

**ROYAL BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE
OF THE EARLY BANGKOK PERIOD**

INVESTIGATIONS IN SYMBOLIC PLANNING

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This thesis is a study of the symbolic planning of Thai royal Buddhist architecture of the early Bangkok period. It aims to investigate the symbolic planning of principal *wats* regarding the concept of the *Traiphum* cosmology, and to establish a theory of symbolic planning and planning system of Thai Buddhist architecture. The issue of the concept of Thai Buddhist kingship is also connected to the study of the symbolic meaning of the royal *wats*.

The conclusion from the analysis of the royal *wats* of King Rama I and Rama III (the Royal Chapel, *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, *Wat Suthat*, and *Wat Ratcha-orot*) is that there are symbols of the major realms of the *Traiphum* cosmology represented in architectural spatial organization of the whole sanctuary area. Significant elements, which are related to symbols of the realms of hell, *Yamaloka*, *Himavanta*, *Jambudīpa*, Mount *Meru* and *Tāvātimsa* Heaven, *Brahmaloka* and the realm of *Nibbāna*, are revealed in this study.

In the important *wats* of the kingdom, the central structure usually represents the symbol of Mount *Meru* overlapping with *Jambudīpa*, which is an influence from the Brahmanistic cosmological concept. However, not only architectural components, but also textual and archaeological evidence, indicates the symbolic meaning of the royal *wats* as a possession of a *cakkavatti*, associated with the imaginary city, created by the Buddha, illustrated in the Legend of King Jambupati. The components of both concepts derive from the elements of the *Traiphum* cosmology. As a result, there are three main concepts incorporated in the symbolic planning of the principal royal *wats*: the *Traiphum* cosmographical diagram, in which the concept of *Jambudīpa* is emphasised; the possession of a *cakkavatti*; and the imaginary city according to the Legend of King Jambupati. They are connected by the notion of *cakkavatti* kingship, which upholds *Dhamma* and worships the Buddha, and is believed to bring peace and provide protective power to the kingdom.

May whatever merit
that may accrue from conducting this research
rest with my father and mother

บุญกสิโกณินฮารเกิดแต่กรทำวิจัยนี้
ขอทิศแต่บิดา-มารดา

My interest in studying the symbolic planning of Thai Buddhist architecture was inspired when I was a student in Silpakorn University at Bangkok a decade ago. While I was conducting field research which was concerned with measured drawings in Srisatchanalai, an ancient city of Sukhothai state, I noticed some order in the planning of buildings and subsidiary *chedis* in the compound of *Wat Čhedičhetthaeo*, which might be deliberately arranged to represent the specific concept of space. I became dissatisfied with the standard explanations of Thai Buddhist architecture that used only the concept of Mount *Meru* and disregarded many of these subsidiary structures. Fortunately, I have had the opportunity to carry out this research more than a decade later, in the form of my D Phil studies presented here.

I believe this research has resulted in a study which proves that the above idea is reasonable. However, while doing this research I have mentioned this concept to some scholars, but have always been met with the opinion that there was no concept of this in traditional Thai Buddhist architecture. I realized that changing a belief based on academic discipline cannot be done in only a short conversation but that it needed pursuing over an extended period of time. From an architectural point of view, I believe that there is a systematic plan of highly ritualized temple architecture, and the concept of the whole temple compound is formed by all the major elements in the planning system, particularly in traditional Thai Buddhist architecture.

Any research which demarcates the scope of its study to only part of these combinations, therefore, may not help the full understanding of this complex form of ideas. To reveal it we need to break through to a new concept of study which investigates all the significant symbols in a sanctuary area.

In this study I have tried to connect the sense of an architect to the logic of Thai thinking, which usually applies similes or analogy to represent a symbol, but is flexible in design, combining the knowledge of conventional architectural site planning, Buddhist iconography, literature and history in the analysis and interpretation. Certainly, based on this concept I could not discuss iconography, Thai literature, Thai history or even the architecture itself in-depth. This is the weakness of an interdisciplinary approach which attempts to look into the *relationships between* these,

instead of discussing in detail each particular field of knowledge. Nevertheless, the advantage of this kind of research is that it reveals a broad perspective on the complexity of human thought, which a specific focus on only one particular subject cannot achieve. I hope that this research may contribute in some way to opening our academic view to a broader, and more generous, perspective.

The transcription for most of the Thai words follows the 'General System of Phonetic Transcription of Thai Characters into Roman' as devised by the Royal Institute, Bangkok. Since there are several hybrid *Pāli*, *Sanskrit*, and Thai terms and names which are used in the context of Thai language, rather than referring to their origin they will be romanized in the system of Thai terms. Specific Buddhist terms will mostly be maintained in the *Pāli* form. The transcription of *Pāli* names follows Malalasekera's 'Dictionary of *Pāli* Proper Names'. However, the superscript and subscript marks of some vowels and consonants are not shown because of the constraints of typesetting.

Where there are names which are widely known or which can be checked, the owner's transcription has been adhered to. The names of Thai Kings as they are known or have been widely adopted by western scholars (Rama I, Rama III, Mongkut, Chulalongkorn) have been used rather than the lengthy official titles. *Wats* are also referred to by their short names in order to make them easier to remember.

Instead of using the term Thailand, this study uses the terms Siam and Siamese for the country and its people in accordance with the context of its history, while the term Thai is used as an adjective for art, architecture and culture, or to refer to modern Thailand. The term Lanka is adopted mostly in order to keep the sense that it is part of Buddhist cosmography or a significant Buddhist country in Thai Buddhist texts and literature, instead of Sri Lanka, which refers to the modern country.

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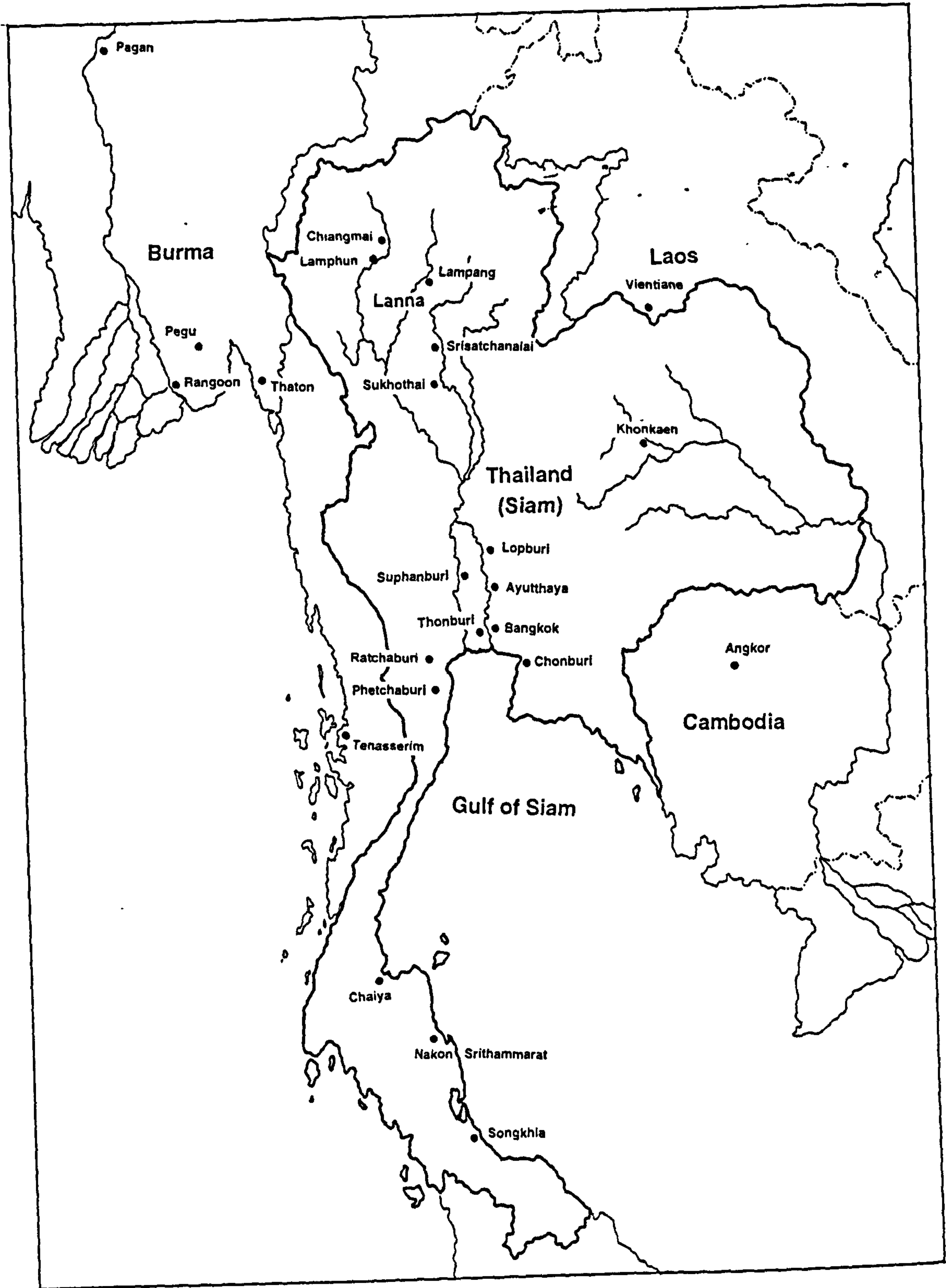


Fig. 1.1 Map of Thailand

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Indian civilization was the major influence upon South-East Asian culture, shaping much cultural expression. Both Hinduism and Buddhism inspired regional art and architecture. During the twelfth century *Theravāda* Buddhism from Lanka (Ceylon) was introduced and became of the utmost importance since the South-East Asian people converted to this form of worship (Wales 1953, 19). However, the history of the Thai people proper began in the thirteenth century with the emergence of the first Thai Kingdom at Sukhothai.¹ Some decades later Chiangmai was established as another Thai centre to the north,² while Ayutthaya³ was founded in 1350 at the lower Chao Phraya River basin, the central part of present Thailand.

One of the keys to the success of the religion was the ability of Buddhism to adapt to and evolve within different cultures and their existing beliefs. This was accomplished by harmonizing with earlier practices, by claiming a common origin with native gods and also by emphasizing aspects of Buddhism that closely paralleled existing customs (Fisher 1993, 8). Therefore, Thai religious complexity is of the sort commonly characterized as syncretic, in which elements derived from several historically discrete traditions have combined to form a single distinctive tradition.

The Thai case is similar to those of Sri Lanka and Burma in that Buddhism maintains a paramount position within a complex religious situation. There are three distinct components in the Thai religion: Buddhism, a Brahmanistic component, and an animistic component (Krich 1977, 244). In Buddhist cultures it is the religious concept

¹ Sukhothai was a Thai kingdom between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. It was later integrated as part of Ayutthaya.

² Lanna was another Thai kingdom to the north. It was integrated to become part of Bangkok in the late nineteenth century.

³ Ayutthaya was a Thai kingdom in the central part of present Thailand between 1350-1767. It was destroyed by the Burmese; thereafter Bangkok was founded as the new capital during the second half of the eighteenth century.

that determines the built form of architecture and the surrounding sacred spaces. The sacred space is often a place built to symbolize the meaning and accommodate the ritual of a particular belief system in its time (Barrie 1996, 1). Apart from the perceived forms of symbols, architecture has meaning through the process of its making, as well as from the cultural system within which it is made (Meister 1992, XVII).

In the Thai Buddhist state, the king is not only a Buddhist himself but also competent in religious practice and the principal upholder of the Buddhist religion. King Rama I of Bangkok was able to argue so closely regarding an error presented in the sermon of Phra Phutthakhosachan that the high-ranking monk accepted his misreading (FAD. 1965, 72). The king is also the person who plays the prominent role in the conception of a royal temple, as it is central to the legitimation of his reign. Thus, in any context there are some unique ideas and conditions by which royal religious architecture expresses its specific conceptions. Thai royal Buddhist architecture was originally established with the co-operation of monks and noblemen. Buddhist monks were competent in both craftsmanship and the religious subjects that were transformed into symbolic elements in religious architecture. Buddhist texts which relate to the design concept are part of the knowledge of architectural planning. Evidence from the royal chronicles of the Bangkok period shows that the clerks of works for royal temples and monasteries (*wat*)⁴ were the officials who served the court government. Before entering government service, most of them, while in monks' orders, had taken the opportunity to acquire specialist knowledge and skills, such as astrology, medicine, or great proficiency in the *Pāli* language (Wyatt 1994, 211).

Important changes in these traditional practices of creating royal art and architecture are believed to have been caused by the adoption of the Western educational system during the late nineteenth century, in the reign of King Chulalongkorn (who reigned between 1868-1910) (Joti 1980, 42). New schools, based on the Western model, had a curriculum which differed greatly from that of the Buddhist monastery education of a few decades earlier. In this same period, Siamese interests in Western art became increasingly complex. Members of the royal family and nobility who had visited or studied in Britain became familiar with European cultural tastes, and returned to Siam with the notion of art as collectible and as a form of interior decoration, thus enlarging

⁴ The Thai word '*wat*' denotes a Thai Buddhist temple and monastery precinct.

the traditional Thai concept of art as a form of moral education. These aesthetic values were quickly diffused to other members of the Siamese elite (Phillips 1992, 6; Joti 1980, 42-45).

Consequently, in the early twentieth century, King Vajiravudh (who reigned between 1910-1925), a British educated monarch, gave up the tradition of establishing royal monasteries. In addition, the revolution of 1932 saw the absolute monarchy replaced by a constitutional monarchy, which ended the role of the king as a leader of the empire. The effect of Western culture and the discontinuation for more than a century of the establishment of new royal monasteries brought about a reduced understanding of the essential concepts of royal Thai Buddhist architecture.

1.1.1 The Lost Knowledge

The achievement of creativity in art or architecture of a traditional school is the result of a period of development. Both technology and philosophy have evolved as fundamental means of knowledge of society. Joti (1980, 44), who has studied Thai art and architecture for several years, concedes that at present the only aspect of traditional art and architecture that is developed is that of technique. The fundamental concept of the traditional practice has been almost completely lost. In addition, there is apparently no treatise about technique and form in Thai art and architectural design available for study, because in Thai culture anyone who wanted to practice as a craftsman or architect would be trained on a one-to-one basis by a teacher. The knowledge and skill would gradually be gained from practising. However, the *Traiphum* text,⁵ which is attributed as the underlying concept of the design, describes nothing about its architecture (Joti 1978, 53-57). Thai artists and architects became more interested in adopting both the styles and techniques of Western architecture. The discontinuation of the tradition of establishing new royal *wats* caused the once familiar subject to become fragmented and hard to comprehend in this contemporary context. It is hard to believe that there is no treatise of traditional Thai Buddhist architecture, since it had developed and maintained certain patterns up until the late nineteenth century.

⁵ *Traiphum* - literary 'Three Worlds', is the name given to cosmological texts of Thai Buddhism. The first version of the *Traiphum* text was apparently compiled by King Lithai of Sukhothai in 1345. The version of the early Bangkok period was composed in the reign of King Rama I in 1782 and revised in 1802. See the discussion of the *Traiphum* text in section 2.3.1 in Chapter 2.

Probably the main reason why some structures in principal *wats* have been demolished is because their symbolic significance has no longer been understood. In early February of 1984, the walls of the four directional pavilions surrounding the *Mondop*⁶ of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* were dismantled. These contained the paintings of the *Ramakian*⁷ epic and the inscriptions established by command of the King, Rama III. The dismantling was carried out by the monks of the *wat*, and the authorities of the Fine Arts Department of the Thai government could do nothing to stop it (Thepmontri 1984, 30). Together with the Royal Chapel, *Wat Phra Chetuphon* has been regarded as the most important royal *wat* of Bangkok. It is acknowledged by many authorities to be the richest monastery demonstrating traditional Thai art and architecture.

Similarly in 1985 the monks of *Wat Ratcha-orot* demolished the pavilion of the Buddha's Footprint and its surrounding structures. New residential units for the monks were built in that area despite there being space for expansion in the *sanghawut* (the residential area of a *wat*). Certainly *Wat Ratcha-orot* is also a very important Thai royal *wat*. It is the first one that was built in a Chinese-influenced style. The buildings were not in a dilapidated state that could not be restored, nor were there financial problems, since there was a considerable donation made by lay supporters, as well as a general donation. Restoration or rebuilding is not an unusual practice in the Thai Buddhist tradition, but the dismantling of a building in the sanctuary area of a royal monastery and its replacement by residential units is not part of that culture. This indicates that the traditional perception of the symbolic function of a structure in the context of the plan of a sanctuary area has been lost, even by the monks who once played an important role in the planning process of a monastery.

The foregoing problem not only causes the destruction of the symbolic evidence of a *wat* or monastery but it also brings about confusion and controversy in the symbolic practice of the contemporary design of Thai Buddhist architecture. Somphop (1985, 36-48) points out that the traditional symbolic hierarchy of Thai temple architecture has been undermined by malpractice in many of the new Buddhist designs. For instance,

⁶ In Thailand, a *mondop* is a square in a planned building with a multi-tiered pyramidal superstructure, enshrining holy objects such as a Buddha's Footprint or collections of the Buddhist scripture (Ringis 1990, 156).

⁷ *Ramakian* is an epic of the story of *Rāma*. It is believed that the epic is the developed form of the *Rāmāyana* of India and the text of the Twenty *Avatars* of Vishnu (Niyada 1997, 115).

the chimneys of some crematoriums were built in the form of *prang*⁸ and *prasat* (*prāsāda*) roofs were applied to some ordinary buildings. Somphop also claims that even though there is no certain royal enactment about the hierarchy of traditional Thai architecture, culturally the *prang* and *prasat* were known as the symbols of monarchy and were inappropriate for application to ordinary design solutions (Somphop 1985, 48).

The loss of this knowledge of symbolic planning in Thai architecture from the consciousness of the monks indicates a decline in the significance of the concepts which originated with the collision between Thai Buddhist cosmography and the new scientific cosmology during the nineteenth century. The *Traiphum* text⁹ (Three World Cosmological text), which used to be the core of Siamese belief (as it is the reference for the relationship between merit and power and a treatise on cosmic structure) began to lose its prestige in the first half of the nineteenth century. The arrival of Christian missionaries in the 1830s brought not only Christian beliefs but also Western science and technology. One result of the encounter with Western arguments was a critique of the *Traiphum* cosmography, which in the minds of sceptical Siamese represented an obstacle to coming to terms with empirically derived knowledge of the world. The *Traiphum* cosmography no longer was an unquestioned instrument for communicating Buddhist values and Buddhist culture. The explanations in the *Traiphum* for natural phenomena - planetary movements, weather, biological processes - were shaken by the explanations offered by Western science (C. Reynolds 1976, 214).

This growing invalidity of the *Traiphum* cosmography and other natural science issues in the light of modern rational science was part of what caused the decline in the belief that the *Traiphum* was a sacred cosmography. Coinciding with the arrival of the first Westerner was a reform of Buddhist monasticism; an insistence on strict ritual, canonical fundamentalism, and purity of ordination (C. Reynolds 1976, 212). In an attempt to re-assert Buddhist principles, Mongkut - a prince monk and the leader of the

⁸ A *prang* and *prasat* (*prāsāda*) were traditionally symbols denoting the heavenly realm and were used only in important religious buildings and palaces (Somphop 1985). The prominent feature of these structures is the multi-tiered top superstructure. The *prang* is a form of *stūpa* in Thailand which derives its form from the *Prāsāda* of Angkorian architecture.

⁹ *Traiphum*, literary 'Three worlds', is the name of the Thai Buddhist text which concerns the discipline of cosmography and cosmogony. It also involves the design conceptions of Thai Buddhist architecture. See the significance of *Traiphum* to Thai culture in Coedès (1956); C. Reynolds (1976); Jackson (1993); Prayuddha (1986).

newly reformed Buddhist order - and his disciples argued that those alleged Buddhist doctrines which were concerned with cosmography were in fact contaminated by other false beliefs, such as Brahmanism. Thiphakorawong, a foreign minister of Siam in Mongkut's reign (1851-1868), wrote a book entitled *Kitchanukit*¹⁰ (A Book Explaining Various Things) outlining the origin of *Traiphum*. In this, he states that:

After the religion of Buddha had spread abroad, a certain king, desiring to know the truth as to cosmogony, inquired of the monks, and they, knowing the omniscience of Buddha, and yet fearing that if they said Buddha never taught this, people would say 'your Lord is ignorant, and admired without reason', took the ancient Vedas, and various expressions in the Sutras and parables and fables, and proverbs, and connecting them together into a book, the '*Traiphoom*', produced it as the teachings of Buddha. The people of those days were uneducated and foolish, and believed that Buddha had really taught it; and if any doubted, they kept their doubts to themselves, because they could not prove anything (Alabaster 1972, 16; translated from Thiphakorawong 1970, 56).

However, Thiphakorawong concluded that the *Traiphum's* teachings on the ethical aspects of Buddhism, that is, on matters such as *Kamma* (action, deed), merit and rebirth remained valid and true (Thiphakorawong 1970, 87-88). Apart from the *Kammic Law*, *Traiphum* still retains its significance to political legitimation and the ethical aspects of Thai culture, even if it has lost the validity of the cosmographical descriptions (Jackson 1993, 72-73). The best known version of the *Traiphum* text is the one composed by King Lithai, of the fourteenth century Sukhothai Kingdom,¹¹ (Lithai 1983) which was first published in 1912 (C. Reynolds 1976, 218).

Only few decades after the publication of the *Kitchanukit* of Thiphakorawong, in 1910 during the restoration of the *prang* of *Wat Arun* (Arunratchawararam), Phraya Ratchasongkhram wrote a letter to King Chulalongkorn reporting that the mural paintings in the west pavilion of the main *prang*, which depicted the scenes of the Realm of Hells, were unpleasant to many members of the royal family. He asked for

¹⁰ The book is the first Siamese printed book, issued entirely on Siamese sponsorship in 1876. There were 200 copies in the first print run (C. Reynolds 1976, 214). Part of the book was summarized and published in the section entitled 'The Modern Buddhist' in the book by Henry Alabaster, *The Wheel of the Law: Buddhism Illustrated from Siamese sources* (London 1871). Reprinted edition, see Alabaster (1972).

¹¹ The text is known to the Thai as *Traiphum Phra Ruang* (Three worlds According to King Ruang) (Lithai 1983). It has been translated into French by Coedès and Archaimbault (1973), and into English by Reynolds and Reynolds (Trans.) (1982), and by the Thai National Team. See Lithai (1985).

permission for it to be whitewashed.¹² He also stated that the *Wat* was the most favourite place for foreigners to visit and worried about their criticism of those unpleasant scenes. King Chulalongkorn approved his request.

New interpretations of the *Traiphum* in contemporary Buddhist *wats* have gone far beyond traditional practice. Frank E. Reynolds once toured contemporary Buddhist centres in central Thailand and discovered that two of the most well known *wats* exhibited very large three-dimensional depictions of the *Traiphum* cosmography (F. Reynolds 1978, 198-200). At *Wat Phairongwua* in Suphanburi province, there is a gigantic exhibit spread over a vast area of land within which one can observe vivid, three-dimensional models of the pleasures of the heavenly realms. The most striking is the representation of the 'realm of hells'. At *Wat Phut-udom* in Prathumthani province, the *Traiphum* cosmic realms of thirty-one levels are contained in multi-storied buildings. One can pass through and observe the realms of the animals, of man, the six heavenly realms of the *devatā* (divine beings who enjoy conditions of great sensual pleasure because of the merit which they have gained in their past lives), the sixteen *Brahmalokas* (the sixteen levels of meditation of the Realm of Form), and the four highest realms of meditation (F. Reynolds 1978, 200-201). The interpretation of the *Traiphum* in these cases is obviously more concerned with the idea of the permanent exhibition and narrative content, than with their architectural symbolic meaning. Moreover, the exhibitions are located separately from the other main religious buildings. Thus, we believe that the traditional symbolic planning of Buddhist architecture is no longer understood, and nor is the issue of how it relates to the *Traiphum* cosmography. Rowland (1953,10) provides a remarkable comment on the concept of traditional art:

Although a certain amount of repetition is to be expected in any traditional art, such repetition is not necessarily harmful or stultifying, as long as the canonical forms and prescriptions continue to provide a healthy discipline, and the beliefs behind the art an ever-renewed source of creative inspiration. Such a renewal implies neither blind adherence to rules nor a straying from the tradition. It is only when one of these two things happens that decadence ensues (Rowland 1953, 10).

To date, the *Traiphum* can be conveniently studied from published books, but the

¹² NA 5 s 6/16, Ministry of Public Instruction, 17/85 On Account of the Restoration of the *Prang* of *Wat Arun*, the letter of Phraya Ratchasongkhram to King Chulalongkorn, 13 January 1910.

matter of how to understand the concept of it in traditional Thai Buddhist architecture is still in question. There is no doubt that the beliefs behind the concept of the *Traiphum* are not in a healthy state.

1.1.2 Thai Studies of Buddhist Architecture

In his study of Angkorian civilization, Coedès suggests that architectural decorative elements such as bas-reliefs and mythological scenes sculptured on buildings are symbolic.

To think of them as purely aesthetic in their appeal would be a great mistake. Just as a statue made according to the requirements and duly consecrated by the proper rites could become the god himself, so a bas-relief picturing a god in a certain legendary episode could contribute to the magic life of the temple. That is why one finds scenes carefully sculptured in obscure and in accessible places where they are not even visible. They were not made to please the eye of a visitor or to instruct him, but to materialize on earth the world of the gods (Coedès 1967, 50).

In parallel with Buddhist art, Coomaraswamy points out the significance of the literary narrative of the Buddha's life and the iconographic representation of his 'appearance': 'just as the latter is not a portrait but a symbol, so the former is not a record of facts but a myth. The supernatural iconography is an essential element rather than accidental or adventitious accretions introduced for the sake of "effect" (Coomaraswamy 1977, 168). Surprisingly, the studies in Thai art and architecture, particularly of the mural paintings, almost all conclude that apart from the decorative, they serve only a didactic purpose in order to make the Buddhist Scriptures in the *Pāli* language accessible to all through narrative depiction (Ringis 1990, 87).¹³ With the conceptual framework based on the decorative and didactic functions of the narrated scenes of traditional Thai art, their symbolic aspects have therefore been ignored in the studies. This also leads to the symbolic planning of the whole compound of Thai Buddhist architecture being ignored.

The interest in studying Thai art and architecture began in the early twentieth century during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (who reigned between 1868-1910). The studies laid emphasis on the archaeological remains and the historical issues of the pre-

¹³ For a similar notion see also Lyons (1990a, 5); Wray et al. (1996, 16); Boisselier (1976, 27). Only the work of Samerchai regards these elements as symbolic. See Samerchai (1996).

Bangkok period. In this period the Thai intelligentsia began to be interested in their past and ancient history in order to clarify the vague history of the so-called 'nation'. The two capitals of the Thai kingdoms, Sukhothai and Ayuthaya, were in ruins. Sukhothai was abandoned two centuries before the founding of Bangkok and Ayutthaya was destroyed during the Burmese war in 1767. The fragmentation and destruction of Buddhist architectural evidence, together with the lack of written documents, encouraged both foreigners and the Thais themselves to excavate the facts and reconstruct the history of the nation. It was nineteenth-century colonial archaeology, with its investigation of antique monuments that were spread out all over South and South-East Asia, that influenced them to become curious about their ancient history (Anderson 1995, 178-83). Piriya indicates that it was not until the reign of King Vajiravudh that the study of iconography, stylistic comparison, and evolution of style became of interest (Piriya 1989, 181-183)

After the second World War, the idea of promoting nationalism through national heritage was put into practice and this resulted in the repairing and restoration of several major national monuments, especially at the two former Thai capitals, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya (Pinrat 1995, 141). Most studies focused on the discussion of style and the iconography of Buddha images and sculptures; only *chedis* (*stūpas*) and *prangs* were included because they alone are the most complete architectural evidence (see for example Griswold 1967; Le May 1963). Other buildings such as *ubosots*¹⁴ (ordination halls) and *wihans*¹⁵ (assembly halls) were never discussed in terms of their symbolic significance in the compound of the *wat*. The art and architecture of the Bangkok period, which was still comparatively new at that time, was of little or no interest, even though it was the most complete.

1.1.3 Buddhist Architecture of the Early Bangkok Period

Many theoretical precepts can be applied to the study of the history of architecture. The historical narrative, which investigates the story of the establishment of an architecture, is the basic form. Stylistic analysis is another discipline. This focuses on the categories

¹⁴ An '*ubosot*' or '*bot*' is the ordination hall, where monks perform ordinations and engage in the monthly recitation of the *Patimokka* (rules of monastic discipline).

¹⁵ A '*wihan*' is the temple meeting hall, where monks and laity join together in religious devotions.

of the style of buildings and their development through history. The study of the influence of other schools, which were sources of dissemination of religious beliefs and political power, or stylistically comparative studies form the general conceptual basis of such studies of ancient Thai architecture. However, the study of architectural spatial organization as a whole in the design of a monastery is rarely found in previous Thai studies, since they were interested in only some fragments of architectural remains and the stylistic development of decorative ornaments.

In studies of the spatial organization of religious architecture, apart from the physical features which can be evaluated by geometrical order and visual perception, or other concepts of space in architectural theory,¹⁶ the cosmological pattern plays a dominant role in the architectural symbolism which developed in conjunction with Buddhist kingship (Mus 1935 in F. Reynolds 1972, 20). This latter concept has never been systematically studied in Thai Buddhist architecture. Space in this context was conceived and made meaningful by a system of symbolic or sacred entities. These entities mediated between the space and the human beings, creating particular kinds of imagined spaces. Consequently, the character of such spaces was determined by the relationships of symbolic entities according to a belief. As a result, to understand these spaces, one has to understand their concepts (grammar) and their symbolism (morphemes) (Thongchai 1994, 28). As Sperber (1975, XII) suggests, 'the basic principles of the symbolic mechanism are not induced from experience but are, on the contrary, part of the innate mental equipment that make experience possible'. The system of a belief-pattern is a necessity for the creation of these kinds of spaces. Nevertheless, the study of the cosmic symbolism in Thai Buddhist architecture has usually only been a speculation from the *prang* and *chedi*, which is then applied to the whole concept of the monastery (see Wales 1977, 59-60; Anuvit 1983, 328-32; Rowland 1953, 252). The symbolic planning of the whole compound has never been seriously analysed and clarified.

A Thai Buddhist *wat* is comprised of several buildings and structures, particularly in a royal *wat*. There might be more than ten of them in a very important *wat* of the kingdom. Their particular meanings and relationships form the main concept of the space. To investigate the symbolic planning requires adequate information. The

¹⁶ See the conclusion of many concepts of space in architectural theory in Norberg-Schulz (1971, 9-14).

fragmentation of both Sukhothai and Ayutthaya Buddhist architecture does not provide a good model for the study of the symbolic planning of the whole compound. The royal Buddhist architecture of the early Bangkok period,¹⁷ which is regarded as the last classical period and the most complete in terms of Thai Buddhist architecture (Anuvit 1984, 39,53), is the best model for such a study. Apart from the completeness of their physical conditions, there are some contemporary documents available for study.¹⁸ In addition, a number of Thai Buddhist texts that were revived and restored together with some other related literature to substitute for those lost during the Burmese war, do provide additional evidence to support the study of Thai Buddhist architecture.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

As has been discussed, the misunderstanding of the concepts of traditional Buddhist architecture is a fundamental problem of the destruction of cultural heritage and also the controversy over contemporary designs. To understand the lost meaning of the past cannot make the past come alive, but it will encourage people to be more aware of how to deal with the present and future within an appropriate cultural framework, for instance in the important work of architectural conservation and other related activities that involve Buddhist architecture.

The elements which signify space in Buddhist architecture are those more usually understood as architecturally decorative ornaments such as mural paintings, sculptures, and other adornments. All these elements are designed to form a particular concept of space in the network of architectural spatial organization. Nevertheless, as Panikkar (1991, 11) suggests, 'modern man is mostly under the influence of the dominant scientific culture which has succeeded in fragmenting knowledge up to the extent of disintegration'. The concepts of Thai Buddhist architecture which are systemized in many kinds of symbolic entities have been separately studied. However, the meaning of space which needs to be comprehended collectively from the whole network of these symbols has become obscured. In several instances the concept is

¹⁷ The early Bangkok period is generally defined as the period from when King Rama I established the new capital at Bangkok in 1782, up until the end of the reign of King Rama III in 1851.

¹⁸ Most of the royal *wats* of the Bangkok period have been conserved throughout its history. Even though some evidence has been lost, for instance in the case of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, substantial information can be collected from written documents. As for the royal Buddhist architecture of Ayutthaya and Sukhothai, their structures are in ruins and the written documents are fragmented.

misunderstood, resulting in the deliberate or unwitting destruction of our human intellectual heritage, even in the royal *wats*, the highest point in the hierarchy of Thai Buddhist architecture.

The major aim of this study is therefore primarily to **explore the concept of the *Traiphum* in Royal Buddhist architecture in the context of the Thai tradition of the early Bangkok period. The question of how the cosmic dimension was interpreted and associated with the architectural planning is to be investigated. A study of the symbol system is also carried out to constitute a theory for the symbolic planning of Royal Thai Buddhist architecture.**

The research also aims to reveal the **texts and treatises relating to the conceptual design of Thai royal Buddhist architecture.** The interpretation of the treatises in the process of architectural planning of a specific *wat* will attempt to manifest the traditional method of symbolizing space.

To understand the architecture of a particular period means understanding more about the history of its time. Another objective of this study is to indicate some important issues involving the notion of kingship and **how this was related to royal Buddhist architecture.** The particular circumstances of the early Bangkok period, when a Buddhist kingdom was re-established, and later on when the traditional states of South-East Asia were interfered with by the external power of western imperialists, is to be analysed to indicate **how the symbolic function of royal Buddhist architecture was adapted in response to the prevailing political circumstances.**

Eventually, this study is expected to be the core that links several disciplines which are integral to the proper design of Thai Buddhist architecture, so that further issues may be raised for future studies.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY AND ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

1.3.1 This research confined the scope of study to only the royal Buddhist architecture of the early Bangkok period, because this is the most complete evidence of Thai Buddhist architecture. There are two types of royal *wats* from the Bangkok period: first, those built under the direct sponsorship of the sovereign; second, those built by others,

with or without grants in aid from him, and offered to the Sovereign with a view to being better cared for and supported in the future (Boriban and Griswold 1988, 5). The royal *wats* may be established for several purposes, such as the Royal Chapel in the precinct of the Grand Palace; these were intended to be the principal *wats* in the capital city, others were for personal purposes, dedicated to relatives (see Phiphat 1982, 147-48). This study will focus on the royal Buddhist *wats* which were constructed by command of the kings of Siam during the early Bangkok period from the reign of King Rama I to the reign of King Rama III. Priority is to be given to only the principal *wats* of the Kingdom and of the reigns. However, some prominent cases will be included in order to investigate how their uniqueness relates to the symbolic use of space, for example: *Wat Ratcha-orot* of King Rama III, which was built in a style influenced by the Chinese. In addition to these selected *wats*, others may be used as models for comparison and referred to in order to provide supporting information.

Another important criterion for the model of the study is the acquisition of sufficient information regarding its original symbolic setting. In very important cases such as the principal *wats* of Rama I, in spite of later alterations to their original design, there is sufficient and reliable documentary evidence. The inscriptions and the Royal Chronicle which comprehensively explains the contents of all the symbol settings are excellent testimonies and these secondary sources are to be the main references. However, it is not necessary to analyse all the royal *wats* of the period exhaustively. The results from this study will later contribute to the clarification of their complex development.

1.3.2 The study is to concentrate on interpreting the concept of space in Thai royal Buddhist architecture through symbolic elements and other relevant evidence. The objective is to clarify the symbolic planning; the meaning which indicates the planning concepts is the essential interest. Mural paintings, inscriptions, sculptures and other related arts will be examined as to whether their contents contribute to the symbolic planning. Their stylistic and artistic techniques are not the aim of the study. In addition, architectural spatial organization will be studied, not in terms of quality, but rather in terms of the organization of the symbolic system. The study is to emphasize its meaning within the context of the Thai tradition.

The symbolic element, in this sense, means an entity which conveys a specific meaning supported by an associated text. In this specific and restricted sense, symbols

are 'objects or images which pertain directly to doctrinal formulations, and in which the symbolic content is clearly and explicitly manifest' (Snodgrass 1985, 2).

There are many buildings and structures in the precinct of the sanctuary area (*Phutthawat*) apart from the principal buildings: *ubosot*, *wihan* and *chedi*. It is not necessary for every building and structure to be included in any interpretation, since an interpretation is a result of decoding the symbol system of the related symbol elements from which the main concepts are formed. Therefore, some structures might not be mentioned if they are found to lack significance for understanding the concept of space. Since most *wats* were repaired and some buildings or structures were later added or altered, their original condition will be the object of this study. In cases where a royal *wat* was significantly restored by a later king and demonstrates important changes in the symbol expression (for instance, *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, which was built by King Rama I and restored by King Rama III), the symbol setting of each design will be studied separately.

As for the elements which are not part of the *Traiphum* and the non-Buddhist subjects, they are also discussed but only in terms of the concepts which are concerned with the meanings of the spaces. For instance, the medical inscriptions will not be considered in detail but rather as an element related to architecture and devoted to a particular conception. The actual information provided by these inscriptions is to be noted but only in outline.

Chinese-influenced elements comprise many kinds of design such as painting, ceramic decoration, Chinese *chedis* and buildings. Most Chinese interior decoration is concerned with the auspicious symbols that appear on all parts of a building. These elements will be discussed in general terms as auspicious symbols rather than described by their specific features. However, all structures related to the symbolic planning are to be recorded.

1.3.3 This research is not a study of Thai history through royal Buddhist architecture, rather it is an attempt to understand more about architecture within its historical context. The historical issue in this research will therefore will focused only on those parts which **relate to or affect architectural symbols and expressions**. The related issues are mostly political and religious, and are part of the notion of Buddhist kingship.

1.3.4 The theory of symbolic planning and the planning system concerning the *Traiphum* cosmology in Thai Buddhist architecture will be established. This can be applied to explain or investigate the symbolic planning of other *wats*. The theory will also provide fundamental knowledge for the teaching in institutions of Thai studies in architecture, archaeology, art history and history.

1.3.5 Apart from the concept relating to the *Traiphum* cosmology, other symbolic meanings which are associated with the system of the *Traiphum* in the symbol of the Thai royal *wats* will also be clarified. This will lead us to understand their symbolic meanings and functions, and will open new questions for further research.

1.3.6 The theoretical aspects of the study are intended to be a model for approaching the study of other periods of Thai architectural history, such as Ayutthaya, Sukhothai and Lanna, and as a comparative model for the study of other cultures in South-East Asia that are based on similar conceptions to *Theravāda* Buddhism.

1.3.7 The study is to be a part of the history of ideas of Thai culture and the Buddhist world, which will hopefully contribute to a greater awareness of the symbolic aspects that spring from its symbolic planning and historical context.

1.3.8 The concept of space and the traditional practice of symbolizing space are to be resources for a new inspiration of contemporary design in architecture, decoration and cultural landscapes.

1.4 DEFINING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The precinct of a royal *wat* may be divided into two distinct parts, the *phutthawat* (*Pāli-buddhāvāsa*) or the sanctuary area, and the *sangkhawat* (*Pāli-sanghāvāsa*) or the monastic area. Most of the important buildings are located in the former, and they form the major part of the study.

As we have learned, an *ubosot* is an ordination hall which is distinguished from other buildings in that the area on which it stands is ritually consecrated and marked by a *sima* or boundary. The *sima* of the *ubosot* is used exclusively by monks for the

ordination ceremony and for meeting on the *uposatha* day to recite the *pātimokkha*, the fundamental precepts of the order, every fortnight. Within a *wat* there may be many buildings, but there is only one *ubosot*, which usually has a rectangular plan with a high gabled roof.

The term *wihan* derives from *Pāli* 'vihāra', which denotes a dwelling place (Buddhadatta 1957, 247) and Buddhist monastery. In Thai Buddhist architecture, a *wihan* is an assembly or preaching hall. It usually takes the form of a rectangular hall similar to the *ubosot*, but it is not defined by a *sima* boundary.

A *kanprian* usually serves as a lecture and study hall where the laity can hear sermons and receive religious instruction. In an important *wat*, the *kanprian* takes a form similar to that of the *wihan*, but in the ordinary *wat* it is usually a wooden structure built on stilts, for multi-purpose use.

Čhedi is the Thai term derived from the *Pāli* 'cetiya'. It is known also as a *stūpa* in *Sanskrit* or *Thūpa* in *Pāli* (see Silva 1988, 11-12). The purpose of the *čhedi* is to be a monument, and it may be enshrined with the Buddha's relics (*Dhātu-cetiya*). The term also denotes the relict objects associated with the Buddha (*Paribhogacetiya*), such as the Bodhi-tree; a doctrinal reminder (*Dhammacetiya*), such as the *Pāli* canon; and an indicative reminder (*Uddesikacetiya*), such as copies of *dhātu-cetiya*; copies of *paribhogacetiya*, or Buddha images and Buddha's Footprints (Damrong 1973, VI).

A *Prang* is a Thai adaptation of the Khmer *prasat* (*Sanskrit- Prāsāda*) or sanctuary tower of a form of Hindu temple. It is square in a centralized plan. The *prang* is divided into three sections. The lowest section comprises the base and, in a large *prang*, staircases lead to the middle section, where there is a chamber with an entrance porch and niches on the other three sides. Later examples and small *prangs* do not have this chamber but are decorated with niches on the four cardinal sides. The uppermost level is divided into six or seven tiers.

Ho Trai is a scripture house or library. It may be built on stilts in the middle of a pond to prevent termites and other insects from having access to the manuscripts.

Prasat derives from *Sanskrit Prāsāda*. In Thai architecture, the *prasat* refers to a multi-

storeyed building or the multi-tiered roofs forming the superstructure of a building. It is referred to as the king's palace, or the palace of gods that is sometimes compared with Mount *Meru* (Kramrisch 1946, 134-37). The *prang* is also a kind of *Prasat*.

Mondop, the term derives from *Sanskrit* 'mandapa' (a pavilion, or temporary building [Monier-William 1964, 775] or an enclosed porch attached to one side of the *prāsāda* or *sikhara* tower of a Hindu temple). In Thai architecture, the term '*mondop*' refers to a building which is square in plan and cubic in form. The simplest roof of the *mondop* is formed by two or three layers of roofing superimposed on top of one another, but in the more important examples it may have many receding tiers, topped by a slender pinnacle to signify its high status. The latter is sometime called a *Mondop-prasat* since it has a roof form similar to the *prasat*. The *mondop* is used to enshrine sacred objects such as the Buddha's Footprint, Buddha image, and Buddhist scriptures.

As for the narrated scenes which are almost always represented in the form of mural paintings in the building, these comprise stories from the Buddhist texts. The main stories of these narrated scenes are:

The Buddha of the past: in Thai Buddhist concept, there are Buddhas who have attained the Enlightenment in the past (Thampricha 1992, 34). Twenty-four Buddhas are mentioned as predecessors of Gotama Buddha in the *Buddhavamsa* (see Hornor [trans.] 1975; Boisselier 1976, 198). The Dipankara Buddha first predicted that the Gotama Buddha would achieve the Buddhahood, then this prediction was confirmed by each of the remaining twenty-three intervening Buddhas who succeeded Dipankara.

Jātakas are stories of the past lives of the Buddha, who as an Enlightened Being or *Bodhisattva* performed many deeds of kindness and rescue before achieving his final birth as Gotama. The stories of these previous births of the *Bodhisattva* are known as *Jātakas*. There are 550 *Jātakas* known in Burma and Thailand, but in the Singhalese tradition they end at 547 (Luce 1969, 294). The last ten *Jātakas* are known as *Dasajāti* (Ten Births), in which the ten great virtues were brought to perfection before the *Bodhisattva*'s last birth and attainment of Buddhahood (Wray et al. 1972; Lyons 1990).

The Life of the Buddha: the story of the Life of the Buddha begins with his birth as a member of the *khattiya*, or warrior class, of the Sakya clan when he was called by the

name Siddhattha. The most important episode is the *Bodhisattva* victory over *Māra* before he attained the Enlightenment. The story ends with the *Mahāparinibbāna*, the Buddha's funeral and the distribution of the holy relics.

The *Traiphum* or *Cakkavāla* painting represents the Buddhist cosmology of a single world system. The scene is centred on the figure of Mount *Meru*, on either side of which are seven mountain ranges and oceans. The composition of these elements is taken from the *Traiphum* text.

1.4.1 The question of the relationship between the *Traiphum* cosmology and the design concept of Thai Buddhist architecture has been studied for decades. However, most previous studies were only focused on the principal *chedi* or *prang*, suggesting that the concept of Mount *Meru* was the central mountain of the universe in Buddhist cosmology. The theory of the centre as being the symbol of Mount *Meru* seems to be the most influential. McGill's (1977,136-47) study of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram* of Ayutthaya proposes that the whole complex of the *wat* is an imitation of the Thai cremation structure, the *men* (*Meru*), while Fouser (1996, 38) notes that the principal *prang* at its uppermost level is divided into seven tiers, probably representing the seven mountain ranges surrounding Mount *Meru*. The centrality of Mount *Meru* is always discussed (Sumet 1988; Ringis 1990; Wales 1977,142-43), but the analysis of the concept of *Traiphum* cosmology of Thai Buddhist architecture is never extended to cover other main buildings such as *ubosot* and *wihan*.

Some Thai scholars have attempted to explain Thai Buddhist architecture in connection to the concept of the *Traiphum*. However, the theory of the centrality of the symbol of Mount *Meru* has also been used as a major framework to approach the study of only the main structure as the centre of the compound. The relationship of the whole planning system has never been investigated. Joti analyses many kinds of structures and buildings of Thai Buddhist architecture: *chedi*, *prang*, *prasat* (*prāsāda*) and *mondop*, and indicates that they are symbolic of Mount *Meru*. This study places emphasize on the vertical diagrammatic aspect of *Traiphum* cosmography: the numbering of levels of perfection of *Kāmahūmi* (the realm of desire), *Rūpabhūmi* (the Realm of Form) and *Arūpabhūmi* (the Realm of the Formless) are compared to the circular tiers on the conical spires of a *chedi* and the heavenly levels of a *prang*. However, an *ubosot*, *wihan* and other symbolic elements such as mural paintings are

not mentioned and the structures are studied separately (Joti 1978, 59-65).

Anuvit adopts the theory of the centre for most interpretations, and on several occasions cites the work of Wales (1977) '*The Universe Around Them : Cosmology and Cosmic Renewal in Indianized Southeast Asia*', particularly the generalization that a *chedi*, *prang*, *ubosot*, and *wihan* are all perfect symbols of a universe (Anuvit 1983, 328, 331-32; Wales 1977, 59-60, 139, 142). In this regard, the various themes of paintings and other symbols in a particular context and the distinctive building type are altogether ignored. As a result, the relationship of these structures in the compound of a *wat* is meaningless in terms of the organization of symbolic planning. The specific meaning of a structure in the milieu of the compound is obscured by this theory. However, Wales himself was influenced by the work of Heine-Geldern (1942), whose study is generalization of the cosmological concept based on the theory of a sacred centre to both palaces and Buddhist and Hindu temples (Heine-Geldern 1942, 18; Wales 1977, 136-140). These broad speculations may well be explained in relation to a single large monument, but Thai Buddhist architecture, which is a combination of structures within a compound, needs an analytical framework which is able to indicate their relationship in the network of planning.

Vacharee's (1992) proposed hypothesis on the concept of space in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* is curiously interesting. The study connects the Buddha images in the four directional *wihans* with the description of *Majjhimadesa* and *Jambudīpa* from the *Traiphum* text, together with an analogy between the shape of the *ubosot* complex and the shape of *Majjhimadesa* described in the text. She concludes that the complex is representative of the *Majjhimadesa*, with the Bodhi-tree at the centre. Nonetheless, only the central complex of the *ubosot* is analysed, and other parts of the compound and symbols are disregarded.

Samerchai's (1996) approach to studying symbolism in Thai mural paintings provides a great contribution to the study of the symbolic planning of Thai Buddhist architecture. It is the only study that regards mural painting as a symbolic element instead of simply a mode of instruction. However, his interpretation of the plans of *Wat Suthat* and *Wat Phra Chetuphon* is mainly focused on mural paintings, while some symbolic elements such as minor *chedis*, ponds, miniature mountains and gardens, are discarded from the hypotheses of symbolic formation. Important symbolic elements which can be

directly referred to particular places such as *Sattamahāthāna* (the Seven Great Sites) of *Wat Suthat*, are not mentioned. In his study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, seventy-one minor *chedis*, miniature gardens, pond and *Ho Trai* are not included in the interpreted concept.

The studies mentioned consider only part of the total symbolic systems available. In addition, there is the case of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, which was established by King Rama I (1782- 1809) and then restored by King Rama III (1824-1851). In the analyses of this *wat*, the two symbolic settings are not clearly separated (for example, see Samerchai 1996 and Vacharee 1992). The studies do indicate that the concept of the *wats* concerns the *Traiphum* cosmography, but they do not clarify the symbolic planning of the whole compound. Therefore, it is necessary to study it by approaching all the significant symbolic elements, and formulating a new hypothesis of the symbol system of traditional Thai Buddhist architecture of the Bangkok period. The important issue is **how the *Traiphum* cosmography was interpreted to form the symbolic planning of these royal wats of the early Bangkok period.**

1.4.2 Apart from the elements concerning the concept of *Traiphum*, there are other elements represented together with the system of *Traiphum* in the same precinct of a *wat*. Some Brahministic elements such as the icon of Nārāyana (or Vishnu) riding on *Garuda*¹⁹ maintained the Ayutthaya practice. The figures of principal Brahmanistic gods are also found painted on the window and door panels of *Wat Suthat* (Niyada 1997, 103-106). As for non-religious subjects, there is no evidence found in the work of the Ayutthaya period of the application of medical inscriptions to the Buddhist architecture found later in the works of both Rama I and Rama III. There are many subjects depicted in the work of King Rama III. *Wat Phra Chetuphon* is the most interesting case, since many branches of knowledge were depicted such as medicine, illustrations of the technicalities of Siamese poetic art, brief verses on the topics of astrology and omens, folk tales, and even the Chinese historical epic of the Three Kingdoms (FAD 1974; Dhani 1976b). All of these entities are mentioned in that they were put in the *wat* to be subjects for all classes of people to learn from (Damrong 1932). Their instructional aspect, pointed out by Prince Damrong, becomes the notion that dominates the later studies (Matics 1979, 43; Somprasong 1982) but the symbolic

¹⁹ Nārāyana refers to the God Vishnu in Thai culture. *Garuda*, a mythical beast in the shape of a half human-half bird is the vehicle of the God Vishnu in Hindu iconography.

aspect of these elements has never been investigated. Such elements therefore need to be investigated in terms of **how they were connected to the system of the *Traiphum* and the concept of space.**

1.4.3 Since the founding of Bangkok some architectural patterns have emerged from royal Buddhist architecture as distinct from Ayutthayan architecture. The most prominent feature is that large *chedi* or *prang* are not the principal structures located at the centre of a *wat*'s compound, even in the most important *wats* such as the Royal Chapel or The Temple of the Emerald Buddha and *Wat Suthat*. The gallery, which was always an enclosure of a principal *chedi* or *prang* in large royal *wats* of the Ayutthayan tradition, was planned to enclose the *ubosot* or *wihan* in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Suthat*, and encloses the whole compound of the Royal Chapel. This pattern is a new feature of the period (Phiphat 1982, 152-53). In addition, it is noticeable that most of the principal *wats* of the kingdom include several elements in their plans, particularly surrounding the main structure. These prominent features should be investigated in term of **how they are related to the concept of Thai Buddhist kingship.**

The main question posed in this study is as follows:

How was the *Traiphum* cosmography interpreted to become the symbolic planning of *wats* of the early Bangkok period?

However, within the system of the symbolic planning of the *Traiphum* concept, there are subsidiary questions, such as, **How were the non-Buddhist and other elements integrated into the system of *Traiphum*? And, how does the *Traiphum* cosmological diagram in the symbolic planning manifest the concept of Thai Buddhist kingship?**

1.5 METHODOLOGY

In order to study the architectural symbol system, the information of the symbolic elements will be examined in the context of the original order of the symbolic planning of the *wat*. Since the symbolic entities in Thai Buddhist architecture derive from the subjects contained in Buddhist texts and some non-Buddhist literature, any interpretation of these entities inevitably needs to refer to the related texts. In addition, the issue of the politico-religious nature of the Buddhist tradition also has a close connection to the discussion. An inter-disciplinary approach is the strategy of this

research method. Each particular *wat* will be analysed one by one in terms of its symbolic planning, in order to maintain the continuity of the interpretation and the relation of all structures as part of a whole.

However, architectural planning is the central coordinating concept which organizes all these subjects to indicate the concept of space. To analyse the symbolic planning, this study is to be approached using the following methods.

1.5.1 The Study of Traditional Patterns

In traditional Thai practice, some arrangements of a set of narrated scenes and some other adornments have been maintained continuously over a long period; this indicates the consistency of tradition and a lack of variation in terms of design and meaning. The most prominent example is the paintings of the story of the Lives of the Buddha and the *Traiphum* cosmography in an *ubosot* or *wihan*. There are many examples of this pattern available to be studied and compared to each other, and they cover a wide range of periods and regions in the context of the Thai tradition. The study of this traditional pattern of symbol setting is the initial analysis which will be a model for comparison with the arrangement of a particular royal *wat*, in order to investigate the symbolic planning of the whole compound. Its standard arrangement and meaning will indicate any development which is distinct from the original pattern.

The strategy of this analysis is to investigate the themes of the paintings and make the relevant connections. The relationship of the themes is to be supported by a text which is the associated text of the whole painting. The connectedness of the stories from the painting, which denotes the time and place mentioned in the text, is to be the concept related to the spatial arrangement.

1.5.2 Symbolic Elements

The original planning of the *wat* which is selected as the model for study will be examined in order to determine, as far as possible, its original symbol setting. Most of the royal *wats* have been restored and a vast number of symbolic entities were destroyed. The evidence from secondary sources is to be the means of reference for this and will be used to fill in the lost parts. The chief sources are the Royal Chronicles,

inscriptions, historical records and other contemporary documents. The archaeological records of the Fine Arts Department also provide information about the architectural details of some royal *wats*.

A symbol is a form of prescribed figurative or spatial representation of the doctrinal teaching of a tradition, mostly in the form of religious iconography. There are some symbolic entities represented in analogical and metaphorical modes which are the creation of a particular culture or period of the tradition. Excluded from the elements of iconography and architecture itself, inscriptions contain particular subjects which may be incorporated as symbols. Snodgrass points out that a symbolic network is formed not only by visual and spatial symbols, but also by modes of myth, ritual and doctrine which express them conceptually. He further suggests that ritual is similarly symbolic myth, that symbols and rites are strictly linked, and every rite incorporates a symbolic meaning; it is a repetition of the sacred actions described in the myths, expressed by way of a series of acts or gestures and words. Rites, myths and symbols are various, closely interlocking expressions of a single reality (Snodgrass 1985, 6-7). Likewise, in the Buddhist view, the canonical text, the *suttas* and commentaries are also symbols. However, myth and ritual are not necessarily directly expressed in architecture, but once the establishment of a monastery is intended to imitate a particular act from myth or text, it is a ritual and the meaning is constituted from that process and integrated into the concept of space. As for a king who builds a *wat* and names it after a particularly important monastery in Buddhist history, in order to repeat its significance for the kingdom, the metaphysical value becomes identified with a convincing belief. As Kramrisch suggests:

The rites by which concrete materials are acquired were vested in the inner experience of non-dimensional space. The transition and transfer of metaphysical experience into concrete, visual form were guided and guarded by rites that effected their transformation into sacred architecture of a selected site in three dimensional physical space (Kramrisch 1991, 103).

The symbolic evidence will be collected and categorized when investigating the evidence for the original plan of the *wats* studied. The information is categorized in groups. Each group comprises the information which relates to the same subject or text. This information is set down in a table which shows the themes, its group and the position (the building or structure) in the plan. There are several types of symbolic

entities, as follows.

Mural paintings or narrated scenes

A narrated scene may be composed of many episodes. However, only the main concept of a story which denotes a particular time and place will be used, and where the essential concept underlying the kingship practice is of interest, rather than the detail of episode, this will be used. The proper name of a story which is well known in the academic field is to be recorded in order to refer to the whole concept of the story. Many of the studies of Thai mural paintings will provide both themes and positions of the paintings for comparison (Boisselier 1976, 1987; Lyons 1990, 1990a; Samerchai 1996; Santi and Kamol 1981; Wray et al. 1996 and Phanuphong 1997).

Inscriptions

Apart from the inscriptions, which are the decree of the construction of a *wat*, there are various others set in the precinct of some *wats*; their content varies from subjects relating to Buddhism, to non-Buddhist literature, poems, tales and medical subjects. The particular inscription used will be referred to by the name of its subject or its proper name which conveys the particular meaning.

The building type

Some building types of Thai Buddhist architecture have certain meanings which are generally known to scholars, such as *prang*, *prasat* and *mondop*. They have been studied and analysed and their symbolic manifestations reveal that they are symbols representing the heavenly realm and *Meru* Mountain. Initially, this study will apply the known meaning to the decoding analysis. If there is any contradiction and the applied meaning does not conform to the context in the planning, this study will help to re-examine the known hypothesis and might point out some variables in the context that they are related to other building types or structures.

Buddha image

The gesture of a Buddha image signifies the great moment in the career of the Buddha. It also denotes the place where the event occurred. So, the iconography of an image may be a symbol of space. However, most of the Buddha images installed in the religious buildings of the *wats* of the early Bangkok period were brought from the old capitals of Ayutthaya and Sukhothai, and some other ancient cities. They are not

original designs to represent the concept of space. Any interpretation, therefore, is not able to adhere to the iconographical meaning, since it does not provide any accuracy to the concept. To identify the meaning one also needs to investigate the context of the image, which was created as an actual symbol of space.

In addition to the information mentioned above, other elements which might convey symbolic meanings will also be recorded, such as the garden, pond, and miniature mountains, including some prominent features of architectural planning.

1.5.3 Related Texts and Treatises

It is necessary to investigate the content of the texts in parallel with the study of the symbolic elements. In the case of the *Traiphum* text, which is a Buddhist cosmographical treatise, apart from the well known fourteenth century version of King Lithai (Lithai 1983), other versions are also to be investigated. The most detailed version is the compilation in 1783 during the reign of King Rama I (Thampricha 1992); it is to be the main reference since it is a document contemporary with the Royal *wats* of the early Bangkok period. The illustrated version of the *Traiphum* text (FAD 1987; OPM 1982) provides significant evidence since it is a traditional interpretation of *Traiphum* cosmography from the descriptive concept into a two-dimensional presentation. The diagrammatic feature of the illustration is to be compared to the symbolic planning in architecture, together with the symbolic interpretation of a particular building or structure.

Apart from the *Traiphum* other texts related to the subjects of symbolic elements are also to be studied. *Pathamasambodhi* is the best known text to the Thai, and concerns the story of the Life of the Buddha (Paramanuchit 1962), while the Legend of King Jambupati (VL 1921) relates to the meaning of the crowned Buddha image and contains some notions of Kingship. *Ramakian* and the Legend of Vishnu's *Avatāras* (Niyada 1997) are the most prominent texts relating to the Brahmanistic elements which are always found expressed in Buddhist architecture.

1.5.4 Symbolic Planning Analysis

With the underlying theory that certain narrated scenes and other adornments are symbols of space (Griswold 1972, 11; Coomaraswamy 1977, 168), the planning system of these symbolic entities will be investigated to determine the symbolic planning of the *wat*. The *Traiphum* cosmology is the main sanctioned theory of the planning concept, since the cosmic order is comprehensively described.

Category of symbolic elements

The symbolic elements will be categorized in groups, following the main subjects. The main three groups are the subjects from the *Traiphum*, *Pathamasambodhi* (the Life of the Buddha) and *Jātakas*, and Brahmanistic elements in which *Ramakian* is included. There are some elements which cannot be categorized within the three main subjects, and these will be later related to their contexts in the process of analysis. There may be some which cannot be related to other themes; if they denote important notions that might deliberately be selected to present association with some specific condition in the historical context, they will be discussed separately in the section of the study of historical context and kingship.

The analysis

The study will first focus on the building which contains similar subjects to the traditional pattern which has already been studied, since the known concept of the standard pattern will help to clarify the meaning of its context. If this traditional pattern is not found in the compound of a *wat*, the most important building in the compound will be considered first, since it usually contains various themes and subjects. The interpretation will begin with the element whose conceptual meaning is certain. This prominent symbol will lead to the main concept, then some subsidiary elements will be discussed to identify more detail to support the interpreted concept. After the main building has been clarified, the interpretation of its surroundings will indicate the network of symbolic planning. Their harmonious interrelation will validate the interpreted meaning of each building or structure step by step. The meanings of buildings or structures with insufficient information to be identified, will be interpreted by the contextual analysis.

The analysis and interpretation of the meaning of a building will be conducted together

with the architectural planning analysis. The analysis will explain the connectedness of the network of symbols associated with architectural spatial organization. The concept of space which the symbol denotes will be presented by a planning diagram. In cases where the prominent parts in the compound are analysed separately in a *wat* that has a complex plan, the conceptual diagram of each part of the analysis will be connected to form the whole of the symbolic planning. This planning diagram will be compared with the diagram of *Traiphum* cosmography to indicate how the cosmic dimension was interpreted into the spatial planning of architectural work.

At this stage of the study, the meanings of most of the buildings or structures will already be clarified. Where the exact meaning of the building or structure cannot be identified it may be possible to speculate from the relationship of the whole plan. The concept of the most prominent part in the symbolic plan will indicate the main concept of the *wat*. This concept is to be analysed with the historical context and an explanation given as to why it was emphasized in that period.

Contextual analysis

There are some minor buildings, the meaning of which cannot be decoded separately from their context. The contextual analysis will help to identify their meanings related to the context in the network of symbolic planning. These minor buildings, such as the *sala* (pavilion), small *wihan* and some subsidiary *chedis*, are not usually adorned with specific symbols, but rather with some decorative ornaments which do not specify their exact meaning.

To speculate on the meanings of these buildings, first the main part of the compound and some related buildings in the complex have to be decoded. Then, we can proceed with the analysis of the position of the 'unknown meaning' buildings; what are the concepts they should signify in the context? The plan of the whole compound will be compared to the diagram of the *Traiphum* cosmography. They will also be compared to the plan of a *wat* in a similar arrangement, where the meaning of the buildings in the compound is already known. The concept of the building, interpreted from this method, will be verified by the validity of its harmony with the buildings surrounding it. In cases where the exact meaning cannot be identified because of some contradiction, a possible hypothesis will be proposed.

Theory of symbolic planning

The results of the survey of the concept of space in all the *wats* in this study will be analysed and concluded as a theoretical explanation of the symbolic planning of Thai Buddhist architecture of the early Bangkok period. This final analysis may refer to information beyond the scope of the study in order to validate and, at the same time, support the theory.

1.5.5 The Issues Relating to Historical Context and Kingship

Although architecture is the result of its own historical condition, to interpret the historical issues only from architectural evidence has restrictions and is highly questionable. Related historical records will help us to understand more about architectural issues. The main concepts of the *wats* which have been studied will be analysed within their historical context. Since the royal *wat* is of direct concern to Buddhist kingship, the critical issue of the politico-religious nature of the period will be investigated to see how it affected the architectural conception. The notion of spiritualization and legitimation connected to the planning concept will be explained.

Historical records, particularly the Royal Chronicle of the Bangkok period (Thiphakorawong 1964, 1995, 1996; Damrong 1962), royal decrees and other related documents, are to be investigated in parallel with art and architecture. The evidence from art and architecture may not necessarily be reconcilable with the written texts in some instances, since they are based on different discourses. The issue involving spiritualization is closely connected to the expression of the higher powers in the Thai belief system.

Secondary sources that discuss the Buddhist state and kingship (Gokhale 1966; Heine-Geldern 1942; F. Reynolds 1972; Aung-Thwin 1981, 1983; Dhani 1976a) are part of the references used. The Asokan and the concept of *cakkavatti* (universal monarch) is specifically discussed in the work of Strong (1983) on '*The Legend of King Asoka*'. Among the studies focused more specifically on Thai Buddhist history and politics is Tambiah's (1976) '*World Conqueror and World Renouncer*'. For the historical issues of the early Bangkok period, concerned with historical writing and literature, are works by Nithi (1986; 1980), C. Reynolds (1979), Niyada (1996) and Wyatt (1982); while Wenk (1968) and Vella (1957) focus more on the political issues of the reigns of

King Rama I and King Rama III respectively.

In Thai society, human peace and prosperity are subject to the influence of many powers other than those of mere human beings. All circumstances are controlled by a network of powers. Somkiat (1990, 197-220) indicates the significant powers in Thai traditional society: the power of *Dharma*, of Buddhist pantheons, of Brahmanistic pantheons, of spirits and the power of Buddhist state rulers. In *Theravāda* Buddhist kingship, the kings are the persons who contract and control all powers in order to provide welfare and prosperity for their kingdoms (Heine-Geldern 1942, 15). It is part of a spiritualized process. Most of the powers mentioned are always found expressed in royal Buddhist architecture. Any of the changes in the values of these powers by a king in a particular circumstance could be seen from the symbols represented in the *wat*; it is important evidence that reflects the historical condition of the period. A *wat* is a place for performing religious rituals, and it is the place where the sacred Buddha images are installed and the great relics are enshrined. Establishing a royal *wat* therefore is an inseparable part of the spiritualization of the kingdom, and must be carried out correctly in the full knowledge of these phenomena.

The concept of space in any *wat* is a result of the organization of symbols in a particular system, while a symbol system is the method of arranging all correlated symbols that represent the planned-for concept. Therefore, meaning has two levels of implication: one is represented by the concept of space, another is linked to the purpose of the formation, related to the politico-religious, kingship and historical context.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF STUDY

The introduction of the broad notion of the *Theravāda* Buddhist state and kingship is to be discussed in **Chapter 2**. The major paradigms of kingship, such as *Cakkavatti* (universal monarch), *Dhammarājā* (righteous king), and the Asokan²⁰ models, are provided. The *Cakkavatti* concept is mentioned in several Buddhist texts and influenced the legitimation of the concept of a righteous monarch. These concepts have been

²⁰ Asoka was a king of India around the third century B.C. He was a great supporter of Buddhism, whose story later became the model for most of the kings of Buddhist kingdoms to follow in order to legitimize their governance.

claimed throughout South-East Asian history. The significance of *Cakkavatti* also relates to the notion of the expansion of the political power of a Buddhist state. In the case of Siam, Rāma²¹ and Indra²² have been the divine notions associated with the monarchical institution since the Ayutthaya period. The eminence of both Rāma and Indra was represented through some elements in Buddhist architecture as well. The chapter also provides a discussion of the relationship of merit, supernatural power and the prosperity of the kingdom. The Buddhist cosmological structure, which is most important both to moral practice and the architectural planning, will be introduced.

Chapter 3 studies the early Bangkok Buddhist architecture of King Rama I. Before the analysis of the *wat*, the study will begin with an interpretation of the standard pattern of Thai mural painting in an *ubosot* or *wihan* in order to clarify the traditional symbolic practice. The application of some Brahmanistic elements to Buddhist architecture is also analysed in relation to its symbolic significance to space.

Some historical issues related to Rama I's establishment of the Čhakkri Dynasty and his legitimation through several reconstructions of Buddhist texts, law and architecture are to be introduced as a historical background. Then the two important *wats* of Rama I, *Wat Phra Srirattana satsadaram* or the Royal Chapel and *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, are to be analysed. **The study will analyse the conceptual planning of the *wats* and how the *Traiphum* cosmography was interpreted in architectural symbolic planning.** These *wats* were restored and altered during the reign of Rama III. The information for study is quoted from inscriptions, royal chronicles and some historical records. The prominent concept of space resulting from the analysis of symbolic planning will then be connected to the historical issue and the concept of Thai Buddhist kingship in the last section of the chapter.

Chapter 4 explores the royal *wats* of Rama III. During his reign, western colonization began to affect the stability of the kingdom. Foreign politics created the remarkable conditions which affected symbolic expression in Buddhist architecture, while Chinese art and architectural influences also contributed to the complexity of the symbol system.

²¹ Rāma in the *Ramakian* epic was an incarnation of the God Vishnu. His righteous act was another paradigm of the Thai Buddhist kingship.

²² Indra or Sakka is the God who rules the *Tāvātimsa* Heaven, located at the top of Mount *Meru*. He is regarded as the Buddhist protecting god.

The study of *Wat Ratcha-orot* will answer the question as to how Chinese elements were adapted to the symbolic planning of Thai Buddhist architecture. The complexity of symbolic elements in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* which Rama III restored, rearranging the symbols from the original planning of Rama I, is an example indicating the change of emphasis in the concepts of the two reigns. **The various non-Buddhist elements and secular subjects in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* are to be investigated for their connection to the concept of space.**

The analysis of the symbolic planning of *Wat Suthat* is to be another model and shows another method of symbolizing space in Thai Buddhist architecture. With only two principal buildings, its condition is different from the plans of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Ratcha-orot*, which consist of many buildings and structures. **The change in the method of representing the *Traiphum* cosmographic diagram in the planning of the *wats* of Rama III reflects the difference in historical conditions from the reign of Rama I.**

Chapter 5 is the concluding analysis of the study of the symbolic planning of the royal *wats* of the early Bangkok period in order to constitute a theory of symbolic planning of the *Traiphum* in royal Thai Buddhist architecture. **The interpretation of the *Traiphum* cosmic diagram into an architectural plan will be explained within the theoretical framework of architectural planning. The conclusion will address the planning system together with the symbolic setting in the spatial organization of the *wat*.**

The principal *prang* of *Wat Arun* will be analysed together with some *prangs* of the early Ayutthaya period. The symbolic planning of the *prangs* will reveal the connection between the symbolic planning and Buddhist kingship, of which the Legend of King Jambupati is the reference text. The study will conclude with a consideration of the significance of the *Traiphum*, and some varied concepts incorporated into the diagram of the *Traiphum* cosmography.

BUDDHIST STATE, KINGSHIP, AND COSMOLOGY

The conception of Buddhist state and kingship that has been developed in South-East Asia was also shaped by Hinduism and *Mahāyāna* Buddhism in its regional development. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the three main critical concepts, the state, kingship, and cosmology in the *Theravāda* Buddhist tradition. However, this chapter gives no account of the interpretation of symbolic planning of royal Buddhist architecture, which is dealt with in Chapter 3.

The discussion will include a broad investigation of *Theravāda* Buddhist kingship. The attention is focussed upon the notion of *cakkavatti*, the universal monarch, which is highly influential in the practice of South-East Asian Buddhist states. The concepts of divine kingship and *bodhisattva* are also bound to kingship practice by the concept that the king is the upholder and protector of *Dhamma*. The discussion is mostly based on secondary sources which have been studied by many scholars, but the particular contribution of this work is to tie together several concepts to present a unified theory.

Buddhist cosmology will be discussed initially through the significance of the *Traiphum* text, which is the most important treatise of cosmology and kingship of Thai traditional belief. Its structure and elements are also introduced, and these will be related to the concept of the symbolic planning of Thai Buddhist architecture in later chapters. The issues discussed will be synthesised to present an argument about the concept of cosmic state, in which a king is the central figure, the bond of all powers of the universe under the rule of *Dhamma*. The concept of supernatural power which is connected to royal ceremonies is also considered in its relation to kingship. These issues present a reference point for some significant meanings connected to the interpretation of Thai Buddhist architecture.

2.1 BUDDHIST STATE AND KINGSHIP

The early Buddhist theory of the origin of the state, as mentioned in *Aggañña Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*,¹ was that men were the re-incarnation of the angels of the *Brahma* world or *Brahmaloka* since the beginning of the aeon or *kappa*. In the course of time, their morals declined and their living standards became worse. The standard of human behaviour deteriorated. There were differences between men and women and their sexual desires. As men became increasingly immoral and greedy for private possessions, there was an increase in conflict, violence and disorder. The people were disturbed and decided that they should select someone who would be stern when the occasion arose and who was prepared to punish them. They then elected one among them, whose beauty was superior to the others and who was capable of enforcing law and order, to be the king, called '*Mahāsammata*' (acclaimed by the many). In return for his labours towards the establishment of law and order, justice and harmony, the king was paid one-sixth of the produce of each of the subjects. The establishment of kingship then ended the anarchy into which society had fallen, and orderly social life became possible. He was also called '*Rājā*' because 'he charmed others by the Norm (*Dhamma*)'; and he was a '*Khattiya*' or 'Lord of the Fields' (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 84-93, in Gokhal 1966, 16-17).

In this case, the Buddhist concept of political authority indicates that kingship was constituted because of the disorder of human society, which needed to be organised. The relationship between the king and his subjects is explained as being that the king has reached his exalted position in society because he accumulated a great deal of merit during his past lives, and this entitled him to the kingship (*Samyutta Nikāya* I, 93, in Somboon 1993, 105). He was the upholder of the *Dhamma*, through which he watched over and protected his subjects (*Anguttara Nikāya*, I, 109, in Somboon 1993, 105). He is a *khattiya* and belongs to a family with an established lineage. This is in keeping with the early Buddhist view that the *khattiyas* are the highest among classes and castes (*Samyutta Nikāya* I, 69 and *Anguttara Nikāya* V, 327, in Gokhal 1966, 17).

¹ The *Pāli* texts cited in the references are from the Pāli Text Society's series (London, 1890-1911).

2.1.1 *Dhamma* and King

A king's power expresses itself in death sentences or imprisonment, fines or mutilation, banishment or confiscation of property. The rights of private property and the sanctity of the human person, therefore, are subject to royal pleasure and the King may choose, as he often did, to exercise these rights arbitrarily.² Since violence, force and arbitrariness were inherent in the exercise of the functions of the state, the early Buddhists felt it was necessary to base the exercise of power on *Dhamma* in the hope that a constant awareness of *Dhamma* would transform the very nature of the state (Gokhal 1968, 255).

It is in the concept of *Dhamma* that Buddhist ideas on kingship find their ultimate conclusion. The *cakkavatti* (universal monarch) is *dhammiko dhammarājā* (a Righteous Ruler). He is devoted to *Dhamma*, honours it, is deferential towards it, worships it, makes it his banner and treats it as his overlord (Anguttara Nikāya I, 109-10, in Gokhal 1966, 20). Buddhist kingship was based on the concept of righteousness. To maintain his political authority and regulate state affairs for the benefit of the kingdom, and hence to reaffirm and enhance his authority, the king had to be a righteous ruler, the *dhammarājā* (Somboon 1993, 105).

There is a distinction between *Dhamma* as a code of conduct and *Dhamma* as an all-pervasive, inexorable, indestructible and eternal mystic entity. In this second aspect as a mystic entity, *Dhamma* stood above and beyond the state. In an illuminating passage, when asked by *bhikku* who was the ruler of rulers, the Buddha is reported to have replied that it was *Dhamma* (Anguttara Nikāya II, 403, in Gokhal 1968, 257). *Dhamma* as the natural force, therefore, is the law that controls rulers.

It gives the king the authority to rule and calls upon the subjects to obey him so long as the king abides by its wishes. It watches over the king at all times and hence is a quasi-cosmic force working in its own mysterious way. It forms the ultimate nexus between the state and the citizens. The citizens must obey the ruler so long, and only so long, as he obeys *Dhamma*. When he ceases to do that the basis of allegiance is destroyed and rebellion becomes inevitable. *Dhamma* stands between order and anarchy; it transforms the condition of non-state into

² *Samyutta Nikāya* I, 75, 89 and V. Trenekner (ed.), *Milindapāñha* (London), 1928, 192, in Gokhal (1968, 252).

the state. It protects the institutions of property and family and is the source of all the rules of conduct pertaining to the diverse groups within a given society (Gokhal 1968, 259).

Thus it was necessary for the king to keep *Dhamma*, the code of conduct, alive by supporting the Buddhist *sangha* which perpetuated and disseminated *Dhamma*. In addition, the new establishment and restoration of Buddhist monasteries and temples were part of this patronage. The knowledge of the teachings of the Buddha should not be allowed to die, for with it would die the norms against which the ruler's conduct could be judged (Somboon 1993, 106).

The Indian concept of time and *Dhamma* were introduced to South-East Asia through Hinduism and Buddhism. *Dhamma* is the ultimate truth. However, the moral order or *Dhamma* of the world is in virtual existence before the beginning, but it becomes manifest in the spheres, energies, and beings of the world (Zimmer 1963, 13). Each world cycle (*kappa*) is subdivided into four *yugas* or world ages: *Krita*, *Tretā*, *Dvāpava*, and *Kali*. The appellations of the *yugas* suggest the relative virtues of the periods, as they succeed each other in a slow, irreversible procession.

Krita Yuga, the first of the ages, is the perfect one. During this *yuga* men and women are born virtuous, and they devote their lives to the fulfilment of the duties and tasks divinely ordained by *Dhamma*. However, order begins to lose ground, and *Dhamma* vanishes quarter by quarter. *Tretā Yuga* is the age in which the universal body, as well as the body of human society, is sustained by only three quarters of its total virtue. The modes of life proper to the four castes begin to lapse into decay. Duties are no longer the spontaneous laws of human action, but have to be learned. In the age of *Dvāpara Yuga*, only two of the four quarters of *Dhamma* are still effective in the manifest world; the others have been irretrievably lost. *Kali Yuga*, the dark age, miserably subsists on only a quarter of the full strength of *Dhamma* (Zimmer 1963, 13-15). Therefore, it is the king's duty to revive the *Dhamma* to the state of perfection and he is expected to be the beginning of the ages, not the follower of the course of the calendar (Lingat 1962, 14-15). The Laws of Manu connect the acts of kings to the ages:

The king's various forms of behaviour are the Winning Age, the Age of the Trey, the Age of the Deuce and the Losing Age; for the king is said to be the Age, Asleep, he is the Losing Age; awake, the Age of the Deuce; when he is ready to act, the Age of the Trey; and when he is active, the Winning Age (Manu 1991, 229)

This means that the king must be active to reconstitute the new Age (Winning Age) or new history (Kosol 1976, 281), a perfect age to which people return to live with *Dhamma*.

2.1.2 *Cakkavatti*

The *cakkavatti* kingship seems to be the most effective concept in the political thought of the states of South-East Asia. A *cakkavatti* is an ideal king who rules his kingdom with *Dhamma*. His merits and charisma give him the power to be able to rule over all *Jambudīpa* and the other three continents. In the Buddhist concept, the *cakkavatti* is to be born only in *Jambudīpa*. The concept of *cakkavatti* had been developed before Buddhism in India, and goes back at least to the tenth century B.C. (Drekmeier 1962, 203). However, its significance was later emphasised and disseminated by Buddhist commentators, who endeavoured to make the status of the *cakkavatti* equal to the Buddha, on the basis that both are born as a Great Man (*Mahāpurusa*), and are endowed with great human character and the highest merits and perfections (Hocart 1927, 120-22 in Sunetra 1988, 98).

The evidence from the story of the Buddha's Life indicates that the *cakkavatti* was the ultimate desire and honour of all monarchs and was as important as a Buddha. According to the story of the Buddha's Life, after the birth of the *Bodhisattva*, Asita *Rishi* beheld the *Bodhisattva*'s thirty-two marks of a Great Man (*Mahāpurusa*), with which a man has two alternative careers and no other. If he dwells in a house, he will become a king, a universal monarch. But if he goes forth from the house to a homeless life, he will become a *Tathāgata*, loudly proclaimed as a fully enlightened Buddha. (Thomas 1931, 40).

Manipin has pointed out that the Gotama Buddha also realised the significance of the belief in the *cakkavatti*. In his proclamation of the *Dhamma*, the *cakkavatti* concept was incorporated in his teaching and explicitly showed that, he too, was a *cakkavatti*. However, his intention was to conquer the world by *Dhammacakra* or 'the Wheel of the Law or *Dhamma*'. The notion was known by the name of his first sermon to the Five Disciples in Isipatana, since he called the sermon '*Dhammacakkakappavattana Sutta*' or 'the Sermon of the Turning Wheel of the Law or *Dhamma*'. This sermon presents the noble truth of the world (*Ariyasaccadhamma*). The reason for so naming his first

sermon was to present the concept of disseminating the great truth of the world to all *Jambudīpa*. When the teaching was disseminated with this name, it would encourage people to know the *Dhamma*, since they had already familiarized themselves with the story of the *cakkavatti* (Manipin 1987, 10).

According to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, the sixteenth *sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the Buddha himself left instructions for the cremation of his body and the preservation of his relics. Responding to Ānanda's question, 'What should be done, lord, regarding the body of the *Tathāgata*?', the Buddha answered, 'As, Ānanda, they treat the body of a Wheel-Turning King (*cakkavatti*), so should they treat the body of the *Tathāgata*'.³ Rahula, in summing up the doctrinal position in *Theravāda* Buddhism, confirms that:

The Buddha and the *cakkavatti*-emperor are regarded almost equally in the *suttas*. The *Lakkahana-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* maintains that the Buddha and the *cakkavatti* are both endowed with the thirty-two marks of the great man (*Mahāpurusa-lakkhana*). .. They both are 'Thuparaha' (worthy of Monuments). While the Buddha holds sway over the entire spiritual world, the *cakkavatti* is the ideal supreme ruler of the secular world (Rahula 1956, 66 in Tambiah 1976, 96).⁴

The important evidence from the *Cakkavatti Sutta*, *Dīgha Nikāya*, clearly explains that a *cakkavatti* monarch rules his kingdom with kindness and peacefulness. He neither executes any punishment nor uses arms in his governing. Above all, according to his merit, he is the monarch whose kingdom has its boundaries encircled by oceans, and he rules over more than 2,000 satellite continents. (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 832-33; vol. II, 1343-45). Since each of the four major continents has 500 satellite continents, this means that the *cakkavatti* ideally extends his power to rule over all the four major continents.

Traditionally, the *cakkavatti* is portrayed in quite extraordinary terms. Apart from the thirty-two marks of the Great Man (*Mahāpurusa*), he is also endowed with the seven jewels or emblems of sovereignty.⁵ The most important of these is the Jewelled Wheel

³ *Dīgha Nikāya* I, 141, translated by Trainor (1997, 49).

⁴ See the detailed discussion of the two notions in F. Reynolds (1972).

⁵ The Seven Treasures of a *Cakkavatti* are: the Jewelled Wheel (*cakkaratana*), the Elephant (*Hatthiratana*), the Horse (*Assaratana*), the Gem-Jewel (*Veluriya*) from Vepullapabbata Mountain, the Woman (*Itthiratana*), the Treasurer (*Gahapati*), and the Advisor (*Parināyaka*) (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. II, 1343-44).

(*cakkaratana*), which leads the *cakkavatti* in a great cosmic conquest of the Four Continents. He encounters no resistance because the power of his *Dhamma*, symbolized by his wheel, is such that local kings immediately submit to him (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 62-64, in Strong 1983, 46).

It is also recognized, however, that the *cakkavatti* king is not completely a phenomenon of the ideal; on the contrary, it is expected that a *cakkavatti* king will appear once again to re-establish a society ordered in accordance with *Dhamma*. Particularly in the later tradition, the appearance of such a figure who will re-establish proper order and harmony in the world becomes an important element in the Buddhist tradition. The *cakkavatti* concept exerts a strong influence on religious attitudes and also has a significant impact on political affairs (F. Reynolds 1972, 20). Nevertheless, the contradiction between the ideal Buddhist *cakkavatti* and historical monarchs always occurred in the history of South-East Asian states. Violent attacks upon neighbouring states usually happened while they claimed their invasions as the career of the *cakkavatti*. Tambiah described the historic *cakkavatti*:

Historic *cakkavatti* kings also defended their attacks on neighbouring kings as acts of *dhamma-vijaya*, the Asokan concept of non-violent conquest by *dhamma*, which they reinterpreted as acts of warlike conquest to defend and preserve Buddhism. Aniruddha of Pagan justified his famous attack on Thaton as *dhamma-vijaya* (Tambiah 1978a, 806-807, n.18).

Sunetra points out the fact that the war between the Burmese and the Siamese throughout their histories was inspired by the concept of *cakkavatti*. The Burmese always invaded and attacked Ayutthaya and Bangkok, because the kings of Burma aimed to prove that they too were *cakkavatti*, since the Chaophraya basin was conceptually under their *cakkavatti* sovereignty. Thus, any Burmese king who claimed that he was a *cakkavatti* had to conquer Siam. Simultaneously, the Siamese kings, from both the Ayutthaya and Bangkok periods, also extended their political powers to the east over the kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia, in order to prove they had the power of a *cakkavatti* (Sunetra 1988, 101-107). King Taksin, who re-united the Siamese Kingdom after Ayutthaya was destroyed in 1767 by the Burmese, campaigned into Lanna, Lao, western Cambodia and some provinces of the Malay Peninsula, to conquer them as his tributary states. Wyatt states that it was the Buddhist ideal of the *cakkavatti* that was behind these actions and events (Wyatt 1982,

14). King Taksin expressed in a letter to the ruler of Vientiane in 1775 that:

The power of His Majesty (*King Taksin*) is compounded of Knowledge, Wisdom, and Equanimity. He has the Jewelled Disk and the Jewelled Sword of the Great King of *Jambudvīpa*. He is intent upon becoming greater than the king of Ava (*of Burma*) and this is not beyond his reach.⁶

Strong (1983, 50-51) indicates that the *Mahāsammata* is the model of kingship that is based on the reality of human society. He was selected to be king because of the disorder and the imperfections of the time. His rule was distinct from the peace of the golden age of the *cakkavatti*. The *Mahāsammata*, although he was an important figure, lacked the prestige and aura that surrounds the *cakkavatti*. What was needed in this sense was a combination of the two figures: a *cakkavatti* who could rule an imperfect world of the *Mahāsammata*. Therefore, as Strong points out, it is not necessary that a *cakkavatti* has to avoid violent wars, particularly when he wants to expand his political power (Strong 1983, 51). The concept of *cakkavatti* kingship of the ideal world became adapted to the imperfect conditions that conflict, violence, and fighting are common in human society. In *Abhidhammakosa* (dated fifth century), Vasubandhu clearly states that there are four kinds of *cakkavatti*: the ideal model is the *cakkavatti* with Golden Wheel (*Suvarnacakravartin*) who rules all four continents: *Uttarakuru* in the north, *Pabbavideha* in the east, *Jambudīpa* in the south, and *Aparagoyāna* in the west. Then there is the Silver-Wheel *Cakkavatti* (*Rūpyacakravartin*) who rules three continents (all of the above except *Uttarakuru*). The Copper-Wheel *Cakkavatti*'s (*Tāmracakravartin*) sovereignty extends to two continents (*Jambudīpa* and *Pabbavideha*); and the Iron-Wheel *Cakkavatti* (*Ayascakravartin*) rules only *Jambudīpa* (La Vallée Poussin (trans) 1931, 197 in Strong 1983, 51-52). All these four kinds of *cakkavatti* achieve their conquests in different ways. The Golden-Wheel *Cakkavatti*, because of his great merit and charisma, causes all the minor kings to submit to him spontaneously. The Silver-Wheel *Cakkavatti*'s victory comes after some sort of encounter. The Copper-Wheeled king is 'victorious after a quarrelsome confrontation'. Finally, the Iron-Wheeled *Cakkavatti* is 'victorious by means of the sword' (Strong 1983, 51-52). As a result, the level of achieving the *cakkavatti* kingship includes the ranks from the ideal concept to the level of achieving by war.

⁶ The letter of King Taksin to King Siribunyasān of Vientiane, January 1775, in King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchawichan nai chotmai khwam sonsācham khong phrachao paiyikathoe Krommaluang Narinthewi* [Commentary on the Memoirs of Princess Narinthewi], Bangkok 1908, Appendix p. 16; translation by Gesick (1976, 98), cited in Wyatt (1982, 14).

It is interesting that King Asoka is called '*caturbhaga-cakravartin*' in *Asokāvadāna* or the Legend of King Asoka, that is, a 'ruler over one of the four continents', or alternatively, a '*balacakravartin*', a term which should be translated as 'armed *cakravartin*' or '*cakravartin* who has to use or threaten physical force to become the ruler of his cosmos' (Strong 1983, 50). As a result, to expand their political powers by military force, the kings of South-East Asian Buddhist states claimed that their campaigns were the act of a *cakkavatti* similar to Asoka. The weaker states always admitted the power of the stronger by presenting themselves as tributary states, and we may note that the more tributary states the king had, the more his kingship equalled the *cakkavatti*. On the other hand, these were evidence that he possessed great merit. Nevertheless, his merit is the prior condition that supports one to be king, of which the *cakkavatti* is the highest achievement.

Apart from righteousness or *Dhamma*, merit is believed to be another factor toward the successful government of the kingdom. In the concept of merit, its advantage is supposed to lie in the fact that it either gives a more happy or comfortable life in the future, or, more importantly, a life which is more abundant in spiritual opportunities and spiritual achievements. To be reborn in a better world could be regarded as either a good thing in itself, or as a means of obtaining more favourable conditions for attaining enlightenment in a future life (Conze 1951, 79).

In traditional Siam, the king was conceived of as being the supreme rank of the realm 'to be filled by the person with the greatest past merit' (Keyes 1973, 97). It was the meritorious component to his kammic legacy that created the right to occupy the throne. Above all, it was also believed that the prosperity of the state during a man's reign was dependent upon the degree to which he possessed a 'merit' which could be shared with his subjects (Keyes 1973, 98). The *Traiphum* text of King Lithai describes the link between merit and *cakkavatti*:

Those who have merit in their previous lives, that is those who have given service to the splendid Three Gems and venerated them; those who have known the virtues of the Lord Buddha, the Holy *Dhamma*, and the Holy *Sangha*; and those who have given alms, kept the precepts, and practised the meditation concerning loving kindness, when they die, take their rebirth in heaven. But sometimes the result is that they are born to be great rulers and kings who have splendour and majesty, who have a great and infinite number of attendants, and whose conquest extends over the entire universe. Any or all words or

orders that such a person says or utters, or anything he enforces, is generally in accordance with the *Dhamma*. This person is one who is called a great *cakkavatti* king (Lithai 1983, 49; Trans. By Reynolds and Reynolds (trans.)1982, 135-36).

Gesick explains the relationship between merit and a king as follows:

A king constantly felt the need to demonstrate that he did indeed possess sufficient merit to be a king and to ensure the well-being of his kingdom. Hence, in part, the lavish piety of Buddhist kings. By repeatedly performing acts to which merit accrued, a king not only improved his merit balance but implied that he too was a *dhammarājā*, an exemplary king who ruled by the *dhamma*, and, therefore, one who was rightfully king through his merit. Hence also, the extreme expansionism of Buddhist kingship. The submission of tributaries was thought to be a direct reflection of a king's superior merit. The inference was that the more tributaries a king had, the more merit he must possess (Gesick 1983, 90).

2.1.3 *Bodhisattva*

In the context of the Legend of King Asoka (*Asokāvadāna*), there is no claim that Asoka actually is the Buddha (Strong 1983, 132), and he never once referred to himself in the inscriptions as a *bodhisattva* (Tambiah 1976, 73). However, the later developments in South-East Asia reflect the influence of both the *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and the Hindu tradition, where Buddhist kings were commonly viewed as deities, *bodhisattva* or Buddha (Strong 1983, 132).

One who has achieved the state of *Arahanta* has experienced his last birth. Upon dying he will no longer be reborn, but will pass into extinction. However, he may renounce immediate *Nibbāna* by virtue of a vow (*panidhāna*) to himself to become a Buddha, and from that moment he becomes a *bodhisattva* (Kletzli 1989, 84). In *Theravāda* tradition, the only *bodhisattva* who is recognized is the Buddha (or *Bodhisattva*) Metteyya, the Buddha-to-come. The expectations of his coming have played a major role in the social and political ethos of *Theravāda* communities. The aspirations of kings in both Ceylon and Burma were to become the *Bodhisattva* Metteyya in their next life (Smith 1972, 56).

It was a concept of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism that a king was also thought of as a potential *bodhisattva*, that is, he was seen as one who had temporarily given up striving to

achieve *Nibbāna* so that he might serve his fellow men in their quest for religious and material satisfaction in this worldly life. Aung-Thwin has pointed out that when the king shared this abundant store of merit with his subjects, the latter's chances for salvation by a better rebirth were significantly enhanced. In effect, then, the king was like a personal saviour, resembling the compassionate Mahāyānist *bodhisattva*. Intrinsically, the king was also a future Buddha, for Gotama had been a prince of a royal family prior to enlightenment (Aung-Thwin 1983, 57-58)

Buddhism believes that the target of life is *Nibbāna*. The present life is only the path to pass from one state to salvation, or *Nibbāna*. Therefore, in each life of a human being he should accumulate his merit to further his path to *Nibbāna* in the future. As a supporter of Buddhism, a king's duty was to lead people to live with *Dhamma* and accumulate their merit from the tendencies of the past in order not to be finally in the nether world. The state, in this sense, is a means towards *Nibbāna* and the king acts like a *bodhisattva* who leads people into bliss. From this point of view, Nithi indicates that even though Buddhist political theory is based on the notion that the state was the result of the decline in human's morals, the states of South-East Asia adopted the idea that the states were the course of revival of morals (Nithi 1980, 53). The *bodhisattva* notion was therefore another kingship that paralleled the *cakkavatti*. Tambiah concludes that:

similarly, the Buddhist conception of kingship as understood in Sukhothai and Ayutthayan times, and later into the nineteenth century Siam can be stated in terms of the simple equation: *Cakkavatti* (universal emperor) is equal to *Bodhisattva* (Buddha-to-be) (Tambiah 1976, 96).

2.1.4 The Asokan Paradigm

In the legitimation of power in South-East Asian Buddhist states, in their long histories, some historical monarchs were always referred to as legitimacy models. However, the account of King Asoka (dated around 238 or 232 B.C.) is the most ideal. He was a king of Magadha (Modern north-east India), the son of Bindusāra. Asoka was converted six or nine years after his coronation, which itself occurred 218 years after the Buddha's *parinibbāna* (Boisselier 1994, 120). The *Mahāvamsa* text contains various stories of his miraculous powers, for example that he was able to command the spread of a *yojana* into the air and a *yojana* under the earth. *Devas* supplied him daily with water

from the *Anotatta* Lake and with other luxuries from elsewhere (Geiger 1912, 28; Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 217). For later commentators to classify Asoka as a *cakkavatti* was a turning point and the primary attempt to relate the ideal *cakkavatti* to the real historical monarch. Thus, the acts of Asoka, and their consequences for South-East Asian rulers, were perceived as providing the possibility for others to follow in his footsteps in order to proclaim their acts as a *cakkavatti* (like Asoka) (Sunetra 1983, 99). He is called a '*dīpacakkavattī*' (the universal monarch of *Jambudīpa* Continent), not the ruler of all four continents (Strong 1983, 51-56 in Sunetra 1983, 99).

The legends which grew up around the person of Asoka provided a new, more fully developed model of the ideal Buddhist king. In all of the various sectarian traditions Asoka came to be pictured as a *Dhammarājā*, a righteous ruler or *Cakkavatti* monarch who, in addition, was a devoted Buddhist layman (F. Reynolds 1972, 29). The account of Asoka's support for Buddhism is known from both textual sources and archaeological remains. The *Asokāvadāna*, a legendary account of Asoka dating to around the second century A.D., and its translations enjoyed great popularity in central Asia, China, Japan, Korea, Tibet and South-East Asia (Strong 1983, 19-37 in Trainor 1997, 39-40). After Asoka was converted to Buddhism by an *Arahanta* named Samudra, he was informed about the Buddha's prediction that he would distribute the Buddha's relics far and wide, and built 84,000 *stūpas* to enshrine them. He collected the relics from seven of the eight original *stūpas* that were built, according to early tradition, over the cremated remains of the Buddha, and contrived to build the 84,000 *stūpas* in a single day. As a result of this act he became known as 'Asoka the Righteous' (Strong 1983, 217-219 in Trainor 1997, 40-41). The tradition of Asoka and the 84,000 *stūpas* is paralleled in a number of *Pāli* sources. The *Dīpavamsa*, dating from around the fourth to fifth centuries A.D., tells that Asoka built 84,000 monasteries (*ārāmas*) throughout 84,000 towns in honour of the 84,000 sections of the *Dhamma*.⁷

And finally, in the *Theravāda* versions, the tradition also includes an account of Asoka's convening of the Third Buddhist Council held by Moggaliputta-tissa. This, it is reported, confirmed the orthodox canon and its interpretation and described the actions which Asoka took to enforce its decisions. He also sent forth *theras* (elder monks) to propagate the Buddha's religion. Eliot has indicated that Asoka had a decisive effect

⁷ The *Dīpavamsa: An Ancient Buddhist Historical Record*, ed. and trans. By Hermann Oldenberg. London, 1879. Reprint, New Delhi : Asian Educational Services, 1982, 6.95-96, cited in Trainor (1997, 41).

on the history of Buddhism, especially in making it a world religion. This was not the accidental result of his action in establishing it in north-west India and Ceylon, for he was clearly dominated by the thought that the *Dhamma* must spread over the whole world and, as understood to date, he was the first to have that thought in a practical form (Eliot 1921 Vol. I, 271-72). In his sacred biography, then, Asoka is presented as a *Dhammarājā* or *cakkavatti* monarch whose devotion to the Triple Gems, the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha*, was complete and effective. (F. Reynolds 1972, 29).

As Asoka was not the crown prince, there was a struggle among the princes for the throne (Thapar 1961, 25). The *Mahāvamsa* states that Asoka caused his eldest brother to be slain and having killed his ninety-nine brothers, born of various wives to Bindusāra (Geiger 1912, 27). With this account, Tambiah thus indicates that the need to kill before becoming a great king who can then rule righteously is a root Buddhist dilemma, to which Asoka is the first Buddhist king to give a historical incarnation, which was then followed by other rulers, Sinhalese, Siamese, and Burmese (Tambiah 1976, 56). The Asokan mythology was well entrenched in South-East Asia, particularly the formula that the king was the patron and protector of Buddhism, that he must of necessity be a Buddhist himself, and that such a king was an embodiment of *Dhamma* (Tambiah 1976, 520).

2.2 THE NOTION OF THE DIVINE

Deva (divine) is used to connote moral superiority rather than omnipotent divinity. It means 'resplendent' or 'awe-inspiring' and was applied to that which possessed more than ordinary power (Drekmeier 1962, 251). A king is also regarded as a Conventional Divine (*Sammutideva*) (Lithai 1983, 98). However, the functions of the king, and not the king himself, are usually equated with the gods. The claim to god-like qualities comes from kingship, rather than kingship from divinity (Drekmeier 1962, 251).⁸ However, the important thing is the extent of divinity claimed for the king in relation to other men. Very rarely has divinity been claimed in complete and absolute terms for any human being (Spellman 1964, 27).

⁸ See the discussion of gradations of divine kingship in ancient India based on both Hindu and Buddhist concepts in Spellman (1964, 28-42).

In early India, it was the royal consecration (*Rājasūya*) that imbued the king with divine power. The *Rājasūya* in its full performance comprised a series of sacrifices lasting for over a year. The magical power which pervaded the king at his consecration was restored and strengthened in the course of his reign by other ceremonials, which not only ministered to his ambition and arrogance but also ensured the prosperity and fertility of the kingdom. The court Brahmanistic rituals were implicitly the idea of the king's divine appointment, and although the *Rājasūya* was later replaced by a simplified *Abhiseka*, or baptism, the ceremony still had this magical flavour (Basham 1954, 81-82). Drekmeier indicates that the need to strengthen the power of the king in any crisis situation was manifested in several activities. The king was declared to be an aspect of Vishnu, to whom the god had granted his own lustre. This claim of the divinity of kings is associated with a period in which power was becoming increasingly decentralized, a time marked by the appearance of divisive forces (Drekmeier 1962, 252).

Gonda has pointed out that the king in Ceylon, like the ruler in other ancient Indian and South-East Asian kingdoms, was regarded as a divine person (*deva*) and at times as a future Buddha, a *bodhisattva*. Thus the king, the Buddha and the gods formed a religious community which merged in the person of the king himself to a lesser or greater degree. Therefore the king has at certain times been called a *deva*, not necessarily in the sense of 'God', but as 'one of a class of powerful beings, regarded as possessing supernormal faculties and as controlling a department of nature or activity in the human sphere' (Gonda 1966, 24 in Evers 1972, 13). Evers even states that the royal palace in Kandy represented a third 'religious' system separate from the *vihāra* (Buddhist monastery) and the *dēvāle* (temple for god) (Evers 1972, 13).

In the Siamese Kingdom of Ayutthaya, the religio-political ideology, the concept of kingship, the administration, and political institutions were influenced by the interwoven traditions of Khmer and Mon, of Hinduism and Buddhism working in combination. From Khmer-Hindu tradition, Ayutthaya inherited its concept of divine kingship (Somboon 1993, 115; Tambiah 1976, 89). The Hindu tradition manifested itself in the form of royal ceremonies such as rituals associated with the oath of allegiance and the coronation. In addition, Wales points that the Siamese practice of *Rājābhiseka* (royal coronation) contains many ideas derived from the Indian *Rājasūya*. There was also another ceremony for the consecration known as the '*Indrābhiseka*', or anointing with the rites

of Indra; of which (although the ceremony with which they connect it seems to have little in common with that of Vedic times in India) the Siamese have preserved the ancient name and its implication of the Indian tradition (Wales 1931, 121). In this ceremony, the king is identified with the God Indra.⁹

2.2.1 Sakka or Indra

'Indra' in *Pāli* literature is usually referred to as 'Sakka', but the name 'Indra' is more familiar to laities in Thai society. Indra is the Lord of *Tāvātimsa* heaven, and a direct commander of the Four Great Guardian Kings (*Cātumahārājika*). The significance of Indra in Buddhist kingship derives from his position as ideal ruler in mythology, his ability to maintain his kingdom in order and peace, as well as his leadership of the *Tāvātimsa* military fighting against the *Asuras*. Many *Jātakas* and commentaries represent the God Indra as the protector of *Dhamma* and Buddhism (Udom 1980, 75-87). For example, in the story of the Buddha's Life when the *Bodhisattva* was sitting on the throne and attaining Enlightenment, *Māra*, by his power, attempted to stop the *Bodhisattva* from achieving the buddhahood. That terrible moment drove away all deities and beings, but it was Indra who blew his conch-trumpet, *Vijayuttara*, to proclaim the victory of the Buddha. Also, when King Dutthagāmani- Abhaya (King of Ceylon 101-77 B.C.) wanted bricks to build the Great *Stūpa* (Mahāthūpa), Indra commanded Vissakamma to prepare the bricks for him to construct the *Stūpa* (Geiger 1912, 187). When the Buddha's relics were enshrined in the relic chamber of the *Stūpa*, Indra appointed Vissakamma to adorn the Lanka island and gave a reliquary and its pedestal to install the Buddha's relic (Geiger 1912, 211-12).

One piece of textual evidence of Thai Buddhism clearly suggests the role of Indra as a Buddhist protecting god. The early nineteenth century *Traiphum* (Three Worlds Cosmology) text, *Traiphumlōkawinitchai*, states that on the full moon day in the eighth lunar month, the day before the beginning of the rains-retreat (*Vassūpanāyikādivasa*), Indra and the Four Great Guardian Kings order *dēvas* under their commands to come down to earth to protect monks who are in their retreats (*Vassa* residence) from

⁹ See the details of the *Indrābhiseka* in Wales (1931, 121-123).

danger. If it is the *Mahāpavāra* of the full moon day in the eleventh lunar month,¹⁰ Indra himself comes down to the human world to *Jambudīpa*, to protect monks in monasteries who are in the *pavāra* ceremony (Thampricha 1992, 965-66). Indra's services to the Buddha and his disciples, to be the *Dhamma* protector and kind to the disadvantaged, make him the ideal ruler of all Buddhists (Udom 1980, 84-85). As Indra ruled and maintained the order of *Dhamma* in his domain, so the king was to rule and maintain the order of *Dhamma* in his earthly kingdom (F. Reynolds 1978b, 101).

The Indra mythology also indicates his righteous power and his unconquered kingdom. When he was born with his followers in the *Tāvātimsa*, at the top of the *Meru* Mountain, the *Asuras* who resided there prepared a drink called 'Gandpāna'. Indra warned his companions not to drink it, but the *Asuras* became drunk. He considered that they were so remiss they did not deserve to reside in *Tāvātimsa*, and they were thrown down from *Meru*. However, due to the good deeds (*kusala*) of the *Asuras*, there existed an *Asuras* city on the lowest level of Mount *Meru*, equal in extent to *Tāvātimsa* (Thampricha 1992, 1003-04). When the flowers of the *cittapātālī* tree (Thai- *Khaefoi*) blossomed, which reminded them that they were no longer in the *deva*-world, the *Asuras* wished to regain the *Tāvātimsa*, and the battle between the *Asuras* and Indra's militaries occurred. However, they would never be able to capture the city of *Tāvātimsa*, and Indra too would never be able to capture the *Asura*'s realm. Their cities, therefore, are named '*Ayujjhapurī rājadhānī*' (Unconquered Royal City) (Thampricha 1992, 1005-10). The Siamese capital city of Bangkok, which was built in 1786 by King Rama I, was also named '*Krung rattana kosin inthara ayothaya*' (The unconquered Jewelled City of Indra) (Wannarat 1978, 428-29). Also, the Grand Palace of the city of Mandalay of Burma was designed to identify with the *Tāvātimsa* Heaven (Aung-Thwin 1987, 94-97).

2.2.2 Rāma

Another prominent figure in the concept of kingship in South-East Asian history who coexisted with Indra was Rāma. In the *Rāmāyana* epic, Rāma is the incarnation of Vishnu, a principal Hindu god. Even the legend of the Sakyas, the clan of the Buddha,

¹⁰ The *Mahāpavāra* is the day the ecclesiastical ceremony at the end of the rains retreat, in which monks invite one another to speak of any offences or unbecoming behaviour they have seen, heard or suspected to have been committed during the rains (Prayuddha 1985, 390).

corresponds with the story of *Rāmāyana* and a *Jātaka* named *Dasaratha Jātaka*, the story of the *Bodhisattva* named Rāma (Thomas 1931, 10-12). This indicates that the story of Rāma had been widely known prior to the time of the Buddha. In the *Jātaka*, King Dasaratha of Benares has three children, Rāma, Lakkhana, and a daughter, Sītā. The queen dies, and his next queen obtains for her son Bharata the boon that he shall succeed to the kingdom. The king, fearing her jealousy, banishes Lakkhana and Rāma, and Sītā chooses to accompany them. They go to the *Himavanta* Forest for twelve years, as the soothsayers tell the king that he has this long to live. But at the end of nine years he dies of grief, and Bharata goes to fetch his brothers back. Rāma refuses to return until the end of the prescribed twelve years, and for the remaining three years his sandals rule the kingdom, after which he returns as king and makes Sītā his queen (Thomas 1931, 11-12). The similarity in the *Rāmāyana*, the *Jātaka* and Thai *Ramakian* epics is the extolling of the high morality and leadership of Rāma.¹¹ However, Rāma in the general sense that connects to kingship refers to the incarnation or *Avatāra* of Vishnu, whose descent is to bring peace to the human world. Since it is of Hindu origin, the claim to be Rāma in *Theravāda* Buddhist states of South-East Asia, has therefore been found less often than the Indra concept. In the later Buddhist text, *Sotthattakī Mahānidāna*, the name of Rāma is given as the future Buddha following Metteyya.¹²

The *avatar*, such as Rāma or Vishnu, appeared when *Dhamma* had become weak. His mission was to restore the law (Drekmeier 1962, 253). Once, in his inscription, Kyanzittha, the king of Pagan (1084-1112 A.D.), claimed that one of his past lives was as Rāma, king of Ayojha (Oudh) (Aung-thwin 1983, 58). Jagatipāla, king of Ceylon (1047-1051 A.D.), came from Ayojha and claimed that he was descended from the race of Rāma (Malalasekera 1960, Vol.1, 930). It is interesting to note that the first king of the Ayutthaya Kingdom, King Ramadhipati I who established the kingdom in 1350, and King Rama I who re-established the Siamese Kingdom in Bangkok in 1782 after the fall of Ayutthaya, both have their royal names on the gold plates as 'Ramadhipati'

¹¹ See the discussion of the *Rāmāyana*, *Dasaratha Jātaka* and the legend of the Sakyas in Thomas (1931, 1-13).

¹² The following is the list of the *Bodhisattvas* who will become Buddhas in the future: 1 Metteyya; 2 Uttama Rāma; 3 Pasendikosala; 4 Abhibhū; 5 Dīghasonī; 6 Cankī; 7 Subha; 8 Todeyya; 9 Nālāgiri; 10 Pālileyyo. The text appears as the reference in the compilation of the fourteenth century *Traiphum* text of King Lithai of Sukhothai (see Lithai 1983, 156). Some of the inscriptions of Sukhothai indicate the ten *Bodhisattvas* generally known at that time. See the discussion about the text in Sailer (1983, 10-15).

(Rama the Great). Their establishment of the Kingdoms apparently parallels the restoration of the *Dhamma* as the *Avatāra* of Rāma.

The icon of Vishnu riding on *Garuda* and the *Ramakian* epic are always found depicted on structures of the royal Thai Buddhist architecture. Their significance in the iconographic planning of the royal *wats* will be discussed in later chapters.

2.3 TRAI PHUM (THREE WORLDS) COSMOLOGY

The purpose of Buddhist doctrine is to release beings from suffering, and speculations concerning the origin of the universe are held to be immaterial to that task. They are not merely a waste of time but they may also postpone deliverance from suffering by engendering ill-will in oneself and in others. In Buddhists' views on the structure and evolution of the universe, they were content to borrow from the traditions of contemporary Hinduism, which are largely mythological. The immensity of time and space in Indian cosmology had been created, however, not through marvellous discoveries and clear demonstrations, but through the intuition of their cosmic imagination (Conze 1951, 49).

Myths and cosmologies are found in the *Pāli* canon; the *Vinaya* and *Sutta Pitaka* have many references to supernatural beings and occurrences, in which the structure of the pantheon and the framework of the cosmology are clearly perceived (Tambiah 1975, 33). However, the cosmology of *Theravāda* Buddhism is fully evolved only in commentaries on the *Pāli* Canon and in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, written in about 400 A.D. A similar but rather more elaborate cosmology is to be found in the third chapter of Vasubandhu's *Abhidhamakośa* (fifth century). But the remarkable features of both are present gradually in the Canon, and have merely been systematised by commentators (Gombrich 1975, 132-33).

2.3.1 The *Traiphum* Text

Coedès has pointed out that the *Traibhūmikathā* (the Story of the Three worlds), compiled by King Lithai of Sukhothai appears to have been the first systematic treatise on Buddhist cosmology (Coedès 1957, 351). It was reputedly first compiled in Siamese prose from the *Pāli* canon and commentaries in 1345 A.D. The text is generally known

under the name *Traiphum of Phra Ruang* (Three-Worlds Cosmology of King *Ruang*).¹³ The earliest extant recension of the complete text dates from 1778 but refers to 1345 as the date of the original compilation (C. Reynolds 1976, 207). However, there is external evidence which mentions some of the content of the *Traiphum*, for instance the inscription in 1393 A.D. of King Mahādhamarājā II, Lithai's son and successor.¹⁴ C. Reynolds also points out that one of the reasons that Buddhist cosmology fitted so well into mainland South-East Asian societies is that it includes a place for the creatures of animism (C. Reynolds 1976, 207).

The essential content of *Traiphum* is the underlining of the truth of rebirth, the impermanent (*Aniccatā*) state of all existence. It describes the Buddhist cosmology and the relationship between merit and power. It ranks all beings from demons to deities in a hierarchy of merit, which accrues according to *kamma* - the physical, cognitive, and verbal actions of past lives (C. Reynolds 1976, 204). In Buddhist ideology, all beings, even those in heavenly worlds, are impermanent. They do not exist perpetually, but are reborn in circles of lives. Any level of *Traiphum* is not the goal of the Buddhist concept of meditation. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is to achieve *Nibbāna*, the realm that is beyond the Three-worlds (Prayuddha 1986, 16-17).

Coedès indicates that the *Traiphum* of King Lithai is a moral dissertation, and that the work was intended for the edification of his subjects. The instructional sermon-like style of the *Traiphum* reflects the concept of the universal monarch or *cakkavatti*, which is the topic most emphasised in the text. The most characteristic piece is undoubtedly the long sermon preached by the *cakkavatti* to his vassals, who are gathered together to pay him homage. This sermon, which is the centre of the text, is not only a short treatise on morals but also a veritable picture of the government of a monarchy conforming to the Buddhist ideal (Coedès 1957, 352).

Sombat and Chai-anan suggest that by the association of the monarch with the Buddha, Lithai attempted to lend religious authority and legitimacy to his rule. They

¹³ The text *Traiphum phra ruang* (Lithai 1983) was translated into French by Coedès and Archaimbault (1973); and into English by Reynolds and Reynolds (trans.) (1982). Another English version is the translation of the Thai National Team. See Lithai (1985).

¹⁴ A.B. Griswold and Prasert Na Nagara, 'The Pact Between Sukhodaya and Nan, Epigraphic and Historical Studies No. 3, *Journal of the Siam Society*, LVII, 1 (Jan 1969), 87-89, cited in C. Reynolds (1976, 208).

note that the socio-political aspects of the *Traiphum* imply a close relationship between being a person who knows the *Dhamma* and being a political administrator in the traditional Thai political order (Sombat and Chai-anan 1980, 100 in Jackson 1993, 71). The *Traiphum* had been the core of Siamese belief throughout both the Ayutthaya and early Bangkok periods. Although the complete manuscript of the *Traiphum* text of Ayutthaya has not been found, a fragment remains of the illustrated copy,¹⁵ and the mural paintings of the *Traiphum* cosmography in some Buddhist monasteries of Ayutthaya provide further evidence. King Taksin, who reassembled the Siamese Kingdom after the fall of Ayutthaya and founded a new capital at Thonburi, commissioned a new illustrated copy¹⁶ of the *Traiphum* in 1776 and a more extensive copy without illustrations in 1778 (C. Reynolds 1976, 209).

In 1782, King Rama I founded a new dynasty and moved the capital to the east bank of the Chao Phraya River. He ordered a group of scribes and monks, under the supervision of the supreme patriarch, to compile an edition of the *Traiphum* (Thampricha 1992, 2). However, when he reviewed the resulting text some nineteen years later in 1802, he found it to be inconsistent and stylistically uneven, and ordered that it be rewritten. The resulting revised text is known by the title '*Trailokawinitchal*'.¹⁷

C. Reynolds has pointed out the importance of the *Traiphum* of both Lithai and Rama I, who sought to recover the losses of a predecessor and to reassemble a poly-ethnic state. Both of them, at least, were kings who manifested a special interest in the *Traiphum* and in restoring territories to their kingdoms (C. Reynolds 1976, 210). It is interesting to note that in some manuscripts of the illustrated version of the *Traiphum*, they concisely portray the Siamese provinces, the holy places of the Buddha, and even the stories of the past lives of the Buddha from the *Jātakas*.¹⁸ The account of the provinces of the kingdom in such detail is not found in the descriptive versions. These

¹⁵ See for example the *Traiphum* illustrated version, Ayutthaya period No 6. in The National Library, Bangkok.

¹⁶ Known as The *Traiphum* manuscript painting of the Thonburi royal version, No. 10, in the National Library, Bangkok.

¹⁷ The text is mentioned in the manuscript as *Trailokawinitchal* for the first version (Niyada 1996, 16-17), and as *Traiphumkatha* in the second revision by Phraya Thampricha (Thampricha 1992, 2-3). However, it is listed in the publication of the Fine Arts Department as *Traiphumlakawinitchaya katha*, which is generally known by the name *Traiphumlakawinitchal*.

¹⁸ See for instance the Ayutthaya Version No. 6 and the Khmer Version No. 1 (FAD 1987) in the National Library, Bangkok.

illustrated manuscripts of the *Traibhum* are interpretations of the concept of Buddhist cosmography and the kingdom in which all matters are put together within a single universe or *cakkavāla*.

These versions of the *Traibhum*, in addition, not only convey the notion of spiritualisation of the kingdom, but also reflect the political intention of the reign which produced them. For example, Lithai gives a central place to the notion of the *cakkavatti* or universal monarch in the *Traibhum* (Lithai 1983, 60; Jackson 1993, 71); whereas Rama I's version is more a collection of the issues from the *Pāli* canon and its commentaries, which puts all details into a bulk volume of more than 1,000 printed pages; the human world is presented as the most emphasised issue. As Sulak explains, the *Traiphum* is the most important Buddhist text of Thai society, and it is the manifesto of political ideology through which both Buddhism and Brahmanism are integrated into one (Sulak 1982, 310).

2.3.2 The Structure of the *Traibhum* Cosmography

The *Traiphum* describes the known world, encompassing all modes of existence which are divided into the major 'Three worlds' of thirty-one realms. It has many facets: firstly, it gives a picture of the universe in terms of space, time and matter; secondly, it translates this physical universe into a pantheon of *devas*, humans, animals, and demons to which can be attributed ethical and moral qualities; and finally, the cosmology gives a dynamic picture of the nature, workings and purpose of the universe in terms of the motion of the personifications in the pantheon, this motion up and down being conceived in terms of ethical and spiritual force and energy (Tambiah 1975, 34). Different actions of beings have specific moral consequences which in turn lead to re-birth in one of these thirty-one realms in accordance with the Law of *Kamma* promulgated by the Buddha.

According to Buddhist cosmology there are innumerable world systems (*cakkavālas*). These world systems are periodically destroyed and re-formed in cycles of vast stretches of time (*kappa*). A single world system (a *cakkavāla*), imaginably comprises three major worlds: *Kāmahūmi* (the Realm of Desire), *Rūpabhūmi* (the Realm of Form) and *Arūpabhūmi* (the Realm of the Formless). They form the core of the universe vertically and consist of thirty-one planes of existence (Fig. 2.1).

The *kāmahūmi* is divided into eleven planes. Six are heavens inhabited by *devas*, and the other five are: the worlds of human beings, animals, *Peta* (hungry ghosts), *Asura* (non-gods) and hell. The Realm of Hell consists of eight major (and other subsidiary) hells, situated in the interior of the earth (Lithai 1983, 3, 8-10).

At the centre of a universe stands Mount *Meru* (*Sineru* or *Sumeru* in *Pāli*). On its peak is *Tāvātimsa*, heaven of the God Indra or Sakka. Above the *Tāvātimsa* there are four other heavenly planes of *Kāmahūmi*: *Yāmā*, *Tusita*, *Nimanarati*, and *Paranimmitvasavati*. Below the *Tāvātimsa* is the kingdom of the Four Great Guardian Kings or *Cātumahārājika* (Fig. 4.12). They are the rulers of the cardinal directions and the first beings who regularly receive the name of '*deva*' and are classed as such (La Vallée Poussin 1911a, 134). The palaces of these Four Great Guardian Kings are situated on top of *Yugandhara* peak, the innermost ring of the mountains that encircle Mount *Meru*. The palace to the east is that of *Dhatarattha*, the king of *Gandhabba* (heavenly musician) who guards the eastern domain. To the south is the palace of *Virūhaka*, the king of *Kumbhanda*.¹⁹ They guard the southern division of the world. *Virūpakkha* is the king of *Nāga*, and rules the west domain. The north palace is that of *Vessarana* (or *Kuvera*), who rule over *Yakkha* (demons) (Thampricha 1992, 915-19).

¹⁹ The *Kumbhanda* has a huge stomach, and his genital organs are as big as a pot, hence his name (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 638).

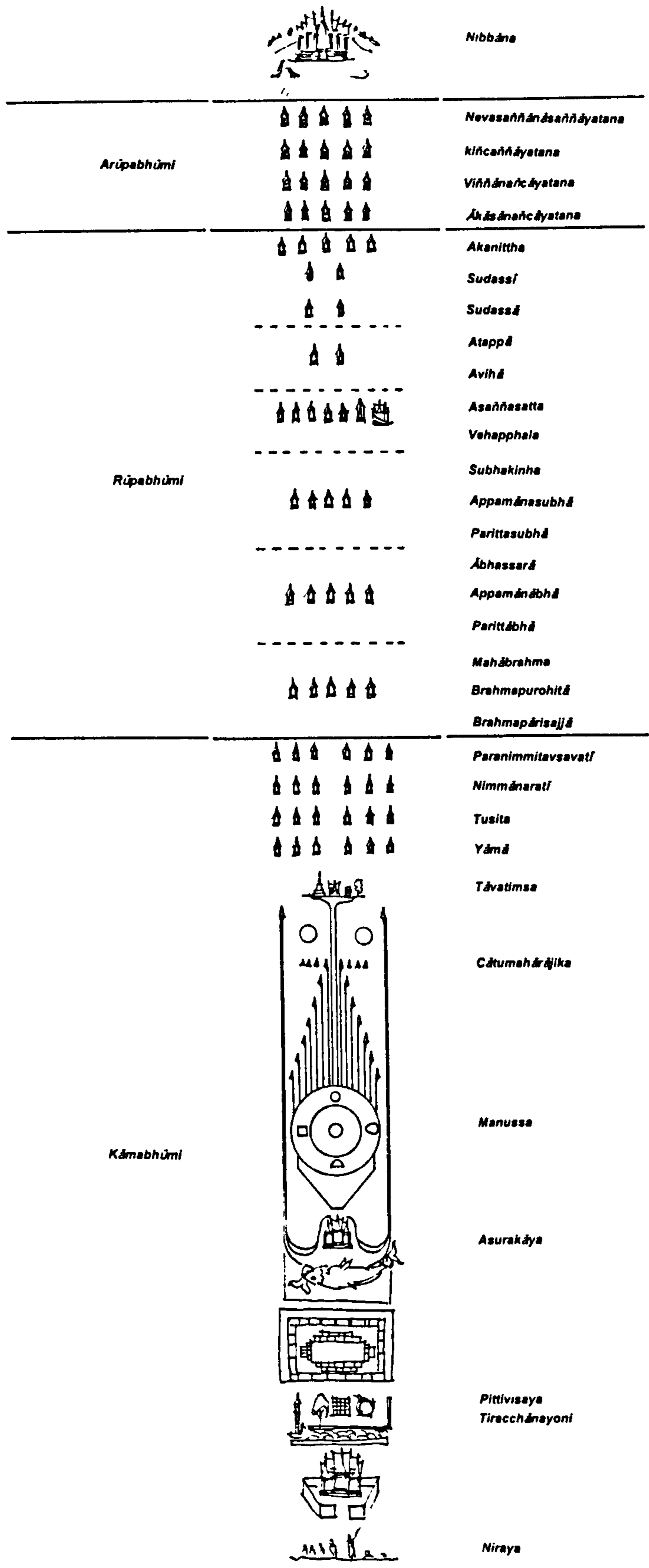


Fig. 2.1 Diagram of the thirty-one realms of the *Traiphum* (Adapted from FAD 1987)

The city of *Tāvātimsa* is called *Sudassana*. Its chief features, which are always illustrated in manuscript paintings, are: *Vejayanta* palace, *Cūlāmanicetiya*, *Sudhammā-sabhā*, *Parijāti* Tree, and the palace of *Erāvana*. *Vejayanta* is the palace of the God Indra, situated at the centre of *Tāvātimsa* (Fig. 4.14). The whole palace is built from seven precious substances. It arose as a result of the rest-house (pavilion or *sala*) built by him in his past life as Magha, for use by the multitudes (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. 2, 915; Thampricha 1992, 948). The *Parijāti* tree accrued to Indra because of his good deed of planting a *Kovilāra*-tree (Thai- *Thonghlang*) when he was born as Magha, out of devotion to the people. Under the tree, there is a throne of Indra's named *Pandukambala silāsana*. When a righteous being is in danger and needs his help, the throne becomes heated, thus attracting his attention. The throne also belongs to Indra because he established a seat under the *Thonghlang* tree when he was Magha (Thampricha 1992, 998).

