

**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

**NATION RELIGION KING**



**MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND FINE ARTS**

**SAMBOR PREI KUK,  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE  
Representing the Cultural  
LANDSCAPE of Ancient  
Ishanapura**

**REQUEST FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST**



**Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO**



## Glossary

**Brahma** - The Creator of all things, originally conceived as the deification of Brahma, becoming the principle deity of the rimurti (with Vishnu and Shiva). Brahma has four heads, and four arms holding scepter, rosary, bow and alms bowl.

**Chenla** – The name “Chenla”, like the name Funan, comes from Chinese reports on Cambodia.

**Durga** - Consort of Shiva in her terrible form; also called Kali, Chandri, Bhairavi.

**Flying palace** - Term used to describe a small depiction of a building or celestial palace supported by winged or flying figures or animals. In Hindu mythology, known as the palace of Indra.

**Funan** - The oldest Indianized state in today's South Vietnam and precursor of Chenla and not known in Khmer epigraphy. The name is only found in Chinese records of contacts with Funan, contacts which began around 230 A.D.

**Gambhiresvara** - “The God of Seriousness”, “The God of the Depths” or ‘hidden knowledge’ and associated with 7<sup>th</sup> century worship derived from India.

**Harihara** - ‘Hari=Vishnu; ‘Hara’= Shiva; Deity combination of two gods seen as the synthesis of the two Hindu cults. Harihara is depicted with the Vishnu tiara on the one side and the Shiva's pleated locks on the other.

**Indic** - refers to/related to India

**Isvara** - Sanskrit meaning ‘lord’, generally referring to Shiva.

**K** - Indicates the inscription number as universally inventorized.

**kendi** (kundika) - form of pottery with a long neck with a spout swelling at the base. It is found in Hindu iconography as an attribute of Brahma and his sakti Brahmani and of Sarasvati the Goddess of Learning; associated with Buddhism as an attribute of Avalokitesvara.

**Kudu** - A niche generally containing a head, decorating the transoms of temples in South India and Southeast Asia.

**Makara** - Sea monster with scales, claws and a large head, often in the form of a crocodile, sometimes with the trunk of an elephant.

**Mahishasura** - A demon who won a great mythical battle against the gods and taken up residence in their heaven after having expelled to wander homeless on earth.

**Mandela** - In Sanskrit meaning circle; used as a term for a model for describing patterns of diffused political power distributed among principalities in early Southeast Asian history;

adapted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Western Historians from ancient Indian political discourse as a means of avoiding the term “state”.

**Mandapa** - A pavilion within of the temple structure, an antechamber in front of the main sanctuary.

**Nagara** - Sanskrit for city or capital (Angkor).

**Narasimba** - Man-lion; Vishnu is described as being in this form when he killed Hiranyakashipu (*Bhagavata Purana* VII, 8-9); symbol of divine strength and valor.

**Narasimbagupta** - A combination of the narasimba (man-lion) and gupta derived from goptri meaning military governor, ruler or protector; ruling dynasty of an empire in India c320CE-c6<sup>th</sup> century CE.

**O** - Minor water stream.

**Prahasiteshvara** - “The God of Smile”, officially introduced in Ishanapura by its founder Ishanavarman I in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

**Poñ** - A Khmer title of authority; chief of a settlement or several hamlet –sized communities.

**Prasat** - Temple, home of the gods.

**Purana** - Collection of Hindu myths and legends.

**Sakti** – Power, energy, an active force of a God personified in his feminine counterpart, also spouse of a God.

**Sanskrit** - Ancient Indian language and script used in the Khmer empire; a language in the Indo-aryan branch of Indo-European, and the literary language of Hindu religious text.

**Shastra** - Instruction book or manual

**Silpashastra** - Ancient India text on art giving guidelines for architecture, sculpture, and painting.

**Steung** - Water stream.

**Vajimukha** - Sanskrit for ‘horse face’; represents one of the two equine forms of Vishnu.

**Vedic** - Pertaining to the Veda, the foundation of the Hindu religion.

**Vishnudharmottara** - A Hindu text dedicated to the arts; an appendix to the VishnuPurana, a fundamental Vishnu canon.

## Time Line

**1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> century: Funan**, one of its capitals Angkor Borei, first Indianized state, geographically situated in present Southeast Cambodia and South Vietnam.

**Late 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> century: Chenla**, Capital Ishanapura, first Khmerized state, geographically situated in present central Cambodia, province of Kampong Thom.

**9<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> century: Angkor**, capital Angkor, Great Khmer Empire ruling over large parts of Southeast Asia.



**1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> century: Funan; Late 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century: Chenla; 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century: Angkor**

## **A very important founding period**

**In many ways the Chenla state, with its capital of Ancient Ishanapura (first known as Bhavapura) can be seen as a very important founding period in the history of Southeast Asia:**

- 1. Religion: The Hindu and Buddhist religions, with the introduction of the Harihara and Sakabrahmana cults get a firm hold in the region and will define the belief systems for centuries to come.**
- 2. Ideology: The introduction of the God-King concept with a centralized state administration will leave a lasting imprint in the region and will only diminish in importance at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.**
- 3. Language: The first introduction of Khmer as universal language next to Sanskrit will have a lasting impact on languages still spoken and written in the Southeast Asia region.**
- 4. Technology/hydrology: The tradition of draining water in water rich areas in the Mekong Delta (Oc Eo, Angkor Borei) for agriculture and navigation purposes is transformed to the technique of catching and storing water in dryer inland areas (Sambor Prei Kuk, Angkor)**
- 5. Architecture: Sandstone elements are being introduced in a purely brick tradition. After Sambor Prei Kuk, more and more sandstone elements will be used in architecture as to come to the sole use of laterite and sandstone in the Angkor period.**



*Fig. 1 Prasat Chrei (N 18) is square in plan with three false storeys in gentle retreat. Its walls are undecorated save for three false doors projecting from the central planes; the false doors are modelled to represent miniature monuments. The fourth façade is occupied by the single doorway; the jambs have an inscription from the time of Ishanavarman I, (Brukoff, B. and Jessup, H.I., 2011, p. 19).*





## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Chapter number</b>		<b>Page number</b>
	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>STATE OF CONSERVATION AND FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>MONITORING</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>CONTACT INFORMATION OF RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE PARTY</b>	<b>131</b>

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **State Party**

Kingdom of Cambodia

### **State, Province, Region**

Kampong Thom province, commune of Sambor, and district of Prasat Sambor

### **Name of Property**

Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura

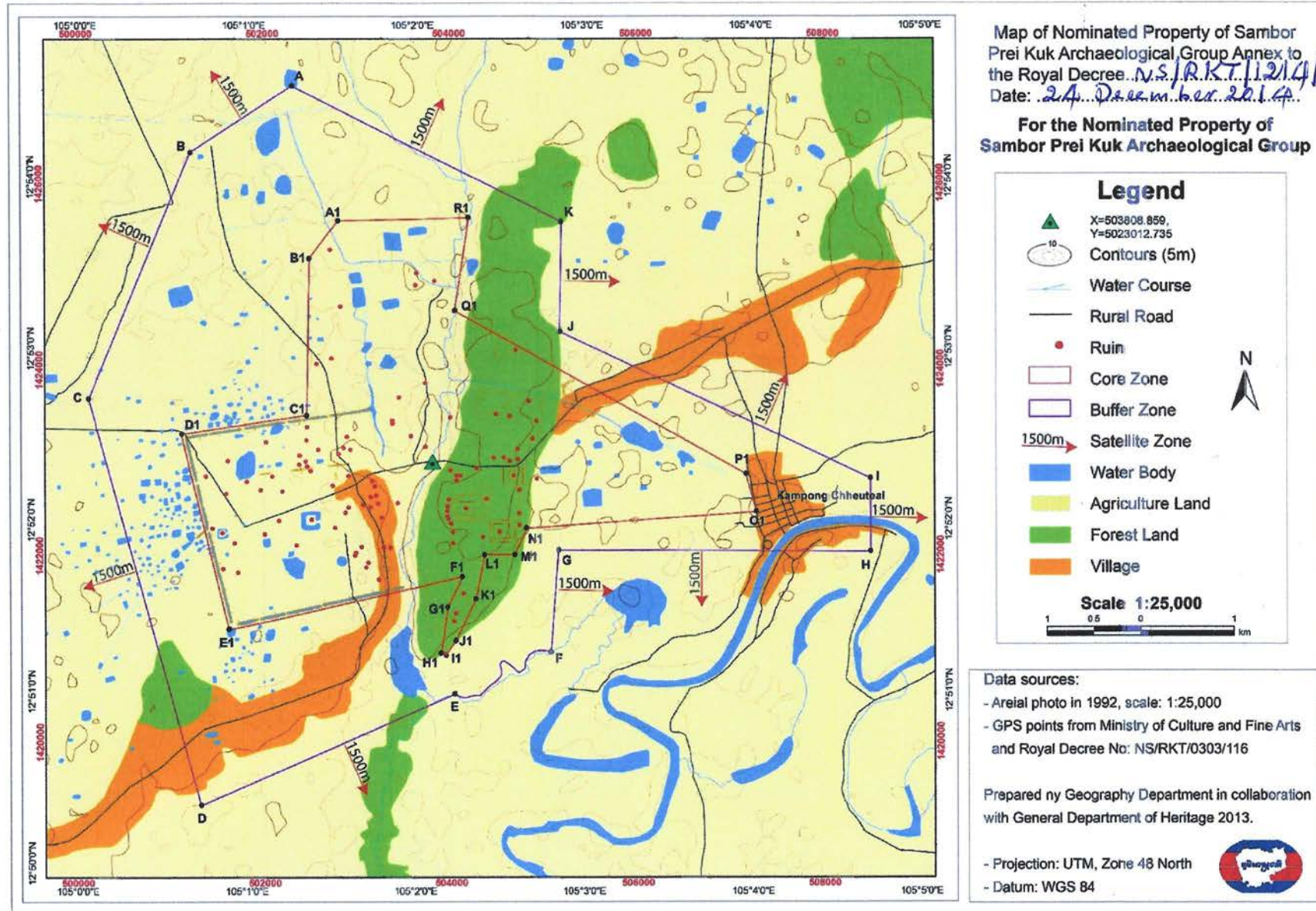
### **Geographic coordinates to the nearest second**

Point Zero: WGS84E 503808 - N 1423012. Point Zero is situated on the point at the approximate center of Prasat Tao Group or Central Group (C) of the much larger Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura

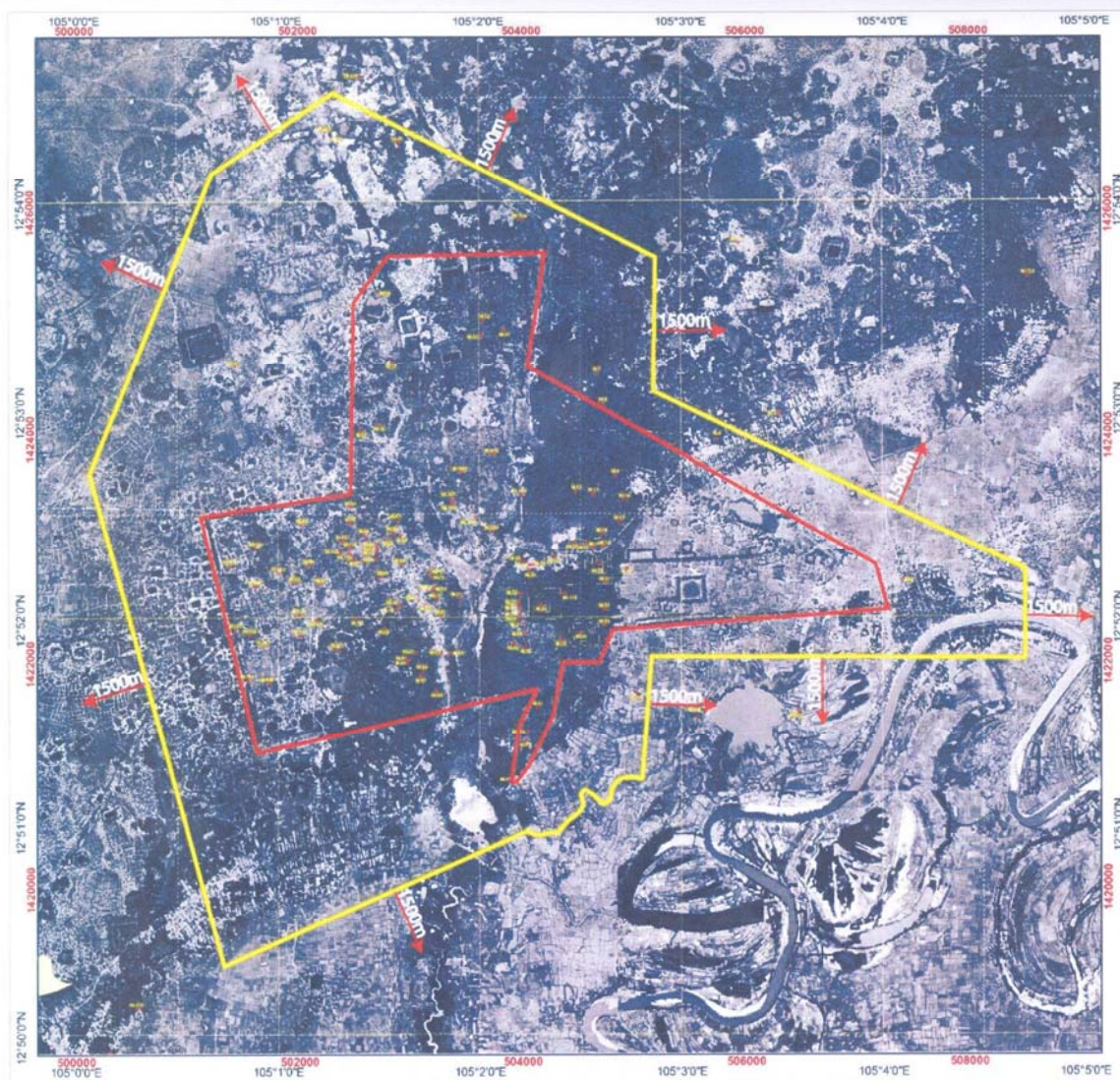
### **Textual description of the boundary of the nominated property**

The 1354.2ha is located on the west bank of the Steung Sen (river) in an area that contains lowlands, a marsh, and plateau. The entire property is situated on a gentle incline from north to south in a relatively flat area with an elevation of 2 m to 10 m. Small rivers punctuate the lower areas. The place is a mixture of rice paddy, tropical forest, and subsistence habitation. The area comprises the cultural site of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group established by the Reform of the Royal Decree of 24 December 2014.

A4 size maps of the nominated property, showing the boundaries and buffer zone







Map of Nominated Property of Sambor  
Prei Kuk Archaeological Group Annex to  
the Royal Decree *NS/RKT/1214/1488*..  
Date: *24 December 2014*.....

**For the Nominated Property of  
Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group**

### Legend

▲ X=503808.859,  
Y=5023012.735

• Ruin

□ Core Zone

□ Buffer Zone

1500m → Satellite Zone



**Scale 1:25,000**



### Data sources:

- Aerial photo in 1992, scale: 1:25,000
- GPS points from Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts  
and Royal Decree No: NS/RKT/0303/116

Prepared by Geography Department in collaboration  
with General Department of Heritage 2013.

- Projection: UTM, Zone 48 North
- Datum: WGS 84



## Criteria under Which the Property is Nominated

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura is nominated for the World Heritage List under criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi):

*Criteria (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.*

*Criteria (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.*

*Criteria (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.*

## Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

### (a) Brief synthesis

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura (first known as Bhavapura), ancient capital of the Chenla Empire, is the most important site for 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> Century Southeast Asia, showing a very complex city planning on monumental scale (harbor, causeways, hydraulic structures, religious complexes introducing octagonal architecture and moated habitation zone) and a unique iconography currently known as the “Sambor Prei Kuk Style”.

Politically, administratively and spiritually, the capital resonated far beyond its borders with central rule (introduction of the King-God concept) and administration transferring the universality of the Sanskrit language to the distinct Khmer language.

It was a place where travelers and diplomatic missions from as far as China, India and Central Asia met each other and where a syncretism of Hindu and Buddhist religions was established through the introduction of tolerant and peaceful cults around Prahasiteshvara, Gambireshvara, Harihara and the Sakabrahmana.

The combination of these new and unique features would give life to a society that would form the basis for the much larger Angkor Empire a few centuries later. Many traits however, would live on till today.

### (b) Justification for criteria

**Criteria ii:** The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura has a **unique architecture** and **town planning**, which is a distinct adaptation of Indian influence, introducing for the first time the octagonal building and translating itself in new aesthetic forms, such as the flying palaces and medallions, carved on the brick walls of temples and enclosures, stone lintels and sculptures currently known as the “Sambor Prei Kuk Style”.

The **landscape design** was carefully crafted and engineered to the needs of this large capital with the simultaneous introduction of three hydraulic systems to manage and control the water flow, providing a continuous water supply throughout the year.

**Criteria iii:** The civilization of Ancient Ishanapura underwent deep influences from the Indian subcontinent in the form of social institutions, religion and art which were assimilated into indigenous customs, ideology and artistic expressions. The Chenla Empire was a centralized state featuring a tolerant syncretism of Hindu (Prahastishvara, Gambireshvara, Harihara and Sakabrahmana) and Buddhist religions, having a lasting impact on Southeast Asian society.

The religious complex was the largest pilgrimage center in Southeast Asia. All that remains architecturally of that civilization are its brick and stone structures, its spiritualism and language however, still live on.

**Criteria vi:** In Sambor Prei Kuk, we see the first official introduction of the Harihara and Sakabrahmana cults, both striving for the universal values of tolerance and peace. It also harbored the first inscription in Southeast Asia referring to the universal teachings of Buddhism.

Inscriptions also make use for the first time of the Khmer language next to Sanskrit referencing to its centralized system of rule, and introduction of the God-King concept, which will stay central in Cambodian society till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The bas relief of a lintel shows us one of the first representations of an orchestra and music instruments, of critical importance for the universal study of ancient and contemporary music.

Ancient Ishanapura thus embraced a language, religious ideas and concepts of governance of universal significance.

### **(c) Statement of integrity**

The extent of the nominated property under Royal decree of 24 December 2014 (see annex VI) includes all the relevant historical, cultural, religious, secular, archaeological and environmental features and artefacts of the ancient complex, manifested through its moated city, three main temple complexes, hydraulic structures, monumental remains and pristine forested area from which the site bears its name. A LiDAR survey carried out early 2015 assists in illustrating the state of conservation of the site (page 19, *fig. 2.5*).

The ancient hydraulic structures (see annex V) are still in use today and a large number of decorative elements have remained in situ. Some of the masterpieces have been stored or are on exhibit in museums throughout Cambodia (see annex III).

**(d) Statement of authenticity**

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape continues to be used for the purposes of human habitation, agriculture production, commerce and religious worship.

Most of the ancient temple shrines are still in use for prayers and the ancient site is also considered a dwelling place for powerful ancestral spirits, for which special rituals are still organized several times a year.

Low density villages with traditional gardens and tree cover largely retain the pattern of settlement that would have existed in the historic urban complex.

This manifestation of continued old practices, assisted to maintain and preserve the archaeological and cultural landscape.

**(e) Requirements for protection and management**

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape is strongly protected by the Royal decree (Preah Reach Kret) NS/RKT/1214/1488 dated 24 December 2014, and the Cambodian Heritage Legislation. Royal Decree NS/RKT/0715/810 dated 31 July 2015, establishes the organization and functioning of the National Authority for the Protection and Development of the Cultural Site of Sambo Pre Kuk. A Sambor Prei Kuk National Authority will be guided by a Management Plan.

**Name and contact information of official local agency**

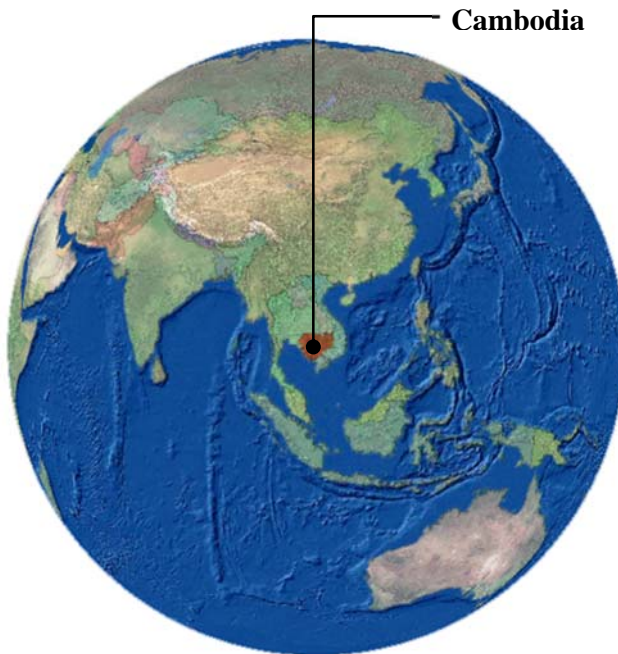
Sambor Prei Kuk National Authority (SPKNA)  
Kingdom of Cambodia  
HE Mrs. Phoeurng Sackona  
Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts  
227 Kbal Thnal, Preah Norodom Blvd, Sangkat Tonle Bassac, Khan Chamkar Mon,  
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[http\\: www.mcfa.gov.kh](http://www.mcfa.gov.kh)



## 1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY

### 1. a Country

**Kingdom of Cambodia**



*Fig.1.1 World map indicating Cambodia's location*

### 1. b Province

**Province: Kampong Thom District: Prasat Sambor Commune: Sambor**

The province of Kampong Thom is located in approximately the center of Cambodia, about half way between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, 168 kilometers (km) from the capital, Phnom Penh. It covers 15,061sq.km, which is bordered by Siem Reap province to the northwest, Tonle Sap (Great Lake) to the west, Kampong Cham province and Kampong Chhnang province to the south, Steung Treng province to the northeast, Kratie province to the east, and Preah Vihear province to the north.



### Location of the Property:

The nominated property is located in the northeast of Kampong Thom province, in the commune of Sambor and district of Prasat Sambor. It is about 28km from the provincial city of Kampong Thom, 181km from the temples of the World Heritage site of Angkor, near Siem Reap, 170 km from the World Heritage site of Preah Vihear, and 196km from the capital, Phnom Penh. The perimeter of the site proposed for nomination to World Heritage Status is situated in the approximate middle of the country.



Fig. 1.2 Cambodian map indicating the province of Kampong Thom and Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group

**1. c Name of Property**

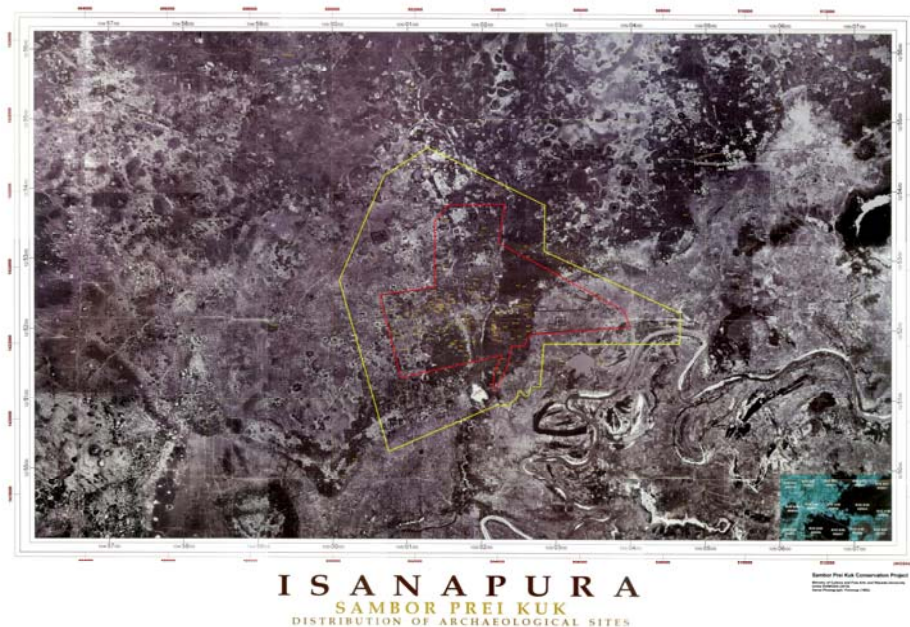
**Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura**

**1. d Geographical coordinates to the nearest second**

Point Zero: WGS84: E 503808, N 1423012

Point Zero is situated on the point at the approximate center of Prasat Tao Group or Central Group (C) of the much larger Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site and Cultural Landscape.

**1. e Maps and plans, showing the boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone**



*1.3 Reduced original 1/25,000 aerial map: The environment of Sambor Prei Kuk and its monuments with boundaries (red) and zoning (yellow): Ishanapura, Sambor Prei Kuk, Distribution of Archaeological Sites, Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation Project, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and Waseda University, Ichita Shimoda 2010, Aerial Photograph Finnmap, 1992; the original 1/25,000 map is to be found at the end of the dossier.*

**1. f Area of nominated property (ha) and proposed buffer zone (ha)**

Area of nominated property: **1,354.26 ha.**

Buffer zone: **2,009.30 ha.**

Total: **3,363.56 ha.**

## 2. DESCRIPTION

### 2.a Description of Property

The 7<sup>th</sup> century megapolis of Asia, known in China, India and Champa (My Son in current Vietnam) as Ishanapura, one of the great power centers in the region, was a nave which represented both the capital city of Ishanapura and the Kingdom of Chenla.

