The Mount of the Immortals

A note on Tamil cultural influence in fifth-century Indodrīna

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Ever since Pelliot first drew attention to it in 1903 the Mount of the Immortals has stubbornly resisted identification of both its name and its location. The circumstances in which it is mentioned are as follows. In the 2nd year of the Yung-ming period of the Southern Ch'i dynasty (A. D. 484), King Kau~Q.inya Jayavarman of the kingdom that is today rather inaccurately termed Fu-nan or B'iu-ngm sent the Indian Buddhist Nāgasena as his emissary to seek the support of the Chinese emperor for a war against Campā. While in China the envoy gave an account of conditions in B'iu-n~, a substantial part of which has been preserved in the Nan-Ch'i Shu, 58, 10b—11a. The relevant passage in this account runs:

*Nā-ka-sjān [Nāgasena] stated that it was the custom of that country to worship the celestial god *Muā-žiei-šigu-lā [Maheśvara]. This deity regularly descends on Mount *Muā-tām [so that] the climate is constantly mild and herbs and trees do not wither.

1 Paul PELLIOT, "Le Fou-nan", Bulletin de l'Eco/e Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, tome 3 (1903), pp. 248—303. Earlier in the same year Etienne AYMONIER had attempted to identify the kingdom of Fu-nan but had not mentioned its sacred mountain ["'Le Fou­nan", Journal Asiatique, 10e série, tome 1 (1903), pp. 109—150]. This paper also contained a list of previous authors who had speculated on the location of Fu-nan (including Wilford, Bowring, Garnier, Rémusat, de Guignes, de Rosny, Klaproth, Pautier, Hervey de Saint-Denis, Barth, Blagden, Schlegel, and Takakusu) but, as far as I have been able to ascertain, none of these authors had commented on the mons sacer.


The usual Chinese transcription of the name used to denote this kingdom was *B'ju-nām but a possible *Ju-ŋ-nām occurs once, in Tso Szū's San-tu Fu [3] (3rd century), and I Ching, an able philologist whose protracted labors in the precise translation of difficult mantras had endowed him with a rare expertise in the transcription of foreign words, on two occasions used respectively the forms *Buált-nām [2] and *Puā-nām [4], while retaining the customary transcription in a third reference: Nan-hai Chi-kuei Nei-fa Chuan, 1, 4a, and Ta-T'ang Hsi-yü Kao-seng Chuan [5], 1, 2.
Nāgasena also submitted a written report on *B'ju-nām, part of which reads:

Good fortune is pervading the world, profoundly affecting all mankind, the reason being that divine power is bringing about the transformation to enlightenment. On the mount of the immortals called *Muā-tām the tree of fortune bears an abundance of fine blossom, so that the divine Mud-xiei-sisu-lā regards it with favor, to send down his holy spirit. The princes of the country all receive its protection and the people are all tranquil. It is because this grace is all-pervading that the subjects [of the King] are submissive to authority.

As long ago as 1928 George Coedès identified the hsien shan mentioned in these texts with the Bā-Phnom, a low hill situated a few kilometres to the southeast of present-day Phnom-Pen, but made no attempt to reconstruct the original toponym, presumably an honorific of some sort, that the Chinese rendered as *Muā-tām. Some thirty years later Louis Malleret suggested

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3 These lines are in verse, and Pelliot "a vu mal la suite des idées" ("Le Fou-nan", p. 260, note 4). It seems that the language carries some of the technical implications of Buddhist terminology, which is not altogether surprising in light of the fact that Nāgasena was a Buddhist and that his report was addressed to an emperor well disposed towards that faith. Buddhist usage is apparent in the terms hua yüan, defined by W. E. Soothill and L. Hodous as, "The cause of a Buddha's or bodhisattva's coming to the world, i. e. the transformation of the living" [A dictionary of Chinese Buddhist terms (Revised edition, T'ai-pei, N. D.), p. 142], and ming, presumably to signify Buddhist enlightenment (Soothill and Hodous, Dictionary, p. 262), while chi (srī), li (patu, tikṣna), kan, she, chün, and sheng are all characters that would have flowed easily from the brush of a devout 5th-century Buddhist monk.

