

**A BUDDHIST PROCESSION INAUGURATED  
IN A 7TH-CENTURY INSCRIPTION FROM ÓC EO (K. 1426)  
AND THE ANCIENT TOPONYM TAMANDARAPURA**

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**ABSTRACT**—This article presents a reading and translation of inscription K. 1426, discovered recently at the Óc Eo archeological site in the Mekong Delta. The stela, inscribed in Southeast Asian Brāhmī script typical of the 7th century, references King Jayavarman I (654–694 CE). Face A features Sanskrit stanzas detailing a royal grant to the Buddhist Sandalwood Monastery (Candanavihāra) for an annual Vaiśākha full moon procession and donations to support the procession of a Buddha image. Face B, in Old Khmer, reiterates these details and outlines the management of this monastery. The new inscription sheds light on early Buddhist rituals in Óc Eo–Ba Thê and identifies Tamandarapura, possibly the site’s ancient name in southern Vietnam.

**KEYWORDS:** Candanavihāra (Sandalwood Monastery); Jayavarman I; Mekong Delta; Óc Eo; Procession of Buddha Statue; Tamandarapura

### A New Epigraphic Discovery

An expansive archeological excavation was conducted at Óc Eo–Ba Thê site (An Giang province) and Nền Chùa site (Kiên Giang province) from 2017 to 2020 by three Vietnamese institutes, the Institute of Imperial Citadel Studies, the Institute of Archaeology, and the Southern Institute of Social Sciences

(Bùi 2023: 55). The inscribed stela studied below was found in an excavation pit on Mount Ba Thê, about 100 meters northeast of the Linh Sơn pagoda, in October 2019.

Ba Thê Mountain has been inhabited since the prehistoric period, as evidenced from the early objects found at its foot (Aymonier 1900: 144). Louis Malleret’s 1944 archeological excavation revealed human occupancy on the whole mountain in the pre-Angkorian period (6th–8th centuries CE). The mountain was then the main religious site of Óc Eo, the most important trading center of the

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Funan polity as attested in Chinese records from the 3rd century CE to the 7th century CE (Harris 2023: 224). The city was linked, by its extensive canal system, to a port on the coast and to the city of Angkor Borei about 100 km to the north, considered by many scholars to have been the Funanese capital.

At least 18 statues, complete or fragmentary, and two stone inscriptions have been discovered at Ba Thê Mountain (Malleret 1959: 76–79, 92). The majority of the statues belonged to the pre-Angkorian period and are classifiable as “Hindu”; more specifically they relate to the worship of Viṣṇu as supreme god. One of the inscriptions, K. 3 (7th–8th centuries CE), records in Sanskrit a donation of Kumārambha to Śiva named Śrīvardhamāna.<sup>4</sup> Another, K. 4 (10th century CE), written in Old Khmer, is fragmentary; only separate words are readable (“god” or “king”, “gardens”, “female singers”, “female dancers”, “rice mortar” and “fortnight”, see Aymonier 1900: 145). The 2017–2020 excavations thus enriched the religious history of the mountain with the finding of a new and early Buddhist inscription given the inventory number K. 1426 and a stone tablet depicting what has been interpreted as a meditating buddha (Bùi 2023: 57). The meditating figure with folded hands might, however, be a bodhisattva.

<sup>4</sup> In general, we remove the honorific Śrī when citing proper names, such as Candanavihāra and Jayavarman, as is the convention in most secondary literature; but this is an instance where the element śrī- appears to form an integral part of the name Śrīvardhamāna, “growing in prosperity”, as is suggested by the extra honorific in the collocation śrīmān śrīvarddhamānaḥ in stanza 3 of K. 3. Comparable are such Vaiṣṇava theonyms as Śrīdhara, “bearer of Śrī”, and Śrīnivāsa, “abode of Śrī”.

Epigraphical sources suggest that Buddhism spread in the Mekong Delta region as early as the 6th century CE (Harris 2023: 214). At least 12 inscriptions with Buddhist content, which are datable to the 6th, 7th, or 8th centuries CE, have been found in the three southern Cambodian provinces of Ta Keo (K. 40, K. 755, K. 790, K. 1266, K. 1355, K. 1455), Kompong Speu (K. 820), and Prey Veng (K. 49, K. 1247), and in the three Vietnamese provinces of Trà Vinh (K. 884), Long An (K. 1330), and now An Giang where the site of Óc Eo is located (K. 1426). This figure represents half of the inscriptions with Buddhist content found in the whole of the EFEO’s K. inventory for the pre-Angkorian period; the other half consists of 12 inscriptions from the central and northern regions, namely in the three Cambodian provinces of Kompong Thom (K. 163), Kratie (K. 132), and Siem Reap (K. 244), and in the four Thai provinces of Lopburi (K. 577), Nakhon Ratchasima (K. 388, K. 389, K. 400 A, K. 987, K. 1000, K. 1009), Sa Kaeo (K. 505), and Udon Thani (K. 981) [MAP 1].<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> It may be noted that, depending on the context, we use the word “Cambodian” to designate either the contemporary nation state or, in a historical sense, as the English equivalent of the indigenous term Kambujā, in much the same way as speaking about medieval “France” implies a rather different polity with a rather different territory from that of contemporary France. The Cambodian corpus consists of inscriptions found in present-day Cambodia and some parts of Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. Some inscriptions that are not Cambodian by this or any definition have nonetheless been included in the EFEO inventory and thus have K. numbers. Among the inscriptions from the Thai provinces cited above, for example, K. 388, K. 389, K. 577, K. 981, K. 987, and K. 1009 contain expressions which reflect Mon epigraphic culture to some extent. Two more inscriptions probably of Mon influence,



**MAP 1: Distribution of K. inscriptions with Buddhist content from the pre-Angkorian period © EFEO/Chea Socheat**

The 12 listed Buddhist inscriptions of the Mekong Delta were written in Old Khmer, Sanskrit, Pali, or Prakrit. While some texts were locally composed, others were excerpts of verses of the Buddhist Canon, i.e., the *ye dhammā* verse and citations of the Buddha's words (*duḥkhasamuppāda*) which summarize the four noble truths. Local compositions cover such matters as a donation to a buddha or a monastery, the eulogy of a king's father for his devotion to the Triple Gem, and the transfer of wealth of two Buddhist monks to their grand nephew.

### The Inscriptions of Jayavarman I's Reign

Among the aforementioned early Buddhist inscriptions from the Mekong Delta, two belong to the reign of King Jayavarman I, i.e., K. 49 and the newly discovered K. 1426 from Óc Eo. The king was a Śaiva devotee who also gave patronage to Vaiṣṇava and Buddhist beneficiaries. The inscription K. 1426, although undated, mentions the king's name and the formulaic phrase in Old Khmer language, *ājñā vraḥ kamratān añ ni* (អាជ្ញាប្រឹក្សតាវង្សនី), "order of My Lord" (see below). To date, 21 inscriptions mentioning either this king's name or the formulaic phrase attested only during this reign are known. No other pre-Angkorian monarch seems to have left as abundant and varied an inscripational record as Jayavarman I.

i.e., K. 404 from Phu Khiao Kao and K. 965 from Hin Tang (both of 7th-8th centuries, Chaiyaphum province, Thailand) are not included in our study in spite of their Buddhist character because doubtful lettering does not allow a satisfactory reading and translation. But this is not the place to adjudicate the cultural and ethnic background of each inscription.

