
Preangkorian Iconography

by

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Contents

Introduction	3
Iconographic Preangkorian chronology	4
Wat Phu, the temple	6
Angkor Borei, Phnom Da	14
Hanchei	23
Hanchei, Prasat Kuk Prah Yhat	26
Prasat Prah Srei	28
Prasat Sakhalâ	31
Prasat Srei	33
Thala Borivat	34
Sambor Prei Kuk	47
Phnom Bayang	83
Stung Trong	85
The Kulen	90
Prei Khmeng style	116
Prasat Kraham	126
Trapeang Pong	127
Banteay Prei Nokor	129
Prasat Andet	131
Phum Prasat	133
Kompong Prah	137
Preah Kok	140
Bakong Towers	142
Preah Kô	156
Prasat Nean Kmau of Takeo	167
Lolei	170
The temple of the Kompot cave	184
Conclusion	188
APPENDIX	214
BIBLIOGRAPHY	226

All pictures by Vittorio Roveda, unless stated

Introduction

Pictures of Khmer artwork appear in most scholarly books but rarely is their position in the art history of ancient Cambodia explained. For the first 7 centuries, ornate stone lintels are the only example of artistic expression. I have tried to put some order to the lintels of various temples in terms of “style” and age. In my Preangkorian study I have looked at the origins and development of visual storytelling. The Cambodian Empire was built by the evolution of the centres of power that in parallel influenced organised workshops which could offer artists specialised in visual narrative, contributing thus to the evolution of Khmer art that is summarised in Table 2.

Several decades have passed since art historians devoted their talents to the Art History of Khmer Culture: Jean Boisselier, Philippe Stern and Madeleine Giteau were perhaps the last of the most illustrious scholars. Since their time, temple conservation and restoration and now extraordinary archaeological studies by LiDAR and satellites associated with new ground excavations have brought discoveries and up-to-date scholars. A new class of competent Cambodian archaeologists has been created.

The work has been separated into the **First Part** studying the 23 most important temples of the Preangkorean and a **Second Part** with the conclusion on the Art History and the method of research. It terminates with a resume on the commonest monsters of the Khmer Preangkorian period.

Iconographic Preangkorian chronology

Table 1

PERIOD	STYLE	TEMPLE	KING	AGE
IRON AGE				Before 500 BC
PROTO-HISTORIC	unknown	Unknown Maha Rosei Hanchei Cell Sambor N.17 Cell.	unknown	500 BC- 500 AD
EARLY PREANGKORIAN	Preangkorian	Wat Phu Phnom Da A.borei	Probably kings of the Bhavapura dynasty	600-700
PREANGKORIAN	<i>Vat Phu Phnom Da Angkor Borei</i>	Phnom bayang (616-635) Han Cei N.17 Cell Sambor	Bhavavarman and Citrasena?	Late 6 th century until part of 8 th century
	<i>Thala Borivat</i>	Prasat Prah Ko		
	<i>Sambor Prei Kuk</i>	Sambor Prei Kuk Stung trong Banteay Prei Nokor (598-?) Prasat Prei Srei	Ishanavarman Jayavarman II Indravarman I	Early 7 th to 9 th centuries
	<i>Prei Khmeng</i>	Prei Khmeng Prasat Andet	Indravarman I	7 th =to 9 th centuries
	<i>Kompong Prah</i>	Kompong Prah Ak Yum Phum Prasat	<i>various</i>	7 th – 9 th centuries
	<i>Kulen</i>	Stern's 16 lintels	Jayavarman II	9 th century
	<i>Trapeang Phong Kok Po</i>	Trapeang Phong Prasat Kok	Indravarman I	Middle-End 9 th to all 9 ^h century
	<i>Bakong towers Prah Kô</i>	Bakong towers Prah Kô	Indravarman I Jayavarman II	Iconographic end of Pre- Angkorian c.875
875 CE. Boundary to EARLY ANGKORIAN	<i>Prah Kô Lolei</i> (same parts)	Lolei Phnom Krom Phnom Bok of <i>Bakheng style</i>	Indravarman I Yashovarman I	End 9 th -10 th century

It is impossible to draw an accurate iconographic chart of Khmer styles because styles were arbitrarily defined on historic assumptions and not art-making. Styles are evolving artistic representations and cannot be put into time boxes (of proved or unproved dates). For these reasons, also an attempt to draw the boundary of the Preangkorian - Angkorian Period is debatable and tentatively drawn by me at circa 875 based on iconography.

