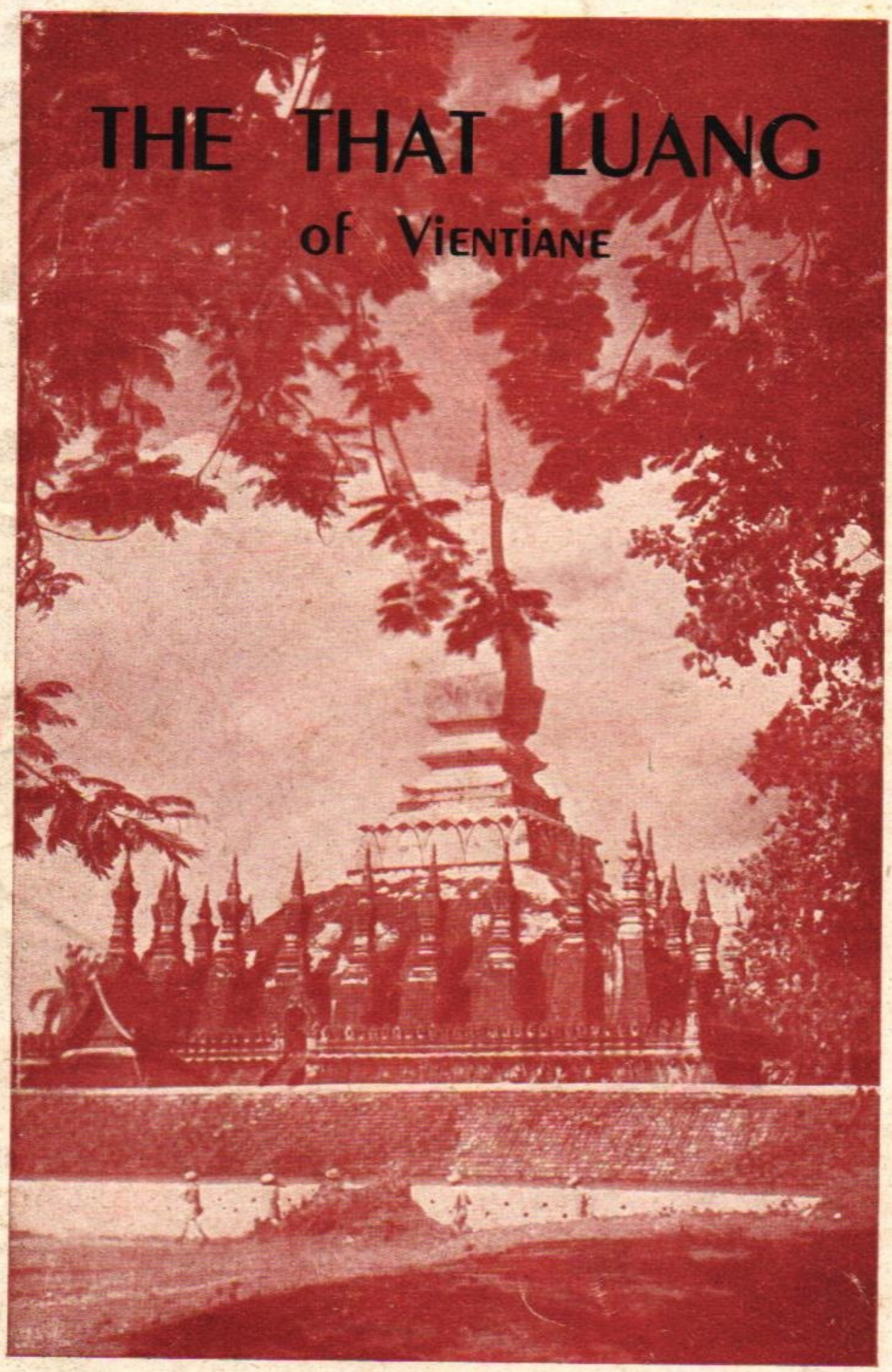


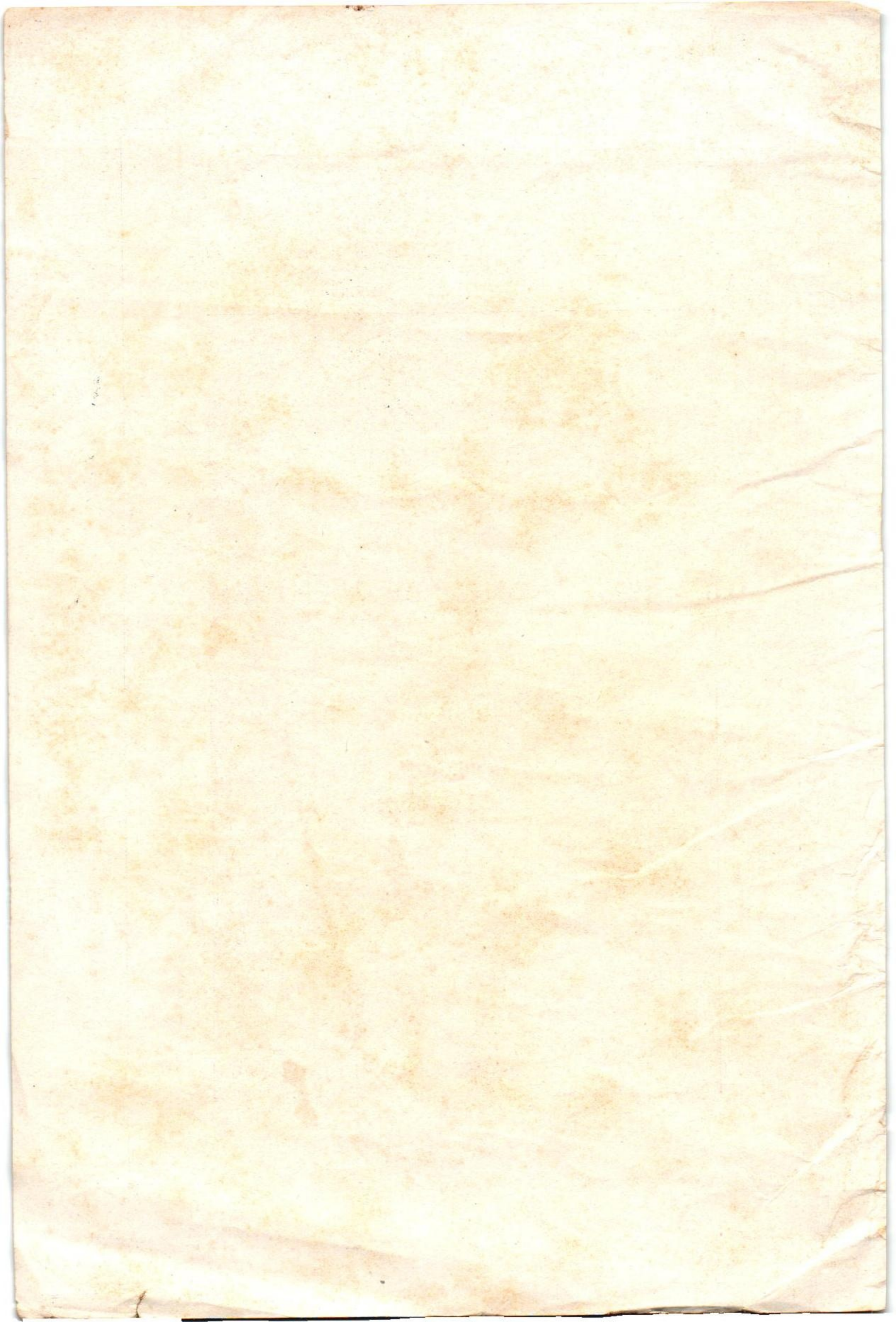
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**THE THAT LUANG  
of VIENTIANE**



— Asia —



THE THAT LUANG OF VIENTIANE

Cover Picture : *The That Luang to-day.*  
(Hang-Xuân Photo)

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

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*Asia*

93, Rue d'Ormay — SAIGON (Viêt-Nam)

The *stûpa*, forming the central edifice, is built on three terraces, the first two of which are surrounded by loop-holed enclosures that form the external wall of the open galleries around the highest terrace, at the foot of the *stûpa*. The base of the pyramid is encircled by an elegant chain composed of 30 pinnacles placed in series of 8 and 9 along the four sides of the monument. The square shape of the building, and its unroofed, concentric galleries, is faintly reminiscent of the system at Barabudur. I shall continue the description of this monument when I deal with the work of restoration that has been done on it at various periods.

An inscription on the That Luang tells us that this « *thûpa* » was built in 928 saka (1566 A.D.) by King Xay Setthathirath (Jaya Settha) who gave it the name of *Lokasûlâmani* (« Crest of the World »). It was built over a relic named *Jinaguyhadhâtu* (« Secret » or « Mysterious Relic of the Buddha ») (1).

The monument, as its name indicates, is really a *stûpa*, that is, a building containing a Relic of the Buddha (*dhâtu*). The Laotians describe, by metonymy, the *stûpa* by the name of the Relic itself. The word *That* came to apply, in a wider sense, to all funeral monuments (Sk. *Caitya*).