4 Hsien is a word with broad connotations that are capable of a rather wide range of translations. In English it has often been rendered as "[Taoist] immortal". Edward H. Schafer normally translates it as "transcendent", and sometimes as "sylph". He writes, "The word actually connotes 'having the ability to spring up out of the mire of the material world into the realm of spirit, symbolized by unearthly journeys to sky castles and island paradises', with linguistic cognates meaning 'soaring, flying, flapping up'. In Han times it had ordinarily been used as a verb to characterize the activity of the 'Feathered Men', who were Taoist adepts and initiates, transformed men shown pictorially with angelic wings" [The Vermilion Bird, T'ang images of the south (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), p. 7]. In the present text I think hsien probably signifies little more than "supernatural" in a vague sense.

5 The concluding phrase kuei-ch'ing is uncommon, and I have found it recorded in only one dictionary, Morohashi 6439/ ½ where it is rendered as "to wish to return (e. g., home)". However, the phrase is also cited as synonymous with kuei hsin, which Tzŭ Hai and Tzŭ Yuän both explain as "to submit with pleasure". It would seem that it was a meaning close to this that was intended in the present instance.

that the triple-peaked Núi Ba-thê, at the foot of which the city now known as Oc-ëo was laid out, might have been the sacred mountain referred to, but he similarly refused to speculate on the form of the ancient name. At much the same time Mme Eveline Porée-Maspero proposed that it should be equated with the hill of Tây-ninh in the Trans-Bassac. In recent times this eminence has been known variously, to the Viêtnamese as Núi Ba-den (= Mountain of the Black Lady), to the Cambodians as Phnom Mi (or Mé) Dên or Phnom Coñ Bă Dên, and perhaps also as Coñ Băk Dên. According to a local legend Mount Mé Dên (which is the form on which Mme Porée-Maspero has based her identification) was erected by a certain Mé Dang during a contest between herself and a youth from a neighboring village. Versions of this myth are widely diffused in Southeast Asia, and are sometimes taken to preserve archetyped remembrances of a postulated, but so far undocumented, conversion from a matriarchal to a patriarchal family system. Mount Mé Dên has not only proved to be the site of several ancient liṅga, but is — or at least was when political conditions permitted — also a place of pilgrimage for barren women desiring children. “Il faudrait”, comments Mme Porée-Maspero, “supposer que Mahecvara [of the Chinese text] ‘descend’ et a son symbole sur le mont bâti par les femmes, et qu’inversement Umā [Śiva’s consort] serait honoré sur le mont dressé par les hommes,” that is the Bà Phnom of which Umā Mahiśāsura is, in Cambodian folk lore, the guardian deity (nāk tà), and which was popularly alleged to have been raised by men.

Essentially this argument rests on an implied phonological similarity between the Modern Cambodian Mé Dên and the Ancient Chinese *Mûa-tîm (though Mme Porée-Maspero cited the graphs in their Modern Standard Chinese transcription as Mo-tan). At first glance there is an attractive simplicity to this reasoning which promises simultaneously to provide answers to

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graphs for Fu-nan with the Khmer phnom = hill, and located the capital of the country at Bà-Phnom: Researches on Ptolemy’s geography of eastern Asia (London, 1909), p. 209.

7 Known to the Cambodians as Bhnam Pâ Thê, Pâ Dêh, or sometimes as Bhnam Pă Samnêr.


10 Cf. G. Janneau, Manuel pratique de la langue cambodgienne (Saigon, 1870), p. 142.


12 These forms illustrate a practice of maintaining alliterative affinities between names connected with the same event that is common in southern Indochina: vide Porée-Maspero, Etude, p. 139.


