as one leaked too badly to make the journey we were obliged to pack ourselves, our cook, and our boy, and all our baggage into three diminutive boats. In our boat we found that when we were seated absolutely still our gunwales were scarcely an inch above the water-line, and as it also leaked slightly and we were told that a considerable number of rapids had to be negotiated we looked forward to the possibility of some minor adventures on the four days' journey which would carry us to a lower reach where we should be able to obtain larger boats.

In the rainy season there would be no great difficulty in making the journey, even as a thousand years or so ago the Indian pioneers would have experienced no difficulty at any time of year. As it was, our three boats were

continually getting stuck, and this necessitated the boatmen's laboriously digging out passages for them with their hands. Frequently we had to bale furiously, and at the more definite rapids we had to wade while the boats were warped through by hand, but the skill of the boatmen and the shallowness of the water were such that no untoward incidents occurred. Nor was their skill confined to navigation; now and then one of the men would strike with his pole a large fish that he saw in the water beneath him. Immediately another man would lightly jump overboard and, diving below the surface, secure the stunned fish.

The scenery was very beautiful.[1] Here and there rose gigantic limestone ranges or isolated massifs, round which the river wound its way in its continuous search for a lower level. Sometimes we passed close beneath perpendicular walls of limestone, high up in which there appeared to be caverns where our boatmen were wont to point out to us natural images of the Buddha or of Hindu deities. To us far below some of the resemblances appeared remarkably lifelike, and so they must have been to Indian merchants and missionaries who first beheld them as they ventured to enter an unknown land, and no doubt saw in them an inspiration to continue.

Villages were few and far between, but wherever we spoke to the inhabitants they told us of a local tradition that this was the route by which the Indians had first come from the west, bringing their ancient civilization with them. Except around these villages there was little open land, and the dense jungle often came down so close to the river-bank that we were compelled to pitch our tent at night on sandbanks. It does not appear that the upper

[1] *See frontispiece.*

portion of the Girirashtra valley was ever extensively cultivated; it would have been too narrow for the Indians to form settlements of any size.

At Amphur Pak Phnom we reached the first Government post on this river, a village that differed little from those we had already passed except for the offices and house of the Nai Amphur, or Siamese District Officer, who had jurisdiction over all the territory through which we had passed after leaving the watershed. He proved to be an elderly official of the delightful old school who, having been warned in advance of our intended visit, had prepared a typewritten list of what he thought were the local places of interest. Armed with this, and dressed up in his best attire, he stood awaiting us on his landing-stage, his assistants standing respectfully in the rear. The dignity of this reception by the Nai Amphur and the minor officials seemed rather out of keeping with the humility of our procession of three tiny boats, not to mention our rather unkempt appearance. However, he escorted us to his veranda, soda-water and cigars were produced, and, after the old official had inquired about our journey and the help afforded by his headmen up the river, he begged leave to ask a favour. Observing that we had a camera with us, he remarked that he had always longed to be photographed. Would we be so good as to take his photograph with all his children? We said it would give us great pleasure, and, an alarm having been sounded, children came running from all directions. A family group was straightway arranged, with the proud and beaming old gentleman in the middle of it.

We made only a short halt at Pak Phnom, and towards dusk camped on the river-bank. Next day we reached a

larger village, almost a town in fact, with something of a market and the offices of another Amphur, who had a smaller but more densely inhabited area under his jurisdiction. Situated at the junction of a considerable tributary, Tha Khanon has a name which signifies that in the old days it was a centre for the collection of that antiquated source of revenue the inland transit dues. Naturally it was not convenient to pitch our tent in such a populous place, and so we asked the Nai Amphur, who also came down to meet us and was likewise possessed of a large family, if we could rent housing accommodation for the night. Courteously he waved aside such a suggestion, and, conducting us to his own house, offered us a corner of his obviously already overcrowded upper story. We felt rather relieved when, just at that moment, another official who was present suggested as an alternative that we should make ourselves at home in a new house of his which was, he said, in an advanced state of construction. Though, in fact, it still lacked doors and window-frames, we much appreciated having it all to ourselves.

At Tha Khanon we were able to transfer ourselves into larger boats, and hardly had we set forth in them, a mile below the village, when we made a discovery which seemed to bring us into close touch with the early Indian colonizers. A few yards from the river-bank there was a large limestone cave which had been transformed into a temple in accordance with a very prevalent custom in Indo-China. There were the usual rows of crude Siamese Buddhist images of no great age, which did not excite our interest much; but just as we were about to leave the local guardian beckoned us confidentially into a secret pocket in the interior of the cave. With a lighted candle he

showed us a little altar on which was placed a much venerated image of a Hindu deity. Covered as it was with layers of whitewash, it yet retained its early Indian characteristics, and it may well have dated from the very earliest period of the influx of Indian civilization and back to the time when this cave, so close to the great natural highway, had first suggested its use as a temple.

Not far away there is a spot in the river-bed where they say fishermen sometimes bring up with their catches ancient gold ornaments, which are said to be part of the treasure carried off from Takuapa by the seventeenth-century Siamese King Narai, who was obliged to send an expedition to sack that insubordinate dependency. On the return journey one of his heavily laden boats foundered with its spoil, and, though I have not seen any of the gold objects said to have been recovered by the local peasants, it is quite possible that some of them are of ancient Indian origin—in fact, just the sort of treasure that may still lie hidden in the mysterious cave at Takuapa.

We had by this time left the scenic upper reaches behind us, with their bold outcrops of limestone. The now broad and sluggish river was wending its way through a wide, fertile district where the more numerous and larger villages and wider stretches of gardens and *padi* land presented an appearance of peaceful prosperity. Even the wilder parts were clothed only with a low secondary jungle growth, and one had the impression of travelling through a land that had for many centuries been the home of settled and civilized man. Shortly before it empties itself into the Bay of Bandon the Girirashtra river is joined by an even larger stream, the Luang, flowing from the south, and it is the combined drainage area of the two

considerable rivers that offered the Indian colonists, freed from the cramped quarters of the west coast, a Land of Promise indeed. Actually the immediate shores of the Bay of Bandon, at the point where it receives the combined outflow of these two rivers, are low and marshy, and covered with dense forest, which was exactly the sort of terrain that Indian colonists always avoided. Hence it is we find that the ancient settlements in this broader east coast region are situated eccentrically, either to the north or to the south of the Bay.

It is in these ancient cities that, during the four centuries which followed the opening of the overland route about A.D. 400, there took place an evolution from the purely Indian artistic styles which the colonists had brought with them from India to a more developed colonial form. As we shall see in later chapters, this was in its turn spread abroad throughout the Farther East. Wave after wave of colonists poured across this route during these four centuries, each wave bringing with it the contemporary art of India. When we come to investigate more closely the ruined cities round the Bay of Bandon we shall do something to analyse these successive influences, the cumulative effect of which made possible Angkor and the Borobodur. At the moment, however, we will content ourselves with stepping aside to examine the site of just one ancient city, which is almost certainly the first settlement made by the Indians after they had reached this region. Actually it is not on the Girirashtra river at all, but near the right bank of the Luang.

This ancient settlement is known nowadays as Wieng Sra ("the City of the Lake"), and may well have been the first capital of a small Indian state which occupied the part

of the Malay Peninsula traversed by the overland route, and was known to the Chinese as P'an-p'an. The early Chinese chronicles tell us that this state sent a number of embassies to the imperial Court at various times during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, and they give us the following further particulars:

> They all learn Brahmanical writings, and pay great reverence to the Buddha's Law. . . . There are temples of Buddhist and Brahman priests. The Buddhist priests eat flesh, but do not drink wine. The Brahman priests take neither wine nor flesh. . . . At the king's Court one sees many Brahmans come from India in order to profit by his munificence. They are in high favour with him. . . .[1]

It would thus appear that P'an-p'an was the resort of the adherents of both the Hindu religion and the Buddhist, and that, as seems to have been the case in most of the Indian colonies, it was a place of religious toleration, a deduction which is borne out by the archæological evidence.

Wieng Sra was found to be situated in dense secondary jungle a quarter of a mile to the east of the Luang river, and its location seems undoubtedly to have been chosen on account of its strong strategic position. It is bordered on two sides by a small tributary of the main river and a lake which has given the place its local name, a moat and mound having been considered necessary to complete the enclosure on the other two sides of the rectangle only. We pitched our tent on the one open space available, the dry bed of the lake, and then cut a passage through the thick, thorny jungle to the centre of the enclosure, where

[1] G. H. Luce, in the *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. xiv, Part II, pp. 170–172.

we were told by local natives several stone statues had been found leaning against a tree. These statues were representations of Hindu deities dating from rather later in the history of P'an-p'an than the earliest period with which we are at the moment concerned. Of primary interest, however, was a small stone bas-relief which I found in the roots of a tree when I was engaged in excavating the brick base of what had once been the central shrine of the city—in fact, the only building of which we found any remains at this site. This little relief —it measured only seven inches in height—was a figure of the Buddha in purely Indian style of the Gupta period, and might be dated fifth-century. It may have been made locally by an immigrant Indian craftsman, but, considering its small size, it seems more probable that it was brought here from India by the colonists. In any case, its presence here on the eastern side of the Malay Peninsula came to us as an impressive testimony of the early passage of Indian culture across this route.

Apart from stony relics of the past there still exists in the Bay of Bandon region a living link with the early days of Indian colonization. Even on the west coast one sees occasionally an individual who bears an Indian cast of features, but beyond the watershed there are still a number of families at Patalung and Nakon Śri Thammarat in whose veins runs the blood of Brahmans from India; though, since no female Brahman ever accompanied the men, it follows that the Indian strain is somewhat attenuated. At Patalung the Brahmans seem to be on the verge of melting into the Siamese peasant stock, which forms the main element of the population, because they never perform any ceremonial functions; but at Nakon Śri



Sand stone figure of Buddha



A Brahman at Nakon Sri Thammarat

Thammarat they still have three little temples where until recently they carried on a daily ritual, and until some years ago the now deserted swing-posts were used for an annual Swinging Rite.[1] When I visited the place there remained only two Brahmans in charge of these temples, with little to do but draw a modest pension from the Government. To learn more of the curious ritual of the Brahmans one must go to Bangkok, where a considerable body of them is still retained to take part in the royal ceremonies. These Court Brahmans have been recruited from Nakon Śri Thammarat from time to time to serve at the capitals of Siam during the centuries since their ancestors arrived from India. But a history which they have in their possession purports to show that they arrived from India as late as the thirteenth century; and so it is unlikely that many of those who now live in Siam can trace their descent from the early Indian colonists, though they represent a survival of the early tradition by which every Indian king maintained a number of members of the priestly caste at his Court. The Siamese Court Brahmans still wear their hair in a *chignon*, and don a white ceremonial robe of Indian origin on State occasions. Since the State religion of Siam is Buddhist the somewhat paradoxical situation arises whereby young Brahmans, like all Siamese youths, must pass the usual short period as Buddhist novices in some monastery, though the remainder of their lives is dedicated to the performance of Hindu ceremonies in connexion with the life of the Court. Another result of their being Buddhists as well as Brahmans is that they may not carry out animal sacrifices, for to the Buddhist the taking of life is a primary sin. The Court Brahmans possess some

[1] See p. 79.

ceremonial treatises written in corrupt Sanskrit in a South Indian character. Nowadays none of them understands Sanskrit; but a hundred and fifty years or so ago there were learned Brahmans at the Siamese Court who really did understand that language. Besides the carrying out of ceremonies and the drawing of omens they were called upon to give their advice on matters concerning the government of the realm. Their position was considerably nearer to that of the powerful caste of Brahmans who well-nigh overshadowed the power of the throne and of the warrior caste in ancient India, and those of them who migrated overseas continued to exercise a considerable control over the affairs of the Indian colonies. Only in recent centuries did the extreme development of royal despotism in Siam and other states of Indo-China reduce the position of the Brahmans to the inferior level which they have occupied in modern times.

Like the Brahmans of Nakon Śri Thammarat, those at Bangkok have three small temples in one enclosure, and these are dedicated respectively to Vishnu, Śiva, and the elephant-headed god Ganesha, son of Śiva. On altars within these temples are bronze and stone images of the respective deities in Indian style, though not of any great antiquity. It is at the coronation that the Court Brahmans exercise their most important functions, for the Siamese kings, though Buddhist, have always surrounded themselves with much Hindu ritual, the better to maintain the pomp which goes with divine kingship. On the occasion of the royal installation it is the Brahman high priests of Vishnu and Śiva who hand to the king the lustral water with which he sprinkles himself, since none other than the king himself is high enough to perform the actual rite.

In the same way these Brahman priests hand the king the various articles of the regalia which symbolize his deification, including the tapering, flame-like crown, which again can actually be placed on his head only by the king himself.

Coronations, however, are rare events, and the foreign visitor is more likely to have an opportunity of seeing something of the Court Brahmans as they carry out their age-old functions at one of the varied State ceremonies which mark the passage of the different seasons of the year; though such opportunities have diminished considerably as a result of the recent rapid political transformation of Siam, and even as I write of them it may be that many of these ancient rites have already been performed for the last time. Undoubtedly the most striking of the great ceremonies of the year is the Swinging Rite, which takes place annually about Christmas-time. In the centre of an open plaza near the Brahman temples there stands the giant swing, similar to but larger than that at Nakon Śri Thammarat, its great red-painted masts of teak-wood soaring a good eighty feet into the air. The swinging ceremony was originally a solar rite, designed to persuade Surya, the Sun God, to continue his functions, and as such may be traced back to Vedic times in India. Later Śiva, the destroyer, seems to have taken the place of the half-forgotten Sun God; and then in later times there grew up in Siam the idea that the swinging ceremony was designed to entertain both Śiva and Vishnu during their annual visit to the earth, when they elect to spend a fortnight enjoying the hospitality of the Brahmans at their temples at Bangkok. On the occasion of the arrival of the gods their images are carried in procession through the streets

of the capital, and the Brahmans begin a long series of nightly rites within the temple precincts, during which the gods are propitiated with meaningless stanzas from the corrupt Brahmanical books, and by more material offerings in the shape of fruits brought by the devout and devoured later on by the priests. But the spectacular part of the ceremony, beloved of the tourist, is the actual swinging, when the *rôle* of Śiva is acted by a nobleman, chosen for the occasion by the king. He comes in procession dressed with every appropriate godlike attribute, and who for three days is—or, rather, used to be, before his privileges were curtailed—regarded as a kind of temporary king. Surrounded by a bevy of 'sprites' from the nether regions and by the officiating Brahman priests, he takes up his position in a pavilion near the swing-posts and watches a number of young men dressed as Nagas, or many-headed snakes, being swung backward and forward in the swing-cradle, while one of them endeavours to catch with his teeth a bag of money suspended from a bamboo pole at a suitable distance. This performance is repeated thrice, much to the amusement of the crowd. The Nagas then descend from the swing and perform a ritual dance round a large brass bowl of consecrated water, with which water they end up by sprinkling themselves by means of buffalo horns.

Another equally popular rite in which the Brahmans play a prominent part is that of the First Ploughing, which takes place annually on a piece of Crown property reserved for that purpose just before the general commencement of the ploughing season. A very similar ploughing festival took place in ancient times in India. On this occasion in Siam it is the custom for the Minister

of Agriculture, also dressed as a god or temporary king, to guide the ceremonial plough, drawn by a pair of highly decorated oxen and followed by a number of old ladies, clad in ancient Siamese costume, who scatter from their baskets the consecrated seed rice. After the ploughing the oxen are unyoked and are offered several varieties of food. From their choice the Brahmans foretell the nature of the coming harvest. The ceremony over, the onlookers, including many farmers who have come up specially from the provinces, dash on to the field to collect as many grains of the magic seed as they can. It is said that this, when mixed with their own seed rice, is the best possible fertilizer.

Though we have had to look to the capital of modern Siam to see the survival of this ancient Hindu Court ritual, we must not forget that it was from the eastern end of the Transpeninsular Route that these Brahmans and their ancestors have been recruited—that remarkable area of Indian cultural evolution and effusion that lay around the Bay of Bandon. Nor is Brahmanic ritual the only feature of social life in modern Siam and Cambodia that can be traced from this source. As we have seen, there is good reason to believe that the Siamese and Cambodian classical theatre has its proximate origin at Nakon Śri Thammarat, and the curious shadow-plays, in which scenes from the great Indian epic the *Ramayana*, cut out of buffalo hide, are projected upon a screen, seem to come from Patalung.

CHAPTER VI

FU-NAN AND THE COMING OF KAUNDINYA

It has been mentioned in Chapter II that the foundation of the first Indianized kingdom in Indo-China is attributed by the Chinese to a certain Indian prince named Kaundinya, who arrived in the first century A.D. and after a brisk exchange with the natives espoused their queen Willow-leaf and set himself up as their ruler. This kingdom became known to the Chinese as Fu-nan, which occupied at first what we now call Cochin-China, around the mouths of the great river Mekong. What little we know of the early history of Fu-nan we owe entirely to the Chinese chronicles translated by the French sinologue Paul Pelliot. It seems that the son of Kaundinya and Queen Willow-leaf was heir to but seven towns, and that even their allegiance was obtained only by force. In the third century, however, the succession passed to a general named Fan-man, of whom it is said that

> he was brave and able, and by force he reduced to submission the neighbouring kingdoms. All their rulers became his vassals, and he himself assumed the title of "Great King of Fu-nan." He extended his territory by five or six thousand *li*.[1] Then he wished to conquer the Golden Frontier [Burma or the Malay Peninsula]; but he fell ill.[2]

[1] A *li* has varied greatly according to the period, and no certain distance can be attributed to it.

[2] From the translation by P. Pelliot, in his work *Le Fou-nan*, in *Bulletin de l' École Française d' Extrême-Orient*, vol. iii (1903).

Soon after, about A.D. 225, he died, but the empire had been extended to include many vassal states, stretching to the borders of Burma and well down into the Malay Peninsula. Many of the names of these vassal states are recorded in Chinese form, but it is difficult to identify them.

Another general, named Fan Chan, now usurped the throne, and it so happened that during his reign an Indian monk reached Fu-nan whose tales aroused the King's interest to such an extent that he resolved to send an ambassador to India to find out more about that country. After a long journey of more than a year the ambassador reached the Court of some Indian ruler, who was surprised at his appearance, and exclaimed, "What! There exist such men on the shores of the farthest seas!" The ambassador was shown over the kingdom, and the Indian king afterwards sent an embassy in return. The interest of this occurrence lies in the evidence it affords that the coming of Prince Kaundinya had made little lasting impression on Fu-nan, and that, after a lapse of two hundred years, the peoples of India and Fu-nan as yet knew little of each other.

Shortly before his death King Fan Chan sent, in A.D. 243, an embassy to China, and about two years later his successor welcomed the first embassy from China that Fu-nan had ever received. It is from the book written by the head of the mission on his return to China that we get the first detailed account of Fu-nan—or, rather, from extracts from it quoted by later historians, for the book itself has disappeared. And what we learn from this source confirms our belief that the culture of India had not as yet made any deep impression on the people of Fu-nan. For it seems that one of the Chinese ambassadors

was constrained to remark to the new king, Fan Siun by name, "The kingdom indeed is beautiful, but it is strange that the men are so indecent." It appears that in accordance with the custom set up by Queen Willow-leaf, though the women continued to wrap themselves in something like a sheet, the men had still no clothing. As a result of this Fan Siun issued an edict forbidding the men to go naked.

Further particulars of Fu-nan at this period, based on the ambassador's book, are as follows:

> The territory is 3000 *li* in width. There are walled cities, palaces, and houses. The men are ugly and black, and their hair is curly. They go about naked and bare-footed. They are simple and do not steal. They resort to agriculture. Besides, they are fond of engraving ornaments and of chiselling. Many of the utensils which they use for taking their meals are of silver. Taxes are paid in gold, silver, pearls, and perfumes. They have books and archives. Their alphabet resembles that of the Hou [a Central Asiatic tribe which had the Indian alphabet].[1]

For the remainder of the third century and during the fourth we hear little more of Fu-nan than that it sent two more embassies to China, accompanying one of them with a present of tame elephants. The latter, however, were returned, as it was feared that they might harm the subjects of the emperor.

It was about the end of the fourth century that there occurred an event which forms a landmark of the highest importance in the history of Fu-nan and in the whole subsequent development of Indian cultural expansion. This was the coming of one of the greatest reformers of all

[1] P. Pelliot, *loc. cit.*

time, in the person not merely of an adventurous prince, but of a learned Indian Brahman, whose name, strangely enough, was also Kaundinya. In the words of the Chinese historian,

> Kaundinya, a Brahman from India, heard a supernatural voice calling to him: "You must go and reign in Fu-nan." Kaundinya rejoiced in his heart and reached P'an-p'an, which is to the south. The people of Fu-nan heard of him; the whole kingdom was stirred with joy; they came to him and chose him king. *He changed all the rules according to the methods of India.*[1]

That is all we know of Kaundinya, but seldom do ancient Chinese records tell us so much that we want to know in such short space. Here we have hard facts, which are amply borne out by the results of recent archæological exploration; and these brief lines tell us in a nutshell how it was that the salvation of the early Indian colonization of Indo-China was brought about as a result of the discovery of the Transpeninsular Route. For P'an-p'an, as we have seen, was the Chinese name of the little Indian state which spanned the Malay Peninsula on either side of the Transpeninsular Route; and it was almost certainly by this time a vassal state of the kingdom of Fu-nan. Kaundinya's arrival in Fu-nan *via* P'an-p'an, just before the time when Fa-hien tells us that piracy was a menace to shipping in the Straits of Malacca, affords definite evidence of the penetration of Indo-China by an invigorating stream of Indian cultural influence just in time to prevent it from sharing the temporary or permanent eclipse that was so soon to overtake the young Indian colonies in the islands of Java, Borneo, and Celebes.

[1] P. Pelliot, *loc. cit.*

At first one wonders how it was that this stranger from India was so spontaneously accepted by the people of Fu-nan as their king; but when it is remembered that interest in India had probably been growing since King Fan Chan sent his ambassador there in the middle of the third century this no longer seems so remarkable, especially as Kaundinya bore the name of the first Indian colonist to reach those shores. Moreover, there is more than a possibility that the kingdom of Fu-nan was in a state of anarchy during the last half of the fourth century, for the embassy dispatched to China with the tame elephants in A.D. 347 was sent by a man "calling himself king." It is not unlikely that the Brahman Kaundinya was aware of the state of affairs in Fu-nan, and had a shrewd idea that he would be received with open arms.

The following extracts from the Chinese chronicles give a fairly lucid picture of conditions in Fu-nan in the last quarter of the fifth century, when the empire was at the height of its power, and indicate the transformation in the customs of the country accomplished by the efforts of Kaundinya:

> For merchandise they have gold, silver, and silks. Persons of high degree dress in brocade, the women wearing also a kind of turban. The poor people wear pieces of cloth. The people of Fu-nan make rings and bracelets of gold and vessels of silver. They cut down trees to make dwellings. and the king lives in a storied pavilion. They build palisades of wood, and the people live in houses raised from the ground. They make boats with the bows and sterns shaped like the heads and tails of fish. When the king goes out he rides on an elephant; and the women also ride elephants. For amusement they make cocks and pigs fight. They have

no prisons. In case of dispute they throw rings and eggs into hot water, which must be picked out; or a red-hot chain must be carried seven paces. The innocent party remains unharmed.[1]

Elsewhere we are told that

they adore the genii of heaven. Of these divinities they make images of bronze; some of them have two faces and four arms, others have four faces and eight arms. In each hand something is held. . . . The king squats sideways, raising the right knee, letting fall the left knee to the ground [the royal position in India]. They spread before him a piece of cotton cloth on which they place golden vessels and censers. For mourning the custom is to shave the beard. There are four methods of disposing of the dead: (1) throwing the dead body into a flowing stream, (2) burning it to ashes, (3) burying it in the ground, (4) exposing it to the birds.[1]

From these extracts, especially the references to trial by ordeal and the existence of images of Hindu deities, it is clear that we have now to deal with a fully organized Indian state, civilized not only through the medium of the second Kaundinya, but by the stream of colonists of the priestly and warrior castes who accompanied and followed him across the Transpeninsular Route and still, no doubt, kept up a lively communication with their homeland.

The names of several of the second Kaundinya's descendants are known. In the first place, a stone inscription has been discovered in Cochin-China which records the consecration of a sanctuary devoted to the Hindu god Vishnu by a king named Gunavarman, who is described as a

[1] P. Pelliot, *loc. cit.*

descendant of Kaundinya—in fact, "the very moon of the Kaundinya dynasty." He seems to have been reigning in the middle of the fifth century or a little later. One of his successors was named Kaundinya Jayavarman, who, we know from Chinese sources, sent an Indian monk to the Chinese imperial Court in A.D. 484 to present a memorial, which naturally began with a panegyric to the emperor as a patron of Buddhism (it seems that both Buddhism and Hinduism flourished in Fu-nan), and then went on to ask the emperor's aid in repulsing the attacks of the pugnacious Indian state of Champa, which occupied the coastal valleys of Southern Annam. Champa had acquired its Indian civilization as early as Fu-nan or earlier, and spent most of its long but difficult existence in a constant struggle for life against the larger and more powerful states that harried it on the north and south. We shall see more of Champa's by no means negligible cultural achievements in a later chapter.

So far as the present incursion of the Chams into Fu-nan is concerned, it seems that the emperor listened to Jayavarman's request for military aid with the usual polite condescension, and then referred the matter to a committee for disposal. The fact that nothing seems to have come of their deliberations carries a truly modern ring! Presumably Jayavarman must have succeeded in repelling his enemies unaided, for he sent another embassy, and this time received an honour that must at least have flattered his vanity, for an imperial edict was issued to the effect that

> the King of Fu-nan, Kaundinya Jayavarman, lives in the extreme limits of the ocean. From generation to generation he and his ancestors have governed the distant countries of the South. And their sincerity is manifest even from

a distance. . . . It is fit to show in return some favour and to confer on him a glorious title. This can be done by the title of "General of the pacified South, King of Fu-nan."[1]

Jayavarman died in A.D. 514, and was succeeded by his son Rudravarman, who was a fervent Buddhist, as we know from an inscription of his found in Cochin-China. This seems to have commemorated the foundation of a Buddhist monastery. He sent several embassies to China, and in A.D. 539 informed the imperial Court that in his country there was a long hair of Buddha. The Chinese emperor was evidently deeply interested, for he is said to have sent a monk in search of this hair. Rudravarman was the last king of Fu-nan, for about A.D. 550 his empire was overthrown as a result of the revolt of some of his vassal states, more particularly Chen-la, the primitive Cambodian state where the early Khmers at this time threw off the yoke. The Chinese chronicles tell us of the event in the following words:

Chen-la is south-west of Champa. It was originally a vassal state of Fu-nan. The family name of the king is Kshatriya, his personal name is Chitrasena. Under his ancestors this state became more and more powerful. Chitrasena reduced Fu-nan to submission.[1]

From the consideration devoted to matters concerning the empire of Fu-nan in contemporary Chinese chronicles it is clear that this great Indian colony in Indo-China was a political entity of considerable importance during the early centuries of the Christian era, and a brilliant offshoot of Gupta India. But to us the great interest in Fu-nan lies in the fact that here, at least during the fifth and first

[1] P. Pelliot, *loc. cit.*

half of the sixth centuries, was a rich and highly civilized Indian state whose art and culture must have been at the base of all the glorious development of subsequent centuries. Yet what material remains has time spared us to witness to the glorious art of the Gupta Golden Age which must have been implanted in this distant land by the early colonists? And what has modern archæology done to rescue these precious remains from oblivion? The answer to both questions is, unfortunately, "Very little!"; for though the positions of the ancient capitals of Fu-nan have been located at Basak, Sambor du Fleuve, and Angkor Borei (Vyadhapura), nothing has been found but the occasional fragment of a Hindu statue and, at the last-mentioned site, several beautiful stone images of the Buddha, whose supple swaying lines remind us of the little stone Buddha which I dug up at Wieng Sra, in P'an-p'an, and, still nearer to the source of their inspiration, the wondrous statues of the caves of Ajanta. But, apart from conserving these chance-found relics of a glorious past, it seems that archæology can do little, at least as regards Fu-nan proper, for it so happens that since the fall of Fu-nan the sites of its principal centres of culture have not merely undergone the destruction of its conquerors, but for many centuries since been the scene of continuous growth and cultural evolution. In the course of this process the material evidence of Fu-nan's past has been ground to powder, so that scarcely a broken statue, still less a building or an entire city, has survived on the sites of the ancient capitals of the empire. Some have sought to explain this lack of architectural remains by supposing that the early colonists built exclusively in wood, of which no traces in this tropical climate could remain.

That this is not the case, however, is perhaps sufficiently proved by the fact that the two stone inscriptions that have been mentioned above were graven on stone pillars of a sort that must have formed part of some temple of solid construction, and if further proof is required it will be found in the next chapter.

