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A First-Century Stele from Sriksetra

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“Indian culture is complementary. It was not imposed. It was called for from within Southeast Asia. The people wanted something different on top.”

Paul Mus, lecture at Yale, 8 November 1966

A sandstone stele (Fig. 1) discovered at Sriksetra (Śrīkṣetra), Central Myanmar (Burma) (Fig. 2),¹ in the 1970s and currently on display in the National Museum, Yangon (Rangoon), can now be dated to around the beginning of the first millennium of the Common Era.² It is possibly the earliest Indic sculpture in Southeast Asia. It will be posited that the stele illustrates an aspect of the adaptation of Indian ideas of power and with it the spread of Buddhism and Brahmanism in the early urban context. One side of the stele illustrates three men. The central figure, apparently a leader or a cult figure, holds a massive weapon and is flanked by smaller figures that also hold symbols of power. The other side shows a throne surmounted by a canopy with two women in attitudes of respect on either side.

The stele was published by John Guy, who identified it as a “warrior stele” with stylistic affinities to the early sculpture of Andhra Pradesh and dated it to *circa* 4th-5th century CE.³ He noted that the central figure resembled the club-bearing guardian figures from the Khin Ba hoard, which influenced his dating, and identified the objects held by the flanking figures as a *garuḍadhvaja* and a *cakradhvaja* suggesting a Vaiṣṇavite allegiance among the ruling elite at Sriksetra.

Hero or warrior stones seem to have arrived in the art of Andhra and Tamil Nadu during the Tamil sangam period, around the 2nd to 3rd centuries CE,⁴ although they differ from the Sriksetra stele in nature, content and artistic expression. A further stylistic analysis and investigation of the provenance of the Sriksetra stone indicates an earlier date. While there are no obvious prototypes for such a stele in India, the massive size

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2. This composite image is based on Archaeology Department photos taken before the stele was installed in the National Museum. The stone is now supported by an iron frame which obscures some of the outer details. The more detailed photographs in this paper were taken in the Museum by Zaw Min Yu.

3. Guy 1997: 85-94; 1999: 17-18. In 2009 Guy considered that the stele might date as late as the 6th century. Stadner 1998 suggests that the stele might reflect an indigenous style, belonging to the earliest phase of Pyu art. Moore (2007: 140) also mentions the stele.

4. Murthy 1982.

of the stone and some later sculpture implies that it might derive from a local tradition involving the ritual use of large stones, while the style of the sculpture itself suggests a south Indian prototype.

The archaeological background

Myanmar has human settlement dating back to between 55,000 and 70,000 years ago, when the dispersal of modern *homo sapiens* out of Africa brought about the occupation of the coast of the Arabian peninsula, the river valleys of India and Myanmar, island Southeast Asia and Australia.⁵ In Myanmar, this population is still visible in the Palaeolithic tool remains that have been found across the Irrawaddy (Ayeyarwady) valley.⁶ Occupation of cave sites from around 10,000 years ago has been detected, with the gradual appearance of polished stone tools, incised pictographs and ochre paintings.⁷

New radiocarbon dates from an earthenware-firing site at Halin show that incised, cord-marked and burnished pottery, characteristic of Neolithic agriculture, was being produced between 2,890 and 2,470 BCE.⁸ This supports a model of an expansion of agriculturalists out of China around this time.⁹

By the middle of the first millennium BCE, the arrival of iron technology coincided with an expansion of personal wealth and clear evidence of social differentiation, notably in the Samon Valley and at Halin. Some skeletons from this period are found with armloads of bracelets, their clothing and persons decorated with hundreds of beads. Burials include bronzes that probably came from Southern China, carnelian beads originally from India but quickly reproduced locally, and blue-green glass ornaments in styles also found as far away as Cambodia. This suggests that goods and information travelled long distances over the land and sea trade routes of the time.¹⁰

The early urban system

By the early centuries of the Common Era irregularly shaped settlements enclosed by brick walls and entered by distinctive corridor gates¹¹ appeared to the north and south of the economically prosperous but densely packed Samon Valley. These are attributed to a people known as the Pyu.¹²

5. Oppenheimer 2009; Soares *et al.* 2009.

6. Movius 1943.

7. Aung Thaw 1971; Myint Aung 2000; Tacon, Daw Yee Yee Aung & Thorne 2004.

8. Radiocarbon dates are OZM357, 4055 ± 35 BP; OZN 200, 4180 ± 35 BP; OZM 356, 4105 ± 30 BP. Date ranges were worked out using the computer program Oxcal 3.9, from the Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit, Oxford University, with calibration data from P. J. Reimer *et al.* 2009. All radiocarbon dates quoted in this paper have been calibrated using this data.

9. See, for example, Bellwood 2005. In Myanmar, these immigrants would have introduced their Tibeto-Burman language to the indigenous local population with whom they integrated. Since the Neolithic agricultural dispersal model puts Tibeto-Burman speakers in Myanmar from at least 2,500 BCE, there is no need to posit a later immigration of Tibeto-Burman speaking city builders.

10. This era has been comprehensively covered by Pautreau 2007; Pautreau, Coupey & Aung Aung Kyaw 2010; Hudson 2009, 2010; Lankton, Dussubieux & Gratuze 2006; Moore 2007; Bellina & Glover 2004.

11. Myint Aung 1998.

12. The Hou-Han Shu refers to the P'iao (Pyu) as having attained "some degree of civilization" around the 1st century CE (Wheatley 1983: 167).

The likeliest source of population for these urban centres, located a comfortable 90 kilometres from each other, is the Samon region.¹³ As distinct from the small Samon sites, each no more than a few hectares in area, the major walled sites range from 1452 hectares at Sriksetra to about 600 hectares at Halin, Maingmaw and Beikthano.¹⁴

This dramatic change in settlement behaviour can be attributed to an increased inflow of religious, political and technological inspiration from India. For example, architectural inspiration for the walled cities of Myanmar can be seen in sites such as the Mauryan period fortress at Jaugada, in Orissa, which features a series of corridor gates. These gates, like all the known corridor gates in early India, project outwards, as distinct from the gates in early urban Myanmar, which turn inwards.¹⁵

Dating the Pyu cities

Radiocarbon dates for three of the Pyu cities indicate that construction and cultural activity was taking place between the 1st and 2nd centuries CE in the case of Sriksetra, and between the 1st and 3rd at Halin and Beikthano.

At Beikthano, charcoal sampled in the 1960s from a rectangular brick building with a shrine at one end (KKG 9), located within the city walls, put the building within the date range 190 BCE and 260 CE.¹⁶ Recent radiocarbon dating of a building *outside* the city walls places it between 60 and 220 CE,¹⁷ implying that by the late 1st to early 3rd century CE architectural and cultural activity was not just underway, but had spread beyond the enclosure walls.

Gates and gatehouses along the brick enclosure wall at Halin have provided carbon dates,¹⁸ which indicate that the gates were functioning to control entry into the city between the 1st and mid-3rd centuries.

We know now that Sriksetra was constructed in several phases. The city was initially contained within an oval brick wall with a drainage channel on the western, upslope side (Fig. 3). The western-to-southern section of the wall and channel was replaced 500 metres up the western slope by a physically larger wall and an eight-kilometre drain. The southern end of the drain diverted in part to a canal, which passed back through the city wall and distributed a controllable supply of water through the centre of the city. This system succumbed to siltation. Two gates, Yahanda and Lulin-kyaw, were filled with silt that overflowed from the drains. Smaller brick gates that were built across the originals, on top of the silt, have been exposed by excavation. Hmot-she causeway, which crossed the drainage channel on the western side, filled with silt and water began to flow around

13. Hudson 2005.

14. Hudson 2004.

15. Yule 2008.

16. This is a broad range, and it is important to resist the temptation to date the building to 190 BCE. Any date within the range could be valid. The 1960s radiocarbon dating of Beikthano is summarised in Hudson 2004: 130-131.

