

CHAPTER 5

SUKHOTHAI RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF INSCRIPTION ONE

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Recent arguments for and against Inscription One's authenticity have been based largely on evidence deriving from linguistic theory.¹ In this paper I would like to address nonlinguistic arguments expressed by Piriya Krairiksh and seconded by Michael Vickery in attempts to back up their claims that Inscription One was not written in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, as its text implies, but dates instead from the post-Sukhothai period. In particular, I will address Dr. Piriya's (and Dr. Vickery's) conclusion that Inscription One's contents are unauthentic and useless for the study of Sukhothai history.² In my opinion, this conclusion, as well as the arguments on which it is based, is without merit.*

Dr. Piriya has written a great deal about Inscription One in several publications. However, as he himself notes, his con-

*The present study deals only with the question of Inscription One's **authenticity**: not its **genuineness** or possible forgery. A document may be labeled "genuine" if it is the original document it is purported to be—that is, not a forgery. "Authenticity" refers to the veracity of the document. An un-genuine—or forged—document may be authentic if it accurately reports information in the original. Of course, a good forgery preserves not only the contents of the original, but also the appearance. Dr. Piriya and Dr. Vickery contend that Inscription One is both unauthentic and ungenuine. My concern is with authenticity only.

clusion that Inscription One was written in the nineteenth century by Thailand's King Mongkut, Rama IV, is based on four fundamental arguments.³ (Although Dr. Vickery does not agree with Dr. Piriya that it was King Mongkut who wrote Inscription One, he apparently subscribes to these underlying tenets.)⁴ Some serious scholars of Thai history have found Dr. Piriya's arguments so unconvincing that they have felt little need to confront them directly. But when a scholar as well-known and highly esteemed as Dr. Piriya writes about a subject on which he is considered a world authority, his ideas must be taken seriously.

The first three of Dr. Piriya's contentions can be dismissed on methodological grounds. I will have more to say about his fourth argument, concerning Sukhothai's art and architecture, in the pages that follow.

Argument No. 1: Words and word meanings in Inscription One are not found in other Sukhothai inscriptions. Thus, they must date from the post-Sukhothai period.⁵

Dr. Piriya's argument is untenable. A quick check through Ishii's *Glossarial Index*⁶ indicates that most Sukhothai inscriptions have numerous words and definitions not found in other Sukhothai inscriptions: Inscription One has about 150 unique words; Inscription Two, over 300 unique words; Inscription Three, about 100 unique words; Inscription Forty-five, about 130 unique words; and so on. (The number of unique words is related in part to the length of the inscription.) The corpus of extant Sukhothai inscriptions simply is not large enough to determine which words and definitions were commonly used in the Sukhothai period and which were not. Moreover, Sukhothai culture, both linguistically and ethnically, was far from homogeneous. Vocabulary was drawn from a variety of sources, not all of which have been identified; the written language was still in its formative stages. Variations in vocabulary, spelling, and writing must be expected, and do not have to indicate different centuries of origin. It is particularly disturbing when Dr. Piriya and Dr. Vickery assert that such and such a word is untypical or highly unusual for the thirteenth century – a century for which

Inscription One is the only document in the Thai/Tai languages extant.

Argument No. 2: Many words and phrases in Inscription One are found in late eighteenth and nineteenth-century works, thus indicating a nineteenth century date for Inscription One's execution.⁷

Nonsense. All Sukhothai inscriptions have words and phrases still in use today. No one has claimed that the Thai language of the Sukhothai period was entirely different from modern Thai. Moreover, most of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works that Dr. Piriya has selected for comparison were either copied from, compiled from, or based upon sources written centuries before, some possibly as early as the fourteenth century.⁸ A larger than average correlation between words and phrases in these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works and the Sukhothai inscriptions should not come as a surprise. Furthermore, Dr. Piriya's repeated claim that this or that word or phrase appeared for the first time at such and such a date implies that he has read everything that has ever been written in the huge body of Thai/Tai languages and dialects. Of course that is impossible.

Argument No. 3: The author of Inscription One "lifted" passages from fourteenth-century Sukhothai inscriptions.⁹

Dr. Piriya gives us no reasons to reject the more rational conclusion that fourteenth-century Sukhothai inscriptions lifted passages from Inscription One.¹⁰

Argument No. 4: The author of Inscription One was a casual visitor with little interest in Sukhothai architecture. Thus, he provided only a vague description of religious sites and neglected to "specify the name of any buildings at Sukhothai. The style of the remaining Buddha images mentioned in Inscription One cannot be as early as the late thirteenth century." Moreover, the architecture mentioned in the inscription is not substantiated by "archaeological and art historical evidence."¹¹

Here, Dr. Piriya has fallen into the familiar trap of assum-

ing that Inscription One's description of the city of Sukhothai refers to the multitude of religious structures whose ruins can be seen today (and which were partially visible in 1833, when King Mongkut visited the city).¹² I will have more to say about this commonly held fallacy below. Here I will simply note my own conclusion: that Inscription One's description of Sukhothai is not, as Dr. Piriya contends, a careless, unobservant survey made by King Mongkut – who, as a matter of fact, took a serious interest in Buddhist architecture; sponsored the construction and repair of religious buildings in various parts of Thailand; saw to it that the construction of Thai *bōts*, or ordination halls, conformed to the Buddhist precepts; had a model of Angkor Wat constructed for his palace grounds; and who, in his own words, visited Sukhothai and other parts of the north country specifically to visit the "*čhēdi*" sites.¹³ More likely (I will argue), Inscription One's description is a reasonably accurate depiction of Sukhothai as it existed at the end of the thirteenth century—that is, some one hundred years before the city took on the appearance suggested by its nineteenth- and twentieth-century ruins.

