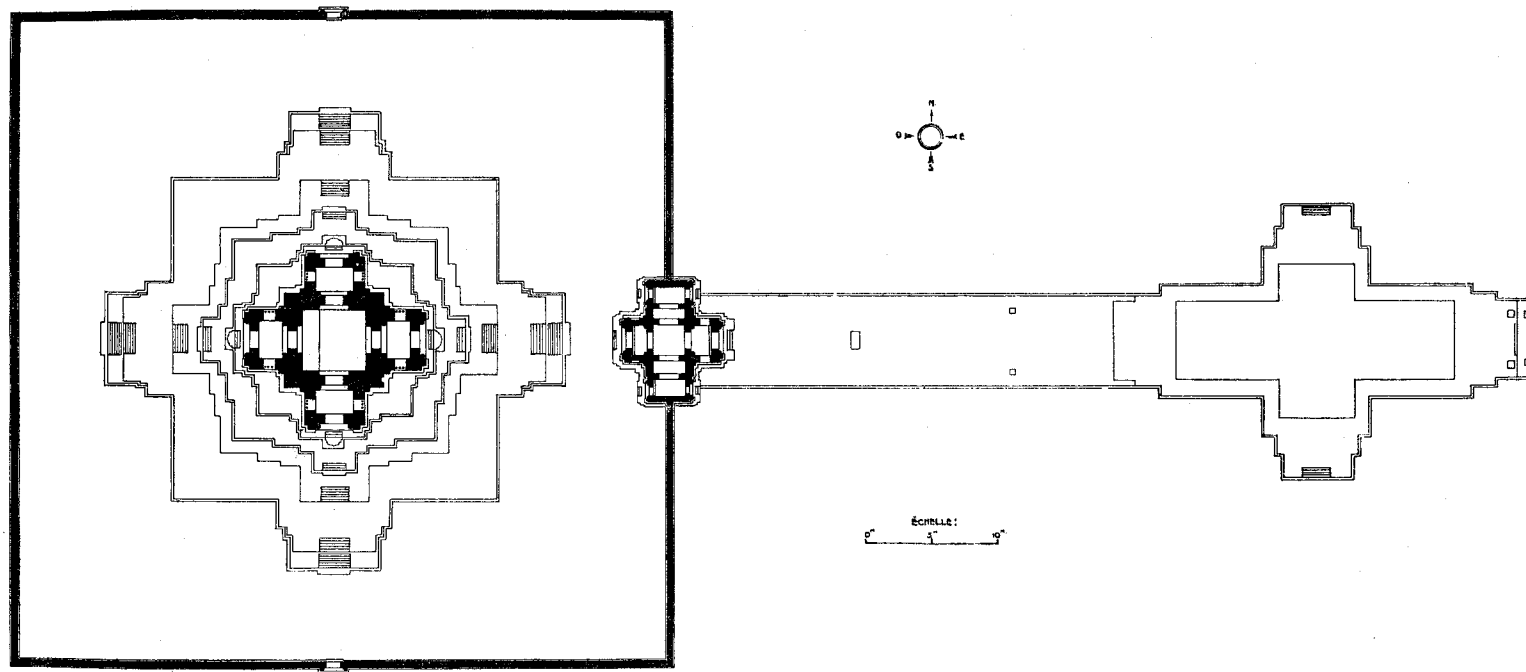




Setting off down the oblique path behind Tep Pranam, towards the north-west, one comes in 150 metres to the foot of a small terrace from where one can see the Buddha preceding the entrance, the gopura, and the sanctuary itself of Prah Palilay, surrounded by the soaring silk-cotton trees which provide a particularly dramatic setting.

This cruciform terrace, of about thirty metres in length by 8m.50 in width on its upper level, is in a remarkable state of preservation, constituting one of the finest specimens of this kind of work from the classic period, where the broadly crested seven-headed nagas of its balustrades are refined in line and carry no excess of material. Two dvarapalas or guardians, now decapitated, preceded it on the east side with two crouching lions, only one of which remains.

The terrace is linked to the gopura by a thirty three metre pavement, once bordered with “Hamsas”, or sacred geese, sculpted on sandstone blocks, similar to those on Terrace of the elephants. A large Buddha of a late period, who for a long-time was missing his head - found in 1934 entwined in the roots of a tree - has been erected in front of the monument. Three metres high, including the base, he sits on a lotus “calling the earth to witness”. His “ushnisha” finishes in a flame like that of the Buddha of Tep Pranam.

The laterite enclosure wall forms a square of 50 metres each side and is divided by a single gopura to the east. Before its restoration in 1937 nothing existed of this but a precarious and unstable structure - the fruit of all the usual problems inherent in the buildings in the style of the Bayon. It is now presented as the elegant silhouette of a cruciform building with three passageways, slender in proportion and crowned at the centre by a single storey square tower with a barrel-formed vault and double gable end.

Its main interest lies in the frontons, sculpted with Buddhist scenes that have extraordinarily managed to avoid being defaced by the iconoclasts. One can see, on the eastern side of the north wing “the offering of the animals in the forest” with elephants, monkeys and peacocks in a scene that could have been the origin of the name of Prah Palilay by the altering of “Parilyyaka”, the name of the woods to which the Buddha retreated in solitude after leaving Kosambi. To the west is the seated Buddha receiving the “offerings from Sujata”, and, on the gable end, the “calming of the furious elephant Nalagiri”.

The sandstone sanctuary has a five metre square chamber that opens to its four sides with as many vestibules. It stands on a base which is itself set on a three tiered plinth of 6 metres in overall height.

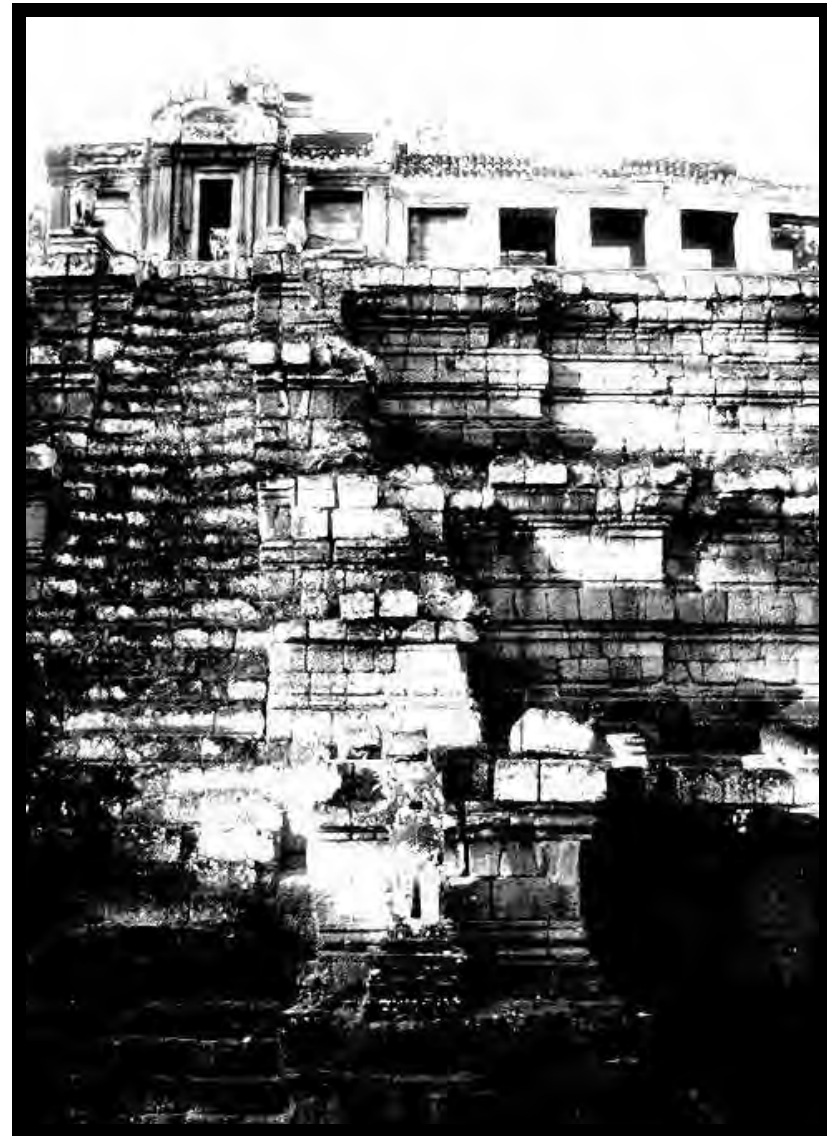
Prah Palilay

Date	sanctuary - first half of the 12th century gopura - late 12th, early 13th century
Cult	Buddhist
Clearing	by H. Marchal in 1918 - 1919 Anastylosis of the gopura by M. Glaize in 1937 - 1938

Breached on each axis by a stairway with intermediate landings, these tiers are unfortunately badly ruined - as are the vestibules - which is all the more regrettable since their ornamentation, close in style to that of Angkor Wat, is from the best period of the classic art (the first half of the 12th century). Above stands a high, truncated pyramid forming a sort of rugged-faced chimney. Filled with re-used stone blocks it certainly forms an addition, and could only have served as a frame - like the towers with faces of the Bayon - for some form of light-weight covering.

Inside, hardwood beams doubling the lintel once gave support to the stonework above the doors. Completely decayed, they had to be replaced by elements in reinforced concrete over the north and west openings. A large Buddha of a later period but of some quality leans in the western opening, close to which can be found the fine torso of a standing Buddha.

Some excellent pieces of sculpture from the frontons have been taken to the Bayon storeroom for safe-keeping, while others have been placed around the monument - some representing Buddhist scenes and others Brahmanic divinities. One will see, in particular - on either side of the gopura within the enclosure - an Indra on a three headed elephant and *"the assault of Mara and his army of demons"* against the Buddha, whose image has not been found. This syncretism is not uncommon with the Khmer, and one suspects that if the Buddhist images of Prah Palilay have managed to escape destruction by the successors to Jayavarman VII, of an intransigent Hinduism, it was maybe due to the proximity of the Tep Pranam monastery (Saugatasrama) on which it perhaps depended and whose official status, situated in the shadow of the Royal Palace, could have endowed these saintly images with some particular immunity.



the Royal Palace enclosure

Leaving Prah Palilay on its axis through the breach in the south side of its enclosure wall - dramatically framed by silk-cotton trees - one makes one's way through the forest for about 200 metres. This is a pleasant walk, which can be extended by taking a path to the left, towards the east, that follows the external enclosure wall of the Royal Palace. In less than a hundred metres one comes to the remains of an ancient basin which must have been a part of the whole composition of the Leper King Terrace, and whose western lining wall is sculpted on its east side with some interesting nautical scenes.

Retracing one's steps, one gains access to the interior of the Royal Palace through the western gopura of the 5 metres high northern laterite wall. This solid wall is doubled by a second of more recent construction, separated from it by a 25 metre wide moat, defining a vast rectangle of 250 metres by 600.

The northern and southern sides of this 15 hectare enclosure each have two similar sandstone gopuras, the best preserved being the one through which we have just come. Cruciform in plan, it is formed of a square towered-passageway with reducing upper tiers and two barrel vaulted wings that terminate with voluted frontons. Careful and restrained in their decoration these have all the purity of the classic period. On the corners of the upper cornices, the perfectly preserved tower miniatures still remain in place. The floor level in the gopura more or less corresponds to the level at the base of the Phimeanakas pyramid, at the centre of the enclosure. It is 1m.20 higher than the external ground level with the difference made up on this side by a double base plinth.

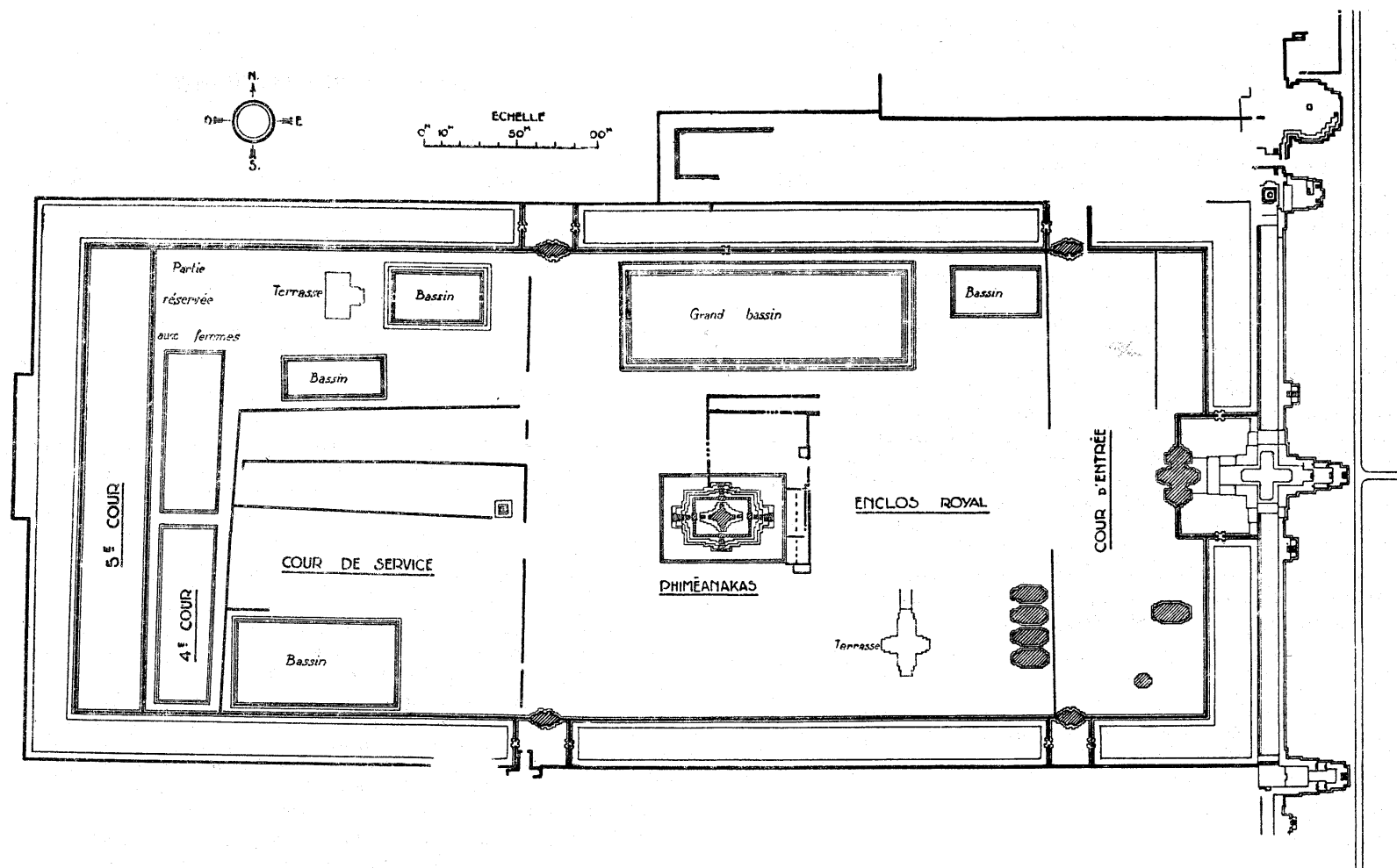
One can then, if the access track is passable, take a path to the right - that is to say to the west - where there is an ancient pool of 50 metres by 25 with steps and a laterite surround, which was perhaps part of the area of the palace reserved for the women. Following the north side, one comes to a small terrace that has its retaining wall sculpted with bas-reliefs showing a line of figures, elephants and horses, under a frieze of "Hamsas" (sacred geese).

Retracing one's steps and continuing east, or, if one has not made the detour, turning immediately left on leaving the gopura, one then arrives at the north-west corner of a large 125 by 45 metre pool, excavated in the 10th century and filled two centuries later during the vast filling work that was to raise the general ground level of the capital. Having since been neglected, it seemed appropriate to re-establish its original condition - an excavation undertaken on the north side revealed thirteen sandstone steps,

Phimeanakas

Akas - Vimana
"Celestial Palace"

Date	late 10th - early 11th century
King	Rajendravarman (posthumous name: Shivaloka)? Jayavarman V (posthumous name: Paramaviraloka) Suryavarman I (posthumous name: Paramanirvanapada)
Cult	originally Brahmanic
Clearing	by Commaille in 1908 and H. Marchal from 1916 to 1918 Excavation of the north Basin started by M. Glaize in 1944



remarkably finished, of which seven were moulded and six were plain, giving an overall depth of 5m.32 down to a laterite base.

A pavement separates it from the northern enclosure wall and from another smaller pool situated to the east - which is about 40 metres by 20, and 4m.50 deep.

On its western, southern, and a small part of its eastern side, the large basin is bordered, above a frieze of fish and aquatic monsters, by two broad, high steps sculpted with bas-reliefs; - below are nagas in animal and human form surrounded by nagi-princesses similar to those on the Terrace of the Leper King, - and above, where the height varies, male and female garudas and winged figures. Clearly in the style of the Bayon, the composition must have been crowned with a naga-balustrade and probably served as a tribune for the king and other court dignitaries during the display of nautical events staged here in this delightful setting.

Descending to the lower level, the visitor can examine all the sculpture in detail by following the western side, and then the southern nearly to its centre, where some blocks of stone have been placed to give access to the upper level.

Here, the history of the Royal Palace presents one of its more enigmatic mysteries. It would appear that these steps, whatever their apparent decorative importance, in fact mainly performed an utilitarian function - which was to retain the enormous mass of earth-fill which covered, in layers of varying thickness, the major part of the original ground level within the enclosure - and in particular the central area occupied by the chapel of Phimeanakas where, at 2m.50 in depth, it masked half the lowest tier of the pyramid.

The clearing of the area surrounding Phimeanakas by Mr Marchal, and other more recent excavations in the vicinity, revealed the existence of an intermediate level between the present ground level and the original base level, at 0m.80 above the latter. The general filling had, therefore, been undertaken in at least two stages. Each lower level - and in particular the intermediate level - corresponds to various remains of walls, of foundations and of paved areas relating no doubt to the layout of structures in light-weight materials - particularly on the eastern side of the temple. This must have stood in quite a crowd of buildings and was perhaps sited within a special enclosure. The fact is confirmed by the nature of the fill which contains brick and tile debris, and even traces of charcoal from fire-damaged construction timbers.

The timing of these successive in-fills remains a mystery - except for the intermediate level where two inscribed steles dating from the reign of Jayavarman VII prove that this was gained after the end of the 12th century. The last stage, given the present level, corresponds therefore at the earliest to the last years of the reign of this king.

The first of the two steles, known as "*of the fig tree*", is interesting in the proof that it gives of the religious syncretism practised by the Khmer - the "*Bodhi*" tree is in fact here identified with the Brahmanic "*Trimurti*" - Brahma for the roots, Shiva for the trunk and Vishnou for the branches. The second stele gives "*the panegyric of a queen who reached nirvana after having performed numerous good deeds around her and practised the virtues of the ascetics*". (V. Goloubew).

In its present state it is therefore impossible to know exactly where within the Royal Palace the various buildings - and in particular the private dwellings of the sovereign - were sited, since they were all built in perishable materials. One cannot be guided here by rules of symmetry, - anyone in our day who has visited the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh before its alterations in



1942 will have some idea of the results of several centuries of work by different monarchs. Unlike the temples, here there is no desire to make a lasting work according to the unchangeable rules of monumental architecture. With enlargements, alterations and modifications made at will to suit the tastes, whims and comforts of each, how does one then interpret with any success the various remains which are often reduced to some foundations of walls and impossible to place in time?

Based on the existence of enclosures still visible in elevation, Mr Marchal was, however, able to divide the royal enclosure into five zones. These are, from east to west; - an entry court of 70 metres in depth served by three gopuras, - the royal enclosure, of 280 metres, surrounding Phimeanakas and the large pool, served by two gopuras, - the area reserved for the women, of 150 metres, with, to its south, the latrine yard, neither of which have any link to the outside, - a fourth court opening onto the preceding and reserved perhaps for the service girls - and finally a last court, completely enclosed and of uncertain use.

Valuable clues to the character of each of these enclosures were provided by the nature of the objects found during excavation - in bronze or pottery and for cultural, decorative or utilitarian use.

DESCRIPTION OF PHIMEANAKAS

Before the identification of Phnom Bakheng, the small pyramidal temple of Phimeanakas was thought by some to be the “*Central Mountain*” of the late 9th century capital of Yasovarman. However, it soon became considered as a sanctuary of the second order - partly because its rectangular plan and single prasat do not accord well with the idea of Mount Meru, the siege of the royal linga, located at the heart of the city itself - but also because it seems rather to justify its role as a private chapel, situated as it is within the palace.

This is the “*golden tower*” described by the Chinese envoy Tcheou Ta-Kouan that was found “*in the private dwellings of the sovereign*” - which gives their precise location and explains the large number of remains which appeared during the course of excavation at the foot itself of the pyramid. “*The local people*” - he adds “*commonly believe that in the tower lives a genie in the form of a nine headed serpent, which is the Lord of the entire kingdom. Every night this genie appears in the shape of a woman, with whom the sovereign couples. Not even the wives of the King may enter here. At the second watch, the King comes forth and is then free to sleep with his wives and concubines. Should the genie fail to appear for a single night, it is a sign that the King's death is at hand. If, on the other hand, the King should fail to keep his tryst, then disaster is sure to follow...*”.

Phimeanakas appears as a pyramid with three diminishing laterite tiers forming an overall height of 12 metres. Rectangular in plan it measures 35 metres east-west by 28 metres north-south at the base and 30 by 23 on the upper platform. The axes are marked by steep, wide stairways framed by powerful side walls that rise in six steps - two for each tier - and are embellished with lions. Small elephants, standing on ornate sandstone bases, mark the corners.

The plainly moulded tiers are narrow and inaccessible, appearing almost pelagic under their thin sandstone capping. This forms a low, narrow gallery with balustered windows around the perimeter, its corners simply marked by small pavilions. The towered passageways of the gopuras are flanked by two wings.

We can see here the first attempt - albeit quite restrained - of a continuous vaulted gallery in sandstone surrounding a terrace, which, together with the detail of the ornamentation, allows one to place it in time from the late 10th century to the early 11th.

The visitor, having climbed the pyramid by its western stairway - the only one that is practically manageable - should notice the quite particular construction of the ovoid vaults of these small one-by-two metre galleries. Rather than having been made in two curved half vaults they are instead topped by a capping stone, whose underside is simply hollowed to suit.

The upper terrace forms an inner courtyard from where one gets a superb view over the neighbouring temple of the Baphuon. One can still distinguish the original base outline of a rectangular building and, set on a 2m.50 laterite plinth, the ruined remains of a cruciform sanctuary - in laterite and sandstone - with four vestibules opening to the four cardinal points. The upper sections have completely disappeared. This structure is not in keeping, and must have been the result of some alteration - no doubt replacing, in the mean time, Tcheou Ta-Kouan's "*golden tower*" that probably had its superstructure constructed in light-weight materials.

It seems that some original form of Phimeanakas existed already during the reign of Yasovarman, since an inscription dated 910 engraved on the jamb of the eastern opening of the present sanctuary describes the setting of a statue of Vishnou-Krishna, invoked under the vocable of Trailokyanatha.

This seems quite reasonable, since Phimeanakas aligns with the axial northern avenue of Phnom Bakheng - Yasovarman's masterpiece - and so explains its somewhat curious location within the present royal enclosure, constructed later and with its principal entrance on the east side considerably offset with respect to the temple. This is not, however, the opinion of Louis Finot, who saw in the inscribed door jamb of Phimeanakas just re-used stones that had simply been transferred here from one of the sanctuaries at Phnom Bakheng when this latter became redundant.

Leaving the temple by the south through a breach formed in the enclosure wall, one can gain access straight to the eastern entrance of the Baphuon - at the foot of the monument - and skirt its north-east corner by a footpath. But it is preferable to leave the royal enclosure by its eastern gopura. In so doing one will see, to the right, an elegant cruciform sandstone terrace with a surrounding cornice supported on columns - a later construction since it is built on filled ground - and then, lining the length of the north-south wall that separates the royal enclosure from the entrance courtyard, the remains of four pavilions in brick, laterite and sandstone, opening to the west and badly ruined, which are probably older - and finally, in the south-east corner of the enclosure, two sandstone structures of a later period. The more imposing of these has two entrances, windows to the south and a large vault with an undulating profile similar to both the "*library*" type of buildings and the shelters for pilgrims.

The single eastern gopura - constituting the principal entrance to the palace behind the central stairway of the Terrace of the Elephants - is grander than those on the north and south sides since it has two lateral passageways. Except for the central part forming a tower, it is vaulted in brick and is noteworthy for the purity of its proportions, the elegance of its internal cornice and the quality of its colonnettes and lintels - which have a head of Kala as the central motif. The inscriptions on the door jambs, dating from 1011 during the reign of Suryavarman I, reproduce the fidelity oaths of the dignitaries of the kingdom. The text is very close to that which is still in use today.

The Baphuon adjoins the southern enclosure of the Royal Palace.¹⁵ Its outer eastern gopura lies on the same longitudinal axis as the Elephant Terrace, which also aligns with the central tower of the Bayon, located just to the south. The two temples differ in age and are not, however, related, but rather juxtaposed in an apparently aimless manner that suggests no ancient connection. On its three other sides the temple is surrounded by a moulded enclosure wall, constructed unusually in sandstone which, to the north, becomes a retaining wall since the embankment has been filled. The dimensions of this rectangle are 425 metres by 125.

Measuring 120 metres east-west by 100 metres north-south at its base, the temple-mountain of the Baphuon stands between the royal palace enclosure and the earth embankment which, bordering to the south, probably constituted the north bank of the moat surrounding the capital of Yasovarman, centred on Phnom Bakheng during the ninth century. Its considerable size would make it without doubt one of the more imposing of the Angkor monuments - were it located on a less restricted site. This is *"the Copper Tower higher even than the Golden Tower (the Bayon) - a truly astonishing spectacle"* described by Tcheou Ta-Kouan at the end of the 13th century.

The Inscriptions of Lovek and Prah Ngok, found at the very foot of the Baphuon, enabled Mr Cœdes to identify this as the *"golden mountain"* (svarnadri) *"an ornament of the three worlds"* erected by Udayadityavarman II at the centre of his capital, and where, in a temple of gold, there stood a Shiva linga.

Before its clearing, the Baphuon was but a vegetation covered mound that had suffered destruction by both natural and human forces. It appears today as a collection of crumbling structures, carried on powerful foundations, from which the gopuras emerge at mid height with their remarkably preserved sculpted walls and bas-reliefs. It is the first realisation in Angkor of a building with concentric stone galleries enclosing a central tower - formed of an artificial earth mound retained by rough laterite walls clad in sandstone. Subsidence caused by water action has been unavoidable, despite some precautionary drainage.

The monumental three-part entrance, bordering the royal square, is composed of cruciform gopuras joined by galleries, all set on a decorated base platform, and is a precursor of the western entrance to Angkor Wat. Three lingas were found at the fourth enclosure on leaving the centre of the monument, where only some wall bases and dangerously leaning porticoes remain - one in each passage.

Baphuon

Date	middle of 11th century
King	Udayadityavarman II
Cult	Brahmanic (Shiva)
Clearing	by Commaille from 1908 to 1914
	Protective works
	by H. Marchal, 1916 -1918

There is then a sandstone causeway - about 200 metres long - formed as a sort of bridge with long paving stones laid on three lines of short columns, followed - perhaps as a result of some miscalculation - by a 5.5 metre wide dike, formed as an embankment between two lateral walls.

At about two thirds of the way along this causeway, a badly ruined cruciform pavilion, which must have been decorated with bas-reliefs, intersects the pathway. Two terraces extend to the north and south, the latter of which leads to a 37 by 28 metre pool surrounded by sandstone steps.

The temple itself is formed as a high, five tiered pyramid in sandstone which, in contrast to those of the 9th and 10th centuries, is rectangular in plan rather than square - with the superimposed upper tiers not decreasing but practically constant in height, almost certainly so that the view of the top was not obscured by the galleries. These galleries surround the first, third and the fifth tiers. The top terrace is about twenty metres above ground level. The base walls, though powerfully moulded, are not sculpted.

The outer gallery of the third enclosure has almost entirely disappeared, its materials having been used relatively recently to construct the outline of an enormous and almost shapeless reclining Buddha, on the western face of the upper levels, from a pile of blocks. Fortunately the gopura with bas-reliefs situated at mid height has simply been incorporated into this masonry without being demolished. The corner towers have been rased, as have almost all of the north and west gopuras.

Entering the monument by the eastern gopura, where three passageways are served by steep stairs, one can see, over the connecting door between the central section and the north wing, evidence of a practice peculiar to this period of Khmer art and which often caused structural failure; - that of cutting a channel in the sandstone lintel in order to set in a secondary wooden beam, whose time-worn remains are still visible.

This gopura is larger than the three others of this entrance, having a central tower and doubled wings with barrel-formed vaults. The façades are richly ornate with foliated scrolls, with devatas, with small animals treated with much vitality and simplicity, and with a pattern of lotus flowers set in squares - a decorative motif "*in tapestry*" found already at Banteay Srei.

In the large surrounding courtyard one can see, in the north-east corner, the result of a recent collapse. Continuing past the remains of two cruciform "*library*" type buildings with four vestibules - once linked to one another by a narrow walkway raised on columns similar to those at the second level of Angkor Wat, and which one can find again, though less developed, on the western side - one reaches the south gopura. This is in a better state of preservation, and has a decoration, as before, of foliated scrolls, flowers and animals and of charming "*hipped*" devatas. There is also, in an unusually small panel, an ascetic who seems deliberately to depart from the austerity of his normal life.

Concrete steps alleviate the southern stairs where the treads, richly ornate and much worn - as on the other sides - are of a difficult height to negotiate and climb, there being no intermediate landing between the tiers.

The second level has its enclosure of narrow galleries almost intact, with windows on the two sides walled in and decorated with balusters to the exterior. The vaulted roof, in contrast to that of Phimeanakas, has a central joint, and the piers are treated decoratively as pilasters.

The corner towers have disappeared except for some remnants of wall supported by props in the south-east corner. The gopuras have a central tower with two upper tiers and three wings - the walls of which are sculpted in remarkable bas-reliefs that are worth a close look (see the following description). The lotus bud crown of the south gopura is almost preserved in

its entirety, and its purity of line makes it one of the best examples of this type of motif to be found throughout the various periods of Khmer art.

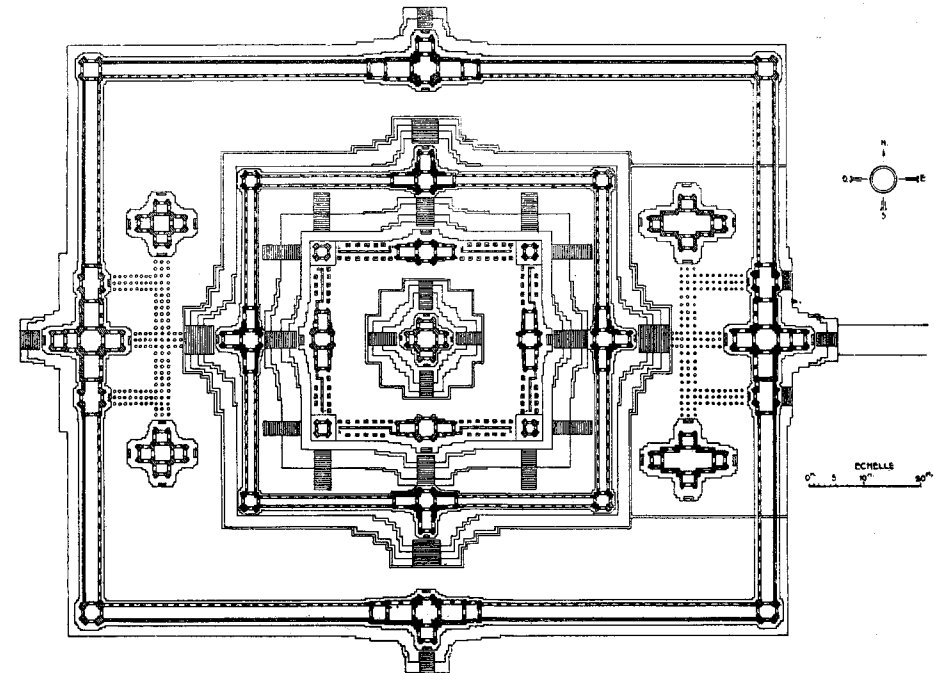
The proximity of the following tier makes the internal courtyard of the second level more of a narrow corridor that is further reduced by the presence, on each side, of the three access stairs to the third level, which again climb the height of two tiers. To avoid the steep steps one can take, just to the west of the southern gopura, an easier stairway, amongst the rubble of the south-west corner of the pyramid's upper tier.

The top platform, of 42 by 36 metres, has suffered a number of slides, and there now only remains a small part of the gopuras with their central tower and two wings - their walls beautifully sculpted with a decoration animated with figurines. Here, a remaining part of a tower in the north-east corner and some bases of wall and gallery pillars give the only indication of the layout. These galleries have the peculiarity of being divided in two along their longitudinal axis by a partition pierced by balustered windows - a unique arrangement that must have given the illusion of a gallery on pillars, which was a formula still unknown at that time.

The view - to the eastern access causeway, - to Phnom Bakheng to the south, to the Phimeanakas on the same axis to the north and out over the forest of Angkor - is particularly pleasant. Nonetheless, one should not forget to admire the architectural qualities of the base platform of the central sanctuary, whose superstructure must have been constructed in light-weight materials and golden in colour in accordance with descriptions of the time.

This base platform is doubled - one square in plan enclosing another that is cruciform - with each having an ornamentation of a quality that puts them with the very best of the classical art. The existence of this hidden base platform was perhaps caused by an alteration in the setting-out that was designed to increase the volume of the central tower - or else - as we have

seen at the Bayon - in order perhaps to emphasise in symbolic form the character of the temple-mountain as mount Meru, which continues under the ground in equal proportion to its elevation above.



THE BAS-RELIEFS.¹⁶

"At the Baphuon", Mr Cœdes tells us, "the small scenes which decorate the four entrances to the internal gallery are drawn from the same sources as are those at Angkor Wat. If we are looking for scenes from the Ramayana, for example, then we can find them here on the four doors to the east with scenes from the Mahabharata, and to the south with scenes from the legend of Krishna. The order in which the tableaux are placed apparently corresponds neither to the pradakshina nor to the prasavya, but rather to a purely decorative intention."

The bas-reliefs here follow the first attempt at a narrative scene sculpted at Bakong towards the end of the 9th century, followed thereafter by isolated scenes on lintels and frontons. They are arranged in superposed panels, reading generally from bottom to top like the registers and are, as such, small pictures, skilfully treated with a naïve realism, full of charm and relating to various episodes of everyday life. The composition is always spacious and the separate figures minutely detailed.

SOUTH GOPURA, SOUTH SIDE.

On the western part can be seen - besides various scenes of daily life including a tiger chasing a hermit who is seeking refuge up a tree, a hunter shooting a bird with a blow-pipe, fighting bulls, ascetics in prayer and a woman playing with a child, - scenes from the childhood of Krishna; - the exchange with another child that was to save the life of the young god, the children's slaughter, then Krishna tearing naga in two and wrestling with human-faced bulls.

To the east are scenes from the life of the ascetics, one of whom carries a human head shot by an arrow that apparently belongs to the person in prayer directly below - with scenes of wrestling between animals and scenes of single-armed combat.

SOUTH GOPURA, NORTH SIDE.

To the east, on the lower part, are scenes from the life of the ascetics, - one is stirring the contents of a jar, another suffers from indigestion while a further seems to be ill or dying. Above are scenes from the Ramayana showing combat between monkeys and giants, and a meeting between Hanuman and Sita who sit under an asoka tree. Another higher panel describes the life of Vishnou - twice shown with his usual attributes.

