Chapter 5: The iconography of Siva and Vishnu in Thailand before the 13th century A.D.

5.1. The iconography of Siva:

In the light of iconographic study, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, the origin of Siva has been mentioned as Rudra and Pasupati who were worshipied as both malevolent and prosperous characters. The earliest figure of Siva believed to be the Pasupati seal could be traced back to the Harappan period. Centuries later, the Saivite cult probably continued to develop and manifested later in the form of different philosophical schools of which the major ones are Pasupatas-Lakulisa, Kalamukhas, Virasaivas and Kashmiri Saivism. During the time of consolidation Brahmanism, from the time of Gupta to the early medieval period, Saivite philosophy had become very prominent and given an intensive inspiration to various types of religious arts. The divine form of Siva varies from the simplest one like Siva linga to the most complicated sculptures carved according to the purana stories. But the most revered form of Siva worshipped in the form of Siva –linga that was wide spreading over the entire Indian subcontinent up to the present day.

Therefore, for a better understanding of the Saivite art in Thailand, a brief introduction on the development of Siva linga in India is described below as the prototype of Southeast Asian representations.

The nature of representation of linga in India from the beginning of Christian era up to the medieval period (1200 A.D.)

The cult of linga or phallus worships has originally been noticed from proto historical period as it represented the concept of fertility. There are early references like puranas and epics providing some important glimpses of the greater position of Mahesvara –Siva worshipped in the phallic form (Mahabharata, XII.14.231-233). Gradually, the linga became the Siva’s divine form and commonly worshipped by the people. Banerjea (1974 : 456) states on the development of lingas as the symbolic of Siva as “…but the ideology about it as a symbol of the verile father- god was too strong among the large section of the people to be brushed aside and ignored by the less numerous but more intellectual section. The latter, however, appears to have made a compromise. They accepted the emblem as the holiness one of Siva, but on one condition, that of conventionalising it in such way that its original realism was thoroughly subdued by stage…”
The linga as a form of devotional worship of Siva had gradually started conventionally (being carved in conventional orders) from Gupta period (Banerjea 1968: 67; Mitterwallner 1984: 20; Meister 1984: pl.6). Actually, it is quite pertinent to suppose that it symbolizes the sexual union of male and female principle (Prusha and Prakriti) even from its early phase. Although the linga in conventional form is always based on the “pitha” which is symbolized as “arghra” or “yoni” pedestal, this concept had been emphasized and developed to a great extent in the later texts of Tantricism. In fact, the projecting portion of pitha really served the useful part for draining off holy water poured from the top to some distance from its base. In addition, the archaeological evidence also supports this suggestion as seen from the Siva linga from Gudimallam, one of the earliest extant realistic emblems of Siva dated from the 1st century B.C. of the early Christian era (Rao 1916 (II): 69; Banerjea 1935: 39, 1974: 455).

There are various types of linga that have been carved and sculptured in India from the ancient time and developed through the ages along with the change in religious concepts and practices. Actually the lingas can be literary classified into three groups such as Syambhuvalinga (natural formed linga), Mukha linga (the linga decorated with Siva face) and conventional form of linga (tripartite). For the last category, Banerjea (1974: 460) said that “…Mukhalingas constitute another class of Manusalinga, convention in character, and as a class much later than the types of realistic linga like Gudimallam…”

There is also some special type of linga developed from lingas incorporating miniature linga as mainlinga known as Sahasara linga. Interestingly, the conventional type of linga is more commonly seen than other groups and still are installing in recent times.

According to Gopinath Rao (1916 (II): 75-99), there are exclusive account of linga and their classifications described on the basis of Siva agamas and various texts. Some important texts like the Makutagama, classifies the Sthiralinga (acala or dhruva: immovable or permanently fixed while cala or Jangama being the moveable linga) into four classes, the Daivika, Arsaka, Ganapa and Manusa. The Kamikagama describes the linga under six heads such as the Swayambhuva, Daivika, Arsaka, Ganapatya, Manusa and Bana lingas. The most important for iconographic study are the last two types. The Bana linga is made of natural material like the pebbles from the holy river bed. These are the type of emblems which many Saivas carry on their body and offer daily worship to them. The Manusa linga or manmade lingas forms the largest group of Sthiralingas, and is made up of three parts known as Brahmbhaga, Vishnubhaga and Rudrabhaga. The lowest square section, the middle is octagonal section while the topmost one is generally cylindrical. Rudrabhaga is also known
by the name of Pujabhaga, for the offering of the water and other worshipped objects. The
two earlier sections are possibly meant to be inserted inside the pedestal and the ground.

The carving of the line technically known as Brahmasutras (Tamil: linga rekai) on the
Rudrabhaga of the emblem is mentioned in some later iconographic texts. This line
separates the phallic nut from the shaft. Interestingly, Makutagama states that the
Brahmasutra is inscribed only on the Manusa linga which was made by human hands. In
some Siva lingas of the early medieval period the Brahmasutra are appeared, but in many
later specimens they are seldom emphasized. The Manasara text mentions the class of
Manusa linga grouped under various heads on the basis of certain criteria like the
measurement of three sections carved on the emblem, sects, shape and materials (Shukla
1960: 242). Several classes of Siva lingas are distinguished by such names as Dharalinga,
Astottarasatalinga or Sahasralinga and Mukha linga, chiefly based on the different ways of
modelling their Rudhabhaga. Remarkably, if the cylindrical shaft of Manusa linga has fluted
facets, it is known as Dharalinga. The number of vertical flutes referred to be
Suprabhedagama is five, seven, nine, twelve, sixteen, twenty-four and twenty-eight. In fact,
the flutes on such emblems serve the purpose of draining the water poured on their top and
then ejected through the nala projection of the pithika. At Kailasanatha temple,
Kanchipuram, the linga of twelve facets in the main sanctum is known as Dharalinga
(Jouveau-Dubreuil 1978: 12).

The Astottarasata and the Sahasra linga are “…those on Rudrabhaga of which are
carved one hundred and eight (108) or one thousand emblems by the incision of parallel
horizontal and vertical line and by chamfering the edges of resultant criss-cross sections…”
(Banerjea 1974: 460). The number one hundred and eight probably represents the numerous
names of Siva Mahadeva and the lingas installed in concentric rows in separate shrines.
There are some important examples of Astottarasata linga found in South India at
Tiruvorritur, Ekambharanathar temple of Kanchipuram and Arunachaleswarar temple at
Tiruvannamalai (Srinivasan 1954: 68).

In the group of Manusa linga, there are sub-types of lingas classified from their
cylindrical depiction such as Mukha linga, natural form linga and conventional linga
(tripartite form). The Mukha linga constitutes another class of Manusa linga, created in
conventional feature and dated much later than the type of realistic linga like Gudimallam.
They denote those emblems which show on their Rudra or Puja bhagas one or multiple Siva
faces. There is some textual injunction about number of doors on the central shrine. But it is
doubtful whether it was always followed. The five faces are considered as the five aspects of Siva; Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpurusa and Isana.

According to Rupamandana, the fifth face (Isana) is beyond the ken even of the yogi. The extant specimens of Mukha lingas usually show one, three and four faces carved on Rudra bhaga and they have been distributed over the Indian subcontinent from as early as the Gupta period (Banerjea 1974: 461).

In order to complete the Manusa linga section, the general description of linga pitha should be defined. The pithas or the pindakas (Tamil: panivattam or avadaiyar) can have any form or shapes: square, octagonal, oblong, elongated, circle or hexagonal etc. In a square pitha, the length of one side may be twice the length of Puja bhaga or equal to the total length of linga. In addition, Rao (1916 (II): 100) further mentions that the length of a side of the pitha may be equal to three times the diameter of linga or equal to the periphery of the Puja bhaga or equal to the periphery of the Vishnu bhaga. The structure of pithas can be made up of one, two or three stone slabs, placed one above the other and shaped with various kinds of ornamental moulding arranged in tiers one over another. They have different varieties according to the number and form of the different kinds of moldings as written in Manasara (Shukla 1960: 247).

The evolution and antiquities of Siva linga from the early of Christian era to 12th century A.D.

The first stage (the 1st century B.C. 1st century A.D.)

In the Indian subcontinent, the Siva linga from Gudimallam is considered to be the earliest type of linga on the basis of the comparative study on the iconographic features of Siva and realistic linga character. The ornament and figure on the Gudimallam linga is close to those yaksha sculptures found at Mathura and Bodhgaya which are dated to the latter half of the 1st century B.C. Thus, it can be argued that the Gudimallam linga could be dated to the 1st century B.C. Moreover, the realistic appearance of linga is much closer to the natural figure as clearly seen from the head carved in the shape of gland penis projects considerably beyond the shaft. The groove of glans penis and shaft is deeply incised and the rim of glans penis is naturally turned up. The shaft of linga is carved in heptagonal form with a square base. Precisely, the general appearance of Gudimallam linga has left no doubt that the creator while carving this linga has drowned inspiration from the natural figure (Mitterwallner1984: 18).
The emergence of *Mukhalinga* is reported from first century B.C. as seen from the *ekmukhalinga* from Mathura presently exhibited at Philadelphia (Srinivasan 1984: 34). The face and hair dressing of Siva resembles the Mathura or contemporary sculptures. The sandstone *Puncha Mukhalinga* from *Bhita* (Allahabad district) preserved at Lucknow museum is also considered to belong to this early stage. The *linga* bears salient features such as of the three male (Siva) and one female (Sakti) faces which depicted around the shaft. Interestingly, there is short inscription written in Brahmi dated to first century B.C. (Banerji 1909-10: 147-148; Banerjea 1968: 68-69; Srivivasan 1984: 35). According to the realistic feature and paleographic evidence, this primitive *puncha mukhalinga* could be dated to the 1st century B.C.

![Fig. 26. The early Mukhalinga, (left) Gudimallam, Mathura and puncha mukhalinga from Bhita (Allahabad)](image)

Second stage: from the 1st- 4th centuries A.D.

The characteristic features of the linga of this period still maintained some of the realistic feature like the head is shown in its natural triangular form, though latter it was reduced in size. The artificial line is still noticeable through the shaft entering the triangle head from below. Interestingly, there are some special decorations either on the head or the root of linga such as wreaths and leaf bowl which are considered as sacred symbols as seen from *Ayagapatha* and *Chakra* dating to Kushana period (Sharma 1976: pl.46). In case of *Mukhalinga* though they were rare in the earlier period they became more prominent in
Mathura art during Kushana period. The lingas belonging to this group are those of the ekmukha-linga from Aghapur at Bharatpur museum and the three lingas (no.80.3; no.40.2885; no.15.657) exhibited in the government museum at Mathura.

![Fig. 27. The realistic linga and Mukhalinga dated to Kushana period from Kankali Tila (Mathura) and Aghapur (Mitterwallner 1984: fig.19,24)](image)

Third stage: from 4\textsuperscript{th}-5\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

The third stage of linga evolution is contemporary with the early and middle period of Gupta dynasty (Mitterwallner 1984: 20). Their characters reflect less in natural form than the previous types since the head is no longer projected beyond the shaft, but incorporated in its silhouette leading to the disappearance of natural glans feature. It is important here to remark that on the head of the linga in this period is very little differentiated from the shaft by the shallow incised Brahmasutra line on the Rudra bhaga. The examples of linga at this stage are the linga with inscription at the basement installed in the cave shrine no.3 at Arvalem, Goa and the linga with inscribed octagonal shaft at Karamdanda, Uttra Pradesh.
Fourth stage: the 5th century A.D. to the end of early medieval period.

The linga of this period is fully developed as a symbolic worshipped object with conventional pattern consisting of three main parts known as Rudra bhaga: the round polished top most part which always emerges from pitha, Vishnu bhaga: the octagonal center of shaft and Brahma bhaga: the square base. In some cases, the two lower parts are roughly carved as they were hidden under the pitha. The regular tripartite was introduced during the late Gupta period, presumably from 5th century A.D. onwards.

The evidence from literature regarding the tripartite making is mentioned in Sanskrit texts from 6th century A.D. The earliest one is Brihat samhita of Varahamihira that describes linga as tridha created in the form of square base, the central part is octagonal the round at the top (Banerjea 1974: 582; Mitterwallner 1984: 22). Vishnudhamottara Purana is assignable to 7th century A.D. also described the portion of tripartite linga in the same manner in sloka 2: b and 4: b (Shah 1958: 25-26). The Matsaya purana for the first time has given the names to identify the different three sections as Puja bhaga at the topmost followed by Vishnu bhaga and Brahma bhaga. The Sanskrit texts written during these centuries have shown the linga in the vogue of the contemporary period.

Besides the tripartite portions, the other significant features of conventional linga are the existence of artificial sutra designs on Rudra bhaga. Two of them are known as Brahma sutra and Parsva sutra in Vishnudharmottara and Matsaya purana. The first one represents frenulum praeputii, as two fold directed up ward and well rounded. Mitterwallner (1984: 23, fig. 9a) describes the Parsvasutra line as “...Parsva sutra or sidelines call to mind the ogee-
shape outline of three dimensionally conceived the corona glandiof the Gudimallam linga…” 

According to Mitterwallner (1984: 23), the existence of Brahma sutra line of linga is dated from 7th century. It always reached beyond the Parsva sutra up to the middle portion of Rudra bhaga.

The tripartite lingas remained in vogue from the post Gupta to the early medieval period are considered to constitute the common form of Manusa linga in stone created by human hands and enshrined in the sanctum of Siva temple. This group of lingas shares the common feature with each other by following the same orders but only difference in height, circumference and sutra line. Thus, there are some lingas which are created in various sizes as noticed from loose lingas in the open air museum of Nachana Kutara (Madhaya Pradesh) and the massive one at Ahicchatra. In fact, there is a distinctive linga which is carved in bipartite form like the Sahasra linga at the ruins of Siva temple at Sondani, Mandasor. According to the inscription inscribed on the temple pillars, the temple was patronized by King Yashodaman during late 6th century A.D.

![Image of lingas](image_url)

**Fig. 29. The early tripaties linga from Ahicchatra and Sondani, Madhya Pradesh**

(Mitterwallner 1984: fig.7, 8)
The fifth stage: from the late medieval period to 20\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

The \textit{Siva linga} of the last evolution, though they are formed by various decorations, the significant feature is the absent or diminished in size of the \textit{Brahma sutra} and \textit{Parsva sutra} lines on the \textit{Rudra bhaga}. This example can be provided from the \textit{linga} of \textit{Ramatirtha} temple at Halsi in Karnataka (Mitterwallner 1984: 24). In Goa and some other parts of India, the Siva \textit{lingas} are always well adorned with metal or wood hood (cap) carved on the face or bust of Siva. Perhaps, this kind of religious adornment is related to the anthropomorphic \textit{darsnamurti} form of Siva for devotee. In addition, the full development of anthropomorphization in the modern \textit{linga} is witnessed from the small and plain \textit{linga} at \textit{Saptakotisvvara} temple located at New Narve of Bicholim taluk. The linga is regularly camouflaged after \textit{abhiseka} ceremony by the seated Siva image whose head, feet and hands are made of hammered metal and adorned with dark colour cloth, all actually joined together.
The existence of *pitha* as linga basement or altar which functioned as the holy water drainage was absent from the group of early lingas dated before the 1st century A.D. Presumably, from the 1st century onwards, the *pitha* were initially created as an altar in order to support the linga during *abhiseka* ceremony in the form of a simple square brick or laterite block with the raised rim framing the surface which acted as a platform for ceremonial propose. Some *pithas* consist of square boxes and finished off by projecting molding. The topmost portion served as *pranali* which collects the holy water as seen from the depiction of linga worship on the stone slab dated to Kushana period in Mathura museum.

The form of *pitha* gradually becomes more complicated from the Gupta period (4th-6th century A.D.) when they were mainly divided into two projecting portions with the recessed layer in between such as the *pithas* found at Udayagiri cave no.4 and 6 dated to the beginning of 5th century A.D. These three layers type *pithas* had been an influencing model for the mediaeval period and was possibly brought across the seas to the Southeast Asian art. Finally,
in the last stage of evolution, the linga *pithas* were created in various patterns, octagonal, circular cross-section or hourglass shape with a constricted center (Banerjea 1974: Pl. XI; Mitterwallner 1984: 26). There are some examples of early medieval circle linga found at *Kailash* cave at Ellora and octagonal *pithas* at Siva cave temple of *Gingee Taluk* (South Arcot district). Generally, like square *pithas*, the circle linga *pithas* always drain out the holy water after the ceremony in the northern direction, whenever the orientation of temple permits.

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 33. The relief of early mukhalinga associated with *pithas* from Mathura (State museum Lucknow) (courtesy: Doris, M. Srinivasan)**

**The concept of union and fertility: linga and pitha.**

It seems that *linga* and *pitha* are representative elements of sexual union according to Tantric Brahmanism. This concept is explained by the low *pitha* in circular or oval shape with attached small conical fingertip linga. In later Saivite texts like the *Siddhanta Sarvali*, it identifies *pitha* with Uma and *linga* with Siva leading to their union “pratistha”. The author *Agroha-Sivacharya* of the *Sivalingapratisthavidhi* had saluted the divine union as being in the form of *bhaga* and *linga*. In fact, the cult of Siva linga had initially been accompanied by the emergence of *yaksha*, *tree* or *nagas* worship which undoubtedly stood for fertility. Perhaps, it is possible that the *linga* was it earlier associated with the concept of natural productiveness is to be interpreted in Tantric wishful context as of divine sexual unity.

In the evolution of linga in India, despite the large variations, there are significant traces which can be set as the sequence of development. The first, group of *lingas* dated to the second half of the first century B.C. was closely carved on the lines of the natural anatomy like Gudomallam Siva linga. Then it gradually involved to the conventional type with the artificial line known as *Brahma* and *Parsva sutras* evidently engraved on the *Rudra*
bhaga. The third stage is the group of tripartite lingas started from the beginning of 6th century A.D. The linga shaft is divided into three portions separately under the name of Rudra bhaga, Vishnu bhaga and Brahma bhaga. Remarkably, the tripartite linga had constituted the largest number of lingas up to the end of medieval period and some exceptions beyond it. In addition to the artistic features, the size of linga is also an important element for dating roughly based on the changes in height and shape. In general, the early linga groups were mostly tall and massive in size which probably related to the menhir-like character from Megalithic period.

Similarly, the development of linga pithas commonly started from simply joining brick blocks during the 1st century A.D. and gradually changed to a variety of shapes such as octagonal or circular shape from 7th century A.D. However, the square pithas have also been retained side by side with other shapes up to the present time.

The Siva linga worship in mainland Southeast Asia:

As mentioned earlier, the worship of linga is not limited only to the Indian subcontinent. The early states in Southeast Asia, especially ancient Khmer and Champa Kingdoms located in the mainland as well as maritime region had contributed to the large number of Siva linga on this flourished land. The cult of Siva linga worship could have started as early as the late of 5th century A.D. according to the epigraphic evidence. There are some associated inscriptions mentioning the Siva-linga worship in ancient Cambodian Kingdom such as the inscription of Citrasena (Mahendravarman of Chanla Kingdom) dated to late 5th century A.D. discovered in the northeastern Thailand and the inscription of King Jayavarman I (674 A.D.) at Prah Kuha Luon, Kampot district of Cambodia (Coedes 1942: 10-13, Malleret 1959: 380). Probably, the Saivite sect was highly favoured by the royal members during pre Angkorean period.

The worship of different materials lingas is seen in many inscriptions like the inscriptions from Toul Prah That and Sombor Prei Kuk dated around 7th century A.D. They mention the establishment of Svayambhu linga (natural linga). The existence of slilothrit linga (the linga made from water) is written in the inscription of Indravarman dated around 9th century and the Vardhaman linga (human made linga) is found from the inscription at Phanom Bathe, Transbassac region of Southern Cambodia and Vietnam. Besides the stone material, the Khmer lingas are also dedicatedly made of gold (Suvarna linga) metal (Trpulinga) and precious stone (Mani linga or Ratna linga) (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 79).
During the reign of King Yashodharavarman I, there was an ashram donated to “the lord of Panchalinga” which was meant to be Siva. It seems that the linga has been extensively worshipped in ancient Khmer Kingdom before the rising of 9th century A.D.

Although there is an inscription of King Rudravarman (514-545 A.D.) mentioning the Siva image enshrined in royal temple (Coedes 1942: 10-13). The image of Siva in iconic form is almost absent in archaeological context but a numbers of primitive lingas exist which can be study. The earlier dated types are closely resembled to the Indian emblem and showing realistic features. These earlier groups are known as Mukha linga and the realistic type linga which are generally dated prior to 9th century A.D. (Boisselier 1963; Malleret 1959; Parmentier 1932: 188)

The exact number of linga has not been calculated due to the loss and unsystematic documented of artifacts. However, there are more than twenty of Mukhalingas reported from Cambodian and Transbassac region of Southern Cambodia and Vietnam (O’Conner 1967: 94). In Indonesia, the mukhalinga is very rare as only one was found from central Java region (Stutterheim 1938) and the same number in western Boneo (O’Connor 1967). There are plenty of Siva lingas of other types, realistic and conventional lingas, found in the entire Southeast Asian region, sharing the main character but different in size and stylistic elements. In present Thailand, a number of Siva lingas have been reported from sites and monuments after systematic research and excavations. In this study, the important samples of particular types will be recorded for analysis section.

The Siva linga in Thailand: description and categories

Similar to the other Southeast Asian states, a large numbers of Siva lingas were also discovered in Thailand and the earliest dating back to7th century A.D. Through the categories of linga found in present day Thailand, they are lesser in variety than in India or Cambodia, the major characteristic groups are as follows. According to the Sanskrit texts, the type of linga found in Thailand is mainly known as Manusya-linga. According to the iconographical study, they are mainly classified in to four categories based on their general appearance namely,

a) Realistic type: (late 5th- early 9th century A.D.)

b) Mukha linga type: (6th –early 9th century A.D.)

c) Conventional (tripartite) type: (early 7th – 12th century A.D.)
d) Special type (the linga with attached pithas and minor lingas): (6th -12th century A.D.

A: The realistic type of Siva linga

The making of realistic type of Siva linga in the Indian subcontinent had started around the middle of the 1st century B.C. as seen from naturalism character of the Gudimallam Siva linga. This earliest linga type follows the faithful by the anatomical feature carved from the shaft to the top gland with Siva depicted in the middle. Although the realistic feature is gradually reduced to a more geometric figure in the linga of later period, the early group of Siva linga dated to Mathura and pre-Kushana period (1st century B.C. - 3rd century A.D.) still reflect some primitive realistic form on the notable top or tally plain shaft. The examples of these realistic or close to realistic types are provided by the linga from Kankali Tila (Mathura) and the linga (no. 40.2885, 15.657) at government museum Mathura. The depiction of realistic linga worship is also clearly seen on some stones relief preserved at government museum, Mathura. Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that the chronological of Siva linga in India has started from the realistic type associated with the making of ekmukhalinga from the 1st century B.C. before getting symbolized in conventional form during Gupta period.

The realistic or naturalistic linga found in Thailand has similar characters which is comparable to those of neighboring countries. According to Malleret (1959), the earliest form of linga found in Transbassac area is in realistic character which is dated to late 5th -6th century A.D. In Cambodia, the most ancient linga and Mukhalinga found in this region are almost certainly those which are most realistic in appearance. That is, the entire object and particularly top part, is most strikingly faithful to its phallic prototype. Precisely, the dimension of Rudra bhaga is usually greater than other portions of linga, and often one of the lower portions is entirely suppressed. This naturalism form gradually decreases during Angkorean period and is replaced by the flat curved top or tripartite form.
Fig. 34. The realistic linga from Chennitalai (left), two lingas from Oc Eo and Vat Crak of transbassac region (Malleret 1959)

In case of Champa, the flourished land of Saivism, Boisselier (1963: 410-415) has stated that although Cham linga is more distinctive and independent in style, there is some evidence of influence from Khmer and Indonesian art. The various forms of Cham lingas have caused difficulty to classify the distinctive characters for arranging the chronological development, but it can be reasonably said that those which reflected the most realistic are the most ancient. In addition to mainland region, there is also a number of realistic lingas reported from the maritime region as well (Malleret 1959: 379). Thus, in Southeast Asia the making of Siva linga in realistic character which might have started from late of 5th -6th centuries up to 9th century A.D. when complete symbolic tripartite form was introduced and got more accepted in tirual worship than previous one.

In case of Thailand, though the number of Siva lingas is reported from sites and temple from the early of Christian era, the naturalism linga is found very less in comparision with other types. Most of them are discovered in the early historical sites mostly related to early maritime trade with India which was dated before 9th century A.D., before the coming of Angkorean period. There are four realistic types of linga exhibited in the National museums that was brought out for this study such as the Siva linga emblems from Yarang district (National museum Songkla), Chaiya (National museum Chaiya: Suratthani province), National museum Nakonsri Thammarat, Prasat Phum-Phon monument (Surin province) and Kok Peep district (National museum Prachinaburi)
The realistic linga of Southern category:

The Siva linga from Yarang district, Pattani province, National museum Songkla province

![Picture of linga]

This linga was found at Yarang, Pattani province located at the southern region of Thailand. The small realistic linga is now preserved in the National museum Songkla and dated to middle of 6th century A.D. (Krairiksh 1981: 132). The linga is quite small in size as it measures up to 33 cm. This polished stone linga has been divided into three parts as the top (Rudra bhaga), the shaft (Vishnu bhaga) and the base (Brahma bhaga). In fact, this linga has depicted the realist curved top which remained the biggest and distinguishing portion of linga. The Vishnubhaga is the smallest part carved as the neck of linga followed by the square bigger base. Remarkably, the Parsva sutra and Brahma sutra are depicted naturally on the circular Rudra bhaga supported by the reduced size octagonal neck.

Although the linga has shown much naturalitic character, the formation of emblem is gradually developed to the early symbolic style. Compared with those of realistic lingas from Transbassac, the early linga is simply devided into two portions, square base and circle top or even carved with plain natural features. Thus, it can be suggested that the linga from Yarang should be dated a little later than the realistic type. Interestingly, the linga carved in this manner is almost absent in the Indian subcontinent. Perhaps it was created in specific style according to Southeast Asian sensibilities.
The Siva Linga from Wat Kheaw, Chaiya district, National museum Chaiya, Suratthani province

Fig. 36. The linga from Wat Kheaw, Chaiya, National museum Chaiya, Suratthani province.

This Siva-linga was discovered from the central cell of Wat Kheaw temple, Chaiya district, and Suratthani province. The temple is dated to the late 7th-8th century A.D. on the basis of architectural style contemporary to the Sri Vijaya period in Thailand. According to Krairiksh (1981: 66), the brick temple architectural style is similar to Chandi Kalasan of central Java dated to 7th-8th century A.D. The decorative art work on the structure has reflected the Champa arts influence in My-son (A) style which is generally dated to the early of 8th century A.D. (Parmentier 1909: pl.73). Thus, the linga found in-situ at the cell of this temple should be dated in the same period with the remaining structure.

The height of this small stone linga is 20 cm in size standing on a base measuring 5 cm. The linga is divided into two parts, the cylindrical top (Rudra bhaga) and square portion (Brahma bhaga). The Brahma sutra and Parsva sutra are clearly seen on the front side of the Rudra bhaga. Remarkably, the Parsva sutra line is jointed together beyond the thick Brahma sutra line.

The significant feature of Chaiya linga is that its general characteristic is comparable to the two early linga from Oc Eo and Vat Crak located at Transbassac region (Marellet 1959: pl.80). There are some differences in size and shape. The Transbassac linga are larger at the Rudra bhaga portion. In fact, Chaia realistic linga would be the proper example of realistic linga which had already developed into a symbolical concept (tripartite form).
However, the thick or parallel *Brahma sutra* and curved cylindrical top reminds us of some connection with Indian Siva linga of the fourth stage starting from 5th century A.D. to the end of early medieval period. According to Mitterwallner (1984: 21), the description of linga in this group is mainly carved in polished circular top sequentially followed by octagonal and square base or sometimes showing the parallel *Brahma sutra* lines reaching at the meeting point of *Parsva sutra* line. There are some examples of this linga type from *Rajghati* (*Deogarh*: Madhya Pradesh) and Elephanta cave. Although they do not reflect the purely naturalism form, the circle polished top and sutra lines drawing resemble the Chaiya linga. Thus, it would be reasonable to suggest that the realistic Chaiya linga is can be dated before the end of 7th century A.D. since the thick Brahma sutra line has not yet reached beyond the *Parsva sutra*’s highest point.

The Siva linga from Koh Chand masjid, Nakon Srithammarat province, National museum Nakon Srithammarat

![Image of Siva linga]

Fig.37. The Siva lingas from Koh Chand masjid, Nakon Sri Thammarat, National museum Nakon SriThammarat

The realistic lingas are reported from *Koh Chand* masjid and later preserved at the National museum, Nakon Srithammarat. The black stone linga, due to the highly damaged, has lost its main character for further study while the white one is in a well preserved condition. The height of both measure lingas are 15 cm. The white linga is carved into three portions starting from circle polished top (*Rudra bhaga*), octagonal (*Vishnu bhaga*) and squared base (*Brahma bhaga*). Although the general formation of linga is close to symbolic or conventional type, the *Rudra bhaga* is the biggest part which clearly shows the inscribed parallel *brahma sutra* and *parsva sutra*. 
The common feature of this linga is much closer to the realistic lingas from Chaiya and Yarang, with minor differences. As mentioned earlier in the realistic linga from Chaiya, these lingas share the same similarities in the shape of Rudra bhaga and the inscribed sutras drawing pattern. Thus, both of lingas are possibly to be dated in the same period as 6th - 7th century A.D. compared with those of Transbassac and Indian subcontinent. Possibly, they are prototype of realistic linga which gradually developed into conventional form.

The two Siva linga from Wat Thung Noang Kong Temple, Brahmagiri district, Nakon Sri Thammarat province

These two stone realistic lingas are reported from Wat Thung Noang Kong temple, Nakon Sri Thammarat province and are already documented in the antiquity list of Fine art authority office, Archaeological department, Nakon Sri Thammarat. Possibly, these lingas are the biggest linga in realistic type found in Southern region measuring around 75 cm. in height and width 15 cm. These stone lingas are divided into two portion almost equally as the high circular top (Rudra bhaga) and cubic form basement (Brahma bhaga).

The first one is made of brownish black stone. At the top, there is a shadowy trace of Parsva sutra and distinctively thick Brahma sutra carved out from the Rudra bhaga portion which reflected the realistic features. The second one is white color stone linga which is almost plain without any trace of inscribed lines.

Interestingly, the general feature of these two lingas has resemblance with the linga from Vat Crak temple (Rach giè: Oc Eo) (Fig.34) which is carved in two portions, the long cylindrical top with inscribed Parsva sutra line supported by the high cubic base. According to Malleret (1959: 379-380), the realistic lingas of Transbassac region could be dated to late
5th - 6th century A.D. In addition to the linga from Vat Crak, the realistic linga from Vat Slen (Ta Kev: Transbassac) also shares the same character, only difference being in size which is much taller (220-250 cm.) (Fig.44) and the inscribed sutra lines are clearer (Parmentier 1935: 89).

The realistic linga carved in the similar form is also found at the centre of the Siva temple at Chennitalai, Travancore district of Kerala. This realistic linga has shown tall cylindrical top emerging from the basement. There are traces of inscribed Brahma and Parsva sutra lines depicted on the front side. According to Gopinath Rao (1916 (II): 69), this linga is supposed to be the third ancient linga which was made in naturalism and dated to the 1st century A.D.

Thus, it can be suggested that the similarity reveals cultural linkage not only among Southeast Asian states but also across the distant sea borders. Although it is not possible to provide exact dating of these two lingas from Thung Noang Kong temple, regarding to the primitive style compared with exact dated lingas found from neighboring country and South India, the lingas could be dated at around the late 5th - 6th century A.D.

The Siva linga from Phum Pon village, Sankha district, Surin province and Prang Song Pi Nong, Sri Tep, Petchaburna province

Fig. 39. (Left) The linga from Phum Pon Village, Surin province, (Right) the linga from Sri Tep

This realistic linga has been reported from Phum Pon village in the northeastern Thailand where the pre Angkorean brick temple of 6th - 7th century A.D. is located. The linga has been installed in the local shrine of this village without any proper preservation but recently documented in the antiquities account of National museum, Surin province. This linga was discovered near by the brick temple suggesting that perhaps it was associated with the monument from the beginning. There are also two inscription fragments dated to the 6th century A.D. found at the brick monument (Shaem 1989). These archaeological and
epigraphic sources certainly provide the probable dating to this linga to the 6th-7th centuries A.D.

This linga, plainly carved in simple form, has shown two separated parts like the plain elongated top, shaft and cubic base. But unfortunately, the cubic base is hidden under cement construction. The size of the linga is about 45 cm. in height. From the root up to the top, it is devoid of any inscribed line or border. This primitive type of linga is also found as one of two lingas discovered during the conservation at Prang Song Phi Nong stone monument: Sri Tep (Petchabura province) in 1993. In fact, at Sri Tep, they discovered some Krishna and Surya sculptures and dated them to the 9th century A.D. possibly during pre Angkorean period. Thus, it would be possible to see primitive linga of this earlier period enshrined inside the brick monument. In Southern part of country, at National museum, Nakon Srithammarat, the linga made of natural granite stone also found as a simple plain linga dated to the late 5th-6th century showing similarity with the Phum Pon.

Although this simple plain linga is completely absent in the Indian art context as well as in Transbassac region, there is a similar primitive linga from Candi Jolotundo: East Java region which is carved as a fountain linga and presently preserved at Tara Ulan museum, Indonesia. In contrary to the primitive appearance, this group of miniature lingas on a platform dated to 997 A.D. possibly associated with the monument (Kinney 2000: 53). Thus, according to some samples, it can be suggested widespread level of plain linga making in Southeast Asian countries.

Fig. 40. The fountain lingas from Candi Jolotundo: Eastern Java (Kinney 2000: 53) and the granite linga from Nakon Sri Thammarat, National museum (Nakon Sri Thammarat)
The Siva linga from Kok Peep district, Prachinaburi province, National museum Bangkok

This linga is reported from Kok Peep district, Prachinaburi province, located at the eastern Thailand. The linga from Kok Peep can be grouped under realistic linga according to the emblem carved on it. Probably, this linga is the tallest one in Thailand with 250-270 cm. The linga consists of two main parts, elongated cylindrical top depicting the Brahma and Parsva sutra lines followed by three rings at the neck and a plain octagonal shaft (Lajonquière 1912: 24-25). This linga has been presently exhibited at the National museum Bangkok.

The linga with this character is not only found from Kok Peep, but there are other lingas which carved with the same pattern but much smaller in size such as the stone linga from Nakon Prathom province (Vat Phra Prathom Chedi temples) and some Rudra bhaga fragments of realistic lingas from U thong site preserved at National museum U thong. Although most of them are in damaged condition, the form of Rudra bhaga and octagonl shaft can be identified quite easy. This kind of realistic linga must have been the common type of the central and eastern Thailand which is comparable to the neighboring areas.
Fig. 42. The fragment of realistic linga from U Thong

Fig. 43. The realistic linga from Nakon Prathom, Wat Phra Prathom Chedi temple

In case of a comparative study with the realistic linga from Transbassac area, the Kok Peep linga is dated to late 5th-6th century A.D. which contemporary to those of neighboring countries. With the similarity in general character especially the large size with elongated Rudra bhaga, this linga is comparable to the pre Angkorean realistic plain linga from Vat Slen temple (220-250 cm.) and other sites (Parmentier 1935: 89-90). The only difference is the shaft decoration. The Transbassac realistic bipartite are always carved in square column while the Kok peep is in octagonal form. Furthermore, if this type of realistic linga was very common in this region, it would suggest the extensive making of this linga type in mainland Southeast Asian before the Angkorean period.
In India, the elaborated realistic linga showing the earlier of being more of a symbolical emblem is seen from the linga from *Karamdanda*: Uttra Pradesh (State museum Lucknow) dated to middle of 5th century A.D. on the basis of epigraphic evidence (Mitterwallner 1984: 21). The linga is carved into two portions consisting of circular shape *Rudra bhaga* depicting two inscribed parallel *Brahma sutra* and *Parsva sutra* lines followed by the tall octagonal shaft and inscription recorded in the middle of the column. Although the *Karamdanda* linga does not as seems to be tall as the Transbassac and *Kok Peep* lingas, it might be the being prototype of Southeast Asian lingas.

**B: Mukhalinga type:**

As far as the numbers of Mukhalinga in Thailand goes, there are four *ekmukhalinga* exhibited in National museums Bangkok, Uthong and Roiet provinces. The earliest Mukhalinga in Thailand is the Mukhalinga from Chaiya (Suratthani province) southern region of Thailand (Khairisk 1981: 130; O’Connor 1966 : 43-54) which is dated to the 6th - 7th century A.D. based on the similarity with the Gupta *Mukhalinga* and the *linga* from Cambodia and western Boneo (O’connor1966:49;Diskul1980:27). The *Mukhalinga* was discovered during the railway construction at *Nong Wai* village located at Chaiya district, Suratthani province.
The *Ek Mukhalinga* from Chaiya, Suratthani province, National museum Bangkok

Fig. 45. The *Ek Mukhalinga* from Chaiya, National museum Bangkok

This *Mukhalinga* is generally carved from the monolithic stone in tripartite form depicting the face of Siva in the middle of *Rudara bhaga*. The size of the *linga* is 141.5 cm. The portions of linga are divided with square base (47.8 cm), octagonal shaft (43 cm) and long cylindrical top (51 cm). In fact, though the highest portion of *linga* is realistic in appearance showing *Pasarva sutra* line, the tripartite form is seen in equal length. Thus, this *linga* would also fit into the conventional category (O’connor 1966: 45; Malleret 1959: 379-80).

The length of Siva’s face depicted on the *Rudra bhaga* is 29 cm carved with an oval face and *jata mukuta* hair dressed in chignon consting of two lateral ligatures on the top of the head while the remainder of the hair falls in loops on either side of the head. The third eye and crescent moon are clearly noticeable as the divine significant emblems. There is only single ornament adorning the neck which seems to be either a single strand of pearl necklace or a string of pearls and an oblong piece with geometric design.

The aesthetic character of Chaiya *Mukhalinga* is comparable to the Gupta *Mukhalinga* at Udayagiri cave (Madhaya Pradesh) dated to 5th century A.D. (Krairiksh 1981: 130; O’Connor 1966: 48; Diskul 1975, 1980: 27; Bowie and Diskul *et al* 1960, 1975: 48; Kamrisch 1954: pl. 46). The hair dressing and divine emblems are similar to the attributes of Siva *jatamukutha* from *Khoh* which is now exhibited in the Allahabad museum (Sivaramamurti 1950:55). The celestial pearl necklace (*ekavali*) or string of pearls and oblong beads resembles those of the Gupta ornaments as seen from other Gupta Siva images and *Lokanatha Avalokitesvara* of *Sarnath* (Mallann 1958: 238, O’connor 1966: 48). In addition to South Asian subcontinent,
the Mukhalinga from Mrgasthali (Nepal) dated to 6th century A.D. also shows some similarities on the divine face, jatamukuta and ornament.

Fig. 46. The Gupta ekmuklingas from (left) Udayagiri (Madhya Pradesh), Shahdul (Bhopal state museum), Mathura (Private collection Chicago) and Mrgasthali, Nepal (Mitterwallner 1984)

Though the Chaiya emblem and the other lingas from Cambodia (pre Angkorean period), southern Vietnam and western Boneo share the some feature in tripartite form, only the natural form of Rudhabhaga and Siva face size make some differences in comparison to the Mukhalinga from Southeast Asian. Notably, the Siva face depicted on Chaiya linga is much bigger than others which are mostly carved smaller than 10 cm. According to Parmentier (1932: 188), the group of small faced linga found in Cambodian and Vietnam are categorized as Funan linga and dated them to 6th century A.D. while Dupant (1955: 121 ) and Mallaret (1959: 379-380) have given the general date these Mukhalinga in tripartite form prior to 9th century A.D.

Although it is not possible to provide exact date for Chaiya Mukhalinga, the 6th -7th centuries would seem a reasonable period, contemporary to the distribution of Mukhalinga in India. Remarkably, the Mukhalinga found in Indian subcontinent have mostly depicted Siva face in the middle of Rudra bhaga with the enlarged size of decorated face is obviously bigger than those of ancient Cambodian and Vietnam (Mitterwallner 1984 : fig.21-22,24,26,63). Thus, the Chaiya Mukhalinga was given more under Indian influence than the others in the contemporary period. In Indian subcontinent, the naturalism linga and ekmuklinga type gradually disappeared in Saivite art admiration after late of 5th century A.D. after the introduction of tripartite Siva linga. Perhaps, it can be assign the date for Chaiya Mukhalinga a few centuries after the Gupta period but not further than the 8th century when the development of Siva-linga in India further evoloved with the tantric concept and before
the emergence of Angkorean art from Cambodia. This certainly gave an intensive influence to Saivite art in Thailand than the previous Indian tradition.

The *ekmukhalinga* from Prathat Phankhan temple, Suvarnbhumi district, National museum Roiet, Roiet province

Fig.47. The *ekmukhalinga* from Prathat Phankhan temple, National museum Roiet

The *Prah That Phan Khan* temple is located at *Suvarnbhumi* district, Roiet province of northeastern Thailand. The brick temple was constructed as a two storie building dated to the 9th – 10th centuries A.D. as observed from the remains of the architectural structure and the *Mukhalinga* is reported as found near the temple. The sand stone *Mukhalinga* presently has been preserved in the Roiet National museum and measures 95 cm. in height. The *linga* shaft is divided into two portions as cubic (*Brahma bhaga*) and octagonal (*Vishnu bhaga*) followed by the cylindrical end (*Rudra bhaga*) depicting the small face of Siva (10.cm) in the middle of *Parsva sutra* line. The top gland is carved separating the octagonal edge in the form of neck and head. Unfortunately, the entire face up to *jatamukuta* is almost damaged, only ears and neck parts are seen.

The significant feature of this *Mukhalinga* is that though it forms a tripartite, its appearance is very close to the naturalistic emblem as noticeable from the top sloping gland decorated with two *Parsva* and *Brahma* sutra lines, passing beyond the neck of *linga*. This linga character is very similar to those of Transbassac region (southern Cambodian and Vietnam) dated prior to 9th century A.D. In fact, this Roiet *Mukhalinga* bears almost the same feature of the pre *Angkorean Mukhalinga* found at *Vat Sek Sampao* and *Neak Ta Svay Damba*, the Funan style before 9th century A.D. (Parmentier 1932: 188; Dupant 1955: pl.XXI). Perhaps, the hair dressing must have been more similar to the *Neak Ta Svay Damba* emblem as noticed from the shape of the damaged skull. In a comparative study with the Indian *Mukhalinga*, though the sizes of face makes it different, the general form of tripartite
linga is possibly influenced by the late Gupta linga (late of 5th-6th century A.D.) which was completely formed as a symbolic emblem showing the separated potions with curved top as seen at the Nachna-Kutara linga and ekmukhalinga from Shahdool (State museum: Bhopal), Madhya Pradesh.

Fig.48. The linga from Oc Eo (left), Vat Sek Sampao and Neak Ta Savy Damba (Malleret 1959; Parmentier 1932: 188; Dupant 1955: pl.XXI)

In this case, it can be assumed that this Mukhalinga from Pra That Phan Khan temple is one of those rare pre Angkorean Mukhalinga found in northeastern region of Thailand. The discovery of Mukhalinga is important archaeological evidence indicating on the early Khmer settlement and the expansion of their political power over this area at least before the 9th century A.D.
The Ekmukhalinga from Kok Chang Din remains, U Thong, National museum U Thong, Suparnburi province

Fig. 49. The Ekmukhalinga from Kok Chang Din remains, U Thong, National museum U Thong, Suparnburi province

The Mukhalinga found at Kok Chang Din site located inside the large area of U Thong ancient monuments group. According to excavation report at Kok Chang Din (Fine art authority 2002: 51), the site consists of four mounds which was supposed to be tanks or wells near the remains of Brahmanical temples (Fine art authority 2002: 99). The Mukhalinga was discovered from one of them and recently preserved at National museum U Thong. The general description of this Mukhalinga mentioned in the excavation report is made of polished green stone dated to 6th - 7th century A.D. (Fine Art authority 2002: 52). This Mukhalinga is almost 65 cm. in height starting from cubic base (Brahma bhaga), octagonal shaft (Vishnu bhaga) and quite flattened cylindrical top without any sutra line (Rudra bhaga). Only the small face of Siva is depicted at the lower part of Rudra bhaga in very elusive appearance. Considering the symmetrical formation of linga, it is quite far from naturalism, roughly carved face and the geometric figure almost created like a symbolic emblem. Thus, this Mukhalinga should be dated closely to 9th century A.D. If this suggestion is correct, the Mukhalinga from Kok Chang Din would be reasonable to date a little after the Mukhalinga from Pra That Phan Khan temple, Roiet province, and those of pre Angkorean found at Transbassac area.
The *ekmukhalinga* from U Thong: National museum U Thong, Suparnburi.

![Fig. 50. The *ekmukhalinga* from U Thong, National museum U Thong, Suparnburi](image)

This *Mukhalinga* was reported from UThong an ancient town without any archaeological context. The *Mukhalinga* is measured as 65-66 cm. high and the size of Siva face is around 30 cm. The important character of this *Ek muklinga* is the shaft carved in plain cylindrical form depicting the healthy face of Siva with peaceful expression, smiling with opened eyes. The God’s high *jatamukhuta* was made of knotted curvy hair over long ears decorated with circle loop earrings which hang upto the single necklace on his neck. Moreover, the depiction of Siva is also shows the bust portion created from the shaft of *linga* supported by tall cylindrical shaft. Possibly the shaft was made for stable erection and to be hidden under the basement.

Although, there is no comparable *Mukhalinga* having the same feature found in Transbassac area as well as in Indonesia, some of the *Mukhalinga* in cylindrical form are available in Indian art dated from the early of Christian era such as the *Mukhalinga* from Mathura (Philadelphia museum of art), *Mukhalinga* from Aghapura (Government museum: Bharatpur, Uttra Pradesh) and the depiction of *Ek mukhalinga* on the stone slab housed at Sate museum Lucknow (Srinivasan 1984: 31-34). In Indian subcontinent, the development of *Ek mukhalinga* formed in cylindrical or realistic features would have evolved to the making of multifaceted -*Mukhalinga* in the later period, after the 6th century A.D. onwards. There are some examples from *Panchayatana- linga* at National museum New Delhi, the *Catura-mukhalinga* from Bhuvanesvari temple, Deopatan (Nepal) and the *Catura-mukhalinga* at Rajput museum (Ajmer).
Finally, after 12th century A.D. or the end of early medieval period, the Mukhalinga form had changed into either plain and smaller in size like round fingertip or replaced the previous concept of Mukhalinga by making more complicated Siva depiction in human-like form known as anthropomorphization. There are examples of linga created in this character such as the linga at Mahadeva temple, Parsem and Poinginim (Goa) and the linga at Ramesvara temple at Ramatirtha (Halsi: Karnataka) etc. Thus, it can be assumed that the realistic-Ekmuklinga from U Thong, though it seems locally made, might have been inspired by the Indian concept.

Fig. 51. The lintel from Wat En Khna temple: Albert Sarraut museum, pre Angkorean before 9th century A.D.

Fig. 52. Tympan de Trach Pho, Phang-rang: Vietnam
As mentioned earlier about the absence of Mukhalinga of this particular form in the Transbassac region, though, there are some related examples reflecting the worship of plain or realistic ek mukhalinga depicted on the bas relief of architectural structure. There are the depiction of Ligodbhava murti narrating the most powerful form of Siva according to the Siva-agama carved on the stone lintel found at Wat En-Khna temple (Cambodia) and the triangular facet of Trach Pho temple, Phang–rang (Vietnam) in Khuong-My style (Bosch 1931: 491; Boisserlier 1963: 170-171). These two puranic scenes share the similarity in the depiction of ekmukhalinga in plain cylindrical form with large Siva’s face adorned with rough jatamukhuta at the middle. According to their aesthetic element, it is possible to date it to the 10th century A.D. This narration of puranic scene suggests the worship of plain or realistic ekmukhalinga in this region from the early Christian era as well as existence of on the ekmukhalinga from U Thong in central Thailand.

The round healthy face of Siva from U Thong Mukhalinga apparently reminds of the localized character of pre Angkorean art before 9th century A.D. Although, the image of Siva in iconic form is almost absent during pre Angkorean period, there are some contemporary sculptures of Brahmanical deities such as Visnu or Harihara (Briggs 1951: 80) showing similar facial characters which is comparable with the face of Siva depicted on the UThong Mukhalinga. Therefore, it is possible to date the U Thong ekmukhalinga at least before 9th century A.D.

In the light of iconographical study, the U Thong Mukhalinga could have come under the influence of Lingodbhava murti concept as suggested by the ekmukhalinga character emerging from the base (pithas) in the form of Siva image. This can be clearly seen in the puranic narration where Siva appears out of the holy flamed linga leading to the sacred emblem concept of linga that was traditionally considered as worshiping Siva himself.
The *ekmukhlinga* with pithas from U Thong, National museum U Thong, Suparnburi province

Fig. 53. The *ekmukhlinga* with pithas from U Thong, National museum U Thong, Suparnburi province

This *ekmulhalinga* with *pitha* was found at the mound near Khao Pu Muang mountain located outside the U Thong ancient town area. Initially, the *Ek mukhalinga* was reported as damaged objects with broken *pithas* fragment. After passing through the conservation process, the *ekmukhalinga* has been exhibited at National museum U Thong. The linga portion measures as 13 cm seated on the square *pithas* of 100 cm length including extended projecting portion.

This *ekmukhalinga* has an important feature as being the only *Mukhalinga* associated with *pithas* found in Thailand. The cylindrical portion (*Rudra bhaga*) emerges from the base depicting the small face of Siva at the lower part between the *Parsva sutra* lines. Unfortunately, the lower half of Siva face is damaged and the upper face up to *jatamukhuta* can still be identified. The Siva face is small in size having a long nose and opened eyes under connected long eyebrows. The style of hairdressing is tall knotted *jatamukutha* depicted the crescent moon as God’s sacred emblem.
In fact, this *Ek mukhalinga* has been roughly dated to 6\textsuperscript{th} - 7\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. on the basis of artistic features comparable to the pre-Angkorean *ekmukhalinga* from Transbassac area (Fine art authority 2002: 82). The small face of Siva and localized facial structure and the hair dressing pattern are quite similar to those of pre *Angkorean jatamukhuta* with the hair knotted in curves (Boisserlier 1955: 101-103; Pl.XXI; Pl.15a).

Though the pattern of *ek mukhalinga* with attached square *pithas* is very rare and almost absent in pre-Angkorean art, there is a distinct example in Cham art such as *Ek mukhalinga* from *Trà-liên* (Fig.68) (Boisserlier 1964: fig. 250) where the style could be compared with the *ekmukhalinga* from UThong. But the only difference is in the *Rudhra bhaga* decoration. While the top of UThong *ekmukhlinga* is curved and plain, the *Trà-liên Mukhalinga* has its top decorated with lotus petal motif in triangular form.

According to Boisserlier (1963: 412), the *ekmukhalinga* from *Trà-liên* is predated to the 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. Thus, the *ekmukhalinga* from U Thong should be dated little earlier than the *Mukhalinga* from Vietnam. Although the *ekmukhalinga* in Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia are rare or almost absent from any context after 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D., the making of *ekmukhalinga* in Cham art had continuously been practiced up to 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. as seen from the *ekmukhalinga* from *Huong Dinh* made in the *Dong Duong* style (the 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.) and the *ekmukhalinga* installed in the main shrine at *Po Kluang Garai* sanctuary. These *mukhalingas* are adorned by golden ornaments and metal mask carved as Siva face depicted at the middle of the small plain *linga* (Boisserlier 1963: 413,423, fig.238 and 251).

