

A Basic Study of Tā Prohm (Vat Bāṭī) Inscription

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About more than 500 hundred Sanskrit inscriptions have been discovered in Cambodia. These belonged to different eras such as Funan, Chenla and Angkor periods. In the Funan period, four Sanskrit inscriptions have been found such as the Vo Canh, Neak Tā Dambang Dek, Prasat Pram Loveng and Tā Prohm of Vat Bāṭī. The Vo Canh and Tā Prohm reflected Buddhism that pointed out the phases of Buddhist aspects and the rest are described Hindu beliefs.

The Tā Prohm inscription also reflects the Cambodian people who worshipped Buddhism. This inscription tells us about the details of the splendour of Buddhism. It mentions of both Kaundinya Jayavarman and Rudravarman who begin with an invocation addressed to the Buddha. This is followed by the mentioning of holy relics, the Buddhist triple jewels, and details of how a Brahman court official becomes a Buddhist lay-disciple.

According to the inscription the king of Funan sponsored Buddhist activities for purely political imperatives. And certainly, little is known about the domestic life of Cambodia. The inscriptions and other material remains are the works of elites and were often associated with the kings himself. We do not know definitely when Buddhism first arrived in Cambodia. But, after a few centuries, Buddhism has flourished in the Funan kingdom. Because of this fact, I would, therefore, like to investigate the splendour of Buddhism through Tā Prohm inscriptions.

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