My interpretation of **Table 1** is based on the works of Mme de Coral-Rémusat 1951, Jacque and Dagen., An epigraphy-based summary is provided by the reign of the king following the traditional view of 20th century scholars such as Claude Jacques (1999: 30-32). **Table 1** is based on the works of innumerable EFEO scholars since the early 20th century and the first two layers of the Table were inserted from Miriam Stark (*Collapse*, 2006).

3-7 th century	Angkor Borei-Phnom Da – iconography und researched till now(Southeast Cambodia
3-7 th century	Thala Borivat, (northeast Cambodia)
6 th century	Sambor Prei Kuk
7 th century	Kulen
end 7 th - 8 th c.	Prai Khmeng
9 th century	Preah ô
9 th century	Bakeng
8 th century	Koh Ker
8 th century	Pre Rup

Unfortunately, Preangkorian iconography is very poor in visual narrative. Hopefully, discoveries from excavations will bring new images following theLIDAR revelations, presumably from 2010 to 2040?) The three examples of complete visual narratives are highlighted in the Sambor Prei Kuk chapter. The astonishing technical ability which was not in demand, therefore, carved only a few temples. I assume that there was no demand for narrative lintels by a king or prince of the Bhavavarman dynasty. Perhaps experienced storytellers (with dance and music) were working at court for the king and his followers, satisfying their needs.

I also assume that during the Preangkorean in the past storytellers were part of the court, with the support of singers and a few players of local musical instruments and dancers. Tey produced something like imaginary theatrical representations, usually with battles, and soldiers in metal armours.

PART 1: The Temples

The Iconography of the most interesting temples of The Preangkorian of Cambodia is based on images, their reading and interpretation. For the lack of inscriptions and ancient literature, the dating is very hypothetical and in flux.

Wat Phu, the temple

Wat Phou (or Vat Phu)

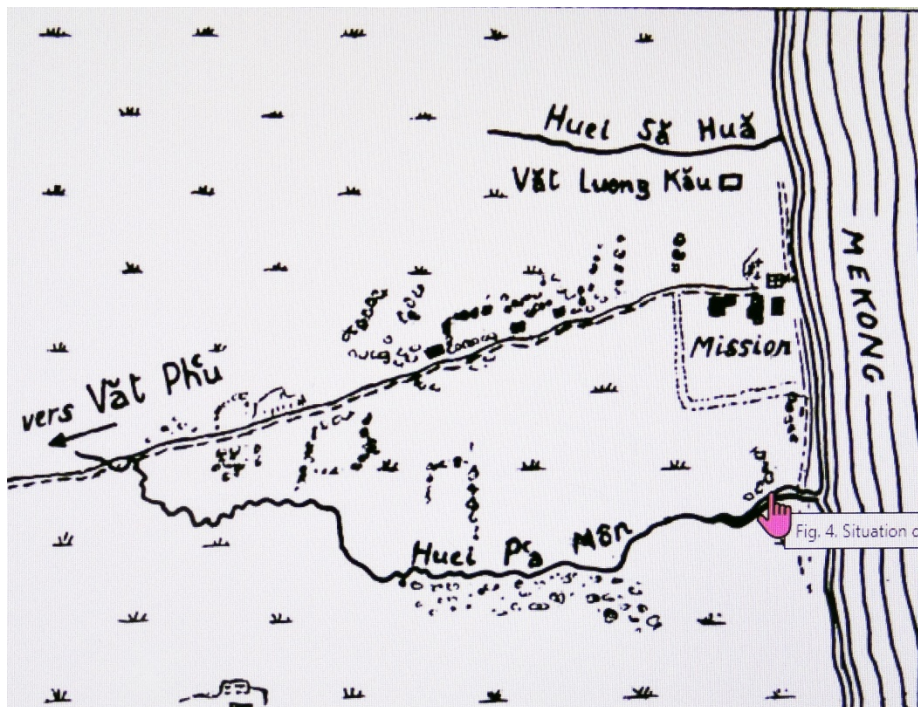
Vat Phu; Lao: Vāt phū:or (temple-mountain) is a ruined Khmer Hindu temple complex in southern Laos (not in Cambodia). It is at the base of mount Lingaparvata, some 6 kilometres distant from the Mekong in Champassak Province. No elements to create a style have survived.

Of Wat Phu, the Chinese *Sui Shu* annals (Sui Dynasty. 591-618 CE) reported that the Lingaparvata Mountain is a temple always guarded by hundreds of soldiers and consecrated to Bradeshvara (the spirit of Lingaparvata), to whom were offered human sacrifices. (Snellgove. 2004: 1)

Wat Phu was part of the old city of *Shrestapura* believed to have been made by King Shruthavarman's son Shrethavarman. The Cham cult of Shiva as Bradeshvara became part of Shivasism. Other scholars accept that the temple was built by Bhavavarman I or probably earlier.