I would like to emphasize at this point that my interpretation in no way undermines—but, rather, supports—Dr. Piriya's "new" (1986) chronology of Thai art,¹⁴ which generally concurs with a chronology of Thai sculpture outlined by Dr. Hiram Woodward in 1975,¹⁵ and my own (1983) chronology of Sukhothai architecture,¹⁶ which is based partially on information in Inscription One and which I will discuss below. My arguments with Dr. Piriya are about his interpretation of Inscription One—not about the art historical conclusions he has based on other sources.

But let me start at the beginning.

Back in 1977 when my study of Sukhothai architecture was in its early stages, suggestions that Inscription One was a forgery and possibly unauthentic were as yet only vaguely formulated. Just a year earlier Prince Chand Chirayu Rajani¹⁷ had suggested a fourteenth (rather than thirteenth) century date of

execution, and Michael Vickery¹⁸ had cautiously supported Prince Chand's opinion.

At the time, I was compiling data for the above-mentioned chronological study of Sukhothai's religious architecture, and was relying on Inscription One for evidence of late thirteenth-century architectural styles. Prince Chand's and Dr. Vickery's suggestions of forgery were intriguing, but, I felt, too imprecisely argued and too inconclusive to be evaluated on their own grounds. In spite of Dr. Vickery's allegations that Inscription One had been written in the post-Ram Khamhaeng period, he nonetheless labeled the Ram Khamhaeng period "historic," which he defined as a period for which contemporary documentation is available¹⁹ (Inscription One is the only possibility). Prince Chand also seemed to consider the information in Inscription One to be essentially reliable.

But how reliable? That was my problem. If I were to use Inscription One as a source for my study, its evidence would have to be evaluated with more care than had apparently been given it. What I decided to do was this: I would plot the characteristics of architectural monuments generally identified with those mentioned in Inscription One along with characteristics of architecture mentioned in later, i.e., fourteenth and fifteenth century, Sukhothai inscriptions. The picture of architectural development or decline that I hoped would emerge would then be considered against Sukhothai's political and religious history as documented in the inscriptions. *The degree of cohesiveness* between these different facts—architectural, religious, and political—would test the reliability of the inscriptional evidence and of my methodology. If Inscription One's data were incorrect, the overall picture would be incongruous; conclusions and evidence would have to be questioned and possibly eliminated. Like ill-chosen words in a crossword puzzle, faulty entries would become obvious when the remaining spaces were filled in. This approach would neither conclusively prove nor disprove Inscription One's authenticity, but it would raise a red flag if erroneous information—from Inscription One or from other sources—had been included.

My study was eventually accepted as a Ph.D. dissertation by the University of Michigan in 1983, and was made available (by request) through University Microfilms International.²⁰ During the next few years, several publishers expressed interest in my work, for which I am deeply grateful, but also in recent years, new questions about Inscription One have continued to emerge, and I have postponed general publication until concerns about Inscription One's authenticity could be brought to surface and thoroughly aired. In this paper I will only briefly describe the method of my study and note some of my conclusions. My purpose is to show how these conclusions relate to questions about Inscription One's usefulness as a source for the study of Sukhothai history.

Thai Buddhist architecture, both in the Sukhothai period and in modern times, is composed largely of stupas (often built for the enshrinement of Buddhist relics); *wihāns* (congregation halls); and *bōts* (for the ordination of Buddhist monks). (Figs. 1, 4, 6, 8, 9.) *Wihāns* and *bōts* are identical except for boundary stones, or *sīmā*, which are ritually positioned around the *bōts*. *Wihāns* and *bōts* share with American barns and Greek temples a simple post-and-lintel construction, and the ones at Sukhothai are prototypes for *wihāns* and *bōts* built in Thailand today. Because of their simple, traditional design, minor stylistic differences are easy to identify and can be objectively tabulated. Thus, they are ideal subjects for stylistic comparison and for a study of chronological stylistic change.

My intent was to assign non-inscriptionally dated *wihāns* and *bōts* to stylistic periods determined by comparisons between the undated buildings and those buildings whose dates of construction are suggested by inscriptional data. My study included the following steps. First, I noted all references to architectural works and their dates in the corpus of Sukhothai inscriptions, including Inscription One. Second, I examined in detail the remains of fifty-five *wihāns* and *bōts* at Sukhothai and carefully noted details of construction: ground plans, dimensions, base heights, moldings, types and placement of pillars, congestion or openness of interior space, indications of repairs

and additions, and so forth. I eliminated four buildings because they were too different from the others to meaningfully compare. Three of these atypical buildings, a *bôt* and two *wihāns*, are in the huge complex of Wat Phra Phāi Lūang, generally dated to the pre-Ram Khamhaeng period of intense Khmer political and cultural domination. A fourth structure, a small *bôt* at a site known today as Wat Aranyik (not to be confused with Inscription One's *Aranyik*), also might date from the pre-Ram Khamhaeng period.

After I had finished my fact-finding, I plotted the characteristics of inscriptionally dated *wihāns* and *bôts* chronologically on charts. Fig. 2 indicates the time spans in which architectural features were constructed. Although there was not as much data to work with as one might hope, it was gratifying to be able to discern some general trends in architectural change.* If it could be demonstrated that Sukhothai's undated *wihāns* and *bôts* individually displayed *clusters* of attributes similar to those in the time spans determined by the dated buildings, then it would be possible to assign them to the same periods of construction. If things were on track, an overall pattern of gradual change in Sukhothai architectural styles, from late thirteenth century to early fourteenth century, would be recognizable.

