Return to P’ong Tuk: Preliminary Reconnaissance of a
Seminal Dvaravati Site in West-central Thailand

A thesis presented to
the faculty of
the Center for International Studies of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts

Wesley S. Clarke
March 2012
© 2011 Wesley S. Clarke. All Rights Reserved.
This thesis titled
Return to P’ong Tuk: Preliminary Reconnaissance of a
Seminal Dvaravati Site in West-central Thailand

by

WESLEY S. CLARKE

has been approved for
the Center for International Studies by

__________________________
Elizabeth Collins
Professor of Classics and World Religions

__________________________
Christine Su
Interim Director, Southeast Asian Studies

__________________________
Daniel Weiner
Executive Director, Center for International Studies
Abstract

CLARKE, WESLEY S., M.A., March 2012, Southeast Asian Studies

Return to P’ong Tuk: Preliminary Reconnaissance of a Seminal Dvaravati Site in West-central Thailand (238 pp.)

Director of Thesis: Elizabeth Collins.

The archaeological site of P’ong Tuk, located in Kanchanaburi Province, west-central Thailand, was subject to field investigations by George Coedes in 1927 and H. G. Quaritch Wales in 1935. Both investigations uncovered substantial material remains, including architectural and mortuary features and ritual objects, used to help define an early Buddhist “Dvaravati” cultural expression in the region of central Thailand. These early investigations, however, while regularly cited in the scholarly literature, were brief and minimally reported. The present study undertakes a reevaluation of the Coedes and Quaritch Wales data in light of new concepts and comparative evidence for the Dvaravati culture, as well as an integration of the published material with newly available information from Quaritch Wales’ field notes, and from a field reconnaissance of P’ong Tuk in 2008. This re-evaluation and integration of site data permits the identification of several new cultural patterns at the site, as well as new avenues for future research.

Approved:

___________________________________________

Elizabeth Collins

Professor of Classics and World Religions
Dedicated to

my patient spouse Hattie.
Acknowledgments

I would like to sincerely thank the staff of the National Research Council of Thailand, specifically Kanchana Pankhoynagam, Chobvit Lubpairee, Pannee Panyawattanaporn, and Yada Sommarat for their guidance in preparing and conducting my research plan. I also thank Supamas Doungsakun of the 2nd Regional Office of Fine Arts Department, Suphanburi, for serving as my Thai collaborator and for her help in the field at P’ong Tuk. Somchai Na Nakhonphanom, Executive Director of the the National Museum, was gracious in allowing me to photograph Dvaravati artifacts on display in Bangkok. I am also indebted to my archaeological colleagues Podjanok Kanjanajuntnorn, now professor with the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology at Thammasat University, Patumtani, Thailand; and Rachanie Thosarat, retired from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand and currently a Research Associate in Anthropology at the University of Otago (New Zealand), for providing indispensable advice and encouragement regarding this research project; and for the substantial efforts of my friend Katherine McConigley, currently Senior Investigator with the Western Australilian Department of Environment and Conservation, to conduct a detailed search in person of the Coedes holdings at the National Library of Australia, Canberra. The spousal team of Kob Kachonsittinoppakun and Pop Indrapiboon also provided translation and transportation services, as well as genial companionship, that were essential to the success of my field work.

Venerable Phra Khru Jariyaphirat, abbot of Wat Dong Sak, was a gracious host and indispensable source of information and encouragement during our visit to P’ong Tuk. His willingness to make the wat’s collection available for this research was a blessing both academically and personally.

I am also grateful for the patient support and guidance of my thesis committee, composed of Elizabeth Collins (Department of Classics & World Religions), chair, William Frederick (Department of History), and Marion Lee (School of Art). I would also like to thank the Director of the Southeast Asian
Studies Program, variously Drew McDaniel and Gene Ammarell, for their academic advice and encouragement, and most recently, Interim Director Christine Su for her help in finalizing my Master’s program at Ohio University. I also gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the Southeast Asian Studies Program in support of my overseas research.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1: Introduction</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The site of P’ong Tuk – geophysical setting</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P’ong Tuk – site characteristics.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coedes and Quaritch Wales: General finds and interpretations.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dvaravati context</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “Indianization” concept</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permit from the National Research Council of Thailand</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research objectives and methods.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2: Newly Documented Buddha Figures</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaches to classification</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mon-Dvaravati sculptural idiom</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The published Buddha assemblage</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wat Dong Sak assemblage</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Buddhas: Overview</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: Other Items Documented from the P’ong Tuk Locality ..........80

Introduction .............................................................................................................80
Stucco and terracotta ..............................................................................................80
Votive tablets/clay sealings .....................................................................................90
Sculptural fragments ...............................................................................................97
Other items: Overview .........................................................................................98

Chapter 4: The P’ong Tuk Visnu .........................................................................101

Introduction .........................................................................................................101
Visnu in first millennium Southeast Asia. .............................................................107
The Hindu component in Dvaravati ....................................................................117
The P’ong Tuk Visnu ..............................................................................................120
P’ong Tuk Visnu: Overview ...............................................................................135

Chapter 5: Evaluation of Archaeological Features ...........................................137

Introduction .........................................................................................................137
Quaritch Wales field notes ...................................................................................138
Coedes field notes .................................................................................................141
Non-architectural features .....................................................................................143
Coedes and Quaritch Wales architectural features ............................................149
Architectural features identified by the present research ................................166
Architectural and other features: Overview .........................................................172

Chapter 6: Human Remains at P’ong Tuk ............................................................175

Introduction .........................................................................................................175
Evaluation of the crania collected by Quaritch Wales. ............................. 177
Evaluation of architectural features with human remains associated..... 179
Evaluation of spatial and temporal relationships among the human
remains and architectural features......................................................... 184
Comparative mortuary sites. ................................................................. 195
P'ong Tuk human remains: Overview. ................................................. 201
Chapter 7: Conclusions........................................................................... 203
The site of P’ong Tuk. ............................................................................. 204
Research potential at P’ong Tuk. ............................................................ 209
Bibliography ............................................................................................. 214
Appendix: Research Documents.......................................................... 234
List of Tables

Table 1: Quantitative distribution of Dvaravati-era site types ...................... 27
Table 2: Dvaravati-era sites with mortuary remains .................................. 198
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General location of P’ong Tuk in Thailand</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>P’ong Tuk and other Dvaravati sites on mainland Southeast Asia</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rural scenes at the P’ong Tuk locality</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>General satellite overview of P’ong Tuk locality</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Topographical quadrangle segment</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Closer view of P’ong Tuk geophysical setting</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>General location of P’ong Tuk relative to geophysical provinces</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Map by Coedes showing mounded locations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>View of eastward wall on modern irrigation ditch</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cultural items weathering out of the buried midden</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Potsherds and burned earth observed at the buried midden</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Artifacts retrieved by Coedes from local residents</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Buddha statuette and stucco lion face recovered by Coedes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>San Chao vihara and Ban Nai Ma shrine</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The 1935 Quaritch Wales encampment at P’ong Tuk</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Outlines of iron tools found by Quaritch Wales with burials</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Quaritch Wales’ excavation of the small octagonal stupa</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>View of collection area at Wat Dong Sak</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Small seated Buddha from Ban Plak Sake</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Standing Buddha statuette from the “Banana Plantation”</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 21: Limestone pedestal fragments from “Thied’s Structure” .............. 64
Figure 22: Underside view of fracture at platform/tenon joint ..................... 65
Figure 23: Heavily effaced “Banaspati” plaque ........................................... 66
Figure 24: Closer view of winged creature’s face (lion type?) ....................... 67
Figure 25: Two fragments from second “Banaspati” plaque .......................... 68
Figure 26: Heavily eroded Buddha statuette .............................................. 69
Figure 27: Bronze Buddha statuette from P’ong Tuk locality ......................... 70
Figure 28: Details of mudra hand gestures ............................................... 71
Figure 29: Awkwardly modeled Buddha statuette ...................................... 72
Figure 30: Two Buddha heads restored to new torsos .................................. 72
Figure 31: Crowned and adorned Buddha ................................................. 74
Figure 32: Details of adorned Buddha ....................................................... 75
Figure 33: Small relief-carved Buddha ....................................................... 76
Figure 34: Back and side views of limestone Buddha plaque ....................... 77
Figure 35: Floral stucco detail ................................................................... 83
Figure 36: Two views of another floral motif in stucco ................................. 83
Figure 37: Corpulent torso in stucco ............................................................ 84
Figure 38: Head in stucco ......................................................................... 85
Figure 39: Terracotta artifacts from P’ong Tuk ............................................. 86
Figure 40: Two conical terracotta artifacts ............................................... 87
Figure 41: Terracotta finial or “votive stupa” element ................................... 87
Figure 42: Another terracotta finial or miniature stupa element ................... 88
Figure 43: Terracotta “skin rubber” ................................................................. 90
Figure 44: Molded sealings or “votive tablets” from P’ong Tuk ....................... 93
Figure 45: “Group 1” molded tablets ............................................................... 94
Figure 46: “Group 2” molded tablets ............................................................... 94
Figure 47: “Group 3” molded tablet ................................................................. 96
Figure 48: Sculptural fragments in Wat Dong Sak collection ......................... 99
Figure 49: Limestone sculptural fragments of uncertain depiction ............... 99
Figure 50: The Visnu recovered in the early 1950s at P’ong Tuk ................. 102
Figure 51: Informants Thied and Chuan Laochan at Visnu find spot .......... 103
Figure 52: Visnu find spot with central group of known structures .......... 104
Figure 53: Photograph of P’ong Tuk Visnu 1962 ........................................ 105
Figure 54: The P’ong Tuk Visnu in active use at Wat Dong Sak ............... 106
Figure 55: The Chaiya Vasudeva ................................................................. 110
Figure 56: Early “mitered Visnus” from peninsular Thailand ...................... 114
Figure 57: The P’ong Tuk Visnu and its attributes ........................................ 122
Figure 58: Details on the P’ong Tuk Visnu .................................................... 123
Figure 59: Elements shared with other early images .................................... 125
Figure 60: Closer view of facial elements on the P’ong Tuk Visnu ............... 126
Figure 61: Elements of the mukuta headpiece and diadem headband ......... 127
Figure 62: Mi-s’on E-1 design elements on the Da Nghi Visnu .................. 129
Figure 63: Pocket-fold sampot garment element ........................................ 130
Figure 64: Typical sketched plan in Quaritch Wales’ field notes ............... 141
Figure 65: Reconstruction of *stupa* base and surrounding burials .......... 144
Figure 66: Locations of Q. Wales’ structures and other nearby features ...... 145
Figure 67: Linear distribution of “Old Cart Track” waypoints ..................... 148
Figure 68: Same view as Figure 67 with waypoints removed ....................... 149
Figure 69: GPS coordinates for all structure and feature locations .............. 152
Figure 70: Manfredi plan of the San Chao *vihara* ........................................ 153
Figure 71: Coedes plan for Banana Plantation square foundation ............... 153
Figure 72: Coedes plan for Ban Nai Ma square foundation .......................... 154
Figure 73: Coedes plan for Ban Nai Ma *stupa* foundation ........................... 155
Figure 74: Reconstruction of Q. Wales’ *vihara* foundation and features ...... 156
Figure 75: The *perron* of the San Chao *vihara* ............................................ 157
Figure 76: Waypoints recorded for Banana Plantation and San Chao .......... 158
Figure 77: Waypoints for Ban Nai Ma structure locations ............................ 160
Figure 78: Waypoints for structural and feature locations at “central group” . 161
Figure 79: Reconstruction of Quaritch Wales’ *stupa* vertical profile .......... 165
Figure 80: Waypoints for concentration of laterite in Mae Klong River ........ 167
Figure 81: View on the “laterite island” .......................................................... 168
Figure 82: Closer views of large blocky laterite fragments ......................... 169
Figure 83: Reconstruction of the structure described by Chuan Laochan ....... 170
Figure 84: Postulated groups of differing construction at P’ong Tuk ............. 174
Figure 85: One of three crania collected by Quaritch Wales...................... 176
Chapter 1: Introduction.¹

The rural hamlets of Tambon P’ong Tuk² reside on the right (westward) bank of the Mae Klong River in southern Kanchanaburi Province,³ western Thailand (Figures 1, 2, 4, 5). In contrast to the intensive urban development east of the river, P’ong Tuk has maintained a rural character (Figures 3-4). The agrarian enclave’s diffuse array of residences follows a minimal grid of roadways (Figure 4), and local residents still encounter ancient artifacts turned up as they cultivate their land, particularly as they adopt the use of power machinery that reaches deeper into the soil.

During short investigations by George Coedes in 1927 and H. G. Quaritch Wales in 1935, P’ong Tuk yielded Buddha figures of various sizes and materials, votive tablets and other ritual artifacts, a limited domestic assemblage (including pottery production areas), ritual architecture, stucco and terracotta, and limited information on at least thirteen inhumation burials. These finds were briefly described and discussed in several articles, including “Excavations at P’ong Tuk and Their Importance for the Ancient History of Siam” (Coedes 1928a), “New Archaeological Discoveries in Siam” (Coedes 1928b), “Further Excavations at P’ong Tuk (Siam)” (Quaritch Wales 1936), “Some Ancient Human Skeletons Excavated in Siam” (Quaritch Wales 1937a), and “Some Ancient Human Skeletons Excavated in Siam: A Correction” (Quaritch Wales 1964).

These finds over a nine year period occurred while Dvaravatī as a material and archaeological concept was germinating, and P’ong Tuk was established as a key representation of this early historic culture. This legacy continues

¹ No diacritical marks have been used for foreign names and terms in this text.

² The spelling originally used by George Coedes is repeated here, even though a variety of more recent transliterations exist. P’ong Tuk is one of 17 communes or subdistricts (tambon) within Tha Maka District (amphoe), and consists of 6 villages (muban) with a total population of approximately 4200 (Wikipedia online entries for “Tha Maka District” and “Kanchanaburi Province”).

³ At the time of the Coedes investigation in 1927, P’ong Tuk was in “Ratburi” (Ratchaburi) Province.
Figure 1: General location of P’ong Tuk in Thailand. Provinces out-lined in red, mountainous elevations shown in green. (Base map courtesy of D. Aussavamas.)

as P’ong Tuk is referenced to the present day in nearly every general scholarly discussion of Dvaravati. Nonetheless, an objective reading of the Coedes and Quaritch Wales reports makes clear that neither their field work nor data analysis were exhaustive; indeed, their combined information leaves even general site boundaries and internal organization unresolved. This combination of substantial content, limited systematic investigation and analysis, and continuing
rural land-use suggested that a reconsideration of P'ong Tuk's existing material record, and of the site’s potential to add new information to the material record for Dvaravati, was appropriate, particularly with regard to new investigative techniques and research questions that have developed in the seventy-five-plus years since Coedes and Quaritch Wales labored on the west bank of the Mae Klong.

Figure 2: P’ong Tuk and other Dvaravati sites on mainland South-east Asia, also showing rivers and Three Pagodas Pass. (Map from Quaritch Wales 1969: Figure 1.)
The site of P’ong Tuk – geophysical setting. P’ong Tuk has to the present day maintained a rural character, dominated by stands of banana palms and fields of cultivated sugar cane, corn, and hot peppers (Figure 3). The circumstance of not being “submerged beneath the accretions of later civilizations” recommended the area to investigators over seventy-five years ago (Quaritch Wales 1936: 43), and continues to distinguish P’ong Tuk from many other Dvaravati sites in central Thailand which have been impacted by modern urban development. This limited alteration of the land at P’ong Tuk also enhances the site’s potential to supply additional significant information.

Figure 3: Scenes at the P’ong Tuk locality which are typical of the rural land-use still prevalent there.

P’ong Tuk resides in a transitional zone between the Central Plain to the east and the Tenasserim Highlands on the west (Figures 6-7). The Plain is a broad lowland area following the Chao Phraya River basin, bordered on the west, north, and east by abrupt highland zones, and on the south by the Gulf of Thailand (Gupta 2005a: Figures 3.1, 3.5; Phienwij and Nutalaya 2005: Figure 21.1). This low basin is deeply filled with sediment eroded from the surrounding uplands (Gupta 2005a: 51). The gulf seas have repeatedly transgressed and regressed across the southern end of this basin, moving the shoreline and creating generally marshy conditions that presented obstacles to human
traversal, settlement and agricultural development; with adequate drainage and management, however, these fluvial soils can support dense cropping and human occupation (Ibid.; Dudal 2005: 95-96). The outermost beach-line of the embayment is approximately 16 kilometers (10 miles) east of P’ong Tuk (Teeyaphan et. al. 1990: Figure 2-26).

Figure 4: General satellite overview of P’ong Tuk (“Phong Tuek”) locality, showing political subdivision boundaries (light blue) and roadways. This view illustrates the more rural character of the areas west of the Mae Klong River, compared to those east of the river.

---

4 While archaeological references often assert that the gulf coastline was as much as 130 kilometers (81 miles) inland in the Dvaravati period, placing the major settlements on or much closer to the sea margin, modern geological studies indicate that the Dvaravati coastline was only marginally inland from the present-day boundary (Kanjanajuntorn 2006: 101; Sinsakul 2000: 424).
The transition zone between the mountainous highlands to the west and the lowlying basin to the east is composed of alluvial fans and terraces that have formed as the region’s streams lose velocity emerging from the adjacent uplands (Kaida and Surarerks 1983: Figure 6, Table 2, 248-249; Miller 1941: 167-168). These fans and terraces range in age from recent deposits “composed of fresh sediments of loamy and sandy texture” to very old deposits “composed of strongly weathered material, as exemplified by . . . laterite more than 5 m[eters] in thickness” (Murata and Matsumoto 1974: 281-282). These alluvial landsurfaces are gently sloping and mildly undulating (Op. cit.: 281).
Physiographic analysis at a more detailed level situates the P’ong Tuk locale on the narrow Marginal Plains zone, residing between the Central Plain to the east and the Western Mountains region to the west (Kaida and Surarerks 1983: Figures 1, 2, 6) (Figures 6-7). This geophysical sector is in the rain shadow of the mountains, creating “one of the two driest zones” in Thailand (Op. cit.: 235, 248-249). Rainfall is unreliable even during the main growing season, and temporary periods of drought are a continuing problem (Op. cit.: 237; Murata and Matsumoto 1974: 283). The climate in this marginal zone is described as “tropical monsoon with a long dry season” (Kaida and Surarerks 1983: Figure 2).

Figure 6: Closer view of P’ong Tuk geophysical setting relative to rivers, gulf, Three Pagodas Pass, and Tenasserim uplands to the west. (Base map courtesy of P. Kanjanajuntorn.)
The landsurface at P’ong Tuk is level to moderately undulating, criss-crossed by numerous small streams most of which appear to have been
artificially channelized. This high valley floor along the Mae Klong channel is situated on the “Mae Klong Fan,” a Late Pleistocene delta⁵ that resides around three meters (10 feet) above the Central Plain delta, and more-or-less on the foot of the adjacent uplands (Tanabe et. al. 2003: 790, Figure 1; Fukui 1976: Figures 1-2). Given P’ong Tuk’s location well downstream from the Mae Klong’s upland headwaters, it is likely the terrace here consists of relatively thin older sediments overlying lateritic soil (c.f. Murata and Matsumoto 1974: 282 and Figure 4). The Mae Klong River course at P’ong Tuk evidences steep high banks that are typical of streams originating in uplands, with the resulting coarse-grained sediment carving abrupt channels (Gupta 2005b: 68-69).⁶ Even so, inundation of the surrounding valley floor can occur, as high-flow periods may see changes in water level of 10-20 meters (33-66 feet) (Op. cit.: 72).

Soils on the broad terrace at P’ong Tuk include luvisols and nitosols (Kaida and Surarerks 1983: 237). These generally have low fertility and variable water retention capacity, but otherwise present some of the best sugarcane growing areas in Thailand, as reflected in current crop production at the site locality (Op. cit.: 248-249, Figure 2, Table 2; Fukui 1976: 149). The luvisols are mostly red to grey-brown loams and sandy loams that are moderately fertile but shallow and stony (Dudal 2005: 98-99). The nitosols were formerly called “lateritic soils,” which tend to reddish colors; they are heavily weathered, deep, and with high clay content (thus retaining water content) (Op. cit.: 99). Despite their relatively low fertility, nitosols “are very productive because of their depth, physical properties, and resistance to erosion” (Ibid.). They are of course also a source for the laterite building material in evidence at several architectural features at P’ong Tuk. Laterite is also known to have been exploited as an iron ore in northeastern Thailand, but no evidence for its similar use has so far been encountered in west-central Thailand (Kanjanajuntorn 2006: 105).

---

⁵ The Mae Klong Fan began forming before 8000 years ago, and reached its final form approximately 4000 years ago (Tanabe et. al. 2003: Figure 8).

⁶ The Mae Klong River drainage basin is $27 \times 10^3 \text{km}^2$ with an annual discharge of $13 \text{ km}^3$; it has the second-largest sediment discharge rate among Thailand’s rivers (Tanabe et. al.: 2003: 790).
Soils in the site locality are generally not suited for rice cultivation (Kaida and Surarerks 1983: 247, Figure 6, Table 2; Fukui 1976: 157-159). Application of suitable management and cultivation methods, however, can make these areas productive (Mudar 1995: 163; Glover 1991: 351). The agriculture at P’ong Tuk is thus a regimen of dryland farming geared to certain crops which are suited to the climate and soils of the region. In January 2008 a crop of sugarcane had just been harvested, as attested by the billowing smokestacks at massive cane processing plants immediately east of the river. It appeared that sugar cane was the dominant crop at P’ong Tuk. Secondary crops included banana palm, hot peppers, and embryonic corn.

Rocks outcropping on the upland margins of the Central Plain are primarily granite, limestone and quartzite (Gupta 2005: 51). Approximately 65 kilometers (40 miles) west of P’ong Tuk, the Tenasserim Hill subprovince forms a zone of narrow, steep ranges and valleys that extend from the Mae Klong Valley headwater in lower Myanmar south to the Isthmus of Kra on Peninsular Thailand (Op. cit.: 50). Rocks in the Tenasserim Range include limestone, sandstone, metamorphic and granitic igneous materials (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 8). Between the Tenasserim uplands and the Central Plain is a transition zone of modulating valleys and limestone hills.

The hilly-to-mountainous zone west of the Mae Klong Valley (Figure 6) is an excellent source for wood and mineral raw materials, particularly for various hard rocks, gems and semi-precious minerals used by the region’s occupants beginning in pre-Bronze Age times (Glover 1991: 351). A substantial belt of tin ore is present in the Tenasserim Range (Kanjanajuntorn 2006: Figure 5.11). Prehistoric or early historic exploitation of this bronze alloy source, however, has not been confirmed by the location of quarry sites (Op. cit.: 105).

Numerous passes in the western highlands provide routes of connection between west-central Thailand and lower Myanmar. The Kwai Yih and Kwai Noi rivers, upper tributaries of the Mae Klong, traverse the Tenasserim Hills below the main such crossing point, Three Pagodas Pass (Figures 2, 6, 7); then these
tributaries join and descend onto the alluvial plain at Kanchanaburi city as the Mae Klong (Op. cit.: Figure 3.5). The Mae Klong River heads southward to the Gulf of Thailand, the coastline of which was much further inland prehistorically, but was close to its present location in the Dvaravati period (Sinsakul 2000: 424; Mudar 1999: Figure 2; Higham 2002: 254). This places P’ong Tuk in a riverine corridor connecting the seacoast to the Three Pagodas Pass entry into the northwestern interior of the Southeast Asian mainland, likely a significant passageway for people, commodities and ideas.

**P’ong Tuk – site characteristics.** The architecture and artifacts recovered by the 1927 and 1935 investigations, over a maximum distance of 1600 meters (Figure 8), were interpreted by both Coedes and Quaritch Wales to indicate “a city of the Buddhist kingdom located . . . between Cambodia and Burma [i.e. central Thailand] and provisionally referred to . . . under the name Dvaravati” (Quaritch Wales 1936: 42; Coedes 1928a: 208-209). Despite this urban attribution, the true nature of the P’ong Tuk settlement and its placement in a larger Dvaravati settlement hierarchy or heterarchy remains uncertain. The lack of adequate information on P’ong Tuk’s content and layout – indeed, even a general impression of its areal extent – is summarily indicated by Pierre Dupont’s observation that “We are unaware of its true importance because research there was stopped rather quickly” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 77-78).7 Regarding the urban designation by Coedes and Quaritch Wales, the sites of many major first millennium urban centers in central Thailand are marked by moats and/or walls (Quaritch Wales 1936: 46; Wheatley 1983: 203-208 and Figure 17), features conspicuously absent at P’ong Tuk,8 and it seems unlikely that “city” is the appropriate label for this settlement. Quaritch Wales eventually shifted his

7 Wheatley has also observed that P’ong Tuk has been “yet only partially excavated” (1983: 208).

8 Chinese accounts of 1st millennium urban centers on mainland Southeast Asia, however, include settlements with wooden palisades (Guillon 1999: 76), a feature that would not be apparent on the modern land surface at P’ong Tuk. There are also large arching topographic zones apparent in the P’ong Tuk locale in satellite imagery that could mark broad moats (or old river channels). These need further evaluation in the field.
Figure 8: Map by Coedes (1928a: Plate 1) showing the mounded architectural locations (crosses) examined by Coedes and Quaritch Wales. These extend over a distance of approximately 1600 meters (1 mile).

characterization of P'ong Tuk to that of “a town that was never more than 'a natural halting place for travelers,'” and “a way-station filling . . . approximately the same function as [a] small market town” (1969: 63, 65).

Certainly the substantial ritual architecture encountered at P’ong Tuk suggests that it was more than a hinterland waystation, and this site probably falls at an intermediate point in a Dvaravati settlement hierarchy or heterarchy that may or may not be “urban.” A recent categorization of “major Dvaravati period settlements” in Thailand mapped by Mathew Gallon (Murphy and Pongkasetkan 2010: Figure 1) provides a general overview of settlement size and morphology:
Table 1: Quantitative distribution of Dvaravati-era site types in Thailand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Type</th>
<th># Identified in Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-moated (includes P’ong Tuk)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-20 hectares, moated</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-65 hectares, moated</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-185 hectares, moated</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-660 hectares, moated</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown site morphology</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the sixteen sites of “unknown size” make any observed patterns tentative, the incidence of known site types suggests that the “unmoated” category is a distinct minority among currently recorded Dvaravati-era sites. This no doubt is partially because non-moated sites are more difficult to recognize in the field. These figures do indicate, however, that P’ong Tuk represents a less well known aspect of the Dvaravati settlement record.\(^{10}\)

Given its potential status as an intermediate settlement type, P’ong Tuk is perhaps more intriguing in its potential to illuminate poorly known aspects of Dvaravati-era settlement. Since most of the field research on Dvaravati has focused on the walled centers, particularly their larger architectural features, intermediate settlements like P’ong Tuk can help address a major gap in the extant data on Dvaravati settlement and culture. In particular, sites like P’ong Tuk may contain a higher proportion of day-to-day domestic occupation deposits that help extend our view of Dvaravati beyond art styles and ritual practices.

---

\(^{9}\) The two sites occupying the largest size category are Nakhon Pathom in central Thailand and Sri Thep on the northeastern margin of central Thailand.

\(^{10}\) Brown (1996: 55) reports that five polities are named in inscriptions for the Dvaravati region of central Thailand: Dvaravati, Lavapura (modern Lopburi?), Tangur (Lopburi region?), Sambuka (central Thailand?), and Anuradhapura (south of Lopburi). Among these, “only Dvaravati was known internationally in India, China and Japan” (Ibid.).
Another significant characteristic of the archaeological remains at P’ong Tuk is their preservation in alluvial soils. It is apparent from the information generated by Coedes and Quaritch Wales that the landsurfaces exposed in Dvaravati times have been buried over time as flood-borne deposits have accumulated on the Mae Klong valley floor. Coedes’ and Quaritch Wales’ investigations focused on low mounds that marked the above-ground surface ruins of architectural features, but the excavation data suggests that the ground-level elements of these structures were approximately 0.6 to 1.1 meters (24-42 inches) below the modern landsurface.\(^{11}\) Quaritch Wales also generally referred to a “Dvaravati level,” the lower range of which was at 1.3 meters (51 inches) below surface (1936 and field notes). Brief notations in his field journal also suggest an upper range for this Dvaravati stratum at around 0.7 to 0.8 meter (27-30 inches) below the modern landsurface.

These estimates for the depths of a Dvaravati-era stratum correlate reasonably well with a buried cultural stratum observed during the 2008 field reconnaissance, although below-current-landsurface depths could not be precisely determined at the latter. Inspection along a deep cut for a modern irrigation ditch crossing the westward area of the P’ong Tuk locality (Figures 4, 5, and 9)\(^{12}\) identified a culture-bearing level approximately 20-30 centimeters (8-12 inches) thick. Due to the ditch excavation and parallel roadway grading disturbance, it was difficult to identify the current groundsurface level on the ditch cut, but the upper range of the buried cultural layer is estimated to reside

\(^{11}\) The description of cultural stratigraphy was largely ignored by the Coedes and Quaritch Wales reports, beyond some references to feature depths below surface, given primarily by Quaritch Wales. Extrapolations of general site stratigraphy described here are based on Quaritch Wales’ measurements both published (1936) and in his field notes, on measurements scaled off of photographs and drawings for the Coedes investigation (1928a), and on observations made in 2008 in an irrigation ditch cut. Given the variable precision of these sources, it is not possible to create a set of stratigraphic measurements that are consistent across the site locality and between the two episodes of subsurface investigation. Below-surface depths cited here are in most cases generalized extrapolations combining information from both the Quaritch Wales and Coedes reports. They are meant to provide a general, preliminary impression of the stratigraphic structure of the site of P’ong Tuk which, however, can only be accurately depicted by newly excavated profiles and stratigraphic assemblages.

\(^{12}\) Satellite imagery reveals that this irrigation channel feeds off a reservoir (dammed segment of the Mae Klong River) at Tha Muang, just downstream from the city of Kanchanaburi.
between 0.8 to 1.7 meters (31-67 inches) below ground surface. This would put the base of the 20-centimeter stratum in the range of 1.0 to 1.9 meters (39-75 inches) below surface. The Dvaravati ground surface estimate of 0.6 to 1.1 meters below present ground surface thus overlaps with the upper drainage ditch stratum levels, as does most of Quaritch Wales’ “Dvaravati level” at 0.6-0.7 to 1.3 meters, and the exposed ditch stratum is probably also in this range below surface. These correlations between the excavated depths of architectural features and the exposed stratum documented in 2008, along with Quaritch Wales’ notation of a “Dvaravati level” at the site (1936: 46, 47), combine to suggest that there is a broadly ranging Dvaravati-era stratum – or “midden” -- buried on the P’ong Tuk terrace.

Figure 9: Views on the eastward wall of a modern irrigation ditch crossing the west side of the P’ong Tuk locality. A darker-colored culture-bearing layer is readily apparent on this exposed profile of the P’ong Tuk terrace soils (closer view cleaned with trowel at right; tape opened to 12 inches – 30.5 cm).

The buried stratum on the eastward wall of the drainage channel displayed visually distinct coloration, ranging brown-grey to grey to grey-brown. The midden textures contrasted moderately with the alluvial soils above and

---

13 The 90 centimeter vertical range indicated here for the buried stratum reflects the difficulty in locating the current ground surface; as stated, the culture-bearing stratum is actually circa 20 centimeters in vertical depth.
below, tending toward sandy silt at the top of the cultural stratum, and gaining in sand and pea gravel content with depth. A brief inspection of this exposed layer encountered early ceramics, brick fragments, areas of intense heat alteration, and what appeared to be weathered fragments of figural stucco (Figures 10-11). The latter items recall the notation by Quaritch Wales that he encountered a layer of stucco rubble “1 foot deep” in places at the base of his “vihara” foundation, i.e. at a level approximately 2 feet 8 inches to 3 feet 8 inches (0.8 to 1.1 meters) below the 1936 landsurface (1936: 44; field notes). During the 2008 reconnaissance an informant also reported buried concentrations of decayed stucco-like substances in the Ban Nai Ma area. These observations provide more evidence that there is a buried Dvaravati-era midden ranging across much of the P’ong Tuk locality.

Figure 10: Cultural items observed weathering out of the buried midden stratum in the irrigation ditch included a white chalky fragment that appeared to be eroded figural stucco (left), and a fragment of terracotta or brick (right).

The inclusion of objects, architecture, and living surfaces in accumulating flood deposits provides an optimal scenario for their preservation. Archaeological features, including architectural remnants, tend to be better preserved as a vertical buffer is formed between the archaeological deposits and the active landsurface. Traceable stratigraphic layers are often created that
correlate to the succession of cultural activity through time. Individual objects are also more likely to remain at or close to their original point of deposition, maintaining a better record of spatial interrelationships among cultural artifacts.

Figure 11: Sherds of both plain and cordmarked earthenware pottery were found eroding out of the buried stratum in the irrigation ditch. An area of intensely burned (reddened) soil was also noted immediately below the midden layer (right).

These characteristics of the archaeological deposits at P’ong Tuk – substantial content (including ritual architecture and objects, domestic items, a pottery production areas, burials), preservation in flood soils, less destructive agricultural land-use, and the likely intermediate position of the occupation(s) in a Dvaravati settlement system – suggest that this site continues to have substantial potential to address important research questions about Dvaravati culture.14

Coedes and Quaritch Wales: General finds and interpretations.

Based on reports of villager finds spectacular enough to raise interest 100 kilometers distant in Bangkok,15 the prominent French historian George Coedes, then General Secretary of the Royal Institute of Siam, organized excavations in 1927 (1928a: 195-209). These excavations were focused on the most productive

---

14 These are more specifically addressed in the closing sections of this thesis.

15 These finds reportedly included “ancient gold, silver and brass statues of the Buddha” and the skeleton of a human giant “nearly twice the size of an ordinary man” (Coedes 1928a: 195).
villager find-spots and several low mounds of structural rubble, and uncovered significant architectural remains and several ritual artifacts (Figure 12-14). Field work was halted, however, after three months’ work and before all the extant rubble-mounds were explored (Ibid. and Quaritch Wales 1936: 43).

Figure 12: Artifacts retrieved from local residents by Coedes in 1927, including a Buddha figure originally attributed to the 2nd century C.E., and the famous Mediterranean style lamp.

Most of the items found by villagers were eventually acquired for the Thai national collection, including small bronze Buddha images, clay votive tablets, a terracotta cup, and a remarkable bronze lamp of “Greco-Roman style”16 (Figures 12-13). Gold and silver figures found by the villagers, however, and a human

---

16 Coedes asserted that this lamp was the first classical Western object to be found in Asia (1928a: 206-207).
skeleton reportedly of gigantic proportions,\textsuperscript{17} were not among the objects available for examination when Coedes visited (Coedes 1928a: 198).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Left, a Buddha statuette retrieved by Coedes from the “Banana Plantation” area at P’ong Tuk. Right, a stucco singha or lion face from the Ban Nai Ma shrine or temple.}
\end{figure}

Following leads obtained from the local residents, the Coedes expedition uncovered architectural remnants at three locations (Figure 8): the “San Chao,”\textsuperscript{18} at the north end of the site locality, where the well-preserved base of a rectangular structure, interpreted to be a vihara, was uncovered; the “Banana Plantation,” approximately 100 meters (328 feet) southwest of the San Chao --

\textsuperscript{17} For reasons not entirely clear, reports of “giant” skeletal remains are common from many regions around the globe. Such remains, like those reported for P’ong Tuk, are nearly always found under non-systematic circumstances and are not available for scholarly evaluation. This report of a giant at P’ong Tuk, then, must be viewed with skepticism.

\textsuperscript{18} So named for the “small Chinese temple” (shrine) erected here in gratitude by a Chinese resident who, after finding two bronze Buddha images at this location, “saw his business steadily prosper” (Coedes 1928a: 196).
the two areas connected by a narrow brick pavement – where a smaller square foundation was uncovered; and “Ban Nai Ma” – “the place called Nai Ma’s house” (Coedes 1928a: 198) -- approximately 800 meters (2625 feet) southeast of San Chao, where a circular foundation, interpreted to be the base of a *stupa*, and another small square foundation platform, this one with a statue pedestal still preserved at its center, were uncovered.

Figure 14: Above, details of the San Chao vihara structure uncovered by the Coedes team. Below, the Ban Nai Ma square shrine with axial pedestal. (From Coedes 1928a: Plates 3 & 11.)

The Coedes team also visited the “Ban Plak Sake” location, “the Southernmost [sic] site of the P’ong Tuk group,” where he reported no building was found but “the excavations . . . yielded only a small golden casket, a small
sitting Buddha . . . and a considerable number of fragments of pottery including a well-preserved jar . . . and a curious hexagonal vessel” (1928a: 201).

In January 1935, while waiting for the end of unseasonably late rains to gain passage to the walled urban center of Si Thep, the English antiquarian H. G. Quaritch Wales spent two weeks at P’ong Tuk (Quaritch Wales 1936: 42-43). This field work was part of a larger archaeological expedition organized by the Greater-Indian Research Committee. Noting that Coedes had not excavated all the rubble-mounds apparent at the site, Quaritch Wales “determined to investigate them . . . and pitched [his] tent for two weeks on a shady spot near the ancient sites” (Figure 15 -- Op. cit.: 43). Despite substantial looting by villagers during the seven years since Coedes’ visit, Quaritch Wales uncovered additional architectural foundations, ritual and domestic artifacts, and a series of human burials (Figures 16-17).

Figure 15: The Quaritch Wales 1935 encampment on the Mae Klong riverbank, P’ong Tuk. (From Quaritch Wales 1937: 128.)
Quaritch Wales' architectural features (Figures 17, 65, 74) included: a rectangular brick foundation approximately 450 meters (1475 feet) southeast of the San Chao area, interpreted by Quaritch Wales to be another vihara structure; and a location approximately 60 meters (195 feet) southeast of the rectangular foundation, where receding rectangular and octagonal tiers of brick were interpreted to be the base of a small stupa. Quaritch Wales published no maps or plans of these architectural remnants, at both locations of which he also uncovered human remains. Artifacts associated with the ritual structures (present whereabouts unknown to the current study) included fragments of large stone images, a small silver “relic casket,” another “relic casket” in gold, and several beads found by local residents, a small gold sheet possibly with a character of Indian script engraved (found by a local resident), and a miscellaneous iron object (1936: 43-46). Quaritch Wales also located the remains of two pottery kilns “at the Dvaravati level . . . at which coarse pottery had been manufactured” (Op. cit.: 47). One of these was adjacent to the stupa location (Figure 65), and one was near the Ban Nai Ma location (Figure 66).
The Dvaravati context. The excavators of P’ong Tuk, George Coedes and H. G. Quaritch Wales, were key enunciators of the Dvaravati concept, an undertaking in which the site of P’ong Tuk had a substantial role. P’ong Tuk was among the first sites to be attributed to the Dvaravati cultural tradition, and was long considered to be the earliest known Dvaravati settlement (Guillon 1999: 99). Two objects attributed to the early 1st millennium by Coedes – a small bronze Buddha said to be in a pre-Gupta style circa the 2nd century C.E., and a “Greco-Roman” bronze lamp said to derive from the 1st to 2nd centuries (Figure 12) -- were taken as evidence that the P’ong Tuk occupation commenced early in the millennium (Coedes 1928a: 204, 207-208). Subsequent reanalysis of these

---

19 P’ong Tuk is among a group of sites in west-central Thailand that were the first to be systematically investigated, including U Thong, Nakhon Pathom, Ku Bua, Kampheng Sen (Wheatley 1983: 203-204).
objects, however, has placed them in later periods congruent with the other ritual objects attributed to the site in 1927 and 1935.  

By the late 1920s Coedes was ready to assert that, taken together, the accumulated documentary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources described a kingdom or confederation of Mon-speaking Buddhists that dominated much of mainland Thailand from circa the 5th or 6th centuries to the 11th century C.E., and which continued to exert social and artistic influences even after the eras of Khmer and Tai dominance had commenced (Coedes 1929; Briggs 1945: 106).

In order to describe and discuss P’ong Tuk as a “Dvaravati site,” it is necessary to delineate at least in a general way the material content, temporal placement and geographical distribution presently associated with the concept of an early, “Indianized” Dvaravati culture. Recent critical reviews of the Dvaravati concept (e.g. Barram 2003; Skilling 2003; Barram and Glover 2008) have in some ways made these delineations more problematical, to the extent that they highlight the aspects of Dvaravati culture that continue to be poorly understood. Recognizing that Dvaravati was initially traced as an art style to which a few inscriptions and historical records were associated (Coedes 1928b; Woodward 2003: 51-80), there remains a continuing ambivalence that has “the term ‘Dvaravati’ . . . used interchangeably to describe an art style, or an actual historical kingdom, or an archaeological culture, without any real proof that any of these actually correlated with each other” (Barram 2003: 60).