But if archæological research seems able to give us so little information about the all-important art of Fu-nan proper, can no light be shed by any of the vassal states which occupied much of what is now known as Siam and the northern part of the Malay Peninsula? From the details supplied by the Chinese chronicles it seems that these vassal states differed in no great degree from Fu-nan proper, with whose culture they were no doubt strongly imbued; and, after the manner of the times, they were probably ruled in every case as semi-independent states, governed by some princely scion of the royal family, who would endeavour to keep up a royal pomp little inferior to that of the king himself. But as we glance over every region of the old empire we find again the same blankness that characterizes the sites of the ancient capital itself. Everywhere the possibility that settlements may survive from the Fu-nan period is annihilated, all trace of them having been lost in swamp and jungle, or having perished beneath the accretions of later ages. Everywhere . . . with one amazing exception!

When the people of Fu-nan proper began their expansion and the building of their empire, one of the routes they took led them some distance up the Mekong, thence westward along the valley of the Mün river, through a gap in the mountainous escarpment that borders the plateau of Eastern Siam, across the narrow valley

of the unnavigable Pasak river, and thence to the fertile plains of the Menam valley. In course of time they seem to have developed this natural route as a great military and trade highway of the empire. And just after the route left the rather inhospitable plateau of Eastern Siam they founded near the left bank of the Pasak river a great Indian city, to act as a kind of half-way house for the refreshment of their military forces and an emporium at which traders from east and west might come and exchange their wares. When the empire broke up the city and the route naturally had to be abandoned, and so far was the city from the centre of any of the kingdoms which grew up on the ashes of the Fu-nan empire that its ruins, lying in the remote, secluded valley of an unnavigable river, have been spared to us until this day. Local peasants call the place Śri Deva.

CHAPTER VII

A LOST INDIAN CITY REVEALED

We are now in a better position to appreciate the unique importance of Śri Deva, before whose ramparts we paused to reflect,[1] lest we should enter too unceremoniously. Our first preoccupation when the expedition had reached its goal was to find a suitable place to pitch our camp for what we knew would be a stay of several weeks. Water being a primary need, we followed along the ramparts in a direction which we were told would lead us to a "Crystal Lake," which sounded most inviting. Though it proved, indeed, to be a large ancient reservoir still containing water, it was too full of weeds and mud to be of any use to us. However, we found a pleasant glade not far from its banks, and decided to rely on the stagnant, but comparatively clear, water which a local peasant undertook to carry to us daily from the neighbouring moat. The carts had come crashing in our wake through the unpathed jungle, and an hour or two later the drivers had unloaded our goods and were already on their homeward journey, leaving us with our Chinese cook and boy to the mercy of the jungle, which, unlike them, we thought preferable to the proximity of a peasant village. The policemen who had accompanied us as our guard, as also the Government officials, were relieved when we excused them from sharing our life in the jungle, and eagerly seized the opportunity of returning with the carts.

[1] See p. 22.

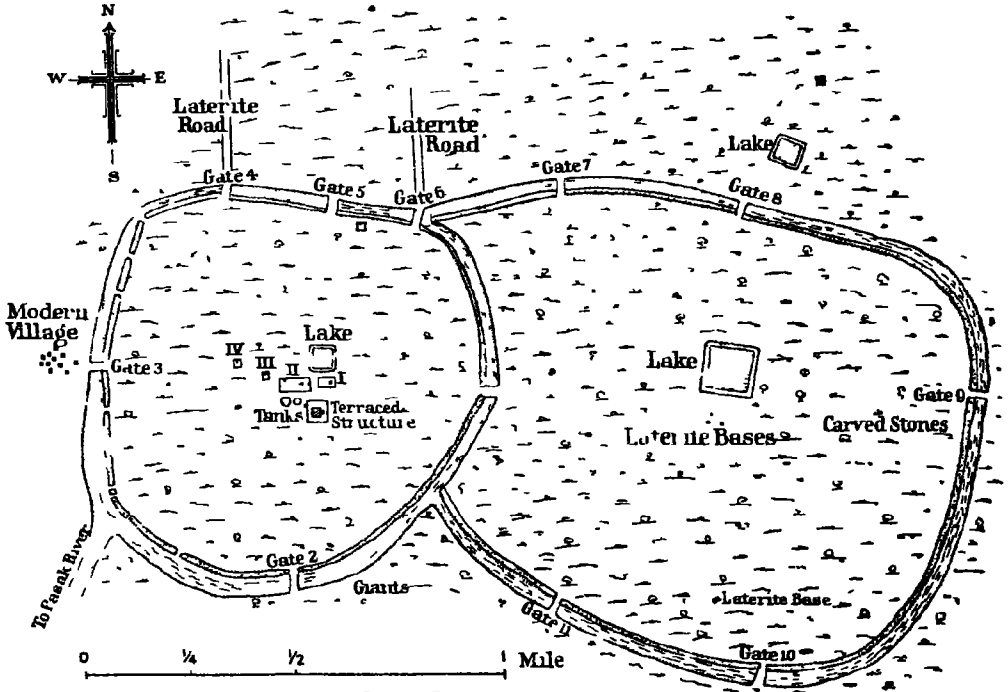
When a space has been cleared in the wilderness, tents pitched, and campfire lighted a homestead seems all at once to have been created, and the mystery of the forest and its possible dangers recede into the background. Yet the wild animals, at first frightened by man's approach, gradually overcome some of their first fear when a camp has been established a few days. One feels that they are peering with inquisitive eyes through the shadows, lurking in the thickets near by, while they wonder whether there is anything to be gained by a closer acquaintance with the strange human creatures that have disturbed their solitude. Apart from a pangolin, or scaly anteater, a harmless oddity who preferred to spend most of his time rolled up in a ball, most of the animals that decided to impose their company upon us were not, unfortunately, of a particularly welcome nature. Virulent scorpions seemed especially attracted by the wicker cover of our water-container as well as by our bedding, while white ants burrowed into that very important part of our tent pegs that was hidden from sight below ground. The extent of the depredations of these white ants was quite unsuspected until the day came for us to strike camp. Then we discovered that so little of the pegs remained below ground that a strong gust of wind would have brought our temporary home down on top of us!

Snakes said to be extremely poisonous were occasionally found and killed almost outside our 'front door'; and after we had been encamped on this spot for a few days we received quite a strong reminder that, however much we had persuaded ourselves we were beginning to feel quite at home at Śri Deva, we were really but trespassers in the precincts of a dead city that the jungle had

long centuries before reclaimed for its own, and of which the wild denizens had now no intention of ceding even so much as a few square yards. We were setting out to work one morning when a peasant called our attention to the path, already beaten by our going and coming, a few yards from our tent. Looking down, we saw, as clearly as one could wish, imprinted on the sandy soil, the spoor of a large tiger! As big-game hunting was not part of our quest, we did what was perhaps the best thing in the circumstances: we dismissed the matter from our minds!

Arrangements had been made by which a posse of men from the nearest village should be sent every morning to aid us in the work of exploration, and after they had overcome to some extent their bewilderment at their first sight of Europeans and at the unusual work required of them they proved to be most willing helpers and, indeed, delightful companions. It was only after several days of extensive exploration with the aid of these men that we were in a position to appreciate the general lay-out of the city, which the reader will see at a glance from the plan at page 97. We found that the rampart which we had first seen, and outside which we camped near Gate 8 in the proximity of the Crystal Lake, was not the rampart of the main city itself, but of a large subsidiary enclosure. The main city was about a mile square, enclosed by great earth and laterite ramparts, which resemble nothing so much as tall green railway embankments, and bordered on the outside by a moat which sometimes reached a hundred yards in breadth. The rampart had no doubt originally been topped by a stockade interspersed at intervals with wooden turrets; and as we tramped along the flat top of the mound we noticed that it was strewn

with coarse potsherds, indicating that here had stood the huts of the soldiers who must ceaselessly have lined the palisades and manned the 'hundred killers' and other ancient war engines, in constant readiness to repel the attacks of an enemy. Though the city was intended to be square, the builders had, as was usual in Indian cities, managed to cut off the corners. The master-builder was always careful to fix the position of the main gates at the four cardinal points, but he does not seem to have troubled to see that the workmen carried out their duties entirely conscientiously. At Śri Deva the four main gateways were now merely gaps in the ramparts; there were also several other narrow breaks, which seem to have been intended to carry away the drainage of the city into the moat, whence it was conveyed by a stream to the Pasak river. At the main gates causeways spanned the moat, and no doubt roads led from them to the centre of the city. The subsidiary city, which I have mentioned above, was added on to the eastern side of the main city, and this extra enclosure was rather more than a mile square, and it too was surrounded by a massive rampart and wide moat pierced by a number of gates. The plan was unlike that of any other city so far mapped in Indo-China; indeed, it is typically Indian, and the subsidiary enclosure was no doubt added either to accommodate the lower castes expelled from the city or else as an emporium at which the merchants from far and near met to exchange their wares. We may dismiss it quite quickly here, for, apart from a large rectangular lake near its centre, there was no trace of buildings except for the stone bases of a few poor temples bordering the main road, which ran through the enclosure from east to west.



I, II, III, IV, represent ruined temples

PLAN OF THE CITY OF ŚRI DEVA

The main city, on the other hand, was the centre of the life of the ruler and his Court, around which pulsated all the activities of the people. We knew that whatever remains time had spared us would be found near the centre of this main enclosure, in the area where in Indian cities were usually situated the king's palace, the council house, and the main temples. The remainder of the enclosure would have been given up to the habitations of the various castes, both soldiers and merchants, and, being built of wood, could leave no traces. The same, indeed, would apply to the king's palace, which was probably a wooden gilded and painted pavilion of several stories, surrounded by a number of outbuildings in which dwelt the members of the harem and the principal ministers of the Court. It may have been situated, in the case of Śri Deva, on the western bank of a rectangular lake near the centre of the enclosure, as in the case of the subsidiary city. It was to the south of this lake that we discovered the one Indian temple that remained in a good state of preservation. Of dignified and restrained architecture, it was yet but a single brick tower, some forty feet high, standing on a laterite pyramidal base which raised it a further twenty feet from the ground. Nevertheless, to us who realized that we were standing face to face with the oldest known Hindu temple in Indo-China it was a revelation, for it held within itself the germ of all the glories that Indian civilization was to produce in Indo-China in succeeding centuries. Its discovery alone would have amply repaid us for all the trouble of our journey.

The tower itself was of bricks, apparently laid without mortar. It was built on a square base, a porch with a corbelled arch opening towards the west giving access to the

sanctuary, the other faces being decorated on the outside with false porches and on the inside with niches resembling windows, both being very primitive features, recalling an early wooden type of construction open to every breeze that blew. Above the main sanctuary the upper part of the building consisted of two receding stages of diminishing height, which repeated on a smaller scale the false porches and other features of the main building. These fictitious stages, especially as they are so few in number, are a further indication that at the date when this shrine was constructed we are not far removed from the time when all buildings were made of wood. This temple preserves most clearly the memory of such forms, both by reason of its false porches and the fictitious stages reminiscent of a storied wooden building.

Unfortunately the true and false porches were so completely ruined that it was impossible to say whether there had been lintels of stone, and if so how they had been carved, but it is probable that both door pillars and lintels were of brick, and, though covered with a layer of stucco, there was no sign that the building had been decorated in any way. Indeed. it would be difficult to imagine a simpler and more undifferentiated sanctuary tower, showing as it did not a single characteristic of the Khmer or other later classes of Indo-Chinese architecture which have beyond a doubt been evolved from this basic type. On the other hand its connexion with the Indian architecture of the Gupta period was very definite, especially with the brick tower of Bhitargaon, in the Cawnpore district, which dates from the fifth or sixth century A.D.; and all the available evidence points to the fact that this temple at Śri Deva was not constructed later than the first quarter of



THE INDIAN TEMPLE AT SRI DEVA
In the South Arcot



HEAD OF A HINDU STATUE FOUND AT SRI DEVA

the sixth century. The temple itself on its laterite base was situated on an extensive earthen platform raised about three feet from the ground, and on it were a number of laterite bases, no doubt the foundations of various little wooden shrines and pavilions in which the Brahman priests lived or carried out the ritual connected with the service of the god whose statue must have stood within the brick sanctuary. The temple I have described was presumably not the most sacred in the city, for it was situated a little distance from the centre, always the most venerated position. At that point we certainly did find a ruined Indian temple, of which only the base remained, but of which I shall have more to say later.

It was near this temple, just beside the site of the main street, that a fragment of finely worked bronze was found which looked as though it might have been a portion of the harness of a horse, and the suggestion was sufficient to conjure up pictures of caparisoned chargers prancing proudly behind the royal palanquin in some State procession; or of warlike chariots, perhaps not so different in construction from the humble bullock-carts with which we had entered the city. We heard from the men of one or two other small finds that had been made in the neighbourhood from time to time, and we were shown a stone beneath which a man told me he had been inspired to dig to a depth of several feet. There he had found a gold plaque and a dozen crystal beads. What had become of the gold I do not know, as only the beads could be produced. As to how such treasure came to be buried there, there is more than one possible explanation. In the first place it is known to have been an ancient custom to bury riches beneath the foundation of a sanctuary at the time of

its dedication. Alternatively there is the possibility that the wealth may have been buried by one of the inhabitants at a time when calamity overtook the city, as occurred in 1767 at Ayuthia, the then capital of Siam, when the Burmese sacked the place. For many years afterwards people from the new capital at Bangkok spent much of their time digging for such treasure. Indeed, this uncontrolled and unauthorized treasure-seeking on the part of the peasants is met with all over Siam, and its destructiveness to ancient sites is one of the troubles of archæologists.

Our explorations resulted in adding four early Indian sculptures to the several statues which had previously been conveyed to Bangkok by the Siamese, and the interesting characteristics of which had been one of the main incentives which had decided me to undertake this expedition. One of the pieces we found, a headless torso, was lying within the sanctuary of the Indian temple, and it is possible that it had originally stood in this shrine. It had had four arms, and was most probably a representation of Vishnu, for the people of Śri Deva were certainly Hindus, and Vishnu seems to have been the god to whose worship they were particularly attached. We found also, lying near the base of this temple, a stone carved with an extremely weathered bas-relief depicting a male figure with a horse. Another statue of four-armed Vishnu in a mutilated condition was found lying at the foot of a tree in the subsidiary city. Its fragments had been stuck together with mud by the peasants in a rather unprofessional effort at restoration, and that it was held in high veneration by them was obvious from the offerings that had been placed before it. Lastly, about a mile outside the west gate of the main city we found a remarkable male

statue, of which the only well-preserved part was the head, a curious exception from the too common rule in which the head has disappeared, leaving only a mutilated torso. The noble head, backed by a portion of a semi-circular nimbus, had purely Indian features, and is perhaps the earliest piece of Hindu sculpture that has yet been found in Indo-China.

From the sculptures found by us, together with those that have previously been transported to Bangkok, one may generalize as to the main characteristics of this virile Indian school of plastic art. The headdress presents a more or less cylindrical appearance, and the face, with its rather heavy features, is set on a thick bull-neck, behind which the hair falls in two or three rows of conventionalized curls; while the supple, swaying body seems to make a triple curve, betraying the characteristic grace of movement of the fully developed Gupta school of India which, apart from these sculptures of Śri Deva, is found only in the beautiful Buddhist images of Angkor Borei. The delineation of the dress is scarcely indicated, and has even escaped the observation of casual observers. One can best compare these Hindu statues with those earliest-known Hindu Gupta statues of India, the Śiva images of Bhumara, although it seems certain that Śiva had no adherents at Śri Deva. When the statues that we were so fortunate as to rescue from the clutches of the jungle have joined those already at the Bangkok Museum they will present a unique and perhaps almost exhaustive collection of the earliest Hindu art of Indo-China; and their importance to the study of this art can scarcely be overestimated, since they lie at the base of the whole later development of sculpture in Indo-China and even in Indonesia.

Our search for evidence led us to every part of the city, and we were constantly turning over blocks of stone half buried in the ground in the hope of finding a new fragment of sculpture. In fact, we literally 'left no stone unturned,' and, though our efforts were often wasted on some natural schist or sandstone boulder, the work was full of excitement, and was heartily enjoyed by our men as well as by ourselves. It was while inspecting a number of scattered stones lying near the centre of the city that my eye fell on a curiously shaped worked pillar, part of which was just protruding from the ground. There was something about it that strongly excited my interest, and I could hardly restrain my impatience as the men carefully levered it up. In the course of my various explorations I have often been led into the depths of a thorny thicket, or far up the rocky bed of a rushing stream, in response to a tale brought to me by some well-meaning villager; and how frequently have I been disappointed by finding my informant's supposed ancient inscription to be at best a fragment of sculptured masonry, more usually some natural quartz veining on a water-worn boulder which had quite genuinely deceived the unlettered peasant. It is natural, therefore, that when at last the pillar had been raised from its earthy bed I should have viewed with considerable satisfaction and excitement what I knew to be one of the few early Indian inscriptions known from Indo-China, and one which I believed would throw a valuable new light, not only on the history of this particular city, but also on that of the empire of Fu-nan, whose history had so far been enlightened only by the two inscriptions from Fu-nan proper which I have mentioned in the last chapter.



Torso of Four-armed Figure
found at Sri Deva



The Inscribed Stone Pillar found
at Sri Deva

Those who believe in omens, and are at the same time familiar with Indian literature, may be interested to know of an auspicious occurrence that happened to take place at Śri Deva on the day we found this important inscription. It may have been coincidence, but we could not fail to note that, just as the scriptures tell us how on great occasions in ancient India flowers were wont to be rained from the skies, so it happened that on this of all days at Śri Deva the almost bare branches of the tall forest trees chose to shower down sweet-scented blossoms upon us, as though the gods themselves were pleased with our discovery.

The pillar was peculiar in shape, its pedestal being surmounted by a bulbous capital which gave the whole the appearance of a giant nail. It was on the upper bulbous portion that two lines of inscription in an Indian character were engraved; but the inscription had been rendered fragmentary by the fact that that part of the schistose stone that had been exposed above ground had flaked away. Though it was found lying near the centre of the city it is possible that the original position of the pillar had been at one of the gates, for we found two other rather similar, though, unfortunately, uninscribed, pillars lying in gateways. Perhaps the ruler of the city had caused one of the gate stones to be inscribed in commemoration of some notable event. There is, however, no definite evidence for this. In fact, since the position near the centre of the city may possibly have been the original site of the stone, it may have been placed there as a record of the foundation of the temple which stood near by. Carefully we photographed the two broken lines of writing, and supplemented these records with

estampages and hand copies, which, as soon as we reached England, were submitted to one of our greatest Sanskrit scholars. Here we had evidence as to the date of the settlement of almost the most definite kind for which it is possible to hope in archæological research; for the study of Indian palæography, which is based on a careful comparison of the forms of writing throughout the ages, has reached a high level of scientific exactitude. Thus, even when a document bears no actual date, and thus does not afford us absolutely the most exact type of evidence, we can nevertheless arrive very closely at the age of the document—within, at any rate, a matter of a quarter of a century. It was thus possible to date the present inscription as not later than the first quarter of the sixth century —possibly as early as the latter part of the fifth—and from the shape of the characters employed one was able to deduce that the colonists had originated from the northern part of the Deccan, probably somewhere between the mouths of the Kistna and Godaveri rivers. This region, as I have indicated in an earlier chapter, seems to have been the part of India from which the adventurers of the Gupta period and before set sail for the Land of Gold.

Inscriptions seldom tell us exactly the sort of thing that we should like to know. The Indians had but little historical sense, and they rarely concerned themselves with recording events of importance in the story of their country. In this case the two lines of Sanskrit were too fragmentary to tell us more than that the people were worshippers of Vishnu, thus confirming what we had already learned from the sculptures we had found; but it is by no means clear from the context whether the names of Rama and Lakshmana refer to deities worshipped or to

members of the royal family, who in ancient India frequently bore the names of gods, just as in our own time a king of Siam was known as King Rama VI. But the point of primary importance about this stone inscription is that it supplies us with an approximate date which, in conjunction with what we have learned from the style of Indian building and the characteristics of the sculptures found, gives us strong cumulative evidence for concluding that the city of Śri Deva was flourishing during the first quarter of the sixth century A.D., and that it met its end shortly after that period. It is, indeed, a remarkable fact that at such an early period the culture of India, with its learned language, its art and religion, had spread so far into the heart of Indo-China; and the high development of these three manifestations shows clearly the state of prosperity enjoyed by the colonists. The old belief that the settlers were poor people, content not only to live in wooden huts but also to build many temples of perishable materials, is quite disproved by the finds at Śri Deva. Indeed, it seems certain that, did we know more of the other ancient cities of Fu-nan, we should find that they possessed temples of similar type, and that during the fifth century and the early part of the sixth Southern Indo-China was a highly developed overseas offshoot of the India of the Guptas, the ruling and priestly castes of which, though actively intermarrying with the native population, were practising all the customs of the mother country, with which they remained in constant communication.

Śri Deva, as pointed out in the last chapter, would appear to have been an important emporium as well as the capital of a vassal state, situated on the great imperial

trade route that ran westward from the plateau of Eastern Siam to the fertile lands of the Menam valley. Probably it was not founded, or, at least, did not receive the culture of India responsible for leaving the material witnesses found by us, until towards the middle of the fifth century, when the empire had reached the height of its development. And from what we know of the history of Fu-nan it seems quite certain that it must have been abandoned about A.D. 550; for when this empire broke up Śri Deva could hardly have continued to exist independently, because it seems certain that so large a city must have depended largely on the products of trade for its support. Its situation in such a narrow river valley, and on a stream which could have given it no satisfactory outlet to the sea, seems a strong argument against the possibility of its survival as a separate state, and the dating of the archæological remains that survive seems to fit in very well with this supposition.

The local peasants, however, have their own views as to how the city met its end, and they have a legend which purports to tell us of this event—a legend which they say has been handed down from generation to generation from the earliest times. It was as we rested one day from our labours beneath the shade of a mighty forest tree that an old man told me the story, which I set down here in as close as possible a translation of his own vivid words:

> On a mountain near the city there lived in neighbouring hermitages two hermits, named Fire-eye and Ox-eye respectively. Fire-eye had for a pupil the king's son, who used to come and study the sacred books with him. One day Fire-eye told the prince about two near-by wells. If you

bathed in the water of one you died, but water poured on you from the other would restore you to life. The prince would not believe him, so Fire-eye agreed to make the experiment, first making the boy promise to bring him back to life with water from the second well. But when the hermit was dead the faithless pupil ran away back to the city.

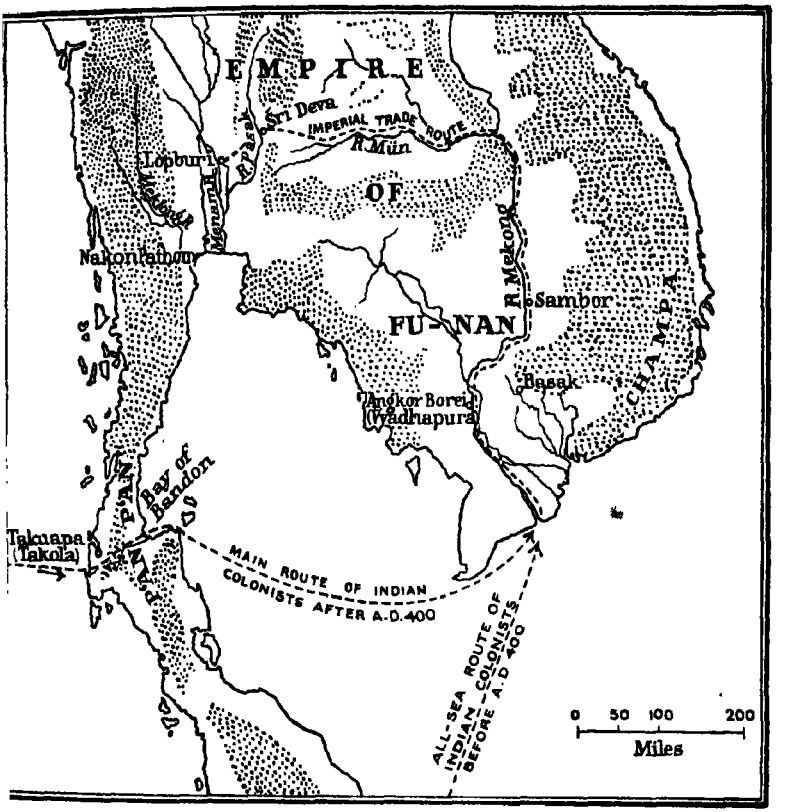
Now the two hermits were accustomed to visit each other at frequent intervals, and it so happened that Ox-eye, not having received an expected visit from Fire-eye, went to look for him. On the way he passed the Well of Death, and, noticing that the water was boiling, realized what had happened. Accordingly he straightway restored the dead hermit to life with water from the Well of Life. Fire-eye, having recovered, would not listen to Ox-eye's counsels of moderation, but swore a terrible vengeance on the prince and the whole city. He made an image of a bull and miraculously gave it life, at the same time filling its body with a potent poison. He sent the bull to circumambulate the city, which it did for seven days, roaring all the while. When the officials had noticed this apparition they had at once closed the gates. But on the seventh day the king ordered the gates to be opened and the bull rushed in. Its body burst and the poison flowed out, destroying all the people.

Though our modern scientific inquiries have given us adequate reason for concluding that the abandonment of Śri Deva was most probably connected with the disruption of Fu-nan, or, at any rate, for supposing that it could not have continued its existence after that event, it would nevertheless be rash to dismiss as a mere myth the legend of the Siamese villagers. Not only has the story a thoroughly Indian complexion, but, as we shall see in the

case of another city that has fallen to my lot to investigate, cholera epidemics were by no means an unknown cause of destruction; and it may well be that the legend of the bursting bull is a picturesque description of such a catastrophe, and it may thus enshrine a germ of historical truth.

For perhaps five hundred years after its abandonment Śri Deva lay desolate, its twin enclosures reclaimed by the jungle, its ruined sanctuaries the haunt of the wild beast. But though Śri Deva was ruined and deserted through the political and economic upheavals that had destroyed the great trade route of the Fu-nan empire, nearer the centre of the old Indianized empire new dramas were being enacted. Eventually out of chaos and anarchy there arose the great Khmer empire, which in turn, early in the eleventh century, stretched its power westward over Central Siam, and in so doing seems to have re-established the old trade route of Fu-nan. At the same time Śri Deva was reoccupied and restored to something of its former position as an emporium, until, some time in the thirteenth century, when the Khmer empire in turn broke up, history repeated itself, and Śri·Deva was reclaimed by the jungle.

The Khmers have left us considerable remains to witness that they attempted to restore the vanished glories of the ancient city during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Thus we find that they built a sanctuary tower of their own style over the base of the Indian temple which I have mentioned stood at the exact centre of the city. And they even endeavoured to transform the Indian temple, which I have described above in some detail, to their own use, fortunately without making any permanent



MAP SHOWING THE POSITION OF ŚRI DEVA ON THE FU-NAN TRADE ROUTE.

alterations that could obscure its original aspect. The Khmers of Śri Deva, unlike their Indian predecessors, were worshippers of Śiva, and we found a number of stone *lingas*, the emblem of that god. The Khmers seem to have had contempt for the worship of Vishnu, for most of the ancient Indian images were found lying in the jungle outside the ramparts, where it is probable they had been thrown by the Khmers, who had often mutilated them as well. Near the centre of the main city the Khmers built a huge mound-like structure of laterite, a sort of terraced hill, which it was their custom always to build at the centres of their cities. They built another and even taller terraced pyramid of this sort a little over a mile to the north of the main city at a site which for some reason they probably held sacred. On climbing to its summit we had a fine view over the tops of the trees far away to the mountainous wall of the plateau of Eastern Siam, and westward to the Petchabun hills, which we had crossed on our way to the city. We were certainly impressed by the splendid setting of the city. The magnificence of this setting must have been even more plainly evident to the inhabitants when, instead of jungle, the valley was carpeted with waving corn. Several other brick towers were raised by the Khmers, who also no doubt repaired the fortifications, opened several extra gateways in the ramparts, and built some broad roads of laterite raised high above flood-level, as was their custom. They have also left a few sculptures, including bas-reliefs and giant gate guardians. But the architectural and other relics of the Khmer occupation are of minor interest on account of their provincial nature, and we may account ourselves fortunate that their occupation has done comparatively

little to obscure the basically Indian aspect of Śri Deva. For it is the Indian remains, taking us back to the time of the colonizers of the Gupta period and affording us a sure basis on which to build a history of Greater Indian culture, that give this ancient city its unique claim to fame.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WHEEL OF THE LAW

In Fu-nan, especially at Śri Deva, Hinduism was the predominant religion, although in the closing years of that empire Hinayana (Southern) Buddhism was temporarily favoured at the Court of the last ruler. The subsequent vigorous development of Indian culture in Indo-China and Java was due to the energy of waves of colonists who made their way across the Transpeninsular Route, and who professed at first Śiva-worship, later mixed with, and to some extent superseded by, the Mahayana (Northern) Buddhism. The latter, with its worship of numberless deities and complicated ritual, had much in common with the Hindu religion, and in fact became more or less fused with it. But before we proceed to follow up this main stream of evolution it will be well to turn aside to see something of the achievements of another and contemporary stream of Indian colonists who, instead of setting out on the main route to the Far East by sailing south-eastward to the Malay Peninsula, turned north-east to the fertile delta of the Irrawaddy, the great river of Burma. Here they founded large cities, the capitals of enlightened and prosperous Indianized realms; and if we meet architectural monuments less spectacular than those evolved on the path of the main stream of colonists we shall nevertheless find on the sites of ancient monasteries, where men sought rather escape from the bonds of the flesh than the perpetuation of material splendour, evidence

enough of a great Indian culture deep-rooted in an alien soil, and an inspiring and all-consuming faith in the teachings of the Enlightened One, the monk from Kapilavasthu.