The outcome of these comparisons is shown in Fig. 3, which includes both inscriptionally dated and non-inscriptionally dated buildings, their major characteristics, and their most likely periods of construction. What we see is a picture of gradual architectural development—from relative simplicity in the Ram Khamhaeng period to complexity and sophistication towards the end of the Sukhothai period and after.

* In spite of what some people think, art historians cannot ascribe **absolute** dates to works of art solely on the basis of style. The best we can do is to identify stylistic **trends**, and, by means of comparisons between many works of art, make attributions to the most appropriate chronological points within a given trend. If our trends are not anchored on secure dates provided by written documentation, our ascribed dates are much less precise.

Let us focus on a *wihān* attributable to the Ram Khamhaeng period. Fig. 4 shows the *wihān* at a site known today as Wat Saphān Hin, which has been identified since the early twentieth century with a *wihān* that Inscription One refers to as *Aran-yik*.²¹ As described in Inscription One, the Aranyik *wihān* was extremely large and beautiful and had been built by Ram Khamhaeng for Sukhothai's *Sangharaja* (ruler of the Theravada monkhood), who had come to Sukhothai from Nakhon Si Thammarat. On festival days Ram Khamhaeng would arrive ceremoniously on richly caparisoned elephant-back to pay homage to the patriarch. Inscription One also tells us that the Aranyik *wihān* was located west of Sukhothai and that it had an eighteen cubit (twenty-seven foot) Buddha image.²² The site known today as Wat Saphān Hin is the only extant site west of the city with an eighteen-cubit Buddha image; its only large building is a *wihān*. I see no reason to question the Aranyik/Saphān Hin identification.

(Dr. Piriya, on the other hand, has denied the identification on the grounds that two eighteen-cubit Buddha images now in the center of Sukhothai are not mentioned in Inscription Two, which dates from the fourteenth century. Thus, neither they nor the one at Saphān Hin could have been in existence in the late thirteenth century. I cannot understand Dr. Piriya's line of reasoning.)²³

Using the *wihān* at Saphān Hin as a standard, I assigned seven other Sukhothai *wihāns* with similar clusters of architectural features to the Ram Khamhaeng period. Features that distinguish these *wihāns* include: a simple, rectangular ground-plan, wide in relation to its length; a narrow center aisle, or nave, defined by round pillars, sometimes overly heavy in relation to the space they occupy; and an overabundance of pillars that sometimes results in congested and poorly organized interior space (Fig. 5A.).

One of the most distinctive characteristics of these *wihāns* is the embedding of peripheral pillars in the ground at the edge of the podium, rather than positioned on the podium itself, as one would expect (Fig. 6.). These pillars suggest that the *wihāns*

originally had ground-level floors—perhaps tamped earth—that were subsequently raised on low podiums, one to two feet high, in later reconstructions. The Ram Khamhaeng period *wihāns* appear to have had as their prototype wood and thatch buildings not unlike those still built in Thailand today. Most of the Ram Khamhaeng *wihāns* are comparatively small. The Saphān Hin *wihān* which, Inscription One describes as large, and which was, according to the inscriptional evidence, one of the city's most important religious sites, is large only in comparison to other *wihāns* I attributed to the Ram Khamhaeng period; it is not particularly large compared to *wihāns* and *bōts* built in later periods.

The early Ram Khamhaeng period *wihāns* contrast decisively with *wihāns* and *bōts* assignable to the late Sukhothai period. Ground plans by the end of the fourteenth century are more elongated—narrower in relation to the length—than those of the squarish Ram Khamhaeng *wihāns*, and are notable for the addition of vestibules or porches at either end of the central, rectangular structure and for pillared cloisters flanking the sides. Pillars are slenderer, sometimes octagonal rather than round, and occupy proportionally less interior space than pillars in earlier buildings. Compared with the cluttered interiors of early *wihāns*, interior space in the later buildings is more organized and spacious, with wide center aisles, or naves, where worshippers would have gathered (Fig. 5B.).

Late fourteenth century buildings are also characterized by floors raised high off the ground on four- to six-foot podiums at the end of the fourteenth century, and up to nine feet in the post-Sukhothai period. Contrasting with early, plain bases, podiums of later buildings are typically embellished with decorative moldings (Fig. 7-8.). Although no roofs survive on Sukhothai buildings, the arrangement and varying heights of pillars in later structures suggest that roofing was more complex than the simple gable roofs one can envision from the Ram Khamhaeng period remains. The late buildings can be described as monumental—in size, in decorative qualities, and in a sculptural cohesiveness of component parts. One senses a surer control

of building techniques and an aesthetic sensibility absent in earlier works.

Also, the sheer number of *wihāns* and *bōts* increased dramatically in the post-Ram Khamhaeng period: thirteen *wihāns* and *bōts* can be attributed to mid-fourteenth century and about thirty more to the late Sukhothai period. Most of the buildings at Wat Mahāthāt, the huge monastery complex that occupies a dozen or so acres in the center of Sukhothai, can be dated to no earlier than the mid-fourteenth century (Fig. 9.).

