Between 1541 and 1747 AD some thirty Khmer inscriptions, numbered collectively by Professor Coedes as K. 3011, were incised onto pillars in the galleries (Brāh Bān) connecting the second and third enclosures of Angkor Wat. Generally, these inscriptions commemorate Buddhist ceremonies performed in the galleries at the behest of secular worthies, and contain valuable information about religious practices and monastic structure. Others also give dates when monarchs or high officials visited the temple. The 1747 inscription is interesting for these reasons and because some forty of its seventy-six lines are given over to the partial biography of an important Cambodian official.

The years covered by this part of the inscription (1737-1747) coincide roughly with those generally given for the third and last reign of the Cambodian monarch Thammarājā IV. Little is known about his personality, beyond the fact that he spent the thirty years between his...
second and third reigns in semi-retirement in Siam. During this period, Cambodia was governed alternately by two kings, each of whom reigned twice. The first, Ang Im (reigned 1710-1722 and 1729-1730) was related to Thammārajā IV by marriage.\(^4\) He abdicated twice to his son, Sātā (reigned 1722-1729 and 1730-1737), but seems to have maintained considerable power, for a struggle to overthrow Sātā ensued immediately after his father's death in 1736. The chronicles relate that Sātā's wife, Sījhatū, and her relations plotted against Sātā. After losing battles to them, the king fled into those parts of the Mekong delta which were under Vietnamese control.\(^5\) At this point, the biographical portion of the 1747 inscription begins.

The inscription itself concerns three major characters: the narrator, an unnamed Cambodian official bearing three successive titles; his patron, Thammārajā IV, both before and after assuming power, and his wife, who accompanied the narrator to Angkor Wat. These persons appear in the inscription under the titles they bore at the moments of history being discussed—in other words, with several different names.

In December, 1747,\(^6\) the inscription begins, a Cambodian official entitled okna vohsa aggrāj, accompanied by his wife, convened monks at

\(^4\) Ang Im’s wife was the daughter of Thammārajā IV’s father, King Jai Jesthū, who reigned four times in Cambodia and died there in 1729. Ang Im’s wife’s half-sister, Sījhatū, married Ang Im’s son, Sātā.

\(^5\) Eng Sut, 861-862, says that Sātā personally sought help from the Vietnamese monarch, who refused it.

\(^6\) The date appears in the inscription as Thursday, thirteenth waxing day of the month magsir, 1669 sakā, year of the hare. Most of the other dates in the inscription are in the form of animal years.
Brāh Bān to recite prayers associated with memorial services for the dead.7 The inscription then doubles back to trace part of the narrator's career, beginning at an unspecified date (earlier than January, 1738) when he was in Siam with Thammhrāja IV and bore a title which translates roughly as minister of war.8 The “ruling monarch” of Cambodia, the inscription tells us, had recently left Ayudhya and had reached the district of Chantabori on the coast.9 Here he ordered the narrator to go to Lovek to meet “the lesser prince, entitled brāh kayev jā”. We know from the chronicles that Thammhrāja IV travelled from Ayudhya to Chantabori in 1737, and it seems likely that the “lesser prince” was his nephew Čān, a cousin of Sātā’s rebellious wife.10 The chronicles place Čān at about this time in Lovek, north of the traditional Cambodian capital at Udong, gathering troops to overthrow King Sātā.11

We do not know if the narrator’s mission was a success, but the inscription says that by January, 1738, he was already “sad, poor, without riches or possessions”. At this point an aunt visited him in Lovek,

7) This prayer is given in the inscription as baisakul ueniñā. I am grateful to mahā Prahsan Bunprahkong of the Department of Fine Arts for identifying it. See also Evénine Pore-Maspéro, Crémonies Privées des Cambodgiens (Phnom Penh, 1958), 76.

8) This title, copañā mondri sanggrām, still existed in the 1790s, but apparently went out of use at some point in the nineteenth century. See Prince Damrong Ratchanuphap (ed.) Tamra tamniap bandasak krong kampheha (Guide to the rankings of the royal household of Cambodia, Bangkok, 1922), 5, and Phong-sawadan khāmen, 237. This officer was responsible for the flintlock weapons of the ujayorāj, the prince who has abdicated. It was probably given the narrator by Thammhrāja IV when he abdicated leadership of the Cambodian court at Ayudhya to his son, an event which Leclère (377) places in 1732, and Eng Sut (857-858) five years later.