![Fig. 54. The decorated golden mask of Cham mukhalinga, (museum Gimet: Paris)](image)
In a comparative study with Indian subcontinent, though frequent making of *ekmukhalinga* had decreased after the 5th century A.D., the small linga with attached pithas was probably started and became common from 5th-6th century A.D. onwards as seen from the linga from Rajghati (Deogarh), Elephanta main cave dated around the middle of 6th century A.D. and Svarga Brahma temple, Alampur (Andhara Pradesh) dated to late 7th century A.D. (Mitterwallner 1984: fig.9). In addition, the similarity of *Parsva sutra* line depicted on *Rudra bhaga* of both lingas is that it has joined beyond the middle portion of cylindrical part which is the remarkable feature of most lingas dated from 6th century A.D. (Mitterwallner 1984: 23-24; fig.9). Interestingly, the cylindrical top of *ekmukhalinga* from U Thong is polished and circular and looks closer to those of the middle 6th century A.D. from Deogarh and Elephanta cave. Perhaps, this *ekmukhalinga* from U Thong can be dated to 6th-7th century A.D.

The trend of realistic linga as well as *Mukhalinga* seems to gradually decrease after the early of 9th century A.D. up to present time when most of linga created during this long period were formed in tripartite or conventional type.

From late 8th-9th century, the prominent form of Siva-linga has been depicted as a symbolized sacred emblem in both religious and political aspects. This development shows the more harmonized from of linga worship in Saivism as it initially represented the concept of natural fertility, then gets elaborated under an intensive religious concept of *tri-murti* and also being interpreted as royal honor.

**C: The tripartite or conventional type of Siva-linga:**

In the Indian subcontinent, the complete tripartite or conventional type of linga came to be extensively made from Gupta (ca. the 5th century A.D.) up to the end of mediaeval period. This form of linga is simply divided into three portions known as cylindrical top (*Rudra bhaga*), octagonal shaft (*Vishnu bhaga*) and cubic base (*Brahma bhaga*). For example, there are some important tripartite lingas created from the early stage such as the linga from Karamdanda (Uutra Pradesh: State museum Lucknow), the linga at Ahicchatra and Nanchna–Kutara (Madhaya Pradesh). There is also the development of inscribed sutra lines as well as the new introduction of small polished circular top linga attached with the pithas as found from Deogarh, Elephanta cave, Pattadakal and Khajuraho which have served as artistic influence to the of lingas in Southeast Asia.

In fact, the tripartite or conventional emblem of linga has been witnessed in Southeast Asian countries expectedly from early 7th century A.D. and becoming extremely prominent
after 8th century A.D. onward. There are plenty of lingas reported from Brahmanical monuments and archaeological sites mostly dated to Angkorean period in mainland region from Thailand, Cambodian (Khmer) and Vietnam (Champa). In fact, the tripartite based lingas found in Transbassac region are generally classified into two categories as *mukhalinga* and simple tripartite linga (Malleret 1959: 386). Although the lingas of this region share the common features, there are some distinctive minor variations such as shaft decoration, inscribed sutra line pattern and the level of top cylindrical curve (Malleret 1959: 383).

![Image](image.jpg)

**Fig. 55. The early mukhalinga in tripatities from (left) Oc EO and Bathe (transbassac region)**

*(Malleret 1959: Pl. 81)*

Similar to the maritime region, Malay Peninsula and Indonesia, the tripartite type of linga has been commonly enshrined in the temples varying in size, decoration and patterns. Interestingly, there are some early conventional type lingas discovered from Southern Thailand which still maintain some realistic features on their cylindrical top which can provide the exact chronology of the development at stage of Siva–linga in Thailand.

For more understanding on the classification of tripartite linga found in Thailand, the number of lingas should be categorized according to their developed artistic style and the chronological periods ranging from early of 7th - 12th centuries A.D. contemporary to the rising of Khmer political expansion in mainland Southeast Asian region.
The group of tripartite linga from Southern Thailand: Samples collected from national museums Chaiya (Suratthani province), Nakon Srithammarat and Songkla province:

The conventional linga in Southern Thailand has carried some remarkable features which are found to be very rare from other places. Firstly, the primitive conventional emblems dated to the early of 7th - 8th century A.D., though they are completely carved in three portions, the naturalistic character still appeared on the cylindrical top (Rudra bhaga). The shape of the topmost portion with narrowed neck is completely polished and circular showing inscribed sutras. In some early dated samples, the depicting of Brahmasutra and Parsva sutras is drawn almost close to realistic way. Secondly, in case of the little later dated linga, the size of emblems is usually taller or larger than earlier ones. Though most of lingas are carved in three separate sections, in some cases the octagonal shaft is absent and replaced by double cubic base. Here there are some examples of tripartite lingas collected from national museums located in the Southern part of country which clearly reflected some important characters suitable for this research study.

The primitive type of tripartite Siva linga, the early of 7th century - 8th centuries A.D.

Fig.56. The tripartite linga from Nation museum Chaiya, Suratthani province
The primitive tripartite lingas from Southern Thailand dated around middle of 7\textsuperscript{th} - 8\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. mostly reflects the naturalistic feature on their top portion. They are important examples explaining the transition stage from realistic character to be completed tripartite form. The first linga (Fig.56) from \textit{Tha Chang} district of Suratthani province presently exhibited at national museum Chaiya: Suratthani province is dated at around the early of 7\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. The linga high measures around 20 cm. consists of three portions from cylindrical top (\textit{Rudra bhaga}), octagonal shaft (\textit{Vishnu bhaga}) and cubic base (\textit{Brahma})
bhaga). The three orders are not equally divided, making the place of Vishnu bhaga little larger than Brahma bhaga section. The shape of Rudra bhaga is circular with narrow neck depicted the Parsva and Brahma sutra lines. The thick vertical brahma sutra line highly reaches upto the connected point of Parsva sutra.

The Siva lingas (Fig.57-58) are presently exhibited in National museum Nakon Sri Thammarat. They are linga from Ban Sra Kud (75 cm.), Old Siva Shrine 1(Ho Prah Isavara) (58 cm.), Old Siva Shrine 2 (40 cm.) and Wat Na Khom (30 cm.). Though they were carved in tripartite, the shape and depiction of Rudra bhaga portion is much in realistic character. Their inscribed Brahma sutra has reached upto the highest point jointing the Parsva sutra. Interestingly, the all primitive tripartite samples have still maintained the narrowed neck portion of Rudra bhaga which certainly has the realistic character.

In the Indian subcontinent, the tripartite linga has been common after the 5th century A.D. The early form of tripartite emblems is from Arvalem (rock cut shrine no.3: Goa), Sahasra linga from Sondani (Mandasor: Mandhaya Pradesh), Karamdanda (State museum Lucknow) and Ahicchtra. They have simply followed tripartite rules with inscribed sutra lines before developing into polished circular linga attached with various forms of pithas. There is the similar trace of linking between Indian tripartite linga and the lingas from Southern Thailand, apart from carving common tripartite according to the rules. It is clearly noticed from the inscribed sutras pattern which most of the Southern Thai examples have shown where it reached upto or beyond the Parsva sutra point. According to Mitterwallner (1984: 23), only the linga dated from the end of 7th century A.D.onwards has the Brahma sutra line rise above parsva sutra. He has given an example from the linga enshrined at Svarga brahma temple, at Alampur (Andhra Pradesh) and Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal to approve this point.

Fig. 59. The lingas and high relief from Pattadakal dated around 7th-8th century A.D.
In the same way, if the development of sutra line is recognizable, it would be secure to provide general dating for the southern primitive tripartite lingas as before the early of 7\(^{th}\) century A.D. except the linga from \textit{Ban Sra Kud} (Fig. 57, left) (National museum Nakorn Srithammarat) that possible to date at the end of 7\(^{th}\) – early of 8\(^{th}\) century A.D.

In addition to the Indian character, many of the Southeast Asian primitive tripartite lingas share similar features. Although most of the early lingas dated before the 9\(^{th}\) century A.D. are usually made as \textit{Mukhalinga}, the tripartite rules and artistic style are comparable to those of primitive tripartite linga in Southern Thailand. The examples are the pre Angkorean \textit{mukhalinga} from Oc Eo, Bathe, Vat Sek Sampao and Neak Ta Svay Damba and the lingas from \textit{Núi Sam} of Southern Vieatnam (Malleret 1959: 386-387). Probably, the similarity in \textit{Rudra bhaga} depiction and the rules provide contemporary date ranging from late of 6\(^{th}\) to 9\(^{th}\) century A.D. on the basis of comparative dates among those lingas from Indian subcontinent and Transbassac, the Southern Thai primitive tripartite linga is supposed to be dated from 7\(^{th}\) – early 8\(^{th}\) century A.D.

\textbf{The tripartite linga from Southern Thailand, national museum Nakorn Srithammarat and Songkla province}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Siva linga from Sathing Pra and Linga from Ranod, National museum Songkla}
\caption{(Left) Siva linga from Sathing Pra and (Right) Linga from Ranod, National museum Songkla}
\end{figure}
The other type of tripartite Siva linga found in Southern Thailand is now preserved at the National museums Songkla and Nakon Sritammarat. With the significant features like tall shape and geometrical emblem, the lingas of this type are supposed to be dated from the late 7th-9th century A.D. or perhaps a little later than the primitive tripartite emblem. They are Siva linga from Sathing Pra district, Songkla (140 cm), Siva linga from Ranod district, National museum Songkla (93 cm), Siva linga from Na Khom temple, Si chon district, National museum NakonSri Thammarat (172 cm) and Siva linga from Wat Theparaj, Sichon district (100 cm)

Though these lingas are formed according to tripartite rules, some of them (Fig.60 left, Fig. 61 right) have double cubic shaft and base. There is another important feature like noticed the elongated cylindrical top portion carved in the form of gland with the inscribed sutra lines. There are two Siva lingas, the lingas (Fig.60, left and right) from National museum Songkla and Wat Theparaj (Fig.63, right); Nakon Sritammarat that have still maintained the clear sutras lines drawing. The vertical Brahma sutra is rising almost beyond the highest point of the Parsva sutra. Another remarkable feature is the double cubic bases instead of octagonal shaft decoration.

Interestingly, this group of tall tripartite linga is similar to the Kok Peep realistic linga to some extents such as the tall shaft and elongated cylindrical top. The Siva linga from Wat Slen of Transbassac region also has comparable features with Southern Thailand tripartite linga as seen from their double cubic bases. The slight difference would be the size of the cylindrical top which is the biggest portion of the Wat Slen linga as well as those of Transbassac region,
contrary to the little lesser or equal with other divided sections as found in Southern Thai tripartite linga.

In case of lingas (Fig.60 right) and (Fig.61 left), collected from Ranod district (Songkla) and Vat Na Khom temple (Sichon: Nakon Srithammarat), the stone Siva lingas are in complete tripartite form starting from cylindrical top portion (Rudra bhaga), octagonal (Vishnu bhaga) and cubic base (Brahma bhaga). Unfortunately, the top portion of the linga from Ranod district is broken, and only the lower part remains. However, both of these Siva lingas are showing tripartite orders and the linga from Na Khom temple is considered to be the largest tripartite Siva linga found in Thailand due to its height measure which upto 172 cm.

According to the official survey report (O’connor 1968: 13), the lingas from Vat Na Khom temple were discovered near the remains that are known as “ancient tanks”. The very large size of this linga indicates that excavation at Na Khom should yield the foundation of a large sanctuary since the size of linga should be proportionate to the scale of sanctuary which enshrined it. Though it is not possible to provide exact dating to the large tripartite linga from Na Khom but because of the basic simplicity of the type and very few associated evidence such as architecture remains or epigraphic evidence for that matter, the linga could be dated to the 7th century A.D.

This is due to the characteristic feature of Rudra bhaga portion which is a simple cylindrical shape showing the low relief of glans and frenum on that part and the three sections of the emblem of equal measurement. This linga is totally made in tripartite form and comparable the group of pre Angkorean lingas from Transbassac region. However, it has not yet undergone extreme stylization (O’Connor 1968: 13). Thus, this linga and the fragment of linga from Ranod (Songkla) may be dated, on the basis of parallels with types found in Cambodia, to sometime before 9th century (Malleret 1959: 383; O’Connor 1968: 14).

In case of comparative study with Indian emblems, the construction of tall tripartite linga does not seem to be the common type in Indian art. Precisely, after the 7th century A.D., the type of linga in India was mostly carved in the smaller form, circular flatt top (Rudra bhaga) and attached with the pitha. This new form of linga has been quite prominent all over Indian subcontinent up to the modern period.
The Siva linga of Khmer influence period

The tripartite Siva-linga in Thailand: from 9th – late of 12th centuries A.D.

In the central and Northeastern region of Thailand, in the period from late 8th century A.D. onwards. It is commonly known as the “Khmer” influence period. The witnessing of strong political expansion from ancient Cambodian Kingdom has been explained from religious arts as well as epigraphic source. This developed trace is also found in the form of Siva linga which finally became a complete symbolic concept.

Fig.62. (Left) The Tripartite Siva linga from Sri Tep and (Right) The Siva linga from Petchaburn province, National museum Bangkok

The Siva linga from Sri Tep (90 cm) and other one reported from Petchaburna province (95 cm) are made in tripartite orders and completely carved in the concept of sacred emblem. They are in simple and plain geometrical formation starting from simple plain cubic base (*Brahma bhaga*), octagonal shaft (*Vishnu bhaga*) and cylindrical top portion (*Rudra bhaga*). The main portion of the linga is almost equally divided into three parts which clearly reflect the philosophical aspect of supreme deities.

Although these two lingas are plain and leave no trace of inscribed sutras, the large and simple geometric design provides the approximately dating from late 8th -11th century A.D. which is also contemporary to the associated architectural style of monuments at *Sri Tep* site. In fact, the Khmer lingas from *Angkorean* period (the late of 8th -12th centuries A.D.) are mostly made smaller in size, circular flatted top with or without attached *pithas* for exampled from the linga from *Phanom Bakhaeng* sanctuary (Delvert 1963: pl. LIV). These two lingas from Petchaburna province, taking into consideration on their top portion, it would be possible to date them from the late 8th -10th century A.D. onward.
Fig. 63. (Left) The Khmer linga from Phanom Bakhaeng sanctuary (Delvert 1963: pl. LIV) and (Right) the Khmer geometric triparties linga from private museum Chicago.

The tripartite Siva linga from Eastern and Northeastern Thailand: selected from National museum Prachinaburi, Pimai (Nakon Ratchasima province) and Surin.

Fig. 64. The tripartite Siva linga (left) from Aranya Pradesh district, Sra Kheaw province (National museum Prachinaburi), The Lingas from Sri Saketh province (middle) and Nakon Ratchasima (right) National museum Pimai (Nakon Ratchasima province)
Fig. 65. The tripartite Siva linga from Nakon Ratchasima (left) and the group of miniature lingas from Prasat Pimai sanctuary, National museum Pimai (Nakon Ratchasima province)

Fig. 66. The tripartite Siva lingas from Prasat Ta Muan Tom, Dong Rek district (Surin province), National museum Surin
Fig. 67. The tripartite lingas (Left and Right) from Non Puey village, Surin, National museum Surin

The Northeastern Thailand has witnessed the Khmer influence from early 6th century A.D. as seen from the epigraphic and archaeological evidences. The emergence of Brahmanism is also believed to have taken root from the beginning of political expansion of the ancient Cambodian empire and rapidly became prominent from 10th-13th century A.D. Tripartite or conventional form of linga found in Northeastern and central part of Thailand has obviously shown the way for the development from closed realistic to complete symbolic emblem. The lingas from the National museums dated from 9th-10th century A.D. are systematically made in the geometrical form with artificial sutra lines depicted on the top portion (Rudra bhaga). In fact, all of them uniformly followed the symbolical concept starting from cubic base (Brahma bhaga), octagonal shaft (Vishnu bhaga) and cylindrical flatt top (Rudra bhaga). If there is any difference, it should be regarding size and the artificial style of inscribed *sutras*. As in the Indian subcontinent, the extensive numbers of tripartite lingas also comprised the major part of Siva linga type found in Thailand.

In a comparative study with the Indian subcontinent and neighboring countries, it can be assumed that the tripartite Siva lingas found in Thailand dating from the 9th century are much similar to *Khmer* emblem than the Indian prototype.
From this period, the trend of Southeast Asian art became independent from Indian influence, except for the main philosophical concept reflected through the general form of iconography. The development of lingas also supports this theory as they are merely followed the Indian order but carved and decorated in Khmer form.

However, apart from tripartite general order, the Indian influence is still be traced from inscribed sutra lines. There are some special tripartite lingas which showing Brahma and Parsva sutra pattern comparable to those of Indian emblems. The linga from Prasat Ta Muan Tom (46.5 and 45 cm.) and Non Phuey village (50 and 46 cm.), Surin province, have shown the curved sutras lines and especially in case of Non Phuey lingas where the rising of inscribed sutras are similar to the linga from Virupaksha and other temples of Pattadakal (8th century A.D.) and the Kandriya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho (the early of 12th century A.D.). The other examples are either plain simple tripartite lingas or have depicted symbolical pattern of inscribed sutra lines on their flatted top portion (Rudra bhaga). The “symbolical pattern” of sacred emblem in Khmer lingas can be described as the combination of simple horizontal line representing Parsva sutra merging with thick parallel line symbolizing Brahma sutra rising vertically way.

This kind of simple symbolical form of sutras was quite common in Southeast Asian, especially in Khmer art of ancient Cambodian Kingdom. The great variations of tripartite lingas have been seen from Cham art of Southern and Central Vietnam. The Cham linga, though they are in conventional form like the others, they are different in decoration and character. One of the distinctive features of Cham lingas is known as jata lingas which depicts the Siva jata mukutha beyond the Brahma sutra on the top portion of Rudra bhaga. Another Cham common linga character is reduced neck portion and flattend top as an example from the tripartite linga from Tra Kieu (late 7th century A.D.) presently exhibited at Tourane museum (Bosch 1931: Pl. CVIII; Boisselier 1963: 411).

There is a miniature tripartite linga from Prasat Pimai sanctuary exhibited at National museum Pimai (right end from the grouped figure) showing the reduced neck portion of Rudra bhaga similar to those of Champa lingas.
In case of maritime region, the tripartite lingas are usually attached with high pedestal square *pithas*. Most of them have flattened cylindrical top with simple inscribed sutra lines. In this case, while the lingas are usually carved in plain geometrical form, their *pithas* or pedestals are normally decorated with several kinds of motif carving. There are remains of high base *pithas*, perhaps made in Javanese style, found in-situ at Khao Kha monument (Nakon Sri Thammarat province) showing the Saivite influence from maritime region.

In fact, there is another type of tripartite *linga* found in Thailand which should be included in this study. They are generally classified as the *linga* with attached *pithas*. 

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*Fig. 68. The Cham *jatalinga* from Myson (left), *mukhalinga* from Trà-lièn and Cham *jatalinga* with reduced neck portion from Tra-Kieu (Boisselier 1963)*

*Fig. 69. The Javanese lingas with high decorated *pithas*, (left) the miniature linga from private collection, the linga from Tara-Ulan museum and Tandjong tirtha, Indonesia*
D: Special category: The circular linga with attached *pithas*

The making of small circular *linga* attached with *pithas* has originated in Indian subcontinent possibly after 5th century A.D. The *lingas* are described as sometime plain, diminishing in size and frequently forming like conical fingertip (Mitterwallner 1984: 24). For example, the linga enshrined inside *Ramesvara* temple at *Ramatirtha* (Halsi: Karnataka) is made in plain small circular form like a fingertip based on circular pedestal. In fact, there are some early medieval period linga carved in this form but still maintained the cylindrical shape and inscribed sutras of *Rudra bhaga* such as *Kandriya Mahadeva* temple : Khajuraho from Madhaya Pradesh. In South India these the linga arfrom Karnataka at *Virupaksa* temple: Pattadakal, Aihole and the *Kotilinga* at *Mahakuti*, the group of minor lingas from *Ekambesavara* temple: Kanchipuram, *Bhridesvara* temple: Tanjavour.

![Fig.70. (Left) The Kotilinga at Mahakuti, the group of minor lingas from Ekambesavara temple, Kanchipuram and the linga with round pitha at Bhridesvara temple, Tanjavour](image)

According to *Linga purana* (2.99: 6-8), this form of linga may have given rise to the concept of the divine union in the form of linga and pithas (Mitterwallner 1984:26). This tantric concept is also clearly developed in the later text written by *Aghora-Sivacharya* and gradually upgrading this type of linga as divine-union emblem.

In addition to the variation in linga feature, *pithas* being the emblem pedestal have been developed into various forms and decoration ranging from simple square base to circular platform. The making of high pithas is not only found in India, but also seen in Southeast Asian countries especially in Java region.

There is also another form of linga with attached *pithas* such as a group of minor simple lingas set in the same platform that are commonly found all over the Indian subcontinent. Additionally, the making of grouped minor linga is also seen from Khmer and Cham arts in mainland Southeast Asian region. These examples are the linga from *Mi-Son* (A) located in the Central Vietnam and at *Phanom Kulen* mountain center of Angkorean region.
In Thailand, there are some lingas with attached pithas dating from the late 5th – 12th century A.D. Most of them are considerably influenced by Khmer art that started flourishing from the 6th century A.D. onwards. There are some examples of the lingas made in this form as follows.

**The Siva linga from Sri Mahosoth, Prachina buri province, National museum Prachinaburi**

This Siva linga is reported from the archaeological remains from Sri Mahosoth located at the eastern part of Thailand and presently housed in National museum Prachinaburi. The measurement of linga including attached square pedestal is recorded, the height of linga is 15 cm. standing over the pithas measured as 58 cm. in length and 4.5 cm. high.
The significant part of this linga is the inscribed sutras line which is clearly carved on the cylindrical top portion (*Rudra bhaga*). In fact, the linga has only a circular part emerging from the square base with a channel to drain out the holy water. This linga should be dated from the 6th century A.D. as seen from the *Rudra bhaga* part that still maintains a circular form and the drawing of sutra lines. The thick *brahma sutra* is described as rising from the root and finally reaching to the highest point of *parsva sutra*.

Comparing with Indian emblem, the inscribed *suras* similar to the linga from *Rajghati* (Deogarh) and Elephanta cave. Both of them are dated to the middle of 6th century A.D. (Mitterwallner 1984: 19). Thus it would be able to place this Siva-linga from *Sri Mahosoth* at the contemporary period. In comparative study with other linga from mainland region, though the linga with attached pithas is rarely found, the round and circular feature of top portion would have defined the date of *Sri Mahosoth* linga closely to those of pre-Angkorean period (6th - 7th century A.D.) or at least before 9th century.

![Fig.73. The linga with high pithas from *Sombor Prei Kuk*, Cambodia](image-url)
The Siva linga from old Siva shrine (Hoh Prah Isavara), Nakon Srithammarat province: National museum Nakon Srithammarat and The terracotta linga from Prasat Chang Pi, Surin

This Siva linga with attached pithas had been worshipped in a Siva shrine of the Nakon Srithammarat city before being preserved in National museum Nakon Srithammarat. The linga is made of localized lime stone in the form of circular fingertip linga with square pithas pedestal. It is a small size linga measuring 15 cm high standing on the square base with holy water drainage and recorded as 42 cm. in length and width. Assuming from the simple character of this linga, it could have been locally made following Indian prototype. In fact, this kind of simple plain linga with pedestal is also found in the Indian subcontinent mostly dated from late 5th century A.D onwards or known as the early medieval period.

Although this kind of simple linga with attached pithas is very rare to be seen in Thailand, the only terracotta one has been reported from Prasat Chang Pi temple at Surin province. The same type is also reported from Cambodian and Vietnam. There are more various types of simple linga in Khmer and Cham arts as the plain lingas are sometime set in group of the same platform. The lingas with attached pithas in Thailand are normally created in single stands. According to the general character of plain circular linga with simple square platform, this linga could probably be dated to around 6th – 8th century A.D.
The minor linga with Pitha from Prasat Phu Prasat temple, Ubon Ratchatani, National museum Ubon Ratchatani and The Siva linga with attached pithas from Lopburi province, National museum Bangkok

![Image of linga and pithas](image)

Fig.75. (Left) The Siva linga from Prasat Phu Prasat temple and (Right) Sivalinga from Lopburi, National museum Bangkok

The Siva lingas with carved molding pithas are mostly influenced by Khmer art dated from early of 9th-12th century A.D. These lingas from Lopburi province and Prasat Phum Prasat temple yield some salient features of Khmer linga such as the flatted circular top (Rudra bhaga) and high molding pedestal with holy water drainage.

The Lopburi linga preserved in National museum Bangkok is also probably dated from the 9th century century onward, but should be a little earlier than the Prasat Phu Prasat temple though the general feature is almost similar.

In this case, the linga from Lopburi has reflected some significant characters regarding the shape of circular top portion and clear inscribed sutra lines. Measurement from the top portion of linga to the root as recorded is around 10 cm. standing over the 35 cm. geometrical square pithas. The linga pithas is formed as high square base with three projecting parts on the top, middle and base. The craving of the parallel Brahma sutra rising beyond the Parsva sutra lines is close to the early medieval linga from Svargabrahmana temple at Andhra Pradesh dated to late 7th-8th century A.D. Moreover, though the top portion is reduced to a small size, still it has maintained the circular shape. These distinctive features have brought the approximate dating of this linga as early as before 9th century A.D. Perhaps it could be dated to the early Angkorean period or at around 8th – 9th century A.D.
In case of the linga from Prasat Phum Prasat temple, there are some significant features which provided general dating for these Siva lingas beside the high pithas. The linga from Prasat Phu Prasat temple is measured as 12 cm. high standing over the square pithas of 25 cm. The flattened top portion reflects the Khmer Angkorean influence after the 9th century. This linga form is quite similar to those of lingas from Phanom Bakheang and others Angkorean period (Delvert 1963: Pl. LIV).

In fact, the lingas of Angkorean style are normally made either in small tripartite form or simply plain with flatted circular head emerging from the high pedestal. Additionally, the elaborated pedestal is commonly formed by the two projecting portion with recessed layer in between. The general dating from Prasat Phum Prasat temple architectural style also provides possible dating of Siva linga as the temple was constructed in Angkor Wat style (12th century A.D.) Thus, it would be able to give proper dating of this linga as 11th-12th century A.D.

In India the making of linga with elaborated base has been broadly noticed from the early mediaeval period. Thus, it can be assumes that this trend which appeared in Southeast Asia are definitely influenced from Indian subcontinent. In maritime region, the Siva lingas enshrined in the temples are normally carved in tripartite form standing on high and decorated high pedestal such as the linga from Candi Ijo and Candi sari located at the central Java region.

Fig. 76. The lingas from from (left) Candi Ijo and Candi sari, Indonesia, The category of pedestals or Siva linga pithas in Thailand

The early evidence of Siva linga pithas can be seen from some stone pedestals which are presently preserved in National museums of major provinces such as Nakon Prathom, Nakon Srithammarat, Chaiya, Pimai and Khon Khean etc. There are a number of stone bases made in various forms such as square base with middle round mortise for linga setting, oval
shape with long extended water drainage channel and bordered square shape with long projecting portion. There are examples for those of simple square basins with drawn chiseled mortises in round or square shapes found at Nakon Prathom National museum, Prah Prathom Chedi temple and National museum U Thong.

The Siva linga *pithas* predated to 9th century A.D or before the Khmer influence period are mostly in simple forms without elaborate projecting parts or recessed middle layer and in some cases the middle round mortise for setting the linga are vertically chiseled or dug in quite deep suitable for each individual linga. The central mortises are usually quadrangular, square and sometime round. In some cases, the middle mortises often fit into the center of light circular bulge in the stone, to from another circle incised into it, or to from a second, shallower, round mortise. This kind of pedestal, perhaps, was deliberately made as images supporters (Michel 2002: 132).

There are a number of stone Siva linga *pithas* found in the Southern Thailand, especially eastern coastal area, at an old Saivite shrine of Nakon Srithammarat. The linga is associated with circular pedestal which is discovered *in situ*. The unique feature of this base is its octagonal shape central mortise, into which the middle part of linga originally has been positioned. The other remarkable point is that the base is circular having a wide border and equipped with a large drainage portion that make the emerged linga appear much smaller than that of the octagonal mortise. This distinctive character of making round pedestal is remarkably similar to the South Indian medieval period as commonly seen from Kanchipuram and *Bridesvara* temple (Tanjavor).

There are other distinctive monolithic pedestals found at the Southern peninsular one associated with the sanctuary at Khao Kha (Sichon: Nakon Srithammarat), Tha Khwai sanctuary (Nakon Srithammarat) and the third found at Wiang Sra site (Chaiya: Suratthani). These monolithic pedestals include an elaborated base with sober moldings, especially found very high in the case of Khao Kha sanctuary which the base is combined with a fragment which possibly served as a support for a receptacle to collect water draining from the above pouring spout. In case of Wiang Sra, a central section with pilasters projecting out to a greater or lesser extent, or even just adorned with decorative strips and a small cornice that more or less merges into the ablution basin. The square central mortises of these three pedestals look rather small and have served either for statues or lingas.
At the Northeastern and Eastern regions of Thailand before the 9th century A.D. or at least up to the time of early Khmer cultural impact, the form of Siva linga pedestal is similar to those of the central part as seen from the linga with associated pithas from *Sri Mahosoth* site (Prachinaburi) which is simply made in square shape base with a drawn chiseled border of the same shape. The other example is the square pedestal with early South Indian style inscription from the site of *Don Khum Nueng* (Roiet province). The square base has a thick border surrounding the middle square mortise which was once supposed to fit the linga or image with an extending front portion for ceremonial water was also clearly noticed.

The size and form of pithas probably developed along with the Siva linga which started from being simple or realistic in character to the more complicated and symbolical emblem. Their size varies, ranging from 30 cm. for the smallest base to more than 128 cm. The stone bases thick are almost 10 cm. In case of the linga with attached pithas, the pedestals are generally made in square shape with thick border and simply flattened base.
In case of the Siva linga pithas style after the coming of Khmer art influence (late of 8\textsuperscript{th} -13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.), most of them are formed as elaborated pedestal with projecting portions at the top and ground and recessed layer portion in between. The size of pithas would have been made according to the suitable proportion to the linga ranging from lesser than 30 cm. to more than 100 cm. These examples are preserved in National museums mostly located at the Northeastern part, such as Kon Khean, Roiet, Pimai and Maha Veeravongsa (Nakon Ratchsima province), Surin Lopburi and Ubon Ratchathani.

During this period, the square high linga pithas seemed to be the common form while the circular and other shapes were completely absent. Precisely, the Siva linga pedestals found in northeastern and central parts which was under Khmer cultural influence are more similar to those of Khmer pedestals in Cambodia. In other parts of mainland region, Champa of Central Vietnam which was considered to be the glorious Saivite state for centuries, the making of Siva linga became done complicated in form and pedestal decoration. There are a number of salient pedestal samples preserved at the museums: Da Nanag of Southern Vietnam.

The minor Siva linga, The Siva linga from Sri Tep site (Petchabura province) and Phanom Rung Sanctuary (Buriram Province)

These two lingas are possible to be classified in special category of minor group of Siva linga due to their minor size that is less than 10 cm. The stone linga from Sri Tep site is carved in cylindrical form, flattened ends with inscribed lines for making sacred emblem identification. The other one from Phanom Rung sanctuary is also simply made in plain tripartite form in small size measuring around 6.5 cm. These two lingas are reported from the conservation that had taken place in Saivite shrine or main hall of the sanctuary which implies the use of minor emblems as involving with ritual ceremony. Though mainland
Southeast Asia has left no trace of archaeological or epigraphic evidence mentioning the use or worship of minor linga in Brahmanical ritual, there is information regarding the small linga worship by the Saivite saints known as Pasupatas-lingayat as they were always carrying the small Siva linga on themselves (Wilson 1972: 8; Banerjea 1956: 458). Additionally, the Phanom Rung sanctuary is also mainly dedicated to Saivism as seen from the epigraphic source. Thus, it could be assumed that the miniature size Siva linga discovered from Saivite sanctuary possibly related to the Pasupatas sect that flourished in the mainland Southeast Asian especially in ancient Cambodian Kingdom from 9\textsuperscript{th} century.

In addition to these two stone minor lingas; there is the crystal linga which is presently in private collection. It was reported from Vat Sra Si Mum temple, Sichon district of Nakon Srithammarat. This crystal linga measures as two inch in diameter. According to O’Connor (1968: 14), this linga was possibly made as an amulet for worshipping as well as seen from the Indian subcontinent where the natural objects looking similar to the phallic shape such as stone from the river bed or sacred rivers have been valued by the devotee of Siva and carried on their person. The followers of Virasaiva sect in Southern India are known to carry and worship lingas as a sacred act of their tradition (Banerjea 1956: 454).

However, the worshipping of minor Siva linga was not only limited to Siva, because small linga made from terracotta was also discovered from Vishnu shrine at Avantipura swami temple, Kashmir (Sahni 1913-1914: 63-97). This temple, despite being dedicated to Siva, has the remains of a Vishnu shrine associated with the main deity. Similar to the Phanom Rung sanctuary in Thailand, there is the main shrine dedicated mainly to Siva and sub-temples situated nearby which probably enshrined Vishnu or minor gods. Perhaps, the Saivas normally did not have anything against worshiping other gods and hence the minor lingas were probably made for this purpose.

**The worship of natural linga or Svyambhu imga in Thailand:**

The worship of Svyambhu linga is not only practiced in India, but also available from Khao Kha monument at Nakon Sri Thammarat province. The group of bricks monuments located at the top of Khao Kha Mountain were functioned as Saivite pilgrimage places (tritha) where the huge natural stone formed linga was worshipped. The site location is befitting for tritha establishment as it is situated near the river. In addition to Svyambhu linga, the high linga pedestal and circular pithas are discovered from this site. These evidences attest this group of monuments as one of an important Saivite pilgrimage center in Southern Thailand.
According to the archaeological evidences before the coming of Christian era, the localize chiefdoms in Southeast Asia had close cultural connection with each other due to the trade contact mainly focused on exchanging of materials and migrations. Even before the Indian impact period, the people of this region had shared the common cultural characters as clearly reflected through the artifacts discovered to the present days.

In fact, though the maritime trade interaction with India was probably most developed during the early Christian era leading to the more material and cultural wealth for these Southeast Asian Kingdoms; it seems that the inner-region connection was also activated. The most obvious evidence which identifies shared cultural linkage is the widespread of Brahmanism, and the using of Sanskrit in the early Kingdoms. Although there are some differences noticed in particular elements depending on the level of Indian cultural impact
of each states, the main character of Brahmanical sects had been continuously preserved and somehow bringing about exchange or influence among the “Indianized” states of Southeast Asia.

The linga, considered to be the sacred emblem of Siva, is one of the cultural evidence reflecting the religious linkage between India and the Southeast Asian states. The group of realistic lingas found in mainland region shares the same character from eastward at Oc-Eo of Transbassac region to the southward at the Malay Penninsular. In this case, there are some realistic lingas from Southern Thailand dated to the late of 5th century A.D. which have been reported from sites or temples located along the coastal area which were connected to the ancient ports showing the beginning period of Saivism in this area as early as the time of Indian maritime trade. In the same way, the ekmukhalinga from Chaiya is also reflected the Indian influence through the face and adornment.

In addition to overseas contact, the evidence of inner-region connection is clearly witnessed from the group of small ekmukhalinga of Transbassac that was widely spread not only over the mainland region, but also scattered in the Malay Peninsula. The unique feature of this type of linga is that it is not seen at all in the Indian subcontinent.

Although there are some comparable items, the exact prototype form of this linga has not yet been discovered. Therefore, it would be possible to consider them as locally made linga which brought an important rapport in Southeast Asian religious connection that linked the entire region together.

Similar to the development of Siva linga in Indian subcontinent, the Siva linga in Southeast Asian had gradually developed from the realistic character to be more symbolical appearance as tripartite or conventional linga after the end of 7th century A.D., a little later than the place of origin. Perhaps, due to the philosophical concept or being more of identical emblem, the number of tripartite lingas made in various sizes and decorative styles had been enshrined in the Saivite temples and being more prominent than the older form they gradually disappeared.

During this period, the Khmer, Cham and Javanese arts had a major contribution to the distinctive and unique style of Siva linga distributed over entire Southeast Asia. In case of Thailand, the influence of Khmer linga is much more noticeable than the others as they are described in simple tripartite form, sometimes associating with pithas and importantly showing flattened top portion.
In Southeast Asia, the installation of Siva linga is not limited in the temple as only being the principle object of devotional ritual, but the erecting of linga may have also been associated with the concept of sacred pilgrimage places or known as *tirtha*. According to the reports mentioned on the place of origins or sites where some Siva lingas were discovered, it is very interesting to notice that some of them were related to the sacred tank, well or mountain. This suggestion is proved by the original location of Siva linga from *Kok Chang Din* (U Thong), *Pra That Phan Khan* temple (Roiet), *Khao Kha* and *Vat Na Khom* temple (Nakon Srithammarat). Perhaps, the erecting of Siva linga would have been the primary object of *tritha* foundation to purify these sacred places as well as being the Saivite *tirthas* in Indian subcontinent.

Besides being a distinctive religious emblem, the erecting of linga was also regarded as the innovative symbol of political expansion.

As a result of great devotion toward linga as Siva’s representative form, this concept inspired the local lords to eagerly establish the Siva linga on their behalf and for the royal prosperity. This tradition had continuously been practiced in ancient Khmer Kingdom where the Kings were given high regard as the great divine on earth according to their eulogistic inscriptions. Therefore, the worshipping of Siva lingas in Southeast Asian state has been represented as the religious devotional elements and royal identity at the same time. To support this suggestion, it can be explained by the discovery of large numbers of Khmer influenced Siva lingas from the temples or domestic sites located at the major part of Northeastern Thailand which was governed as the local district of ancient Cambodian Kingdom for centuries.

Though the general character of the Siva linga is observed simpler in iconographical feature than other divine images, their form clearly reflects the early Saivite philosophy that was initially started worshipping Siva as the fertility God then gradually becoming the mighty one known as *Mahadeva* who is absolute in his eternal divine power which is greater than the others. The development of Siva worship in Saivite philosophy can be explained from the characteristic changes in the lingas since they were initially made in natural feature and gradually became complete symbolic emblem consisting of Rudra bhaga (Siva), Vishnu bhaga and Brahma bhaga together in the sacred symbol.

In fact, the reason for the linga being extensively worshiped for more than thousand years is the sacred symbol representing the enormous divine power on their simple feature. This concept perhaps led to the superior stage of the Siva linga establishment when it is
considered as being primary and the principle image, without this sacred emblem the embodied image of Siva is infructuous (Shastri et al 1969: 63). Thus, wherever the Saivism came into existence, the linga was enshrined together with other images making the cult of linga become more prominent and widely accepted over entire Southeast Asian countries.

The Image of Siva in Iconic form: sculptures and reliefs.

The iconic sculptures of Siva in mainland Southeast Asia and maritime region are generally dated after the 8th century A.D. (Malleret 1959: 373). Most of the Saivite emblems are made in the form of linga which was worshipped as the common symbol of Siva. However, there the early Siva images reported from Trapang Pong, Kampong Cham Kao and Bathe of Transbassac region, but very few of them are in proper condition for study.

In Southern Thailand, the early images of Siva dated from the 8th-10th century A.D. are presently exhibited at National museum Songkla and Bangkok. There are bronze images of Agastaya, Siva Mahadeva and stone sculpture of Vatuka Bhairava. As a result of Siva in the form of linga had been given more acceptances in religious tradition than the sculpture, the number of Siva in human form is limited. And these images might have been brought from India or Indonesia as they are made in portable size and single unique piece.

The bronze image of Agastaya or Bhatara guru, Sathing Pra district, National museum Songkla.

Fig.82. The bronze image of Agastaya, National museum Songkla
This bronze image in Thailand is rare found depicting Agastaya image and perhaps, the only one in this country. The bronze image of Agastaya is from Sathing Pra district and measured as 22.5 cm. in high. This portable image might have been brought from Indonesia where the cult of Agasthaya is well established.

In fact, Siva in Agastya form is worshipped as Mahaguru of the devas and is also believed as the founder of Aryan- Brahmanism in South India. The iconographic feature of Agastaya is described as an old rishi in healthy form, peaceful face with long beard and knotted hair (jatamukuta) like other priests. Similar to the other sages, he wears sacred thread (Yajnopavitra) and a long dhoti which is tightly knotted by simple cloth belt. His left hand holds the whisk, but the other is already broken. This image is similar to the Agastaya images of early Chola (early 9th-10th century A.D.) and central Javanese arts (7th-9th century A.D.). Therefore, it can be dated around the 10th century A.D. comparable to the art of Sri Vijaya Kingdom in maritime region that dated from the 8th-13th century A.D. (Kairisk 1981: 69)

Fig. 83. The Agastaya images from Southern Thailand, Brahmapurisvara (early Chola art), Candi Banon, National museum Jakarta (central Java arts) and the sage Ternavindu form Singosari complex (eastern Javanese art the 10th-14th c.) (Kinney 2000: fig. 116)

Though the image of Agastaya is the only one found in Thailand, there are some comparative examples of contemporary images provided from South India and Indonesia. In the light of iconographic and artistic comparisons, the Agastaya image from Songkla seems to share the same general character with the Javanese and Chola images.
The Agastaya image from Songkla has some decorative jewelled ornaments on the knotted hair same as depicted on the Chola and Javanese image, but slightly closer to Javanese style. There are others significant features which reflect the Javanese influence such as the shape of beard in Songkla and Javanese Agastaya images are seen in triangle shape, but the Chola Agastaya image has flowing natural beard. The long simple dhoti is generally seen in Javanese art. Though the shared iconographic attributes are similar among those images, the waist band (udharabandha) which is always decorated in the male image in South Indian art is clearly absent in Javanese and Songkla images. Thus, it is able to assume that the Agastaya from Songkla was influenced by Javanese art of the 10th century A.D.

However, the Agastaya image of eastern Javanese art dated to the 10th-13th century A.D. is also shown slightly different from the central Javanese style of earlier period. The other bronze image of Agastaya dated around the 9th century is also reported from Jalong, Malaysia (Micheal 2002: 335; fig 166). Though they are quite different in appearance, there are some common characters which can be comparable to the Songkla image. The Jalong Agastaya is represented as an old man with healthy figure, wearing short dhoti up to knee with the sacred thread (yajnopavitra) flowing down it. The hair is pulled up as jatamukuta with a long beard. He is supposed to hold the rosary or whisk in the right hand and water pot on the left as commonly seen in Saivite sage. Grisworld (1962) has given a reasonable date to 9th century A.D. contemporary to the Songkla image.

Interestingly, there is the bronze image of Agastaya (?) reported from Vat Po located at Southern Vietnam (Cisbassac region). The image is possibly dated to the end of 12th century, comparable to AngkorWat-Baphoun stlye. In fact, the major iconographic feature is similar to those of maritime region. Only the short and highly decorated dhoti of Bayon style make it slightly different.
Fig. 84. The Agastaya (?) image (65 cm) from Vat Po, Can tho district of Southern Vietnam, (Malleret 1963: 43-44, Pl. XVI)

The bronze image of *Siva Mahadeva* from *Vat Khanun* temple, Songkla, National museum Songkla

Fig. 85. The bronze image of Siva mahadeva, National museum Songkla
This image represents four armed Siva (35 cm). His hands were once supposed to hold the divine attributes but in present condition only one unclear item can be seen in his upper left hand. The image has the crescent moon decorated on his *jatamukuta*. Behind the head is a flamed halo. The Siva image does not have much adornment. It has only the sacred thread (*yajnopavitra*) and plain long dhoti tightened by bead string and cloth belt. He is standing on lotus base in balance (*sambhaga*) pose. The expression on the face is very silent and peaceful.

![Fig. 86.](image)

**Fig. 86. (Left) The Siva-Mahadeva image from Songkla, the bronze image of Avalokitesvara and Siva of Central Javanese art, National museum Jarkata**

The Siva Mahadeva image from Songkla has shown significant feature which is comparable to the bronze images of central Javanese style dated around the 8th-9th century A.D. (Lamb 1961: 89-91; Boisselier and Beurdeley 1974: Pl.64; Krairisk 1981: 69). It is remarkable that the Songkla Siva image has reflected an art work that is much closer to central Javanese style as seen from the Avalokitesvara image. Though they are different deities, the general feature of costume and iconographic feature are comparable according to the concept of priesthood.

The crescent moon clearly depicted on the *jatamukuta* of the Songkla Siva image is noticed on the Javanese Siva bronze image as well. In comparison with Javanese Siva image dated slightly later around the 9th century A.D., the Siva *Mahadeva* image from Songkla seems to be made much simply than the other which is highly decorated with jeweled
ornaments. Therefore, it would be reasonable to date this Songkla Mahadeva image in the same period as of those of central Javanese bronze images.

**The Vatuka Bhairava from Viang Sra, Suratthani province, National museum Bangkok**

![Image of Vatuka Bhairava](image)

**Fig. 87. The Vatuka Bhairava from Viang sra, National museum Bangkok**

This image represents the furious forum of Siva (53 cm), commonly known in Indian iconography as Bhairava. The God is carved with four arms, standing naked and leaning against dog which always accompanies him in this form. Although he is seen as a naked angry sage, the image wears the yajnopavitra and several jewels such as necklace, bracelets and a belt with role of bells. Among these mentioned ornaments, the string of akshamala or bell chain hangs almost up to knee level. This character resembles to early Chola period and beyond (Harle 1963: 118). Moreover, the fan of hair spreading around the image’s head is a significant feature of Bhairava of Chola period dated around 850-1000 A.D. (Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1957: 15). There are some depictions of Bhairava in Chola style clearly seen from major Saivite temples like Brhadesvara (Tanjavour), Darasuram and Gangaikonda Cholapuram. They apparently share the common iconographic aspects with the Viang Sra image from Thailand.
Among the attributes held in four arms, there are trident (sula), drum (damaru), skull bowl (kapala) and rosary (aksamala); the trident is the most identified attribute as well as the visible third eye on his forehead. This image, though it seems to be much in similarity with Chola style, the hands that are holding attributes still present kathaka mudra like other late Pallava style. Thus, it would be reasonable to date this image to early Chola period (9th-10th century A.D.). Perhaps, this image might have been brought from South India for installing inside the Saivite shrine of Brahmanas community that were once located in this region.

The Javanese and South Indian influenced Savite images dated after the 8th-10th century A.D. were found in Southern Thailand. Three sculptures were found which were perhaps a result of the religious trend rapidly changing into Buddhist Mahayanism. It was influenced from Javanese Island during the foundation of Sri Vijaya Kingdom of Sumatra and Malay peninsula from late of 8th century A.D. However, the Brahmanical rituals was continuously practiced in this region as evidenced from the present day worship of Siva linga at the Siva shrine (Hoh Prah Isavara) of Nakon Srithammarat city.
On the contrary, the Northeastern Thailand of contemporary period had already been the center of Khmer-Brahmanism that was extensively spread along with the political stream from ancient Cambodian Kingdom known as Angkor or Yashodhara pura. From early 9th - 13th century A.D. onwards, the Saivite images as well as other sect had been under strong influence of Khmer art which is considered as the modification of Indian art.

The stone sculptures of Siva in Khmer art from Thailand

As mentioned earlier, though the worship of Siva in human form had been practiced in ancient Cambodian Kingdom before 9th century A.D., but the numbers of icons are far less than lingas. Thus, it can be stated that linga was regarded as the most common representation of Siva for the Khmers from the beginning of their Saivite worship tradition.

From the ephigraphic source, there are some references that mention the worship of Siva image. Dupont (1955: 110) suggested on some words which have its meaning related to Siva images in the inscription dated before the 9th century may refer to the Siva images, but this proposition has not yet been proved. However, there are some literary names of Siva found from the inscriptions at Sombor Prei Kuk as Prahsitesvara (the smiling Siva) and Nrittesvara (Siva Nataraja). Though these two Siva images are completely lost, at least the names are being an evidence of Siva image in ancient Khmer Kingdom.

The emergence of Siva image in authentic Khmer art has clearly started from early of 9th century A.D. as seen from the group of Siva accompanied by goddess, Uma and Ganga (Uma-Ganga-Patisavara) of Preah Ko style from Prasat Bakong sanctuary. In Khmer art of Angkorean period, there are also other Siva images depicted in the form of relief and sculpture like Uma-Mahesavara or Nataraja that had been in popularity among the Brahmanical deities. Hence, this kind of religious art tradition would have influenced to the Khmer art in Thailand as well as in Cambodia.
Fig. 89. The sthanaka murti of Siva image and the group of Uma-Ganga-Patisavara images from Prasat Ba Kong sanctuary of Preh Ko style. (Boisselier 1955: pl. 33, 36)

The Siva image from Prasat Nong Ku, Aranya Pradesh district of Sra Keaw province, National museum Bangkok, the Siva image from Ku Noi, Mahasarkam province, National museum Konkhean and the Siva image from Prasat Nang Ram, Nakon Ratchasima province, National museum Pimai

Fig. 90. (Left) The Siva image from Prasat Nong Ku, National museum Bangkok, (Middle) the Siva image (?) from Ku Noi, National museum Konkhean and (Right) the Siva image (?) from Prasat Nang Ram, National museum Pimai
Though the worship of Siva in human form had been continuously practiced from the beginning period of ancient Khmer Kingdom, the actual iconographic form of Siva in northeastern Thailand is very rarely discovered. At least among three sculptures, the one from Prasat Nong Ku is already identified as Siva while the rest of them are still in question, either being the depiction of Siva or Saivite door guardian (dvalapala). All of them are accurately dated around the middle of 11th-12th century A.D. by their costume and ornaments that are comparable to Baphoun-Angkor Wat style (Boisselier 1955).

In comparison with authentic Khmer images, the Siva image from Nong Ku (157 cm.) reflects the similar iconographic aspects like the depiction of crescent moon on jatamukut and the third eye on the forehead of image. These identified characters are commonly seen in Khmer Siva images dated from the 9th century A.D. onwards. Although the remaining two images are still doubtful, they at least show some significant features like the third eye depicted on the forehead and crescent moon. The Siva (?) from Ku noi (172 cm.) clearly shows the third eye without crescent moon whereas the Siva (?) from Prasat Nang Ram (96 cm.) has dawy line depicting the crescent moon but the third eye is not seen.

Fig. 91. The head portion of Siva (?) images from Prasat Nang Ram and Ku Noi which showing Siva identifiable aspects like crescent moon and third eye

The other point of iconographic study is divine attributes. Though the arms of Siva from Nong Ku and Ku Noi is absolutely broken, the two arms would have held rosary (aksamala) or trident (sula) which normally was considered as important attributes of Siva. In fact, the attributes held by this divine image could be either made attached with the hand or metal objects that can be taken off from the sculpture. The Siva (?) from prasat Nang Ram is represented with two arms and holding trident (sula) with both hands, but the Siva (?) from
Ku Noi would have held the long mace (gada) as traced from the remaining part of mace on the sculptural base.

These are the sculptures that are possibly considered as Siva images in northeastern Thailand, besides a number of linga and high reliefs related to the widespread of Siva worship in this region.

As mentioned earlier, the worship ritual in Saivite shrines in India as well as Southeast Asia are mainly conducted directly through the linga that is considered as the most important representation of Siva. If the images of Siva were available, they would have been regarded as associated form of worship ritual in separate shrine.

The high reliefs of Siva and his associated deities in Khmer art

The representation of Siva in high relief form is much higher in number than the single sculptures. Most of them are depicted on the decorative part of architectural structures such as pediments and lintels. There are plenty of Saivite reliefs found in the northeastern Thailand dated from the 11th century A.D. onwards due to the more intensive cultural interaction with ancient Cambodian Kingdom, especially under the Mahidharapura dynasty. In this study, the representations of Siva in relief form are generally classified in three categories, the Siva-Nataraja, Uma-Mahesvara murti and other specific scenes such as yoga dakshinamurti or accompanying with other sect’s deities.