The inscriptions of his reign cover a vast area, from Wat Phu (Champasak province, Laos) in the north to Óc Eo in the south of Vietnam [MAP 2]. At least 13 of his inscriptions are from the Mekong Delta whereas six are from the northern region, and two discovered in Thailand are of unknown provenance (K. 1240, K. 1546). While some inscriptions are undated, others bear dates between 576 Śaka (654 CE) and 616 Śaka (694 CE).

The dates of the reign of King Jayavarman I are controversial. The reign is often believed to start in 657 CE as recorded in two of his inscriptions, namely K. 447 and K. 493 both dated 579 Śaka. However, Dominic Goodall and Nicolas Revire (2021: 271, n. 21) propose 654 CE instead, the date of K. 1201 (576 Śaka), an unpublished inscription of the king's reign from Prasat Houay Kadian in Champasak province.

Determining when the reign ended is more difficult. George Coédès (1968: 72) at one time believed that it ended after 690 CE, probably based on Sanskrit-Khmer inscription K. 1004, which mentions the name Jayavarman and the date 612 Śaka (= 691 CE).<sup>6</sup> However, in his "Genealogy of the Kings of Cambodia" at the end of the same book of 1968, Coédès gives 657–681 CE as the dates of the king's reign. The year 681 CE is the conversion from 602 Śaka, the date of the Khmer inscription K. 451 from Siem Reap province. This text refers to King Jayavarman I by his posthumous name Śivapura; hence Coédès's later assumption in his genealogy that the king could not have been alive after 681 CE.

Claude Jacques (1982: 231) considered 691 CE the latest date of the king's

<sup>6</sup> See: <https://dharmalekha.info/texts/INSCIK01004>.



**MAP 2: Distribution of inscriptions belonging to the reign of Jayavarman I © EFEO/Chea Socheat**

reign, a hypothesis which was followed by Goodall & Revire (2021). Michael Vickery (1998: 358–366) questioned the authenticity of inscription K. 1004 and favored the date 681. Although the inscription contains some doubtful words and might be “the result of a late Angkor-period attempt to recopy and/or rewrite a 7th-century charter” as Vickery stated, it is meaningful as a whole. Perhaps it would be more pertinent to question whether the posthumous name used in K. 451 (602 Śaka) really refers to King Jayavarman I. This problem was first raised by Coedès (1952: 56–57) on the grounds that another inscription of the king (K. 561, dated one year later than K. 451, i.e., 603 Śaka) suggests that he was still alive. Coedès proposed two solutions: (1) either that even the 7th-century inscriptions hitherto ascribed to Jayavarman I in fact belonged to two different kings (who could either have reigned successively or overlapped in time but reigned over different territories)<sup>7</sup> or (2) that the dates 602 and 603 Śaka are in one case expressed in elapsed and in the other in current reckoning.<sup>8</sup> In brief, his hypothesis was that the king died in 681 CE. However, the newly found inscription K. 1431 (Prasat Pram, Kratie) rules out this hypothesis, for the king was still ruling in his capital Purandarapura in 608 Śaka (= 686 CE).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it is necessary to take into consideration the

inscription K. 1240, fragmentary and kept in a private collection. It is a stela with a sculpture of Gaṇeśa in bas-relief on the top. It has been cut off under the second line of the text. Fortunately, the remaining letters of the third line allow an important restitution.

- (1) 𑀓 𑀓odaśottara-ṣaṣṣata  
śaka-parigraha daśamī ket-  
Āṣāḍha  
(2) svāti-nakṣatra candra-  
divasa-vāra Āy·kanloṅ·puran-  
darapura 𑀓  
(3) (Ā)j[ñ]ā (vraḥ) [kamratān]·  
[Añ]·[n]i {5}·{2}·{2}

[Year] amounting to six hundred and sixteen of the Śaka [era], tenth day of the waxing [fortnight of the month of] Āṣāḍha, lunar mansion Svāti, Monday, at the palace of Purandarapura. Order of His Majesty [...]<sup>10</sup>

Dominique Soutif (2009: 424–425) proposes that the inscription belongs to the reign of King Jayavarman I's daughter, Queen Jayadevī, for he assumes that the queen stayed in Purandarapura, which may have been only one of the royal residences of King Jayavarman I, before moving to her palace of Kāmyārāma, as mentioned in inscription K. 904 (635 Śaka = 713 CE). However, it would be simpler to understand that the king was still ruling in his capital Purandarapura in 616 Śaka (= 694 CE). Moreover, the formulaic phrase *ājñā*

<sup>7</sup> That there was another epigraphically attested 8th-century king Jayavarman (between Jayavarman I and Jayavarman II), a king now widely referred to as Jayavarman I *bis*, seems now established as a certainty. On this issue, see Goodall 2015: 74–76.

<sup>8</sup> According to Roger Billard and J.C. Eade (2006: 402), the conversion of the date in K. 451 is 17 May 680 CE whereas that in K. 561 is either 681 or 682 CE.

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://dharmalekha.info/texts/INSCIK01431>.

<sup>10</sup> Dominique Soutif (2009: 416–425) edited only the first two lines of the text. Our reading and restitution of the third line is based on the photograph of the inscription found in Soutif's dissertation (2009: C).

*vraḥ kamratān añ ni* “order of My Lord” is a clear indicator of Jayavarman I’s reign, for it appears in at least ten of his inscriptions (K. 38, K. 44, K. 49, K. 426, K. 502, K. 818, K. 940, K. 1240, K. 1426 and K. 1431). The inscriptions belonging to preceding reigns use the phrase *ājñā vraḥ kamratān añ* without the final particle *ni*. The expression *ājñā vraḥ kamratān añ* or *ājñā vraḥ kamratān añ ni* is not attested in any inscriptions of the few remaining pre-Angkorian rulers such as Jayadevī or Jayavarman I *bis* and disappeared in the Angkorian period.

In short, if we adopt the new dates provided in K. 1201 and K. 1240, Jayavarman I appears to have had a long reign of at least forty years from 654 to 694 CE.

### Physical Description of the Inscription

The stela newly discovered at Óc Eo is made of sandstone. Its upper silhouette has the shape of a downturned curly brace. Narrowing towards the bottom, the stela measures 64 × 32/26 × 8 cm. It has no tenon at its base, but the bottom 15 cm were left blank, as though this part was originally intended to be inserted into the ground or into a stone mortise. When discovered, it lay on the ground, somehow broken into two fragments on one face and in four fragments on another. The pre-modern breakage has not been repaired yet. The stela is now kept in the Óc Eo Museum.<sup>11</sup>

The stela is inscribed on its two broad faces, Face A in Sanskrit verse and Face B in Old Khmer prose. Both faces are decorated with a blossoming lotus above one or two strings of pearls (two on A, only one on B) at the top of 14 lines of text and one string of pearls below the text on each face [FIGURES 1–2]. The Khmer text runs continuously in one column whereas the Sanskrit one is arranged in two columns, even-numbered verse quarters (*pādas*) in one and odd-numbered ones in the other. Both texts are written in a form of script typical of the second half of the 7th century, without long descenders on the characters *ka* and *ra*. Since no other king going by the name Jayavarman is known to have ruled in the 7th century, it is clear that the king Jayavarman mentioned in the Sanskrit text must have been Jayavarman I (ca. 654–ca. 694 CE). Besides its paleographic aspect, the inscription shares two main features of its content with other inscriptions of the same king: (1) as already stated, the opening expression *ājñā vraḥ kamratān añ ni*, i.e., “order of My Lord”, and (2) the details of the threat of punishment found at the end of the Khmer portion (see below).<sup>12</sup>

More specifically, the character *ra* consists of a double stroke and does not extend farther down than the body of other characters. While the subscript of the character *ṇa* in the word *pūrṇṇamī* in the Khmer text and *pūrṇṇodita-* in the Sanskrit one still preserves the “x” shape (characteristic of the 5th and

<sup>11</sup> At the time of completing this article, none of us has yet had the chance to observe the stone directly. We rely on information shared by Nguyễn Khánh Trung Kiên (2019) and Đỗ Trường Giang (2023).