Almost nothing of the original temple has survived (except piles of bricks). From the beginning, almost any Khmer King did add something to Wat Phu, but nothing compared to what was built and modified by Jayavarman VII in the 13th century.

An enormous amount of archaeological work was done by Italo-Laotian teams directed by Dr Patrizia Zolese, discovering a city with a port and sanctuaries with towers and many more showing a large settlement on the Mekong River south of the existing temple.



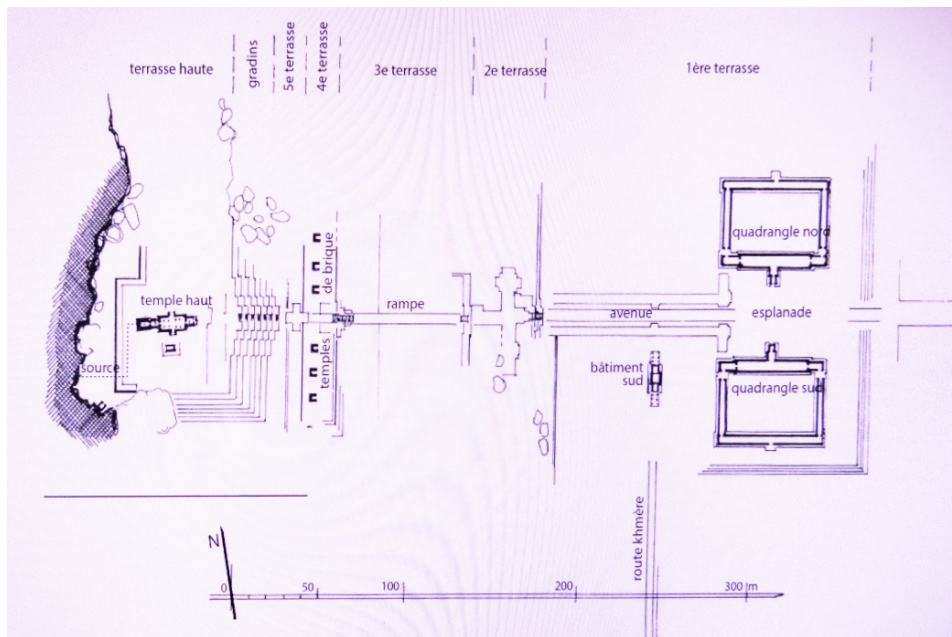
Plan of Wat Phu area and the region of new excavation of the Laotian team.



Wat Phu - Mount Llingaparvata is so-named because at the top there is part of Shiva's erect penis (the linga)



Wat Phu -The causeway to the temple as it was in 2009 with pillars aligned in direction to the temple on the hill. It was originally flanked by 2 large water reservoirs now reduced to 2 *ponds* The large *barays* at the far end are modern and confuse the view of the plan of Wat Phu. At the side of the entrance, there are large pavilions of which only some doors are preserved with lintel and pediments. Probably they are from the 11th century.



From Parmentier 1927



Wat Phu - Lintel and pediment over the door of the monuments at the base of the temple, located in the two rectangles to the right of the plan. The pediment was carved in the the 12th century when Jayavaraman VII was ruling.



Wat Phu - One of the few standing brick buildings, protected from visitors, as seen in 2009 on the occasion of my fourth visit with my students



Wat Phu - This sandstone building is a large sanctuary built by the workshops of Jayavaraman VII which also carved about a dozen lintels that are by far the best of the 13th century.

Lintels are rare at Wat Phu due to the absence of old monuments. I could only find a couple which were very eroded and almost unrecognizable but older than the 13th century. The best are photographed below.



Wat Phu - A large *dvarapala* guardian, fallen or broken down from its pedestal, the head is missing. The old guardian is still venerated today.



Wat Phu - Probably two old lintels, eroded, defaced, un-identifiable - another unreadable ancient lintel.



Wat Phu - The best-known carving of Wat Phu (but not from the 6th century), has Shiva standing between Brahma (left) and Vishnu (right) carved on the mountain face. The realism of the images of these gods has been improved by adding gold leaf.



Wat Phu – This remarkable carving is possibly the mould for human sacrifices. To the right is an ancient staircase inserted between two *naga*.





Wat Phu - A remarkable carving in the mountain's face of a *Buddhapada* professionally executed for its accuracy.



Wat Phu -This is what has been created now for the collection of the sacred water dripping from the mountain. Following the old tradition, the sacred water must be directly from the source. The original Wat Phu 7th century *somasutra* for collecting drop by drop the sacred waters through the mouth of a dragon's head (2004).