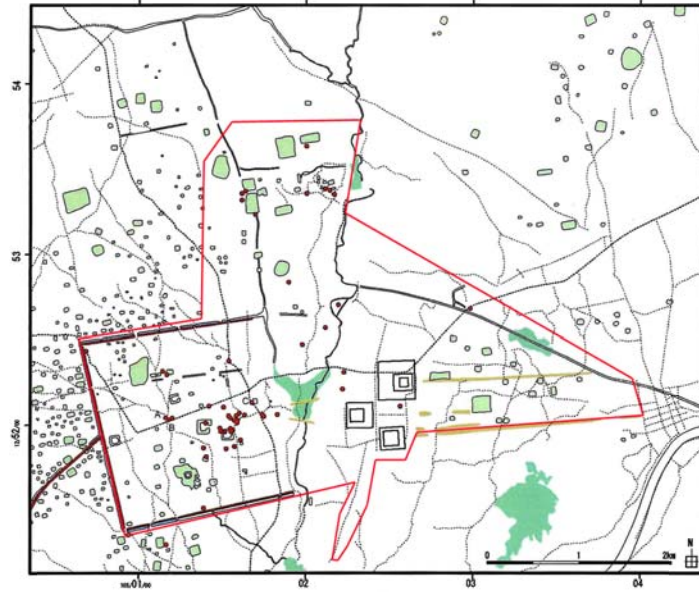
Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group has been identified as Ishanapura (city of King Ishanavarman I), the capital city of the Chenla Empire in the late 6<sup>th</sup> early 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. In more recent times Ishanapura has become known as Sambor Prei Kuk, which translates to “the temple in the richness of forest”. The archaeological group name is a combination of three Khmer words: Sambor means richness, Prei means forest and Kuk means temple (*Prasat*). This name came into being during the early days of exploration when the French explorers Aymonier and Lajonquiere described the temples in reference to a neighboring village spelled Sambour. Parmentier added the two words Prei Kuk. (Parmentier, 1927)

Sambor Prei Kuk, the ancient city of Ishanapura, is remarkable for its geographical and cultural centrality to the Khmer civilization. The site occupies a central position in present day Cambodia. It enjoys a central position in the vast pre-Angkor and Angkor Empire stretched along Wat Phu in the present Laotian sector of the Mekong upstream and to Oc Eo along the downstream Mekong in present day South Vietnam.

The fluvial plain in which Ishanapura flourished is a mosaic of aquatic landscapes: the Steung Sen River, the O Krou Ke stream, back marshes, valley plains, natural levees, meander scrolls, abandoned channels, water surfaces and sand bars, each one in its own way explaining the dynamics and flowering of the Ishanapura civilization. The Steung Sen River being an important artery for communication and trade played an important role in the diffusion of Khmer civilization southward.

The temples are located on the upland, which is several meters higher than the floodplain. The upland surface is slightly undulated and wavy in shape, containing a range of higher and lower areas. The builders of Ishanapura and its temple complexes made a wonderful choice by selecting uplands, a fact which amply explains the survival of the site for about one thousand five hundred years.

Recent field surveys have documented the remains of this ancient city, including the brick temples and their embanked causeways, the moat and rampart of the city, and waterworks for irrigation and town supply. This ancient city primarily consisted of three zones; the western habitation zone, the central temple zone and eastern causeways zone (*fig: 2.1*).



*Fig. 2.1 Generic map showing only the boundaries of the nominated site (red) with clear depiction of the two causeways (right), religious complex (center) and moated habitation zone (left), (I. Shimoda, 2010, p. 122)*

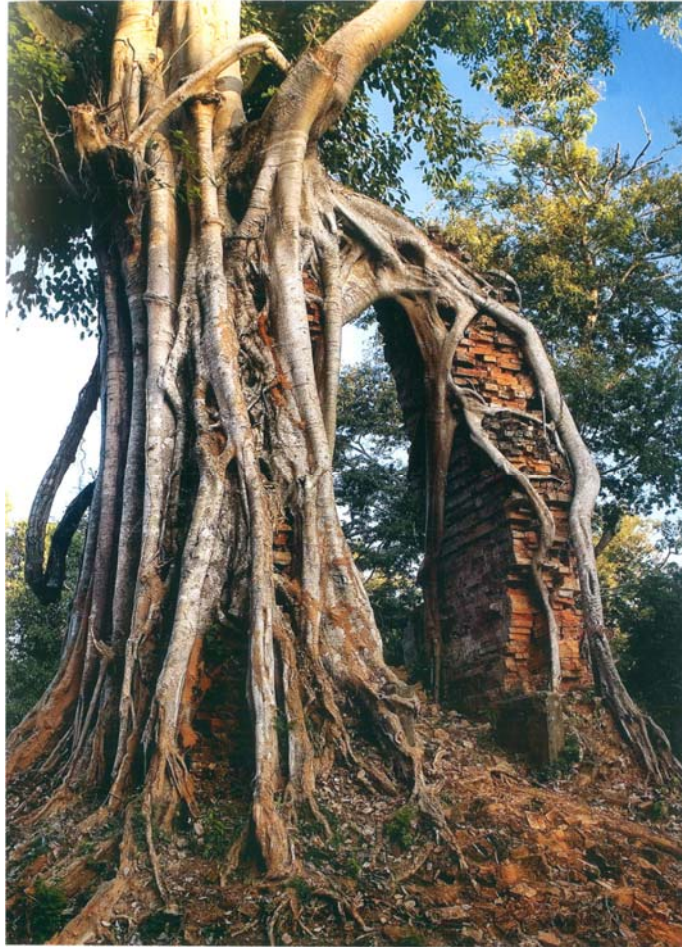
### **A complex of 291 surviving architectural features**

Several monument and many brick structures are concentrated in the central temple zone of the Sambor Prei Kuk Cultural and Archaeological Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura. However, many other remnants were also confirmed in the western area where the habitation zone, surrounded by a moat on three sides and a river on the other, is located. A further temple group is located to the north in the nominated property and can be considered as a satellite of the central temple zone.

The Sambor Prei Kuk Cultural and Archaeological Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura, contains numerous ancient temples and other structures. The number of identified individual archaeological structures, excluding features such as walls, total 291. A portion of the 291 structures, are grouped temple complexes comprising of multiple individual structures and accompanying features. The majority of the 291 structures are built in brick with some containing sandstone architectural elements such as lintels, door heads, sills and jambs. There is one confirmed laterite building (K8) tower, and one sandstone building (N17). A more complete description giving the location, dimensions and other pertinent facts as well as current state of conservation and importance of each of the 291 known structures and unexcavated mounds is contained in the Historical Building Information System: Annex I.



The central temple zone contains three main groups of monuments: Prasat Sambor (North Group) (M.020), Prasat Tao (Central Group) (M.026) and Prasat Yeay Poan (South Group Fig. 2.1) (M.024) (Fig. 2.4). Each of these temple groups contains a central main tower on a raised platform, surrounded by smaller towers and other structures.



*Fig. 2.2 Little remains of tower S 3, the once important gopura, or gateway, facing the principle temple (S 1) of the S group, (Brukoff, B. and Jessup, H.I., 2011, p. 23).*

### **The unique octagonal temples**

A peculiar and very unique aspect to the north and south groups is the presence of octagonal shaped temples.

Sambor Prei Kuk assumes special importance in the global history of architecture for its surviving ten octagonal temples: in the South Group: S7, S8, S9, S10, S11; in the North Group: N7; the temples with inventory numbers Z2 and Z6; Prasat Y and Khnach Tol.

These ten known examples of octagonal temples are the oldest and only specimen of this type in Southeast Asia. There are two more in Champa (South Vietnam), one at Bang An, and the other at Chan Lo, but they are however, from a later period.

There are five octagonal temples in the South Group, S7, S8, S9, S10 and S11, while the N7 is the only octagonal in the North Group. No octagonal temple has been reported from the Central Group. The two temples of the Z Group, Prasat Y and Khnack Tol, are the four octagonal temples outside the three main S, N and C - temple groups.

The Ishanapura examples of octagonal temples follow the general principles as explained in the ancient Indian Manuals of Architecture, but no existing Indian octagonal temple offers a prototype for the Sambor Prei Kuk structures, which makes them all the more unique.

From the viewpoint of the ancient Indian Manuals, the Sambor Prei Kuk octagonal temples represent the flying octagonal palace of Indra or Vimana Trivishtapa, the heaven of Indra and of the 33 gods (Kramrisch, 1946, 281).

The inside of the octagons is particularly impressive, with its layers of brick “reaching to the heavens” (*fig. 2.3*).

The ornamentation outside, mainly consists of Hindu iconography. The iconography for the five octagons of the South Group especially consists in its turn of the very rare and exquisite depiction of sculpted flying palaces (*fig. 2.2* and see further; an inventory of the flying palaces may be found in Annex II).



*Fig. 2.3 Flying palaces sculpted on the walls of the S-group.*

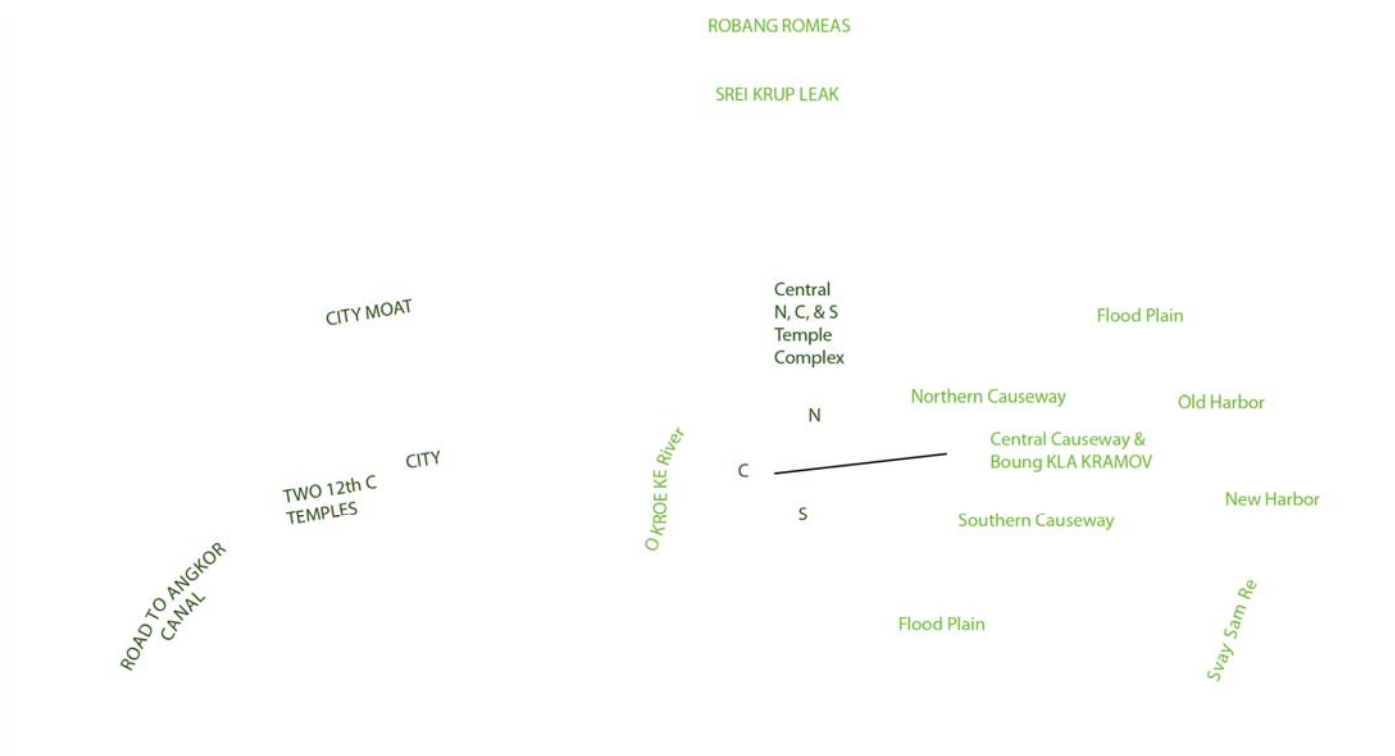


*Fig. 2.4 The sealing inside of an octagonal temple of the S-group.*

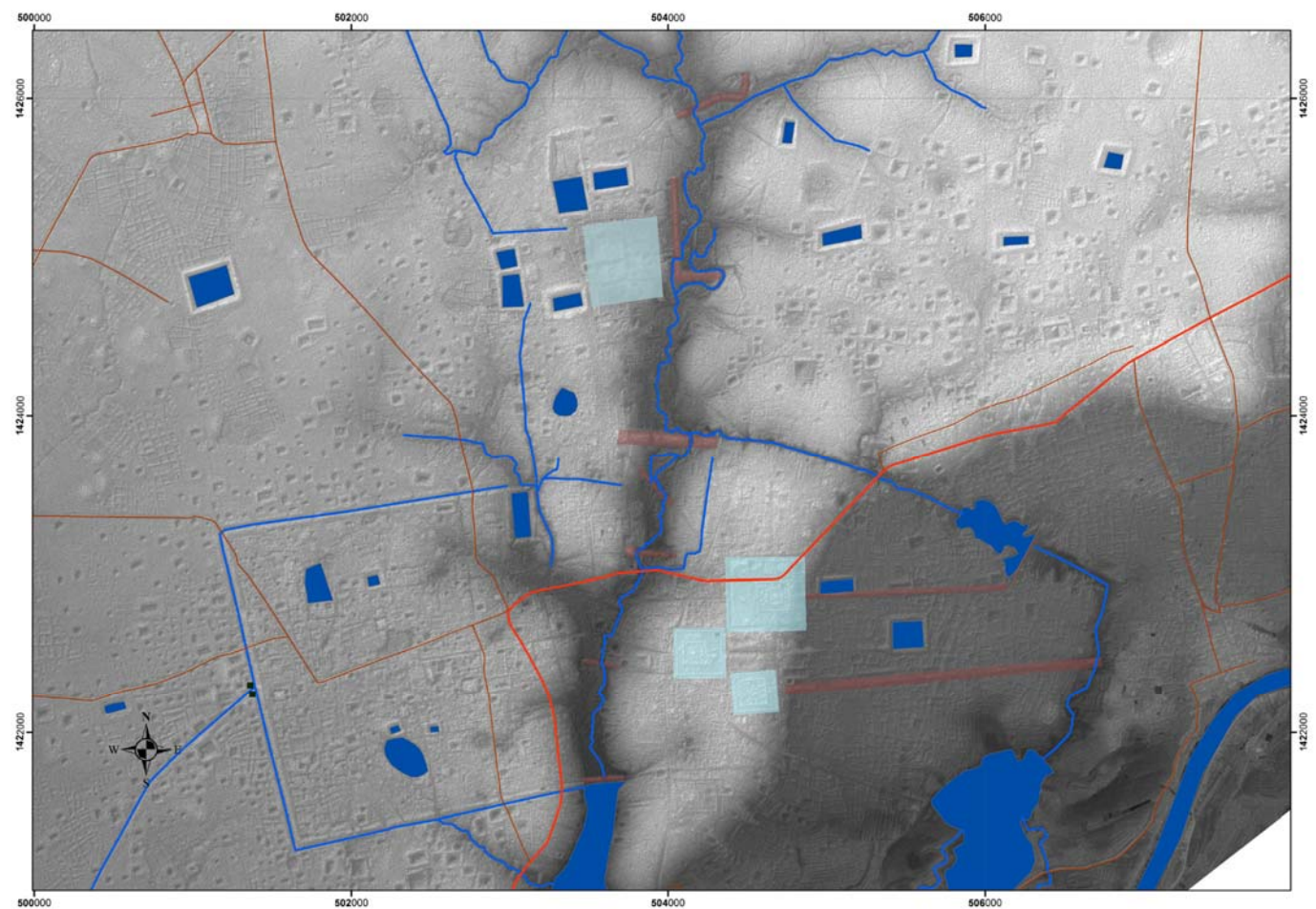
### **Details of the main site features**

There are a total of 79 monuments in the three main N, C and S temple zone complexes. Two concentric brick and/or laterite walls surround each temple complex; Prasat Sambor was recently discovered to have a third, much larger enclosure that is 389m on each side. The complexes are oriented on an east-west axis with two major causeways linking the temple zone to the river (harbor?) east of the Group. The causeways originate from the east gates of Prasat Sambor and Prasat Yeay Poan, approximately 600 and 700m in length running parallel to the east. These causeways, constructed in the floodplains of the rainy season (clearly visible on *fig. 2.5* as the large darker colored area in the southeast corner of the LiDar image), probably linked the city and temple complex to a harbor (*fig. 2.5*).

There are vestiges of another causeway in between that links Prasat Tao with a pond called Boeng Kla Kramov and which measures 250m east-west and 240m north-south. This water body is located between the causeways of Prasat Sambor and Prasat Yeay Poan complexes (*fig. 2.5*). Additionally there are 46 temples located outside the main three complexes in the temple zone, A further two complexes, Prasat Srei Krup Leak and Prasat Robang Romeas (*Fig. 2.6 and 2.7*) are located at the north end of the nominated property, and consist of 16 temple structures that are considered as a satellite zone to the temple zone.







*Fig 2.5 Map, reproduced from the LiDar survey, showing the main features of the site.*

Throughout the moated city area there are 143 structures. Most of these structures are individual buildings/towers, smaller in size and in a very poor state of preservation. There are three other sites within the habitation zone that have similar features as the central temple complex, and are in the same very poor state of preservation; Rong Trapang Srotei and (M.108, no name designated, *fig. 2.5*). From the LiDar survey (*fig. 2.5*) and prospection on the ground, it is obvious the moated city complex consisted of an array of habitat and temple zones crisscrossed by a network of roads and canals, some of them still in use today. A more detailed analyses of the LiDar survey (carried out in May 2015, with the support of the European Research Council), which is currently being conducted and further archaeological research should however, enlighten us on the structure, use and occupation of this vast city complex.

The buildings of the temple complex that are in a good to moderate state of preservation contain an impressive array of decorative elements carved in brick and sandstone. The brick artworks are integrated into the late 6<sup>th</sup> early 7<sup>th</sup> century buildings and structures. Many of the brick temples have multiple carvings on their external walls, including friezes with geometric and stylized floral and animal designs as well as a unique iconography such as the “flying palace” motifs (*Fig. 2.8 & 2.9*). Each flying palace motif depicts the residence of a god or king, kept aloft by winged animals and human figures. The origin of the flying palaces is to be found in the Indian flying vehicle originally designated in Sanskrit as “ratha”, later referred to as “vimana”, also a word of Sanskrit origin integrated both in ancient and modern Khmer language. The original flying vimana’s of the Sanskrit epics are flying chariots. Flying wheeled chariots transport Indra and other Vedic gods. The remains of the palace of the later Kings of the Angkor Empire, at the current World Heritage Site of Angkor, is popularly known as Phimienakas (vimana+akasha) or the celestial vimana in modern Khmer language. The expression carries several meanings ranging from temple or palace to mythological flying machines described in Sanskrit epics. References to these flying machines are commonplace in ancient Indian texts, even describing their use in warfare. The Bharavahakas in Indian epics are the precursors of the winged animals at Sambor Prei Kuk, carrying the celestial structures on their stretched out palms.

The site also contains a series of brick bas-relief medallions (*Fig. 2.10*), in various stages of completion and preservation condition, depicting mythical scenes carved along the wall surrounding Prasat Yeay Poan. These medallions are unique to the Group; no similar carvings have been found at other Khmer sites. Additionally, the lintels of the same period have similarities in so far as medallions integrated into the overall artistic design of the Sambor Prei Kuk style.

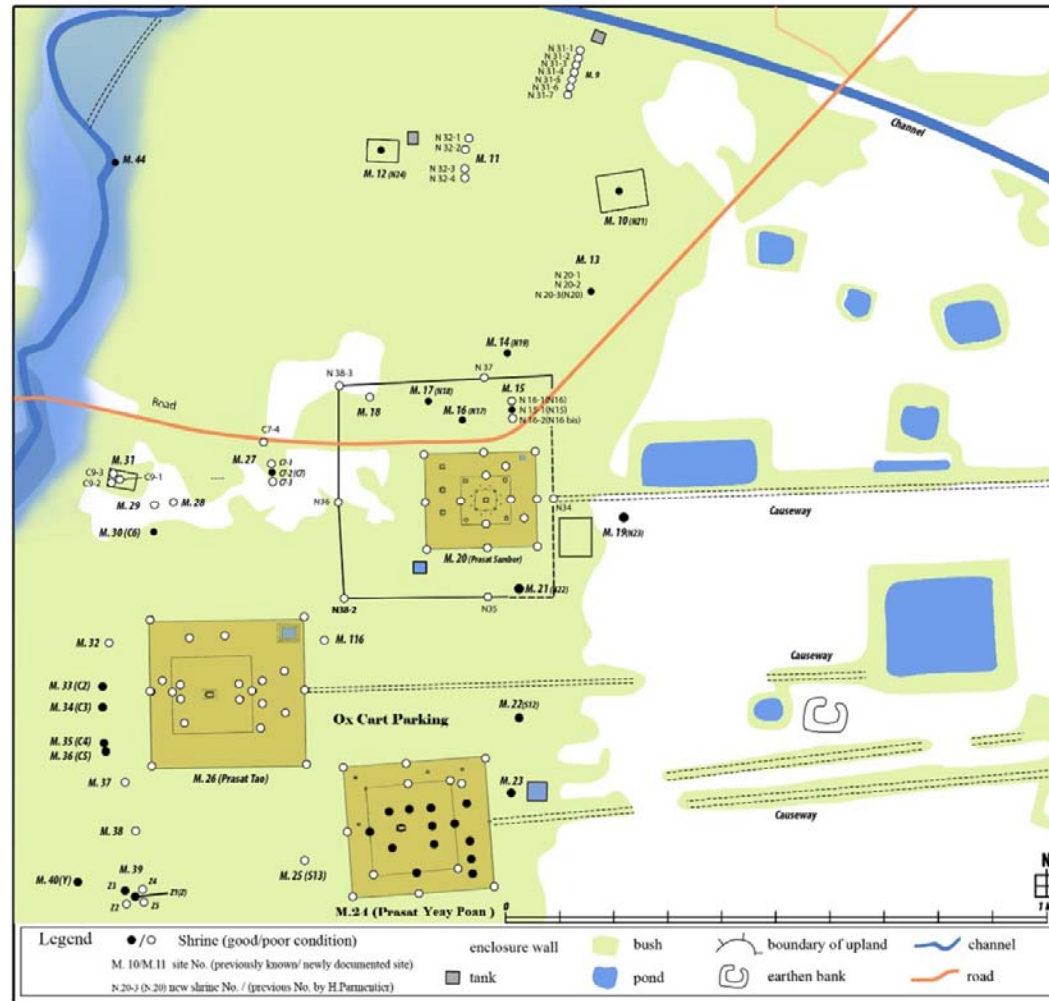


Fig. 2.6 Map showing three main groups of the temple zone

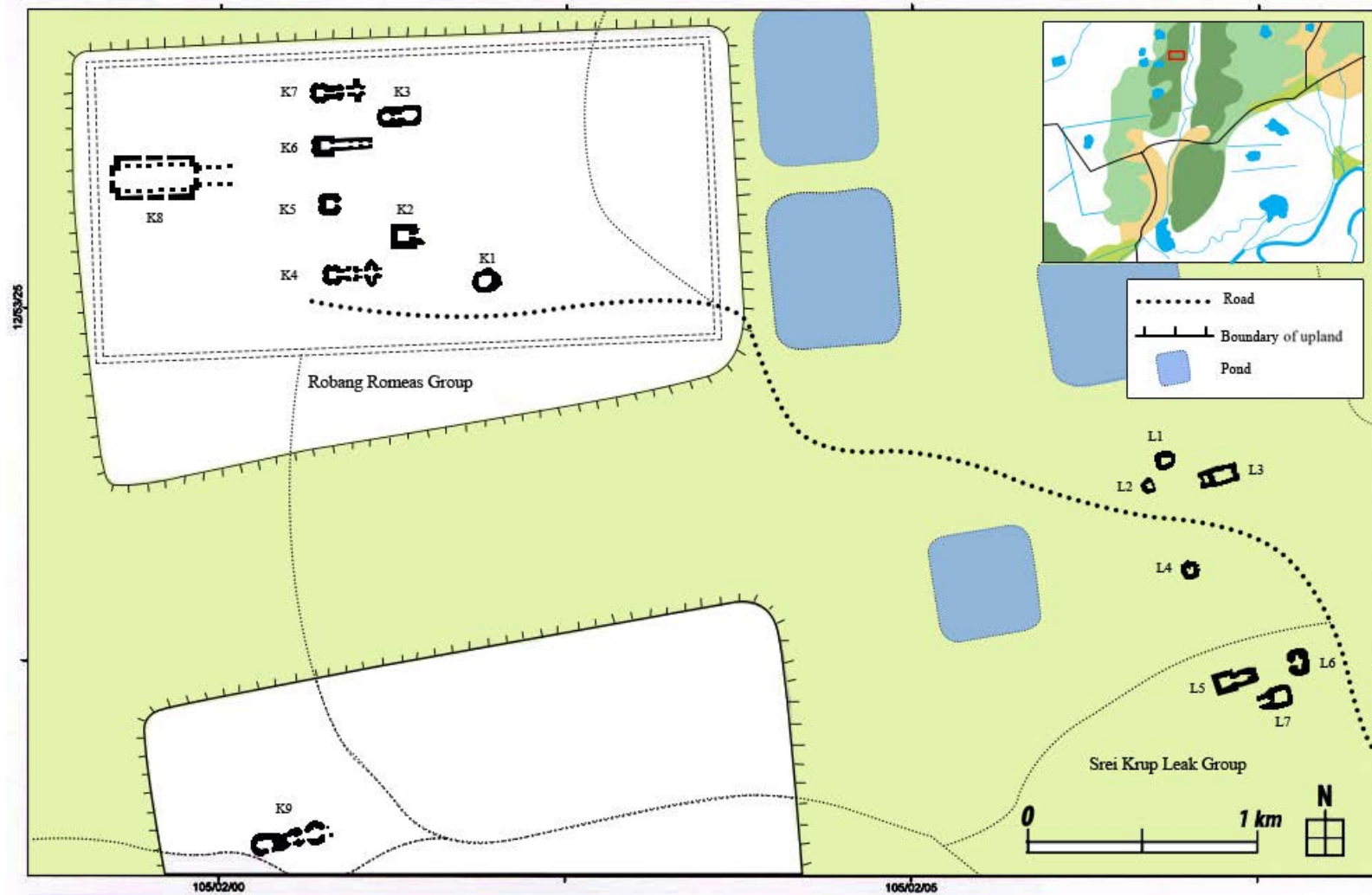
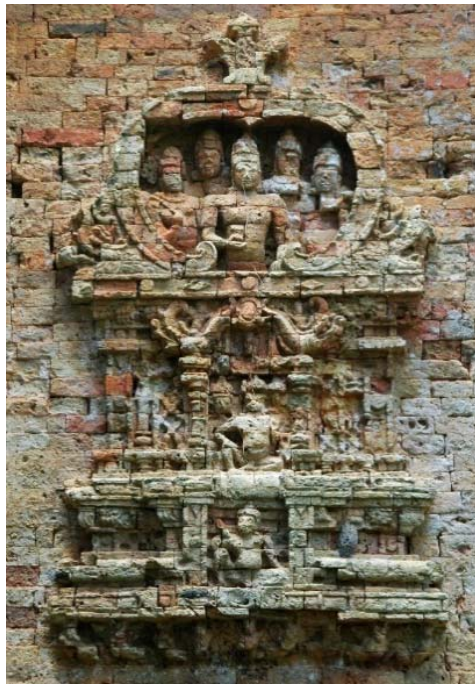
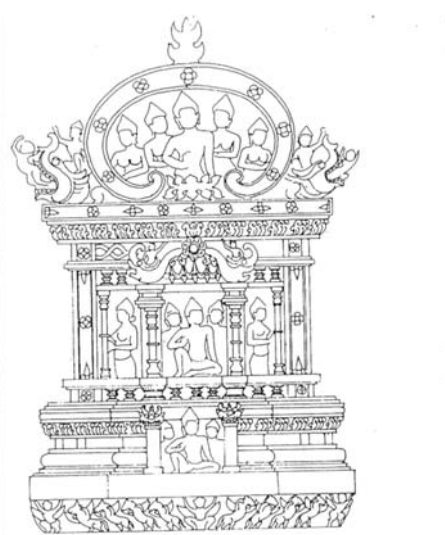