<sup>12</sup> For more discussion of the characteristics of the inscriptions of King Jayavarman I, see Vickery 1998: 26, 165–168, and for his dates, see Goodall & Revire 2021: 271, n. 21.

6th centuries), the character *ṇa* above it has the two sides of the “x” split and connected by a stroke at the bottom. Again, the decoration of the stela and the paleographic characteristics of the script present similarities with several other inscriptions of Jayavarman I. The stela from Phum Chrei (K. 563, Kompong Speu), for example, also has a decorative lotus at the top and a string of pearls below the text.<sup>13</sup> The character *kā* does not have a long descendant loop, except the ones in lines 9 and 12 of the Sanskrit text. The dominance of the *ka* without the descendant loop can also be found in the doorjamb from Tuol Kuk Preah (K. 493, Prey Veng, dated 657 CE); by contrast, the stela from Preah Kuhea Luong (K. 44, Kampot, dated 674 CE) presents more characters *ka* with the descendant loop than the other type, whereas the two types are equally represented in K. 563.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the vowel-marker *i* is written as a small circle and the vowel-marker *ī* is slightly larger with a horizontal stroke in the middle in K. 1426. In some other inscriptions, such as K. 493, the latter appears like a spiral turning to the left.<sup>15</sup>

### Synopsis

Face A contains seven Sanskrit stanzas in *anuṣṭubh* meter. The first is an invocation to the Buddha. Stanzas II and III

praise the fieriness and righteousness of the ruling King Jayavarman I. The *raison d'être* of the inscription is mentioned in stanzas IV and V: these constitute an edict of King Jayavarman I concerning a monastery named after *candana* “sandalwood” (*candanavihāra*, ចន្ទនវិហារ) and they decree the use of funds—not given by the king—for the annual procession of an image of the Buddha on the full moon day of the month of Vaiśākha (April–May). Stanzas VI and VII stipulate that the slaves, cows, buffaloes, gardens, fields, servants, etc., given to the Buddha are not to be stolen and are under the protection of the Governor of Tamandarapura (តម្រាបនិប្រឹក្សា).

Face B is a 14-line text in Old Khmer. It echoes the Sanskrit text in what is said about the annual procession of the Buddha’s statue of the Candanavihāra on the full moon day of Vaiśākha as an order of King Jayavarman I. It also provides details of the management of the wealth of the monastery including servants, slaves, cows, buffaloes, etc. The last two lines warn that those who flout the order of the king shall be punished.

### *A Famously Named Monastery and the Procession of a Buddha Statue*

To date, the Cambodian epigraphic corpus contains at least 20 premodern inscriptions (7th–14th centuries CE) formulated in Old Khmer or in Sanskrit that mention the term *vihāra*.<sup>16</sup> The name *candana*, “sandalwood”, given to the monastery with which K. 1426 is associated, reproduces the name of an ancient monastery constructed at the

<sup>13</sup> For the edition and translation of the inscription K. 563, see Cœdès 1942: 198–199.

<sup>14</sup> For the edition and translation of the inscriptions K. 44 and K. 493, see Cœdès 1942: 10–13, 149–152.

<sup>15</sup> The paleographic data mentioned can be corroborated by consulting the relevant EFEO estampages kept in Paris. For the inscriptions K. 44, K. 493 and K. 563, the corresponding estampages bear numbers n. 392, n. 250, and n. 414 respectively.

<sup>16</sup> For a list of the inscriptions, see Chhom 2021–22: 235–236.

place in western India called Sopara today (and referred to as Śūrpāraka or Śupāranagara in Sanskrit sources) that evidently remained famous in Buddhist circles for centuries.<sup>17</sup> For a survey of relevant archeological, epigraphic, scriptural, and literary sources from the Indian Buddhist tradition, we refer to Chapter 1 (Introduction) of the monograph by Joel Tatelman (2000) dedicated to the narrative cycle about a man called Pūrṇa who becomes the founder of the Sandalwood Monastery at Sopara.<sup>18</sup> Given the fame of the earlier Candanavihāra, it may be assumed that the echo of the name here is a conscious one.<sup>19</sup> Whether or not it also indicates

some sort of affiliation with the older homonymous monastery is another question. Potentially relevant elements for the question of why the same name could have been given to a monastery in an ancient mercantile hub of the Mekong Delta are the emphasis on ocean-going trade in the narrative traditions about the Indian namesake and the fact that both at Sopara and at Óc Eo, the sea lies to the west.<sup>20</sup>

Another point of interest for historians of religion is that the new inscription furnishes the earliest reference in the Cambodian epigraphic record to the procession of an image, here of the Buddha, to mark a chariot festival. We know of no other contemporary evidence from the region for such religious processions, but must extrapolate from Angkor-period allusions, for instance that of 902 Śaka in stanza XI of K. 356 (as re-translated by Goodall 2022: 250), which mentions the gift of a golden Viṣṇu (*harim... haimam*) mounted on a silver Garuḍa (*tāratārksyasthitam*) that was to process in festivals (*utsavayāyinam*).<sup>21</sup> This image too must have been of portable size, either in stone, metal, or wood.<sup>22</sup> Such practices

<sup>17</sup> This persistence is revealed, among other evidence, by a Nepalese manuscript of 1015 CE transmitting three Buddhist texts in Sanskrit (Cambridge University Library, MS Skt Add 1643). The illustration on f. 216 verso, which can be viewed at: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01643/434> (accessed on 4 November 2023), is labelled *śupāranagare vulbhukavītarāgākṛte candranavihārah 12*. The online catalogue gives a detailed bibliography of published accounts of the manuscript. Previous scholars have observed that *candrana°* must be a copying error for *candana°*. We believe it may not yet have been observed that the perplexing phrase *vulbhukavītarāga-kṛte*, which would appear to mean that the monastery was considered to have been founded by a sage or *bodhisattva* (*vītarāga*) bearing the odd name Vulbhuka, starts to make sense once one sees, upon close inspection of the string *vulbhuka*, that it is in all likelihood a result of careless copying from another manuscript which read *pūrṇaka*. The two strings can indeed be graphically similar in old Newari script. This gives us the expected name (with insignificant suffix *-ka*) of the founder of the monastery at Sopara. We wish to thank Pia Brancaccio, who made us aware of the reference to the famous Candanavihāra in this manuscript.

<sup>18</sup> See also Lamotte 1988: 21, 298, 300, 680.

<sup>19</sup> It was customary in Indian Buddhism to name monasteries after the lay people who donated them; see Schopen 1996 and Albery 2020: 511–516. So, the designation *śrī-candana-vihāra* could alternatively be understood as “monastery of [a layman named]

Candana”. But this seems less likely to us.

<sup>20</sup> There is also a Jain Candanavihāra in the town of Jalor at the foot of the hill Songiri, in Rajasthan (India), mentioned as having been “renovated some time earlier than the thirteenth century” by Upadhye in the introduction to Part 2 of his edition of the *Kuvalayamālā* (1970: 103). Back in a Buddhist context, near Legaing in central Myanmar, there is another Sandalwood Monastery, but the oldest historical evidence for its existence does not seem to predate the 16th century. See Moore 2023: 168–169, 237–238 (map 3.8.3), 352.