Notes on Wat Phu and the origin of the KHMERS

Some old remains of buildings of the ancient Chenla of the Reign of Bhavavarman probably include the temple of Wat Phu, in the region near Champassak, near a mountain that has a standing set of vertical rocks that remind believers that it represented the linga of Shiva. This legend was transferred to the building of a Khmer temple at its foot dedicated to a special form of Bhairava Shiva, the protector saint of the Chams so that this construction was acting as defining sign of the two cultures and the idealized boundary of separation between old Chams and the Cambuja's Khmers.

The emergence of the Khmers at Wat Phu¹ is associated with a mythic victory over the Chams at Champassak (all the area on the east bank of the Mekong was Cham only a century later when it became part of Laos. According to an inscription of King Davanika, the Chams occupied the region and made Shiva supreme lord of Lingaparvata, the sacred mountain rising over Wat Phu. Many later inscriptions praise the Khmer monarch of the time.

From the time of the Chinese annals of the 6th period the Lingaparvata Mountain and its temple were mentioned as places where human sacrifices were performed, a tradition that was probably extended to the 17/18th century. The site is believed to be Shrestapura city, near the mountain erected by King Shrestavarman and his son Shrutavarman; from whom it is assumed that King Jayavarman descended. Shrestavarman and his companions are mentioned in the inscription of Baksei Chamrong (10th century) and no connection is reported on Rudravarman. He was the first Khmer ruler of Funan. It is difficult to establish reports between Khmer and Chams at such an early stage of Khmer history although the presence of Khmer to the north is incontestable.

It is possible that the cult of Shiva Bhairava was adopted by Khmer history and that its importance was never forgotten. Much construction and remodelling happened by kings that follow until the 12th century. Nothing remains of the original temple except brick structures and stonework presumably associated with the Khmer occupation in the 6 or 7th century. In other terms what we see now when visiting Wat Phu is only a fraction of the ancient Khmer site.

Khmer history starts arbitrarily from Wat Phu

Near Wat Phu, on the left bank of the Mekong, was found the important inscription of Vat Luong Kău, numbered K.356 which was translated and interpreted by George Coedès in 1956 and published on BEFEO 48 (1) 1956.

According to the inscription, it is certain that the Cambodian kings named Shrutavarman and Shrestavarman planned to take over the North Damrek region. After killing the great Cham king Devanika, the Cambodian kings took control over the local Chams and of that area of Champasak--Basak. The inscription of *Vat Luong Kău* tells us that it is certain that the Cambodian kings named Shrutavarman and Shrestavarman planned to start from Vat Phu or from the recently occupied Champaak/Basak area to descend south and west.

The assumption continues in believing that they descended from Wat Phu's Lingaparvata Mountain to the South to conquer and create Kambuja. The kings Bhavavarman and brother Citrasena-Mahendravarman were of Funanese origin but rebelled against Funan, which they divided, forcing the Court to leave the ancient capital *Vydiapura* (Ba'in Cham) and install in the South, on the other side of

¹ Wat Phu has been restored by an Italian team directed by Dr, Patrizia Zolese. They have discovered new settlements, water reservoir at the South and that the city was extending considerably along the Mekong west bank with large temples and habitations

the Mekong, at *Naravarānagaraputra* (Angkor Borei). This conquest was achieved by Ishanavarman's son and successor of Mahendravarman who, after residing at *Bhavapura* (near Ampil Rolum), the capital of his predecessor and where a Cham inscription confirms his presence. He then moved south to build a new capital at *Ishvarapura* (Sambor Prei Kuk) some 40 Km east of *Bhavapura*. From Champasak they followed the river, passing bat *Cuoy Ampil* on the right shore, then in Stung Treng, on the west, Mahendravarman (promoted from Citrasena) obtained a victory to the north of the Khone falls at the confluence of the Mun river with the Mekong, and Surin with the southern Korat Plateau (all in contemporary Thailand).

Whatever the value of his reconstruction of the inscription K.365 of *Wat Luong Kău*, the theory of the creation of Kambuja from North to South disagree with the views of Coedès who concluded that the history of the origin after avoiding the Khone falls when going south, and continue in their southern descent from Champasak/Basak and Wat Phu to create the Kambu's area (Cambuja).

Coedès George. *Nouvelles données sur les origines du royaume khmèr : la stèle de Văt Luong Kău près de Văt P'hu*, BEFEO, 48-1, 1956.

Angkor Borei, Phnom Da

The battles that Funan's rulers fought for territorial expansion in the 3rd century AD involved the conquest of coastal settlements along the Gulf of Thailand and the Malay Peninsula. Rudravarman II, who was the last ruler of Funan, declared Angkor Borei Funan's capital in 514 AD. Modern Archaeological studies suggest that the site had already been occupied for hundreds of years. Chinese and local inscriptions suggest that in the early first millennium the Mekong delta comprised several competing polities, rather than a single united kingdom and comparable to a mandala structure.