But the most dramatic change in the Sukhothai landscape resulted from the building of large stupas, those majestic monuments of either Thai or Sinhalese design, several dozen of which dominate Sukhothai's skyline today. The lotus-bud tower on the stupa at the center of Wat Mahāthāt can be dated to the 1330s and 1340s, and apparently, not long after, when Sukhothai had established contact with Sri Lanka, large Sinhalese style bell-shaped stupas began to be built in great numbers. Richard O'Connor has noted that the concept of Thai *wat*, or monastery, is a fourteenth-century phenomenon.²⁴ And in architectural terms, that typical *wat* complex of *wihān*, *bōt*, and stupa seems to have appeared at Sukhothai no earlier than the latter part of the fourteenth century. (Dr. Piriya, on the other hand, for reasons I do not understand, accepts the commonly-held belief that Wat Mahāthāt was founded in the thirteenth century. He explains the omission of any reference to Wat Mahāthāt in Inscription One to King Mongkut's having been "too cautious" in his attributions to the Ram Khamhaeng period²⁵—an observation that does little to support Dr. Piriya's contention that King Mongkut did not give much thought to Sukhothai's religious architecture.)

In brief, my study indicated that Sukhothai in the Ram Khamhaeng period did not look much like the city we envision from today's ruins. Most of what does remain from the Ram Khamhaeng period appears to have been renovated or added to in later periods. Aside from the raised floor levels of the *wihāns*, mentioned above, one finds in some instances the addition of vestibules or porches (Wat Čhēdī Sī Hōng; Wat Ton Čhan); random replacement of round pillars with octagonal ones (Wat

Ton Čhan); *bōts* and *mondops* built to form *wat* compounds (Wat Si Čhum and Wat Traphang *Thōglāng*). The only large stupa found in conjunction with a Ram Khamhaeng *wihān* is at Wat Ton Čhan, where the above-mentioned indications of late Sukhothai reconstruction are obvious. Moreover, recent Fine Arts Department excavations have indicated various periods of construction in the *trīpūn*, or city walls, mentioned in Inscription One,²⁶ and one can guess that in the Ram Khamhaeng period the walls were not so high, nor their gates so well fortified as those we see today. Between the time of the Ram Khamhaeng period of *wihān* construction and their renovation, there was perhaps a period of almost half a century in which no developments in architectural design appear to have taken place at all—the one notable architectural event of the period having been the building of the Mahāthāt tower, that uniquely Thai, non-Sinhalese style stupa about which I have written elsewhere.²⁷

Of course my conclusions about the Ram Khamhaeng period seriously contradicted the usual picture we have grown accustomed to: a picture of the Ram Khamhaeng period as a fully developed Buddhist Kingdom at the height of its religious and artistic accomplishments—as the jewel in Thailand's Golden Age. As my architectural study began to take shape it was apparent that something was out of place. The red flag had been raised. The new beginning of architectural activity that I ascribed to the mid-fourteenth century coincided with Prince Chand's—and later, Dr. Vickery's—date for the introduction of Theravada Buddhism into Sukhothai, thereby supporting suggestions that the Ram Khamhaeng period should perhaps be removed from the picture altogether.²⁸ Perhaps that was the answer. The *wihāns* that I had placed in the Ram Khamhaeng period could be moved up to mid-fourteenth century, when my charts indicated that Buddhist monuments began in great earnest and the city began to take on the appearance we can now visualize from the ruins. The overall pattern of development would not be affected by the transfer, and that long Dark Age that so awkwardly separated the Ram Khamhaeng period and the mid-fourteenth century could be eliminated.

But there were compelling reasons not to follow that course. It was beginning to dawn on me that what was out of place in the giant crossword puzzle were not my conclusions based on Inscription 1, but the generally accepted picture of the Ram Khamhaeng period that twentieth-century historians and art historians had devised about it. King Vajiravudh, Rama VI, in his book *Thīeo Mŭang Phra Ruang*, used Inscription One as a kind of guide to the ruined city of Sukhothai that he saw when he visited it in 1906.²⁹ In 1956 George Coedès did the same, leaving us with a vivid impression of the Sukhothai's ruins having once shone in all their splendor in the reign of King Ram Khamhaeng.³⁰ Similarly, Mr. A.B. Griswold has noted that *some* (my italics) of Ram Khamhaeng's religious structures might survive today, suggesting that in the thirteenth century there had been even more than what we see today.³¹

I must admit (with some embarrassment), that it was not until I was well into my research that I realized that Inscription One mentions neither stupas nor *bōts* at Sukhothai, so indelibly was the equation of Ram Khamhaeng's and today's Sukhothai etched in my mind. But once realized, this negative evidence seemed significant. Since Inscription One, in its descriptive overview of the city notes *wihāns*, *kutis*, *trīpūn*, bazaar, palace, Buddha images, fields, groves, dam, and so forth, one might guess that *bōts* and stupas, the two most sacred components of a Theravada Buddhist monastery, might also have been mentioned if they had been considered of much importance. Their absence in Inscription One provided some justification for my own failure to find any *bōts* or large stupas that I could attribute with certainty to the Ram Khamhaeng period on stylistic grounds. Moreover, the locations of *wihāns* that I had placed in the Ram Khamhaeng period, a large one in the center of the city and smaller ones to the south and to the east, corresponded well with the locations of "large" and "middle-sized" *wihāns* that Inscription One does mention.

With these small bits of encouragement, I began to see Inscription One in a new light. Prince Chand had noted in 1976 that the inscription "reads rather like an airline advertisement

to come to Sunny Sukhothai."³² And it seemed to me that, like those beautiful photographs in the travel posters, Inscription One emits a kind of aura that encourages the imagination to wander well beyond what is actually there. Some of the embellishments art historians have given Ram Khamhaeng's Sukhothai have been facilitated by the Thai language, which does not distinguish between singular and plural nouns. Thus, it is easy to read one *wihān* or one Buddha image or one *mahāthēra* as "several," or "many." Scholars have also tended to translate *vihāra* according to the Sinhalese as *monastery*, i.e. a group of buildings, rather than as a single congregation hall, or Thai *wihān*. (In Thai script, *wihān* and *vihāra* are spelled the same.)