Even a general time period for the range of phenomena attached to Dvaravati is uncertain.  

---

20 Brown and McDonnell (1989) argue convincingly that this lamp is a Byzantine item dating to the 5th-6th centuries C.E., and Griswold (1966: 71) asserts that Coedes’ pre-Gupta Buddha is actually in a Pala-influenced Dvaravati style of the 8th century.

21 “There are a number of reasons that precise chronologies have not yet been developed for Thailand (and indeed much of Southeast Asia) for the period between 200BC and AD 1000. One important factor is that this period has not attracted significant attention amongst archaeologists until relatively recently. Limited access to radiocarbon dating facilities is undoubtedly another significant problem” (Barram 2003: 59).
Continuing artistic influences can be traced beyond the end of the first millennium C.E. (Skilling 2003: 102), and other scholars have assigned a range of time as broad as the 7th through 15th centuries (e.g. de Casparis 2000: 58). A time frame of circa the 6th or 7th to the 10th or 11th centuries is most regularly cited as the “Dvaravati Period” in central Thailand (e.g. Indrawooth 2002: 37; Brown 1996: xxi; Wheatley 1983: 199; Lyons 1979: 352; Diskul 1979: 360; Quaritch Wales 1969: 1), a temporal range that may obscure more than it illuminates.

The life of Dvaravati as an art style and as a period of Thai history seems to have been extended simply to fill an awkward gap, to offer a sense of continuity rather than disjuncture. It strikes me that this periodisation serves only to conceal our ignorance and to create the false impression that the problems of history have been solved. On the contrary, many questions need to be asked. (Skilling 2003: 102)

Not only is the standard end terminus for Dvaravati probably too late, but recent analysis of the few associated absolute dates suggests an earlier beginning is also in order. Barram and Glover point out that radiometric dates from sites with Dvaravati type assemblages, reflecting the incorporation of Indian cultural elements, are consistently earlier than the traditional time frame in the second half of the first millennium CE (2008: 180-181; Barram 2003: 60). These absolute dates are, in fact, focused on the first half of the millennium.

The calibrated dates range from about AD 200-600 with long “tails” each side . . . It is clear that neither of these dated sequences [from Chansen and U Thong] support the traditional dating for Dvaravati culture to between AD 600-1000. But [they] strongly support the notion that communities strongly influenced by Indian ceramic and other traditions of material culture, and which were not significantly different from the historic Dvaravati Culture were occupying these

Barram and Glover (2008: endnote 1) assert that many art historians “lack an understanding of, if not actual prejudice against, radiometric dating.” They go on to observe that only one radiocarbon date from Thailand – from Non Ban Khan, northeastern Thailand – “with a calibrated range of AD 600-905 fits the accepted chronology for Dvaravati.”
sites from early in the first millennium of the Christian era. (Barram and Glover 2008: 181)

These analysts also briefly review the dated sites of early Indianization in Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Java, where they find a similar focus in the first centuries of the first millennium (Op. cit.: 178-181). It would therefore appear “that the commencement of Dvaravati Culture should be pushed back at least 200 years before the generally accepted date of around AD 600” (Op. cit.: 175). It is further suggested that this expansion of the beginning of Dvaravati might be termed “Early or Proto-Dvaravati” if it needs to be differentiated from the later era of “classic” architecture and art (Op. cit.: 181).

The shifting of Dvaravati’s beginning to earlier in the 1st millennium C.E. correlates to a developing view that the process of urban nucleation on mainland Southeast Asia started sooner than the dated evidence presently at hand indicates. Recent analysis of paleoenvironmental data from north-central Thailand provides strong, if tentative, indications of when this shift occurred. Operating on the proposition “that large-scale patterns of agricultural expansion relate directly to increases in political complexity,” canal sediments associated with the walled urban locality of Kamphaeng Phet, northwest-central Thailand, were core-sampled for plant remains (Kealhofer and Grave 2008: 209-211). These botanical remains provided both datable organics and a record of plant communities associated with those dates. A series of thirty dated samples allowed for the tentative reconstruction of a paleoenvironmental sequence as follows (Op. cit.: 217-219):

---

23 The term Indianization is used minimally in this paper, recognizing that the term has problematical connotations relating to the nature South Asian cultural influences on Southeast Asia. See discussion in next section.

24 This general proposition can be further deconstructed into three hypotheses: (1) that plant/animal domestication transforms landscapes and social structures; (2) increasing social complexity is concurrent with increasing transformation of the landscape; and (3) land use (“agricultural strategies and . . . patterns of resource use”) is a sensitive indicator of socio-political development (Kealhofer and Grave 2008: 203).

25 Kamphaeng Phet is located in Kamphaeng Phet Province, north-central Thailand, “on the east bank of the Ping River, a western tributary of the Chao Phraya . . . with an ‘old’ city located on the adjacent west bank” (Kealhofer and Grave 2008: 209).
7000-6000 B.C.E. -- Predominantly woodland cover is present, with "little evidence of . . . human disturbance . . ."

6000-4500 B.C.E. -- Increase in proportion of grasses and "secondary regrowth forms" suggesting the beginning of human disturbance.

4500-3000 B.C.E. -- "Multiple [sampling] locations across the region reveal the creation of an agricultural landscape" which includes "a patchwork" of wet rice and slash-and-burn fields.

2000-1000 B.C.E. -- Slash-and-burn methods expand onto higher terraces, perhaps as a regimen of dry agriculture, while a mix of wet rice and dry agriculture persists at lower elevations.

1000 B.C.E.- 0 C.E. -- There appears to be a "convergence" of dry and wet rice techniques, with these agricultural regimes intensifying and expanding around a population core, up to a distance of 30 kilometers east-west. This expanding intensification appears to follow the geographical "extension of water control, through canals" into drier areas.

Interestingly, this agricultural intensification and concomitant population increase appears to occur prior to the establishment of the walled urban settlement at Kamphaeng Phet in the early 1st millennium C.E., and long before its architectural zenith in the 2nd millennium (Op. cit.: 220). Thus a pre-urban period of agricultural and population intensification lengthens the "history of complexity" in central Thailand, and suggests in general that the process of urbanization and its associated political structures is not discernable simply by examining walled and moated centers and their monumental architecture. Indeed, "Understanding the processes of early political formation in mainland Southeast Asia is clearly going to require broader implementation of innovative multi-disciplinary approaches to integrate its distinctive archaeological and environmental record" (Kealhofer and Grave 2008: 220).

Thus the dynamic period of urban – and perhaps even "protostate" – development in Southeast Asia, typically located in the first half of the 1st
millennium C.E., should perhaps be extended into the last millennium B.C.E. Just as Skilling has indicated there is an “awkward gap” in our knowledge of cultural developments during the last quarter of the first millennium C.E., however, so Glover (2010) has observed that there is a similar gap of several hundred years between the prehistoric Iron Age cultures of Southeast Asia and the Indian-influenced groups that followed.

Connecting the Indian-influenced historic cultures of the early to mid-1st millennium CE in Southeast Asia to their prehistoric antecedents has, despite decades of research, proved a difficult task and I can think of no case more intractable than the Dvaravati Culture of Thailand (Op. cit.: 79).

Glover observes that the minimal archaeological evidence so far recovered for the centuries spanning the end of prehistoric occupations and the earliest Indic influenced groups leaves the impression that “much of modern-day Thailand was abandoned at this time,” a condition he finds “most improbable” (Glover 2010: 84). He further asserts that “More controlled excavation of Dvaravati sites backed by numerous dated samples” are necessary to begin filling in the details of this transition period leading into the Dvaravati era and region (Ibid.). In recent years more attention has been focused on Dvaravati as a social phenomenon beyond an art style, and more sites have been studied with the intent of examining a whole culture (e.g. Lertrit 2002; Lertcharnrit 2005). This expanding body of information will eventually close the knowledge gaps noted here, but this process is just beginning.

The Dvaravati kingdom was a concept refined by Coedes based on his translations of non-Tai inscriptions from Siam and western Laos (Coedes 1925b: 1-200; 1928b: 9-20); by 1925, Coedes was able to list several characteristics of Dvaravati culture that would have lasting influence: the dominance of Mon ethnic

---

26 Hagesteijn traces an historical process of nucleation in Southeast Asia advancing through several phases: village communities coalesced to form regional centers (urbanized “central places,” “capitals”); among these centers, kinship- and marriage-based alliances were formed, creating “supraregional centralization;” and finally, there was “confiscation . . . of land surrounding the capital of supraregional settlements” to use for the official purposes of the polity (1989: 87-88). Where in such a continuum each of the large walled and moated Dvaravati centers would reside is presently undetermined.
groups, the influence of Gupta styles on Dvaravati art, the repeated inclusion of the “ye dhamma” inscription on sealing tablets (“votive tablets”), frequent depiction of the Buddha with legs pendant, and a temporal presence in the 5th to 7th centuries C.E. (1925a; Hennequin 2010: 11-12). His subsequently described “School of Dvaravati” art tradition was based in part on the objects recovered from P’ong Tuk (Coedes 1928b). Prior to these analyses by Coedes, the concept of a Dvaravati kingdom or culture was not widely discussed (O’Connor 1970: 494). Chinese annals recorded trade missions in the 7th century C.E. to the Tang court by ambassadors from a kingdom southeast of Sri Ksetra (in central Burma), and west of Isanapura (in Cambodia) (Briggs 1945: 98-107), and earlier analysts of these texts had recognized a variety of Chinese transliterations (e.g. To-lo-po-ti) for the Sanskrit placename “Dvaravati” (Beal 1885; Chavannes 1894; Pelliot 1904: 131-413). The recovery of two silver medallions from beneath a temple ruin at Nakhon Pathom inscribed “sridvaravatisvarapunya” – generally translated as “the meritorious work of the King of Sri Dvaravati” – has been taken by many scholars to be a material confirmation of this polity’s location in the Chao Phraya basin of central Thailand (Wheatley 1983: 206). Brown points out that of the five polity names known from inscriptions for centers in Dvaravati territory (Dvaravati, Lavapura, Tangur, Sambuka, and Anuradhapura), “only Dvaravati was known internationally in India, China and Japan” (1996: 55).

Regarding the occupants of this kingdom, Pelliot had hypothesized in 1904 that Dvaravati was predominantly Mon, and through his study of the pre-Tai texts Coedes also connected Mon-speaking groups with this polity (Saraya 1999: 140). Promoting this view is the fact that “the only vernacular language found in Central Thailand between the sixth and twelfth centuries is Mon” (Guillon 1999:

27 The continued prominence of the P’ong Tuk objects as representative of Dvaravati material culture is demonstrated by their placement in the initial display cases of the Dvaravati hall at the National Museum in Bangkok, as well as on the frontispiece plate of the recent catalog of a joint French/Thai exhibition of Dvaravati art (Fine Arts Department 2009).

28 In 1884 Samuel Beal converted the Chinese transliterations “into the Sanskrit toponym Dvaravati and suggested that it had been located in Central Thailand” (Guillon 1999: 73).
53). Such observations are based on the presence of “many Old Mon inscriptions” in central Thailand, said to date from the 6th to 9th centuries and therefore associated with Dvaravati (Indrawoot 2004: 135). Mon inscriptions dated to the 6th-8th centuries on pillars, stupas, and seals have been found in greatest number in the area of Lopburi at the northeastern margin of central Thailand, but also to the west at Nakhorn Pathom, to the north at Nakhom Sawan, and as an isolated find to the southeast (Bauer 1990: Map 1 and Figure 1). “A number of Old Mon inscriptions” have also been found in northeastern Thailand, dated to the 8th-11th centuries, on media including pillars, sema stones and votive tablets (Indrawoot 2004: 135; Bauer 1990: Figure 1; Skilling 2008: 252-253).

The Mon were said to be the people occupying much of the Thailand region before the dominance of the Khmer and the Tai in the second millennium C.E., and were promoted as the people “that truly spread Indian civilization in the central region of the Indo-Chinese peninsula” in the first millennium (Coedes lecture quoted in Saraya 1999: 140; Saraya 1999: 138-139). Clear evidence for a nearly exclusive Mon population or elite cadre in Dvaravati, however, has not been developed (Saraya 1999: 139-141). Additionally, there are difficulties with the widely held idea that the Dvaravati Mons were an offshoot population of a “Mon heartland” in Lower Burma (c.f. Aung-Thwin 2005). Appropriately aged archaeological sites and Old Mon inscriptions are generally lacking in Lower Burma; the Old Mon inscriptions that do exist in Myanmar are said to date no earlier than the 11th and 12th centuries (Indrawoot 2004: 135). It would therefore appear that Mon-language groups may have settled in the region of Myanmar at a time after Mon speakers were widely present in central Thailand. As Indrawoot asserts: “We can conclude with a fair degree of certainty that the Dvaravati kingdom(s) did not form a part of the Mon Confederacy centered at Thaton in lower Burma, but they developed out of the earlier Austroasiatic-

29 The attribution of “Mon” may be more accurately conceived as various groups speaking Mon dialects within the Austroasiatic language family, rather than as a monolithic ethnic affiliation (Saraya 1999: 140-143).
speaking chiefdoms of prehistoric Central Thailand" (Op. cit.: 136). Saraya asserts that Dvaravati participation in “maritime trade brought in many cultures from foreign lands,” resulting in a population that was “a mixture of ethnic groups,” including Mon, Khmer, Tai, Chinese and Indian components (1999: 58-59).

The emergence of Dvaravati in the Chao Phraya river basin meant the appearance of the power of the state, which had the critical duty of bringing cultural and political cohesiveness out of the notably diverse population of different ethnic backgrounds which is especially characteristic of Southeast Asia (Op. cit.: 145).

A Dvaravati “kingdom” or culturally related series of smaller polities has from the start been associated with central Thailand and the Chao Phraya basin (Guillon 1999: 76). The extent to which the boundaries of Dvaravati should be drawn beyond the Chao Phraya, however, has always been debated. Tracing the Dvaravati art style may seem to be an obvious guide, but this procedure also involves debatable issues of artistic influence and its connection to socio-political units (per Skilling’s comment above, page 39 -- 2003: 102; and Guillon 1999: 75).

For example, the walled and moated center of Si Thep, in the Paksak River basin of north-central Thailand, exhibits Dvaravati artistic influences and is believed to overlap the traditional Dvaravati era, so is usually included on a list of Dvaravati sites (Saraya 1999: 130-137). Some analysts, however, feel that Si Thep represents a sharply different, largely Hindu and Khmer based cultural tradition that should not be subsumed into Dvaravati (Skilling 2003: 101).

Even if we grant Dvaravati held sway over the central plain, I find it doubtful that its administrative control reached as far as Muang Sema (Nakhon Ratchasima), Si Thep . . . Don Lakhon (Nakhon Nayok), or the Bang Pakong and Prachinburi rivers. And I do not think that the Chi and Mun river valleys or the Khorat plateau were part of “Dvaravati” in any sense. In these areas we find different practices . . . and an art and iconography which have their own character . . . not derivative to the so-called Dvaravati style (Ibid.).

In contrast, H. G. Quaritch Wales traced “the culture of Dvaravati” over a region equivalent to “the mediaeval kingdom of Siam, less the Lao and Malay
states” (1966: 40). More recently, available data is interpreted to indicate a Dvaravati phenomenon consisting of several “small independent states,” each with a “cosmopolitan population” and “loosely knit social system” (Krairiksh 1982: 22, 26). These “petty kingdoms” shared a general cultural pattern (often glossed with the label “Mon”), while still retaining discernable local variations (Guillon 1999: 74). Such assertions, based on the information at hand, should be treated as postulates to be tested against a future expanded data base that provides temporal, material, and social information about Dvaravati era sites adequate to make such judgements. Indeed, essentially every new excavation of a “Dvaravati site” produces significant new information, demonstrating again that there is probably more that we don’t know than know about this polity or polities.

An artifact assemblage has been described for Dvaravati, but its distinctiveness at times seems to merge with wider patterns, and the classic Dvaravati art style is still a principal marker in tracing this entity. The assemblage now observed at sites that are ascribed to a Dvaravati era and territory (whichever version is recognized by each site’s investigator) includes locally made earthenware, especially spouted vessels and carinated pots, sometimes with limited non-local ceramics also present; iron implements; bronze adornments, and glass and semi-precious stone beads; gold jewelry; grinding stones and rollers; pottery stoves and lamps; coins or medallions with Indian-based symbols; ritual images and implements showing “evidence for the practice of Hinduism and Buddhism at least in later phases” of the Dvaravati era; several “unique iconographic forms” including large dharmacakra wheels, “Banaspati” plaques, and Buddha figures with both hands raised in mudra gesture; and “brick religious monuments often skillfully decorated with lively stucco” images (Srisuchat 1998: 103, 105, 111; Barram 2003: 59; Skilling 2003: 107; Barram and Glover 2008: 177). In the past it was repeatedly observed that this assemblage bore similarity to first millennium material remains in other regions, such as the Oc Eo (“Funan”) culture area of the Mekong delta, and culture areas to the west in Myanmar and Arakan (Bronson 1979: 17, 25, 32-33; Michener 1982: 5, 7;
This phenomenon is part of a larger issue of delineating specific socio-political territories, eras and material patterns like Dvaravati inside a broad, late Iron Age tradition on mainland Southeast Asia. Excavated profiles at central Thai sites like Chansen (circa 200 B.C.E. to 1100 C.E.) and Chaibadan (circa 500 B.C.E. to 500 C.E.) document a millennium or more of relative continuity in a basic “Iron Age” domestic assemblage (Glover 1980: 19), a long tradition repeated at sites elsewhere on the mainland. As additional “proto-historic” or “Dvaravati” sites have been excavated, however, it appears that clearer material delineations are possible.

We can now see many differences, as well as parallels, between the material culture of Funan and western Thailand as well as the ceramics and other small finds from early Champa sites in central Vietnam such as Tra Kieu. . . In light of this, we do not believe that the lable “Funan” is appropriate for Thailand in the early to mid-1st millennium and a new cultural term has to be found that more properly reflects the development of urbanisation and early Indic cultural influences in Thailand. Most importantly, it is clear that the material described as Funanese by Bronson and Boisellier is not distinctively different from the later ceramics and minor finds they attribute to Dvaravati (Glover 2010: 83).

The nature of a transition from late prehistoric Iron Age occupations to an early historic Dvaravati culture is still poorly understood. Indeed, sites that could be considered transitional between these eras seem to be absent in Thailand (Op. cit.: 84). The social and material continuities and changes from prehistoric to urbanized lifeways represent another significant gap in the record for a Dvaravati cultural entity in central Thailand.

Whatever may be the precise time period and geographic distribution for the socio-political phenomenon labeled “Dvaravati,” its general temporal and spatial placement more-or-less in central Thailand in, at minimum, the middle centuries of the 1st millennium is well-established. This locates Dvaravati at a key place and time in the process of adapting Indic cultural elements on the Southeast Asian mainland, particularly relative to the spread of Buddhism (c.f. de
Casparis 2000: 58). The Dvaravati region is central to major and differing Buddhist and Brahmanic traditions in the regions of Myanmar, Cambodia, and the Thai-Malay peninsula, and was no doubt an overland conduit for new Indic forms and practices. Even with the inadequate record currently available, lines of connection across these regions in the first millennium are readily traceable in the domestic material assemblage and ritual art.

The “Indianization” concept. The Dvaravati era resides at the temporal entry point of substantial Indic forms and concepts onto mainland Southeast Asia, and the P’ong Tuk locality specifically, located in a corridor connecting land and sea routes of communication, has long been cited as an early reflection of contact with South Asia. Probably no concept has been more fundamental to the discussion of increasing social complexity in Southeast Asia than that of “Indianization.” At its most basic, the term acknowledges the transfer of South Asian cultural elements to Southeast Asia beginning circa the early 1st millennium C.E. (Gupta 2005: 27). Over time, however, the term “Indianization” has come to represent not just the presence of Indian elements, but a “cluster of theories” explaining how and why these elements appeared (Mabbett 1997: 343). The nature of this cultural transfer – the agents of change and their methods and motivations – continues to be discussed and debated by scholars.

Many early scholars, under the lead of George Coedes, conceived the Indian impacts as being the result of intentional “cultural colonization” (Stargardt 1990: 40; Coedes 1968). This colonization was economic and social, not military, “an extension of the process by which high Sanskrit culture marched across the Indian subcontinent” (Mabbett 1997: 342). It was also a rather

---

30 While the terms “South Asia” and “India” will be used interchangeably here, it is recognized that the latter is a modern appellation referring to a geo-political unity that did not exist historically.

31 Such elements include “Indian ideas of royalty, Hindu and Buddhist religion, and Sanskrit language, mythology and literature” (Miksic 2007: 145), as well as technology and Indian-made trade items (Gupta 2005).

32 Hence the term “Further India,” often used in this era to designate Southeast Asia, usually implying a “large-scale migration of Indians to Southeast Asia” (Bellina and Glover 2004: 68), although Coedes allowed
simplistic concept wherein “‘India’ as a single subject [was] actively doing things to Southeast Asia, or some part of it, as a single object” (Op. cit.: 343). The result, by this account, was the rapid developmental advance of simple Southeast Asian cultures to “cities, states and kingdoms,” kingdoms that were from their beginning “true Indian states” (Stargardt 1990: 40; Coedes 1968: xvii).

This viewpoint, however, was not universally held. Some scholars, notably J. C. van Leur working in Indonesia, recognized a consistent process of adaptation (rather than straightforward adoption) of the Indic elements by Southeast Asians, a situation characterized as “superficial borrowings” from South Asia resulting from “local initiative,” not from outside imposition (Mabbett 1997: 342). In particular, evidence for the existence of “elaborately organized societies with specialized ranks and duties before the adoption of Sanskritic terminology” was traced in the early Indonesian and Cambodian inscriptions, citing titles in both Sanskrit and local languages (Stargardt 1990: 43).

Indeed, van Leur viewed the influence of Indian culture in Southeast Asia as no more than “a thin and flaking glaze” (1955: 95).

The prehistoric record for mainland Southeast Asia now documents a strong local basis for rising social complexity (c.f. Bentley 1986: 276-277; Bogucki 1999: 245-249; Higham 2002: 82-227). Some scholars would even assert that “recent archaeological discoveries in Southeast Asia now oblige us to consider the degree of progress achieved during its prehistory as comparable to . . . that of the most civilized regions of Asia” (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 74), with “most of the conditions for the rise of large communities . . . which used to be
(and often still are) treated as importations from India . . . [having] been met before any Indians arrived" (Mabbett 1997: 346).

It is, for example, now well established “that iron was . . . economically important over wide areas of South East Asia between the fifth and second centuries BCE at the latest,” well before substantial Indianization was underway (Stargardt 1990: 41). Scholars must also now take into account Bronze Age “superburials” uncovered in northeast Thailand, exhibiting remarkable quantities of materiel and energy focused on the graves of a few high-status individuals, presenting a surprising level of prehistoric social differentiation (Chang 2009: 40; Stone 2006: 1366). In the trading sphere, the broad distribution of the socially and materially expensive Dongson drums (circa the last centuries B.C.E.) is indicative of a highly developed network in which these large bronze tympanums were traded among a wide array of “pre-Indianized” political entities as “instruments of authority,” tying local chiefs into “a wider politico-religious system” that helped confer heightened rulership status (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 75, 77; Loofs-Wissowa 1991: 47).

The expanded archaeological data-base makes it evident that protostate or state development in Southeast Asia did not arrive from outside as a monolithic “cultural package,” but resulted from a long process of social development which incorporated both external and indigenous elements. These cultural expressions were oriented to local sensibilities, resulting in a cultural “amalgam” that provided a foundation for later elaboration (Stark 2004: 97; Coe 2003: 59). As such, Indianization is better characterized as “a subtle and constant process that transcends the over-simplistic . . . dichotomy between categories of ‘Indian’ and ‘indigenous’ ” (Lavy 2004: 10; Brown 1996: 183-188).

---

35 These technologically and artistically sophisticated objects exist in limited numbers but are found in all major regions of Southeast Asia.

36 Bronson (1979b: 10-11) asserts that between 1500 and 500 B.C.E., “well before there are any signs of ‘Indianization,’” most of the components necessary to support an archaic state were already in place on mainland Southeast Asia: “bronze and iron-working, weaving, pottery manufacture . . . engineering materials like bamboo and rattan, excellent ships . . . skills in range navigation . . . domestic animals, many potentially high-yielding protein and carbohydrate crops . . . [and] probably irrigation.”
The incorporation of Indian elements was not a simple transfer of a cultural package *en masse*, but was instead the result of “a complicated network of relations, both between various parts of each of the two great regions and between the two regions themselves” (de Casparis 1983: 18-19).

**Permit from the National Research Council of Thailand.** The aspects of this research conducted in Thailand were accomplished under the auspices of the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT). Per the regulations and procedures enunciated in the National Research Council Act, an “Application Form for Permission to Conduct Research in Thailand” (Form NRCT-01) was submitted, including a research plan (Appendix). Upon receipt of a letter of authorization from the NRCT approving the research plan (Appendix), application was made in person (due to time constraints) for a non-immigrant visa at the Royal Thai Embassy in Washington, DC. Once in Thailand (arrival January 1, 2008) it was necessary to report in person to the NRCT offices in Bangkok within seven days, file a registration form (NRCT-02), receive a foreign researcher identification card and a letter from NRCT to the collaborating Thai researcher, and to pay a 10,000 baht deposit (to be refunded upon receipt by the NRCT of the completed research report, i.e. this thesis document). These tasks were completed and field research at P’ong Tuk was initiated January 5, 2008, then continuing through January 11. An additional week in Thailand was spent visiting several key sites, organizing field notes and reviewing the information obtained at P’ong Tuk. A summary of research activities on Form NRCT-05, along with a more detailed addendum statement, was submitted to the NRCT by mail from Phimai, Thailand, on January 14, 2008 (Appendix). Confirmation of NRCT receipt of this report was obtained by email.

Prior to traveling to Thailand, letters were also sent to the director of the National Museum in Bangkok, and to the abbot of Wat Dong Sak in P’ong Tuk

---

37 The approved project is listed on the NRCT web site at: http://www.nrct-foreignresearcher.org/index.php?lang=en&mod=projects&op=list&title=&researcher=&cate_id=&year=2008&fiscal_year1=&order=down&page=4&sort=title

38 Foreign Researcher Registration No. 152/50, Project 608.
(Appendix), to explain the objectives and planned activities of this research. The National Museum was visited on January 4, 2008, and Executive Director Somchai Na Nakhonphanom graciously provided a photography permit to allow the recording of artifacts on display from P’ong Tuk, as well as comparative items from other sites attributed to the Dvaravati culture. The abbot of Wat Dong Sak, the Venerable Phra Khru Jariyaphirat, acknowledged receipt of our letter and was most gracious and accommodating throughout our time at P’ong Tuk, giving us ready access to all aspects of the temple collection of items found in the site locality.

**Research objectives and methods.** This research project’s rationale, conceptual framework, objectives, methods, schedule, and projected results are presented in detail in the “Application for Foreign Researcher’s Permit” (Appendix). A brief outline of research objectives and activities is presented here. All research undertaken has been considered to be “preliminary” in nature, representing an initial phase of documentation and evaluation aimed at identifying potential cultural, temporal, and material areas of future investigation. Given the limited record for previous finds at P’ong Tuk, the brief nature of the present field reconnaissance, and the gaps in our knowledge of the wider Dvaravati context, it is only possible to use the existing information from P’ong Tuk to formulate hypotheses regarding site structure and content, temporal placement, trade and social connections, ritual and religious associations, and general ethno-cultural affiliations. Such hypotheses – or informed predictions – require much additional field work at P’ong Tuk and related sites in central Thailand and beyond to ascertain their validity. Given this situation, all previous assertions regarding P’ong Tuk’s content and associations are also considered to be tentative, and subject to further testing and refinement.

Basic objectives of the present research include: (1) Creating a unified site description. The finds and observations of the Coedes, Quaritch Wales, and present investigations have been treated as a unified body of information for purposes of description and interpretation. All known site features, including new
features documented by the 2008 reconnaissance and those described but not mapped by Quaritch Wales, have been brought together on digital maps using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology applied in the field (e.g. Figure 69). Observations and proposed interpretations made here take into account the information on P’ong Tuk produced by the site’s various investigators. (2) Creating a systematic record of ritual objects found at the site. This includes a photographic record of items previously recovered by Coedes and on display at the National Museum in Bangkok, and of items curated at Wat Dong Sak, P’ong Tuk locality, including a major Visnu image. Only two artifacts from P’ong Tuk, a small Buddha figure and a Western-style lamp, have been previously described and analyzed in detail. Characteristics observable in the unified P’ong Tuk assemblage provide important information about chronological, stylistic and iconographic associations, and suggest future avenues of research. (3) Evaluating the material information from P’ong Tuk, and the original interpretations of Coedes and Quaritch Wales, in the context of current analytical concepts, improved knowledge of Dvaravati cultural patterns, and an expanded view of P’ong Tuk’s content. A broader knowledge of P’ong Tuk specifically, due to discoveries made since the Coedes and Quaritch Wales investigations, the “rediscovery” of Quaritch Wales’ field notes by the present research, and the documentation of additional site features and content, provides additional new context for site description and analysis. (4) Applying comparisons directly between the P’ong Tuk data and other local and regional site data. The systematic, unified description and analysis of the known material content of P’ong Tuk has facilitated comparisons to other systematically documented sites, as well as to more general observations and assertions regarding Dvaravati cultural patterns. These comparisons highlight similarities and differences between P’ong Tuk and other sites, point to data that may contradict previous assertions about Dvaravati, and suggest research questions that can be addressed by future research.
Chapter 2: Newly Documented Buddha Figures

Introduction. Field reconnaissance and other material and documentary research in Thailand included the examination and photographing of objects collected at the local temple-monastery, Wat Dong Sak (Figures 5 and 18).39 These are objects purported to be finds by residents in the P’ong Tuk locality since the time of the Coedes and Quaritch Wales explorations (i.e. during the past eighty years). Nine Buddha images or image fragments in the Wat Dong Sak collection were judged to have moderate-to-good provenance and were photographed by the present study. Attribution of these images to P’ong Tuk is based entirely on “hearsay” assertions, all images being chance finds brought to the wat by local residents. None of these objects were obtained with systematic recovery methods and no written or photographic records of their original context are known. This of course makes the provenance of the nine new images problematical, but their status in this regard is not much different from the Buddha images published for the site by Coedes. These latter pieces are also chance villager finds observed by Coedes after haphazard removal from their original contexts.40

Some discernment has been applied in selecting these specimens for recordation. Selecting these ritual items from the dozens kept in the Wat Dong Sak collection was based on several considerations. Oral attributions by the abbot and monks were considered, paying special attention to conflicting assertions of fact or opinion. In three cases, corroborating information regarding find episodes was obtained independently from village residents. Accepted pieces also had to display the corrosion, patina, staining and/or damage indicative of their derivation from an archaeological context. Apparently all

39 The use of locally collected items curated at a nearby wat “may answer many intriguing questions,” according to Stanley O’Conner, who used such a collection at Wat Majjhimavasa in Songkla to elucidate “the earlier history and culture of the Isthmian tract” (1966: 137).

40 Of the Buddha images recovered by Coedes, Dupont observes: “None was found in situ, i.e. either in a sanctuary or in a foundation-deposit” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 83).
Figure 18: View of collection area at Wat Dong Sak, P’ong Tuk locality. Items are kept securely within this gated and locked area.

specimens brought to the wat by residents have been chance finds when digging for other reasons (e.g. house construction), or as items found on the eroding riverbank. Based on these considerations, a reasonable, if not certain, confidence level is ascribed to the nine images discussed here. Recognition must be maintained, however, that these pieces newly described for P’ong Tuk suggest chronological, stylistic, or doctrinal possibilities that, ultimately, will only be corroborated by additional data collected systematically from original contexts. Throughout the discussion here of this new information, it has been important to maintain an awareness of the limitations of this data, which perhaps rises to a level that is better than “hearsay,” but which still relies entirely on external sources to obtain functional and temporal meaning.

An additional observation would be that, based on comments previously published or received in the field during the present research, a substantial
number of ritual images have left the P’ong Tuk locality.\textsuperscript{41} Mention was made repeatedly during the reconnaissance of local finds acquired by outsiders. Such recent activity parallels conditions described by both Coedes and Quaritch Wales, and it would appear that during the intervening seventy-plus years many ritual images have been found and dispersed from the site of P’ong Tuk. This situation adds to the need for documenting the objects that have remained in the locality where they were found, and the current abbot of Wat Dong Sak, Phra Khru Jariyaphirat, is to be commended for leading efforts to collect and protect ancient objects found in the surrounding fields and riverbanks.

\textbf{Approaches to classification.} A variety of approaches has been used to describe the history of artistic style and function in the region of modern-day Thailand. Early in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Prince Damrong Rajanuphab developed a system of periodization, placing objects into a succession of temporal groups (e.g. “Srivijaya period”, 8\textsuperscript{th} to 13\textsuperscript{th} centuries, overlapped by the “Lopburi period”, 9\textsuperscript{th} to 13\textsuperscript{th} centuries).\textsuperscript{42} Prince Damrong’s son, M. C. Subhadradis Diskul, later promoted a shift to style groups, including a “Dvaravati style,” “but his idea was not taken up” and he returned to periodization, with a “Dvaravati period” dating to the 6\textsuperscript{th}-11\textsuperscript{th} centuries (Guillon 1999: 75; Subhadradis Diskul 1981: 4-8). In 1977 Piriya Krairiksh proposed a system that was viewed as a radical departure, associating art traditions with ethnic groups, further subdividing these into region- or site-specific styles (Piriya 1977). Thus the “Dvaravati” material was included in a “more logical . . . Mon Style . . . because it was the Mon people who gave uniformity and cohesiveness to an \textit{oeuvre} created in different geographical locations.”\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} Griswold (1966: 69) comments that “the discoveries of 1927 started a frenzy of digging by treasure hunters” at P’ong Tuk.

\textsuperscript{42} Originally published in Thai in 1926; published in English translation in 1962.

\textsuperscript{43} Geographically specific “Mon” styles were identified by Piriya Krairiksh at Lamphun in northern Thailand, U Thong, Ku Bua, Nakhon Pathom, Si Maha Phot, Si Thep, Suphan Buri, and Kanchanaburi in central and eastern Thailand, Surin, Nakhon Ratcasima, Muang Fa Daed Sung Yang, Udorn Thani, and Chaiyaphum in north-eastern Thailand, and Chaiya and Nakhon Si Thammarat in peninsular Thailand (Piriya 1977: 38, 50-51).
Piriya later refined his system to include Early (A.D. 500-590), Middle (A.D. 590-650) and Later (A.D. 650-775) phases, providing a detailed breakdown of artistic developments for a “Mon Period” in Thailand (Piriya 1982: 22-25). Pierre Dupont, focusing on “archaeological” material, developed a detailed typology of Mon Buddha figures, subdividing basic categories (standing and seated) into numerous groups of style and motif forms (Dupont/Sen 2006: 105-161). These are in turn each connected to a relative temporal placement, i.e. the earlier and later types of each formal element. This is a very different approach to the material data that may especially highlight the distinctive work of local schools and ateliers (Chirapravati 1997: 14).

The objective of the brief analyses of P’ong Tuk specimens presented here is to identify obvious or potential connections to established art historical and iconographic categories. This is approached in a straightforward manner, matching characteristics of style and iconography to examples documented in the literature. This then provides a basis for comparison of the new data with the previously published images from P’ong Tuk, and for the delineation of similarities and differences between the old and new assemblages. Observations can then be made regarding any new temporal, stylistic or iconographical patterns that are tentatively indicated for P’ong Tuk.

The Mon-Dvaravati sculptural idiom. It has been observed that “the story of . . . Dvaravati art is elusive . . . strewn with wildly contradictory opinions”

---

44 The term “Mon-Dvaravati” is used here to suggest that the Dvaravati phenomenon is a central-Thailand variation of a broader cultural pattern. Dvaravati has traditionally been seen to be dominated by the Mon ethnic group, an assertion supported by the observation that “the only vernacular language found in Central Thailand between the sixth and twelfth centuries is Mon” (Guillon 1999: 53). Many of the distinctive features of the Dvaravati art style have also been attributed to a Mon sensibility and physiogamy. It is nonetheless recognized that the association of particular ethnicities with proto-historical events and material remains can be problematic, especially when, as in the present case, documentary and archaeological information is inadequately developed. The term “Mon-Dvaravati” recognizes the on-going discussion about the relationship between the Dvaravati art tradition and ethnic Mon populations. Some analysts accept a strong association of the Mon with Dvaravati, while others see the latter as a broadly influential art style that ranged across several geographical and ethno-cultural boundaries. Strong material affinities are discernable across western Thailand and lower Burma, suggesting a broad culture area that may have been predominantly Mon (Op. cit.: 52-59, 74; Galloway, 2007: f.n. 30; Galloway 2010). Conversely, serious challenges have been raised to the long-standing “Mon Paradigm” associated with lower Myanmar and central Thailand (AungThwin, 2005), and the Mon-Dvaravati connection may ultimately have to be reconsidered.
(Woodward 2005: 54). This situation can be largely attributed to the fact that few images have been recovered in their original functional context, and essentially no specimens “can be dated with exactitude” (Ibid.). Analysis therefore becomes an attempt to discern relationships and trends of form and style largely divorced from original contexts and absolute dates. The results are such that for “many important works there is not even a consensus about which are generally early, which are late” (Ibid.).

Given this state of art historical analysis for Mon-Dvaravati, the present review will not attempt to make detailed temporal or stylistic attributions. Evaluations by specialists will be utilized, recognizing that current attributions may change as a more systematic base of information is developed for Dvaravati material culture.

It has been recognized for some time that Dvaravati art derives much of its artistic content from the Gupta tradition of north-central India and related post-Gupta expressions (Dupont/Sen 2006: 108, 111, 116, 121; Chirapravati 1997: 14; Fickle 1989: 25-29; Boisselier 1975: 75-76). These sources range from the 4th to 6th centuries C.E. (Williams 1982). Indian elements that transferred to Southeast Asian images include the “Gandharan mode” of draping the robe; a “wet look” of clinging sheer robes that reveal the body contours underneath; tight, regularly-placed hair curls; solid, sometimes almost stocky body forms, with wide shoulders and a narrow waist; and a “serene . . . self-contained” face with downcast eyes and a temperate smile (Fickle 1989: 21-29).

By the 7th century a Mon-Dvaravati version of the Gupta/post-Gupta imagery had emerged (Dupont/Sen 2006: 122; Fickle 1989: 33). This showed an increasing emphasis on physical features said to be indigenous to Southeast Asia – a flat, round face, protruding eyes, wide nose, thick lips, and large hair curls (Subhadradis Diskul 1991: 10; Battacharyya 2007: 14). The Mon-Dvaravati tradition also exhibited several stylistic and iconographic preferences, mostly expressed on standing Buddha figures: emphasis on the frontal imagery, with “the back and sides only cursorily sculpted” (Piriya 1982: 33; Fickle 1989:30); a
“love of symmetry,” with “bodies and hand positions . . . always in balance” and robes usually adjusted to unnatural but symmetrical outlines\(^ {45}\) (Fickle 1989: 32; Griswold 1966: 67); execution of the same *mudra* by both hands, with the forearms extending perpendicular to the torso, a further assertion of symmetry and an iconographic form essentially unique to Mon-Dvaravati (Griswold 1966: 65; Fickle 1989: 11, 32);\(^ {46}\) joined arched eyebrows (“swallow wing form” – Dupont/Sen 2006: 128-129; Fickle 1989: 32); and the depiction of an asexual Buddha, as the sculpted robe “closely molds not only the outer contours of the body but also the area between the thighs” with no indication of sexual anatomy (Dupont/Sen 2006: 129-130).\(^ {47}\) Several of these elements appear to be unique to the Mon-Dvaravati idiom, and taken together they form a distinctive “school” of artistic expression, granted that many socio-temporal issues connected to this style remain to be examined in detail and clarified.