In the Gupta Golden Age of India, although the Hindu renaissance had set in by the fifth century of the Christian era, Buddhism, which had been spread throughout the land by the great Emperor Asoka in the middle of the third century before Christ, continued to enjoy royal protection, side by side with Hinduism, under all the Gupta kings. In the third century A.D., indeed, when the earliest wave of Indian colonizing activity was in full swing, there were no doubt as many Buddhists as Hindus, if not many more, in the region between the Kistna and Godaveri rivers, and here were the sites of many thriving monastic cities. This was the part of Eastern India from which, as we have seen, the earliest colonists were at this time setting forth for the Land of Gold; and we have plenty of evidence that it was from this region that the colonists, almost exclusively of the Buddhist religion, set sail for the Irrawaddy delta. The journey was not a difficult one, there were no pirate-infested Straits to be negotiated, and the merchants, who had first established friendly intercourse with the natives, were soon followed by adventurous princes in the way that has already been indicated. Thus, by the fifth century A.D. there were at least two well-established Indian kingdoms in Lower Burma, of which one, centring round the modern Prome, in the Irrawaddy valley proper, went by the Indian name of Śrikshetra; the other, farther to the south-east, near the mouth of the Salween, had its capital at Thaton. The first-mentioned state was peopled by Indianized Pyus, whose uncivilized brethren occupied the barbarous hinterland of Upper Burma; while the Thaton

kingdom was inhabited by equally Indianized people of a distinct race, the Môn or Talaing. We shall first see something of what archæologists have found on the site of Old Prome, the capital of the Indianized Pyu kingdom.

The ruins of Old Prome are enclosed by earthen ramparts, the distance around which amounts to eight and a half miles. Within the enclosure have been found a number of sculptures, burial-grounds, and Buddhist *stupas* (reliquary shrines), many of the latter reduced to mere mounds. The burial-grounds cannot exactly be compared with our cemeteries because the Pyus practised cremation and placed the ashes of the deceased in small earthenware urns, which were deposited in rows beneath the soil of these burial-grounds. Large numbers have been excavated, and many of them bore inscriptions in the Pyu language, written in South Indian characters. Several other inscriptions of the sixth or seventh century were discovered at Old Prome, some written in Pyu, some in Pali, the sacred language of Hinayana Buddhism. One of the latter was inscribed on a gold plate. But at least one inscription was also found that was written in North Indian (Gupta) characters and in the Sanskrit language. This shows that some of the colonists came from Northern India, but they were certainly in the minority. The use of the Sanskrit language suggests the Hindu religion or the Mahayana canon of Buddhism; but it was also used by certain sects of Hinayana Buddhists, and there is every reason to suppose that it was used by one of these sects at Old Prome. In particular this is evidenced by the type of sculptures found, which are almost all representations of Sakya Muni, the historical Buddha, in a style akin to the Gupta images in India.

The *stupas* of Old Prome have a rather peculiar shape, but they are in fact only a local variety of the hemispherical mass of masonry or brickwork, looking rather like an enormous inverted basin, that is best known from such examples as the famous Sanchi tope of India and the great *dagobas* of Ceylon. Originally the *stupa* was intended as a reliquary to contain one of the 84,000 sacred relics of the Buddha spread abroad by Asoka, but in later centuries many were built to contain the relics of some revered Buddhist saint or monk; and at the same time the *stupa* began to acquire a more bell-shaped form, eventually culminating in the tapering, spire-like modern pagoda of Burma and Siam. Those at Old Prome are naturally not far removed from the original shape, though, as has already been remarked, most of them are reduced to mere mounds; and all of those that had been examined by the Archæological Survey prior to 1926 had been burrowed into by treasure-seekers at some period, and the relic chamber had been rifled. This treasure-seeking is, of course, the bane of archæologists everywhere, and it seems as though it can never be effectively controlled. In China, despite the promise of dire penalties in this world and the next, the robbing of graves has been rife throughout the ages; in Indo-China it is the Buddhist reliquary that has always offered the best return to this class of thieves.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the archæologists at Old Prome met with a good deal of disappointment, until in 1926 M. Charles Duroiselle, in charge of the excavations, made an amazing discovery which, for sheer wealth of treasure and richness of variety, has never been equalled even in India itself, and is reminiscent of the tomb of Tutankhamen. At last a *stupa* which had

escaped the hand of the vandal was located. The relic chamber was closed by a stone slab on which was engraved the figure of a *stupa* of early type, crowned by the usual honorific multiple umbrellas. This being removed, a brick-lined vault was disclosed, in the centre of which stood a large silver-gilt casket, having the shape of a miniature *stupa*, beautifully engraved with *repoussé* figures of the Buddha and his attendants in Gupta style of the sixth century A.D. With the opening of this casket a veritable wonder-house of votive offerings was laid bare, of which I will enumerate only a few of the most striking. They included numerous small gold and silver images; gold rings, some of which were set with precious stones; a hollow gold-bead necklace; a manuscript with gold leaves; miniature silver *stupas*; symbolical coins; gold and silver lotuses, the largest of the latter measuring seven and a half inches in diameter; gold and silver butterflies; gold and silver bells; a small jade figure of an elephant; a variety of precious and semi-precious stones; a chalcedony tortoise; crystal, jade, and glass beads; and a number of stamped votive plaques.

One is naturally interested to know something of the life of a people who could express their devotion to their religion by means of such luxurious offerings, the discovery of which caused so great a sensation that the objects were taken to India for exhibition. Here once more the Chinese historians of the T'ang dynasty do something to satisfy our curiosity:

> When the Pyu king goes out in his palanquin he lies on a couch of golden cord. For long distances he rides an elephant. He has several hundred women to wait upon him. The wall of his city, built of greenish-glazed tiles,

with twelve gates, has pagodas at each of the four corners. The people live inside. . . . They dislike taking life. They greet each other by clasping the arm with the hand. They know how to make astronomical calculations. They are Buddhists, and have a hundred monasteries, with bricks of glassware embellished with gold and silver vermilion, gay colours, and red kino. The floor is painted, and is covered with ornamented carpets. The king's residence is in like style.

At seven years of age the people cut their hair and enter a monastery; if at the age of twenty they have not grasped the doctrine they return to lay estate. For clothes they use skirts made of cotton, for they hold that silk should not be worn, as it involves the taking of life. On the head they wear gold-flowered hats with a blue net or bag set with pearls. In the king's palace are two bells, one of gold, the other of silver; when an enemy comes they beat these bells and burn incense, to divine whether their fortune is good or evil. There is a huge white elephant image a hundred feet high; litigants burn incense and kneel before the elephant, reflecting within themselves whether they be right or wrong, and then they retire. When there is any disaster or plague the king kneels down before the elephant and blames himself.

They have no fetters. Criminals are flogged on the back with five bamboos bound together, receiving five blows for heavy and three for light offences. Murder is punished with death. The land is suited to pulse, rice, and the millet-like grains. Sugar-cane grows as thick as a man's leg. There is no hemp or wheat. Gold and silver are used as money, the shape of which is crescent-like. . . . Having no grease for oil, they use wax and various scents for lighting. In trading with the neighbouring states they use porpoise skin, cotton, and rock-crystal and earthenware jars as barter. The women knot their hair on top of their heads

and ornament it with strings of pearls; they wear a natural-tinted skirt, and throw pieces of delicate silk over themselves; when walking they hold a fan, and the wives of great personages have four or five attendants at each side carrying fans.[1]

Old Prome, the largest city that was ever built in Burma, was overthrown by internal dissension about A.D. 800, and the Pyus were never again of much importance. In fact, they were gradually absorbed by the Burmese, a people of Mongolian origin, who were in course of migrating southward from Thibet; and to-day no trace of the people who once attained such heights of civilization remains. Their language is dead, and was only deciphered from inscriptions in recent years by Dr C. O. Blagden, the chief authority on the ancient languages of Burma.

Though we may be quite certain that the Môn or Talaing kingdom, that centred around the mouth of the Salween, was a worthy rival of the Pyu kingdom, and perhaps an even more thriving centre of Buddhism, we know much less about it. This is perhaps partly because less excavation has been carried out on the site of Thaton, its capital; still more because it met a disastrous and catastrophic end, when in the eleventh century the Burmese conqueror Anawrahta came down from the north and sacked the city, destroying all its buildings and carrying off its king and people into captivity. However, it fortunately so happens that very early in the history of the Indian colonization of Lower Burma Indians and Indianized Môn began to spread their culture farther afield, swarming across the Three Pagodas Pass into Central

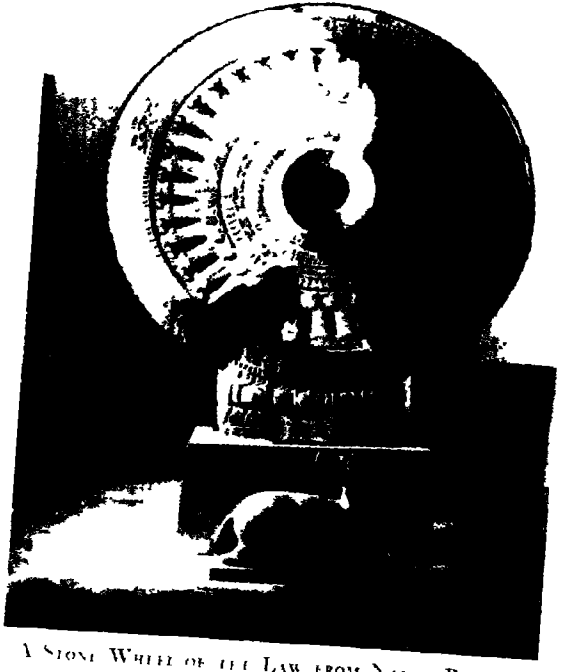
[1] G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma* (Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1925), pp. 12, 13.

the crumbling Indo-Môn *stupa* which had stood there for perhaps six hundred years. And round about this monument, the pride of the Siamese Buddhist of to-day, cluster the modern monastic buildings, raised, no doubt, on the foundations of much more ancient halls.

Naturally such a centre of the living Buddhist religion as Nakon Pathom still is is not available for excavation. Nevertheless, in the course of repairs that were carried out from time to time during recent years a large number of objects dating from the Dvaravati period were brought to light. These are preserved either in the local museum attached to the temple or in the National Museum at Bangkok. A number of fine statues of the Buddha in blue limestone have been found, and these have both the facial characteristics and the simple treatment of the robe that belongs to the Gupta epoch. Though they are rather stylized in treatment and lack the suppleness of the true Gupta school, nevertheless they are among the most pleasant products of Buddhist art in Indo-China. Some of these statues, the best of which date from the sixth or seventh century, represent the Master seated in a European attitude, and with the hands making the gesture of "turning the Wheel of the Law"—that is to say, preaching the doctrine of Nirvana. Moreover, the Wheel of the Law is represented in more ponderable form among the Nakon Pathom finds by several enormous stone wheels, which in the earliest Buddhist times were one of the emblems used to represent the Buddha himself, when as yet it was forbidden to make personal images of him. However, the Wheels found at Nakon Pathom show characteristics which date them as belonging to the Gupta period of inspiration. The Wheel of the Law was the symbol of the



A Buddha of the Dvaravati Style
Sathiansathian
In the National Museum



A Stone Wheel of the Law from Nakon Pathom
In the National Museum

Buddhist belief in an endless circle of cause and effect, birth and rebirth, from which escape was only possible through the conquest of desire. It thus epitomizes the teachings of Hinayana Buddhism, and explains my choice of title for a chapter which deals especially with the early spread of Buddhism in Indo-China.

Other objects found at Nakon Pathom include ancient coins, similar to those brought to light in the treasure at Old Prome, and two interesting seals, one bearing a representation of a fish and the other that of a small sailing-ship. The latter is perhaps the earliest known delineation of a type of ship used in an ancient Indian colony. While it may not exactly represent the kind of vessel on which the early Indian Argonauts embarked for the Land of Gold, it is certainly a good deal nearer to it than is the much later style of ship illustrated on the ninth-century reliefs on the Borobodur, in Java, sometimes quite incorrectly pointed out as representing the kind of transport used by the early Indian adventurers. A large number of plaster heads, showing some Gupta characteristics, but also a great deal of originality, may perhaps date from a rather later period in the history of Dvaravati, after ability to make stone images had somewhat degenerated.

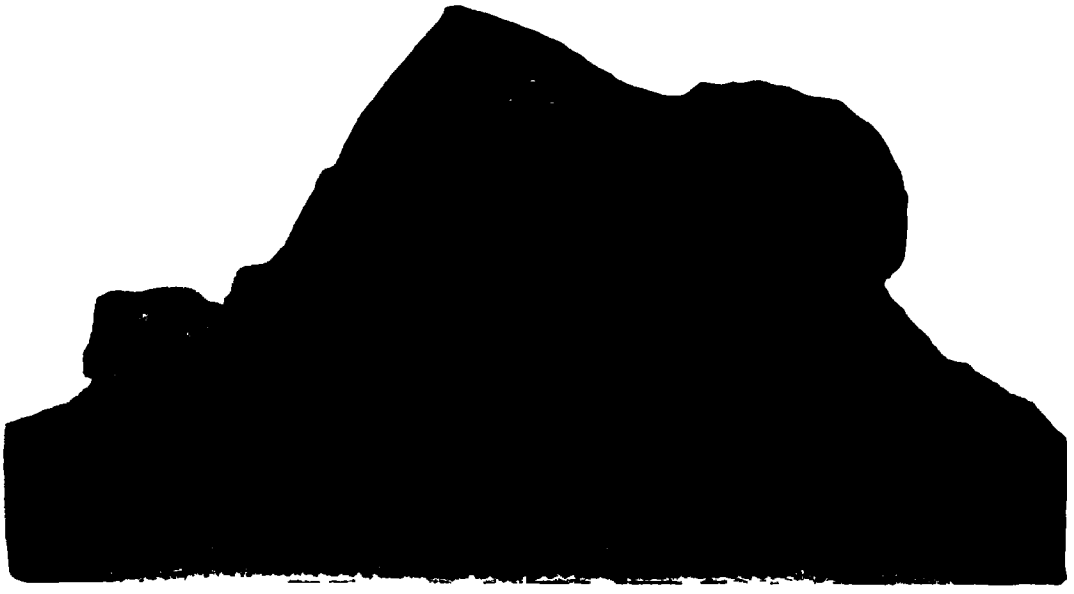
At half a dozen other sites around the Gulf of Siam, nearly all of them centres of present-day Buddhism, and hence not easily available for excavation, have been found Buddhist images of the Dvaravati style; and both at these sites and at Nakon Pathom terra-cotta votive plaques stamped with the Buddhist *credo* have been unearthed, while a few other short inscriptions have come to light in the Pali or Môn languages. Among these of particular note is a large seated figure of the Buddha carved in high

relief on the wall of a hermit's cave in a hill near Ratburi, on the Meklong. The sculptor has apprised us of his identity in a short inscription that tells us that the sacred figure is the "pious work of the holy recluse Samadhigupta."

So far we have been merely discussing more or less chance finds, which, while throwing a certain amount of light on the religion and art of Dvaravati, do not in the least enable us to picture the life that went on in a city of that period. Only the discovery and methodical excavation of a contemporary settlement could tell us more of what we wanted to know on this score; for, as I have already said, it was impossible to carry out digging on the site of the sacred city of Nakon Pathom or any of the other modern towns, the growth of which obscured all the known centres of Dvaravati civilization. Then, on July 28, 1927, *The Bangkok Daily Mail*, a newspaper printed in English, came out with the surprising heading, "Farmer Digs up Giant Skeleton among Gold and Silver Buddha Statues."

The information followed that a peasant, tilling the soil of his farm on July 15, had come upon a small cavity in the ground full of ancient gold, silver, and brass statues; while near by he had found the skeleton of a person said to be nearly twice the size of an ordinary human being, the skull measuring nearly a foot in diameter! It was added that the people of the district had flocked to the place to dig for further treasures, the skeleton having been broken into pieces and distributed among them.

When in due course this story reached the ears of His Royal Highness Prince Damrong, at that time the President of the Royal Institute, which controls the National



A BAS-RELIEF FROM NAKON PATHOM

Museum, the Archæological Survey, and the National Library, at first he was naturally sceptical; but he decided to ask M. Cœdès, then Secretary-General of the Siamese Royal Institute, now Director of the École Française d'Extrême Orient, to go down and investigate. The place where these remarkable finds had been made was in some fruit gardens in the vicinity of a small village named P'ong Tük, situated on the right bank of the Meklong river a few miles above Nakon Pathom, and quite easy of access from Bangkok. On reaching the village M. Cœdès invited the inhabitants to come forward with their finds; but it is perhaps hardly worthy of note that we do not hear any more about the gold and silver Buddhist images. On the other hand a number of very interesting bronze Buddhas of the provincial Gupta style were produced, dating from about the sixth or seventh century, together with two much more remarkable objects.

One of these was a small bronze Buddha of the much earlier style of Amaravati, showing the free movement of the hips and the emphasis on the folds of the drapery indicating the influence of Greece. It could be dated as belonging to the second century A.D. Still more surprising was the second object, a bronze Greco-Roman lamp of the first or second century A.D. It was exactly similar to those that have been found in the ruins of Pompeii. When in use this kind of lamp was usually fixed to a low tripod, and the mortise by which it was attached could be seen underneath. The lamp itself was of the usual shape, with a spout in which the wick burned, an aperture on top, through which the oil was poured, and a handle, which in this case had the shape of a

palmette between two dolphins. Of these well-known Greco-Roman *motifs* the dolphin is said to have been an emblem of seaports, which is exactly what one would expect to find on a lamp that had probably been brought by a seafaring merchant. The lid of the lamp is engraved with a head of Silenus, and, as there is not the slightest Indian touch about this head or the other ornamental work, M. Cœdès is of opinion that the lamp was almost certainly made in the Mediterranean area and is not an Indian copy. He mentions the fact that the Chinese annals of the Han dynasty tell us that in A.D. 120 a company of Greek or Roman comedians were sent over from Burma to China, and possibly they came *via* the Three Pagodas route to P'ong Tük, continuing thence by sea. He does not, of course, suggest that this is actually what did happen, but cites it only as an instance of the sort of intercourse that might have been responsible for such an unexpected find. But I do not think that we can take either the Roman lamp or the Amaravati Buddhist image as definite evidence that there were Indian settlements in the Meklong valley so early as the first or second century A.D. It seems to me much more likely, since they were found associated with objects of much later date, that they were brought over from Burma about the sixth century A.D. by Indians or Môn colonists, who no doubt regarded them as antiques even then.

After inspecting these extremely interesting finds M. Cœdès went to look at the place where they had been found, and marked out promising sites for excavation, which was then undertaken by the Italian architect attached to the Royal Institute. Quite soon a number of foundations of ancient buildings were unearthed, which



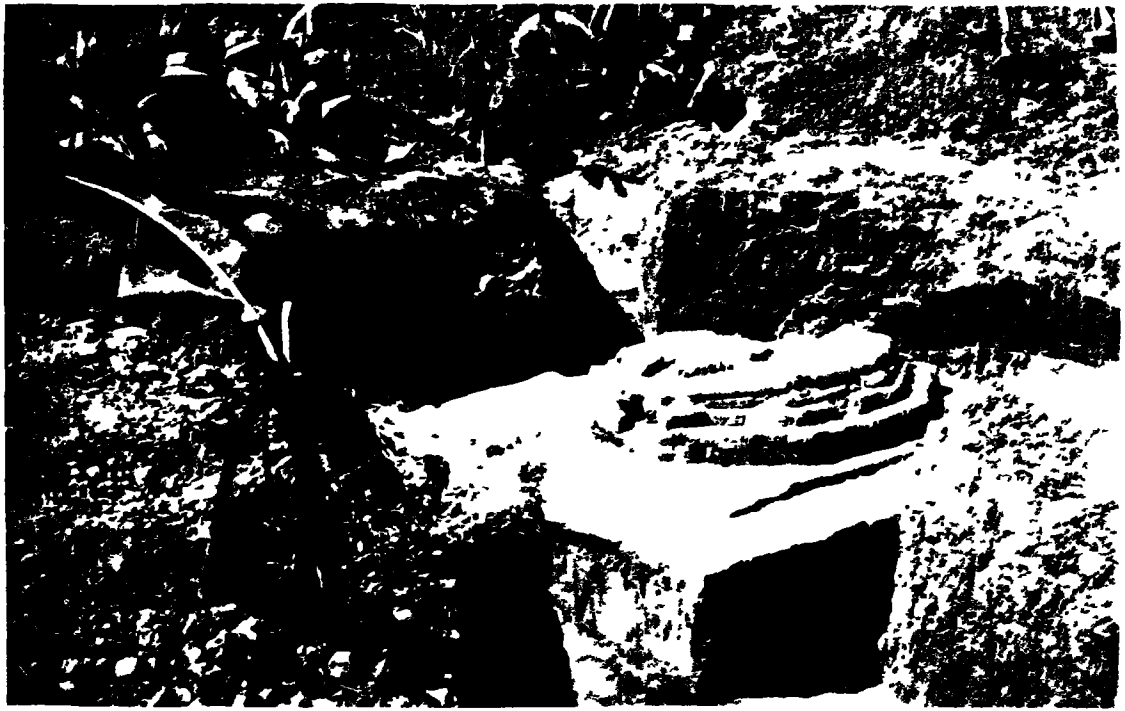
Our Camp at Penguin

threw a flood of new light on the hitherto practically unknown architecture of Dvaravati. These included the bases of one or two laterite *stupas*, and also, buried about three feet below ground-level, the foundation of a square shrine, approached by a narrow brick roadway. On the roadway a few yards in front of the shrine was found a beautiful golden flower, which may have been part of the treasure sometimes buried at the foundation of holy places. Of greater interest, however, was an oblong laterite platform which had a flight of steps leading up to one end and small projecting bays on the other sides. Lying about were several stone columns, and the appearance of the whole was such that it was clear that this was one of those platforms so characteristic of Anuradhapura, in Ceylon, and that it was the basement of a Buddhist *vihara*, or assembly hall. Other finds included a number of stucco figures similar to those found at Nakon Pathom, some ancient pottery, a golden casket, and a number of votive plaques of ancient type.

The excavations undertaken by the Royal Institute were suspended before all the mounds that had been located in the neighbourhood of P'ong Tük had been excavated, and it was some years afterwards that I had the opportunity of continuing this work. Unfortunately, in the interval the local people had developed an interest in digging, but from the point of view of the treasure-seeker. Soon after my arrival I learned that about two years prior to my visit they had been exceptionally successful when opening one mound in making a large haul of stone and bronze figures of the Buddha, which had nearly all been dispersed—a great loss to the National Museum. One or two that I succeeded in tracing were

fine examples dating from the sixth or the seventh century A.D. I found, on digging a few trenches at the site indicated, the remains of a brick *vihara*, with before its entrance a 'moonstone,' or semi-circular, doorstep, similar to those that are such a well-known feature of Ceylon architecture, though in this case of plain brickwork. On opening another mound, which had not been tampered with, at any rate to the same extent, I was rewarded by the discovery of the lower part of a brick *stupa*, the only one, indeed, that is as yet known of this period, and which furnished some idea of the sort of building that probably forms the original core of the great modern pagoda of Nakon Pathom. Beneath it we found a silver relic casket containing human ashes. One old man—I believe he was the original finder of the Roman lamp—had a great local reputation as a successful treasure-seeker, and after we had gained his confidence he produced for our inspection some objects that he said he had dug up in his banana garden. These included a gold relic casket, several large beads, some fragments of gold, and a polished amethyst.

As a result of these various excavations we can now form quite a good idea of the sort of place P'ong Tük was—a trading post, no doubt supporting several Buddhist monasteries in which, as to-day in Siam, it was the custom for every man to spend a few months or years in retreat from the world. Though it was probably a place of minor importance in comparison with the great capital city of Nakon Pathom, yet the fact that it was never occupied by later centres of civilization makes it of outstanding importance for the study of the culture of the Buddhist Indian colonies of this period. No inscriptions have come to light at P'ong Tük, and, indeed, those



STELA EXCAVATED BY THE AUTHOR [illegible]

found at other Dvaravati sites are singularly uninformative. We do not know the name of a single king or of a single event in the history of the kingdom of Dvaravati. All we know is that the country was overrun by the Khmers towards the close of the tenth century; but, as we shall see in the next chapter, in one far corner of the kingdom the Wheel of the Law survived.

CHAPTER IX

A CHOLERA-STRICKEN CITY

In pondering over the fate of the Buddhist kingdom of Dvaravati, when it was overrun by the Khmers from Angkor in the tenth century A.D., I had been led to wonder whether these conquerors had really succeeded in destroying all the ancient Hinayana Buddhist culture of that kingdom and in supplanting it with the mixture of Hinduism and the Mahayana which they professed. It is true that the Khmers had covered the old *stupa* of Nakon Pathom with a Cambodian tower of their own, and numerous other Hindu relics of that period have been found in the neighbourhood; and, with the exception of P'ong Tük, which seems to have been abandoned for some reason before the coming of the Khmers, they had installed themselves in every ancient city of the kingdom of Dvaravati, no doubt pressing the people into servitude and forcing them to build monuments of an alien cult. Nevertheless there were certain surprising circumstances which had attracted the attention of Prince Damrong and M. Cœdès many years ago.

Early in the thirteenth century the Thai, or Siamese, as we may now call them, had thrown off the Khmer yoke at Sukhothai, hitherto a vassal state of the Khmers, situated in the northern part of the Menam valley. We see the men of this state, uncouth-looking barbarians, depicted upon the twelfth-century bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat as raw levies forced to fight in the Khmer army.

Now they had obtained their independence, and towards the end of the thirteenth century their great king Ram Khamheng had freed the whole of what we now call Siam from Khmer domination, and was the powerful ruler of an extensive state. Among the vassal states which owned his sway was a city named Uthong, a Siamese translation of the significant title Suvarnabhumi, "the Land of Gold," which was situated on a branch of the Suphan river, some sixty miles north of Nakon Pathom, the old capital of Dvaravati.

After the death of Ram Khamheng of Sukhothai, early in the fourteenth century, his successors failed to hold together his extensive feudal dominions In the south the Prince of Uthong proclaimed his independence, and succeeded in spreading his power over a large part of Central Siam. Just before A.D. 1350, however, according to a local legend, a terrible disaster in the shape of a cholera epidemic overwhelmed his capital city, and he was forced to flee eastward with the survivors until he reached the Menam valley, where he founded a new capital, which later history knows as Ayuthia, but to which he added the unexpected secondary name of Dvaravati! It seemed that there might be some truth in the legend, because a branch of the Suphan river, on which Uthong was situated, had silted up into little more than a shallow brook. This reduction of the water-supply, despite the digging of artificial reservoirs, might well have accounted for the epidemic. Moreover, the name of this stream was "Three Thousand Crocodiles," suggesting that crocodiles had at one time swarmed in the vicinity, where now none was to be seen. Then, with regard to the old city's possible connexion with the Dvaravati kingdom, Prince Damrong,

who visited the place in 1903, heard that some silver coins and Buddhist images had been dug up there of exactly the same type as those found at Nakon Pathom. The ruins of the *stupas* at Uthong, however, were of a later type, which showed that the city had continued to exist until a much later date than had the old capital of Dvaravati. The question therefore had arisen, "Could Uthong, situated as it was in a rather remote corner of Central Siam, almost in the shadow of the mountains separating Siam from Burma, have been a last refuge of the Dvaravati kings, driven from their former capital at Nakon Pathom by the invading Khmers, but permitted by them to continue to exist as rulers of a distant vassal state in which the old Buddhist culture was able still to hold up its head?"

That such was a possibility was indicated by the fact that a branch of the Dvaravati people had migrated northward, and had founded an independent Môn state at Lamphun which had held out against the Khmers until late in the twelfth century. If this had been possible at Lamphun, it seemed that the main branch of the Dvaravati kingdom might have continued to exist—at least as a vassal state—for two centuries longer. The fact that the Prince of Uthong who ultimately founded Ayuthia, after the abandonment of his original capital, is always spoken of as having been "Thai"—that is to say, Siamese—need not be considered as an obstacle, for by this time the Thai, who, as we have seen, already formed a large proportion of the population of the kingdom, may have absorbed the more civilized Môn, just as in Burma the Pyu were absorbed by the Burmese. At any rate, I had hoped that a little excavation at Uthong along scientific

lines might throw further light on the problem, and accordingly I decided to pay a visit to the place.

