

BELIEFS & VALUES: HUMAN-NATURE RELATIONSHIPS IN CAMBODIA



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A guide for Buddhist monks in Cambodia

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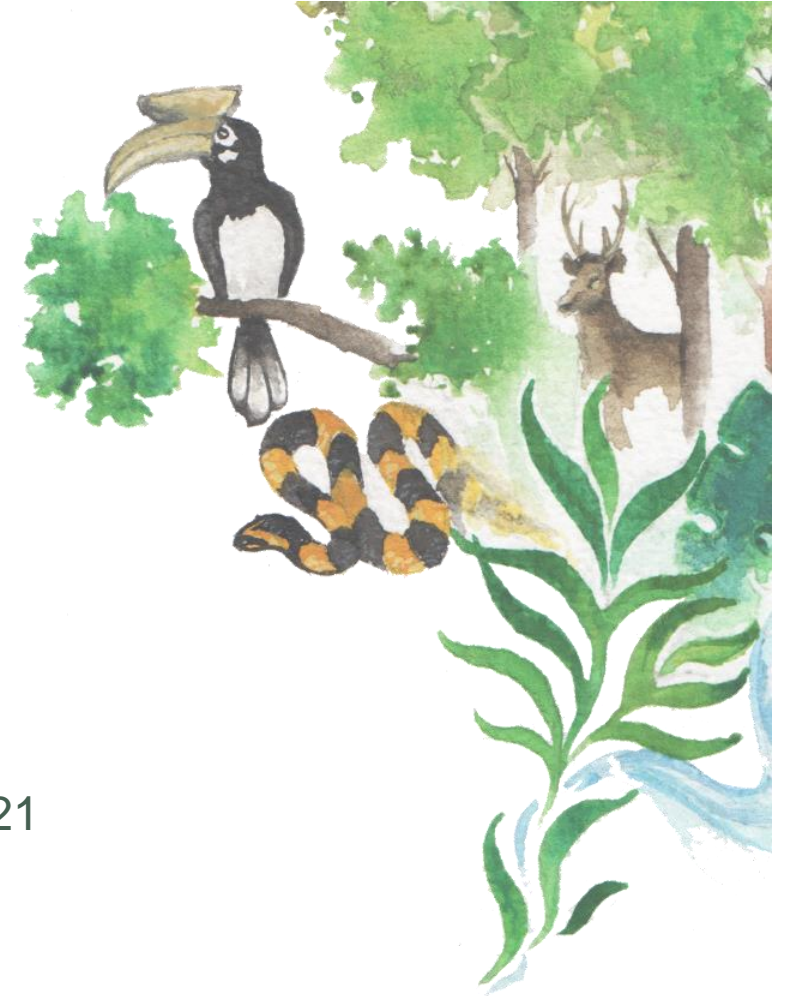


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PART 1: BUDDHISM & NATURE

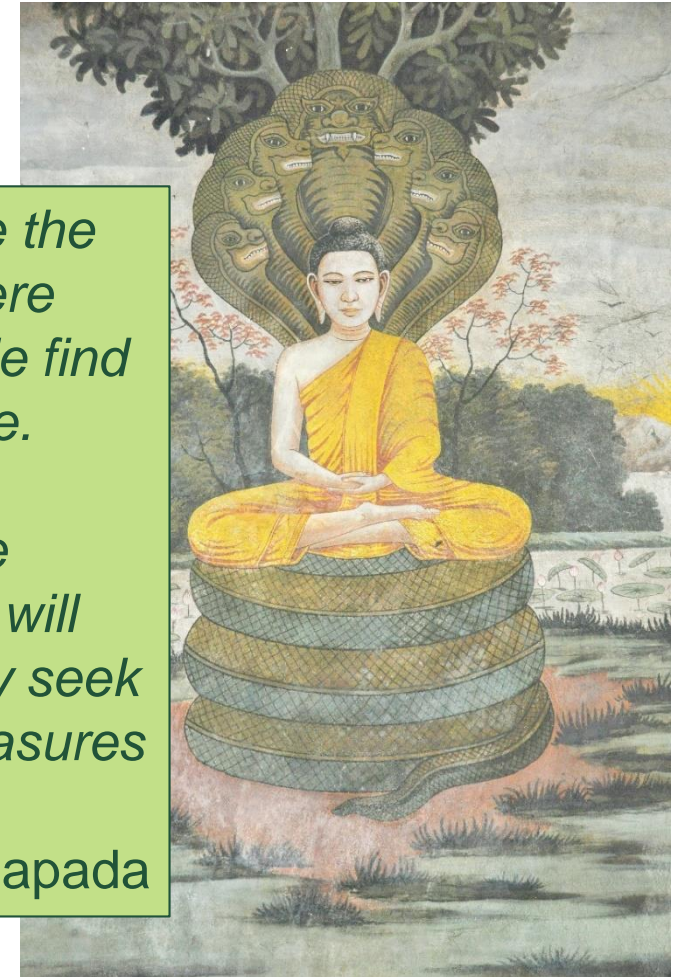


Wat Prasat Bakong, Siem Reap

*Delightful are the
forests where
ordinary people find
no pleasure.*

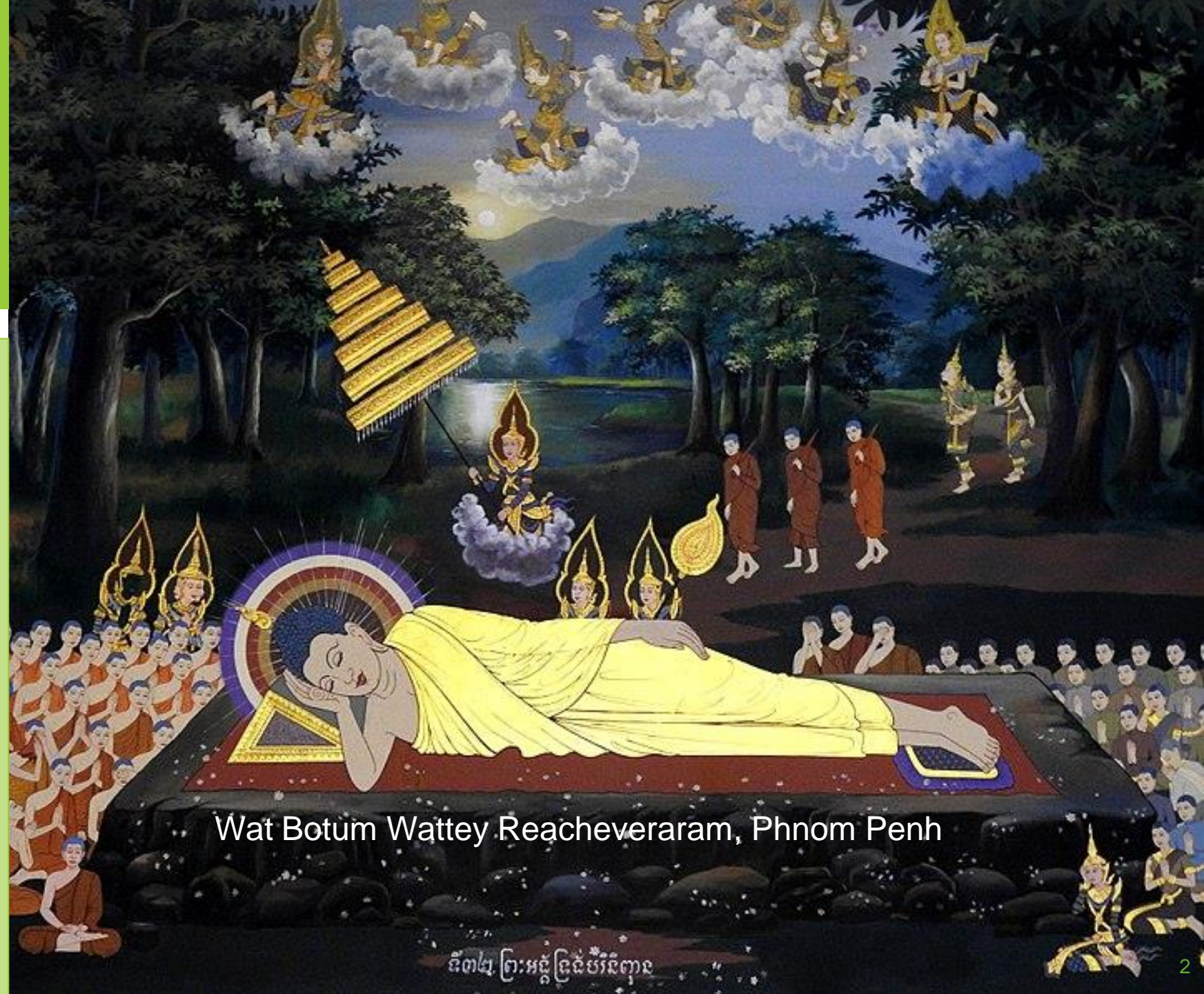
*There the
passionless will
rejoice, for they seek
no sensual pleasures*

Dhammapada



BUDDHA

- Birth under a Sal tree
- Early meditations under rose apple tree
- Enlightenment under Bodhi tree
- First sermon in deer park
- Attained nirvana between twin sal trees