The *Cūlāmanicetiya* is a *cetiya* which was raised by Indra to enshrine the hair that was cut off by the *Bodhisattva* when he donned an ascetic's robes on the banks of the *Anomā* river. After the Buddha's death, Indra added to the hair the right collar bone taken by him from Dona, who was trying to conceal it in his turban (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 909; Thampricha 1992, 1027-28). The *Sudhammā-sabhā* is the hall where the *devas* hold their meetings on the eighth day of each month, or when the *Dhamma* is preached, and also hold all their important festivals and gatherings. (Thampricha 1992, 962-63; Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 1204). The palace of *Erāvana* elephant is another element of *Tāvātimsa*. In fact, the elephant is a *deva*; whenever the Lord Indra has somewhere to go and wants to take a pleasant ride on an elephant, the *Erāvana deva* then transforms himself into an elephant to be the vehicle of Indra (Lithai 1983, 103).

Mount *Meru* is generally round and made of gold; it is 84,000 *yojana*²⁰ high and 84,000 *yojana* deep (Gombrich 1975,127). There are seven rings of the mountain (*Sattabhanda*) encircling Mount *Meru*, which are separated by seven rings of the *Sīdantara samudda* Oceans. *Yugandhara* peak is the innermost ring and the highest. The outer rings become gradually lower than the inner ones. They are: *Īsadhara*, *Karavīka*, *Sudassana*, *Nemindhara*, *Vinataka*, and *Assakanna*. The *Cakkavāla* peak is the outermost encompassing the Four Major Continents (*Mahādīpa*) of the human

²⁰ A *yojana* equals about ten miles (Reynolds and Reynolds (trans.) 1982, 67, n. 10).

world, which are situated at the four cardinal directions of the concentric rings of the mountains (Fig. 2.2). Each major continent has 500 minor satellite continents (Sirimangkharachan 1980, 51). The east continent, *Pabbavideha*, is round in shape. The *Aparagadāna*, the western continent, is in the form of a half or crescent moon. In the north, the *Uttarakura* is in the form of square, while the south continent, *Jambudīpa* is shaped like a chariot (Thampricha 1992, 104-105).

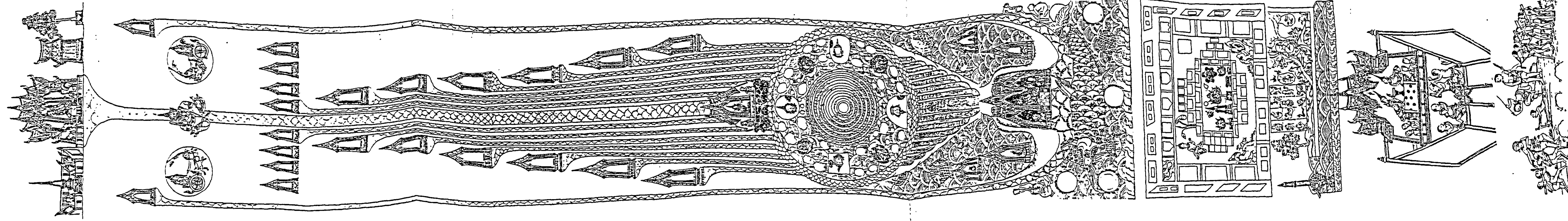
The most important continent is *Jambudīpa*, since it is the only continent where the Buddhas, *Pacceka Buddhas*, *bodhisattvas* and *cakkavattis* are born (Lithai 1983, 49). At the centre of *Jambudīpa* is the Diamond Throne (*Vajrāsana*), under the Bodhi-tree where Buddhas attain Enlightenment. The area of *Jambudīpa* is 10,000 *yojana*, 3,000 of which is the land where humans dwell, 4,000 of which is covered with water, being the sea, while the remaining 3,000 *yojana* is a great forest named *Himavanta* (Lithai 1983, 133). In the Forest, the *Himavanta* Mountains are 500 *yojana* high, extend for 3,000 *yojana*, and have 84,000 peaks. There are seven great Lakes in *Himavanta*. The *Anottata* Lake is where the *devas*, *Pacceka Buddhas*, hermits, sages and those with occult knowledge (*vijjādhara*) go down to bathe (Lithai 1983, 135).

The realm of the Lord *Yama* or *Yamaloka* (The Realm of the Lord of Death) is situated 10,000 *yojana* under the earth of *Jambudīpa* (FAD 1987, 32). At the same level of the major continents, the realm of *Garuda* is situated close to Mount *Meru* (FAD 1987, 26). The realm of the *Asuras* is especially in the caverns beneath Mount *Meru* (FAD 1987, 26).

<i>Nibbāna</i>		
Arūpabhūmi (The Realm of Formless)	4. <i>Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana</i> (The realm of neither perception nor non-perception) 3. <i>kiñcaññāyatana</i> (The realm of nothingness) 2. <i>Viññānañcāyatana</i> (The realm of infinite consciousness) 1. <i>Ākāsānañcāyatana</i> (The realm of infinite space)	
Rūpabhūmi (The Realm of Form)	Catutthajhāna (The fourth <i>jhāna</i> planes)	7. <i>Akanittha</i> (The realm of the highest or supreme <i>Brahmas</i>) 6. <i>Sudassī</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> who are clear-sighted) 5. <i>Sudassā</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> who are beautiful) 4. <i>Atappā</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> who are serene) 3. <i>Avihā</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> who do not fall from prosperity) <div style="text-align: right;">(<i>Suddhāvāsa Brahma</i> realms)</div>
		2. <i>Asaññasatta</i> (The realm of non-percipient beings) 1. <i>Vehapphala</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> with abundant reward)
	Tatiyajhāna (The third <i>jhāna</i> planes)	3. <i>Subhakinha</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> with steady aura) 2. <i>Appamānasubhā</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> with infinite aura) 1. <i>Parittasubhā</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> with limited aura)
	Dutiyajhāna (The second <i>jhāna</i> planes)	3. <i>Ābhassarā</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> with radiant lustre) 2. <i>Appamānābhā</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> with infinite lustre) 1. <i>Parittābhā</i> (The realm of <i>Brahmas</i> with limited lustre)
	Pathamajhāna (The first <i>jhāna</i> planes)	3. <i>Mahābrahma</i> (The realm of great <i>Brahmas</i>) 2. <i>Brahmapurohitā</i> (The realm of great <i>Brahmas</i> ' ministers) 1. <i>Brahmapārisajjā</i> (The realm of great <i>Brahmas</i> ' attendants)
Kāmabhūmi (The Realm of Desire)	Kāmasugati-bhūmi (The sensuous blissful planes)	6. <i>Paranimmitavsvatī</i> (The realm of gods who lord over the creation of others) 5. <i>Nimmānaratī</i> (The realm of the gods who rejoice in their own creations) 4. <i>Tusita</i> (The realm of satisfied gods) 3. <i>Yāmā</i> (The realm of the <i>Yāmā</i> Gods) 2. <i>Tāvātimsa</i> (The realm of the Thirty-three Gods) 1. <i>Cātumahārājika</i> (The realm of the Four Great Kings)
	Apāya-bhūmi (The planes of loss and woe)	1. <i>Manussa</i> (Human realm) 4. <i>Asurakāya</i> (Host of demons) 3. <i>Pittivisaya</i> (Ghost-sphere) 2. <i>Tiracchānayoṇi</i> (Animal kingdom) 1. <i>Niraya</i> (Hell)

Table 2.1 The thirty-one realms of the *Traiphum* cosmology

(The table is composed from the information presented in Prayuddha 1985, 316-319)



Tāvātimsa

The Moon Rāhu The Sun

The six of the Nine Planets
Yugandara

Deva

Īsadhara

Karavika

Sudassana

Nemindhara

Vinataka

Assakanna

Mahādīpa

Garuda

Asura

Majjhimadesa

Himavanta

Yamaloka

Hell

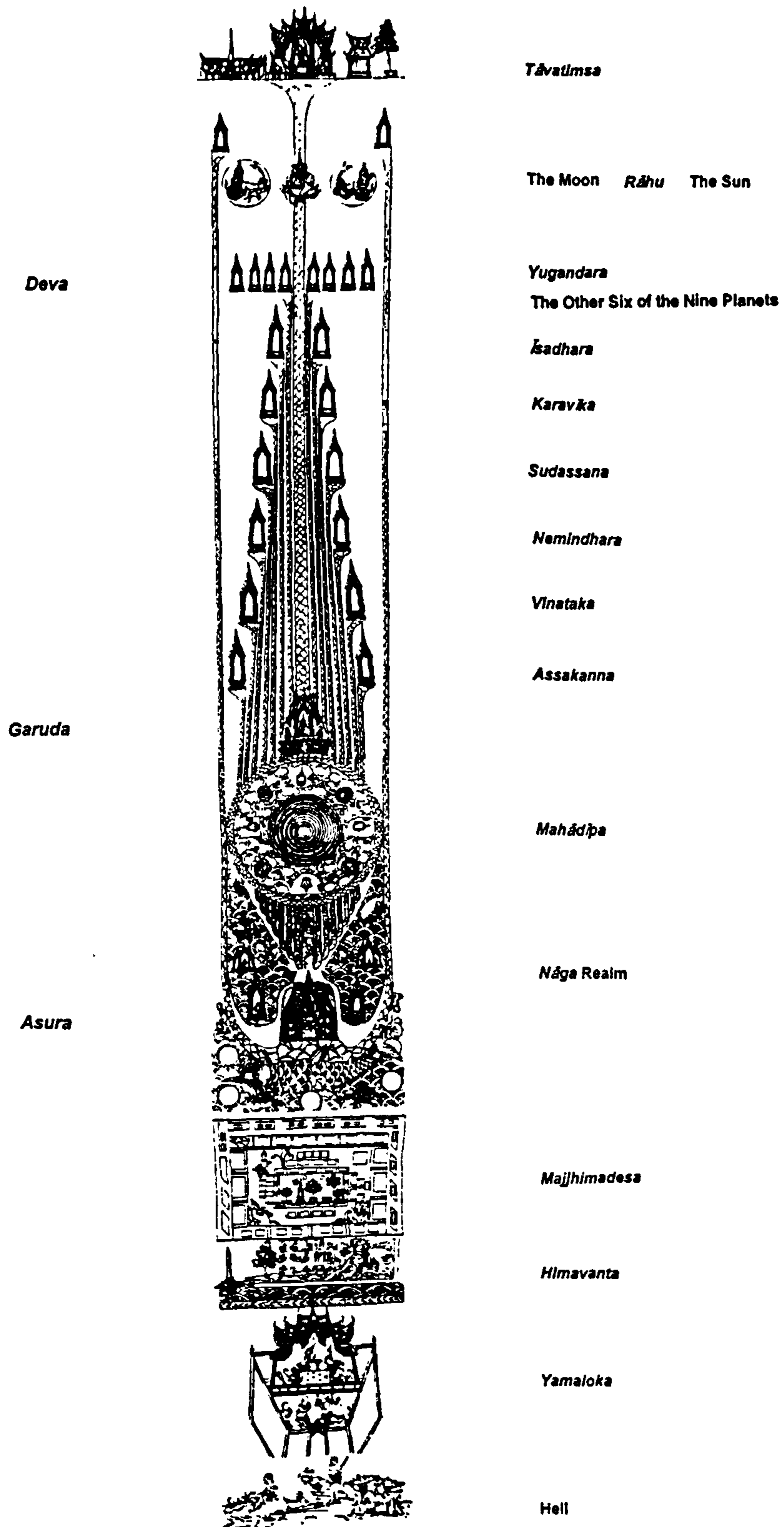


Fig. 2.2 Diagram of the *Traiphum* from the top of Mount *Meru* down to hell (Redrawn after FAD 1987)

Half-way up *Meru* are the chariots of the Sun (*Sūrya*), and of the Moon (*Candra*), going to the right around the *Meru* Mountain, along with six other planets: Mars (*Angara*), Mercury (*Budha*), Jupiter (*Brhaspati*), Venus (*Sukra*), Saturn (*Saura*) and Neptune (*Ketu*) (Lithai 1983, 132). *Rāhu* is mentioned as being among the *Asuras* (*Asuradinarāhu*) who creates eclipses, preventing the Sun God and the Moon God from shining in all their glory (Thampricha 1992, 897; Malalasekera Vol. II, 735-37). In the traditional list, *Rāhu* is the ninth planet. (Reynolds and Reynolds (trans.) 1982, 288). All of the planets, the Sun and the Moon make up the group of the Nine Planets or *Nopphakho* (*Navagraha*).

The *Rūpabhūmi* or the Realm of Form consists of sixteen levels of the *Brahma* world or *Brahmaloka* above the *Kāmahūmi*. The *devas* here are those who attained *Jhāna* (absorption) from their meditations. The top five levels are called *Suddhavāsa Brahma* (Table 2.1). On the day when the *Bodhisattva* is going to be Enlightened and become a Buddha, he goes to be ordained; the *brahmas* who live in the Supreme *Brahma* world (*Akanittha Brahma*), the highest realm of the *Suddhavāsa Brahma*, bring with them a set of Three Robes and requisites for the monks, which they offer to the *Bodhisattva*. They then take the white garment which the *Bodhisattva* had been wearing to the *Akanittha Brahma* world. There, they create a gem *cetiya* for enshrining the garment. This *cetiya* is called *Dussacetiya* (Lithai 1983, 117).

The *Arūpabhūmi* or the Realm of the Formless consists of four levels of the *Brahma*. The *Brahma* in these levels have neither bodies nor corporeal forms, but these *Brahma* are not empty since they still have consciousness alone. (Lithai 1983, 119-20). Beyond all the realms of these three worlds is the Realm of *Nibbāna*. The *Traiphum* manuscript paintings represent the Realm of *Nibbāna* as being at the zenith of all the vertical structures of the Three Worlds, while the account of *Nibbāna* is put at the last section of the descriptive versions of both the *Traiphummikatha* (Lithai 1983, 151-56) and *Traiphumlakawinitchai* (Thampricha 1992, 1206-14).

Some of these major realms of the *Traiphum* have been found represented in various forms of depiction in Thai Buddhist architecture. The structure of the *Traiphum* in the symbolic planning of a *wat* is, therefore, an interpretation of Buddhist cosmology into architectural planning. This will be investigated in order to establish a theory of the *Traiphum* symbolic planning in Thai Buddhist architecture in later chapters.

2.4 COSMIC STATE

2.4.1 The Concept of Supernatural Power

Moral actions performed in previous existences are believed to produce 'merit' (*Puñña*). The accumulation of merit and demerit (*Pāpa*) from previous lives determines one's kammic heritage. It is with reference to this heritage that the *Theravāda* Buddhist culture explains the inequalities, both physical and social, which are observed among men. Merit is also the reward for moral action undertaken in one's present life (Keyes 1973, 96).

In addition to the *Theravāda* Buddhism of Burma, Laos, Thailand and Ceylon, there is the normative Buddhism which developed an ordinary, moral teaching based on the Law of *Kamma* (Kammatic Buddhism) as well as an extraordinary, practising meditation to achieve *Nibbāna* (Nibbanic Buddhism), and another ideology is the magical concept of Apostrophic Buddhism (Spiro 1972, 11-14). The latter is concerned with important matters in this present existence: health and illness, drought and rain, calamity and tranquillity. It assumes that the goals involved here can be attained by specific magical acts which, unlike the normative Buddhism, either create immediate merit or enlist the assistance of supernatural beings or powers. For this magical concept, Buddhism as a whole - its devotions, ritual, ethics, scripture - acts as a protective shield against the dangers of the present existence (Spiro 1972, 140).

However, Buddhism as it should be is strictly forbidden to practise all kinds of magical arts and performances, even of a benevolent nature, as they are regarded as pernicious (La Vallée Poussin 1911b, 255). But 'historic Buddhism' is not, in every respect, what Buddhism ought to be. As a matter of fact, the Buddha was looked upon by his followers, as he was by unbelievers, as a great magician. It is recognized by all Buddhists that magical power is one of the natural possessions of the saints, since they are holy men. Magical power ranks therefore with the divine eye, the divine ear, the knowledge of the thought of others, the knowledge of former births, and the knowledge of the disappearing of passion (La Vallée Poussin 1911b, 256). Nevertheless, the orthodox form of magic in Buddhism is '*Paritta*'.²¹ This consists of chapters or sections

²¹ The word '*paritta*' means protection (Buddhadatta 1957, 171).

of chapters taken from various books of the canon, mostly the *sutta*, which are chanted for protection against danger (Spiro 1972, 144). The recitation of the *Paritta* in Ceylon dates back at least to the late fourth century A.D. Though they are part of the *Pāli* canon itself, they are still used extensively, now primarily in exorcism rites (Adikaram 1946, 143-44 in Smith 1972, 42 n. 43). Thus, King Sena II of Ceylon, made the community of monks recite the *Paritta*, and by producing a spring of water charmed with *Paritta* he made the people free from illness and so removed the danger of plague from the country (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. II, 157).

In 1801 there was a serious cholera epidemic in Bangkok and King Rama II ordered the performance of a ritual to destroy the sickness (*Aphat phinat*). In order to make great merit, the King commanded:

The firing of cannon around the capital overnight, and then he invited the Emerald Buddha Image from the Royal Chapel and the Buddha's relic to be in the procession, with the high ranking monks spreading sand and pouring the *paritta* holy water. The king himself observed the eight precepts and suggested that the members of royal family, ministers and government officials to observe precepts and give offerings to monks. The King also bought and freed all animals which would be sold and killed from market. All prisoners were released and people were asked to abstain from killing (Damrong 1962, 73-76).

This event indicates the belief that the King was the centre of the organization of meritorious activities. The collective merit gained from observing the precepts of society would bring the results of great merit and the alleviation of difficulties. Even in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, as Fisher (1993, 10) points out, in the thirteenth century the Koryo Kings of Korea commissioned the printing of thousands of manuscripts in the belief that they could offer protection against a Mongol invasion. Meritorious acts and the *Paritta* are usually performed in parallel in order to assure the result of the protective powers. *Traiphumlokawinitchai* states that the power of *Paritta* extended to 100,000 *koti*²² *cakkavālas* or world systems (Thampricha 1992, 35). However, Buddhist magic is believed to be efficacious only for those who live according to the moral precepts of Buddhism, and its efficacy is interpreted in terms of normative kammic doctrine. It is believed to work because it invokes the assistance of supernatural helpers, namely, the Buddhist *devas* (Spiro 1972, 161).

²² A *koti* equals ten million (Buddhadatta 1957, 89).

Apart from the framework of *Theravāda* kammic theory, both Sinhalese and South-East Asian societies explain events and their causation as being influenced by the actions of the nine planets, demons, and divine intervention (Obeyesekere 1963, 147-48; Ames 1964, 33-34). However, it is possible to explain events as a consequence of *kamma*, good or bad, in a past life. The frames of reference are mutually inclusive. The astrological situation makes it possible for demons or deities to cause good or bad fortune, but the astrological situation is, in turn, dependent on *kamma* acts (Obeyesekere 1963, 148).

2.4.2 Powers in the Cosmic System

Somkiat has provided a systematic explanation of events and their causation in the framework of cosmic power. In the beliefs of Thai society, he indicates that there are several aspects of power (*Amnat*), which concern both individuals and society. The five major kinds of power are: the power of *Dhamma*, the power of Buddhist *devas*, the power of Brahmanistic *devas*, the power of spirits and the power of rulers or kings (Somkiat 1990). Mulder has also explained that both Brahmanism and local animism which are incorporated with Buddhism in the framework of all powers in Thai belief, is the process of organizing those powers into the system of Buddhist cosmology (Mulder 1985, 21). Nevertheless, all powers operate within the rule of *Dhamma*, while the supernatural in the pantheon is manipulated by humans through ritual (Obeyesekere 1963, 144). The natural law or *Dhamma* is the fundamental condition which no other existence will ever be able to override. It is an ultimate reality which, in the Buddhist view, is the concept of the Three Common Characteristics (*Trilakkhana*): Impermanence (*Aniccatā*), the State of suffering (*Dukkhatā*), and Soullessness (*Anattatā*). All beings and non-beings in the universe are subject to the conditions of the Three Common Characteristics. However, *Kamma* (act) consists solely of the actions of beings, whether morally good or bad. Even though *Kamma* is the most powerful, affecting causation to a large extent, it is part of the natural law of *Dhamma*. The Law of *Kamma* is the most important power in the view of humans because it directly affects human fortune. As a result, to define the power of the world, there is the perimeter of nature and humans. In the Law of *Kamma*, the act and its result is the responsibility of humans, and the other aspects belong to natural laws (Rachaworamuni 1986, 155 in Somkiat 1990, 199).

In fact, the powers that have been mentioned within the framework of the natural law of *Dhamma* are those pantheons and spirits present in the system of *Traiphum* cosmology. Obeyesekera (1963; 1966) categorized the Sinhalese pantheon system and put the Buddha as a super-deity, the head of a supernatural hierarchy. Below the Buddha are the guardian deities of Ceylon, who are *devas* in a conventional sense, for they grant favours, intercede on behalf of humans, help them in worldly affairs, and cause welfare or woe in the human world (Obeyesekera 1963, 144). The deities in this system are the Buddhist and Brahmanistic pantheons, and local deities.

The *Traiphum* text of King Lithai enumerates three kinds of Buddhist *Devas*: the conventional gods (*Sammutideva*), the beings who are born divine (*Uppattideva*) and the beings who are divine by the purity of their great religious merit (*Visuddhideva*). The *Sammutideva* or conventional gods are rulers and kings who know the basic principles, know merit and *Dhamma*, and act according to the Ten Kingly Virtues.²³ The *Uppattideva* are those in the six heavenly realms of *Kāmahūmi* and the celestials of the *Brahmaloka*. Buddhas, *Pacceka Buddhas*, and *Arahantas* (those who have entered *Nibbāna*) are the *Visuddhideva* or purely divine (Lithai 1983, 98).

The syncretism of Thai religious belief is its integration of the Brahmanistic gods as part of the cosmic power. In Thai Brahmanistic mythology,²⁴ there are gods who create the universe. The Legend of Vishnu's *Avatāras* states that the Paramesvara (the God Siva) first creates Nārāyana (Vishnu) and the God Brahma, then all of them cooperated in creating the universe. Paramesvara took off his hairpin and stuck it into the earth, and through their powers it became Mount *Meru* (Niyada 1996, 123). They create the sun, the moon, and all beings of the three worlds (Niyada 1996, 123). Paramesvara then considers that either the *Brahmaloka* or six heavenly realms of the *Kāmahūmi* are not suitable to him to reside, he creates Mount *Kailas* for himself (Niyada 1996, 128). The God Siva is mentioned in the *Traiphum* text as residing on top of Mount *Kailasa* in *Himavanta* Forest (Thampricha 1992, 852-62). In Bangkok, there are in the

²³ The Ten Kingly Virtues In Buddhist kingship are: 1. *Dāna* (Charity or generosity); 2. *Sīla* (High moral character); 3. *Pariccāga* (Self-sacrifice); 4. *Ājjava* (Honesty); 5. *Maddava* (Kindness and gentleness); 6. *Tapa* (Austerity or self-control); 7. *Akkodha* (Non-anger, non-fury); 8. *Avihimsā* (Non-violence, non-oppression); 9. *Khanti* (Patience, tolerance); and 10. *Avirodhana* (Non-opposition, conformity to the law) (Prayuddha 1985, 285-87).

²⁴ In this reference, the Brahmanistic text which manifests the link with *Traiphum* cosmology is the Legend of The Twenty *Avatāras* of Vishnu See Niyada (1996).

centre of the capital three temples in one enclosure, the large one (in the south) being dedicated to Siva, the middle one to Ganesa, and the northern one to Nārāyana (Vishnu) (Wales 1951, 54).

Spirit in the concept of Thai Buddhist cosmology is a non-human existence which is usually invisible, but may be more powerful than humans. The spirits may affect the lives of human beings in some ways, so they are another kind of power in Thai Buddhist belief. The effect of the power of the spirits ranges from minor actions, such as haunting or scaring people, to more serious harm, which might cause death to humankind. The spirits, in this concept, are omnipresent and exist everywhere, such as in the air, water, earth or forest (Somkiat 1990, 210). In general, the spirits are those who exist in the realms lower than the human world, in the Realm of Desire (*Kāmaphūmi*).

All of the powers mentioned might affect the life of the individual person, although one may possess a talisman or worship the spirits or *devas* in order to supplicate for protection from any danger. But at the level of human society, the power of the ruler or king is the most important and it is the central one above all the others. Under his government, positive or negative results may be brought to society (Somkiat 1990, 211). Nevertheless, the factor which assures that all power in the cosmic system will bring good results to humans is the '*Dhamma* of the king'.

It was the belief of Buddhism that the welfare of the whole kingdom, and even the regularity of the calendar and of heavenly phenomena generally, are dependent on the king being attuned to *Dhamma* at the centre of society (Conze 1968, 246-47). The *Traiphumlakawinitchai* describes the phenomena when the king rules without the *Dhamma* as follows:

'When the king is not righteous; the princes, ministers, and rich men are not righteous, populace in the city and those in all regions are also not righteous, proliferating to all territory. To those *devas* who protect humans, when humans are not righteous, they are too, not righteous. ...when *devas* and *brahmas* are not righteous, the moon and the sun deviate from their course. ...the wind blows wrongly. ...the rain comes out of season. ...the soil is not fertile. .. All beings are sick and live short lives (Thampricha 1992, 75-78).

In contrast, when the king exercises his power with *Dhamma*, the reverse results (Thampricha 1992, 78-79). The *Traiphum* explains the phenomenon of the disaster

when the king rules without *Dhamma* as 'public unwholesome cause of action' (*sādhāraṇa Akusalakamma*) (Thampricha 1992, 78). When it occurs, the Buddhist *devas*, Brahmanistic *devas*, the other spirits and even nature (namely, animals, vegetables, weather, etc.), are not able to assist or bring any better effect. In this sense, we may conclude that the king is a mechanism of the effectiveness of all powers in the cosmic system, and *Dhamma* is the rule operating monarchical power. It is not surprising that in several royal ceremonies, the procedure always involves these five major kinds of power. For instance, the announcements of the royal ceremony of the Bangkok period since the reign of King Rama I always referred to both *devas* and some kinds of spirits in their passages. They are worshipped in order to ensure their support so that the ceremony will achieve its object and be successful. The passage from the announcement to *devas* when the Sakayamuni Buddha Image was to be cast-altered in the reign of King Rama I, indicates the role of the king who dedicates his merit to all existence in the universe.

His royal majesty is kind to dedicate all this royal meritorious to all humans, *devas*, Indra, *Brahma*, *Yama*, *Yakkha*, and to all those who are from the guardian spirits to through the highest of *Brahmaloka*. The horizontal dimension through uncountable universes (*cakkavālas*); the lower realms reach the beings in *Avīci* Hell (Sommat 1965, Vol. I, 310).

In the same announcement, all *devas* in the six heavenly worlds of the Realm of Desire (*Kāma*) and the sixteen *Brahma* realms, including Siva and other spirits from all continents, were invited to assemble and protect the ceremony from all danger. Monks were also invited to chant *Paritta*. (Sommat 1965, Vol. I, 311-12). The main function of the king was of course to constitute the central pinnacle, the bond between the divine and the human (F. Reynolds 1973, 41).

2.5 CONCLUSION

Kingship practice in South-East Asian Buddhist states is the synthesis of both Buddhism and Hinduism, expressed through local interpretations. Aung-Thwin's investigation of Burmese kingship, the kingdom that had maintained its *Theravāda* tradition for centuries, concludes that:

The conceptions of classical Burmese kingship comprise three essential parts- the king as human, the king as divine, and the king as superhuman.

The three components are inextricably linked....For administering the state efficiently and morally in the tradition of Asoka and *Mahāsammata*, the king was a *dharmarājā*, in perpetuating the economic and political grandeur of the kingdom, he was *cakkavatti*; in aiding the public concern for salvation and upward spiritual mobility, he was a *bodhisattva*; as ruler of the earthly *Tāvātimsa*, he was Sakka; and because he attained these heights by the merits of his past actions, he was above all, a *kammarājā* (Aung-Thwin 1983, 51-52).

As we have seen, the main concepts of kingship, the *cakkavatti*, the *bodhisattva*, and the divine concept, are interpreted and exercised to uphold *Dhamma* as a moral order of the society and the cosmic power. Nevertheless, the king himself is also obliged to rule with *Dhamma* in order to cause all powers to function effectively. Therefore, *Dhamma* is the central concept which links various notions to be in the practice of kingship.

The account of Asoka's building of *stūpas* is a major paradigm which, for the *Theravāda* tradition, is the representation of *cakkavatti*. According to Boisselier, the establishment of the Phra Prathommachedi *stūpa* by King Mongkut of Siam during the mid nineteenth century is the latest work of a king who recognized the career of *cakkavatti* (Boisselier 1990, 137). The *cakkavatti* kingship has also been connected to the theory of the cosmic centre of Buddhist architecture, as Mus put it:

The *cakkavatti* is depicted as a cosmocrator whose conquest proceeded through the continents located at each of the four cardinal points, and whose rule radiated out from a central position either identified or closely associated with the central cosmic mountain of the Indian tradition, Mount *Meru*. In the later texts, this connection between the *cakkavatti* and the cosmological pattern of the four directions and Mount *Meru* comes increasingly to the fore and it plays a dominant role in the architectural symbolism which developed in conjunction with Buddhist kingship.²⁵

However, the notion of divine kingship that the king is the central figure between human society and the celestial world, has been connected to the theory of a sacred centre, i.e. that the capital city of a state represents the cosmic centre of the empire (Heine-Gelden 1942, 17). The theory has been extensively applied to explain not only

²⁵ Paul Mus, 1935, *Barabadur. Esquisse d'une histoire du bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes*, Paul Geuthner, (Paris), and Jeannine Auboyer, 1949, *Le Trône et son symbolisme dans l'Inde ancienne*, Presses Universitaires de France, (Paris), cited in F. Reynolds (1972, 20).

the geographical polity, but also governmental organization and architecture. Royal palaces and temples are the representation of kingship, and are identified with Mount *Meru*.²⁶ However, to generalize the meaning of Thai Buddhist temples and palaces, as merely the symbol of Mount *Meru* does progress our understanding of Thai Buddhist architecture, both the design of symbolic planning and the underlying concept. The *Stūpa* has been the central element of Buddhist architectural studies, but Thai Buddhist architecture comprises a number of buildings and structures in a monastery precinct. A breakthrough to a new framework of study, approaching the investigation of the whole system of the design in Thai royal *wats*, is now required. The investigation that follows of both the textual and architectural evidence of a particular period of Thai history will contribute to clarification of the representation of kingship through royal Buddhist architecture, as it is connected to the cosmological conceptions.

²⁶ Heine-Gelden (1942, 24), and see for examples Anuvit (1983; 1984); Sumet (1986; 1988); Wales (1977).

TRADITIONAL PATTERNS AND THE FOUNDING OF BANGKOK

The main aim of this chapter is to analyse the planning concept of the royal *wats* of King Rama I, which were built during the same period as the establishment of the city of Bangkok and the Čhakkri Dynasty. *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel are the models for the study. The study of the symbolic planning of these two *wats* shows the relationship of main structures in the compound, that they are formed to represent a diagram of the *Traiphum* cosmography. This is the first time that all the main structures in the compound are studied for their connected meanings within the whole plan. Before studying the *wats*, the traditional pattern of the settings of mural paintings in *ubosots* or *wihans* has to be considered. It is also necessary to clarify the meaning of some Brahmanistic elements, in order to provide the fundamental knowledge necessary for the interpretation of the meaning of particular *wats*. The study of traditional patterns will be a model indicating the development or new interpretation of these patterns in the symbolic planning of the *wats*.

The beginning of this Chapter gives a brief introductory history of the Siamese Kingdom, including the fall of the city of Ayutthaya, the failure of Taksin to maintain his kingship when Thonburi was the capital of Siam, and the legitimation of Rama I, focussing upon the primacy of kingship in his reformation of Buddhist ideology. The last section of the chapter will connect the concept of Buddhist architecture with some notions of Buddhist kingship, and the historical conditions of the early Bangkok period.

3.1 THE FALL OF AYUTTHAYA AND THE LEGITIMATION OF RAMA I

Ayutthaya had been under siege for two years before it was captured and destroyed by the Burmese in 1767. The result was chaos. The king of Ayutthaya fled from the city into a forest, and died. The palaces, monasteries and the city were destroyed and burnt to the ground. The populace was either killed or afflicted with a variety of ills by the enemy. Many *wats* had been looted and partially or totally demolished in the fighting; as a result, some monks were forced to seek new places to reside. Others left

their monasteries because of inadequate lay support, while some chose to disrobe and leave the *sangha* rather than break their monastic discipline (Wannarat 1978, 408-21).

3.1.1 The Failure of Taksin

Taksin, who was a minor provincial official and of mixed Sino-Siamese parentage, first established a base of military and political administration in order to restore order. He very quickly brought under control not only all the old Ayutthaya provinces but also extensive new regions. These included the Lanna Kingdom, which had been under the control of the Burmese for most of the preceding two centuries, the principalities of Vientiane and Čhampasak in Lao, and the western part of Cambodia (Fig. 3.1) (Wyatt 1982, 120). Taksin resettled the capital in the Čhaophraya delta at Thonburi.

Throughout Taksin's reign, he confronted the necessity of waging war against the Burmese much more aggressively than any antagonist the Siamese had ever met. Even though he had, to a considerable extent, established an internal administrative structure at Thonburi, he never achieved political power, or the transformation of Thonburi into the impressive centre of a Buddhist Kingdom (Butt 1978, 36-40 and Wyatt 1982, 12-13). His reign ended because he caused a schism within the *sangha* by making excessive spiritual claims for himself, including those of being a *Sotāpanna*¹ or 'stream winner', and of possessing special powers as a result of practising meditation. It was not Taksin's '*Sotāpanna*' state that was called into question, but the propriety of his insisting that monks worship him as a god. Monks who objected to Taksin's claims were penalized. The highest ranking monks were demoted and the supreme patriarch replaced. More than five hundred dissident monks who stood against Taksin were flogged and sentenced to menial labour at *Wat Hong*, the monastery of the new supreme patriarch. Only when Rama I came to power were they reinstalled (C. Reynolds 1972, 34).

¹ A *Sotāpanna* is an advanced being who has embarked upon the first of the four stages towards Enlightenment. See the discussion about the fall of Taksin in Reynolds (1972, 30-35) and Gesick (1983).

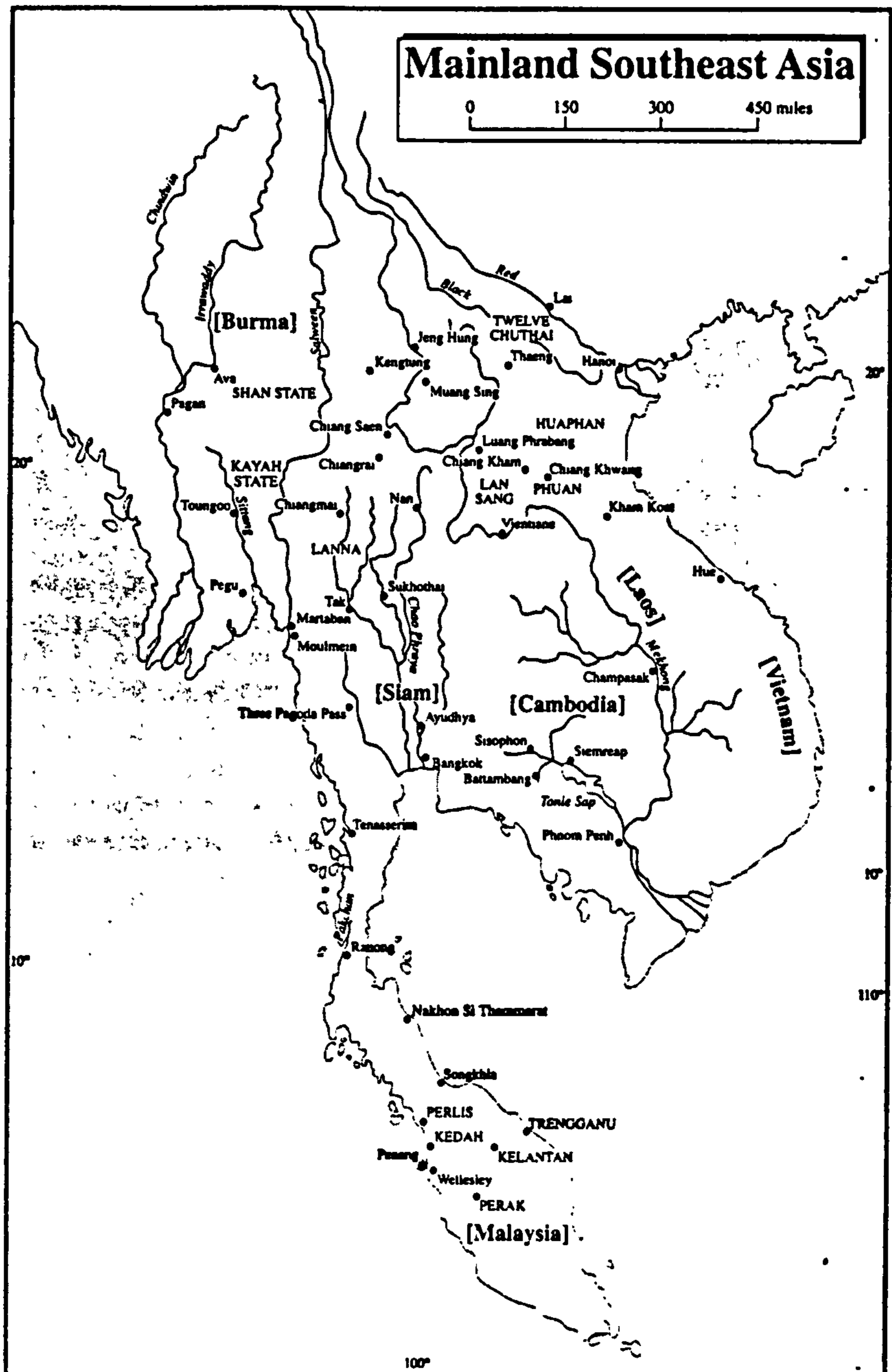


Fig. 3.1 Map of South-East Asia (source: Thongchai 1994)

In claiming spiritual authority over the monks, Taksin departed from the traditional pattern of interaction between the king and the monks. The direct manner in which he made his claims and then tried to enforce compliance with them represented a serious affront to the spiritual leadership of the *sangha*, and made conflict with the monks inevitable. This conflict in turn ensured the failure of Taksin's attempt to validate his political power through religious means (Butt 1978, 40). However, C. Reynolds indicates that Taksin committed as many commendable acts as could be expected of a monarch in any period of Siamese history. He commissioned a new edition of the *Tripitaka* in 1769, and a copy of the *Traiphum* cosmology in 1776 (C. Reynolds 1976, 209). His reign came to an end because he failed to achieve a balance between the *sangha* and a secular realm, and it was claimed that he demonstrated insufficient merit to be the king, who was expected to be responsible for maintaining the moral order of the world (Gesick 1983, 90).

The revolt against Taksin began in March 1782. Immediately, Čhao Phraya Čhakkri, one of Taksin's most respected generals, returned to Thonburi from his campaign in Cambodia. He was invited to become the new king (Rama I). He then moved the capital from Thonburi to the east bank of the river and established the Čhakkri Dynasty. Bangkok's history as the centre of the Siamese kingdom then began.

3.1.2 The Legitimation of Rama I

After his accession to the throne on 6 April 1782, Rama I was crowned in June of the same year. However, his second full-scale coronation was performed, replete with Brahmanistic rites, in 1785 after he had made major appointments and built monasteries, palaces and fortifications (C. Reynolds 1972, 36). Although both the military and the political administration of the Siamese state had progressed during Taksin's reign, many cultural traditions remained disrupted and society itself continued to be disordered. One of the challenges and tasks for Rama I was therefore to restore Thai culture and society to a state comparable to that which had characterised the vigorous prosperity of Ayutthaya.

In internal affairs, the most significant act of Rama I was his re-codification of Siamese Laws. A decree issued by the King in the year 1794 stated that at the time of the destruction of Ayutthaya, ninth-tenths of the legal materials had been destroyed. In

these circumstances, a stocktaking and new codification naturally followed. However, the necessary work did not begin until 1805, when Rama I undertook a grand re-codification of Siamese Laws. Three copies of the revised code were written down and stamped with the royal seals used by the three chief ministers. The Laws are known to this day as '*Kotmai tra samduang*' (The Laws of the Three Seals) (Wenk 1968, 35-38 and Dhani 1976c, 151).

Rama I's Restoration of the Buddhist State

Even though Rama I upheld Buddhism as the legitimising ideology of kingship, much of the ritual of the court calendar was Brahmanistic in origin. Wyatt points out that there was some feeling at the beginning of Rama I's reign that the unfortunate downfall of Taksin might have been due, at least in part, to the fact that Taksin had never undergone a full, proper coronation (Wyatt 1982, 28). However, in his state restoration ceremony, Rama I seems to emphasize the primacy of Buddhism. The most prominent example is the oath-of-allegiance ceremony. In 1785 Rama I required that officials participating in the annual oath-of-allegiance ceremony in the Royal Chapel should complete their obeisance to the Triple Gems² of Buddhism, the Emerald Buddha Image, and the Buddhist relics before paying their respects to the guardian deities or to the statues of previous rulers.³

One important division of Thai society which had been disrupted and needed immediate reform was the religious sector. The Buddhist *sangha* organisation and *vinaya* discipline had not recovered during the fifteen years of Taksin's reign. Therefore, early in his reign Rama I undertook a thorough reform of the *sangha* order, because it was the major mechanism of Buddhism and involved lay people and the strengthening of social morality. In the first two years after his accession to the throne he issued seven decrees concerning the Thai Buddhist Monks (*Kotmai phrasong* or *Sangha Law*), with the purpose of raising the morals of the monks and restoring their prestige and authority. Three other decrees were issued in 1789, 1794 and 1801. In his last Law, the tenth, 128 monks were expelled from the Buddhist *sangha* and

² The Triple Gems or Three Gems (*Tiratana* - Three Refuges) is the Buddhist trinity, which is comprised of the Buddha, *Dhamma* (the Teaching of the Buddha), and *Sangha* (the Order of Monks).

³ *Kotmai tra samduang* (The Laws of the Three Seals), Vol. 4, (Phraratchakamnot mai, 40, Apr. 22, 1785), Bangkok, 1962, 353-57, cited in Wyatt (1982, 29).

condemned to hard labour because they had been guilty of all kinds of ignoble behaviour (Wenk 1968, 39). The *Sangha* Law as issued by King Rama I marked the inauguration of the Siamese legislative system. It was the first time that a government had attempted to directly control the observance of the monks. This then became Thai tradition, with the king being obliged to issue the *Sangha* Law for the duration of his reign (Nithi 1986, 409).

After Rama I had, to a certain extent, managed to reform the *sangha* order, in 1788 he donated a large sum towards the cost of copying the *Tripitaka* texts on to palm leaf manuscripts and distributing them to the royal *wats* for the *sangha* to study. The texts were taken from the Mon and Lao versions and transcribed into Khmer script. However, Čhamun Wiworanat pointed out that the extant version of the *Tripitaka* was defective, and Rama I ordered a revision of the entire *Pāli* canon. The Buddhist Council was held in 1788 (Thipakorawong 1996, 114). The revision of the *Tripitaka* had manifold implications. Symbolically, it was merit-making on a grand scale, with the greatest merit accruing to the king as sponsor. Politically, since the *Dhamma* was contained in the *Tripitaka*, the revision led to the revival of the moral tone of the kingdom, and indicated Rama I's intention to be a righteous king (*Dhammarājā*) (Somboon 1993, 120).

Only a year after the council, Phra Wannarat, the abbot of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, who compiled the *Sanghitiyavamsa* (the Chronicle of Buddhist Councils), identified the 1788 Council in Bangkok as the ninth in a lineage reaching back to the sixth century B.C., when the first council was called following the Buddha's death (See Wannarat 1978, 445-47). C. Reynolds indicates that for Wannarat to locate the 1788 council in a lineage that included Asoka was to borrow the prestige of that famous king and connect it to Rama I's own achievements. It was to proclaim that Rama I was Asoka's equal, and to intimate equality by associating Rama I with a genealogical line of Buddhist councils which included that of Asoka. In addition, the schisms in the orders which occurred after the time of Taksin were united by the Council, as the unity of *sangha* was based upon the unity of, and relative agreement on, the Doctrine (C. Reynolds 1979, 104-05).

The Restoration of Literature

The destruction of Ayutthaya caused most of the literary works in the royal collection to be destroyed. Some literary productions were significant elaborations of moral, political, and cultural standard practices, which determined particular meanings for and values of society. They may also have referred to the legitimation of social institutions. These literary works covered various subjects such as religion, royal chronicles, legends and even royal plays. Nithi suggests that the Royal Chronicles which had been edited throughout Thai history in order to provide a constitution for the relationship and political guidelines between states, also contained accounts of warfare between states, the relationship between the ruler and the populace, and tributary practice (Nithi 1980, 66).

According to the research of Niyada, the literary works which were compiled, edited, revised and translated under the sponsorship and order of King Rama I were comprised of: six religious texts, five legends, seven versions of Royal Chronicles, seven versions of moral guidance writings, a volume of legislation, four writings about plays, and three titles translated from foreign literature.⁴ Most of the works were approved and reviewed by Rama I and sometimes he even contributed to the work. However, the most important religious text, apart from the *Tripitaka* and its commentaries, was the *Traiphum* cosmology.⁵

In the second year of his reign Rama I invited his ministers and highest-ranking members of *sangha* (Thai- *Rachakhana*), led by the supreme patriarch, to the throne hall and questioned them on a wide range of matters, including methods of reckoning time, miracles performed by the Buddha, and the destruction and recreation of the universe. When he discovered inadequacies in the monks' mastery of these subjects, he ordered a group of scribes and monks, under the supervision of the supreme patriarch, to compile an edition of the *Traiphum* (Thampricha 1992, 2-3). However, in 1802 the King reviewed the work and found it to be inconsistent and uneven, and not in accord with the *Pāli Tripitaka* and its commentaries. He ordered a revision, appointing Phraya Thampricha, the head of the Royal Pundits, to supervise it

⁴ See the discussion of the restoration of Thai literature during the reign of King Rama I in Niyada (1996) and Dhani (1976c, 153-59).

⁵ See Chapter 2 for the significance of the *Traiphum* cosmology.

(Thampricha 1992, 2-3). In the preface of the text is stated the king's purpose: that people who learned the *Traiphum* would be encouraged to be faithful to Buddhism (Thampricha 1992, 2).

Some religious texts including the *Tripitaka* were first translated from *Pāli* into Thai on the orders of Rama I (Saichon 1982, 117). The most important text, apart from the *Tripitaka*, was the *Mahāvamsa*,⁶ the Great Chronicle of Ceylon or Lanka, which was translated in 1797. The *Ratanabimbavamsa*⁷ (the Chronicle of the Emerald Buddha Image) and *Jinakālamāḷipakarana*, the Buddhist history of the Lanna Kingdom, were translated in 1788 and 1797 respectively. By the translation of the Buddhist texts, particularly the *Tripitaka*, Rama I intended to uphold *Dhamma* in a more effective way, since those who did not know *Pāli* would be able to learn the *Tripitaka* in Thai. Some of the *Pāli* chanting stanzas which concerned the daily observances of lay people were also translated for instance: *Thamwat chao* (Morning Observance Recitation) and *Kruatnam* (Recitation of pouring Water of Dedication). These were translated in order to encourage people to practice Buddhism with an understanding of the meaning of the rites they were performing, rather than doing them without any knowledge of their significance (Saichon 1982, 117).

Within non-Buddhist literature, *Ramakian* or the saga of Rāma was the most ambitious work of Rama I. The systematic collection of all the available material concerning the story of Rāma had already been done before the entire saga was written down in verse in 1797. It is the only complete version of the *Ramakian* in Siam, and Rama I himself is said to have revised and approved the entire work (Wyatt 1982, 34; Niyada 1996, 181). The *Ramakian* tells the story of Rāma, the hero of the epic who ascends to his throne because of his virtue and bravery after a long period of dark and

⁶ The *Mahāvamsa* text describes the visit of the Buddha to Lanka Island, his prediction that Buddhism would prosper in that Island, the establishment of Buddhism when King Asoka sent missionaries to Lanka, and the relationship between the monarchy and the *sangha* throughout the history of Lanka (See Geiger 1912). The *Mahāvamsa* was the most well-known and influential to Thai Buddhist literary works since the fourteenth century (Niyada 1996, 95). The structure of some of the fifteenth century Lanna Chronicles show a strong influence upon the *Mahāvamsa*, for instance: *Jinakālamāḷipakarana* (A.D. 1516-17), the *Mulasāsanā* (1420s), the *Cāmadevivamsa* (mid-fifteenth century), and the *Ratanabimbavamsa* (fifteenth century) (C. Reynolds 1979, 92-93 and Niyada 1996, 115-20). The *Sanghitiyavamsa* of Phra Wannarat, which was compiled in the reign of Rama I, also relies on the *Mahāvamsa*.

⁷ The *Ratanabimbavamsa* was originally composed in *Pāli* during the mid-fifteenth century by Phra Phromratchapanya, a Lanna monk. The text contains the mythology and history of the Emerald Buddha Image which Rama I installed in the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel. He also ordered Phraya Thamparohit (Kaeo), who later became Phraya Thampricha, to translate it into Thai in 1788 (Niyada 1996, 59-63). See Thamparohit (1961).

dangerous warfare. He triumphs because he is virtuous and brave, and worthy of the loyalty of those who assist him. The implication of the story of *Ramakian* was directly applicable to Rama I's own situation (Wyatt 1982, 35), as he had demonstrated and proved himself similar to Rāma in the *Ramakian* through his campaigns since the destruction of Ayutthaya and his upholding of Buddhism. Although *Ramakian* was a piece of highly elitist literature that concerned the concept of the kingship of Rāma, the hero of the epic who is an incarnation of the Indo Brahma God Vishnu, Rama I again emphasized the primacy of Buddhism at the end of the epic. It is clearly indicated in the epilogue that:

This work called *Ramakian* is an essay at presenting a pagan tale of no great moral essence but meant as an offering (to the Three Gems). Whoever listens to this must not be misled by it but should moralise upon the impermanence of all things.⁸

It was not only the fall of Ayutthaya that forced the Thais to carefully re-examine their mistakes, or the failure of Taksin's legitimation of Buddhist kingship that pressured Rama I to more carefully legitimize his sovereignty. Neither Taksin nor Rama I was a blood relative of the last Ayutthaya dynasty: one way to overcome this weakness of genealogy was to demonstrate a faithfulness to tradition (C. Reynolds 1979, 91). However, the catastrophe of Ayutthaya caused the accession of Rama I, and his contemporaries were not, nor could they have been, simply hoping for a 'return to Ayutthaya', since the last king of Ayutthaya ruled without *Dhamma* and the capital was totally destroyed (Wyatt 1982, 17). Even though legitimation measures sought the sanction of the traditions of the past, innovations were inevitably brought into practice. The restoration of the Buddhist *sangha* order and the Ninth Buddhist Council in 1788 were the great achievements of Rama I; they made him an equal to King Asoka, the greatest model in Buddhist history. Literary works, both new compilations and revisions, not only served religious and spiritual functions, but were part of the political process, a progression of Rama I's government of affairs. The study of Buddhist art and architecture during the reign of Rama I will demonstrate another facet of how the Buddhist state was begun in such a context.

⁸ *Ramakian* Vol. 4, Klangwitthaya, Bangkok 1963, 759. The translated text is quoted from Dhani (1976e, 77).

3.2. TRADITIONAL SYMBOLIC PATTERNS

3.2.1 *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* Paintings: An Interpretation

One of the most important structures in the sanctuary area of a *wat* is the *ubosot* or *wihan*. This building is usually located as a principal structure on the main axis of the plan. Evidence from the mural paintings in these buildings from the late Ayutthaya period (seventeenth century onward) up until the nineteenth century, reveal a consistent pattern of both theme and arrangement. The pattern of this traditional practice is as follows.⁹

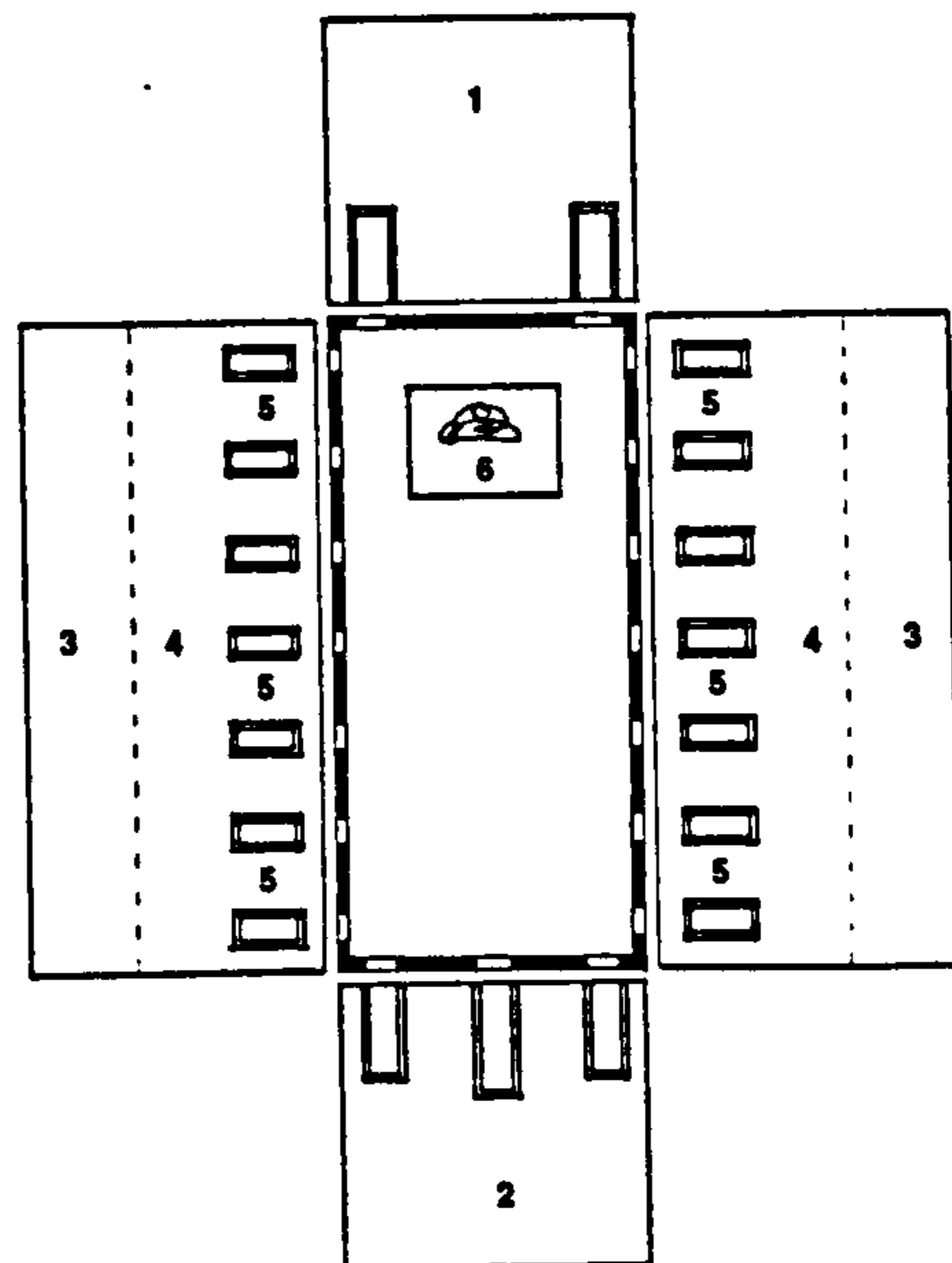


Fig. 3.2 Traditional pattern of mural paintings

1) *Cakkavāla* Painting; 2) Victory over *Māra*; 3) Celestial Assembly; 4) The Buddha's Life; 5) Ten *Jātaka*; 6) Principal image (Adapted from Wray et al. 1996)

⁹ For a similar conclusion about this pattern see also Boisselier (1976, 32-34); Lyons (1990, 7); Santi and Kamol (1981, 62-64); Samerchai (1996, 106) and Wray et al. (1996, 121-32).

1. On the wall behind the principal Buddha image (area 1 in Fig. 3.2) of the building is painted the scene of *Cakkavāla*,¹⁰ from the *Traiphum* cosmography. The portrayal of the *Meru* Mountain and the Seven Mountain Ranges (*Sattabhanda*) is usually found in the middle area of the mural. The heavenly city of *Tāvātimsa* is depicted on the *Meru* peak, with the sun and the moon on both sides of *Meru*. The lower part of the mural shows four continents. Details of this part of the mural are usually mainly concerned with *Jambudīpa*, the southern continent of the human world. The realm of hell is painted on the lowest part of the wall (Figs. 3.3).
2. The wall facing the principal image (area 2 in Fig. 3.2) usually portrays the scene of the Buddha's victory over *Māra*, focussing on the *Bodhisattva* seated on the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-tree. Underneath the Throne stands the earth goddess, *Dharanī*, who witnesses the *Bodhisattva*'s virtues. The army of *Māra* is depicted on both sides of this central image. The painting is known to Thai scholars as the '*Māravijaya*' (defeated *Māra*) painting (Fig. 3.4).
3. The space on the two side walls is divided into three parts. The uppermost portion under the ceiling (area 3 in Fig. 3.2) shows the gathering of various celestial beings (Fig. 3.5). It is known as the scene of Celestial Assembly (Thai- *Thepchumnum*). The portion above the windows (area 4 in Fig. 3.2) shows scenes from the Buddha's Life. The area between the windows (area 5 in Fig. 3.2) has scenes from the Ten Lives of the Buddha or Ten *Jātakas* (*Dasajāti*). There may also be scenes from other *Jātaka* tales (Santi and Kamol 1981, 56). Since the complete story of the Buddha's Life and the *Jātaka* tales cannot be painted due to the limited space, significant episodes are always chosen to represent the theme.

¹⁰ A *Cakkavāla* is a single, circular world system surrounded by a mountain of iron (*Cakkavāla*) from which its name is derived (Kloetzli 1989, 3).

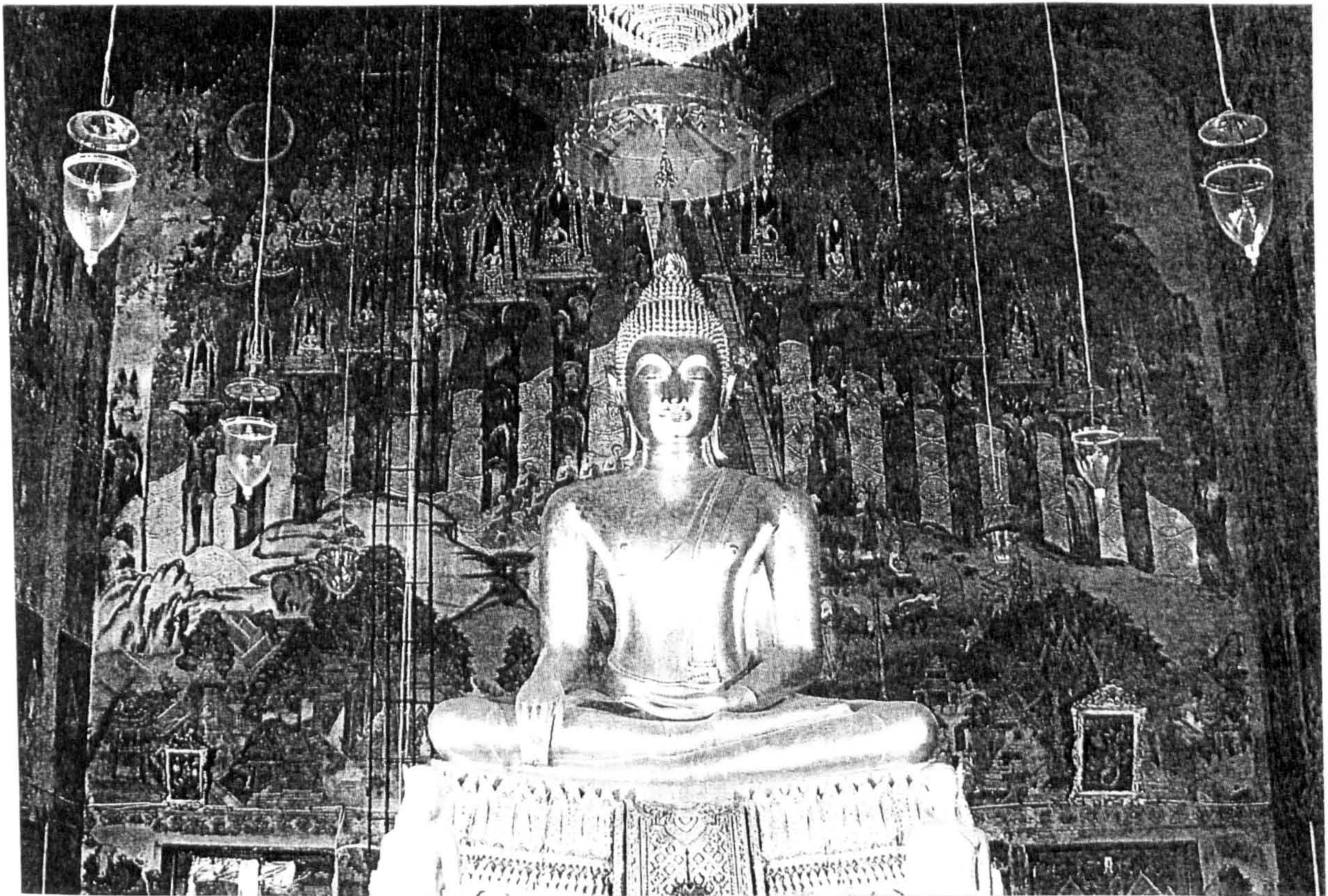


Fig. 3.3 *Cakkavāla* Painting, *ubosot* of *Wat Suwannaram*, Thonburi (source: Ringis 1990)

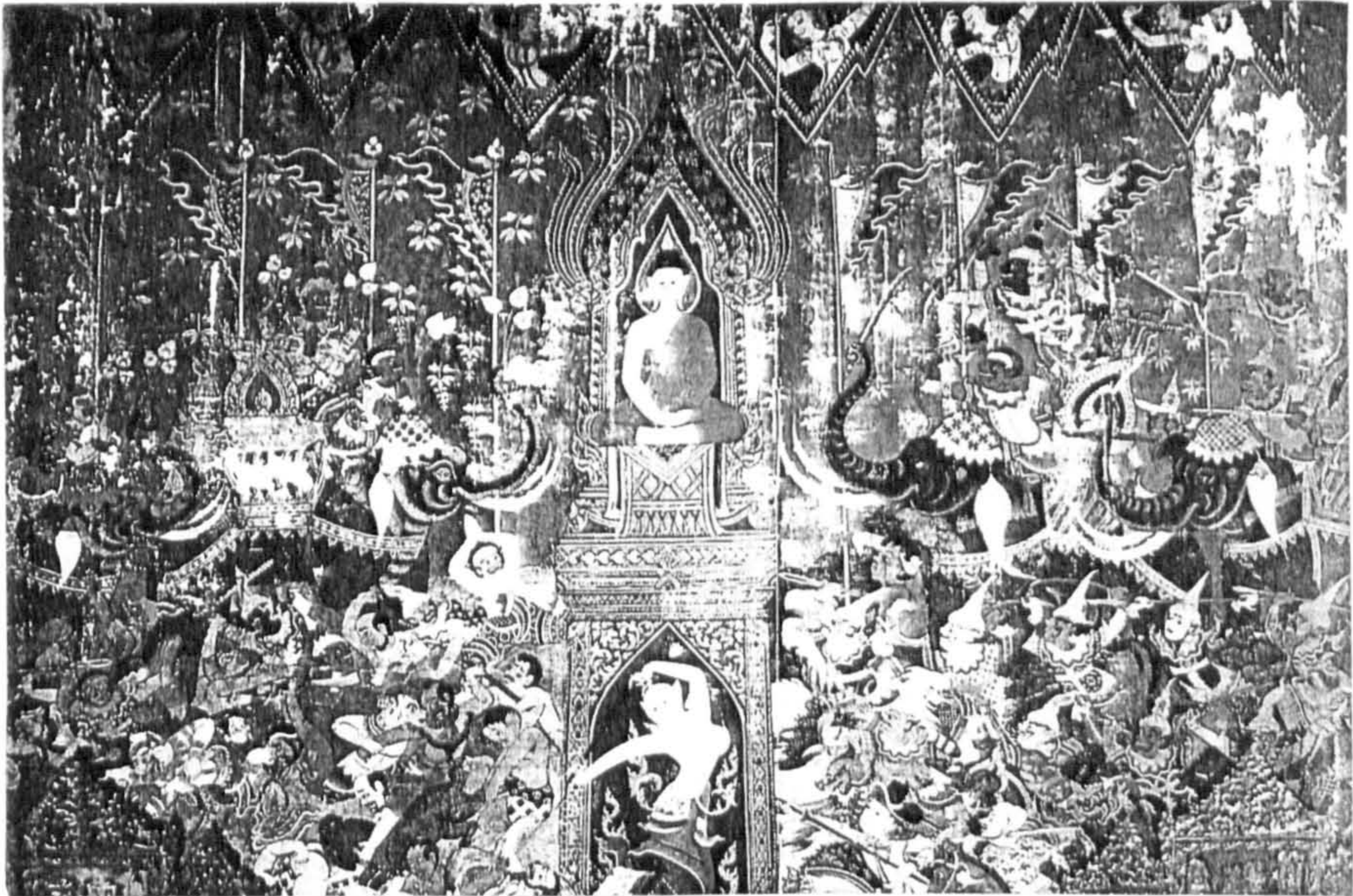


Fig. 3.4 Scene of Victory over *Māra*, *ubosot* of *Wat Dusitdaram*, Bangkok (source: Samerchai 1996)

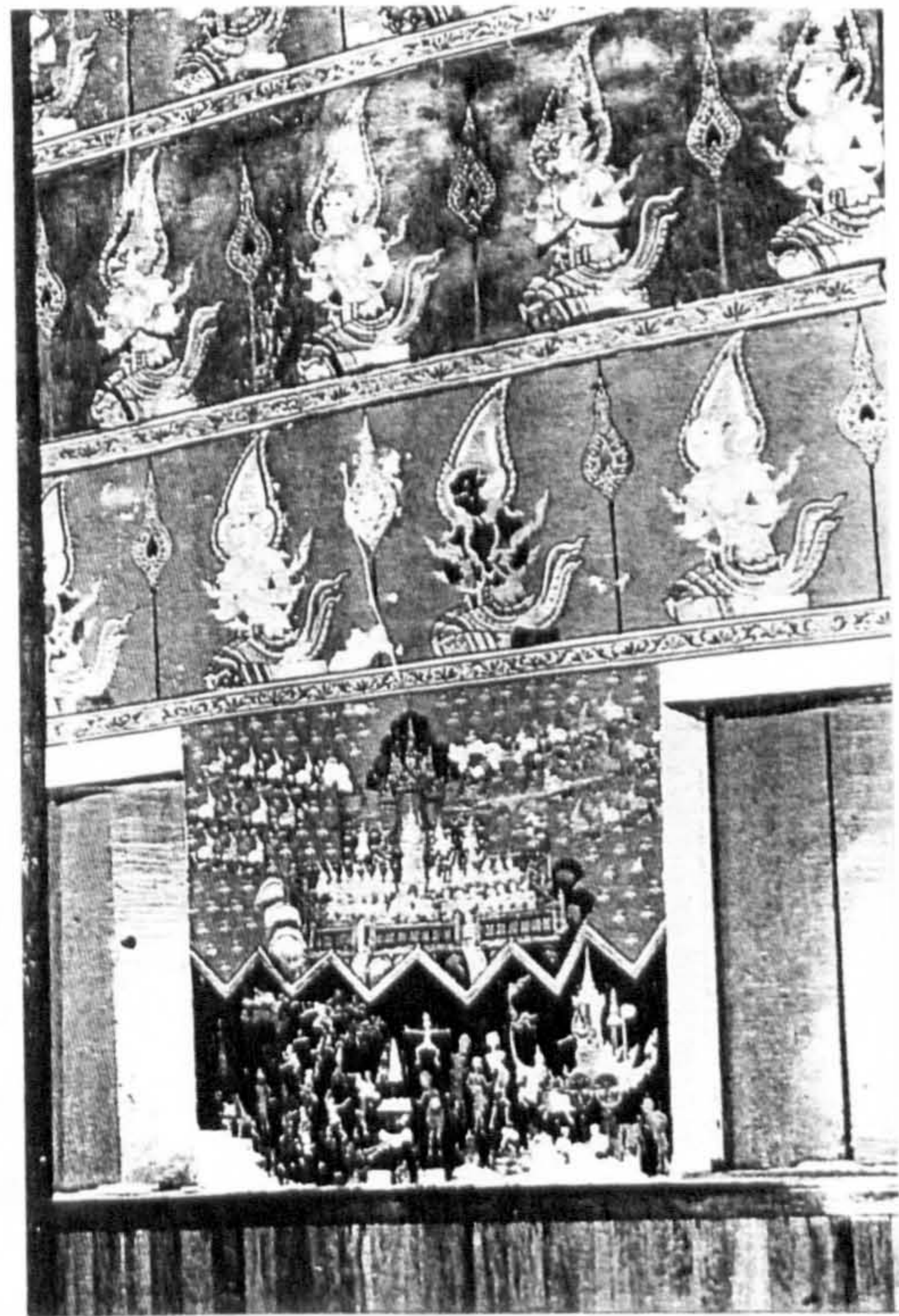


Fig. 3.5 Scene of Celestial Assembly, *ubosot* of *Wat Suwannaram*, Thonburi (source: Wray et al.1996)

The fact that these *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* Paintings¹¹ were produced over such a long period (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries) indicates that the paintings must have had some symbolic meaning concerning the space of an *ubosot* or *wihan*. The interpretation of this set of paintings forms the author's initial analysis, followed by a focus on the study of other structures in the compound of the royal *wat*.

It is certain that the scene of the Buddha's victory over *Māra* represents the event when *Māra* and his army disturbed the *Bodhisattva* and claimed his right over the Diamond Throne (*Vajrāsana*). The episode occurred when the *Bodhisattva* had made his vow to win emancipation and seated himself, in an effort to carry this out, under the Bodhi-tree. The composition and content of this painting is so obvious that it cannot be interpreted in any other way. As for the painting of the Celestial Assembly, Santi and Kamol describe the scene in the *ubosot* of *Wat Yai Suwannaram* in Phetchaburi, by pointing out the significant position of the celestial beings, who all face the presiding Buddha image in the hall. They conclude that the event occurred after the *Bodhisattva* had defeated *Māra* and attained the Enlightenment (Santi and Kamol 1981, 49-50). These two episodes indicate the possibilities for analysis of the **interconnections** between the various themes of the paintings. However, the themes are always studied separately¹² and the possibility that they are symbols denoting the concept of space has never before been proposed.

In the past, the *Cakkavāla* painting on the wall behind the principal Buddha image has been interpreted in various ways. Son explains that the painting is illustrated to provide a comparison of the Three Worlds: *Kāmabhūmi* (the Realm of Desire), *Rūpabhūmi* (the Realm of Form) and *Arūpabhūmi* (the Realm of the Formless) (Son 1983, 134-35). On the other hand, Samerchai points out that the *Māravijaya* and *Cakkavāla* paintings represents the choices of a *Mahāpurusa* (Great Man). He explains that most parts of the *Cakkavāla* painting represent the scene of *Kāmabhūmi*, including the four

¹¹ Hereafter this arrangement will be referred to as *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* Paintings, because *Pathamasambodhi kathā* is the best known text containing the story of the Life of the Buddha in Thai Buddhist history. The text was disseminated from Lanka (Ceylon) and its story was adopted as the theme of paintings and sculptures in Burma, Cambodia and Siam. The *Gandhavamsa* text mentions that the *Pathamasambodhi kathā* was composed in Lanka, but the original version is no longer known. The text is known to the Burmese as *Mālāsamkaravasatu* (Subhadhradis 1969, 5 in Santi and Kamol 1981, 13, 70). The *Pathamasambodhi* text referred to in this study is the version composed by Kromsometphra Paramanuchit Chinorot, a prince monk and the supreme patriarch during the reign of King Rama III. The text was composed in 1844 (see Paramanuchit 1962).

¹² See for examples Ringis (1990), Santi and Kamol (1981), and Boisselier (1976).

continents which are known to be the possession of a *cakkavatti* or universal monarch.¹³ The scene of the Buddha's victory over *Māra* may also represent another alternative meaning, a buddhahood of the *Mahāpurusa*, since a *Mahāpurusa* could be a buddha or a *cakkavatti*. The principal image always faces the scene of the *Māravijaya* painting because it represents the life of a *Bodhisattva*, who always chooses to renounce the mundane possession of the *cakkavatti*, represented by the scene of the *Cakkavāla* (only one of the three worlds; *Kāmahūmi*) behind the Buddha image (Samerchai 1996, 111-20).

The connection between the *Māravijaya* and the *Cakkavāla* paintings in Samerchai's interpretation above does not hold good for some exceptional instances of Lanna (northern Thailand) mural paintings. In Lanna practice, the scene of *Cakkavāla* is not always placed on the wall behind the principal Buddha image, but sometimes on the front wall and/or side walls as well. In addition, this explanation does not account for the significance of the Ten *Jātakas* mural, the Celestial Assembly and the Life of the Buddha murals. Many years ago, Griswold pointed out that the implication of the *Jātaka* paintings in Thai temples relates to the meaning of the place. In the painting, 'nothing is merely decorative, if flowers are seen falling from heaven, they are not there simply to fill a space, they are being thrown down by the gods to celebrate a miracle'. He then concluded that 'architecture, landscape, and genre scenes specify the type of place in which the action occurs' (Griswold 1972, 11). However, this notion has never been investigated to clarify the interconnectedness of the themes of this traditional painting. We will now attempt to do just that.

The connection of *Māravijaya*, Ten *Jātakas* and the Buddha's Life

The set of mural paintings mentioned above only becomes meaningful and shows harmonious interconnectedness when considered in the context of the events leading up to the Enlightenment of the Buddha and the Enlightenment itself. The course of events and the miraculous phenomena described in *Pathamasambodhi Kathā* are the original ideas to which the mural paintings give expression. In this context the

¹³ There are some episodes from the Life of the Buddha that are incorporated into the scene of *Cakkavāla* painting, usually miraculous events such as : the Descent from *Tāvātimsa* Heaven, the sermon in *Tāvātimsa* and the Twin miracle. These episodes are interpreted as the power of both a Buddha and *cakkavatti* (Samerchai 1996, 111-20), although the *cakkavatti* is not able to perform the miracle, unlike the Buddha.

symbolism can be understood and the spatial arrangement becomes meaningful.

The *Māravijaya* chapter in *Pathamasambodhi kathā* describes the story of the moment when *Māra* (the evil one) commanded his army to distract the *Bodhisattva*, so preventing him from attaining the Enlightenment (Paramanuchit 1962, 162-81). When *Māra* demonstrated his power to the *Bodhisattva*, all deities and gods attending were frightened and fled. None of them could stand before the evil one, and thus the *Bodhisattva* was left alone. The latter then perceived that only the Ten Virtues (*Dasapāramī*) could be his real supporters.¹⁴ He called the Ten Virtues to be his soldiers at arms. All of the virtues that he had cultivated during his past lives gathered around to be his followers. *Māra* exercised his powers and attempted to distract the *Bodhisattva*; however, on account of the power and splendour of the latter's Virtues, he remained surrounded by glory, and *Māra* could not inflict any harm. The evil one then claimed his right over the Diamond Throne, stating that he deserved that seat because of his merit (*Puñña*). The *Bodhisattva* steadily considered his own virtues, merits and his resolution that the Throne should remain his. The great man then pointed his right index finger to the earth to witness his virtues. With the great power of the *Bodhisattva*, there miraculously appeared a (*Dharanī*) goddess from the earth, who produced the water of dedication (*Dakkhinodaka*) by squeezing her hair to demonstrate the *Bodhisattva*'s virtues. The water became like a huge flood, which vanquished the *Māra* and caused his army to flee (Paramanuchit 1962, 181).

The painting of the Ten *Jātakas* and the *Māravijaya* in the *ubosot* and the *wihan* portray the above events. Selected scenes from the Buddha's past lives represent the symbols of his virtues, which protectively surrounded the *Bodhisattva*. Thus, the scenes from the Ten *Jātakas*, while not completely illustrated, are sufficient to symbolize the virtues. There is a strong symbolic connection between the *Māravijaya* mural on the front wall and the scenes of *Jātakas* on the side walls.

¹⁴ The final Ten stories of *Jātakas* have been accorded a special place of honour by Buddhists. In *Pāli* they are called *Dasajāti* (Ten Birth, or Ten Lives). These Ten *Jātakas* illustrate the virtues by which the future Buddha perfected himself and thus finally achieved the Enlightenment (see Wray et al. 1996). The Ten Virtues are: 1. *Nekkhamma*, renunciation; 2. *Viriya*, effort or endeavour; 3. *Mettā*, loving-kindness or friendship; 4. *Adhitthāna*, resolution or self determination; 5. *Paññā*, wisdom; 6. *Sīla*, morality; 7. *Khanti*, tolerance or endurance; 8. *Upekkhā*, equanimity; 9. *Sacca*, truthfulness; and 10. *Dāna*, giving or generosity or charity (Prayuddha 1985, 248-85).

The event of considering the Ten Virtues and calling them to witness ended when the *Bodhisattva* finally conquered *Māra*. The document about the restoration of *Wat Phra Srirattana satsadaram* (the Royal Chapel), composed by Phra Sriphuripricha in the reign of King Rama III, clearly explains the mural painting of the Buddha's victory over *Māra*: 'The *Bodhisattva* is sitting on the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-tree considering the *Samatimsapāramī*¹⁵ (Sriphuripricha 1973, 32). This traditional record supports the interpretation above that the *Māravijaya* painting is connected with the theme of *Jātakas* to represent the *Bodhisattva* considering the *Pāramī*.

Pathamasambodhi describes the moment when *Māra* and his followers were defeated when the evening sun was about to set in the west and the moon was rising in the east. The miracle occurred when a golden ray radiating from the body of the Great Man (*Mahāpurusa*) brightened this domain. The east direction was brightened by moonlight and the west was painted with sunlight. (Paramanuchit 1962, 185). The text further explains that:

(The Great Man) was sitting on the Throne, over which the white parasol (*chatta*) raised in the air that is the canopy of the Bodhi-tree, in the midst of a golden room of the firmament lit up by the light of the shining moon, and the ceiling adorned with crystals of star light. The space glittering with stars embraced by the curtain- the *cakkavāla* mountain range (Paramanuchit 1962, 186).

A *chatta*¹⁶ (parasol or umbrella), which is always found over the principal Buddha image in the hall of an *ubosot* or *wihan*, is the symbol of the Bodhi-tree. Irwin indicates that in many early depictions of the Buddhist *stūpa*, the axial pillar breaks out of the summit in the actual form of a tree, with the foliage resembling the parasol. The latter feature should serve as a reminder that *chatta* derives from the root *chad-*, 'shade, shelter'¹⁷ (Irwin 1980, 16). The analogy between the white parasol and the shade of the

¹⁵ To achieve the supreme perfection of virtue, one has to complete all three stages of practising the Ten Virtues: *Pāramī* (ordinary perfection), *Upapāramī* (Superior perfection) and *Paramathapāramī* (Supreme perfection). The completion of these three stages of practising the Ten virtues refers to the '*Samatimsapāramī* (The completion of thirty supreme virtues) (Prayuddha 1985, 284-85).

¹⁶ A '*chatta*' is an umbrella or multi-tiered umbrella, usually consisting of three, five or seven tiers.

¹⁷ Irwin further points out that 'the umbrella as a religio-magic symbol especially associated with the person of a king was ultimately identified with the shading branches of the sacred tree, image of the sacred centre or Axis Mundi from which the king derived cosmic power as ruler of the universe' (Irwin 1980, 16). See also the analogical study of the sacred tree, *chatta* and other symbols in Son (1992, 222-43).

Bodhi-tree in this passage of *Pathamasambodhi* clearly supports the thesis that the position of the principal image represents the Diamond Throne in the context of these paintings.

Another element in the hall of the *ubosot* and *wihan*, whose design derives from a passage of the *Pathamasambodhi*, is the ceiling star (Thai- *Dao phedan*), the flower or lotus-like ornament adorning the ceiling. This element represents the hall of the building as the sphere of the universe, glittering with stars, a ceiling of jewels. *Pathamasambodhi* elaborates the incident of the morning after the Enlightenment: 'In the sphere of the universe which is ravishingly embellished, beyond any description; even in the day time, the stars appearing as brightly as at night' (Paramanuchit 1962, 197). The ceiling star is thus part of the sequence of events from the twilight, when the *Bodhisattva* defeated *Māra*, until the moment of the miracle after the Enlightenment, when the sun was rising from the horizon.¹⁸

When approaching the first watch of the night (*pathamayāma*)¹⁹, the *Bodhisattva* meditated and put himself into a trance. He recollected the successive series of his former births.²⁰ *Pathamasambodhi* describes it as follows:

(He) recollected where he was and why he was sitting on this unconquered Bodhi Throne. (He) then saw that he came from the bank of Nairanjanā River where (he) threw the bowl, and recalled the place where (he) was offered the succulent boiled rice (Paramanuchi 1962, 187).

(He) recalled his birth in Lumbinī Park, back in his mother's womb, back to the time (he) was born as Prince Vessatara, since when (he) had practised the virtues, back to the time when he made a miraculous resolution to attain the state of buddhahood at the feet of Dīpankara Buddha,²¹ (he) recalled

¹⁸ Anuvit (1979, 22-23; 1983, 331) suggests that the positions of mural paintings and the adornment of ceiling stars provide a synthesis of the sphere of universe within the hall of the *ubosot* of Wat Khongkharam. However, he does not explain how the theme of the painting and the sequence of events relate, conceptually.

¹⁹ In India, the night time is divided into three periods: *Pathamayāma* (first period), *Majhimayāma* (middle period) and *Paccimayāma* (last period) (Boisselier 1994, 59-60).

²⁰ *Pubbenivāsānussati-ñāna* : knowledge of the remembrance of a former existence (Prayuddha 1985, 282).

²¹ Dīpankara was the first of the twenty-four Buddhas. It was during the time of Dīpankara Buddha that the ascetic Sumedha, who later became Gotama Buddha, first declared his intention to become an aspirant to Enlightenment (Malalasekera 1960 Vol. I, 1087). It was predicted by Dīpankara Buddha that he would become a Buddha in this world. This prediction was confirmed by each of the twenty-three intervening Buddhas, Dīpankara's successors (Boisselier 1994, 29).

thoroughly all four periods of the immense duration *Kappas*²² (four *asankheyya* (incalculable) and one hundred thousand *kappas*) (Paramanuchit 1962, 188).

The mural paintings which represent the stories of the Buddha's Life, the Ten *Jātakas* and the other *Jātakas* are symbols of the events that the *Bodhisattva* recollected from his former existence during the first night watch. Depictions of the Buddhas of the past may be included. In particular, the stories of the twenty-four Buddhas who predicted that the *Bodhisattva* would attain the buddhahood are part of the stories of the past lives of the Gotama Buddha. It seems that the figures of the Buddhas of the past also imply the stories of the past lives of the *Bodhisattva*, since the details of the episodes of each *Jātaka* do not need to be represented. However, the episodes after the Enlightenment are always included in paintings of the Life of the Buddha, and are sequentially depicted to end at the *Parinibbāna* event.²³

When approaching the second watch, the *Bodhisattva* acquired the supreme heavenly eye.²⁴ As the third watch drew on, he achieved supreme mastery of the trance state, the knowledge of the exhaustion of mental intoxicants (*Āsavakkhaya-Ñāna*, the Tenth *Ñāna*). When the dawn broke, the light painted the east horizon, and thus the *Bodhisattva* attained the Enlightenment and became the Buddha (Paramanuchit 1962, 190-93).

²² A 'Kappa' is a cosmic age. One *kappa* is the amount of time that is involved by giving a simile. 'There is a mountain that is one *yojana* high and has a circumference of three *yojana*, and once every hundred years the mountain is wiped with a celestial cloth as soft as smoke; when the mountain has become worn down so that it is level with the rest of the ground, then it can be said that one *Kappa* is over' (Reynolds and Reynolds (trans.) 1982, 83). A *yojana* equals about ten miles (Reynolds and Reynolds (trans.) 1982, 67 n. 10).

²³ Son's study of Lanna (Northern Thailand) mural paintings found that some *ubosots* and *wihans* which contain the painting of the Life of the Buddha end at the episode of the Enlightenment. For example: *Wat Buakkhokluang*, *Wat Padat* and *Wat Thakham* in Chiangmai (Son 1985, 56-57). In addition, the Lanna *Pathamasambodhi* text (Debindarassa 1992), which was composed ten years before the version of Paramanuchit (1962), ends the story at the First sermon.

²⁴ *Cutūpapāta-ñāna*: knowledge of the decease and rebirth of Beings (Prayuddha 1985, 281-282).

The Celestial Assembly and *Cakkavāla* Painting

At the moment of the Enlightenment, there were many miraculous happenings.

Pathamasambodhi describes:

The earth measured 240,000 *yojana*, shook and echoed. The miraculous event caused the *Meru* Mountain to move, the peak leaning as if to pay homage (Paramanuchit 1962, 194).

All miracles cause a commotion, the universe appeared as one which could be seen from the lowest part of the earth to the heights of *Brahmaloka*. The spot as tiny as a tip of a yak's hair, *devas* and other celestials created their bodies equal to that of molecules. They assembled there in a group of ten, some twenty, some thirty up to 100, 1,000, 10,000, 1000,000 and *koti* (ten million) (Paramanuchit 1962, 197).

In the gathering there were also other celestial beings, such as *Yakkhas* (demons), *Gandhabbas* (heavenly musicians), *Asuras*, *Nāgas*, *Supannas* (*Garuda*), *Kinnaras* (birds with human heads) and *Kinnarīs* (*Kinnara* women). They all attended and saluted the Buddha.

There appeared rows of heavenly *chattas* between which were *chamons*,²⁵ between the *chamons* were lines of heavenly banners of victory, between the banners were flags, all alternately lined up, profusely seen surrounding the Diamond Throne (Paramanuchit 1962, 198).

The scene of celestial assembly, which is always painted on the top section of the side walls of the building, certainly represents the event above. It is also found that not only the figures of deities, but also the other celestial beings such as *Asuras* and *Yakkhas*, are depicted alternately with heavenly flags and *chamons*. The mural paintings in the *ubosots* of *Wat Suwannaram* (dated early nineteenth century) in Thonburi (Fig. 3.5) and *Wat Yaisuwannaram* (dated seventeenth century) in Phetchaburi are good examples of this.

The description clearly specifies that the miraculous event opened up the universe so that it could be seen from the bottom of the world to *Brahmaloka*.²⁶ The *Cakkavāla*

²⁵ A 'Chamon' is a whisk made of a Yak's tail. It was adopted as the Thai insignia, not in the form of Indian whisks, but in the fan-like form with a long handle (Yupha 1996, 43).

²⁶ The *Brahmaloka* is the sixteen *Brahma* realms in the *Rūpabhūmi* (the Realm of Form) and *Arūpabhūmi* (the Realm of the Formless) (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. 2, 336).

painting behind the principal Buddha image possibly represents this miraculous incident. The traditional pattern of the *Cakkavāla* painting usually depicts a part of *Kāmahūmi* (the Realm of Desire) and some heavenly palaces which can be identified as *Brahma* realms. The pattern has been maintained from the oldest group, such as in the *ubosot* of *Wat Chongnonsi*, dated as the late Ayutthaya period, to the early nineteenth century Bangkok period (Samerchai 1996, 114). The figure of sixteen *vimānas* (heavenly palaces) on top of the *Cakkavāla* painting in the *ubosot* of *Wat Khongkharam* at Ratchaburi might signify the sixteen *Brahma* realms of *Rūpabhūmi* (the Realm of Form). The document on the restoration of *Wat Phra Srirattana Satsadaram* (the Royal Chapel), which was written in the reign of King Rama III, suggests that the painting behind the Emerald Buddha Image started from *Brahmaloka* and progressed down to the whole of Mount *Meru* (Sriphuripricha 1973, 31). Accordingly, the *Cakkavāla* painting is probably not intended to symbolize the building as Mount *Meru*,²⁷ but to represent the miraculous phenomenon in order to connect it with the other themes of the paintings that have been discussed above.

²⁷ Samerchai interprets the *Cakkavāla* painting as the means of symbolizing the building as Mount *Meru* (Samerchai 1996, 155).

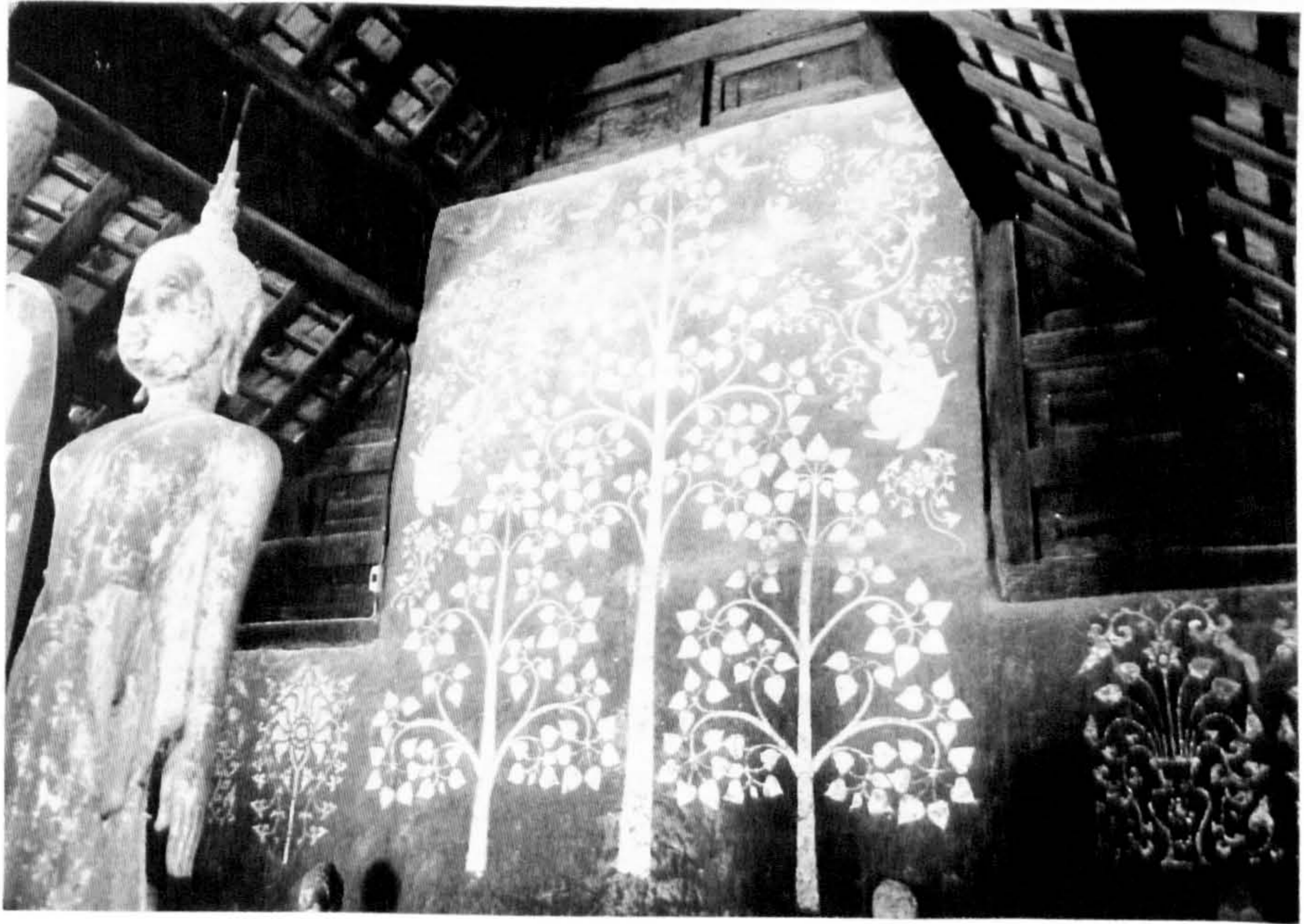


Fig. 3.6 Scene of Bodhi-tree, *Wihan* Namtam, *Wat* Phrathat Lampangluang, Lampang

Interesting evidence from some of the Lanna (Thai northern school) mural paintings and gilded motifs apparently supports the same idea. Instead of the usual traditional *Cakkavāla* painting on the back wall behind the presiding Buddha image, there is a picture of the great Bodhi-tree. This can be seen, for instance, in the *wihan* Namtam of *Wat* Phrathat Lampangluang (Fig. 3.6), the *wihan* of *Wat* Pongyangkhok and the *wihan* of *Wat* Laihin, in Lampang. The works date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Suraphon 1997, 100-09). The *Cakkavāla* painting in the *wihan* Namtam is on the north wall, while in the *wihan* of *Wat* Nasaeng in the same province (painted in 1937) it is on the east wall, opposite the principal image (Phanuphong 1997, 40).

Some of the *Cakkavāla* paintings may contain episodes of the Descent from *Tāvātimsa* Heaven and the Twin Miracle.²⁸ The two incidents constitute the supporting evidence that identifies the *Cakkavāla* painting as a symbol of the miracle, because these two episodes also caused the same phenomenon at the moment when the *Bodhisattva* was attaining the Enlightenment. The episode of the Descent from *Tāvātimsa* is represented by the mural of the Buddha descending from heaven to earth by way of

²⁸ See the aspect of the Twin Miracle in appendix 5.

a triple staircase made of gold, silver and jewels. This scene is depicted in conjunction with the *Cakkavāla*, where at the top of *Meru* mountain, the Buddha is shown preaching to his mother. Just after the Buddha descended from *Tāvātimsa* and while he was performing the Twin Miracle, the heavenly worlds, the human world and the nether world became visible to each other and all of the 10,000 *lokadhātus* (world system). The Celestial Assembly happened there also, when the Buddha performed the Twin Miracle at *Sāvātthi* before making his way to *Tāvātimsa*. *Pathamasambodhi* explains that incident:

At the instant, the earth echoed and the miracle happened as in the time of the Enlightenment. Multitudes of celestial beings lead by Sakka worshipped with an uncountable fragrance of heavenly blossoms (Paramanuchit 1962, 418-19).

As a result, the *Cakkavāla* painting is possibly the symbol of this miraculous phenomenon. It shows a clear view from *Brahmaloka* down to the Realm of Hells, and it is presented as seen through all 10,000 world systems.

The issues which have been interpreted indicate that the painting of the Buddha's victory over *Māra*, the scene of *Cakkavāla*, the Ten *Jātakas*, the Buddha's Life and the Celestial Assembly are connected to identify the position of the principal Buddha image as the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-tree, the centre of *Jambudīpa*. Phra Sriphuripricha, in his document on the restoration of the Royal Chapel, describes this arrangement as the *Pathamasambodhi* painting (Sriphuripricha 1973, 32). Therefore, the *Pathamasambodhi* text might have been the reference text for the painting since at least the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, for some specific features of the buildings of *ubosot* and *wihan*, it has been distinctively interpreted and arranged in some detail of both theme and design. The detail of the episodes from the text might be modified: for instance, only a few stories may be selected from the Ten *Jātakas*. The favourite one is the last *Jātaka*, the story of *Vessantara*.

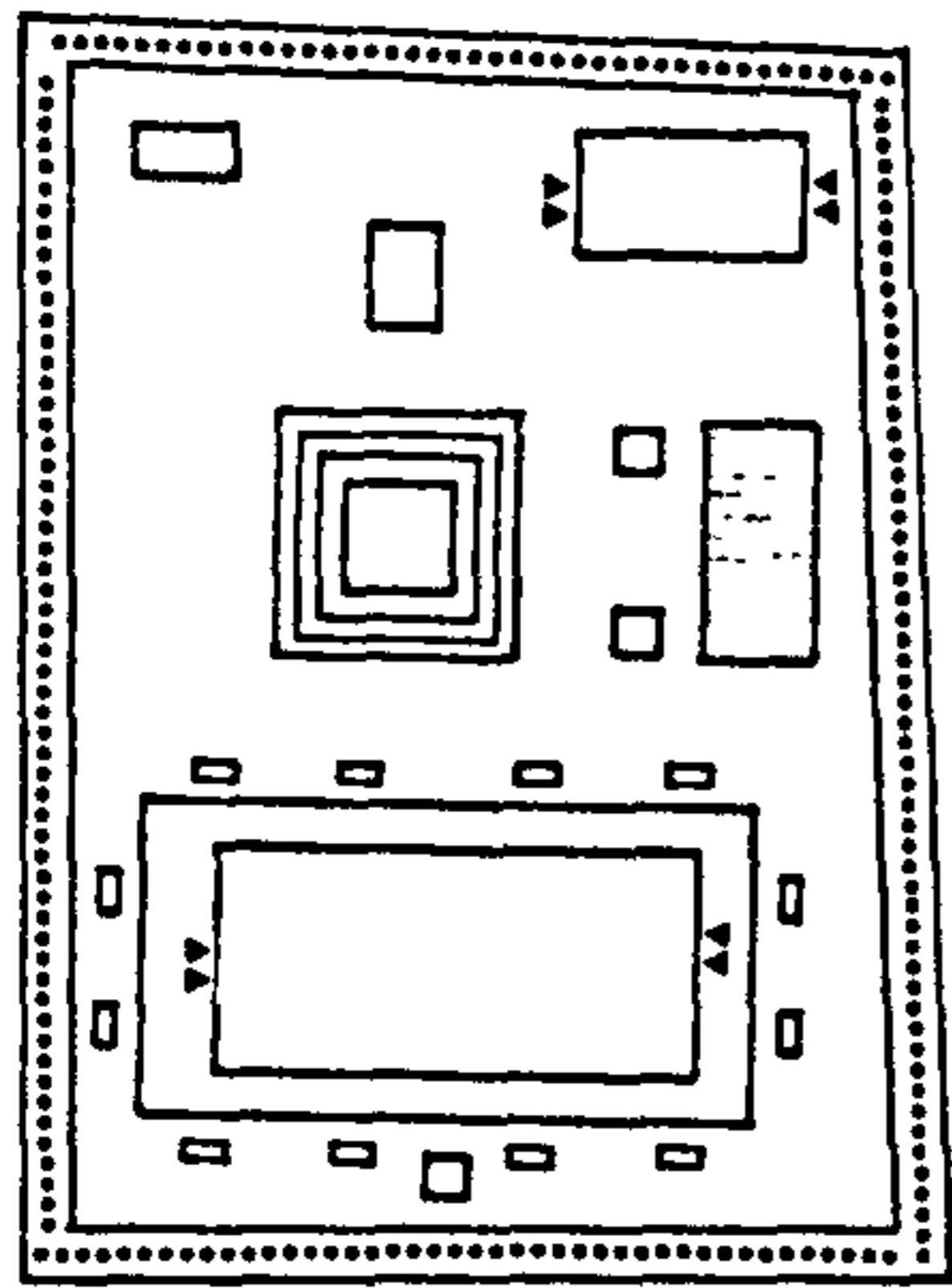
In the *Traiphum* cosmography, the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-tree is the centre of *Majjhimadesa*, and *Majjhimadesa* is the central region of *Jambudīpa* (Thampricha 1992, 250). All the evidence that has been studied substantiates the concept of The Diamond Throne and the Bodhi-tree. As a result, most of the principal Buddha images in *ubosot* and *wihan* in the Thai tradition use the gesture of *Māravijaya* (*Bhūmisaparsa*

mudrā) or *smādhi* (*Dhyāni mudrā*), to indicate the moment and position when the *Bodhisattva* defeated *Māra* and attained the Enlightenment.

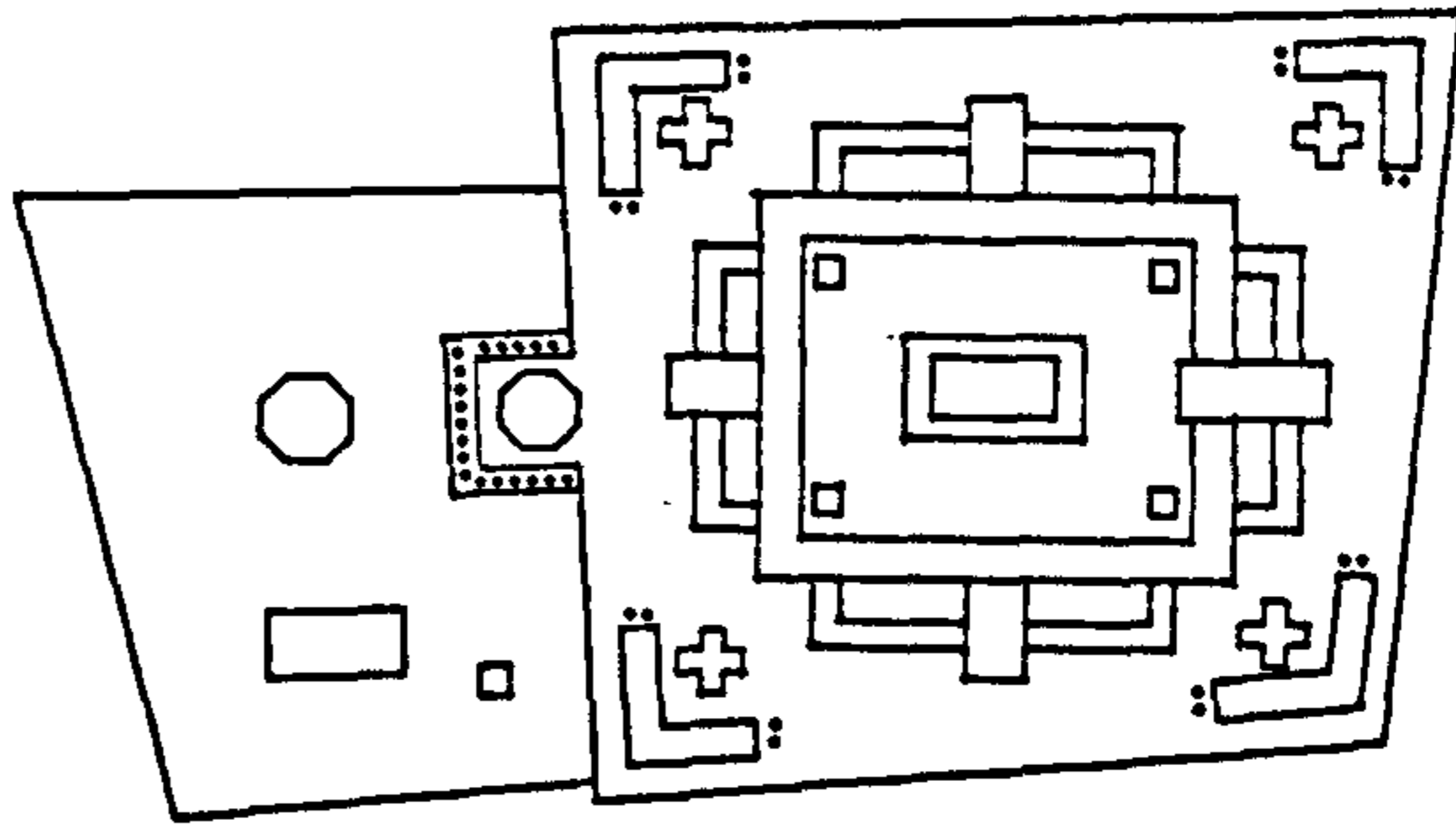
Because the *ubosot* or *wihan* are just two of many structures in the sanctuary area (*phutthawat*) of a *wat*, this interpretation will help to identify the concept of buildings which contain a similar set of paintings, as the symbol of the Diamond Throne at the centre of *Jambudīpa*. This traditional pattern is also a model for any development of the symbolic planning of the particular *wats* in this study.

3.2.2 *Ramakian* and Brahmanistic Elements

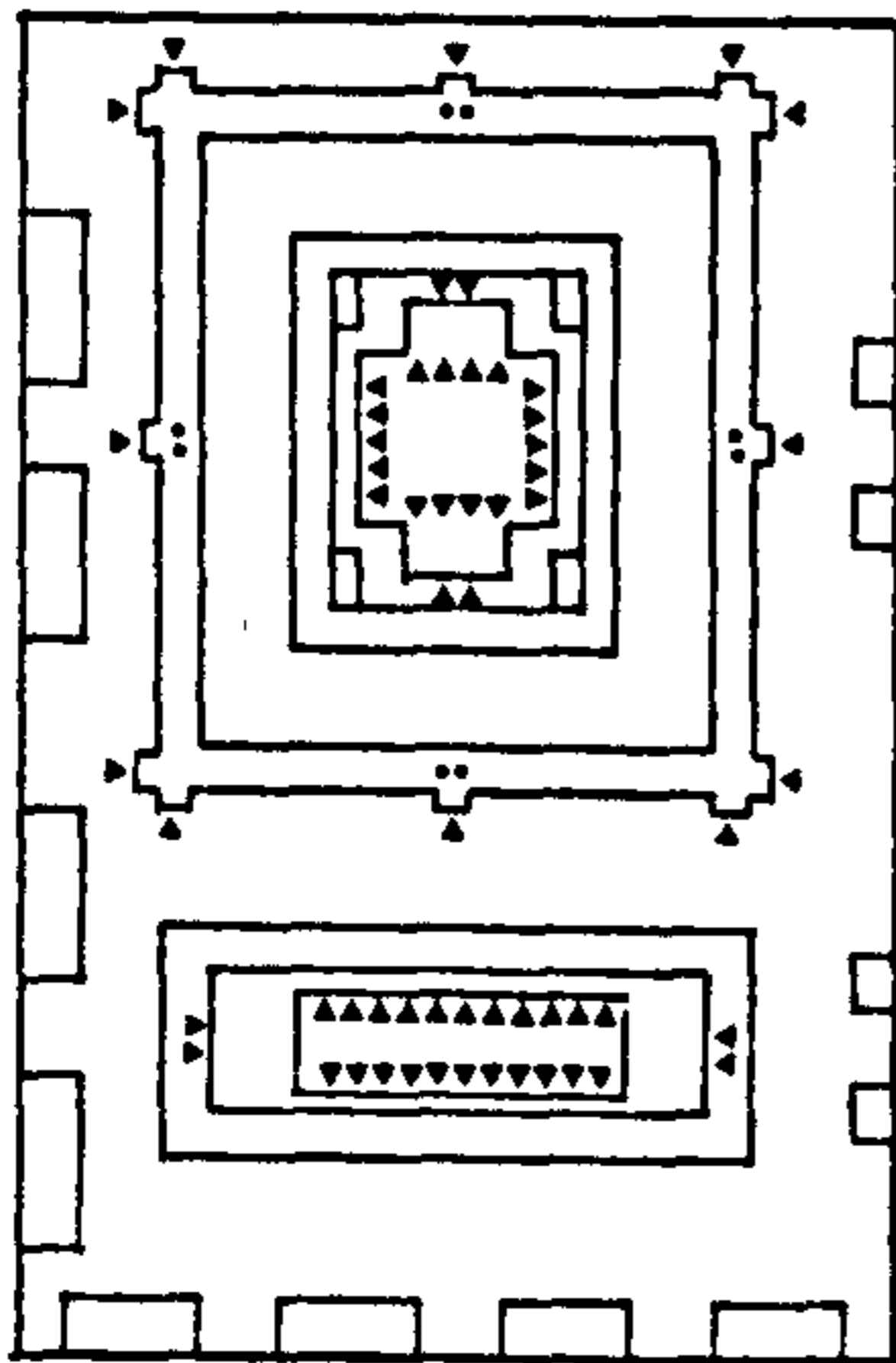
In the two most important *wats*, the Royal Chapel and *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I, the story of the *Ramakian* epic is depicted in the sanctuary area (*phutthawat*). In the Royal Chapel, the *Ramakian* epic was painted on the wall of the gallery enclosing all the structures, while in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* it was illustrated in the gallery surrounding the principal *chedi*. The *Ramakian* is a non-Buddhist text and has its origin in Brahmanism. Since both the *Ramakian* and other Brahmanistic elements appear in Thai Royal Buddhist architecture, their significance for the concept of space should be investigated (Fig. 3.7)



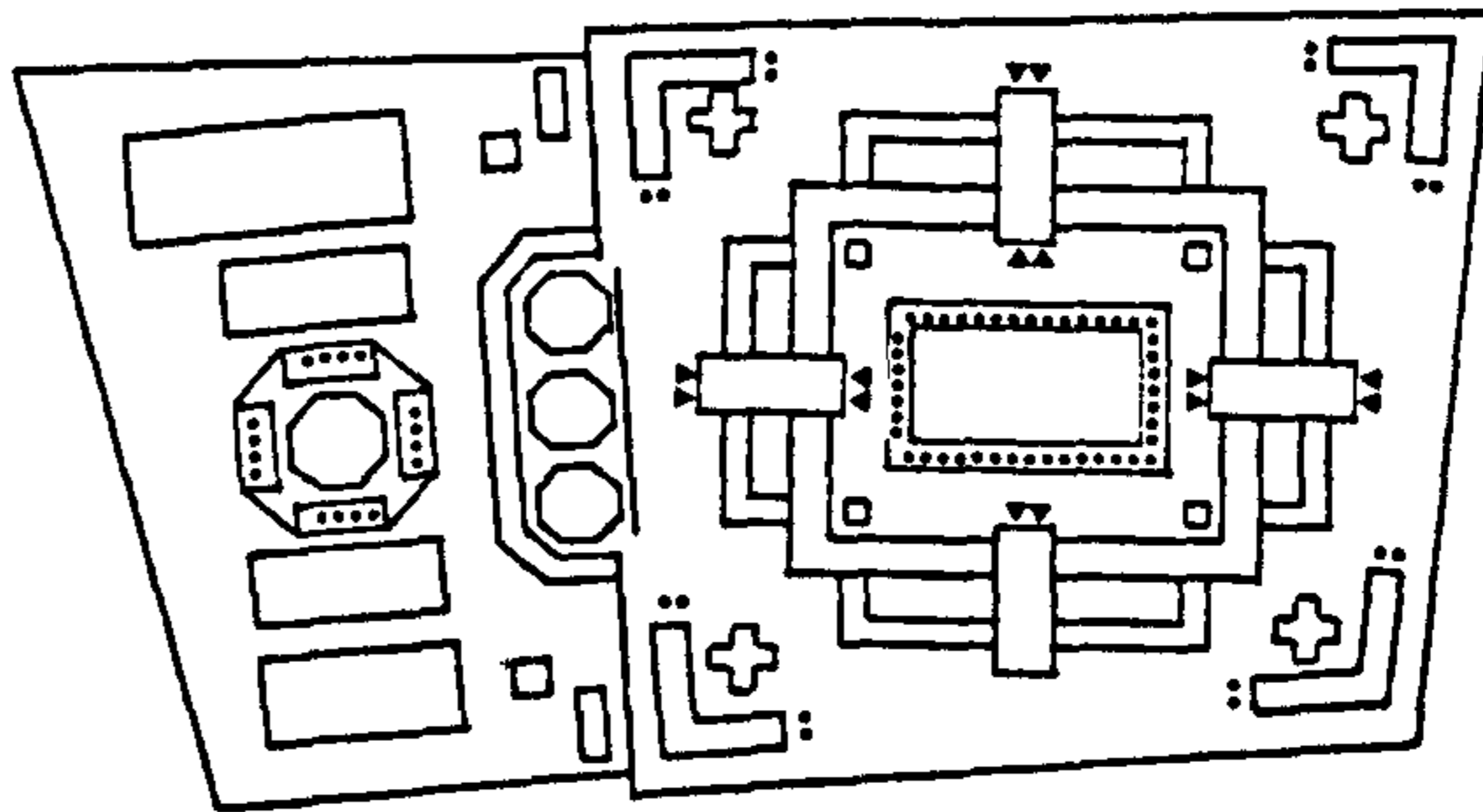
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Fig. 3.7 Diagram of positions of principal gods and *Ramakian*; 1) The Royal Chapel; 2) Wat Phra Chetuphon (Rama I); 3) Wat Suthat; 4) Wat Phra Chetuphon (Rama III)
 ▲▲ = principal gods; ●● = *Ramakian*

The religious system of *Theravāda* Buddhism in Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia, Laos and Siam is not simply a unitary Buddhist notion: there are some non-Buddhist components which were practised concomitantly. The Brahmanistic component is a prominent one (Krisch 1977, 214-15). Even in the Sinhalese *Theravāda* Buddhism, which has been referred to as the South-East Asian *Theravāda* Buddhism archetype, Brahmanistic entities are always integrated into Buddhist temples.²⁹ In the Great Royal Temple of Lankātilaka in Kandy, the inscription of King Bhuvanaikabāhu IV in 1344 A.D. states that the King built five shrines for the gods, in addition to the principal Buddha image seated on the Diamond Throne with his back to the image of the illustrious Great Bodhi-tree. The gods installed in the five shrines were: 'Their Lordships *Kihirāli-Upulvan*, who has assumed (the task of) the protection of Lanka (Ceylon), *Sumana*, *Vibhāsana*, *Ganapati*, *Khandhakumāra* and others, together with images of their divine consorts'.³⁰ Paranavitana identifies *Kihirāli-Upulvan* with the God Vishnu (Paranavitana 1953 in Evers 1968, 453). Over all, statues of the gods have usually been found both in separate shrines located in the same precinct as Buddhist temples, and in the same shrines as Buddha images (Evers 1968, 543).³¹

There is no evidence of the *Ramakian* manuscript surviving from the Ayutthaya period. The mural painting of *Ramakian* has been found only in a pavilion built at *Wat Phutthaisawan*, Ayutthaya. The building was built for the Somdet Phraphuttha Khosačhan in the reign of King Phetracha of Ayutthaya (who reigned between 1688 and 1702) (Santi and Kamol 1981, 55). However, it is located outside the precinct of the sanctuary area (*phutthawat*). In many Angkorian Temples, the *Ramayana* or the Saga of Rāma is depicted in part of their structures (Groslier 1957, 213 in Velder 1968, 33). The most interesting case is the Angkor Wat, in which the *Ramayana* is depicted on the wall of the gallery enclosing the central structure. Velder also asserts that the saga of *Rāma* is one of the sacred epics that the Siamese adopted from the Khmer (Velder 1968, 33).

²⁹ Evers categorizes the religious shrines of Lanka into two systems: the *Vihāra* (Buddhist temple) and the *Dēvāle* (temple for gods). The two systems have existed side by side throughout Sinhalese history. An especially close cooperation was achieved before or during the Gampola period in the fourteenth century. In the *Mahāvamsa* text, a Buddhist chronicle, *dēvāles* are frequently mentioned from the fourth century A.D. onwards (Evers 1972, 3, 10).

³⁰ Evers (1968, 542-43); cited Copperplate B1, Sinhalese rock inscription of Bhuvanaikabāhu, IV, line 4-5.

³¹ Rahule states that temples for gods already existed in the third century B.C., together with the *Vihāra* Buddhist monasteries (Rahula 1956, 43 in Evers 1972, 10).

During the Ayutthaya era, *Ramakian* was a sacred piece of literature in that the name of Rāma and his capital were incorporated into the name of the kings and the name of the Kingdom. Moreover, Rāma and some other names in the epic are referred to in the words of the oath of allegiance (Thai- *Ong kan chaeng nam*) as the witness gods in the allegiance ceremony (Nithi 1986, 31-32). After Ayutthaya was destroyed by the Burmese, King Taksin (who reigned between 1767 and 1782) re-established the kingdom at Thonburi, and also commissioned the revival of the Rāma play (Velder 1986, 36). In the Bangkok period, the *Ramakian* epic was re-written in different forms in every reign from Rama I to Rama IX (except Rama VIII) (Niyada, pers. Comm.).

Niyada's study of Rama I's version of the *Ramakian* suggests that the epic has its origin in the text of 'the Legend of Vishnu's Twenty *Avatāras*' or '*Khamphi Narai yisip pang*' (Niyada 1997, 115).³² This is a Brahmanistic text which contains the story of the genesis of the principal Brahmanistic gods, together with the story of Vishnu's incarnations. The text is dated not later than the reign of King Prasatthong of Ayutthaya (1629-1652) (Niyada 1997, 15-16).³³ Moreover, the content of the text is the source of the iconographic illustration of the principal gods (*Tamra thewarup lae thewada noppakho*) (FAD 1992). Some of these principal gods are depicted on the window and door panels of the *ubosot* and the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat*, which were built in the reign of King Rama III (Niyada 1997, 89,114). As a result, the *Ramakian* painting and the figure of the principal gods are an interpretation of the Nārāyana Text and are put in royal *wats*.

The arrangement of the principal gods in Thai Buddhist *wats* seems to appear not only in the central structure of the compound. For example, the icon of Nārāyana riding on *Garuda*³⁴ appears on the pediments of the *wihan* and also on every gate of the gallery of *Wat Suthat*. In *Wat Phra Chetuphon* it appears on the pediments of the four directional *wihans*, while the scenes of *Ramakian* are depicted on the pediments of the L-shaped *wihans*. The arrangement suggests that the icon may appear on any building

³² Vishnu is always referred to by the name Nārāyana (Thai- *Narai*) in the Thai tradition. Hereafter the text will be referred to as Nārāyana Text.

³³ The Nārāyana text referenced in this study is the version scribed in 1854. It has been published as an appendix in Niyada (1997, 122-39).

³⁴ *Garuda* is represented, generally, with wings, human arms, vulture's legs and a curved, beaklike nose. *Garuda* is the vehicle, or *vāhana*, of the God Vishnu (Zimmer 1963, 75-76).

in the *phutthawat* area. The icon of Nārāyana riding on *Garuda* can be found adorning the pediments of buildings which were not built by the king. It also appears on the pediments of buildings in the *wats* of the Front Palace (*Wang Na*), such as *Wat Chanasonkhram* in Bangkok, which was built in the reign of King Rama I.

The relationship between *Ramakian*, the iconography of principal gods and the Nārāyana Text indicates that *Ramakian* not only conveys meaning related to the Siamese monarchical institution, with its implication of the king as an incarnation of the God Vishnu or Nārāyana, but it also integrates its original significance as a symbol of the Brahmanistic gods. The text is probably as important as the *Traiphum* text of Buddhism, the main component of Siamese religion. It mentions the universe and Mount *Meru* as the creation of the God Phra Paramesvara (Siva). Before that creation, Phra Paramesvara created the God Brahma and Nārāyana in order for them to be contributors to the creation. They created Mount *Meru* as the place where gods and deities would reside (Niyada 1997, 123-24).

The icon of Vishnu or Nārāyana mounted on *Garuda*, which is always depicted on the main pediments of an *ubosot* or *wihan* in the royal *wat* is certainly interconnected with both the paintings of principal gods and *Ramakian*. Its real meaning possibly refers to the Nārāya text, which describes the story of the Brahmanistic gods who protect the world, rather than the mere symbolic representation of the kings of Siam. Therefore, they are the symbols of the protecting gods in the Nārāyana text and the symbolic analogy between the divine and the monarchy. The inclusion of the icon of Nārāyana on pediments of Thai Buddhist architecture has been practiced since the Ayutthaya period. The case of the *ubosot* of *Wat Naphramen* at Ayutthaya is an example of this (Fig. 3.8). The icon of Nārāyana mounted on *Garuda* is placed at the centre of the pediment, surrounded by other deities.

The figure of Nārāyana mounted on *Garuda* has also been used as the Royal Seal of the Siamese Kingdom since Ayutthaya, and it is an institutional sign. In the Bangkok period, apart from the Nārāyana seal each king has his own individual emblem.³⁵

³⁵ The individual emblem of Rama I is *Unalom*, Rama II's is the icon of *Garuda* capturing *Nāga*, Rama III's is the *Prasat* and Rama IV, King Mongkut used a Crown as his emblem (So 1984, 15). These emblems were stamped on the cover of *Tripitaka* manuscripts to indicate in which reign the scriptures were scribed or restored (Kongkaeo and Wirat 1984,16).

However, no evidence can be found to suggest that the Kings Rama I, Rama II and Rama III used their own emblems to stamp royal documents (So 1984, 7). Equally, it seems that they never applied their individual emblems to the pediments of any building. All their emblems appear as part of the adornment of buildings made by their successors, initially by King Mongkut. Therefore, the scene of *Ramakian*, the figure of the gods from the Nārāyana text and the icon of Nārāyana mounted on *Garuda*, however they are represented in the precinct of the royal *wat*, may be a symbol of the omnipresence of the gods who protect the world, the compound of the *wat* or even the Siamese Kingdom. Apart from the system of the *Traiphum*, these elements form another concept in the same precinct of a *wat*. They will be considered only part connected to the *Traiphum* in the interpretation of the symbolic planning concerning the *Traiphum* concept in Thai royal *wats*.