17. BTO 32, a multi-room complex containing castellated burial urns. The radiocarbon date OZM355, 1885 ± 25 BP was obtained by Accelerator Mass Spectrometry, which provides a more concise range.

18. OZN912 (HL 31, 1845 ± 35 BP, 70-250 CE) and OZN914 (HL 32, 1825 ± 30 BP, 80-320 CE), excavated in 2011 by Bob Hudson and colleagues from the Myanmar Archaeology Department. These, along with dates for two other gates excavated in the late 1960s by Myint Aung (1970), fall within the period 120-250 CE.

it. The central canal became so silted that a rectangular walled complex, known today as the palace, could be built right over it, using the vestigial flow from the canal to fill its moat. By this stage, corridor gates seem to have gone out of use (Fig. 4). The palace complex was entered on the north side by an oblique passageway.¹⁹

A thermoluminescence date from a potsherd found in the palace complex indicates that all this activity took place before 710 CE.²⁰ This supports the conventional dating of the city from the 4th century CE to 8-9th century CE with later occupation in the 11th to 13th centuries.²¹ However a new radiocarbon date demonstrates much earlier occupation.²² It places activity at an iron production site in the very centre of the city to between 50-200 CE (Figs. 3-4). On the available radiocarbon evidence, then, the city in its early phase, pre-dating the palace and the later western wall, was active from the 1st to 2nd century period CE.

The stele that is the subject of this paper was found between the palace and the iron production site.²³ We propose through stylistic analysis to place the stele in its regional cultural context. Its physical context, and the chronology of that context, can be stated simply. It was found under several metres of topsoil and debris in the geographical centre of the most extensive of several culturally linked, walled sites, which were part of an urban system that was demonstrably active in the 1st to 3rd centuries CE.

Ritual stones and their context

Throughout rural Myanmar large stones, altars, or stone rings, often associated with a tree or a grove, are used for major ceremonies often involving the spirits of the earth and sky, and sometimes the ancestors, to ensure the prosperity of the chief's domain.²⁴ Paul Mus, in his *India Seen from the East*, proposed that in Southeast Asian animist practice a stone or boulder was considered to concentrate the active power of the soil, that it was not the seat of the god but the god himself, co-substantially.²⁵ Ritual developed to control this power, to ensure the continued fertility of the land for the people who depend on it. The spirit of the stone passes into the officiant of the ritual, who may be a shaman or priest or a chief, identified with the god for the duration of the ceremony. The size and iconography of the Sriksetra stele argue that Indian beliefs were imposed on such an earlier animist tradition.

19. Hudson 2007; Hudson & Lustig 2008. Excavated entrances on the north and east walls of the complex could still be seen in 2011.

20. Hudson 2004: 284.

21. Hudson & Lustig 2008.

22. OZN909, 1890 ± 30 BP, calibrated date range 50-200 CE. The sample came from the lower layers of a mound of iron slag, which is more than 2 metres deep, and covers an area of 14,000 square metres. It is 120 metres north of the northwest corner of the palace. Four hundred metres to the northeast, extensive brick ruins 3 metres below the surface were briefly exposed by illegal treasure hunters in 2006. They were recorded by Bob Hudson and Myanmar Field School of Archaeology staff. This unexcavated structure stratigraphically precedes the palace and would have been of significance during the early phase of the city. Another recent radiocarbon date, OZM358, 1555 ± 25 BP, for building complex HMA 47 outside the south wall, shows that by 420-570 CE building activity had extended outside the city walls.

23. Hudson 2007; Gutman & Hudson 2004.

24. Leach 1954: 117, 129, 206-107; Moore 2007: 75-77; Lebar, Hickey & Musgrave 1964.

25. Mus 1975: 13-15.

Such practices may well have been the basis for Gordon Hannington Luce's suggestion²⁶ that the Buddhism at Sriksetra appeared to have absorbed an earlier megalithic cult, noting in particular the huge stone funerary urns, often over a metre high, some engraved in Pyu with the names of members of the Vikrama dynasty ruling around the 7th century CE.²⁷ Stone urns are found only at Sriksetra, although all Pyu sites have abundant evidence of cremation burials in terracotta urns. While certain early stone sculptures at Sriksetra may stand as high as 3 metres, and are 2 metres at the base and nearly one metre thick, the relief part, always Buddhist, might be less than a third the height of the stone. At the Kyaukka shrine (also known as the Settaing) these reliefs (Fig. 5), dating to around the mid-first millennium, each depict a triad, and were placed as a set of three facing another set of three, each within a square brick shrine some 40 metres apart. They are usually sculpted with a Buddha in the attitude of Enlightenment, with an attendant or devotee, or a *stūpa*, on either side.²⁸ This brings to mind the stone arrangements facing each other at Halin 22, which will be discussed below. Luce also called a collection of ornately carved stone platforms, either circular or rectangular, "megalithic thrones".²⁹

The stele therefore continues an earlier tradition involving ancestor worship and the spirit of the soil. It marks the transformation of an older society to one where Indic traditions were recognised as a way to gain power over a diversifying, urbanising society. And the practice of venerating large stones was absorbed into Pyu Buddhist art some centuries later.

Brick structure, ritual stones: Halin 22

The excavation of a brick³⁰ building at Halin has revealed Indic cult activity, without any apparent Buddhist or Brahmanical influence. HL 22,³¹ in the northwest sector of the city, was inexpertly excavated in 1999.³² This is a square brick structure, with walls nearly 8 metres long and an entrance to west (Figs. 6-7). Inside on the remaining three sides are three groups of stone slabs.³³ No burials were recorded, although a terracotta head and breast of a female and some oil lamps were discovered, suggesting the worship of a female deity. In Andhra Pradesh, particularly, the megalithic continued well into the historic period and anthropomorphic figures are often associated with the megaliths.³⁴

26. Luce 1985, vol. 1: 52.

27. These urns have been studied in detail by Tun Aung Chain 2003 and San Win 2003. Some Myanmar scholars maintain that they date to a period earlier than the 7th century; an argument that is beyond the scope of this paper, but would bear revisiting by palaeographers.

28. Luce 1985, vol. 2: pl. 12. Buddha images touching the earth with the left hand, as in Fig. 5, are sometimes found in Pyu and early Pagan art. The significance of this, if any, is unknown.

29. Luce 1985, vol. 1: 128-129; vol. 2: pls. 110 and 111.

30. Brick technology in Southeast Asia is generally thought to have been introduced from India. The Burmese (and Thai, Shan, Mon and Khmer) word for burnt brick, *ut*, is Indo-Aryan in origin, usually taken to come from Pali *itthaka*, and it seems likely that the technique originated in India (North Vietnam, more influenced from China, is the exception).

31. Myanmar Archaeology Department identification code.

32. Myint Aung 2007: 275-286. A second unexcavated site with tops of stones protruding has been observed by Bob Hudson and Nyein Lwin, inside the eastern wall of the city.

33. In the north, 8 slabs in 3 rows at the ratio of 3:3:2; in the east, 9 slabs in 2 rows at the ratio of 5:4; and in the south, 10 slabs in 3 rows at the ratio of 5:4:1.

34. Rao 1993: 665; 1988: 19-32.

These included terracotta fertility goddesses comparable to the example from Halin 22, where the style, with its well-defined face and hooded protruding eyes, can be compared with pre-Kushana art.

The Sriksetra Stele

The stele was found in the geographical centre of Sriksetra (Figs. 3-4). It was exposed during the digging of a well 70 metres north of the palace, in what is probably a vestigial water channel pre-dating the construction of the palace some time before the 7th century. This area, as we have seen, was a hub of early first millennium activity, with iron production and a complex of buildings.