<sup>21</sup> See also “Utsava-mūrti” in Bhattacharya 1961: 89–90.

<sup>22</sup> Given the name of the monastery and the fact that a number of wooden buddha images, datable to the

can be traced back in the wider world of Sanskritic influence; the two earliest sources known to date are the canonical *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* (ca. 2nd–3rd centuries or later) and the travel account of a Chinese Buddhist monk, Faxian (4th–5th centuries). Rules on Buddhist image processions which are found in the section of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* called *Uttaragrantha* mention festivals as occasions for monastic fund drives, but do not imply the use of a chariot in the processions (Schopen 2022: 103, 107).<sup>23</sup> However, a chariot festival was recorded in Faxian’s account as Cristina Bignami (2017: 198) has noted:

In contrast to what might be expected, the earliest surviving evidence for a chariot festival comes neither from South Asia nor from a Brahmanical background, but from the kingdom of Khotan. There, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Faxian witnessed and recorded a Buddhist chariot festival around the year 400 CE. The very fact that Faxian described a second Buddhist festival that he witnessed in the ancient city of Pataliputra (the modern city of Patna in Bihar) suggests

that chariot processions were widespread ritual practices throughout South Asia (and beyond) at the time of Faxian.

Bignami goes on to quote from Faxian’s descriptions of the festivities (2017: 199–200). The description of the festival at Pāṭaliputra begins as follows (p. 199):

Every year on the eighth day of the second month there is a procession of the images. On this occasion they construct a four-wheeled car, and erect upon it a tower of five stages composed of bamboos lashed together, the whole being supported by a centre-post resembling a large spear with three points in height twenty-two feet and more. So it looks like a pagoda. They then cover it with fine white linen, which they afterward paint with gaudy colours. Having made figures of the *dēvas* and decorated them with gold, silver and glass, they place them under canopies of embroidered silk. Then at the four corners (of the car) they construct niches (shrines) in which they place figures of Buddha in a sitting posture with a Bodhisattva standing in attendance. There are perhaps twenty cars thus prepared and differently decorated. During the day of the procession both priests and laymen assemble in great numbers.

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6th or 7th centuries, have been found in the Mekong Delta (Boisselier 1991), it is tempting to speculate that a wooden image was intended. Namhee Noh (2021) reports that these images are made of wood of the Takien (*Hopea odorata*), Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), or Tamanu (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) trees, rendering it less likely that a statue made specifically of sandalwood was intended.

<sup>23</sup> Some scholars have suggested that the *Vinaya* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādins* may have been followed by the majority of Buddhist monks in Cambodia around the 10th century; see Chhom 2021–22: 261.

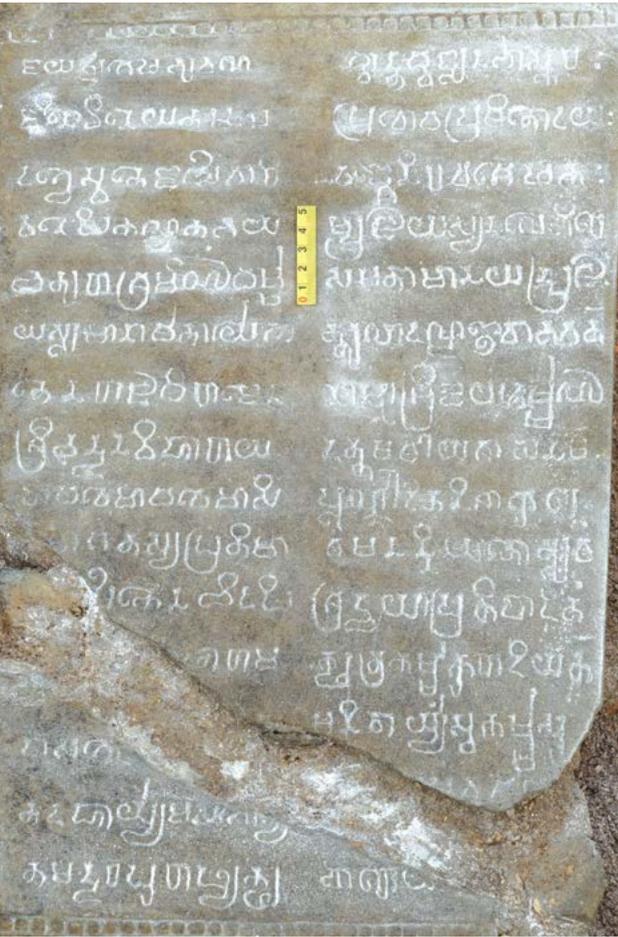
We note, incidentally, the mention of the “second month”, which we suppose corresponds to Vaiśākha, the second month of spring and of the year, in other words the same month in which our procession takes place. Moreover, the word *prāsāda* “temple, sanctuary, shrine, tower” in line 6 of the Khmer portion might refer to the pagoda-like chariot for a statue procession. Although the Khmer syntax allows two possible interpretations of the phrase *tve prāsāda panter vraḥ* (ព្រះ ព្រាហ្មណ៍ បន្តិ ត្រី វ្រះ), namely “build a *prāsāda* [and] organize a procession [of the statue of] the Lord” or “build a *prāsāda* [for] a procession [of the statue of] the Lord”, the latter seems preferable in the light of Faxian’s description. The Candanavihāra was probably already constructed, in durable materials (wood, brick, stone,

etc.), by the time of the royal order recording the donation to the monastery for the procession of the Buddha statue. For this statue a mobile “sanctuary-tower” (*prāsāda*) would have been built in disposable materials (wood, bamboo, etc.). Such a festival vehicle could clearly have been sufficiently elaborate to be referred to by the same word as that which normally designates temple towers, viz. *prāsāda*. We may compare the probably 7th-century prescription of an elaborate “chariot” (*vimāna*) made of wood, bamboo, and the like that was to have five niche-bearing aedicules and three storeys (*pañcāṇḍakam tribhaumam*) for the procession of a Śaiva manuscript in *Śivadharmottara* 2:45 (De Simini 2016: 378 and 396). Our inscription’s Kloñ Ñan was presumably a talented craftsman of this type of *prāsāda*.

### Editorial Conventions

In the edition that follows, to represent the original text in romanized form we follow the conventions outlined in the DHARMA Transliteration Guide prepared by Dániel Balogh & Arlo Griffiths (2020), notably the use of · to represent the *virāma* sign and of capital letters to represent independent vowels combined with the use of *q* to represent cases where independent vowel characters are used as consonants in Khmer context. The indication by apostrophe ‘ of elision of *a-* in st. II is editorial. We further use the following editorial symbols.

- (...) surround graphic elements whose identification is uncertain but apparently in agreement with what is visible.
- [...] surround graphic elements that are entirely lost and are restored by conjecture.
- {n} surround a number of lost graphic elements corresponding to about *n akṣaras*.
- marks the gaps deliberately left blank to demarcate metrical units from one another.
- \_ marks the spaces left blank between some characters in the Khmer text.



