

# อาณาจักรศรีวิชัยกับประวัติศาสตร์ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย

สจวร์ต ร็อบสัน

D.Lit.(leiden), รองศาสตราจารย์

ภาควิชาภาษาเอเชียและเอเชียศึกษา

มหาวิทยาลัยโมนาช เมลเบิร์น ออสเตรเลีย

## บทคัดย่อ

อาณาจักรศรีวิชัยมักถูกนำไปผูกโยงกับประวัติศาสตร์ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย การทบทวนตีความหลักฐานทางประวัติศาสตร์ชี้ให้เห็นว่าในอดีตน่าจะมีการโยกย้ายศูนย์กลางอำนาจของอาณาจักรหลายครั้งด้วยกัน หลักฐานบ่งชี้ว่าในช่วงครึ่งหลังของศตวรรษที่ 7 ศรีวิชัยเป็นอาณาจักรมลายู ตั้งอยู่ทางตอนใต้ของสุมาตรา 'ศรีวิชัย' ปรากฏนามขึ้นใหม่อีกครั้ง ใน ค.ศ.775 ในดินแดนที่เป็นภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย ในช่วงเวลาดังกล่าว ดินแดนแถบนี้มีการติดต่อกับชาวและภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือของอินเดีย นับสำคัญประเด็นนี้ยังคงคลุมเครือ แต่เป็นไปได้ว่าในช่วงระยะเวลาหนึ่ง อาณาบริเวณส่วนหนึ่งของภาคใต้ของประเทศไทยเคยเป็นศูนย์กลางของอาณาจักรศรีวิชัย อย่างไรก็ตามประมาณปลายศตวรรษที่ 10 และต้นศตวรรษที่ 11 สุวรรณทวีป (สุมาตรา) และศรีวิชัยก็กลับมามีความสัมพันธ์กันอีกครั้งหนึ่ง

การเชื่อมโยงคำว่า 'ศรีวิชัย' กับประวัติศาสตร์ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทยอาจทำได้ ในขณะที่ยังไม่มีชื่ออื่นที่เหมาะสมไปกว่านี้ แต่ก็ควรใช้ในความหมายที่จำกัด การค้นคว้าเรื่อง 'ศรีวิชัย' ควรมุ่งประเด็นไปที่การพรรณนาและตีความตัววัตถุและโบราณสถานมากกว่า ทั้งนี้เราควรพิจารณาศึกษา 'ศรีวิชัย' ในบริบทของเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ แทนที่จะใช้ชื่อ 'ศรีวิชัย' เพียงเพื่อส่งเสริมแนวคิดเรื่องชาตินิยมในวงการประวัติศาสตร์

คำสำคัญ : ศรีวิชัย, ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย

## Srivijaya and Southern Thailand : Some Questions

**Stuart Robson**

D.Lit.(Leiden), Associate Professor,  
Department of Asian Languages and Studies,  
Monash University, Melbourne

*Srivijaya is often linked with the history of southern Thailand. A review of the evidence, however, suggests that over time a number of shifts may have taken place. It is clear that Srivijaya began as a Malay kingdom in southern Sumatra in the second half of the 7th century. After that, the name reappears once, in A.D. 775, in a different region, namely southern Thailand, at a time when this region had evident contacts with Java and north-east India. The significance of this is still unclear, but for a certain time part of southern Thailand may have been central to Srivijaya. However, by the late 10th and early 11th century, Suvarnavipa (Sumatra) and Srivijaya are again associated.*

*The name Srivijaya should only be linked with southern Thai history in a limited sense. Accepting the absence of other convenient labels, in the meantime it is better to focus on a description and interpretation of the objects and monuments themselves. Rather than being used to promote nationalist agendas in the field of history, Srivijaya should be viewed in its wider Southeast Asian context.*

**Key words :** Srivijaya, southern Thailand

In the past quite a lot has been said and written about Srivijaya, the early kingdom located in South-east Asia. But this does not mean that a lot is actually known about this kingdom. On the contrary - solid evidence for it is remarkably sparse. In fact, the very name 'Srivijaya' had been completely forgotten, till it was identified by a European scholar in the early part of this century. So despite the importance and obvious interest of the subject, precisely because of the lack of evidence, it has been impossible to answer many questions about Srivijaya - a frustrating situation for historians.

For someone who has specialised on the early history of Java, within an Indonesian context, Srivijaya is also interesting because with it island and mainland Southeast Asia are closely linked. In other words, it is nonsensical to think only in terms of the modern nation-states of Indonesia, Malaysia or Thailand. Further, a subject that touches upon the history of southern Thailand is attractive because of

the impression that southern Thailand has been much neglected.