Dating the stele

The stele can be dated by stylistic analysis. Although Guy observed that it exhibited some Andhra affinities,³⁵ he looked to the sculpture of Amaravati and later Buddhist sites in the Krishna delta region and assigned it to the first half of the 5th century. Our work on the provenance and the likelihood of earlier dates for Sriksetra however, reveals that an earlier date can be considered. Both reliefs are framed by a vegetal surround over which the outer elements of the central carvings intrude so we can safely assume that both sides were carved at the same time. The most obvious prototype for the figures on the “hero” side are the *yakṣas*, the ancient fertility spirits traditionally worshipped as place-bound tutelary deities, which were incorporated into the early Buddhist and the incipient Vaiṣṇava iconographies. A comparison of the central figure with a *yakṣa* (Fig. 8) on a gateway to Sanchi *stūpa* I, dated to ca. 25 CE, is illuminating.³⁶ Both are depicted frontally, in a similar *yakṣa* stance, one hand on hip. The figures are solid, with firmly rounded flesh. They wear comparable tripartite turbans and their ornaments are similar: multiple bracelets or armbands, wide necklaces, large round earrings hanging to the shoulders. Both figures wear dhotis tied in front, the ends falling between the legs. The wide flat faces of the stele figures too share the physiognomy found in the pre-Śātavāhana phase at Amaravati, dated by Knox to the 1st century CE.³⁷ And like earlier *yakṣas*, the stele figures have prominent bellies illustrating their promise of fecundity. Doris Meth Srinivasan has shown how, in the pre-Kushana art of Madhya Pradesh, the Bhāgavata tradition fused *yakṣa* with proto-Vaiṣṇava and *vīra* (Hero, Warrior) elements in the 1st century BCE, citing the big-bodied Malhar image which carries a great weapon as well as a *cakra* and a mace.³⁸ Most recently Charlotte Schmid has suggested that these elements signify a major change from localised deities to heroic Brahmanic divinities belonging to a cult practised across cultural frontiers.³⁹ The considerable correspondences between the Sriksetra stele and this tradition will be discussed in the following section.

Other interesting comparisons can be made with sculpture from the 1st century phase at Kanganhalli (Figs. 9, 13), a site in Karnataka a few kilometres from the better-known site of Sannathi on the east bank of the Bhima River, just south of Gulbarga. Sannathi

35. Guy 1997: 89.

36. Eastern gateway, south pillar; American Institute of Indian Studies 34677.

37. Knox 1992: 106-107 and Fig. 146 (short side).

38. Srinivasan 1997: 216.

39. Schmid 2010: 162.

and Kanganhalli were the farthest west of the early south Indian Buddhist establishments along a vast river system ending in the east coast of Andhra Pradesh.⁴⁰ While the Archaeological Survey of India excavations at Kanganhalli have yet to be published, Elizabeth Rosen Stone has shown⁴¹ how the site flourished from the 1st century BCE, and the panels on the main *stūpa* compare with the 1st century CE art of the Great Stūpa (*stūpa* 2) at Sanchi. The headgear and ornaments depicted on the Sriksetra stele and at Sanchi mentioned above, have their counterparts at Kanganhalli (Fig. 10). In both cases the hair is arranged into three buns, probably separated by a string or a ribbon which flies from the top of the high middle portion: while at Kanganhalli the buns are covered by a cloth, at Sriksetra the hair is depicted by striated lines. They have similar square faces with long noses and slightly protruding eyes.

On the other side of the Sriksetra stele, its Buddhist intent is illustrated at the apex with a much-abraded symbol, which proved to be the upper portion of a *triratna*, said to be the symbol representing the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (Fig. 11). The Buddhist Canon makes a concerted attempt to inculcate a sense of moral and ethical values among the laity based on Buddhist ethics and loyalty to the *triratna*.⁴² *Triratna* amulets feature prominently among the assemblage of early manufacturing and trading sites in Southeast Asia,⁴³ and the form of the symbol in question here compares with these and with depictions at Sanchi⁴⁴ and Amaravati.⁴⁵ The outward-facing *makaras* with uplifted elephant trunks at either end of the cross-bar (Fig. 12) are also found at Sanchi, in the 1st century BCE *stūpa* 2⁴⁶ and appear to precede the 2nd century examples from Amaravati.⁴⁷ Similarly, the bulbous headed columns supporting the canopy above have their counterparts at Kanganhalli and Sannathi⁴⁸ and are more developed at Amaravati. The throne itself directly reflects the “aniconic” art of Bodhgaya, Bharhut, Sanchi, Kanganhalli and Amaravati where it often denotes the Enlightenment of the Buddha at Bodhgaya, the throne representing the *vajrāsana*. Inscriptional evidence too links the *āsana* with the Enlightenment.⁴⁹ It is worth remembering that in India, as elsewhere, the basic components of the ancient “sacred centres” were the altar-throne, tree and pillar, all cosmic symbols representing a mystical link between the sacred and the profane, variously

40. These correspondences are interesting in that the most immediate prototypes of the *śrīvatsa* motif found on early Pyu coins are 2nd century Śātavāhana coins from Chandravalli in northern Karnataka and identical Andhra coins; see Gutman 1978: 13-14.

41. Stone 2008: 47. We are grateful to Bob Brown for bringing the Kanganhalli site to our attention.

42. Ray 2006: 304.

43. e.g. at Khao Sam Kaeo; see Bunchar Pongpanich 2009: 99.

44. e.g. Sanchi, *stūpa* 2, east gate, south pillar, 2nd panel: the bo tree shrine (Zimmer 1964, vol. 2, pl. 17).

45. e.g. Bénisti 1977: Figs. 32-34, 38.

46. American Institute of Indian Studies 36179.

47. Knox 1992: 91 and Fig. 35. The *makaras* on either side of the front of the shrine appear in early Indian lintels but by the Gupta period are also incorporated into the Buddha's throne, and as such are well-known in the later art of Sriksetra.

48. Stone 2008: Figs. 1 and 20.

49. *Āsana* appears in at least two inscriptions from Mathura (Mathurā), and Herbert Härtel has suggested that *āsane* refers to “one of the Holy places of Buddhism” (Härtel 1995: 33-44). See also von Hinüber 2008: 32.

described as *axis mundi*, navel of the world, centre of the universe, and so forth,⁵⁰ and were incorporated into Indian Buddhist art between the Mauryan and Gupta periods. The *vajrāsana* is usually, but not always, depicted together with the Bodhi tree and is encased within an open shrine, often referred to in the literature as a *bodhighara*.⁵¹ At Bodhgaya a polished stone *vajrāsana* found by Cunningham in front of the Bodhi tree shrine is usually considered to be of Mauryan manufacture from its goose and palmette frieze, and is the earliest physical evidence of a shrine.⁵² The *Aśokāvadāna* and related legends recounted by Chinese Buddhist pilgrims describe Aśoka's conversion and worship of the Bodhi tree. A Śuṅga period relief from Bharhut⁵³ depicts the early appearance of the tree shrine, the *bodhighara* where the tree and the throne slab, supported by four small pilasters, are surrounded by a pillared structure. The inscription on this relief reads *Bhāgavata saka munino bodho* ("the Enlightenment of Lord Sakyamuni"). Another railing inscription refers to a gift of Bodhiraksita of Tambaparna (Sri Lanka), evidence of early pilgrimage and patronage.⁵⁴ The Sanchi architrave depicting Aśoka's visit to Bodhgaya in the tenth year of his reign gives us a vivid picture of the early appearance of the hypaethral bodhi tree shrine, open to the air.⁵⁵ At Kanganhalli around the 1st century CE a backrest is added (Fig. 13) and the *vajrāsana* begins to resemble a throne. This is followed at Amaravati where eventually in the 3rd century the iconic Buddha is shown seated on a throne with a footstool.⁵⁶

In Sri Lanka the worship of the throne in conjunction with a bodhi tree, often surrounded by stone pillars, was practised perhaps as early as the 3rd century BCE. Massive stone slabs, minimally decorated, are found within the monuments popularly known as *āsanagharas* ("Shrines of the Throne"). Excavations have shown that these were usually associated with *bodhigharas* ("Shrines of the Bodhi Tree"), in monastic complexes from around the 3rd century BCE until the introduction of the Buddha image there, usually considered at about the 3rd century CE.⁵⁷ These shrines reproduced the Mahabodhi shrine as it was depicted in the 1st century BCE at Bharhut.⁵⁸ Ulrich von Schroeder makes the point that the *āsana* were not aniconic representations of the Buddha but "served as a trigger for visionary and contemplative realisations of the Buddha, as if he were seated there".⁵⁹ The huge size of some of the Sri Lankan examples indicates that an earlier practice involving the propitiation of large stones was incorporated into these reproductions of the site of Enlightenment.