**The published Buddha assemblage.** George Coedes retrieved five Buddha figures from P’ong Tuk in 1927, all finds by local residents, and transferred them to the National Museum in Bangkok (1928a: 198). He attributed four to the “Dvaravati school” circa the 6\(^{th}\) century C.E. (Coedes 1928b: 202), and the fifth image to a much earlier, Amaravati-influenced era circa the 2\(^{nd}\) century C.E. (Op. cit.: 203-204). Dupont found this same assemblage to be a less cohesive group, sharing only “their mediocre quality and late development” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 83). In particular, he observed a Khmer influence in a seated figure where Coedes did not (Figure 19). More recent scholarship generally

\(^ {45}\) Piriya Krairiksh has suggested that this “rigid symmetry” seems to have greater affinity to “Chinese art” than to Indian (1982: 22). Along with other elements in the Mon-Dvaravati style (see f.n. 46 following), this raises the possibility that the Mon-Dvaravati style may derive as much or more from Central or East Asian sources as from Indian sources.

\(^ {46}\) The *mudra* expressed is usually *vitarka*, which had limited use in India (Dupont/Sen, 2006:130; Fickle 1989: 32). Revire (Forthcoming), however, points out that this *mudra* is much more frequently encountered in Central and East Asia, once again raising interesting questions about whether important aspects of the Mon-Dvaravati style arrived via these regions, rather than directly from India.

\(^ {47}\) This asexual stylistic element may be related to post-Gupta Pala forms in north India (Dupont/Sen 2006: 130, 132-134).
agrees that the five Buddha figures published by Coedes each exhibit characteristics of a fully formed Mon-Dvaravati idiom, circa the 8th-9th centuries (Griswold 1966: 71; Quaritch Wales 1969: 65).

Dupont did not specify his reasons for believing the seated Buddha exhibits Khmer influence, which could make it a very late or even post-Dvaravati piece, but the square-waisted pedestal, bare upper torso, and squarish head are reminiscent of Khmer examples (c.f. Frederic 1995: 59). The *virasana* (semi-lotus) position, however, *vitarkamudra* on the unbroken right hand, and flame-edged aureole are familiar Dvaravati elements.

Figure 19: Small seated Buddha figure found by the Coedes team at the southern Ban Plak Sake locality, P’ong Tuk (Coedes 1928a: 201 and Plate 15; photo by W. Clarke.)

Two of the published standing Buddha figures have a right shoulder uncovered, and fit within Dupont’s “Group P” sub-style for Mon-Dvaravati (Dupont/Sen 2006: 83, Plate 460). One is heavily damaged and cannot be evaluated in detail. The second figure has a fully curved front hem (said to be a
slightly later trait), a small gem bulb atop a large conical ushnisha, and an “unusual” and “interesting” double mudra (Figure 13 -- Op. cit.: 83, 159). The latter exhibits a vertical right hand in vitarkamudra, while the left hand is executing the vitarka palm-up and also holding the robe-end (Op. cit.: 159). As will be noted below, this appears to be an unusual double-mudra form that is shared with one of the newly documented Buddhas.

Another standing figure (Figure 20) has the robe covering both shoulders and a damaged but typical flaming aureole (Dupont/Sen 2006: Plate 453; Griswold 1966: 68). This figure displays classic Dvaravati frontal symmetry, including a U-shaped drape and a double vitarkamudra. There is also an “unusual usnisa” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 83), possibly with a small rasmi flame rising out of a cylindrical ushnisha form.

Coedes believed that a fifth image collected at P’ong Tuk (Figure 12) diverged markedly from this Gupta-inspired group. It exhibited a “graceful” robe with “wavelike folds,” covering a body in “graceful movement” and with an “almost . . . Greek” nose (Coedes 1928a: 204). In these features he discerned a heavy Gandharan influence associated with the Amaravati School of 2nd century eastern India. This attribution placed the P’ong Tuk specimen among the earliest images of Buddha found in Southeast Asia. Combined with a “Greco-Roman” bronze lamp also found by villagers, an exceptionally early Buddhist cultural

---

48 The ushnisha (Indian usnisa) is “a protuberance on the top of the head . . . It denotes the seat of intellectual powers and the seat of divine energies. It is the foremost of the major thirty-two signs of a Buddha” (Bunce 1997: 320).

49 The rasmi (also ratsami) is a “Flame finial emanating from the top of the Buddha’s head” (Stratton 2004: 423).

50 Dupont (1959a) provided the fundamental description and analysis of the “Amaravati Buddhas” of Southeast Asia, which at the time consisted of eight standing bronze figures from Celebes, Java, Sumatra, Thailand, and Vietnam, including the purportedly early figure from P’ong Tuk (Op. cit.: Plate LXIV). Dupont asserted, however, that six of these figures exhibited elements attributable to a Sri Lankan interpretation of the Amaravati style. This Sri Lankan filter has temporal as well as stylistic implications, making it likely that the Southeast Asian images are several centuries removed in age from the Amaravati source of inspiration (Op. cit.: 633). This line of analysis takes the P’ong Tuk image that Coedes took to represent an early 1st millennium component and shifts it into the middle of the millennium.
component was discerned at P’ong Tuk, associated with the opening centuries of the 1\textsuperscript{st} millennium C.E. (Op. cit.: 204-207).

Figure 20: This Buddha statuette with aureole is another local resident find at the “Banana Plantation” area on the north side of Tambon P’ong Tuk, collected by Coedes for the National Museum collection in 1927. (From Dupont/Sen 2006: Plate 453.)

Since the publication of the brief site report in 1928, several researchers have convincingly challenged the Amaravati and Greco-Roman attributions, and more detailed analysis supports a shift in dating (Dupont 1959a; Brown and MacDonnell 1989). It has in fact been argued that almost none of the traits of the purportedly early Buddha image relate to the Amaravati idiom. The constellation of right hand up, left hand down, and robe covering both shoulders is practically unknown in Amaravati (Griswold 1966: 71). Amaravati robes are typically “opaque, with heavy folds” that are not as revealing of the underlying body as is
seen on the P’ong Tuk specimen. The front drape of the robe also displays the strong “U-inflection” common to later Dvaravati pieces (Op. cit.: 71-72).

What may differentiate the “early” P’ong Tuk image from the Gupta-inspired P’ong Tuk images is the addition of Pala traits from northeastern India. These include the slim body forms, incised robe folds and a fully modeled backside (Griswold 1966: 72). “Hence it’s mixed nature,” states Griswold, “in which many of the usual characteristics of Dvaravati bronzes are joined to others which are common in the Pala bronzes but rare in Dvaravati.” Given this analysis, the “early” Buddha from P’ong Tuk fits readily into the 8th-9th century post-Gupta era of the remaining site images (Dupont/Sen 2006: 123; Griswold 1966: 73; Quaritch Wales 1969: 65).

**The Wat Dong Sak assemblage.** Nine complete or fragmentary Buddha images were selected for recordation during the January 2008 examination of the Wat Dong Sak collection. These include two bronze heads, four standing bronze statuettes, a seated votive in limestone, a defaced limestone plaque, and the basal fragments of a large stone image.

The statue base is blue-grey limestone, in two fragments exhibiting large, simply formed feet on a single-tiered lotus platform with a large tenon beneath (Figures 21-22). The feet are more-or-less life-size (approximately 10 centimeters [4 inches] across each set of toes and 18 cm. [7 inches] from the ball of the foot to the end of the toes). The fracture across the feet on the joint of the lotus platform with the tenon (Figure 22) suggests that the statue was destructively leveraged from behind, breaking the figure at the feet and ankles.

The lotus motif on the platform pedestal would probably support comparative analysis. The initial significance of this image fragment, however, is its association with a structural location at the P’ong Tuk site (“Thied’s Structure”).

---

51 This newly documented structure location is recorded as “Waypoint #17” in the January 2008 field notes for digital GPS mapping. The coordinates for this location are latitude N13 53.357 and longitude E99 47.387. See pages 167, 170-173 below for additional discussion of these newly defined structural remains.
who unearthed these structural remains, there is a high confidence level in this association. This represents the first, if tentative, direct connection of a documented sculptural piece with a structural location at P'ong Tuk. This new structural location is located approximately 30 meters (100 feet) northwest of Coedes’ circular stupa, which in turn is approximately 33 meters (108 feet).

Figure 21: Limestone pedestal fragments from the “Thied’s Structure” location. Top, overhead view; bottom, side view showing feet on lotus platform, tenon underneath, and fracture line through the front of the lotus and feet.
northwest of the small square “temple” foundation at the “Ban Nai Ma” location (Figure 77). This places the new structure on a northwest-southeast line with the other Ban Nai Ma structures, all three being essentially equidistant. The horizontal and vertical placement of the newly documented structure therefore suggests it could be another element in this particular complex of ritual features.

One remnant of a “Banaspati” plaque, in two fragments of blue-grey limestone (Figures 23-24), was present in the Wat Dong Sak collection, along with small fragments from what is probably another Banaspati example in limestone (Figure 25). Though heavily effaced, the more complete specimen is readily identifiable by the presence of standing central and attendant figures over a large winged creature, along with a centrally bored hole. The additional

Figure 22: Underside view of pedestal where fracture line (arrows) occurs on the lotus platform – tenon joint.

---

52 Distances are based on GPS readings in the field and should be considered approximate. GPS waypoints recorded at P’ong Tuk in 2008 were in the range of ±3-4 meters (10-14 feet) accuracy.

53 The term “Banaspati” is a modern label that may have nothing to do with the original meaning and function of these unusual ritual items (K. I. Matics 1982: 17). The mythical creature is variously identified as Banaspati (a combination of kala and makara), or Panaspati/Vanaspati (a protective form of Śiva; also the Siamese ‘Lord of the Jungle’) – Chaturachinda et.al.1995: 35, 161.
fragments from another specimen evidence the legs of the attendant figures standing on a wing (Figure 25), and are almost certainly indicative of a “Banaspati” format.

This is an iconographic arrangement unique to Mon-Dvaravati, and no textual source has been identified to clarify the symbolic meaning (Guillon 1999: 87; Fickle 1989: 35-36). Less than two dozen examples are known to exist, and there is much variation in form and design motif among specimens (Matics 1982: 16; 1998: 165). The basic content depicted is of a central Buddha flanked by acolytes, either bodhisattvas or Indra and Brahma, riding atop a fabulous creature (Guillon 1999: 87). The creature is said to combine elements from the

Figure 23: Heavily effaced “Banaspati” plaque reportedly found at P’ong Tuk. 34.5 cm high.
vehicles for Siva (a cow or bull), Visnu (a bird or garuda), and Brahma (a goose or swan), though in rare instances the Hindu sun-god Surya is said to be the vehicle (Matics 1982: 15, 26). The P’ong Tuk specimen is too damaged to support a detailed description, but the creature’s facial remnants (Figure 24) suggest the “lion’s mask” type (Chutiwongs 2002: 208-209).

Figure 24: Closer view of “winged creature” face (lion type?).

Banасpati plaques appear to be a uniquely Dvaravati format, representing unknown practices, circa the 8th to 9th centuries. Potential explanations for this imagery include the assertion of Buddhist superiority (represented by the standing Buddha) over Hinduism (the Brahmic vehicles); or an illustration of the Buddha’s descent from the Tavatimsa heavenly realm; or more specifically, of Amitabha Buddha’s descent to the Pure Land of Sukhavati to welcome the souls of the dead; or a symbolic depiction of “Buddha’s transcendence over ignorance and delusion” (Piriya 1982: 23; Revire [Forthcoming 2011]; Matics 1998: 166). It is unlikely that all these explanations can apply, however, and it has been pointed out that they are “purely speculative” in the absence of underlying inscriptions or texts (Revire [Forthcoming 2011]). Given their scarcity and the

54 This is the range of estimated dates given for eleven Banaspati stellae in Chutiwongs 2002: Plates 88-98.
apparently esoteric nature of their content, the likely occurrence of two Banaspati plaques at P’ong Tuk is a significant new addition to this unusual group of Dvaravati ritual objects.

Figure 25: Two fragments that appear to be from a second “Banaspati” plaque, showing legs and feet standing atop a wing. Specimen at left if approximately 16.7 cm high.

Of the four newly documented statuettes, one is heavily eroded (Figure 26). The available stylistic and iconographic detail is therefore reduced, but the Dvaravati emphasis on frontal symmetry is readily observed. A close-fitting robe has the familiar U-shaped drape, and both hands appear to be in the same position, perhaps the abhayamudra (dispelling fear). These features of course are readily associated with the Mon-Dvaravati style.

A standing Buddha in much better condition exhibits similar frontality and symmetry (Figure 27). A simple robe again covers the shoulders and exhibits a U-shaped drape superimposed on a flaring hem; there is no belt and the upper under-garment is indicated by a simple curving line below the belly. The spindly legs and arms and slim torso may indicate an earlier placement, circa the 8th century, and the flat “jowly” face, heavy eyebrow ridge, receding chin, and broad
nose and mouth are also said to be an earlier combination of forms (Piriya 1982: 24; Fickle 1989: 32-33, Fig. 5; Dupont/Sen 2006: 155). Large hair curls extend onto a small conical ushnisha, which appears to be topped with a small gem bulb. The arms are raised to shoulder height in the double vitarkamudra (Figure 28 left) that is nearly exclusive to Mon-Dvaravati images (Griswold 1966: 65).

A third standing image is rather crudely modeled, including an awkward presentation of the tribhanga⁵⁵ posture (Figure 29). The right shoulder is uncovered and the robe curves naturalistically to one side. The undergarment is again indicated by a simple curved line below the belly. Facial features are very

---

⁵⁵ Tribhanga is a standing pose “in which the body is flexed in three places – i.e. from head to shoulders, from shoulders to hips, and from hips to feet. This stance symbolizes beneficence” (Bunce 1997: 311).
heavy, with a pronounced, continuous brow ridge, bulging eyes, broad nose and full lower lip. Haircurls are also large and somewhat haphazardly placed, with what may be the remnant of a small rasmi flame topping a conical ushnisha.

Of particular interest is the unusual double mudra found on this statue (Figure 28 right). An almost grotesquely large right hand is raised to chest level in vitarkamudra, while the left hand angles downward with palm up, also showing vitarkamudra. There is no indication that the left hand is holding an edge of the robe, a form of the asymmetrical gesture said to be earlier (Matics 1998: 19). This is an asymmetrical mudra arrangement that appears to be “unusual” and “rare” in Southeast Asia (Frederic 1995: 42-43; McArthur 2002: 112-113; pont/Sen 2006: 83, 159). Interestingly, one of the figures collected by Coedes at P’ong Tuk (Figure 13 left), similar in its robe arrangement and drape, also shows
this variant double *vitarkamudra*. On the Coedes specimen, the upturned left hand also holds an end of the robe, whereas the Wat Dong Sak image shows no trace of the robe in this hand. The empty left hand is said to be “usual” in Dvaravati sculpture, whereas standing Gupta/post-Gupta Buddhas typically grasp a corner of the robe (Griswold 1966: 61). It has been observed that such differences in presentation are very intentional, reflecting “local monastic practice” in wearing the garment (Ibid.).

Figure 28: Details of mudra hand gestures on the Figure 27 (left) and Figure 29 (right) Buddha figures.

Two bronze Buddha heads from Wat Dong Sak are nearly identical in size, features and workmanship (Figure 30), and undoubtedly were made at the same atelier. The missing bodies and head elements have modern replacements, including the ears on both pieces and the gem bulb on one. The original facial features are in a different style from the previously considered figures, and of better workmanship. The face is thinner, with a strong chin and a long nose with flaring nostrils. A finely incised line rims the lips and pupils, and

---

56 “Diverse streams of influences from [India and Sri Lanka] were received, absorbed, adopted . . . combined and eventually harmonized with local elements. The imported religions and the arts which they inspired became localized” (Chutiwongs 2000: 276).
Figure 29: Awkwardly modeled Buddha statuette, 28.3 cm. high.

Figure 30: Two Buddha heads restored to new torsos; some missing features also replaced. Specimen on left is 6.5 cm in maximum diameter above the ears.
the “swallow wing” brow is present as a raised band. Both heads also show a pronounced gem bulb rising from a conical *ushnisha*, but only one is original. This elongated *rasmi* form stands iconographically between a gem and the later flaming finial (Bhattacharyya 2007: 22), and seems to originate with “Dvaravati” images circa the 10th to 13th centuries out of Hariphunchai to the north (Stratton 2004: 48, 107-120). These head fragments may therefore represent a later component at P’ong Tuk with connections to northern artistic developments.

A well-made crowned Buddha may have even stronger connections to “northern Dvaravati” (Figures 31-32). A pronounced symmetrical frontality persists, including hands raised in double *abhayamudra*, but this specimen in general reflects new influences from the Pala art of northeastern India. The royally adorned Buddha image appears to have emanated from India into Southeast Asia circa the 11th century C.E., but the vehicle(s) and route(s) of this transfer are not well understood (Bhattacharyya 2007: 22). The introduction and spread of such royal imagery in Dvaravati regions has traditionally been ascribed to Khmer Mahayanists asserting control out of Cambodia, but there is also evidence that Mon groups in Burma and north-central Thailand may have been conduits for these practices (Briggs 1945: 104-105; Fickle 1974: 109-110; Stratton 2004: 260-262).

Much of the adornment on the Wat Dong Sak image matches Khmer versions of Pala motifs (i.e. the conical head cap [*makuta*], the necklace, ornamented belt, armbands, and central pleat – Fickle 1989: 38-39; Piriya 1982: 27; Bhattacharyya 2007: 18, Fig. 25). The crown, however, is said to be a later Mon-Dvaravati form, emanating from the northern center of Hariphunchai in the 11th to 13th centuries (Stratton 2004: 121-126, 260-262). This “five leaf” crown form was present at both Mon-Dvaravati and Khmer centers during this time.

---

57 Given the previous discussion on the temporal range of Dvaravati (pages 38-42), it may be that such later imagery, while showing clear affinity to the Mon-Dvaravati style, post-dates the core Dvaravati phenomenon.
Figure 31: Crowned and adorned Buddha figure, 48.3 cm high.
It may be that the adorned forms and motifs entered Thailand through late Dvaravati elements in the northwest. Stratton asserts that the earliest crown form at Haripunchai “relates to a type found in eleventh-century Pagan, which in turn derived from the Pala” (of northern India) (Op. cit.: 59).

Figure 32: Details, adorned Buddha. Left, view of back of head; note also well-developed green patination on shoulders. Right, right hand in abhayamudra, possibly with cakra symbol on palm.

Finally, a small (16.5 cm high) relief-carved stone image,\(^5^9\) presents a fleshy Buddha seated in the vajrasana meditation posture, with large hands in dhyanamudra (Figure 33). The soles of similarly oversized feet both show cakra marks, exposed by the padmasana (“full lotus”) positioning of the legs.\(^6^0\) The face includes a large mouth with full lips subtly smiling, a broad nose, high cheek

---

\(^{58}\) An image essentially identical to the Wat Dong Sak specimen is illustrated by Stratton in Figure 9.42.

\(^{59}\) This piece is made of a fossiliferous tan limestone that appears to be different from the “blue limestone” typical of larger Dvaravati images, including the larger images known from P’ong Tuk.

\(^{60}\) The “full lotus” position of the legs is said to be rare on Dvaravati images; the typical position is ardha padmasana (“half lotus”) – Nicolas Revire, personal communication. Again, such “rare” imagery could represent practices specific to the P’ong Tuk site or region, a possibility that can only be clarified after substantial new information on material patterning across local and regional areas has been developed.
bones and bulging, downcast eyelids. Hair curls are represented as squares incised in rows, with a conical ushnisha topped by a small gem bulb.

This Buddha modeling has strong affinity to figures seen on the “late Dvaravati” sema stones of the Khorat Plateau, circa the 8th-9th centuries (c.f. Woodward 2003: Plate 27). The robe leaves the right shoulder uncovered and a narrow “scarf” extends over the left shoulder. An unusual feature is the folded undergarment falling centrally across the ankles. This motif is seldom encountered, but is duplicated with the same general iconographic layout on a series of molded clay images found to the northeast at U Thong, pieces estimated to date to the 8th or 9th centuries (Piriya 1977: 78-79 and Fig. 14; Dupont/Sen 2006: 177 and Plate 482).

Figure 33: Small relief-carved Buddha in limestone, 16.5 cm high.
The concentric semi-circle motif surrounding the body and head aureoles of this piece also seems unusual. It could be a stylized representation of the aural light, or of lotus buds. The seven semi-circles around the head match the conventional number of naga hoods that make a canopy over Sakyamuni (Bhattacharyya 2007: 19), and so may be an abstraction of that imagery. A similar background treatment has so far not been found on other published specimens, and this semi-circular element may represent a localized artistic idiom. The simple geometry of these motifs is in some contrast with the fleshy, multi-dimensional modeling of the body forms, but the overall effect is a successful three-dimensionality on a bas-relief carving depth (Figure 34).

![Image of limestone Buddha plaque](image)

Figure 34: Back and side views of the limestone Buddha plaque.

**New Buddhas: Overview.** This brief review of previously published and newly observed ritual images attributed to P'ong Tuk evokes several observations. Styles and forms presented by the Banaspati plaque, three unadorned standing Buddhas, two head fragments, and a seated tablet are generally attributable to the 7th-9th century material culture of central Thailand.
This new information is therefore congruent with the revised temporal assignments for the images collected by Coedes, and supports the view that P’ong Tuk is primarily a mid-to-late Dvaravati settlement.

The presence of a crowned Buddha tentatively suggests additional temporal, social and religious components at P’ong Tuk. Adorned Buddha figures obtain a substantial presence in Thailand circa the 11th to 13th centuries (Woodward 1980: 158-159), and the stylistic features on the P’ong Tuk example suggest connections to the center at Hariphunchai (Lamphun) over 500 kilometers (310 miles) to the north, from a period that would be “Late Dvaravati” in some chronological schemes (Quaritch Wales 1969: 85; Fine Arts Department 2009: 97-101). This suggests that occupation at P’ong Tuk continued well beyond the pre-Khmer brackets previously applied to the site (Coedes 1928a: 207-208; Quaritch Wales 1936: 48), and had connections to cultural patterns beyond central Thailand. The crowned Buddha also raises the possibility of Mahayana practices at P’ong Tuk. The meaning and function of these adorned figures through time and across geography is not well understood, but they have usually been associated with Mahayana/Vajrayana practices (Fickle 1974; 1989: 38; Huntington and Bangkel 2003: 28; Stratton 2004: 57). Woodward, however, questions whether this royal imagery always indicates the presence of “complicated esoteric Buddhism” (1980: 158). In any case, the Wat Dong Sak image dates to a period when Mahayana practices were probably being promoted in the region by the Angkorian Khmer.

The brief and very preliminary observations given here on the ritual forms and iconography known from P’ong Tuk reflect the lack of functional and dated contexts. None of the Coedes figures, nor those newly described from the Wat Dong Sak collection, were obtained in a systematic manner from archaeological deposits that can be described spatially or temporally. The usefulness of these objects to elucidate the social content and functions of P’ong Tuk specifically, then, or Dvaravati in general, is limited. What we can say about these objects, in fact, must draw on what we know of such objects from other, somewhat better
documented sites; the P’ong Tuk objects contribute very little new information, except to indicate the presence of these artistic and ritual forms at the P’ong Tuk location (and even this presumption cannot be made with certainly, since it must remain a possibility that some of these specimens are not from P’ong Tuk). The information conveyed by these objects, then, is treated here as highly tentative and preliminary in nature. One basic observation supported by the images discussed here, however, is that P’ong Tuk contains a variety of functional forms, artistic styles, and temporal components. P’ong Tuk is, in fact, likely to be a “multi-component” site that contains succeeding occupational deposits spanning multiple centuries. In particular, Pala-influenced items such as the crowned Buddha and votive tablets also found at the site give strong indications of a later component, possibly a presence that should be termed “post-Dvaravati.”

Finally, it should be noted that at least two objects discussed here appear to have been intentionally ruined. The more complete “Banaspati” plaque in particular (Figures 23-24) shows extensive effacement across the face of its imagery, and is also broken into fragments. Another broken “Banaspati” plaque is indicated by two fragments (Figure 25). Two basal fragments of a large limestone image (Figures 21-22) also appear to have been fractured by leveraging force from the back of the statue, as if it were being pushed or pulled forward with substantial force from its vertical mount. The damage observed on the pieces seems to go well beyond what would be expected via natural degenerative processes in an archaeological context.\(^{61}\) This raises an interesting question as to whether these damaged pieces represent an episode or episodes of conflict at P’ong Tuk, during which these images were intentionally defaced. Even within a region and period that was generally Buddhist, could the Dvaravati era have experienced inter-polity conflict?\(^{62}\)

\(^{61}\) The break on the seated Buddha plaque (Figure 34), on the other hand, is of a type that could occur on a natural fracture plane of the stone during exposure to the elements in an archaeological context, or when accidentally dropped.

\(^{62}\) One village informant attributed the broken Buddha statuary to an invasion by the Burmese, reflecting a local collective memory of the region’s history.
Chapter 3: Other Items Documented from the P’ong Tuk Locality

Introduction. Among the diverse assemblage of objects collected at Wat Dong Sak, several additional items reportedly found in the P’ong Tuk locality were documented by the 2008 reconnaissance. These are objects that relate to forms and/or types previously associated with Dvaravati occupation at other sites. Again, as with the ritual images, a “conservative” approach to documentation was applied in recording only items that the wat caretakers gave strong assurances were from the P’ong Tuk locale, and which presented characteristics of having derived from an archaeological context.

The items pictured and briefly discussed here are representative of materials in the wat collection and are not a comprehensive record of this assemblage. Many additional photographs were taken of the objects illustrated here, and additional objects were photographed. The objective of this chapter is to provide an impression of the material range and stylistic content of items found in the P’ong Tuk locality and curated at Wat Dong Sak, and the present discussion of these objects does not purport to be more than a cursory description. All of the categories included here are conducive to detailed analysis, and substantial comparative information is available from other Dvaravati sites.

Stucco and terracotta. H. G. Quaritch Wales asserted that the covering of ritual structure exteriors with stucco adornment is an architectural trait “characteristic of the Dvaravati period” (1936: 48), and it has been further observed that this type of ornamentation “has no immediate precedent” in the region of Thailand (Zaleski 1998: 97).

While this relatively ephemeral medium (essentially, plaster) is often found in a fragmented and decayed state, substantial intact panels have survived at some sites (e.g. Nakhon Pathom and Sri Thep), and this imagery reveals a “mastery of narrative sculpture” during the Dvaravati period (Fontain 2007: 60).
Dvaravati stucco exhibits a highly energetic and varied content that appears to draw, in various instances, on both Theravada and Mahayana texts (Ibid.). The apocryphal *jataka* stories of Sakyamuni Buddha’s previous lives are a particular source for many of these sculpted narratives. Dvaravati stucco work is also noted for its strongly expressive quality – “perhaps moreso than in any other period” – with an emphasis on facial features (Op. cit.: 67).

Stucco is a generally less permanent medium which in Thailand is reported to have been composed of lime and sand in varying proportions, with rice husks sometimes added (Boisellier 1975: 45). The quality of the resulting mix varied greatly from location to location and even at times on the same structure. While still wet, this mixture was either pressed into molds or sculpted by hand, often on a brick or laterite core and sometimes over a bamboo or wood framework (Ibid.). Surfaces “were always painted,” and it is reported that “Mon sculptors introduced the innovation [during the Dvaravati period] of inlaying the stucco with colored stones, bits of ceramics or mother-of-pearl” (Van Beek and Tettoni 1991: 35).

Since the plastered stucco dries steadily after application, “timing was very important . . . [and] the quality of the finished work inevitably depended on the skill of the artist and his sensitivity to the properties of his materials” (Op. cit.: 46). Stucco work therefore tended to exhibit the individuality of the modeler to a greater degree than most sculptural media, resulting in “considerable differences of style even among works of a single school done at nearly the same time” (Van Beek and Tettoni 1991: 46). Coedes felt this reduced the art historical value of stucco remains, teaching “us more about the [artist’s] personality than about the school to which he belongs” (1928a: 203). It is, however, this quality of idiosyncratic expression that raises the potential usefulness of stucco in tracing local and regional styles and motifs. For example, Dupont asserted that the substantial assemblage of stucco remnants recovered by Coedes at the Baan Nai Ma location was “from a decorative tradition not seen elsewhere” (Dupont/Sen 2006 84). This suggests that a distinctive artistic idiom
may be attributable to the P’ong Tuk locality, a possibility that has ramifications beyond stylistic and art historical considerations. If, using stucco and other categories, local material traditions can be delineated, this will aid in tracing social relationships and political structures across Dvaravati territory.\(^{63}\)

Most of the stucco remains known from P’ong Tuk were encountered by the Coedes team at the square Baan Nai Ma foundation. Representative examples were pictured by Coedes (1928a: Plates 4-5), and even more detailed photographs are provided by Dupont (Dupont/Sen 2006: Plates 288-306). Decorative forms discussed by Dupont include triangular leaves arranged around a circular motif, fleurons (terminal floral motifs), fleurons with triangular serrated leaves, and curled volutes (Op. cit.: 81-82). Human and animal motifs are characterized as “clumsy and unsophisticated” in execution, with bulging eyes and other stylized, distorted features (Op. cit.: 82). Representations include a female monster (*rakasi*), *kala* death heads, a *naga*, lions and an elephant head with crown (Op. cit.: Plates 288, 290-295).\(^{64}\)

Dupont suggested that the stucco remains from P’ong Tuk exhibited a progression in stylistic distortion that might have occurred over time (Op. cit.: 84). He also asserted that the refined San Chao *vihara* foundation and the rather crude stucco art “may have been from different periods” (Ibid.).

The 2008 examination of the Wat Dong Sak collection indicates that stucco artifacts continue to be found at P’ong Tuk. Specific find locations were not available for these pieces, but as discussed above (page 28-31), there is evidence for a widespread buried cultural stratum in the P’ong Tuk locality that appears to include stucco remains. It is therefore not surprising that stucco artifacts are encountered by local residents. The foliate pieces illustrated here (Figures 35-36) appear to be similar to examples described by Coedes and Dupont. A corpulent torso fragment (Figure 37) also displays the casual, almost

\(^{63}\) For example, the recognition of distinctive local pottery forms and decorative motifs can help trace the lines of trade or the movement of brides among settlements as non-local pots are identified at sites.

\(^{64}\) Dupont notes that a crowned elephant is a motif known in “the Cham style of Tra-kieu,” but not previously known in Dvaravati (Dupont/Sen 2006: 82).
Figure 35: Floral stucco detail in Wat Dong Sak collection.

Figure 36: Two views of another floral motif in stucco.
Figure 37: A corpulent torso in stucco from the Wat Dong Sak collection.

whimsical forms and lines discussed by Dupont. The subdued features on a human head, however (Figure 38), are in sharp contrast to the “clumsy” and distorted treatment Dupont ascribed to facial representations collected by Coedes. These contrasting styles may reflect the temporal range suggested for the P’ong Tuk by Dupont, or the variation in artistic quality observed more generally within and among Dvaravati sites.

A more limited presence of terracotta was encountered at P’ong Tuk by Coedes and the 2008 reconnaissance. Terracotta is essentially a lower grade of pottery: earthenware, unglazed, usually with a coarse red body fired at low temperatures (Rice 1987: 483). Its lesser use probably reflects the greater difficulty of production, especially compared to the preparation of stucco, which served similar functions (Boisellier 1975: 47). Terracotta was produced essentially in a pottery workshop, requiring greater management of raw materials, forms, and firing procedures in order to create this material. Due to this need for “highly skilled workmanship,” however, “many terra-cottas display greater aesthetic quality” (Ibid.). Of the few sites “remarkable for the abundance
and the quality of the terra-cottas they have yielded," the Dvaravati center of Ku Bua, downstream from P’ong Tuk, provides outstanding examples from circa the 8th century (Boisellier 1975: 47-48).

This material was also shaped by hand or in molds. It is said to have been used in Thailand mostly for small figural sculpture and secondarily for architectural decoration; it is also a dominant material in the production of so-called votive tablets (Van Beek and Tettoni 1991: 35). Large figural pieces were sometimes built up of individually shaped and fired terracotta components (Ibid.). Wheatley asserts that figural terracotta appeared earliest, in the 7th century C.E., with "stucco thereafter" (1983: 206).

Aside from so-called votive tablets, which are treated separately below, only a few pieces of terracotta were present in the Wat Dong Sak collection. Most of these appear to be architectural elements. Two items with vegetal forms

Figure 38: Head in stucco, reportedly found at P’ong Tuk locality.
(Figure 39) exhibit the “curled and serrated edges” noted by Dupont on P’ong Tuk stucco (Dupont/Sen 2006: 82). A plain triangular item (Figure 39 left) is large, approximately 18 centimeters wide, and was probably mounted on architecture. The smaller piece (Figure 39 right), approximately 7 centimeters wide, is more plaque-like and was perhaps part of a shrine composition, or an eave ornament at the margin of a tiled roof (c.f. Moore 2007: 191).

Two generally cone-shaped pieces of terracotta may be architectural finials (Figures 40-42). Items identified by Coedes as “pinnacles” were found at the Baan Nai Ma square foundation (1928a: 199 and Plate 5). Dupont gives a better description of these “crowning or finials” from P’ong Tuk, stating that they “are reinforced by an assembly of terracotta or laterite pieces and coated with a thick layer of stucco” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 81). He goes on to say that “they are similar to finials found at Wat Phra Men” (Ayutthya).

The newly documented pieces have sinuous contours that follow a tiered pattern, with a thick bulbous base topped by narrower bands. The interior surfaces of both reveal heavy clay coils that have been hand-built (Figures 41-42), though the exteriors exhibit a uniform wheel-thrown finish, with traces of a thin stucco coating mainly apparent on the complete specimen (Figure 41). The
Figure 40: Two conical terracotta artifacts.

Figure 41: Terracotta finial or “votive stupa” element, 30 cm in height. Interior view from base (right) shows coiled clay construction.
Figure 42: Another terracotta finial or miniature stupa element, this example with break edges that are waterworn, 17 cm at widest diameter. Coiled clay construction is quite apparent in the basal view at right.

The complete specimen is 30 centimeters high and 22 centimeters at its widest, while the incomplete example is 17 centimeters at its widest. Both are more detailed in their narrow and thin turnings than the “pinnacle” examples pictured by Coedes, and would seem to have had only a thin layer of finishing plaster. In these respects they may relate to another class of objects often encountered at Dvaravati sites, so-called “votive stupas.”

“Votive stupas” can be quite small, only a few centimeters tall, and used as devotional offerings in a manner similar to the tablets, sometimes also exhibiting seal impressions or incised stanzas of Buddhist scripture; they are most often placed in quantity within an architectural stupa (Chirapravati 1997: 33). Use of these smaller forms, however, “does not seem to have taken hold in the central plains of Siam” (Skilling 2009: 109). There is also a larger class, ranging up to 90+ centimeters (35.5 inches) tall, constructed of individually formed components, some published examples of which are similar in shape to

---

65 Use of the term “votive” with regard to these items is common in the literature, but problematical in its implications for function – see the discussion of this term in the following section on “votive tablets.”
the P’ong Tuk specimens (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 175-179 and Figure 19; Leksukhum 2009: Figures 6 and 8). These may also have been created as devotional offerings for making merit, or as portable elements of a shrine or altar.\footnote{The portable stupas depicted on sculpture or on “votive tablets” are unique to Southeast Asian Buddhist imagery, and their ritual function is not well understood (Skilling 2008: 257).} Similarly shaped stupas are sometimes seen flanking the Buddha on Dvaravati sculpture (e.g. Boisselier 1975: Figure 50; Quaritch Wales 1969: Plate 72).\footnote{The larger votive stupas, it has been suggested, may be related to Buddhist sects that emphasized stupa veneration (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 178).}

The large “votive stupas” have been documented at only a few sites in Thailand, and are mostly encountered in the Peninsular region (Skilling 2009: 108-109). Dvaravati site Ban Ku Muang, Singburi Province, central Thailand, however, yielded two specimens 43 and 48.5 centimeters high (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 178). “Larger baked clay stupas” of similar height have also been reported from the walled and moated site of Ban Thap Chumphon, Nakhon Sawan Province, in north-central Thailand (Quaritch Wales 1969: 80 and Plate 53A; Skilling 2009: 109). Items identified as finials or “roof decorations” have been found at the Dvaravati sites of Muang Fa Daed Song Yang (northeastern Thailand – Indrawooth 1994: 113), and In Buri Kao (a small walled and moated settlement north of U Thong – Quaritch Wales 1980: Figure 3); an unprovenanced specimen in the National Museum is also illustrated by Quaritch Wales (1969: Plate 23B). One possible indication of the newly documented P’ong Tuk specimens’ function is the relatively rough finish on their bases, perhaps reflecting use as an architectural element rather than as a votive.

A final terracotta type observed in the Wat Dong Sak collection from P’ong Tuk and illustrated here is a “skin rubber” (Figure 43). These are small rectangular tablets with incised striations or cross-hatching, said to have been used in place of soap to clean skin (Indrawooth 2002: 46). They are reported to be “found from excavations in domestic areas of most Dvaravati cities,” and examples very similar to the P’ong Tuk specimen are illustrated in Indrawooth
1999 (page 273), 2002 (Figure 10), and 2004 (page 134). Multiple examples are also noted for the “small farming community” of Phu Noi in north-central Thailand, dated circa the 1st-4th centuries C.E. (Ciarla n.d.). This artifact is said to originate as an Indian toiletry form that occurs regularly at prehistoric and early historic sites in South Asia (Ghosh 1989: 346). Its presence at P’ong Tuk adds to the site’s list of material traits typical for Dvaravati.

**Votive tablets/clay sealings.** This material representation of Buddhist ritual practice is widely encountered throughout Asia, and particularly in Southeast Asia. Production of these items, primarily in unbaked clay or ceramic/terracotta, was especially voluminous in Thailand, and these sealings are found at “almost all Dvaravati sites,” including P’ong Tuk (Skilling 2009: 110-111; Van Beek and Tettoni 1991: 70; Coedes 1928a: 196, 202). Indeed, the extensive use of these small molded images in the Thailand region “began in Dvaravati, which adopted a ritual practice current in India and developed it according to its own imagination and iconographic and aesthetic preferences” (Skilling 2009: 113).

Figure 43: Terracotta “skin rubber,” 9.6 centimeters long.

---

68 “The variety of images [in Thailand] is astounding. There seems to be more diversity in the central plains of Thailand alone, not to speak of the Northeast, than in India itself. This is in sharp contrast with Cambodia or Vietnam of the same period, where only a few moulded images have been found” (Skilling 2009: 111).
The substantial quantity, long-time use, and broad presence of this ritual type has generated a similarly extensive literature. A great variety of imagery is encountered in these tablets, some of it trans-regional, but most of it localized to a specific site and ritual event (Op. cit.: 111-112). The present discussion will not attempt to analyze these P’ong Tuk examples in detail, particularly since the basis in text and practice for this imagery is not well understood (Skilling 2008: 251, 257). An unpublished Master’s thesis that studied the molded sealings found in the Mae Klong and Ta Chin basins “reveals a great diversity in conceptions and style in these regions,” again mostly appearing to be site-specific productions (Op. cit.: 252). No doubt a detailed analysis of specimens from P’ong Tuk, particularly in conjunction with the information already developed for the Mae Klong Valley, would contribute substantially toward understanding this ritual practice in western Dvaravati.

It has recently been asserted that the function of these objects is misunderstood, and that the “votive” label is incorrect (Skilling 2005, 2008, 2009; Lawson 1982: 181-196). In the dictionary sense of “votive” as an offering “given . . . in fulfillment of or in accordance with a vow” (Harper 2011), or in the mediaeval Christian sense of “expressing gratitude to a saint” for wish fulfillment, these Asian objects should not be so labeled (Skilling 2009: 107). Their principal function -- as indicated by the context of their deposition, mostly out-of-sight within stupas or caves, and by the dedicatory inscriptions placed on some examples -- is connected to merit-making (Op. cit.: 108, 110; Skilling 2008: 248-249, 252).

To produce an image of the Buddha or to produce a stupa brings spiritual merit which leads to rebirth in heavens and on higher planes. Therefore, if to make a single image brings enormous merit, to make many images brings vast – indeed, incalculable, according to the texts – merit. This ideology inspired technologies of mass-production which included the use of moulds (Skilling 2009: 108).

69 “The study of Buddhist sealings or votive tablets is an immense task, since the tablets were produced from molds in vast numbers. The field is constantly changing, or expanding, as new examples continue to be found and reported, both in India and Southeast Asia” (Skilling 2008: 248).
Contrary to the widely-held idea that these inexpensive molded images were “the poor person’s road to heaven,” there is inscriptive evidence that this avenue of merit-making was used by all levels of society, including royalty (Skilling 2008: 249). The key element in this practice was the multiplication of meritorious action, not the intrinsic value of the offering.

