"What and Where was Chenla?", *Recherches nouvelles sur le Cambodge*. Publiées sous la direction de F. Bizot. École française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, 1994, pp. 197-212.[The research of which this paper is a part has been supported by a grant from the Social Science Research Council, New York.]

All students of early Cambodian history must have been struck by the contradictory treatments of Chenla. In this paper my purpose is to review the evidence and offer a new conclusion about the identity and location of that polity.

There has been a traditional consensus that Chenla was centered in Champassak in southern Laos, or even farther north, and it has even been said that "des inscriptions nous enseignent que, dans la seconde moitié du VIe siècle en tout cas, il occupait la vallée de la Se Moun et une partie...du Cambodge septentrional" (Jacques, 1986: 61). The inscriptions to which reference is made are those of the Dangrek chieftains, Vīravarman, Bhavavarman, and Mahendravarman. But they in fact make no reference to Chenla at all, in this context they are being forced into a conception of Chenla based on other reasoning, and they themselves are not at all evidence for the existence of Chenla in their area.[1]

As Coedès put it in his synthesis of the Indian-influenced part of Southeast Asia, "the center of [Chenla] can be localized on the middle Mekong in the region of Bassac [because]...*The History of the Sui*, in information dating from before 598, thus before the total conquest of Funan [by Chenla]...says: 'near the capital [of Chenla] there is a mountain named Ling-kia-po-p'o, on the summit of which there is a temple...dedicated to a spirit named P'o-to-li" (Coedès, 1964:126, 1968: 65-6), which modern scholars have interpreted as the Liṅgaparvata in southernmost Laos where Wat Phu is located, with a sanctuary to Bhadreśvara.[2] Otherwise Chinese information on Chenla just placed it southwest of Lin-i and north or northeast of Funan.

It is not necessary, however, to relate the foregoing Chinese record to that particular mountain. As Coedès wrote in another context, "...ce nom [Liṅgaparvata] désignait, entre autres [sic], la montagne de Vat Ph'u" (Coedès, 1954: 286, n. 9), and Bhadreśvara was rather common as a deity in pre-Angkor Cambodia.[3] Thus virtually any mountain in central or northern Cambodia could

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[1] Jacques seems to have forgotten that no inscriptions refer to Chenla at all. The concept "Dangrek chieftain" was inspired by Coedès' remark about a much later (11th century) Hiranyavarman who may not have "effectivement règné; peut-être était-il simplement le chef de quelque principauté au Nord des Dangrek" (Coedès 1929:302)

[2] Coedès 1968 is an English translation of Coedès 1964. Whenever an English-language translation has been published I shall quote it here, but for French readers, I have cited the pagination of both versions of Coedès' *États hindouisés/Indianized States*.

[3] It is not certain what mountain was meant in that inscription (K136). It was probably another Liṅgaparvata which was evoked in K418, from Phnom Svan (Nui Sam) about 7 km southeast of the town of Chaudoc, An

have been the Liṅgaparvata of which the Chinese had heard, and on the basis of this information there is really no need to look for Chenla beyond the borders of what is present-day Cambodia. All that is required is that it be inland from Funan. The importance of this will appear below.

For Chenla and the transition to it from Funan, Coedès accepted the Chinese framework and erected on the very terse inscriptions of the Dangrek chieftains an impressive edifice about the conquest of Funan by Chenla. He assumed *sārvabhauma*, mentioned as grandfather, or ancestor, of the kings in the inscriptions, to be Emperor of Funan, even identifying him with Rudravarman, the last king of Funan mentioned in Chinese records. This assumption, as presented by Coedès, is not entirely convincing, given the distance between Funan, with the Jayavarman-Rudravarman inscriptions in southern Cambodia and Vietnam, and the Bhavavarman-Citrasena inscriptions in the north; and it may have been based on an exaggerated view of Funan's extent (Coedès, 1964: 127-8, 1968: 66-7). Nevertheless, new research, discussed below, on the inscriptions in question suggests that Rudravarman may really have been the king intended by the designation *sārvabauma*.

Coedès, in his reconstruction, also started with some details from tenth and twelfth century inscriptions concerning kings Śrutavarman and Śreṣṭhavarman, putative ancestors of the Kambuja line, and the latter supposedly a ruler of Śreṣṭhapura, a city which has usually been placed near Wat Phu in southern Laos. This led Coedès to the assumption that Śrutavarman and Śreṣṭhavarman must have been early kings of Chenla, since that kingdom, in the Chinese histories, had been located to the northeast of Funan, and its sacred mountain, as described by the Chinese, bore some resemblance to the mountain at Wat Phu (Coedès, 1964: 126, 1968: 65-6).

The error in the next step in Coedès' construction, a hypothetical marriage between Bhavavarman of the northern inscriptions, allegedly a prince of Funan, with a Chenla princess (Coedès, 1964:128, 1968: 66-7) has been demonstrated by Claude Jacques. Bhavavarman, he writes, was not "the husband of a princess issuing from the maternal family of S'res.t.havarman", and he was thus not a Funanese "who became King of Chenla through his marriage to a princess of the country" (Jacques: 1979, 372-3, 1986b:, 64-5). Whether or not they represented Chenla, the locations of inscriptions concerning Bhavavarman, Citrasena-Mahendravarman and their families suggest that they belonged to an area

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Giang Province (Coedès, 1929: 305). Unless quoting from the text of an inscription, I shall cite it by K. number only. Bibliographical references for numbered inscriptions may be found in Coedès 1966, *Inscriptions du Cambodge* VIII.

comprising what is now northern Cambodia and adjoining parts of Thailand. Even on this point Coedès' view underwent shifts which have not been reflected in the standard treatment.