Fig. 2.7 Map showing Prasat Srei Krup Leak and Prasat Robang Romeas groups





*Fig. 2.8 Flying Palace bas-relief in brick, north face west side of the T1 tower, Prasat Tamon (M.061)*



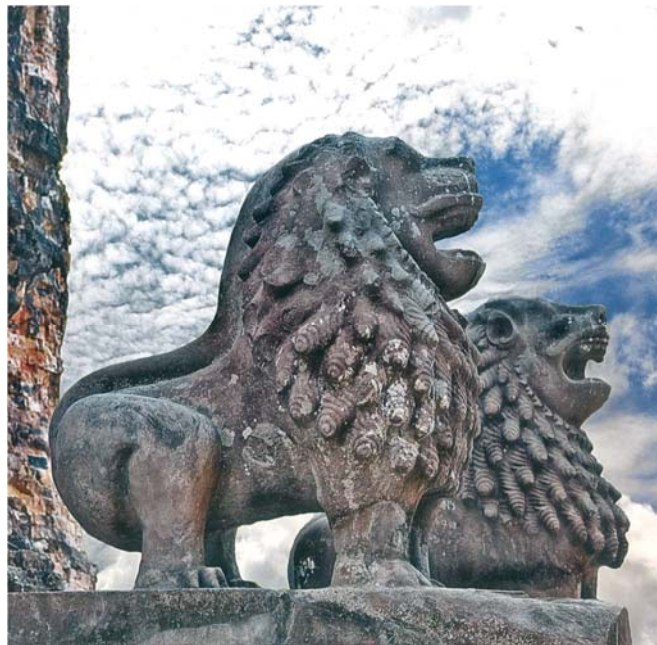
សំបូរព្រឹក្ស (SAMBOR PREI KUK)  
ប្រាសាទប្រាសាទ (ប្រាសាទប្រាសាទ) គេង  
សំបូរព្រឹក្ស (N)  
Groupe Nord (du Prasat Sambor) Edition (N)  
Tome N° 16 : ប្រាសាទប្រាសាទ  
ប្រាសាទ ប្រាសាទ ប្រាសាទ  
Palais Violent Mur Nord Est  
Le 20-3-98  
Uong Vong

*Fig. 2.9 Drawing of the "flying palace" at the north-east façade of tower (N 16), after Uong Vong in "Survey Report of the Temples at Sambor Prei Kuk (Kampong Thom)", by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, General Department of Protection of Culture, Department of Patrimony, Editor Nouth Narang, Minister of Culture and Fine Arts, (undated), pp. 38.*



*Fig. 2.10 Engraved brick medallion the outer wall of Prasat Yeay Poan (South Group) depicts the mythical event with the Goddess Durga fighting the demon Mahishasura.*

The sandstone elements include lintels, statues, pedestals, colonnades and pediments. Many are carved in the distinctive late 6<sup>th</sup> early 7<sup>th</sup> century Sambor Prei Kuk style. Sambor Prei Kuk style is the earliest known consolidation of Khmer artistic style and includes important early masterpieces of Khmer art. Later artistic elements include the well-preserved lintels, colonnades and lion statues of Prasat Tao (*Fig. 2.11*), which exhibit the transition between pre-Angkor and Angkor styles in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the sandstone elements remain in situ (*Fig. 2.12*) and several have been removed for safekeeping (*Fig. 2.13 & 2.14*). A complete inventory of movable objects is to be found in Annex III.



*Fig. 2.11 Lions guarding the entrance to C 1 (Prasat Tao). The highly stylized ringlets of their luxurious manes are unique to Sambor Prei Kuk. Crouching with hind legs braced for instant attack, they are the most animated of all Khmer temple animals, (Brukoff, B. and Jessup, H.I., 2011, p. 24).*



*Fig. 2.12 7<sup>th</sup> century relief of 'kudu' in Sambor Prei Kuk style (Prasat S2)*





*Fig. 2.13 7<sup>th</sup> century lintel in Sambor Prei Kuk style (Prasat N4) sandstone  
(Conservation Office at Sambor Prei Kuk)*

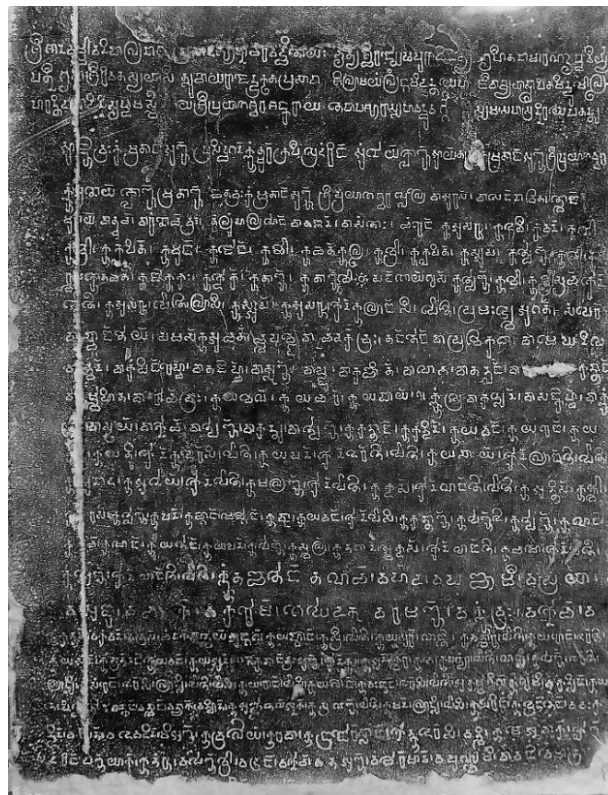


*Fig. 2.14 7<sup>th</sup> century sandstone statue in Sambor Prei Kuk style:  
Durga from Prasat N9 (left), Ka.1593 (National Museum Phnom Penh).*

## Inscriptions

Contemporary inscriptions documenting the site are the authentic source to estimate its value as a cultural property of great significance. The site thus narrates its history in its own words, using for the first time the Khmer language in the cultural and political discourse in the time of Ishanavarman I, the founder of the capital city. These documents elucidate Ishanapura's international links with other regional powers such as India and Champa.

A total of 21 inscriptions have been found, mostly located on the door jambs of the temples and other structures. The inscriptions are in Sanskrit and old Khmer (*Fig. 2.15*), and dated to the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries during the reigns of kings Ishanavarman I (r.616-637), Bhavarman II (r.637-657), Rajendravarman (r.944-968) and Suryavarman I (r.1002-1050). These inscriptions constitute an important part of the historical record of the complex, detailing dates of temple activities, names of kings and other personages, and details of the religious and political life of the city. Prints and details of each inscription are contained in Annex IV.



*Fig. 2.15 Unpublished Inscription (K.1250) early 7<sup>th</sup> century (Ishanavarman I), Prasat Leang Preah. The inscription is in two parts: 3 lines of Sanskrit that commemorates the installation of a linga of Siva named Sri Prayagesvara by a woman (Jiva) who is the wife of a dignitary of the king (Ranadrstavirya) and 22 lines in ancient Khmer that list the gifts that include among other things slaves, cattle, rice fields, dancers and musicians.*



Reference was already made to the fluvial plane in which Ishanapura is geographically situated. It is indeed a remarkable “water land” in the rainy season (indication of floodplains, *fig. 2.5*), which was carefully adapted, crafted and engineered to the needs of this large capital (*fig. 2.16*). For the first time on the Southeast Asian mainland a carefully engineered combination of three hydraulic systems was put in place to manage and control the water flow and catchment as to prevent flooding in the rainy season, and make sure water was available in periods of draught. An Inventory of larger hydraulic structures is to be found in Annex V.

#### **Man and nature**

**The natural environment in and around Ancient Ishanapura was carefully chosen to implant the capital and then crafted and engineered as to comply with the needs of a big city. Especially in terms of hydrology the region underwent an intense transformation with the simultaneous construction of the city moat, dykes and water reservoirs, supplying the city and surrounding areas. This way water was available for the inhabitants and agriculture purposes the year round.**

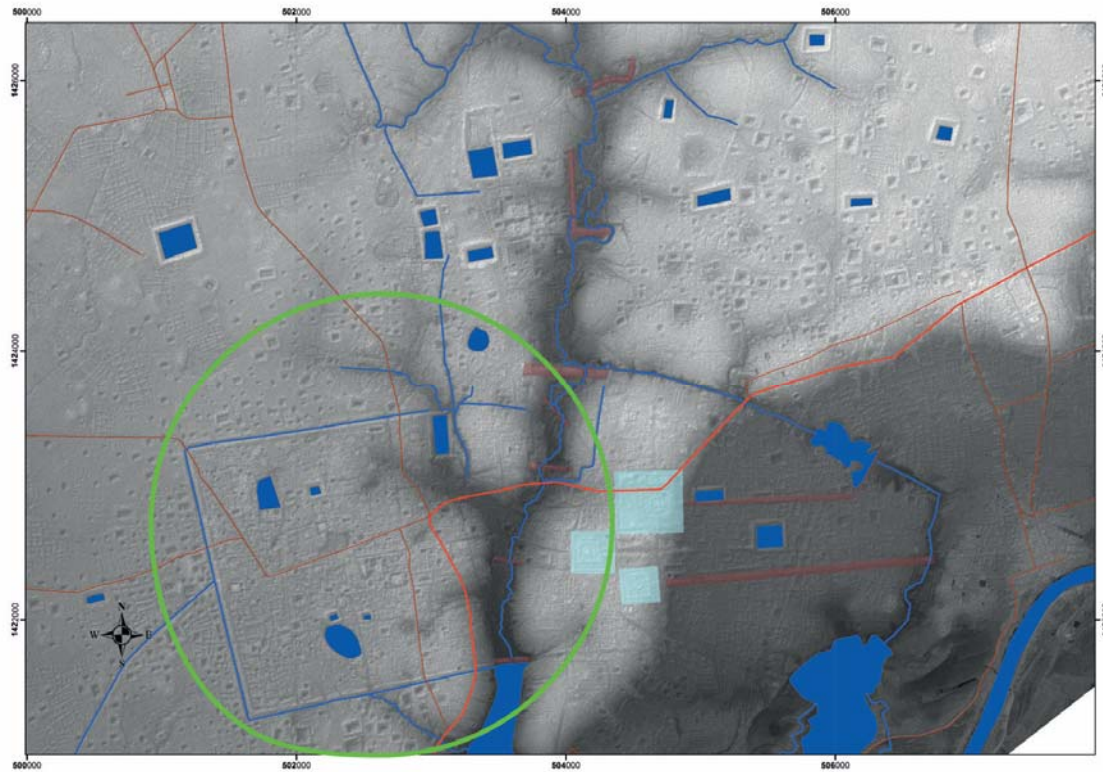
The recent LiDar survey clearly shows the three different systems (1. Moat (*fig. 2.17*), 2. Dams (*fig. 2.18*) and 3. (*fig. 2.19*) water reservoirs) simultaneously put in place for water control and catchment in and around the ancient city of Ishanapura.



*Fig. 2.16: Aerial photograph showing the moat and walled embankment of the ancient city*

The following LiDar-based maps may illustrate the functioning of these ingenious systems, which are in fact simplified precursors of a much more complicated water management system put in place a few centuries later at Angkor.

1. The design of a city moat and its affiliated hydraulic structures (*fig. 2.17*):



*Fig. 2.17 within the green circle, the moat and affiliated structures are clearly visible.*

Slightly southwest to the central part of the LiDar-based map (*Fig. 2.17*) the ancient city center of Ishanapura, is clearly surrounded by a manmade moat on the North, West and South sides, naturally closed on the East by the O Krou Ke stream enveloping 4-5 km<sup>2</sup> (see also *fig. 2.5*). The manmade structure at present is at average, approximately 1.5 m. deep, but sediments suggest an original dept of 2-3 m., transforming it into a formidable water reservoir with its width of 15m.

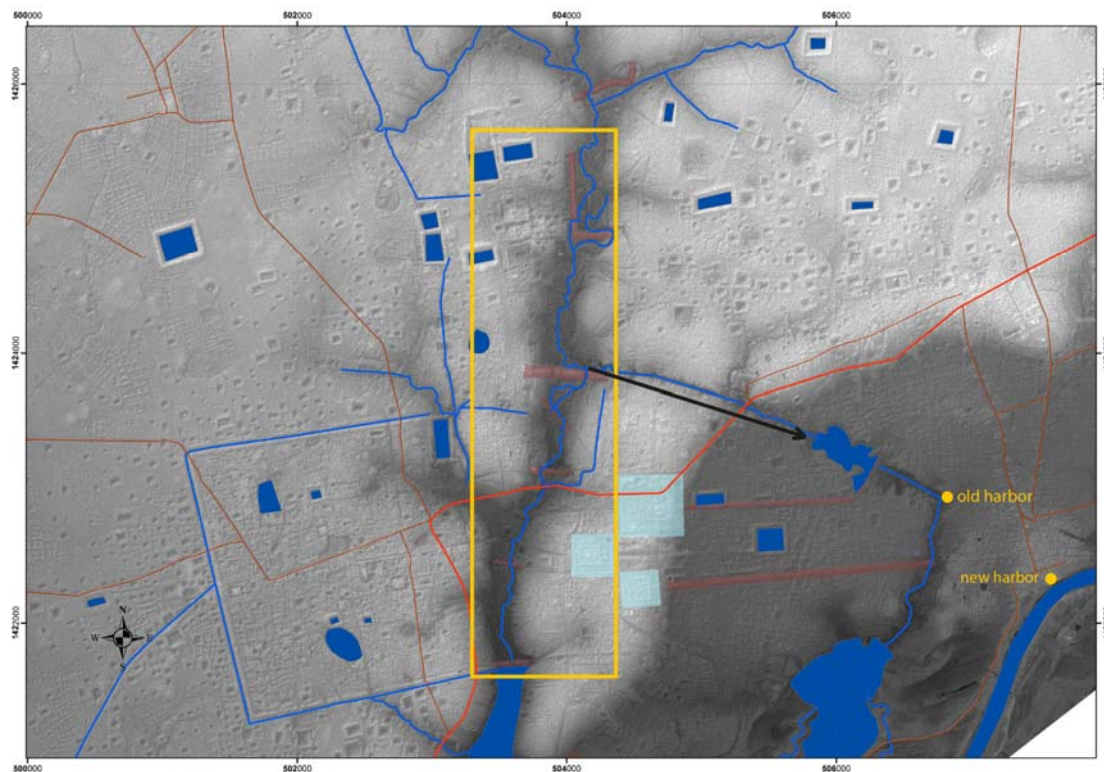
The LiDar image shows that the moat is supplied with water in its northeast corner by an affluent of smaller streams. The map also highlights the provisions made for the drainage of surplus water in the moat through an artificial canal in the middle of western part of the moat (remains of two 12<sup>th</sup> century temples are visible on the ground at the intersection of moat and canal, *fig. 2.5*), which may have served as an irrigation canal for agriculture at the southwestern part of the city, an artificial canal in the middle of the southern part of the moat (connecting the moat to the wider downstream of the O Krou Ke river) and the extreme southeastern point of the moat directly connected to the downstream part of the O Krou Ke river. This way, the moat served a multi-purpose

system, providing for water the city, agriculture, as well as “defending” the city against floods and eventual military threats.

This architectural moat design may have certainly inspired the later engineers of the Angkor Empire.

Remarkable is also that the surplus of earth gained from digging the canal in the middle of the western part of the moat, was piled along the canals direction forming a dyke, used for the construction of a road. This road would later connect Sambor Prei Kuk to the capital of the Angkor Empire, Angkor Thom (see also *fig. 2.41*).

2. The construction of at least six dams upstream and parallel to the city, to regulate the water flow (*fig. 2.18*):



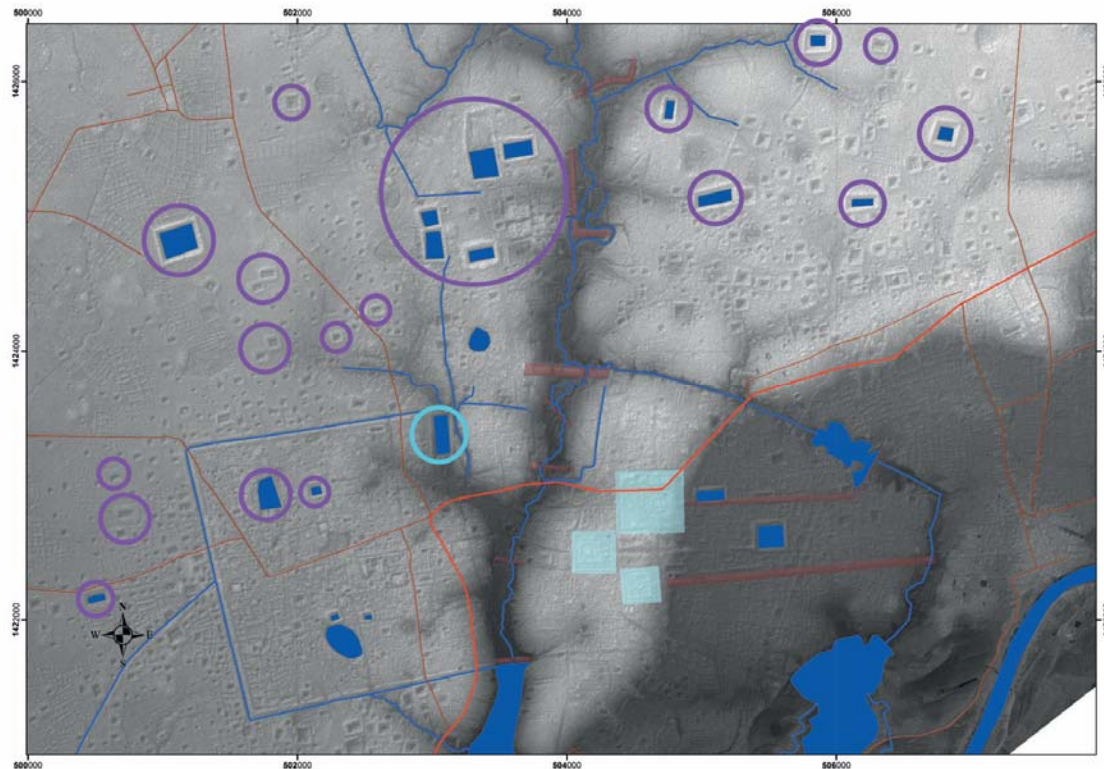
*Fig. 2.18 The six old dams are clearly visible in brown color within the yellow rectangular (the brown colored dam north of the yellow frame is a modern structure).*

The LiDar-based map shows at least six manmade, brown colored dams upstream, east and parallel with the city regulating the water flow within the yellow rectangular (*fig. 2.18*). They are all constructed in direct relation to the O Krou Ke stream and served to slow down, catch and deviate the water, which could have been used in the city, serve agricultural irrigation purposes and provided water to artificial canals, such as the one to the immediate northeast of the city (*fig. 2.18*, the black arrow). This canal may have been made as a connection to the ancient harbor of the city.



It is also clear that upstream the dams contributed to create deviations and catch areas for agriculture irrigation purposes, and helping to supply a third system put in place, namely the manmade reservoirs/containers, build to catch and storage water for use during dry periods. This rather simple system may certainly have served as an example for the much more complicated dam construction program in and around Angkor century's later, deviating water from the Kulen Mountains, to supply moats and "barays" (very large water reservoirs) in and around the capital of the Angkor Empire.

3. The building of an impressive amount of larger and smaller water reservoirs/containers (*fig. 2.19*):



*Fig. 2.19 The purple circles indicate the water reservoirs/containers.*

On the LiDar-based map, it is easy to observe a large amount of square/rectangular manmade shapes representing water reservoirs/containers encircled in purple (*fig. 2.18*). The most obvious reservoir was constructed at the affluent of some smaller streams at the northeast corner of the city moat, highlighted in light blue color (*fig. 2.19*). Other samples of these reservoirs, north of the city moat, have also been highlighted in purple color on the LiDar-based map (*Fig. 2.19*).

It is however, easy to detect a much larger amount of smaller containers, both square and rectangular, all over the site. Rainwater, and the irrigation system put in place with the dams and artificial canals, could have easily filled this multitude of stock facilities, providing water for the city and agriculture purposes in drier periods, making water provision secure all around the year. Interesting to observe is also, that many of these

reservoirs are constructed in areas, where the water table is close to the surface. As a result, some of them may never have been dry, as is still visible today.

The shape and sometimes emplacement of these reservoirs/containers, suggests they are the predecessors of the much larger “barays” (very large water reservoirs), which would be an essential part of the very refined hydraulic and water management system put in place in Angkor.

## **2.b History and Development**

The Sambor Prei Kuk Cultural and Archaeological Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura has been identified as Ishanapura (also identified through inscriptions by some authors as Bhavapura, city of Bhavavarman and Ishanavarman I)), the capital city of the first empire, and first Khmer State in Southeast Asia, late 6<sup>th</sup> early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. According to the textual evidence of Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions, archaeological investigations and art historical analysis, large-scale inhabitation and building at the site began in the late 6<sup>th</sup> early 7<sup>th</sup> century with the construction of the urban complex, its temple precinct and the landscape features of the site. Prior to this period, mainland Southeast Asia had been dominated by the coastal centers of the Funan Empire in the South, Angkor Borei and Oc Eo. With the decline of these cities, power moved inland to Sambor Prei Kuk. The developments that took place at the Sambor Prei Kuk Cultural and Archaeological Landscape laid the foundations for the later achievements of the Khmer Empire, and in later periods in the Siamese kingdoms at Ayutthaya, and Sukhothai. It must be considered that until the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century most of Southeast Asia was controlled by the Khmer Empire, and that Sambor Prei Kuk was the catalyst for the future development of that empire (*fig. 2.20*).



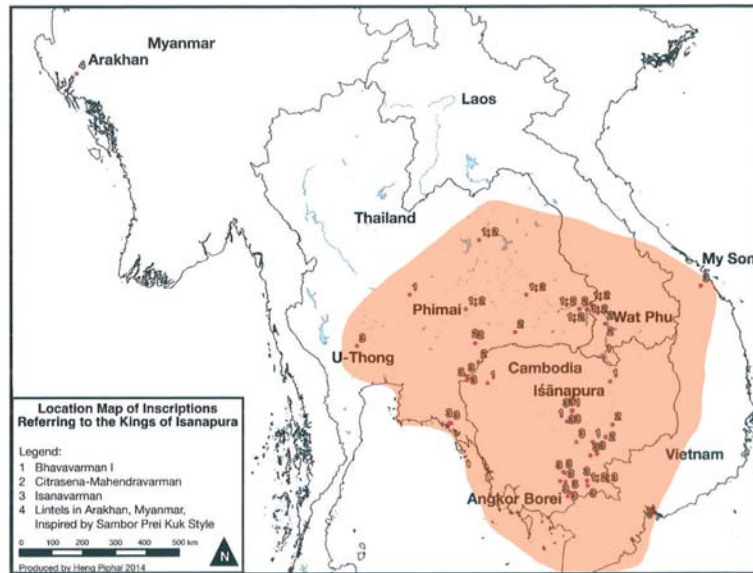
Fig. 2.20 Map indicating the extent of the successive Empires of Funan, Chenla and Angkor.

