

Calligraphic Magic: Abhidhamma Inscriptions from Sukhodaya

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Keywords

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The article presents five fifteenth- to sixteenth-century Pali inscriptions from Sukhodaya, Thailand. Three of them are engraved in the Khom alphabet on large square stone slabs, with considerable attention to format; they seem to be unique in Thai epigraphy. Two of these carry extracts from the *Abhidhamma*; the third gives a syllabary followed by the recollection formulas of the Three Gems. The other two epigraphs are written not on stone slabs but are inscribed on small gold leaves; they contain the heart formulas of the books of the *Tipiṭaka* and the qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṃgha. The exact find-spots and functions of the slabs and gold leaves are not known. I suggest that they are the products of widespread and enduring Buddhist cultures of inscription, installation, and consecration, as well as of customs of condensation and abbreviation that have been intrinsic to Thai liturgical and manuscript practices up to the present.

Lance Cousins' approach to Buddhist studies was holistic: his was a broad and boundless interest in the Dhamma as a living tradition with a deep history. One of his enduring passions was the Abhidhamma — not as a lifeless scaffolding of elaborate abstractions constructed in thin air, but as a living contemplative system that animated the intellectual history of the Buddhadhamma.¹ I offer in his memory a study of Abhidhamma inscriptions from Sukhodaya or Sukhothai.² In the popular

1. 'Why were these Books, so dry and sterile-seeming to most, ever prized thus highly by our deeper thinkers? Only one who can appreciate the root of Buddha-dhamma and its message of Deliverance can understand the reason.' — Cassius A. Pereira, Foreword to Nyanatiloka 1971, xiii.
2. Sukhodaya is a Pali-Sanskrit word meaning 'source, origin, birth, or dawn of happiness'. The Indic word is spelt perfectly correctly in Thai as Sukhodaya (สุขโทยะ), but according to the rules of Thai pronunciation it is pronounced 'Sukhothai'. In this article I tend to use Sukhodaya in historical contexts and Sukhothai in modern contexts, but the gentle reader should remember that they are the same word. It is same with Mahādhātu (มหาธาตุ), which is spelt perfectly accord-

Thai imagination, Sukhodaya is a fabled city, a golden and glorious age — the very dawn of Thai civilization. But in the world of hard facts, even post-truth, it is not easy to pin down exactly what Sukhodaya means. Does the name refer to a geobody, an autonomous state, an historical period, a literature, an architectural school, or styles and techniques of casting statues of the Buddha? All of these overlap and interact but they are neither physically nor temporally coterminous. Sukhodaya was cosmopolitan and complex, an inland power centre that participated fully in the imaginaires of the age and at the same time forged its own identity. Simplistic nationalistic narratives do not do it justice.

The three stone inscriptions are from three different sites in the modern Tambon Meuang Kao ('Old City subdistrict') in Sukhothai province. One is from Wat Mahathat (วัดมหาธาตุ, Mahādhātu), the heart of the ancient moated city, a large cetiya set in a complex of subsidiary structures. The exact location of Wat Traphang Nak (วัดตระพังนาถ), the source of the second inscription, is not known today, but near the southern Namo Gate (ประตูนโม) there is a pond still known locally as Traphang Nak. Today there is no temple named Traphang Nak but there is a ruined temple with a chedi named Wat Kon Laeng (วัดก้อนเล้ง) not far from the banks of the pond. The third find-spot is described as on the banks of the Nam Chon river, which is most probably the Khu Mae Chon (คูแม่โจน), the moat that surrounds Wat Phraphai Luang (วัดพระพายหลวง) to the north of the ancient city, where there is a Mae Chon Temple (วัดแม่โจน). Clearly there is scope for further investigation. There is no information about the precise find-spots, and we cannot be certain whether these were their original locations; still, when we take the size and weight of the slabs into account, it is unlikely that they were moved for any distance. The gold leaves are, however, another matter. They are portable and could have come from anywhere. Here the weight of the evidence lies in the fact that the script is described as Khom Sukhothai and that the couple who presented them to the National Museum were from Sukhothai.

1. Stone slab from Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai

The large stone slab was found at an unrecorded date in a cetiya to the north of Wat Mahathat. No further details are available. Two parallel lines run along the outer border on all four sides to frame 19 lines of text written in the Khom Sukhothai script.

The slab is broken vertically on the right side with the result that some letters are missing along the crack. The bottom line or lines — including the lower border — are broken off. In 2003 we were able to make an estampage of only the larger left-hand piece (Figure 1). The published transcription does not seem entirely accurate and a precise reading must wait for another occasion. The inscription given below for reference shows the layout and line breaks but not the details of the current condition of the slab.

The inscription opens with a circular punctuation mark flanked by double lines (|| ◎ ||) followed by *namo buddhāya*, 'homage to the Buddha'. The body of the text

ing to Pali-Sanskrit rules but is pronounced Mahathat. In Thai there are many similar cases both among names and technical terms.

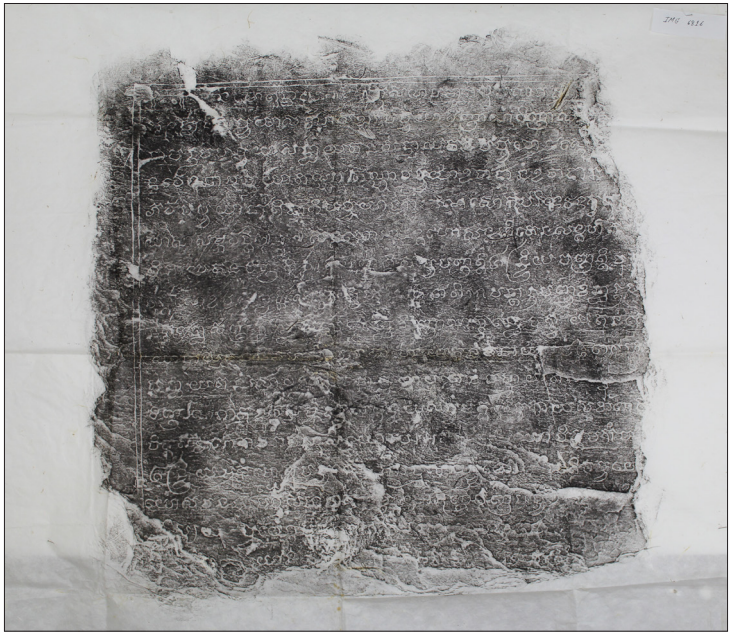


Figure 1. Left-hand fragment of stone slab inscription from Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai. Estampage by Santi Pakdeekham, 2003. Courtesy Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, Nonthaburi.

Script	Khom Sukhothai
Language	Pali
Date	CE 16th century (BE 21st century)
Support	Stone slab
Sides/lines	1 side with 19 lines
Dimensions	Width 71.5 cm; height 73 cm; thickness 5 cm
Registration no.	STh 30
Place of discovery	Cetiya to the north of Wat Mahathat, T. Meuang Kao, Meuang district, Sukhothai province (เจดีย์วัดมหาธาตุ ต. เมืองเก่า อ. เมือง จ. สุโขทัย)
Discoverer	Not known
Present location	Ramkhamhaeng National Museum, Sukhothai
Accession date	Not known
Photo/estampage	Estampage by Santi Pakdeekham/Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, 2003
Publication	1) <i>Chareuk nai prathet thai</i> , Vol. 5, pp. 53–57. Read by Chaem Kaewkhilai. 2) Suphaphan Na Bangchang, <i>Wiwathanakan ngan khian phasa bali</i> , pp. 52–54.

commences with the first ‘matrix of the triads’ (*tika mātikā*) of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, the first of the seven books of the Abhidhamma. The second book, the *Vibhaṅga*, is represented by the *Paccayākāra-vibhaṅga* (No. 6, ‘the modes of dependency’) — the formula of the twelve links of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) in natural order in sutta style.³ There follow the opening sentences of the *Dhātukathā*, the *Puggalapaññatti*, and the *Kathāvatthu*. Next come the components of the *Yamaka*:⁴ the five aggregates (*khandha*: *Yamaka*, Section II), the twelve sense bases (*āyatana*: *Yamaka*, Section III), the eighteen elements (*dhātu*: *Yamaka*, Section IV), the four truths (*sacca*: *Yamaka*, Section V), the three formations (*saṅkhāra*: *Yamaka*, Section VI), and the seven biases (*anusaya*: *Yamaka*, Section VII), concluding with the titles of the last three (Sections VIII, IX, X: *citta-yamaka*, *dhamma-yamaka*, and *indriya-yamaka*). Finally come the twenty-four conditions of the *Mahāpaṭṭhāna*. In this way, a skeletal inventory of the seven books of the Abhidhamma is complete.