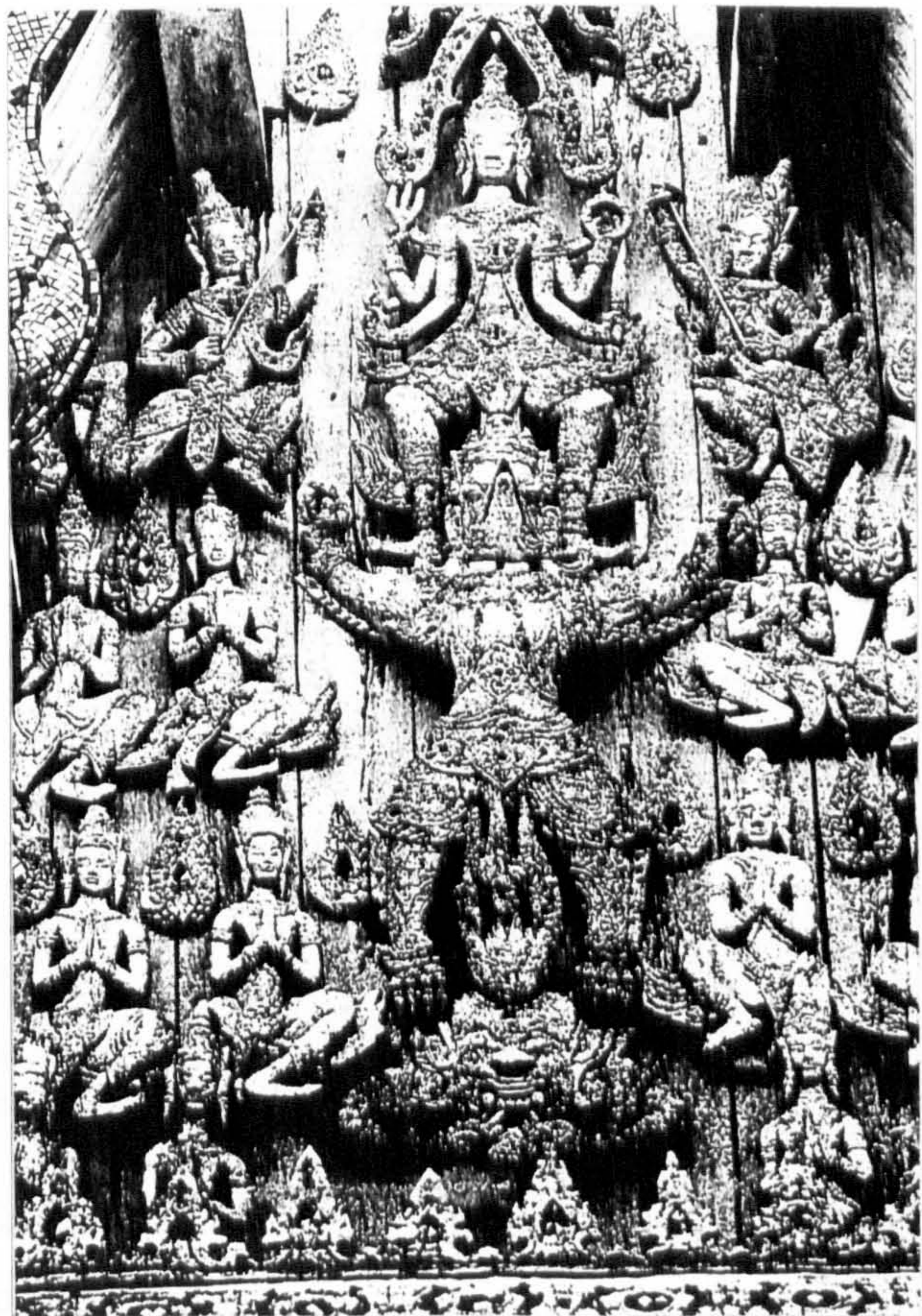


Fig. 3.8 Vishnu mounted on *Garuda*, *ubosot*, *Wat Naphramen*, Ayutthaya (source: Anuvit 1978)

3.3 THE ROYAL WATS OF KING RAMA I

Having studied the symbolic concept of the patterns of Thai traditional mural paintings and the historical account of the reign of King Rama I, this section will analyse the symbolic planning of the royal wats of King Rama I, *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel. The analysis will draw upon an interpretation of the concept of the *Traiphum* cosmography in the symbolic planning of a particular building and its whole compound. The other main concepts which may relate to and be incorporated in the system of the *Traiphum* will be discussed in Chapter 5.

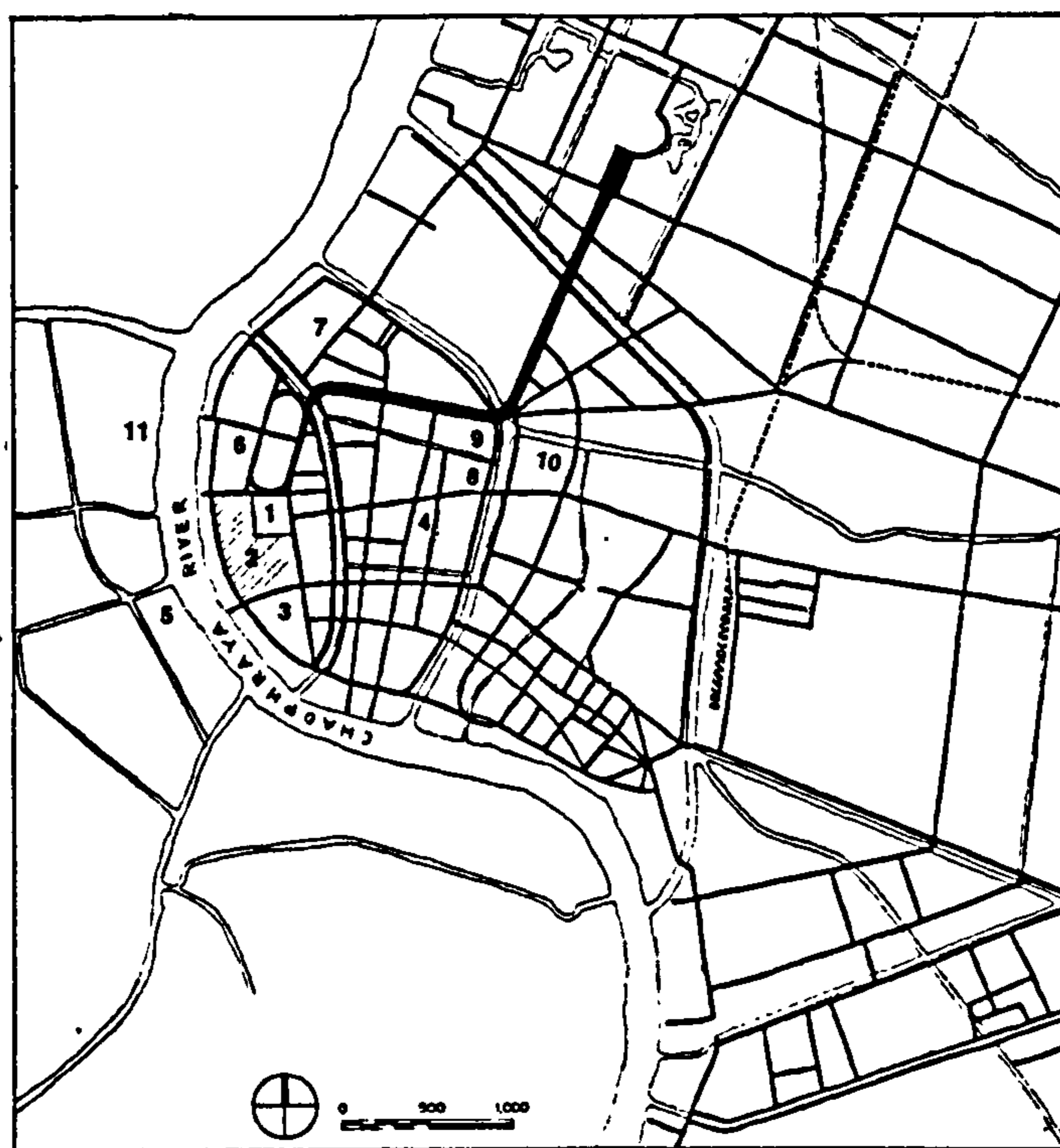


Fig. 3.9 Map of Bangkok

- 1) The Royal Chapel; 2) The Grand Palace;
- 3) *Wat Phra Chetuphon*; 4) *Wat Suthat*; 5) *Wat Arun*;
- 6) *Wat Mahathat*; 7) *Wat Chanasongkhram*; 8) *Wat Thapthidaram*;
- 9) *Wat Ratchanatdaram*; 10) *Wat Saket*; 11) Thonburi

In the reign of King Rama I, the Royal Chapel (*Wat Phra Srirattana Satsadaram*) in the precinct of the Grand Palace was the only newly established wat (Fig. 3.9). The Royal Chronicle of the First Reign states that Rama I restored eleven old wats (Thiphakorawong 1996, 214). Apart from the restorations he commissioned, many other old wats were restored by other members of royal family and nobility. No less than twenty-nine wats in total were restored or rebuilt in his reign (Phiphat 1982, 151). However, the two most important ones were *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal

Chapel. *Wat Mahasutthawat*³⁶ (*Mahāsuddhāvāsa*) is another significant one, but only its foundations and the principal Buddha image were completed by the time Rama I's reign ended (Wichitkankoson 1973, 2-5).

3.3.1 *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I (1788-1801)

History and Original Plan

Before the restoration of King Rama I, there had been a *wat* on the site of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* since the Ayutthaya period. It was significantly restored again by King Rama III in the early nineteenth century. The most important source which gives the details of Rama I's plan of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* is his inscription in the rear chamber of the east *wihan* of the *wat* (FAD 1974,1-8). The present conditions of all the structures are mostly the result of the restorations of Kings Rama III and Rama IV (Figs. 3.10, 3.11). However, a number of symbolic elements such as mural paintings, statues and other adornments have been destroyed during later restoration programmes. Apart from some of the remaining symbolic elements, which are today in an incomplete state, the evidence of the original idea of its planning and elaboration by Kings Rama I and Rama III is now only available from written sources: the inscriptions of Kings Rama I and Rama III, and the 1845 poem of His Royal Highness Kromsomedphra Paramanuchit Chinorot.³⁷ Information from the inscription of King Rama I and the present state of all structures in the compound of the *phutthawat* provide an image of the original plan and the symbolic elements of *Wat Chetuphon* of King Rama I as follows. (See Fig. 3.12 and Table 3.1)

The inscription of King Rama I (FAD 1974,1-8) tells us that in 1788 the King visited the old *Wat Photharam* (*Bodhārāma*), south of his Grand Palace, and perceived that the old *wat* was in a state of ruin. As a sign of his religious devotion, he undertook to restore it. Twenty thousand people were commanded to fill in the site as it was in marshy and uneven land. Two years later, when the site had settled, he ordered for a foundation of earth to be laid. Then in 1792, construction commenced. It was

³⁶ The *wat* was completed in the reign of King Rama III and was renamed *Wat Suthathepharam* (*Sudasana devadhārāma*).

³⁷ The inscriptions and the poem have been collected and published. See FAD (1974) for the inscription and a commentary on the poem, and for a commentary on the inscriptions see Dhani (1976b).

completed in the year 1801 and the King held a ceremony and gave it the name 'Wat Phra Chetuphon wimon mangkharawat'⁴⁰

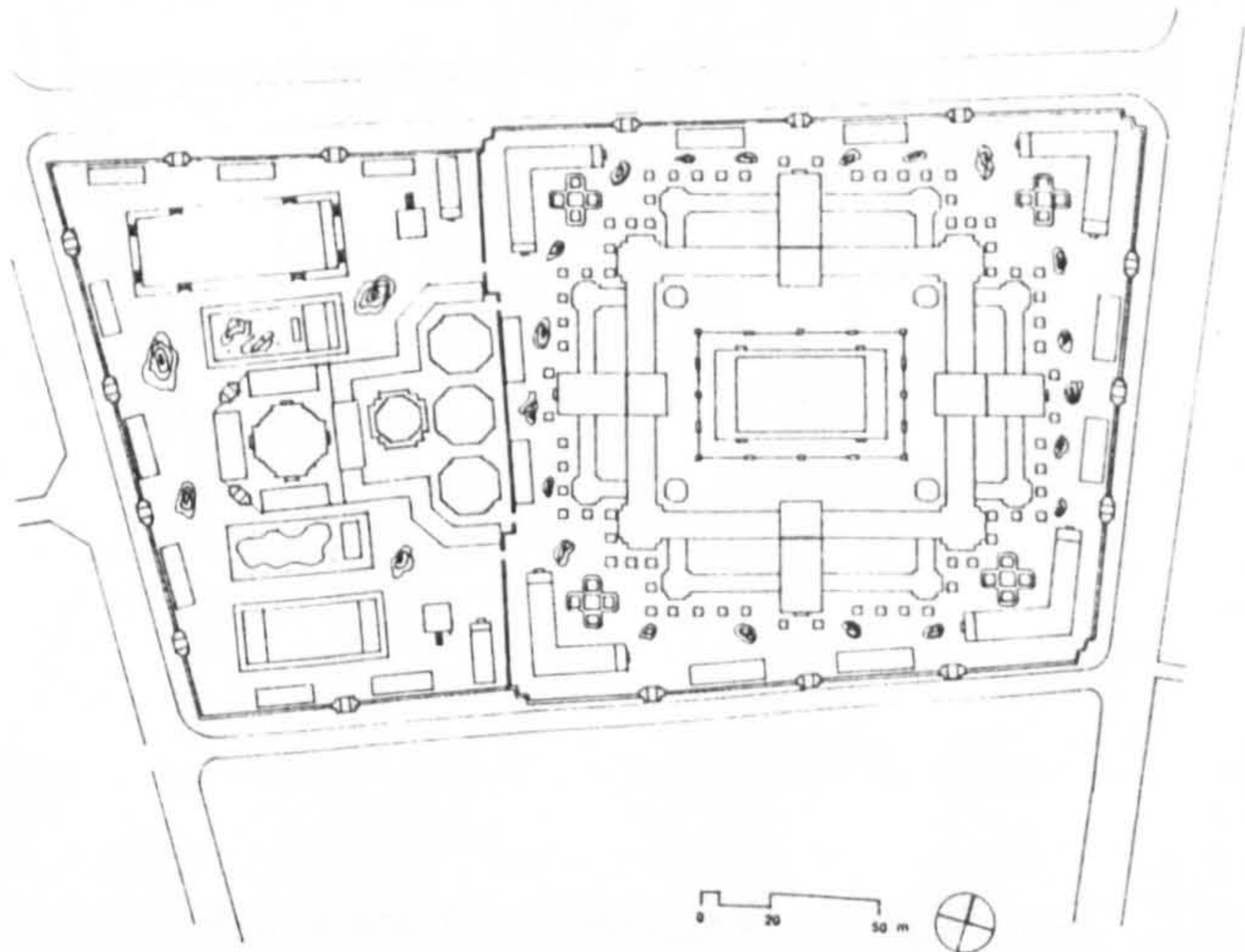


Fig. 3.10 Plan of Wat Phra Chetuphon (Adapted from Vacharee 1991)

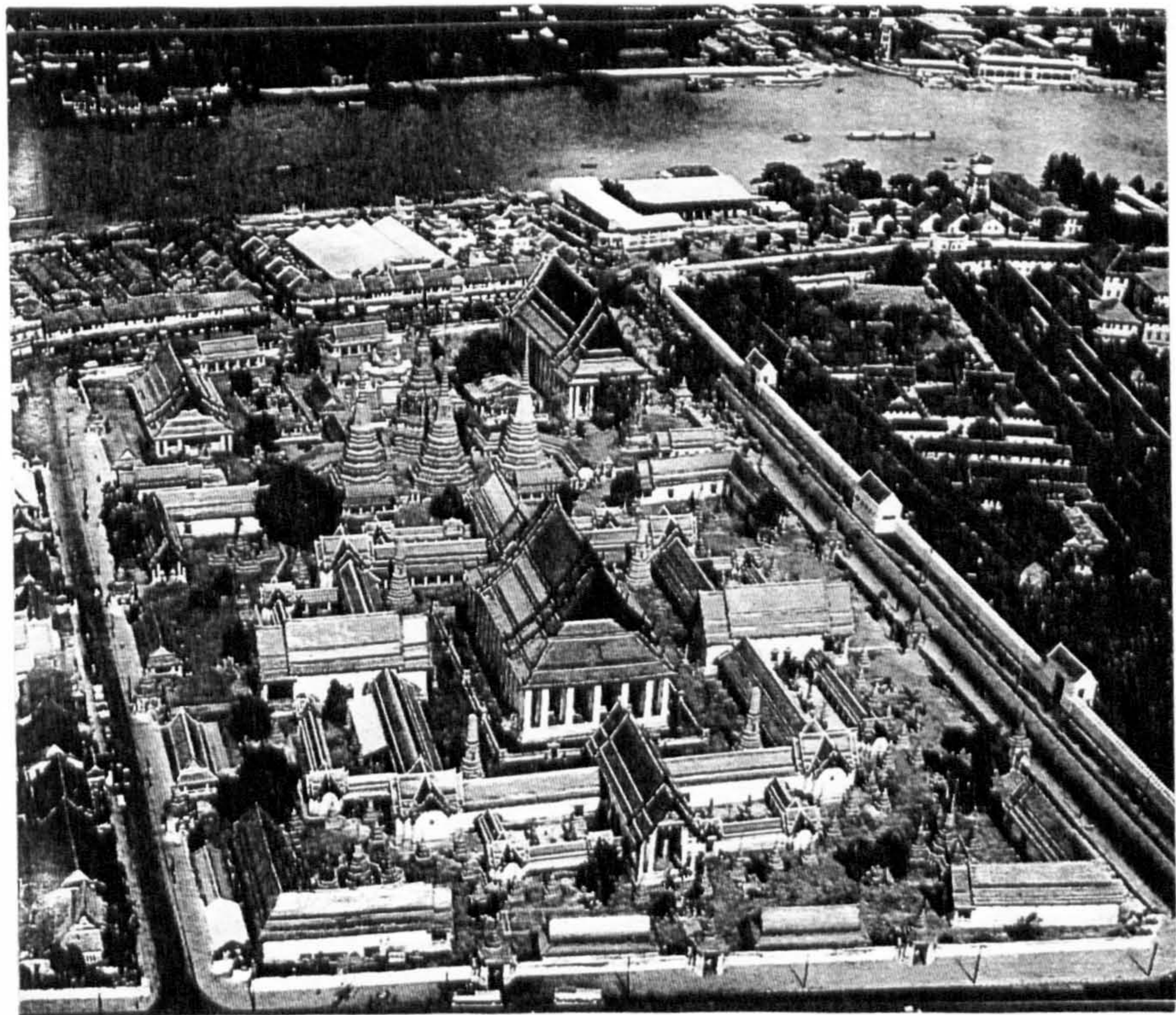


Fig. 3.11 Wat Phra Chetuphon (source: Dhani 1976b)

⁴⁰ King Rama IV (Mongkut) altered the name to 'Wat Phra Chetuphon wimon mangkhararam'.

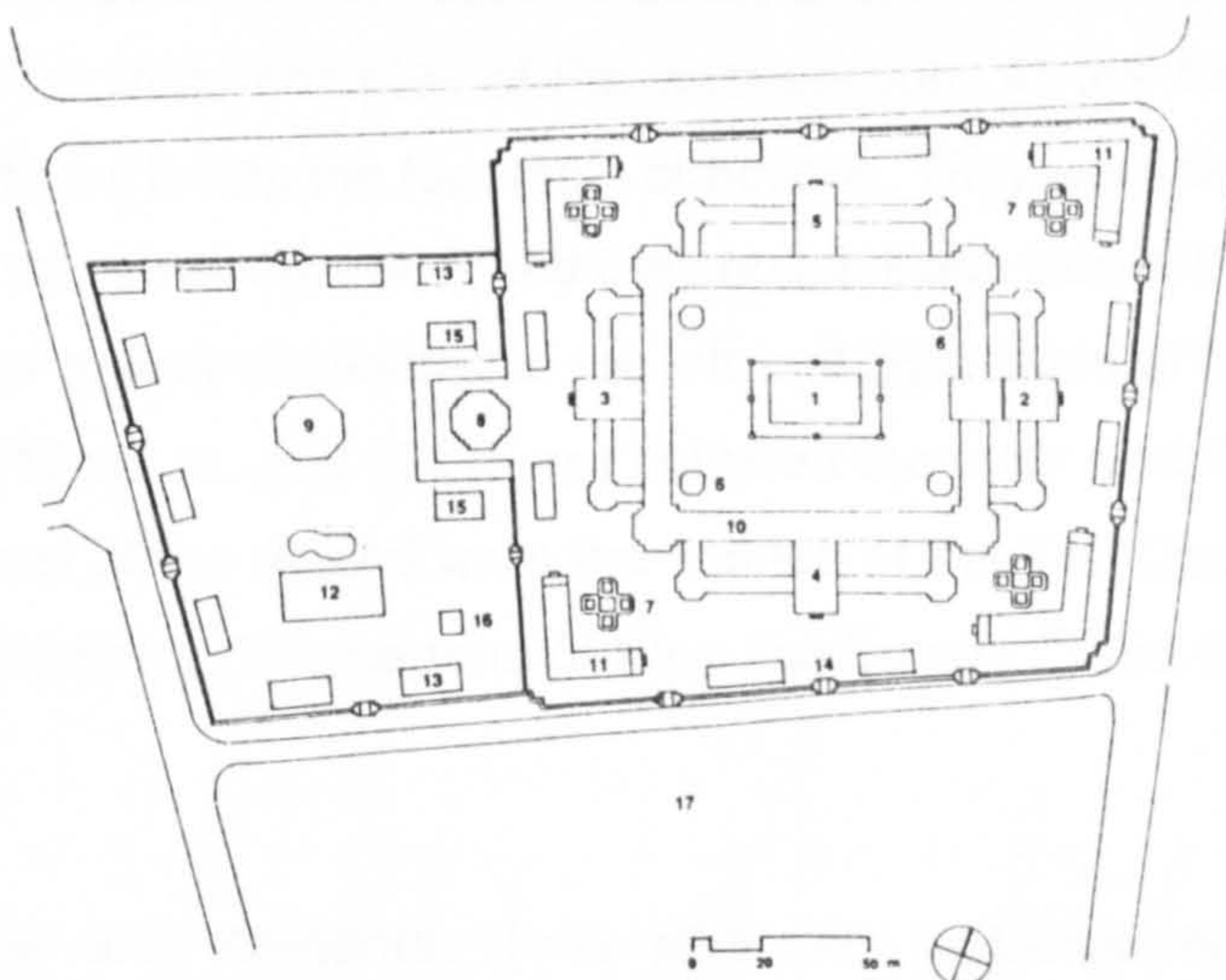


Fig. 3.12 Plan of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I
1) *ubosot*; 2) *east wihan*; 3) *west wihan*; 4) *south wihan*;
5) *north wihan*; 6) *mahathat chedis*; 7) *five chedis on one base*;
8) *principal chedi*; 9) *Ho Trai*; 10) *gallery*; 11) *L-shaped wihans*;
12) *kanprian*; 13) *salas*; 14) *gates*; 15) *small wihans*; 16) *bell tower* (Adapted from Vacharee 1991)

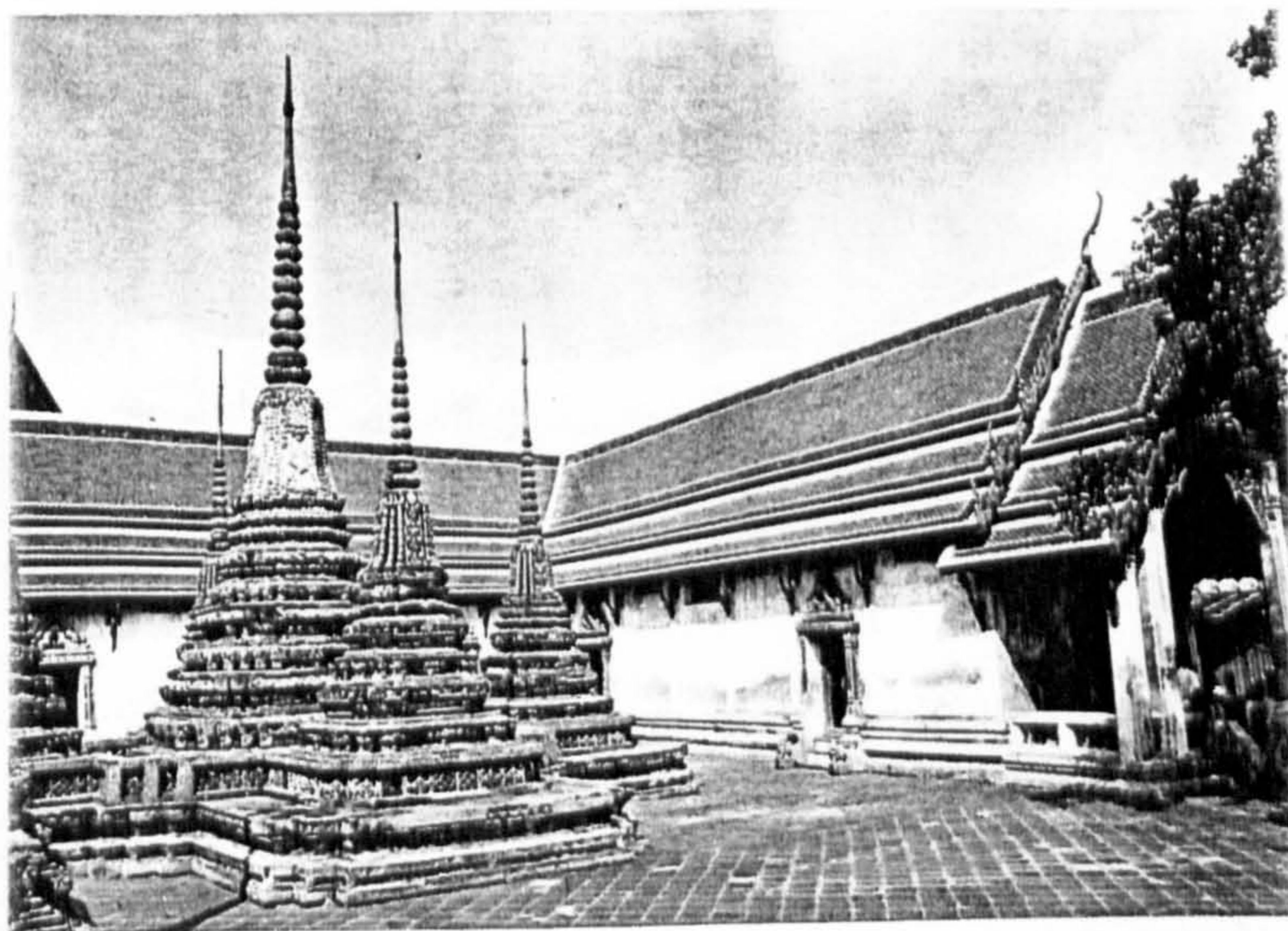


Fig. 3.13 *Five chedis on one base and L-shaped wihan, Wat Phra Chetuphon* (source: FAD 1974)

Within the *phutthawat*, which was separated into east and west parts, the *ubosot* (No. 1 in Fig. 3.10) was the centre of the main complex of the east section. At the four cardinal points there were four *wihans* facing the four main directions. They were tied together by the main gallery (No. 10), which also enclosed the *ubosot*. Each side of the gallery extended to form a smaller gallery connected to the left and right sides of the four *wihans*, leaving courtyards (12x31 m. and 12x18 m.) between the inner and the outer galleries. Depicted in the hall of the *ubosot* were the scenes of the Ten Great *Jātakas* (*Dasajāti*), *Thao Mahachomphu* (The Legend of King Jambupati),³⁹ and the scene of Celestial Assembly.

A total of 872 Buddha images and *Arahantas* (one who has achieved final emancipation) were placed in the main and outer galleries (80x88 m.). At the four corners of the main courtyard were located four *mahathat čhedis* (great relic *stūpas*) (No. 6). The 'inscription' does not mention that they were in the form of *prang* or *čhedi*.⁴⁰ Five *čhedis* on one base (No. 7) were built near the corners of the four *wihankhots* (L-shaped *wihan*) (Fig. 3.13). These twenty *čhedis* all enshrine holy relics. Thus there was a total of twenty-five *mahathats*, including the principal *čhedi* and the four *mahathats* which were located in the main courtyard.

The east *wihan* (No. 2) contains a Buddha image with a model of a Bodhi-tree behind it. The subject of the mural paintings in the *wihan* was the episode of the Buddha's victory over *Māra*. There is also a standing image in the rear chamber of the *wihan* named *Phra Lokanatsatsadačhan* (Fig. 3.14). The wall of the chamber depicts the subject of the Ten States of Decay of the Dead Body (Ten *Asubha*), and a subject for meditation of the Ten Levels of Knowledge (Ten *Ñāna*).⁴¹ Both the images in the fore and the rear chambers enshrine holy relics.

The south *wihan* (No. 4) contains a Buddha image. Also in it are enshrined some holy relics, and the statues of the five disciples are set in front of the image. The paintings

³⁹ The Legend of King Jambupati is an apocryphal Buddhist text which was possibly composed in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, to explain the presence of a crowned Buddha image in the countries of South-East Asia (Fickle 1974, 115). See appendix 8.

⁴⁰ At present the four *mahathats* are in the form of *prang*, which is a result of the restoration of King Rama III.

⁴¹ For the Ten Levels of Knowledge see appendix 6.

of the *wihan* depict the Buddha's Preaching of the *Dhammacakka* (the First Sermon), and the story of the Sermon to his mother in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven.

The west *wihan* (No. 3) holds a seated Buddha image enshrined with holy relics. It is in the attitude of being protected from rain by the *Nāga* King. A model of a *Čhik* tree is set together with the image. The mural paintings in the chamber represent the story of 'The Hair Relics' of the Buddha.

The north *wihan* (No. 5) contains a newly cast Buddha image and holy relics, representing the Buddha seated on a rock accepting offerings from wild animals - a monkey and an elephant named *Pārileyaka* (Fig. 3.15). The mural paintings represent the *Traiphum* (Three Worlds Cosmography) which is composed of Mount *Meru*, the seven ranges of mountains, the four major continents, the *Himavanta* Forest, the *Anotatta* Lake and the Five Great Rivers.

The principal *čhedi* (No. 8) was constructed to encase the huge bronze standing Buddha image named *Phra Phut Srisanphet*, which was transported down from the capital of Ayutthaya. Because of its dilapidated condition, Rama I realised that it could not be restored to its former glory. The holy relics together with the replica of the tooth relics made of jewels, gold and *nak* (alloy of gold) were also enshrined in the *čhedi*, which was named *Čhedi Srisanphet Dayan*. A gallery enclosed the *čhedi* with the scenes of *Ramakian* depicted therein. West of the principal *čhedi*, a *Ho Trai* (library) (No. 9) was constructed to house the *Tripitaka* manuscripts which were kept in the *prasat*-like⁴² cabinets (FAD 1974, 3). On its pedestal were installed statues of *Devas* on the upper part, the *Garudas* on the middle, and the *Asuras* on the lower part.

There were seventeen *salas* (pavilions) (No. 13) in the precinct of the *phutthawat* (sanctuary area). They were placed along the wall of the compound. In these *salas* were depicted scenes from 550 *Jātakas*. Placed in the *salas* were also inscriptions of medical matters and the statues of hermits (*rishis*) performing posture exercises to cure various ailments. All of these were intended to be benevolent towards the people.

⁴² In Thai architecture a *prasat* (*prāsāda*) is a multi-storied or multi-tiered building. It is applied to both palaces and some religious architecture, which features on its roof-line a tiered spire-like tower or pyramidal finial.



Fig. 3.14 Standing Buddha image, rear chamber of east *wihan*, Wat Phra Chetuphon (source: FAD 1974)

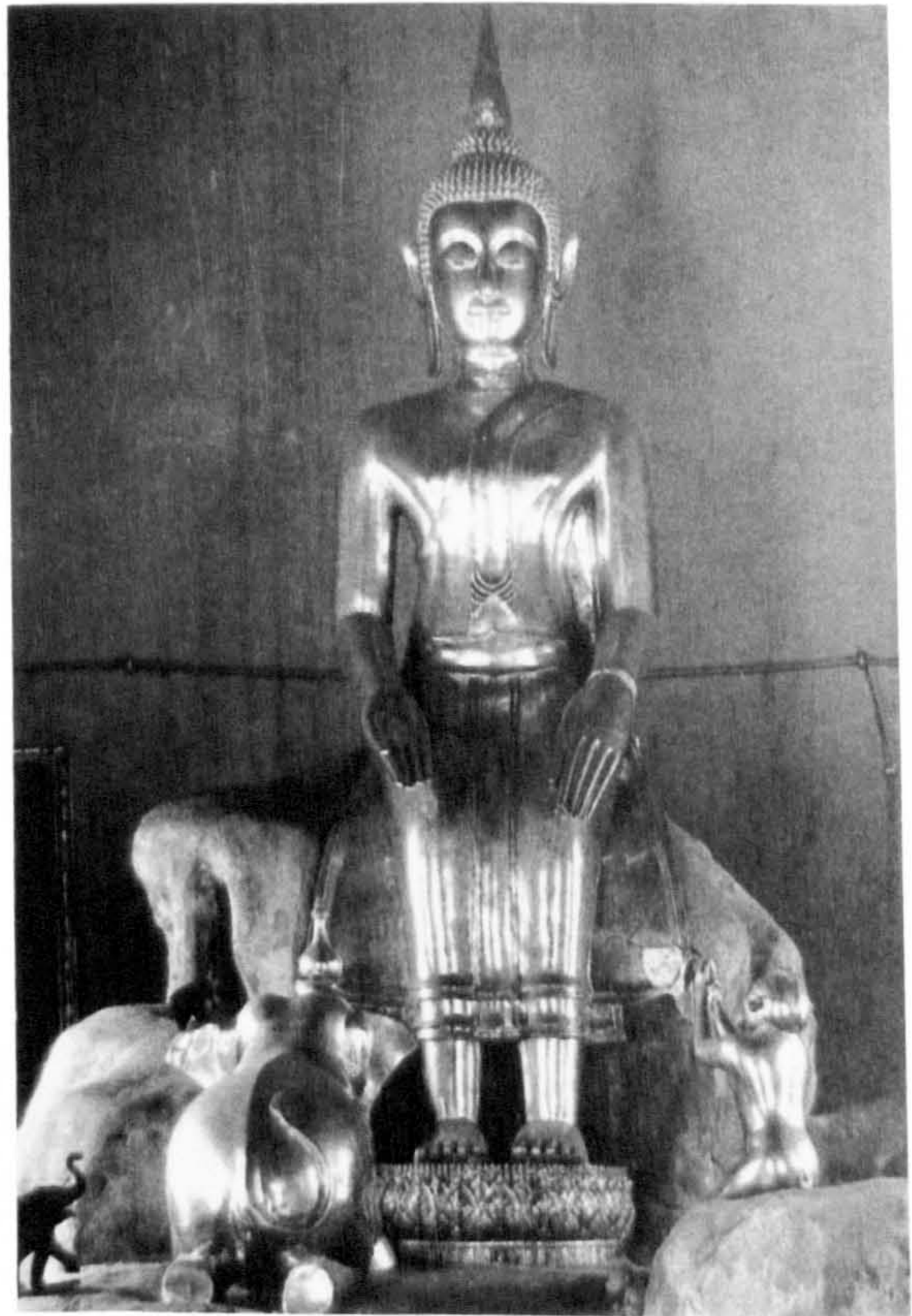


Fig. 3.15 *Pārileyyaka* Buddha image, north *wihan*, Wat Phra Chetuphon (source: FAD 1974)

A *kanprian* (preaching hall) (No. 12), a pond and a garden were located south of the *Ho Trai*, and some trees were planted there. The inscription does not mention any paintings in the *kanprian*. However, the poem by Kromsomdetphra Paramanuchit Chinorot gives the detail that the *kanprian* of King Rama I was a timber constructed building. In the building were depicted the *Peta kathā* (the Story of Hungry Ghosts) and *Niraya kathā* (the Story of the Realm of Hells). The pond and garden were part of its curtilage (Paramanuchit 1974, 281).⁴³ There were two other *wihans* alongside the principal *chedi* containing Buddha images.

The outermost part of the precinct was defined by a boundary wall with fifteen gates. There was a pair of *Asuras* (non-gods) at each of the four main gates, which were decorated with porcelain, and a pair of animals guarded each of the other gates. It is worth noting that the outermost wall surrounding the *phutthawat* was not in a rectangular shape, as the north wall was longer than the south.

⁴³ The original themes of the mural painting in the *kanprian* were revised in the *kanprian* restored by King Rama III (FAD 1974, 275-77).

Buildings	<i>Traiphum</i> elements	The Buddha's Life and <i>Jātakas</i>	<i>Ramakian</i> and Brahmanistic elements	Other
<i>Uposot</i>		-10 <i>Jātakas</i> -Celestial Assembly		-Legend of King <i>Jambupati</i>
East <i>Wihan</i> (fore chamber)		-Victory over <i>Māra</i>		
East <i>Wihan</i> (rear chamber)		-Ten Levels of knowledge		-Standing Buddha image (<i>Abhaya-mudra</i>) -10 States of decay
West <i>Wihan</i>		- <i>Mucalinda</i> -Hair relic story		
South <i>Wihan</i>		-The First Sermon and the statues of the five disciples - <i>Tāvātimsa</i> sermon		
North <i>Wihan</i>	- <i>Traiphum</i> -Mount <i>Meru</i> -7 Mountain Ranges -4 continents - <i>Himavanta</i> Forest - <i>Anotatta</i> Lake -5 Great Rivers	- <i>Pārileyyaka</i>		
4 <i>Mahathat</i> <i>chedis</i> (4 Holy relic <i>chedis</i>)				4 <i>Mahathat</i> <i>chedis</i>
5 <i>chedis</i> on one base				20 <i>Mahathat</i> <i>chedis</i>
Principal <i>chedi</i> and its gallery			- <i>Ramakian</i> painting (in the gallery)	- <i>Phra Srisanphet</i> (<i>Mahathat</i> <i>chedi</i>) -Tooth relics
<i>Ho Trai</i> (Library)	<i>Prasat</i> -like cabinets			- <i>Tripitaka</i> manuscripts
Main gallery				-Buddha images
4 <i>Wihankhot</i> (L-shaped <i>wihans</i>)				-Buddha images
<i>Kanprian</i> , pond and garden	Painting in <i>Kanprian</i> - <i>Peta kathā</i> - <i>Niraya kathā</i> (hells)			-Pond and garden
17 <i>Salas</i> (pavilions)		-550 <i>Jātakas</i>		-Medical inscriptions and hermits
Gates and walls	- <i>Asuras</i> at 4 main gates			-Animals
2 Small <i>Wihans</i>				-Buddha images
Bell tower				-Bell
<i>Sangkhawat</i>	South of the <i>phutthawat</i>			

Table 3.1 Symbolic elements of Wat Phra Chetuphon of King Rama I

The Concept of Space in the Wat Phra Chetuphon of King Rama I

The East Part of the Compound

As it is the dominant part of the compound, the *ubosot* and its complex will be the first part to be investigated through its symbols. The network of the themes of religious iconography and mural paintings should be the key features of the design.

It is rather unusual that the mural painting in a principal building like the *ubosot* did not contain the *Cakkavāla* painting on the back wall of the principal Buddha image, as is the traditional practice.⁴⁴ Instead, it is found in the north *wihan*. In the *ubosot*, the mural of the Ten *Jātakas* and the Celestial Assembly are not anomalous themes, but the scene the Legend of King Jambupati is quite unique since it is not included in the traditional pattern.

The design concept of the *ubosot* may be made clearer by investigating its complex plan - the four directional *wihans*. The subjects of the mural paintings and the iconography of the Buddha images in these buildings lead to an elucidation of the design concept of the complex. Both the paintings and the Buddha images in them are episodes from the story of The Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*), the seven stations where the Buddha spent each week after the Enlightenment and The Eight Great Places (*Atthamahāthāna*).⁴⁵

The name of the image in the fore chamber of the east *wihan* is 'The Buddha Enlightened under the Bodhi-tree' (FAD 1974, 4), and the painting of the Buddha's victory over *Māra* (*Māravijaya* painting) represents the location of the Bodhi-tree where the Buddha attained Enlightenment. This episode can be connected to other themes of depictions in the rear chamber and in the *ubosot*. The painting of the Ten Levels of Knowledge in the rear chamber represents the event of the *Bodhisattva*'s meditation after the victory over *Māra*. The Ten Virtues that the *Bodhisattva* called to be in his power when he was distracted by *Māra* were represented by the mural of the Ten

⁴⁴ See the study of traditional patterns of *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings, in section 3.2.1 in this Chapter.

⁴⁵ See details of the places in the sets of *Sattamahāthāna* and *Atthamahāthāna* in Thampricha (1992, 251-56, 263-64). See appendices 4 and 5.

Jātakas in the *ubosot*.

The standing image in the rear chamber of the east *wihan*, which faced west to the *ubosot*, may be attributed to an event in the first week after the Enlightenment. At the *Animisa-cetiya*, the Buddha spent a week standing northeast of the Bodhi-tree and gazing unblinking at the Diamond Throne (*Vajarāsana*) at the foot of the tree. These episodes relate to the west *wihan*, in which was represented the event of the sixth week when the Buddha stayed under a tree near the *Mucalinda* pond, and the *Nāga* King protected him from the rain. The stories end with a painting in the same building telling the story of 'the Hair Relic', an incident which happened after the seventh week. It was on the last day of the week that two *Brahmins* offered rice-cakes and honey to the Buddha when they saw him at the foot of the *Rājāyatana* tree. For worship, the Buddha gave them eight handfuls of his hair, which he obtained by stroking his head (Paramanuchit 1962, 210-12). On this east-west axis, a sequence of several events from the set of the Seven Great Places was represented, commencing with the episode of the victory over *Māra* and continuing up until the seventh week after the Enlightenment (Fig. 3.16).

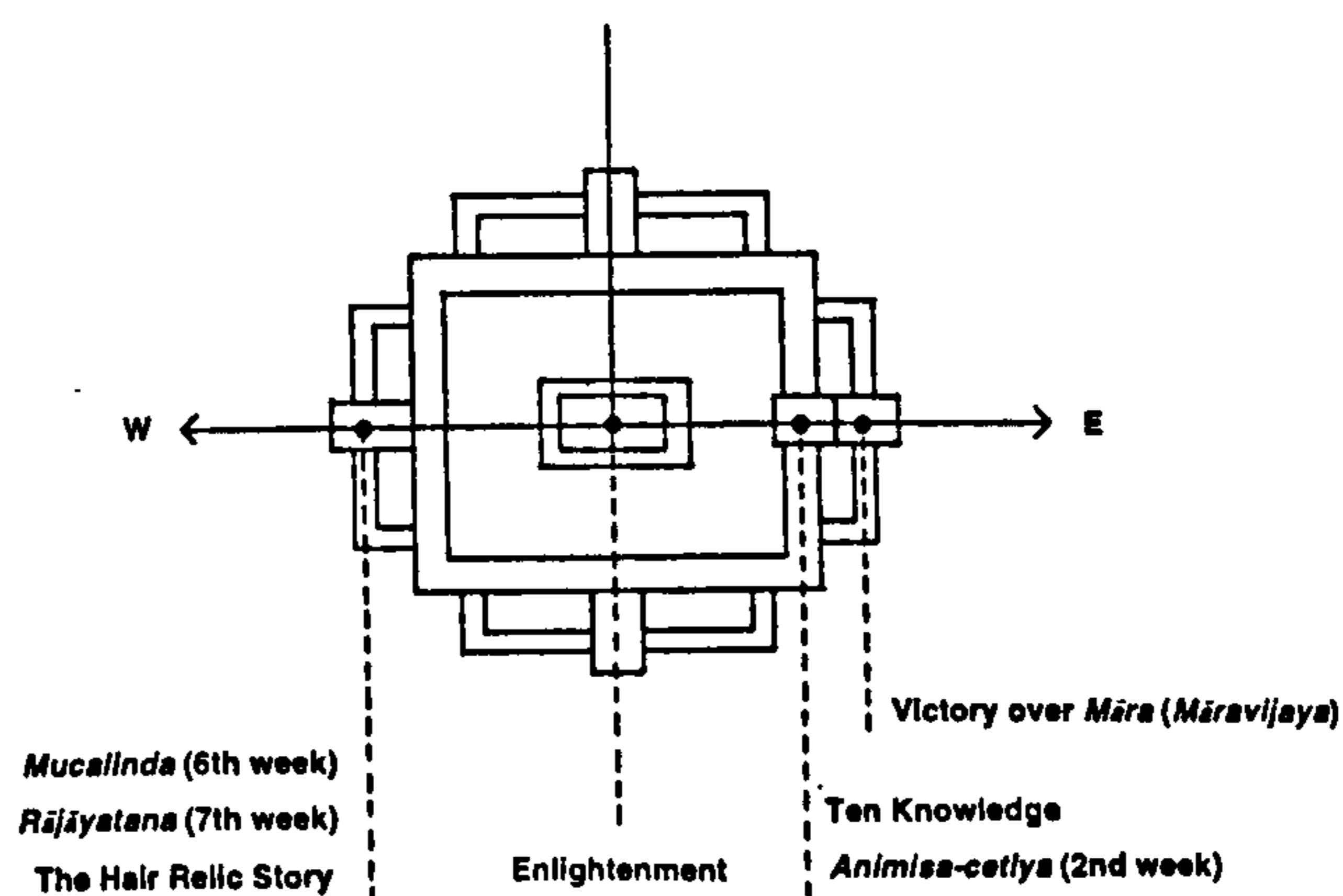


Fig. 3.16 Diagram of *Sattamahāthāna* on east-west axis

The north and south *wihans* represented places from the set of the Eight Great Places (*Atthamahāthān*) which have the same centre point - the Bodhi-tree. The Eight Holy Places which are mentioned in the *Traiphumlokawinitchai* are the Four Holy Places of Buddhism: the birth place of the Buddha, the place of the Enlightenment, the place of the First Sermon and the place of the Great Departure or *Parinibbāna*. They also include the other four locations where the Buddha performed miracles, making eight in total (Thampricha 1992, 263-64; see appendix 5). One of the Four Holy Places was represented in the south *wihan* in the Buddha image and the statues of the five disciples, together with the mural painting telling the *Dhammacakka* - the First Sermon in the Deer Park of Isipatana. The subject of the miracle is the sermon in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven, which is linked to the descent from *Tāvātimsa* Heaven after the sermon; these were represented by the painting in the south *wihan*. In the traditional painting, these miracle events are always portrayed as part of the *Cakkavāla* painting behind the principal Buddha image.

The *Pārelyyaka*, another event in the set of the Eight Great Places is portrayed by the Buddha image and the wild animals in the north *wihan*. The *Cakkavāla* painting was also allocated to the north *wihan* in order to symbolize the miraculous phenomena which were consequences of the miracles performed by the Buddha.⁴⁶ These miracles were represented along the north-south axis: the Enlightenment in the *ubosot* and the *Tāvātimsa* Sermon in the south *wihan* (Fig. 3.17).

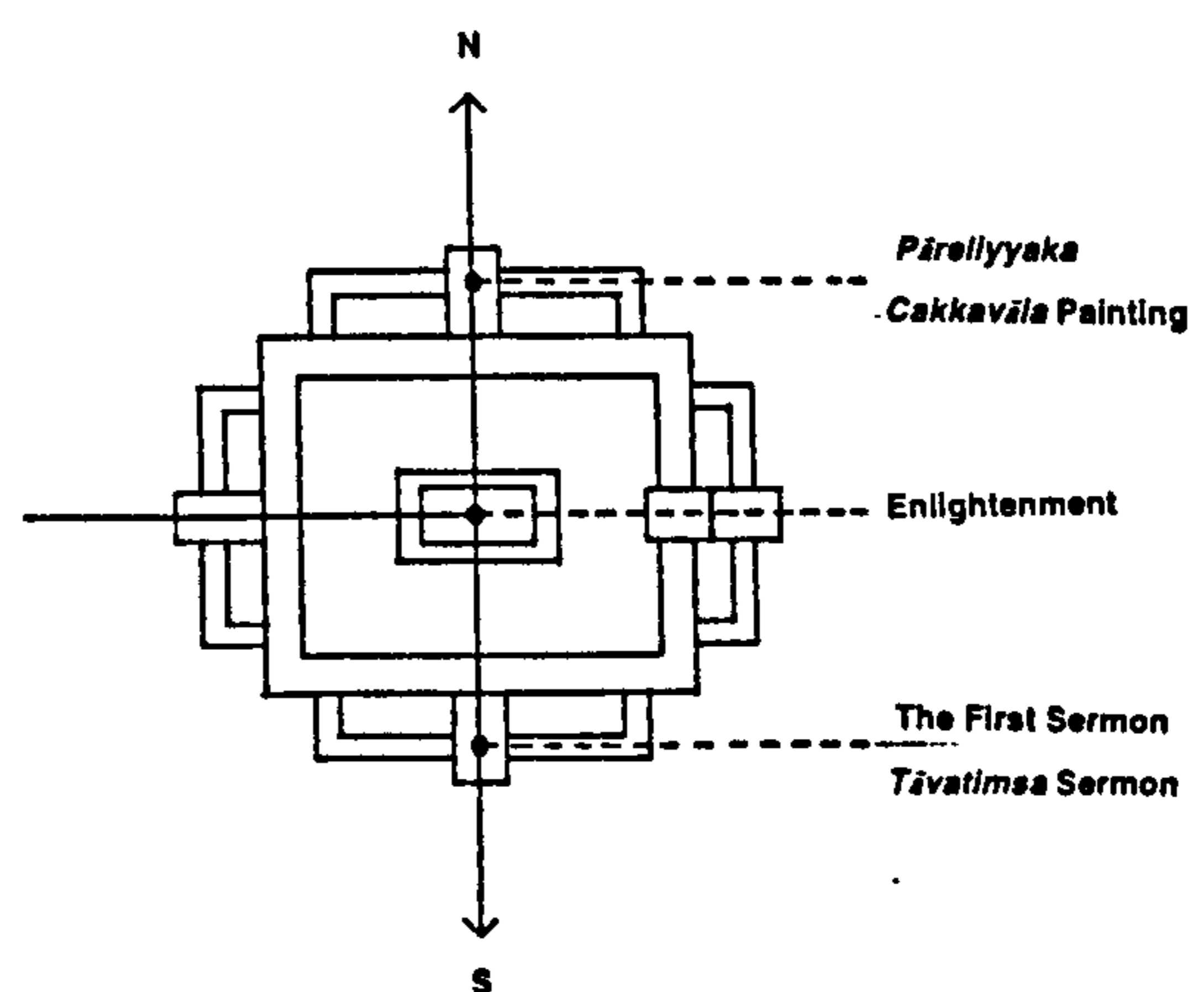


Fig. 3.17 Diagram of *Atthamahāthāna* on north-south axis

⁴⁶ See the analysis of the *Cakkavāla* painting as miraculous phenomenon in the study of the *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings in section 3.2.1 in this Chapter.

The elements of the Eight Great Places (*Atthamahāthāna*), which were lined up on the north-south axis, and the Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*) on the east-west axis, were unified by the same centre - the *ubosot* which represented the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-tree. The arrangement indicates that the design of the complex of the *ubosot*, the four directional *wihans* and the galleries, is a new interpretation of the traditional *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings in a single building. The subjects of the traditional painting are spread out to the four *wihans*. In addition, the subjects of *Sattamahāthāna* and *Atthamahāthāna* were selected to amplify the themes from the *Pathamasambodhi* painting, to determine the same centre - the Diamond Throne. The design extends to cover the seventeen *salas* in which the stories of *Jātakas* were depicted.

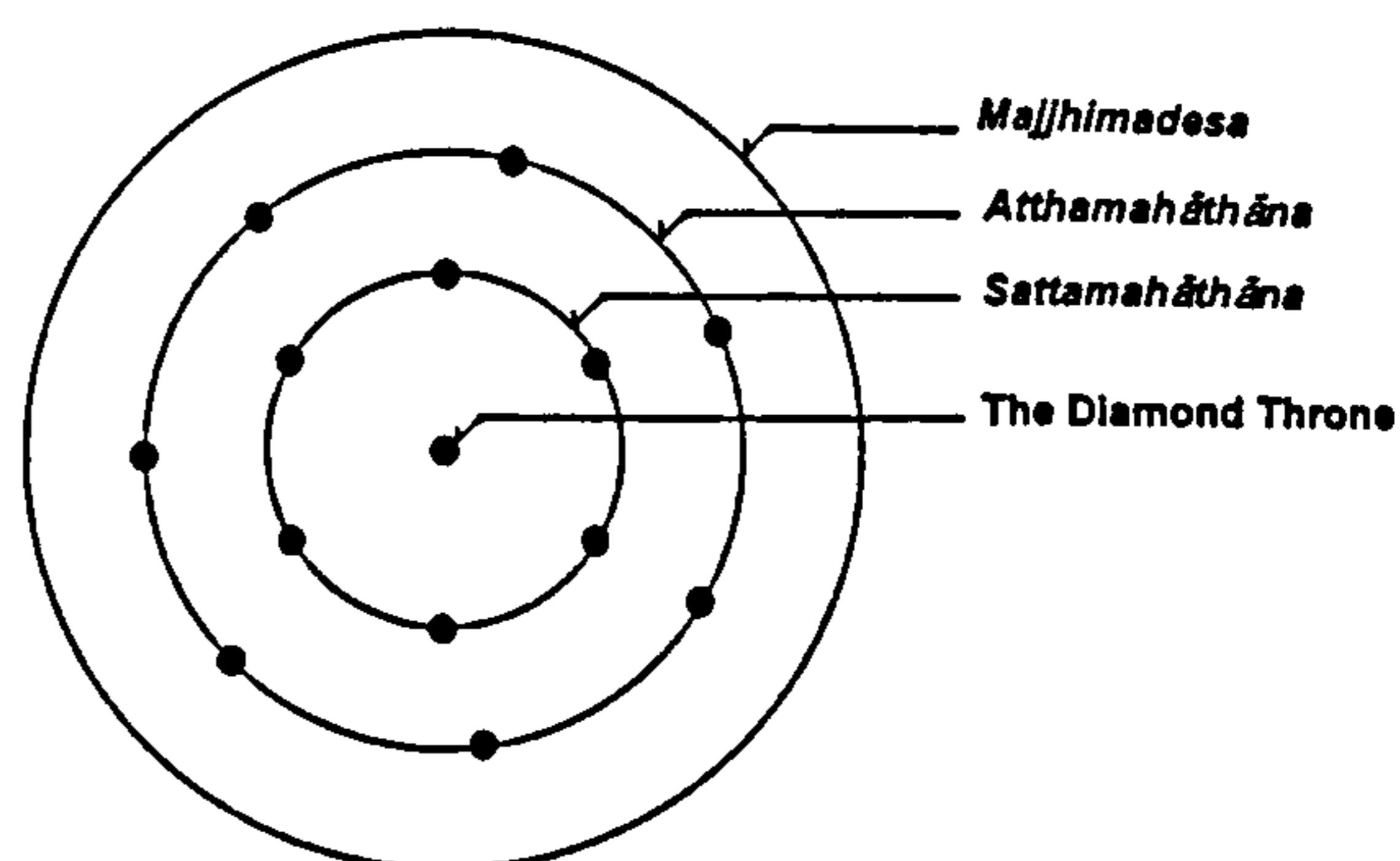


Fig. 3.18 Diagram of *Majjhimadesa*

Traiphumlakawinitchai states that the position of the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-tree is the 'head of the earth' (*Sīsa-pathavī*). Six of all the seven sites of the *Sattamahāthāna* surround the Bodhi-tree as the inner ring, and seven of the eight places of the *Atthamahāthāna* surround the Bodhi-tree as the outer ring. All sites are in *Majjhimadesa*, the central region of *Jambudīpa* (Thampricha 1992, 251, 264) (Fig. 3.18). The east-west axis of the complex of the *ubosot*, therefore, represented the inner ring and the north-south axis represented the outer ring. The whole complex is a symbol of *Majjhimadesa*, with the Diamond Throne at the centre. The seventeen *salas* perhaps represented the towns outside the central region of *Jambudīpa*. *Traiphumlakawinitchai* describes that:

The Bodhi-tree where every Buddha attains the Enlightenment locates at the centre of *Majjhimadesa*, and the *Majjhimadesa* locates at the centre of *Jambudīpa* (Thampricha 1992, 250).

This interpretation will be resumed after the analysis of the western part of the compound.

The Western Part of the Compound

On the major east-west axis, the principal *chedi* is located next to the *ubosot* complex, and the *Ho Trai* (library) is located at the west end.⁴⁷ The replicas of the jewel, gold and *nak* tooth relics enshrined in the principal *chedi* may be, in essence, a symbolic element to signify the *Cūlāmanicetiya* in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven.⁴⁸ The *prasat*-like cabinet, which contains the *Tripitaka* manuscripts and is housed in the *Ho Trai* (FAD 1974, 3), is the element which relates to the symbol of Mount *Meru*. Apart from its form of a *prasat*, the arrangement of the statues of *Devas*, *Garudas* and *Asuras* at its pedestal is in line with the position of these beings in the vertical feature of Mount *Meru*. The *Traiphum* illustration shows Mount *Meru* as the core of the universe. *Devas* reside at the top of it. The realm of the *Garudas* is located on the same level as the Four Major Continents (*Mahādīpa*). The realm of the *Asuras* is underneath Mount *Meru* (Fig. 2.1). Thus the *Tripitaka* cabinet is the key symbol to signify the *Ho Trai* and has the same status as a *prasat*, the symbol of Mount *Meru*.⁴⁹ In general, a scripture cabinet is not designed in the form of a *prasat*. The principal *chedi* and the *Ho Trai* which lie along the east-west axis may represent the *Cūlāmanicetiya* and the top of Mount *Meru* respectively.⁵⁰ There is no clear evidence regarding exactly what the two small *wihans* flanking the principal *chedi* represented. Their position close to the *chedi* implies the

⁴⁷ There is no evidence regarding the form of the *Ho Trai* of Rama I. The present appearance is the rebuilt version by Rama III.

⁴⁸ *Cūlāmanicetiya* is a *chedi* in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven. After the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, at the distribution of the relics by Dona *brahmin*, he took his chance and hid the right eye-tooth of the Buddha in his turban. *Sakka* saw this, and thinking that Dona was incapable of rendering suitable honour to this relic, removed it and placed it in the *Cūlāmanicetiya* (Malalasekera 1960, Vol.1, 1122).

⁴⁹ In Thai tradition the funeral pyre of a king is called *Phra Meru*; it has a *prasat* form and symbolizes Mount *Meru* (Wales 1931, 144-45). Other multi-tiered buildings in Thai architecture, such as *mondop*, *prang* and *prasat*, imply the symbol of a heavenly palace (see Joti 1978, 66-74; Anuvit 1983, 334 and, for the symbolism of Mount *Meru*, Mabbett 1983, 80).

⁵⁰ Because the *Ho Trai* was demolished and rebuilt in the reign of King Rama III, there is not sufficient evidence to identify its exact symbolic manifestation. However, according to the position in the plan, it certainly represented a realm not lower than *Tāvātimsa* Heaven.

possibility that they were symbols of the *Erāvana* Palace and the *Sudhammā*, the assembly hall in *Tāvātimsa*.⁵¹

The *kanprian*, which depicted the story of *Peta* realm (the realm of hungry ghosts) and hells, was the key element representing both the *Peta* realm in the *Himavanta* Forest and hell. *Traiphumlokawinitchai* explains that the position of the *Peta* realm is in the *Himavanta* Forest, and underneath this spot is the Realm of Hells (Thampricha, 1992, 584). The garden, which was close to the *kanprian*, was probably a symbol of the *Himavanta* Forest, and the pond in the garden was no doubt a symbol of the *Anotatta* Lake, one of the seven lakes in the Forest.⁵² This interpretation is in line with the diagram of the *Traiphum* portrayed in the manuscript painting of the Khmer version.

Even though a bell tower is not mentioned in the *Traiphum* text as a component of the *Yamaloka* (the Realm of the Lord of Death), in the illustration of the *Yamaloka* in the *Traiphum* manuscript of the Thonburi royal version (Fig. 3.19), there is a bell tower and a drum tower flanking the palace of the *Yamarāja* (the Lord *Yama*). In Rama I's inscription, the bell tower and the *kanprian* are described continually in the same category (FAD 1974, 3). Therefore, a bell tower may be a symbol of the *Yamaloka*.⁵³ The interpretation of all these elements is to be connected to the east section of the compound and to form a diagram of the *Traiphum* cosmography.

⁵¹ The similar arrangement of two small *wihans* flanking the *chedi*, which symbolizes the *Cūlāmanicetiya*, appears in *Wat Ratcha-orot*. The contextual analysis of the symbolic planning of *Wat Ratcha-orot* leads to the conclusion that the two small *wihans* are the symbols of the *Erāvana* Palace and the *Sudhammā* in *Tāvātimsa*. See the study of *Wat Ratcha-orot* in section 4.2.1 of Chapter 4.

⁵² See the symbolic kingship significance of the *Anotatta* Lake in section 3.4.3 of this Chapter.

⁵³ Bell towers in the early Bangkok period are usually built close to a *kanprian*. The designation of a *kanprian* to symbolize the *Yamaloka*, *Peta* realm and Hell in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* indicates that the bell tower shares the same meaning. Most of the bell towers of the early nineteenth century *wats* are located in the south or south-west of the compound. These directions are regarded as the lowest positions. Some examples of this arrangement can be found in important *wats* such as *Wat Suthat*, *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, *Wat Ratchanatdaram*, *Wat Saket*, all of which were built or restored during the reigns of Rama I and Rama III. See the analysis of this issue in the study of the Royal Chapel in section 3.3.2 of this Chapter, and the study of *Wat Suthat* and *Wat Ratcha-orot* in sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.1 of Chapter 4.

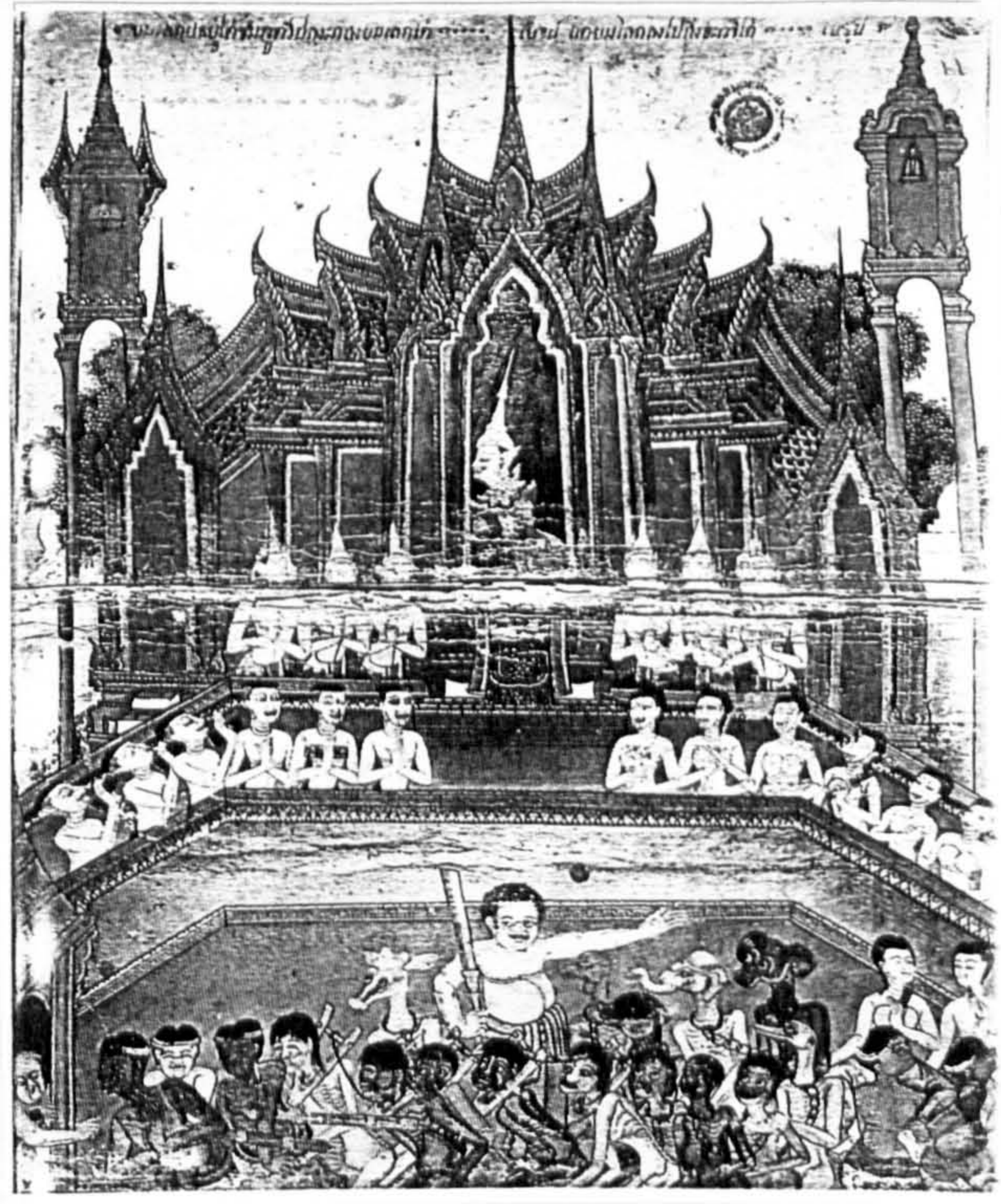


Fig. 3.19 Scene of Yamaloka, *Traiphum* manuscript, Thonburi version (source: Lithai 1983)

The Connection of the East and West Parts of the Compound

The most significant aspect of the design of the *ubosot* complex is its plan shape. The complex can be compared to the illustration of the *Jambudīpa* in the *Traiphum* manuscript (Khmer Version) (FAD 1987, 29) (Figs. 3.20, 3.21). Its similarity supports the belief that the *Traiphum* illustration is the underlying guideline for its plan.⁵⁴ In the illustration, the symbol of *Jambudīpa* is focused on the *Majjhimadesa* and the Bodhi-tree. The scripts in the small rectangular boxes surrounding the central one, in the centre of which is a Bodhi-tree, are the names of the cities in *Majjhimadesa*. Surrounding the Bodhi-tree are the symbols of the other six stations of *Sattamahāthāna*. The *Himavanta* is represented by a tree and its components, the *Peta* (hungry ghost) realm and the *Anotatta* Lake (Figs. 2.2, 3.20). The twelve square boxes are the symbols of the twelve major kinds of *Peta*. The realm of *Peta* is located in the *Himavanta*, beneath which is the *Niraya* (The Realm of Hells) (Thampricha 1992,

⁵⁴ There are several versions of the *Traiphum* illustration are collected in the National Library, Bangkok. The Khmer version seems to be the most significant to the planning of Buddhist *wats* since its composition is very close to the feature of the planning of the *wats*.

sides of the Lake, one in each of the cardinal directions. Below the *Himavanta* is the palace of the lord *Yama* or *Yamaloka*. It is represented in the illustration as a palace enclosed by four walled sides. Below the *Yamaloka* is a hell represented by sinners being punished. On top of the figure of *Jambudīpa* is the section of *Cakkavāla* with Mount *Meru* as the central axis. On the peak of Mount *Meru* is *Tāvātimsa* Heaven, the illustration of which shows the figure of *Cūlāmanicetiya*, the Indra palace, the *Sudhammā* and the *Pārijāti* tree (see Fig. 2.2)

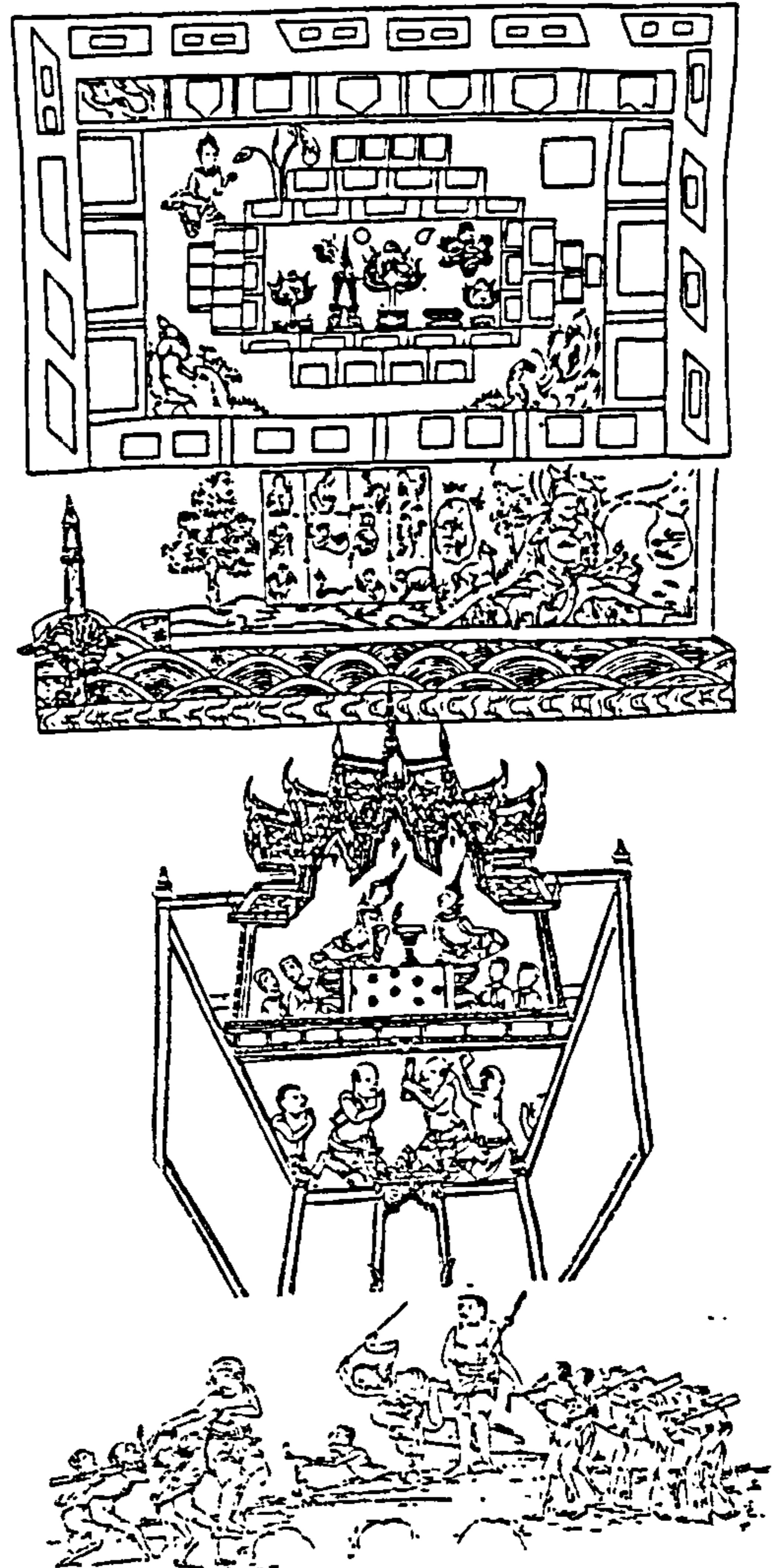
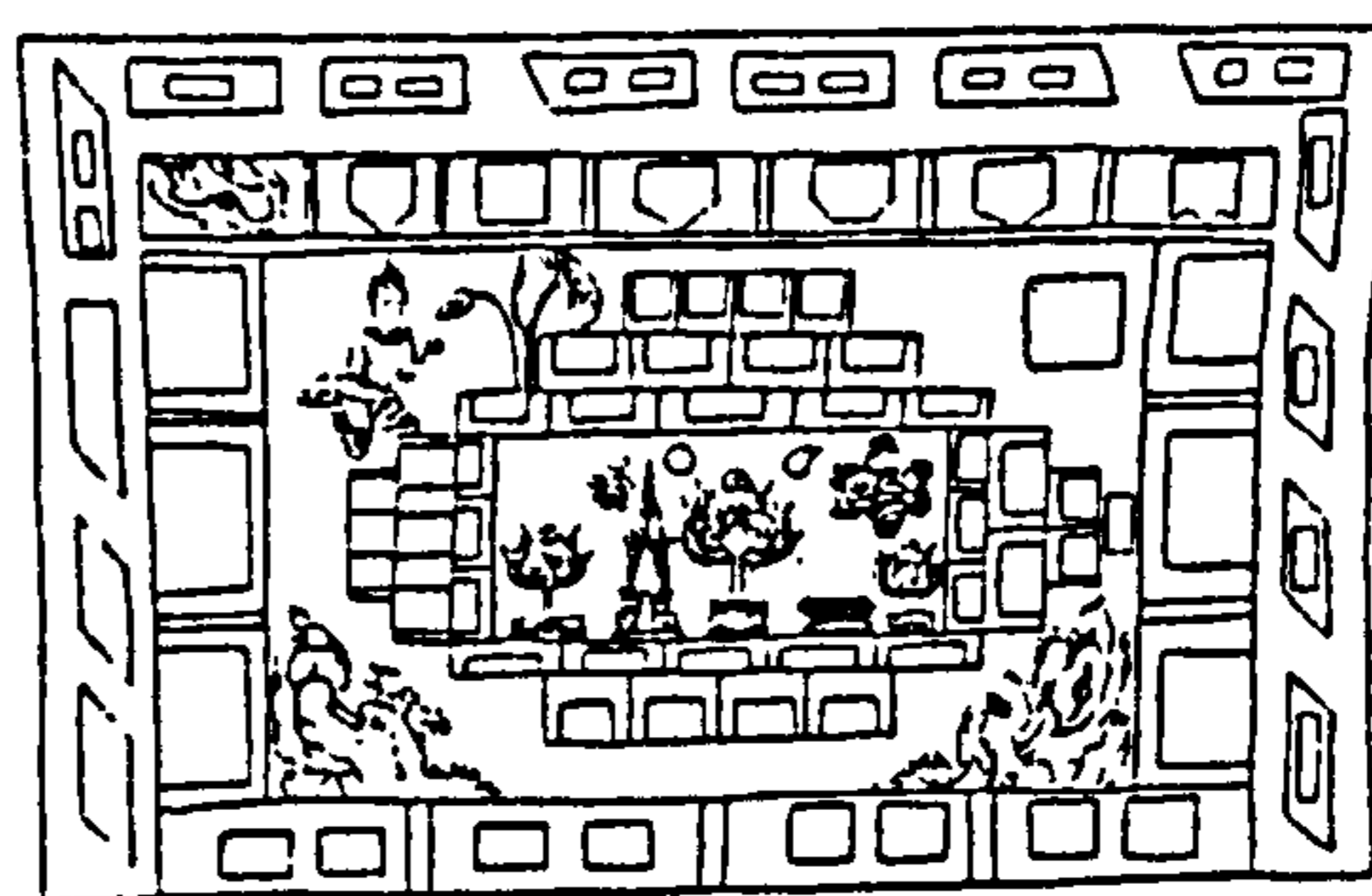
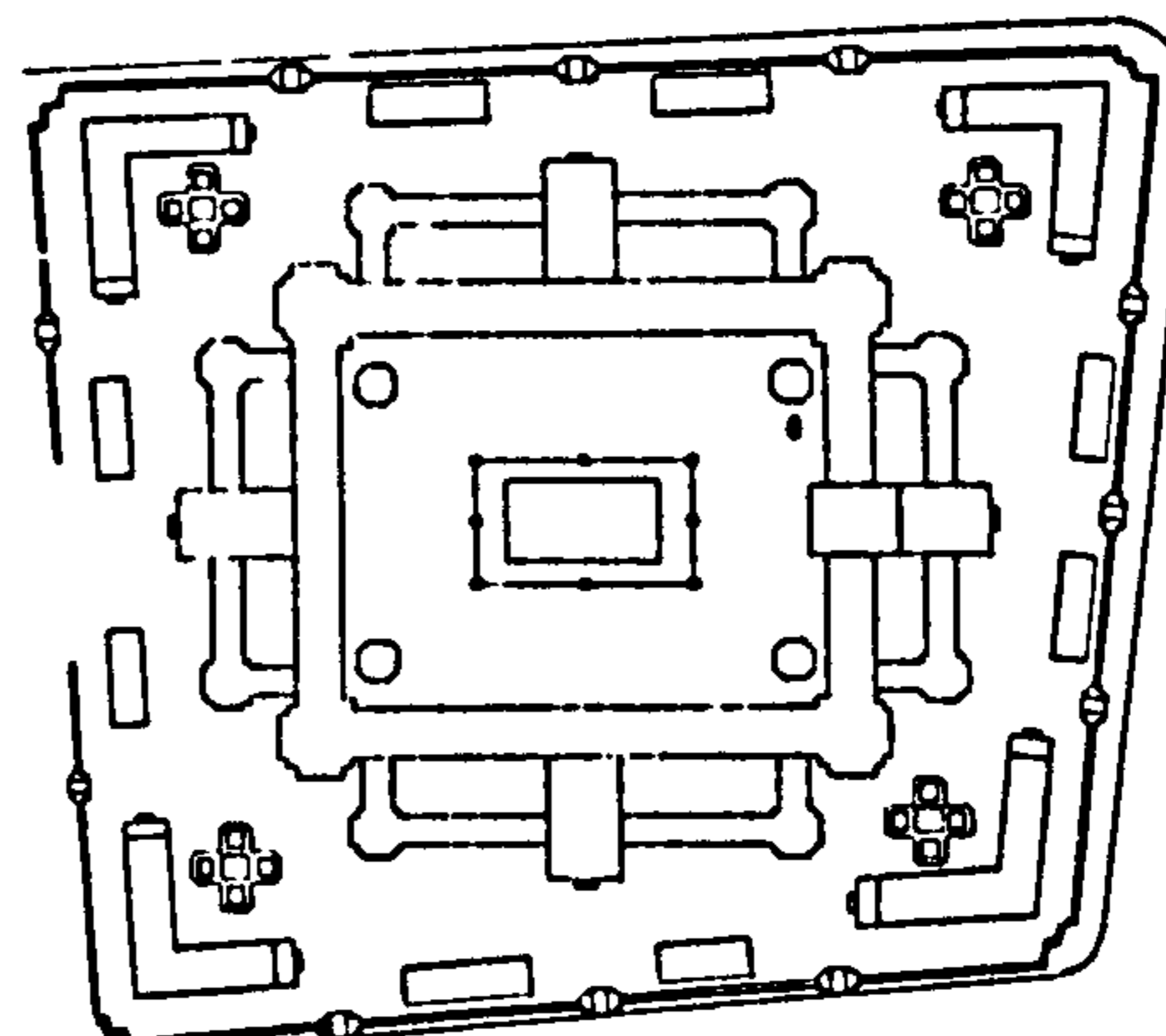


Fig. 3.20 Diagram of *Jambudīpa*, *Himavanta*, *Yamaloka* and hell (Redrawn after FAD 1978)



1



2

Fig. 3.21 Diagram of *Jambudīpa* (1) and the *ubosot* complex of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* (2)

The symbolic organization of the *phutthawat* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* indicates that *Majjhimadesa* is at the centre, between the higher and lower realms (Fig. 3.22). The axis stretching from the *ubosot* through the pond and garden, the bell tower, and the *kanprian* in the south-west direction, is the lower axis. The structure of this group represents the *Himavanta*, the *Yamaloka*, *Peta* realm, and hell. The east-west axis is the higher realm, locating the *Cūlāmanicetiya* and *Mount Meru*, symbolized by the principal *chedi* and the *Ho Trai*. If these two axes are combined and stretched out in a single axis, the position of the structures aligned on the axis is in the same arrangement as the diagram of the *Traiphum* cosmography as illustrated in the Khmer version (Fig. 3.23). Therefore, the *Traiphum* illustration of the Khmer version seems to be the guideline for the symbolic planning of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*.

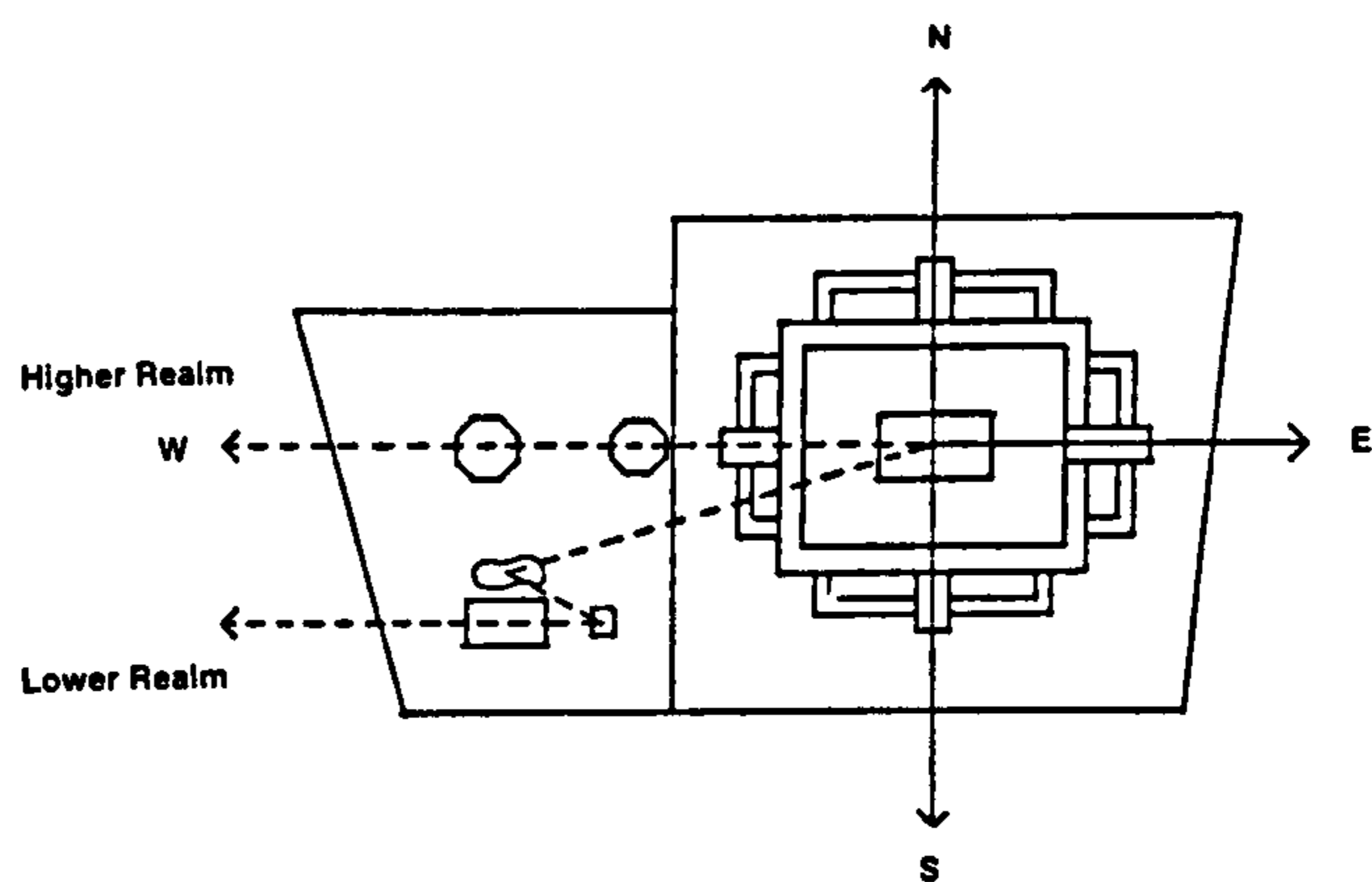


Fig. 3.22 Direction and planning system of Wat Phra Chetuphon

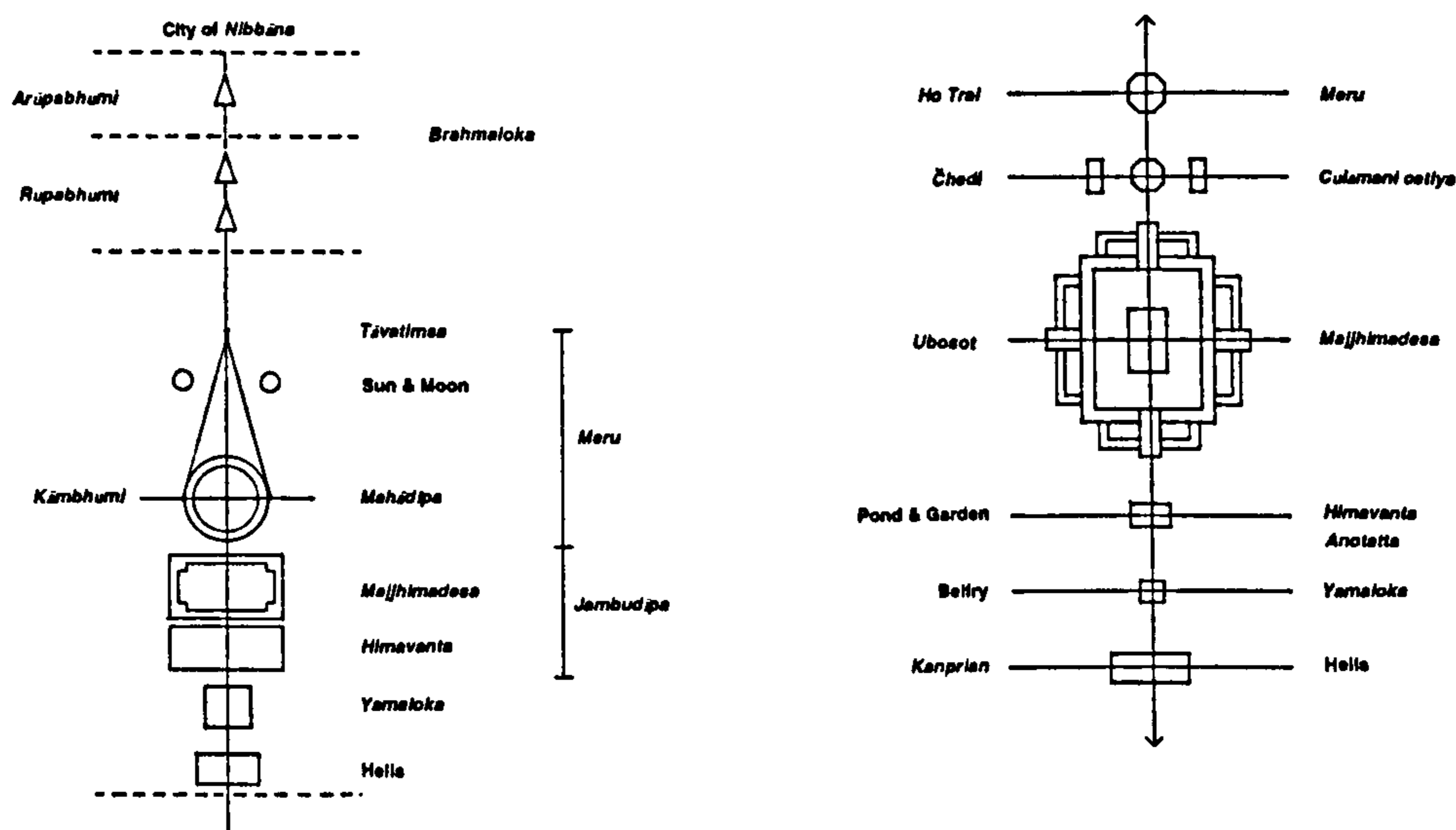


Fig. 3.23 Traiphum diagram (1) and the symbolic planning of Wat Phra Chetuphon (2)

However, at the level of the whole plan the concept of *Jambudīpa* was expressed throughout the enclosure. Further evidence to suggest the use of symbolism in the planning of the *phutthawat* of Wat Phra Chetuphon (with the concept of *Jambudīpa* as the most significant), is the shape of its layout. *Traiphumlokawinitchai* explains the shape of *Jambudīpa* as follows:

Jambudīpa is shaped like a chariot. The measurement of its perimeter is 10,000 *yojana*⁵⁵; the front or east direction is 4,000 *yojana*, the back side or the west direction is also 4,000 *yojana* long. The length of the north side is 1,700 *yojana* and the south is 300 *yojana* (Thampricha, 1992, 105) (Fig. 3.24).

Although the city plan might affect the plan of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, the plans of the city and the *wat* were set out by Rama I himself. In addition, it is possible to plan the sanctuary area (*phutthawat*) of the *wat* in a rectangular wall in terms of architectural planning, while the arrangement of all structures could be maintained the same pattern. The design of the walls of the *phutthawat* area (as well as of the *sangkhawat* area) of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* is in the shape of a trapezoid and is intended to reflect the shape of *Jambudīpa*. However, the proportions are not correct (Fig. 3.25) because the length of the north and south walls is much longer than the proportions given by the text. The same hypothesis may also be applied to explain the deformed rectangular shape of the gallery of the Royal Chapel.⁵⁶

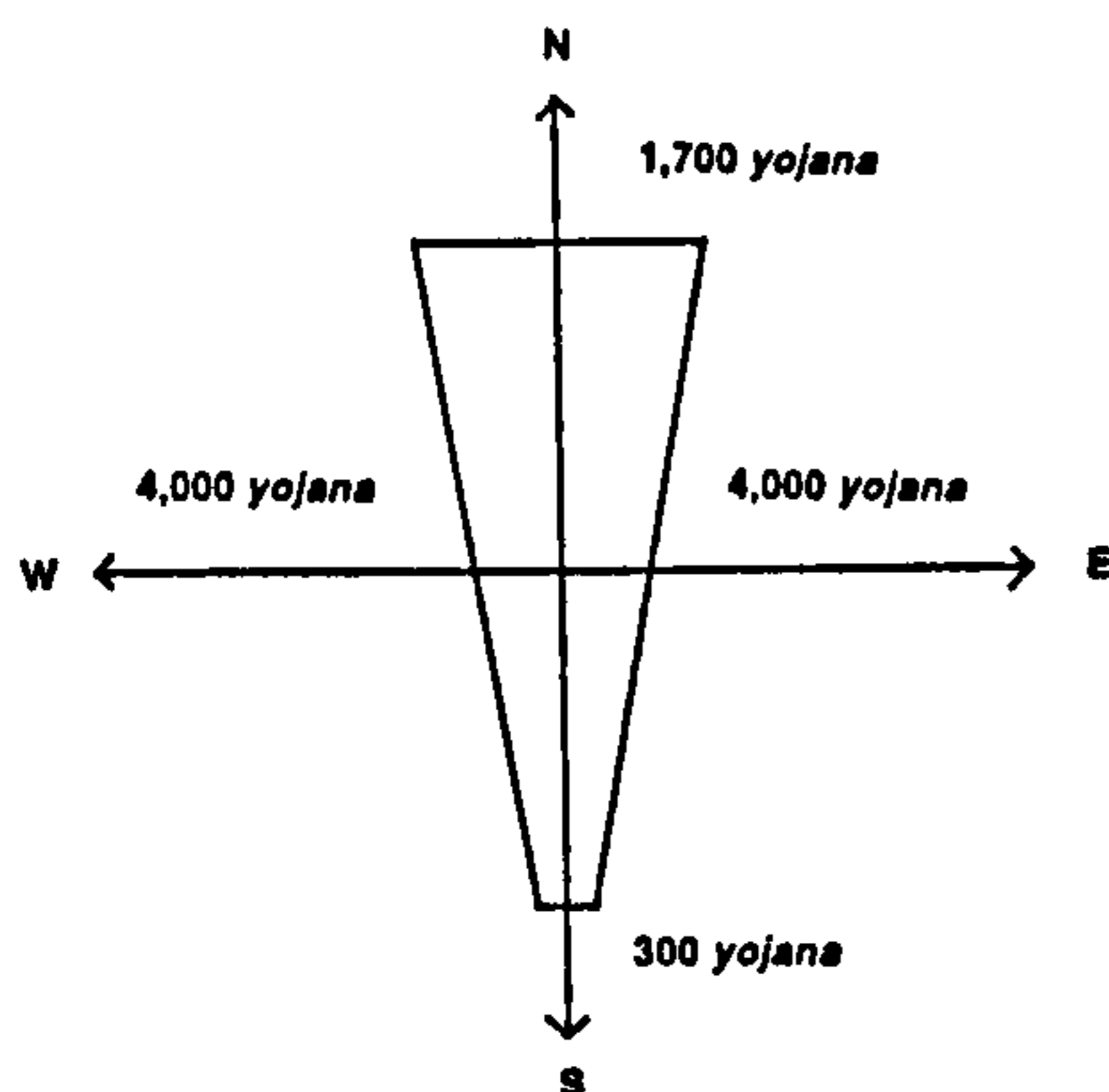


Fig. 3.24 Shape of *Jambudīpa*

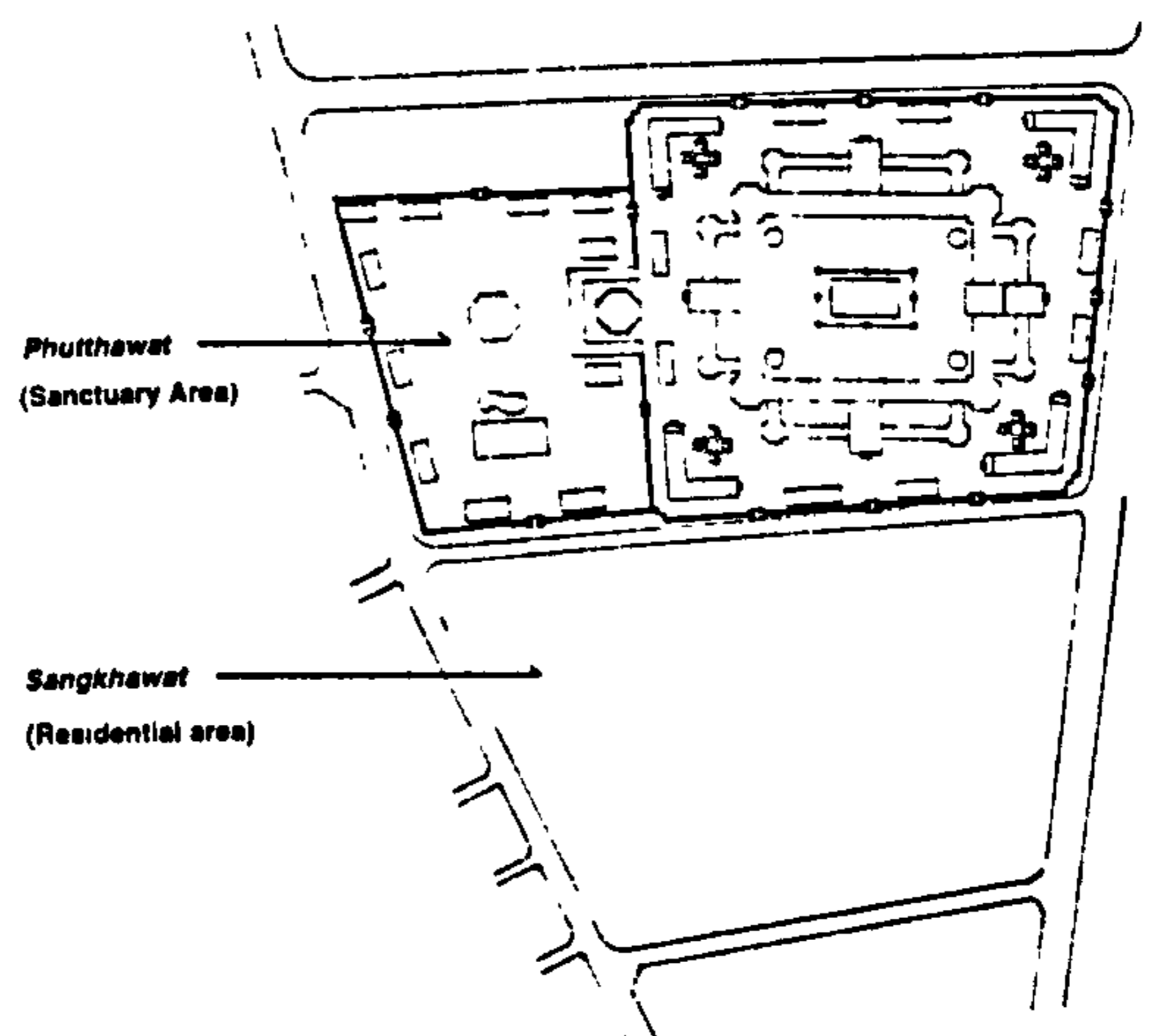


Fig. 3.25 shape of the layout plan of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*

⁵⁵ The *Traiphum* text of King Lithai (Lithai 1983, 10) gives the information that a *yojana* is 8,000 *wa*. *Wa* is Thai measurement generally recognised as equalling about 6 2/3 feet. Since there are 8,000 *wa* in one *yojana*, one *yojana* should equal 53,333 feet or about 10.1 miles. Approximately, a *yojana* equals about ten miles (Reynolds and Reynolds (trans.) 1982, 67 n. 10).

⁵⁶ See the analysis of the concept of *Jambudīpa* in the Royal Chapel in section 3.3.2 of this Chapter.

3.3.2 The Royal Chapel of King Rama I (1782-1789)

As a Royal Chapel, *Wat Phra Srirattana Satsadaram* is the most important *wat* in Bangkok. The construction of the *wat* and the Grand Palace was begun by King Rama I in 1783. They have been restored several times, while many buildings and structures have been added to the precinct of the *wat* throughout the history of Bangkok. Above all, the layout plan of the Royal Chapel was altered by King Rama I himself after the fire in 1788. Therefore, the original plans of the first and the second schemes need to be clarified before studying their symbolic planning. The two schemes will be reconstructed and analysed separately in recognition of the fact that they represent two different designs.

The History and Plan of the Royal Chapel in the Reign of King Rama I

The Royal Chronicle states that there are *ubosot*, *chedis*, *wihans* and a number of *salas* (pavilions) in the construction program of the Royal Chapel of King Rama I. The King commanded that a pond should be dug, with a *Ho Trai* (Library) (No. 2 in Fig. 3.26) located in the middle, to house the cabinets of the *Tripitaka* manuscripts. It was given the name '*Ho Phra Monthiantham*' (The Palace of Dhamma). In addition, he ordered that the bell of *Wat Saket* be moved to the *wat* as he considered that it had a beautiful sound, and he had a new one cast to replace it (Thiphakorawong 1996, 46). The king also moved the *Phra Thepbidon* statue, or King Ramathibodi U-thong, from Ayutthaya to have it altered into a crowned Buddha image, covered with silver and gilded. The image was set up in a *wihan* called '*Ho Phra Thepbidon*'⁵⁷ (No. 7 in Fig.3.26) (Thiphakorawong 1996, 46). The building was located to the north of the *Ho Trai*. Two *chedis* (No.5 in Fig.3.26), enshrining holy relics in their bases, were located east of the *Ho Phra Monthiantham*. Statues of *Asura* were placed at the base of the *chedis*. They were designed in the gesture of supporting the structures.

⁵⁷ The *Ho Phra Thapbidon* was also called '*Wihan Khao*' or '*White Wihan*' which was later rebuilt in the form of a crowned top *prasat* in the reign of King Rama III (Chulalongkorn 1958, 217-18).

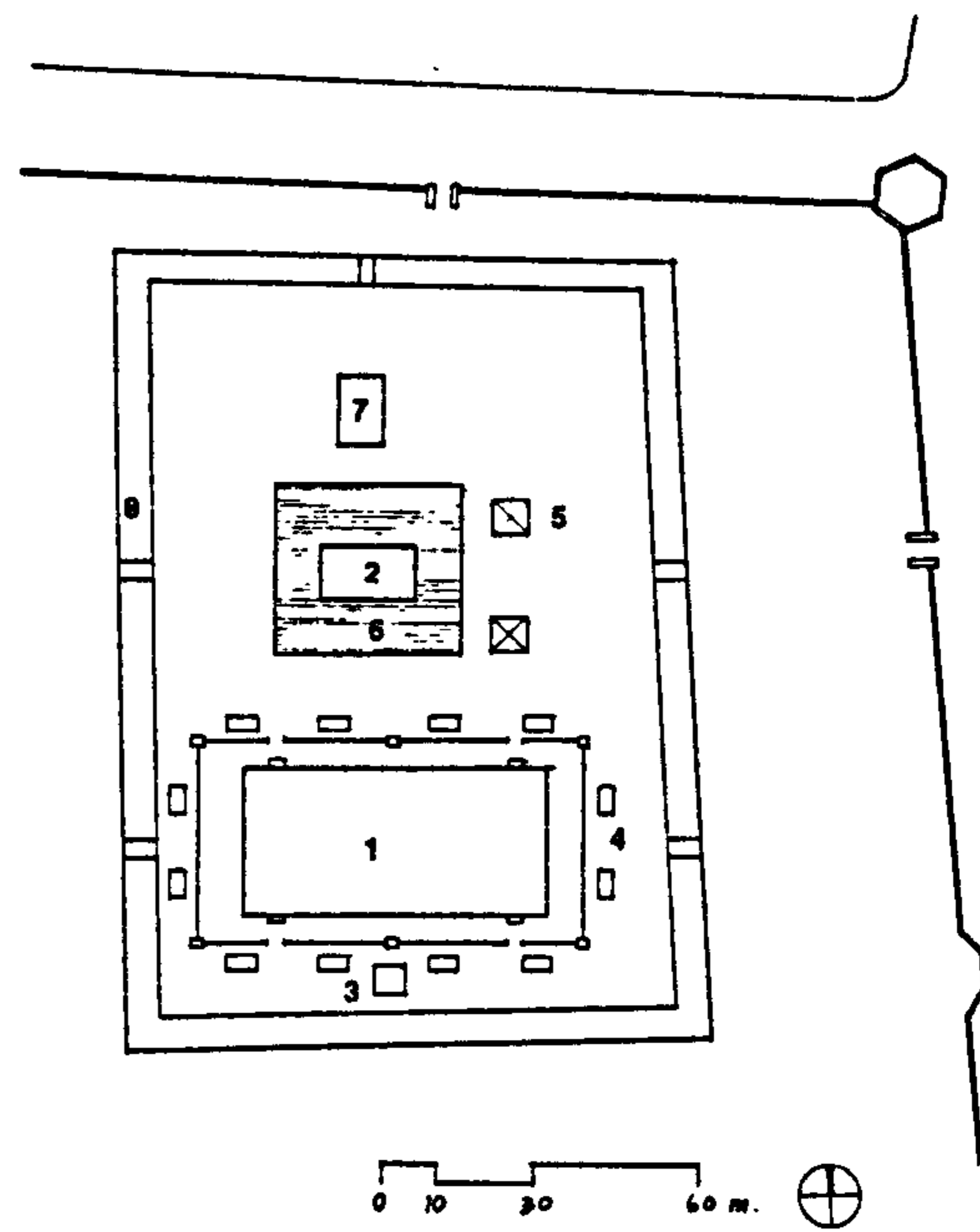


Fig. 3.26 Reconstruction of the plan of the Royal Chapel, the first scheme (1783-1788); 1) *ubosot*; 2) *Ho Trai*; 3) bell tower; 4) *salas*; 5) *chedis*; 6) pond; 7) *Ho Phra Thepbidon*; 8) gallery

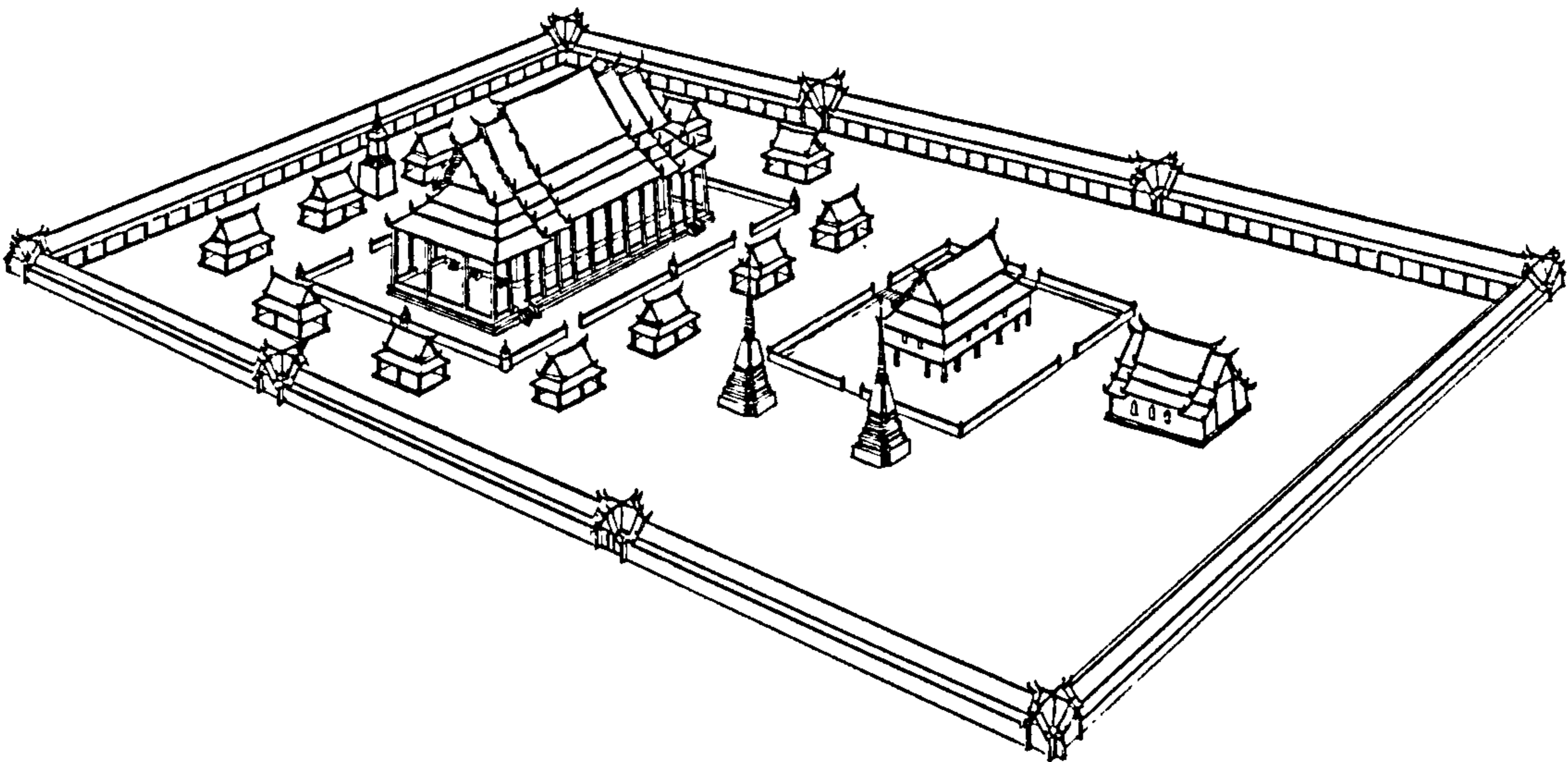


Fig. 3.27 Reconstruction of the Royal Chapel, the first scheme

The construction of the Royal Chapel was completed in the year 1784. The Emerald Buddha Image was removed from the hall of the old palace on the west bank of the Chaopraya River, taken to the new palace, and placed in the *ubosot* of the *wat* (No. 1 in Fig. 3.26). King Rama I invited high ranking monks to perform a ceremony and define the consecrated boundary of the *ubosot* (the *sima* boundary). He named the Royal Chapel 'Wat Phra Srirattana Satsadaram' (Thiphakorawong 1996, 50). The *Sankhitiyavamsa* (The Chronicle of the Buddhist Councils), which was composed in the reign of Rama I, mentions that the pediments of the *ubosot* were adorned with the icon of the God Indra riding on *Erāvana* Elephant (Wannarat 1978, 430).⁵⁸ The Emerald Buddha Image is housed in a *Butsabok* or a *mondop* pavilion (Sriphuripricha 1973, 32).

The manuscripts which were installed in the *Ho Trai* (Library) were those of the Mon and Lao version transcribed into Khmer (or *Khom*) script. In 1788, Rama I gave the command to call together a council in order to restore the original text of the *Tripitaka* (Thiphakorawong 1996, 114-15). The Buddhist Council was convened at *Wat Mahathat* (*Mahādhātu*) and took five months to finish the revision. The new edition of the *Tripitaka* was written on palm leaf manuscripts, the covers of which were gilded, and thus it became known by the name 'The Master Gold Edition' (Thai- *Chabap Thongyai* edition). All of the manuscripts were kept in the *prasat*-like cabinets in the *Ho Trai* (Subhadradis 1991, 31-32).

At the celebration occasioned by the completion of these works, the fireworks went out of control and the *Ho Trai* caught fire. However, the manuscripts were rescued in time. Rama I took into consideration that the *Devas* (deities) who protect the religion might have thought that the *Ho Trai* was not high enough, so he ordained that the building should be razed, while the *ubosot* was saved. He commanded a new library to be built (Thiphakorawong 1996, 120).

⁵⁸ At present the main pediments of the *ubosot* are adorned with the icon of Nārāyana riding on *Garuda*. These might be one of the alterations made during King Rama III's restoration in 1832. The record of Phra Sriphuripricha reports that during the restoration the pediments were decorated with the icon of Nārāyana riding on *Garuda* (Sriphuripricha 1973, 24).

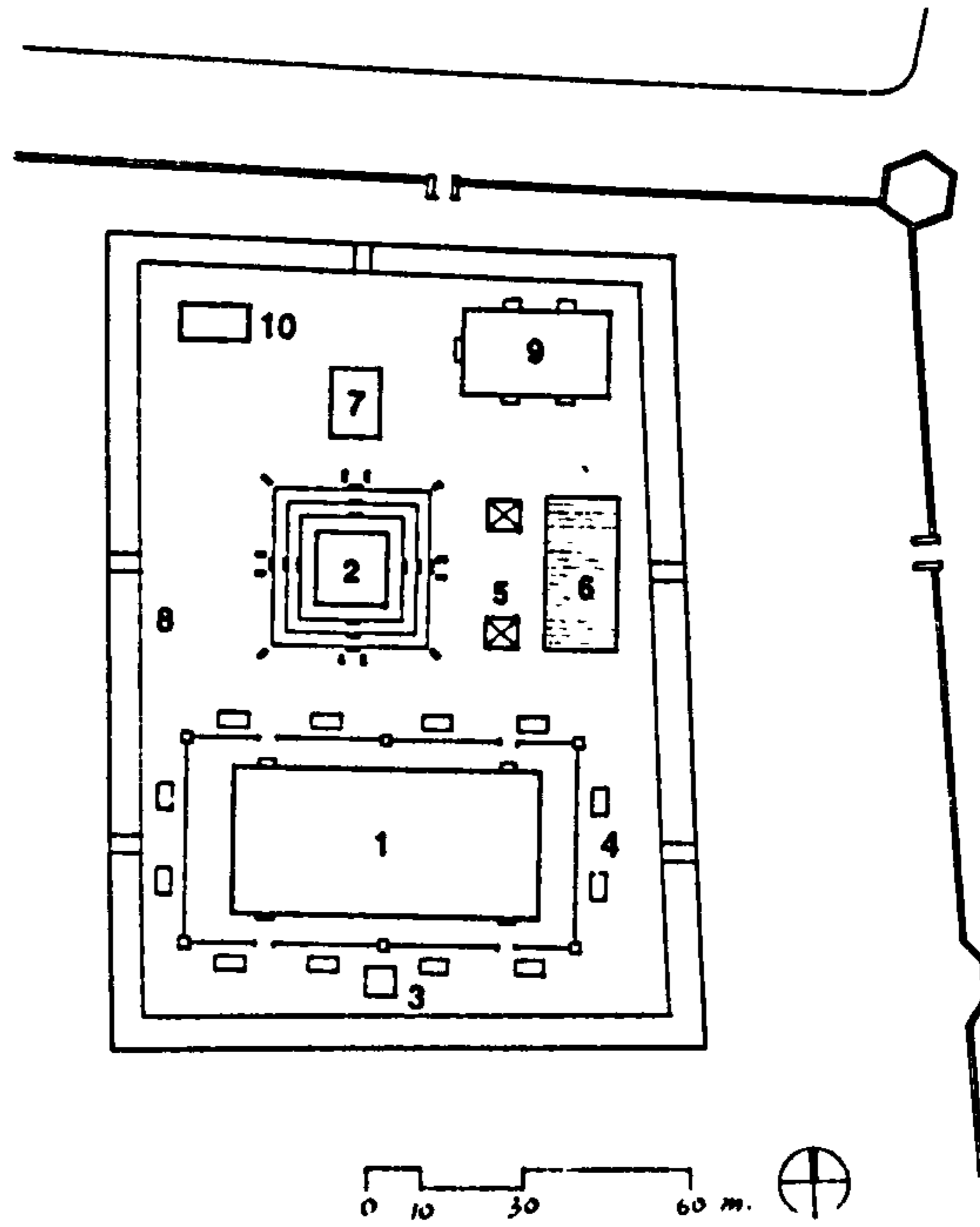


Fig. 3.28 Reconstruction of the plan of the Royal Chapel, the second scheme; 1) *ubosot*; 2) *Phra Mondop*; 3) bell tower; 4) *salas*; 5) *chedis*; 6) pond; 7) *Ho Phra Thepbidon*; 8) gallery; 9) *Ho Phra Monthiantham*; 10) *Ho Phra Nak*

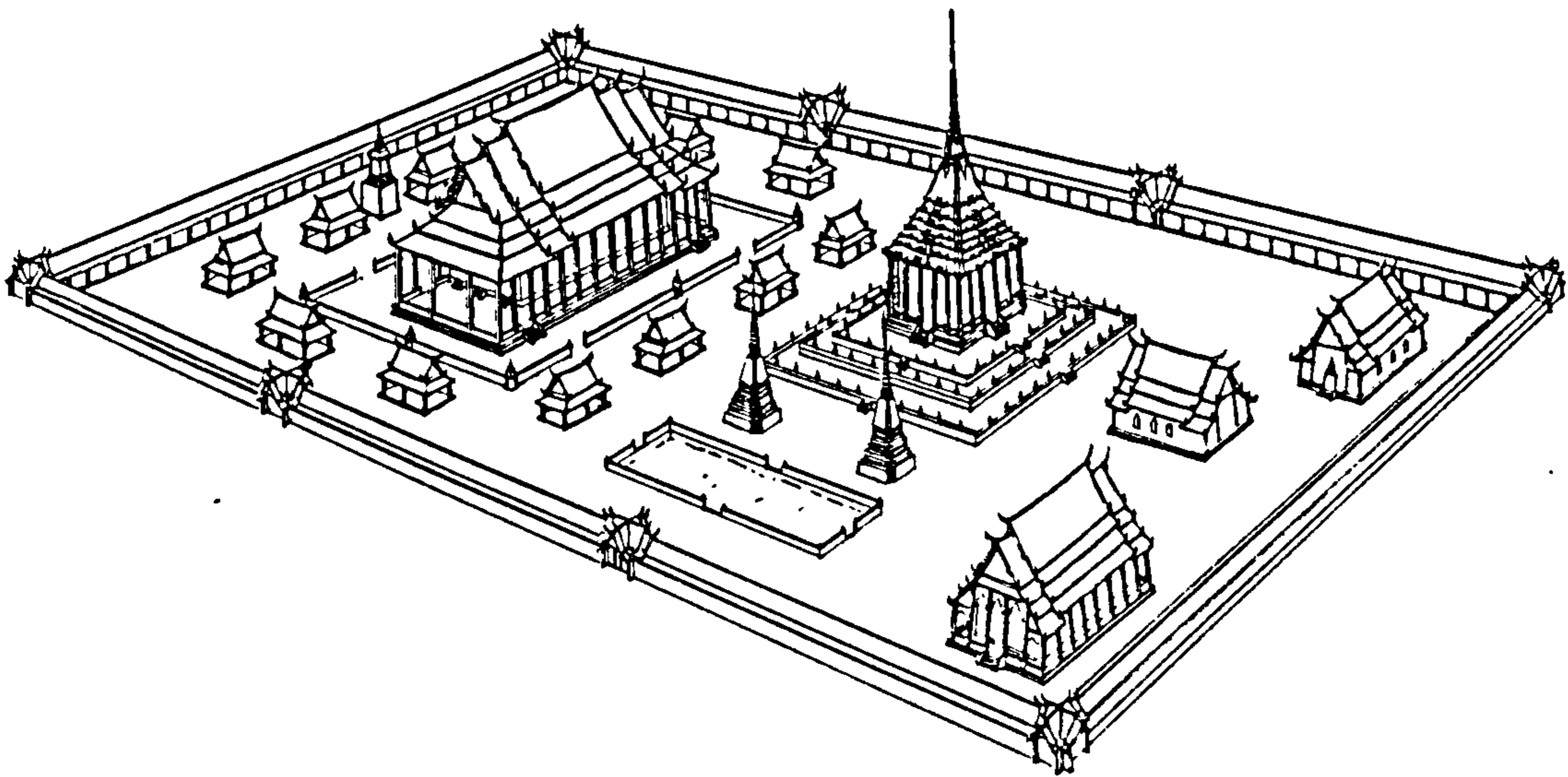


Fig. 3.29 Reconstruction of the Royal Chapel, the second scheme

The new scheme of construction started with the filling in of the pond and the placing of new foundations. The new library was built on a three terraced base and named '*Phra Mondop*' (No.2 in Fig. 3.28). There was a pond to the east of it. A new *Ho Phra Monthientham* (No. 7 in Fig. 3.28) was built to the northeast of the *Phra Mondop* (Thiphakorawong 1996, 120-21). Twelve *singha* lions were placed around the base of the *Phra Mondop*, flanking the staircase in the four cardinal directions and at the four angles of the base. Lanterns were installed on top of the balustrades of the three terraces; between them were placed gilded multi-tiered parasols (*chattras*), decorated with jewelled Bodhi-tree leaves hanging from each tier (Fig. 3.30). There were *Himavanta* mythical beasts flanking the staircases of each terrace. Then the Master Gold Edition of the *Tripitaka* manuscripts was kept in the *prasat*-like cabinets, housed in the *Phra Mondop*.

The cabinet which was placed at the centre of the room had statues of *Devas*, *Garudas*, and *Asuras* adorning its pedestal (Fig. 3.31). Its top was designed like the multi-tiered roof of a *mondop* or *prasat*. The old version of the *Tripitaka* was kept in the newly built *Ho Phra Monthiantam* for *sangha* learning the *Dhamma* (Thiphakorawong 1996, 125). *Ho Phra Nak*, another *wihan* was also built in the north part of the compound during this period (Chulalongkorn 1958, 217). It was set up with a four metre high image of the Buddha standing (Damrong 1973, 22). All of the structures of the Royal Chapel were enclosed in gallery depicting the story of the *Ramakian* epic.

The mural paintings in the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel of Rama I maintained the traditional pattern. The wall behind the principal image (the Emerald Buddha Image) was occupied by a *Cakkavāla* painting according to the Buddhist system of cosmology or *Traiphum*. Opposite the image, above the entrance doors, there was a painting of the Buddha's victory over *Māra* and his army. The side walls above the windows depicted scenes of the Celestial Assembly and the space between the windows was painted with scenes from the Buddha's Life (Subhadradis 1991, 29-30).