We may wonder whether it will ever be known what sort of a Relic is enclosed in the That Luang. There is, however, a legend that the original *That* was built over a hair of the Buddha about the 11th century (2), while another version suggests that the Relic is one of the Master's small bones.

According to another legend, the first That Luang was built in the time of Asoka, the great Indian Emperor and propagandist of Buddhism at this epoch (3rd century B.C.). The story relates that the Buddha Gautama, who was wandering in the *Muong* of Si Sattanâganahuta Uttamapuri Si Lan Xang, stopped, one day, at Phon Pha Nao (3). When he came to the spot on which the That Luang now stands, the Buddha smiled. Ananda asked why he looked so happy. The All-Knowing One replied : « After My death, Emperor Asoka will build a monument on this spot to shelter My mortal remains ; the monument will be venerated and Buddhism will irradiate from this centre. » Queen Purichanda, wife of King Sumittadhammade Si Sattanâganahuta, accompanied by five brahmans, marked the spot with a stone and built a chapel there. Later, Asoka brought a Relic of the Buddha after his *Nirvana*, and built a stone *stûpa* at the same place, to shelter this Relic.

The above legend gives no details as to the nature of the Relic. On the other hand, it situates the kingdom of Si Sattanâganahuta as belonging to a very ancient period of history. The kingdom of Si Sattanâganahuta (Sk. *Cri*

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(1) See Louis Finot, in *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XVII, V, pp. 70 sqq.

(2) P. Le Boulanger, *Histoire du Laos français*, pp. 85 sqq.

(3) Mss. of the Venerable Lakkham Kèo, Chief of the Diocese of Vat Sisaket (Vientiane). The village of Phon Pha Nao is 5 km. along the Tha Ngon road, N.-E. of the That Luang. Its name comes from the mound (*Phon*) where the Buddha (*Pha*) stopped (*Nao-Xao*).

