Though the reliable recorded history of the Thai people began in the 13th century A.D. which was the time when Hinduism and Buddhism were resisting the Muslim in India. But it does not mean that the Indian culture fail to influence this part of land. It influenced pre-Thai kingdoms.

The world began to acknowledge the influence of the Indian culture upon the religion, art and architecture of South-East Asia in the late nineteenth century A.D. The study of the antiquities of this part of the world was taken up by the European scholars. These scholars faced a big problem of searching for literary
evidences. Exact information about this area is not noted in Indian literature. Only vague references are found, e.g., the Ramayana speaks of Yavadvipa (the island of gold and silver). The Vayu Purana mentions Malayadvipa also, etc. The scholars equate Malayadvipa with Sumatra, while Yavadvipa is interpreted as a regional name for Java-cum-Sumatra. Even indigenous South-East Asian writings provide no help. Although many inscriptions were found, but the script used in the earliest inscriptions could not solve problem. Because the various types of Indian writing in its earliest forms are slightly different from each other. Even the plastic art and architecture which remain at present, are only the late ones which are very much different from their Indian prototypes. Only the Chinese sources (the references in the Chinese dynastic histories to relations with the states of South-East Asia) give references to this area.

According to the Chinese source, Indianized kingdom called "Funan" existed by the end of the second century A.D. It occupied the lower Mekong and its delta.

some parts of modern Annam and the northern part of
the Malay Peninsula. The excavation at Oc. Bo (on the
maritime fringe of the Mekong), Funan's centre of
industry and trade, clearly show that the Funan culture
was a mixed culture between indigenous and Indian. The
Indian influence on this land is regarded by
scholars as a result of an Indian trade with South
East Asia. And the trade was followed by the Indian
settlement. The Funan kingdom was the first Indianized
kingdom in this area. It survived for over 500 years,
and was succeeded by many kingdoms. These Indianized
kingdoms profoundly influenced Thai culture and civili-
zation. These kingdoms are: The mon kingdom,
(Dvaravati kingdom), the Srivijaya kingdom (Indo-
Javanese kingdom) and the Khmer kingdom.

When the Thai came to occupy this region in the
12th century the Indian culture and belief, as
practised by the above mentioned races, influenced Thai
culture and religion once more. Therefore the contact

1. Louis Malleret, "Les Fouilles d' Oc-Bo 1944", BEFEO.
XVI, i, 1951.
2. George Coedes, Lés-peuples de la Peninsule Indo-Chinoise
1962, Ch.ii: J.C.Van Leur, Indonesian Trade and Society
(The Hague, Bandung) 1955, p.92 and pp.98-99, etc.
3. Regarding the religion of the ancient Thais, there was
no definite information, it is known that Buddhism was
introduced into the south of China during the first
century B.C. (see Dietrich Seckel, The Art of Buddhism,
Methuen-London, Holland, 1964, page 79) Therefore the
Thai inhabitants of Nan-Chao (in Yunnan) must have
been familiar to the Buddhist religion for several
centuries before their migration southward.
between Indian and Thai in the present Thai territory is not a direct contact. The Thai received Indian culture through the intermediary. Besides the Mon, the Khmer and the Javanese, the Sinhalese is responsible for the introduction of the Indian culture to Thailand. Moreover the Burmese help the Sinhalese to complete their work.

PRE-THAI PERIOD

Mon Kingdom (Dvaravati kingdom)

After the decline of the Funan kingdom in the middle of the 6th century A.D., one of its successor rose up in the region between Burma and Cambodia. The existence of this kingdom was recorded in the Chinese chronicle by Hindu Tsang (a Chinese pilgrim who was on his way to study Buddhism in India in the middle of the 7th century A.D.). "To-lo-po-ti" is the kingdom's name in Chinese pronunciation. And the word "Dvaravati" was still preserved in the official titles of two later Thai capitals: Ayudhya and Bangkok.

After many excavations and explorations conducted by both European and Thai scholars, it is concluded that Dvaravati covered the central part of Thailand.
including Nakorn Pathom, U-tong (supanburi), Ratburi, Ayudhya, Prachinburi, Kanchanburi, Petchburi. Due to the lack of historical record (except some references in Chinese sources) the extension of Dvaravati kingdom is based on archaeological finds.