FIGURES 1a-b: Face A of stela (a) and its estampage (b)

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**Edition**

**Face A [FIGS 1a-b]**

- I.<sup>24</sup> (A1) jayaty aśeṣa-bhuvāṇa<sup>25</sup>
  - dhvānta-dhvaṅsana-bhāskarahaḥ
  - (A2) jino vineya-kamala-
  - pravodha-prathitodayaḥ
- II.<sup>26</sup> (A3) dagdhe sva-tejasaivāri-
  - vaṅśe nir-avaśeṣataḥ
  - (A4) vane '(p)i ka(ṅṭa)ka-bhaya
  - m prajā yasya na lebhire

- III. (A5) catur-āsraṁiṇā(r̥)ṁ dharmma-
  - samatām ānayan prajā(h)
  - (A6) yas samānārthatāyogā
  - t tulā-daṇḍa Ivābhavat-
- IV. (A7) tena rājādhiraḥjēna
  - nāmnā śrī-jayavarmmaṇā
  - (A8) śrī-candana-vihārāya
  - dattam arthāya śāsanam-
- V.<sup>27</sup> (A9) mādhave mādhave māsi
  - pūrṇṇodita-niśākare
  - (A10) [ta]thāgatasya pratimā-
  - gamanan niyatotsavaṁ
- VI.<sup>28</sup> (A11) [Eta](s)[y](ai) kena cid api
  - śraddhayā pratipāditam

<sup>24</sup> The roman numerals indicate Sanskrit stanzas, all of them in *anuṣṭubh* meter. Here, *pādas* a and c: *na-vipulā*.

<sup>25</sup> °*bhuvāṇa*°: read °*bhuvana*°.

<sup>26</sup> c: *na-vipulā*.

<sup>27</sup> c: *bha-vipulā*.

<sup>28</sup> a: *na-vipulā*.

- (A12) dāsa-go-(mah)i(ṣ)ārāma-  
•kṣetra-karmmakarādi yat  
VII. (A13) tad ahāryyam asa[m]bho(g)  
ya•m anivāryyam sva-karmmasu  
(A14) tamandarapurādhyakṣa-  
•bhāro ya(m avagam)[yatām:]

Face B [FIGS 2a–b]

- (B1) Ājñā vraḥ kamratān· Añ· ni  
roḥ parihāra man·  
(B2) Oy· ta nā vraḥ kamratān·  
Añ· śrīcandana-  
(B3) vihāra \_ gan· vnok· vraḥ  
kamratān· Añ· dai lah·  
(B4) gan ta saṃ paribhoga<sup>29</sup> lah·  
\_ gan· pradāna qnak·  
(B5) lah· pre gui siddhi ta vraḥ  
kamratān· Añ·  
(B6) pre ge ta kloñ ñan·<sup>30</sup> Ai  
taṃrān· tve prāsāda pan-  
(B7) ter· vraḥ ta gui pūrṇamī  
vaiśākha cracar· cnaṃ  
(B8) voṃ pre hau pak· tok· cmap·  
vnaṣ· Amvi ta ge  
(B9) qnak· vraḥha \_ kñuṃ tmur·  
krapī daṃriṃ tpaḥ

<sup>29</sup> *saṃ paribhoga*: the reproductions at our disposal make it imaginable that the dot we interpret as *anusvāra* is actually accidental, which would allow reading *saparibhoga*. Previous scholars have sometimes hesitated between *saṃ paribhoga* and *saparibhoga* (see e.g. the note in Cœdès 1936 on the inscription K. 6). But it is probably undesirable to read *saparibhoga*, as the expression is attested multiple times with or without *p-* prefix as (*p*)*saṃ paribhoga*, often with clear presence of *anusvāra* (see further occurrences in the inscriptions K. 51, K. 163, K. 426, K. 561, K. 582, K. 600, K. 818, K. 904, K. 926 and K. 1275).

<sup>30</sup> *kloñ ñan·*: It might be read *kloñña n(aṃ)* “superintendent of temple (*naṃ* = *vnaṃ*)”, but this would yield a unique example of the word *vnaṃ* followed by the preposition *ai* “at”. Nevertheless, there are several examples in the pre-Angkorian inscriptions where *vnaṃ* stands in front of a name.

- (B10) sre karom dok \_ voṃ tel·  
pre qnak· cralak·  
(B11) [voṃ] pre pāk· slā voṃ pre  
knar· c(k)op· ge voṃ  
(B12) [dap·]<sup>31</sup> qnak· naṃ pitai col·  
[ka](m)l)uṇa Aṅgana  
(B13) ge [ta ce]r· gui ne(ḥ pa)r[i]  
hāra ta roḥ gui nehha  
(B14) ge (ce)[r· Ā](jñā) vraḥ  
kamratān· Añ· ge daṇḍa<sup>32</sup>

Translation

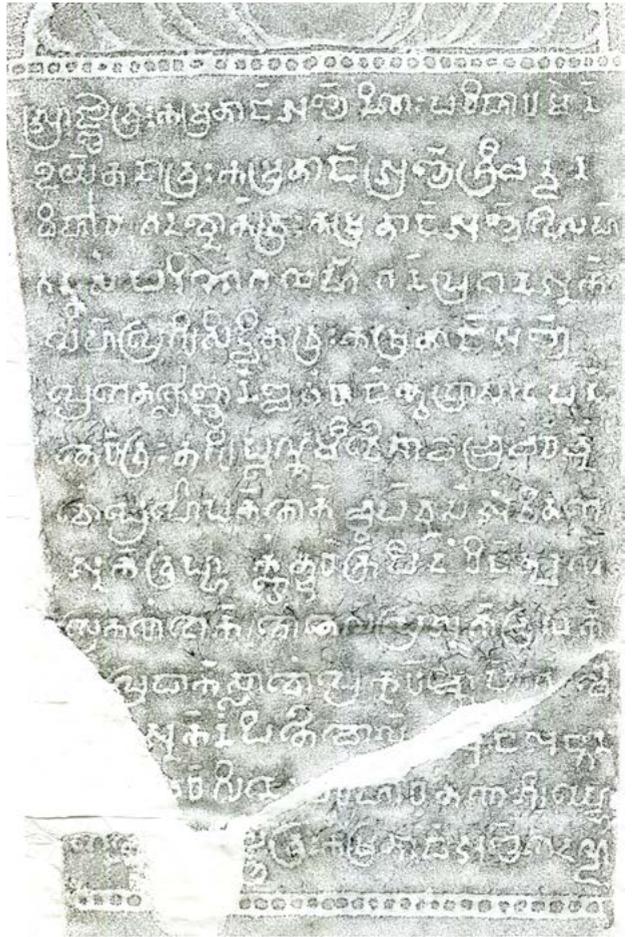
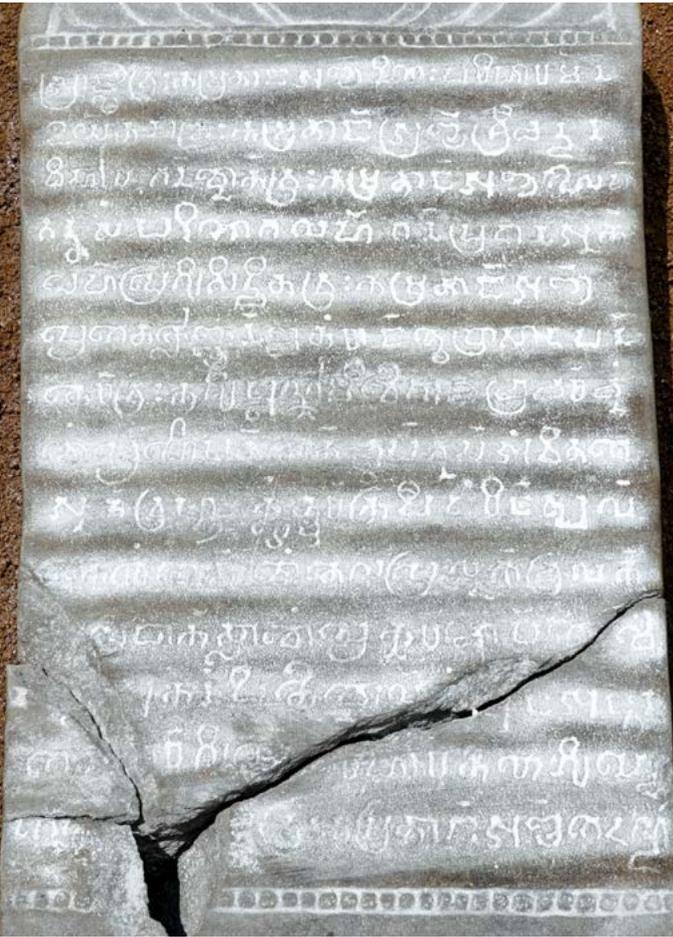
I. He is victorious (*jayati*), the Buddha (*jinaḥ*), a sun to destroy darkness (*dhvānta-dhvaṅsana-bhāskaraḥ*) throughout the world (*aśeṣa-bhuvana-*), whose rise is proclaimed by the awakening of his lotus-like disciples (*vineya-kamala-prabodha-prathitodayaḥ*).