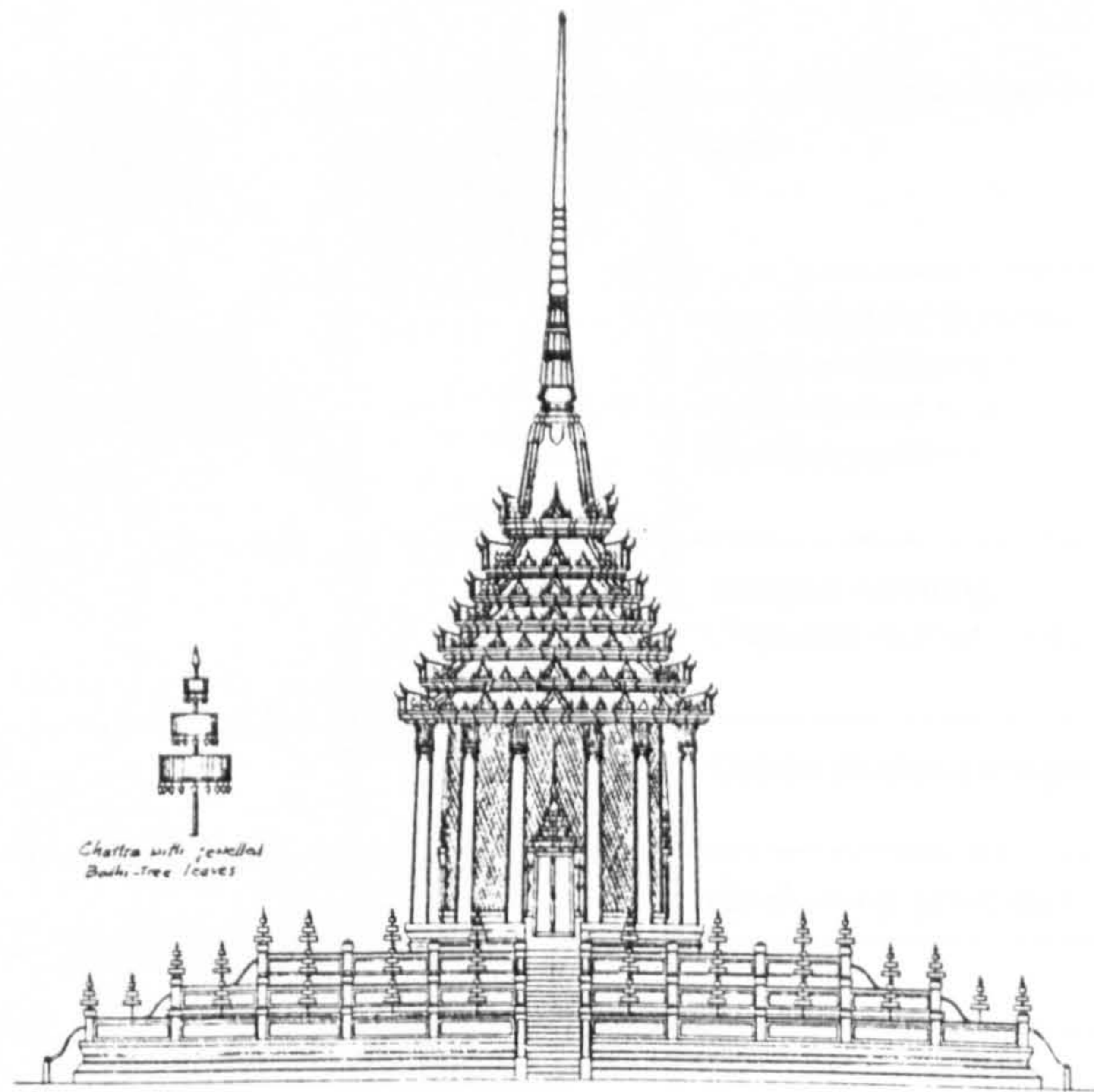


Fig. 3.30 Reconstruction of the *Phra Mondop*

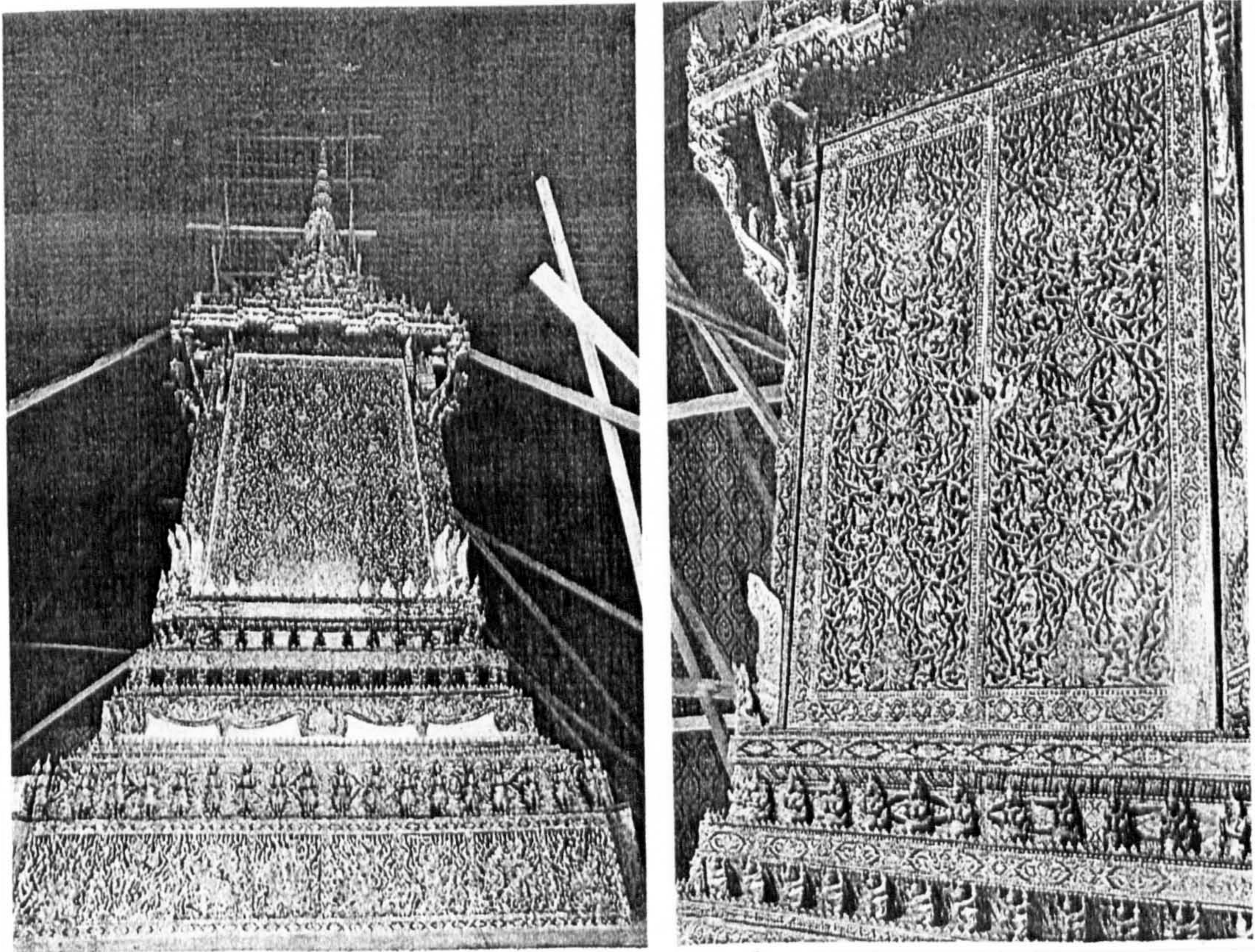


Fig. 3.31 *Prasat*-like cabinet in the *Phra Mondop*, the Royal Chapel
(source: Sanoë and Sangsun 1975)

Buildings	<i>Traiphum</i> elements	Buddha's Life and <i>Jātakas</i>	<i>Ramakian</i> and Brahmanistic elements	other
<i>Ubosot</i>	West wall - <i>Cakkavāla</i> painting pediments -Indra riding on <i>Erāvana</i> Elephant	-10 <i>Jātakas</i> -Victory over <i>Māra</i> -Celestial Assembly -The Life of the Buddha		-The Emerald Buddha Image enshrining holy relics housed in a <i>Mondop</i> pavilion
<i>Ho Phra Monthiantham (Ho Trai)</i>	- <i>Prasat</i> -like cabinet			- <i>Sangha</i> learning - <i>Tripitaka</i> manuscripts
<i>Ho Phra Thepbidon</i>				-Crown Buddha image
Two <i>chedis</i>				-Enshrining great relic
Pond				
Gallery			- <i>Ramakian</i> painting	
12 <i>salas</i>				
Bell tower				- Bell

Table 3.2 Symbolic elements of the Royal Chapel, the first scheme

Buildings	<i>Traiphum</i> elements	Buddha's Life and <i>Jātakas</i>	<i>Ramakian</i> and Brahmanistic elements	other
<i>Ubosot</i>	West wall - <i>Cakkavāla</i> painting Pediments -Indra riding on <i>Erāvana</i> Elephant	-10 <i>Jātakas</i> -Victory over <i>Māra</i> -Celestial Assembly -The Life of the Buddha		
<i>Phra Mondop</i>	- <i>Prasat</i> -like cabinet - <i>Himavanta</i> mythical beasts			- <i>Tripitaka</i> manuscripts - <i>Chatta</i> with jewelled Bodhi- Tree leaves -Twelve <i>singha</i> lions
<i>Ho Phra Monthiantham</i>	Pediments -Indra riding on <i>Erāvana</i> Elephant		Pediments -Brahma riding on <i>Hamsa</i>	- <i>Sangha</i> learning
<i>Ho Phra Thepbidon</i>				-Crowned Buddha image
<i>Ho Phra Nak</i>				-Standing bronze Buddha image
Two <i>chedis</i>				-Enshrining great relic
Pond				
Gallery			- <i>Ramakian</i> painting	
12 <i>salas</i>				
Bell tower				-Bell

Table 3.3 Symbolic elements of the Royal Chapel, the second scheme

The Study of the Concept of Space

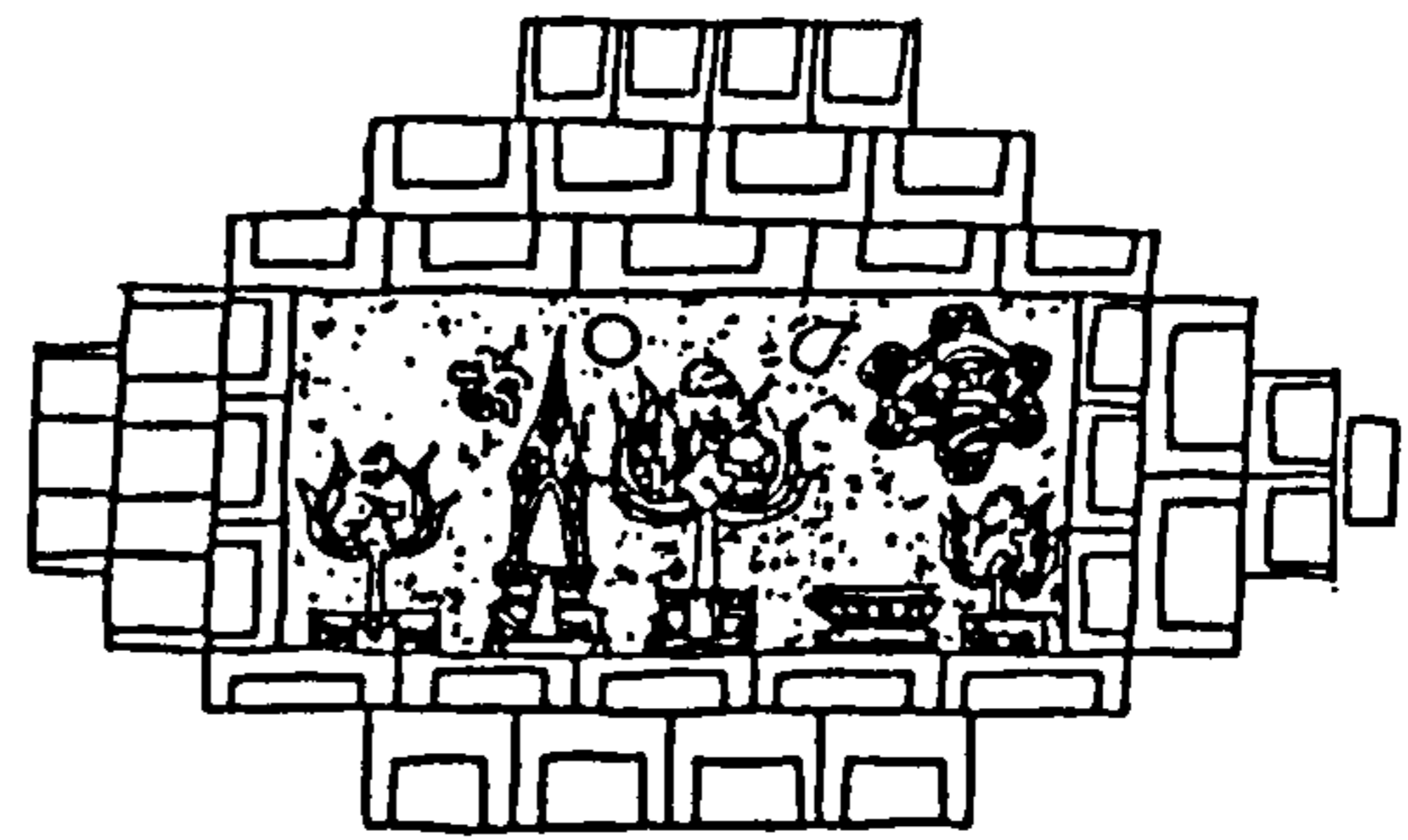
The First Scheme (1783-1788)

Having studied the tradition of Thai mural painting, the result of the analysis of the *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings in an *ubosot* or *wihan* indicates the position of the presiding Buddha image in the building as the Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa*.⁵⁹ The *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel which contained the same traditional pattern should also be initially identified with the centre of *Jambudīpa*. The elements which are closely connected to the *ubosot* are its surroundings, the twelve *salas*. Because they are built in small buildings without any specific symbols, this interpretation is based on an analogy method, explained below.

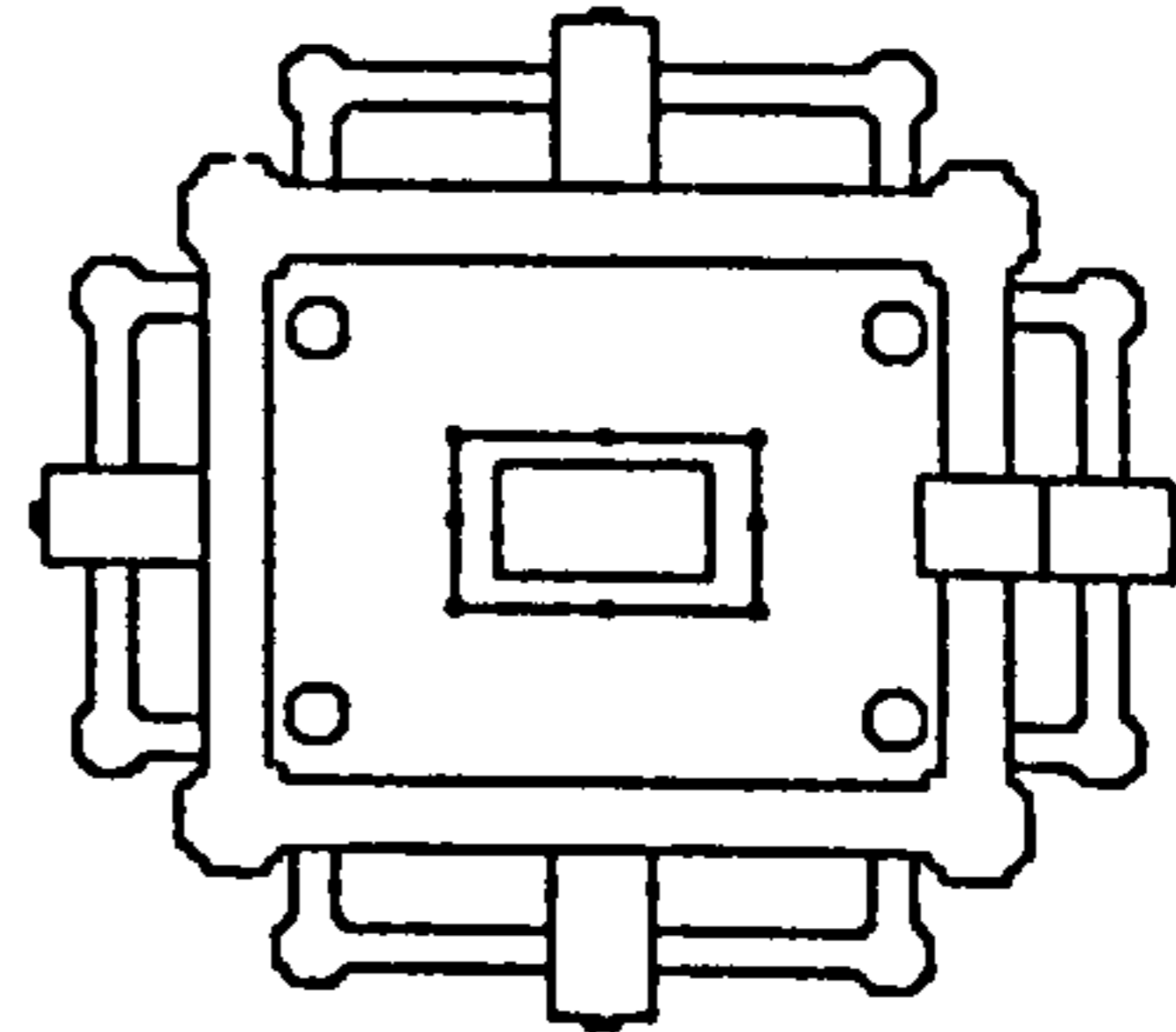
The pattern of the constellation of the *ubosot* and the *salas* reminds one of the figure of *Jambudīpa* in the illustration of the *Traiphum* manuscript (Fig. 3.32). The twelve *salas* might be an interpretation of the rectangular boxes in the illustration, which represent the cities of *Majjhimadesa*. They surround another rectangular space in which the figures of the Bodhi-tree and other signs of the Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*) are represented. The position of the principal Buddha image in the *ubosot* certainly signifies the position of the Diamond Throne. However, the plan of the *ubosot* can be compared to the rectangular space which, with its centre, denotes the Bodhi-tree. Therefore, the pattern of the *ubosot* and the twelve *salas* of the Royal Chapel, the plan of the *ubosot* complex of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, and the illustration of the *Majjhimadesa* of the *Traiphum* manuscript, all are comparable.⁶⁰ However, the twelve *salas* which surround the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel seem to be more modified in the designed plan since they do not contain any element denoting the cities of *Majjhimadesa*. This hypothesis is the result of an interpretation of the traditional pattern of painting inside the *ubosot* and its combination with the *salas*, which might be another interpretation of the concept of *Jambudīpa* from the *Traiphum* illustration. The validity of this hypothesis needs to be supported by other elements in the compound.

⁵⁹ See the analysis of the traditional painting in section 3.2.1 of this Chapter.

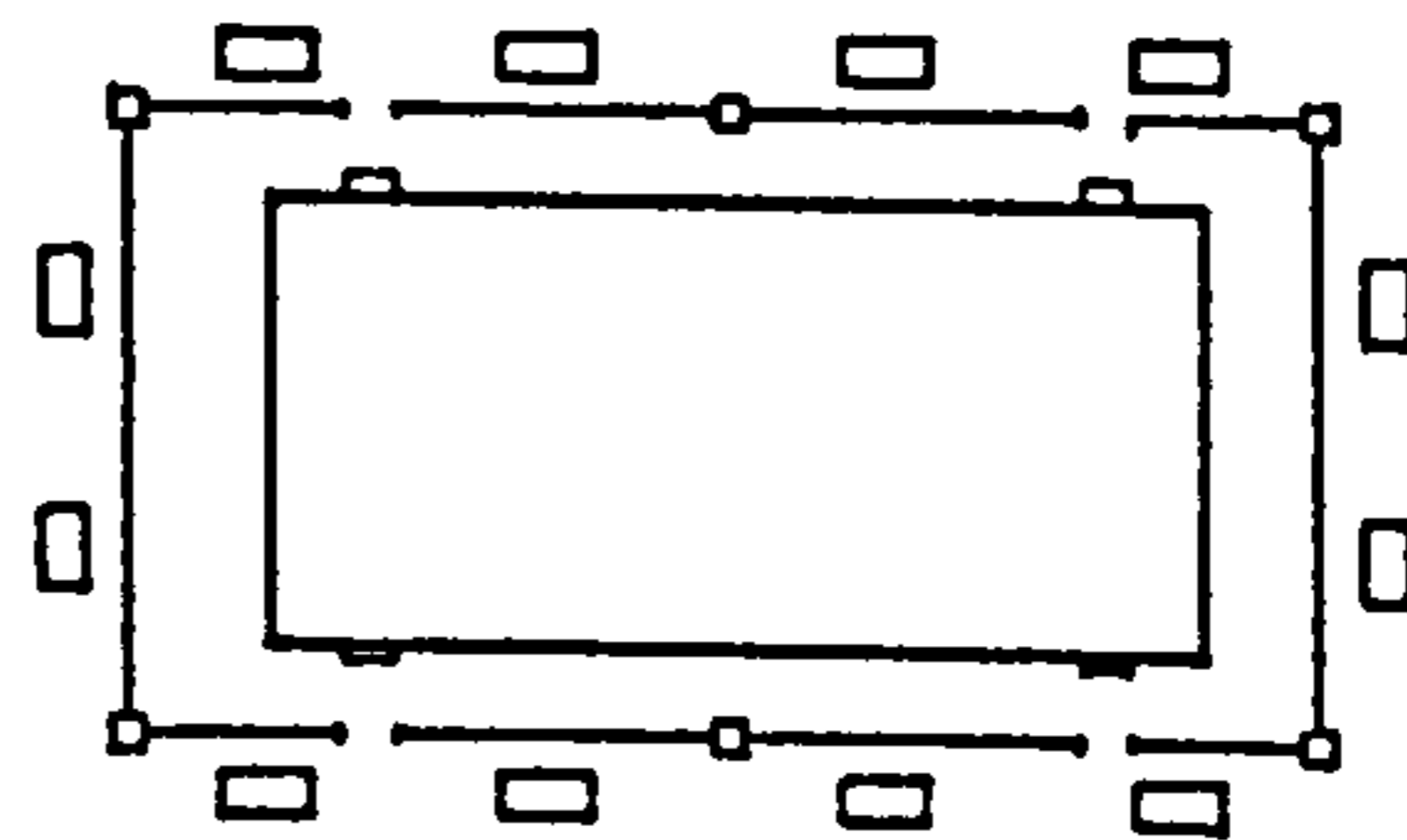
⁶⁰ See the study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* in the section 3.3.1 of this Chapter.



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Fig. 3.32 1) Diagram of *Majjhimadesa*; 2) the *ubosot* complex of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*; and 3) the *ubosot* complex of the Royal Chapel

However, another set of symbols which was in the *ubosot* may be connected to the concept of Mount *Meru*. The *mondop* pavilion, which housed the Emerald Buddha image, according to its form, is the symbol relating to Mount *Meru*. The icon of Indra riding on the *Erāvana* Elephant on the pediments of the *ubosot* also implied that the building represented *Tāvātimsa*. As a result, the vertical axis of the building is the axial symbol of Mount *Meru* overlapping with the centre of *Jambudīpa*.⁶¹

⁶¹ See the analysis of the overlapping of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa*, which might be an influence from Brahmanistic cosmology, in Chapter 5.

It was very unusual that the *Ho Trai* (Library) and the pond should occupy almost half of the compound: this has never been found in the Ayutthaya tradition. In general, the function of a *Ho Trai* is to house the *Tripitaka* scriptures and other Buddhist texts. The domination of the *Ho Trai* in the plan of the Royal Chapel reflects Rama I's emphasis of the importance of the *Dhamma*, represented by the *Tripitaka*. The integration of the teaching place with *Ho Trai*, and its location at the centre of the compound of the Royal Chapel, is the real innovation of Rama I. However, the analogy between the buildings in the compound and the illustration of the *Traiphum* cosmography indicates by their relationship that the illustration might be a planning concept similar to that of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*.

The *prasat*-like cabinet containing the *Tripitaka* in the *Ho Trai* is the key to signifying the concept of Mount *Meru*, as also seen in the *Ho Trai* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. According to its position in the layout plan, the *Ho Trai* could be compared to the position of Mount *Meru* in the *Traiphum* cosmological diagram. The pond which held the *Ho Trai* at its centre represented the *Sidantara* Ocean which encircles *Meru* Mountain. The *ubosot* which was located south of the *Ho Trai* conforms to the representation of *Jambudīpa* as the southern continent located south of Mount *Meru*. Nevertheless, the *Ho Trai* might not be built in the form of a *prasat*⁶² and the concept of Mount *Meru* was represented by the *prasat*-like cabinet which was housed in it. Both the symbolic planning of the Royal Chapel and that of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* put the *Ho Trai* in a position which could be identified with the *Meru* Mountain.

The *Tripitaka* is the most important Buddhist text since it is connected with the teaching of the Buddha and the ultimate truth, the *Dhamma*. The reason that the *Ho Trai* of the Royal Chapel was not built with a *prasat* or *mondop* roof might be because it incorporated the function of a *sangha* learning place. The *prasat* form is the architectural symbol of Mount *Meru* and the symbol of the king (Kramrisch 1942, 143 n.42). Thus, it was applied to the *Tripitaka* cabinet instead.

If the *ubosot* and the twelve *salas* are symbols of *Jambudīpa*, the bell tower located to

⁶² One is able to speculate on the architectural features of the *Ho Trai* as a building with a simple gable roof; traditionally, the building with a multi-tiered roof always has the words '*prasat*' or '*mondop*' incorporated into its proper name. This determines its specific building type, particularly the royal architecture. The term '*Ho*' generally means 'building'; this interpretation is based on its position in the compound.

the south could be identified with *Yamaloka*, the Realm of the Lord of Death, as in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and in *Wat Suthat*.⁶³ It is located at the far south of all the structures, indicating that the southern part is the lowest realm of the compound.

Although all structures in the compound are represented in the *Traiphum* diagram, comprised of Mount *Meru*, *Jambudīpa* and *Yamaloka*, the concept of *Jambudīpa* is apparently the main idea expressed through the shape of the gallery, since it was not formed with right angles. The measurement shows that the north gallery is approximately eight metres shorter than the south.⁶⁴ The difference in the length of the galleries, which is too long to be a measurement error, suggests that they were deliberately distorted from the shape of the true rectangle. This might be an interpretation of the shape of *Jambudīpa*, which is like the shape of a chariot in plan, similar to the shape of the outermost wall of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* (see the analysis of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*).

The Second Scheme After the Fire (1788-1831)

After the fire had destroyed the *Ho Trai*, a new building was built in the form of *Phra Mondop* (Fig. 3.30) to replace the old *Ho Trai*. The establishment of some other new buildings, needs to be interpreted further using the second plan.

Because the function of the *sangha* learning place was provided in the new building together with its original name, the new *Ho Trai* in the form of *Phra Mondop* then became eligible to be built in the multi-tiered roofed form as *Mondop* (Fig. 3.30). Its multi-tiered roof conveys a higher status than the old *Ho Trai*. According to its form, the *Phra Mondop* is the symbol of Mount *Meru*. It is a re-interpretation, representing *Dhamma* as the centre of the universe in a more tangible form. Thus it is a real monument to *Dhamma*.

The most interesting elements which Rama I added to the architectural symbolism of the *Phra Mondop* were its elaborate decorations. The *chattas*, multi-tiered parasols

⁶³ See the study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* in section 3.3.1 in this Chapter and *Wat Suthat* in section 4.2.3 in Chapter 4. The present bell tower of the Royal Chapel is the new version, built on its original position by King Rama IV (Mongkut).

⁶⁴ The north gallery is 100.28 metres long and the south is 108.80 metres.

hanging with jewelled Bodhi-tree leaves, and the lanterns on the balustrades of the terraces, were an elucidation of the concept of *Phra Mondop*. The jewelled Bodhi-tree leaves are deliberately linked to the Bodhi-tree and the *Dhamma*, since 'Bodhi' is the generic name given to the tree under which a Buddha attains Enlightenment. The *Traiphum* Text (*Traiphumlukawinitchai*) compares a *chatta* to the central mountain of the universe - Mount *Meru*. The text confers the spire of the *chatta* to Mount *Meru* and its circumference represents the *Yugandhara* mountain which encircles the central Mountain (Thampricah 1992, 83).⁶⁵ A vast number of *chattas* hanging with jewelled Bodhi-tree leaves marked the *Dhamma*, represented by the *Tripitaka* in the *Phra Mondop*, as the centre of uncountable universes (*Ananta cakavāla*). However, the *Himavanta* mythical beasts adorning the staircases may transform the base of the *Phra Mondop* to be the land of *Himavanta* in *Jambudīpa*. The vertical axial symbol of the *Phra Mondop* perhaps represented Mount *Meru* overlapping with *Jambudīpa*, similar to the *ubosot*.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See also Irwin (1980, 16); and the study of the concept of the parasol and the sacred tree in Thai culture in Son (1992).

⁶⁶ See the study of the overlapping of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa* in Chapter 5.

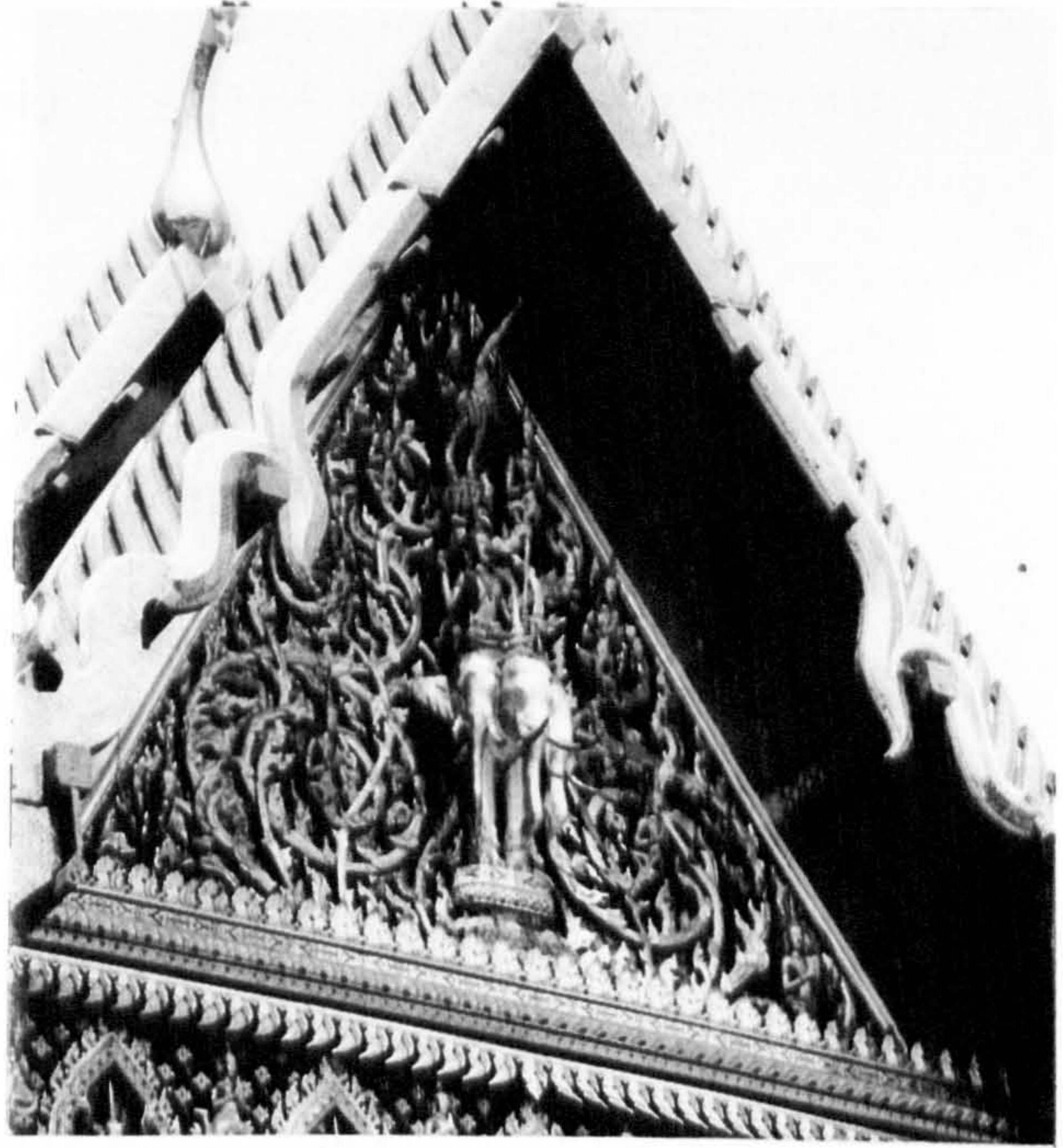


Fig. 3.33 Brahma and Indra gods, pediment of *Ho Phra Monthaintham*, the Royal Chapel

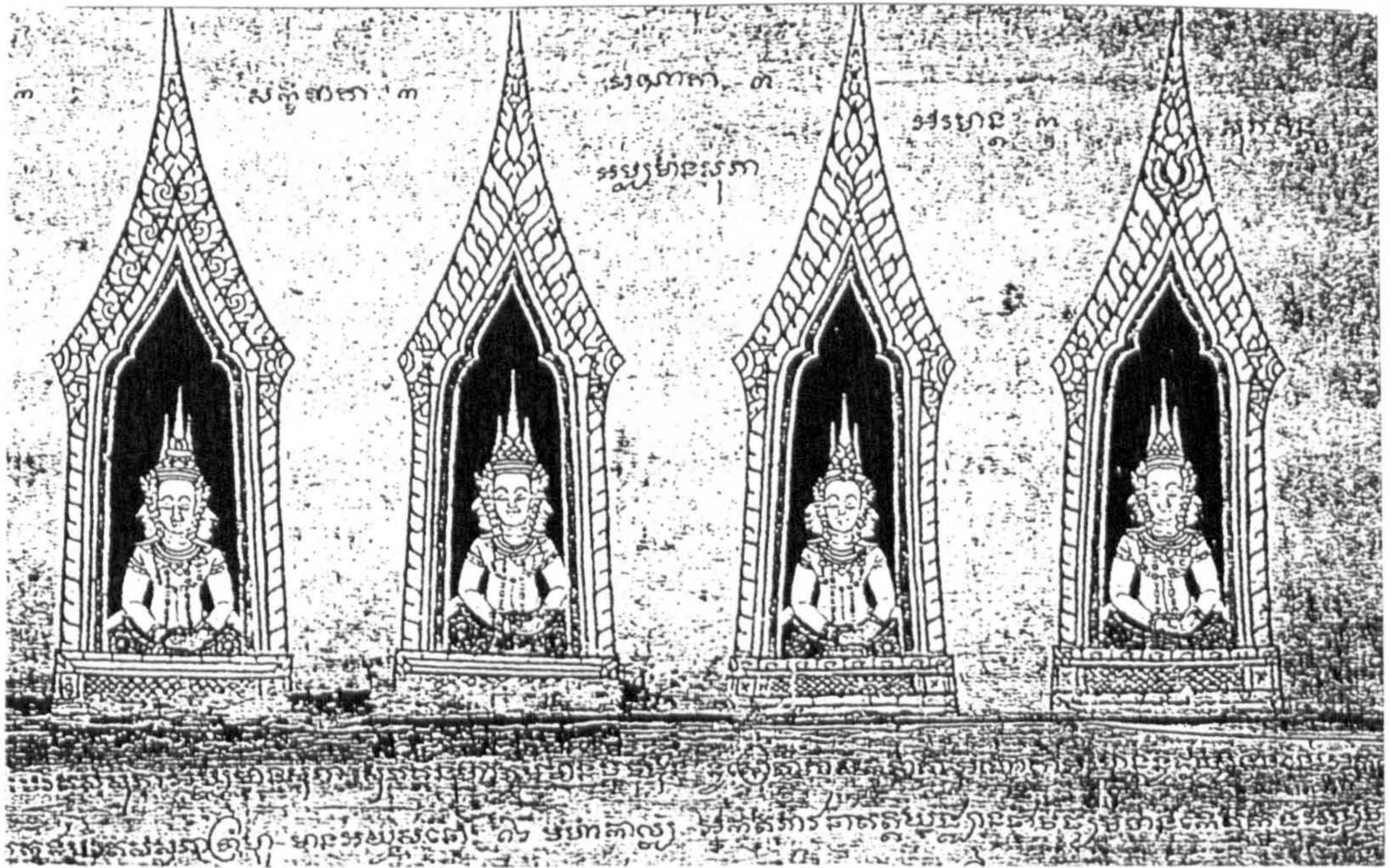


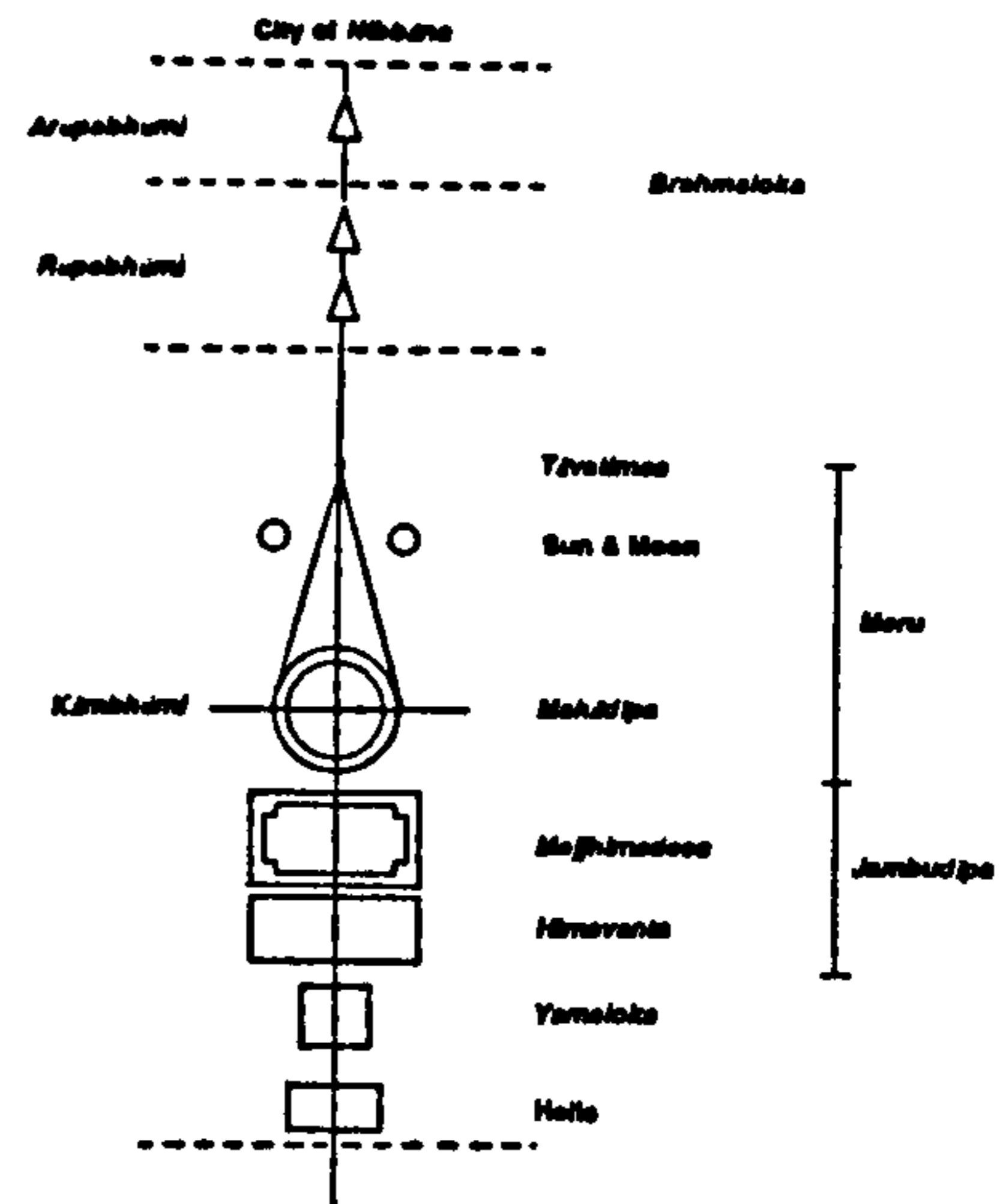
Fig. 3.34 *Brahma* deities in the Realm of Form, *Traiphum* manuscript painting, Khmer version (source: FAD 1987)

As for the new *Ho Phra Monthiantham*, which was located at the north part of the compound, the icons on its pediments imply a meaning related to the sixteen planes of *Brahmaloka* in the Realm of Form. The icons of the God Indra mounted on the *Erāvana* Elephant and the God Brahma mounted on *Hamsa* (goose) (Fig. 3.33), indicate that the building probably represents a level higher than the Realm of Desire (*Kāmabhūmi*). 'The Legend of Vishnu's Twenty *Avatāras*' states that after Phra Paramesvara (Siva) created *Tāvātimsa* Heaven and invited the God Indra from *Brahmaloka* to rule the Heaven, he commanded the God Brahma to stay in *Brahmaloka* to teach *Tiveda*⁶⁷ (Thai- *Traiphet*) to all *brahma* deities in the sixteen levels of *Brahmaloka* (*Solasamahābrahma*)⁶⁸ in the Realm of Form (Niyada 1997, 129). The icon of the God Brahma should be the key element symbolizing the building as high as *Brahmaloka*. The relation between the God Brahma and the concept of *Brahmaloka* in the *Traiphum* is also represented by the figure of the *brahma* deities in *Brahmaloka* in some of the *Traiphum* manuscripts. The *brahma* deities in the *Traiphum* manuscript painting from the Khmer version are portrayed by the figures of deities with four faces similar to the God Brahma (Fig. 3.34).⁶⁹ The *Ho Phra Monthiantham* probably represents the vertical symbol of Mount *Meru* and above it, the *Brahmaloka*. It may be attributed as a symbol of the highest realm which appears in the context of the whole compound. However, for the *Ho Phra Nak* and *Ho Phra Thepbidon* which are also located in the north section of the compound, there is no clear evidence to identify what they represented. Both of them were rebuilt in the reign of King Rama III. Only the *Phra Thepbidon* statue which is in the form of a crowned Buddha image can not exactly be identified to particular realms of the *Traiphum*.

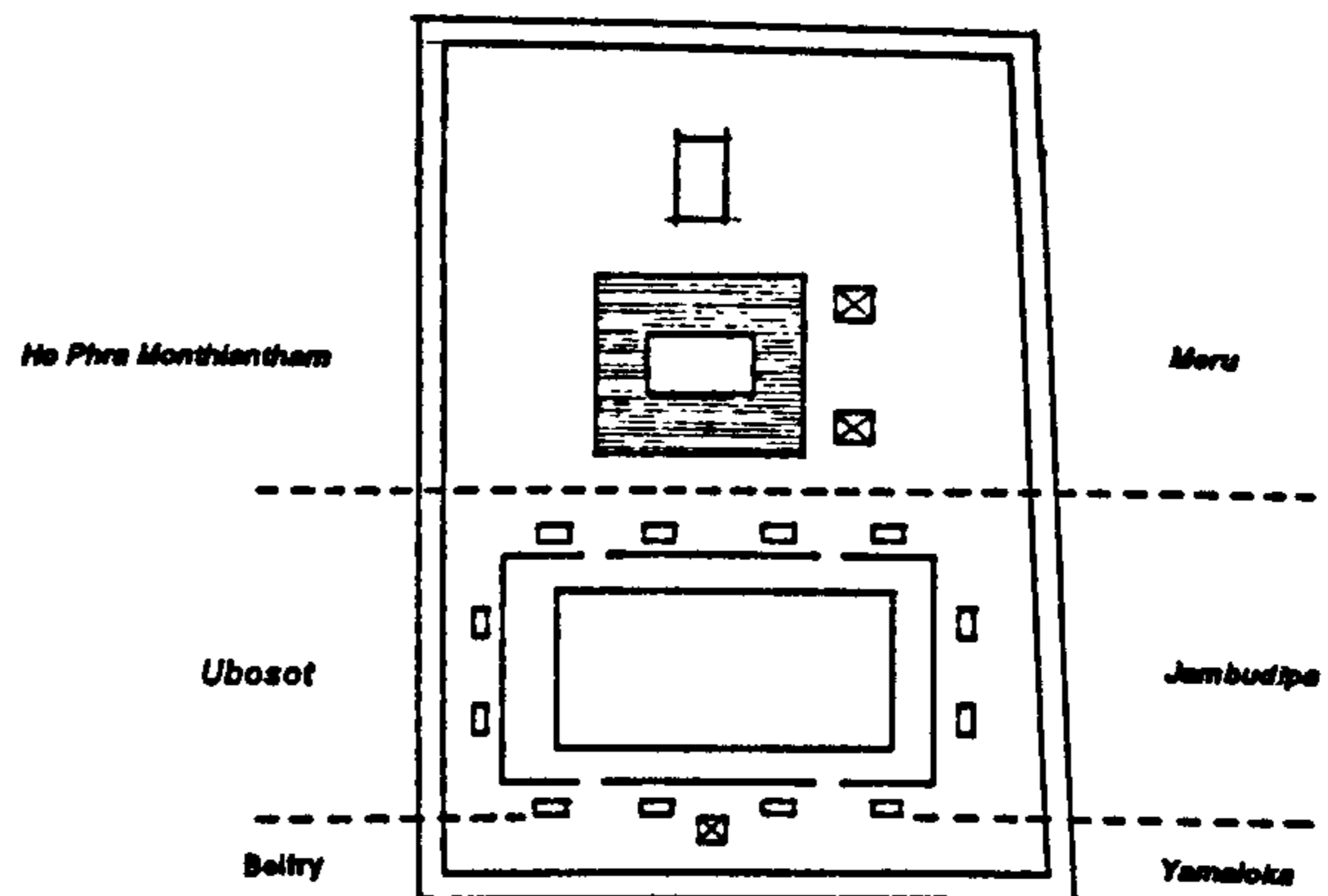
⁶⁷ 'Tiveda' is the three knowledge or the three divisions of the Brahmanistic canon of authorized religious teaching and practice (Prayuddha 1985, 378).

⁶⁸ There are sixteen levels of *Brahma* in the Realm of Form (*Rūpabhūmi*) which are higher than the Realm of Desire (*Kāmabhūmi*). See Chapter 2.

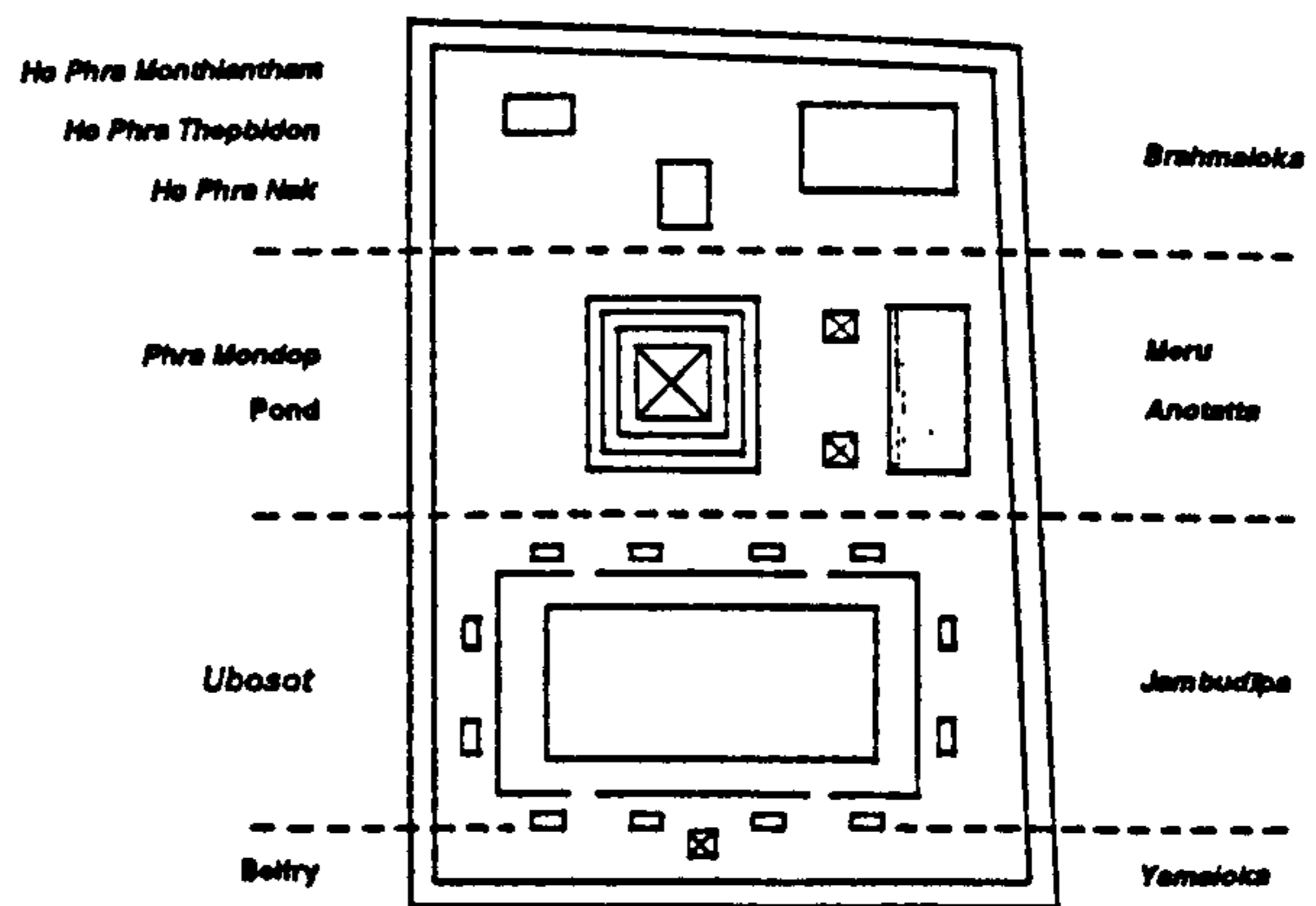
⁶⁹ See FAD (1987, 12-18). The figure is usually shown with only three faces in the painting (Ginsburg 1989, 108).



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Fig. 3.35 1) *Traiphum* diagram ; 2) the symbolic planning of the Royal Chapel; the first scheme; 3) the second scheme

Accordingly, as we have seen, the level of a single structure may represent the vertical symbol of *Traiphum* cosmography. However, in the level of the whole compound, there is another form of symbolic planning in which all structures are connected to each other in a particular system, to form another *Traiphum* diagram. The latter is formed on the horizontal axis. The area of the Royal Chapel which is enclosed by the gallery may be divided into four parts from north to south for the second scheme (Fig. 3.35). The highest realm is the northern part which was comprised of *Ho Phra Monthiantham*, *Ho Phra Thepbidon* and *Ho Phra Nak*; this might be the area of *Brahmaloka*. As we have said the *Phra Mondop* represents Mount *Meru*. The *ubosot* and twelve *salas* symbolize *Jambudīpa*, located south of Mount *Meru*. The lowest realm is the far south, where the bell tower represents the *Yamaloka* (the Realm of the Lord of Death). The arrangement of these structures conforms to the illustration in the Khmer version of the *Traiphum* manuscript. This second plan indicates that King Rama I built the *Ho Phra Monthiantham* to symbolize the *Brahmaloka*. In addition, the *Phra Mondop* which is in the form of a *prasat*, has its architectural symbol higher than the old *Ho Trai*. It is also built to accentuate the significance of the *Tripitaka* housed in it.

Because all the structures were encompassed by the gallery, which was deliberately planned to represent the shape of a chariot, the concept of *Jambudīpa* is the prominent one. This signifies another concept, that all the structures in the cloister are in *Jambudīpa*. The pond at the east of *Phra Mondop* might have signified *Anotatta* Lake in *Himavanata* Forest, which is part of *Jambudīpa*, as is the *Sidantara* Ocean which separates Mount *Meru* from the Four Continents.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ See the discussion of *Anotatta* Lake in section 3.4.3 of this Chapter. Rosenfield (1970, 286-87) interprets the *Phra Mondop* as Mount *Kailasa*, the abode of *Siva* or *Isvara* God in *Himavanata* Forest and the pond as representing *Anotatta* Lake. The arrangement of the symbols in the *Phra Mondop* may be an influence of Brahmanistic cosmology. See the conclusion on this issue in Chapter 5. However, Mount *Kailasa* is probably not important enough to be the centre of the Royal Chapel, particularly as Rama I attempted to emphasize Buddhist ideology by upholding *Dhamma*, represented by the *Tripitaka* and the symbol of the Bodhi-tree; a concept related to Brahmanistic elements would probably not be the major idea.



Fig. 3.36 Čhedi, the Royal Chapel

The two *čhedis* located east of the *Phra Mondop* could be supposed to be the *čhedis* dedicated to ancestors as practised in the Ayutthaya period.⁷¹ However, considering that they were supported by statues of *Asuras* (Fig. 3.36), they may be attributed as the element which is not in the human world but is floating in space. Their setting at either side of the *Phra Mondop* may lead one to suppose that they represent the Sun and the Moon, although this is unlikely to be the case in accordance with their *stūpa* form. Nevertheless, this hypothesis is possible in the context of Thai tradition, in which the meaning of a structure may vary according to its context.⁷²

⁷¹ Damrong (1928, 26) explains that the tradition since the Ayutthaya period is that two *čhedis* were usually built at the front of the main building of the *wat*, which may be an *ubosot* or *wihan*, for enshrining the remains of or being dedicated to parents.

⁷² See the discussion of two *čhedis* at the front of the main building of a *wat* in Chapter 5.

3.4 RAMA I'S KINGSHIP AND BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE

The result of the analysis of the symbolic planning of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel of King Rama I suggests that they represented the diagram of *Traiphum* cosmography. This section will discuss the relationship between the conception behind the planning of the *wats* and the historical conditions of the early Bangkok period, when Rama I attempted to establish a new kingdom and to legitimize his sovereignty.

3.4.1 *Traiphum* Cosmography and *Dhamma*

Although they represented the *Traiphum* cosmic diagram, the plans of the Royal Chapel and *Wat Phra Chetuphon* were distinctively designed. The *Brahmaloka* (of the Realm of Form), Mount *Meru*, *Jambudīpa* and *Yamaloka* (the Realm of the Lord of Death) were aligned on a north-south axis in the plan of the Royal Chapel. Its centre was the *Phra Mondop* which contained the *Tripitaka*, the symbol of *Dhamma* at the position of *Meru* Mountain. The east-west direction was the main axis of the plan of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, in which the *ubosot* complex is the symbol of *Majjhimadesa*.

The two most important centres of the world are the Diamond Throne (*Vajrāsana*) and Mount *Meru*. However, Rama I's most striking design was to install the *Tripitaka* manuscripts in the building which symbolizes Mount *Meru*, both in the Royal Chapel and *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. The importance of the *Tripitaka* was also extraordinarily emphasized by installing them in the *prasat*-like cabinets. The adornment of *chattras* (multi-tiered parasols) with jewelled Bodhi-tree leaves surrounding the *Phra Mondop* of the Royal Chapel symbolized the *Dhamma* as the centre of *Ananta cakkavāla* (uncountable universes). Lanterns, which were placed alternately with the *chattas*, apparently represented the light of *Dhamma* which lightened the world after the anarchy at the end of Ayutthaya. Rama I intended the architectural adornments of the *Phra Mondop* to show his righteous leadership in promoting the enlightened code of ethics. The act of Rama I may be compared to that of Asoka, who commissioned the erection of the wheel pillar or the Pillar-of-Law (the *dharma-stambha*, see Irwin 1976). The wheel is an analogy for the eternal law (or *Dhamma*) which the Buddha 'turned' when he began teaching his first sermon at Saranath (Moore 1977, 143-44). Irwin has pointed out the symbolic significance of Asoka's pillar as follows: 'In terms of his personal faith as a Buddhist, Asoka may well have imagined the Pillar-of-Law as a

symbol of light and order over darkness and chaos' (Irwin 1976, 752). As for Rama I, in a similar concept, he directly used the *Tripitaka* manuscript as the symbol of *Dhamma*.

The specific condition of Rama I's reign was to re-establish a new Buddhist kingdom after the destruction of Ayutthaya; therefore, the *Dhamma* needed to be constituted as the fundamental rule of society. This might be the most significant concept expressed through the interpretation of Rama I's installation of the *Tripitaka* at the position of Mount *Meru*. In addition, the Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya, which were revised during his reign, allege that the kings of the last dynasty of Ayutthaya ruled without *Dhamma*, which caused the catastrophe in the kingdom. Thus their right had to rule Siamese society had ceased (Nithi 1980, 25-35). The *Sanghitiyavamsa* (the Chronicle of the Buddhist Council) makes a similar allegation:

The last king of Ayutthaya had ruled for eight years, he was incompetent and deluded, and lacked of conscience (*hiri*) and moral dread (*ottappa*). He also did not have wise judgment in administrative affairs and did not take into consideration about what was valuable or not. At that time, ministers, officers, city folks and villagers did not live with righteousness. They fell into bad conduct and oppressed each other (Wannarat 1978, 402).

When the Burmese came and attacked, the capital of Ayutthaya was captured (Wannarat 1978, 403-21). The text compares the calamity of Ayutthaya to the *Kali Yuga* (Dark Age) (Wannarat 1978, 417).⁷³ The reign of Rama I, therefore, was the beginning of the new age when humans lived in the most peaceful society. By placing the *Dhamma* (*Tripitaka*) at the centre of the world, Rama I might have imagined that the *Dhamma* was to be constituted firmly in the new kingdom. The power of the *Dhamma* was called on to be with society again, since it is the most important of all the powers of the world, which would bring prosperity and peace to all the populace. Constructing a cosmic diagram (in *wats*), but living without *Dhamma*, would not ensure peace in the kingdom; the case of Ayutthaya was an example of this *par excellence*, or so it must have seemed at the time.

⁷³ See the discussion of *Yugas* (ages) in Chapter 2.

3.4.2 The Significance of the Diamond Throne and *Jambudīpa*

Although the *Traiphum* cosmic diagram was the main planning concept of both the sanctuary areas of the Royal Chapel and *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, the concept of *Jambudīpa* was expressed through the shapes of their outermost enclosures. The shapes of the gallery of the Royal Chapel and the outermost wall of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* were designed to symbolize the shape of *Jambudīpa*. The most obvious elaboration is the eastern part of the sanctuary area of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, where most of the details were interpretations of the illustration of *Jambudīpa* and covered over half of the total area. The design is focused on its centre, the *ubosot*, where the position of the principal Buddha image inside the building was represented by the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-tree.

The Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa* is given great importance in the design and is in line with the passage in the *Traiphum* text compiled by the order of Rama I, the *Traiphumlokawinitchai*. The text alters the most stable position of the world from the *Tāvātimsa* Heaven to the Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa*. It mentions that the station, which arises first when the flood dries up at the beginning of the aeon (*kappa*), is the Diamond Throne. When the wind blows the water away and establishes the realms just as they were before, after the First *jhāna* Plane of the *Brahma* realms (the Realm of Form) emerges from the flood, then the *Paranimmitvsavati*, *Nimanarati*, *Tusita* and *Yāmā* Heavens emerge.⁷⁴

However, *Tāvātimsa* and *Cātumahārājika*, both heavens have not been established yet because these two heavens (*Devalokas*) are associated with the human world; after the human world (*Manusayaloka*) has already been established, then follow the *Cātumahārājika* and *Tāvātimsa* (Thampricha 1992, 46).

The above explanation of *Traiphumlokawinitchai* is invalid according to the principles of cosmography, since both *Tāvātimsa* and *Cātumahārājika* heavens are located at higher levels than the human world in the vertical arrangement of the *Traiphum* cosmology. The two heavenly realms should emerge from the flood before the human world does. However, *Traiphumlokawinitchai* further explains that:

⁷⁴ Thampricha 1992, 46. The *Paranimmitvsavati*, *Nimanarati*, *Tusita* and *Yāmā* are the heavenly realms of *Kāmahūmi* (the Realm of Desire) located above *Tāvātimsa* and *Cātumahārājika*.

The land in which the Diamond Throne is located under the Great Bodhi-tree, where the Buddhahood is attained by the salvation of the great white umbrella, when the destruction of the world has come, the location is the last place to be destroyed. As the world is to be established, it is the first place to exist. The position of the Diamond Throne is named 'Sisapathavī (Head of the Earth), as it is the principal of *Jambudīpa* (Thampricha 1992, 46).

This unusual account of the *Traiphumlōkawinitchai* is distinct from the preceding *Traiphum* text. *Traiphum Phra Ruang* (Lithai 1983), the fourteenth century *Traiphum* cosmological text, describes the same event and is consistent with the cosmographical principle that the peak of Mount *Meru* is where the *Tāvātimsa* heaven is located. It identifies it as the first thing to emerge from the flood, in sequence from upper to lower levels; but the Diamond Throne is the first part of *Jambudīpa* to appear (Lithai 1983, 143-44). The change in the foundation of the world from Mount *Meru* to the Diamond Throne in *Traiphumlōkawinitchai* profoundly signifies the change in the concept of the state and kingship, since it changes the centre of the world. The king in this sense is not a 'Deva' (divine) of the world residing at the top of the *Meru* Mountain, but a 'Buddha' who leads all beings, both physically and mentally, from suffering to salvation (Nithi 1980, 57).

The importance of the Diamond Throne also relates to the concept of the cosmic state that is regarded as the essence of the stability of the kingdom. Evidence from Chiangmai, another capital city of the Thai kingdom, may assert the significance of the Diamond Throne. It had been the centre of Lanna, a northern Thai state, in the same period of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya. It was also the centre of *Theravāda* Buddhism brought from Ceylon during the mid fifteenth and sixteenth century. Saraswadi discovered that by setting the eight important *wats* of Chiangmai at the eight main directions, each direction conveys a particular significant meaning to the capital city of Chiangmai as shown in table 3.4 (Saraswadi 1993, 141).

Directions	Implication	Wat
North	<i>Teja</i> (power, glory)	Wat Chiangyun
North-east	<i>Siri</i> (luck, splendour)	Wat Chai Sripum
East	<i>Mūla</i> (root, foundation)	Wat Burapharam
South-east	<i>Ussāha</i> (endeavour, effort)	Wat Chai Mongkhon
South	<i>Mantī</i> (counsellor, minister)	Wat Nantharam
South-west	<i>Kālakini</i> (dark hour, evil time)	Wat Tapotharam
West	<i>Parivāra</i> (retinue)	Wat Suandok
North-west	<i>Āyu</i> (age)	Wat Mahaphotharam (<i>Mahābodhārāma</i>)

Table 3.4 The setting of the wats in Chiangmai and their implications to directions

The *wat* which is located at the position that represents the age of the city to the north-west is *Wat Mahaphotharam (Mahābodhārāma* or the Great Bodhi-tree Monastery). It was built in the mid-fifteenth century by King Tilokaraja of Chiangmai and it was the place where the Eighth Buddhist Council was held. The King also planted a Bodhi-tree there (Griswold 1965, 182-83). The main structure of the *wat* was a copy of the main sanctuary of the *Mahābodhi* shrine at Bodhi Gaya in India.⁷⁵ There is no doubt that the position of the Bodhi-tree in *Wat Mahaphotharam* possesses the same magical value as the original *Mahābodhi* shrine in India. Because the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-tree is the last place to be destroyed at the end of the world; to associate the age of the city with the Diamond Throne means that the kingdom will also exist and last until the end of the world. It is worth noting that the south-west direction is believed to be the *Kālakini* (evil time) of the city. The inauspiciousness of the direction corresponds to the position of *Yamaloka* (the Realm of the Lord of Death) and hell at the south-west in the plan of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*.

It is not at all surprising that Rama I chose to emphasize the eastern part of the sanctuary area of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, which represented *Majjhimadesa* of

⁷⁵ The *Mahābodhi* is the shrine built at the place of the Diamond Throne where the Buddha attained the Enlightenment. See the study of the history and architectural design of the copying of the *Mahābodhi* in Griswold (1965).

Jambudīpa,⁷⁶ because it is the real Buddhist land, as *Traiphumlokawinitchai* states:

Majjhimadesa is named '*Patirūdesa*' (suitable country) since it is eligible to be the birth place of all marvellous persons: the Buddha, *Pacceka Buddhas*, great disciples, Buddha's son, lay supporters, Buddha's father, Buddha's mother, and *cakkavatti*. For all those who possess miraculous power are always born in *Majjhimadesa*. When these great meritorious persons have existed, an uncountable number (*asankheyya*) of beings will be free from suffering, and released. For just only a *cakkavatti*, when he is born in *Majjhimadesa*, all beings who obey his teaching will put their faith in the five precepts (Thampricha 1992, 248-49).

Traiphumlokawinitchai further explains that the name *Majjhimadesa* may be applied to wherever Buddhism has been firmly established and effectively practised. The whole continent of *Jambudīpa* may be called by the name *Majjhimadesa* since Buddhism has flourished there (Thampricha 1992, 249). The text raises the case of Anurādhapura,⁷⁷ the capital city of Lanka, which was also regarded as a *Majjhimadesa* because it was the place where Buddhism had thrived. King Devānampiyatissa,⁷⁸ the king of Anurādhapura, is mentioned, including his great endeavour in making acts of merit which led a vast number of the people of Lanka to *nibbāna*. Therefore, Anurādhapura was also worthy to be called by the name *Majjhimadesa* (Thampricha 1992, 249-50).

Accentuating the concept of *Jambudīpa* in the plans of the Royal Chapel and Wat Phra Chetuphon, together with his reformation of Buddhism, indicates that Rama I intended Bangkok to have the same quality as *Majjhimadesa*; pious persons would be born in the kingdom, which would lead to everyone in the kingdom being released from misery. Aung-Thwin points out the significance of the *Jambudīpa* in Burmese history: in inscriptions and records from Pagan times until Mandalay, Burmese kings continually referred to their kingdoms as *Jambudīpa*. As a result, by this association, they

⁷⁶ *Majjhimadesa* is the central region of *Jambudīpa*. However, in commentaries the *Majjhimadesa* is extended to include the whole of *Jambudīpa* (Malalasekera 1960, vol. II, 419).

⁷⁷ Anurādhapura was the capital city of Lanka (Ceylon) for nearly fifteen centuries from the fourth century B.C. until the eleventh century. It was regarded as the chief centre of Buddhism during the fourth century and attracted many visitors from abroad in search of learning (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 83-84).

⁷⁸ Devānampiyatissa was the king of Lanka between 247 and 207 B.C. when Anurādhapura was the capital city. He was a contemporary of King Asoka, who sent Mahinda and Sanghamittā to teach Buddhism in Lanka. Sanghamittā also brought the right branch of the sacred Bodhi-tree to the island. His conversion to Buddhism was followed by a large number of his subjects, many of whom entered the order. Devānampiyatissa dedicated a great deal to Buddhism and has been regarded as a great monarch in the history of Lanka (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 83-84). The *Mahāvamsa* text dedicates Chapter XI to Chapter XX to the story of the reign of Devānampiyatissa (see Geiger 1912, 106-141).

projected all of the virtuous qualities of *Jambudīpa* onto their realms (Aung-Thwin 1981, 51, 60 n.10). By creating *Jambudīpa* through the symbolic planning of his royal wats, Rama I would expect that the same virtuous qualities would be brought to Bangkok and the new Siamese Kingdom as well.

3.4.3 Anotatta Lake

There is no clear evidence as to whether a pond was set into the plan of Ayutthaya's royal wat or not. Because it is only in *Wat Phraram* in the capital city of Ayutthaya that a pond is found to the north-east of its sanctuary area, this does not constitute evidence that it was part of the original design of the wat. The ponds in the plans of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel of King Rama I, as have been analysed, were symbols of the *Anotatta* Lake in the *Himavanta* Forest. The sites are parts of *Jambudīpa*. The *Traiphum* text mentions that the Lake is the most important reservoir of the world. Its water is forever fresh because it receives only reflected light; there are places for the Buddha, *Pacceka Buddhas*, *Arahantas*, and those who have magical power come to bathe (Thampricha 1992, 112).

The significance of creating the *Anotatta* Lake is that it implies the stability of the kingdom, since it is one of the last to dry up at the end of the world (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 97). It also signifies the place of meritorious beings. To bathe in the water of the lake is to be thoroughly cleansed. Thus the Buddha's mother, on the day of her conception, dreamt that she had been taken by the Four Guardian Kings (*Cātumahārājika*) to the lake and had bathed there (Paramanuchit 1962, 49). This was interpreted to mean that she would give birth to a holy son (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 97). Also, possession of the water of the lake will assure its owner the highest degree of magical power. The *Mahāvamsa* tells that every day Emperor Asoka, who is the model of all the Buddhist kings and *cakkavatti*, received water drawn from the lake by magical means. He used the water for his own personal needs, and for the use of his nearest kin (Geiger 1912, 28). Therefore the water of the lake is indispensable for the consecration of a *cakkavatti* (Boisselier 1990, 9).

In the study of '*The Symbolism of Neak Pean*', Boisselier points out that the Neak Pean Temple which was built by King Jayavarman VII⁷⁹ of Angkor is the symbol of the *Anotatta* Lake. In a perspective that associates religion, politics and magic, the importance of the construction of the *Anotatta* Lake on Angkorian land was to make his kingdom like *Himavanta* Forest. It would become the favourite abode of all meritorious beings, namely the Buddha, *Pacceka Buddhas*, *Arahantas*, *Devas* (deities) and hermits, to the end of the aeon (*kappa*). During all this time, the kings were assured of becoming *cakkavatti* because they were the only ones who could use the water of the lake. To construct the lake was to guarantee long life for the kingdom and to assure supreme power for its monarch (Boisselier 1990, 9-10).

The specific conditions of the Siamese Kingdom during the reign of Rama I are not too difficult to understand. At the time, it was the beginning of the restoration of the new kingdom. Apart from the re-establishment of *Dhamma* as the strength of a new society, the magical perspective of projecting the virtuous qualities of *Jambudīpa* and *Anotatta* Lake onto the kingdom was also put into the concept of his royal *wats*.

3.4.4 The Medical Inscription: An Interpretation

The appearance of inscriptions relating to medical subjects in the *salas* (pavilions) in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* is another practice that has never been found in the royal *wats* of the Ayutthaya period. It is clearly stated in the inscription of Rama I himself that he put the medical subjects into the pavilion in order to create benevolence, and dedicate any benefit of the subjects to the people, and the cultivation of merit (FAD 1974, 3). This act by Rama I may be an interpretation of Indra Mythology, since there is no better hypothesis to explain the act in this context. These medical pavilions might denote the act of Magha, the man who was later re-born as the God Indra, the ruler of *Tāvātimsa* Heaven. Magha and his friends built a pavilion, made a garden, and provided rooms for the sick and travellers. After death, because of the merit bestowed by building the pavilion and his other good deeds, he was reborn as the God Indra (Thampricha 1992, 1000-02).

⁷⁹ Jayavarman VII was the king of the Kingdom of Angkor between 1181 and about 1219. He came to the throne after the kingdom was attacked by the Chams and he had to fight a series of battles against them. Finally he liberated the country from the Chams. He is considered one of the greatest rulers of Angkor (Cambodia) (see Mus 1937 and Coedès 1967, 84-107).

The account of Rama I's interest in Indra Mythology appears in the record of the Royal Inquiry (*Phra Ratchaputcha*) (FAD 1965). His second interrogation, given to the highest ranking monks in the year 1784, concerned the question: what is the meritorious act that will cause Magha to be born as Indra?(FAD 1965, 7-13). He also inquired as to whether Magha accumulated his merits and was born as Indra in this last aeon (*Bhaddakappa*), or whether he had made them in the previous aeon (*kappa*) (FAD 1965, 20-22). The story of Magha building his pavilion was also painted in the library (*Ho Trai*) of *Wat Rakhang*. The *wat* is located across the river opposite Rama I's Grand Palace. The library was Rama I's own residence before he became king and dedicated it to the *wat*, and it was conserved to become the library (FAD 1982, 257). Rama I's construction of the medical pavilions therefore was an act demonstrating that he intended to confer merit in the way the story of Magha is told in the mythology, rather than directly assuming the role of the God Indra.

A similar practice of building medical pavilions was continued in the reigns of King Rama III and Rama IV (Mongkut). Mongkut in particular built pavilions along the canal he had ordered to be dug in 1860. The pavilions were located at four kilometre intervals along the twenty-seven kilometres of the Mahasawat Canal, for conferring merit. The middle one was installed with medical inscriptions and was called '*Salaya*' (medical pavilion) (CC 1964, part 25, Vol. 14, 295-96). This practice of Siamese kings might be comparable to Jayavarman VII's founding of more than a hundred hospitals along the roads he made. The underlying concept of building the hospitals of Jayavarman VII is not clear.⁸⁰ However, the similarity between the acts of Rama I and Jayavarman VII of Angkor must be remarked upon here. Both of them fought a series of wars against their enemies before they came to the throne and restored their kingdoms. Jayavarman VII built the new city at Angkor Thom, the Neak Pean Temple to symbolize the *Anotatta* Lake, and commissioned the building of more than a hundred hospitals; Rama I built the new Siamese capital at Bangkok, created the *Anotatta* Lake in his royal *wats*, and built the medical pavilions. Rama I may have built the *Anotatta* Lake to guarantee long life for the new kingdom. However, the construction of the medical pavilions implies two

⁸⁰ Coedès connected the bas-reliefs showing the treatment of a secondary symptom of leprosy on the pediment of a hospital and the Temple of Takeo, with the Legend of a Leper King of Angkor and Jayavarman VII's construction of the hospitals, to constitute a hypothesis explaining why the king had to build so many hospitals. If the king had leprosy, he may have hoped that by founding these hospitals to care for his subjects, some credit might accrue to him which would relieve his suffering. Or, if he was healthy himself, he may have undertaken this medical philanthropy so that the benefits would reflect on one of his relatives sick with this affliction, which was generally considered to be a punishment for former sins (Coedès 1967, 93-94).

major aims: one was to cultivate merit by dedicating the benefits to the people and religion; another was his resolution to be born as the God Indra in his next life so that he might be the protecting god who would guard his kingdom for his successors.

3.4.5 A *Cakkavatti* Kingdom

There are at least two explicit representations relating to the concept of *cakkavatti*, the ideal monarch of Buddhism. The Emerald Buddha Image was the most important image of the kingdom since its legend connected the times and places of the *cakkavatti* mythology with the history of the Buddhist states of South-East Asia and Lanka. The painting of the story of King Jambupati in the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* was another representation of *cakkavatti* kingship.

The Emerald Buddha image (*Phra Kaeo Morakot*), housed in the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel, is the most important symbol of the kingdom. The image significantly represents the kingdom as the centre of universe, since it was a revered image in several countries which then became the tributary states and provinces of Siam: Cambodia, Kamphangphet, Chiangmai, Lampang, Chiangrai, Luang Phrabang and Vientiane.⁸¹

The Chronicle of the Holy Emerald Buddha Image gives the story of the image as follows: some five hundred years after the death (or *Parinibbāna*) of the Buddha, the elder (*Thera*) Nagasena, who was at the time a spiritual counsellor of King Milinda, wanted to make an image of the Buddha in order to encourage the expansion of the faith. Fearing that an image of silver or gold would be destroyed by a degenerate humanity, he wanted to make the image from a precious stone endowed with special spiritual power. *Sakka* (Indra) became aware of his desire, and decided that he would provide the gem Jewel of the great *Cakkavatti* King.⁸² Since no one but a *Cakkavatti* King could possess the gem Jewel, its guardians refused to relinquish it to *Sakka*; but in its place they offered an Emerald Jewel which was of the same essence and came from the same place. *Sakka* brought the Emerald Jewel to Nagasena, and then

⁸¹ Saichon (1982, 210-11); see the significance of the Emerald Buddha Image in F. Reynolds (1978, 175-93).

⁸² According to Buddhist mythology, when a great *Cakkavatti* king or universal Monarch appears in the world this gem Jewel, which normally resides on Mount Vibul, comes to him along with six other great gem possessions, and remains in his care until the very end of his reign (F. Reynolds 1978, 176).

Vissukamma, the divine architect and craftsman, appeared in the guise of an artisan and fashioned the Jewel into an image of the Buddha. When the image was completed, the elder (*Thera*) invited the seven relics of the Buddha to enter into it, and they did so. Thereupon, the *Thera* prophesied that the image would be worshipped in Cambodia, Burma and Siam (Thamparohit 1961 and F. Reynolds 1978, 176).

The translation of the legend of the image (*Ratanabimbavamsa*) from *Pāli* into Thai in the reign of Rama I is an amplification of the importance of the image to a broader understanding, and signifies Bangkok as the centre of the *cakkavatti* kingdom. The name of the kingdom (*Ratanakosindra*- Indra jewel) which derives from the name of the image (Thiphakorawong 1996, 62), is also an accentuation of the status of Siam as the kingdom of the *cakkavatti* (Saichon 1982, 210-11).

The mural painting of the Legend of King Jambupati in the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* is the only subject that does not relate to the other themes in the *Pathamasombodhi* and *Māravijaya* paintings⁸³ which were depicted in the *ubosots* and the *wihans*. The Legend concerns the concept of *cakkavatti* and a righteous king. It tells the story of King Jambupati, who foolishly claimed to be the supreme sovereign of *Jambuṭpa*, a *cakkavatti*. He was so self-absorbed and proud that he would not listen to the teachings of the Buddha. He even went so far as to use his magical powers to torment King Bimbisāra of Rājagaha, who was a great follower of the *Dhamma*. To protect Bimbisāra, the Buddha transformed himself into another *cakkavatti* even more glorious than Jambupati, enthroned himself in a dazzling imaginary palace and invited Jambupati to come to visit him. Jambupati arrogantly approached the palace at the head of his vassals, but became more and more nervous at the signs of wealth and power that far overshadowed his own. He then became receptive to the Buddha's teachings, even abandoning his own throne.⁸⁴

The story of Jambupati in the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* apparently reflected the concept of kingship that it is dangerous and meaningless to be consumed with self-importance. The Buddha as *cakkavatti* in the legend connotes the ideal of the righteous king who rules according to the *Dhamma* (Fouser 1996, 88-89), or the association of

⁸³ See the study of the paintings in section two of this Chapter.

⁸⁴ See appendix 8 and Fickle (1974, 85); Griswold (1961, 295).

the *Dhamma* with the religious realm and the secular power of the political realm. The story of Jambupati is in line with the fact that Rama I identified the *Dhamma* as the primacy of all the concepts of kingship.⁸⁵ The *Traiphumlokawinitchai*, the *Traiphum* text of Rama I, does not enhance the glory of a *cakkavatti* so highly as in the *Traiphum Phra Ruang*, the fourteenth century *Traiphum* text. To be a *cakkavatti* is not only the result of the merits of previous lives, but it is necessary for the king to perfect the righteous rules of a *cakkavatti*, so that he then could achieve the state of *cakkavatti* (Manipin 1987, 13).

3.5 CONCLUSION

Although the *Traiphum* cosmographical diagram is the main planning concept of Rama I's royal *wats*, the most eminent part is *Jambudīpa*. The eastern part of the sanctuary area of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* may be regarded as the most elaborate design to represent *Jambudīpa*, the southern continent of the human world. It was developed in a much more distinct way than the traditional pattern of Ayutthaya, which has a *prang* at the centre to represent Mount *Meru*. The significance of *Jambudīpa* in the symbolic planning of the *wats* related to the change of the important centre of the world from Mount *Meru* to the Diamond Throne in the text of *Traiphumlokawinitchai* (Thampricha 1992, 46).

Some concepts of Buddhist kingship were also incorporated into the cosmic planning of the royal *wats*. The medical pavilions in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* were Rama I's interpretation of Indra Mythology in connection with *Traiphum* cosmology, since the act of Magha building his pavilion occurred in *Jambudīpa*. The Legend of the Emerald Buddha Image which relates to the *cakkavatti* mythology also made a connection with the concept of the Royal Chapel, where the image was installed. The legend of the image (*Ratanabimbavamsa*) assures that it is the possession of the *cakkavatti* kingdom. In addition, the painting of the story of King Jambupati was represented to affirm that a *cakkavatti* is necessary to rule with *Dhamma*. Relating to the concept of *cakkavatti*, the actions of Rama I implied that he cultivated merit in order to achieve particular status in his next life. *Sanghitiyavamsa* (the Chronicle of the Buddhist Council) claims in a Buddhist proverb that if one built a *mondop* and installed the

⁸⁵ See the discussion of the Legend and the symbolic planning of royal *wats* in Chapter 5.

Dhamma (Tripitaka) in the building, then great merit would lead such a man to be born as the great king of the four continents and another two thousand minor continents. He would be a *cakkavatti* (Wannarat 1978, 517-18). The *Phra Mondop* in the Royal Chapel and the *Ho Trai* (library) of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, in which the *Tripitaka* manuscripts were installed, were connected to the *cakkavatti* in this sense. In addition, the medical pavilions were also a means of merit accumulation for becoming the God Indra in the next life, following the model of Magha in the myth. It is also worth noting here that the fourteenth century version of the *Traiphum* text (Lithai 1983) does not mention the story of Magha, while the *Traiphumlोकawinitchai* elaborately illustrates this Mythology (Thampricha 1992, 1000-02).

The primacy of Buddhism as the fundamental ideology of the state brought about a decline in the role of Brahmanism in some royal ceremonies. The *Ramakian* epic which contains the story of Rāma, an incarnation of the God Vishnu, was claimed to be only a pagan fable with no moral essence since it is a non-Buddhist teaching. The sacred implication of the *Ramakian* epic as the symbol of a protecting god became ambiguous, while the notion of representing a literary work in the form of mural painting could also be perceived. This ambiguity about the status of the *Ramakian* epic, particularly as to whether it was a sacred text or only a fable, gave rise to later interpretations in the symbolic planning design which brought other kinds of literature to be put into the royal *wats*, particularly in the reign of King Rama III, which is to be studied in the next chapter.

AN INTERPRETATION OF KING RAMA III

The aim of this chapter is to study the royal Buddhist architecture of King Rama III, whose reign is regarded as the last classical period of Thai Buddhist architecture. Some historical issues will be introduced as a background to this period. Diplomatic and trade relations with Western countries were renewed. Although they had less far-reaching effects than in the following reign, the Siamese inevitably had to adopt some aspects of Western culture and technology. The religious issue concerning the establishment of the *Thammayuth* Buddhist sect of Prince Mongkut was one that generated a delicate political situation, which Rama III had to deal with in order to maintain his right to the kingship.

With regard to the study of royal Buddhist architecture, this chapter is an attempt to uncover the system of symbolic planning and how each symbol relates to the meaning of conceptual space. The analysis also establishes the importance of the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer version) as a guideline to planning the layout of the temple. The study focuses on the symbolic planning of three important *wats* of Rama III: *Wat Ratcha-orot*, *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Suthat*. Some of the interpretations that have been suggested in Chapter 3 are referred to as supporting evidence. However, some aspects of the focus of this chapter are central to the argument in Chapter 3. The connections within the *Traiphum* cosmological diagram and the *cakkavatti* kingship become clearer through using the interpretations of Rama III, which are expressed through the richness of symbolic elements in the royal *wats*. This analysis will lead to a deeper discussion in Chapter 5.

4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1.1 Accession to the Throne and Relations with the West

More than four decades after King Rama I established the new Siamese kingdom, Rama III came to the throne in 1824. Rama I had restored the stability of the kingdom, reestablishing the Buddhist *sangha* and monasteries, and had successfully defended

the country against the Burmese. Some of the vassal states were also recaptured and put under the sovereignty of Čhakkri kings. Rama II devoted himself to the restoration of literature and plays.

It was shortly before the end of Rama II's reign that Mongkut, the crown prince, was ordained on the eve of the succession crisis because of the death of two white elephants. Since white elephants were the glory of the city, they were believed to go hand in hand with the transcendent virtues (*Pāramī*) of King Rama II. The ordination was then therefore urgently ordered. Fifteen days after Mongkut was ordained, Rama II died. When his half brother was voted king, Mongkut decided to remain in the priesthood (Damrong 1962, Vol. 2, 191-92). Because of the feeling that the situation was critical (the Anglo-Burmese war had just begun), an experienced hand was needed at the kingdom's helm, and the role fell to Mongkut's elder half brother, born in 1787 of a mother not of royal blood (Moffat 1961, 9). Rama III acceded to the throne on the death of his father on July 21, 1824, when he was thirty-seven years old. He was not a crowned prince, but he had experience of directing a force to protect the country from a threatened attack from Burma; of leading of the port authority, where he had been in charge of court trading and was in close contact with European traders; and of other high positions. These won him the throne rather than his rank in the order of princes.

In the first year of Rama III's reign, the first Anglo-Burmese war began. Burma was the traditional enemy of Siam. After the Burmese had destroyed Ayutthaya in 1767, the Čhakkri kings had remained alert for new invasions from the Burmese. The final end to the threat of a Burmese invasion of Siam came as a result of the British defeat of Burma in the war (Vella 1957, 109). The war was the primary cause of a change in relations between Siam and the West. It had a profound effect on Siamese political thought, as from her experience in the eighteenth century Siam had come to look on Burma as an empire second only to China. However, the British defeated what the Siamese had considered to be 'invincible Burmans'.¹

In fact, the British first attempted to have contact with Siam when the mission of John

¹ Charles Gutzlaff, *Journal of Three voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832 and 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea and the Loo-Choo Islands*, 2nd ed., Westley and Davis, (London) 1834, 81, cited in Vella (1957, 118).

Crawford, the envoy of the Governor General of India, came to Bangkok in 1821. Crawford unfortunately came at a rather bad time, because in the preceding year the Sultan of Kedah in the Malay Peninsula, who was then a vassal of Siam, had conspired with the Burmese. The Siamese army had consequently been sent to invade and to occupy Kedah. The British who had already settled at Penang, did not have confidence in the situation. Crawford was sent to negotiate for the restoration of Kedah to the Sultan as well as to propose the treaty of trade. The Siamese were willing to trade with the British but wanted the British to supply them with arms and ammunition in return. The British at that time wished to enter into relations with the Burmese and Crawford asked the Siamese not to use such arms against the Burmese. However, the negotiations broke down (Damrong 1926, 94).

Henry Burney, a British envoy, arrived in Bangkok in 1825 during the Anglo-Burmese war. However, it was not until the war had been concluded that Burney broached the subject of trade, the Malay Peninsula, and a treaty. Although Rama III had instructed his ministers to be hospitable to Burney, and had given Burney an elaborate royal audience, he was initially opposed to any treaty negotiations. Nevertheless, his high officials argued that the British had already been turned down once and another rejection might result in the end of friendly relations. The rejected envoy might bring false charges against Siam (Thipakorawong 1995, 12 in Vella 1957, 119). In fact, the Siamese felt no need for trade with the West. They did not desire competition from Western merchants and were reluctant to sign treaties with the West because of the possible political dangers involved (Vella 1957, 115).

On June 20, 1826, Burney succeeded in concluding the first Treaty of Friendship, an alliance and the first commercial agreement between a Western nation and Siam (Thiphakorawong 1995, 14). Seven years after the Burney treaty was negotiated, Siam signed a similar treaty with the United States. The American treaty of March 20, 1833 closely followed the model set by Burney. However, it was not concerned with any delicate political issues regarding the Malay states, so Edmund Robert, the American envoy, had a much easier task than that of Burney (Vella 1957, 122). Vella indicates that the agreement between the Siamese and Americans, however, does not bear out the belief that the Siamese were at this time actually interested in trade. They probably feared the political implications of exclusive relations with the British and may have wished to use the United States to counterbalance British power (Vella 1957, 124). In

1840, the Siamese Government also informed the French consul in Singapore that Siam would be eager to see the development of French commerce in Siam. However, the French did not take up this offer.²

Having maintained satisfactory relations for almost two decades, particularly with regard to trade, in the last decade of the reign of Rama III a reaction against the West and her merchants apparently took place. Trade with the West sharply declined as trade restrictions were gradually reimposed (Vella 1957, 125-26). Thus the obstacles placed in the way of foreign trade at this time also affected Robert Hunter, a British merchant who had established a company in Bangkok shortly after the beginning of the reign.³ To improve his financial position he resorted to importing opium in direct violation of the special edict of the King. Antipathy between Hunter and the Siamese reached a crisis in 1844 when Siamese officials refused to buy a steamer he had brought to Siam, since they were dissatisfied with its condition and the price which Hunter demanded. Hunter became angry and insulted the Siamese. His actions were considered to be in violation of the Burney treaty and he was expelled from the country in December 1844. Before he left Siam, Hunter threatened to bring charges that Siam had violated the trade provisions in the Burney treaty to the attention of the British Government, and asserted that the government would send warships to look into the matter (Vella 1957, 129).

The event that seems to have been decisive in the thinking of the Siamese was the defeat of China by the British in 1842. Siamese had deferred to the power and prestige of China for many centuries. If China could not hold out against Western pressures, they reasoned that neither could Siam expect to resist these pressures and survive as a nation (Nuechterlein 1965, 13). During last few years of his reign, Rama III became as unfavourable to foreigners as he had formerly been friendly (Vella 1957, 129). There were political as well as economic reasons for the increasing disinclination of the Siamese to compromise with the West. Probably the main reason was that the former, who had signed treaties initially in order to prevent political threats from the West, believed that such threats had not decreased. In fact, the Siamese were convinced that the very opening of formal relations with the West had brought more Western

² Capitaine Seauve, *Les Relations de la France et du Siam*, Charles Lavauzelle, (Paris), 1908, 26, cited in Vella (1957, 124).

³ See the account of Hunter in Moore (1915).

interference, and opened them to actions based on charges, such as those of Hunter, that the treaties had been violated (Thiphakorawong 1995, 115-116). Relations between Britain and Siam became strained on a number of occasions in the 1840s (Vella 1957, 130). There were rumours in Bangkok that after the British had concluded their affairs in China they would pay Siam a visit.⁴ During this period the Siamese fortified Paknam and built an iron cable to block the Čhaophraya River to hostile ships (Thiphakorawong 1995, 116).

In 1850, Sir James Brooke, an envoy accredited directly from Britain, arrived in Bangkok in order to revise the treaty with Siam. Rama III was ill and appointed Čhamun Waiworanat to negotiate with Brooke (Thiphakorawong 1995, 140). However, the treaty revisions suggested by Brooke were completely rejected. The draft commercial agreement presented by Brooke was not a mere revision of the 1826 agreement, but was definitely a new agreement that would have made most articles of trade tax-free. Moreover, the draft requested the granting of extraterritorial rights to British consuls (Vella 1957, 137-38). The power of Western nations, especially Britain, became manifestly clear in the British victories over Burma in 1826 and over China in 1840. The Siamese Government desired to keep Britain at as great a distance as possible without antagonizing her (Vella 1957, 139).

4.1.2 Missionary Influence and Western Skills

From 1782 onwards, Bangkok, which was the main port and capital city of Siam, became increasingly important for trade. A large number of Chinese immigrated to Bangkok and settled in Siam. It was the Chinese in Siam who attracted the protestant missionaries to come to Bangkok, primarily with the object of teaching Christianity to them. The Protestant missionaries, Rev. Carl Gutzlaff M.D. and Rev. Jacob Tomlin were the first Christians to arrive in Bangkok, in 1828. However, three years later they left for China because their head organization was not interested in establishing a mission in Siam. The first American Board of Protestant missionaries arrived in 1831 and those of the Presbyterians in 1840 (Cady 1964, 339).

⁴ Bradley, Dan Beach, *Abstract of the Journal of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D. : Medical Missionary in Siam 1835-1873*, Edited by Rev. George Haws Feltus, Cleveland: Dan F. Bradley, 1936, 99, cited in Vella (1957, 130).

The American missionaries were nevertheless responsible for many innovations. In 1835 the Rev. D.B. Bradley M.D., an American missionary under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, came to Bangkok and imported the first printing press to serve the dissemination of Christian teaching. During the early nineteenth century the Siamese medical science and public health services were still far behind those of the West. Scientific human anatomy was little known to the traditional Thai medical doctor; vaccinations, operations and injections were also totally new to the Siamese. However, Bradley played a very important role in introducing modern medical science to Siam. He also operated a drugstore and treatment service for the Siamese.

The Siamese elite contracted and adopted some cultural practices of the West. Although they were few in number they were prominent in society, which rapidly led to the expansion of the influence of the West. Royalty and noblemen were not the only pioneer group that learned new skills, for some members of *Thammayut* (see page 155) who were in the priesthood were also keen to know what the Westerners brought with them.

Mongkut was one of the first Siamese to be open to Western ideas. During his second sojourn at *Wat Samorai*, he entered into relations with the French Bishop, Mgr. Pallegoix, whose parish was next to his monastery. He taught him *Pāli* and received Latin lessons in exchange. At *Wat Bowonniwet*, Mongkut made acquaintance with the American missionaries, and more intimately with the Rev. Jesse Caswell, Rev. D.B. Bradley and Dr. S. Reynolds House (Lingat 1933, 73-102 in Tambiah 1976, 214). In 1845 Caswell served for eighteen months as Mongkut's tutor in English and science, receiving in return permission to use a room at a convenient *wat* for his own preaching and distribution of tracts (Cady 1964, 340).

The decade 1830-1840 was the transition period during which Western culture was of great interest to the Siamese elites. Prince Čhuthamani, Mongkut's younger brother, was not only competent in his command of English, he was also interested in military and naval matters. His knowledge of English placed him in a favourable position in the Court of Rama III. The King sought his assistance in translating English documents and sending out English correspondence (Cowan 1967, 45). One of his most significant contributions to a modernized Siam lies in the field of medicine. Although

he had known Bradley, the American missionary, for less than a month, he discussed the Siamese method of midwifery with him and requested the loan of a book which Bradley had on the Western method (Cowan 1967, 47). That the interest was more than intellectual curiosity is evidenced by the request he made in December 1835 to have Bradley attend his expectant wife, although Bradley arrived four hours after the woman had given birth (Cowan 1967, 47-48). Rama III himself was also attracted to Western knowledge. When a treatise that Bradley had prepared on smallpox was delivered to him in March 1839, he requested a similar work on midwifery .⁵

The defeat of China by the British in 1842 convinced some nobility and royalty to begin to try and acquire knowledge about the West so as to be prepared for future eventualities (Damrong 1926, 96). The government of Rama III was, in general, tolerant of and even favourable to the missionaries. This tolerance by the government was in keeping with Siamese religious feelings, and the favourable attitude of many officers of the government was undoubtedly due to their appreciation of Western skills (Vella 1957, 36). Rama III raised no serious objections to the missionary program until 1849, when he became angry with the French mission, who would not comply with his decree to assist the country in 'making merit' to offset a serious epidemic of cholera. The eight Catholic priests were banished from the country (Thiphakorawong 1995, 136). A year later, he became irritated with the Protestants and had four of their convert-teachers arrested (Vella 1957, 37).

4.1.3 The Chinese

Although Chinese culture did not have much effect on traditional Thai thought, it nevertheless contributed to a certain extent to the change in Siamese economic and social values. The numbers of Chinese increased greatly in the reign of Rama III. During the later part of King Rama II's reign, some Chinese labourers and artisans were employed to construct monasteries and other buildings. What was not typical was the privileged position which the Chinese had held in Siam from early in Thai society. Long before 1855 they had been treated as free agents in matters of trade. They could buy and sell without restriction, they paid lighter import duties than other aliens and they were free to move wherever they pleased, all of which placed them at a great

⁵ Bradley, D.B. *The Journal of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D.*, March 24, 1839, cited in Cowan (1967, 48).

advantage over all other foreign traders. They were also exempt from forced labour or from the poll tax, which was universal amongst the ordinary Thais themselves. (Tate 1979, 544).

Trade with China had been increasing since the reign of Rama I and was the most important branch of Siamese commerce in the reign of Rama III. Chinese immigrants therefore greatly contributed to the development of the Siamese market economy. They were active in internal and external trade, engaged in commercial farming, and operated shops (Nithi 1986, 127-128).

The integration of Chinese culture into that of Siamese led to the adoption of Chinese art and architectural styles in some of the construction programs of the Siamese court and nobility. However, the Chinese culture which was adopted by the Siamese during this period did not much affect Siamese thought, since it had been absorbing Chinese culture for a long period, and more importantly there was not much distinction between the technology and knowledge of the two cultures. Nevertheless, it was the Western culture which was held in greater affection by the Siamese. Western technology was based on absolutely different principles to those of Siam. Therefore, any adoption of Western knowledge meant a radical change in the thinking of the Siamese. Thai traditional knowledge might have to be changed to an opposite way of thinking, for example, the acceptance of reckoning a solar eclipse by the Western method, which was more accurate than the Siamese astrological method, led to the acceptance of the new solar system, which was certainly distinct from traditional Buddhist cosmology. The adoption of Western technology was not merely a new discipline but much more fundamental to the Siamese world view, and therefore this also had to be changed (Nithi 1986, 346).

4.1.4 Religious Affairs

Although Rama III was accepted by high-ranking Siamese officials and possessed great political power to rule the kingdom, the fact of his non-royal blood inevitably meant that he was pressured to prove his transcendent virtues (*Pāramī*). Many temples were constructed and restored in his reign. He was noted for his piety, and the building and repairing of religious edifices and articles were considered acts of great religious merit. He also led princes, officials, and wealthy people to make merit by building

temples (Thiphakorawong 1995, 146). Altogether Rama III built four new *wats*, and thirty-five were restored. Fifteen new *wats* were built by royalty and nobles, and fifteen were also restored by them during the reign of Rama III (Thiphakorawong 1995, 145-46).

In 1829, Mongkut founded a new *Theravāda* Buddhist sect named *Thammayut* (*Dhammayutika*) at *Wat Samorai*. He claimed that the *sangha* of the time was in many ways undisciplined, too easygoing, and unwilling to reform abuses and introduce more rigorous practices. Apart from cases of individual immorality, some *vinaya* rules of conduct were being ignored and probably the *Patimokkha* recitations, an important activity for a community of monks, were being only irregularly observed (Tambiah 1976, 210). This was the principal concern that affected Rama III's Buddhist kingship and brought schism to the Siamese *sangha*. In order to avoid radical conflict, Rama III became reconciled and deliberately took years to legitimize his authority over the new order.

After 1829, when Mongkut went to reside at *Wat Samorai*, he seems to have pursued his curiosity on many questions, but the one that proved most fruitful was the authenticity of the sanctuary boundary stones (*sima*), which he excavated within the first three years of his return to the *Wat*. Mongkut claimed that the boundary stones were an improper size, a discovery which, if taken seriously, threw into question the validity of every Siamese ordination in the kingdom, meaning that there were impure *sangha* under the patronage of Rama III. Mongkut's solution was to reset the boundary stones in 1833 and to establish his own ordination ceremony according to the *Pāli* canon, on a raft moored to the river bank near the monastery (C. Reynolds 1972, 82).

Mongkut's claim was quite a serious allegation against the Siamese *sangha*, and his establishment of the *Thammayut* sect implied that he refused to remain in the old Buddhist sect of Siam. That meant he was not, strictly speaking, under the sovereignty of Rama III, who was the great Buddhist patron of the kingdom. One Western source had stated that he also turned down Rama III's invitation to become the *Uparat* (heir apparent), the contention being that Mongkut wanted to somehow command the King's respect. Since the king had to bow before all priests, Mongkut's decision to remain in the priesthood allowed him to receive the respect that he sought. In addition, as a

priest he did not have to bow before the King.⁶ It is quite probable that Mongkut used his status as a monk as a political sanctuary, especially after refusing to become the *Uparat* (Cowan 1967, 43).

It was, traditionally, the duty of the king to take responsibility for the reform of the *sangha* when it was found to be deficient. Mongkut was not a king when he undertook his reforms. His efforts initially caused resentment and created dissent rather than unity (C. Reynolds 1972, 65). However, because of Mongkut's competence in *Pāli* and his knowledge of doctrine, together with his objectives of finding the true canon, understanding the truth correctly and discarding false beliefs and magical practices, Rama III inevitably finally had to support the *Thammayut* sect. Although Mongkut and his followers did not directly challenge Rama III's regime, their actions seriously compromised his ability to maintain the unity of Buddhist *sangha*.

It was not until 1837 that Rama III legitimized Mongkut as the abbot of a monastery called 'Bowonniwet', near the royal base. By doing so he was not merely formalizing the stature that Mongkut had earned through his religious studies and his leadership of a chapter of monks, but he was also giving him a retinue equivalent to the deputy headship of a *khana* (chapter), which symbolically included him in the *sangha* hierarchy (C. Reynolds 1972, 87). The title given to the *wat* was very similar to that by which the Palace of the Second King (*Uparat*) or the Front Palace (*Wang na*) was designated.⁷ Since the second king had died and Rama III had never appointed a successor, Prince Mongkut was implicitly represented as the Second King of Siam (Moffat 1961, 15). It took almost a decade for Rama III to unite the *Thammayut* sect into the Siamese *sangha* organization without occasioning a violent encounter between them.

With a policy flexible to the needs of the West, Rama III and his officials successfully maintained relations with the West in order to secure the country from the warfare that the Burmese had faced. The cases of Burma and China were the principal events that

⁶ Ruschenberger, W.S.W., *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World, 1835-37*, 1838, 291; Bradley, D.B., *The Journal of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D.*, April 7, 1836; Abeel, D., *Journal of a Residence in China and the Neighboring Countries*, 1836, 234, cited in Cowan (1967, 43).

⁷ The name of the *wat* is 'Bowonniwet' and the name of the Front Palace is 'Bowonsathan'. 'Niwet' and 'Sathan' have the same meaning as 'place'.

made the Siamese aware of the power of the West. Some royalty and nobles therefore became keen to learn about Western knowledge and technology. Their absorption of the new culture was remarkably helpful to the government of Rama III, in that they served as an agency for releasing the pressure on both scientific and religious matters. Undoubtedly some Siamese during Rama III's reign familiarized themselves with Western thought because they felt it necessary to do so.

4.2 THE ROYAL WATS OF KING RAMA III: AN ANALYSIS

According to the Royal Chronicle of the Third Reign, there were four royal *wats* built by King Rama III. However, it gives only three names for the list of newly built *wats*: *Wat Ratchanatda*, *Wat Thepthida* and *Wat Chaloemphrakiat* (Thiphakorawong 1995, 145). *Wat Suthat* might be the fourth, because although it was begun by Rama I, it was completed in a much more elaborate design during the reign of Rama III.

Wat Ratchanatda was begun in 1846 (TAT 1996, 34-35) and *Wat Chaloemphrakiat* in 1847 (FAD 1982, 15). However, neither of them was completed by the time Rama III died in 1851. The former was not finished until the reign of Rama V (Chulalongkorn) and most of the construction of the structures of *Wat Chaloemphrakiat* was completed by King Rama IV (Mongkut) (FAD 1982, 15). In accordance with the aims of this chapter to focus on the principal *wats* of the kingdom, *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, which was restored by Rama III, has been selected for this study in order to compare it with the original design of King Rama I. *Wat Suthat* has also been chosen even though it was not first established by Rama III, because most structures were built to his design, and it is the largest *wat* of the Bangkok period.

Only *Wat Thepthida* was completed during Rama III's reign [it was begun in 1836 and completed in 1839 (FAD 1982, 18)]. It is a Chinese-influenced style, similar to *Wat Ratcha-orot* which was restored, if not rebuilt, by Rama III. *Wat Ratcha-orot* comprises more structures and is much more complicated than *Wat Thepthida*. *Wat Ratcha-orot* is selected as a model of the Chinese-influenced style royal *wat* in this study. In all, there are three *wats* to be analysed: *Wat Ratcha-orot*, *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Suthat*.

4.2.1 *Wat Ratcha-orot (Rāja orasārāma) (1821-1831)*

Wat Ratcha-orot is situated in Thonburi at about seven kilometres west of the Čhaophraya River. Before it was restored by Prince Četchadabodin, who later became King Rama III, it was an old *wat* named 'Čhomthong'. In the eleventh month of the year 1820, in the reign of King Rama II, it appeared that the Burmese were planning a new attack. Prince Čhedchadabodin was commanded by King Rama II to defend the west border of Siam at Kančhanaburi against the Burmese. The prince led his troops from Bangkok by a waterway. He arrived at *Wat Čhomthong*, rested at the monastery, performed rites to assure his victory over the enemy, prayed for his success against the Burmese and safely returned from the duty. The military settled at Kančhanaburi until 1821 but there was no sign of the invasion by the Burmese. After he had returned to the capital, he began to restore the whole compound of *Wat Čhomthong* in 1821 and frequently went to supervise the construction himself. He then presented the *wat* to be a royal monastery and the king gave it the name '*Wat Ratcha-orot*' (Prince's Monastery) (FAD 1961, 7-9). The Royal Chronicle of the Third Reign states that King Rama III held a celebration on the completion of the *wat* in January 1831 (Thiphakorawong 1996, 47), seven years after he came to the throne. The *wat* was constructed in the Chinese-influenced style, which was the best known of that time.

The Plan and Symbolic Elements of *Wat Ratcha-orot*

There are four main buildings and some subsidiary structures in the area. An *ubosot* and a *wihan* containing a reclining Buddha image are the principal buildings located on the central east-west axis. The *ubosot* (13.55x26.05 m.) (No. 1 In Fig. 4.1) has its pediments decorated with *hamsas*, dragons, flowerpots and a landscape scene. The outside face of the door and window panels of the *ubosot* depict the figures of Chinese dragons and a cloud motif. Chinese door guardians are painted on the inside faces. The mural paintings inside the hall of the *ubosot* illustrate a large number of sets of Chinese auspicious symbols.

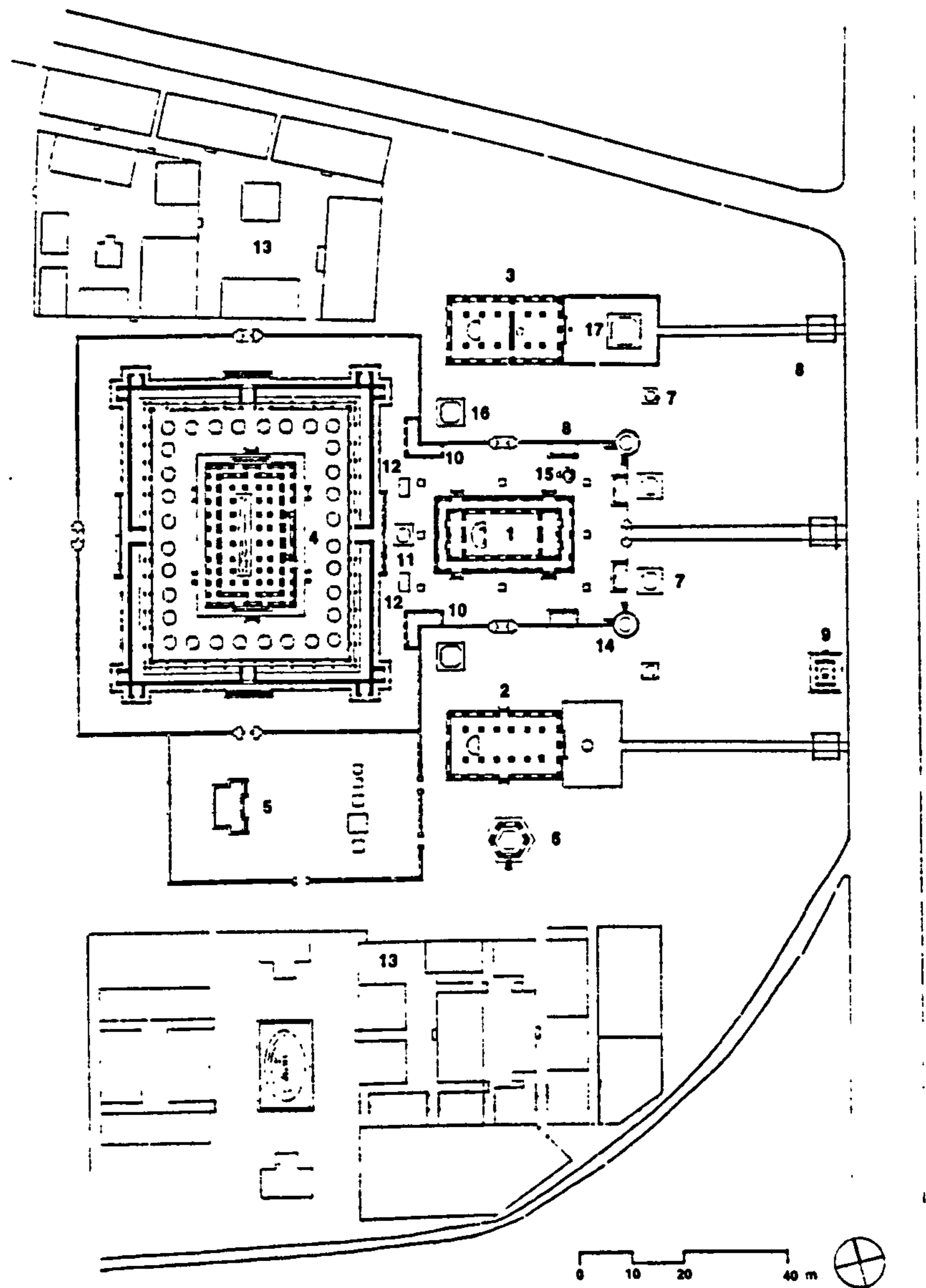


Fig. 4.1 Plan of Wat Ratcha-orot (source: FAD 1961);

1) *ubosot*; 2) *kanprian*; 3) *wihan*; 4) *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image; 5) pavilion of the Buddha's Footprint; 6) bell tower; 7) four stone *chedis*; 8) *salas*; 9) *wihan* of Siddhratha Buddha image; 10) L-shaped *wihans*; 11) principal *chedi*; 12) small *wihans*; 13) residential area; 14) *prangs*; 15) *Pikun* tree; 16) Thai style *chedis* 17) Thai style *chedi*



Fig. 4.2 *Ubosot* of *Wat Ratcha-orot* (source: FAD 1961)



Fig. 4.3 Pedestal and *Pikun* tree

To the north of the *ubosot* within the wall there was a *Pikun* tree (Bullet wood - *Mimusops elengi* Linn.) (No. 15 in Fig. 4.1) and a stone pedestal at the bole of the tree (Fig. 4.3). During the restoration, King Rama III superintended the works and when visiting the *wat*, he always sat on this pedestal under the tree.⁸ Consequently, whenever kings or members of the royal family visit the *wat*, traditionally they pay homage at the site of the *Pikun* tree (FAD 1961, 22).

The *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image (18.30x32.40 m.) (No. 4 in Fig. 4.1) is enclosed by a gallery (51.5x65.4 m.) lined with a row of sixty Buddha images in it. (Fig. 4.4) There are also thirty-two Thai style *chedis* located in the courtyard around the *wihan* (Fig. 4.5). The window panels of the building are painted in the Chinese style with peacocks and *hamsas*. On the window casings are painted lotus ponds and sarus cranes. The surfaces of the ceiling, interior walls and columns are all painted with flowers, foliage motifs and birds.⁹ The outside faces of the window panels are engraved with Thai and Chinese mixed-style door guardians. Each of the main pediments of the *wihan* is decorated with stucco motifs and ceramic works representing a bird in a circle at the centre, surrounded by fowls, flowers, roses and cloud motifs. The lower pediments represent a scene of Chinese landscape. On the outside face of the wall of the gallery there are stone slabs engraved with medical subjects.

Between the complex of the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image and the *ubosot* are a Chinese *stūpa* (No. 11) and two small Chinese stone *wihans* (No. 12 and Fig. 4.6). The *stūpa* or *chedi* (Fig. 4.5) is located on the central east-west axis and the two small stone *wihans* are situated to the north and south of it. The two small stone *wihans* have rectangular chambers with gambrel roofs. The middle of the chamber of the north one contains a stone slab engraving of a figure which might have been attributed to the Buddha or his disciples on one side and, on the other side is the figure of a man.

⁸ The original tree no longer exists. The present one is a newly-grown *Pikun* tree.

⁹ These paintings were painted white during the restoration in the reign of King Chulalongkorn in 1901, because they were too badly deteriorated to be restored (FAD 1961, 24).



Fig. 4.4 Buddha images in the gallery, *Wat Ratcha-orot* (source: FAD 1961)



Fig. 4.5 Thai style *chedis*, courtyard of the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image, *Wat Ratcha-orot* (source: FAD 1961)



Fig. 4.6 South small *wihan* and principal *chedi*, *Wat Ratcha-orot*



Fig. 4.7 *Prang*, *Wat Ratcha-orot*

At the corners of the L-shaped *wihans* (No. 10 in Fig. 4.1), outside the enclosure of the compound of the *ubosot* and the *wihan*, are situated two Thai style *chedis*. There were also statues of the Buddha's disciples in the L-shaped *wihans* (*wihankhots*) (FAD 1961, 22).¹⁰ There are four *salas* (No. 8 in Fig. 4.1) around the *ubosot*. They are designed to straddle the walls. Two lie at the front of the *ubosot* and the other two are at the north and south of it. They originally had stone slab inscriptions describing medical themes installed on the walls.¹¹

Two *prang* (No. 14 in Fig. 4.1) are located on the angles of the wall in front of the *ubosot* (Fig. 4.7). Outside the main enclosing walls to the north and the south of the *ubosot* are a *wihan* and a *kanprian* respectively. Both of them and the *ubosot* all face east. Outside the wall in front of the *ubosot* are four stone *chedis* (No. 7 in Fig. 4.1) aligned in a north-south direction. Further to the east are three *salas* by the side of the canal and a small *wihan*, containing a *Siddhratha* Buddha Image. There was a pavilion of the Buddha's Footprint (No. 5 in Fig. 4.1) and some subsidiary buildings located to the south of the *wihan* containing the reclining Buddha image.¹²

The pediments and eaves of the *kanprian* (12.66x20.63 m.) (No. 2 in Fig. 4.1 and Fig. 4.8) are decorated with the figures of *hamsas* and trees. On its window panels are painted books, butterflies and weapons, all in Chinese style. The most interesting element is a statue on the front wall of the building, whose hands hold lotuses whose stems rest on its shoulders. The gesture and elements of the statue recall the iconography of the *Suriyadeva*, or the Sun God of Hindu-Buddhism iconography (Fig. 4.9) (FAD 1961, 27)

The *wihan* (13.24x21.20 m.) (No. 3 in Fig. 4.1) has both the size and the architectural characteristics of the *Kanprian*. In its fore chamber there is a standing Buddha image whose right hand performs *Abhaya mudrā* (Fig. 4.11).¹³ At the front of the building a *singha* lion is sitting (Fig. 4.10). There is a Thai style *chedi* located within the enclosing

¹⁰ The statues deteriorated and were cleared out from the buildings (FAD 1961, 22).

¹¹ Most of the inscriptions in the *salas* have been lost.

¹² All of this part was demolished in 1985 but it was recorded in the plan made by the Fine Arts Department published in FAD (1961, 41). The Buddha's Footprint was moved for installation in a newly built pavilion south of the *Kanprian*.

¹³ The *mudrā* shows the right forearm bent at more or less a right angle, with the hand turned out to show the palm and the fingers straight and extending upwards.

wall that demarcates the frontal precinct of the building.



Fig. 4.8 *Kanprian*, *Wat Ratcha-orot* (source: FAD 1961)



Fig. 4.9 Chinese statue at the front wall of the *kanprian*, *Wat Ratcha-orot* (source: FAD 1961)



Fig. 4.11 Standing Buddha image, *wihan*, Wat Ratcha-orot (source: FAD 1961)



Fig. 4.10 *Singha* lion, front of the *wihan*, Wat Ratcha-orot

Building	Chinese influenced element	Image or statue	Other
The <i>wihan</i> of the reclining Buddha image	Pediments -Birds -Hamsa (geese) Base -Sarus cranes -Chinese ceramic idols -4 Lotus columns Window casings -Sarus cranes -lotus pond Inside face of windows -Hamsa (geese) -Peacocks -Lotuses Exterior face of windows -Door guardian deities Ceiling -Birds -Flowers	-Reclining Buddha image	
Courtyard			-32 Thai style <i>chedis</i>
Gallery		-60 Buddha images	-Medical inscriptions on the outside wall
<i>Ubosot</i>	Pediments -Hamsas, dragons, flowers and lanscape Front and rear porch -3 Chinese idols each Exterior face of doors -Dragons and cloud Inside face of doors - Chinese door guardians Windows -Chinese auspicious symbols (paintings) -Lotuses Walls paintings -Chinese auspicious symbols		- <i>Pikun</i> tree (north of the <i>ubosot</i>)
<i>Wihan</i>	-Chinese auspicious symbols	-A <i>Singha</i> (lion) in front of the building -Standing Buddha image in the main hall	-A Thai style <i>chedis</i> in front of the building
<i>Kanprian</i>	-Chinese auspicious symbols	-Chinese style idol (Sun god?)	-A Chinese <i>chedi</i> ?
4 <i>salas</i>			-Medical inscriptions
2 <i>prangs</i>			

Table 4.1 Symbolic elements of *Wat Ratcha-orot*

Building	Chinese influenced element	Image or statue	other
4 stone <i>chedis</i>	Chinese style	-4 human figures on the bell-shaped part of the north <i>chedi</i>	
Principal <i>chedi</i>	Chinese style		
North small stone <i>wihan</i>	Chinese style	-Monk and man?	
South small stone <i>wihan</i>	Chinese style		
2 <i>wihankhots</i> (L-shaped <i>wihans</i>)		-Disciple statues	-2 Thai style <i>chedis</i> at their corners
3 waterfront <i>salas</i>			
The pavilion of the Buddha's Footprint		-The Buddha's footprint	
<i>Wihan of Siddhratha</i> Buddha Image		-Buddha image (<i>Bhūmispara mudrā</i>)	
Belfry			-Bell
<i>Sangkhawat</i>	North and south of <i>phutthawat</i>		

Table 4.1 Symbolic elements of *Wat Ratcha-orot* (continue)

The Symbolic Planning of *Wat Ratcha-orot*

Because it is a Thai Buddhist *wat* which was designed in a Chinese-influenced style, its symbolic planning has never been studied. This analysis is the first study which interprets its symbolic planning and relates it to the *Traiphum* cosmographical diagram.

Tāvātimsa and Heavenly Realms

Most of the decorative elements of the buildings in the *phutthawat* of *Wat Ratcha-orot* are dominated by Chinese decorations and symbols. In the main buildings, such as the *ubosot* or the *wihan* with the reclining Buddha image, apart from the principal Buddha images there is neither the symbol of Mount *Meru* nor the paintings of *Jātakas* and the Life of the Buddha to be found. The Chinese elements found in the buildings seem not

to relate to *Traiphum* cosmology. They were, rather, decorative ornaments. There is only the statue in front of the *kanprian*, which according to its iconography is represented as a human body raising his hands to the level of the shoulder and holding lotuses. This is attributed to the iconography of the Sun God (Ions 1967, 74). If this image was deliberately installed to symbolize the building, the *kanprian* could be identified with the palace of the Sun God. In accordance with the illustration of *Traiphum* cosmology, the *wihan*, which is symmetrically located to the north of the *ubosot*, possibly signifies the palace of the Moon God. However, there is a *singha* lion sitting on a pedestal at the front of the *wihan*, this is the animal that draws the chariot of the Sun God in iconographical practice in Thai art, instead of the Moon. In the illustration from the *Traiphum* manuscript, the painting clearly shows the chariot of the Sun God drawn by a *singha* lion and the chariot of the Moon God drawn by a horse (FAD 1987, 23). The same pattern is found in the painting in the *ubosot* of *Wat Bowon Mahasutthawat* at Bangkok, and on the pediments of the *ubosot* of *Wat Suthat*.¹⁴ As a result, the *kanprian* and the *wihan* might represent two Suns instead of the Sun and the Moon.¹⁵ However, in this initial analysis the *Kanprian* and the *wihan* are to be attributed to the sun and the moon since the arrangement of the buildings implies that the layout is planned according to the *Traiphum* cosmological diagram.

According to *Traiphum* cosmology, the Sun and the Moon orbit around Mount *Meru* at a level lower than *Tāvātimsa*. They are part of the Nine Planets (*Nopphakho*). At the core of the vertical axis in the illustration is Mount *Meru*, on top of which is *Tāvātimsa* Heaven. At the centre of the Heaven is located the *Vejayanta*, the palace of the God Indra. There are also the *Cūlāmanicetiya*, the *Sudhammā* assembly hall, the *Pārijāti* Tree, and the palace of the *Erāvana* - the vehicle of the God Indra, as included in the *Traiphum* manuscript painting of the Thonburi version (Fig. 4.12).

¹⁴ *Wat Bowon Mahasutthawat* was built by the Front Palace (*Wang Na*) in the reign of King Rama III. The *ubosot* of *Wat Suthat* was also built in the same period. See the study of *Wat Suthat* in this Chapter.

¹⁵ This iconographical problem might derive from the concept of *Cakkavatti*. This issue will be clarified in section 4.3.2 of this Chapter.

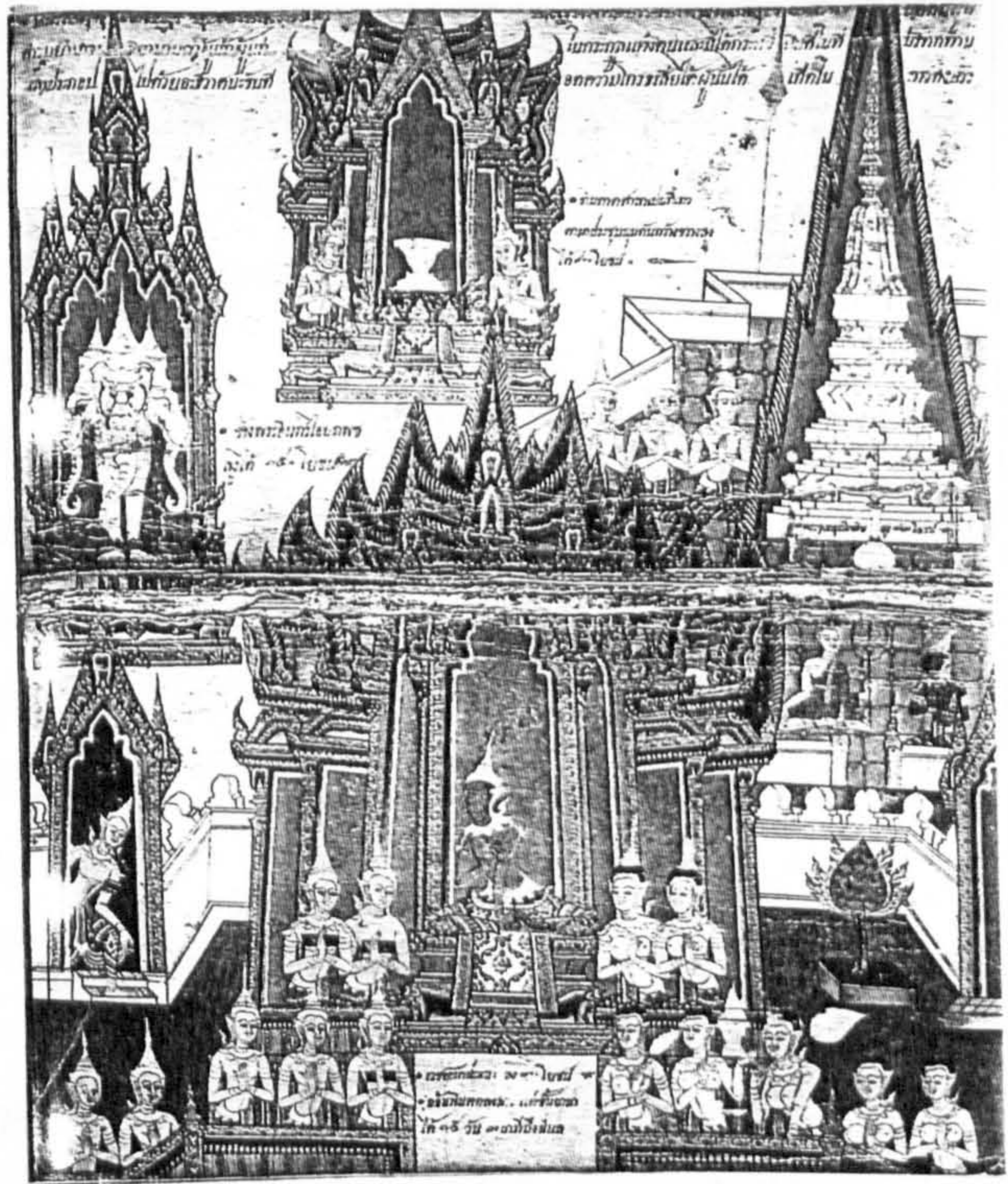


Fig. 4.12 Scene of *Tāvātimsa*, *Traiphum* manuscript painting, Thonburi version (source: Lithai 1983)



Fig. 4.13 Small stone *wihan* and *Sudhammā* Hall, *Traiphum* manuscript painting, Khmer version (source: FAD 1978)

There are some components surrounding the *ubosot* which relate to the concept of *Tāvātimsa*. Apart from a comparison between the elements of *Tāvātimsa* in *Traiphum* and the structures surrounding the *ubosot*, mythology has to be invoked to explain the meaning of these structures in this analysis. The *Pikun* tree of *Wat Ratcha-orot* and the acts of King Rama III during the construction of the *wat* suggest the myth of the *Pārijāti* Tree of the *Tāvātimsa* Heaven. The *Traiphumlokawinitchai* states that the *Pārijāti* Tree appears in the heavenly garden name '*Puntharikavana*' near the *Vejayanta* palace. There is the throne of Indra at the foot of the tree named '*Pandukambalasilāsana*'. Both the tree and the throne are dedicated to Indra because of his good deed in establishing a stone slab at the foot of a tree which he planted as a charitable deed to all the people who passed by, since he was born as a man with the name of 'Magha' (Thampricha 1992, 997-98). It is probable that King Rama III assumed the *Pikun* tree as the *Pārijāti* Tree and acted after Magha. The *Pikun* tree of *Wat Ratcha-orot*, therefore, may be identified with either Magha's tree or the *Pārijāti* Tree in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven. The act of Magha was also repeated in the four *salas*, in which Rama III put medical inscriptions to show their symbolic status as Magha's pavilions. This is the same symbolic statement as that of Rama I at *Wat Phra Chetuphon*.¹⁶

Further evidence to support the hypothesis that the *ubosot* and its surroundings represent *Tāvātimsa* Heaven are the principal *chedi* and the two small stone *wihans*. The *chedi*, located on the central axis west of the *ubosot*, possibly represents the *Cūlāmanicetiya*; and the two small stone *wihans* represent the *Sudhammā* assembly hall and the Palace of *Erāvana*. The north small stone *wihan*, inside which is a stone slab depicting the bas-relief of a Buddha's disciple and a man, was probably installed to symbolize *Sudhammā* - an assembly hall in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven. Its installation in the room to make it distinct from the south one. The *Sudhammā* is the meeting hall of all deities, where they attend the preaching of *Dhamma*. The small stone *wihan* to the south probably represents the palace of *Erāvana*.¹⁷ They are apparently an interpretation of the *Traiphum* manuscript painting, because the forms of these small stone *wihans* are very similar to the *Sudhammā* Assembly Hall portrayed in the *Traiphum* illustration (Khmer Version) (Fig. 4.13). They have a similar rectangular shape

¹⁶ See the discussion about the inscriptions of medical matters relating to the act of Magha in the study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* in Chapter 3.