The capital of the Dvaravati kingdom is still unknown. However, Nakorn Patham and U-tong was focussed by archaeologists to be the centre of Dvaravati kingdom. As a large number of antiquities of this period are found at both sites.

The Dvaravati kingdom used the Mon language. It could be inferred from the fact that some Mon inscriptions have been found at Lopburi and Nakorn Pathom.¹ The Dvaravati Buddha images indicate the influences of those of the Gupta and Post-Gupta styles which flourished in central and western India in the 4th-8th century A.D.² It is certain that there was a direct contact between the Indians and people of this kingdom during that time. This hypothesis is well supported by the discoveries of two silver medals inscribed with

the Sanskrit's word "Sridvaravatisvarapunya" found at Nern Hin, west of Phra Pathon Cedi in 1943 and by the inscribed copper plate in the Sanskrit language written in pre-Angkorian characters (showing Mon influence), discovered at U-tong (supanburi) in A.D. 1957, both of which were dated by palaeographical methods to the seventh century A.D.

Religion

Regarding religion, a large number of stone wheels of Law and figures of deer have been found at Nakorn Pathom. These symbols were used in ancient Indian art to represent the first preaching of the Buddha at the Deer Park near Benares in India. This discovery led the scholars to conclude that Buddhism might have come to Thailand as early as the time of King Asoka the Great or thereabouts (in the middle of the 3rd century B.C.) This hypothesis is well supported by the statement

1. J.J. Boeles, "The King of Sri Dvaravati and his Regalia" Journal of the Siam Society, LII, 1(164), pp.101-103

2. It is read by Coedes in "Nouvelles donnees Apigraphiques sur l'histoire de L'Indochine-centrale", Journal Asiatique, 1958, pp.129-131 and also by Prof. Cham Tong Kamwan in Sanskrit inscription on gold plate concerning Muang U-Tong" Silpakorn, II, 6 (1959) in Thai, pp.66-68.

3. in the period (from 3rd B.C. 1st A.D.) when Buddha was not depicted in anthropomorphic form.
in the Mahavamsa, the Sinhalese chronicle. It runs that king Asoka sent two Buddhist missionaries Sona and Uttara, to propagate Buddhism in the land of Suvarnabhumi, which is believed to be South East Asia. But the decorations inscribed on these stone wheels of the Law have affinities to the Gupta style in India see Fig. 34 (4th-6th Century A.D.) Hence, these stone pieces could have been produced in the same or the succeeding period.

Apart from Theravada Buddhism one scholar was of opinion that Sanskrit Hinayana Buddhism may have flourished for sometimes within Dvaravati kingdom during the sixth and the seventh centuries A.D. As he discovered that the majority of the scenes depicted on the Chula Pathon relief (Chula Pathon Cedi is situated near the town of Nakorn Pathom) derived from the Sanskrit Avadana tales and these Avadanas were creations of the Sarvastivada, the Hinayana school of Buddhism that used the Sanskrit language.

Moreover, Mahayana Buddhism is also believed to have flourished for sometimes as many terracotta figures found from Stupa No.40 at Ku Bua (Rajburi) were identified by Prof. Silpa Bhirasri of the Fine Arts Department of Thailand as figures close to the tradition of Ajanta and most of them were Mahayanist Bodhisattvas. Also Boisselier recognized, in the Bangkok Museum collection (Dvaravati section), one torso as that of Avalokitesvara (with antelope skin on the chest) and another as that of Vajrapani. Such identification was debated. Some argued that the figure with antelope skin could not be the image of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara for the image of Amitabha is missing from its crown. Such absence of the deity on the crown is known in India, so this argument has less strength. The existence of Mahayana Buddhism in this kingdom is also confirmed by the discovery of many images of Buddha standing on the Kirtimukha (Lord of light). Kirtimukha is made a vehicle of Buddha to indicate that Buddha is the Lord of Light.

2. A. Ghosh, Nalanda, Department of Archaeology, New Delhi 1959, p.37 and even one image of Avalokitesvara was produced uncanonically as it had the Dhyani-Buddha with varada on the crest.
3. A.S.I.A.F., 1946, p.59
Not only Buddhism flourished in Dvaravati Kingdom, but Hinduism (both sects: Saivism and Vaishnavism) also was practised.

A rough figure of Vishnu sculptured in high relief on a stele had been found near U-tong. And this image of Vishnu was related to the Pallava style of India.