14 Porée-Maspero, Etude sur les rites agraires, tome 1, p. 139.
the twin questions of the identification and location of the sacred mountain. But on closer inspection there can be no doubt that it is a misleading oversimplification. In the first place, as a tool of the transcriber 'muā' was normally used to render ma- or -ma- in words such as Maheśvara (a classic example occurs in the same passage in which Muā-tām is mentioned); Mahāśrī ('Muā-χā-śjāt-liji'\footnote{A fifth morpheme was slightly irregular, being vocalized as tām\cite{karlgren} (KARLGRREN, Grammata Serica Recensa 656k).}) in numerous Buddhist texts; Malayu ('Muā-lā-yau')\footnote{In attempting to elicit a phonetically more satisfactory identification of 'Muā-tām, it may be helpful to state briefly some of the implications of the texts quoted above in so far as they can be inferred on general grounds. The fundamental import of Nāgasena's memorial so far as it concerns this enquiry would seem to be that a Śaivite cult was practised on a sacred "mountain" — in reality no elevation in the lower Mekong valley could} in Ts'ē-lu Yūan-kuei, 970, 10a, and T'ang Hui-yao, 100, 13b; Mahācampā ('Muā-χā-tṣjām-puā')\footnote{In short, and discounting the fact that Mme Porée-Maspero's equation is based on contemporary vocalizations, the phonetic correspondance between the Khmer and Chinese names falls short of that customarily attained in medieval Chinese transcriptions of foreign toponyms.} in Hsüan Tsang's Ta-T'ang Hsi-yū Chi, 10, 51a; or Vima ('Iwi-muā, for Vima[ aka r i t i])\footnote{None of these graphs, I think, would have been pressed into service by a competent transcriber of the 6th century in order to convey the Khmer sound dēn. In short, and discounting the fact that Mme Porée-Maspero's equation is based on contemporary vocalizations, the phonetic correspondance between the Khmer and Chinese names falls short of that customarily attained in medieval Chinese transcriptions of foreign toponyms.} in I Ching's Ta-T'ang Hsi-yū Chi'iu-la Kao-seng Chuan, 98b. Another transcription in this last text (57a) has particular relevance to the present enquiry, for it incorporates both the characters with which we are here concerned, though in reverse order: Tāmalitti (the Pāli form of Tāmlapūṭi) is rendered as ' Tām-muā-ljap-tieī'\footnote{In short, and discounting the fact that Mme Porée-Maspero's equation is based on contemporary vocalizations, the phonetic correspondance between the Khmer and Chinese names falls short of that customarily attained in medieval Chinese transcriptions of foreign toponyms.}.' It does not appear likely that a knowledgeable and scholarly Chinese author of the 6th century would have employed 'muā as a transcription of the Old Khmer equivalents of Mé or Mi, for which he would almost certainly have preferred a form such as 'mjēg or 'mjēt\footnote{None of these graphs, I think, would have been pressed into service by a competent transcriber of the 6th century in order to convey the Khmer sound dēn. In short, and discounting the fact that Mme Porée-Maspero's equation is based on contemporary vocalizations, the phonetic correspondance between the Khmer and Chinese names falls short of that customarily attained in medieval Chinese transcriptions of foreign toponyms.} (e. g. 'kju-liu-mjiēt-ka\footnote{In short, and discounting the fact that Mme Porée-Maspero's equation is based on contemporary vocalizations, the phonetic correspondance between the Khmer and Chinese names falls short of that customarily attained in medieval Chinese transcriptions of foreign toponyms.} for karmika: Sui Shu, 82, 4a).