9) Before leaving Ayudhya, Thammhrāja IV probably obtained permission to do so from the Siamese king, Baromokot, who also provided him with troops. See Eng Sut, 864, and Phong-sawadan khāmen, 198.

10) Ratchaphongsawadan, 114, and Eng Sut, 861. Although Ang Im had been known by this title (bestowed on him in 1699 by his father-in-law, King Jai Jestā) for most of his life, he had assumed the title of ujayorāj when he abdicated for the last time in 1730.

11) Lovek, the capital of Cambodia throughout most of the sixteenth century, had been reoccupied in 1732, and made the capital again, by King Sātā. Sattā abandoned Lovek following his father's death in 1736. See Ratchaphongsawadan, 115; Phong-sawadan khāmen, 195, and Eng Sut, 855.
accompanied by an unmarried female cousin named Sor.12 These women gave him clothes and he “hurried after” them to Samrong Sen, a swamplike region north of Lovek, near the mouth of the Tonle Sap.13 Here he encountered a “young queen, princes, princesses, royal nephews and royal nieces; he also saw his own aunt, and his relations to seven degrees of kinship”.14 The “young queen” was probably Satti’s rebellious wife, Sibbā, who was in Samrong Sen at about this time.15 During the narrator’s stay there (and perhaps this is why he had gone) he courted and married a young woman, Pau, who had “large quantities of goods and slaves”. When the couple returned to the “fortified city” (presumably Lovek)16 they received titles from the “great prince”, Thammāra IV’s eldest son. This prince, who bore his father’s name and was to succeed him to the throne in 1748, had preceded his father into Cambodia, travelling via Angkor Wat.17 The narrator’s new title, okhā surinthrāthibbātī, carried with it, in the nineteenth century at least, revenues from the district of Roleia pear, south of the Tonle Sap.18 More interestingly, his wife’s new title, comtav sri ratna kesrā, combined those of his aunt (ratna kaññā) and his deceased mother (kañña kesrā). This fact reveals the narrator’s deep sense of obligation to these two women and suggests that his wife may even have been his aunt’s daughter, if not the girl Sor mentioned earlier in the inscription.19 No date is given for these events, which probably occurred in 1739 or 1740.

12) Aymonier, Le Cambodge, Vol. 3, 311, suggests that the narrator was in prison, but the form his rescue took makes this unlikely.
13) The region has been famous since the 1870s for the neolithic artifacts discovered there. For its strategic importance, see Aymonier, Le Cambodge, Vol. 1, 354.
15) Ratchaphongsawadan, 115; Phongsawadan khamen, 198; Engl Sut, 866.
17) This prince expected to be crowned himself, according to Leclère (377).
18) A. Fourès, “Royaume du Cambodge. Organisation politique”, Excursions & Reconnaissances 13 (1882), 169-211. In the 1790s, the title was associated with the ministry of justice; see Prince Damrong, 11.
19) For the mother’s title, see Silajarik, 117. The Khmer word pau, although frequent as a proper name, also means merely “younger”.
In 1741-1742, the inscription goes on, a royal personage referred to as the "revered father"—probably Thammārājā IV—gave the narrator the title he still bore in 1747—okūa voṃā aggrāj. In the eighteenth century, this official shared responsibilities with the minister of justice (the yommrāj) for the suppression of disorders. In the nineteenth century, with similar duties, the office was part of the parallel administrative structure allotted to the second princely house, that of the obhayeraṅ, or prince who has abdicated. This connection, and the absence of the phrase "ruling monarch" from the titles attached to the "revered father", suggests that in 1741-1742 Thammārājā IV was not fully in control of the kingdom. By 1744-1745, however, this situation appears to have changed, for the inscription tells us that a ruling monarch with some of the same titles as the "revered father" ordered the narrator to subdue bandits operating in five districts along the southern shore of the Tonle Sap. The narrator may still have had duties connected with one of these districts, Roleia Pear, and his expedition was apparently a success.