Though images of Siva are rarely found in Thailand, but Ardhanari, representing Siva and Uma his consort mingled together into one figure, was found in the province of Ubon Rajdhani in the north east of Thailand. Many Sivalingas were also discovered at Dong Si Maha Pot in the province of Praciburi. And portions of mukhalingas had been found near U-tong.

It should be noted here that the Dvaravati kingdom was the contemporary with the countries of Sriksetra (Hmauzi near Prome, in central Burma) and Isanpura.

1. See J.R.A.S., 1946, pl.XVII
2. See Quaritch Wales, Dvaravatim p.91
3. See Quaritch Wales, Ibid., p.91, pl.57A
4. See Quaritch Wales, Ibid., p.22, pl.10A
5. Sriksetra was the kingdom of the Pyu (500-800 A.D.) see Aung, Thaw, Historical Sites in Burma (Ramgoon: (1972).
And there must have been sufficient contact between Sriksetra and Dvaravati. This could be seen in the similarity of the numismatic remains and the votive tablets found in both places.

Dvaravati Kingdom had its dominion not only in the central part of Thailand, but also in the Northeast e.g. in Korat and Buriram because many typical Dvaravati Buddha images (Buddha performing vitarka mudra with both hands) were found. The most typical Dvaravati site in the Northeast is in Kalasin province as a great number of Buddhist boundary stones at Muang Fa Daed and a Dvaravati style reclining Buddha in Tambol Ban Na Chan.

1. These coins which bear the Srivatsa emblem on one side and either a conch or a sun symbol on the other side, were found throughout central Thailand. They were known as Pyu coins in Burma (Aung Thaw, Historical Sites in Burma, pp.9,14,17); as Funan coins in South Vietnam (L.Maileret, Les Fouilles d' Oc Eo, BEPEQ XVI, i, (1951) pp.129-138 and pls.44-46; as Dvaravati coins in Thailand (R.Le May, "The coinage of Siam, "JSS, 25, pt.1 (1932) pp.7-8, pl.1(3-5), see also the Cultural Heritage in Thailand before the 19th Century B.E. (in Thai) Fine Arts Department.

2. For the tablets found at Sriksetra see T.Mya, Votive Tablet of Burma, (Rangoon, 1961). Vol.II, fig.54. For the ones found in Thailand see G.Coedes, "Siamese Votive Tablets", Trans. by W.A.Graham, JBS, p.20, pl.2 (1926)

3. Wales, Quartich, Dvaravati, 1969,p.99


5. See Cho Fa, VIII, 6 (June, 1973), p.75.
It was in the middle of the 8th century A.D. that the inhabitants of the town of Lavo (Lopburi) migrated to the north and settled down at Haripunjaya (Lampun). They brought with them the Dvaravati civilization which continued to flourish there until it was conquered by the Thai of the Sukhothai Kingdom in the late 13th Century.

According to the inscription found at Prasad Beng Vien, it says that King Rajendravarman of Cambodia, who ruled from 944-968 A.D. invaded Ramapya and Champa in 946 A.D. This Ramapya should be the Mons of eastern Dvaravati, for his conquest did not extend into Burma, and an inscription discovered in Prachinburi province which records a foundation by Rajendravarman. These facts indicate that Dvaravati was overpowered by the Khmers. Moreover, there are archaeological evidences from Prachinburi and other places which point to the extension of Khmer to the western region. The typical ones are


3. This inscription is unpublished, it is now preserved in the Bangkok National Museum.
the lintel dated to the mid-10th century A.D. (by M.C. Subhadradas Diskul) 1 a Khmer temple, Prasad Hin Muang Khaek, 2 Km from the Dvaravati town of Muang Serna dated by its lintels to the mid-10th century. 2 This extension went as far as Lopburi, as another 10th century lintel was found there. 3

Srivijaya Kingdom

Apart from the Dvaravati Kingdom, another empire rose to power, following the fall of Funan, at the Western end of Indonesia. It covered Sumatra, the Malaya peninsula and some parts of southern Thailand. It is called Srivijaya 4 by George Coedes who published the first study of the history of this empire in 1918. This empire flourished from 7th-12th A.D. under the rule of the Buddhist kings of Java.