**A very important founding period**

**In many ways the Chenla state, with its capital of Ancient Ishanapura (first known as Bhavapura) can be seen as a very important founding period in the history of Southeast Asia:**

- 1. Religion: The Hindu and Buddhist religions, with the introduction of the Harihara and Sakabrahmana cults get a firm hold in the region and will define the belief systems for centuries to come.**
- 2. Ideology: The introduction of the God-King concept with a centralized state administration will leave a lasting imprint in the region and will only diminish in importance at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.**
- 3. Language: The first introduction of Khmer as universal language next to Sanskrit will have a lasting impact on languages still spoken and written in the Southeast Asia region.**
- 4. Technology/hydrology: The tradition of draining water in water rich areas in the Mekong Delta (Oc Eo, Angkor Borei) for agriculture and navigation purposes is transformed to the technique of catching and storing water in dryer inland areas (Sambor Prei Kuk, Angkor).**
- 5. Architecture: Sandstone elements are being introduced in a purely brick tradition. After Sambor Prei Kuk, more and more sandstone elements will be used in architecture as to come to the sole use of laterite and sandstone in the Angkor period.**

Ishanapura was constructed as a large integrated complex containing a vast number of temples alongside a massive city. This complex was a symbol of economic prowess, religious devotion, and powerful centralized authoritarian rule that marked the emergence of a new kind of state; the first and largest of its kind in South East Asia (*Fig. 2.21*). The site is an outstanding example of how influences from India in the form of social institutions, religion, art, architecture, design and language were assimilated into indigenous customs, ideology, and artistic expressions. The Sambor Prei Kuk Cultural and Archaeological Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura was constructed at a time when a distinctive Khmer culture emerged from this cross-cultural exchange.



*Fig. 2.21 Map showing the extent (pink color) of influence of Ishanapura (Sambor Prei Kuk) based on the location of inscriptions within the Southeast Asian region (after Heng, 2014)*

### **Bhavavarman, Mahendravarman and Ishanavarman: a strong Shivaite tradition.**

The 5<sup>th</sup> century inscription of Wat Luang Kao attests the popularity of Wat Phu (today's South Laos) as a Shivaite seat per excellence, where the phallic-shaped Lingaparvata had formed the nucleus of the most sacred pilgrimage.

It appears that Shivaism spread southward from the northern center of Wat Phu and gradually eliminated the dominance of Vishnuism. A Shivaite wave was virtually launched by the so-called Dangrek (mountain range) Chiefs, who in several phases absorbed the territories of the Funan Empire in the South.

Following the decline of the Funan Empire, the two Shivaite brothers, Bhavavarman and Mahendravarman emerged as a new political force in the middle Mekong valley by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. (Barth and Bergaigne, 1893, no 3; Bhattacharya, 1961, 25).

Ishanavarman I, son of Mahendravarman and founder of Ishanapura (Sambor Prei Kuk), is supposed to have completed the annexation of the territories of the Funan Empire. Ishanavarman I thus came from an exclusive Shivaite milieu. At his newly founded capital of Ishanapura he installed the Shiva cults of the “Lord of Seriousness” (Gambiresvara Shiva) and the “Lord of Smile” (Prahasitesvara Shiva).

The Indian influence is obvious, as smile and laughter have been part of the philosophical debate in India for millennia. Two examples may illustrate its importance.



The first one is the *Natyashastra*, a treatise on theatre, dance and music, composed by the Indian dramaturge Bharata (somewhere between 200 BC and 200 AD), which says that the comic sentiment arises from the erotic.

The second one is the *Matavilasa*, or "The Merry Pranks of a Drunkard", a pure comedy written by the early 7<sup>th</sup> century South Indian King Mahendravarman I (600-630 AD) from the city of Kanchi (Kanchipuram in modern Tamil Nadu), the capital of his realm. It is a humorous play and a comedy full of laughter.

It is interesting to note that the writer of this Indian comedy is contemporary to two Khmer kings, his homonymous Mahendravarman (600-611 AD) and Ishanavarman I (612-635 AD), founder of Sambor Prei Kuk. The early 7<sup>th</sup> century city of Ishanapura was aware of the intellectual and social milieu of India through its many exchanges as Kanchi is directly mentioned in a 7<sup>th</sup> century inscription of Cambodia (Majumdar, no 34, p.44). It is also interesting to mention that the son in law of Ishanavarman I, the Brahmin Durgesvamin came from the same region in India.

Religious centers of The Lord of Smile (*Prahasiteshvara*) in India are also known to have existed in present day Patna and Varanasi, although, there are no traces of the actual monuments anymore.

The Lord of Smile however, figures in three inscriptions belonging to the reign of Ishanavarman I: K 440, K 442 and K 90. K 440, is a Sanskrit text inscribed on each of the two uprights door slabs of the eastern gate of the outer enclosure wall of the South Group of the temples of Sambor Prei Kuk (*fig. 2.22*).



*Fig. 2.22 Inscription K 440 at the east entrance of the South Group, praising in very flowery language Pahasitashvara*

The location itself clearly suggests that the principal god of this southern complex of temples was Prahasiteshvara. Both K 440 and K 442 praise in a very flowery language Prahasiteshvara. The third inscription K 90 is inscribed on the Temple Kuk Preah Kot in today's province of Kampong Cham about 120 km south of Sambor Prei Kuk.

On the walls of the Sambor Prei Kuk Temples there are sculptures of flying palaces inhabited by women and men. A number of these figures are smiling under the protection of Pahasiteshvara (Fig. 2.23, 2.24 and 2.25).



*Fig. 2.23 smiling face at "flying palace".*



*Fig. 2.24 smiling face at "flying palace" in support of a celestial level*



*Fig. 2.25 smiling face at "flying palace"*



This artistic tradition of portraying smiling faces (*Fig.2.23. 2.24 and 2.25*) is one that will continue for 600 years throughout the Angkor Empire. In fact it is a cultural treat to be found throughout South East Asia today.

While this strong Shivaite tradition will continue to be the prime cult in the pre-Angkor empire, the official introduction of the Harihara cult (a combined Shiva-Vishnu cult) leads to an inclusive policy towards the Vishnuite south.

### **The Harihara Cult and politics of reconciliation**

Sectarian issues and violence in India between the followers of Shiva and the followers of Vishnu, led in the first centuries of the Christian era to the introduction of an inclusive form of religion called the Harihara cult in which the double image of Shiva-Vishnu was venerated. The ancient city of Sirpur in Central India is a good example of the introduction of this tolerant form of religion (5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> C. AD, see also 3.2: Comparative analyses).

As we already illustrated there was a continued and close exchange of ideas between India and Southeast Asia in the first centuries of the Christian era, and it is almost certain that the concept of Harihara reached the shores of Indochina after its popularity in India in the fourth century AD. Early images of Harihara in the south of Cambodia, referred to in a recent study on “Harihara Images of the Pre-Angkor Period in Cambodia” (E.C. Bunker, 2001) and dating back to the fifth century, indeed support this theory. It is possible to argue that the Harihara cult and images were gradually adopted by the Shivaite north for a rapprochement with the Vishnuite south. The epigraphic sources rather suggest the use of Harihara as a devise to assert their political power and authority or to consolidate their territorial gains.

At least three epigraphic texts of Ishanavarman I, K 60, K 22 and K 926 mention the cult of Harihara. A number of epigraphic texts, which belong to his period of reign, but do not mention his name, also suggest that Ishanavarman I was responsible for proliferation of the Harihara image as part of his politics of reconciliation.

The south group of temples at Sambor Prei Kuk was completed in the early stages of the reign of King Ishanavarman I. Besides Prahasiteshvara Shiva, The Lord of Smile, who was the presiding deity in this group, it is supposed that stanza 31 of inscription K 440 mentions an image of Harihara, which the king had installed in this group. The missing words in the stanza do not allow us to assert the certitude of Harihara in the south group of temples. But a beautiful image of Harihara found from the north group, devoted to Gambiresvara Shiva (*fig. 2.26*), The Lord of Seriousness, and contemporary to the south group, clearly attests that this composite form was a well thought out addition to the Shivaite assembly of gods at Sambor Prei Kuk.





*Fig. 2.26 Harihara, 7<sup>th</sup> Century, Sambor Prei Kuk, Prasat N 10, National Museum Phnom Penh.*

Ishanavarman I, thus for the first time officially uses Harihara ideology to win over the south not simply militarily, but through the sharing of a Vishnu oriented ideology dear to this region.

The cult of Harihara patronized by Ishanavarman I, will, some 100 years later, lead to the development of a city celebrating the name of this composite god, Hariharalaya, the present day Roluos (8<sup>th</sup> century AD), part of the Angkor World Heritage Site. The identification of Roluos with Hariharalaya is confirmed by the epigraphic sources. Hariharalaya was already a city of repute when Jayavarman II, founder of Angkor, came from Java in 802 AD.

It is however, interesting to observe, especially through inscriptions found throughout and outside Cambodia, how the Harihara cult will continue to spread through the empire at least till the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The Sakas and Ishanapura's exposure to Central Asian culture**

The Sakas or Scythians represent a Central Asian tribe whose movements in different regions of Asia were of great consequences. Their homeland is generally identified with modern Seistan in Eastern Iran. One of the first detailed accounts on the Scythians may be found in Book IV of "The Histories" of Herodotus. Referring to the conquests of Darius I, The Great, he gives many details on their land and customs.

Saka infiltration in the extreme northwestern and western borders of India began some considerable time before the beginning of the Christian era. They soon adopted Indian names and became followers of the different Indian religious creeds. The Indian epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata place Saka settlements in these parts of India.

From the mid-second century A.D. the Sakas of western India became great patrons of Sanskrit and of the new literature written in it. It has been suggested that these Saka rulers were responsible for carrying Sanskrit to Indochina, as far as Indonesia, leading to the first epigraphic texts in the region.

The memory of the Saka is also preserved in the Saka calendar. Many inscriptions in ancient Cambodia (also in Sambor Prei Kuk) are regularly dated by the Saka era calendar. The calendar is still in use in some parts of India and Bali. It is generally agreed that this era opened at 78 A.D., the inaugural year of Kanisha, a famous Indian ruler.

With the homeland of the Sakas is associated a particular group of priests in ancient India called the Brahmana from Sakadvipa or Sakabrahmana. These Sakabrahmana, under whom orthodoxy of Brahmanism was much relaxed, were well versed in the Veda and Vedangas and are often associated with the worship of the sun-god, an ancient Iranian practice (Sahai, 2007, pp. 70-71). They also acted as the most active agents for diffusing Indian cultural elements in Southeast Asia (Sahai, 2007, p.71).

A number of inscriptions ranging from the seventh to thirteenth centuries suggest that the Sakabrahmanas went to Cambodia from various parts of India and became so popular and powerful by their magic powers that they earned the status of local gods (inscriptions K. 521, K. 365, K. 660 and K. 136).

The Sanskrit inscription K 438 from the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, found on a doorjamb of the now completely destroyed temple of the North group N 16, informs us that Durgasvamin, the son in law of the founder of Ishanapura, Ishanavarman I, was a Sakabrahmana (Sahai, unpublished, 2015).

Durgasvamin, a Sakabrahmana from Daksinapatha (South India), was honored by King Ishanavarman I, ruler of Sambor Prei Kuk, by the gift of his daughter. Endowed with wealth on the occasion of his marriage Durgasvamin installed a linga at temple N 16, following the prescribed rules in the Saka year 500. He or his kinsmen was deified from at least the ninth century (Sahai, 2007, p. 72). In fact, later inscriptions lead us to believe that a number of temples, including the Bayon of Angkor Thom (at the World Heritage Site of Angkor) were dedicated or partially dedicated to the Sakabrahmana in the course of at least four centuries.

Not only inscriptions, but also bas-reliefs, enlighten us on the presence of Sakabrahmanas in Ishanapura and the later Angkor Empire. It is however, interesting to first go back to some of the early historical descriptions and depictions of Saka (Scythians), before reflecting upon the images at Sambor Prei Kuk.

The Persian ruler, Darius I The Great (558-530 B.C.), who defeated some of the Saka (Scythian) tribes on his numerous military campaigns from Persia to Egypt, distinguishes, in the inscription at his tomb of Nacqs-i-Rustam (Iran) among the conquered tribes, the “Scythians with the pointed cap” (Saka Tigraxauda). Bas-reliefs, representing individuals of this tribe may be found at the ancient city of Persepolis (*fig. 2.27*) and Behistun, both in Iran.



*Fig. 2.27 Representation of “Scythians with the pointed cap” at the ancient city of Persepolis.*

The tall cap was the trademark headwear of the Saka Tigraxauda. Xaud being the precursor word for present day “hood” in English and “khud”, meaning helmet in Persian. The tall pointed shape of the headwear indicated status. He who wore the cap could be distinguished from the rest of the tribe. In the procession of the nine captive kings at the bas-relief of Behistun, the Saka King Shunka, with his pointed hat, can be seen to the extreme right (*fig. 2.28*).





*Fig. 2.28 The bas-relief of Behistun in Iran, showing the Scythian King Shunka with pointed hat at the extreme right.*

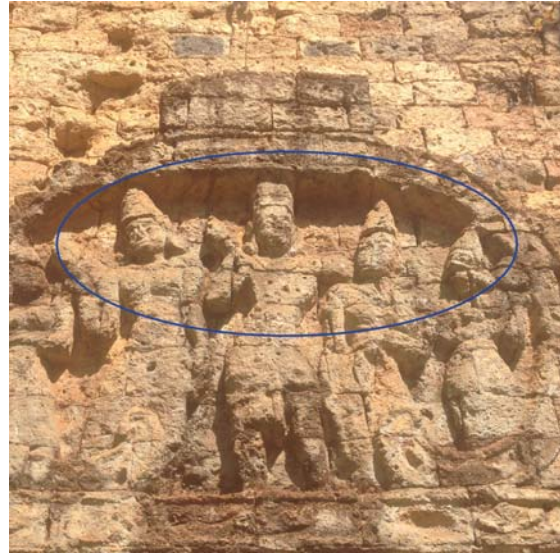
Saka soldiers in military attire are sometimes represented on the Buddhist friezes in the art of Gandhara (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.) in the Indian sub-continent, and more particularly in the “Buner reliefs” (Peshawar, Pakistan). They are depicted dressed in tunics and trousers, wearing a pointed hat and carrying straight swords (Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 216-226).

A bas-relief of a flying palace (*fig. 2.29*), sculpted on the East façade of temple N 15 of the North group of Sambor Prei Kuk (see also temple N 15 in annex II), shows at least five figures (*fig. 2.30*) with pointed hat, carrying different attributes (possible lances or swords). It is no coincidence that the North group was already associated with the Sakabrahmana Durgasvamin, son in law of Ishanavarman I and they show the importance of the Sakas in 7<sup>th</sup> century Ishanapura.





*Fig. 2.29 East façade of temple N15*



*Fig. 2.30 Five figures with pointed hat at N15*

During the Angkor period, and more specifically the reign of Jayavarman VII, bas-reliefs at the temple of Bateay Chhmar, reveal the presence of pointed hat characters at a royal audience (*fig. 2.31*). This could be convincingly interpreted as a direct legacy of Ishanapura (Sahai, unpublished, 2015).



*Fig. 2.31 Three figures with pointed hat are kneeling behind the vizier in front of King Jayavarman VII at a bas relief of the temple of Banteay Chhmar, 12 century A.D.*

The presence of the Sakas, Saka calendar and Sakabrahmana-cult are yet other illustrations of close cultural and religious interconnectedness between India, the Southeast Asia region and more in particular Ishanapura (Sambor Prei Kuk). It is however, to be observed, that adaptation and religious practice, gave the Sakabrahmanas a specific local character.

### **India revisited and adapted**

Some parallels in governance may also be concluded with the Gupta Empire in India (4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century AD). Kings were the epicenter of the entire administration. The fact that Ishanapura stands alone as the major urban complex of that time is testament to that centralization of power. In the Indian empire, and likewise in the pre-Angkor Khmer empire, the provinces each had an appointed official from members of the royal family that were responsible for local administration. It appears that local administration was allowed to govern somewhat autonomously. Villages were organized under rural bodies consisting of a headman and council of elders as today in modern Cambodia. The system provided for a stable government that encouraged trade, agriculture, architecture, arts and religious harmony.

The parallels extend to the location and choice of sacred space and materials used in temple architecture. The use of temporary materials such as wood, and bamboo were replaced with permanent materials such as brick and stone in both the Gupta and pre-Angkor Khmer empires. Additionally, revenues for the empire were derived essentially from the use of land as a commercial activity with surpluses as trade commodities.

The material culture of the site provides further evidence of this exchange, such as the adaptation of Indian design evident in details of the temples, including architectural elements, and religious iconography (Indorf 2004; Beynon and Datta 2005; Datta and Beynon 2008). Indian precedents are also apparent in the ceramics uncovered at the site, such as *kendi* (spouted vessels). The *kendi* (*kundika*) sometimes referred to as a sprinkler, is an Indian ceramic design produced by the wheel technique and extensively adapted in Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia stamped and molded ceramics or molded design is also derived from Indian prototypes. Although some may have been imported, it is believed that stamped ceramics are a local product that reflects adaptation and adaption of Indian technique and style (Glover, Bellwood, 2004, 80-83). Remnants of *kendi* vessels have been found at Sambor Prei Kuk, identified by the most notable feature, the spout (*Fig. 2.32 & 2.33*).



*Fig..2.32 and 2.33 Kendi vessel spout remnant from Sambor Prei Kuk and representative kendi example from Sophy Village, Beanteay Meanchey province, dated to the Iron Age*

Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group offers important evidence for understanding the nuances of religious practice during this period, and its connection to state formation and political power. At Sambor Prei Kuk, the temple precinct formed a gateway to the urban area. Visitors to the city would have passed from the nearby port along the causeways, still visible today, that lead to the main temple complexes before entering the urban complex located behind the religious precinct. Moreover, the adjacent city was not just a support center for priests and pilgrims to the temples, but also a major center of political power. At Sambor Prei Kuk, we see the emergence of a new relationship between powerful rulers and religious ideas. It is also the site of the first inscription to give divine titles to secular rulers. This is evidence of the adoption of the concept of the god-king from India, an ideology that would form the underpinnings of the state during the Angkor period and beyond.

Ancient Ishanapura marks a change in emphasis in the Southeast Asian expression of Hinduism. Earlier Southeast Asian temples had been devoted to a mix of Indic deities, both Buddhist and Hindu. At Ancient Ishanapura however, the religious affiliation is emphatically Shivaite with an official introduction of the Harihara cult.

With the establishment of a new kingdom, the kings made a conscious effort to promote philosophical unity in the duality of humble religious influence and authoritative secular power in the king.

### **A new urban concept, new horizons**

It was under Ishanavarman I, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century that most of the initial phase of building took place at Sambor Prei Kuk. The main two complexes, Prasat Sambor (North Group), and Prasat Yeay Poan (South Group) are believed to have been built under the reign of Ishanavarman I. After Ishanavarman I's death, the site continued as a capital under his son and successor, Bhavavarman II, though whether building activity took place at the site



during this time is unclear. A third major complex, Prasat Tao, is difficult to date, as no related inscriptions have been found and judgments of its date carried out so far have been based on comparison of artistic styles. This group may have been constructed as early as the regime of Bhavavarman II (r.639-655) or as late as Jayavarman II's rule (r.802-850) at the beginning of the Angkor period.

The city of Ishanapura marked the appearance of a new kind of urban complex. The earliest urban settlements in Southeast Asia, such as Oc-Eo and Angkor Borei, display some similar attributes to Sambor Prei Kuk such as brick structures, ramparts, moats and canals, their areas however, being smaller. Sambor Prei Kuk exhibits, by contrast, a more dispersed pattern of occupation with large enclosures, widely separate shrines, and substantial water management features. The walls of the city alone enclose a large area, with evidence of extensive settlement beyond (Stark 2006, 12).

Accompanying the city, as we have seen earlier, was a substantial system of canals, moats, ponds and other water management features. Water management at the site would have been crucial, given that the region is subject to annual fluctuations in water flow (Nagumo et al 2010). The location of the city on the banks of the Steung Sen (Sen River) was an advantageous one. The river provided both local needs (water supply, fish, and aquatic vegetables) and a connection to the wider world. Upriver, the Steung Sen provided a link to forested areas which supplied valuable trade goods like furs, tropical hardwoods, and honey. Downstream were the vast lake of Tonle Sap and sprawling waters of the Mekong Delta, providing further resources and transport routes. The Mekong River provided further trade access to the Southeast Asian coastline and markets for the luxury goods from the forests. Such access would, however, have been seasonal, as the fluctuation of the Steung Sen's height and flow would have made passage difficult or even impossible at some times of the year (Nagumo et al 2010). The site's inland position would have also provided proximity to overland trade routes between China and India (Ferlus 2012).

Trade, however difficult to measure, must have contributed largely to the wealth of the capital. Religious, ideological and material evidence points in the direction of India, but early written sources from the Chinese Sui Dynasty reveal a deeply rooted connection with the middle Kingdom and a vivid diplomatic exchange. The cult of the Sakabrahmana even unveils an indirect link to Central Asia. To this date, no material evidence has been found for contacts with regions such as Iraq and Iran, but 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century ceramics from these regions have been found further north in Angkor and the Kulen Mountains. It will only be a question of time before such contacts are revealed by future excavations (fig. 2.34 trade routes).





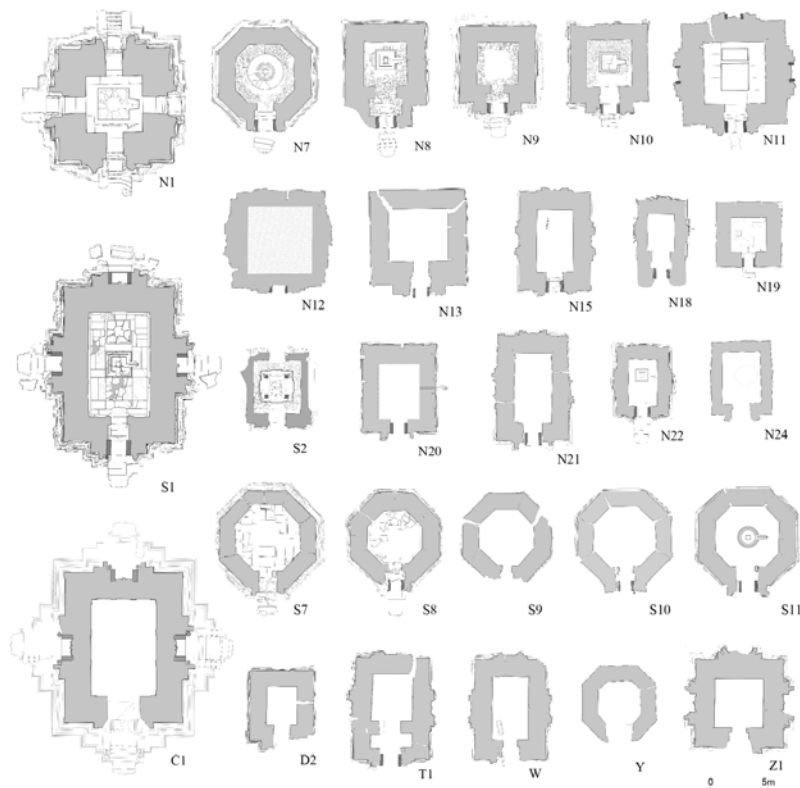
Fig. 2.34 Trade routes linking the successive Empires of Funan (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century), Chenla (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century) and Khmer (Angkor: 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century) to India, China and other parts of the world.

### Unique architectural diversification and construction methods

The monuments at the Sambor Prei Kuk Cultural and Archaeological Landscape display a unique diversification of architectural ground plans and configurations attributed via earlier Indian influences. Hindu temples were a prototype for the Khmer architects of Ishanapura (*Fig. 2.35, 2.36, 2.37 & 2.88*). During the Gupta period of northern India (4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> C), temples were basically an enclosed rectangular hall with a multi-tiered roof or square hall with pillared porch and flat roof. As architecture and the arts progressed during the period the decorations became more elaborate, and the roof was multiplied by additional false stories diminishing in size, but not decoration, upwards in a pyramidal shape. Platforms and terraces were added, wall space was covered with a multitude of relief carvings, and statues were placed in niches, on pedestals and beside doorways (Mabbett, Chandler 1995, 184-186). This set the stage for Khmer construction design keeping in mind that much of the Indian construct was of stone.

The tower design of previous periods borrowed from India became more slender, bricks were sculptured, a stucco finish applied to the surface, and bricks were adhesively bonded to form smooth inner and outer surfaces.

Though varying in size there is an attempt towards standardization of construction norms by conforming the brick to set proportions.