This last point is worth elaborating. If one searches the English-language literature for information on the history of southern Thailand, one finds almost nothing. Foreign scholars have been attracted by the civilisations that flourished in the great river-valleys of mainland Southeast Asia, and for Thailand the focus has been on the kingdoms centred at Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Bangkok. There are clear political reasons for this, not to mention the visible remains. But it is as if someone had taken a pair of scissors and snipped off the lower part of Thailand. An example is Renée Hagesteijn's *Circles of Kings* (1989), which deals with the *mandala* theory of the development of early polities and which almost completely neglects the southern part of Thailand. Does this imply that there were no kingdoms in early southern Thailand? Or, if there were, that they were uninteresting or insignificant? In any case, it

cannot be denied that there is visible evidence of something, in the form of remains of temples such as those at Chaiya, sculpture and other objects. Finally, the matter of language may not be irrelevant; obviously southern Thailand was inhabited in early times (in a period before Thai-speakers arrived in the Peninsula), so one wonders which language the builders of the temples were speaking, and what this might be able to tell us.

It is true that the SPAFA Final Reports from the Consultative Workshops on Archaeological and Environmental Studies on Srivijaya held in 1979, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985, and published in Bangkok, do contain a wealth of information on a wide range of topics, but this does not seem to have been critically assessed or coordinated into a broader picture usable for the writing of history. It is possible that the delegates from Indonesia and Thailand did not, after all, find much common ground, or that the enterprise ran out of momentum (or finance). There are also earlier publications from Jakarta, such as the *Pra Seminar Penelitian Sriwijaya, Jakarta, 7-8 December 1978* (Pra Seminar, 1979) and *Studies on Srivijaya* (1981).

Again and again in the course of this paper questions will be raised, but this does not mean that answers will be given, or can be given, in view of the present state of knowledge. However, there may be some benefit in reviewing what is known and in drawing attention to the problems, in the hope that this may suggest solutions or at least challenge misconceptions that stand in the way of solutions to the problems. A position of rather extreme scepticism was adopted by Mr Pisit Charoenwongsa of SPAFA, Bangkok, when in 1985 he expressed the opinion that "we know much less now than we thought we knew thirty years ago" (Pisit Charoenwongsa, 1985 : 110). He rejects Coedès' picture of Srivijaya as "a big empire rather than a small state", and thinks I-Ching also had his reasons to exaggerate. More specifically, he claims that Srivijaya could not have been a large and long-lasting state, as it (1) had no distinguishable art style of its own; (2) there are no great architectural remains clearly related to it; and (3) there is no evidence of dense population at the

sites speculatively associated with Srivijaya (Pisit Charoenwongsa, 1985 : 107-8). More recently, Srivijaya was mentioned in a similar vein by Supomo, who draws attention to the fact that traces of an Old Malay literature datable to Srivijaya cannot be found, in contrast to Java, which fortunately had its 'Bali', namely an environment culturally congenial to its Hindu-Buddhist literature, where this could be preserved over the centuries (Supomo, 1995 : 302). It is true that such a state of affairs is remarkable, and in fact some scholars of Malay have taken the view that Malay literature only commences with the coming of Islam and the traditions of writing associated with it (Arabic script, using pen and paper) (Jones, 1986). Supomo repeats the assertion that "we also find hardly any architectural remains from the Srivijaya period", and rejects the idea that lack of manpower was the reason, so that "the conclusion seems to be that either the greatness of Sriwijaya is merely another myth..., or that the rulers of Sriwijaya had entirely different priorities from those of their Javanese counterparts" (Supomo, 1995 : 303).

As a first step, it should be pointed out that some recent publications exist which are very helpful in the task of reviewing evidence for Srivijaya. The first is a long article, a 'state-of-the-art' review, by Professor Jan Wisseman Christie (of the University of Hull, UK) devoted to the subject of "State Formation in Early Maritime Southeast Asia : A Consideration of the Theories and the Data" (Christie, 1995). This article contains a section on Srivijaya in the seventh and eighth centuries. Christie's interest is in how early states came to be formed and the role playing in this by trade, so that the international sea-routes are seen to be very important in the rise and fall in the fortunes of particular states. Second, a *Bibliography for Sriwijayan Studies* was published by P.-Y. Manguin in 1989. This suggests how much published work exists in the subject, although the bibliography contains some items only indirectly related to Srivijaya. Third, we have the monograph *Sriwijaya : History, Religion and Language of an Early Malay Polity. Collected Studies by George Coedès and Louis-Charles Damais* (Manguin & Sheppard (eds.), 1992). The title may sound impres-

sive, but the contents are in fact reprints of old articles, though conveniently brought together here in one, accessible place.

The following remarks will follow a chronological approach, and therefore go back to the earliest evidence of Srivijaya. This is perhaps the best way to make sense of the subject, because we can assume that there has been a development over time, and over a matter of some centuries it goes without saying that changes and shifts will have taken place, making it important to be specific about which time (or place) we are discussing at a particular moment.