From the publication of Coedès' "Site primitif" (Coedès, 1918), it had been held that the center of Chenla was near Wat Phu and in the Mun valley, and that Bhavavarman and Citrasena pushed southward from there against Funan. Then in "Nouvelles données sur les origines du royaume khmer" (Coedès, 1956), on the basis of a paleographically 5th-century inscription from near Wat Phu, Coedès hypothesized that the Wat Phu area had been ruled by the Cham. In that case the *Urheimat* of the Kambujas, and the seat of Śrutavarman and Śreṣṭhavarman, must have been farther south, perhaps near Kratie, with the northern inscriptions of Bhavavarman and Citrasena representing a push northward, perhaps against the Cham, concurrently with attacks southward toward Funan.

By l964 Coedès was offering still another interpretation in the last edition of *Les états hindouisés*. The center of the original Chenla is again "on the middle Mekong in the region of Bassac", but it "must have come under the domination of Champa by the end of the fifth century". Then the Khmer of Chenla, from wherever they had been displaced by the Cham conquest of Bassac, reconquered "the country from the Chams at the end of the fifth century or beginning of the sixth century", at which time Śreṣṭhapura "may have been founded" by Śreṣṭhavarman (Coedès, 1964: 126, 1968: 65-6). This would have been a Chenla movement northward.

In fact the idea of a Chenla conquest of Funan is based entirely on the Chinese remarks that "ses [Citrasena] ancêtres avaient progressivement accru la puissance du pays [Chenla]" and Citrasena conquered Funan, replacing it by Chenla (Ma Touan-lin, 1876: 477). A later Chinese history added that the Funanese capital moved from T'e-mu to Na-Fou-Na, identified by Coedès respectively with Ba Phnom and Angkor Borei (Coedès, 1964: 126, 1968: 65).

Coedès' embellishment of the scenario is confusing. Śrutavarman and Śreṣṭharman of Chenla "broke the ties of tribute" to Funan and "gradually increased the power of their country". But then Bhavavarman initiated the conquest of Funan, although according to Coedès, he was Funanese himself, married to a Chenla princess (Coedès, 1964: 126-7, 1968, 66). The last inference has been shown invalid by Jacques; and another difficulty is that Bhavavarman's residence, Bhavapura, was northeast of the Tonle Sap in the modern province of Kompong Thom, whereas "in the second half of the sixth century, Bhavavarman and...Citrasena attacked Funan [implicitly from the Wat Phu area] and, judging by their inscriptions, pushed their conquest at least up to Kratie on the Mekong, to

Buriram...and to Mongkolborei", all locations north of Bhavapura, already implicitly the seat of Bhavavarman (Coedès, 1964: 130, 1968: 67-8). Although this alleged military activity was far to the north, the Funanese were forced to transfer their capital from Ba Phnom to Angkor Borei.

Such a story is incoherent, and springs from Coedès' attempt to force incompatible data into a preconceived unified scheme. Nothing in the epigraphical record authorizes such interpretations; and the inscriptions which retrospectively bridge the so- called Funan-Chenla transition do not indicate a political break at all.

There are only two such texts, but one of them is the most important political record of pre-Angkor Cambodia, K53 from Ba Phnom, dated AD 667.[4] It lists four generations of a family which provided ministers to five kings, Rudravarman, Bhavavarman [I], Mahendravarman [Citrasena], Īśānavarman, and Jayavarman [I], the first and third of whom figure in the Chinese histories as respectively last king of Funan and the first conqueror from Chenla (Coedès, 1928: 129-30). This 7th-century Cambodian record, however, does not indicate any political discontinuity, either in royal succession or in the status of the family of officials who produced the inscription. Another inscription of a few years later, K44, 674 AD, commemorating a foundation in Kampot province under the patronage of Jayavarman I, refers to an earlier foundation in the time of King (*vraḥ kamratāṅ añ śrī*) Raudravarma, presumably Rudravarman of Funan, and again there is no suggestion of political discontinuity.[5]

Of particular importance for Coedès' reconstruction of Funan and Chenla history were the inscriptions which mention Śrutavarman and his son Śreṣṭhavarman. The first was Rājendravarman's inscription K958 of 947 AD, which was also his first genealogical record. He traced his line back to Śrutavarman, son of the Rishi Kambu and first king of the kambujas [*kambuja* = 'born of Kambu'], a term for the Khmer which also makes its first appearance here in Khmer epigraphy.[6] In that family, the inscription continues, were Indravarman, Yaśovarman, Jayavarman [IV], and of course Rājendravarman himself. Important for the matter of interest here is that there is no mention of Śreṣṭhavarman,

[4] For the purposes of this article it has been sufficient to add the conventional 78 to *śaka* dates, without regard to whether they fell in the first months of the Christian year, equivalent to *s'aka* + 79.

[5] Perhaps K1036 could be considered another piece of evidence, for it chronicles the positions held by several members of a single family from the reign of Rudravarman, through the seventh century, to Jayavarman II, and up to Sūryavarman II. At least that family had a tradition of Funan-Chenla political continuity, even if the very late date of the inscription might suggest to some that it was not reliable for the 6th-7th centuries. I wish to thank Claude Jacques for a transcription of K1036.