To the west - where the wall is truncated - are forest scenes with ascetics, men and animals and scenes of single-armed combat.

EAST GOPURA, EAST SIDE

To the south are scenes from the Ramayana - the ordeal of Sita, suffering to prove her purity. One can see the young princess sitting on Rama's knee - then Sita on her pyre, her hands clasped above her head and Agni the god of fire at her side - then Mahesvara on his bull. Above are Rama and Sita on their respective thrones. Next is an episode from the Mahabharata - the duel between Arjuna and Shiva over a wild boar - a form taken by the rakshasa, Muka.

To the north is another scene from the Mahabharata - which one can find again represented on the southern section of the western gallery at Angkor Wat - but outlined here in the single action of some of the main actors; - above a group of musicians is the chief of the Pandavas going to battle with the Kauravas - then his duel against their chief, Bhishma, and the death of the latter - whom one can see first falling from his chariot and then lying dead, lanced with arrows. Note how the figures are out of scale, larger than their horses - with the body of the vanquished too large for the palace that shelters him.

Beside are other parts of the battle, with some small scenes including one in which a man undresses a woman by unfurling her "sarong".

EAST GOPURA, WEST SIDE.

To the north is the capture of a wild elephant with the help of some tame elephants - then a parade of chariots and servants and scenes from the life of ascetics with, to the left, an archer shooting an arrow at a woman. Further is wrestling between men, monkeys and an elephant. To the south, above a person hunting a tiger, is a duel over a woman, or a scene of decapitation. To the right, men struggle with animals. There are ascetics in the forest, women and archers and a king enthroned amongst his wives.

NORTH GOPURA, NORTH SIDE.

To the east are scenes from the Ramayana (the battle of Lanka); - Rama on his horse-drawn chariot, Ravana with multi heads and arms drawn by monsters with human heads - Ravana's fight against the monkeys Hanuman and Nila - Sugriva against a chief Rakshasa - and Ravana against Rama carried by Hanuman. Sita, captive in the palace of Ravana, meets Hanuman the monkey in the grove of asoka trees, returning the ring to him that is to prove the success of his mission, while along the first window of the gallery are some charming animal motifs.

To the west, beside similar motifs of animals and figurines, is once again the battle of Lanka; - one of the sons of Ravana, Indrajit, shooting Rama and his brother Lakshmana with magic arrows which turn into snakes and encoil them both while the monkeys, their allies, lament. Garuda swoops from the sky to free them, healing their wounds by touching them, - Rama, mounted on the chariot Pushpaka, harnessed with "Hamsas" (sacred geese), returns to Ayodhya after having taken leave of the monkeys, - still further, under two elephants in confrontation and an ascetic, churning, is the alliance of Rama and Lakshmana with the monkey Sugriva who, exiled by his brother Valin to mount Mayala, is lamenting. Next is the wrestling between the two brothers and the defeat of Valin, thanks to the intervention of Rama, who unashamedly shoots him in the back with an arrow.

NORTH GOPURA, SOUTH SIDE.

To the east are bulls and horses in confrontation, and then again the alliance of Rama and Lakshmana with Sugriva. To the west are scenes of wrestling between men and animals - in one corner is Sita in the asoka grove.

WEST GOPURA, WEST SIDE.

To the north, single-armed combat and animals, then, above musicians, a warrior on an elephant preceded by an archer - and another on his chariot crossing a flight of arrows. To the south, again above musicians, is a person whirling an elephant which he holds by a leg, and, above, an airborne palace carried by "Hamsas", where a god with three heads and four arms sits throned. Then, more scenes of single combat - in a chariot and in front of a palace - and Arjuna receiving weapons from the hands of Shiva.

WEST GOPURA, EAST SIDE.

To the north are scenes of wrestling and single-armed combat interspersed with animals. To the south one can see a mixture of men and monkeys with, in the centre of the panel, a very large dying person carried by a very small elephant. Beyond; - a wild boar fight, - an archer shooting an arrow at a monster with a human head - and two remarkable horses in confrontation.

Prasats Suor Prat

"The towers of the tight-rope dancers"

The Prasats Suor Prat are the twelve rugged looking towers in laterite and sandstone which line the eastern side of the royal square in Angkor Thom and the start of the road leading to the Victory Gate, on either side of which they are symmetrically arranged.

Their function remains unknown, since their romantic name, which corresponds to the local belief that they were used to support a high wire stretched between them for acrobatics during certain festivals, is probably irrelevant. The explanation of their use given by Tcheou Ta-Kouan, though picturesque, is also hardly adequate:- *"In front of the palace there are twelve small stone towers. When two men dispute over some unknown matter, each of the contestants is forced to sit in one of them while the relatives stand watch at the base. After three or four days, he who is wrong shows it by suffering some illness - ulcers, or catarrh, or malignant fever - while the other remains in perfect health. Thus right or wrong is determined by what is called 'divine judgement'..."*

The character of these towers is all the more puzzling since, with balustered windows on three of their sides, they do not correspond to the usual form of sanctuary, even though several statues were found there during clearing works. Their exact use remains therefore a mystery.

Date	late 12th century
King	Jayavarman VII
Cult	Brahmanic (Vishnou)
Clearing	by Mr Commaille in 1908 and Mr H. Marchal 1919-20 Restoration of prasat no.4 1955 - 6

Square in plan, they were built in laterite, crudely finished inside and have two upper tiers, the higher of which is covered in a barrel-formed vault and has two gable ends. Only the frames of the openings, the lintels and the frontons are in sandstone, though they remain in rough form with only some of the frontons having the sketched outlines of nagas' curves mounted on flaming leaves and foliated scrolls decorated with the small lions which are typical of the 12th century. There is no trace of any plaster, and the collection gives the impression of being unfinished, which is only typical of later buildings. Antefixes sculpted with ascetics or nagas - which are not so typical - have been found in several places. The entrance doors, opening towards the royal terrace and the road to the Victory Gate and situated at a lower level than the interior of the towers, have been adjusted during the forming of a kind of raised terrace which partially blocked them for the length of the square. This embankment must have been formed at a later date.

On either side of the road leading to the Victory Gate, in a corner defined by the Prasats Suor Prat, is a large pool of 80 metres by 60 bordered with steps. Behind the southern is a well-preserved Buddhist terrace, modified to take the large statue of the *"Buddha-King"*, discovered by Mr Trouvé in 1933 down the central well of the Bayon.

Just behind the Prasats Suor Prat towers and nearly opposite the extreme northern and southern limits of the Elephant Terrace, running parallel to the long side of the royal square, are two imposing sandstone buildings whose central core, preceded by vestibules to the east and west, is flanked by galleries and then smaller annexes at a lower level. These are the north and south Kleang, the name of which, “storeroom”, does no justice to the monumental character of the buildings, to the rich perfection of their decoration or to the care taken in their construction. Of an unusual width - 4m.20 for the south Kleang and 4m.70 for the north Kleang - each rather gives the impression of being some kind of palace, destined perhaps for the reception of foreign princes or of visiting dignitaries.

If at first sight the two Kleang appear similar, they are in fact noticeably different, - the southern, remaining unfinished, seems later than the northern - though both date from the period between Pre Rup and the Baphuon (late 10th - middle of 11th century) being of the same period as the gopuras of the royal enclosure. Their decoration is slightly later than the style of Banteay Srei. Two inscriptions in the north Kleang date from Suryavarman I (1002 - 1049) while two others from the south Kleang reproduce the formula of the oath of servants, inscribed during the reign of the same king (1011) on the door jambs of the east gopura of the Royal Palace.

SOUTH KLEANG

Set on a plain moulded base platform, the 0m.90 thick walls are decorated at the base and at the cornice and are entirely of sandstone - pierced on the two main sides by large square windows, each with seven balusters. The east and west porticoes have four windows - their wooden and tiled roofs have completely disappeared. The large internal gallery, as a single space, extends overall for 45m, with, on the axis, two projections corresponding to the porticoes. Their only decoration is a frieze under the cornice. The two small annexes at either end, at a lower level, are finished externally with a false door and open to the west side with a window, while to the east a small door linked them to a system of partial galleries, at least in light-weight materials, enclosing an internal rectangular courtyard of about 50 metres by 30, itself divided into two by another north-south gallery. Virtually nothing remains of this arrangement.

NORTH KLEANG

Preceded to the west by a cruciform terrace of a late period, built on filled ground and with a balustrade in nagas of various styles, the north Kleang is the more imposing building and the more carefully executed - its plinth has its entire surface sculpted with a classic profile of opposing diamonds, with a central

the Kleang

“The storerooms”

Date	late 10th century - beginning of 11th century
King	Jayavarman V (posthumous name: Paramaviraloka) or Suryavarman I (posthumous name: Paramanirvanapada)
Clearing	by Commaille in 1908 and H. Marchal from 1919 to 1920

band of foliated scrolls which is one of the finest in Khmer art. Its colonnettes have four large bands instead of the eight of the south Kleang - which so dates them earlier - and are therefore more sturdy, while the lintels and frontons, with the head of Kala set on a background decoration of large vegetal scrolls, show characteristics of the 10th - 11th centuries.

The walls are also thicker - 1m.50 - and support within the bare interior a false upper storey which, due to the bad practice of supporting the stonework above the deep reveal of the openings with doubled wooden beams, has inevitably collapsed. Sandstone was only used as an external face to the laterite blockwork.

In the centre, at a later date, the long gallery with its tiled roof was split by a masonry construction forming a tower, which has today mostly crumbled. This divided it into a square middle room of 4m.50 flanked by two others of 18m.70 by 4m.70. In the passage one can still see the doubled wooden beams in place above the connecting doorways. Two remarkable bronze statuettes were found in these galleries - one of Vishnou, the other of Lokesvara.

Towards the east extends the same arrangement of surrounding galleries that one finds at the south Kleang, but here it was possible to rebuild some elements of the external walls, with their cornice and long horizontal windows, after having found them on the ground. The centre of the courtyard is marked by a small cruciform sanctuary which approaches the style of Angkor Wat. Its sculpted base platform, of which only the main level remains, must have been connected to the galleries by light-weight passages forming a cross. The 2m.00 by 2m.00 sanctuary chamber is open to the four axes with as many small doors. One can see in the north-east corner of its base a "*somasutra*" - an evacuation channel for lustral water.

THE SMALL MONUMENT TO THE EAST OF THE NORTH KLEANG.

Just to the east, a small group of structures opening to the west has been found to form a complete monument - relating in style to Banteay Srei and slightly predating the Kleang. A laterite wall forms a square of some thirty metres each side, enclosing the remains of a 2m.10 square prasat that has three false doors, two "*library*" type buildings and a miniature cruciform gopura of 1m.80 by 2m.00. In front, one of the lions marking the entrance still stands. Of the sanctuary, only the bases of the corner piers remain - decorated with devatas in their niches which are similar to, but slightly larger than those at Banteay Srei. The miniature sanctuary towers from the upper corners are arranged on the ground - as are the frontons of the two "*libraries*". Within the southern library, eleven small lingas of 0m.47 in height were found curiously aligned in three rows.

One refers, in the name Prah Pithu, to a collection of five small temples and terraces situated at the extreme north of the royal square on the east side, just in front of Tep Pranam. Arranged without any apparent order they are unfortunately badly ruined, but their high base platforms and that which remains of their principal levels - their superstructures having disappeared - reveals the excellent quality of their ornamentation and places them in the best period of classic art, - that of Angkor Wat (the first half of the 12th century).

From the road, one reaches THE FIRST TEMPLE by means of an elegant cruciform terrace on two levels, whose corbelled edges are supported by channelled columns and surmounted by balustrades with particularly fine, sweeping nagas - comparable to those preceding the monument of Prah Palilay.

The sandstone boundary wall, with its coping curiously treated in imitation of gallery vaults, then encloses an area of 45 metres by 40. It is intersected to the east and west by small gopuras with a central core and two wings, remaining rough in form.

The sanctuary, set high on an ornate three-tiered base platform - each with a central band and which reach six metres overall - has four axial stairs with a single landing on the first tier. It encloses a three metre square sanctuary chamber, open on its four sides to as many two windowed vestibules, that contains a large one metre linga on its pedestal.

The walls are truncated at the top of the niches for devatas, which are particularly pleasing - despite their feet being represented in profile - and surrounded by bands of decoration enhanced with dancing figurines. It is notable that their skirts are decorated with small flowers, a motif that became general in the style of the Bayon. The lintel of the western opening shows a highly stylised depiction of the scene from the churning of the Ocean, while the colonnettes are densely ornate and sixteen sided, making them seem almost cylindrical.

The SECOND TEMPLE is set on the same axis as the first and placed in an enclosure of 35 metres by 28, defined by a sandstone wall constructed on a moulded base. There are no gopuras but only simple doors framed with rough pilasters.

Prah Pithu

<i>Date</i>	<i>early 12th century</i>
<i>Cult</i>	<i>Brahmanic except for one Buddhist sanctuary</i>
<i>Clearing</i>	<i>by Commaile in 1908 and H. Marchal from 1918 to 1920</i>

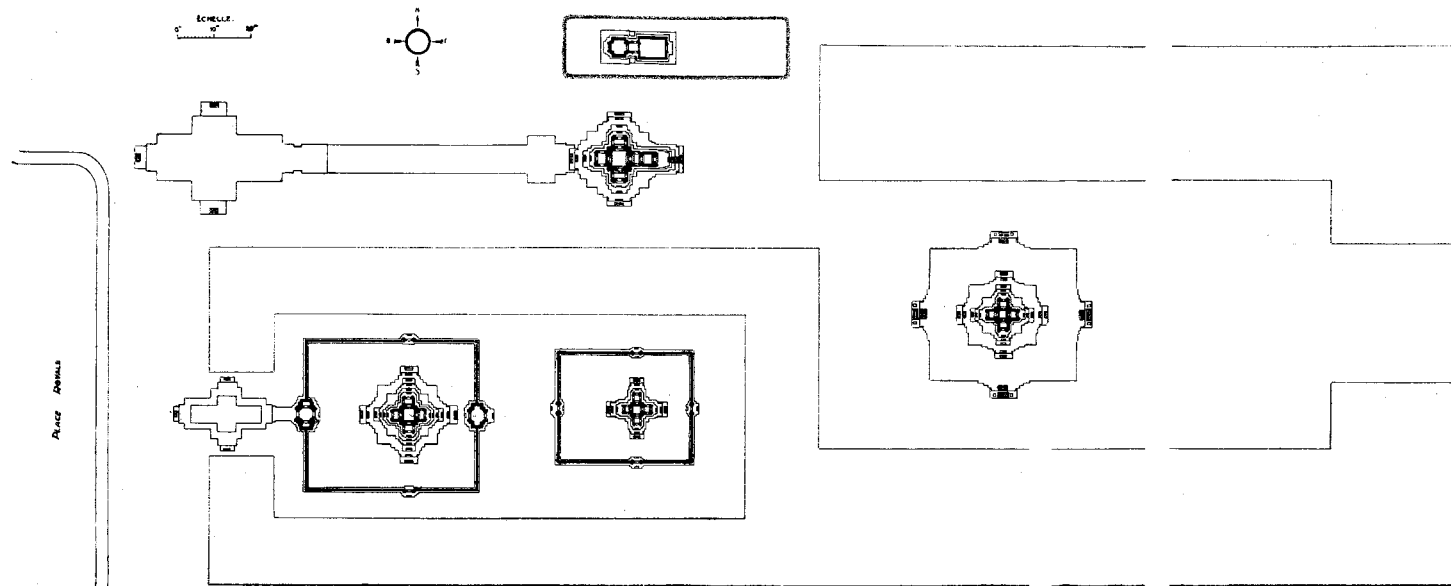


The sanctuary, presenting the same characteristics in plan as the first but reduced in dimension, has but a single sanctuary chamber of two metres. The walls have been entirely sculpted, and the devatas - small in stature and with their feet forwards - are replaced on either side of the entrances with dvarapalas. Small scenes with figures have been sculpted in blind arches at the base of the pilasters - as was customary at the time of Angkor Wat.

The colonnettes remain unfinished, as does the southern lintel showing Krishna standing on a head of Kala. The northern lintel is dedicated to the churning of the Ocean, and the western to the "*Trimurti*" or Brahmanic Trinity - mounted again on a head of Kala is Shiva with multiple arms dancing between Vishnou and Brahma.

Crossing an ancient moat, one reaches the THIRD TEMPLE, located behind the two others and off axis by thirty metres towards the north. Conceived again according to the same plan, it is set on a terrace of some 40 metres in width by four in height, with moulded retaining walls breached by stairways embellished with lions.

The two storey sanctuary on its moulded base platform is quite plain, with no decoration and blind windows with balusters. Remaining unfinished it seems to be of a later period, and must have been Buddhist. Within the 2m.20 high sanctuary chamber runs a double frieze of Buddhas of a late period - with flaming "*ushnisha*" - and on its eastern lintel are sculpted three other representations of the Sage surrounded by figures in prayer, all of which are probably later than the architecture. The remains of other more interesting frontons - including a remarkable "*Cutting of the Hair*", which is now in the Bayon storeroom - have also been found in the vicinity.



Continuing towards the east after having skirted the moulded laterite wall of a Buddhist terrace - surrounded by steles or "semas" defining the sacred area and bordered by some remains of a balustrade with nagas - one comes to an ancient "srah" (pool) into which descends a stairway guarded by two small elephants sculpted in the round.

Retracing one's steps, one finds, to the north of the second temple, a **FOURTH TEMPLE**, distinguished from the others by the absence of any enclosure and the existence, to the east, of a double vestibule accentuating its orientation. Here, the more imposing square sanctuary chamber (3m.80 each side) was set on a base and a sculpted double plinth, sheltering a large 1m.50 linga whose sixteen-holed sacred deposit stone has also been found. Externally the mural decoration has only been started, but one can recognise the principal characteristics of the Angkor Wat style - also evident in the ornamentation of the pilasters, with elements in the form of a lyre.

Finally, again further to the north and raised on a simple earth mound, is a **FIFTH TEMPLE** which, differing from the others, appears to be placed in time between Angkor Wat and the Bayon. It is composed of two main buildings linked by a vestibule. The sanctuary, to the west, is closed to the west with a false door. The pilasters are ornate with foliated scrolls finishing in the heads of birds. The 3m.00 by 3m.50 sanctuary chamber is formed as three false aisles and encloses a linga of 0m.95 in height.

The larger chamber has mostly collapsed. Measuring 7 metres by 8, on its western side one can still see the two half frontons that flanked the adjoining vestibule. To the north, the victory of Krishna mounted on Garuda on the asura Bana - to the south, the "*Three Strides of Vishnou*". The dedication of this temple, which in some ways resembles the buildings for the shelter of pilgrims to be found at the entrance of various other monuments, remains a mystery.

One regains the westwards path by skirting a charming pool to the north - always full of water and reminiscent of some rural French scene - and then a cruciform terrace bordered, like that on arrival, by colonnettes.



Access to this temple is gained along a 250m forest track leading south from a point 900 metres east of the royal square in Angkor Thom, on the road to the Victory gate.

Its principal interest lies in the fact that it is the last of the Angkor monuments to have been dated with any precision - for a four sided inscribed stele places it towards the end of the 13th century, with some information on the period which followed the death of Jayavarman VII. It also mentions that it was dedicated to deified figures - the Brahman Mangalartha, assimilated to Vishnou, and his Mother. Its architecture, which shows indication of the re-use of some materials, differs little to that of various examples from the last part of the style of the Bayon.

An isolated sandstone sanctuary, it opens to the east and is raised on a double base plinth. Moulded and decorated this is breached by four projecting axial stairways - the super-structure has disappeared. Cruciform in plan with four avant-corps, it is preceded to the east by a vestibule, with false windows ornate with partially lowered blinds. The false doors are plainly moulded, as are the entrance colonnettes. One of the door jambs is inscribed, and the sanctuary chamber, of 2m.20 across measured at the centre, sheltered the two statues whose pedestal is still in place.

It has been possible to reconstruct most of the frontons on the ground. To the east is "*Vishnou reclining on the serpent Ananta*" - to the south "*the Three Strides of Vishnou to gain the world*" - to the north a "*Shiva dancing*" with four arms, surrounded by apsaras and with his "*sakti*" sitting on his knee, as well as a lintel of the "*Churning of the Sea of Milk*" - and finally, to the west, a lintel showing "*Krishna lifting the mount Govardhana to shelter the shepherds and their flocks*".

Monument 487 (Mangalartha)

Date	late 13th - beginning of the 14th century
Cult	Brahmanic
Clearing	by H. Marchal in 1924



Leaving Angkor Thom by the Victory gate - on the axis of the eastern gopura of the Royal Palace - one finds, in just under 500 metres on either side of the road known as the “*Small Circuit*”, two charming temples of modest proportions - Thommanon to the left and Chau Say Tevoda to the right - whose situation and similarity in plan render them inseparable. Although they have not been dated with any precision, their state of ruin has left sufficient architectural and decorative elements remaining to allow one to place them in time between the Baphuon and Angkor Wat - they appear to be therefore from the best period of classic art - the late 11th or the first half of the 12th century - and represent two variations on a particular theme of composition which is also evident in the central core of Beng Mealea and Banteay Samre, dating from the same period.

THOMMANON is essentially composed of a sanctuary opening to the east onto a rectangular room, with two differing gopuras to the east and west, and a single “*library*” on the southern side.

Crossing the surrounding moat on a causeway, one passes the remains of the base of a laterite wall that enclosed an area of about 45 metres by 60.

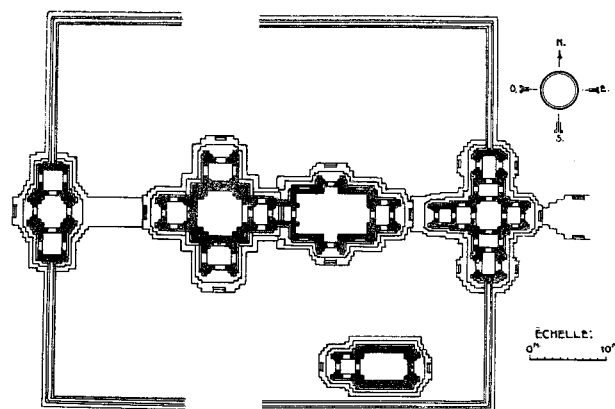
The sanctuary tower has four upper tiers and clearly dominates, as much by the prominence of its finely sculpted 2m.50 high base plinth - which has the foliated scrolls of its central band enlivened with tiny figures - as by the bold proportion of its corner piers. These are entirely decorated and rise uninterrupted to the full height of the frontons. There are four avant-corps, three of which have ornate false doors that are amongst the finest in Angkor. The highly stylised devatas are no less remarkable.

With a change in level, a small vestibule joins the eastern avant-corps to the long room with its false upper storey - whose corbel-vaulted roof ends in a simulation of stop-tiles in the form of garudas instead of the usual lotus petals. Its base is only 1m.80, and the walls, which are more restrained in their decoration, each have a door in addition to the entrance corresponding to the eastern vestibule. The frontons are badly deteriorated. Above the southern door one can see Ravana with multiple heads and arms trying to shake the mountain where Shiva is enthroned and, inside, above the door towards the adjoining vestibule, the death of Valin after his fight with Sugriva. The dimensions of the long room are 3 metres by 6 metres overall. A linga of 0.95m in height was found in the sanctuary chamber, which is 3 metres square. Its eastern lintel shows Vishnou on Garuda.

Thommanon and Chau Say Tevoda

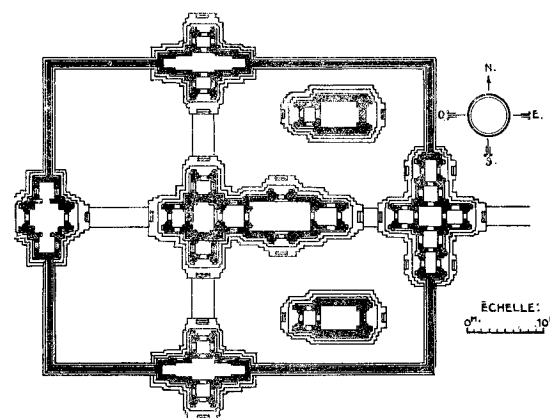
Date	late 11th to first half of the 12th century
Cult	Brahmanic
Clearing	by H. Marchal in 1919 - 1920 and from 1925 to 1927 Anastylosis of Thommanon gopura west from 1961 to 1966 by B.P. Groslier

The eastern gopura is adjacent to the long room with which it is connected by the arrangement of its foundations. It has three independent passageways - the linking openings having been walled in.¹⁷ The central tower measures 3 metres each side internally and has four avant-corps with a door towards the west. Its single reduced upper storey is in the form of a barrel vault. The decoration is quite restrained and the eastern fronton remains unfinished, while on the northern fronton, Vishnou overcomes two of his enemies whom he holds by the hair. On the southern side, another representation of the same god has been reconstructed on the ground.



The single "*library*" is conceived in the same spirit and has, like the long room, a false upper storey with long balustered windows that have been walled in. The base plinth is only 1m.10 high, and the room of 3 metres by 3m.70 overall. It is lined with laterite and opens to the west by a small portico with two windows, while the east end is closed with a false door.

The western gopura is similar but composed only of a central passage and two wings without windows. It differs from the other annexe buildings by the absolute purity of its lines and the care taken in its decoration - which is limited to some superb details shown on a clear background. The west fronton shows Vishnou on Garuda fighting with the Asuras. The pilaster bottoms are decorated with small scenes with figures - a motif that was typical in the period of Angkor Wat. The false tiles which terminate the vaults are in the form of small lions.



CHAU SAY TEVODA is in a more advanced state of ruin, evident by the numerous remarkable fragments of sculpture in the vicinity. This temple has the same plan as Thommanon, but with four gopuras and two "*libraries*".

Of the 40 by 50 metre enclosure wall there remains only the moulded laterite base. The north and south gopuras are cruciform in plan and have been almost entirely rased to their base plinths and sculpted stairways - as

have the “libraries”, opening to the west by a vestibule, of which only the bases of some walls still remain standing.

The central sanctuary has retained only a part of three of its four upper tiers, and the composition is less majestic than Thommanon since the corner piers are cut by the horizontal line of the cornice at the height of the springing of the vault of the long room. The general decoration, which is based on the covering of every available bare space, is also less architectural - though the ornamentation is no less remarkable, with its more animated devatas, - the false doors where foliated scrolls replace the vertical patterned motifs, - the pilasters with horizontal diamonds and fleurons, - and the bands of foliated scrolls enlivened in places with small figures. The junction vestibule and the long room are covered with a motif of rosettes set in squares delicately sculpted in the surface of the stone - like those one can find at Banteay Srei and the Baphuon. The sanctuary chamber forms a square of 2m.80 each side, and the long room, whose vault has collapsed, measures 6m.80 by 3m.60. It is preceded by a door opening that links with the eastern gopura by means of a pathway raised on three rows of columns.

This gopura with three passageways is similar to that of Thommanon, except that the side entrances are no longer independent from the central core. It has received the same decoration as the long room and was linked to the river, which is just to the east, by means of a pavement raised on three rows of octagonal-sectioned supports - that are later than the monument - and a terrace. Of the badly damaged frontons, two at least relate to the Ramayana; - to the south of the lateral passage is the combat between Sugriva and Valin, while to the east of the northern passage are other monkeys. Generally in the monument the Shivaïte and Vishnouïte scenes alternate, which one can see in the various frontons reconstructed on the ground at the south side. Here one can recognise notably Shiva and Uma on Nandin, with other familiar scenes and some apsaras.

All that remains of the western gopura with its central body and two wings is the central section with its single barrel-formed upper tier. As elsewhere in the monument, the presence of double wooden beams has caused the masonry to collapse

A rather gaunt and not particularly impressive Nandin, the mount of Shiva, was found to the south of the northern library.

Spean Thma

“The stone bridge”

Two hundred metres east of Thommanon, just before crossing the river - which here has been diverted from its original course and whose bed has become more deeply cut since Angkorian times - the road passes the remains of a sandstone bridge on the left, built no doubt at a later period if one is to judge by the number of blocks that have been re-used in the composition of its masonry.

The original foundation is now much higher than the level of the water even during times of flooding, indicating the extent to which the hydrology of the region has changed over the centuries since the abandonment of the ancient barrages.

The need to vault in successive corbels in the same manner as in the galleries of the monuments has forced the Khmer to be content with narrow arches between massive piers - which required the doubling of the width of the river as it passed under the bridge in order to obtain sufficient flow. The remains of 14 arches of 1m.10 in width are separated by piers of 1m.60.

The Spean Thma was cleared by H. Marchal in 1920.

the Hospital Chapel

Having passed the Spean Thma and then the bend in the road towards the south (7 kilometre marker stone), there is, on the right, a sanctuary tower similar to Ta Prohm Kel (in front of Angkor Wat). The discovery of a stele reproducing the well-known text of the edict of Jayavarman VII relating to hospitals confirmed its identification as the chapel of one of the 102 establishments founded by the king and mentioned in the inscription of Ta Prohm.

Passing the remains of the cruciform gopura with its eastern door and two small wings - in laterite and sandstone - one reaches the foot of the prasat. This is preceded by a pavement of about twenty metres and is practically complete, with four upper tiers, though it stands a little precariously. It is a cruciform building with three false doors, opening to the east by a two-windowed vestibule and enclosing a square sanctuary chamber of 2m.00 each side. The decoration, on a base of foliated scrolls, is very poor, - the devatas are quite mediocre, and on the frontons the image of the Buddha has been defaced.

In front of the door is an unusual pedestal with vertical bands. Mr Goloubew also noted a fronton “where one can distinguish a representation of the bodhisattva Lokeshvara associated with the figure of a patient - apparently suffering from nervous leprosy - of whom an attendant is preparing to massage the hand”.

Date	late 12th century
King	Jayavarman VII (posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)
Cult	Buddhist
Clearing	by H. Marchal in 1920

Skirting Ta Keo by its western and southern boundary, one leaves the small circuit at the crossing corresponding to the south-east corner of the temple to take the *route Batteur* to the left. The simple, massive form of the monument then appears framed by the large trees at the end of the axial causeway. It is quite different in appearance to the other temples constructed so far, since the building remained undecorated. It also distinguishes itself by the unusual emphasis placed on the arrangement of the various horizontal elements of the pyramid in the composition - in elevation, the towers themselves, arranged in a quincunx, appear as the silhouette of a single group, seemingly joined by the projection of their avant-corps.

It is not known why work on this temple - which might have been included with the best - was abandoned just after the start of its ornamentation. Perhaps the successor to the founding king did not want to detract from the religious merit of his predecessor by completing the task and taking credit for himself - or maybe he had some other personal work of his own that was of more interest to him. Whatever the reason, the style and the quality of the partial decoration is sufficient to place the monument in time, and close study undertaken by Madame de Coral-Remusat and Mssrs Goloubew and Coëdes, from differing points of view, has allowed them to place it between the extreme limits of Banteay Srei and the gopuras of the Royal Palace of Angkor Thom. It appears therefore to be from the period between the end of 10th century and the first years of the 11th. The inscriptions engraved on the door jambs of the eastern gopuras, relating to donations made to the temple but not to its foundation, date from 1007.

Ta Keo is a pyramid of five levels reaching a total height of 22m.00 - the first two form the base of two enclosing courtyards, one surrounded by a simple wall and the other by a gallery, while the last three, with their various elements conforming to the usual rule of proportional reduction and so narrow that one can barely walk around them, are but a massive artificial plinth for the quincunx of sanctuaries.

This is the first realisation in sandstone of such a structure - generally dedicated to some deified nobility - after the temple of Bakheng which crowned a natural hill that served as its base. Its construction was consequently far more delicate and has been undertaken with much more care in the systematic cutting and placing of the enormous blocks of stone, whose arrangement, in the absence of any moulding or decoration, remains perfectly clear. The gallery, on the other hand, must be practically contemporaneous with the somewhat restrained sandstone gallery of Phimeanakas - but here one will see that there are no remains of any stone vault. It is probable, to judge by the rubble found during clearing works and the

Ta Keo

*"The ancestor Keo" or
PRASAT KEO
"The crystal tower"*

Date	early 11th century
King	Jayaviravarman
Cult	Brahmanic (Shiva)
Clearing	by H. Marchal in 1920

existence of corbelled brick vaults on the wings of the gopuras - a technique similarly used at Banteay Srei and on the entry pavilions of the Royal Palace - that the galleries at Takeo were themselves also vaulted in brick, rather than in any light-weight structure.

The access to the monument from the east is gained across a moat by means of a paved causeway, preceded by lions in the style of the Bayon and lined with bornes. If one follows its extension to the east for 500 metres to the bank of the eastern baray one comes to a terrace on two levels.

The external enclosure wall forms a rectangle of 120 metres by 100 and is in sandstone on a laterite base. The gopura - all in sandstone and partially sculpted - has three independent passageways and a central tower with reducing upper tiers. Frontons reconstructed on the ground show the style of the purely ornamental decoration. From the courtyard - open to the faithful - the view of the pyramid was entirely masked by the gallery of the next high tier. To the east, on either side of the axis, long rooms of 22 metres by 2m.75 served perhaps to shelter pilgrims. Preceded by a portico and followed by a smaller annexe, each was covered in wood and tiles and illuminated by a series of windows on either side with slender balustrades.

The second terrace dominates the first by 5m.50 in height with an imposing moulded laterite base and four axial sandstone gopuras. It is gained by steps of 0m.40 in height. To the east, the stone has received the beginnings of an ornamentation on the upper elements. The surrounding sandstone gallery, of 80 metres by 75 and 1m.40 in width, has no external openings and is only lit by windows towards the interior - the exterior being decorated with false balustered windows. There remains no trace of vault nor roof covering - only the corner pavilions, which are less prominent, are vaulted in sandstone.

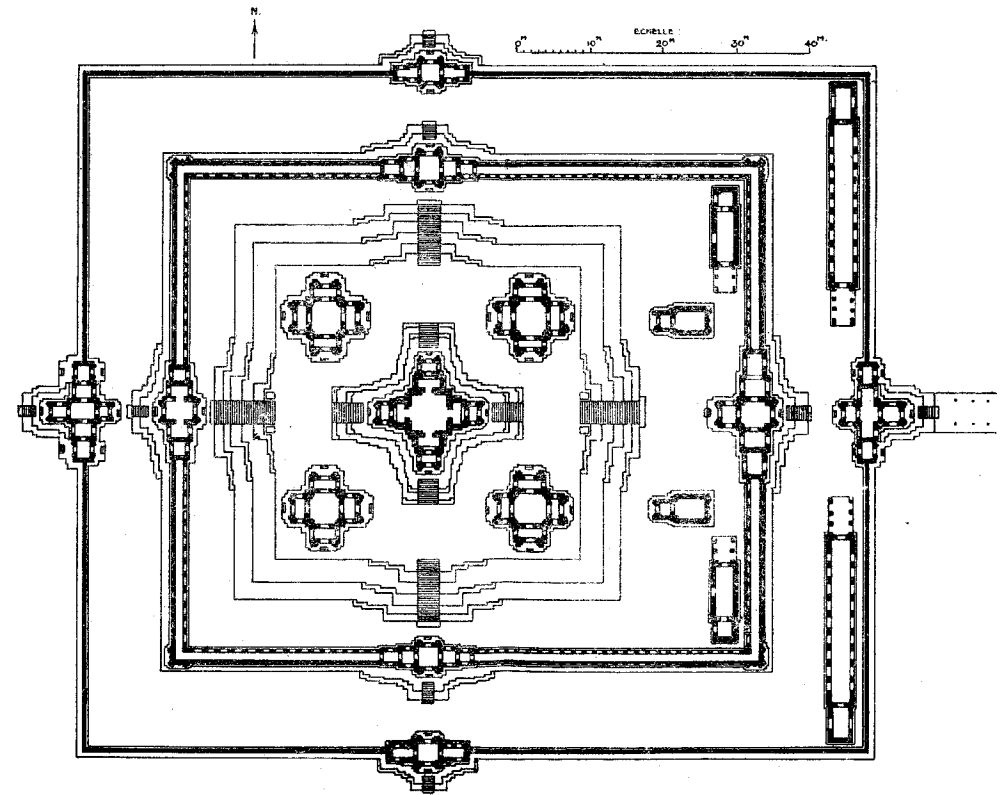


The offsetting of the pyramid's axis towards the west has enabled the placing on the eastern side of two buildings, similar to the long rest rooms on the first terrace, though much less developed and poorly lit, and also of two "*libraries*" which open to the west and have a false upper storey pierced by long horizontal windows. Again there remains neither vault nor roof covering.