Inscription⁵

1. || ☉ || namo buddhāya || kusalā dhammā akusalā dhammā abyākatā dhammā ||
2. avijjā paccayā saṃkhārā saṃkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ
3. nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso phassapaccayā ve-
4. da(nā) vedanāpaccayā taṇhā taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ upādānapaccayā bhavo
5. bhavapaccayā jāti jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃsokaparidevadukkhadomanassupā-
6. yāsā sambhavanti || saṅgaho asaṅgaho saṅgahitena saṅgahitaṃ || khandhapañña-
7. tti āyatanapaññatti dhātupaññatti saccapaññatti indriyapaññatti puggalapa-
- ññatti ||
8. puggalo upalabbatti sacchikatthaparamatthenāti āmantā || pañcakkhandhā rūpakkhando veda-
9. nākkhandho saññākkhandho saṅkhārakkhandho viññāṇakkhandho cakkhvāyatanaṃ sotāyatanaṃ
10. ghāṇāyatanaṃ jivhāyatanaṃ kāyāyatanaṃ manāyatanaṃ rūpāyatanaṃ saddāyatanaṃ
11. gandhāyatanaṃ rasāyatanaṃ phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ dhammāyatanaṃ || cakkhudhātu sotadhātu
12. viññāṇadhātu dukkhasaccaṃ dukkhasamudayasaccaṃ maggasaccaṃ kāyasāṅkhāro vacīsāṅkhāro
13. cittasāṅkhāro kāmārāgānusayo avijjānusayo cittayamakaṃ dhammayamakaṃ

3. For the *Paccayākāra-vibhaṅga*, see Nyanatiloka, 1971, 34–37.

4. Abbreviated, with a few omissions.

5. For each inscription I give an unedited transcription of the inscription based on the published readings. As far as possible it is an exact account of the document. The ‘edition’ that follows is not a critical edition but an edited and formatted version for ease of consultation. It shows what should be there, the standard text, formatted according to contemporary conventions.

I have not been able to read clearly the punctuation marks or determine the system. It has been difficult to ascertain whether there is *aṃ* or *añ*, and to what degree previous editors may have standardized these.

14. indriyayamakaṃ || hetupaccayo āramaṇapaccayo adhipatipaccayo anantara-
pacca-
15. yo samanantarapaccayo sahaajātapaccayo aññamaññapaccayo nissayapaccayo u-
16. panissayapaccayo purejātapaccayo pacchājātapaccayo āsevanapacca-
17. yo kammaṇapaccayo vipākaṇapaccayo āhārapaccayo indriyapaccayo jhāna-
18. cayo maggaṇapaccayo sampayuttapaccayo vippayuttapaccayo atthipaccayo
19. natthipaccayo vigatapaccayo avigatapaccayo

Edition

[HOMAGE] namo buddhāya ||

[DHAMMASAṂGAṆI] kusalā dhammā akusalā dhammā abyākatā dhammā ||

[VIBHAṄGA = PACCAYĀKARA-VIBHAṄGA NO. 6] avijjāpaccayā saṃkhārā, saṃkhārapaccayā
viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ, nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ,
saḷāyatanaṇapaccayā phasso, phassaṇapaccayā vedanā, vedanāṇapaccayā taṇhā,
taṇhāṇapaccayā upādānaṃ, upādāṇapaccayā bhavo, bhavaṇapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā
jarā-maraṇaṃ-soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyāsā sambhavanti ||

[DHĀTUKATHĀ] saṅgaho asaṅgaho saṅgahitena saṅgahitaṃ ||

[PUGGALAPAÑṆATTI] khandhapañṇatti āyatanapañṇatti dhātupañṇatti saccapañṇatti
indriyapañṇatti puggalapañṇatti ||

[KATHĀVATTHU] puggalo upalabbatti sacchikatthaparamatthenā ti āmantā ||

[YAMAKA] pañcakkhandhā rūpakkhando vedanākkhandho saññākkhandho
saṅkhārakkhandho viññāṇakkhandho cakkhāvāyatanam sōtāyatanam
ghāṇāyatanam jivhāyatanam kāyāyatanam manāyatanam rūpāyatanam
saddāyatanam gandhāyatanam rasāyatanam phoṭṭhabbāyatanam
dhammāyatanam || cakkhudhātu sotadhātu viññāṇadhātu dukkhasaccaṃ
dukkhasamudayasaccaṃ maggasaccaṃ kāyasaṅkhāro vacīsaṅkhāro
cittasaṅkhāro kāmarāgāṇusayo avijjāṇusayo cittayamakaṃ dhammayamakaṃ
indriyayamakaṃ ||

[PAṬṬHĀNA] hetupaccayo āramaṇapaccayo adhipatipaccayo anantarapaccayo
samanantarapaccayo sahaajātapaccayo aññamaññapaccayo nissayapaccayo
upanissayapaccayo purejātapaccayo pacchājātapaccayo āsevanapaccayo kam-
maṇapaccayo vipākaṇapaccayo āhārapaccayo indriyapaccayo jhāṇapaccayo mag-
gaṇapaccayo sampayuttapaccayo vippayuttapaccayo atthipaccayo natthipaccayo
vigatapaccayo avigatapaccayo

2. Stone slab from Wat Traphang Nak, Sukhothai

This broken and chipped slab contains a 'syllabary inscription' of the vowels and consonants of an Indic alphabet. Officials from the National Library made estampages and took photographs in 1972 (2515). They learned that Phra Boranavattthachan (Thim), then abbot of Wat Ratchathani, Sukhothai, and Ecclesiastical Chief of Sukhothai Province, found the inscription at Wat Traphang Nak and presented it to the Ramkhamhaeng National Museum, Sukhothai. The registry does not record when it was discovered or when it entered the collection.

The inscription is carefully designed. The central square within which the inscription is placed is defined by a cross-hatch border between two pairs of lines. Outside of this the names of the four directions and the presiding kings of the

Script	Khom Sukhothai
Language	Pali
Date	CE 16th century (BE 21st century)
Support	Stone slab
Sides/lines	1 side with 14 lines
Dimensions	Width 66 cm; height 66 cm; thickness 5 cm
Registration no.	STh 33
Place of discovery	Wat Traphang Nak, T. Meuang Kao, Meuang district, Sukhothai province (วัดตระพังนาถ ต. เมืองเก่า อ. เมือง จ. สุโขทัย)
Discoverer	Phra Boranavattachan (Thim) (พระโบราณวัดลาจารย์ (ทิม))
Present location	Ramkhamhaeng National Museum, Sukhothai
Accession date	Not known
Photo/estampage	Estampage by Santi Pakdeekham/Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, 2003
Publication	<i>Chareuk nai prathet thai</i> , Vol. 5, pp. 58–62. Read by Chaem Kaewkh-lai.



Figure 2. Stone slab inscription from Wat Traphang Nak, Sukhothai. Estampage by Santi Pakdeekham, 2003. Courtesy Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, Nonthaburi.

group of four Great Kings are inscribed in larger letters facing outward on the four sides. Each name is set between a pair of radiating circles. The slab is chipped with the result that the end of lines 3 and 4 and the beginning of lines 6 to 8 have been obliterated. I have restored them on the assumption that the text follows the standard formulas.