Molded sealings were also deposited as part of the consecration rituals for sacred architecture, thus surviving as “installation artifacts” that were ceremonially placed within stupa relic chambers or under structural foundations (Skilling 2009: 108). There is also some evidence, not well developed, of a funerary or reliquary function for these objects, wherein the remains of a venerating monk may have been mixed with the clay used to produce tablets (Skilling 2008: 257).

Another misconception is that these tablets are “pilgrims’ souvenirs” obtained at the main Buddhist holy sites in India (Coedes 1926-27: 2-3), a circumstance that has “no basis in Buddhist, South Asian, or Southeast Asian texts or ritual or in the archaeological record” (Skilling 2009: 107).

The specimens illustrated here from the Wat Dong Sak collection (Figure 44) are basically of three types: (1) Three leaf- or teardrop-shaped plaques (Figure 45) with a single Buddha seated pendant-legged, sheltered by the outline of a “stylized north Indian tower” within a trefoil arch, flanked by two larger stupas and with smaller stupas overhead (Skilling 2009: 111); (2) Four triangular plaques (Figure 46) with a single Buddha seated cross-legged, sheltered by a north Indian tower outline within a trefoil arch, and with what appear to be small stupas surrounding; the larger, light-colored example has three small stupas flanking laterally to each side, and possibly traces of a molded inscription underneath the lotus pedestal; (3) Two wider triangular or arched plaques with figural groups (Figure 47); one example has five figures seated cross-legged, framed by flaming aureoles, above niches with five additional figures seated cross-legged, and with apparently foliate forms in the background within an arched frame; the other example has a large Buddha figure seated cross-legged,
flanked by two cross-legged figures, all seated on a large lotus pedestal and backed by flaming, more architectural aureole forms, with apparently foliate forms in the background within an arched frame.

Group 1 specimens fall within a Pala-style “trans-regional type” delineated by Skillings (2009: 111). This image is widely distributed at sites in Myanmar (Pagan period) and Thailand (Dvaravati through Ayutthya periods), as well as northern India. Why this tablet imagery is “so widespread and so enduring” is unknown, though the multiplication of stupa images is often associated with

Figure 44: Molded sealings, or “votive tablets,” reportedly found at P’ong Tuk.
Figure 45: “Group 1” molded tablets, leaf-shaped with a single pendant-legged Buddha figure.

Figure 46: “Group 2” molded tablets, trianguloid with a single Buddha figure seated cross-legged.
the “Miracle of Sravasti” episode of Buddha’s life (Chirapravati 1997: 17; Briggs 1945: 100). These P’ong Tuk examples are essentially cruder duplicates of tablets recovered at the downstream center of Ku Bua (Sukpramun 2009: Figure 5), but lack any trace of a molded inscription, as is present on the Ku Bua examples.\footnote{Molded inscriptions on these tablets are usually the “ye dharma” verse that succinctly expresses the Buddha’s teaching on causation – sometimes referred to as the “Buddhist credo” – in Pali or Sanskrit, written in Nagari or Pallava script. The inclusion of this verse is said to be typical of Dvaravati sealing tablets (Chirapravati 1997: 16-17).} (The Figure 5 specimen illustrated by Sukpramun for Ku Bua appears to be the same tablet pictured by Coedes in Plate 1 of his 1926-27 study of votive tablets. In that plate Coedes labeled this tablet as being from “the neighborhood of Jaiya” (1926-27: 17), but in a later publication he stated that this label was incorrect, and that this specimen was from “Dong Sak, near P’ong Tuk” [1928a: 196/f.n.1]. In this case, explicitly asserted by Coedes, this tablet would be the only inscribed artifact known for the P’ong Tuk locale. Given the confusion of provenance, however, now added to by the Sukpramun attribution to Ku Bua, this sealing specimen must be treated as problematical.)

The Group 2 tablets are a variation on this “trans-regional” format, now showing the Buddha cross-legged and in earth-touching gesture (Skilling 2009: 111). Again, these P’ong Tuk examples are relatively “crude” in their execution and appear to lack an inscription. A date circa the 10\textsuperscript{th} century has been proposed for these trans-regional types (Groups 1 and 2), although there are indications that they appear earlier, even in Southeast Asia (Ibid.).

The third group presents a wide, arching tablet shape that is sometimes attributed to a later Khmer era of dominance in central Thailand (Zaleski 1998: 99). The triad of figures is also a common representation in the Khmer period (10\textsuperscript{th}-13\textsuperscript{th} centuries), usually Sakyamuni flanked by the bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani or Prajnaparamita (Chirapravati 1997: 10, 40, 43). The figural adornments, however, and the elaborated architectural and foliage forms, resemble Coedes’ “Type I” tablet that he attributes to the Phra Pathom
(Nakhon Pathom -- 1926-27: 7). He still sees a Khmer influence in these Type I designs, and places these in a later period not clearly defined (Op. cit.: 7, 11).

Along with the rise of Khmer hegemony on the mainland came a shift to “Mahayana iconographic programmes” on molded sealings (Ibid.). This included a variety of mandalic arrangements derived from “Tantric” (Vajrayana) practices, the tantra of Hevajra71 perhaps being the most frequently encountered (Op. cit.: 46). Interestingly, one major version of the Hevajra mandala utilizes ten figures, such as would be present on one of the P’ong Tuk examples if it were complete (Figure 47).

![Figure 47: “Group 3” tablet, with a widely arched format.](image)

It is asserted that these molded artifacts and associated rituals were “usually local and site specific” (Skillings 2008: 257; 2003: 107). It may be that

71 The cult of Hevajra apparently existed in Tibet, Mongolia, Cambodia and Thailand, but not in India, China, or Japan; the details of this practice have “remained rather obscure” (Frederic 1995: 256-257). Hevajra is a bodhisattva said to be an emanation of the Panca Jina Buddha Aksobhya (Chirapravati 1997: 75).
the tablets illustrated here display elements of design or style that are specific to the P’ong Tuk locality, just as some elements in other material categories discussed in this thesis have been viewed as potentially local. The region of the Mae Klong Valley has been described as presenting a great diversity of local votive styles, and additional data on this ritual category from P’ong Tuk can augment these previous studies, as well as help provide a clearer picture of these practices in Dvaravati more broadly.

Sculptural fragments. Most Dvaravati sculpture was done on a “blue limestone” reported to be “a brittle schistous variety riddled with internal fault lines” (Briggs 1945: 101; Van Beek and Tettoni 1991: 67). The difficult nature of this material is said to have limited Dvaravati sculptors to “excessively heavy” forms that were less susceptible to fragmentation over time (Ibid.); even so, once in an archaeological context, the natural faults in this stone would tend to degrade and break up.

All systematic visits to P’ong Tuk, from the Coedes investigation through Quaritch Wales and the 2008 reconnaissance, have encountered reports of sculptural finds that subsequently left the site locality. One indication of the extensive nature of this circumstance is provided by the rectangular “vihara” foundation examined by Quaritch Wales, which he reported “had been completely ransacked” by local residents whose “interest . . . in digging had been aroused” by the previous investigations of Coedes (1936: 43). He further reported that the finds by local residents included “no less than fifteen small bronze images . . . and some twenty heads and other portions of large stone images,” none of which were available for his direct inspection (Ibid.). During his excavation of this looted feature, Quaritch Wales himself found “a number of small fragments of the limbs of images in the blue limestone characteristic of the Dvaravati period” (Op. cit.:44). None of these finds by Wales were illustrated or described in any detail, and their ultimate disposition (i.e. left at P’ong Tuk, removed to another repository in Thailand, or taken out of the country by
Quaritch Wales?) was not specified. Thus at this single location is documented the removal of artifacts representing dozens of ritual images.\footnote{Dupont – who dismissed the small metal statuettes from P’ong Tuk as of “very erratic” age and quality, and possibly removed from their place of origin – lamented the fact that Quaritch Wales “did not photograph the head, the lotus-base and the various fragments which he mentions” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 83). Dupont felt these would have been more useful as comparative specimens, particularly as “large stone statues hardly change sites,” and with such items “it would have at least been possible to place P’ong Tuk in the context of Dvaravati archaeology” (Ibid.).}

It may be that this architectural feature had a particular abundance of figural remains (c.f. Quaritch Wales 1936: 43), but there is nothing in the size or details of this location that would suggest an unusual status in this regard. Likewise, Coedes reported a variety of objects that were found by village residents at the San Chao and Banana Plantation locations, but which were not available for viewing or acquisition, and during the 2008 reconnaissance there were also reports that items had been found and then removed from the locality. It seems likely, then, that the record of ritual imagery presently available for P’ong Tuk is a minor representation of the site’s actual content.

In the Wat Dong Sak collection there are a variety of stone sculptural fragments. These mostly derive from larger images made of the blue limestone of Dvaravati preference. A few representative examples are illustrated here (Figures 48-49). Of particular interest is the hand fragment showing fingers in ritual pose – possibly the \textit{vitarka mudra} often seen on Dvaravati images. Two small figural fragments, exhibiting conical tenon extensions for mounting on a larger sculptural composition, appear to be portions of human or animal figures, possibly small deer images such as were reported by Quaritch Wales to have been found by residents “about 300 yards SW” of his \textit{stupa} excavation (1936: 47), deer being an element in the depiction of Buddha’s first sermon (e.g. Intrawooth 2002: Figure 6).

**Other items: Overview.** The variety of materials and artifact types briefly described in this section indicates the range of archaeological content at P’ong Tuk. To these categories should be added the common domestic pottery...
Figure 48: Sculptural fragments in the Wat Dong Sak collection, including a hand in mudra gesture, and part of a pedestal with foot remnants.

Figure 49: Limestone sculptural fragments of uncertain depiction, probably either human or animal (deer?) form. Oblique view at right.
fragments observed in the field at the site locality, as well as the human remains and accompanying iron tools, plus a “copper” earring, uncovered by Quaritch Wales. Not surprisingly, most items preserved at Wat Dong Sak are ritual types, but the “skin rubber” may be an item used day-to-day, as would be the coarse unglazed pottery (e.g. Figure 11, page 31). It seems likely that ritually associated deposits and features still preserved at P’ong Tuk would produce substantial imagery and related material. No doubt deposits representing daily domestic activity are also present at the site. The non-systematic retrieval of additional objects from the site, however, will only minimally expand an understanding of the site and its roles in a wider Dvaravati system. Only the recovery of objects and information with systematic archaeological techniques will generate the data on spatial, temporal, and functional contexts that will truly enhance the record for Dvaravati in west-central Thailand.
Chapter 4: The P’ong Tuk Visnu

Introduction. None of the remains described for P’ong Tuk by Coedes or Quaritch Wales were ascribed to a Brahmanical, non-Buddhist component, and the site has been characterized since those investigations as a Buddhist entity. The discovery in the early 1950s of a Visnu image at P’ong Tuk should have changed this perception of the site, particularly since the image in question is a relatively major piece both in size and quality of execution (Figure 50). Almost no attention has been given, however, to this image in subsequent literature. The occurrence of a substantial Hindu object at P’ong Tuk places the site among numerous additional Dvaravati sites that contain both Buddhist and Brahmanical material, even as it generates more questions than answers regarding the nature of Brahmanical practices at P’ong Tuk.

The P’ong Tuk Visnu was discovered during highway construction “at 200 m[eters] [656 feet] east of San Chao” (Diskul 1962: 109). Since the old “cart-track” and new roadway both follow a similar northwest-southeast course (Coedes 1928a: Plate 1 compared with Google Earth satellite imagery), a distance of 200 meters southeast from the San Chao location appears to place the Visnu find-spot very close to a small rubble-mound mapped by Coedes but not explored by his team or by Quaritch Wales. This raises the possibility that the Visnu derives from a structure represented by this mound, a circumstance that would be expected for a substantial ritual image. That the Visnu image was actually located near the roadway to the southeast of San Chao, instead of at a location due east, was confirmed by local informants.

73 The preliminary description and discussion given here of the P’ong Tuk Visnu figure will be expanded to a more detailed analysis in an article co-authored with Dr. Paul Lavy, currently in preparation. A paper titled “The P’ong Tuk Visnu” was presented to the Council on Thai Studies annual meeting at Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, October 23, 2009.

74 Coedes concluded in his main report on P’ong Tuk that all the architectural features uncovered were “devoted to the Buddhist cult” (1928a: 208).

75 This general date of discovery is based on the statement by Subhadradas Diskul: “About 10 years ago, when the cart-track in Tambol Pong Tuk was replaced by a road, a stone image of Vishnu . . . was discovered” (1962: 109).
Figure 50: The Visnu recovered in the early 1950s at P’ong Tuk, now housed at Wat Dong Sak.

During the 2008 field reconnaissance, two elderly residents of P’ong Tuk provided information on the location and circumstances of the Visnu discovery. Khun Thied and Khun Chuan Laochan both remembered the discovery of the Visnu and both agreed on its general location, to which they took the reconnaissance party (Figure 51). This location is generally 12 meters (40 feet) west of the highway centerline and 282 meters (925 feet) southeast of the San

---

76 The Visnu find spot was recorded as GPS Way Point #15 on January 9, 2008, accuracy factor ± 4.3 meters (14 feet), at latitude N13° 53.526' longitude E99° 47.207'.
Chao “vihara” structure (Figure 52). This distance is at substantial variance with the 200 meter distance given by Diskul, but the 1962 notation is presumed to be a general estimate. Both of the informants had strong personal recollections of this discovery and readily agreed on the specific location, so a reasonable confidence level is assigned to this information.

The elderly informants stated that the fragmented Visnu was found while scraping for fill dirt to create the adjacent highway embankment. The embankment next to the find spot is estimated to be 1.5 meters (5 feet) high on the river valley terrace. Khun Chuan also stated that in the area immediately west of the Visnu find-spot many old (i.e. large) bricks used to be found. These bricks, combined with the Coedes mapping of a small rubble mound in the vicinity (but east of the road), further raises the possibility that the Visnu image was associated with a structural location, a circumstance that would be expected if the image remained close to its original context.

Despite the obvious significance of this image, the only knowledgeable publication regarding the P’ong Tuk Visnu appears to be Diskul’s 1962 reference. This amounts to one short paragraph accompanied by a rather indistinct
photograph (Figure 53). The 2008 reconnaissance, then, is believed to be the first investigation to describe and discuss the stylistic and formal elements of this ritual artifact in some detail, if only at a preliminary level.

The Visnu as it has been preserved and presented at Wat Dong Sak appears to be carved in high relief on a large tablet or plaque (Figures 50, 53). As the abbot reported to Diskul in the early 1960s, however, the image is actually “sculptured in the round” (1962: 109). Because it was uncovered in a fragmented condition, monks from Wat Dong Sak, including our informant Khun Chuan, attempted to restore the sculpture as a free-standing image, but “the
The type of stone on which the image was formed is unknown. The hardness noted by the abbot may suggest a material other than the “blue limestone” used on many Dvaravati images, including some other items documented at P’ong Tuk.

The “shoes” present an odd “Dutch wooden shoe” form, and one wonders what the source of inspiration was for this modern restoration. The pedestal is a small rectangular form with what appear to be crude floral motifs in a recessed panel on the front (Figures 50, 53, 57). Both elements are sharply incongruent with the manner of detail and form on the original image.
Wat Dong Sak, mounted on a multi-tiered marble pedestal (Figure 54). Despite repeated entreaties from the National Museum, the Visnu remains at P’ong Tuk, where its retention appears to be an issue of importance to the local community. Steps have been taken to permanently anchor the image and its cement matrix at its position in the shrine, hopefully assuring its security. There is ample evidence of the image’s status as an active element in worship at Wat Dong Sak. Offerings of fresh flowers, fruit, incense and gilt leaf are maintained, and visitation specifically to the Visnu image by lay practitioners was regularly observed during the 2008 visit to P’ong Tuk.

Figure 54: The P’ong Tuk Visnu in active use at the Wat Dong Sak monastery, January 2008.
Visnu in first millennium Southeast Asia. The appearance in Southeast Asia of substantial ritual architecture and statuary during the middle centuries of the 1st millennium C.E. coincides with the rise of new socio-political structures. Art was not a luxury in the modern sense, but a necessary "means to power," radiating what Hermann Kulke has termed a "magico-political force-field" that helped leaders establish and maintain power as persons of prowess, as cakravartins, or as dhammarajas (Brown 1996: 194-195; Kulke 1986: 14).

There has been a persistent occurrence of Brahmanical practices on the Southeast Asian landscape from the beginning of Indic religious influence. The earliest examples of Southeast Asian ritual art and architecture securely associated with dated inscriptions are found at the north-central Cambodian site of Sambor Prei Kuk (Lavy 2004: 45). Seventh century temple dedications here concerned various manifestations of Siva.

A general census of pre-9th century, free-standing, four-armed, mitered Visnu (or Visnu-related) images (relatively intact or interpretable fragments) on mainland Southeast Asia is given by Paul Lavy as approximately 65 from the Mekong delta region of southern Cambodia and Vietnam, 4 from northern Cambodia, 1 from the region of Laos and the Khorat Plateau, 10 from Si Thep on the northeastern margin of central Thailand, 5 from east-central Thailand (Prachinburi Province), 3 from U Thong in west-central Thailand, and 25 from Peninsular Thailand (2004: 133-139, 200-201). Most of these are estimated to originate in the 7th-8th centuries C.E. (Op. cit.: 201); the earliest images, circa the 6th century, are found on the Peninsula (Op. cit.: 271-272, 302). The distribution of styles and estimated ages suggests that the initial movement of artistic influence was from west (Peninsular region) to east (Mekong delta region) (Lavy 2004: 338).

Images of Siva, Surya, Indra, Ganesha, Uma, and Lakshmi "figure prominently among the known Brahmanical vestiges" in Southeast Asia (Dofflemeyer 1999: 34). Vaisnavite remains, with a multiplicity of images and stylistic variations, have drawn the majority of scholarly attention on early mainland Southeast Asia, but there is also a substantial presence of Saivite imagery across the region, almost entirely represented by linga forms (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 128).

The earliest textual (Sanskrit) evidence of Brahmanical practices in Southeast Asia include the Vo Canh inscription from central Vietnam, which expresses general Brahmanic principles, and inscriptions on stone pillars from Kalimanatan, Indonesian Borneo, which record gifts given to Brahmns for the performance of rituals (Lahiri and Bacus 2004: 316-317). These are dated paleographically to the 3rd and the 4th-5th centuries C.E., respectively. The adaptation of Indic cultural elements in Southeast Asia was not an historically abrupt event, but a long process of reciprocal interchange between South and Southeast Asia. The material beginnings of this interchange appear to be marked by the occurrence of Northern Black Polished Ware (from the region of West Bengal), Rouletted Ware (from the Chandraketugarh-Tamluk region of Bengal), and stone and glass beads from the Indian subcontinent in regions surrounding the Bay of Bengal circa 500 B.C.E. (Gupta 2005: 23-24; Bopearachchi 2004: 62-64).

The currently named Sambor Prei Kuk presents a relatively well preserved complex of small brick temples and sandstone sculpture in Kompong Thom Province, southeast of the later Angkorian complex on the Tonle Sap. This site has strong associations with the reign of Isanavarman I (circa 616-637), and may be his capital of Isanapura. Lavy notes: "Of the seventeen inscriptions that have been recovered from Sambor..."
Siva had probably been the focus of veneration in what is today northern Cambodia and in neighboring regions of present-day Thailand and Laos as early as the late fifth century and, while the style of Sambor Prei Kuk is the earliest securely dated material, there is evidence in the form of undated inscriptions (dated by paleography) and Siva lingas to suggest a long tradition of Siva-oriented worship among the elite of these areas. Meanwhile, at approximately the same time, from the fifth through the eighth century, a corresponding tradition oriented around the deity Visnu, and similarly documented by inscriptions and statuary, developed in southern Cambodia and in adjacent coastal areas of present-day Southern Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia (Lavy 2004: 46).

To the extent that Hindu practices were used by early Southeast Asian leaders to consolidate political influence and control, these actions and material expressions were probably aimed foremost at other elites “who shared a similar Hinduized worldview and who, therefore . . . would have been susceptible” to these representations of authority (Op. cit.: 53). It is suggested that the adapted “Indian cultural vocabulary” was “an esoteric cult confined to the court” that helped Southeast Asian elites “maintain intra-regional relationships and competitions” (Christie 1964: 55; Brown 1996: 193; Saraya 1999: 22). Combined with these shared “Hindu notions of divinity” and “aesthetics of rule” was the material accumulation of wealth via surplus production and trade (Vickery 1998: 308-318; Lavy 2004: 54). The new rituals displayed prestige trade commodities, exotic paraphernalia, and foreign ritual specialists. Involvement of domestic populations with these early Brahmanical practices would have been

Prei Kuk, Coedes assigns at least ten of them to the seventh century. Six of these, one of which carries the date 549 Saka (=627 C.E.), mention Isanavarman by name” (2004: 45). Indeed, Sambor Prei Kuk is a leading candidate for the place where the concept of capital-as-microcosmos and “exemplary center” first appeared in Southeast Asia, concurrently with a 7th century “rise of a new form of divine kingship” (Lavy 2004: 49, 51).

83 This depiction of ritual used to acquire and centralize political and economic power is in many respects at odds with Clifford Geertz’s negara (“Theater State”) model, which “emphasizes the purely ritual nature of power, even at the ‘exemplary center’ itself. He furthermore stresses the fact that royal ownership of the land was symbolic and that real control resided with the ‘hamlet, the irrigation society, and the household’” (Lavy 2004: 56). Both the broad regional patterns and local nuances of early socioeconomic power structures are in need of much more data collection and analysis in Southeast Asia.
tangential, through participation in surplus production and redistribution organized via the temples; the religious concerns of the “common people” probably remained focused on the “tutelary spirits of ancestors and places” (Lavy 2004: 53).

The artifact most often cited as likely to be the earliest stone image of a South Asian deity in Southeast Asia is a manifestation of Visnu. This image, found in the vicinity of Chaiya on Peninsular Thailand (Figure 55), has been interpreted to be the Vasudeva form of Visnu (Hartel 1987; Lavy 2004: 265).\(^84\) The Chaiya Vasudeva is probably the earliest of a group of “conch-on-hip” images that were originally considered “rustic” and “late” (Lavy 2004: 251, 272-273), but which are now established as dating circa the 5\(^{th}\)-6\(^{th}\) centuries C.E. (O’Conner 1972: 25-39; Lavy 2004: 271).\(^85\) These four-armed images, which range 65-78 centimeters (25-31 inches) in height, share strong two-dimensional frontality, the left anterior hand holding the conch on the hip “with fingers tucked into the mouth and the thumb on the shell’s apex,” a high cylindrical miter (royal headdress) with floriate decoration, almond-shaped eyes, tasseled earrings, a symmetrical u-shaped belt or sash across the thighs, and a heavy vertical garment fold between the legs (Dofflemyer 1999: 36; Lavy 2004: 254, 260). This latter element is part of an early “system of five supports” composed of the legs, the heavy median fold, and two lateral struts, all of which helped stabilize the sculptural piece at a time when three-dimensional representation in stone was

\(^{84}\) Vasudeva is one of the 24 principal forms of Visnu, presenting the deity as “Supreme Soul [or] Supreme Creator” (Gupta 1993: 68; Rao 1968: 227-230). Each of these 24 forms is signified by which of four hands is holding Visnu’s conch shell (sankha), wheel/discus (cakra), mace/baton (gada), and lotus/orb (padma/bhu). Vasudeva holds the conch in the back right hand, the wheel in the back left, the lotus in front left, and the mace in the front right hand (Op. cit.: 230). Recent scholarship has further interpreted the Chaiya image to be Vasudeva-Krsna, one of the five Vrsni Viras (“heroes”) forms (Lavy 2004: 265-266). Although Vasudeva-Krsna originates in a pre-Vaisnava tradition of Bhagavatism, by the time of a 1\(^{st}\) millennium presence in Southeast Asia this deity had been assimilated into Vaisnavite practice (Ibid.).

\(^{85}\) Although none of these images have precise provenance or absolute dates, the best documented examples include the Chaiya specimen, and two examples from the Muang District of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, i.e. all originating on Peninsular Thailand (Lavy 2004: 253).
still finding its sustainable forms (Lavy 2004: 252-253). Later sculpture would evidence less stylized, and more naturalistic, forms as methods to better depict the human form in the round were developed.

The characteristic that makes the Chaiya Vasudeva pivotal in the entry of Indic sculptural forms is its bridging of South Asian styles and new Southeast Asian interpretations.
Based on the currently available evidence, it is . . . most likely that the Chaiya Vasudeva dates to ca. 500 C.E. . . . It closely reflects north Indian stylistic and iconographic characteristics of the fourth fifth centuries and is most closely related to Indian images that probably date to the early sixth century. Most scholars would agree that this makes it the earliest known Brahmanical image in Southeast Asia . . . Robert Brown has suggested that it may be “the single extant seed from which all other Southeast Asian mitered Visnu images spring.” His argument is that the Chaiya Vasudeva is the only Southeast Asian Vaisnava image that can be closely tied to Indian prototypes and . . . subsequent developments were “largely internal” (Lavy 2004: 271-272).

It is the contention of Brown, Lavy and other specialists that the Chaiya image presents the clearest retention of Indian sources, combined with Southeast Asian adjustments, while all other early Southeast Asian Visnus lack “close comparisons with the corpus of Indian art” (Op. cit.: 272, 294).86

The clustering of these earliest “conch-on-hip” images on Peninsular Thailand indicate that this was the entry point of South Asian influences regarding Vaisnavite imagery,87 and the “crucible for artistic developments” that then emanated across Southeast Asia (Lavy 2004: 302).88 The initial “apparently disparate Indian influences” were then “restated in shared and consistent South East Asian manners” (Brown 1996: 188).89 Brown suggests that these Southeast

86 Lavy observes: “Gupta [South Asian] and Preangkorian [Southeast Asian] images have virtually nothing in common . . . as Robert Brown has argued, there are not likely to have been any Indian prototypes, for after the initial impact of Indian stylistic influence in the fifth-sixth centuries, represented by the Chaiya Vasudeva, subsequent developments were primarily the result of local Southeast Asian initiative” (2004: 294).

87 O’Conner states that the early Chaiya type Visnus have clear artistic connections with eastern Indian (Amaravati) and Sri Lankan sources (1972: 49).

88 Lavy observes: “As a ‘locus and relay for cultural and artistic influences’ (Brown 1996: 41) emanating from Dvaravati, Khmer civilization, India, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia the peninsula has long fascinated scholars who have repeatedly tried to sort out its incredibly complicated history and political geography on the basis of a smattering of Chinese, Indian, and Arabic accounts of the area but without the benefit of substantial local sources” (2004: 141).

89 Essentially all analysts admit that the topic of early, Indic-influenced Southeast Asian art is not well documented or understood, and is in need of much additional scholarship (c.f. Brown 1996: 188; Lavy 2004: 18).
Asian styles developed quickly, “with no lengthy period of copying or . . . experimentation” (1992). Regional art styles “moved in their individual trajectories, with tremendous internal variety as well,” (Brown 1996: 52), even as shared elements of design persisted. He attributes the broadly shared elements among the regional styles to their roots in a few original South Asian prototypes, reinforced by “the close interrelationship among the elite” in this time period (Op. cit.: 189, 57).

Interestingly, the Chaiya region from which it appears the Vaisnava imagery spread is believed to be the general location for the polity of P’an-p’an. P’an-p’an was a substantial entity that sent emissaries to China from the 5th through 7th centuries, and is purported to have had close ties with Funan (Wheatley 1983: 252-253/f.n. 25, 299; Miksic 2007: 283; Dofflemyer 1999: 40). Thirteenth century Chinese chronicler Ma Duanlin recorded that many Indian brahmins were present in P’an-p’an, as well as numerous Buddhist monasteries (Miksic 2007: 283).

The next phase of Vaisnava imagery (Figure 56) was increasingly three-dimensional and almost wholly Southeast Asian in conception, the “innovative products of a local [Peninsular] atelier rather than mere replications of Indian models” (Dofflemyer 1999: 40). By the beginning of the 7th century C.E., a fully realized tradition of long-robbed, mitered Visnu imagery was proliferating in mainland areas around the Gulf of Siam, and to a lesser degree in Java and Myanmar (Lavy 2004: 303).90 This included a new iconographic arrangement “that was probably a Southeast Asia innovation” (Ibid.).

---

90 The end culmination of the mitered Visnu tradition in Southeast Asia is traced to the Kulen style images of the first half of the 9th century. “By the last quarter of the ninth century and the style of Preah Ko, the miter was permanently replaced by an intricately carved diadem and an elaborate tiered coiffeur” (Lavey 2004: 444).
The anterior hands of the new image type are placed on or near the hips. . . . the posterior hands are raised to shoulder level or higher. The position of the lower right hand remains the same [at waist level] . . . invariably holding the round object symbolizing the earth. The conch . . . is no longer placed on the left hip, but instead held in the raised left hand. Thus, the new arrangement of attributes becomes, clockwise from the lower proper right hand, the earth-ball, cakra, conch . . . and club.

Given the lack of dated, closely provenanced images, the developmental chronology and directions of influence for this new imagery are difficult to reconstruct, but the tradition appears to have appeared in the 7th century and lasted through the end of the 1st millennium (Dofflemyer 1999: 39; Woodward 2003: 46; Lavy 2004: 304-306). The basic elements of this group include its three-dimensionality of body forms, a supporting back-arch, a nude, unadorned upper torso, a tall cylindrical miter (kiritamukuta headdress), ankle-length robe knotted at or below the navel, and absence of the u-shaped sash (O’Conner 1966: 138; Dofflemyer 1999: 41).

Subsequent pre-Angkorian development of Visnu forms, what Dupont in his classification called “late derivations” (1941: 242), included increasing three-dimensionality, reduction of supporting appendages, changes to the miter form, and a short “sampot” type garment (Lavy 2004: 244-245, 249-250). It is probably

---

91 Lavy relates: “The origins, identity, and development of the round attribute [bhu] often held in Visnu’s anterior right hand [as opposed to a straightforward lotus motif] is one of the most poorly understood aspects of Vaisnava iconography. During the Kusana period of north Indian art [late 1st through 3rd centuries C.E.], Vaisnava images began to hold a ball-shaped object that is often identified as some variety of fruit . . . Similar round attributes occur through the Gupta period (ca. fourth-sixth centuries C.E.) and some scholars have identified them as lotuses or lotus buds. However . . . the lotus does not seem to become an attribute of Visnu until the sixth or seventh century.

“In the Southeast Asian context, perhaps the only free-standing Visnu image that may plausibly be argued to hold a lotus is Visnu no. 1 from Cibuaya (Java), but this is by no means certain. In all other instances where the attribute survives intact – whether on Visnus from Peninsular Thailand, Cambodia, or southern Vietnam – it is a smooth-surfaced orb, sometimes slightly flattened, probably representing the earth” (2004: 255-256). In keeping with these observations for Southeast Asia, the P’ong Tuk Visnu holds an orb (bhu) motif in the right anterior hand (Figure 57).

92 This placement of attributes is variously associated by Indian iconographic texts with the Vasudeva or Janardana (“One who inflicts suffering on evil men” – Wikipedia) manifestations of Visnu (Lavy 2004: 303/f.n. 4). Both of these manifestations have association also with Krishna, a Vaisnavite entity.
to this group that the P'ong Tuk Visnu most closely relates, although not without certain caveats that will be discussed below.

Figure 56: Early “mitered Visnu” images from (left) Ta Kua Pa, Peninsular Thailand (190 cm high); (right) Dong Si Maha Pot, Peninsular Thailand (170 cm high). (From Boisselier 1975: Plates 64 and 65.)

It appears that Visnu has had a strong association with the development of centralized authority and paramount rulership in Southeast Asia (Dofflemyer 1999: 34; Lavy 2004: 198). Early references to Visnu promote characteristics of the deity that support the acquisition of territory and power. The earliest known of these is found among seven inscriptions placed on natural rocks and boulders by a Purnavarman in the vicinity of his polity of Taruma in western Java (Lavy
Paleographic analysis dates these Sanskrit inscriptions, in a Pallava-Grantha script, to the mid-5th century C.E. (Op. cit.: 190). The inscription at Ciaruteun "includes a pair of carved footprints . . . said to belong to the 'illustrious' Purnavarman . . . then compared to those of Visnu" (Op. cit.: 190-191). Another of these inscriptions at Jambu includes the foot-print motif again, noting that Purnavarman’s feet were “ever dextrous in destroying hostile towns” (Vogel 1925: 25). A third inscription, at Cidanghiang, is translated to read “This is the conqueror of the three worlds (with his three steps), his majesty king Purnavarman, the great king, the hero, (and) to be the banner of all kings in the world” (Santiko 2001: 425).

The use of the words vikranta (often translated as “mighty,” “powerful,” or “valiant” but also meaning a “step” or “stride”) and Visnoriva padadvayam (“pair of footprints comparable to Visnu’s”) connotes the aspect of Visnu as “he who strode over the three worlds in three steps” or “conqueror of the three worlds” . . . ancient Indian texts identify Visnu’s “vikranta” with his traversal and ascension of the earth, atmosphere, and heaven or, in other words, his conquest of the entire universe. In the context of early Indian sovereignty, the king who performs the ritual three strides “is said to rise high above everything here; becoming Visnu he gains these worlds” [Gonda 1966: 83-84]. This exact conception of kingship is clearly expressed in Purnavarman’s Cidanghiang inscription . . . (Lavy 2004: 191-192).

Whether the inscriptions of Purnavarman indicate actual Vaisnavite practices is uncertain (Vogel 1925: 22; Lavy 2004: 198). They do illustrate, however, “that Visnu’s name and mythology could be made to serve local political interests” (Lavy 2004: 198).

Reference to the founding of “a sanctuary containing an image of Visnupada” (Visnu’s footprint) occurs in the Funan associated K.5 inscription from the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam, dated to the second half of

---

93 “The distribution of the inscriptions indicates that [Taruma] probably corresponded to the plains of the Ciliwung and Citarum Rivers” (Lavy 2004: 190).

94 Such dating can only be approximate, and in the case of Pallava-Grantha script could range over several centuries (Lavy 2004: 194).
the 5th century C.E.; another Funan-related inscription from the delta in Cambodia, K.875, relates the dedication of a hermitage and artificial lake to Visnu (Coedes 1937: 117-121; Lavy 2004: 200). Subsequent textual references and the distribution of ritual images across the Mekong Delta and north into Cambodia indicate a distinct dichotomy of practice, with Siva-related material dominating in the north (“Land Chenla”? ) and Visnu-related material dominating in the delta (“Water Chenla”? ) (Lavy 2004: 202-204). Clearly, imagery and concepts associated with Visnu were among the principal vehicles used “for the articulation and expression of a new form of political authority” in 1st millennium Southeast Asia (Op. cit.: 180).

Finally, it should be reiterated that all material and textual indications of “Hindu” or “Brahmanical” practices in 1st millennium Southeast Asia must be understood within the indigenous context. As Vickery asserts for the 7th century Khmer, “There is no indication in the pre-Angkor inscriptions that the Khmer considered themselves ‘Hindu’” (1998: 170).

. . . a description of the formal Hindu traits of Cambodian epigraphy, art, and architecture does not constitute a study of old Khmer religion, which must be hypothesized as a body of beliefs and practices some of which the Khmer had found possible to represent convincingly in garb borrowed from India, but other aspects of which remain totally foreign to India even if decked out in Indian trappings . . . If we are studying Cambodia, the main interest is in the local elements, particularly when, as in the 7th century, they are so pronounced. It is not adequate to say that traits which appear Indic must be Indian, and leave it at that, or even to allude to a mixing of cultural elements (Op. cit.: 141-142).

It is now recognized that Indic concepts, forms, and practices were not simply transplanted or adopted by Southeast Asians; neither were they imposed from outside. Instead, the appearance of South Asian concepts was “a selection process governed by the indigenous beliefs and cultural needs of the local

95 The earliest *Buddhapada* in Southeast Asia are said to be rock-carved examples in Thailand dating to the Dvaravati era (Lavy 2004: 195).

96 These Funanese inscriptions “constitute the earliest extant evidence of Visnu worship in Southeast Asia” (Lavy 2004: 200).
inhabitants” (Dofflemyer 1999: 34), and the Brahmanical elements present in early Southeast Asia were no doubt substantially altered to fit the various social contexts of the region.

**The Hindu component in Dvaravati.** Robert Brown observes that “how to explain, and what to call, the Hindu art found in Dvaravati cultural areas” is “one of the knottiest problems in Dvaravati-period art” (1996: 56). Despite the tendency to characterize Dvaravati as a predominantly Buddhist phenomenon (e.g. Diskul 1981: 7-8), Buddhist and Brahmanical images occur together regularly at Dvaravati sites, including major settlements like Dong Si Maha Pot in eastern Thailand, Si Thep to the northeast, U Thong, Ku Bua, and Nakhon Pathom in central Thailand, and Chaiya on the peninsula (c.f. Brown 1996: 48, 56-61; Ray 1997: 43), suggesting a syncretic approach to religion that is still very much present in modern Thai society (c.f. Kirsch 1977). A specific material example of this coexistence is provided at the locality of Aranyaprathet, in eastern Thailand’s Saw Kaew Province on the border with Cambodia, where two similarly dated inscriptions refer to the different religious traditions. Inscription K.506, dated 637 C.E. and concerning the appointment by central Cambodia’s Isanavarman of a servant to manage the polity of Jyesthapura, is dedicated to Siva (Vickery 1998: 130, 132, 264; Brown 1996: 61). Inscription K.505, dated 639, describes the “typical” foundation of a Buddhist monastery “with personnel and orchards” and other necessities (Vickery 1998: 129, 280-281; Brown 1996: 61). In another example from north-central Thailand, the moated and walled center at U Thong has been described as “preponderantly Buddhist” in its content (Quaritch Wales 1969: 12), but Dvaravati-era lingas and Visnu figures (now lost) have also been found there (Brown 1996: 51).

Dupont recognized only one “very poor” example of Brahmanical architecture in the Dvaravati oeuvre, a small laterite and sandstone cella at Muang Phra Rot near Pracinaburi (Dupont/Sen 2006: 93). His discussion of Hindu images from Dvaravati sites is also quite limited. He did admit, however,
to a Hindu presence substantial enough “that Dvaravati cities emerged in the
context of both the Hindu devaraja cult and the kingship system” (Op. cit.: 11).

The interaction of the [Hindu and Buddhist] communities can be
clearly seen in the mixed characteristics on images, such as the
Srivatsa sign (of Visnu) on the Buddha and, especially, the Buddha
on Banaspati, a mythical bird with the beak of Garuda (Visnu’s
mount), the horns of a cow (Siva’s mount) and the wings of a
hamsa (Brahma’s mount). The explanation for the existence of
Banaspati, which is native only to Dvaravati, is that it was created
out of competition between Hinduism and Buddhism (Ibid.).

Dvaravati scholar Phasook Indrawooth has labeled Dvaravati a “Buddhist
kingdom,” but nonetheless has admonished that “we should not lose sight of the
Hindu elements in Dvaravati religion” (1999: 233). These are said to be
especially discernable at U Thong, which has produced “a stone Mukhalinga in
Pre-Angkorian style of the 7th-8th centuries,” a copper plate inscription that refers
to Saivite practices, and two steles “with rough figures of Visnu in high relief”
(Ibid.).

Quaritch Wales suggested “a fairly equal division between adherence to
Hinayana Buddhism and to Hinduism” at some Dvaravati sites (1969: 90), but
overall emphasized the Buddhist nature of Dvaravati.

Judging by the remains, there were evidently small Vaisnava
communities both in the peninsular portion of Dvaravati and near
the western [eastern?] border, where they would have been in
touch with strong Vaisnava centres in Chen-la. But this Hindu
Pallava element scarcely survived in Dvaravati after the 8th
century, and as a factor in the cultural history of the kingdom needs
little consideration here (Quaritch Wales 1966: 51/f.n.2).

Among other leading discussants of the Dvaravati concept, Boisselier
recognized the coexistence of Hinduism, Theravada and Mahayana at Dvaravati
sites (Hennequin 2010: 23). He asserted, however, that the Theravada material
was dominant and better crafted, while the Hindu and Mahayana remains
“showed foreign influences much more perceptible than the commissions
inspired by Theravada” (Boisselier 1968: 36). Diskul has described Dvaravati
only in terms of Buddhist elements, placing “Ancient Hindu Images” into a separate if temporally overlapping category (1981: 7-9). Saraya emphasizes the dominance of Buddhism, asserting that it “absorbed” Hindu and indigenous influences (1999: 192-193). Brown is of the opinion that “there was a fairly even mix of the two religions, particularly in the seventh and eighth centuries” (1996: 61).