The second element in the Chinese transcription under consideration does not figure among Karlsgren's reconstructions, but presumably belonged with a series of four linguistic cognates\footnote{None of these graphs, I think, would have been pressed into service by a competent transcriber of the 6th century in order to convey the Khmer sound dēn. In short, and discounting the fact that Mme Porée-Maspero's equation is based on contemporary vocalizations, the phonetic correspondance between the Khmer and Chinese names falls short of that customarily attained in medieval Chinese transcriptions of foreign toponyms.} vocalized with a sound very close to tām\footnote{None of these graphs, I think, would have been pressed into service by a competent transcriber of the 6th century in order to convey the Khmer sound dēn. In short, and discounting the fact that Mme Porée-Maspero's equation is based on contemporary vocalizations, the phonetic correspondance between the Khmer and Chinese names falls short of that customarily attained in medieval Chinese transcriptions of foreign toponyms.}, among them two graphs\footnote{In short, and discounting the fact that Mme Porée-Maspero's equation is based on contemporary vocalizations, the phonetic correspondance between the Khmer and Chinese names falls short of that customarily attained in medieval Chinese transcriptions of foreign toponyms.} which have sometimes, though erroneously, been regarded as interchangeable with the present character. None of these graphs, I think, would have been pressed into service by a competent transcriber of the 6th century in order to convey the Khmer sound dēn. In short, and discounting the fact that Mme Porée-Maspero's equation is based on contemporary vocalizations, the phonetic correspondance between the Khmer and Chinese names falls short of that customarily attained in medieval Chinese transcriptions of foreign toponyms.
have been anything more than a hill — in *B'ju-nām. However, this at first sight seemingly incontrovertible reading of the text has been disputed. Professor Kalyan Kumar Sarkar has argued that the Mahesvara mentioned in the Nan-Ch'i Shu referred not to Śiva but to the Bodhisattva specified later in the same memorial, and that the whole passage was a Mahāyāna Buddhist formulation. This interpretation, which requires that Nägasena’s account be read from a Tantric point of view, is rendered dubious by the date of Nägasena’s journey to China, namely 484, whereas the earliest dated evidence of Mahāyāna Buddhism anywhere in Southeast Asia is an inscription from Talang Tuwo, near Palembang in Sumatra, that has been ascribed to 684. The doctrine seems to have diffused at all widely only during the second half of the 8th century in response to the dual stimuli of the political prestige of the Pāla dynasty and the teaching of the university of Nālanda. In Cambodia the first extant epigraphical record of Mahāyāna Buddhism is an inscription found in the province of Siemrêap and dated no earlier than 791. In any case the two sections of the memorial that refer respectively to Mahesvara and the Bodhisattva are cast in different conceptual moulds, and it would seem a priori unlikely that there would have been an alternation of terms between them such as is envisaged by Professor Sarkar. In the second half of the passage the Bodhisattva is referred to explicitly enough as *B'uo-sāṭ [for *B'uo-d'iei-sāṭ-tud] and I have been unable to detect Tantric overtones in the language of the memorial. Furthermore, Professor Bhattacharya has pointed out that, in the official response to Nägasena’s petition, the Ch’i Emperor acknowledged the role of Mahesvara as a source of spiritual power (ling) and expressed approval of the Śaivite cult practices, even though they were “alien usages and strange customs” (shu-su i-hua). "Que pouvaient être," asks Professor Bhattacharya, “aux yeux des Chinois, ces ‘coutumes lointaines’, ces ‘moeurs étrangères’, sinon des


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coutumes, des moeurs non bouddhiques"\(^{19}\) But the primary reason for rejecting Professor Sarkar’s thesis will become apparent later in this paper. The existence of a Saivite cult in "B’iu-nām at the end of the 5th century, by contrast, not only appears to be a reasonable inference if it is seen as a precursor of the Saivite devotionalism that flowered in Cambodia in the 7th century\(^{20}\), but is supported by a passage in the Liang Shu, 54, 8b that probably relates to the reign of Kaundinya Jayavarman at the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries, but which cannot in any case be later than the middle of the latter century. This passage notes that among the statuary of "B’iu-nām were bronze figures with two faces and four arms that can only have been representations of Harihara, a syncretism of Śiva and Viṣṇu\(^{21}\). No sculpture of this type from the 6th century has yet come to light, but the stone head of such a statue dated to about 650 has been found on the Phnom Ba-thé\(^{32}\). Already by the second half of the fourth century, in the neighboring kingdom of Campā, inscriptions cut to the order of a King Bhadravarman attest to the dominance at the royal court of the cult of Śiva-Umā\(^{23}\), and in the pre-Aṅkorian kingdom known to the Chinese as "Ts’ījen-lāp (MSC = Chen-la\(^{28}\)) Saivism was sufficiently prominent to be properly regarded as the state religion. Although even before the end of the 6th century the brothers Bhavavarman and Citrasena-Mahendravarman appear to have been, in Bhattacharya’s phrase, “de fervents adorateurs de Śiva”\(^{24}\), the earliest extant

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\(^{22}\) Louis Mallaret, *Pour comprendre la sculpture bouddhique et brahmanique en Indochine* (Saigon, 1942), pl. XXVI, 1, and *L’archéologie du delta du Mékong*, I, pp. 89 and 409—410, and pl. LXXXVIIIb; Dupont, *La statuaire prangkoriennne*, p. 28, pl. III A.