The stucco Buddha images that remain at Sukhothai also distort the picture. These images, exposed to the weather, have all undergone many restorations, and in the nineteenth century they looked very different from what we see today. There is no way to determine their appearance six hundred years before that. However, basing our conclusions on Dr. Woodward's and Dr. Piriya's chronologies of Thai sculpture,³³ we can be fairly certain that these figures did not originally have the typical Sukhothai stylistic features they have today, but were more closely related to Khmer and Mon sculptural styles. Moreover, the erroneous, twentieth-century identification of Ram Khamhaeng's one stupa, reported in Inscription One to have been built in the middle of Si Satchanalai (about forty kilometers north of Sukhothai) with the present-day stupa at Wat Chāng Lōm (Fig. 10), has skewed Sukhothai's architectural chronology off by at least a century and a half. Dr. Piriya and I have independently dated the Chāng Lōm stupa to the mid-fifteenth century or later.³⁴

Inscription One has also led to other misconceptions. Although (as I understand it) one well-known passage states that it was persons of all the various ruling classes who were Buddhists in the Ram Khamhaeng period,³⁵ one reads time and again that Buddhism was enthusiastically supported by all Sukhothai's inhabitants. B.J. Terwiel, in a comparative study of dispersed Tai groups, has suggested that Ram Khamhaeng's offering to

the *phī mūang*, Sukhothai's guardian sprit, involved the sacrifice of a buffalo, as performed by non-Buddhist Tai.³⁶ And I have argued that Sukhothai's annual Kathin festival, which attracted throngs of people that filled Sukhothai "to the bursting point," was just as much a celebration of the old Southeast Asian pre-Buddhist Festival of the Twelfth Month as it was a Buddhist ceremony.³⁷

Although scholars have long questioned the degree of control Ram Khamhaeng is said to have held over distant provinces in peninsular Siam³⁸—as detailed in a postscript to Inscription One—one continues to read that such a mighty kingdom did exist. Ram Khamhaeng, whose inscriptional title, *phō khun*, was translated as "father protector" in the nineteenth century,³⁹ and as "prince" in the early twentieth century,⁴⁰ is now, in both Thailand and the West, nearly always referred to as "King." In fact, *khun* is a title that was used by the Ahom and, presumably, other Tai groups in South China and Southeast Asia long before the Tai began to settle in the Chao Phya valley.⁴¹ I think that anthropologists would interpret *phō khun*, in the context of early Tai society, as "chief" or "chieftain."

With its embellishments stripped away, Inscription One's Sukhothai is recognizable, not as a highly developed Buddhist "Kingdom," but as a political-economic-religious-social organization at a cultural level anthropologists sometime label "formative" or "chiefdom" (Kottak),⁴² or one of "regional development and florescence (Steward).⁴³ Chiefdom (or formative or florescent) society is identified by the anthropologists as intermediary to "primitive" tribal groups and fully developed "states," and is characterized by a cluster of features: small pre-urbanized communities grouped together under loosely structured political control; intensive agriculture supported by extensive, but localized, irrigation works; the development of intellectual disciplines such as mathematics, astronomy, and writing; the introduction of distinctive styles in arts and crafts such as weaving and ceramics. Social structure is based on kin and lineage groups; government is paternalistic and functions by means of generosity rather than coercion. Government and the lives of the people

center largely around agricultural matters; the soil and the water and the change of seasons are the focus of political, religious, and ceremonial attention.⁴⁵

Anyone who has read Inscription One with much care must be well aware of how closely Ram Khamhaeng's Sukhothai fits the model put together by the anthropologists. What other type of society would provide inscriptional documentation of a *phī*, or guardian spirit, more powerful than the ruler; orchards with species of trees more carefully detailed than the circumstances surrounding the founding of Buddhist temples; of Buddhist temples noted more for their beauty and size than their sanctity?

Of course this is only one part of the story. Hiram Woodward and Richard O'Connor have described other aspects of Ram Khamhaeng's Sukhothai in important papers that are included in this volume. Obviously, Ram Khamhaeng's Sukhothai was not just another thirteenth-century *mūang* (the Tai name for "chiefdom" socio-political groups), but "a sort of super-*mūang*, as David Wyatt⁴⁴ has described it—a *mūang* in which the seeds of momentous change had been planted. If Sukhothai's early flowering was supplanted by newer, more vigorous growth in the fourteenth century, that does not make the Ram Khamhaeng period any less significant. As an essential link between Tai-ness and Thai-ness, the Ram Khamhaeng period should be recognized as both seminal and pivotal. Tai was becoming Thai; a Thai national identity was beginning to shape; the groundwork for the formation of modern Thailand had begun.

This is not the place to relate the details of the implanting of Theravada Buddhism into what appears to me to have been, in the Ram Khamhaeng period, a society structured primarily still in accordance with old Tai, pre-Buddhist beliefs,⁴⁶ or to discuss Buddhism's slow and sporadic growth. That story is yet to be completely told. Undoubtedly, Prince Chand and Dr. Vickery are right in their conclusions that the fully established Theravada tradition at Sukhothai can be traced back continuously only to the mid-fourteenth century. But before that, cer-

tainly, there had been other attempts, notably Ram Khamhaeng's, to establish Buddhism firmly at the center of Sukhothai's politico-religious structure. Contrary to what one often reads, all the evidence points to Theravada Buddhism having been introduced into early Sukhothai, not by the Mon, but by the Khmer. Perhaps that is why, in an attempt to espouse Theravada Buddhism and at the same time disengage himself from old Khmer entanglements, Ram Khamhaeng selected a ruler of the monkhood from the unlikely, southern city of Nakhon Si Thammarat, far away from the scene of Sukhothai's political struggles. And perhaps that is why Inscription One's epilogue detailing Ram Khamhaeng's dependencies, including Nakhon Si Thammarat, may have been added as propaganda to the corpus of the inscription at some later time. But these are only guesses, and I am getting way beyond the limits of my paper. There is still much to learn.