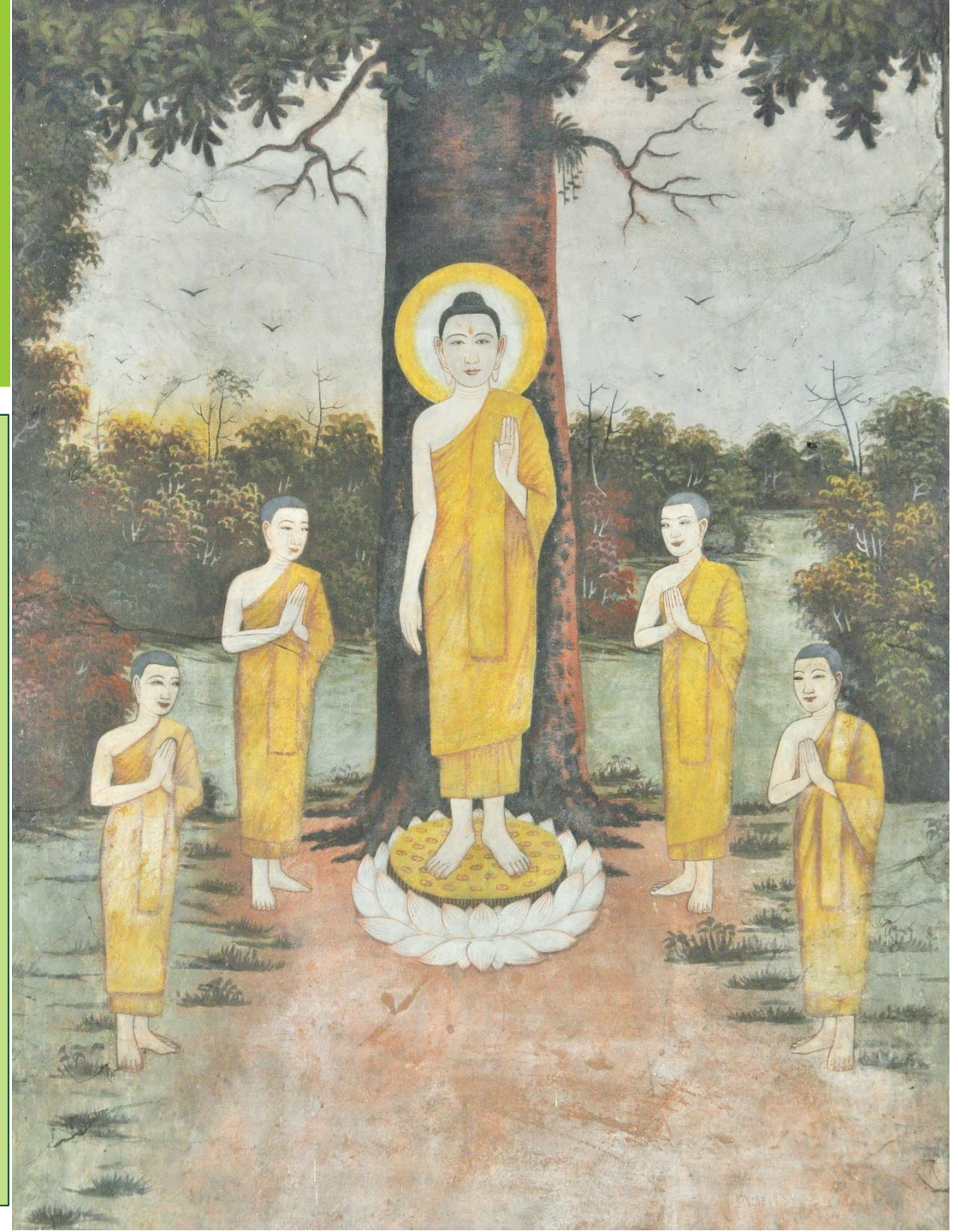
Wat Botum Wattey Reacheveraram, Phnom Penh

DHAMMA

*the cause was there,
the consequences followed;*

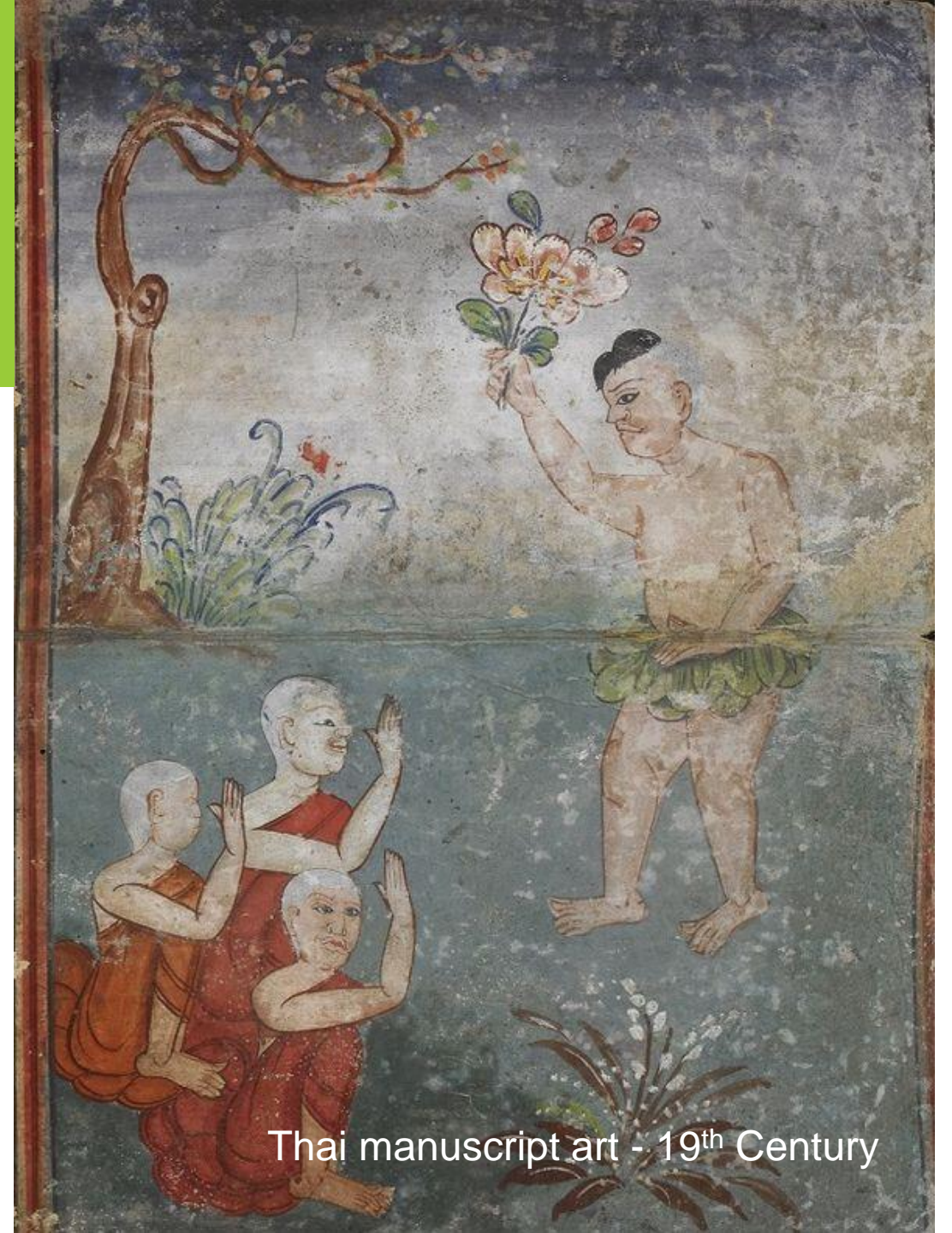
*because the cause is there,
the effects will follow*

Buddha (sutra)



DHAMMA

- What is the effect of our actions on the environment?
- Harmony between all parts of the environment
- Compassion and respect for animals as different yet equal to humans



Thai manuscript art - 19th Century

PANCA SILA – FIVE BUDDHIST PRECEPTS



Wat Prasat Bakong, Siem Reap

PANCA SILA – FIVE BUDDHIST PRECEPTS

Interpreted from an environmental perspective:

- Not Killing (No harming) – applicable to environmental conflicts & pollution
- Not Stealing - applicable to corporate exploitation of resources
- Not engaging in abusive relations – applicable to cruelty to non-humans
- Not lying – applicable to advertising that promote consumerism
- Not taking intoxicating substances

after Kaza (2006)

BUDDHA (SUTTA NIPATA)



Know ye the grasses and the trees... Then know ye the worms, and the moths, and the different sorts of ants...

Know ye also the four-footed animals small and great, the serpents, the fish which range in the water, the birds that are borne along on wings and move through the air...

Know ye the marks that constitute species are theirs, and their species are manifold.

Sutta Nipata

MAHA GHOSANANDA

When we respect the environment, then nature will be good to us. When our hearts are good, then the sky will be good to us.

The trees are like our mother and father, they feed us, nourish us, and provide us with everything; the fruit, leaves, the branches, the trunk. They give us food and satisfy many of our needs. So we spread the Dharma (truth) of protecting ourselves and protecting our environment, which is the Dharma of the Buddha.

When we accept that we are part of a great human family—that every being has the nature of Buddha—then we will sit, talk, make peace.

Maha Ghosananda

SANGHA



ROLE OF MONKS IN SOCIETY

*People and forests are connected.
If we take care of ourselves we will
take care of the forests and the
forests will care for us in return.*

Samdech Preah Maha Goshananda

- Vinaya Pitaka 1
- Vassa
- Engaged Buddhism



Pra Lay, Arang Valley

ENGAGED BUDDHISM



We must find the courage to leave our temples and enter the temples of the human experience, temples that are filled with suffering... This will be a slow transformation, for many people throughout Asia have been trained to rely on the traditional monkhood. Many Cambodians tell me, "Venerable, monks belong in the temple." It is difficult for them to adjust to this new role, but we monks must answer the increasingly loud cries of suffering. We only need to remember that our temple is with us always. We *are* our temple.