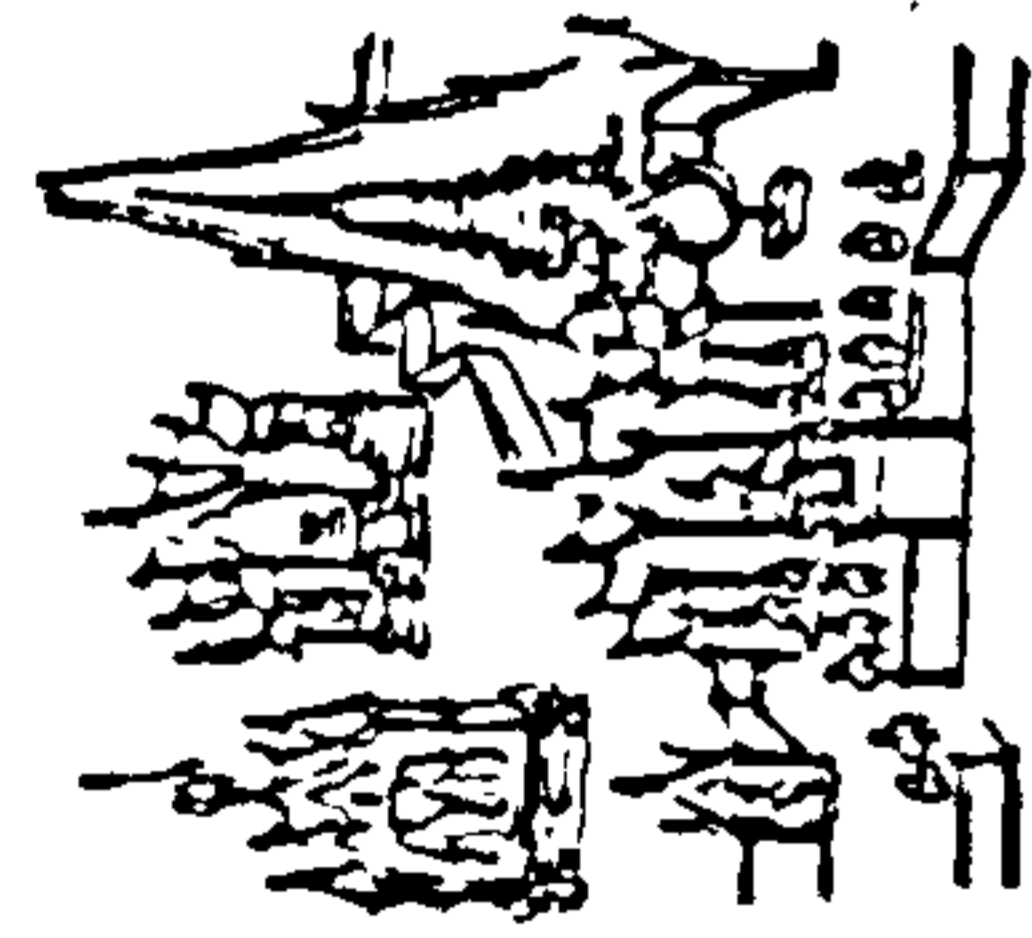
¹⁷ Two small *wihans* flanking a *chedi* also appeared in the design of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I. See the study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of Rama I in Chapter 3.

sitting on a pedestal, topped with a gambrel roof.

These initial interpretations and the meanings attributed to the setting of the buildings suggest a method of planning of *Wat Ratcha-orot* that are in line with the elements in the Thonburi version of the *Traiphum* manuscript painting. The *ubosot* and its surroundings are a representation of *Tāvātimsa* Heaven. The *kanprian* and the *wihan* are the symbols of the sun and the moon. The vertical axis disposition of *Tāvātimsa*, the sun, and the moon in the *Traiphum* illustration was converted to a horizontal plane in the layout plan of *Wat Ratcha-orot*. The higher level is to the west and the lower is to the east.

Although the style of the small stone *wihans* is similar to the *Sudhammā* Assembly Hall portrayed in the Khmer version of the *Traiphum* manuscript painting, the setting of the buildings and their meanings are in line with the manuscript painting of the Thonburi version (Fig. 4.14). It portrays the group of the Nine Planets just below the *Tāvātimsa*, and below the Nine Planets are the *Cātumahārājika*, the Four Great Guardian Kings. Because there are only two *prangs* at the angles of the wall, rather than four to symbolize the *Cātumahārājika*, they may represent other heavenly realms. It is possible that the two *prangs*, the four *salas*, the *wihan* (which represent the moon) and the *kanprian* (which represents the sun), might form a group of the Nine Planets in accordance with the *Traiphum* manuscript painting of the Thonburi version. However, the *Rāhu* might be represented by the main gate even though it was not shown on the gate.¹⁸

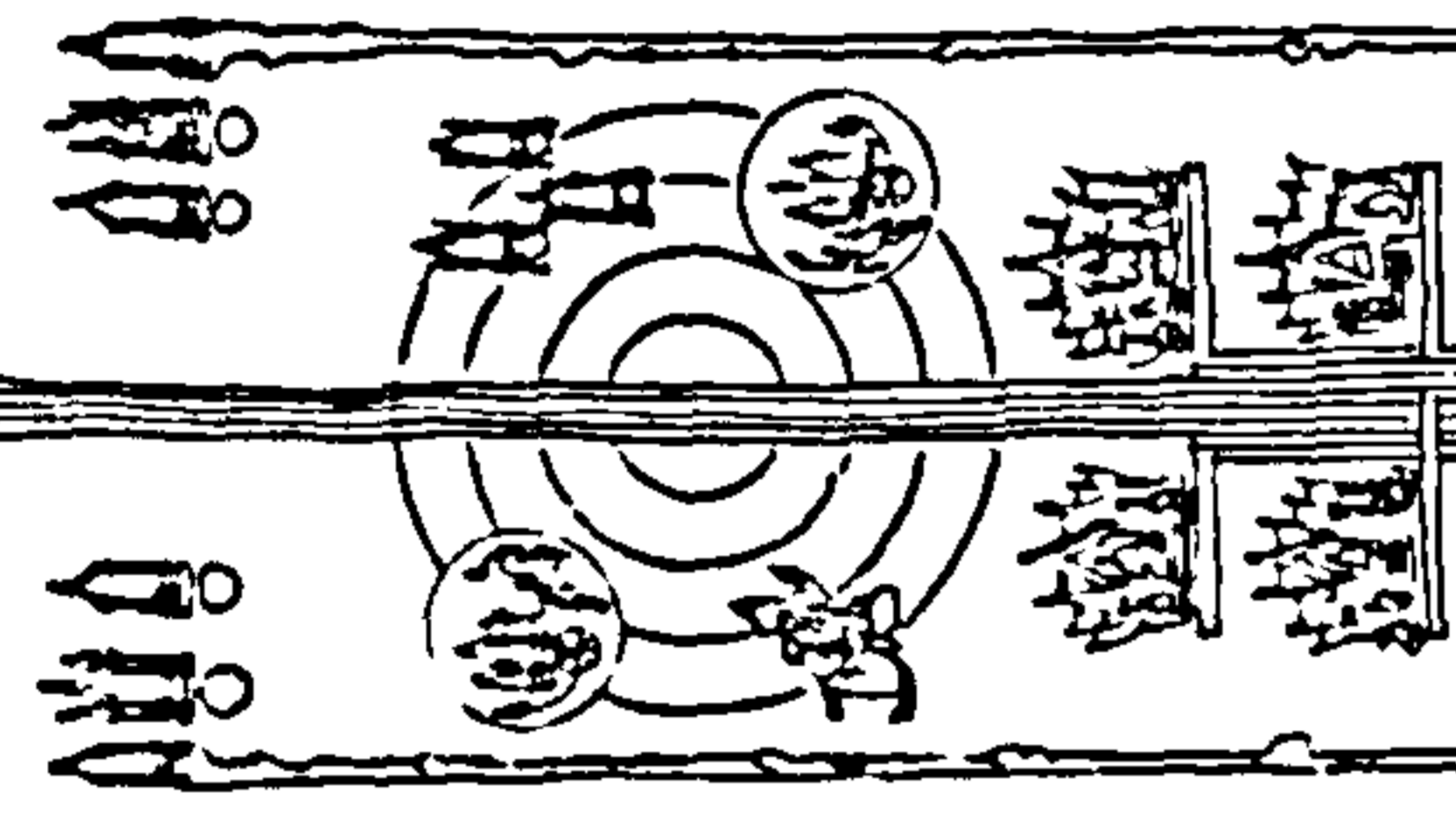
¹⁸ The original gate was demolished and rebuilt in a different style some twenty years ago. There was not a figure of the *Rāhu* on the gate.



Tāvātīmsa

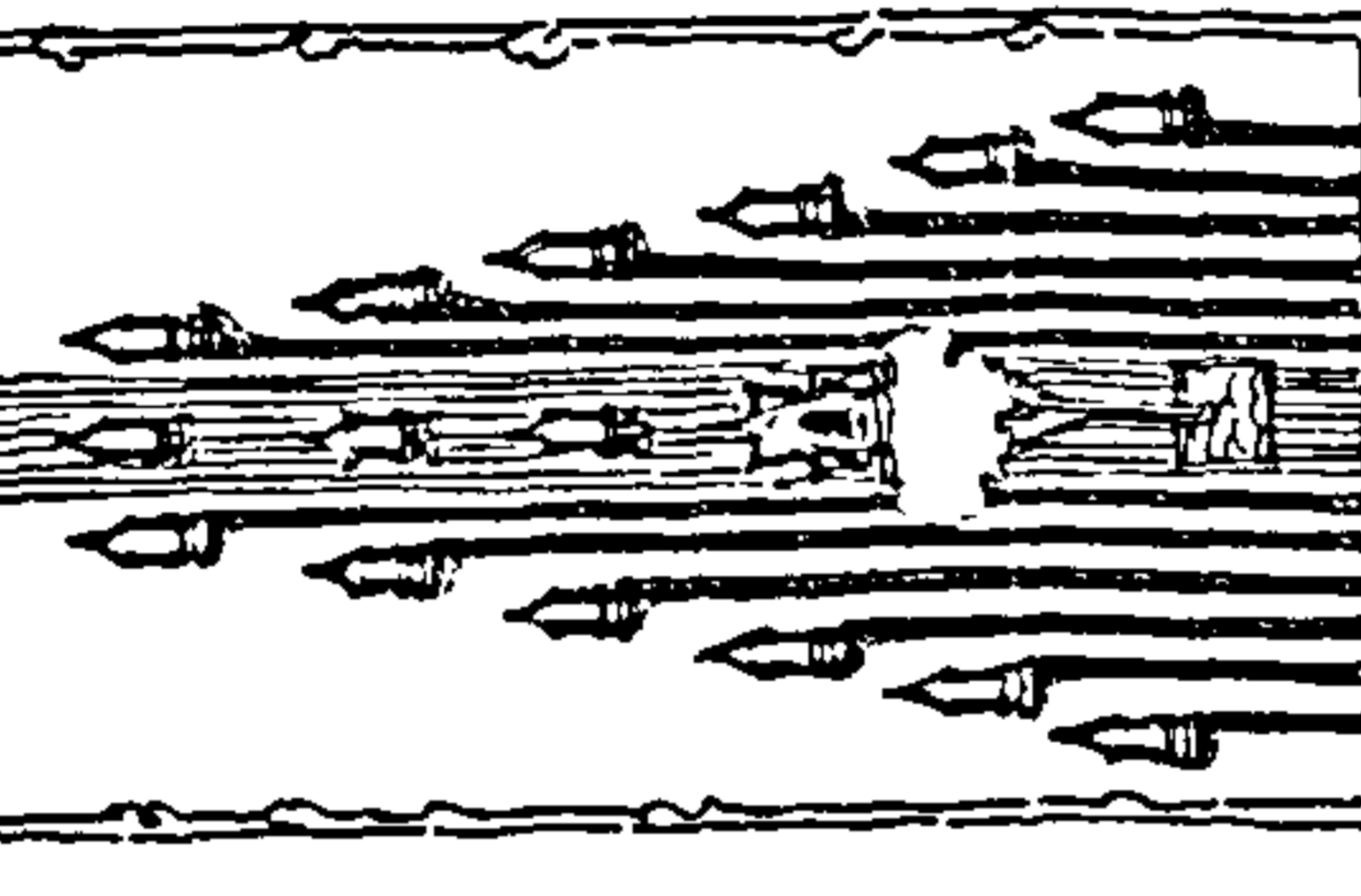


**The Sun The Moon Rāhū
The Other Six of the Nine Planets**

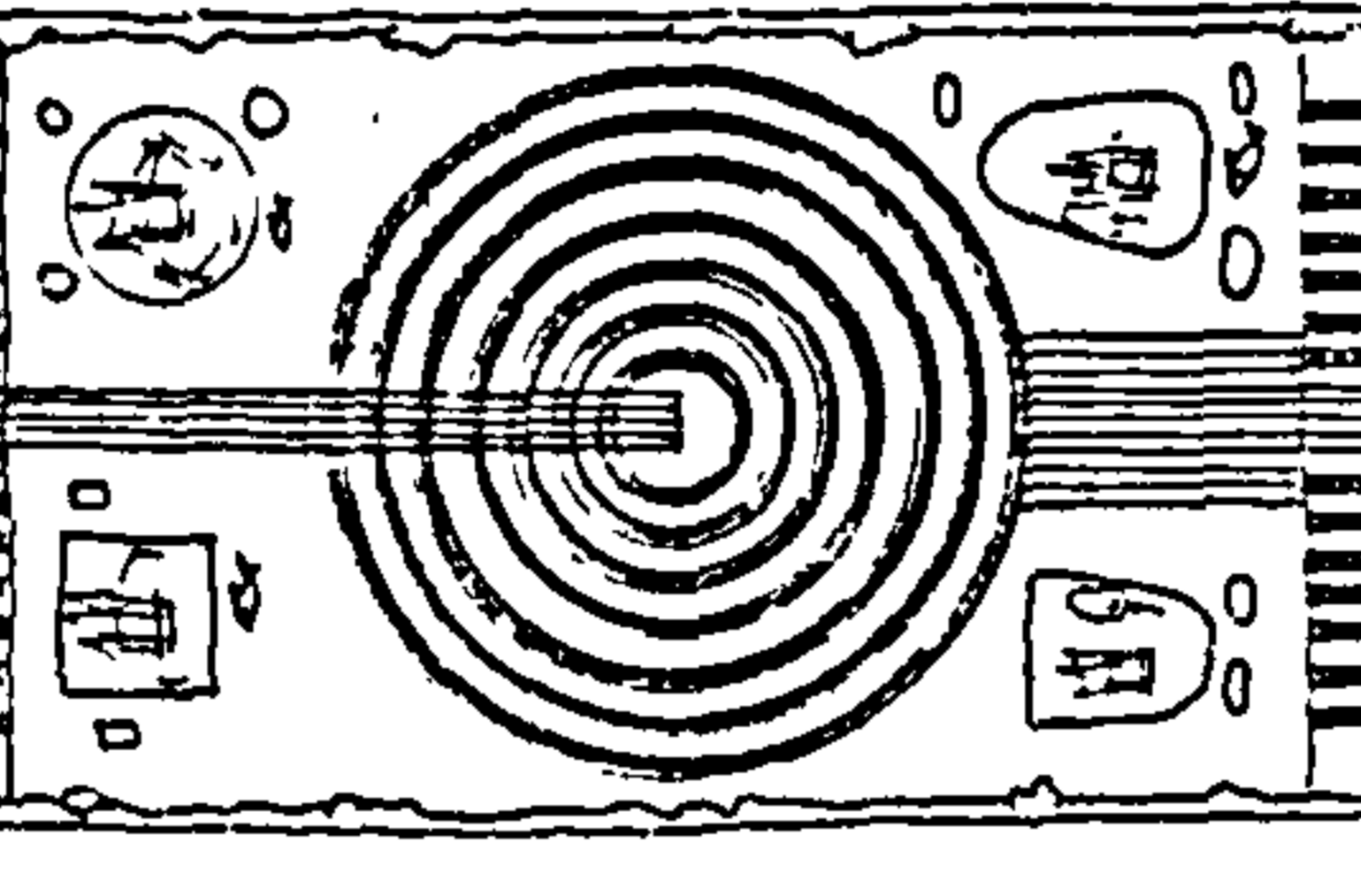


Cātumahārājika

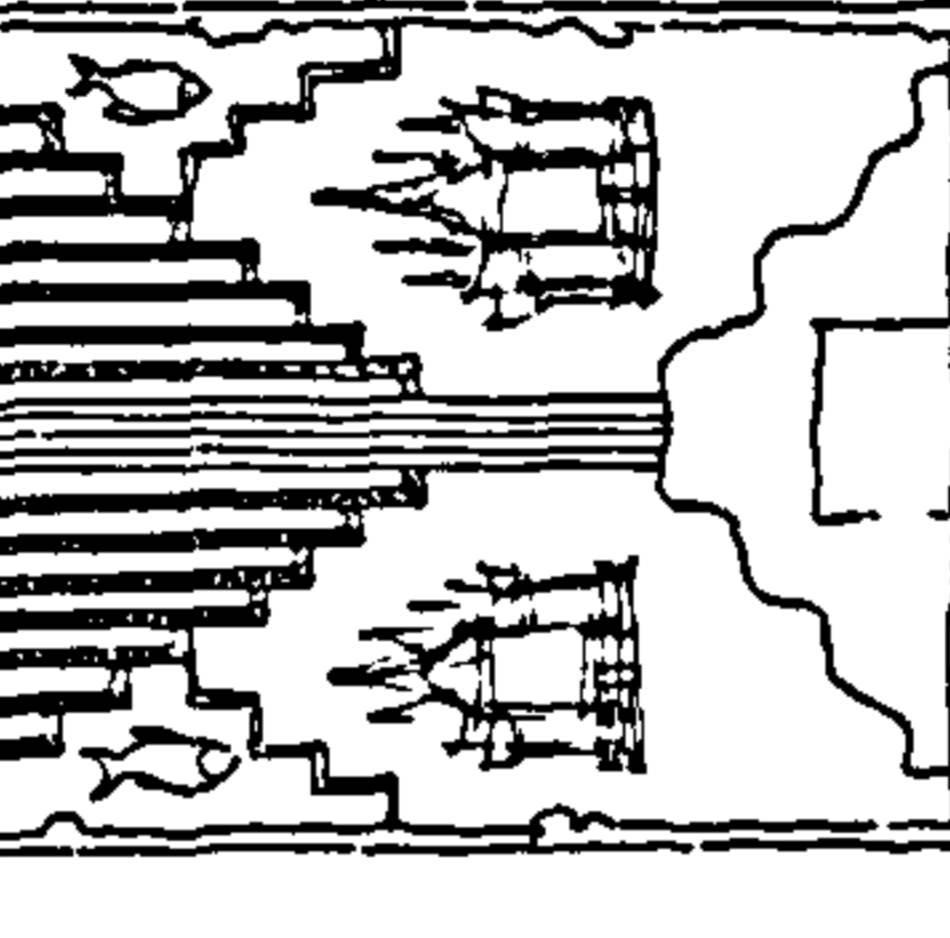
Deva



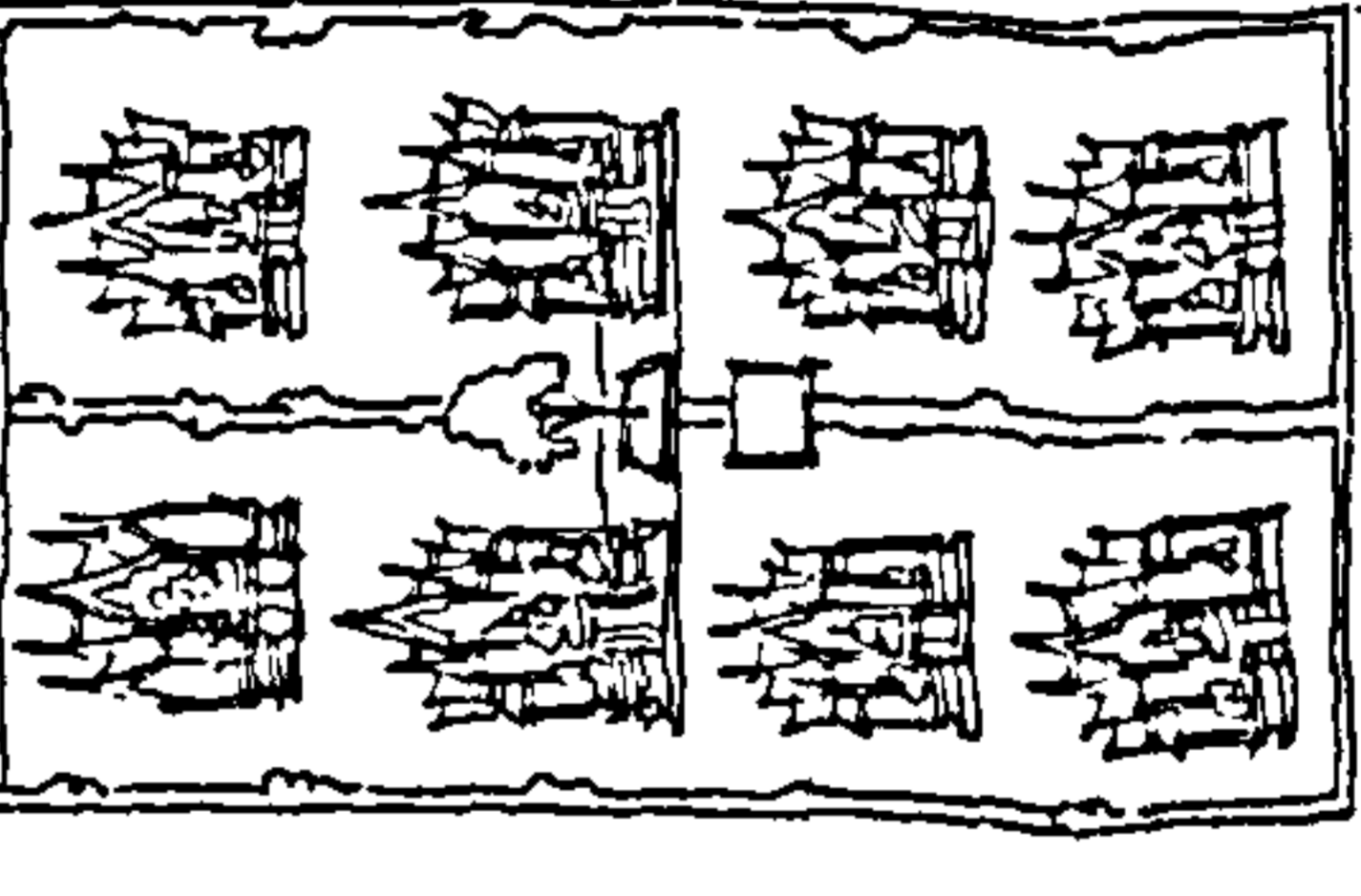
Garuda



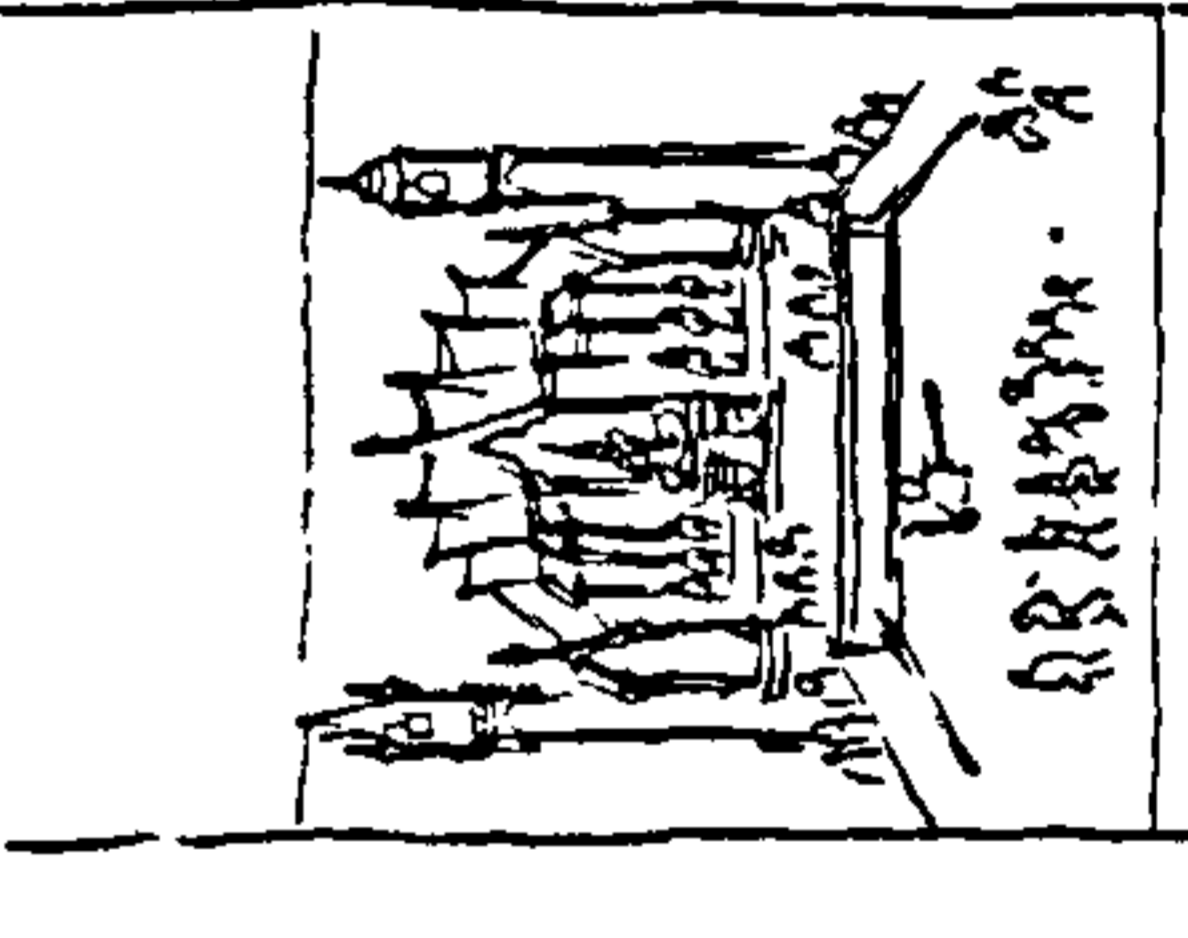
Mahādīpa



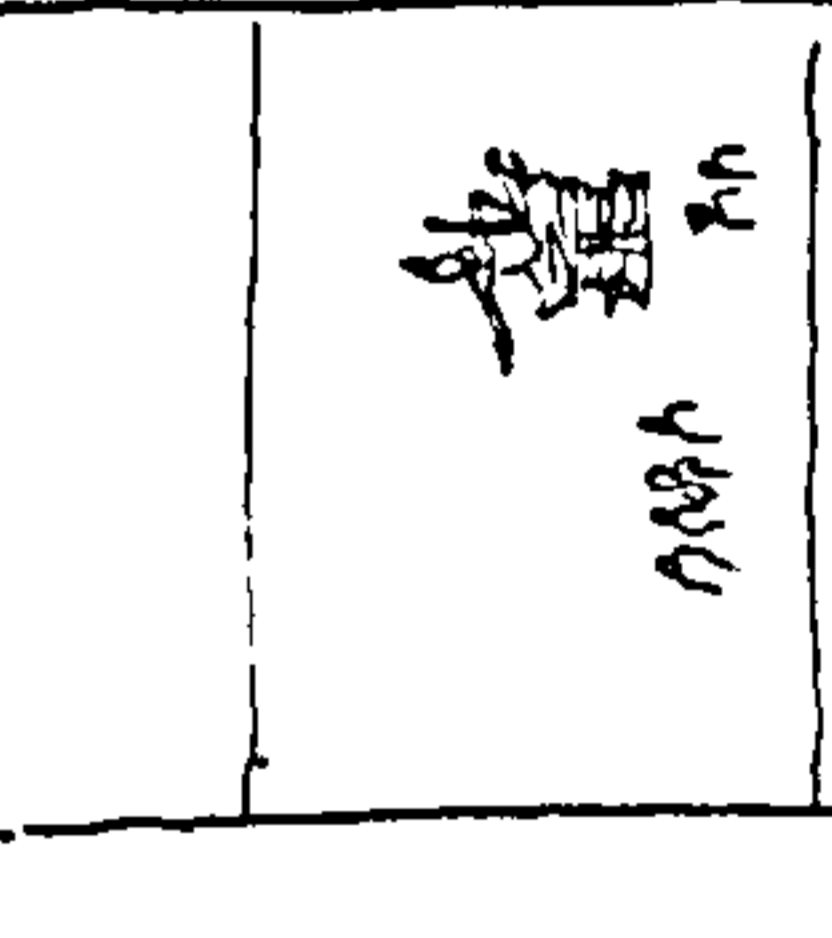
Nāga Realm



Asura



Yamatoka



Hell



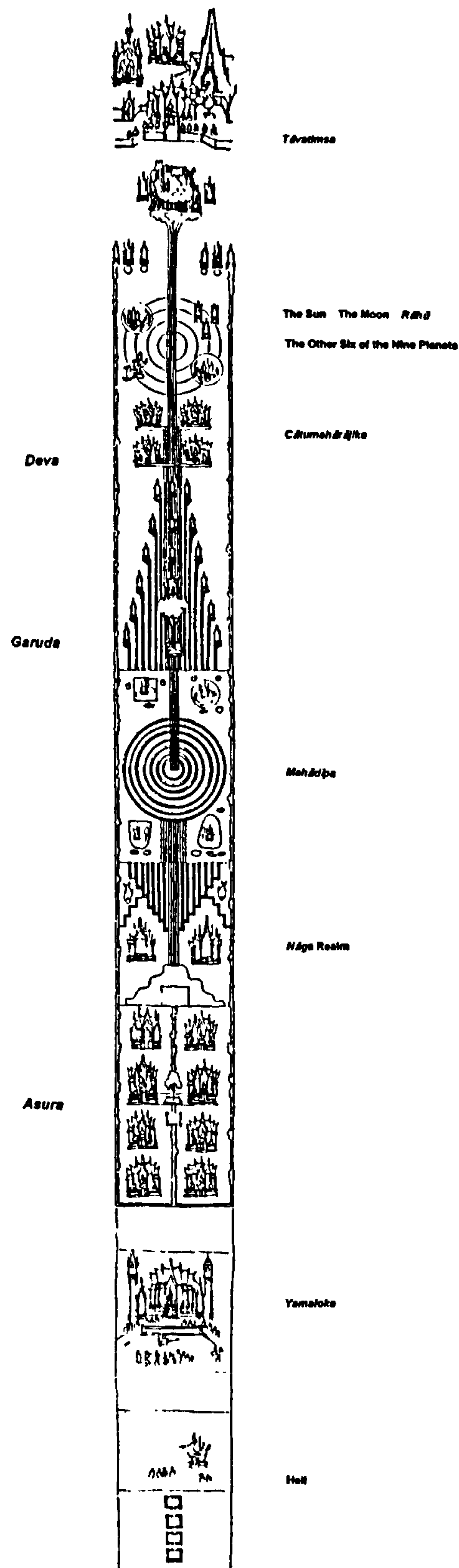


Fig. 4.14 *Traiphum* diagram from top of Mount *Meru* down to hell, *Traiphum* manuscript painting, Thonburi version (Redrawn after OPM 1982)



Fig. 4.15 Chinese influenced *chedi*,
Wat Ratcha-orot



Fig. 4.16 Bas-relief on the *chedi* in Fig.
4.15

The four *chedis* outside the walls located east of the *prangs* might represent the *Cātumahārājika* - the Four Great Guardian kings. Even though their distinctive character is their Chinese craftsmanship, the two *chedis* of the group situated close to the central east-west axis have roughly-depicted human figures on the surfaces of their bell-shape part (*Anda*). The figures of the four men are depicted on the four sides of the bell-shaped part of the north *chedi* (Figs. 4.15, 4.16), while the south shows two figures. Because they are depicted in the Chinese style, it is not clear that what they represent. The figures are not Buddha images but probably represent *devas* rather than humans. All these bas-reliefs seem not to be the original designs, but later incomplete alterations. The alteration shows the attempt to adapt the *chedis* to suit a particular symbol. The four figures at the four cardinal directions of the bell-shaped part might be an attempt to symbolize *Cātumahārājika*, or the Four Great Guardian Kings, similar to the four niches of a *prang* in each of which is contained a statue of deity such as the *prangs* of Wat Phra Chetuphon.¹⁹

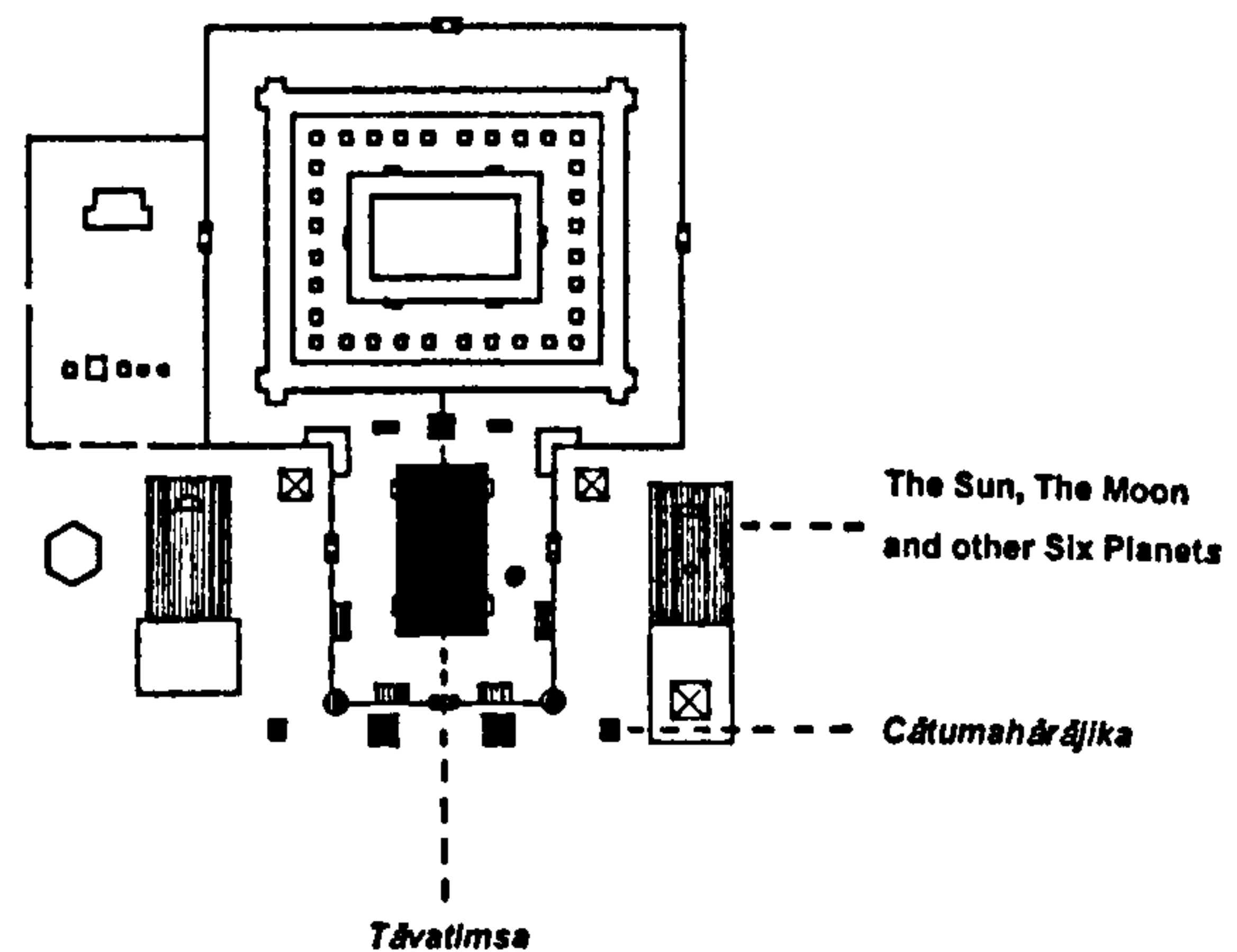


Fig. 4.17 Symbolic planning of Wat Ratch-orot, *Tāvātimsa* and its components

As for the *Cātumahārājika*, they are usually symbolised in *prangs* because their multi-tiered superstructure implies the heavenly realm. Because of the number and position of these four *chedis*, it is difficult to identify them with other elements of the Realm of Desire (*Kāmabhūmi*). Their setting to the east of the group of the structures which

¹⁹ The four *prangs* of Wat Phra Chetuphon are attributed to the symbol of *Cātumahārājika*; see the study of Wat Phra Chetuphon in section 4.2.2 of this Chapter.

represent the Nine Planets suggests that they are arranged following the *Traiphum* diagram of the Thonburi version (Fig. 4.17). This proposed interpretation seems to be the most valid and harmonious with the context of the planning of *Wat Ratcha-orot*. The *chedis* as represented here might be a specific case, while Chinese influenced *prangs* have never been found in Thai Buddhist architecture.

The *wihan* of the *Siddharatha* Buddha image which is located close to the canal probably represents the human world, since the name 'Siddharatha' is the personal name of *Gotama* Buddha - the present Buddha when he was a prince of the *Sakaya* Dynasty (Malalasekera 1960, vol.2, 1135).

The *Wihan* of the Reclining Buddha Image, the City of *Nibbāna*

Above the Realm of Desire (*Kāma bhūmi*) represented in the *Traiphum* manuscript paintings, there are the Realm of Form (*Rūpa bhūmi*), the Realm of the Formless (*Arūpa bhūmi*) and at the zenith the *Mahānagara Nibbāna* (the Great City of *Nibbāna*).²⁰ The illustration (4.18) and the passage describing the City of *Nibbāna* relate to most of the elements of the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha. The text states:

The city of the *Nibbāna* is neither far nor near, neither high nor low. However, it is very difficult to attain. It has five, eight and ten encircling walls, with gates, fortresses and four moats. Twenty-four roads and thirty-seven market places are there. There are strong fortifications and ramparts. There is a seven storied *Prasaṭ* with a reclining throne within and lanterns provide lights at all times.

Its ground laid with sand of crystal, lake filled to the brim with clear water, blooming with lotuses. Bees are busy fondling the stamens. Melodious songs are heard from peacocks, cranes, and wild ducks and white and red *hamsas* (goose) (*Traiphum* manuscript painting, Thonburi version No. 10; OPM 1982, 13).

²⁰ The manuscripts of both the Khmer version and the Thonburi version illustrate the Great City of *Nibbāna* at the zenith of all the Three Worlds.

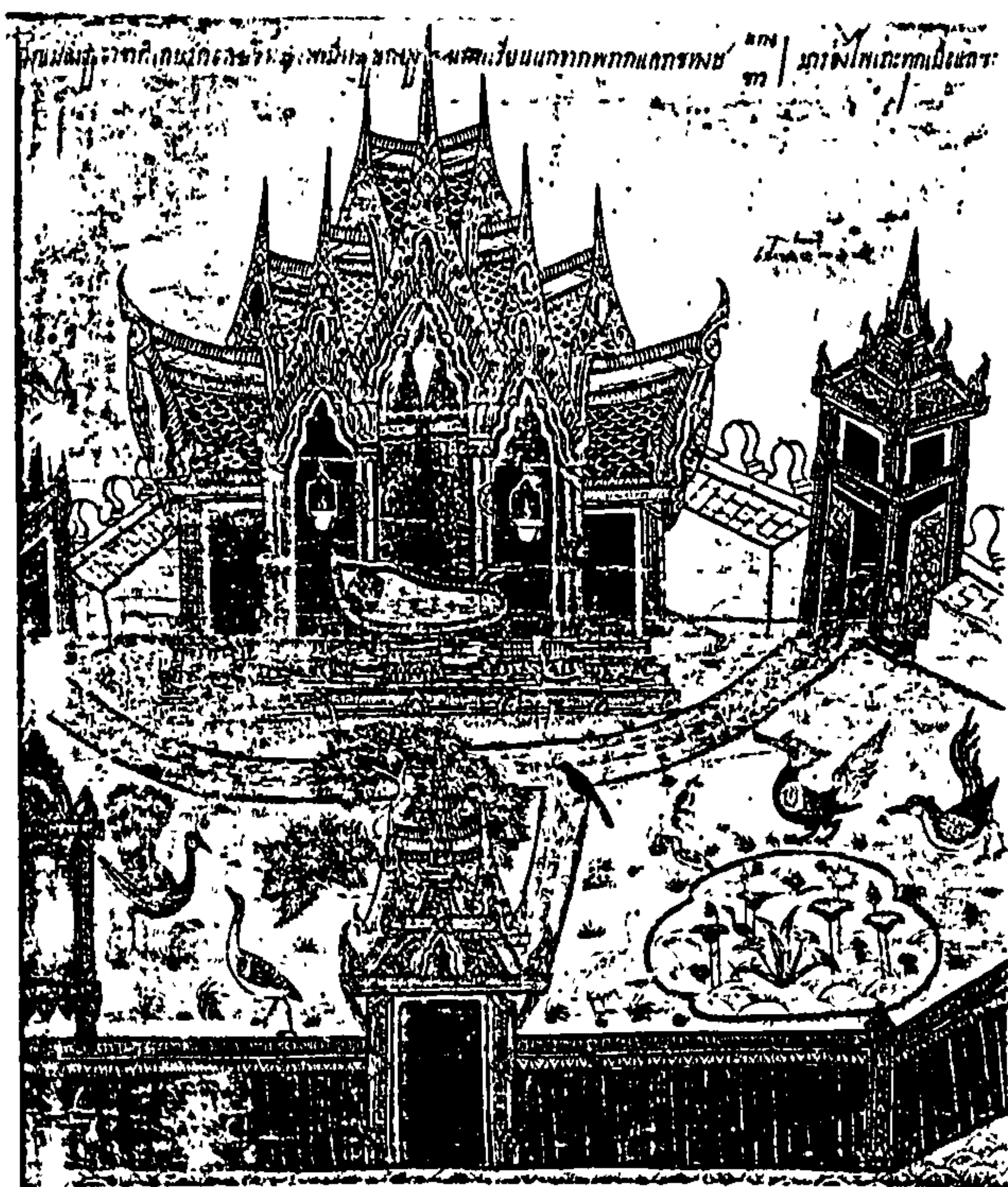


Fig. 4.18 Scene of the City of *Nibbāna*, *Traiphum* manuscript painting, Thonburi version (source: Lithai 1983)

The four lotus columns and the painting of fowls in the *wihan*, and the decorations on its pediments, are in line with the elements in the passage describing the City of *Nibbāna*. The reclining Buddha image represents the *Parinibbāna* event or the Great Departure of the Buddha. The gallery enclosing the *wihan* and the courtyard might also be an interpretation of the walls, gates, moats, and fortifications of the City of *Nibbāna*. The other components that relate to the City of *Nibbāna* are the thirty-two Thai style *chedis* in the courtyard and the Buddha images in the gallery, which probably represent the Buddhas of the past who had also attained *Nibbāna*. The meaning of the *wihan* as the City of *Nibbāna* again confirms that the layout plan of the *phutthawat* of *Wat Ratcha-orot* was inspired by the illustrations from the *Traiphum* manuscript paintings, which represent the City of *Nibbāna* at the highest realm.

However, the appearance of the statues of disciples (*sāvaka*) in the L-shaped *wihans* is also an unusual design. The *Traiphum* manuscripts of both the Khmer version and the Thonburi version allow the possibility of identifying the L-shaped *wihan* as a stage in the realization of *Nibbāna*. Just below the City of *Nibbāna* represented in the *Traiphum* manuscripts there is an illustration of eight Holy Persons (*Ariyapuggalas*) in

the form of Buddha's disciples.²¹ The statues of disciples in the L-shaped *wihans* probably represent the Holy Persons (*Ariyapuggalas*) who are in various stages of realization of *Nibbāna*. They are in the transcendental world (*Lokuttara*) or beyond the mundane world (*Lokiya*). Apart from the *Arahanta* who has attained the stage of *Nibbāna*, other Holy Persons will be reborn in particular planes of *Brahmaloka* according to their achievements of meditation (Thampricha 1992, 1071-72). The statues of disciples therefore might also relate to *Brahmaloka*. However, it is not possible to determine exactly what the Thai style *chedis* located at the corners of the L-shaped *wihans* represent. Their setting near the L-shaped *wihans* indicates that they might relate to the *Ariyapuggalas* who are approaching *Nibbāna*. The style and size of these *chedis* are similar to the thirty-two *chedis* in the courtyard, the area which is designed to be part of the City of *Nibbāna*.

These issues have been interpreted to indicate that the lowest level is close to the waterfront of the canal, and that status gradually rises up to the higher levels to the west. The orientation of the buildings in the compound can be compared to the *Traiphum* elements, as follows:

The buildings in the <i>phutthawat</i> of Wat Ratcha-orot	The elements from the <i>Traiphum</i> manuscripts (the Thonburi and the Khmer versions)
The <i>wihan</i> of Siddhratha Buddha image	Human world (<i>Jambudīpa</i>)
The four Chinese <i>chedis</i>	<i>Cātumahārājika</i>
The <i>kanprian</i> and the <i>wihan</i>	The Sun and the Moon
The two <i>prangs</i>	Six of the Nine Planets
The four <i>salas</i>	
The <i>Pikun</i> tree	<i>Pārijāti</i> Tree
The <i>ubosot</i>	<i>Vejayanta</i> or the palace of Indra
The two small stone <i>wihans</i>	<i>Sudhammā</i> Assembly Hall (north) and <i>Erāvana</i> Palace (south)
The principal <i>chedi</i>	<i>Cūlāmanicetiya</i>
The two L-shaped <i>wihans</i>	<i>Ariyapuggalas</i> (Holy Persons) or <i>Brahmaloka</i>
The <i>wihan</i> of the reclining Buddha image	The City of <i>Nibbāna</i>

Table 4.2 The comparison between the meanings of the structures of Wat Ratcha-orot and the *Traiphum* elements

²¹ See appendix 7 for the Eight Holy Persons (*Ariyapuggala*).

Jambudīpa

The structure which has not yet been mentioned in this analysis is the pavilion of the Buddha's Footprint. The setting of the pavilion in the layout plan has been studied and it was obviously a deliberate addition, causing the plan to become asymmetrical and thus marking the specific concept of the main compound. The Buddha's Footprint, in addition, is represented in the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer Version). The painting represents the Buddha's Footprint on the top of the *Sumanakūta* Mountain or the Adam's peak of Lanka Island (Fig. 4.28).²² Lanka is represented in the *Traiphum* manuscript, and is depicted close to *Jambudīpa* in the Thonburi version. The position of the pavilion in the layout plan, adjacent to the complex of the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha on the south side, implies that the complex also represents *Jambudīpa*, and not solely the concept of the City of *Nibbāna*.²³ The passage which explains the City of *Nibbāna* also allegorically connotes some aspects of *Jambudīpa*. The elements which are mentioned in the passage, for instance: roads, marketplaces, walls, ramparts and animals, are all the things of the human world or *Jambudīpa*. The allegorical explanation of the City of *Nibbāna* that 'it is neither far nor near; neither high nor low', indicating that the location of *Nibbāna* is within the soul of one who realizes the Ultimate Truth. Thus the City of *Nibbāna* can be nowhere except in the persons who attain the state of *Nibbāna*, which should be in *Jambudīpa*, since it is the only birthplace of all Buddhas, *Pacceka Buddhas*, the great disciples, *Arahantas*, *cakkavattis*, and *Bodddhisattvas*. (Thampricha 1992, 49). Therefore, the City of *Nibbāna* in this sense is the same place as *Jambudīpa*.

As we have said, the elements which relate to the concept of *Jambudīpa* surrounding the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha are the thirty-two Thai style *chedis* and the Buddha images in the gallery. The gallery installed with Buddha images enclosing the building is one of the elements that relates to *Jambudīpa*, as does the gallery of *Wat Phra*

²² *Samanakūta* is a mountain peak in Ceylon. When the Buddha visited the island for the third time, he left on the mountain the mark of his footprint. Owing to this, the mountain became a sacred place of pilgrimage. In later times many kings of Ceylon paid the shrine great honour (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. 2, 1045).

²³ See the overlapping of *Jambudīpa* and the City of *Nibbāna* in the study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* in section 4.2.2 of this Chapter.

Chetuphon of King Rama I.²⁴ The sixty Buddha images in the gallery may represent the Buddhas of the past, the *Pacceka Buddhas* who have attained *Nibbāna*, which certainly must be in *Jambudīpa*.

Jambudīpa as a design concept is expanded to cover some structures surrounding the *ubosot*. The four *salas* on which are carved medical inscriptions, and the *Pikun* tree, denote the *Jambudīpa* where Magha made his merits, and simultaneously refer to the emulation of Magha's acts by King Rama III. The pavilion of the Buddha's Footprint, in addition to its meaning as the island of Lanka, is also the key element in identifying the area within the wall as *Jambudīpa*. The *Traiphum* text explains the position of the Lanka Island, located five *yojana* from Mount *Meru* (FAD 1987, 38). Among the 2,000 subsidiary continents, Lanka is the foremost land because it has been visited by every Buddha. It is where Buddhism, the Buddha's relics and the Bodhi-tree were established (Udom (ed.) 1981, 31). It is part of *Jambudīpa*. Therefore, the complex of the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha, the *ubosot* and the pavilion of the Buddha's Footprint affirm each others' concepts by their positions in the overall layout of the *wat*.

The North-South Axis Planning System

The *Traiphum* diagram is not only represented on the main east-west axis, but different planes of it are symbolized on the north-south axis. The axis is accentuated by the Bell Tower at the southernmost end. The study of the symbolic plans of the Royal Chapel and *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I in Chapter 3 suggests that a bell tower is a symbol that relates to *Yamaloka* (the Realm of the Lord of Death). By the same hypothesis, the Bell Tower of *Wat Ratcha-orot* may also represent this concept. The four buildings on this north-south axis are the *wihan*, the *ubosot*, the *kanprian* and the bell tower. Since the *ubosot* could be identified with both *Tāvātimsa* Heaven and *Jambudīpa*, as has been discussed above, the investigation of the meaning of this axis should be pursued in the context of other buildings.

²⁴ A gallery installed with Buddha images usually implies the concept of *Jambudīpa*. See the similar design concept in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I in Chapter 3, *Wat Suthat* and *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama III in this Chapter, and the analysis of a gallery enclosing a *prang* in Chapter 5.

If the bell tower of *Wat Ratcha-orot* is a symbol of *Yamaloka* similar to the bell towers of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel of King Rama I, as have been studied in Chapter 3, it is the lowest realm on the axis. The *kanprian* next to the north aspect should certainly signify the realm higher than the *Yamaloka*. It might represent *Himavanta* or *Jambudīpa*, or both.²⁵ However, there is no distinctive element to identify for certain what it represents. Although the *kanprian* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the *kanprian* of *Wat Suthat* are the symbols of the realm of hell, they are located lower down the axis than the bell towers.

In general, in the arrangement of the planes on the main east-west axis, the higher plane is located westward, while the lower plane settles to the east.²⁶ However, where a *kanprian* and a bell tower are separated from the main axis, for instance in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Suthat*, the east direction is regarded as higher than the west. The bell towers of those *Wats*, which are the symbols of *Yamaloka*, are assumed to be a higher plane than the *kanprians*, which are located to the west of them and represent the realm of hell.

In front of the *wihan* there is a Thai style *chedi*. If the *ubosot* is assumed to be *Tāvātimsa*, the *wihan* should represent a higher realm. There is only one *chedi* that is located higher than *Tāvātimsa* Heaven: the '*Dussacetiya*' (*Thussa chedi*) in *Akanittha Brahma* world, the highest plane of the Realm of Form (*Rūpabhūmi*). When the time comes for a *Bodhisattva*, who will become enlightened and be a Buddha, to leave for his ordination, *Brahma* who lives in *Akanittha*, the Upper-Most of All, will carry the robes and the eight clerical necessities down to earth and offer them to the *Bodhisattva*. The *Brahma* then takes the white cloth of the *Bodhisattva* to *Akanittha Brahma* domain and places it in a *chedi* called '*Dussacetiya*' (Lithai 1985, 348-49).

If the *ubosot* is supposed to be *Jambudīpa*, the *wihan* and the Thai style *chedi* in front of it should refer to *Tāvātimsa* and *Cūlāmanicetiya* respectively. However, because the principal *chedi* behind the *ubosot* on the central axis has already been identified with *Cūlāmanicetiya*, it is unlikely that there are also two *chedis* representing the *Cūlāmanicetiya* in the same compound. Therefore, the *chedi* in the front of the *wihan*

²⁵ *Himavanta* Forest, is in fact part of *Jambudīpa*. However, it is represented separately from *Jambudīpa* in the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer version).

²⁶ See the study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* in Chapter 3.

can be more plausibly attributed to *Dussacetiya* in *Brahmaloka*. The *ubosot* on this north-south axis is apparently the symbol of *Tāvātimsa* at the top of Mount *Meru*. The *kanprian*, which is located south of the *ubosot*, represents *Jambudīpa*, a higher realm than the bell tower which is the symbol of *Yamaloka*.

It is important to note that the standing Buddha image in the *wihan* may relate to the concept of the *Brahmaloka*, like *Ho Phra Nak* in the Royal Chapel, which also has a standing Buddha image.²⁷ However, the connection between a standing Buddha image and the concept of *Brahmaloka* needs to be investigated in the light of further evidence. To attribute a standing Buddha image to *Brahmaloka*, it is necessary to support the argument with contextual evidence from the plan. As a result, the buildings on this north-south axis can be seen to symbolise four planes. The highest plane is the *Akanittha Brahma* Realm symbolised by the *wihan* and the Thai style *chedi*. The *ubosot* represents *Tāvātimsa* Heaven, the top of Mount *Meru*. The *Kanprian* symbolises *Jambudīpa*, the human world. The southernmost is the lowest plane, where the bell tower represents the *Yamaloka* (the Realm of the Lord of Death) (Fig. 4.19).

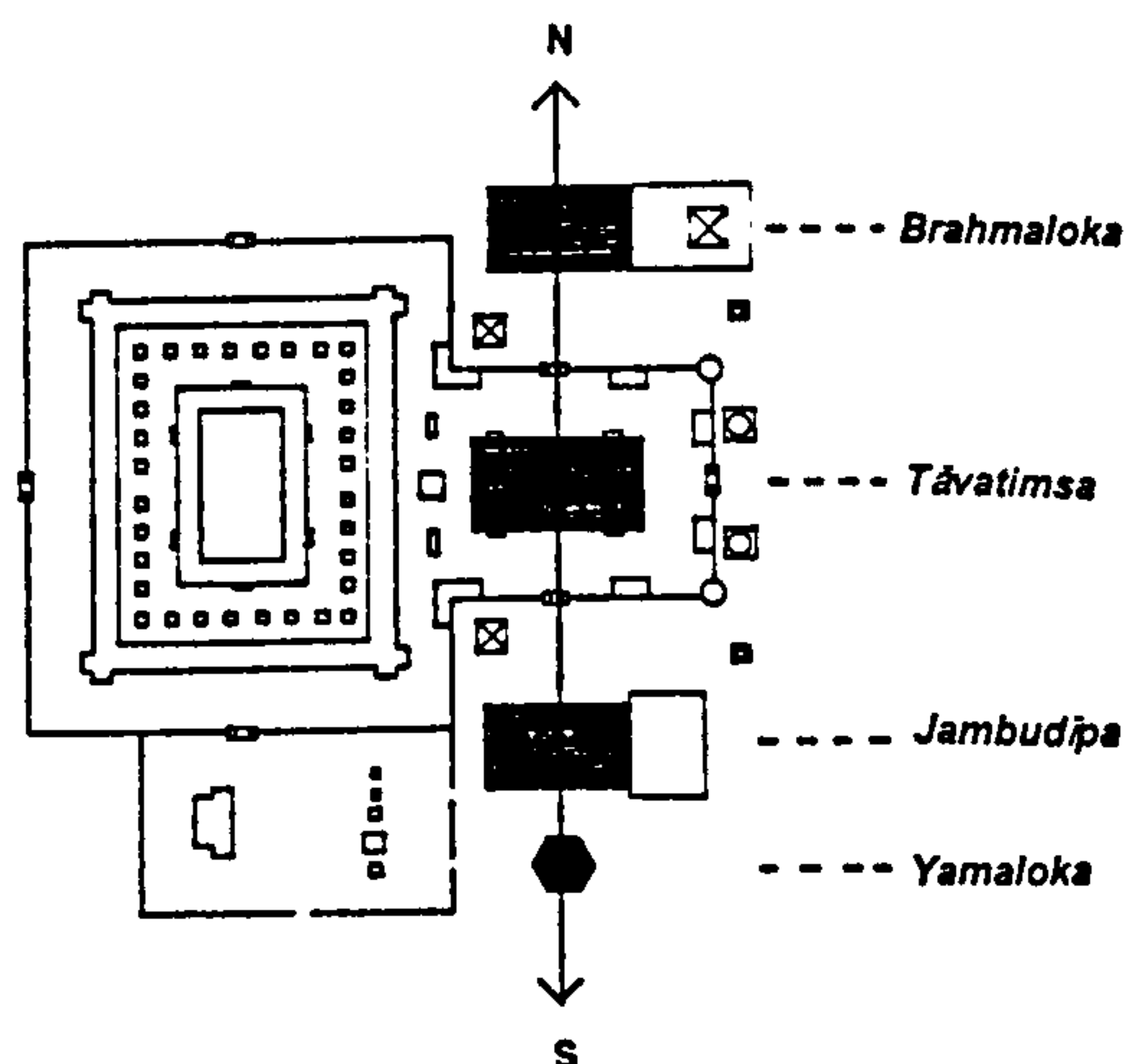


Fig. 4.19 Symbolic planning of *Wat Ratcha-orot*, north-south axis

²⁷ See the study of the Royal Chapel in Chapter 3.

The arrangement of different planes on this north-south axis is similar to the planning system of the Royal Chapel, in which the buildings oriented on the east-west direction are aligned on the north-south axis. The bell tower is located at the southernmost point, to represent *Yamaloka*. The *ubosot* and twelve *salas* represent *Jambudīpa*. The *Phra Mondop* is a symbol of Mount *Meru*, while the buildings grouped north to the *Phra Mondop*, *Ho Phra Monthaintham*, *Ho Phra Nak* and *Ho Phra Thepbidon* might be in the plane of *Brahmaloka*. The symbolic planning on the north-south axis of *Wat Ratcha-orot* may be compared to the structures of the Royal Chapel shown in table 4.3.

Wat Ratcha-orot (N-S Axis)	The Royal Chapel	Meaning of the Buildings
<i>Wihan</i>	<i>Ho Phra Thepbidon</i> <i>Ho Phra Monthiantham</i> <i>Ho Phra Nak</i>	<i>Brahmaloka</i>
<i>Ubosot</i>	<i>Phra Mondop</i>	Mount <i>Meru</i>
<i>Kanprian</i>	<i>Ubosot</i> and twelve <i>salas</i>	<i>Jambudīpa</i>
Bell tower	Bell tower	<i>Yamaloka</i>

Table 4.3 A comparison of the meanings of the structures on the north-south axis of *Wat Ratcha-orot* and the Royal Chapel

All the buildings have had their symbolic planning analysed in the compound of *Wat Ratcha-orot*, and there are indications that some Chinese structures have been intentionally integrated into the symbolic planning system of Thai Royal Buddhist architecture of this period. Most of these structures display a mixture of Thai art and Chinese craftsmanship. Most of the main buildings are decorated with Chinese ornaments, particularly mural paintings, which were all painted to represent Chinese auspicious symbols instead of themes from Buddhist texts. Therefore, these Chinese stone structures play an important role in indicating the meanings of the *ubosot*, *kanprian* and *wihan*.

In summary, there are three main symbol systems in the sanctuary area of *Wat Ratcha-orot*. The main east-west axis, which centres on the *ubosot* and its surroundings, displays the symbol of *Tāvātimsa*. The higher levels are the *Brahmaloka*, symbolized by the L-shaped *wihans*, and the city of *Nibbāna*, which is symbolized by the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image. Below *Tāvātimsa* are the Nine Planets represented by the *kanprian*, the *wihan*, the two *prangs* and the four *salas*. The

Cātumahārajika is represented by the four Chinese stone *chedis*. The symbol of the human world on this axis is the *wihan* of the *Siddharatha* Buddha image. The whole area of the compound also represents *Jambudīpa*, which is marked by the pavilion of the Buddha's footprint, the symbol of Lanka Island. Another symbol system is formed by the arrangement of the structures on the north-south axis, which represent another *Traiphum* cosmographical diagram as shown in table 4.3.

4.2.2 Wat Phra Chetuphon of King Rama III

Wat Phra Chetuphon was chosen as an example for the study because of its richness in symbolic elements after it was restored by King Rama III. These will lead to the clarification of the *Traiphum* symbolic planning and its relation to kingship. This analysis will reveal that the *ubosot* is the symbol of Mount *Meru*, overlapping with the Diamond Throne of *Jambudīpa*. Above all, most of the main structures convey more than one meaning. They are organized within different symbol systems and represent different layers of symbolic planning.

The *wat* is located south of the Grand Palace (No. 3 in Fig. 3.1). The restoration was begun in 1831. The north-west part of *phutthawat* area was extended in order to build a new *wihan* to house a reclining Buddha image. Some new buildings and structures were added while the original *ubosot* was enlarged in plan and height. The restoration was completed and celebrated in 1847 (Thiphakorawong 1995, 130).

The layout plan of Rama I's original design was mostly maintained but more inscriptions, paintings and some other significant symbols were arranged in the compound. The present state of the *Wat* retains almost all of its structures, which are the result of the restoration of King Rama III. However, most of the decorations and symbols, particularly the inscriptions and mural paintings, have been abandoned and destroyed. Some of them were altered during the course of the modern restoration by the *wat's* authority and the Fine Arts Department. Apart from the original elements which still remain in some of the buildings, the information of the symbolic elements which were arranged in the reign of King Rama III is now available only from the textual

evidence.²⁸ Most of the information in this study is quoted from the 'Poem about the Restoration of Wat Phra Chetuphon' (Paramanuchit 1974).

The Arrangement of the Symbolic Elements

The old *ubosot* of King Rama I was demolished. King Rama III installed the foundation stone of the new *ubosot* (30x48 m.) (No. 1 in Fig. 4.20) on the fifth day of the waxing moon in the eleventh lunar month of 1835. The peristyle of the building was extended to the boundary line of the old *sima* boundary. A new, larger *sima* boundary was redefined.

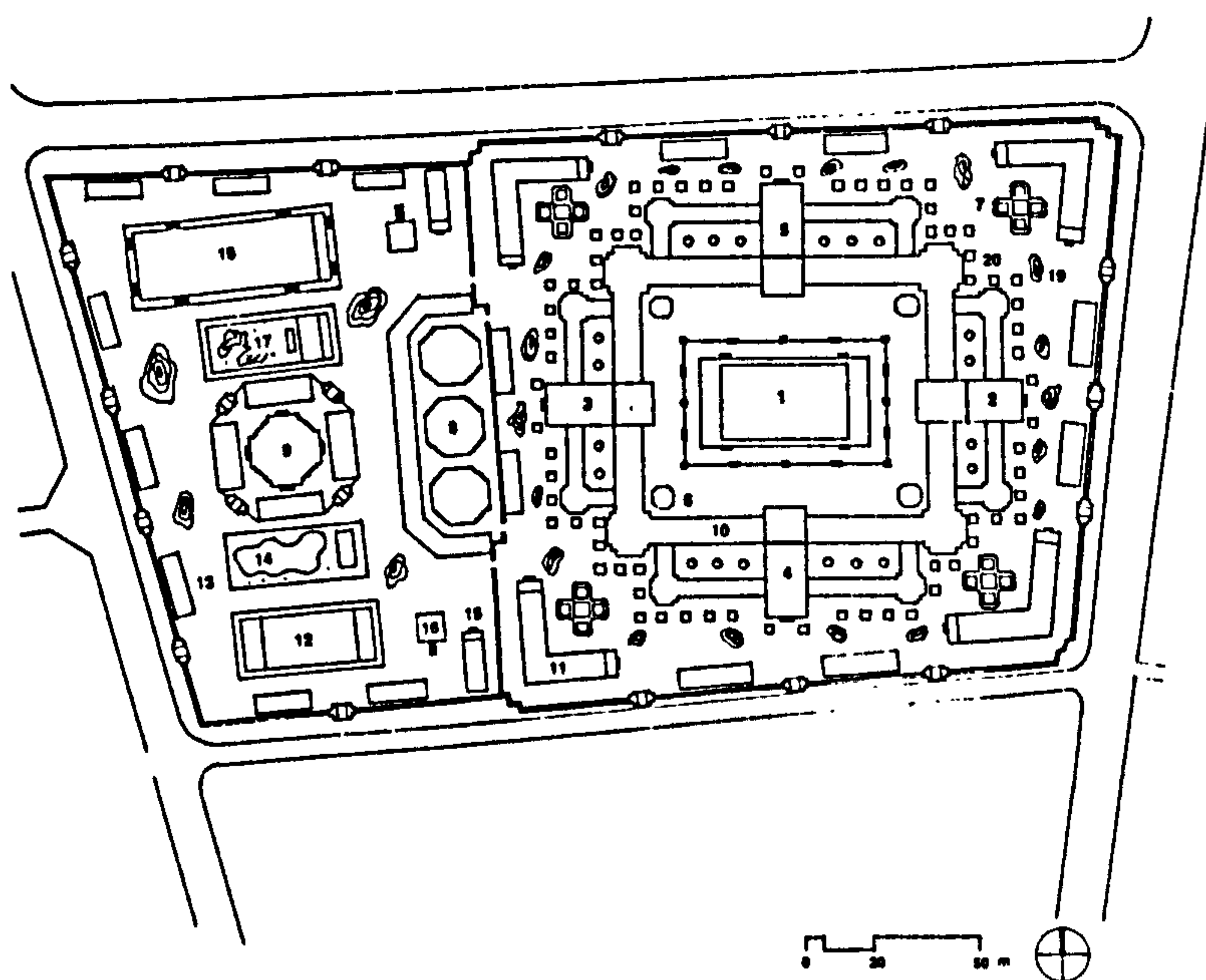


Fig. 4.20 Plan of Wat Phra Chetuphon of King Rama III; 1) *ubosot*; 2) east *wihan*; 3) west *wihan*; 4) south *wihan*; 5) north *wihan*; 6) *mahatthat čhedis* (*prangs*); 7) five *čhedis* on one base; 8) principal *čhedi*; 9) *Phra Mondop*; 10) main gallery; 11) L-shaped *wihans*; 12) *kanprian*; 13) *salas*; 14) pond and garden; 15) small *wihan*; 16) bell tower; 17) *Missakavana* Garden; 18) *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image; 19) miniature mountain; 20) seventy-one subsidiary *čhedis* (Adapted from Vacharee 1991)

In the hall of the *ubosot*, the walls between the windows illustrated the stories of Forty-one Eminent Disciples (from *Anguttara Nikāya*). The scenes of *Umanga Jātaka* or *Mahosatha Jātaka* were illustrated on the walls above the windows. On the frieze of the nave were painted the celestial worlds, the realm of *Cātumahārājika*, while on the frieze

²⁸ The details of the restoration of King Rama III were written in 1845 as a record in poem form by a contemporary poet and scholar, His Royal Highness Krom Kun Nuchitchinorot; see Paramanuchit Chinorot 1974 in FAD 1974, 218-96. The inscriptions and poems are collected and published in FAD (1974). For a commentary on the inscriptions, see Dhani (1976b, 5-28).

of the front and rear porches were painted *Nāgas*, *Garudas*, *Asuras*, the sun, the moon, *Dattatreya*, *Gandhabba*, *Kumbhanda*, *Naksiddhi*, *Vijādhara*, *Kinnara*, *Kinnarī*, *Hamsa*, *Arahantas* and birds (Fig. 4.21). The pedestal of the principal Buddha image was re-constructed to form a three-stepped pedestal. Surrounding each step are small statues of *devas* on the highest level, *Garudas* on the middle and *Asuras* on the lowest level (Fig. 4.22). On the middle terrace were also placed statues of the two great disciples, and on the lower terrace were established newly-cast statues of eight *Arahantas* (FAD 1974, 17).



Fig. 4.21 The Moon God and celestial beings, painting on the frieze of the front porch, *ubosot*, Wat Phra Chetuphon

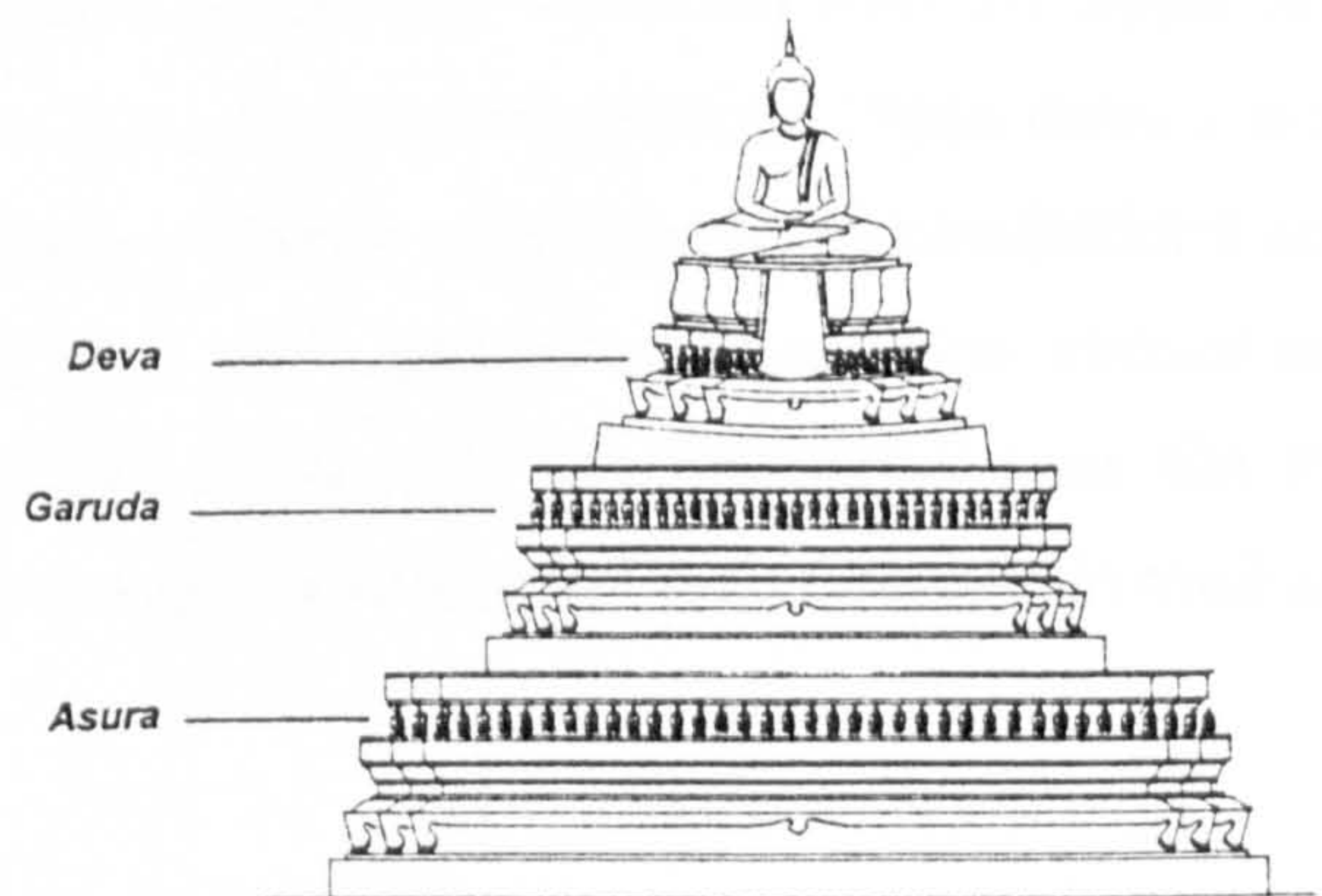


Fig. 4.22 Principal Buddha image, *ubosot*, Wat Phra Chetuphon

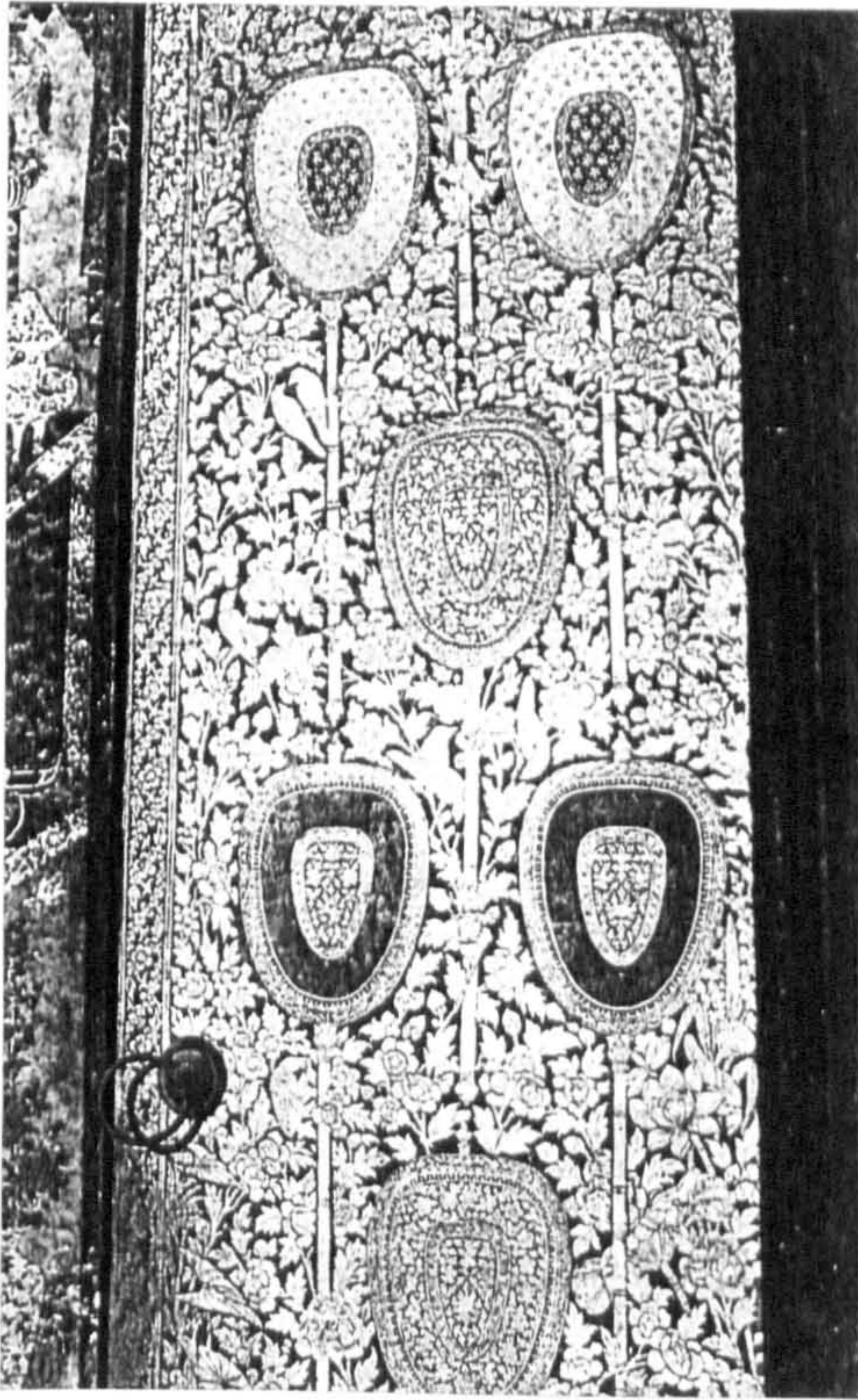


Fig. 4.23 Honorific fans, door panels, Wat Phra Chetuphon (source: FAD 1974)



Fig. 4.24 Chinese *chedis*, Wat Phra Chetuphon

The inside faces of the door panels are painted with specimens of all grades of honorific fans, presented as tokens of hierarchical rank by the sovereign to the Holy Brothers (Fig. 4.23). The back of the window panels are inscribed with the seals and names of the dignitaries of the Buddhist Church, indicating that in those days it was divided into two jurisdictions.²⁹ The northern windows depict the north jurisdictions and the southern windows those of the south. The balustrades around the *ubosot* are adorned with marble bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the *Ramakian* epic. On the outside faces of the door panels, the scenes of *Ramakian* are also depicted in mother-of-pearl.

Most of the elements of the four direction-*wihans* (9x31 m.) (Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Fig. 4.20) maintained the design of Rama I. Although the mural paintings in the *wihans* were re-

²⁹ The northern jurisdiction was placed under an abbot of *Somdet* rank in Bangkok, including all territories approximately north of Bangkok. All territory bordering on the Gulf of Siam, both east and west as well as the Malay Peninsula, was under the southern jurisdiction, the head of which was also of a similar rank and resident in Bangkok. See Dhani (1976b, 9).

painted, the original themes were revised.³⁰ Only the north, south, and west *wihans* were extended, with new rear chambers. The new arrangements are:

- The rear chamber of the south *wihan* shows the painted *Bhahum* or the stanza of the victory of the Buddha.³¹
- The west *wihan*'s rear chamber depicts the story of the Five Buddha's Footprints.
- The rear chamber of the north *wihan* depicts the Thirteen *Dhutanga* or the Thirteen Austere Practices.
- The rear chamber of the east *wihan* displays the paintings of the Ten States of Decay and the Ten Levels of Knowledge.
- There were two Chinese lotus stone basins placed in the front of each *wihan*, alongside the staircases.³²

The main gallery (80x88 m.) (No. 10 in Fig. 4.20) enclosing the *ubosot* was made two *soks* (1 metre) higher than the original. On the frieze of the gallery are depicted the 374 provinces of the Kingdom of Siam. There were also inscriptions explaining the literary works of the period, the *Klong Konlabot*, the *Phleng Yao Konlabot*, and specimens of Prosody of verses, placed on the gallery's colonnades. At the corners of the gallery was painted the story of *Nonthuk pakaranum*, or *Nonthuk* the bull. The tales of *Pisat pakaranum* were depicted in the niches of the angles of the outer gallery. On the door panels of the outer galleries were painted *Kumbhanda* and *Yakkha*. The small courtyards between the main and outer galleries held Chinese *chedis* (Fig. 4.24). Two *chedis* were placed in each of the east and west courtyards, and three in each of the north and south courtyards. These *chedis* are supported by Chinese statues. Between these *chedis* are stone basins with Palmyra palm trees. There are seventy-one subsidiary *chedis* (No. 20 in Fig. 4.20) situated around the complex of the *ubosot* and the four-direction *wihans*.

³⁰ See the study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I in Chapter 3.

³¹ 'These stanzas of victory, believed to have been composed in Ceylon, are rather popular and are always chanted in a morning service of benediction. They consist of eight stanzas of *Pāli* verse, each stanza referring to an incident of the Buddha's victories over evil, invoking in each stanza the Buddha's power to bestow a similar victory, with an additional stanza detailing the good result that would accrue to one repeating them from day to day' (Dhani 1976b, 12).

³² All the basins were lost.

The four *mahathat čhedis* (No. 6 in Fig. 4.20) were restored to three *soks* (1.5 metres) higher than the original. In the four niches of these *mahathat čhedi*, which are in the form of *prangs* (Fig. 4.25), were installed thin cast statues of deities. At the base of the multi-tiered top structure above the niches of the *mahathat čhedis* are the figures of *yakkha* making the gesture of supporting the superstructure.

Another two *čhedis* of the same size as the principal *čhedi* (height 42.32 m.) (No. 8 in Fig. 4.20) were built on either side of it (Thiphakorawong 1995, 64-65). These three *čhedis* are surrounded by the U-shaped gallery and two *salas*. There were many encyclopaedic inscriptions in these enclosures (Dhani 1976b, 19-20)

- On the friezes of the gallery were painted the army procession in grand reviews, as on the occasion of the *kathin*³³ presentation.
- On the colonnades of the gallery were inscriptions describing medical matters.
- In the two *salas* at the front of the three principal *čhedis* were depicted the Twenty-four *Jātaka* of the *Nidāna-kathā*³⁴ and some inscriptions of medical subjects.
- On the backs of these two *salas*, facing the *čhedis*, were inscriptions of contemporary moralist literature: *Kritsana Son Nong*,³⁵ *Atchata Phanon*,³⁶ *Phali Son Nong*,³⁷ *Suphasit Phra Ruang* (the Maxim of King Ruang) and the *Kamthai Phothibat* - the subject of astrology and omens.

³³ *Kathin* is the annual robe-presentation ceremony which is held in the month following the end of the Rains Retreat (Prayuddha 1986, 367).

³⁴ See the translation of the *Nidāna kathā* in Rhys Davids 1925, part II, 82-232.

³⁵ The poem composed by Prince Paramanucht Chinorot. Its subject is the conduct of a good wife. See FAD (1874, 565-83).

³⁶ *Atchata Phanon* concerns a royal personage, who had endeared himself to eight monkeys of the forest by feeding them daily, is given much advice of a moral nature in gratitude for his generosity by those animals, who turn out to be celestial beings in disguise (Dhani 1976b, 20). See FAD (1974, 593-605).

³⁷ The poem details the dying instructions of the Monkey-king to his brother Sugriva as to the proper behaviour of one serving a sovereign in anticipation of the latter's service under Rama (Dhani 1976b, 20). See FAD (1974, 584-87).



Fig. 4.25 *Prang (Mahathat ċhedī)*, Wat Phra Chetuphon

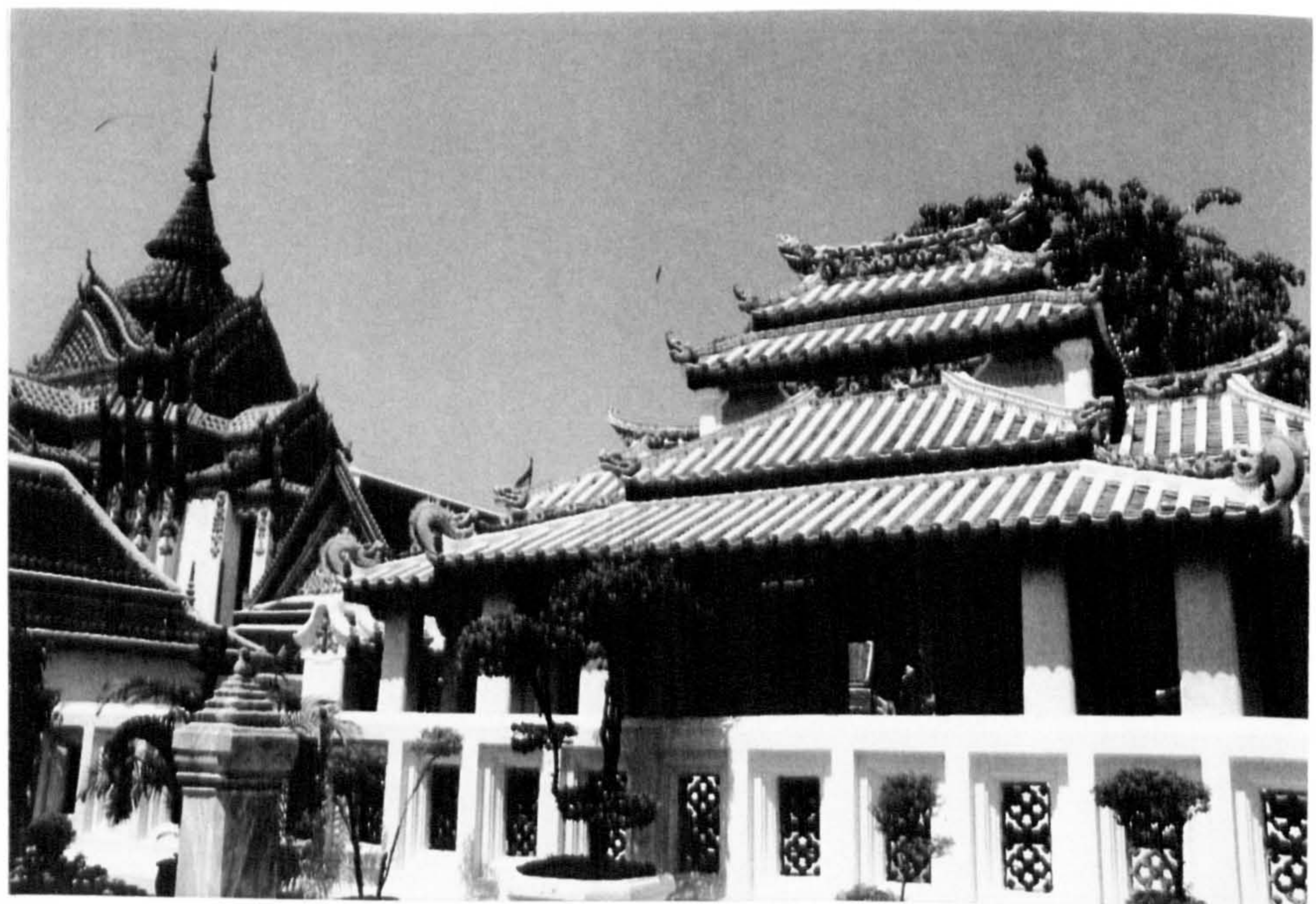


Fig. 4.26 Chinese pavilion and *Phra Mondop*, Wat Phra Chetuphon

The seventeen old *salas* were demolished and sixteen new *salas* were built (No. 13 in Fig 4.20) around the precinct of the *phutthawat* area. On the friezes of the *salas* were painted 550 *Jātakas*, according to their original themes. Below the friezes, scenes of the *Himavanta* Forest and animals were painted. There were eighty statues of hermits (*Rishis*) in these *salas*. These hermits were performing posture exercises to cure various ailments. There were also inscriptions, the content of which was in accordance with the posture of the hermits.

The old *Ho Trai* (library) was demolished and a new one built in the form of *Mondop* with crowned-top roof, which was then called '*Phra Mondop*' (No. 9 in Fig. 4.20, Fig. 4.26). In the chamber of the *Phra Mondop* the story of the 'Nine Buddhist Councils' was painted. Inside the four pavilions surrounding the *Phra Mondop* were painted the earlier episodes of the *Ramakian*, leading up to the coming of age of Rama. The friezes of the east pavilion were painted with themes from the 'Incarnations of Vishnu';³⁸ the south pavilion was painted with 'The Wiles of the Women'; the west pavilion depicted the '*Sipsong Liam*' (The Duodecagon - the translation of Persian literature) (Dhani 1976b, 23). The stories of the 'Mon Women's Divine Rice' and the '*Songkran*'³⁹ were depicted in the north pavilion. The outer walls of these pavilions were installed with inscriptions of the *Klong Lokanit* or the 'Verses of Worldly Wisdom'. There were two statues of demons from the *Ramakian* epic placed on either side of the gates which connected the angles of the four pavilions.

The old timber-constructed *kanprian* was in a dilapidated state so it was demolished and rebuilt (17.99x44.23 m.) (No. 12 In Fig. 4.20). The centre of its pediments was decorated with a statue of deity in a *Vimāna* (heavenly palace). The hall of the *kanprian* was painted with the world of *Petas*, or the hungry ghosts, and hells.⁴⁰

The pond was originally part of the precinct of the *Kanprian*, and was separated to be in an enclosing wall. Within the enclosure are miniature mountains, gardens, and a

³⁸ The east pavilion was pulled down to provide space for the extension to the enclosure of the principal *chedis*, due to the erection of the blue *chedi* by King Rama IV (Mongkut).

³⁹ *Songkran* is the Thai traditional New Year, which usually falls on April 13th.

⁴⁰ The inscriptions tell that in 1838 Prince Kraisaravijit, the superintendent of the whole work of restoration, was commanded by the king to have this building painted with pictures of hells and *Petas*. The content was taken from the *Deveduta Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (Dhani 1976b, 260-27).

European pavilion (No. 14 in Fig. 4.20). The pavilion depicts the 'Story of Thirteen European Stores'. Another garden named 'Missakavana' was arranged to the north of the *Phra Mondop*. (No. 17 in Fig. 4.20). Trees were planted and a Chinese pavilion built in the garden (Fig. 4.26). Scenes from 'Samkok' or 'The Romance of the Three Kingdoms' - a Chinese epic - were painted in the pavilion.

To the north of the *Missakavana* Garden, a new grand *wihan* (22.4x62.0 m.) was built to house a reclining Buddha image (No. 18 in Fig. 4.20). The scheme of the paintings of the *ubosot* was continued on the wall between the windows of the building, while in the *ubosot* were painted the lives of the Forty-one Eminent Disciples, beside the lives of the Thirteen Eminent Women Disciples of the Holy order, the Ten Eminent Members of the Laymen, and Ten Eminent Laywomen. Above the windows were pictures depicting Lanka Chronicle, according to the *Mahāvamsa*: these stories ranged from the earliest recorded times down to the famous single combat on elephants between king Dutthagāmanī-Abhaya and Elara, which resulted in the former's victory and consequent conquest of Anurādhapura (Dhani 1976b, 27-28).

The two old small *wihans* flanking the principal *chedi* were demolished and two new *wihans* were built parallel to the wall which separated the east and west areas (No. 15 in Fig. 4.20). Buddha images were installed in these *wihans*. Another belfry was built close to the small north *wihan* to balance the south one, which was also restored.

Rocks from the Royal Garden in the Grand Palace were moved to the *wat* to make miniature mountains and gardens (No. 19 in Fig. 4.20). There were twenty of them in the east and sixteen in the west part of the *phutthawat*. Some Chinese idols and animals were placed around these rock mountains. There is a *Siva-linga* on the top of the one that is located at the front of the west *wihan*. Sixteen new gates were re-arranged along the walls and the old rotten statues of *Asura* and animals were cleared out, and thirty-two Chinese stone statues were substituted, a pair at each gate.

Buildings	Traiphum elements	Buddha's Life and <i>Jātakas</i>	Slam and foreign countries	Ramakian and Brahmanistic God	Literature and others
Ubosot	<p>Interior frieze -Heavenly realm -<i>Cātumahārājika</i></p> <p>The friezes of front and rear porches -Devas -Asuras -Garuda -Sun -Moon -Gandhabba -Kinara, kinarī -Naksidhi -Vijādhara</p> <p>The pedestal of the principal image -Devas -Garudas -Asuras</p>	<p>-Mahosatha <i>Jātaka</i> -41 Eminent Disciples -10 statues of Great Disciples</p>	<p>Inside face windows -Siamese <i>sangha</i> honorific fans -Seals and names of the dignitaries of the Siamese Buddhist church (<i>Sangha</i> organisation)</p>	<p>Door panels and balustrade -Ramakian</p>	
East wihan - fore chamber		<p>-Enlightenment -Victory over <i>Māras</i></p>		<p>Pediments -<i>Nārāya</i> riding on <i>Hanuman</i> Monkey</p>	-2 lotus basins at the front
- rear chamber		<p>-Standing Buddha image -10 states of decay -10 Knowledge</p>			
West wihan - fore chamber		<p>-<i>Mucalinda</i> -Hair relic</p>		<p>Pediments -<i>Nārāya</i> riding on <i>Hanuman</i> Monkey</p>	2 lotus basins at the front
- rear chamber		<p>- 5 Buddha's Footprints</p>			
North wihan - fore chamber		<p>-<i>Parileyyaka</i></p>		<p>Pediments -<i>Nārāya</i> riding on <i>Garuda</i></p>	-2 lotus basins at the front
- rear chamber					- <i>Dhutanga</i> 13 (13 Austere practices)
South wihan - fore chamber		<p>-First Sermon -<i>Tāvātimsa</i> Sermon</p>		<p>Pediments -<i>Nārāya</i> riding on <i>Garuda</i></p>	-2 lotus basins at the front
- rear chamber		<p>-<i>Bhahum</i> (The stanzas of the Victories of the Buddha)</p>			

Table 4.4 Symbolic elements of Wat Phra Chetuphon of King Rama III

Buildings	<i>Traiphum</i> elements	Buddha's Life and <i>Jātakas</i>	Siam and foreign countries	<i>Ramakian</i> and Brahmanistic God	Literature and others
4 Mahathat <i>chedis</i> (<i>prangs</i>)	-4 statues of <i>Devas</i> on each <i>prang</i>				-4 Holy relic <i>chedis</i>
5 <i>chedis</i> on one base					-20 Holy relic <i>chedis</i>
3 Principal <i>chedis</i> gallery and 2 <i>salas</i>		-24 <i>Jātakas</i>	- <i>Katin</i> presentation -Four divisions of Siamese army		-Medical inscriptions - <i>Kritsana Son Nong</i> - <i>Atchata Phanon</i> - <i>Phali Son Nong</i> - <i>Suphasit Phra Raung</i> - <i>Kamthai Phothibat</i>
71 <i>chedis</i>					-71 <i>chedis</i>
Main gallery		-Buddha images	-374 provinces of Siam		- <i>Phleng Yao Konlabot</i> (verse) - <i>Nonthuk the bull</i> (fable)
Outer gallery	Door panels - <i>Kumbhanda</i> - <i>Yakkha</i>	-Buddha images			- <i>Pisat Pakaranam</i> (fable)
<i>Ho Trai</i> (<i>Phra Mondop</i>)		-9 Buddhist Councils (Buddhist history)			
4 directions <i>salas</i>				- <i>Ramakian</i> -10 incarnations of <i>Vishnu</i>	-The Wiles of Women - <i>Sipsong Liam</i> -Mon Woman's Divine Rice -Verse of Worldly Wisdom
<i>Kanprian</i>	- <i>Peta</i> Realm -Realm of hells				
2 small <i>wihans</i>		-Buddha images			

Table 4.4 Symbolic elements of Wat Phra Chetuphon of King Rama III (continue)

Buildings	<i>Traiphum</i> elements	Buddha's Life and <i>Jātakas</i>	Siam and foreign countries	<i>Ramakian</i> and Brahmanistic God	Literature and others
16 <i>salas</i>		-550 <i>Jātakas</i> - <i>Himavanta</i> Forest -Hermits	-32 Foreign countries		-Medical inscriptions
<i>Missakavana</i> garden	- <i>Missakavana</i> (garden west of <i>Tāvatisa</i>)		-Chinese pavilion -The Romance of the Three Kingdoms		
Pond			-European pavilion -13 European Stores		
26 Miniature mountains		- <i>Siva-linga</i> (front of the west <i>wihan</i>)			-Trees, animals, -Chinese statues
<i>Wihankhot</i> (L-shaped <i>wihan</i>)		-Buddha images		Pediments - <i>Ramakian</i>	
<i>Wihan</i> of the reclining Buddha		-Reclining Buddha image -The Buddha's Footprint Between the window -13 Eminent Female Disciples -10 Eminent Laymen -10 Eminent Lay Women	Above window - <i>Mahāvamsa</i> (Lanka Chronicle)		
16 Gates					-32 Chinese statues
2 Bell towers					-2 Bells
<i>Sangkawat</i>	South of the <i>Phutthawat</i>				

Table 4.4 Symbolic elements of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama III (continue)

The Symbolic Planning of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* by King Rama III

Although some buildings established by King Rama I were dismantled and replaced during the restoration of King Rama III, most of the original subjects were preserved in the new arrangement. The details of the new subjects evidently indicate the complexity of the concept of space and the complicated symbol system. A vast number of the symbolic elements found in the *phutthawat* area have never been found in any other *wats* in Thai history. Certain concepts over the same structure of the *phutthawat* area which are formed by the groups of symbols categorised in table 4.4 are as follows:

1. The concept of *Majjhimadesa* in *Jambudīpa*, which is symbolised by the group of symbols, was for the most part originally designed by Rama I and was revised in the restoration of Rama III. The main concept is the Diamond Throne where the Buddha attained the Enlightenment. The *Majjhimadesa* is represented by the *ubosot*, four-direction *wihans* and the gallery.
2. The concept of Mount *Meru* represents the *Tāvātimsa* Heaven and other heavenly realms radiating from the *ubosot* - the focus point.
3. The Kingdom of Siam is symbolised by the elements relating to the Siamese *sangha* organisation and provinces. The concept was emphasised by the subjects concerning foreign countries.
4. The organisation of the structures in the west part of the *phutthawat* represents another *Traiphum* cosmological diagram and the City of *Nibbāna*. The lowest level, commencing from the *kanprian*, then steps upward to the higher levels along the north-south axis. The highest realm is the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image, which represents the City of *Nibbāna*.

The Diamond Throne, the Centre of *Jambudīpa*

According to the list of the symbols in table 4.4, the subjects which were the main components of the symbols of *Majjhimadesa* in the design of King Rama I were preserved (Table 3.1 and Table 4.4). The symbolic planning of *Majjhimadesa* was not discarded from the plan, because the elements of the Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*) and the Eight Great Places (*Atthamahāthāna*) in the four-direction *wihans*, and other themes of the *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings were preserved as Rama I had designed (See Chapter 3). In the *ubosot* - the central building - the Ten Great *Jātakas* were modified, and only the *Mahosatha Jātaka* was selected to be illustrated in the hall in order to leave space for the painting of other subjects which were allocated to the building. The *Māravijaya* painting was in the fore chamber of the east *wihan* and the *Cakkavāla* painting was in the north *wihan*. Accordingly the concept of the *Majjhimadesa* the centre of *Jambudīpa* was preserved.⁴¹ The original concept was not affected by the extension of the rear chambers of the west, north and south *wihans*. The *Bhahum* or the stanza of the victory of the Buddha in the south *wihan* and the story of the Buddha's Footprints in the west *wihan* are themes related

⁴¹ See the study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I in Chapter 3.

to the Buddha's Life which is the central theme of the symbol of *Jambudīpa*.

The modification of the paintings of the Ten *Jātakas* in the *ubosot* was atoned for by emphasising its surroundings. The themes of *Himavanta* Forest were made clearer by painting the scenes of the Forest in the sixteen *salas*, while 550 *Jātakas* were also represented, maintaining the original design of King Rama I. The 550 *Jātakas* contained in the sixteen *salas* may also be identified with *Himavanta*, part of *Jambudīpa*. The *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer version) represents the past lives of the Buddha in association with the scenes of the *Himavanta* Forest (see FAD 1987, 42-53, 55-58). The *Jātakas* and *Himavanta* are therefore closely connected to represent the Forest and the regions outside the central core of *Jambudīpa*. The miniature mountains and gardens are a more realistic representation of the *Himavanta*.⁴² Moreover, the statues of hermits in the sixteen *salas* also relate to *Himavanta*. *Traiphumllokawinitchai* states that north of *Himavanta* near *Sitha-nathi* River is the abode of more than 10,000 *rishis* (hermits) (Thampricha 1992, 207-211). All the elements that have been mentioned are noticeable as symbols which relate to *Jambudīpa* (Fig. 4.27).

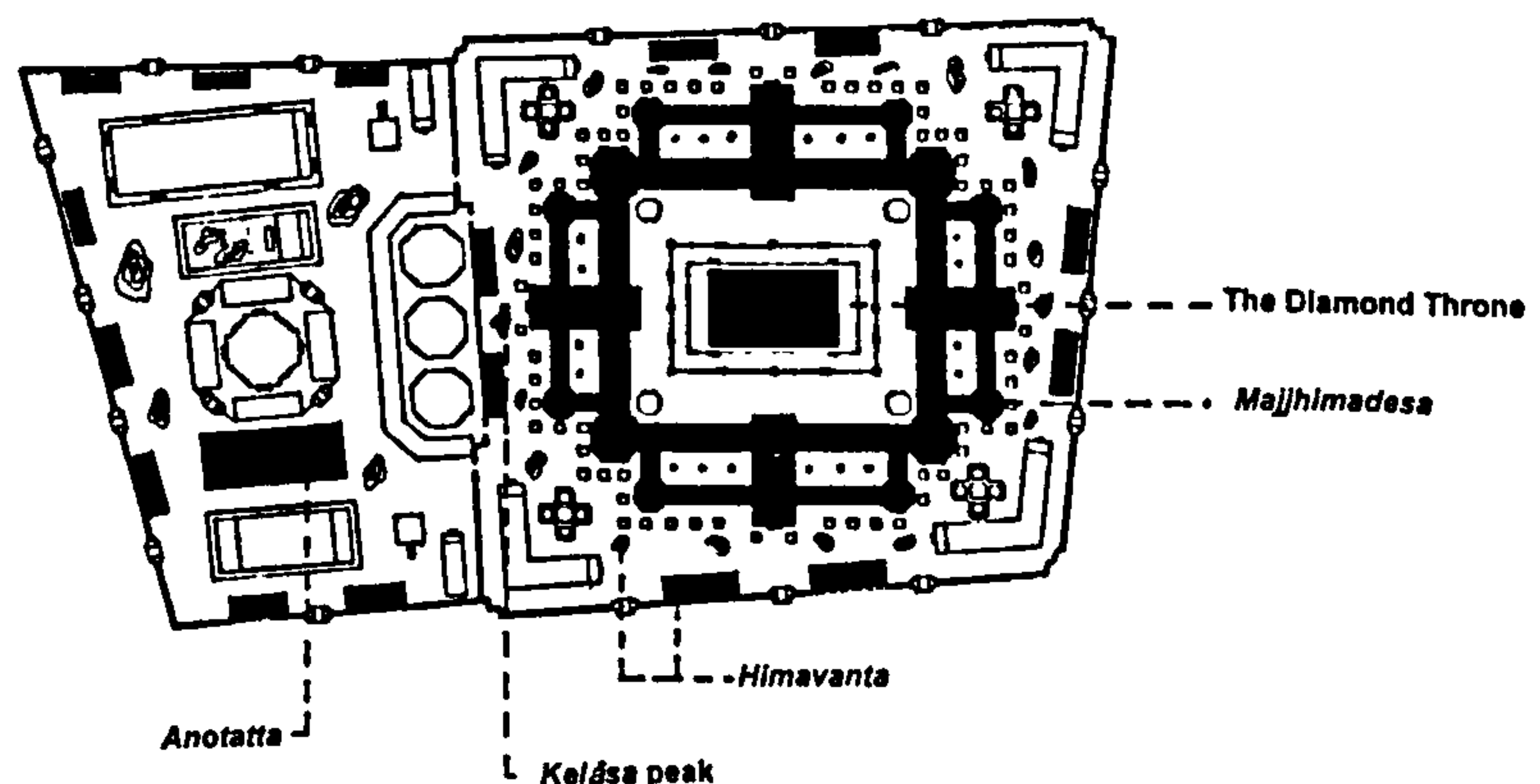


Fig. 4.27 Concept of *Jambudīpa* in symbolic planning of Wat Phra Chetuphon

⁴² See the discussion of the miniature mountains connected with the subsidiary *chedis* in the following sub-section.

The elements of the new restoration in the west part of the *phutthawat* seem to be the key symbols confirming the main concept of space that is centred on the *ubosot* complex. The pictures of the *Peta* realm and the Realm of Hells depicted in the *kanprian* imply that the building is the symbol of the *Peta* realm and hell. *Traiphumlोकawinitchai* mentions that the *Peta* realm, which is named '*Wichataprathet (Vijātadesa)*', is in *Himavanta*, and underneath it is the Realm of Hells. There are twelve categories of *Peta* in the '*Vijātadesa*' (Thampricha 1992, 584). Because the realm of hell is located underneath the *Peta* realm, the scenes of the *Peta* and hells were put together in the *kanprian*. The pond and the garden near to the north of the *kanprian* undoubtedly represent the *Himavanta* Forest. The pond, in addition, is a symbol of the *Anotatta* Lake in that forest. The combination of the garden, pond and the *Kanprian* symbolizes *Himavanta*, which consists of the *Anotatta* Lake and the *Peta* realm and hells.

The concept of space of the *phutthawat* has been investigated and could be compared in its layout plan to the illustration of *Jambudīpa* in the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer version), as in the case of King Rama I's design (see Chapter 3). However, there are more details in the design of Rama III. In the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer version) there is an island separate from *Himavanta* (Fig. 4.29a). This probably represents Lanka Island. The tree, which is close to twelve squares which represent twelve kinds of *Peta* in the painting, might be the Jambulan (*Ton Hwa*), the tree of *Jambudīpa*. It is 100 *yojana* in height and the circumference of its trunk is fifteen *yojana*. It grows at the north of *Himavanta* (Thampricha 1992, 106). Painted in the manuscript at another side of the *Peta* realm is the *Anotatta* Lake. The Lanka Island, in addition, is portrayed in detail as part of *Jambudīpa* and this illustrates its distinctiveness with the Buddha's Footprint on the *Sumanakūta* Peak (Fig. 4.28). The subjects relating to the Lanka Island were found in the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image. The scenes from the *Mahāvamsa* - the Great Chronicle of Lanka - are painted in the *wihan* and the elaboration of the soles of the feet of the reclining image with auspicious symbols similar to the Buddha's Footprint, symbolize the building as being Lanka Island. The tree in *Missakavana* Garden might be assumed to represent this Jambulan after the illustration. These supplemented structures, the *wihan* and the *Missakavana* Garden, are created to complete the components of *Himavanta* represented in the manuscript painting (Khmer version). They are located at a position

that is very similar to the disposition of the Island and the Tree in the illustration (Fig. 4.29).



Fig. 4.28 Lanka Island and the Buddha's Footprint, *Traiphum* manuscript painting, Khmer version (source: FAD 1987)

The structures in the west area were thus designed according to the *Himavanta* and Lanka Island as represented in the manuscript. Above the *Himavanta* in the manuscript is *Jambudīpa*, portrayed in a rectangular frame. Therefore, the *ubosot* complex and its surroundings in the east area is an interpretation of *Jambudīpa*, and the structures in the west area represent the *Himavanta* and Lanka Island. The *kanprian* is a symbol of the *Peta* realm and hells. The whole compound was planned in accordance with the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer version) (Fig. 4.29).

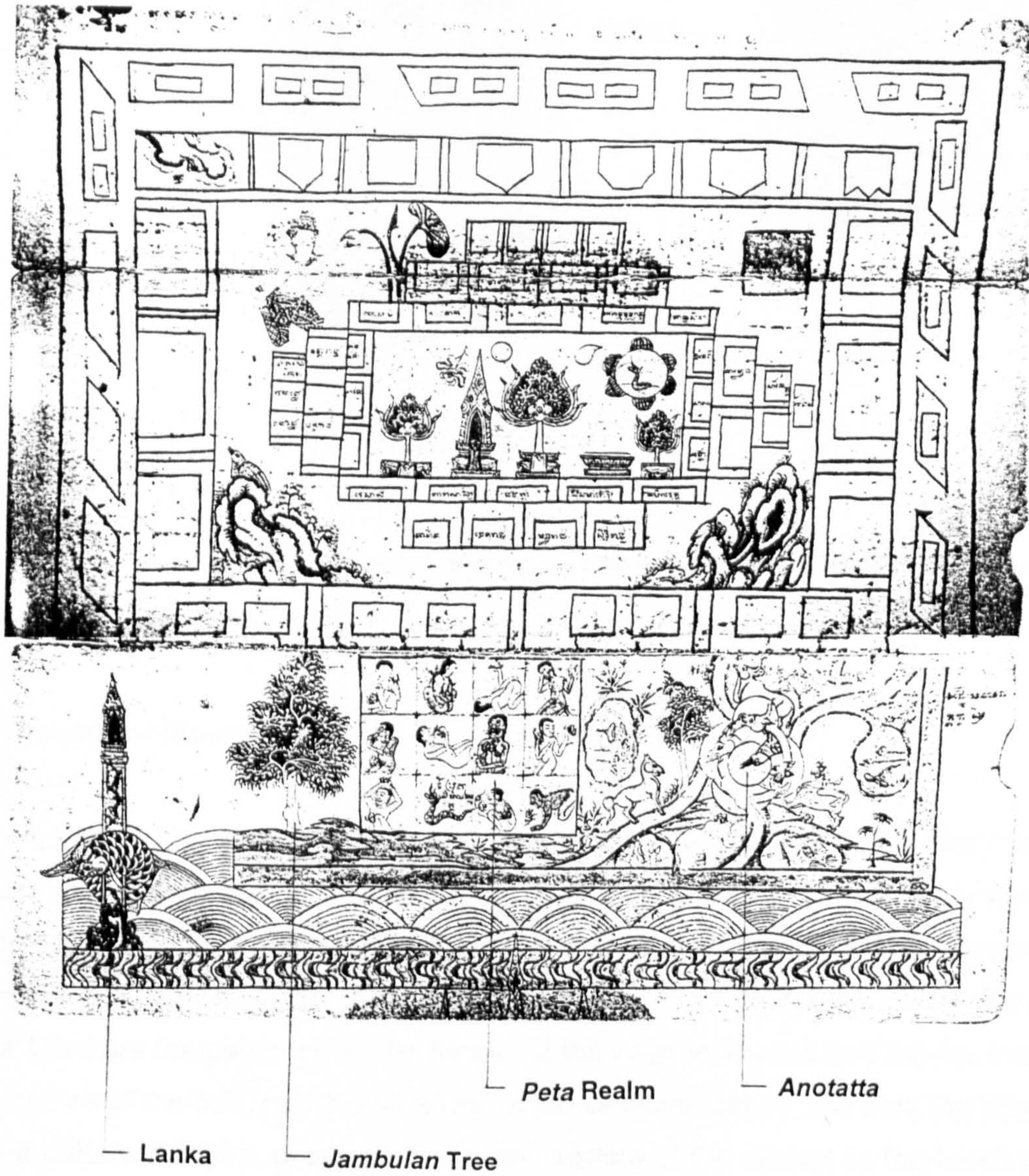


Fig. 4.29a The detail of the diagram of *Jambudīpa* in Fig. 4.29 (source: FAD 1987)

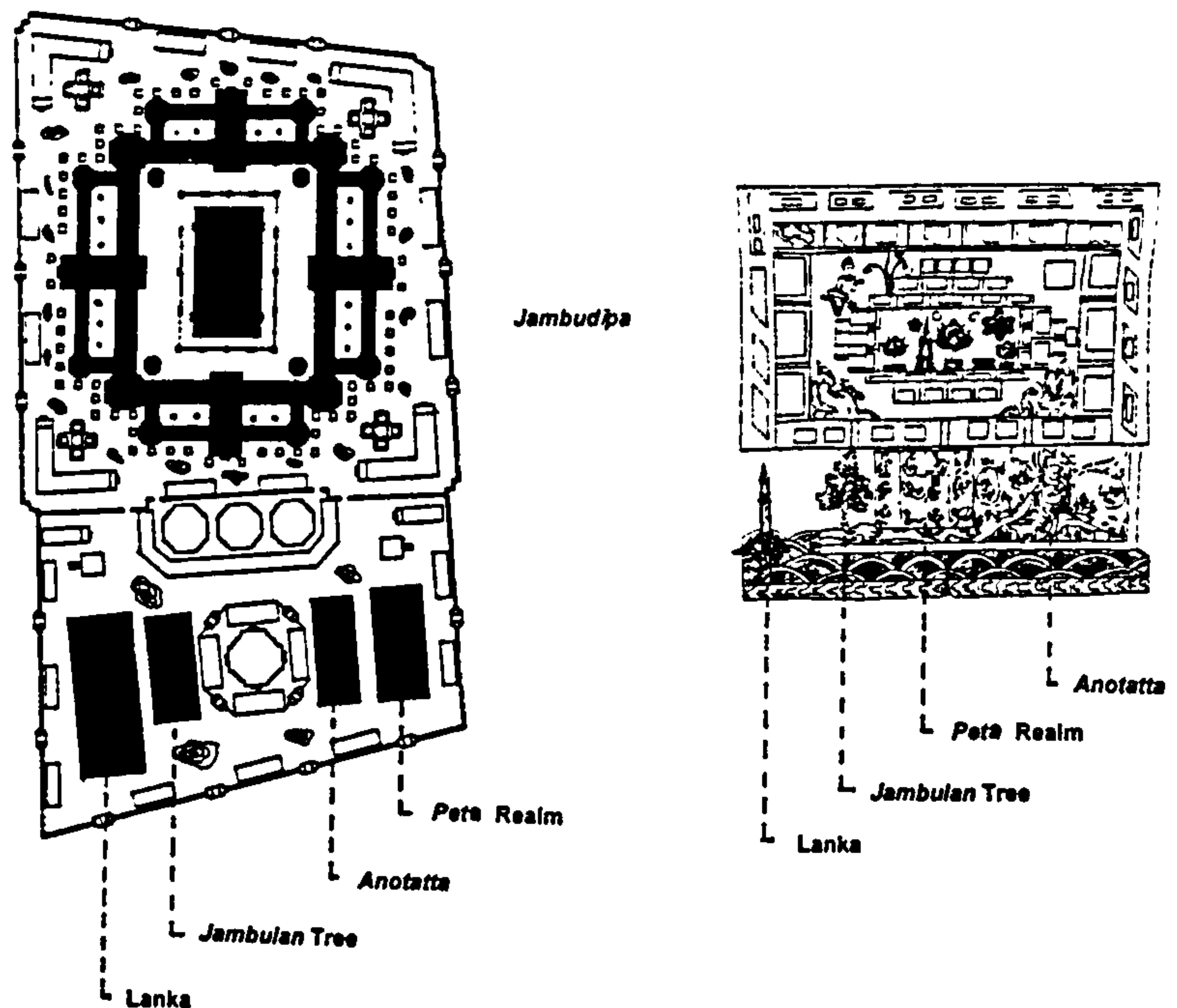


Fig. 4.29 Diagram of *Jambudīpa* and symbolic planning of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*

The Concept of Mount *Meru*

The remarkable change in the planning concept of the *phutthawat* of the *Wat Phra Chetuphon* in the restoration of King Rama III was the creation of new sets of symbols to represent Mount *Meru* and the Siamese Kingdom and its provinces. These central concepts are all allocated over the *ubosot*. The elements which denote the *ubosot* as Mount *Meru* are the paintings on the friezes of the nave in the hall and the front and rear porches of the building. The paintings of the celestial realms, the Sun, the Moon and the *Cātumahārājika*, designate the upper sphere of the *ubosot* as the heavenly realms. The Sun and the Moon orbit around Mount *Meru*, providing days and nights. The concept of Mount *Meru* is accentuated by the alteration to the pedestal of the principal Buddha image. The statues of *Devas*, *Garudas* and *Asuras* are placed on its three-stepped pedestal. According to this arrangement, the pedestal of the presiding Buddha image is a vertical symbol setting, representing the position of the principal Buddha image as at the top of Mount *Meru*. The same arrangement has been applied to the pedestal of the *Tripitaka* cabinets in the design of King Rama I, both in the Royal Chapel and *Wat Phra Chetuphon*.

The concept of Mount *Meru* is amplified by the four *Mahathat čhedis*, which are built in the form of *prangs*. The four statues in the niches of each of the *Mahathat čhedis* and the multi-story patterns of the superstructure of the *prang* represent the heavenly realm at the four directions. The statues of *Devas* in the four niches of each *prang* holding swords in their right hands are apparently the symbols of *Cāumahārājika* - the Four Great Guardian Kings who rule over the four directions.⁴³ They are also the guardian militaries of the God Indra (Fig. 4.30).

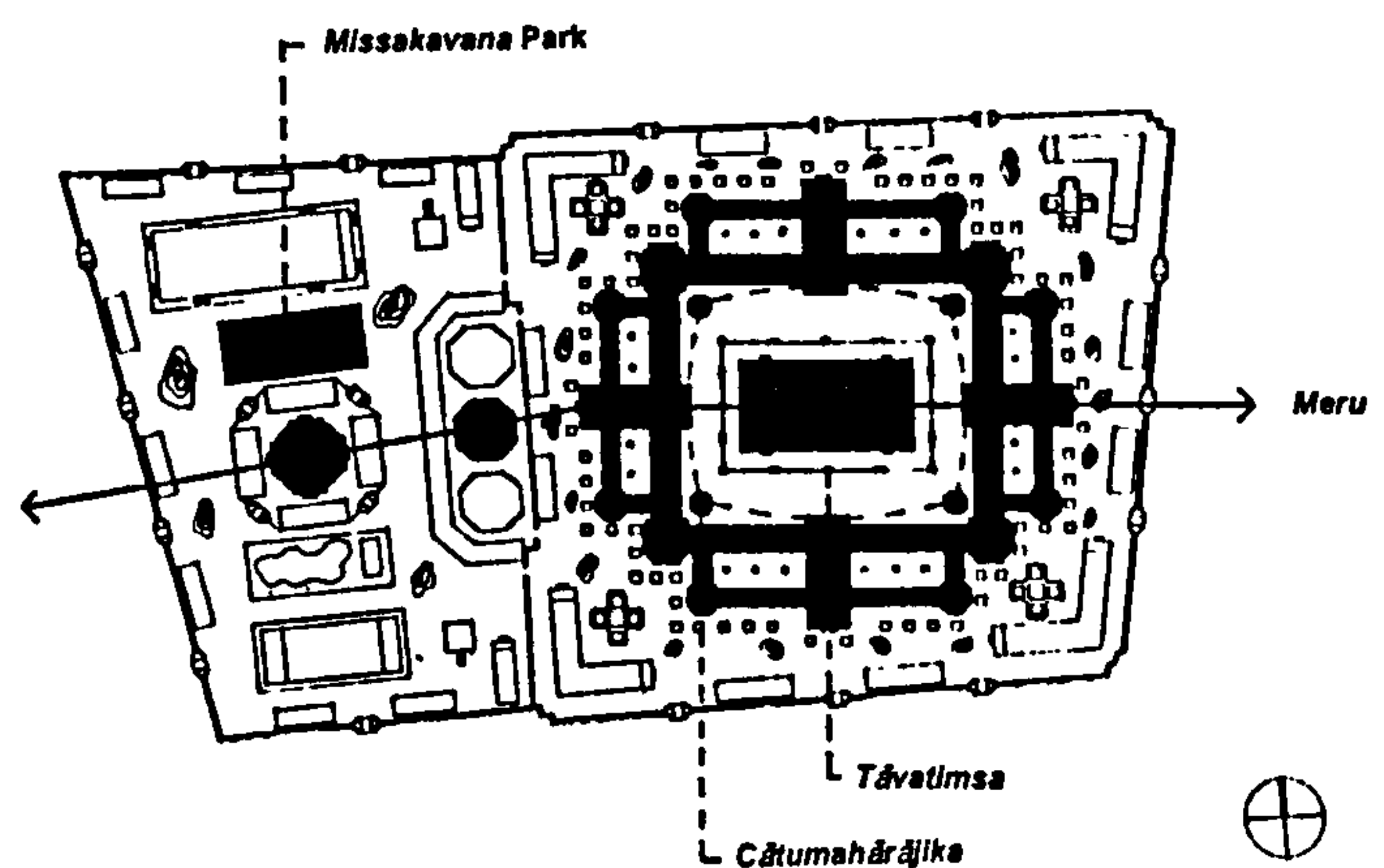


Fig. 4.30 Concept of Mount *Meru* in symbolic planning of Wat Phra Chetuphon

Extending further from the four *prangs*, the other heavenly realms are represented by Chinese *čhedis* or *tha* in the eight courtyards between the main and the outer galleries. Samerchai identifies them with the *Ākāsathavimāna* or heavenly palaces that float in space (Samerchai 1996, 158). The *Traiphumlukawinitchai* notes that the heavenly palaces floating in space are either the immovable *vimānas* or those that move following the zodiac around Mount *Meru*. All these floating heavenly palaces are named '*Ākāsathavimāna*'. The text also determines the position of these *Ākāsathavimānas*, as those floating at the same level as the peak of the *Yugandhara*

⁴³ There is a deity in each of the four niches of the four *prangs* of Wat Thepthidaram, which was built in the same reign (established between 1836-1839). In the niche of the north direction of each *prang* is installed a statue of a *Yakkha*. It might represent *Vessavana* - the north guardian king, who is the ruler of all *Yakkhas* (Thampricha 1992, 917-918). Thus the four *prangs* at the four angles of the wall surrounding the *ubosot* of the Wat Thepthidaram represent the *Cātumahārājika*. The four *prangs* of Wat Phra Chetuphon apparently symbolise the same concept, even though the deities in the four niches are the same. See the discussion of the meaning of the four *prangs* in Chapter 5.