The representation of Siva Nataraja

1) The reliefs of Siva Nataraja in Khmer art, northeastern Thailand

Before coming to the specific detail of the Siva Nataraja in Thailand, this particular forum in Khmer art should be briefly described. The earliest reference to Nataraja in Khmer art is mentioned in the inscription at Sombor Prei Kuk as Nrittesvara. The later period inscriptions from Prasat Pre Rup and Ta Keaw dated around the 10th -11th century also figured the image of Siva Nataraja as Siva who is an expert in performance (tandva), having ten arms and given an honorific name as Natakesvara. Moreover, the inscriptions from Phnom Sandak and Preah Vihar dated around the 12th century during the reign of King Suryavarman II clearly refer to the installation of golden Nataraja images in the main shrine. However, the sculpture of Siva in this form has yet to be discovered in any site either in Cambodia or Thailand (Bhattacharya 1957).
The early form of Siva Nataraja might be depicted on the lintel at Sonbor Prei Kuk. Siva is seen dancing with the rishis who is playing musical instruments. In the later depictions, the ten armed Siva is dancing while the Brahma and Vishnu are sitting and showing the hands in respective pose. On the lintel from Prasat Prah Pithu dated around the 12th century, Brahma and Vishnu are also playing musical instruments accompanying the dancing lord. There are similar form of dancing companions seen from Angkor Wat and Banteay Srei where Siva is described as dancing among the other Brahmanical Gods, apsaras and mythical creators like nagas and kinaras. The relief of Siva Nataraja from Prasat Beng Mala is another interesting scene where Siva is performing his universal dance in company with Parvati and Ganesha. At Banteay Samre, Siva is dancing on the stage supported by a man and there are two demons (asura) attaching to the God’s legs.

![Fig. 92. The relief of Siva Nataraja from Prasat Prah Pithu, Cambodia (12th century A.D.)](image)

In comparison with Indian art, Siva Nataraja in South India is always seen dancing on the back of demon (apsamara purusa or asura), while in the northern Indian tradition, the place of demon is commonly replaced by the bull nandi. The examples of Siva Nataraja in South Indian art are available at Badami (6th-7th century A.D.) and Gangaikonda Cholapuram (10th-11th century A.D.) And also, the depictions of Siva Nataraja in eastern Indian art at Odhisa are provided from Vaital and Satrughnesvara temple dated around the 6th - 8th century A.D.

The remarkable point of Siva Nataraja in Khmer art is Siva neither dancing on demon nor bull, but always performing on the moulding stage or earth without lifting his foot high. Actually, the Siva Nataraja in South Indian art is always depicted with four arms whereas the northern and eastern schools are generally seen with multiple numbers. Thus, it would be able to suggest that Siva Nataraja in Khmer art might be inspired from North Indian tradition, but the southern influence is also seen from the demon (asura) figures.
The depiction of Siva *Nataraja* is also seen in Cham art of Southern Vietnam. Three good examples of Siva in this form are provided from My Son C.1 and Phong Le dated between the 10th-11th century A.D. and the eastern pediment of *Po Klaung Garai* temple dated to the 12th century A.D. (Boisselier 1963; fig.17, 77,172). Siva is represented with multiple arms and dancing with his body moving naturally. The God is sometimes accompanying his divine family or mythical creators like nymphae and demons. *Nataraja* in Cham art has shown the significant feature of the natural character of divine performance while *Nataraja* in *Khmer* art would normally be strictly in the ethnic form than naturalism of sculptural motivation. According to this aesthetic feature, the art of Champa Kingdom seems to be closer to Indian concept than the other mainland countries.

Fig. 93. The reliefs of Siva nataraja in Cham art from (Left) *My Son C1* and (Right) *Phong Li*, Vietnam

Fig. 94. The *Nataraja* from Odhisa, (Left) Vaital and (Right) *Satrughnesvara* temple (courtesy, Sikhashree Ray)
The representation *Siva Nataraja* in Thailand definitely followed Khmer tradition. Thus, these reliefs can be dated contemporarily with those of authentic *Khmer* art in Cambodia.

1.) The *Siva Nataraja* from *Prasat Nairai Jeng Weng*, Surin province.

This relief is depicted on the eastern pediment, showing the image of ten armed Siva dancing in company with five deities. Though it is difficult to identify each god, the Ganesh is seen seated at the left side of the relief. There are also dancing *devatas* above the head of Siva. According to the costume and decorated motifs, it is possible to date this lintel to early 12th century which is comparable to late *Baphoun-Angkor Wat* style (Boisselier 1955; Diskul 1960; 1967).
2. The relief of Siva Nataraja from Phanom Rung sanctuary, Buriram province.

![Image](image1)

Fig. 97. The relief from eastern pediment of Phanom Rung sanctuary

This relief is one of the most beautiful representations of Nataraja in Thailand. Here, Siva is dancing on the stage among the associated deities and yaksini. Siva is depicted as the great dance performer with motivative ten arms. Though it is difficult to identify his divine followers seated at the left side, the one of two yaksini would have been the depiction of Karaikal (Karikkalammayivar) who was regarded as Saivite Bhakti in South Indian literature known as Periapuram. The Karaikal is seen as women with pendulous breasts and sometime carrying child on her shoulder (Roveda 2005). This relief is dated to the middle of 12th century A.D. of Angkor Wat style according to the pattern of costume and associated date of stone architecture.

![Image](image2)

Fig. 98. The figure of Karaikal ammaiyr sitting with ganas from the relief of Siva Nataraja from Gangaikonda Cholapuram
3. The relief of *Siva Nataraja* from *Prasat Sri Khorabhumi*, Surin province

Fig. 99. The relief from Prasat *Sri Khorabhumi*, Surin province

This relief is the depiction of ten arms dancing Siva. He is standing on the stage supported by three swans (*humsa*). There are other Brahmanical deities like Brahma, Vishnu, Ganesh and Durga sitting on the lotus seat accompanying the cosmic dance. There are the image of rishis and *devatas* depicted on the surrounding scene. Apart from the *Nataraja*, there is an other secondary scene of *Arjuna-kirata* murti placed at the right side of Siva. The small depiction is seen as Arjuna fighting with *Kirata* (Siva as hunter) for the boar. Both of them are pointing the arrow at each other. According to the decorated motifs and costume, this relief is accurated dated around the middle of 12th century A.D. and comparable to *Angkor Wat* style.

Fig. 100. The depiction of Arjuna-Kirata from *Prasat Sri Khorabhumi* compared with Pallava images from Kailashnath temple, Kanchipuram
4. The relief of Siva Nataraja from Prasat Sra Kamphang Yai, Sri Saket province

Fig. 101. The relief from Prasat Sra Kamphang Yai, Sri Saket province

This representation of ten armed Siva is almost eroded, but the remaining parts are available for iconographic study. Siva is depicted as ten armed standing on the stage accompanied with male deities and Karaikal who is seated on the right side of Siva. Though the costume and other motifs are mostly damaged, this relief is probably dated around the late 11th-12th century A.D. according to the architectural structure and decorating motifs.

5. The relief of Siva Nataraja from Prasat Pimai, Nakon Ratchasima province

Fig. 102. The relief of Siva Nataraja from Prasat Pimai, Nakon Ratchasima province

This relief is depicted on the pediment of the main shrine of Pimai complex. Siva is probably presented as ten armed in Khmer common form. He is dancing on the stage surrounded by divinities, rishis, Nandi and Karaikal. In this relief, Siva wears the pyramid
shaped crown which is different from earlier Siva images as it always identified as Vishnu *kiritamukuta*. This relief could be dated around the 12th century A.D. in *Angkor Wat* style.

6. The relief of Siva Nataraja from *Ku Suan Thang*, Buriram province: National museum Pimai

![Image of Siva Nataraja relief]

**Fig. 103. The relief from Ku Suan Thang, Buriram province presently exhibited at National museum Pimai**

This representation of Siva is depicted on the lintel of *Ku Suan Thang* which was supposed to be a Saivite temple. The *Siva Nataraja* is seen in dancing pose with two arms. Brahma and Ganesh are accompanying the cosmic dance along with other minor deities. Siva is regarded as the lord of dancing as noticed from the royal symbols which are held in the hands of divine followers. According to the carved features, this lintel could have been made by local craftmen drawing inspiration from late *Angkor Wat*-Bayon style of Khmer art dated around the late 12th-13th century A.D.

These are the proper examples of Siva *Nataraja* in Thailand under the Khmer inspiration. Although it is impossible to trace back to the particular Indian school which influenced to both Khmer art in Cambodia and Thailand, there would be some significant features from both northern and southern Indian traditions reflected in Khmer art. These Indian influenced concepts are multi-hands presentation that is well depicted in the North Indian images or the depiction of *Karaikal ammaiyar* which would definitely come from South India. Therefore, it can be stated that Khmer art is the unique aspect of Indian tradition which adapts and represents the distinctive features from the major schools of both Indian regions.

**The reliefs of Uma-Mahesvara murti**

The representations of *Uma Mahesvara* in Thailand are mostly depicted on decorative parts of architectural structure. This is the gentle scene of Siva and his consort, known as
Parvati, riding on the bull *Nandi*. This form is found very common in Khmer reliefs. The God is always represented with two arms; one holding his divine attributes either rosary or trident and his consort. In Indian art, Siva is shown with four arms, his body covered with antelope skin and sometimes he also carries a trident on his shoulder. In Khmer reliefs, Uma is commonly seen seated sideways on the bull, though occasionally noticed riding astride. Similar to the general iconographic form, the Goddess holds the lotus in one hand. There are a number of *Uma-Mahesvara murti* found from many Brahmanical temples in Cambodia such as *Prasat Preah Vihar, Banteay Srei, Phanom Chisor, Banteay Samre*, and *Bayon*. Most of them are dated ranging from the 11th-13th century A.D.

On comparison with Indian art, Sivarammamurti (1957: 48) has stated that there is a difference between Uma Mahesvara murti from north and south India as in northern Indian sculptures. Siva not only embraces Parvati but also presses her breast and caresses her chin as well. This embracing character is the most significant feature of northern type. There are very fine examples of this form provided from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Odhisa dated around 11th-12th century A.D. While in the South Indian tradition, Siva and Parvati are always seated together but not in embracing scene like the northern style. There are good examples of this form in South Indian art from *Hemavati (Andhara Pradesh), Helebidu* and *Ellora* that show the similar characters with *Khmer Uma Mahesvara murti* reliefs (Bhattacharya 1961b: 84-85). These South Indian images are dated around 6th-8th century A.D, except the Helebid image that dated to late 11th-12th century A.D in Hoysala style.

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*Fig. 104. The two Uma-Mahesvara images in Indian art (Left) the sculptures from Mandsor, State museum Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)*
Fig. 105. The Uma-Mahesvara images in Indian art, the Southern images (Left) from Hemavati (A.P.), State museum Chennai and Helebidu, State museum Bangalore

The *Uma-Mahesvara murti* in Thailand

Similar to Khmer Saivite tradition, this form has also been commonly depicted on the architectural structures. These are examples of *Uma-Mahesvara murti* mostly reported from the northeastern region. Only one is attached with *Prang Song Pi Nong* at Sri Tep located in the upper central part of the country. The earliest one could be dated around the middle of 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. comparable to *Koh Ker* style from *Prasat Muang Kheak, Nakon Ratchasima* province. The rest of them are generally dated from the 11\textsuperscript{th} -12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. or *Baphoun-Angkor Wat* styles.

The depiction of images share similar characters. If any difference exists, it would be the seating pose and relief composition. In fact, the God and Goddess are seen seated next to each other or in overlapping pose. Similar to Khmer tradition, the divine couple is always seated together, but not showing any embracing pose.

Fig. 106. The reliefs of *Uma-Mahesvara murti* in Thailand (left) *Prasat Sra Kamphang Yai, Sri Saket* and *Muang Tum, Buriram province*
The other forms of Siva: Yoga Dakshinamurti and group deity’s reliefs.

There are some other forms of Siva which are very interesting for iconographic study, but not so common like Nataraja and Uma Mahesvara. The Yoga Dakshinamurti is represented on the eastern pediment of Phanom Rung sanctuary dated to early 12th century A.D. According to the epigraphic information, this relief is related to Pasupata cult as well as tantric.

Fig. 108. The relief of Yoga Dakshinamurti from Phanom Rung Sanctuary
This relief represents Siva in the form of Yoga Daksinamurti which is considered as rare in Khmer art. In Khmer reliefs, he is sitting on the throne with one hand raised to the chest and other in the teaching mudras. According to Indian Iconography (Rao 1916: 273), there are differences between Siva representation as a teacher of Shastra known as Siva – Vykhayana Daksinamurti and the teacher of Yoga or Yoga Dakshinamurti as seen particularly from the seated posture, the number, mudras and the attendance at his teaching by a number of rishis. At Phanom Rung pediment, he is seated among women and below him is the dead body lying on the ground, held by the women’s hands.

In fact, this Yoga Daksinamurti is not merely meant to Siva due to the composition of attendances, but also could be Pasupati sage who resided at the hermitage at Ramayagiri (Phanom Rung sanctuary) and was known as “Narendradithya”.

It is possible to state that this relief is the personified image of great sage Narendradithya, the founder of this hermitage and who once belonged to the Royal family of Mahidharapura dynasty. Perhaps he was also the cousin of Suryavarman II.

According to the inscription at Phanom Rung sanctuary (K.384) we get valued information regarding Narendradithya as he had left from nagara (yashodharapura) along with the honorable ladies. And also the inscription further mentions his tantric ritual which magically cured the dead people from the snake poison. (Suksawasti 2006: 328). Thus, the relief of Yoga Daksinamurti on the eastern pediment probably narrated the life story of Narendradithya, Pasupati sage of Phanom Rung without any doubt.

**The relief of Siva seating on the lion with Ganesh and Skanda: Pimai, National museum Pimai**

![Fig. 109. The relief from Pimai, national museum Pimai](image)
This is one good example of authentic Khmer iconography which was adapted from Indian tradition into their unique style. The relief is dated around the 12th century A.D. according to the divine custome and motifs. The Siva has two arms, sitting on the lion, Ganesh is sititng on the elephant and Skanda (Katrikeya) riding on the horse (?) or peacock.

The relief of Saivite panthenon would have been complete if the Goddess Parvati was presented. In this case, since the Siva has never been seen sitting on the lion in Indian art, this manner would be the new creation of authentic Khmer iconography. Moreover, Ganesh and Skanda are also not represented on elephant or horse in Indian canons. These animals, lion, elephant and horse, are commonly used as Vahanas of nine planet deities (Navagrihas) or guardians of directions (Dikapalas). In case of Dikpalas, Kubera (southern deities) is always seated on lion, Indra (eastern) is seen on elephant and Agni is sometimes mounting a horse. This relief would illustrate the meaning which may be interpreted as the Siva and his panthenon are the greater gods of all directions.

**The relief of Siva and Parvati seating on the throne, Prasat Muang Tum, National museum Pimai**

![Image of relief from Prasat Muang Tum](image)

**Fig. 110. The relief from Prasat Muang Tum, National museum Pimai**

This pediment was located at Prasat Muang Tum, Buriram province. Presently, it has been preserved at National museum Pimai. The two arms Siva is seated on the throne while the Parvati and other deities are placed in the lower seats. Parvati is supported by her female attendant as she is being given to Shiva. On the right side of Siva, there is a male figure sitting down and touching the hand of God. Perhaps, this is the depiction of Parvati devine’s father, Himavat, giving away his daughter in marriage to Siva. This relief could be
identified as the other form of Kalyanasundara murti in Khmer art dated around late 10\textsuperscript{th}-11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. in Khleang-Baphoun style. And this representation is also reported from the pediment of Prah That Phan Khan, Roiet which is now exhibited at the national museum Roiet.

**The relief of Siva as Mahesvara murti, Pimai, Nakon ratchsrima province**

![Fig. 111. The relief depicted on the pediment of Pimai](image)

The relief clearly represents the highest position of Siva among the other Brahmanical Gods. Siva is seen seated on the Nandi bull with his consort, Parvati, accompanied by the other deities. At a lower level from Siva, there are three main Brahmanical Gods described as Brahma (left) riding on the swan (humsa), Indra seating on Airavatta and Vishnu mounting on Garuda. These Gods are surrounded by the sages and minor deities. Based on the costume and decorative features, this relief can be dated at around 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. comparable to Angkor Wat-Bayon style. This is one of the most unique reliefs found in Thailand and perhaps only one in this country, as it obviously shows the higher position of Siva over the other sectarian gods in the same depiction.

It also leads to the other interpretation that there is no difference of sectarian Gods worship in Khmer Brahmanical tradition as well as the Brahmanical gods are also associated deities in Mahayana Buddhist monument like Prasat Pimai in Thailand or Bayon complex in Cambodia.
The syncretism Gods: *Ardhanarisvara* and *Harihara*:

The representations of syncretism Gods like Adhanarisvara and Harihara are very rare in Thailand, though they are discovered plenty in numbers in India as well as Cambodia. There are only two *Ardhanarisvara* images and one small head of Harihara images currently preserved in National museums in Thailand. All these sculpture reflect the Khmer art influence which played a major role in the expansion of Brahmanism in Thailand. Some of them are unique found without any duplicate image which undoubtedly suggests on their outside origin and that they were brought here for religious purpose. In this case, a good example *Ardhanarisvara* of unknown origin exhibited at the national museum Ubon Ratchathani province.

**The image of Ardhanarisvara from Ubon Ratchathani province, location unknown, National museum Ubon ratchatani**

The seated *Ardhanarisvara* (59 cm.) is presently exhibited at National museum Ubon Ratchathani. Though the exact dating is still unknown, it could possibly date around late of 9\(^{th}\) - 10\(^{th}\) century A.D. This *Ardhanarisvara* depicts Siva in the right and Parvati at the left and is devided equally from the head along the entire body. The Siva portion is shown as a male figure decorated with head gear and lotus petal crown, bare chest and using cloth belt over short dhoti. His hand was holding rosary (*aksamala*). The Goddess portion is represented in female form with bosom, ornament and long lower garment. Though this kind of image has never been reported from Cambodia or any exact Indian prototype, there are some examples
of Champa sculptures which have similar character with *Ardhanarisvara* from Ubon Ratchathani and the male figures from *Dong duong* (Boisserlier 1963: fig 49, 51, 54).

On comparison to pre-Angkorean arts, the Avalokitesvara from Rajgir dated around 8th-9th century A.D., now exhibited at Museum Gimet also shows a kind of head ornament motif and ornament, though they are not exactly in the same pattern. This image was possibly brought from Vietnam or Cambodia and finally gets preserved in Thailand.

Fig. 113. The Avalokitesvara from Rajgir, Museum Gimet (Paris)

The *Ardhanarisvara* from *Sri Tep*, Petchaburna province, Sri Tep historical park museum

Fig. 114. The fragment of Ardhanarisvara from Sri Tep, Petchaburna province
This fragment of Ardhanarisvara image is reported from Sri Tep, one of the important Brahmanical centers in the upper northeastern part dated to the beginning of 9th century A.D. The fragment is divided into two portions separately, male on the right and female on the left. Unfortunately, the head and arms of the image are lost, only body portion can be seen. The lower garment is divided into two parts, the deer skin dhoti identifies as Siva and the long pleated cloth is undoubtedly Parvati.

In comparison with Khmer art, the lower garment of this image is close to the pre-Angkorean style dated around 8th - early 9th century A.D. The Siva garment is similar to the Siva of Harihara image from Ashram maharishi, Phanom Da (museum Gimet: Paris). The Parvati’s lower garment is also comparable to the pattern of the Goddess from Koh Krien (museum Gimet: Paris). Thus it is possible to state that this Ardhanarisvara from Sri Tep is dated to the 8th -9th century D. and is comparable to pre Angkorean art (Prei Kameng-Kampong Preah style).

Fig. 115. The comparative lower garment feature of Ardhanarisvara from Sri Tep with the Harihara from Asharma Maharishi (Boiseelier 1955: 7) (Left) and (Right) Goddess from Koh Krien (museum Gimet)
The head of Harihara image from *Muang Ka Vai, Chandharapuri* province National museum Prachinaburi

![Image of Harihara head]

**Fig. 116. The head of Harihara image, National museum prachinaburi**

This head fragment (10 cm.) represents the head of Harihara statue. The head is clearly divided into two portions, Hari (Vishnu) and Hara (Siva). Siva head portion with third eye is on the right side with wavy hair *jatamukut* while the Vishnu is the other side identified by plain *kiritamukuta*. Behind the head is the remaining part of stone arch which was used for supporting the image. The face of the God clearly shows the Khmer influence undoubtedly from pre *Angkorean* period. Actually, this head of Harihara can be dated before the 9th century A.D. in comparison with Pre Angkorean Harihara and Vishnu sculptures which share a great similarity (Boisselier 1955).
As a result of study, in Thailand, the changes in Siva iconography must have developed with particular influencing trends mainly from India or Khmer art. From the beginning of Christian era, an intensive maritime trade contact brought the Brahmanical worship tradition that expanded over entire Southeast Asian region. The Siva was commonly worshipped in the form of linga as well as practiced in India, though the image of Siva in earlier period was mostly not found.

In Southeast Asian art the human form of Siva and reliefs are actually introduced after the 8th century A.D., very much later than those of early Vishnu images. Perhaps, the image of Siva had not been given much importance in worship ritual like Siva linga which is regarded as the universal form of Siva from the earlier stage. This theory is proved by the development of Siva worship in Indian tradition. The proper form of Siva image with identifiable iconographic feature was initially introduced in Kushana-Gupta period (Banerjea 1974: 178-179), while the linga had been well worshipped before the Christian era (Mitterwallner 1984).

The Siva representations found in Thailand, both sculptures and reliefs, clearly reflect the development of Saivism through art and iconographic aspects. During the 8th-10th century A.D. in Southern region, Siva images reported are very less in numbers and showing much of South Indian or Javanese influences. Thus, it can be assumed that they were specially brought for the Brahmin communities settled in this region. The other observation is the number of lingas found in Southern region was obviously much higher than the images which suggested the prominent role of linga worship in Saivite shrines.

Though the images of Siva is completely absent after 9th century A.D., perhaps due to the extensive expansion of Buddhist Mahayanism from Indonesia, the linga worship was still practiced for another few centuries. The change in religious worship tradition explains the more stable role of linga worship and the lesser appreciation of Siva image.

Same is the case with northeastern region where Brahmanical sects had been well established along with the appearance of Buddhism in Dvaravati culture for centuries. The Saivites had made its presence from the late of 5th century, mainly starting from the political and administrative aspect rather than religious devotion. The establishment of Siva linga was
regarded as the symbolic expression of political expansion as seen from the inscriptions of King Citrasena-Mahendravarman of Chenla Kingdom located at the lower basin of Cambodia. This historical event indicates that Siva worship in the form of linga was probably worshipped in the northeastern Thailand before the coming of Khmer political expansion while the other forms of Siva did not exist until the Khmer had dominated this region. Thus, this historical point makes the nature of Saivite worship in northeastern and central region different from Southern tradition.

It is clearly seen from the style of Siva images from both regions, that in the Southern they are completely contain Indian or Javanese features or they were brought here for trade or religious purposes. But the northeastern Siva depictions are absolutely made in Khmer style as a result of political expansion bringing religious tradition all the way from Cambodia. There is another noteworthy point regarding the Khmer Brahmanical images.

They are commonly reported from the former Khmer dominant region, but mostly rare outside this particular area where undergone with Buddhism had taken root in Dvaravati culture. This observation helps to assume that the Khmer Brahmanical expansion was limited only to the governed area, and did not spread extebsively over the entire country like the Indian culture.

The cause of lesser variation of Siva images in Southeast Asia is also explained from the religious background of this region. These counries did not originally develope their religious culture in the same way as in India, where the influence of Vedic-Brahmanism prevails right from from the beginning. On the contrary, the early Southeast Asian states just accepted Indian religions that mainly come along with Indian trade connection from the 5th century A.D. onwards. Though the Brahmanism and Buddhism had altogether settled in this region, Buddhism seemed to be more prominent in central part and upper plain of northeastern region of Thailand and Burma. The Brahmanical sects might have been more intensively practiced along the port sites where the Indian traders had been settling their communities.

It seems that the Buddhist Kingdom like Dvaravati had widely spread their cultural influence over the major part of northeastern region and founded the Hinnayana Buddhism as main religious culture of the large and flexible boundary states. Brahmanism definately existed, but maintained as a secondary sect or was limited to the elite class or Brahmin communities. Thus, the Saivite worship ritual in the early stages may not have require any complicated ritual or any large temple complexes as in India. As a result of this situation,
linga worship was enough for the Saivite worship ritual. If the images might be accompanied the ritual, they would have been simple form of Siva worshipped as associated deities installed inside the main shrine.

This simple character of Saivite worship is also clearly seen from the reliefs depicted on the architectural monument in northeastern Thailand. Most of them represent the common forms of Siva which generally seen in *puranic* literatures. The famous scenes always keep repeating and duplicating from authentic Khmer art.

In this case, it really explains the role of Khmer political expansion that led to the appearance of Brahmanism in the dominated region. Saivism was primarily known before the period of intensive political governing from the 11th-13th century A.D. and became more popular by the royal patronage during this period. Though Saivism was well established in this region, the worship ritual was probably not highly developed and assimilated with ethnic tradition. So the various forms of Saivite iconography would be less than the authentic Khmer culture in Cambodia due to the social selection of this particular period.

In fact, the section of Saivite iconography in Thailand will not be finally complete with Siva iconography. The minor section of Saktis and Minor deities will be described later in the next chapter. Therefore, the next section is the Vaisanavite worship and iconography of Vishnu image in Thailand.

### 5.2 Iconography of Vishnu

The emergence and development of Vaisnavism is similar to Saivism as they originally started from the Vedic divines who were related to natural characters. After *Rudra-Siva* is respected as devil destroyer, Brahma as world creator and Vishnu as preserver then the three together form the great Hindu trinity.

Regarding the *Vedas*, *Vishnu- Narayana* is the God of multitudinous facets. He is the God of skies, solar deities and heavens. Moreover, he is regarded as God of the seas as well as the protector of the sea-farers (Krishna 1980: 1; Desai 1973: 2). Although the status of Vishnu in *Rig Veda* appeared as a minor deity, the God had “taken three strides” traversing the Earth, atmosphere and heaven (*urukrama, vikrama and urugaya*). According to the divine character in Sanskrit literary works up to these days, with the basis explanation of *Vedas* and Mythology, the God has been related to the solar origin (Macdonell 1963 : 31-39; Keith 1964 : 29; Hopkins 1985 : 56). The divine position of Vishnu in Brahmanical pantheon had higher developed in post-*Vedic* period as mentioned in *Brahmanas* texts. It then reached the
most important phase in the evolution of Vaishnavism when he was given the identification with Vasudeva-Krishna in the Mahabharata epic leading to the permanent role in Bhakti theology.

Like other Brahmanical sects, Vaisnavism also had successfully journeyed to Southeast Asia and continuously developed there for centuries. At the Southeast Asian Kingdoms, Vaisnavism was one of the major sects which reflected the predominant role in arts and religious culture.

The high position of this sect is also noticed from the political sphere where the Kingship was being inspired by the concept of grand royal warrior. Apart from being the great Kingdom protector, Vishnu-narayana had commonly been worshiped as the lord of ocean, safeguarding the maritime traders and fulfilling their material wishes. There are some Sanskrit texts like the Mahabharata, Manu Samhita, Harivamsa and Vishnu purana approving on the evident aquatic association of Vishnu. In South India, the Narayana was generally worshiped as God of seafaring as mentioned in Sangam literatures, Perumbanatruppadai and Manimekhalai (Nayak 1999: 207).

Therefore, it can be assumed that the growing of Vaisanavite sect in this region would have been given much patronage from the courts as well as the merchant guilds settled at many trade centers. There are a number of archaeological evidences which affirm to the high admiration of the Vishnu worshipping appearing in epigraphic sources, architectural monuments and sculptures. Remarkably, the iconography of Vishnu images found in this region showing their local appearance with a glimpse of Indian aesthetism influenced from various parts of subcontinent. Before coming to the study of Vishnu iconography in Southeast Asia, the general description regarding the development of Vishnu image in Indian art should be considered.

The development of Vishnu iconography in India

There are a number of literary and archaeological evidences related to Vishnu worship in North India from Kushana period. The Ghosundi inscription found at Chitorgarh district, Rajasthan, mentions on the temple dedicated to Samkarsana and Vasudeva at 200 B.C. (Desai 1973: 4). Another important inscription discovered at Besnagar (Vidisa), the Garuda pillar inscription, records the memorial Garuda dhvaja (flag staff), set up in honour of Vasudeva by Heliodorus who called himself as Bhagavatas (Sircar 1942: 90; Vogel 1908-9: 126). At Mathura, the inscription of King Shodasa, datable to the 1st century B.C., has mentioned on the construction of Vasudeva temple including the Vedika and torana etc.
The images of Vishnu were represented in simple form normally in standing position with four arms holding divine attributes like, mace (gada), disc (chakra), conch (sankha), and lotus (padma) or posing in Varada or Abhaya mudra represented according to the twenty four forums (murti) of God. The divine representations are distinguished by the procession of certain aspects of the God’s attributes such as energy, power, knowledge or strength that invoked by the prayers for their special capacities (Banerjea 1956: 387-388).

Generally, the God’s adornment is also simple as seen from his mukuta (crown: mitre) and a few celestial ornaments. Almost all images, presently preserved in Mathura museum, are very similar on iconographic as well as on stylistic ground.

Vaisnavism, especially in Arts and religious literatures, flourished under the patronage of the Gupta dynasty. The Gupta Kings like Chandra Gupta II, Kumaragupta and Skandagupta on their coins, dated ranging from years 400-464 A.D., have been styled as Parama Bhagavata, indicating Vishnu as their supreme God (Siddhantashastree 1986: 160). There are many inscriptions related to Vaisanavism from 5th century A.D.Some of the importance ones are the inscription found at Eran (Sargar district) dated 483 A.D. which mentions the Dhvajastambha (flag staff) erected by the great devotee of the Bhagavat (Bhandakar 1965: 43). At Delhi, the inscription on an iron pillar shows that it was erected as flag-staff by the Chandragupta, the Gupta King who was a devotee of Vishnu (Bhandakar 1965: 43).

In the field of literature, Bana in his Harsa carita has referred to the Bhagavatas and Pancaratras, the two important sects of the Vaisnavism. Vishnudharmottaram text has given the detailed description of images of Vasudeva, one of viras, having one face and four hands with cloud laden complexion adorned with ornaments. Vasudeva widely known as Vishnu was the most dominating God who continued to exist and evolve in later period. A number of his images have been found right from the time of the Kushana.

From Kushana to Gupta period, four armed Vishnu images and his Avataras have been found widely in north India. The traditional image of Vishnu, in his four arms forum, is holding the conch, disc, mace, lotus, the abhaya or varada-mudra, the auspicious symbols of Vishnu.

The conchshell is related to treasure as signifying prosperity in Mahabharata (Mahabharata 1924: XIV). The disc is symbolic of universality and power. The lotus represents a mark of divine purity and the mace being a prominent weapon showing strength
are God’s attributes. Later on the God attributes gradually developed in to personified form known as “Ayudha-purusas” accompanied with the divine image.

According to North Indian texts the images of Vishnu can be classified into standing, sitting and reclining types, their further classification depending on the number of hands while South Indian texts are more concerned in the qualitative aspect and accessory figures of God (Rao 1914: 71; Desai 1973: 21). The other form of God which was newly invented during this period and also given an art influence to successive schools was Vishnu-Anatasayana or Sesayina murti (Vishnu reclining on naga coil) as found at Vishnu temple at Deogarh dated around the 5th century A.D.

Although the Gupta dynasty had lost the political power over north India and felt was shilding into the stage of down fall in middle 7th century A.D., the style of the finest arts and literatures still inspired and influenced successive regional Kingdoms located in several parts of India as well as the expansion of Vaisnavism in various religious centers. The Vakatakas of central and Deccan plateau were also great royal patrons of Bhagavata sects during the time of King Rudrasena and queen Prabhavati Gupta. There are a number of Vishnu images and divine avatars reported from Mandal, Nagara and Nandapuri (Ramtek). These Vishnu images are not only close to Gupta art, but also reveal some influence of late Kushana statuary from Mathura (Jamkhedkar 1986: 335-341).

Regarding the different facet of iconography, Vishnu and his Avatars images, especially Krishna, earlier were widely created in several forms basically influenced from Gupta aesthetic. Later on in medieval period, it became more sophisticated is an attempt to represent Vishnu in various forms due to his extreme divine quality through multiple hands and emblems, as inspired from religious and iconographic texts (Maxwell 1988: 113-143).

In the context of South Indian arts, Vaisnavism had also played an important role as a religion inspiring from the early Christian era and contemporary to Amravati schools of Andhra region. At Nagarjunakonda, there was an early trace of Vaisnavism seen from the Brahmanical temple of Astabhujaswamin which is belived to have been installed in 278 A.D. (Nigam 1987: 342). Besides the remains, the inscribed conch shells with the name of this deity also discovered at the site and a dhavajastambha surmounted by the chakra (disc) was standing by the site of the shrine. Thus, it can be assumed the Vaisnavism had flourished in the Andhra region during 3rd century A.D. The other important site of Vaisanavite worship is Yellesvaram located on the bank of Krishna basin.
Probably the early iconography of Vishnu developed in Deccan and spread to other parts of South India (Nigam 1987: 343). A close comparison of Vishnu images found from Yellesvaram with Mathura has shown some general differences. The Andhra Vishnu images was two arms, the right hand holding gada (mace) and left hand show akimbo, carrying the sankha (conch).

The God does not wear any ornament, only the armlets. Neither yajnopavitra nor vanamala are present like the northern Vishnu images. The lower garment consists of a dhoti with side tassels and a semi-circular loop in front known as typical form of Ikṣvaku. The stone, standing pose and lower garment can be dated to 2nd-4th century A.D.

Later on, during the middle of 6th century A.D. contemporary to the time of Vishnukundin dynasty, the Andhra court had close matrimonial relationship with the Vakatakas of Deccan that stimulated the Vaisanavite movement from north India under the Guptas to spread to the southern region.

The Anatasayina murti image from Undavalli has exhibited the influence of Gupta art wherein the Seshasayin theme was very prominent (Nigam 1987: 347). The early appearance of Anatasayin murti images are also seen from Orissa and the eastern coast region. There are two gigantic Anantasayin Vishnu images discovered on the bed of Brahmani River. Both of them are dated around 9th-10th century A.D. The single four armed Vishnu images in reclining pose are craved out of natural rock as the God lying on the serpent couch. At the Vishnu’s navel, Brahma emerges from the lotus.

According to Nayak (1999: 217), the measurement of Vishnu images are ranging from 32 - 41.6 feet which is considered as one of the largest images in India. In Tamil country, the early Vishnu images dated to Pallava period at Mamallapuram are available from the punja ratha and the shore temple. At the shore temple, one of the finest representations of is lying on the coil of Adisesa with female attendant below. The Anatasayina murti is one of the popular form of Vishnu which continuously inspired the later period. The examples are provided from the Ranganath of Sri Rangam temple and Yathoktakarismwamy at Kanchipuram.

The categories of Vishnu images in South India are similar to the northern tradition as they are literally arranged into twelve iconographic classes under four main varieties namely, Yogasayana murti, Bhogasayana murti, Virasayana murti and Abhicharika murti worshipped by different of devotees such as priest (yogi), grahamas who desire enjoyment (bhoga), the
Kings or warriors wishing to defeat the enemies (vira and abhicharika) (Srinivasan 1954: 40; Rajan 1967 : 67-82).

The Sthanaka murti (standing) of Vishnu in South India follows the same tradition as the northern schools as they are twenty-four forms identified by the divine attributes that is mentioned in Rupamandana (Rao 1916: 228-232; Banerjea 1956: 387-388; Srinivasan 1954: 41-42; 54). At most of the temples, the Vishnu images are depicted in sthanaka forms and placed where asanamurtis is usually represented as seated on adhiseshan and sometimes with Sri Devi on his left lap (Srinivasan 1954: 41). The early South Indian example of Vishnu image in Adhisheha-asanamurti is provided from Badami cave, Karnataka. Moreover, there is another form of God mounting on Garuda to rescue elephant devotee, Gajendra. Vishnu here is known as Gajendra-varada.

In addition to the puranic tradition, there are several other forums as described in special aspects worshipped in the temples in South India like Venkatesa at Tiruvengadam temple and Varadaraja at Kanchipuram. Remarkably, most of these forms are one of the main twenty-four types mentioned already with some subtle differences in pose.

Like other parts of India, the avatars is also very much illustrious in Southern regions. There are many depictions of Vishnu in different avatars stories narrated in the puranas such as Vishnu purana, Matsya purana and Bhagavata purana or the other early Sanskrit literature like Brahmanas and Aranyaka (Rao 1916: 122-124). Though the number of Vishnu avatars range from ten to twenty four.

The main avatars of Vishnu is ten known as Dasavatara. In case of South Indian agamas, the other feminine form of Vishnu is commonly known as Mohini (Srivivasan 1954: 44). The Vishnu Dasavatara are always depicted on the wall, pillars, gopuram or miniature sculptures in the temples like Kurma avatara, Varaha avatara, Narasimha avatara, Vamana avatara, Raghurama avatara and the famous one, Krishna avatara images.

To sum up, the Vishnu images found from any parts of India share the general iconographic character which commonly follow the puranic tradition as making the God with four arms with main divine attributes like disc (chakra), mace (gada), lotus (padma) and conch shell (sankha). The God is adorned with Kirita mukuta (cylindrical royal crown) and celestial ornaments, distinguishing in style of each artistic school. The variation is only noticed from minor forms that are probably created out of any Sanskrit text or getting influence by the regional mythology.
The Vaisnavism (*Bhagavad*) and its arts were continuously developed from Kushana to early medieval period as noticed from the more complicated iconographic forms of Vishnu images. It is possible to state that the expansion of Vaisnavism from India to Southeast Asian countries might be started during 5th-6th century A.D. as a result of much intensive maritime trade connection. The traders and priest played an important role of religious patronage, leading to the widespread impact of Vaisnavism in Southeast Asia.

**Vaisnavism in early Indianize states of Southeast Asia.**

Traces of Brahmanical sects appear in Southeast Asia from early 5th century A.D. during the time of intensive trade connection. The growth of Vaishnavism had extended its religious influence in various parts of Indianized states and their polities. The corpus of inscriptions and statues related to Vaisnavism found from these states affirm this deduction.

Generally, Vaisnavism had been developed with the principal tenent that the God descends periodically to earth in various forms (*avatara*) to protect human and his followers from the evils. Regarding the God ideology, Vaisnavism had glorified the monarchy in the concept of King who was respected as the protector of his Kingdom. As most of the Gupta Kings were *Vaisnavas*, it is possible to assume that the local Kings of the early Indianized states would also follow their examples.

In mainland Southeast Asian, ancient Cambodian Kingdom during pre-*Angkorean* period witnessed the trace of Vaisnavism that was practiced and patronized by Royal family member. The inscription of Queen *Kulaprabhavati*, datable to the 5th century A.D., attests that she had found a hermitage and reservoir for the benefit of *Brahmins*, and the record refers to the myth of Śesā. The inscription of prince *Gunavarman*, likewise, indicates a devotion to Vishnu for whom an image of his footprints was endowed. Some early images in ancient Cambodia have reflected a fusion of Vaisnavism with the influence of Surya, the deities are wearing ‘tunic’ in Central Asia style which is also seen in western India and Persian images.

In addition to the iconography evidence, there is the inscription belonging prior to the 7th century A.D which refers to the ‘*Sakabrahmana*’ and the *Sakas* (*Sythian*) settlement in ancient Cambodian Kingdom (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 130). However, this influence is still speculative.

The Vaisnavism sects had been glorious in this Kingdom which is mainly known from inscriptions as well as from *Bhagavad* and *Pancaratra*. In case of intensive religious philosophy, the Vaisanava concept of *vyuha* (four emanations) was mentioned in 9th-10th century inscription of *Angkorean* period (Bhattacharya 1955: 111-16). Vaisnavism had its
most conspicuous success in the reign of King Suryavarman II (1113-50 A.D.) in his impressive construction of ‘Vishnu Lok’ or commonly known as Angkor Wat. According to Bhattacharya (1961b), the Vaisnavism in ancient Cambodian Kingdom, had shown strong religious influence from both North and South Indian schools as appeared in epigraphy evidences.

In present day Thailand, the role of Vaisnavism could be traced to as early as the 6th century A.D.contemporary to Dvaravati culture period in the central and some parts of northeastern region. While Buddhism was the dominant religion of the Dvaravati kingdom, the sight of the Hindu elements in Dvaravati religion should not be neglected. It is noticed that a number of stone images of Vishnu, datable from 5th-7th century A.D., have been reported from major Dvaravati sites such as Pong Tuk, U Thong, Lopburi, Srit Thep and Sri Mahosot. The rising of Vishnu worship was possibly related to the Kingship system practiced during this pre-urbanization period.

Although Dvaravati kings patronized Buddhist activities and no doubt followed the religious ritual, it is believed that they had adopted Brahmanical customs and administrative concepts. The discovery of stone images of Vishnu, a divinity associated with kingship and political power in major Dvaravati towns indicates that Vaisnavism and Buddhism coexisted in the Dvaravati Kingdom. And Vaisanavite Brahmins might have played a great role in the royal court, especially in the Brahmanical rites, such as Rajasuya or the Royal Consecration, They have also introduced the Indian concept of state and kingship to the Dvaravati kings. The development of Dvaravati kingship from Vaisanavite inspiration is noticed from the archaeological evidences such as the stone tablet depicting the sacred royal symbols, camara (flywhisks), sankha (conch shells), vajra (thunderbolts), valvijani (fans), ankusa (elephant goads) and chhatra (umbrellas). They were discovered from some Dvaravati sites at Nakhon Pathom and from Dong Khon, Chainat province. There are also the ivory or bone dices traditionally used for Rajasuya ceremony from Nern Makok, Lopburi province. Besides these ritual objects, the Dvaravati coinage also supported the Kingship concept.

Dvaravati coinage suggests that some of the Indian concepts of state and kingship were accepted by Dvaravati rulers. Inscribed silver coins reported from sites such as Nakhom Pathom, U-Thong, Ku Bua, Ku Muang, Brahma-tin, Dong Khon and U Ta-Pao indicate the existence of Dvaravati kingship.

On the obverse side of these coins are engraved Indian symbols of fertility and prosperity, such as purnaghata (vase of plenty) or an animal-cow or deer-with its offspring. On the reverse sides occurs the words “sridvaravatisvarapunya”, meaning “meritorious
deeds of the King of Dvaravati”. A large number of uninscribed silver coins bear Indian symbols of kingship and prosperity such as the rising sun or sankha (conch shell) and srivatsa (indicating the abode of Sri, goddess of fertility). These coins are found throughout the Dvaravati region and from contemporary cities influenced by Indian civilization, including Burma to the lower Mekong Valley.

Apart from mainland Southeast Asian center, in Indonesia, according to Tugu inscription of King Purnavarman found at the costal area of Taruma presently is located in East Jakarta, Vaisanava Brahmans were associated with the royal ritual consecrating and the irrigation canals providing the agricultural fertilization and protecting urban settlement from flooding (Sarkar 1971). This inscription indicates that Vaisnavism in the early Indianized states of Southeast Asia most probably received royal patronage as a result of cultural exchange gradually brought to them by intensive contact with Indian merchants or priests who settled down in this region.

Thus, a numbers of stone images of Vishnu, the divine who is related closely to the kingship and political power, had come to light in the early Indianized states of Southeast Asia.

![Fig.118. The inscription of King Mulavarman of Taruma, eastern Java (Indonesia)](image)

**The Vishnu images in Thailand and mainland Southeast Asia before the 13th century A.D.**

The presented day Thailand territory before 13th century A.D was once inhabituated by people who belonged to different regional cultures. In spite of the cultural diversity, most of their elites were admiring indianized tradition and adapted it into their individual styles. This character is noticeable in religious arts, especially Brahmanical deities in both Vaisnavism and Saivism, reflecting Indian influence through the philosophy and iconographic pattern.

Similar to the other Southeast Asian countries, Vaisnavism had emerged in Thailand at least before 5th century A.D. according to archaeological evidences from sculptures and epigraphy.
The development of Vaisnavism iconography in Thailand is generally classified into two categories based on the influence of Indian arts, the first is early Indianized period or (the 5th-8th century A.D.) mainly in Central (Dvaravati culture) and Southern regions. The second is the period of regional modification after 8th-13th century A.D. as seen from the glorious Srivijaya art in Southern and Ancient Cambodian (Khmer) art in Central and Northeastern regions of country.

Therefore, the category of Vishnu images in this study will be classified by period and regional wise for more convenient understanding iconographical development. At the beginning, it should start from the oldest group of Vishnu images found in Thailand before to further describing the later period groups.

5:3:1 The group of Indian prototype images: The early Vishnu images in Thailand: The Indian prototype images from the late of 4th – 5th century A.D.

The Southern Vishnu images

Fig. 119. (left) The Vishnu image from Wat Sala Thung temple(Chaiya), National museum Bangkok. (center) Vishnu image from Yelleswaram, Andhara pradesh. (right) The head fragment of Vishnu images, National museum Nakon Sri Thammarat

One of the earliest Indianized sculptures in Southeast Asia is the stone image of four arms Vishnu found at Wat Sala Thung temple from Surat Thani province. The size of image is 54 cm. This Vishnu image standing in sthanaka murti is holding a conch shell (sankha) in the anterior left hand up to the hip level, while the anterior right hand performing Abhaya mudra and posterior right hand is holding the mace. As the statue represents Vishnu, the attribute in the missing hand must have been either lotus (padma), the round symbol of earth (bhu) or the
discus (chakra). The God wears a tall mitre crown (kirita mukhuta) decorated in carved motif with a floral and vine pattern with rosettes at the corners.

The God’s face is round and quite small; the eyes are sharply incised in almond shaped, flat and without any interior definition of pupil or structure. The ears are clearly made in remarkable fashion adorned with a pair of celestial long earring (kundala). The torso is almost bare with only a single necklace and some ornaments on his arms and hands. The same features are also noticed from the head portion of Vishnu image from Nakon Srithammarat (right) that shows the face of God with round face, opened eyes, thick lips and wearing almost same pattern of floral decorated crown (kiritamukuta) and long ear ornaments. Unfortunately, it is not possible to describe the iconographic from as the body part is damaged. According to the much in similarity, these two images should be dated to the same period.

Similar to Indian traditional costume, the Vishnu image is wearing a long dhoti made up of a large rectangular of untailored cloth which can be draped in various ways making it difficult to identify the exact pattern. The lower part is decorated by the single beads belt to tighten the loincloth (katisutra) that encircles his legs between knees and down to ankles. This mass of cloth forms one of three supports of the statue. On the right side is a broken club (gada) performing the same function. The third support is the main block of stone in which legs and heavy vertical fold of the dhoti between them are carved (O’ Connor 1972: 21).

This early Vishnu image is interesting due to its primary iconographic position of conch shell posed on the left hip and some of the divine adornments such as the decorated mitre crown and circular form of sash. In spite of being a specific sample for the art-history subject, a proper intensive study on this image for comparative dating has not yet been completed (O’ Connor 1972: 26). There are some scholars like Ceodes (1928: 25), Le May (1965 : 80), Sastri (1949) and Dupont (1955) who have given suggestions regarding this stone Vishnu sculpture as “Indian-Prototype image” carved in clumsy, heavy and inelegant quality that is possibly the product of late Indian art, valuable as showing the persistence of Indian influences to a late period (Sastri (1949 : 92). In this matter, Dupont (1955: 133-134) has compared this Vishnu image with those of pre Angkorean Vishnu images found from Transbassac region (Tuol Koh) and surmised that both of these images are relatively similar in general character, despite some minor iconographic differences. The Chaiya Vishnu image was probably brought or carved by Indians while the Transbassac images are supposed to be the localized products which were inspired by Indian tradition.
Furthermore, Dupont also suggested that the Indian prototype images carving center should be in exterior land located in the territory of Chenla state during the late 6th-7th century A.D. In this case, Rawson (1957) has given an important suggestion regarding the dating of early Vishnu image in Thailand, especially those images posting conchshell on the left hip that should be dated earlier up to the pre Gupta art of Kushana period as a result of the similarity in iconographic form.

However, Boisselier (1959: 67) contested on this suggestion as he has stated that the iconography of Vishnu images posting the conchshell in the left hip like the Chaiya and pre-Angkorean images was unknown in India until the 8th century. Actually, though there are some Vishnu images dated after the 8th century A.D. holding the conch shell on their hips such as those of Pala-Sena art (Krishna 1980: 36, Pl.19, 20, 21, 25; Diskalkar 1932: 21, 23), the same character has also been seen from the early period icons contemporary to Mathura art of Kushana time (Mathura museum accession register no.933, 956, 1729; Krishna 1980: Pl. 4;7;9). In fact, this Chaiya Vishnu image has stylistic prototypes considered to be 4th century Vishnu image from Yelleswaram of Krishna valley under the patronization of Ikshvaku dynasty (Khan : 1963). The style of cylindrical mitre crown (kirtita mukuta) and circular loincloth (katisutra) is evidently transferred to the later images made by local craftsmen in Malay Peninsular and Transbassac regions. To sum up, the exact dating of this Chaiya Vishnu image should be dated from the late 4th-5th century A.D. contemporary to the Vishnu image from Yelleswaram of Amravati (Ikshvaku) style.

This image must have been brought from India due to its portable size (54.cm.) and was perhaps enshrined in the temple located in this region. Unfortunately, the image was discovered without any archaeological background, so it is not possible to find the other religious context except the trace of cultural interaction showing through in the form of art.

The group of early Vishnu images in Thailand: the Indian prototype images dated from the late of 5th-6th century A.D.

There are a number of Vishnu images dated ranging from late 5th-8th century A.D. preserved and exhibited in National museums of both Bangkok and regional centers.

In spite of the variation in the localized character, they can be arranged into groups depending upon their major artistic features. Some of the apparent identifications are the wearing pattern of loin cloth (katisutra) that is always shown at the lower part of the images, the divine attributes position and the style of cylindrical mitre crown (kiritamukuta). Actually, the Southern Vishnu images wearing the circular loin cloth pattern are almost
similar to the earliest Vishnu image from Chaiya and reflect an intensive Indian influence. Therefore, this group should be dated earlier than the others.

The Southern Vishnu images: the group of Vishnu images with circular sash (katisutra)

The small stone images of Vishnu, (A) and (B), found from the Southern peninsular share certain similarity in costume of dress and iconography that accurately make them distinctive from the other sculptures of the same region. Two of them are reported from Nakon Srithammarat, the Vishnu image (A) is recently preserved in National museum Nakon Srithammarat while the image (B) is permanently exhibited at Vat Mahathatu museum. The sizes of these two images are recorded as 78 and 65 cm.

The group of Vishnu images with circular loincloth (katisutra) from National museum Nakon Sri Thammarat and Vat Mahathatu temple Nakon Srithammarat

Fig. 120. (Left)The Vishnu images from National museum Nakon Sri Thammarat and (Right) Vat Mahathatu temple, Nakon Sri Thammarat province
They are the examples of early Vishnu images dated around 5th-6th century A.D. reported from southern coast of Thailand. These Vishnu images (A) and (B) are from Nakon Srithammarat without any exact location, only Wat Mahathatu temple used to be the preserved place of both images. Interestingly, the images are sharing similarity in general feature and iconographic form. Furthermore, both images bear a close resemblance in form and style with the Vishnu image from Chiya, considered as the oldest one of the country.

In general character, both images have small round faces with button-like eyes, four armed figures with the lower arms missing. The remaining left arms of both are holding conchshell (*sankha*) against the hip. The right arm of the image (A) with the palm up and extended at the hip level must have held the divine attributes either the lotus (*padma*) or the earth (*bhu*). Similar to the image, this image (B) would have carried the same attributes in the same orders.

Both of the Vishnu images are wearing decorated high *mitre* crowns and adorned with long earrings up to their shoulders. Their torsos are almost bare, with only celestial ornaments like necklace and armlets evidently carved.

These Vishnu images are wearing dhoti as the lower garment, around the waist without any ornament. The folding pattern is very similar to the early Vishnu image from Chaiya as the lower edge encircling the legs below the knees and the heavy vertical fold of cloth falling between the legs is made up of the edge of dhoti. The diagonal folds or creases along the legs are rendered by incised lines. Both images wear sash falling in circular fashion in front of their thighs, knotted or looped at the left and right, and forming a tight spiral at the left.