Maha Ghosananda (1992)

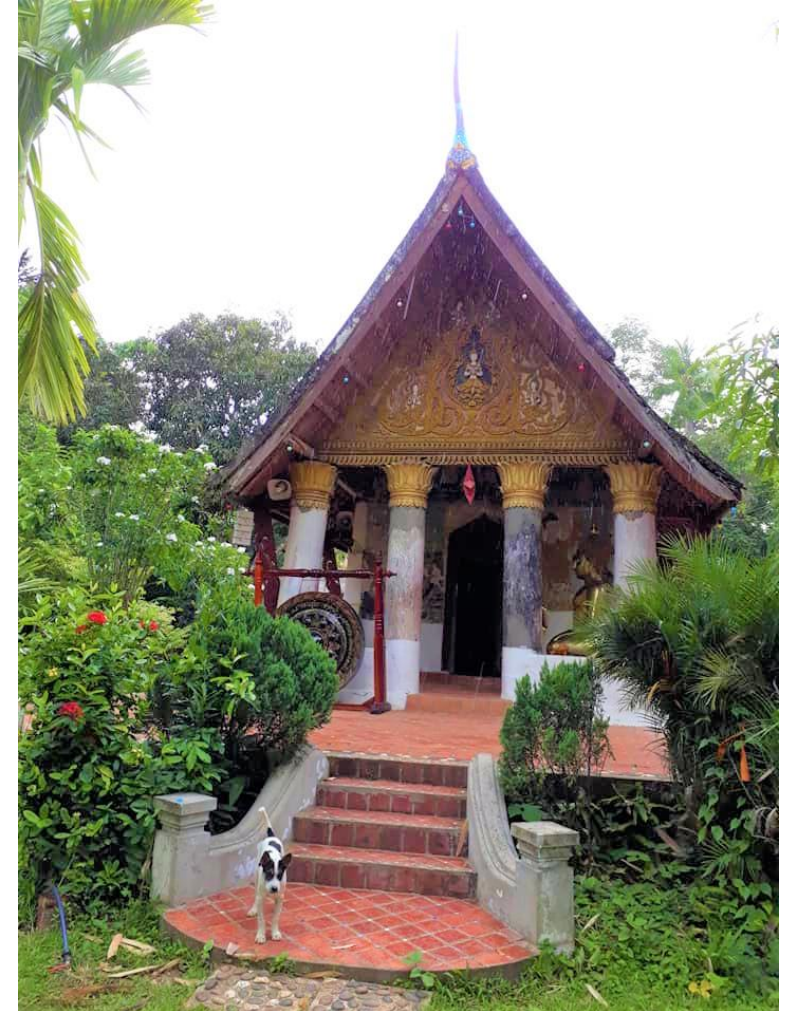
WATS & WATARAMS



WATS & WATARAMS



- Wat: heart of the community. Exemplary & education role
- Buddha encouraged monasteries in natural settings. *E.g. Veluvanarama* – temple in a grove of bamboo
- *Vihara* (Buddhist temple) = open place in the forest (pali)
- Watarams: pagodas with *abhyadana* land/river- front
- Khmer Buddhist tradition since King Sisowath: plant Koki trees in temple grounds



PART 2: TRADITIONAL BELIEFS



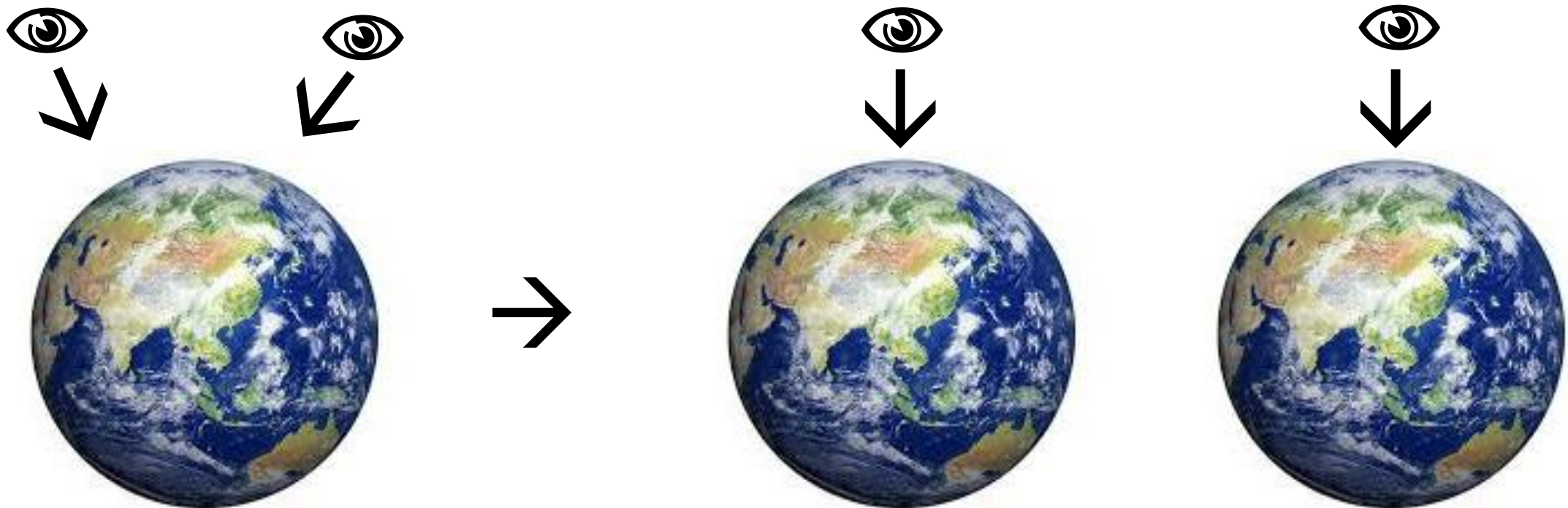
Buddha stressed the need for co-existence with other religions and beliefs:

As long as people respect the other religious beliefs and old holy places, the social environment will be healthy

Buddha
Mahaparinibbana Sutta

SCIENCE AND TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

Not just different views on the same world, but different understandings of the world itself: what 'the nature of reality' is; what exists / doesn't exist; how humans and nature relate; how the world 'works'

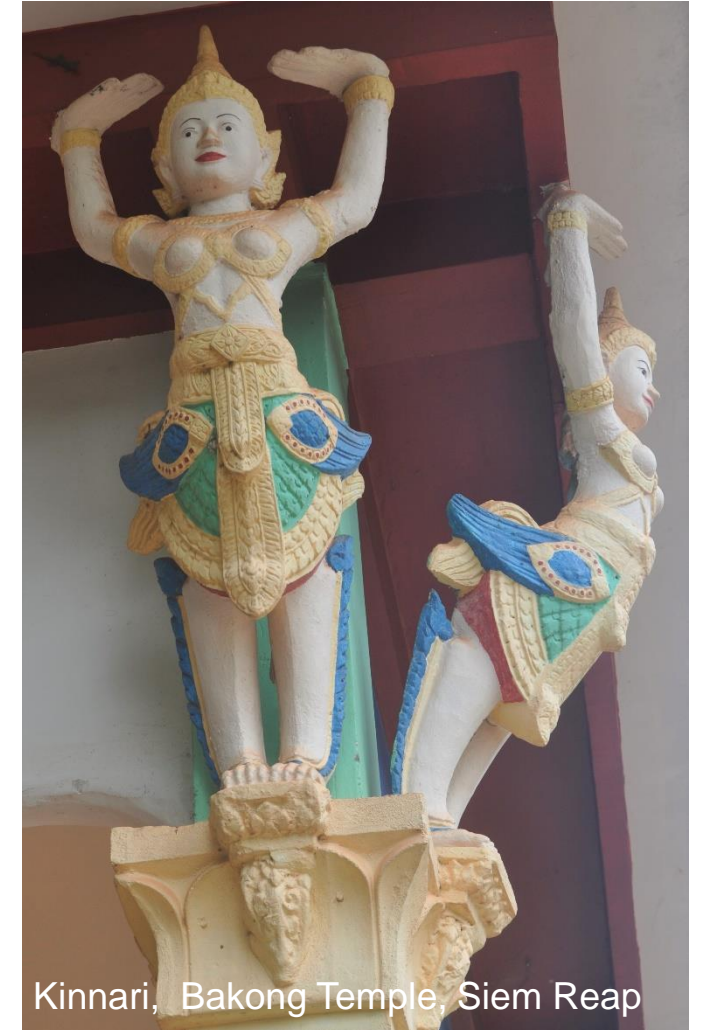


SCIENCE AND TRADITIONAL BELIEFS



*Do humans and non humans
(animals; spirits) have a similar
body?*

*Do humans and non humans
(animals; spirits) have the same
mind?*



Kinnari, Bakong Temple, Siem Reap

SCIENCE AND TRADITIONAL BELIEFS



Humans & Non-Humans	Science	Traditional beliefs
Similar body	Yes	No
Similar mind	No	Yes

This helps one understand why scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge is often so different.

Different, but equally true and equally important!