II. After he burnt (*dagdhe*) completely (*nir-avaśeṣataḥ*) the race of his enemies (*ari-vañse*) merely (*eva*) by his fieriness (*sva-tejasā*), his subjects (*prajāḥ*) experienced (*lebhire*) no (*na*) fear of thorns (*kaṅṭaka-bhayam*) even [when they were] in a forest (*vane 'pi*).

III. Leading (*ānayan*) his subjects (*prajāḥ*) to a state of being in balance in the Dharma (*dharma-samatām*) of those belonging to the four [orthodox] walks of life (*catur-āśramaṇām*), he became (*abhavat*), it seemed (*iva*), [impartial] like

<sup>31</sup> The restitution of the world *dap* is based on both the meaning and the space on the stone. Given that the prohibitive word *dap* is followed by the word *pre* or *tel pre* in three previous phrases, the same wording is expected in the lost passage here. Nevertheless, the available space is too large for the word *pre* and too small for *tel pre*. The meaning of *dap* suits the context better than that of *pre* “to use, to order”.

<sup>32</sup> Understand *daṇḍa*.



FIGURES 2a-b: Face B of stela (a) and its estampage (b)  
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the rod of a pair of scales (*tulā-daṇḍaḥ*), because he possessed a sense of each [walk of life] being of equal value (*samānārthatāyogāt*).

IV. This (*tena*) overlord of kings (*rājādhirājena*), by name (*nāmnā*) the illustrious (*śrī*-) Jayavarman (*-jaya-varmmanā*), gave (*dattam*) the [following] charter (*śāsanam*) for the sake of wealth (*arthāya*) [given] for the benefit of the venerable (*śrī*-) Sandalwood Monastery (*-candana-vihārāya*):

V. “In spring (*mādhave*), in the month of Mādhava (*mādhave māsi*) [i.e., Vaiśākha],

when the risen moon is full (*pūrṇoditanisākare*), the procession of the image (*pratimā-gamanam*) of the Buddha (*tathāgatasya*) is to have a fixed festival (*niyatotsavam*)”.

VI. “[And] whatever (*yat*) is dedicated (*pratipāditam*) to this [image] (*etasyai*), out of devotion (*śraddhayā*)—slaves, cows, buffaloes, gardens, fields, workers, and so forth (*dāsa-go-mahiṣārāma-kṣetra-karmmakarādi*)—by anybody at all (*kena cid api*),

VII. “... that (*tad*) is not to be stolen (*ahāryam*), not to be enjoyed (*asambho-*

*gyam*), not to be withheld (*anivāryam*) for [the accomplishment of some individual's] own works (*sva-karmasu*). May [the responsibility of ensuring] this (*ayam*) be understood (*avaḡamyatām*) to be the burden [of duty] of the Governor of Tamandarapura (*tamandara-purādhyakṣa-bhārah*)”.

(B1–B12) Order of My Lord concerning the modalities (*roh*) of management (*parihāra*),

- assigning (*oy*) to My Lord (the Buddha) of the venerable Sandalwood Monastery some laborers of other Lords, some [laborers] who are a shared resource, [and] some who are gifts from people;

- enjoining that they become the exclusive property of My Lord (of the Sandalwood Monastery);

- enjoining that Kloñ Ñan at Tamrāñ build a shrine [for] a procession of the Lord[’s image] on the Full-moon Day of Vaiśākha, every year;

- forbidding that he summon to break (*pak*), to uproot (*tok*), to seize (*cmap*) the measured lands (*vnas*) from the Lord’s servants;

- [regarding] the slaves, cows, buffaloes, orchards, groves, low-lying rice fields, boats, absolutely forbidding that people cause damage (*cralak*);

- forbidding that they break areca [palms];

- forbidding that they obstruct taxation (*ckop*) of others;

- forbidding that they prevent the *nam pitai* people from entering inside the precincts (of the Lord).

(B13–B14) Those who transgress the above (*qui neḡ*)—the modalities of management as above—, [i.e.,] those who flout the order of My Lord, are punished.

## Philological Commentary

**Verse I.** As Diwakar Acharya pointed out to us (pers. comm.), *vineya* could refer also to the king’s subjects (cf. *vinayādhāna* in *Raghuvamśa* 1.24). This means that a second punning interpretation is at least suggested, even if it is not perhaps meant to expand fully in the mind of the reader, in which the king is the subject of the stanza, his name, Jayavarman, being already adumbrated or suggested by the opening word:

He is victorious, that Victor (*jinaḡ*), a [veritable] sun for destroying the darknesses of all the world, whose rise spreads out to awaken the lotuses that are [his subjects who are] to be disciplined.

For a handful of comparable instances of pre-Angkorian Śaiva inscriptions that open with a verse that is manifestly in praise of Śiva but that allow themselves also to be interpreted as referring to the ruling king, see Goodall & Revire (2021: 270). This is a trope we find elsewhere, for instance in the 5th-century Guḡnāpur pillar inscription from Karnataka (India), commemorating the creation and endowment of a temple of Kāmadeva. Its first verse, as Cecil & Gomes suggest (2021: 16, n. 16), could describe both Kāma and the ruling king Ravivarman.

**Verse II.** The use of *kaṅṭaka* (literally “thorn”) to refer metaphorically to enemies or trouble-makers within the realm is an old cliché (cf. *Raghuvamśa* 14.73). One is thus meant to understand *kaṅṭakabhayam* simultaneously as “fear of

thorns” and “danger of trouble-makers”. Although the “burning of enemies” might in such a Buddhist context allude to the destruction of Māra, it seems more likely to us that this stanza speaks about the king. The correlative *yasya* shows that this stanza is to go with the next two stanzas which contain *yas* and then *tena*, each time denoting the king. The vocabulary (*tejas*, *prajāḥ*, *arivamśe*) also suggests that this stanza is only about the king.