In comparative study with the previous image, apparently there are similarities in terms of carving technique, adornment and iconographic form. Although there are some minor differences in the size and pattern of *mitre* crown and decorative ornament, the general character between these three images are almost similar. There is a remarkable point to be noted the carving technique where all images appear to be frontal while the other side is totally flat and unmodified. Perhaps, they might have been set inside the niche in architectural structure (O’ Connor 1972: 25).
At every level then, the relationship between the Chaiya Vishnu image and Vishnu images from Nakon Srithammarat (A and B) seems obvious. There are some differences to suggest that these statues of Vishnu had been made in different workshops or, perhaps, different times when the schema had undergone some small variation.

The third Vishnu image (C.) recorded as 42 cm is recently reported from Si Chon district, Nakon Srithammarat province. This image has developed from the preceding ones, despite sharing with them the main character. Among the three sculptures, this image has been given support for the free standing technique by using the associated arch at the level of ears, which was intended to consolidate the position of the raised back arms.

The left upper arm held the conch while the right side is supposed to be shown with disc (chakra). In this case, the two lower arms of this image are slightly bigger for supporting the body structure and at the same time holding a mace (gada) and earth (bhu). Possibly, this might be the first challenge for making image in free standing technique that gradually developed later as seen from the absolute free standing Vishnu from Ta Kua Pa dated to the 6th-7th century A.D.

And finally, the relief of feet is clearly visible and seems to be separate from each other. Similar to the previous trend, this Vishnu image is traditionally wearing a long dhoti knotted with almond shape center belt where the falling reclined circular sash is set at the front of the thighs. The flat mitre crown seems taller and simpler than the earlier images while the face is quite smooth showing in carving skill. Regarding the general iconographic character, the dating for this image is at around the end of 5th century A.D.

In the light of comparative study with the neighboring region, Transbassac of southern Cambodia and Javanese island, three scholars like Malleret (1959), Dupont (1941) and Boisselier (1959 : 210-226) have provided very valuable suggestion regarding the description of Vishnu images of that particular region. The example of Vishnu images from Transbassac area like those of Oc-Eo and Bathe (Malleret 1959: Pl.LXXXII-III) share main iconographic characters with the early Vishnu images from Southern Thailand.

The Vishnu images holding the conch shell on the left hip are found from both Malay Peninsula and Transbassac regions with much similarity in the ornamentation. All three images wear tall mitre crowns which are variants of the same basic shape, only slightly different in motifs decoration. Additionally, most of the images are wearing the dhoti with the same pattern like the sash falling in arch form in front of their thighs and heavy vertical fold of drapery dropping between the legs. Only some difference are found on the minor
decoration of Transbassac Vishnu images such as indistinctive loop under the conch shell and dhoti wearing style which shows an attempt to duplicate the Malay Peninsula ones. Perhaps, it is quite reasonable to suggest that the Transbassac image is a duplicate, later in time and removed in distance from peninsular model (Malleret 1959: 394; O’ Connor 1972: 29).

In addition to the Transbassac Vishnu images, there is also a contemporary period four armed Vishnu image from Tjibuaja, western Java region, dated to 6th-7th century A.D. Although this image seems to be made a little later than Vishnu image from Southern Thailand (A.) and (B.) and developed little differently in iconographic form, the main characters are still maintained such as the tall mitre crown, long dhoti and some ornaments. In fact, the Tjibuaja Vishnu image is closer to the Vishnu image from Sichon (C.) in both iconography and pre-free standing technique.

However, the variations regarding the minor details of ornamentation are also noticed as the Tjibuaja Vishnu image is adorned with motifs like mitre crown, jewelled necklace and simple arm bands while the Vishnu images (A. and B.) are almost plain and unornamented. The lower garment folding is seen differently from the previous images since the arch is almost absent but only half is still remaining as it is knotted with the wrapped loin cloth (katisutra) at the middle and immediately falls to the base. The most significant point which helps identifying the date of image is order of the attributes changing the position of the conch shell from left hip to the upper hand.

On the basis of these points, this Vishnu from Tjibuaja, can be reasonably dated at to around 6th-7th century A.D. almost contemporary with the Transbassac Vishnu images. In this case, it can be further suggested that the Vishnu image from Tjibuaja was possibly inspired by the Malay Peninsular images but time and distance had caused the difference in artistic style and iconographic form.

In any case, the discovery of early Vishnu images in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Java and Malay peninsula have thrown the light on the religious connection among the distant lands with in diverse iconography, religious intention and geographic provenance (Boisselier 1959: 210-226). Another reason that was responsible for the mixed stylistic character in the group of early Vishnu images in Southeast Asian is the influence of Southern Indian art from the time of Pallava period which gradually combined with local craft traditions. This effect is obviously seen from the making of early Vishnu images in Southern Thailand that is considered as the work of mediocre artisan whose technique is a regression from earlier work on the peninsula (Boisselier 1959: 224).
The early Vishnu images from Central Thailand (U Thong)

Fig. 122. The Vishnu images from U-Thong, Image (A), (B) and (C)

Fig. 123. (Left) The early Vishnu images (D) from U Thong, Suparnburi province and (Right) the Visnu image from San Prakal shine (E), National museum Lopburi (Naraya rajshayanivesh mansion)

In addition to Southern peninsula, the stone images of four armed Vishnu wearing the mitre crown and long dhoti decorated with circular sash (katisutra) are also reported from central region of Thailand, especially at U Thong which was once a religious center of both
Brahmanism and Buddhism. There are four Vishnu images (A-D) found at U Thong area. Though the origins of these images are still unknown, they are now installed and worshipped in a local shrine situated at the heart of the town of present U Thong city. The iconographic form of the carved images is clearly identified as the Vishnu in *sthanaka murti* holding divine attributes like disc (*chakra*) in upper right hand while the conch shell is in the lower left, despite being unclear as a result of the thick deposited layer of gold flakes.

The Vishnu image (D.) is perhaps the possible model of the group of U Thong Vishnu images but unfortunately the carving iconographic detail has been erased by time and improper conservation. According to the museum catalogue information, the image made of white soft stone carved in the form of four armed Vishnu image, is wearing a tall *mitre* crown which possibly had some decorated motifs.

Similar to other Vishnu images, this one also wears long *dhoti* covering his lower portion and a falling knotted sash (*katisutra*) in circular form in front of the thighs. The left folded sash is knotted at both sides of waist and immediately drops next to the body. Although the divine attributes are not clearly seen from these gold flake covered images, the way of holding disc (*chakra*) can be seen from image B, C, and D which share the same character. The disc is held from its lower part showing its frontal side which is similar to the early Indian image dated to Mathura art of Kushana period. Only the Vishnu image E. is holding a disc at the upper right hand sideway. Neither conch shell (*sankha*) nor other attributes at the location appears. Besides, the remaining traces and the details of ornament is absolutely worn off.

All the early Vishnu images found from central region are carved in two dimension form while those of southern peninsular images have been slightly elevated to a free standing image. In this case, the Vishnu images were meant to be installed and worshipped inside the niches of temple structure. The example of Vaisnavism art in the form of stone panel in can be held from the carved images of *Narasimha* and *Panchaviras* from *Kondamotu* (Guntur district) dated to the 4th century A.D.

The iconographic form, dress and ornament pattern of depicting idealistic warriors reflect Vishnu character which is remarkably similar to the early Vishnu images found at U Thong, central region of Thailand. In this case, the Vishnu image from Yellesvaram is also comparable in iconographic feature and dress wearing style. Perhaps, this similarity seems to reflect the cultural relationship between the religious centers located in coastal south India and central region of Thailand from the early Christian era.
The classification of the Vishnu images wearing mitre crown in Thailand: from the first half of the 6th-8th century A.D.

![Fig. 124. The group of Vishnu images wearing mitre crown from Southern Thailand: Group A. Vishnu image from Wiang Sra: Surathani province, Group B. Vishnu image from Khao Sri Vijaya: Suratthani province and Group C. Vishnu image from Ta Kua Pa district, Phang Nga province](image)

Generally, Vishnu images dated to the 5th century A.D. display indifferent workmanship and are usually of a portable size. But by the 6th century A.D., they became significant by larger, exhibiting a sophistication of workmanship that place them among the finest of southeast Asian sculptures. With common characters, most of them are holding mace (gada) on one side and the falling portion of katisutra on the other. They have been stylistically classified into three groups, as follows (Dupant 1941: 233-254; O’conner 1972:48-4)

**The Group A.** Vishnu images: This group consists of those wearing a low mitre crown slightly flared at the top. The dhoti is secured with the upper cloth border twisted into almond shape knot and the remaining fold and front border together falling vertically at the center of dhoti. The katisutra, worn horizontally, is tied on the right hip. The Vishnu group A. is considered to be the oldest one among others and reasonably dated to the early 6th century A.D. (Michel 2002: 120).
There are eight examples of Vishnu images classified into this group; five of them belong to Southern region while the rest are from the eastern Thailand having its border land connected to Cambodia. The sculptures are presently preserved in National museums, Bangkok and the regional museums under control of fine art authority department.

**Southern Vishnu images : Group A.**

![Image](image)

Fig. 125. Image (A) The Vishnu from Sathingpra, Songkla, National museum Songkla. The two Vishnu images (B and C) from Wiang Sra, Surattha, National museum Bangkok. Vishnu image (D) from Khao Sri Vichai Vishnu, Surathani province, presented location unknown. (E) Vishnu image from Vat Toh Temple, Petchaburi province, National museum Bangkok.

1. **The Vishnu from Sathingpra, Songkla: National museum Songkla (image A.)**

The four armed Vishnu image measured as 75 cm. is carrying a conch shell (*sankha*) in his upper left and side portion disc (*chakra*) in upper right while the lower hands hold earth (*bhu*) and support knotted sash or the object that supposed to be mace (*gada*). The image wears a low *mitre* crown (*kiritamukuta*) surrounded by circular halo behind the head. Similar to the
Vishnu of earlier period, the only ornament is the round earring which hangs up to the shoulders. Interestingly, the face clearly shows the localized influence by eyebrows, nose and lip that look rather heavier than the Indian style.

The long dhoti covers lower part of the image. Upper border is knotted into almond shape leaving the fold falling vertically under the horizontal tight sash (katisutra) and a wavy end at the right hip making it remarkably noteworthy. This image is possibly dated to the beginning of the 6th century A.D. (Michel 2002: 120; Kririsk 1981)

2. The two Vishnu images from Wiang Sra, Suratthani province : National museum Bangkok. (Image B. and C.)

These two images are accurately classified into Group (A.) The Vishnu image (B.) measured around 148 cm. and shows traces of carving technical skill by making primary form of free standing image as there is no evidence of supporting arch linked with hand or crown. The Vishnu wears low and little opened end simple mitre crown. The four armed image has two lower arms which are supposed to carry earth (bhu) and mace (gada).

The lost two upper hands held disc (chakra) and conch shell (sankha). The face of the image is round, open eyes and thin smooth lips that is very rare beautiful and character found among Southeast Asian sculptures (Michel 2002 : 121). The body feature is well built with natural detail of muscle, making the image more slender in appearance.

Below waist is covered by long robe dhoti that reaches upto ankle. The upper border is tightened up into form of almond shape knot over the vertical wrapping fold decorated by the horizontal sash (katisutra). In fact, the remaining of sash is purposely used for supporting the sculpture as they drop from hips to the base.

The other image (C.) measuring around 131 cm. is also classified to Group A. Though it is not a free standing sculpture, it has a high relief. It has shown some archaism of the earlier period by the position of divine attributes, holding conch shell (sankha) and disc (chakra) in upper hands and the lower ones for earth (bhu) and mace (gada). The form of body treatment and ornament generally resemble to the other image (A.). Furthermore, these images could possibly have been made from the same workshop in contemporary period or a little later.

3. The Vishnu image (fragment) from Khao Srivijaya Vishnu, Surathani province: presented location unknown
A fragment of Vishnu image is reported from the excavation at Khao Srivijaya moutain, Suratthani province. The site, yielded four Vishnu images which are preserved in different National museums. This Vishnu fragment is perhaps preserved in a private collection (Michel 2002 : Pl.8 ; O’Connor 1972 : Pl.25). This stone fragment is considered to be the lower part of Vishnu image wearing *dhoti* tightened with almond shaped knot over the pleats of vertical folds and finally fitted with horizontal wrapping sash (*katisutra*). According to this general character, this fragment should be set in Group A. image.

4. The Vishnu image from: Vat Toh Temple, Petchaburi province : National museum Bangkok

This four armed Vishnu image has been exhibited at National museum Bangkok measuring around 150 cm. According to Dupont (1941 : 235-236), this Vishnu image has shown its character that is comparable to Group A. The image wears a little taller mitre crown with specific design as it has low curved portion on the top. The face is round and showing localized apperance by opened eyes looking downward, long nose and thick lips. Similar to the others, this image is barely decorated by any sculptural ornament and weating long robe *dhoti*.

The upper hem of the cloth is knotted in almond shape form leaving the frontal folds at the middle. The sash (*katisutra*) is wrapped in a curve and set in a horizontal way from left to right hip, tightened like a loop with remaining folds next to the body.

There is the remarkable point to be noticed about the other decorated sash which is unnecessarily arranged in a circular patten below the main hip sash. Although the upper arms are damaged, the lower two ones are preserved. The left is touching mace (*gada*) while the right is supposed to hold the earth (*bhu*). The image is carved in archaic technique by using supports from frontal folds as well as mace (*gada*) and remaing folds. While the arms are still attached to hips showing early carving pattern.

Hence, it would be possible to date this image around end of 6th century A.D., according to the much strong localized appearance than the previous images.

Central and Eastern Vishnu images:

The central and eastern region of Thailand developed religious culture with Indian as well as the neighboring country, especially with ancient Cambodian Kingdom (pre-Angkorean) before the political expansion of Angkorean Kingdom from late 8th century A.D. The eastern
region that was close to the Khmer dominated territory evidently witnessed strong influence of the Khmer Brahmanical tradition, both Saivism and Vaisnavism.

In case of Vaisnavism, Vishnu worship was probably more prominent than others in this region as seen from a number of Vishnu images discovered from the group of monuments at Sri Mahosoth (Sri Mahabodhi), Prachinaburi province, dated to Dvaravati period. After systematic excavation had taken place at this site, the sculptures found belonged to Buddhism, Saivism and Vaisnavism. But the evidence of Vaisnavism is the most prominent. The Vishnu images from Sri Mahosoth, besides showing an intensive influence from pre-Angkorean art, the style and iconographic form is also remarkably comparable to those of early Southern Vishnu images. This point clearly suggests widespread influence of Vaisnavism in Southeast Asian region that linked ancient cities together, perhaps stimulated by the trade connection.

According to Dupont (1941), the Vishnu images mainly from Sri Mahosoth are classified in groups arranged as follow.

**Group A : Eastern Vishnu Images**

![Vishnu images from Sri Mahosoth, Prachinaburi, National museum Prachinaburi and Bangkok](image)

**Fig. 126. The Vishnu images from Sri Mahosoth, Prachinaburi, National museum Prachinaburi and Bangkok**

These four armed Vishnu images are reported from Sri Mahosot, Prachinaburi province. The images A. (148 cm.) and B. (165 cm.) are presently preserved at National museum Prachinaburi while the image (C.) is exhibited at National museum Bangkok. Similar to the other images of this group, the Vishnu image (A.) wears lower plain mitre crown without any
ornament. The face of Vishnu is round, opened eyes and natural smooth lips showing natural looks as well as the muscular features carved on the upper body. The lower part, downward from the waist, is covered by long robe dhooti that reaches up to the ankle while the upper border is tightened in almond shaped knot, leaving the vertical fold falling down to the base. The upper hands are broken, only attributes of two lower hands are available like earth (bhu) and mace (gada). The size of the round earth is really evident as it almost come out from the right hand and mace is made in simple form. Actually, the sculpture making technique is in primary stage of free standing image. The standing Vishnu is supported by mace and remaining knotted sash (katisutra).

Apart from the upper hem that is bound in knotted shape, the horizontal sash is also used for decorating the middle part of dhooti. Interestingly, the sash shows inscribed curvy line that resemble the belt of Vishnu image B. from the same site and contemporary period.

The four armed Vishnu image B. is reported from Sri Mahosoth. Undoubtedly the style and iconographic form is comparable to Vishnu image A., though three hands are lost and the remaining one probably held the long mace (gada). There is a slight difference on the body treatment of image B. as it is looking healthier and more natural in appearance than the previous one. This character is evidently noticed from the Vishnu image C. too.

In case of four armed Vishnu image C. from Sri Mahosoth, measuring 158 cm., now exhibited at National museum Bangkok, this sculptural style is very close to the image B. Due to this similarity, it suggests the same workshop and being the prevalent form of Vishnu worship in this region. The only minor difference is seen from the details of inscribed line on sash (katisutra) which image C. shows as horizontal line parallel with the pleated sash same as it did on the front fold.

Unfortunately, all the arms that once carried divine attributes are now in broken condition. However, it is possible to identify the characteristic order which could be matched with the other Sri Mahosoth images. The other minor distinctive point of this image is noticed on the knot at the end of sash, wrapping in triangular-fanned shape different from the others. According to the iconographic form and artistic character reflecting on the divine adornment similar to those of Southern Thailand Vishnu images dated to the 6th century A.D., it is reasonable to set them into contemporary period.

**Group B.** According to Dupont (1941), the four armed Vishnu images in this category is reported from Southern and eastern regions of Thailand. The main character of this group is the sash tied up diagonally from the right to left hip over the almond shaped knot from
which the frontal fold of cloth falls. The other significant point is the mitre crown carved in tall-cylindrical shape. In general, the images in Group B are dated to the end of 6th century, possibly the beginning of the 7th century A.D. (Michel 2002: 123). There are three Vishnu images classified in to this group.

Group B. Two Vishnu image from Khao Sri Vijaya, Suratthani province

![Image of Vishnu images from Khao Sri Vijaya](image)

**Fig. 127. (Left) (A.) Vishnu images from Khao Srivijaya, National museum Bangkok and (B ) The Vishnu image from Khao Srivijaya, National museum Nakon Sri Thammarat**

There are two four armed Vishnu images reported from *Khao Srivijaya*, the first image (Left) measuring as 170 cm. is currently exhibited at National museum Bangkok and the other, smaller in size, is preserved at National museum Nakon Sri Thammarat. The first one is carved in free standing technique whose conception takes slightly advanced step towards perfect independence in relation to image’s arms and body.

The mitre crown is typically plain and tall in cylindrical shape, set on the localized round face. The upper body is unornamented, down to the narrow waist which is tied by a long robe *dhoti*. The almond shaped knot is strengthen by cloth belt which is tided up as a round twist with loose end. The sash (*katisutra*) is crossed diagonally from right to left direction and the end part is knotted in a wrapped ribbon style. The frontal fold reaches upto the base in order to support the image as well as the fragment of mace (*gada*). The Vishnu image used to have four arms, but now at present has only two lower hands.
The lower left arm is still attached to the hip that is supposed to lean on mace as the right did with earth (bhu). In case of upper arms, they have totally disappeared as a result of being fragile and perhaps no supported from arch as there is no trace of stone arch on the back of mitre crown. An impressive point of this image is its slender appearance, narrow waist and facial expression. Though there are no ornaments, but a trace of polishing is seen.

The Vishnu image (Right) is found in a damaged condition with its rare arms missing and discovered from the same site. Though the size is small (43 cm.), the form and appearance provide an important comparative detail which links to the first image as suggesting that it was carved at the same workshop. An strong similarity can be seen in the arrangement of dhoti.

The Vishnu images from Eastern region: Two Vishnu images from Sri Mahosoth (Sri Mahabodhi or Sri Mahosoth), Prachinaburi province.

![Fig. 128. (Left) the Vishnu image from Sri Mahosoth (Boisselier 1965: Pl. 15), the private collection of S.A.R. prince Bhanubhantu (current exhibited at Gimet, Paris) and (Right) the remains of Vishnu image, National museum Prachinaburi](image)

The first Vishnu image (Left) has retained the fine characters of four armed Vishnu image, despite the disappeared arm. Vishnu image wears quite tall cylindrical mitre crown which is smooth and plain with simple pattern. The face is round and shows local influence by the eyes and lip. The body of the figure is similar to those of Southern images showing the natural muscle and narrowed waist. The dhoti is knotted in almond shape and tightened by cloth belt at the middle with rounded twist and loose end over the frontal fold.
As same as the other images of this group, the sash (*katisutra*) is used for traditional decoration from right to left hip and wrapping the remaining sash with a band. The four lost arms of the images are supposed to hold divine attributes like mace (*gada*), earth (*bhu*), conch shell (*sankha*) and disc (*chakra*).

Only a trace can be seen is though the lower arms were attached on the hip side and the upper hands might be free from horse shoe arch.

The remaining lower portion of the second image (125 cm.) is carved in pre-free standing technique. The disappeared lower arms might have been attached to narrowed waist but the upper hands was probably independent. This image, only lower part is covered by well decorated *dhoti* which is clearly seen as the upper hem is knotted in almond shape and again tied up by a single cloth ribbon that is twisted round with the loose end. Decorated sash (*katisutra*) is crossed from right to left hip, wrapping the remaining sash with a band. The significant feature of this image is the incised pleats of the lower garment. In fact, this dress character is comparable to the pre- *Angkorean* Vishnu image dated around early 6th century A.D.

**Group C**: This type comprises free standing images with typically simplified costume that now consists of only the long *dhoti* with tightened upper border in almond shaped knot over the folds of gathered garment. In some cases, the curved lines incised on either side of the statue indicate folds that are drawn up to the waist. Most of them do not have decorative hip sash. The most significant point of these images is the innovation of independent four arms detaching from the hips. It is probable that this stylistic innovation, developing through the slow evolution, causes the statues to be more fragile. It is noticed from most of images in this group that remain up to these days are reduced to body or sculptural fragments. The general dating of these Vishnu images belonged to this group start from 7th-8th century A.D. (Michel 2002: 123).
Fig. 129. The four armed Vishnu images of Group C. from National museum Nakon Sri Thammarat province (A-D.)

Fig. 130. (E.) Vishnu from Khao Sri Vijaya (F) fragment of Vishnu image from Songkla and (G) the four armed free standing Vishnu image from Ta Kua Pa, Phang nga province, National museum Bangkok

The four armed Vishnu image from Chom Thong temple, Sichon district : National museum Nakon Srithammarat (A.)

This Vishnu image (58 cm.) is classified into Group C. according to the general feature of the image that clearly shows four arms of the body part, especially two lower arms are detached from hip. Though the head of the image remains with mitre cap, the face is seriously damaged due to erosion. The carving technique of this image is considered as free standing, though mace (gada) that used to help support the image is seen. The general feature of this image like dress and ornament pattern are similar to the other Vishnu images, particularly with the four armed Vishnu image from Ban Phang Kam (Sichon district).

The four armed Vishnu image from Wat Phra Narai temple, Tha Sala : National museum Nakon Srithammarat (B.)

The four armed Vishnu image is measured as 68.5 cm., but without head and arms. Actually, there is no trace of attached lower arms on both hips, therefore this image is can be set in Group C. In spite of being in an uncompleted condition, the body treatment still shows the smooth and natural muscle form, narrowed waist with fine pleated long dhoti. The other
significant point of this image is the pattern of pleated lower garment is undoubtedly comparable to the Vishnu image of pre Angkorean style (Phanom Da style) (Boisselier 1955: Pl.3-7).

The fragment of Vishnu images from Wat Phra Narai temple, Tha Sala and Sichon district of Nakon Srithammarat : National museum Nakon Srithammarat (C.)

The fragments of Vishnu images are discovered from several parts of Southern region which once were the center of Brahmanism like present day Nakon Srithammarat province. At the National museum Nakon Srithammarat, there are other remains of Vishnu images like torso and hip portions which have been exhibited.

The torso including narrowed hip of image is measured as 52 cm. It was part of four arms Vishnu of Group C whose arms were supposed to be independent. Body treatment showing natural muscle and slim hips are covered by long robe dhoti. Similar to other images, the knot of upper hem is in almond shape over the frontal folds.

The other hip portion of Vishnu image D. is also found from the same region. The general feature of this fragment as seen from fishtailed folds resembles to the pre Angkorean style (Phanom Da) as noticed from Vishnu image from Thoul Dai Boun (Cambodia) and Avalokitesvara from Rach-Gia of Transbassac (Michel 2002: 124; Boisselier 1955: Pl.10, 12).

There is also the fragment of Image from Khao Srivijaya moutain E. which has only lower portion, huge feet and armless torso. It is unquestionably belonged to this group. Though the image has quite a heavy appreance like pinched waist, wide hip and huge feet which are still attached in the stone, it shows the more archaic feature that later on will be developed as proper free standing and independent form.

The torso of four armed Vishnu image from Sathingpra district, Songkla : National museum Songkla

This image (F.) once formed the major portion of Vishnu image measured as 65 cm. and is currently seen as incomplete condition. However, the significant feature of lower garment is still remaining. The dhoti covers narrowed waist with almond shaped knot that tighten falling folds and again decorated with belt that consists of two wrapped cloths with the ends tied at the frontal bow made of four circular associated loops.
The four armed Vishnu image from Ko Kho Khao mountain, Ta Kua Pa district, Phang Nga province, National museum Bangkok

Fig. 131. The four armed Vishnu image from Ko Kho Khao, National museum Bangkok

This is one of the most impressive and proficient sculpture of four armed Vishnu image found in the Southern Penninsular and perhaps the most powerful and emphatically monumental sculpture discovered in Thailand (Lajonquiére 1909: 170-171). Besides the splendid height (202 cm.), the arms as well as head are completely separated from torso. The feet and ankles are made free from their base. Moreover, the realistic appearance is obviously noticed from muscle, arms, leg portions and feet. However, the old traces of old technique of sculpture supports can still be found from the frontal folds that was traditionally wrapped from the waist to basement.

This remarkable sculpture was studied in the field of art by scholars such as Lajonquière (1909: 234) who discovered this image and Dupont (1941: 239), considering that this four armed Vishnu image is the prototype of Southeast Asian Vishnu images influenced by the Pallava art of South India. According to Dupont (1941), this sculpture would be a work resulting from the influence of Tamil traders in this region from the earlier period upto the 9th century A.D. In this case, Dupont has dated this image to the 6th century A.D.
Krairiksh (1980: 28, Pl.12) also assigns the same date to it, after comparing this image with the sculptures belonging to pre Angkorean period (Phanom Da style), the result of which has shown much similarity in the realistic rendering of the body to be evidently of an early date. O’Connor (1968; 1972:41-42) has issued slightly different opinion that this image is not the prototype of Pallava form since it does not show much influence from the particular school. In fact, the statue is perfectly set into the coherent evolution of the images of Vishnu in Southeast Asia that begins with the eldest one known as Chaiya Vishnu image and intended to be developed with a more energetic appearance as can be seen through the closely natural features as well as its enormous size with independent arms. For this image, O’Connor (1972: 43) and Dupont (1955 : 132) provided general dating between the years 650-800 A.D. which being the common time period of group C. images.

Special categories

The Vishnu image from private collection of Prince Bhanubandha, Bangkok

Apart from being categorized into three groups on the basis of costume arrangement and carving technique, the other significant point of Vishnu images from Southern Thailand is that almost of them are rarely adorned with sculpted jewellery or luxurious ornament. If they are depicted, normally they would be of the simple kind like simple arm ornament or mitre crown motifs. According to the work done by Filliozat and Pattburamin (1966), there is trace of decorated removable jewel ornament for sculptural adornment in India that is still in practice up to these days. Dupont (1955-143-146) also agreed in this matter as he gave example from the inscription from Pan Hor (Cambodia) dated from the time of Bhavavarman II (the middle of 7th century A.D.).

The inscription has mentioned on the precious ornaments namely the jewelled head gear, bracelet, silver chain and gold ankle rings (Coedes 1952-53: V, 5-6). Furthermore, Dupont (1955: 146) has also given specific points of using metal attributes noticed from pre Angkorean- free standing image as deduced from the hands position of Hari-hara image from Sombor Prei Kuk sanctuary. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the rare jewel adornment depicted on the Southern Thai Vishnu images might be influenced by the same trend as did in Cambodia and India.

However, there are some Vishnu images found in the Southern peninsular which have decorative ornaments. The Vishnu statue from the private collection of H.R.H. Prince Bhanubandha Yugala, Bangkok dated to the 8th century A.D. is a good example (Boisselier 1974 : Fig.66 ; Michel 2002 : Pl.19).
Fig. 132. (Left) Vishnu image from Tjibuaja, western Java (Center) The four armed Vishnu image from private collection of Prince Bhanubandha and (Right) The Vishnu image (202 cm) from Chandi Banon, central Javanese art (courtesy, National museum Jakarta, Indonesia)

This Vishnu image measuring around 39 cm. is preserved in the Private Collection in Bangkok and its local origin is yet unknown. In fact, this statue might have originated from the Southern peninsular of Thailand (Michel 2002: 127) because of some similarities in carving technique and traditional costume. There are some significant characters such as the decorated head gear on the mitre crown, single pearl necklace (ekavali) and long jewelled ear rings. Unfortunately, this Vishnu image has lost three arms and their attributes and only the lower left hand is touching the mace (gada). The face of image has resemblance to Indo-Javanese art of the 8th century A.D. or perhaps a little later up to the 9th century (Michel 2002: 127). In this case, there are examples of four armed Vishnu images of Javanese art from Indonesia which is comparable to the image such as the Vishnu image from Candi Banon (National museum: Jakarta)

In this case, the trace of Javanese influence is also seen through the head ornament, the decorated mitre crown and necklace as noticed from the earlier group of Vishnu images from Tjibuaja, western Java. Perhaps, it can be suggested that the making of sculptural ornament is a remarkable point of Javanese art as it was commonly practiced in India especially in Gupta style.

The Standing Vishnu image from Petchaburi province: National museum Bangkok
This four armed Vishnu image from Petchaburi (125 cm.), upper region of peninsular, is made in high relief form with localized carving technique. The archaic feature of this sculpture is obviously seen from heavy looks noticed from the narrowed top mitre crown, plain shadowy belt around the hips. The body and the conch shell (*sankha*) have lost their naturalism appearance in compared to other earlier images. In fact, this particular type of *mitre and* the moustache are in conformity with the development of later pre *Angkorean* art. These significant features are noticed from pre-*Angkorean* sculptures from *Andet* and *Kampong Prah* of Cambodia dated around 650-800 A.D. (O’Connor 1972: 48). Regarding the classification of this image, O’Connor (1972) has considered it as one of Group C. sculptural type due to the carving of hands which appear to be out of waist and unattached to the body. However, this image forming technique is still archaic, heavy and does not seem to be carved out independently from background.

In this case, this image should be set separately as a special category due to the absence of sash (*katisutra*) that could have arranged this image to the Group A. type of Vishnu image.
Fig. 134. (Left) The Vishnu image from Viang Sra in comparison with the other contemporary sculptures from pre-Angkorean of Cambodia, (center) Vishnu image from Kam Phong Prah and (right) Prasat Andet, Cambodia

The high relief of four armed Vishnu image from *Pong Tuk* district, *Ban Kao* museum, Kanchanaburi province

Fig. 135. The high relief of four armed Vishnu image from *Pong Tuk*

This is a high relief of Vishnu image now preserved at *Ban Kao* museum, Kanchanaburi province of western Thailand. This Vishnu image (150 cm.) shows much of the localized
influence which is considered as the Dvaravati character such as the form of face, head ornament and up-to-knee dhoti. However, this locally made image has reflected an intention to follow the contemporary Khmer art tradition by depicting the divine attributes and horseshoe shape in order to support the sculpture. There is the significant feature providing the general dating noticed on the dhoti wrapping pattern that seems to be comparable to the Harihara image from Prasat Andet of Kampong Preah style in Cambodia dated to early 8th-9th century A.D. This comparative dating is contemporary to the last stage of Dvaravati art in the central region when most of the images belonged to both Buddhism and Brahmanism dated around the 7th-9th century which clearly replicate Khmer art influence (pre-Angkorean period). Hence, it is possible to date this high relief Vishnu image to around the early of 8th-9th century A.D.

Fig. 136. (Left) The high relief of Vishnu image from Pong Tuk, Kanchanaburi province, (Center) Harihara image from Prasat Andet, Cambodia and (Right) Harihara from Traphan Phon, Kampong Preh style. (Courtesy, Phasook Indrawooth and Boisselier 1955)

The comparative study of four armed Vishnu images in Thailand: the art influence from India and neighboring countries before the end of 8th century A.D.

The four armed Vishnu images in Thailand, though quite less in numbers as compared with neighbouring countries and India, they have reflected the great evidence of cultural movement from distant regions on religious art. Perhaps, it is reasonable enough to state that during the late 5th-8th century A.D., the majority of Southeast Asian states had intensively
interwoven with the Vaisanavite tradition. This particular sect might have been initially motivated by Indian merchant guilds and priests. They mostly settled at along the sea ports as noticed from the discovery of Vishnu images from Malay Penninsular and Transbassac, southern Cambodian and Vietnam. The much similarity of sculptural making definitely attests to the connection and contemporary development of Vaisanavite iconography in this region through the ages. First of all, the comparative part should be started from those of Vishnu images from Transbassac area that show the most similar characters with the only statues in Thailand.

**The pre Angkorean Vishnu images from Transbassac area**

The early form of four armed Vishnu images wearing long *dhoti* and *mitre* crown reported from this region is comparable to the Vishnu image of Group A type in Thailand. There are some examples of them dated to pre Angkorean period (before 9th century A.D.) discovered from ancient port sites such as *Bathe* (Transbassac area) and Southern Vietnam.

![Fig. 137. (A.) Vishnu image from Oc Eo, Transbassac. (B). Vishu image from Kampong Cham Kau, (C) Bathe and (D) Vishnu image from Vat Cetdei: Tran Vinh district) (Boisserlier 1955 : Pl.2 ; Malleret 1959 : Pl.83; Malleret 1963 : Pl.3)](image)

The examples of Vishnu images from neighbouring region contemporary to pre Angkorean period (early 6th -9th century A.D.) are reflect much similarity in both iconographic and artistic aspects with the Vishnu images (Group A.) in Thailand. All of
them are wearing cylindrical mitre crown, long robe dhoti with decorated sash (katisutra) and barely adorned by any ornament. They are represented as four armed image which carry almost the same divine attributes and also the same order. Only the earlier image used to hold the conch shell in the lower left hand while the later one always hold it in the upper left hand. The lower garment (dhoti) is usually arrenaged in horizontal direction similar to the Vishnu Image of Group A. type. The sash (katisutra) is hanging across from left to right hip horizontally and leaving the wrapped folds next to the body.

There is a significant deviation in the carving technique. The images are reflecting an attempt to make free standing images from high relief sculpture by using horse-shoe shape arch for supporting the arms, mitre crown of the image as well as mace and folding sash (katisutra). The verteicle frontal garment is also made for the same purpose as if it supporting the sculpture at the center point. The Vishnu image from Bathe, Trasbassac region, (Malleret 1959 : Pl.83) is one of the good examples, showing the transition step of iconographic feature which developed from the early Vishnu images from Southern Thailand to the compleate Group A. images. The Vishnu image is also holding conch shell in his upper left hand and is carved in archaic-free standing technique. In fact, the Vishnu image from Tjibuaja, western Java, also has some similarities in this matter.

Iconographic discussion

In the context of iconographic study, there are some inscriptions written in both Sanskrit and old Khmer languages which mention the iconographic attributes of Vishnu image. According to Dupont (1955 : 143-144), one of the most ancient inscription dated to the middle of 7th century A.D. has listed the earth (bhu) as one of Vishu attributes. The inscription at Thvar Kdei contemporary to the reign of King Rajendravarman (994-968 A.D.) as well as from Ta Kev of King Suryavarman I (1002-1050 A.D.) mention the divine attributes namely the disc (chakra), earth (mahi), conch shell (sankha) and mace (gada) including the other weapons such as arrow (sarnga) and sword (khadga) (Bhattacharya 1961 b : 103). There is also the early image of Hari Kambhujendra or The God (Vishnu) King of Kambhuja depicted in the form of eight arms Vishnu dated around the 6th-7th century, holding the eight attributes but only six are survived like mace(gada), antelopeskin, sacred water pot (kamandalu), vajra, fire and stick (danda) which symbolized the Lokpalas or “guardians of the world”. This specific character of Vishnu is meant to be an intimate relation between Visnavism and Kingship concept in early Cambodian kingdom before the 9th century A.D. (Bhattacharya 1964 : 72-78).
An interesting point in Khmer iconography is that the earth (bhu) directly replaces the lotus (padma) which earlier represented the earth according to Indian iconography.

If the earth (bhu) which carried in Khmer Vishnu’s lower right hand is symbolically considered as same as lotus, then most of the four armed Vishnu images found in Khmer art are classified as Janardana or Vasudeva form after the twenty four murti of Vishnu stated in the Rupamandana and Padma purana text (Bhattacharya 1961 b : 104-105; Rao 1916 (I) : 227-233). Vishnu image in Jarnardana form carries his lotus (padma) in lower right hand, mace (gada) in lower left hand, conchshell (sankha) and disc (chakra) are held in upper left and right hands respectively. According to C. Sivaramamurti (1950 : 40), these Vishnu forms are much prevalent in South India.

In fact, the iconographic tradition which replaces the lotus with earth (bhu) is not limited only to Khmer art. There are two Vishnu images from Tjibuaja (western Java) which represent Vishnu form known as Madhava (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 105). This particular form of Vishnu carrying the earth is also available in Champa such as the Vishnu image from Da-nghi (Parmentier 1922 : Pl.XXVI) and Vat Cetdei (Tran Vinh ) district. Perhaps, according to Bhattacharya (1961b : 105), this specific iconographic tradition could have been initially developed in Cambodia before spreading to the other countries in Southeast Asia.

However, the Vishnu images carry lotus (padma) with the similar form of earth (bhu) in South Indian art as noticed from early Chalukya Vishnu images from Badami cave, Mahakuta and Aihole which dated around the middle of 6th - 7th century A.D.

Thus, it would be more possible to suggest the cultural relationship between the Southern Deccan region and Southeast Asian countries for bringing this particular iconographic tradition.
In case of the Vishnu images carrying conch shell in his lower left hand and mace (gada) in upper right hand as seen from the Oc Eo, Bathe and Tual Koh (in land Cambodia), they reflect the Vishnu in the form of Trivikarma murti of Padma Purana and Rupamandana. This Vishnu form is normally described as holding conch shell in lower left, lotus (earth: bhu) in lower right, disc (chakra) upper left and mace (gada) in upper right (Rao 1916 (I): 229-233). This particular form is popular in north Indian art (Bhattacharya b 1961 : 105; Sivaramamurti 1950 : 41). While in South India most of four armed Vishnu images normally represent Janardana murti (Champakalakshmi 1981: 202).

The earliest Vishnu images found in Chaiya also hold conch shell (sankha) in the lower left. Though the other attributes are not clearly seen, according to the remaining body part, lower right hand should carry disc (chakra) and mace(gada) in upper right hand respectively. This iconographic form reminds of the Govindha murti of Vishnu (Rao 1916 : 231; Banerjea 1956 : 387-388; Bahhatacharya (b) 1961 : 105).

Actually, though it is difficult to find the Indian prototype of Vishnu image holding conch shell (sankha) in the lower left hand, there are some examples of Mathura and late Amravati arts showing this specific character (Diskalkar 1932 : 21; Sivaramamurti 1957 : 35-70; Bhattacharya 1961b : 106). In this case, the iconographic form of Vishnu image from Oc Eo (A.) is similar to the group of early Vishnu image from Chaiya, especially the oldest one from Wat Sala Thung temple.

Therefore, it is reasonable to state that the specific form of Vishnu images carrying conch shell on the left hip might have first developed at Malay peninsular before coming to Transbassac region, Southern Cambodia and Vietnam, along with the maritime trade connection (Malleret 1959 : 396).
In order to find comparative cultural influence for this deviant iconographic form of four armed Vishnu images in Southeast Asia as well as in Thailand, it is necessary to consider Indian prototypes or better understanding.

Indian comparisons: The iconographic form of Indian Vishnu images dated contemporary to the Vishnu images found in Thailand

As mentioned in the earlier section, the iconographic character group of early Vishnu images dated between late 4th – 5th century A.D. is comparable to those of Mathura and Amravati images leading to the conclusion that the Vishnu images from peninsular Thailand should be dated prior to late 5th century A.D. There are a number of four armed Vishnu images dated to later period from the beginning of 6th – 8th century A.D. which share the iconographic form with those of neighboring countries. Although, most of them reflect the strong local characteristics, the Indian influence that inspired the craftsmen should not be ignored.

According to Dupont (1941), the classified standing Vishnu images in Thailand as well as the Transbassac region share the common iconographic characters like wearing cylindrical plain mitre crown, long robe dhoti, very less ornament and being carved with a particular attribute order. This significant feature is likely comparable to those of Pallava sculptures dated around late 5th-7th century A.D. Besides Pierre Dupont, there are other scholars like Le May (1965: 81), Groslier (1962: 84), Wheatley (1961: 196) and Wales (1951: 44) who have considered that the style of the mitre Vishnu from the peninsular derives inspiration from the Pallava style (7th – middle of 9th century A.D.) (Jouveau-Dubreuil 1972: 36) or even carved by sculptors trained in South India. The main reasons for so much similarity appear to be the style of cylindrical mitre crown (kiritamukuta) and costume.
Fig. 139. The examples of four armed standing Vishnu in Pallava style carved in bas relief technique. (Left and center) The Vishnu image from the group of monuments at Mahabalipuram and Kailasnath temple, Tamilnadu

According to the sculptural character, it is reasonable to state that the main character of Vishnu image in Pallava art is quite simple in comparison with the Chola style (the 9th – middle of 14th century A.D.). Most of the sculptures are quite similar to those four armed Vishnu images from Thailand and neighbouring countries dated to contemporary period as noticed from the mitre crown (kiritamukhuta), dhoti arrangement and plain decoration. This can be seen especially in the standing Vishnu images of Group B which are really close to Pallava style as they wear tall mitre crown that resemble the early south Indian pattern.

In fact, the use of cylindrical mitre crown in sculptures is not limited only to Pallava art since it had earlier been worn by Indra and Kubera in early Indian art as well as the Indra images at Amravati and Nagarjunkonda dated prior to Pallava art of South India. There is also a trace of cylindrical mitre crown noticed from the Kushana Vishnu images of Mathura. Coomaraswamy (1928) has connected on the cylindrical mitre crown in Gupta and Pallava schools. One of the good examples of Vishnu wearing mitre crown in Gupta art is the Vishnu image at Udaygiri, Gwalior. According to this suggestion, Coomaraswamy (1928: 40-41) has given an idea of the Gupta art influence to those of mitre crown Vishnu images in Southeast Asia.
Furthermore, the example of cylindrical *mitre* crown in northern India belonged to early post-Gupta art as is seen in the standing Vishnu from Kanauj presently exhibited in Baroda Museum believed to be dated from the 6th-7th century (Shah 1955: 19-23, fig.10). In comparison with Gupta and Pallava style, the headdress of free standing Vishnu from *Ta Kua Pa*, peninsular Thailand, is much similar to the Gupta than the early Pallava art (O’connor 1972: 45).

From this point of view, it is possible to suggest that if the invention of *mitre* crown is not merely limited to Pallava style then the four armed Vishnu images with cylindrical headdress found in Southeast Asia might have been influenced by various Indian schools and gradually amalgamated with local style.

There is another important argument which is worth noticing regarding the transfer of Pallava influence as can be clearly seen from the sculptural carving technique. O’Connor (1972: 43-44) has pointed out the difference in sculptural technique that is most of the Pallava images are totally flat or made as high relief, while those of Malay peninsula show natural body treatment and standing almost independently with human size though they are considered as belonging to the formative phase of art.

Though the Southeast Asian Vishnu images were not been made under the mainstream of any specific Indian school and obviously show the localized appearance, there may be major iconographic characters undoubtedly inspired by Indian art influence of Gupta or Pallava. Besides South Indian trends, the four armed Vishnu image which is preserved in private custody of Prince *Bhanubandha*, Bangkok, is an example of Gupta (5th-6th century A.D.) inspired sculpture.
Fig. 140. The Vishnu and Bodhisattava images of Gupta art (Left) Vishnu image from Udayagiri cave (No.6) (center) The Vishnu image from archaeological museum Sanchi, Madhaya Pradesh, (right) Vajrapani and Padampani Bodhisattava from archaeological museum Sanchi, Madhaya Pradesh

The Vishnu image from private collection in Bangkok has shown the similarities in the divine adornment, the necklace, jewelled headdress and the shape of mitre crown with the Gupta style. Furthermore, the sculptural ornament and the garment that are depicted on the Vishnu images are generally seen complicated or highly decorated in art of the later period such as the Gupta and early mediaval schools of north India and early Chalukya of the Deccan plateau. The widespread of Gupta influence is also reflected on the early Indonesian art of central Javanese dated to the 6th-7th century A.D.

Other remarkable point of Gupta image is the diagonal by tied of sash (katisutra) handing from right to left hip. This character is clearly noticed from the four armed Vishnu images of Group B. but the slightly difference is observed from the direction of sash that contrary hanging in opposite of the Gupta images.

Besides dress and ornament, the most significant identification of Vishnu image in northern India is the floral garland (vanamala) that is worn over the torso of the sculpture. Although this vanamala tradition had extensively influenced and succeeded in the Gupta and mediaval schools in northern region, this floral garland is not found in the early Vishnu images from Southern plateau as well as Southeast Asia. Therefore, it would be possible to state that though the Gupta influence is existed, it almost assimilated into the local style.

The early Vishnu images in Thailand as well as other neighbouring states are considered to be the depiction of Indian art through iconographic form and general character, despite assimilating with local tradition. From the recent study, it is possible to assume that
the Indian art influence, from both northern and southern schools, had made a strong impressive while creating the earliest group of Vishnu images. The influence of the early Indian art from Andhra Pradesh is seen in the early Vishnu images while later Vishnu images dated after 6th century might be modified by Gupta and related art influence.

Finally, the Indian prototype images reached to its highest point of carving skill as seen from free standing Vishnu image from Ta Kua Pa district (National museum Bangkok). This character has definitely reflected advanced skill of local craftsman who adapted Indian appearance into their traditional form.

The making of Indian prototype images was probably lasted up to the end of 8th century A.D. though there are few Brahmanical sculptures dated between the 9th-12th century A.D. (late Pallava to early Chola style) found scattered in the Southern peninsular while the other parts like central and northeastern regions were developed their regional art generally inspired by Khmer influence from ancient Cambodian Kingdom. There are three Vishnu images from southern peninsular dated to this contemporary period from the end of 8th -11th century A.D., showing dominant styles of late Pallava and Chola schools.

**The standing Vishnu images from Southern Thailand under South Indian influence.**

The Vishnu image (175 cm.) and the associated deities from Pra Narai hill, Ta Kua Pa district: National museum Phuket.

![Fig. 141. The standing Vishnu in Madhayama Yogasthanakamurti from Khao Pra Narai mountain, National museum Phuket](image)

Traces of Vaishnavism from the 9th -11th century A.D. is obviously attested by the image of Vishnu in Madhayama Yogasthanakamurti group at Phra Narai (Vishnu Narayana)
hill located at the valley of Takua Pa River. This group of images is now exhibited at National museum, Phuket. The sculpture stands in samabhanga pose, flanked by two kneeling figures, the sage Markandeya and the goddess Bhudevi. This group of images is dated to the second quarter of 9th century A.D. which makes it contemporary to the Tamil inscription found at the same place and referred to the water tank dedicated by an Indian merchant guild “Manikrammam”. According to the inscription, K.A. Nilakanta Sastri (1978) noted it mentions the title of the later Pallava King, Nandivarman III (826 to 850 A.D.) and was known as Avani Naranan. This word means “the Vishnu on Earth”. By going the King’s title name, then the inscription can be dated from second quarter of 9th century.

The iconographic form of Vishnu image is known as “Madhayama Yogasthanakamurti” means the four armed Vishnu with dark complexion holding disc (chakra) and conch shell (sankha) in back hands and front hands showing abhaya or varada pose. The front left should rest upon hip (katyavalambita-hasta).

The principle image is accompanied by the sage Brigu or Markandeya, kneeling and resting on one knee on the right and left respectively of Vishnu, or flanked by Bhudevi and Markandeya seated on the left and right of Vishnu image. Furthermore, the images of Siva and Brahma should be depicted on the north and south wall of the main shrine (Rao 1916: 80). In this case, the group of image consists of the four armed Vishnu image in company with Markendeya and Bhudevi.

The Vishnu is standing in the middle wearing jeweled tall cylindrical crown (kiritamukuta) over the round face fully showing south Indian influence. The body portion is well decorated by single pearl strings; celestial jewel necklace, waist band (udhara bhanda) and the scared thread (yajnopravita) made from three pearl strings and armed lances decorated with circular type of jeweled ornament. The lower part after narrowed waist is adorned by fine pleated garment which is traditionally wrapped in the form of long dhoti, knotting the front folds with jeweled cloth belts tied up like circular ribbon and followed by the sash (katisutra) hanging in a circular form between the two hips with twisted end on both sides.

The Vishnu images have shown the iconographic feature as noticed from the four hands, though upper set is in damaged condition and the attributes were supposed to be conch shell (sankha) and disc (chakra) while the lower hands showing Abhaya-varadha and resting upon hip (katyavalambita-hasta). This form is completely reflected with the Vishnu in yogasthanaka murti forum.
There are two followers of Vishnu, Markandeya and Bhudevi, kneeling at the left and right sides of God. The Markandeya image is presented in the form of a young sage wearing knotted hair (jatamukuta) with simple round ornament and the face showing a peaceful appearance. Around the neck, the sage wears a single pearl string similar to the ones on his arms and the fine cloth is wrapped as yajnopavita. The lower part is covered by a simple pleated dhoti.

In case of Goddess Bhudevi, though the image is not in good condition, it can be noticed that the goddess wears jewelled ornaments. There are a set of bangles in both hands. Similar to other images, the Bhudevi's lower garment is arranged in the form of simple pleated dhoti.

This group of images is intensively studied by many scholars like Lajonguière (1909), Wales (1935), Le May (1938), Lamb (1961), K.A. Nilankanta Sastri (1978) and O’connor (1972) in order to examine their iconographic features. Earlier this group of images was considered as “Gangadhara murti” of Siva, but after some more intensive study, this group...
can be identified as Vishnu image in “yogasthanaka murti” form (Krairiksh 1981: 74). In this case, it is possible to point out different iconographic character related to this controversy. In general, if this group narrating the Gangadhara Siva, the Ganga as well as other divine attributes of Siva should be seen. In the absence of these features, the group of images can be reasonably identified as yogasthanaka murti.

Fig. 143. The group of Brahmanical images in Gangadhara murti of Siva (Left and Center), from Trichinopoly rock cut cave, Tamilnadu and the bas-relief of Gangadhara murti from Ravanaphadi cave, Aihole, Karnataka. (Right) The Vishnu and divine attendant group in Yogasthanaka murti form, Mamallapuram, Tamilnadu

The present dating of this group of images is generally believed to be based on Pallava style (O’ Connor 1972: 53, Le May 1965: 80-81; Wales 1951: 45), but the specific time of this long period has not yet been verified. O’Connor (1972: 53-54) has given
suggestion regarding the comparable form of divine attributes like the development of scared thread (*yajnopavita*), dress and ornaments.

According to the study, he states that the sacred thread (*yajnopavita*) provides one indication of a Pallava date. It consists of bell-clasp and ribbons, an iconographic feature of the early medieval period in South India (Sivaramamurti 1950: 24). The *yajnopavita* flows over the right arm following the early Pallava sculptural tradition. It is composed of the pearl strings, introducing from the Chalukya style.