*Catanâganahuta*), or « Hundreds of Millions of Nâga », was thus possibly a part of the Nan-Tchao or the Fou-Nan. In prehistoric times, Indochina was peopled by various races, some of them related to the Negrites and the Veddas, others to the Australians, the Papuan-Melanesians and the Indonesians. The original inhabitants of Indochina and Insulindia were related to those who inhabit the Pacific Islands today. The Mongolian element in these countries is of recent origin. These ancient populations have left traces of their culture in the form of stone, bone and metal tools, fragments of pottery and megaliths. The discovery of prehistoric sites in the region of Luang Prabang and Ban Vang, above Vientiane, shows that the valley of the Mekong had been inhabited by primitive peoples since the stone age. Tools found near the menhirs of Upper Laos (Plain of the Jars of Xieng Kouang), show that they date from the Iron age that is, from the proto-historic epoch. These are funeral monuments, related to the worship of ancestors and dead chiefs.

The influence of India reached the Thai of Nan-Tchao in Yunnan (China) as early as II B.C., by the route that linked India to China, passing through Assam, Upper Burma and Yunnan (1).

The Chinese envoys K'ang T'ai and Tchu Ying, who visited Fou-Nan in the middle of the 3rd century, were the first to bring news of this State, the centre of which lay along the lower course and on the delta of the Mekong river, although it is possible that, at one time, it may have included South Viêt-Nam, Central Mekong and a considerable part of the valley of the Menam and the Malay Peninsula. This remains to be proved. Mr. George Cœdès connects the dynastic traditions of the capital of Fou-Nan to the Court of the Pallavas. At a certain period, this capital was *Vvâdhapura*, « the City of Hunters », situated near the hill named *Ba Phnom*, in what is now S.-E. Cambodia (2). The Fou-Nannians used a system of writing that resembled that of the Hu (inhabitants of Central Asia who used signs of Indian origin) (3). Khmer influence made itself felt on the Laotian tribes of the Mekong and the Menam, as far as Xieng Sen, Luang Prabang and Xieng Mai until the 9th century (4).

The archaeological remains of Vat Phu show that Khmer culture spread to South Laos between the 7th and 9th centuries. This was the period when the kingdom of Tchen-La, or Cambodia, made its appearance. Mr. George Cœdès has situated the centre of this State along the Central Mekong, in the region of Bassak, near the site of the Vat Phu (5). At the end of the 8th century, after the cleavage of the Tchan-La into Tchen-La on Land and

(1) Paul Pelliot, *Deux Itinéraires* (*Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, IV, pp. 142-43, 154 sqq.)

(2) Paul Pelliot, *Le Fou-Nan* (*Id.*, III, p. 303), and George Cœdès, *Histoire ancienne des Etats hindouisés d'Extrême-Orient*, p. 44.

(3) Paul Pelliot, *op. cit.*, III, p. 252, sqq.

(4) Henri Maspéro, *La Frontière de l'Annam et du Cambodge du VIII<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles* (*Id.*, XVIII, 3, p. 32 sqq.)

(5) George Cœdès, *Le Site primitif du Tchen-La* (*Id.*, XVIII, 9, pp. 1-3). See also *id.*, XXVIII, p. 124 sqq.)

Tchen-La on Water, the capital of Tchen-La on Land was transferred, according to the overland itinerary of Kia Tan from China to India, to a point that has been situated in the region of Pak Hin Bun, along the Central Mekong (1).

Archaeological discoveries along the Mekong from Bassak in the South to Luang Prabang in the North, and especially the Sanskrit inscriptions and the Khmer paintings of Vat Phu, Sayfong and Vat Sangkhalok at Luang Prabang, show that Khmer influence extended over nearly the whole territory of Laos until the 12th century (2).

The massive infiltration of the Indochinese Peninsula by the Thai, resulting from the annexation of Yunnan by the Mongols in 1253, began in the 13th century. We are told of the founding of Thai principalities beyond Yunnan, dating from this period : Mogaung, North of Bhamo (1215), Mone or Muong Nai on a tributary on the right bank of the Salwinn, (1223), Assam (1229), the Thai principalities of Burma (1287), Sukhothai (1283), Xieng Mai (1296), Xieng Ray (1262) and Xieng Sen about the same time. The Râma Kham Heng inscription of 1292 gives the Muong Xua (Luang Prabang) as the frontier of the kingdom of Sukhothai. It results from this that the legendary descent of Khun Borom and the arrival in mass of the Thai by the Nam U at Xieng Đông Xieng Thong (Luang Prabang) took place at about the same epoch.

Prehistoric and archaeological discoveries confirm the historical facts concerning the ethnical elements of early Laos.