\(^{24}\) Bhattacharya, *Les religions brahmaniques*, p. 24. In the Sui Shu, 82, 7b—8a, which is here reporting on events immediately prior to 589, there is mention of a mountain called the Līghaparvata (Chinese transcription = *Liang-ka-puan-b’uḍa*\(^{29}\), on the summit of which was a temple dedicated to the god (shen) "B’uḍ-lālī (MSC = Bhadreśvara), the name under which Śiva was worshipped at Vat Phu [Coëdès, "La tradition généalogique des premiers rois d’Angkor", p. 124]. It was during this period, too, that Citrasena, later King Mahendravarman, erected a
explicit expression of Śaivite doctrine in Cambodia is incorporated in an epigraphic invocation to the god recovered from Phnom Bāyān and dated 526 Śaka (A.D. 604)25. Nearly a quarter of a century later (549 Ś, A.D. 627) the earliest mention of the Pāṣupata sect occurs in an inscription from Sambór-Prei Kūk26. To sum up: even though there is no extant epigraphic evidence of Śaivism in *B'ju-nām contemporary with Nāgasena’s petition, such cults became so prominent in succeeding centuries that it would seem not unreasonable to regard the Mahēśvara of Mount Mūd-lām as an early manifestation of the same complex of beliefs.

The Chinese text also exhibits an interesting parallel with a ninth-century Javanese metrical inscription transcribed, translated, and annotated by de Casparis27. In the translation of the textus amplior on p. 1, I have proposed two possible translations of chi-shu lu-chia yung. Pelliot offered a version similar to the second of my alternatives ("les arbres fortunés y prospèrent en grand nombre")28. However, if the reference were to a single tree, then the passage would be reminiscent of the following lines abstracted from a rather lengthy description (perhaps evocation were a more apt word) of a Javanese Śaivite temple-complex:

"... there also was a Tañjung tree...

Of the tree Ki Muhūr (?) the trunk was only one year old. The proximity of the Lord was the reason for its matchless growth on the Eastern side. Its beauty was extraordinary, equal to the [divine] Pārijātaka tree; it was the place where the God would descend29 and [its branches] would be a parasol [for the God]. Was it not a God for the God?30?

The Pārijāta (or Pārijātaka) to which the temple tañjung tree (Mimusops elengi, Linn.) is here compared was one of the five sacred trees produced series of linga along the Mekong, in the vicinities of Kratié and Stung Treng [Louis Finot, "Notes d’épigraphie, IV: Inscription de Thma Kré (Cambodge)", Bulletin de l’Ecole Francaise d’Extrême Orient, tome 3 (1903), p. 212; Adhémar Leclère, "Une campagne archéologique au Cambodge", loc. cit., tome 4 (1904), p. 739], and in the region between the Mun river and the Danrek upland [Erik Seidenfaden, "Complément à L’Inventaire descriptif des monuments du Cambodge pour les quatre provinces du Siam oriental", loc. cit., tome 22 (1922), p. 57—58, and "Chronique", loc. cit., p. 385].

26 George Coëdès, Inscriptions du Cambodge (Hanoi, 1937) tome 1, pp. 3 et seq.
29 Panawataran = Skt. avatāra with the Javanese affixes pa- and -an and the long vowels shortened to meet the exigencies of the meter; signifying "the place of an avatāra". Cp. the Chinese chiang31 = "to descend", "to send down", which occurs in both parts of the Chinese text.
during the Churning of the Ocean\textsuperscript{31}. The inscription, whose provenance is unknown, was erected by Dyah Lokapāla\textsuperscript{32}, whose regnal name was Rakai Kayuwañi, in 856 during a Śaivite renaissance. Despite the difference of nearly four centuries in the dates of the Chinese and the Javanese texts, the two passages seem to be remarkably similar in spirit: in both a luxuriant growth of vegetation is held to signify that a particular locality is an appropriate setting for a Śaivite theophany\textsuperscript{33}. In view of this similarity I am inclined, without any great degree of conviction, to prefer the first of the translations proposed above.