**Verse III.** One could imagine a layer of meaning in which he “was [straight] as the rod of a pair of scales because of [the fact that he was engaged in cultivating] a meditative state of awareness that all things are of equal value”. Such a yogic awareness is spoken of as *sāmarasya* in Śaiva traditions, or as *śaktisamarasa* (e.g., in 5:36 of the *Uttarasūtra* of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, and in 4:61 of the *Nayasūtra*, both edited in Goodall et al. 2015). Furthermore, given that this is a Buddhist inscription, and that *dharma-samatā* (or rather *sarva-dharma-samatā*) is similarly used in many Mahāyāna works (for instance several times in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*) to refer a state of mind in which one equanimously recognizes the “sameness of all things”,<sup>33</sup> it would certainly be fitting if the verse were intended to mean that he led his brahmanical subjects to a state of mind in which they felt a Buddhist equanimity with regard to all things. Such an interpretation might be straightforward

if we had an accusative *caturāśramiṇīr*, agreeing with *prajāḥ*, but we instead have the genitive plural *caturāśramiṇām*. Could one perhaps understand “Among those belonging to the four [orthodox] walks of life, he led subjects to [a Buddhist state of realization of] all things being equal”? Or perhaps “Leading his subjects to [an awareness of] the sameness of [all] the teachings (*dharma-samatām*) of those belonging to the four [Brahmanical] walks of life, [...]”? While it seems more than likely that the Buddhist notion of *sarva-dharma-samatā* is in some way alluded to, no translation of the stanza seems to us entirely satisfactory.

**Verse IV.** As Diwakar Acharya observed to us (pers. comm.), the combination of a genitive and a dative (*candanavihārasya arthāya*) would be more normal for expressing the sense “he gave this charter for the sake of the Śrī Candana Monastery”. Nonetheless, the first dative could be the result of attraction to the case of the second. Or we can interpret as we have, with two parallel purposive

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The Buddha, equally beneficent towards all beings, penetrates the sameness of all *dharmas* (I, § 10, st. 8). In order to beg correctly, one should penetrate the sameness of all *dharmas* (III, § 11). One must, through the sameness of the depravities, penetrate the sameness of the Absolute Good (III, § 13). Subhūti is promised recompense if he can, through the sameness of material objects, penetrate the sameness of all *dharmas*, through the sameness of all *dharmas* penetrate the sameness of all Buddha attributes, through the sameness of the five acts of immediate fruition penetrate the sameness of deliverance (III, § 16).

<sup>33</sup> Cultivating this state of mind leads to liberation, as outlined in the summary of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* given by Lamotte, rendered into English by Sara Boin (Lamotte 1976: LXIX):

See also pp. 982–983 of Lamotte’s French rendering of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*, which does not survive in Sanskrit, but has been translated from the Chinese (Lamotte 1949: II, 982–983).

datives: “for wealth” and, at the same time, “for the *vihāra*”. Another possibility would be to take only *arthāya* as a purposive dative and to understand “he gave this charter to the Śrī Candana Monastery for the sake of its wealth”. Note that it is not said that the king made any donation himself. Pre-Angkorian inscriptions that record expenditure by the ruling king seem to be rare (Goodall 2023: 27–36). Here no benefactor is mentioned, which perhaps suggests that the king’s edict relates to the disbursement of wealth that is regularly donated in small amounts by many individuals.

**Verse V.** We could have taken the expression *mādhave mādhave* distributively to mean in “every month of Vaiśākha”, but since the element *niyata-* already expresses fixedness and therefore calendrical regularity, there is no need for the repetition of *mādhave* to express this. Indeed, this repetition seems elegant precisely because the word is used in two different senses. Admittedly, one could argue that *niyata-* is instead used to qualify the festival as “restrained”, in other words a ceremony in which the participants were expected to restrain themselves from sensual enjoyment and fix their minds on the Buddha and his teachings. But this might seem an anachronistically post-Protestant interpretation, since Hindu and Buddhist festival processions often allow a joyful suspension of norms. This is furthermore arguably suggested by the opening *mādhave*, “In Springtime! [...]”, a time for joyous festivals all over the world from time immemorial.

We have silently assumed that *pratimā-gamanam* is intended as a metrically expedient alternative to some more standard expression for a procession, such as *pratimāyātrā*, although it is just conceivable that it refers to “the approaching of the Buddha image (for veneration)” (*pratimā-āgamanam*). Still, this is less likely, since festivals archetypically involve processions—in South India invariably so, to the point that *utsava* is often used to mean “procession”, e.g. in the expression *utsavamūrti*. For other allusions to religious processions in the Khmer epigraphical corpus, see K. 290 (9th c., st. LXVI–LXVII, Buddhist); K. 853 (9th c., st. XIV, Śaiva); K. 356 (10th c., st. XI, a processional image, described as *utsavayāyin*, of a golden Viṣṇu mounted upon a silver Garuḍa); K. 276 (11th c., lines 4–6, Śaiva); K. 277 (11th c., lines 33–34, Śaiva); K. 1222 (12th c., southern face, Śaiva). See also the passages referred to by Bhattacharya in his brief discussion of the subject (1961: 89–91), to which we have alluded above. There are numerous other references of course to *utsavas*, such as a Śaiva one in K. 55, st. XIV, which also belongs to the 7th century, but without explicit references to processions or processional images. It is also worth noting that a 12th-century lintel from Prasat Hin, in Phimai, depicts a procession carrying a buddha image sheltered by a *nāga*’s hood on a palanquin.<sup>34</sup>

**Verse VI.** As for *dāsa* and *karmakara* (which latter are presumably servants with a different legal status from the

<sup>34</sup> See: Lintel depicting the procession of Buddha Sheltered by Naga’s Hood.

*dāsas*, perhaps because they are not as completely owned), the Śaiva author Brahmaśambhu draws this distinction in his *Naimittikakriyānusandhāna* of 938 CE. According to this text (f. 73v),<sup>35</sup> when the religious master (*ācārya*) transfers his responsibilities to his successor, he should say:

*idaṃ sthānam iyaṃ vṛttir iyaṃ  
pustakasamhatih*

*amī vai bharaṇīyās tu dāsāḥ  
karmakarās ca naḥ*

*etat sarvaṃ mayā tubhyaṃ dattam  
adya tvayāpi ca*

*pālanīyaṃ tathā samyag  
yathāsmābhiḥ prapālitaṃ*

Such is the foundation; such is the revenue; such is the library; and these are the slaves and workers that are to be supported. All this I have given to you this day, and you should properly maintain it as I have done.

The term *karmakara* “worker” is attested in at least two later inscriptions: (1) the group of almost identical *āśrama* inscriptions at Angkor in Sanskrit (K. 279, K. 290, K. 701 and K. 1228), belonging to the reign of the 9th-century king Yaśovarman; (2) the inscription of Samrong (K. 258) in Old Khmer, dated

1107 CE. The contexts in which the term appears do not make clear whether they were different from the slaves (*dāsa*). Even in modern Khmer, the word is still used in its Pali forms *kammakara*, “male worker”, and *kammakariṇī*, “female worker”.

**Verse VII.** The Governor mentioned here is presumably one of the successors to Vidyāviśeṣa, the governor of Tamandarapura who authored K. 604 and K. 1235 in 627 CE (for editions and translations of which, see Goodall 2019). The fact that this figure is assigned the administrative burden of ensuring the correct use of these resources seems indeed to confirm that we may speak of him as a “governor” (as argued by Goodall, 2019 *passim*). It was clear already that the various other mentions of Tamandarapura in the epigraphic corpus (K. 9, K. 604 and K. 1235), when all taken together, suggested the location somewhere in southern Vietnam.<sup>36</sup> The discovery of K. 1426 at Óc Eo might indicate that Tamandarapura was in fact the ancient name of Óc Eo. As for the nature of the compound name Tamandarapura, which, apart from the element *-pura*, does not seem to be Sanskrit, see the summary of past discussions given by Goodall (2019: 29), and see Chhom & Griffiths (2025: 55), who conclude:

<sup>36</sup> Thus Vickery 1998: 339 and Goodall 2019: 29. Although K. 604 is in Sambor Prei Kuk, Tamandarapura may nonetheless be a toponym referring to Óc Eo (or a place in the vicinity of Óc Eo) since there is nothing implausible about the Governor of Tamandarapura recording an endowment that he made in the vicinity of Tamandarapura (K. 1235) as well as an endowment that he made in the then capital city (K. 604).