The account has to start with a mention of the Old Malay inscriptions and the Chinese reports, already well-known among historians. The inscriptions, in an early form of Malay termed Old Malay, had already been known for some time when, in 1918, George Coedès identified the word Srivijaya in them as referring to a kingdom. Further, the inscriptions provided exact dates (A.D. 683 to 686) (Manguin & Sheppard (eds.), 1992 : 1-40; 41-92). Their distribution pointed clearly to southern Sumatra, with two from the neighbourhood of the present city of Palembang, one from just across the strait on the island of Bangka, one a little to the north in Jambi, and one to the south in Lampung. This evidence has to be combined with what was written by the Chinese monk I-Ching [I-Tsing], who travelled from China to India and back in search of Buddhist scriptures to translate from Sanskrit into Chinese. The period concerned is A.D. 671-695. His account of the route followed gives a clear idea of where he stopped : he sailed direct from China to a place where he stayed for study to prepare himself; in the translation by Takakusu (1896) the Sanskritised form Sribhoja is given on the basis of Chinese Shih-li-fo-shih. It was Coedès who pointed out that this is the same rendering as used for the Cham capital Vijaya. If this is correct, then the description of the place given by I-Ching refers to Srivijaya - the same place as the Old Malay inscriptions. From here I-Ching sailed on, calling in at Malayu (generally identified as Jambi, on the east coast of Sumatra),

then Kedah (at the northern end of the Straits, on the west coast of the Peninsula), and then across the Bay of Bengal to the port of Tamralipti in India. On the return he followed the same route, through the Straits of Malacca, staying again at Srivijaya, and finally returning via the South China Sea to China. Describing the return voyage from India, I-Ching relates that they sail in a south-easterly direction for two months in order to reach Ka-cha, which is thought to be Kedah. "We stay in Ka-cha till winter, then start on board for the south, and we come after a month to the country of Malayu, which has now become Bhoja; there are many countries (under it). The time of arrival is generally in the first or second month. We stay there till the middle of summer and we sail to the north; in about a month we reach Kwang-fu (Kwang-tung)" (Takakusu, 1896 : xxxiv).

I-Ching's book *Record* is in fact an account of all the rules to be followed by Buddhist monks, but it is most famous for his remarks on 'Sribhoja' as a centre of scholarship. After all, he himself studied there, and he suggests that others should also prepare themselves there before going on to India, in the following famous passage :

"Many kings and chieftains in the islands of the Southern Ocean admire and believe (Buddhism), and their hearts are set on accumulating good actions. In the fortified city of Bhoja Buddhist priests number more than 1,000, whose minds are bent on learning and good practices. They investigate and study all the subjects that exist just as in the Middle Kingdom (Madhya-desa, India); the rules and ceremonies are not at all different. If a Chinese priest wishes to go to the West in order to hear (lectures) and read (the original), he had better stay here one or two years and then proceed to Central India" (Takakusu, 1896 : xxxiv)

It is worth mentioning that I-Ching was not the only monk travelling this way. In his book *Memoir* he supplies biographies of 60 Buddhist monks who undertook a pilgrimage to India in the

second half of the 7th century. Some, like him, stopped for study at 'Sribhoja', and while there they also studied the K'un-lun language. The term 'K'un-lun' is applied to the ships and their crews who carried the Chinese back and forth; they were not Chinese, but looked dark and fierce to the Chinese. They were probably inhabitants of the islands of the present Indonesia, experts in sailing, although the term could not have been exact and might refer to various different ethnic groups. In any case, as it is used to refer to the language spoken at 'Sribhoja', we know from the inscriptions from the same period that this was Old Malay. It is interesting that the Chinese took the trouble to learn it - probably it was used at court, and perhaps was the medium of instruction in the monasteries, not to mention being used in the markets and the port.

Turning to another type of evidence, it has often been said that although in all probability the centre of Srivijaya in the 7th century was at or near Palembang, the archaeological evidence (i.e. remains of monuments and settlements) was rather thin, and only related to a later period, namely the 14-15th centuries (e.g. Bronson & Wissemann, 1978) - people wondered whether Palembang could really have been the centre of an extensive kingdom. However, this view has been superseded, as careful archaeological work has produced much more evidence for locating the capital of Srivijaya in the early period at Palembang (Manguin, 1993), and at preparation (by P.-Y. Manguin and Soeroso). Unfortunately, no reports of excavations are available for reference.

There is one more piece of information regarding the location of Srivijaya to be found in I-Ching's *Record*, where he writes :

Again, for instance, in the Sribhoja country, we see the shadow of the dialplate neither become long nor short, in the middle of the 8th month (i.e. about the time of the autumnal equinox). At midday no shadow falls from a man who stands on that day. The case is the same in the middle of spring (i.e. about the time of the vernal equinox). The sun passes just above the head twice in a year.

When the sun travels in the south, the shadow (of a man) falls northwards, and becomes as long as two or three feet, and when the sun is in the north, the shadow is the same at the south side (of a man) (Takakusu, 1896 : 143-4).

The decisive word here is "same"; taken together, this information suggests a location at or near the equator. One notes that I-Ching said "in the Sribhoja country", not city, and elsewhere (see above) he had remarked that Malayu was "now" part of "Sribhoja". However, if Malayu is identified with the present Jambi, then it has to be observed that the latter is not on the equator but a little to the south (and Palembang ever further south). In short, probably the whole east coast of Sumatra, from its southern tip northwards, was part of the Srivijayan 'polity', to include Kedah on the Peninsula - this was also the location of a very early kingdom, which must at least have been allied with Srivijaya, as its ships called there regularly. What sort of 'kingdom' was this then?