In the summer of 1747, the narrator was ordered to raise troops to fight a "princess who was the daughter of the prince brāh kaev fā". No other source mentions her, or this rebellion. However, we know from the chronicles that the brāh kaev fā originally named by Thammārājā IV, prince Cān, had died in 1743. His widow, whom he had married when Thammārājā IV assumed the throne, soon married one of the king's own sons. Another son was then appointed brāh kaev fā. This sequence of events may have insulted Cān's relations, who had been helpful in returning Thammārājā IV to power. A daughter from Cān's earlier marriage, owing nothing to the monarch, might thus have been able to rally troops whose loyalty was primarily to Cān. In any case, the rebellion apparently failed. For his generalship the narrator was offered the position of okūa tejō, with which to "consume"—or administer—the

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21) Etienne Aymonier, Le géographie du Cambodge (Paris, 1876), 42.

22) The inscription says that after the bandits were suppressed "commerce flourished, and goods went in and out", suggesting that the bandits had disrupted internal commerce at a time when Cambodia's access to the sea was blocked by the presence of a group of Sino-Vietnamese who administered the ports on the gulf. See Emile Gasparadonne, "Un chinois des mers du sud", JA 240 (1952), 363-386.

23) Eng Sut, 872; Phongsawadan khamen, 201.
important territorial division of Kompong Svay, north of the Tonle Sap. This part of the inscription is obscure, but the narrator apparently refused the promotion, perhaps temporarily, choosing instead to travel to Angkor Wat. His wife, his aunt, and several female relations went with him.

Here the biography stops, and the last lines of the inscription describe ceremonies at Brāh Bān in which the family took part. A curious feature of these ceremonies was the temporary entrance into religious life of several women, including the narrator’s wife and aunt, but not the narrator himself. For their services in reciting prayers and the great Jataka, monks at the temple were offered silver, cloth and other objects. The inscription closes by recalling the narrator’s mother and father, in whose honor an inscription had been incised onto a neighboring pillar in 1703.

The 1747 inscription is the last extensive one at Angkor Wat and reveals the importance of the temple in Cambodian religious life barely a century before it was “discovered” by the French. The inscription itself is helpful for the political and social information it conveys. For example, the importance of women in the narrator’s career, in the religious ceremonies at Brāh Bān, and in the two dynastic revolts mentioned in the inscription throws an interesting side-light onto the question of the dynamics of power at this time. The inscription also reveals a continuity of patronage and functions within a single bureaucratic career. Finally, the inscription provides valuable support for the chronicles and offers some clarifications in matters of dating. The length of time between Sattā’s departure and Thammrāja IV’s assumption of power, the inscription suggests, lasted at least from 1737 to 1741-1742, and perhaps longer. The chronicles obliquely confirm this delay, without stressing dates, by spelling out the extensive set of patronage and marriage arrangements which Thammrāja IV made among his potential supporters before resuming the throne. These arrangements seem to have disintegrated when Thammrāja IV died, in 1747-1748, and the dynastic turmoil which followed lasted for over thirty years.

25) Despite his refusal, the monarch appears to have given him the regalia of office.
26) This earlier inscription dates from Thammraja IV’s first reign.
27) Eng Sut, 873-877.
Translation

[To those who read what follows] greetings, good health, prosperity, victory.

In the year 1669 saka, year of the hare, month magir, thirteenth waxing day, a Thursday, at an auspicious moment all the ranking members of the sacred order assembled, the lords of the ever prosperous community—superiors, teachers, elders and novices in the right proportions, as requested by okûa vōhsā aggrāj and the lady sri ratna kesrā who had gone up [the steps] to [perform a ceremony with which to] earn merit, and had invited the monks to recite bahaskula aunica at Brâh Bûn.

When okûa vōhsā* aggrāj was still [entitled] copoña montri sanggrām, the ruling monarch [of Cambodia] bid farewell and left Krung Thep, the great city (Ayudhya) and came to the region of Chantabori, where he ordered copoña montri sanggrām to come first to the fortified city of Lovek and meet the lesser prince, whose title was brāh kaeo ūa.