The outstanding event in Cambodian history in which Śiva figured on a mountain occurred in 802, when Jayavarman II signified the re-unification of the kingdom, its political autonomy, and the institution of an official cult focussed on himself as cakravartin by raising, according to the ritual of the sacred Vināśikhā, a līṅga that subsequently in Khmer epigraphy was accorded the honorific "Lord of the Universe who is King" (Skt. devarāja; Old Khmer Kamraten jagat ta rāja)\textsuperscript{34}. The establishment (sthāpāna) of the līṅga took place on Mount Mahendra (Mahendraparvata), which has long been identified with the Phnom Kulén, the sandstone plateau that overlooks the Āṅkor plain from the north\textsuperscript{35}. At first glance is would seem reasonable to recognize devarāja as a designation of Indra, who is commonly characterized as "King of the Gods", and who might be expected to dwell on the "Mount of the Great Indra". But neither have cults such as that allegedly instituted by Jayavarman II ever been associated with Indra, nor is the līṅga a symbol of that god. The place of this cult in the congeries of evolving beliefs that we call Hinduism becomes apparent only when we turn to texts from the subcontinent itself.


\textsuperscript{33} For the significance of such hierophanies in a wider context see, int. al., Mircea Eliade, Le mythe de l'éternel retour: archétypes et répétition (Paris, 1949).


\textsuperscript{35} Etienne Aymonier, Le Cambodge, tome 1 (Paris, 1900), p. 428; George Coëdès, "Les capitales de Jayavarman II", Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, tome 28 (1928), pp. 117—119; Philippe Stern, "Travaux exécutés au Phnom Kulén", loc. cit., tome 38 (1938), pp. 151—173. Recently George Coëdès has demonstrated that the use of devarâja and kamraten jagat ta rāja with the connotation stated here was an anachronism in a ritual ascribed to 802. Most probably the terms were insinuated into the Sdôk Kâk Thom inscription in 1052, some two and a half centuries after the event, by a member of the brâhman gotra whose fortunes had become linked with that particular cult. It is Coëdès's contention that the terms in question had been devised as late as the reign of Jayavarman IV (921—941), a monarch of dubious legitimacy, as a means of validating his own claim to the throne. Henceforward, the essence of kingship would inhere not in the person of the ruler but in the abstract notion of royalty, of the kingdom at large ["Le culte de la royauté divine au Cam-
Some of the relevant texts are in Sanskrit. The *Kaśyapaśilpa*[^36], for instance, the Tantric *Niśvāsatathasamhitā*[^37], the *Svacchandatantra*[^38], and several Gaṅga inscriptions ranging in time from the 6th (or perhaps 7th) century to the 13th or 14th[^39], all refer to Śiva, not Indra, as residing on the Mahendra-parvata. And always Śiva is "the god of the mountain". As Śiva Giriśa he is the god who slumbers upon the mountain; as Śiva Giriśa he is the lord of the mountain; as Śiva Giritra he is the protector of the mountain; and his consort is Pārvatī or Haimavatī, goddess of the mountain, or Śikharavā-sini, she who resides on the peaks[^40]. But it is still the Sanskrit name Mahendra that is associated with the god, and this is a form that cannot have been the original of the Chinese transcription Muā-tām. Somewhat unexpectedly in the general context of the brāhmaṇization of Southeast Asia as it has been customarily presented, it is in Tamil (not Sanskrit) Śaivite literature that the source of the Chinese transcription must be sought. The relevant texts have recently been assembled in convenient translation by Professor Filliozat[^41], from whose versions the following citations are taken.

The earliest extant Tamil reference to Śiva as the King of the Gods occurs in the 6th-century *Tiruvirattaimanimālai* of the woman saint Kāraikkālammaiyār, who unequivocally designates the god as "Lord of the Immortals" (amarar piran)[^42]. But the most numerous and most explicit passages enunciating Śiva on Mount Mahendra are to be found in the *Tiruvācakam*, the "Sacred Utterances" that constitute a veritable spiritual autobiography of the Tamil saint Māṇikkavāacakar, perhaps the greatest of all exponents of the Śaivasiddhānta, who lived probably during the 9th century:


[^36]: *Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series*, 95, 1, 1.