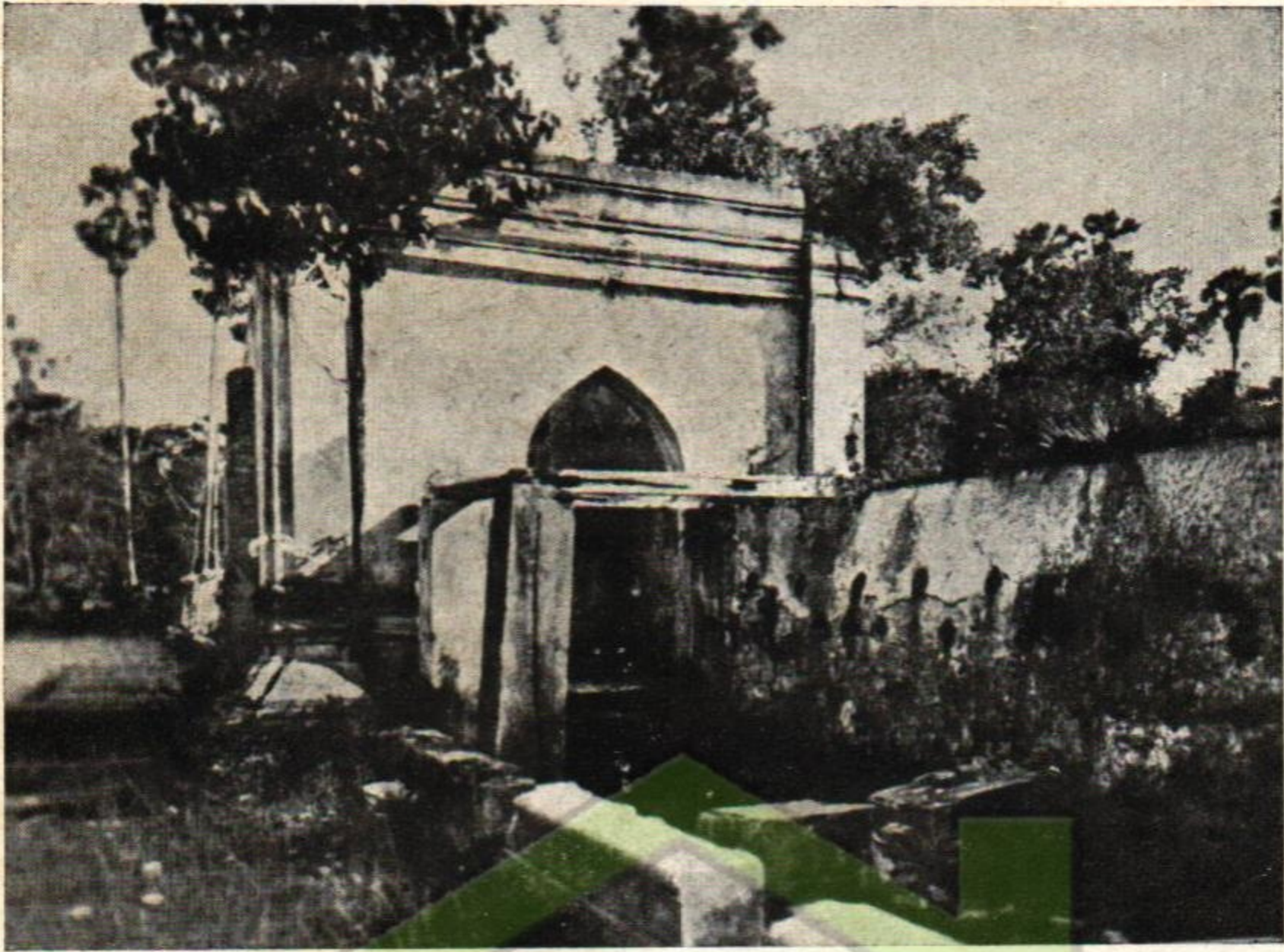
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It should be recalled that the general architecture of the That Luang resembles that of Barabudur, a master-piece of Javanese art built in the 9th century, that is, about seven hundred years before the That Luang. There are several *stûpas* in Burma that resemble the architecture of Central Java, as typified by the Barabudur and the temple of Shwe Dagon, or that of Shwe Hmaudau that belongs to the style of Pagan. What can be the relation between monuments so widely separated both in space and time ? Xay Setta (Jaya Jettha), the ruler of Xieng Mai who came to the throne of the Lan-Xang at Luang Prabang in 1548 under the name of Setthathirath (Jetthadhirâja) was frequently at war with his enemy Bureng Naung, King of Burma, who had seized Xieng Mai in 1558. Is it possible that Setthathirath may, in such circumstances, have been inspired by the art of Pagan when he built the *stûpa* of That Luang in 1566 ? One might rather suppose that the That Luang was built on the same spot from the plans of some ancient Khmer temple, following the system at Barabudur or Angkor-Vat. The Lao-

(1) Paul Pelliot, *loc. cit.* (*Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, IV, pp. 213, 215, 372) and Henri Maspéro, *loc. cit.* pp. 30-32.

(2) André Barth, *Stèle de Vat-Phu* (*id.*, II, p. 235) and Louis Finot, *L'inscription sanskrite de Sayfong* (*id.*, III, p. 18). See also Paul Lévy, *Les traces de l'introduction du Bouddhisme à Luang Prabang* (*id.*, XI, 2, p. 412).



A gallery of the cloister round the «That», in ruins.