What a terrible loss if historians decide that Ram Khamhaeng's Sukhothai should be erased from the history books just because it does not conform to the model they have constructed from fourteenth-century data! I cannot find any valid reasons not to accept Inscription One's idiosyncrasies as the products of a unique time and place for which we have no other written documents for comparison. If Inscription One is a fabrication from a much later period about which we know a great deal, its anomalies are much more difficult to explain.

Notes

1. See for instance, Vickery, "Piltdown 1;" Vickery, "Piltdown 2;" Diller, "Consonant Mergers;" Gedney, "Comments;" Nidhi, Prasert; Chamberlain.
2. Piriya, "Sinlapa Hāeng Dāen Neramit: (Sinlapa Sukhothai Rawāng 1750-1900), "A New Dating of Sukhothai Art," *Mūang Bōrān Journal* 12.1 (1986), p. 29; "Towards," p. 65; Vickery, "Piltdown 2," p. 3.
3. Piriya, "Date," p. 1; Piriya, "Towards," *passim*.
4. Vickery, "Piltdown 1," pp. 206, 208, and *passim*; "Piltdown 2," pp. 11, 51.
5. Piriya, "Date, p. 1." "Towards," *passim*. Vickery, "Piltdown 2," pp. 52, ff.
6. Ishii, Adagi, and Endo, *A Glossarial Index of the Sukhothai Inscriptions*, Kyoto, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1977.
7. Piriya, "Date," p. 1; "Towards," *passim*. Vickery, "Piltdown 2," pp. 52. ff.
8. *Phongsāwadān Yanok; Phongsāwadān Lān Chāng; Phra Rāt-chaphongsāwadān Nūa; Traiphūmikhā Phra Ruang; Rū-ang Nang Nophamāt*. It is not certain how closely these works duplicate the original manuscripts on which they were based. Nor is this the place to argue that similarities between words in the secondary works and vocabulary in early, internally dated inscriptions might be useful in determining the degree of correlation between the copies/compilations and the originals. However, it seems to me that might prove to be a more valid path of investigation than using the same comparisons to support Inscription One's forgery.

9. Piriya, "Date," p. 1; Vickery, "Piltdown 2," p. 5.
10. Michael Vickery contends that some phraseology in Inscription One is more closely related to Sukhothai Inscription Four, written in Khmer, than it is to Inscription Five, which is in Thai: therefore Inscription One must be the latest of the three. "Piltdown 1," p. 207; "Piltdown 2," p. 58. But since the late thirteenth century, in which Inscription One purports to have been written, is much closer to Sukhothai's period of Khmer political and cultural domination (twelfth-thirteenth century) than are Inscriptions Four and Five, which were written in 1361, Dr. Vickery's line of reasoning, on face value, doesn't make any sense.
11. Piriya, "New Dating, p. 29; "Date," p. 1; "Towards," pp. 27-8; Vickery, "Piltdown 2," p. 11.
12. Piriya, "Towards," pp. 27-8.
13. *Prachum Charuk Sayām*, Part One, 1924, p. 13. *The Dynastic Chronicles: Bangkok Era, The Fourth Reign*, Chadin Flood, tr., Tokyo, Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1966, pp. 487-530. A.B. Griswold, *King Mongkut of Siam*, New York, The Asia Society, 1969, p. 40. R. Lingat, "La vie religieuse du Roi Mongkut," *Siam Society Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Publication*, 1954, pp. 29-30.
14. Piriya, "New Dating," pp. 23-49.
15. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "Studies in the Art of Central Siam, 950-1350," Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1975, chapter 7. See also Dr. Woodward's article in this volume.
16. Elizabeth Gosling, "The History of Sukhothai as a Ceremonial Center." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1983. Hiram Woodward first suggested that I undertake a study of Sukhothai *wihāns* and *bōts* for a University of Michigan seminar.
17. Mom Chao Chand Chirayu Rajani, *Guide through the Inscriptions of Sukhothai*, Southeast Asian Studies Working Paper, No. 6. Honolulu, The Southeast Asian Program, University of Hawaii, 1976, p. 30.