2. Report of Ancient Monuments in North-east Thailand, I 60, 77-79, Eigs. 64-78, Fine Art Department; see also Subhadradas Diskul, Lopburi Art, Bangkok, 1967, fig.6.

3. It is now in the Ayudhya National Museum (Candraksem) it is brought there by Phya Boran, governor of Ayudhya in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

4. The name taken from the Kalasan inscription of Vien Srah of 778 A.D. in the Malay Peninsula and from the inscription at Wat Sema-muang, Nakorn Sri Dharmaraj Southern Thailand and also from Chinese Source (Record of Fa-Hsien).
According to Coedes, Palembang is supposed to be its centre for a series of old Malay inscriptions dating from 683 to 686 were found. Two of them were found near Palembang, the third at Karang Brahi on the upper reaches of the river Batang and the fourth on the island of Banka. But some scholars point to Chaiya (south of Thailand) as Srivijaya's centre. This hypothesis is supported by the discovery of the Ligor stele at the Wat Sema-muang (Nakorn Sri Dharmaraja). It has two faces, both containing inscriptions. Face A contains ten Sanskrit verses commemorating the foundation of a Mahayanist sanctuary by a king of Srivijaya and bears the Saka date corresponding to 15 April, 775. Face B bears an unfinished inscription celebrating a victorious king who bears the title of Sri Maharaja.

Though Srivijaya's centre is still unknown, it is clear that Srivijaya Buddhism was mainly Mahayanist as many Bodhisattva images were discovered. The Chinese

sources also point to this fact. I-tsing, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who traveled to India in the 7th century A.D. visited Srivijaya on his way in 671. He noticed that there were over a thousand Buddhist monks (Mahayana monks) and their rules and ceremonies were the same as in India. I-tsing spent six months there studying Sanskrit grammar before going to India. In 685, after a long period of study at the Buddhist university of Nalanda in Bengal, I-tsing returned to Srivijaya and spent some four years there translating Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Chinese.

Both inscriptions and Chinese sources indicate the expansion of Mahayanism to this area. Moreover, the relation between India and this empire was well supported by the inscriptions found in India. It is the copper-plate of Devapala (c.810-850) issued from Mughgiri (Monghyr). It records that "being requested by the Maharaja Balaputradeva of Suvarnadvipa (Sumatra) through a messenger, Devapala granted five villages in the district of Rajagriha in the Srinagara (Patna) division for the"


2. I-tsing, the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malaya Archipelago (671-695 A.D.) Translated by J. Takakusu, Delhi, 1966, p.xxxiv
upkeep and maintenance of monks and copying of manuscripts in the monastery built by the Sumatran king, on the twentyfirst day of Karttika in the thirtyninth regnal year. It was found in Monastery Site 1 and is now in the Indian Museum.

This inscription clearly shows a close relation between Srivijaya and the Pala kings during the 8th-9th A.D.

Not only in Bengal, but also in South India at Nagipattanam (Negapatam) the kings of Srivijaya had their contacts. The Tanjore Cola inscriptions of Rajendracola and Rajaraja Rajakesarivarman, 1030 and 1044-46, refer to a king of Kataha (Kedah in the Malay Peninsular) and Sri Visaya (Srivijaya). This sailendra king Cudamanivarman endowed and supported a Buddhist temple at Negapatam. In 1084, Kullotungacola dedicated a village to the above mentioned Buddhist temple, which is spoken of in the inscription as the Sailendracudamani varman-vihara.

2. See the Mahavamsa, History of Buddhism of Ceylon (Thai translation from the Pali) Made by royal command in 1976. 2 vols. Bangkok 2454, B.E.) it proves a comparatively late survival of Buddhism in Southern India.
3. Ferrand G.L'Empire sumatranais de Srivijaya,Paris,1922 pp.44-48.Ruins of this Vihara seem to have survived until 1867.
Hence, one can conclude that Indian Buddhism which expanded to the Malaya and some parts of Southern Thailand between the 7th-12th A.D. was the Mahayana Buddhism from the eastern India (Bengal) which was influenced by Tantric practices (Buddhist Tantras). And Hinayana Buddhism from the later centre in southern India (Negapatam) must have had some influences in Srivijaya kingdom.

And this form of Buddhism reached the eastern part of Thailand in the 10th Century A.D. by the victory of the king of Srivijaya over the king of Lavo (Lopburi) and flourished there for sometimes. This incident was recorded in the famous inscription of Sdok Kak Thom (1042 A.D.)

