

#### 49. INSCRIPTION

Go Xoai, Duc Hoa district, Long An Province, 7th–8th century  
Gold foil, 4.05 cm × W: 21 cm  
Long An Museum, BT87-M1-II-1

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Peter Skilling, "A Buddhist inscription from Go Xoai, southern Vietnam and notes towards a classification of *ye dharma* inscriptions," in *80 pi Satsadachan Dr. Prasert na Nagara: ruam bot lahwam wichakan dan charuk lae ekasan-born (80 Years: A collection of articles on Epigraphy and ancient documents published on the occasion of the celebration of the 80th birthday of Professor Dr. Prasert Na Nagara)* Bangkok 21 March 2542 [1999], 172. Basing his reading on Ha Van Tan's reading, Skilling notes the language is hybrid Pali; the reading is as follows (p. 173):

- (1) *ye dhamma hetuppabhava tesam hetum tathagato avaca tesanca yo nirodho evamvadi mahasamano*
- (2) *dukkham dukkhasamutpado dukkhassa ca atikkamo airo atthangiko maggo dukkhopasamagamiko*
- (3) *tadyatha dandake pandake kaurande keyyure dantile dantile svahah*
- (4) *tadyatha adhame amvare amvare parikunja nata nata puskaradhaha jala khama khaya ilimi*
- (5) *liki limili kirtti caramudre mudramukhe svahah*

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The Pali Vinaya 1: 40, 28–29, as translated in Peter Skilling, "Traces of the Dharma," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 90–91 (2003–4): 273–87.

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Skilling, *80 Pi*, 174.

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Ha Van Tan, "Inscriptions on the Gold Leaf of Go Xoai (Long An)," in Le Xuan Diem, Dao Linh Con, and Vo Si Khai, *Van Hoa Oc Eo*, 439–41; and Skilling, *80 Pi*, 172.

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Skilling, *80 Pi*, 176.

The text of this inscription indicates the site of Go Xoai in Long An Province was a Buddhist site, as it records the *ye dhamma* (Sanskrit, *ye dharma*) verse, the *dukkha dukkhasamutpada* verse, and two mantras.<sup>43</sup> The *ye dharma* verse, or the so-called Buddhist creed, is the text most commonly inscribed on Buddhist sculptures and found embedded in images or installed at Buddhist sites, as it expresses the important Buddhist concept of dependent origination. The creed can be translated:

The Tathagata has declared the cause and also the cessation  
Of the things that arise from causes:  
Such is the teaching of the Great Samana.<sup>44</sup>

The second line of the text of this gold inscription summarizes the four noble truths (from the *Dhammapada*), a text only found in three other inscriptions (two in Thailand and one in India), while the last two lines (mantras) have not been identified.<sup>45</sup> The epigraphy suggests to one scholar a date of the eighth or ninth century, and the seventh or eighth to another.<sup>46</sup> Based on Sanskrit and Pali elements in the text, Skilling has noted that it cannot be a Theravada text, and very reservedly suggests the Sammitiya school as a possible affiliation for practitioners at the site.<sup>47</sup>

#### LITERATURE

Peter Skilling, "A Buddhist inscription from Go Xoai, southern Viet Nam and notes towards a classification of *ye dharma* inscriptions," in *80 pi Satsadachan Dr. Prasert na Nagara: ruam bot lahwam wichakan dan charuk lae ekasan-born (80 Years: A collection of articles on Epigraphy and ancient documents published on the occasion of the celebration of the 80th birthday of Professor Dr. Prasert Na Nagara)*, Bangkok 21 March 2542 [1999]; Peter Skilling, "Traces of the Dharma," 2003–4; James C. M. Khoo, *Art and Archaeology of Fu Nan: Pre-Khmer Kingdom of the Lower Mekong Valley*, 2003; Le Xuan Diem, Dao Linh Con, and Vo Si Khai, *Van Hoa Oc Eo: nhung kham pha moi*, 1995; Bui Phat Diem, Dao Linh Con, and Vuong Thu Hong, *Khao Co Hoc Long An: Nhung The Ky Dau Cong Nguyen (Archaeology in Long An Province: Centuries in the Early Christian Era)*, 2001; plates, pp. 277 and 289 as well as the appendix written by Ha Van Tan, "Inscriptions on the gold leaf of Go Xoai (Long An)."