[6] The term is found earlier in Cham epigraphy, in the inscription of the "Tour de gauche de Po Nagar", dated 817 A.D., published in Abel Bergaigne, *Inscriptions sanscrites de Campa*, number XXVIII (408,C,2), pp. 268-270.

although Śreṣṭhapura, not at all associated with Śrutavarman, is named in the section of the inscription devoted to contemporary cult and administrative matters.[7] Thus a place named Śreṣṭhapura existed in the tenth century, but the royal genealogy of the time ignored its eponymous founder.

Śrutavarman apppears again a year later (948 AD) in the Baksei Chamkrong inscription, K286, as 'root' of the Kambu line, but again Śreṣṭhavarman is missing, as is any further connection to Rājendravarman and his immediate predecessors, whose ancestry is traced back, via Rudravarman, to another mythical couple, Kauṇḍinya and Somā.[8]

The lineage of Sūryavarman I was also traced back to Śrutavarman in a reference to an archivist who kept the records of "the *kamvuvaṅśa*" and "the kings from *vraḥ pāda* Śrutavarmadeva up to...*vraḥ pāda kaṃrateṅ kaṃtvan añ śrī* Sūryavarmadeva who is of the lineage of *raḥ pāda kaṃrateṅ añ śrī* Indravarmadeva who went to Īśvaraloka..." (Coedès, 1954: 261,266); but there is no mention of Śreṣṭhavarman or Śreṣṭhapura.[9]

Śreṣṭhavarman does not appear in Cambodian epigraphy until the reign of Jayavarman VII, six hundred years after his supposed existence, and when he does, he bears the marks of an eponymous mythical figure.[10] Śrutavarman's appearances in the record also seem suspect, and he certainly cannot have been son of a mythical Rishi Kambu. He could, in principle, have been a king of the Kambujas, but there is nothing in the texts in which he figures to associate him with the area of Wat Phu or with a conquest of Funan by Chenla. As Claude Jacques has written, the kings Śrutavarman and Śreṣṭhavarman "nous apparaissent...comme des figures de légende" (Jacques, 1986b: 73).

In assessing these various pieces of evidence it is essential to keep in mind that the contemporary or near contemporary pre-Angkor records ignore Śrutavarman, Śreṣṭhavarman and the Kambujas, while the Angkor inscriptions which purport to treat the pre-Angkor period show no knowledge of the real pre-Angkor rulers Citrasena-Mahendravarman, Īśānavarman, Jayavarman I, or Jayadevī. Of genuine ancient kings known from 6th-7th century epigraphy only Rudravarman and Bhavavarman seem to have been remembered at Angkor, but it

[7] S'rutavarman is mentioned in verse II, S'res.t.hapura in verse XVII.
[8] The number of generations involved suggests that this was not the Rudravarman of Funan.
[9] This is K380 among the "Inscriptions de Práh. Vihãr". My translation is from the Khmer, p. 261. The French version is on p. 266.
[10] See inscriptions K273, K287, K288, K547, K597, and K903.

is not certain that even they were assigned to their true places.[11] References to the real city or province of Śreṣṭhapura have no bearing on the problem of Chenla.

Accepting all of the evidence as literal fact leads to such incoherence as Coedès' "they [Śrutavarman and Śreṣṭhavarman] felt themselves strong enough, during the second half of the sixth century, to attack the empire to the south [Funan]"; and "the king of Chenla at that time ... Bhavavarman" "and his cousin Citrasena attacked Funan", likewise "in the second half of the sixth century" (Coedès, 1964: 127-30, 1968: 66-8).

The 'conquest of Funan by Chenla' is thus derived from very weak sources. In fact, research conducted in a materialist spirit on the Chinese records of relations with early Southeast Asia has revealed that by the 6th century Funan was in irreversible economic, and therefore political, decline, and that no conquest theory is required to explain its disappearance (Wang, 1958, Wolters, 1965: 152-3, 157-8, 236, Vickery, "Funan"). Certainly Funan was no longer a coveted goal for a supposed "constant latent threat" of the "push to the south" (Coedès, 1964: 30, 130, 1968:, 10, 68), a sort of domino theory of ancient history, so beloved of older historians.

In the 1970s Claude Jacques began cautiously to move away from the established historiographical framework. In a discussion of "The Reality Concealed by these Chinese Views of Indochina" he said that "some very basic historical mistakes have been made" because "the history of pre-Angkorean Cambodia was...reconstructed much more on the basis of Chinese records than on that of [Cambodian] inscriptions", and that as new inscriptions were discovered "they preferred to adjust the newly discovered facts to the initial outline rather than to call the Chinese reports into question". This bias was reinforced by the predominant interest "in those days" in "the history of events" to which the Khmer inscriptions added little detail (Jacques, 1979: 369).