Therefore the Khmer received Mahayana Buddhism from Java and this concept flourished in the eastern part of Thailand under the Khmer power with its centre at Lopburi.

It was in the second half of the 13th century A.D. that the Buddhist empire of Srivijaya was losing control over the straits through the pressure of the Thai.

After that, Islam began to undermine its spiritual traditions over the Srivijaya empire.

From the evidences mentioned above, one can see that there was a direct contact between Eastern India and Srivijaya empire between the 8th-12th century A.D. As a matter of fact Buddhist Tantras which were known in that part of India during that time must have set a firm root in Srivijaya empire. The evidences of which can be seen in the monumental remains e.g. the shrine at Borobudur in Middle Java etc. In Thailand, many Mahayana stupas were found mostly in the south. As for sculpture, the images of Bodhisattva e.g. Padmapani, Vajrapani and others were discovered. The votive tablets made of unbaked clay which indicated the Mahayana concept were unearthed in Namorn Sri Thamarat Pataling, Trang Province.

**Concept of Deva-raja.**

Among the principal stone monuments of ancient Java, the majority of them are the so-called candi.  

1. In Mahayana tradition, for the merit of the dead monks, their ashes were mixed with clay for making votive tablet. These tablets could not have been baked again as the ashes had already been on fire once.  

2. This term is now applied to every Hinduistic sanctuary. Krom suggests that the word "Candi" originally designated a monument erected over the ashes of a deceased persons and that the word might be connected with candika one of the names of the goddess of death (Durga) see Clare Holt, *Art in Indonesia*, New York, 1967, p.39.
The candi in Java and Bali are temple-mausoleums or Antyesti temples, in which the ashes of royal personages were deposited in a stone casket buried in pit. Above it was erected a commemorative statue of a king or queen in the shape of a Hindu or Buddhist deity.

These archaeological evidences indicate that the concept of Devaraja existed in Indonesia since early time. The cult of Devaraja is the deification of royal ancestors. Though the royal images were set up in Indian temples, in human form and sometimes, the temples were specially erected for this purpose, as is indicated in Bhasa's Pratimanatika where the scene is laid in a temple of royal images in Ayodhya, the form of Devaraja does not appear in Indian art and life.

Outside India especially in the Hinduized kingdoms of Indochina and Indonesia, Hinduistic cults especially of Siva developed into the cult of royalty. According to this cult, the royal essence (the inner self) was supposed

2. The statues of Kushan Kings at Mathura.
to reside in the linga enshrined in a pyramid in the exact centre of the royal city which in turn was located in the centre of the world. This miraculous linga, a kind of palladium of the kingdom was supposed to have been obtained from Siva through an intermediary (A Brahman priest) who then gave it to the first king of the dynasty. This communion between the king and the god through the mediation of a priest took place on the sacred mountain located in the centre of the capital.\(^1\) Coedes explained that this concept might have originated among the aboriginals of Indonesia.\(^2\) When the Indian priests, who must have been popular among the tribals, converted the powerful chiefs to the new religion and anointed them as divine kings. These kings were supposed to be temporary incarnations on earth of various Hindu and Buddhist deities.

From Java, this concept spread to Cambodia and reached its zenith there. And from Cambodia it came to Thailand.

Khmer Kingdom (Lopburi Kingdom)

Many sculptural objects and architectural ruins have been discovered in the central eastern and north eastern region of Thailand. And the recent excavation conducted by the Fine Arts Department revealed that Khmer power reached the Western Thailand as Khmer building as well as other objects including the image of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara were discovered at Sing, Sub-district, Saiyok District, Kanchanaburi Province.

These remains of art are similar in style to those of the Khmer art (11th-13th A.D.) in Khmer region.

Not only artistic evidences indicate the Khmer power in Thai territory, but also the inscriptions produced by the Khmer kings of that period were unearthed in Thai region; - the inscription of King Suriyavarman I (c. 1010-1050 A.D.) found at Sal Chao Muang District, Lopburi Province. Hence the centre of Khmer power in

1. Subhadradis Diskul, Lopburi, Art p.1
2. Siam Radh (Thai Daily News) of 7th April, 1977, front page.
3. Subhadradis, op.cit. p.1
This region is considered to be Lopburi. One stele which was erected by king Jayavarman VII (1181-1218 A.D.), discovered in Cambodia at Prasad Phra Khan, mentioning Lopburi (therein it is called "Lavo") as one of the Khmer Towns seem to support this hypothesis.