Like that from Wat Mahathat, the Wat Traphang Nak inscription opens with *namo buddhāya*. This is a standard formula of homage that opens not only inscriptions but also chants, *mantras* and *yantras*, and can itself be broken down to five syllables. At an uncertain date, Thai tradition equated the five syllables with sets of five: five precepts, five elements, five colours and lights — and the five Buddhas of the Fortunate Aeon (*bhadda-kappa*).⁶ The association of *namo buddhāya* with the five Buddhas is given in a chant that is integrated into several texts, for example:⁷

*na-karo kakkusandho ca
mo-karo konāgamano
bu-karo kassapo buddho
dhā-karo sakyapuṅgavo
ya-karo ariyametteyyo
pañcabuddhā ahaṃ namo.*

The syllable *na* is Kakusandha;
The syllable *mo* is Konāgamana;
The syllable *bu* is Kassapa Buddha;
The syllable *dhā* is the scion of the Sākyas (that is, Siddhattha, Gotama);
The syllable *ya* is Ariya Metteyya;
To the five Buddhas I bow in homage.

The Wat Traphang Nak inscription continues with the word *siddham*, ‘Success!’ ‘Accomplishment!’. *Siddham* often stands at the beginning of inscriptions in South and Southeast Asia, and of texts or textual divisions, as, for example, at the opening of the chapters of the Old Khotanese *Book of Zambasta* from Central Asia.⁸ In the present inscription the words may be read as a unit, *namo buddhāya siddham*, which serves to open what follows — the syllabary, first the vowels and then the consonants. This is followed by the formulas of recollection of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṃgha, with the latter shortened.

Inscription

- ☉ pacchimavirūpaksa rājā ☉ [outer border, top]
- ☉ uttarakuvero rājā ☉ [outer border, left]
- ☉ purbādhaṭaraṭṭho ☉ [outer border, bottom]
- ☉ dakkhiṇavirūhako ☉ [outer border, right]

6. See table of correspondences by Olivier de Bernon, *Fragile Palm Leaves Newsletter* 5 (May 2542/1999), p. 12.

7. From *Dvādasaparittagāthā*, a Mon chanting book published by Kittisāro at Pakklāt in BE 2480 (CE 1937), p. 114, published in *Fragile Palm Leaves Newsletter* 5 (May 2542/1999), p. 3.

8. Maggi and Martini 2014, Table 1, p. 141.

1. || ☉ || namo buddhāya siddham (a ā ī ū)⁹ ū
2. e ai o au am aḥ || ☉ ||
3. || ☉ || ka kha ga gha ṇa ca cha ja (jha ṇa)
4. ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa ta tha da dha na (pa pha ba)
5. bha ma ya ra la va sa ha ḷa
6. (i)tipiso bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vi
7. (jjācaraṇa)sampanno sugato lokavidū
8. (anutta)ro purisadammasārathi satthā de
9. va manussānaṃ buddho bhagavāti s-
10. vākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko a
11. kāliko ehipassiko opanayiko pa
12. ccattaṃ veditaḥ viññūhīti supaṭiṇa
13. anno ujupaṭipanno ñāyapaṭipanno sāmī
14. (ci)paṭipanno bhagavato sāvakaśaṅgho || ☉

Edition

[FOUR MAHĀRĀJA]

☉ pacchima virūpaksa rājā ☉ [outer border, top]

☉ uttara kuvero rājā ☉ [outer border, left]

☉ purbā dhaṭaraṭṭho ☉ [outer border, bottom]

☉ dakkhiṇa viruḷhako ☉ [outer border, right]

[HOMAGE] || ☉ || namo buddhāya siddham

[VOWELS] a ā ī ū e ai o au am aḥ ☉

[CONSONANTS] ka kha ga gha ṇa

ca cha ja jha ṇa

ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa

ta tha da dha na

pa pha ba bha ma

ya ra la va sa ha ḷa

[BUDDHAGUṆA] itipiso bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato
lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā deva manussānaṃ buddho
bhagavā ti

[DHAMMAGUṆA] svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akāliko ehipassiko opanayiko
paccattaṃ veditaḥ viññūhīti

[SAMGHAGUṆA] supaṭipanno ujupaṭipanno ñāyapaṭipanno sāmīcipaṭipanno bhagavato
sāvakaśaṅgho || ☉

3. Stone inscription from Nam Chon River, Sukhothai

This is probably the longest Pali citation inscription in the Sukhodaya corpus. It takes up two sides with a total 57 lines, almost certainly engraved by the same hand. The recto is divided into two text areas, each of which is enclosed within double parallel lines. The inner square is reserved for the *Mātikā* of the twenty-four conditions of the *Paṭṭhāna*, which start in the upper left corner and run downwards.

9. The use of parentheses follows the published edition. I have not been able to verify it.

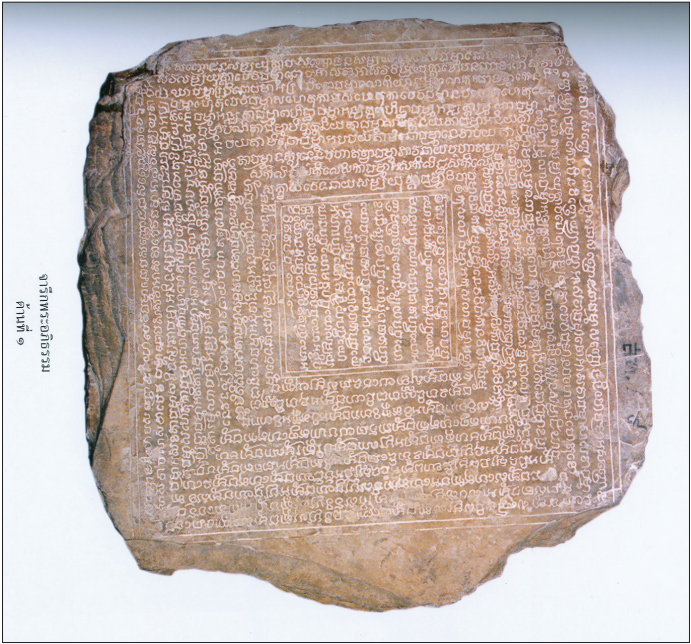


Figure 3. Stone inscription from banks of Nam Chon River, Sukhothai. After *Prachum chareuk phak 8, Chareuk Sukhothai*, p. 373.

Script	Khom Sukhothai
Language	Pali
Date	CE 15th century (BE 20th century)
Support	Stone block
Sides/lines	2 sides: recto 22 lines, verso 35 lines
Dimensions	Width 71 cm; height 67 cm; thickness 5.5 cm
Registration no.	STh 19
Place of discovery	On the banks of the Mae Chon River, T. Meuang Kao, Meuang district, Sukhothai province (ริมฝั่งน้ำโจน, ต. เมืองเก่า อ. เมือง จ. สุโขทัย)
Present location	Ho Phra Samut Vajirañña, National Library, Bangkok
Accession date	Not known
Photo	After <i>Prachum chareuk phak 8, Chareuk Sukhothai</i>
Read by	Chaem Kaewkhlai
Publication history	1) <i>Chareuk samai Sukhothai</i> , pp. 284–98. Read by Chaem Kaewkhlai. No rubbing or photo. 2) <i>Prachum chareuk</i> , Part 8, pp. 359–374. Reprint of previous reading. Good colour photograph of recto, p. 373. Poor photograph of verso, with sample close-up of text, p. 374. 3) Mention only in Supaphan Na Bangchang, <i>Wiwathanakan ngan khian phasa bali</i> , pp. 50–51.

At the beginning is a circular symbol, a *fong man* (ฟองมัน); at the end is a *kho mut* (โคมุต, *gomūtra*). The *Dhammasaṅgaṇī Mātikā* is engraved in the space between the inner box and the outer edges. It starts from the *Tikā Mātikā* and runs onto the verso, ending with the *upādāna-gocchakaṃ*. The words are written without separation, running clockwise in ascending order up to line 10; they are neatly written with few mistakes. The text ends at the top of the outer left line, part way through the *saññojana-gocchakaṃ*, which continues on the verso. Regrettably no clear photograph or rubbing of the verso has been published. From the photograph in *Prachum chareuk* Part 8, it appears to be a straightforward text read from top to bottom, marked off by double lines around the edges. According to the transcription it has 35 lines. A photograph of the middle of the slab (*Prachum chareuk*, Part 8, p. 374) shows about 12 lines of text without the left- and right-hand portions.