And possibly the Rashtrakutas, the succeeding dynasty of Chalukya in Western Deccan in 753 A.D., adopted this pearl string *yajnopavita* tradition. During the warfare with the Pallavas in 775 and 803 A.D., the Rastrakutas incorporated this delicately worked decoration into the dominions of the Pallavas (Coomaraswamy 1927: 102; Sivaramamurti 1950: 37; O’ Connor 1972: 53).

In comparison with Pallava sculptures dated around the 9th century, O’ Connor (1972) has given some comparative examples of traditional costume and ornaments among the Vishnu image from Tamilnadu (presently exhibited in British museum), the Vishnu image of *Viratanesvara* temple at Tiruttani (890 A.D.) and the Chola Vishnu image and the one from *Pra Narai* hill (National museum Phuket). The result has pointed out the similarity in sculptural characters as seen from ornament and the stiff drapery patterns of Vishnu image from *Pra Narai* hill which resembles the late Pallava sculpture dated between 750-850 A.D. rather than the others dated to later period as they are more developed in design.

Another scholar has pointed out some identification, proving the exact period of this Vishnu image, Tingsanchali (2008 : 139-147) has stated that the divine attributes such as *mitre* crown and lower garment pattern can help in dating the image as it resembles those of the later Pallava period.

Furthermore, the iconographic feature like *mudra* is also a significant feature as seen from the early Pallava sculptures which normally carry depicted the *kathaka mudra*. The Pallava and Chola style always follow *kartari* *mudra* or the way of holding attributes with mainly two fingers. This distinctive character is obviously noticed from the Vishnu images from *Mamallapuram, Vaikuntha perumal* of Kanchipuram and *Gangaikonda cholapuram*. Therefore, this Vishnu image from *Pra Narai* hill can be dated to the late Pallava period or before 850 A.D.
Fig. 144. The examples of Vishnu images from different period, (Left) The Vishnu images from Pra Narai hill, (Center) Mamallapuram: Early Pallava, (Right) Vaikunta perumal, Kanchipuram, Late Pallava

Fig. 145. (Left and center) Vishnu from Kottur and Tirykkara Vayil, Late Pallava period, Cultural and art museum, Tanjavour and (Right) Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Chola
The four armed Vishnu image from Viang Sra, Suratthani province, National museum Bangkok

![The Vishnu image from Viang Sra, National museum Bangkok.](image)

This southern Vishnu image (45 cm.) is of a little later period than the Pra Narai hill and carved under South Indian (late Chola) art inspiration dated around 11\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. This image could have been brought from South India assuming from its portable size and it is the only unique image discovered in this Southern peninsular. This image has been earlier studied by Wales (1935: 17-19) and has given approximate date up to the 8\textsuperscript{th} century as it appears to be closely related to the Chola art of 10\textsuperscript{th}-11\textsuperscript{th} century, however, this dating seems to be doubtful.

This high relief image is carved in the form of simple sthanaka murti of Vishnu following the South Indian tradition. The God’s lower arms present Abhaya-varada mudra and the left is resting on hip (katyavalambita-hasta). The upper arms hold conch shell and disc (Chakra) but the opposite orders of traditional Pallava–Chola pattern. It seems to be have been made by local Indian craftsman as the face, ornament and costume are simply carved. Interestingly, the image shows the remarkable facial character like the moustache beyond its small lips and almond shaped eyes showing the localized South Indian character. The mitre crown is lower in shape and decorated with pearls same as the necklaces and other simple sculptural ornaments. The sacred thread (yajnopavita) consists of beads or pearls flowing from left shoulder shortly to the right side of narrowed waist.
Similar to the others, this image also wears draped dhoti, but a short robe without proper decorated sash (katisutra), leaving the remaining folds next to the waist.

This kind of image character is not found in the neighbouring regions, only some medieval period Vishnu images from South Indian have comparable features which provide dating for this image. These comparative examples are the Harihara image of late Pallava-Chola period 10th-11th century A.D. from Tiruverumbur: Tamilnadu, Vishnu image of early Chola period from Tirumalai Nayak palace: Tamilnadu (late 9th -10th century A.D.) and the stone Vishnu image of Vijayanagara from Karnataka (11th-12th century A.D.)

Though there are some minor differences in the general characters, the comparable features are those of costume, dress ornament and iconographic form especially the hand pose (mudra). In fact, the Viang Sra Vishnu image has shown significant feature by holding attributes in kartari mukha hasta which commonly appeared in the Brahmanical images dated contemporary to late Pallava and Chola arts (from 10th century A.D. onwards). This particular mudra pose is also followed by the successor of Chola schools such as Vijayanaga art of late 12th century A.D. The low cylindrical crown of Viang Sra image is closer to the late Pallava-Chola pattern rather than the late Chola or Vijayanagara that always made the mitre crown much taller and slender.
Besides the similar ornamental style like elongated beads necklace and waist band, and other datable identification like the flow of yajanopavita of Viang Sra image which is not across the lower right arm as those of Pallava sculptures.

Thus, it can be assumed that this four armed Vishnu image from Viang Sra has was made under inspiration from Chola art of the 10th-11th century A.D.

Though the Brahmanical sects, flourished in the southern region, there is very little report on Brahmanical sculptures after the 8th century A.D. These images are stylistically product of Indian arts, but not in the former pattern that show the regional artistic character.

In this case, it can be suggested that these images were possibly brought by the Indian traders and installed them in the temples where the Brahmin communities and their descendants settled in this peninsular region (O’ Connor 1972: 63; Devahuti 1965: 59). Perhaps, the Brahmanical images were not the concern of the local craftsmen due to the thriving influencetial trend of Mahayanism from Javanese Kingdom of Indonesia.

Thus, after Malay Peninsula became a part of Sri Vijaya Kingdom and had intensive relationship with the Śailendras dynasty of Java Island, the majority of Sri Vijaya arts of Southern Malay Peninsular belonged to Mahayana Buddhism. This fact was contrary to the northeastern region of Thailand after the 8th century when the Buddhism of Dvaravati culture (late 5th-8th century A.D.) had been gradually replaced by the Brahmanical tradition, spreading along with the political expansion of ancient Cambodian Kingdom that covered entire region of northeastern plateau and the central river basin.

The standing Vishnu images under Khmer art influence from the 8th – 12th century A.D. in the central and northeastern region of Thailand.

As mentioned earlier, the central and northeastern regions of Thailand from the late 8th century A.D. was considered as the Khmer dominated region under the political expansion of Ancient Cambodian Kingdom, with it the capital city established at Angkorean area of Cambodia. Thus, most of the religious arts and architecture style was definitely followed the Khmer tradition, especially in the iconographic character secondarily derived from the Indian source.

The forms of Vishnu image made during this period are mainly classified into three major groups like the single four armed freestanding image, Avatāras and Narayana. The latter two categories are normally depicted in stone bas relief which used to be important parts of the monumental structures. Interestingly, the iconographic form of free standing
Vishnu images found in Thailand during the Khmer dominant period is very much similar to its contemporary Cambodian images dated from the 8th -13th century A.D. (Angkorean period). Thus, the dating of these images conventionally followed the Khmer styles that was studied and given secured dated by many foreign scholars like Boisselier (1955;), Briggs (1951), Dupont (1936), Groslier (1925) Parmentier (1939), Stern (1931-34), Remusat (1940), Giteau (1972), Lee (1969) and also Thai scholars like Diskul (1967,1970,1975), Suksawasti (1994) and Krairiksh (1979) etc. The description of each image will be discussed by period wise for more convenient understanding.

Four armed Vishnu images of Khmer art in Thailand after the 8th century A.D.

Interestingly, the Khmer Brahmanical sculptures discovered in Thailand are mostly carved out of sandstone of different qualities, made in free standing position. This technique was not newly introduced during this period, but developed from the pre-Angkorean time. The images were supported by horseshoe shaped arch and finally developed into free standing forms like Vishnu image group C. (Dupont 1941) from Southern peninsular. Therefore, it is possible to suggest on the influence of Vishnu images making from the Southern region into the mainland Southeast Asia during the early period of Christian era.

In Thailand, one of the earliest four armed Vishnu image under the Khmer (Angkorean period of after 802 A.D.) influence is dated around the 10th century A.D. Due to lack of Vishnu image dated to the earlier period . Only the two armed Vishnu avatars known as Krishna Govardhana images from Sri Tep dated around the 7th -8th century A.D. are placed in the early phase of this Khmer influenced period. After being totally absent in Thailand for centuries, the making of Vishnu in free standing position appears again in the 10th century A.D. probably, it was because the political power of ancient Khmer Kingdom was not much permanent before the rising of the legendary Mahidharapura dynasty which originated from northeastern plateau of Thailand in late 10th century A.D.

During the governing period under the Mahidharapura dynasty, the upper plateau including the northeastern Thai region was given much attention from the royal family in social economic aspect as well as religious activities. And, therefore, the evident progress of Brahmanical sects is noticed from the number of temples which were constructed or maintained from the 11th century A.D. onwards. The Vishnu images dated around the 10th-11th century A.D. are also being remarkable evidence of the expansion of proper Khmer Vaisnavism patronized by the court over the vast region.
There is a noteworthy point to be noticed that the number of Vishnu stone images discovered so far much less as in compared to Siva linga, though it was quite common during the pre-Angkorean period. In this case, it was probably because of differences in worshipping of leading Brahmanical sects in inner-mainland regions. This is proved by the number of Brahmanical Gods, Vishnu and Siva, reported from northern part of mainland (the Korat plateau in Thailand and upper plain of Cambodia including central part of Vietnam), lower basin (Transbassac region) and maritime peninsular.

At lower basin area, the emergence of Vishnu images dated from late of 5th-8th century A.D. is higher in numbers than the Siva images including Siva linga, while the Saivite emblems are most commonly found in the upper plateau from the 6th century onwards (Levy 2003 : 25). Perhaps, Vaisnavism was not given attention by the Saivite lords or chiefs who dominated the upper plateau before the rising of Angkorean.

**Four armed Vishnu images: Sthanaka murti**

The four armed Vishnu image the Sthanaka murti found in northeastern Thailand is certainly developed from Group C. with mitre crown and Vishnu images carved in free standing form. The examples of Sthanaka murti Vishnu with Khmer art influence are dated from the late 10th-12th century A.D. contemporary to the traditional Khmer art styles of Koh Ker, Pré Rup, Banteay Srei-Khleang, Baphoun and Angkor Wat (Briggs 1951; Boisselier 1955; Diskul 1967; 1970; Suksawasti 1994).

These six styles can be rearranged in to two main periods based on historical chronology as

1) **Before the rising of Mahidharapura dynasty** : Koh Ker (the early of 10th century : 907-940 A.D.), Pré Rup (The middle of 10th century : 957-967 A.D.), Banteay Srei-Khleang (the late of 10th century : 967-1007 A.D.) and 2) **Mahidharapura dynasty period** : Baphoun (the 11th century : 1017-1087 A.D.) and Angkor Wat (the 12th century : 1107-1177 A.D.) and the Bayon (the end of 12th-13th century).
Before the Mahidharapura dynasty period: The Koh Ker style: the early of 10th century: 907-940 A.D.

The sthanaka murti of Vishnu in Koh Ker style of Khmer art from Prah Narai shrine of Nakon Ratchasima city: Nakon Ratchasima province

Fig.148. The Vishnu image from Prah Narai shrine of Nakon Ratchasima city, the present condition and old photograph

This Vishnu image is carved in almost free standing position. The style of art is comparable to Koh Ker period of Cambodia (Boisselier 1995). There are divine attributes in his hands like the disc (chakra) and conch shell (sankha) in upper right and left hands while the lower set hold the earth (bhu) and mace (gada).

According to the pattern of head ornament (mukuta) and Khmer lower garment shown in the old photograph, it is comparable to the Koh Ker style of Cambodian art (Boisselier 1955; Diskul 1967,1970). Though the entire sculpture has been covered with gold flakes, the shape of crown and Khmer lower garment are still visible. The crown consists of cylindrical knotted hair and jewelled head ornament worn over the forehead portion.

Downward the lower garment is short up-to-knee level which is common in Khmer art from the Angkorean period (from the late 9th century A.D.). There is significant point is the development of Khmer traditional costume noticed on the new form. The decorated sash (katisutra) gradually changes from proper Indian way to authentic Khmer tradition with fish tailed belts tightened up like frontal folds. The upper hem, instead of knotted in almond shape
of previous style, remains free and overturned covering the belt. In addition to these new creations, the pleated short garment has replaced the long robe *dhoti* tradition from the early Angkorean period. Thus, it is reasonable to state that Khmer craftsmen had contributed their unique art tradition since after the 8th century A.D. and this aesthetic invention led to the new phase of history of Southeast Asian art.

Fig. 149. The examples of sculptures in *Koh Ker* style, (left) the male torso from Prasat Crap (Koh Ker): Cambodia, (center) the Brahma statues from Prasat Crap (Koh Ker), museum Guimet, Paris (courtesy, Boisselier 1955), and (right) bas relief of the Vishnu in *trivikrama* from Prasat Muang Kheak, Nakon Ratchasima province, National museum Pimai.

The *Mahidharapura* dynasty period: Baphoun and Angkor Wat styles (11th-12th century A.D.)

The *sitanaka murti* of Vishnu in *Baphoun* style (the 11th century: 1017-1087 A.D.)

Fig. 150. (Left) The body part of Vishnu images from *Ku Noi*, Maha Sarakham province, National museum *Khon Khean* and (Right) The Vishnu image from *Prasat Phanom Rung* sanctuary, Buriram province, National museum *Mahavirawongsa*, Nakon Ratchasima province.
The Vaisnavism in northeastern plateau became more prominent during 11\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. under the royal patronage of Mahidharapura dynasty as seen from the increasing numbers of fine carved Vishnu images made during these centuries. The Vishnu image from Ku Noi (61 cm.) is one of the early sculptures made in early Baphoun style which is also dated as “late Khleang-Baphoun style” of the late 10\textsuperscript{th}-11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. (Suksawasti 1994: 64, Diskul, 1967, 1970). According to Suksawasti (1994), the lower garment of this Vishnu image is comparable to the Vishnu image from Phanom Bayang in Cambodia that is contemporary to the late Khleang style. There is another suggestion put forth by Siribhatta (Diskul 1967: 37) stated that the lower garment pattern of this Vishnu image was already developed into Baphoun style, thus it could be dated to early 11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

The lower garment of this statue is short up to knee level, plain cloth wrapped in complicated Khmer style with pleated fold on the front right leg under the cloth belt which is tightened up in Khmer style. The upper border is not that much narrow like the proper Baphoun style. Unfortunately, the arms and head of statue are lost, so the style of head ornament could not be described.

The Vishnu from Prasat Phanom Rung sanctuary (79 cm.) is considered as a perfect Baphoun sculpture. It noticed from its complicated narrowed hem of lower garment is significant feature of Baphoun style. The head ornament consists of pyramid shaped top and jewelled crown decorated by many motifs like pearls, geometric flower and artificial leaves in different layers. The four arms of the images are completely damaged. Perhaps, it is a disavantage for the independent free standing sculpture which is already in a fragile stage because of extended parts like legs or arms of the stone image. According to the style of contemporary Khmer art, this Vishnu image is dated around the 11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. The Vishnu image with pyramid form of head crown was probably continuously practiced in the coming century and known as the Angkor Wat style.

Besides iconographic study, the enshrined Vishnu image in Saivite sanctuary directly reflects the tolerance in worship of sectarian deities. This remarkable tradition has been mentioned in the inscriptions which were erected officially by the royal court of ancient Cambodian Kingdom. Perhaps, along with the political power the syncretic character of Khmer Brahmanism was settled in the territory.
The Sthanaka murti of Vishnu image of Angkor Wat style (the 12th century, 1107-1177 A.D.)

The Vishnu images of this period (12th century A.D.) are quite prominent in Khmer art due to the Royal patronage from King Suryavarman II of ancient Khmer Kingdom, the founder of the magnificent Vaisnavite sanctuary, Angkor Wat. The stone standing Vishnu images found in northeastern Thailand during this period are mostly carved in the same pattern as Khmer art in Cambodia that is considered as general iconographic form of Vishnu
image of Khmer art. Commonly, the Vishnu images of this particular style are identified by the pyramid shape crown (*kiritamukuta*), four armed carrying divine attributes namely mace (*gada*), earth (*bhu*), disc (*chakra*) and conch shell (*sankha*). The body treatment of image is plain without any ornament and covered the lower part with short pleated lower garment shows decorated two fish-tail folds at the central part of costume. The significant feature of Khmer images which is still maintained from the pre Angkorean period is that most of them are carved as plain sculptures, perhaps they were once decorated by real jewelled ornaments as mentioned in the temple grant inscriptions. The cylindrical crown (*mukuta*) of the previous styles was limited as the symbolic form of *jatamukta* for Siva and Brahma. Moreover, the *jatamukuta* of Angkor Wat style are shown with its opened top and decorated hair.

Fig.153. The example of Vishnu image of Angkor Wat style, (from Left) the Vishnu image from Prasat Traphang Tong Thung Tngai, Cambodia, The Vishnu images and Kalki or Haygriva avatars from Cambodia, Museum Gimet, Paris and The bronze Vishnu image from Prasat Phnom Rung sanctuary, Thailand

After the end of Angkor Wat style in the late 12th century, the development of Khmer art had reached its final stage with the Bayon style around 13th century A.D. and also the last phase of Khmer Brahmanism. The Bayon style was started from the reign of King Jayavarman VII who declared himself as great devotee of Mahayana Buddhism and was responsible for various Buddhist monuments in both ancient Khmer Kingdom and distant territories crossing Thailand and Laos. Thus, the long flourishing time of Vaisnavism as well as other Brahmanical sects had gradually decreased and finally replaced by Mahayanism. From the 13th century onwards, the standing Vishnu stone image is very rare or, if available, most of them are seen in relief forms.
The development of divine attributes of the Vishnu images in Thailand

Similar to Indian tradition, the divine attributes of Vishnu images are generally seen as mace (*gada*), earth (*bhu*), disc (*chakra*) and conch shell (*sankha*). The development of these symbolical objects had developed along with the trend of sculptural making. Although there is not much variation in forms and style like in Indian art, the major changes are noticed from chorological classification.

The Indian prototype images from the late of 5\textsuperscript{th} - 8\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.:

The attributes dated to this period have significant features comparable to Indian form. Though it is not possible to identify any particular schools the attributes possibly follow the major stylistic trends like Mathura and Gupta in northern style or Pallava or early medieval South Indian styles which is common with other Southeast Asian countries.

The Khmer influence styles after the 8\textsuperscript{th} - 13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.: Most of the divine attributes were duplicated or a little modified from previous patterns. If the inventive style was created, it was commonly made either plain or slightly decorated with floral motif. However, the pattern is depended on the craftsman’s skill. Actually, most of the images found in Thailand were products of both Royal Khmer and local craftsmen.

The conch shell (*sankha*)

![Fig.154. The conch shell of Vishnu images from (Left) Chaiya, Nakon Srithammarat, Songkla and Petchaburi](image)

The depiction of conch shell in early Indian prototype images was carve in naturalism and initially held in the lower left hand of Vishnu image. This aberrant form has been identified as earliest as the 5\textsuperscript{th} - 6\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. Most of the conch shells depicted with the Vishnu image dated ranging from the early 6\textsuperscript{th} - 8\textsuperscript{th} are commonly held in the divine upper left hand and still carved in realistic and simple form. However, there are some cases like the conch shell of Vishnu image from Petchaburi which is made in plain and rough form.
After 8th century A.D., the forms of conch shell (sankha) is slightly developed but still most of them maintain the natural feature with a little decoration or carved in real conch shell shape without much naturalistic detail. According to the general Khmer iconographic feature the conch shell is always held in the upper left hand from at least the 6th century A.D.

Fig.155. The conch shells of Vishnu from (left) Viang Sra the rest four examples are made under Khmer art (courtesy, National museum Roiet, Pimai and Maha Virawongsa, Nakon ratchasima)

In case of the Southern Vishnu image made under the early medieval South Indian influence, Pallava or Chola arts, the depicted conch shell is depicted similar to the particular South Indian style. For instance, the conch shell of the Vishnu image from Viang Sra, Suratthani province is carved in artificial form with small flame decoration on both sides like the Chola style. Additionally, the conch shell is held in Kartari mudra by only two fingers considered as attributes holding pose of late Pallava-Chola art.

The Disc: Sudrasana-Chakra
The development of disc is also seen through the ages from the early Indian prototype image dated around the late 4th-5th century A.D. Earlier form of *Sudrasana-Chakra* is generally made as a flat wheel with simple spokes, held directly by catching it with four fingers in frontal side. A century later, around the 6th-8th century A.D., the disc had still been made in simple form but more bloated in shape, normally held sideways in between two fingers which may be considered as the basic form of *Kathaka mudra*. These simple and realistic discs are quite common not only in Indian prototype image in Thailand, but also the *pre Angkorean* art of ancient Khmer and early Javanese style before the 9th century A.D. The exception is the disc of *Viang Sra* Vishnu which is an example of Chola influence noticed from the artificial shape decorated with four direction flame that was always seen in the Chola art.

*Sudrasana Chakra* in Khmer art, especially during 11th-12th century A.D., is depicted in the form of a circular disc or wheel. In case of decorated ones, most of them are incised with floral designs such as lotus petals or artificial style flowers. It seems to represent the symbolic form of lotus (*padma*), commonly known as the other sacred attribute of Vishnu.

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**Fig. 157. The Sudrasana - Chakra wheel from Vishnu images of Khmer influenced style dated up to 12th century A.D., (left) the hands \ from National museum *Mahaveerawongs*, National museum *Pimai* and (right) *Pon Vit*, National museum *Roiet***
The mace and earth: *Gada* and *Bhu*

Mace (*gada*) is one of the identical attributes of Vishnu which is always depicted in both Indian and Southeast Asian arts. At the earliest time, most probably from 4th-5th century A.D., the *mace* is generally held in the upper right hand and supported by the arm. In case of the earliest Vishnu found in Thailand (*Chaiya*), in spite of being in incomplete condition, the simple form of this attribute was probably carved as a long plain tube which was perhaps similar to those of *Mathura* style of *Kushana* period or *Amravati* style. From the beginning of 6th century A.D, mace had been given more specific detail making it much similar to the *gada* in Indian art with bigger end and shaft handle. The function of mace in Indian prototype image group is not only for compleating iconographic features but the handle is also necessary for balancing this stone image from left side. The maces of *Khmer* influenced Vishnu image shows variation in forms and designs. Normally they were carved as plain, shaft handle with circular end or decorated with floral motifs like those depicted on the discs.

Fig. 158. The mace (*gada*) from Vishnu image, (from left) the mace of Vishnu image from Petchaburi, the mace of three Khmer Vishnu images from National museum Konkhean, and two hands from National museum Pimai

Fig. 159. The earth (*bhu*) from Vishnu images (from left) the Vishnu image from Sathingpra, National museum Songkla, National museum Mahaveeravongsa and Pimai, Nakon Ratchasima province
The earth (bhu) was not depicted in Southeast Asian Vishnu image before early 6th century A.D. It possibly replaced the lotus (padma) which symbolized the earth. Remarkably, the earth has maintained the same character from the 6th -12th century A.D. The earth is always depicted as round pebble shaped form, carried in the lower right hand. It is the size of plam. An interesting feature is its similarity with the lotus of early Chalukya Vishnu images from Southern Deccan dated around the 6th - 7th century A.D. In fact, the early form of lotus depicted as a plain round object is seen earlier in Mathura sculptures like Vishnu from Unchdih (Allahabad museum) and Mathura (Krishna 1980; fig.7, 8). Perhaps, the earth (bhu) symbolic of Vishnu in Southeast Asia might be inspired from the lotus (padma) according to the comparable design.

The Bas relief of Vaisanavite Puranas scene. Narayana and Avataras of Vishnu

Beside the sthanaka murti sculptures, the representation of Vishnu is also commonly depicted on the bas reliefs. Similar to the other visualized images, the Vishnu is always depicted as four armed God, standing or seated on his Garuda-vahana which is normally seen as mythical bird or human-head bird. Generally, the bas reliefs of four armed Vishnu found in Thailand can be dated as early as 6th-7th century A.D.

During the Khmer influence period, from the 8th -13th century A.D., the number of four armed Vishnu images had increased and most of them are generally dated around the 11th-12th century A.D. comparable to Baphoun-Angkor Wat style. There is a significant feature noticed from Vishnu reliefs dated to pre Angkorean (before late 8th century A.D.) and Angkorean periods (the 9th-13th century A.D. ) the divine attributes held in his lower hands that is seen pointing down in pre Angkorean style was upward in the later period.

Fig. 160. The reliefs of four armed Vishnu, (left) the gold relief from Sri Tep, Norton Simon private museum and (right) the lintel from Pimai, National museum Pimai
The Narayana (Vishnu Anantaśayina padmamabha murti)

The Narayana is worshiped as another important form of Vishnu. Although the Vishnu-Narayana images are rarely been presented as an independent free-standing image in Southeast Asia, most of them are depicted in the form of bas relief scene. The concept of Narayana was developed from the seafaring deity to the cosmic Gods who is traditionally considered as the universal creator. In addition to this mythological development, the iconographic form of Narayana has already well proven this sacred concept by using the symbolical representation.

Similar to the other forms of Vishnu and Avatars, the Narayana had been successfully accepted in Southeast Asian art, especially the Khmer art of ancient Cambodia. In Thailand, the bas reliefs of Vishnu Narayana or Vishnu-Anantaśyanamurti are also found attached to the monumental structures as lintels or pediments. The bas reliefs of Vishnu-Narayana found in Thailand are normally dated around 10th-12th centuries A.D. contemporary to the Khmer dominant period. Thus, the art and iconographic form of this relief scene must have resembled those of Khmer art from that particular period in Cambodia.
First, before coming to the description of Narayana reliefs in mainland Southeast Asia, the general form of Vishnu-Narayana or Vishnu-Anantaśyana padmanabha murti in Indian art should be briefly mentioned in order to understand the original concept of this puranic depiction.

**The Vishnu–Narayana: the concept and art of Indian context.**

![Fig. 162](image)

**Fig. 162.** (from Left) the Anantaśyana padmanabha murti from Deogarh and Ellora cave, the Anantaśyana murti from Mamallapuram and Anantaśyana padmanabha murti from Malayadippatti, Madras

The Vishnu–Anantaśyana murti story is related to the birth of Brahma who is regarded as the world creator. In general, the relief of this puranic story narrates the resting of Vishnu (Narayana) during the twilight time of a yuga in the primordial ocean.

The God was reclining on the Šesa also as Ananata naga whose name implied the meaning of “residue” (Šesa) and the “eternal” (Ananta). When the Purusha, Vishnu in the form of Supreme being, was lying down on the naga his head supported by one of his arm, the legs were respectively caressed by his divine consorts, Lakshmi and Bhu devi.

Meanwhile, the God was in deep meditation of creating and from then on the sacred lotus emerged from his navel with the Brahma installed in the petals. The Brahma immediately created nine rishis to fulfill the creation of all livings. Thus, this form of Vishnu-Narayana is generally known as “Anantaśyana padmanabha murti” (Bénisti 1965: 91; Renou
and Filliozat 1947-49: 501). The narration of Anantaśyana murti of Vishnu has been mentioned in many puranic literatures like Matsya purana, Markandeya purana, Bhagavata purana and including the Mahabharata (Bénisti 1965: 91).

In Indian art, the depiction of Vishnu-Anantaśyanamurti is evidently available in Gupta and Post Gupta arts from 5th century A.D. The good examples of this forum are from Bhitagaon, Deogarh, Mamallapuram, Aihole and Ellora (Rowland 1953; Pl.78 B.; Rao 1916: Pl.XXXII, Pl.XXXI, Pl.XXXIII). A beautiful depiction of Anantaśyanamurti are provided from Deogarh where the Vishnu (Narayana) image was delicately carved reclining on the Ananta or Śesa naga. The great serpent was also made in naturalism with multiple heads, covering the head of God.

_Narayana_ is wearing mitre crown (kiritamukuta) and horizontally lying on the serpent seat, surrounded by his divine consorts, sages and attributes. A noteworthy point that makes the difference between Ananataśayana murti depiction in northern and Southern schools is that the Vishnu (Narayana) images in Southern art are normally carved in enormous size, non-stylistically simple resting with the spread hand and looking heavier than the early delicate northern school.

The proper example of an early Southern Anantaśayi murti present at the shore temple and at the group of rock cut caves at Mamallapuram, Tamilnadu. The Vishnu is seen reclining horizontally on the serpent with his side hand spread up to the head.

In this early depiction, the lotus and Brahma are not noticed from the scene. Perhaps this Anantasayi murti only represented the resting of Narayana in between each yuga. There are also the two demons, Kaitabha and Madhu, who came out from the ears of Vishnu while he was resting. They were trying to steal the Veda from Brahma. Actually, Vishnu was well aware of this incident by taking the form of Hayagriva and killing them away (Bhagavata purana, VII: 9, 37). The destroying of two demons is also narrated in the other versions such as in Markandeya purana, the Śesa had fumed the poison against them (Rajan 1967: 68).

In general, the depictions of Anantaśayi murti in India are quite similar to each other as a result of extensive influence of puranic tradition. There would be some minor differences such as the head direction of Anantaśayi murti in India are mostly turned to the right side, while very few like the Deogarh is placed opposite. But this is not regarded as major character. At Ellora cave, the Vishnu in the form of Anantaśayina padmanabha murti is depicted as bas relief. The God is resting on the naga coils with upper half of his body raised up. The lotus has emerged from his navel and held by one of his hands. According to
Bénisti (1965: 93), this style of Vishnu image would have been the prototype of *Anantaśayina murti* in Khmer art.

In addition to northern tradition, the Southern depiction of this *puranic* relief has been much in common. The earliest evidence of *Anantaśayina murti* in South India is seen from Mamallapuram and shore temple where the Vishnu-Narayana was carved from the stone in resting pose over the serpent coil. Interestingly, the two armed God is lying completely straight and also extending the right arm over his head. Perhaps, this character is considered as the significant feature of *Vishnu-Narayana* in Southern art which was practiced from 5th century A.D.

The Southern *Anantaśayina murti* is normally carved on stone in various sizes and styles, but most of them are generally sculpted in large sizes and attached with the shrine. They are popularly known as *Ranganatha* or *Rangaswami* and worshipped as principle image in many Southern Indian Vaisanavite shrines (Banerjea 1974: 406).

Regarding the iconographic feature, the reliefs are devided into two types. The first is the depiction of reclining *Narayana* and the second represents the birth of Brahma (*Anantaśayina padmanabha murti*). The *Narayana* depictions are classified in four cataogies known as *Yogasayana murti*, *Bhogasayana murti*, *Virasayana murti* and *Abhicharika murti* like depicted in *sthana murti*.
The Anantaśayina murti in Khmer art of ancient Cambodian Kingdom and Thailand

As mentioned before, the bas reliefs of Anantaśayina murti of Vishnu-Narayana in Thailand are duplicated works of Khmer art after 10th century A.D. Before coming to the reliefs of Narayana in the northeastern plateau, at first the development of Anantaśayina murti in ancient Khmer art should be mentioned.

The style and development of Anantaśayina murti of Vishnu-Narayana in Khmer art

The emergence of Anantaśayina murti in ancient Cambodian Kingdom can be traced back to the 5th century A.D. according to the inscription of queen Kulaprabhavati which mentions the resting Vishnu on, serpent Śesa naga. There are some literary sources dated around 10th-11th century A.D. like the inscription at Phanom Bakheng and Prasat Trapan Run which praise the Vishnu in the form of Anantaśayina padma murti who had created the Brahma from his celestial lotus (Bénisti 1965: 92; Finot 1928: 70; Bhattacharya 1961 b: 109). It seemed that worship of Vishnu in this particular form was continuously practiced form at least 6th century A.D., but the earliest iconographic form in Khmer art discovered is not dated earlier than 7th century A.D in Prei Krom style (Bénisti 1965: 93; Bhattacharya 1961 b: 109).

There are some particular iconographic symbols of Anantaśayina murti in Khmer art like the primordial ocean which is represented by the lotuses, the celestial lotus with Brahma installed inside symbolizes the Universe and the lotus stalk also represent the Mount Meru, the axe of universe (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 109). This special iconographic symbol is also mentioned in the Prasat Trapan Run inscription.

The Anantaśayina murti in Khmer art is discovered in both rounded sculptures and bas reliefs. They reflect the worship of Vishnu-Narayana in this specific form. In fact, only three rounded sculptures have been found in Cambodia, the first one is only head remaining, second sculpture is reported from Bathe (Transbassac region) which presently modified as Buddha image (Malleret 1959: Pl.LXXXVI) around 7th-8th century A.D. and the large bronze image from the west Maebon temple(11th-12th century A.D.) located in the Angkor area.
Fig. 164. The *Anantaśayina murti* in Khmer art, (left and center) the Vishnu - Narayana image from Bathe, Transbassac region and (right) the bronze Vishnu image from Western Maebon temple

The bas reliefs of *Anantaśayina murti* of Vishnu in Khmer art show the iconographic development through characters of the main Gods like Vishnu, Brahma and the serpent. At the beginning stage, there are examples depicted on the monuments dated around the 7th -8th century A.D. at Prasat Hanchai, Tuol Baset and Robang Romeas temples. The *Anantaśayina murti* depiction which is comparable to Prei Kameng style found at the lintel on door frame of Prasat Hanchai temple.

The couple Vishnu-Narayana images carved resting naturally on the five head serpents with one hand extended over his knee and the other placed at the naval and under the head of Vishnu. Perhaps, this is the *Anantaśayina murti* or the resting scene of Vishnu in during the yuga. At Tuol Baset, Transbassac region, the early depiction of *Anantaśayina padmanabha murti* has shown the specific character similar to the relief at Ellora cave. The Vishnu is lying straight on the naga coil and holding the lotus stalk in one hand. Brahma is sitting in medition at the center of the flourishing lotus.

The early Khmer *Anantaśayina murti* reliefs generally demonstrate the role of Vishnu and Brahma. The Goddesses and other attributes as depicted in contemporary Indian art are not found. However, the bas reliefs of Vishnu Anantaśayina murti from Robang Romeas temple show the goddess Lakshmi holding the leg of Vishnu and two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha (Bénisti 1965: 94). Thus, it can be assumed that the later period reliefs were adding more divine attendants. There are also other significant features of early *Anantaśayina murti* reliefs like the Brahma was always depicted in Samadhi mudra. The Vishnu resting position is seen with feet that pointing in an angular pose with the knees. The serpent coil was carved in wavy round form like Indian style.
The later developed depiction of *Anantaśayina padmanabha murti* from *Phnom Pros* temple dated around early 11ᵗʰ century A.D. demonstrates new characters. The Vishnu is resting straight with his feet on the goddess’s lap. The multiple heads of *naga* is not fanned as divine halo. The other important features are Vishnu holding his attributes like mace (*gada*), rosary (*akshamala*), conch shell (*sankha*) and disc (*chakra*) in four hands. The shape of his *kiritamukut* changed into a pyramid top with forehead crown. Brahma is with four arms doing Anjali mudra by the front hands while the rest are carrying attributes.
The depictions of *Anantaśayina padmanabha murti* from *Prasat Nak Ta Tang Reay* dated around the 10th century A.D. shares the common features with the *Phnom Pros* temple as noticed from the natural character of serpent, the celestial lotus coming out of his navel, the position of Goddess Lakshmi and *Garuda*. The only change seen on the sleeping pose of Vishnu-Narayana is instead of laying straight, the upper part has risen up. This character commonly appears on the pediment narrating the *Anantaśayina padmanabha murti* like *Prasat Nak Ta Khlan Muon* and *Vat Ek*. The form of celestial lotus become more complicated by adding decorated lotus buds and others floral designs. Moreover, lotus stalk is still made a single branch, but no more comes out from the God’s naval. The *naga* is flat without coils and their heads are decorated with head gear. Goddess Lakshmi is always seen along with the sages *Markandeya* and *Bhrigu*.

![Image](image1.jpg)

**Fig. 169. The relief from Prasat Nak Ta Khlan Muon, Baphoun style**

![Image](image2.jpg)

**Fig. 170. The relief from Bantay Samre, Angkor Wat style (Bénisti 1965)**
Later on, the bas relief of this *puranic* scene which is comparable to *Angkor Wat* stlye (late 11th-12th century A.D.) showing Vishnu lifting his upper portion of body higher, supported by one of his arms over the roughly carved serpent. The scene consists of Goddess Lakshmi, Brahma and two demons, *Madhu* and *Kaitabha*. In the *Angkor Wat* style, the *Śesa naga* was developed in the form of a monster as the monster or mythical animal combining dragon with serpent.

In fact, the Vishnu is resting on the back of this mythical animal over the serpent. The celestial lotus came out from Vishnu’s navel and extends into three branches depicting Brahma and two demons at the center. At *Prasat Phanom Ta Mao*, the two Goddesses are seated on the dragon, possibly Lakshmi and Bhudevi according to *Rupamandana* text (Bénisti 1965: fig.13).

The depiction of *Anantaśayina padmanabha murti* in Bayon style after middle 12th century A.D. has shown a slight development from the previous style. The Vishnu is resting on the dragon. The serpent disappeared during this time. At *Prasat Ta Prohm*, the *Anantaśayina murti* has been associated with the Buddha image. Thus, it seems that Mahayana Buddhism flourished during this time and spread its religious influence across the limited border of the Brahmanical arts.

![Fig. 171. The *Anantaśayina padmanabha murti* in Bayon style at *Prasat Pra Khan*](image171)

![Fig. 172. The *Anantaśayina padmanabha murti* in Bayon style at *Prasat Ta Prohm* (Bénisti 1965)](image172)
The style and development of *Anantaśayina murti* of Vishnu-Narayana in Khmer art in Thailand

The northeastern Thailand during the 9\textsuperscript{th} - 13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. had been dominated by the Khmer political power from ancient Cambodia Kingdom. Their art affiliation was influenced directly or indirectly by several Khmer art styles. The relief of *Anantaśayina padmanabha murti* found in the Khmer dominant region has definitely reflected an extensive implication of Khmer art comparable to the authentic Khmer art in Cambodia.

There are seven samples of *Anantaśayina murti* bas reliefs selected for this recent study. Most of them are dated around the 11\textsuperscript{th} - early 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. which is generally considered as the Baphoun and Angkor Wat styles. Thus, it is better to classify them into two groups namely, **Before Angkor Wat Styles**: Koh Ker to Baphoun styles (10\textsuperscript{th} - 11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.) and **Angkor Wat style** (12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.).

**Before the Angkor Wat style. : Koh Ker style (the early of 10\textsuperscript{th} - 11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.)**

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 173. The relief from Aranya Pradesh, Sra Keaw province, National museum Prachinaburi**

This relief is reported from unknown origins at Aranya Pradesh, Sra Keaw province, and now exhibited in National museum Prachinaburi. The huge size of lintel measures around 158 cm. It is the relief of *Anantaśayina Padmanabha murti* of Vishnu-Narayana comparable to Koh Ker style (10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.). The Vishnu is lying straight on the two serpents coil. All of the *nagas* have head ornaments. Vishnu is sleeping with one of his arm supporting his head while the other is holding a rosary (*akshamala*).

The rosary (*akshamala*) is the symbol of yoga or meditation according to the concept of *yoga-nidra* of Vishnu-Narayana. The lower garment of Vishnu shows the style of Koh Ker (10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D). Goddess Lakshmi is caressing his right leg next to the flying Garuda. In comparison to Khmer art, this relief has great similarity with the lintel at *Phanom Pros* dated around the middle of 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.
Khleang - Baphoun style (The 11th-early of 12th century A.D.)

Many of fine Khmer reliefs depicted as lintel on the door frame were generally made in Angkor Wat style, the golden age of Khmer art. However, there are also some well carved examples from previous style like Khleang and Baphoun styles. The first example is the bas relief from Prasat Sra Kampheang Yai, Sri Saket province.

Fig. 174. The bas relief from Prasat Sra Kamphang Yai, Baphoun style

This bas relief depicts the image of Vishnu-Narayana resting on the serpent with the head turned to the left. The upper portion of Vishnu is slightly raised, the upper arm supporting his head and the right arm holding the celestial lotus stalk that emerged from navel. The Brahma is seated inside this flower. There are three female deities supposed to be Lakshmi, Bhudevi and their attendant holding the legs of God. Next to the God, Šesa nagas have spread their multiple heads to cover the head of Vishnu.

Unfortunately, the carving detail is unclear and eroded. According to the stylistic comparison, this relief should be dated contemporary to the transition of Khleang-Baphoun style of the 11th century A.D. This relief is similar to the lintel from Nak Ta Klan Moun and Nak Ta Thang Reay (10th-early of 11th century A.D.)

Fig. 175. The relief from Prasat Preah Vihear, Sri Saket province (Bénisti 1965)
The Anantaśayina padmanabha murti from Prasat Preah Vihear temple is also one of well-preserved sculpture showing the iconographic form and composition of this puranic scene. Vishnu is half resting on the five heads serpent that still maintains the general from of snake-like character. The Vishnu is carrying his attributes like conch shell (sankha) and mace (gada) in two hands. His legs are caressed by the goddess Lakshmi and her attendant or Bhudevi seated at the end side of relief. Similar to the others, the Brahma has come out from the celestial lotus that emerged from the navel of God.

There is another interesting point of the scene like the bunch of lotuses symbolically represents the water and ocean. The composition of this relief is much similar to the reliefs from Nak Ta Tang Reay and Nak Ta Khlan Muon was carved in Khleang –Baphoun style. They are dated around 10th-11th century A.D.

Fig. 176. The eroded relief from Lopburi, National museum Lopburi (Narayana Rajnivesh mansion)

The eroded bas relief from Lopburi is now preserved in National museum, Lopburi. From the rough feature, it is the resting Vishnu on the naga. His divine consort is caressing his feet at the end of relief. There is nothing left neither Brahma nor other attendants. According to the rough form which is comparable to Khleang –Baphoun pattern, it can possibly be dated around 10th-11th century A.D.

Fig. 177. The relief of Anantaśayina padmabha murti from Prah Narai shrine, Nakon Ratchasima province, National museum Pimai
This bas relief of Vishnu-Narayana is showing the local carving style. The Vishnu is lying on the nagas which are turning their head in the same direction of Vishnu. The Brahma is inside the single stalk lotus emerged from his naval. At the end of relief, goddess Lakshmi is caressing Vishnu's feet. This bas relief was not carved with good skill like other Khmer traditional style. Perhaps, it made by local craftsmen whom know very little of general iconography and its composition. However, this relief is resembled to those of Khleang-Baphoun style (10\textsuperscript{th}-11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.)

![Image of a bas relief](image)

**Fig. 178. The relief from Prasat Pueay Noi, Kon Khean province**

The relief from Prasat Pueay Noi might be made by local craft man because of its strongly local appreance. Vishnu is resting on the serpent with one of arm risen up to support his head. The crown and ornament are duplicated Khmer art, but was not carved skillfully. Lakshmi is sitting and caressing Vishnu's feet on her lap. There is also the Brahma in the flourishing lotus, emerged from the navel of Vishnu. Flying Garuda is depicted at the end of scene. The crown of Vishnu is decorated in pyramid shape showing an influenced of Angkor Wat style. Thus this relief is perhaps dated to end of 11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. comparable to the transition style of Baphoun and Angkor Wat.

**The Angkor Wat style (the 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.)**

There are two perfect reliefs showing the artistic style comparable to the Angkor Wat art of the 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. The first one is depicted at the Phanom Rung sanctuary, Buriram province and the second relief is from Ku Suan Thang temple, exhibited at National museum Bangkok. These stone bas reliefs were functioned as lintel of door frame as same as in Cambodia.
This relief is the depiction of Vishnu-Narayana resting on the multiple heads serpent supported by the dragon or mythic animal in Angkor Wat style of Khmer art after 12th century A.D. The upper portion of God’s body is raised, his head laying on one of right arms and holding divine attributes like mace (gada) and conch shell (sankha). His head crown (kiritamukut) is decorated in pyramid shape. The other adornments are similar to Angkor Wat style. The other significant feature is the brunches of lotus emerged from the backside of Vishnu. Brahma is sitting inside the middle one. Goddess Lakshmi is caressing Vishnu’s feet on her lap. There are decorated motifs like Garuda, parrots, wild animals and Kalamukha or Vyal carved on the lintel. According to the traditional style, this lintel was possibly carved by well-trained craftsmen from Cambodia. The composition of relief provides exacted dating around 12th century A.D. contemporary to Angkor Wat art in Cambodia.

This bas relief was carved in the same period of Phanom Rung sanctuary around 12th century A.D. comparable to Angkor Wat style. The Vishnu is resting on the dragon without the serpent seat. He is accompanied with Lakshmi and Bhudevi. There are three main lotus brunches emerged from the backside of Vishnu. Brahma is sitting on the middle lotus. According to the art composition and style, this lintel is dated to 12th century A.D. or little later than the Phanom Rung sanctuary.
The bas reliefs of *Avatars* in Khmer art found in Thailand before 13th century A.D.

The *Dasavatras* or is known as the ten incarnations of Vishnu. The stories of *Dasavatras* is narrated in many puranic literatures like *Bhagavata purana*, *Agni purana*, *Vishnu puranas* and Sanskrit epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. There are commonly ten incarnations of Vishnu, *Matsyavatara*, *Kurmakavatara*, *Varahavatara*, *Narasimhavatara*, *Vamanavatara*, *Parasurama*, *Ramavatara*, *Krishnavatara*, *Buddha* or *Balarama* and *Kalki*. In fact, there are some *puranas* like *Bhagavata puranas* increases the number of manifestations of God in twenty-two to twenty-four.

The *Dasavatras* of Vishnu was well accepted in Khmer art. There are various narrated reliefs of ten incarnations found over entire ancient Cambodian Kingdom. Most of them were created around 11th -12th century A.D. Though the *Dasavatras* concept was getting high popularity in Khmer art, only some of incarnations were well depicted on the structures of Brahmanical monuments. These are the depictions of *Kurmakavatara*, *Vamanavatara* (trivikrama), *Krishna* and *Rama* which were narrated after an important mythological scene of each incarnation.

In this case, though there are numbers of *avatars* reliefs found in Thailand, the proper samples reflecting the well iconographic characters are selected for this recent study.

*Matsyavatara*: Vishnu as the Fish

This *avatar* is not found in Thailand and considered as very rare scene in Khmer art in Cambodia. The only one reliefs of *Matsyavatara* is found at the south-eastern gallery of *Bayon* dated to late of 12th century A.D. The scene shows a mountain or step pyramid lifted by the large fish. The sacred fish has attempted to save human from the great flood. In front of mountain is a large depiction of Garuda, the divine attributes of Vishnu (Roveda 2005: 70).

2). *Kurmakavatara*: The Vishnu as Tortoise

The Vishnu incarnation as *Kurma* or tortoise is well-known in Khmer art. Most of the reliefs found in Thailand were an important part of architectural structure. The narration is based on the crunching of *Meru* Mountain by demons (*asura*) and gods (*devas*). According to the legend, the divine tortoise supports the Mount *Meru* during the process of crunching milky ocean (*Bhagavata purana* VIII: 15; 12). This scene is also literary mentioned in *Mahabharata* (I:5,15-24) as Vishnu only had given advice and encouragement to the gods (*devas*). On the contrary, *Bhagavata purana* has stated that Vishnu had involved in every part
of activities, in crunching rods, the Kurma, in the bodies of devas as well as asuras and placing his hand over the Mount Meru.

As the result of this holy ritual, there are mythological creatures like goddess Lakshmi, Sura (the goddess of wine), Moon, the nymph Rambha, Ucchaishrava (flying horse), Kaustubha (the celebrated jewel), Parijata (the celestial tree), Surabhi (the holy cow), Airavata (the white elephant), Sankha (the victorious conch), the magic bow, Visha (poison) and the celestial elixir (amrita) carried by Dhanwantri (divine physician) has emerged out of the ocean. The Vishnu is always depicted in both iconic and tortoise forms in the same relief.

There are reliefs regarding avatars from Prasat Ku Saun Tang (135 cm.) and Prasat Pimai (145 cm.) presently exhibited in National museum, Pimai (Nakon Ratchasima province).

Fig.181. The relief from Ku Suam Thang, Buriram province, National museum Pimai

Fig.182. The relief from Prasat Pimai, Nakon Ratchasima province, National museum Pimai
The Kurmavatara in Khmer art are commonly shown the scene of crunching Mount Meru. The mountain is represented in the form of pillar (stambha) placed on the tortoise shell (Kurma) encircled by the roles of asuras and devas who are holding serpent as crunching robe. The Brahma is depicted inside the lotus on the top of pillar. In some cases, such as the Kurmavatara lintel of Prasat Preh Vihar and Ku Suan Thang has depicted the four arms Vishnu image climbing at the upper portion of sacred pillar. At the lintel from Prasat Pimai, the Garuda is represented Vishnu at the upper portion of sacred pillar.

The bas relief scene of crunching milky ocean from both Cambodia and Northeastern Thailand share much similarity in iconographic and artistic characters of particular style which is comparable to Baphoun-Angkor Wat style. In Cambodia, the most outstanding depiction of this avatars is from Angkor Wat eastern gallery of enclose III. There is interesting figure of other sectarian Gods with rakshasa hair style. This rakshasa is supposed to be Shiva or Rahu. The five heads deity depicted in the scene also suggested as Brahma. This specific character definitely reflects indifference in worshiping of Brahmanical sectarians Gods Coedes (1911: 116-117).
In case of the *Kurma* in the form of sculpture, there are three images of half human and tortoise made from bronze and stone probably dated after middle of 12th century A.D. discovered from *Angkor Wat* and *Bayon* (Bhattacharya 1961b: 117).

3). *Varahavatars*: The Vishnu as Boar

This incarnation is very rare in *Khmer* art and thus not found in Thailand. In *Khmer* reliefs, the divine boar is depicted as simply and mighty boar. The Varaha was rather known in epigraphy source than in iconographic sculpture. There is only the high relief depicted the Vishnu in *Varahavatars* from Prasat Traphangpong dated to middle of 11th century A.D. The Varaha is depicted having boar head with human body, his four arms carrying Vishnu attributes and the Bhudevi. There are the sculptures of Varaha found at *Bayon* and *Angkor Wat* dated around middle of 12th century A.D. Both of sculptures, though found in uncompleted condition, they were carved as half human body and boar head known as *nara-varaha* (Bhattacharya 1961b: 116)

The role of boar in Khmer art has been noticed associating in the *Lingodbhavamurti* story narrated in Saivite sect at the inner gallery of *Bayon* (Roveda 2005: 70). At Banteay Sri, the boar is seen from the relief of Arjuna-Kirata, part of Mahabharata. It was possibly meant on the name of founder of this shrine, Yajnavaraha. As mentioned earlier, the boar depiction in *Khmer* relief is very rare, so it is indeed unseen in the northeastern Thailand where is considered as distant region of ancient Angkorean Kingdom.

4) *Narasimhavatars*: The Vishnu as Man-lion

In Indian art *Narasimha* is shown emerging or splitting from the pillar, similar to Siva in *Lingodbhavamurti* forum. But in *Khmer* art, the *Narasimha* is always seen killing Hiranyakashipu by thorning the demon chest with his claws. The Narasimha avatar of Vishnu was well worshipped during Vakataka period of Deccan plateau. At Ramgiri, there is the remains of temple dedicated to Kevala Narasimha.

The relief of this scene is not found in Thailand. But there are some good examples of *Khmer* reliefs from *Prasat Pre Rup*, *East Mebon*, *Prasat Thom* of *Koh Ker* (Parmentier 1939: 33, Plate XIa) and the most dedicated one at *Banteay Srei*. The last bas relief of *Narasimha* was made in *Bayon* style at *Prasat manglartha* (Bhattacharya 1961b: 116)
Fig. 185. The depiction of Narasimhavatars at Ramgiri, Vakataka period and Ban Teay Srei temple

5). Vamanavatars: The Vishnu as dwarf and his Trivikrama

In this scene, Vishnu is clearly depicted simply making a long stride with a foot raised over a lotus or small platform; the earth or ocean considered as one of the three Worlds (triloka) is represented by aquatic creatures such as fish or crocodile.