[^43]: Cp. also XXIII, 2 where Viṣṇu, Brāhmaṇ, and Indra come to pay homage to Śiva, who bestows on them his grace. Incidentally, the Śaiva-Siddhānta accords high prominence to the operation of divine grace (Tamil arul), and it is a moot point whether the word en[^39], a Chinese near-synonym, was employed in Nāgaseṇa's petition (p. 98) as an unconscious expression of his Buddhist sympathies or deliberately as an accurate rendering of a cardinal Śaivite concept.
II, 8—10. Taking as his abode the great mountain *Mayentiram* [the Tamil vocalization of Sanskrit *Mahendra*] where he established his seat and his glory, there he granted the grace of manifesting the tradition (*āgamam*).

II, 19—20. From his seat on the Mayentiram, he [Śiva] granted the grace of giving them [the Āgamas] with his five fruitful mounths.

II, 100. He [Śiva] who possesses the great mountain of the mantras, the Mayentiram.

Furthermore, Śiva was King of the gods:

XIX, 7. For Indra, Viṣṇu, Brāhmaṇ and the other gods, he is the King. Brāhmaṇ and Viṣṇu call him: "Our great one, the Lord of gods (*emperumāṉ Revarpirāṉ*)."

XXVIII, 9. He is invoked: "O God of the gods themselves."

XXXVII, 7. O King of those who are above.

The pre-eminence of Śiva among the gods is also illustrated in the following passages:

VIII, 3. Indra, Viṣṇu, Aja and the other celestials are beyond [this world]; Śiva has been granted the grace to come to the Earth . . .

VIII, 4. The gods who went to the sky, Viṣṇu, Aja and Indra, have dried themselves in the jungle [in performing tapas], rising like ant-hills and hardly do they see him [Śiva] . . .

IX, 3. He is the king of those who are beyond [this world].

More generally according to Māṇikkavācakar, Śiva is the luminous protector of the Mayentiram [Mahendra] (XLIII, 9), the god of the Kailāsa (II, 146; VI, 34, 40; XXIII, 10), and — in Filliozat's summary phrases — "the King and owner of every holy place, of every town, of every kingdom, of the universe, and specially the king of the Gods" . . .

Phonology and context here combine to support the conjecture that in *Mayentiram*, the Tamil form of the name for the abode of Śiva, is to be discerned the origin of the Chinese *Muā-tōn*. Another passage in the *Tiruvācakam* goes a long way towards confirming this interpretation. In Hymn XLIII, 2 in particular, and generally in numerous subsequent formulations, Śiva is said to have taken the form of a bunter on the Mayentiram. Now it is well known that, according to later inscriptions the capital of *Bju-nām*, situated at the foot of the cosmic *axis mundi regnique*, at one time was *Vyādhapura* , hitherto usually translated as the City of the Hunters, but now surely to be rephrased, as the rules for Sanskrit compounds permit, as the City of the Hunter (Śiva). It is perhaps significant that the *Hsin T'ang-Shu*
preserves the Old Khmer translation of this honorific, *dmâk or dalmâk, under the transcription *d'âk-mjuk [33], but makes no reference to the Sanskrit form [46]. The Tang history, although dealing officially with the period between 618 and 906, is here describing the situation in *B'iu-nâm prior to the abandonment of Vyâdhapura as a result of military pressure from the northward during the second half of the 6th century. It is, therefore, not unlikely that Vyâdhapura, the City of the Hunter, may have been the capital some three-quarters of a century earlier when Nâgasena was reporting that Śiva, in Saivasiddhânta lore the Hunter, descended on the Mayentiram. There is no epigraphic record of the Saivasiddhânta as such in either India or Cambodia prior to a Pallava inscription of the 7th century from Kâñcipuram [47], but the PuRanâNuRu, the oldest collection of Tamil verse extant, attests that the cult of Śiva, in association with Vedic recitations and sacrifice, was popular in South India in the time of the Pânḍyan King Palyâkacalai, who is thought to have reigned prior to A.D. 400 [48].

If, as we have tried to show, Śiva the Hunter on the Mahendraparvata was recorded in *B'iu-nâm in 484 [49], and if Śaivite cults existed in the Tamil country before 400, might they not have been introduced into Southeast Asia as early as the 3rd century A.D. — or possibly even earlier — and might not the sacred mountain, the cosmic omphalos from which either the ruling dynasty or the territory (or both) took its name have been ab initio the Mayentiram?