Inscription¹⁰

Recto

[Text within central box]

1. ☉ hetupaccayo ārammaṇapacca-
2. yo adhipatipaccayo anantarapaccayo sa-
3. manantarapaccayo saha-jātāpaccayo a-
4. ñāmaññāpaccayo nissayapaccayo
5. upanissayapaccayo pure-jātāpacca-
6. yo pacchājātāpaccayo āsevana-
7. paccayo kamma-paccayo vipāka-paccayo
8. āhārapaccayo indriya-paccayo
9. jhāna-paccayo magga-paccayo sampayu-
10. tta-paccayo vippayutta-paccayo atthipa-
11. ccayo natthipaccayo vigata-paccayo a-
12. vigata-paccayo [*gomūtra symbol*]

[Text within outer area, starting from the first line of the top left corner above the inner box]

- 1a. ☉ kusalā dhammā akusalā dhammā abyāka-
- 1b. tā dhammā sukhāya vedanāya sampayuttā dha-
- 1c. mmā vedanāya sampayuttā dhammā adukkhamā-
- 1d. sukhāya vedanāya sampayuttā dhammā vipākā
- 2a. dhammā vipākadhammadhammā nevavipākanavopākadhamma-
- 2b. dhammā upādiṇṇupādāniyā dhammā anupādiṇṇupā-
- 2c. dāniyā dhammā anupādiṇṇa-anupādāniyā dhammā
- 2d. saṃkiliṭṭhasaṃkilesikā dhammā asaṃkiliṭṭha-asāṃkile-

10. The inscription given below for reference shows the layout and line breaks but no further details of the current state of the epigraph. I retain some of the parentheses of the published edition but am unable to verify them.

- 3a. sikā dhammā asaṃkiliṭṭha-asamkilesikā dhammā savitakka-
- 3b. savicārā dhammā avitakka-avicārā dha-
- 3c. mmā pitisahagatā dhammā sukhasam(!)agatā dhammā upekkhāsahaga-
- 3d. tā dhammā dassanena pahātabbā dhammā bhāvanāya pahātabbā
- 4a. dhammā nevadassanena na bhāvanāya pahātabbā dhammā dassanena
- 4b. pahātabbahetukā dhammā bhāvanāya pahātabbahetukā dhammā
- 4c. nevadassanena na bhāvanāya pahātabbahetukā dhammā ā-
- 4d. cayagāmino dhammā apacayagāmino dhammā nevācayagā-
- 5a. mino nāpacayagāmino dhammā sekkhā dhammā asekkhā dhammā nevasekkhā
nāsekkhā dhammā
- 5b. parittā dhammā mahaggatā dhammā appa(mā)ṇā dhammā parittārammaṇā
dhammā maha-
- 5c. ggatārammaṇā dhammā appamāṇārammaṇā dhammā hīnā dhammā majjhimā dha-
- 5d. mmā paṇītā dhammā micchattaniyatā dhammā samattaniyatā dhammā aniyatā
- 6a. dhammā maggārammaṇā dhammā maggahetukā dhammā maggādhipatino dhammā
uppa-
- 6b. nnā dhammā anuppannā dhammā upādino dhammā atitā dhammā anāgatā dhammā
paccu-
- 6c. ppannā dhammā atitārammaṇā dhammā anāgatārammaṇā dhammā
paccuppannārammaṇā
- 6d. dhammā ajjhattā dhammā bahiddhā dhammā ajjhattabahiddhā dhammā
ajjhattārammaṇā dhammā
- 7a. bahiddhārammaṇā dhammā ajjhattabahiddhārammaṇā dhammā
sanidassanasampañikā dha-
- 7b. mmā anidassanasampañighā dhammā anidassana-apañighā dhammā hetudhammā
nahe-
- 7c. tu dhammā sahetukā dhammā ahetukā dhammā dhammā hetusappayuttā dhammā
hetuvippayuttā dha-
- 7d. mmā hetu ceva dhammā sahetukā ca sahetukā ceva dhammā na ca hetu hetu ceva
- 8a. dhammā hetusampayuttā ca hetusampayuttā ceva dhammā na ca hetu na hetu kho
- 8b. pana dhammā sahetukā ca ahetukāpi sappaccayā dhammā appaccayā dhammā
saṅkhatā
- 8c. dhammā asaṅkhatā dhammā sanidassanā dhammā anidassanā dhammā sampañighā
dhammā appaṭi
- 8d. ghā dhammā rūpino dhammā arūpino dhammā lokiyā dhammā lokuttarā dhammā
kenaci vi-
- 9a. ññeyyā dhammā kenaci na viññeyyā dhammā āsavā dhammā no āsavā dhammā
sāsavā dhammā
- 9b. anāsavā dhammā āsavasampayuttā dhammā āsavavippayuttā dhammā āsavā ceva
dhammā
- 9c. sāsavā ca sāsavā ceva dhammā no sasavā āsavā ceva dhammā āsavasampayuttā ca ā-
- 9d. savasampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca āsavā āsavavippayuttā kho pana ca dhammā
sāsavāpi a-

[line 10 begins in the top left corner and runs clockwise]

- 10a. nāsavāpi saññojanā dhammā no saññojanā dhammā saññojaniyā dhammā
asaññoja-

- 10b. niyā dhammā saññojani sampayuttā dhammā saññojanavippayuttā dhammā
saññojanā ceva dhammā
10c. saññojaniyā ca saññojani sampayuttā dhammā saññojanavippayuttā dhammā
saññojanā ceva dhammā
10d. saññojanasampayuttā ca saññojanasampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca saññojanā

Verso

1. saññojanasampayuttā dhammā saññojanavippayuttā dhammā sa-
2. ññojanā ceva dhammā saññojaniyā ca saññojaniyā ceva dhammā no
3. ca saññojanā saññojanā ceva dhammā saññojanasampayuttā ca sañño(jana)sa-
4. mpayuttā ceva dhammā no ca saññojanā saññojanāvippayuttā kho pana
dhammā sañño-
5. janiyāpi asaññojaniyāpi gaṇṭhā dhamma no gaṇṭhā dhammā gaṇṭhaniyā
dhammā ca gaṇṭhani-
6. dhammā gaṇṭhasampayuttā dhammā gaṇṭhavippayuttā dhammā gaṇṭhā ceva
dhammā gaṇṭhaniyā ca gaṇṭhani-
7. yā ceva dhammā no cagaṇṭhā gaṇṭhā ceva dhammā gaṇṭhasampayuttā ca
gaṇṭhasampayuttā ceva dha-
8. mmā no ca gaṇṭhā gaṇṭhavippayuttā kho pana dhammā gaṇṭhaniyāpi
agaṇṭhaniyāpi oghā dhammā no
9. oghā (dhammā oghaniyā) dhammā anoghaniyā dhammā oghasampayuttā
(dhammā) oghavippayuttā dhammā oghā
10. (ceva dhammā ogha)niyā ca oghaniyā ceva dhammā no ca oghā oghā ceva
dhammā oghas-
11. (mpayuttā ca ogha) sampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca oghā oghavippayuttā kho
pana dhammā oghaniyāpi a-
12. (noghaniyāpi saññojanagocchakaṃ yogā dhammā no yogā dhammā yoganiyā
dhammā ayoganiyā dha-
13. (mmā yogasampayuttā dhammā yogavippayuttā dhammā yogā ceva dhammā
yoganiyā ca yoga(ni)yā ceva
14. (dhammā no ca yogā) yogā ceva dhammā yogasampayuttā ca yogasampayuttā
ceva dhammā noca
15. (yogā yogā)vippayuttā kho pana dhammā yoganiyāpi ayoganiyāpi
yogagocchakaṃ
16. nivarāṇā dhammā (no) nivarāṇā dhammā nivarāṇiyā dhammā anivarāṇā
dhammā nivarāṇasampayuttā
17. dhammā nivarāṇavippayuttā dhammā nivarāṇā ceva dhammā nivarāṇiyā ca
nivarāṇiyā ceva dhammā no
18. ca nivarāṇā nivarāṇā ceva dhammā nivarāṇasampayuttā ca nivarāṇasampayuttā
ceva dhammā no
19. ca (nivarāṇā) nivarāṇā ceva dhammā nivarāṇasampayuttā ca
nivarāṇasampayuttā ceva dhammā no
20. sā dhammā no parāmāsā dhammā parāmaṭṭhā dhammā aparāmaṭṭhā dhammā
parāmāsasampayuttā dhammā parāmā-