While *pura* means “city” in Sanskrit, the element *tamandara* is hard to explain in Sanskrit or Khmer and may perhaps reflect an indigenous language of the Austronesian family: in Malay, for instance, *taman darat* could mean “flatland garden”, and it is likely that a very similar expression also existed in the ancient Cham language. So the name may be an indication that the ethnolinguistic profile of the ancient Mekong Delta, and the polity of Funan, included other people beside Khmers.

**B6.** Tamrāñ (តំរាំង) is a rare toponym. In a variant spelling (of presumably trivial significance) it appears as Tamrañ in the inscription of Ban Hin Khon (K. 388, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, possibly 7th c.).<sup>37</sup> Is Tamrāñ the Khmer form of the Sanskrit Tamandara(pura)? To give an example of the sometimes rather substantial differences between (presumably primary) vernacular names and their guise in Sanskrit context, we may first refer to the epigraphy of Campā, where Panrāñ is the vernacular toponym to which Pāñḍaraṅga (or Pāñḍuraṅga) corresponds in other contexts (Griffiths & Southworth 2011: 285–291). We are also reminded of the possible correspondence between the Sanskrit name Kāmarāṅga for Arakan (Rakhine, in present-day Myanmar) and the Old Burmese toponyms Kam Rarñ or Kamḥ Yam (Griffiths 2015: 307). If

Tamrāñ does indeed form a pair with Tamandara, then the Malay or Cham explanation of the latter, proposed just above, may need to be reconsidered, or else it must be assumed that the vernacular Khmer term came into existence only after the Sanskritization of an originally Austronesian name had taken place.

**B7.** The word *cnañ* (ច្រាំង) is clearly the Old Khmer word meaning “year”, as found for instance in the inscription K. 90 (Kampong Cham, 7th c., lines N7–10) *nivandha ge ta gui utsava ta pon hvat ta gui cnañ ta moyya*, “Provision for the people at the four festival occasions in one year”. The word *cracar* (គ្រាគ្រា), by contrast, is not recorded in Pou’s Old Khmer dictionary (2004) while in Jenner’s dictionary of pre-Angkorian Khmer (2009: 144), based on a single attestation in the inscription K. 1004 (Kandal, 691 CE), it is analyzed as a derivation from the verb *car* “to write (note, jot) down in order”. However, in unpublished notes on that inscription to which we have access, Jenner translates the word *cracar triai*, “daily” (literally *cracar*, “every”, and *triai*, “day”). If our intuition is correct that the context in which the word *cracar* appears in the inscription K. 1426 is comparable to the one where *cracar triai* appears in K. 1004, our translation of *cracar cnañ* as “every year” stands to reason. We would then propose a different morphological analysis from Jenner’s: *cracar* could be derived from the (otherwise unknown) Old Khmer antecedent of the word *cuor* (ជួរ) word that means “line, row” in modern Khmer. With the prefix of intensification

<sup>37</sup> See: <https://dharmalekha.info/texts/INSCIK00388>.

*cra-*, the resulting meaning could then be “one after another in a line or a row”, somewhat like the words “règle” and “régulier” in French which can refer both to straight lines and regularity.<sup>38</sup>

**B8.** The word *cmap* (𑄎𑄑𑄖) is formed with the infix *-m-* whose original function seems to have been to create agent nouns, so *c-m-ap* “seizer” from *cap* (𑄎𑄑) “to seize” (Griffiths 2015: 307). However, it needs to be recognized that the inherited affixation of Khmer had already become fossilized to a certain degree by the stage of Old Khmer.<sup>39</sup> In the context where *cmap* occurs in K. 1426, it is likely that the word functions as equivalent to the verb *cap* although the alternative interpretation as an agent noun cannot be entirely dismissed. The syntactic context is similar to that where *c-m-er* (𑄎𑄑𑄖) occurs, interchanging freely, it seems, with unaffixed *cer* (𑄎𑄑) “to transgress”, in the formulaic phrase of King Jayavarman I’s inscriptions: *ge cer/cmer ājñā vraḥ kamratāñ añ ge daṇḍa*. This can be translated by “those who transgress the order of My Lord are punished” if *cmer* is understood as a verb or “those who are transgressors of the order of

My Lord are punished” if it is taken as an agent noun.

**B10.** Like the word *cracar*, *cralak* (𑄎𑄑𑄖𑄎) is formed with the prefix of intensification *cra-*, here attached to the verb *-lak* “to cut a notch, groove, make an incision; to hollow out; to trim, clip; to cut into; to scratch, score, groove, mark; to incise, engrave; to gouge, chisel”. The resulting meaning, “to cut intensely”, underlies our interpretation “to cause damage” in the context of the inscription (Jenner 2009: 417). To date, the word *cralak* appears in three inscriptions, i.e., K. 502 (Chanthaburi, 7th c.; this inscription is fragmentary), K. 1267 (Kompong Speu, 7th c.) and now K. 1426. The context in which the term *cralak* appears in K. 1267 seems to confirm our interpretation. The sentence *ge ta cralak gui pañ tiñ ti mās kaddi moy* can thus be translated as “Persons who cause damage [to the donation of the king] shall pay a fine of one *katti* of gold” (Pou 2001: 194).

**B11.** Analogously to the word *cmap* above, the noun *k-n-ar* (𑄎𑄑) is derived from the verb *kar* (𑄎𑄑) “to obstruct” with another affix, *-n-*, whose original function was likewise to form agent nouns, but contextually more likely to have been intended as a verb.

**B12.** The expression *qnak nam pitai* (𑄎𑄑𑄎𑄑 𑄎𑄑 𑄎𑄑) “*nam pitai* people” cannot be entirely understood: while the meaning of *qnak* “person” is certain, that of the word *pitai* remains obscure and the word *nam* might be a noun meaning “cake” or a verb meaning “to lead, bring, take”. According to Jenner (2009: 310), *pitai* is the name

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of the prefixes *c-* and *cra-* in Khmer, see Jenner & Pou 1980–81: xxxvii–xxxviii.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Jacob (1976: 608): “The fossilization may be described as follows. Although the function of many Mod.K. [Modern Khmer] words containing an O.K. [Old Khmer] affix could in a given context be recognized by means of the affix, there are also many words of similar construction in the use of which the original function does not operate any more. In addition to this, other, newer affixes have confused the picture. The infix *m* occurring between two consonants, for example, can be nominalizing or causative, at least since the Mid.K. [Middle Khmer] period”.

of an unidentified cake (*nam*) which was presumably offered to the dead.<sup>40</sup> However, if one considers *nam* to be a verb, then *pitai* must be its object and it may no longer be assumed to be any kind of cake. The expression *qnak nam pitai* figures also in another inscription of King Jayavarman I, i.e., the

stela of Preah Kuhea Luong K. 44 (Cœdès 1942: 10–13). The text alludes to the presence of some *nam pitai* people within the precincts of a sanctuary. Similarly, these people in K. 1426 probably had the privilege of entering the precincts of the Lord.

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<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of the rare expressions with *pitai*, and notably *vrah pitai*, “sacred *pitai*”, in several inscriptions of the 9th to the 12th centuries CE, see Vickery 1999: 76–77.

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