The use of the Tamil form of a name in a deposition submitted to the Chinese court in 484 is at first sight surprising in view of the general function of Sanskrit in the early centuries of the Christian era as the language of literary communication both within the Indian subcontinent and abroad, but it is not the only instance of Tamil cultural influence in southern Indochina during the *B'iu-nâm period, nor is it the earliest. In the style of an ancestor

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[33] 特牧  [34] 康泰：扶南土俗

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Some years ago Professor O. W. Wolters drew attention to a passage in the 3rd-century Fu-nan t'u-su of K'ang T'ai [34], now preserved only in the T'ai-p'ing Yû-lan, in which a king of *B'iu-nâm is said to have captured and tamed mighty elephants as a means of inducing the submission of neighboring kingdoms [Wolters, private communication cited in Coëtès, Les états hindouïsés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie (Paris, 1964), p. 75, note 1]. The implication might have been that the King, by identifying with, and thereby emulating, Śiva as the divine Hunter on the Mahendraparvata, and perhaps also as Paśupati, the Lord of Beasts, was able to subdue his rivals in the same way as the god hunted and tamed the wild animals on his mountain.

[48] Ibid.

[49] It is well known that in their transcriptions of foreign names medieval Chinese authors often attempted, with varying degrees of success, to render simultaneously sound and sense. It is just possible — though I advance the idea with a good deal of trepidation — that the form *Mud-tâm was intended to convey not only the name Mayentiram but also the sense of "[the place where] Ma[heśvara] lingers".
of a ruler tributary to "B'ju-nám who is mentioned on the famous stele from Vo-canh Filliozat has discerned a Tamil royal title. The ancestor in question appears on the stele as Śrī Māra, which Filliozat has shown, in the context established by the inscription, can only have been a Sanskrit rendering of MāRaN, a frequent element in the titularies of the Pāṇḍyan kings of Maturai. After a scholarly debate lasting more than eighty years the date of the Vo-canh inscription now seems to have been firmly ascribed on palaeographic grounds to the 3rd century A.D.51. In South India the title māRaN is found not long after the beginning of the Christian era, occurring for example in the PuRanāNūRu 55.6, 56.21, 57.3, and 198.27. But Māra or MāRaN was an ancestor, probably of the fourth generation, of the ruler who caused the inscription to be cut in the third century, which would probably place his rule in the 2nd century A.D. However, as Filliozat has shrewdly observed, "On peut aussi se demander si le roi Śrīmāra a jamais régé précisément là où son descendant a fait graver la stèle et s'il ne s'agit pas d'un roi Pāṇḍya, comme son titre de MāRaN semblerait l’indiquer, dont ce descendant évoquerait dans un royaume d’Indochine le souvenir et la tradition pāṇḍya"52. The point of concern in the present context is that in the 3rd century a Tamil name, for one reason or another, was important enough to be recorded on stone.

None of the foregoing throws light on the location, as opposed to the identification, of the Mayentiram in "B’ju-nám. My own preference is for Coedès’s identification with the Vraḥ Vnam the Bā-Phnom of modern times (p. 98 above), though against this equation can be adduced an apparent absence of definitive archaeological confirmation on aerial photographs53. The vicinity of the hill has yielded no inscription earlier than the reign of Îśānavarman I, who probably came to the throne in about 615. But this lack of material evidence cannot be regarded as conclusive until thorough archaeological investigation has been undertaken on the ground in the neighborhood

of the Bà-Phnom. If an alternative hill had to be sought as the original of Nāgasena’s Mayentiram, then the Phnom Đà overlooking the city known today as Ankor Bôrêi, would suggest itself. Here an extensive rampart, vestiges of a cult centre, and other archaeological remains bear witness to the former existence of an important settlement, sufficiently important in fact to warrant not only the canalization of the Châu-dóc river leading northwestward from the Bassac, but also the cutting of an independent channel linking Ankor Bôrêi to the port at Oc-êo and ultimately to the Gulf of Siam. One difficulty with this argument would be the fact that, as the history of *B’ju-nām* is currently understood, Ankor Bôrêi became the capital following the abandonment of Vyādhapura. Although the presently available evidence, mostly inferential in character, would seem to favour the Bà-Phnom as the most likely locale for the Southeast Asian Mayentiram, this is a matter on which definitive certainly will have to await the advent of new evidence, either archaeological or epigraphic.

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