*Fig. 2.35 Ground plans and basic designs*

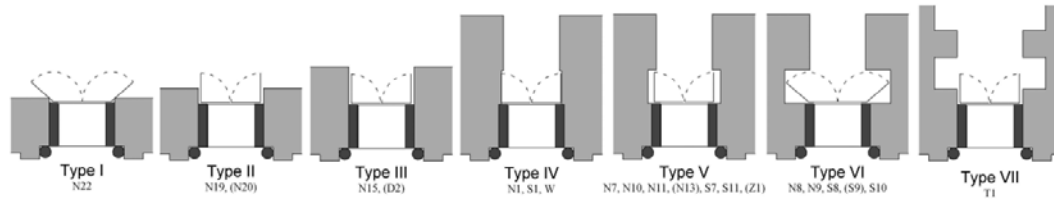


Fig. 2.36 Basic door plan design variations



Fig. 2.37 Roof plan and step variations

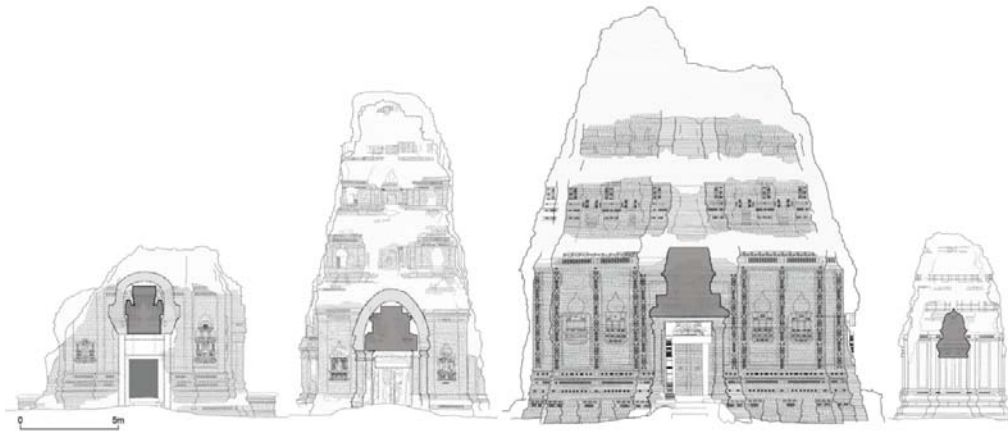


Fig. 2.38 High and low tier plan of temples

### Rich city, rich culture

Chinese sources offer a small glimpse into the nature of this Pre-Angkor Empire during the 7<sup>th</sup> century. A passage in Ma Duanlin's 13<sup>th</sup> century compilation *Wenxian Tongkao* (Comprehensive Examination of Literature) quotes from the *History of the Sui* (compiled in 629–636CE) the following estimate of the size of the city and the territory that it controlled:

This prince makes his residence in the city of I-she-na [Ishanapura], which contains more than twenty thousand families. [...] The kingdom includes thirty other cities, each populated by several thousands of families, and each ruled by a governor; the titles of state officials are the same as in Lin-yi. [...] The north of Chenla is a country of mountains intersected by valleys. The

south contains great swamps, with a climate so hot that there is never any snow or hoar-frost; the earth there produces pestilential fumes and teems with poisonous insects. Rice, rye, some millet, and coarse millet are grown in this kingdom. (Quoted in Cœdès, 1968, 74&76; following 1876–1883 French translation of Marquis d'Hervey de Saint-Denis)

This passage goes on to detail the customs of the court at Ishanapura, painting a picture of the splendor that surrounded Ishanavarman I:

In the middle of the city is a great hall where the king gives audiences and holds court. [...] Every three days the king proceeds solemnly to the audience hall and sits on a couch made of five kinds of aromatic wood and decorated with seven precious things. Above the couch there rises a pavilion hung with magnificent fabrics; the columns are of veined wood and the walls of ivory strewn with flowers of gold. Together this couch and this pavilion form a sort of little palace, at the back of which is suspended, as in Chih-t'u, a disc with gold rays in the form of flames. A golden incense-burner, held by two men, is placed in front. The king wears a dawn-red [page 75] sash of *ki-pei* cotton that falls to his feet. He covers his head with a cap laden with gold and precious stones, with pendants of pearls. On his feet are leather, or sometimes ivory, sandals; in his ears, pendants of gold. His robe is always made of a very fine white fabric called *pe-tie*. When he appears bareheaded, one does not see precious stones in his hair. The dress of the great officials is very similar to that of the king. These great officials or ministers are five in number. The first has the title *ku-lo-you* [guru?]. The titles of the four others, in order of the rank they occupy, are *hsiang-kao-ping*, *p'o-ho-to-ling*, *she-ma-ling*, and *jan-lo-lou*. The number of lesser officials is very considerable.

Those who appear before the king touch the ground in front of them three times at the foot of the steps of the throne. If the king calls them and commands them to show their rank, they kneel, holding their crossed hands on their shoulders. Then they go and sit in a circle around the king to deliberate on the affairs of the kingdom. When the session is finished, they kneel again, prostrate themselves, and retire. More than a thousand guards dressed in armor and armed with lances are ranged at the foot of the steps of the throne, in the palace halls, at the doors, and at the peristyles.

The custom of the inhabitants is to go around always armored and armed, so that minor quarrels lead to bloody battles.

Only sons of the queen, the legitimate wife of the king, are qualified to inherit the throne. On the day that a new king is proclaimed, all his brothers are mutilated. From one a finger is removed, from another the nose is cut off. Then their maintenance is provided for, each in a separate place, and they are never appointed to office (*ibid.* 74-75).

The same source also contains a brief account of the everyday life and material culture of Ishanapura:

The men are of small stature and dark complexion, but many of the women are fair in complexion. All of them roll up their hair and wear earrings. They are lively and vigorous in temperament. Their houses and the furniture they use resemble those of Chih-t'u. They regard the right hand as pure and the left hand as impure. They wash every morning, clean their teeth with little pieces of poplar wood, and do not fail to read or recite their prayers. They wash again before eating, get their poplar-wood toothpicks going immediately afterwards, and recite prayers again. Their food includes a lot of butter, milk-curd, powdered sugar, rice and also millet, from which they make a sort of cake which is soaked in meat juices and eaten at the beginning of the meal.



Whoever wishes to marry first of all sends presents to the girl he seeks; then the girl's family chooses a propitious day to have the bride led, under the protection of a go-between, to the house of the bridegroom. The families of the husband and wife do not go out for eight days. Day and night the lamps remain lit. When the wedding ceremony is over, the husband receives part of the goods of his parents and goes to establish himself in his own house. At the death of his parents, if the deceased leave young children who are not yet married, these children receive the rest of the goods; but if all the children are already married and endowed, the goods that the parents have retained for themselves go to the public treasury.

Funerals are conducted in this way: the children of the deceased go seven days without eating shave their heads as a sign of mourning, and utter loud cries. The relatives assemble with the monks and nuns of *Fo* or the priests of the *Tao*, who attend the deceased by chanting and playing various instruments.

### **First representation of musical instruments**

Some instruments and a musical orchestra are to be found in the bas relief of a lintel of the site of Sambor Prei Kuk (*Fig. 2.39*). These are among the first representations (7th C. AD) of music instruments and orchestra in South East Asia, rendering them of critical importance to the study of ancient and contemporary music.



2.39, we can identify four (highlighted) instruments: a sitar, rattle, drum and harp. The sitar and rattle as represented in the bas relief are still in use in Cambodian contemporary music (Kersale, 2013).

The (deaths are then) burned on a pyre made of every kind of aromatic wood; the ashes are collected in a gold or silver urn, which is thrown in deep water. The poor use an earthenware urn, painted in different colors. There are also those who are content to abandon the body in the mountains, leaving the job of devouring it to the wild beasts (ibid. 75-76).

### **The Ishanapura-My Son Axis**

At the very outset of the seventh century, Mahendravarman, the father of Ishanavarman I, had realized the importance of the neighboring Kingdom of Champa (current South Vietnam) as an ally in order to realize his dream of establishing a powerful Khmer state in the Mekong Valley. So he sent one of his ministers to the court at My Son, capital of the Kingdom of Champa (and current World Heritage Site), with a mission to reinforce friendly relations between the two countries. This crucial information is given in a Sanskrit inscription, K 53 dated 667 AD (Sahai, 1970, ISC, IX, 67, stanza 8).

The interest of Ishanapura in the affairs of the Kingdom of Champa continued during the following reign under Ishanavarman I, as attested by inscription C 96, dated 657 AD, found near temple E 6 at My Son. Ishanavarman I's interest in the politics of the neighboring state of Champa was instrumental in promoting future closer cultural ties between the two neighboring countries, especially in the field of the arts and architecture. The inscription C 96 was installed at My Son by the ruling King of Champa, Prakashadharma (655-690 AD) who belonged to a new dynasty.

In the inscription King Prakashadharma of Champa unveils his origins by referring to his exiled father Jagadharma in Bhavapura (Ishanapura), who married Sharvani, his mother and daughter to King Ishanavarman I (the inscription gives much more information about the family and especially on the ancestry of Ishanavarman I referring to Mahendravarman I, his father and Bhavavarman I, his uncle).

The illustrious King of Champa, Prakashadharma and grandson of Ishanavarman I, was thus half Khmer and half Cham, his proud lineage going back to the founders of the Chenla Empire and ultimately Ishanapura.

Several French archaeologists, art historians and historians such as Boisselier (2008, 256), Philippe Stern (1942, 81 ff), and Mus (1928, 151-152) also refer to the similarity in art, architecture and religious symbolism produced by both Ishanapura and My Son. Boisselier (2008, 256) observes: "The accession to the throne of a new dynasty in Champa, its family ties with Chenla (Ishanapura), and the role that the Khmer Kingdom had necessarily played in its formation, are no doubt sufficient to explain the artistic relationship of the two Kingdoms of Champa and Ishanapura..."

This intense relationship with the Kingdom of Champa will continue throughout the Khmer Empire.

### **Continuing importance**

With the shift of power north to the Angkor region, the political power of Sambor Prei Kuk diminished. However, the city continued to play an important role as a provincial center. Evidence of the ongoing importance of Sambor Prei Kuk throughout the Angkor period exists in several forms. The most important evidence relates to the revival of the cult practice at the Northern Group in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, including the alteration and renovation of Prasat Sambor (Shimoda and Nakagawa 2008), the installation of inscriptions K.148, K.436; K.443 in the Z Group from the Angkor period and additional statuary (the Pre Rup style Vajimukha from N7) during the reign of Rajendravarman (*Fig. 2.40*).



*Fig. 2.40: 10<sup>th</sup> century statue in Pre Rup style Vajimukha from Prasat N7, Sandstone, MG. 18099 at the Musée national des arts asiatiques-Guimet, Paris*

The Angkor road network (*Fig. 2.41*) extended to Sambor Prei Kuk, indicating that the site continued to be of ongoing importance as a religious center and possibly as a link between the northern capitals and southern tributary states (Hendrickson 2010, 2011; Shimoda and Nakagawa 2009). Further evidence is provided by Khmer and Chinese ceramics excavated at the site. Khmer green and brown glazed potsherds have been found that are dated to the Angkor period. The Chinese ceramics are bluish-white porcelain from kilns in Fujian and Jiangxi and have been dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries (Kubo et al 2012, 86). A piece of Yuan celadon from the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century has also been found (Heng 2009, 23). The presence of such imported luxury goods demonstrates that Sambor Prei Kuk continued to host members of the elite despite the center of power having moved elsewhere.

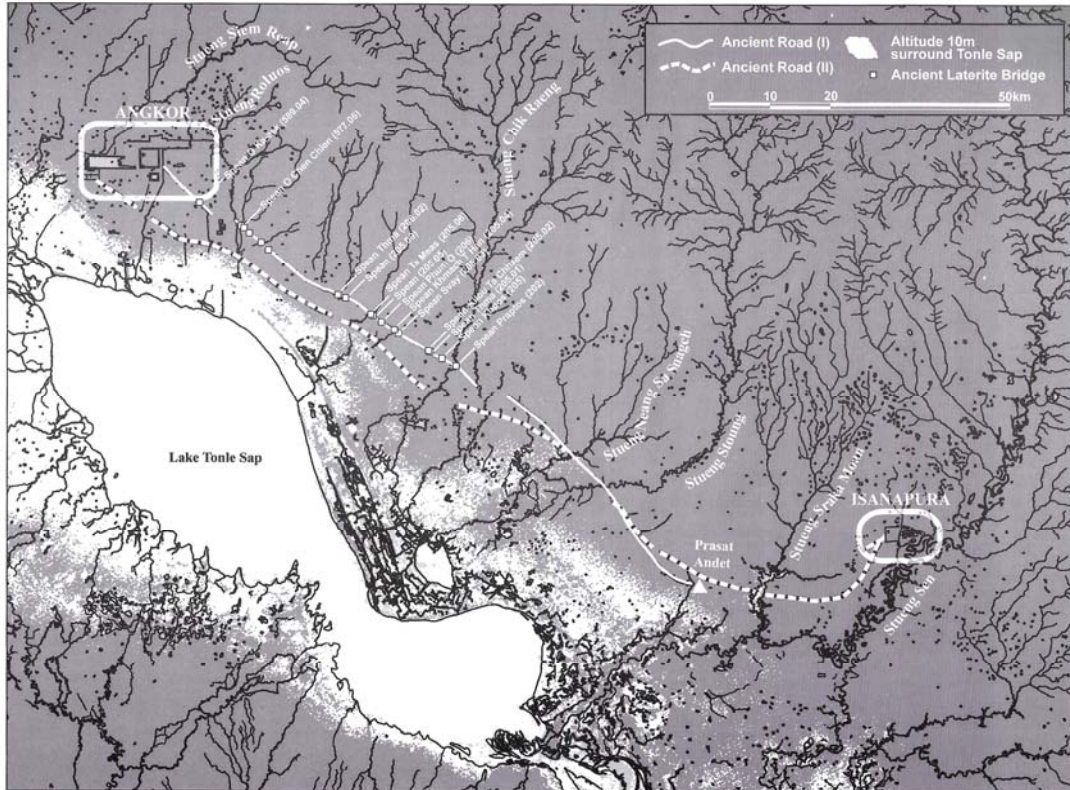


Fig. 2.41 The ancient Angkor road system indicating the road network from Angkor to Sambor Prei Kuk.

During this late period the use of brick with accompanying sandstone elements such as doorjambs, head, colonnades, and lintels continued in the tradition of Sambor Prei Kuk. However the particular and peculiar decorative elements such as medallions, flying palaces, and sculptures in the Sambor Prei Kuk style are no longer to be found.

### Living traditions

#### Continuity

**The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape continues to be used for human habitation, agriculture production, commerce and religious worship.**

**Most of the ancient temple shrines are used as places of worship by the local population as well as visitors. Local communities consider Ancient Ishanapura as the dwelling place for “Neak Ta” (powerful ancestral sprits) who are worshipped in everyday rituals and two unique annual festivals.**

**This manifestation of continued practices assisted to maintain and preserve the site.**



Certainly, today, the temples of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site and Cultural Landscape are regarded as having strong religious value. Local communities regard Prasat Sambor as the home of a *Neak Ta* (powerful ancestral spirit), who is worshipped in everyday rituals and in two annual festivals (Fig. 2.42). Currently eight *Neak Ta* wooden shrines share space with the monument. Many more are scattered throughout the site. These festivals contain several elements not practiced elsewhere in Cambodia (Fig. 2.43), including the creation of unique ritual objects and the use of powder from the stones of the ancient causeway to bless worshippers with the power of the *Neak Ta*. The age of these ritual practices is unknown, but markings on the stones caused by rubbing have been found during excavations, suggesting that the ceremonies have historical roots. Most of the accessible temple shrines continue to be used as places of worship by both local villagers and visitors to the site. Other uses of the site also continue. The site of the ancient urban complex continues to be used for human habitation. The historical hydraulic system of canals, dikes and other water features serve local communities as a water supply.



Fig. 2.42 *Neak Ta* ceremony



*Fig. 2.43 Ceremony as part of the annual ploughing ritual*

### **3. JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION**

#### **(a) Brief synthesis**

Sambor Prei Kuk, the Archaeological and Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura, is the most important archaeological site for 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> Century Southeast Asia and capital of the Chenla Empire. It extends over a territory of approximately 25 km<sup>2</sup> and it shows us for the first time in Southeast Asia a very complex city planning with a collection of buildings on a monumental scale (harbor, causeways, hydrologic structures, religious temple complexes and moated habitation zone) and a very specific iconography currently known as the “Sambor Prei Kuk Style”. The city is strategically set in its geographical environment.

Inscriptions, iconography and historical documents reveal the capital of an empire, which ruled over a vast area of current Southeast Asia. The “History of the Sui” mentions “...the thriving city of Ishanapura with more than twenty thousand families residing in, with a royal audience hall in the center of the city. The territory of Ishanapura included thirty other cities, each populated by several thousands of families, and each ruled by a governor...” (Coedes, *The Indianized States*, 1968, 74 & 76).

The Empire was not a landlocked state, but was outward looking with sea harbors in the Northwest and Southeast. Politically, administratively and spiritually, the capital resonated far beyond its borders as a first metropolis of South East Asia.

The universality of the Sanskrit language was transferred to the distinct Khmer language, first used in Ishanapura for state and ruling purposes, soon to become the universal language of the Khmer Empire, next to Sanskrit.



It was a place where travelers and diplomatic missions from as far as China, India, Central Asia and neighboring countries lived with the local Khmer community, establishing a syncretism of Hindu and Buddhist (It is the first time that Buddhism is mentioned in an inscription in Southeast Asia with reference to its universal learning and philosophy) practices so well reflected in its inscriptions and art and introducing for the first time the octagonal form in architecture in the Southeast Asia region (*fig. 3.1*).



*Fig. 3.1 Octagonal temple (N 7). Reliefs, representing the so called “flying palaces”, decorate every façade except the one where the east-facing doorway is placed, (Brukoff, B. and Jessup, H.I., 2011, p. 20).*

Two groups of monuments (the North and South groups) with octagonal buildings are dedicated to the Lord of Seriousness (Gambiresvara) and the Lord of the Smile (Prahasitesvara), a philosophical concept referring to universal human characteristics (*fig. 3.2 & 3.3*). Prahasitesvara, the Lord of the smile later paves the way for the Buddhist smile, which will both have a profound impact on Khmer iconography, architecture and civilization as a whole.

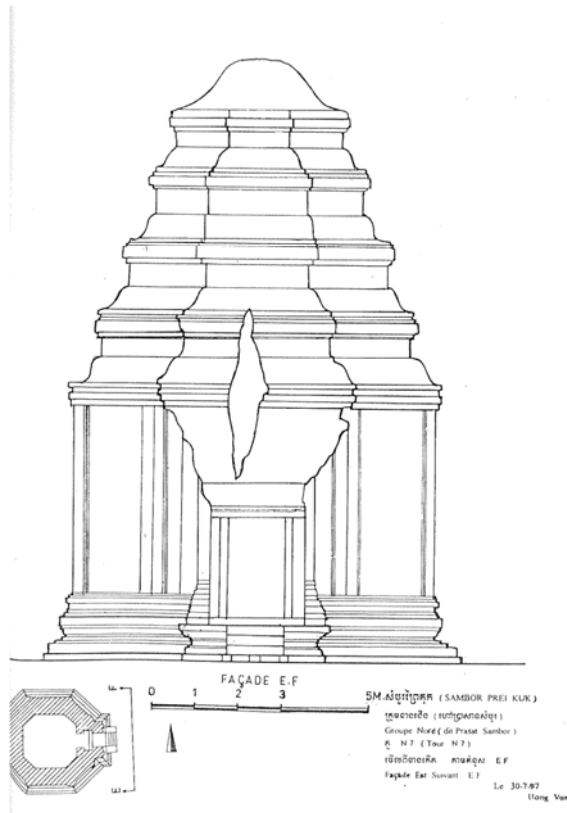


Fig. 3.2 Drawing of the Octagonal temple N 7 after Uong Vong in "Survey Report of the Temples at Sambor Prei Kuk (Kampong Thom), by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, General Department of Protection of Culture, Department of Patrimony, Editor Nouth Narang, Minister of Culture and Fine Arts, (undated), pp. 38.

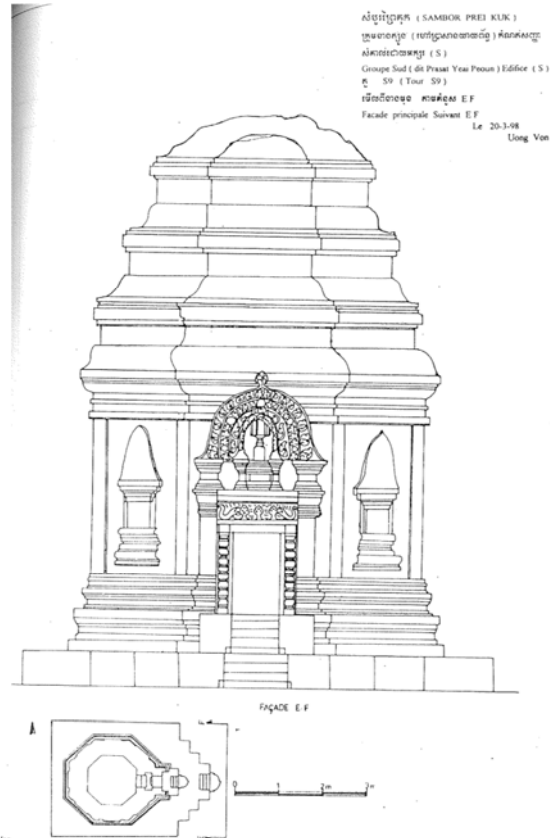


Fig. 3.3 Drawing of the principal façade of tower S 9 after Uong Vong in "Survey Report of the Temples at Sambor Prei Kuk (Kampong Thom), by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, General Department of Protection of Culture, Department of Patrimony, Editor Nouth Narang, Minister of Culture and Fine Arts, (undated), pp. 38.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the cult of Harihara, an inclusive form of Shiva-Vishnu worshipping, originating from India was officially introduced in Ishanapura, to bind and crystalize the Khmer state by uniting the Vishnu worshipping of the South and the Shiva worshipping from the North resulting in political empowerment of regional rule, introducing a refined level of spirituality and religious tolerance contributing to the universal value of peace (fig. 3.4 & 3.5). Ishanapura is also the site of the first inscription to give divine titles to secular rulers. This is evidence of the adoption of the concept of the god-king from India, an ideology that would underpin the state during the Angkor period and last until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.





*Fig. 3.4 Harihara, 6<sup>th</sup> Century Phnom Da?, Takeo Province, Cambodia, Musée Guimet, Paris, France.*



*Fig. 3.5 idem, back of Harihara, with clear distinction in the head-dress between the straight cap of Vishnu and curly hair of Shiva.*

Ishanapura also officially introduces for the first time the deity of the Sakabrahmana. A cult that has its origins in Iran and which reaches Sambor Prei Kuk via the Indian sub-continent. The Sakabrahmana will have a prominent role for more than four centuries in Khmer religious symbolism as reflected in later inscriptions and bas-reliefs of the Angkor period.

Sambor Prei Kuk therefore reflects the unique aspects of the pre-Angkor civilization, with its very particular cultural, religious and symbolic traits, forming the basis for the future history of Southeast Asia. It furthermore reflects a high architectural and artistic significance cementing the layers for styles and traditions to come, some of which are continuing today.

Several contemporary villages are situated in and around the archaeological site mainly living from crop and livestock cultivation. The inhabitants conduct multiple religious ceremonies per year onsite demonstrating the continuous religious and symbolic value of Sambor Prei Kuk. Ancient hydraulic structures related to water supply and irrigation are used by the local population on a daily bases for drinking water purposes and agriculture

while its natural environment and more specifically its waterways and little thriving harbor still connects its inhabitants to other merchant parts of the country.

### **(b) Justification for Criteria**

**Criteria ii:** The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and cultural landscape is an outstanding example of the interchange of human values that took place in the monumental arts in the late 6<sup>th</sup> early 7<sup>th</sup> century in Southeast Asia. As evidenced by the site, the political structure, religious practices and material culture were important advances that had a lasting impact in the region. The buildings, artwork, inscriptions and **landscape design** of the Group constitute the most significant and complete early expression of a distinct Khmer culture that drew upon and adapted Indian religious concepts and iconography and their accompanying artistic and architectural styles. The site is an outstanding example of how influences from India in terms of art and architecture, were assimilated and refined in the distinctive “Sambor Prei Kuk Style”. The Indian concepts were modified to meet the specific needs of this emergent empire and its social, religious and agrarian order, which ultimately evolved into a distinct Khmer culture that constitutes a milestone in urban planning and the plastic arts for the South East Asia region.

Its **unique architecture**, which is a distinct and original adaptation of Indian influence, introduces for the first time in the South East Asia region the octagonal form and translates itself in new aesthetic forms, such as the flying palaces and medallions, carved on the brick walls of the temple structures, stone lintels and sculptures currently known as Sambor Prei Kuk Style.

The **town planning** of Sambor Prei Kuk, the ancient city of Ishanapura, is also remarkable for its geographical centrality to the Khmer civilization and its close relationship with the surrounding environment. The fluvial plain in which it flourished is a mosaic of aquatic landscapes: the Steung Sen River, the O Krou Ke stream, back marches, valley plains, natural levees, meander scrolls, channels, water surfaces and sand bars.

It is indeed a remarkable “water land”, which was carefully crafted and engineered to the needs of this large capital. For the first time on the South East Asian mainland a carefully engineered combination of three hydraulic systems has been put simultaneously in place to manage and control the water flow and catchment as to provide a continuous water supply for the city especially in periods of draught, prevent flooding in the rainy season, protect the city and contribute to the agriculture produce (see also Description of Property).

These extensive hydraulic works probably also connected a harbor via two causeways to the religious complex before entering a walled city.