At the same time (4-7th centuries), **Thala Borivat** could have been the assembly point for armies that would descend south along the Mekong line. Additionally, it may have functioned as a commercial centre of merchandise to the south, and the import of other items from China, Thailand and Laos from the east. From Thala Borivat to Kampong Cham then to Sambor Prei Kuk, always use river transportation. In the area all around the stone towers of Sambor Prei Kuk there were hundreds of older small brick polygonal shrines decorated with the "flying palaces". In my opinion, the meaning of these brick shrines was perceived as the last palaces of the idealized gods with humans (or the Khmer aristocracy?) in earthly pleasures of drinking and conviviality.

The Mekong also played a central role in the development of northern Cambodia's earliest complex polities from approximately 500 BC to AD 600 in what is now northern Cambodia and eastern Laos. These settlements, even if sparse, grouped in the centre where they constructed religious monuments within their cities and in the surrounding countryside, and participated in the economic and social network from northern to southern Sambor Prei Kuk.

Much research has been done by Dr Myriam Stark directing an international team of Archaeologists as well as Cambodian APSARA Archaeologists but the final results are not yet published (2004).

Phnom Da



Phnom Da - The view of Phnom Da When arriving from Phnom Penh (2002), Angkor Borei.

The Phnom Da temple at the top of the hill is a modern tourist site development. The temple at the top of the hill is a modern reconstruction of the old original sandstone slab basement. At Angkor Borei there is a museum which has collected findings from Phnom Da temple and caves.



Phnom Da - View of the village at the base of Phnom Da and further away from the Mekong marshes till; the river.

Phnom Da caves (4-6 century)



Phnom Da - The highest cave on the hill (*Phnom*)



Phnom Da - At the top of the cement wall to the right of the door, there is a row of fine sandstone (?) carved with a sequence of kudus without the inside face



A dislodged door frieze with shallow *kudus*, later painted white.



Phnom Da - Details of the caves probably of the 4-7th century, of Phnom Da that we visited for the last time in 2006.

In these caves were found the large Vishnu now at the National Museum of Phnom Penh, and the statues. An inventory was never made known.

The Phnom Da Caves were exposed for centuries to people grabbing what they wanted, also from the temple at the top of the hill, which is now a tourist attraction and popular site for professional photographers.



Phnom Da. The southeastern side of the hill is presenting stone slabs in a form of a shrine maybe to protect a statue. Every single slab is of schistose rock. The statue is now in the National Museum.



Phnom Da - Inside a cave, there is what looks like a cooking oven used by poor people in a protected site possibly a few centuries old. The block could have been the base of a statue or a ritual altar.



Phnom Da caves. Vishnu with Rama and Parasurama, end of 6th early 7th century. These magnificent sculptures were found separately in the caves shown above. These masterpieces are proudly exhibited at the National Museum of Phnom Penh.

The Ashrama Maha Rosei

The **Ashrama Maha Rosei** is a sanctuary on the edge of Phnom Da hill. Henry Mauger, a scholar from the last century believed that the building was transferred stone by stone from a site near Kratie to Phnom Da.



The door has cylindrical colonnettes, is lightly decorated and terminates at the top in a bulbous shape. The door has an incomplete lintel with the double arc eroded/not carved. (pictures by Vittorio Roveda 1999)



The roof has three massive levels; the lower floor has a cornice with small circular Kudu. Each level of the temple has a false pediment carved over the pediment of the unique door, the last level has a large circular element composed of a pear-shaped emblem. The main door has no ornate pediments with a an ornate rectangular open window at the centre. Below it there is a lintel that seems “incomplete”

to us although the artist of the time only had for models the U-folded coloured glass chains hung on the main door of houses in India. Maha Rosei is a unique demonstration of Khmer architecture before Sambor. It is entirely made of granite blocks which made its construction a harder job for the devoted to their gods. We do not know to which God the shrine is dedicated. It is believed to be older than 600 CE, having Kudus carved in a circular recess as in the ornate Indian temples at Pallava circa 600 CE. and before.



Maha Rosei. the northern and southern sides of the building have 3 windows



The Ashrama **Maha Rosei** has many elements not seen since, being typical of the early Preangkorian.

Hanchei

This large modern Buddhist temple complex is located some 30 km north of Kampong Cham on the Mekong River. It includes several Preangkorean monuments. To the northern side of the modern Buddhist **vihara** is the rare early Hindu cell, then the basalt tower of Prasat Kuk Pra Yath, then a brick tower of the 7th century. To the south of the vihara is a large 7th century(>) brick tower.