21. savippayuttā dhammā parāmāsā ceva dhammā parāmatṭhā ca parāmatṭhā ceva dhammā no ca parāmāsā parāmā-
22. savippayuttā kho pana dhammā parāmatṭhāpi aparāmatṭhāpi parāmāsagocchakaṃ sārammaṇā dhammā anāramma-
23. ṇā dhammā cittā dhammā no cittā dhammā cettasikā dhammā acettasikā dhammā cittasampayuttā dha-
24. mmā cittavippayuttā dhammā cittasamsatṭhā dhammā cittavisamsatṭhā dhammā cittasamuṭṭhānā dhammā no cittasamuṭṭhānā
25. dhammā cittasahabhuno dhammā no cittashabhuno dhammā cittānuparivattino dhammā no cittānupa-
26. (rivatti) no dhammā cittasamsatṭhasamuṭṭhānā dhammā no cittasamsatṭhasamuṭṭhānā dhammā cittasamsatṭhasamatṭhānasaha-
27. bhuno dhammā no cittasamsatṭhasamuṭṭhānasahabhuno (dhammā) cittasamsatṭhasamuṭṭhānā parivattino dhammā no
28. cittasamsatṭhasamuṭṭhānānuparivatti (no dhammā ajjhakkā dhammā bā)hirā dhammā upādā dhammā no u-
29. pādā dhammā upādiṇṇā (dhammā anupādiṇṇā dhammā upā) dānā dhammā no upādānā dha-
30. mmā upādāniyā dhammā anupādāniyā (dhammā upādānasampayuttā dhammā upādāna)vippayuttā dhammā upādā-
31. nā ceva dhammā upādāniyā ca (upādāniyā ceva dhammā) no ca upādānā upā-
32. dānā ceva dhammā upādāna (sampayuttā ca u)pādānasampayuttā ceva
33. (dhammā no ca) upādānā (upādānavippayu)ttā kho pana dhammā
34. (upādāniyāpi anupādāniyāpi)
35. (upādānagocchakaṃ)

Edition

Recto

[Text within central box]

© hetupaccayo ārammaṇapaccayo adhipatipaccayo anantarapaccayo samanantarapaccayo saha-jātapaccayo aññamaññapaccayo nissayapaccayo upanissaya-paccayo purejātapaccayo pacchājātapaccayo āsevanapaccayo kamma-paccayo vipāka-paccayo āhārapaccayo indriya-paccayo jhāna-paccayo magga-paccayo sampayuttapaccayo vippayuttapaccayo atthipa-ccayo natthipaccayo vigatapaccayo avigatapaccayo [gomūtra symbol]

[Text within outer area, starting from the first line of the top left corner above the inner box]

kusalā dhammā akusalā dhammā abyākatā dhammā
sukhāya vedanāya sampayuttā dhammā [dukkhāya]¹¹ vedanāya sampayuttā
dhammā adukkhamasukkhāya vedanāya sampayuttā dhammā

vipākā dhammā vipākadhammadhammā nevavipākanavipākadhamma-dhammā
upādiṇṇupādāniyā dhammā anupādiṇṇupādāniyā dhammā

11. Added according to context (Ed.).

anupādiṇṇa-anupādāniyā dhammā

saṃkiliṭṭhasaṃkilesikā dhammā asaṃkiliṭṭha-asamkilesikā
dhammāasaṃkiliṭṭha-asamkilesikā dhammā

savitakka savicārā dhammā avitakkavicārā [vicāramattā] dhammā avitakka-
avicārā dhammā

pitisahagatā dhammā sukhasahagatā dhammā upekkhāsahagatā dhammā

dassanena pahātabbā dhammā bhāvanāya pahātabbā dhammā nevadassanena
na bhāvanāya pahātabbā dhammā

dassanena pahātabbahetukā dhammā bhāvanāya pahātabbahetukā dhammā
nevadassanena na bhāvanāya pahātabbahetukā dhammā

ācayagāmino dhammā apacayagāmino dhammā nevācayagāmino
(nāpacayagāmino) dhammā

sekkhā dhammā asekkhā dhammā nevasekkhā nāsekkhā dhammā

parittā dhammā mahagatā dhammā appamāṇā dhammā

parittārammaṇā dhammā mahagatārammaṇā dhammā appamāṇārammaṇā
dhammā

hīnā dhammā majjhimā dhammā paṇītā dhammā

micchattaniyatā dhammā sammattaniyatā dhammā aniyatā dhammā

maggārammaṇā dhammā maggahetukā dhammā maggādhipatino dhammā

uppannā dhammā anuppannā dhammā uppādino dhammā

atītā dhammā anāgatā dhammā paccuppannā dhammā

atītārammaṇā dhammā anāgatārammaṇā dhammā paccuppannārammaṇā
dhammā

ajjhattā dhammā bahiddhā dhammā ajjhatabhiddhā dhammā

ajjhattārammaṇā dhammā bahiddhārammaṇā dhammā

ajjhatabhiddhārammaṇā dhammā

sanidassanasappaṭighā dhammā anidassanaopāṭighā dhammā anidassana-
opāṭighā dhammā

[bāvisati tikamātikā]¹²

hetudhammā nahetu dhammā

sahetukā dhammā ahetukā dhammā

dhammā hetusampayuttā dhammā hetuvippayuttā dhammā

hetu ceva dhammā sahetukā ca

sahetukā ceva dhammā na ca hetu

hetu ceva dhammā hetusampayuttā ca

12. In the following, I add sectional titles in square brackets at end of the sections, based on *Syāmaratṭhassa Tepīṭakaṃ*. The inscription itself seems to supply at most five sectional titles. *Yoga-gocchakaṃ*, *nivaraṇa-gocchakaṃ*, and *parāmāsa-gocchakaṃ* are clear, *saññojana-gocchakaṃ* is there but is misplaced, and *upādāna-gocchakaṃ* may be there but it is enclosed in parentheses.

hetusampayuttā ceva dhammā na ca hetu
na hetu kho pana dhammā sahetukā ca ahetukā pi

[hetu-gocchakaṃ]

sappaccayā dhammā appacayā dhammā
saṅkhatā dhammā asaṅkhatā dhammā
sanidassanā dhammā anidassanā dhammā
sappaṭighā dhammā appaṭighā dhammā
rūpino dhammā arūpino dhammā
lokiyā dhammā lokuttarā dhammā kenaci viññeyyā dhammā kenaci na viññeyyā
dhammā

[cūlantara-dukaṃ]

āsavā dhammā no āsavā dhammā
sāsavā dhammā anāsavā dhammā
āsavasampayuttā dhammā āsavavippayuttā dhammā
āsavā ceva dhammā sāsavā ca
sāsavā ceva dhammā no sāsavā
āsavā ceva dhammā āsasampayuttā ca
āsavasampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca āsavā
āsavavippayuttā kho pana ca dhammā sāsavā pi anāsavā pi

[āśava-gocchakaṃ]

saññojanā dhammā no saññojanā dhammā
saññojaniyā dhammā asaññojaniyā dhammā
saññojanasampayuttā dhammā saññojanavippayuttā dhammā
saññojanā ceva dhammā saññojaniyā ca
saññojanasampayuttā dhammā saññojanavippayuttā dhammā
saññojanā ceva dhammā saññojanasampayuttā ca
saññojanavippayuttā ceva dhammā no ca saññojanā

Verso

(saññojana-gocchakaṃ: continued)

saññojanasampayuttā dhammā saññojanavippayuttā dhammā
saññojanā ceva dhammā saññojaniyā ca
saññojaniyā ceva dhammā no ca saññojanā
saññojanā ceva dhammā saññojanasampayuttā ca
saññojanasampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca saññojanā
saññojanavippayuttā kho pana dhammā saññojaniyā pi asaññojaniyā pi