**Criteria iii:** Sambor Prei Kuk, Cultural and Archaeological Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura, represents the remains of a very well organized urban complex, capital of a unique past civilization, which introduced the first large empire in 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Century Southeast Asia stretching from today's Southern Thailand to Southern Vietnam in the Mekong Delta. The ancient city is an exceptional testimony of a culture tradition with centralized political power, bearing Hindu and Buddhist religious features, having a lasting impact on Southeast Asian society today. Its civilization underwent deep influences from the Indian subcontinent in the form of social institutions, religion and art which were assimilated into indigenous customs, ideology and artistic expressions. The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and cultural landscape was born at a time when a distinctive Khmer culture/identity emerged from this cross-cultural exchange.

The extraordinary architecture of the religious shrines is in two distinctive temple groups, dedicated to the Lord of Seriousness (Gambiresvara) and the Lord of the Smile (Prahasitesvara), a philosophical concept referring to universal human Characteristics. Prahasitesvara, the Lord of the smile will influence the Buddhist smile, and they will both have a profound and lasting impact on Khmer iconography, architecture and civilization as a whole.

Inscriptions and bas reliefs reveal a capital with a metropolitan character where travelers and diplomatic missions from China, India, Central Asia and neighboring states mixed with the Khmer population clearly extending beyond its regional influence and which will have a fundamental formative role for the future of the region.

The religious complex was the largest pilgrimage center in South East Asia. All that remains architecturally of that civilization are its brick and stone structures, its spiritualism however, and language still live on.

**Criteria vi:** It is at Ishanapura that we find the first evidence of the official introduction of the Harihara cult (originating from India) in Southeast Asia – an inclusive form of religion venerating the double image of Shiva-Vishnu - for the establishment of a very specific universal value; “peace”. Ishanavarman I, ruler with a Shivaite family tradition from the north, introduces the cult which is gradually adopted by the north for a rapprochement with the Vishnuite south, being conquered by the empire. Epigraphic sources suggest the use of Harihara as a device to assert political power and authority to consolidate territorial gains. The adoption of this inclusive religion will become so important that the later capital of the early Angkor Empire will bear its name in the form of Hariharalaya.

The official introduction of the new deity of the Sakabrahmana also finds its origins in Ishanapura. With the homeland of the Saka rulers (originating from Iran) in India is associated a particular group of priests in ancient India called the Brahmana from Sakadvipa or Sakabrahmana. These Sakabrahmana, under whom orthodoxy of Brahmanism was much relaxed, were well versed in the Veda and Vedangas and are often

associated with the worship of the sun-god, an ancient Iranian practice (Sahai, 2007, pp. 70-71). They also acted as the most active agents for diffusing Indian cultural elements in Southeast Asia (Sahai, 2007, p.71), including the Sanskrit language, leading to the first epigraphic texts, and the Saka calendar still being used in parts of India and in Bali. The inscriptions in ancient Cambodia (also in Sambor Prei Kuk) are regularly dated by the Saka era calendar. In fact, later inscriptions lead us to believe that a number of temples, including the Bayon of Angkor Thom (at the World Heritage Site of Angkor) were dedicated or partially dedicated to the Sakabrahmana in the course of at least four centuries.

Ishanapura furthermore introduces us to the first inscription in Southeast Asia on the Buddhist philosophy with reference to its universal character of learning and teaching. Throughout Khmer history the Buddhist philosophy will have a profound impact on its culture and will stay a predominant belief system in the region until today.

Sambor Prei Kuk is the first site in this region where inscriptions are found, giving divine titles to secular rulers. This is evidence of the adoption of the concept of the god-king from India, an ideology that would form the underpinning of the state during the Angkor period and would see its continuation till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Ishanapura is also the first place where the ancient Khmer language is used next to the Sanskrit language as a universally binding force, where it is introduced for state and administrative purposes, its legacy being reflected in different languages in use in the Southeast Asia region today.

In terms of artistic expression, the appearance of some instruments and a musical orchestra on the bas relief of a lintel, are among the first representations (7<sup>th</sup> Century) of music instruments and orchestra in Southeast Asia and of critical importance to the study of ancient and contemporary music.

The site, and moreover its society and culture thus embraces a language, religious ideas and concepts for governance of outstanding universal significance.

### **(c) Statement of integrity**

The extent of the nominated property under the Royal Decree of 24 December 2014 includes all the relevant historical, cultural, religious, secular and archaeological features and artifacts of the ancient complex, manifested in its moated city, three main temple complexes, hydraulic features and number of monumental remains within its original setting.

The boundary also includes its pristine environment with forested area from which the site bears its name.



The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape has suffered from the ravages of time, a difficult climate and recent historic events. The weathering process and encroachment of vegetation caused degradation of the monuments and in some cases their entire collapse. Over time, parts of the monuments and object belonging to the site have been dislocated and/or looted. The gravest harm to the site however, came with the international conflict which plunged Cambodia in a war zone between the late 1960's and early 1990's. Several monuments were severely hit by bombs, and many remnants of bomb craters are still visible today.

Despite these tragic events the site has been remarkably conserved. The property retains a large amount of monuments (291 Brick temples) and features which demonstrate the exceptional technological, architectural, artistic, hydraulic, historical and cultural value of the site. The major temples of the site retain their original form and fabric. Modifications and repairs were carried out at some of the buildings between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries and possibly as late as the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

A number of the decorative elements, statuary, and inscriptions from these monuments have remained in situ. A large part of the masterpieces have been stored or are on exhibit in museums in Cambodia and abroad (see annex III). The system of dykes, canals and hydraulic features stay intact and many are still in use today (see annex V). Excavation surveys have also indicated that many of the buried structures are in good condition. Protection of the site is secured by the Cambodian Government authorities, and regular clearing and restoration efforts in recent years have contributed to the preservation the site.

#### **(d) Statement of authenticity**

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape continues to be used for the purposes of human habitation, agricultural production, commerce and religious worship.

Most of the ancient temple shrines continue to be used as places of worship by the local people as well as visitors. Local communities furthermore, consider ancient Ishanapura as the dwelling place for “Neak Ta” (powerful ancestral spirits) who are worshipped in everyday rituals and two unique annual festivals with practices not used anywhere else in Cambodia. Some shrines for these “Neak Ta” share the space of the monuments and many more are scattered throughout the site.

Low density villages with traditional gardens and tree cover largely retain the pattern of settlement that would have been exhibited by the historic urban complex.

As the inhabitants of ancient Ishanapura, local villagers today depend on agriculture, mostly rice cultivation and livestock such as water buffaloes, cattle, pigs and chicken.

Carbon dating has even indicated that water features and earthworks still in use today are contemporary to the historic buildings.

The harbor, which is most probably situated at the spot of the ancient harbor, is a small thriving commercial center, which uses the Steung Sen River to accept and transport goods around the country.

This manifestation of continued, centuries old practices, assisted to maintain and preserve the archaeological and cultural landscape of the site.

### **(e) Requirements for protection and management**

Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group is strongly protected by the Royal Decree of December 2014, and Cambodian heritage legislation as described in section 5. The National Authority for Sambor Prei Kuk (NASPK) under the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Department of Archaeology provides the framework for the ongoing conservation, preservation, restoration, revitalization and general management of the site, and the interpretation of its heritage values to visitors.



*Fig. 3.6 Visitor center outside the Sambor Prei Kuk area*



*Fig. 3.7 Visitor center with tourism facilities such as restaurants and shops selling traditional crafts*

The authority is guided by a Management plan for the site and is further supported by the Ministry of Tourism which is in charge of visitors and provides amenities and facilities at site like the Visitor center build with assistance of ADB.

NASPK is further supported by a local NGO, the Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation and Development Community , established in 2004 with the agreement with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and has played a critical role in the sustainable conservation of the cultural heritage and development of the local community.

The boundary of the site is based on the cultural, archaeological and environmental studies being conducted since 1995.

### 3.2. Comparative analysis (including state of conservation of similar properties)

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group is compared to **eleven** cultural heritage sites on a national, sub-regional, regional and international level, not only using the World Heritage criteria, but also reflecting on the period of time, characteristics and/or features such as influences, religion, language, governance, architecture, material, e. a. The **first table** underneath lists the comparative sites, their location, name, time period and World heritage Criteria. The **following map** shows the site distribution worldwide, and the **second table** lists characteristics and/or features. The reason of choice and a more detailed description of each of the sites follows the two tables.

### 3.2 Comparative analyses

	Country	Site Name	Time Period	World Heritage
<b>I. National</b>	Cambodia	Angkor Borei	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	Tentative List
		Roluos (Angkor World Heritage Site)	8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	(i), (ii), (iii), (iv)
<b>II. Sub-Regional</b>	Laos	Wat Phu (World heritage site)	5 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	(iii), (iv), (vi)
	Vietnam	Oc Eo	1 <sup>st</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	No World Heritage Listing
		My Son (World Heritage Site)	4 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	(ii), (iii)
<b>III. Regional</b>	China	Big Wild Goose Pagoda (Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshin Corridor World heritage Site)	8 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	(ii), (iii), (v), (vi)
	India	Sirpur	5 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	No World Heritage Listing
	Japan	Hoku'endo and Nan'endo Halls at Kofukuji Temple (Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara World Heritage Site)	8 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	(ii), (iii), (v), (vi)
<b>IV. International</b>	Guatemala	Tikal National Park (World Heritage Site)	7 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	(i), (iii), (iv), (ix), (x)
	Jordan	Quseir Amra (World Heritage Site)	8 <sup>th</sup> Century AD.	(i), (iii), (iv)
	Italy	Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna (World Heritage Site)	6 <sup>th</sup> Century A.D.	(i), (ii), (iii), (iv)





Fig.

Nomination File for Inscription on the World Heritage List of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura

		National			Sub-regional			regional			international		
		Cambodia			Laos	Vietnam		China	India	Japan	Guatemala	Jordan	Italy
		Sambor Prei Kuk	Angkor Borei	Roluos	Wat Phu	Oc Eo	My Son	Big Wild Goose Pagoda	Sirpur	Kofukuji temple	Tikal	Quseir Amra	Basilica of San Vitale
Period: century A.D.		6 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> C	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> C	8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> C	5 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> C	1 <sup>st</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> C	4 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> C	8 <sup>th</sup> C	5 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> C	8 <sup>th</sup> C	7 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> C	8 <sup>th</sup> C	6 <sup>th</sup> C
Influences from:	India	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
	China	x	x	x	x	x	x			x			
	Others	x	x	x		x	x				x	x	x
religion	Hindu	x	x	x	x	x	x		x				
	Buddhist	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x			
	Others	x									x	x	x
language	Sanskrit	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
	Khmer	x		x	x		x						
	Others							x		x	x	x	x
governance	King-God	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x
	Centralized	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
City/architecture	Urban planning	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
	Temple	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
	octagonal	x								x			x
material	Brick	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x
	Stone	x		x	x		x		x		x	x	
	others					x				x			
hydrology	drainage		x			x							
	storage	x	x	x							x		
	Moat	x	x	x		x							
	Canal	x	x			x					x		
	reservoir	x	x								x		
	navigation	x	x		x	x	x						
agriculture		x	x	x	x	x	x				x		
Outside influence	Sub-regional	x		x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
	regional	x		x	x		x	x	x				x
	international	x		x	x			x	x		x		
commerce	India	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
	China	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
	others	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

## **I. National:**

**3.2.1 Angkor Borei (Cambodia: 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)** is on the Cambodian Tentative List and is a precursor of Sambor Prei Kuk, as one of the capitals of the Funan Empire:

State formation came relatively late to Southeast Asia and the Mekong delta in comparison with other regions of the world. By the end of the mid first millennium A.D., however, several coasts and river valleys of mainland Southeast Asia and the Mekong delta in particular, contained nucleated, hierarchical communities and religious systems (Stark, M., 2003, p.89). Populations in these communities engaged in international commerce that linked Southeast Asia to China, India, and by extension the Mediterranean. Archaeological, epigraphic, and art historical research illustrate that the Mekong delta was the center of the region's first cultural system with trappings of statehood such as high population and urban centers; the production of surplus food through intensive rice cultivation; sociopolitical stratification, legitimated by Indic religious ideologies; a system of writing, and a vigorous network of long distance trade.

Archaeological research in Vietnam's Mekong delta at "Oc Eo" site (a site later described in this chapter) provides impressive insights on settlement traditions and material culture of the early historic period. Chinese documentary accounts and indigenous inscriptions, however, suggest that the political centers of Funan lay in the delta's northern reaches. For historic reasons, many scholars believe that the archaeological site of Angkor Borei (in current Cambodia's Takeo province) was one capital of this Funan Empire (*Fig. 3.8*).



*Fig. 3.8 Geographical situation of Angkor Borei, Oc Eo and Rach Gia in the Mekong delta*

Angkor Borei is located on the southeastern edge of an elevated escarpment that is surrounded by a low-lying delta in all directions except the northwest. During the rainy season, floodwaters inundate most of the surrounding fields (geographically ideal for rice cultivation (*Fig. 3.9*)).





*Fig. 3.9 Floodplains in the Angkor Borei region*

Most of the Mekong delta has an altitude of ca. 2 meters above sea level and the altitude around Angkor Borei varies from approximately 2-10 meters above sea level (comparable to the geographical situation of Sambor Prei Kuk). More research and studies will have to be carried out, but it is clear from aerial photography that drainage and navigation canals (linking Angkor Borei to Oc Eo in the delta) surrounded the city.

Angkor Borei contains some of the earliest dated Khmer inscriptions, brick architecture and statuary (*fig. 3.10 and 3.11*) found in Cambodia and is located in the proximity of Phnom Da Mountain containing ancient temples and also statuary associated with the earliest Khmer style.



*Fig. 3.10 Vishnu, 6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., Phnom Da, National Museum Phnom Penh.*



*Fig. 3.11 Krishna, 6<sup>th</sup> Century, Phnom Da, National Museum Phnom Penh.*

The ancient site of Angkor Borei is no fewer than 3 km<sup>2</sup> in area (smaller than Sambor Prei Kuk), the city wall encircles a D-shaped elevated area. More than 151 possible archaeological features were identified inside the walled area of Angkor Borei, including more than 100 water control features (e.a., reservoirs, small pools and natural ponds of various sizes). Mapping work also identified monumental architecture in the form of more than thirty brick masonry rubble mounds. Apparently there was a successful local ceramic production albeit the discovery of imported Indian ceramics, showing a direct trade link with the Indian subcontinent.

Both Hindu and Buddhist images (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Century) have been recovered from Angkor Borei, suggesting that both religions were important at the time. Epigraphic evidence also offers a window into the relationship between religion and economy, illustrated by the earliest Khmer inscription (K600/611) making reference to large offerings to the temple gods, indigenous and Shivaite, indicating the importance of the temple economy.

Angkor Borei thus illustrates state formation in the Mekong delta and the larger Southeast Asian region, which will form the basis for the establishment of larger empires, such as Ishanapura (Sambor Prei Kuk), eventually leading to the emergence of Angkor which will dominate the whole of the Southeast Asian mainland between the ninth and fifteenth Centuries.

### 3.2.2 Roluos (Cambodia: 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.) as part of the Angkor World Heritage Site and capital of the early Angkor Empire founded on the Harihara cult and known as Hariharalaya:

Jayavarman II, founder of the Khmer Empire built four capitals for his Kingdom: Indrapura, Hariharalaya (identified as Roluos), Amarendrapura and Mahendrapura. The most important capital was Hariharalaya, “The Seat of Harihara”, about 15 km South East from Angkor, named after the syncretic deity in which Vishnu and Shiva merged, and which was introduced to the Khmer Empire, as illustrated above, by Ishanavarman I, founder of Ishanapura (Sambor Prei Kuk). Hariharalaya was the capital used by Jayavarman II at the end of the 8th century. There are however, no structures left from the period of Jayavarman II and the monuments found at the site today, date back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The main monuments at Roluos are Preah Kô and Bakong, both dedicated to Shiva, and Lolei.

Preah Kô is an elegant small brick temple and the first temple to be built in the capital Hariharalaya by Indravarman I (*Fig. 3.12*). Its surrounding moat is large in proportion to the temple buildings and should have included the Royal Palace, of which no trace so far has been found. Indravarman I had this temple dedicated on 25 January 880 in honor of his predecessors. The door jambs of the three front towers have long inscriptions on all sides, whereas of the back row only the middle has an inscription. The middle tower of the front row, set back slightly from the other two, was dedicated to Paramesvara, “the Supreme Lord”. This was one of the names of Shiva, and in this case also the posthumous title of the founder of the Khmer Empire, Jayavarman II, and builder of Hariharalaya (identified as Roluos).



*Fig. 3.12 Roluos, Preah Ko, east row, north tower, west façade. The receding storeys are decorated with miniature depictions of towers and supported by interior corbeling, (Brukoff, B. and Jessup, H.I., 2011, p. 34).*



Bakong is the State Temple of Indravarman I at Hariharalaya, and is the first significant temple mountain in what will be the Khmer Empire (*Fig. 3.13*). It appears that it was previously constructed in laterite by Jayavarman III, son of Jayavarman II, and simply finished in sandstone by Indravarman I as his last work.

There are however, a lot of brick/sandstone monuments to be found at Bakong (*Fig. 3.14*).



*Fig. 3.13 Roluos, Bakong from the north-west. The four lower levels of the pyramid are exceptionally broad and add to the monument's solidity and grandeur. The upper level's tower is a twelfth century addition that resembles the towers of Angkor Wat in form, (Brukoff, B. and Jessup, H.I., 2011, P. 42).*



*Fig. 3.14 Roluos, Bakong, view of two of the subsidiary towers surrounding the temple. The pediments and guardian Fig.s in arcuated niches flanking the doors are carved from thick stucco and the underlying brick. The collonettes are cylindrical, as in seventh-century temples..., (Brukoff, B. and Jessup, H.I., 2011, p. 44).*

Lolei is an island temple in the middle of a “baray” (large man made water reservoir), prepared by Indravarman I and finalized by his son Yasovarman (893 AD) (*Fig. 3.15*).



*Fig. 3.15. Roluos, Lolei, the sanctuary towers as seen from the north-west.*



The brick structures at the three sites, intermingled with laterite and sandstone clearly refer to a transition period in construction and architecture between the Sambor Prei Kuk and Angkor eras, while society is still venerating Shiva and Harihara. Hariharalaya (identified as Roluos), shows in a very vivid way the influence and importance Ishanapura (Sambor Prei Kuk) had on later state formation in the Khmer Empire.

## II. Sub-Regional

### 3.2.3 Oc Eo ( Vietnam: 1<sup>st</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.) as early urban center and a harbor of the Funan Empire reflecting urban aspects and hydraulic works which will contribute to the founding of later and larger cities such as Ishanapura :

The archaeological site of Oc Eo in the Mekong Delta of today's South Vietnam, used to be a very important maritime city of the Funan Empire (1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> C AD), connected to the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, through its sea port and smaller settlement of Rach Gia (*Fig. 3.8*). Oc Eo was surrounded by canals extending into the inner city (one of the larger canals connecting its center to the harbor of Rach Gia on one side, and the capital of the Funan Empire, Angkor Borei, on the other).

Geographically Oc Eo is situated in the Mekong Delta plains, subject to maritime tides and the influx of sediments. Waterworks were therefore strictly necessary to drain the water and to keep the canals navigable (*Fig. 3.16*).



*Fig. 3.16 Ancient canals still in use in the Oc Eo region viewed from Mount Bathé*

This position and the importance of the hydrology works opened many maritime horizons for the city being centrally positioned between the sailing routes to India and China. This way, foreign contacts and cultural exchanges, especially with India, were assured and rendered the place a commercial vocation, while the vast plains in the hinterland secured the food staple for the inhabitants.

Apart from its proximity to the sea there was another reason for the geographical situation of Oc Eo. The site is at a little distance of Mount Bathé (*Fig. 3.17*), a lonely granite formation, visible from all directions over very long distances. In India summits are considered to be the houses of the gods and around Mount Bathé there were a lot of remnants and pieces of statues found, predominantly referring to images of Vishnu. As we have seen earlier Oc Eo would have been part of a predominantly Vishnuite South conquered by the Shivaite North in the Sambor Prei Kuk era. Aerial observation also leads to the impression that a belt of waterways was constructed around Mount Bathé which could invoke the symbolism of the cosmic sea still present in a much later Angkor (I. Malleret, 1959, p. 200).



*Fig. 3.17 Mount Bathé viewed from Oc Eo site*

Oc Eo was a city surrounded by an immense rectangular consisting of a succession of small embankments and moats (1500m by 3000m), at the same time providing water and security from the exterior. This succession of small embankments and moats contains a

surface of 4,5 km<sup>2</sup>, which makes it slightly bigger than the walled city of Sambor Prei Kuk. Inside we may observe an extension of the canals to the inner city in a very regular pattern and there are hundreds of remains of brick temples, mainly in a poor state of conservation (*Fig. 3.18*) and remnants referring to houses built on stilts. The strong geometry of the city suggests a centralized power which must have overseen its planning and construction.



*Fig. 3.18 Unearthed brick structures at the center of the Oc Eo Site.*

The early Indian influence – and probably the first one on the Southeast Asian mainland – on the city is clear as suggested by this regular pattern and the many objects, especially religious, found onsite. Oc Eo may therefore be seen as one of the precursors of Sambor Prei Kuk, where Indian influence and culture first took root to later spread inland with an adaptation to Khmer needs.

#### **3.2.4 My Son (Vietnam: 4<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)** for its World Heritage status and nomination under criteria ii and iii and its close historic and cultural ties with Ishanapura:

The World heritage Site of My Son in South Vietnam is contemporary to Sambor Prei Kuk. They both owe their spiritual origins to the Hinduism of India and share a common history, which has a lasting impact on the region.



In My Son this is graphically illustrated by the remains of a series of impressive brick tower temples (Fig. 3.19 & 3.20), in a lesser extent though than Sambor Prei Kuk, forming the religious and political capital of the Champa Kingdom for most of its existence.



*Fig. 3.19 & 3.20 The temples at My Son are made of a reddish brick. Decorative carvings have been cut directly into the bricks.*

My Son Sanctuary dates from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, and uses just as Sambor Prei Kuk its natural environment for its foundation. The property is located in the mountainous border Duy Xuyen District of Quang Nam Province, in central Vietnam. It is situated within an elevated geological basin surrounded by a ring of mountains, which provides the watershed for the sacred Thu Bon River. The source of the Thu Bon River is here and it flows past the monuments, out of the basin, and through the historic heartland of the Champa Kingdom, draining into the South China Sea. The location gives the sites its strategic significance as it is also easily defensible.

Influenced by Hinduism of the Indian sub-continent many temples were built to the Hindu divinities such as Krishna and Vishnu, but above all Shiva. Although Buddhism penetrated the Cham culture and became strongly established in the north of the kingdom, Shivaite Hinduism remained the established state religion. In Sambor Prei Kuk, the state religion, even after introduction of the Harihara cult and Buddhism, also stayed predominantly Shivaite.

The monuments of the My Son sanctuary are the most important constructions of the Champa civilization. They are constructed in fired brick with sand stone pillars and decorated with sandstone bas-reliefs depicting scenes from Hindu mythology, very much like Sambor Prei Kuk. Their technological sophistication is evidence of Cham engineering skills while the elaborate iconography and symbolism of the tower-temples give insight into the content and evolution of Cham religious and political thought.

The site of My Son however is a religious ensemble, whereas Sambor Prei Kuk is a city with religious elements. Sambor Prei Kuk however, remains predominant in its centuries of glory, being the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, with a major influence over the region and far beyond. After that, its influence creates the basics for the foundations of Angkor, while its



regional might is reduced. Champa however, will continue to be a center of power rivaling its neighbor of Angkor.

**3.2.5 Wat Phu (Laos: 5<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century)** for its World Heritage Status and as early Shivaite center in Southeast Asia, birthplace of the dynasty which will rule Ishanapura and which will be part of the Pre-Angkor and Angkor Empire from the 7<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries:

The temple complex of Wat Phu near the modern town of Champassak in Southwestern Laos is distinguished by its hills. One of these hills is crowned by a rock resembling a “linga” (Fig. 3.21). This mountain is named in several inscriptions as Lingaparvata.



*Fig. 3.21 The Lingaparvata is visible in the background of the monument.*

The earliest mention of this site is in the inscription of King Devanaka (K365), dating back to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., who established the New Kuruksetra (Kuruksetra being the holy Indian city where the last great battle of the Mahabharata took place) at the foot of this mountain. A cult grew around it and centered on the important temple complex of Wat Phu at the foot of the mountain. The inhabitants saw the landscape in terms of Hindu cosmology with Wat Phu Mountain as the home of the gods, particularly Shiva, while the Mekong River represented the River Ganges and the surrounding universal ocean. Referring to Zhenla (Chenla), the pre-Angkor Empire of mainland Southeast Asia, the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century history of the Chinese Sui Dynasty mentions this mountain and its cult practices as follows:

*“Near the capital is a mountain named Ling-jia-bo-po, on the summit of which a temple was constructed, always guarded by five thousand soldiers and consecrated to the spirit Po-do-li, to who human sacrifices are made. Each year the king himself goes to this temple to make a human sacrifice during the night. It is thus that they honor the spirits.”*

Wat Phu, as described earlier, is supposed to be an area where the ruling dynasty Of the Zhenla Empire (Chenla) or pre-Angkor originated. The old city was settled 5 km to the east of the mountain on the bank of the Mekong, surrounded by a double enclosure of earthen walls, rectangular in ground plan. An earthen wall divided the settlement into two halves, spread over 4 km<sup>2</sup>, about the same size as Sambor Prei Kuk. Remains of some 30 brick temples, residential quarters and workshops have been exposed. The ancient city was built in an area with a rich natural network of small and medium-sized rivers and streams flowing from the mountain into the Mekong River. The three principal rivers were channeled through the ancient city to supply water and control flooding.