Jacques' ongoing study of pre-Angkor Cambodia, nevertheless, and the presentation of new evidence and hypotheses center on what had always been called 'Chenla', in particular the realms of the princes who left short Sanskrit inscriptions north and south of the Dangrek mountains--Bhavavarman, Citrasena-Mahendravarman, Vīravarman, Hiraṇyavarman, Candravarman. There is no longer, however, any question of Chenla conquering Funan, but separate conquests by the brothers Bhavavarman and Mahendravarman south and north of the Dangrek, starting from the realm of their father Vīravarman which stretched

[11] In his "Cours Année 1985-1986" (Jacques 1986a), p. 24, Claude Jacques proposed that a Jayavarman, named in the 11th-century K989 (IC VII, pp. 175, 182, verse XXXI), was Jayavarman I, not, as Coedès thought, Jayavarman V. More probably the reference is to Jayavarman II, as Jacques had earlier indicated in his "La carrière de Jayavarman II", pp. 216-7.

from south of Korat to Kratie. Bhavavarman established his capital at Sambor Prei Kuk in north central Cambodia, while Mahendravarman first expanded control in northeastern Thailand, then took over the kingdom of his brother at the latter's death, reigning thenceforth in Sambor Prei Kuk (Jacques, 1986b: 68-70).

As I noted above Jacques rejects Śrutavarman and Śreṣṭhavarman. Of greater interest is Jacques' emphasis in "Le pays Khmer avant Angkor" (Jacques, 1986b) that Mahendravarman's own inscriptions do not imply joint activities with his brother Bhavavarman, as Coedès had surmised. They suggest rather that Mahendravarman at first remained with and succeeded his father Vīravarman, somewhere between Sambor on the Mekong and Stung Treng. In the meantime, Bhavavarman went out to conquer his own realm farther south and southwest between Ta Phraya and Sambor Prei Kuk, perhaps never going northward beyond the Dangrek mountains, and making his capital at Sambor Prei Kuk. Citrasena-Mahendravarman on the other hand seems to have enlarged his kingdom beyond the Dangrek mountains, for all of his inscriptions with the title 'Mahendravarman' are in Thailand and Laos. Then at the death of Bhavavarman I, probably around 600, Mahendravarman took over the latter's kingdom, settling then also in Sambor Prei Kuk. The most significant aspect of Jacques' new readings is the indication that the original home area of these two kings as well as their father Vīravarman was within Cambodia south of the Dangrek mountains.

Jacques' new readings of the Dangrek chiefs' inscriptions imply a reinterpretation of the location of Chenla and of its relations with Funan. With the home territory of Bhavavarman and Mahendravarman, their father Vīravarman, and implicitly their grandfather the *sārvabhauma*, located in what is now Cambodia south of the Dangrek mountains, and with Śrutavarman and Śreṣṭhavarman rejected as mythical, there is no longer reason to postulate a Chenla conquest of Funan from Champassak or from north of the Dangrek mountains. The Chinese description of Chenla as "southwest of the kingdom of Lin-i", and thus implicitly northeast or north of Funan does not require placing it farther north than modern northern Cambodia, and the Chinese record that Īśāna[varman], son of Citrasena who established authority over Funan, resided in the city of Īśāna[pura] places him precisely where, according to Jacques, his uncle Bhavavarman and his father Citrasena had resided. The Chinese record (Ma Touan-lin, 1876: 477-83) implies no significant shift of the center of Chenla in the late 6th or early 7th century (Coedès, 1964: 130-3, 1968: 68- 70).

Furthermore, new study of K506 and the discovery of K1150 (Jacques, 1986b: 79-81) have now linked King Īśānavarman, and inferentially his predecessors, directly with the family of officials of Āḍhyapura in K53, which

testifies to Funan-Chenla political continuity. Īśānavarman was father of Śivadatta, who figures importantly in K54, apparently another record of the same family, because according to Coedès it is "*inséparable*" from K55 recording the appointment of a governor, probably Siṃhadatta mentioned in K53, in their city Āḍhyapura. Īśānavarman was also father of Bhavavarman II, called younger brother of Śivadatta in K1150, which means that Bhavavarman, although missing from the king list of K53, was also of their family, and was probably the Bhavakumāra named as a participant in the act of his older brother Śivadatta recorded in K54.[12]

With the careers of Bhavavarman I and Citrasena, and their father Vīravarman, placed firmly within Cambodia south of the Dangrek, and viewing them, Īśānavarman and Bhavavarman II as close relatives of the family of K53 who began their history as officials of Rudravarman of Funan, it is once again reasonable to suppose that he was the ancestor *sārvabauma* recorded in the northern inscriptions. The 'Dangrek chieftains' were indeed conquerors, or at least would-be conquerors, but not of the south (Funan) by the north (Chenla), rather in the other direction. They represent the first reaction of Cambodian rulers to the decline of 'Funan' occasioned by the shift in Southeast Asian maritime trade routes; and this in itself is an implicit argument against the traditional conquest story.

Fnan was in decline, and no longer an attractive object for conquest.[12a]Its rulers had to seek new sources of wealth inland. The 'Dangrek' inscriptions should be regarded as records of exploratory probes rather than enduring conquests, with little, if any, permanent effect; and I would not interpret Mahendravarman's inscriptions as 'delimiting' any kingdom (Jacques, 1986b: 65, 68), either his father's or his own. I repeat, the shift of political and economic center of gravity, and related military campaigns during the late 6th and early 7th centuries, all took place in a south to north direction.