Previous abbots built a private shrine and inhabitations around the vihara, a tower for special Buddhist events and the monks' cells, school and refectory. There are entertainments for children, a fountain with Manimekhala over a crocodile (a common statue in Cambodia), then another fountain with a frightening cement statue of Sugrib fighting the bull Nandin (a short episode narrated from the *Ramayana* and *Ramakien*. According to the inscription on two lateral pilasters, this cell was built during the reign of Bhavavarman (611-635c.)

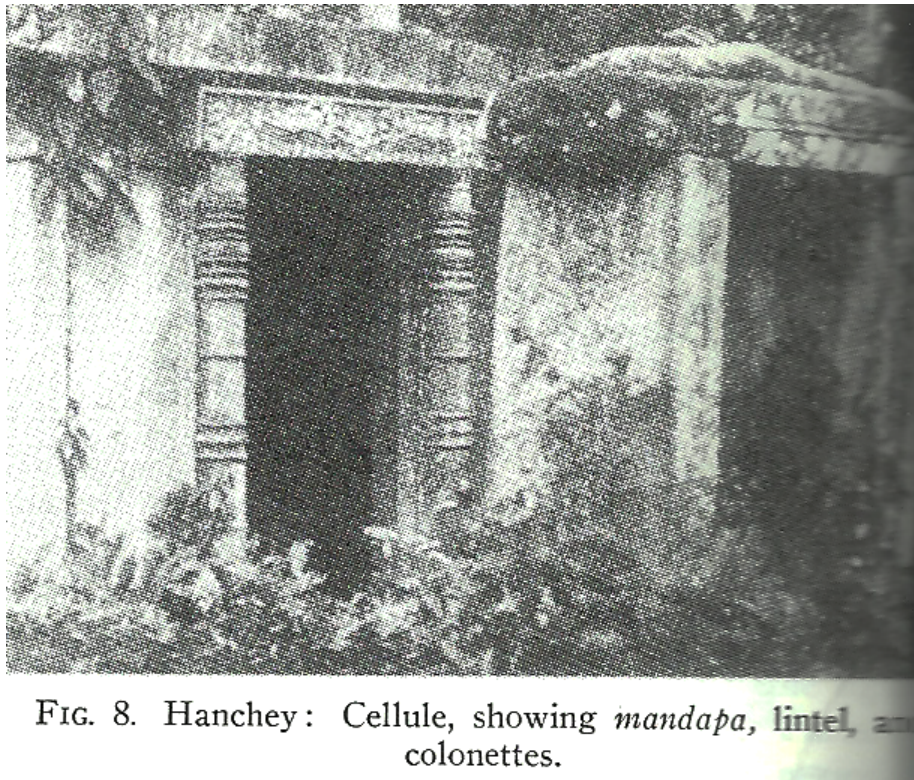


FIG. 8. Hanchey: Cellule, showing *mandapa*, *lintel*, and colonettes.

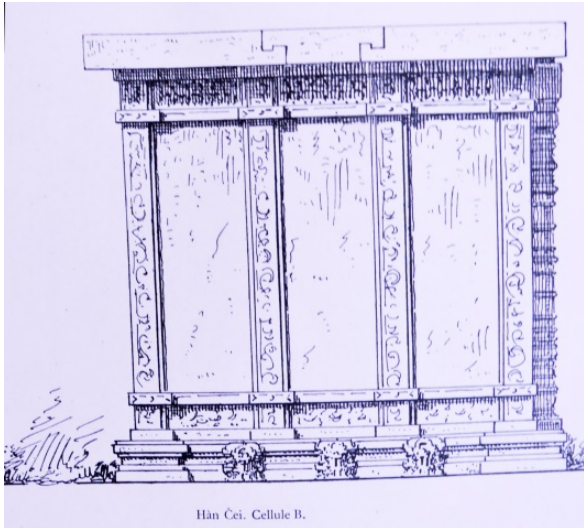
When Parmentier visited site 12937 he observed that it was composed of a sanctuary-tower and a cell: (1037:194). The sub-basement of both buildings have disappeared, but a new one was made when only the Cell was repositioned over a layer of mixed rubble of granite and bricks. It was however an important archaeological piece.



The **Hanchei Cell** after the first phase of restoration



The cell before restoration



The cell seen by Parmentier in 1927, showing the side pillars decorated side with carved flowers columns.



Hanchei Cell. The lintel with the image of Vishnu on Ananta on both sides of the central medallion of flowers. Small god Palaces are carved on the base of the walls basement slab.