Returning to Christie's article, it is useful to quote her conclusion on this matter. She makes a good case for seeing Srivijaya as a "multi-port state similar in general outline to the later sultanate of Malacca" - "large enough to be considered a true state of the classic 'Malay' type" (Christie, 1995 : 272). She is referring to the typical hierarchical structure of a number of small ports located on or near the mouths of the rivers that empty into the Straits, under the leadership, but not direct control, of one, the later Malacca sultanate (1400-1511) being the classic example.

Moving ahead in chronological order, the next evidence for Srivijaya comes from another inscription, the one generally known as the 'Stele of Ligor', dated A.D. 775, that is about one century later than the ones discussed above. This inscription is in Sanskrit and contains the terms *srivijayendraraaja*, *srivijayesvarabhupati* and *srivijayanrpati*, all translated with "king of Srivijaya" by Coedès in 1918. At that time he thought that the inscription came from "Vieng Sa", but later (in 1927) corrected this mistake and said it originally was found in Wat Sema

Muang in Nakhon Si Thammarat - hence its usual name, the Stele (or Stone) of Ligor. (Western scholars have consistently referred to Nakhon as Ligor.) The stone has two sides, called Side A and Side B. Side A is the one mentioning a king of Srivijaya (no name given), who gave orders for the building of three brick edifices, for Kajakara (= Padmapani), the Destroyer of Mara (= The Buddha) and Vajrin (= Vajrapani). So we are dealing with a Mahayana Buddhist foundation. Side B (also in Sanskrit) is undated and unfinished, but mentions a king "of the Sailendra dynasty" (also unnamed).

The evidence of this inscription has been used by Thai writers to locate Srivijaya in southern Thailand. This is our first big problem, as they prefer to ignore the evidence from the previous century (just as Indonesian writers ignore the Thai side). Furthermore, Thai writers claim that the inscription comes in fact from Wat Wieng at Chaiya. An extreme example of the level of polemic can be found in : "Unfortunately even a simple, straightforward situation like that can be messed up by Professor Coèdes... the professor not only went against the official records, but he failed to interpret according to the sense of the actual inscription. And he refused to change his mind under any circumstances when arguments were put forward" (Rajani 1987 : 121). However, no "official records" are available on this point, as far as I know.

The first to suggest the equation Chaiya = Srivijaya was Quaritch Wales in 1935, and Thai writers have regularly made the association between the "srivijaya" of the inscription and the placename Chaiya, probably because of the sound resemblance. This point was investigated by Preecha Noonsuk, who reported on local interviews in 1983 as follows:

"The name 'Chaiya' are [read 'was'] transmitted through oral tradition among the local people. This town was formerly call [read 'called'] 'Tsaiya' (Tsai is the banyan tree, and ya means medicine). There was a legend that there was a big scared [read 'sacred'] Tsai tree which could cure all types of sickness. The sick only had to eat parts of the tree. Even-

tually, this tsai was called 'Tsaiya' which later became Chaiya. Non [read 'none'] of the locals have known any other name for the town. Even the word 'Srivijaya' means nothing to them.

Generally, the locals did not think that 'Chaiya' would have any connection with 'Kao Srivijaya' as the later [read 'latter'] has only recently acquired this name. It is, actually, largely known as 'Kao Bon' or 'Hue Kao Bon'... Nobody knows when the names were changed.

I have checked some documents in the possession of Phrakru Vichit Kananukarn, the abbot of Wat Srivijaya situated at the side of this hill... The abbot recalled that in the past Tambon Srivijaya was under the administration of Tambon Phunphin. It was him [read 'he'] who changed its name to Tambon Srivijaya in 1957 and had the wat's name changed for 'Wat Hua Kao Bon' to 'Wat Kao Srivijaya'...

It becomes clear from the discussion that the local academic leaders have tried to create a new version of the origin of the name 'Chaiya'. They have left out the old oral tradition and tried to fit Chaiya in the Srivijaya history as much as possible. In fact, Chaiya does not have such grand implications in the eyes of the ordinary villagers. Chaiya has its own unique identity, so distinctive that it does not need to be identified with Srivijaya to prove its significance" (Preecha Noonsuk, 1983 : 153-4).

I have quoted this report at length, not because I agree with the folk etymology, but because it is a fine example of how myths are formed and how 'facts' are created to fit the prevailing historical opinion. However, a second argument for linking the inscription with Chaiya is the existence of a group of very old brick temples at Chaiya, not to mention some fine sculpture, including the bronze Avalokitesvara now to be seen in the National Museum in Bangkok. The temples are the Wat Boromathat Chaiya (re-

stored and in good condition), Wat Keao (ruined), and Wat Long (only the base left). It is said that at Wat Wieng there was a similar building, but it was built over in the 1950s (Indorf, 1992 : 55). Are there any more? The Chaiya area is also remarkable because of its hot springs, at the foot of Kao Nam Ron, at the top of which there are also remains of a brick structure. In short, the Chaiya complex represents an important site which deserves a prominent place within early southern Thai history.