From the courtyard, standing in front of the three tiers that form the 14 metre high central pyramid, one is struck with a powerful impression. The stairs are, abnormally, of a constant width and rise in a single flight with steps from 0m.40 to 0m.30 in height, while their retaining walls to either side ascend in six steps. The strong moulding of opposing diamonds with a broad central roll gives a sense of force without detracting from the other elements of the decoration. Though only applied on the eastern side, and there badly damaged, this is remarkable in its composition, sculpted on a base of large flaming scrolls and horizontal diamonds. A rather scrawny Nandin (sacred bull) was found at the foot of the eastern stairway, confirming the Shivaïte destination of the temple.

The upper platform is 47 metres square and almost entirely occupied by the quincunx of towers in their unfinished form. These open to the four cardinal points by means of as many projecting vestibules which are doubled for the central sanctuary. The corner towers are set on a 0m.80 plinth and are clearly dominated by the central tower. This is raised by 4 metres, with the further development of its porticoes and frontons adding to its grandeur. The internal sanctuary chambers measure 4m.00 and 3m.50 each side respectively. They are remarkably constructed and have the inside of their upper tiers carefully faced, with no decoration other than an elegantly sculpted internal cornice. Fragments of pedestals and of lingas have been found both in and around the towers, as have several statues.

Because of its orientation, a visit to Takeo should best be made in the morning, and early so that its abrupt stairs do not appear too daunting.





From Takeo, the visitor who has the time will find in a trip to Ta Nei the pretext for a pleasant walk through the forest. A path to the north continues the *route Batteur* and leads directly in 800 metres - having crossed several mounds and ditches - to the western gopura of the temple, on the western side of the road.

The monument is built 200 metres west of the western dike of the eastern baray, and though it has been left untouched, overall it is relatively well preserved. Its style, from the second half of the twelfth century, is consistent throughout - only the two gopuras (east and west) of the external (or third) enclosure, whose wall has disappeared, would seem to be slightly later than the rest of the monument.

These two small gopuras, in sandstone and partially ruined, are cruciform in plan and covered with a crossing of barrel-formed vaults. Quite crude in construction, with decoration based on foliated scrolls, false windows with blinds and devatas, they relate to the end of the style of the Bayon. A decorative cornice surrounds the interior. On the east side of the eastern gopura - which is joined to the temple by the remains of a terrace and a pavement - one can see a curious fronton in place; - a Lokesvara, standing on a lotus surrounded by apsaras and flying figures, dominates a lower line of other kneeling figures with large bellies who seem to be pleading with him. Are these the sickly who seek healing, or perhaps the damned "rice thieves" who appear on the Hell bas-relief of Angkor Wat? It is difficult to say.

A pavement joined the western gopura to a small sandstone portico which cuts the laterite wall of the second enclosure, most of which has collapsed. Similar porticoes were to be found on the north and south sides, simulating gopuras as the walls themselves simulate galleries. In fact, above one of the doors in the south-east corner (east side) and on the plain wall of the north-west corner (west side) one can still see triangular sandstone frontons which, from the exterior, seemed to abut internal galleries of which there remains no trace. If they ever existed they were probably constructed in light weight materials - the Khmer architects having accustomed us to such tricks. This second enclosure, of 47 metres by 55, was bordered to the north and south by pools.

The temple as such had four gopuras joined by galleries with corner pavilions, a central sanctuary and, in the eastern part of the internal enclosure, a single "*library*" on the southern side - the whole arrangement forming a rectangle of 26 metres by 35. At some time, the eastern gallery was moved out to the wall of the second enclosure, blocking this side of the surrounding courtyard and transforming the original

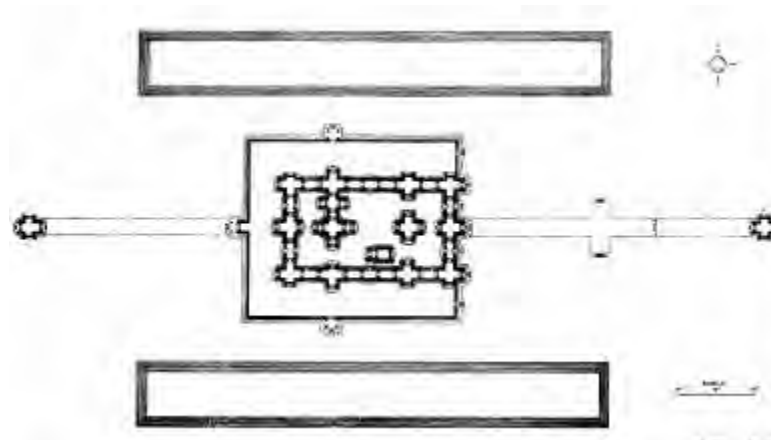
Tanei

Date	late 12th century
King	Jayavarman VII (posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)
Cult	Buddhist

eastern gopura into a second isolated sanctuary within the enclosure - extending it from 35 metres to 46.

The sandstone gopuras form towers with two upper tiers. They are cruciform in plan and crowned with lotuses. The central sanctuary, also forming a cross but additionally with four small vestibules, had four storeys, was open to each side and joined to the north gopura by a passage. Its sanctuary chamber forms a square of 2m.75 each side.

The frontons are for the most part interesting, of reasonable craftsmanship and of Buddhist inspiration. One can see; - on the north side of the southern gopura, - above a line of figures in prayer - a kneeling figure blessing two children in a palace surrounded by apsaras, - on the south side of the northern gopura, an elegant cavalier brandishing a weapon above two lines of figures, - and on the central sanctuary, north side, a person standing in a boat, surrounded by flying figures carrying parasols, making a gesture of benediction.



The surrounding gallery has laterite walls and sandstone vaults with a stone finialed ridge-line. To the east and the west each element forms a secondary passageway, while to the north and south they have simple door openings to the internal courtyard and false doors to the exterior. The sandstone corner pavilions are cruciform in plan with a simple crossing vault, like the extreme eastern gopura which, as an adjustment, has not been treated with a multi-levelled tower like the other gopuras. The laterite and sandstone "library" has mostly crumbled - it opens to the west and is preceded by a vestibule. Generally the false windows have balusters sculpted into them without blinds.

Some lintels on the ground remain intact; - in the western gopura, one on which two figures present offerings above a head of Kala - an image of the Buddha is sculpted on only one of the branch motifs, which is separated into four quarters, - while in the south-west corner pavilion, there are three Buddhas on a head of Kala, one in the centre and two on the lateral motifs.¹⁸

Short inscriptions on the door jambs give the names of the idols set up in the temple.

Note: - the traverse of the monument can be made in totality either from west to east, or from east to west, by sending your driver to wait for you at the gate opposite your entry. The western gate of Ta Prohm is to be found a kilometre south of the crossing leading to Ta Keo.

"Nature," - wrote Aldous Huxley - "if you water and feed it too well with that strong tropical sun and rain, it will lose control..."

Even though the relentless force of the vegetation is the cause of so much damage, the École Française d'Extrême-Orient felt obliged to leave at least one temple in Angkor as an example of the "*natural state*" that so marvelled the early explorers, while also showing by comparison the importance of the effort already achieved in its work to safeguard these ancient stones. It chose Ta Prohm - one of the most imposing and the one which had best merged with the jungle, but not yet to the point of becoming a part of it - as but one specimen typical of a form of Khmer art of which there were already other models. The concession to the general taste for the picturesque could be made, therefore, with not too much reluctance, in order to enable each to give free rein to their own imagination and emotion.

Our work here was first limited to clearing in order to gain access, and then to preventing further ruin by seeking to reconcile the creepers and the roots with the survival of the structure and the architecture. In return, we ask the visitor to submit to the charm of Ta Prohm, to give it longer than just a few minutes and to thrill to it as the mood dictates.

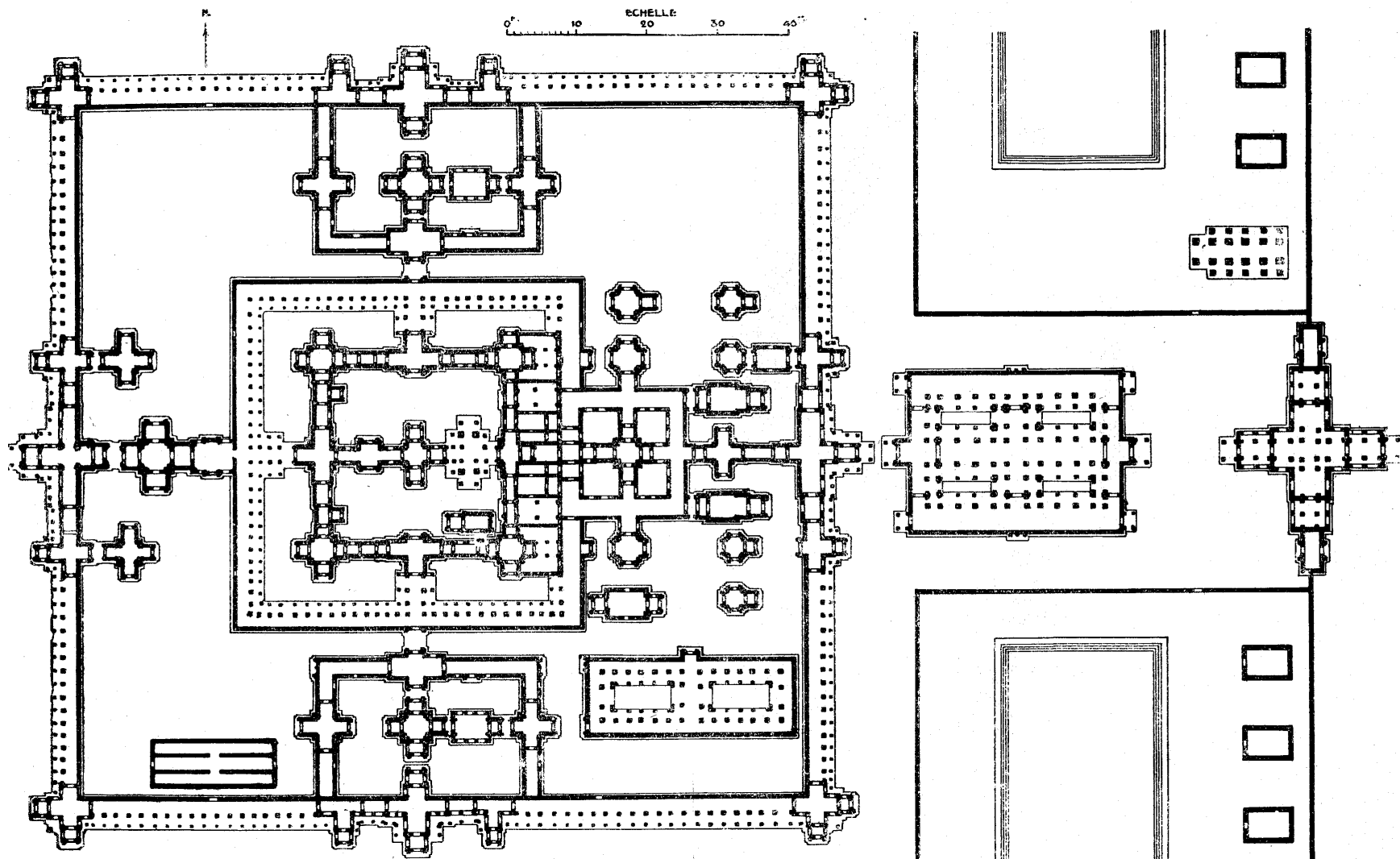
Ta Prohm should be visited either in the afternoon or the early morning, and crossed from west to east according to the itinerary that we have traced on the plan. This precaution will prevent the visitor with limited time from becoming disorientated, due to the relative simplicity of a clearly marked route. In contrast, those who wish to spend several hours exploring the monument will find here the potential for an adventure - but without danger of ever getting lost, since the main axis is clearly defined from place to place by an uninterrupted line of rooms and vestibules, almost always made inaccessible by their collapse but providing nevertheless a good point of reference. We would advise, however, not to wander but with extreme caution in the areas of crumbling vaulted galleries remote from the normally frequented passageways.

Ta Prohm is a Buddhist monastery typical of the last formula of the Khmer temples in which the ensemble, laid out on a single plane, no longer followed the principle of multiple levels, but where the notion

Ta Prohm

"the Brahma ancestor"

Date	<i>middle of 12th to early 13th century (1186)</i>
King	<i>Jayavarman VII (posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)</i>
Cult	<i>Buddhist</i>
Clearing	<i>by H. Marchal in 1920</i>



of elevation was rather expressed by the rising of the towers and predominant central sanctuary from within an arrangement of concentric galleries. Here these number three, and the principal east-west axis, formed by a succession of towers and passages, gives a sort of 'sacred vista' straight to the heart of the monument. The "*horror of the void*", a sentiment particular to the Khmer, has unfortunately favoured the proliferation on this framework of numerous parasitic buildings which, particularly to the east, either enhance or detract without any apparent logic.

The overall site is enclosed by two successive walls, the outer of which measures 600 metres by 1000. It may seem surprising that the temple as such with its three concentric galleries, consisting of all the elements of a grand composition, has been crowded into a meagre square of 100 metres each side which is itself lost in a park of 60 hectares. One should not forget, however, that - if one is to believe the inscription - there were 12,640 people living within the interior of the enclosure, including 18 high priests, 2,740 officiants, 2,232 assistants and 615 dancers...

While for some time all the various temples in the style of the Bayon were attributed to a single king - Jayavarman VII - during his twenty or so years reign, today it seems more likely that he could not, in such a short time, have done more than just transform, extend or complete already existing religious establishments with his mark. A monument as intricate as Ta Prohm, as Mr Groslier observed, was not built in a single throw, and shows traces of numerous alterations and adjustments. Some parts, in terms of style, are quite close to Angkor Wat, while others are to the Bayon - and only a deeper study after clearing the temple would allow one to classify the various elements with any certainty.

The stele of Ta Prohm is inscribed on its four sides and was found in a part of the gallery preceding the eastern gopura of the second enclosure. It gives the date of 1186, later by five years than the accession of Jayavarman

VII, and describes the placing of a statue of the king's mother in the form of Prajnaparamita, the "*Perfection of Wisdom*", considered as "*mother of the Buddhas*", so classifying Ta Prohm in the category of temples consecrated to the glory of deified parents. After a listing of ancestors and the description of a victorious expedition to Champa, it attributes to the prince the setting of 260 statues of divinities, as well as the one of his "*guru*" or spiritual master, and the construction of 39 pinnacled towers, 566 groups of stone habitations, 286 in brick, and 2,702 metres of laterite enclosure wall.

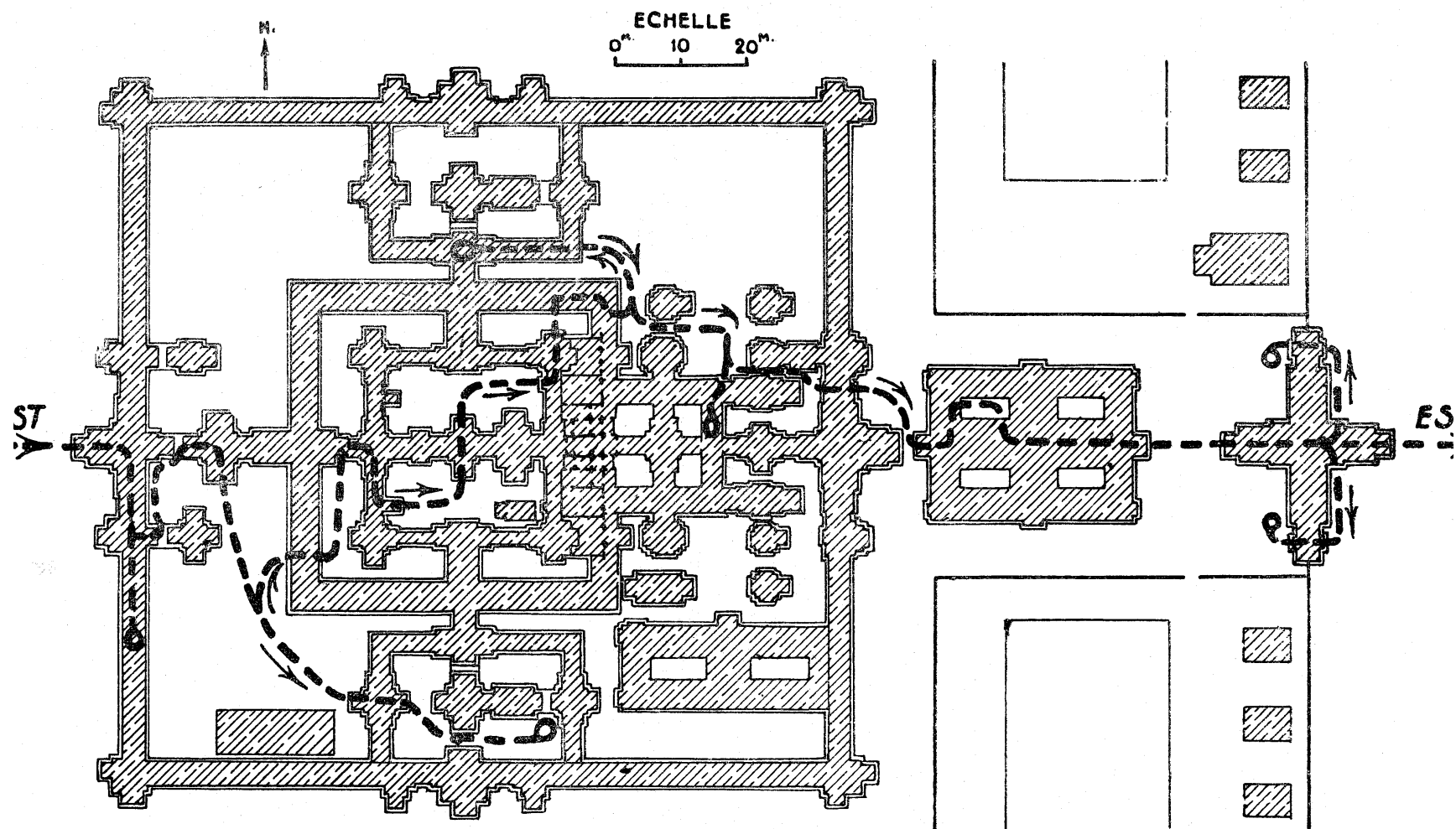
3,140 villages and 79,365 people were involved in the service of the temple, whose particulars the text lists with a great delight for detail - including notably the existence of 5 tons of gold plates, 512 silk beds and 523 parasols. After defining the celebration of certain festivals it then also describes the foundation in the kingdom of 102 hospitals.

DESCRIPTION

Only the western of the four gopuras relating to the external laterite enclosure is well preserved - except for its corner motifs with large garudas which have almost entirely disappeared. It is, clearly in the style of the Bayon, a tower with four faces of Lokesvara on a crown of devatas in prayer, with two smaller wings to either side.

From here, a 350m track through the forest leads to the fourth gopura. This is preceded by a cruciform terrace forming a causeway across the moat, on which are the remains of some lions, dvarapalas and of naga-balustrades in the style of the Bayon with their straddling garudas. The laterite and sandstone building is itself badly ruined, but the areas of wall which remain standing give an indication of its original grandeur.

With the view to the internal courtyard that follows, one is plunged into a surreal world. On every side, in fantastic over-scale, the enormous pale trunks of the silk-cotton trees soar skywards under a shadowy green canopy,



their long spreading skirts trailing the ground and their endless roots coiling more like reptiles than plants. A cruciform paved terrace with naga-balustrades in the style of the Bayon, serving some of them as a base, leads to the next enclosing gallery - which is the third from the centre of the monument.

A single dvarapala armed with a club guards the axial entrance to the gopura. This has three towered passageways and extends considerably in breadth with walls abundantly decorated and sculpted with devatas. Turning to the right, one enters the gallery that has a double row of columns to the exterior and its interior wall, which remains without openings, decorated with large images of the Buddhist trinity sheltered in shallow niches - which have been systematically destroyed during the religious reaction of the 13th century. The light under these vaults - which are admirably preserved and show clearly the technique used by the Khmer of successive corbelling on horizontal beds - is a gentle, serene green.

Returning to the southern lateral entrance of the third gopura, one emerges to the right in a large surrounding courtyard with vegetation-capped towers, and, circulating around the narrow verge formed by the projecting base plinth of the building's east side, one returns to the axis where, from the west, one enters the sanctuary wherein lies a reclining Buddha. Then descending the few steps of its southern stairway, one crosses the right-angled courtyard of the south-west quarter. Through the southern tower, at its eastern extremity, one can penetrate to the internal courtyard of a small ensemble, enclosed by galleries, whose centre is marked by a sanctuary tower preceded by a long room to the east. Opposite is a fine fronton showing a group of divinities holding the hooves of the future Buddha's horse in order to muffle their sound during the *"Grand Departure"*.

Returning to the right-angled courtyard, one enters the small door that pierces the southern part of its western side to pass through the laterite and

sandstone gallery of the second enclosure, with its double row of pillars towards the interior. These are held by the roots of a tree growing on the vault itself which so appears to be suspended - held aloft by its grasping tentacles that hang to the ground like the limbs of a massive, slumbering beast. Turning again towards the axis one enters - by its western door - the western gopura of the first enclosure which one follows to the right towards the south, to then exit by the second opening - which is preceded by a small portico - into the central courtyard of the temple. This measures 24 metres each side.

Here one can see that an excavation carried out in the south-west corner revealed a 1m.10 high sculpted base plinth, completely buried, which must previously have considerably lightened the composition. Here stands a solitary square pillar with a top tenon, supporting no doubt some small light-weight altar, while a *"library"*, opening to the west with a vestibule, is set in the south-east corner. The walls of the gallery are covered in sculpture, like a continuous embroidery, and while the execution is perhaps a little crude, the decor remains nonetheless charming, with its frieze of pendants, its foliated scrolls animated with figurines and its devatas sheltered in niches - their hair-styles, with small flaming discs set in a triangle, are in the style of the Bayon. The vault itself is channelled to represent false tiles and decorated with a repeating vertical motif.

Forming a quincunx with its corner towers strongly accentuated, the shapeless mass of the central sanctuary, which one traverses from the north to the south, seems incongruous in its undecorated form - the stone has been hacked in order to receive a plaster covering, some traces of which remain, that must have been painted or gilded. Internally, the regular small holes suggest the existence of a lining in wood or metal.

Leaving the northern part of this courtyard by its eastern gallery - after having first stopped to admire the finesse of the devatas on its walls - one passes through a door that is eerily framed by the roots of a gigantic tree.



Then turning left into the gloom of the first gallery, one emerges at the north door of its north-eastern corner tower to turn right into the second gallery, with its lower side-aisle on doubled pillars, which one leaves towards the east by a small avant-corps.

Finding oneself in the large courtyard of the third enclosure in front of a lone sanctuary tower, one turns left towards the north to take a look at the small group of structures with a surrounding gallery and central tower which is symmetrical to the one already encountered on the south side of the main axis. Returning towards this axis, one passes between two rows of matching towers - and just by the one which has the west fronton sculpted with a row of feminine figures with naga heads, one squeezes into a tight passageway leading to the stele, which is found in part of a gallery close by, not far from which is a fronton showing, under a palace scene, a figure taming a horse.¹⁹

Emerging from the same narrow opening, one climbs over some fallen blocks to walk through to the third gallery. Here one passes through a vestibule joining the central mass of its gopura to its northern wing. On the main axis a young tree has grown on the frame of the eastern entrance, enveloping each of its jamb stones in its roots with perfect symmetry.

In front, the main entrance opens to a large rectangular enclosure of 20 metres by 30, surrounded by high walls decorated only to the north and south with magnificent false doors. This forms an internal cloister with four small courtyards formed by a crossing of galleries with side-aisles. The composition, situated outside the sacred enclosure and quite different to the other buildings of the monument, perhaps related to the *"Royal Palace"* mentioned in one stanza of the inscription - unless it was reserved for ritual dancing - since apsaras form friezes above the openings.

In the north-west corner one can see a curious freak of nature; - a tree, having dislodged the stone pillars, has substituted instead one of its roots

which supports the whole weight of the galleries architrave. Passing through this unfortunately badly ruined crossing cloister from end to end, one arrives at the imposing eastern gopura of the fourth enclosure. Cruciform in plan with internal pillars, four wings and two lateral passageways, the enormous capping stone at the crossing of the roof vaults has fallen to the ground - where it still lies, intact.²⁰

Restrained in style and fairly close to that of Angkor Wat, this gopura is decorated on two sides along its lateral passageways with remarkable panels of bas-reliefs. To the north, beyond a laterite wall, one can see a hall of closely placed pillars - similar to the ones at Prah Khan and Banteay Kdei - which must have carried an upper storey in light-weight materials. Its use remains a mystery. Further beyond, all the way around the inside of the fourth enclosure wall, stand the remains of small rectangular cells.

The moats are crossed by a vast sandstone-paved terrace, whose central area is cruciform in plan and slightly raised. It was decorated with lions and with naga-balustrades of which the hoods, without garudas, are certainly earlier than the style of the Bayon. Further - to the north of the axis - is a typical shelter for pilgrims. Half collapsed, it has its thick walls decorated with windows that have a double row of balusters. Its central sanctuary must have been consecrated to the bodhisattva *Lokesvara*, represented on the south fronton. A shaded path leaves the temple, whose fifth and final enclosure is encountered 400 metres towards the east; - its gopura is similar to the one to the west, but is reduced to some sections of wall where there still remain traces of the corner garudas.

Kutisvara

Leaving Ta Prohm by the east gopura, one takes the *route Demasur* to the right, to then turn left onto the Small Circuit - here bordered to the south by the external enclosure wall of Banteay Kdei. Just after its north gopura, where a large fronton reconstructed on the ground shows the Earth wringing her hair to drown the army of Mara,²¹ one walks across the fields on the left for two hundred metres to find the remains of Kutisvara in a small copse. It can be difficult to reach even in the dry season.

Although situated just 500 metres east of Ta Prohm and quite close to a village, this little monument was surprisingly only discovered in 1930 - and while not particularly spectacular, it is of undeniable archaeological interest since it marks the site of Kuti, founded during the reign of Jayavarman II in the 9th century and mentioned in the inscriptions of Bat Chum and Tep Pranam. Until then this had been associated with the site of Banteay Kdei, where the re-used jambs of the door openings mention the placing in Kutisvara of a Brahma to the south and of a Vishnou to the north by Shivasarya, one of the priests of the Devaraja or Royal Linga, during the reign of Rajendravarman in the 10th century.

The temple presents itself in the form of three half-ruined sanctuary towers in brick, aligned north south and opening to the east, standing on a small hillock that was probably surrounded by a moat. The central tower is very close to the art of Roluos. Set on a brick base platform, it is preceded by a double stairway with “*acolade*” formed base steps - the first being enclosed within the remains of some wall which formed a sort of internal area that was probably a later addition. The door assembly is in sandstone with a straight-jointed frame, octagonal colonnettes with four bands and a lintel that is practically defaced. The 2m.80 wide sanctuary chamber contained a pedestal for a linga with a sacred base stone.

The lateral sanctuaries are slightly later in style and set on a laterite plinth. With no trace of false doors or decoration on their external surface, the frames of their openings are almost intact and assembled with half-mitred joints. Their colonnettes are ringed with four bands. The lintels - topped with a small frieze - have slender branches, large terminal scrolls and small figures crowding the decoration. Central on the southern lintel is a seated Brahma, and on the northern, the usual Vishnouïte scene taken from the churning of the Sea of Milk - the pivot braced by the god and resting on the tortoise. The inscription of Banteay Kdei is thus confirmed. Moreover, within the southern sanctuary chamber - which, with the northern, is slightly rectangular - the statue itself of Brahma was found, with four faces and four arms, standing on the circular pedestal ornate with lotus petals that was generally reserved for this god and similar to those at Phnom Krom and Phnom Bok. Although of mediocre craftsmanship, the idol has been returned to the storeroom.²²

Date 9th - 10th century
Cult Brahmanic (Shivaïte)
Clearing by H. Marchal and
 H. Parmentier in 1930

Note: - like Ta Prohm, the traverse of this temple can be made from end to end, by sending your vehicle to meet you at the gate opposite to your entry.

Leaving Ta Prohm by the east gopura, one can get straight to Banteay Kdei by the route Demasur, which crosses the Small Circuit and leads, in 600 metres, directly to the temple's western entrance.

Here one finds another example of the spirit of confusion, although less so than at Ta Prohm and Prah Khan, that is characteristic of the monuments built, transformed or completed by Jayavarman VII - and of the crowding of the sacred enclosure, which here is 63 metres by 50, set within a vast overall enclosure (700 metres by 500).

At least two different styles are evident, relating to the periods of Angkor Wat and the Bayon, and the additions are clear, in many places masking the already existing sculptures. The various sanctuary towers were also apparently joined only after their construction by a system of galleries and vestibules which exploit the use of the cloister to its extreme. The scheme is reduced to an ensemble on a single level, in the usual manner of the Buddhist monastery, and consists, within two successive enclosure walls, of two concentric galleries from which emerge a veritable profusion of towers, preceded to the east by a crossing cloister.

The ruin is quite advanced, as much due to the numerous defects inherent in the buildings of this period as to the low-grade, friable sandstone that has a tendency to fail. After the delight of Ta Prohm, Banteay Kdei might seem less enchanting - perhaps because of its presentation. Although the vegetation has been entirely cleared, the monument has been left until now in its partially ruined state with no attempt at restoration.

We have no information concerning the dedication of this temple, and so are ignorant of its consecration. An inscription found in the western gopura of the second enclosure has been recognised as having been sculpted on re-used stones. Dating from the reign of Rajendravarman in the 10th century, it would seem to have come from the neighbouring temple of Kutisvara, and contains an invocation to Shiva. It also mentions the placing of two statues - Brahma and Vishnou.

Banteay Kdei

"The citadel of chambers"

Date	<i>middle of the 12th to the beginning of the 13th century</i>
King	<i>Jayavarman VII (posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)</i>
Cult	<i>Buddhist</i>
Clearing	<i>by H. Marchal and Ch. Batteur from 1920 to 1922 Partial anastylosis at the end of 1946</i>

The frontons and lintels of this Mahayanist monastery are interesting and of reasonable craftsmanship. Some have escaped destruction during the religious altercations of the 13th century. Until clearing work began there was still a pagoda on the site.

DESCRIPTION

The external laterite enclosure wall (fourth enclosure) has four gopuras which are exactly the same as those at Ta Prohm - an upper tower with the four faces of Lokeshvara and corner motifs with garudas. They are evidently of the Bayon period, like the narrow cruciform terrace which, on the west side - at 200 metres from the entrance - crosses the moat and is decorated with lions and naga-balustrades with straddling garudas.

The gopura of the third enclosure is cruciform in plan, has internal pillars and is covered with a crossing of vaults. It appears to be older and has three passageways - those at either extremity are independent and adjoin the 320 metre by 300 metre laterite wall. Their walls are sculpted quite crudely with foliated scrolls enlivened with small figures and with large devatas standing in niches. In the internal courtyard is a frieze of Buddhas which have been defaced by the iconoclasts.

Another pavement bordered with nagas leads to the gopura of the second enclosure, formed as a gallery with a wall to the exterior and an internal double row of sandstone pillars opening onto the courtyard. Some parts of this have been walled in, leaving only the lower side for covered circulation. The gopura, which is flanked by two secondary doors cut in the wall at the back of the gallery, forms a tiered tower. The ornamentation is in the style of the Bayon, with balustered false windows with lowered blinds and devatas with head dresses in the form of small flaming discs set in a triangle. The vault of the galleries, since constructed in both laterite and sandstone, has lost all homogeneity and so in places has collapsed.

The four gopuras of the first enclosure, like the corner towers, form prominent tiered towers linked by galleries. This ensemble would seem to be earlier than the style of the Bayon. The central sanctuary, which still carries some traces of sculpture, must have been hacked in order to receive a plaster covering. It has four avant-corps and a 2m.75 square sanctuary chamber where there still remain, resting on the cornice, traces of a wooden ceiling.

The galleries and halls linking it in a cross to the four gopuras seem to be additions. One should notice the fine fronton with banded scenes on the eastern side of the first western gopura - and also the one on the south side of the first northern gopura, where one can see a sitting Buddha above a figure standing between two elephants.

The two small western courtyards, formed by the crossing of the galleries, each contain one of the isolated standing pillars with a top tenon which, like those in Ta Prohm and Prah Khan, must have supported some altar or lantern in light-weight materials. In the two other courtyards, two buildings opening to the west - the so called "*libraries*" - are in the style of the Bayon and were found to shelter in their main section - which forms a tower - two admirable female statues with neither heads nor arms, probably of the 10th century and originating from some other monument. With rounded breasts, a markedly "*hipped*" stance and flat buttocks, they have their torso naked and wear a long skirt with fine vertical pleats.

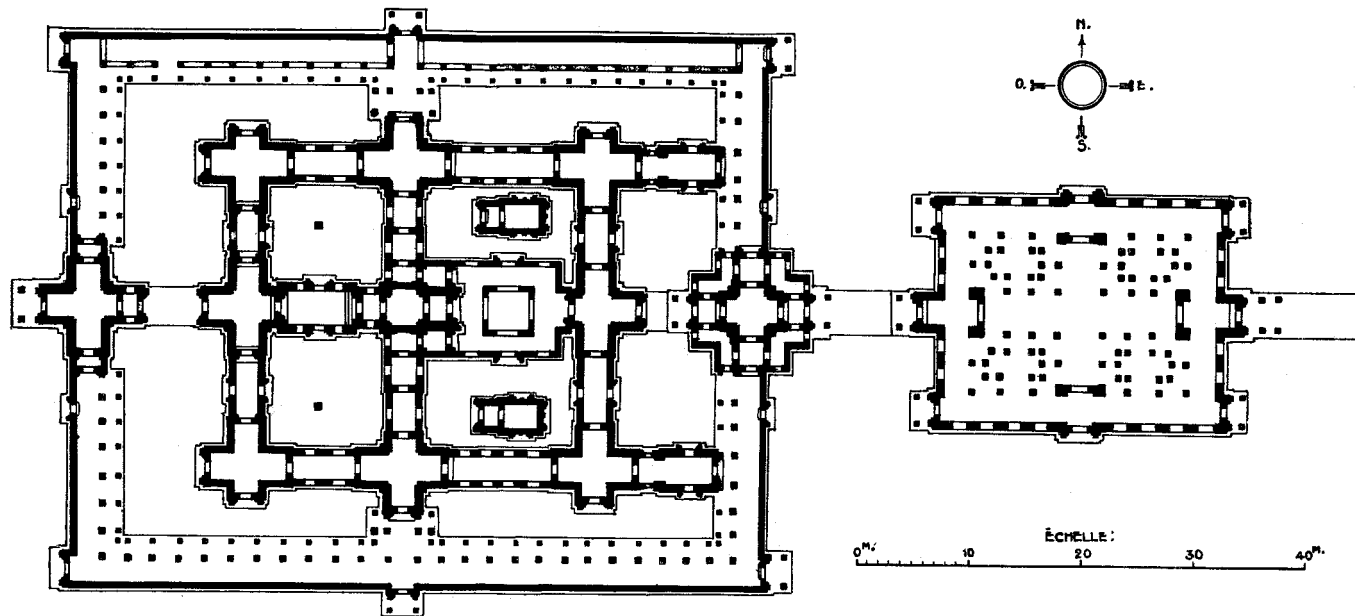
The north-east and south-east corner towers of the first enclosure have been joined to the second gallery where one can see, forming a silhouette, a statue of a sitting Buddha, framed impressively against the sky beyond. Further on is, as at Ta Prohm and Prah Khan, the vast rectangle of a crossing cloister forming four smaller courtyards which served perhaps as a hall for ritual dance or as a "*palace*". The pillars, like those at the entrances to the Bayon, are animated with charming apsaras - dancing individually or in pairs - sculpted in slight relief on the surface of the stone. Dvarapalas treated

in bas-relief precede the entrance, surrounded by devatas. The upper sections have disappeared.