50. Irwin 1974: 4.

51. Coomaraswamy 1930: 225-235.

52. Archaeological Survey of India 1908-1909: 153-154. For a more recent image, see Leoshko 1988, frontispiece.

53. Bachhofer 1929: pl 23.

54. Coomaraswamy 1930: 225-235; Malandra 1988: 9-28.

55. Dehejia & K. B. Agrawala 1996.

56. Sivaramamurti 1956: plates 42 and 50.

57. For an illustration see von Schroeder 1990: Fig. 4; Bandaranayake (1974: 176-182) has an extensive discussion of the purpose of these shrines. See also Boisselier 1979 and brief accounts of more recent excavations in Kulatunga & Amarasekera (1993: 50-51), Dehejia (1988: 12-16) and Malandra (1988: 89-100).

58. Malandra 1988: 12-16.

59. Von Schroeder 1990.

At Sriksetra, Luce's "megalithic thrones" are in the vicinity of 700 centimetres high, and around 3 metres in diameter.⁶⁰ No intact rectangular examples remain. The decoration of the Hsin-ma-ko-wun-din-kon example⁶¹ appears to represent the railings (Fig. 14) around early *stūpas* in India, again indicating an early date.⁶²

The "megalithic thrones" can now be seen to be connected to the *āsanaghara* tradition, as can the Sriksetra stele. Stylistically, the stele might be dated between the main building phase at Sanchi in the 1st century CE and the 2nd century phase at Amaravati. Given that both sides can be connected with the Sanchi tradition, before the advent of Buddhist and Brahmanic iconography, a date around the end of the 1st century can be inferred.

We know of no stone sculpture in Myanmar, or indeed elsewhere in Southeast Asia, from this time. The sculptor quite probably came from South India and worked in the style of his time. Commissioned and itinerant artisans, like Brahmins and monks, are known to have moved along the trade routes.⁶³

Iconography of the stele

The foliate border of the stele (Fig. 11) has its origin in early Indian sculpture. Brown has argued that the floral patterns at Sanchi and Bodhgaya neither merely served a decorative purpose nor were they arbitrarily placed. Following Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and E. H. Gombrich, he proposed that the presence of such structured and patterned representations are "intended to orient the viewer in space and time in order to point them towards a goal", and create a perfected space in which nature is ordered and controlled, presenting an idealised realm in which the dharma—both that of the teachings of the Buddha and of what is firm and true—is expressed literally in stone.⁶⁴

Is the central figure a king or a deity? Or, as in the later art of Southeast Asia, a king who identifies with the deity? He holds a massive club, possibly a prototype for the *gadā*, a symbol of sovereignty and later one of the attributes of Viṣṇu, and we can perhaps find the answer in the early development of Vaiṣṇava art. In 1st century India the important school of the Bhāgavata ("devotees of the Blessed"), also known as Pāñcarātra or Sātvata had elevated Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, originally a tribal hero, to the rank of Supreme God by identifying him with the Vedic Viṣṇu.⁶⁵ The Bhāgavata system originated from the speculative thinking of the orthodox Brāhmaṇas and while its impact only became clearly

60. A portion of the stone throne from the Hsin-ma-ko-wun-din-kon is currently displayed at the Archaeological Museum at Hmawza.

61. Luce 1985, vol. 2: pl. 10. Hsin-ma-ko-wun-din-kon is part of a complex south of the city walls and west of the square walled and moated complex known as Beikthano-myo.

62. Brown has pointed out that this example utilises the technique of anamorphosis to create a three dimensional illusion. The appearance of projections is created by foreshortening, and the design was meant to be seen from the right side by a person circumambulating the throne in a clockwise direction. He says that anamorphism does not appear to have an Indian source and elsewhere in Southeast Asia the only other known example is a socle from a Dvaravati *cakra* pillar from Nakhon Pathom (Brown 2001).

63. Himanshu Prabha Ray (1994: 143) cites a *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* (vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 224, 5, 4) reference to a *citrakārācārya* (master painter) who travelled from Madhyadeśa to Yavanaviṣayam in order to earn money. The *Mahāvastu* (II.90) refers to a *sārthavāha* (leader of a trading guild) residing in a town beyond the sea who wanted to perform a sacrifice and hence wanted a brahman to be sent there for the purpose, as cited by Asher 2006: 64.

64. Brown 2009: 63-80.

65. Bhattacharya 1961: 97-98. The school is known later in Cambodia at the time of Jayavarman I.

visible in the Kushana period its presence is marked in Indian art somewhat earlier.⁶⁶ At the beginning of the 1st century CE the Mora Well inscription from Mathura (Mathurā) records the installation in a stone temple of cult icons of the five heroes (*pāñcavīra*) of the Vṛṣṇi race, named *mānuṣyaprakṛti-devāh* (“gods of human origin”) in the *Vāyupurāṇa*.⁶⁷ Schmid has noted that the Mora inscription designates a major change, from a local to a more universally recognised cult. She describes the *bhagavāns* as deities who take part in the world of mortals by giving it a share of the divine world from which they come. Thus the growth of a personal link with the deity, called *bhakti*, coincides with the features that fix the appearance of the god, giving him eyes with which he can regard his devotee. The *devaputra* (“son of the god”) Kṛṣṇa is another self of Viṣṇu. The relationship between the ruler and the god, expressed in the royal and Vaiṣṇava mythologies, appears to be two expressions of the same conception of the world of the ancestors, which legitimises the appearance of kings.⁶⁸

Perhaps on the stele the central Hero represents this concept, later to evolve in Southeast Asia as the much-discussed cult of the *devarāja* “god-king” or “god of the king”.⁶⁹ This is a natural progression from the ancestor cults associated with large stones at the village level. The leadership of the chief, Wolters’ “man of prowess”, depended on his being attributed with an abnormal amount of “soul stuff” which explained and distinguished his performance from that of others. With the arrival of *bhakti* beliefs a leader could achieve, under a brahman’s instruction, a close relation with the god of his affection, in this case Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa. In the eyes of his people by partaking of the divinity he could therefore offer them the means of establishing their own relationship with the divinity.⁷⁰ It is interesting to note that at Sriksetra three much-abraded images depicting a male figure holding a club over his shoulder have been found (Fig. 20). Hitherto identified as “guardian figures”, they are possibly descendants of the stele Hero.⁷¹

Härtel and Schmid have identified *vīra* images dating from the Kushana and Gupta periods, the earlier with two rather than four arms. Images pre-dating this period have not been found.⁷² There is no standardisation of iconography at this early stage of the development of the cult. The question here is whether the Sriksetra stele can be connected to this tradition. The Heliodorus inscription at Vidisha, ten kilometres northeast of Sanchi, closely linked to the Pāñcarātra system, records the erection of a *garuḍadhvaja*,

66. Härtel 1987: 580.

67. Härtel 1987: 575.

68. Schmid 2010: 161.

69. Woodward 2001 provides a summary of the history of the theories regarding the *devarāja* cult, which is said to date to the time of Jayavarman II (ca. 770-850) or earlier, while Peter Sharrock 2007 deals with Buddhist aspects. Today it is generally agreed that the cult involved a royal consecration believed to enhance the power of the ruler through identification with the deity. Schmid’s discussion (2010, Ch 8.) of Kṛṣṇa holding up the Govardhana Mountain as a figure of victory and of royal consecration depicted in Gupta period sculpture and in pre-Angkorian art is pertinent here: in the Govardhanadhara of the *Harivaṃśa*, Kṛṣṇa, son of Devakī, the “Divinity”, is consecrated by the former king Indra.