Having Lopburi as its centre, Khmer power extended over the north eastern part and reached the north western part of Thailand.

Regarding religion, in the 11th -12th A.D., it seemed that Buddhism of both sects, Hinayana and Mahayana, flourished side by side with Hinduism. For the inscription, erected by King Suriyavarman I in 1022 A.D. at Lopburi (as already mentioned above) declares that the King had ordered that Mahayana and Sthavira (Hinayana) monks and Brahmanical Yogins offer the fruit of their meditations to the king. It was in the reign of King Jayavarman VII (c. 1181-1218 A.D.) that Mahayana Buddhism (Tantric form) seemed to be the dominant cult. This form of religion seemed to have strongly emerged at the end of

2. The Khmer accepted Buddhism (Mahayana and Hinayana) from the Sailendra of Java as discussed above.
of religion seemed to have strongly emerged at the end of the 12th A.D. In the inscription of Prasad Beng Vien which speaks of Rajendravarman's victories over the Chams and the Mons, a Buddhist trial is invoked that consists of the Buddha, Lokesvara and the Prajnaparamita. Jayavarman's Buddhism also focused on the Mahayana Trial, as he built the temple of Ta Prohm, to hold an image of Prajnaparamita the temple of Preah Khan to hold Lokesvara and the Bayon Temple of place Buddha.

**Concept of God King (Devaraja)**

It is necessary to mention here the continuation of concept of Devaraja, as it seem to be dominant in Cambodia through the age, and that its influence extended more or less to Thailand.

G. Coedes, the prominent French scholar of the South East Asia, noticed that among innumerable statues of deities left to us by the Khmer Empire, only a few of them were idealistic or impersonal representations of

the deities. The majority of them were portraits of kings and princes and high dignitaries, each represented as the god into whom he would be absorbed at the end of his earthly existence. And the names given to the statues, generally a composite of the names of the man and of the god, which indicate clearly that men were worshipped as gods.

In Cambodia, the installation of this royal cult, (Devaraja firstly took place in the ninth century by Jayavarman II, the first king of the Angkorian dynasty on the summit of Phnom Kulen. This cult was practised by the succeeding kings e.g. Yasovarman the builder of the first temple of Angkor installed the cult at the summit of phnom Bakheng. After the adoption of Buddhism in the second half of the twelfth century, the god king left his linga to enter into the statue of Buddha e.g. Jayavarman VII who built the Bayon to shelter the statue of the Buddha king in the Centre of the city of Angkor.

The national temple, which was erected by the king during his reign, was also the personal temple of the


2. The Initiation of this cult in Cambodia by Jayavarman II was stated in the inscription of Sdok Kak Thom (1042 A.D.) (See M.K. Sharan, Studies in Sanskrit, Inscriptions of Ancient Cambodia, p.256,) found at Aranyya District, Prachinburi Province, now preserved in the National Museum, Bangkok.
king himself. When after his death his ashes or mortal remains were deposited there to animate the idol and to give the cult a living image. The temple became his mausoleum, while his successor built another sanctuary for the god-king.

**Thai Period**

It was from the twelfth to the thirteenth century that the Thai firmly set their feet in the present Thai territory. By that time India was invaded by the Central Asiatic Muslims and Buddhism was about to decline; its last centre existed in Bengal. And from the 13th up to the 17th century, large parts of India were under the Muslim government, therefore there was little cultural contact between Indian and outside. Mahayanaism existed in Nepal and Tibet - whereas Hinayanaism flourished in Ceylon. As the people in the South East Asian countries are devotees of Hinayana (orthodox) Buddhism, they tried to contact Ceylon. However, not only the Ceylonese who are responsible for the introduction of Indian culture and civilization to Thailand, but also many other races who were strongly influenced by India civilization as mentioned above played their own part.
It is difficult to trace the Indian civilization in Thailand in Thai period as the formation of the present Thai kingdom only started at the end of the 13th century with Sukhothai as its capital. From the 12th to the 14th century, the Thai established many independent kingdoms in different parts of the country. It would be easy to trace the Indian civilization in the important kingdoms starting from the early ones, they are namely: Lanna, Sukhothai, Ayudhya and Bangkok.