To the north of the pavement which follows, one can find the same hall of large, closely set columns which are also to be found in the two temples mentioned above. Although their function is unknown, they must have carried some light-weight upper storey. In the gopura of the third enclosure is the statue of Buddha sitting in meditation - previously described - which is reasonable in craftsmanship. One crosses the moats again on a large terrace that has its cruciform central area is slightly raised. The naga-balustrades here are again in the style of the Bayon, while the lions, which are quite squat, have their hind legs treated in an unusually decorative manner.

Symmetrically placed to the north and the south of the principal axis stand the remains of two buildings in laterite and sandstone, formed of a central square room between two vestibules and opening to the east and the west. The southern one is the more imposing - its central crossing section and the joining of its two lateral wings being more developed. These must have been small sanctuaries, and one can see, reconstructed on the ground at the foot of the northern one, a fronton depicting the "*Grand Departure*" with the divinities supporting the horse's hooves with their hands.

One leaves the temple by the east gopura of its fourth enclosure, whose tower with faces is better preserved than are the wings - its corner garudas remaining almost intact.



Srah Srang

"The royal bathing pool"

Leaving Banteay Kdei by the east gate and crossing the road near the 11 kilometre marker stone one gains, in a few paces, an elegant embarkation terrace, axial on the temple and dominating the area of water known as the Srah Srang. This measures 700 metres by just over 300 and, slightly off axis, was without doubt excavated before the reign of Jayavarman VII. It has a border of laterite steps with an outer margin of sandstone. Its centre is marked by a small island on which some jointed stone blocks perhaps formed the base for a small light-weight pavilion.

Entirely surrounded by large trees and always full of water it provides, in the fading light of day, one of the most delightful settings in the Angkor Park - its majestic calm particularly recalling certain views in Versailles, such as the Pièce d'eau des Suisses or the Grand Canal. The terrace, with a moulded sandstone base on laterite foundations, must have supported some light-weight construction which, to judge by the plan of doubled small courtyards, consisted of a large rectangular room with surrounding galleries. An axial stairway flanked by two lions divides into three branches with an intermediate landing - a pleasing arrangement which has allowed the naga-balustrades to be set out in a particularly decorative manner. The rich ornamentation remains refined in style despite the profusion of its elements. To the fore, an enormous garuda rides a three headed naga while the other heads serve to frame it, - to the rear, again the three headed naga with the thighs of the garuda clearly indicated and its stylised tail ornate with small naga heads. The body of the naga rests on blocks sculpted with monsters standing "as *atlantes*". This is undoubtedly the triumph of a formula which, although perhaps questionable, is nonetheless characteristic of the Bayon style.

Date	(embarkation terrace) late 12th century
King	Jayavarman VII (posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)
Clearing	by H. Marchal in 1920 Excavation and restoration work by B.P. Groslier between 1963 and 1965

Returning towards Siem Reap by the Small Circuit, one sees, to the left between the 12th and 13th kilometre marker stones, a line of five crumbling brick towers set at an angle to the road. One should not hesitate to stop here, since within their barren exterior they hide a phenomenon unique in the art of Angkor; - sculpture in the brickwork of the sanctuary interiors.²³

Surrounded by a moat, which is crossed in its north-western corner by a small access causeway, these towers are set quite close, built on a single terrace and open to the east - though the absence of any access stairway to the very high thresholds is surprising. Their state of ruin has been caused mainly by the presence of several large trees, whose roots have disintegrated the brickwork.

We recommend that the visit starts with the central tower, the only one still retaining any of its upper tiers. These remain perfectly visible, particularly from inside where the brickwork has been constructed with remarkable care; - the mortar-less joints, which have only a thin vegetal binder, remain absolutely tight.

Externally, the eastern side is sculpted with dvarapalas set in shallow niches, while the pilasters show a decoration of chevrons and small framed figures. Only the lintel with its line of small heads set in a frieze above and the octagonal colonnettes with their four ringed bands are in sandstone. All are very well preserved. The jambs of the door openings are inscribed, mentioning the placing of a statue of Vishnou in 921.

The 3m.50 square sanctuary chamber sheltered a linga on a pedestal and must once have contained a hanging velum, the stone suspension hooks for which can still be seen. To the left of the entrance one can see a large figure of Vishnou, whose four arms carry the usual attributes - a disc, a sphere, a conch and a club. One of his feet rests on a pedestal next to a figure in prayer, while the other stands on a lotus blossom being held by a female figure on a background of undulating lines (waves of the Ocean). This is clearly a representation of the *"three strides of Vishnou"*, with which the god won possession of the world. To the right is a Vishnou mounted on the shoulders of Garuda between two seated figures in prayer. In front, another Vishnou with eight arms is framed by six rows of standing figures in prayer which multiply in number from bottom to top and are for the most part masculine, above all of which there is a frieze of other praying figures and an enormous lizard.

Prasat Kravan

Date	first quarter of the 10th century (921)
King	Harshavarman I (posthumous name: Rudraloka)
Cult	Brahmanic
Clearing	by H. Marchal from 1929 to 1931 and G. Trouvé in 1935 Further restoration by B.P. Groslier from 1962 to 1966

The extreme northern tower, although unfortunately truncated at their midriff, is also sculpted internally with figures, replicating the female aspect of the central sanctuary and perhaps consecrated to Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnou. A pedestal was found there during clearing works, ornate on three sides of its plinth with small figures in prayer.

The three other towers have their walls bare. In places one can see again the remains of their false brick doors, and on the middle northern tower some fragments of sculpted pilasters. The best preserved of the lintels (Vishnou on Garuda) is to be found on the extreme southern tower. Internally, the secondary towers measure only three metres across.



Situated 2.3 kilometres east of the junction between the Grand and the Small circuit at Srah Srang, just after the right-angled northwards bend and 500 metres south of the southern dike of the eastern baray - indicated by the 16th kilometre marker stone - the temple of Pre Rup unfortunately presents itself from insufficient distance. It would surely have gained by being re-united with the avenue of bornes which precedes it to the east.

An impressive work of impeccable proportions, constructed almost entirely of warm coloured materials (laterite and brick) at a time when sandstone was only used sparingly, Pre Rup needs to be visited either early in the morning or at sunset. Its relatively recent clearing required particular attention, the brick monuments needing special care in the removal of the soil, the fallen materials and the entangling roots. Any anastylosis being impossible, the restoration work was limited to some brickwork repairs and consolidation.

Later by a few years than the eastern Mebon and identical in style, Pre Rup is the last realisation of the *“temple-mountain”* that preceded the advent of the continuous surrounding galleries - which had their antecedent in the line of long rooms around the base. This is the *“Meru”* in the form of a pyramid, crowned with a quincunx of towers and dedicated to the deified nobility, with twelve small sanctuaries sheltering lingas on each of the tiers, as at Bakong. The inscription, after listing the genealogy of Rajendravarman, gives the foundation date (961) and names the monument as Rajendrabhadresvara, after the linga placed in the central sanctuary. There is then the designation of the statues placed in the corner towers - their cult corresponding to that of the king himself (Shiva) - identified as one of his maternal ancestors (Vishnou), his maternal aunt (Uma) and his half brother, king Harshavarman (Shiva), the son of this maternal aunt. The text explains that the royal essence or *“spirit”* of the sovereign was incorporated in his image, which was erected during his lifetime.

Axial on the eastern Mebon and dominating the wide cultivated plain irrigated by the baray, the temple-mountain of Pre Rup was certainly the centre of an important settlement - the *“eastern City”* referred to by Philippe Stern that developed on the return of the capital city from Koh Ker, to where it had moved between 921 and 944. This does not imply, however, that Rajendravarman established the royal City to the detriment of the former Yasodharapura, centred on Phnom Bakheng.

Pre Rup

“Turn the body”

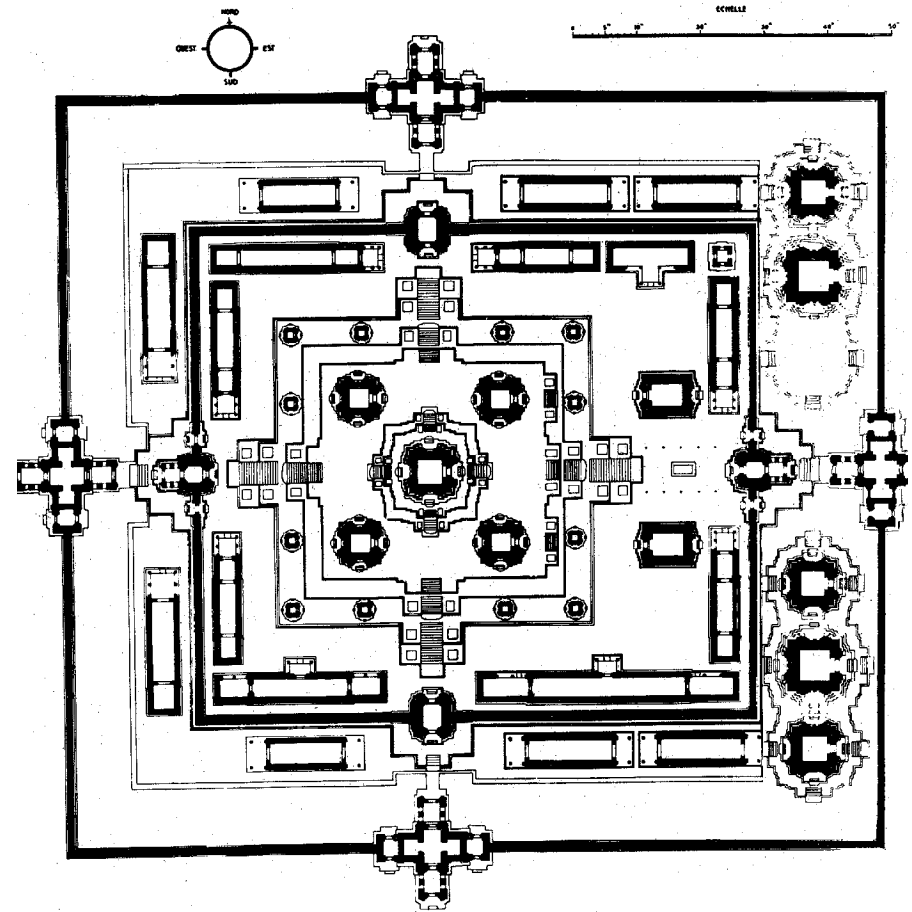
Date	second half of the 10th century (961)
King	Rajendravarman
Cult	Brahmanic (Shivaïte)
Clearing	H. Marchal and G. Trouvé from 1930 - 1935



It is not known why the Cambodians have always attributed a funerary character to this temple. The name Pre Rup ("to turn the body") recalls one of the cremation rites, where the silhouette of the corpse in its bed of cinders is successively turned to different orientations. A large tank at the base of the east stair to the pyramid is considered by some to have been used in such ceremonies - and the funerary link continues in the legend of the careless King whose passion for sweet cucumbers caused his untimely death at the hands of his gardener.²⁴

Architecturally, Pre Rup is composed of two enclosures, each with four gopuras, and a pyramid of three narrow tiers, conceived as a simple pedestal for the five towers of the upper platform. The eastern part of the last enclosure is occupied, unusually, by two groups of three towers aligned symmetrically with respect to the axis, set on a common plinth. One of these - the first to the north of the entrance - remains unbuilt, although its base platform has been prepared - unless perhaps the bricks have been re-used elsewhere following its demolition. The central tower of each group of three predominates and is more developed than usual, with a square sanctuary chamber of 5 metres each side and upper tiers which reduce slightly but are particularly high - their colossal dimension causing the upper sections of brickwork to crack, and in places collapse. The bricks are larger than normal - 300 x 160 x 85mm - and laid as usual without mortar but with a thin vegetal adhesive placed in the horizontal joints after the bricks had first been ground together.

These towers are not mentioned in the inscription and are presumably subsequent since they remained unfinished. The false doors in sandstone, surmounted by their lintels, remain in rough form with only some outline traces of decoration. The most complete lintel is on the east side of the southern tower, showing Vishnou in his manifestation as a lion clawing the king of the Asuras, who had claimed the same honour as the god. The octagonal colonnettes with four bands give a forceful impression of strength.



Approaching from the road, the badly ruined access gopura is preceded by a small lion in the style of the Bayon, brought from some other monument. Its central brick section between two sandstone vestibules is formed of three adjacent rooms flanked by two independent passageways. The enclosure wall, of 120 metres by 130, is in laterite, and the surrounding courtyard has preserved but a few remains of the long rest rooms accessible to the pilgrims. Constructed with sandstone pillars in the eastern part and laterite walls with variously arranged balustered windows elsewhere, these were roofed in wood and tiles.

The laterite enclosure which follows is divided by four small single-roomed brick gopuras which are preceded by a sandstone vestibule and supplemented by two lateral doors pierced in the walls at either side. Long galleries, reserved for the temple servants and differing only in their manner of ventilation or lighting, surround the whole arrangement - their laterite walls and sandstone porticoes generally remained standing. Numerous fragments of tiles were found in the rubble, including some highly decorative stop-tiles.

In the north-east corner is a curious little building, square in plan and made with large blocks of laterite, that has been entirely restored. Of the type which usually shelters a stele, it is open to the four axes and topped with a "*priests cap*". On the ground is a sort of ablution vessel with a drain for water. The temple's large foundation stele has both sides inscribed and was found in part of a specially designated neighbouring gallery.

On either side of the eastern axial entrance are two buildings which open to the west. Of the "*library*" type, they have been built as high rectangular towers with reducing upper tiers. They sheltered respectively a "*stone of the nine planets*" and a "*stone of the 7 ascetics*". In the middle, between two rows of slender sandstone columns with top tenons, was found the dressed stone tank mentioned above. It measures 3m.00 by 1m.90. Not at all watertight and grooved on its upper edge, it would seem that it must

have served as a base for some light-weight pavilion or statue of Nandin the bull, the sacred mount of Shiva, rather than as a sarcophagus in accordance with the legend. At the base of this tank were found the remains of a pedestal and a sacred foundation stone with a large linga, all of which perhaps came from the central sanctuary.

The elegant three tiered pyramid stands over a dozen metres in height, measuring 50 metres across at the base and 35 at the summit. Each axis is marked by a stairway, rising in constant width, while the stair-walls and the sitting lions which adorn them obey the usual laws of proportional reduction. The two lower tiers, around which the narrow verges of 4 and 3 metres barely allow any circulation, are formed in laterite. The first is twice the height of the second, both being treated as simple retaining walls with a moulded base and cornice. The third is all in sandstone, as are the steps cut into it, and appears in contrast as a decorated plinth with a central horizontal line of symmetry. Two secondary stairways framed with lions - a simple device of composition rather than of any practical use - animate its eastern side with their incision, while a dozen small sanctuary towers with lingas, opening to the east, stand around it on the first tier.

From the upper platform one can see the mound of Phnom Bok to the north-east and the dark chain of the Phnom Kulen beyond - the view then plunging down to the towers below. The central sanctuary clearly dominates, raised by more than 4 metres on a double plinth of moulded sandstone - but whose decoration is badly deteriorated. Its stairways are flanked by lions. The sanctuary chamber measures 4m.20 each side and only shelters two standing Buddhas of a later period.

The five sanctuaries open to the east. To the other orientations, false sandstone doors are sculpted with delightful figurines set in a vertical band in a lattice-work surround. The lintels are simplistic in style, lack much

originality and are not particularly well preserved. All the brick elements still stand, though the detail of the superstructure has disappeared.

The walls were originally covered externally with a lime based plaster coating, which can still be seen in places - particularly on the tower of the south-west corner. The ornamentation was sculpted in the plaster itself, on a brick background which, for the more important decoration such as the figures in arches, was first sculpted in outline. The style is close to the motifs of the classic art but with some recollection of previous styles, such as in the representation of palaces and flying figures over the devatas.

It can be seen that the figures decorating the corner piers are feminine on the two western towers and masculine on those to the east - as they are on the central tower. One should also note; - on the south-west corner tower, a devata with four faces and four arms - the wife of Brahma, - and on the eastern side of the north-east corner tower another with four arms and a hog's head - the "*sakti*" of Vishnou in the form of a boar - who is to be found on the west face of the south-west corner tower.



Prasat Leak Neang

"The sanctuary of the hidden woman"

This small tower, constructed in bricks which are smaller than those used at Pre Rup, is situated slightly to the north-east of this monument at about 100 metres from the road. With simple mouldings it shows no trace of any decoration or plaster. The false doors are in brickwork and the sanctuary chamber, of only 2m.30 in width, opens to the east. The sandstone lintel shows Indra on a three headed elephant surmounted by a frieze of small figures in prayer. Behind is a double timber beam.

The inscriptions on the door jambs describe various donations and gives the date of 960 - which is earlier than Pre Rup by one year. This temple could therefore have formed a part - with others that have since disappeared - of its external enclosure.



Date	second half of the 10th century (960)
King	Rajendravarman (posthumous name: Shivaloka)
Cult	Brahmanic

Five hundred metres north of Pre Rup, the 16th kilometre boundary stone stands at the southern edge of the large expanse of water known as the eastern baray. Measuring two kilometres north-south by seven kilometres east-west, it is enclosed by an earth embankment and marked at each of its four corners with a stele set in a shelter. Identified as the “*Eastern Lake*” by Tcheou Ta-Kouan and the “*Yasodharatataka*” on the inscriptions, it was realised during the reign of Yasovarman towards the end of the 9th century and supplied by the Stung Siem Reap.

This vast reservoir, that served to regulate the flow of the river and to irrigate the surrounding plain, is today given over to rice fields, though if one is to judge by the laterite steps which surround the small island of the Mebon, its original depth was three metres and its volume must have been 40 million cubic metres. Since a large part of it is now silted up there must have been some disaster or rupture of a dike to have caused its rapid choking rather than its slow sedimentation. Whatever the cause, its centre was marked by a small island of 120 metres across where the temple of the Mebon was raised - on which the main entry pavilion of the Royal Palace of Angkor Thom and the Victory Gate were subsequently aligned.

The Mebon has all the characteristics of a “*temple-mountain*” symbolising the Meru - but where there should have been the tiered pyramid inside two concentric enclosing walls, here there is instead a simple three metre high platform carrying the quincunx of towers. Perhaps the builders were wary of putting too much burden on such a small mound of earth entirely surrounded by water? Whatever the reason, in allowing a more open composition and in reducing the movement of pilgrims to a minimum - since it was only accessible by boat - an arrangement which must have considerably eased the circulation.

Several inscriptions found in the vicinity as well as the foundation stele - dated 952 and so only nine years before Pre Rup - describe the placing in the various sanctuaries of the linga Shri Rajendresvara, of several idols - notably of Shiva and Parvati “*in the likeness of the mother and the father*” of king Rajendravarman, and of Vishnou with Brahma - and of eight lingas of the god in eight forms (in the eight small towers of the surrounding court). The Mebon belongs therefore to the series of temples consecrated to the memory of deified parents, - and a very fine statue of a feminine divinity found during the course of clearing and returned to the sculpture storeroom would seem to be the Parvati of the inscription.

Each axis is marked by a laterite embarkation terrace, framed by two sitting lions and forming projections from the retaining wall, itself supported on tiers. A border of five metres surrounds the external

the Eastern Mebon

Date	second half of the 10th century (952)
King	Rajendravarman (posthumous name: Shivaloka)
Cult	Brahmanic (Shivaïte)
Clearing	and restoration by H. Marchal and M. Glaize from 1935 to 1939

enclosure wall which, by the pleasing arrangement of its setting back, leaves sufficient space in front of each of the four gopuras. These are in laterite and sandstone - with no remains of either vaults or roofs - and cruciform in plan with three passageways and central sandstone porticoes. The inscribed stele is to be found on the right on entering.²⁵

A series of galleries with laterite walls pierced by variously arranged balustered windows and with sandstone porticoes follows the interior of the enclosure wall, serving as meditation or rest rooms. They are, as at Pre Rup, the precursor of the continuous galleries that were soon to make their appearance in the monuments. Except for in the southern part, there are but a few remains of these buildings, whose roof covering was in timber and tiles. Perhaps the materials were put to some other use after their demolition.

A 2m.40 high laterite retaining wall with a 2m.00 surrounding border defines the next level (first enclosure) which carries a low enclosing wall. One should not forget to admire, standing at the four corners of the platform of the first and second enclosures, the handsome monolithic elephants, treated in realistic fashion and showing every detail of their harnesses. The best preserved are to be found to the south-west, and are more impressive than those at Bakong.

Ahead of the axial stairways, flanked by lions, a return in the enclosure wall again frames each gopura - except for the western where the border has been left wider. The building itself, in laterite and brick, formed a towered passageway, though this has virtually collapsed. The western lintel of the east gopura shows Krishna wrestling with the naga.

Within the large courtyard of the first enclosure, eight small brick towers - two on each side - open to the east. Each sheltered a linga. They have finely detailed octagonal colonnettes with two bands, and lintels with figurines incorporated into a foliate decoration. To the east are three

rectangular buildings in laterite - two to the south of the axis that contained in one a "*stone of the nine planets*" and the other a "*stone of the seven ascetics*", and a single one to the north. They open to the west like the "*library*" buildings, and traces of brickwork remaining above the cornice suggest that they were vaulted in brick despite their width. In the north-west and south-west corners are two similar buildings - without windows - but opening to the east.

The upper platform carrying the five towers is surrounded by a sandstone wall forming a plainly moulded base of 3m.00 in height. Another plinth of 1m.90, but which is ornate, allows the central sanctuary to dominate the four others. Lions embellish the stairways.

The towers are built in bricks which are much smaller than those at Pre Rup - 22cm x 13cm x 5.5cm - and constructed without mortar in the usual manner. Figures - all masculine except for the two western towers - are outlined on the corner piers. All were covered with a sculpted lime-based mortar that is mentioned in one of the inscriptions, but of which there remains no trace, despite the measure taken of boring small holes in the brickwork to aid adhesion.

The towers open to the east, with the other three false doors in sandstone. The sanctuary chamber measures 4m.00 in the central and 2m.80 in the corner towers. The one to the south-east still contains an interesting circular pedestal of the type already found at Phnom Bok and at Phnom Krom, where it carried a statue of Brahma.

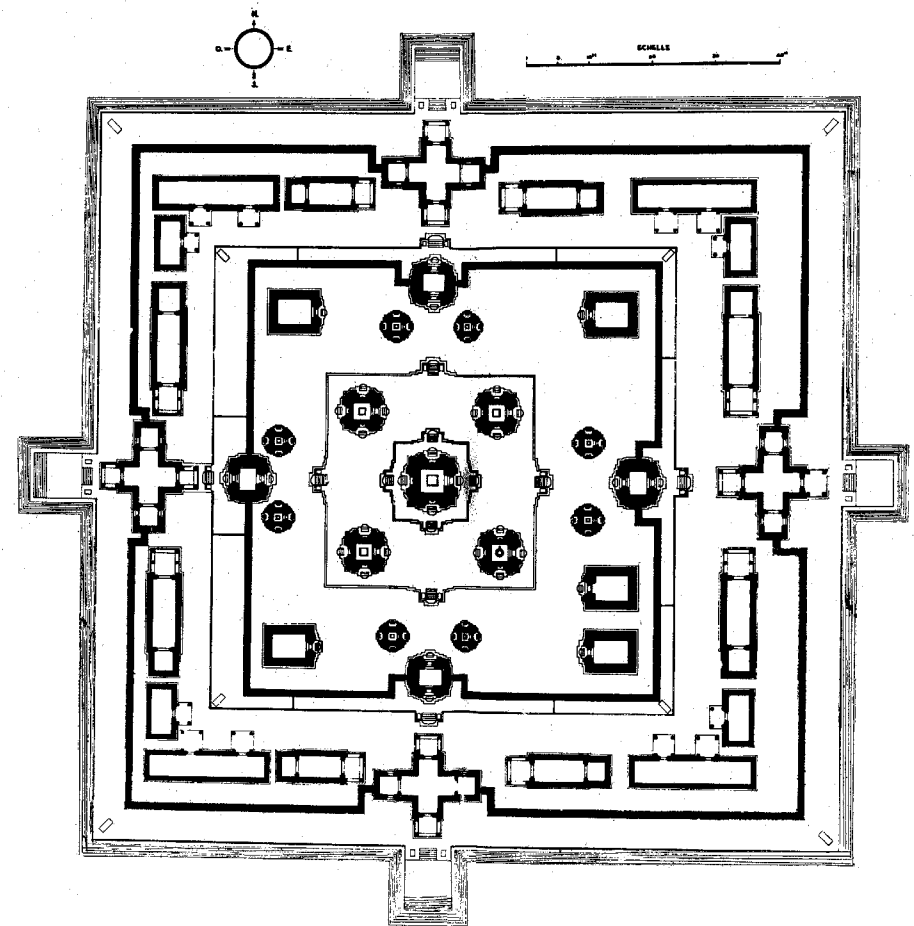
The ornamentation is similar in many ways to Pre Rup, and all the sculpted sandstone elements are remarkable - even though the decoration remains slightly affected and is occasionally reminiscent in its complexity of certain failings in the Baroque style. The false doors are delightful with their lattice-work pattern and banded motifs set with tiny figurines.

It has been possible to secure the lintels in place nearly everywhere during the course of the works. These are far better than those at Pre Rup and are handled with real craftsmanship, vigour and imagination.

On the central tower, one should particularly note; - to the east, Indra on a three headed elephant with small cavaliers on the branches and flights of figures being disgorged by makaras, under a small frieze of figures in meditation, - to the west, Skanda the god of war on his peacock with a line of figures holding lotus flowers - and to the south, Shiva on the sacred bull Nandin.

Then on the tower of the north-west corner, east side, - the curious motif of Ganesha sitting astride his trunk that he has transformed into a mount.

On the tower of the south-east corner, north side, - the head of a monster devouring an elephant. On the west gopura of the first enclosure, east side, - Vishnou in the form of a man-lion, clawing the king of the Asuras who dared to challenge him. On the building of the north-east corner of the first enclosure, west side, - Lakshmi between two elephants who, with their raised trunks, spray her with lustral water.



Ta Som

"The ancestor Som"

From the eastern Mebon, Ta Som appears on the right, a little after the 13th kilometre marker stone, as a tower with four faces of Lokesvara entwined within the roots of a giant Ficus tree that crowns it perfectly. Several of the roots have pierced the vault and descend straight to the ground, obstructing part of the passageway.²⁶

Cruciform in plan, this gopura is flanked by two small rooms and adjoins the 200 by 240 metre laterite wall of the external (the third) enclosure. Its western lintel shows the standing bodhisattva surrounded by worshippers. There is a similar gopura to the east with the same fronton, preceded externally by a small terrace bordered with naga-balustrades - the temple having a double entrance.

Ta Som lies on the extension of the Prah Khan-Neak Pean axis, and must represent, in its diminutive size, a single unified development typical of the monuments appearing in the last period of the style of the Bayon. It appears to be exactly like the external enclosures of Ta Prohm and of Banteay Kdei. In all its parts the same elements recur - false windows with lowered blinds, small devatas - which are rough and rustic - and an embroidery of organic decoration on a background of foliated scrolls in profusion on the walls.

In an advanced state of ruin, the various buildings which still stand have been the object of some provisional consolidation and basic clearing work. The internal courtyard remains littered with fallen blocks and the ensemble is, in its verdant setting, quite charming.

After the first gopura, a pavement bordered by nagas with large garudas crosses the moat. The laterite wall of the second enclosure is divided to the east and west by cruciform sandstone gopuras, each with small wings to either side and open only to the outside with balustered windows. Preceded by porticoes, they are covered by a crossing of barrel-formed vaults.

The first enclosure is formed by a gallery of 20 metres by 30. These are built in laterite and sandstone, as are the corner pavilions with their crossing vaults and moulded false doors. The four gopuras, entirely in sandstone, are in the form of a tower with two reducing upper tiers topped with a crowning motif. The plan remains the same as the other enclosures, as does the mural decoration.

Walking around the exterior one passes successively the north-west and north-east corners - the latter of which has completely collapsed - to gain access to the internal courtyard by the small door in the

Date	late 12th century
King	Jayavarman VII
	(posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)
Cult	Buddhist
Clearing	by H. Marchal in 1930

gallery, situated on the south side between the south-east corner and the gopura.

Climbing over the fallen blocks, one will see the two “*library*” type buildings on the right, opening to the east - the northern of which is badly ruined - and then the imposing mass of the central sanctuary, cruciform in plan with four vestibules. The sanctuary chamber, which is open on its four sides, has an ornate cornice and is decorated “*in tapestry*” at the base of the walls.

The tympanums of the gopuras, sculpted with banded scenes, are not without some interest - particularly that on the south side of the north gopura, where four figures in prayer frame a fifth who stands. Defaced at the time of the 13th century Brahmanic reaction he was carried, as are the others, on a lotus and surmounted by flying figures. In the south-west and north-west corners of the courtyard stand two sandstone pillars with a top tenon that are similar to those at Prah Khan, Ta Prohm and Banteay Kdei.



Krol Ko

"The oxen park"

About 2 kilometres beyond Ta Som, just after the 11th kilometre marker stone and 100 metres to the right of the road, stands the little temple of Krol Ko - the access track preceding by a hundred metres the *route Trouvé* which leads to Neak Pean.

From the east, one enters the second enclosure through a simple opening in the external laterite enclosure wall. The internal court is defined by a 25 by 35 metre wall - again in laterite - which is itself surrounded on three of its sides with a moat lined with steps.

Some frontons have been reconstructed on the ground on either side of a small cruciform terrace. Two of them on the right represent the bodhisattva Lokeshvara - to whom the temple seems to have been dedicated - standing amidst some figures in prayer. To the left, of Brahmanic inspiration, is Krishna raising the mount Govardhana to shelter the shepherds and their flocks - with another Lokeshvara.

The upper section of the cruciform sandstone gopura has collapsed - it is preceded by a vestibule to the east and has two small wings on either side. Within the internal enclosure stands the sanctuary. It is reasonably sized and clearly in the style of the Bayon, with a general embroidery of decoration and false windows with blinds. A "*library*" precedes it to the south of the axis. Open to the west and constructed in laterite and sandstone, this has a false door on its eastern side. The rest of the ornamentation is generally basic and without much interest.

Date	late 12th - early 13th century
King	Jayavarman VII
	(posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)
Cult	Buddhist
Clearing	by H. Marchal from 1922 to 1924

Just beyond Krol Ko, the 300 metre *route Trouvé* leads to the small island of Neak Pean. This is the “*Mebon*” of the Prah Khan baray (the “*Jayatataka*” of the inscription) measuring 3,500 metres by 900 - the two monuments being aligned on the same axis. The island, of 350 metres each side, was defined by a system of laterite steps with pavements set on the axes. Small elephants must once have stood at the four corners since there is still one in place - to the north-east.²⁷

King Jayavarman VII, the Prah Khan stele tells us, placed the “*Jayatataka*” - the “*Northern Lake*” of Tcheou Ta-Kouan - “*like a mirror, coloured by stones, gold and garlands. The pool shines, illuminated by the light of the golden prasat and coloured red with lotus blossom, evoking an image of the pool of blood spilled by the Bhargava: inside is an eminent island, charmed by the pools which surround it, cleansing from the stain of sin all those who come into its contact and serving as a vessel to cross the Ocean of Existence*”.

The symbolic character of Neak Pean is so established. Already in 1877 Delaporte saw there a building consecrated to the Buddha attaining the glory of Nirvana, with a series of pools cleansing the pilgrims of their sins and lifting them to supreme perfection. After research by Mssrs Coëdes, Finot and Goloubew, we can recognise in the central basin a replica of lake Anavatapta, to be found in the region of the Himalaya at the summit of the world and venerated in India for the healing powers of its waters. It is the source of the four large rivers of the Earth that flow through as many sculpted gargoyles, corresponding to the four cardinal points, which one can also find here with some slight variation.

“*An expanse of water and a lotus which arises from it, carrying the supreme god. It is a schema of the Pure World, closely related to the theme of Vishnou reclining on the waters emitting the lotus of Brahma*”. Paul Mus’ beautiful image could be considered as the very definition of this sacred water and of its sanctuary.

In the middle of the now dry northern baray, Neak Pean itself is but a series of “*srahs*” (pools) - some with stone surrounds - whose outlines were found within the limits of the laterite enclosure. In plan, a large square pool of 70 metres each side is bordered by steps and has at its centre - surrounded by similar steps - a circular island of 14 metres in diameter on its upper level with a small sanctuary. Four secondary pools of 25 metres each side flank it on the axes, marked by four chapels set into the common surrounding bank.

Two nagas surround the base of the circular island with their tales entwined to the west - from where derives the name *Neak Pean*. Their heads - separated in order to allow passage to the east - are treated in

Neak Pean

“*The entwined serpents*”

Date	second half of the 12th century
King	Jayavarman VII (posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)
Cult	Buddhist
Clearing	by H. Marchal from 1922 to 1924 with anastylosis by M. Glaize from 1938 - 1939

the manner of the naga Mucilinda which shelters the statues of the Buddha. These are, with their axial head coiffed with a "*mukuta*", a representation of the two large Nagarajas - Nanda and Upananda - often associated in Indian literature with lake Anavatapta.

The upper platform appears as the enormous corolla of a lotus blossom, a motif repeated at the base of the prasat by a row of 16 opposing petals, undercut with a groove and particularly pleasing. The Buddhist sanctuary, although the idol had disappeared, has two upper tiers crowned with a lotus and frontons dedicated to the life of the Buddha, - the "*Cutting of the Hair*" to the east, - the "*Grand Departure*" to the north, - and Buddha (defaced) meditating under the Bodhi tree to the west - while the southern tympanum has been defaced. The plan is cruciform with an east door - the three others having been walled in and then sculpted with three fine panels containing large images of Lokesvara, the compassionate bodhisattva.

The process of anastylosis revealed other transformations, showing that the construction was undertaken in at least two stages. It appears that the sanctuary itself, originally open to the four cardinal points, had its entrance stair enlarged to form a cross - with a banal decoration of devatas - and was rounded by the addition in the inward corners of the three headed elephant which one also finds at the gates of Angkor Thom, but here surmounted with a rearing lion instead of the figure of Indra.

In similar fashion, on the circular island, an earlier system of steps in laterite and sandstone with a perron to the east was covered with the present surfacing, which is ornate and all in sandstone. It is possible that these additions and alterations corresponded, as Mr Coëdes has suggested, to a change in cult or destination. Neak Pean, though dedicated to the Buddha at the time of its construction, would have been avowed to Lokesvara only towards the end of the reign of Jayavarman VII, at the time when the pools were arranged for healing ablution or purification.