18. Michael Vickery, "A Guide through Some Recent Sukhothai Historiography," *JSS* 66.2 (1978): 203-9.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 193; 203.
20. See note 16.
21. Vajiravudh, King Rama VI, *Thīeo Mūang Phra Ruang*, Bangkok, 1907, pp. 73-4. George Coedès, "Les Premières capitales du Siam aux 13-14 siècles," *Arts Asiatiques* 3.4 (1956): 250-1.
22. Lines 2.27-33.
23. Piriya, "Towards," p. 32.
24. Richard O'Connor, "Sukhothai: Rule, Religion and Elite Rivalry," pp. 1, 2.
25. Piriya, "Towards," p. 28.
26. "Rāṅgān kām khutkhon thāng bōrānkhadī nai muong mūng Sukhōthai," *Phra boromarāchānusāwari phō khun rām kham-hāeng mahārāchā*, Bangkok, 1983.
27. Betty Gosling, "Once More, Inscription Two: An Art Historian's View," *JSS* 69.1-2 (1981) 13-42. Sukhothai's political troubles during this period are mentioned in Inscription 3.2.14-23, Griswold and Prasert, "Epigraphic and Historical Studies 11," *JSS* 61.1 (1973): 91, 196.
28. Chand, *Guide*, p. 42; Vickery, "Piltdown 1," p. 206.
29. Vajiravudh, *Thīeo*, chaps. 5-10.
30. George Coedès, "Capitales," pp. 243-67.
31. A.B. Griswold, *Towards a History of Sukhodayai Art*, Bangkok, Fine Arts Dept., 1947, p. 8.
32. Chand, *Guide*, p. 29.
33. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "Studies in the Art of Central Siam, 950-1350 A.D.," Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale Univ., 1975, chap. 7. Piriya, "Sinlapa," pp. 23-49.

34. Piriya Krairiksh, "New Evidence from Lan Na Concerning the Development of Early Thai Letters and Buddha Images," *Siam Society Newsletter* 1.3 (1985): 14. Betty Gosling, "Where is Ram Khamhaeng's Stupa? A Consideration of Past and Present Topographical Identifications," paper presented at the Symposium on Southeast Asian Art, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, The University of Michigan, 1987. Published in *Journal of the Siam Society* 76 (1988): 264-74. Prince Damrong identified the Chāng Lōm stupa as Ram Khamhaeng's in *Tamnān Phra Phuttha Chādi*, 1926.
35. Lines 2.8-17.
36. B.J. Terwiel, "The Tai of Assam: Sacrifices and Time Reckoning," *The South East Asian Review*, 6.1-2 (1981): 70-71.
37. Gosling, "Ceremonial Center," chap. 6.
38. See for instance, Vickery, "Guide," p. 204.
39. Adolph Bastian, "On Some Siamese Inscriptions," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 34.1 (1865): 31-8.
40. Cornelius Beach Bradley, "The Oldest Known Writing in Siamese: The Inscription of Phra Ram Khamhaeng of Sukhothai, 1293 A.D.," *JSS* 6.1 (1909): 1-68.
41. B.J. Terwiel, "Ahom and the Study of Early Thai Society," *JSS* 71.1.-2 (1983): 45, 53.
42. Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Anthropology: The Exploration of Human Diversity*, Random House, 1978, pp. 225-6.
43. Julian A. Steward, "Cultural Causality and Law: A Trial Formulation of the Development of Early Civilizations," *American Anthropologist* 51.1 (1949): 1-27.
44. Kottak, pp. 225-32; Steward, pp. 12-14, 16-21.
45. David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: a Short History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1982, p. 59.

46. See Betty Gosling, "Some Thoughts on the Early Stages of Thai Buddhism Relevant to the Art and Architecture of Sukhothai," paper presented at the First International Congress on Thai Studies, New Delhi, 1981. Pub. in *Buddhism and Society*, B.J. Terwiel, ed., *The South East Asian Review* 7.1-2 (1982): 11-23.



Fig. 1 Stupas, pillars of *wihāns*, Sukhothai.

BASE	1290	1300	1310	1320	1330	1340	1350	1360	1370	1380	1390	1400	1410	1420
Stepped High/Moldings "B" bevel, low Plain low "A" bevel, low Ground level	●					●						●		
GROUND PLAN	1290	1300	1310	1320	1330	1340	1350	1360	1370	1380	1390	1400	1410	1420
2 vestibules Cloisters 1 Vestibule Rectangular													●	
PROPORTIONS: Length to Width	1290	1300	1310	1320	1330	1340	1350	1360	1370	1380	1390	1400	1410	1420
Long Medium Short												●		
PILLARS	1290	1300	1310	1320	1330	1340	1350	1360	1370	1380	1390	1400	1410	1420
Octagonal or Square Round										●				
SPACE	1290	1300	1310	1320	1330	1340	1350	1360	1370	1380	1390	1400	1410	1420
Attenuated pillars Wide nave Brick supports Heavy Pillars														
CHĒDĪ TYPE	1290	1300	1310	1320	1330	1340	1350	1360	1370	1380	1390	1400	1410	1420
Pyramid Bell Stupa Mondop Lotus Bud None	●					●		●				●		

Fig. 2 Architectural features of Sukhothai's inscriptionally dated *wihāns* and *bāts* and dates of construction.

WITHANS AND BŌTS AND MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS ARRANGED BY PERIOD	SEMINAL C. 1290	EARLY FROM C. 1345	MID TO C. 1380	TRANSITIONAL C. 1300-1390	MATURE C. 1390-1419
	<div>Si Chum W. I Si Chum W. II Ph. Phai Luang W. I Ton Chan W. I Ton Thonglang W. I Ton Mahkham W. I Mahachhat West W. I Saphan Hin W. I Si Chum W. I</div>	<div>Chetuphon W. I Ph. Phai Luang W. I Ton Chan W. II Mahachhat West W. II Saphan Hin W. II Ton Mahkham W. II Ramparts W. II Aranyik W. II J. Thonglang W. II Si Chum W. II</div>	<div>C. Yot Hak W. Si Thon W. Kampheang Leang W. Chang Kopp W. Prong Men W. J. Thonglang B. J. Ngoen B. Mahachhat Center W. Pa Mamuang B. Chedi Ngam W. Mum Huang W.</div>	<div>Khae San B. Mum Langka B. Sa Si B. Sa Si W. Chang Lom W. Sangkhawat W. Sangkhawat B. Chang Lom B. Chetuphon B.</div>	<div>Chana Songkhram W. Chana Songkhram W. Son Khao B. Mum Langka B. Mahachhat B. Mangkon B. Ya Kion W. Phra Yun B. Si Hong W. II Itrakun B. Mahachhat East W.</div>
Base: About 9 ft. Complex Vestibules Brick - Laterite Attenuated Pillars Long Ground Plan Cloisters 2 Vestibules 48" - 72" Base Wide Nave Base Moldings Octagonal Pillars Brick Pillars 36" - 48" Base Large Bell Stupa Brick Exterior No Interior Pillars 1 Vestibule 24" - 36" Base Medium Length Plan Plain/Bevel Base Pillars at Mid Nave Narrow Nave Heavy Pillars Short Ground Plan Rectangular Plan 12" - 24" Base Ground Level Floor					