This mention of Srivijaya, far from Sumatra, needs to be put into some kind of context. A hint of what was going on in the second half of the 8th century may be found in some curious reports that refer to daring expeditions by Indonesian peoples around the coasts of the mainland. In 767 the Vietnamese annals speak of an invasion of Tonkin by bands from Java and K'un-lun, whom the governor defeated and threw back into the sea. In 774 a Sanskrit inscription from Nha-trang (Kauthara, Champa) refers to "men born in other countries... terrifying, entirely black and thin, who came in ships" and destroyed a temple, but were pursued and defeated at sea by King Satyavarman, who rebuilt the temple brick by brick and inaugurated it in 784. Finally in 787 there was another incursion into Nha-trang, when "armies coming from Java in ships" destroyed another temple to the west of the capital Virapura (Coedès, 1964 : 6; Coedès, 1968 : 91; Coedès, 1981 : 42). Did these peoples perhaps also visit the coasts of southern Thailand, even closer to home?

It is probably best for the time being to leave on one side the question of the name or names of particular kingdoms, bearing in mind that the artistic and archaeological evidence deserves to be placed in a larger framework, that of southern Thai history. After all, one has to remember that there is much more, dating from both before and after the temples of Chaiya mentioned above. It is best to look for a periodisation for the art of southern Thailand, and we can adopt that proposed by Piriya Krairiksh in his book *Art in Peninsular Thailand Prior to the Fourteenth Century* (1980), which is based on an important exhibition of the same name held in that year. Piriya's periodisation is as follows :

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| the Indianised period                   | 3rd to 5th century<br>A.D. |
| the Mon and Peninsular<br>states period | 5th to 8th century         |
| the Indo-Javanese period                | 8th to 10th century        |
| the Khmer period                        | 10th to 13th century       |

These were the prevailing cultural periods prior to that of the Thai in the 13th century. Piriya emphasises that these changes occurred "when a variety of factors such as economic, politic, social and religious all combined to make one cultural group predominant..." (Piriya Krairiksh, 1980 : 3). Hence they are not political periods or correspond to particular kingdoms and he does not refer to a 'Dvaravati style' or a 'Srivijaya style' and so on. Even so, in common with many other Thais, he cannot resist the temptation to claim : "Late in the eighth century A.D. the state of Srivijaya on the Isthmus which, by virtue of its geographical position, had the control of the east-west trade, became economically and politically the most powerful in the region" (Piriya Krairiksh, 1980 : 4). Assuming that the Chaiya-monuments can be dated to the 8th or 9th century, and would thus belong to the Indo-Javanese period, Piriya's scheme reminds us that they were preceded by a long development. There are Buddha images in the Chaiya Museum, for example, which betray a Mon (= Dvaravati?) stylistic affinity, not to mention the even earlier images of Hindu gods, including the famous 'mitred Visnus'.

It is the "Indo-Javanese" period which is relevant here. It bears this name because of its associations with both India and Java. The mention of the Sailendra family on Side B of the Ligor Stele can be used to argue a link with Java, as this family was Javanese and had sponsored the building of some of the most impressive religious architecture of Central Java (Borodubur, Mendut, Sewu, Plaosan), before Balaputra was apparently evicted around A.D. 856 by the line of Saiva kings descended from King Sanjaya.

Probably the political history is more complicated than we suspect. Fluctuations in trade also affected the economic fortunes of states : without

economic power they could not exert political power. Christie refers to a trade depression occurring during the mid to late 8th century, when T'ang China began to turn its back on external trade and the Indian states were also in some turmoil, so that the volume of international trade passing through Southeast Asia appears to have fallen off. She writes, "It never dried up completely, but it must have dropped below the threshold necessary to keep the port hierarchy of Srivijaya together" (personal communication 23-2-1993; Christie, 1992-3). On the other hand, it was precisely at this time that the kingdom of Java in the inland built its huge temples, and on the other it was also in the 9th century that the transpeninsular route from Chaiya to Takuapa flourished, on the evidence of the sherds of Chinese wares concentrated at Laem Pho (Chaiya) and Ko Kho Khao (Takuapa) (Ho, *et al.*, 1990). This trade still linked China with the Middle East, but avoided the Straits of Malacca, possibly because it had become unsafe if Srivijaya were not strong enough to exert control.

This may be the place to insert a note on the question of a transpeninsular route. Several of these have been suggested by scholars. The one alluded to above is supposed to have carried trade from coast to coast, to link Laem Pho at the eastern end with Ko Kho Khao at the western end, following rivers and involving a portage in the middle. This seems not unreasonable, but there are a few problems. For example, Laem Pho is at the mouth of a river, the Phumriang, but it is not this river that leads into the inland at all. In fact Laem Pho, and Chaiya, lie on the *northern* side of Ban Don Bay, whereas the river leading inland, the Phanom (not the Tapi, as often said), enters the bay on the *southern* side. Why go to the trouble of unloading the ceramics at Laem Pho, if they then had to be reloaded for transport across the bay and upriver? Further, it is easy to point to a short portage on the map, but on the ground the porters would have faced high mountains and thick forest; presumably they struggled with loads of heavy plates, bowls and so on over slippery rocks up river beds and down the other side - how many would have survived this treatment unbroken?