70. Wolters 1999: 18-22, 226-228.

71. While Guy 1997 suggested an affiliation between the hero figures and several bronze repoussé *dvarapala* excavated in the 1920s at Sriksetra (see Duroiselle 1927), the latter lean on their weapons, and their hairstyles and dress have little obvious similarity. *Dvarapala* generally are portrayed standing at ease, their weapons grounded, while the stele warriors, and the club-bearing figures in the Hmawza museum, are clearly at the ready.

72. Härtel 1987: 582-583.

the banner of Vāsudeva, by Heliodorus of Taxila, an ambassador of king Antialcides (*fl. circa* 115-180 BCE). This early illustration of the popular hero worship, which was the basis of the Bhāgavata tradition is important here as the figure on the left of the Sriksetra stele (Fig. 15) holds a *garuḍadhvaja*. The practice of installing standards in honour of deities is attested in the textual record. The *Śrīviṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, for instance, states that “fine standards on poles with their appropriate banners should be fashioned at the left side of [each of] the deities”⁷³ and gives the *Suparṇa*-(or *Garuḍa*)-*dhvaja* as Vāsudeva’s emblem. The later *Vāmanapurāṇa* (3, 14) speaks of Viṣṇu as “the god whose banner bears the bird, discus in hand”⁷⁴ while several passages in the *Mahābhārata* refer to the chariot of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa as marked by the Garuḍa standard.⁷⁵ In ancient Indian epic literature the emblem of the *dhvaja* was regarded as no mere symbol but a manifestation of the divine.⁷⁶

The figure on the right (Fig. 16) holds a *cakra*, the potent weapon of war with possible solar connotations, mounted on a stick. A passage in the *Mahābhārata* relates how Kṛṣṇa received the *sudarśana-cakra* from Agni, the Vedic divinity of fire, and describes it as “a discus with an iron stick attached to a hole in the centre”.⁷⁷ The *cakra* is not mentioned in connection with the *dhvajās* of the *vīras* but is carried by Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa on coins of Agathocles found at Aī Khanoum, possibly minted at Taxila and dating to the early 2nd century BCE.⁷⁸ The *cakra* was closely connected with royalty, appearing among the seven attributes of a *cakravartin* king at Jaggaygapeta in the 1st century BCE and at other Andhra sites. Later at Mathura, Vāsudeva, four-armed, carries the *gadā* and the *cakra* in the upper two. Also at Mathura and in Gupta art these are often represented as the personified *gadā* and *cakra āyudhapuruṣas* under each of the back hands of the deity.⁷⁹ It is possible that the figures on either side of the Sriksetra stele are the forerunners of these personified weapons. Taken as a whole, this side of the stele suggests a close connection with a pre-Kushana form of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa worship, but perhaps not that which developed into the worship of Kṛṣṇa at Mathura in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE. The *yakṣa*-type figures have been transformed from regional protectors and guarantors of fertility to a cult endorsed by the elite, one which would enhance the power of the ruler and in particular his function of guaranteeing the fertility and prosperity of the state. Images of Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva, which do not appear in Indian art until the 4th and 5th centuries CE, are among the earliest Brahmanic images found in Southeast Asia, usually dated to after the mid-first millennium CE. Piriya Krairiksh and Robert Brown have argued, however, that the ‘Chaiya Viṣṇu’, usually considered the earliest Viṣṇu image in Southeast Asia, is not Viṣṇu at all, but rather Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa of Mathuran inspiration.⁸⁰ In early Vaiṣṇavism Viṣṇu was considered to enter all kings, and by identifying himself

73. Shaw 2004: 16, fn. 80.

74. Guy 1997: 88.

75. Srinivasan 1997: 216.

76. Irwin 1974: 5, citing Mitra 1934.

77. Begley 1973: 13, citing Roy 1884-1896: 625.

78. Härtel 1987: pl. 3b. For the relationship of the king with the deity on these coins, not necessarily that of a devotee, see Schmid 2010: 163, fn. 336.

79. As they are in Myanmar, in the 6th-7th century art of northern Arakan; see Gutman 2001: 58.

80. Krairiksh 1990: 200-202; Brown 2000.

with Viṣṇu the king would be able to conquer the three worlds, a concept reflected in the regnal names of the later Pyu Vikrama rulers of Sriksetra.

Julia Shaw has also noticed the importance of the Bhāgavata system to the state and suggests that the early monumentalisation of the tradition was a result of the availability of state patronage.⁸¹ This patronage stretched from beyond northwest India's present borders to the Deccan, which would presuppose a great deal of regionalisation in its monumentalisation. Both Shaw and Srinivasan have commented on the location of sculptures connected with the Bhāgavata system on major trade routes, and India and Southeast Asia had been linked through these routes for several hundred years. In early historic Southeast Asia, in particular, Brahmanic ritual was adopted by predominantly Buddhist societies. Indeed, the Śātavāhanas in the Deccan also patronised both Brahman and Buddhist establishments.⁸² Moreover, as Schmid elucidates, "A king is a *deva-putra*, a son of God, the much commented upon expression that echoes at the same time Hindu divinities and the fathers, the ancestors and the king who came before".⁸³ The Sriksetra stele superimposes Brahmanic iconography on to the stones erected by each village in what is now Myanmar: as the ancestors were propitiated through the stone and through them the celestial and terrestrial forces guaranteed fertility of the land. The chieftain, by adopting the trappings of a Bhāgavata cult, was able to enhance his power in the eyes of his people, and to extend his authority as urbanisation proceeded.

Significance of the throne

So what does the throne signify? Its function as a representation of the site of Enlightenment in early Buddhist art, or of the Enlightened One, has been discussed above. Here, however, it is depicted within a pavilion supported by four slender pillars surmounted by a canopy made of cloth. The throne itself has many of the characteristics of thrones in worship at early Amaravati:⁸⁴ it has ornate legs, possibly with animal feet, and a footstool with a symbol which may be a *vajra*, indicating the *vajrāsana*. It is no longer within the hypaethral Bodhgaya shrine as depicted at Bharhut and Sanchi, but what appears to be a reproduction of a shrine made in portable materials, wood and fabric.

The transportation of an Amaravati-type throne across the waters was depicted in a now-lost relief from the internal face of a pillar of the outer enclosure of the Great Stūpa at Amaravati, illustrated in James Fergusson's *Tree and Serpent Worship*.⁸⁵ Here a ship is transporting a throne, accompanied by a worshipful monk. A *nāga* King and attendants in the waters below worship the throne, while royally dressed attendants in attitude of obeisance, one carrying an umbrella, another an ornate *dhvaja*, surround it (Fig. 17). While the Amaravati scene might date a century later than our stele, it illustrates a practice which may well have begun as Buddhism spread to Southeast Asia: the transportation of a replica of the Bodhgaya *vajrāsana*.⁸⁶ The canopy itself may have been either of Chinese silk or Indian cotton and is of interest as it might illustrate an aspect

81. Shaw 2004: 17.

82. Ray 2003: 29.

83. Schmid 2010: 419, 738.

84. Auboyer 1949.

85. Fergusson 1868: pl. 68.

86. Ray 2003: 141, 251, citing *Epigraphia Indica* XX: 23, mentions a 3rd century inscription from Nagarjunakonda which refers to the gift of a *bodhighara* to the Sinhala (Sri Lankan) monks there.

of the trade in textiles (Fig. 18) along the India-China routes from late prehistoric times and give Sriksetra a place in that trade.⁸⁷