Whatever the reason, the ornamentation of the initial prasat - and notably of its pilasters and frontons - places it in that part of the 12th century subsequent to Angkor Wat, while the unity of style and conception of the monument confines it to a limited period.

The four chapels are set into the steps of the central pool just to the base of their frontons, and are all similar. Each is open to the secondary pool, with the line of the opening arch following the full tympanum of the gable end wall. Composed of a continuous nave whose oval formed corbelled vault is decorated internally with lotus coffers and with, at the back, a mid height platform serving as a base for a mascarons gargoyle and a plinth for an idol, each has the external appearance of a groin-vaulted central core, square in plan and surmounted by a pinnacle, which is extended, on its main axis, by two gable ended avant-corps - the whole then flanked laterally on each side by three similar but less dominant projections. The decor is remarkably fine, and the scenes with figures are without exception consecrated to Lokesvara.

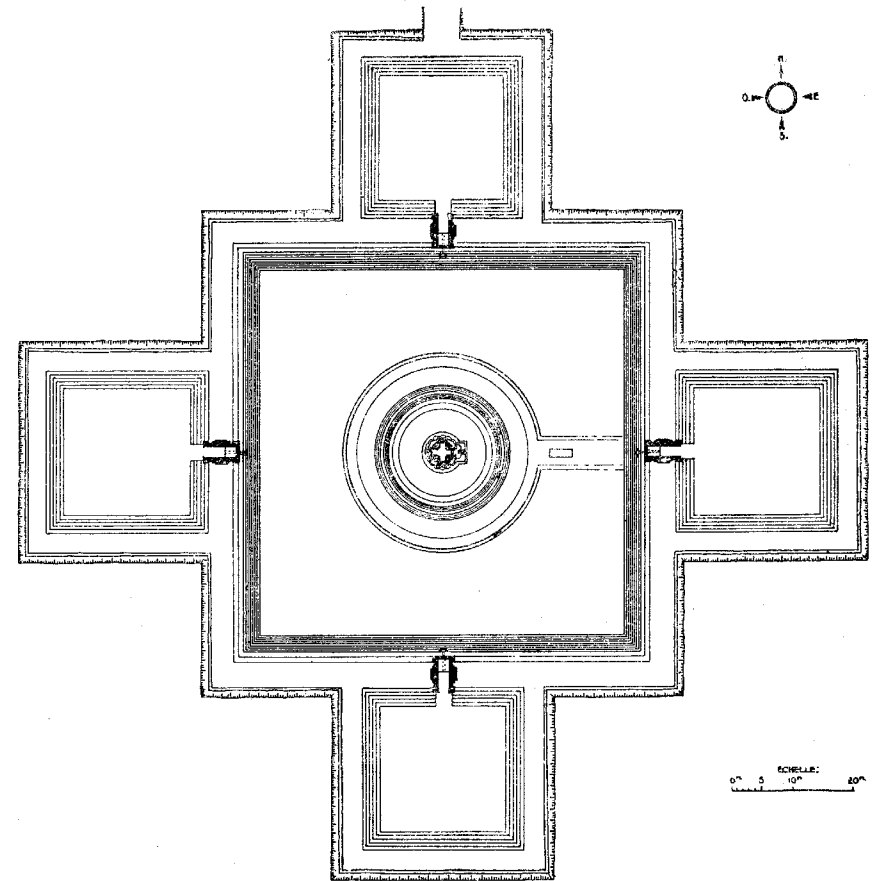
The four buildings served for the ablution of the pilgrims who, to judge by the motifs on the frontons, hoped to be cured of their illnesses or afflictions. Crouched on a circular lotus base bearing the imprint of two bare feet, and thus elevated symbolically above the level of their physical reality, they showered themselves with water flowing from the gargoyle that was fed from the exterior by a channel. This channel terminates at the large pool in a sort of ornamental stone bowl, also in the form of a lotus blossom, surmounted with a feminine bust with her back to the steps, where the officiant would have practised the rites.

The mascarons gargoyles - in the form of an elephant's head to the north, a horse's head to the west and lion's to the south - are mediocre in execution - with the exception of the human head to the east, which is truly a work of real craftsmanship.

Sculpted images must once have embellished four axial platforms forming redents at the base of the island. Only to the south has it been possible to identify some blocks of lingas in a multiple setting - no doubt part of the "*thousand lingas*" described in the inscription of Prah Khan - while to the east is the horse Balaha, investigated by Mr Goloubew. It is a form taken by Lokeshvara, as the saviour of men. Heading towards the sanctuary as if to safety, the flying animal - the major part of whose body is unfortunately missing - carries the merchant Simhala and his companions in misfortune who, hanging to its flanks, are being rescued from their shipwreck on the island of the rakshasis (Ceylon), where the resident ogresses were in the habit of awakening their obliging hosts of the previous night with their gnashing fangs. The group, hanging from the tail of the horse, is remarkable in its composition and craftsmanship.

Until it was damaged by a storm in 1935, the central sanctuary of Neak Pean was crowned by an enormous Ficus, the sacred tree. In an extraordinary arrangement, its overhanging branches gave a haunting charm to the composition of the monument. Having become its living skeleton, it had formed a rigid foundation with the sinews of its roots framing the sculpted panels and overshadowing the water - but in return, however, managing to crumble much of the superstructure and dislodge that which remained.

In its renovated form Neak Pean is quite different, and although the part played by nature may no longer prevail, the work of man wins in clarity. Situated in a delightful setting and reflected sometimes during October or November in the water of its basins - the filling of which relies on the flow from the neighbouring river - this temple is like no other. It is undoubtedly one of the "*delights*" of Khmer art, bringing to mind, with the processional way lined with bornes at Prah Khan on which it depends, ideas of "*Le Notre*", with his decorative compositions of landscape and pools.³



Prasat Prei

"The forest sanctuary"

After the 9th kilometre marker stone and just beyond the *route Fombertaux* leading to the eastern entrance of Prah Khan, one takes a forest track to the right. At about 100 metres on the left, perched on a hillock, stands Prasat Prei.

Enclosed within a single laterite wall - most of which has collapsed - all that remains is a gopura in laterite and sandstone with a sandstone sanctuary opening to the east, forming a tower with four upper tiers preceded by a restored vestibule. The sanctuary chamber, with three false doors - moulded on the exterior - is cruciform in plan and 2m.90 in width.

The decoration is linked with no peculiarity to the style of the Bayon (dense ornamentation, devatas, false windows with lowered blinds) while the frontons have been defaced.

In the courtyard - where on the southern side a badly ruined laterite and sandstone "library" has a moulded false door to the east - an interesting chariot being pulled by oxen was found, set on a base. It has been removed to the Bayon sculptures storeroom.



Date late 12th - early 13th century
King Jayavarman VII
(posthumous name:
Maha paramasangata pada)
Cult Buddhist
Clearing by H. Mauger in 1934

One hundred and fifty metres north of Prasat Prei, an opening in what is left of the external laterite enclosure wall of Banteay Prei gives access to the remains of a terrace, bordered by naga-balustrades, crossing a moat.

A small and low sandstone gopura, covered in a crossing of vaults, presents all the characteristics of the Bayon style. It divides the laterite wall of the 75 by 65 metre second enclosure to the east. Further on, a 30 by 25 metre sandstone gallery surrounds the internal court. Its four gopuras - still in the same style - form towers with a single upper tier and a crowning motif. They are flanked by secondary doors, while the corners are marked by small low pavilions. The gallery vault has a short span and is particularly shallow. The walls, in terms of decoration, are restrained.

Only half of the central sanctuary superstructure, with its four upper tiers, remains standing. Cruciform in plan it has four vestibules which are increased in width externally by the presence of false half-vaults to either side. The cruciform sanctuary chamber is 1m.90 across at its centre and open to the four cardinal points. The frontons have been defaced and the false windows here have balusters without blinds.

In the south-west quarter of the courtyard stands one of the isolated standing pillars with a top tenon, such as one finds in most temples of this period. In the south-east corner, where the “*library*” would normally be found, a small rectangular pit has been excavated and lined with laterite. Its function remains a mystery.

Banteay Prei

“The forest citadel”

<i>Date</i>	<i>late 12th - early 13th century</i>
<i>King</i>	<i>Jayavarman VII</i> <i>(posthumous name:</i> <i>Maha paramasangata pada)</i>
<i>Cult</i>	<i>Buddhist</i>
<i>Clearing</i>	<i>by H. Mauger in 1934</i>



Note: - The traverse of the monument can be made in totality either from east to west or inversely. Send your vehicle to meet you at the gate opposite to your entry, or if you only have a little time, straight to the north gate. The three are to be found on the Grand Circuit, the way leading to the east gate (route Fombertaux) is just a little after the 9 kilometre marker stone, to the north gate after the 8 kilometre stone, and to the west gate at 7 kilometres.

The large ensemble of Prah Khan, forming a rectangle of 700 metres by 800 surrounded by moats, covers an area of 56 hectares. It is, like Ta Prohm with which it has many analogies, an example typical of the formula adopted by Jayavarman VII; - all the elements of a vast composition compressed into a relatively small space (the third enclosure contains all of its buildings in only 175 by 200 metres), - the transformation of an elegant initial plan into a veritable architectural chaos by the multiplication of additional buildings placed at random - all then enclosed within a vast habitation zone that was probably covered with huts and timber houses.

For Prah Khan, things can easily be explained. On the one hand, the jambs of the sanctuary door openings give proof in short inscriptions of the multiplicity of the pious foundations - naming the idols which represent as many deified dignitaries and giving the monument the character of a kind of temple of remembrance, rather like a necropolis. On the other, the stele discovered in 1939 reveals that it was here the king won victory (personified in the name of Jayasri) and founded a city of the same name: "Nagara-Jayasri".

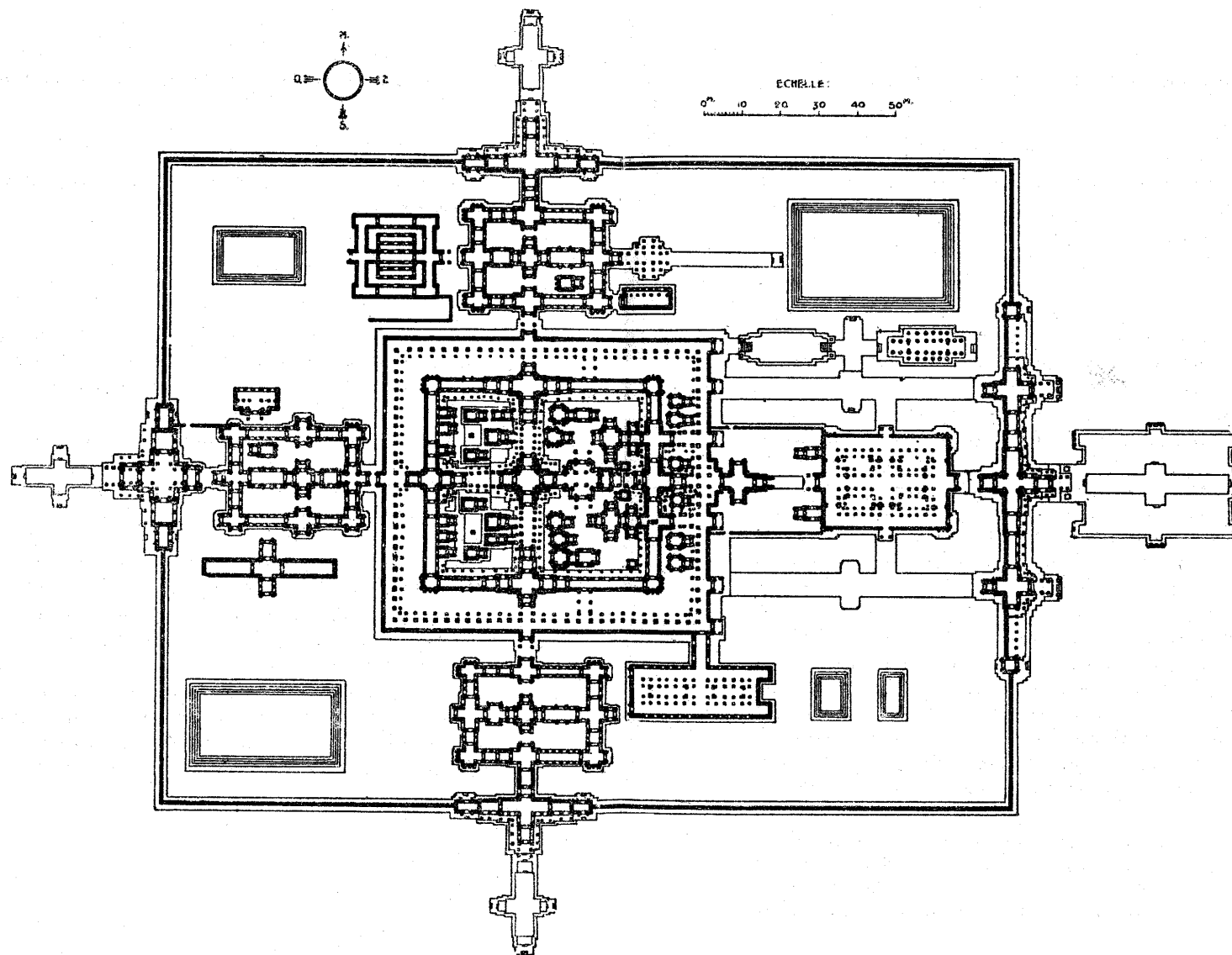
It is also quite likely that Prah Khan was a city, since, according to Mr Coedes, the ancient name of Jayasri and the modern name of Prah Khan are but one and the same - *"the sacred sword - the palladium of the Khmer kingdom - still being called Jayasri in Thailand: - "Nagara Jayasri", which meant in fact "the city of victorious royal Fortune", which became in popular usage the city of the sacred sword - or in Cambodian, Prah Khan"*.

In contrast to Ta Prohm or Banteay Kdei - other foundations of Jayavarman VII - the four access paths crossing the moats are here bordered by the same lines of giants holding the naga which also precede the gates of Angkor Thom, whose architectural symbolism we have studied in previous chapters. At Prah Khan, as in the distant city of Banteay Chmar where they can again be found, this element was the mark of a royal city, further confirmed by the planning of the entrances that are set on level ground, in contrast to the usual

Prah Khan

"The sacred sword"

Date	second half of 12th century (1151)
King	Jayavarman VII (posthumous name: Maha paramasangata pada)
Cult	Buddhist
Clearing	initiated by H. Marchal from 1927 to 1932 Continued with partial anastylosis by M. Glaize in 1939 Various consolidation and restoration work carried out since 1946



arrangement, in order to allow the passage of carts and elephants. Prah Khan, where one finds no faced towers like those at the Bayon, or outer enclosures as at Ta Prohm, Banteay Kdei, Ta Som or Angkor Thom - and which must therefore have preceded them - quite probably served as the provisional residence of Jayavarman VII during the reconstruction of his capital, devastated by the Chams in 1177.

As a temple, the stele tells us that in 1191 a statue was consecrated in Prah Khan to bodhisattva Lokeshvara, named Jayavarmesvara, who was none other than an image of the father of Jayavarman VII, Dharanindravarman - in the same way that Ta Prohm was dedicated to his mother represented in Prajnaparamita.

It also refers to the existence of 515 other statues, to one of the 102 royal hospitals of the kingdom (which has not been found), and to a house of fire or stage-post. The attendants and servants numbered 97,840 men and women, a thousand of whom were dancers. Eighteen major annual festivals and ten days public holiday a month give evidence of the taste that the Khmer have always had for leisure and their religious ceremonies.

DESCRIPTION.

Prah Khan, like most other temples of Jayavarman's reign, is not uniform in style. It shows evidence of numerous alterations and additions - and although a Buddhist monastery, there is nonetheless an abundance of Brahmanic iconography.

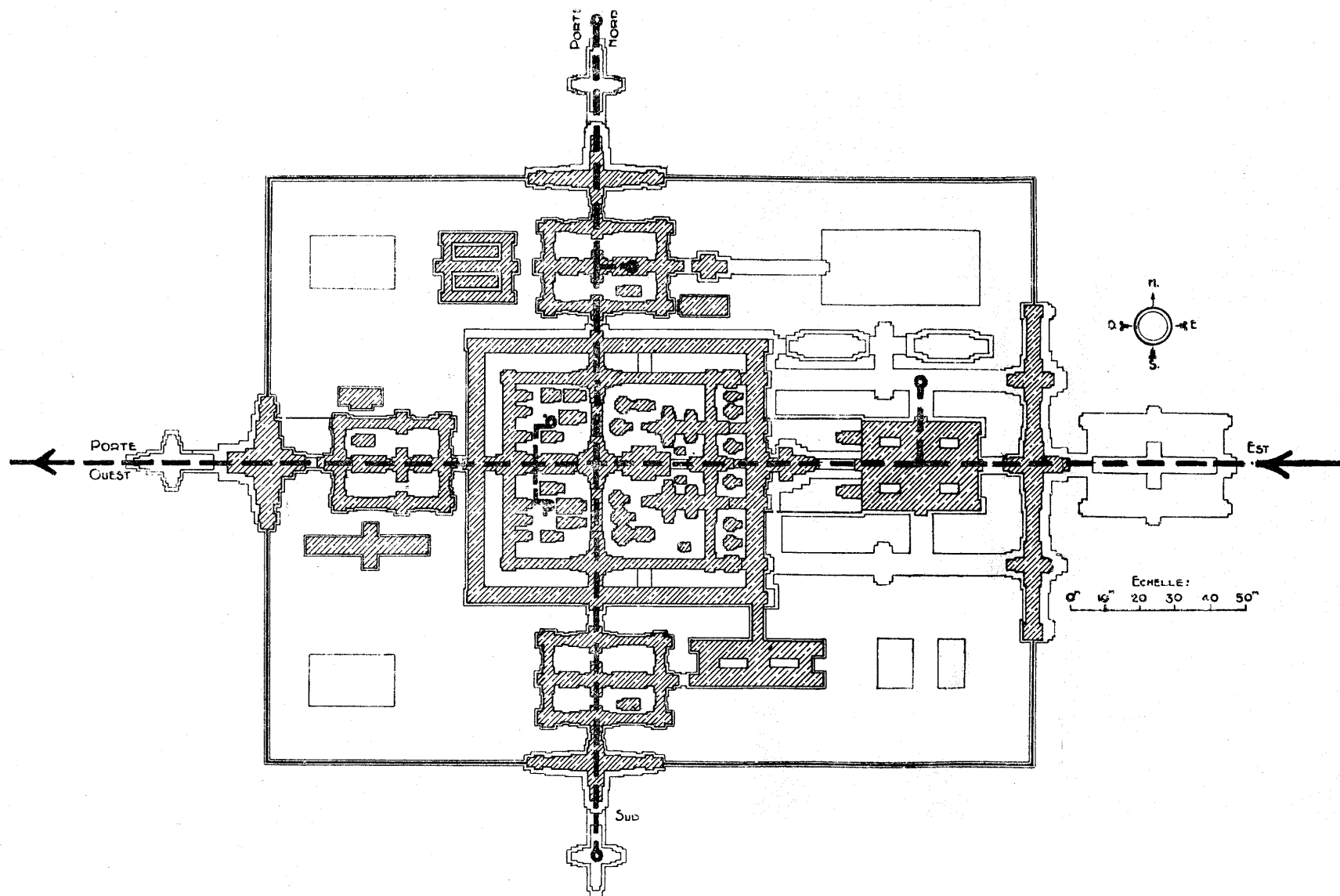
It has two concentric galleries and, similarly, two enclosures formed by simple walls - the closest to the centre containing important groups of galleries and sanctuaries on the axes which, as a crossing cloister to the east, become veritable temples in reduction in the other orientations.

The visit is easy since recent clearing works have opened the axial circulation by clearing the fallen rubble. From the east to the west, as from north to south, is a long line of door openings, vestibules, rooms and galleries - and we recommend that one follows the central route while making as many deep forays on either side as possible.

The temple was previously overrun with a particularly voracious vegetation and quite ruined, presenting only chaos. Clearing works were undertaken with a constant respect for the large trees which give the composition a pleasing presentation without constituting any immediate danger. At the same time, some partial anastylosis has revived various buildings found in a sufficient state of preservation and presenting some special interest in their architecture or decoration.

The *route Fombertaux*, leading to the eastern entrance, ends at the ancient terrace which served as a landing for boats on the western bank of the "*Jayatataka*" - the large reservoir of 3,500 metres by 900 - which is axial on Prah Khan and has the tiny island of Neak Pean at its centre. Of the original arrangement there remains but some foundations and steps in laterite, preceded towards the lake by two beautiful "*gajasimha*" lions.²⁹

From here, the perspective of the ensemble must have been magnificent, responding to the natural partiality of the Khmer for grand schemes. The avenue with decorative bornes followed by the pavement bordered with giants carrying the naga across the moats, leading to the external enclosure, is one of the finest realisations in Angkor, and irresistibly brings to mind the noble presentations of Versailles or of the Grand Trianon. It is only regrettable that the two lines of bornes are set closer together than are the two chains of giants, so masking rather than complementing them - a fault in the composition that could easily have been rectified.



One hundred metres long and ten metres wide, the avenue is repeated to the west with a little less dimension, while to the north and south there are only the chains of devas and asuras. Each borne has its shank sculpted with monsters, standing “as *atlantes*”, and the square top decorated with four niches containing a seated Buddha. The image of the Sage - systematically butchered during the Brahmanic reaction of the 13th century - unfortunately only remains on two of them - at the return to the western end on either side of the axis.

The external gopura of the fourth enclosure has three towers, the central of which has four upper tiers and forms a clear passage at ground level, so dominating the two others which have only two tiers and secondary doors. Here one can clearly see all the characteristics of the Bayon style - the general decoration of the walls that are embroidered on a base of foliated scrolls, small devatas and false windows with partially lowered blinds. Large garudas brandishing the naga, over five metres in height, stand with their backs to the laterite wall on each side of the building - a motif that is repeated every fifty metres along the surrounding three kilometre external enclosure. At the corners they are more developed, and stand in their full glory - we would particularly draw attention to the one in the north-east corner, which has been fully restored and is accessible from the north gate by skirting the outside of the wall.

One of the finest works of Khmer statuary, a kneeling Prajnaparamita with a divine purity of expression, was found in this gopura during the clearing works. The original is now in Paris at the Musée Guimet, although there is a copy at the National Museum in Phnom Penh.

To the north of the forest track leading to the third enclosure and still practically intact stands the “*house of fire*” for the pilgrims, mentioned in the inscription. It is similar to the one at Ta Prohm, with particularly thick walls and windows with a double line of balusters. Its multiple corbelled vault,

which undulates like the framing line of a fronton, allows the principal room an exceptional width of 4m.70 overall.

A vast terrace on two levels with lions and naga-balustrades in the style of the Bayon allows access to the five-doored gopura, which aligns its three towers and its two extreme pavilions on a front of nearly a hundred metres, the whole being linked by galleries with pillars to the outside and a rear wall ornate with false windows with balusters towards the courtyard. To the south of the axis, a pair of large trees, resting on the vault itself of the gallery, frame its openings and brace the stones in substitute for pillars in a caprice of nature that is as fantastic as it is perilous.

From here to the interior of the third enclosure, contained within a laterite wall, there is the usual cruciform court forming four small courtyards surrounded by galleries with side-aisles on pillars. Certain elements of the half vaults, carefully coursed and dressed, are still in place, with their ornamentation of lotus blossomed coffers. Above the openings, the presence of several remarkably fine apsara friezes confirm the probable use of this area as a hall for ritual dance.

Leaving by the north one can see, to the side of a pavement bordered with nagas, the curious arrangement of massive closely set pillars which also exists at Ta Prohm and Banteay Kdei - with the exception that here they stand as large cylindrical columns - the only example in Angkor in this dimension. They serve to support a first floor in masonry, whose window frames have been reconstructed on the ground, though no trace of any access stair has been found. Opposite is a long raised terrace with laterite retaining walls.

Returning to the principal east-west axis of the monument, one then passes through the ritual dance hall, which one leaves by a courtyard enclosing two “*libraries*” within its walls, opening to the west, and a pseudo-gopura that forms a tower.

The cruciform gallery that follows seems to be slightly later. Its ornamentation is excellent, with the dvarapalas and devatas in high relief framing the openings, its frieze of sculpted - though defaced - Buddhas separated by gracious winged figurines and its corner garudas. Up at the back, barely visible in the half-light, the eastern fronton on the gopura of the first enclosure is quite particular in nature with its palace door motif framing two figures - male and female - mounted on a base and elegantly dressed.

To the left, the first small courtyard has been cleared. It must have been delightful, with its surrounding cloistered gallery ornate with gracious devatas - until one of the towers, still in rough form, came as an unfortunate addition to obstruct its near totality.

The stele, discovered miraculously intact under a pile of rubble, has been replaced in its original location in the western vestibule of the first gopura.³⁰ Practically identical to that at Ta Prohm and of the same size, 2m.00 by 0m.60, it is inscribed on each of its four sides with 72 lines of angular writing that is characteristic of the late 12th century.

Two minuscule "*libraries*" with a particularly dense ornamentation frame the western door, whose imposing fronton - consecrated to the glory of the triumphant king - has been repositioned. Surrounded by large trees which so far it has been possible to spare, a vast cruciform hall with pillars separates the north-east and south-east quarters from the internal courtyard which, not yet cleared, is choked with more or less ruined buildings. Its walls are peppered with small holes and it must once have been covered, like the interior of the central sanctuary that follows, with wooden or metal panels. The sanctuary is clearly offset to the west and so divides the court into two unequal parts.

The main tower is cruciform in plan and has four avant-corps, and externally would seem to have been sculpted and then pitted to receive a

covering of mortar. Within its eastern vestibule was erected - in 1943, after having been found in the neighbouring undergrowth - a large statue of a standing Lokesvara with eight arms that would seem to correspond to the "*Lokesa called Shri Jayavarmesvara*".³¹ According to the foundation stele this should have been found in the main tower, and is in the image of the father of Jayavarman VII. Clearly in the style of the Bayon, the countenance is inspired with the same serene spirituality as the statue of the kneeling deified princess represented in the aspect of the Prajnaparamita (discovered in 1929 in this temple and mentioned above) - the two seeming to be by the same artist. The whole effect is concentrated in the expression of the face that glows with an imperceptible smile and an intense vitality. The simply modelled body stands firmly on oversized legs and has the peculiarity of being "*irradiating*" - it is covered with tiny figures of the Buddha from the toes, ankles and wrists to the chest, shoulders and the small curls of the hair. The only two hands which remained holding the disc and the rosary were broken off and stolen in 1945, during the Japanese occupation.

The central sanctuary is now occupied by the crowning motif of a stupa, the elements of which were found in the rubble of the sanctuary chamber. Unusual in form with its slender, banded shaft (tiered parasols?), it is no doubt of a later date. From here, the four lines of rooms and galleries which stretch to the four cardinal points can be viewed with their delightful play of shadow and light.

Taking one of the monumental galleries with double side-aisles which leave it on three of its axes, the visitor with a little time can explore either to the south, where from the avenue of giants (which no longer stand), the perspective stretches through a clearing in the forest to the moats of Angkor Thom - or, better, to the north, where the chains of devas and asuras have been re-established on either side of the pathway leading to the 8th kilometre of the Grand circuit.

The third gopura north is surrounded by some delightful trees, the “srajaos” with their white channelled trunks, which frame it beautifully. Its principal entrance is preceded by two enormous dvarapalas and a cruciform terrace, and has an interesting fronton; - it shows a lively scrum which is probably an episode from the battle of Lanka (Ramayana). Passing through the small cloister that forms a complete temple between the second and third gopuras, one can find a Ganesha in the central tower³² and, on its eastern axial gallery, two superb frontons of Brahmanic inspiration - the “*Reclining Vishnou*” and “*Shiva between Vishnou and Brahma*”.

Leaving the central sanctuary towards the west, one should visit the north-west and south-west quarters of the internal courtyard of the first enclosure - which have been entirely restored - with their numerous buildings sited without order and sometimes juxtaposed, which Mr Cœdes sees quite justifiably as “*funerary chapels - or family tombs*”. Some of them are vaulted, unusually, with a cloistered arch. The centre of the courtyard is marked by one of the isolated standing pillars with a top tenon, similar to those in other temples of the same period and which perhaps carried a miniature wooden temple containing some offerings. Each corner of the first enclosure gallery is marked by a high tower with reducing upper tiers - the one to the south-west has been reconstructed. It is interesting that, on the walls of the two symmetrical pavilions closest to the central sanctuary, the ascetics in arches on the north-western quarter remain unscathed, while on the south-western, the images of the Buddha have all been defaced.

Passing the first and second gopuras and continuing through the small temple in reduction with cloistered galleries like those encountered to the north and south, one can see a fronton representing “*Krishna raising mount Govardhana*” to shelter the shepherds and their flocks. It should be noted that all the tympanums with scenes in this part of the temple are dedicated to Vishnou and his various manifestations, in accordance with the convention for images of this god, so closely associated with the west.

The large gopura of the third enclosure - presenting a front of nearly 40 metres and entirely restored - has its central core formed in a crossing of aisles with groined vaults supported on pillars, with half vaulted side-aisles. It is quite close in style to Angkor Wat, though the external decoration, crowded with numerous figurines on a base of foliated scrolls that covers the entire surface of its panels, is very much in the style of the Bayon.

Among the fine frontons one can see; - to the east, on a royal embarkation, the “*chess players*” which one can also find in the south-west gallery of the bas-reliefs at Angkor Wat - and to the west, an episode from the battle of Lanka (Ramayana). The western door is found with its two dvarapalas and its access terrace guarded by lions, once again practically intact.

A long cutting through the forest creates a dramatic vista that accentuates the monumental character of the composition and finally allows one to exit the temple through the three towered gopura of its fourth enclosure - whose restoration intervened just in time to save the ruin of its crumbling structures whose vaults only remained in place by a miracle of balance. The pavement bordered with giants that crosses the moat was restored to its original condition, with complete success on the side of the asuras, as was the avenue of decorative bornes with defaced Buddhas that joins the road of the Grand circuit at its seventh kilometre.

Krol Damrei

"The Elephant Park"

Eight hundred metres after the 7th kilometre marker stone indicating the western entrance to Prah Khan, a path on the left of the road leads to Krol Damrei, which can be found 75 metres into the forest. This curious ruin, discovered in 1924, forms an elliptical arena of about 45 metres by 55 that is entered by two large openings at either extremity of the longer axis. A broad laterite retaining wall of 3m.00 in height surrounds it, restraining a large embankment that must have allowed the construction of a platform - the wooden poles of which would have been held in the vertical slots that can be seen located around the perimeter at two metre intervals. This arrangement, where one can still see a drainage channel for foul water towards the north, must have formed a place for taming the elephants.



The miniature temple of Banteay Srei is located twenty kilometres north-east of the Bayon as the crow flies, not far from the right bank of the Stung Siem Reap, the river that descends from the Phnom Kulen to flow into the Tonle Sap. Situated in the middle of the forest, small in scale and in a region lacking in archaeological remains, one can understand why it escaped general attention for so long - its discovery by lieutenant Marec, an officer in the geographic service, was in fact only made in 1914. It was not cleared until 1924, following the theft and ensuing scandal the previous year of some important stones. These were eventually recovered and restored to their original positions during the course of restoration work.

The total success of the anastylosis, undertaken by Mr Marchal, caused the general adoption of this technique for the restoration of the monuments by our archaeological service, directly inspired by methods used by archaeologists in Java - and although the task at Banteay Srei was eased by the diminutive volume of the buildings, by the small blocks of stone cut from a durable sandstone which retained its sharp profiles and by the abundance of a remarkably well preserved and clearly visible decoration, the achievement of Mr Marchal is no less impressive since he was obliged to employ his skill on a particularly distant site with difficult access and with minimal means - and with an unskilled and inexperienced work force who had first to be trained from scratch.

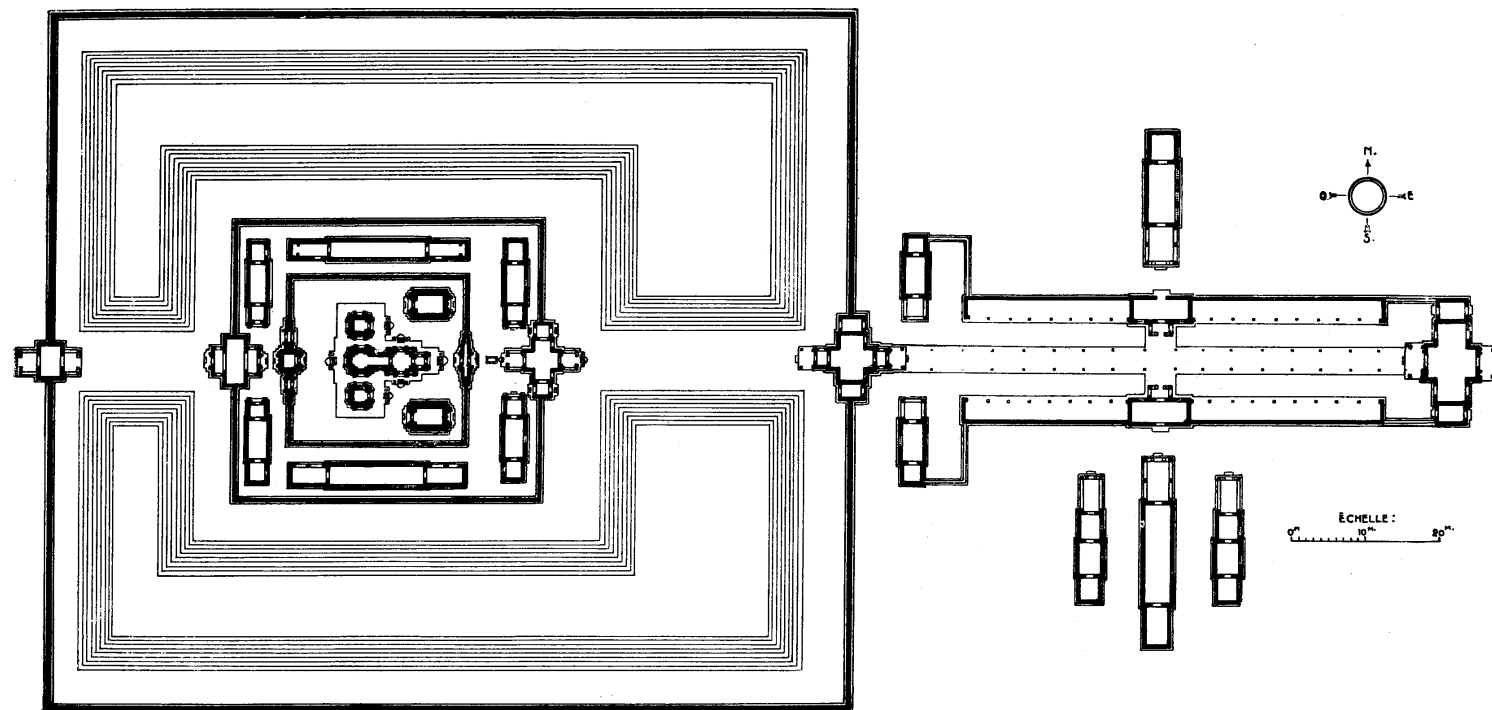
Negotiations by Japan in 1941 ended the hostilities between Thailand and France, ensuring that Banteay Srei would be left to Cambodia - even though situated to the north of the 15th degree that marked the new frontier - by the creation of a triangular enclave which was effectively in part of Thailand. This provisional solution was unconditionally reversed by Thailand's restitution at the end of 1946.