From the fifth century till the end of the Angkor period (15<sup>th</sup> century), Wat Phu remained an important Shiva temple site, patronized by the Khmer kings. Even today, thousands of pilgrims come to Wat Phu from southern Laos for a Buddhist-Hindu ceremony held in February, during which young girls in white pray to Shiva and buffaloes are sacrificed.

Although founded in the pre-Angkor area and contributing to the history of Sambor Prei Kuk, Wat Phu does not represent the specific and unique characteristics of the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century site of Sambor Prei Kuk, as it was absorbed in the Angkor style of later centuries of which the monumental remains are still visible today (*Fig. 3.22*).



*Fig. 3.22 Angkor Style sandstone monument at the site of Wat Phu.*



### III. Regional

#### 3.2.6 Sirpur (India: 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.) for its interchange of human values:

Sirpur is a historical town in central India on the banks of the river Mahanadi. The town of Sirpur has been mentioned in ancient epigraphic records, dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. The city was once the capital of the Sarbhapuriya and Somvanshi Kings of Dakshin (south) Kosala state. It was also an important centre of Buddhism from the 6<sup>th</sup> the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and was visited by Hieun Tsang, the 7<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Pilgrim and Scholar. Like SPK Sirpur also demonstrates complex city planning and hydrology with collection of remarkable civic and religious buildings at a monumental scale. As per Hindu traditions the city is placed towards the west of river and temples are aligned north south with opening towards the west to get the rising sun, this is also a prominent feature of temples at SPK with slight variations. The tolerance of the rulers is once again demonstrated by the presence of twin shrines to Vishnu & Shiva called Harihara temples, though unlike SPK this did not transform into a single iconic representation. Along with Hindu temples there are many Buddhist and Jain shrines which have been excavated in Sirpur.

The 7<sup>th</sup> century Lakshana Temple (dedicated to lord Vishnu) is considered as one of the finest brick temples of India with a stone doorframe (*Fig.3.23 & 3.24*). It is the most developed among the temples of the post-Gupta period and retains most of its original appearance and comparable to many temples at SPK in terms of their plan form, architectural similarities including decorations, iconography, construction material and techniques.



*Fig.s 3.23 & 3.24 Sirpur, the Lakshmana Temple, one of India's finest brick temples ever created. A remarkable product of unique symmetry, precise construction and exquisite carvings was constructed in 650 AD.*

Though unlike SPK many of the bricks here were pre-casted in required shapes and not carded post construction, it has a developed socle mouldings and has a stout but slightly incurved shikhara. Like SPK temple becoming predececor to Angkor temples this temple at Sirpur also marked a transition between the Gupta and the early medieval temples, anticipating several features of the latter'. Its shikhara is highly decorated with large

chaitya-niches (horse shoe like window) above the door also a common feature at SPK including a variant as seen in its flying palaces. The most noticeable feature is a deeply recessed false window in the center of each side; this is divided into panels by mullions evidently derived from a wooden lattice as also seen in SPK temples.

Even with many similarities and evidences of interchanges SPK remains a unique typology and surpasses Sirpur with sheer its scale and grandeur. Moreover unlike Sirpur which saw many alterations to its monuments between 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, the nominated property SPK retains the integrity and authenticity proving it with the OUV worthy for the nomination to the world heritage list.

**3.2.7 The Big Wild Goose Pagoda as part of the “Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang’an-Tianshan Corridor” World Heritage Site (China: 8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)** as one of the larger early brick structures in China, build under the Tang Dynasty, which had very close diplomatic relations with Ishanapura. The Pagoda was constructed to house Buddhist statues and Sanskrit texts brought from India early 8<sup>th</sup> Century:

The Big Wild Goose Pagoda of Chang’an (today’s Xi’an), Shaanxi province, China, originally built in 652 AD under the reign of Emperor Gaozong (628-683) of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), was a mud structure covered by bricks and was part of the larger Da Ci’en Temple complex. The pagoda was built to house the Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures (sutras) and Buddha relics and images which the prominent Buddhist scholar Xuanzang brought back from India. He got the permission of the Emperor to build the pagoda and was also to be the first abbot of the Da Ci’en Temple complex. With the support of the Emperor he brought fifty scholars to the temple to translate the Sanskrit sutras into Chinese, a novelty in the history of translation.

The original 5-story-building roughly survived 50 years and collapsed because of its structural defaults. It was however, immediately rebuild under Empress Wu Zetian between 701 and 704 to become square ten story brick facade building. The brick façade was renovated under the Ming Dynasty. The severe earthquake of 1556 destroyed part of the pagoda and brought it down to its current height of seven stories (*Fig. 3.25 & 3.26*).





*Fig. 3.25 The Big Wild Goose Pagoda.*



*Fig. 2.26 View on the Pagoda from the temple gardens.*

The Big Wild Goose Pagoda became part of the China “Silk Road” World Heritage Nomination in June 2014 as part of an interconnected web of routes linking the ancient societies of Asia, the subcontinent, Central Asia, Western Asia and the Near East and contributed to the development of many of the worlds’ great civilizations.

**3.2.8 The Hoku’endo Northern and Nan’endo Southern Octagonal Halls of Kofukuji Temple as part of the World Heritage Site “Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara” (Japan: 8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)** because of its role as a capital of a centralized empire and its artistic and architectural values including the octagonal halls at Kofukuji Temple:

Until the mid-seventh century, every time a new emperor was enthroned, the seat of the imperial court of Japan was transferred to a new location in or around the Asuka region. Empress Gemmei began to construct a new capital in Nara in 708 A.D. and transferred the capital there in 710 A.D. The Nara period lasted for a subsequent 74 years. In this period of Japanese history, the framework of national government made much progress on the basis of the legal systems from the Tang Dynasty in China. The construction of the Nara capital was carried out, seeking examples in the Chinese capital of Chang’an. Extending 5.9 km East to West and 4.8 km North to South (encompassing 2,500 ha), it is estimated that the Nara capital had a population of 100,000 residents.

Kofukuji Temple in Nara, is an impressive complex of wooden buildings, many of which are National Treasures. In 1998 Kofukuji Temple was inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site as part of the “Historic Monuments of Nara” listing.

Kofukuji Temple was first established in 669 A.D. in Yamashina Suehara (now part of the Kyoto Prefecture). In 710 however, with the establishment of Nara the capital, Kofukuji Temple was moved to its current site. Kofukuji Temple was the first temple to be moved to Nara and with its central location it grew in power and wealth.

The original Hoku’endo Northern Octagonal Hall of Kofukuji Temple was completed in 721 A.D. at the request of Empress Gemmei (*Fig. 3.27*). The monument underwent many restoration phases with the current building being completed around 1210 A.D. The Northern Octagonal Hall houses several national treasures.



*Fig. 3.27 The Hoku’endo Northern Octagonal Hall at Kofukuji Temple.*

The original Nan’endo Southern Octagonal Hall was completed in 813, but the current building is a reconstruction of 1789 (*Fig. 3.28*). The Southern Octagonal Hall is still a very important Buddhist pilgrimage center as it is the ninth temple on the West Japan Thirty Three Temple Pilgrimage Route, housing several national treasures.



*Fig. 3.28 The Nan'endo Southern Octagonal Hall at Kofukuji Temple.*

#### **IV. International**

##### **3.2.9 Quseir Amra for its World Heritage Status and one of the most prominent of the so called “Desert Castles”, Eastern Jordanian desert (Jordan: 8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.) for its unique and extraordinary artistic value:**

Quseir Amra, an exceptionally well-preserved desert castle (nominated as a World Heritage Site in 1985), was built beside the Wadi Butum, a seasonal watercourse, sometime between 723 and 743 A.D. both as a fortress with garrison and a residence for the Umayyad caliphs. It is considered one of the most important examples of early Islamic art and architecture.

The building is the remnant of a larger complex that included an actual castle of which the foundation remains. What stands today is a small country cabin, meant as a royal retreat, without any military function. It is a low building made from limestone and basalt (*Fig. 3.29*).





*Fig. 3.29 Quseir Amra in the Eastern Jordanian Desert.*

The exceptionally well preserved small pleasure palace comprises a reception hall and hammam (a bath complex with changing room, warm and hot rooms), all richly decorated with figurative murals that reflect the secular art of the time (Fig. 3.30 & 3.31).



*Fig. 3.30 Refined wall paintings at Quseir Amra.*



*Fig. 3.31 Secular art at Quseir Amra.*

The extensive fresco paintings of the bath building and reception hall are unique for Islamic architecture of the Umayyad period. The wall paintings show influence from classical pagan themes, Byzantine style portraits and hunting scenes, depictions of animals and birds, and are accompanied by inscriptions in Greek and Arabic.



The desert establishment, of which this pleasure palace forms part, was one of several created in the semi-arid area East of Amman for the purpose of interacting with the tribal region of the Wadi Butum. As such, Quseir Amra is an outstanding example of a particular type of architectural and artistic ensemble which relates specifically to the administrative strategy of the first Islamic caliphate.

**3.2.10 Tikal National Park (Guatemala: 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)** for its World Heritage Status, setting in the tropical forest and the very complex city planning with a collection of buildings on a monumental scale and hydraulic structures:

The World Heritage Site of Tikal, geographically situated in a lowland tropical forest area, was a major Pre-Columbian political, economic and military center, and one of the most important archaeological complexes left by the Maya civilization. An inner urban zone of around 4 km<sup>2</sup> contains the principle monumental architecture and monuments which include palaces, temples, ceremonial platforms, small and medium sized residences, ball game courts, terraces, roads, large and small squares (*Fig. 3.32*).



*Fig. 3.32 The inner urban center of Tikal.*

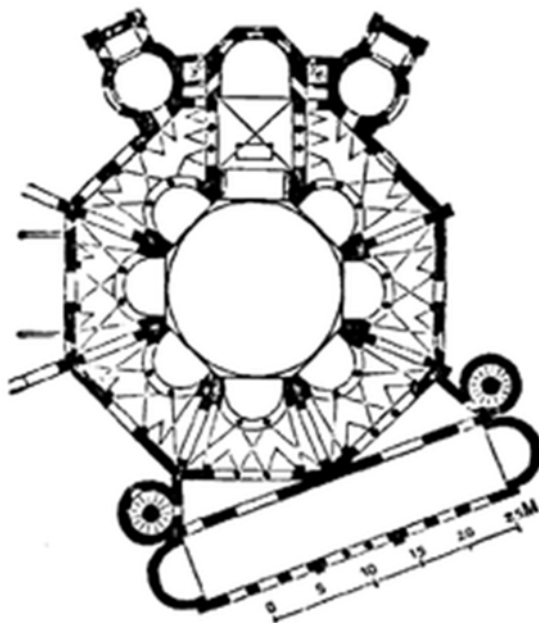
Recent research also reveals that the city's inhabitants created a sophisticated water management system to see it through periods when it did not have any rain. The water needs of Tikal were met by a series of paved reservoirs that held rainwater during the eight month long wet season for use during dry periods. At its peak in the Late Classic period (682-909 A.D.) its population is estimated to be as high as 100,000 people.

Many of the existing monuments preserve decorated surfaces, including stone carvings and mural paintings with hieroglyphic inscriptions, which illustrate the dynastic history of the city and its relationships with urban centers as far away as Teotihuacan and Calakmul in Mexico and Copan in Honduras. A wider zone of key archaeological importance, around 1,200 ha, comprises more residential areas and historic water reservoirs. The extensive peripheral zone features more than 25 associated secondary

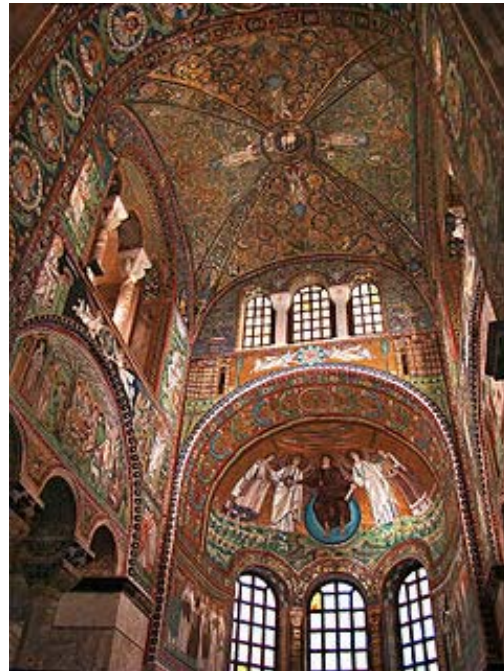
sites, historically serving protective purposes and as check points for trade routes. The peripheral areas also played a major role for agriculture production for the densely populated center.

The diversity and quality of architectural and sculptural ensembles serving ceremonial, administrative and residential functions are exemplified in a number of exceptional places, such as the great plaza, the twin pyramid complexes and irrigation structures.

**3.2.11. Basilica of San Vitale (Italy: 6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna World Heritage Site),** criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), is one of the three religious octagonal monuments build in brick, in Ravenna (there are seven religious octagonal buildings, build in brick in Sambor Prei Kuk) and the best preserved in terms of artistic expression.



*Fig. 3.33 Octagonal ground plan of the Basilica of san Vitale.*



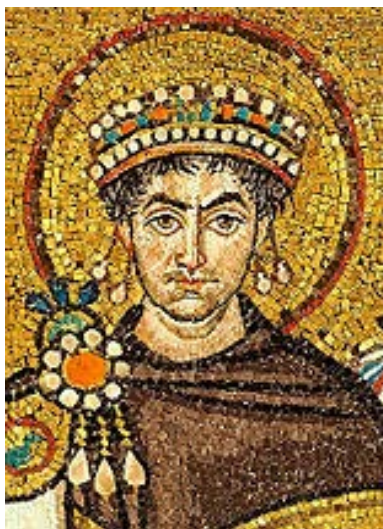
*Fig. 3.34 The magnificently decorated nave of the Basilica with mosaics.*

The city of Ravenna in Italy houses eight early Christian monuments (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.) inscribed on the World Heritage List. Three of these monuments (the Arian Baptistry; the Baptistry of Neon or the Orthodox Baptistry and the Basilica of San Vitale) all have the octagonal architecture, which was quite common for monuments in the early Christian period (octagonal standing for the seven days of the week and “the eight day for resurrection and eternal life”).

For the comparative study, focus is given to the Basilica of San Vitale, one of the most important examples of early Christian Byzantine art and architecture in Southern Europe (*fig. 3.33 and 3.34*).

The Church was built at the request of Bishop Ecclesius in 526 and completed by Bishop Maximian of Ravenna in 547. The monument combines Roman elements and Byzantine elements and is best known for its wealth of exquisite Byzantine mosaics, the largest and best preserved outside Constantinople. The Church is of extreme importance in Byzantine art, as it is the only major church from the period of the Emperor Justinian I to survive virtually intact to the present day.

The mosaics reflect important scenes from the bible and profane life (as Sambor Prei Kuk reflects important scenes from the Hindu religion and scripts). So there are the very famous panels of Justinian (*fig. 3.35*) and Theodora (*fig. 3.36*), Emperor and Empress of the Byzantine Empire, where Justinian is represented with a halo around his head giving him the same aspect of Christ emphasizing he is both, head of church and state. One can but reflect on the god-king principle introduced in Sambor Prei Kuk... It is however, the exquisite form of artistic expression and architectural symbolism, which relate both sites.



*Fig. 3.35 Mosaic of Emperor Justinian*



*Fig. 3.36 Mosaic of Empress Theodora*

### 3.3 Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

#### (a) Brief synthesis

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura, ancient capital of the Chenla Empire, is the most important site for 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> Century Southeast Asia, showing a very complex city planning on monumental scale (harbor, causeways, hydraulic structures, religious complexes introducing octagonal architecture and moated habitation zone) and a unique iconography currently known as the “Sambor Prei Kuk Style”.



Politically, administratively and spiritually, the capital resonated far beyond its borders with central rule (introduction of the King-God concept) and administration transferring the universality of the Sanskrit language to the distinct Khmer language.

It was a place where travelers and diplomatic missions from as far as China, India and Central Asia met each other and where a syncretism of Hindu and Buddhist religions was established through the introduction of tolerant and peaceful cults around Prahasiteshvara, Gambireshvara, Harihara and the Sakabrahmana.

The combination of these new and unique features would give life to a society that would form the basis for the much larger Angkor Empire a few centuries later. Many traits however, would live on till today.

#### **(a) Justification for criteria**

**Criteria ii:** The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura has a **unique architecture** and **town planning**, which is a distinct adaptation of Indian influence, introducing for the first time the octagonal building and translating itself in new aesthetic forms, such as the flying palaces and medallions, carved on the brick walls of temples and enclosures, stone lintels and sculptures currently known as the “Sambor Prei Kuk Style”.

The **landscape design** was carefully crafted and engineered to the needs of this large capital with the simultaneous introduction of three hydraulic systems to manage and control the water flow, providing a continuous water supply throughout the year.

**Criteria iii:** The civilization of Ancient Ishanapura underwent deep influences from the Indian subcontinent in the form of social institutions, religion and art which were assimilated into indigenous customs, ideology and artistic expressions. The Chenla Empire was a centralized state featuring a tolerant syncretism of Hindu (Prahasiteshvara, Gambireshvara, Harihara and Sakabrahmana) and Buddhist religions, having a lasting impact on Southeast Asian society.

The religious complex was the largest pilgrimage center in Southeast Asia. All that remains architecturally of that civilization are its brick and stone structures, its spiritualism and language however, still live on.

**Criteria vi:** In Sambor Prei Kuk, we see the first official introduction of the Harihara and Sakabrahmana cults, both striving for the universal values of tolerance and peace. It also harbored the first inscription in Southeast Asia referring to the universal teachings of Buddhism.

Inscriptions also make use for the first time of the Khmer language next to Sanskrit referencing to its centralized system of rule, and introduction of the God-King concept, which will stay central in Cambodian society till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.



The bas relief of a lintel shows us one of the first representations of an orchestra and music instruments, of critical importance for the universal study of ancient and contemporary music.

Ancient Ishanapura thus embraced a language, religious ideas and concepts of governance of universal significance.

#### **(b) Statement of integrity**

The extent of the nominated property under Royal decree of 24 December 2014 (see annex...) includes all the relevant historical, cultural, religious, secular, archaeological and environmental features and artefacts of the ancient complex, manifested through its moated city, three main temple complexes, hydraulic structures, monumental remains and pristine forested area from which the site bears its name. A LiDar survey carried out early 2015 assists in illustrating the state of conservation of the site (annex...).

The ancient hydraulic structures (see annex...) are still in use today and a large number of decorative elements have remained in situ. Some of the masterpieces have been stored or are on exhibit in museums throughout Cambodia (see annex...).

#### **(c) Statement of authenticity**

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape continues to be used for the purposes of human habitation, agriculture production, commerce and religious worship.

Most of the ancient temple shrines are still in use for prayers and the ancient site is also considered a dwelling place for powerful ancestral spirits, for which special rituals are organized several times a year.

Low density villages with traditional gardens and tree cover largely retain the pattern of settlement that would have existed in the historic urban complex.

This manifestation of continued old practices, assisted to maintain and preserve the archaeological and cultural landscape.

#### **(e) Requirements for protection and management**

Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura, is strongly protected by the Royal Decree (*Preah Reach Kret*) NS/RKT/1214/1488 dated 24 December 2014, and the Cambodian heritage legislation. A Sambor Prei Kuk National Authority established by Royal Decree 04 August 2015 will be guided by a Management Plan.

#### 4. STATE OF CONSERVATION AND FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

##### 4.a Present state of conservation

###### (i) Past intervention

Modern day research and conservation of the site began when Sambor Prei Kuk was introduced to the European community at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Leclère and subsequent French explorers. Subsequently, several surveys were conducted by *l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* which established the basic boundaries of the complex and catalogued many of the monuments and features (*Fig 4.1*). Basic preservation measures, including the clearing of vegetation from parts of the North and South Groups, was carried out by *Conservation d'Angkor* in 1927-28, with further conservation work and archaeological research being conducted during the period 1958-70.

DATE	ACTIVITIES	BIBLIOGRAPHY
1890–1900	Site survey and reports; establishment of lettered identification system for monuments	Leclère 1894; Aymonier 1900; Lajonquière 1902; Morand 1904
1910–1927	Intensive survey; architectural and artistic studies; epigraphic studies	Finot 1912& 1928; Parmentier 1927& 1935
1927–1928	Preservation works including clearance of vegetation and soil at South Group and part of North Group, conducted by Victor Goloubew and Lucien Fombertaux of Conservation d'Angkor	Chronique 1927, 489-492&1928, 331–332
1958–1970	Historic preservation work, excavation and mapping	Groslier 1963; Rapport C. A. 1908–1973
1990s–2001	MCFA preservation work	

*Fig. 4.1 Timeline of research and conservation activities conducted at Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group (adapted from Heng p 44–45).*

The restoration and investigation of the site was disrupted by the outbreak of civil war in Cambodia in 1970. During the era of the international conflict in South-east Asia, the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura suffered damage from all the hostile forces engaged in the struggle that spanned over 20 years (early 1970s-early 1990s). The area was the scene of air raids as well as ground conflicts. During that period the research, maintenance, and protection of the monuments as well as movable artifacts gravely suffered. Degradation of the monuments was unchecked, and artifacts were looted. The number of pieces looted or destroyed can only be estimated. Very few looted items have been recovered. War damage was also inflicted on several monuments and valuable archaeological features and a lot of bomb craters are still visible onsite, often filled with water.

## (ii) Present state of conservation

From 1995-2001 the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts worked on conservation activities with the UN World Food Program contributing to the maintenance of the site by providing food in exchange for local labor at the monuments. During 1995-1997 the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Department of Cultural Heritage started working on projects such as emergency supporting and back filling of looted pits from important towers.



Fig. 4.2 & 4.3: The villagers involved in the clearance work of Sambor Prei Kuk site from 2001

In 1998 the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in cooperation with the Architectural History Laboratory of Waseda University conducted research work in Sambor Prei Kuk. Since 2001 (Fig. 4.2 & 4.3), the Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation Project (SCP) began surveys and maintenance works such as periodical weeding, cutting branches, removing tree danger from the monuments, and installing emergency supports. The weeding work is applied regularly to the monument complexes including the mounds. Modern excavation surveys or the clearing of rubble from the temples have taken place on or near 19 monuments as well as the restoration of 7 pedestals. Moreover, SCP has also digitalized all documentation.

In 2007, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts contributed in the emergency set-up and restoration works for the towers in the Prasat Yeay Poan group. 2001–ongoing	Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation Project, a joint project between MCFA and Waseda University, Japan	SamborPrei Kuk Conservation Office
2013–2014	Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Administrative and Conservation Office established to implement SPK-Management Plan on a temporary basis.	Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation Office
2015	National Authority for Sambor Prei Kuk (NASPK)	Royal Decree

#### **4.b Factors affecting the property**

##### **(i) Development Pressures (e.g., encroachment adaptation, agriculture, mining)**

Previously planned road networks, funded by ADB, within the nominated property have been re-routed around the nominated property.

There are also numerous trails, paths, and small unimproved roads intersecting with the nominated property, especially in the 'city zone' that are used currently. They are a result of infrastructure development from ancient to modern times, and will require careful monitoring. The satellite zone, as defined by the Cambodian government, and administered on a local and regional level with enforceability through the Reform of the Royal Decree, beyond the buffer zone is expected to assist in the sustainable development of the area through tourism facilities, products and services. The satellite zone is supported by Cambodian Ministries, Asian Development Bank, and UNESCO. The Sambor Prei Kuk National Authority will monitor development initiatives to insure conservation and protection of the nominated and buffer zones are maintained.

##### **(ii) Environnemental pressures (e.g., pollution, climate change, desertification)**

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site and Cultural Landscape is surrounded by forest and agriculture land away from the industrial and developing areas. Climate change and environmental hazards are not evident, however possible.

Since the monuments are surrounded by forest, to reduce the risk of any incident of a tree falling down on temples, SCP has regularly cleared the tree that might cause problem to the monuments. Monsoon rains, humidity, and rapid temperature changes have an effect on the monuments and feature stability.

The monuments, and built features are comprised of one or more primary construction materials; fired brick, sandstone, and laterite with rammed earth (sandy soil) as a foundation base. Water intrusion may seriously destabilize the monuments.

##### **(iii) Natural disasters and risk preparedness (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.)**

Cambodia is not in a seismic zone. Due to the advantages of the natural topography (for example, swamps and Steung Sen as reservoirs), ancient functioning artificial hydraulic works, and the fact that most of the monuments are built on higher ground, the monuments have never been affected by the flooding problems. Water run-off from the monument areas is a potential problem that is being addressed. The risk of forest fire exists, but intentional burning has been mitigated. Moreover, the Forestry Department is also involved in education programs and the prevention of forest fires. The Royal Decree



on Environmental Protecting and Resources (NS/RKM/1296/36, dated 24 December 1996) has legislated such protection.

#### **(iv) Responsible visitation at World Heritage Sites**

Foreign visitors to the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura currently cause no overcrowding or environmental pressures. They generally spend around 2 to 3 hours at the site. Most visit the main monuments. Upon inscription foreign visitation is anticipated to increase significantly while Khmer visitors are also expected to increase. The estimated carrying capacity of the site at one time is determined by the current parking facilities at the visitor center. The facilities can currently accommodate 12 buses with 45 persons per bus, and 38 cars with 5 people per car with an estimated daily capacity of in excess of 1,400 persons. . There is an estimated total initial carrying capacity of 504,000 people annually. Electric car and alternate transport usage within the site has been planned. Anticipated future pressures such as increased tourism and special events are addressed in the management plan which outlines how current and future related plans will address development pressures without adverse effects.