My hypothesis is that the inscription of 775

represents an attempt by a ruler of Srivijaya to assert authority over a part of southern Thailand (possibly Chaiya, and if so, then an *already existing* settlement), and that at a comparable time a member of the Sailendra family (possibly Balaputra) also wished to control this point, due to its trade, but we cannot tell how long this lasted. If we assume that Srivijaya was a confederation of trading states, then was it a grouping of *Malay* states, and if so, does this mean that in the 8th or 9th century Malay was spoken much further north than it is now - perhaps even as far as Chaiya?

Looking at Wat Boromthat Chaiya or Wat Kaeo, one is struck by the strong affinities with Javanese temples, such as Candi Kalasan (founded 778) dedicated to the Buddhist goddess Tara. Boisselier refers to Candi Pawon, Candi Mendut and Candi Sewu in this connection, and mentions a "mélange d'influences indonésiennes et chame" [mixture of Indonesian and Cham influences] at Wat Kaeo (Boisselier, 1979 : 44). The links between the Bay of Ban Don and various points on the east coast of Vietnam appear to have been established and continued since the Bronze Age, a hypothesis strengthened by the discovery of Dong-Son drums in Suratthani Province (Boisselier, 1979 : 46).

Following the depression of the 9th century, in the early 10th century, with the formation of the Southern Han state in China and the expansion of the Cholas in South India, there was a sudden reopening of the trade routes, so that the ports of maritime Southeast Asia experienced an upswing in trade. The port hierarchy of Srivijaya reformed itself in the Straits early in the 10th century (this is also the time when the centre of the kingdom of Java moved from Central Java to East Java to take advantage of the trade) (Christie personal communication 23-3-93). The freer flow of trade would have favoured the sea-route through the Straits of Malacca, rather than using the difficult portage route from Chaiya to Takuapa, so that the deposits of ceramics disappear - and no more temples are built.

Returning to the art-history, in 1988 an exhibition of bronze images was held in Amsterdam. These were mainly from Java, and a catalogue, *Di-*



*vine Bronze*, was published which contains a useful discussion of their forms and characteristics. The authors, Lunsingh Scheurleer and Klokke, show how bronzes were imported from the 8th century onwards from what is now south-east Bangladesh into Java. "At first the Javanese bronze-casters copied them but, within a very short space of time, the native Javanese element predominated eventually to result in a purely Javanese style by about the middle of the 9th century" (Lunsingh Scheurleer & Klokke, 1988 : 29). They find it remarkable that this contact did not lead to any influence of Pala sculpture on that of Sumatra, despite Balaputra's foundation of a monastery at Nalanda not long after becoming king of Suvarnadvipa in 859 or 860. They comment further that south-east Bangladesh is the "main source for the dispersion of the Pala style to South-East Asia", and that the bronzes of Peninsular Thailand "are of the very same provenance" (Lunsingh Scheurleer & Klokke, 1988 : 30). Finally, in contrast to the dominance of the later Chola style, they write that "the influence of the sculpture of northern India, which so clearly predominates in Java and which has left such obvious traces in peninsular Thailand... is scarcely visible in Sumatra" (Lunsingh Scheurleer & Klokke, 1988 : 36). This makes us wonder where the centre of Balaputra's kingdom of Suvarnadvipa was, at least in the mid 9th century. The name Srivijaya is not used.

The Chinese dynastic histories mention the arrival of embassies from Java and Srivijaya, but not at the same time. Between 670 and 742 they arrived only from Srivijaya, between 767 and 873 only from Java, and from 904 again from Srivijaya. In other words, at precisely the time of the inscription of 775 (and possibly the Chaiya monuments) Srivijaya was not in a position to assert itself against Javanese dominance. Suleiman concludes : "This means that the trade route to China had been conquered by Java so as to prevent ships from Srivijaya sailing to China along the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula" (Satyawati Suleiman, 1983 : 62).

Furthermore, a fresh glance at the Sanskrit terms for "king of Srivijaya" mentioned above shows that two of the three translate not as "king of Srivija-

ya", but as "king of the kings of Srivijaya". There are two ways of interpreting this. Firstly, it could suggest that the person issuing the inscription claimed leadership over a group of Srivijayan kings, or secondly that the kings of Srivijaya were under the control of an outsider, such as the king of Java, as suggested by Krom (1931 : 144).