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[12] Although it is not important for the present article, it should be noted that Jacques has reversed the chronological order of K506 and K1150, and has not paid close attention to a date in K506. There a certain Īśvarakumāra describes himself as a servant of King Īśānavarman, and says that he was appointed to govern Jyeṣṭhapura, apparently the site of the inscription. The inscription has a date equivalent to 637 A.D., and this means that Īśānavarman must still have been alive. Further evidence that Īśvarakumāra was not claiming to be an independent ruler, is in his Khmer title *mratāñ kloñ* (Jacques, 1986b: 89), which in pre-Angkor records always denotes a subordinate official, although of very high rank. Inscription K1150, although undated, must be somewhat later, for there the governor of Jyeṣṭ hapura is Śivadatta, who describes himself as a son of King Īśānavarman and elder brother of *mahārāja* Bhavavarman, which can only mean that it is from the reign of Bhavavarman II, and presumably after 637. This new revelation of the antecedents of Bhavavarman II means that my hypothesis about his separate origins (Vickery, 1986) was mistaken, as were earlier hypotheses by Coedès, Dupont, and Jacques.

[12a] Michael Vickery, "Funan Reviewed: Deconstructing the Ancients" *BÉFEO*, 90-91, 2003-2004, pp. 101-143.

One detail which Coedès forced out of context and into his interpretation of Chenla was based in part on an error of translation and in part on mistaken reliance on Angkor records. Coedès wrote that the *History of the Sui*, which provides information from "before 598, and so before the complete conquest of Funan and the transfer of the capital of Chenla to the south says, 'near the capital is a mountain named [Liṅgaparvata] on the summit of which is a temple...to the spirit named [Bhadreśvara]'", which Coedès considered to be Vat Phu in Champassak, where indeed there was a foundation for Bhadreśvara in Angkor and pre-Angkor times (Coedès 1964: 126, 1968:, 65-6).

In Coedès (1964) that detail appears on page 126, appropriate for the date '598', while description of Īśānapura is on p. 141, but in Ma Touan-lin, whom Coedès was citing, the passage concerning Īśānapura in the reign of Īśānavarman (616?-637?) and the mention of Liṅgaparvata are both on p. 483, with no indication that the second was meant retrospectively. In the French translation Ma Touan-lin describes Īśānavarman's realm, in the present tense, on pages 477-487, and he concludes that section with the paragraph on Liṅgaparvata.

Only then is there a retrospective reference to "the time of the Sui dynasty", but in 616, not 598. What Ma Touan-lin wrote, in the translation of d'Hervey de Saint-Denys, was that Liṅgaparvata was near Īśānavarman's city Īśānapura, not at Vat Phu, and if so, its identity should be sought at some hill in the vicinity, perhaps Phnom Santuk, 30 km south of Īśānapura. Coedès, however, assuming from his interpretations of other sources that Chenla had once been in Champassak, that therefore a Liṅgaparvata associated with it must have been Vat Phu, but that such association had to predate the shift of the Chenla capital to the region of Sambor Prei Kuk/Īśānapura, took the date 598 from inscription K151 which seems to associate Bhavavarman with that region, meaning that the supposed conquest of Funan from the north had been completed, and inserted it into a section of Ma Touan-lin torn out of context. Moreover, Tatsuo Hoshino, working directly with the Chinese texts, has stated that there is a translation error in the work of d'Hervey de Saint-Denys, and that there is no mention at all of Liṅgaparvata in the context used by Coedès. Noting that Coedès' period, 'before 598' in the Sui history, must be an error, for the Sui dynasty was only founded in 598 and its history therefore only begins then, Hoshino says that what Ma Touan-lin really wrote was, "'près de la capitale est un mausolé Jia bo po (où Kia-po-p'o) qui a la forme d'une butte....sur son sommet se trouve un temple....[à] l'est de la

ville, il y a (un temple pour) le dieu nommé Po duo li (P'o-to-li)...'" , which has been assumed to mean Bhadreśvara (Hoshino, 1986: 23).[13]

Claude Jacques (1986a: 61) noted Coedès' error in the date, but did not realize its significance, considering it simply a 'lapsus', not an attempt to resynthesize historical data. The mausoleum shaped like a butte must have been an early temple-*prāsāda*, the size of which was exaggerated in the reports which eventually reached Ma Touan-lin's writing desk some 600 years later when the Chinese knew of the huge temple-mountains of Angkor.[14] We should conclude that Chenla, within the period of relevance to pre-Angkor Cambodia (and including the division into 'Land' and 'Water' Chenla), was within what is now the north central part of the country, that Chenla during its alleged vassalage to Funan probably bordered the latter, that there was no invasion and descent of the Khmer from beyond the Dangreks, probably not even a great conquest but a rather smooth transition from one type of dominant polity to another. In fact, since Funan continued to send envoys to China into the middle of the 7th century (Coedès, 1964: 123, 1968: 65), some of the early 7th- century inscriptions in southern Cambodia, including some naming Īśānavarman, may be 'Funanese'.

This new view of Chenla's location puts an end to the idea of sudden intrusion of the Khmer language into an area dominated by Pearic and Katuic, as suggested by Dupont (Dupont, 1943-46: 43, 1952-54: 139-41). The wide use of Khmer in the seventh- century inscriptions, without any significant mixture of other languages than Sanskrit, of which considerable terminology was already assimilated to Khmer, indicates that Khmer had been the language of central and southern Cambodia for centuries.[15] It also negates Michel Ferlus's directly contrary concept of Land Chenla as a Katuic language area, related to his acceptance that Chenla was on the "Middle Mekong" (Ferlus, 1992: 58).[16] Not

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[13] Perhaps this is an example of d'Hervey de Saint-Denys' "habitual negligence" and tendency "to gloss over some points rather than directly translate them", noted by sinologists (John Whitmore, "Elephants Can Actually Swim", p. 134, note 8, with citation from Pelliot, "Le Fou-nan", p. 138). I must add here that in general I reject Hoshino's presuppositions and methods of using Southeast Asian historical documents. On certain isolated points, however, he has contributed valuable new insights.