The track to Banteay Srei, though sandy in places, is always passable by car, except for three or four weeks from September to October when the rains are particularly heavy. It leaves the Grand Circuit between Pre Rup and the eastern Mebon to head east through the delightful village of Pradak, where it forks to the north, at two kilometres from the point of its departure, to skirt, after another ten kilometres, the village of Khna - where those with a taste for coconut milk will be able to refresh themselves on their return. After six more kilometres it leads to a parking area. Walking from the river, which here cuts deep and is cleared by a foot bridge, one finally gains, by the road straight ahead and at the first fork, the eastern entrance to the temple - after some 500 metres.³³

Banteay Srei

"The women's citadel"

Date	2nd half of the 10th century (967)
King	Yajnavaraha under the reign of Rajendravarman II and Jayavarman V
Cult	Brahmanic (Shivaïte)
Clearing	by H. Parmentier and V. Goloubew in 1924 with anastylosis by H. Marchal from 1931 to 1936.



Given the very particular charm of Banteay Srei - its remarkable state of preservation and the excellence of a near perfect ornamental technique - one should not hesitate, of all the monuments of the Angkor group, to give it the highest priority. Although, in our opinion, there is no gain in trying to classify the quite different monuments of Angkor Wat, Banteay Srei or the Bayon in order of merit - nevertheless, Banteay Srei is by popular consensus a "*precious gem*", the "*jewel of Khmer art*". This commendation, however, also carries with it the only justifiable criticism - which is that the work relates more closely to the art of the goldsmith or to carving in wood than to sculpture in stone. The very nature of the material used - a hard red sandstone that can be worked like wood - has inspired the artist not to carve in volume, but rather, in the reduced scale of the composition and the proximity of the buildings - whose bare walls have disappeared under a dense overall decoration - to have made the temple itself like a half scale model, to the detriment of any architectural theme or monumental character.

The proportions of Banteay Srei remain unexplained and always amaze - it is a sort of "*caprice*", where the exquisite and abundant detail is more impressive than the mass. And while it is generally true that the outlying sanctuaries never attain the grandeur of the capital temples, and that the Khmer, used to seeing the Meru in a pyramid, the ocean in a moat and chains of mountains in the retaining walls, readily accepted small things for large - here, nevertheless, all the usual devices are distorted, with gopuras the usual thickness of a large wall and minuscule openings where the priest could not enter but by crawling.

This anomaly is particularly marked in the sacred enclosure, contributing at one time, following the erroneous interpretation of certain epigraphic data, to the assignment to the buildings of a later date - it was thought that the three sanctuary towers were not constructed until nearly the year 1300 in replacement of a single sanctuary of the normal grandeur - of the 10th century as the other enclosures - which occupied the same space.

It is now known, with the discovery in 1936 in the eastern Gopura of the fourth enclosure of the temple's foundation stele, that Banteay Srei formed a whole, whose style proves quite homogenous. Inscribed in 968, the first year of the reign of Jayavarman V, the inscription gives, with the position of the sun, the moon and the planets, the date of April-May 967 - the last year of Rajendravarman's reign, under whom at least some of the construction was probably started. After the invocation of Shiva and of his "*Sakti*", the text contains an eulogy of Jayavarman V and of his "*Guru*", Yajnavaraha, who founded Banteay Srei with his younger brother, erecting the linga of Shiva Shri Tribhuvanamahesvara in the central sanctuary. Other inscriptions engraved on the jambs of door openings mention the placing of another linga in the southern sanctuary, and of a statue of Vishnou in the northern.

DESCRIPTION

The temple is presented to the east with a cruciform laterite gopura. This is flanked by two small side doors and probably corresponded to an external enclosure (fourth enclosure) formed as a timber palisade. The eastern door, with its sandstone pillars, the fine ornament of its pilasters and the fronton of Indra on a three headed elephant, give a taste of the internal decoration to come - and of the beautiful rose tint of the stone. The location of the beams which carried the tiled roof still remains visible in the masonry.

A processional way bordered with decorative bornes - that were toppled conscientiously every year by the wild elephants - leads to the third enclosure. Lining either side are galleries, with foundation walls in laterite and pillars in sandstone. These are intersected towards their middle by small buildings, like gopuras, which lead, to the south, to three long rooms orientated in parallel north-south, and to the north to a single-roomed building. Here one should notice the superb fronton where Vishnou in the form of the god-lion (Narasimha) is holding Hiranya-Kasipu - the king of the Asuras who has dared to challenge him - upside-down below him while cleaving his chest with his claws. On the ground near the entrance is a long

stone representing seven feminine divinities, facing forward on their mounts - then, to the side, a Ganesha and an unidentified figure. The remains of two other buildings can be seen before arriving at the third enclosure, near to which, on the north side, the fronton of the eastern door of the third gopura east has been reconstructed on the ground. It shows, mounted in a decoration of foliated scrolls with animals and small figures, the abduction of Sita - the wife of Rama - by the Yeak Viradha.

The temple as such is composed of three enclosures defined by simple walls that measure respectively 95m.00 by 110m.00 - 38m.00 by 42m.00 - and 24m.00 by 24m.00.

The third enclosure from the centre is formed by a moat surrounded by laterite steps, with a border to both sides, divided to the east and west by a causeway that leads to the two gopuras. The wall is in laterite and the eastern gopura, whose plan is the same as that of the fourth gopura east, dominates the western. Preceded by small lions, it has a superb *"acolade"* formed base step, a pedestal and three passageways. The fronton of its west portico was not replaced but sent instead to the Musée Guimet in Paris. It shows the *"story of the apsara Tilottama, created by the gods in order to cause discord between the two brothers, Sunda and Upasunda - formidable asuras who wrought havoc in the universe. The sculptor has reproduced the moment where the two, each seizing the apsara by a hand, are in dispute over her possession"*. (G. Coëdes). This scene, taken from the Mahabharata, is very simple in composition but perfectly balanced - with the clear background between the figures further enhancing the modelling.

The second enclosure is also surrounded with a laterite wall and intersected by two gopuras of differing size. Offset towards the west with respect to the third, it contains six building annexes in laterite - the tiled coverings of which have naturally disappeared. These are rest galleries divided into three sections. The two longest are to the north and south, while

the others flank each of the gopuras. The east gopura, again cruciform in plan with three passageways, has each of its double-pillared porticoes set with superb superposed triangular frontons which follow the slope of the roof, recalling architecture in timber. Their bordered frames in large terminal volutes are crowned with deeply cut motifs of a refined elegance which, like their tympanums, are purely ornamental in decoration. Frontons treated in similar spirit are to be found at Koh Ker (10th century) and Preah Vihear (11th century), in the northern part of Cambodia - conceded in 1941 to Thailand and regained at the end of 1946. A small Nandin, the mount of Shiva, lies facing the temple to the west of the gopura.

The buildings of the first enclosure have undergone complete anastylosis, restored in every detail to their original condition. The integrity of the decor - even in its excess - is further enhanced by the numerous antefixes and corner stones in the form of the prasat which, on the sanctuary towers, line the cornices of the four upper tiers. Crowned with a *"Kalasa"*, or a symbolic water jar, these are particularly slender in proportion - they seem to shimmer in the light, and bring to mind the dense complexity of Hindu art. This is no longer the monotonous *"uniform density"* inherent in the architectural method of the Khmer. However, nowhere is there chaos - the profiles are as sharp as the lines are everywhere decorous - nor any lack of style.

The enclosure wall is in brick, as is its western gopura. This has a central room forming a sanctuary flanked by two passageways. The eastern gopura, all in sandstone and with a single passage, is so narrow that a man can barely squeeze into its wings.

On either side, two *"libraries"* open to the west and have their long façades in plain laterite and sandstone under a corbelled brick vault. Opposite is the central group, presented on a single 0m.90 high platform in a simple T form. Three towers are aligned to the front in an arrangement

reminiscent of Prah Ko, Phnom Krom and Phnom Bok. The two lateral towers are 8m.34 in height while the central is 9m.80. The sanctuary chambers are 1m.70 and 1.90 metres each side respectively. By a kind of anticipation - in accordance with an arrangement which one will often find in the 12th century - the central sanctuary is preceded to the east by a long room, or more exactly here by a square chamber with lateral doors between a portico and a junction vestibule. All are roofed in corbelled brickwork like the "*libraries*", and the interior is as bare as the exterior is ornate.

Banteay Srei, apart from its diminutive form, has also the particularity that it is both a reflection of the past - but not to the point of regression - and an advance to the future in its innovation. Through refinement it takes the best of all that had preceded - its affinity with the art of Roluos is clear - and submits it to new creation in a dynamic form of high art.

The arrangement of the plan - the stacking of superimposed frontons and the variety of the terminal motifs of their framing curves, - the appearance of bas-reliefs with scenes on the tympanums which until then were reserved for the representation of isolated figures, most often in hieratic poses, - the wall tapestry with squares and motifs with foliated scrolls, - the multiplication of heads of Kala, treated in purely decorative fashion, - the replacement of lions on the stair-walls by human figures with heads of monsters; - all of these are the mark of a general reconsideration, the majority of whose elements will be found time and again during the classical period, though often treated with considerably less skill.

The enchanting decoration requires detailed study. Besides the moulding of the profiles, the false doors, the frames of the frontons and the bands of foliated scrolls - which indicate a veritable "*renaissance*" several centuries before the Renaissance in Europe - we would also generally draw the visitor's attention to the following:-

1ST GOPURA EAST

The superb sculptural work on the east lintel, and the central motif on the west lintel where a divinity with four arms and the head of a horse overcomes two Yeaks whom he is holding by the hair - and the west fronton, where the goddess Durga with eight arms, helped by her lion, wrestles with a demon buffalo which a serpent entwines in his coils.

SOUTH LIBRARY

The two frontons, dedicated to Shiva; - To the east (Ramayana) is the giant Ravana, with multiple heads and arms, trying to shake the mount Kailasa - represented by a tiered pyramid similar to the mount Meru of the temple-mountains and set on a stylised forest background. At the summit sits Shiva with his wife Parvati crouching beside him in a delightfully abandoned pose. The different tiers are populated by animals that flee in terror, by figures with animal heads and by ascetics.

To the west, in a similar composition inspired by the Kalidasa, is Kama the god of love, shooting an arrow at Shiva - close to whom is Parvati, giving him a rosary and trying to disrupt his meditations.

NORTH LIBRARY

The two frontons, inspired by the legend of Vishnou.

To the east (Harivamsa) is the "*Rain of Indra*", or beneficial rain, indicated by parallel lines which fall on a stylised forest inhabited with animals and through which pass the child Krishna with his brother Balarama. The god, mounted on a three headed elephant, dominates the clouds - represented by many undulating lines. On the axis stands the naga, the symbol of water.³⁴

To the west is the murder of king Kamsa by Krishna. The scene, inspired by the Bhagavata Pourana and the Harivamsa, takes place in a



palace, giving a precise indication of the contemporary wooden architecture - mounted on poles with reducing superstructures like the prasats in stone. The two principal figures, in their oversize, give an appearance of perspective that is rare in the reading of the bas-reliefs.

The four frontons, representing the first appearance of tympanums with scenes, are works of the highest order. Superior in composition to any which followed, they show true craftsmanship in their modelling in a skilful blend of stylisation and realism.

Other interesting frontons include the one on the west gopura, second enclosure, east side, which has been restored. It shows the duel of the two monkeys, Valin and Sugriva - the ally of Rama - who dispute the Royalty (Ramayana), - and from the same gopura but returned to the sculpture storeroom at the Conservation Office, another depicting the wrestling between the Pandava Bhima and the Kaurava Duryodhana (Mahabharata) in the presence of Krishna with four arms and his brother, Balarama, armed with a ploughshare. Both compositions are light and restrained, showing similarities in their execution to the history of the "*apsaras Tilottama*" described previously.

SANCTUARY TOWERS

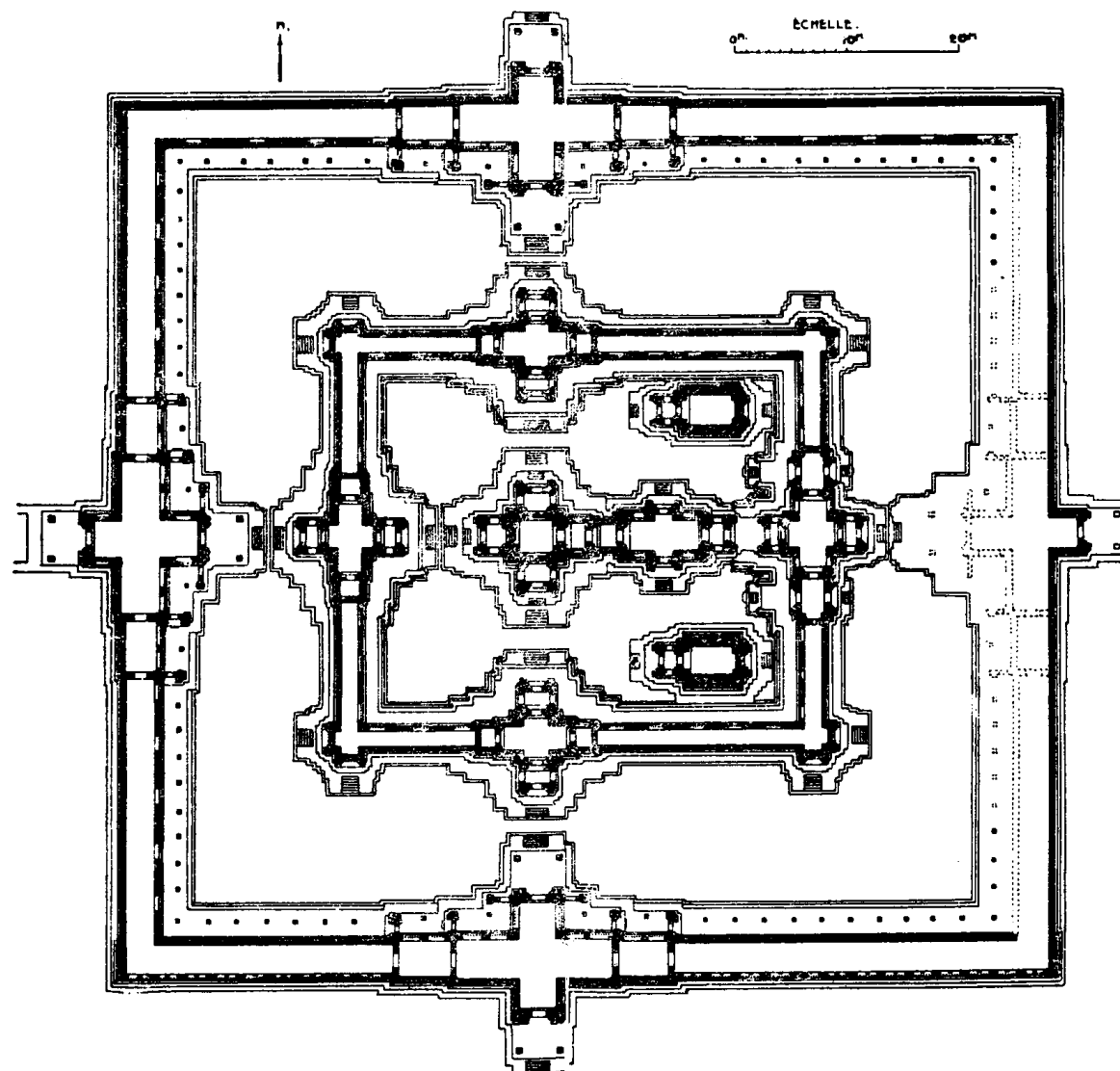
The delightful statuettes of devatas under arches of the corner piers of the north and south towers and the gracious young "*guardians*" of the central tower.

The male figures stand elegantly in a slightly "*hipped*" stance with their hair set in a cylindrical chignon. They gracefully hold a lotus bud in one hand and their lance in the other. The female devatas, standing similarly, have their torsos naked and play with flowers. Their hair is set in plaits and they are richly adorned. Above, separated from a head of Kala by a lotus, female figures playing cymbals give rhythm to a female dancer with a large bell

dress, like those one can see in the art of the Bakheng, and particularly of Phnom Krom.

Of the lintels enhanced with figures one should note, on the central sanctuary; - to the north, the duel between the monkeys Valin and Sugriva, - to the west, the abduction of Sita, - and to the south, a wild boar, viewed from the front, who is perhaps an allusion to the founder of the temple, Yajna-varaha ("*the sacrificial boar*"). On the north Sanctuary, north side, a god cleaves his enemy from head to navel.

Excavation revealed several interesting pieces of sculpture in the round, worthy of narrative or ornamental sculpture and, like the temple itself, small in scale. Six male and female statues in two groups were found close to the east gopura of the third enclosure, - Shiva and Uma from the central sanctuary are now in the National Museum in Phnom Penh. There were also figures crouching on the stair-walls with bodies of men and heads of monsters; - monkeys in front of the south entrance of the long room, lions in front of the south tower, garudas in front of the north tower and a kind of negroid in front of the west side of the central sanctuary.



A visit to Banteay Samre can be combined with an excursion to Banteay Srei, which it should precede if possible. The whole trip takes perhaps half a day and is best made in the morning.

From the Grand Circuit a track, which can often be sandy and difficult on a bicycle or rickshaw, leads from a point at 14 kilometres from Siem Reap, between Pre Rup and the eastern Mebon, straight in five kilometres to the path giving access to the eastern causeway of the monument. Two kilometres from its point of departure, in the village of Pradak, one passes the road to Banteay Srei to the left. 1700 metres further on one crosses an earth embankment forming the eastern dike of the ancient eastern baray. After another 500 metres, the first road right leads to the temple's north entrance, while the second, 300 metres further at the signpost indicating the crossing of the tracks, takes one to the extreme eastern end of the access causeway. One's car can then wait in front of the north gate.

The Samres are an indigenous people of uncertain origin - they populated the region at the foot of the Kulen hills, and the inhabitants of Pradak are considered as their descendants.

The monument itself has its own story, related with particular relish by Mr Baradat. It tells of the accession to the throne of a poor farmer of Samre origin named Pou, who specialised in the cultivation of sweet cucumbers - the seeds of which he had received in some supernatural manner. He made homage of his first harvest to the king, who found them so succulent that he quickly secured exclusive rights, ordering Pou to kill anybody, man or beast, who should enter his "*chamcar*" (field).

In the season of the rains when the cucumbers were scarce, the sovereign, impatient for their taste, went himself to visit his gardener - but, arriving after nightfall, was mortally wounded by the farmer with a blow from his lance, being mistaken for a thief and buried as such in the middle of the field.

The king had no direct descendants, and the dignitaries of the kingdom, unable to agree on the choice of his successor, resorted to divine intervention, calling for the "*Victory Elephant*" to designate the new king. Stopping just in front of the sweet cucumber farmer, it "*saluted him, lowered its trunk between its feet, kneeled and, encircling him with its coiling trunk, placed him gently on its back*".

Banteay Samre

"The Samres' citadel"

Date	towards the middle of the 12th century
Cult	Brahmanic (Vishnou)
Clearing	cleared in 1930. Anastylosis by Mr Glaize from 1936 to 1944

So becoming king, the cucumber farmer exhumed the corpse of his predecessor to celebrate the funerary ceremony at the Mebon, followed by the rites of cremation at Pre Rup. The court dignitaries, humiliated at being governed by a Samre, soon expressed their discontent by neglecting to show any respect. The king, unable to discipline them with either kindness or cruelty, left the Royal Palace and went to live at some distance from the city - at Banteay Samre - where he *"remained shut away like a frightened tortoise with its head in its shell"*. There, he summoned his ministers who remained loyal to the attributes of the royalty and the regalia of the old king rather than to the Master himself and, when he could take no more, resolved to punish them. Calling for the commode of his predecessor, he decapitated all those who chose to humiliate him by rather showing their devotion to this miserable relic of the previous dynasty. His reign followed from thenceforth in harmony amongst his followers who, overcome by his compassion, became faithful to him.

Banteay Samre, overrun with vegetation and cluttered with fallen blocks from its upper parts, had all the usual charm of ruins lost in the forest, but was no more than an object without form or personality. Anastylis has transformed it into one of the finest monuments of the Angkor group, and one of the most complete. Its ornamentation, exceptional in quality and very well preserved in its entirety, became thereafter presented in its unified integrity - it is a pure specimen of the classic art from the finest period where the decoration, shown to its best advantage on a clear background, is itself a function of the architecture.

Following the resurrection of Banteay Srei, this first attempt at the restoration of a monument of any considerable size proved that the new method of work was justified and the confidence placed in its success well founded. Although undated, since no inscription was found - unlike other monuments in the same style - Banteay Samre is without doubt very close in time to Angkor Wat, and perhaps a little later.

Its slender proportions - though not fully appreciated before the clearing works since the horizontal lines of the truncated buildings barely emerged from their verdant covering - are impeccable, with an internal layout similar to the central part of Beng Mealea or Chau Say Tevoda, with which it is approximately contemporaneous; - enclosed by galleries with four gopuras and a surrounding courtyard, its central sanctuary is preceded to the east by a long room flanked by two *"libraries"*.

Arriving from the east, a 200 metre causeway paved in laterite and bordered by a naga-balustrade in the style of Angkor Wat - which unfortunately barely remains - passes between two *"srahs"* (pools), to end at one of the perrons embellished with lions and supported on colonnettes. On two levels and bordered by nagas - similar to those in front of the entrance to Prah Palilay - this was joined to another terrace that stretched in width to either side of the axis. Its retaining wall, with rich decoration of a quality rarely achieved even during this period, ends in two perrons. These have disappeared, and their absence - which no doubt results from some later use of the materials - detracts considerably from the majesty of the composition. They are followed by the beginnings of two right angle returns, evident by the remains of their laterite foundation walls.

To judge by the remains of a large number of tiles found during clearing works, this vast esplanade was topped with light-weight structures extending to the limit of the eastern enclosure wall, obscuring its 1m.20 high moulded substructure. Excavation carried out during the clearing works discovered some remains of the walls of an ancient terrace, though unclear in plan, which indicated that the arrangement of the immediate surroundings of the temple on the east side must have been altered. The external laterite enclosure wall in its imposing proportion of 6m overall height must have formed, as on the other sides, one of the walls of a tile-covered gallery joining a gopura that would have been far more impressive than the existing projecting entrance with portico. This meanly proportioned arrangement

could not reasonably have constituted the principal entry to a temple as important as Banteay Samre - and its style is in any case of the Bayon, which is later than the monument.

Internally the impression is confirmed - the galleries and gopuras of the second enclosure must either have been demolished or remain incomplete on the eastern side - and a laterite terrace has also been identified just at the outcrop of the projection serving as the plinth for the first gopura. The gallery of the second enclosure, of 83m.00 by 77m.00, encloses a surrounding courtyard at a lower level with a border forming a continuous portico in elegant sandstone pillars. Its side-aisle was once covered in a double-curved tiled roof - the holes for locating the carpentry still being visible in the walls. The main gallery, also with its roof once tiled, has no openings to the exterior except on the south side where long horizontal windows are placed high, while to the courtyard it gains light through numerous windows, each with seven balusters. Those to the south are walled in.

The height of the walls forms a very effective enclosure, corresponding well to the defensive role given to it in the legend of *"the King of the sweet cucumbers"*.

The three north, west and south gopuras are all similar - cruciform in plan with two wings that lead to galleries and two porticoed doors. They are in laterite and sandstone and far more imposing than those of the first enclosure, - the anastylosis has, apart from the tiled roof, enabled the complete restoration of their powerful masonry framework. The pictorial tympanums of the frontons and half frontons, in a composition that stands clearly apart from the usual pattern, are set in very high relief - the figures are larger in scale than those within the temple and differ in technique, showing a superior quality in their modelling. It would seem that, like Angkor Wat, the last enclosure with its gopuras was realised later than the rest of the monument, though maintaining an undeniable unity.

One should particularly note the large frontons on the porticoes, which have had to be supported by a reinforced concrete frame. Inspired by the Ramayana, they describe various episodes of the battle of Lanka where the monkeys play a primary role. The best preserved panel - and one of the finest specimens in Khmer art - is on the north gopura, northern side. It represents, in a high relief standing out from the confusion of monkeys and asuras, the fight between Rama and Ravana, each mounted on his war chariot.

All the others should also be seen:

On the north gopura, southern side, is the charge of the monkeys under the command of Rama, mounted on Hanuman, and Lakshmana, on Angada.

On the south gopura, northern side, the construction by the monkeys of the causeway in rocks that is to enable them to attack the island of Lanka, and, on the half fronton to the right, Vishnou holding an Asura by the hair.

On the south gopura, southern side, Hanuman carries the summit of mount Kailasa (whose magic plants will serve to revive them) to Rama and Lakshmana who have been wounded by Indrajit.

On the west gopura, western side, the ferocious battle between the monkeys and the rakshasas and, on the eastern side, Vishnou overcoming two asuras whom he is holding by the chignon, with, on the half-fronton to the right, a line of gods on their mounts; - Vishnou with four arms on a lion, - Skanda, the god of war, with ten arms and multiple heads, on a peacock, - and Yama, the god of the Dead, on a buffalo.

The internal enclosure (the first enclosure), of 44 metres by 38, is poorly defined by a low and narrow gallery in laterite which, like the other, is

set high with respect to the surrounding ground-level. It has small corner pavilions, and the monotony of its line is fortunately relieved by the crested ridge of sandstone finials which it has, unusually, been possible to partly reconstruct.

The corner elements of this gallery that link the four axial gopuras are closed to the exterior and have no doors, opening only to the internal court with balustered windows - some of which have been walled in - giving a general impression of being prison cells or stores rather than places of meditation or of rest.

The works revealed that these galleries were in fact but an addition, having taken the place of an ancient enclosure wall, the original line of which could be identified on the gable end walls of the gopuras. The sandstone pavement surrounding the interior of the courtyard - with its steps and its balustrades of nagas on blocks with their remarkable five headed terminal motifs - is evidently also not original since, behind its unfinished sculpted plinth, there appeared to be another corresponding to the layout of the entrance pavilions. It would seem, however, that this *"change of mind"* was not a happy one, since the first arrangement in fact left far more space around the buildings, and in particular around the two libraries that now are practically wedged into the corners.

The overall dimensions of Banteay Samre are sufficiently small that, no matter from where, one gets the impression of the whole as being a complete composition of impeccable proportions, and all the more slender since the buildings are all perched high on a platform leaving the courtyard at a lower level. The decorative moulding of the plinth is of the usual design with opposing diamonds and with an horizontal axis of symmetry. It is particularly deeply cut and perfectly executed, embellished on the central band with delightful figurines, trimmed with lotus buds and standing proud from their background. Others are to be found in elevation around the base of the

pillars and the frames of the openings - or, in accordance with the 12th century practice, grouped to form small scenes.

The four gopuras are all similar - formed of a central core with a false upper storey and crossing vaults with two smaller wings which, on the eastern gopura, form secondary passageways. They enclose a cruciform room preceded by projecting vestibules with tiered frontons.

From the eastern gopura, an exposed earth platform gives access to the long room preceding the central sanctuary that is framed by two vestibules and complemented on each of its broad sides by a slightly projecting entrance corresponding to a stairway. The thickness of the walls is accommodated in a false half-vault that has allowed the closing of the windows with a double row of balusters to very good effect. Internally, a delicate relief decoration has been started in places.

The sanctuary is considerably offset to the west and opens only to the long room, enclosing a square chamber of 3m.00 in width. The four avant-corps, three of which correspond to false doors, project to the four cardinal points - their doubled frontons are set in tiers just to the height of the cornice of the principal level, whose corner piers *"reveal the background"*, rising uninterrupted to the full height of the frontons. Above, the four tiers are surmounted with a circular lotus crown capped with a double hat from which must have projected a timber or metal pole, reaching 21m.00 in height in relation to the courtyard ground-level. The numerous antefix stones set on the cornices intensify the play of light and shadow, giving this tower, more so than Angkor Wat, the aspect of a slender latticed cone.

It is interesting to note that many scenes on the frontons of the upper levels have been identified as episodes from the Vessantara Jataka. The presence of Buddhist scenes in a Hindu temple and the fact that in some places certain sculpted motifs - probably also Buddhist - have been mutilated

(notably on the pilasters) makes a curious statement about the religious tolerance of the monument's patron.

Within the eastern part of the courtyard, on either side of the long room, two elegant "*libraries*" open to the west preceded by a vestibule forming a portico. Slender in proportion and with barrel-formed vaults, they have false side-aisles and a false upper storey punctured by horizontal windows, with gable ends forming frontons. Like the central sanctuary, the ornamentation of their false doors is remarkably fine.

Although in places defaced and differing in size, the door lintels and the tympanums of the frontons on the various buildings, either in single or tiered composition, are all interesting and merit being considered in some detail. Few temples present an iconography so complete in such a state of preservation, and we would draw particular attention to the following: -

On the east gopura, east side, the lintel over the secondary southern entrance (Krishna wrestling with the serpent Kaliya), with its fronton showing the "*Churning of the Ocean*" presided over by Brahma and, above the northern entrance, the "*apotheosis of Vishnou on Garuda*".

On the west side "*Vishnou Trivikrama astride the world*" (south entrance), "*Krishna raising the mount Govardhana*" (north entrance), and "*the aerial attack of Indra by the Rakshasas*" (middle vestibule).

On the central sanctuary, the four lintels - almost intact and highly accentuated in relief - the southern of which shows, above a head of Kala, Vishnou with four arms overcoming two figures whom he holds by the hair (a motif which is repeated many times in the temple).

On the north gopura, southern side, a panel of apsaras dancing to the sound of a harp, and Shiva and Uma on Nandin.

On the west gopura, the conjunction of the sun and the moon (east side) and a line of divinities on strange mounts (west side).

On the north library, western side, "*the birth of Brahma*" carried by a lotus, whose stem grows from Vishnou's navel as he reclines on a serpent.

The absence of any devata may seem peculiar. However, on two of the narrow corner piers of the central sanctuary one can see some traces of figures, simply indicated in outline on the stone, as proof again that the sculpture on this temple, like so many others, remained unfinished.

Excavation has revealed only one statue in the round within the temple, of a superbly executed masculine torso, dressed and in a sitting position. Outside the second enclosure, close to the north-west corner, four large standing divinities (dvarapalas?) were discovered lying broken on the ground. In ignorance of their place of origin they have been set in the neighbouring second north gopura.³⁵ A delightful stone tank, the only in Angkor to still have its lid, with a hole pierced in the top of it and with a drainage channel in the bottom, has also been restored and placed in the large room adjacent to the central sanctuary. Mr Coëdes considers it to be some form of sarcophagus, enabling the procedure of periodic ablution of mortal remains which may have been entombed here.³⁶

To finish, we recommend that you leave the temple by the south and walk around the external wall towards the right to the north gate, the parking place for vehicles. On the way one can then also admire, if not having already done so, the frontons of the three gopuras of the second enclosure. To the west, the construction of an axial cruciform terrace remains in its early stages - from where an avenue of 350 metres then leads to the east dike of the baray, forming in the last part of its stretch a wide paved causeway lined with elegant sandstone bornes of which unfortunately only a few remain. They recall the arrangement at Beng Mealea's eastern causeway.

THE ROLUOS GROUP

The Roluos group lies 15 kilometres south-west of Siem Reap and includes three temples - Bakong, Prah Ko and Lolei - dating from the late 9th century and corresponding to the ancient capital of Hariharalaya, from which the name of Lolei is derived.

When king Jayavarman II came from Java to take power at the beginning of the ninth century, he settled twice at Hariharalaya - already an existing city, - first before his investiture on Phnom Kulen (Mahendraparvata) where the cult of the "*Devaraja*" was inaugurated, and then again afterwards, dying there in 850 after a reign of 48 years. His successors remained until Yasovarman founded the first Angkor, centred on Phnom Bakheng.



Bakong is to be found down a sandy track, at about 1,500 metres from *route 6*. The turning is indicated by a signpost 13 kilometres from Siem Reap in the direction of Phnom Penh. The track initially approaches from the north on the same axis as the central sanctuary, which reveals itself at the far end, to then skirt the north-east quarter of the monument's second enclosure and lead to the end of the eastern causeway, just before the remains of the second gopura.

In its pyramidal form - the third after the restrained attempts at Ak Yom to the north-west of Siem Reap and Rong Chen on Phnom Kulen - Bakong presents itself as having been the main temple of Hariharalaya, where the cult of the god king was practised. Here the idol could be elevated in dignity above the plains bordering the great lake, and here the Khmer royalty came to affirm itself - indeed it is not impossible that the construction of this "*temple-mountain*" was initiated by Jayavarman II on his descent from the Kulen hills.

Of all the temples on stepped terraces of the Angkor region, Bakong is perhaps the one which most closely responds to the idea of the cosmic Mount Meru on five levels, corresponding, from bottom to top respectively, to the world of the Nagas, the Garudas, the Rakshasas, the Yakshas, and then to the Maharajas of the four cardinal points with their court.

In the proportion of its tiers, it is the only pyramid that makes allowance for processions and festivals, and being more human in scale than the usual "*stairway to heaven*", it also responds the best to our western principles. Finally it is also the first realisation in sandstone of a large architectural ensemble, a fact indicated by the founder himself - the king Indravarman - who called it "*the stone house of Isa*".

The inscribed stele, discovered in 1935 by G. Trouvé, is remarkable in its calligraphy. After the invocation and eulogy of king Indravarman, it describes the foundation in 881 of the linga Shri Indresvara, and then the setting up in the temple court of eight images or "*murti*" of Shiva - probably either in the eight brick towers surrounding the base of the pyramid or on the pedestals which flank the axial stairways. Other statues in "*stone sanctuaries*" are listed, as are several idols - the cult of some being associated with the deceased nobility. Finally it also mentions the excavation of the Lolei baray, the "*Indratataka*".

Before restoration the temple of Bakong was little more than a mound of earth. Having been the object over the centuries of systematic destruction and subject to various alterations, its sandstone elements had been completely rased and their stones scattered at the base of the pyramid. In particular nothing

Bakong

Date	late 9th century (881)
King	Indravarman I
Cult	Brahmanic (Shivaïte)
Clearing	Clearing work started by Henri Marchal in 1936 Anastylosis by M. Glaize, 1936 - 1943



remained of the central sanctuary - built after the other towers - except for the external outline of its base on the paving of the upper platform. From a pile of rubble it has now reassumed its entire silhouette - from the base to the crown, - a "resurrection" that indeed validates the interest, both aesthetic and documentary, in the methods of anastylosis.