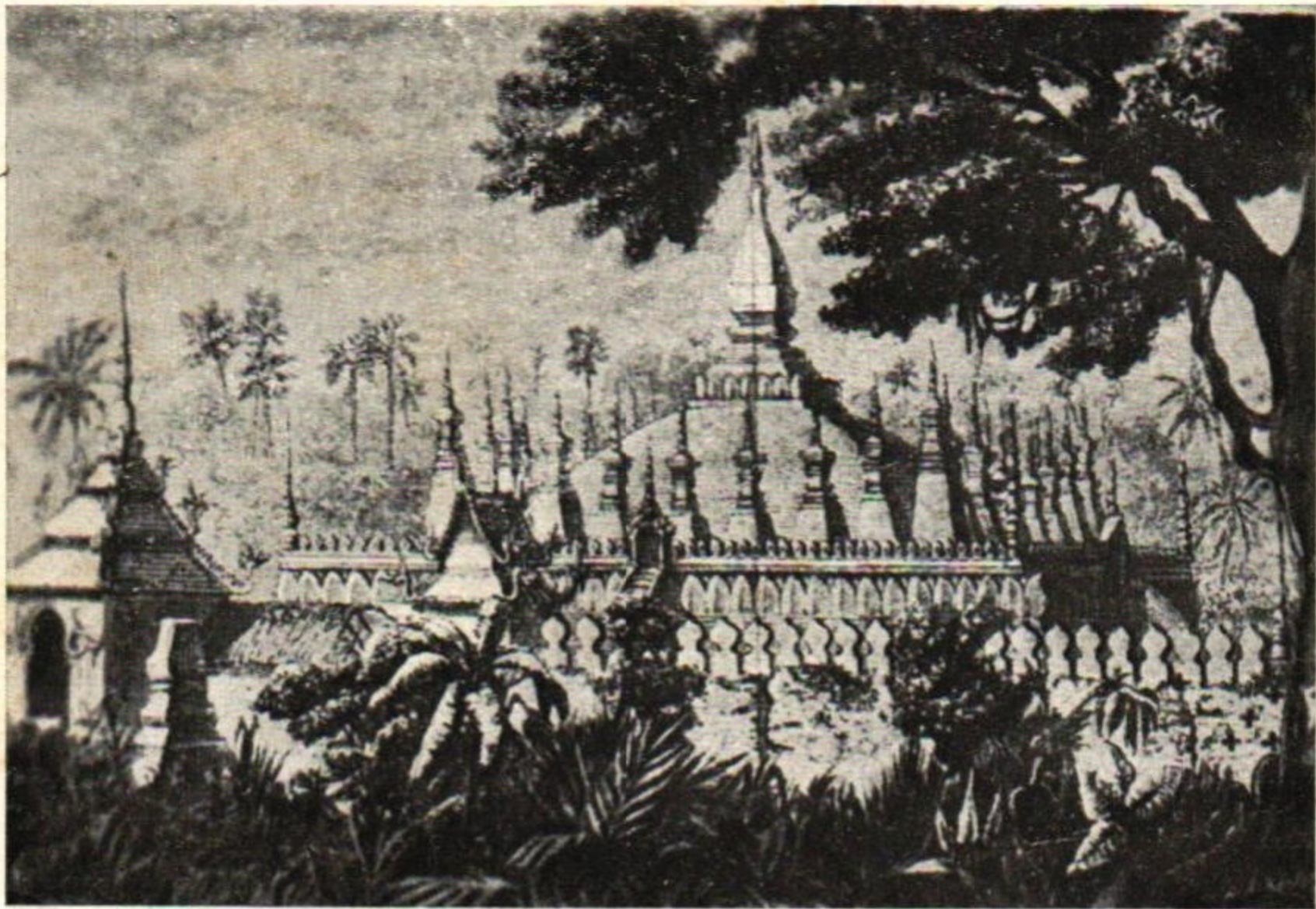
(Photo E.F.E.O.)

24 / VII



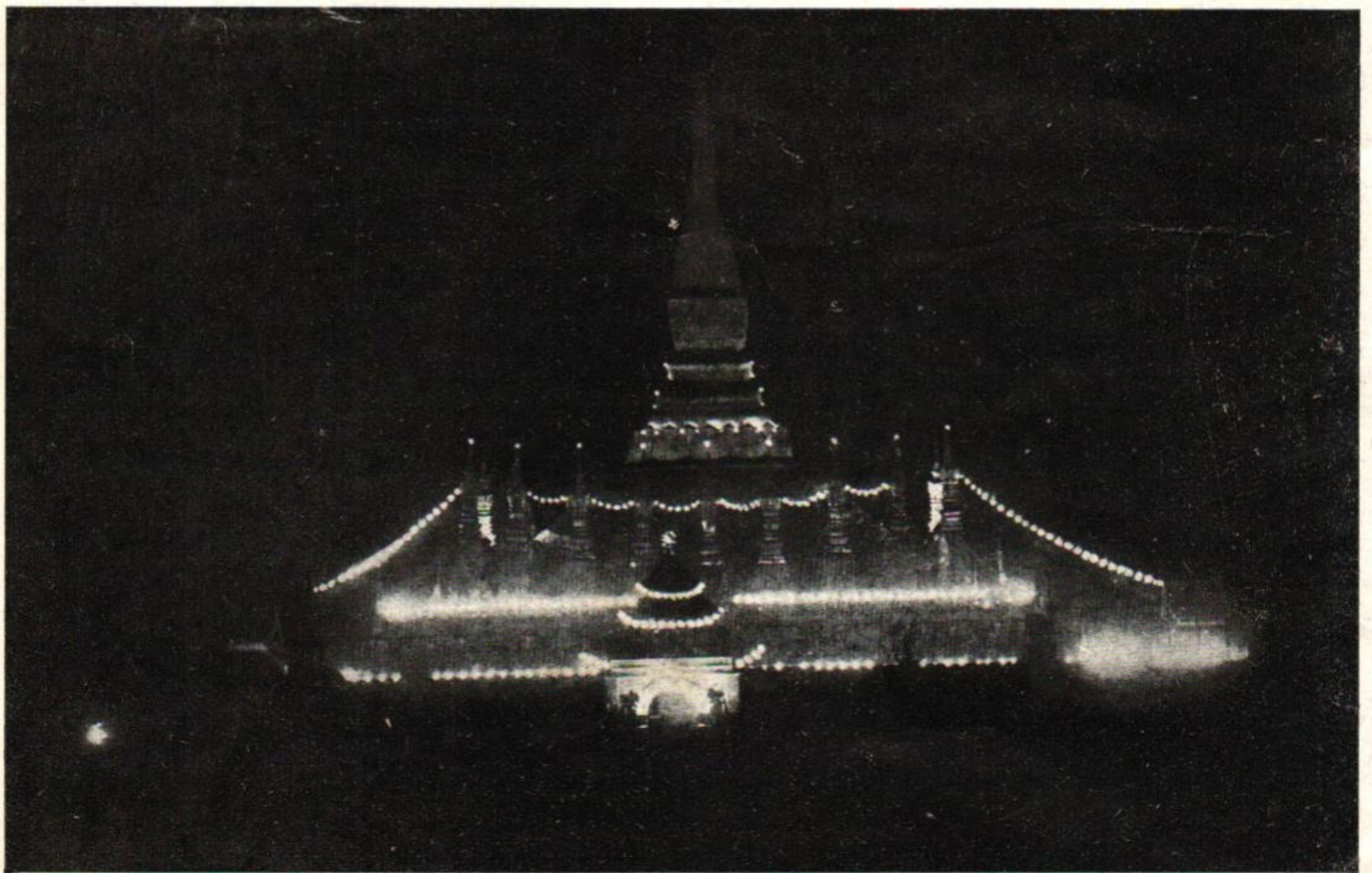
The «That» between 1900 and 1930.