Just as the Chaiya remains are not alone in time, similarly they are not alone in space. There are no other monuments in southern Thailand in the same state of preservation, but there is evidence of other buildings. For example, Stargardt writes : "Wats which have not been subjected to later restorations in the Ayutthya and Bangkok style and still show the architectural styles of the Srivijayan period are Wat Sii Yang and Wat Chedi Ngam. To this list we added a further six ruined monumental sites at Kok Tong..." (Stargardt, 1973 : 8). These are all located on what she calls the Satingpra Peninsula, the stretch of land separating the Thale Luang and Thale Sap from the Gulf of Thailand. But there are problems with Stargardt's remarks. What is the Srivijayan period? A Srivijayan period cannot be taken as a given, as this is precisely what has to be demonstrated; not yet having been established, it cannot be taken as definition of a certain style. A discussion of style may have been beyond the scope of the article, but it has not been addressed in the 25 years since. Why is this? Reading the short papers compiled in the volumes resulting from the SPAFA Workshops of the 1980s, one finds references to many other interesting sites, alas mostly without sufficient documentation. (In fact it is estimated that there may be more than 100 important archaeological sites in southern Thailand; each of these could be the subject of a scholarly monograph, containing description, measurements and photographic record.) The extensive remains of the kingdom of Langkasuka at the Yarang Complex may have been contemporary with Chaiya, and form another part of the evidence of early settlements in southern Thailand. In view of the wide geographical area involved, there may be several different regions to be distinguished, such as, from the north : Chaiya with other sites around the Bay of Bandon; the Nakhon-Tha Sala-Sichon area; the area of

Phattalung-Satingpra-Songkhla; and Langkasuka-Patani in the south. Can all of these be claimed to be 'Srivijayan'? At least in the 9th century there appear to be affinities between the art of the east coast and that of Java - but Java is not Srivijaya, and never has been. So perhaps the name 'Srivijayan' should be used with caution.

One person who has taken a serious look at the ruins of monuments in southern Thailand is Professor Pinna Indorf. Indorf is an architect who has developed a new methodology to describe and interpret monuments, based on the form of the buildings themselves, rather than waiting for texts (inscriptions) to turn up - which they don't. Her approach is "to reconsider the value of the artifact as a primary source of information" (Indorf, 1992 : 9). She has set up a "taxonomy of major architectural forms of the Buddhist sanctuary complex" including the *stupa* and *prasada* as basic forms. Discussing the forms of the *stupa*, she claims, "The formal evidence in South Thailand reveals about 12 early stupas. Only one and possibly two more are the basic *stupa* form. That one is Chedi Ngam of Ranot, Songkhla... Ruins at Mok Kalan, Sichon, and at Wat Si Yang, Ranot, Songkhla respectively show a 2-step and a pilaster articulated square base which could have supported a basic *stupa* form. All other *stupa* sites show clear evidence of having been *prasada-stupa*" (Indorf, 1992 : 37). A difficulty with this method is of course that at least the upper parts of the monuments are often lacking.

Among her conclusions we read : "Reading the symbolic potential of the monuments of South Thailand, the monuments of Chaiya indicate a ruling dynasty at Chaiya with Sri Vijayan connections. This dynasty was roughly contemporary with the Sailendras of Java. Following their decline the Peninsula was apparently divided into 3 competing trans-peninsular zones, none of which could muster dominance over the others or gain adequate reserves to establish a major socio-political centre anchored with a major religious monument" (Indorf, 1992 : 47-8).

Based on a comparison with Sumatran and Javanese monuments, she says : "In the case of

Chaiya the form must represent the Mahayana form of Buddhism known to exist there. The similarity of these *stupa* forms (by proportion and by being flared at the bottom) to the Plaosan *stupa* forms is also interesting in terms of the possible Sailendra links with Chaiya" (Indorf, 1992 : 48).

Finally, "Although somewhat sketchy, the above analysis does demonstrate the type of contribution this approach could produce, accepting basic architectural forms and relationships as intentional symbolic references" (Indorf, 1992 : 49). This last sentence sums up the potential of this method, which has relevance to a consideration of the surviving monuments of southern Thailand.

Resuming the chronological consideration of evidence for Srivijaya (and its possible location), as mentioned earlier, the 10th century saw an upturn in trade and a revival of the route through the Straits of Malacca. A strong South Indian influence is visible in the art of Sumatra, corresponding to a growing involvement with the Chola realm of South India. An example is the establishment by the Sailendra king Cudamanivarman of Suvarnavipa of a Buddhist monastery, the Cudamanivarmavihara, at Negapatam on the southeast coast of India, which was under Chola rule. The Chola king Rajaraja I (985-1014) lent his personal support to this foundation by donating the revenue of a nearby village for the upkeep of the monastery, and the next king, Rajendra I (1014-1042), confirmed this (Chandra, 1994 : 98-9).

This can serve as background to another interesting aspect of the contacts between India and Srivijaya, having implications as far away as Nepal and Tibet. Let us now consider the life and work of the Buddhist scholar and missionary, generally known as Atisha.