The women on either side of the throne stand in an attitude of respect, the free hand touching the elbow of the inner arm, which reaches to support or touch the throne. This gesture is quite different from the dramatic postures of women worshipping at Amaravati, suggesting a completely different, more conservative society and a local ritual. Their garments, however, may well be based on an Indian model. Like the Amaravati women they are naked to the waist, but their garments are tied at the waist with the ends falling between the legs, as do the men's garments. It is unclear here whether the legs are bare. Like the male figures on the obverse they wear heavy torques around the necks. Their hair is not elaborately dressed as is usual in early Indian sculpture, but falls straight over the shoulders. Their identity is unclear. They may be related to the royal figure on the other side of the stele, queens who patronised Buddhism.⁸⁸

The ritual associated with replicas of the site of Enlightenment may well have its origin in the *Kāliṅgabodhi Jātaka* in which the Buddha's disciple Ananda, concerned that when the Buddha was absent from the Jetavana monastery there were no sites for worship, was encouraged to create a shrine of *paribhoga*, a class of objects once used by him. Ananda thereupon planted a Bo tree seed, which immediately sprang forth and which, the Buddha said, "shall be as it were an abiding place for me". Subsequently the tree was paid great reverence, and the Buddha tells Ananda that similar festivals should be held at Bodhi shrines at other monasteries constructed to honour his Enlightenment.⁸⁹

Replicas of later forms of the Mahabodhi shrine at the site of the Enlightenment are found throughout Southeast Asia, particularly in Myanmar.⁹⁰ The Buddhist belief was that, by constructing Mahabodhi temples abroad, they could reproduce the Indian landscape and have access to the living presence of the historical Buddha. The power of Bodhgaya was therefore redeployed by Buddhists outside India as an element in their national religious landscapes which intimately connected their religious history with the Gautama Buddha.⁹¹ In this context, the earliest coinage of Sriksetra might be mentioned. The obverse of these coins, which represents the issuing authority, almost invariably depicts a *bhadrapiṭha* or throne. A rare Śātavāhana prototype has been proposed for this motif.⁹²

When kings constructed replicas in the centres of their political power, they were seen to establish a firm connection between their ability to lay claims to India's religious landscape and their authority as rulers. The motivation for building replicas of the site of Enlightenment was to give religious power to landscapes which had acquired Buddhism

87. Cameron 2010: 141-151. The sea route was first recorded in the *Han shu* (History of the [former] Han dynasty [206 BC-25 AD]); see Sun Laichen 1997: 9. For the overland route, the "Southwest Silk Road" via Yunnan, see Yang (2004: 281-322) and Sun Laichen (1997: 10), referring to the *Sanguo zhi* (History of the Three Kingdoms), completed around 290.

88. The figure to the left of the throne appears to be grimacing with an open mouth, but this is a consequence of a defect in the stone.

89. Woodward 2006: 83-86; Ray 2003: 256. While the present paper does not discuss the now largely resolved question of "aniconic" Buddhist art, Woodward's comments on the issue are pertinent.

90. An example dating to around the 8th century is the encased temple No. 996 at Pagan: see Gutman & Hudson 2005.

91. See Tun Aung Chain 2004: 127, where he compares the significance of the royal city site as a "victory ground" (Burmese *aungmyei*, Pali *jayabhumi*) with the *bodhimaṇḍa*, the site where successive Buddhas attain Enlightenment.

92. Mahlo 2012: 22-26.

after the time of the Buddha of our era.⁹³ So in the case of the Sriksetra stele the image of the site of the Enlightenment, the throne, would have had the same purpose.⁹⁴ Interestingly later inscriptions and chronicles make reference to the roles of both Buddhism and Brahmanism in the founding of Sriksetra. In a late 11th century inscription, King Kyanzittha recounts that the Buddha while in the Jetavana monastery prophesied that in the year when he entered Parinirvana, Kyanzittha, here an incarnation of the ascetic Viṣṇu, together with Gavampati, Indra, the deva Vissakarma and the *nāga* king Katakarma, would found the city of Sriksetra.⁹⁵ Viṣṇu-Kyanzittha is described as great in potency and energy and possessed of the five higher knowledges. The account of the foundation in U Kala's early 18th century *Mahayazawingyi* (Great Chronicle) and others of the period place the Buddha's prophecy to the time of his visit to Myanmar, having the foundation take place in the 101st year of the religion, and that a *nāga*, a *garuḍa*, a *kumbhaṇḍa* (potbellied *yakṣa*), Caṇḍi, and Parameśvara joined in its founding.⁹⁶

Historical Implications

How, then, was imagery from Sanchi and Amaravati transported to Myanmar? Metal-using societies on both sides of the Bay of Bengal had been linked through trade over the last half of the first millennium BCE, during which time urban and ritual centres along the trade routes had been developing. By the 1st century CE the Sanchi area was incorporated into the Śātavāhana empire, with its base in the Deccan. The Śātavāhanas in the Deccan patronised both Brahman and Buddhist establishments. The ancient town of Vidisha, some ten kilometres from Sanchi, was situated on the major trading routes linking Northwest India and the Ganges valley with the Deccan, with its ports on the east and west coasts which had a long history of trade with Ceylon and Southeast Asia. Buddhism had been spreading through this area since Mauryan times, and by the 1st century CE the monastic establishments were intimately connected with this trade, accumulating wealth through donations and interest from money lending and organising its redistribution. Indeed Ray has argued that the location of Buddhist monasteries along trade routes is evidence for a Buddhist trading network in the early historical period.⁹⁷ Buddhism, which had become institutionalised in the post-Mauryan period, had already been successful in pioneering newly developing regions in Andhra and elsewhere. The Sangha, once established, was well equipped to provide practical help to society and monks could interact with groups outside the core group.⁹⁸ It was thus attractive to the leaders of newly emerging polities, and soon followed the trade routes to Myanmar. Similarly, the rulers of these polities

93. McConeghy 2006: 64.

94. A similar Śaivite tradition connected pre-Angkorean Cambodia with Śaiva pilgrimage sites in India. Alexis Sanderson (2003: 403) says: "In the pre-Angkorean period most of the Śivas whose installation in Liṅgas is recorded in our inscriptions, at least two thirds, were given the names of the Śivas of venerable Śaiva sites of pilgrimage in India. They have a name in -īśvara preceded by the name of one of those sites, meaning, therefore, 'the Śiva of X', or the name (in -īśvara) of the deity that presides there. The effect of the practice is to transfigure the Khmer realm by creating a Śaiva landscape whose sacred enclaves could be seen as doubles of those of the religion's Indian homeland."

95. Duroiselle 1960: 88-89, 114.

96. Tun Aung Chain 2004: 124-126.

97. Ray 2003: 133.

98. Shimada 2009: 231-232; Ray 1994: 126-127.

were adopting the Bhāgavata cult and identifying with its heroes, notably Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa. This devotional cult, as it emerged, was also conducive to proselytisation, and was developing in importance in both the economic and political spheres. Its adherents were not as closely tied to the limits of the caste system, believing that anyone could achieve salvation. As Pierre-Yves Manguin has pointed out, Vaiṣṇava merchant communities, who were strong agents of integration and assimilation in India, probably played similar roles in Southeast Asia.⁹⁹

Similar steles are not found in India. Luce's supposition that the later Buddhist art of Sriksetra absorbed earlier megalithic beliefs, evidenced by the huge stone jar reliquaries and the megalithic qualities of the early reliefs, may well have some basis. Given that Halin 22 incorporates brick, an innovation from India, it is likely that certain aspects of the south Indian cultures were introduced along the trade routes during the second half of the first millennium BCE. The grouped stones at Halin 22 have their later counterparts in Buddhist triads at Sriksetra dating to sometime after the middle of the first millennium.