Another point which interested me was in connexion with the legend which told of the abandonment of the city of Uthong as the result of a pestilence. I wondered whether archæology would supply any evidence to support that such a catastrophe had occurred, and how the remains might differ from those of any other ruined and deserted city. Perhaps it will be as well for us to pause here and consider exactly what the ever-present menace of cholera has meant to the cities and the lives of the people of Indo-China. So far as the individual is concerned, Dr Victor Heiser, an American Director of Public Health, who had much to do with the measures taken for the suppression of this and other diseases in the Philippines, tells us that "little can be done for the sufferer beyond alleviating his agony." Despite the education of the people in such simple precautions as the boiling of their drinking water and the free distribution of anti-cholera vaccine, which offers almost certain immunity, the cholera demon still raises its fearsome head from time to time in Siam. A few years ago a rather bad epidemic in Bangkok almost brought the tourist traffic to a standstill. Many people died each day, and several princes offered their palaces as temporary hospitals. If such can still sometimes be the unfortunate state of affairs in modern times, when the Government have at their disposal, and are quick to make use of, all the latest advances in medical science, one can well understand the misgivings which many foreigners had in visiting Siam forty years ago, before there was even a pure water-supply.

How much more then can we appreciate the horrors

which attended the outbreak of cholera epidemics a century ago, when there was no possibility of release for a tortured city before the coming of the next rainy season, and while as yet superstitious fear ruled. Thus in May 1820 an epidemic of cholera broke out which was one of the worst recorded in the history of Siam.

> Corpses which there was no time to burn were heaped up in the monastery "like stacks of timber," or else left to float about in the river or the canals. The people fled in a panic from the capital; the monks deserted the monasteries, and the whole machinery of government was at a standstill. The king even released the royal guard from their duties in the palace. There were great ceremonies of propitiation; the Emerald Buddha and the precious relics kept in the monasteries were taken out in procession through the streets, and on the canals of the city, attended by the high dignitaries of the Church, who scattered consecrated sand and water. The king and the members of the royal family maintained a rigorous fast. The slaughter of animals was completely forbidden, and the king caused all supplies of fish, bipeds, and quadrupeds offered for sale to be bought up in order that they might be liberated. All criminals, except the Burmese prisoners of war, were released from prison. The scourge abated at last after taking 30,000 victims within a few months.[1]

Now perhaps we are in the right frame of mind to approach Uthong, where, if there is any truth in the legend, the epidemic of about A.D. 1350 was on such a ghastly scale as even to cause the abandonment of the city.

Circumstances dictated that we set off on our journey

[1] R. Lingat, in the *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. xxiv, p. 14.

to explore the stricken city one day late in the rainy season, not an ideal time of year for archæological field-work, but I was given to understand that Uthong itself was situated on comparatively high ground above the flood-level. After travelling twenty miles by train westward from Bangkok we reached the Suphan river, where a large motor-boat had been ordered to await us. Our cook and boy, with all the necessary equipment, having been placed on board, we started northward for our destination, which lay some sixty miles away. The river was full to overflowing, and presented a busy scene of Siamese riverine life, which remains comparatively unchanged here by modern influences which have done much to alter the original aspect of the Menam valley near Bangkok and in the neighbourhood of other large towns. The vast rice plains which spread on either side of the river were still deep in flood water. Across them in all directions peasants paddled their canoes, and men, women, and children were everywhere engaged in gathering a great harvest of fish, to be dried against the time, now just approaching, when the waters would subside. Whenever we passed a riverside village of floating bungalows or wooden houses, built up high on stilts, the water lapping almost up to the very floors, we noticed how the villagers safeguarded their oxen and plough buffaloes during the rains by providing them with attap-thatched stables also perched up on stilts. Into these stables the animals had been driven up a steep ramp at the beginning of the rains, just as Noah drove the animals into the Ark.

After we had travelled about half the distance between the railway and our goal we turned into the Three

Thousand Crocodiles tributary which had once been the main stream. It not only showed clear signs of silting up, but was half choked with that pest of Siamese waterways the water hyacinth or Java weed, which is said to have been introduced into Siam as late as the last century, at the request of a princess who admired its undoubtedly beautiful flower. To-day it has found its way into every river and canal of Central Siam, often seriously interfering with navigation, and it is said that it would cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to rid the country of it. On this particular stream only a narrow channel, through which our motor-boat could just forge its way, remained open. But that day we had only a few miles to go before reaching the village of Song Pinong, where, on our arrival, the village schoolroom, also perched up on stilts, was made ready for our reception. Here we spent a comfortable night, our cook and boy preparing our meals and sleeping on the veranda just outside our schoolroom-bedroom, which we had furnished with our own camp-beds.

Next morning we continued on our way in two smaller motor-boats, but after a few miles we had to transfer into sampans. These brought us late in the day to the market-place of the little Siamo-Chinese village that lay about half a mile from the rampart of old Uthong. It was a miserably dirty village, and after inspecting the wells as a possible source of drinking water we decided that a more wholesome position for our camp would be just within the bounds of the ancient city where the moat widened out to form what had been in ancient times a kind of combined reservoir and harbour. As it turned out, however, water-supply on this occasion was not to be a prob-



ONE METHOD OF FISHING PRACTISED IN CENTRAL SIAM

lem; for an abundance of the freshest sort one could wish was to be vouchsafed from the heavens! We found sufficient bare space to pitch our tent, but unfortunately no shade whatever, the city, as we subsequently discovered, being filled with jungle scrub with very few tall trees. The village headman and others, who assisted in the erecting of our tent, could not, of course, understand our choice of a site so far removed from the comforting security of the village, and the usual warnings about tigers were freely offered. Nor was the choice a popular one with the three policemen who had been sent from provincial headquarters to act as our escort.

The afternoon had been very hot, and clouds, banking up in the south-west, warned us that one of those great storms that mark the approaching end of the rainy season was upon us. As the sun was setting mass after mass of rain-cloud seemed to ooze up from the horizon like smoke from some ghastly inferno, rent every now and then by brilliant flashes of lightning. The heat became more and more oppressive as we hurriedly dug the usual precautionary trenches around our tent, with runways leading towards the moat. Only just in time, for hardly had we finished when a cold wind fanned our cheeks, and a moment later the rainstorm roared across the palm-trees over by the village and was upon us. The rain continued to fall in the torrents that only those familiar with tropical storms can imagine, yet somehow our cook contrived to continue cooking our evening meal over his two charcoal stoves. This repast was eventually consumed, plus a good deal of rain-water, as we sat well within our tent doorway, which was protected from the worst of the weather by its ample canvas veranda.

that, having obtained the loan of a roofed buffalo-cart from the village headman, they returned to their posts and slept as soundly as we did.

The old city of Uthong is a rectangular enclosure, the high ground within being surrounded by a rampart and moat, and measuring about a mile from north to south, half that distance from east to west. Apart from a ruined *stupa* base in the centre of the city, and a better-preserved pagoda outside the northern rampart, it contains no monuments, all trace of the timber buildings having, as usual, disappeared. A stucco head with features closely resembling those of figures found so commonly at P'ong Tük and Nakon Pathom, and the existence of a brick 'moonstone' doorstep similar to the one I had found before the ruined *vihara* at P'ong Tük, were useful pointers; but my objective was obtained only when, after digging a number of trial trenches within the city, I found several occupation levels and Chalieng glazed pottery, now believed to have been made in Siam as early as the sixth century, at such a great depth that I was able to establish the high antiquity of the city. It had certainly been founded well back in Dvaravati times, and at the time of its destruction must still have been a surviving centre of that ancient Buddhist culture. Yet I think what we found on the surface of the ground, the evidence of that final ghastly catastrophe, will be of most general interest.

"It's an ill wind . . . ," and certainly the daily storms, though not conducive to our material comfort, were a means of furthering our archæological efforts. In various parts of the city there were wide bare patches, somewhat reminiscent of the city site at Takuapa, where the forest scrub could obtain no foothold, owing to the poverty of

the soil. These extensive bare patches were, of course, the sites of the dwellings of the former inhabitants of Uthong, but there was this difference from Takuapa—that at the latter place the *débris* consisted of little more than broken pottery, just the sort of rubbish that one would expect to find cast down by housewives through the holes in the floors of the stilted attap-thatched wooden houses. Here at Uthong there was very much more, and this was laid bare to our view by the washing over of the superficial deposits by the heavy rain, over an area which would have taken us many days to examine by any other method. Human bones lay everywhere, not the sort of thing one would expect to find in a Buddhist community, where cremation would almost certainly have been practised, although it is true that it is usual to bury cholera and smallpox victims (when there are men to bury them), women who die in childbirth, people struck by lightning, and criminals, either from fear of the disease or of the ghost.

But this was no burial-ground. The dead men's bones lay on the sites of their ruined houses, among a medley of often unbroken cooking-pots, stone pestles and mortars, as good for use when we found them as they had been the day the pestilence had overtaken them nearly six hundred years earlier. These were the bones of people who had died of cholera, the women still wearing their necklaces of agate, cornelian, crystal, and amethyst beads, which none had troubled to remove, but of which we could have picked up scores. With the human bones, scattered beads, and little-damaged household utensils these superficial deposits differed markedly from the lower occupation levels, where there were no human bones, but only

a refuse of fragments of fish and animal bones, shells, pottery fragments and layers of charcoal, the remains of ancient kitchen-middens. On the surface, on the other hand, we found all the evidence of life in a busy community suddenly brought to a catastrophic standstill. Though, of course, agriculture must have been the chief occupation of the people, the citizens of Uthong were no doubt skilled workers of metal. On the sites of many of the houses or workshops we found lumps of lead, brass, and other metals, probably the stock-in-trade of the image-founders; while the little earthenware crucibles of the gold-workers were scattered among the craftsmen's bones. We ourselves found only a few specks of gold, but we soon discovered that almost every villager, who was accustomed to search after the thunderstorms as we were doing, was in possession of a fragment of gold leaf or a ring. The city's name appeared to be an apt one; it was still, more than any other site I have visited, a veritable Suvarnabhumi—"Land of Gold."

One young Annamite woman, who before migrating to this remote village had been a member of some French missionary's flock down the river, was eager to renew her acquaintance with Europeans. As soon as she knew the object of our inquiry she spent her days searching, with the aid of her quick-eyed children, for the beads and other objects we were collecting. It appeared that, like the other villagers, she also had a private store of her previous finds. These included a gold ring, which she proudly showed us on her wedding-ring finger. It fittingly replaced, she said, the Christian wedding-ring which she had once owned, but had lost some years before. She also showed us a large bullet coin of primitive shape,

stamped with elephant, lion, and other Indian emblems. It was the ancestral form of the well-known Siamese bullet coinage of later centuries, and perhaps the earliest bullet coin of which the find-spot has been traced.

While we sat in our tent in the evening, looking over our finds of the day in the light of our hurricane lamp, the storm raged without, and the eerie nature of the place did not fail to impress us. As we looked from one object to another the horror of those last few days of the city's anguish came vividly to life in our minds' eye. We pictured the frantic processions of the monks bearing the sacred images through the city, the ceremonies of propitiation, and the ruler's desperate efforts to secure an abatement of the epidemic by the liberation of prisoners and of animals held for sale in the market. Corpses, at first piled high in the monastery courtyards, must have accumulated in the houses when too few remained to remove them. As daily the waters fell there remained not even polluted water with which the sufferers could quench their thirst; the survivors could bear it no longer, and the Prince of Uthong gathered together officials, monks, and the remnant of a panic-stricken people to fly from the horror within the city. There was no time to gather up much in the way of personal possessions as the people flocked down to the landing-stage just below our tent. The boats, however, would have been stuck fast in the mud, and no alternative would have remained but to flee on foot across the burned rice plains. One particular find, indeed, brought home to us very vividly the disordered haste of the last scene: a beautiful golden earring, set with polished rubies in the old Indian style, was shown to us by a man who had found it in the moat. One may

well suppose that it was dropped by some princess of the royal household, stopping her ears against the shrieks of the victims who were left behind, as she herself was hastily borne in a litter to safety by some faithful attendants. Thus across the parched plain the sorrowful procession must have wended its way, eastward to the Menam valley, where, at a healthier, well-watered spot, the Prince of Uthong rallied his followers and founded Ayuthia, destined for four centuries to be the capital of a united Siam in which the Buddhist culture of Dvaravati, so nearly extinguished, though now mixed with that derived from other sources of inspiration, would be fanned once more into a bright flame.

Our work was done, and we wished to make preparations for our return journey; but we found that even at the present day to escape from Uthong was not so easy as to arrive there. The daily rainstorms had ceased abruptly a few days before we decided to go, and the dry season was at hand. When we called upon the village headman to make arrangements for our departure he told us that the boatmen would be afraid to make the journey. The waters in the river of Three Thousand Crocodiles would, he said, already be falling; and, besides, the channel might be completely choked with Java weed brought down by the recent storms. If we waited two or three weeks it would be dry enough to use the track that ran beside the river, and then he could find ox-carts for our baggage. Just at that moment an unaccustomed sound attracted our attention. Looking upward, we saw high overhead an Imperial Airways liner, still maintaining the great altitude necessitated by its recent crossing of the Burmo-Siamese border mountains, which offer no safe

landing-places. It had left Rangoon, I reflected, some three and a half hours earlier, and within half an hour its passengers would be alighting at Bangkok. Without more ado I ordered that the boats be got ready for our departure early next morning, and, luck being with us, none of the headman's forebodings came to pass, so that three days later we too were in Bangkok.

CHAPTER X

THE PALLAVA EXPANSION

We must now return to our central theme, primarily concerned with the main stream of Indian colonization which, after the end of the fourth century, spread eastward almost exclusively by means of the Transpeninsular Route. To understand the subsequent developments after the fall of Fu-nan, and, indeed, the underlying causes of the disruption of that state, it is important to note that in India by the end of the fifth century the great empire of the Guptas was tottering before the inroads of the White Huns. Its influence must consequently have been waning in Telingana, the region between the Kistna and Godaveri rivers from which, as we have seen, the earlier colonists set sail. Hence by the middle of the sixth century the tide of overseas Indian expansion had ceased to flow—at any rate, with anything like its former vigour—with the result that distant Indianized states like Fu-nan not only showed signs of political distress, but their art began to become stylized or to yield its purity to the effects of local influences. Before cultural decadence could make much headway, however—at least, along the main route of Indian colonial expansion across the Malay Peninsula to Fu-nan—a new factor came to bear on the situation.

In the far south of India a new power, that of a dynasty known as the Pallavas, built itself up at the expense of the older Tamil states, and for two hundred years, from about A.D. 550 to 750, dominated South India. In India the

Pallavas are famous for their fine artistic achievements, especially the Seven Pagodas at Mamallapuram, built in the seventh century, and some fine structural temples at their capital Kanchi, or Conjeeveṛam, just south of Madras, which date from the following century. But above all the Pallavas were colonists, and throughout the period of their greatness a constant stream of merchants and adventurers flowed across the Indian Ocean to bring new life and a new phase of Indian art to the various countries of Greater India.

Pallava sculpture is itself a local development of the art of the Gupta school, the influence of which reached all parts of India. But it differs from Gupta sculpture in the greater slenderness and freer movement of the figures, and in the higher cheek-bones and more oval face. It reached the peak of its development in the seventh century, during which the most graceful figures of both human beings and gods were produced, as well as representations of animals which surpass those of all other schools. Unlike the earlier colonists, the Pallavas were mainly worshippers of Śiva.

As one would expect, it is on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula that one first meets with Pallava sculpture outside India; but it may come as rather a surprise when I say that the west coast is the *only* place in Greater India where Pallava sculpture is found. In Southern Indo-China and Java, in the national art of which countries Pallava influence is undoubted, not a single piece of genuine Pallava sculpture has been found. Only when we reflect that from the early part of the fifth century the Straits of Malacca became practically closed to Indian shipping, by reason of the danger of piracy, do we appreciate the reason

why this important phase of art, unlike that of the Amaravati and Gupta schools, failed to reach the farther regions of Greater India—failed directly, that is to say, and in its original purity, but by no means altogether. The Transpeninsular Route was the channel by which Pallava cultural influences were disseminated throughout the Farther East; but in the preliminary process of crossing the watershed and taking root in the land around the Bay of Bandon changes had taken place, and what was broadcast from that region was no longer purely Pallava, but was already an Indian colonial art.

We shall first glance at the settlements on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, where, as I have said, purely Pallava antiquities have alone been found. In this region, by the way, considerable changes seem to have taken place in the local political organization, after the suzerain power of Fu-nan disappeared consequent on the break-up of that empire. The little states of the Peninsula seemed to have asserted their independence, and we find occurring in the Chinese contemporary records new names, which, however, it is seldom possible to place with any certainty. In some cases old names have perhaps merely given place to new, in others earlier states would appear to have split up; but it is impossible to be certain whether any of these actually stretched right across the Peninsula, even in the latitude of the Transpeninsular Route. P'an-p'an may have continued to exist for some time, with its capital at Wieng Sra, but as the wide area around the Bay of Bandon came to be more fully explored new colonies seem to have been founded at Grahi, north of the Bay, and Tambralinga, the district south of it, with capitals at Chaiya and Nakon Śri Thammarat respectively.

Farther south, on the west coast, there came into prominence, in the neighbourhood of modern Kedah, a kingdom called Laṅka-suka, which may have grown up at the expense of the old "Red Earth" kingdom. Chinese records of the seventh century tell us that the capital of this kingdom was encircled by a brick wall, forming a city with double gates, towers, and pavilions; and they say that the king, who wore a gold girdle and earrings, was accustomed to ride on an elephant accompanied by banners, fly-whisks, and drums, and shaded by a white parasol. Probably all these little kingdoms of the Peninsula enjoyed considerable prosperity during the Pallava times, and, being in constant touch with the latest Indian developments, their courts were up to date and highly cultured. At Sungai Batu, in Kedah, there are ancient remains which may be those of a capital of the Lanka-suka kingdom. Though little systematic excavation has been carried out there as yet, among objects that have been brought to light, and which appear to date from Pallava times, are a statue of the goddess Durga and the head of Śiva's bull. Still farther south, at a place on the coast called Kuala Selinsing, there are the remains of an old trading settlement which seems to have been a centre of the Indian bead-market. Vast numbers of cornelian, shell, and glass beads, as well as pieces of stone bracelets and pottery, have been picked up on the beach; also a gold ring worked with South Indian figures. But of greater interest was a cornelian seal, found in a hole left by the roots of a fallen tree. It is engraved with the words "Śri Vishnuvarmmasya," probably the name of the local Indian ruler. The characters are of Pallava type, a style of writing more evolved than those we have seen used in

earlier inscriptions, and in this case appear to date from the seventh century. They are used henceforth in all the Sanskrit inscriptions of Greater India during the period of the Pallava ascendancy; but the Tamil merchants, who doubtless formed a large proportion of the settlers, naturally did not write in Sanskrit, a language known only to the priests and kings. Instead, when they had occasion to write, it was in the Tamil language of the common people, which employed an entirely different script.

I have already mentioned an example on the Takuapa river—the inscription which referred to the tank founded by some merchant benefactor in the eighth century. And this brings me once more to the finest examples of Pallava sculpture yet found beyond the shores of India: the three stone images, one certainly being Śiva, partially engulfed by tree-trunks on the banks of the Takuapa river. When I first mentioned them their presence there seemed inexplicable, but knowing what we now do of the Transpeninsular Route we may be fairly certain that with the inscribed stone they were in process of being transferred by devotees from the more or less moribund settlement at Takuapa towards one of the more flourishing cities of the east coast. No doubt the heavily laden boat had gone aground in the shallowing water, just above the junction with a tributary, and the boatmen had been obliged to lay their precious burdens on the bank.

It was when I had crossed the watershed and was investigating the eastern settlements that I found the clearest evidence of the important part that had been played by the Transpeninsular Route in furthering the spread of Indian culture; for the Pallava wave of colonization had left a much better defined impression of its

passage than had the earlier influence of the Guptas. This is evidenced by the existence of a transpeninsular zone of Pallava-inspired works of art in the latitude of the Transpeninsular Route, north and south of which zone nothing of the sort is found.

At Wieng Sra, as we have seen, were found other sculptures the consideration of which I saw fit to postpone. They were, in fact, two sandstone Hindu images, one of which represents a four-armed Vishnu, whose identity is established by the presence of a conch and a discus; while the other represents Śiva in his terrible aspect, his four hands holding respectively a trident, a lasso, a drum, and a skull. These sculptures are now in the Bangkok Museum, and with them is a limestone statue of Vishnu from Nakon Śri Thammarat. I have seen another very similar one in the temple of the Brahmans at that place. When examining these Hindu images, which probably date from the latter part of the seventh century or from the eighth, one cannot fail to be struck with their close similarity to South Indian images of the same period, for the costume and jewellery and the manner in which the gods hold their attributes is in accordance with Indian ideas of correctness. But, though so nearly Indian, there is something about the treatment of the features and the hands that makes us feel instinctively that we are not in the presence of the work of an Indian craftsman.

Before we inquire more deeply into the meaning of this Indian colonial sculpture let us look into the matter of the seventh- or eighth-century architecture that is associated with the images that have been found around the Bay of Bandon. At once they throw a flood of light on the problem; in fact, there is a temple named Wat Keu at



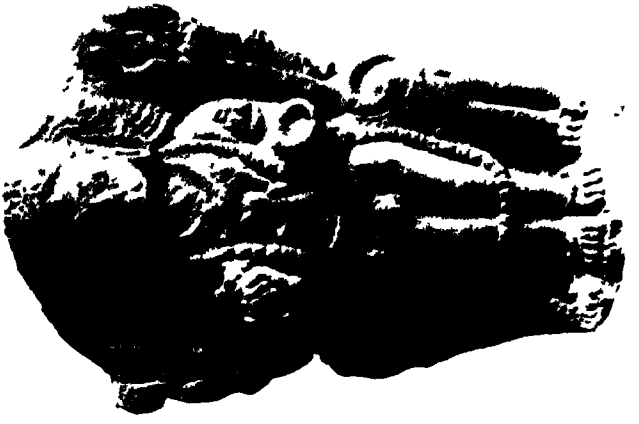
Wat Kut Chaiya

Chaiya that affords the solution in a nutshell! Its northern and western faces are hidden by an enormous mass of bricks and earth, so that only the other two façades can be clearly seen. At first sight the building has the appearance of a simple brick tower somewhat reminiscent, despite its ruined condition, of the Indian brick temple at Śri Deva. But a closer inspection shows that the architecture is more highly developed, and that Wat Keu has in fact several basic features in common with the more archaic of the contemporary buildings of Java, Cambodia, and Champa (South Annam). So far as Java is concerned the building reminds us by reason of its cruciform plan of Chandi Kalasan (A.D. 778), the earliest Buddhist temple in Java, the porches (real and false) of the earlier type of Indian tower having been developed to form chapels at the cardinal points. The architecture, however, suggests that of the early Primitive Khmer temples, and still more, by reason of the excellence of its brickwork, the presence of pilasters and the rounded brick pillars beside the doors, the earlier temples of Champa. The combination in a single temple of some of the basic features of the earlier temples of such geographically widely separated regions as Java, Cambodia, and Champa can only mean one thing: a dissemination of art influences, during the period A.D. 550 to 750, from a cultural centre situated in the neighbourhood of the Bay of Bandon. And Wat Keu is not an isolated example of this composite type of building existing in this area. Both at Chaiya and at Nakon Śri Thammarat there are other shrines of the same type; and at the latter place the Brahmans have in their custody a couple of old ruined brick temples the architecture of which, in its extreme simplicity, is more reminiscent of

the little stone, cell-like Hindu buildings of the Dieng Plateau, in Java, which date from the latter part of the seventh century.

Although there are, it is true, on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula no surviving buildings of purely Pallava architecture corresponding to the Pallava sculptures found there, there is no doubt that primitive buildings once existed there, and the foundations of the temple excavated by us on the island at Takuapa were no doubt those of such a building. But, in any case, a comparison with the seventh-century stone shore temples at Mamallapuram, in India, an evolution parallel to the temples produced by contemporary descendants of colonists of the same stock around the Bay of Bandon, can leave us in no doubt that this as yet unspecialized colonial art was the product of Pallava inspiration.

As with the architecture, so with the associated so-nearly Pallava sculptures, which yield their mystery before the clear explanation afforded by the study of Wat Keu and other buildings of the same type. They are local products of the great wave of Pallava expansion which swept across the Transpeninsular Route to Java, Cambodia, and Champa. It is, however, to the early sculptures of the Dieng Plateau that they bear the strongest resemblance and for which they might well have served as models. For we must remember that the early colonies in Java had perished some time in the fifth century, and for two hundred years Indian culture in Java must have languished, until Indianized emigrants from the Bay of Bandon region began to find their way thither in the seventh century, and, the Gupta art tradition being dead in Java, began to make poor images in imitation of those they had been





used to worship in the temples of Chaiya and Nakon Śri Thammarat.

On the other hand, when Cambodia began to receive Pallava influences she was still in possession of the living Gupta tradition of Fu-nan. The combination of the two Indian schools of art, leavened no doubt by the peculiar genius proper to the Khmers, produced a style of sculpture which for sheer beauty of line the Khmers never surpassed even in the period of their classical greatness. It was the Chams, however, that seemed to have reacted most profoundly to Pallava influences, and at their best they produced graceful statues vastly superior to the local Peninsular sculptures, and, indeed, bearing comparison with the finest products of pure Pallava art in India. One can only suppose that the fame of Champa, and its position on the road to China, was sufficient to attract many Indian settlers, including skilled craftsmen, to proceed thither without making a prolonged stay on the Malay Peninsula.

Now that we have seen something of the way in which Pallava influence was spread abroad, and the relics of its passage left on the Transpeninsular Route, it will be fitting to make some acquaintance with the interesting and vigorous cultures that it was the means of building up in the colonies which drew from it their renewed inspiration. To deal first with Cambodia, we know that the Fu-nan empire was overthrown about A.D. 550, although a remnant of the Fu-nan kingdom appears to have continued to exist for some time. Indeed, it was even strong enough until the seventh century to send embassies to China, after which we hear no more of it. But a new Power had come into being when, about the middle of the sixth century, a vassal state in Cambodia, known to the

Chinese as Chen-la, threw off the yoke and proclaimed its independence under a king called Bhavavarman. No doubt the weakening of Fu-nan, a reflection of that of the Gupta empire of India, gave him his opportunity, but Pallava influences may have provided the stimulus even if he, as is by no means unlikely, was not a newly arrived adventurer of that stock. The last king of Fu-nan had favoured Buddhism, but now a Chinese historian tells us that whereas formerly "the law of Buddha prospered and expanded, at the present time a wicked king has completely destroyed it, and there are no more monks." Chen-la accepted the worship of Śiva, the favourite god of the Pallavas, as well as the cult of Hari-hara (Vishnu and Śiva in one). This "wicked king," Bhavavarman, was a great conqueror, and a number of Sanskrit inscriptions have come down to us which extol his warlike qualities. One of these tells us about his campaign against the hill chiefs, whom he is represented as having beaten right up to their mountain peaks. But it does not appear that this first Khmer kingdom ever extended farther north than the Mün river (the ancient imperial trade route of Fu-nan), or much farther west than the limits of the modern kingdom of Cambodia.

Early in the seventh century Chen-la began to send embassies to China, and the Chinese historian Ma-touan-lin was able to collect the following information concerning the customs of Chen-la about this period:

> The capital contains twenty thousand houses. In the centre of the city is a grand hall where the king holds his Court. There are thirty cities, in each of which there are several thousands of houses. Each town has a governor . . . and there are five classes of high officials. When they

appear before the king they thrice touch the ground in front of the steps of the throne. If the king orders them to mount the steps, then they kneel with their hands crossed over their shoulders. Then they sit in a circle round the king to discuss State affairs. When the meeting of the council is over they kneel down again, prostrate themselves, and take leave. More than a thousand guards in armour and armed with lances are ranged at the foot of the throne and in the precincts.

The men are of a small stature and of a dark complexion; but there are women who are fair. The people tie their hair in a knot and wear earrings. They are robust and of an active temperament. They bathe every morning, and they use twigs of trees for cleaning their teeth. . . . In their food they use a good deal of butter, cream, powdered sugar, rice, and millet, of which they make a kind of cake.[1]

After describing the marriage and funeral ceremonies the record goes on:

The north of Chen-la is a country of mountains and valleys. In the south there are large marshes . . . with pestilential exhalations. Rice, rye, and a little millet are produced. . . . Between the fifth and sixth moon there blows a pestilential breeze, to ward off the ill-effects of which sacrifices of swine and white sheep are offered outside the western gates. Otherwise the grain would not ripen and the cattle and people would perish. Near the capital one comes to a hill on the top of which is a temple which is always guarded by a thousand soldiers. It is consecrated to a spirit to whom human sacrifices are offered. Every year the king goes himself to offer a human sacrifice at night. Thus they honour the spirit. There are many who follow the law of the Buddha, and there are many others who

[1] From the French translation—*Ethnographie des Peuples Étrangers à la Chine (Méridionaux)*—by Le Marquis d'Hervey de Saint-Denys (1883).

follow the law of the Brahmanic religion. In the houses where travellers stop the Buddhists and Brahmans place their sacred images.

