



Figs. 3, 4a, 4b High tiara and jaṭāmukuta on Beng Mealea Avalokiteśvara and Bánh Ít Buddha. (P. Sharrock)

protective *nāga* suggests the Theravada myth of Śākyamuni being protected from a storm by the serpent Mucalinda. The importance of the icon to the Cambodian Buddhists is attested in its becoming their prevalent icon for centuries and was reproduced an untold number of times. In about 1200 CE such an icon, without jewelry, was erected as the principal icon of the central sanctuary of Jayavarman VII's Bayon. The *nāga*-Buddha remains in continuous production today, when it is directly associated with a giant serpent wrapping himself around the meditating Buddha against a storm some weeks after his enlightenment.⁹

The portrait of the Buddhist king Tribhuvanādityavarman and his lineage that emerges from K. 1297 is a very different from the picture painted by George Cœdès, who was guided only by Jayavarman VII's low estimate of his predecessor in two of his inscriptions (K. 228 and K. 485). These call Tribhuvanāditya 'a servant (*bhṛtya*) who killed his master (*bhartṛ*):'¹⁰ On this basis Cœdès called him a 'mandarin' and a 'rebel' who overthrew Yaśovarman (II) and proclaimed himself king.¹¹ The political background to Jayavarman's ungracious attitude to his predecessor, and the exact role of 'Yaśovarman (II)' has yet to be unravelled and will be partly explored below. For the moment we can say it is clear from the newly found inscription that Tribhuvanāditya was a normal, legitimate sovereign who had to battle with enemies and who fulfilled his duty in architectural accomplishments that place him among the three great builders of Cambodia. K. 1297 states that he built eight Buddhist sanctuaries and erected Buddha icons in them. Art historians today say the diadems of the Buddhas are said to be in the 'Angkor Wat style' and with the high hair cover were presumably all his, including the Bánh Ít Buddha. Tribhuvanāditya's Avalokiteśvara wore the same diadem. The only icon recovered from Tribhuvanāditya's vast, crumbled forest temple complex of Beng Mealea, east of Angkor, is a seated four-armed Avalokiteśvara with a small icon of the *Jina* Amitābha set above an unusually high tiara and in front of a four-tiered, lotus leaf and jewel bedecked hair-cover or *jaṭāmukuta*.¹² (Fig. 3) The Bánh Ít Buddha (Figs. 44, 46) is similarly adorned, but naturally without the Amitābha borne by a Bodhisattva. In the light of inscription K. 1297, both icons should now, in my view, be considered to be in the 'late Angkor Wat style' attributable to the reign of

Tribhuvanādityavarman (r. 1149-c.1180 CE).

Tribhuvanāditya was killed when a Cham army attacked and looted Angkor probably just before Jayavarman VII seized power with his Khmer-Cham army in 1182 CE. Bernard Philippe Groslier's excavations indicated the huge wooden royal palace was burnt down.¹³ Michael Vickery has shown that the Chinese sources on the Cham attack, dating it to 1177 CE, are unreliable.¹⁴ But an inscription in Po Nagar, Kauthara, mentions a gift made to that Brahmanical temple in 1182 CE by king Jaya Indravarman of Grāmapura, after he had gone 'to take the country of the Kambujas'. This could indicate the Angkor raid and Tribhuvanāditya's death took place as late as 1181-2 CE. As the Cham king claimed control of much of Champa, it is not impossible that he offered another gift of the *nāga*-Buddha to the Buddhist Bánh Ít sanctuary in neighbouring Vijaya. Tribhuvanāditya's splendid *nāga*-enthroned Buddha could have been plundered from one of his temples and carried on the back of an elephant across the Annamite mountains to Champa. Plundering the icons of neighbouring polities is frequently recorded in inscriptions, with thanks to the gods for according victory and the right to take their images for veneration at home. A later Po Nagar inscription says king Jayavarman VII (or more probably his general Cham prince Vidyānandana) 'took the capital of Champa and carried off all the *liṅgas*.'¹⁵

Tribhuvanāditya was not nearly as engaged in foreign expeditions as his older brother Sūryavarman or his successor Jayavarman. He launched one unsuccessful expedition against the Đai Việt at the beginning of his reign in 1150 CE, which hit bad weather and withdrew before going into action.¹⁶ He then sent a senior Khmer general in an attempt to crush a revolt in southern Champa in which Tribhuvanāditya's eventual successor Jayavarman VII was probably fighting on the Cham side. Before K. 1297 established Sūryavarman's death in 1149 CE, historians saw both actions as the last sorties of the aging Sūryavarman. Tribhuvanāditya's temperament was different and he appears to have withdrawn from engagements in Champa for the rest of his reign.

Let us return now to Sūryavarman's restless campaigning in neighbouring territories. He is known to the world as the builder of Angkor Wat, one of the largest and most elegant sacred monuments on earth. But he was first and foremost a campaigning soldier, dedicated to expanding his kingdom. While still in his teens