Vallibhotoma (1986) has perhaps afforded Brahmanical practices the most socio-political weight, asserting that Dvaravati territory was divided into predominantly Buddhist (western) and Hindu (eastern) regions. These consisted of the Mae Klong, Thachin, and Chao Phraya river valleys as predominantly Buddhist, and the Bang Pakong River Valley as predominantly Hindu, forming “rival states” that would not unite until the 15th century as the kingdom of Ayudhya (Op. cit.: 235). Settlements in the east cited as having particularly strong Hindu components include Sri Mahosod and Sri Thep (Op. cit.: 231). While both regions shared the Dvaravati art style, the dominance of different “belief systems” implied, according to Vallibhotoma, “a difference in political entity” (Op. cit.: 234). Brown, however, finds little evidence for this analysis of Dvaravati political structures. He asserts that “a difference in belief systems does not necessarily indicate a difference in political entities,” and points out that Vallibhotama recognizes that both religions were practiced in both regions, so the implied “exclusivity of belief” did not exist (1996: 48). Brown also has difficulty viewing the eastern area as even “predominantly Hindu,” since there is a strong mix of Buddhist and Hindu remains there (Op. cit.: 61). Even the sparse epigraphical data indicate political ties from both eastern and western regions in the 7th century to the Khmer house of Isanavarman I (Ibid.).

As Brown has been quoted above, the interrelationship of Brahmanical and Buddhist components within Dvaravati remains a “knotty” problem, largely for the reasons of inadequate data cited previously in this thesis. Essentially all major ritual images lack the absolute dates and specific archaeological contexts that are necessary to reconstruct temporal and social relationships. The record
of Buddhist and Hindu objects found at one or another site, stylistically dated to a similar era, adds little to the general observation that Buddhism and Hinduism coexisted geographically and temporally in central Thailand. Detailed stratigraphic and functional contexts are needed, as well associated dates (e.g. radiocarbon, thermoluminescent), to understand how these distinct -- or merged? or temporally separate? or ethnically discrete? -- religious practices operated at Dvaravati settlements, particularly given the apparently limited corpus of inscriptions that can be expected within the Dvaravati material record.

The P’ong Tuk Visnu. Given the early and extensive presence of Visnu and other Brahmanical imagery across Southeast Asia, it should not be surprising to find a Hindu image at P’ong Tuk. Robert Brown observes that “Dvaravati has consistently been considered Buddhist; but we might expect . . . a Hindu face as well. I think that Hindu elements in Dvaravati have been undervalued” (Brown 1996: 46). Indeed, the “exclusivity of Buddhism or Hindusim is more the exception than the rule” at 1st millennium sites across Southeast Asia (Op. cit.: 51). The presence of a Visnu image and Buddhist artifacts at P’ong Tuk follows this pattern, and the P’ong Tuk Visnu in great part reflects broadly shared elements of the early Brahmanical imagery on mainland Southeast Asia, even as other aspects of this object present unusual forms that raise new questions.

The Visnu image found at P’ong Tuk is estimated to be 80 centimeters (31.5 inches) tall from its feet to the top of its unusual headpiece (Diskul 1962: 109). Given the missing original lower extremities, however, and the non-expert reconstruction, this can only be a rough estimate of its original size. This general measurement does, however, help place the image on the size continuum of inscriptions that can be expected within the Dvaravati material record.

---

97 Even the large walled and moated center of Sri Thep (first explored by Quaritch Wales immediately following his stay at P’ong Tuk), for many years considered “a purely Hindu site,” revealed Buddhist elements beginning in the early 1960s (Brown 1996: 33). These Hindu and Buddhist components at Sri Thep have ultimately been demonstrated to be more-or-less contemporaneous, occurring together “when the site was most Dvaravati” (Op. cit.: 32-36).
early Brahmanical images, beginning with the Chaiya-type group ranging approximately 65-80 centimeters, and followed by the second group of three-dimensional mitered Visnus that are larger, mostly over 100 centimeters (1 meter) in height, but ranging approximately 75-200+ centimeters. The P’ong Tuk specimen therefore resides at the top end of the earlist Visnus and at the initial size class of the next Visnu group, a position taken here to indicate an image of major, if perhaps not monumental, proportions. This substantial size, combined with sculptural workmanship judged to be of very-good-to-excellent quality, suggests that the P’ong Tuk Visnu ranks among the significant Brahmanical images known from 1st millennium mainland Southeast Asia.

The P’ong Tuk Visnu also deserves recognition as one of the best-provenanced Brahmanical images from 1st millennium mainland Southeast Asia. Although precise details of its stratigraphic relationships are lost, the general location, circumstances of its recovery, condition at recovery, methods of restoration and preservation, and history of curation are known – essentially a continuous record of the image’s disposition since its in situ discovery. The current investigation has a high confidence level in the locational information gathered for this image in 2008, and the GPS location at latitude N13° 53.526’ longitude E99° 47.207’ indicates the general horizontal relationship of the piece to other known features at P’ong Tuk (Figure 52).

The P’ong Tuk image presents the four-armed arrangement of attributes that is standard to Southeast Asian Visnus (Figure 57): the cakra (wheel) in the raised right posterior hand, sankha (conch) in the raised left posterior, gada (mace) in the lower left anterior hand, and the bhu (earth disk, orb) in the lower

---

98 O’Conner suggests that the size of stone sculpture present in a settlement can reflect the level of cultural complexity achieved at that location (1966: 142).
Figure 57: The P’ong Tuk Visnu and its attributes. The dashed red line indicates a general estimate for the areas of modern reconstruction (below the line).

right anterior hand (Lavy 2004: 303). These attribute forms are simple but well-executed, as are other details on the image (Figure 58). The conch is held upright in typical Southeast Asian fashion between the thumb and fingers. The shell is of the sinistral type, with the coils running counter-clockwise (Lavy 2004: 303).

---

99 This is a new iconographic arrangement of Visnu’s attributes that is peculiar to Southeast Asia, occurring “on the peninsula [of Thailand] . . . in Eastern Thailand, Cambodia, southern Vietnam, and, to a more limited degree, in Java and Burma (Myanmar)” (Lavy 2004: 303).
Modern restoration replacements are said to include the feet/shoes and small rectangular pedestal beneath (Diskul 1962: 109); there is some visual indication that these restorations might also include the lower mace, lower legs, and lower columnar support beneath the anterior right hand (Figure 57), but this is by no means a certainty. The shift to a columnar support for the lower right hand, from an earlier vertical panel of cloth, is said to be a 7th-8th century innovation (Lavy 2004: 234, 239).

Figure 58: Details on the P’ong Tuk Visnu.

The overall figure gives an impression of being flexed, if not in a fully tribhunga form (see Footnote 56 above), a format of Visnu seen mainly at Sri Thep, on the northeast margin of central Thailand. This impression results from the slightly angled head and hips. The merging of the arms at the elbows also repeats a format seen at Sri Thep (Lavy 2004: 207). Body forms and proportions are somewhat stylized, straying from a fully natural depiction; particularly notable is the elongation of the torso. The upper body is unclothed, as is typical for the early mitered Visnus, with no bracelets, arm bands or necklaces. This lack of adornment, in contrast with contemporary Gupta images in South Asia, is typical

---

100 “Particularly sacred in many Indian traditions is the sinistral (Valampuri) variety of shell, meaning that the coils run counter-clockwise or, in other words, with the spire upward, the ventral aperture is on the left from the perspective of the viewer . . . no priority seems to have been accorded [sinistral shells] in ancient Southeast Asian art. Of the extant sankha, sinistral shells occur with the Visnus of Sating Phra, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Tuy-Hoa, Prasat Damrei Krap and perhaps the Chaiya Vasudeva” (Lavy 2004: 311).
for post-Chaiya Visnus in Southeast Asia (Lavy 2004: 292-293). The chain-link forms on a presumably metal belt draped low across the hips are also plain (Figures 57, 59). The earrings also present a rather plain form, difficult to interpret, but perhaps consisting of a simple columnar plug through the elongated slotted earlobe, with a floral form (lotus bud or flower?) pendant below the lobe (Figure 58 center).

The accretions of active devotion make the observation of smaller details problematical on this image. Even so, the head on the P’ong Tuk Visnu (Figure 60) presents a striking combination of unusual forms. The face is quite naturalistic, much moreso than on many other early Brahmanical images in Southeast Asia. The naturalism extends to the point of giving the impression of a specific portrait. Lavy notes that “arguments suggesting that Preangkorian depictions of deities are also portraits of kings are not unusual” (2004: 41). He goes on, however: “. . . there is little direct evidence (i.e., inscriptions on statues or inscriptions that refer to images of people) to corroborate the notion . . . [that] any Preangkorian statuary doubled as portraiture-as-physical-likeness” (Op. cit.:42). It seems more the case that Southeast Asian royalty were depicted as deities, rather than deities being depicted as royal personages (Op. cit.: 43).

The narrow face and long, narrow nose are counter to the broad “Mon” forms associated with much of Dvaravati art, perhaps akin to the features on two Buddha head fragments described above (Figure 30, page 73). Like those fragments, the Visnu brow appears to be a continuous “swallow wing” ridge above the eyes and across the nose bridge (Figure 60). No incising around the

---

101 The mitered Visnus of Southeast Asia do not typically display earrings. “With the exception of the sixth century conch-on-hip images and Cibuaya Visnu no. 1, the presence of jewelry on mitered Visnus is extremely rare whether they originated in Thailand, Cambodia, or Vietnam . . . at least in the Khmer context, Visnu images were outfitted with removable jewelry and accessories made of metal and precious stones” (Lavy 2004: 322). On the other hand, some early Visnu images without the cylindrical miter do display earrings and other jewelry, e.g. the reclining Visnu from Tuol Baset, Battambang, Cambodia, and the reclining Visnu from Mi-s’ on Temple E-1, central Vietnam.
eyes or mouth, or of a moustache above the lips, is apparent, though this could be masked by the accumulated gold leaf. The eyelids largely cover the eyes, almost to the point of closure.

Across the forehead and temples is a diadem band with multiple arched florettes (probably three) above a beaded margin (Figure 61). A diadem band of this sort is seen on various early figures, particularly the Cham images (e.g. Figure 62). The beaded margin is said by Boisselier to be typical of images from U Thong (1975: 162), and Lavy says this border marks the final phase of Preangkorian sculpture in Cambodia (2004: 224). The head is further surmounted by a covering so unusual that it truly approaches the status of
“unique” (Figures 60-61).\(^{102}\) In place of the high cylindrical crown seen on the Chaiya and many subsequent early Visnus, the P’ong Tuk image presents a multilayered series of forms, beginning at the top of the scalp (Figure 61): a short column, narrow rounded band, wide expanding band with large hemispherical bosses, topped by a narrow beaded (?) band, ending with a subconical apex. It is difficult to say whether this format is strictly a crown, or a combination of a headpiece (\textit{mukuta}) and styled hair (\textit{chignon}). This analyst’s tentative interpretation is that the P’ong Tuk headpiece presents a combined crown and hair format, or \textit{jatamukuta} (Chaturachinda et. al. 2004: 104; Janse1993: 27; Huntington and Huntington 1990: 591). In this example, the hair appears to be pulled tightly above the diadem into a banded tubular restriction,

\(^{102}\) Much effort has been devoted to searching published illustrations, as well as consulting with scholars, in an effort to locate another example of this headpiece format. No duplicate of the specific combination of forms and motifs present on the P’ong Tuk Visnu has been located.
then knotted or coiled into a bun to form the abrupt apex (Figure 61). The band with large bosses, combined with the narrow beaded band and the subconical apex, are suggestive of a lotus bud, certainly a motif strongly associated with Visnu. This bud-like format is also perhaps repeated on the earrings (Figure 58 center), with a lobate disk hanging from the pierced earlobe. In the context of Visnu, such a headpiece is termed a *kiritamukuta*, “the highest of crowns . . . a rather conical cylinder . . . ending in a knot or point” (Jansen 1993: 27). Another

---

103 “Highly conspicuous among Visnu’s emblems is the lotus . . . We can only mention in passing that *Padmini*-‘possessing lotus-plants or flowers,’ *Padmanabha*-‘lotus-naveled,’ *Padmapani*-‘lotus-handed,’ *Aravindaksa*-‘lotus-eyed’ . . . are among the many names and epithets of the god” (Gonda 1954: 103-104).

104 A similar-appearing bronze earring form has been found at the Dvaravati center of U Thong (Saraya 1999: 73).
source notes that the *kiritamukuta* is sometimes arranged as a “hair retainer . . . made hollow to let the hair [be] seen” (Soubert 2003).

Although no duplicate of this specific combination of forms and motifs has been located, the general column-bands-subconical-apex format is well represented on certain Cham and Preangkorian Cambodian Visnu images. This includes the earliest examples of Cham sculpture labeled Mi-so’n E-1, from central Vietnam, which are attributed to the 7th-8th centuries (Stern 1942; Boisselier 1963; Hubert 2005). The Da Nghi Visnu (Figure 62), an image now lost, is considered to be a late E-1 example (i.e. 8th century), exhibiting an “onion-shaped chignon” (Soubert 2003: Footnote 8) that is essentially a column (in this case octagonal instead of round) surmounted by several bands and a sub-conical top. (This *mukuta* form resides above a diadem band, one of several additional elements this Mi-so’n example shares with the P’ong Tuk Visnu, as will be discussed below.) The pediment with reclining Visnu from Mi-so’n temple E-1, a reclining Visnu on a lintel from Tuol Baset, Battambang Province, Cambodia, and a Visnu head from Wat Phra Phikanet, Peninsular Thailand – all dated as 7th to early 8th century images – display a similar column-bands-subconical-apex headpiece format, and seem to attest to a wide distribution of this *mukuta* type (Boisselier 1956: 250, 260; Paul Lavy, personal communication, October 2009). The P’ong Tuk Visnu also shares elements of its dress and accoutrements with early Cham and Khmer images. The short “sampot” type garment exhibits a “pocket-fold” arrangement of its drapery that is also seen on early Brahmanical pieces such as the Prasat Andet Harihara (central Cambodia) and the Da Nghi Visnu (Figures 62-63). This garment format is also typical of the Phnom Da style (Lavy 2004: 330), and is generally dated to the mid-8th century C.E. (Op. cit.: 214). The upper edge of the P’ong Tuk garment fold is not held in place by the cinched fabric of the sampot, as is the case on the other “pocket fold” images, but is held up in tension under the belt and coiled sash -- an unusual modification of the “pocket fold” motif (Lavy, personal communication, 2009).
Figure 62: Mi-s’on E-1 design elements on the Da Nghi Visnu (image now lost) have some correspondence to elements on the P’ong Tuk Visnu. Note tubular and banded headpiece, diadem band across forehead, "swallow wing" brow, pocket-fold garment, and a possibly metallic belt (arrow).
Figure 63: “Pocket-fold” sampot garment element the P’ong Tuk Visnu (center and right views) shares with the Prasat Andet Style (Harīhara from Prasat Andet, Cambodia -- late 7th-early 8th centuries?). The P’ong Tuk image also has an unusual “untucked” treatment of the garment margin.

The belt and sash crossing the P’ong Tuk image’s thighs are individually familiar, but unusual in their co-occurrence. A chain-link belt draped snugly on the lower hip is presumably a metal accessory, possibly envisioned in gold, as are several early Khmer examples that have been found (e.g. Richter 2000: 50/Figures 29-31). A linked belt is similarly present on the Prasat Andet Harīhara and the Tuol Baset reclining Visnu (Figure 59). Above the P’ong Tuk belt is a coiled sash that also occurs individually on certain Preangkorian images (Figure 59), but almost never in combination with the metal belt (Lavy, personal communication, 2009). Lavy observes that the coiled sash “seems to have been
an early stylistic element that faded out during the first quarter of the 7th century” (2004: 314), so this motif appears to have a different temporal placement than the chain-link belt. The combination of a metallic-looking belt and a fabric sash is, however, also found on some Mi-so’n E-1 images. The Da Nghi Visnu, for example (Figure 62), exhibits a more elaborate belt of chain-mail type construction, with a non-coiled fabric sash looping beneath.

Even with a cursory examination, then, it is apparent that the P’ong Tuk Visnu shares a variety of elements with 7th and 8th century Cambodian and Cham images, but in an idiosyncratic combination. This shared imagery over a long distance is most complete between the P’ong Tuk and the early Cham images, which both evidence “pocket-fold” garments, combined metallic (?) belt and cloth sash, a general lack of ornamentation, bare upper torso, heavy continuous brow line, diadem band with arched rosettes, and a column-banded-sub-conical-apex jatamukuta. Elements shared with early Cambodian images are more individual, but not less striking – specifically the chain-link belt and “pocket-fold” garment. The combination of all these elements in the P’ong Tuk Visnu, however, and in forms and details divergent from the Cambodian and Cham examples, results in “a complicated image with no clear parallels in either Indian or Southeast Asian art” (Paul Lavy, personal communication, 2009).

Assuming that this image emanates from its find-spot locality, it can be postulated that the P’ong Tuk Visnu -- with its presently unique headdress, portrait-like face and combination of multiple early design elements -- represents a hitherto unrecognized regional style in the western reach of Dvaravati. Given P’ong Tuk’s location adjacent to lower Myanmar, the Peninsula, the gulf coast, and the Chao Phraya basin, it perhaps should not be surprising that ritual art from this location would display influences from a broad spectrum of sources.

105 Quaritch Wales noted that “The resemblance of the basic Dvaravati decorative motifs to those of the Cham Early Style [i.e. Mi-so’n E-1] is very evident” (1969: 43).

106 Early Vaisnavite and Saivite imagery is present in Myanmar as well, and could have stylistic relationships with the P’ong Tuk image specifically and Dvaravati art in general (c.f. LeMay 1962: 30; Lavy 2004: 121; Moore 2007: 173-174; Gutman 2008; Galloway 2010).
Taking all the stylistic and design elements briefly described above, Visnu scholar Paul Lavy states that his “inclination would be to place [the P’ong Tuk image] . . . in the 8th century” (personal communication, 2009). This positions the Visnu image squarely within the 7th-9th century temporal range estimated for the site’s Buddha figures (see pages 60-78 above).

Robert Brown asserts that the “artistic solidarity” and “affinities” apparent in 1st millennium Southeast Asia art are explained in part by “the close interrelationship among the elite in the seventh and eighth centuries” (1996: 57). Limited but intriguing epigraphic evidence from west-central Thailand may describe some of the elite interrelationships underlying the artistic connections apparent in the P’ong Tuk Visnu. One of the few known texts relevant to Dvaravati is the copper plate inscription (K. 964) found at U Thong in 1957 and translated by George Coedes in 1958. The inscription speaks of one Harsavarman, grandson of the king Isanavarman, dedicating two Saivite lingas (Amratakesvara and Isanesvara) (Brown 1996: 49; Coedes 1958: 130). The inscription is dated paleographically to the mid-7th century, and significantly, evidences a “Mon influence on the script,” thus confirming its likely origination in the central Thailand region, rather than its presence as an import from Cambodia (Op. cit.: 50-51).

Wheatley (1983: 204) summarizes the possibilities regarding the identity of this inscription’s Harsavarman: an unlisted Khmer ruler who succeeded his grandfather Isanavarman in Cambodia; a “Khmer prince” on whom a Chao Phraya territory was bestowed; or a local ruler from a dynasty using names drawn from the Cambodian house of Isanapura. Brown (1996: 49-50) explores the potential identities in more detail.

---

107 “We would expect the Dvaravati polities to be ruled by a web of interrelated elite, connected through family and followers. The elite would be mobile, with relationships not only within but also sometimes outside the most immediate geographical area. Indeed, the mandala[s] . . . need not be formed in neat concentric circles but amoeba-like, with extensions in various directions, even with sections separated from one another geographically” (Brown 1996: 46).
If we look at the king lists of Cambodia, there are three Harsavarmans who ruled, but they appear to have reigned too late [after 900 C.E.] to be identified with the U Thong Harsavarman [7th century]... There are two Isanavarmans who ruled in Cambodia, and it is the first... whose reign dates [ca. 616-630] fit the paleographical dating. Harsavarman would then be the grandson of Isanavarman I, who was ruling [at Isanapura – probably Sambor Prei Kuk] until ca. 630.

Brown goes on to point out that Isanavarman I “had a son, Sivadatta, who was ruling at Jyesthapura, in the Aranyaparithet area of Thailand, probably in the 620s or 30s,” and that a Bhavavarman III is identified by Claude Jacques as a relative of Isanavarman I “possibly ruling in the U Thong area in the second half of the seventh century,” which “further associates quite firmly Dvaravati (central Thailand) with seventh-century Khmer rulers” (Ibid.).

Several objections have been raised by scholars regarding a direct connection of these rulers in central Thailand to the Cambodian house of Isanapura I, but Brown finds these less than persuasive. One is that the central Thailand location is too distant from the Chenla polity of 7th century central Cambodia to have been ruled directly by the Khmer, but if Chenla and Dvaravati “were not states, but interconnected mandalas,” and “Harsarvarman was not a Chenla king, but a king of U Thong with blood ties to the most important Khmer ruling families,” the connection between these distant regions is plausible (Brown 1996: 50). Other objections question whether the inscription is a local statement of affairs at U Thong, or an import regarding people and events in Cambodia. Thus it has been noted that the inscription is on a copper plate in a region where the few extant inscriptions are on stone. Brown cites indications, however, that “inscriptions on metal may have been much more extensive than we realize,” and that the current lack of examples may be “due to the value of the metal and its reusability” (Ibid.). Another objection to a Dvaravati origin is that the inscription refers to Saivite practices in the Buddhist territory of central Thailand. The intermixture of Buddhist and Hindu deities and practices throughout Dvaravati

---

108 In eastern Thailand’s Saw Kaew Province on the border with Cambodia.
territory, however, has already been discussed above, and in fact both Saivite and Vaisnavite images have been found at U Thong, even as this center may have been predominantly Buddhist (Brown 1996: 51).

Brown concludes that, “while we cannot prove that Isanavarman of the U Thong inscription is Isanavarman I of Cambodia . . . the circumstantial evidence for it is quite strong” (Ibid.).\(^{109}\) Relative to the elements combined in the P’ong Tuk Visnu, to this proposed Dvaravati-Chenla connection can be added a political connection to 7th century Champa. Jean Boisselier, in his examination of the earliest Cham sculpture (1956), noted the strong affinities between these 7th century pieces and contemporary examples in central Cambodia (e.g. Figures 59, 62, 63). His research on this phenomenon encountered inscriptive documentation\(^{110}\) that a grandson of Isanavarman I, Prakasadharma,\(^{111}\) founded a new dynasty in Champa in the year 653 (Brown 1996: 52). Boisselier therefore attributed the strong artistic connections between 7th century Khmer and Cham art to the presence of a Khmer ruler in Champa. “The ‘beginning’ of Cham art [Mi-so’n E-1] is thus based on ‘imported’ Khmer art, and Boisselier points out that the style (early Prei Kmeng) will remain the tradition for Cham art whereas it will be quickly abandoned in Cambodia” (Brown 1996: 52).

The Khmer and Cham design elements we find combined in the Visnu from the site of P’ong Tuk in central Thailand, then, appear to reflect a web of elite interconnections extant in 7th century mainland Southeast Asia. Although all such connections both political and artistic should to some extent be treated as postulates to be further investigated, the parallels between the proposed political

\(^{109}\) Michael Vickery also appears to be convinced that a Khmer ruler or chieftain was at U Thong, stating that Harsavarman “probably represented a branch of Cambodian royalty who had established their own center” at U Thong (1998: 132).

\(^{110}\) Inscription C96, found at Mi-So’n, a Cham Hindu center in central Vietnam (Lavy 2004: 47).

\(^{111}\) Prakasadharma (reign ca. 653-686), “who took the regal name Vikrantavarman . . . was the son of Sarvani, the daughter of the Khmer king Isanavarman I, and a Champa ‘prince,’ Jagaddharma . . . Prakasadharma . . . was thus raised in Cambodia until he went to Champa to become its king” (Brown 1996: 52; Boisselier 1956: 207-209).
relationships and the shared artistic elements observed on the P’ong Tuk Visnu are striking. Indeed, it would appear that the Visnu from P’ong Tuk is one of the clearest material expressions yet found of these early socio-political relationships among Dvaravati, Khmer, and Cham polities.

P’ong Tuk Visnu: Overview. The Visnu recovered at P’ong Tuk approximately sixty years ago is a major Brahmanical image that has received surprisingly limited attention. The preliminary description and comparative analysis presented here for this “interesting and odd piece”\textsuperscript{112} (Lavy, personal communication, 2009) is only a tentative starting point for understanding this ritual artifact in its local and regional contexts. More detailed analysis will require additional perusal of the image itself, as well as the development of additional information about the site of P’ong Tuk and other sites across the Dvaravati landscape.

Within Dvaravati time and territory, Buddhist and Hindu practices mixed in various proportions. At P’ong Tuk, given the restricted sample presently available from the site, it appears that Buddhism was heavily dominant but that a Hindu element was present more-or-less contemporaneously. Putting the aesthetic and stylistic issues of the Visnu image aside, there remain questions regarding why this image was present at P’ong Tuk and how it functioned within the sacramental regimen of the community.

It has already been noted that there is evidence for a structure located close to the image find-spot, perhaps a structure that actually housed the Visnu. Additional information about this structural context, if it exists, might illuminate the role of the Visnu at P’ong Tuk. Some scholars ascribe the Brahmanical elements at early sites to practices by elite social classes, much as certain Brahmanical

\textsuperscript{112} French analysts recognized that there were idiosyncratic pieces that did not fit neatly into their rigid art historical schemes of linear development towards an Angkorian crescendo (Lavy 2004: 99-100). “These works are usually described . . . as ‘secondary,’ ‘late,’ ‘isolated,’ or as having ‘contaminations,’ a vocabulary that betrays an underlying notion of a pure and uninterrupted progression towards a particular end” (Op. cit.: 100). Boisselier, however, discussing the early art of Thailand, pointed out that classification schemes “can never account fully for shifting realities, for blurred chronologies, or for the continual overlapping of schools and styles . . . schools [in Thailand] were essentially regional and, in many cases, existed contemporaneously” (1975: 63).
practices continue to be observed by the Thai royal house (Christie 1964: 55-56; Desai 1980: x, 5, 47, 59; Lavy 2004: 198, 200). It could thus be the case that the P’ong Tuk Visnu represents a royal foundation at the locality, or at least is associated with the leadership of what is presumed to be a regional or sub-regional center. The size and quality of this image certainly argues for a connection to an elite social stratum.

Kirsch identifies a “Folk Brahman complex,” distinct from the formal Brahminism of the Thai court, that may have its roots in “an early ‘Hinduized’ period in Thai society . . . [or that] was introduced and spread simultaneously with Theravada Buddhism” (1977: 252). These are practices and beliefs aimed at “this-worldly problems . . . good health, prosperity, luck in some undertaking, or a happy and auspicious marriage” (Op. cit.: 254). The P’ong Tuk Visnu could have operated in this sphere of lay concerns, though again, the substantial size and workmanship of this piece may suggest otherwise.

Lavy states that “at the village level, worship was not so much oriented around the universal gods of Hinduism . . . but rather around local deities that were syncretized with these gods” (2004: 18). If the P’ong Tuk image was integrated with local ritual associations, this would be congruent with its idiosyncratic style that may reflect a local artistic idiom. It could be that the P’ong Tuk Visnu was a spiritual palladium for the locality or region, providing for functions outside the dominion of the preponderant Buddhist practices.

---

113 In a study of “folk religion” in the central Thailand hamlet of Ban Nai, Attagara notes that, since Buddhism recognizes a godly realm, “Brahminism with its . . . gods and goddesses is readily incorporated within the Buddhist movement in Thailand” (1968: 51). Attagara further notes that, in the village setting, “The worship of the Hindu gods tends to be formalized and impersonal. They are invoked mainly in special rites of passage. The daily life of the villagers is more associated with various household and agricultural spirits. However, it must be noted that the [Hindu] deities are accepted generally as secondary helpers . . . an individual still ultimately believes in the autonomy of his own actions [karma]” (Op. cit.: 67).
Chapter 5: Evaluation of Archaeological Features

Introduction. Unlike individual objects – or “artifacts” – such as those discussed above, an archaeological “feature” is a combination of context and content recognizable as a discrete material entity in an archaeological site’s depositional sequence and horizontal arrangement (ref. MoLAS 1994 for this paragraph). These discrete phenomena include both positive deposits of material remains and places where material has been removed (cuts). Features that may occur at archaeological sites include pits for storage or refuse disposal, post holes, hearths and fire pits, graves, walls and wall trenches, wells and cisterns, ovens and roasting pits, kilns, structural foundations, etc. Features also represent an event or sequence of events in time. It is the essence of scientific archaeology that features and stratigraphy are excavated in a systematic way that records in detail the morphology (shape), location (vertical and horizontal contexts), arrangement (internal structure), and content (artifacts, soils, plant remains, etc.) of features and stratigraphy. Such a record facilitates placing a feature in time, interpreting its function, and discerning its role in the complex of activities at a site at a given moment in time and through the passage of time.

As a result of the field work by Coedes, Quaritch Wales, and the present reconnaissance, information on over twenty major archaeological features at P’ong Tuk has been generated. There are reasonable, if rather general, horizontal locations on the landscape recorded for most of these features. Unfortunately, information on the stratigraphic (vertical) placement of these features is variable, and tends toward the minimal. Details of specific content and internal structure are also lacking in many cases. These deficiencies in the archaeological record for P’ong Tuk restrict the extent to which these material remains can be individually interpreted and mutually interrelated.

Because the Coedes and Quaritch Wales field work was mostly focused on the few rubble mound locations that were topographically obvious at P’ong Tuk, there are substantial distances between these features, leaving broad gaps
in the record of site content and layout. It has also become apparent that, particularly in Quaritch Wales’ case (and probably also true for the Coedes fieldwork), only a selective portion of the excavated data was published. These factors of selective reportage also limit interpretation of the material record from P’ong Tuk. Fortunately, the “rediscovery” of Quaritch Wales’ field notes has provided a portion of the information on feature context and content missing in the published reports. This has permitted some additional interpretation of the material record for P’ong Tuk.

**Quaritch Wales field notes.** Substantial effort was expended searching for field notes related to the Coedes and Quaritch Wales field work. This began with numerous emailed inquiries to scholars involved with pertinent Southeast Asian topics. A general request for information was also posted online in the *Southeast Asian Archaeology International Newsletter* Issue No. 23 (September 2008). These email contacts generated a few suggestions about where portions of the Coedes and Quaritch Wales papers may have been curated, and these were investigated. Staff with the archives of Bernard Quaritch Ltd. were also contacted by email. B. Quaritch Ltd. is the venerable British publishing house operated by one side of H. G. Quaritch Wales’ family. They had published many of H. G.’s key manuscripts and it was hoped that some of his papers would be preserved with this firm, but a reply indicated that “the little we have regarding Mr. Quaritch Wales is related to business matters.”

A breakthrough regarding the Quaritch Wales field notes occurred due to the persistent help of Henry Ginsberg, Curator Emeritus of Thai and Cambodian Collections at The British Library. His repeated inquiries with various colleagues and institutions resulted in the information that the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS), London, had received a donation of papers and photographs belonging to H. G. Quaritch Wales. A brief published description of these donated materials was

---


115 These materials, along with a few items of furniture, were donated by H. G.’s widow, Dorothy C. Wales (RAS 1995).
subsequently located; of immediate interest was item “(v) A quantity of manuscript material including Note-books, and Tour Diaries relating to Dr. Wales’s researches in South-East Asia in the 1930s [sic]” (RAS 1995: 169).

Inquiries with the RAS established that these documents had been inventoried in a preliminary fashion by a volunteer archivist in 2005, and this brief catalog was provided by the RAS via Dr. Ginsberg late in 2006. The archival listings were sufficient to identify Wales’ “field notebook[s]” for 1935 and 1936, the period which included his visit to P’ong Tuk. There were also several photographs listed for this period as depicting a “possibly Siamese excavation site?”

Sadly, a few months later Dr. Ginsberg died unexpectedly. Elizabeth Collins traveled to London in June, 2007, to attend a memorial for Dr. Ginsberg, and during that trip also arranged to inspect the Wales archive at the RAS. Dr. Collins confirmed that Quaritch Wales’ field notes for his brief P’ong Tuk investigations were present in the RAS materials, and the RAS staff kindly granted permission to photocopy these documents for use in the re-evaluation of P’ong Tuk. An album of 47 photographs of an excavation were also inspected, but these were unlabeled and could not be positively confirmed by Collins as being of the P’ong Tuk excavations.

The locating of Quaritch Wales’ original field notes for his work at P’ong Tuk provides significant new information, and also new dilemmas. There are inconsistencies both within the notes and between the notes and Wales’ published accounts, necessitating more discernment of original intent than would have been preferred. For example, one such issue is simply a matter of individual skeletal remains being given different reference numbers on different sketch maps, a confusion that is relatively easy to sort out. More concerning are differences between published depths for individual items and features and those depths recorded in the field notes, particularly when Quaritch Wales uses this

116 Specifically, “Notebook #28” consisted of two hardbound notebooks, the earlier volume containing the handwritten and drawn notes for the P’ong Tuk investigations of 1935-36.
information to arrive at a fundamental decision as to whether the burials and architecture are contemporaneous. In such cases, the present analysis has tended to give greater weight to information in the field notes, since presumably this was written in more direct reference to the original observations. It is also the case that Quaritch Wales provided site information in his publications that is not in the field notes; also, in making his published interpretations of site structure and history it appears that he downplayed some spatial data recorded in the field notes that contradicted these interpretations. (The latter point will be addressed in the “Spatial and temporal relationships” section below.)

Quaritch Wales’ notes encompass fourteen unnumbered pages in an 8-by-10-inch composition book, with the front of each page lined and the back gridded 10-squares-to-the-inch. What is presumed to be H. G.’s writing is heavy and quick, in a hand that is rather “slapdash” and often difficult to read (there are, in fact, a few words which this analyst has not been able to decipher). The maps and drawings are similarly sketchy and not done entirely to scale (Figure 64). Some individual artifacts and features are sketched, but in several cases these are not clearly labeled as to where they are from within the site, and the overall organization of the notes seems unsystematic and minimal. Reconstructions presented in the current paper are extrapolations from both the field notes and the published reports. These reconstructions are no doubt subject to alternative versions, though the present analysis has attempted to take a conservative approach that avoids implied or presumed “facts.”

There is a second, minority set of notations in the field notes, in a lighter and readily intelligible hand that is suspected to belong to H. G.’s wife, Dorothy. Mrs. Quaritch Wales accompanied H.G. to P’ong Tuk, as it appears she often did when he was in the field. The notes in this second hand follow a pattern of adding clarifying information to the heavy-handed notes, in some cases correcting information or providing an alternative interpretation. For example, the primary notes (those presumed to be H.G.’s) repeatedly refer to iron implements found with the stupa burials as a “weapon” or “dagger,” reflecting his
interpretation that these were the remains of "warriors killed in battle" (1936: 45-46). Written above the first hand's "weapon" for one of the burials, however, is the second hand’s "cutting instrument," the latter providing a more prosaic utilitarian label. In general, then, it is suspected that Mrs. Wales reviewed and annotated H.G.'s field records, a habit which proved helpful to the present study in several instances.

**Coedes field notes.** Substantial efforts were also made to locate P’ong Tuk field records created by Coedes or his associates. The initial objective was to learn where any Coedes papers had been donated or otherwise archived. As
was done in the search for Wales’ records, emailed inquiries were sent to a range of scholars and organizations that might have knowledge of the whereabouts of Coedes’ papers; searching online was also undertaken. The latter activity located a “Coedes Collection” at the National Library of Australia (NLA) in Canberra. A request for specific information from the NLA was made using their formal online system. The initial response was slow in arriving, but eventually certain members of the NLA staff proved quite helpful for this perusal of the Coedes material in Canberra.\textsuperscript{117}

The Coedes holdings, acquired by the NLA “in the early 1970s” apparently with the belief that this archive represented most of the historian’s personal papers, consist of a group held in the library’s Manuscripts Section,\textsuperscript{118} and a group held by the Asian Collections Section.\textsuperscript{119} The former consists of unpublished documents such as letters, typed drafts of manuscripts, and a few photographs, and was indexed in 2002. The Asian Collections group consists of published material, including books, monographs and pamphlets, the general contents being included in the NLA catalog. A perusal of both the index and online catalog suggested that no material relating to the Coedes-directed work at P’ong Tuk was present, but this could not be ruled out with high confidence. It was apparent that a direct search of the archival groups would be necessary to eliminate or confirm the existence of pertinent records. The NLA staff was theoretically willing to attempt this search as time permitted; fortunately, an Australian friend of the thesis author – Katherine McConigley, an attorney experienced in forensic documentary research -- agreed to inspect the Coedes holdings on a vacation trip to Canberra that had been previously planned. She

\textsuperscript{117} I am particularly grateful for the help of Ms. Saowapha Viravong, librarian with the NLA Thai Unit, Asian Collections; archivist John Crocker; and Dr. Paul Sidwell, Director of Mon-Khmer Projects, Centre for Research in Computational Linguistics, Australian National University, who helped guide me in my inquiry with the National Library of Australia.

\textsuperscript{118} NLA Reference No. MS 9607.

\textsuperscript{119} A catalog of the Asian Section group can be searched online at \url{http://nla.gov.au/catalogue} by sorting for call number prefix COE.
was warmly received by the NLA staff and was able, over portions of two days, to examine all of the Coedes materials. In both groups she noted a predominance of manuscripts and publications authored by others rather than by Coedes, most post-dating World War Two; a lack of material relating to archaeological and historical sites; and a dearth of material dating to the 1920s-30s period most likely to produce information on the P’ong Tuk investigation. Essentially, the materials present in Canberra appeared to be a very incomplete collection of Coedes’ personal papers. Archivist John Crocker explained that, having eventually generated a basic catalog of these holdings, the NLA staff had concluded that a substantial portion of material had been selectively removed from the collection prior to its delivery to the library. The whereabouts of any removed documents, which it would appear includes the bulk of items generated personally by Coedes, are of course unknown.

The search on behalf of this thesis project therefore confirmed that no documentation relating to Coedes’ P’ong Tuk field work is present at the National Library of Australia’s Coedes archives. Inquiries in Bangkok, where Coedes was operating at the time of the P’ong Tuk investigation, including communication with the National Museum and the Siam Society, also failed to locate pertinent material. The location of these field work records, if they still exist, remains unknown.

Non-architectural features. The focus of both the Coedes and Wales investigations at P’ong Tuk was on architectural features. One important secondary result of Wales’ excavation effort, however, was the exposure of eleven human burials, probably the first systematically excavated group of prehistoric or protohistoric burials in Thailand (c.f. Tayles and Oxenham 2006: 9). These human remains will be discussed in Chapter 7 below.

During his brief stay at the site Wales also encountered “at Dvaravati level the remains of kilns at which coarse pottery had been manufactured” (1936: 47). This is essentially all that Wales reported for these features, which qualify as the first Dvaravati ceramic manufactories to be identified (a Dvaravati resource type
that is still rarely encountered). Fortunately, additional locational information was provided in Wales’ field notes. One of these kilns, labeled “Pottery Kiln A” on a sketch map, was found in Wales’ excavation trench “E,” which extended from the northeast side of the stupa platform (Figure 65). It was described as being approximately 7 feet (2.1 meters) distant from the stupa margin and approximately 7 feet square. Wales also recorded the kiln’s vertical placement at a “Dvaravati level” between 27 inches (0.6 meter) and 39 inches (1 meter) below ground surface, allowing that the lower few inches of this measurement included natural soil reddened by the heat of the kiln fire. It was also noted that “many pottery fragments [were] found.”

Figure 65: Reconstruction of the stupa base and surrounding burials based on information in Quaritch Wales 1936 and the RAS field notes. Trench locations are estimated with dashed lines. “Pottery Kiln A” is also an approximate location, upper right.
During the 2008 reconnaissance “Pottery Kiln A” was roughly located by hand-taping from the estimated *stupa* site location (GPS Waypoint #21) and recorded as GPS Waypoint #22. This location resides in a small field which the property owner said had not been subject to modern filling (Figure 66). Numerous small coarse pottery and brick fragments were observed scattered across the field surface, tending to confirm the proximity of a kiln site.