According to Indian iconography (Rao 1916: 164), Vishnu must rise his left foot, at least higher than his right knee and four arms carried divine attributes. Indra holds parasol over the God while Brahma supports his uplifted foot with one hand and washes it respectively with the other. In Bhagavata purana (VIII, XXI, 3-4), the water that purified by washing through the Vishnu sacred feet became the holy river, perhaps implied as Ganga. And at the same text (VIII, XVIII, 28), also stated that the water which cleaned Vamana feet by King Bali is as pure as the sacred water (Ganga) that Siva has supported on his head (Bhattacharya 1961 b : 113). The representations of trivikrama in Indian art are available from many sites like Badami, Ellora and Mamallapuram (Rao 1916: Pl.XLVIII, XLIX, L, LI, LII). The trivikrama in the form of sculpture of Vakataka style is also seen in situ at Ramgiri, Nagapur district.
The *asura* Bali is depicted as demon King who carries a golden vessel for the ceremonial oblation. At the beginning of the story, Vishnu is shown as dwarf or young Brahmin (*Vamana*) coming to the court of Bali then asking him for the small pieces of lands in three steps. There are some proper samples of this depiction in *Khmer* art in Cambodia like the *trivikrama* reliefs from *Prasat Kravan, Prasat Baphoun, Banteay Samre, Beng Mealea, Preah Pithu* and *Maglartha*.

There are the best two examples of Vishnu in *Trivikrama* found in Thailand from the northeastern region at *Ku Suan Thang, Buriram* province and *Prasat Muang Kheak, Nakon Ratchasima* province. They are now preserved at the National museum Pimai.
Fig. 188. The lintel from *Prasat Muang Kheak*, *Nakon Ratchasima* province, National museum Pimai

The lintel is from *Prasat Muang Kheak* temple, *Nakon Ratchasima* province. Perhaps, this may be the earliest *trivikrama* in Thailand dated to 10th century A.D. comparable to *Koh Ker* art. Four arms Vishnu is standing over the ocean represented by fishes, right foot is over the lotus flower carried by female divine that supposed to be Lakshmi known as *lokmatra* or Ganga. At the left side of Vishnu is male figure looking like *Asura* King *Bali*. These three figures are placed on the lotus pedestal. Behind image of God, role of swans is represented the heaven. The lintel has couple images of *Ganesha* riding rats at the ends of long garland and the role of *rishi* in *yogasana* at the upmost portion of this lintel. According to their costume pattern, this lintel is possible to be dated contemporary to *Koh Ker* art of the 10th century A.D.

Fig. 189. The lintel from *Ku Suan Thang*, *Buriram* province, National museum Pimai

The second one is the lintel from *Ku Suan Thang*, Burirum which now exhibited at National museum Pimai. This lintel is the most instructive scene of *Vamanavatars* that narrating an important event of each scenes and connecting them together in one lintel.

At the beginning started from the right side of image, the Vishnu is depicted in the form of old Brahmin asking for the small land of three strides from King *Bali* whom accompanied with his teacher named *Sukra*. Then the second scene is depicted as Vishnu *trivikrama* at the
middle. Vishnu represents his full form with four hands holding divine attributes while crossing three Worlds, the earth, Ocean (lotuses and crocodile) where the Goddess Lakshmi supporting his foot on the lotus and the heaven (mythological bird). The final scene is narrating the Vishnu defeats King Bali by placing his left feet over the demon’s chest and lower left hand catches the his hair. According to the style of art, this lintel is possible to be dated at around middle of 12th century A.D. comparable to those of late Angkor Wat style (Smitthi and Veeraprasert 1990: 143). However, this lintel could be made by the local craftsman according to the artistic skill.

Moreover, the depiction of Vamanavatars is also depicted on one of the lintel inside the main shrine at Prasat Phanomrung sanctuary, but in damaged condition (Suksawasti 2006: 268-269).

6). Parsuramavatars : The sage who carries the axe.

This particular form of Vishnu is totally lacking in Khmer art neither in Cambodia nor Thailand. In fact, there is only male sculpture which may be Parasurama dated to the 7th century A.D. presently exhibited at the National museum Phnom Penh (Boisselier 1955: Pl.VI ; Giteau 1997 : 38).

7). Ramavatars : The Rama-Dasarath

In the Ramayana, Rama is the great hero portrayed as an ideal son, husband and King. Later on he was deifined and considered as an incarnation of Vishnu. The image of Rama, according to the Vishnudharmottaram (III,85,62-63), should be adorned with all royal marks of King. His brothers Lakshaman, Bharata and Satrughna are also to be carved in the same manner without the tiara. In Agni purana (49,6), Rama is described as holding the bow, arrow, the sword and conch. It is rather surprising that in India no any shrine dedicated to Rama has come to light before the early mediaval period, though the cult of Rama had emerged before that period. Actually, the Ramayana has not only given much influence in Indian art, but also those of Southeast Asian region.

As well as in Khmer art, the number ofreliefs depicted Ramayana story have shown the highest status of Vaisnavism during 10th -12th century A.D. In fact, the well knowledge of this great epic in Khmer society was mentioned in the early inscription from Veal Kantel (K.359) dated around 7th century A.D.(Coedes 1929). Sanskrit literature was popular with Khmers from the early time, possibly appreciated in both religious and ethnic ways. At the time of King Jayavarman VII, Ramayana was regarded as the allegory of King’s life.
(Roveda 2005: 114). The story of *Ramayana* is seen through the reliefs depicted some important events following the epic sections (*kandas*).

The same tradition of *Ramayana* is obviously influenced in *Khmer* art of northeastern Thailand. There are plenty of reliefs depicted the important events from this great epic that had been used as decorative structures mainly seen from the large religious monuments like *Phanom Rung* sanctuary and *Pimai*. The iconography of Rama in Khmer art represented in most of the reliefs is the crown human King carrying sword bow and arrow in both hands. According to the epic, Rama is symbolized as ideal King who is perfect in morality and royal warrior. This great overlord concept might have inspired the ancient *Khmer* Kings to be the absolute one like Rama.

![Image of Rama in Khmer art](image.png)

*Fig.190. The image of Rama in Khmer art, Angkor Wat style, Cambodia (Bunker and Latchford 2004)*

There are some depictions of Rama in the Ramayana scene found in Thailand. Though they are not much skillful as Khmer art in Cambodia, they generally reflect the common character of Rama who respected as great King and warrior.
Fig. 191. The relief of Rama shooting arrow to the rakshasa, Sita and Lakshmana are staying behind Rama and Surpanaka also stands at the end of demon role. (Pimai, National museum Pimai)

Fig. 192. The relief from Aranyakanda, Ravana is abducting Sita while Rama and Lakshman are in the forest. (Phanom Rung Sanctuary)

Fig. 193. The scene from Kishkindhakanda, Rama and Sugriva are coming back to the Khishkind Kingdom with royal symbols and monkey military. (Pimai, National museum Pimai)
Fig. 194. The relief from Yuddhakanda, the Rama and Lakshmana are struck down by the Nagapasa arrow surrounded by the monkey troop. (Prang Ku, Sri Saket province, National museum Pimai)

Fig. 195. The relief from Yudhakanda, Rama, Lakshman and Sita are reunited at Ayodhaya.
(Pimai, National museum Pimai)

Fig. 196. The relief from Yudhakanda, The three royals are at court of Ayodhaya from Phanom Rung sanctuary
Beides of the sampled reliefs, there are various Ramayana scences on decorative parts of Brahmanical monuments, especially at Phanom Rung sanctuary. But the depiction of Rama is unclear. In Cambodia, Ramayana and Mahabharata were given high attention among Khmers as noticed from the great numbers of relief available at Khmer monuments during the 10th-12th century A.D. For instance, the Ramayana scenes are discovered from Prasat Baphoun, Angkor Wat, Banteay Srei, Beng Mealea, Banteay Samre and Bayon etc.

The Ramayana epic was also well presented in Java Island at Prambanan (Lolo Jongrang), associating with the cult of ethnic Gods like Bhatara guru or Agastaya (Vogel 1921: 214). In fact, this character is also similar in Khmer art as Ramayana was rather valued as Sanskrit literature than regarded as religious text.

8). Krishnavatars

The represent of Krishna and Mahabharata epic were created in great numbers. Krishna is the eighth avatars of Vishnu which has given great inspiration to the Bhagavatas through the arts and literatures. According to Bhattacharya (1961b: 115), the Krishnavatars is the most important avatars of Vishnu due to the comment recited from Bhagavata purana. The text states that the other avatars are only the manifestations from Purusa (Vishnu) but Krishna only is being the complete Bhagavat (Bhagavata purana I,3,28).

The life of Krishna can be divide into three parts as childhood which ending after lifting Govardhana Mountain, the mighty and admirable youth and the adulthood after defeating Kamsa. At the primetime of his life, he became the philosophical adviser for the Pandavas and became King of Dwaraka. The most significant role was moral teacher for Arjuna. This ethical legend is perfectly narrated in Bhagavad Gita.

The representation of Krishna in Khmer art is generally depicted the childhood time of Krishna as naughty young boy with his legendary episodes up to the highest time of adulthood. But Krishna in Khmer reliefs was given more attention as mighty youth than other aspects like the lovely cowherd or great philosophical adviser as in Indian mythology. Thus, the reliefs of Krishna in Thailand are as same as depicted in authentic Khmer art, but lesser in stylistic variation.
**Krishna subduing the naga Kaliya**

The depiction of Vishnu in this forum is seen only through bas reliefs form. In Thailand, especially northeastern region, most of representations of Krishna are dated to 11\(^{th}\)-12\(^{th}\) century A.D.

The story of Krishna subduing Kaliya is narrated in *Bhagavata puranas* (X: 16) as the poisonous *Kaliya* and his clan had infested the village pound and thus, made the villagers felt sick. Krishna had come to know this event then he fought with the great serpent and finally subdued him before drove the wounded serpent to leave for the Ocean with all of his clan.

![Fig.197. The reliefs from Prasat Ban Ploung, Pimai and Muang Tum;and Phanom Ruang sanctuary](image)

**Fig. 197. The reliefs from Prasat Ban Ploung, Pimai and Muang Tum;and Phanom Ruang sanctuary**

In Indian art, the representation of Krishna subduing Kaliya serpent is known as *Kaliyahimarddaka*. Krishna is commonly described as young and mighty boy dancing over the multiple head serpent. His left hand is holding the tail of reptile while the right keeping the other hand outstretche like a steamer.

![Fig. 198. The other three reliefs from Prasat Muang Tum, Buriram](image)

**Fig. 198. The other three reliefs from Prasat Muang Tum, Buriram**

There are examples of *Kaliyahimarddaka* in Indian art like the Bronze images dated to 10\(^{th}\) century A.D. of Chola style exhibited at Madras state museum and on the wall of pillared at the central shrine in the great Kailasa temple at Ellora (Rao 1916 (I): 213).
Fig.199. The representation of Kaliyahimarddaka from Somnarthpur temple, Hoysala style and the bronze image from Nagapattinam district, Madras state museum (15th-16th century A.D.)

The Krishna subduing Kaliya serpent in Khmer art is always represented in the form of youth and mighty Krishna torturing serpent Kaliya, making its heads thorn out into two parts by his hands and feet. He is also emerging from the middle of separated heads. Krishna is carved as young man who has knotting hair and energetic muscle. Most of his depictions are normally carved on the lintel with decorative garland or floral motifs, framed within square form of structure. The Krishna Kaliyahimarddaka reliefs are found from Khmer temples like Angkor Wat Phanom Chisor, Preah Vihar, Banteay Samre and Baphoun and Preah Khan in Cambodia, Wat Phu in Laos, Phanom Rung sanctuary (Buriram) and Narai Jeang Waeng (Surin) in northeastern Thailand.

**Krishna lifting Govardhana Mountain.**

As mentioned earlier, the Krishna was famous in Khmer art as mighty youth than other forms. Thus, the representation of Krishna lifting Govardhana Mountain was well spread over the ancient Khmer territory according to the great admiration of powerful young God.

Regarding to the legend of Krishna narrated in Bhagavata purana (X :25), the story has gone that during the confrontation between Krishna and Indra, Indra was enraged at being lost of worship status and sent terrifying clouds (samvartaka) to bring destruction to the world and universe. The most terrify rain, hailstones and flash lighting had made the cowherds and villagers of Vrindavan forest sought for the protection from Krishna. Then, Krishna intentionally used his divine power in order to fight and humiliate Indra arrogance by uprooting Govardhana Mountain with left right hand to stop the heaven rain for seven days.
As a result, Indra was completely defeated, acknowledged Krishna as “Govinda” which means “The Lord of Goloka” and “The protector of the cows”.

The Krishna lifting Govardhana is commonly depicted in several schools of Indian art. Generally, Krishna is always depicted as young boy with energetic body, standing with his right hand placed on waist and showing left hand uprooting Govardhana Mountain. Krishna is surrounded by the cowherds and villagers who sought for his divine protection. In case of single image, Krishna is represented as mighty youth who has knotting hair, lifting the mountain splendidly. There are good examples of Krishna in this form in northern India at Mandor and terracotta image from Rangmahal at Bikaner museum. The others are presently exhibited at Bharat Kala Bhavan and Allahabad museum. According to Desai (1973: 130), the Krishna –Govardhana images was in high popularity as early as Gupta period, especially at Mathura, and this high admiration on this mighty form had continuously given an influence in Vaisanavite art of early medieval period.

As well as occurred in India, the Krishna-Govardhana murti is also well known in Khmer art. The depictions of Krishna are available in both round sculpture and reliefs forms. In Thailand, at Sri Tep, Petchaburna province, there are at least four Krishna-Govardhana murti reported from the sites dated to 7th-8th century A.D comparable to those of pre-Angkorean style. The headdress and costume of Krishna from Sri Tep shows some similarity with the early Khmer art, proving the close religious connection during the 7th-8th century A.D. However, the Krishna Govardhana images from Sri Tep have reflected the unique feature on the natural character, pose and iconographic form. Some of Krishna Govardhana
images from Sri Tep wear *kiritamukut* that is normally depicted in Vishnu images, but the hands are seen in lifting pose.

**Fig. 201.** (from Left) the Krishna from Tual Koh, Cambodia, museum Albert Sarraut (Boisselier 1955), Phanom Da: Angkor Borei (Cleveland museum of Art, Bunker and Lachford 2004: 46 - 47 ) and the group of Krishna images from Sri Tep, Nationalmuseum Bangkok.

In case of reliefs, there are numbers of pediments depicted Krishna in this forum found in northeastern Thailand. Krishna images are seen in both single and accompanied with cowherds, lifting his powerful right hand uprooting the mountain. Most of them are dated from 11th -12th century A.D. and their sizes are ranging from 85-160 cm. which is comparable to the *Khleang-Baphoun* and *Angkor Wat* styles. Besides of selected samples, there are the depiction of Krishna-*Govardhana* reported from *Angkor Wat, Phanom Chisor, Banteay Samre, Banteay Ampil, Bakong, Prasat Einkosei* and *Bayon* located in Cambodia (Roveda 2005 : 84).
Fig. 202. The representations of Krishna lifting Govardhana mountain (from left) Prasat Ban Ploung, and the two from Phanom rung sanctuary

Fig. 203. The representations of Krishna lifting Govardhana mountain from Prasat Muang Tum, Buriram and Prasat Sra Kamphange Yai and Prasat Preah Vihar, Sri saket province

Krishna Killing Kesin (horse demon)

This story has been narrated from Bhagavata purana(X, 37) and Harivamsa (II, 24,32-37) as King Kamsa had sent the Demon named Kesin in the form of terrify horse to kill Krishna. The horse demon attacked Krishna on his chest with two of the front legs, but finally Krishna inserted his hand into the horse mouth and killed him. Krishna is clearly depicted as hitting the mouth of Kesi with left arm and the right hand also risen up to hit him. The depiction Krishna Kesihanta is well known in Indian art as seen from Mandor and Vallabhi in Saurastra (Desai 1973: 131).

In Khmer art, the representation of Krishna Kesihanta is also available but not much in popularity. The depiction of Krishna in this forum is commonly seen as Krishna fighting with horse, perhaps a couple of horses. His hands are in the poses of lifting or inserting inside the horse mouth. There are some reliefs of this form depicted on the lintels or architectural monuments in Cambodia such as at Baphoun, Sdok Kok Thom, Beng Meala, Angkor, Banteay
Samre and Bayon. In northeastern Thailand, there are two reliefs available from the Prang Prohmhat at Pimai temple and Prasat Sra Kam Phang Yai, Sri Saket province. The relief from Sri Saket, Krishna image was carved in the form of young man, lifting the couple of horses at the front legs by two hands. It shows the much powerful form of Krishna who successfully defeated terrify Kesin. The almost similar depiction is also appeared at Wat Ek temple in Cambodia (Roveda 2005: 97).

Fig. 204. The example relief of Krishna killing Kesin from Sra Kam Phang Yai temple, Sri Saket province

Krishna killing elephant Kuvalayapida

This scene is narrated the story of Krishna and Balarama when they were in Mathura waiting for the westling competition in front of King Kamsa court. At the gate of arena, they met the huge elephant named Kuvalayapida. The elephant grapped Krishna with trunk, but he slipped away. Finally Krishna caught the terrify animal by its tail and dragged it to the grand distance and pulling out of the tusks then entered to the westling arena (Bhagavata purana, X, 43; Harivamsa, II, 29).

The iconographic form of Krishna in this forum is described as young powerful man fighting with elephant which seen in extreamly agaony. In Khmer art, the depiction of Krishna is similar to Indian mythological character. At Prasat Baphoun temple, Krishna is dragging the tail of huge elephant as if he wants to throw it away (Roveda 2005: 93). Besides of mentioned temple, there are the reliefs from Angkor Wat, Banteay Kadei and Banteay Samre.
In Thailand, the reliefs of Krishna killing *Kuvalayapida* are provided from Pimai temple dated around 12th century A.D. in *Angkor Wat* style. The Krishna is represented as young boy fighting with elephant in different poses, dragging it upside down and spreading its legs out or gripping its tail. In the relief on the lintel preserved at National museum, Pimai Krishna is capturing the terrorify elephant in upside down pose, coming over from backside and throning out its legs.

![Fig. 205. The reliefs of Krishna killing the elephant *Kuvalayapida*, (A, B.) two reliefs from Pimai temple, (C.) Krishna killing *Kuvalayapida* and the other is lion, *Phanom Rung* sanctuary and (D.) Pimai (National museum Pimai)](image)

Krishna killing lion and elephant-lion (*gaja-simha*) monsters

Krishna in this forum is one of well known depictions in Khmer art, but never been mentioned in *puranas* or any Sanskrit literature. Perhaps, this representation was created by Khmer craftmen, approving the concept of mighty Krishna. As well as in Cambodia, Khmer art in northeastern Thailand had progressively developed the similar trend.

In fact, the scenes of Krishna fighting with various monsters like lion, elephant (*Kuvalayapida*) and elephant-lion (*gaja-simha*) are similar to other demons. In case of depiction on the lintel, they were generally carved in two ways as either Krishna holds the monster in upside down pose, throning its legs or standing in imbalance pose (*tri bhanga*) and capturing the couple of monsters with two powerful hands. For the reliefs on the pediment wall, Krishna is fighting with monster in the forest, surrounding by the trees and
wild animals. Besides of sampled reliefs, the depiction of Krishna fighting with lion is also available at Prasat Narai Jengweng, Surin province (Rovada 2005: 97).

Fig. 206. The reliefs of Krishna as mystical animal fighters, (A) Krishna fighting with lion (?) from Phanom Rung sanctuary and (B and C.) the two lintel from Pimai.

Fig. 207. The Reliefs of Krishna capturing elephant-lion (gaja-simha), (A.) Prasat Sri Khorabhum, B. the lintel from Pimai, C. the reliefs of Krishna fighting with elephant-lion (gaja-simha and elephant Kuvalayapida) from Pimai and (D.) Prasat Sri Khorabhumi, Surin (National museum Surin)

The reliefs of Krishna as mighty youth or monster slayyher are commonly depicted in Southeast Asian arts. The other monsters defeated by Krishna according to Bhagavata purana (X, 26,171-174) are known as bull demon (Arishta) and bull head demon (Vatyasuravadha). Their reliefs are unknown in Thailand but available in other countries.
At Prambanan, Indonesia, there is the fighting relief of Krishna and bull demon named *Arishta* and the relief of Krishna and *Vatyasuravadha* at Baphoun temple, Cambodia.

![Image](image1)

Fig. 208. The narrative panel of Bhagavata purana, from the childhood of Krishna, the young Krishna fighting with the demons like *Putana, Pralambha*, *Kuvalayapida* etc. and lifting Govardhana mountain dated around the 6th-7th century (Archaeological museum Badami, Karnataka)

**Krishna killing *Kamsa* and other wrestlers.**

The reliefs of Krishna killing Kamsa and wrestlers is one of well depicted scene of Krishna who is worshipped as powerful youth. This important story is narrated in *Harivamsa* (II,29) and *Bhagavata purana* (X,43-45) as the tyrant King *Kamsa* who once had sent orders for killing Krishna from his childhood, had come for fighting with Krishna at the arena in Mathura. At the end, Krishna sized his hair and finally killed him. From then in, Krishna become the King of Mathura and his youthful life become end. This scene is well depicted in Indian art from Gupta to early mediaval period such as at Khajuraho, Deograh and Paharpur (Desai 1973: 132).

In Khmer art, the depiction of Krishna killing Kamsa is also represented in the reliefs at *Angkor Wat* and *Banteay Srei* dated around the 11th-12th century A.D. At the northern gallery pediment of *Banteay Srei*, the fighting was happened at the crowded arena where Krishna is seen grapping Kamsa’s hair in his left hand while the left foot brutally placed on
his chest. This dedicated relief could have been considered as most instructive scene of this story. There are other examples available at Prasat Thomanon located in Cambodia.

In Thailand, the reliefs of Krishna killing Kamsa and wrestlers are seen from Phanom rung sanctuary and Pimai. There are other earlier reliefs which could be identified either as Krishna defeating Kamsa or Bhima splitting Duhshasana body from Prasat Muang Kheak, Nakon Ratchasima province (National museum Pimai). Possibly, this lintal can be dated around middle of 10th century A.D.

At the Phanom Rung sanctuary, this scene is comparable to the relief at Banteay Srei. Krishna and Kamsa are fighting violently surrounded by the audiences and finally Krishna catches his head and kills him. The other similar story also seen from the lintel at Pimai, there is Krishna defeated the wrestler or possibly be uncrowned Kamsa by catching his hair and placing the foot on his back.

Fig. 209. The relief of Krishna killing Kamsa at Phanom Rung sanctuary

Fig. 210. The example of Krishna killing Kamsa at Pimai (left) and Prasat Muang Kheak, Nakon Ratchasima

After the death of Kamsa, Krishna was the King of Mathura. This event makes the end to his youthful life and he became complete adult. His later life is not oftenly depicted on stone like the previous part. In Khmer art, the reliefs of Krishna story after killing of Kamsa is less discovered or perhaps annexed to the Mahabharata scene.
9). **Buddha:** The Buddha as avatars of Vishnu, this form is not found in Khmer art and also in Thailand.

10). **Kalkin:** This particular form of Vishnu is unknown in Khmer reliefs, while those of *Hayagriva* occurs occasionally. *Kalkin* is described as either four arms horse head man or the man with the sword, riding the white horse (Maxwell 1997: 228). According to *Agni purana* and *Vishnu dharamottara*, *Kalkin* is prescribed only two hands while *Vaikhanasagama* mentioned *Kalkin* as having the horse face and body of man with four arms (Rao 1916: 223).

The *Hayagriva* is Vishnu depicted as horse head man with two arms for killing demons *Madhu* and *Kaitabha*. This forum of Vishnu is well known in Khmer art from the pre Angkorean period at *Kuk Trap* (Boisselier 1955: Pl.I), *Banteay Srei* (Roveda 2005: 73) and *Prasat Thom* (Parmentier 1939: Pl. XXXV).

![Fig. 211. The examples of Kalkin or Hayagriva in early Medieval South Indian and Khmer arts, A. Vaikunta Perumal at Kanchipuram, B. Ranganath temple, C. the Kalkin (?) from Kuk Trap (Boisselier 1955) and D. horse head deity from Southern Vietnam (Malleret 1963: Pl. VI).](image)
The Bronze images

The Bronze images of Brahmanical deities found in Thailand, especially Vishnu, were commonly made during late 11\textsuperscript{th} -13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. They were made as same as Khmer art. It can be assume that the Khmer bronze image had given an intensive influence to Thai Brahmanical Bronze images according to the continuity of religious relationship.

In case of the study of Khmer bronze images, Boisselier (1955) and Diskul (1967, 1970) has studied the catagories of Khmer Bronze in Cambodia as well as in Thailand. They devided them into three groups as 1) The large size image, 2) The fine casting images of medium size and 3) the unrefined small images.

Infact, the frist group is considered very rare inKhmer art. The good example of this group is the bronze Vishnu – Narayana image from wastern Maebon temple which is comparable to Baphoun stlye. The second and third groups are seen in certain numbers, but the third are lesser in artistic valueand roughly made.Thus, the example of Vishnu bronze images for this study would have selected from second group.

![Fig. 212. The example of Khmer Vishnu bronze images, Angkor Wat style dated around the 12\textsuperscript{th} century, National museum Bangkok](image)

These two images are flourishing with iconographic detail and artistic value. The Vishnu (left) is standing on the shoulder of Garuda. His upper arms hold the devine attributes disc and conchshell. The lower set catch the tails of serpents that also caught by Garuda. The mystical bird is well decorated with the same crown pattern and other royal ornaments, standing in flying pose.
In fact, the well made bronze images are showing the similar character with the stone sculptures and reliefs. Though there may be some differences in costume and decoration, the major iconographic character is always preserved. Similar to Siva bronze image, the main iconographic characters are still depicted on the small images.

Siva is commonly depicted in two arms, knotting hair in the form of *jatamukuta* decorated with Khmer crown and the third eyes on his forehead. In this sample, he is wearing the lower garment arranged in short of *Bayon* style and royal jeweled ornaments. The God is holding trident (*sula*) in his left hand and rosary (*aksamala*) in the right. In the same way, the lingas of different sizes and decorations are also made as miniature bronze images, worshipped as amulets or enshrined in the temple.

The Khmer style bronze images of Brahmanical Gods discovered from central and northeastern Thailand are plenty in numbers, but most of well made images are preserved as private collections in Thailand and foreign countries.

Fig. 213. The image of Siva from Lopburi province (14 cm), dated around the late of 12th-13th century, national museum Bangkok

The iconographic discussion of Vishnu is finished after the section of Bronze images. As well as Sivism, Vaisnavism had given an intensive influence on the Brahmanical culture in early states of Southeast Asia, especially Khmer and ancient Indonesia Kingdom. The early phase of Vaisnavism possibly emerged from the ancient ports sites and then extensively spreaded to inner region. This concept proved by Manguin (1998: 87-123), he states that the port sites located along the Malay peninsular (*Kota Kapur*), Transbassac region and Java island (*Tjibuaja*) revealed the the group of early Vishnu images dated from 5th-7th
century A.D. Furthermore, their iconographic feature is considered as ethnic form of early Vishnu images found only in Southeast Asian art.

Fig. 214. Map of sites discovered four arms Vishnu images and ancient port sites showing the connection of Merchant groups and the Vaisnavism expansion in southeast Asia before (8th century A.D) (after Manguin 1998)

This sculptural evidence is showing the linkage of Vaisanavite expansion among the ancient ports that well connected by the trade activities. Thus, this network is identified as “Vaisanava obedience” (Dalsheimer and Manguin 1998: 110). The early Vaisnavism has represented through the numbers of Vishnu images and reliefs reflecting an extensive level of Vaisanavite worship practiced in early Southeast Asian states.
As well as Saivism, Vaisnavism also close to the Kingship concept. It seemed to be seen little earlier than Saivism. In this case, the iconography of eight armed Vishnu image known as “Hari Kambhujendra” and the various form of Vishnu discovered from Phanom Da (Bhattachrya 1964: 78) has identified the major role of Vaisanavism in early Khmer Kingship before 9th century A.D. before gradually replaced by Devaraja cult of Saivite concept.

At Dvaravati Kingdom of Central Thailand, where the Buddhist had been perpetually established, the Vaisanavite worship was also practiced paralleling with Buddhism as seen through the arts and architecture. The early Vaisanavite images are found at U Thong site, though they are lesser in comparison to the Buddhist images. These Vishnu images reported from U thong were getting an inspiration from the early Indian schools like Amravati and the ancient Khmer art of the later period.

Beside of U Thong sites at the central region, Sri Mahosoth or known in the other name as Sri Mahabodhi site is also yielded the number of early Brahmanical remains. The trace of Vaisnavism is also revealed from the Vishnu images dated around 7th-8th century A.D. The role of Vaisnavism is also noticed from the concept of Kingship like happened in Cambodia. There are numbers of ritual objects such as inscribed silver coins, ivory dices and stone tablets with depicting royal insignia emblems, have proved on the royal ceremony related to the Kingship influenced by Vaisavavite concept.

These contexts provide the general feature of Vaisnavism in the dominant Buddhist state. Though it was not the main religion like Buddhist and coexisted with Saivism, the Vaisnavism was well regarded as the early Kingship concept.

During late 12th-13th century A.D., Vaisnavism had also been practiced as well as Saivism, though the Buddhist Mahayana had taken more important role in religious aspect. However, both religions were maintained in peaceful relationship as seen from the Buddhist art (Bayon style) and reliefs dated to this period. Vaisnavism has still related to the Kingship and Royal ceremony of Thai Kingdoms from late of 13th century A.D., after the establishment of Sukhothai Kingdom that regarded as Buddhist dominant state. The practice of Brahmanical rituals are continued, but mostly as ceremonies conducted for previledge class.
Chapter 6: The iconography of Goddesses (Saktis), other Gods and minor deities

6.1 The Sakti

The worship of Goddesses as the divine consort of supreme Gods is known as the cult of Saktism. Though the early trace of Sakti worship in Thailand is dated from the beginning of Christian era, the variation of forms is far lesser than in Indian art of contemporary period. During the early urbanization period from 5th-9th centuries A.D., the form of Goddess is rarely seen as the sculptures. Most of them are depicted on seals and reliefs. The two most common representations of Goddesses are Lakshmi (Gajalaks) and Durga (Mahisasura mardhini). The damaged relief of Soma Skanda is also discovered from Ta Kua Pa district of Southern region. Besides of these mentioned images, the other form is not found.

In mainland Southeast Asia, on the contrary with the wide spread level of the supreme Gods worship, the Goddesses seemed not to get individual cult like popularly happened in India. Though the worship of Goddesses like Devi or Bhagavati were commonly referred in the inscriptions of ancient Khmer Kingdom before the 9th century A.D., the ritual was only associated with the supreme Gods and being worshiped in lower position. The sculptural form of Goddess had been introduced in authentic Khmer art from the pre Angkorean period (before 9th century A.D.). Most of them are the images of Durga (Mahisasura madhini) or Parvati (Uma) depicted in two or four arms holding the same divine attributes of Vishnu like conch shell (sankha), disc (chakra), earth (bhu) and mace (gada). This character reflects the religious toleration and assimilation between Saivite and Vaisnavite sects.

In Thailand, the image of Goddess is very much lesser than those of Cambodia and India. The earliest depictions of Goddess dated around 5th-8th century A.D. are made in the form of Gajalakshmi seals and relief associated with the stone Dharmachakra. The representation of Lakshmi accompanied with the wheel of law (Dharmachakra) can be suggested on the well acceptance of Gajalakshmi, the sacred symbol of wealth and fortune in Brahmanical mythology, had commonly associated in Buddhist art without any difference in religious aspect.

The Gajalakshmi seals in Thailand

The Maritime trade relation between India and Southeast Asia from the early of Christian era up to the 8th century A.D. was most probably controlled by Indian merchants. Along the seafaring journeys, it was necessary to carry their religious images with them as amulets for their moral support. One type of the amulets for merchants is the seals of
Gajalakshmi that believed to bring their fortune in business and ward off the unexpected calamities along the far journey.

In Indian mythology, Lakshmi is comonly known as the devine consort of Vishnu, the supream God of Vaisnavism. In fact, her representation is well seen through all religions like Brahmanism, Buddhist and Jain. Lakshmi is generally worshipped as the Goddess of beauty, wealth, fourtune and fertility. Therefore, anyone whom wishing to obtain these materials prosperity should worship her for this particular aspect.

The cult of Lakshmi is apprently related to the worship of mother Goddess that can be traced back to Harappan period (Mashall 1931 : 52, 62) and later on developped as fertility Goddess that normally seen in the reliefs of nude female deities. She always associates with makara, animals and birds. These releifs are reported from Banaras, Taxila and other sites (Banerjea 1956 : 170-171). In context of Sanskrit literatures, she is always figured as the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. Markandeya purana refers to Lakshmi as the presiding deity of the eight treasures (nidhis) such as lotus (padma), makara and conch shell (sankha) etc. (Sahai 1957 ; Rajeshwari 1989 : 22).

The iconography of Gajalakshmi is narrated in various texts. In Sri Sukta, the trace of Gajalakshmi concept is prevalent. Generally, she is normally described as sitting on the lotus in ardhaparyankasana and being given bath by two white elephants, standing on the lotuses with upturned jars held in their trunks. Abhilashitartha Chintamani states that the Goddess has white complexion. Matsya purana narrates her as having gloden appearance. According to Vishnu Dharmottara, she should have four arms, sitting on the lotus and holding lotus, nectar jar, conch shell (sankha) and bilva fruit. The elephants always associate with Gajalakshmi as they are the symbol of fertility by having power of attractng the rainy coulds and life bestowing power (Iyer 1977: 43-50).

Sri Lakshmi is associated with lotus in three different forms (Coomaraswamy 1927). Three aspects are Padma hasta, Padmesthita and Padmalaya narrated that she is holding lotus, standing or sitting on the lotus and surounding by the lotuses and its leaves. Lotus is always associated with Lakshmi in all forums because it is related to the water and being source of life. The extened lotus is signifying the manifest universe and symbol of purity.

The representation of Lakshmi in Indian arts are depicted on the gateway of Sanchi, Bharahut and Bodhgaya datable to 2nd – 1st century B.C. (Rajeshwari 1989 : 21). Gajalakshmi also occurs at the centre of lintels over doorways of the shrines or Brahmanical
temples at Khajuraho, Ellora (Gupta 1972), Mahabalipuram (Jouveau-Dubreuil 1978: 99-100) and Kanchipuram.

Fig. 216. The Gajalakshmi from Sanchi stupa (eastern torana)

Fig. 217. The Gajalakshmi from Adhivaraha cave, Mahabalipuram

Fig. 218. The reliefs of Gajalakshmi depicted at the gateway (torana) from Andhara pradesh dated around 10th - 11th century, State museum Andhara Pradesh, Hyderabad

In Gupta period, the goddess was regarded as the Goddess of wealth for trade, the most important way for becoming wealth. Her representation on a Gupta seal shows that she was also the patron Goddess of seafaring wealth (Sahai 1957 : 171). The seal depicted the Goddess in two arms hold conch shell (sankha) on the left hand placed on hip and the right hand raised. Interestingly, her image associated with barge and decks is clearly related to the concept of trading wealth Goddess. The Lakshmi depictions are also noticed from the seals of
bankers and merchant guilds. During the Gupta period, the worship of Lakshmi as the Goddess of wealth became more dominant. Some Gupta seals and coins (Banerjea 1956) have the depiction of Goddess associated with the dwarfs holding money bag or throwing the coins from their bags. Perhaps, this character shows the closed relationship between Lakshmi and Kubera as the symbol of fortune (Lakshmi) and wealth (Kubera).

Though the worship of Lakshmi as individual rite is not found in Thailand, a number of Gajalakshmi seal discovered in many sites are related to the Indian impact dating from 5th-8th century A.D. are considered on the position of this Goddess that being commonly worshipped as the fortune and welfare deity. The seals are generally depicted Gajalakshmi in one side and Kubera at the other, or simply depicting Kubera or Gajalakshmi on the face. They have been reported from the central region of Thailand, namely Nakon prathom (Indrawooth 1983: 99-101), U Thong (Boisselier 1966), Sab Champa (Veeraprasert 1982: pl.44-45) Chansen (Bronson 1979:PL.I/B) and Muang Bon (Wales 1969: 72-73).

![Fig. 219. The Gajalakshmi seal (4cm) from Sap Champa, Lopburi province, terracotta image from U Thong (4-5 cm) and Chansen (4 cm)](image)

The representation of Gajalakshmi is comonly depicted as the seated Goddess wearing the crown and holding lotuses in both hands at the shoulder level. Two elephant are sprinking lustral water from their raised trunks over the head of Goddess. This sacred motif is generally known as Gajalakshmi or Abhisekha Lakshmi (Indrawooth 1992 : 165).
Fig. 220. The reliefs of Gajalakshmi on Dharmachakra from Nakon Prathom and ritual stone tablet (27 cm)

As mentioned earlier, the depiction of Gaja Lakshmi is also depicted on the wheel of law (Dharmachakra) found at Nakon Prathom. This motif is carved in rectangular version on the lower part of wheel dated to the Dvaravati period. For the royal ceremony, the Gajalakshmi is carved on the stone tray which was supposed to use in the certain royal ceremony. The Gajalakshmi representing on royal object and Buddhist symbol reflects the high popularity of Gajalakshmi as the fortune and prosperity Goddess that worshipped well beyond the limitation of any religion or social class.

In Khmer art, Lakshmi is commonly known in the inscriptions as Sri devi or the Goddess of wealth. The depictions of Abhiseka Lakshmi are seen as reliefs from Sombor Prei Kuk and Prasat Dumrai Krap datable to 7th-early of 9th century A.D. According to Bhattacharya (1961 b), the sculptures of Lakshmi would not be dated earlier than 11th century A.D. The iconography of Lakshmi in Khmer art is described as the two arms Goddess, holding lotuses in both hands or the right hand with the lotus and Sri pala (fruit : bilva) in the left. The reliefs of Abhiseka Lakshmi also occur in Java island and Champa (southern Vietnam). At the wall of Prasat Kravan, the relief of Goddess is presented holding disc (chakra) and trident (sula) that commonly regarded as the symbols of Vishnu and Siva. In this case, it seems to reflect the amalgamation of different leading Brahmanical sects.
The Khmer sculpture of Lakshmi is rarely discovered in Thailand, only one can be identify as Lakshmi image found from Pimai and dated around 11th century A.D.

This image is comparable to Angkor Wat style as examined from the pattern of lower garment (Boisselier 1955). Though the head and other three hands are lost, the remaining one is holding conch shell (sankha) that helps identifying the Goddess as Lakshmi. In fact, the Goddess Durga is also noticed holding conch shell (sankha), but her sculptural form is very few in Khmer art after the 10th century. Thus, this image should be the Goddess Lakshmi according to the remaining iconographic feature.
This relief seems to be the image of Goddess Lakshmi. According to the excavation report, this lintel was found at the Ku Kra Don, Roiet province. The remains is supposed to be Vaisnavite temple due to the discovery of Vishnu image inside the main shrine. Although the iconographic feature of the Goddess is unclear, she may be having two or four arms and standing accompanied with two female attendants. Actually, the composition of this relief is similar to the carving Lakshmi image on the wall of Prasat Kravan. Only difference is noticed on the face direction of her attendants. The significant feature of the Goddess is pyramid shape crown (kiritamukuta) reflecting relationship with Vaisnavisite cult. This relief should be dated around the 12th century A.D. regarding to the style of motifs depicted on the lintel. The Vishnu image found inside the main shrine is also dated in contemporary period.

The bas relief of Goddess with child, Ko Kho Khao, Ta Kua Pa district, Phang nga province (present location unknown)

Fig. 224. The fragment of Goddess holding a child (Somaskanda?) (65 cm.) from Takua Pa, Phang nga province (courtesy : Chaysuwarn 2009)
At Southern region of Thailand, the high relief of women (devi?) carrying a child (Skanda?) was discovered from the mound looted by the locals searching for the beads and other unearthed treasures. The relief was kept in local shrine and been worshiped as “Goddess” (Devi), but it is presently lost from that place. (Chaysuwarn 2009)

The Goddess sits on lifting left leg pose and carried the child that similar to the iconographic form of “Somaskanda”. This forum consists of Pravati, Skanda and Siva sitting in the platform. According to Rao (1916 (I) : 134), the general form of Somaskanda is depicted as the God and his family are sitting on the platform, the Goddess is representing varada mudra in one hand and resting her other one on the seat and the Skanda is seen dancing in between them. The Kumara (Skanda) shows his hands in simhakarna pose. The good examples of Somaskanda are provided by the Chola bronze images.

Fig. 225. The Somaskanda from Shore temple dated around the 7th - 9th century A.D. and the bronze image from Patteswaram, the Art gallery of Tanjavour palace

The relief, perhaps represents the Goddess in Somaskanda forum as she is carrying the child on her lap. Unfortunately, the rest of relief is totally damaged that made very much difficult to identify the exact form of Goddess. However, this relief can be dated to the Pallava period (7th-9th century A.D.) by the ornament and genral feature of deity that resemble to the Pallava sculptures.
The high relief of Durga, Mahisasuramadhini in Thailand: Sri Tep, Petchaburna province; Sri Mahosoth, Prachinaburi province and the relief on the lintal at Prasat Muang Kheak, Nakon Ratchasima province.

The image of Durga in the form of Mahisasura mardhini is one of the most common representation of Sakti in Brahmanical art. It is the vigorous appreance of Goddess who splendorly defeats the mighty buffalo head demon named Mahisasura. This Durga form is narrated in some puranic texts such as Varaha purana, Vamana purana, Markandeya purana and Devi Mahatmaya as well as Silparatna and Vishnudharmottara (Rao 1916 (I) : 345-354). In some Sanskrit literatures, the Mahisasura mardhini is also well known in other name as Katyayani, who is being the most beatufiul goddess and defeating the demon.

The gradual increase in impotance of Goddess worship happened during the first half of Christian era by making the Goddess (Saktis) as the principle deity with many forms and appellations described in literary reference from Rig Vedic to puranic and epics literatures. By the 7th century A.D., the worship of Goddess could be in well practicing in Tantric
Brahmanism when the concept of Sakti pithas was introduced associating with Siva (Bhairava). In the Devimahatmya section of the Markandeyapurana, Durga in Mahisasura mardhini is described among the other forms of early Goddesses (Banerjea 1974: 490-497).

The depiction of Durga in this energetic form is well made in Indian art as well as the cultural influenced countries such as Indonesia and Cambodia. In case of Cambodia, most of her images are generally dated around 7th-8th century A.D. Only few reliefs were made after the 9th century A.D. Perhaps, it happened as a result of the popularity of Sakti worship was gradually reduced and integrated to the cult of supreme Gods.

In Khmer art, the representations of Mahisasura mardhini are categorized in three forms as the sculptures, bas reliefs depicted on the wall of architectures and the large relief carved on pediment (Nagaswek 1983). As mentioned earlier, most of them were made in pre-Angkorean style.

Similar to authentic Khmer art, the depictions of Durga in the form of Mahisasura mardhini in Thailand are belonged to the group of pre Angkorean images. At least, there are four Goddess’s depictions as sculptures and high reliefs. But the images from Sri Mahosoth and Prasat Khao Noi, Prachinaburi are lost. The remaining Mahisasura mardhini reliefs are reported from Sri Tep and Prasat Muang Kheak and can be dated before the 10th century A.D.

The Mahisasura mardhini from Sri Tep presently preserved at the site museum is the fragment of Goddess sculpture. Unfortunately, only the feet and buffalo head are available for iconographic study. The sculpture of Mahisasura Mardhini is seen commonly in Khmer art between 7th-9th century A.D. The Goddess figures are always depicted as having four arms, standing on the buffalo head and wearing kiritamukuta. She is holding conch shell (sankha), disc (chakra), earth (bhu) and mace (gada) which are considered as Vishnu divine attributes. In some case like the images of Durga from Liêu- Hu and Kampong Speu in Southern Cambodia and Vietnam, she is holding sword and shield in her upper hands (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 91; Dupont 1955: Pl. XLIII.C). Precisely, the images of Mahisasura Mardhini of pre Angkorean period always wear kiritamukuta and standing on buffalo head. In fact, the depiction of Durga standing on Mahisasura head is related to the South Indian tradition and also seen in Javanese art (Sivaramamurti 1950: 32, Pl. VI C.; Bhattacharya 1961 b: 92).

The reliefs of Durga from Sri Mahosoth is also an important evidence showing the general iconographic form of Mahisasura mardhini image. Durga is standing on buffalo head
and wearing long lower garment with decorated belt. She has four arms, but two upper ones are in damaged condition. The remaining are seen holding mace (gada) and resting on her narrow waist. This iconographic feature appeared on relief is similar to those of pre
Angkorean image dated before 9th century A.D. (Boisselier 1955; Dupont 1955).

Fig. 227. The examples of Mahisasura mardhini in early Khmer art from Cambodia and Southern Vietnam, the image of Durga from Kamphong Cham (Boisselier 1955, Pl.24), (middle) Trung Hua (Malleret 1963 : Pl. XII), Kamphong Speu (National museum Phnom Penh, Bunker and Lachford 2004)

Fig. 228. The depiction of Durga mahisasura Mardhini from Prasat Banteay Samre dated around the 11th century, Angkor Wat style
Durga in *Mahisasura mardhini* is also seen as the high relief depicted on the lintal of *Prasat Muang Kheak*, Nakon Ratchasima province. The Goddess is fighting with buffalo demon as she is seen standing on its back and using trident (*sula*) to kill it. Though the scene carving detail is unclear, but she is seen having four arms. According to the costume and ornament of the Goddess, this relief is possible to date around the middle of 10th century A.D., comparable to *Koh Ker* style in Khmer art. Similar to Khmer art, the depiction of *Mahisasura mardhini* after Angkorean period (9th-13th century A.D.) are rare and available only as relief available from *Prasat Banteay Samre* and *Prasat Bakon*. Thus, *Mahisasura mardhini* from *Prasat Muang Kheak* is the single depiction of the Durga in Thailand after 9th century A.D.

The *Mahisasura mardhini* image is also found in the eastern Javanese art of early 10th-14th century. There are some Durga image from Candi Jawi and Singosari dated around 11th-12th century A.D. Goddess is standing on the buffalo demon with multiple arms carrying divine attributes. One of her hand is placed on the head of *asura* that may be either *Mahisasura* in human form or *ganas*. Interestingly, the Javanese Durga images reflect in much similarity with early Medieval northern Indian art, particularly in the style of ornament and iconographic composition. This character suggests on an intensive influence of Saktism from northern or eastern India in the eastern Javanese Kingdom under the great patronage of royal devotees.

Fig. 229. The Javanese *Mahisasura mardhini* from Candi Jawi (Left), Candi Singosari (Right) dated from 11th - 12th century, eastern Javanese art (Kinney *et al* 2002), the eastern Javanese image from Indonesia : National museum Bangkok and the north Indian image from Mandsor dated around the 8th century A.D., State museum, Bhopal (Madhya pradesh)
The Durga in *Mahisasura mardhini* form in Indian Iconography is briefly described as, the Goddess is carrying various divine attributes in her hands and riding on lion. She is fighting with the demon depicted as having buffalo head and human body, slaying him violently by various weapons. This battling scene is famous in early medieval South Indian art and Deccan as seen from Mahabalipuram, Ellora, Badami and Tanjavour.

In fact, the representation of *Mahisasura mardhini* images in Cambodia and Thailand might be inspired from South Indian tradition as they are seen as four arms and standing on buffalo head. However, the Khmer *Mahisasura mardhini* shows the distinctive feature as holding the four Vishnu attributes and the earth (*bhu*) that is not found in any Indian school. Thus, it is able to state that the special iconographic form of these images possibly reflects the religious toleration between Saivism and Vaisnavism which is considered as the salient feature of Khmer art.

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**Fig. 230.** The depiction of *Mahisasura mardhini* from Mahabalipuram (the 6th-7th century) and Kailashnarth temple (the 7th-8th century), Pallava art

**Fig. 231.** The divine group panel dated to the 7th-8th century, Mahisasura mardhini is represented as the supreme Goddess at the right end, Badami. The Mahisasura mardhini from Durga temple and Ravanaphadi, Aihole dated around the 7th-8th century A.D.
The worship of Goddess or Saktism in Thailand as well as other mainland countries are not much in popularity like happened in case of supreme God. But atleast the trace of Saktism has shown the early Brahmanical relationship that bound connected the entire Southeast Asia by the specific forum of Goddess like Mahisasura mardhini. Beside of being an evidence of cultural impact, the Goddess images also signifies on the nature of Sakti worship in this region. The worship of Durga in ancient Khmer Kingdom prior to 9th century seemed to be worship independently as seen from her iconographic feature that represented without her devine consort. Later on, the liberal character of energetic Goddess gradually became down. It can be noticed from her status which was always in lower position than her consort. Beside of the religious aspect, the changes in iconographic feature perhaps suggests on the position of royal women in ancient Khmer political history. According to Jacobson (2008: 17-73), her study mainly observes on the changes of royal women’s position in historical aspect as reflects from the reduced of Goddess worship in ancient Khmer Kingdom. As a result of study, both were probably happened as coincidence.

The lost of independent Goddess worship can explain from the nature of Southeast Asian Brahmanism. From the beginning, Brahmanism was regarded as an important part of political expansion in the form of sacred Vedic ritual. It might help increasing the divinity of royal sovereign. Thus, the character of supreme Gods either Siva or Vishnu was highly accepted and related to the Kingship. Though the Saktis worship and Tantric ritual were continously practiced later on, but it was not as much as did to supreme Gods. The female dieities could be worshipped without any different as seen from the less variation in iconographic feature and simple from of each Goddesses.
In this recent study, the iconographic form of Goddesses can be identified only two deities, as Lakshmi and Durga. Similar to the depiction of Goddesses in Khmer art, beside of two dominant Saktis, there are the one female sculpture known by the inscription as Ganga from the group of images “Ganga-Uma-Patisvara” from Prasat Bakong dated to middle of 9th century (Coedes 1939 : 221).

Fig. 233. The group of images named “Uma-Ganga –Patisvara” from Prasat Bakong, Preah Ko style dated around the middle of 9th century A.D.

The Goddess Ganga was also worshiped in ancient Khmer Kingdom as seen evidently from the inscriptions praising on her purify character (Bhattacharya 1961 b : 93-94). Though, the Goddess image was installed in Saivite temples as mentioned in ephigraphic source, her identifical image showing the iconographic character has yet to be seen in present days.

The Sarasvati regarded as the Goddess of speech was woshiped independetly in the temple without Brahma, though it is only one example showing their accompany in the shrine. There are a number of inscription dated from the 7th-8th centuries recording the woship of Sarasvati images and the temples dedicated to her, but none of actual sculpture has survived up to these days (Jaconson 2008 : 21; Bhattacharya 1961b : 127-128).

Beside of the identified sculptures, some of images recorded as unknown Khmer female deities (devatas) are reported from monuments and archaeological sites. Some of them are possibly the images of Brahmanical Goddesses, but their iconographic features such as arms or heads are lost. Thus, it is difficult to identify the particular Goddess among broken images.
The worship of Goddess in mainland Southeast Asia was not been practiced much evidently like the cult of supreme God and always assimilated into these major sects. Sakti worship had given an influence to folk Tantric ritual which existed from the beginning of Christian era to 13th century A.D. and perhaps getting patronized from the Royal members. This folk Goddess worship is known as the cult nak ta Mae Sa (Mahisasura Mardhini), performed at Ba Phnom mountain (Chandler 1979 : 54-62). In fact, the similar kind of worship is also found in Thailand as the folk beliefs of fertility Goddesses (Lakshmi), wisdom (Sarasvati) and water (Ganga) depicted in several forms of crafts and arts.

The other Gods and minor deities of Saivite sect

6.2 Ganesha

The iconography of Ganesha in Thailand

The Ganesh worship in Thailand and other southeast Asian regions can be traced back to the time of early Indian impact at around 5th - 6th century AD. It is possible to state that the Indian traders had brought Ganesh images as amulet to get divine protection along the risky trade journey and bestow the great fortune regarding to their business. Thus, there are numerous small images of Ganesha discovered in Southeast Asian region, from Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia (Getty 1971 : 46).