**Lanna**

In the northern Thailand, between the late eleventh to the mid fourteenth century, there existed an independent Thai kingdom known as Lanna with its capital at Chiengsean.

The people of Lanna must have been influenced by the Hinayana Buddhism from the Mon. As the Lanna king in 1292 conquered the old Mon city, Haripunjaya (Lampun). Haripunjaya was at that time a colony of the Dvaravati kingdom and a stronghold of Hinayana Buddhism. It was

1. See two early Chronicals of North Siam, The Camadevivansa of Bodhiramsi and Jinakalamali of Ratanpana.

2. Jinakalamaliparana (Thai version) 2501, B.E., p.86
founded by Camadevi about the 8th century in the hills some 17 miles south of the later Thai-city of Chieng Mai.

Indian civilization from Burma also penetrated into this kingdom. For Thai literary mentioned the relationship with Burma in the reign of King Aniruddha (1044-1077 A.D.)¹ and Queen Camadevi of Haripunjaya². Archaeological evidences also support this contact, as many votive tablets which were discovered at Sukhothai and Srisajanalai were similar to the ones produced by King Aniruddha of Burma (They depict figure, of Buddha seated under the Shrine at Bodh Gaya ³, figs. 82, 156 and 157). Therefore Burmese style of art appeared in Lanna e.g. religious buildings at Wat Chiengman, Chiengmai Province, and Buddha images which show the influence of Indian Pala appear in a large number. They are seated Buddha in Bhumisparsa mudra. This type of image was the favourite type during Anirudha's reign.⁴ Thus, we can conclude that the influence of Indian Pala art reached northern region of Thailand through Burma.

4. Gordon H. Luce, Ibid. Chapter VIII, p.130
The direct contact between Lanna kingdom and India was in the reign of King Tiloka in 1455. He sent the mission to Bodh Gaya to copy the Bodh Gaya shrine to be built at Lanna. The seven Spires Monastery (Wat Chet Yot or Mahabhodharama) near Chiengmai built by King Tiloka resemble the shrine at Bodh Gaya. The king ordered seven shrines to be built on one pedestal. Each shrine marked one of the seven spots where the Buddha spent the seven weeks following his enlightenment. The story of the mission to Bodhgaya is related in an unpublished manuscript in the possession of the Buddhist Institute at Chiengmai. However, one manuscript says that the Minister of King Tiloka got the plans from the replica of the Mahabodhi at Pagan. For in Burma, there was also a mission dispatched to Bodhgaya by King Dharmacetiya of Pegu (Hainsavati) and he ordered a replica of Bodhgaya to be construct at Pegu.

In the 14th century in the reign of King Kuna (1355-1385) he requested the establishment of the Sinhalese school of monasticism in Lanna from Sukhothai.

2. See Mon Chronicle Nidana Arambhkatha, see the translation (giving an account of King Dharmacetiya's expedition to the Mahabodhi at Bodhgaya and his construction of a replica at Pegu) in A.B. Griswold, ibid. p.62, note 31.
Therefore Ceylonese style of art reached northern region.

In the mid 16th century A.D., the Burmese conquered Lanna and held the greater part of it for three hundred years. Therefore Burmese style of art influenced Thai art in this area. Only in the 19th century, Lanna became a part of Siam.

Sukhothai

The first king of Sukhothai, king Sri Intratit declared Sukhothai to be a state independent of the Khmer in the first half of the 13th century. Therefore Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism from Khmer (as evidenced by the remain of their art in Thailand) must have more or less influenced Thai people. In art, remains of shrines resembling north Indian temples appear they are known as "Prang". Therefore Mahayanism from northern India reached Thailand through the Khmers. Hindu deities e.g. Siva, Vishnu Uma etc. were produced. And Hindu temples were also built.


By the end of the 13th Century, King Ramkamhaeng, the third king of Sukhothai requested the monks of Sinhalese of Mahavihara sect who establish Hinayana Buddhism in the south of Thailand at Nakorn Sri Dharmaraj to come to Sukhothai. Therefore Hinayana Buddhism from south India came to Thailand by way of Ceylon. And from Ceylon it came to the south of Thailand as the earliest Ceylonese style of stupa exist at Nakorn Sri Dharmaraj. ¹ From the 13th century onward Ceylonese style of stupa became wellknown in Thai territory and this type of chedi continued to be the favourite type through the age.