Figure 66: Locations of Quaritch Wales’ structures and other nearby features, recorded as GPS waypoints and superimposed on Google Earth satellite imagery (scale at lower left). This view includes the two kiln sites noted by Quaritch Wales, and the new “Chuan’s Structure” location discussed below.

---

120 The coordinates for Waypoint #22 are latitude N1353.411 and longitude E9947.246. Information in the Quaritch Wales field notes, informant interviews, and observations in the field led to a general area being identified as the potential “Pottery Kiln A” location. Thus the “Kiln A” and “Building #2 stupa” locations shown in Fig. 66 are approximately 165 feet apart, with the potential area of pottery production in between.
The only specific information given in the field notes for Quaritch Wales’ “Pottery Kiln B” was its position 400 yards (366 meters) along the main roadway southeast of the San Chao vihara. The published notation further stated that this was opposite from “the road leading to Nai Ma’s house” (1936: 47). This location was hand-taped from a point on the roadway adjacent to the San Chao structure southeast along Highway 5097, ending in the vicinity of a new house (Figure 66). The residence’s owner stated that no digging had been done for the house construction, only filling with dirt brought from outside the locality, so nothing could be reported concerning subsurface material here. Elderly informant and nearby resident Khun Chuan Laochan, however, remembered the Quaritch Wales team at work on this site, which he said was marked on the groundsurface by many pieces of broken pottery. He also stated that Quaritch Wales dug up pots here that were “round with no handles.” Quaritch Wales, however, did not mention these ceramic vessels in print or in his field notes.

Another subsurface feature, already described and discussed (see pages 28-31), is a buried occupation stratum that appears to range across much of the P’ong Tuk locality. This or a similar stratum was briefly alluded to by Quaritch Wales as the “Dvaravati level” in his excavation trenches, and he appears to place the base of this stratum around 51 inches (1.3 meters) below groundsurface (1936: 46, 47; field notes). The unpublished notes for “Pottery Kiln A” also suggest an upper surface of the Dvaravati stratum in the vicinity of 27 inches (0.7 meter) below the modern landsurface. A buried culture-bearing stratum was also observed by the 2008 reconnaissance in the wall of a modern irrigation ditch running generally northwest-southeast along the west side of the P’ong Tuk locality (Figures 4 and 9). While the vertical relationship of this 8-inch (20-centimeter) deep cultural layer to the modern landsurface could not be clearly observed in the irrigation cut, it generally appears to correlate to Quaritch Wales’ “Dvaravati level.” This suggests that a cultural midden layer that Quaritch Wales identified as Dvaravati in content may extend across the P’ong

121 The Kiln B location was recorded as Waypoint #20, latitude N1353.491 and longitude E9947.241
Tuk locale for a distance of at least 900 feet (274 meters), although the substantiality of this feature could vary over that range. The likelihood that Dvaravati-era occupation extends this far west is tentatively confirmed by Quaritch Wales’ report of two brick structures destroyed by looters at this distance southwest from his *stupa* site (1936: 47). He further reported that “two well-known Buddhist symbols,” small terracotta deer “about 4 inches long,” were found in this vicinity.

A final feature newly noted on the P’ong Tuk landscape is a sizeable embankment known locally as “the old cart track.” This raised embankment runs generally northeast-southwest across cultivated fields, between the northern and middle architectural groups (Figures 67-68). It also angles nearly perpendicular to the highway and longitudinal axis of the P’ong Tuk architectural groups, which may indicate a spatial relationship to this early occupation. On the other hand, it was never mentioned or mapped by Coedes or Quaritch Wales, so may be a facility created since those visits. A more specific age and function, however, was not determined during the 2008 reconnaissance.

The earthen embankment is generally 8 meters wide at its base, and currently has an irrigation channel running longitudinally on its upper surface. It was mapped in the field via Waypoints 24-47 (Figure 67), and extends approximately 245 meters (804 feet) before ending abruptly. This terminus, however, is close to the modern irrigation channel on the west side of the P’ong Tuk locality, and the “cart track” alignment may have been disrupted by this massive excavation. It remains to be determined what era and function this linear embankment relates to, and it has been described here so that any potential relationship to pre-modern occupations may be determined eventually.

Another area of non-architectural finds should be mentioned in this section, even though the nature of these deposits is not clear. The area labeled “Ban Plak Sake” was the southernmost Coedes excavation location (Figure 8),
Figure 67: Linear distribution of GPS waypoints recorded by the 2008 reconnaissance, marking the apparent extent of the “Old Cart Track” embankment. Note the angle more-or-less perpendicular to the main road, and the location of the central group of structures to the southeast.

800 meters (2625 feet) downstream from the Ban Nai Ma position (Dupont/Sen 2006: 78). The reasons for digging there are not specified in the brief description by Coedes, and “no trace of building” was found, “except some triangular bricks” (1928a: 201). Several items recovered from Plak Sake include a “small golden casket,” a small seated Buddha (1928a: Plate 15 lower left), a “pinnacle,” decorated pottery jar (Plate 14 left), and “a curious hexagonal [pottery] vessel” (Plate 14 right). The Buddha (Figure 19) and ceramic vessels are now on view at the Dvaravati exhibit hall at the National Museum. The “unusual” pottery has drawn some attention since its discovery, but these

122 Ban Plak Sakae is one of six villages in Tambon Phong Teuk, as recorded on the locale’s modern quadrangle (Amphoe Ban Pong quadrangle, Sheet 4936 I, 1:50,000 scale).
Figure 68: Same view as Figure 67, but with waypoints removed from the “Old Cart Track” alignment.

specimens are not known to have been analyzed in detail. Such an analysis might establish affinities with Pyu ceramic forms in Myanmar, since there is visual similarity, particularly to burial urns (e.g. urns illustrated for Beikthano – Stargardt 1990: 229-250).

Coedes and Quaritch Wales architectural features. Pierre Dupont, in his comprehensive review of the architectural remains known for Dvaravati as of 1959, describes the structures from P’ong Tuk and five additional sites, and also includes comparisons to Wat Phra Men and Wat Phra Pathon (Dupont/Sen 2006: 75-90, 93-103). An indication of the prominence of the P’ong Tuk architectural data uncovered by Coedes and Quaritch Wales is provided by the fact that of the fifteen pages devoted by Dupont to his overview of Dvaravati architecture at six sites, six-and-a-half (43%) were concerned with the P’ong Tuk remains (Op. cit.: 77-84).
The six structural locations documented for P’ong Tuk by Coedes and Quaritch Wales include (Figures 8 and 69):

- A well preserved rectangular “vihara” (monastic assembly hall) at the “San Chao” location (Figures 14, 70, 75), 25 by 14.4 meters, constructed of laterite, with excellent retention of face molding details (Coedes 1928: 200). This foundation is still uncovered and available for inspection at P’ong Tuk, if in a somewhat dilapidated condition as of early 2008.

- A laterite foundation 100 meters southwest of the San Chao vihara (Figure 71), approximately 8 meters square, with remnants of a brick superstructure and brick pathway leading northeast toward the San Chao area; probably a small temple or shrine (Coedes 1928: 199). This location was filled in sometime before 2008 and returned to agricultural use.

- A square foundation of laterite at the “Ban Nai Ma” location approximately 800 meters southwest of San Chao (Figures 14 and 72), 6 meters square, with a square statue pedestal at the center and much figural stucco debris (Figure 13); said to be a small temple (Coedes 1928: 198-199). The foundation and pedestal, along with other structural fragments, are still available to view, though in a somewhat dilapidated condition.

- A round foundation of laterite at the “Ban Nai Ma” location (Figure 73), 28 meters northwest of the small Ban Nai Ma temple, 9 meters in diameter; interpreted to be a stupa base (Coedes 1928: 198-199). This location was overgrown in 2008 but still observable.

- A largely intact rectangular brick foundation (Figure 74), 20.5 feet northeast-southwest by 36 feet northwest-southeast, located approximately 1475 feet southwest of the San Chao area; interpreted to be a vihara location (Quaritch Wales 1936: 44). This location today is in agricultural use.

- Basal members of a small stupa in brick, including two rectangular platforms surmounted by four receding octagonal levels (Figures 65 and 79), 195 feet southeast of Quaritch Wales’ vihara foundation. The lowest rectangle was 9 feet 4 inches by 8 feet 10 inches, and the lowest octagonal was 2 feet 3 inches on each side (Quaritch Wales 1936: 45). This location is in agricultural use today.
The Coedes excavations were actually conducted by “Signor Manfredi, architect of the Archaeological Service” (Coedes 1928a: 198). As Coedes relates:

On August 16 [1927], I went once more to P’ong Tuk in order to delimit the area in which digging should be carried out, and to enter into negotiations with the owners of the land. With this survey . . . my task ended, and Signor Manfredi . . . began his work on August 27 . . . During the last three months, the work has made a steady progress, and Signor Manfredi, is to be congratulated on the results he has obtained (Ibid.).

Architect Manfredi’s mapping, not surprisingly, provides detailed plans to scale, as well as some longitudinal sections and details of surface molding (e.g. Figures 70-73). The Coedes features therefore benefit from an excellent record of their forms and layout, if not of their relationship to surrounding archaeological contexts and materials.

This field work was focused on mound locations marking architectural ruins at the widely distributed “Banana Plantation,” “San Chao,” and “Ban Nai Ma” locations (Figures 8, 76, and 77). No excavated sampling occurred in the broad areas between these mound locations, except where a brick pavement was traced leading away (northeast) from the Banana Plantation shrine foundation (Figure 71). Neither, apparently, were any drawings or descriptions produced of cultural or natural stratigraphy surrounding the excavated

---

123 The 1928a publication quoted here repeats a paper Coedes “read at a Meeting of the [Siam Society] study-section of History, Archaeology, Philology and Literature, held at the National Museum on December 2, 1927” (1928a: 195). The three months of steady progress noted here by Coedes, then, would have extended from the August 27 starting date to the end of November, with Coedes giving this formal report at the beginning of December. This also implies that all field work at P’ong Tuk was accomplished within this three month period.

124 These mounds would have been relatively abrupt rises in elevation on the modern landsurface, composed of earth mixed with debris from a ruined architectural structure. Their existence suggests that the structures were not entirely razed and/or removed, but descended into a ruined state over a long period of time. This could also indicate long-term use of the structures when they were standing. The 2008 data collected at P’ong Tuk now suggests that there are also structural sites not marked by above-surface mounds.
structures. Regarding the extent and depth of the Coedes excavations, then, it is left to extrapolate from the published photographs and brief descriptive comments.

Figure 69: Satellite-based GPS coordinates for all structural and feature locations from the Coedes, Quaritch Wales, and 2008 investigations at the P'ong Tuk locality (minus the “Old Cart Track” location – see Figure 67 – and the Ban Plak Sake location to the south).

125 As described in a previous section, attempts to locate field notes for the Coedes excavations were not successful.
Figure 70: The Manfredi plan of the San Chao vihara uncovered by the Coedes investigation of 1927 (1928a: Plate 9).

Figure 71: Partial view of the Coedes plan for the Banana Plantation square foundation, said to be either a shrine or small temple (Coedes 1928a: Plate 6).
Figure 72: Partial view of the Coedes plan for the Ban Nai Ma square foundation, also said to be a small shrine or temple, with the perforated image foundation stone still present at center (Coedes 1928a: Plate 2).

Quaritch Wales’ published structural descriptions are perhaps slightly better in their delineation of excavated areas and stratigraphy, but lack plans and vertical section maps. The field notes have substantially augmented the published record of Quaritch Wales’ methods, sampling areas and the stratigraphy encountered, as well as details of structural layouts and associated features. Without the field notes located at the Royal Asiatic Society archives it would not be possible to adequately reconstruct archaeological features uncovered by Quaritch Wales at P’ong Tuk.
The layout and other details of the structural remnants uncovered by the Coedes and Quaritch Wales investigations are described and discussed in publications by Coedes (1928a, 1928b), Quaritch Wales (1936, 1937, 1969), Dupont (1959), and Dupont/Sen (2006), among others. Only selected elements of these structures will be noted here.

According to Dupont, the 2.5-meter-high laterite platform excavated by the Coedes party at San Chao (Figures 70, 75) was the complete base of a vihara (Dupont/Sen 2006: 79). The positions of five circular laterite columns were still traceable on the upper perimeter of this platform, and the superstructure was thus interpreted to consist of “a wooden roof resting on laterite columns” (Ibid.). The horizontal layout is described as “re-entrant angles and projecting corners;” the platform exterior presents a vertical series of moldings in “plain,” “torus,” and “necked wide band” forms; also, architectural details are formed in laterite and
Figure 74: Reconstruction of the rectangular “vihara” foundation excavated by Quaritch Wales in 1935, based on information in the published 1936 report and in the RAS field notes. Includes locations for the burial uncovered by Quaritch Wales, and one reported by local diggers.
covered in stucco, with forms including lotus buds, bollards (tubular forms), and finials (Op. cit.: 79-80, Plate 558). Dupont asserted that all of these elements related to types known from Wat Phra Men (at Ayutthya) and Wat Phra Pathon (now known as Chula Pathon Chedi -- at Nakhon Pathom). He placed the style of these elements specifically between the Wat Phra Men construction stages II and III (Dupont/Sen 2006: 102-103). Absolute dates were not available when this construction chronology was developed, but an informed estimate currently puts this Stage II-III period in the late 7th to early 8th centuries C.E. (Nicolas Revire, personal communication, August 2011).

Dupont states that the “Banana Plantation” square, generally interpreted to be a shrine or small temple, is joined with the San Chao vihara as part of a
contemporaneous ritual complex (Figure 76) (Dupont/Sen 2006: 80). This connection is a physical one, marked by the brick pathway which, however, is

variously described as “unfinished” or “damaged” (Op. cit.: 78, 80). The roughly 8-meter-square laterite foundation encloses a paved brick interior, with traces of a perron (stairway) or vestibule projection on the northeast side where the paved walkway terminates (Figure 71). Interestingly, an apparently older brick platform 1.9 meters square underlies the northeast corner of the perron – evidence for succeeding structural episodes and, therefore, time depth of occupation. Items found in proximity to the square shrine include the famous lamp, small Buddha figures, a gemstone, terracotta cup or vase, “votive tablet” fragments and a gold foil “lotus” (Op. cit.: 80; Coedes 1928a: 197-200). Dupont characterizes these items as typical of a “foundation deposit,” but notes that “A foundation deposit
was not found under this basement,” leaving the impression that at least some of these items might be from another foundation deposit nearby. With no foundation deposit location apparent at the square shrine, Dupont suggests that this may have been “a sanctuary with an important statue” at which these items were left as donations (Ibid.).

At the “Ban Nai Ma” location (“the hamlet of Mr. Ma”), approximately 800 meters (2625 feet) southwest of the San Chao (Figure 77), Coedes uncovered one circular and one square foundation, which Dupont states are both “part of the same [ritual] unit” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 81). At the square, characterized as a small temple, laterite blocks half a meter wide (1.6 feet) enclose an earth-rubble interior, at the center of which a nearly in situ monument pedestal resides (Figure 72). The small horizontal extent of the foundation, at 6 meters (20 feet) square, and its single outline of laterite make the overall composition of this structure problematical; numerous laterite blocks and heavy laterite details were present in the surrounding rubble, suggesting a heavy architectural format that seems beyond the capability of the foundation (Ibid.). Particularly noteworthy about the architectural remains here is the proliferation of stucco fragments, mostly “crownings or finials . . . reinforced by an assembly of terracotta or laterite pieces and coated with a thick layer of stucco.” One new stucco type at Baan Nai Mai “not found elsewhere” is the colonnette – “half-round cylinders set against a wall . . . lavishly decorated with floral and lanceolate motifs” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 81 and Plates 301-302). Also of note is the head of an elephant wearing a crown, a motif not seen previously in a Dvaravati context (Op. cit.: 81). In general, Dupont finds the stucco forms and decorative motifs to be “clumsy and unsophisticated,” a group so distinctive in its “extreme stylization and lack of artistic skill” that he suggests it belongs to a different period than the San Chao vihara, which he associates with the more refined art of the large urban sites (Op. cit.: 81, 84).

---

126 Slaczka (2007: 207, f.n.31) states that the 8-petaled lotus, such as was found on the Banana Plantation walkway (Coedes 1928a: Plates 6-7), is a form that often functioned to mark the location of a consecration deposit, as well as sometimes occurring in isolation (Op. cit.: 249-250).
Approximately 15 meters (50 feet) northwest of this small temple or shrine a circular foundation 9 meters (30 feet) in diameter was uncovered, interpreted to be “the lower foundation of a stupa” (Op. cit.: 81). This foundation is composed of “enormous laterite blocks” (size not specified) topped by “three layers of laterite slabs” (Figure 73). Little additional commentary is offered, given the paucity of objects associated with this structural location. Dupont does observe that this stupa base is on a northwest-southeast alignment with the temple square (Op. cit.: 78).

The two structures uncovered by Quartich Wales were either not illustrated in the published reports (the vihara foundation) or minimally illustrated
with photographs (the *stupa* base).\footnote{127} Availability of the field notes, however, has facilitated a reconstruction of these structural remains and associated features (Figures 65, 74, 78 and 79).

Quaritch Wales focused on several brick rubble-mounds not examined by Coedes. The first location explored by Quaritch Wales, located approximately 1475 feet (450 meters) southeast of the Banana Plantation structures (Figure 8), had been extensively and recently looted, but Quaritch Wales nonetheless

---

\footnote{127} As Dupont notes, “no plans and no photographs were published of these ruins” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 80). The first measurements cited here are in English units, as recorded by Quaritch Wales.
uncovered a relatively intact rectangular brick foundation measuring 20.5 feet northeast-southwest by 36 feet northwest-southeast (6 by 10.5 meters) (Quaritch Wales 1936: 44 and Quaritch Wales’ field notes) (Figure 74). The “much ruined” brick walls were 2 feet 1 inch (0.6 meter) thick, with generally 1.5 feet (0.5 meter) of height remaining that preserved an exterior surface with three plain moldings (Quaritch Wales 1936: 44; Dupont/Sen 2006: 80). A layer of large stucco lumps “in places . . . 1 foot deep” was also encountered by Quaritch Wales around the foundation perimeter, and within the northern corner Quaritch Wales uncovered an extended human burial (Quaritch Wales 1936: 44; field notes).

Quaritch Wales interpreted this structure to be another “vihara” (monastic assembly hall) (Quaritch Wales 1936: 44). A semi-circular brick “moonstone” step outside the northwest doorway was said to be similar to ritual forms in Ceylon (Ibid.). Additionally, the local diggers reported that “in this building about two years ago were found” 15 small images (presumably of Buddha) 12 inches or less in height, a limestone double lotus pedestal with feet attached, and twenty heads and other fragments of images (Quaritch Wales’ field notes). A sketch in the field journal indicates that these ritual items were found at the northwest interior of the structure. During his excavation, Quaritch Wales also found “small fragments of the limbs of images in the blue limestone characteristic of the Dvaravati period” (1936: 44). Other items found by locals near this building, at depths “over 3 feet,” included a small fragment of gold foil, a small gold sheet inscribed with what may be a single character of some Indian script (Quaritch Wales 1936: 43). The current whereabouts of this item is unknown, but if this is in fact a fragment of script, it would be a significant addition to the textual record from P’ong Tuk (the only other known inscriptions being standard phrases on “votive tablets”).

---

128 These bricks, larger than modern examples, had dimensions approximating 14 by 7 by 3 inches, and were tempered with rice husks (Quaritch Wales 1936: 44). See Guillon 1999: 83 for a brief discussion of “Dvaravati bricks.”

129 Quaritch Wales’ excavation of these sculptural fragments from inside the vihara foundation perhaps comes closest to a systematic association of ritual art and architecture at P’ong Tuk. These “limbs of images,” however, were never illustrated or further described.

130 Curving lines inscribed on this small gold sheet were described by Quaritch Wales as “what may . . . be a single character of some Indian script” (1936: 43). The current whereabouts of this item is unknown, but if this is in fact a fragment of script, it would be a significant addition to the textual record from P’ong Tuk (the only other known inscriptions being standard phrases on “votive tablets”).
“casket” (0.55 inches in diameter), and the “fragment of a [small] Dvaravati image” (field notes).

The rectangular foundation excavated by Quaritch Wales, labeled a vihara remnant, differed in several important aspects from the San Chao vihara (Figures 70 and 74). The Quaritch Wales structure is less than one-fifth the area of the San Chao structure, and lacks an underlying foundation platform; the narrow brick footers and plain exterior finish at the Quaritch Wales site also contrasts sharply with the Coedes laterite platform; whereas the latter had an ascending stairway at the entrance, the Quaritch Wales entry exhibits a semi-circular “moonstone” pad or step, composed of bricks and “quite unornamented;” and the absence of laterite at the Quaritch Wales vihara was further confirmed with the recovery of a large terracotta column section outside the foundation, “and what appeared to be part of a broken stone lintel” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 80; Quaritch Wales 1936: 44). It is apparent in these comparisons that there are substantial differences of construction fabric, method, and form between these rectangular structures, dissimilarities likely to reflect different eras of construction.

At a second rubble-mound 65 yards to the southeast from the “vihara” (Figures 8 and 78), and less disturbed by looting, Quaritch Wales uncovered the lower sections of “the first stupa of the Dvaravati period that has been discovered, of which anything more than a base remains” (Op. cit.: 45). As with the vihara, these structural remains were entirely of brick, and included two rectangular platforms at the base, surmounted by four recessive octagonal levels (Figures 65 and 79). The outside dimensions of the lowest rectangular platform were 9 feet 4 inches northwest-southeast by 8 feet 10 inches northeast-southwest (2.8 by 2.7 meters); the largest octagonal level was 2 feet 3 inches (0.7 meter) long on each of the eight sides (field notes). The recession of the octagonal levels resulted in “reducing the diameter of the small monument by . . . a third at the level of the stupa [bell] which . . . is missing” (Dupont/Sen 2006:

131 The octagonal stupa format is repeated at U Thong, though on a much larger scale and with more elaborate detail (c.f. Quaritch Wales 1969: 24 and Plates 12A, 13B).
The bricks used here were again of the large “Dvaravati” size, typical examples measuring 15 by 7 by 2.5 inches and 13.5 by 7 by 2.5 inches (Quaritch Wales 1936: 45).

The core area of the stupa consisted of earth, and a shaft dug on the central axis encountered “a small silver casket containing cremated human relics” at a depth of 4 feet 3 inches (1.3 meters) below the modern landsurface (Figure 79); “a few inches beneath the silver casket” an iron hook and “a piece of bone” were found (Op. cit.: 46; field notes). The implication by Quaritch Wales that this “casket” was a reliquary and its contents human remains is not supported with any corroborating information (e.g. identifiable fragments of human bone in this very small container), and its location under the center of the stupa, as well as the associated objects, suggests it is more likely to be a structure consecration deposit. Anna Slaczka, in a comprehensive study of consecration rituals and deposits in South and Southeast Asia, argues that many such deposits presumed to be human remains may not be so, while also asserting that consecration features are often found “below the relic chambers in stupas” (2007: 252, 259/f.n. 101 – and see Footnote 145, page 183 below).

In exploratory trenches surrounding the stupa remnant, Quaritch Wales encountered ten inhumation burials at levels slightly deeper than the architectural base (Figure 65 and Figure 79). This substantial discovery, however, was given little subsequent attention after Quaritch Wales declared that these features were not related to the Dvaravati occupation at P’ong Tuk (1936: 45-47). These burials will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Quaritch Wales also briefly mentioned “two small brick structures, completely destroyed by unauthorized diggers, at which we did not attempt to work” 300 yards (274 meters) southwest of the stupa (1936: 47). This would place these structures at Waypoint #70, which is at the southwest corner of a

---

132 Quaritch Wales reports: “We were informed that only superficial digging had taken place here, but undoubtedly the bell of the stupa had been broken open, and any images it may have contained had been stolen” (1936: 45).
banana grove, bordered immediately by two roadways and the large irrigation
ditch. This is a very disturbed area and it is likely these structural locations,
already “destroyed” by looters in Quaritch Wales’ time, have been entirely
eliminated. This structural information does, however, confirm that feature
locations associated with the Dvaravati occupation of P’ong Tuk extended as far
west as the large irrigation ditch (and possibly further). Quaritch Wales does
report that two small terracotta deer, “each about 4 inches long,” were found at
this western structural location (1936: 47).
Architectural features identified by the present research. During the 2008 field reconnaissance, information on three new structural locations was collected via resident interviews and physical observation. These include:

- A deposit of large blocky laterite fragments in the Mae Klong River channel at the north side of the P’ong Tuk locality (Figure 80). These laterite blocks have eroded out of the right-descending (south-eastward) bank of the river and can only be reached by boat during normal river pool.

- An alluviated brick floor here designated “Chuan’s Structure,” based on a local resident interview. This structure base was described as approximately 5 meters square, with remnants of light brick walls (Figure 83). Five human crania were said to be placed in each of the four corners and in the middle of the horizontal brick surface.

- A “cavity” encountered approximately 0.5 meter below ground surface by a local resident digging a cooking pit in his back lot in the “Ban Nai Ma” locality (Figure 77), here designated “Thied’s Structure (?).” Round pieces of laterite, decayed stucco, and several ritual artifacts were recovered here.

In January 2008, local reports described an “island of laterite” in the river not far upstream from the Dong Sak monastery, and a local fisherman and his boat were enlisted to visit this location (Figures 80-82). Although overgrown, a substantial accumulation of large and small laterite fragments was readily apparent over an area at least 10 by 20 meters (33 by 66 feet). While these were understandably eroded by action of the river, many large examples retained rectangular faces and appeared to be artificially formed construction blocks.\textsuperscript{133} Typical examples were 117 by 69 centimeters on a face, and 145 by 40 centimeters. By comparison, larger blocks drawn by architect Manfredi at the San Chao platform were 106 by 59 centimeters, and 78 by 40 cm; at the Ban

\textsuperscript{133} Consultation with one Thai archaeologist familiar with the region indicated that these blocky forms are not likely to be natural.
Figure 80: GPS waypoints (4) recorded at the concentration of laterite blocks eroded into the Mae Klong River, a potential structural feature newly identified by the 2008 reconnaissance. Wat Dong Sak is the red-colored complex to the southeast.

Nai Ma square, 101 by 60 cm and 86 by 60 cm; and at the Baan Nai Ma stupa, 100 by 135 cm (Coedes 1928a: Plates 2, 6, 10). The latter stupa base also had a foundation plinth composed of “enormous laterite blocks” of unspecified size (Dupont/Sen 2006: 81). It would therefore appear that the blocks in the river are on the large end of a scale for such building blocks, but perhaps not unlike the “enormous” examples sometime produced.

This accumulation of laterite blocks and fragments presumably represents a substantial structural location that has eroded into the river. Given this circumstance, no wholly in situ preservation is possible. A brief inspection of the area encountered one terracotta rim sherd with a molded, lobate collar, a type
however that is relatively modern (archaeologist Thanik Lertcharnrit, personal communication).\textsuperscript{134} The laterite deposit was recorded with four GPS waypoints (Figure 80).\textsuperscript{135}

![Figure 81: View on the “laterite island” off the right-descending (southeastward) bank of the Mae Klong, with our fisherman guide included. Essentially all the large and small fragments in view are hardened laterite.](image-url)

\textsuperscript{134} As with all cultural artifacts observed in the field by the 2008 reconnaissance, this sherd was not collected but left in place at its find location.

\textsuperscript{135} A representative location for this feature, Waypoint #49, is at latitude N13 53.856 and longitude E99 46.934.
“Chuan’s Structure” (Figure 83) was located and described based on multiple interviews of elderly local resident Khun Chuan Laochan. The designated location of this all-brick feature was approximately 30 meters (98 feet) southwest of the “Pottery Kiln B” location (Figure 78), in a newly planted cornfield. It was said to be composed of large Dvaravati-style brickbats. While this structural description and location are based entirely on hearsay, the informant was interviewed multiple times and elicited confidence in his recollections. Due to the presence of human skulls at this feature, it is described in more detail in the following chapter.

The third location included here must be viewed as a potential structure. “Thied’s Structure (?)” (Figure 77) is based on interviews with elderly P’ong Tuk resident Khun Thied, whose residence is at the Baan Nai Ma locale. Khun Thied related that, while digging a cooking pit for a Chinese New Year’s celebration behind (east of) his home, he encountered a “cavity” in the ground starting approximately one-half meter (1.6 feet) below ground surface. A variety of items were subsequently extracted from this pit, including four “round pieces of laterite,” a “very green” sheet of “brass” (bronze?), a sculptural fragment in limestone of a lotus pedestal with feet, a small round “casket” of “porcelain” (approximately two inches in diameter), and two small terracotta Buddhas (apparently “votive” tablets). Khun Thied described the latter in detail, one
Figure 83: A reconstruction of the structure described by P’ong Tuk informant Chuan Laochan, a brick platform and low wall dismantled by monks for the bricks circa 1949.
presenting a standing Buddha with a crown and jewelry, no upper garment, long ears, and eyebrows “like a wing” (no doubt the Dvaravati “swallow brow” form); another exhibiting a naked standing figure with jewelry, holding something akin to a fly whisk, with a monkey at lower left offering fruit. This second set of imagery sounds very much like the “boy with monkey” or “man pulling monkey” figurines found at several Dvaravati sites. The origins of this imagery are variously attributed to South Asian or indigenous sources, but is generally said to be “found only in Dvaravati art” (Boisselier 1975: 66, 224; Saraya 1999: 193-194). The limestone pedestal fragment was taken by Thied to Wat Dong Sak, and it was found in the collection there during the 2008 reconnaissance and photographed (see Figures 21-22 and discussion on pages 64-66 above). The association of this sculptural fragment with the Thied location is the most direct connection of a sculpted image and a possible structure yet documented at P’ong Tuk.

Khun Thied also emphasized that there were substantial quantities of “white cement” in his fire pit excavation. This is likely to be decayed stucco akin to that encountered by Quaritch Wales at his vihara foundation (1936: 44).

The overall assemblage of materials from Khun Thied’s cooking pit, particularly the laterite and “white cement,” is taken here to suggest the presence of a structure, though this cannot be stated with certainty. Most interestingly, this location is not only generally within the Ban Nai Ma locality, but is more-or-less in a line with the Coedes stupa and shrine foundations, over a distance of 65 meters (214 feet) (Figure 77). Furthermore, points at the center of the shrine, stupa and Thied locations are essentially equidistant, with the Coedes structures being digitally recorded at 33.2 meters (109 feet) apart, and the Coedes stupa and Thied location at 31.7 meters (104 feet) apart. Also, the depths below surface of upper structural members, while not explicitly recorded at any of the three locations, appears to be similar (i.e. 0.5 meter below surface). This all

136 Waypoint #17 records the “Thied’s Structure (?)” location at latitude N13 53.354 and longitude E99 47.385
suggests that there may be a larger complex of structures or ritual features aligned southeast-northwest in the Ban Nai Ma locale. At the very least, it is reasonable to tentatively group the “Thied’s Structure (?)” location with the Ban Nai Ma structures uncovered by Coedes.

**Architectural and other features: Overview.** Coedes and Quaritch Wales focused on locations with above-ground (mounded) indications of structural features. Excavation of these features revealed that the lowest construction courses were generally between 0.7 and 1.3 meters (27-51 inches) below the modern ground surface. Some of this depth reflects foundation trenches that would have been dug below the early landsurface by the Dvaravati builders. Subtracting the depth of subsurface foundation elements produces an estimated Dvaravati landsurface ranging between 0.6 and 1.1 meters (24-42 inches) below the modern surface, reflecting many centuries of alluvial deposition (Dupont/Sen 2006: B9/Figure K and Figure 558; Quaritch Wales 1936 and field notes). This also indicates the extent of protective alluvial matrix separating Dvaravati features from modern activities.

The 2008 reconnaissance obtained information on two possible structural locations where above-surface indications were minimal or absent: “Chuan’s Structure” and “Thied’s Structure (?)” (Figures 77-78). These locations suggest that architectural remains exist at P’ong Tuk in an entirely buried state, with little or no above-surface indications of their presence. The present study has also clarified some details regarding “Dvaravati level” kilns found by Quaritch Wales buried in the P’ong Tuk alluvium. All of this highlights the possibility that there may be more structural deposits and cultural features on the site than has been indicated by the Coedes and Quaritch Wales findings. Combined with the 1935 and 2008 observation of a buried cultural stratum (see pages 28-31), it would appear that a substantial occupation level and associated features

---

137 Coedes did not provide excavated depth measurements, but these have been estimated using the published photographs and scaling from the dimensions of architectural features pictured.
contemporaneous with Dvaravati architecture is present across much of the P’ong Tuk locality.

A unified review of the Coedes, Quaritch Wales, and 2008 architectural and non-architectural features raises an interesting possibility for temporal seriation (Figure 84). The known structural locations can be placed into a northern group combining structures of laterite and laterite-and-brick (Coedes’ “San Chao” and “Banana Plantation” areas), a central group composed entirely of brick (Wales’ excavated “vihara” and stupa, plus the newly reported “Chuan’s structure”), and a southern group composed of laterite only (Coedes’ “Ban Nai Ma” structures). The available evidence indicates that brick construction was the first “permanent” architectural fabric used on the Southeast Asian mainland, with stone and laterite materials utilized later in time (c.f. Stark et al. 2006: 111). The standard pattern for Dvaravati construction is said to be a brick superstructure on a laterite foundation (Aasen 1998: 36), a condition encountered at the P’ong Tuk structures uncovered by Coedes in the northern group; but the “vihara” and stupa excavated by Quaritch Wales were entirely brick, as was “Chuan’s Structure” described in 2008. Differences between the rectangular Coedes and Quaritch Wales structures, both interpreted to be vihara foundations, are also striking. These include different building materials (laterite at the San Chao versus brick and terracotta at the Quaritch Wales site), plainer moldings at the Quaritch Wales structure, different entry formats (ascending stairway versus a simple semi-circular pad or step), and different construction techniques (no underlying foundation platform at the smaller Quaritch Wales structure). These contrasting elements suggest different construction techniques at different points in time. Dupont also saw evidence for time depth in the decorative stucco found at P’ong Tuk, stating that “it is natural for a site to include structures from several different periods if it had been in use over a long time” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 84).138

138 In particular, whereas Dupont saw a direct correspondence of architectural forms and decoration between P’ong Tuk’s “San Chao vihara” and the larger structures of Wat Phra Men (Ayutthya) and Wat Phra Pathon (Nakhon Pathom), he found the decorative stucco recovered at the Baan Nai Ma shrine to be of a
Perhaps, then, the central group of all-brick construction is earlier than the northern and southern groups with laterite. It is also the group known to have burials proximal to the architecture.

Figure 84: Postulated groups of differing construction at the P'ong Tuk locality, perhaps associated with different periods of occupation at the site.

"tradition not seen elsewhere" and possibly of a different period than the San Chao structure (Dupont/Sen 2006: 84).
Chapter 6: Human Remains at P’ong Tuk

Introduction. Although never described or discussed in detail, human remains were part of the P’ong Tuk narrative from the first accounts by local residents in 1927. Among the reports of substantial finds drawing George Coedes’ attention in Bangkok was the description of a “giant skeleton among gold and silver Buddha statues” (part of a headline in Bangkok’s *Daily Mail* for July 28th, 1927, quoted in Coedes 1928a: 195). The precious relics reported to have been found with these human remains apparently added to the frenzy of discovery at P’ong Tuk, for by the time Coedes arrived less than a month later the skeleton had been broken up and dispersed along with the associated artifacts, and additional villagers had “flocked to the place to dig for other treasures” (Ibid.).

H. G. Quaritch Wales excavated eleven burials at P’ong Tuk in 1935 – apparently the first systematically documented archaeological sample of human remains in Thailand (c.f. Tayles and Oxenham 2006: 9). Even so, relatively little comment on these remains was offered by the original investigator or subsequent commentators, probably because Quaritch Wales asserted that the eleven burials he uncovered were not associated with the Dvaravati component at the site.139

Indeed, the investigative narrative for the human remains at P’ong Tuk is a curious story of consistently incomplete information, miscommunication and dramatically shifting interpretation. The looted skeleton of a human “giant” noted by Coedes (1928a: 195) was scattered and lost before it could be examined. None of the burials uncovered by Quaritch Wales were illustrated or described in even moderate detail; neither were their stratigraphic contexts diagrammed (Quaritch Wales 1936). In the absence of such information, the wavering field interpretations published by Quaritch Wales – which initially suspected a

---

139 “Studies [in Thailand] have been concerned almost entirely with surface finds – large buildings and the artifacts found inside them. We have taken very little interest in excavations; for example, the skeletons discovered at P’ong Tuk were ignored entirely by students of Thai history” (Sangvichien 1966: 234).
connection between burials and Dvaravati architecture, but ultimately asserted that these were more likely to be “warriors killed in battle,” residing in accidental proximity to the P’ong Tuk structures (Op. cit.: 46) – could not be adequately evaluated by other scholars. A published consideration of three of the excavated crania, including one specimen purported to exhibit tooth-filing (Quaritch Wales 1937a – see Figure 85), was revealed after many years to reflect a misunderstanding between Quaritch Wales and his London analyst which, however, could not be redressed because the three retained skulls had been destroyed by Nazi bombs! (To Quaritch Wales’ credit, he gave a brief published accounting of the cranial misinterpretation in 1964, which had originally asserted that the P’ong Tuk skulls were “those of Thai people” [1937a: 89].)

Figure 85: One of three crania collected by Quaritch Wales from the burials surrounding the small excavated stupa – the only aspect of these human remains illustrated in detail. The upper medial incisors were determined to exhibit deliberate tooth-filing. (From Quaritch Wales 1937a: Plate F.)
The minimal and irregular nature of the reported mortuary data from P’ong Tuk has been mitigated to some degree by the resurrection of Quaritch Wales’ field notes. These notes provide significant new information on mortuary, architectural, stratigraphic, and other categories of information beyond that published by Quaritch Wales. On the other hand, the notes are relatively minimal, considering the amount of work undertaken, and physically sketchy to the point of being difficult to decipher in many places. Drawings of feature plans are not to scale, but still convey spatial relationships totally lacking in the published reports, which border on the anecdotal. Of particular interest to the present evaluation, the burials’ general layout, individual disposition, associated artifacts, and relationship to structural elements are recorded in the field notes, though again not without certain deficiencies.

**Evaluation of the crania collected by Quaritch Wales.** Quaritch Wales retained three crania from the *stupa* burials and delivered them to the Royal College of Surgeons museum in London, to be stored there permanently as comparative specimens, and in the hope that they would “throw some light on the little understood ethnic structure of this region at the dawn of the historical period” (1936: 47; 1937a: 90; 1964: 121). One of these skulls was determined to exhibit “tooth filing,” apparently on the upper medial incisors (Figure 85). Quaritch Wales’ request to the museum staff that a comparative study be made resulted in the assertion by Curator A. J. E. Cave that “the skulls are certainly not Indian and they appear to be those of Thai people since they exactly resemble the Siamese skulls in the museum of the R.C.S., and show the same filing of teeth” (Quaritch Wales 1937a: 89). Quaritch Wales noted the startling nature of this information, suggesting as it did that “Thai colonies were already established in the Meklong valley . . . in the early centuries of the Christian era,” directly contradicting the belief (still supported today) that Thai groups did not enter the
region of Siam until the late first millennium or early second millennium C.E. (Op. cit.: 90).

These assertions had to be withdrawn over twenty-five years later, however, when subsequent communication between Quaritch Wales and curator Cave revealed that Caves’ Thai attribution was an extremely generalized identification, meaning only that crania used for comparison with the P’ong Tuk specimen were “of a similar provenance [Thailand] even though this was not accurately indicative of their racial affinity” (Quaritch Wales 1964: 121). In other words, Cave’s original report that the P’ong Tuk skull with tooth-filing “exactly resemble[s] the Siamese skulls in the museum” was not asserting that these comparative Siamese skulls were Thai specimens; they could, he later said, have “represented Malats hailing from Siam rather than genuine Thai people” (Ibid.). As for an up-dated study of the P’ong Tuk specimens, “unfortunately these skulls are not available for re-examination, since they were destroyed when the R.C.S. museum was bombed in 1941” (Ibid.). Quaritch Wales assures, however, that “more such skulls could probably be found at P’ong Tuk” (Ibid.).

The need to verify that observed tooth filing is “true filing,” rather than wear-pattern or shaping by chipping, is emphasized by Singer (1953). The 1937 line-drawing illustrating the P’ong Tuk specimen (Figure 85) resembles established examples of tooth filing (e.g. on a Neolithic specimen from the nearby site of Ban Kao – Sangvichien 1966: Figure 1), but is not entirely dissimilar from certain types of unintentional surface abrasion (c.f. Scott and Turner 1988: 109). One is left to hope that Quaritch Wales and curator Cave were accurate in their assessment of this specimen as being a product of intentional behavior.