[14] In d'Hervey de Saint-Denys' translation it would appear that the five thousand guards of the temple were accomodated on top of the mountain where the temple stood, but Hoshino's version only implies that there were five thousand guards for the temple, and no Cambodian temple was large enough to accomodate five thousand guards on its summit.

[15] The presence of a few Mon terms in the Khmer inscriptions of southern Cambodia argues for close contact between the two languages in that region; and two Austronesian, probably Javanese terms which had been totally assimilated to Khmer indicate that Khmer had been in contact with Austronesian languages, if not Javanese, then Cham or Malay, since Funan, or even pre-Funan times (Vickery, 1992).

[16] On an earlier occasion Ferlus (1977: 59-67) also argued that the language of Funan was probably not Khmer. There is a certain incoherence, or at least a puzzle, in the arguments of Ferlus as they stand. If neither Funan nor Chenla were Khmer, where were the Khmer?

only is the location wrong, but the rather large pre-Angkor Khmer epigraphic corpus shows little, if any, Katuic influence.

In this connection Hoshino reveals another significant detail, from the *New Tang History*, concerning the 8th century: "Zhen la [Chenla] s'appelle aussi...Ji Mie". Plausible restitutions of the old pronunciation of 'Ji Mie' may be inferred from "K'it Mat (Cantonese)", "Kiêt Miêt (Vietnamese)", and "Kiat Biat (Amoy)", which suggest, more than anyting else, 'Khmer' (Hoshino, 1986: 25-6).

[*This fits very well with Geoff Wade's observation (personal communication), that the chracters read in Mandarin as *Zhen la* 'Chenla' are pronounced in Hokkien as 'Tonle'/Angkorean Danle, which helps situate Chenla within Cambodia.*]

So much for the location of Chenla; now what was it? Was Chenla ever a unitary state? Chinese writing about it thought it was. They considered that there was a state of Funan which was replaced by a state of Chenla in the 6th or early 7th century, and that Chenla split into two states, Land and Water Chenla, in the 8th century. It is possible, however, that the Chinese sources may be inadequate to determine such details of internal organization. Pierre Dupont's detailed examination of the pre-Angkor generations of the Angkor royal genealogies suggested that the Chinese might have erred, not in supposing a split, but in not realizing the degree of splitting which occurred, and that there might have been many small states, dynasties and family domains in the 8th century (Dupont, 1943-46).

Claude Jacques emphasized the very vague character of the Chinese terms 'Funan' and 'Chenla', and the circumstance that many inscriptions make no reference to supralocal authority, which Jacques at least on occasion has considered to mean that those locations were independent of any king, and probably in frequent conflict among themselves (Jacques, 1986b: 90). If that were always true, should they all be called states, or should we perhaps infer the absence of state-type organization, and consider that even those persons entitled 'king' ruled little more than the immediate region around their city? If Chenla was already divided into multiple polities, it would render meaningless the Chinese view of division into 'Land' and 'Water' Chenla.

Although many inscriptions indicate that central authority was loose during the time of Īśānavarman, a new view of his realm based on inscriptions K506 and K1150 discussed above must acknowledge that he maintained administrative control over at least one distant region, then named Jyeṣṭhapura, far to the west in what is now eastern Thailand, and presumably over a stretch of territory between it and his capital, and that his son and successor Bhavavarman II maintained

authority there for at least a certain period. Since a *mrātāñ kloñ* Jeṣṭhapura is mentioned as a person of authority in K1 on the southern coast near the modern border with Vietnam, and that inscription is closely related to K22 in which Īśānavarman is mentioned as overlord, we may assume that his authority was strong in that rather distant area also.

Both of these regions were coastal areas which may have been part of Funan, meaning that in fact Īśānavarman was maintaing the coherence of Funan and was perhaps responsible for some of the envoys which Funan continued to send to China into the first half of the 7th century (Coedès, 1964: 125, 1968: 65). This is further support for the argument that Funan and Chenla were not separate states.

The inscriptions of Jayavarman I are full of indications that he increased central authority throughout Cambodia, and one of his first inscriptions, K447 near Battambang, indicates that he also was intent on controlling an outlet on the western coast. Indeed he may have succeeded in creating a unified state comprising most of Cambodia within its present boundaries. The epigraphic evidence has traditionally been interpreted as suggesting that the unity was not preserved after his lifetime. The explanation as offered by Coedès was that "anarchy followed the reign of Jayavarman I, who died without male heir"; that a prince "named Pushkara or Puṣkarākṣa [puṣkarākṣa] became king in Śambhupura" [near modern Kratie], which "marked the beginning of the breakup of Cambodia"; and that Cambodia may have suffered from an Indonesian invasion (Coedès, 1964: 161-2, 1968: 85, 92-3).