[saññojana-gocchakaṃ]

gaṇṭhā¹³ dhammā no gaṇṭhā dhammā
gaṇṭhaniyā dhammā ca gaṇṭhaniyā dhammā
gaṇṭhasampayuttā dhammā gaṇṭhavippayuttā dhammā
gaṇṭhā ceva dhammā gaṇṭhaniyā ca
gaṇṭhaniyā ceva dhammā no ca gaṇṭhā
gaṇṭhā ceva dhammā gaṇṭhasampayuttā ca

13. Syāmaratṭha has gaṇṭhā here and in following.

gaṇṭhasampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca gaṇṭhā
gaṇṭhavippayuttā kho pana dhammā gaṇṭhaniyā pi agaṇṭhaniyā pi

[gantha-gochakkaṃ]

oghā dhammā no oghā dhammā
oghaniyā dhammā anoghaniyā dhammā
oghasampayuttā dhammā oghavippayuttā dhammā
oghā ceva dhammā oghaniyā ca
oghaniyā ceva dhammā no ca oghā
oghā ceva dhammā oghasampayuttā ca
ogha sampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca oghā
oghavippayuttā kho pana dhammā oghaniyā pi anoghaniyā pi

[ogha-gochakkaṃ]

yogā dhammā no yogā dhammā
yoganiyā dhammā ayoganiyā dhammā
yogasampayuttā dhammā yogavippayuttā dhammā
yogā ceva dhammā yoganiyā ca
yoganiyā ceva dhammā no ca yoga
yogā ceva dhammā yogasampayuttā ca
yogasampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca yoga
yogavippayuttā kho pana dhammā yoganiyā pi ayoganiyā pi

yoga-gocchakkaṃ

nivaraṇā dhammā no nivaraṇā dhammā
nivaraṇiyā dhammā anivaraṇā dhammā
nivaraṇasampayuttā dhammā nivaraṇavippayuttā dhammā
nivaraṇā ceva dhammā nivaraṇiyā ca
nivaraṇiyā ceva dhammā no ca nivaraṇā
nivaraṇā ceva dhammā nivaraṇasampayuttā ca
nivaraṇasampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca nivaraṇā
nivaraṇavippayuttā kho pana dhammā nivaraṇiyā pi anivaraṇiyā pi

nivaraṇa-gocchakkaṃ

parāmāsā] dhammā no parāmāsā dhammā
parāmaṭṭhā dhammā aparāmaṭṭhā dhammā
parāmāsasampayuttā dhammā parāmāsavippayuttā dhammā
parāmāsā ceva dhammā parāmaṭṭhā ca
parāmaṭṭhā ceva dhammā no ca parāmāsā
parāmāsavippayuttā kho pana dhammā parāmaṭṭhā pi aparāmaṭṭhā pi

parāmāsa-gocchakkaṃ

sārammaṇā dhammā anārammaṇā dhammā
cittā dhammā no cittā dhammā
cetasikā dhammā acetasikā dhammā
cittasampayuttā dhammā cittavippayuttā dhammā
cittasaṃsaṭṭhā dhammā cittaviṣaṃsaṭṭhā dhammā
cittasamuṭṭhānā dhammā no cittasamuṭṭhānā dhammā
cittasahabhuno dhammā no cittasahabhuno dhammā

cittānuparivattino dhammā no cittānuparivattino dhammā
 cittaṣaṃsaṭṭhasamuṭṭhānā dhammā no cittaṣaṃsaṭṭhasamuṭṭhānā dhammā
 cittaṣaṃsaṭṭhasamuṭṭhānasahabhuno dhammā no cittaṣaṃsaṭṭhasamuṭṭhānasah
 abhuno dhammā
 cittaṣaṃsaṭṭhasamuṭṭhānā parivattino dhammā no
 cittaṣaṃsaṭṭhasamuṭṭhānānuparivattino dhammā
 ajjhakkā dhammā bāhirā dhammā
 upādā dhammā no upādā dhammā
 upādiṇṇā dhammā anupādiṇṇā dhammā

 upādānā dhammā no upādānā dhammā
 upādāniyā dhammā anupādāniyā dhammā
 upādānasampayuttā dhammā upādānavippayuttā dhammā
 upādānā ceva dhammā upādāniyā ca
 upādāniyā ceva dhammā no ca upādānā
 upādānā ceva dhammā upādānasampayuttā ca
 upādānasampayuttā ceva dhammā no ca upādānā
 upādānavippayuttā kho pana dhammā upādāniyā pi anupādāniyā pi

(upādāna-gocchakaṃ)

4. Heart formulas of the *Sutta-piṭaka*, *Phaya Kāsalak*, *Karaṇiya-metta-sutta*, *Traisaraṇagamaṇa*, plus *om*

According to Cham Thongkhamwan's notes, Mr Somphong and Mrs Bunmi Phromwipha from the Phromwipha Pharmacy (ร้านขายยาพรหมวิภา) in the Sukhothai market donated the gold leaves to the National Museum on 3 February 1959.¹⁴

Script	Khom Sukhothai
Language	Pali
Date	CE 15th century (BE 20th century)
Support	Rectangular gold foil
Sides/lines	1 side with 2 lines
Dimensions	Not recorded
Registration no.	STh 42
Place of discovery	Sukhothai province
Present location	National Museum, Bangkok
Date of donation to museum	3 February CE 1959 / BE 2502
Donated by	Mr Somphong and Mrs Bunmi Phromwipha (นายสมพงษ์ และ นางบุญมี พรหมวิภา)
Photo/estampage	Not available
Publication history	1) <i>Chareuk nai prathet thai</i> , Vol. 5, pp. 47–49. Read by Cham Thongkhamwan 2) Supaphan Na Bangchang, <i>Wiwathanakan ngan khian phasa bali</i> , pp. 57–59.

14. Renowned epigraphist Cham Thongkhamwan (CE 1897–1969 / BE 2440–2512) was Professor at Silpakorn University. For his life and works, see *Prawat buraphachan dan chareukseuksa neuang nai ngan phithi 'khurubucha'*, 49–60.

The Ramkhamhaeng National Museum in Sukhothai was opened by King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit only in 1962. Phra Ratchaprasitthikhun, abbot of Ratchathani Temple, donated more than 2,000 artifacts and local citizens also donated many objects to the new museum.

Inscription

1. *dī(ma)saṃaṃ(khu)ca(bha)kasa*
2. *buddhasaṃmiuddhaṃadhomau*

Edition

dī ma saṃ aṃ khu ca bha ka sa
bud dha saṃ mi uddhaṃ adho ma a u

Interpretation

The first five syllables represent the titles of the five *Nikāyas*, the primary collections of the *Sutta-piṭaka*, by giving the first syllable of each.¹⁵

1. *dī* **dī**ghanikāya
2. *ma* **majj**himanikāya
3. *saṃ* **saṃ**yuttanikāya
4. *aṃ* **aṃ**guttaranikāya
5. *khu* **kh**uddakanikāya

The next four syllables are the first syllables of the four lines of a verse known from the *Vajirasāratthasaṅgaha* and other sources.¹⁶ This is known as the heart formula of (Phaya) Kāsalak (หัวใจสี่กล):

caja bhaja kara sara

Drop it, stay with it, do it, remember!

The complete verse is:

caja dujjana-saṃsaggam
bhaja sādhu-samāgamaṃ
kara puññaṃ ahorattaṃ
sara nīccam aniccataṃ.

Drop it! — Stop mixing with bad people.

Stay with it! — Keep the company of the good.

Do it! — Make merit day and night.

Always remember! — Everything is impermanent.

The verse is included in collections of moral and spiritual maxims like the Pali *Dhammanīti* and *Lokanīti*, and doubtless other texts.¹⁷ There are Sanskrit parallels to the verse in *Cāṇakya* and elsewhere.¹⁸ The Pali version and three Thai transla-

15. For the five *Nikāyas* see Norman 1983, 30–95; von Hinüber 1996, 23–64.

16. *Phra Khamphi Wachirasaratthasaṅkhaha*, 44–45.

17. Bechert and Braun 1981, 33 (*Dhammanīti* v. 411) and 75 (*Lokanīti* v. 42).

18. See Skilling 2555 [2012], 437–38.

tions are included in the ‘Anthology of *khlong* verses on worldly principles’ (*Prachum khlong Lokanit*/ประชุมโคลงโลกนิติ, § 20) compiled in the reign of King Rama III (Phra Nangklao/พระนั่งเกล้า, reigned 1824 to 1851).