Mountain are classified as the same rank as *Cātumahārājika*, and those floating at the same level as *Tāvātimsa* Heaven are ranked to be the deities of the Heaven (Thampricha 1992, 864). The multi-stories of the *chedis* and the Chinese statues, caryatids in the gesture of supporting the *chedis*, signify that they might be heavenly elements and floating in space rather than settling on earth. It is important to note here that any structure that has statues of *Yakkhas* caryatids at its base might signify that it is floating in space or representing the celestial realm.

There are certain structures surrounding *Tāvātimsa* Heaven described in *Traiphumlukawinitchai*. A golden wall is at the innermost of all these structures, the second level is the ramparts, then the moats, the palmyra palms and outermost are the *Bokharani* Lakes (Thampricha 1992, 952-53). The interpretation of these components in the *phutthawat* around the *uposot* are accurately repeated following the text. The wall demarcates the *sima* boundary, which is composed of gates, and *sima* houses topped with golden *chedis* undoubtedly represent the golden wall. The door casing of the gates are also gilded to represent this golden wall, while the courtyards and the galleries might signify the moats and ramparts. The palmyra palms mentioned in the text were represented by real plants in the stone basins of the eight courtyards between the main and outer galleries. The lotus basins at the front of the four-direction *wihans* should represent the *Bokharani* Lakes (Fig. 4.31).

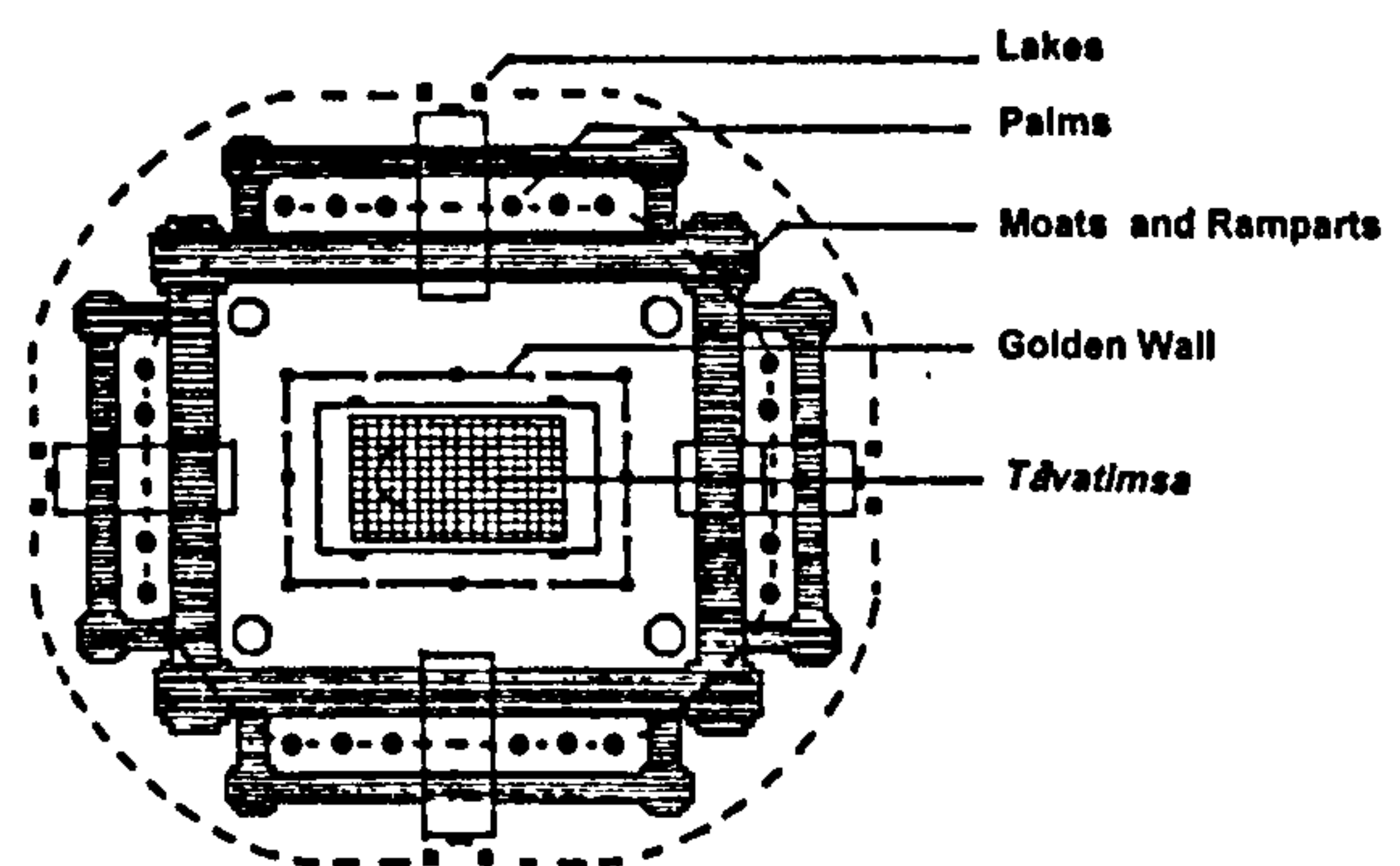


Fig. 4.31 *Tāvātimsa* and its encircle elements in symbolic planning of *ubosot* complex, Wat Phra Chetuphon

The symbolic planning of *Tāvātimsa* of the *ubosot* complex is asserted by the *Missakavana* garden in the west part of the compound. There are four main heavenly gardens at the four directions of *Tāvātimsa*. The west garden is named '*Missakavana*' (Thampricha 1992, 958-59).⁴⁴ The garden is undoubtedly the key element denoting the *ubosot* in the east part of the compound as the *Tāvātimsa* Heaven on the peak of Mount *Meru*. The symbol of *Meru* was repeated on the east-west axis at the position of the *Phra Mondop*. The *prasat*-like *Tripitaka* cabinet in the room of the *Phra Mondop*, which was built by Rama I, now is also accentuated by the form of the *Phra Mondop*, with its *prasat* roof.

The Concept of the Siamese Kingdom as the Centre of the Universe.

The integration of the concept of the Siamese Kingdom into a Buddhist *wat*, and the fact that it shares the same centre with the concepts of Mount *Meru* and the Diamond throne, is a curious phenomenon. It is explicit that the arrangement of this group of symbols is intended to put the centre of the Kingdom of Siam at the centre of the universe.

The Siamese *sangha* organization represented on the window panels, in both its honorific fans and the seals of the dignitaries of the Buddhist church, are presumably selected to represent the centrality of Siam. These elements are compatible with the stories of the Forty-one Eminent Disciples and the statues of the Ten Great Disciples placed on the terraces of the pedestal of the presiding Buddha image. They are all Buddhist lineages which have the Buddha at the centre of the Buddhist world and of the universe. The structure of the Siamese *sangha* organization was chosen as the symbol of Siam's authority since it relates to religious subjects and suits the *ubosot*, the assembly hall of Buddhist *sangha*. However, it also implies that the Siamese state has its king at the centre as a great patron of Buddhism. Traditionally, the dignitaries of the Thai Buddhist church were appointed by the King.

If the *ubosot*, which contains the subjects of the Siamese *sangha* organization, is assumed to be the centre of Siam, the subjects that directly relate to the Siamese

⁴⁴ The four heavenly gardens of *Tāvātimsa* are: *Nandana* as the north garden, *Cittalatāvana* as the east garden, *Phārusaka* as the south garden, and *Missakavana* as the west garden (Thampricha 1992, 953-61).

Kingdom were the paintings of the 374 provinces of Siam in the main gallery. The paintings circumferentially extend from the centre, and conceptually denote the satellite states surrounding the central power of Siamese sovereignty. Further encompassing these 374 provinces were the statues of thirty-two foreigners installed in the *salas*, obviously denoting foreign countries surrounding the Siamese Kingdom. There are some countries which had close relationships in some ways with Siam, which were specially included in the structures of the west part of the compound. These countries were represented through the literature that connotes their origins. They were interpreted mostly in the form of mural paintings and inscriptions (Fig. 4.32).

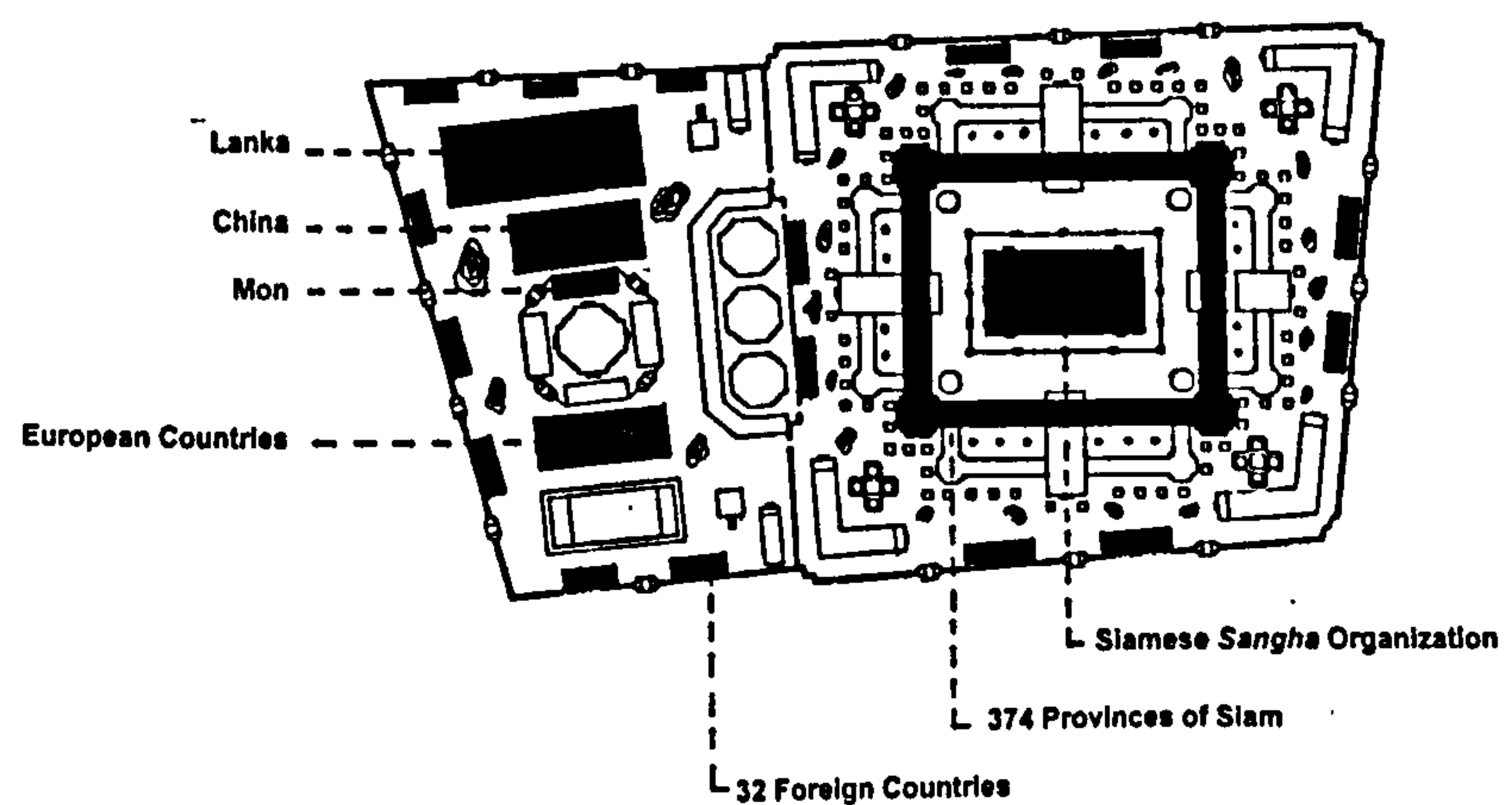


Fig. 4.32 Diagram of Siamese Kingdom and foreign countries, symbolic planning of Wat Phra Chetuphon

The *wihan* of the reclining Buddha, which has been investigated with regard to its meaning, refers to Lanka Island. The Chinese pavilion in the *Missakavana* garden, within which is painted the scenes of the historical epic of 'the Romance of the Three Kingdoms', obviously signified China. The epic had been translated into Thai during the reign of King Rama I and was widely known to Siamese elites. Above all, the names of some Chinese cities are inscribed in the *Traiphum* manuscript painting of the Khmer version, together with the Siamese provinces and some of the cities of *Jambudīpa* (See FAD 1987, 41).

It is significant that in the west part of the *phutthawat* aligned on the north-south axis, which denotes foreign countries, Europe was allocated south of those countries aforementioned. The European pavilion is in the precinct of the pond and garden, and its mural paintings of the 'Thirteen European Stores' undoubtedly signifies European countries.⁴⁵ The position of the pavilion which is closest to the *kanprian* - the lowest position and the symbols of the *Peta* realm and hell - indicates the negative relationship between the Europeans and the Siamese at that time. As for Lanka, which had been a *Theravāda* Buddhist centre and the source of Buddhist scriptures, it is allocated the highest position in the same building, which symbolizes the City of *Nibbāna*.⁴⁶

The scene of the Siamese army procession in grand review, as on the occasion of the *kathin* presentation illustrated in the gallery enclosing the three principal *chedis*, was another subject that relates to the Siamese Kingdom.⁴⁷ It implies the military power of the Kingdom of Siam. On the same east-west axis in the four pavilions surrounding the *Phra Mondop*, the scenes of the *Ramakian* were painted. On this east-west axis, if the honorific fans and the *sangha* dignitary seals in the *ubosot* represented the Siamese *sangha* organisation, the army procession in the gallery of the three principal *chedis* signified the military power of Siam and the *Ramakian* around the *Phra Mondop* probably denoted the Siamese monarchy - the Čhakkri Dynasty.⁴⁸

Seventy-One Subsidiary Čhedis: An Interpretation

As for the seventy-one subsidiary *chedis* surrounding the complex of the *ubosot* and the four direction *wihans*, their exact meaning is not clear. Prince Damrong mentions that subsidiary *chedis* in royal *wats* suggests that they are constructed to enshrine the ashes of cremated dead of royalty (Damrong 1928, 26-27). However, since the

⁴⁵ The architectural style of the pavilion is actually Chinese. The name 'European Pavilion' and the painting inside it are means referring to the Europeans.

⁴⁶ See the analysis the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image connected to the concept of the City of *Nibbāna* in a further section.

⁴⁷ The scenes of the waterway procession was depicted in the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel or *Wat Prakeaw*. They were also depicted in the reign of Rama III.

⁴⁸ The scenes of *Ramakian* are also depicted in the gallery of the Royal Chapel or *Wat Prakeaw*. Rama III, in his restoration of both *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel connected the scenes of *Ramakian*. The epilogue of an inscription labelled the *Ramakian* painting in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* states that the consequence of the *Ramakian* can be seen in the gallery of the Royal Chapel or *Wat Prakeaw* (Niyada 1992, 253).

beginning of the Bangkok period the ashes of royalty were always installed in cinerary urns and kept in residences or in a *wihan* (FAD 1971, 12-13). For instance, *Ho Phra Nak* in the Royal Chapel was the place where the Grand Palace royalties kept their cinerary urns; while the royalties of the Front Palace (*Wang Na*) kept theirs in the rear chamber of the *ubosot* of *Wat Chanasongkhram*. It has never been found in any record that the subsidiary *chedis* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* enshrined the ashes of royalty.

There are quite varied hypotheses to explain the meaning of these subsidiary *chedis*. The *ubosot* complex conveys three main concepts: Mount *Meru*, *Jambudīpa* and the centre of the Kingdom of Siam, so these *chedis* might also signify more than one concept. Samerchai (1996, 159) proposes an interpretation that they are the symbols of the Seven Mountain Ranges (*Sattabhanda*) that encircle Mount *Meru*. This hypothesis, however, can only be applied to explain the centre that represents the *Meru* mountain. It is also found that subsidiary *chedis* may surround a building which is not a symbol of Mount *Meru*: for instance the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha of *Wat Ratcha-orot*, which is a symbol of the City of *Nibbāna*.

If the *ubosot* complex represents *Majjhimadesa* of *Jambudīpa*, the subsidiary *chedis* should also be elements of *Jambudīpa*. The miniature gardens and mountains which spread over the compound probably relate to *Himavanta* Forest. They might represent the peaks in that forest, which has 84,000 peaks. The *Siva-Linga* on the miniature mountain in front of the west *wihan* is evidence to assert that these mountains represent the peaks in *Himavanta*. The *Siva-Linga* clearly refers to the God *Siva* who resides on *Kelāsa* (*Kailat*), one of the 84,000 *Himavanta* Peaks (Thampricha 1992, 107). The subsidiary *chedis* which are lined together with the miniature mountains, therefore, might be associated with the same meaning, the peaks in *Himavanta*. In addition they may also symbolize *Pacceka Buddhas*, who dwelt in *Himavanta*. A *Pacceka Buddha* is one of the four persons deemed worthy of a *stūpa* (*chedi*). According to the *Mahāparinibbāna sutta*, the Buddha states that:

there are these four who are worthy of a monument (*thūpa*). What four? A perfect One, accomplished and fully enlightened; a *Paccekkabuddha*; a Perfect One's disciple who is an *Arahanta*; and a Universal Monarch who turns the wheel of Righteousness (Dīgha Nikāya 16 in Nānamoli 1992, 317).

It is also plausible to speculate on the meaning of these *chedis* on the basis that the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer version) is the primary text that relates to the symbolic planning of the compound. If the *ubosot*, four-direction *wihans* and gallery are interpretations of the central region or *Majjhimadesa* shown at the centre of the illustration of *Jambudīpa*, and the *salas* can be attributed to the *Himavanta* as has been analysed, then the subsidiary *chedis* which are in between them should be part of the provinces or cities encircling the central region. They can also be identified with the provinces of Siam if the *ubosot* complex represents the centre of the Kingdom of Siam. The provinces of Siam and some cities of *Jambudīpa* are also illustrated in the *Traiphum* manuscript (Fig. 4.33). However, the meanings attributed to these subsidiary *chedis* are denoted by the contextual structures of the whole plan. Their meanings are relatively connected to the concepts of the central structures they encircle. The concluding analysis of the subsidiary *chedis* will be discussed in Chapter 5.

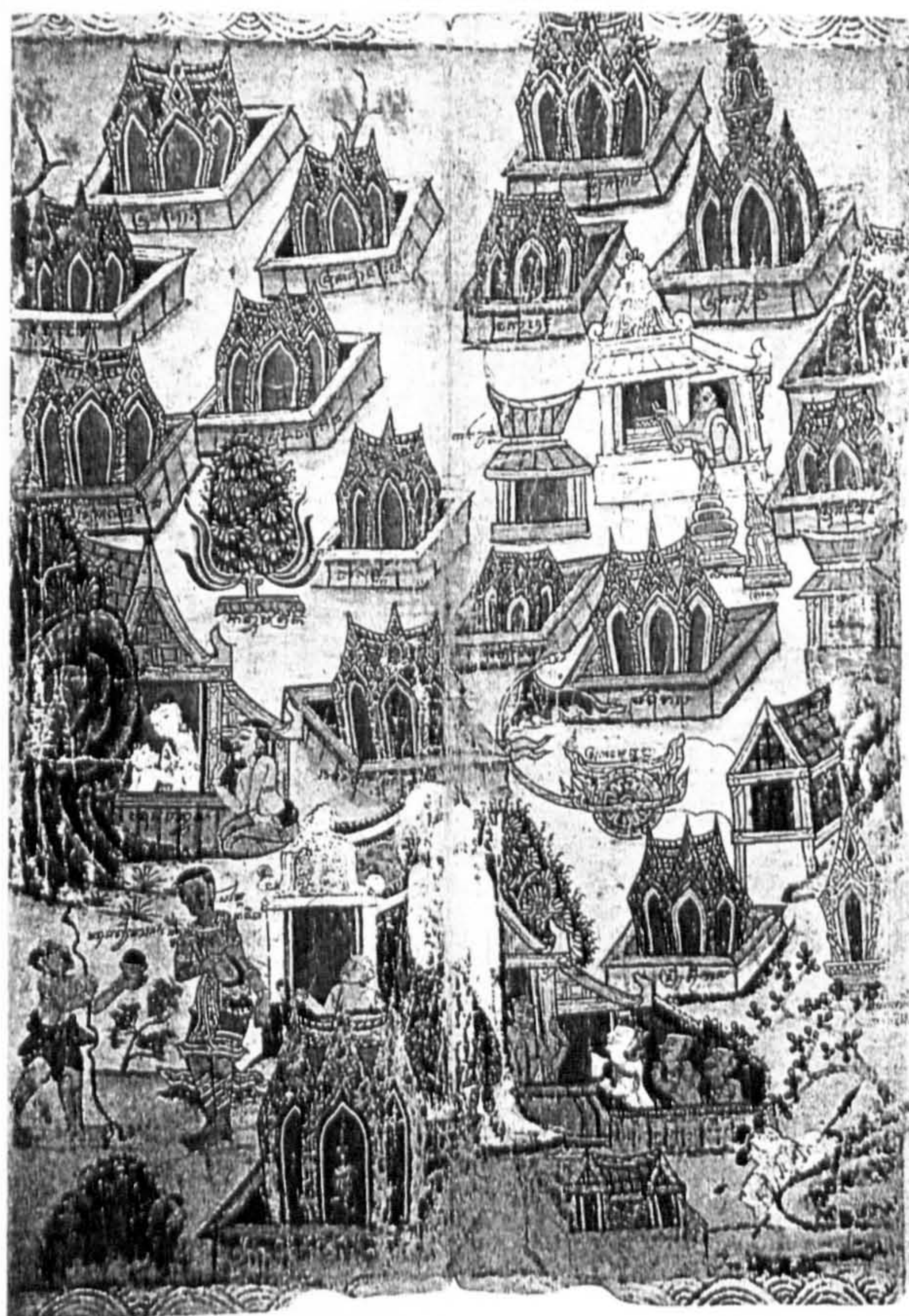


Fig. 4.33 Siamese provinces and other countries, *Traiphum* manuscript painting, Khmer version (source: FAD 1987)

The West Part of the *Phutthawat*: An Interpretation

The meanings of some structures in the west area of the *phutthawat* have been identified as indicating that they are components of the concept of the *ubosot* complex in the east area. They not only affirm the concepts of the *ubosot* complex in the east part, but these structures also form another *Traiphum* cosmological diagram. The meanings of these structures have been investigated to indicate a hierarchical arrangement from north to south. The highest realm starts from the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha, with the lower levels to the south.

The *Phra Mondop* which is located at the middle of the west part of the compound, has a painting in its chamber showing the story of the 'Nine Buddhist Councils' held in India, Lanka, Chiangmai and Bangkok. The story apparently denotes the human world or *Jambudīpa* where Buddhas are born and teach the *Dhamma*. The *Phra Mondop* in this context, must represent *Jambudīpa*, the world of Buddhism. Although, in accord with its form, the multi-tiered top superstructure of the *Mondop* is the symbol of Mount *Meru*, it is possible to convey more than a single meaning. To interpret any structure it is necessary to refer to its contextual setting or particular planning system. The *Phra Mondop*, on the planning system of the main east-west axis, it is Mount *Meru*. On the other hand, it represents *Jambudīpa* in the context of the north-south axis of the west area of the compound.

To the south of the *Phra Mondop* is the pond and garden, which have been identified with the *Anotatta* Lake and *Himavanta* Forest. The lowest level is the *kanprian* and bell tower. A bell tower is a symbol of *Yamaloka*, as has been discussed in Chapter 3 and in the study of *Wat Ratcha-orot* in this Chapter. The *Peta* realm, which is in *Himavanta*, was represented in the *kanprian* together with the Realm of Hells.

The plane higher than *Jambudīpa*, represented by the *Phra Mondop* to the north, is *Missakavana* garden and the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image. The name of the garden derives from the heavenly garden of the *Tāvātimsa*, and thus the garden should represent the peak of the Mount *Meru*, which the Heaven locates. The City of *Nibbāna* is the highest level, represented by the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image. The iconography of the reclining Buddha image in the *wihan* is the event of the great departure or *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. Accordingly, the *wihan* represents the realm

of *Nibbāna*, similar to the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha of *Wat Ratcha-orot*.⁴⁹

In the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* there were also the stories of the Thirteen Eminent Woman Disciples, the Ten Eminent Members of Laymen and the Ten Eminent Lay Women. The Thirteen Disciples all attained the Arahantaship,⁵⁰ while the Laymen and Lay Women all attained *Sotāpanna* and *Anāgami*, which are the Holy Persons (FAD 1974, 65-90). Those who attained the Arahantaship have attained the state of *Nibbāna*, while other categories of Holy Persons will be reborn in *Brahmaloka* (Thampricha 1992, 1072). The *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image might therefore be the symbol of both *Brahmaloka* and the Realm of *Nibbāna*, which are higher than *Meru*.

However, the symbol of the Realm of *Nibbāna* is not confined only to the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image. It also integrates the *ubosot* to be part of it. The stories of the Forty-one Eminent Disciples who all attained the Arahantaship may be connected to the Realm of *Nibbāna*. Their stories also relate to the Buddha which theme is the central symbol of *Jambudīpa*. The association of the City of *Nibbāna* and *Jambudīpa* results from this relation. The Realm of *Nibbāna* is the same location as *Jambudīpa*. These subjects, therefore, may be compared to the statues of disciples in the L-shaped *wihans* (*wihankhots*) and the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image of *Wat Ratcha-orot*. They too, are the symbol of *Ariyapuggala* and the Realm of *Nibbāna* respectively.⁵¹

The symbolic planning of the west area of the *phutthawat* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* represents the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image as the City of *Nibbāna* and *Brahmaloka* at the highest realm; the *Missakavana* Garden is part of *Tāvātimsa*; the *Phra Mondop* represents *Jambudīpa*; the pond and garden are symbols of *Anotatta* Lake and *Himavanta*; the bell tower located to the east of the *kanprian* is the symbol of *Yamaloka*; and the *Peta* realm and hell were arranged in the *kanprian*. The symbolic planning on this north-south axis is in line with the arrangement of the *Traiphum* cosmology in the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer version) (Fig. 4.34).

⁴⁹ See the study of *Wat Ratcha-orot* in section 4.2.1 of this Chapter.

⁵⁰ The inscriptions telling the stories of these disciples state that they have all attained Arahantaship. See FAD (1974, 52-72).

⁵¹ See the study of *Wat Ratcha-orot* in section 4.2.1 of this Chapter.

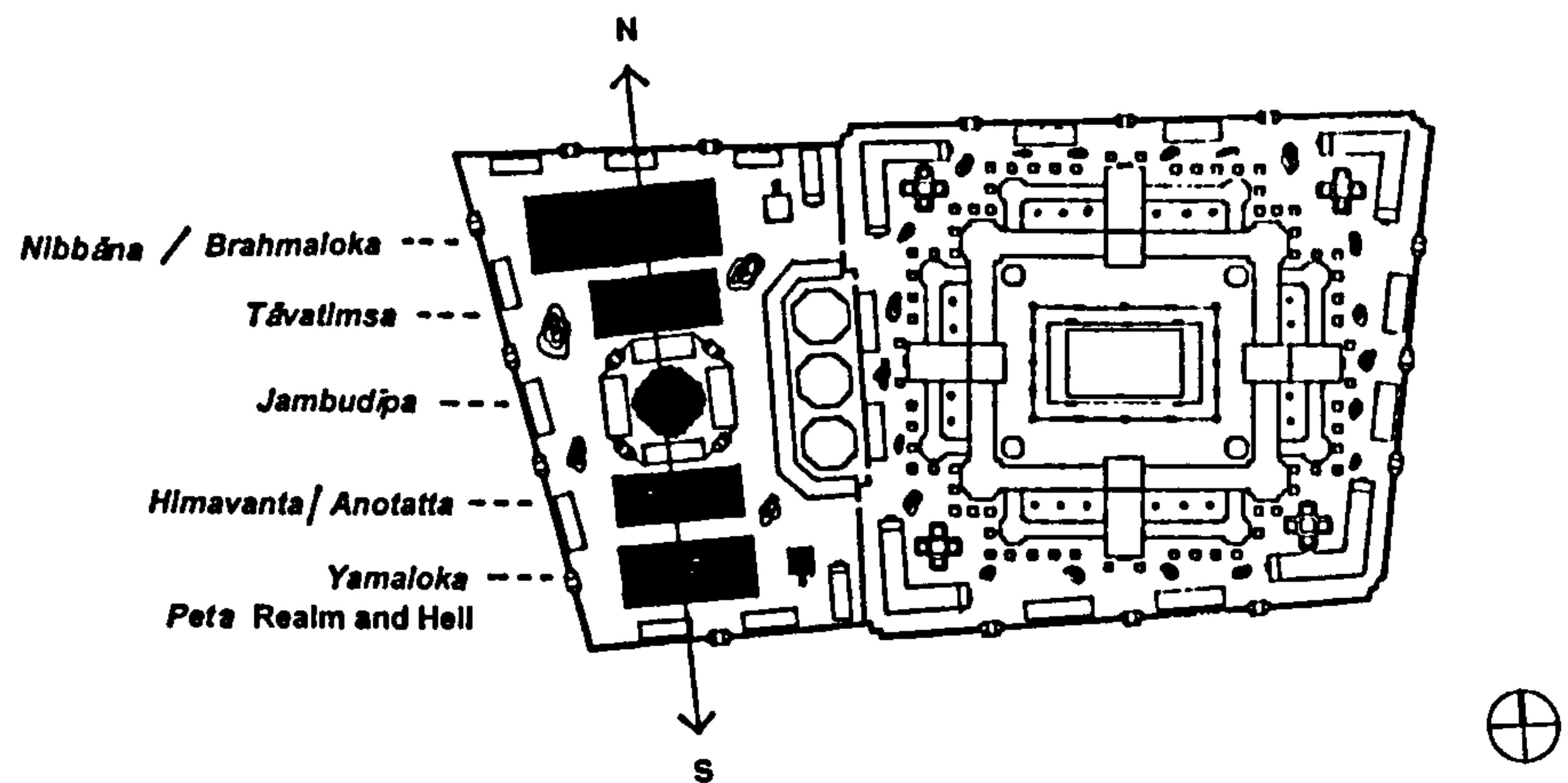


Fig. 4.34 Symbolic planning of the west part of the compound, north-south axis, Wat Phra Chetuphon

According to the overlap of symbolic planning in the structures of Wat Phra Chetuphon, many layers of symbols are integrated in the same compound. Each layer comprises a particular group of subjects which are connected to a particular contextual relationship. In addition to the concept of the Diamond Throne that King Rama I had set in the central part of the compound of Wat Phra Chetuphon, there are two other main concepts, Mount *Meru* and the Siamese Kingdom, which were put over the same centre during the restoration of King Rama III. However, the elements that denote Mount *Meru*, apart from the statues of *Devas*, *Garudas* and *Asuras* at the pedestal of the presiding Buddha image, and the paintings concerning the celestial realm all appeared in the upper part of the *ubosot*. The lower part contained subjects related to *Jambudīpa* and the Siamese Kingdom. This suggests that the structure of *Traiphum* portrayed in the manuscript painting (Khmer version) is directly interpreted as the symbolic planning. It not only corresponds to the symbolic planning of the horizontal plane, but it is also applied to the vertical section.

The complexity of the symbolic planning of the *wat* is derived from the interpretation of the *Traiphum* diagram which is symbolized in the vertical, horizontal and centralized system over the same structures. The integration of the three main concepts in the same centre therefore requires more elaboration and detail to remark upon the concepts. That is why the miniature mountains, subsidiary *chedis*, Chinese *chedis* (*tha*) and statues of hermits were allocated in the new plan.

Nevertheless, there are a number of subjects that are included in the form of inscriptions and murals on the structures of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* which are found not to relate to the symbolic planning of the *Wat*. Most of these inscriptions or paintings are contemporary moralist literature, specimens of prosody of verses of the Thai tradition, subjects of astrology and omens, and medical subjects. Some non-Buddhist literature was included to clarify the concept of space in some of the structures, mostly in the west part of the compound. The stories of the 'Romance of the Three Kingdoms', and the stories of the 'Thirteen European Stores', are connected to the countries that they derive from or denote. No doubt, these countries are part of the world known to the Siamese at that time and place them in the system of *Traiphum* cosmology. This interpretation is the real innovation of Thai Buddhist architecture, since similar subjects have never been found represented in any *wats* prior to this period. The issue of why this non-Buddhist literature appeared in the precinct of the royal *wat* is to be discussed in the last section of this Chapter.

4.2.3 Wat Suthat thepwararam (*Sudassana Devarārāma*) (1831-1847)

Wat Suthat is the largest monastery in Bangkok. It is located to the east of the Grand Palace, at the spot that marks the centre of the city of Bangkok in the plan of Rama I. The construction of the *wat* was begun in 1807 during the reign of King Rama I. He named it '*Mahāsuddhāvāsa*' (Chulalongkorn 1958, 317).⁵² A year later the foundation was laid (Chulalongkorn 1958, 318) and a huge Buddha image from Sukhothai was transported to Bangkok to form the presiding Buddha image of the *wat* (Thiphakorawong 1996, 201). Some holy relics were also enshrined in the image (Wichitkankoson 1973, 7). At that time, King Rama I was ill but according to his faith in Buddhism, he walked without shoes to accompany the procession of the image to the *wat*. He could only place the image on the pedestal of the main building, and then his reign ended (Chulalongkorn 1958, 320-21).

King Rama II carried on the construction of the monastery but made little progress. The work was continued by Rama III in 1834 and completed on a very grand scale in 1847 (Wichitkankoson 1973, 16). He renamed the *wat* '*Suthat theptharam*'⁵³ (*Sudassana Devadhārāma*) (Thiphakorawong 1995, 143). This study will show that the *wihan* of the *wat* symbolizes the two main centres of the universe, the Diamond Throne and Mount *Meru*, while the *ubosot* is the symbol of *Jambudīpa*. However, all of the main structures will be connected in the analysis, including a *kanprian* and a bell tower in the *sanghawat* area, to represent the *Traiphum* cosmography diagram.

⁵² *Suddhāvāsa* is the name of the highest five planes of *Brahma* Realm in the Realm of Form (*Rūpabhūmi*).

⁵³ King Rama IV (Mongkut) changed the name to '*Suthat thepwararam*' (*Sudassana Devarārāma*). '*Sudassana*' is the name of the City of Indra in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven.

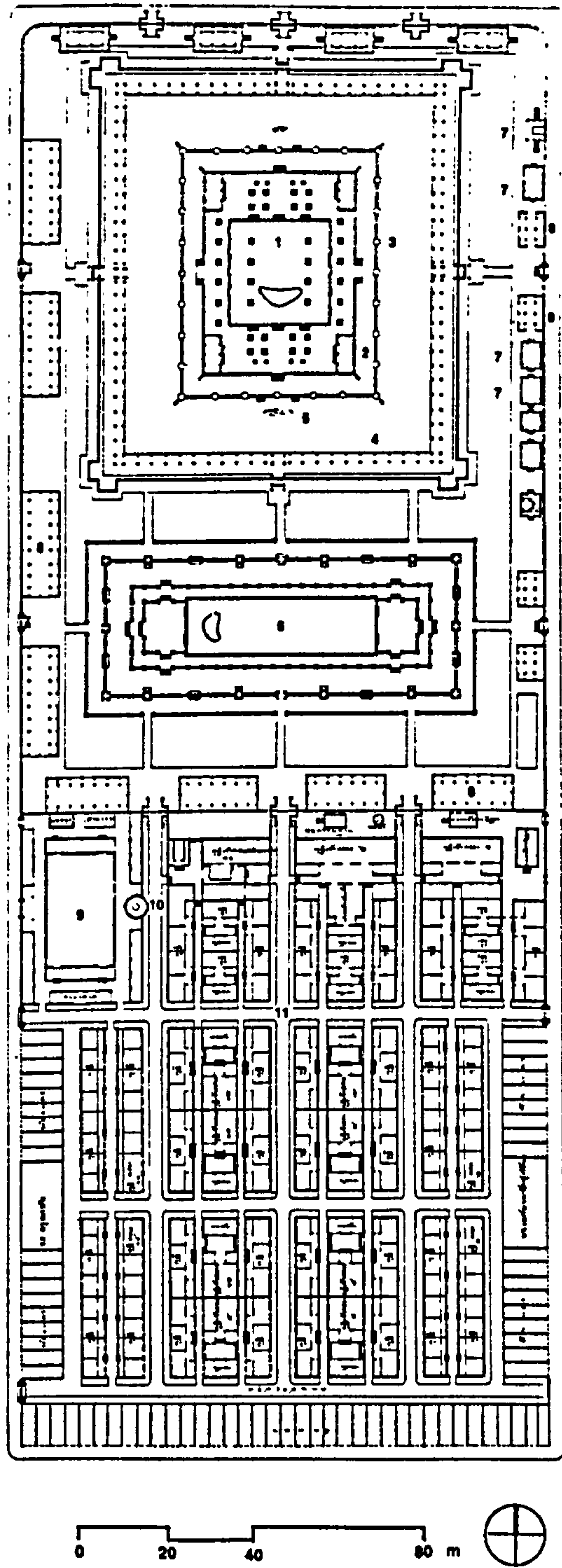


Fig. 4.35 Plan of Wat Suthat (source: Wichitkankoson 1973)
 1) *wihan*; 2) 4 *wihan* pavilions; 3) 28 Chinese *chedis*; 4) gallery;
 5) miniature mountain; 6) *ubosot*; 7) *Sattamahāthāna*; 8) *salas*;
 9) *kanprian*; 10) bell tower; 11) residential area

The Layout Plan and the Symbolic Elements of *Wat Suthat*

There are only two main buildings, a *wihan* (23.84x26.25 m.) and an *ubosot* (22.60x72.25 m.), in the sanctuary area (*phutthawat*) of *Wat Suthat*. The area is in a rectangular precinct with its longitudinal axis oriented on the north-south direction. To the south of the *phutthawat* are monks' residential units, in which a *kanprian* and a bell tower are located at the north-west corner (south-west of the *phutthawat*).

The *wihan* (No. 1 in Fig. 4.35, Fig. 4.36) is situated on a two-stepped platform, occupying the north area of the compound. A *wihan* pavilion (*sala*) (No. 2 in Fig. 4.35) is located at each corner of the upper platform. On the balustrade of the lower platform are twenty-eight Chinese *chedis*, encircling the *wihan* and the four *wihan* pavilions (No. 3 in Fig. 4.35). All of these structures are located at the middle of the courtyard, which is enclosed by a gallery (89.60x98.87 m.). Outside the gallery to the east are situated the Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*), aligned from north to south along the outermost wall (No. 7 in Fig. 4.35).

The *ubosot* (No. 6 in Fig. 4.35, Fig. 4.37) in which the principal Buddha image faces east is situated on a platform, south of the *wihan*. The building therefore lies across the main axis of the *wihan*. Eight *sima* houses, eight mounting platforms (*Koei*) and eight gates are situated on the balustrade of the platform to form an enclosure for the *ubosot*.

Flanking the gate near the Seven Great Places is a small pavilion (small *sala*) (No. 8 in Fig. 4.35). There are also two other small pavilions flanking the gate in front of the *ubosot*. Four larger pavilions (*salas*) are located along the wall that separates the sanctuary (*phutthawat*) and the residential areas (*sangkhawat*), which are to the south and alongside the west wall. The residential area is comprised of several monks' residential units. The complex of a *kanprian*, pavilions (*salas*) and a bell tower is also located in the residential compound (Nos. 9 and 10 in Fig. 4.35).

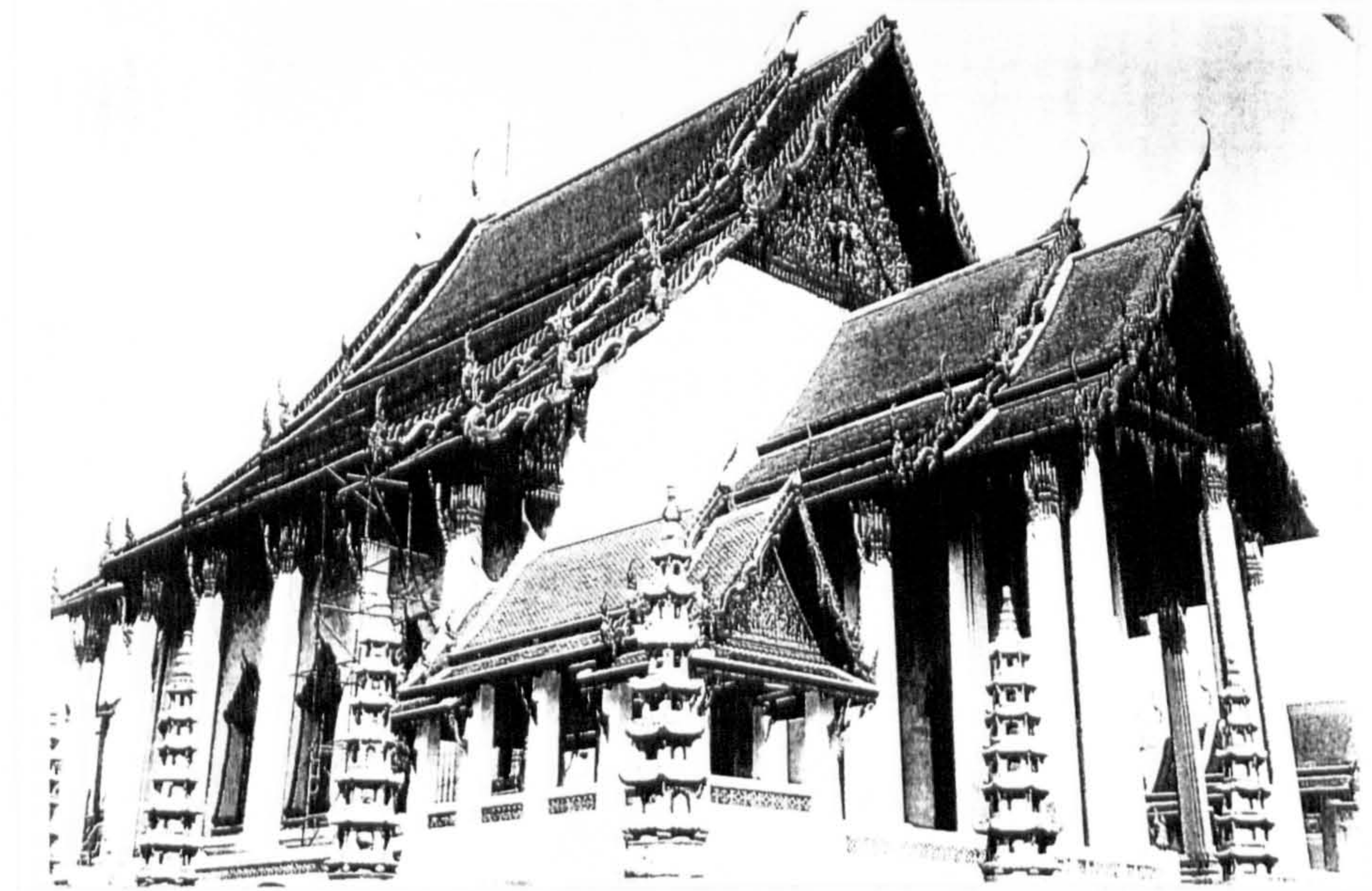


Fig. 4.36 *Wihan, Wat Suthat* (source: Samerchai 1996)



Fig. 4.37 *Ubosot, Wat Suthat*



Fig.4.38 Icon of Indra on Eravana, main pediment of the *wihan*, Wat Suthat

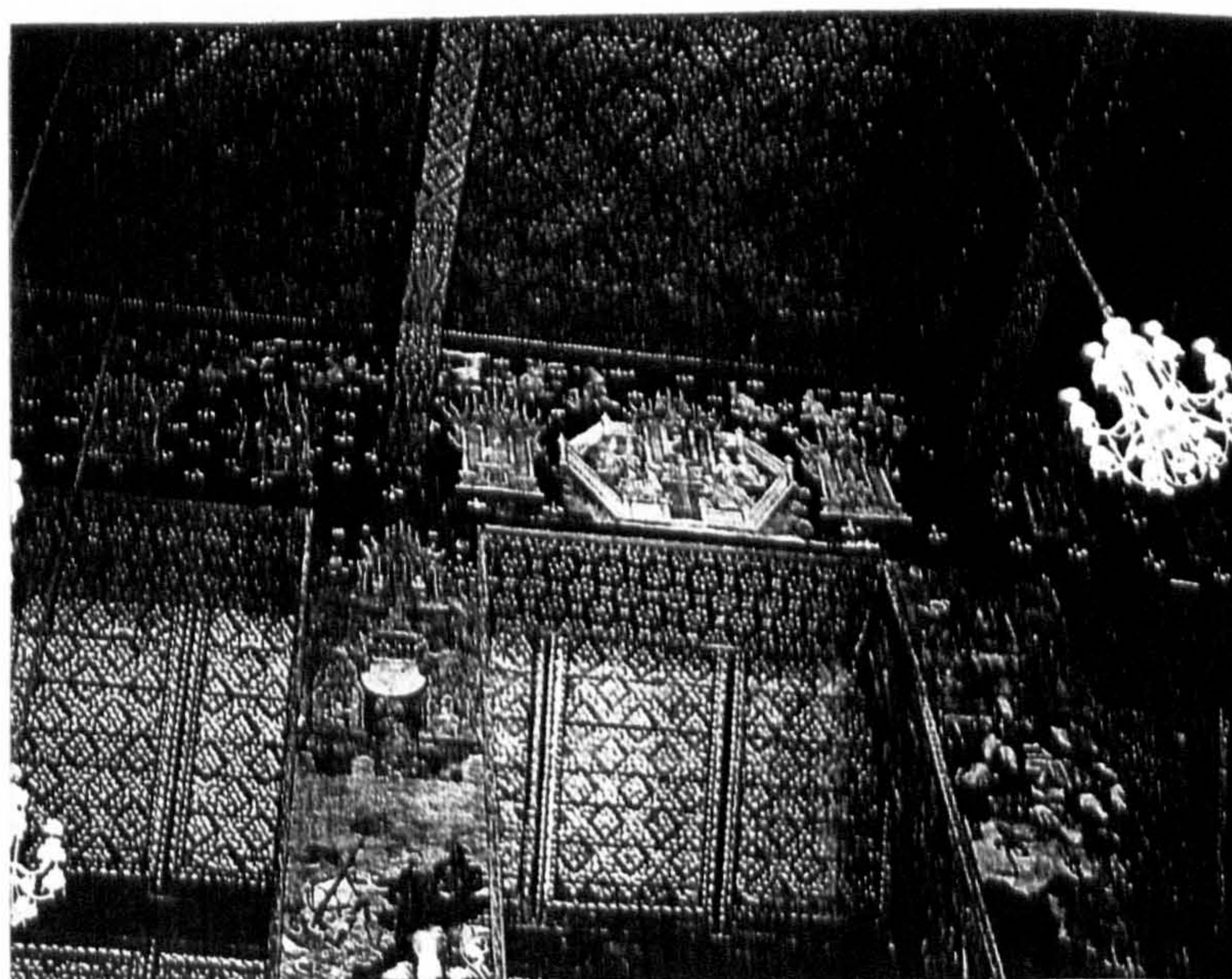


Fig. 4.39 Scene of *Tāvatisa* Sermon, *wihan*, Wat Suthat
(source: Samerchai 1996)

The Symbolic Elements of Wat Suthat

The main *wihan* takes a form of an oblong structure. On its main north and south pediments are depicted the God Indra riding on *Erāvana* Elephant (Fig. 4.38). The icon of Vishnu (Nārāyana) riding on *Garuda* is depicted on the pediments of the front and rear porches. The surfaces of the interior columns and interior walls are all covered with mural paintings. The themes of the paintings are labelled with inscriptions placed on the lower parts of the walls and columns. The paintings on the columns are arranged into upper and lower parts which represent different episodes and themes. The sequence of the stories of the murals commences with the higher realms on the north columns (first row) and gradually represents lower realms on the south columns (fourth row). However, the paintings which represent the highest realm are on the friezes of the nave. At the middle of the east frieze is depicted the episode of the Buddha's Sermon in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven, and on the west is depicted the *Cūlāmanicetiya* (Fig. 4.39). Along these central scenes on both friezes, twenty-eight heavenly palaces (*Ākāsathavimānas*) are illustrated, fourteen on each side.

The themes from *Traiphum* cosmology are systematically arranged on the surfaces of the interior columns. The themes of the mural on the **upper part** of the columns are arranged from the higher realm on the north columns to the lower realms to the south. The theme of the *Sudassana* City of *Tāvātimsa* is on the 1A and 1B columns. Below *Tāvātimsa* are the Seven Mountain Ranges (*Sattabhanda*), which are sequentially represented with the lower one to the south. The *Cakkavāla* Range is depicted on the 4A and 4B columns (See Table 4.5 and Fig. 4.40).

On the **lower part** of the columns, the higher realms are represented on the north of the hall, and the lower realms on the south. The *Asura* Realm on the 1A column is the theme that continues from the upper part, since it is at the lowest level of the *Meru* Mountain. The Four Major Continents (*Mahādīpa*) are depicted on the 1B column, on the sides according to the directions they are located. The theme of *Jambudīpa* and *Himavanta* are on the 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B and 4B columns. The *Peta* Realm and Hell are allocated to the southernmost point, the 4A and 4B columns respectively (See Table 4.5 and Fig. 4.41).

On the wall of the *wihan* is depicted the stories of the twenty-seven Buddhas of the past (twenty-eight including the story of Gotama, the historic Buddha). On the other door and window panels are painted the Brahmanistic pantheons and the legends of the principal gods, according to the illustrated treatise of the principal Gods (*Tamra Thewarup*) which was illuminated during the first half of the nineteenth century (Boisselier 1976, 106).

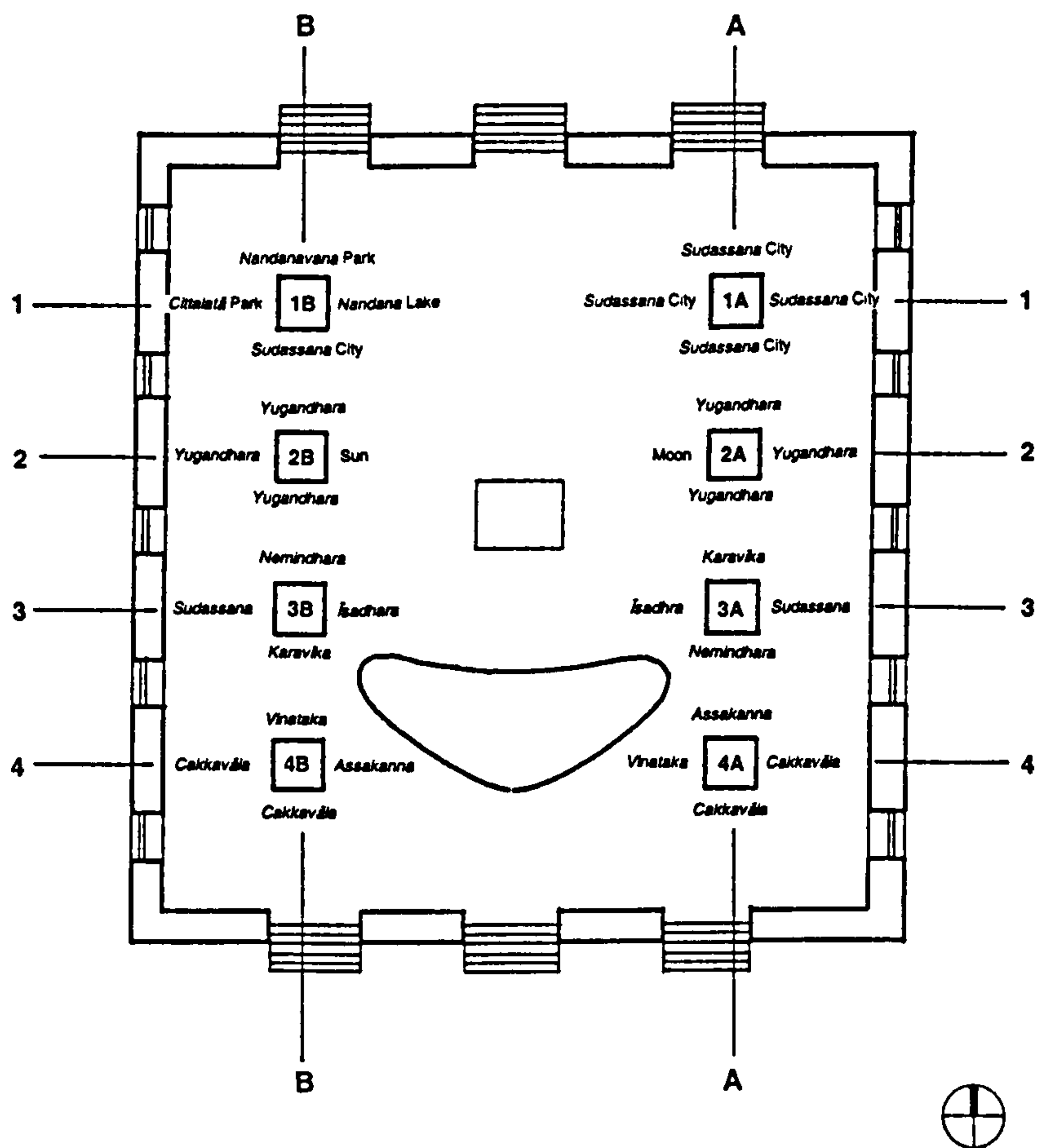


Fig. 4.40 Themes of mural painting, upper section of columns, *wihan*, Wat Suthat

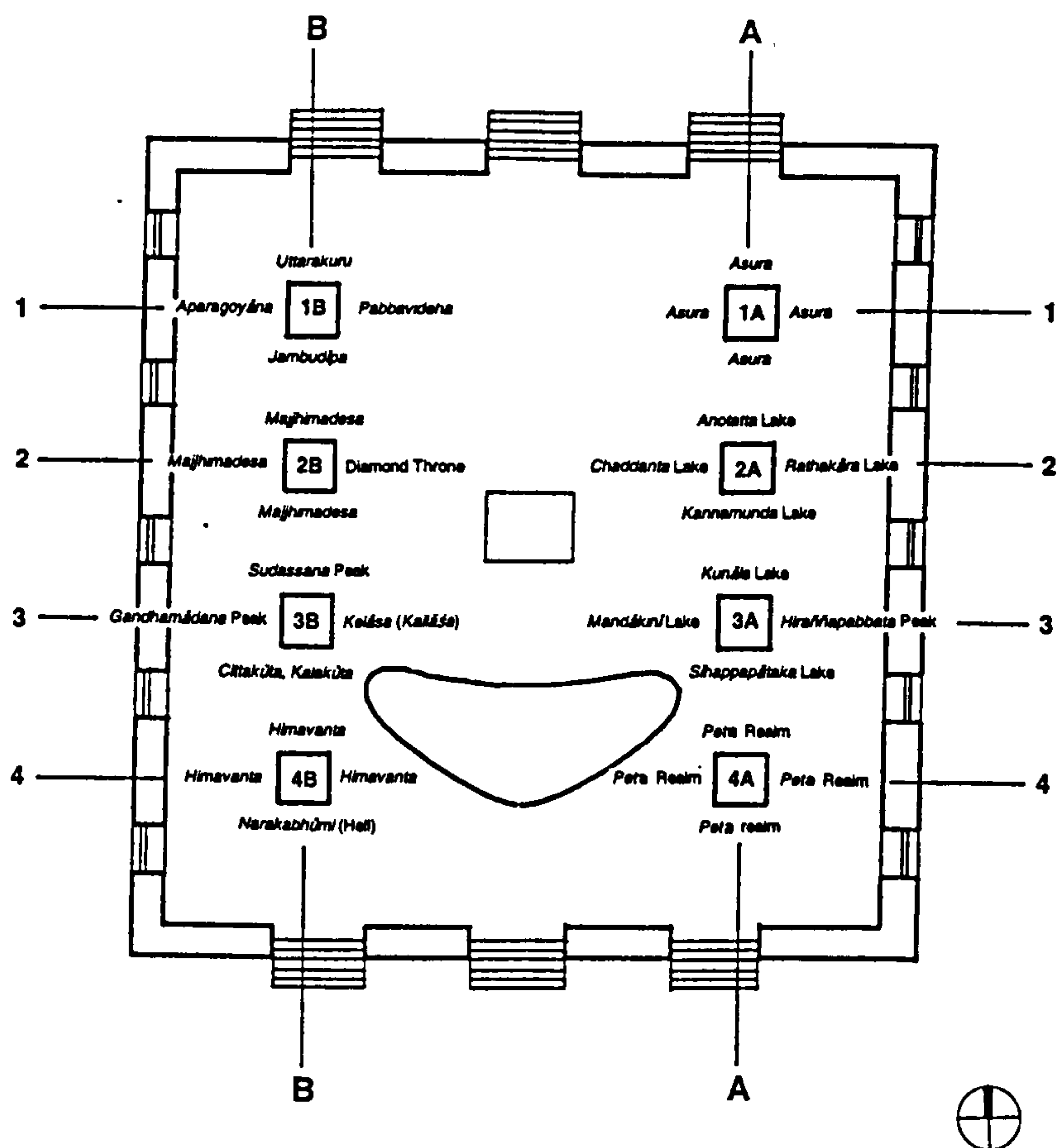


Fig. 4.41 Themes of mural painting, lower section of columns, *wihan*, Wat Suthat

The presiding Buddha image in the *wihan* is in the posture of *Māravijaya* (*Bhūmisparamudrā*). At the back of the pedestal of the image there is a stone bas-relief depicting episodes from the Life of the Buddha. The upper scene represents the Sermon in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven. The Buddha appears in the Heaven flanked by Indra and Brahma Gods. The Buddha's mother and *Devas* are assembled to attend the Sermon. The lower scene represents the episode of the Twin Miracle (Fig. 4.42). The relief is dated from around the seventh to eighth centuries. (Subhadradis 1985, 7).

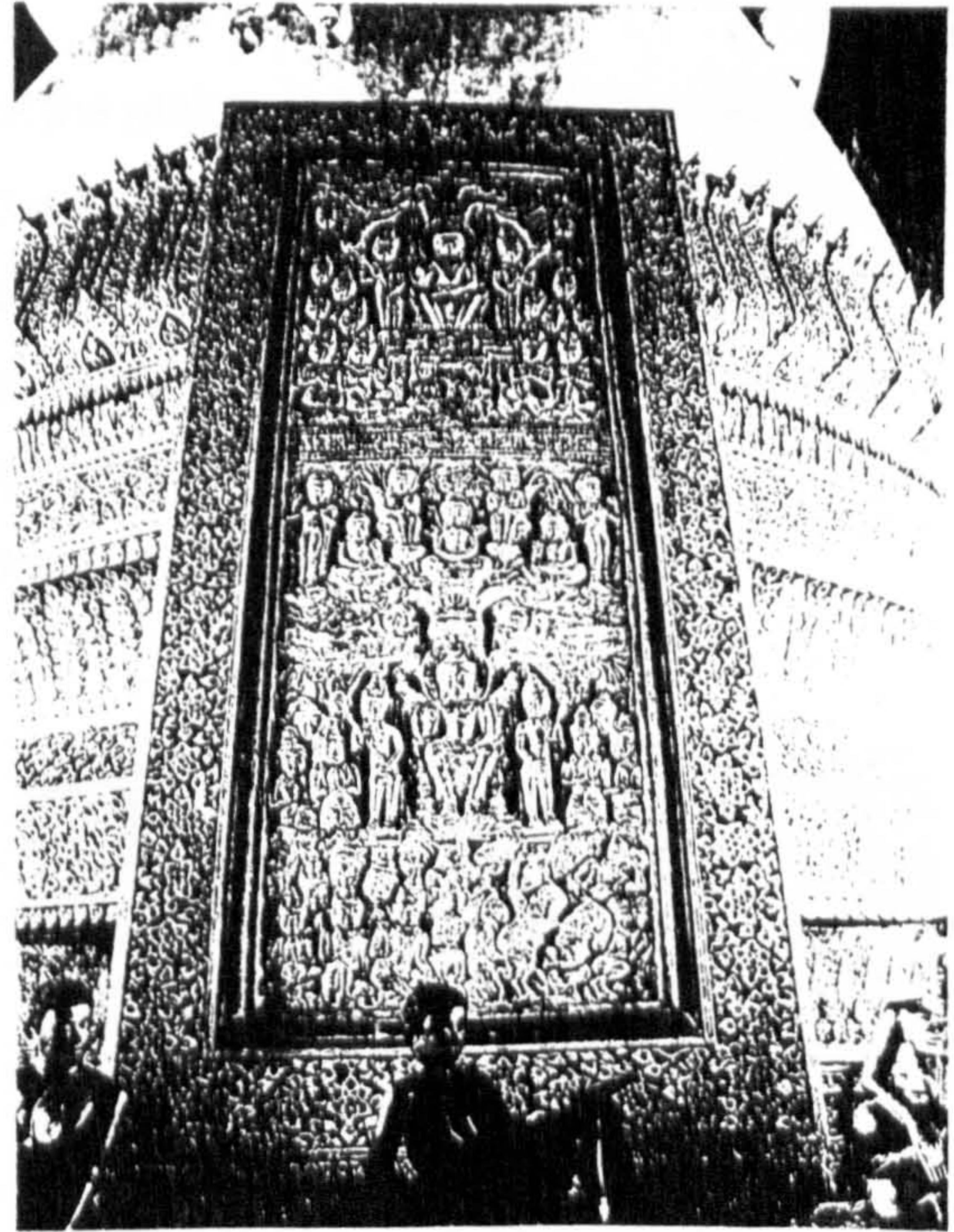


Fig. 4.42 Stone bas-relief showing scenes of the *Tāvātimsa* Sermon and the Twin Miracle (source: Phonhiphat 1997)

At the middle of the nave, just in front of the principal Buddha image, was a Chinese stone pavilion placed on a pedestal between the 2A and 2B columns (Fig. 4.43).⁵⁴ The style of the pavilion is similar to the larger one, which represents the *Animisacetiya*, a place in the set of the Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*), which is situated to the east of the gallery (Fig. 4.44).

There are two Buddha images installed in each of the *wihan pavilions* which are located on the upper platform. The images represent different gestures (Fig. 4.45). The twenty-eight Chinese *chedis* (*Tha*) on the balustrade of the lower platform are similar to the Chinese *chedis* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, but there are no guardian statues supporting the bases. On the ground level at the front and back of the platform there is a miniature mountain. Trees and some Chinese dolls are placed around these mountains.

Extending from the platform of the *wihan* is the courtyard, which is enclosed by a

⁵⁴ The pavilion was moved outside the *wihan*, to the ground at the front of the lower platform. In 1946, King Rama VIII (Ananda) observed that it obstructed the view of the presiding Buddha image and should be moved out from the building (Wichitkankoson 1973, 42).

gallery in a concentric rectangle of the plan of the platform. There are four main gates at the cardinal directions of the gallery. On the pediments of these gates is depicted Vishnu (Nārāyana) riding on *Garuda*. On the outside faces of the door panels are gilt lacquered figures of door guardians. On the inside faces are painted scenes of the *Ramakian* epic. The gallery is lined with a row of 156 Buddha images: most of these are in the gestures of *Dhayana-mudrā* or *Samādhi*.



Fig. 4.43 Chinese stone pavilion, Wat Suthat

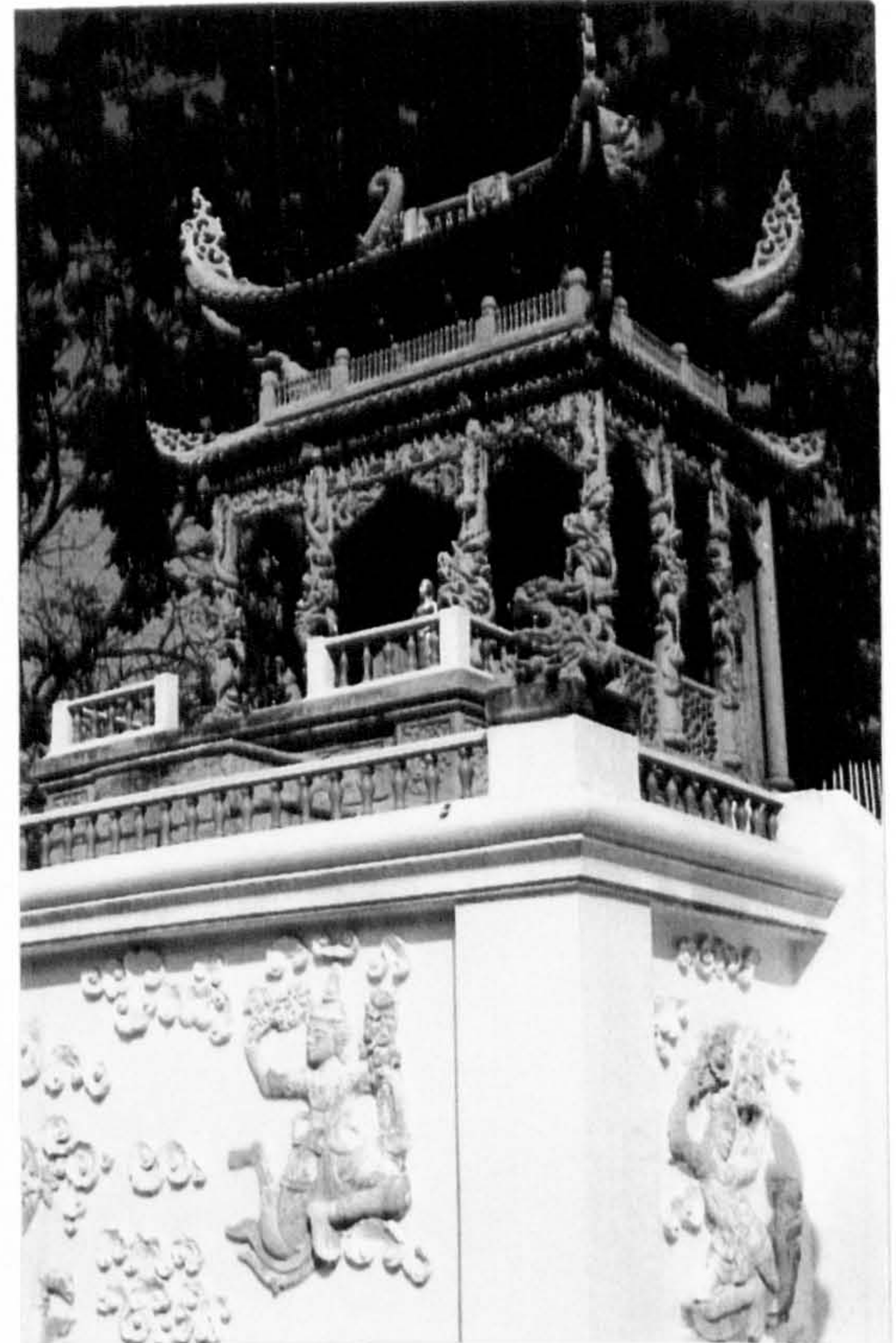


Fig. 4.44 *Animisacetiya*, Wat Suthat

Building	Mount <i>Meru</i>	<i>Jambudīpa</i> (Buddha's Life and Buddhas of the past)	Others
<i>Wihan</i>	<p>Pediments -Indra riding on <i>Erāvana</i></p> <p>Interior frieze -28 <i>Ākāsatthavimāna</i> -<i>Tāvatisa</i> Sermon -<i>Cūālamanicetiya</i></p> <p>Upper part of the columns</p> <p>1A column E- <i>Sudassana</i> City W- <i>Sudassana</i> City N- <i>Sudassana</i> City S- <i>Sudassana</i> City</p> <p>1B column E- <i>Nandana</i> Lake W- <i>Cittalatā</i> Park N- <i>Sudassana</i> City S- <i>Nandanavana</i> Park</p> <p>2A column E- <i>Yugandhara</i> W- Moon N- <i>Yugandhara</i> S- <i>Yugandhara</i></p> <p>2B column E- Sun W- <i>Yugandhara</i> N- <i>Yugandhara</i> S- <i>Yugandhara</i></p> <p>3A column E- <i>Sudassana</i> Peak W- <i>Īsadhra</i> N- <i>Karavīka</i> S- <i>Nemindhara</i></p> <p>3B column E- <i>Īsadhara</i> W- <i>Sudassana</i> N- <i>Nemindhara</i> S- <i>Karavīka</i></p> <p>4A column E- <i>Vinataka</i> W- <i>Cakkavāla</i> N- <i>Assakanna</i> S- <i>Cakkavāla</i></p> <p>4B column E- <i>Assakanna</i> W- <i>Cakkavāla</i> N- <i>Vinataka</i> S- <i>Cakkavāla</i></p> <p>Lower part of columns</p> <p>1A column E- <i>Asura</i> W- <i>Asura</i> N- <i>Asura</i> S- <i>Asura</i></p>	<p>Wall paintings -27 Buddhas of the past and <i>Bodhisattva</i></p> <p>Lower part of the columns</p> <p>1B column E- <i>Pabbavideha</i> W- <i>Aparagoyāna</i> N- <i>Uttarakuru</i> S- <i>Jambudīpa</i></p> <p>2A column E- <i>Chaddanta</i> Lake W- <i>Rathakāra</i> Lake N- <i>Anotatta</i> Lake S- <i>Kannamunda</i> Lake</p> <p>2B column E- Diamond Throne W- <i>Majjhimadesa</i> N- <i>Majjhimadesa</i> S- <i>Majjhimadesa</i></p> <p>3A column E- <i>Mandākinī</i> Lake W- <i>Hiraññapabbata</i> Peak N- <i>Kunāla</i> Lake S- <i>Sñappapātaka</i> Lake</p> <p>3B column E- <i>Kelāsa</i> (<i>Kailāśa</i>) W- <i>Gandhamādana</i> Peak N- <i>Sudassana</i> Peak S- <i>Cittakūta</i>, <i>Kalakūta</i></p> <p>Peaks</p> <p>4A column E- <i>Peta</i> Realm W- <i>Peta</i> Realm N- <i>Peta</i> Realm S- <i>Peta</i> realm</p> <p>4B column E- <i>Himavanta</i> W- <i>Himavanta</i> N- <i>Himavanta</i> S- <i>Narakabhūmi</i> (Hell)</p>	<p>-Chinese miniature pavilion at the centre of the hall</p> <p>Inside face of windows -Brahmanistic pantheon and legends of the principal gods</p> <p>Lower pediments -Vishnu riding on <i>Garuda</i></p>

Table 4.5 Symbolic elements of Wat Suthat

Building	Mount <i>Meru</i>	<i>Jambudīpa</i> (Buddha's Life and Buddhas of the past)	Others
4 <i>Wihan</i> pavilions		1 reclining Buddha image 2 sitting Buddha images 5 standing Buddha images	
28 Chinese <i>chedis</i>			28 Chinese <i>chedis</i>
<i>Ubosot</i>	Pediments -Sun -Moon Exterior face of the windows -Indra and celestial world	Upper part of the wall -The Buddha's Life East wall -Victory over <i>Māras</i> Between the windows - <i>Pacceka Buddhas</i> Window casings - <i>Paññasa Jātaka</i>	Inside face of the windows -Brahmanistic pantheon and legends of the principal gods Door casings - <i>Ramakian</i>
Miniature Mountains			North and south of <i>wihan</i>
Gallery		-Buddha images	Pediments of the gates - <i>Nārāya</i> riding on <i>Garuda</i> Door panels - <i>Ramakian</i>
<i>Sattamahāthāna</i> (The Seven Great Places)		East of the gallery	
<i>Kanprian</i> and bell tower			South-west of the <i>phutthawat</i>
4 small <i>salas</i> 8 <i>Salas</i>		-Hermits - <i>Jātakas</i>	
<i>Sangkhawat</i>	South of the <i>phutthawat</i>		

Table 4.5 Symbolic elements of Wat Suthat (continue)

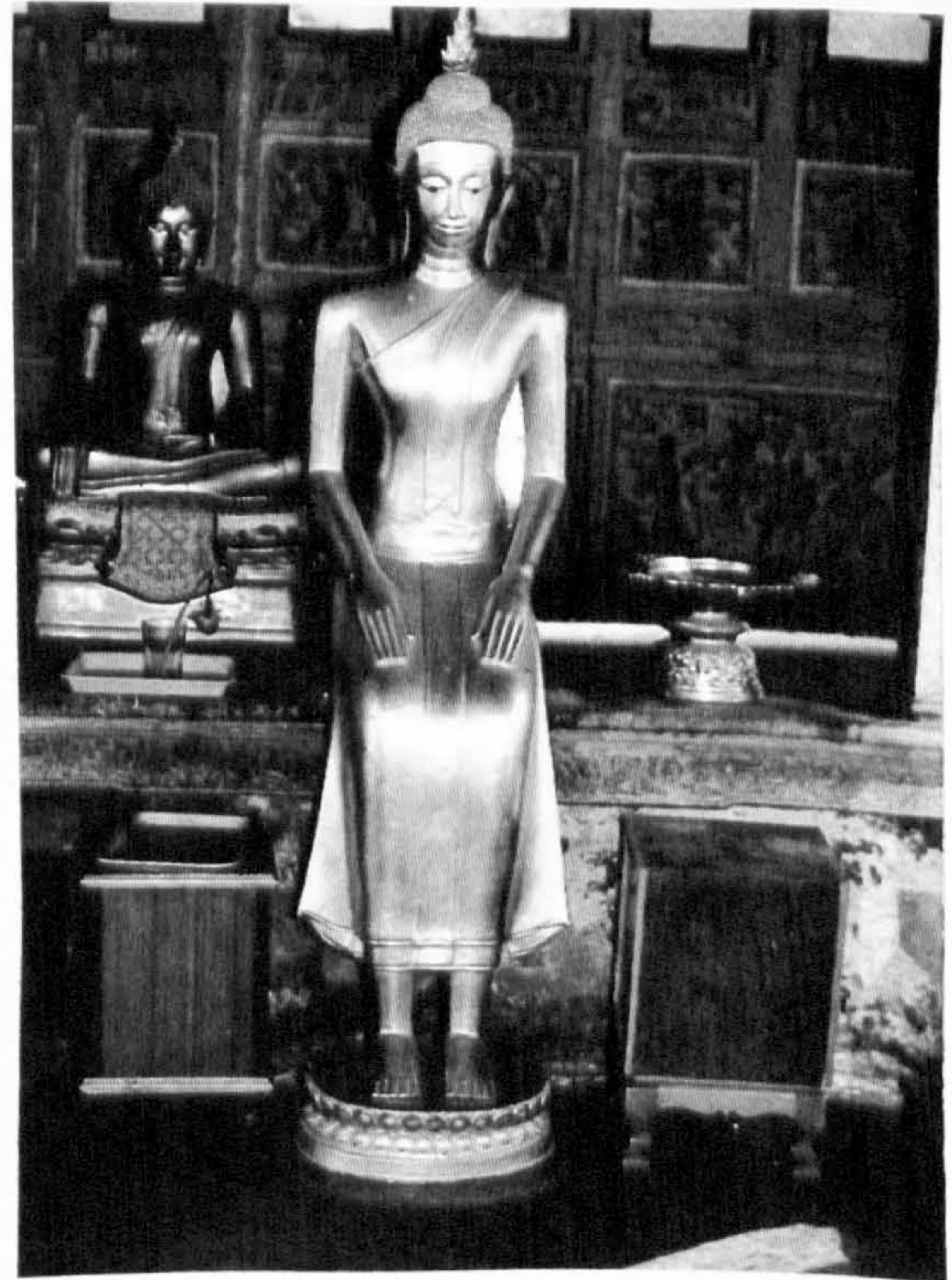


Fig. 4.45 Buddha image, north-west *wihan* pavilion, *Wat Suthat*



Fig. 4.46 Mounting platform (*koei*), *Wat Suthat*



Fig. 4.47 Principal gods, door panels, *ubosot*, Wat Suthat

The *ubosot* is situated to the south of the gallery. It stands on a platform surrounded by a composite enclosure comprised of eight gates, eight *sima* houses and eight mounting platforms (*Koei*) (Fig. 4.46). Inside the *ubosot*, the story of the Life of the Buddha is painted on the wall above the windows. The scene of *Māravijaya* (Victory over *Māra*) is on the wall opposite the principal Buddha image. The spaces between the windows are devoted to the career of the *Pacceka Buddhas*, and are depicted in the *Himavanta* Forest landscapes where they customarily meet. On the inside faces of the window and door panels are painted the Brahmanistic Gods, most of which are taken from the Legend of Vishnu's *Avatāras* (Fig. 4.47) (Niyada 1997, 103-106). On the window casings are illustrated episodes from *Paññasa Jātaka* (Apocryphal Birth Stories). On the door casings are painted episodes from the *Ramakian* epic (Niyada and Seiler 1983). The outside faces of the door and window panels are gilt lacquered with the scene of Indra's Palace. The east pediment of the *ubosot* is adorned with the Sun God riding on a chariot drawn by *singha* lion. On the west pediment is depicted the Moon God, riding on a chariot drawn by a horse (Figs. 4.48, 4.49).

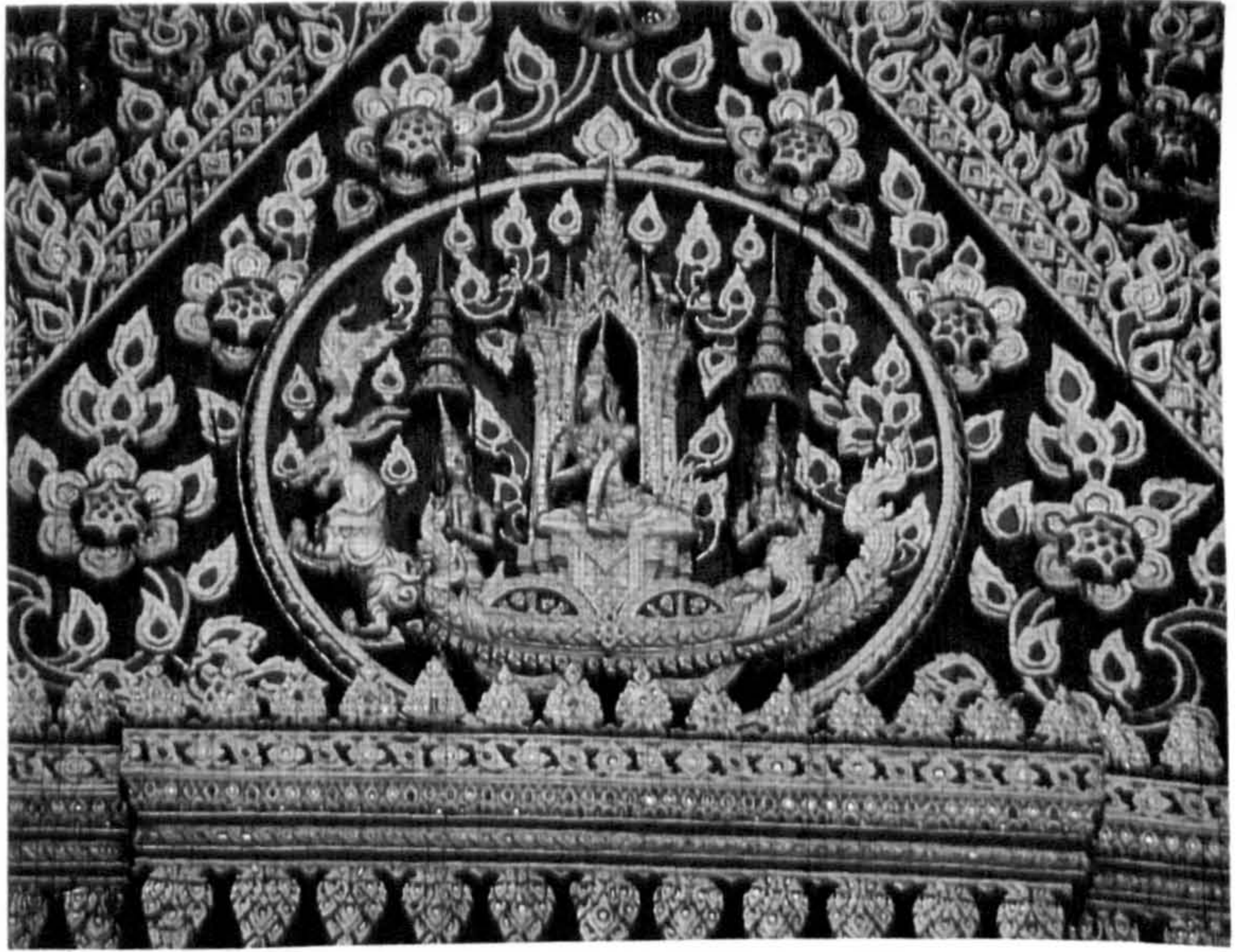


Fig. 4.48 East pediment (the sun), *ubosot*, Wat Sutaht



Fig. 4.49 West pediment (the moon), *ubosot*, Wat Suthat

The Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*)⁵⁵ of *Wat Suthat* are comprised of seven stations placed along the east wall, aligned from north to south. Buddha images and some Chinese sculptures are placed near the trees to represent the episodes.

- ***Animisacetiya*** is represented by a Chinese stone pavilion. Its style is similar to the one located in the *wihan*, but it is much larger.
- The Bodhi-Tree is planted in a square base. At the foot of the tree is placed a *Māravijaya* Buddha image. There are some Chinese sculptures, which are assumed to be *Māra*'s army.
- The Bodhi Tree that represents the first week after enlightenment and the Buddha was there for one session, suggesting the bliss of deliverance.
- A banyan tree (*Ton Sai*) is assumed to be the ***Ajapāla-nighrodha***.
- A *Chik* tree (*Barringtonia coceinea nexandra*) is planted, to represent ***Mucalinda***.
- A *Ket* tree (*Mimusops nexandra*) is assumed to be ***Rājāyatana***.
- A Chinese pavilion represents ***Ratanaghara-cetiya***.
- ***Ratanacankama-cetiya*** is represented by a place laid with stone slabs and a standing Buddha image.

In the four **small salas** next to the wall are installed stone slabs with engraved *rishis* (hermits) performing posture exercises to cure various ailments (Wichitkankoson 1973, 96). In the eight *salas* are installed stone slabs with engravings the scenes from *Jātakas*, with their labelling inscriptions (Wichitkankoson 1973, 97).

The ***Kanprian*** (15.75x26.20 m.) was built in 1854 (Witchitkankoson 1973, 99). Its cluster comprises the *Kanprian* at the centre, six *salas* and a bell tower (Fig. 4.50). The presiding Buddha image in the *kanprian* was cast from opium metal canisters which were confiscated in 1839 (Witchitkankoson 1973, 81).

⁵⁵ See the Seven Great Places in appendix 3.



Fig. 4.50 *Kanprian* complex and bell tower, *Wat Suthat* (source: Phonphiphat 1997)

The Analysis of the Symbolic Planning of *Wat Suthat*

The initial investigation of mural paintings and other elements shows that the *wihan* contains elements which represent *Traiphum* cosmography from *Tāvātimsa* down to the realm of hell. In addition, the themes of the paintings are systematically arranged in accordance with the arrangement of the structures of the *Traiphum* cosmography. However, all the themes are separated into three layers: in the friezes of the nave, on the upper and the lower parts of the interior columns. The mural paintings in the *ubosot* are also separated into lower and upper sections. The analysis begins with the *wihan*, which is rich in themes from the *Traiphum*.

The *Wihan*

It is noticeable that the method of arranging the murals on the columns of the *wihan* places the higher realms on the north column, and progressively lower realms towards the south of the building. However, the highest realm is on the friezes of the nave, on which the episode of the Sermon in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven and *Cūlāmanicetiya* are portrayed. The paintings are connected to the icon of the God Indra riding on *Erāvana* Elephant on the main pediments, and the scenes of the *Sudassana nagara*, the city of *Tāvātimsa*, on the upper part of the 1A column. All these elements represent the top of Mount *Meru*, where the *Tāvātimsa* is located. The other twenty-eight heavenly

palaces (*Ākāsathavimāna*) painted on the friezes should also be identified with the palaces of the *Devas* in *Tāvātimsa*, since they are floating at the same level as *Tāvātimsa* (Thampricha 1992, 864). Therefore, this uppermost section of the *wihan* represents the City of *Tāvātimsa* on the peak of Mount *Meru*. The Sun and the Moon on the pediments of the *ubosot*, which are slightly lower than the pediments of the *wihan*, therefore represent the Sun and the Moon orbiting around *Meru* mountain.

The symbolism of this part, however, might be a connection with the stone bas-relief at the back of the pedestal of the principal Buddha image (Fig. 4.42). The upper scene of the relief, which shows the episode of the Sermon in *Tāvātimsa*, is the same episode as that painted on the frieze of the nave. This relief may suggest the presiding Buddha image as preaching in that Heaven. Another scene on the relief is the Twin Miracle. During the miracle, which was performed by the Buddha, all of the universe appeared as one, like the miracle that happened when the Buddha attained the Enlightenment (Paramanuchit 1962, 418). The upper and lower parts of the columns of the *wihan*, on which are painted the *cakkavāla* universe, probably represent the same miracle that the universe appearing as one.

Below *Tāvātimsa* are paintings on the upper sections of the 2A and 2B columns, on which are depicted the *Yugadhara* Peak, the Sun on the west and the Moon on the east columns. Other peaks of the Seven Mountain Ranges (*Sattabhandā*) which encircle *Meru* Mountain, *Īsadhara*, *Karavīka*, *Sudassana* and *Nemindhara*, appear on the 3A and 3B columns. The *Vinataka* and *Assakanna* are painted on the 4A and 4B columns. The *Cakkavāla* range, which is the outermost ring that encircles all the universe, is illustrated on the back and outside faces of the 4A and 4B columns. All these arrangements resemble the vertical section of the *Meru* Mountain, the Seven Mountain Ranges (*Sattabhandā*) and the *Cakkavāla* Peak, which are spread horizontally over the upper sphere of the *wihan*.

On the lower part of the columns, the theme of the paintings continues on the 1A column, on which is portrayed the *Asura* Realm. This is located beneath *Meru* mountain. The theme of the human world is begun on the 1B column, on which the Four Major Continents (*Mahādīpa*) are painted in accord with the directions in which they are located. Because the upper sections of both the 1A and 1B columns depict the scenes of *Tāvātimsa*, and the lower sections depicts the *Mahādīpa* and *Asura* realm, this pair of columns is presumably the axis of *Meru*.

The story of *Jambudīpa* is elaborated in the 2B column. The *Solasa-nagara*, the Sixteen Cities of *Majjhimadesa*, which is the central region of *Jambudīpa*, are represented on the four sides of the column. It should be remarked here that the Diamond Throne and the Bodhi-Tree are depicted on the side that faces the nave of the *wihan* (Fig. 4.51). The Lakes and peaks in *Himavanta* Forest begin on the 2A column and thereafter continue on the 3A, 3B and 4B columns. The *Peta* realm, which is in the *Himavanta* Forest, is found on the 4B column. The lowest realm, represented by the scene of hells, is depicted on the south side of the 4B column, in a south-westerly direction from the nave, which is regarded as the lowest direction. Most of the paintings on this lower part of the columns are images of *Jambudīpa* and *Himavanta* Forest. However, *Majjhimadesa* is set at the front while *Himavanta* is allocated to the rear of the hall.



Fig. 4.51 Bodhi-tree on 2B column

The concept of *Jambudīpa* is also emphasized by the theme of the Buddhas of the past and the Life of the Buddha. The stories of the Buddhas of the past denote the stories of the past lives of Gotama Buddha, particularly the twenty-four Buddhas who predicted that the *Bodhisattva* would attain the buddhahood.⁵⁶ The elements which relate to the stories of the Life of the Buddha are represented through the Buddha images in the four *wihan* pavilions. Different gestures of the images imply different episodes from the Buddha's Life. For instance, the image seated in the European fashion (*Pralambanasana*) in the north-east *wihan* pavilion might represent the *Pārileyyaka* episode, because its posture is strikingly similar to the image in the north *wihan* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, which is a replica with a monkey and an elephant to represent the same episode (Fig. 4.45 and Fig. 3.15). The representation of the Life of the Buddha in these images in the four *wihan* pavilions, therefore, is comparable to the Buddha images in the four-direction *wihans* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*.⁵⁷ These four *wihan* pavilions of *Wat Suthat* might be symbols of the cities in *Majjhimadesa*, the central region of *Jambudīpa*, like the four direction *wihans* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*.⁵⁸

Other evidence that supports the hypothesis that the lower part of the *wihan* represents *Jambudīpa* and its centre is the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-Tree, are the Seven Great Places outside the gallery to the east. Most of the statues and the miniature buildings which decorate each station of the Seven Great Places are Chinese stone sculptures. The Chinese miniature pavilion was once located on a pedestal at the centre of the hall of the *wihan*, therefore is probably the connection between the *wihan* and the Seven Great Places. The characteristics of this pavilion are similar to the one which represents *Animisacetiya* in the set of the Seven Great Places (Fig. 4.43 and Fig. 4.44). The similarity is apparently a design solution. The reason the Seven Great Places are separated from the complex of the *wihan* might derive from the fact that they could not be made to blend in with other buildings in this context, since they are represented by real trees. In addition, the main structure of the *wihan* had been constructed by King Rama I and King Rama II, after which King Rama III came to the throne and took over

⁵⁶ See the study of *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings in Chapter 3.

⁵⁷ See the analysis the meaning of the four-direction *wihans* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* in Chapter 3.

⁵⁸ Samerchai (1996, 136) interprets these four *wihan* pavilions as the Four Great Guardian Kings (*Cātumahārājika*). However, apart from the positions of these buildings that are located at the four corners of the platform, there is not any symbol that could be identified with the Four Great Guardian Kings.

all the construction. The small Chinese pavilion is located between the 2A and 2B columns, and the mural of the Diamond Throne and the Bodhi-Tree is depicted on the east side of the 2B column. Both the pavilion and the mural painting mutually imply the same concept. The small Chinese pavilion, therefore, is connected to the Seven Great Places outside the gallery to represent the position of the presiding Buddha image in the *wihan* as the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-Tree.⁵⁹

This concept is also affirmed by the twenty-eight Chinese *chedis* and the Buddha images in the gallery. The twenty-eight Chinese *chedis* on the balustrade of the lower platform may be identified with the twenty-seven Buddhas of the past and Gotama Buddha, as painted in the *wihan* (Wichitkankoson 1973, 85). The Buddha images in the gallery can be identified with Buddhas of the past who had attained their the buddhahood only in *Jambudīpa* at the Diamond Throne. Therefore, the twenty-eight Chinese *chedis* and the Buddha images in the gallery all denote the centre of the *wihan* as the Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa*. However, Samerchai (1996, 137) proposes the interpretation that the twenty-eight Chinese *chedis* reflect the twenty-eight heavenly palaces (*Ākāsatthavimānas*) which are painted on the friezes of the nave of the *wihan*. They are similar to the Chinese *chedis* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, which symbolize the heavenly palaces. He further proposes that the gallery of the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat* is a symbol of the Seven Mountain Ranges which encircle Mount *Meru* (Samerchai 1996, 148). It is possible that the concept of *Jambudīpa* and Mount *Meru* and its surroundings are laid over one another on the same structures.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ It is worth noting here that a similar small Chinese pavilion is placed at the wall behind the principal Buddha image of the *ubosot* of *Wat Suwannaram* in Thonburi. The *Wat* was also restored by King Rama III (FAD 1971, 32). The *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings which have been analysed to show that they symbolize the position of the principal Buddha image as the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-Tree are also painted in this *ubosot*. However, Samerchai (1996, 146-47) interprets the small Chinese pavilion in the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat* as the *Vejayantapāsāda*, the Indra Palace in *Tāvātimsa* Heaven. This is due to the interpretation following the proposed concept that the *wihan* is the symbol of *Tāvātimsa*.

⁶⁰ However, Samerchai ignores all the elements concerning the concept of *Jambudīpa* in and surrounding the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat*, and comes up with the single concept that the *wihan* is only a symbol of Mount *Meru*.

Extending from the gallery are the four small *salas* and other eight larger *salas*. Each of the four small *salas* contains stone *slabs* with engraved hermits (*rishis*) performing posture exercises to cure various ailments, and the eight *salas* contain *Jātaka* plates. The same subjects as are depicted in these *salas* were also found in the *salas* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama III. The *Traiphum* text states that there are more than 10,000 hermits (*rishis*) residing near *Sitha-nathi* river north of *Himavanta* Forest (Thampricha 1992, 207-211). The *salas* therefore relate to the concept of *Himavanta* and they assert that the *wihan* is the symbol of the centre of *Jambudīpa*.⁶¹

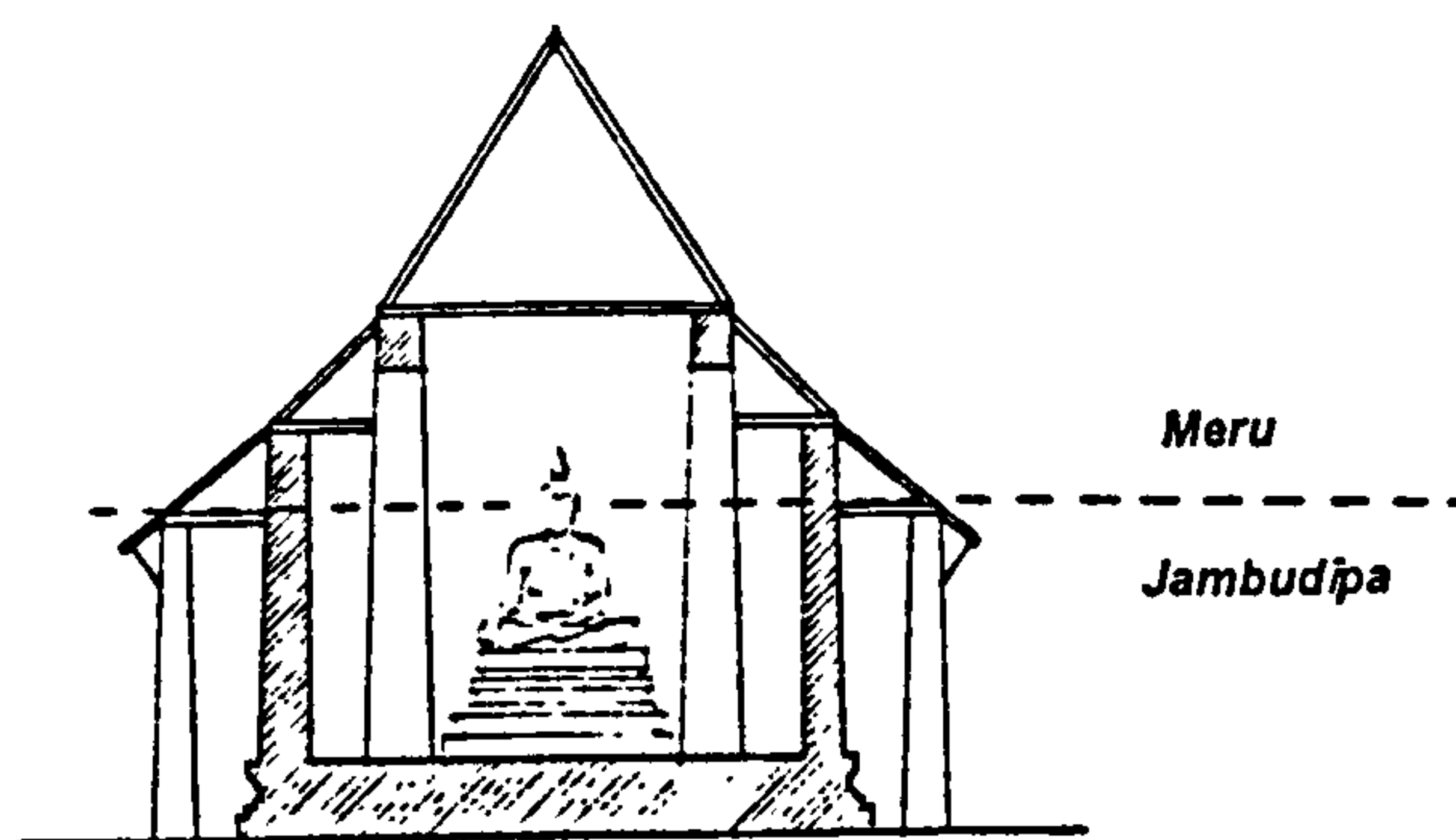
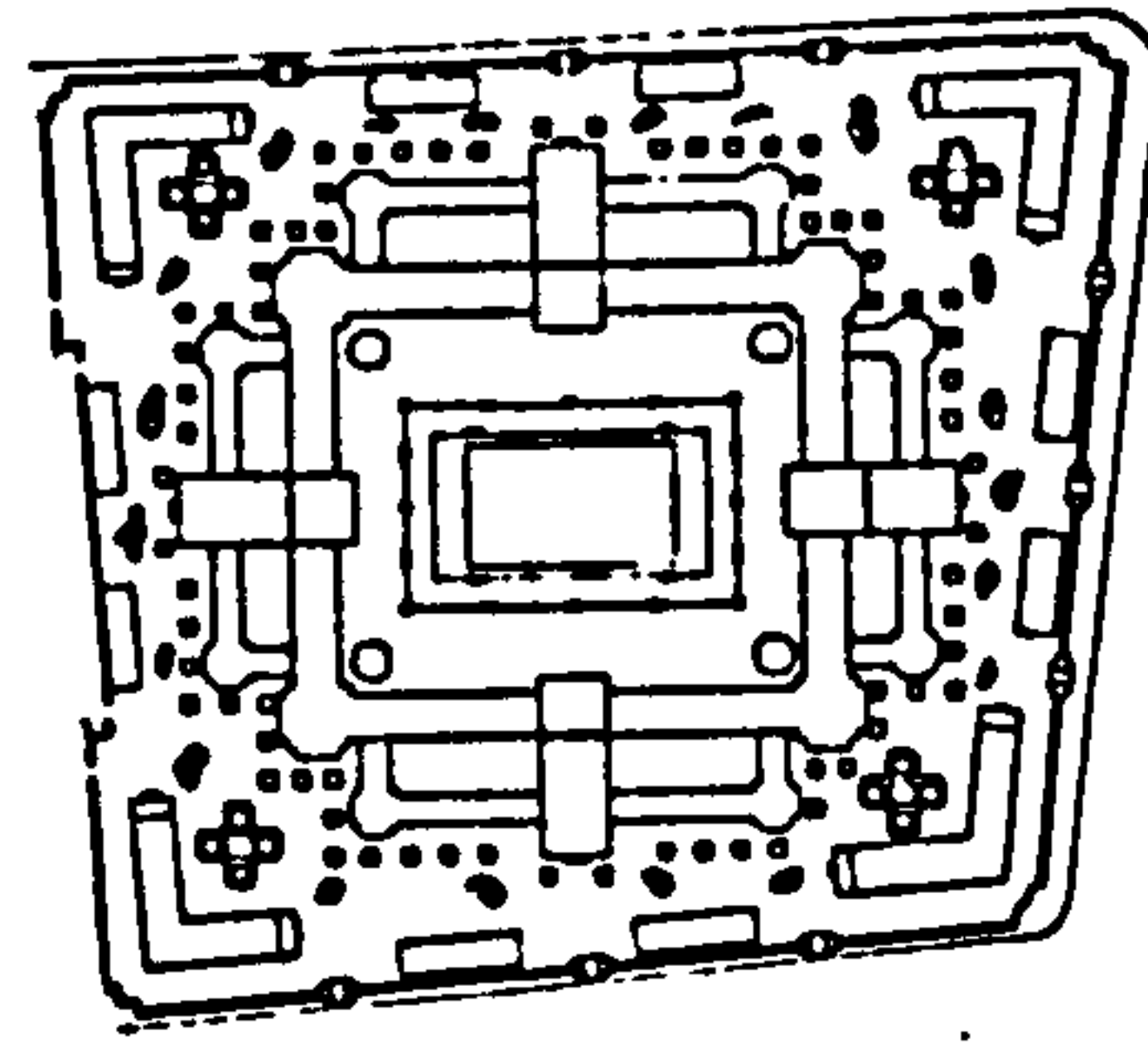


Fig. 4.52 Vertical symbolic planning, *wihan*, *Wat Suthat*

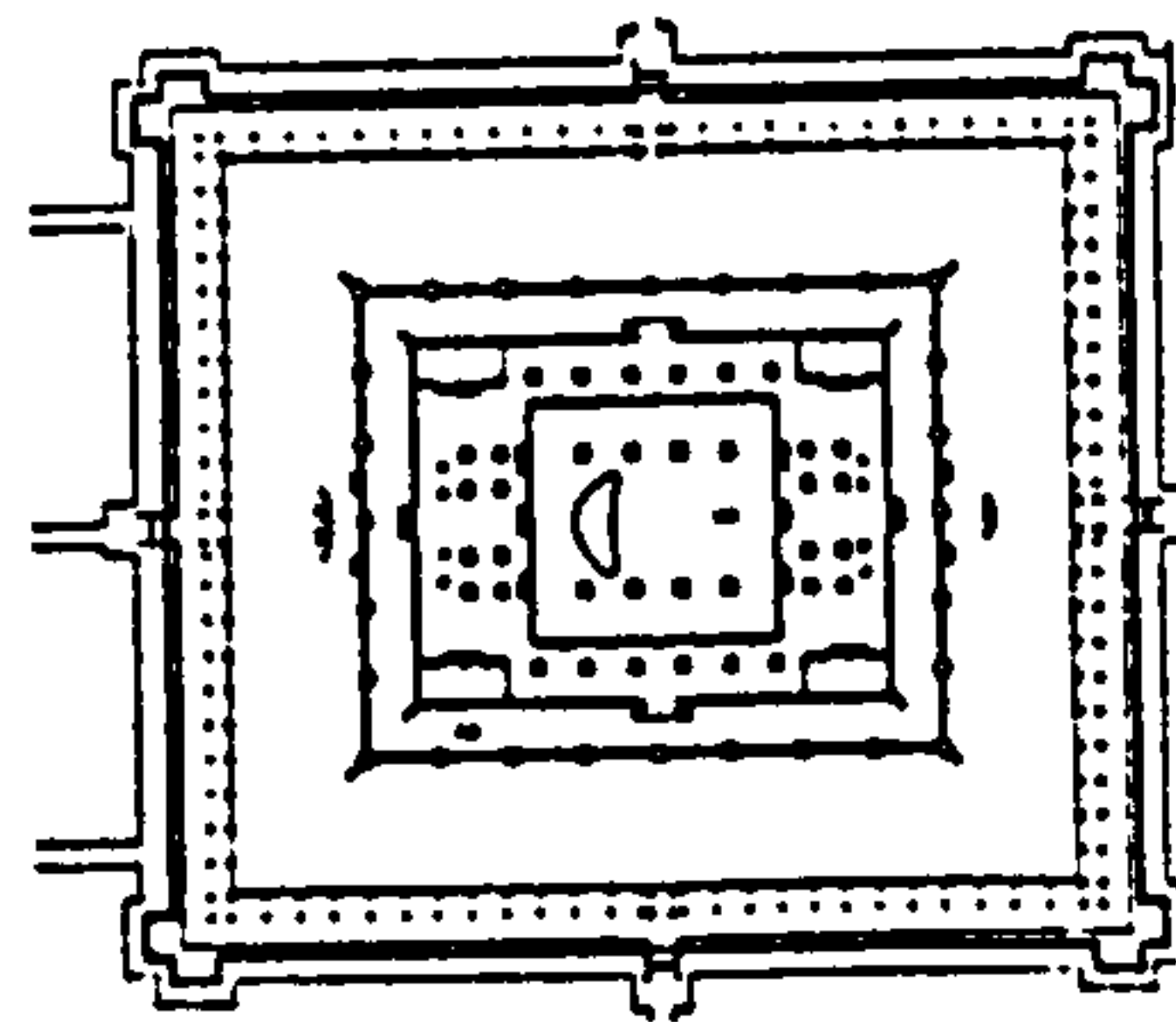
The symbolic planning of the *wihan* and its surroundings has been interpreted to indicate that it is planned along a similar system to the *ubosot* complex of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. Mount *Meru* and the Diamond Throne are symbolized in the same building. However, the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat* contains more elaborate mural paintings. The arrangement of groups of symbols into upper and lower parts may again be compared to the picture of the *Traiphum* diagram in the manuscript painting (Khmer version). The upper part represents Mount *Meru*, the Seven Mountain Ranges and the *Cakkavāla* Peak. The lower part is an interpretation of the illustrations of *Jambudīpa* and *Himavanta* Forest (Fig. 4.52). Moreover, the layout plan of the *wihan* and its surroundings may also be compared to the illustration of *Jambudīpa* as well as the *ubosot* complex of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. The *wihan* of *Wat Suthat*, the four *wihan* pavilions and the twenty-eight Chinese *chedis* are comparable to *Majjhimadesa*, as

⁶¹ See also the discussion of the themes from *Himavanta* and 550 *Jātakas* as the symbol of *Himavanta* in *Jambudīpa* in the analysis of the symbolic planning of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama III in this Chapter.

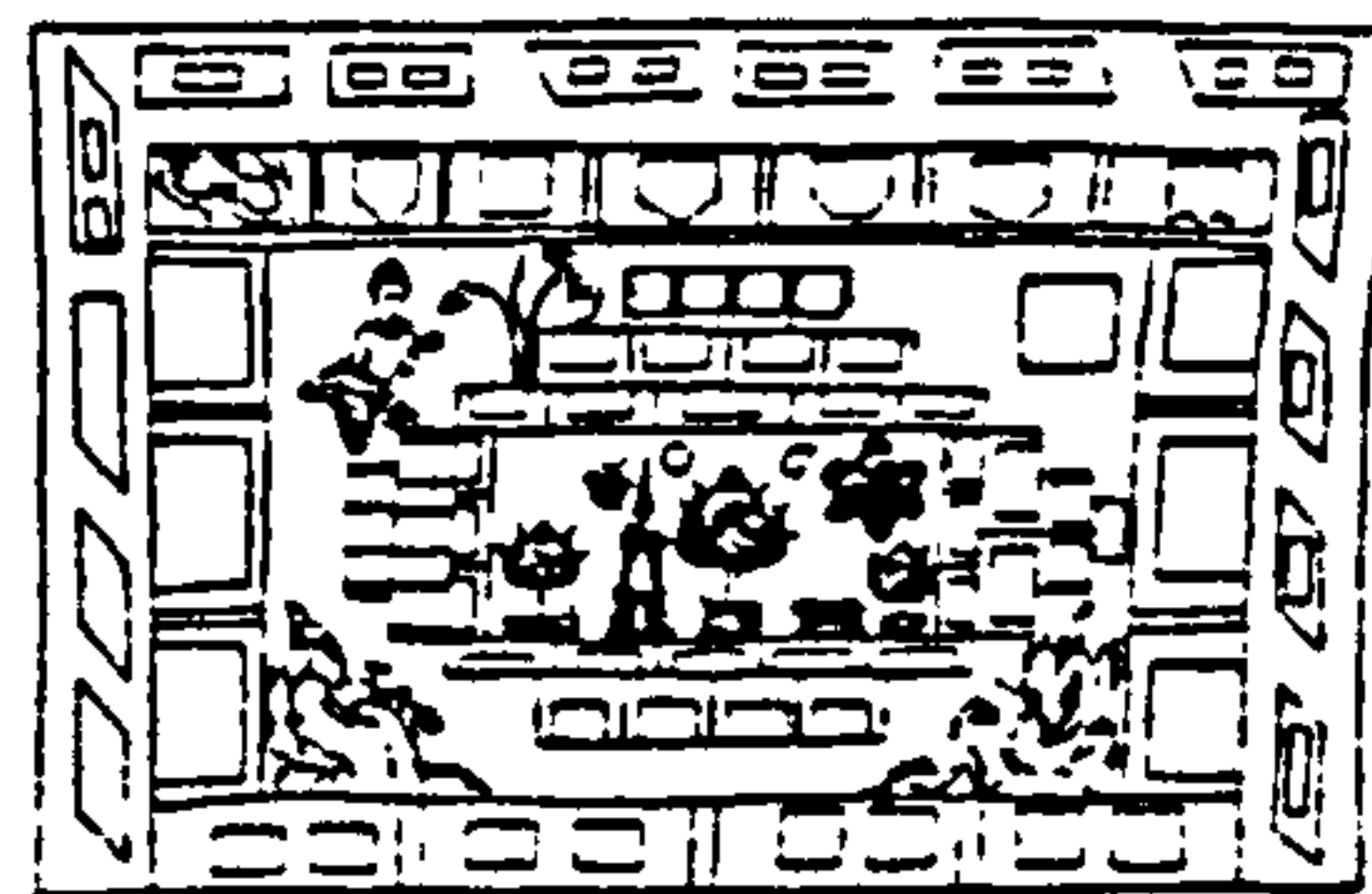
illustrated at the centre of *Jambudīpa* (Fig. 4.53). The gallery encircling the *wihan* and *salas* represents *Himavanta* and the regions outside *Majjhimadesa*.



1



2



3

Fig. 4.53 Diagram of *Jambudīpa*; 1) *ubosot* complex, *Wat Phra Chetuphon*; 2) *wihan* complex, *Wat Suthat*; 3) diagram of *Jambudīpa*, *Traiphum* manuscript painting, Khmer version

The *Ubosot*

The study of *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings in Chapter 3 has already shown that the theme of *Jātakas*, the Life of the Buddha, and the *Cakkavāla* paintings are symbols denoting the moment when the Buddha attained Enlightenment at the Diamond Throne, in the centre of *Jambudīpa*.⁶² The paintings of the Life of the Buddha and the scene of the Buddha's victory over *Māra* in the *ubosot* of *Wat Suthat*, undoubtedly symbolize the same concept. Although the *Cakkavāla* painting is not found in the *ubosot*, it appears in full in the *wihan*. This arrangement is comparable to the design of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I, in which the *Cakkavāla* painting was put in the north *wihan* instead of in the *ubosot*. It is worth noting that both the symbolic planning of the *ubosot* complex of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and that of the *phutthawat* of *Wat Suthat* allocated the *Cakkavāla* painting to the north of the buildings that contain the themes of the Buddha's Life and the *Jātakas*. These symbolic settings are in line with the fact that *Jambudīpa* is located to the south of Mount *Meru*.

There is another design characteristic in the *ubosot* of *Wat Suthat* which confirms the position of the presiding Buddha image as the Diamond Throne. In his explanation of the Royal Festivals of the Twelve Months (*Phra ratchaphithi sibsongduan*), King Chulalongkorn mentions that the eight mounting platforms of the *ubosot* of *Wat Suthat* were used as stations for placing Buddha images of the Seven Great Places. In the *Visākhapūjā* ceremony⁶³ these images would be placed on the platforms for lay people to pay homage to them and attend the *Pathamasambodhi* Sermon (Chulalongkorn 1951, 183). This explanation does not specify the gestures of the images. However, the iconography of these images should be related to the episodes of the Seven Great Places, which have the Diamond Throne at the centre. The eight mounting platforms (Fig. 4.46) are therefore probably assumed to be the Seven Great Places. According to its symmetrical design, the number of the mounting platforms needs to be eight. However, the Seven Great Places located to the east of the main gallery of the *wihan* are also represented in eight stations. There are two Bodhi-trees, which actually symbolize the same station but represent two episodes: the Victory over *Māra* and the episode of the first week that the Buddha sat there and felt the bliss of deliverance.

⁶² See Chapter 3 for the study of the *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings.

⁶³ This is the worship on the Full-Moon Day of the sixth lunar month, in commemoration of the Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Passing (Prayuddha 1985, 404).

The eight mounting platforms might be arranged to serve eight episodes of the Seven Great Places. As a result, the eight mounting platforms also mark the presiding Buddha image in the *ubosot* as the Buddha sitting on the Diamond Throne under the Bodhi-Tree.

The stories of *Pacceka Buddhas* represented on the lower part of the hall of the *ubosot* imply a place in *Himavanta*. *Traiphumlokawinitchai* states that the assembly place of the *Pacceka Buddhas* is in a Jewelled Hall at *Gandhamādanakūta* Peak in *Himavanta* (Thampricha 1992, 109-10). The stories of the *Pacceka Buddhas* in the *ubosot* are apparently represented in this Jewelled Hall. The *ubosot* therefore conveys more than one concept. It is not only a symbol of *Majjhimadesa* with a Diamond Throne at its centre, but it is also a symbol of the Jewelled Hall, the meeting place of the *Pacceka Buddhas* in *Himavanta*. The arrangement of the mural paintings, which are separated into upper and lower parts of the *ubosot*, is also comparable to the *Traiphum* illustration (Khmer version). It clearly shows that the upper part, which represents the Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa*, is placed over the *Himavanta* Forest, similar to how it is portrayed in the illustration (Fig. 4.54).

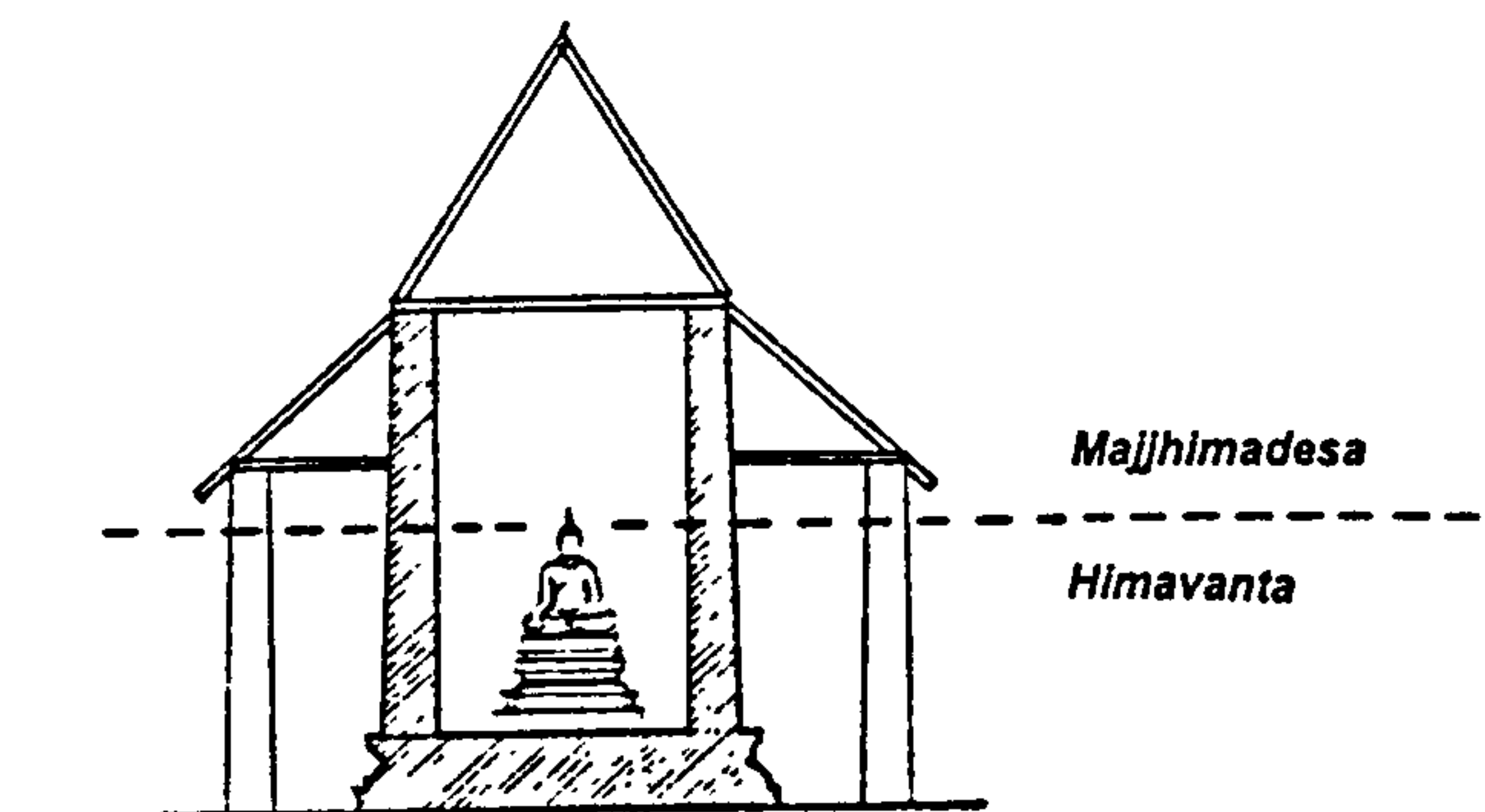


Fig. 4.54 Vertical symbolic planning, *ubosot*, Wat Suthat

The *Kanprian* and Bell Tower

Even though the *kanprian* and the bell tower are located in the *sangkawat*, their positions and meanings are connected to the planning system of the sanctuary area (*phutthawat*). Their functions are the communal facilities of the monks, and they should have been located at the centre of the residence compound, instead of at the corner. According to the studies of the symbolic planning of the Royal Chapel, *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Ratcha-orot*, the meaning of a bell tower relates to *Yamaloka* (the Realm of the Lord of Death).⁶⁴ It is usually located in the south or south-west direction, which is the lowest and most inauspicious position in the compound. Another condition is that it is not on the main east-west axis. The complex of the *kanprian* and the bell tower of *Wat Suthat*, which is located south-west of the sanctuary area, indicates that they are related to the lowest realm (Fig. 4.55).

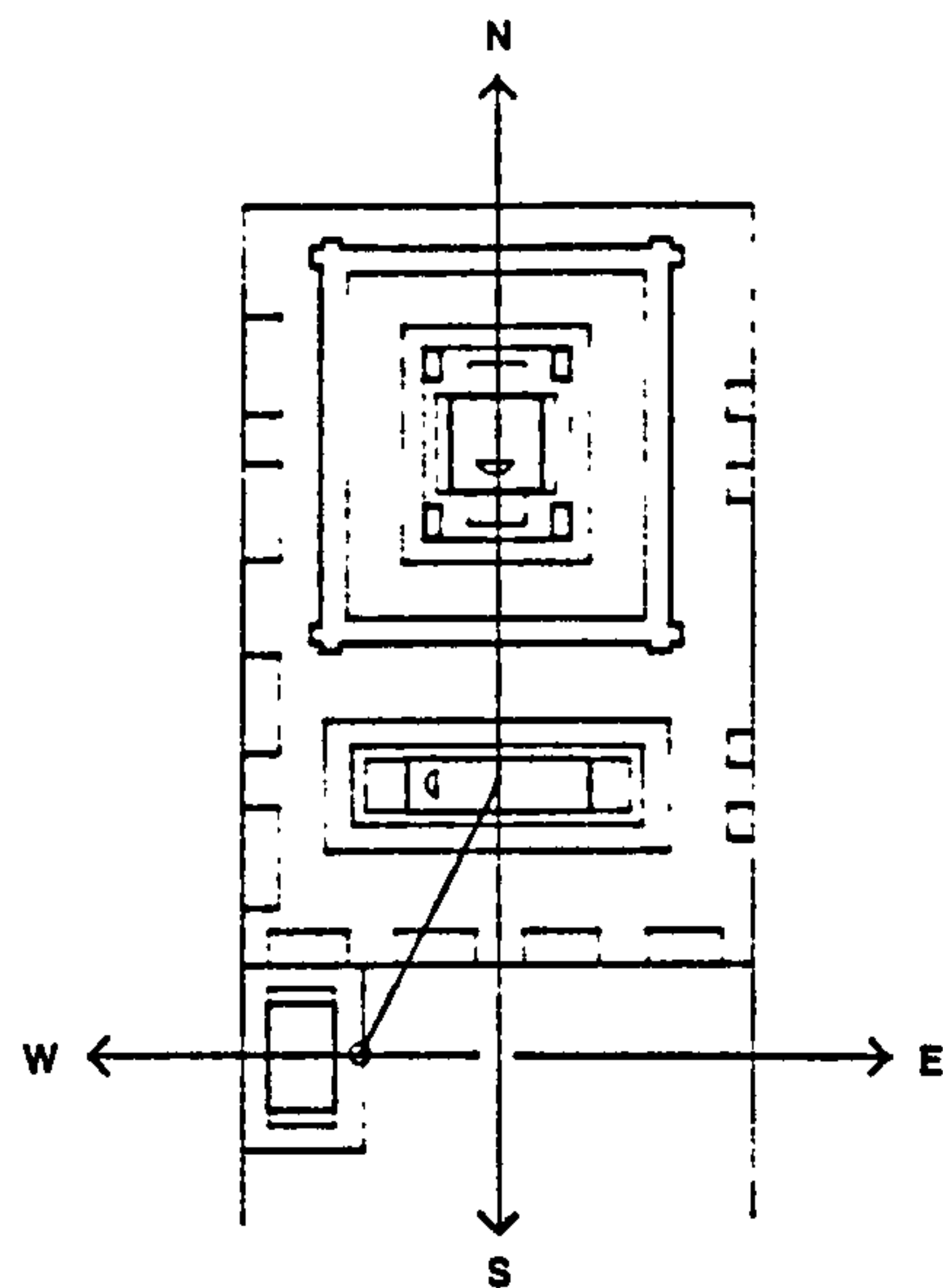


Fig. 4.55 Axis organization, *Wat Suthat*

⁶⁴ See the studies of the Royal Chapel and *Wat Phra Chetuphon* in Chapter 3 and the study of *Wat Ratcha-orot* in this Chapter.

Neither the *kanprian* nor the bell tower contain any elements that can be clearly attributed to a particular concept of place. However, there is an issue which might connect to the symbol of the *kanprian* as a realm of hell. The principal Buddha image in the *kanprian* was cast from opium tin and lead canisters. During his reign, which was strongly opposed to the use and sale of opium, King Rama III issued a strict decree making the use and sale of the drug a crime in Siam. Surprisingly, the decree added the statement that consuming opium leads to hell.⁶⁵ As a result, both the location and the origin of the principal Buddha image in the building connect the *kanprian* to the Realm of Hell. The bell tower therefore might be the symbol of the *Yamaloka* (The Realm of the Lord of Death) similar to those of *Wat Ratcha-orot* and of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*.