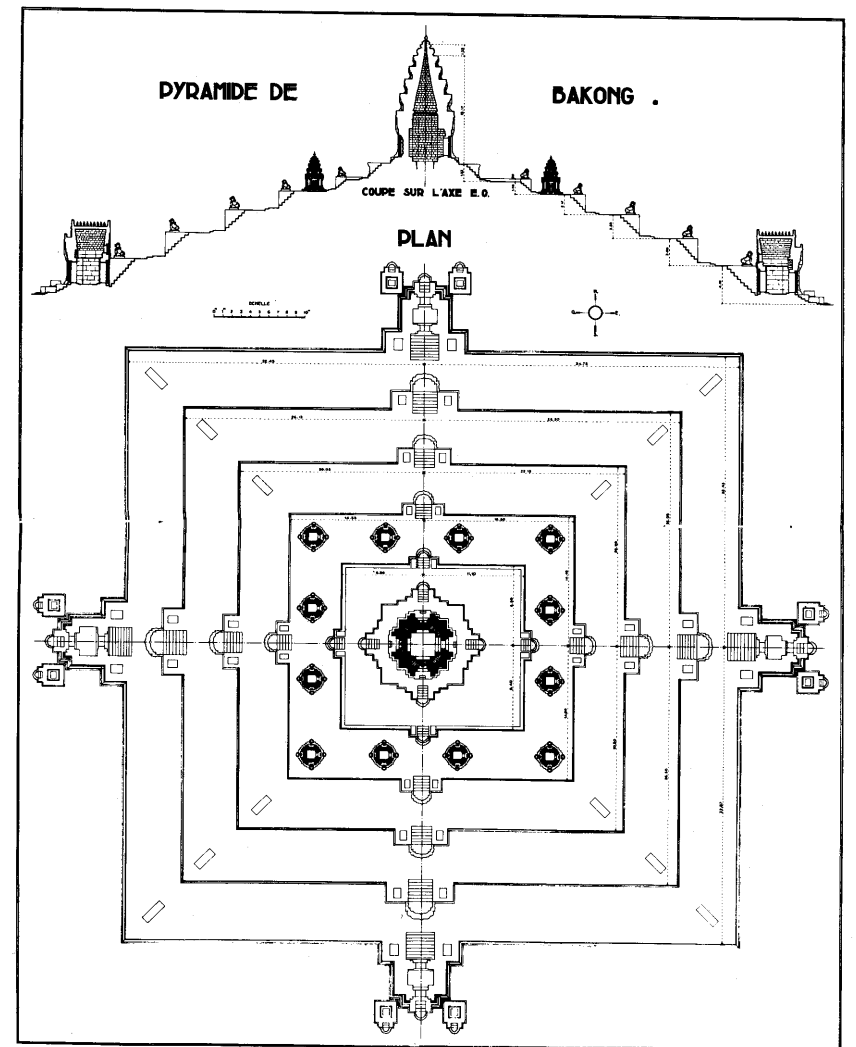
While other restored monuments still stood perhaps ruined but with their crumbled elements lying at their feet, Bakong however presented nothing but chaos, with no clue to the number or nature of the missing buildings. Only by grouping the stones in categories according to their moulding or decoration could one determine their respective positions.

DESCRIPTION

The track to the temple penetrates the third enclosure - an area of some 900 metres east-west by 700 north-south formed by a moat that only remains visible in places - leaving to the left, on the north side and close to the north-east corner, a group of three brick towers aligned north-south of which only one still stands.

Similar remnants of wall stand just to the south of the main axis, close to the eastern gopura of the second enclosure, - the remains all part of a series of brick buildings, generally badly ruined, that surround the monument. They number 22 in total - six on the west side, four on each of the other sides and four at the corners. Mostly they stand as isolated towers grouped in twos or threes, except in two cases, opening some to the east and some towards the pyramid - with which they are contemporaneous. Their clearing has enabled the discovery not only of some interesting architectural elements (lintels, colonnettes, "accolade" formed base steps) and several lingas, but also of some remarkable statues of Shiva and Vishnou.

The second enclosure is defined by a laterite wall of 400 by 300 metres that is partially buried and intersected to the east and west by laterite



and sandstone gopuras - cruciform in plan but badly ruined - and others to the north and south that are similar in nature but more modest in proportion. A deep, wide moat - though now partially dry - occupies most of the immediate surroundings, while the remainder accommodates the light-weight buildings of the local monks under the shade of large trees. Just to the north of the axis stands a modern pagoda, whose absence would give no cause for regret.

The moats are crossed, to the east and west, by long paved causeways - their monumental character emphasised by enormous nagas whose bodies rest on the bare ground and whose massive seven headed terminal motifs are quite different to the elegant naga-balustrades on supporting blocks that were to become general in the 12th century - the one to the east on the southern side is the best preserved. The whole temple indeed has a sense of grandeur achieved through simple means - it presents a restrained and disciplined art founded upon logic.

Another low laterite wall forms the first enclosure - a large rectangle of 60 metres east-west by 120 north-south - with four gopuras evident only as the bases of laterite walls on a moulded plinth. Although identical in plan - cruciform rooms, two wings forming secondary passageways and two porticoes - those to the east and west are more developed, while the northern and southern, centred on the pyramid, are offset to the west. Within the enclosure to the east, two large statues of Vishnou with four arms stood opposite one another. In the style of the Bayon - and therefore much later than the monument - they were discovered during excavation work.

To either side of the eastern entrance, continued as a pavement lined with standing bornes, one passes successively; - the remains of two rigorously symmetrical long rooms with large balustered openings, preceded by porticoes and followed by small annexe rooms of slight proportions which were perhaps rest galleries, - then two buildings in laterite, the southern of which sheltered the temple's foundation stele, - and finally two longer

buildings all in sandstone but with walls filled with re-used blocks. Certainly late, they give the impression, with their single avant-corps opening to the pavement, of having been utility buildings for use as store-rooms.

The north-east and south-east corners of the enclosure are each occupied by two juxtaposed square brick buildings - nearly intact on the south but crumbling to the springing of the vaults on the north. Open to the west with an aperture sculpted from a monolith of sandstone, they receive daylight only through a pattern of small round holes. One of them - the most southern - has, on the brick corbelling of its upper tier on the northern and southern external sides, a sculpted frieze of ascetics set in niches. The presence of a fragment of stone from the nine planets found during the clearing work appears as one of the first manifestations of a cult that was to become general thereafter in the *"temple-mountains"*, symbolising Mount Meru.

The north-west and south-west corners have only one building of the same type, but opening to the east and now completely ruined.

Eight sanctuary towers in brick - two on each side - originally coated externally in the sculpted paste of a lime based plaster, are arranged around the pyramid. Of the four to the east of the north-south axis, which dominate those to the west, only the tower on the north side remains standing. The two to the east are, unusually, set on a double sandstone base, moulded and decorated in the style of the monument, with some evidence of a reshaping of the entrance motif - notably to the colonnettes.

Square in plan with redents, these towers all open to the east with four axial stairways that form a double flight, embellished with lions squatting at their bases. The only sandstone elements are the frames of the openings with their richly decorated banded cylindrical colonnettes, and the lintels that are particularly high and surmounted with a frieze. Above these the plastered frontons, with solitary figures set in niches, must have looked weak.

Doors and false doors are uniformly sculpted from a single monolithic block from which the void of the opening is hewn, which explains their reduced proportion with respect to the whole. The ornamentation of the false doors is remarkable, with a mascaron on each panel perhaps recalling the motif of door handles on wooden panels. The lintels, with those of the Kulen style (the first half of the 9th century), are amongst the finest to be found in Khmer art - the rich decoration, enhanced with a multitude of figures in a great variety of detail, is without affectation and remains purely decorative. We especially recommend those on the western towers which remain in a perfect state of preservation. On the corner piers, the dvarapalas and devatas in stucco alternate according to the orientation, sheltered within niches in the form of palatial arcature.

Above, the false upper stories reduce only slightly and have become shapeless. They apparently carried miniature sandstone towers at the corners of their cornice, several of which were found during clearing work.

Practically abutting the southern part of the enclosure wall stretches the long body of a building in three parts, forming a gallery with a portico that is axial on the eastern towers. Completely demolished, it seems not to have had its twin on the northern side.

The five tiered pyramid is almost square and entirely clad and paved in sandstone. It extends 67 metres east-west by 65 metres north-south at the base, and 20 by 18 metres at the summit, forming verges of 5 and 6 metres in width. When clearing work began, the upper level had its sandstone retaining wall enclosed in brickwork and it supported a kind of wooden hangar containing some fragments of sculpture, the ancient stone prasat having been completely rased. A central well was found to be filled with earth and assorted rubble. Excavated by Mr Marchal to a depth of 20 metres, the equivalent to 6 metres below external ground level at the base, nothing of any

interest was found, since a long breach had previously been cut in the base of the sanctuary by treasure hunters in order to gain access from the side.

The fourth and fifth levels were built on a thick bed of laterite which has not moved, while the three others, founded on earth fill, have settled by some twenty centimetres. The upper level dominates the surrounding ground level by 14 metres and the tiered retaining walls, which are massive and thick-set, have a uniform cladding with a plain moulded base and a crowning band.

The four axial stairways, in five flights, obey, as do the tiers themselves, the principle of proportional reduction that so gives an illusion of perspective. They have at each landing a superb “*accolade*” formed base step set between the two side walls, which are themselves sculpted with dvarapalas and devatas and embellished with lions. At their base is quite an unusual type of building. Entirely reconstructed on the northern side, it precedes the first flight and forms a redent in the tier for the full height of the retaining wall. Flanked by two large stone blocks that must have carried some monumental statue, and with sculpted gargoyles to take the water flowing down the steps, each was complemented with a reclining Nandin (the sacred bull) on a pedestal, facing the temple. The presence at the four cardinal points of Shiva’s mount is symbolic of the omnipresent power of the god and suggests that the original sanctuary was open to the four axes, like Phnom Bakheng.

These unusual buildings have their roofs formed in two sandstone slopes made up of horizontal courses, corbelled to form a triangular section that was then crowned with a crested ridge of sandstone finials, this being the natural transition between a covering in tiles and a vaulted stone arch. One can also see here the first realisation in stone of frontons with figures. Facing the sanctuary they crowd the whole surface, framing a small opening with round colonnettes that lights the gable end - quite unusual in Khmer art. The figures fly or are framed in palatial architecture, set apart on a clear

background, much like the motifs sculpted in the plaster coating of contemporary or earlier brick tympanums. This sobriety contrasts with the abundant vegetal or figurative ornamentation that prevailed thereafter.

The corners of the three lower tiers of the pyramid are marked by monolithic elephants which decrease in size, though they are unfortunately badly ruined. The fourth tier was in turn lined with a dozen small regularly placed sandstone *"prasats"*, each sheltering a linga - though nothing remained of them but the foundation bases, buried under the rubble. Ten of them were reconstructed, the remainder mostly being incomplete in their superstructure. They date from the time of the pyramid.

The fifth level is 1m.90 in height and has around its entire perimeter, framed by a finely decorated moulding, a continuous frieze with figures sculpted in bas-relief. The first of its kind in Khmer art, it is sadly in such a state of erosion that one can distinguish only but a few outlines, mostly scenes of battle or of the court. Four or five of the better preserved panels - notably those on the south side - show a group of asuras in combat, and are sufficient to cause considerable regret for the ruin of the whole.

The central sanctuary, contrary to what is found in other pyramid temples, is visible from each level, due to the unusual width of the tiers. In restoration, despite the use of a large number of replacement blocks, it remains true to the original, due to the similarity of the various composite elements of the upper levels. If one studies the ornamentation in detail one finds evidence of a veritable collection of different styles ranging from the art of Prah Ko to that of Angkor Wat or to the start of the Bayon. Bearing in mind that the sculptors had only Lolei or Bakong itself as previous models, one is therefore justified in drawing the conclusion that the prasat must have been constructed about two centuries later than the rest of the monument, and in any case could not have been earlier than the Baphuon (second half of the 11th century). This is evident in the lintels, pilasters and colonnettes. Some

of the devatas with their hair set in tiaras under the miniature towers are, however, inspired by models from the ninth century, while other decoration, like the frontons with decorative scenes - Shiva dancing to the east, the Churning of the Ocean to the south, reclining Vishnou to the west and Lakshmana amongst the monkeys, entwined by the serpents of Indrajit to the north - is in the style of Angkor Wat.

Of Indravarman's previous scheme for the central sanctuary only the base platform remains. Perhaps the king had no time to finish the construction which was then realised by his successors - or perhaps the prasat was demolished and rebuilt... Whatever the reason, the present tower - of a redented square in plan with four vestibules, three of which have false doors - encloses a 2m.70 wide sanctuary chamber. Fifteen metres in height it has four upper tiers lined with numerous standing stones and a lotus crown.

Among the sculptures of the 9th century found during the course of the excavation, apart from several finely sculpted and simply treated female figures and the separate heads of masculine and feminine divinities, we found several examples of statues with a backing that must have been encased in the brickwork of the towers. Common during this period, they represent a sitting figure with one knee raised and its naked torso clad in jewellery.

Finally, on a pedestal in the crumbling brick tower to the north, on the east side, stands a curious group of three statues cut from a single block of stone, but of which only the bodies remain.³⁷ Mentioned on the inscribed stele this represents a Shiva *"Umagangapatisvara, having the small of his back caressed by the reaching arms of Uma and of Ganga"*, his two wives. The torso of the female to the right of the god, in a long, plain dress, is quite superb, with a serenity and purity of line that one encounters only during this period. The hands can be clearly seen placed behind the thighs. Apparently the group had many replicas, since similar elements of another collection and the rough-hewn remains of a third have also been found.

Prah Ko, the funerary temple of Jayavarman II and of the ancestors of his second successor, Indravarman, is to be found just to the west of the track leading to Bakong, at 500 metres south of route 6. Sited in the eastern part of the vast square of 500 metres east-west by 400 metres north-south formed by its moats, its buildings were perhaps but a complement to a temple-mountain project which was superseded by the pyramid of Bakong, or else to some light-weight construction, long since disappeared, that was part of the city of Hariharalaya, the capital of Indravarman - perhaps for example an ancient royal residence, as Mr Cœdes suggested.

The temple's foundation stele was found in the gopura of the first enclosure and is admirably preserved.³⁸ After a homage to Shiva it gives a brief genealogy of Indravarman, and then his eulogy in accordingly grand terms *"the right arm of the prince"* reads the Sanskrit text *"is long, strong, and fearsome in battle as his flashing sword falls on his enemies, defeating kings in every direction. Invincible, he can be appeased by two enemies only - those who have their backs turned, and those who, valuing life, put themselves under his protection"* (G. Cœdes). The inscription is followed by a reference to the cult of Devaraja, or the *"god king"*, instituted on mount Mahendra (Phnom Kulen) and ends by giving the foundation date (879) of three statues of Shiva and of Devi. The other side, written in Khmer, dates from 893 under the reign of Yasovarman and prescribes certain gifts to Paramesvara, the divinity of the middle eastern row of sanctuaries, and to Prithivindresvara in the southern.

Another stele dating from the beginning of the 11th century (1005) gives the eulogy of King Jayaviravarman who reigned from 1002 to 1010 and was ousted by the usurper Suryavarman I.

The east gopura of the third enclosure, three quarters of which have collapsed, has its sandstone portico just by the access track. In laterite but with sandstone windows - each with five large balusters - it is cruciform in plan and has two wings forming secondary passageways. Originally tile covered, it must have had - to judge by the various elements found during excavation - triangular frontons embellished with large volutes corresponding to the two slopes of the roof.

The west door opens onto a laterite pavement that marks the axis of the wide causeway dividing the enclosing moat. It was flanked by two parallel galleries of which nothing remains but the foundations. A small terrace leads to the gopura of the second enclosure - analogous in plan to the preceding one but not

Prah Ko

"The sacred ox"

Date	late 9th century (879)
King	Indravarman I (posthumous name: Isvaraloka)
Cult	Brahmanic (Shivaïte)
Clearing	by G. Trouvé in 1932

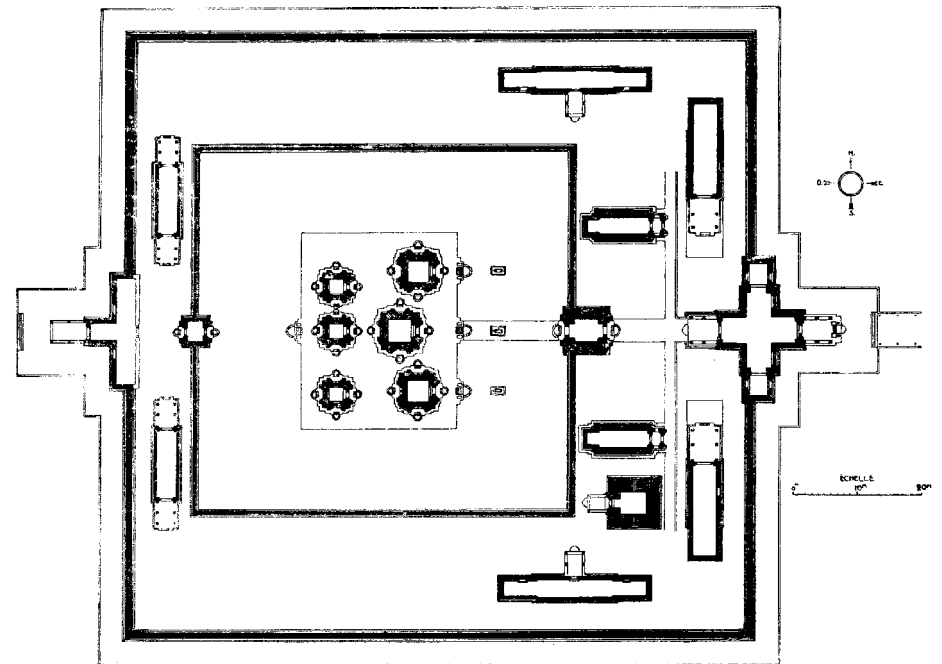


as wide - and joins with the 97 by 94 metre laterite enclosure wall. Only the outward side has windows, each with 7 balusters. A fine “*accolade*” formed base step at its eastern door.

The surrounding courtyard of the second enclosure is wider to the east, and was once occupied on this side by two symmetrical long rooms running parallel to the wall that had porticoes facing one another - and then by two others lying perpendicular and opening to the east onto a small path running north-south. Two buildings forming galleries, but which are entirely ruined, are again aligned east-west against the north and the south enclosure walls, each with a portico to its main side. Finally, a square brick building with an upper tier, similar to those at Bakong, remains standing - due to the considerable thickness of its walls - between the two long rooms to the south. It opens to the west with a portico and is ventilated by lines of holes. Above are figures of ascetics sculpted into the brickwork, while below, a series of niches shelter other figures moulded in stucco. On the western side the courtyard is fairly tight, and was occupied by two long north-south galleries set symmetrically with respect to the axis of the monument, which is marked by a partially collapsed gopura.

The wall of the 58 by 56 metre first enclosure is in brick, like its two gopuras - simple square buildings with a single room, and cylindrical colonnettes with fine lintels that have Vishnou on Garuda as their central motif. The eastern gopura is more imposing than the western and encloses a 3m.60 wide chamber that sheltered the foundation stele.

The moulded sandstone plinth forms a common platform for the six sanctuary towers. On the east side it is breached by three stairways whose side walls are ornate with dvarapalas and devatas and set with squatting lions. In front of each is a reclining Nandin (the sacred bull), the mount of Shiva. On the west side there is a single axial stairway.



The brick sanctuary towers are arranged in two rows and vary in size - to the east, the middle tower is set back slightly and dominates. The three prasats behind are similar but less developed - and the one in the north-west corner of the platform is, for no apparent reason, offset with respect to the corresponding sanctuary of the first row.

The six towers open to the east. Each has four upper tiers that become increasingly deformed. They were covered with a coating of lime based mortar which was remarkably sculpted and is still preserved in places - particularly on the tower of the north-east corner - after eleven centuries in existence. On the eastern side, the frames of the openings and the motifs of the false doors are in sandstone, with some superb octagonal colonnettes that are undeniably the finest to be found in Khmer art. The door panels have mascarons as at Bakong. The frames are in four parts with mitred joints, as if in timber, and are preferable to those at Bakong, where the door openings are crudely cut from a monolith.

The lintels are also in sandstone and of the same merit as those at Bakong, being treated in similar spirit but perhaps with less variety. One should particularly note those above the doors of the three towers with their relief ornament of small cavaliers and figurines mounted on nagas - and the ones, more restrained but as new, of the false doors of the middle tower that have a central garuda holding the branch, above which is a charming frieze of small heads set in a row.

The square chambers - of 3m.40 across and 3m.70 in the main sanctuary - were reserved for masculine divinities. The corner piers were also ornate with imposing dvarapalas set in blind arches which, in contrast to those at Bakong, are in sandstone and set into the brickwork. They are quite distinctive in style - the one to the north-east corner, north side, of the central tower standing particularly proud, and very different to the graceful guardians of Banteay Srei.

The three towers behind, reserved for feminine divinities and of only 2m.50 inside, were less developed. Reduced in proportion they are entirely in brick with the exception of the sandstone door frames and devatas on the corner piers, which replace the dvarapalas of the eastern towers and already herald those in the Bakheng style. Everywhere the decor is sculpted in stucco, even the colonnettes, the false doors - which here are without mascarons - and lintels, where the motifs were first rough-formed in the brickwork.

As at Bakong, several fine pieces of sculpture - dating from the 9th century to the style of the Bayon - were found during the course of our work. Of these, only one of Shiva in the south-east corner tower and a feminine divinity without a head in the rear central tower were left in place.³⁹ Both of these statues date from the period of the monument.

The temple of Lolei is situated on the northern continuation of the track to Bakong, at 500 metres north of *route 6*. Its access track is taken therefore towards the north-west, on the left of the road from Siem Reap, just beyond the 13 kilometre marker stone and 400 metres after the track to Bakong. The turning is marked by a sign, at which one crosses 600 metres of rice fields on a dike that is usually passable by car.

Lolei is comparable in situation to the Mebon of the eastern baray, forming an island in the middle of the Indratataka - a large reservoir of 3,800 metres east-west by 800 north-south - whose excavation started, so the inscriptions tell us, five days after the consecration of Indravarman I, in order to provide the capital city (Hariharalaya) with water and to irrigate the surrounding plains.

The stele explains that the temple was dedicated to Indravarmesvara in memory of Yasovarman's father - it constituted, according to Mr Coedes, the foundation charter of a series of identical hermitages, all with the name Yasodharasrama, which were constructed by order of the king in the year of his accession.

The appearance of the monument is marred by the unfortunate presence of various pagoda buildings. In the middle of these stand the towers, though the monks have taken the liberty of making a number of alterations and demolitions, mainly to the arrangement of the terraces, that render the original layout barely visible.

The composition is formed of two tiers whose laterite retaining walls are breached by four axial stairways. These have their side walls embellished with lions and flanked with gargoyles that evacuate the rainwater from the upper terrace.

The first tier is 9m.00 in overall width, leaving a surrounding verge of 2m.00 to the exterior - its edge is trimmed with a half-cylindrical surround that recalls the body of the nagas lying on the ground. The second, of 90m.00 east west by 80 north-south and 2m.40 in height, with its 2m.40 wide border, is defined by an enclosure wall. Having been back-filled, this has now become the retaining wall for the platform that carries four brick towers - which must originally have stood on a common plinth that is now buried.

Arranged in two rows, the towers to the east dominate - though they all have four upper tiers. Their coating of stucco in lime based mortar has completely disappeared. The best preserved is the tower in the

Lolei

Date	late 9th century (893)
King	Yasovarman (posthumous name: Paramasivaloka)
Cult	Brahmanic (Shivaïte)

north-east corner - the upper part of the south-west tower has crumbled. The siting of the two northern towers, that are axial on the east-west stairways, suggests an original arrangement consisting of two lines of three towers like those at Prah Ko - two of them either remaining unbuilt or having already been demolished - like the annexe buildings, if there ever were any.

All the characteristics of Prah Ko can be found again at Lolei, except that here the door openings are cut, as at Bakong, from a monolith. The motifs of the corner piers are the same - with dvarapalas on the east row and devatas on the west, sheltered within "*palatial*" arcature and sculpted in a block of sandstone that is set into the brickwork. The devatas are quite close in style to those of the Bakheng, with which they are almost contemporaneous - and the one in the north-east corner, east side, of the north-west tower is remarkably well preserved. The decoration of the panels and of the false doors, with their multiple figurines, is already more detailed than those which one finds at Bakong and Prah Ko, while the mascarons have disappeared.

The lintels are as good as those on the other two temples, and still present fine qualities of composition, craftsmanship and animation - though several have deteriorated or disappeared. One can see on the north-east tower; - above the opening, Indra on an elephant with tiny figures crowding the decoration and a branch of nagas disgorged by small makaras, and then, on the north and south façades, (the latter being quite deteriorated) a divinity above a head of Kala, with the curious motif which one also finds at Baksei Chamkrong and the eastern Mebon of the branch terminating in a Ganesha riding his own trunk that has been transformed into a mount, - on the south-east tower,⁴⁰ above the east opening, Vishnou on Garuda with a branch ending in a naga motif, and, to the north, a divinity on a head of Kala, some small riders, and a branch terminated by makaras disgorging lions, - on the north-west tower, the east lintel, with its deeply cut ornamentation, is surmounted by a minutely detailed frieze.

The sanctuary chambers are large and square in plan, each side measuring 4m.50 for the first row and 4m.00 for the second.

The door openings have their jambs inscribed. Their colonnettes - similar to those at Prah Ko - are starting to become complicated by the multiplication of leaves that decorate the bands.



At Phnom Bakheng we have seen how king Yasovarman crowned each of the three Angkor peaks with a temple, thereby dominating the surrounding plain. This trio included - apart from the “*Central Mountain*” - Phnom Krom on the shores of the Tonle Sap, 16 kilometres south-west as the crow flies and 137 metres in height, and Phnom Bok, 14 kilometres to the north-east in the middle of an area of rice fields. Of the three monuments, the temple of Phnom Krom remains the most complete in silhouette, with only the top tier on its northern and southern towers and the two top tiers on its central sanctuary missing. It is also the most threatened with destruction by the wind storms blowing in from the Tonle Sap on to its walls, built as they are in a friable and porous sandstone that has a tendency to exfoliate, and that consequently have retained but a few traces of decoration on their facing.

The climbing of Phnom Krom would perhaps not impose by its archaeological interest alone, but the pleasure of the walk is such and the panorama of the Great Lake with the surrounding plain so extensive and tranquil that we have no hesitation in recommending it - and with preference at the end of the day. It is, with the western baray, truly relaxing after the effort inherent in a visit to the monuments. From the top, if one is able to ignore the quite regrettable presence of the unsightly pagoda and the military buildings recently established in the south-west corner of the monument,⁴¹ the view extends without obstruction to the far horizon, taking in, when the waters are high, the vast surface of the surrounding flood-lands. Towards the south, the clusters of straw huts easily dismantle to follow the rising water line - to establish themselves for part of the year at the foot of the hill and for the rest at the far end of the diked road, forming a lakeside village during the fishing season.

Phnom Krom is accessible by car all the year round. From the market in Siem Reap⁴² the road follows the right bank of the Stung for 7 kilometres with which it meanders through luscious scenery, shaded by coconut palms and mango trees and opening every now and then to the water. There follow 4 kilometres of barren plain to the eastern base of the hill, where the road contours the south-east flank, leaving the access track to the Great Lake to the left, to take a series of steep, sharp bends that finally get one to the top. It is also possible to walk up the hill taking a stairway that forms a short cut from the fork in the two roads at the bottom.

The monument is enclosed within a fifty metre square laterite wall - carefully constructed this is well preserved and has a verge to the exterior. Entry is gained from the east. Four cruciform gopuras are complemented with two small side rooms and a portico to the courtyard, though there remain only a few

Phnom Krom

“The lower mountain”

Date	late 9th - early 10th century
King	Yasovarman I (posthumous name: Paramashivaloka)
Cult	Brahmanic
Clearing	by M. Glaize in 1938

bases of laterite walls and sandstone pillars. On the north side of the hill, the ground seems to have been prepared for a large staircase corresponding to two "srahs" (pools) on the plain below - but no trace of any steps makes one doubt that this was ever finished.

Internally, nothing remains of the surrounding laterite long-rooms - forming rest galleries and separated from the enclosure wall by a narrow one-metre passageway - except for the platforms and foundations with some isolated remnants of wall. Differing in size, there are four to the east and two on the other three sides, varying in width by two or three metres overall - with the symmetry not observed to the east of the north-south axis. They were capped with timber and tiles, and a single fragment of wall shows the remains of a rectangular window with five laterite mullions.

Within the eastern part of the internal courtyard four annexe buildings stand in a line, coupled on either side of the axial passageway and opening to the west. Remaining standing, though quite precariously so, they are 3m.10 by 3m.50 overall and surmounted by an upper tier and a barrel-formed vault that terminates in two gable end walls. Those to either extreme are in brick, the two others in sandstone, and they are plain but for a row of diamond shaped ventilation holes.

Three sanctuary towers set on the same north south axis stand opposite, presented on a common platform that is formed in laterite and faced in sandstone. This plinth is moulded but not ornate, and is breached on its two main sides by three stairways with side walls set with lions.

These towers form a simple redented square in plan and differ in size - with a sanctuary chamber of 4m.00 in the central tower and 3m.40 in the two others. Set back from the axis by a dozen metres on the axis they have two openings (east and west), so that only the north and south sides have false doors. Each must have had four upper tiers of superstructure and a circular

crowning motif. The dominance of the central tower is expressed only in the size of its frontons, which are practically square. On the two lateral towers they are much reduced in height.

Of the scarce remains of decoration still legible we would draw attention; - to the dense ornamentation on the plinths, with the stair-walls ornate with the same small figure dancing within an arch that exists already in the art of Roluos, - to the pilasters treated in meticulous detail, like the panels of the false door, with a covering of tiny figures and interweaving foliage, - to the moulding at the base of the cornices, that is more in scale with the architecture and more vigorous in conception, - to the bands of foliated scrolls on the corner piers, - and to the niches with devatas, that are hieratic and quite serene, having the face slightly turned, a high slender waist, a long skirt with small vertical pleats as at Bakheng and the torso naked. They rest one hand on the staff of a kind of fly swat while the other hangs to the side holding a lotus.

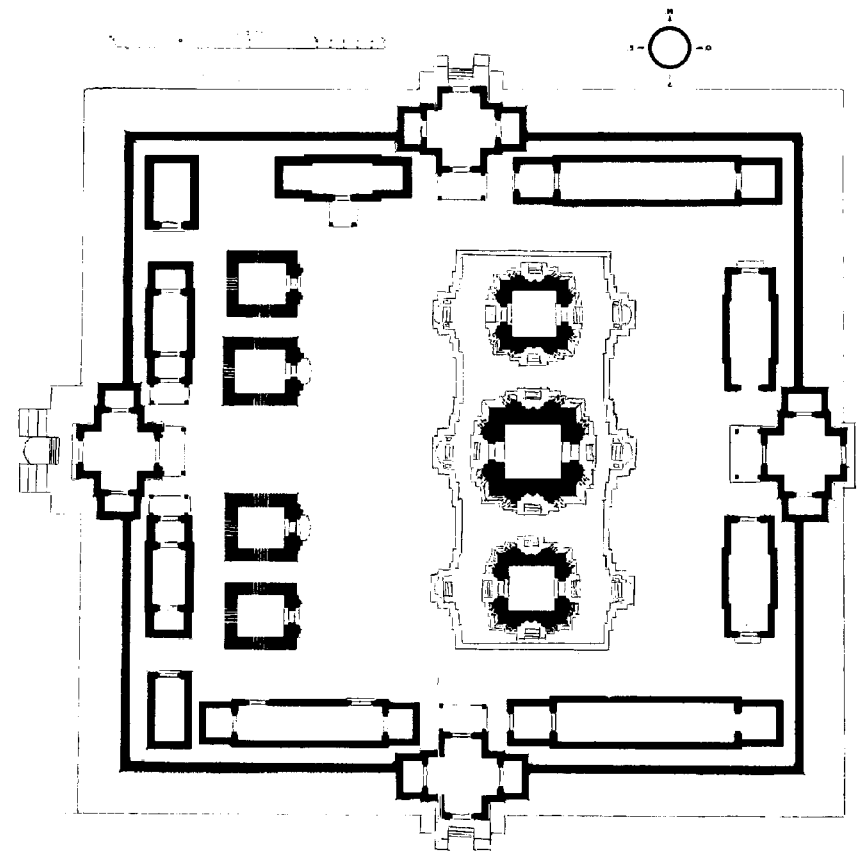
The tympanums of the frontons are the first important realisation in sandstone following those - which are more architectural than figurative - on the small buildings at the base of the pyramid of Bakong. They are, in their restrained execution, little more than panels "*in tapestry*" set above the doors in a muddle of juxtaposed motifs that have no relationship or dominant theme, where one guesses, despite the disintegration of the stone, that a central divinity is perched on a shaft and flanked by two large S forms of scrolling foliage, set on an organic background that has a capricious fringe of curves lined with a row of small heads.

Numerous tower miniatures and antefixes decorate the cornices of the upper tiers, on which one can see the curious motif of a dancer with a broad pleated bell dress, like one finds again in smaller scale on the mural decoration of Bakheng and Banteay Srei.

The “*Trimurti*” of Shiva between Vishnou (to the north) and Brahma (to the south) sheltered in the three towers has been restored to its rightful location.⁴³ Of an art which is quite coarse, angular and massive in style, these statues - which moreover were broken - are marred by the disproportionate width of their shoulders and the weight of their legs. Their pedestals, however, are quite beautiful - particularly the one in the southern tower, the base type of Brahma in its ritual location. Circular in form with a decoration of lotus petals and Hamsas (sacred geese) and crowned with stamens, it contained a circular sacred foundation stone with sixteen holes.

A badly deteriorated “*stone of the nine planets*” was found in the north sandstone annexe building, and a colossal dvarapala of 3m.20 in height was unearthed in front of the eastern side of the three towered platform. Later than the monument it is reasonable in craftsmanship and imposing in aspect, its rakshasa head curiously coiffed with a diadem and a tiered “*mukuta*” with a nape-cover.

The poor state of the stone has unfortunately rendered any repair or restoration work to the monument impossible.





Phnom Bok is a steep hill of 235 metres in height, and the third peak of the Angkor region after Phnom Bakheng and Phnom Krom chosen by Yasovarman on which to erect his sandstone temples.

In this systematic occupation of the summits, with all the problems inherent in carrying and assembling the tons of stone which had to be hauled by hand up their steep sides, this innovator king, in dedicating his capital to the cult of Devaraja or the royal linga, placed all of his subjects - both urban and rural - under the protection of the Brahmanic Trinity, or "*Trimurti*", of Shiva, Vishnou and Brahma. In the architectonic history of the Khmer, it is a trilogy characteristic of a time of exceptional unity.

The ascent of Phnom Bok should not be undertaken except by strong walkers who are undaunted by the climb, in full sunlight, up the exposed hill - one needs to start early in the morning with a guide who knows the path well. Eight kilometres of sandy road - the same to Banteay Samre which, parting from the grand circuit between Pre Rup and the Mebon at 14 kilometres from Siem Reap, turns to the east, passes through the village of Pradak and crosses the eastern dike of the baray - allows one to gain access by car, if the small bridge clearing the Stung Roluos is in condition, to the crossing of the road that leads left to the south-eastern base of the hill. A path from here, at first shaded and then climbing the barren, rocky southern slope, leads one to the top - gradually revealing limitless horizons barred only to the north by the long line of the Phnom Kulen. The beauty of the landscape rewards the effort.

The temple of Phnom Bok, the brother to Phnom Krom, is also undated since no inscription has been found. Nevertheless, their differences are so minimal that they have surely been conceived by the same architect, built to a common plan and sculpted by the same craftsmen. They are, with a difference of a few years, contemporaneous with Bakheng - whose motifs are identical.

The various buildings are similar in arrangement to Phnom Krom but with the difference that here the three sanctuary towers equal in size. They were found, following clearing, badly ruined and without their upper tiers, although the removal of the fallen masonry - completed to the east and only started to the west - revealed the mural decoration to be excellent in craftsmanship and far better preserved than at Phnom Krom, the stones here not having suffered the elements.

Phnom Bok

"The ox-hump mountain"

Date	late 9th - early 10th century
King	Yasovarman I (posthumous name: Paramasivaloka)
Cult	Brahmanic
Clearing	Partial clearing by Glaize in 1939

The frontons are all practically similar, and several have been reconstructed on the ground. Though damaged, they clearly indicate tympanums with the superficial decoration that characterises the art of Yasovarman. Nearly square in proportion and slightly confusing in composition - but powerfully framed by the enormous makaras that finish the line of the arch - they have a central cheek adorned with a figure flanked by large flaming volutes, enhanced with figurines and fringed with a varying number of small heads of divinities.

Although the mural decorations on the towers to the north and south remained unfinished, everywhere one finds elements similar to those at Bakheng and Phnom Krom, but with slight variations in detail - the devatas' faces are here full forwards and the framing of the niches is more constricted - the complexity of the lintels, which are a little weak and rather banal in composition, contrasts with the elegant simplicity of the octagonal four-banded colonnettes. The two outer brick annexe buildings have crumbled, while the two others - in sandstone - are better preserved than those at Phnom Krom. Only the bases of the laterite galleries remain, but the enclosing wall is intact.