Fig. 3 Sukhothai *wihāns* and *bōts* architectural features, and probable dates of construction.



Fig. 4 *Wihāns* and eighteen-cubit Buddha image, Wat Sapān Hin, Sukhothai.

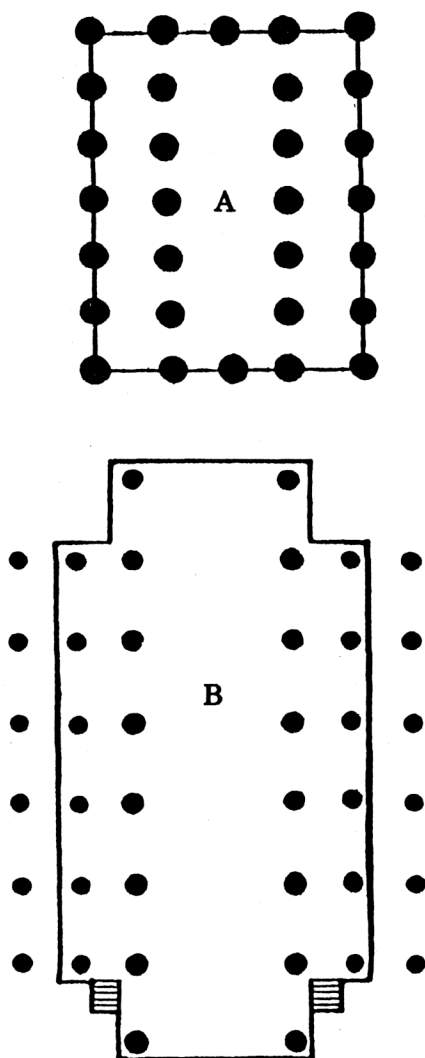


Fig. 5 Typical ground plan of Sukhothai *wihāns* and *bōts*.

A. Ram Khamhaeng period.

B. Late Sukhothai period.



Fig. 6 Ground-embedded pillar of Ram Khamhaeng period *wihāns*, at future Wat Mahāthāt.



Fig. 8 Late period Sukhothai *wihāns* (Wat YāKrōn)

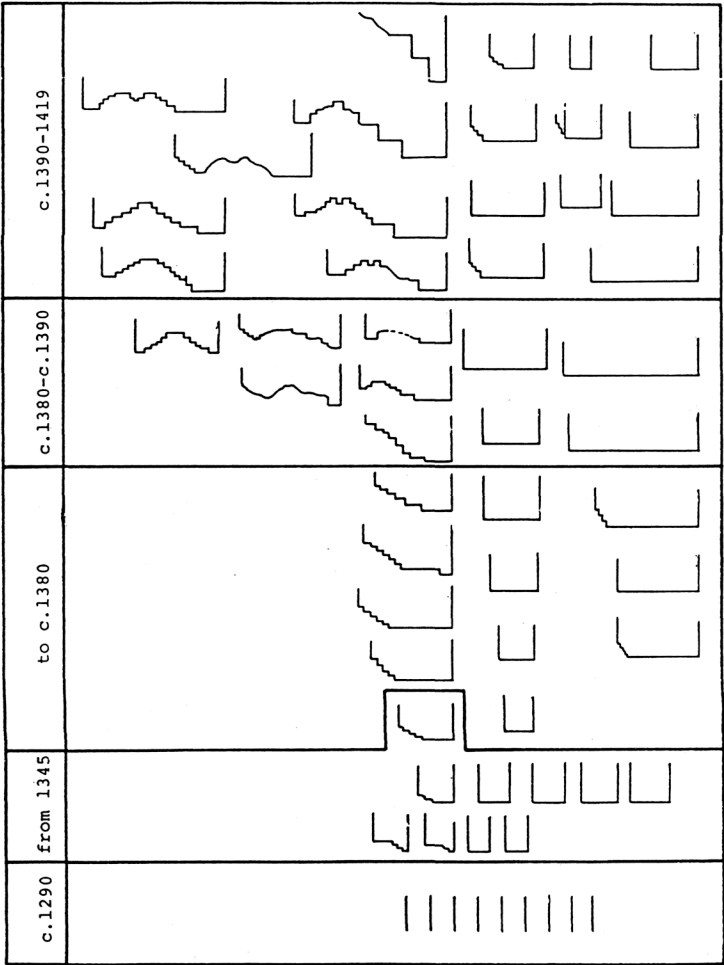


Fig. 7 Base moldings of Sukhothai *wihāns* and *bōts* arranged according to chronology in fig. 3.



Fig. 9 Wat Mahāthāt, Sukhothai.



Fig. 10 Stupa at Wat Chāng Lōm, Si Satchanalai.