As Buddhism and the Bhāgavata system gradually supplanted earlier cults in the post-Aśokan period in the Deccan, so did they in Southeast Asia. There was no dichotomy between Brahmanism and Buddhism in ancient India or in the countries culturally influenced by India. While the lay community followed the precepts and doctrines of the Sangha in its search for salvation, its daily life continued to be governed by Brahmanical rituals.¹⁰⁰ Buddhism was unable to successfully resolve the question of providing ritual identity for its lay followers. In contrast to the detailed rules laid down for the monastic order, the laity was left to adopt the Brahmanical rites and rituals for its day-to-day functioning and it was the ruler who dictated the nature of the ritual.¹⁰¹

Oliver W. Wolters, in discussing the emergence of political elites in pre- and proto-historic Southeast Asia¹⁰² proposed that to gain influence and power beyond a kinship group in order to mobilize settlements, a leader had to be perceived as "a man of prowess" with superior and potent spiritual qualities which distinguished him from others. At a time around the beginning of the first millennium, when trade had precipitated urbanisation and consequent social diversity the adoption of Indian trappings of religion and kingship became the means to achieve this. Through the stele, itself a progression from animist practices, the headman, a "man of prowess" now asserts his power through Brahmanic ritual associated with a proto-Vaiṣṇavite cult, promising his people salvation, power, wealth and fertility, but to be sure of this he, or his queens, also appropriated Buddhism, which assisted in stabilizing the evolving society and indeed promised much the same.

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99. Manguin 2010; Dalsheimer & Manguin 1998.
 100. Ray 2003: 129-133.
 101. Ray 2003: 9-10.
 102. Wolters 1999: 112-114.

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Figure 1: The Sriksetra warrior/throne stele. Height 135 cm. Upper: Bob Hudson, composite, after Archaeology Department Myanmar photos. Lower: as displayed in National Museum, Yangon. Photo Zaw Min Yu.

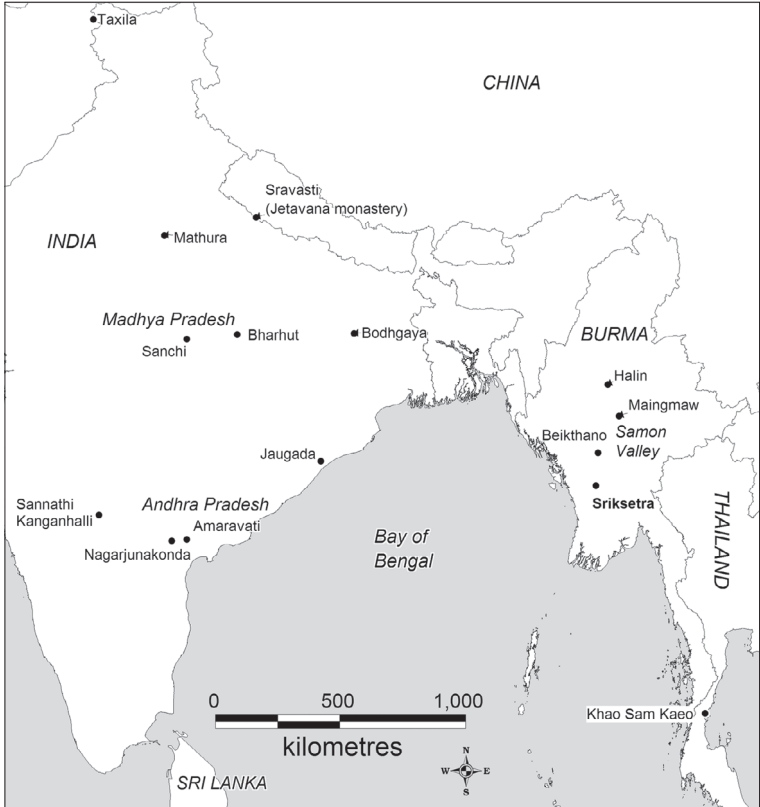


Figure 2: Places in the India-Myanmar (Burma) region mentioned in the text.
Map: Bob Hudson.

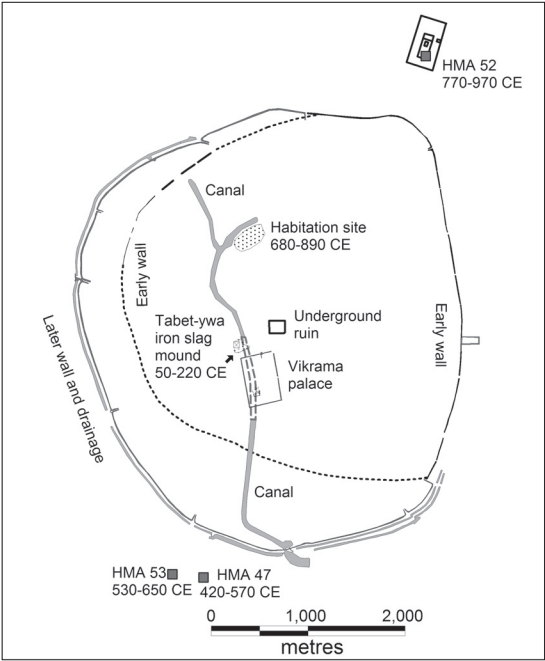


Figure 3: Sriksetra: key places mentioned in the text.
Plan: Bob Hudson.

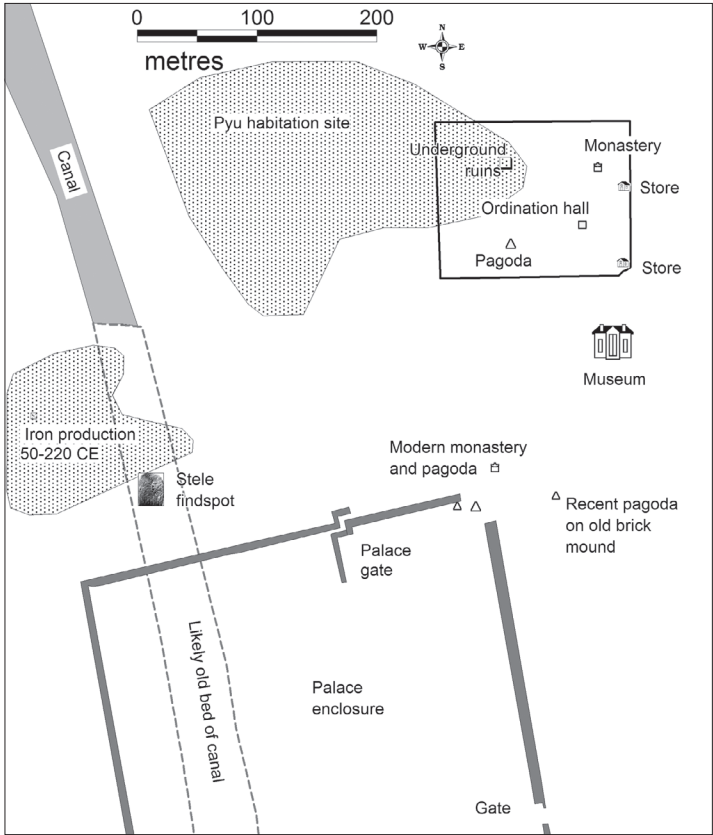


Figure 4: Sriksetra city centre, detail. Debris from the early iron site has extended over the canal after it became silted. The stele was found in the bed of this old waterway. Plan: Bob Hudson.



Figure 5: Kyaukka triad when found (above) and a stone still *in situ* today.
Photos: ASI 1910 (Plate 50, Fig. 1) & Bob Hudson.