At the beginning of the eighth century the Primitive Khmer kingdom split up into two independent states under two ruling families. Chen-la of the Land, with its capital at Sambor, occupied the northern hilly region, while the low-lying country along the coast, with its capital at Angkor Borei, was known as Chen-la of the Water. We know little about Cambodia during the eighth century beyond the fact that this division of the kingdom led to the country's being plunged into a state of anarchy which was the prelude to foreign invasion. Far from being a catastrophe, however, this invasion was the means of ushering in the period of Khmer greatness and the flowering of the classical art of Cambodia.

Considerably less than a hundred Primitive Khmer temples dating from the middle of the sixth to the middle of the eighth centuries still survive in Cambodia. They are for the most part single brick towers, sometimes two or three in line. The most usual style is superficially very reminiscent of the Indian temple at Śri Deva, and consists of a main sanctuary, with a true porch and three false ones, topped by receding stages repeating on a smaller scale the same structural elements. It is when we come to details, however, that we notice the effects of evolution and of Pallava influence, especially in the matter of decoration. For not only are the walls decorated with pilasters, but the spaces between the latter are occupied by miniature edifices carved in low relief, highly elaborated floating palaces or temples, which indicate that the temple enclosures must often have contained, in addition

to the brick towers, beautifully carved wooden pavilions, of which no traces have come down to us. Another characteristic feature is the type of lintel surmounting the entrance. It is carved with figures of deities, monsters, and floral motives, and is supported by rounded stone pillars which are all of an archaic type not met with in later Khmer architecture. Inside the sanctuary special features are the stone hooks which support the timber roof; while from the carved pedestal, which supported the statue of the deity worshipped, there runs a kind of conduit pipe carrying off the consecrated water with which, according to Hindu usages, the images were frequently sprinkled. The pipe pierced the thick wall of the shrine, and issued on the outside as a gargoyle having the shape of a monster's head.

The statues of the gods to which these temples were dedicated are seldom found *in situ*, but a considerable number of them have been recovered; and in their portrayal of the human or divine figure they reach an artistic standard that was never surpassed, if, indeed, it was ever equalled, in classical Khmer times. From the sculpture of Fu-nan, as evidenced by the Śri Deva finds, the Primitive Khmer statue differs in many points of detail. As a result, no doubt, both of Pallava influence and of the awakening of the Khmer genius, the headdress is more definitely cylindrical, the more delicate features are often illuminated by the new-born Khmer smile, and the head is mounted on a more slender and graceful neck. The thighs are less clearly detached from each other, and representation of the dress is more distinct. But perhaps the most notable difference is the loss of the pronounced triple flexion of the body, so characteristic of the purely

Indian images of Śri Deva. Yet much of the early simplicity and natural grace of line is retained, especially in the female figures, though it may be agreed that Primitive Khmer sculpture reaches its acme in the famous Hari-hara of Prasat Andet (now in the Phnompenh Museum), which dates from the early part of the eighth century. This very masculine figure excels above all in the subtle and correct modelling of the muscles, while the slightly stylized features afford an expression of quiet dignity and firmness of character never attained in Indo-China before or after.

The artistic achievements of Java immediately resulting from her recolonization in the seventh or early part of the eighth century need not long delay us. The character of the simple little stone shrines of the Dieng Plateau, as well as their associated images, bears evidence of Pallava influences, while the character of the sculptures and of an inscription dated A.D. 732 attest the fact that Śiva-worship prevailed. But as yet the Indian or Indianized colonists were poor and few in number. No doubt they were fully occupied by their struggle to open up the new country, whose fertility was such, however, that a rich harvest, both cultural and material, was soon, as we shall see in Chapter XIII, to result from the seeds sown in the seventh century.

The kingdom of Champa, which occupied the fertile valleys of the coast of South Annam, is the state which, on account of its almost purely Pallava culture, has most call on our attention in this chapter. Indeed, what we have to say about it will be said here, for with the decline of the Pallavas their distant cultural colony soon fell into decadence, although it retained its political independence for many more centuries. Situated on the direct sea route



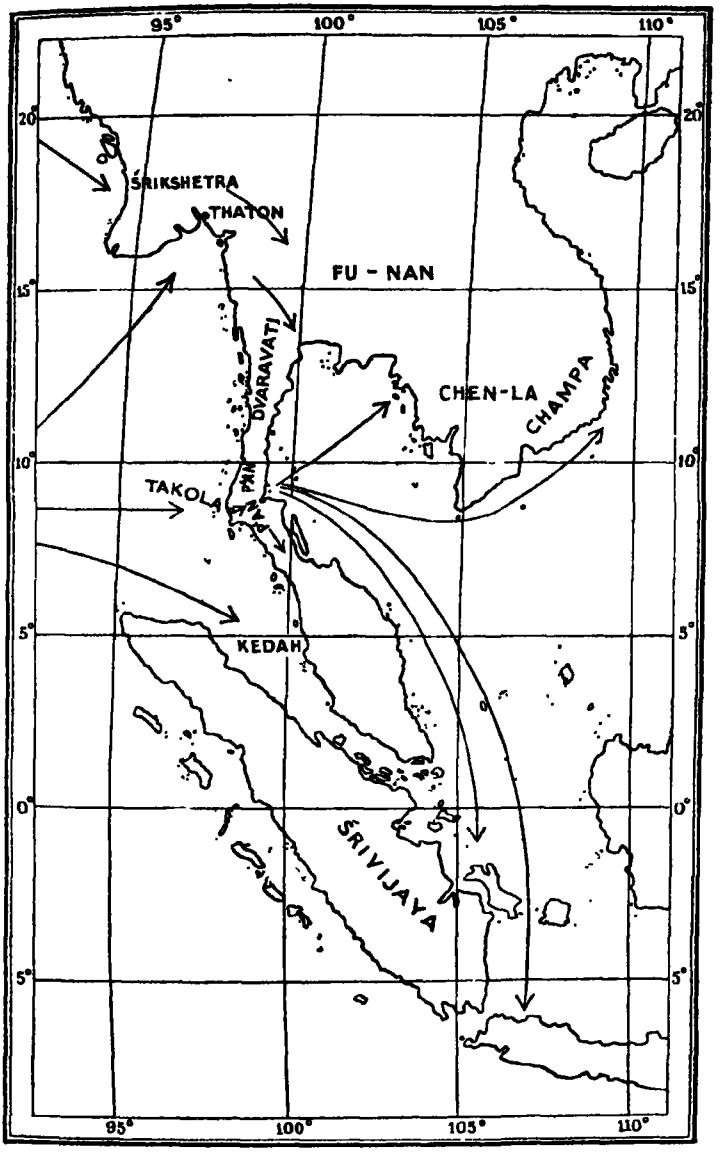
CHAM FIGURE OF SIVA
[illegible]

to China, an Indian state of Champa seems to have been founded as early as the second century A.D., for an inscription has come to light there which cannot be later than the third century, and ranks as the earliest known Indian inscription in Greater India. Subsequent inscriptions (the Chams were especially prolific in this respect), together with frequent mentions in the chronicles of China, to which this little Indian kingdom sent many embassies, provide us with a long list of the names of monarchs ending with *varman*, and afford us an outline of the history of the Chams. This history does not make very interesting reading, although it leaves us with the impression of a very heroic people who, at least from the tenth century, were constantly engaged in a ding-dong struggle for existence. To the south they were incessantly at war with the more powerful kingdom of Cambodia (the fighting is depicted in great detail in the bas-reliefs of Angkor); while on the north their enemy was Annam, a state which finally compassed their destruction and absorbed their territory in the fifteenth century. One can only wonder that in these difficult circumstances the Chams achieved the cultural level that they did.

From the beginning the Chams seem to have favoured the cult of the god Śiva, a fact which the Pallava colonists may have found particularly attractive, though Vishnu was also worshipped. Indications abound as to the completeness with which the Chams absorbed every aspect of Indian culture—religion, ceremonial, and administrative ideas. Cham architecture is best known to tourists by the two or three towers visible, far off, from the Mandarin Road, that magnificent highway which skirts the coast of Annam, and by the fine temple of Po Nagar, at Nha

Trang. The latter, together with the older temples of the Mi-son and Dong-Duong groups, are the finest representatives of the best period of Cham art. This period lasted from the seventh century to the ninth or tenth, and was followed by a century or so in which architectural forms maintained a static correctness, after which decadence set in. But despite detailed differences all Cham temples belong essentially to one type—a brick tower with superimposed stories of diminishing size, set on an eminence, and obviously a derivation from the simple early Indian temple, modified by Pallava influences in the way that I have indicated when speaking of Wat Keu at Chaiya. Sometimes the main tower is accompanied by two subsidiary sanctuaries, and there are usually the remains of record-rooms, storerooms, etc.

The Cham sanctuary tower rises on a square base, and is constructed of beautifully made bricks carefully fitted together without apparent mortar, and a peculiar feature is that the true porch is enlarged to form a kind of antechamber. The stone lintels and pediments are characteristically carved. The outer walls of the main sanctuary are ornamented with strongly marked pilasters, and the base and cornice are usually elaborately carved with figures and floral decorations and designs, in which latter the Chams excelled. Peculiar characteristics are that the junctions of two cornices are strengthened by the presence of stone carved pieces in the shape of heavenly beings or monsters, while at the four angles of the cornice, on the roof of the main stage, are four miniature towers reproducing the structure of the tower itself. There are usually three or four upper stories, each reproducing in miniature the structural features of the main sanctuary, and the vault



PART OF GREATER INDIA ABOUT A.D. 550

is closed by a stone slab. Later buildings, however, vary so far from the basic type of Indian temple that the upper part consists of a curvilinear pyramidal dome which rises directly from the walls of the sanctuary. An interesting peculiarity of some Cham sites is the valuable buried treasures that have been found there. Thus at Mi-son the gold ornaments (bracelets, crown, etc.) of a sacred figure were found in a sealed earthenware pot; and at Po Nagar pearls, golden jewellery, and silver vessels came to light.

In the seventh and eighth centuries the Chams produced statuary of a high degree of artistic merit, as all will agree who have been privileged to visit the splendidly organized museum at Tourane, or who have perused the beautiful volume devoted to it in *Ars Asiatica*. Some of the well-proportioned stone figures of the masculine Hindu deities have great poise and dignity, but perhaps the highest pitch of excellence is reached by the female figures. I refer particularly to the graceful dancer which ornaments the pedestal from Tra-kieu, and, above all, to the bust of a goddess from Huong-qua, whose noble countenance so brilliantly reflects the light of Pallava inspiration beyond the seas.

Later Cham figures become thick-lipped and grotesque. The Chams are racially Malayo-Polynesian; and it is Malayo-Polynesian artistic instinct, kept in abeyance except in some monstrous animal forms during the active period of Indian colonization, that is given free rein in Cham art after the eighth century. The last great wave of Indian influence, of which we shall speak in the next chapter, never gained a footing in Champa, nor did the Chams possess a genius of their own in any way comparable with that of the Khmers. It was the absence of

these two important factors, together with the difficulties under which they contrived to continue their national existence, that condemned them to long centuries of decline and decadence. Yet Cham art at its best is one of the brightest gems in India's cultural crown, and deserves to be better known by the general art-loving public. But the scheme of this book, more concerned as it is with the main trend of development which led to Angkor, does not allow me to wander farther along this attractive byway.

CHAPTER XI

THE KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

THE stage is now set for a series of dramatic events which not only increase the *tempo* of our story, but introduce a striking and romantic personage, the greatest of the Indian Argonauts. For now, at last, a hero emerges whose glorious deeds are brought to life once more as modern research painfully pieces together the all too fragmentary records of a forgotten past. This great conqueror, whose achievements can only be compared with those of the greatest soldiers known to Western history, and whose fame in his time resounded from Persia to China, in a decade or two built up a vast maritime empire which endured for five centuries, and made possible the marvellous flowering of Indian art and culture in Java and Cambodia. Yet in our encyclopædias and histories, which are at such pains to store and tabulate masses of relatively unimportant facts which do infinitely less honour to human achievement, one will search in vain for a reference to this far-flung empire or to its noble founder. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

The very fact of such an empire's ever having existed is scarcely known, except by a handful of Oriental scholars; and even these were at a loss to know where to place its capital until in 1918 M. Cœdès bravely suggested Palembang, in Sumatra. This theory, tentative as it was, held its ground, and was adopted by various writers until 1934. Then an Indian scholar, Professor R. C. Majumdar,

published two brilliant articles based on a reinterpretation of all the inscriptions and other records. He adduced strong evidence that the capital of this empire was situated, not in Sumatra, where incidentally no ruins that could be those of such a great city have been found, but somewhere in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula, where it seemed certain that these new colonists had first landed. This literary evidence does not have to stand alone. Early in 1935 I crossed the Transpeninsular Route from Takuapa to the Bay of Bandon, and its importance as a channel of Indian expansion strongly impressed me. Moreover, when I had reached the eastern end of the route my explorations in that region convinced me that at Chaiya, a site I have already had occasion to mention, I had located the capital of this great empire. Indeed, the combined literary and archæological evidence seems to me to leave no reasonable room for doubt, and any other interpretation leaves the archæology of the period in chaos. I need not enter further into the history of research on this subject, which has been a matter of keen controversy among Indologists in recent years. It will be more interesting to set forth the dramatic story of these stirring times in so far as it may be offered for the general reader's consumption; in the next chapter I shall have something to say of my exploration of the city which I believe to have been the empire's capital.

To understand the circumstances which made possible the events about to be narrated we must first look back to conditions in India. There, in the south, a severe defeat inflicted by the Chalukyas in A.D. 740 on the reigning Pallava king sounded the knell of the greatness of his dynasty, although it continued to survive until its power

was finally destroyed by the Cholas at the end of the ninth century. But the middle of the eighth century saw the beginning of the decline of Pallava power in South India; and that state of affairs must have been reflected in the Pallava-inspired countries of Greater India. Just prior to this time Bengal, which had suffered a long period of anarchy since the break-up of the Gupta empire, attained settled government under a strong dynasty, known as the Palas, which ruled for four and a half centuries, from about A.D. 730 to 1197. These kings were Buddhists, but they were followers not of the simple teachings of the Gautama, but of the Northern or Mahayana, school, which had originated in the Punjab in the first century A.D. The influence of the Pala kings spread southward, and with it naturally came the new religion. In due course it reached Mysore, which was then ruled by the Ganga dynasty, a branch of the Pallava royal family. No doubt it was as a result of the unsettled conditions in his homeland that a young Ganga prince, with his four brothers and a handful of retainers, resolved to set forth overseas with the avowed intention of conquering the world. It would seem very likely that it was this young prince who reached the Malay Peninsula soon after the middle of the eighth century and, landing most probably at Takuapa, made his way with his followers across the Transpeninsular Route to the rich but now somnolent state of Grahi. Taking the inhabitants by surprise, he encountered little resistance, and not only seized the throne of Grahi, but in a short time made himself master of all the petty states of this part of the Peninsula.

We now find Greater India faced by a situation unprecedented in its history. We have seen early pioneers

engaged in petty skirmishes with the natives; reformers such as the Brahman Kaundinya welcomed by the populace as bringers of a new era of prosperity; and the Indianized state of Fu-nan building up a considerable empire by the conquest of less advanced neighbouring states. But on the whole the tide of Indian colonization had moved steadily and peacefully, now ebbing, now flowing, each successive wave introducing, by a gradual infiltration, the contemporary culture of India. Now, and at a time when the colonies were least prepared to resist—for the vigour of the Pallava colonizing wave had spent itself and the Indianized states were beginning to settle down to a leisurely local evolution—there burst upon South-eastern Asia the shock of an Indian invasion, both military and religious, which was to have the most sensational and far-reaching effects.

As is so often the case with great undertakings, the initial step, that by which this adventurous prince made himself master of the Transpeninsular Route, was the most fateful. Though no details of this first campaign have come down to us we need not doubt its possibility. History, both in the Old World and in the New, can supply us with plenty of parallels—dazzling conquests in which a few resolute men, fired by a burning religious zeal and pitted against an unprepared enemy, have made themselves masters of a nation in the twinkling of an eye. But if the inspiration of the Mahayana and the torpidity of the people made these things possible, they could have been carried into effect only by the bold resolution of the man—the hero whose name we do not even know. There is nothing curious about this. It was tabu to refer to the personal names of Indian kings; and in Indo-China down

to quite recent times a ruler was referred to only by high-sounding epithets. Indeed, it would be quite easy to find peasants in Siam and Cambodia, even at the present day, who are ignorant of the names of the present kings or of any of their predecessors. However, if we cannot put a name to the hero, at least we have no lack of grandiose epithets. In the Indian inscriptions he is known as the Śailendra, which means "the King of the Mountain," and, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, the east-flowing river by which he reached the Bay of Bandon till this day bears the name Girirashtra—"the River of the Kingdom of the Mountain." Perhaps the Śailendra named it so because it reminded him of his mountainous homeland in Mysore. To the Arab merchants, who from the middle of the ninth century began to write their travels, he is known as the Maharaja, King of the Mountain and Lord of the Isles.

Having mastered the central part of the Malay Peninsula, the King of the Mountain appears to have looked round him to see what next step he could best take to further his dream of conquering the world—or that part of it which was known to him. It may seem strange that he did not extend his conquests northward along the coast of the Gulf of Siam. That he did not was probably due to the fact that north of the Bay of Bandon the coastal strip between the mountains and the sea narrows to such an insignificant stretch of habitable land as would hardly have repaid his efforts. It may have formed a sort of No Man's Land between his territory and that of the Buddhist kingdom of Dvaravati. Moreover, the far-sighted outlook characteristic of his genius turned his attention southward, and he longed for the control of the

Straits of Malacca. The reason for this was that the latter had acquired a new importance since in A.D. 663 the Thibetans revolted, temporarily closing the Silk Route through Central Asia, in consequence of which China began to make greater use of the all-sea route—that is to say, so far as the pirates would let her. It is not surprising, therefore, that it occurred to the King of the Mountain that his plans would be greatly forwarded if he could obtain control of the Straits, and incidentally of the rich Chinese shipping that passed through them—a move that would certainly benefit his treasury.[1] This plan entailed the conquest of the great island of Sumatra with its colonies, at the southern extremity of the Malay Peninsula. But before proceeding we must pause to consider what had been happening in the Sumatran kingdom prior to the invasion of the King of the Mountain.

This great island must have received Indian influences at an early period, for we know that quite early in the Christian era Indianized emigrants from Sumatra colonized

[1] In a recent criticism of my views M. Cœdès, while admitting that a kind of sub-capital probably existed in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula, still supports his original contention that Palembang was the seat of the Maharaja and capital of the Śailendra Empire, dismissing Chaiya mainly on the ground that its position at the bottom of a *cul-de-sac* and its distance from the Straits make it geographically impossible for it to have controlled this important waterway. His objection would indeed offer a very real difficulty if we had to suppose that Chaiya was obliged to control the Straits *directly*, especially in the North-east monsoon period. But the Arab texts and South Indian inscriptions repeatedly refer to Kedah in such a way that we must conclude that it was the chief port of the Empire, and there was always easy overland communication between Kedah and the Chaiya-Nakon Śri Thammarat region. Moreover, Kedah, situated at the western entrance to the Straits, and in a position to patrol them throughout their length, certainly seems better placed to exercise this control than does Palembang, which lies fifty miles up a river, the mouth of which is 250 miles distant from Singapore.

Madagascar, where traces of their language and customs survive to this day. Towards the end of the seventh century the Chinese Buddhist monk I-Ching visited Sumatra, and found there a state named Śrivijaya, with its capital on the site of the modern Palembang. This state had attained a high standard of civilization. Hinayana Buddhism flourished there, so that its culture was probably very similar to that of the kingdom of Dvaravati. However, we know from inscriptions of about the same date that Mahayana ideas had already reached Śrivijaya nearly a hundred years before the Śailendra monarch spread them through the rest of Greater India. I-Ching tells us that Śrivijaya was in close touch with India, and carried on a water-borne trade with Indian ports. But we know from another source that this kingdom was not content with carrying on legitimate trade: she stretched a chain across the Straits, and exacted a heavy tribute from foreign merchantmen who desired to pass. In other words, Indian princes, who had succeeded in establishing themselves in Sumatra, had harnessed for their own gain the piratical habits of the Malays, of which Fa-hien complained in the fifth century, and which subsequently cut off Indian communication by sea with Java and Borneo. It was this iniquitous system at which the King of the Mountain resolved to strike, and after his successful invasion, though no doubt he levied duties of some sort on the merchants, these must have been reasonable, since sea-borne trade undoubtedly increased, and we hear that the chain ceased to be stretched across the Straits. After four centuries of strangulation the all-sea route to China was reopened; and this was not the least of the triumphs of the King of the Mountain.

We have no details of the conquest of Sumatra. All we know is that a Sanskrit inscription dated the equivalent of A.D. 775 has been found at Chaiya, and that in commemorating the foundation of three Mahayana brick shrines it says:

> Victorious is the king of Śrivijava, whose sovereignty is recognized and whose commands are obeyed by the neighbouring kings, and who has been deliberately created by Brahma, as if that god had in view the perpetuity of the praiseworthy Law.[1]

Perhaps we may assume that the King of the Mountain, having absorbed the Sumatran state of Śrivijaya, had adopted its name for his own capital city, for the name simply means 'victorious,' and was quite a common name for an Indian city of which the ruler was, or imagined himself to be, a great conqueror. That would account for the name Chaiya (or Jaya), which is attached to the site of his capital to this day, for the first part of words is commonly dropped in Southern Siam; and near by is a hill which retains in full the name Mount Śrivijaya. However this may be, another inscription on the *same* block of stone, but of slightly later date, is a eulogy of the Śailendra monarch, whose titles are mentioned. But if the King of the Mountain adopted the name Śrivijaya for his capital (it is known to the Chinese as San-fo-tse), the empire in process of being built up came to be known as Javaka, which the Arabs corrupted into Zabag. It may have obtained this name as a variation of Java, that part of the empire better known to mariners, from its proxi-

[1] From the French translation by G. Cœdès in *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam*, Part II, p. 38.

mity to the sea route to China. But I proceed too fast. That the conquest of the greater part of Java had taken place by A.D. 778 is attested by the inscription of that date found at Chandi Kalasan, the earliest Buddhist (Mahayana) temple in Java. From it we learn that the Śailendra king had founded this temple in that year in celebration of the defeat of the Indian princes of Central Java, whom he had driven to the eastern end of the island.

Though we have so little detail concerning the Śailendra's exploits in Sumatra and Java, happily we are much better informed with regard to his conquest of the Primitive Khmer kingdom (Chen-la of the Water presumably), from the point of view of the cultural development of Greater India by far the most important of the Śailendra's warlike undertakings. An Arab merchant, Sulaiman by name, who travelled through the empire of Zabag in about A.D. 851, has handed down to us the following account which tells us exactly how the matter came about, and is of such lively interest that I shall quote it *in extenso*. It would appear that in this case the Cambodian king brought the trouble upon himself, though one can well imagine that the King of the Mountain, or Maharaja as he is termed by the Arab writer, was not averse to taking advantage of the opportunity offered. As we know from other sources, these events took place in the last quarter of the eighth century, following quickly on the Śailendra's southern conquests.

> Cambodia is the country from which the Khmer aloe is exported. It is not an island, and there is no kingdom which possesses a more numerous population than that of Cambodia. Debauchery and all kinds of fermented drinks are prohibited; and in town and country one cannot find a

single person leading a dissolute life. Between Cambodia and Zabag the distance is ten to twenty days by sea, depending on the weather.

They say that formerly there was a Khmer king who was young and rash. One day he was sitting in his palace which overlooked a river resembling the Tigris (from the palace to the sea the distance was a day's journey), and his minister was with him. He was discussing with his minister the grandeur of the kingdom of the Maharaja of Zabag, of its immense population, and of the large number of islands which it comprised. "I have a desire," said the King, "that I should like to satisfy." The minister, who was sincerely devoted to his sovereign, and who knew with what rashness he often made up his mind, replied, "What is your Majesty's desire?" The latter answered, "I wish to see the head of the Maharaja, King of Zabag, before me on a plate." The minister understood that it was jealousy that had suggested this to his sovereign, and said, "I do not like, your Majesty, to hear my sovereign express such a desire. The peoples of Cambodia and Zabag have as yet shown each other no hatred, and Zabag has done us no harm. It is a distant land, and its king has shown no wish to attack us. No one must hear about this desire, and it must never be repeated." The Khmer king was angry with his minister, and, ignoring the advice of his wise and loyal counsellor, repeated the proposal before the generals and courtiers who were present.

The idea spread from mouth to mouth, until it reached the knowledge of the Maharaja of Zabag himself. The latter was an energetic and experienced monarch, who had then reached a mature age. He called his minister and informed him of what he had heard, adding, "After the proposal that this foolish Khmer king has made in public concerning a desire which is born of his youth, I must take steps in the matter. To take no notice of these insults would be to

humble myself before him." The King ordered his minister to keep this conversation secret, and to go and prepare a thousand ships of moderate size, to equip them, and to put on board arms and as many valiant troops as possible. To explain the situation it was given out that the Maharaja intended to make a tour among the islands of his kingdom; and he wrote to the governors to warn them of the tour that he was going to make. The news spread everywhere, and the governor of each island prepared to receive the Maharaja.

When the King's orders had been executed and the preparations were finished he embarked, and with his fleet set sail for Cambodia. The Khmer king had no suspicion of what was going on until the Maharaja had arrived at the river which led to the capital and had landed his troops. These invested the capital by surprise, surrounded the palace, and seized the King. The people fled before the invaders. But the Maharaja proclaimed by public criers that he guaranteed the safety of everybody; and then he seated himself on the Khmer king's throne and ordered the captive monarch to be brought before him. He said to the Khmer king, "Why did you formulate a desire which was not in your power to satisfy, which could not have done you any good if it had been satisfied, and which would not even have been justified if it had been possible?" The Khmer king did not reply, and the Maharaja continued: "You wished to see my head before you on a plate. If you had similarly desired to seize my kingdom or to ravage part of it I should have done the same to Cambodia, but as you only wished to see my head cut off I shall confine myself to subjecting you to the same treatment, and then I shall return to my own country without taking anything from Cambodia of value great or small. My victory will serve as a lesson to your successors, so that no one will be tempted in future to undertake a task beyond his powers, or to desire more than

fate has in store for him." He then had the Khmer king beheaded, and, addressing the Khmer minister, said, "I am going to recompense you for the good that you tried to do as minister, since I know well that you had wisely advised your master. What a pity for him that he did not listen! Now seek somebody who can be a good king after this madman and put him on the throne instead."

The Maharaja left at once for his own country, and neither he nor any of his followers took anything away from the Khmer country. When he had returned to his own kingdom he seated himself on his throne, which looked over a lake, and he had the Khmer king's head placed before him on a plate. Then he called together the dignitaries of his kingdom, and told them what had happened and why he had undertaken this expedition against the Khmer king. On learning this the people of Zabag prayed for blessings to be bestowed upon their ruler. The Maharaja then had the Khmer king's head washed and embalmed, and, placing it in a vase, had it sent to the new Khmer king, together with a letter to the following effect: "I was obliged to act as I did because of the hatred that the former king manifested against me, and we have chastised him to serve as a lesson to those who might wish to imitate him." When the news of these events reached the kings of India and China the Maharaja rose in their estimation. Since that time the kings of Cambodia every morning on rising turn their faces towards Zabag and bow to the earth to do homage to the Maharaja.[1]

Inscriptions afford ample corroboration of the Arab merchant's story of the conquest of Cambodia; though we may perhaps be permitted to doubt the motive. There is no reason to doubt the fact of the Khmer king's boast

[1] From the French translation of G. Ferrand in his work *L'Empire Sumatranais de Çrivijaya*, in *Journal Asiatique* (1922).

and the penalty he paid for it, but the effort that is made to show that the attack was justified looks too much like an endeavour to cloak the King of the Mountain's lust for conquest. Sulaiman probably got hold of the story that was intended for foreign export, especially to the Court of China, which might have otherwise been disposed to intervene. At any rate, it would appear that from the very beginning of his career the Śailendra's forces had been making raids on Champa, for a Cham inscription tells us that in A.D. 774 an icon was destroyed by "ferocious, pitiless dark-coloured people who came on board ships"; and in A.D. 787 invaders from "Java" burned a Cham temple. But they were repulsed, or, at least, did not find the poor Cham country worth the trouble of holding; and so the Mahayana, much to the ultimate cultural loss of the Chams, did not obtain much footing in that part of Indo-China. Still more important is a Cambodian inscription which tells us that in A.D. 802 a king named Jayavarman, who came from "Java," ascended the Khmer throne. The use of "Java" in these inscriptions does not necessarily mean the modern island of Java, but any part of the empire of Javaka, especially its capital. This Jayavarman was one of the greatest of Indo-Chinese monarchs, for he prepared the way for the great era of Cambodian history by uniting under one ruler the two Khmer states, Chen-la of the Land and Chen-la of the Water, at the same time introducing the Mahayana; and he is the hero of many Cambodian legends. We can also deduce from this inscription that, even if the King of the Mountain had installed a Khmer king to rule over Cambodia at the time of his conquest, the latter had evidently proved unsatisfactory, and, not having learned his lesson

as well as had been hoped, had been replaced by a scion of the conqueror's family. This vassalage, however, did not last after A.D. 869, when Jayavarman died.