There now seems to be a consensus that neither Puṣkarākṣa, nor an Indonesian invasion, should be emphasized in explanations of what happened in Cambodia in the eighth century (Jacques, 1972: 208, Wolters, 1973: 21, 1982: 7), and in his latest treatment of the period Jacques stated that "[n]ous ne possédons aucun renseignement sur la manière dont la partition du royaume de Jayavarman Ier a pu s'opérer après sa mort" (Jacques, 1986b: 88).[17]

Dupont still accepted a "période d'unification du Tchen-la" under "la dynastie venue au pouvoir" around 580 A.D., at the time of "la dislocation du Fou-nan"; and he considered that "les inscriptions attestent...l'importance du Tchen-la au cours du VIIe siècle", even though they do not mention it. He also assumed that the best documentation for the pre-Angkor period was the

[17] In his "Cours Année 1986-1987" (Jacques, 1987: 32-3), Jacques has emphasized that inscription K121 dated 716-7, which had been construed as dating King Pus̱kara-ks̱a, does not refer to a king at all, and he suggests that King Pus̱kara-ks̱a, said in K95 to have been the maternal uncle of the maternal uncle of the mother of Jayavarman II, must have lived in the latter half of the 7th century, during the time of Jayavarman I. Concerning an Indonesian invasion see Vickery 1998, pp. 386 ff.

retrospective Angkor-period royal genealogies, although he took into consideration the pre-Angkor inscriptions which named royalty. His work was still the traditional history of royal genealogies (Dupont, 1943-46: 17).

What precisely do the royal genealogies studied by Dupont mean? In their detail, as I remarked in an earlier context (Vickery, 1986: 103), the dynastic identities may be in large part fictitious, drawn from sources which Dupont himself recognized may have retrospectively "usurped relationships". In a manner similar to the tales of brahman-princess marriages, where Dupont was aware of the element of myth, of "the sixteen named ancestors beyond the parents of the ninth-century kings [in their genealogies], only one may with some certainty be identified with an individual known from the pre-Angkor corpus, while none of the mainstream kings of the pre-Angkor inscriptions, or the S'ambhupura dynasty recorded in K124 of 803, or any other supra- local chief mentioned in contemporary seventh to eighth century texts finds mention in the genealogies at all".

I showed that the complex genealogies of the early Angkor kings Indravarman, Yaśovarman, and Rājendravarman illustrated a phenomenon well-known to anthropologists, the reorganizing of chief-lineage genealogies to legitmize power relations in the present, with the ultimate ancestor situated at an increasingly higher generational point. Some of the analysis was based on more contemporary detail about certain ancestors, found in Khmer inscriptions, and which demonstrates the exaggeration of the official Sanskrit genealogies. Most of the ancestral branches illustrated in Dupont's table, and in the table in Coedès' *États/States*, can be traced back either to the cohorts of Jayavarman II or to the Śambhupura royalty. The most suspect of the positions in these tables is that of Rājendravarman's mother Mahendradevī. There is no clear statement about her parentage in any of the royal genealogies, and as Dupont acknowledged, "[a]ucune inscription ne qualifie explicitement Mahendradevī de fille d'Indravarman" (Dupont, 1943-46: 48), although that is a reasonable, and probably accurate, inference. As I illustrated (Vickery, 1986: 107), a Khmer inscription indicates that on her mother's side she must have been daughter or granddaughter of Jayavarman III and a consort of the Palhal family who were of *vāp* rank and among the early followers of Jayavarman II. Her father King Indravarman is seen in another Khmer inscription to have descended on his father's side from two of the supporters of Jayavarman II (Vickery, 1986: 105), but his parents could have been named Pṛthivīndravarman and Pṛthivīndradevī, as in the official genealogies, although I consider the identical form of the names suspect. Indravarman's mother also came from the group of Jayavarman II

followers; and only her putative father, Rudravarman, cannot be accounted for in that way. The official genealogies, however, say that Rudravarman's sister was Pṛthivīndravarman's mother and Indravarman's paternal grandmother; and if this detail is assimilated to the true genealogy, it makes Pṛthivīndravarman's father, the alleged Rudravarman, a brother of *teṅ* Pit, a sister-in-law of Jayavarman II (Vickery, 1986: 105). This was probably the true situation, and the name 'Rudravarman' a post-facto embellishment.

Indravarman's queen Indradevī seems really to have come from another lineage, at least on her father's side. The official genealogy of her mother's side, descending in four generations from a mythical brahman Agastya, probably indicates quite ordinary ancestors rather than any kind of royalty. Indradevī's father Mahīpativarman, however, is designated as one of the Śambhupura royalty, and this must be considered seriously, particulary since we possess a part of their own royal genealogy over the period in question.

We will recall inscription K124/803, in Sambor, Kratie, listing a King Indraloka, who must have lived (or who occupies a time slot) early in the eighth century, followed by his daughter, granddaughter, and great granddaughter, ranked as queens or princesses, but without their husbands being named.[18] This does not mean the consorts were nonentities. The inscription merely reflects a structure of inheritance, and it is well known that in matrilineal systems the consorts of the heiresses may still hold political leadership roles. Inscription K134, some 40 km northeast of the town of Kratie, describes Jayavarman II as king there, that is, less than 40 km due east of the place believed to have been Śambhupura. With approximately twenty years allowed for a generation, Jayavarman's presence near, in fact we can hardly avoid saying **in**, Śambhupura coincides with the reign of the next-to-last queen, Jayendra[valla]bhā, a name which means 'beloved of Jayendra', or 'beloved of Jaya the king [*indra*]'. Jayavarman was apparently her consort, and in this manner secured the control of Śambhupura which is recorded in the inscriptions. Interestingly, Dupont made the same marital connection, but believing that K134 was by a mysterious Jayavarman I*bis*, he did not see the link between Śambhupura and the first king of Angkor (Dupont, 1943-46: 31- 32).[19]

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[18] Not all historians agree on the interpretation of the title in question, *kanhen˙/kañhen˙/kanhyan˙*, but I have presented the evidence (Vickery 1992) that it must be taken as at least 'princess', and in the seventh century probably queen.