In the year of the dragon, month maghi [the narrator] was in difficulty, sad, poor, without riches or possessions. Then the lady ratna kaïna, the younger sister of one of his parents, and an unmarried girl named Sor, a cousin, sent a silk skirt and a jacket to copoña in Lovek. He hurried after his relations to the region of Samrong Sen, where he met a young queen, princes, princesses, royal nephews and royal nieces; he also saw his own aunt, and his relations to seven degrees of kinship. He courted and took in marriage a young woman Pau, who had large quantities of goods and slaves.

[Having returned to] the fortified city, the great prince, whose title was sri thammrāja, bestowed the title of okûa surinhrashibbâti, and on the woman Pau that of sri ratna kesrā. Later the revered father, baromnit brâh bāt baromobupit, bestowed the title of okûa vōhsā aggrāj, in the year of the cock. In the year of the rat, the ruling monarch, brâh bāt baromnit brâh bāt baromobupit ordered okûa vōhsā aggrāj to assemble soldiers, slaves, dependants and relations to go out and subdue bandits in the districts of Roleia Pear, Borbaur, Klong, and Krakor. [The narrator] defeated the bandits, and made them resume their fealty to the ruling monarch. Then there was plenitude and abundance in the country; and the people were happy and at ease. Commerce...flourished* and goods went in and out,
On Friday, the 3rd waning day, month asadh, year of the hare, jai jēsthā thirāj rama thībāthi baromanadh brāh bāt barombupit, the ruling monarch, commissioned oknā vohsā agg...* to be a general. He accepted the royal command...*, bowed, bid farewell, and went out to gather soldiers, conscripts, dependants and relations to confront and wage war against a princess who was the daughter of the brāh kaev fā. He fought the princess and defeated her, driving out, dispersing, seeking out and disintegrating [the enemy forces] so that they became aware of the ruling monarch’s power. [Indeed, the victory was due to] the strategy, intelligence and tactics of oknā vohsā aggrāj, who planned and carried out attacks throughout the countryside, cutting across every road and path, until the forces, slaves and goods of the princess were led in [to the capital] and offered up [to the king].

Then brāh bāt baromnit brāh bāt barombupit, the ruling monarch, prepared an edict, benevolently bestowing upon oknā vohsā aggrāj the title of oknā tejō, to consume (administer) the province of Kompong Svay. [The narrator] implored the king, and did not accept the reward; (but?) the king honored him with a gold plate and a four-tiered umbrella. [The narrator] bowed low and bid farewell to brāh bāt baromnit brāh bāt barombupit. He went away and came to earn merit at Brāh Bān.

[There he] entered into religious life the lady ratna kanna, his aunt; his wife, the lady sri ratna hesrā; a young woman Kim, who was a relative by marriage; and two nieces. These entered as nuns, to earn merit on a single day. For his aunt, the following monks were invited to recite bāsukul annicā: two superiors, five abbots, and eleven teaching monks. To recite on behalf of oknā vohsā aggrāj were one superior, one abbot, and two teaching monks. For the lady ratna hesrā there were one superior, two abbots, and six teaching monks. The following contributions were made: for each superior, an ounce of silver; for teaching monks, eight strings of coins per monk.

[When the monks had] finished reciting, the two superiors and the three abbots were each offered an ounce of silver, and teaching monks

* Lacuna in original.
were offered two baht. The two novices who had recited prayers were offered one baht, and the seventy novices who had joined in chanting handsukul annică each received a string of coins.

Then the congregation was asked to recite the great Jataka, once, and Kuñ, an eight-year-old boy, was offered to the Law, along with three baht, and was repurchased for seven ounces of silver. The congregation was asked to record these actions, and to record the honor [which fell to those who] entered religious life. Other offerings [to the monks] included a carved box, a shoulder-bag, a length of white cloth, and a silk scarf for betel. The cost of musicians was seven baht. All the offerings totalled three jing of silver.

Those who made the offerings were okūa voṁsa aggrāj, the son of okūa krālāhom senabortes and of lady kaṁna kesra: the lady ratnā kesra; and Hiñ, Prom, and Kuñ. All of these people were eager to gain merit, and made these offerings to their parents and ancestors, to seven degrees of kinship.

They ask further to be granted great age, reaching five thousand rainy seasons, as well as wisdom and riches resembling those of (a mythical merchant named) Jotikasetti. Finally, they beg to be granted health and happiness until the time that they enter Nirvana.