(Photo E.F.E.O.)



Reproduction of the sketch by Delaporte.

(Photo E.F.E.O.)



The « That » illuminated during the Feast of the 12th Month.

(Photo Hang-Xuân)

tian architect would thus have transformed the Khmer monument into a Laotian *stûpa*. There are numerous Khmer statues in sandstone, both in Vientiane and Luang-Prabang, that the Laotians have covered over with a thick layer of lacquer and another layer of gold, thus transforming them into Laotian buddhas. These are generally images representing the Buddha seated on the coils of a polycephalic Nâga, the many heads of which form a canopy to shelter the Saint. When the first floor in the Western part of the Prayer Pavilion was being restored in 1930, M. Fombertaux discovered the remains of the original pavilion, the plan of which comprises a rectangular terrace acceded to by a staircase in a perfect state of preservation, and moulded skewbacks in the same style as the whole architecture of the first and second floors, also perfectly preserved (1). During the reconstruction of the central spire of the monument, another discovery brought to light the remains of an ancient *stûpa* that had been enclosed in the present monument and the date of which is still unknown (2).

The That Luang, like the Barabudur, is probably a symbol, a microcosm, an image of the various worlds of the universe. The lower floor is probably dedicated to the *Kâmadhâtu*, the rough, material world of the senses ; the second to the *Rûpadhâtu*, representing appearances and illusions ; and the upper story, which forms the base of the *stûpa*, seems to be the *Arûpadhâtu*, the formless world, limitless space, inhabited by absolute Emptiness.

« The Barabudur », says Mr. Paul Mus, « seems to have singular affinities with the Laotian monument » ; according to Mr. Foucher's idea of the construction of the Javanese monument, it was built with a cupola surrounded by skewback galleries, of a regular shape at the top but almost square at the base, though with a curved profile (3).

As for the legend described above, it should be interpreted differently. The story tells us that the That Luang was built by Setthathirath on the site of the column of Asoka, that sheltered some of the Buddha's bones. Emperor Asoka reigned over India about 250 B.C., that is, three centuries after the Buddha's death. Neither he nor the Buddha ever left India to come to Laos, but as he was the great propagator of Buddhism, his name has become associated with that of the Master in the popular traditions of Cambodia, Thailand and Laos. The Sayfong Chronicle also speaks of him (4). The That Phanom, a Laotian *stûpa* on the right bank of the Mekong river, opposite Se Bang Fai, has a legend almost similar to that of the That Luang. The Chronicle of the sanctuary of That Phanom relates that 8 years, 7 months and 12 days after the *Nibbâna*, Mahâ Kassapa and 500 *arahats* brought a Relic of the Buddha, which they buried under a sacred fig-tree. Six neighbouring kings built a *stûpa* over this Relic. In 1520, the That was aban-

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(1) See *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XXX p. 584 sqq.

(2) Henri Marchal, *Nécrologie de L. Fombertaux* (*id.*, XXXVI, p. 651 sqq.)

(3) Paul Mus, *Barabudur* (*id.*, XXXII, p. 289 sqq.)

(4) Georges Maspéro, *Say-Fong, une ville morte* (*id.*, III, p. 7).

done, but a daughter of the King of Cambodia, who had married the crown-prince of Laos, persuaded her father-in-law to rebuild the monument (1).

Does the legend of the That Luang, considered in the light of archaeological discoveries, allow us, by analogy with Barabudur, to give the date of the original monument as between the 8th and 9th centuries? I will make the supposition that the original building was constructed by the Khmers, the ancestors of the Lao (2).

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Let us pass from the legendary period to the beginning of the classical epoch, that is, the 16th century, the period when the fortress-town of Vientiane was built by Setthathirath. The historic period begins in the 14th century, with Fa-Ngum, who unified the Lao kingdom of Lan-Xang in 1353, but we find no trace of Lao art in the region of Vientiane between the 14th and 15th centuries.

The That Luang belongs to the block of monuments that formed the treasure of the « City of Sandalwood » from the 16th century onwards. At this period, the walls of the city enclosed many rich pagodas, palaces, opulent dwelling-houses, and among them moved a gay crowd, dressed in silks and cloth of gold, preoccupied only with festivals and songs (3).

On November 16th, 1641, King Souigna Vongsa (Surya Vamsa) gave an audience in the That Luang to the Ambassador of the Netherlands, Van Wusthof, and his assistants, Messrs. Willem de Goyer and Huybert Boudewinsz van Lochorts, all of whom had been sent from Batavia by General Van Diemen, Governor of the Dutch Indies. Van Wusthof gives the following description of the visit (4) :

« On the 16th (November 1641), in the morning, six elephants came to fetch the General's letter, which was placed in a golden *doulangh* (5) on the back of one of them. Each of us mounted one of the five others. We passed thus in front of the Court, between a double rank of soldiers and

(1) Francis Garnier, *Voyage d'Exploration en Indochine* (I. pp. 264-269). See also Aymonier, *Notes sur le Laos* (I. p. 236 sqq.).