Atisha was born in A.D. 982 at Vikramapura in north-east India, at a time when the Muslim Ghaznavids were advancing from Ghazni (near Kabul) right across North India, although at this point Nalanda had not yet been reached. Atisha left for Suvarnavipa in 1012 to study with the teacher Dharmapala (also known as Dharmakirti), who was *rajaguru* to the king. Suvarnavipa ("Gold Island")

is generally taken as a name for Sumatra, which was once famous for its gold, produced in the Minangkabau districts. Some of the works of Dharmakirti have been preserved, in Tibetan translation, and one of these has the colophon, "Written by Dharmakirti on the request of king Sri Cudamanivarman, during the tenth year of the reign of King Cudamanivarman, in Vijayanagara of Suvarnadvipa" (Chattopadhyaya, 1967 : 88), while another version adds the detail "in Malayagiri in Vijayanagara...". Atisha spent 12 years studying in Suvarnadvipa, and left to return to India in 1025.

During this period Atisha was known by the name Dipamkara-Srijnana; he and a fellow-student, Kamalaraksita, are mentioned in the colophons of three of the works of Dharmakirti. From later writings, it is evident that Dipamkara "during this period... became a master of Mahayana philosophy and logic. Thus Dharmakirti, who made Dipamkara a master in the Mahayana philosophy, must have been a great scholar himself" (Chattopadhyaya, 1967 : 64-5). His work concentrates on the *prajnaparamita*. The important point is that he (Atisha, = Dipamkara) found it necessary to gain his knowledge outside India, and that he found the best teacher in Suvarnadvipa. On return to India he became head of the Vikramasilavihara in Bengal, but left India for Nepal in 1040 and Tibet in 1042, and died in 1054 at the age of 73 at Netang, 10 miles from Lhasa (Schoterman, 1986 : 15). In Tibet he is remembered as having restored Buddhism to its pure form, and he is still revered within the lineages of most Tibetan schools.

Schoterman draws attention to an illustrated manuscript of the *Astasahasrikaprajnaparamita* dated 1015 [from Nepal], which alongside the text contains miniatures of a large number of Buddhist deities and sanctuaries. Most of these illustrations refer to India, but a few refer to overseas sanctuaries, including : "1. On the island of Java is Dipangkara; 2. In Sumatra [Suvarnadvipa] at Srivijayapura is Lokanatha (= Avalokitesvara); 3. In Kedah on the mountain Valavati is Lokanatha". But in another manuscript of the same work from 1071, only Java occurs - both Srivijaya and Kedah have disappeared from the list of important Buddhist sanctuaries (Schoterman, 1986 : 12).

The cause of the change is not far to seek. For in 1025 the Chola king sent an expedition which destroyed (or weakened) Srivijaya, and a list of other places, ending with Kadaram (Kedah), according to a Tamil inscription of King Rajendrachola at Tanjore dated 1030-31 (Coedès 1968 : 142-3). Perhaps Atisha saw the impending danger, and left in the same year.

One wonders where exactly Atisha studied, and where this famous centre of Buddhist scholarship was located. The mention of Malayagiri (see above) was picked up by Satyawati Suleiman (of the Indonesian Archaeological Service and an expert on Sumatran art) in a report for one of the SPAFA workshops. She identifies it as Bukit Malayu [Melayu Hill], near Jambi (Satyawati Suleiman, 1985 : 102), in the district which apparently had been called Malayu as early as I-Ching's time. If this is correct, then we would hope to find archaeological remains there. These exist in abundance at Muara Jambi, probably the place where shipping entered the great Batang Hari river. However, as usual, one is unable to provide a reference to a full description, only a report of the restoration of the monuments (Satyawati Suleiman, 1982). There are no more references to Srivijaya in texts or inscriptions. And in fact little is known about the history of southern Thailand until the next inscription, that on the base of the Mucalinda Buddha, dated 1183. As Miss Kongkaew Veeraprajak (1985 : 136) comments, this "reveals a high degree of Khmer influence in South Thailand. This region may still have had some political and cultural relations with Sumatra, but the impact of the cultures of the main land apparently began to predominate".

The National Museum in Bangkok has been very liberal in its labelling of exhibits with the term "Srivijayan art style". It is attached to a mitred Visnu, said to be "Indian art at Krishna River valley influence 5th century", found at Wat Sala Thung, Chaiya, and a Vatuka Bhairava, "Indian art Cola style influence 10th century", found at Wiang Sa, Surat, and even the Buddha sheltered by naga-heads from 1183 A.D. (the Mucalinda Buddha), found at Wat Wiang, Chaiya. This is typical of a wider trend to label anything and everything from the early (pre-13th century) period of southern Thai history as

## Srivijayan.

In view of the discussion presented here, namely the fact that the name Srivijaya occurs only once in an inscription found in southern Thailand, and that there are problems surrounding this, as well as the fact that other evidence suggests a close link between Srivijaya and Sumatra, we can conclude that :

1. Caution should be exercised in applying the term 'Srivijayan' to either a historical period, or an art-style, in a description of the remains from southern Thailand;

2. More exploration and interpretation are needed in order to present a coherent picture of southern Thai history, and to place Srivijaya in a wider Southeast Asian context.

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