From Sulaiman and other Arab travellers we learn something of the wealth and magnificence of the King of the Mountain, whose country was a great centre of the spice trade, and from which ships sailed to Oman. Part of the King's revenues was derived from cock-fighting. A leg of the cock which won belonged by right to the King, and the owner had to redeem it in gold. One of the things that impressed the Arabs most was that this king used to sit every morning in his palace facing the lake, while an attendant brought him a golden brick, which he straightway ordered the official to throw into the lake. The waters of this lake were tidal, since a small stream or canal connected them with the sea, and when the tide was up the gold bricks which were accumulated from day to day were covered by the water; but at low tide the bricks were visible and shone in the sunlight, and the King used to say, "Behold my treasury." This became the custom of the Maharajas of Zabag. But on the death of each king his successor had all the gold bricks collected and melted down; and the product was divided among all the members of the royal family and officials, and the rest was given to the poor. A strict account was kept of the number of bricks found after the death of each king, and the one after whose death most bricks were found was the most highly honoured, because he had reigned the longest. A somewhat similar custom existed in Champa; and down to the present day in Siam a golden image is cast to commemorate each anniversary of the reigning king's accession.

A point in the Arab accounts which requires some elucidation is their frequent reference to the Maharaja of Zabag as "Lord of the Isles." This was not only because his empire included a number of islands, both large and small, but because the Arabs always regarded the Malay Peninsula as an island. They had no occasion to coast up the Peninsula beyond the latitude of Chaiya or Kedah (Takuapa seems to have been deserted soon after the Śailendra re-established the all-sea route); so they quite naturally did not imagine that the Peninsula differed in any way from the great islands of Sumatra and Java. Before we leave the subject of the Arab accounts of Zabag it may be mentioned that in the course of his travels the renowned Sindbad the Sailor found himself on the "island of the Maharaja," and was received at his Court!

We know nothing as to the exact date of the death of the King of the Mountain, but it is certain that during the ninth century the Śailendra empire continued under his successors to enjoy the wealth and fame acquired by the founder. Soon after the middle of this century, however, the island of Java threw off the yoke. The wonderful cultural development that made ninth-century Indo-Javanese art the peak of the Śailendra achievement will be considered in a later chapter. Here we are concerned only with the political and economic effect of its separation from the mother country. The feudal system, by which Indian empires of this kind were governed, was always an encouragement to provincial governors, often themselves of royal blood, to declare their independence whenever the opportunity arose. In this case the seeds of dissolution had already been unknowingly sown by the

King of the Mountain when he reopened the all-sea route *via* the Straits. Important as that move had been, and great though the benefit of it had been to him during his lifetime, he had not foreseen the amazingly rapid development of the fertile island of Java, to whose shores new settlers from India must have flocked as soon as the reopening of the sea route made direct access easy. With an increased and more vigorous Indian population to develop her products, her proximity to the trade route to China and the West made Java a dangerous rival to Javaka. The eccentric position of the capital of Javaka was a disadvantage now that the Transpeninsular Route had diminished in importance.

In A.D. 904 the Śailendra empire sent its first embassy to China, and thereafter frequently, until in 992 it was compelled to ask the Chinese for protection following an invasion by the Javanese. Fifteen years later, however, in 1007, the Śailendras gave proof of their continued vitality by destroying the capital of Java and killing the king. Thus all danger from this quarter was removed for the time being. Trouble, however, was threatening from another quarter. The Cholas, who had succeeded to the power of the Pallavas in South India, cherished the ambition of building up a colonial empire; and in this project they were aided by their possession of a strong navy, for they had conquered the whole east coast of India, including that of Bengal. At first their relations with the Śailendras were friendly, for trading relations existed between them; and we know from an inscription that at the beginning of the eleventh century the Śailendra king granted a village for the upkeep of a Buddhist monastery in Chola territory. But the aggressive imperial-

istic policy of the Cholas made continued friendship impossible, and there began a bitter struggle between the two Powers which lasted more than a century.

After some years of naval warfare the great Chola king Rajendra inflicted a decisive defeat on the Javaka king and took possession of the greater part of that empire, both on the Malay Peninsula and in Sumatra. But, as usual, his successors failed to consolidate their gains, and for fifty years the struggle went on, after which the Cholas, having more pressing difficulties to deal with in India, were glad to give up all pretensions to suzerainty over the Śailendra empire. Through all that troublous time, indeed, a remnant of the empire had been able to continue sending embassies to China; and that the tables were finally turned is shown by a Chinese reference to the Cholas as vassals to the Śailendras.

In the twelfth century the Śailendra empire was restored to something of its former greatness, for Arab voyagers again speak of the glories of Zabag. But it would appear that as a result of Khmer encroachments on the north the capital had to be moved south to Nakon Śri Thammarat about the middle of the twelfth century. A Khmer inscription dated A.D. 1183, which speaks of the "province of Grahi," shows that the old Śailendra capital was then in the hands of the Khmers. The occupation, however, seems to have been short-lived, but the Śailendra capital remained at Nakon Śri Thammarat. One might be inclined to think that Javaka could not have survived this destruction of her capital, but the history of other Indo-Chinese states shows on what small provocation these monarchs moved their capitals. In Burma, for example, almost all the later kings founded a new capital, the

change being made on purely superstitious grounds, and the whole population being bodily removed in compliance with the royal order.

Soon after the first quarter of the thirteenth century the last great king of Javaka ascended the throne. His name, as we know from an inscription dated A.D. 1230, was Chandrabhanu, but it is not certain whether he was a member of the Śailendra dynasty or not. Between 1236 and 1256 he undertook two rather foolhardy expeditions against Ceylon, the first of which evidently met with some success, for a contemporary Chinese writer mentions Ceylon among the vassal states of Javaka. These expeditions, however, must have been a great strain on the resources of Javaka, and the following account, which is summarized from the Ceylon chronicles, shows plainly the unsuccessful outcome of the venture:

> In the eleventh year of the reign of King Parakramabahu II a king of Javaka, called Chandrabhanu, landed with an army, on the pretext that they were Buddhists, and therefore came on a peaceful mission. The soldiers of Javaka, who used poisoned arrows [is this the earliest recorded protest against recourse to chemical warfare?], treacherously occupied the passages across the rivers, and, having defeated all those who opposed them, devastated the whole of Ceylon. But the regent defeated them in several battles, and forced them to withdraw from the land. A few years later King Chandrabhanu again landed, and his army was, on this occasion, reinforced by a large number of Tamil soldiers from the armies of the Pandya and Chola kings of South India. After some initial successes the Javaka army was surrounded and completely defeated by the Ceylonese troops. King Chandrabhanu somehow fled with his life, leaving

behind his family and treasures in the hands of the victorious enemy.[1]

But the worst disaster was yet to come. The Pandya king went over to the side of Ceylon, and, having first defeated one of his former allies, the Cholas, turned on the remnant of the Javaka army, and slew King Chandrabhanu. Finally this arch-traitor betrayed the King of Ceylon, and made himself master of that island. A splendid example of the diplomacy of the time!

This catastrophe spelled the ruin of the Śailendra empire, for it gave the King of Java his long hoped-for opportunity. He invaded Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula simultaneously in 1275. At the same time the Siamese King, Ram Khamheng, whose father had shaken off the Khmer yoke, descended upon Javaka from the north, sacked the capital, and eventually extended his dominion to the southern end of the Peninsula. Java, on the other hand, contented itself with deliberately destroying the prosperity of Sumatra, which thenceforward became a haunt of Chinese pirates. Thus ingloriously a great empire met its doom.

[1] Summarized from the *Cullavamsa* (ed. Geiger, Chapter 83, vv. 36–48, Chapter 88, vv. 62–75) by R. C. Majumdar (*Decline and Fall of the Śailendra Empire*, in the *Journal of the Greater India Society* (Calcutta), vol. II (1935), p. 18).

CHAPTER XII

EXPLORING THE KING OF THE MOUNTAIN'S CAPITAL

OUR exploration of Chaiya, which in my view was the ancient capital of the Śailendra empire, was undertaken in circumstances very different from those which had attended our investigation of the remote Indian city of Śri Deva, for a portion of the area of ancient Chaiya is to-day occupied by a thriving little town, with a station on the Siamese southern railway line. This accessibility has, of course, one disadvantage. The place has been an unusually happy hunting-ground for treasure-seekers, who have dug over nearly all the ancient sites. We were accommodated most comfortably within the precincts of Wat Phrathat, a Buddhist monastery pleasantly situated some distance from the modern market, from which it was separated by a stretch of rice-fields. The abbot, who had been advised of our coming, had made ready a small bungalow, consisting of one room and a large veranda, situated within the monastic enclosure. This, I noticed from an inscription on the door, had been built by a pious old lady of the neighbourhood. The broad-minded abbot made no difficulty about suspending the regulations of the Order so as to enable my wife to share the house with me. Our residence was agreeably bare on our arrival, and our camp furniture soon gave the little pavilion the appearance of a European oasis. During our stay we were able to get excellent provisions from the market, much to the relief



of our Chinese cook, who set up his kitchen within a few yards of our bungalow next to a convenient well; but I was particular to adjure him to be sure to respect Buddhist susceptibilities by taking our daily chicken outside the monastery grounds for its necessary slaughter.

In general appearance Wat Phrathat differed little from any other large provincial monastery, with the usual large assembly hall, or *bote*, and adjoining cloistered gallery surrounding a *stupa* and other reliquary shrines. Around these sacred buildings were the large courtyards dotted with the wooden houses of the monks and an open *sala* used as a school, all shaded from the midday heat by the leafy boughs of the sacred fig-tree. From our veranda we looked across an open court to where three enormous Siamese images of the Buddha were seated in the attitude of meditation, while morning and evening the droning of the monks in their temple was the only sound to be heard; for, as becomes such holy refuges, the monastery was set a little apart from the bustle of the worldly life. Wat Phrathat is, in fact, the best-kept monastery in Chaiya, and its abbot has jurisdiction over all the other *wats* of the district. The reason for this is that Wat Phrathat enjoys a peculiar sanctity, as it is believed to date back to Śailendra times.

There is, indeed, archæological evidence for this in the construction of the main *that*, or reliquary shrine, which stands beside the *stupa* within the sacred cloistered enclosure. One can see at a glance that it was originally a sanctuary tower exactly like the ruined temple of Wat Keu, of which I have already spoken in Chapter X, and which stands in another part of the city. No doubt they were both constructed by the Pallava colonists of Grahi

of the seventh or early part of the eighth century as Hindu shrines, and were then converted to Buddhist use after the coming of the King of the Mountain. But, whereas Wat Keu was allowed to fall into decay in later centuries, Wat Phrathat, on account of its peculiar sanctity, has been kept in good repair to this day. Its ancient sanctuary has been restored, though, of course, in semi-Siamese style, and adapted to the Hinayana Buddhism of the present-day inhabitants of the land. The modern Siamese *bote*, or assembly hall, with its multiple roofs and glittering tiles, doubtless stands on the site of an ancient hall of the Śailendra period. This would also have been built of timber, and so, unlike the brick sanctuary tower, could not have survived, but has had to be replaced by the Siamese structure. In fact, its appearance probably differed little from the modern *bote*, for Buddhism of whichever school is characterized by congregational worship, which has at all times necessitated the erection of spacious assembly halls. In this it differs from Hinduism, which is uncongregational in nature, and requires only comparatively small, though usually non-perishable, structures, built primarily as shelters of the statues of the gods. In such shrines there is merely sufficient room for the Brahman priests to carry out the ritual sacrifices, and the anointments of the icon.

It was just outside the enclosure of Wat Phrathat that the two magnificent bronze statues of the Mahayana deity Lokeśvara (the same whose differently interpreted visage crowns the four-faced towers of Angkor Thom) were found twenty years or so ago, and which are among the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Indian sculpture in Indo-China. It appears that Prince Damrong was riding past on his elephant

when he noticed two metal objects gleaming in a ditch. Others must have seen them and passed them by unheeded. The manner of their finding is thus a curious commentary on the lack of interest in such things which still prevailed so comparatively recently, before the acquisitiveness of collectors had aroused the cupidity of the native treasure-seeker and Chinese art dealer, who have now, at any rate superficially, denuded all but the more remote sites.

Unfortunately neither of these images is complete. The larger figure, of which only the head and torso remain, is remarkable for the serenity of its features, the easy sway of the shoulders, and the magnificence of the jewellery which adorns it. In this last respect, however, the smaller figure, which is intact but for the loss of its forearms down to knee-level, is superior. Especially fine is the elaborately worked crown, though the æsthetic appeal of the figure as a whole is less than that of the larger Bodhisattva. The style of these beautiful bronzes is purely Pala, and they probably date from the ninth century, when the Śailendra empire was at its height. And though during this century Java produced a profusion of such sculptures in stone, there is nothing in that island surpassing these two fine bronzes, which are in every respect worthy of the capital city of a great empire. The Pala affinity of these images is explained, not only by the fact that the land of origin of the Śailendra kings was affected by Pala influences, but also because a direct intercourse was kept up between Bengal and Javaka. We have definite evidence of this in the fact that a copper-plate discovered at Nalanda, the great Mahayana monastery and centre of learning in Bengal, records a gift made about A.D. 850 by the reigning Śailendra king.

A number of stone sculptures of the Śailendra school have been found, but they are not artistically equal to these bronze Bodhisattvas. In fact, stone does not seem to have commended itself as a medium to the craftsmen of the capital. Only in Java, where stone of superior quality abounded, do we find the Śailendras blossoming into stone architecture, just as the Pallava colonists had done on a smaller scale before them. In Chaiya we find the remains of brick buildings only. They lie scattered all over the area occupied by the city, the brick bases of vanished assembly halls and little brick shrines, the latter looking very much like miniature Pallava sanctuary towers, but modified as Buddhist reliquaries, and often crowned with lotus capitals.

One of these shrines is of special interest because it is situated on a little natural hill, and was no doubt originally approached by a brick stairway. Quite possibly this shrine may have enjoyed peculiar sanctity, because this little hill perhaps symbolized *the* mountain, the one which gave the King of the Mountain his title, the Kailasa, or Mountain of the Gods. In Java, but more especially in Cambodia after the coming of Jayavarman from the Śailendra Court, this symbolical mountain, the speciality of the Śailendra kings, who no doubt brought it with them from India, gained ever-increasing importance in connexion with the cult of the Royal God, a kind of divine essence presiding over the destiny of the kings and resident in a *linga*, or emblem of Śiva, which was enshrined in the sacred mountain. In Cambodia, where this cult reached its highest development, the flatness of the land often meant the necessity of constructing an artificial mountain for the reception of the Royal God, on whom the welfare of the





kingdom depended. This artificial mountain, or *phnom*, was built at the centre of the capital, and its evolution after the days of Jayavarman, who introduced it, led to the development of some of the finest of the classical Khmer temples.

So far as the natural 'mountain' at Chaiya is concerned, one might at first sight be surprised that this cult, which is obviously of Brahmanic origin, should have continued to appeal to the Śailendra at all, in view of the fact that his family had adopted Buddhism. But, as I have mentioned earlier in this book, Indian kings of whatever religious persuasion always surrounded themselves with Brahman priests and counsellors. These carried out their ritual in connexion with the royal ceremonies, since Buddhism, with its more unworldly outlook, was not adapted to upholding the grandeur and pomp inseparable from the kingship. In fact, quite a number of stone Brahmanic images have been found at Chaiya. They were probably kept in temples ministered to by the Court Brahmans whose descendants still survive in the district.

The small hill just mentioned is also of interest from another point of view. It is called locally Khau Ron—"the Hill of the Hot Spring"—in reference to a pool of hot saline water situated near its base, the last remnant of some ancient subterranean igneous activity. Probably the water was believed to have some medicinal qualities, and the pool may have been frequented by the king himself, for we know in what esteem such hot springs were held in India. Indeed, more direct evidence on this point came to light when I was investigating a Javaka site near Trang, a small port on the western side of the

Peninsula. Near this place there formerly existed the remains of a temple of Śailendra style. A little farther south, at the time of my visit, some peasants cutting wood in the jungle had recently discovered two baths cut out of hard conglomerate rock, and just large enough for a man to sit in. When I saw them they were still overflowing with hot salt water from a near-by spring, and I noticed the stone lid of one of the baths close at hand. A curious point was that the realization of the curative value of the water, as evidenced by the original maker of the baths, had been succeeded by primitive superstitious beliefs. This was shown by the fact that the peasants had surrounded a pool of salt water, that lay in the jungle a few yards away, with a circle of sticks bearing paper flags, a sign that some magical rites had been performed.

During our stay in Chaiya we thoroughly explored all the outlying districts, walking on one occasion some five miles across the fields to the westward, where there were other hills on which we found Buddhist reliquary shrines of the type already mentioned. There were signs that, if not the city itself, at least some of its suburbs had extended as far out as this, which confirms the reports of the Arab travellers who speak of a large and thriving population. On one low range of hills, bordering the rice plain and covered with jungle, we found a limestone cave of rather unusual nature. On either side of the entrance the faces of men, or possibly supernatural beings, had been carved in the living rock, no doubt to act as gate guardians. Inside we found a number of fragments of sculpture, and on one massive block of limestone was a sculptured representation of the Buddha's footprint. Near the base of these hills we discovered two large

rectangular lakes covered with lotuses, and it may well be that the Śailendra king built himself a summer residence on the rising ground overlooking one of these ornamental pools. That either of them was the famous lake into which the King of the Mountain daily cast his golden brick is, however, unsubstantiated by any evidence; or, at any rate, if the local peasants have been so fortunate as to recover specimens of these riches they have certainly kept the matter to themselves. It is more likely, indeed, that this royal lake was situated on the other side of the city, since we are told that it was connected by a canal with the sea.

If so, one could hardly expect to be able to find any trace of it at the present day; for the sea has receded far from Chaiya, leaving a wide expanse of alluvial land which would probably have done much to mask the configuration of the ground on the seaward side.

An actual example of the way in which old watercourses had been silted up in the neighbourhood of the city was one day brought to my knowledge. I was told that some time before our arrival a peasant, when digging a well in his garden, situated near Wat Keu, had made a very remarkable find. He had unearthed thousands of green-glazed porcelain bowls, all closely packed together and piled one within the other. The find had been reported to the National Museum, and a few examples had been claimed by them, the man receiving permission to keep the rest, which were sold by him for a small price and distributed throughout the countryside. Though digging expressly for treasure is strictly prohibited by law, it was naturally hardly possible for the local authorities to forbid the peasant to dig wells in his own garden; and

it would seem that he and his family had developed a prodigious thirst. At any rate, several more wells were dug, though not with such spectacular results.

After we had been staying in Chaiya for some days I heard that the peasant had just dug a new well, this time bringing to the surface a small bronze image. It was brought to me for examination, and proved to be an eight-armed figure of the Mahayana goddess Tara seated on a throne, of Śailendra type, and probably dating from about the tenth century. On seeing this I decided that it would be worth while to carry out trial excavations, and so we dug a number of trenches across the garden. Before doing so, however, I asked to be shown an example of the porcelain bowls about which I had heard. Those I saw were in perfect condition, and were of Sung type, though of provincial craftsmanship. They may quite likely have been imported from Tonkin, where similar glazed bowls have been found. The result of our trial excavations showed that the site was the former bed of a stream that had now changed its course about twenty yards to the north. Quite possibly the bowls had formed the cargo of some ancient trading junk that had been stranded there. We also found many fragments of good quality Sung celadons, which indicated that there was trade not only with such places as Tonkin, but also with China proper. Moreover, the importation of these fine wares indicates the high level of culture attained by the upper class, just as the vast quantities of bowls of inferior quality is additional evidence of the density of the population. Other Chinese objects found included a number of blue and yellow beads and a fragment of a Chinese mirror of a type which may be as old as the seventh

century, and was thus probably regarded as an antique by its owner even in the days of Javaka.

As I mentioned in the last chapter, it appears that about the middle of the twelfth century the capital of Javaka was removed to Nakon Śri Thammarat as a result of the Khmer encroachments on the north. At the present day Nakon Śri Thammarat is a veritable city of temples—indeed, almost the whole of the area within its medieval brick walls consists of monastic foundations. In their present state, however, all these *wats* have a very obviously Siamese appearance; and that applies even to the great Wat Mahathat, which stands in the centre of the city, and is certainly the best kept up, as it is the most sacred, religious establishment in Southern Siam. The site of this temple (where excavations are obviously out of the question) is probably ancient, as is indicated by the presence in one of the courtyards of a miniature shrine of definitely Śailendra style; while a few ancient images and the ruined temples of the Brahmans are indeed relics of the phase of culture that preceded the coming of the Śailendras.

There is one more archæological matter connected with the headquarters of the Śailendra empire that is deserving of notice. Many of the caves in the limestone massifs of the northern and central parts of the Malay Peninsula were until a few years ago packed with heaps of votive tablets. Since then they have been much in demand by Siamese souvenir-hunters, and we were able to pick up comparatively few of them. They are flat, oval pieces of clay, stamped with the figure of the Buddha or one of the deities of the Northern Buddhist pantheon, together with the Buddhist profession of faith in Northern Sanskrit

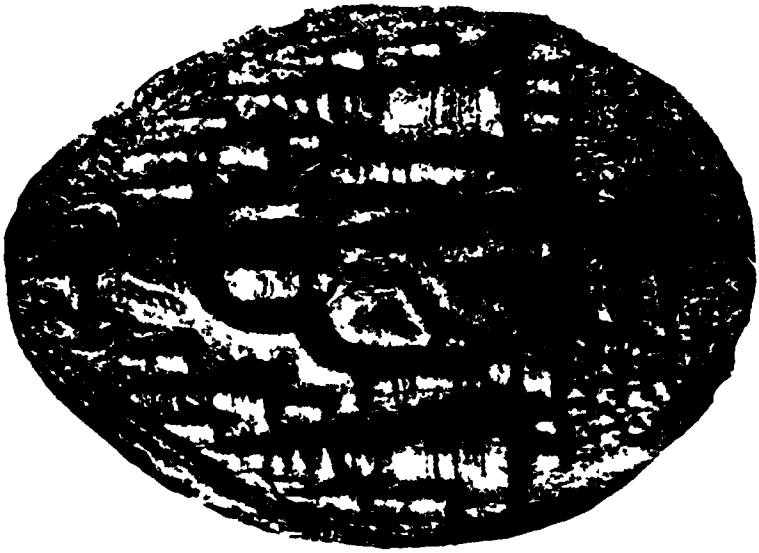
characters. This stamping was carried out with a die, and some of the figures are quite pleasing examples of Śailendra art. The wet clay plaques were not baked, but simply dried in the sun. They date from the tenth or eleventh century, but much older examples have been found at Nakon Pathom, dating back to Gupta times.

The origin of the custom is very interesting, and has been traced to the pilgrimages which pious Buddhists were accustomed to make to the sacred places of their religion, particularly Kapilavasthu, the Buddha's birthplace, and Buddhagaya, where he achieved enlightenment. And just as nowadays images and medals are offered for sale at Lourdes to pilgrims to the miraculous grotto, so were these clay tablets, baked or merely sun-dried and stamped with some Buddhist emblem, offered for sale to the pilgrim to the holy places of Buddhism. Soon, however, these tablets ceased to be regarded merely as souvenirs of an accomplished pilgrimage; and their manufacture on a large scale became a means by which even the poorest devotee could become the owner of an icon representative of his spiritual ideal. The inscription of the tablet stated in words of the utmost conciseness the essence of the teachings of the Master, and may be translated as follows:

> The conditions which arise from a cause,
> Of these the Tathagata has stated the cause,
> Also the way of suppressing these same:
> This is the teaching of the Great Ascetic.[1]

The import of these words helps us to understand how it was that the final idea about these votive tablets came into being. Rich men who desired to acquire merit for

[1] *Siamese Votive Tablets*, by G. Cœdès, in *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. xx, Part 1.





themselves on a large scale caused hundreds and thousands of tablets to be made and stored in caves, so that when, in accordance with the ancient prophecy, the Buddhist religion should pass away, five thousand years after its foundation, the recovery of these hidden expressions of the Buddhist creed might serve to revive the faith. The enormous numbers of tablets that were hidden in the caves of the Malay Peninsula are certainly an eloquent testimony to the religious fervour that radiated from the great Buddhist cities of Chaiya and Nakon Śri Thammarat during Śailendra times; while, though the Law shows as yet no signs of falling into oblivion, the fact that many of these votive tablets have passed from the hands of the Siamese souvenir-hunters into private collections and museums throughout the Old World and the New would not only have been a matter for surprise to the pious donors, but may yet prove a more effective instrument for securing the survival of the Buddhist faith than they could possibly have imagined.

CHAPTER XIII

JAVA AND BALI

It would be beyond the scope of this book to enter at all fully into the wondrous blossoming of Śailendra culture in Java, with which my personal acquaintance is limited to a month spent in that island in 1926. Yet no one whose ambition it is to make more widely known the works of the Indian colonists can refrain from endeavouring to arouse the reader's interest in the architectural masterpieces of Java, even if, rather than himself dare to attempt to satisfy that interest, he can only suggest a more intimate acquaintance with the standard publications on the subject. Moreover, certain aspects of Indo-Javanese art have a bearing on my main theme, and must therefore receive attention before we proceed farther, if only as an apologia for my decision to regard this art, perfect in itself though it may be, as an offshoot of the main stream of Indian cultural development which led to the final climax in Cambodia.

Chandi Kalasan, which dates from A.D. 778, is the oldest known Buddhist building in Java, having been founded in honour of the goddess Tara soon after the King of the Mountain conquered that island. Both it and the rather later Chandi Mendut, with its magnificent Buddhist statues, show at once an advance on the little shrines of the Dieng Plateau by reason of their greater size and bolder design, while they present also a more elaborate and grandiose ornamentation. Yet in each case

we are still dealing with a single shrine but little removed from an Indian prototype, though in Chandi Kalasan the false porches are developed as chapels. This gives to the building a cruciform appearance, followed in many later temples. A further development comes with the Chandi Sewu group, of which A. R. Wallace, condensing Sir Stamford Raffles' original account, wrote:

> They cover a space of nearly six hundred feet square, and consist of an outer row of eighty-four small temples, a second row of seventy-six, a third of sixty-four, a fourth of forty-four, and the fifth forming an inner parallelogram of twenty-eight; in all two hundred and ninety-six small temples, disposed in five regular parallelograms. In the centre is a large cruciform temple surrounded by lofty flights of steps richly ornamented with sculpture and containing many apartments. The tropical vegetation has ruined most of the smaller temples, but some remain tolerably perfect, from which the effect of the whole may be imagined.[1]

And in my 1926 diary I wrote:

> Since Raffles' day much has been done in the way of restoration, the central and many of the smaller temples having been reconstructed, and the whole area has been surrounded by a wall. A large number of the small temples, however, are reduced to nothing more than heaps of stones; but the difficult work of rebuilding them is still being carried on.

One cannot, indeed, speak too highly of the splendid work of restoration of many of the Indo-Javanese temples which has been carried out with such scientific care by the

[1] *The Malay Archipelago* (1869), vol. i., p. 164.

Dutch Archæological Survey, and which can receive no higher praise than that it was accepted by the French as the model of what ought to be when, in recent years, they at last decided to set aside their perhaps too careful policy of preserving but never venturing to restore.

At all the above-mentioned Indo-Javanese temples it is of importance to note that we are still in the presence of the Indian sanctuary tower, in which the sculptural decoration is always kept in strict subordination to the architectural proportions of the buildings. The decorative *motifs*, too, are purely Indian; they are only modified by their expression at the hands of the Indo-Javanese craftsmen, and the result is the maintenance of a harmonic balance. In Chandi Sewu we find an advance in composition that is entirely Indian in conception, from the single sanctuary tower to a group of such sanctuary towers, smaller ones being arranged symmetrically around a central larger shrine. Yet by reason of the fact that Indo-Javanese art always clings to the isolated shrine arranged in a symmetrical group, it never attained the grand-scale composition conceived by the Khmers, who alone among Indo-Chinese peoples invented the connecting gallery. This is one of the reasons why the art of Java can never exercise the same hold on the European imagination as that obtained by the Khmer.