[19] The identification of Jayavarman Ibis as Jayavarman II was made by Claude Jacques in "La carrière de Jayavarman II" (Jacques, 1972). The explanation offered here of Jayavarman's connection with the lineage of Ś'ambhupura fits the records better than Jacques' remark in "La carrière de Jayavarman II", p. 218, that in 770-780 Jayavarman took charge of Śambhupura, yet left in place a rival local dynasty which sulkily refused to recognize his elevation to supreme king in 802. Earlier (Vickery, 1986; 104) I hypothesized that the princess in question might have been wife of a King Jayendrādhipativarman, supposedly maternal uncle of Jayavarman II, but since

That the unification of Śambhupura with the new state forming near Siemreap was peaceful seems supported by Indravarman's erection (K826) of a statue in memory to the queen of Indraloka, the most ancient ancestor recorded in K124. Dupont made still another connection with the Śambhupura queens. Because the Rājendravarman whom the official genealogies list as Indradevī's paternal grandfather is said to have been a king of Śambhupura, and to have married Nṛpatīndradevī, Dupont assimilated that name to the Nṛpatīndradevī of K124, and then inferred that Rājendravarman was her consort. This seems to me a reasonable procedure, but it links another branch of Angkor royalty to the same close-knit group of ancestors, and strengthens the argument against eighth-century political fragmentation.

Moreover, assuming the 'Rājendravarman' of Śambhupura was a true name, the name of Indradevī's mother, Rājendradevī, whose official genealogy is very suspect, was probably his daughter by another wife, and Indradevī's parents half-siblings. The result of this reworking of the royal genealogies is that all branches, except that of the father of the Angkor King Rājendravarman (944-68) descend from a small group of closely related royalty and their followers. Even Rājendravarman's connection, through his father Mahendravarman, with Bhavapura, does not justify the assumption of a rival kingdom, for there is ample evidence that Jayavarman II, three generations before Rājendravarman, had control of Bhavapura, which means that Rājendravarman's ancestry also goes back to the same intimate political coterie. What the genealogies studied by Dupont reflect is not multiple dynasties in the eighth century, but royal cliques vying for influence and for the throne in the 9th-10th centuries.

What, then, was the political situation of the eighth century? It was certainly not anarchy, fragmentation, and absence of rulers. In spite of the lack of inscriptions, and although we do not have the names of any of the rulers between Jayadevī in 713 and Jayavarman II in 770, except for the queens or princesses of Śambhupura (K 124), the steady investment in art and architecture (Briggs, 1951: 76-78; Coedès, 1964: 1778-9, 1968: 94; Pottier) proves the contrary. This material evidence shows that the country was sufficiently at peace and sufficiently unified for its rulers to extract enough wealth to invest in more and larger temples than had been built in the seventh century, with the exception of the city of Īśānapura, capital of Īśānavarman and Bhavavarman II.

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the latter was claiming kingship within her realm, a more likely hypothesis is that he was her consort. 'Jayendra[valla]bhā is a hypothetical restoration by Coedès.

Was there even a two-way split as recorded by the Chinese? Even this, although not impossible, cannot be confirmed. It was not, however, the the type of division which has traditionally been postulated.

As has been argued above, Chenla, in the sixth and seventh centuries, or even earlier, was located entirely within the boundaries of modern Cambodia; and if so, we cannot avoid the logic that the two parts into which Chenla allegedly split would also have been within the same area. Apparently with the establishment of Jayavarman II at Angkor, the Chinese soon stopped referring to 'Land' and 'Water' Chenla, and reverted to 'Chenla', implying that for them the two parts were reunited.[20]

Moreover, the reunification of Chenla beginning in the time of Jayavarman II, if that is at all an accurate conception, was a movement from southeastern Cambodia which achieved domination over northern Cambodia. Nothing in the local epigraphic corpus records or implies involvement of the trans-Dangrek region, and there is little record of any involvement of that region in Angkor affairs until the reign of Sūryavarman I (1002-1050), nor continued active involvement until the time of Jayavarman VI at the end of the 11th century. This reasoning implies that 'Land Chenla' had always been in the northern part of what is now Cambodia.

NOTES

[20] Although there is no clear statement to that effect in the literature, Coedès (1964: 191, n. 4, 1968: 306, n. 35), says the *New T'ang History* "still attributes an embassy of 813 to 'Water Chenla'". O.W. Wolters , "North-Western Cambodia in the Seventh Century", p. 357, says 'Water Chenla' [but no more mention of ‘land zhenla’?] occurs again in a Chinese record of 838, but, pp. 378-382, argues cogently that the Chinese misunderstood Cambodian politics, and that the terms 'Land' and 'Water Chenla' were geographical, not political divisions, both, implicitly, within Cambodia south of the Dangrek Mountains.

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