From Parmentier's studies (1923: 197) of the construction of Kuk Prah in vascular basalt on the Mekong (see below), he noted that it has, by chance, the same profile as Maha Rosei at Phnom Da. The most important aspect of the Hanchei is that it was made from three 3 large sandstone slabs and another for the roof, and not of laterite or sandstone blocks cemented by usual vegetal glue. Therefore a fourth slab was needed for the roof of the cell and complete slabs were needed for the side walls and probably a cut slab for the door. The roof of the cell is the 4th slab. Simple colonettes with rings were added later together with the monolithic lintels

We also note that it is smaller than the similar cell N17 of Sambor Prei Kuk which is probably older than Sambor. The singularity of the cell is to have the eastern wall open with a door. The lateral walls and basement are carved with place images. Most important is the carving over the door, a sort of thin lintel supported by columns (colonettes). The largest carved flowers compose a central medallion. The tower door has an inscription that has similarities with the 7th century of Sambor Prei Kuk. This cell is probably slightly older.



Hanchei, Prasat Kuk Prah Yhat

Parmentier (1923: 197) studied Kuk Prah Yhat (here below) which is constructed in blocks of vascular basalt, facing the Mekong. It has, by chance, the same profile as Maha Rosei at Phnom Da. This monument was originally built on the Mekong shore as Kuk Prah Yhat. The other pictures are after the second restoration in January 2009 showing the improvements; the old road had been moved and a garden was created to host this old monument which is square in plan, and the door that opens to the east, topped by a 4 level roof ending with a large bulb. The lintel has two-segmented arcs with hanging scrolls garlands, 2 *makara* spetting out the arc. The door has two circular simple colonnettes which are bulbous at the top. The sanctuary was probably erected during the reign of Bhavavarman I, as its two-pillar inscriptions are believed to be of his reign (611-635 circa).

Since the *Ashrama* and the Hanchei's *Prasat Kuk Prah Yhat* were made of loose blocks of a vascular basalt (a basalt with small bubbles) easily put together and easily reconstructed, the scholar Henry Mauger believed that the 2 monuments may have been taken from another old locality on the Mekong and reassembled locally stone by stone as done at Phnom Da. The Kuk Pra Yhat tower is a little lower than the main ground of the monastery.



The Temple around 1999 (picture by Snellgrove)



The door with the unique lintel; eroded cylindrical colonette" (pictures by David Snellgrove 2004: 36-37)

Hanchei's Prasat **Kuk Prah Yhat** is another piece of evidence of the oldest Preangkorian, but stylistically, the eroded lintels are already Preangkorian with the figure of Indra on Aitavata, while the medallions over the end of the arc were carved with the image of a kneeling worshiper (left) and Brahma (right pavilion}. Hanchei is a very small shrine, thus referred to as a cell. Originally there was a similar cell in front functioning as a mandapa removed for unknown reasons (see photograph).



Hanchei The restored tower has a new stairway but with the original “moon plateau” at the base of the steps. The wall base level is decorated at precise intervals with Kudus with faces. The figure in the central medallion is unrecognisable.



Hanchei.The lintel of the above monument consists of a thick arc with borders as in a ribbon with a small central oval medallion containing an unidentifiable figure. From the arc hang small bunches of flowers or fruits but no makaras. Noticeable are the two stone kudas apparently over the lintels. They had their face carved on these cylinders as can be seen on the previous page.

The double bend ribbon-looking arc contains a single medallion at the centre with the image of Indra on Airavata. Over the arc both extreme ends, there are two large medallions of which the left one has the image of a worshiper (?) and the one to the right the figures of Shiva on Nandin. This identification was done around 1912 by Parmentier (1936: 128)

Prasat Prah Srei

At present this site has a single tower in an excellent state of preservation but slanted to the NW. Originally there were two more towers, smaller, to the southwest. Probably already in poor condition, they were used as construction material for a few houses, one for the *hachar* (head of the village) and one for the large Buddhist vihara that was demolished at the end of the 20th century, but immediately rebuilt in the early 20th c. even closer than before to the Khmer tower. The tower has several architectural innovations (Parmentier 1927 :173).