Kinnari, Royal Palace, Phnom Penh

TRADITIONAL BELIEFS IN CAMBODIA

Buddhism co-exists peacefully with indigenous belief systems

- Guardian spirits (*Neak Ta*)
- Spirits of fallen heroes
- Ancestors
- Devas
- Focus on human-nature harmony
- Often very beneficial for environmental conservation
- Joint Buddhist – Spirit ceremonies (E.g. in Thailand: Conservation in Karen areas; abbot Phra Kru Pitak Nantakhum’s tree ordinations)



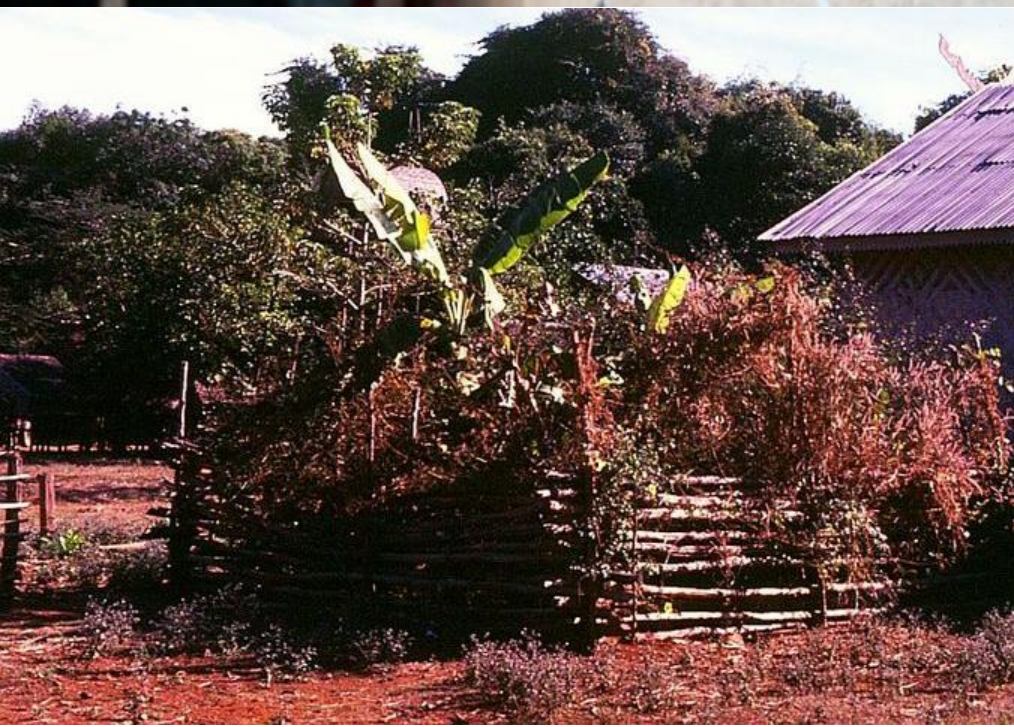
Prayer to the Mera Mountain spirits

SPIRITS - GUARDIANS OF THE FOREST

- Thevoda story
- Spirit related codes of conduct in the forest
- Vassa



Tree spirit pagoda, Alishan, Taiwan



SPIRIT RELATED CODES OF CONDUCT / TABOOS

- Neak Ta
(guardian spirits)
- Areak
(ghost spirits)
- Deva
(Buddhist deities)



PART III- SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL VALUE OF PLANTS, ANIMALS, SITES

- Sacred plants – tree, flower
- Sacred animal species
- Sacred Natural Sites
- Culturally meaningful species



Prey Lang Forest

SACRED PLANTS



- Lotus: flower rising above the muddy waters is symbolic of beings that have risen above greed, hatred, and delusion.
- Lotus flowers offerings at Visakh Bochea
- Bon Phka (flower ceremony)- the story of King Serey Lanka



SACRED TREES – VANASPATI & BUDDHA'S 'FURNITURE'



Gautama Buddha attained Enlightenment under a Peepal Bodhi tree

SACRED TREES - VANASPATI & BUDDHA'S 'FURNITURE'

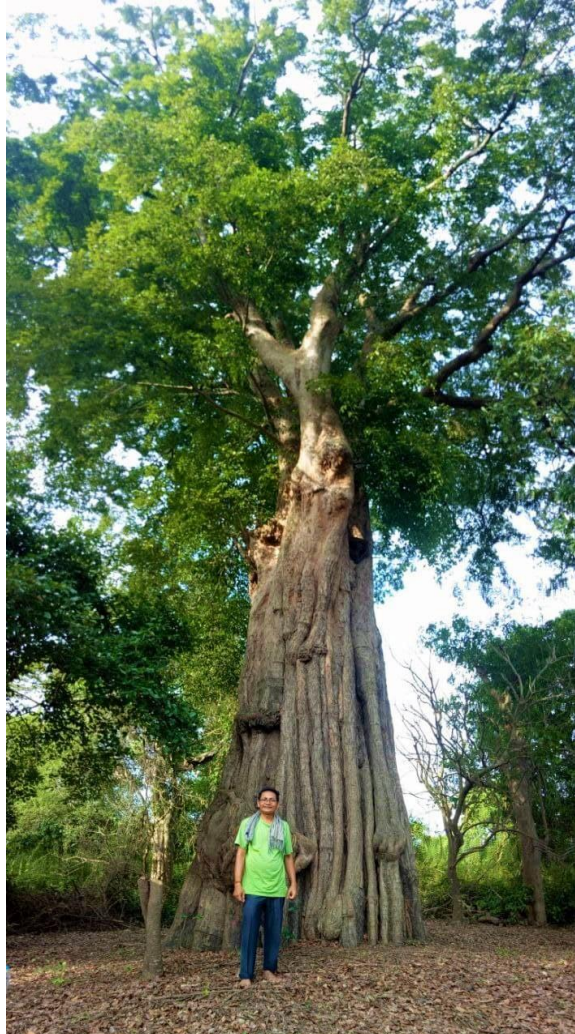


Taṇhāṅkara Buddha attained Enlightenment under a Rukkaththana tree

SACRED SPECIES IN BUDDHISM



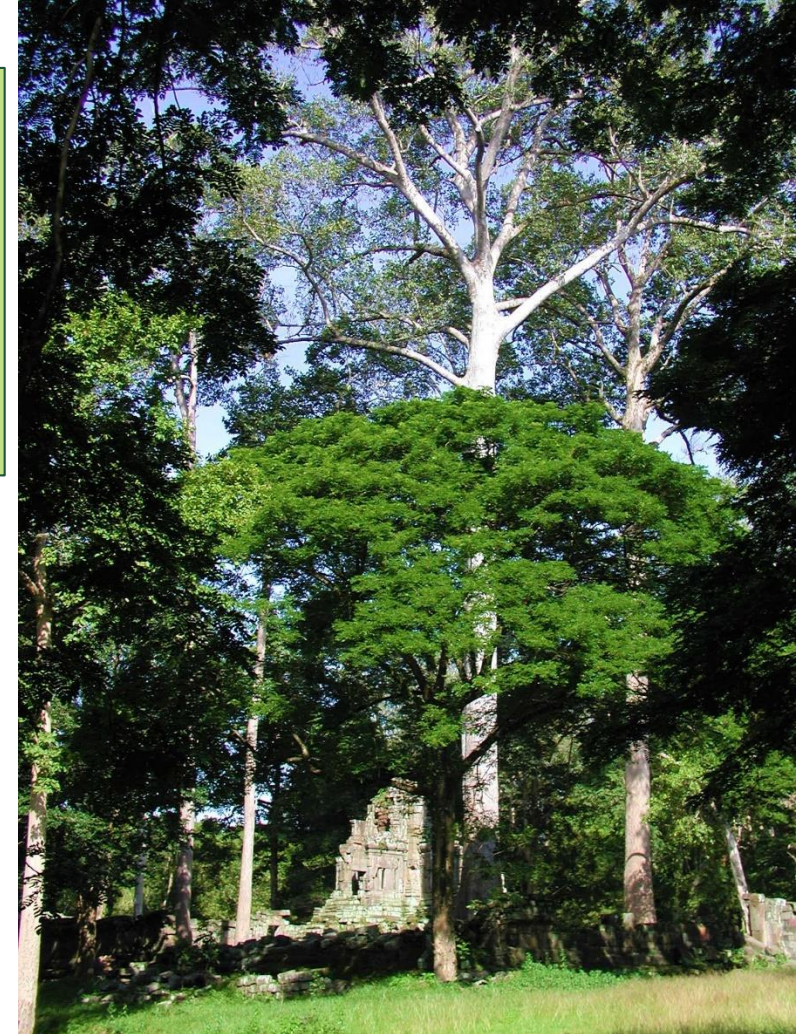
SACRED TREE MAPPING



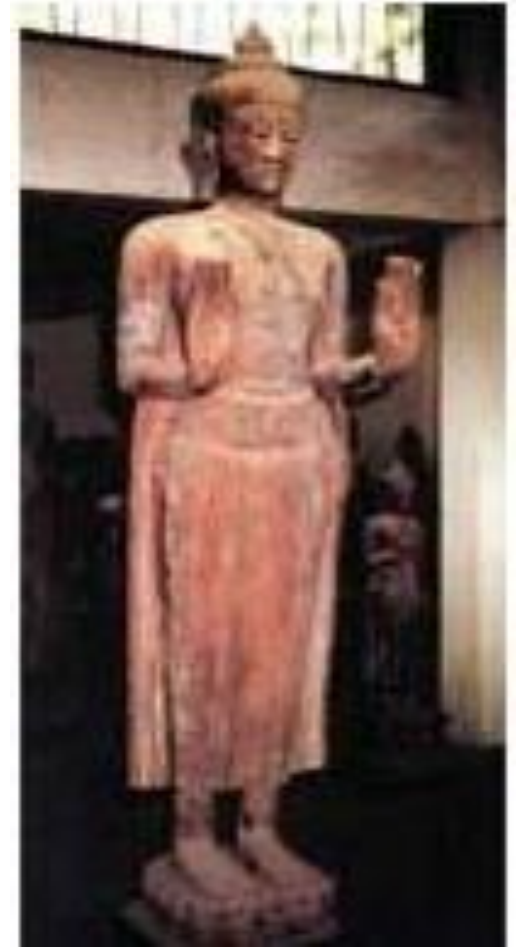
*The tree that gives you pleasant shade
to sit or lie at need, you should not tear
it's branches down, a cruel wanton deed
(The Jataka, Vol. IV)*

What trees in your area are:

- Vanaspati
- Related to a Buddha's enlightenment
- Home to powerful spirits



SACRED TREE



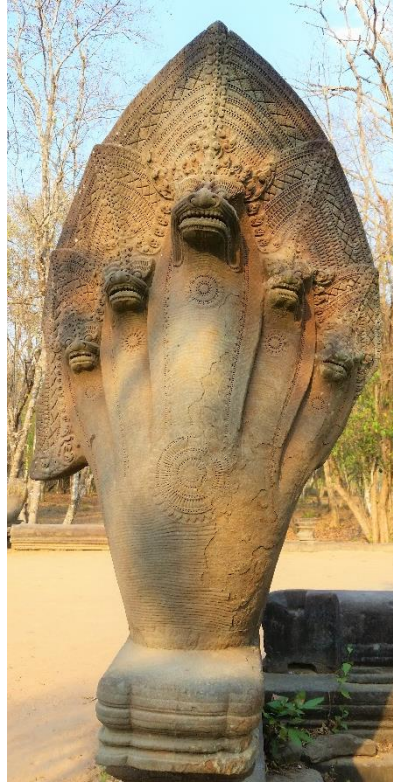
Ironwood or Tembusu (*Fagraea fragrans*) – ‘the God tree’

SACRED ANIMALS



- Naga (king of snake)
- Elephant
- Turtle
- Dolphin
- Certain species of birds
- Other ?