Ganesha is well regarded as the remover of all obstacles and bringing success for his followers. Some of his names also identify his special character like Vighnaraja (King of obstacles) and Vighanavinasaya (the destroyer of obstacles). He is always praised as Siddhidata, bestower of success (Banerjee 1974 : 355). The worship of Ganesha had been probably started from 4th century A.D. and risen up at the late of Gupta period around 5th-6th century A.D.

During Gupta period, Ganesha was principally regarded as the supreme God of Ganapatya cult (Bhandakar 1928 : 210). Ganesha is widely mentioned in various literature sources. In Rig Vedic and Manava Grhya sutra (II. 14) have referred to the deity named as Ganapati (lord of ganas) and Vinayaka, but there is no exact description regarding to iconographic character. The legends and actual feature of Ganesha are generally mentioned in the Taittriya Aranyaka and later puranic texts like Skanda purana (v.i.,28.10-11,21), Brahmananda purana (2.3.42.35-40) Matsya purana(154.499-505) Vayu purana (2.30.25-55) and Siva purana (2.4.15-18) (Banerjea 1974 : 357-358). In fact, most of the texts described on his legends and major form of iconographic feature are generally dated after 4th
century A.D. which is quite late in comparison to other Brahmanical Gods. Thus, this is the reason of late rising of Ganesha image in Indian art (Krishna and Jagannathan 1992 : 31).

In general, Ganesha is figured as elephant-head God regarded as the child of Siva and Parvati. His iconographic form described in Vishnudharmottara (III,71,13-16) and Rupamandana represents as having one tusk, healthy figure, large ears, three eyes and many arms. The specific divine attributes are his broken tusk, lotus, sweet (modaka), axe and rosary. He is generally riding on mouse as his vehicle or sitting with Saktis named Riddhi and Buddhi. Although the God is well regarded as a remover of obstacles, the other side as the creator of difficulties is always recognized. Thus, this opposite character makes Ganesha become one of the well worshipped Gods for those who wishing to get success and fortune under the divine blessing.

As a result of being well worshiped God, Ganesha images had been created in large numbers mainly for ritual purpose and amulet. In Indian subcontinent, the distinctive form of Ganesha images are made according to the style of arts in different regions.

The northern schools, started from Gupta style dated around 4th-5th century A.D., the Ganesha images were generally made in simple form with natural manner. The distinctive natural form of Gupta gave an influence to the early western and eastern Chalukyan art. The head decoration is an identification of Ganesh images in regional arts. The Ganesh images of early mediavel northern schools from Orrisa, Bengal and Bihar are dressing in knotting hair (jatamukuta). The Ganesha images in early South Indian arts, Pallava, Chola and Hoysala, are decorated with lower crown (karanda-mukuta) which is comonly used for Goddess and minor deities. The sculptural decoration is also different as noticed from the Ganesha images in later Chalukya and Hoysala arts of Karnataka are well adorned with jeweled ornaments.

Moreover, the trunk of Ganesha images is also other significant feature showing differently in particular arts. In the southern schools. The trunk is shown vertically running down to the paunch and finally turning to touch the sweets in the left palm. The Ganesha in Chalukyan region has the entire trunk turns to left with curved end resting on the sweets bowl. The trunk of Ganesha image in Orissa art sometimes twirls slantly and flows towards the bowl in his left hand (Sivarammacururi 1950 : 30). Beside of India, Ganesha images are also broadly seen through out Asia, especially in Southeast Asian where the Indian culture was well accepted and adopted in to their ethnic tradition.

In Southeast Asia, both mainland and maritime regions, the worship of Ganesha are broadly practiced as noticed from the numbers of Ganesha images made of stone and metals.
In ancient Cambodian Kingdom, Ganesha had been in high popularity as seen from number of small image of Ganesha discovered in the country. The early trace of Ganapati cult is mentioned in Khmer inscriptions dated to the pre Angkorean period (before the 9th century A.D.) regarding the establishment of sanctuaries dedicated to Siva and Ganesha. (Getty 1971 : 49; Bhattacharya 1961 b : 131-132).

The cult of Ganapati in Khmer Brahmanical tradition was not related only to Saivite Gods, but also the Navagrahas (planets). The inscription from Banteay Pir Chan records the Ganesha image enshrined in the temple associating with the other Gods like Siva (linga), Candi (Goddess Candi : Parvati) and the Navagrahas. It possibly means the wishing of fortunity in the worship of Ganesha as obstacle remover with the nine planet deities who control human destiny in astrological context (Bhattacharya 1961 b : 133). There are also evidences of Ganesha image worship mentioned in many of Khmer inscriptions as the God is depicted in two to four arms as presented in Khmer sculptures.

In some case, Khmer Ganesha images are holding the Vishnu attributes such as conchshell (sankha) and disc (chakra) (Dupont 1955 : 121-122). According to Getty (1936 : 50), this character appears in Dhyana of Mahanirvana-Tantra. Perhaps, this significant character of Ganesha in Khmer art has reflected the religious syncretism as same as Durga.

In Champa Kingdom of Southern Vietnam, Ganesha worship was always associated with Siva at Bhadresvara sanctuary (the group of monument at My Son). The earliest Cham Ganesha image is discovered from My Son, depicted in standing pose with four arms and close to natural manner. In fact, the Ganesha in Champa was not in high popularity in comparison with number of Ganesha image in Khmer art.

The Ganesha images in Cham art are mostly dated around 7th-8th century A.D. Though Ganesha images in Cham art have similar iconographic features resembled to Khmer images, their distinctive character is simple sitting pose that is similar to the Buddha statues. There was the temple dedicated to Ganesha at Po Nagar sanctuary under the name of Sri Vinayaka. It has proved the exisance of Ganapati cult in this country (Getty 1971 : 54).
At the Javanese Kingdom, Saivism was one of prominent cult in this region. There was no trace of individual cult for Ganesha as his images were always enshrined in Siva temples. The Ganesha was well worshipped in Javanese Kingdoms as the obstacle remover and dangers protector. Moreover, the Ganesha in Javanese culture is associated with Tantric cult as they are surrounded with the skulls. This special iconographic character is seen on the Ganesha from Bara belonging to 13$^{th}$ century A.D. dated to Singasari period.

At Bali island, Ganesha worship is always associated with Siva, Durga and Nandi reflecting an intensive relationship with the supreme God of Saivism. The iconographic from of Ganesha in Javanese art is almost similar to other Southeast Asian styles, but the unique feature is noticed from the sitting pose depicted in feet touching way (Redig 1996 : 130). As far eastward to the Boneo island, Ganesha image is also discovered with the group of Brahmanical dieities at the Kombeng cave.
In Thailand, the Ganesha images are found various in sizes and forms according to different periods and functions. For this study, the images of Ganesha are categorized into two groups based on the chronology of art and location. The first group is the Ganesha images dated before 8th century A.D. which most of them evidently reflect much intensive influence of Indian arts or early Khmer art (pre-Angkorean: 6th-9th century A.D.).

And the second one is the group of Ganesha images under Khmer art influence mostly dated after 8th century A.D.

The first group: The images of Ganesha from the southern and eastern Thailand dated before 8th century A.D.

The early Brahmanism centers as well as their communities had been located along the southern Thailand since the beginning of Christian era. As a result of intensive maritime trade connection, the Brahmanical sects were well spread in this region. The early form of Ganesha images found scattered from coastal port sites signify the rising of Saivism along with the trading impact. Though the number of Ganesha image perhaps suggests the existence of Ganapatya cult, the Ganesha worship in this region is always accompanied with Siva without any trace of individual rite. The worship of Ganesha seemed to reduce its importance in religious aspect gradually after 8th century A.D.

Besides the group of early images reported from the Southern region, there is the huge image of standing Ganesha reported from Sri Mahosoth (Sri Mahabodhi), Prachinaburi province, that comparable to those of Gupta and early Khmer images dated before 9th century A.D. The establishment of Ganapati image reflects well acceptance of Ganesha worship influenced by early Khmer tradition as happened in Vaisnavism.

The Ganesha images found from the Southern region are made of both stone and metals such as bronze and lead. Those of stone works are generally dated earlier than the metal images which were generally made in Khmer art as amulets.
Fig. 236. The four armed Ganesh images from Southern Thailand, (Left) the Ganesh image from Sathing Pra (Songkla: National museum Songkla) and two Ganesh images from Wat Kheaw temple, Suratthani province (National museum Chaiya, Suratthani).

The Ganesh image from Sathing Pra, Songkla province: National museum Songkla.

Fig. 237. The stone Ganesha image from Sathing Pra, Songkla (35 cm)

This image is believed to be the earliest Ganesha image in Southern Thailand (Kairiksh 1981 : 134, fig.16). The God is sitting in Maharaja-lilasana by lifting his right knee up to the chest level and bending his left one simply on the ground. He is depicted in four arms, the below right hand holding an unidentified object at his knee, the below left carrying sweet (modhaka). The conchshell (sankha) and loop (pasa) are held in upper right and left hands respectively. The conchshell (sankha) held on upper left hand is not found in Indian art. Thus, this speical character suggests distinticive chararcter of Ganseha iconography in Southern Thailand which perhaps showing Vaisnavite inspiration.
The image is carved in close natural character and having less ornaments used for sculptural decoration. The divine simple ornaments are the pearl string (ekavali), snake belt and sacred thread (yajnopavitra). This image is considered as the oldest Ganesh image in Thailand (Krairiksh 1981 : 134), according to their iconographic feature and art that much comparable to Gupta style (4th-6th century A.D.) from the Deogarh, Udayagiri, and Mathura (Sivarammamurti 1950 : fig. 15a., Krishna and Jagannathan 1992 : 32, 35). Therefore, this image can be dated around the 5th-6th century A.D. It is slightly older or contemporary with the early Ganesh images from Tuol Phak Kin (Kandal), Oc Eo of Transbassac region and Champa.

![Fig. 238. Early Ganesh images dated around the 6th-7th century A.D. from (top left) Toul Phak Kin (Getty 1936), Oc Eo, Chau doc (Malleret 1959) and Ganesh image of Gupta period from National museum, Delhi](image1)

The stone images of Ganesha from Wat Kheaw temple, Suratthani province, National museum Chaiya.

![Fig. 239. The Ganesha images from Wat Kheaw temple, Chaiya, Suratthani province, National museum Chaiya](image2)
There are two eroded Ganesh images reported from Wat Kheaw temple, Suratthani province. The brick temple is dated around 7th-8th century A.D., so it could be constructed in the same period of sculptures. Though most of their identifiable characters are damaged, the head and body figure present some iconographic form of Ganesha described as elephant head, four arms and healthy body. These images are made of local red stones. The first and second images are measured around 56 cm. and 62 cm. in height. Unfortunately, most of the general feature depicted on the first Ganesha image (left) are completely gone. Only head and the remains of healthy image are able to identify this image as four arms Ganesha. The second one (right), though the head is damaged, the four arms and body part decorated with sacred thread, waist band and some ornaments are still visible for study.

The second Ganesha image is sitting by lifting both of his left legs. The waist band (udarabhanda) is seen on his healthy stomach and the sacred thread (yajnopavitra) is flowing from left shoulder. The pattern of waist band and huge figure shape are comparable to South Indian image dated around 7th-8th century A.D.

Fig. 240 The Ganesh from National museum Chaiya (Left) and the four armed Ganesha images from Aihole (Archaeological museum, Aihole, Karnataka) dated around 7th-8th century A.D.
The Ganesha image from Sri Mahosoth, Prachinaburi province: National museum Bangkok.

![Image of Ganesha image from Sri Mahosoth, Prachinaburi province]

Fig. 241. The Ganapati and pithas (170 cm) from Sri Mahosoth, Prachinaburi province, National museum Bangkok

The huge Ganesha made of sand stone (170 cm.) reported from the group of monuments (no.22) at Sri Mahosoth, Prachinaburi province of eastern region, and presently preserved in National museum Bangkok. Though the image is in serious damaged condition, the general feature presents the two armed Ganesha in standing pose. Ganesha image is carved close to natural manner from the elephant-head feature and body muscle. According to size and skillful carving feature, it seems that Ganapati might be well worshipped in contemporary with the Vaisnavism in this site.

The artistic feature of this standing Ganesha from Sri Mahosoth is much in similarity with the Genasha from Oc Eo (Transbassac) and Toul Phal Kin in Cambodia dated to early of 6th century A.D. Thus, it is possible to date this standing Gansha image in the same period.

![Images of standing Ganesha from Oc Eo and Chau doc southern Vietnam]

Fig. 242. The standing Ganesha image from Oc Eo and Chau doc southern Vietnam (Boisseler 1955; Marellet 1969)
The first group of Ganesha images evidently reflect the strong influence of Indian art as well as the pre-Angkorean art from Cambodia. This characteristic feature of this group makes the early images different from the later period dated from the 8th-13th century A.D., commonly known as the Khmer art period in Thailand.

Before coming to the section of second group, there is the special Ganesha image found in Southern Thailand, Phang Nga province. The four-armed image of Ganesha made of sandstone was discovered from Thung Tuk site and recently preserved at Wat Indrawas temple.

![Fig. 243. The four armed Ganesha image from Thung Tuk (72 cm)](image)

This Ganesha image reflects such strong influence of Chola art noticed from karantamukuta depicted on his head. The God is sitting by lifting both of his legs wide apart. His four arms hold the rosary (aksamala) and sweet in the both right hands respectively, but the rests are not possible to identify. There are the sacred thread (yajnopavitra) and waist band (udarabhandha) decorated on his healthy body. Only the different feature is the direction of trunk turning toward right side. This image can be dated to early of 9th-10th century A.D. and possibly made by local craftsman under Chola art inspiration. The local appearance is proved by the carving skill and local raw material.

![Fig. 244. The Ganesha images from (Left) Kailashnath temple (Kanchipuram: 8th-9th century), Kaveripakkam (Government museum Chennai, 8th-9th c) and unknown origin (11th-13th century) from Government museum Chenna](image)
The second group: The image of Ganesha under Khmer art influence in Thailand dated after the 8th-13th centuries A.D.

Numbers of Ganesha images made under Khmer art influence are mostly dated from 9th-13th century A.D. Most of them are reported from northeastern region where was Khmer dominant area. The Ganesha images also found scattered in some parts of central and southern region as far as the Khmer political power expanded.

Infact, one of the early Ganesha image reflecting pre-Angkorean Art influence was discovered from Prasat Phanom Rung sanctuary, Buriram province, and presently exhibited at National museum, Pimai.

The Ganesh image from Prasat Phanom Rung sanctuary, Buriram province: National museum Pimai.

Fig. 245. Ganesh image from Phanom Rung sanctuary (24 cm)

The Ganesha is depicted in two arms. This images is carved in natural form without any decoration, only the sacred thread (yajnapavitra) and cloth belt are clearly seen. His long trunk is turning to the left side and flowing to the sweet bowl held in his left hand. This Ganesh image can be dated to the early of 8th century A.D. It is comparable to the Ganesha from Toul Phak Kin, southern Cambodia. The costume is much similar to the Avakitesvara from Angkor Borei in Prei Kmeng style dated around early of 8th century (Boisselier 1955: fig.56f.). Thus, this image can be dated earlier than 9th century A.D.

In fact, the Phanom Rung sanctuary was constructed during 11th-12th century A.D., the discovery of this early Ganesh image may suggest that this image could have been brought from another place before enshrined in the sanctuary.
The stone images of Ganesha of later period, dated around 10th century A.D., are usually found from Khmer Saivite temples as they were installed in the separated shrines close to the Sivalinga sanctum. The special place in Saivite temple suggests an important role of Ganesha in Khmer Saivite pantheon. Ganesha is worshiped as son of supreme God and the auspicious one who is bestower of great wishes or obstracles remover. Thus, his images were well accepted and extensively worshipped in the Khmer Brahmanical temples. There are three Ganesha images that are dated to the early of 10th century A.D., comparable to Koh Ker style of ancient Khmer art discovered in Thailand. Though some of them are in damaged condition, some iconographic features still remain for study.

The Ganesha images of Koh Ker style (10th century A.D.)

Fig. 246. (Left) The Ganesha image from Prasat Muang Tum (47 cm), National museum Pimai and the two Ganesha images from Ban Bon of Varinchamrab district, Ubon Ratchathani province, National museum Ubon Ratchathani (Middle: 62 cm, Right: 64 cm)

The first Ganesha image (left) show the significant feature of Khmer Ganesha image depicted in two arms and sitting by the right leg laying over the left one. The stone image is decorated by the royal ornaments such as pyramid shape crown (mukuta), jewelled necklaces, waist band, armlaces and rings of his trunk. Similar to other contemporary style male figure, he wears the lower garment arranged in pleated and the remaining cloth pulled out the belt in circular shape. The Khmer Ganesha images dated after the 10th century A.D. represent in ethnic tradition different from natural manner. Although its head still has an appearances of elephant, there are artificial decorations on the small ears, trunk and skull making this image become closer to human form.
Two remaining Ganesha images were discovered from the paddy field and presently exhibited at National museum, Ubon Ratchathani. The middle one is an uncompleated Ganesha image depicted in two arms. He holds sweet bowl in the right hand, but the others are unknown. This image is possibly adorned by crown and royal ornaments which similar to the *Prasat Muang Tum* image, but this jewelled decorations are not carved. There is also the other significant point on his trunk that turning rightward, perhaps it proves the distinctive iconographic manner of Khmer art.

The last Ganesha image was also reported from the same site. This image is resembled to the one from *Prasat Muang Tum* in iconographic feature as depicted in two arms and decorated with royal jewelled ornaments, but in damaged condition. Thus, it can be dated in the same period of the other two images.

![Fig. 247. The damaged Ganesha image from national museum Ubon ratchathani (46 cm)](image)

In fact, there is other damaged Ganesha image exhibited at National museum Ubon Ratchathani. Though the origin location is unknown and in damaged condition, the general form is still visible as two armed Ganesha, holding the sweet bowl in his left hand. According to the remaining feature, this image was carved in natural form without trace of jewelled crown on the double moulds skull. The ornaments and other identities are difficult to be observed as they are already lost. The natural elephant head and sitting pose is comparable to the small Ganesha image from *Phanom Rung* sanctuary. Thus, it is possible to date this image closer to 9th century A.D. or slightly earlier than the *Prasat Muang Tum* and *Ban Bon* images.
The Ganesha images of *Baphoun-Angkor Wat* style (11th-12th century A.D.)

![Ganesha images](image)

The Ganesha images of this period are generally followed the same iconographic feature of previous style as depicted in two arms, sitting pose and wearing crown with royal ornamens. The natural elephant feature was likely reduced as a result of high decoration. The Ganesha from *Wat Supatthanaram* (left) has damaged face and eroded hands, but the crown and lower garment pattern carved under *Baphoun* inspiration. In fact, the elaphant ears become little smaller and body shape is slimmer. This significant point is clearly seen from Ganesha at *Wat Supattanaram* that his stomuch and waist are flat and narrow like others Baphoun human figures. Moreover, the crown of Ganesha is also identified in the same period.

Ganesha image from *Prasat Ta Muan Thom* (63 cm.) is sitting over high moulding *pithas*, presently exhibited at National museum Surin. The image also show the Khmer influence of contemporary period. His crown is broken, but the simple way of lower garment knotting is arranged around narrowed waist in *Baphoun* style. The image holds the sweet bowl in his left hand where the trunk turns toward this way.

The last Ganesha image (67 cm.) of unknown origin place is presently exhibited at National museum *Mahaveerawongsa*, Nakon Ratchasima province. This Ganesha image is depicted in two arms with vertically flowing trunk. He is sitting with right feet laying over the left and adorned with crown. Similar to *Angkor Wat* style, the remaining part of lower garment is pulled up in circular shape. There is other special feature like the decorated leaves motifs
over the seat which sometimes used for Khmer seated Buddha statues. Therefore, this image can be dated contemporary to the Angkor Wat style of 11th-12th century A.D.

The stone Ganesha image of Khmer art is not found only in the northeastern region, there is the damaged stone image of Ganesha in Khmer style (40 cm.), probably dated around 11th-13th century A.D. This image is exhibited at Wat Mahathatu temple museum, Nakon Srithammarat province. Though the major iconographic form is totally damaged, the left arm and the sacred thead are remaining. As a result of serious damage condition, it is difficult to identify other specific features for iconographic study.

![Fig. 249. The damaged Ganesha image from Wat Mahathatu temple, Nakon Sri Thammarat province (40 cm)](image)

The image of Ganesha in Khmer art in Thailand are also available in the reliefs. He is devine attendant of Siva in Siva nataraja forum. As a result of being worshipped as fortune bestower and obstacle remover, the miniature images of Ganesha were also commonly depicted on stone or casted as amulets in different styles and sizes. Most of them are dated between the 10th-13th century A.D. The Khmer bronze images of Ganesha are broadly discovered in the major parts of Thailand where were in connection with Khmers. Similar to the other Khmer Brahmanical bronze images, the small bronze images of Ganesh gave strong influence to the making of bronze Ganesha amulets in Thai arts after 14th century A.D.
Fig. 250. The example of stone amulet of Ganesha (3.5 cm) from Prachinaburi province, National museum prachinaburi

The Ganesha images as amulets: the bronze images of Ganesha from Southern and central regions under the Angkor Wat-Bayon influence (12\textsuperscript{th}-13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.)

The bronze images of Ganesha made as amulet are generally available in portable size smaller than 30 cm. They are depicted in the various sizes and forms according to the specific function of each amulets. Most of them are depicted in Khmer sitting pose or crossed legs on the square stage. Sometimes he is sitting on the rat as vehicle. The arms are varied from simple two to multiple numbers. But most of them are made in two or four holding devine attributes such as rosary (aksamala), loop (pasa), sweet (madoka) and angusa which used for elephant controlling.

The significant character of Khmer bronze Ganesha images is seen as they are fully decorated with crown and royal jewelled ornaments. There are atleast six samples of bronze Ganesha images made in Khmer style dated from the 12\textsuperscript{th}-late of 13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. in Southern region at Nakon Srithammarat, Songkla, Krabi and Suratthani provinces. The three bronze images of Gansha exhibited in National museum, Nakon Srithammarat are reported from main Brahmanical shrine of the city. These images are dated in comtemporary period as they are similar in iconographic feature and decoration, but the standing one (46.5 cm.)should be dated a little later to the late of 13\textsuperscript{th}-14\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

In fact, the style of costume and ornament are closer to Thais Ayutthaya art than Khmer-Bayon style. The other two Ganesh bronze images are measured as 4 cm. 19 cm. respectively are in sitting pose and having two or four arms. They are dated to the late of 13\textsuperscript{th}
century A.D. according to the crown and the decorated sacred thread (yajnopavitra) that look similar to the late Khmer bronze images.

There is other bronze image of four armed Ganesha riding on the rat (8 cm.), holding loop (pasa), sweets (modaka), broken tusk and conchshell (sankha). He is decorated with Khmer crown and ornaments comparable to late Bayon style. This image was in private collection before officially preserved in museum.

Fig. 251. The Bronze Ganesha images from Brahmanical shrine, Nakon Srithammarat, National museum, Nakon Srithammarat (upper) and the bronze image of Ganesha riding on rat, National museum Nakon Srithammarat

The Bronze images of Ganesha from Songkla province : National museum Songkla

There are two bronze images of Ganesha exhibited in National museum Wat Matchimawas temple, Songkla province. The first bronze image measured as 7 cm. (left) is two armed Ganesha sitting by lifting his right leg high up to the stomach level and bending the left one. He is depicted as two arms holding unidentified attributes and decorated with sacred thread (yajnopavitra) and royal ornament. The trunk is shorter and twisting on his chest.

According to the general form of crown, this image can be dated to the 13th century A.D. comparable to late Bayon style of Khmer art. The other image (7.5 cm.) is other form of Ganesh amulet for elephant hunting. Ganesh is made in simple form with four arms and sitting in knee lifting pose. At his lower left hand, he holds the long handle angusa. This weapon is generally used for elephant hunting. This image is dated after the 14th century A.D., Ayuthaya art of Thais Kingdom. According to the form of amulet, it was supposed to be fit at the end of stick handle instruments or weapon for hunting elephant. Besides of these two bronze image, there is other Bayon style Ganesha image (20 cm.) from National museum
Chaiya, Suratthani province, reflecting late Khmer art on its costume, crown and decoration. This image is sitting in common Khmer pose on the high pedestal with decorated nich.

Fig. 252. The Bronze images of Ganesha from National museum, Wat Matchimawas temple, Songklap province and the bronze Ganesha image from National museum Chaiya, Suratthani province

The bronze image of Ganesha from the central and Northeastern regions

The number of small Khmer bronze image of Ganesha are also reported from other parts of country, especially northeastern and central regions. These images were generally casted as the duplicated form of Khmer bronze of Angkor Wat-Bayon style. They are well adorned with royal ornament and crown of 12\(^{th}\)-13\(^{th}\) century A.D. In sitting pose, they are depicted in almost same form in simple crossed legs, wearing sacred thread (yajnopavitra) and royal jewelled ornaments. In case of standing position, the images are generally made in similar character, but sometimes the numbers of arms are increased to four or multiples.

Fig. 253. The two seated Ganesha images from Prang Thanon Hak (12.5 cm) and Lam Prai Mas (5 cm) Buriram province: National museum Pimai (Left), (Middle and Right) the two armed sitting Ganesha from national museum Prachinaburi (4 cm)and National museum Bangkok (10 cm)
The Ganesha worship in Thailand has shown its development from the beginning stage to the downfall of ancient Khmer Kingdom through the arts. From the time of early Indian cultural impact, the images of Ganesha were mainly considered as the amulets among those whom wishing for the great fortune and protection from dangers. Beside of being worshipped as amulets, the Ganesha images were also enshrined in the local temples of Brahmanins community according to his auspicious character as wishes bestower and obstacle remover. Comparing with other parts of the country, the continuity of Ganesha worship in Thailand shows its most clear evidence from the southern region where the oldest Ganesha image is reported along with a numbers of Ganesha images from other costal sites.

Although the standing Ganesha image dated to early of 6th-7th century A.D. is also found from the eastern region, it is only single piece that can not exactly prove the continuity of Ganesha worship in this region. As well as the central and northeastern regions, the worship of Ganesha images in the temples was probably practiced after the rising of Khmer Brahmanical tradition reached and dominated this region.

However, the much popularity of Ganapati worship in southern region is not reasonable enough to state on an existance of Ganapatya cult that was florished in India during 5th-6th century A.D. According to the lack of any archaological evidence attesting the individual worship of Ganesha as principle image, it can be stated that Ganesha was genrally worshiped as associated God with Siva or Vishnu. On contrary with South Indian tradition, this highest position of Ganesha in South India are evidently recognized by the number of

Fig. 254. The standing Ganesha image from Lopburi province, National museum Bangkok (15 cm)
shrines dedicated to him as chief deity during early mediaval period or after 8th century A.D. (Krishna and Jagannathan 1992 : 50).

In the light of iconographic study, the Ganesha images in Thailand has revealed its development through their general feature, influenced by the Indian and Khmer arts of different periods. At first, it shows an intensive influence of Indian arts, both northern and Southern traditions depicted on the poses, general feature and attributes. The sculptural forms are different as they were depended on the changes of artistic trend and religious connection. The best example is available from the influence of Chola art in the local made Ganesha image dated to 9th century A.D. from Thung Tuk site, Phan nga province. While the Ganesha images of northeastern region were commonly made under Khmer influence of the same period.

The general form of Ganesha images depicted on stone sculptures are simple as initially made in two to four arms with natural character influenced by Gupta art then getting well decorated with royal ornaments in Khmer style. The significant characters of stone images were duplicated in the bronze images with slightly modification. It seems that the bronze images of Ganesha were made as amulets in portable size or minimized form of stone sculptures. The well acceptance of Khmer bronze images in Thais arts after the 13th century A.D. was a result of the stronghold in Khmer Brahmanism.

There is other significant iconographic feature regarding to the position of Ganesha in Saivite pantheon. Although the Ganesha in Thailand are more related to the Saivism, the relationship between Ganesha, Siva and Parvati as divine family members is not much evident. At least, there is one stone lintel dated around the 12th century A.D. from Pimai temple depicted the images of Siva, Ganesha and Skanda sitting on different vehicles. Possibly, the Ganesh might be accepted as son of Siva in Khmer art. Initially, the separated position of Ganesha in Siva’s family is noticed from Pallava art of South India as the Ganesha is totally absent in Somaskanda form. On contrary to the various images of Ganesha are commonly depicted at the same temple.

In fact, the Ganesha image sometimes occurs in Khmer Vaisnavite reliefs as associated deity. The two small figures of Ganesha riding on rats are seen from relief of Trivikarma from Prasat Muang Kheak, Nakon Ratchasima province. This significant feature suggests on the religious liberality in Khmer art that is far beyond the sectarian borders.
Fig. 255. The Ganesha images associated in the trivikarma scene from Prasat Muang Kheak temple

The worship of Ganesha in Thailand is still continued up to present days. Beside of being the obstacle remover and wish bestower, he is well regarded as the God of knowledge especially in arts and literature. The depictions of Ganapati in Thais art are generally made as painting and bronze images in different characters like multiples heads or arms and decorations. Although the Thais Kingdoms are considered as Buddhist states, the Ganesha as well as other Brahmanical Gods are still worshiped along with the florished Buddhist tradition. Regarding to his high popularity, Ganesha is the most auspicious Brahmanical God in Thailand.

6.3 The iconography of Skanda in Thailand

The image of Skanda or Subrahmaniya in Southeast Asia is very rare in comparison with his brother, Ganesha. Perhaps, there are only two of his representations found in Thailand. The first one was reported from Ayuthaya, but present location is unknown. It was the sculpture of Skanda sitting on peacock, but the upper part of body is totally damaged. Boisselier (1965 : 156) has dated this image to the Angkor Wat style of 12th century A.D. The other depiction is associated with the group of deities, Siva and Ganesha on the lintel from Prasat Pimai exhibited at National museum Pimai, Nakon Ratchasima province. The Skanda is represented as young boy (Kumara) with two hands, riding on horse (?) or peacock. This relief is dated around the 12th century A.D comparable to Angkor Wat style.
Fig. 256. (Left) the Skanda image from Ayuthaya (Boisselier 1965: 156, fig.5) and (Right) the relief from Prasat Pimai, Skanda is seen riding on the horse

The worship of Skanda in ancient Cambodia Kingdom is also rare. However, there are some early inscriptions mentioning the ritual offering to the Gods who are “old” (ta acas) and “yong” (kanmin’) which referred to Briddhesvara (Vriddhesavara) or Siva and Skanda. His character depicted as yongboy was also mentioned in an inscription at Kuk Trapan Srok at the year 925 A.D. It stated that the image of Kanmyan is installed together with the Bhagavati image. The closed relationship with supreme God and Sakti of Saivism is also noticed from the inscription from Ban That, dated to the early of 12th century A.D., relating to the establishment of Sadanana (Skanda) image, linga and Gauri in the temple (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 136).

The iconographic form of Skanda in Khmer art is depicted in few reliefs and two sculptures from Kadei An (National museum Phanom Pehn : Cambodia) and Angkor Barei (Museum Guimet: Paris). The Skanda is represented as two arms, young boy, having three knotted hairs and riding on peacock. This hair dressing is used to indentify the God of young character like Krishna, Balarama and Manjusri Bodhisattava. In fact, Rao (1916 II:432) has given an iconographic interpretation of Skanda as related to the Sun “…his six heads perhaps represent the six ritus or seasons, the twelve arms, the twelve months; the kukuta or the fowl, the harbinger of the rising sun and the peacock wose features display a marvellous blending of all colours represents the luminous glory of the sun; the saktyayudha is also of solar origin.”

The close relation of Skanda and the Solar deities is mentioned in Mahabharata as the son of Agni. And the trace of this mythologic relation is also available from Rig Veda. According to the Veda, Agni is named as “Kumara. In Saptapatha-Brahmana, Kumara is one of Agni form and related to Siva-Rudra. (Bhattacharya 1961b: 140). Possibly, the concept of solar deities worship is the universal cult combinding the Gods of different sects.
Reagrating to this connection with Agni, he is also considered as the gaurdian of Southern (below) deirection,depicted in the relief of Angkor Wat.

![Image of Skanda from Angkor Borei](image)

**Fig. 257. The image of Skanda from Angkor Borei dated around 7th-8th century A.D. (museum Guimet)**

### 6.4 The iconography of Brahma images in Thailand

In the Hindu mythology, Brahma has occupied an importnt role as he is counted as the first among the supreme deities, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. In literature and art, the reference and depictions of Brahma are vivid in nature. His images are found throughout the Indian subcontinent as well as in several numbers outside countries.

The origin of Brahma and his subsequent history are extensively narrated in the puranic and Agamic literatures. From the beginning, he was known as Prajapati, the Vedic God of sacrifice. Then he became one of Brahmanical supreme deities or trinity. Later on his place was gradually inferior to the other two Gods that caused the absent of his individual cult.

In India the Brahma images are generally discovered over the entire country, but lesser in numbers and importance than Siva or Vishnu. The temples dedicated to him are also rarely known. The subordinate position of Brahma is noticed on the iconographic feature of trimurti scenes in central and southern India. In these icons, the most honorific figure is always placed at the middle which is either belongs to Siva or Vishnu. The Brahma has never been given the most supreme position in trimurti depictions.
The causes that making Brahma become subordinate deity are provided from some ancient texts such as *Skanda purana, Padma purana* and *Markandeya purana* (Mishra 1989: 28-31). However, his position for worship ritual was constantly maintained but lower than the other supreme Gods. The iconographic feature of Brahma is cleanly described as priest or rishi. According to the Sanskrit texts like *Rupamandana, Suprabhedagama, Silaparatna* and *Vishnu Purana*, the iconographic feature of Brahma is narrated as four faces signfying the four Vedas, Yugas and Varnas. His four heads and arms are facing to four directions. The Brahma common vehicle is swan (*humsa*). The God adornment are described as wearing deer skin in *upavita* pattern with white silk lower garment. His head is dressed in *jatamukuta* and wearing *yajnopavitra* in company with other simple ornaments. The four hands should hold rosary (*aksamala*), water pot(*kamandalu*), book of *Vedas, Kusa* grass and ghee pot (*ajyasthali*). He has two consorts known as Sarasvati and *Savitri or Gayatri*. In *Silparatna*, Brahma is siting surounded by *rishi* and *Vedas* with the ghee pot in front of his face.

An extensive numbers of Brahma images in India and oversea countries indicates the well accepted of Brahma worship in these regions, especially from Burma, Cambodia, Champa and Java Island. Besides the independent images, the Brahma figure represents in the devine groups of Saivism, Vaisnavism and also Buddhism as the grand devotee of Buddha. This significant character of Brahma in Indian iconography has given an insprialion to the making of Brahma images in Southeast Asian art.

**The Brahma worship and his iconographic form in Southeast Asia**

Similar to Indian tradition, Brahma in Southeast Asia is worshipped as one of the *trimurti* as devine creator. Though his individual cult was absent in ancient Cambodian Kingdom, there are references of temples dedicated to the *trimurti* provided from the inscriptions from *Prasat Banteay Kdei* (994-968 A.D.). The inscription mentions the three temples of *Kutisavara*, Siva was enshrined at the centre, the north and south temples dedicated to Vishnu and Brahma respectively (Finot 1925: 359-363; Marchal 1937:333). The plan of three temples at *Prasat Phanom Bok* and *Prasat Phanom Krom* constructed during in the reign of King *Yashovarman I* (889-900 A.D.) were also arrenged in the same orders and dedicated to *trimurti* (Glaize 1944: 265, 268).

This architectural plan might be influenced from the Saivite concept of *trimurti*. The sacred concept states that the supreme Siva has derived his minor forms (Siva) from his heart, Vishnu from his left and the right was Brahma (Bhattacharya 1961b: 126). This Saivite-
The trimurti concept is also well depicted on the iconography of trimurti image from *Prasat Prai Cruk* (Bhattacharya 1961b: Pl.25-26)

**Fig. 258.** The *trimurti* image from *Prasat Prai Cruk*, Cambodia (front and back), *Koh Ker style* (10th century)

The iconography of Brahma in Khmer art is very similar to India. The God is depicted as four heads decorated in *jatamukuta* and same numbers of arms. Most of the devine attributes are lost, but they definitly follow Indian orders. Brahma images in Khmer art are available in both sculptures and reliefs. In case of sculptures, he is seen sitting or standing on *padma-pithas* like other deities.

Brahma was also worshipped in Champa Kingdom, but was not having individual cult like Saivism or Vaisanavism. The sculpture of Brahma is very rare and only few reliefs are available. The absence of Brahma in Champa art explains the inferior position of this God as well as lesser in popularity, contrary to *Khmer* Brahmanism. Depictions of Brahma carved on the reliefs are seen at the frontal pediment of *My Son* and some bas reliefs from *U-diém* and *Tri-thuy* (central Vietnam). They are presently exhibited at museum of *Danang* (*Saigon*) (Finot 1901: 13).

In Javanese Island, Brahma was broadly worshiped as the great *rishī* and divine creator. But his free standing sculpture is not found, only high reliefs are enshrined in the *Candis* as worshipped images. The reliefs are commonly depicted on the architectures. His images and iconographic features reflect northern and eastern Indian influences amalgated with local art tradition.
The iconography of Brahma image in Thailand

In Thailand, at least three of Brahma images are reported and presently exhibited in National museum Bangkok and Pimai, Nakon Ratchasima province. The first one is documented as unknown origin (120 cm.), the second one from Prasat Phanom Rung sanctuary (110 cm.) and the last one from Lopburi province (65 cm.) dated around the 10th - 11th century A.D.

The Brahma images in Thailand are made under Khmer art influence from the 9th century A.D.onwards. All of sculptures and reliefs reflect Khmer iconographic feature. The God has four heads, four arms and carries the divine attributes. Thus, the making of Brahma as free standing sculptures which is rare found in India, was introduced in Thailand under the Khmer Brahmanical tradition.
Fig. 261. The images of Brahma, (Left) National museum Bangkok, (9th century A.D.), (Middle) Brahma from Prasat Phanom Rung sanctuary (11th century A.D.) and (Right) Brahma from Lopburi (late 12th century A.D.) ,national museum Bangkok

The first image (154 cm.) is presently exhibited at national museum Bangkok. The Brahma is depicted as four heads with jointed knotting *jatamukuta*. He is depicted in four arms that once held divine attributes, but most of them are damaged or lost. The Brahma image was carved without any sculptural decoration or, perhaps, the real jewelled or metal ornaments were used for divine adornment. Similar to other images in *Preah Ko* style, his lower garment is arranged in simple, plain and tied by cloth belt and left the ends in fish-tail shape. The Brahma image from *Phnom Rung* (143 cm) was carved in the same iconographic form of the previous one. Only two difference are noticed from the separation of four *jatamukut*, decorated with round beads, and the style of pleated and complicated pattern of lower garment. The third one (95 cm.) is in the form of high relief with the same iconographic feature of other images, but the dress and ornaments belong to the later period work.

Three of Brahma sculptures are resembled to the Khmer Brahma image from *Prasat Baset* in Cambodia (Suksawasti 2006 : 171-172). The other form of Brahma in Thailand is presented on the reliefs. Most of them are related to Saivite puranic like *Nataraja* or appeared in *Anantasyana – padmanabha murti* of Vishnu.

The Brahma in *puranic* reliefs in Thailand are commonly dated after 10th century A.D. In present days, he is generally worshipped like Hindu Gods as well as the associated divine followers of Buddha in Buddhist mythology.
The image of Brahmani or Brahmi

This is the rare sculpture of Brahmani or Brahmi, one of the seven mothers (matrikas) in Brahmanical mythology. She is considered as the depiction of Brahma in female form. Her iconographic feature is described as having four heads, four arms and carrying Brahma attributes like rosary (aksamala) and water pot (kamandalu). The Brahmi goddess sits on the lotus seat (padmasana) in maharaja-lilasana by lifting her right knee and doing anjali mudra with her front hands. She wears lower crown below jatamukut identifying her priesthood. According to her dress and ornament, it is resembled to the way of Goddess from Prasat Crup in Koh Ker style dated around 10th century A.D. (Boisselier 1955 : Pl.43 ; Suksawasti 2006 : 179-180).

Fig. 263. The Brahmi from Phanom Rung sanctuary (10th century A.D.) and the female deities statue from Prasat Crup, Cambodia (Boisselier 1955: Pl.43)
In India, the Goddess Brahmi image is presented as one of *Sapta matrika* and well spread over entire Indian subcontinent, but very few are seen in Southeast Asia. She always appears on the first seat of the role with four heads and sits on the swan or lotus pedestal. Her images are normally depicted in the group of *matrika*. The single free standing images are very few.

Fig. 264. The Brahmi (1st) from the left in Saptamatrika panel, Aihole (7th - 8th century A.D.)

Fig. 265. The Brahmi (2nd) from left in Saptamatrika panel with swan, Aihole (7th - 8th century A.D.)

Fig. 266. The Brahmi in Saptamatrika panel, Ayyapa temple at Thiruvaiyaru (10th-11th century A.D.)
6.4 The *Navagrahas* and *Dikpalas* (nine planets and directions guardians)

**Surya and Navagrahas**

The group of Brahmanical Gods known as *Navagrahas* is headed by the Surya, Sun God. In India, they are installed within the enclosed *varandah* around the shrine of temple with or without special structure erected over them. Similar to Indian tradition, the *Navagrahas* are well known in Southeast Asian art, but only particular deities like Surya or Chandra. In case of Khmer art in Cambodia and Thailand, the concepts of *Navagrahas* and *Dikapalas* worshiping were practiced together. This character was leading to the new creation of “The panel of nine gods”. It was consisted of four *Navagrahas* (Surya, Chandra, Ketu and Rahu) and five selected *Dikpalas* (Indra, Agni, Yama, Vayu and Kubera). Moreover, Surya was also worshiped in single form as same as in Indian tradition. Thus, before coming to the concept of group deities, the Surya iconography should be first discussed.

**The iconography of Surya**

Surya or Aditya is regarded as the first deities of nine planets (*Navagrahas*) and was well worshipped since the Vedic period. Initially, the role of Sun God was belonged to the Aditya who has seven or eight in numbers (Rao 1916 I/II : 299). In *Satapatha-brahmana*, the group of Adiithyas is varied from eight to twelve numbers. The later case is related to the months in a year. Aditya was named after his devine mother, Aditi.

In *Puranic* literatures, Aditya or Surya is the solar deity and other aspects like the bestower of prosperity, health, the growth of crops and intelligence (Mukhopadhyay 1981 : 162-170). In fact, the Sun worship in northern Indian might similar to the cult of Mitra (Sun) of the Maga Brahma, Sakadvipa Brahma or Magi in Persian tradition (Bhandakar 1928 : 151-155). The connection of Surya in India and Mitra cult is mentioned in *Bhavishyat-purana* as Sambha was suffering from leprosy and getting cured after worshiped the Sun God of Sakadvipa Brahmanas (Rao 1916 : 301).

There are many temples dedicated to Surya in northern and eastern India such as Konarack temple in Odhisa, Marwar, and Marthan (Kashmir). But only one temple in South India at *Suryanarkoyil* (Tanjavour) and also the village where the temple erected was named after the Surya temple. According to the inscription, this temple was built in the reign of Kulotungacholadeva (1060-1118 A.D.) and known as *Kulottungachola-Marttandalaya* (Rao
The iconographic features of Surya are varied in different sources.

In Amsumadbhedagama and the Suprabhedagama figure out the image of Sun God should be sculpted with two hands, each holding lotus. The hands held up to the shoulders. His head is surrounded by halo (Kantimandala) and body is adorned with ornaments as well as Karanda-makuta at his head.

His costume is red in colour and arranged in northern Indian style with yajnopavitra (Rao 1916 : 306). The Sun God is standing on the seven horses chariot driven by the Aruna or lotus pedestal (padma-pithas).

The Silparatna has stated on his accompanions are Mandala (Dandin) and Pingala standing at each sides as Davarapalaka. Matsya-Purana gives other minor details on Surya that he should depict in four arms, having fine mustache and wearing north Indian dress. Interestingly, Rao (1916 : 311) suggested that there are some names of Surya which related to Parsis origin such as Mitra (Mithra), Aryaman (Airyaman) and Bhaga (Bagho).

Fig. 267. The image of male figure (Sassanid period: privated collection Chicago) dated around the 5th century A.D., the images of Surya from Khaira Khaneh (Kabul: Afganistan) dated around the 5th-6th A.D., the Surya image from Kondia, Madhaya Pradesh (9th century A.D.): State museum Bhopal
The Cult of Surya in mainland Southeast Asia

Surya images are extensively discovered throughout the Southeast Asian countries. Because the social economic was based on agricultural products, the Sun was given much importance for all kinds of farming process. Thus, the cult of Surya was well established in this region, especially before the 9th century A.D.

The worship of Surya in ancient Cambodian kingdom seemed to be widely practiced as noticed from the image’s honorific names referred to Surya like “Bhataraditya” (the great Surya). The “Bhanubhattarak” was mentioned in the inscription at Prasat Tual Ta Pec of King Suryavarman I (1002-1050 A.D.). In fact, the Bhatara was derived from Bhattarak in Sanskrit and also widely used in Javanese inscriptions (Gonda1952 : 130) The word “Bhattara” is seen from the South Indian inscription mentioning the other name of Surya as “Aditya Bhatara”. It has same meaning with “Bhataraditya” (Bhattacharya 1961 b : 128).
Although it is difficult to state on the existence of individual cult of Surya (saura) in ancient Khmers Kingdom, atleast there are the references of Sakabrahmanas appeareed in the pre-Angkorean inscriptions. In the inscription dated around the 7th century A.D. from Prasat Sombor Prei Kuk records the Sakabrahmana named Durgaswamin from South India (daksinapatha-janma) who was married to Khmer princess (daughter of King Isanavarman I). Durgaswamin was a learned priest of Brahmanical philosophy and conducted the royal ceremony for Siva linga. And also, the other inscription from Prasat Sombor Prei Kuk mentions on the village named Sakatirtha. These information given from ephigraphic source has suggested the Sakas community in ancient Khmer Kingdom (Bhattacharya 1961b:130-131).

The cult of Surya in Khmer Brahmanism was also related to Sivism as the Surya image was associated with the Siva linga worship, reflecting the close religious relationship between Siva and Solar deities (Agni or Surya).

The inscription at Vat Kantel of King Bhavavarman I dated around the late of 8th century A.D. points out the concept of Siva as the light of the world (Bhattacharya 1961 b : 128). The images of Surya in Khmer art are generally dated before the 9th century A.D. (pre-Angkorean period) and most of them were reported from the transbassac area, Southern Cambodia and Vietnam (Goloubew 1940:38-42). Their iconographic feature strongly follows northern Indian tradition (udicya-vesa). There is an influence from Persian tradition in the ornament such as the avyanga (kusti) belt that used by the Zoroastriens. This significant feature of Surya images in northern India is mentioned in Vishnudharmottara and Brihatasamhita that followed by the craftsmens for centuries (Banerjea 1948 : 63-64, 1974 : 437). The same incident is also noticed from Javanese Surya image which adopted norhtern Indian character before changed to South Indian style.

The Surya images of maritime region, Javanese Kingdom and Malay pennisular, their iconographic features has shown the influence of both northern (Gupta) and the Southern Indian. Actually, they were made of stone and bronze in various forms and sizes. The Surya images influenced by nothern style is flanked by two attendents and wearing high boots. Surya images made under South Indian inspiration are very closed to Chola art. Their southern distinctive iconographic form is presents on bare feet. In case of high relief bronze images, the glimse of eastern Indian art of Pala-sena style is clearly seen from their apperance, poses and decoration.
Fig. 270. The Surya image of pre-Angkorean style (7th - 8th century A.D.), Denver Art museum (Bunker and Latchford 2004, fig.9)

Most of the Surya images in Thailand are dated from the 6th century A.D. onwards and made under Khmer iconographic froms. Though the cult of Surya is not mentioned in any inscription found in Thailand, there might be the center of Surya worship found at Sri Tep located at Petchaburna province where four Surya images were discovered. In fact, there are seven single Surya images reported and preserved in different national museums in Thailand.

The Group of three Surya images from Sri Tep

Fig. 271. The Surya image from Sri Tep (83 cm)
This image is recently discovered from the excavation at Sri Tep in 1992. It was found in front of brick temple named as Prang Song Pi Nong. The Surya image was not associated with any structure. According to the general feature, it reveals Indian and Persian influence. The image can be dated around 5th-8th century A.D.

The Surya image (83 cm.) is represented in two arm, but all of them are broken downward from elbow. These arms raised up to chest level and held the lotuses. This image wears kiritamukuta with floral motifs, floral necklace and round earing. Behind his head is the round halo identifying divine position. Though his legs are broken, the long tunic lasted up to the knee level is still visible.

In fact, the most significant feature of this image is the beard, neatly trimmed in closed curls and the fine moustaches. His face is calm and smile with thin lips. These character is considered as unique appearance different from another Surya image in Southeast Asia. The other remarkable point is the “U” shape decorative item placed on the front of image. It may be the remaining part of garland, sash, belt (avyanga), reins or the lotus stalk.

**The two Surya images from Sri Tep**

![Fig. 272. The two Surya images from Sri Tep](image)

The exacted origin of this image (left) is unknown, only in Sri Tep area. This Surya image (92 cm.) is made in standing pose with two arm holding the reins or lotuses. His head dress is kiritamukuta with floral motifs. The remarkable point is his cylindrical crown shaped
in octagonal form with decorative floral design on the biggest facet. Behind his head is the circular stone depicted as the halo. He wears round ear rings and floral design necklace. This Surya image does not have beard or mustache on his round face. Though the carving detail of costume is uncleared, the lower border of tunic is seen on his legs. Unfortunately, the sculpture is broken downward from his knees. Thus, it is not possible to see his high boot. According to Pisit and Diskul (1978: 225), this image is dated to 7th-8th century A.D.

The other image of Surya (108 cm.) remaining only upper portion is also reported from Sri Tep. This Surya wears the lower circular shaped kiritamukuta with floral motifs decoration. His face is round and showing localized looks with open eyes and thick nose and lips. Only his bare chest is remaining, while the other parts are badly damaged. This one may be the biggest one among three Surya images, if it could have been in fine condition.

The Surya image from Sri Tep (?) : Norton Simon museum, California (United states of America)

![Fig. 273. The Surya image from Sri Tep (?)](image)

This male deity (114 cm.) from Sri Tep (?), is still in controversy of two questions on its origin place and the divine identification, either Surya or Vishnu. At first point, Diskul (1979 : 46, 50) has affirmed on the basis of art showing its distinctive stylistic comparable to the Sri Tep images. Thus, the probability of its origin place from Sri Tep is reasonable. This image is dated around the 7th-8th century A.D. The second controversy is the divine identity. Though there are some scholars like Sherman Lee (1969 : 101) has assigned this image as Surya on the basis of head and halo, there are some art historians like Diskul (1979) tend to describe this image as Vishnu. Recently, Pratapaditya Pal (2004 : 112) has given some notable suggestion on the iconographic form of this image that it should be identify as other Brahmanical God than particular deity.
In fact, the remarkable features of this image are the locks of wavy hair flowing from the floral motifs octagonal *kiritamukuta* and the short plan *dhoti*. The knotted upper hem dhoti seems to be very rare and perhaps unseen in the other Surya images in Thailand or Southeast Asian countries. Moreover, the curved hair flowing from crown reminds the natural hair of Krishna images belonging to pre Angkorean images or *Sri Tep* style. The doubts of this image identity would be clearly solved, if the two arms could have been available to hold devine attributes.

The images of Surya (?) Krishna Goverdhana images (middle) and Surya image from Sri Tep.

The comparison is to show the difference between Surya and Vishnu image.