The Isanbori Craft Center (which was established since 2005 with support from German Organization for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)), is located near the new community market which include Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site administration, interpretation center, “Sambor Prei Kuk Community Market” and visitor amenities. Community members for training on local crafts use the community market. The new community market was designed and constructed with the assistance Asian Development Bank in local architectural style in consultation with local authorities, departments, and the UNESCO Phnom Penh Office.

Religious activities on a large scale are held several times a year and are well attended by the local population. Individual worship is present but not obvious. These activities are seen as an inherent right of all Cambodians, and traditions and law guarantee their respect for ancient religious practices. The religious practices are non-intrusive to the monuments and the surrounding environment. Religious activities in the future are expected to attract tourists, and provide for tourist intangible cultural heritage education. Planning mitigation of potential risks will be jointly held by all stakeholders.

#### **(v) Number of inhabitants within the property and the buffer zone**

- **Area of nominated property:** 886
- **Buffer zone:** 6,720
- **Total:** 7,606
- **Year:** 2014

## **5. PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY**

### **5.a Ownership**

Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura is the property of the Royal Government of Cambodia. This ownership is conferred under the provisions of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, NS/RKM/0196/26 dated 25 January 1996 and the Land Law, NS/RKM/0801/14 dated 30 August 2001. This legislation declares that the archaeological, cultural, historical patrimonies and any property that constitutes a natural reserve are the public property of the State and public legal entities. Sambor Prei Kuk was declared an archeological site under the act by the Royal Decree on Establishment of Sambor Prei Kuk Temple site in 2003.

### **5.b Protective designation**

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura is a site protected under the National Heritage Law. Further the Royal Decrees establish and allocate responsibilities among competent institutions for the site as a whole along with the notified area of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura and its associated buffer zones.

A summary of the relevant provisions under each act is described below:

#### **(i) Royal Decree on the Establishment of Sambor Prei Kuk Temple Site**

(Royal Decree 2003, 2014)

The Royal Decree (*Preah Reach Kret*) NS/RKT/1214/1488 dated 24 December 2014 encompasses all of the historical, archaeological, and cultural aspects of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura. The decree expanded the protected core zone property (nominated property) from 381.11 ha to 1,354.26 ha. following the boundaries formed by roads, canals, rivers, property ownership demarcation lines, or administrative arrangements.

#### **(ii) Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage**

(Royal Decree (*Preah Reach Kret*) NS/RKM/ 0196/26, dated 25 January 1996)

This is the principal Cambodian national law applicable to the entire country for the protection of national cultural property against illegal destruction, acts of vandalism, illicit transfer of ownership, illicit excavation, illicit export and import. This law shall apply to moveable and immovable national cultural heritage, whether publicly or privately owned, whose protection is in the public interest. Protected sites containing archaeological reserves or other sites of archaeological, anthropological or historical

interest can be established. The boundaries of such protected sites shall be defined by Royal Decree at the proposal of the Supreme Council on National Culture (SCNC).

The SCNC is responsible for policy formulation in the domain of national cultural property, in particular for the protection and enhancement of national cultural heritage, while the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts is responsible for policy implementation.

**(iii) Sub-Decree concerning the Implementation of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Property**

(Sub-Decrees (*Anu-Kret*) No.98, dated 17 September 2002)

This sub-decree is formulated to support the implementation of the law on the protection of cultural heritage (mentioned above) by clearly defining the terms cultural property, archaeological excavation, and import-export of cultural property.

**(iv) Land Law**

(Royal Decree (*Preah Reach Kret*) NS/RKM/0801/14 dated 30 August 2001)

Articles 4 and 5 of the law state “the archeological site, cultural and historical heritages are within the public property of the state and public legal entities”.

**(v) Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resource Management**

(Royal Decree (*Preah Reach Kram*) NS/RKM/1296/36 dated December 24, 1996)

Full text of all applicable Royal Decrees, Laws and legislation are in Annex VII

**5.c Means of implementing protective measures**

The National Authority for Sambor Prei Kuk, (NASPK) under the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, department of Archaeology provides the framework for the ongoing conservation, preservation, restoration, revitalization and general management of the site, and the interpretation of its heritage values to visitors. The authority is guided by the Management Plan for the site and is further supported, by the Ministry of Tourism which is in charge of visitors and provides amenities and facilities at the site like the Visitor center build with assistance of ADB.

NASPK is further supported by a local NGO, the Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation and Development Community , established in 2004 with the agreement with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and has played a critical role in the sustainable conservation and development of the cultural heritage and community of Sambor Prei Kuk.

Part of the nominated area also falls within the Protected Forest for the Conservation of Plant and Animal Genetics and under the environmental protection and natural resource management of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Environment. They are major partners in management. The Ministry of Land Management, Urbanization and Construction, the Ministry of Tourism and other national and provincial authorities are also involved in relevant aspects of the management system such as land-use, lifestyles, housing & construction, and farming in both the nominated property and buffer zones.

### **Coordination mechanism**

The National Authority for Sambor Prei Kuk will be located at the entrance of the site, and will perform technical work, research and management of the site, its site director under the president is the primary point of contact. The authority will be responsible to coordinate all the efforts of other departments, ministries, NGO's etc. towards the conservation and management of the site.

The proposed structure of this authority is based on prior experience of other world heritage sites in Cambodia i.e. APSARA for Angkor and NAPV for Preah Vihear as per annex VI.

### **5.d Existing plans related to municipality and region in which the proposed property is located**

There are several approved projects currently underway to improve infrastructure in the area surrounding the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura, and to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the surrounding communities. These projects include the Rural Road Improvement Project (Ministry of Rural Development) and the Improvement of Market Access for the Poor in Central Cambodia (Ministry of Tourism), both funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB; Initial Environmental Examination issued February 2013). With financial support from ADB, a visitor interpretation center and parking area, along with office accommodations for administration of the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site has been built just outside the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura nominated property. This facility serves as a focal point for Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site activities.

### **5.e Property management plan or other management system**

The Sambor Prei Kuk Management Plan (SPK-MP) will provide the framework to conserve the cultural heritage assets of the inscribed World Heritage site, and includes but not limited to protection, conservation of and restoration of the architectural, archaeological, landscape, natural and sacred assets, and their geological settings, improving the understanding of the site, its interpretation, and most importantly ensuring and



supporting local community in its cultural, social and economic vitality. The plan is designed to create a balance between economic gains, socio-cultural needs, and cultural and conservation values. Additionally, the plan is designed to create sustainable development and sustainable tourism that will contribute to both conservation and development objectives as well as safeguarding social equality and religious and cultural values.

The underlying principle by which the SPK-MP is as follows:

- ① comply with current laws, regulations, legislation, and Royal Decrees, Sub-Decrees, and cultural norms;
- ① prevent all impairment of the OUV and other resources and values of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group;
- ① ensure that conservation will be predominant when there is a conflict between the protection of resources and their use;
- ① emphasize consultation and cooperation with local, provincial, and national entities as well as UNESCO and other institutions worldwide;
- ① support pursuit of the best contemporary business practices and sustainability;
- ① encourage consistency of application across all disciplines, and incorporate policy revisions in a timely manner;
- ① reflect Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Management goals and a commitment to cooperative conservation and civic engagement;
- ① affirm the National Authority for Sambor Prei Kuk commitment to the public's appropriate use and enjoyment, including education and interpretation, of all cultural and natural resources and values, while preventing adverse impacts to the values of the site;
- ① ensure that sustainable development concepts are implemented across all sectors of society in the immediate surrounding areas that include the core (nominated property for World Heritage), buffer and commercial zones; .
- ① promote the ecological aspects providing interactive natural educational opportunities for visitors and local communities;
- ① insure that heritage landscape management plans are congruent and fully integrated with the current living traditions, landscape usage, and rights of residents to pursue sustainable development activities;

The implementation of these objectives will be achieved through a series of actions and programs in a phased manner as per an agreed priority among the stakeholders.

The following are the SPK-MP current issues and objectives:

Gaining a better and ongoing holistic understanding of the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site;

Improving the setting of the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site;

Conserving the historic fabric of the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site;

Promoting site interpretation and facilitate educational outreach;

Managing visitation in ways that enhance visitor experience and minimize the impact of visitation on the site;

Managing existing and potential risks to the site;

Encouraging sustainable tourism for economic development of the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site;

Providing Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site with world class administration;

Encouraging and facilitating foreign participation in the research, conservation and; sustainable development of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site.

The plan provides a holistic management perspective that incorporates conservation, restoration, revitalization, administration, funding, risk management, health and safety, planning, monitoring, religious requirements, and change of management. Each element will be treated as a “life cycle” in a continuous improvement process of preparation, elaboration, implementation and review.

The SPK-MP determines and establishes the appropriate strategies, objectives and management structure to safeguard the OUV including its cultural heritage, balance different needs, and use the historic areas and the cultural heritage as development assets.

#### **5.f Sources and levels of finance**

As the site has already been declared a protected zone of cultural and natural importance, and is under the National Authority for Sambor Prei Kuk, a state budgetary allocation is provided for its maintenance and preservation. Potential additional funds can be foreseen from various sources:

- Subsidies from national and provincial authorities
- Donations, legacies and international subventions
- Revenue from ticketing
- Profits from select tourist services

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, through the NASPK provide an adequate financial source for the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site for restoration, conservation and management of the site. Additionally, funds from international governmental and non-governmental organizations are solicited to fill budgetary gaps, and initiate revitalization projects.

#### **5.g Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques**

The National Authority for Sambor Prei Kuk will be staffed by specialists in archaeology, architecture, cultural heritage conservation, and visitor services. Additional expertise will be available as required through the participation of Cambodian and international heritage experts.

The authority will provide training for local people as guides, maintenance workers and conservation assistants. The organization also conducts community forums, at which community members can learn about actions that they can take to protect the Site, and provide feedback on management matters. The Authority will ensure the development of sustainable livelihoods for local communities and their participation in decision-making processes. Their training and employment programs recognize the vital importance of local community support in the ongoing sustainable management of the Site. The authority will engage with local groups formulated under the Ministry of Culture & Fine Arts, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Environment to achieve the objectives set within the management plan.

The Authority will source some its staff from Royal University of Fine Arts which provides training for young Cambodian nationals in heritage conservation, as well as from APSARA (Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap) which has developed conservation expertise specific to the management of Cambodian cultural heritage properties. APSARA & NAPV employees will be important sources of expertise in conservation and site management of Sambor Prei Kuk.

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA) will continue to provide guidance to the NASPK to ensure that the operation of the authority is consistent with international best practice. International experts in various fields will also provide vital training and assistance on a regular basis.

#### **5.h Visitor facilities and statistics**

The annual number of visitors to Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site as compiled by the Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation & Development Community (2009-2013) has been increasing steadily in recent years. Visitor numbers in 2013 were approximately 30,000 and is likely to grow by ten times by 2018. Visitor numbers are subject to seasonal fluctuation, with a high season from December to March.

Nomination File for Inscription on the World Heritage List of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site  
Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura

MONTH	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Foreign	Khmer	Foreign	Khmer	Foreign	Khmer	Foreign	Khmer	Foreign	Khmer
January	436	2000	1200	11011	1826	559	1592	596	2563	933
February	426	1000	1710	1503	2018	761	2050	365	2047	608
March	117	500	1626	738	1938	1013	1504	585	1549	819
April	185	500	291	1087	989	3432	693	3000	714	4200
May	431	500	490	722	708	271	395	215	407	301
June	166	500	214	1074	374	346	437	340	450	476
July	704	500	657	482	741	935	436	763	449	1068.2
August	328	500	966	1260	1099	102	1046	407	1077	569.8
September	645	500	330	746	280	120	250	115	258	161
October	577	500	825	746	393	123	555	790	572	1106
November	175	750	801	550	1515	293	2295	485	2364	679
December	799	750	1343	410	1509	690	1691	2792	1742	3908.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>4989</b>	<b>8500</b>	<b>10453</b>	<b>20329</b>	<b>13390</b>	<b>8645</b>	<b>12944</b>	<b>10453</b>	<b>14191</b>	<b>14830</b>

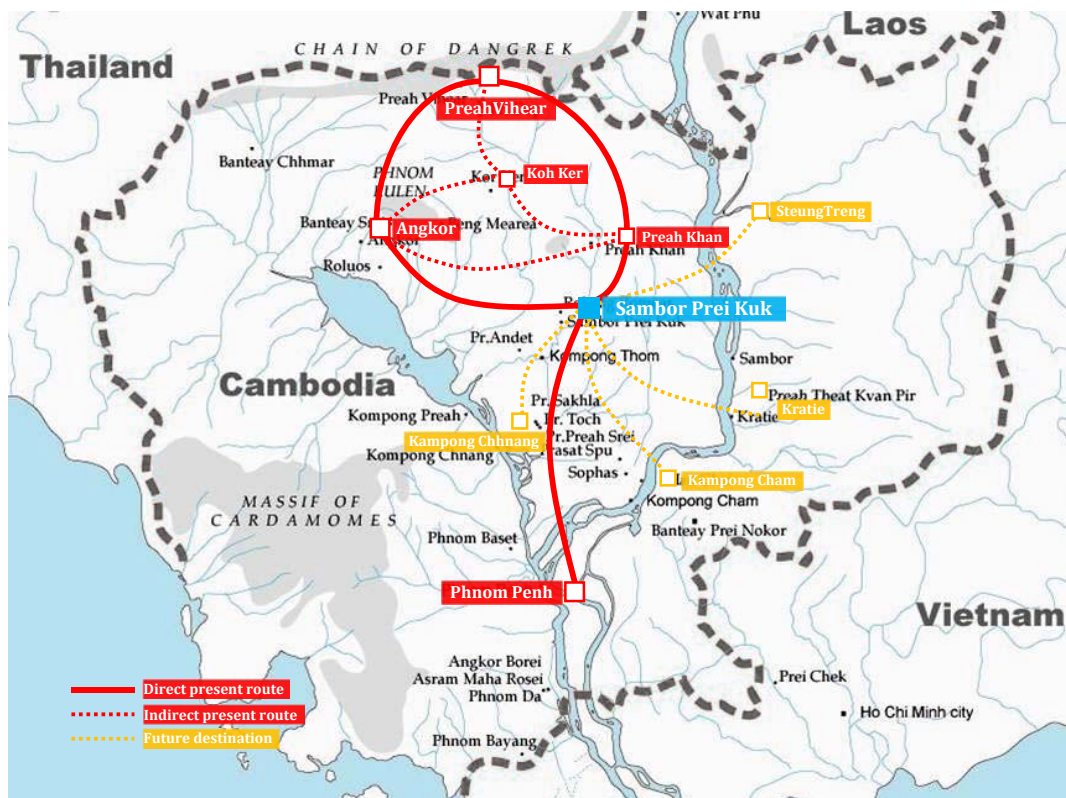


Fig. 5.1: Map of tourist connections from/to Sambor Prei Kuk, Kampong Thom



The Kampong Thom Museum hosts an exhibition on Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site and other sites, featuring inscriptions, artworks and other artifacts that have been removed from the site for safekeeping. It is proposed to implement an educational exhibition located at the site housing the objects from the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site.

Interpretative materials are provided at the site in the form of leaflets explaining the site's heritage values, and through an online website. Guides are also available, and can be organized through local hotels and tourist agencies. At present, only English and Khmer speaking guides are available.

The Isanborei Community Tourism Project, a program of community-based tourism enables visitors to explore the site and to engage with the local communities. The emphasis of the program is on low-impact activities that enhance visitor experience and encourage visitors to lengthen their stay at Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site. Visitors are able to participate in supervised temple excavation and restoration work, and bicycle and ox cart tours of the temples and their surroundings. Picnic meals at the site can also be arranged. Home-stay accommodation is available with local community members. The program also includes other activities, such as rice planting and harvesting, cooking classes and craft workshops. The Conservation and Development Community also operates a website that provides visitors with extensive information about the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site.

The new low impact visitor facilities, constructed with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Tourism, in traditional architectural style, includes an enlarged ticketing office and car and bus parking area as well as restaurants, toilets, and a visitor information center.

#### **5.i Policies and programs related to the presentation and promotion of the property**

In conjunction with local, national and international organizations, the Royal Government of Cambodia promotes Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site through a variety of policies and programs, including the following:

- The visitor information center has been established at the nominated property and provides visitors with an introduction to the site and facilitates access to other services such as guided visits.
- The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts supports an ongoing and regular research program at the site, currently run in conjunction with Waseda University. As well as enhancing scholarly understanding of the site, the program also promotes public engagement in opportunities for students and other visitors to the site to contribute to supervised archaeological investigations.

- Websites and brochures provide information on Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site and its environs, including details of local community activities and festivals.
- Statues and other artworks from the site are displayed at the National Museum in Phnom Penh, the Provincial Museum in Kampong Thom city, and the site conservation office educational exhibition. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts also facilitates the loan of these artworks to international institutions. National and international exhibitions promote interest in Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site and help to communicate the importance of Sambor Prei Kuk style in the development of Cambodian plastic arts. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts has a policy of facilitating the international loan of works as part of its efforts to promote Cambodian cultural heritage and to raise awareness about the illegal trafficking of antiquities.
- Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site can be conveniently visited as part of a journey to Cambodia's other World Heritage sites, Preah Vihear and Angkor Archaeological Park. Visiting the sites in conjunction with other sites enables a better understanding of the development of the pre-Angkor culture of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site into the flourishing Khmer Empire at Angkor and Preah Vihear. Tourist operators offer package tours that combine these sites.

#### **5.j Staffing levels (professional, technical, maintenance)**

The National Authority for Sambor Prei Kuk, initially plans for the following staffing with provisions for expansion as the needs require:

- Director/Site Manager (1)
- Assistants to the Director (2)
- Administrator (1)
- Administrative assistants (2)
- Archaeologists (2)
- Architects (restoration) (2)
- GIS expert (1)
- Conservators (2)
- Documentation expert (1)
- Communication person (1)
- Logistics/technician (1)
- Workers (15 skilled laborers, 30 unskilled laborers as required)
- Heritage protection police (5)
- Tourist police (3)
- Guards on site (15)

Further the staff of Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation Project office, under the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts which included 1 chief architect/conservator, 1 site director and 6 technical staff members who were responsible for technical aspects and management of the site till now will also be absorbed with the NASPK. The Authority will be at the center of the administrative network and will undertake regular maintenance, field research and extensively survey the site to produce conservation plans in collaboration with various national and international partners ensuring efficient and cooperative work teams.

Both skilled and unskilled laborers will be selected from the communities surrounding the site. In the future, it is intended the proposed number of office staff and laborers will be increased to carry out on-site work. A community consultative program between the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, supported by the United Nations World Food Program, commenced since 1995 with the local community will be governed by the Authority with assistance of the local NGO the Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation and Development Community.

The Kampong Thom Provincial Department for Culture and Fine Arts will also be responsible for providing backup and technical assistance when needed.

## **6. MONITORING**

### **6.a Key indicators for measuring state of conservation**

#### **Monitoring**

Measuring the progress is essential to adapt and improve the conservation and management of the site. For this it is important to create a base line data for both environmental and cultural assets of the site based on which its condition can be assessed periodically. The qualitative annual review, combined with a series of objective monitoring indicators against which the progress of the condition of the site will be measured are:

Indicator	Periodicity	Location of Records
Percentage of 73 structures with plan shape identified unchanged since 2014	Annual	MCFA
Percentage of 43 structures with walls remaining unchanged since 2014	Annual	MCFA
Percentage of 64 collapsed structures with sandstone elements unchanged since 2014	Annual	MCFA
Percentage of 111 structures in rubble mounds/little traces unchanged since 2014	Annual	MCFA
Changes in identified risk factors assigned to 60 structures Percentage change in assigned risk factors	Annual	MCFA
(categories 1-4) assigned to Flying Palaces since 2014	Annual	MCFA
Percentage of movable and non-movable artistic elements unchanged or improved since 2014	Annual	MCFA
Annual number of traumatic events causing degradation in structures	Annual	MCFA
Rate at which current land elements are being intentionally modified	Annual	MCFA
Other indicators to include increase in visitor number, visitor facilities, satisfaction, improved access to the site, improved community facilities and livelihood opportunities, improved environmental conditions including tree plantation and revival of water bodies etc.		

#### 6.b Administrative arrangements for monitoring the property

Conservation and management of the WHS is a dynamic process, new information, changed perceptions or priorities can impact the conservation and management of the site. Thus regular review and monitoring is required to provide and incorporate this information.

Since 1995, Cambodian authorities from both the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the provincial authorities have ensured follow-up procedures for safety measures at the site; including mine clearance, security guards and daily maintenance. The review process will now be the responsibility of the NASPK and will be overseen by the Ministry of Culture & Fine Arts. The annual reviews meetings will be held at site where all the concerned staff of the NASPK will be encouraged to attend.



**The proposed periodic reviews will consist of:**

**i. Annual Reviews:**

Yearly progress review will be based on annual work plan which will be developed based on the set priorities from the programs of action and the key monitoring indicators derived from the objectives of the management plan. This will ensure incorporating short term updates, needed for more effective management of the site.

**ii. Reviews every 5 years:**

Comprehensive review of the conservation and management of the site, issues and programs of action are proposed to be done every five years.

The review mechanism will also correspond with the 'periodic assessment cycle' for the World Heritage sites.

The Management Plan will also be reviewed every five years, to keep it relevant to changing scenarios and conditions.

**6.c Results of previous reporting exercises**

Since 1995, annual reports show that the site is monitored, remedial actions taken, restoration is proceeding and key monuments are maintained. A series of monthly progress reports from 2004 to the present has been made by the Sambor Prei Kuk Conservation Project team in cooperation with Waseda University and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Some of these reports figure in the annexes.

## 7. DOCUMENTATION

### 7.a Photographs, slides, image inventory and authorization table and other audiovisual materials

Id.N	Format (Slide/p rint /video)	Caption	Date of Photo (Mo/yr. )	Photographer/ Director of the video	Copyright owner (if different than photographer/di rector of video)	Contact details of copyright owner (Name, address, tel/fax, and email)	Non- exclusive cession of right
1	jpg file	Ishanapura NW	2011	Nara University	Nara University	Nara University	yes
2	jpg file	Prasat Tao	03/200 9	So Sokun Theory	So Sokun Theory	sthearyso11@ gmail.com	yes
3	jpg file	Prasat N1	07/201 1	Heng Sophady	Heng Sophady	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts hsophady@yahoo.co m	yes
4	jpg file	Prasat Chrei (N18)		So Sokun Theory	So Sokun Theory	sthearyso11@ gmail.com	yes
5	jpg file	S10 temple , octagonal shape, view from South	03/200 7	Heng Sophady	Heng Sophady	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. hsophady@yahoo.co m	Yes
6	jpg file	Relief of <i>Kudu</i> of Prasat S2	10/201 2				yes
7	jpg file	Aerial Photo	9/2013	Ishita Shimoda	Ishita Shimoda	ishita731@hotmail.c om	yes
8	jpg file	Asram Moha Russei (N17)	6/2011	So Sokun Theory	So Sokun Theory	sthearyso11@ gmail.com	yes
9	jpg file	Medallion depicting two human Figs fighting a lion-Lbokator	10/201 1	So Sokun Theory	So Sokun Theory	sthearyso11@ gmail.com	Yes
10	jpg file	Robang Romeas L6 (Srei Kroup Leak Group)	4/2013	Heng Kamsan	Heng Kamsan	kamsan_heng@yaho o.com	Yes
11	Jpg file	Dossier pictures this document	9/2014	Phann Nady	Phann Nady	Nady.phann@gmail. com	Yes

**7.b Texts relating to protective designation, copies of property management plans or documented management systems and extracts of other plans relevant to the property**

- Historical Monument Inventory (Annex I of this document and Management Plan)
- Inventory of Inscriptions (Annex II of this document)
- Inventory of Hydraulic Systems (Annex III of this document)
- Inventory of Flying Palaces (Annex IV of this document)
- Royal Decrees and Legislative Actions (Annex V of this document)
- Conservation reports (annex VII)
- Inventory of Movable Objects
- Inventory of Old Photographs
- Detail of Comparative Site Analysis
- Current Photographs
- Site Maps from Ministries
- Chronology of Work Done on-site from 1992-2014

**7.c Form and date of most recent records or inventory of property**

National inventory 2008, accessible by CISARK; <http://cisark.org> (currently being updated); hard copies available at Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts updated regularly;

Bruguier, B. ; Lacroix, J. : Sambor Prei Kuk et le bassin du Tonlé Sap, Guide Archéologique du Cambodge, Tome II, Les éditions du Patrimoine, 2010, 242 p.

**7.d Address where inventory, records and archives are held**

**Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts**

#227 (Kbal Thnal), Preah Norodom Blvd, Sangkat Tonle Bassac,  
Khan Chamkar Mon, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
Tel/Fax: (855) 23 218 148  
E-mail: [info@mcfa.gov.kh](mailto:info@mcfa.gov.kh)  
Website: [www.mcfa.gov.kh](http://www.mcfa.gov.kh)

**Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO**

#74, Preah Norodom Blvd, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
Tel/Fax: (855) 23 210 369  
E-mail: [camnac@hotmail.com](mailto:camnac@hotmail.com)

**National Museum of Cambodia**

Street 13, Chey Chumneas, Daun Penh  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
Tel: (855) 23 211 753  
Email: [museum\\_cam@camnet.com.kh](mailto:museum_cam@camnet.com.kh)

**Department of Culture and Fine Arts of Kampong Thom Province**

National Road No. 6, Krong Steung Sen.  
Kampong Thom, Cambodia

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