Functional associations with intentional tooth alteration include differentiation for coming-of-age, marriage, mourning, or social status;

---

140 The early dating of the skulls was based on Quaritch Wales’ calculation, probably faulty, of alluvial rates of accumulation at P’ong Tuk, which he used to date the stupa burials to circa the 1st century B.C. (1936: 47).
signification of tribal or kinship affiliation; enhancement of personal safety or success in the hunt; and ornamentation or beautification (Domett and O’Reilly 2009: 72; Scott and Turner 1988: 113; Tayles 1996: 333). Most mortuary data from Thailand, and the concomitant dental information, is prehistoric. While tooth filing is not prehistorically unknown on the Southeast Asian mainland (it is, for example, present at the Iron Age site of Phum Snay in northwest Cambodia – Kate Domett, personal communication), intentional dental alteration in the region has mostly involved ablation -- tooth removal (Tayles 1996; Pietrusewsky and Douglas 2002: 70; Domett and Tayles 2004). Unintentional alteration observed on Thai specimens includes abrasion, notching, and surface wear (Domett and Tayles 2004). The use of teeth as a “third hand” in performing a repetitious task is a major source of these alterations (Op. cit.: 75; Agelarakis 1996).

Given the limited information available for the “tooth filing” observed at P’ong Tuk, this assertion must be considered tentative at best, even as it is worth noting for comparison with any additional data that may be generated from the site or region.

Evaluation of architectural features with human remains associated. Unlike the situation uncovered by Quaritch Wales, no human remains were encountered at the Coedes structures, possibly owing to the lesser depths of excavation. Photographs of the San Chao vihara excavation indicate that subsurface exploration stopped at or slightly below the lowest construction course. This also appears to be the case at the “Banana Plantation” shrine/temple structure. Photographs of the “Ban Nai Ma” stupa and shrine excavations suggest that excavation continued to circa 10 to 12 inches (25-30 centimeters) beyond the lowest foundation level. This is generally short of the 12 to 22 inch (30-56 cm) vertical separation between Quaritch Wales’ excavated burials and foundations. In essence, the Coedes excavations, by stopping more-or-less at the base of the architectural features, may have missed by inches any

141 For consistency in this section, and following Quaritch Wales’ practice and records, English units of measurement are given first.
burials adjacent to the structures at the San Chao, Banana Plantation, or Ban Nai Ma locations.

The Coedes and Quaritch Wales field investigations of 1927 and 1935, and the present study's field reconnaissance at P’ong Tuk in January 2008, have resulted in the documentation, to various degrees, of four instances of human remains at or near stratigraphic levels and architecture labeled “Dvaravati.” These include:

(1) The “giant” skeleton described above, never directly examined, obtained from a “small cave in the ground” discovered by “a peasant tilling the soil in his farm” (Coedes 1928a: 195). In this “cave,” which was presumably a hollow architectural feature (burial or relic vault?), the apparently extended body was lying next to a group of Buddha figures in gold, silver, and “brass” (probably bronze) (Ibid.). This feature was situated at the northern end of the P’ong Tuk site locale, in an area designated the “Banana Plantation” (Figures 8 and 76) (Op. cit.: 197, 199). This places these skeletal remains, whatever their true proportions, in proximity to a laterite foundation approximately 8 meters (26 feet) square (Figure 71). The superstructure of this building was brick, and a brick pathway led northeast from this feature toward the “San Chao vihara” structure excavated by the Coedes team (Op. cit.: 199-200). In size, layout, and content, including a gold foil “flower” found on the adjacent paved pathway, the Banana Plantation structure is indicated to be a ritual feature, probably a shrine or small temple. Although little else can be related for the disposition and context of this first encounter of human remains at P’ong Tuk, it does appear to present a burial in association with a structure (the “cave”), as opposed to a backfilled mortuary pit, and in close association with more substantial ritual structures.

(2) The rectangular “vihara” foundation excavated by Quaritch Wales produced information on two extended burials (Figure 74). There are inconsistencies in Quaritch Wales’ record of the details for this architectural feature, but he indicates that he uncovered an extended inhumation burial “just within the walls” (Quaritch Wales 1936: 44). Verbal and sketched notations
suggest that this burial was in the structure’s northern corner, paralleling the outer wall with the head situated to the southwest (Ibid. and field notes). Interestingly, this places the skeleton more-or-less south of and, looking outward, to the right of the doorway – the location often cited for placing one of the ritual construction deposits (the garbhanyasa) for a temple (Slaczda 2007: 206 and 209/f.n. 37 – and see Footnote 147 below). Quaritch Wales reported that this skeleton represented an individual approximately 5 feet 7 inches in height, and was not accompanied by any “objects that might have thrown light on its period” (1936: 44). It appears that the vertical position of this burial was between 48 and 54 inches (1.2-1.4 meters) below ground surface (Ibid. and field notes), creating a vertical separation with the lowest structural course of 16 inches (0.4 meter). A second burial previously dug up by local residents apparently paralleled the grave excavated by Quaritch Wales, being described as having its feet pointing to near the midpoint of the northeast wall (field notes). No indication is given for the ultimate disposition of the human remains excavated here by Quaritch Wales.

(3) At the nearby stupa excavated by Quaritch Wales, the lowest course of brick rested at 38 inches (1.0 meter) below ground surface (Figure 79) (1936: 45). Quaritch Wales continued excavating along the perimeter of the stupa base to a depth of 6-7 feet below ground surface “with the object of ascertaining that natural soil had been reached” (1936: 45; field notes). The basis for Quaritch Wales’ interest in reaching “natural soil” at this structural location is not clearly stated. He also dug at least nine radial trenches into the surrounding area (Ibid.). The trenches were dug in order to look for more burials which, somewhat ironically, he termed “the most interesting discoveries” at the stupa location (1936: 45). These explorations uncovered ten extended inhumation burials close to the stupa, as well as an area of “Dvaravati level” ceramic production (1936: 47; field notes). The burials resided in a vertical zone between 50 inches (1.3

---

142 This stature, of approximately 170 cm, is well above prehistoric and modern means for males on mainland Southeast Asia (Pietrusewsky and Ikehara-Quebral 2006: Table 4).
meters) and 56 inches (1.4 meters) below ground surface (Op. cit.: 46; field notes), creating a vertical separation with the lowest structural course of 12 inches (0.3 meter). In later published remarks Quaritch Wales stated that all burials were “lying full length” (1937a: 89), and in the field notes he observed that none of the remains extended beneath the stupa structure. There is, however, a striking concentration of four burials comiled, adjacent to and paralleling the southeast margin of the stupa platform (Figure 65). Among the other graves, four included iron implements (which Quaritch Wales labeled “weapons” and “daggers”), and one of these also had a “copper ring” (presumably bronze) at the area of the right ear. No other grave goods were present among the ten burials.

The core of the stupa remnant was composed of earthen fill and Quaritch Wales excavated the medial axis,\textsuperscript{144} encountering a “relic” deposit\textsuperscript{145} at a depth of 51 inches (1.3 meters) below ground surface (13 inches – 0.3 meter – below the brick base) (1936: 45). Items in this deposit included “a small silver casket containing cremated human relics;” four inches below the casket, an “iron object of unknown use [“iron hook” in the field notes], as well as a piece of bone” were found at 55 inches (1.4 meters) below ground surface on the central axis – “hence at the level of the skeletons” (Op. cit.: 45-46; field notes). Despite the latter comment, Quaritch Wales did not speculate further (or excavate to check) on

\textsuperscript{143} Quaritch Wales’ field notes put the base of this “pottery kiln” at 2 feet 3-6 inches (0.6-0.7 meter) below ground surface, notably shallower than the stupa base but comparable to the “vihara” base. It would thus appear that Quaritch Wales’ “Dvaravati level” encompassed a vertical zone at least 2 feet (0.6 meter) thick, between 2 feet 3-6 inches (0.7 meter) and 4 feet 3 inches (1.3 meters) below ground surface.

\textsuperscript{144} “As the stupa was filled with earth only, it was easy to sink a narrow shaft into the centre without damaging the bricks” (Quaritch Wales 1936: 45).

\textsuperscript{145} Whether this axial deposit should be assigned a reliquary function is uncertain. Slaczka (2007) makes a convincing case that many foundational deposits termed “relic” or “reliquary” are actually consecration deposits (garbhanyasa – “the placing of the embryo” – Op. cit.: 6) offered during rituals that insure the safety and prosperity of the facility and its occupants, as well as animating and consecrating the ground where construction is occurring (Op. cit.: 201-202, 217-219). Slaczka’s thorough review of sites and objects finds that the majority of consecration deposit candidates at Buddhist sites in Southeast Asia “were discovered below the reliquary chambers in stupas and under the pedestals of images in . . . temples” (Op. cit.: 252). Moreover, the “ashes” found in “reliquary caskets” -- such as those presumed by Quaritch Wales here to be cremated human remains -- are usually unverified chemically and may not even be “anything of animal origin at all” (Op. cit.: 259/f.n. 101).
whether this iron and bone might represent a burial underneath the *stupa* – at least there is no indication of this in the published reports or field notes.

(4) During the January 2008 field reconnaissance of P’ong Tuk, the interview of several elderly residents (some of whom had direct recollection of the Coedes and/or Quaritch Wales visits) resulted in the tentative identification of a new structural location with associated human remains, here designated “Chuan’s Structure.” Through uncertain circumstances, a small, lightly built structural remnant had been uncovered circa 1949, and a crew of seven monks were dispatched from nearby Wat Dong Sak to retrieve the large bricks to use in constructing a stairway at the temple. The newly uncovered structure was described as a square platform of brick (one course) approximately 5 meters (16.5 feet) on a side, with remnants of a light wall (one brick width) 0.5 to 0.6 meter (18-24 inches) high laid in a simple overlapping bond around the perimeter (Figure 83). On the brick floor inside, a human skull was present in each corner, facing inward, and one skull was placed at the center. There was no recollection of any associated artifacts. The base of the structure floor was estimated to be between 1.4 and 1.5 meters (53-60 inches) below groundsurface. The central cranium was reportedly collected, due to its presence where bricks were being removed, and taken to nearby Wat Dong Sak, where it remained for about a year before it was burned as part of the annual mortuary cleansing of Chinese-style graves (surface vaults). The four corner skulls are said to have been left in place and reburied.

146 The principal source of information on this new structural location was Chuan Laochan, circa 80 years old in early 2008. As a monk, circa 1949, Khun Chuan helped remove bricks from the buried structure, and also was involved in removal of the central cranium to Wat Dong Sak. Although the basis of this structural identification is strictly hearsay, Chuan was interviewed multiple times and we obtained a good level of confidence in his information.

147 This cleansing by incineration of the gathered human remains from surface burial vaults is said to be a Chinese custom observed on an annual cycle. There is a strong Chinese ethnic presence in the P’ong Tuk community; also reportedly a significant Mon contingent.
This small structure had light brick construction similar to that of Quaritch Wales’ octagonal stupa, and appears to be a subterranean compartment similar in depth to the graves surrounding the stupa. Given the presence of multiple skulls, this feature might represent a communal burial or memorial vault.

There was a question as to whether this structure might be the stupa base uncovered by Quaritch Wales, perhaps with skulls from the surrounding burials moved onto the rectangular brick platform before backfilling. The overall dimensions and perimeter wall ascribed to the newly reported structure, however, do not match the stupa construction. Additionally, Quaritch Wales implied that he left the octagonal stupa superstructure remnant intact (1936: 45). The GPS locations recorded for all structural locations in 2008 indicate that the newly reported “Chuan’s Structure” is approximately 130 feet (40 meters) northeast of Quaritch Wales’ vihara, and 265 feet (81 meters) north-northwest of the octagonal stupa. Nonetheless, the newly reported structure can be seen to cluster with the structures and kilns uncovered by Quaritch Wales (Figure 78), and is also of brick-only construction. It is thus possible that these brick-only features represent a complex of contemporaneous activities.

The ritual nature of the four structural locations described above is inferred from the associated ritual contents (at the “giant’s cave,” excavated “vihara”, and stupa), the architectural form (stupa), or the unusual arrangement of human remains and architecture (“Chuan’s Structure”). None of these structures appear to be of a utilitarian domestic type. Ritual items documented for P’ong Tuk indicate the predominance of Buddhism at the site, although a large Visnu image represents a Hindu component (Clarke 2009).

**Evaluation of spatial and temporal relationships among the human remains and architectural features.** H. G. Quaritch Wales wavered in his evaluation of a potential connection between the excavated burials and the proximal architecture at P’ong Tuk.

---

148 This newly documented structure location is recorded as “Waypoint #16” in the January 2008 field notes for digital GPS mapping. The coordinates for this location are latitude N13 53.480 and longitude E 99 47.229.
I was at first inclined to think that there was indeed a relationship between the skeletons and the stupa, which might have been built over the shallow grave of warriors killed in battle as a memorial to the occasion. While not being able absolutely to rule out this explanation I am now more inclined to think that the juxtaposition of the ten skeletons and the stupa is a matter of coincidence, and that had I been able to dig many more trenches I might have found more skeletons. For we have to explain the finding of at least one other skeleton beneath the vihara 65 yards away and lying in a similar position at practically the same level. Moreover, the finding of the silver relic casket, buried a few inches above the level of the skeletons, seems to be a sufficient explanation of the raison d’etre of the stupa (1936: 46).  

The factors that led Quaitch Wales to an opinion that the human remains and structural features were not directly related appear to include:

- The absence of diagnostic Dvaravati-era artifacts in association with the burials (1936: 44; 1937a: 89).
- The broad distribution of skeletons, as if in a large cemetery zone (1936: 46).
- Differences in depth below ground surface between the burials and architecture, which Quaritch Wales calculated to represent as much as five centuries difference in age (1936: 47; 1937a: 89).
- The functional identification of the remains at the stupa as being those of “warriors,” in contrast to the ritual and reliquary function of the stupa (1936: 46).

On each of these points, the line of reasoning taken by Quritch Wales has obvious alternatives, and in some cases his evaluation seems to be faulty. The low incidence of artifacts among the vihara and stupa graves excavated by Quaritch Wales provides no strong basis to confirm Dvaravati affiliation, but neither do the iron tools and bronze earring contradict a Dvaravati age. Perhaps more significant is the consistent sparseness of the mortuary

---

149 There is a recurrent irony in Quaritch Wales’ notation of the close spatial relationship between the stupa relic deposits and the burials (1936: 45-46), which he never explicitly addresses as a potential indicator of a direct functional relationship.
assemblage among the eleven excavated graves, a condition also present in the possibly Dvaravati-era graves at Dong Mae Nang Muang (see pages 201-202). One interesting postulate would be that this meager material presence is an intentional aspect of a ritual association, i.e. that material aggrandizement was intentionally de-emphasized in graves placed in these ritual contexts. The incidence of four similar, plainly formed iron tools in four of the stupa graves (Figure 16) also raises a question as to whether this material pattern indicates a social or functional connection among these individuals. Quaritch Wales chose to extrapolate the function of “warrior” to all ten graves from these material patterns, but his “weapons” (1936: 46; field notes) for use by warriors could just as well be utilitarian or ritual “cutting instrument[s]” (field notes) used by lay residents or monks.

Quaritch Wales cited the presence of a “skeleton beneath the vihara 65 yards away and lying in a similar position at practically the same level” in his reasoning against an intentional relationship between the human remains and ritual architecture (1936: 46). This seems to suggest (but does not explicitly state) that the excavated burial distribution is a window on a larger cemetery pattern. No intervening burials, however, were encountered by Quaritch Wales’ excavations, which included multiple long trenches (trench lengths recorded in the field notes include 15, 17, and 22 yards – Figure 74); nor were intervening graves reported by local diggers. Quaritch Wales suspected, however, that “had I been able to dig many more trenches I might have found more skeletons” (1936: 46). He did not recognize the repeated incidence of graves with architecture over a substantial distance as a potential indicator of functional

---

150 Murphy and Pongkasetskan (2010: 66) relate that “Stratigraphically, the burials were found directly under the layer . . . of the [Dvaravati] monument proper . . . The question therefore arises whether the burials predate the constructon of the monument; not only are they located in a separate stratigraphic layer, but also no Dvaravati material was found within the layer of the burials themselves. However, since there is no evidence of prehistoric occupation at the site, the working hypothesis continues to be that the burials date to the Dvaravati period.”

151 Hudson (2004: 133) notes that the inclusion of an iron implement is “a characteristic . . . of ‘Pyu’ burials.” It is also reported that iron is ascribed “protective” properties in the Pyu tradition (Hudson and Lustig 2008: 292-293).
linkage. This latter postulate, however, seems just as plausible as the assertion of a preexisting cemetery.

Alternatively, the close spatial relationships of the exposed graves and architecture are apparent in Quaritch Wales’ sketches and on the reconstructed plans (Figures 65 and 74). The location of the “vihara” burial(s) within and parallel to the structure is obviously proximal, and Quaritch Wales himself describes the ten burials at the stupa as close to the building (“all within two or three yards” except for one six yards distant\(^{152}\) – 1936: 45) and “fairly well distributed all round the building” (Ibid.), seeming to suggest a distributional focus on the building location. He also speculates that these burials might be “a shallow grave of warriors” (1936: 46 – see quote on page 186), indicating that he recognized a possibility that these burials could be a functionally unified feature.

Additional aspects of the burials’ spatial disposition suggest relationships with their respective structures. Just as both of Quaritch Wales’ structures have a northwest-southeast axis, so also do nine of the eleven exposed burials (81.8%), with heads to the southwest – and the remaining two have their heads in westward orientations (Figures 65 and 74). Additionally, the concentration of four burials on the southeast margin of the stupa is striking. Quaritch Wales stated that these inhumations “were closely pressed together, the nearest being almost under the brick base” (italics mine) (1936: 45). This suggests that these remains were deposited close to an existing architectural feature, rather than prior to construction of the stupa, since Quaritch Wales indicates that they do not extend underneath the structural base. The possibility that the stupa construction randomly missed, or was intentionally placed up against, an unusual concentration of preexisting graves is judged to be less likely than the burials being installed adjacent to a preexisting stupa foundation. Indeed, it would seem

---

\(^{152}\) Given Quaritch Wales’ repeated trenching, the closeness of the exposed burials and architecture do not appear to be a function of a sampling area that was only opened close to the architecture.
a remarkable coincidence that the *stupa*, superimposed on a preexisting cemetery, would narrowly miss so many graves.

It should also be noted that the *stupa* burials can be interpreted to reside as four groups at roughly the four sides of the *stupa* base, with paired inhumations on the southwest, northwest, and northeast, and the “closely pressed” group of four on the southeast (Figure 65). Two pairs each have one individual with an iron implement. The “richest” pair at the southwest, with two iron implements and a bronze earring, are located furthest from the *stupa*; the group of four, with no grave goods noted, are deposited closest to the *stupa*. Whether these observed patterns are intentional remains uncertain, but they would be congruent with a ritual program where material impoverishment is a virtue.

Quaritch Wales also emphasized differences in vertical (stratigraphic) position between the architecture and the burials. Much of this focus was based on his calculation of the rate of alluvial accretion in the P’ong Tuk locality, using a procedure that seems flawed. Assigning a highly generalized date of the sixth century to a Dvaravati stratum 3 feet 2 inches deep at P’ong Tuk, and an equally generalized eleventh century age to a Khmer stratum 2 feet deep at a site three miles up river, Quaritch Wales calculated an accretion rate of “1 foot every 450 years” to account for the 14-inch separation of these Khmer and Dvaravati levels (1936: 46-47). Several factors make this calculation problematical at best. The one-century “periods” assigned to the Khmer and Dvaravati occupations are

---

153 As Dupont described Quaritch Wales’ procedure: “Assuming that P’ong Tuk was a Dvaravati site of the 6th century and that the Khmer site was from the 11th century, he concluded that the level of the ground was raised by 0.30 meter (1 foot) every 450 years. More-over, by assuming that the ground was raised at a constant rate over a long time and that the skeletons found 0.45 meter (18 inches) below the lower level of the Dvaravati site, that is, at an elevation of -140 cm [sic], he dated them around the beginning of the Christian era if they were simply on the ground. If, on the contrary, they were buried, i.e. placed below the existing ground level, then their age would be between the 1st and 6th centuries.

“It is necessary to emphasize that introducing fictitious details is dangerous since the chronology of the Dvaravati sites has not yet been accurately established. By assigning *ex abrupto* the 6th century as the age of the Dvaravati ruins whatever they may be, and similarly the 11th century to the Khmer ruins of Thailand, one seems to lose sight of the fact that the historical civilizations in Thailand were not distinct periods, and that the territory of Dvaravati – which is still a vague concept – existed after the 6th century and that Khmer influence was not limited to the 11th. It is thus not possible to subscribe to the conclusions of H. G. Quaritch Wales” (Dupont/Sen 2006: 78).
vague and arbitrary, unsupported by absolute dates and ignoring the usual temporal variation from site to site. Also, using occupational depths from positions three miles distant, and at different positions on the river’s course, ignores the typical variation in riverine and alluvial dynamics; rates of alluviation and depths of occupational burial by sedimentation can in fact vary significantly even within a single locale, and moreso between localities three miles distant (c.f. Leopold et. al. 1992). Quaritch Wales’ computation, then, utilizes overly generalized temporal periods and site areas likely to have dissimilar fluvial dynamics.

Given the measurements recorded by Quaritch Wales, the range of elevation among the burials and structural features does not seem to be particularly substantial, certainly not to the point of demonstrating significant temporal separation. Quaritch Wales’ temporal calculation in fact assumed that the human remains “were not artificially buried and that the level on which they were found was the level at which they lived” (1936: 46). Given this presumption, differential depths of even a few inches take on greater significance. Given a greater likelihood, however, that the human remains were not left on an open living surface, but were placed in burial pits or grave shafts, differences in basal elevation do not necessarily reflect differences in age. Quaritch Wales himself implied a recognition of these stratigraphic principles, stating that if the “warriors” were “artificially buried,” this could “place their death between the first century B.C. [the placement he calculated using his alluviation rate] and the sixth century A.D. [the same date he assigned to the architectural features]” (1936: 46-47). Quaritch Wales therefore recognized that, if the excavated human remains were not lying on a living surface contemporaneous with their deposition – a stratigraphic interpretation for which he admitted “no evidence (as of potsherds, etc.) was obtained” (Ibid.) – that these inhumations could just as well be contemporaneous with the architecture attributed to Dvaravati. Quaritch Wales’ decision to favor what seems to be a less logical and less factual scenario
appears to emanate from his insistence that these were the remains of warriors left on a battlefield surface.

By Quaritch Wales’ measurements at the vihara structure, the excavated skeleton ranged 48 to 54 inches (1.2-1.4 meters) below groundsurface (1936: 44; field notes), indicating a vertical separation from the architectural base of 16 to 22 inches (0.4-0.6 meter) -- a difference readily accounted for by the excavation of a burial pit. At the stupa, the skeletal deposits ranged vertically between 50 inches to 56 inches (1.3-1.4 meters), creating a vertical separation from the architectural base of 12 to 18 inches (0.3-0.5 meter) (1936: 45; field notes). Perhaps most significantly, the axial “relic” deposit excavated by Quaritch Wales (Figure 79) was recorded at 51 inches (1.3 meter) below groundsurface (1936: 45), crossing into the level of the burials. An iron object and bone fragment encountered a few inches deeper on this axis were even more firmly “at the level of the skeletons” (Op. cit.: 46). It is therefore the case that a principal element of the stupa configuration, the foundational “relic” deposit, was positioned at essentially the same depth as the nearby burials.

Not only are the differences in the maximum depths of architecture and burials easily accounted for by grave pits, but there is additional stratigraphic evidence to suggest a relatively contemporary relationship between the architecture and the burials. During the 2008 reconnaissance of the P’ong Tuk site locality, a culture-bearing stratum was observed in the wall cut of a modern irrigation ditch crossing the western side of the site locale (Figures 9-11). Rough measurements by hand in the field indicated this stratum resided between 31 and 75 inches (0.8 and 1.9 meters) below the modern groundsurface. Using the below-surface depths recorded by Quaritch Wales and the morphology of the architectural elements uncovered by Quaritch Wales and Coedes, a Dvaravati groundsurface is estimated to range between 24 and 42 inches (0.6 and 1.1 meters) below the present land surface, overlapping with the upper extent of the exposed irrigation channel stratum. The maximum burial depths reside at 54 to

154 See Footnote 147.
56 inches (1.4 meters) below surface, thus falling within the exposed stratum range, as does the axial “relic” deposit at the stupa, recorded at 51 to 55 inches (1.3-1.4 meters) deep. It is therefore the case that the architectural bases and the burials all fall within the vertical range of the culture-bearing stratum observed in the irrigation ditch, a situation that provides additional, if still not conclusive, spatial evidence that the burials and architectural features are part of a Dvaravati occupational continuum.

Quaritch Wales’ functional attribution of the human remains as “those of warriors killed in battle” seems rather fanciful, by all accounts based entirely on the presence of iron “weapons” with four of the ten stupa burials. It has been previously mentioned that a secondary notation in the field notes, believed to be by Mrs. Quaritch Wales, suggested that these items be labeled a “cutting instrument,” but H. G. seems to have been fixated on the warrior theme. “It is impossible to say,” he wrote, “whether a weapon was the cause of a mortal wound, since none was found penetrating bone, or whether the weapon was the warrior’s own, having remained clutched in his hand after death” (1936: 46). In light of the numerous Iron Age burials now documented with iron tools on the Southeast Asian mainland, there would seem to be no compelling reason to view the P’ong Tuk artifacts as other than utilitarian and domestic, particularly in the absence of other conditions that would support a militaristic attribution (e.g. other categories of weaponry, or wounds to the cranial or post-cranial remains). Additionally, some burials described at other Dvaravati sites (see next section) repeat aspects of the mortuary pattern observed at P’ong Tuk. Perhaps most intriguing is a group of over fifty inhumation burials recently excavated next to Dvaravati-era architectural foundations at Dong Mae Nang Muang in north-central Thailand (Murphy and Pongkasetkan 2010: 66-68).
Significantly, grave goods are absent. Burials in Iron Age sites in central Thailand are usually rich in grave goods . . . At Dong Mae Nang Muang, on the other hand, no pottery or beads were found; in a number of burials, metal objects (some may be iron, others are bronze) measuring about 10 centimeters in length were found close to the cranium. No other associated finds were encountered (Op. cit.: 67).

Thus the burials at Dong Mae Nang Muang not only share with P’ong Tuk graves a paucity of mortuary goods, but the items present are quite similar. The iron “cutting instruments” from P’ong Tuk range 8.4 to 17.3 centimeters in length, with the blade elements being in a tighter range of 6.4 to 8.4 centimeters (Quaritch Wales 1936: Figure 3), sizes comparable it would seem to the metal tools “about 10 centimeters” in length from Dong Mae Nang Muang graves. At both sites, then, inhumation burials in close association with Dvaravati ritual architecture are “impoverished” materially, perhaps reflecting an intentional social pattern.

Single extended inhumations with varying amounts of grave goods are said to be the “most common burial ritual in Thailand during the pre-metal, bronze, and iron ages” (Pietruszewsky and Douglas 2002: 177). Inhumations without surviving grave goods also occur. It has been asserted that inhumation burials are entirely a pre-Indianization phenomenon – that is, essentially a prehistoric type (Glover 1980: 20; f.n. 1). As of 1976, Bronson asserted that “not a single inhumation burial associated with Indianized protohistoric or historic period artifacts has ever been discovered in Thailand” (1976: 20-21). True to this principle, the “small silver casket” excavated by Quaritch Wales at the octagonal stupā was said to contain “cremated human relics” (1936: 45), although there is no evidence that this identification was analytically verified.

If the observed inhumation-cremation dichotomy applies in all Southeast Asian cases, then the burials and Dvaravati ritual architecture uncovered at P’ong Tuk can only derive from separate components. But do we know what “early Dvaravati” mortuary and ritual practices look like in the archaeological record? Assuming that the conversion to Indianized forms was not temporally
instantaneous or geographically uniform, would there not be periods and regions where pre-Indic forms endured, perhaps alongside new forms during a transitional period? Processes of [religious] substitution and replacement in a locality or society may initially be "mutually contradictory," a mix of old and new forms and practices (Jordaan and Wessing 1996: 65). Indeed, inhumation burials appear to have now been documented at several post-Indianized levels in Thailand (see "Comparative Sites" section below), and the remains at P’ong Tuk may represent a pattern occurring early in the Indianization process.

It is possible that the juxtaposition of burials and ritual architecture at P’ong Tuk is nothing more than the superimposition of structures on a pre-existing field of graves. It should be noted, however, that all of these features reside in alluvium on a relatively level terrace, not on an occupational mound where burials are often found in concentration. For the reasons discussed above, the spatial relationships observed at these structural locations seem to favor an interpretation of contemporaneous association of the human remains and the ritual structures: burial orientations, and their horizontal and vertical positions, all appear to relate to the structural positions. Even so, it is still the case that the currently available data does not permit a conclusive interpretation.

Regarding the newly identified “Chuan’s Structure” tentatively reconstructed from the reports of local residents (Figure 83), the intentional combination of human remains and the brick structure are obvious. The presence of multiple crania and absence of post-cranial remains is clearly unusual and ritualistic in nature (c.f. Pietrusewsky and Douglas 2002: 179-181). In general size this structure, estimated at 5 meters (16 feet) square, is similar to the shrine foundation excavated by Coedes nearby at the Ban Nai Ma location, which measured approximately 5.8 meters (19 feet) square (1928a: 198). The deepest vertical extent of the newly documented structure, very roughly

---

195 Jordaan and Wessing (1996: 64) write of aboriginal tribes in the northeast Indian regions of Bihar-Bengal-Assam "who had just been converted to Hinduism or Buddhism and who were still in a process of transition, trying, with the help of the priests and monks of these religions, to bring their old customs in line with the dogmas of the new creeds."
estimated from memory, was said to be between 1.4 and 1.5 meters (54-60 inches). This places the structure base in the general region of Quaritch Wales’ maximum burial depths. Obviously the identification and reconstruction of this structure is based on hearsay and must be treated with caution, but it follows a consistent pattern of human remains occurring in association with “Dvaravati-level” structures at P’ong Tuk.

If indeed human interments and ritual architecture are functionally linked at P’ong Tuk, one possibility is that the architecture is a memorial to the interred. In this case the assemblage of burials around the stupa would presumably have resulted from cumulative deposition, since they are indicated to be articulated extended inhumations, rather than secondary burial types (i.e. bundles or cremations) that could be curated for group interment. The skulls-only deposit reported in 2008 (“Chuan’s Structure”), on the other hand, could be a curated assemblage memorializing kinship or ancestral relationships, among other possibilities.

The location of burials adjacent to or, as at Quaritch Wales’ vihara, within structural foundations raises the possibility of construction-related ritual, including construction sacrifice. Such practices have been documented in Southeast Asia in connection with ritual and other public structures (Wessing and Jordaan 1997). For example, human skeletons that appeared to be intentional offerings were present in one or more ninth century C.E. axial “temple pits” on central Java (Jordaan and Wessing 1996), and inhumations on the foundation levels of early Buddhist shrines and stupas at the Pyu center of Beikthano, upper Myanmar, have also been interpreted to be deliberate sacrifices (Stargardt 1990: 187-190, 206-207, 214-223, 300-304). In such cases, evidence of violent death and/or the context of the skeletal deposit, as well as an “appropriate ideological framework” that justifies sacrificial practices in a particular cultural setting, are used to identify instances of human sacrifice (Jordaan and Wessing 1996; Wessing and Jordaan 1997). For example, at Beikthano structure KKG14, a Buddhist stupa ruin attributed to the fifth century C.E., an extended skeleton
adjacent to and paralleling the southwest foundation corner was “a young adult male who had died as a result of a violent blow on the right side of the skull” (Stargardt 1990: 206-207). Other burials along the foundation perimeter were in substantial contrast as cremations in urns and a bundle burial with pottery, and the young male has been interpreted to be a sacrificial deposit.

Given the limitations of the available data, particularly the absence of specifics on age, gender and presence of trauma, the potential for construction sacrifice at P’ong Tuk is difficult to evaluate, although none of the available information is taken to suggest sacrifice.

**Comparative mortuary sites.** The first Dvaravati sites with documented architectural remains (a total of seven)\(^{156}\) were reviewed by Pierre Dupont in 1959 (1959b); the recent English edition of this work added six more sites to the list excavated by the Thai Fine Arts Department after 1961 (Dupont/Sen 2006: 17-93).\(^{157}\) Sites where substantial architectural data was uncovered include Wat Phra Men (at the ancient Thai capital of Ayutthaya) and Wat Phra Pathon (now known as Chula Pathon Chedi at the urban center of Nakhon Pathom), both of which were the main subject of Dupont’s study, Muang Fa Daed (northeast Thailand), U Thong (west-central Thailand near Suphanburi), Ku Bua (west-central, near Ratchaburi), and P’ong Tuk (west-central, Kanchanaburi Province). The only site among these where human remains were noted in association with the architecture was P’ong Tuk. These remains were, however, dismissed by Dupont as not seeming “to make any significant contribution to justify further research” (2006: 83), i.e. Dupont apparently accepted Quaritch Wales’ assertion that these burials were not related to the Dvaravati component at P’ong Tuk.

\(^{156}\) These sites included Wat Phra Men (Ayutthaya), Wat Phra Pathon (Chula Pathon Chedi, Nakhon Pathom), Wat Yai (Nakhon Pathom), P’ong Tuk, The Military Camp of Lopburi, Nern Phra (near Nakhon Pathom), and Muan Phra Rot (Prachinburi Province east of Bangkok) (Dupont/Sen 2006: 75).

\(^{157}\) These new sites included Dong Si Maha Phot (Prachinburi Province), Muang Fa Daed (near Khon Kaen in northeast Thailand), Kok Mai Den (Nakhon Sawan Province, north-central Thailand), U-Thong (Suphanburi Province to the east and north of P’ong Tuk), new structures uncovered at Nern Phra, and Ku Bua (Ratchaburi Province south of P’ong Tuk) (Dupont/Sen 2006: 90-91).
Sites with locations and ages potentially relevant for comparison to P’ong Tuk (e.g. with labels such as late Iron Age, protohistoric, early historic, Dvaravati; and in the time range discussed above, circa 400 – 1000 C.E.) have been summarized by Srisuchat (1998), Dupont/Sen (2006), and Barrram and Glover (2008). Additional searches were made of the literature for comparative site information. Among the Dvaravati-era site reports examined, only a few include mortuary data. Adding a further requirement that ritual architecture reside close to the human remains, and there is only one site to discuss.

Table 2 summarizes four sites in Thailand initially identified for comparison with the mortuary patterns at P’ong Tuk. Interestingly (and with no selectivity applied), no examples were dominated by the predicted post-Indianization cremations. These sites have been attributed by their investigators to “Dvaravati” or to components dated to the Dvaravati time period, within a broader geographic range often associated with Dvaravati, and they include human remains associated with the period. A closer examination of these sites, however, illustrates some of the interpretive difficulties in defining Dvaravati mentioned previously.

The Tubluang site, relatively close to P’ong Tuk in Nakhon Pathom Province, was particularly interesting for its display of several behaviors: tooth ablation and filing (Sangvichien 1970: 57; Figures 18 and 35); inhumation feet placed in or on ceramic pots (Op. cit.: 52, 53, 57); animal skulls placed beneath the human skulls (Op. cit.: 51, 53; Figures 14 and 31); and gibbon remains in a jar, accompanied by a variety of artifacts (Op. cit.: 55). The only basis given for the Dvaravati attribution at Tubluang, however, was the assemblage of personal adornments, which was said to be typically Dvaravati (earrings, beads, bangles – Op. cit.: 60). Artifacts associated with the Tubluang inhumations included a bronze “sword;” bronze hoop earrings, bangles and finger rings; a jade bangle;  

---

158 Information used here draws heavily, though not exclusively, from the English literature for the region and period, and significant examples of Dvaravati mortuary remains in the Thai literature may have been missed by this preliminary review.
rather coarse, shouldered earthenware; agate pendants; beads of clay, glass, gold, jade, carnelian, marble and agate; clay pellets; and cut cowries (Sangvichien 1970: 49-55). Actually, there is nothing exclusively Dvaravati about this assemblage, especially in the absence of spouted or carinated pottery vessels. The absence of iron is also troublesome, and without radiometric dates or more diagnostic artifacts, it would appear that the Tubluang assemblage is best labeled “prehistoric.”

Extended inhumation and non-cremation jar burials at Muang Fa Daed, a well known Dvaravati-era moated center in northeast Thailand, have also been published with a Dvaravati attribution (Indrawooth 1994, 2001). Muang Fa Daed has been extensively explored, including the excavation of fourteen brick-and-laterite foundations. Substantial Buddhist remains, including architecture, sculptural images, *sema* stones, and votive tablets in Dvaravati styles have been uncovered at the site (Indrawooth 2001: 69, Figures 1-8). During excavation of a habitation area in 1991, cultural deposits up to four meters deep revealed a long sequence of occupation ranging from the “late Prehistoric” Iron Age, beginning circa 300 B.C.E., to an “Ayutthaya culture” component terminating circa 1800 C.E. (Op. cit.: 31). In the middle of this sequence, Phase 3 is identified as a “Protohistoric culture” - “Dvaravati culture” component circa 700-1100 C.E. (Op. cit.: 75). This attribution is based on a material assemblage that relates directly to Dvaravati-era assemblages in central Thailand, including iron implements and bronze ornaments, beads of glass, clay and stone, spindle whorls, carinated pots, spouted pots, and small cup lamps (Ibid.). It is asserted, however, that “the most interesting discoveries” in this level were “three human skeletons buried in full length with their head turned to the west and the south” (Ibid.). Items included with these extended inhumations included spouted pots, small cup.
Table 2: Dvaravati era sites with mortuary remains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE NAME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>BURIALS</th>
<th>BURIAL TYPE</th>
<th>SPECIAL TRAITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P’ong Tuk (Quaritch Wales 1936)</td>
<td>Kanchanaburi Province, western Thailand</td>
<td>Dvaravati 7th – 9th centuries CE</td>
<td>12 – 18</td>
<td>Extended inhumation; secondary inhumation</td>
<td>Proximal to ritual architecture; one foundation with skulls only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisatchanalai (Hein et. al. 1988)</td>
<td>Sukhotai Province, north-central Thailand</td>
<td>7th – 9th centuries CE</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Extended inhumation</td>
<td>Eroded on riverbank; no grave goods observed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dong Mae Nang Muang (Murphy and Pongkasetkan 2010)</td>
<td>Nakhon Sawan Province, northwest Thailand</td>
<td>Dvaravati 7th – 11th centuries CE</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Extended, flexed, “bagged/rounded” inhumations</td>
<td>Minimal grave goods; some burials close to curving laterite foundation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubluang (Sangvichien 1970)</td>
<td>Nakhon Pathom Province, central Thailand</td>
<td>“Dvaravati” [prehistoric Iron Age]</td>
<td>6 excavated 6-7 salvaged</td>
<td>Extended inhumation</td>
<td>Feet on or in pots; animal skulls under human crania; tooth ablation, tooth filing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

lamps, iron implements, and glass and stone beads (Op. cit.: 76) – again, a recognizable Dvaravati-era assemblage (c.f. Lertrit 2002: 122). Jar burials with uncremated contents were also present in this cultural level.

Indrawooth observes that the Dvaravati-era residents of Muang Fa Daed, unlike their contemporaries in the Chao Phraya Valley of central Thailand, “continued to bury their dead,” not shifting to cremation immediately after Buddhism arrived (1994: 120, Figures 15 and 17). The presence of these
extended inhumations with typical Dvaravati grave goods in an excavated cultural sequence (earlier segments of which are radiocarbon dated) appears to dispel the assertion that inhumation graves do not occur in post-Indianization contexts.

The remaining candidates for comparison include burials observed eroding on a riverbank at the walled and moated center of Sisatchanalai (Chaliang section) (Hein et. al. 1988), and burials excavated on an architectural mound at the double-moated center of Dong Mae Nang Muang (Murphy 2009). The Sisatchanalai remains consist of nine inhumations approximately 5 meters below ground surface, apparently extending out of a habitation level radiocarbon dated to circa the seventh-ninth centuries C.E. (Hein 1988: 12, 14). The midden includes impressed and cordmarked earthenware pots, some burnished and painted, no glazed stoneware, and spouted “kendi” and “flared mouth” (carinated?) jars (Op. cit.: 14) – an assemblage that fits within the Dvaravati pattern. No grave goods were noted with the eroded burials, which were all extended.