The Surya image (?) from Wat Hong temple : National museum Bangkok

Fig. 274. The surya image from Wat Hong temple, National museum Bangkok

This image (20 cm.) is reported from Wat Hong temple, Bangprahan district of Ayutthaya province. Though it is lack of iconographic detail to identify as Surya, the remaining part of circular halo behind the image can be compromised in this case. However, if this image is not Surya, it is also lesser possible to be Vishnu or Siva.
In fact, the general form of this image is different from the other Dvaravati sculptures. It is clearly noticed from his face and different head crown that decorated with two floral motifs on its both sides. He is also wearing very large round ear rings, strings of pearl necklaces and floral band armlace. The shoulder and arms, though they are broken, might spread sideward for holding lotuses or any divine attributes.

The depiction of Surya without mitre crown is rare found in Thailand as well as other parts of Southeast Asia. But there are some Indian sculptures resemble to this image like the early Surya image dated around the 4th-5th century A.D. from Mathura and Brindavan exhibited at Mathura museum (Pandey 1989: Pl. 8, 11). By the way, it seems to be unreasonable to assume that these images are belonged to the same group or the image from Wat Hong was brought from India during that early period.

**The depiction of Surya on Dharmachakra at Nakon Prathom, National museum Nakon Prathom**

![Fig. 275. The surya image on the Dharmachakra at Nakon Prathom, National museum Nakon Prathom](image)

This is another image of Surya in Dvaravati culture found from Nakon Prathom, center of Dvaravati culture in central region. The Sun God is sitting simply on the pedestal and holding lotuses in his two hands. He is not decorated with crown (mukuta) or other royal ornament, only pearl string on his neck and large ear rings. Instead of depicting halo, his background is attached with wheel. The hair dressing of Surya is comparable to Buddha image in Dvaravati art as it is knotted at the middle of head. This high relief can be
compared with the Surya image from Wat Hong, National museum Bangkok. They were made almost in the same time and quite similar in adornment.

The depiction of Surya in Dhammachakra suggests on the popularity of Sun God during the 5th-8th century A.D.in the same way with Gajalakshmi. In Buddhism, Surya might be worshipped in the same concept as the bestower of welfare, wishes and the remover of diseases. Thus, Surya was well accepted in the Buddhist dominant society, leading to the assimilation of religious cultures.

The Images of Surya from Southern Thailand

The two images of Surya are reported from the Southern region. They are depicted as single sculture and high bronze relief flanked by two attendants. The first one to be described is the stone Surya image from Chaiya, Suratthani province, presently exhibited in National museum Bangkok.

The Surya image from Chiya: National museum Bangkok.

![Fig. 276. The Surya image from Chaiya, National museum Bangkok](image)

This images (68 cm.) is presently exhibited in the National museum Bangkok. Surya image was carved from reddish stand stone. He wears the high knotting hair with head band or bead string to set it in shape. Behind his head is decorated halo fully carved with round
figure design. The image is adorned by jewelled necklace as well as strings of beads. Chest band and sacred thread (*yajnopavitra*) are attaching to each others.

The *yajnopavitra* curvely flows from left shoulder to the waist. This Surya image has shown its significant feature which helps to identify the South Indian (Chola) influence as wearing short *dhoti* with two circular sashes and also without the boot of northern tradition. Thus, this image should be dated in contemporary with other Chola images in South India dated from the 10\textsuperscript{th} - 11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

Fig. 277. The Chola Surya images from South India (10\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.), Chidambaram, Cuddapah (Tamilnadu), Hemavati (Andhra pradesh) and unknown origin from Andhara pradesh, Salar jung museum, Hyderabad.

The brone relief of Surya from Yarang district, Pattani province (present location unknown)

Fig. 278. The surya image from Yarang district (courtesy, Indrawooth 1986)
The bronze image of Surya image is reported from Yarang district of Pattani province. It clearly shows the influence of northeastern Indian style, Pala-Sena, as the Surya is depicted in two arms holding lotuses, standing strength on seven horses chariot flanked by two attendants named Dandin (Mandala) and Pingala. There is one lady attendant known as Usa. This background of this relief has curved end and decorated with flame that normally seen in Pala art. The God has shown his large halo behind his head.

This image was probably brought from outside country because it is only piece found in Thailand. The similar examples of the Surya bronze reliefs are provided from Mrohuang, Akyab district of Burma, the Surya image from Rajshahi museum and high relief of Surya from Dhamasa, Faridpur district (Pandey 1989 : Pl. 24,32, 34).

Beside of having high value in art-historical study, the single form of Surya images are considered as significant point in the development of ancient Brahmanical art in Thailand. According to their distinctive style which is slightly different from Indian prototype or pre Angkorean images, this character may be interpreted as the “unique and independent” form of Brahmanical images in Thailand.

In case of Surya (saura) cult at Sri Tep, these images were found without any structures or related archeological context. Because the local evidence is totally absent, it is difficult to trace on the link of cultural relationship related to the spread of Surya cult among early the states in mainland Southeast Asia and Sri Tep. However, the worship of Surya at Sri Tep might be well established during the 6th-9th century A.D. and was important center of Surya worship in mainland Southeast Asia.

The moon (Chandra), Sri Tep : Norton Simon museum, Califonia

Fig. 279. The depiction of Chandra on the gold plaque (9.5 cm)
This is small (9.5 cm.) but delicate image of Chandra on the gold plaque from Sri Tep exhibited at Norton museum, California. The moon deity is alone standing on the low stage. He wears floral decorated cylindrical mukuta with a bead band. The large hair animates the large circular halo.

The presence of this rabbit or hair suggests the identity of this image as Chandra, the moon god, though his emblems known as night lotuses are absent. Instead of holding divine attributes, his left hand showing vitarka mudra (teaching pose). The right one is held at the same level but with the palm facing up and half closed, as if holding object.

In fact, the association of hare on the moon can be traced back to the Vedic literature. It seems to represent mythological imagery of a leaping rabbit on the moon surface (Coomaraswamy and Nivedita 1967). Hence, the moon is called “Sasalakshana” or “Sasanka”, meaning the one whose whose mark is hare (shashah). The iconographic form and stylistic of this gold plaque is resembled to the other plaque depicted the Vishnu image from Sri Tep. Therefore, it is possible to date this gold plaque of Chandra to the 6th-7th century A.D.

6.5 The panel of nine deities: Dikpalas and Navagrahas

The general concept of Dikpalas and Navagrahas in Southeast Asia is similar to Indian mythology. But there are some differences on their distinctive ethnic tradition. In mainland Southeast Asia, especially in Khmer art, the depiction of these minor gods are seen as the group of nine deities panel. The four deities selected from Navagrahas like Surya, Chandra, Ketu and Rahu are associated with other five Dikpalas mainly as Indra, Kubera and Agni. The concept of nine deities panel is perhaps unseen in India. It may be the new creation of Khmer craftsmen who dedicated his work for the temple of their supreme Gods.

The representation of nine deities is commonly depicted in Khmer art, at least dated as early as the 9th century A.D. of Preah Ko style. There is the nine deities panel exhibited at National museum Bangkok given by the Government of Cambodia depicted the complete nine deities in Khmer mythological orders.
Surya: the Sun God is sitting on the chariot driven by seven horses. His pedestal is decorated with lotus petal. Interestingly, his body is surrounded by the two layers halo. He holds lotuses in his two hands.

Chandra: The Lunar deities is presented in the vimana and sitting on lotus stage. He holds two long petal lotuses in his hand up to the chest level.

Vayu: The depiction of Vayu, the wind God and Dikpala of Northwestern direction, is very interesting as he rides on deer (mrga) similar to Indian mythology (Rao 1916: 532). The deer has long horns.

Varuna: The Varuna, the rain God and Dikapala of western direction, is mounting on the swan (humsa).

Indra: The Indra, God of sky and Dikapala of eastern direction, rides on huge elephant, Airawatta.

Kubera: The Kubera, God of wealth and Dikapala of northern direction, rides the horse.

Agni: The Agni (God of fire and sacrifice and Dikapala of southeast direction, seats on ram or goat.

Rahu: The depiction of Rahu is close to Indian mythology. He comes with the smokes and has demon appearance.

Ketu: The last of planet, he is always riding lion with whisk in his right hand.

Actually, these Gods rise their right hands holding the attributes and face to right direction. The concepts of Dikpalas and Navagrahas in Khmer mythology is mentioned in the inscriptions as well as reflected in arts. There are evidences of the worship of eight Dikpalas (Lokapalas) associated with the Royal linga named Rajendra varmesvara of King

Fig. 280. The panel of nine deities from Prasat Lolei, Preah Ko style (the 9th century A.D.), National museum Bangkok
Rajendravarman mentioned in the inscription at Prasat Pre Rup (961 A.D.). The inscription of Prasat Ta Kev, during the reign of King Jayavarman VII or VIII also speaks about the erecting the Nandi and Lokpalas for the great merits of King Sri-Jayavarman. And also the grand inscription at Kapilapura also mentions the cult of Lokpalas worship (Bhattacharya 1961b : 138).

Though there has no trace of Lokpalas worship survived from the mentioned temples in Cambodia, the good examples of Lokpalas worship are provided from other Saivite and Visnavite temples like Banteay Sri and Angkor Wat. At Banteay Sri, the depiction of Lokpalas are depicted on the lintel of four directions namely as, Indra, Varuna, Yama and Kubera. The ten Lokpalas deities also present on the high relief of Angkor Wat. There are four cardinal directions divne guardiances as Indra (east), Kubera (north), Yama (south) and Varuna(west) acoompanying with other minor directions Agni (southeast), Nritti (southwest) and Vayu (northwest) In this scene, there are the other Brahmanical Gods like Surya and Chandra coming with the chariots and Skanda riding his peacock.

The role of Surya and Chandra considered as planet deities is mentioned in Brhadaranyaka-Upanishad (III,9,19-24) and Chandogya- Upanishad (II,13,1-5) as being one of direction guardians. Manu (V,96; VIII,4) also places the Surya instead of Nritti, the God of Southwest and Chandra at the northeastern. There are other texts describe the role of Surya and Chandra as the Lokpalas in Agni purana (LVI : 26-27) and Matsya purana (CCLXVI, 26).

Moreover, the worship of Lokpalas was also referred in the inscription of Champa as Chandra is one of the ten Lokpalas and seems to replace Isana of northeastern. This concept of direction guardians from Manu might be used in the carving of Lokpalas scene at Angkor Wat because the Moon was depicted in the place of Nritti. Surya should be regared as the God of upper (beyond) direction as his mythologic character is related to Brahma. According to Brahma purana (XXX,26), the Brahma is believed to derive from the 12 Adithya (sun). In Brhadaranyaka-Upanishad (III,9,19-24), Agni whom regarded as one of Solar deities in Rigveda was also worshipped as the God of upper (beyond) direction.

The vehicle of Lokpalas in Khmer mythology was sometime depicted with in other animals different from Indian tradition. Agni in Khmer art rides rhinoceous, while in India he is seen on ram. The Khmer Vayu and Kubera are riding horses but these two deities in Indian mythology always sit on deer and lion.
The depictions of Dikpalas at Badami caves (7th - 8th century A.D) is one of good examples in South India. The Dikpalas in South Indian art usually followed the Abhilasitartha cintamani (Shama 1926: 267-270). The text describes the deities in orders as, Indra (elephant: east), Agni (goat or ram: southeast), Yama (buffalo: south), Nritti (man: southwest), Varuna (makara: west), Vayu (stag: northwest), Kubera (man-drawn chariot: north) and Isana (bull: northeast).

However, the panel of nine deities is unseen in Indian art. Perhaps it was made under Indian inspiration and adapted in to Khmer concept.

Fig. 281. The depiction of Lokpalas at Badami (I), showing Brahma as the God of upper direction

Fig. 282. The depiction of Lokpalas at Badami (II), showing Vishnu as the God of upper direction
The nine deities panel from Prasat Ban Ben: Tung Sri Udom district, Ubon Ratchathani, northeastern Thailand.

Fig. 283. The nine deities panel from Prasat Ban Ben, Ubon Ratchathani (152 cm)

The nine deities are depicted in the nices, decorated with floral motifs in Khmer art. The role of deities starts from the top right. All Gods are wearing Khmer style costume and lower crowns (mukuta) which are dated to 11th-12th century A.D.

**Surya**: The Sun God is sitting on horses and holding two lotus buds. He is always regarded as the first of Navagrahas (planet).

**Chandra**: The Moon God is simply sitting in Khmer style on high stage with left hand touching his knee, the other hand rise up and hold lotus. He is the second one of Navagrahas (planet)

**Agni (?)**: The God of fire and holy sacrifice is riding on rhinoceros or ram. His right hand is holding an object and place on his vehicle head. The right hand holds lotus. He is one of Dikaplas (direction guardian) of the Southeast direction.

**Varuna**: The God of rain and morality is sitting on the swan (humsa) and holding lotus in his right hand. He is one of the Dikpalas (direction guardian) of the West deitection.

**Indra**: The God of sky, rain and thunder is always depicted in the middle of role. He is always presented on the back of elephant Airavatta in riding position. Indra is also regarded as the Dikpalas of Eastern direction.

**Vayu or Kubera (?)**: The wind God is presented riding on the horse (?) and also holding the lotus on his right hand. He is one Dikpalas of Northwestern direction.

**Yama**: The God of death is riding buffalo (bull) and holding lotus in his right hand. He is generally regarded as the Dikpalas of Southern direction.
**Rahu**: He is one of the *Navagrahas* (planets). Rahu is always seen as half human-snake (*naga*) deity, sometime his representation is depicted as demon.

**Ketu**: He is the last *Navagrahas* (planets). Ketu is riding on lion (*singha*). Remarkably, he holds the whisk (*jamara*) in his right hand instead of lotus.

**The two nine deities panel from National museum Mahaveerawongsa, Nakon ratchasima province**

![Image of two nine deities panel](image)

Fig. 284. The two nine deities panels preserved at National museum Mahaverawongsa, Nakon ratchasima province

These nine deities panel are dated around the 11th-12th century A.D. They are of unknown origin and presently exhibited in the national museum Mahaveerawongsa, Nakon ratchasima province. The first one (113 cm.) is depicted nine deities according to Khmer mythological orders. The role of deities starts from Suya riding horses, Chandra (moon) sitting on lotus pedestal, Agni (?) riding ram or rhinoceros, Varuna mounting on swan, Indra riding elephant, Vayu or Kubera(?) sitting on horse(?), Yama riding buffalo or bull (?), Rahu with *naga* body and the last one, Ketu riding lion with whisk in his right hand.

All of these deities are depicted inside niches with Khmer floral decoration, adorned with crown (*mukuta*) and ornaments. According to these characters, this panel can be dated around the 11th-12th century A.D., comparable to *Angkor Wat* style.
The other panel (96 cm.), though the rest three deities are lost, the remaining six deities can be identified with the basis of their vehicle as Varuna (swan), Indra (Airavatta elephant), Vayu or Kubera (horse?), Yama (bull or buffalo), Rahu (nagas) and Ketu holding whisk (lion). The panel is also dated around the 11th-12th century A.D., made in Angkor Wat style. In fact, the same type of nine deities panel is also provided from the Vishnu shrine (Prah Narai shrine) of Nakon Ratchasima city, presently exhibited at National museum Pimai, Nakon Ratchasima.

![Image of the panel of nine deities from Vishnu shrine](image1)

Fig. 285. The panel of nine deities from Vishnu shrine (Prah Narai shrine of Nakonratchasima city), National museum Pimai, Nakonratchasima (105 cm)

The panel of nine deities from Prasat Pimai: National museum, Pimai

![Image of the panel of nine deities from Prasat Pimai](image2)

Fig. 286. The panel of nine deities from Prasat Pimai, National museum Pimai

This panel shows the representation of nine deities in high relief form, but different in orders. They were made in Khmer art of 12th century A.D. and resemble to Angkor Wat style. The first three deities and half of the forth deity are damaged, thus only five deities can be identified. Starting from right side, Kubera (?) is riding lion, Indra sitting on Airawatta elephant, Yama sitting on buffalo, Ketu or Vayu (?) riding lion and Chandra sitting on the pedestal. Interestingly, there are depiction of two deities riding on lions in the same panel which one can be identified as Kubera in Khmer mythology. Kubera sometimes sits on lion or horse and other may be Vayu or Ketu whose vehicle are also lion (Rao 1916 : 532).
In fact, the orders of nine deities panel is normally unstricted. But it is always started with Surya, Chandra and ended with Rahu and Ketu. Normally, Indra is depicted at the middle (5th) and Kubera or Vayu at the 6th of the role. The 3rd, 4th and 7th places are flexible. Moreover, the devine vehicles are also changed depending upon the artisans. But the three important Gods, Indra, Yama and Varuna are always riding on elephant, bull and swan respectively.

Besides of being depicted in the form of nine deities panel, the Dikpalas in Khmer art found in Thailand are also avaliable in other form. At Phanom Rung sanctuary, the Dikpalas and their vehicles are depicted seprarately on the cubic sand stone measuring around 45-50 cm. There are Indra (elephant), Agni (rhinoceous), Varun (five heads naga), Kubera (gajasimha), Isana (bull) and Brahma (swan).

All of the deities are holding the devine attributes. In case of Kubera, he is riding gajasimha which might be an influenced of Cham art. Interestingly, all of stand stone cubics are depicted the blossom lotus motif decorated at the top as the symbolic of fortune and fertility. Additionally, the Dikpalas and vahicles are exactly placed at the main directions of monument. This sculptural form of Dikpalas is also worshiped or placed as direction guardians in Brahmanical temples of 12th-13th century A.D.

Fig. 287. The depiction of Dikpalas (top left) in snad stone cubic Brahma, Varuna, Agni, Indra, Kubera and Isana from Prasat Phanom Rung sanctuary (11th-12th century A.D.)
Fig. 288. The vehicles of Dikpalas from Phanom Rung sanctuary proving that the Dikpalas is also made in the form of sculptures.

The depiction of Dikpalas in Brahmanical monuments was also carved on architectural structures like door frame, miniature shrines on the top roof, lintel and pediment. As reliefs, Dikpalas are clearly presented with their vehicles and divine attributes in small but visible. Though they are regarded as minor Gods in Indian mythology, the Khmers highly worshipped them as depicted their images almost equal to the supreme Gods. It can be stated that the concept of Dikpalas and Navagrahas worship in Khmer Brahmanism was well accepted and believed as they were related the destiny, fertility and evil protection. The high popularity in the worship of these deities was perhaps leading to the making of nine deities panel that regarded as the united form of minor Gods.

Fig. 289. (Left) Nritti mounting on the human from Prasat Muang Tum and (Right) Yama riding on buffalo (28 cm) from Ku Keaw, Kon Kean province.
The cult of Dikapalas or Lokpalas is not limited only in Khmer art of mainland region. In Java island during the eastern Javanese Kingdom (10th-14th century A.D.), the Dikpalas was known in the name of Astadikpalas (the guardianship of eight directions). There depictions are available from the monuments at Panataran, Singhasari, Jalatunda and Prambanan (Lara Jonggrang) which are certainly dated around 10th-13th century A.D. The Javanese Lokpalas concept fully reflects the folk or Balinese influence. According to Agni purana (LVI, 31), the God of below direction (underground) is Ananta (sesa or nagas) riding tortoise. At Candi Singhasari, he is replaced by Darma (other from of Yama) in Balinese name and also using the same vehicle (Lohuizen de Leeuw 1955 : 364).

At Panataran, the concept of Dikpalas in Javanese style known as Astadikpalas became more complicated under strong Saivite iconographic influence. It was leading to the new creation of Navasanga or Navadevetas (nine deities) in Javanese-Bali tradition. The Navasanga consists of Siva forms namely, Isavara (east), Mahesvara (southeast), Rudra (southwest), Mahadeva (west), Sangkara (northwest), Sambhu (northeast) and Siva (center) and the rest of them are the Vishnu (north) and Brahma (Guru : South) (Lohuizen de Leeuw 1955 : 373). Interestingly, these Navadevatas are holding Dikapalas attributes.

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The concept of Astadikpalakas are found in Prambanan (Lara Jonggrang), the Saivite complex of eastern Java. The deities are depicted inside decorated niches. Kubera and Soma are regarded as the northern guardians, Isana at Southeast, Indra at the east, Agni at the Southeast, Yama at the South, Surya and Nritti are together for being God of southwest, Varuna at the west and Vayu at the northwest. This Javanese Astadikpalakas orders is similar to the Khmer mythology as depicted at Angkor Wat. Perhaps, this might be the general orders of Dikpalakas in Southeast Asia.

The worship of Brahmanical Gods or minor deities in Southeast Asia was inspired by Indian mythology and gradually developed into their distinctive way different from places to places. On the other hands, the cult of minor deity in this region was sometimes getting higher popularity than Indian concept. This character is clear noticed from the cult of Indra in ancient Cambodian Kingdom where this minor Brahmanical deity was highly worshiped as popular deity.

The iconography of Indra in Khmer art in northeastern Thailand

The widespread of Indra worship in ancient Khmer Kingdom can be traced back to the pre Angkorean period, prior to the 9th century. They are noticed from the place and royal personal names like Indrapura (the one of the Khmer kingdoms during reign of King
Jayavarman II) and the name of early Khmer King Indravarman. According to the original concept of Indra as the God of water and rain, his worship was well practiced in Khmer Kingdom which was agriculture society. According to the Vedic texts Indra is also considered as the King of deities. Though he was inferior than the supreme Brahmanical Gods of the later period, his important role still be visibled in Brahmanical art as minor God. On contrary with Indian tradition, Indra in Khmer mythology was given high acceptance and mainatained in well worshipping as the leader of Dikpalas. Indra in Khmer art is represted in specific forms, depicted on the high position of temple structure equally to the supreme Gods, Siva or Vishnu.

Fig. 290. The Indra from Prasat Banteay Sri (10th-11th century A.D.), Cambodia

In fact, the depiction of Indra in Khmer art in Thailand can be catagorised into five groups on the basis of iconographic form. They are dated from the 10th-late of 12th century A.D.

The first group : Indra mounting on the three heads elephant (Airavatta)

The Indra is represented in complete iconographic form as he is powerfully riding the Airavatta. Indra is always depicted in two hands and well adorned with royal garment and crown depended on particular styles. He is holding Vajra in his right hand, or sitting without attribute in knee lifting poses (Maharaja-lilasana). This iconographic feature has directly reflected his relationship with elephant that is considered as the symbol of heavy cloud and rain. The reliefs of Indra mounting on Airavatta is the most comon scene in Khmer art, usually facing eastern direction. In some reliefs, he is accompanied with other two attendants, perhaps Indrani and other consort, sitting on the Airavatta. The good examples are provided from Prasat Muang Kheak (Koh Ker-Pre Rup style : 10th century A.D.), Muang Tum (Kleang-Baphoun style : late of 10th-11th century A.D.) , Ban Phluang and Pimai (Angkor Wat : 12th century A.D.) etc.
Fig. 291. The relief of Indra from Prasat Muang Kheak (132 cm.), Nakon ratchasima province, National museum Pimai

Fig. 292. The relief of Indra riding elephant (Airawatta) from Prasat Ban Phlaung, Surin province

Fig. 293. The reliefs of Indra sitting on Airawatta from (Left) Prasat Muang Tum, Buriram province and (Right) Pimai, Nakon Ratchasima province, National museum Pimai

Fig. 294. The Indra and consorts sitting on the Airavatta (145 cm.) from Pimai, National museum Pimai
The second group: The Indra sitting on Kala-mukha and holding lotus

The relief of this type is seen as Indra is two armed deity adorned with royal ornaments, sitting in knee lifting pose (Maharaja-lilasana) on the Kala-mukha (the monster face) and holding lotus in his right hand. The demon face is normally seen in Khmer art that was influenced from the Javanese art in Indonesia. Perhaps, it is believed as evil protector of the sacred Saivite monument (Remusat 1954: 126).

According to Bhattacharya (1961b: 145), the Indra sometimes holds white lotus, presenting the symbolic of water. Thus, Indra as the God of rain is commonly presented with the lotus (water) and elephant (cloud). The example are available from Prasat Muang Kheak (Koh Ker-Pre Rup style: 10th century), the eastern lintel of Phanom Runag sanctuary (Angkor Wat style: 12th century A.D.) and Prasat Muang Thum (Kleang –Baphoun style: late 10th-11th century A.D.).

Fig. 295. The lintel from Prasat Muang Kheak, Nakon Ratchasima province, National museum Pimai

Fig. 296. The relief of Indra holding lous from Prasat Muang Tun, Buriram province

Fig. 297. The relief of Indra holding lotus from Phanom Rung sanctuary, Buriram
The third group: The Indra sitting on the pedestal or Kala-mukha and holding mace (gada)

The Indra in this forum is sitting in knee lifting pose (Maharaja-lilasana) on the Kala-mukha or pedestal. He is holding the mace (gada), other divine attribute of Indra (Sahai 1975: 12). The God is well decorated in royal garment and crown. This type of reliefs are seen from the lintel from Prasat Ku Suan Tang, Buriram province which is now exhibited in National museum Pimai.

Fig. 298. The relief of Indra holding mace from Prasat Ku Suan Tang, Buriram province, National museum Pimai

The forth group: Indra sitting on the pedestal over the Kala-mukha without attributes.

This depiction of Indra is the simplest form of his iconographic character. At Prasat Muang Tum, he is sitting with two knees lifting pose (Maharaja-lilasana) on the stage that placed on Kala-mukha face. The Indra is holding nothing, only left his hands on two of his knees. According to his sitting pose, he is represented as the King of deities.

Fig. 299. The relief of Indra sitting without attribute from Prasat Muang Tum, Bururam province
The are other reliefs of Indra in Khmer art, but accompanying with other Gods in Puranic stories. In this case, it would able to assume that the position of Indra is almost equal to the supreme Gods like Vishnu, Siva and Brahma. The depiction from Pimai representing the trimurti scene is one of the best example that showing the high level of Indra. According to the carving scene, the three main dieites like Brahma (left), Indra (middle) and Brahma (right) are standing in the lower role than the stage of Siva who appears in the form of Uma-Mahesvara. These Gods are surrounded by the rishis and humans at the lower portion. This kind of carving scene equalizing Indra with other supreme sectarian Gods may not be available in Indian arts. Therefore, the cult of Indra worship was in high popularity and being one of the significant features of Khmer Brahmanism.

Fig. 300. The depiction of Indra sitting on the Airawatta at the middle of devine role, Pimai

The worship of Saktis and minor deities seemed to be practiced in Thailand as well as happened in other Southeast Asian countries. Actaully, the cult of Goddess was developed and widely spread in contemporary with the sectarian Gods. This incident undoubtedly caused the process of amalgamation in religious culture and arts. It is evidently represented on iconographic feature of Mahisasura mardhini images of pre Angkorean period. Though she is regarded as Goodess in Saivism, her iconographic character is much related to Vishnu by holding the same divine attributes. But the well worshiping of Goddesses might be lasted for short period or before the 9th century A.D. The decline of her cult can be explained from the lesser numbers of Goddess sculptures, reliefs and her lower position with consort suggesting the changes and value in the popularity of Goddess worship. Perhaps, it also indicates on the lost of political power of royal women in Khmer ancient history. However, the worship of Saktis had been continued in the form of fertility and knowledge Goddesses like Lakshmi, Ganga and Sarasvati that was gradually engaged with major Brahmanical sects.
In case of minor deities that is mainly divided in two categories as the minor deities of Saivite sect and the independent groups such as Brahma, Navagrahas (planets) and Dikpalas (Dikpalakas: guardience of directions). In spite of different in major functions, they are relating to each others by sharing iconographic features and sometimes presenting in the form of group deities.

The Ganesha is considered as the most popular Brahmanical God in Southeast Asian countries. His cult had well established in this region from the beginning as luck bestower and obstacle remover depicted in the form of amulets and sculptures. The general iconographic form of Ganesha is initially made close to the natural elephant, pot belly and unornamented. But his later form in Khmer art was developed to be more humanized with royal ornaments and multiple arms.

The high popularity of Ganesha in Southeast Asian was possibly leading to the growing of Ganapatya cult in this region like in India. Although the images of Ganesha are found in large numbers and different forms in Thailand, the existence of Ganapatya cult is still in doubtful because the lack of related archaeological evidence attests to the position of Ganesha as supreme gods of his temples. As a result of his high popularity, his representation is not limited only in Saivism, but also found in other sect as well. This is one of significant feature of Khmer Brahmanism that commonly reflects the religious toleration through its arts.

In case of Skanda, he is regarded as the son of Siva. But the numbers of his images are far lesser than Ganesha. He is mentioned in few inscriptions in Cambodia and almost absent in Thailand. Only one of his depiction as associated deity is depicted on the lintal from Pimai. From this relief, Skanda is described as young boy riding on horse (?) or peacock.

Brahma and Srasvati were also in well worshiping as minor Gods associated with both of Saivism and Vasnavism. He appears in Siva Nataraja reliefs as well as Anatasayina-padmanabha murti of Vishnu. Brahma is considered as the great creator in trimurti concept, but his cult is absent in Cambodia or Thailand. In Cambodia, his divine consort was considered as the Goddess of Knowledge and worshipped in the temples dedicated to her. Sometimes, she is also regarded as Sakti of Siva (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 125-128). The evidence of Sarasvati worship is not available in Thailand, perhaps it was similarly practiced with other Goddesses.

The iconography of Surya in Thailand is an interesting evidence reflecting the unique style of Surya images, especially those of Sri Tep site. Surya worship was continually
practiced in Thailand at least before the 7th century A.D. as seen from his small depiction on Dvaravati Dhammachakra from Nakon Prathom. At Sri Tep, the Surya images reveal their distinctive feature on artistic and iconographic characters. They were sculpted as two arms, wearing kiritamukuta with floral motifs decoration, floral necklace, and long robe tunic. The large circular halo representing the Sun ray is behind his head. It helps to signify this images as Surya. In fact, the Surya images of Sri Tep style has shown little similarity with pre Angkorean art of contemporary period. This individual character has suggested on the distinctiveness of Surya images and its high worshiping position. Sri Tep was likely to be the center of Surya cult, but unfortunately it is lack of associating or local archeological evidences to prove this suggestion.

Surya image in Thailand, beside of Sri Tep style, there are Chola influenced sculptures and the high relief bronze Surya image reported from southern region. They could have been brought from India or Indonesia and enshrined in Southern Thailand. And also some fragments of Surya images of Dvaravati culture have much localized appearance rather than Indian art tradition. The variation of Surya images discovered from different places has suggested the widespread of Surya worship in Thailand, though its cult or connection with other Surya worship centers in Southeast Asia still be unknown.

The concepts of Dikpalas and Navagrahas in Thailand are considered as Khmer duplicated work, presenting little different from Indian tradition. Dikpalas are normally seen in ten numbers including four cardinal directions, four minor directions and two upper and lower directions. They are depicted as small figure on the architectural structures, miniature sculptures and also the cubic sand stone blocks placed at main direction corner of monuments. The well acceptance of the groups of minor deities was perhaps leading to the making of nine deities panel consisted of four Navagrahas and five Dikpalas. The innovated form of nine deities worship is possibly regarded as the unique creation of Khmer Brahmanism that was popular in northeastern Thailand.

Indra is also regarded as minor deities in Indian mythology, though he was worshipped as the King of God during Vedic period. His inferior position is seen from Indian arts but it seemed to be different in Khmer concept. The representations of Indra in Thailand are much similar to Khmer art. Beside of commonly regarded as Dikpalas and God of sky and weather, he is also depicted in single form on the temple relief with various iconographic manners such as sitting on Airavatta or holding different divine attributes. Sometimes, Indra is also equally placed among other supreme Gods like Siva, Vishnu and Brahma, showing high popularity in Khmer mythology.
Similar to the sectarins Gods, the worship of Saktis and minor deities also played an important role in the development of Brahmanism in Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand and Cambodia. Their iconographic characters evidently reflect the connection and influence of Brahmanical tradition from different origins that was practiced in Thailand.

In this case, it can also understand that the Khmer Brahmanism had strongly dominated the arts of northeran Thailand as well as in Cambodia. The comparable character are obviously noticed from the religion toleration and popularlity in the worship of some minor deities.

The other point that makes Khmer Brahmanical art in Thailand and Cambodia different from India is the lack of Saktis worship and devotional Bhakti movement. It might be explained as a result of losing strong cultural contact with India during the 10th-11th century A.D. That was when Saktism and Bhakti movement were in highest point and most widespread in Indian society. And also, the Khmers did not enter deeply to the doctrinal philosophy, but interpreted them by their understanding and ethnic tradition. Thus, the nature Brahmanism in Khmer Kingdom was adaptable, leading to religion syncretism of different Brahmanical sects or with Buddhism.


Chapter 7: Conclusion

Ancient Indian culture had an important role in shaping a part of socio-cultural and religion structures in Southeast Asia. The expansion of Indian culture in Southeast Asian states is generally termed as “Indianization” process which primarily started by the adapting and accepting more influential part of the Indian culture, leading to the social and religious convergence between the two regions. Some of the ancient Chinese literatures written by monks and royal ambassadors also tell about this kind of inter-regional relationship (Pelliot 1903: 279, Wheatley 1961: 16-17 Sarkar 1985: 4-5 Takakusu 1896; Coedes 1968: 81). During the early urbanization period the Brahmanism and its rituals processes was initially introduced by merchants guilds and priests who traveled along with intensive maritime trade connection. The cultural contact through trade and commerce began as early as the before the Christian era. It had a heyday in patronization of Brahmanical tradition during 5th-8th century A.D. which happened prior to the formation of regional states around the late of 8th century A.D. onwards.

The archaeological evidences from the excavations of some important sites such as Oc Eo (Malleret 1962, 1959) Kuala Selinsing (Ray 1994), Kwon Luk Pad (Veeraprasert 1987), Phu Kao Thong (Chaysuwan 2009) and Ban Don Ta Phet (Glover 1986) revealed the trade commodities which suggest the cultural inter-relationship between Indian and Southeast Asia during ancient times. It provides valuable information giving the approximate date of early Indian impact around the beginning of Christian era. The artifacts can be identified and co-related to their manufacturing places, tracking back to their origins and migration. The development of early urbanizations in Southeast Asia located in Southeast Asia probably appeared during this intensive Indian impact time. They were found following Indian cultures, especially administrative system and religious traditions.

The cultural contact between these two countries came to existence from 6th - 13th century A.D. when the Southeast Asian countries was directly or indirectly ruled by the Buddhist and Hindu Kings and locals chiefs of regional Kingdoms such as the ancient Khmer Kingdom of Cambodia, the Cham Kingdom of Vietnam and Dvaravati Kingdom in Thailand. They were governing the major parts of mainland region. The Malay peninsular as well as maritime region (the Indonesia and islands) was belonged to Sri Vijaya and ancient Javanese Kingdoms of Indonesia.
The present Thailand was one of Indianize states in Southeast Asia where Indian culture was highly valued and adapted into ethnic tradition. During the above mentioned period, it was under the dominance of three different Kingdoms: Dvaravati governed the central region, southern part was dominated by Sri Vijaya and the northeastern part was belonged to Khmer Kingdom. In fact, very less information is available regarding the political history of these regions before the 8th century A.D. However, the Kings ruling in this region were patronizing both Buddhism and Brahmanism.

It is difficult to figure out the exact period and circumstances regarding the emergence of early Brahmanism in Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand. It has sustained through centuries. It is evident from both archaeological and historical information found. It is possible to state that the Brahmanism traveled along with traders and priests from several parts of India, especially from the eastern and southeastern coasts. There are a number of literary sources which gives the information regarding the movement of Indian Brahmanas to Southeast Asia (Wales 1976: 22-24). The two major early states of the central and Southern part of Thailand, the Dvaravati and Sri Vijaya, Kingdoms were dominated by Buddhism. But Brahmanism also had its equal importance in religious aspect.

The development of Brahmanism in Thailand along with other Southeast Asian countries can be distinctively divided into two periods, early urbanization period (prior to 5th-8th century A.D.) and the regional states influence period (late of 8th-13th century A.D.). The later phase is generally identified as “Khmer dominant period” when the expansion of Khmer political power had taken place over the large area located in Thailand territory. The rising of ancient Khmer Kingdom (Angkorean period) in mainland Southeast was not only projects an important step of regional history, but also the introduction of arts and other form of Brahmanism.

The nature of Brahmanism in Thailand was not only for conducting sacred ceremony, but practice certain ethnic associated with the religions. It gave an inspiration to manifest various forms of religious art and philosophy which is clearly seen through building of monuments, iconographic features and other cultural activities. In the absence of sufficient literary source as well as other archaeological evidence, the Brahmanical sculptures found at the monuments give a vivid picture of the rising of Brahmanism in Thailand.

The beginning of Brahmanism might be gradually started at least before the 5th century A.D., but the evidences are found subsequently. The Brahmanical sculptures pertaining to the early period (especially from 5th – 8th century A.D onwards) are depicted as Indian prototype
images. They are a few in numbers but are unique pieces of entire country. The examples are provided from Vishnu images from Chaiya (Surathani) and Nakon Sri Thammarat provinces (Krairiksh 1981). This suggests the nature of Brahmanism during the early period introduced by Indians and the images were initially brought along with the trade route. Moreover, the early Brahmanism was perhaps getting better attention at the port sites, religious center and coastal communities.

So far as the different sect of Brahmanism is concerned, Saivism as well as Vaisnavism emerged in the Thailand almost in the same time. The icons pertaining to this phase are much similar to their counterpart found in India. Prior to the introduction of Saivism, the natives worshiped a monolithic stone as fertility God. The introduction of Saivism and linga as a part of iconographic representation of Siva was easily accepted by the natives and assimilated as fertility Gods. So this amalgamation of the native beliefs and Saivism had an impact on the religious belief of the people, making it easier for accepting all related rituals of Brahmanism in to their folds.

Hence, the worship of Siva before the 8th century A.D. was generally presented as the cult of sacred linga carved in different forms while the Siva image in human form is not discovered. There are numbers of lingas dated before 8th century A.D. found in the central region and southern coast, especially at Nakon Sri Thammarat province.

Besides the sculptures, the trace of early Brahmanism is also reflected in the group of architectural remains located at port sites and ancient settlement. In most of the monuments of early period only basement portions are found. The remains of Brahmanical temples at U Thong (Suparnburi), Sri Mahosoth (Prachinaburi) and Beikhthano at Burma are similar in plans and building pattern. It reveals the religious connection between the central part of Thailand and neighboring state. The same explanation can also be given in case of the group of monuments at Southern region at KhaoKha (Nakon Sri Thammarat), Khao Sri Vijaya (Suratthani) and Thung Tuk (Phangnga) that sharing the architectural form with other contemporary sites such as Bujang valley, Kotar Kapur and Candi Blandogan in Malaysia and Indonesia respectively. In this scenario, the Kings and elites were the great patrons of Brahmanism as they contributed to the establishment of Brahmanical temples in the capitals and extended regions.

The glorious rising of ancient Khmer Kingdom in Cambodia had significant changes in ethnic and religious aspects, as did the Javanese Kingdom in maritime region. Brahmanism entered into Khmer ethnic tradition which was concentrated especially on the
sacred rituals of royal ceremonies. The Brahmanical Gods like Siva and Vishnu would be personified as the Kings of Cambodia. Khmer Kings were expanding their political power over entire region initially in the form of religious institutions center and temples built for both religious activities and political administration centers. There are important Khmer monuments in Thailand such as Prasat Phanom Rung sanctuary, Prasat Pimai and Preah Vihear temple. Most of them are located in the northeastern region and was established under Royal patronage.

According to the general forms and stylistic development of structural as well as iconographic representations in the monuments was affected due to the cultural interaction, changes of dynastic approach, social necessitating, the variation in art forms and religious depictions. They are quite different from the Buddhist art of contemporary period. Because of this, the distinctive character of Brahmanical images in Thailand reflect distinct form of arts pertaining to the Brahmanism which was different from the Buddhist arts of the contemporary period as seen at Dvaravati and Sri Vijaya arts.

This difference can be argued of having to different class of patronages, one is the general public and the one was more centered around the ruling class.

Though the earlier Brahmanical images followed the Indian tradition, still it reveals the local influences. This could have happened from several ways such as trade and political alliance. The example is provided from the group of early Vishnu images identified as “Indian prototype images” showing their distinctive iconographic features. They are shown initially holding conch shell (sankha) in the lower left hand and earth (bhu) in lower right hand, this was replacement of the lotus (padma) seen in Indian tradition. This form is described as Janardhana in Rupamandana and commonly found in South Indian tradition. Moreover, the reported location of early Indian prototype Vishnu images is important, as the evidence supports the expansion of Vaisnavism along with maritime trade connection.

The salient feature of Brahmanical iconography up to the 8th century A.D. is clearly seen from a group of early Vishnu images found from Southern Thailand. The early Vishnu images in Southeast Asia share the general feature and iconographic character of South India. Though the form of Vishnu images are close to the Pallava style, their local influence are clearly visible on the carving technique and distinctive iconographic feature. This stylistic similarity within the Southeast Asia indicates an intensive connection among the states through inter-regional trade, administrative and political relation reflecting in the form of Vaisnavite linkage.
Thus, Vaisnavism in Southeast Asia emerged from maritime trade connection and then gradually got absorbed into more complicated Kingship concept as can be observed from the inscriptive evidences. However, the process related to Vaisanavite worship and monuments building in Thailand do not give a clear picture of gradual development. Only some archaeological evidences like seals and ritual objects provide some information on the influence of Vaisnavite ritual practice in royal ceremonies.

The making of Vishnu images after 9th century A.D. had strong influence of Khmer tradition. The Vishnu images in the form of free standing as well as reliefs were most popular and found comparatively in large numbers during the late of 11th-12th century A.D. They were mostly carved in Baphoun-Angkor Wat style of Khmer art. The Vishnu images created under Angkorean period were well adorned with Khmer ornaments, projecting a type of royal and warrior characters of Vishnu. In Thailand, especially in the northeastern region, most of the four armed Vishnu images and reliefs are dated around 11th-12th century A.D. This coincides with intensive political dominance under the ancient Cambodian Kingdom. Hence, the expansion of Brahmanism in northeastern Thailand was possibly happened along with the political expansion.

The trace of early Saiva worship is found from both inscriptive and archaeological evidences. Besides being worshiped as natural fertility deity, Siva is regarded as the supreme God among divines. The highest position of his pantheon is clearly reflected through the energetic form of linga which regards him as the union of three principle deities or trimurti.

Furthermore, the amalgamated form of linga and the worship of fertility God is evident from the natural stone Svayambhu linga worshipped at the tirtha at Khao Kha monuments, Nakon Sri Thammarat province. The discovery of linga and Saivite related artifacts at port sites and religious centers datable to early of Christian era reveal the high popularity of Saivism. Siva lingas were directly worshiped as supreme God in the shrines. And the royal power reflected the similar principle that is creating, preserving and administering both as the protector and punisher.

Unlike the Vaisnavite images the remains of Siva in the form of icons before the 8th century A.D. has not been found. During this early phase, the Siva lingas bear such close influence of Indian types of lingas and as well as have some Southeast Asian influence. The natural form of linga and ek-mukalinga contributed the major linga types of early period. They were created under Indian concept with localized adornment. Both types of lingas
especially from mainland of Southeast Asia share the similar characters, showing a common acceptance of Saivism among the local communities.

Similarly the later images also show continuity of Indian tradition. The tripartite linga was introduced in this region soon after it was introduced in India around the 7th century A.D. The philosophical concept of linga worship in India was changing to incorporate the *trimurti* reflecting the symbolic form of conventional linga worship. This *trimurti* concept probably remains within the tripartite lingas itself or being the principle worshiped object in Saivite temples. This tripartite was gradually replaced by geometric form, square, octagonal and cylindrical.

The geometric tripartite lingas made in Khmer art were highly popular probably after 9th century A.D. They are normally made in portable size, placed on *pithas* or fixed in the same platform representing the symbolic form of linga and *yoni pithas*. These characters are considered as distinctive Khmer art. The Khmer lingas not only represent Siva, but also the Kings who ordered to erect them according to the *Devaraja* cult. Looking into the kind of practice of religion and the royalty, it can be observed that the concept of ritual associated with the religion and the manifestation of iconography had the strong influence of divine origin of the royalty and projected in various aspects in the manifestation of linga worship.

Siva linga worship was well practiced in mainland region as well as Malay Peninsula. It became the most common image in Saivite shrines from 6th century A.D. onwards. Besides being worshipped among Brahmanins communities at the ancient port sites and coastal region, the trace of linga worship was also noticed from inland central region and northeastern plateau. This extensive Saiva worship and establishment of Saiva *tirtha* had strong Indian relationship during this period.

Another reason that led to the wide expansion of Saivism in mainland region during early centuries of Christian era is the concept of Siva pantheon as “He is the supreme one”. This gave probably an inspiration to local rulers a kind of initiative to aspire to achieve, “the great King among other Kings”. This well accepted tradition was followed by the King *Mahendravarman* and known as prince *Citrasesa* of Chenla state that conquered over the lower region of northeastern Thailand. He had erected lingas and placed *Nandis* (bull) in front and dedicated inscriptions recording his grand victory. This kind of patronization percolated into the regions where the other religions were invoked. This might have impacted
adjustment in the new found religious practices that bringing out a synthesis of the religious practices and tolerance.

In addition to the Siva linga, the Siva images are also depicted in Khmer art after 9\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. Though the representations of Siva in Thailand are a few in comparison to Vishnu images, the images of Siva here are found in the forms of \textit{Nataraja} and \textit{Uma Mahesvara}. The images reflect close to the local appearance adorned with ornaments, attributes and iconographic features. They are sometime found in reliefs. Though Siva and Vishnu have a complex and various manifestations of their forms seen in Indian iconography, they are not found in very significant way in Thailand. Some exception can be seen on this statement that there is the image of \textit{Gajasura murti} found at \textit{Preah Vihar} temple at Cambodia.

The significant features of Khmer Saivite reliefs are sometimes not only presenting Siva, but also the portrait of the person who probably patronized it. The example is found from the Siva \textit{Yoga Daksinamurti} at eastern pediment of the \textit{Prasat Phnom Rung} sanctuary.

Besides Vishnu and Siva, the iconographic features also noticed from the Saktis and other minor deities. There is a lot of similarity of the Goddess \textit{Mahisasura madhini} in iconographic features which helps in identify the cultural connection between two neighboring countries. On contrary to the high popularity of Indian Saktism in India around 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D, a few depictions of Goddesses are reported in mainland of Southeast Asian region. It could have been as a result of Indian Brahmanical tradition being gradually given more attention to the ethnic Brahmanism which was already existed.

The iconography of minor Gods can also be explained having a major role for the development of Brahmanical tradition in Thailand as well as other parts of Southeast Asia. Ganesha is considered as the most popular Brahmanical deity of this region due to his mythological character. He is regarded as fortune bestowing God and obstacles remover. The widespread popularity of Ganesha is noticed from his various forms of images available from the period of the beginning of Indian impact to the end of Cambodian period. The early Ganesha images had elephant head deity, a fat pot belly figure with four arms and resemble a close affinity to the Indian traditions. While the later period Ganesha images are commonly sculptured in Khmer style, though having elephant head, the God has more like human body, slim in the waist and normally showing two to four arms. The ornamentation of the images goes well with the Khmer royal adornments. This explains the introduction of Indian religion along with the Gods and Goddesses with their iconographic features. Subsequently this was
getting localized with local artisans engaged in carving images with the contemporary art tradition as can be seen during the Khmer period.

In case of Brahma and Indra who were not being given place as much as to Vishnu and Siva. Though they were quite important divinities, they are well represented in Khmer arts. Brahma and Indra are generally seen both in free standing images as well as in reliefs. Sometimes single or accompanied with other two supreme Gods. The placement of these deities in association with Siva and Vishnu was more emphasized in Southeast Asian tradition. In Thailand, Brahma and Indra images follow the same tradition of Khmer art and its influence seen on other art forms.

The iconography of Surya, Navagrahahs (planets) and Dikpalas (direction guardian deities) are also part of iconographic depiction found in Southeast Asian Brahmanism. As we have observed earlier the early Surya images have strong Indian influence, while the later images have local influence. The images belonging to 8th-9th century A.D. have more of Indian influence. The later images of Surya found from Sri Tep and images contemporary to Dvaravati culture deviated from Indian tradition and concentrated more on local feature. The image from Sri Tep has mustache, wearing boot and cylindrical head dress suggests a Persian influence. However, the cult and the iconographic feature clearly suggest that the strong cultural relationship with mainland India kept this tradition continue probably constant relationship and cultural exchange.

Dikpalas and Navagrahahs, though they were not major divinity having some specific cult appear in Southeast Asian Brahmanism. Their appearances are remarkable. The Asthadikpalas appear into two formats. One is found occupied the cardinal positions in the temples, the other one comes in combination with Navagrahahs. In this case, in a panel either corners of panel which occupied by four of Navagrahahs, two in each sides. The center has five Dikpalas making the panel depicting nine divinities. This is the unique combination of Dikpalas and Navagrahahs seen in Southeast Asian art.

Beside important Brahmanical deities, there are some icons of Skanda, Ardhanarisvara, Harihara and some minor Gods and Goddesses appeared in the early temples in Thailand. There are only a few and do not appear in prominent places. Though their importance in the propagation of religion may not have been very intense but their presences certainly tell that they were accepted and their relevance in the religious scenario was well accepted.
As it can be observed, the initial introduction of Brahmanical deities was through directly produced in India or were carved by Indian craftsman coming to Southeast Asia especially Thailand. The early images are small in size and a few in numbers. Some of these icons were probably carved in Malay Peninsular, southern Cambodia and Vietnam by Indians craftsmen or trained local craftsman in Indian art. Though it is difficult to identify the production center, artisan involve, the skill of carving attended to differentiate from imported arts and local produced images. This phase of this research, looking in the kind of stone used, in most of the cases they are of local origins. In this circumstance, it can be suggested that artisan moved to the Southeast Asian country to carve out images required in the local market rather than imported in most of the items. The sculptures and icons during the Khmer period essentially depicted Khmer iconography with the contemporary traditional ornaments.

In Thailand, monuments and temples belonging to this period are located close to Cambodian border. The inscriptive evidences, the temple construction and the religious center suggest that along with the political expansion Brahmanical religious tradition was spreading to northeastern part of Thailand. There are some significant differences between the icons and sculptures produced by the skill craftsmen probably of royal patronization and local craftsman.

During the time of early urbanization, most of the locals were possibly under the stronghold of Buddhism as observed from numbers of images and monuments related to this religion. On the other hand the King and royal family practiced Brahmanism especially related to sacred rituals associated with administration. Like in Indian context, Surya and Gaja Lakshmi images were also associated with Buddhist arts as seen from Sanchi stupa and early western India rock cut caves. These Surya and Gaja Lakshmi images were common to Brahmanism, Jain and Buddhist tradition. It is not known whether it was going through Buddhist tradition or impact of common divinity in propagating the religious movement in Southeast Asia especially Thailand.

The nature of Brahmanism after 8th century A.D. was influenced from South India, Javanese and ancient Khmer Kingdom. In comparison, Khmer Brahmanism was more influenced by this moment and propagation was seen in the extended territory in Thailand. This is evident from sculptures, monuments, trades, inscriptions and administrative etc. During this period, along with the Brahmanism Mahayana Buddhism was flourishing and had a continued relationship. Some of the Brahmanical images dated around 10th century A.D. have quite stylistic similarity with the Buddha statues. The symbiotic relationship was remarkable achievement in the religious practice of Southeast Asian states.
The present day Thailand, though the Buddhist dominated Kingdom, the worship of Brahmanical Gods and Goddesses are well accepted. There is no hesitation or restriction of people visiting either of the monuments or worshiping suitable to the respective religions. Ganesh has been given especial grace in religious life of Buddhist dominated Thailand. He is practically occupied one of the auspicious place in religious beliefs and faiths in contemporary Thailand society.

The thousand years movement of Brahmanism in Thailand and neighboring countries in Southeast Asia was keeping in space to some extends as it was developing in India. Whatever may be the religions or sects, the people of Thailand are devoted to Gods in general and believe that worshipping them brings peace, luck, health and prosperity.
Abbreviation


BKI. : Bidragen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde, Gravenhage

Bidragen : Bidragen Tot De Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde. The Hague, Laiden

EFEO. : (Publications de l’) Ecole Francaise d’ Extrême-Orient. Paris


JGIS. : Journal of Greater Indian Society. Calcutta

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