Apart from the tower miniatures and the antefixes so typical of monuments of this period, excavation has notably discovered; - in the north tower, a broken broad-necked pedestal with a linga, of a type generally classified as pre-angkorian, - at the foot of the central sanctuary, some major fragments of a very fine statue of Vishnou in an assertive stance that appears to be later than the monument, - three heads of the gods of the "*Trimurti*", removed by Delaporte in 1873 and now in the Musée Guimet in Paris, - and the large circular pedestal that carried the statue of Brahma in the southern tower, analogous to the one at Phnom Krom.

The temple suffers, once again, from the addition, just in front, of a modern pagoda. Sixty metres east are the remains of a deep rectangular pit

formed in brick, measuring a dozen metres by eight, with a stairway to its eastern side. It must have previously served as a water tank. At 150 metres west, a high laterite platform forms a square of a dozen metres each side and carries an enormous monolithic sandstone linga, of 4 metres in height and 1m.20 in diameter, now toppled and broken. The effort that must have been required to transport this unique piece - the weight of which has to exceed 10 tons - defies belief.



the Western Baray

Leaving Siem Reap by *route 6* in the direction of Sisophon towards the north-west, a branch in the road to the right after 12 kilometres, leading north, takes one in 500 metres to the south-west corner of the western baray. The view on arriving at this vast artificial lake is superb, particularly at the end of the day. The entire expanse of water is contained within a levee of earth which forms a dike, shaded by large trees and with the forest of Angkor as its backdrop - set against which is the verdant foliage of the western Mebon at its centre, with Phnom Bakheng off to the right. In the distance, Phnom Bok stands out in silhouette from the long line of the Kulen hills which bar the horizon. At sunset the whole is coloured in sweet pastel tones.

The baray forms a vast rectangle of 8 kilometres by 2. At its present level, the water only covers its western two thirds with, in places, depths of 4 and 5 metres - the remainder having been turned to rice fields. The water is quite clear, and the gently sloping sandy bottom allows very pleasant bathing - though one should always beware of the weeds that sometimes grow at some distance from the bank.

Previously filled only by the rains, it is now, since the construction of a barrage on the Stung Siem Reap not far from the temple of Ta Nei, replenished by a system of channels which make use of the north and part of the west moats of Angkor Thom.

To judge by the small temple of the western Mebon which marks the centre - in the same style as the Baphuon - the baray must have been realised in the 11th century, with its eastern dike corresponding to the western limit of "*Yasodharapura*", the first Angkor centred on Phnom Bakheng. It is, to the west of Angkor Thom, the replica of the eastern baray that is similar in size and was excavated to the east of the capital towards the end of the 9th century, during the reign of Yasovarman.

Traces of ancient pathways and the remains of buildings found in the baray - the bases of walls and the jamb stones of openings, brick steps, the remains of tiles and pots and copper jewellery - show that before the formation of the lake the region must have been inhabited. An eighth century stele (713) has been discovered, defining the rice fields offered to a certain queen Jayadevi, who seems to have been a daughter of Jayavarman I. The discovery of some pieces of sculpture - pedestals, a large statue of a badly decayed dvarapala and an exceptionally large round colonnette in primitive style - also shows that at least one important sanctuary was submerged which must have belonged to the "*city of the baray*" of Jayavarman II (9th century), investigated by Philip Stern.

Some think that the western baray, perhaps linked with the Great Lake by canal, could have served as a port for royal barges - besides its function as an immense reservoir and fishpond. On occasion, it has also provided an excellent landing strip for sea-planes.



The remains of Prasat Ak Yom are to be found on the south side of the western baray, at about one kilometre east from its south-west corner. Since the raising of the water level one can only get there by boat, on condition that the vegetation around the temple itself is cleared.⁴⁴

While perhaps of little interest to the tourist, these ruins, though not entirely cleared, are of great archaeological importance since they are in fact the oldest in the region - older even than the first Angkor. Excavation work took some effort due to the amount of earth that needed moving - it was even necessary to blast the dike of the baray, under which the sanctuaries were buried.

Probably started in the 7th century but not taking final form until the beginning of the 9th - with alterations evident in the re-use of many of the stones - Ak Yom must have been partially buried when the axial road west from the first Angkor (the city of Bakheng) was established, to then completely disappear in the 11th century under the additional mound of the southern bank of the present baray when this was formed. Inscriptions on the jamb stones of the openings and on a *“stone of the nine divinities”* give respectively the dates of 609, 704 and 1001 and reveal that the temple was dedicated to the god Gambhiresvara.

Although not yet a true tiered pyramid like the *“temple-mountains”* dedicated to the cult of the *“Devaraja”* or royal linga, Ak Yom, with its terracing on three levels - the first of which is marked by a simple brick wall enclosing an earth embankment - already shows, however, clear analogies with this formula. One can assume that it must have been central to the *“city of the baray”* investigated by Philip Stern, the construction of which he dated between the departure of king Jayavarman II for Phnom Kulen and the accession of Indravarman in 877. Several other remains, evidently of pre-angkorian design, have been found in the surrounding area.

The monument is entirely in brick, with only the surrounds of the sanctuary openings formed in sandstone. On a base platform of a hundred metres each side, the two upper tiers were also paved in brick, with the retaining walls decorated with applied projecting motifs that recall the base elements of Cham towers. The second tier carries four corner towers and two others that are intermediate on each side, making a total of 12, while the third has a single tower raised high. Investigations have shown that this sanctuary - formerly opening to the east with three false doors and in the same style as the pyramid and the secondary sanctuaries - must originally have been covered with a timber framework - the holes for the

Prasat Ak Yom

Date	7th to 9th century
Cult	Brahmanic
Clearing	by G. Trouvé from 1932 to 1935

supporting posts of which can still be seen in the walls. These were then enclosed in a thicker skin of masonry capable of carrying a corbelled brick vault and pierced with openings to the four cardinal points.

The 5m.50 square sanctuary chamber contains a large pilastered pedestal of 2m.75 that probably carried a linga. Below it, a well has at its bottom a paved underground chamber at a depth of 12m.25 that is level with the surrounding plain. This chamber formed a square of 2m.70 each side, was vaulted in brick and must have contained some sacred deposit. It was the existence of this well that subsequently led G. Trouvé to undertake similar research at the Bayon and at Angkor Wat, and so to the discovery of the foundation deposit of this latter and the Great Buddha - the guardian of the kingdom's destiny - of the former.

The ornamentation of Ak Yom provides some rare evidence of the primitive art - the lintels, often re-used, are slim in height and simplistic in composition. In some places they incorporate medallions and pendants, while in others, branches and terminal scrolls with an invasion of foliage. The colonnettes have been made cylindrical with a relatively charged ornamentation of beads and leaves on the rings. The "*hipped*" devatas sculpted in the brickwork are still visible on the south-east sanctuary, where there is also a remarkable false door on the east side. On the panels, small lions in circular medallions are set on a band of leaves in a crossing motif.



The Mebon forms an island in the middle of the western baray and is only accessible by boat since the raising of the water level. To visit, one should be accompanied by a guide.⁴⁵

the Western Mebon

In some ways reminiscent of the delightful ensemble of Neak Pean - built a century later in the middle of the Prah Khan baray - the Mebon was formed by a levee of earth that encloses a square of a hundred metres. This was then excavated as a basin and lined with sandstone steps. The centre is marked by a platform, also in sandstone, of a dozen metres each side joined by a laterite and sandstone causeway to the eastern dike. Some fragments of naga-balustrades on blocks have also been found.

The surrounding bank has three small entry pavilions on each side with two opposing doors, all in sandstone, set about 25 metres apart and in the form of a single tiered tower with a large eight-petaled lotus crown. Unfortunately badly ruined they now remain only as piles of rubble, except for the central eastern and southern towers which, crumbling and quite unstable, have been the object of some clearing and restoration work. The bases of some walls still stand on the north (central and eastern towers), south (central tower) and east (north tower) sides. Each pavilion is square in plan, measuring 2m.40 overall and 1m.28 internally.

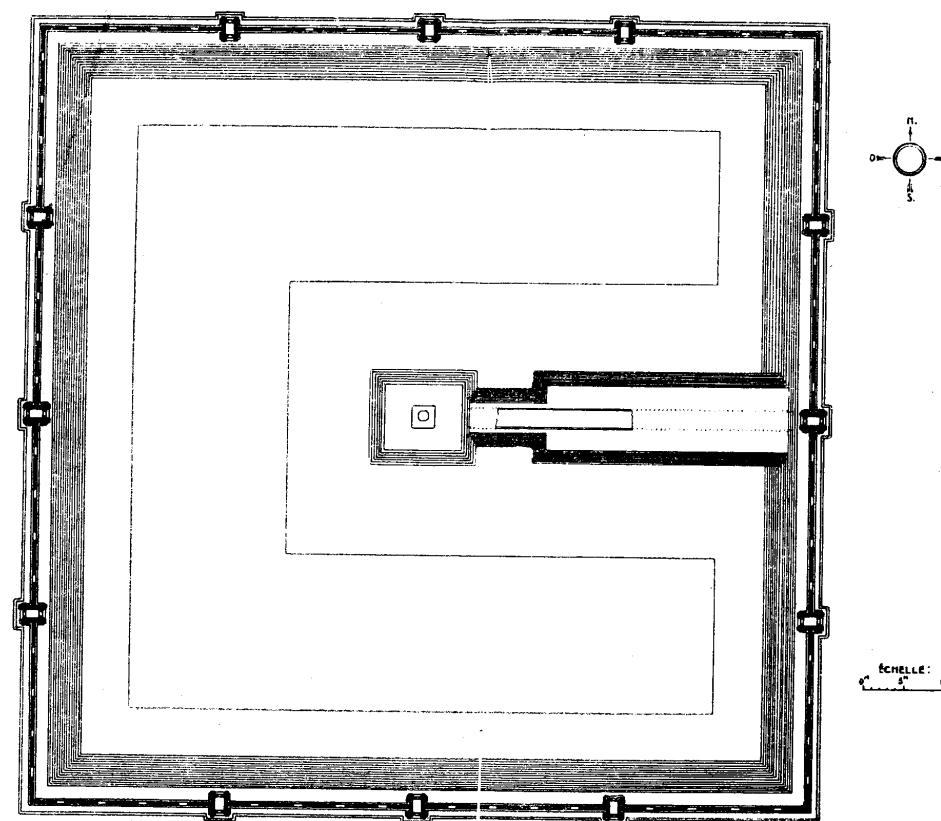
The style is clearly that of the Baphuon, with nagas framing the frontons with their rounded form, the organic decoration crowded with small animals on the tympanums, the pilasters with their vertical "herringbone" line, and the vertical bands of the corner piers, ornate in some places with foliated scrolls and in others with small animals set in panels. The best preserved frontons are those to the north side (eastern tower), which are purely ornamental with a motif of superimposed vertical bands and large scrolls. The eastern lintel of the central tower, eastern bank, in which three figures grasp the branch at its centre and quarters, also shows remarkable fluidity. The door frames are constructed with a half-mitre, and some fragments of colonnettes show that they were of a type rarely used, with sort of vertical channels.

The towers were linked to one another by a sandstone enclosure wall pierced with numerous small openings rising just to the moulded and decorated cornice - which had a coping curiously treated in imitation of a gallery vault, with an edging band of lotus petals. Nearly the whole of this wall has fallen, and its ruin would appear to be caused primarily by the unfortunate combination - frequent in the 11th century - of stone and doubled wooden beams.

<i>Date</i>	<i>second half of 11th century</i>
<i>Cult</i>	<i>Brahmanic</i>
<i>Clearing</i>	<i>and partial anastylosis by M. Glaize from 1942 to 1944</i>

The platform situated at the centre of the basin must have carried some masonry or light-weight structure, though there remains no trace. The excavations detected the presence of a well, first octagonal in section and 0.m55 across and then circular and a metre in diameter, with the base lined in sandstone at a depth of 2m.70, carefully dressed with radiating joints. Part of the facing had been detached, so enlarging the cavity wherein was found, in 1936 - following the premonition of a local to whom the Buddha had appeared in a dream - an important fragment (the head and part of the body) of a gigantic bronze statue. Now in the National Museum, Phnom Penh, this is a work unique in the art of the Khmer by virtue of its size. Representing a reclining Vishnou with four arms, once gilded and encrusted with precious stones and with an overall length that must have exceeded four metres, it appears to be contemporaneous with the monument. It was no doubt the *"recumbent bronze Buddha, from whose navel flowed a steady stream of water"* placed by Tcheou Ta-Kouan, perhaps mistakenly, at the centre of the *"oriental lake"*- relating more readily in association to the western Mebon than to the eastern. Immediately behind the well, to the east, is a 2 metre square tank lined with sandstone.

According to the legend, it was here that a young princess, the daughter of one of the kings of Angkor, was devoured by an enormous crocodile, who, after his mischief, escaped by digging a large hole in the bank of the baray - which one can still see to the west of the village of Svay Romiet. When captured and slain, the beast carried the still living victim in its belly.



A trip to Beng Mealea, which in itself demands an entire day, can be combined with a hunting party, since the region is rich in both small and large game and wild animals; - tigers, panthers and elephants, herds of oxen and wild buffalo inhabit the forest as far as Prah Khan of Kompong Svay in the east.

The track to the Beng Mealea turns right from the Grand Circuit between Prasat Kravan and Srah Srang at 10 kilometres from Siem Reap, a little after the 12 kilometre marker stone. Following an ancient Khmer road for 28 kilometres (a bridge with nagas is still visible at the 16th kilometre) it joins the road from Damdek to then head north, then east, and then pass through the village of Tuk Lich to end near the south-west corner of the monument. The journey, which is quite difficult and only possible in the dry season, is 40 kilometres and requires about 2 hours by car. Jungle enthusiasts can then continue on to Kompong Thom by passing the temple of Prah Khan (of Kompong Svay) on condition that they make camp at this last location.⁴⁶

We recommend that the visitor to Beng Mealea follows the dotted line indicated on the schematic plan provided, which should give a general idea of the most interesting parts without proving too difficult. Entry is gained by the western causeway that starts from the Koh Ker track, where one will see some remains of naga-balustrades on moulded blocks. Their terminal motifs have a purity of line rarely achieved during the various periods of Khmer art, - their high crest is trimmed with a stylised and extremely delicate decoration that is like embroidery.

Beng Mealea is one of the largest ensembles in the Angkor region, covering an area - within its 45m.00 wide moats that cover a distance of 4,200m all around - of 108 hectares, and comparable therefore to the most imposing temples of the capital. Clearly of architectural character, it gains above all by the clarity of its plan, the harmonious equilibrium of its composition and the sense of the monumental, given effect by the large clear surfaces - the decoration is simple and animated only in certain areas, and so shown to particular advantage. Platforms, bases and capitals, - cornices underlined with a single frieze, - the tympanums of the frontons and devatas are the main elements of an ornamentation that is generally discreet while maintaining excellent quality.

Although undated like many temples of this period, Beng Mealea is, by virtue of its style, later than the Baphuon and very close to Angkor Wat. It is in totality the prototype on a single level of a building formula

Beng Mealea

"The Mealea pool"

Date *late 11th - first half of 12th century*
Cult *Brahmanic*
Research by *J. de Mecquenem in 1913*

which, combined with the principle of terracing, must have reached its peak in this latter monument. Unfortunately, its state of ruin is such that it is difficult to attribute the natural destruction to any single cause - although carefully constructed, in places it presents the appearance of a veritable chaos of fallen debris beside areas that remain absolutely intact - while everywhere vegetation reigns as master.

The external enclosure corresponding to the moats must have been formed in a timber palisade. Four axial pathways lead from the dikes - which are ornate with colonnettes as they cross the moat - to the cruciform terrace, also with colonnettes, preceding the gopuras of the third enclosure. These long avenues are paved and have lateral steps and naga-balustrades.

On the east side, like at Prah Khan of Angkor, the pavement is first framed by pools - one of which, lined with sandstone, always has water - and then extends beyond the external enclosure to a vast depression that was perhaps an ancient *"baray"*. This was dominated by a large laterite terrace with three perrons to the east and west, preceded by decorative bornes and surmounted by a sandstone platform with small internal courtyards which, as at Srah Srang, must have carried a light-weight pavilion.

The temple as such is composed of three enclosing galleries with four gopuras. The third from the centre, of 152m.00 north-south by 181m.00 east-west, has a large tower set on each axis and each corner - that of the eastern gopura being flanked by two smaller others corresponding to secondary entrances. The following enclosures are concentric and resolutely offset to the west to allow the positioning on the east side of two *"libraries"* and a large crossing cloister, as at Angkor Wat. They have no towers. The first enclosure, finally, forms in itself a single complete temple in a similar arrangement to Banteay Samre and Chau Say Tevoda, which are practically contemporaneous; - four gopuras and corner pavilions, two *"libraries"*, and a

central sanctuary (that has completely collapsed) are preceded to the east by a long room.

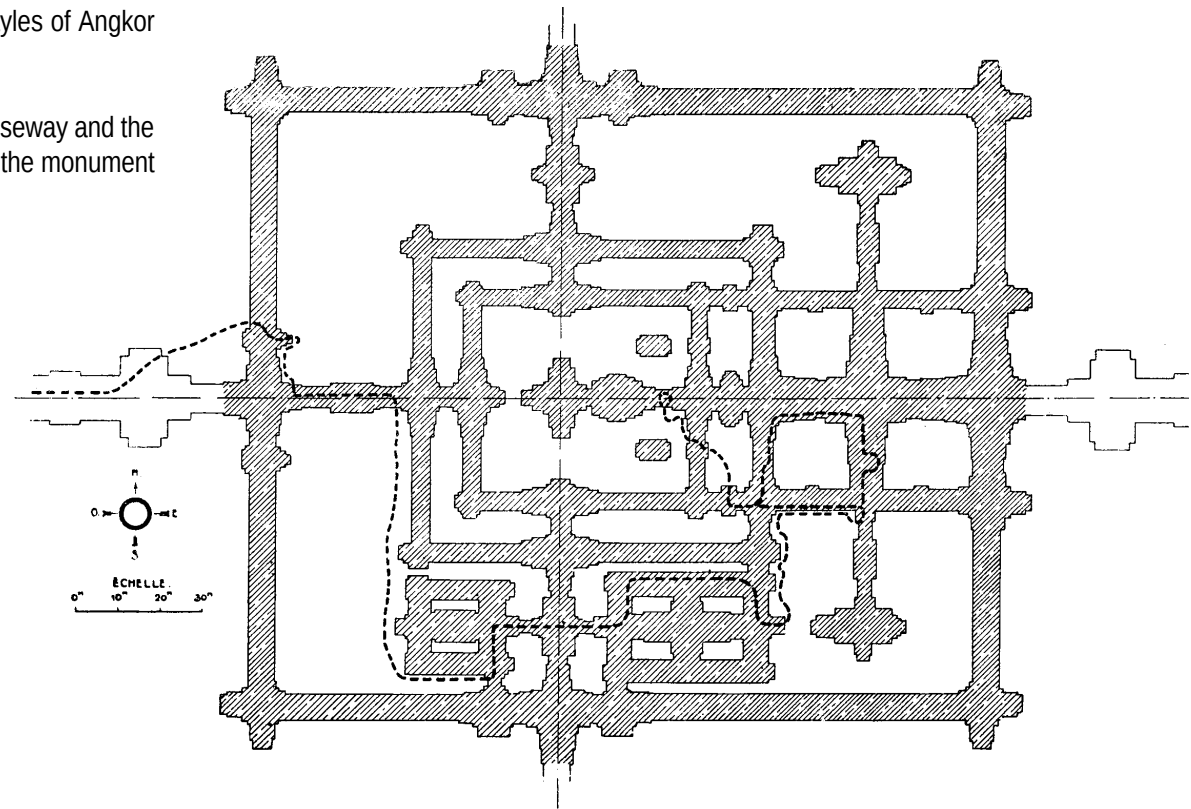
To the south, between the 2nd and 3rd enclosures and on either side of a connecting north-south gallery that is axial on the central sanctuary, two annexe ensembles have been built; - to the east, a crossing cloister with four small courtyards and surrounding galleries stands partially intact with the vaults and slender side-aisles in elegant proportion; - to the west is a similar arrangement but which is less developed with a central hall and two small courtyards. Monsieur de Mecquenem saw here a place reserved for sacred dance or for *"oration with or without the accompaniment of music"* and in the other, where he found traces of guttering and remains of pottery, halls for ritual ablutions.

At Beng Mealea the galleries appear for the first time with the vaults supported on one side by a back wall and on the other by rows of pillars - a particularly favourable arrangement for the execution of bas-reliefs in the best conditions of lighting and presentation - as at Angkor Wat and the Bayon. Here, however, the walls have not been sculpted, and the iconography is seen again in various scenes, for the most part Vishnouïte, on the frontons or at the base of the pilasters, in a manner consistent with the 12th century. Recognisable in particular are; - the *"Birth of Brahma"* on a lotus emanating from the navel of Vishnou reclining on the serpent; - the *"Churning of the Ocean"*, - *"Krishna supporting the mount Govardhana"* to shelter the shepherds and their flocks from the storms, - the *"Wrestling of Krishna with the asura Bana"*, where the god is mounted on Garuda and his adversary is in a chariot drawn by lions, - some episodes from the Ramayana (the battle of Lanka), including the *"Ordeal of Sita"* which is well preserved and set on three tiers - and *"Shiva dancing"* between Brahma and Ganesha on his right and Vishnou on his left. The usual divinities are represented on the lintels; - Indra on a three headed elephant, - Vishnou on Garuda, - Lakshmi between

two elephants whose raised trunks hold lotuses rather than ewers, - and Shiva dancing between Ganesha and Parvati.

Again, the devatas wear long plaited skirts with the material falling to the front, held at the waist by a circle of pendants, and hair coiffed with a single disc and a single point that herald the more complex styles of Angkor Wat.

We would point out, finally, that to return to the east causeway and the large terrace at its far end, one can skirt the third enclosure of the monument by a path to its south.





Glossary of commonly used terms

Asrama	Monastery.	Cham	The inhabitants of Champa, kingdom of the Hindu civilisation on the coast of what is now Vietnam, earlier than the Annamites.
Airavana	Elephant, the mount of Indra.	Shiva	One of the gods of the Brahmanic trinity - the creator and destroyer, mounted on Nandin (the sacred bull), generally with a third frontal eye and a crescent on the chignon, worshipped in the form of the linga.
Amitabha	Buddha of the higher spirit, represented on the head-dress of bodhisattvas.	Shri	Sakti of the god Vishnou (or Lakshmi).
Amrita	Elixir of life, from the churning of the ocean.	Damrei	Elephant.
Ananta	Serpent on which Vishnou reclines on the ocean.	Deva	A god.
Angkor	City.	Devaraja	Or god king, the essence of Royalty, supposed to reside in the royal linga.
Apsaras	Celestial dancers.	Devata	Feminine divinity.
Asura	Demon with power equal to that of the gods.	Dharmasala	House of fire or shelter for pilgrims.
Avatar	Incarnation (or manifestation) of Vishnou.	Dhyana-mudra	Meditative posture of the Buddha (with hands crossed in the lap).
Avalokitesvara	Or Lokeshvara, the compassionate bodhisattva, responding to the idea of Providence, with four arms and carrying the amitabha on his head-dress: attributes; lotus, rosary, bottle and a book.	Durga	One of the wives of Shiva.
Balang	Pedestal.	Dvarapala	A guardian of the temple (deva or asura).
Banteay	Citadel.	Ficus Religiosa	Sacred tree (Buddhist religion).
Baray	An area of water enclosed within mounds of earth.	Fou-Nan	The Chinese name of an ancient Indo-Chinese empire preceding the kingdom of Cambodia.
Beng	A pool.	Gajasimha	Lion with a snout.
Bodhisattva	One in the process of becoming a Buddha.	Ganesha	Son of Shiva, god with the head of an Elephant.
Buddha	The Sage who has achieved ultimate wisdom.	Ganga	One of the wives of Shiva (goddess of the Ganges).
Brahma	One of the gods of the Brahmanic trinity - the creator, generally with 4 faces, mounted on the Hamsa (swan or sacred bird.)	Garuda	Divine bird with a human body, enemy of the nagas and the mount of Vishnou.
Saka	The Indian era the most commonly used in the inscriptions, preceding the Christian era by 78 years.	Gopura	Entry pavilion to the various temple enclosures.
Sakra	The wheel of the Buddha, signifying immortality and power.	Guru	Master.
Sakti	The wife or feminine energy of the Hindu gods.	Hamsa	Sacred bird, the mount of Brahma.
Cedei	Or stupa, a funerary or commemorative monument usually containing the remains of incineration.	Hanuman	The white monkey. Chief of the army of monkeys.
		Harihara	A god unifying in the same figure Hari (Vishnou) and Hara (Shiva).

Hayagriva	Secondary god of the family of Shiva, represented with the head of a horse.	Meru	Mountain, centre of the world and residence of the gods.
Hinayana	Or small vehicle - a Buddhist sect.	Mucilinda	Naga sheltering Buddha in meditation.
Ishvara	One of the names of Shiva.	Madras	Symbolic gesture of gods or Buddha.
Indra	Brahmanic god, master of thunder and lightning; his mount is Airavana the elephant (usually three headed) and his attribute, the thunderbolt.	Mukhalinga	A linga adorned with a face.
Kailasa	One of the mountain peaks of the Himalaya where Shiva resides.	Mukuta	Or mokot, the conical head-dress worn behind the diadem.
Kala	The head of a monster, supposed to represent one aspect of Shiva.	Naga	Stylisation of the Cobra - a mythical serpent, usually multi-headed. Genie of the waters who shelters the Buddha in meditation with his fanned heads.
Kali	One of the names of the sakti of Shiva.	Nagaraja	King of the Nagas.
Kama	The god of love.	Nagi	Female naga.
Ko	Ox.	Nandin	Sacred bull, the mount of Shiva.
Kompong	A port or village by the water.	Narasimha	The God Vishnou, with the lower part in human form and the head of a lion.
Krishna	Manifestation of Vishnou.	Neak-ta	Popular idol, or the shelter that contains it.
Kubera	The god of wealth, dwarfed and deformed, mounted on a Yaksha or a rat.	Nirvana	The ultimate enlightenment and the supreme Buddhist objective.
Lakshmana	Brother of Rama (from the Ramayana).	Pala	Dynasty ruling in Bihar and Bengal between about AD 750 and 1196.
Lakshmi	The wife or sakti of Vishnou.	Parinirvana	The entry of the Buddha to enlightenment, the pose of the statues of the reclining Buddha.
Lanka	The island of Ceylon, home of the rakshasas.	Parvati	Wife or sakti of Shiva
Linga	Phallic idol, one of the forms of Shiva.	Peshani	Millstone intended for grinding.
Lokapala	Guardian of one of the four cardinal points.	Phnom	Mountain.
Lokesvara	Other name for Avalokitesvara, the compassionate bodhisattva .	Phtel	Bowl.
Mahabharata	Grand Hindu epic.	Pradakshina	A circumambulation ritual always keeping the monument to the right.
Mahayana	Or Large Vehicle, a Buddhist sect.	Prah	Saint, sacred.
Maitreya	Future Buddha (a sort of Messiah).	Prah patima	A metal leaf stamped with the image of the Buddha.
Makara	Sea monster with the head of an elephant, who, in ornamentation, often disgorges the naga.	Prajnaparamita	The mystical mother of the Buddhas, symbol of wisdom.
Mara	Evil spirit who tempts the Buddha.	Prasat	Sanctuary in the form of a tower.
Men	A light pavilion used for incineration.		

Prasavya	Circumambulation funerary ritual, in the opposite manner to the pradakshina.	Surya	God of the sun, haloed with a ring of light and mounted on a horse-drawn chariot.
Prei	Forest.	Tandava	Dance of Shiva separating the cosmic periods of the creation and destruction of the worlds.
Pourana	Historical Indian legend.	Tantrism	Buddhist sect from the Mahayana.
Puri	Town.	Tara	Feminine energy of Lokeshvara, similar to the Prajnaparamita.
Rahu	Head of the monster demon of eclipses.	Tchen-La	Of water and earth, ancient Chinese name for Cambodia.
Rakshasa	Inferior demon joining with the asuras against the devas.	Tevoda	Or devata, a feminine divinity.
Rakshasi	Feminine form of rakshasa.	Thom	Large.
Rama	A manifestation of Vishnou (Ramayana).	Trapeang	Sea.
Ramayana	Grand Hindu epic, the history of Rama and of Sita.	Tricula	Trident, the weapon of Shiva.
Rati	The wife of Kama, god of love.	Trimurti	Brahmanic trinity (Shiva between Vishnou and Brahma).
Ravana	King of the rakshasas, with multiple heads and arms.	Tripitaka	Sacred Buddhist texts.
Rishi	Brahman ascetic.	Uma	Wife or sakti of Shiva.
Sarasvati	Wife of Brahma, goddess of eloquence.	Ushnisha	Protuberance from the skull crowning the head of Buddha.
Sarong	A length of cloth wrapped around the lower body.	Vajra	Thunderbolt, the attribute of Indra.
Sema	Steles (inscribed stones) placed on the axes and corners of Buddhist terraces to define the sacred platform.	Valin	King of the monkeys, brother of Sugriva and overcome by him with the help of Rama (Ramayana).
Seng	Lion.	Varaha	Manifestation of Vishnou (wild boar).
Sita	Wife of Rama (Ramayana).	Vasuki	The serpent in the churning of the Ocean.
Skanda	God of war, son of Shiva, mounted on a peacock or on a rhinoceros.	Vat	Pagoda.
Snanadroni	An ablution slab with a beak, always orientated to the north, placed on the pedestal of the idols for the flow of lustral water.	Veda	Brahman rules.
Somasutra	Channel for the evacuation of lustral water out of the sanctuary.	Vihara	Monastery.
Srah	Pool.	Vishvakarman	The divine architect, son of Shiva.
Srei	Woman.	Vishnou	One of the gods of the Brahmanic trinity - the protector. His mount is Garuda and he generally has four arms that hold a disk, a conch, a ball and a club. Numerous manifestations.
Stupa	Or cedei, a funerary or commemorative monument usually containing the remains of incineration.	Yama	God of death and the supreme judge, mounted on a buffalo.
Sugriva	King of the monkeys, dethroned by his brother Valin and ally of Rama (Ramayana).	Yakshas	Or Yeaks, genie of good or evil.

Notes

chapter 4

- 1 The exact interpretation of the cult of Devaraja remains questionable - some suggest god-king, others king-of-the-gods.

chapter 5

- 2 The original use of these stone tanks remains controversial - some archaeologists suggest that they were used only for offerings.

chapter 6

- 3 *Le Notre* was Louis XIV's landscape architect of Versailles and others.

chapter 8

- 4 Author's note: - The head of Kala is also known as the "*Head of Rahu*", the demon of the eclipses. The legend of Rahu is linked to the Churning of the Sea of Milk - the monster steals the amrita, the elixir of immortality, and is denounced by the sun and the moon to Vishnou who, with a cast of his disk, cuts his body in two. Ever since, both halves remaining immortal, he endeavours, in order to revenge himself, to devour the Sun and the Moon whenever one of them passes near by. It is still customary to "*shoot the moon*" at the time of an eclipse to scare the monster away.

chapter 11

- 5 Author's note: - Jacques Lagisquet took up his position as Conservator again on the departure of Maurice Glaize in 1946, followed by Henri Marchal who held it until 1953. Jean Boisselier served first as assistant, then as scientific director until 1955. After Mr Laur the last French conservator was B.P. Groslier who was forced to resign by political events in 1972

Angkor Wat

- 6 Only a few of the thousand buddhas remain.
7 The central stairway has since been improved.
8 Following the collapse of the heaven and hell gallery in 1947, Mssrs Marchal and Lagisquet started restoration work which finished in 1950. Mr Lagisquet then reformed the false ceiling in this gallery with concrete panels.
Other general work undertaken from 1946 to 1972:
Consolidation work continued with partial anastylosis, particularly of the libraries.

Prasat Bei

- 9 This and the previous temple have been subject to restoration in the 'sixties, and this lintel can now be seen in its rightful location above the door.

the Bayon

- 10 Author's note: - Mr Cœdes rather sees, in the addition of the four corners of galleries masking the arrangement in a cross, an arrangement analogous to the one which blocked the initial cross of the Baphuon with an oblong base surrounding the line of the original cross - the architect wanting to emphasise in symbolic form the

representation of the Bayon as Mount Meru, which in Indian cosmology continues below ground in equal proportion to its elevation above.

monument 486

- 11 The lintel is longer in place. This monument now stands badly ruined and is not often cleared of vegetation.

Elephant Terrace

- 12 Further excavation by Mr Marchal in 1952 revealed more internal bas-reliefs at the northern end.

Terrace of the Leper King

- 13 The Terrace of the Leper King was restored by the École Française d'Extrême Orient in 1995.
14 After an attempt to steal his head he was replaced with a copy - from which the head was then successfully stolen. He now sits in the centre of the National Museum, Phnom Penh.

Baphuon

- 15 Restored by B.P. Groslier during the 'sixties in an ambitious programme of work for the monument which was abandoned in 1972. Partial work on the central pyramid was resumed in 1995 by the EFEO.
16 The elements of most of the bas-reliefs still lie methodically scattered in the surrounding forest.

Thommanon

- 17 This is no longer the case since the walls have been removed following anastylosis work in 1965 by B.P. Groslier.

Tanei

- 18 The south-west corner pavilion has since collapsed.

Ta Prohm

- 19 The stele is no longer in position.
20 It is no longer advisable to enter the fourth eastern gopura.

Kutisvara

- 21 The fronton is no longer in position.
22 This temple now stands badly ruined.

Prasat Kravan

- 23 All towers are now in a better state following extensive restoration work during the 'sixties. Replacement bricks are stamped with the mark CA.

Pre Rup

- 24 This tale relates to the temple of Banteay Samre.

the Eastern Mebon

- 25 The stele is no longer in place.

- 26 **Ta Som**
This famous tree has long since disappeared.
- 27 **Neak Pean**
These elephants are no longer in position.
- 28 Louis XIV's landscape architect of Versailles and others.
Prah Khan
29 These and virtually all the other free standing statues described are no longer in place.
- 30 The two lions are no longer in position.
- 31 The Lokeshvara is now in the National Museum, Phnom Penh.
- 32 Ganesha is no longer in place.
Banteay Srei
33 Although the road has since improved, security has sadly deteriorated. Visitors to Banteay Srei should always first check the situation with the local police. These days one can park just by the eastern entrance to the temple.
- 34 The interpretation of this scene remains questionable.
Banteay Samre
35 Only the feet remain...
- 36 Others propose its use as a casket destined to receive offerings or for water having served in ablution.
Bakong
37 No longer in place.
- Prah Ko**
38 The stele is no longer in place.
- 39 These statues are no longer in place.
Lolei
40 The south-east tower collapsed in 1966.
- Phnom Krom**
41 The camp has since gone but the pagoda grown.
- 42 The old market to the south, on the west bank of the river. The mud in the rainy season and the quarry on the side of the hill do not always allow easy access.
- 43 Only their broken pedestals remain.
Ak Yom
44 Ak Yom is now visible, though badly ruined, just on the southern side of the track that surrounds the baray - a few hundred metres west of the sluice.
- the Western Baray**
45 Not much remains of this site since it was used by the military during the '70s. Boats now leave from the concrete dam on the south bank of the baray.

- 46 **Beng Mealea**
This journey to Beng Mealea is no longer possible, nor is the game hunting, nor the enthusing in the jungle.



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