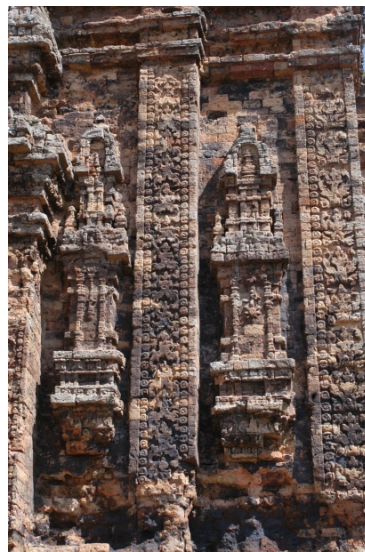
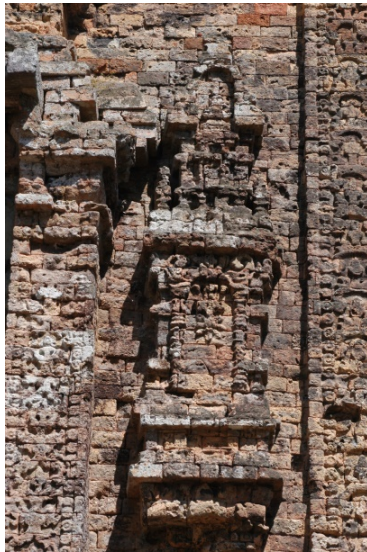


Samrong Sear. Eastern face (2003). The new vihara was built only a few metres close from the ancient tower. **Far Right:** an elevation drawing by Parmentier 1927



This prasat is located on the lower part of the Tonle Sap which during the dry season is on solid ground with good country roads but during the rainy season becomes an island. The access from Kampong Chhnang must be made by boat (20 minutes). Extensive excavation for pre- and protohistoric artefacts has been going on for many years. The temple studied here is typically Preangkorian with 4 levels composing the tower. The tower has a room for rituals accessible by stairs. The towers are entirely made of flat brick cemented with local vegetal glue. The doors have cylindrical colonettes and a lintel with the arch, slightly curved with a row of vegetal scrolls. This style reminds one of that of Prasat Andet.

lintel with the arch, slightly curved with a row of vegetal scrolls. This style reminds one of that of Prasat Andet.



Palace replicas on the walls are reminiscent of the Flying Palaces of Sambor Prei Kuk with the difference that they contain stairs or sets of columns instead of people. Over the door lintels, there is a sort of pediment in the shape of a walled palace with a small shrine with an arched mini-pediment. The roof of the tower is similar to the barrel-shaped Indian temples.



The false doors with lintels of the Prei Khmeng style



The door modified in recent times.

Prasat Sakhalâ

2 km distant from the previous temple it has a very *similar tower* but is oriented exactly to the east. There were at least 3 smaller towers now reduced to rubble, some under the soil. The top was added later by Buddhists who wanted to dedicate the entire sanctuary to Buddhism. A door leads to the internal space of the ground floor; the decoration of the monument is by far superior (carved signs repeated together with rows of pearls). The lintels *are interesting being quite different from those of Sambor*. The lintel reminds me of those of the *Prei Khmeng style*. At present this site has a single tower in an excellent state of preservation. Originally there were two more towers, smaller in size, to the southwest. Probably already in poor condition, they were used as construction material for a few houses, one for the *hachar* (head of the village) and for the large Buddhist vihara that was demolished at the end of the 20th century, but immediately rebuilt in the early 20th c. even closer than before to the Khmer tower. The tower has several architectural innovations (Parmentier 1936 :173).

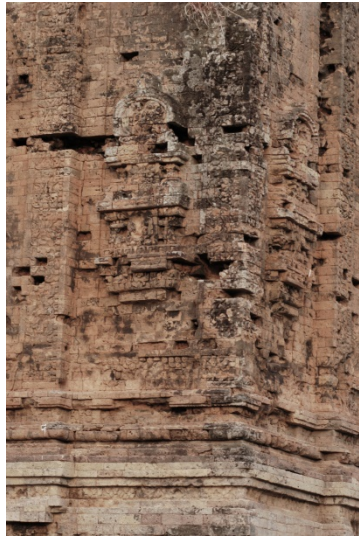
The tower has at least 3 floors, one less than Prasat Samrong Sear, if not better preserved in the parts, being smaller. Each layer of the roof's 6 or 7 levels has square decorations with a sort of kudu's Arch. The top 2-3 floors have a series of colonettes imitating a gallery.



Prasat Sakhalâ



Prasat Sakhalâ. The top modern decoration in the shape of a Buddha head on a cement plinth.



Prasat Sakhalâ. Example of poorly preserved miniature palaces



Prasat Sakhalâ



Prasat Sakhalâ - The door of this Prasat does not have a stone lintel but a rich layers of decoration.

Prasat Srei

This Prasat consists of 3 brick towers in a very poor state of preservation. Fortunately, one lintel hidden on the ground was preserved. Its style does not remind those of the previous towers, and the eroded central image of a small Indra and his elephant (?) and this lintel could have been intended to decorate the ruined temples as an act or gift in exchange for a request.



The lintel of the above temple of an evolved Prai Khmeng with the arc making an inflexion in the middle of the lintel where there seems to be an elephant's head probably of the 8th century.