If for the moment we leave aside the Borobodur, the *chef-d'œuvre* of the Śailendras, we find similar ideas on composition prevailing in the latter part of the ninth century, after the descendants of the Dieng builders, who had been driven to the eastern end of the island by the King of the Mountain, had reconquered Central Java and forced the Javaka invaders to abandon the island. The

great accomplishment of these rehabilitated Śiva-worshipping princes was the building of Prambanan (Loro Jongrang), another symmetrical group of temples, which is distinguishable from earlier works by ultra-refinement, exaggeration, and the tendency to aspiration which warns us that we are here on the brink of the *débâcle* that was to overtake Indo-Javanese art in later centuries, though we have not yet passed that brink. The largest temple, set on a terraced pyramid, is dedicated to Śiva, the balustrading of the terraces being carved with wonderfully executed bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the *Ramayana*. These beautiful bas-reliefs share, indeed, with the Buddhist bas-reliefs of the Borobodur the honour of being the crowning glory of Indo-Javanese art; and there can be no doubt that we owe indirectly to the Śailendras the Prambanan Hindu bas-reliefs, just as directly we are indebted to them for the Buddhist reliefs of Borobodur. Not only must their influence have spread far and wide throughout the islands, but their action in re-establishing the all-sea route through the Straits of Malacca must have opened the way for a flood of art influences, Hindu as well as Buddhist, coming from Bengal as well as *via* Southern India, which must greatly have reinforced the richness in artistic ideas of the Hindu princes of Java; for we cannot imagine Prambanan as being merely a result of local evolution from the humble temples of the Dieng Plateau, whose tradition in some sense it continues.

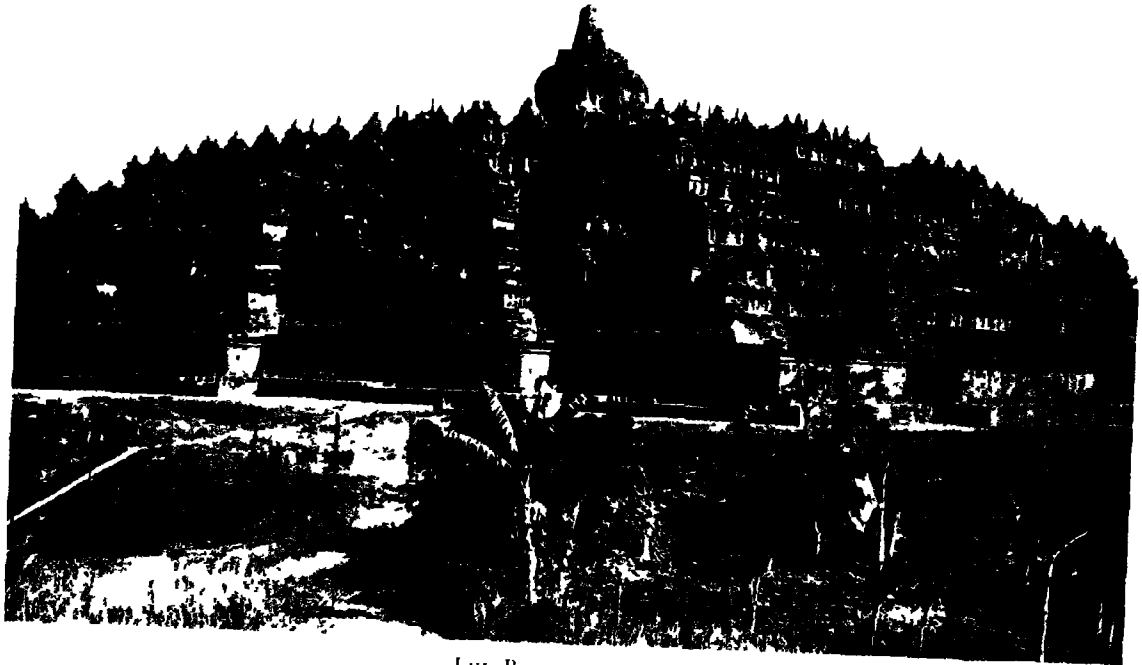
Much has been written of late on the Borobodur, built just before the middle of the ninth century, since it has been realized that it has a deeper significance beyond the obvious fact that it is a Buddhist *stupa*. As such its curiously elaborate structure makes it one of the most remarkable

buildings in Greater India, just as its magnificent series of bas-reliefs from the Northern version of the life of Buddha places it among the most important. Yet, as Dr A. K. Coomaraswamy has remarked,

> The rich and gracious forms of these reliefs, which if placed end to end would extend for over five kilometres, bespeak an infinitely luxurious rather than a profoundly spiritual or energized experience. There is here no nervous tension, no concentration of force, to be compared with that which so impresses the observer at Angkor Wat. Borobodur is like a ripe fruit matured in breathless air: the fullness of its forms is an expression of static wealth, rather than the volume that denotes the outward radiation of power.[1]

That Borobodur is a Buddhist *stupa* is attested not merely by the contour, unbroken by the seventy-two miniature *stupas* of the upper terraces, which resembles the half-globe shape of the Central Indian prototype, but also by the presence of numerous Buddhist images (*dhyani* Buddhas of the Mahayana school) in the miniature *stupas*, while the centre of the upper stage is crowned by another and somewhat larger bell-shaped object. It was the discussion of what sort of relic this crowning shrine might have contained—for it is now empty—as well as certain structural features of the main building, that suggested the deeper significance of the Borobodur. This underlying meaning has a considerable bearing on the development of some similar structures in Cambodia, for it seems that Borobodur was essentially the shrine of the Royal God, and, built on a little hill as it is, was symbolical of the cosmic mountain which the Śailendras considered so intimately bound up with their own destiny.

[1] *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927), p. 204.



THE BOROPODUR, JAVA

After restoration

By courtesy of Lieut.-Col. Theodor Resident

A tendency of the Mahayana form of Buddhism is to absorb Hindu ideas, and there is, therefore, nothing remarkable in the Buddhist Śailendras, who, as we have seen, in any case retained Hinduism in connexion with their Court ceremonies, covering their distinctively royal cult of Śivaite origin in an elaborate Buddhist dress. And just as in Hindu shrines the Royal God was represented by a *linga*, so in all probability the central *stupa* at Borobodur may well have been represented by a Buddhist emblem. Actually this central shrine is empty, and opinions differ as to whether it was empty originally or contained an unfinished figure (which was found there in 1842), or a gold Buddha, which would no doubt have been stolen. Whether represented materially or not, the Royal God was regarded as inhabiting his throne-room on the summit of his cosmic mountain, surrounded by innumerable other lesser manifestations of the Supreme Being as represented by the seventy-two mystic *dhyani* Buddhas in the miniature *stupas*.

For some unexplained reason all trace of art disappears from Java after the end of the ninth century. When it reappears in the thirteenth century it is at the eastern end of the island where a new kingdom, with capital first at Singasiri, afterwards at Majapahit, came into being, and eventually built itself up a considerable empire on the ruins of the insular portions of the Śailendra dominions. From the art of this later period, which eventually disappeared with the coming of Islam in the fifteenth century, we can learn some interesting lessons which throw light on the part played by Indian inspiration not only in Indo-Javanese, but in other forms of Greater Indian art. At Panataran especially we find vast assemblages of

terraces and small temples crowded together in a confusion which emphatically indicates that the guiding mind and hand of the Indian master-builder has gone, and the Javanese artist has been able to set free his passion for unbridled decoration. No longer does each temple retain the Indian balance between construction and ornament, and the richness of the latter becomes overwhelming. Instead of the unit's being subordinated to the composition of the *ensemble* we find an incoherent aggregation of shrines of differing architecture, copiously ornamented with bas-reliefs representing a mixture of texts from Buddhist and Hindu sources, selected on account of their decorative possibilities rather than for any message they have to tell. Side by side with now meaningless Indian heroes there begin to appear on these bas-reliefs purely Javanese personages who have no legitimate place in the Indian scenes portrayed. Curious apparitions and clown-like figures have emerged from age-old Malayo-Polynesian folk-lore. Their style bears no relation to Indian forms, but is rather that of the *wayang*, or puppet-show, which still survives in Java. Sculpture in the round tells the same story, but the figures of the great deities, being governed by strict, dogmatic rules of manufacture, retain their Indian features longer, accompanied though they are by monsters of Javanese creation. One may regard these embroidered manifestations as the expression of a Javanese 'national' art evolving along lines of its own; and as such they have great charm, though they must be judged by standards other than those we are at present applying. For from our present point of view, that of Indian cultural evolution, they can only be considered as decadent, the result of the submergence of the ennobling Indian factor

in 'Indo-Javanese' culture, after the loss of which 'Javanese' art was free to follow its own extravagant course.

These later manifestations provide us with an instructive parallel to the secondary development of that other Indianized Malayo-Polynesian people, the Chams, after the disappearance of direct Indian influence, or, to use a Buddhist metaphor, after the hand of the potter had been removed from the wheel. We have seen that Cham art at its best, during the seventh and eighth centuries, was essentially Śivaite and Pallava. After it had achieved this momentary brilliance a long period of decadence set in, during which Malayo-Polynesian forms became increasingly predominant. Java, on the other hand, mainly as a result of the influence of the Buddhist Śailendras, enjoyed another century of increased brilliance, after which the same process of decay began. And it is because this Malayo-Polynesian art of Champa and Java, with its superabundant decoration, has failed to develop its cultural opportunities to the full that we are forced to look elsewhere for the consummation of the union of Indian inspiration with a native genius.

In spite of what has just been said, the little island of Bali, which in recent years has become one of the chief attractions in every tourist itinerary through South-eastern Asia, has a special claim on our attention. Blessed with all the loveliness of the most perfect tropical scenery and inhabited by a race whose charm has impressed itself on every visitor to the island, Bali is the last outpost of living Hinduism that has survived the Islamic invasion of the East Indies. And after the dead stones of Java, Bali offers us something of the same refreshment belonging to things that are still alive which we have already found when for

the moment we turned to contemplate such living links with India's colonial past as the Court Brahmans of Bangkok or the primitive Indian theatre of Nakon Śri Thammarat. There is good reason to suppose that Bali received Indian culture at least as early as the ninth century, and at the end of the tenth it was, indeed, the birthplace of the hero king Erlangga, the only monarch to unite the two islands under one rule. But it was only after the defeat of the last king of the Javanese empire of Majapahit by the Mohammedans in 1478 that there took place a great influx of refugee Hindus, whose descendants in some measure carry on the Indo-Javanese tradition of that time.

From the point of view of sculpture and architecture Bali need not long detain us, since hardly anything survives from the early period corresponding to that of Javanese greatness. This is partly due to the fact that the volcanic tuff used as their medium by the Indo-Balinese craftsmen is of such a friable nature that it has not withstood the passage of time. Later Balinese art is merely a continuation of the 'national' Javanese period, and as such does not concern us here.

The religion of the people is, as it always has been, a simple animism mixed with ancestor-worship. The spirits of the dead are thought to further the growth of rice, have power to subdue epidemics and to calm overflowing streams—in short, to control all the occurrences which make for the welfare or discomfort of the people in their daily life. On to these primitive beliefs were grafted Indian ideas concerning the oblations which must be offered to secure the benevolence of the ancestor spirits; and, beyond the fact that the monkeys from the *Ramayana* and some of the Hindu gods are regarded by the people

as purely Balinese heroes, the cultivation of religion is left to the priests attached to the various temples. Actually the four original castes survive in Bali, but the three higher ones—priests, soldiers, and merchants—who represent the survival of the Indian colonists, do not make up more than 7 per cent. of the whole population, which amounts to about one million. The rest of the people, regarded as belonging to the fourth caste, or *shudras*, are really the descendants of the original inhabitants of the land.

There are both Buddhist and Brahman priests, the latter known as *padandas*, who receive great respect from the people; but in fact in Bali there is very little to distinguish between the so-called Buddhism and the Hindu practices (Śivaite), and both have assimilated Polynesian and animistic elements. The *padandas* play a considerable part in the life of the people, selling sacred water to the faithful, taking part in the temple festivals and cremations, and acting as medicine-men. They are also the judges in the village law-courts, and they act as teachers, especially to the sons of princes. Aspirants to the priesthood have to spend many years in study before they are admitted to share in the mystic knowledge which the caste preserves as its heritage, and which gives it its authority in the eyes of the villagers. In fact, the Balinese priests have in their possession a large number of corrupt Sanskrit texts which have been handed down from ancient times. Although they have long since ceased to understand them, they guarded them very jealously, and were loth to allow the Dutch officials to see them until it was explained to them that there were scholars capable of telling them the nature of their contents. Much remains to be done in the way of interpretation of this ancient Balinese literature,

but it is already playing an important part in clarifying both Balinese and Javanese history. Besides these religious texts, a certain number of copperplate charters have been found confirming grants of land and comparable with our title-deeds.

The Balinese priests are allowed to marry any woman, whereas the priestesses, of which a number also exist, may only marry priests. The priests of Śiva wear long hair in the form of a *chignon*, just as is the case with the Court Brahmans of Siam, while the Buddhist priests have short hair, but both are partial to floral ornaments. In the temple ceremonies fresh flowers are in constant use, being held by the priests between their fingers, and then, after each ritual hand pose, they are thrown to the four points of the compass. These hand poses, or *mudras*, form the most striking feature of the Balinese ritual; and the *padandas* have retained the intricate details of their use to a much greater extent than is the case even in India itself. The priest employs the same kind of ritual implements that have been used from time immemorial in India, including the chalice, rosary, hand-bell, censer, holy water, and oil-lamp, which have also with justice been compared with those in use in the Roman Catholic Church.

Though much has been rendered obscure by the changes wrought by the passing centuries and the modifications inevitably produced by the cessation of contact with the source of her Indian inspiration and by the effects of a Polynesian environment, in the ritual of her priesthood and the life of the royal Court Bali still preserves her unique position as a survival of Indian colonizing zeal set in the midst of an island world in which Islam now reigns supreme. Now that at last Bali has been redis-

covered by the mother country who had so long forgotten her, scholars are eager to interpret the message which she has preserved throughout the troublous centuries. At the same time Bali has been in danger of becoming almost too sensational an addition to the itinerary of the round-the-world tourist. We may, however, congratulate ourselves that the Dutch Government have taken efficient steps to preserve this island paradise and guard its people from exploitation.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BURMESE PARALLEL

ERE we reach the climax of our story it will be fitting to turn aside for a while to consider the outcome of that other great stream of Indian colonizing energy which, having no pirate-infested narrows to circumvent, found at once, as we have seen in Chapter VIII, a hospitable home in the fertile delta of the Irrawaddy. It is, indeed, imperative that we do take note of the final issue in Burma, which finds its supreme expression in Pagan, because this great temple city has not infrequently been compared with Angkor itself. True, the admirers of Pagan are most often residents in Burma, better acquainted with the art of that country than they are with that of any other Indian cultural colony. Nevertheless, one must admit that *prima facie* the existence of sixteen square miles crowded with brick temples, in various stages of ruin or preservation, built for the most part between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, and therefore the contemporaries of Angkor, must automatically tend to link the names of the two most colossal monuments to religious endeavour in Indo-China. On the other hand Pagan is visited by comparatively few tourists. Is this because its fame has been too little bruited abroad, or because of the limited accommodation there? The circuit-house is certainly not a first-class hotel, and may be found already in occupation by Government officials. Or is the tourist—I mean the intelligent tourist, who certainly has from his varied

experiences as much comparative material at his disposal to judge in a general way what constitutes a great art as anyone—is he right when he refuses to include Pagan in his itinerary or to put its innumerable monuments on an æsthetic level with those of Java and Cambodia? We must try to arrive at an impartial judgment, which will enable us to allocate to Pagan its proper position in our story.

The greatness of Pagan begins with the accession of King Anawrahta, who came to the throne in A.D. 1044. Before his time this region of Upper Burma had been backward and uncultured in comparison with the more favoured Talaing country of the south, which was in constant communication with India by sea. A form of Mahayana Buddhism had, it is true, reached Pagan *via* Assam as early as the fifth century, but it was very corrupt, and was administered by depraved priests, called Aris, who drank intoxicants, fought in battle, had long hair, wore dark blue robes, rode horses, went in for boxing, and enjoyed the *jus primæ noctis*. As soon as Anawrahta came to the throne he carried out many reforms, and just at that time heard of a Hinayana Buddhist monk who had come up from the Talaing capital at Thaton, burning with a desire to convert the heathens of Upper Burma. The King realized that here was a man who could help him to suppress the wicked Ari priesthood. He called him to his Court. To the amazement of all present, the monk, whose name was Shin Arahan, on being told to be seated, immediately sat on the throne. The King asked, "Master, of what race art thou? Whence comest thou? Whose doctrine dost thou follow?" On being told the King replied, "My Lord, teach me somewhat—yea, though it be a little—of

the Law preached by the Lord, the Master." With the help of Shin Arahan King Anawrahta broke the power of the Aris and introduced the pure teachings of Southern Buddhism into his realm. But a certain difficulty presented itself:

> Shin Arahan had brought no sacred books, for writing was still a rare gift. His mission could not thrive without them, and he urged Anawrahta to procure copies from Thaton, where there were thirty complete sets of the *Tripitaka*, the Three Scriptures. Envoys were sent, but returned with an insulting refusal. Stung to anger, Anawrahta marched on Thaton with all his men. They went down the river, foot, horse and elephants. The land forces crossed the Sittang river, and the boats went by the Hliang river and along the coast. Thaton was decaying, but any walled town was impregnable save to starvation, and the Burmese had to undertake a three months' siege; moreover, the town was guarded by the spirit of a dead Indian brave, and fell only after Anawrahta had exhumed his remains and cast them into the sea. "Now the king of Pagan mustered his army and rode his horse . . . and came to the city of Thaton. He compassed it round about and beleaguered it for three months straitly. And those within could get neither food nor drink, and they were exceedingly a-famished; so great was their hunger that they ate one another; and many perished thereby. The warriors entered the city on their flying horses and slew many. The folk could no longer abide such suffering; and King Manuha rendered himself. And the king of Pagan, having possession of King Manuha, took away the saintly monks, who were full of learning and piety: he took away the monks who knew the Three Scriptures and the Four Books of Divination, and he took them all to the land of Pagan. He chained King

Manuha with golden chains and led him captive. From that time henceforth Thaton was desolate, but Pagan flourished like unto a heavenly city." (*Talaing Chronicle.*) This is the end of Thaton as a royal city, and she could not recover her prosperity by sea trade, because the receding coastline left her high and dry. Anawrahta rode back in triumph to Pagan. Like some great glittering snake, the victorious host uncurled its long length and set out through the Delta creeks with a captive chief and Court, all the monks, and an entire population, numbering 30,000; but the pride of the Burmese was Manuha's thirty-two white elephants, each laden with scriptures and relics. On all sides chieftains hastened to make submission to the new power.[1]

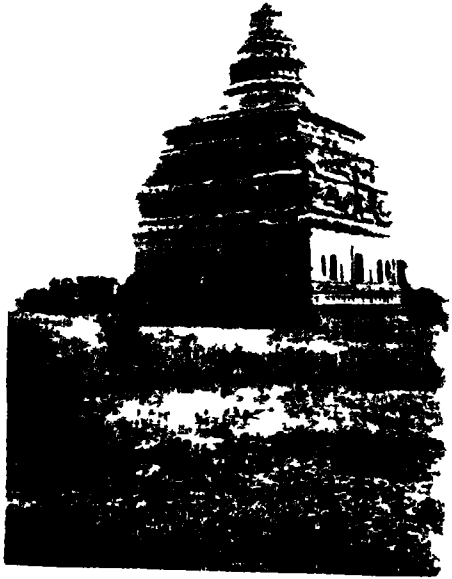
The captured monks were a great help to Shin Arahan in converting the Burmese. A large number of skilled craftsmen also accompanied King Manuha into captivity, and partly through their efforts and those of their descendants, still more perhaps by reason of the fact that communication was now opened up with the Indian influences that reached the Delta, an era of great building activity began at the capital. A beginning only was made in the reign of King Anawrahta. The first great Burmese temples date from the reign of King Kyanzittha (A.D. 1084–1112), while many others followed during the twelfth century and the early part of the thirteenth, until the whole area of the city was covered with the outward symbols of two and a half centuries of the most feverish religious zeal. By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, this energy was all but exhausted. Then the last king of Pagan, Narathihapate, more generally known in Burma as "the king who fled from the Chinese,"

[1] G. E. Harvey, *op. cit.* pp. 27, 28 (slightly adapted).

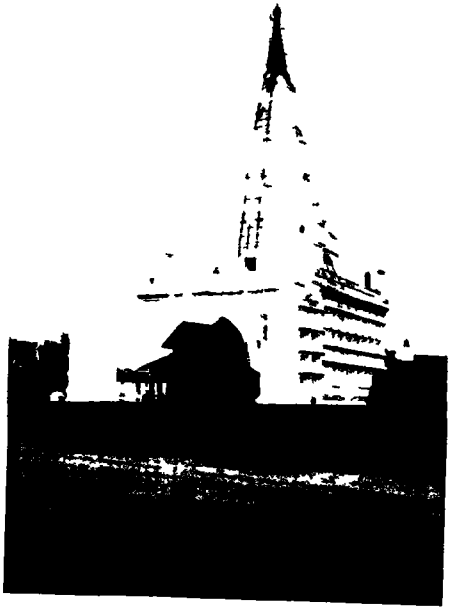
ordered two or three thousand temples to be pulled down to prepare defences against Kublai Khan. As his title suggests, however, he did not wait to test the strength of his preparations. In A.D. 1287 the city was overrun by the Tartar hordes, who fortunately did not take the trouble to destroy the many temples that still remained after the destruction wrought by the Burmese king himself.

Pagan is situated on the left bank of the Irrawaddy, in what is known as the dry zone, for here very little rain falls, and the country resembles a semi-desert, euphorbias and other drought-resisting plants being the only form of vegetation that can flourish. The main temples have been effectively preserved by the Archæological Survey, though two of the most revered, the Ananda and the Bodhgaya, have been left to the care of the local Buddhists, who, besides covering them with whitewash, still carry on religious worship in the precincts. Little paths, lined with euphorbias, run hither and thither between the crowded temples, and it would seem, from the presence of broken brick everywhere, that, apart from the communicating paths, almost every square yard of the city was covered by part of a shrine of some sort.

As no satisfactory explanation of the main types of Pagan temple exists, I shall advance here a theory which suggested itself to me during a fairly long stay at Pagan in 1929, and which certainly brings some order out of chaos. Apart from a few simple Buddhist *stupas* of no originality of design, and of which the well-known Bupaya is merely a late copy of a Prome reliquary, the oldest type of structural building at Pagan is represented by the Nat Hlaung Gyaung, the only surviving Hindu temple at Pagan, and reputed to date from the tenth



Nat Hlaung Gyaung, Pagan



Bodhgaya Temple, Pagan

century, and the Bidagat Taik, or Library, which was built by Anawrahta to house the Buddhist Scriptures. Both these buildings are really only the Hindu sanctuary tower, with which by now we are quite familiar, although the false porches have disappeared (as in some Cambodian buildings); and the multiple roofs of the Bidagat Taik have upturned eaves, thereby betraying the influence of contemporary wood architecture. The modified Hindu sanctuary tower, indeed, is the basis of the evolution of the Pagan temple architecture. If surprise is felt that Buddhists should have adopted the Hindu form of building it must be remembered that we have now arrived at a relatively late period, after the decay of Buddism in India, when Pallava and Chola ideas on building construction imported from South India had long since reached and been adopted in the Delta region, even by people who professed Buddhism. Naturally, on account of the proximity of North India to the Delta, architectural forms, including a knowledge of the true arch, also reached Burma from that quarter; and we shall see that the Pagan architecture represents a synthesis of these various forms, while it may be added that there are also signs of the presence of Chinese influences.

The Ananda, dating from the eleventh century, is the earliest, as it is also perhaps the most universally admired, of the great temples of Pagan. It is essentially the South Indian sanctuary tower, modified in various ways, which do not, however, destroy its dignified and harmonious proportions; and its lines are altogether pleasing as it gleams white against the cloudless sky. Its plan is cruciform, a result obtained, as we have already seen, simply by the development and prolongation of the true and

false porches to form chapels, each with its own entrance. But the temple proper of the Ananda, like later temples, covers such a vast area that the enormous mass of the upper stages could only be supported by the filling in of the centre of the sanctuary with a solid core of brickwork, which thus left only a narrow gallery between this core and the wall of the building. In the Ananda the gallery is lined with bas-reliefs which possess considerable merit and are the best works of their kind found in Burma, although the fact that they are carved on separate panels makes them lack continuity. A feature entirely new to us in Greater Indian architecture is the curvilinear *shikhara*, or North Indian derivative of the Hindu sanctuary tower, that crowns the uppermost false stage, and is continued upward in a tapering Buddhist finial, though the latter is probably a late addition. In this crowning *shikhara*, as also in the miniature shrines placed at the four corners of each stage, we get a foretaste of the elements that in later buildings are largely responsible for a tendency to aspiration, at present counterbalanced by the massive horizontal lines of the building; while the characteristic flame pediments of later Pagan architecture are here used with restraint. Another eleventh-century temple but little removed in style from the Ananda is the Kubyaukkyi temple, though here there is but one large porch.

Knowledge of the true arch made possible the construction of large assembly halls built of non-perishable materials, like the only stone-built edifice in Pagan, the Nanpaya, which, according to tradition, was the palace of the captive king Manuha. But the knowledge of the true arch also made it possible for the Burmese of Pagan to enlarge the accommodation of their brick sanctuary







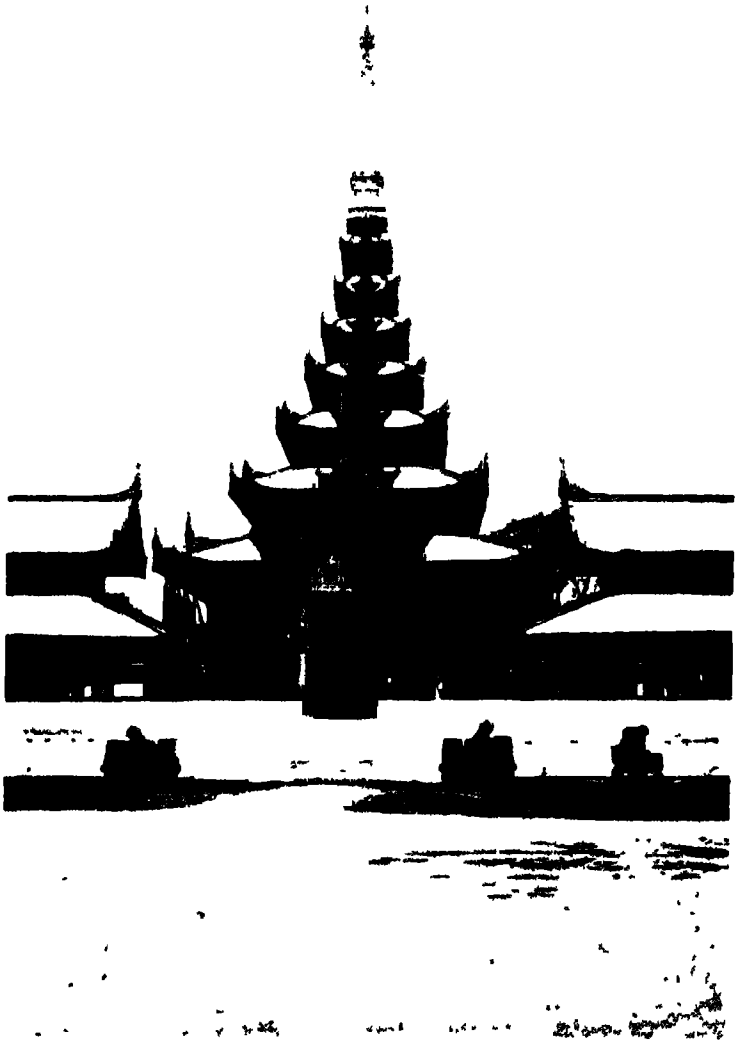
(1) Ananda Temple, Pagan
(2) Thatbyinnyu Temple, Pagan
(3) Thominlo Temple, Pagan

towers by constructing a second true story above the main body of the temple. In my opinion this upper story was really the restoration of one of the false upper stages that had lost its functions many centuries before in Southern India, when brick buildings constructed with a false arch superseded the multi-storied wooden buildings. Thus were produced the great Thatbyinnyu and Gawdaw-palin temples of the twelfth and the Tilominlo of the thirteenth century. But if the second true story was useful because it afforded additional space for the storage of images and the performance of ritual, no doubt its main object was to increase the appearance of height of the building and to accentuate the soaring lines. In the same way, though the decoration, carried out in stucco, was mainly confined to the flame pediments of the porches and windows, these are greatly elaborated, and do much to increase the aspiring effect.