There was a very close-contact between Sukhothai and Ceylon, Thai monks went to study in Ceylon at Wat Udumbaragiri in the centre of Mahavihara sect. This wat is situated in the forest near Mahavaluka River near Polonnalüwa. The inscription of King Lu Thai says that a Thai monk who came from the royal family named Phra-Mahathera Sri Sraddha Raja Chulamani went to India crossing the Bay of Bengal to Kalinga and from India he

came to Ceylon to study Tipitaka for ten years. From Ceylon he brought to Sukhothai Buddha Relic (the neck and the tooth) which were enshrined in Chedi at Sukhothai. Obtaining Buddha's Relic from Ceylon, Sukhothai people believed that Relic of Buddha were still available in Ceylon. Therefore many chedis were construct to enshrine Buddha's relic. This belief led to the construction of a new type of Chedi. It consists of a base (three square bases, small base surmounted the big one) surmounted by what looks like a kosa or funerary urn. For the funerary urn was utilised by the king and royal families for enshrining the ash of their deceased relatives. This type of Chedi became a typical Sukhothai chedi, the important one is the central chedi at Wat Mahadhet (Monastery of the Great Relinquary) at Sukhothai. (fig.128)

Besides the bell-shaped stupa of Ceylonese style and new type of stupa created by the Sukhothai artist, many other types of stupa and vihara became the prototype of some buildings in Thailand but they had short life. Only bell shaped stupa gained popularity through the age.

In sculpture, Sukhothai artists also created a new type of Buddha image which perfectly show superhuman anatomy.

Ayudhya

When Thai people founded their new capital at Ayudhya in the end of the 14th century. There are remains of both Hinayana and Mahayana monuments and objects e.g. Dvaravati image in Dharmacakra mudra, crowned Buddha image of Lopburi school (Khmer school). And the concept of Mahayana Buddhism seem to fade away. The people then combine two sects (Hinayana and Mahayana) together. Many Bodhisattva images were transformed into Buddha Images.

Moreover the Ayudhya people were familiar with the Khmer custom more than Sukhothai custom. They prefered Khmer school of art. They then combined Khmer art and Sukhothai art together.

As Ayudhya had been capital of Thailand for more than four hundred years, their work of arts are therefore uncountable. There are three different styles of art which show three different sources:¹

¹ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, History of Buddhist Monuments in Siam, in Thai, pp.130-135.
In the first period from 1352-1463 Ayudhya followed the Khmer in producing their art e.g. the prang at Wat Rajburana Ayudhya. Even Buddha image resemble Khmer Image.

The second period from 1463-1630 starting from the reign of King Boromtrailoknath who stayed for sometimes in the north at Pisanulok Province. He studied Sukhothai tradition and very much appreciated it. He then requested the Ceylonese monk to establish the validation of the ordination at Ayudhya. Therefore stupa buildings including Buddha image of Ayudhya followed Ceylonese style.

The third period from 1630-1732 starting from King Prasad Tong who successfully conquered Cambodia. To dignify his vitory, many Khmer style buildings were erected. Buddha images also resemble Khmer images. Most of them are made from sandstone the favorite material of Khmer sculpture.

From the reign of King Boromkot from 1732 upto the downfall of Ayudhya in 1767 A.D., it was the period of restoration of the old wats (Monasteries) Dressed Buddha images were prevalent.
Bangkok Period

In Bangkok period, though Hinayana Buddhism was still regarded as state religion and the contact between the Thai and the Ceylonese was not interrupted. But religious art was declining as the temples and Buddha images produced by the artists of the Bangkok school were merely imitation of the old style.

The direct contact between India and Thailand started again in the reign of King Rama IV and King Rama V. Marquis Curzon, the English Governor of India sent Buddha Relic dug up from Kapilabatra to King Rama V. This Relic is now enshrined in the casket inside the stupa on Suwanbanpot; Wat Sra Ket, Bangkok.¹

After King Rama V, the Thai kings turned their interest to Europe instead of Ceylon and India. Therefore, European civilization pour into Thailand and affect in Thai art and culture as well.

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¹ Damrong Rajanubhab, The History of Buddhist Monuments, B.E., pp.149-150.