(2) A superb sandstone statue of the Bayon period, representing a figure seated in the attitude of meditation, was discovered by Mr. Henri Deydier in January, 1951, on the altar of a ruined sanctuary in the jungle, a little to the North-West of the *That*. There were several Khmer buddhas and fragments of stone, some of which seem to have framed the doorway of an old Khmer *prasat*. Investigations in the neighbourhood of the That Luang, tending to prove the existence in the East of a gradient with pavement and an old *baray* communicating with the pond of Sayfong, may lead to the discovery of important remains of Khmer monuments in the region of the That Luang, since the legend tells us that the princes of Sayfong made their Pilgrimages to the That Luang by this waterway.

(3) L. de Lajonquière, *Vieng-Chan* (*Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, I, p. 99 sqq.)

(4) Francis Garnier, *Voyage lointain aux Royaumes de Cambodge et Laouwen par les Néerlandais et ce qui s'y était passé jusqu'en 1644* (*Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, 1871. pp. 264-268).

(5) A large, round dish, ordinarily of lacquered wood, used for presenting sacrifices in the temples or serving meals in Laos.

arrived at one of the town gates. We then saw that the town was entirely surrounded by a wall of red stones, half the height of a man higher than ourselves mounted on our elephants. At the foot of the wall was a moat filled with grass and stagnant water ; it was about as wide as the distance of a pistol shot. We had arranged to meet the King to give him the letter at a place about a quarter of a mile from the town. We dismounted, and went to await the arrival of the King in the tents prepared for this purpose. All around us camped the soldiers, elephants and the horses of the nobles of this Kingdom ; there was such noise and animation that we could have believed ourselves to be in the Prince of Orange's camp. After about an hour, the King arrived on an elephant. We left our tents and went to kneel in reverence to him as he passed. The King is a young man of twenty-three. He is very polite and is surrounded by skilful councillors who are called Tevinias. One directs the police, another religious matters, others, commercial affairs, the Army, etc...

« Three hundred soldiers armed with lances and guns, marched before the King ; then came the elephants, mounted by armed men ; then the musicians, followed by two hundred soldiers and the tail of the procession was formed by sixteen elephants carrying the King's wives. When it had passed, we went back to sit in our tents and almost immediately, the King sent us a repast served on eight great *doulanghs*.

« We were called before the King at about four in the afternoon. We crossed an esplanade, in the middle of which rose a high pyramid surrounded by a stone wall pierced with numerous loop-holes. This pyramid was entirely covered with gold plate ; there must have been about 1,000 pounds of gold on it. The Louwens never pass the spot without holding lighted candles in their hands, in order to mark the holiness of the place.

« When we had remained seated within the wall of the pyramid for a time, we were brought through another door that opened on to a part of the esplanade where the King was waiting. When we arrived, preceded by our presents, and stood at sixteen paces from His Majesty, we each took two candles and knelt on mats, with joined hands and bare feet, as if we had been at the procession of Antwerp. We bowed three times, as the Tevinia Lanckan had told us was the custom. His Majesty, surrounded by his court, was seated in a big temple, in which there was only one great idol. We then read him General Van Diemen's letter, then prostrated ourselves as before. After this, servants came to take our candles and we advanced three or four paces to kneel again. The King then ordered us to approach and sit on the mats under the gallery of the temple. We did reverence as before and came to sit at seven or eight paces from him. He asked us through a Tevinia if the General was well and told us how happy he was that we had been sent to him in spite of the great distance. His Majesty intended to send an ambassador back with us, to maintain relations with the General and he greatly hoped that these would be frequent and regular. In any case, the Dutch, whether they were merchants or not, would always be welcome.

We thanked the King warmly for his sentiments, saying that these would give great pleasure to the General and assuring him that the latter was greatly desirous to strengthen this alliance and friendship which we had come to inaugurate. When the Tevinia had transmitted this answer, the King dismissed us, after asking us to give his cordial greetings to the General and wish him a long and happy life. We expressed the same wishes to His Majesty, adding our wishes that he might govern his Kingdom in peace, to the glory of his name and the confusion of his enemies... ».

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After the fall of Chao Anu, the last King of Vientiane, in 1827, the old Lao metropolis fell into decay. One after another, the monuments were beaten down by storms or dislocated by tree-roots growing up beneath them. The Doudart de Lagrée mission that visited Vientiane in 1867 found nothing but solitary ruins where there had been great palaces and gay crowds in the days of Van Wusthof. L.M. de Carné has given the following description in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1) :

« ... We soon came upon the outer wall of the city. It is high, extremely wide and surmounted by heart-shaped ornaments close enough together to form loop-holes. A huge wooden post, beside what used to be the main gate, is still standing. The wall that used to end at the river bank, runs beneath bamboo trees and forms a series of jutting out and receding angles. One can still see the piles of bricks that were probably its bastions. After long and meticulous investigations, we gained the conviction that the town had not contained any monuments apart from the King's palace, pagodas and libraries for the sacred books ; but there were so many of these buildings that it was impossible for us even to count them. All appear to have been constructed according to the same plan and decorated with the same ornaments, the only variation being their proportions... »

The author then gives us his impressions of the That Luang :

« A wide, straight causeway, planted with old trees, crosses marshy fields that used to be moats, and leads to the principal entrance and a sandy path under a vault of bamboos. At every step, we came across traces of walls that indicated the sites of ancient pagodas ; small pyramids became more and more frequent as we advanced... I continued my way till I came to a monument that appears to have been the masterpiece of this Laotian architecture, which was neither grandiose nor permanent, but to which one cannot deny a certain elegant grace. This monument was spared by the Siamese. The first two walls present no special interest. There is a garland of pot-bellied ornaments beneath the cornice that decorated the third courtyard. They look like the petals of an enormous lotusbud, just about to

(1) See *Exploration du Mékong, III — Vieng-Chan et la conquête siamoise* (*Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 1869, pp. 490-491).