The next four syllables are the ‘heart formula of going for refuge’ (หัวใจไตรสรณาคมน์, *hua chai traisaranakhom*, *traisaraṇagamaṇa*): I go to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṃgha for refuge (*buddhaṃ, dhammaṃ, saṃghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*).

bud **buddha**
dha **dhamma**
saṃ **saṃgha**
mi *saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*.

Going for refuge, entrusting oneself to the Buddha, is the basis of Dhamma practice. By taking refuge ‘as long as one lives’ (*yāva jīvaṃ*) one sets out on the path, and should take refuge, reciting the formula, at least once a day to reinforce and refresh one’s practice. There are chants that elaborate on the refuges (such as *natthi me saraṇaṃ aññaṃ, buddho me saraṇaṃ varaṃ*). The assembly takes refuge, following the chants of the monks, at the beginning of all Thai ceremonies.

Next is a phrase ‘above, below’ from verse 8c of the *Karaṇīya-metta sutta*,¹⁹ known in Thai as the หัวใจกรณีย์/*huachai karani*, ‘heart formula of the *Karaṇīya*[-sūtra]’:

mettañ ca sabbalokasmiṃ
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ
uddhaṃ adho *ca tiriyañ ca*
asambādhaṃ averaṃ asapattaṃ
tiṭṭhañ caraṃ nisinno vā
sayāno vā yāva tassa vigatamiddho
etaṃ satim adhiṭṭhāya
brahmam etaṃ vihāraṃ idha-m-āhu.

Foster limitless love for the whole wide world in your mind,
Above, below, and all around, without obstruction, enmity, or rivalry.
Standing, walking, seated, lying down, keeping drowsiness at bay,
Setting mindfulness firm like this: they call it
A superbly divine way of life here in this world.

Last is the formula of *om*, which is made up of three letters, *ma a u*.²⁰

19. *Suttanipāta* (PTS) vv. 150–51 (*Uragavagga*, *Sutta* No. 8, verses 8–9). The *sutta* is also included in the *Khuddakapāṭha* (PTS, p. 8).

20. See Supaphan, *Wiwathanakan ngan khian phasa bali*, 59. There are numerous explanations and configurations of the three letters that make up *om*.

5. Heart formulas of the *Buddhagūṇa*, the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, and the *Vinaya-piṭaka*

Script	Khom Sukhothai
Language	Pali
Date	CE 15th century (BE 20th century)
Support	Rectangular gold foil
Sides/lines	1 side with 2 lines
Dimensions	Not recorded
Registration no.	STh 45
Place of discovery	Sukhothai Province
Present location	National Museum, Bangkok
Date of donation to Museum	3 February CE 1959/BE 2502
Donated by	Mr. Somphong and Mrs Bunmi Phromwipha (see previous entry for details)
Photo/estampage	Not available
Publication history	1) <i>Chareuk nai prathet thai</i> , Vol. 5, pp. 47–49. Read by Cham Thongkhamwan. 2) Supaphan Na Bangchang, <i>Wiwathanakan ngan khian phasa bali</i> , pp. 55–56.

Inscription

1. *asaṃvisulopusabu(bha)*
2. *saṃvidhāpukayapaā(pā)macupa*

Edition

a saṃ vi su lo pu sa bu bha
saṃ vi dhā pu ka ya pa āpāmacupa

Interpretation

The first nine syllables *asaṃvisulopusabubha* represent the *Buddhagūṇa*, the virtues or qualities of a Buddha. Recitation of the *Buddhagūṇa* is basic to practices of praising and recollecting the Buddha

a *arahaṃ*
saṃ *sammāsambuddho*
vi *vijjācaraṇasampanno*
su *sugato*
lo *lokavidū anuttaro*
pu *purisadammasārathi*
sa *sattā devamanussānaṃ*
bu *buddho*
bha *bhagavā*

The next set of seven syllables *saṃvidhāpukayapa* represents the seven books of the Abhidhamma.²¹

saṃ	saṃgaṇī
vi	vibhaṇṇa
dhā	dhātukathā
pu	puggalapaṇṇatti
ka	kathāvatthu
ya	yamaka
pa	paṭṭhāna

The last set of five syllables *āpāmacupa* stands for the five books of the Vinaya.²²

ā	ādikamma
pā	pācittiya
ma	mahāvagga
cu	culavagga
pa	parivāra

Comments

Inscriptions can be dated: they can be dated precisely when they bear a date, or they can be dated approximately when they have a clear stratigraphic context or association. The five inscriptions studied here have neither. Inscriptions can also be dated through palaeography, the comparative study of the shape of the letters to determine their age, but palaeography is a subjective art that needs to be grounded on a corpus of dated inscriptions. In the Siamese corpus, especially for the earlier periods, there are few uncontroversially dated records, and we end up running around in circles. We can say, but only very generally, that in this case the letters belong to the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries and are similar to the Khom Bali letters of other inscriptions.²³

It is unlikely or even impossible that such large, heavy, carefully lettered and formatted stone slabs should have been produced after the middle of the sixteenth century when the population of the northern principalities (*chao meuang neua*)²⁴ — including that of Sukhothai and its neighbouring *meuang* — was uprooted and shifted to repopulate the central capital, Ayutthaya, which had been depopulated by the Burmese. This brought immense social and cultural disruption to the northern principalities, with the result that the archive of memory, the oral map of the landscape, was obliterated. The Luang Prasert chronicle states laconically that ‘in that same year [CS 946, Year of the Monkey = 1584–5], the households of the north-

21. For the seven books see Nyanatiloka 1971; Norman 1983, 96–107; von Hinüber 1996, 64–75.

22. For the five books see Norman 1983, 18–29 and von Hinüber 1996, 8–22. The titles and order of the European editions differ from those of the traditional Thai editions, but the contents are fundamentally the same.

23. See Pali inscription at Wat Si Chum from about the fourteenth century, unfortunately very fragmentary: Skilling 2008, 115.

24. At that time *Meuang Neua* meant the upper Chao Phraya basin, the cities listed in the Somdet Phra Phonarat chronicle.

ern *meuang*s were deported en masse down to Krung Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya'.²⁵ The royal chronicle of Somdet Phra Phonarat gives more details:²⁶

In the same ninth lunar month there was a royal command of his father the king [Phra Mahā Dhammarājā] to go up and flush the households of the northern cities down to the capital, Si Ayutthaya. When Somdet Phra Naresuan knew the command, he had the households of the *meuang*s Phra Phitsanulok, Phichai, Sawankhalok, Sukhothai, Kamphaeng Phet, Phichit, and all the smaller towns loaded onto boats and rafts, arranged flotillas of guard boats, and stationed detachments of soldiers as guards on both banks of the river, to prevent the households escaping before reaching the capital.²⁷

The *Mātikās* and the condensed *Tripitaka* must have been in circulation as autonomous extracts or as liturgical texts by this time at the latest. The Wat Mahathat stone slab is the earliest evidence that I know of for what is today known as the 'Seven books of the Abhidhamma' (พระอภิธรรม ๗ คัมภีร์/*Phra aphitham 7 kamphi*) — a selection of short extracts from each of the seven books of the Abhidhamma that stands for the complete set, whether through the medium of writing or that of recitation. In some details the Wat Mahathat inscription differs from those of other compilations of the 'Seven books of the Abhidhamma', but the inscription covers the full seven books, and that is the essential point. The installation of golden texts in the cetiyas at Wat Pho (Wat Phra Chetuphon) (see Skilling 2016) in nineteenth century Bangkok continued to follow the cultures of abbreviation and installation. The texts also have the social associations of the chanting of the condensed *Tripitaka* at funerary rites. The Cetiya of the Four Reigns at Wat Pho were, after all, memorials dedicated to deceased kings. Whether the Sukhodaya slabs had funerary functions is not at present known.