SACRED ANIMALS



ANIMALS IN NATURE



Come back, o tigers!

*To the wood again, and let it not be
levelled with the plain;*

*for, without you, the axe will lay it low;
you, without it, forever homeless go.*

Jatakas

ELEPHANTS



The Bodhisattva (Buddha-to-be) himself came to his mother, queen Maha Maya, in the form of a white elephant.

ELEPHANTS



Devadatta elephant story (Vinaya Pitaka)

TURTLES

- Churning of the Milky Ocean -Vishnu took form of tortoise and upheld mount Meru
- Symbol of longevity, prosperity
- Angkor - dedications to Hindu deities including Shiva and Vishnu
- Turtle = Kashyapa (Sanskrit), ancestor of all living creatures



TURTLES

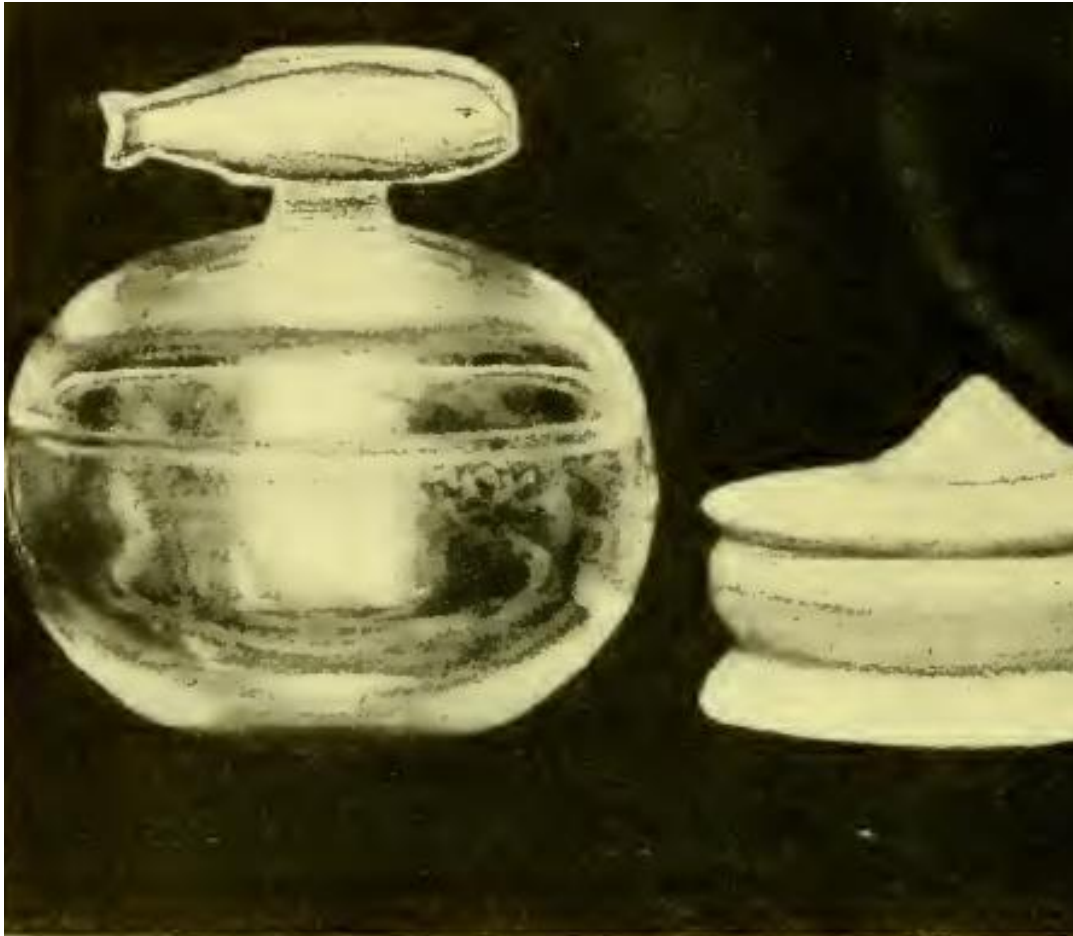


Prasat Phnom Da, Cambodia

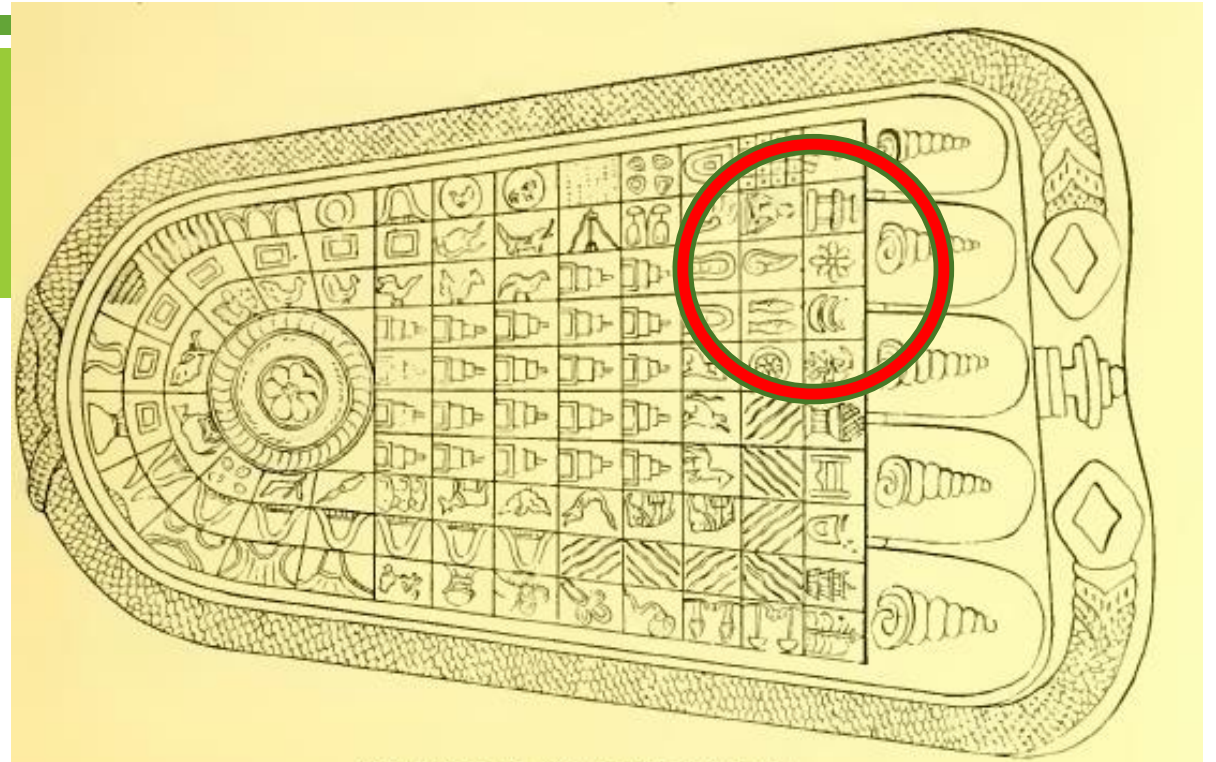


Turtle statue at Sras Srong, Cambodia

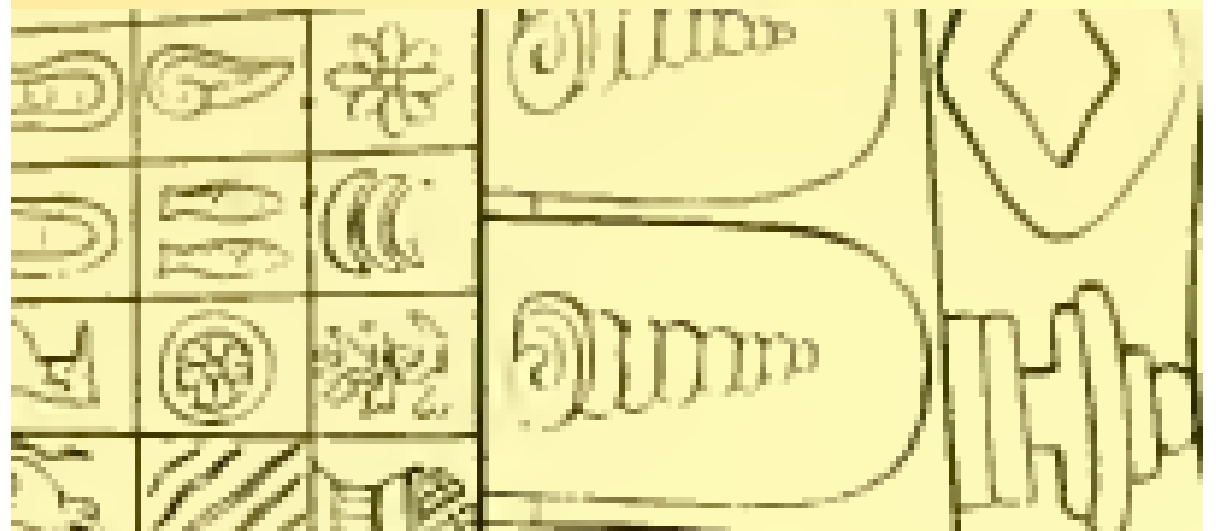
CERTAIN SPECIES OF FISH

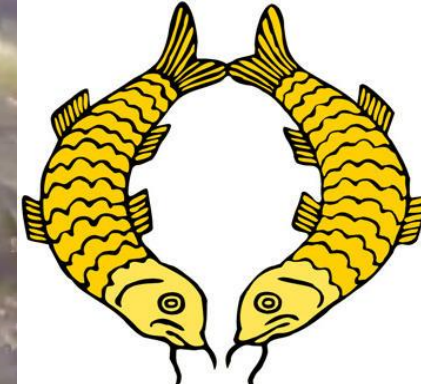


CRYSTAL BOWL FOUND IN BUDDHA'S TOMB.