flower. Heavy pedestals, covered with inscriptions, support thirty-four slender bell-turrets, that lean against these pedestals as if against buttresses. We could now perceive the massive curves of the base upon which the pyramid rests, and which rises like a flower-stalk from among a bunch of wide leaves. It is of traditional form and terminates in a point... It would be easy to criticise details but the general effect of the building is agreeable ; its narrow peaks and graceful bell-towers rise up against a moving background of palm-trees, in the shelter of which stand a number of huts... »

Francis Garnier, who took part, like de Carné, in the Mission for the Exploration of the Mekong river headed by Doudard de Lagrée, has also left us a description of the That Luang (1) :

« Continuing our route Northward through the forest, we soon came to the bastioned walls of the town, which are fairly well preserved. The moats are still full of water. A solidly-built, arched gateway opens on to the countryside. It opens on a fine, tree-planted avenue, running West-North-West. We followed it and arrived after three-quarters of an hour at the That Luang, one of the most famous temples of Laos. The central pyramid is rectangular at the base and rounded on top, like those we have found still in use in Cambodia. It rests on two super-imposed terraces. On the upper terrace are placed 28 smaller sized pyramids, around the base of the central pyramid ; this upper terrace leads to a lower one through two flights of steps cut out on the Northern and Southern fronts respectively. On the lower terrace, on the east side, is an elegant pavilion that contains a small pyramid, three or four metres high. We understood from the respectful attitude of the natives that this was the real sanctuary. There was a great profusion of gold, and the present Governor of Nong-Kay, who is responsible for this small reproduction of the central pyramid, has spent over a thousand *nens* (70-80,000 French francs) on it. Four staircases lead out of the last terrace. All around the That are to be seen the houses of the numerous bonzes who serve this holy place and several other pagodas. An upright stone, outside the East gate, carries an inscription relating the circumstances in which the temple was built in the first half of the 16th century... »

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The descriptions of Messrs. L. M. de Carné and Francis Garnier show the monument, spared by the Siamese at the beginning of the 19th century, in the same state in which it is to be seen today, after the restoration undertaken by M. Fombertaux.

It should be noted, however, that the lodgings for the bonzes, built around the That Luang, were probably situated in the galleries of the enclosure surrounding the central monument. There is no mention of a statue of the Bodhisattva standing in a recess terminating in a frontal decorated

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(1) Francis Garnier, *Voyage d'exploration en Indochine*, pp. 253-254.

with *Garuda*, that is to be seen in the North-West angle of the Western gallery. It is probably of recent date (1). Moreover, the number of bell-towers mentioned by the authors (34 for de Carné and 28 for Francis Garnier) does not correspond with reality. The exact number, that is, 30 (2), is shown in the drawing by Delaporte. The difference in the number of pinnacles on the façades (9 on the East and West façades, 8 on the North and South) can be explained by their role; they were set up to form the number 30, corresponding to the three degrees of the ten « Perfections » (*pâramî* or *pâramitâ*) : *pâramî*, *upapâramî* and *paramatthapâramî*). The fact is proved by the discovery of *ex-voto* offerings, including two small golden steles bearing inscriptions and dedicated to Pâramitâ. These objects were found in a secondary *That* that was struck by lightning in 1896 (3). The writing on the *ex-votos* belongs to the same system as the commemorative inscription for the erection of the monument in 928 *saka* (1566 A.D.). The date of these *ex-votos* is thus apparently the same as that of the *stûpa* itself. The graphic system is that used in the Annals of Xieng-Mai.

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The *That* Luang was overthrown in 1873 by pirates from Yunnan and part of it was rather clumsily restored by the Commissioner Morin in about 1900, who erected a « Norman tower » in the place of the bulbous central spire that had been demolished.

According to Mr. Henri Parmentier's account, dated 23rd April, 1912, there lacked eight pinnacles to the monument in his days; he also noted that the cloister was almost completely in ruins (4).

This pyramid has been greatly injured by storms. Mr. Jules Bosc, then French High Resident in Laos, appealed in 1920 for the restoration of this monument, which would, he considered, be completely ruined unless urgent measures were taken.

M. Fombertaux was appointed Curator of the Historical Monuments in Laos in 1930 and entrusted with the restoring of the building. Work on it began in 1929 and ended only in 1935. It consisted in repairs to the scaffolding, walls and doors of the cloister and of the Prayer Pavilion. When the pyramid was reconstructed floor by floor, Léon Fombertaux undertook the reconstruction of the central spire in order to restore it to its original form, as shown in the drawing by Delaporte (5).

(1) It is actually a transformed Khmer *Dvârapâla*. The absence of lacquer covering on this statue, shows that it is in sandstone, decorated in the Bayon style (discovered by Mr. Henri Deydier in January 1951).

(2) Francis Garnier, *op. cit.* pp. 253-254.

(3) Henri Parmentier, *Inventaire des monuments historiques du Laos* (ms. « Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient » p. 118-bis) and Louis Finot, *Ex-voto du That Luang de Vieng-Chan* (*Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, III p. 661).

(4) See *id.*, XII. pp. 190-193.

(5) Henri Marchal, *Nécrologie de L. Fombertaux* (*id.*, XXXVI, p. 651). See also Raquez, *Pages Laotiennes*, and Auguste Pavie, *Géographie et Voyage*, (Leroux, Paris, 1901, I. p. 306).

The present study will help to show the archaeological importance of the restoration and preservation of the That Luang, that glorious relic of the history of the Laotian people. The discoveries already made are a first step along the path that leads us back to primitive Laos. In order to understand the ancient civilisation of Müông Xua (Java), difficult investigations must be carried out and these will demand, as we have seen in the case of the That Luang, the help and council of specialists, not only in historic and literary questions, but above all in prehistory, ethnography, archaeology, epigraphy and linguistics.

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N. 1512-53

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