The Connection of the *Wihan*, *Ubosot* and *Kanprian*

Apart from the symbolic setting in a single building, there is a connection between the buildings in the whole compound of *Wat Suthat*. The two layers of the symbolic planning in the *ubosot* and the *wihan* are arranged in accordance with the *Traiphum* illustration (Khmer version). The vertical section of the Realm of Desire (*Kāmahūmi*), from the top of Mount *Meru* down to the *Cakkavāla* peak in the illustration, is likewise set in the upper part of the *wihan*, while *Jambudīpa* is put in the upper part of the *ubosot*. Lower realms to the south-west are the bell tower and the *kanprian*, which are comparable to the *Yamaloka* and hell. All these arrangements from north to south are similar to the organization of the illustration. A similar system is also found in the lower section of the *wihan* and the *ubosot*. The lower layer of the *wihan* is comparable to the illustration of *Jambudīpa* and *Himavanta*. The lower layer of the *ubosot* is the symbol of *Himavanta* Forest. Beneath the *Himavanta* Forest in the illustration is the *Yamaloka* and hell, which are symbolized by the bell tower and the *kanprian* respectively (Fig. 4.56).

However, the four small *salas* and the eight larger *salas* which are located next to the outermost wall are the elements to which demarcate the whole compound as *Jambudīpa*, like the system found in the *salas* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. They contain the same subjects, the themes from *Jātakas* and *Himavanta*, and are located along the

⁶⁵ Bradley, D.E. (Ed.). 1873. *Kotmai muangthai* [The Laws of Siam], (Bangkok): 66. Cited in Nithi (1980, 58).

wall, to exemplify the form of *Jambudīpa* in accordance with the *Traiphum* manuscript painting. Apart from the vertical axis of the *wihan*, whose upper part symbolizes Mount *Meru*, it can be concluded that the main concept of the sanctuary area (*phutthawat*) is the symbol of *Jambudīpa*. Both the centres of the *wihan* and the *ubosot* signify the Diamond Throne.

The relationship between the pattern of the *Traiphum* illustration (Khmer version) and the symbolic planning not only of *Wat Suthat*, but also of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, *Wat Ratcha-orot* and the Royal Chapel, have been analysed to clearly indicate that this illustration is the most important guideline for the planning.

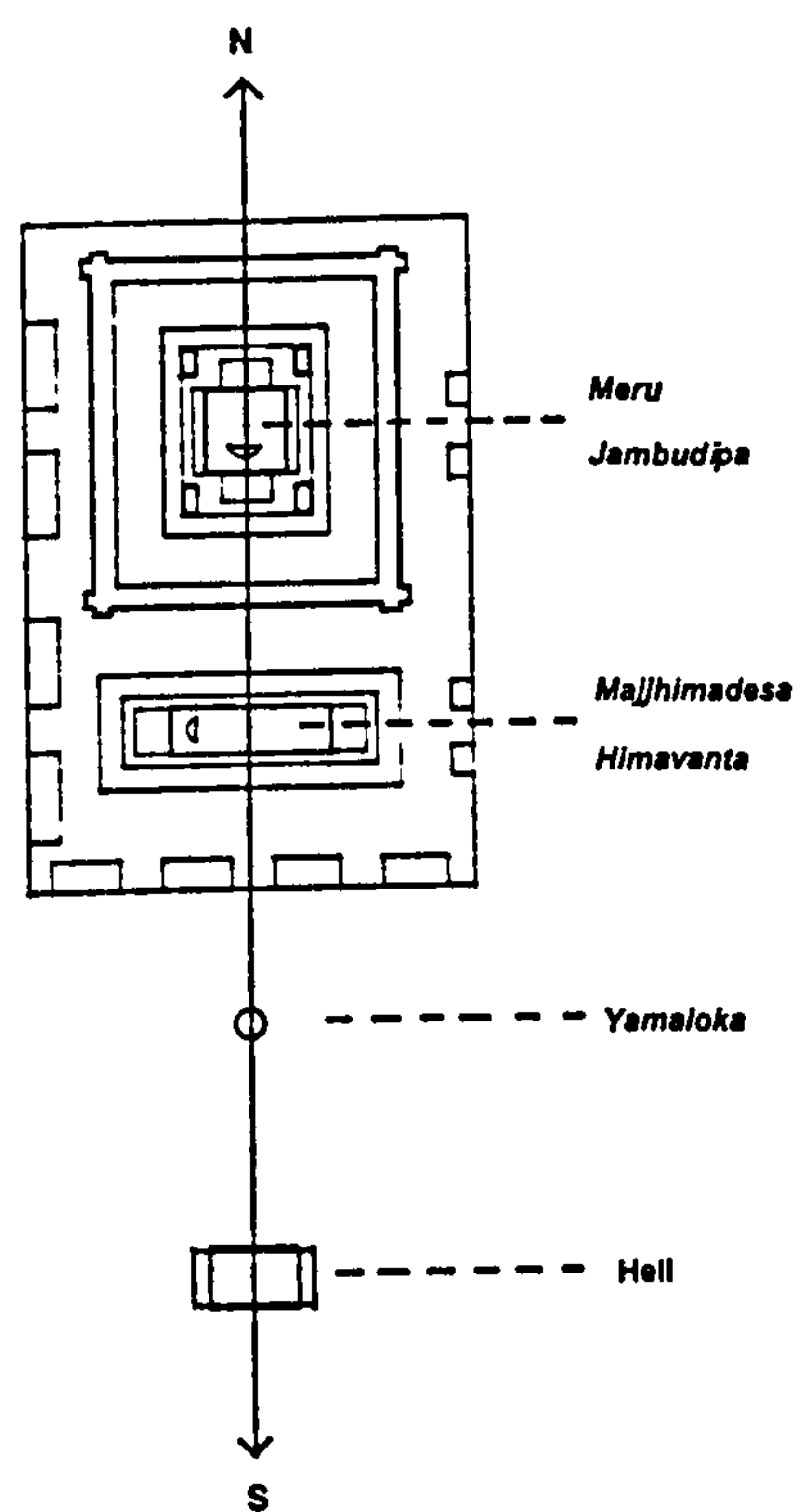


Fig. 4.56 Symbolic planning, *Wat Suthat*

Brahmanistic Gods and *Ramakian*

Apart from the symbolic planning of the *Traiphum* cosmology, which has had its system uncovered, the Brahmanistic Gods are also inserted into the *Traiphum* system of *Wat Suthat*. Most of the icons of the gods and the scenes of *Ramakian* appear on the door and window panels. The number of the Brahmanistic Gods represented in *Wat Suthat* is far greater than in any other royal *wats*. This is probably because *Wat Suthat* is located at the centre of the city and close to the Brahmanistic Temple which is situated just to the north. These principal gods are represented in the *Wat* to symbolize the omnipresence of the gods in the universe, particularly in *Jambudīpa*, as the protecting gods or those who in one way or another bring benefits to humans (see Chapter 3). However, on the outside faces of the window and door panels of the *ubosot* appear scenes of the palace of the God Indra. The position of these scenes are not related to the concept of the building, which represents *Jambudīpa*. They might represent the Indra God as a Buddhist protecting god, particularly regarding *Jambudīpa*, the land of Buddhism.

4.3 RAMA III AND HIS ROYAL WATS

As we have seen, even though the royal *wats* of Rama III traditionally represent the *Traiphum*, they are much more complicated than the designs of Rama I. Several layers of symbolic planning are put together in the compound of a *wat*. In addition, the main buildings of the most important *wats*, the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat*, represent the overlapping of the symbols of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa*. In *Wat Ratcha-orot* and *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, the symbolic planning of the *Traiphum* was extended to include the realm of *Nibbāna*. Some historical issues and concepts of Kingship will be analysed to indicate their relation to the royal *wats* of this period.

The Siam of the time of Rama III was very different to that of the reign of Rama I. The complexity of the context of Rama III's reign derived from the arrival of the Western powers in Asia, which affected political and cultural thought, the increasing trade with China, and the domestic politics relating to the establishment of the *Thammayut* Buddhist sect which brought about the controversy in the Siamese *sangha*. All of these issues seem important in the process of the legitimization of Rama III's own position.

It is noteworthy that the most important royal *wats* of the kingdom began to be constructed and restored after 1831, two years after Mongkut had established the *Thammayut*. The construction of *Wat Suthat* commenced in 1834, ten years after Rama III came to the throne. This meant that the construction program begun by Rama I and carried on by Rama II was left untouched during the early period of Rama III's rule. Moreover, the principal *prang* of *Wat Arun* was begun in 1842 when the British defeated China in the Opium War (see Table 4.6). These events seem to relate to the influence of the West and the problem of establishing the *Thammayut* sect.

Year	Event
1824	Rama III ascended to the throne
1824-1826	The first Anglo-Burmese war
1825	Henry Burney arrived in Bangkok
1826	The Burney Treaty was concluded
1828	Christian missionaries arrived in Bangkok
1829	Prince Mongkut established <i>Thammayut</i> sect
1831	<i>Wat Ratcha-orot</i> was completed, and the restoration of the Royal Chapel began
1832	The restoration of <i>Wat Phra Chetuphon</i> began
1833	American Treaty, the restoration of <i>Wat Nangnong</i> began
1834	The construction of <i>Wat Suthat</i> began
1835	The restoration of <i>Wat Yannawa</i> began
1837	Mongkut was appointed an abbot of <i>Wat Bowonniwet</i>
1839-1842	Anglo-Chinese war
1841	Demarcation of the <i>sima</i> boundary of <i>Wat Nangnong</i>
1842	British defeated China, and the principal <i>prang</i> of <i>Wat Arun</i> was begun
1844	Robert Hunter was expelled
1845	<i>Wat Phra Chetuphon</i> was completed
1847	<i>Wat Suthat</i> was completed
1849	Eight French missionaries were expelled
1850	Sir James Brook arrived in Bangkok
1851	Rama III's reign ended

Table 4.6 The major events in Rama III's reign

The issue of the effect of the West seemed not to be a significant concern during the early period of Rama III's reign. Although the British demonstration of their power over the Burmese had alerted the Siamese to be more cautious of the West, the Burney treaty of 1826 to some extent relieved the political tension between Siam and the West. Even though there were some minor incidents concerning the boundary of Lower

Burma and Siam, they were not of serious interest to the Siamese court. It was not until after the incident of Tenasserim province in 1840 that the British needed to make an agreement about the boundary demarcation (Thongchai 1994, 62-68).⁶⁶

The teaching of Christianity by missionaries did not have a major effect on Siamese thought, but the Western technology brought by them was a critical influence. The missionaries also had remarkably little success in making conversions. Regarding the relations between the West and the Siamese court during Rama III's early reign, Vella comments that:

For about twenty years after the conclusion of the Burney treaty Siam and the Western powers seem to have maintained satisfactory relations. Although some foreign diplomats found Siamese official diplomatic ceremonies unduly time consuming and irksome, all were well received. The Siamese had adopted some modifications in ceremonial procedure for receiving Westerners during the seventeenth century and were willing to make additional minor modifications to suit the new foreign emissaries. There are records of the granting of six audiences with the king to Western diplomats during a period of thirteen years from 1826 to 1839- a figure that probably cannot be matched by any other independent Asiatic country during that time (Vella 1957, 125).

The issue of the *Thammayut* sect has always been considered as both a political and a religious problem for Rama III (Naruemol 1982, 94-95). It is, in addition, connected to the restoration of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. The restoration thus had a number of intentions. In order to avoid a violent encounter between state authorities and *Thammayut*, Rama III appointed Kammün Nuchitchinorot, who was an elder and a scholar of the Siamese *sangha*, and was Mongkut's uncle, to be the chief of the Siamese *Sangha*. *Wat Phra Chetuphon* was therefore seemingly the administrative centre of the Siamese church. Mongkut and the *Thammayut* sect were also placed under the administration of Nuchitchinorot in order to reconcile the situation (Prathip 1982, 125). The depiction of the signs of the Siamese *sangha* organization in the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* clearly reflects this circumstance. Because of his concern over the unity of the Siamese *sangha* under his rule, Rama III set the symbols of the Siamese *sangha* into the building which was the symbol of Mount *Meru* and the Diamond Throne. This might be a strategy of ritual that Rama III thought would strengthen the unity of the *sangha*, and it implied that the outstanding role of the *Wat*

⁶⁶ See the study of this conflict over the boundary between Siam and the West in Thongchai (1994).

was that it was the real centre of the Siamese *sangha* at that time.

4.3.1 The Effect of the West

The study of the symbolic planning of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* suggests that a number of subjects depicted in the *wat* were not related to the *Traiphum* concept of space. Most of these subjects are moralist tales, poems, local knowledge of medicines and myths. *Wat Phra Chetuphon* was completed and consecrated in 1845 and *Wat Suthat* in 1847. The final decorations and inscriptions are considered to have been carried out in the last five years of the construction, during the period after 1840 when Western culture was influencing Siamese thought, especially that of the royalty and nobility. Even though symbolic decorations needed to be agreed at the beginning of the design process, the subjects represented in the form of inscriptions could be installed during this final stage of construction without any reference to the original plan.

Wirailkha (1987, 123-24) indicates that although the Siamese accepted some Western technology during this period, they were at the same time anxious that traditional Thai knowledge was being devalued and might be ignored. Rama III therefore limited his interest in the adoption of Western culture and attempted to preserve the role of traditional Thai technology. He provided court medical doctors to give treatment to some members of royalty, who might have preferred the modern medical services of the missionaries, for instance Prince Mongkut and Prince Čhuthamani. They were then deterred from receiving any treatment from the missionary doctors, even though they wished to.

It should be proposed here that the depiction of various subjects in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* may reflect Rama III's determination to preserve the high esteem of Thai culture and maintain the status of the kingdom. The subjects of the thirty-two civilized foreigners and ethics imply that the persons who made them deliberately showed that they were ignoring the reality that the Westerners possessed higher technology than Siam. The inscriptions categorize Lanka as the foremost of all countries of the world, and Siam as the second (see FAD. 1974, 695), since Lanka had been regarded as the land of pure Buddhism. The pure *Pāli* canon could be found only in Lanka. The implication of this category reveals that Buddhism was, in every respect, the principal source from which all other kinds of knowledge derived. Other Europeans, the Dutch,

Italian and French, were fifth, sixth and seventh respectively in terms of rank and status. However, the British, the most powerful nation at that time, was not on the list. It was intentionally ignored by the Siamese (Wirailekha 1987, 124). The depiction of traditional Thai knowledge in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* functioned, on the one hand, to preserve the traditional Thai heritage, and on the other it implied that Rama III accepted that the old Siamese way of thought was obsolescent (Wirailekha 1987, 124).

Most of the literary works inscribed on stone plates and installed in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* related to proverbs, specimens of verse-forms and poetic metres, moralist tales, and also traditional Thai medical subjects. These subjects were being pushed aside and were beginning to lose their prestige in Siamese society, for instance, the collection of tales such as *Paksi pakaranam*, *Pisat pakaranam*, and *Nonthuk pakaranam*.⁶⁷ They were originally *Sanskrit* tales and were translated into Thai in the late Ayutthaya period.⁶⁸ These tales were neither popular nor the favourite stories to be adapted into plays. They were not even known by ordinary Thai people.⁶⁹

The specimens of verse-forms inscribed in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* also have a complicated structure, are difficult to compose and were beginning to go out of fashion. The '*klon*', which were simplest to compose, was instead in favour, as were prose literary works (*Roikaeo*) (Nithi 1986, 68-73). Since the time of Rama I, many of the translated works of literature in prose became important and facilitated reading. *Samkok*, *Rājādhirāja*, *Mahāvamsa*, *Jinakālamālipakarana* and the *Traiphum* are all written in prose. Therefore, the specimens of verse-forms might be seen to be less favoured in modern Siamese society, which tended to favour Western culture. In the prologue to the collection of the poems in *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, it was stated:

That they had been composed by a number of poets at the instigation of the king who wished that future generations should be able to obtain easy access to that branch of knowledge, which was in olden times considered as the knowledge essential to a gentleman but has now become rare among people who have turned to bad ways (Dhani 1976b, 17).

⁶⁷ See all these *Pakaranams* in CS 1963, Vols. 1 and 2, *Prachum Pakaranam* [Collected Stories], Khurusapha (Bangkok).

⁶⁸ Dhani Nivat, 1960. 'Siamese Literature', SEATO Lecture (Bangkok): 17, cited in Nithi (1986, 18).

⁶⁹ Kusuma Raksamani, 1978-1979, '*Nithan pan̄cha tantra chabap phasa thai*' [*Pañca tantra* Tales of Thai versions], *Aksonsaf*, Silpakorn University, 2, 1-2, cited in Nithi (1986, 18).

The most curious example of the preservation of a cultural relic is that of the ship of *Wat Yannawa*. In 1835 a young nobleman called Luang Sidhi succeeded in building a ship after the European fashion. Rama III was then restoring a *wat*. He was so convinced that European ships were bound to replace the Chinese junks that he ordered a model of a Chinese junk as a base for the *chedis*, saying that future generations might not know what a Chinese junk looked like and would be able to satisfy their curiosity in that monastery (Damrong 1926a, 96). Although the ship might imply a particular concept within the religious edifice it is associated with, it also indicates that traditional knowledge was probably going to be ignored by modern technology. The model of a Chinese junk in *Wat Yannawa* and some of the traditional Thai knowledge which was inscribed and installed in *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, therefore, were examples of the old Siamese culture which were being made obsolescent and would be replaced with the more progressive, modern and in short, Westernized cultures. The mingled feeling of realizing the superiority of Western technology and deploring the loss of traditional Thai knowledge is clearly reflected in one of Rama III's messages, where he determined to warn the progressive group of Siamese royalty and nobility:

The hostilities with Annum and Burma seem to be over. They will be only with the West. Please be careful not to be deceived by them. Any matter which we should learn from them let us follow them. However, don't admire or respect everything of theirs (Thiphakorawong 1995, 152).

However, the Siamese who turned to favour Western culture were confined to a minority of some members of the royal family, noblemen and the rich. They were the influences which led to a wider adoption of the traditions of the West after only two decades. Scientific thinking, which was supposedly more rational and provable, had shaken traditional belief, particularly the explanatory accounts of natural phenomena in the *Traiphum*. Several Thai traditional practices were losing their roles in elite Siamese society. Even though the subjects collected in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* were not the most significant because they were miscellaneous moralist teachings and beliefs, they represented those aspects of Siamese thought which might not be able to survive in an age of great change.

4.3.2 The *Traiphum* Cosmological Diagram and *Cakkavatti* Kingship

The two most important centres in the *Traiphum* cosmological diagram are Mount *Meru* and the Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa*. However, we have tried to show that the interpretation of the diagram into the architectural planning of royal *wats* is highly flexible. Rama I, in his royal *wats*, emphasized the significance of *Dhamma* by placing the symbol of *Dhamma*, the *Tripitaka*, in the position of Mount *Meru*. The *Tripitaka* cabinets both at the Royal Chapel and *Wat Phra Chetuphon* symbolized Mount *Meru* by placing statues of *Devas*, *Garudas* and *Asuras* at their pedestals (see Chapter 3). A different interpretation of the *Traiphum* diagram is represented in the symbolic planning of the royal *wats* of Rama III. The two centres, Mount *Meru* and the Diamond Throne were placed vertically over one another in the same building. This method is found in all the most important *wats* of the kingdom: *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, *Wat Suthat* and the Royal Chapel.⁷⁰

The superimposing of Mount *Meru* upon the Diamond Throne is also re-emphasized in the Royal Chapel. The alteration of the pedestal of the Emerald Buddha Image in the Royal Chapel shows the same planning strategy as the design of the pedestal of the principal Buddha image in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the *Tripitaka* cabinets of King Rama I. Twenty-four statues of *Deva* and twenty-four statues of *Garuda* were placed at the pedestal of the Emerald Buddha Image (Sriphuripricha 1973, 34) to symbolize Mount *Meru*. Moreover, surrounding the base of the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel, 112 statues of *Garudas* catching *Nāgas* were also installed. (Sriphuripricha 1973, 26). The *Garudas* in a similar gesture exist at the base of the *Vejayanta* of Indra in the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Ayutthaya version) of the twelfth century (Boisselier 1976 fig. 138). It represents Indra as seated in the midst of the thirty-three gods on a throne supported by caryatids in the form of *Garudas*. The *Garudas* at the base of the *ubosot* might therefore symbolize the building as the *Vejayanta* palace of Indra.

However, the subjects of Siam's provinces and of foreign countries in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* introduce further questions regarding how they were related to the two important centres, and in which conception they were linked together. Because the

⁷⁰ It is worth noting here that these principal *wats* of the kingdom were planned and their symbolic planning was altered to have Mount *Meru* overlap with the Diamond Throne in a similar pattern. The restoration of the Royal Chapel was begun in 1831 (Sriphuripricha 1973, 19), of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* in 1832 and of *Wat Suthat* in 1834.

Siamese provinces and some foreign countries are also illustrated in the *Traiphum* manuscript paintings, they should not be exclusively interpreted from the network of the *Traiphum*. They must also be considered as part of the universe. The integration of the subjects of Siamese provinces and foreign countries in the system of the *Traiphum* is the new interpretation of King Rama III, which brings together the imagined *Traiphum* cosmology and real geographical knowledge. The inclusion of the subjects of Siamese provinces and the *sangha* organization indicate that they are under Siamese sovereignty and are connected to a particular concept of kingship. This interpretation of the concept of space will reveal the meaning of this set of symbols, and how they are connected to the *Traiphum* and Kingship.

The relationship between towns, cities, and the *Traiphum* cosmological diagram is mentioned in the *Traiphum* text as the possession of a *cakkavatti* (Lithai 1985, 197). After the *cakkavatti* had traversed the Four Continents accompanied by his *Cakkaratana* (Bejewelled Wheel) and won the allegiance of all the inhabitants and admonished them to lead righteous lives, he returned to his own city in *Jambudīpa*:

Then it came to him to see, all at once, his great worldly possessions. As though divining the king's wish, the Bejewelled Wheel (*Cakkaratana*) rose skyward. Its brilliant glow was like that of the moon and it lit up the sky. It seemed as if two suns had simultaneously risen from beyond Mount *Sineru*. The people beheld the glorious sight and believed they had seen a second sun. The universal king and his same retinue were born up high by the mighty power of the Supreme Wheel, and their eyes beheld a spectacular view of the entire universe. From where they were they saw Mount *Sineru* standing in the centre surrounded on all four sides by the four kingdoms, the Four Great Continents, and by 2,000 satellite lands, each separated by the waters of the Four Great Oceans. They all saw rivers great and small, streams, mountains and forests, large and small towns, villages, and countless little-known hamlets. There were lakes and ponds which abounded in lotus blooms of all kinds and colours. When the king had seen everything he desired to see, the Bejewelled Wheel led him down back to the city of his residence in the land where we live now (Lithai 1985, 197).

The integration of Mount *Meru*, *Jambudīpa* and minor continents, and also the provinces of Siam and foreign counties, into the plan of a royal *wat* is in fact a representation of these *cakkavatti* possessions through architectural symbol. The symbolic planning of the royal *wats* makes *Jambudīpa* the main concept because it is the centre of the *cakkavatti* kingdom. The Siamese provinces represented in the main gallery of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* obviously indicate that they were the world that was

under Siamese sovereignty at that time. The existing cities, towns, and villages were set in the plan to echo the ideal world of the *Jambudīpa*. The foreign countries in the symbolic planning were conceptually added to symbolize the whole universe. They were all the possessions of the *cakkavatti*, even though in reality they were not under Siamese sovereignty.

It is necessary to bear in mind that these were the symbols of the universe according to the possession of the ideal *cakkavatti*, rather than the real situation. It does not mean that the power of the Siamese king extended to all those countries. The diagram of the *Traiphum* in the planning of the royal *wats*, therefore, might be a proclamation of ideal power of the *cakkavatti* king. On the other hand, it implied a ritual to call for the *cakkavatti* power to maintain peace and prosperity in the kingdom, and also assure that it was still an unconquered state, in times when Western colonialism was everywhere increasing.

The explicit relationship between the *cakkavatti* kingship and the *Traiphum* symbolic planning in the royal *wats* throws light on the problematic issue concerning the iconography of the Sun God in *Wat Ratcha-orot* that was mentioned above. The representation of two suns in the *Wat* may be understood in the light of the passage in the *Traiphum*. The *wihan* and the *kanprian* of *Wat Ratcha-orot* deliberately symbolized two suns in order to represent the Bejewelled Wheel that rises in the air, and whose brilliant glow seems like a second sun. The *singha* lion that is placed at the front of the *wihan* and the icon of the Sun God that is at the front wall of the *kanprian* were to represent two suns in accordance with the story of the ideal *cakkavatti*.

According to the evidence that has been discussed, the *Traiphum* cosmological diagram, the provinces of the Siamese Kingdom, and the symbols of the two suns are, in this sense, elements of an idealized *cakkavatti* kingdom.

Another example which shows Rama III's representation of *cakkavatti* kingship is the painting of the story of King Jambupati,⁷¹ and the crowned Buddha image in the *ubosot* of *Wat Nangnong*. The monastery is another in the list of Rama III's restorations. There is no exact date for the restoration recorded in the Royal Chronicle of the Reign.

⁷¹ See the story of Jambupati in Appendix 8 and the connection of Jambupati and the concept of royal *wats* in Chapter 5.

However, Suchit's research, based on some literature and historical records, concludes that the restoration was begun not earlier than 1833 and the *sima* boundary of the *ubosot* was demarcated and a ceremony held in 1841 (Suchit 1987 in Suchit 1996, 181). Once again the date shows that it was begun during the same period as some of the principal royal *wats* which were constructed after 1830. They were established in order to ensure that the *cakkavatti* power would save the kingdom during the critical situation caused by the power that Westerners actively exercised in the region.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the combination of the story of King Jambupati and the crowned Buddha image represents the Buddha preaching to a universal emperor named Jambupati (Fickle 1974, 85). The same story was depicted in the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Ratchaburana* at Bangkok by Rama I. The king worshipped the crowned Buddha image, the symbol of the great *cakkavatti* of the *Dhamma* realm, which suggests that he wished to achieve the *cakkavatti* kingship in his political realm (Suchit 1996, 187). In addition, Rama III's construction of the principal *prang* of *Wat Arun*, begun in 1842, also related to the concept of the possession of *cakkavatti*, since the *prang* is the symbol of *Meru* mountain and its components signify similar symbolic planning, in terms of the overlapping of *Meru* and the Diamond Throne.⁷²

4.3.3 *Jambudīpa* and the City of *Nibbāna*

Another concept which has been added to the possession of a *cakkavatti*, within the *Traiphum* cosmological diagram from the top of Mount *Meru* down to the human world, is the City of *Nibbāna*. The *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image of both *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Ratcha-orot* is the most important symbol of the City of *Nibbāna*. Moreover, the subjects relating to the City of *Nibbāna* are not confined only to the *wihans*, but extend to cover the area that represents *Jambudīpa* as well, for instance in the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. The realm of *Nibbāna* is actually the same place as *Jambudīpa*, which has maintained its pre-eminence in the symbolic planning of the royal *wats* since Rama I's reign. Although Mount *Meru* is the most important concept of both *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Suthat*, the whole compounds are in fact the symbol of *Jambudīpa*. The planning of *Wat Suthat* clearly shows that both the *wihan* and the *ubosot* represent the Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa*. Aung-Thwin

⁷² See the study of the symbolism of the *prang* in Chapter 5.

indicates the significance of *Jambudīpa* with the Burmese idea that:

Although in Buddhist literature, *Jambudīpa* was technically the southern Island, one of the Four Great Islands (*Mahādīpas*) of the universe; in Burmese political ideology it was Burma's paradise-on-earth (Aung-Thwin 1987, 98).

It was ruled by a moral king (*dhammarājā*) who enforced law and order, whose conquests were 'religious' (*dhammavijaya*), and who used his might for right (*Rājadhama*)....*Jambudīpa*, thus was not an end in itself nor a secular ideal to return to, only a means to another end, namely, *Nibbāna* (Aung-Thwin 1987, 99).

By creating *Jambudīpa* and the realm of *Nibbāna*, Rama III demonstrated his kingship and devoted himself to leading his subjects to *Nibbāna*. He was determined to be virtuous in action, leading to Bodhisattvaship (Achara 1980, 32; Nithi 1980, 53). He exhibited his religious piety in his generosity in distributing alms to the poor. A special building was set up near the palace walls for the distribution of royal alms (Vella 1957, 35). He also provided for the preaching of *Dhamma* to the people, ordered royal scholars to teach *Tripitaka*, provided medicines as charity and ordered that animals be freed on the Buddhist sabbath day (Thai - *Wan phra*) (Thiphakorawong 1995, 146-47). He even allocated a certain amount of rice to junks in the China trade to be distributed free to 'the poor people in China' (Thiphakorawong 1995, 147).

At least two laws also demonstrated Rama III's adherence to Buddhist principles: in 1826 he ordered a tax on fish traps to be discontinued; and in 1835 he abolished the government practice of leasing out islands for the collection of sea turtle eggs.⁷³ On occasion during his reign the King also showed his Buddhist compassion for the people by remitting taxes or by providing government rice at low prices to regions in which crop failures had produced great distress. One of the last acts of Rama III after he became ill showed his concern for Buddhism. On his sickbed he instructed one of his trusted officials to ask his successor to use one-quarter of the money remaining in the treasury to repair and complete Buddhist temples (Thiphakorawong 1995, 152; Vella 1957, 35).

⁷³ Royal Institute, 1930, *Tamnan Phasi Akon Bang Yang* [An Account of Various Taxes] Introduction by Prince Damrong, No. 16 of *Latthithamniam Tang Tang* [Various Customs], Sophon (Bangkok): 9, 13-14; 'Kotmai Phraratchabanyat Ham Hai Prathusarai Tanu' [Law Prohibiting the Harming of Sea Turtles] in Sathian Layalak, *Kotmai Ratchakan Thi 2-3*, Vol. 4 of *Prachum Kotmai Pračhamsok*, 66-69. Cited in Vella (1957, 152).

Rama III's religious devotion is noticeably very closely related to the *cakkavatti-vatta*,⁷⁴ the duties of a universal king or a great ruler. His royal acts corresponded to the duties of a *cakkavatti*. The magnificence of *cakkavatti* kingship covers almost all traditional kingship practices. In terms of architectural symbolic planning, *Jambudīpa*, Mount *Meru* and some other parts of the *Traiphum* cosmology are inseparable from the concept of the possession of the *cakkavatti*. Even the Bodhisattvaship also overlaps with the *cakkavatti-vatta*. Thus, *cakkavatti* is apparently the core conception which integrates subsidiary ideas into the symbolic planning of royal *wats*.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Although the *cakkavatti* is the main concept that is similar to the *wats* of Rama I, the manifestation of kingship in the royal *wats* of Rama III is so obvious that the royal *wats* required much more elaborate elements. This might be due to the requirement of authenticity of symbols, in order to clarify the complexity of the symbolic planning system. Rama III himself and Siamese royalty and nobility, who contributed to the construction of Buddhist monasteries in this period, were those who had become wealthy from trading with China. Nithi (1986) even labels this period the bourgeois culture of early Bangkok.⁷⁵ He suggests that the success of the bourgeois businesses led them to take more interest in the empirical world and rationalism, which might be the origin of the popularization of the idea of realism (Nithi 1986, 195). The need for real elements to denote particular concepts in the planning of royal *wats* is noticeable in this period. A lot of Chinese sculptures, a profit from trading with China, were put in the precinct of the sanctuary area of royal *wats*; some of them contribute to the clarification of the symbolic meaning of their contextual structures. For instance, the application of real plants and rock to form miniature mountains together with Chinese sculptures was certainly an innovation that resulted in the more realistic representation of *Himavanta* Forest. Above all, the subjects of foreign countries and Siamese provinces were based on real geographical knowledge. The statues of hermits in the *salas*, although they were intended to represent medical matters, were also elements that were picked out from the theme of *Himavanta* in the *Traiphum* text. They imply

⁷⁴ See the *Cakkavatti-vatta* in appendix 9.

⁷⁵ See the study of the literature of the early Bangkok period and its culture in *Watthanatham kadumphikap wannakam ton rattanakosin* [Bourgeois culture and the Literature of Early Bangkok Period] in Nithi (1986, 1-234).

both instructional and symbolic functions. The stories of foreigners were also a means of didactic instruments to inform about the world outside Siam.

The need for authenticity in symbolic planning could also be discerned from the subjects relating to Lanka. Apart from the Buddha's Footprint in the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image, the hall of the building was also painted with the accounts from the *Mahāvamsa*, the Great Chronicle of Lanka. Non-Buddhist literature such as *Samkok* was used to represent China because it was assumed to be Chinese history, similar to the implication of the *Mahāvamsa* as representing the chronicle of Lanka. *Samkok* is itself an imported literature and was translated into Thai in the reign of Rama I. It manifests various implications in its representation in *Wat Phra Chetuphon*: a non-Buddhist literature, a historical epic of China, and also a treatise of warfare (*Tamra phichai songkhram*). It was mentioned in the Kawi play, a royal literary work of King Rama II that is a kind of treatise of warfare (Damrong 1964, 4). It was also depicted in the *ubosot* of *Wat Nangnong*.

The *Ramakian* epic, which was a sacred work of literature ever since the Ayutthaya period (Nithi 1986, 31-32), was represented together with non-Buddhist tales, secular matters and also imported alien literature like *Samkok*. Excluded from the story of the Buddha's Life and the subjects of Buddhist texts, the mixed representation of these distinct literary works consequently leads to generalization that all the works are of the same status. The inauguration of Rama III brought together a variety of literary works for representation in *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, which may have brought about misleading interpretations of their different implications. The application of non-Buddhist literature, plays, historical accounts, and some individual interests in royal *wats* of the later period might be the legacy of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. However, the didactic function of the literary works seems to dominate the symbolic function of certain symbols in Thai Buddhist architecture.

TOWARDS A THEORY OF SYMBOLIC PLANNING

This chapter is the concluding analysis of the knowledge gained from the studies in Chapters 3 and 4, and aims to offer a hypothesis on the *Traiphum* symbolic planning of Thai royal Buddhist architecture. A model of the planning system is also proposed in this chapter. The model will help to clarify the symbolic planning of a principal *prang* of royal *wats*, which has not yet been discussed in the previous chapters. Some *prangs* from the Ayutthaya period provide the necessary evidence for the analysis. Textual and archaeological evidence is also investigated to uncover the main concept of the principal *prang* and its connection to kingship practice, particularly the *cakkavatti* concept. The three main concepts, the possession of a *cakkavatti*, the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*, and *Jambudīpa*, will be revealed as being interwoven in the symbolic planning of Thai royal *wats*.

This new interpretation will also indicate the integration of the Brahmanistic concept, the *Theravāda* relic cult based on the *Mahāvamsa* text, and the legitimation of Thai Buddhist kingship under the belief of the cosmic powers and the *cakkavatti* concept. However, the Legend of King Jambupati is apparently to be the rationalized text, which was influenced by the *Mahāvamsa* and connected to the relic cult and the architectural symbols of Thai royal *wats*. As a result, a royal *wat* was built to emphasize the king as a righteous ruler. It was also a meritorious deed which was expected to gain him protective powers from his merit, the power of the Buddha and other celestials.

5.1 THE THEORY OF SYMBOLIC PLANNING OF THAI BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE

The analysis of the symbolic planning of the royal *wats* of King Rama I and King Rama III reveals that there was a good deal of variation, especially in the *ubosots*, *wihans* and *kanprians* which have similar forms. The depiction of specific subjects which are contained in the buildings are the essence which denotes their symbolic meanings. Their contextual planning is also important to the concept of space. The theory of symbolic planning to be proposed here is therefore categorized following the concepts rather than the building types. The main components of the *Traiphum* cosmography

will be explained to show how they are interpreted in the symbolic planning of Thai Buddhist architecture. Since the symbolic planning of a *wat* may involve more than a single concept, and the planning system may incorporate both east-west and north-south axes, there are several layers of diagrams of symbolic planning. The presented theory for each concept is an interpretation of a single layer of symbolic planning.

5.1.1 The Symbolic Planning of *Jambudīpa*

Jambudīpa has been interpreted on various levels of elaboration. Its description involves the subjects and places around its centre, the Diamond Throne (*Vajrāsana*) under the Bodhi tree. *Traiphumlोकawinitchai* states that the Diamond Throne is the Head of the Earth (*Sīsa pathavī*). The Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*) form the inner ring encircling the Diamond Throne, and the outer ring is the Eight Great Places (*Atthamahāthāna*). All of these places are in *Majjhimadesa* (Thampricha 1992, 251-264). Surrounding the *Majjhimadesa* is the *Paccantadesa* or *Paccantima-janapadā*, the outskirts of the *Majjhimadesa* (Thampricha 1992, 248). However, if Buddhism has been established in *Paccantadesa*, they are regarded as *Majjhimadesa*. The *Solasa nagara* or the important Sixteen Cities of Buddhism are also in *Majjhimadesa*. The number of *Solasa nagara* is uncertain since there are some new and growing cities which may be counted among the *Solasa nagara*.¹ It is claimed that during the reign of King Asoka there were 84,000 cities in *Jambudīpa* or *Majjhimadesa* (Thampricha 1992, 271-72). The entire continent of *Jambudīpa* may be named *Majjhimadesa*, and other continents are *Paccantadesa* (Thampricha 1992, 249-30). *Majjhimadesa* and *Jambudīpa* are therefore used interchangeably to refer to places where Buddhism is firmly established (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. I, 419).

Himavanta Forest is part of *Jambudīpa*. It is also the abode of *Pacceka Buddhas*, *rishis* (hermits) and also mythical beasts. The most often mentioned component of *Himavanta* is *Anotatta* Lake. It is the place where meritorious beings come to use the water. *Jambudīpa* may be symbolized in a single building or a complex of structures, and even by the whole compound.

¹ Even though *Solasa nagara* means Sixteen Cities, the text provides twenty-one names of *Solasa nagara*: Bārānasī, Ālavī, Campāka, Kapilavatthu, Kukkuta, Kusinārā, Sāvatti, Kosambī, Sāgala, Sāketa, Pātaliputta, Vesālī, Ujjenī, Sumsumāragiri, Madda, Jetuttara, Mithilā, Takkasilā, Rājagaha, Indapatta and Sankassa (Thampricha 1992, 269).

A Single Building

The Diamond Throne forms the centre in most aspects of symbolization of *Jambudīpa*. The principal Buddha image in a single building may represent the position of the Diamond Throne. The concept is elaborated through the iconography of the Buddha image or the representation of the scenes of *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings (see Chapter 3). The scenes may be represented by other techniques of narrative mode such as bas-relief or different iconographies of Buddha images. The significance of the themes of *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings is to symbolize both the position and the moment when the *Bodhisattva* attained the Enlightenment. The moment that the immense time of practicing virtues had achieved its goal, the *Bodhisattva* became the Buddha. Buddhas of the past in *Theravāda* tradition also relate to the past lives of the *Bodhisattva*. They also imply the repetition of the career of all Buddhas who have similar Virtue practicing and attained the Enlightenment at the same spot, the Diamond Throne.²

A Complex of Buildings and a Gallery

In a grander scale of architectural planning, *Jambudīpa* may be represented by several buildings, forming a complex of structures. The structure containing the Buddha image which represents the centre of *Jambudīpa* is located at the centre. The symbolic diagram of this pattern comprises the centre, which is the symbol of the Diamond Throne, enclosed by one or two rings of symbolic diagram, the Buddha's Life and/or the Buddhas of the past (Fig. 5.1).

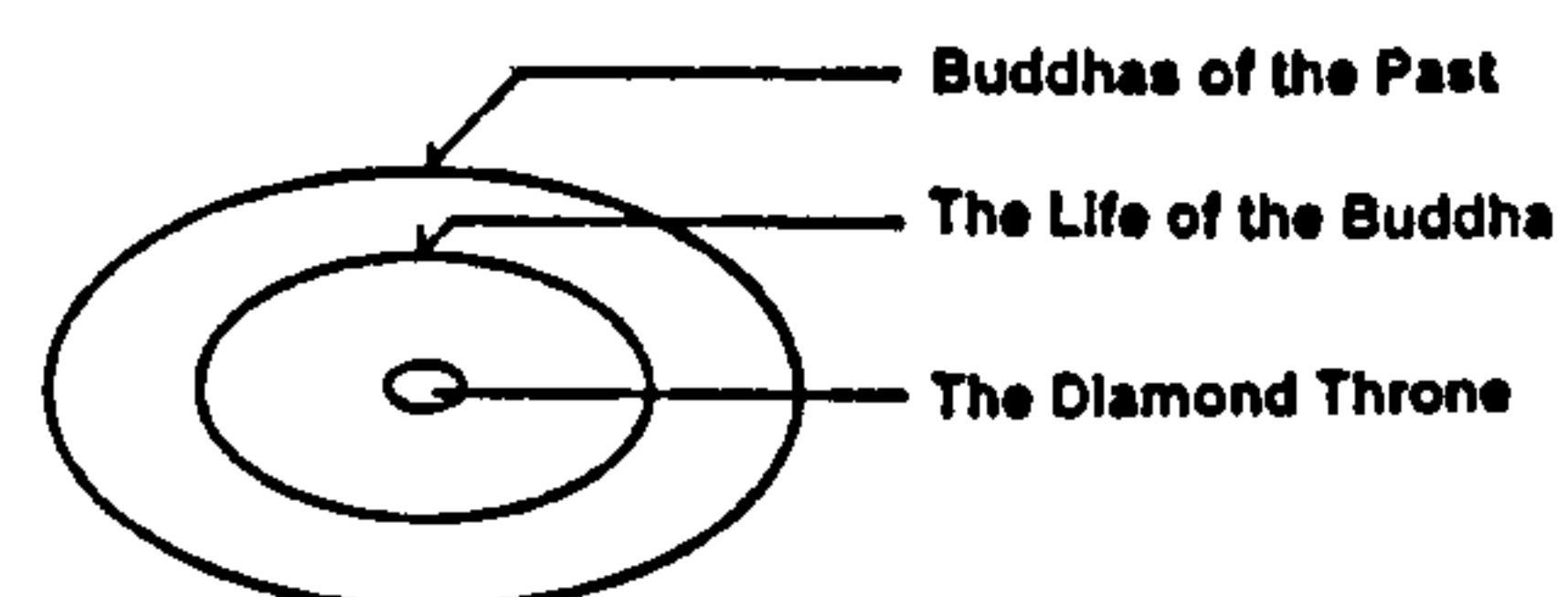


Fig. 5.1 Diagram of elements representing *Jambudīpa*

² See the discussion about the twenty-four Buddhas of the past of *Theravāda* Buddhism in Horner (1975).

A gallery which contains Buddha images and encloses the central structure is part of *Jambudīpa*. The images represent Buddhas of the past whose attainment of the Enlightenment occurred only in *Jambudīpa*. A gallery may enclose a single building, for example the *ubosot* of *Wat Arun* which was built in the reign of King Rama III. It contains the *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings,³ to represent the centre of *Jambudīpa*. Another example is the complex of the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image of *Wat Ratcha-orot*, which is enclosed by a gallery containing Buddha images. The reclining image represents the episode of the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. There are no elements which are clearly related to the symbol of Mount *Meru* in this complex. Therefore, the gallery containing Buddha images is an organism of the symbolic planning of *Jambudīpa*.

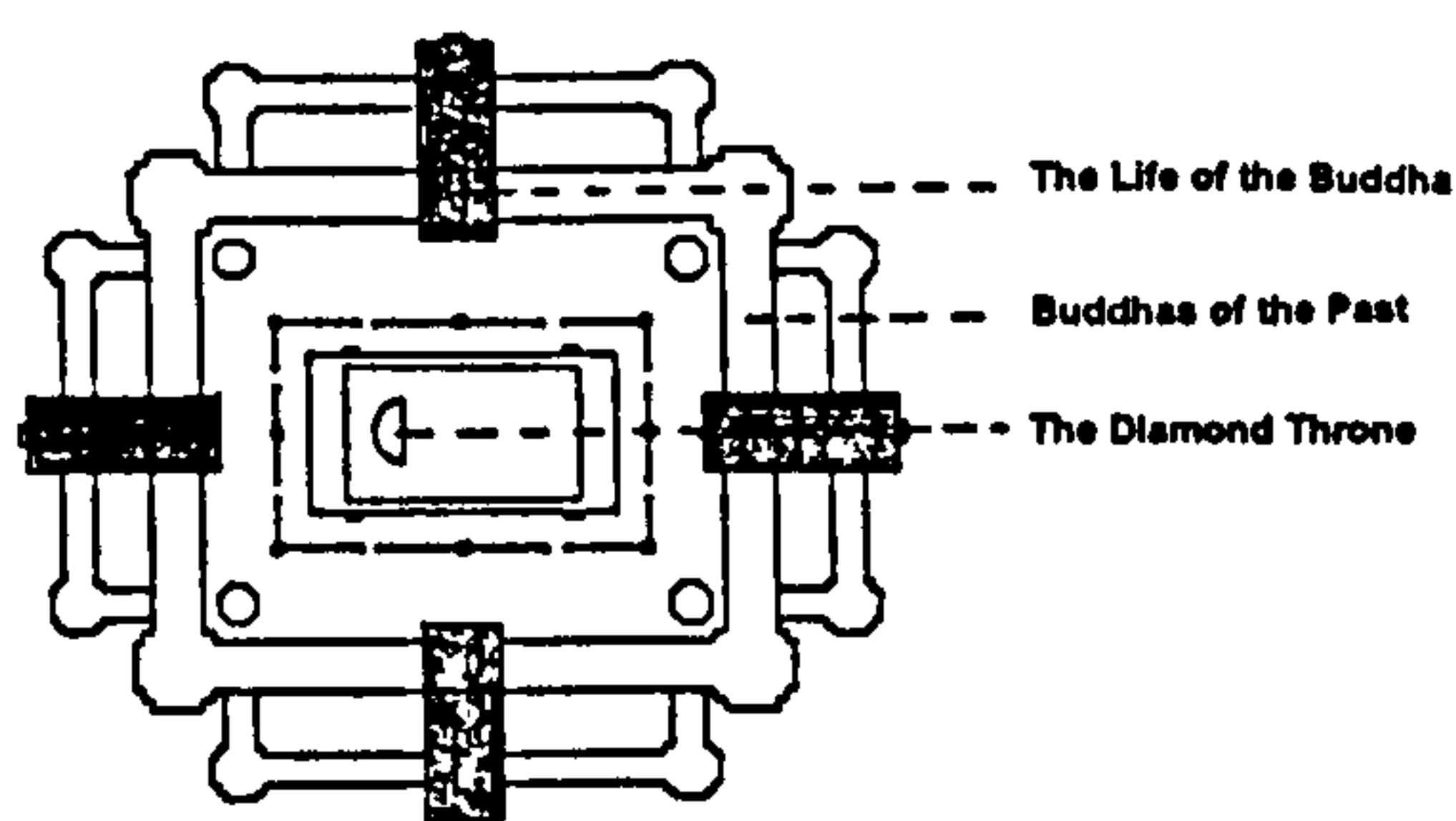


Fig.5.2 Diagram of elements representing *Jambudīpa*, *ubosot* complex, *Wat Phra Chetuphon*

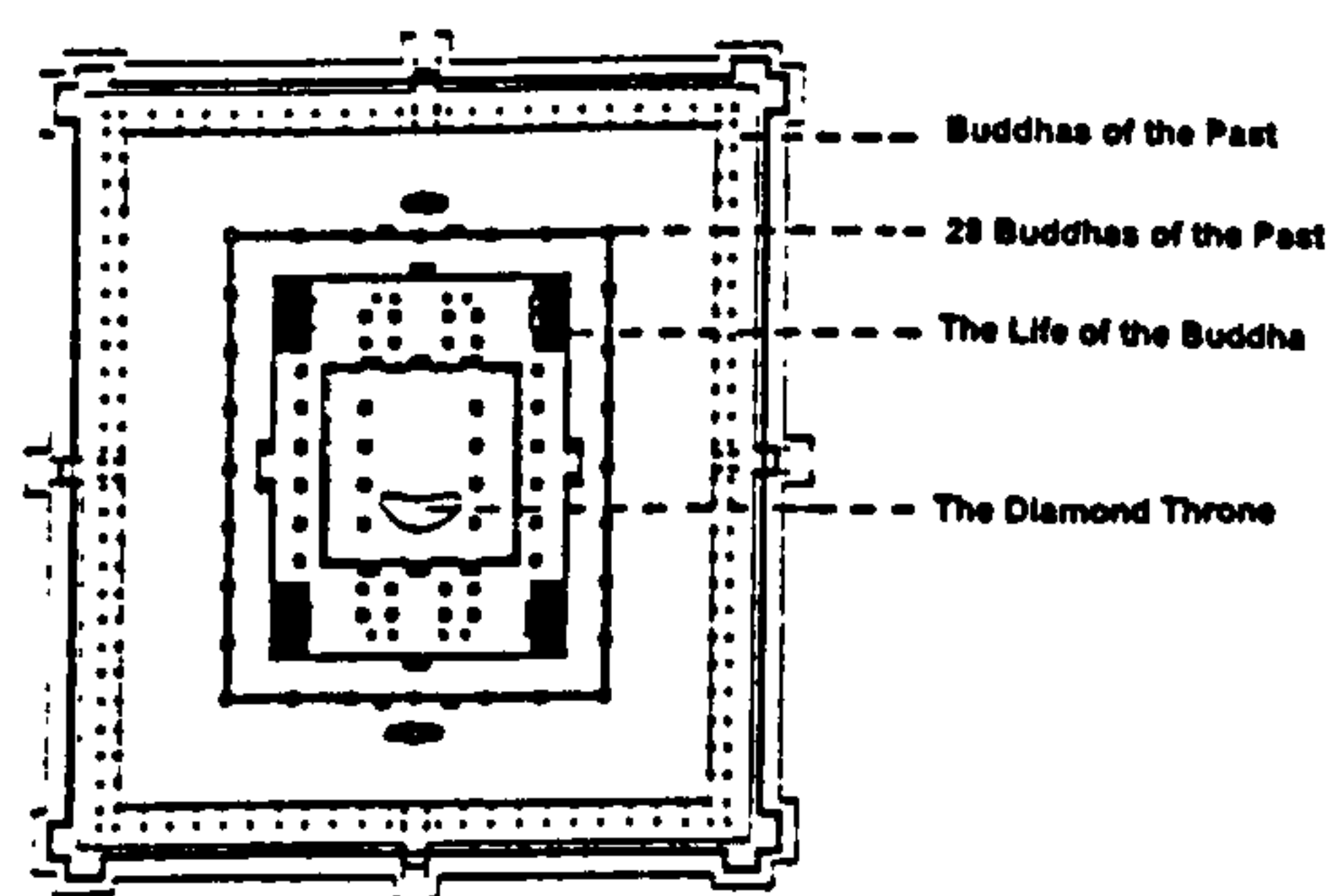


Fig. 5.3 Diagram of elements representing *Jambudīpa*, *wihan* complex, *Wat Suthat*

The subjects in the traditional pattern of the *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings in a single building may be spread out, or modified into several buildings. The *ubosot* complex of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* is the best example of this. The subjects of the Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*) and the Eight Great Places (*Atthamahāthāna*) are applied to accentuate the concept of the Diamond Throne at the centre of the complex (Fig. 5.2). The *wihan* complex of *Wat Suthat* is another case in which the themes of the Buddha's Life are represented through Buddha images in different types of iconography in the *wihan* pavilions (Fig. 5.3). *Traiphumlokawinitchai* states that the lands that the Buddha had traveled to are all in *Majjhimadesa*: he never went outside *Majjhimadesa* (Thampricha 1992, 264-65). The themes from the

³ The *ubosot* caught fire in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. However, the original themes of the paintings were preserved. See FAD (1978, 65-67).

Buddha's Life as represented in the structures surrounding the main central building are regarded as symbols relating to *Majjhimadesa*.

A Complex of Buildings Enclosed by a Gallery and Subsidiary Structures

Extending from the gallery which encloses a complex of buildings, there are subsidiary structures arranged in the plan of a more elaborate design. Subsidiary *chedis* and/or *salas* are usually applied to this design. Because the central structures they encircle are symbols of *Majjhimadesa*, they are also elements of it. Both the *chedis* and *salas* represent the cities in *Majjhimadesa*. The *salas* may also be symbols of *Himavanta* if they contain any depiction connected to the theme of *Himavanta*. The subjects relate to hermits (*rishis*) or *Pacceka Buddhas*, and are also symbols related to *Himavanta*. The connection between some *Jātakas* and *Himavanta* is represented in both *Traiphumllokawinitchai* and *Traiphum* manuscript paintings. Some *Jātakas* are inserted to illustrate the scenes of *Himavanta* in both the text and the manuscripts (see Thampricha 1992, 136-246; FAD 1987, 46-57). Therefore, the *Jātakas* may be depicted in these *salas* together with the scenes of *Himavanta*. In a more realistic design, miniature mountains and gardens may be put around the complex to represent *Himavanta*, which mean the subsidiary *chedis* they align with are integrated as its components. These subsidiary structures form another one or two rings of the symbolic planning diagram extending from the gallery. *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Suthat* are examples of this (Fig. 5.4).

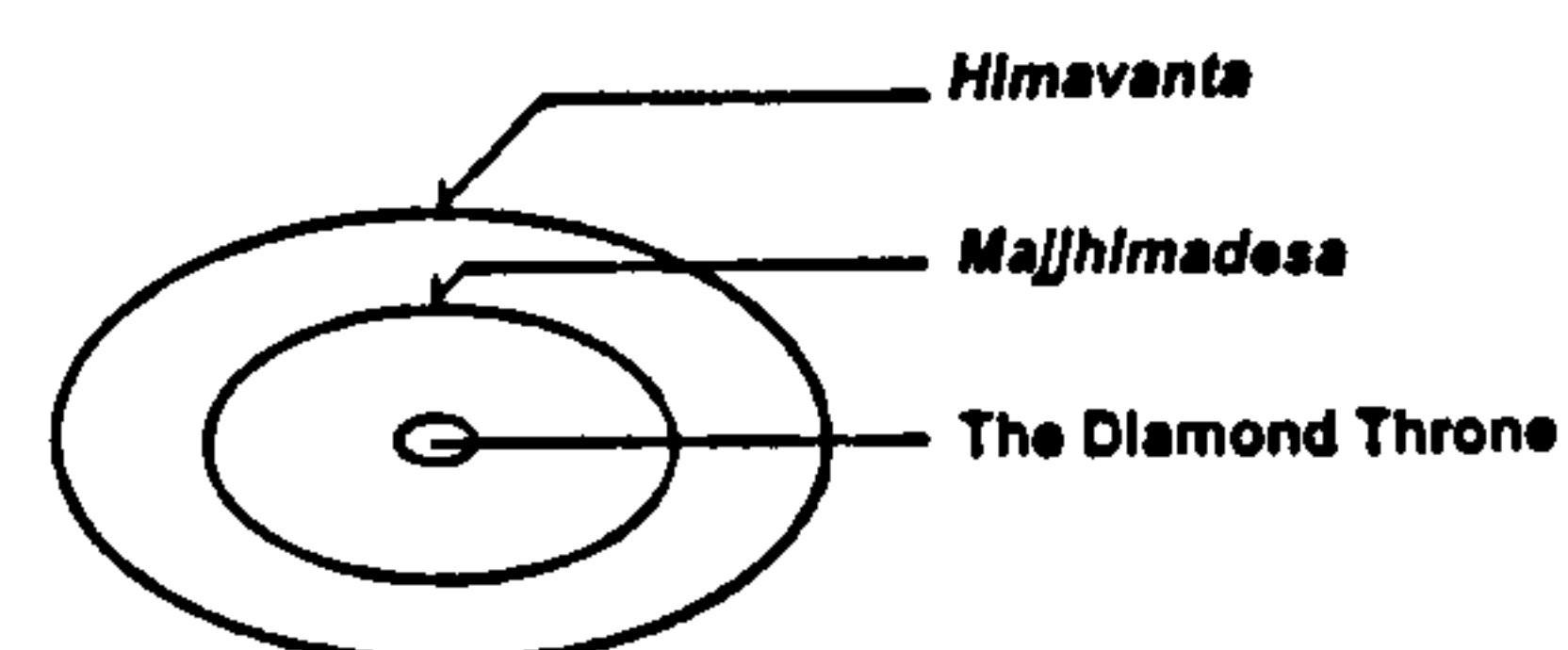


Fig. 5.4 Diagram of *Jambudīpa*

Supplementary Elements

There are some elements that may not be able to be harmoniously set into the architectural planning system of the aforementioned theory. Therefore, they are separated from the main complex, which is the symbol of *Jambudīpa*, but still relate to the meaning of the complex. These elements are the pond and garden, which are connected to the symbols of *Himavanta* and *Anotatta* Lake, and trees which represent the Seven Great Places (*Sattamahāthāna*). The Bodhi-tree is another element that marks a site as *Jambudīpa*. There are a few principal *wats* of the early Bangkok period that have a pond set in the *phutthawat* area and incorporated into the concept of *Anotatta*. Apart from *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel of King Rama I, another example is *Wat Mahathat* in Bangkok. *Wat Phraram* in Ayutthaya has a pond at the north-east corner of the compound.

The Seven Great Places represented by trees in *Wat Suthat* are separated from the central complex but they mark the centre of the *wihan* as the position of the Diamond Throne. In *Wat Thepsirin*, which was built in the reign of King Chulalongkorn, trees were planted at eight directions to symbolize the Seven Great Places. A Bodhi-tree is at the centre of the *Phutthawat* area. The Nakonchum inscription of King Lithai, dated 1357, states that the King has a Bodhi-tree planted behind the *Mahathat chedi* in Nakonchum.⁴

The Shape of *Jambudīpa* and the Outermost Demarcations

In general a *phutthawat* area of a *wat* is enclosed by a rectangular wall. However, there are some important *wats* from the kingdoms of the Bangkok, Ayutthaya and even Sukhothai periods, in which the outermost walls are not planned in the true rectangular shape. Their shapes are slightly distorted from the right angle. According to the shape of *Jambudīpa*, which is in a chariot or trapezoid shape, this distortion from the right angle is an interpretation of the shape of *Jambudīpa*. Apart from the shape of the outermost wall of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the gallery of the Royal Chapel, the enclosing walls of the *phutthawat* area of *Wat Chedi Chetthaeo* (mid fourteenth century) (Fig.5.5) and *Wat Changlom* (late thirteenth century) at Srisatchanalai, and *Wat*

⁴ See Nakonchum inscription in FAD (1984, 29). Nakonchum was a city in the Kingdom of Sukhothai. It is now part of Kamphangphet province.

Phutthaisawan (mid fourteenth century) at Ayutthaya (Fig. 5.6), are not planned using true right angles. The degree of deviation of the angles and the different length of the walls are certainly not due to measurement errors, but are deliberately planned to represent the shape of *Jambudīpa*.

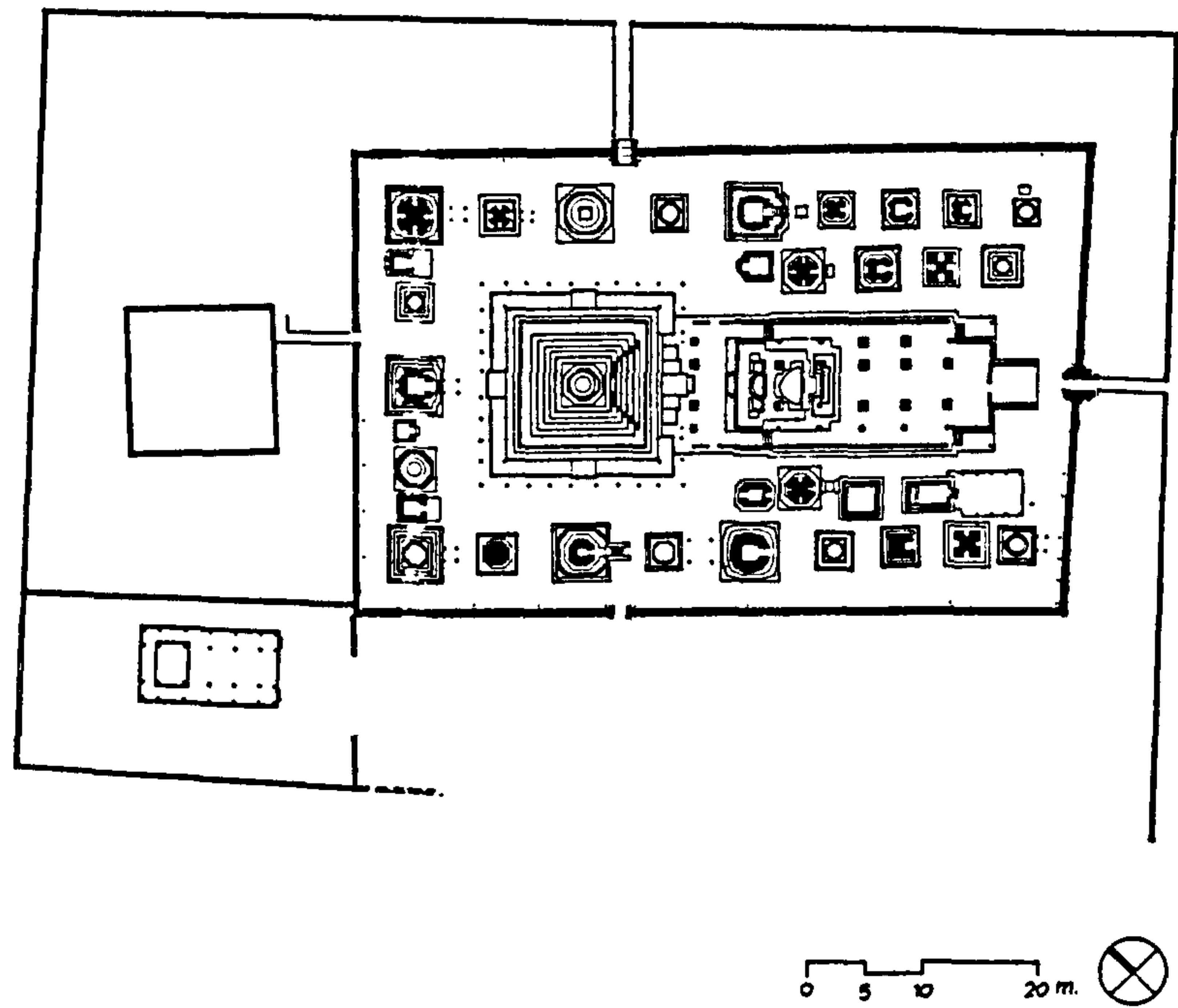


Fig. 5.5 Plan of Wat Chedi Chetthaeo, Srisatchanalai

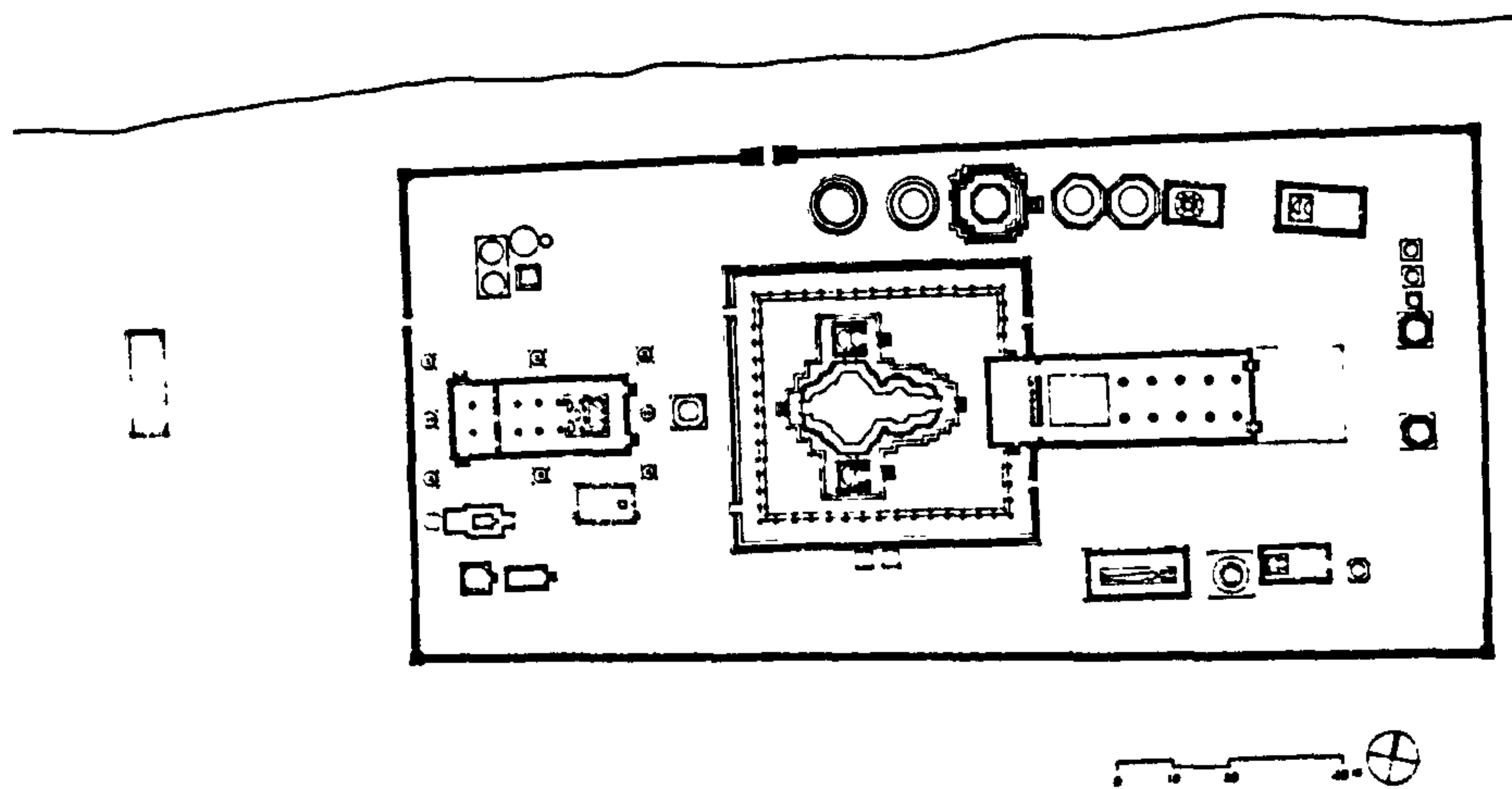


Fig. 5.6 Plan of Wat Phutthaisawan, Ayutthaya (Redrawn after FAD 1968)

Lanka Island

Lanka is part of *Jambudīpa*. It is the most important minor continent of *Jambudīpa* since it is the source of pure scriptures and Buddha relics. Since the Sukhothai period, the Buddha's relics obtained from Lanka were regarded as the genuine ones.⁵ The *Mahāvamsa* states that in the eighth year after the Buddha had attained the buddhahood, he visited Lanka and left his footprints on Sumanakūta Peak (Geiger 1912, 8). The Buddha's Footprint on the peak was copied and established in several parts of Siam during the Sukhothai period.⁶ The *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Khmer version) portrays Lanka Island with the Buddha's Footprint on Sumanakūta Peak (Fig. 4.27). In the Thonburi version, Lanka Island is depicted as an island just below *Jambudīpa*.

A pavilion of the Buddha's Footprints is a symbol of Lanka in the symbolic planning of Thai royal *wats* of the early Bangkok period, for example in the pavilion of the Buddha's Footprint of *Wat Ratcha-orot*. The theme of *Mahāvamsa* is another element which represents Lanka. In the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, Lanka Island is represented through both the mural paintings of the theme from *Mahāvamsa* and the Buddha's Footprints (depicted on the soles of the reclining image). The significance of the symbol of Lanka in the compound is to mark the main complex it is adjacent to as *Jambudīpa*. This theory is a result of the evidence of the royal *wats* of Rama III's reign only, and it may not be relevant for other periods.

5.1.2 The Symbolic Planning of Mount *Meru*

According to the imagery diagram of the *Traiphum* cosmography, Mount *Meru* is a vertical axis penetrating through the horizontal plane of the level of *Mahādīpa* or the major continents on which the realm of Garuda is also situated. At the top of this central core is *Tāvātimsa*, and underneath its base is the *Asura* Realm (Fig. 5.7). The Seven Mountain Ranges (*Sattabhanda*) are the main vertical components of Mount

⁵ See FAD (1984) for the Nakonchum inscription (dated 1357) (p. 29), the inscription of *Wat Srichum* (p. 78), and the Inscription of *Wat Asokaram* (dated 1399) (p. 333).

⁶ See for example the Sumonnakut inscription (dated 1359) (p. 84-85), Nakonchum inscription (p. 39), and the inscription of the Buddha's Footprint in *Wat Bowon* (dated 1427) (p.267-68), in FAD (1984).

Meru. The Four Great Guardian Kings (*Cātumahārājika*) are the most important components which radiate horizontally from the centre at the four cardinal directions. The Sun and the Moon are usually represented flanking either side of Mount *Meru*. However, the horizontal plane of Mount *Meru* is represented through the elements in *Tāvātimsa*. All the components of Mount *Meru* are interpreted in various designs in the symbolic planning, and may be categorized as follows.

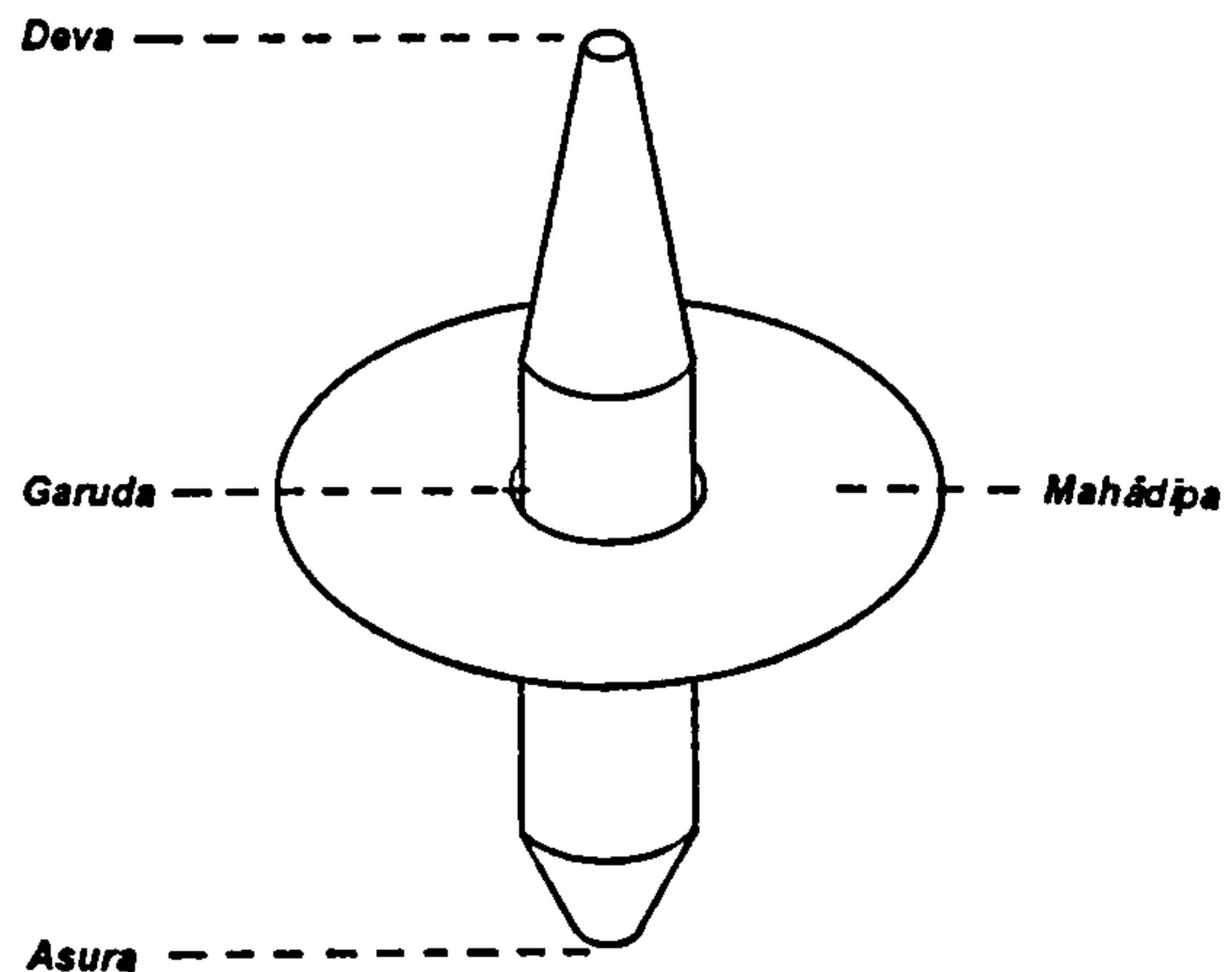


Fig. 5.7 Diagram of Mount *Meru*

A Single Structure

The vertical feature of Mount *Meru* is the essential concept for its identification in a single structure. The significant levels which are the abodes of beings connected to the vertical core of Mount *Meru* are: the *Deva* realms, the *Garuda* Realm and the *Asura* Realm. These are the main elements of its vertical symbolism. A configuration of statues of *Deva*, *Garuda*, and *Asura* on a structure show that it is a symbol of Mount *Meru*. This pattern is applied to the pedestals of the *Tripitaka* cabinets and the pedestals of the presiding Buddha images in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel (Fig. 5.8). In a larger structure, the statues are also placed at the base, such as on the *Phra Mondop* of the Royal Chapel and the main *prang* of *Wat Arun*. In the early Ayutthayan *prangs*, these statues are placed at the same level just above the niches of the middle section (*ruanthat*) which contains the main chamber (Fig. 5.9). These statues are the elements that symbolize the vertical axis of the *prang* as the axial

symbol of Mount *Meru*.⁷

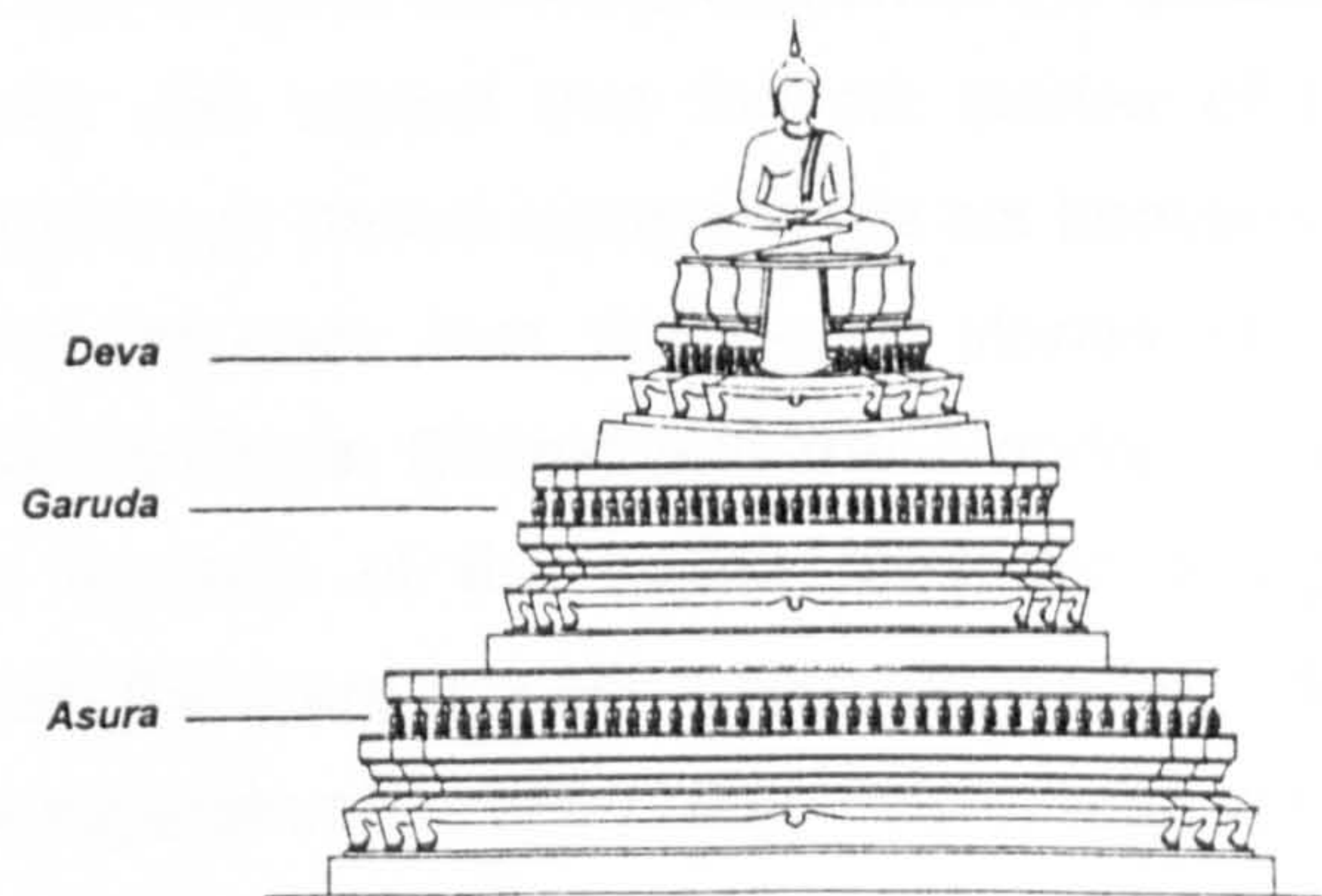


Fig. 5.8 Principal Buddha image, *ubosot*, Wat Phra Chetuphon



Fig. 5.9 Statues above the main chamber, principal *prang*, Wat Ratchaburana, Ayutthaya

⁷ Prince Damrong has noted that these statues of the early Ayutthayan *prangs* are elements representing the assembly of deities, since there were Buddha's relics enshrined in the *prangs* (Damrong and Narit 1972, Vol. 21, 25). However, according to the arrangement of these sets of statues on the pedestals of some principal Buddha images, of the *Tripitaka* cabinets and the base of the *prang* of Wat Arun, they all represent Mount *Meru*. The same set of statues in the Ayutthayan *prang* may be attributed to the same concept, but these are gathered on the same level.

According to the cosmography of Mount *Meru*, *Tāvātimsa* is at the top and the four higher realms of *Kāmabhūmi* are not included as part of *Meru*. Therefore, the multi-tiered superstructure of a *prang* or *mondop* may be an interpretation of the declining levels of the Seven Mountain Ranges. Joti argues that the six stories of the superstructure of Thai *prangs* of the Ayutthaya period represent the six heavens of *Kāmabhūmi* (Joti 1982, 41), while he proposes that the seven stories of the superstructure of the *Phra Mondop* in the Royal Chapel and the *Mondop* of the Buddha's Footprints at Saraburi are symbols of the Seven Mountain Ranges (*Sattabhanda*) (Joti, 1982, 45). However, there are actually seven stories, including another story at the topmost level of the superstructure of a *prang*. Fouser argues that these seven stories represent the Seven Mountain Ranges (*Sattabhanda*) which encircle Mount *Meru* (Fouser 1996, 38). Either the heavenly realms or the *Sattabhanda* may relate to the symbol of the superstructure of a *prang*. Since the Thai *prang* is a development of the *prāsāda* of Angkor, which was Brahmanistic in origin, with Mount *Meru* representing the abode of the gods, the superstructure of a *prang* might initially connect with this original concept and represent the heavenly realms. However, it is possible that the Siamese adapted this into the concept of the *Traiphum*, in which the *Sattabhanda* form an important component of Mount *Meru*. It is likely that the superstructure of the *prang* is an interpretation of *Sattabhanda* in the sense of Thai symbolic thinking of *Theravāda* Buddhist context. The arrangement of the *Sattabhanda* in the *Traiphum* painting is remarkably similar to the superstructure of the *prang* (Figs. 2.2, 4.14). However, the multi-tiered top of a *prang* and a *mondop* is an interpretation which marks the central axis of the structure, and is the symbol of Mount *Meru*. Some iconographic statues which are connected to these structures provide evidence of this.

Mount *Meru* may be symbolized by a building which is not in a centralized plan. A longitudinal plan of an *ubosot* or a *wihan* may represent Mount *Meru* by means of mural paintings which relate to the heavenly realms of *Tāvātimsa* or *Cātumahārājika*, and other elements that are connected to the vertical arrangement of Mount *Meru*, either the celestial or semi-divine beings. The *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat* are examples in which are depicted the aforementioned themes on the upper section of the buildings. Statues of *Garuda* may be placed at the base of a building to represent *Vejayanta* Palace of the God Indra, as in the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel.

Mount *Meru* and *Cātumahārājika*

The *Cātumahārājika* are the *Tāvātimsa*'s guardians at the four directions. In a centralized arrangement, a single building or structure which represents Mount *Meru* or *Tāvātimsa* may be emphasized by placing four subsidiary structures at the four directions to represent the *Cātumahārājika*. The *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the *ubosot* of *Wat Thepthidaram*, which are symbols of Mount *Meru*, are located at the centre of four subsidiary *prangs*. A principal *prang* has been surrounded by four subsidiary *prangs* at its four angles or directions in a general pattern of the principal *prang* since the Ayutthaya period, such as the *prangs* of *Wat Phraram* and *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* at Ayutthaya. *Wat Arun* is the most prominent example from the Bangkok period. When *Tāvātimsa* and its components are planned on the horizontal axis, as in *Wat Ratcha-orot*, the *Cātumahārājika* are represented by four *chedis* located at a lower direction than *Tāvātimsa*.

Tāvātimsa's Elements

The important elements of *Tāvātimsa* may be represented by a set of structures. The main components of *Tāvātimsa* are the *Vejayanta* Palace, *Erāvana* Palace, *Cūlāmanicetiya*, and *Sudhammā* assembly hall. The *Cūlāmanicetiya* is usually given a principal position and is located at the main axis of the plan. Two buildings flanking the *chedi* represent *Erāvana* Palace and *Sudhammā*, and are the contextual structures which denote it as *Cūlāmanicetiya*. Within the same set there is usually located a main building on the principal axis to represent *Vejayanta* Palace or Mount *Meru*. This may be placed in front of or behind the *Cūlāmanicetiya*. In order to emphasize the concept of *Cūlāmanicetiya*, King Rama I made replicas of the Buddha's tooth relics and enshrined them in the principal *chedi* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. However, the main building, which represents the *Vejayanta* Palace, may require some significant symbols to indicate *Tāvātimsa* in these structures, or it may be symbolized by its context. This arrangement is found in the plans of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I and *Wat Ratcha-orot* (Fig. 5.10). In the arrangement of the structures of *Wat Ratcha-orot*, a *Pikun* tree was assumed to be the *Pārijāti* tree of *Tāvātimsa*, to mark the *ubosot* as the *Vejayanta*, because the building is covered with Chinese auspicious symbols instead of the symbols of Mount *Meru* or *Tāvātimsa*.

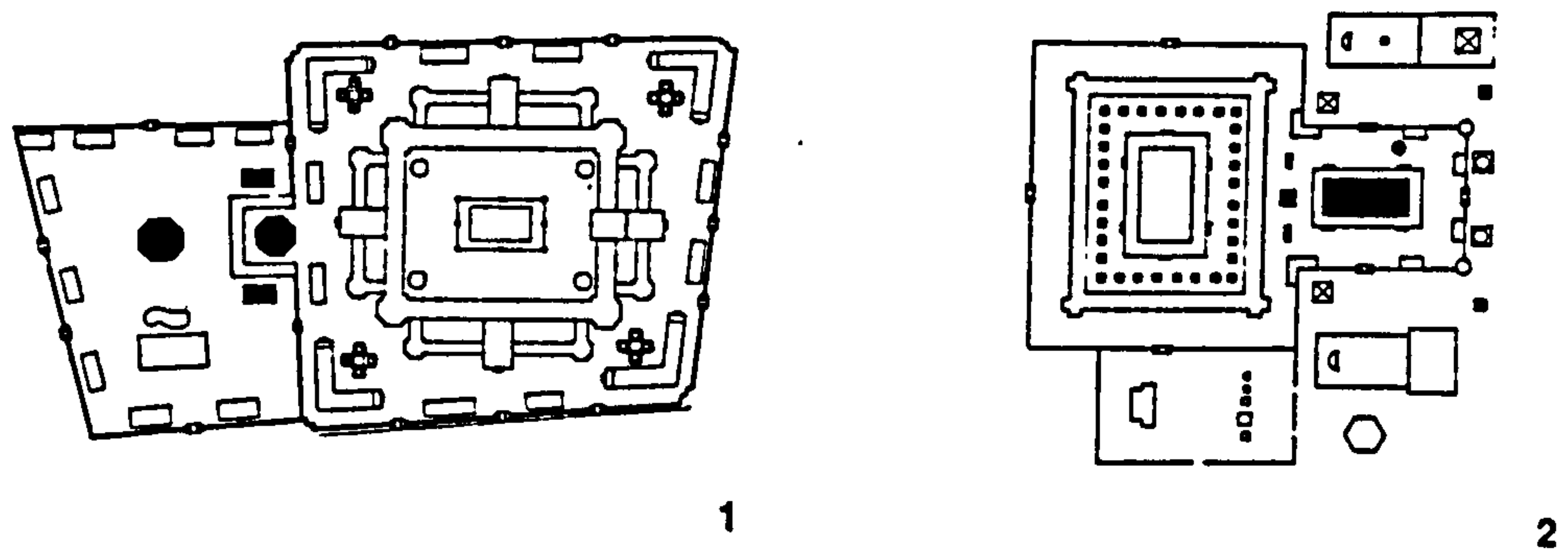


Fig. 5.10 *Tāvātimsa* elements; 1) *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I; 2) *Wat Ratcha-orot*

The Sun and the Moon

The Sun, the Moon, and other planets are elements which orbit around Mount *Meru*. However, the Sun and the Moon are more important than the other planets. They are also involved with the moment when the *Bodhisattva* defeated *Māra*. At that moment the Sun appeared about to set in the west and the Moon was rising in the east. At *Wat Ratcha-orot* they are represented by two buildings, the *wihan* and the *Kanprian*, flanking the central axis which locates the symbol of *Tāvātimsa*. In *Wat Suthat* they are depicted on the pediments of the *ubosot*, which according to their position, are at either side of Mount *Meru*, represented by the upper section of the *wihan*. Two *chedis* which are located at either side of the structure which is the symbol of Mount *Meru* may represent the Sun and the Moon. The two golden *chedis* to the east of the *Phra Mondop* of the Royal Chapel may be examples of this.

5.1.3 The Symbolic Planning of the *Yamaloka*, *Peta* realm, and Hells

The *Traiphum* text states that the *Peta* realm is in *Himavanta* and at the spot underneath is the Realm of Hells (Thampricha 1992, 561, 584). There are eight hells, and each of them is square in form. At the centre of each square is a major hell which is surrounded by sixteen subsidiary hells called *Usudanaraka*, four at each side. Extending from these subsidiary hells are forty minor hells called *Yamalokanaraka* (Thampricha 1992, 528). The *Yamaloka*, or the realm of the Lord of Death, are located the four directions of these hells, extending to encompass every hell (Fig. 5.12) (Lithai 1985, 47; Thampricha 1992, 528). Since *Yamaloka* is the realm of the Hell Ruler, it is

regarded as higher than the hells. *Peta* and hell beings are those who did evil deeds and are being punished in accordance with their *kamma*. The scenes of the *Peta* realm and hells are therefore usually depicted in the same building, generally in a *kanprian*.⁸

The symbol of *Yamaloka* is found to be related to a bell tower. It may be located close to a particular building which represents the *Peta* realm and hells. This might be because of the form of a bell tower, which is usually a single structure in a square or centralized plan, similar to a *Yamaloka* as depicted like a pavilion in the *Traiphum* manuscript paintings (Fig. 5.11). In addition, the *Traiphum* manuscript painting (Thonburi version) represents *Yamaloka* flanked by a bell and a drum tower. A bell tower is a unique building type and in its symbolic meaning does not vary after the theme of mural paintings or other depictions, so that may be a key to denote its context in the symbol system in which it is located.

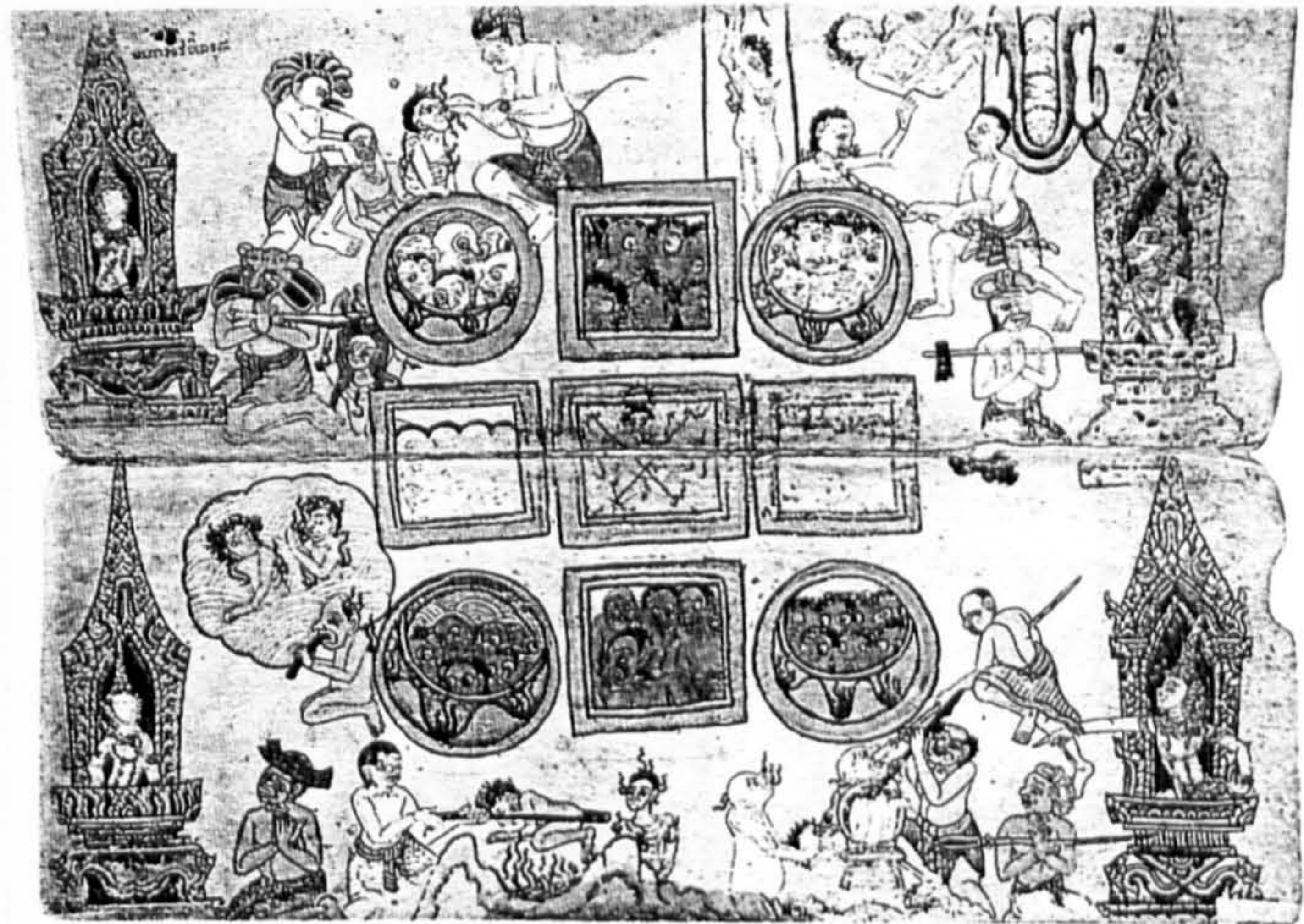


Fig. 5.11 Scene of hell, *Traiphum* manuscript painting, Khmer version (source: FAD 1987)

The symbol of *Yamaloka* and hells may be integrated into a building by applying an icon of *Yamarāja* or the Lord of Death on its pediment. His icon is portrayed by a deity figure seated on a throne holding a sword. The icon of *Yamarāja* is portrayed on the pediments of the *kanprian* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* (Samerchai 1996, 166) and the *wihan* of *Wat Arun*, which are also located close to bell towers. A *kanprian* and a bell

⁸ A *kanprian* without these depictions may not relate to the symbol of *Peta* realm and hells.

tower are usually located close to each other and on some occasions form another complex. In a case where a *kanprian* does not contain any scenes related to *Yamaloka*, the *Peta* realm, and hells, but is situated in the same complex of a bell tower, it may be attributed to the symbol of the *Peta* realm and hells. The complex of the *kanprian* and the bell tower of *Wat Suthat*, which is comprised of some *salas* is an interpretation of the realm of hells as described in the *Traiphum* (Fig. 5.12).

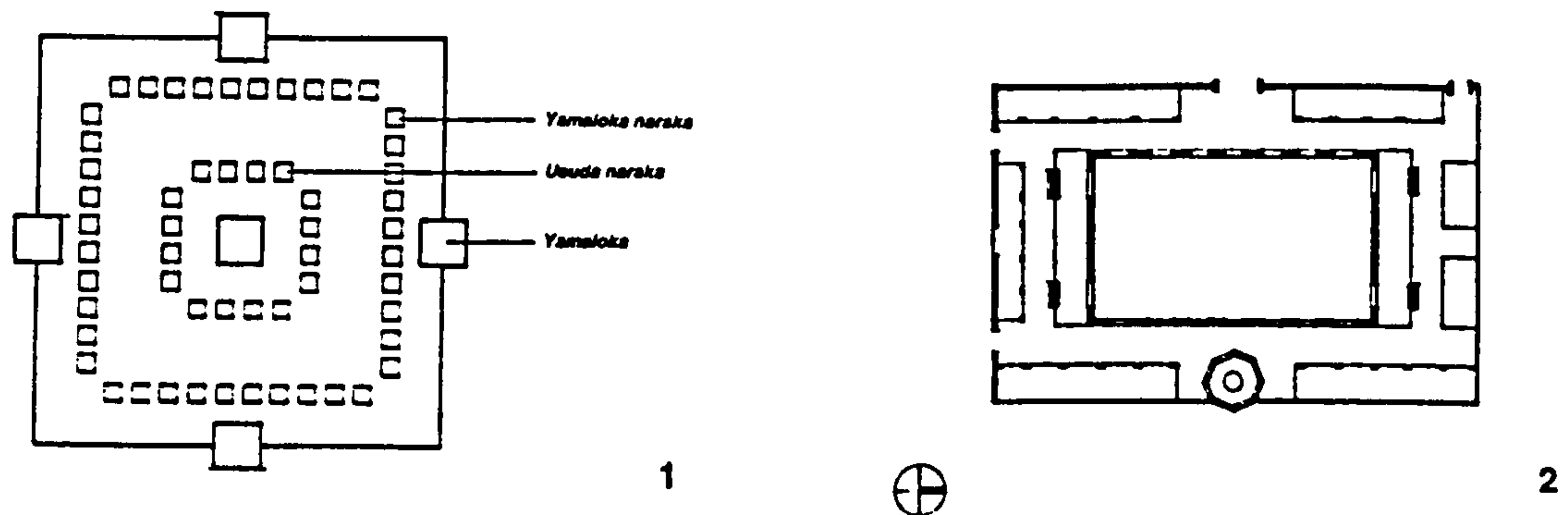


Fig. 5.12 Diagram of hell and its interpretation; 1) diagram of hell according to the *Traiphum*; 2) *kanprian* complex, *Wat Suthat*

5.1.4 The Symbolic Planning of the Realms Higher than Mount *Meru*

The realms higher than Mount *Meru* in the *Kāmahūmi* are the other four heavens, *Yāmā*, *Tusita*, *Nimanarati* and *Paranimmitvsavati*. Higher than *Kāmahūmi* are *Brahma* domains or *Brahmaloka* of *Rūpabhūmi* (the Realm of Form) and *Arūpabhūmi* (the Realm of the Formless). The other two significant domains which are represented in the *Traiphum* manuscript paintings are the *Ariyapuggala* (Holy persons) and the Great City of *Nibbāna*. There is no evidence of the symbol of the four heavenly realms of *Kāmahūmi*, which are higher than Mount *Meru* in the architecture of Thai royal wats.

Brahmaloka

Brahmaloka is the realm of beings in the *Rūpabhūmi* (the Realm of Form) and *Arūpabhūmi* (the Realm of the Formless), which are higher than *Kāmahūmi* (the Realm of Desire). The symbol of *Brahmaloka* is represented by the icon of *Brahma* God riding on *Hamsa*, and appears on the pediment of the *Ho Phra Monthiantham* in the Royal Chapel. Below the icon is the God *Indra* riding on *Erāvana* Elephant, to

indicate that the building is a symbol of the realm as high as *Brahmaloka*.

The theme of the Holy Persons (*Ariyapuggala*) is also related to the symbol of *Brahmaloka*. *Traiphumlokawinitchai* states that the Holy Persons who have achieved the stages of either *Sotāpanna*, *Sotāpattimagga*, *Sakadākāmi* or *Sakadākānimagga*, will be reborn after they die in the *Vehapphala Brahma* Domain. As for the Holy Persons who have achieved the stage of *Anāgāmi* or *Anāgānimagga*, they will be reborn in *Suddhāvāsā* (the Pure Abodes or the Abodes of the Purified Ones) (Thampricha 1992, 1071-72; Malalasekera 1960 Vol. 2, 336).

The theme of *Ariyapuggala*, which is the symbol of *Brahmaloka*, is found in the form of statues of the Buddha's disciples in the L-shaped *wihan* of *Wat Ratcha-orot* and the murals in the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*. Both are connected to the symbol of the Realm of *Nibbāna*. The meaning that *Ariyapuggala* gives to space in this context is regarded as higher than *Kāmahūmi* (the Realm of Desire) that is, the *Brahmaloka*. Therefore, the structure which is the symbol of *Brahmaloka* is usually located between the Realm of *Nibbāna* and *Kāmahūmi*.

Dussacetiya, the *chedi* in the *Akanittha* Brahma Domain, is another prominent feature of *Brahmaloka*. However, it is represented only in *Wat Ratcha-orot*. Because *Cūlāmanicetiya* is another *chedi* in *Tāvātimsa*, symbolizing *Dussacetiya*, a clear context is required in order for it not to be confused with *Cūlāmanicetiya*. A standing Buddha image seems to be related to the symbol of *Brahmaloka*. The *wihan* of *Wat Ratcha-orot* and the *Ho Phra Nak* in the Royal Chapel, which relate to the symbol of *Brahmaloka*, contain a standing Buddha image. However, to identify a building containing a standing Buddha image as a symbol of *Brahmaloka* requires supporting evidence from its context.

The City of *Nibbāna*

A reclining Buddha image generally represents the event of the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. This image in a building is a symbol of The Great City of *Nibbāna*. However, a reclining image which is in a set of images representing the theme of the Buddha's Life may not be a symbol of the Realm of *Nibbāna*. The theme of the Holy Persons who have achieved an arahantship, which is a stage of *Nibbāna*, is also connected

to the symbol of the realm of *Nibbāna*.

Since *Nibbāna* is the ultimate transcendent world, it is represented at the zenith of the Three Worlds. A *wihan* of a reclining Buddha image which represents the realm of *Nibbāna*, therefore, is usually located at the end of the axis to represent the highest realm. The examples of this are the *wihans* of the reclining Buddha image of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and of *Wat Ratcha-orot*.

5.1.5 Planning System

The *Traiphum* cosmography is formed by an imagery structure which integrates all of the realms in a certain relation. Its prominent image is a vertical arrangement of the realms in accordance with the ethical and spiritual force of beings. In the system of the whole plan, the symbolic planning of each component of the *Traiphum* as proposed in the basic theory is connected to each other by a planning system. Each component may need to be modified or adapted in order to set it into a context of a particular system. A system may contain only some components of the *Traiphum*. In a *wat*, it may contain more than one layer of the symbolic planning system. The system is planned in a framework of architectural spatial organization, in which axes and directions are the important concepts.

Direction

In general, the royal *wats* of both the Ayutthaya and Bangkok periods face east. However, there are some cases of *wats* that face transportation routes such as canals or rivers (Joti 1982, 98). In Thai tradition, the easterly direction is regarded as superior to the west, and the west is literally 'the direction of the falling sun', and therefore inauspicious (Davis 1984, 80). The north direction is considered higher and more auspicious than the south, and the south-west is the lowest (Davis 1984, 80). The account of the Enlightenment of the *Bodhisattva* indicates that the east is the most important direction. After the *Bodhisattva* received eight handfuls of grass offered by Sotthiya, he approached the Bodhi-tree. He first ascended to the south side, facing north. The moment he stood in this way, the ground where he stood sank down. He then walked round the tree with his right side toward it (*Padakkhinā*) to the west, then to the north, and the same thing happened at these directions. Only when he stood on

the east, facing the west, did the east side remain firm. He then laid down the eight handfuls of grass and the Diamond Throne immediately made its appearance. The *Bodhisattva* sat with his back against the Bodhi-tree, his face toward the east, and attained the Enlightenment at this position (Paramanuchit 1962, 155-156).

However, Prince Narit has pointed out that most of the Thai *wats* face east because of the influence of the *Mahāyāna* concept of the Sukhāvātī Land. This is in the west, and a *Tathāgata* called Amitāyus resides there. He is an *Arahanta*, fully enlightened, who dwells now, and remains, and supports himself, and teaches the Law.⁹ When one pays homage to the Buddha image in the building of a *wat* which faces east, one will at the same time do so to the Amitāyus Buddha and Sukhāvātī country.¹⁰ This thesis has been supported by later scholars (See Joti 1982, 55; Sa-nguan 1983, 20). However, the evidence from many royal *wats* suggests that this thesis may not affect the planning system. Most of the royal *wats* of Ayutthaya, which face east, have most of their buildings located to the west of the main *prang* or *chedi*, facing west, while the main building at the front of the *prang* or *chedi* faces east. This suggests that they are located against the centre. To pay homage to the Buddha images in these buildings is to face the centre. The concept of the direction of *Mahāyāna* mentioned above does not seem to be the real influence in the planning of Thai Buddhist architecture.

The concept that the east is the front direction in Thai belief is probably the most interesting one. It provides great flexibility in planning practice because a plan does not hold strictly to the geographical direction. The arrangement of the *Traiphum* cosmography in the manuscript painting of the Khmer version portrays *Jambudīpa*, the south continent, at the right hand of the reader (Fig. 2.2). Therefore, the north direction is at the left and the west is at the back. Whatever direction one faces, the front may be presupposed as the east direction. This is because of the concept that a similar planning system among different *wats* may be oriented in any direction and retain the same pattern of symbolic planning. However, in a centralized plan the highest level is at the centre and the lower ones radiate from the centre in the manner of several rings.

⁹ See 'Smaller Sukhāvātī-Vyūha', Trans. by Friedrich Max Müller in *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts*, Ed. by Edward Byles Cowell, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 49, Dover Publications, Rep. MLBD (New York): 91-99, cited in Kloetzli (1989), 9-11. See Sujivo (1979, 16-32) for the Thai translation of the Sukhāvātī-Vyūha.

¹⁰ See the letter of Prince Narit to Prince Damrong dated 23 January 1934 in Damrong and Narit (1962), Vol. 5, 8 and Vol. 15, 260.

The complex with a centralized plan may also be incorporated into the system of axis organization.

Axis

An axis is a line established by two points in space, about which forms and spaces can be arranged in a regular or irregular manner (Chang 1996, 322). The axial organization is an important planning system in the symbolic planning of *Traiphum* cosmography in Thai Buddhist architecture. In this study, some Ayutthayan *wats* will be selected as examples, because these *wats* are in ruins and there is no evidence about the subjects of the symbols that have survived in their main buildings, except the principal *prang* or *chedi*. This explanation will demonstrate that the knowledge we have obtained from studying some royal *wats* of the early Bangkok period means that we can clarify the symbolic planning of these examples. Another reason why some *wats* of the Ayutthaya period have been chosen for study here is because of the consistency of their planning patterns, which will demonstrate that in cases where a *wat* is systematically planned, the theory we have proposed is adequate to analyse their symbolic planning, without problems about dating these structures and whether they might have been altered.

East-west is generally the main axis of Thai *wats*. The arrangement of the symbolic planning is generally to put the higher realm to the west and the lower realm to the east. Since *Jambudīpa*, which may be represented by the main building, is always located at the front, it will be the first building to be approached. In addition, it is usually the lowest realm on the main east-west axis. Behind this main building, therefore, should be the realms higher than *Jambudīpa*: Mount *Meru* and the *Brahmaloka* respectively. The City of *Nibbāna*, which is the highest realm, is located at the end of the axis. However, there are some *wats* that are planned in the reverse direction. The concept that the east is the auspicious direction, therefore, does not imply that the higher realm should also be located to the east.

Some early Ayutthayan royal *wats* are arranged with a main *wihan* at the front, a principal *prang* or *chedi* at the middle and an *ubosot* at the back or to the west. The *ubosot* always faces west (Sa-nguan 1983, 20) or in the opposite direction to the front. These structures form the symbolic planning of a *Traiphum* diagram. If the *wihan* represents *Jambudīpa* and the *prang* or *chedi* represents Mount *Meru*, the *ubosot*

should be the symbol relating to *Brahmaloka* or the realm higher than *Meru*. However, in later periods the *ubosot* became more important and occupied the front position. This planning type appeared around the mid-fifteenth to late-fifteenth century and may have happened when ordination was favoured by laymen in order for them to get opportunities to study while they were in their monkhood. The *ubosot* which is a building which serves for the ordination ceremony occupies the front position (Samerchai 1996 77-79). A similar development, in which the *ubosot* became more important in the later period, also happened in the development of Sukhothai Buddhist architecture (Songyot 1996, 97).

That the *ubosot* of the early Ayutthaya period was considered a higher realm than the *wihan* may relate to its function. It is demarcated by a consecrated *sima* boundary, which is the area dedicated to ordination ceremony and specific *sangha* meetings. It is the ideal that monks who are the disciples of the Buddha should be those who renounce the worldly life. The *ubosot*, which is functionally for the purposes of *sangha* performing their meetings, can be a symbol of the realm higher than *Kāmahūmi* (the Realm of Desire). As for the realms lower than *Jambudīpa*, the *Yamaloka* and hells, these are less important and are always located separately from the main east-west axis, in a south-west direction from the centre of the main system.

The plan of *Wat Lokayasuttha* at Ayutthaya represents well the theory of the symbolic planning system along the east-west axis (Figs 5.13, 5.14). The *prang* which is located at the centre of the plan, which according to the basic theory we concluded, is the symbol of Mount *Meru*. The *wihan* to the east should be the realm lower than the *prang*, which is *Jambudīpa*. The *ubosot* to the west of the *prang* should, therefore, represent the realm higher than the *prang*, which is probably the *Brahmaloka*. The westernmost element a *wihan* of a reclining Buddha image is no doubt the symbol of the City of *Nibbāna*. Both the *ubosot* and the *wihan* of the reclining Buddha image face west against the centre, the principal *prang*. This system contains a series of components, commencing from the lower realm in the east to the higher realm in the west, as follows: *Jambudīpa*, Mount *Meru*, *Brahmaloka* and the City of *Nibbāna*.

□

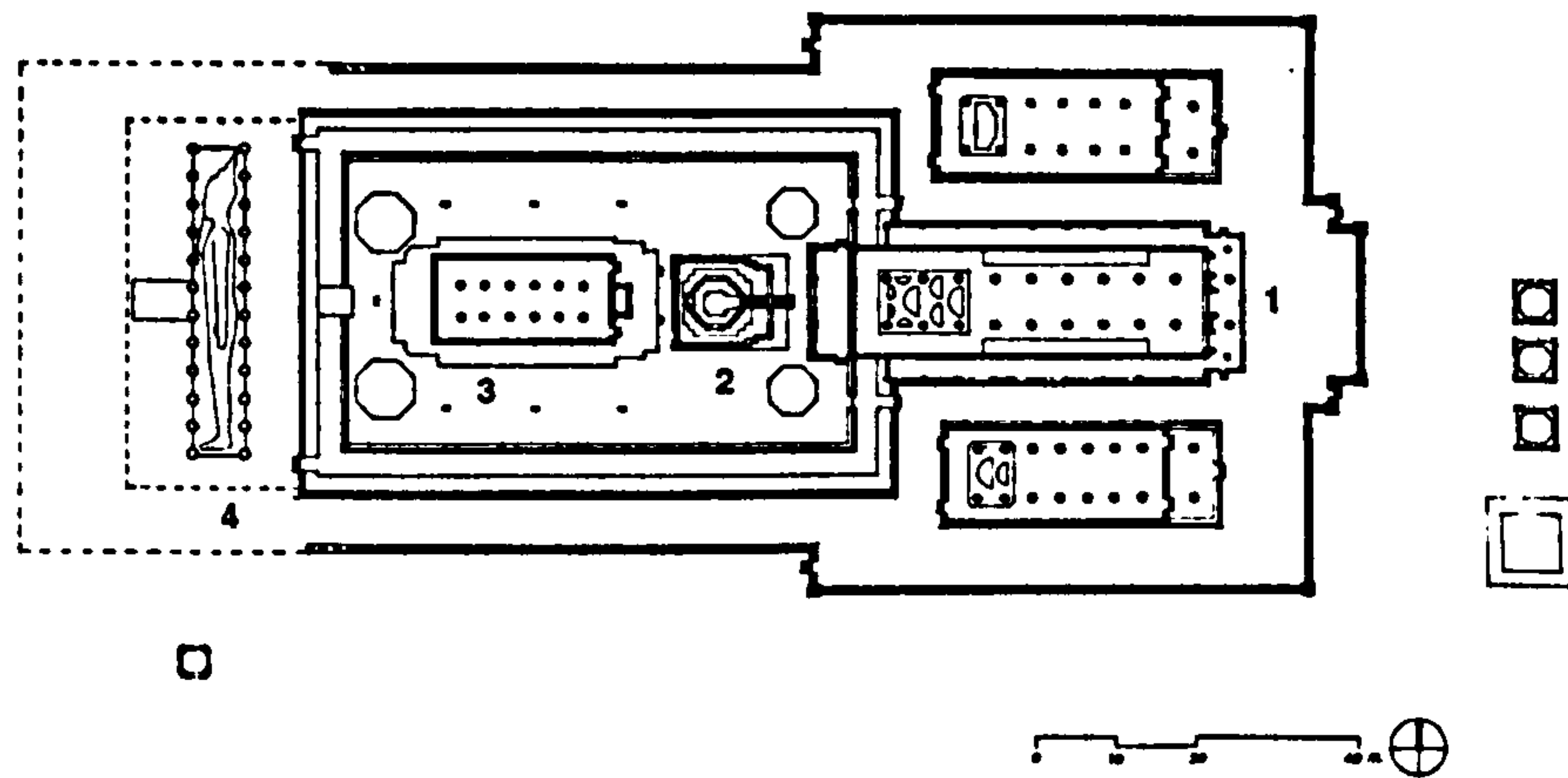


Fig. 5.13 Plan of *Wat Lokayasuttha*, Ayutthaya (Redrawn after FAD 1968)
 1) *wihan*; 2) principal *prang*; 3) *ubosot*; 4) *wihan* of a reclining Buddha image

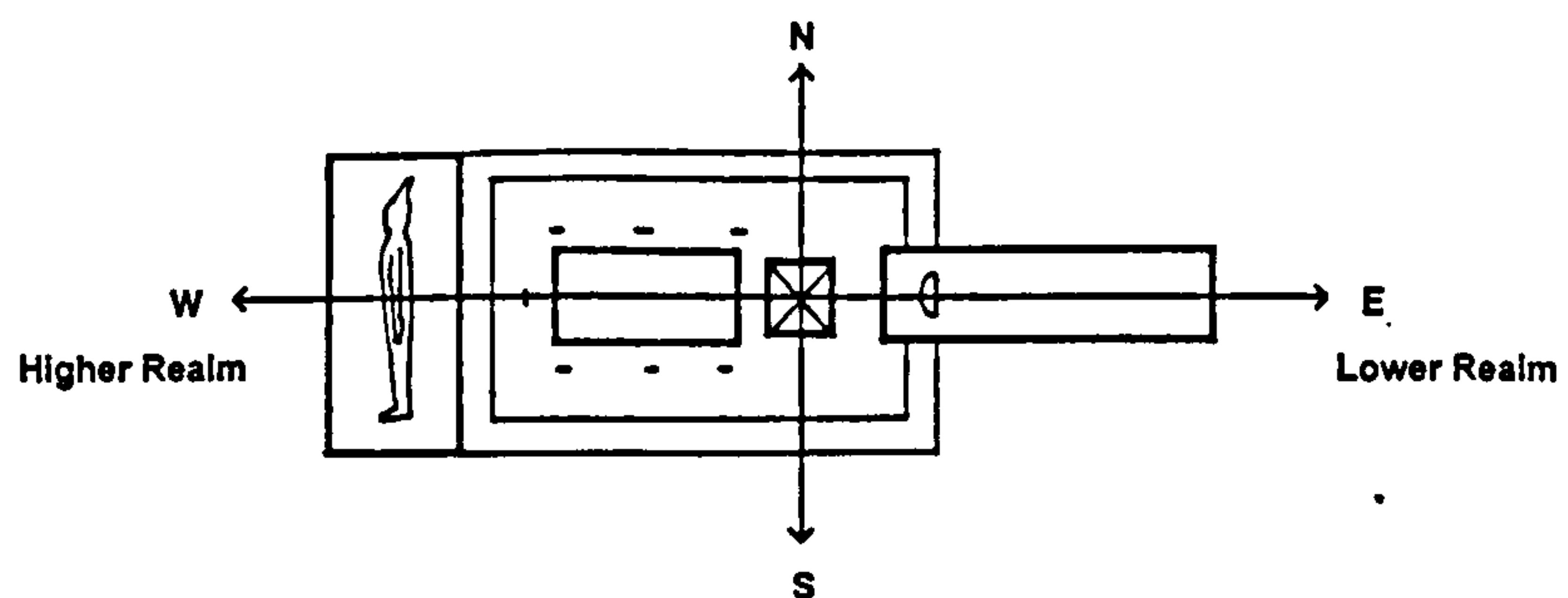


Fig. 5.14 Planning system of *Wat Lokayasuttha*, Ayutthaya

The main symbol system of some royal *wats* is arranged on the north-south axis, as in *Wat Suthat*. On the main axis, the higher realm is located to the north and the lower realm to the south. The structures on the axis can be oriented to the east or the west without any building being located in front of another. However, the main north-south axis of *Wat Suthat* has a diagonal axis to the south-west to connect to the realm of *Yamaloka* and hells (Figs 4.55, 4.56). This indicates that the south-west direction is the most inauspicious direction, and this is strictly practiced although the symbols of *Yamaloka* and hells could be located on the main axis without any planning problem. On the north-south axis, arranged in the west section of the *phutthawat* of *Wat Phra*

Chetuphon, the organization of the symbolic planning of the *Traiphum* can be lined up from the realm of the City of *Nibbāna* at the north down to the realm of hells at the southernmost point (Fig. 4.34).

In some cases, the main axis of a system, whether it is east-west or north-south, may be combined with a minor axis in order to comprise more realms without making the main axis too long, or creating the problem of obstructing the front of the front building (in the case of the main axis being aligned on the east-west direction). This subsidiary axis is usually applied to the highest or lowest realm of the main axis. For example, the arrangement of the west part of the *phutthawat* of Wat Phra Chetuphon, the bell tower, is placed to the east of the *Kanprian* to represent *Yamaloka* (Fig. 5.15).

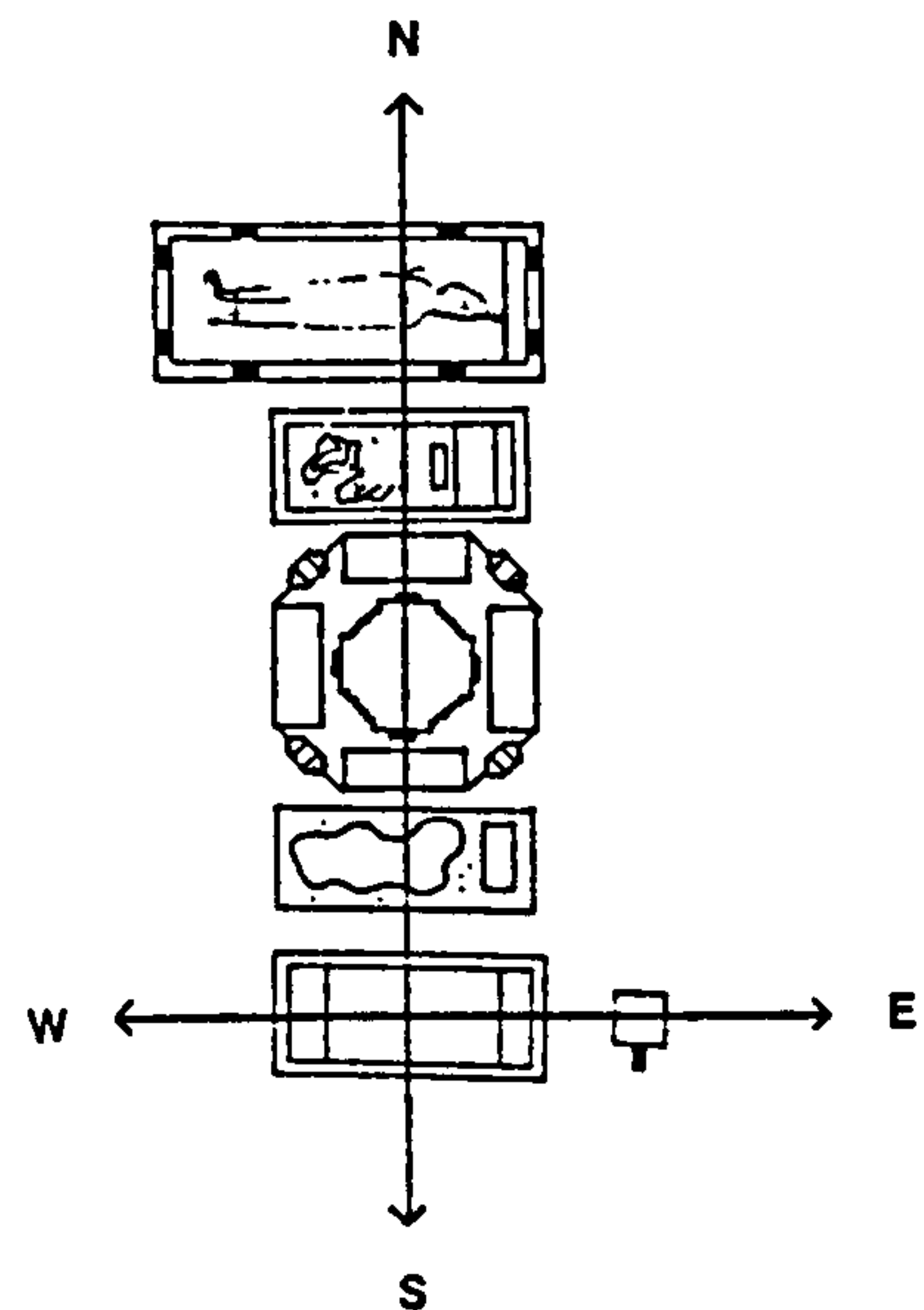


Fig. 5.15 Planning system, western part of the compound, Wat Phra Chetuphon

Wat Yaichaimongkon at Ayutthaya is another example in which a minor axis is combined with the highest realm of the main axis (Fig. 5.16). The plan is a reversal of the usual orientation of the Ayutthayan *wats*. The *ubosot*, which might represent the realm higher than *Meru*, is located at the east instead of to the west. However, the minor axis which is combined with the *ubosot* suggests that it is the highest realm on the main axis. The *wihan* of a reclining Buddha image is connected to the *ubosot* to the north, to form an ancillary north-south axis. According to the theory of symbolic planning that suggests that a *wihan* of a reclining Buddha image is the symbol of the Realm of *Nibbāna*, it is the highest realm of the planning system. If it was allocated to the east of the *ubosot* on the main axis, the whole system would be similar to the plan

of *Wat Lokayasuttha* (Figs. 5.13, 5.14), but in the reverse direction.

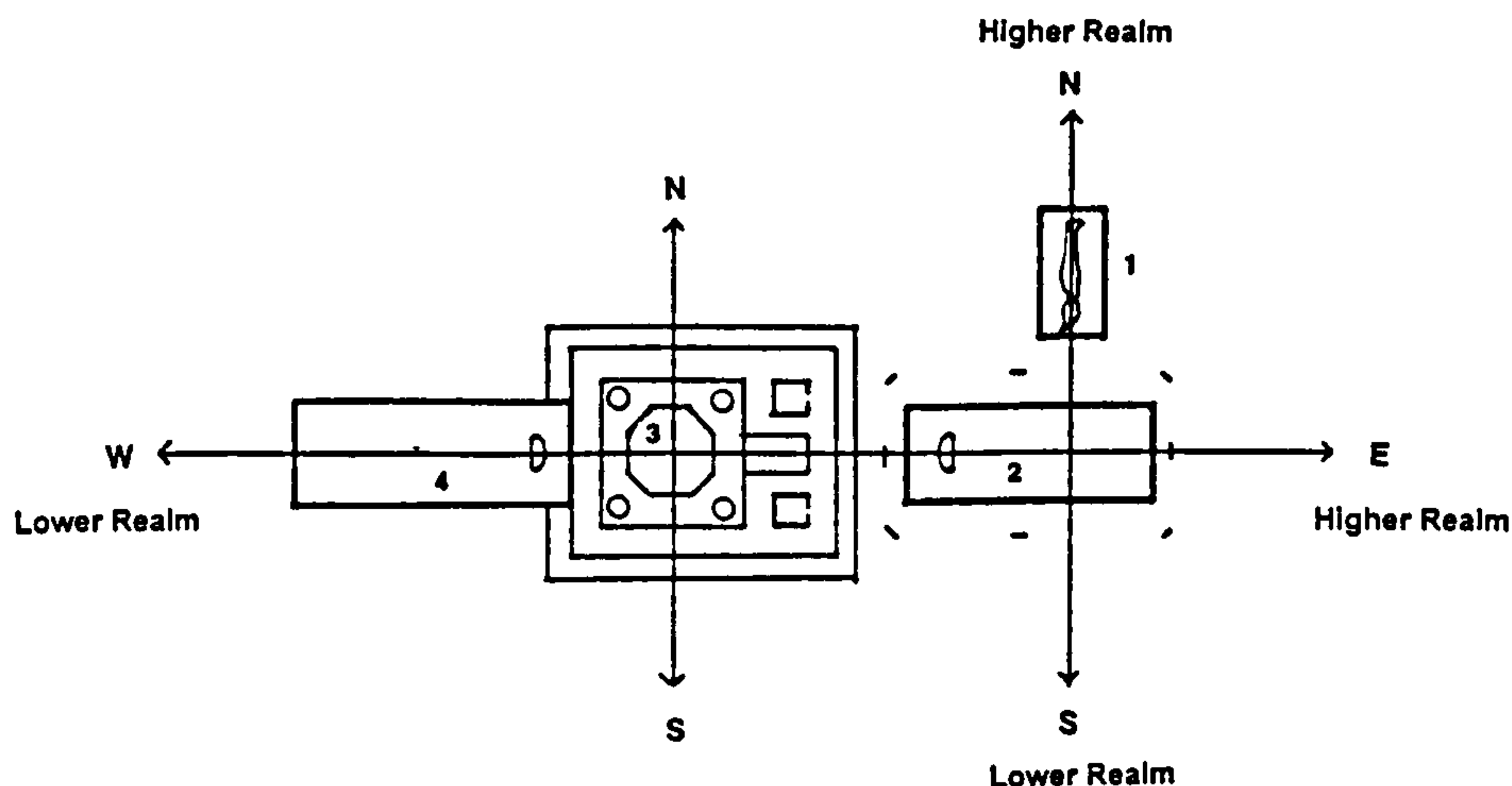


Fig. 5.16 Planning system, *Wat Yaichaimongkon*, Ayutthaya; 1) *wihan* of a reclining Buddha image; 2) *ubosot*; 3) principal *chedi*; 4) *wihan*

The theory of the planning system is introduced here as a basic principle. There are some variations in each case which require a specific investigation and analysis in their own context. The important point is that the theory is an explanation of a single layer of a system of the *Traiphum* symbolic planning. Prior to applying the theory to the analysis of any symbolic planning of a *wat*, it is necessary to clarify that all structures are part of the original plan, because some later structures or alterations may not be associated with the system. However, in cases where this problem cannot be clarified, the theory may be applied to investigate the original plan and indicate some incompatibilities in the system, which might be due to alterations or designs that create a different context from the original plan.