FOOTPRINT OF THE BUDDHA.






God's fishes: religion, culture and freshwater fish conservation in India

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 28 September 2015

Nishikant Gupta, Arun Kanagavel, Parineeta Dandekar, Neelesh Dahanukar, Kuppusamy Sivakumar, Vinod B. Mathur and Rajeev Raghavan

Show author details  37

DOLPHINS



CERTAIN SPECIES OF BIRDS

- Hornbills
- Owls
- ?



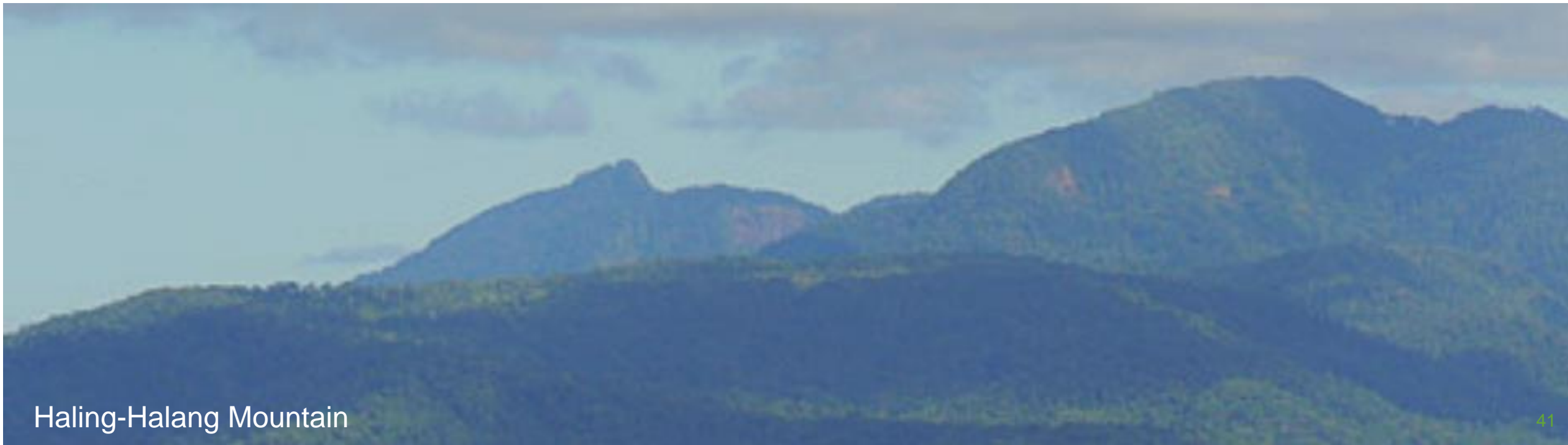
OTHER?

- Deer (Sama Jataka / Sovannasam)
- Muntjac
- ?



SACRED NATURAL SITES

- Ancestor related areas
- Wat territories
- Spiritscapes: enspirited mountains, rocks, rivers, lakes



Haling-Halang Mountain

ANCESTOR RELATED AREAS- SIEM REAP ANGKOR

- Angkor Wat Temple- Neak ta Reach
- Angkor Thom, the ancient capital- Preah Ang Kokthlok, Preah Vihear Prampi Lveng
- Kulen Mountain, the first capital of Angkor- Preah Ang Thom
- Preah Ang Chek, Preah Ang Chorm, Yeay Tep



ANGKOR WAT TEMPLE- NEAK TA REACH



ANGKOR THOM (ANCIENT CAPITAL)

PREAH ANG KOKTHLOK, PREAH VIHEAR PRAMPI LVENG



PHNOM KULEN- PREAH ANG THOM



PREAH ANG CHEK, PREAH ANG CHORM, YEAY TEP

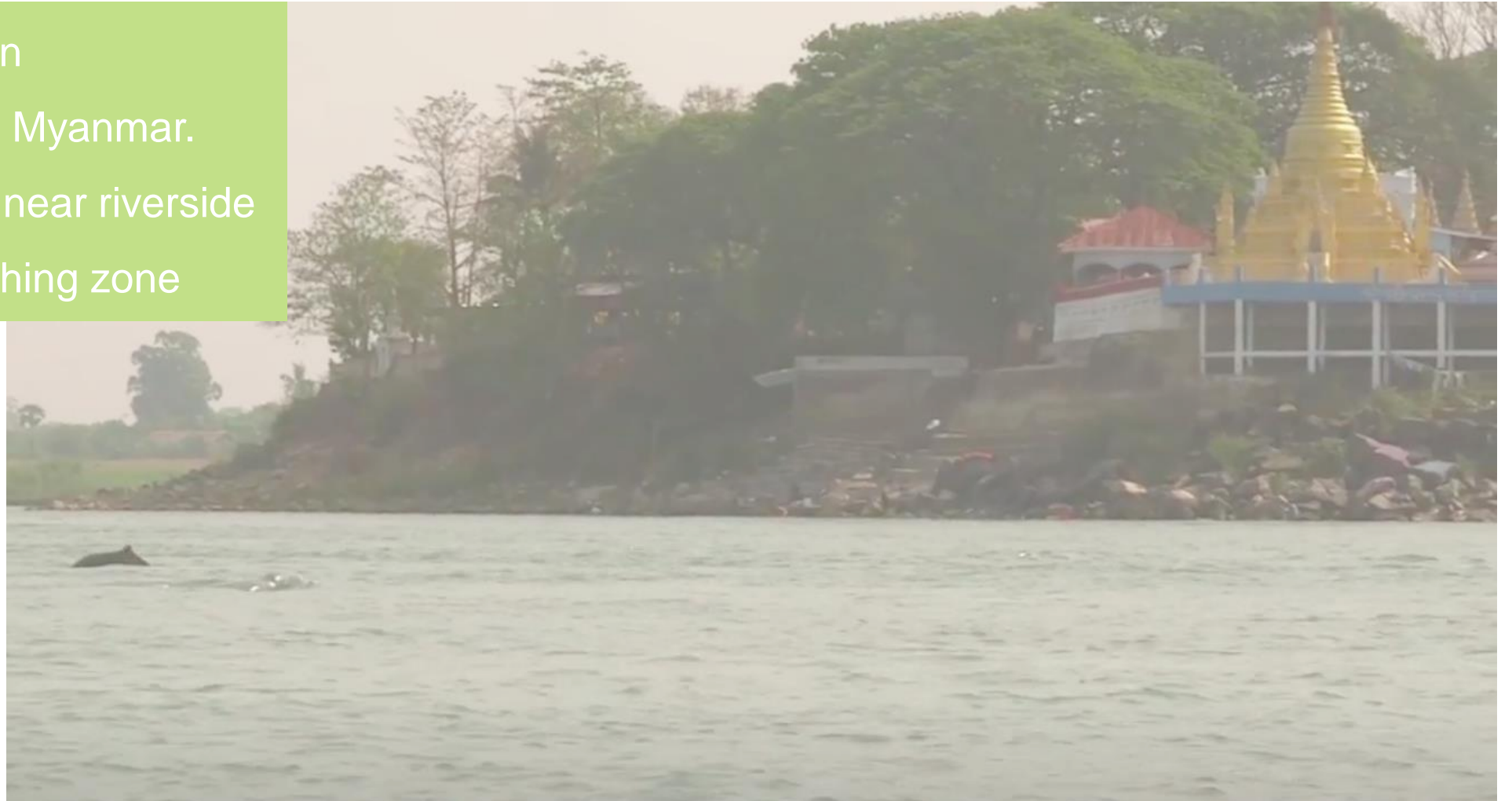


**PHNOM KRANG ROMEAS, VEAL THOM GRASSLANDS,
VIRACHEY NATIONAL PARK**



WATER

Irrawaddy dolphin in
Ayeyarwaddy river, Myanmar.
A circle of 100 feet near riverside
pagodas is a no-fishing zone



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What spiritually meaningful trees, animal species there are in your community and what the benefits of these are for your community.
- Why are they important to Buddhism?
- How can you raise community awareness of the importance of these trees and animals?

OR

- Discuss what sacred natural sites can be found near you. What is the importance of those sites for your community? What actions are taken to take care of them?