The inscriptions belong to a period in Siamese cultural history during which Pali language and recitation had ritual, liturgical, and meditational functions that were all part of the broad and intangible stream of mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*). Their exact use is not known, but they might have been covers of stone relic caskets meant to protect the relics not only by their size and weight but by the magic power of the letters.²⁸ That is, they were produced within the Buddhist culture of inscription, installation, and consecration. The custom of installing the Buddha's word in *stūpas* began in India nearly two thousand years ago; the practice was

25. *Phra ratchaphongsawadan krung kao chabap luang prasert*, 17.9, ในปีเดียวกัน ให้เทครัวเมืองเหนือทั้งปวง ลงมายังกรุงพระนครศรีอยุธยา. My translation; see also Frankfurter 1954, 59.

26. *Phra ratchaphongsawadan chabab somdet phra phonarat*, 98: translation by Chris Baker (11 May 2017). For another translation see Cushman and Wyatt 2000, 96–97.

27. ถึง ๗ วันอาทิตย์ เดือน 9 แรม 5 ค่ำ ขุนอินทรละครกลับลงมาถึงเมืองพระพิษณุโลก แลในเดือนเก้านั้น มีพระกำหนดสมเด็จพระราชบิดาให้ขึ้นไปเทครัวรอบพบบนเมืองเหนือทั้งปวงลงมายังพระนครศรีอยุธยา สมเด็จพระนเรศวรเปนเจ้าครั้นแจ้งพระราชกำหนดคั่งนั้น ครัสให้เทครัวรอบพบบนเมืองพระพิษณุโลก เมืองพิษณุโลก เมืองสุโขทัย เมืองกำแพงเพชร เมืองพิจิตร เมืองเล็กน้อยทั้งนั้นลงบรรทุกเรือบ้างแพบ้าง แล้วแต่เรือคุมปนหมวดปนกอง แลแต่งกองทับบัองกรสองฝั่งปากน้ำลงมายังให้ครัวหนีได้ จนถึงกรุงเทพมหานคร.

28. The names of the four great kings are inscribed on the four sides of Inscription 2. The four kings were depicted on the four sides of the relic caskets of China, Korea, and Japan.

adopted in ancient Siam since the Dvāravatī period (seventh to eighth centuries CE if not earlier).

The formatting of the Sukhodaya stone slabs is a special feature. I do not know of any similar examples from other parts of the country or even the region, or from any period of Thai history. They link Sukhodaya to the cultures of word and alphabet and of magic diagrams (*yantra* and *maṇḍala*). These, like manuscripts, were made of perishable materials; they do not survive and the history of these cultures remains to be written. Ayutthaya society celebrated the majestic alchemy of letters in many alphabets: Khom Thai, Khom Bali, Thai, Mon, and Khmer, and delighted in intricate and refined poetics. Mastery of the alphabetic arts began with training in the *cintāmaṇī* manuals.

The layout of the slabs brings to mind the *dhāraṇī* amulets known largely from China, where they were written or painted on cloth and paper. Most are set within a square frame. A *dhāraṇī* of Mahāpratisarā has a ‘two dimensional pyramid’ design: the apexes of four triangular text blocs meet in the centre at a square space with a lotus (Drège 1999, fig. 54 and pp. 154–155). This compares with Inscription 3, where the four blocs meet at the centre. The *Mahāpratisarā* is one of the popular *dhāraṇīs* that spread throughout China and Southeast Asia. This example may date to the tenth century. Here the text is the Chinese translation. Another, found in Sichuan in 1944, is in Siddhamāṭṭṛka letters; the text is inscribed in a square running around a central square with a picture of the deity Mahāpratisarā. Around the border are figures of deities. In another from Dunhuang dated 980, the *dhāraṇī* is written in a circle also in Siddhamāṭṭṛka.²⁹

The slab inscriptions seem to link Sukhodaya to the broad stream of *Siddham* alphabets — a mainstream that is not restricted to so-called esoteric or tantric Buddhism but rather goes beyond it. *Siddham* is the key to success — an interactive complex of educational and didactic practices that draw on the visual power of letters and the power of sound, the power of written and recited *buddha-vacana*. Most of the *Siddham* inscriptions in southern China and elsewhere are earlier than the Sukhodaya slabs, but there may have been a long-term continuity — at least, this should not be ruled out. *Siddham* and *dhāraṇī* practices flourished in Dali and the kingdom of Nanzhao until the thirteenth century. A curious hybrid of the encounter between Pali Buddhism and *dhāraṇīs* is the Pali *Uṇḥissa-vijaya*: a verse narrative that corresponds closely to the standard *Uṣṇīṣavijaya-dhāraṇī* narrative, but without the *dhāraṇī*. The Pali *Uṇḥissa-vijaya* was widespread across central mainland Southeast Asia, and today is recited in ceremonies to prolong or fortify life-forces amongst the Thai, the various Tai, the Lao, and the Khmer.

On the other hand, the Sukhodaya inscriptions in Thai, Pali, and Khmer were well designed, and in the fourteenth century the massive project at Wat Si Chum to the north of the city engaged craftsmen to carve hundreds of stone slabs, many depicting *jātakas*. These were carefully formatted; the pictures were beautifully

29. For examples of *dhāraṇī* amulets, see Copp 2014, figs. 2.2, 2.3, 2.7, 2.11, 2.13, 2.16, 2.19, 2.10, 2.21. Drège 1999–2000, figs. 1–8; Hidas 2014; Wang 2011, *passim*.

etched, accompanied by brief Thai-language captions (see Skilling 2008). That is to say, the lapidary arts were well developed at Sukhodaya.

The last two inscriptions discussed above are on gold leaves. There are many inscribed gold leaves in Thai collections. The majority, perhaps, are *suvaṇṇapaṭ* (สุพรรณบัฏ) or *hiraṇṇapaṭ* (หิรัญบัฏ), gold or silver foils that during the Ayutthaya period were inscribed in Thai with the royally bestowed names and titles of high-ranking monks and nobles. The term and custom continue to this day. A much smaller number give citations from Pali scriptures. Unfortunately there seems to be no study or even inventory of such artefacts. Deluxe editions of scriptures in gold were produced for centuries across Buddhist cultures.³⁰

Written culture is more than tool of memory; the letters preserve canons but they also configure and consecrate. To understand the vibrant culture of *abhiṣeka* that has permeated Thai society from the time of the earliest records is one step towards the recovery of the cultural life of the Pali imaginary and the dynamics of Theravāda. Political power may have changed address — from Sukhodaya to Phitsanulok to Ayutthaya to Bangkok — but the spiritual and cultural dynamics live on.

Note

Throughout the preparation of this article, the National Museum and the National Library, both in Bangkok, have been undergoing renovation and moving to new buildings, with the result that I have not had access to the original objects. I have relied on the previous transcriptions and such estampages or photographs as are available to me. The result is that my readings are not ideal. The texts are well-known and formulaic, and they do not present significant variants or transmissional problems. The published editions place words or phrases within parentheses and compare them to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*. The parentheses usually mean that the editors have added the word or phrase on the basis of the canonical text. Because the available reproductions are not sufficiently clear for me to check all of the doubtful readings, and because no pictures of the two gold foils have been published, it seems futile to attempt a scrupulous edition until better materials are available.

We speak of Khom Sukhothai, but no palaeographic study exists in any European language. Such a study is a desideratum, as is an inventory of the Pali inscriptions of Sukhodaya and of Thailand. No matter what the date of the Pali epigraphic corpus may be, the Sukhodaya corpus is one of the most substantial Pali corpora in mainland Southeast Asia or Sri Lanka. There are no similar bodies of Pali inscriptions in Ayutthaya, Nakhon Si Thammarat, or Angkor Wat; the exceptions are the eleventh to thirteenth centuries corpus of Pukam or Pagan in Burma and King Dharmacedi's Kalyani Sima inscriptions outside of Pagan in lower Burma dated to 1479.

30. For 'a scientific study of the gold from U Thong' see Bennett 2017; gold foil inscriptions are not, however, mentioned. Nor are they mentioned or illustrated in Namikawa's splendid *The Golden Figures of Buddha and Buddhist Sites in Thailand* (1987). Miksic's *Old Javanese Gold* (2011), has a chapter on gold in Southeast Asia; there are gold foil inscriptions in Java and Sumatra, but none, it seems in the *Yale University Art Gallery*.

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