Despite the absolute date, associated pottery types and proximity to the Dvaravati center, the Sisatchanalai analysts state that the burials “appear to belong to an early habitation phase which may be prehistoric and non-Buddhist” (Ibid.). No explicit reasoning is provided, but the fact that the burials are inhumations is suspected to be the basis of this observation. If this is so, then the no-Buddhist-inhumations-rule would seem to overrule any data at Sisatchanalai in conflict with that rule, including radiometric dates.

Perhaps the most recent excavation of Dvaravati-era burials is also the most promising for comparison to P’ong Tuk. Dong Mae Nang Muang is a smaller double-moated center of “standard Dvaravati configuration” that has been investigated in various aspects over several decades (Murphy and Pongkasetkan 2008, 2010). The site complex includes an array of earthen mounds thought to mark architectural features. One of these mounds, exhibiting sema-like “standing stones,” was sampled with four trenches in April through July
of 2009. Excavated assemblages appear to be firmly Dvaravati, including typical stucco forms, large “Dvaravati bricks” (some finger marked), and a possible terracotta finial; no prehistoric or historic (Sukhotai/Ayutthaya) components were encountered (Murphy and Pongkasetkan 2009 and personal communication).

The initial testing at Dong Mae Nang Muang uncovered ten burials in a variety of extended, flexed, and “rounded/bagged” positions (Murphy and Pongkasetkan 2009). These were in proximity to a curving laterite structural remnant suspected to be a stupa foundation. Grave goods were minimal, mostly “small iron objects placed near the cranium” (Ibid. and personal communications). The configuration of burials to laterite gave a strong initial impression of being contemporaneous, and the grave distribution even appeared as though it might relate to the cardinal points.

Given these findings, Thailand’s Fine Arts Department undertook additional excavation in 2009, extending the trenched areas and uncovering an additional forty-plus inhumations, all within the foundation boundary (Murphy and Pongkasetkan 2010: 66). One interesting similarity between the remains at Dong Mae Nang Muang and P’ong Tuk is the paucity of grave goods. In both cases, simple iron artifacts are the principal mortuary artifact. One possibility raised in the previous discussion of the P’ong Tuk remains is that these “impoverished” graves might reflect a ritual function connected to the ritual architecture. This might also be the case even if the burials are part of a general cemetery, rather than foundational or memorial deposits specific to a structure. As Elizabeth Moore has recently observed:

. . . it is likely, as seen at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, that Buddhist sites were built on top of burial grounds. Schopen notes that by this practice monks situated themselves within the already existing religious landscape. It also fit well with the custom of burying monks within stupa complexes and erecting stupas for monks as in many cases this was interpreted as a memorial structure to enshrine monks within the local community. The point . . . is that new Buddhist communities literally and figuratively built upon previous practice, thereby embedding localization in the honoring of the Sangha (Moore 2007: 241).
Of course there remains the intriguing possibility that the inhumations at Dong Mae Nang Muang are more directly connected to the ritual architecture, as has been considered also for the burials at P’ong Tuk. Further comparisons await completion of the analysis and dissemination of the new information from this latest investigation at the site. It may be that the Dong Mae Nang Muang graves are the first sizeable group of clearly Dvaravati inhumations to be systematically recovered.

This preliminary attempt to locate comparative data for the P’ong Tuk reevaluation is probably not exhaustive, but illustrates the scarcity of mortuary data for Dvaravati in its era and geographical range. Nonetheless, the association of inhumation graves with Dvaravati-era contexts at Muang Fa Daed and Dong Mae Nang Muang, and even to some extent the eroded burials at Sisatchanalai, demonstrates the presence of this mortuary type during the “protohistoric” or “early historic” period. The scarcity of both inhumation and cremation graves in Dvaravati contexts may partly reflect the fugitive nature of the latter, and of not looking in the right places for the former. Stephen Murphy (personal communication) has made the cogent observation that the excavation of structural remains often stops at the foundation level, potentially leaving even modestly deeper burials undiscovered. As already observed, this situation may pertain at P’ong Tuk. At the structural locations where Quaritch Wales excavated beyond the foundation level, inhumations were encountered. At structures excavated by Coedes to or only slightly beyond the foundation base, no burials were discovered.

**P’ong Tuk human remains: Overview.** Coedes encountered some vague and indirect information on human remains at P’ong Tuk during his investigation in 1927. The information gathered by Quaritch Wales eight years later, in contrast, was relatively systematic and detailed, amounting to a

---

159 The paucity of mortuary remains in Dvaravati contexts is reflected in the lack of their discussion in general reviews of Dvaravati culture – e.g. Indrawooth 2002, Saraya 1999.
significant body of data for ancient human remains in Thailand. In neither case, however, was the available information sufficiently analyzed and discussed.

The principal objective of this chapter has been to describe and evaluate the co-occurrence of human remains and ritual architecture at the Dvaravati site of P’ong Tuk. It has been recognized from the outset that the available information on these P’ong Tuk features, even when augmented by the excavator’s field notes, is not adequate to produce a definitive judgment about whether the human remains and ritual architecture are contemporaneous and functionally linked. The repeated instances of this phenomenon at the site, however, and the compelling spatial relationships among the structures and inhumations, warrant the dissemination of this evidence for future comparative reference. Even with the limited comparative information presently available, there are intriguing similarities with the patterns observed at P’ong Tuk. In particular, the P’ong Tuk and comparative data suggests several postulates to be explored further: that inhumation burials continued after the arrival of Buddhism, possibly as a holdover of earlier indigenous mortuary practices; that traceable regional and local varieties of mortuary practice may have persisted after the entry of Indic influences; that human remains and accompanying grave goods in proximity to ritual features may have direct functional ties with those ritual locations; and finally, that human remains may be more frequently present in the vicinity of Dvaravati ritual architecture than has been generally demonstrated, perhaps requiring an adjustment in field work procedures in order to look for remains at deeper levels of site deposits.
Chapter 7: Conclusions

The general intent of this study has been to initiate, at a preliminary level, a reevaluation of P’ong Tuk, an archaeological site in west-central Thailand that was seminal to the development of the Dvaravati concept. The information extant for P’ong Tuk is an accretion of investigations and analyses over the past eight decades, beginning with the field work of George Coedes and H. G. Quaritch Wales, following through sporadic finds and analyses since that time, and continuing most recently with the present study’s field reconnaissance in January 2008. All of these endeavors have been limited in their scope of sampling or focus of subject and their depth of analysis. Some aspects of the site record have undergone relatively extensive discussion (e.g. the “Mediterranean lamp”), while others have been ignored (e.g. the extended burials). Some categories that received extensive initial attention (e.g. the Buddha figures) have faded from prominence, while the architectural remains have retained their status as among the better examples of Dvaravati construction. A principal result of the current evaluation, which has examined the accumulated site information through a series of interrelated categories, is the realization that P’ong Tuk has yielded only a small portion of its potential information, an assertion made with some irony, given the prominent place this site has occupied in the literature and scholarly discussion regarding Dvaravati. Already treated as a seminal resource, P’ong Tuk may have a great deal more to provide regarding our understanding of Dvaravati culture and chronology.

By integrating the multiple sources and types of information for P’ong Tuk, it was anticipated that new material patterns could be tentatively observed, leading to the formation of new questions about the social and material content of the site. Such questions, applied at the local site level, can eventually generate comparative information that supports analysis at regional and trans-regional scales. The potential for these broader comparisons was fortuitously demonstrated by the discovery of human remains and Dvaravati-era architecture.
in proximity at the site of Dong Mae Nang Muang.\textsuperscript{160} These discoveries occurred at the same time that such patterns were being scrutinized in the P’ong Tuk record, and were the subject of communication between Ohio and the archaeologists in the field in Thailand. These concurrent events have already resulted in discussions at conferences and in the literature of potential new material patterns for Dvaravati culture (Murphy and Pongkasetkan 2009; Glover 2010; Revire [Forthcoming 2011]), and have opened a new line of inquiry at Dvaravati sites.

Such developments illuminate the potential to obtain new insights from both old and new information, while also highlighting the incomplete nature of the record for Dvaravati. It is undoubtedly the case that there is far more we don’t know about the phenomenon labeled “Dvaravati” than we know. There may be some frustration that this is the case after more than eight decades of research and the vigorous efforts of many scholars, but it also raises an energizing challenge to field workers and analysts. Just as new material remains have been unearthed in recent years, so too have new concepts been formulated that will guide research plans and data analysis in new directions (e.g. the paleo-environmental extrapolations of Kealhofer and Grave). Indeed, it seems likely that the most significant discoveries and insights regarding Dvaravati are yet to be made, based on \textit{systematically recovered, temporally and spatially controlled information}.

\textbf{The site of P’ong Tuk.} Based on the items and structures discovered in 1927, George Coedes described P’ong Tuk as a Buddhist occupation perhaps beginning as early as the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century C.E., but focused on the 6\textsuperscript{th} century (1928a: 207). H. G. Quaritch Wales generally agreed with this temporal attribution (1936: 42-43), but by asserting that the burials he found at P’ong Tuk predated the Dvaravati occupation, he implied a pre-Buddhist component at the site. This

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{160}Dong Mae Nang Muang is characterized as “one of the northernmost settlements of the Dvaravati culture,” located in Nakorn Sawan Province, north-central Thailand (Murphy and Pongkasetkan 2010: 49). It is an oblong-shaped settlement surrounded by a moat and a wall; absolute dates have not been published yet, but the site is generally dated, based on artifact styles, to the 8\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} centuries (Op. cit.: 57).
earlier component, however, was never substantially discussed. Coedes and Quaritch Wales also both initially characterized P’ong Tuk as a “city,” and treated it as an exclusively Buddhist occupation. The present re-evaluation of P’ong Tuk, drawing on additional information for the site and comparative information from other sites developed since the work of Coedes and Quaritch Wales, suggests that P’ong Tuk was a settlement of longer duration and greater social complexity than has been previously ascribed, probably operating at an intermediate level in the Dvaravati settlement hierarchy or heterarchy.

Dating the ritual figures and fragments retrieved from P’ong Tuk to circa the 6th century C.E. placed them within an “early Dvaravati” context, based on the generalized, non-absolute chronology developed largely by Coedes. Later analysts have tended to shift the temporal attribution of the P’ong Tuk finds to the 7th-9th centuries. Most of a series of newly described Buddha figures from the Wat Dong Sak collection repeat the stylistic forms and temporal attributions of the Coedes specimens, but a crowned Buddha image exhibits traits generally attributed to an early 2nd millennium tradition centered in Haripunchai to the far north. This crowned specimen also raises the possibility of Mahayana/Vajrayana practices at P’ong Tuk, as do the bodhisattva figures and mandalic arrangement found on some molded sealings (“votive tablets”) from the site. Fragments of two “Banaspati tablets” have also been added to the list of ritual objects from the site. Altogether, the total assemblage of Buddhist figures ascribed to P’ong Tuk suggests a greater complexity of styles, practices, and temporal range than was previously recognized.

The presence of molded sealings, or “votive tablets,” at P’ong Tuk was only briefly mentioned by Coedes, but nine examples have been described here from the Wat Dong Sak collection. These mostly appear to be Dvaravati-era types, but two wider, arch-shaped tablets appear to have Khmer-influenced elements, again suggesting a later, possibly “post-Dvaravati” time period at the site. Other material types documented for the P’ong Tuk locality in 2008 include a series of stucco and terracotta specimens that are probably all or mostly
architectural details. These largely resemble the distinctive set of forms and decorative motifs that Dupont felt were localized to P’ong Tuk. Along with unusual elements observed on a small limestone Buddha plaque and the large Visnu image, it may be that a local artistic idiom or idioms can be associated with P’ong Tuk.

The discovery of a major Visnu image at P’ong Tuk in the early 1950s documented a Brahmanical element at the site that was, however, not examined in detail prior to the present study. Although the current analysis is preliminary in nature, it highlights the stylistic and formal idiosyncracies and commonalities apparent in this image. The latter include connections to forms in early Cham and Khmer art, which in turn seem to parallel 7th century political connections postulated for mainland Southeast Asia. The P’ong Tuk Visnu is a significant addition, then, to a growing body of evidence supporting the idea that there were close relations of kinship and socio-political alliance among the elite across mainland Southeast Asia during this formative period. It also further documents the coexistence of Hindu and Buddhist practices across the Dvaravati landscape, a phenomenon in need of additional analysis, and suggests another aspect of the P’ong Tuk record that needs to be accounted for in future research.

The architectural features exposed by Coedes and Quaritch Wales at P’ong Tuk have received considerable scholarly attention over the years, particularly in their preservation of formal details and range of functional types (interpreted to be assembly halls, shrines, and stupas). This preservation of the lower structural courses can be ascribed largely to the protective accumulation of alluvium (flood deposits) at the site. The present evaluation has noted that the architectural features fall into three materially and geographically discrete groups, with structural remains composed of laterite-only at the Ban Nai Mai area on the south, a group of brick-only features in the area of Quaritch Wales’ stupa and vihara, and structural remains combining brick and laterite at the San Chao – Banana Plantation complex on the north. This patterning may simply be fortuitous, but the discrete clustering of building materials raises the possibility
that these groups represent a progression of construction techniques through time. It would not be unusual for P’ong Tuk to have some time depth of occupation, a possibility already suggested by the artistic styles present at the site. The earliest permanent ritual construction in Southeast Asia consists of brick-only structures, and it may be that the earliest architectural features at P’ong Tuk are the brick-only features. These are also where burials were found close to the structural foundations, a phenomenon that might represent the holdover of indigenous mortuary traits early in the process of adopting Buddhism in the region of central Thailand. Such observations at P’ong Tuk are provisional in nature, but point to another line of investigation that should be pursued at this and other Dvaravati sites.

Less apparent in the Coedes and Quaritch Wales reports is the potential for substantial cultural features wholly unmarked on the present land surface. Unpublished details provided by Quaritch Wales’ field notes, and new information gathered on site in 2008, indicate that such features are extensively present across the P’ong Tuk locality. Substantial remains have been encountered by local residents while excavating for various domestic purposes, and perhaps most significantly, there is evidence for a buried Dvaravati-era occupational stratum across a broad area of the locality. Such indications represent the potential at P’ong Tuk to yield significant new information from the in situ archaeological contexts that are absent for much of the Dvaravati material record.

The record for P’ong Tuk now includes information on a variety of human skeletal remains accounting for up to eighteen individuals. Seven of these -- the “giant” reported to Coedes, the looted inhumation at Quaritch Wales’ “vihara,” and the five skulls described in 2008 -- are based on “hearsay” reports, but tentatively indicate spatial proximity to three structural locations. The extended inhumations of eleven individuals are known in much more detail through published reports and the field notes of H. G. Quaritch Wales. These are within or adjacent to two ritual structures – Quaritch Wales’ excavated stupa and
“vihara.” It is the case that of the six structural locations systematically excavated at P’ong Tuk, contiguous human remains were encountered at the two locations where digging proceeded beyond the foundation level. This raises the possibility that the association of remains and architecture at P’ong Tuk may have been more consistent than is presently documented, given that excavation depths were at several locations too shallow to intercept burials, and given the “heresay” reports of additional human remains close to some structural locations. The potential association of extended inhumations with Dvaravati architecture contrasts with the previous assertions that Buddhism and cremation arrived concurrently in Southeast Asia, and relates to issues concerning the nature of “Indianization” and the persistence of indigenous practices. Once again, the current information from P’ong Tuk is not definitive, but strongly suggestive of new concepts to be explored by future research.

The intentional combination of human remains with ritual architecture, if this occurred at P’ong Tuk, would have affinity with practices in the Pyu region of Myanmar. Human remains, primarily as cremations in jars but also as extended articulations or secondary bundles, occur in the foundation layers of Buddhist halls and stupas at Pyu sites (Moore 2007: 241; Stargardt 1990: 153, 206-207, 214). Given the absence of documentation for such patterns in other adjacent culture areas, the Pyu tradition is currently the best candidate as the source of a proposed architectural linkage with human inhumations at P’ong Tuk. Affinities between Dvaravati and Pyu artistic styles are also apparent (Brown 2001: 35; Hudson and Lustig 2007: 274; Galloway 2010), and P’ong Tuk’s location on the Mae Klong River places it on the main conduit to the Three Pagodas entry into Myanmar. It is quite possible, then, that this community was a direct participant in first millennium interactions between Dvaravati culture and culture areas in Myanmar.

As has been repeatedly indicated in the comments above, the accumulated body of information for P’ong Tuk presents a combination of frustrating insufficiencies and interesting potentialities that is not unusual for an
archaeological resource. The integrated review of site data undertaken in this thesis has served to delineate the shortcomings and strengths of past work and analysis, but has perhaps to a greater extent revealed multiple promising avenues for future research at P’ong Tuk. Indeed, with the possible exception of architectural ruins, it seems plausible that substantial bodies of information for most material categories are still present at P’ong Tuk, awaiting well-designed research programs. The remainder of this concluding section will briefly discuss general site characteristics that would support additional research at P’ong Tuk.

**Research potential at P’ong Tuk.** Most fundamental to the potential to yield significant new information are the land use and geophysical characteristics extant at P’ong Tuk. The continuing dominance of agricultural activity across the site locality, while not totally lacking in disturbance factors, has promoted the retention of much more subsurface integrity than would be the case in a more urbanized or industrialized setting (such as is present immediately across the Mae Klong River). Both small and large tracts on which a variety of annual crops are cultivated present ground surfaces that could be systematically examined and recorded for the density and functional distribution of cultural remains. These open areas, when crops have been harvested, would also accommodate the application of geophysical techniques – such as ground-penetrating radar, electrical resistance, and magnetic gradation – for tracing sub-surface cultural features. These techniques of systematic, non-destructive surface and sub-surface documentation would provide an essential basis for planning a comprehensive research strategy at the P’ong Tuk locality.

Subsurface preservation at P’ong Tuk is also enhanced by the alluviated nature of the topography. Repeated flooding over time has caused silt and sand to accumulate and bury earlier living surfaces, apparently placing the Dvaravatiera land surface in the vicinity of 0.6 to 1.1 meters (24-42 inches) below the modern surface. This has created an overlying buffer of soil that, while masking ancient site features and objects, has also in many areas protected them from disturbance by modern activity. Certainly the actions of house building, roadway
and irrigation construction, and utility emplacement have intruded into earlier cultural levels in the P’ong Tuk locality, but observations made in 2008 indicate that large segments of the site landscape continue to be relatively unscathed by modern development. This combination of alluvial preservation with the known incidence of Dvaravati features, and a possible occupation stratum (midden), at P’ong Tuk presents a situation exceptionally promising for the retention of significant archaeological remains. This manifestation of in situ preservation at P’ong Tuk enhances the potential value of information from the site relating to any research topic.

The soils at P’ong Tuk also bear on the cultural history of the locality. They are not generally suited for growing wet rice, and may have been utilized through time for a “dryland farming” regime geared to crops such as millet and dry rice (Mudar 1995: 163). Dryland agricultural practices were probably more extensive and important to past subsistence on mainland Southeast Asia than has generally been recognized, and site survey strategies in fact appear to have been biased toward wet rice production zones (Op. cit.: 160-163). Such strategies can “lead to erroneous conclusions about the development of agricultural systems in the region” (Op. cit.: 160). Sites like P’ong Tuk, located outside wet-rice production zones, can help improve the record for agricultural strategies through time on mainland Southeast Asia, particularly if future research is geared to the recovery of ethnobotanical and related information.

P’ong Tuk’s geographical location within a key transportation corridor has been emphasized, and information from this site can help address questions about the flow of culture and commodities into and out of the central Thailand region. Saraya (1999: 59) depicts the Mae Klong Valley as the main western entry corridor into Dvaravati territory, an important component in a network of overland trading routes connecting all of mainland Southeast Asia internally, and also to nodes with South Asia and China. P’ong Tuk is famous for the Mediterranean-style lamp found there, but a more systematic record of artistic styles, religious practices, pottery and bead types, and other social patterning at
the site may be more revealing of important trade and socio-political relationships. Located intermediate to the Dvaravati-era centers at U Thong, Nakhon Pathom, and Ku Bua, and probably operating at a secondary level in the settlement system, P’ong Tuk is well-positioned to cast light on details of settlement function and interaction locally, regionally, and with more distant points.

Certainly the arrival and spread of Indic religious practices is a central focus in tracing the rise of more complex socio-political structures in Southeast Asia, and Dvaravati is recognized as one of the entities critical to the early history of Buddhist and Brahmanical practices in Southeast Asia (cf. Boisselier 1975: 69). P’ong Tuk’s location within the Mae Klong corridor may be particularly relevant to these issues. As previously discussed, this riverine system provides connections between interior routes out of Lower Myanmar, coastal Arakan, and the Benghali regions of South Asia beyond – all regions that appear to have been major sources for cultural developments in central Thailand – and to the sea routes accessed via the Gulf of Thailand. Given this geographical position, archaeological deposits at P’ong Tuk are likely to reflect the movement of ideas and commodities from both inland and maritime sources, in a time period that was critical to the formulation of significant new concepts and institutions.

The presence of both Buddhist and Hindu components at P’ong Tuk, and perhaps both Theravada and Mahayana approaches to Buddhist practice, speaks to general questions about the early adoption of Indic religions, including the relationship of these religious traditions to each other and to the indigenous beliefs they encountered in Southeast Asia. Certain Dvaravati ritual forms -- e.g. repetition of the mudra on both hands of an image, the prevalence of the vitarka mudra, the monumental cakra wheels, and the “Banaspati” iconography – indicate a new synthesis of Buddhist practice unlike preceding forms in South Asia. Most of these elements have been documented at P’ong Tuk, and additional patterns at the site, e.g. the close spatial positioning of inhumation
burials and ritual architecture, may further describe an early Southeast Asian amalgamation of Indic and indigenous beliefs.

P’ong Tuk’s relationship to the Dvaravati center of Ku Bua, located 100 kilometers (62 miles) downstream near the mouth of the Mae Klong, is another aspect of the site’s participation in early religious and social developments, as well as with the Dvaravati settlement system in general. Ku Bua, enclosed by double walls with a moat in between, presents extensive ritual content, and is described as both “cosmopolitan . . . and a cradle for the flowering of an ancient current of Mahayana Buddhism” (Zaleski 1998: 95; Wheatley 1983: 207). Quaritch Wales bracketed the Dvaravati occupation of Ku Bua to the 8th century, but this dating must be considered speculative in nature (Quaritch Wales 1969: 51, 61). He further attributes the rise of a city here to an “inflow of Buddhist Mons from Burma over the Three Pagodas Pass . . . lead[ing] to the foundation of a town . . . intended to meet the new demand for a port near the actual mouth of the Meklong.” (1969: 51). P’ong Tuk may or may not have operated as a satellite of Ku Bua, but combined with the larger center it is an important component of Dvaravati settlement and cultural history in the region of west-central Thailand.

The presence of distinctive traits, forms and practices at prehistoric and protohistoric sites is a widespread pattern on the Southeast Asian mainland, and P’ong Tuk has revealed a variety of stylistic, formal, and behavioral elements that may reflect a set of local idioms. Since the late 1970s, as systematic information has accumulated from excavated sites, there has been a growing recognition that a “sub-regional” or “localized” diversity of social practices and material assemblages has been the typical condition on the Southeast Asian mainland. This is certainly the case in Thailand, where “one of the most interesting outcomes of surveys and excavations of the past few years is the recognition of regional variability; that what is true for the northeast does not hold for central, west or southern Thailand” (Glover 1991: 352). Distinctive assemblages are often observable even among sites “closely situated to one another” (Glover
1980: 19). Skilling asserts that religious practices were also subject to socio-geographic adjustment, stating that “the Buddhisms of the Mon, Burmese, Central Thai, Shan, Lanna Tai, Lao, and Khmer are each quite distinctive” in their art and practices (2003: 103/f.n. 39). For Dvaravati specifically, Vallibhotama sees polities organized along individual river valleys that, while sharing certain elements diagnostic of Dvaravati culture, are otherwise not “well integrated” (1986: 233-234). The generally north-south running valleys were separated by “heavy jungles and swamps,” leaving interaction to occur mainly at nodal settlements on the gulf shore (Brown 1996: 49).

Whatever the specifics of Dvaravati socio-political organization may prove to be (and we are far from having a clear picture of that system), data from P’ong Tuk can help delineate localized cultural traditions that were an important component of early social organization on mainland Southeast Asia. Quaritch Wales recognized west-central Thailand as one of five sub-regions in Dvaravati (1969: 20-67). His “Western Dvaravati” includes U Thong, Nakhon Pathom, Khu Bua, and P’ong Tuk – a complex of settlements that has been termed the Dvaravati “heartland” (Skilling 2003: 105). Within this group, Guillon sees distinctive traits in the art of Nakhon Pathom (squarer, heavier facial features), U Thong (rounder facial features), and Khu Bua (with an “indigenous style . . . almost anecdotal”) (1999: 89). The relationships between sites like P’ong Tuk and these sub-traditions within a “Western Dvaravati” pattern will require much more information from all aspects of the system proposed by Quaritch Wales. As described and discussed in this evaluation, P’ong Tuk exhibits the archaeological content and characteristics of preservation that can, and hopefully will, make a significant contribution to this undertaking.
Bibliography

Agelarakis, Anagnosti  

Aasen, Clarence  

Attagara, Kingkeo  
1968 *The folk religion of Ban Nai, a hamlet in central Thailand.* Doctoral dissertation, submitted to the Institute of Folklore at Indiana University, September 1967. (copy at Ohio University Library)

Aung-Thwin, Michael A.  
2005 *The mists of Ramanna: the legend that was lower Burma.* University of Hawai‘i Press, Honolulu.

Barram, Andrew  

Barram, Andrew and Ian Glover  
2008 Re-thinking Dvaravati. In *From Homo Erectus to the living traditions; choice of papers from the 11th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists:* 175-182. Siam Ratana Ltd., Chiang Mai.

Bauer, Christian  

Beal, Samuel  
Bellina, Berenice and Ian Glover

Bentley, G. Carter

Bogucki, Peter

Boisselier, Jean


Bopearachchi, Osmund

Briggs, Lawrence Palmer

Bronson, Bennet


1979 The late prehistory and early history of central Thailand with special reference to Chansen. In Early South East Asia, essays in archaeology, history, and historical geography, R. B. Smith and W. Watson, editors: 315-336. Oxford University Press,
(Bronson, Bennet continued)

Bronson, Bennet and George F. Dales

Brown, Robert L.


Brown, Robert L. and Anna M. MacDonnell

Bunce, Fredrick W.

Chang, Nigel
2009 The archaeology of Ban Non Wat, northeast Thailand: a view of the collaborative process. The SAA Archaeological Record 9 (3): 40-42.

Chaturachinda, Gwyneth, Sunanda Krishnamurty, and Pauline W. Tabtiang

Chavannes, Edouard
Chirapravati, M. L. Pattaratom

Christie, Anthony
1964 *The political use of imported religion: an historical example from Java.* *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 17 (1): 53-62.

Chutiwongs, Nandana

Ciarla, Roberto

Clarke, Wesley


Coe, Michael D.

Coedes, George


(George Coedes continued)


1968 *The Indianized states of Southeast Asia*. English translation by S. B. Cowing, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu..

de Casparis, J. G.


Desai, Santosh N.

Diskul, M. C. Subhadradis


Dofflemyer, Virginia
Domett, Kate and Nancy Tayles  
2006 AAPA abstracts: Tooth modification in late Iron Age in Cambodia.  

Domett, Kate and Dougald O'Reilly  
2009 Health in pre-Angkorian Cambodia: A bioarchaeological analysis of the skeletal remains from Phum Snay.  
Asian Perspectives 48 (1): 56-78.

Dudal, R.  

Dupont, Pierre  

1959b L'archeologie mone de Dvaravati.  Publication de l'Ecole francaise d'Extreme-Orient XLI.

Dupont, Pierre and J. K. Sen  

Fontein, Jan  
2007 The art of Southeast Asia; the collection of the Museum Rietberg Zurich.  Museum Rietberg, Zurich, Switzerland.

Fine Arts Department  
2009 Dvaravati art: the early Buddhist art of Thailand.  Fine Arts Department of Thailand, Bangkok. (in Thai and English)

Frederic, Louis  
Fukui, Hayao
1976 Environmental determinants affecting the potential dissemination of high yielding varieties of rice – a case study of the Chao Phraya basin. In Southeast Asia: nature, society, and development, S. Ichimura, editor: 139-166 (Chapter 8). University of Hawai`i Press, Honolulu.

Galloway, Charlotte


Ghosh, A., editor

Glover, Ian


Gonda, Jan

1966 Ancient Indian kingship from the religious point of view. E. J. Brill, Leiden.
Griswold, A. B.  
1966 Imported images and the nature of copying in the art of Siam. *Artibus Asiae, supplementum, (essays offered to G. H. Luce by his colleagues and friends in honour of his seventy-fifth birthday)* 23 (2): 37-73.

Guillon, Emmanuel  
1999 *The Mons; a civilization of Southeast Asia.* English translation. The Siam Society, Bangkok.

Gupta, Avijit  


Gupta, Sunil  

Gupta, Shakti M.  

Gutman, Pamela and Zaw Min Yu  

Gutman, Pamela  

Guy, John  
Harper, Douglas  
http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/votive

Hartel, Herbert  
Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Rome.

Hein, Don, Mike Barbetti and Paul Bishop  

Hennequin, Laurent  

Higham, Charles  

Hudson, Bob  
2006 *The origins of Bagan*. PhD thesis, University of Sydney; available at:  

Hudson, Bob and Terry Lustig  

Huntington, Susan and John Huntington  
1990 *Leaves from the Bodhi tree: the art of Pala India (8th-12th centuries) and its international legacy*. Dayton Art Institute/University of Washington Press, Seattle and London.

Intrawooth (Indrawood), Phasook (Phasuk)  

(Intrawooth, Phasook continued)

2001 *Report on the excavation at Muang Fa Daed Song Yang, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province.* Sathaban Wichai lae Patthana, Silpakorn University, Nakhon Pathom.


Jacq-Hergoualc'h, Michel


Jansen, Eva Rudy


Jordaan, Roy E. and Robert Wessing


Kaida, Yoshihiro and Vanpen Surarerks


Kanjanajuntorn, Podjanok

2006 *Developing social complexity in metal age west-central Thailand ca. 500 BC - AD 500.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Bristol, Great Britain. (excerpts provided by the author)

Kealhofer, Lisa and Peter Grave


Kirsch, A. Thomas


Kairiksh, Piriya

1981 *Sculptures from Thailand.* Urban Council of Hong Kong.
Kulke, Herman  
1985  The early and the imperial kingdom in Southeast Asian history.  
In *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th centuries*, D. G. Marr and A. C. Milner, editors: 1-22 (Chapter 1). Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, and Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.

Lahiri, Nayanjot, and Elizabeth Bacus  

Lavy, Paul A.  

Leksukhum, Santi  

Le May, Reginald  

Leopold, Luna B., M. G. Wolman and J. P. Miller  

Lertcharnrit, Thanik  

Lertrit, Sawang  
Loofs, H. H. E.

Lyons, Elizabeth

Mabbett, Ian
1997 The “Indianization” of mainland Southeast Asia: a reappraisal. In *Living a life in accord with dhamma; papers in honor of Professor Jean Boisselier on his eightieth birthday*: 342-355. Silpakorn University, Bangkok.

Miksic, John N.


Miller, William J.

Mitchener, Michael

MoLAS

Moore, Elizabeth
Mudar, Karen M.  


Murata, Gen and Eiji Matsumoto  

Murphy, Stephen A. and Pimchanok Pongkasetkan  

2010 Fifty years of archaeological research at Dong Mae Nang Muang, an ancient gateway to the upper Chao Phraya basin. *Journal of the Siam Society* 98: 49-74.

O'Conner, Stanley J.  


Pelliot, Paul  

Phienwej, Noppadal and Prinya Nutalaya  
Pietrusewsky, Michael and M. T. Douglas

Pietrusewsky, Michael and Rona Ikehara-Quebral

Quaritch Wales, H. G.


1969 *Dvaravati; the earliest kingdom of Siam*. Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., London.


Rao, T. A. Gopinatha

RAS (Royal Asiatic Society)

Ray, Himanshu Prabha
1994 *The winds of change; Buddhism and the maritime links of early South Asia*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, India.
(Ray, Himanshu Prabha continued)


Revire, Nicolas


Rice, Prudence M.

Richter, Anne

Sangvichien, Sood

1970 *Past and present of the Mon culture; analysis of skeletons and artefacts from the Dvaravati period*. Aksorn Samphan, Bangkok.

Santiko, Hariani

Saraya, Dhida
1999 *(Sri) Dvaravati, the Initial Phase of Siam’s History*. Muang Boran Publishing House, Bangkok.
Scott, G. Richard and C. G. Turner III

Singer, Ronald

Sinsakul, Sin

Skilling, Peter


Slaczka, Anna A.
Soubert, H. E. Son

Srisuchat, Amara

Stargardt, Janice

Stark, Miriam T.


Stark, Miriam T., D. Sanderson and R. G. Bingham

Stone, Richard
Stratton, Carol

Sukpramun, Phatcharin

Tanabe, Susumu, Y. Saito, Y. Sato, Y. Suzuki, S. Sinsakul, S. Tiyapairach, N. Chaimanee

Tayles, Nancy

Tayles, Nancy and Marc Oxenham, editors

Teeyaphan, Sermsak, Nukul Noosri and Samai Yaemsudjai
1990 *Report on quaternary geological survey covering the areas on the amphoe Ban Pong and Ratburi province map sheets*. Geological Survey Division, Mineral Resources Department, Bangkok. (in Thai)

Vallibhotama, Srisakra
1987 *Political and cultural continuities at Dvaravati*. In *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th centuries*, D. G. Marr and A. C. Milner, editors: 229-238 (Chapter 11). Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Canberra and Singapore.

Van Beek, Steve and Luca Invernizzi Tettoni

van Leur, J. C.
Vickery, Michael  
1998 *Society, economics, and politics in pre-Angkor Cambodia, the 7th-8th centuries.* The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for UNESCO, The Toyo Bunko, Tokyo.

Vogel, J. P.  

Welch, David C. and Judith R. McNeill  

Wessing, Robert and Roy E. Jordaan  

Wheatley, Paul  
1983 *Nagara and commandery: origins of the Southeast Asian urban traditions.* Department of Geography, University of Chicago, Research Papers 207/208, Chicago.

White, Joyce  

Wicks, Robert S.  
1992 *Money, markets, and trade in early Southeast Asia; the development of indigenous monetary systems to AD 1400.* Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, Ithaca, New York.

Wilen, Richard  
Woodward, Hiram

2003 *The art and architecture of Thailand*. Brill, Leiden and Boston.

Zaleski, Valerie
Dear Mr. Clarke,

We are pleased to inform you that the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) has permitted you to conduct the research project on "Revisiting Pong Tun - A Reevaluation of an Early Buddhist Site in West - Central Thailand" from November 2007 to December 2007.

According to our immigration law, you are advised to apply for non-immigrant visa (RS) prior to your leaving for Thailand. Moreover, you are required to report in person to Office of International Affairs, NRCT within seven days after your arrival in Thailand in order to pay a deposit guaranteeing submission of the complete research report of 10,000 baht, then obtain concerned documents.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Sincerely yours,

[Kamala Parkhuyang] (Ms. Kamlal Parkhuyang)
Deputy Secretary-General
Acting Secretary-General

Mr. Wesley Clarke
Ohio Department of Transportation
338 Maltzahnam Drive
Marina, Ohio 43750
No. 00023: 5905

12 November BE. 2550 (2007)

Dear Mr. Clarke,

Reference is made to your e-mail dated November 4, 2007 asking permission to postpone the research period of your permitted project on “Revisiting Phueng Tak -- A Reevaluation of an Early Buddhist Site in West-central Thailand.”

We are pleased to inform you that you are permitted to conduct the aforementioned project from December 2007 to January 2008, as requested. Please come to our office to fulfill NRCT regulations mentioned in our permission letter.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

(Mr. Chatchai Laksapin)
Deputy Secretary-General
Acting Secretary-General

Mr. Wesley Clarke
Ohio Department of Transportation
338 Mockingbird Drive
Marietta, Ohio 45750
USA
Office of the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT)

Office of International Affairs

116 Phaholyothin Road

Chachada, Bangkok 10900, THAILAND

Ph: (+66-2) 946-8390, 970-3490; Fac: (+66-2) 941-2409

Website: www.nrct.net, www.nrct-foreignresearcher.org

Email: webmaster@nrct-foreignresearcher.org

SUMMARY REPORT SUBMISSION FORM

Please type or print in English

RESEARCH PROJECT TITLE: Revisiting Phra That - A Revaluation of an Early-Buddhist Site in West-Central Thailand.

1. Name: Wesley, Stephen, Clarke
   (First) (Middle) (Last)

2. Foreign researcher registration no: 1571/59

3. Current employer: Ohio Department of Transportation
   330 Main Street Drive, Marietta
   Postal code: 45756
   Country: U.S.A.
   Phone: 740-373-2286 Fax: 740-373-7317
   E-mail: Wesley.Clarke@ohndot.gov


5. Research site(s): Phra That, Kanchanaburi Province

6. Research completed as planned: [ ] Yes [ ] No

7. Checklist for summary report submission: Those sections need to follow this instruction form
   [ ] Acknowledgment
   [ ] List of outstanding Thai researchers and/or Thai institutions
   [ ] Objective of research
   [ ] Research methodology
   [ ] Summary of results
   [ ] Conclusions and recommendations

I do hereby certify that all of the above given information is true.

Wesley Clarke

(Researcher's signature)

January 14, 2009

Project Title: “Revisiting Pong Tuk – A Reevaluation of an Early Buddhist Site in West-central Thailand”.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank the staff of the National Research Council of Thailand, specifically Kanchana Pankhongnoen, Chobvit Lukpakdee, Pannee Panyawatanaanpet, and Yoda Sommarat for their guidance in preparing my research proposal. I also wish to thank Supamas Doungsakun of the 2nd Regional Office of Fine Arts for serving as my collaborator and for her help in the field at Pong Tuk. Somchit Na Nakhonphom, Director of the National Museum, was also very kind to let me photograph Pong Tuk artifacts on display in Bangkok.

Collaborating: Supamas Doungsakun, 2nd Regional Office of Fine Arts, Suphanburi.

Research Objectives: (A) Create a unified site description; (B) Create a systematic record of ritual and domestic objects from the site locality; (C) Make comparisons between Pong Tuk and other sites; (D) Evaluate site data and previous interpretations with new theoretical constructs. (These objectives are discussed in detail in my Research Application to the Council.)

Research Methodology: This phase of research in Thailand has operated at a preliminary reconnaissance level of investigation. Field investigation was observational, consisting of interview of local informants, examination of artifacts in the National Museum and at the site locale, and observation and mapping of land use and find spots at the Pong Tuk locale. Information developed by these activities was recorded with handwritten notes, photographs, and digital GPS satellite readings.

Summary of Results: This phase of research in Thailand was successful in meeting all field work objectives. Results included: (1) Interviews of several dozen Pong Tuk residents were completed. This included seven elderly residents who recall the excavations of 1927 and 1933. Interviews provided new information on site features, artifacts, and find spots. (2) High resolution photographs were made of Pong Tuk artifacts on display at the National Museum, and of items kept in a collection at Wat Dong Sak. The wall collection included new items not previously documented for the site locality. (3) Land use in the Pong Tuk locale, particularly the distribution of agricultural crops, was observed and recorded to help evaluate future research potential. Land use conditions were recorded with photographs and digital GPS readings. (4) Previously known and newly identified cultural features of the Pong Tuk locale were mapped via hand-held tape and GPS readings. This field data will be used to create a comprehensive map of the site locality.

No artifacts or other physical samples were removed from the site locale.
Conclusions and recommendations: This field work phase in Thailand has been successful in confirming previously reported information and also developing substantial new information for the P'ong Tuk site. New artifacts and structural locations have been documented, and a general picture of land use and ownership has been obtained. This raw field data will now be processed and refined for presentation in my Master's thesis. Information developed by the current field work will also be used to identify future research actions that could be taken at P'ong Tuk. I am encouraged by what I have been told and what I have observed at the site, and I believe additional phases of field investigation would be productive. We have also developed good relationships with local residents/landowners, including the abbot at Wat Dong Sak, and this will aid any future field work at the P'ong Tuk locality.