CULTURALLY MEANINGFUL SPECIES

- National reptile of Cambodia
- National mammal of Cambodia
- National bird Cambodia
- National fish of Cambodia
- National flower Cambodia
- National tree of Cambodia
- National fruit of Cambodia



Unofficial Translation

NS/RKT/0305/149

ROYAL DECREE

on

**Designation of Animals and Plants as National Symbols
of the Kingdom of Cambodia**

We

Preah Karuna Preah Bat Samdech

Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni

King of the Kingdom of Cambodia

- Having seen the constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia;
- Having seen the Preah Reach Kret No. NS/RKT/0704/124 of July 15, 2004 on the appointment of the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia;
- Having seen the Preah Reach Krom No. 02/NS/94 of July 20, 1994 the promulgation of the Law on the organization and functioning of the Council of Minister;
- Having seen the Preah Reach Krom No. NS/RKM/0196/13 of January 24, 1996 the promulgation of the Law on the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries;
- Having seen the Preah Reach Krom No. NS/RKM/1296/36 of December 24, 1996 the promulgation of the Law on the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management;

!TEST! KNOW YOUR NATIONAL SPECIES



NATIONAL REPTILE:



NATIONAL REPTILE: SOUTHERN RIVER TERRAPIN (ROYAL TURTLE)



NATIONAL MAMMAL:



NATIONAL MAMMAL: KOUPREY

គោព្រៃ
Kouprey (*Bos sauveli*)



NATIONAL BIRD:



NATIONAL BIRD: TROR YORNG YEAK (GIANT IBIS)



NATIONAL FISH:



NATIONAL FISH: GIANT BARB



NATIONAL FLOWER:



NATIONAL FLOWER: ROMDUOL FLOWER



NATIONAL TREE:



NATIONAL TREE: ASIAN PALM TREE



BONUS QUESTION: NATIONAL FRUIT OF CAMBODIA:



**THE NATIONAL FRUIT OF CAMBODIA: CHICKEN EGG BANANA
(*MUSA AROMATIC*)- CHEK PONG MOIN**



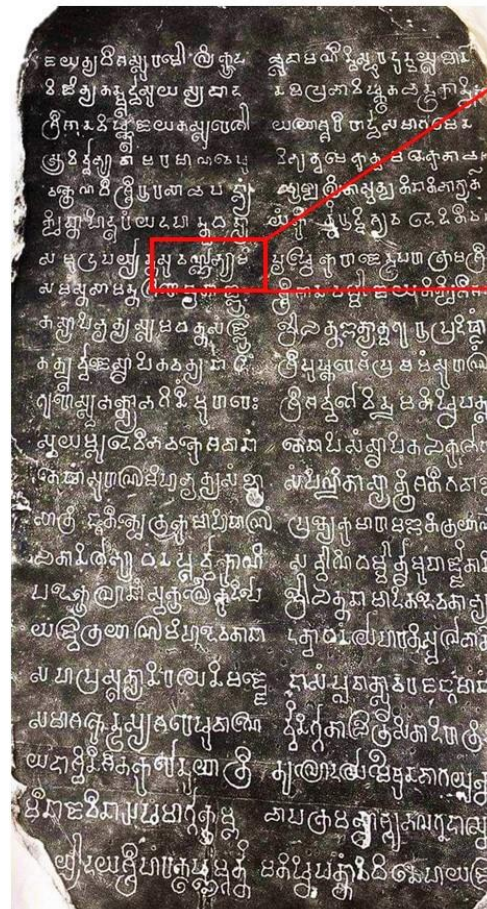
PART 4: BUILDING A CAMBODIA FOR ALL SENTIENT BEINGS

- Conservation
- Treatment of animals
- Preserving water, soil, air, natural “resources”
- Pollution



CONSERVATION: PARITHAN

- *Parithan* - derives from the Pali *paritta*, which means “protection, to safeguard.”
- Mainland Southeast Asia known as *Suvannabhumi*, or the “golden land” in Pali.
- Old, venerated trees are referred to by Buddhists as *vanaspati* in Pali, which means “lords of the forest.”



The term “Suvannabhumi” as mentioned in a newly found 7th century Sanskrit inscription from Cambodia.

The inscription translated as:

“...The great King Isanavarman is full of glory and bravery. He is the King of Kings who rules over **Suvannabhumi** until the sea, which is the border, while the kings in the neighboring states honor his order to their heads....”

The rubbed text of the recently discovered inscription in Cambodia dated to 7th century.

CONSERVATION: PARITHAN

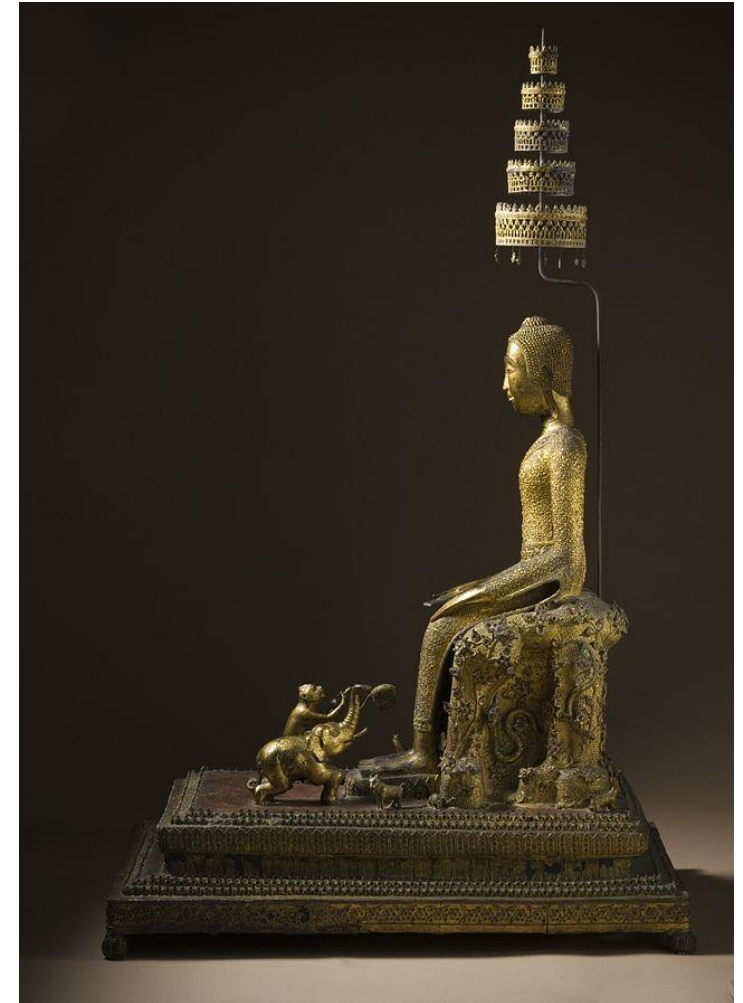
- Pali names of many Cambodian provinces or districts recall the natural or cultural features of that particular area.
 - Ratanakiri means “mountain of gems,”
 - Mondulkiri derives from *mandalagiri*.
 - Sambor, from the Pali word *sampheakboreak*, means “plentiful” or “bountiful,”
 - Pursat - said to derive from Bo-thi-satva, the floating Bodhi tree that floated against the water current, after which the tree was taken to be planted in a place called Bo-ro-sat.

TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

All creatures that have been born always want true happiness and goodness; those who seek happiness by threatening others through their power, abandon this world and will never achieve true happiness. All who have been born want to be happy; those who seek happiness without threatening others through power abandon this world and always achieve true happiness.

Buddha (in response to boys teasing snake)

Dhammapada-Sukhavagga



TREATMENT OF NON SENTIENT ORGANISMS

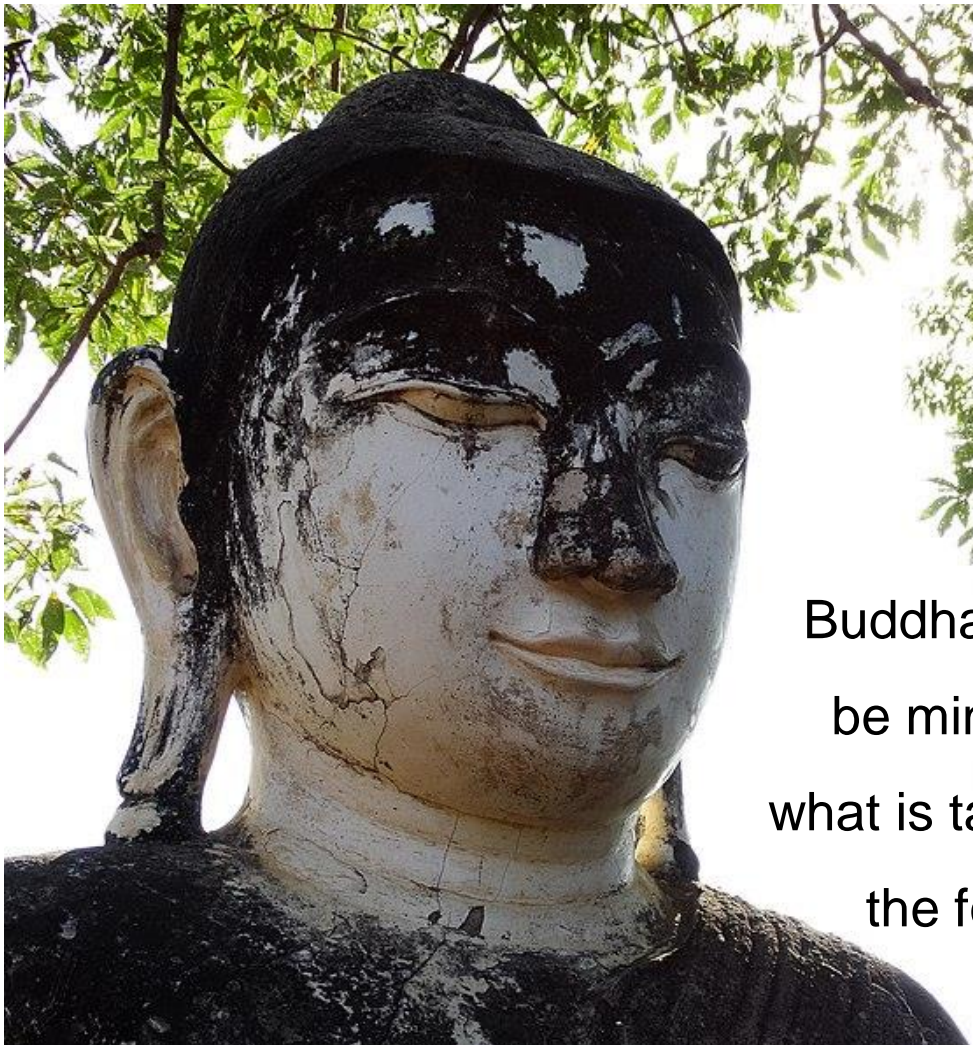


Buddha taught that plant life shouldn't be destroyed and that monks are not allowed to injure plant life in any way.