These remarkable temples of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries represent the crystallization of a truly Burmese national tradition. Their fame must have spread far and wide in their day, for in the contemporary Lao states of Northern Siam there still stand twelfth-century Buddhist temples which at first sight might well make the Burmese visitor think he is in Pagan. Then they were imitated less successfully, and with an ever-increasing emphasis on decoration, throughout the periods of the later Burmese capitals Ava and Amarapura, until finally they gave way in the Mandalay period before an open preference for wood forms, which allowed full scope to the Burmese passion for decorative carving, the attenuated and glittering white or gilded *stupa* being the sole survivor of less perishable architectural forms. And, just as none can deny

a certain attractiveness about the Gawdawpalin and the Thatbyinnyu, who can be insensitive to the charm of the soaring Shwe Dagon, the lofty *phyathat* that surmounts the throne-room at Mandalay, coupled within living memory with a splendid Indo-Chinese royal Court, or remain unmoved at the sight of any wooden village *phoongye kyaung* for that matter? But in our appreciation of these distinctively Burmese forms, just as when considering late Cham and Javanese art, we must perforce judge them by standards fitted to the national culture they represent. From the point of view of an Indo-Burmese art manifestation they can only be regarded as decadent. Composition on the large scale is absent; incongruously the most diverse types jostle each other at Pagan, like badly arranged exhibits in an overcrowded museum; while in the construction of the unit a tendency to over-ornamentation and aspiration has already been noted.

The above are only trends that we find already in the contemporary art of Champa and Java, and which we might expect to find in Burma. To arrive at a fair judgment we must compare the earlier architecture of Pagan, that of the tenth and eleventh centuries, with classical Cham and Javanese art. The conclusion is then inescapable, whether we take the little Nat Hlaung Gyaung and Bidagat Taik or the grandiose Ananda, that we are in the presence of dead things, the work of copyists. In the case of the two little temples first mentioned we are dealing with scarcely modified copies of South Indian shrines; in the Ananda we have a South Indian temple crowned by a North Indian *shikhara*, and into the composite product has already crept a suspicion of later Burmese developments. This tendency to produce poor copies of revered



PHYATHAT OVER THRONE-ROOM, MANDALAY PALACE

Indian buildings lasted even until the thirteenth century, when the Bodhgaya temple was built in imitation of the famous shrine which stands near the scene of the Enlightenment of the Buddha in India.

Thus Anawrahta strove to show his zeal for his new-found faith by the erection of buildings compounded of Indian forms the meaning of which he imperfectly comprehended. The difficulty of making enslaved craftsmen produce inspired work is above all illustrated by the poverty of the religious sculpture of Burma. The conqueror might carry off the riches and the people of Thaton, but he could not capture their soul. Thus the best art of Pagan, evidence of an all-consuming thirst for enlightenment as it is, cannot bear comparison with classical Indo-Javanese and Cham art, which are each the expression of a living Indian tradition. How much less then can it bear comparison with Angkor!

CHAPTER XV

ANGKOR—THE CLIMAX

My main object in this book has been to trace the spread of Indian inspiration, and eventually to bring the reader to the gates of Angkor with a better understanding of the long centuries of endeavour that led up to that crowning triumph. To enter into a detailed discussion of Khmer culture or a lengthy description of the ruins of Angkor, on which such a vast literature already exists, would therefore be distinctly out of place. Yet my task would remain uncompleted if I did not attempt to analyse the factors that brought about this consummation, and to distinguish between the respective parts played by the Indian cultural stimulus and the genius of the Khmers. This concluding portion of my task is facilitated by the brilliantly scientific work of one French scholar in particular, M. Philippe Stern, whose evolutionary treatment of his subject in his book *Le Bayon d'Angkor et l'Evolution de l'Art Khmer* (1927) fits in so exactly with my present theme. But in this connexion I must not omit to mention the valuable corroborations and modifications afforded by the researches of MM. Cœdès and Goloubew. The sum total of these discoveries has placed the chronology of the main Khmer monuments on a sound basis, though many details remain to be worked out. I first visited Angkor in 1926. What an amazing advance I found had *been made in our comprehension of it when I returned* there in 1933!

It will be remembered that in Chapter XI we left Cambodia at the point where this kingdom threw off the suzerainty of Javaka about A.D. 869, the year in which King Jayavarman died. This great king had ruled for sixty-seven years, from the time when, in his extreme youth, he was sent by the King of the Mountain to occupy the Khmer throne. During his long reign he is believed to have changed his capital twice, the most important centre of his government having been at Hariharalaya, some ten miles from Angkor. Here stands an interesting group of ruins known as Roluos, comprising the temples of Bakong, Bako, and Lolei, which appear, however, to have been built not in the reign of Jayavarman I or in the short reign of his son of the same name, but under the rule of King Indravarman I, who reigned from A.D. 877 to 889. He was followed by King Yaśovarman, who founded Yaśodharapura, the first city of Angkor, which was enclosed by earthen ramparts and, as we now know, thanks to the discoveries of M. Goloubew, centred, not around the Phimanakas, as M. Stern suggested, but around Phnom Bakeng. Yaśovarman reigned for only twenty years, and much of his effort must have been devoted to the essential works of defence, so that only a few quite simple structures, such as Phnom Bakeng, the Towers of the Dancers, and perhaps the Phimanakas, can be definitely attributed to him. But his successors continued to develop the same style of building, and the monuments at Angkor they had produced by the end of the tenth century include Baksei Chamkrong, Prasat Kravan, Eastern Mebon, Pre Rup, Ta Keo, and finally Baphuon. The exquisite temple of Bantai Srei may also date from this period. The monuments of the group of

Roluos (formerly described by M. Parmentier as the "Art of Indravarman"), together with the whole series of later buildings of Yaśodharapura, up to the end of the tenth century, have now been grouped by M. Stern as belonging to the First Style of Angkorean architecture, the general characteristics of which we must now consider.

The monuments which belong to the earlier part of the First Period—*i.e.*, those of the Roluos group—consist of two distinct types (*a*) the group of isolated sanctuary towers, forming Lolei and Bako, and (*b*) the pyramidal shrine or artificial mountain, represented by Bakong. In the first instance it is clear that we are still dealing with the Indian sanctuary tower, but little removed from the Primitive Khmer temple, which in fact we have met with all over Greater India, and which has, so far as Indo-China is concerned, its prototype in the sixth century purely Indian tower of Śri Deva. Here, in these ninth-century Khmer temples, the material in use is still brick, sandstone being employed tentatively only for some carved panels, and, though there are developments in the matter of detail, the towers with their superimposed stages of diminishing size continue to hark back to a primitive wooden architecture. Only in the juxtaposition of several separate towers to form a group, sometimes on a common laterite base, is there any distinct advance in plan beyond the single isolated tower of the Primitive Khmer period; but in this the composition hardly exceeds that attained at the same time elsewhere in Greater India, and is, indeed, surpassed by the symmetrical arrangement of the contemporary Indo-Javanese shrines. With Bakong, on the other hand, we come to something new in the history of Cambodian architecture. It is, in fact, the central mountain,



BAKO TEMPLE, ANGKOR

The ill[illegible]

or Kailasa, which we have seen was associated with the cult of the Royal God, the speciality of the Śailendras of Javaka. There is little doubt that it was brought to Cambodia, along with the Mahayana, by King Jayavarman. The Bakong, once probably surmounted by a shrine or pavilion that has disappeared, is built of stone, and is the first of a series of artificial mountains built by the Khmers. At Phnom Bakeng, however, the central mountain of Yaśodharapura, a natural hill was available as a basis for the Royal God's shrine.

During the later part of the First Period certain modest architectural developments took place. We find laterite used for the construction of the Towers of the Dancers; and in the pyramid called Phimanakas we find for the first time the appearance of the concentric gallery. The craftsmen were evidently very hesitant in the adoption of this new invention, as we can see from the low and narrow construction of the vault; while throughout the First Period it seems that only that type of gallery of which the outer wall was pierced with windows was employed, never the gallery on pillars. Towards the end of the First Period we get the union of the group of sanctuary towers with the artificial 'mountain,' five symmetrically arranged towers being built on the summit of a stone pyramid, a design which produced the Eastern Mebon, Pre Rup, and Ta Keo, the latter being the first instance in which sandstone alone was used for sanctuary towers in place of laterite or brick. But though this conjunction of the tower with the pyramidal artificial 'mountain' is certainly a matter of some moment, it is not the sort of brilliant stroke of genius that was to make the ultimate development of Khmer architecture world-famous. It was, in

fact, the mere bringing together of two unrelated Indian structures. At the same time simple pyramids continued to be erected, and at Baphuon, the one that appears to have been erected at the very close of the First Period, the earliest series of bas-reliefs appears. But they consist only of isolated scenes occupying separate panels, reminiscent of the bas-reliefs of the Pagan temples. The Indo-Javanese reliefs of a century and a half earlier are incomparably superior.

The statuary of this First Period exhibits great strength and vitality, and has the following distinguishing characteristics. In the human figure the eyebrows are straight, the eyes and mouth are usually bordered by a double line, and in the male the moustache is as frequent as the beard, which latter is merely indicated without changing the contour of the face. In male figures the dress is very long, descending almost to the knees; in the female the dress appears to be striped, and is never flowered. The form of the body in the First Period remains more free and naturalistic than is the case after the tenth century, and is thus closer to Primitive Khmer and Indian models.

We may now turn to the Second Period, which began early in the eleventh century, reached its height in the twelfth, and waned in the thirteenth. By the beginning of this period the Khmer empire had already reached its fullest territorial extent, had reduced all Central Siam (until then the kingdom of Dvaravati) to submission, and was hammering at the gates of the Śailendra capital in the Peninsula. In the monuments of this great period brick has entirely given place to sandstone, except in the case of provincial cities like Lopburi and the restored

Śri Deva, while the more easily worked but less pleasing laterite is used only for basements.

In the monuments of the Angkor region the great advance is in the matter of plan. Instead of a mere juxtaposition of unrelated elements, as in the First Period, we get a union and development which brought about an immense advance in grand-scale composition. The great new factor which made possible this union and development was the introduction of the cruciform gallery which joined together the concentric galleries (having windows or pillars), just as the latter united the towers. At the same time the temples of this type, Ta Prohm, Bantay Chmar, Bantay Kdei, and originally the Bayon, each occupying an area vastly in excess of any temple previously conceived, perhaps owing to the growth of Buddhism, which did not favour lofty structures, abandoned the principle of the pyramid, and were constructed on the horizontal plane. Only Angkor Wat, the great twelfth century monument of Suryavarman II, united from its inception the pyramidal form and the new plan.

> The pyramid is huge; it is the whole building. The concentric galleries unite the towers, and even, despite the difference of level, the cruciform gallery joining the different *enceintes* is employed: these are the famous galleries in the form of a cross which form a covered way between the first and second stage, and are attached to the latter by an ingenious overlapping of the roofs.[1]

The adoption of the horizontal plane in buildings of the Second Period, by the additional solidarity of appearance it gave to the whole, thus counteracting any tendency to aspiration, enabled the Khmers to soften the contour of

[1] Stern, *op. cit.*

the tower by modifying the incongruous fictive stages of the upper part into the semblance of a lotus-bud, one of the happiest thoughts of these master-builders. Lastly, with the vast expansion of the galleries, there come, in Angkor Wat and the Bayon, continuous series of bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the Indian epics, as well as from the national history, with a vividness and vitality that words fail to describe.

M. Stern has tentatively worked out the trend of evolution in such structural components as lintels, pediments, and the capitals of pillars. But to complete our general review of the Second Style of classical Khmer art it will, I think, be sufficient to note the distinguishing features of the sculpture in the round. Here in the human figure the mouth lacks the double border and is wider, while the distinctive Khmer smile comes into its own. The eyebrows become curved and softened, and the sometimes oblique eyes are often closed, which is never found to be the case in First Style faces. The moustache disappears, and the beard, though rarely present, has the form of a tuft. Two new modes of dressing the hair appear, and the garment worn by the male is much shorter, while in the female a flowered robe appears for the first time. A tendency to stylization of form is offset by great dignity and grace, and the charm of Khmer art is perhaps nowhere more felt than in the elaborately crowned and smiling *apsarases*, which never fail in their appeal to all visitors to Angkor Wat.

M. Stern has done an outstanding service to the study of Khmer art by his clear differentiation between these two styles, which correspond to two definite periods of development. But he has not, so far as I am aware,



BANTAI SREI, ANGKOR

Before restoration. Banteay Srei is one of the most ro[illegible] sculptured temples of the Angkor group

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offered any explanation for the existence of these two periods. I therefore propose to regard the First Style as preponderantly Indian, though not by any means to the exclusion of the active participation of a Khmer factor, which even in the Primitive Khmer period was far from dormant. Indeed, it is to this already active participation of an indigenous Khmer factor, as well as to the fact that Cambodia was rather less exposed than were Champa and Java to the renewed flow of direct Indian art influences that followed the reopening of the all-sea route *via* the Straits of Malacca, that the somewhat less pronouncedly Indian aspect of First Style Angkorean art is due.

It is when we turn finally to the contemplation of the Second Angkorean Style that the true wonder of the Khmer achievement is revealed; and this is especially made manifest when we make the necessary comparison with the contemporary art of those other Greater Indian states, Java and Champa. There the inspiration of India, through the medium of Indian craftsmen or their direct descendants, produced works unsurpassed in India itself, but only until the ninth or tenth century, when, the hand of the potter having been removed from the wheel by the disappearance of the influence of the last great wave of Indian colonizing zeal, a period of static correctness was followed by a long decadence, during which the noble cultural ideas of India became lost or misinterpreted, and an inferior art manifestation took possession of the field. But in Cambodia nothing of the sort occurred. When the guiding hand of India was removed her inspiration was not forgotten, but the Khmer genius was released to mould from it vast new conceptions of amazing vitality different from, and hence not properly to be compared with,

anything matured in a purely Indian environment. It is true, and if it were not so Angkor would have no place in this book, that Khmer culture is essentially based on the inspiration of India, without which the Khmers at best might have produced nothing greater than the barbaric splendour of the Central American Mayas; but at the same time it must be admitted that here, more than anywhere else in Greater India, this inspiration fell on fertile soil.

As craftsmen the Khmers had their faults: their mechanical knowledge was extremely limited, and their bas-reliefs suffer from a desire to leave no vacant space unfilled. But these human weaknesses, this evidence that Angkor was not in fact, as the modern Cambodians would have us believe, built by the gods, must surely only add to our admiration of their amazing triumphs. And, above all, it is in Cambodia, alone of all the Indian cultural colonies, that we find a clear comprehension of all the ideas inculcated by the Indian *gurus*, and an ability not merely to apply but also to develop them. The nature of these subsequent developments in the realm of art has already been sufficiently indicated in the outline given above of the main characteristics of the Second Style. It need only be added that in all the great compositions of this great period there is never the slightest indication of any lack of poise or dignity, any appearance of misconception or bad taste that might for one moment suggest an inferiority of the Khmer master-mind to that of the Indian. Even in the Bayon and the gate towers of Angkor Thom, which perhaps date from the very end of the Second Period, the enormous four-faced Lokeśvaras, staring down upon us with their enigmatic smiles, awake in our breasts only

feelings of awe and wonder, never of criticism. This, the ability of Angkor to hold our imagination even until the end, is perhaps its supreme marvel, and, even now that we have gone some way towards the understanding of the Indian factor, well may we falter before the magnitude of the problem which still confronts us, and which is summed up in the oft-put question, "Who were the Khmers?"

It may be that the above necessary discussion of styles and periods has created in the mind of the more general reader a picture of Angkor as a dead city, a dry bone of contention for scholars and art historians. If this be so I must hasten to dispel the impression, for the spirit of the past still lives strongly at Angkor, as any right-thinking visitor to the venerable city may find for himself if he cares to make the experiment. If he wanders *alone* among the ancient fanes he will soon find that the deathless soul of Angkor will issue from the grey stones to bear him company. But for those who are not so privileged an agreeable alternative fortunately exists in the perusal of the records of that remarkable Chinese traveller Tcheou-Ta-Kouan, who visited Angkor at the close of the thirteenth century, just before the curtain was finally rung down on this stirring drama of Greater India, and who, alone of those to whom it was vouchsafed to know the Khmers in the time of their glory, has left us an account of what he saw at the capital. My desire, then, to take leave of Angkor as the living climax of the immortal epic of the Indian Argonauts, as well as by reason of the precedent I have created for myself in former chapters of taking toll of contemporary Chinese chronicles whenever

they serve to enliven the story, must be my excuse for reproducing here a few passages from M. Pelliot's oft-quoted translation of Tcheou-Ta-Kouan's memoirs:

> The city wall has a circumference of twenty *li* [actually 14,400 metres]. On the eastern side two gates open, while each of the other sides has only one. Outside the wall there is a wide moat, beyond which there are causeways with bridges. On either side of the bridges there are fifty-four stone demons, like stone generals, gigantic and terrible. The five gates are identical. The parapets of the bridges are in stone, sculptured in the shape of nine-headed serpents. The fifty-four demons hold the serpent in their hands, and look as though they were preventing it from escaping. On the city gates there are five stone heads of Buddha [the Bodhisattva Lokeśvara], their faces turned to the west, the middle one being adorned with gold. The two sides of the gates are carved as elephants' heads. The wall is entirely built of superimposed blocks of stone . . . it forms a regular square, at the four angles of which are raised stone towers. Criminals whose toes have been cut off may not enter the gates. Marking the centre of the city there is a golden tower [Bayon] flanked by more than twenty stone towers and hundreds of stone cellas. On the eastern side, on a golden bridge, two golden lions stand on each side of the bridge, and eight golden Buddhas occupy stone chambers. At about a *li* farther north there is the king's dwelling. In his private apartments there is another golden tower [Phimanakas]. It is these monuments, we think, which have caused the merchants who have seen them to sing the praises of rich and noble Cambodia. . . .
>
> The palace, official residences, and noble houses are all oriented towards the east. The palace is to the north of the golden tower and of the golden bridge. The tiles of the king's private apartments are of lead; those of the other



LE TEMPLE DE THE BAYON, ANGKOR THOM

buildings are of yellow earthenware. The piers of the bridge are enormous, and there are some sculptured and painted Buddhas there. The main portions of the buildings are magnificent, while the verandas and covered galleries are bold and irregular, without much symmetry. The council hall has golden window-frames, below which elephants are sculptured. I have heard it said that there are many marvellous places inside the palace; but the defences are very severe, and it is forbidden to enter. In the palace there is a golden tower [Phimanakas], on the top of which the king sleeps. All the natives believe that in the tower there is the spirit of a nine-headed serpent, master of the earth and of the whole kingdom. It appears every night in the form of a woman, with whom the king must sleep. Even the king's principal women dare not enter. He leaves at the second watch, and can then sleep with his wives and concubines. If one night the serpent spirit does not appear the moment of the king's death has arrived. If the king fails to be there on a single night some misfortune takes place.

The dwellings of the princes and grandees are different in form and size from those of the common people. All the outhouses are thatched; only the family shrine and the private rooms can be covered with tiles. The official rank of each person determines the size of his house. . . .

Everybody, from the king downwards, both men and women, wears the *chignon* and leaves the shoulders bare. They simply wear a loin-cloth, to which when they go out they add a voluminous garment. There are many qualities of cloth. The king wears a kind, worth two or three ounces of gold, which is the finest in colour and texture. Although in this country they weave cloth, much is imported from Siam and Champa, and the most esteemed comes from the western seas.

Only the king may wear a densely flowered material. He

usually wears a golden diadem, but when he is without it he rolls some garlands of odoriferous jasmin flowers round his *chignon*. His necklace is made up of nearly three pounds' weight of large pearls. On his wrists, ankles, and fingers he wears bracelets and rings of gold set with 'cats' eyes.' He goes barefoot, and the soles of his feet and the palms of his hands are tinted with a red pigment. When he goes out he holds a golden sword in his hand [the Phra Khan, the sacred sword of Cambodia—perhaps the same one that is still preserved with such care by the Court Brahmans of Phnom Penh].

Among the people only the women may tint the soles of their feet and the palms of their hands. The high officials may wear a sparsely flowered cloth. The palace people may wear cloth ornamented with a double row of flowers, but among the common people this is permitted only to the women. A newly arrived Chinese wore a cloth of this type, but was not punished, as he did not know the custom.

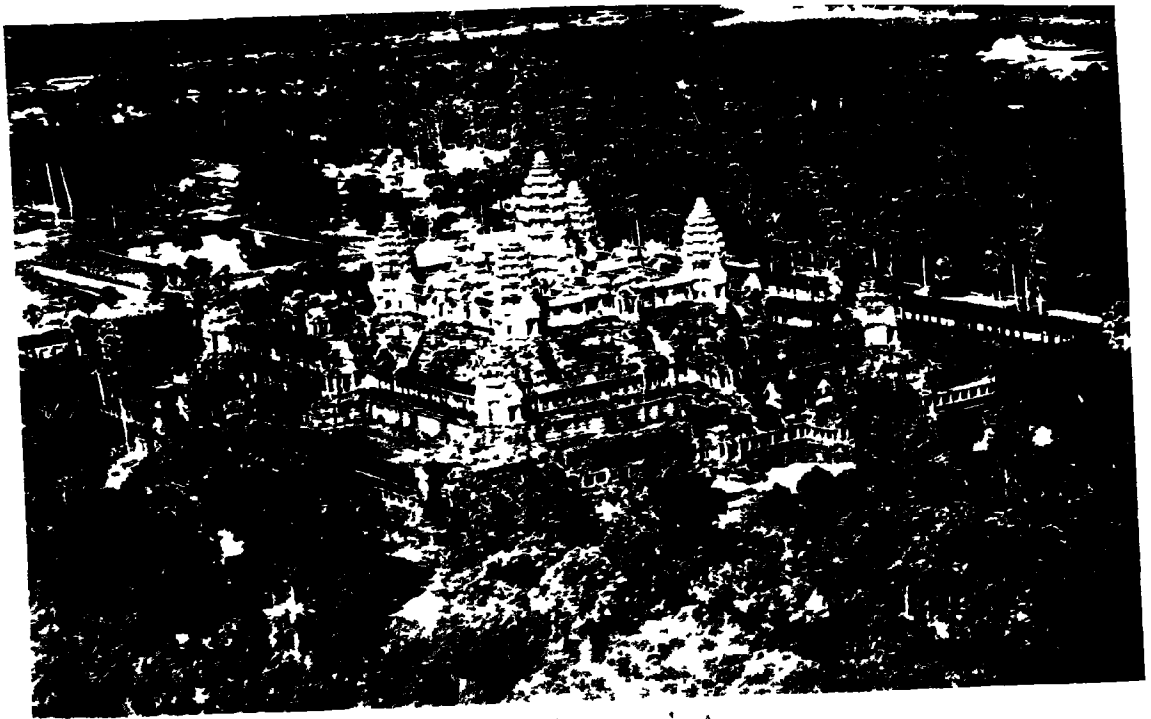
In this country there are councillors, generals, astronomers, etc., and, below these, every kind of minor official, only the titles of which differ from ours. Usually princes are chosen to fill high office; in other cases those who offer their daughters as royal concubines are chosen. Insignia and attendants depend on rank, the highest dignitaries being those who use a golden-shafted palanquin and four gold-hafted parasols . . . these parasols are made of red Chinese taffetas, with fringes falling to the ground. . . . The Buddhist monks [Mahayanist] shave the head, wear a yellow robe, and leave the right shoulder bare. They also wear a yellow skirt and go barefoot. Their temples may be covered with tiles. The interior contains only one image, resembling that of the Buddha Sakyamuni. It is dressed in red. Made of clay, it is adorned with red and blue. It is the only type of image in the temples. The Buddhas in the towers, on

the contrary, are different, and all are cast in bronze. There are neither bell, drum, cymbals, nor *ex voto* banners of silk, nor a daïs. All the monks eat fish and meat, but do not drink wine. In their offerings to the Buddha they also use fish and meat. They eat one meal a day, which is prepared in the house of a host, because there are no kitchens in the monasteries. The texts that they recite are very numerous, and are all written on very regularly bound palm leaves. On these leaves they write in black script, but as they use neither brush nor ink I do not know how they write. Some monks have the right to a gold- or silver-shafted palanquin and parasol, and the king consults them on important matters. There are no Buddhist nuns.

The Brahmans dress like ordinary people, except for a piece of red or white stuff they wear on the head. They also have temples, but these are smaller than those of the Buddhists. This is because Hinduism is not so flourishing as Buddhism. The Brahmans worship only a block of stone resembling the altar stone of the sun-god in China [a *linga*?]. Otherwise I do not know what they worship. There are Brahman nuns. The Hindu temples may be tiled. The Brahmans do not eat the food of other men, nor do they eat in public. They do not drink wine. I have not seen them recite prayers nor make merit for other men. . . . The king has five wives, one for his central apartment and one for each of the cardinal points. As to concubines and palace girls, I have heard mentioned a figure from three thousand to five thousand. They are divided into several classes and rarely go out. As for me, each time I entered the palace I saw the king go out with his first queen and sit at the golden window of his private apartment. The people of the palace ranged themselves under the window on either side of the veranda, pressing each other to get a better view. I was able to get a quick glance. Of inferior rank are the

women who serve in the palace, to the number of not less than one or two thousand. They are married and live some distance outside. . . . When the king goes out cavalry march at the head of his escort; then come the standards, pennants, and music. Palace girls to the number of three to five hundred, in flowered robes, with flowers in their hair, hold large candles and march in a body. Even in daylight their candles are lighted. Then come the palace women servants, carrying gold and silver royal utensils, and a whole series of ornaments, all of very unusual style, and of which the use is unknown to me. Then come a troop of amazons, armed with lance and shield, who form the king's bodyguard. They are followed by goat-cars, and horse-chariots, all adorned with gold. The ministers and princes are mounted on elephants, and they go in advance and watch from a distance. Their red parasols are innumerable. After them follow the king's wives and concubines, seated on palanquins, in carriages, or on elephants. They have certainly more than a hundred parasols adorned with gold. Lastly comes the king, standing erect on an elephant, bearing aloft the precious sword. The elephant's tusks are bound with gold. The king is accompanied by more than twenty white parasols adorned with gold and with golden handles. Numerous elephants press around him, and cavalry protects him. If the king goes to a near-by place he uses only a palanquin carried by four palace women. Most often the king goes out to visit a little golden pagoda, in front of which stands a golden Buddha. Those who see the king must prostrate themselves and touch the ground with their foreheads. If they do not they are seized by the lictors, who do not let them go without payment.

The king gives audience twice daily in connexion with the affairs of government. No definite list is prepared. Those of the functionaries or people who wish to see the



ANGKOR WAT FROM THE AIR

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king sit on the ground and await his appearance. After some time one hears a distant music in the palace; and outside they blow conches as a welcome to the king. I have heard it said that he only uses a golden palanquin, as he does not come from far away. An instant later one sees two palace girls lift the curtain with their little fingers, and the king, holding the sword in his hand, appears at the window. Ministers and people join hands and strike the ground with their foreheads; they may not raise their heads until the conches have ceased to sound. According to the king's pleasure they approach and sit down before a lion's skin which is regarded as a royal object. When the business is completed the king leaves; the two palace women let the curtain fall, and everybody rises.[1]

[1] *Mémoires sur les Coutumes du Cambodge*, in *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, vol. ii (1902), pp. 141–177. The translation into English from Pelliot is the present author's.

EPILOGUE

In those great legendary stories the *Ramayar*. and the *Mahabharata* India has epics worthy of comparison with the *Iliad* of Homer, though to some extent they fail in their appeal to the Western mind by reason of the preponderance of the miraculous. To those, therefore, who hold historic truth to be a weighty consideration, and delight rather in the courageous deeds of flesh-and-blood heroes, the noblest Indian epic must surely be the story of those Argonauts and colonists who, braving the blackest dangers, carried the culture of India across the eastern seas. Paradoxically enough, the stirring events of those heroic times passed unremembered among a people whose historical sense as yet lay dormant, and it has remained for modern scholarship to attempt the reconstruction of the tale which I have endeavoured to outline.

As scholars, both European and Indian, continue to devote thought to the problems that still await solution, as the swamps and forests of Indo-China gradually yield their secrets to the archæological explorer, so may we hope to fill in the details on our broad canvas, and paint in all its vivid imagery the deeds of the Indian pioneers whose fearless exploits and immortal achievements make one of the most glorious chapters in the history of mankind. As Dr Rabindranath Tagore, in his foreword to the first issue of *The Greater India Society's Journal*, has expressed it in his own inimitable style:

> To know my country in truth one has to travel to that age when she realized her soul, and thus transcended her

physical boundaries; when she revealed her being in a radiant magnanimity which illumined the eastern horizon, making her recognized as their own by those in alien shores who were awakened into a great surprise of life; and not now when she has withdrawn herself within a narrow barrier of obscurity, into a miserly pride of exclusiveness, into a poverty of mind that dumbly revolves round itself in an unmeaning repetition of a past that has lost its light and has no message to the pilgrims of the future.

In the finest art of Java and Champa India certainly realized her soul; but it would seem to be a law of nature that the consummation of perfection requires the aid of a fitting mate. In Greater India it is in Cambodia that we find that ideal union of Indian inspiration with a native genius, symbolized so poetically by the meeting of Prince Kaundinya with Queen Willow-leaf, which gave birth to Indo-Khmer culture, and produced as its outward manifestation one of the great arts of all times, culminating in the wonder that is Angkor.

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