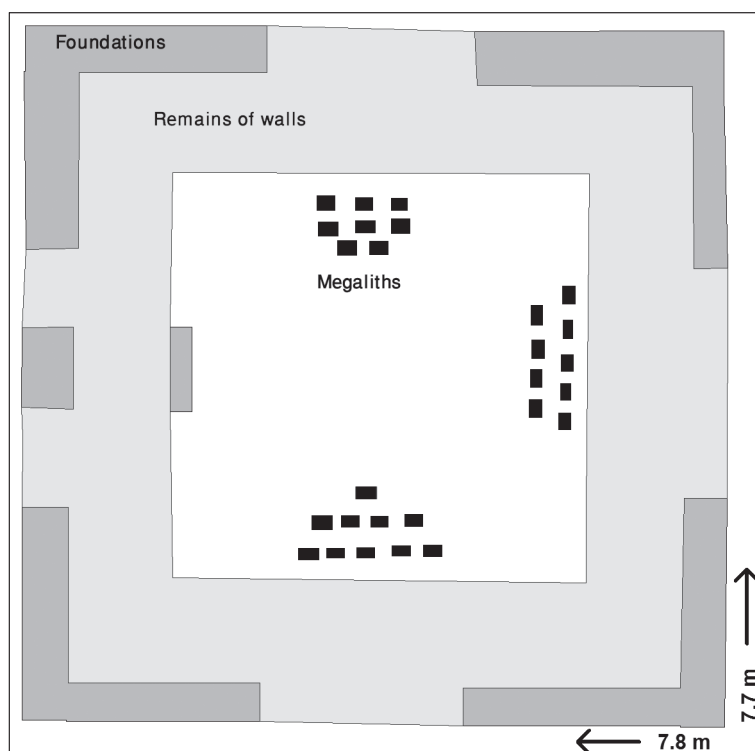


Figure 6: Halin 22, plan of brick shrine containing groups of upright stones. 7.8 metres square. Plan: Bob Hudson.



Figure 7: Halin 22, east and south stone formations. Photo: Bob Hudson.



Figure 8: Yakṣa at Sanchi, eastern gateway, south pillar. Photo: Public Domain.



Figure 9: Couple with attendant, Kanganhalli. Photo: Christian Luczanits, WHAV.



Figure 10: Turbans at Sanchi, Sriksetra and Kanganhalli. Images Public Domain, Zaw Min Yu & Christian Luczanits.

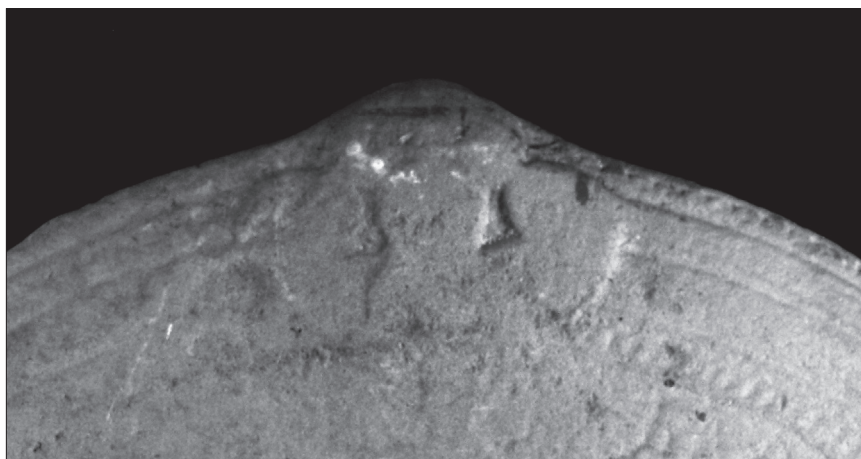


Figure 11: Throne side of Sriksetra stone, detail of the triratna at the apex. Photo: Zaw Min Yu.

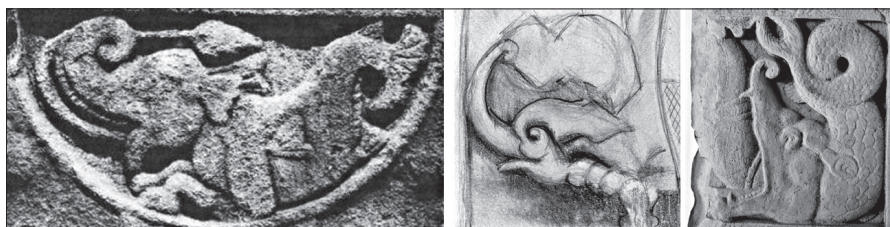


Figure 12: Makara from (left to right) Sanchi, Sriksetra and Amaravati. Images: AIIS 39494, Jane Tyrrell (drawing), & (after) Knox 1992, Fig. 35.



Figure 13: Throne from Kanganhalli. Photo: Christian Luczanits, WHAV.

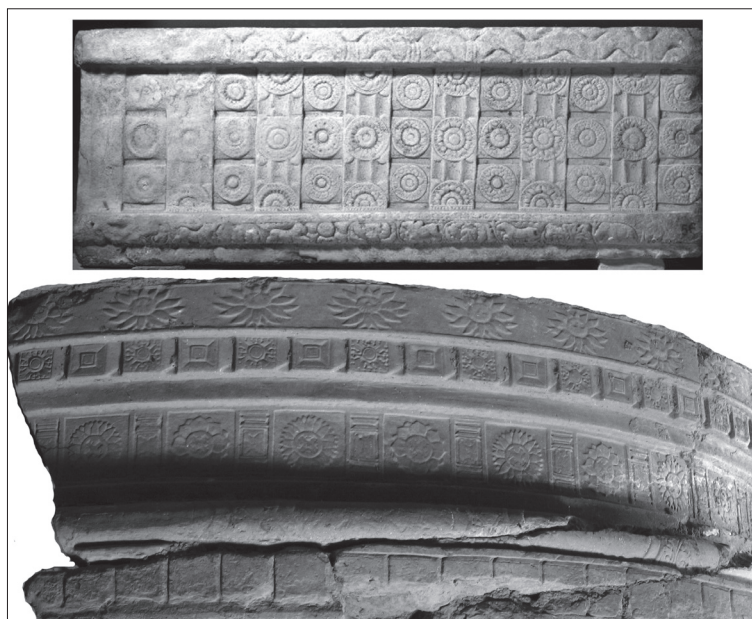


Figure 14: Drum frieze panel at Amaravati (above) and the Hsin-ma-ko-wun-din-kon throne in the Archaeological Museum, Sriksetra. Photos: Trustees of the British Museum (1880.7-7-9.56; Knox 48) & Bob Hudson.



Figure 15: Sriksetra, warrior holding *garuḍadhvaja*. Photo: Zaw Min Yu.



Figure 16: Sriksetra, warrior holding *cakra*. Photo: Zaw Min Yu.

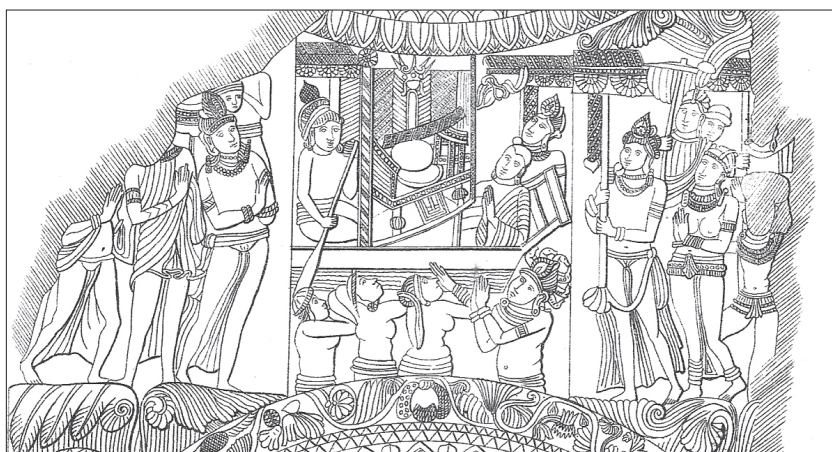


Figure 17: Amaravati, a throne, accompanied by a monk, is transported in a boat while a *nāga* king and his companions worship from the waters below. Drawing: Fergusson 1901, Plate 68.



Figure 18: Detail of the floral design on the canopy behind the Sriksetra throne. Photo: Zaw Min Yu.



Figure 19: Comparison: thrones from Sriksetra and Amaravati. Photo: Zaw Min Yu;
Drawing: Fergusson 1901.



Figure 20: A sandstone figure holding a club over his
shoulder, Hmawza Museum. Height 65 cm. Photo:
Archaeology Department.