He is one who abstains from injury to seed-life and plant-life..... Abandoning the taint of ill-will; with heart free from ill-will he abides having regard for the welfare and feeling compassion for every living thing; he cleanses his heart of the taint of ill-will.

Anguttara- Nikaya

SUSTAINABLE HARVESTING / USING NATURAL “RESOURCES”



Buddha taught:
be mindful of
what is taken from
the forest.



PRESERVING WATER, SOIL, AIR, NATURAL “RESOURCES”

*As a bee without harming the flower,
its colour or scent, flies away, collecting
only the honey,
even so should the sage wander in the
village.*

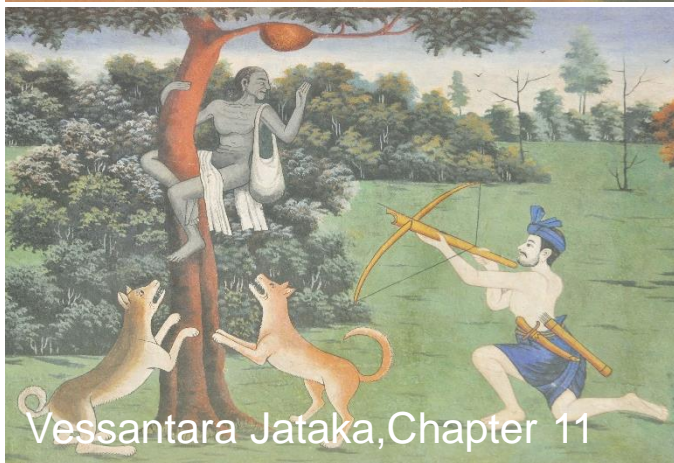
- Dhammapadda



USING SENTIENT BEINGS & NON SENTIENT ORGANISMS FROM THE FOREST



- Buddha intended for monks to live simply, economically, and along with nature (Cattara Nissaya Dhamma)
- What non sentient organisms (plants) and sentient beings (mental consciousness) from the forest do you use?
- Are these collected / hunted wisely, in a sustainable way, in your community?
- Discuss how the systems for collection, hunting, and management of the forest could be improved



Vessantara Jataka, Chapter 11

HUNTING, SHOOTING, FISHING

Consider different methods of hunting



- Trap
- Fishing net
- Electro-fishing
- Poison
- Gun
- Bow and arrow
- Explosives
- Hunting dogs
- Slingshots
- Snare



POLLUTION

- Buddha set down rules forbidding the pollution of water resources.
- *Vinaya Pitaka* prohibits monks from polluting grounds and water with spit, faeces, and urine.
- Water strainer is one of the eight basic tools provided to ordained monks. Guard against harming small insects and living creatures in the water.

River near Ream commune in Sihanoukville province, 2014



RECYCLING

Venerable Ananda held a discussion with King Udena. At that time five hundred courtesans of King Udena visited Ven. Ananda to hear the Dhamma.

Delighted with his teachings, they made an offering of 500 robes to the monk.

Vinaya Pitaka II



RECYCLING

Surprised by this event, the King approached the monk and asked:

King: *What will you do with such a big heap of new robes?
Are you going to open a shop?*

Ven. Ananda: *We share them with the other monks*

King: *What will they do with their old robes?*

Ven. Ananda: *When new robes are received the old robes are used as coverlets, old coverlets as mattress covers, the old mattress covers as rugs, the old rugs as dusters, the dusters as foot-wipers, and the old tattered foot wipers are kneaded with clay and used to repair cracked floors and walls*

Vinaya Pitaka II

PART 5: EXAMPLES OF BUDDHIST BASED CONSERVATION

- Dhammayietra
- Monk's community forest
- Tree ordination
- Buddhist based patrolling
- Revival of degraded land/
ecosystems
- Environmental education



DHAMMAYIETRA



- Dhammayietra (Pilgrimage for Truth)
- Samdech Preah Maha Goshananda inspired
- 1992: Bodhi tree seedlings from Sri Lanka

DHAMMAYIETRA

When we respect the environment, then nature will be good to us.

The trees are like our mother and father.

They feed us and nourish us: provide us with everything - the fruit, the leaves, the branches, the trunk; they give us food and satisfy many of our needs.

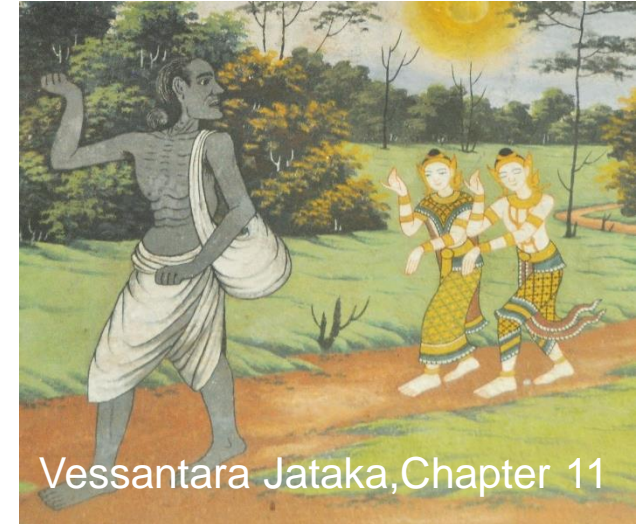
But if we just cut down the trees it won't rain anymore. The trees make it rain.

So on the Dhammayietra we are spreading the dhamma of protecting ourselves and protecting our environment, which is the dhamma of the Buddha.

Samdech Preah Maha Goshananda

MONK'S COMMUNITY FOREST

- Community forest (CF) concept has long been a part of the Buddhist tradition
- CF develops when local people manage a forest on which they depend
- CF can also involve reforesting a degraded forest
- CF projects can be initiated through Sangha (Monk's Community Forest)
- Venerable Monk Nhem Kim Teng formed the *Santi Sena* (Peace Army) in Svay Rieng province to undertake environmental preservation
- Prei Chumka Koki 1 (Chantrea district): CF that integrates Buddhist and traditional beliefs to protect and regenerate local forest



Vessantara Jataka, Chapter 11



MONK'S COMMUNITY FOREST



Forest boundary demarcation



Ven. Bun Saluth in Oddar Meanchey monk's community forest

TREE ORDINATION

When we ordained a tree, it became a monk...and we told the people. When you kill the tree, then you kill the monk

Maha Ghosananda

(when ordaining a tree in Ratanakiri province to highlight deforestation)



BUDDHIST BASED PATROLLING: DHAMMA & DIALOGUE

PARTICIPATORY, UNARMED & NON-VIOLENT



Oddar Meanchey Monk's Community Forest

REVIVAL OF DEGRADED LAND/ ECOSYSTEMS: TREE PLANTING, PARKS

- Merit making through donation of parks/ groves.
In Buddha's time. e.g. monastery built by Anathapindika
- Wat Chas in Kampong Cham has recently been working to renew its 10 hectares of land into a public park.

Planters of groves and fruitful trees, and they who build causeway and dam, and wells construct and watering sheds, and (to the homeless) shelter give: of such as these by day and night forever doth the merit grow.

In righteousness and virtue's might such folk from earth to heaven go.

Samyutta Nikaya



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- Buddhist temples
- Schools
- Festivals
- Community gatherings



PART 6: PUTTING TOGETHER AN ACTION PLAN

How can your beliefs, practices, and ceremonies help preserve local environment?

- As an individual or a small group, pick one of the chapters within this section.
- Write down why it interests you and consider ways in which you can follow it up through an activity in your community.
- Discuss and list practical ways in which to help preserve the environment through the Wat, drawing on Buddhist practices, traditions, and ceremonies;
- Decide on the activities most suitable for your community

PART 6: PUTTING TOGETHER AN ACTION PLAN

- Pick one activity which you feel they be done in next 6 months
- As a large group, draw a 6 month work-plan. Mark important Buddhist/ traditional beliefs days and ceremonies.
- Write down, from week to week and month to month, the environmental activities the group will carry out.
 - How long will the activity take?
 - Who will be responsible?
 - How community involvement?
 - Expected achievement?



APPENDIX: LITERATURE REFERENCES

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WWF's Beliefs & Values Programme, which has sponsored this guidebook, engages with leaders and communities based on their spiritual, religious and cultural beliefs and value systems.

The Angkor Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity (ACCB) founded and operated by Allwetterzoo Munster, ACCB is one of Cambodia's first wildlife conservation centres, located at the foot of Phnom Kbal Spean, around 50 km north of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Angkor.



Each year, several hundred wild animals are rehabilitated and, if possible, returned to the wild. Furthermore, ACCB runs environmental education activities in order to raise awareness about the threats affecting Cambodia's unique and endangered wildlife. This guide book for Buddhist monks has been developed in order to support the capacity building for Buddhist monks involved in animal protection and conservation.