5.2 THE OVERLAPPING OF *JAMBUDĪPA* AND MOUNT *MERU* AND THE SYMBOL OF *PRANG*

In Chapters 3 and 4 no large *prang* was studied with regard to its comprehensive symbol system. This section aims to analyse the symbolic planning of a principal *prang* in accordance with the basic theory of the *Traiphum* symbolic planning. The issue is not only that the symbol system of the *prang* needs to be clarified, but that this analysis is simultaneously an evaluation of the effectiveness of the theory itself. However,

initially, only the symbolic planning of the *Traiphum* will be investigated, in order to clarify the symbolic diagram of the *prang*. This analysis will also prove that the symbolic planning of a principal *prang* is, in general, similar to the main buildings of some principal royal *wats* of the early Bangkok period, which do not have a *prang* as the centre of their compounds.

The only *prang* of Bangkok period that can be compared to the *prangs* of the royal *wats* of the Ayutthaya period is the *prang* of *Wat Arun*. Therefore, this study will focus not only on the *prang* of *Wat Arun*, but also on the archaeological evidence of the Ayutthaya *prangs*. The symbolic planning concerning the *Traiphum* diagram of the *prang* uncovered in this section is to be connected to the study of the concept of kingship, which is the underlying concept of the Thai royal *wats*.

5.2.1 The *Prang* of *Wat Arun*

The *prang* of *Wat Arun* was built in the reign of King Rama III (commencing in 1842). The presiding *prang* is located on three terraced bases, encircled by four *mondops* at the cardinal directions and four other subsidiary *prangs* at the intercardinal points. It does not have a main chamber at the middle section (Thai - *ruanthat*) but has four niches containing the statue of the God Indra riding on *Erāvana* Elephant. The three terraced bases are arranged with statues of *Deva* on the upper terrace, *Krabi* (Hanuman Monkey)¹¹ on the middle terrace and *Asura* on the lower terrace (Figs 5.17, 5.19). According to the basic theory that has been proposed, there is no doubt that the main *prang* is the symbol of Mount *Meru* and the four subsidiary *prangs* represent *Cātumahārājika*.¹²

¹¹ *Krabi* or *Hanuman* Monkey is here at the position that should be taken by *Garuda*. However, their iconographical meanings here are interchangeable. On the pediments of the four-direction *wihans* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* are the icon of Vishnu (Nārāyana) riding on *Garuda* on the north-south pediments, and the same statue riding on *Krabi* on the east-west pediments. The *Krabi* or *Hanuman* Monkey is the chief of Rāma's army in the *Ramakian* epic. Rāma is an incarnation of Vishnu (Nārāyana), so *Krabi* and *Garuda* convey equally iconographical meanings in this context.

¹² Joti argues that these four subsidiary *prangs* are symbols of the Four Major Continents (*Mahādīpa*) (Joti 1982, 41), while Anuvit argues that the four *mondops* represent the Four Major Continents and the four *prangs* represent four minor continents (Anuvit 1984, 51).

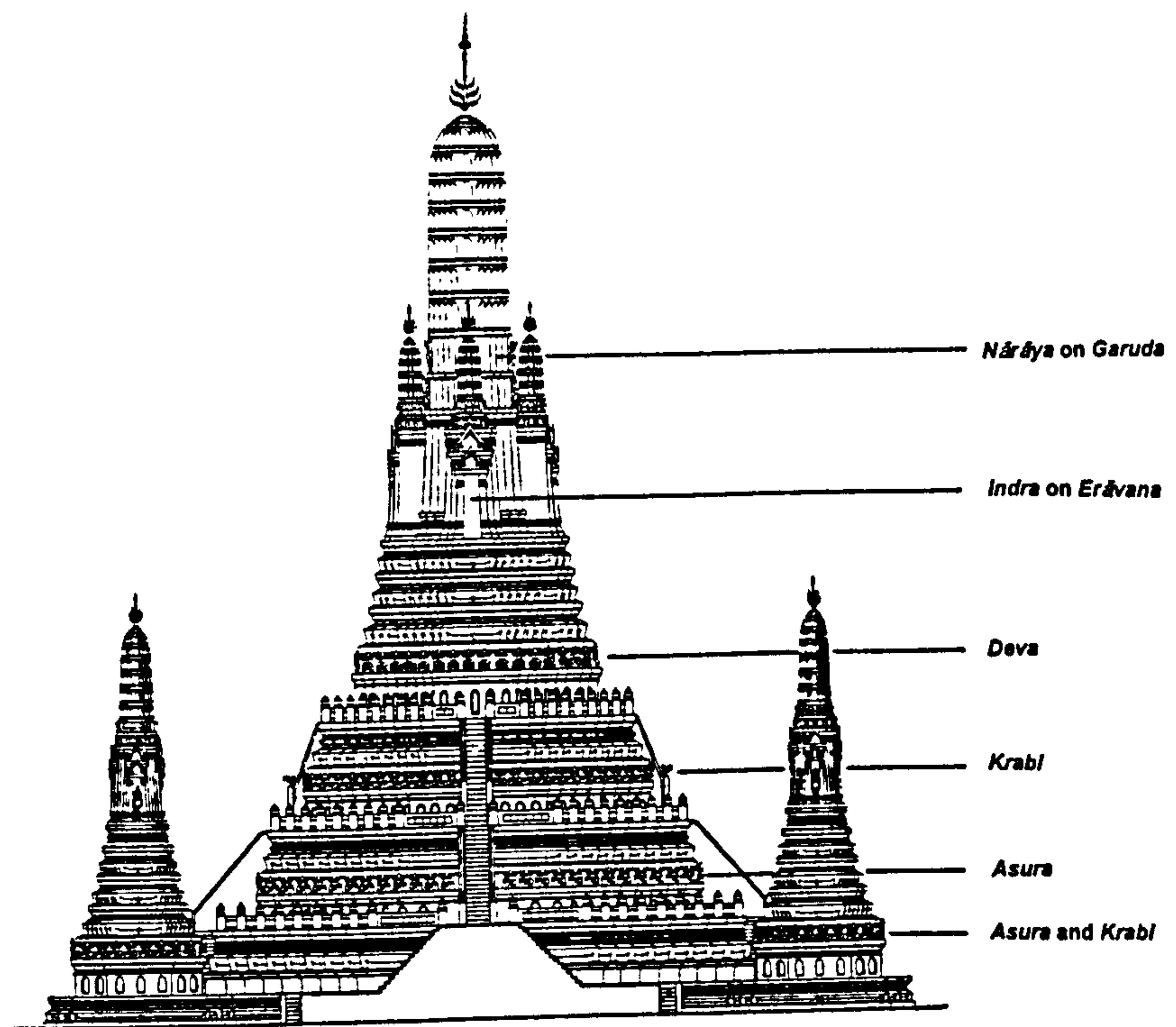


Fig. 5.17 Prang of Wat Arun (source: Sumet 1986)

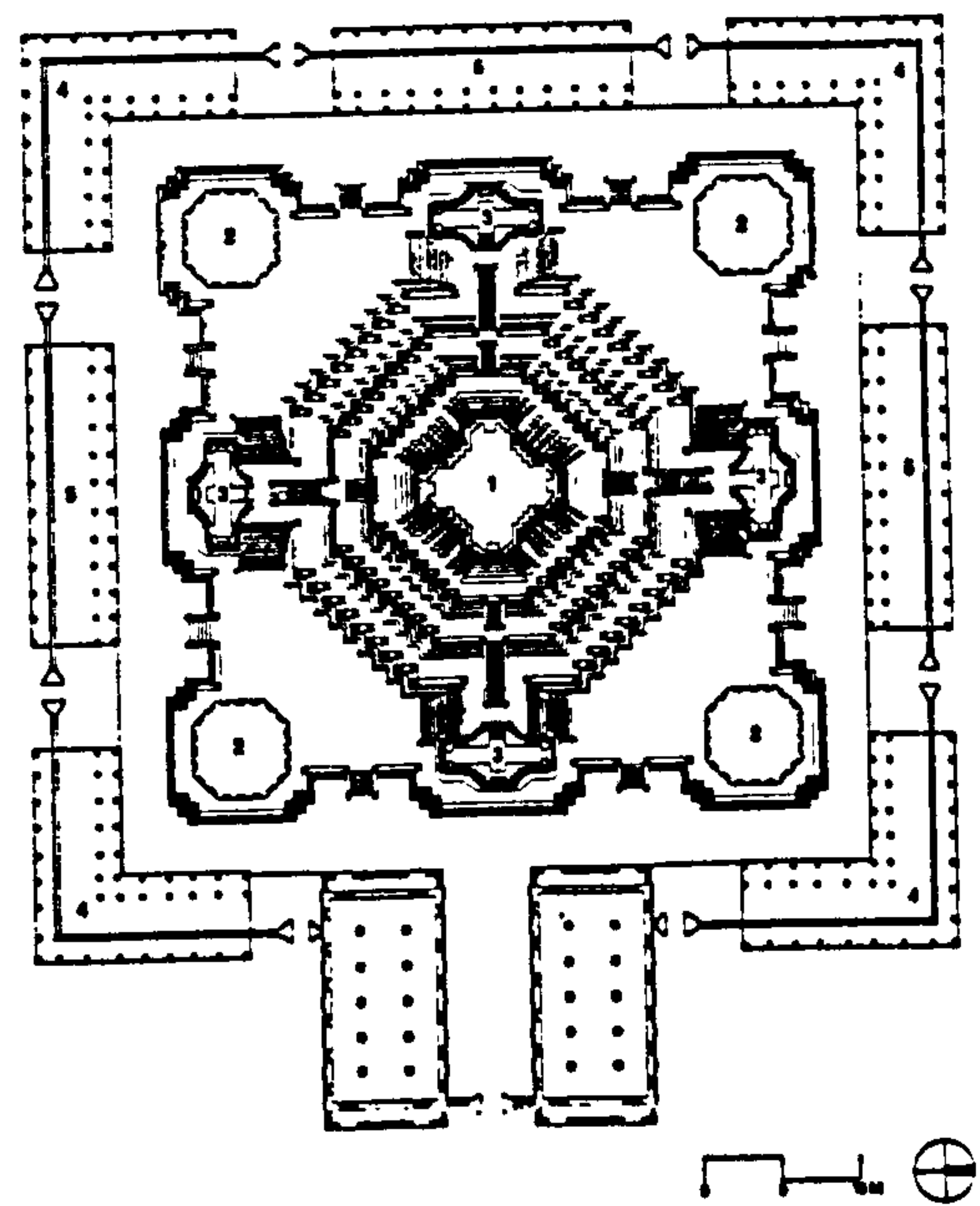


Fig. 5.18 Original plan of prang complex, Wat Arun (Adapted from Sumet 1986); 1) principal prang; 2) subsidiary prangs; 3) mondops; 4) L-shape wihans; 5) salas

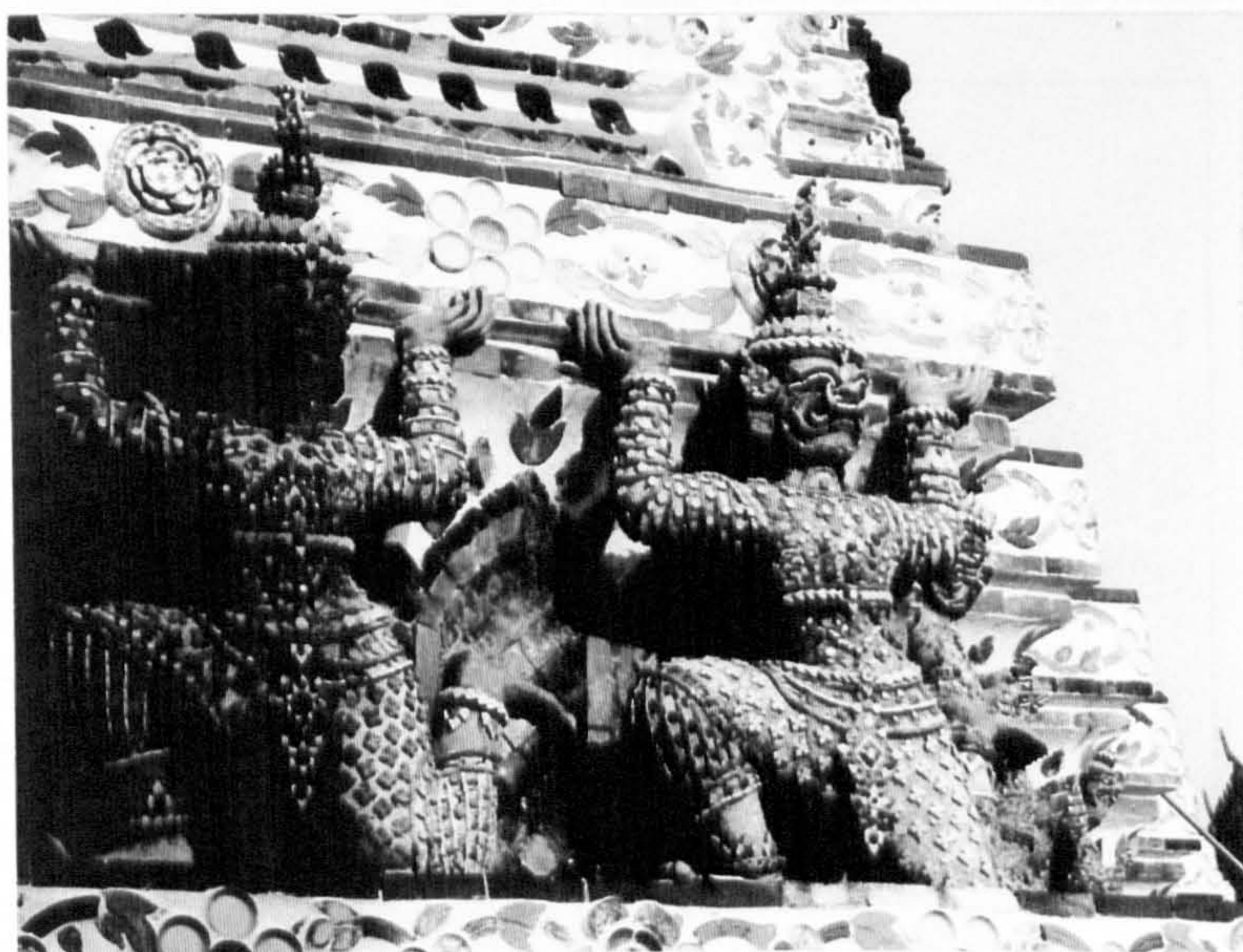


Fig. 5.19 Statues of *Asura*, principal *prang*, *Wat Arun*

Some original features of its surroundings should be clarified here before going further in this analysis. In the report of Phraya Ratchasongkhram to King Chulalongkorn during the restoration in that reign, that there were four L-shaped *wihans* at the four angles and *salas* at the north, south and west directions. They formed an enclosure and were connected to the *ubosot* and the *wihan* at the east (Fig. 5.18). The L-shaped *wihans* originally contained Buddha images in accordance with the themes of the Buddha's Life: the Nativity, the Enlightenment, the First Sermon and the *Parinibbāna*. However, in the restoration these images were moved to be housed in the four *mondops*, which originally contained Buddha images, but these had been removed before the restoration.¹³ In the west *sala* was depicted the scene of hells.¹⁴ However, the L-shaped *wihans* and the north and south *salas* were demolished, leaving only the west *sala* where the scenes of hells were whitewashed.

At the base of the four subsidiary *prangs* there are statues of *Asura* and *Krabi* alternately arranged in the gesture supporting the *prangs*. The *prangs* therefore might represent the realm above the abodes of *Asura* and *Krabi* (or *Garuda*). At the base of the east and west *mondops* are statues of *Gandhabba*, and the north and south

¹³ Letter from Phraya Ratchasongkhram to King Chulalongkorn dated 25 June 1908; see FAD (1978, 33-34).

¹⁴ NA s 6/16, Ministry of Public Instruction, 17/85 An Account of Restoration of the *Prang* of *Wat Arun*, Letter from Phraya Ratchasongkhram to King Chulalongkorn, dated 13 January 1909.

mondops are supported by *Kumbhanda* (FAD 1978, 93). The *Gandhabba* are ruled by *Dhatarattha*, the *Cātumahārājika* of the east domain, and the *Kumbhanda* are ruled over by *Virūhaka*, the *Cātumahārājika* of the south domain. The arrangement is not in line with the directions of the domains of the *Cātumahārājika*. According to the *Traiphum* cosmology, the four *mondops* might represent the heavenly palace of the deities at the same level as the *Cātumahārājika*. Another problem is that there were Buddha images in the *mondops* which were quite clearly connected to the themes of the Buddha's Life. The arrangement, which is not compatible with the description of the *Traiphum* cosmography, indicates that there might be other layers of symbolic planning overlapping with the *Traiphum*. This issue will be investigated in the section that discusses kingship and royal *wats*.

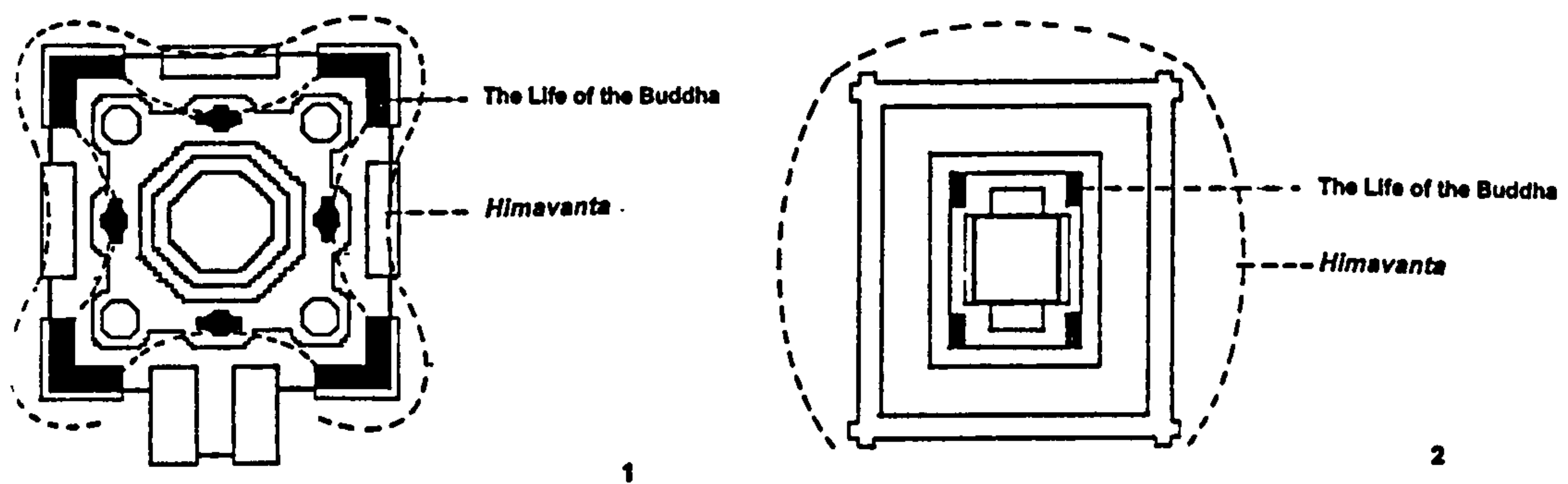


Fig. 5.20 Diagram of elements representing *Jambudīpa*; 1) *Wat Arun*; 2) *Wat Suthat*

The problem here is that the *mondops* contained Buddha images which may be connected to the images representing the episodes from the Buddha's Life in the L-shaped *wihans*. The eight structures, the four *mondops* and the four L-shape *wihans*, formed a ring that represented the episodes from the Buddha's Life encircling the central structures. As has been indicated in the basic theory, the themes of the Buddha's Life are the essential elements of the symbol of *Jambudīpa*, so there might be the symbol of *Jambudīpa* in the plan of the *prang*. Some elements of *Jambudīpa* provide supporting evidence. At each of the terrace bases of the main *prang* and the bases of the subsidiary *prangs* and of the *mondops*, there are statues of *kinnarī* and *kinnara*, the mythical beings of *Himavanta*. The scenes of hells in the west *sala* may also relate to the *Peta* realm in the *Himavanta*, which might be symbolized by the three *salas*, like the system of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Suthat* (Fig. 5.20). The symbolic arrangement of the main *prang* of *Wat Arun*, thus, is initially attributed to the overlapping of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa*, as in the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*

and the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat*. However, because of the centralized plan of a *prang*, the possible position of the Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa*, might be at its centre. Another possibility is that it is in the relic chamber inside the *prang*. This thesis will be proved by some evidence from the principal *prangs* of the Ayutthaya period.

5.2.2 Evidence From the Relic Chamber of the Ayutthayan *Prangs*

Because principal *chedis* and *prangs* of important *wats* of Ayutthaya were looted by treasure hunters before the Fine Arts Department undertook their archaeological work, there is no complete evidence of this kind available for study. The richest evidence came from the relic chamber of the principal *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* at Ayutthaya, although this was also looted. The *Wat* was built in the early fifteenth century, in the early Ayutthaya period. Prior to the study of the evidence from the relic chamber, it is necessary to prove that the *prangs* of the early Ayutthaya period, which were built almost four centuries before the *prang* of *Wat Arun*, have similar symbolic planning. Although some arrangements were developed in the *prang* of *Wat Arun*, the main concept should be maintained.

The *Prangs* of Ayutthaya

The architectural feature of the Thai *prang* is a development of Angkorian architecture. The principal *prang* of *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* at Lopburi,¹⁵ dated around the thirteenth century, is probably a prototype of the early Ayutthayan *prang* (Woodward Jr. 1975, Vol. 1, 173, Vol. 2, 15). The important *prangs* of Ayutthaya are the *prang* of *Wat Phutthaisawan*, built by King Ramathibodi (Uthong) in 1353 (RCA, PC, 2); the *prang* of *Wat Phraram* (Fig. 5.21), built in 1369 by Ramathibodi's son Ramesuan (RCA, LP, 131); the *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* (Figs 5.22, 5.23), built in 1424 by Borommarachathirat II (Samphraya) (RCA, LP, 134); and the *prang* of *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* Ayutthaya, built in 1374 by Borommaracha I (RCA, LP, 131). Because all the *prangs* were in ruins for centuries, their fragmentary evidence is being integrated in order to construct their symbolic planning diagrams, to compare them to the *prang* of *Wat Arun*.

¹⁵ In large cities which were in the sovereignty of the Ayutthaya Kingdom, there was usually a principal *wat* which was named 'Phra Srirattanamahathat' (Glory Jeweled Great Relic). To specify the *wat* of a particular city, it needs to be referred to by the name of the city in which it was located.

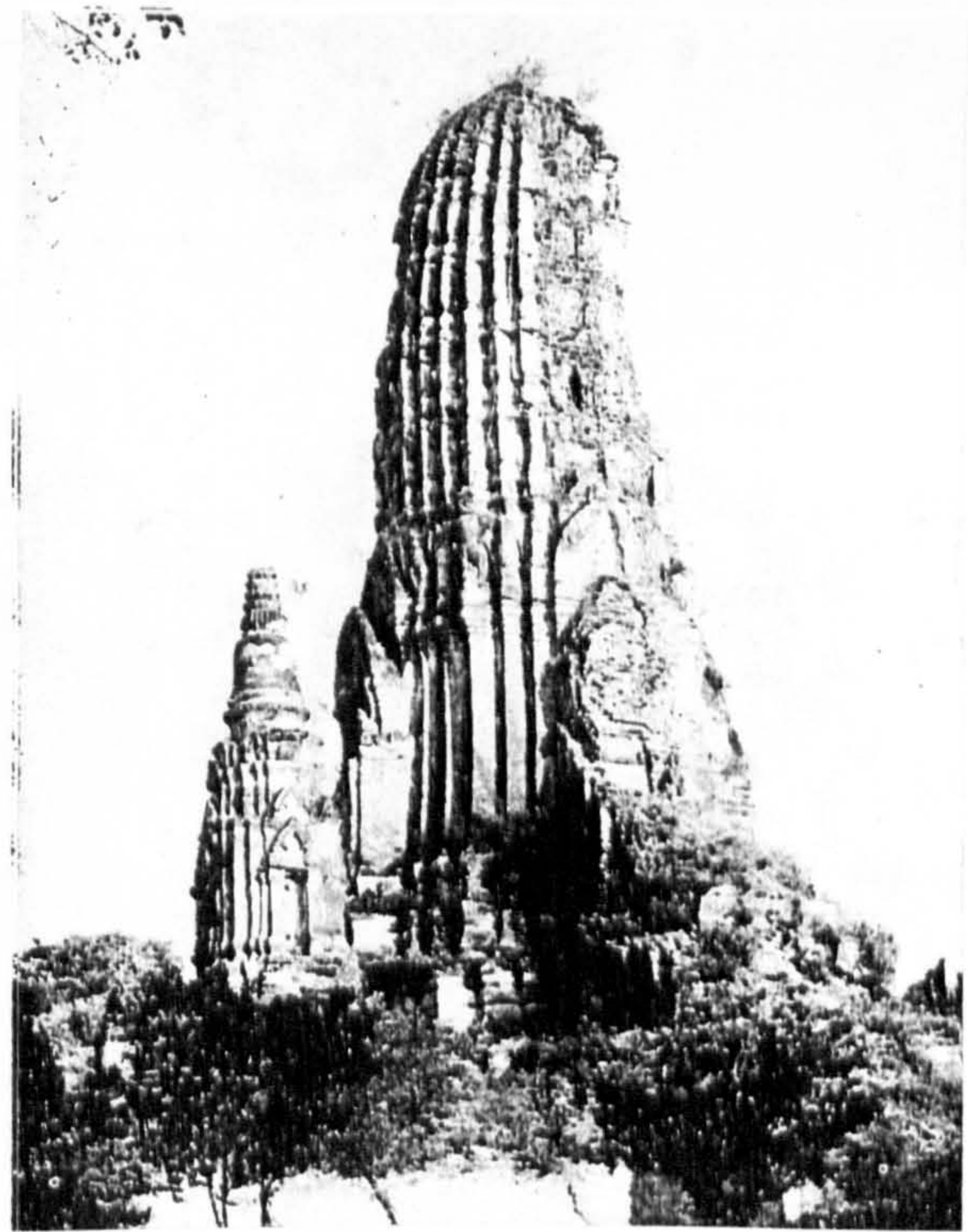


Fig. 5.21 Principal *prang* and south-east subsidiary *chedi*, Wat Phraram, Ayutthaya (source: FAD 1971a)

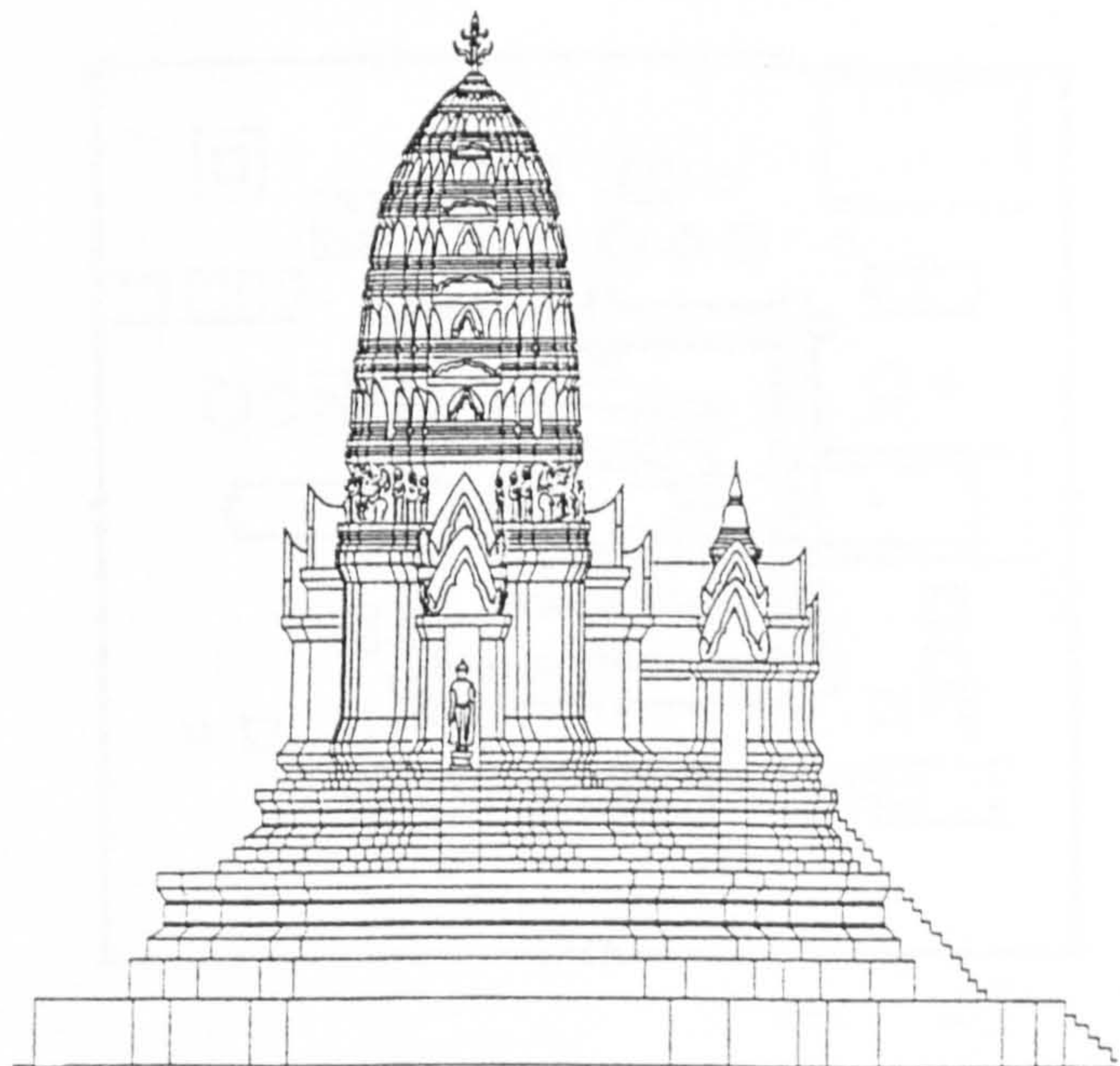


Fig. 5.22 Principal *prang*, Wat Ratchaburana, Ayutthaya (source: Santi 1998)

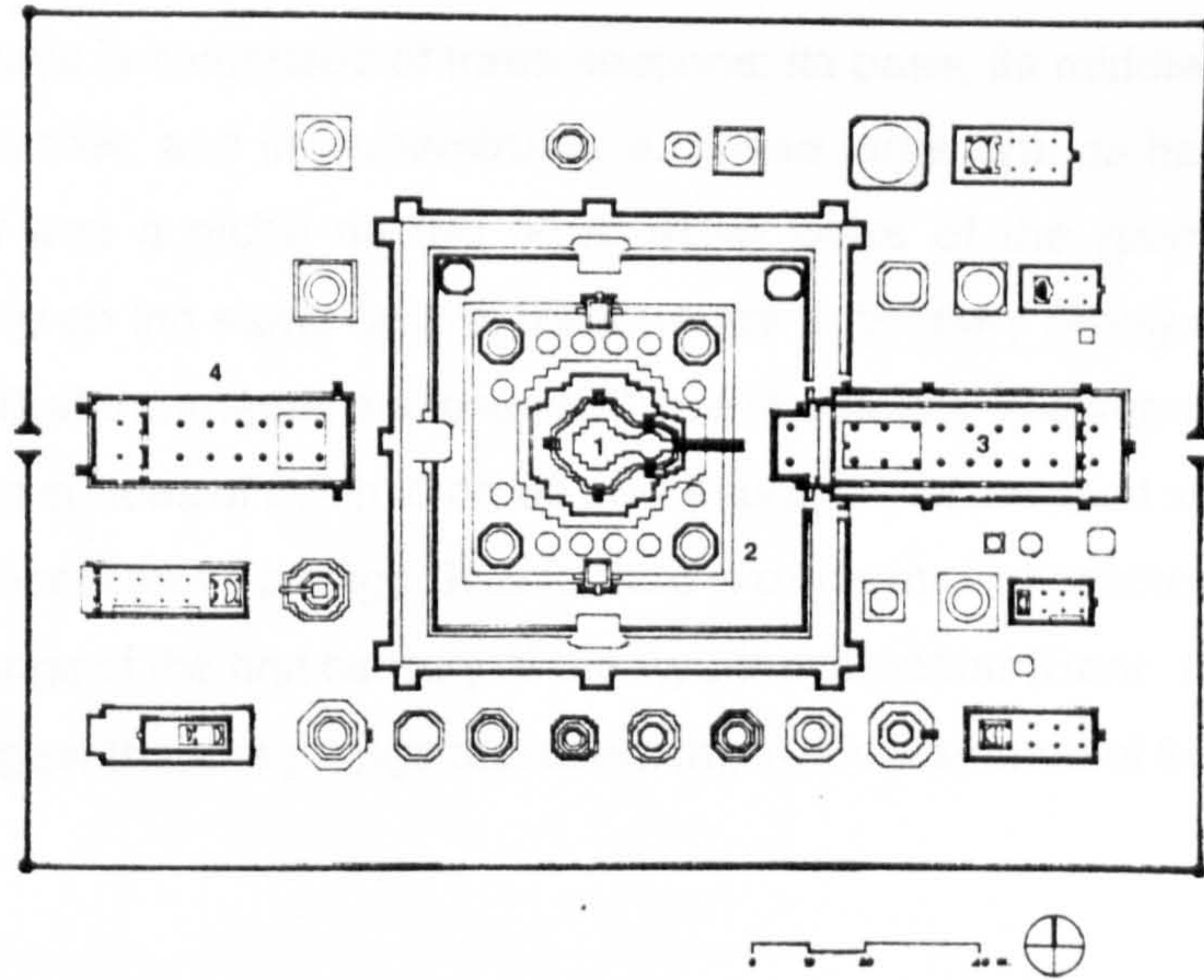


Fig. 5.23 Plan of Wat Ratchaburana, Ayutthaya (Redrawn after FAD 1968); 1) principal *prang*; 2) subsidiary *chedis*; 3) *wihan*; 4) *ubosot*

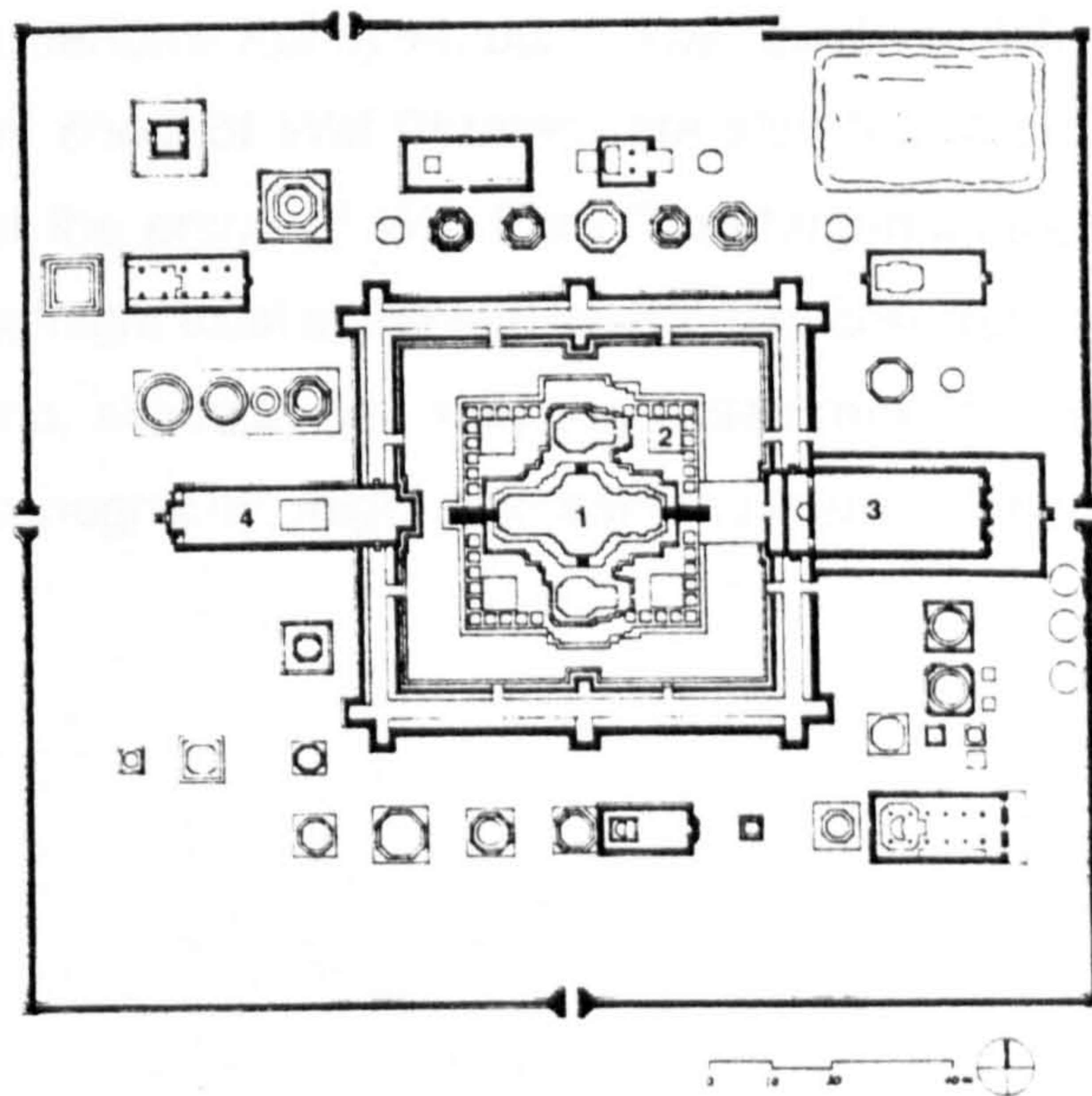


Fig. 5.24 Plan of Wat Phraram, Ayutthaya (Redrawn after FAD 1968); 1) principal *prang*; 2) four subsidiary *prangs*; 3) *wihan*; 4) *ubosot*

A principal *prang* of Ayutthaya is comprised of three sections: its base, its middle part (*ruanthat*) with a main chamber, and its superstructure. These large *prangs* have a forechamber on the east and a niche on the other three sides of the *ruanthat*. Surrounding the main *prang* on the same central platform are subsidiary *prangs* and *chedis*. A gallery lined with Buddha images encloses all these structures. The important symbols of Mount *Meru*, the statues of *Deva*, *Garuda* and *Asura*, are placed just above the middle section or *ruanthat* of these *prangs*. This feature is a common characteristic of most of the principal *prangs* of the first century of the Ayutthaya period (Santi 1998, 14-15). These statues suggest that the *prangs* represent the vertical symbol of Mount *Meru*.

Like the *prang* of *Wat Arun*, the *prangs* of *Wat Phraram* (Fig. 5.24) and *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* at Ayutthaya (Fig. 5.25) have four subsidiary *prangs* at four directions to represent *Cātumahārājika*. The evidence which may be attributed to the themes from the Buddha's Life encircling the main *prang* are the Buddha images in gestures of walking and standing in the niches of the south-east subsidiary *chedi* of *Wat Phraram* (Fig. 5.26). In the niches of the main *prang* of the same *wat* are standing Buddha images whose right hands perform *Abhaya-mudrā*. The *chedis* which are similar to the style of the subsidiary *chedi* of *Wat Phraram* are also found on the platform of the central structures of the *prang* of *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* of Ayutthaya (Fig. 5.27). A similar design might exist in the subsidiary *chedis* surrounding the main *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana*, although now only the bases remain. These Buddha images, according to their iconography, might represent the theme of the Life of the Buddha.

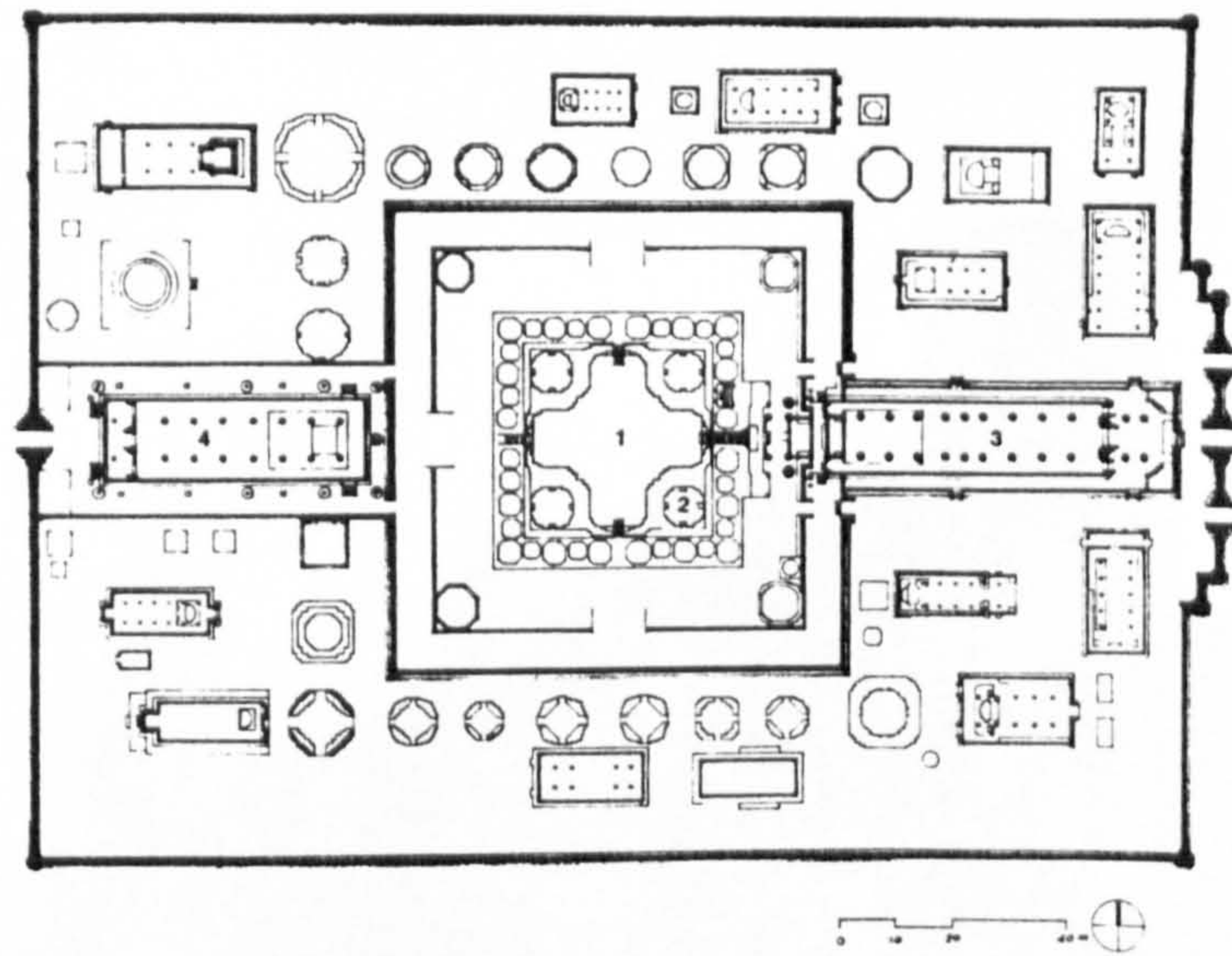


Fig. 5.25 Plan of *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat*, Ayutthaya (Redrawn after FAD 1968); 1) principal *prang*; 2) four subsidiary *prangs*; 3) *wihan*; 4) *ubosot*



Fig. 5.26 South-east subsidiary *chedi*, *Wat Phraram*, Ayutthaya (source: Santi and Kamol 1981)



Fig. 5.27 Subsidiary *chedis*, Wat Phra Sri Rattanamahathat, Ayutthaya



Fig. 5.28 Gallery, Wat Chaiwatthanaram, Ayutthaya



Fig. 5.29 Crowned Buddha image, Wat Chaiwatthanaram, Ayutthaya

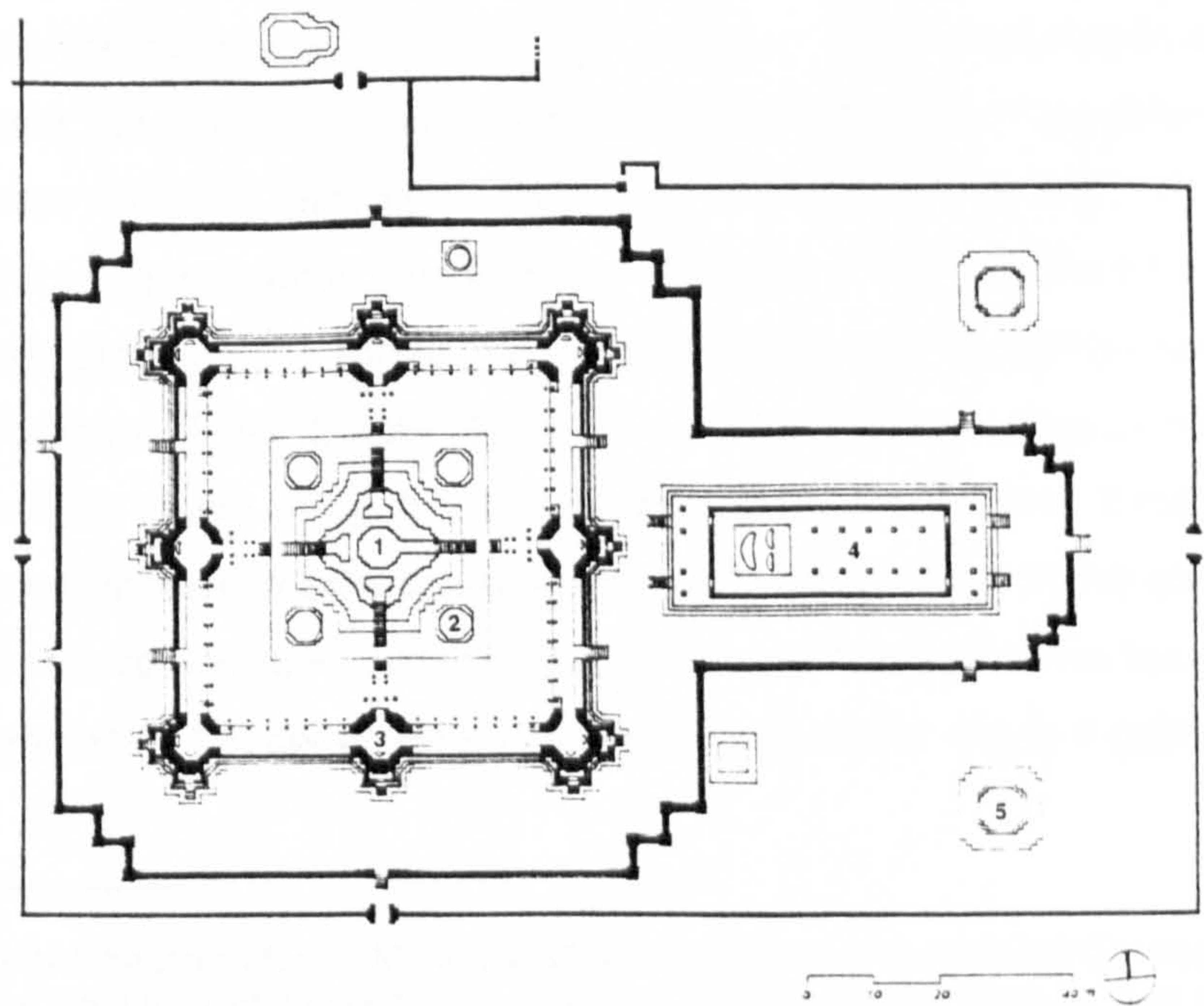


Fig. 5.30 Plan of Wat Chaiwatthanaram, Ayutthaya (Redrawn after FAD 1968); 1) principal *prang*; 2) four subsidiary *prangs*; 3) eight *prasats*; 4) *ubosot*; 5) *chedis*

The clearest evidence of the scenes of the Buddha's Life are depicted on the eight *mens* or *prasats*¹⁶ at eight directions surrounding the main *prang* of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*. The *wat* was built in 1630 by King Prasatthong (RCA, PC, 218). The stucco relief of the scenes of the Buddha's Life are located inside the porch on the exterior wall of each *prasat*.¹⁷ These eight *prasats* are connected to each other by a gallery, inside which is a row of Buddha images (Fig. 5.28). There are twelve crowned Buddha images inside the *prasats*, one in each of the midpoints and two in the corner *prasats* (Fig. 5.29).

Although *Wat Chaiwatthanaram* has a quite different plan from the earlier *prangs* (Fig. 5.30), the arrangement of the theme of the Buddha's Life and the gallery indicates that they have similar symbolic planning.¹⁸ Their main *prangs* are encircled by *Cātumahārājika*, represented by the four subsidiary *prangs* and the theme of the Buddha's Life. However, in the arrangement of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*, the theme of the Buddha's Life on the central platform in the earlier pattern is moved to the same ring as a gallery, in which the Buddha images are symbols of Buddhas of the past. The gallery, which connects the eight *prasats* containing the scenes of the Buddha's Life of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*, is surprisingly, very similar to the arrangement of the gallery which connects the four direction *wihans* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* (Fig. 5.31). The *wihans* contain Buddha images representing different episodes of the Buddha's Life. In addition, the symbolic planning of the early Ayutthayan *prangs* may be comparable to that of the *wihan* complex of *Wat Suthat* (Fig. 5.32). All the diagrams suggest that they represent *Jambudīpa*, above which is a vertical symbol of Mount *Meru*. It might be possible to conclude that the symbolic planning of the principal *prangs* of the early Ayutthaya period, which have been concisely investigated, are comprised of the theme of the Buddha's Life encircling the central *prang*. Extending from this ring is a gallery

¹⁶ Woodward Jr. suggests that the term '*Men*' or *Meru* is applied to these towers in the Royal Chronicle, probably not because they are supposed to specifically represent Mount *Meru* but because they are copied in brick and stucco from the wooden tower erected for royal cremations, which is referred to as a *Men* or *Meru* (Woodward Jr. 1971, 64). Their multi-tiered superstructures actually represent *prasat* type. They are referred to as '*prasat*' in this study.

¹⁷ See the discussion of the details of the episodes of these scenes in McGill (1977, 101-10) and Fouser (1996, 60-85).

¹⁸ This summary is based on only the diagram of the arrangement of the symbol subjects. The form of the *prasats* will be analysed with regard to their meaning later.

which is lined with a row of Buddha images. This symbolic diagram is similar to that of the *prang* of *Wat Arun*, the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat*. Due to this similarity, we will prove, based on the evidence of the Ayutthaya period, that the centre of the *prang* also represents the Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa*.

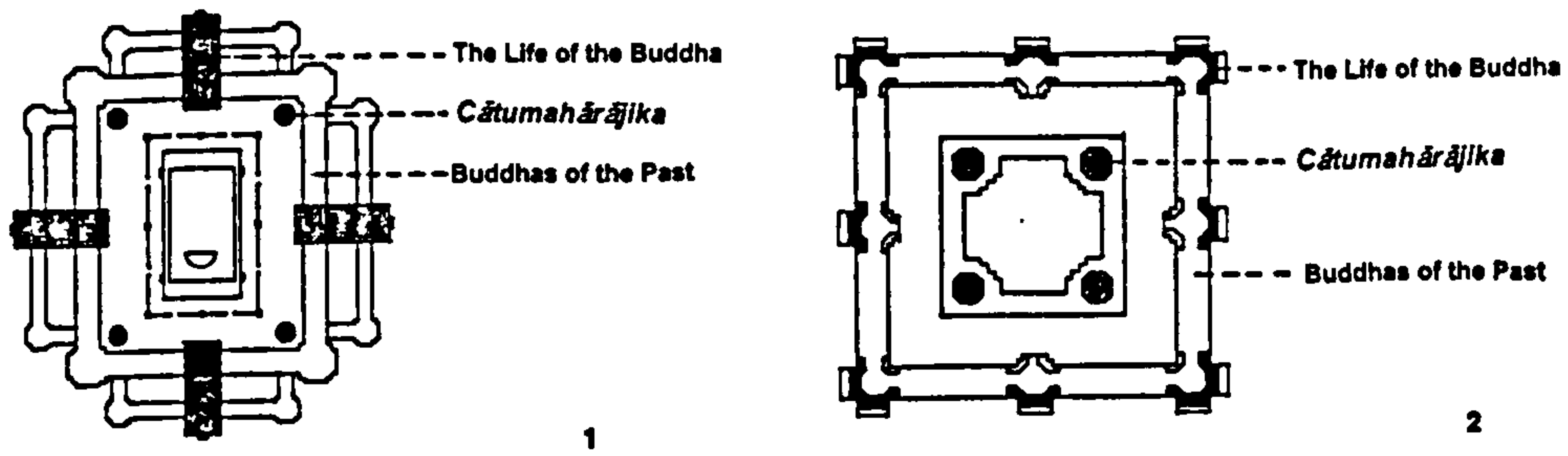


Fig. 5.31 Planning diagram; 1) *ubosot* complex, *Wat Phra Chetuphon*; 2) *prang* complex, *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*

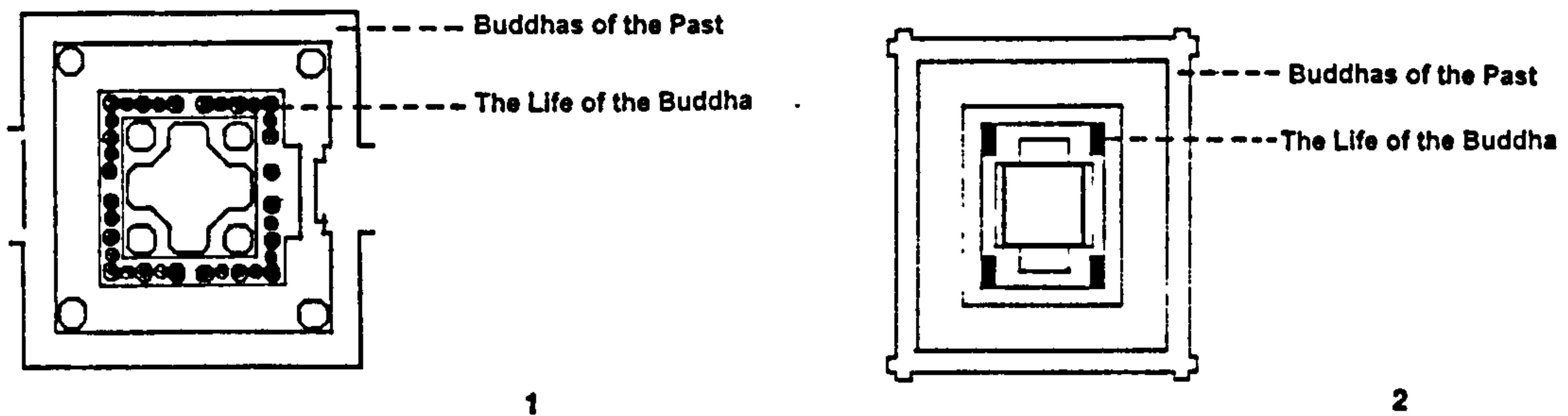


Fig. 5.32 Planning diagram; 1) *prang* complex, *Wat Phra srirattanamahathat*, Ayutthaya; 2) *wihan* complex, *Wat Suthat*

The Relic Chamber of the Principal *Prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana*

The relic chamber of the main *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* was looted in 1957. Although a large number of articles from the chamber were lost, the remains are the most important evidence of a large *prang* of Ayutthaya. The mural paintings in the relic chamber, the gold treasures, the votive tablets and other articles found in the chamber, are related to the designation of the concept of the *prang*.¹⁹

The mural paintings of the upper part of the relic chamber represent the twenty-four Buddhas of the past, from *Dīpankara* to *Kassapa*. Next to each Buddha there is a human figure or an animal to represent each life of the *Bodhisattva (Jātaka)*, which occurred in the time of that Buddha (Fig. 5.33) (Santi and Kamol 1981, 44). The episodes from the Buddha's Life are depicted below the Buddhas of the past, comprising the themes from the Seven Great Places and the Eight Great Places. Below these scenes are the eighty disciples performing *anjali* (pressing their hands together in salutation) and doing *padakkhinā* (clockwise circumambulating). As we have seen, the themes of the Buddhas of the past, *Jātakas*, and the Life of the Buddha are symbols relating to *Jambudīpa*. They are part of the theme of *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings, as discussed in Chapter 3. Moreover, the same elements of these paintings are also in the list of things that King *Dutthagāmanī* installed in the relic chamber of the *Mahāthūpa*, as described in the *Mahāvamsa* (Geiger 1912, 203-207; see appendix 3).

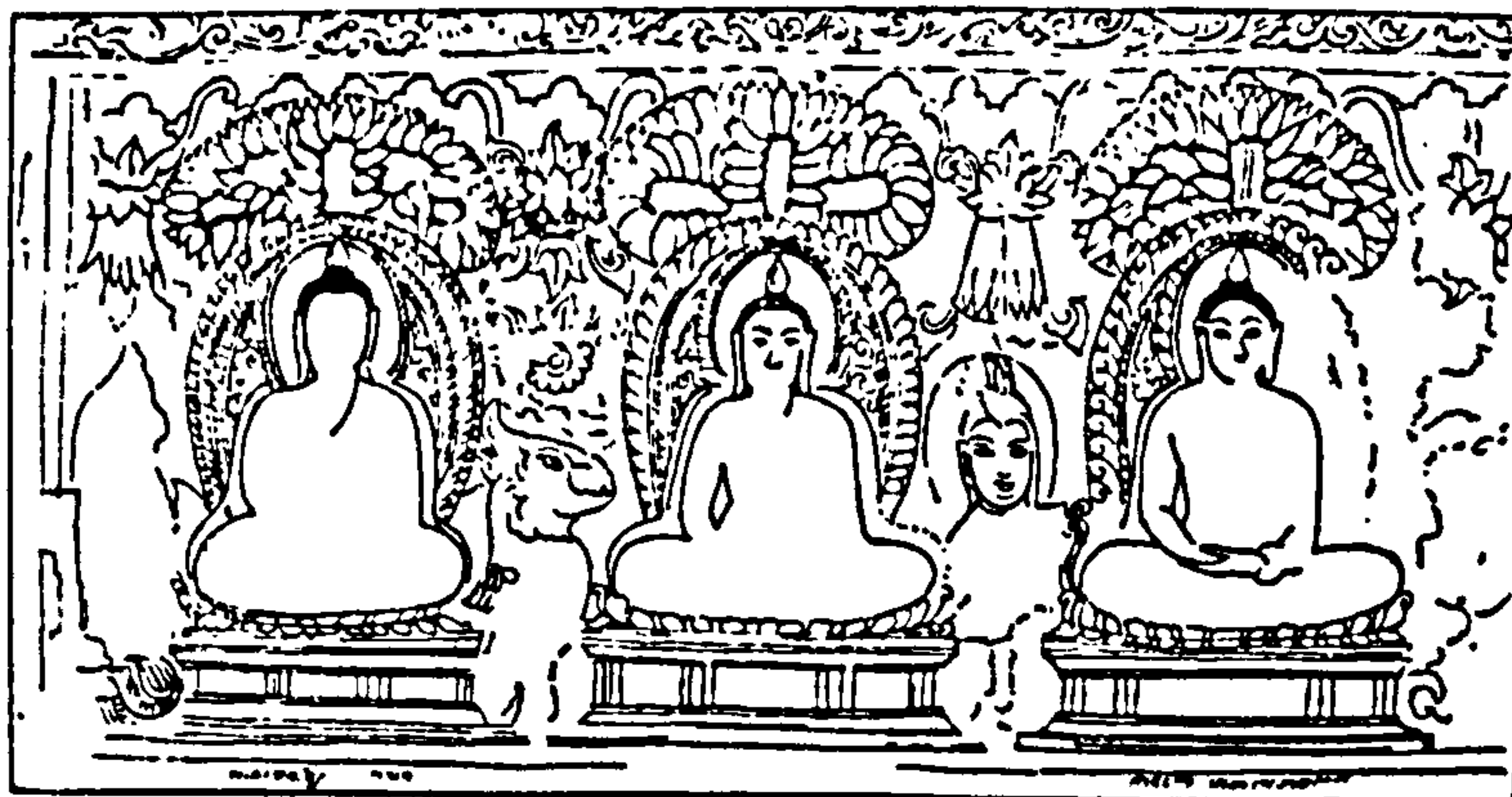


Fig. 5.33 Scene of Buddhas of the past, relic chamber of the principal *prang*, *Wat Ratchaburana* (source: Santi and Kamol 1981)

¹⁹ See the art and the mural painting of the relic chamber of *Wat Ratchaburana* in FAD (1958) and Santi and Kamol (1981, 43-46); for the Buddha images see FAD (1959); for the gold treasure see Prathum (1988).



Fig. 5.34 Gold Buddha image (8 cm.), relic chamber of principal *prang*, Wat Ratchaburana (source: FAD 1971a)

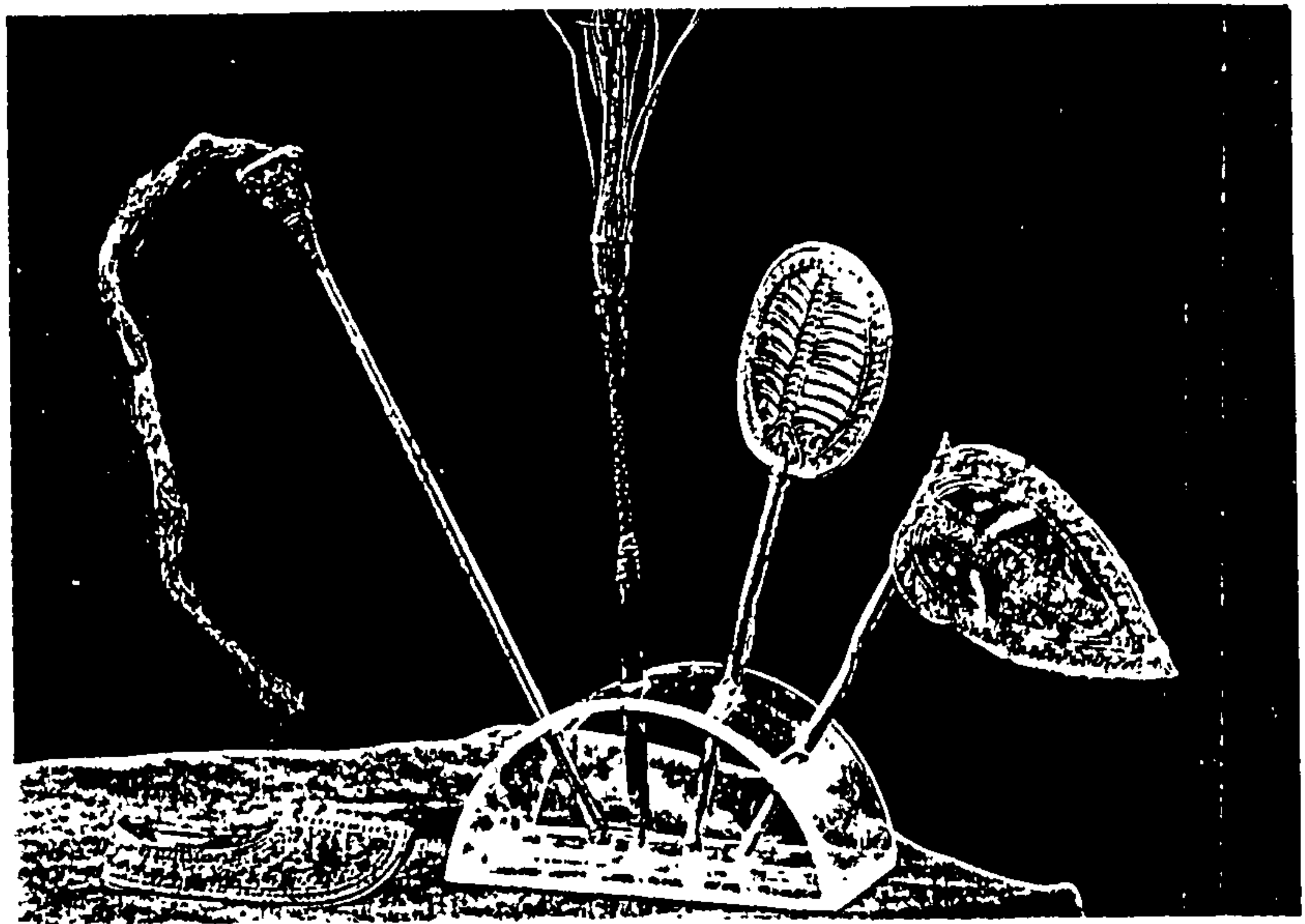


Fig. 5.35 Gold models of regalia from the relic chamber of principal *prang*, Wat Ratchaburana (source: Prathum 1988)

Many treasures from the relic chamber of *Wat Ratchaburana* are made of gold and are elaborately studded with gems. Many Buddha images were made of gold plaques in relief, and most of the images are portrayed in a niche under a Bodhi-tree (Fig. 5.34). A gold miniature *prang* decorated with gems, gold royal regalia and other royal possessions were also found in the chamber (Fig. 5.35). There are the gold water-pitcher, the fan and the elephant, which might be elements of the eight auspicious symbols. A testimony given by a looter said that there were many vases filled with gold treasures, pearls, and gems (Prathum 1988, 39). All these items are in line with the gold treasures and articles found in the relic chamber of King Dutthagāmanī. This connection led to the hypothesis that the concept of the relic chamber of the *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* was inspired by the relic chamber of King Dutthagāmanī.

The influence of the account of the relic chamber of King Dutthagāmanī may be better known in Lanna. Vases filled with flowers are found in the relic chambers of some *chedis* of Lanna (Natthaphat 1993, 74). The adornments in some *wihans* of Lanna, which are usually in gilt lacquer or gilded on a red surface to represent vases filled with flowers (Fig. 5.36) or flying deities in the gesture of *anjali*, might be a closer interpretation of the relic chamber than the *Pathamasambhodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings of central Thailand. This might be because the *Traiphum* text of Lanna, which was inscribed in 1748, integrates the story of the enshrined relics of King Dutthagāmanī with the account of *Jambudīpa* (Udom (ed.) 1981, 86, 65-66). Another cosmological text, *Lokadīpakasāra*, which was composed around the fourteenth century also includes the royal lineage of Lanka and the establishment of the *Mahāthūpa* as part of the section of *Jambudīpa*, particularly the elaboration of the relic chamber (Medhankara 1986, 114-116). This evidence suggests that there is a connection between the *Pathamasambhodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings and the account of the enshrined relics of King Dutthagāmanī. They are related to the symbol of *Jambudīpa*.

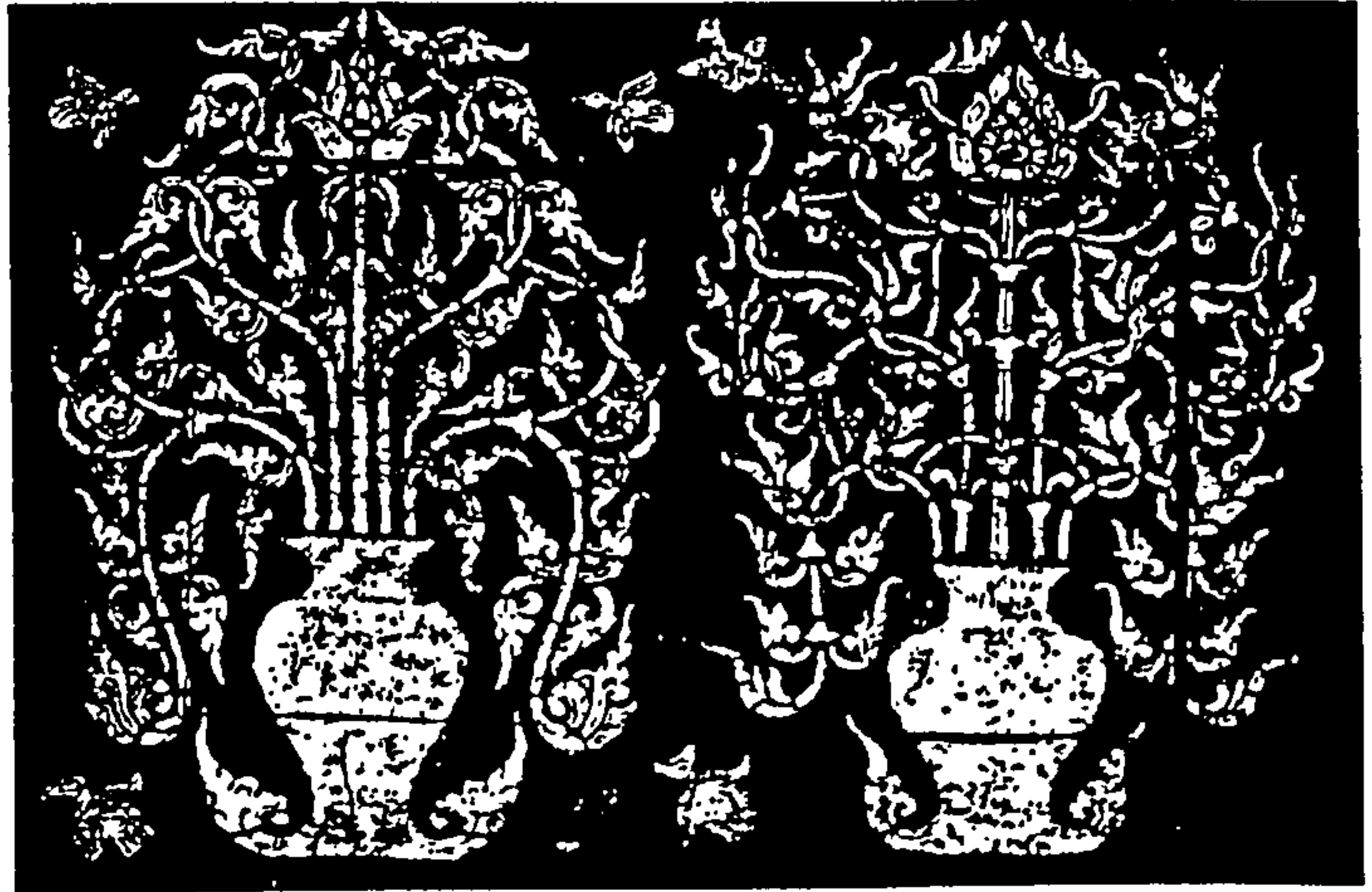


Fig. 5.36 Motif of vases filled with flowers, *wihan*, Wat Pongyangkhok, Lampang (source: Suraphon 1997)

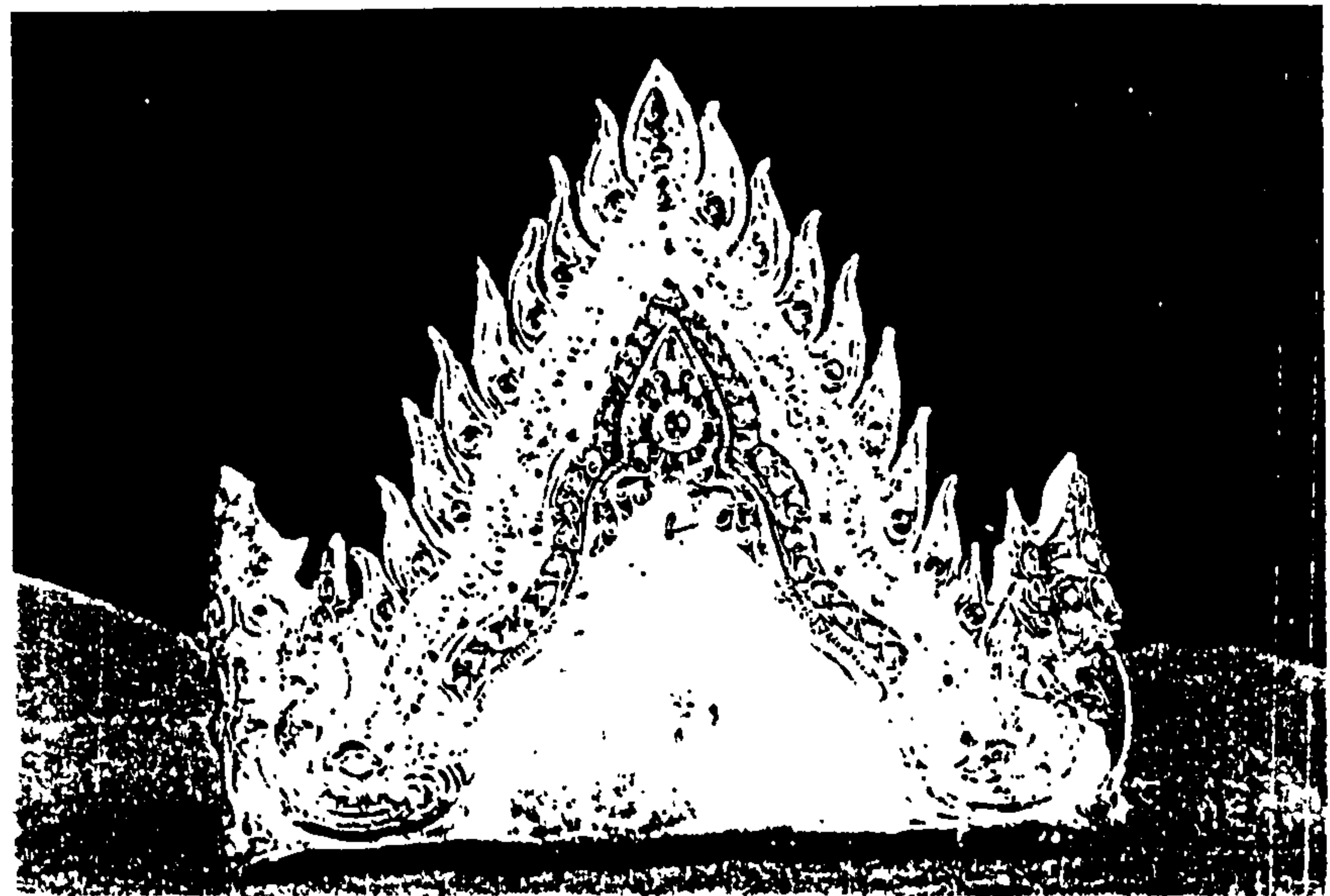


Fig. 5.37 Fragment of gold miniature *prang*, relic chamber of principal *prang*, Wat Ratchaburana (source: Prathum 1988)

The mural paintings in the relic chamber of the main *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* and the painting in the main chamber of some of the early Ayutthayan *prangs* indicate that they are symbols related to *Jambudīpa*. Although a gold model of a Bodhi-tree as stated in the description of the relic chamber of King Dutthagāmanī is not found in the *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana*,²⁰ the meaning of the form of the *prang* itself relates to the Bodhi-tree instead. The gold miniature *prang* in the relic chamber of the *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* may relate to the concept of the Bodhi-tree. It was approximately one metre in height when it was completed (Fig. 5.37) (Prathum 1988, 51). There are also many gold Buddha images which represent the Buddha sitting under the Bodhi-tree.²¹ These articles might relate to the symbol of the Bodhi-tree. This issue will be analysed in the next section

5.2.3 The Centre of *Jambudīpa* in the Symbolic Planning of *Prang*

Although the mural paintings and some articles from the relic chamber of the main *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* may relate to the theory of symbolic planning of *Jambudīpa*, the same arrangement is not discovered in the relic chambers of some other *prangs*. However, similar themes are discovered in their main chambers. For example, the *prang* of *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* at Ratchaburi, dated around the mid-fourteenth century (Santi 1979, 81) portrays in its main chamber scenes of Buddhas of the past seated under the Bodhi-tree, scenes of the Buddha's Life and the great disciples (Santi and Kamol 1981, 33-35; Samerchai 1996, 21-39). The mural painting in the main chamber of the main *prang* of *Wat Phraram*, now shows only some figures of the Buddhas of the past, due to its seriously deteriorated condition (Santi and Kamol 1981, 38-39). Although they are incomplete, it is quite possible that similar themes are depicted in the main chambers of some early Ayutthayan *prangs*.

The Evidence from Votive Tablets

There are some votive tablets found in Ayutthaya and elsewhere that suggest a relationship between the symbol of a principal *prang* and the Bodhi-tree. Some

²⁰ Parnavitana (1946, 20-25) reported that similar arrangements to the relic chamber of the *Mahāthūpa* were not found in many *stūpas* dated later than the *Mahāthūpa*. Instead, some evidence related to the concept of *Meru* was discovered.

²¹ See the pictures in FAD (1959, plates 239-308).

samples from the relic chamber of the *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* portray a Buddha image seated in a niche under a *prang*, and radiating from the *prang* are Bodhi-tree branches (Fig. 5.38). A similar image is also found in *Wat Mahathat* at Sukhothai (Fig. 5.39). The central image is flanked on either side by a Buddha in a smaller niche. Woodward Jr. has indicated that the early Ayutthayan *prangs* such as *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* at Lopburi, *Wat Phutthaisawan* (Fig. 5.6) and *Wat Phraram* (Figs 5.21, 5.23) at Ayutthaya, are comparable to these tablets. They are comprised of three structures, the central *prang* flanked either side by a smaller structure. The complex of three towers or structures should be conceptually related to the votive tablets depicting three Buddhas (Woodward Jr. 1975, Vol. 2, 5-6, 14).

An interesting point is that there are votive tablets of Dvaravati, Pagan of Burma and Pala art of India, which share a similar pattern, namely, a seated Buddha image at the centre with an architectural structure and Bodhi-tree branches in the background. An example from a Pagan tablet dating from the Anuruddha reign (1044-1077) represents the Buddha seated in a niche, while behind is a multi-storied roof structure topped with Pagan *Sikhara* architecture, and at its back are Bodhi-tree branches (Fig. 5.40) (Luce 1970 Vol. II, 2, Vol. III, pl. 6a). Another more elaborate tablet dating from the same period shows eight scenes of the Buddha's Life from the eight episodes of the Eight Great Places (*Atthamahāthāna*) (Fig. 5.41) (Luce 1970, Vol. II, 61-62, Vol. III, pl. 71a). Some similar tablets show small *stūpas* appearing between these scenes of the Buddha's Life, which lead one to speculate that these small *stūpas* may be the simplest form of representing the Buddha's Life, instead of making narrated scenes. However, the scenes of the Buddha's Life in this tablet suggest that they are meant to focus upon the central episode, in which the Buddha is attaining the Enlightenment at the Diamond Throne.

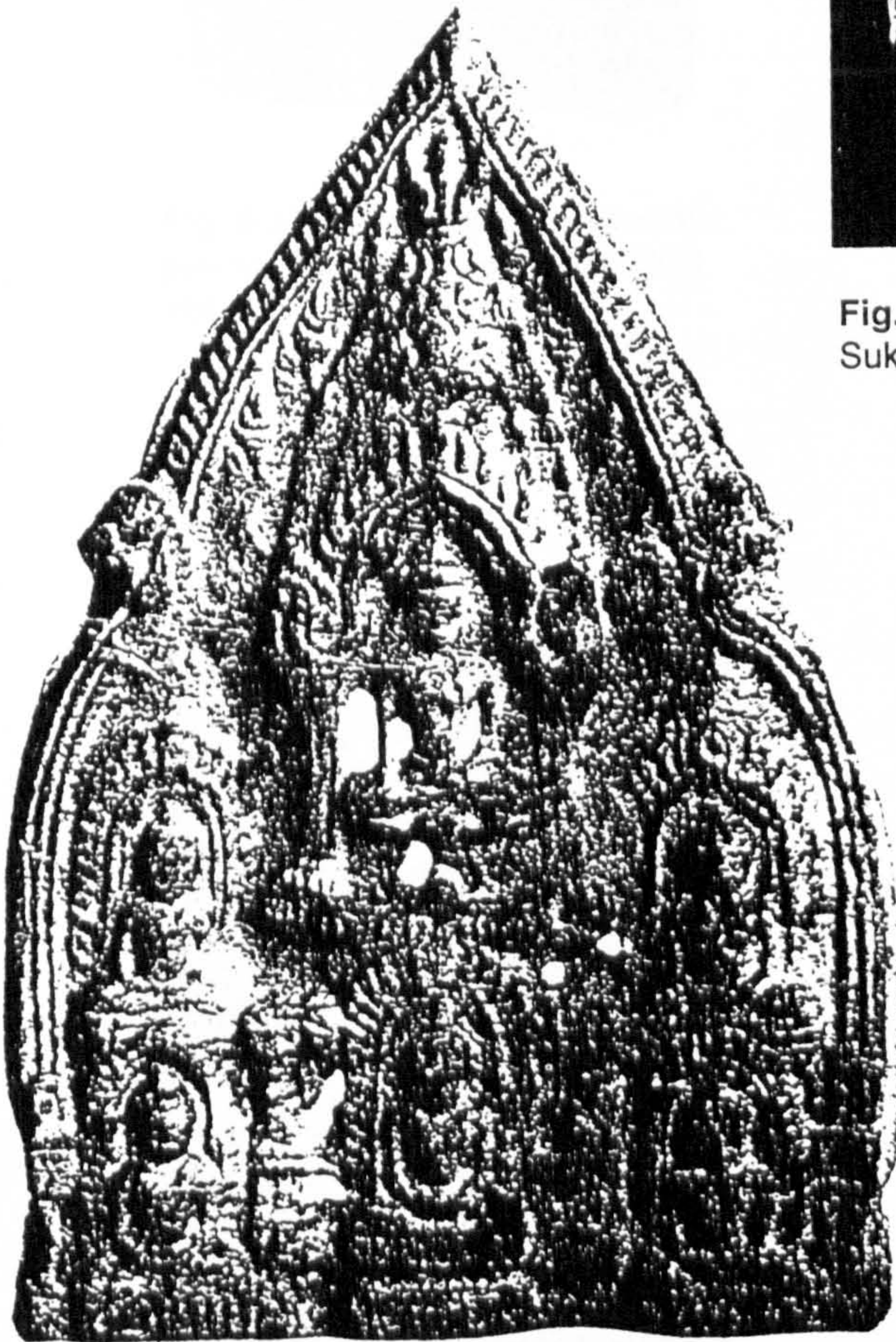


Fig. 5.38 Votive tablet found in the relic chamber, principal *prang*, Wat Ratchaburana, Ayutthaya (8x12.5 cm.) (source: FAD 1959)

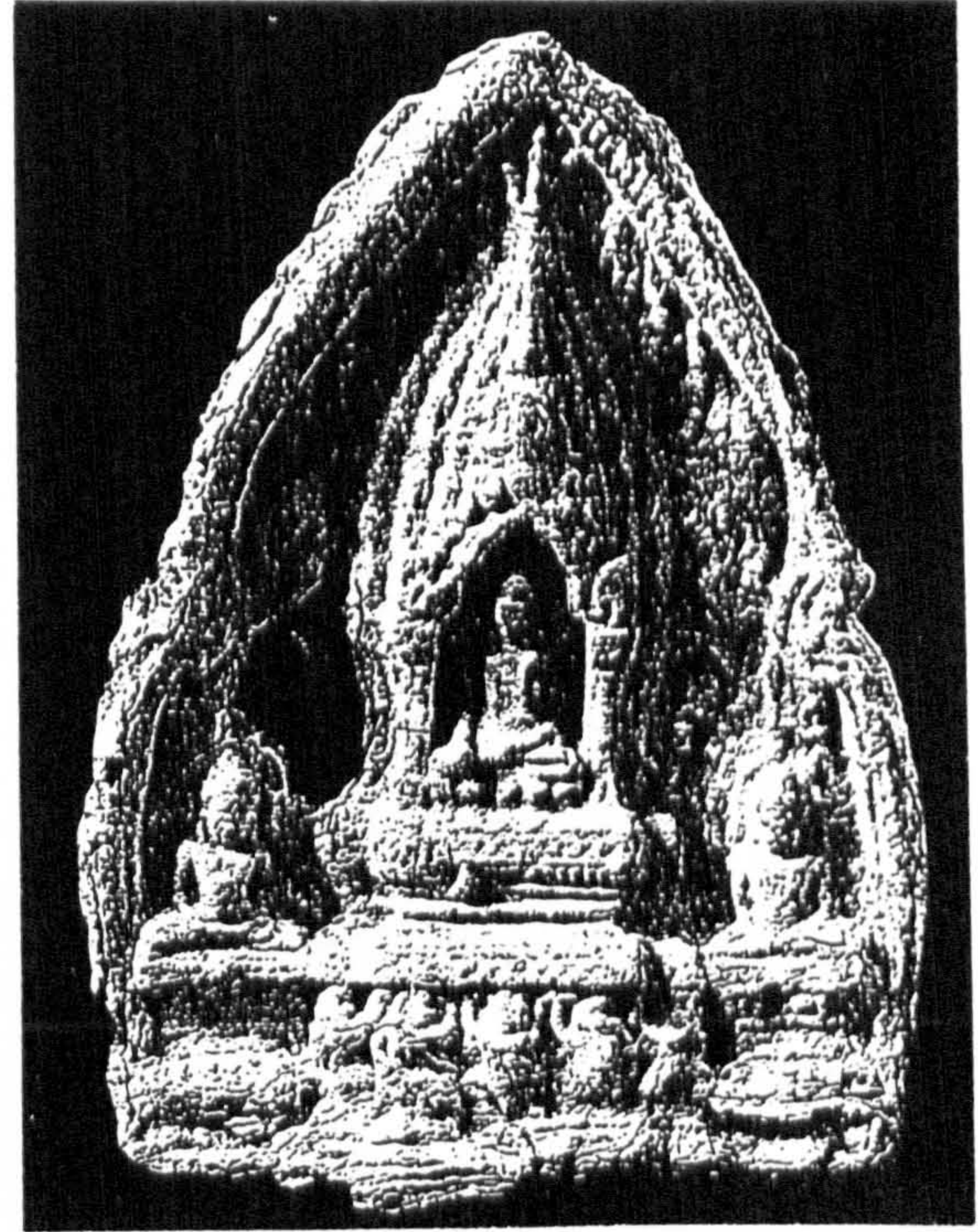


Fig. 5.39 Votive tablet found at Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai (12.5 cm.) (Source: Piriya 1986)



Fig. 5.40 Votive tablet, Anuruddha period, Pagan (source: Luce 1970, Vol. III)



Fig. 5.41 Votive tablet, Anuruddha period, Pagan (source: Luce 1970, Vol. III)



Fig. 5.42 Votive tablet, Thakradan, Chaiya (source: Coedès 1954)



Fig. 5.43 Votive tablet, Bodhi Gaya (source: Cunningham 1892)

A similar tablet discovered in southern Thailand at Thakradan near Chaiya reveals the influence of India (Fig. 5.42). Coedès has indicated that the tower under which the Buddha image is shown is evidently the tower of Bodhi Gaya (Coedès 1954, 152-153). The tablets which show the tower of Bodhi Gaya and Bodhi-tree branches are also found at the site of Bodhi Gaya in India (Fig. 5.43) (Cunningham 1892, 51, pl. XXIV). Woodward Jr. has suggested that the *Sikhara* of Pagan architecture and the *prang* of Ayutthaya, which appear in the tablets with Bodhi-tree branches, refer to the *Mahābodhi* at Bodhi Gaya (Woodward Jr. 1975, Vol. 1, 133-140).²² He has further suggested that the *prang* of *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* at Lopburi, is at least in part a re-creation of India's *Mahābodhi*, the place of the Buddha's Enlightenment (Woodward Jr. 1975, Vol. 2, 15). However, the number of Buddha images in some of these tablets is not certain. These Buddhas, therefore, might represent the Buddhas of the past in *Theravāda* tradition, and are possibly intended to indicate such a temporal succession at Bodhi Gaya's Diamond Throne (Woodward Jr. 1975, Vol. 1, 139). Since the position of the Diamond Throne does not change for every Buddha, a votive tablet found in the relic chamber of the main *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* explicitly represents twelve Buddhas of the past and a central axial of the Bodhi-tree (Fig. 5.44). This is evidence that the Buddhas of the past are intended to indicate the Diamond Throne. Therefore, they are portrayed in the relic chamber or the main chamber of a *prang*, to mark the centre of *Jambudīpa*.

The evidence from the relic chamber of the *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana*, the mural from the main chamber of some early Ayutthayan *prangs* and votive tablets, all suggest that the principal *prang* of a royal *wat* relates to the centre of *Jambudīpa*. Although its superstructure is a symbol of Mount *Meru*, its components indicate that from the middle section (*ruanthat*) down to the relic chamber it is connected to the symbol of *Jambudīpa*.²³ Another votive tablet from the relic chamber of the *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* has gone so far as to represent the tower of a *prang* with all of its structure covered by Bodhi-tree branches (Fig. 5.45). The totality of its form is probably a symbol of both the Bodhi-tree and the *Mahābodhi* architecture.

²² See the discussion about the votive tablets and architecture of Pagan and Lamphun of northern Thailand, which share similar patterns and are suggested to represent the *Mahābodhi*, in Woodward Jr. (1975 Vol. 1, 135-140). It is worth noting here that if the *prang* of Ayutthaya and the *Sikhara* of Pagan architecture relate to the *Mahābodhi*, they might convey similar symbolic planning.

²³ The *prang* of *Wat Arun* is not included in this thesis since it includes the late development that the elements of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa* are interwoven as part of its base.

It is now quite clear that a gold miniature *prang* in the relic chamber of the *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana*, apart from Mount *Meru*, might represent a Bodhi-tree, which is an interpretation of the relic chamber of the *Mahāthūpa* of King *Dutthagāmanī*, which has a gold-jeweled Bodhi-tree at its centre. In conclusion, the principal *prang* of a royal *wat* is comprised of a complex of symbolic planning. Its symbolic planning is an overlapping of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa*. As the centre of *Jambudīpa*, it represents the *Mahābodhi* where the Buddha attained the Enlightenment. It is also related to the cult of relic veneration of the Ayutthaya and early Bangkok periods.

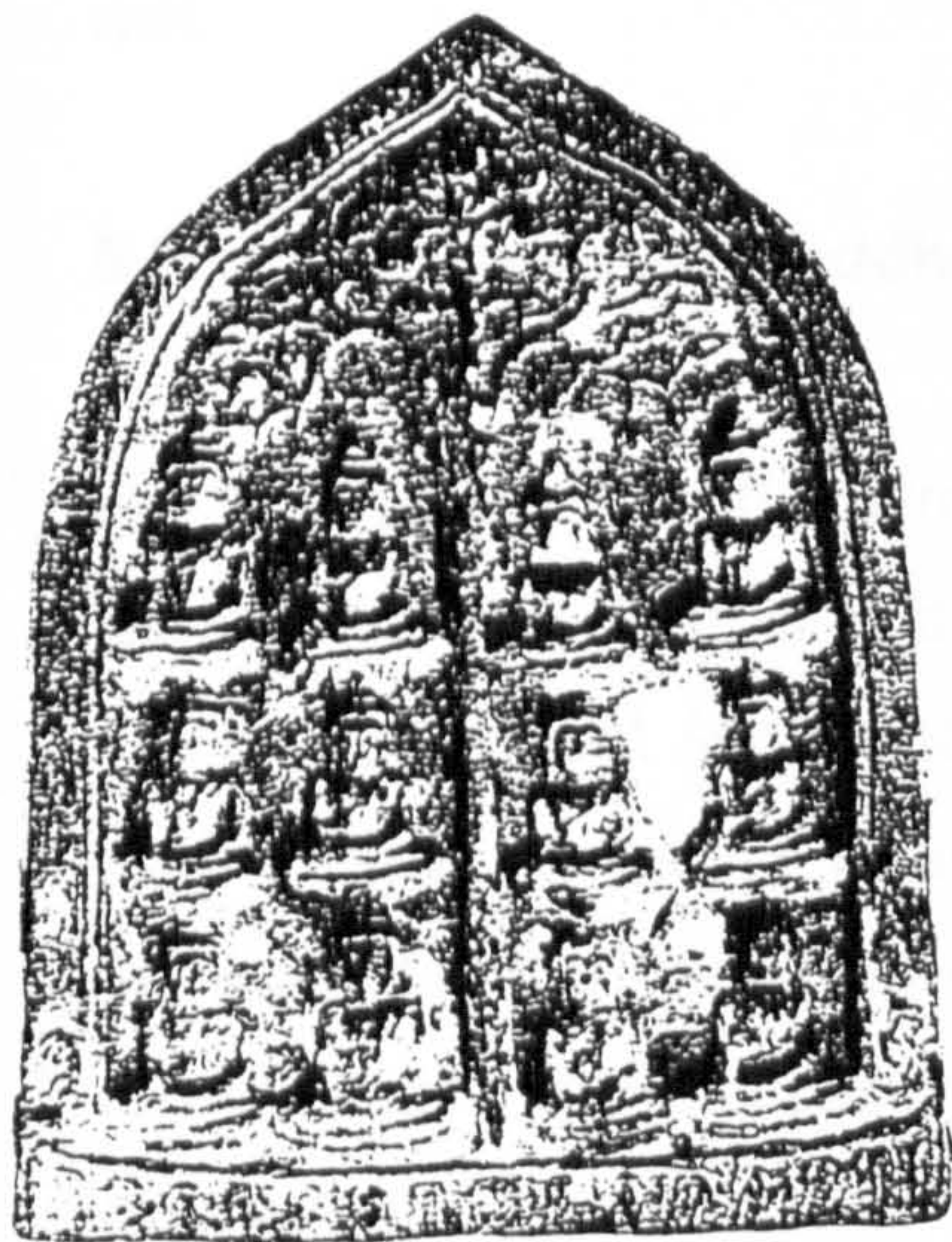


Fig. 5.44 Votive tablet, relic chamber of principal *prang*, *Wat Ratchaburana* (10x13.5 cm.) (source: FAD 1959)

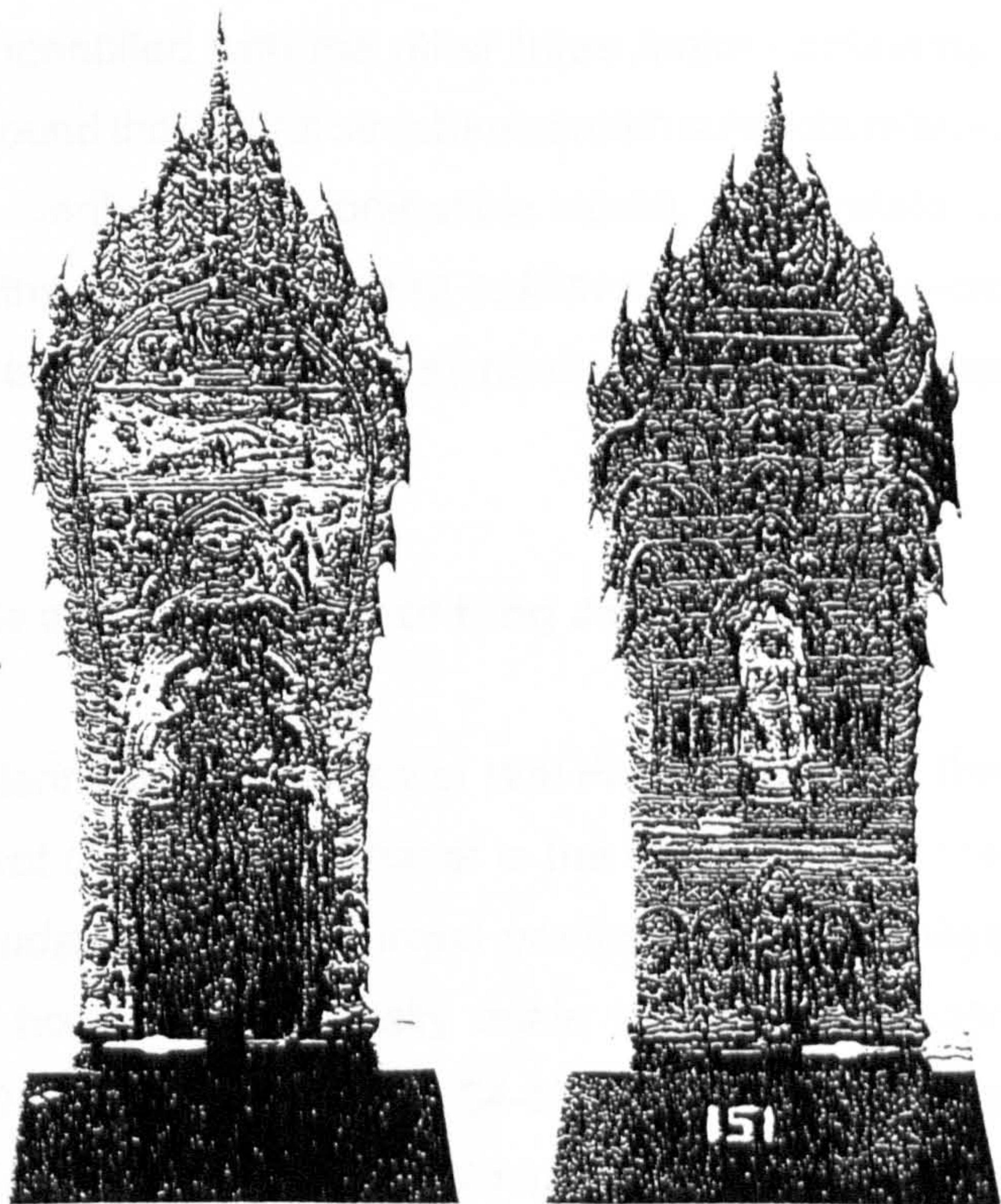


Fig. 5.45 Votive tablet, relic chamber of principal *prang*, *Wat Ratchaburana* (source: FAD 1959) 1) front; 2) back

5.3 THAI BUDDHIST KINGSHIP AND ROYAL BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE

Although the concept of the possession of a *cakkavatti* which has been introduced in the study of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama III may, to some extent, explain the symbolic planning of the overlapping of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa*, there are some incompatible arrangements according to the *Traiphum* cosmological diagram. This is because another layer of symbolic planning overlaps with the same plan. As for the symbol centred around a principal *prang*, apart from the diagram of four directional components which may be the diagram of *Meru* and the four major continents, we have not found any element that can be identified with the other three major continents. However, most structures which surround the central structure contain subjects related to the Life of the Buddha. In order to clarify some incompatible issues, which relate to another layer of symbolic planning, the concept related to *cakkavatti* kingship needs to be reinvestigated to show how it is connected to the symbolic planning of a royal *wat*.

5.3.1 The Crowned Buddha Image and the Legend of King Jambupati

We have proved that the symbolic planning of the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, the *wihan* of *Wat Suthat*, and the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel is the overlapping of the symbols of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa*, like the principal *prangs* of the Ayutthaya period. The *prangs* of Ayutthaya, however, specifically relate to the cult of relic veneration of the kings (Damrong 1982, 24; Phiphat 1990, 54-57, 61). According to its form, a *prang* is more easily conceived as the symbol of Mount *Meru* than an *ubosot* or a *wihan*.

We have also indicated that the diagram of *Traiphum* cosmology in the planning of a royal *wats* relate to the concept of the possession of a *cakkavatti*. Another paradigm of *cakkavatti* in Thai tradition relates to a crowned Buddha image, which is an iconography representing the Buddha performing a miracle, creating himself in the form of a Great *Cakkavatti* king and preaching to King Jambupati (or Thao Mahachomphu)²⁴ (Damrong 1921, b). A *cakkavatti* king is an ideal ruler; he is the great

²⁴ For the story of King Jambupati see appendix 8.

patron of *Dhamma*, which is the most significant power of the universe. The Thai kings thus always claimed themselves either directly or indirectly to be *cakkavatti* kings. Many inscriptions and some other textual evidence reveals that many kings of Ayutthaya added the word '*cakkavatti*' to their names (Prasert 1998, 170-176). Also, Rama I had the word '*cakkavatti*' as part of his name inscribed on a gold plate. The most interesting inscription is found in the *prang* of *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* at Supanburi. It states:

May there be success! The king of Ayojjhā known by the name Paramorucakkavatti caused this *stupa* to be built, and deposited some relics of the conqueror of Māra inside; but later on, this *stupa* fell into decay from (the passage of) time.

His son Rājādhirājapavaro, who is king over kings of the whole earth, causing the *stupa* to be rebuilt larger than before, deposits these relics of the Sage in the inner chamber.

Having faith in the *stupa*, His Majesty does homage with offerings of gold and other things, and makes this wish: 'As a result of this meritorious deed of mine, may I become a Buddha in the future!' (Griswold and Prasert 1974, 2).

The two kings mentioned in the inscription are believed to be King Borommaracha II (Samphraya) (1424-1448) and King Borommatrailokanat (1448-1488) (Prasert 1998, 176). The titles Paramorucakkavatti (Highest *cakkavatti*) and Rājādhirājapavaro (Noble or excellent king of kings) (Griswold and Prasert 1974, 3, 6), remind us of the Legend of King Jambupati, which is another text related to the *cakkavatti* concept. *Rājādhirāja* is the title given to the Buddha who created himself to appear as king of kings, while King Jambupati is portrayed through the description of a *cakkavatti*. Borommaracha II was also the king who built the principal *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana*, which contains the most important evidence relating to the Legend of King Jambupati. Fickle has indicated that the Legend of King Jambupati does not exist in the Buddhist literature of Ceylon or of India, nor in the mythology of the countries of Northern Buddhism. It is considered to be an apocryphal Buddhist text, a part of the *Pāli* commentary (Fickle 1974, 88). Above all, the story was a later rationalization, possibly composed in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, to explain the presence of a crowned Buddha image in the countries of South-East Asia (Fickle 1974, 115).

The well-known crowned Buddha images of Ayutthaya are at *Wat Naphramen* and *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*, and are attributed to the reign of King Prasatthaong. King Rama I

also had the Legend depicted as mural paintings in *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and *Wat Ratchaburana* of Bangkok. King Rama III had a crowned Buddha image cast together with a depiction of the Legend in the *ubosot* of *Wat Nangnong*.

The most important element (for our purposes) of the Legend of King Jambupati is the city which the Buddha created from Veluvana, a monastery in Rājagaha, as a City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*.²⁵ It is comprised of most elements of *Traiphum* cosmology. The *Cātumahārājika*, the Sun God, the Moon God, *Brahmas*, *Devas*, *Gandhabbas*, *Supannas* (*Garudas*) and *Nāgas* etc., all transformed themselves to be the guardians and city folks of the imaginary City. The text describes the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* as being comprised of 100,000 *Vimānas*.²⁶ The *Mahāprāsāda* (Great *Prasat*) of the Buddha is located at the centre of all (VL 1921, 31). The connection between the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* and Thai royal Buddhist architecture must be examined in terms of how it is interpreted in the system of *Traiphum* symbolic planning. This thesis has never been investigated elsewhere, apart from connecting to the concept of a crowned Buddha image (see Fickle 1974, Fouser 1996, 87-89). This study investigates the symbolic planning of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*, which contains some crowned Buddha images. It has already analysed its symbolic planning, which is similar to most of the early Ayutthayan *prangs* and some royal *wats* of the Bangkok period.

Wat Chaiwatthanaram: the Imaginary City of the Buddha rājādhirāja

Wat Chaiwatthanaram (Figs. 5.46, 5.30) was built by King Prasatthong of Ayutthaya in 1630 (RCA, PC, 218). Although there are no statues of *Deva*, *Garuda* and *Asura* placed above the middle section (*ruanthat*), the superstructure of the principal *prang* is a symbol of Mount *Meru*. This is a development of the *prang* of the late Ayutthaya period. The study of McGill, after discussing various speculations, concludes that the main *prang* and its four corner subsidiary *prangs* stand for Mount *Meru*, with its five peaks. The eight *prasats* that surround these central structures are symbols of the Seven Mountain Ranges (*Sattabhanda*) and the *Cakkavāla* Range (McGill 1977, 138-

²⁵ In order to distinguish the Buddha from his creating body as a king of kings in the Legend of King Jambupati, the creating body is referred to as the 'Buddha *rājādhirāja*' in this study.

²⁶ *Vimāna* is synonymous with *Prāsāda*. They connote a palace or a multi-story structure (Joti 1982, 77; see also Kramrisch (1946, Vol. 1, 134); Monier-williams (1964, 980).

151). Fouser proposes the same concept for the central structures but argues that the eight *prasats* are symbols of the guardian deities of the eight directions (Fouser 1996, 96). It is illogical that the different rings of all Seven Mountain Ranges and the *Cakkavāla* Range are gathered into the same circle in McGill's proposed concept. As for the concept of eight guardian deities as proposed by Fouser, this is not quite in keeping with the magnificent form of the eight *prasats*. Different interpretations of the eight *prasats* which contain crowned Buddha images seem to derive from the fact that their arrangement is not very compatible with the *Traiphum* cosmographical diagram.



Fig. 5.46 Principal *prang* and eight *prasats*, Wat Chaiwatthanaram, Ayutthaya

The problem of the interpretations may also derive from the separation of the significance of the crowned Buddha images and the scenes of the Life of the Buddha from the architectural structures, so that only the planning diagram and the number of the eight *prasats* are taken into account. The eight *prasats* which were added in the plan and contain crowned Buddha images, might be intended to be connected with the Legend of King Jambupati. The initial interpretation is that they are part of the symbol of the imaginary City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. They are probably symbols of the 100,000 *Vimānas* which surround the *Mahāprāsāda* of the Buddha, represented by the main *prang*. The development of Thai *prangs* whose bases are proportionally higher in the later period is evidently an interpretation of the *Mahāprāsāda* of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*, which is higher than 100,000 *vimānas* and has 1,000 stories (VL, 1921, 32). The meaning of the subsidiary *prangs* at the four directions, therefore, are the symbols of *Cātumahārājika*, which descended to be the Guardians of the City at the four directions. The *ubosot* which is located to the front of the complex of the *prang* may be a repeated symbol of the *Mahāprāsāda* of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. The two *chedis* flanking either side of the front of the *ubosot* are probably the elements which represent the Sun and the Moon, although it is unlikely that the iconography of a *chedi* may relate to this interpretation. However, the Legend of King Jambupati describes that in the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*, the Sun God and the Moon God were the guardians at the left and right of the main gate of the City (VL 1921, 33). It is very interesting to note that the two *chedis* may also relate to the concept of Veluvana monastery. During the Buddha's lifetime, two *stūpas* were erected at the gate of Veluvana, one containing the relics of Añña-Kondañña, and the other those of Moggallāna (Malalasekera 1960, Vol 2, 938).

If this theory is another layer of the symbolic planning of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*, which connects to the system of the *Traiphum*, it may be applied to explain other royal *wats* with a principal *prang* at the centre. In order to prove the theory, some principal *wats* should be investigated that they were similarly conceptually arranged to *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*. There are a number of structures situated on the central platform of the principal *prangs* of *Wat Phraram*, *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* and *Wat Ratchaburana* at Ayutthaya. Unfortunately, most of these structures retain only the bases. Some surviving examples come from the south-east corner of the main *prang* of *Wat Phraram* (Fig. 5.26) and some others from *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat* of Ayutthaya (Fig. 5.27). These *chedis* are a mixture of the styles of a *prang* and a round

bell shape *chedi*. They have four niches at the middle section and the superstructure comprises some stories of a *prang*'s superstructure, topped with a round bell-shape *chedi*. It is known as a *prasat*-type *chedi* (Santi 1992, 21).²⁷ In the niches are installed Buddha images which analysis has already shown to represent episodes from the Life of the Buddha. Since there is certainly an image installed in each niche of these *chedis*, they might represent the Life of the Buddha, which in terms of the symbolic diagram may be compared to the scenes of the Buddha's Life on the eight *prasats* of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*. The round bell shape *chedi* on top of this *prasat*-type *chedi* may also be the iconography of the theme of the Buddha's Life in this specific context.²⁸ The same concept may be attributed to the *mondops* of *Wat Arun*, which contain Buddha images and in form are comparable to a *prasat* or *vimāna*.

If this hypothesis is acceptable, the principal *prangs* and their subsidiary structures of *Wat Phraram*, *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat*, *Wat Ratchaburana* at Ayutthaya and *Wat Arun* are symbols of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*, like the complex of the *prangs* of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*. Conceptually, these principal *prangs* are located at the centre of the 100,000 *vimānas*. The four subsidiary *prangs* which are located on the same platform may be interpreted as being the *Cātumahārājika*, who descended to be the guardians of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* in the human world. A similar concept is also well explained with regard to the unique design of the *Phra Mondop* in the Royal Chapel of King Rama I (Fig. 3.32). This was situated on a three terrace platform and surrounded by many *chattas* hung with jeweled Bodhi-tree leaves. The *chattas* may be another interpretation of the 100,000 *vimānas* which encircle the *Mahāprāsāda* of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. In this case the Buddha was represented by the *Dhamma*, symbolized by the *Tripitaka* in the *prasat*-like cabinet in the *Phra Mondop*. The twelve *salas* which are located around the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel may also be a symbol of 100,000 *vimānas*. Because the Emerald Buddha image housed in the *ubosot* is a crowned Buddha image, the two golden *chedis* located to the east of the *Phra Mondop* may therefore be symbols of the Sun and the Moon, similar to the two *chedis* of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*.

²⁷ This type of *chedi* was developed around the mid to late fourteenth century. See Santi (1997) for a study of the stylistic development of this *chedi* type.

²⁸ See the discussion of the equivalent of the *stupa* and the icon of the Buddha in Shorto (1971).

The theory that has been introduced contributes a great deal to explaining some arrangements that are not compatible with the *Traiphum* cosmographical diagram. It is also applicable to the appearance of *Kinnara* and *Kinnarī* at the bases of the main *prang*, the *mondops* and the subsidiary *prangs* of *Wat Arun*. They are actually elements of *Himavanta*, which should not have appeared in such a position. The placing of statues of *Gandhabba* at the bases of the east and west *mondops* is also not in line with the direction it should be in, according to the *Traiphum* arrangement. Only the account from the Legend of King Jambupati can clarify this question. The *Kinnara*, *Kinnarī* and *Gandhabba* were appointed to come to the imaginary City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* to create beautiful music, dance and entertain in order to represent the happiness and greatness of the City (VL 1921, 31). Because of this concept, they are spread throughout the area around the bases of the central structures. The positions of these statues, however, are more related to the Brahmanistic cosmology. This suggests that the world consists of a central continent named *Jambudīpa*. At its centre rises Mount *Meru*, the cosmic mountain. This continent was encircled by six concentric rings of land, and separated by seven oceans, the outer one of which was enclosed by a rock wall. At the summit of *Meru* was the city of Brahma, the home of the gods, surrounded by the eight guardians of the cardinal points (Coedès 1967, 40; Bhattacharyya 1969, 59-60). The overlapping of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa* in the symbolic planning of the principal *prang* of Thai Buddhist architecture, therefore, might be an influence of Brahmanistic cosmology. The Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa* in Buddhist cosmology, thus shares the same position as Mount *Meru*. As a result, the principal *prang* of royal *wats* represents the symbols of both centres.

According to the theory put forth by Wales, *Himavanta* animals held a special significance in two royal ceremonies, the Royal Tonsure and the Royal Cremation (Wales 1931, 128, 150-151 in Rosenfield 1970, 218). The tonsure of princes is carried out in a high place, a rock or artificially built mountain, depending on the rank of the prince, in order to represent Mount *Kailasa* (*Kelāsa*), the home of the God Siva (Wales 1931, 127 in Rosenfield 1970, 218). It should be noted here that the Thai royal ceremonies have maintained their original Brahmanistic ideas without any need for adaptation to the concept of Buddhism. However, for the royal *wat*, it is inevitable that the concept needed to be explained and sanctioned by the *Theravāda* notion. The Legend of King Jambupati, therefore, was created, as we shall see, to legitimize the Brahmanistic pattern by the description of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. The

similar symbolic planning of the Brahmanistic cosmology was transformed to the framework of the new interpretation of Thai royal Buddhist architecture.

Nevertheless, it seems that only the central part of the compound, which represents the vertical symbol of Mount *Meru* overlapping with *Jambudīpa*, contains this symbolic planning, while other realms in the *Traiphum* are planned along the horizontal axis. It is also only this central component that is applied to the royal ceremonial edifices mentioned above. However, the evidence from the relic chamber of the main *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* at Ayutthaya supports the idea that the symbolic planning of the *prang* is connected to the new concept which has the Legend of King Jambupati as a sanctioned text. This thesis is supported by evidence from relic chambers of some principal *prangs*. It will now be brought forward and analysed.

The Treasures from Relic Chambers: An Interpretation

Apart from the mural paintings and religious articles, there are some gold treasures found in the relic chamber of the main *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* at Ayutthaya. Some of them are in the form of regalia such as a victory sword, shoe, fan, fly-whisk and sunshade (Fig. 5.35). Others are royal costumes, various types of necklaces, armlets, bracelets, bangles and rings, etc. Unfortunately, it is said that a victory crown was taken by looters, as well as some precious headdresses in various forms and sizes (Prathum 1988, 69-75; FAD 1958). Almost of the items are made of gold and decorated with precious stones and gems.

These gold treasures may relate to both the account of the enshrined relics (*Dhātunidhāna*) of King Dutthagāmanī and the Legend of King Jambupati. The *Mahāvamsa* states that when King Dutthagāmanī obtained the Buddha's relics and was enshrining them in the chamber of the *Mahāthūpa*, he worshipped the relics by offering a white parasol and conferring on the relics the entire overlordship of Lanka for seven days. He also offered all the accessories he wore to the relics, and so did the dancing-women, the ministers, the retinues and *Devas* (Geiger 1912, 218; FAD 1991, 407). The Legend of King Jambupati tell us that after the Buddha *rājādhirāja* had preached the *Dhamma* to King Jambupati, he was devoted and then took off his crown, offering it to the Buddha. His retinues, the rulers of 101 city states, also did so. Again, when King Jambupati was devoted to the teaching of *Nibbāna*, he offered all of his regalia to the

Buddha *rājādhirāja*. His retinues followed him and offered many offerings (VL 1921, 85, 108). After he decided to be ordained, Jambupati presented all his royal possessions of Pañcāla Kingdom to the Buddha (VL 1921, 113).

Although the Fine Arts Department of Thailand obtained only insignificant headdresses from the relic chamber, the testimony of the looters claims that at least nine headdresses and a queen's crown were counted in the relic chamber of the main *prang* of *Wat Ratchaburana* (Prathum 1988, 39). These gold treasures from the relic chamber are surprisingly consistent with both the account of enshrining relics (*Dhātunidhāna*) of King Dutthagāmanī and the story of King Jambupati. They might represent the possessions that two kings offered to the Buddha, which is no doubt the Buddha's relics in the chamber. The main *prang* accordingly represents the *Mahāprāsāda* of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*.

According to the evidence that has been analysed, it should be proposed that the account of the offering of the royal possessions of King Jambupati might be influenced by the account of enshrining relics of King Dutthagāmanī in the *Mahāvamsa*. The similarity between the offerings of the royal possessions of King Dutthagāmanī and King Jambupati indicates that the Legend was constructed to sanction and connect the enshrining relics with the architectural symbol of a *prang*, which has its origin in Brahmanistic concepts; and also with the presence of the crowned Buddha image. The Legend of King Jambupati therefore is the most important text which integrates the *Traiphum* cosmology of *Theravāda* Buddhism, the Brahmanistic cosmology, and the concept of the account of the enshrining relics (*Dhātunidhān*) of King Dutthagāmanī in the compound of a royal *wat*, in order to create a new concept of Thai royal Buddhist architecture. Above all, the concept was continued into the Bangkok period.

The Interpretation of King Rama III

The royal *wats* of the early Bangkok period, which explicitly represent the concept of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*, are *Wat Nangnong* and *Wat Arun*, and the latter has been investigated in terms of the symbolic planning that connects it to *Traiphum* cosmography. They were built in the reign of King Rama III. The crowned Buddha image and the mural painting of the Legend of King Jambupati in the *ubosot* of *Wat Nangnong* is obviously another interpretation of the concept (Fig. 5.48). However, it was

built in the Chinese-influenced style and has a unique plan (Fig. 5.47). Only some main features interpreted from the Legend of King Jambupati will be indicated here. Apart from the story of Jambupati, the *ubosot* depicts scenes of the possessions of a *cakkavatti*, such as the seven treasures and regalia. Some celestial beings, such as the Sun, the Moon, *Gandhabba*, etc. are also illustrated. These elements are taken from the Legend of King Jambupati to represent the compound as the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. There are two *wihan* flanking the principal *čhedi*. Behind each *wihan* is a *prang*; while at the multiple indentations at the corners of the enclosing wall of the *wihans* are raised spires of small *prangs* (Fig. 5.49), creating numbers of *Vimānas* which surround the *Mahāprāsāda* of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. In this interpretation the *ubosot* and the principal *čhedi* might represent the *Mahāprāsāda*, which suggests that the principal *prang* may be substituted by a principal *čhedi* in a specific contextual design.

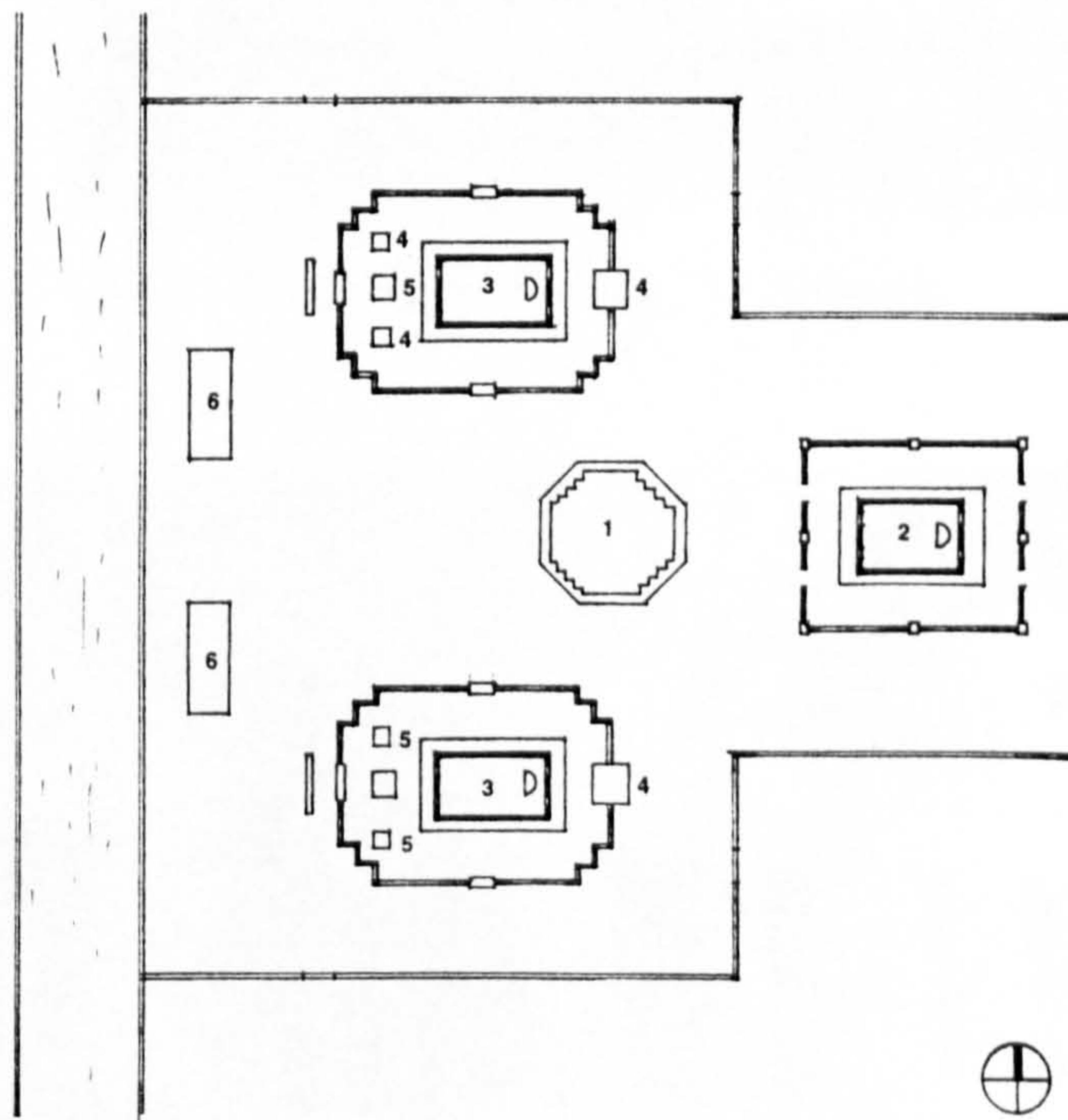


Fig. 5.47 Plan of Wat Nangnong, Bangkok
1) principal *čhedi*; 2) *ubosot*; 3) *wihan*; 4) *prang* 5) *čhedi*; 6) *sala*



Fig. 5.48 Crowned Buddha image, Wat Nangnong

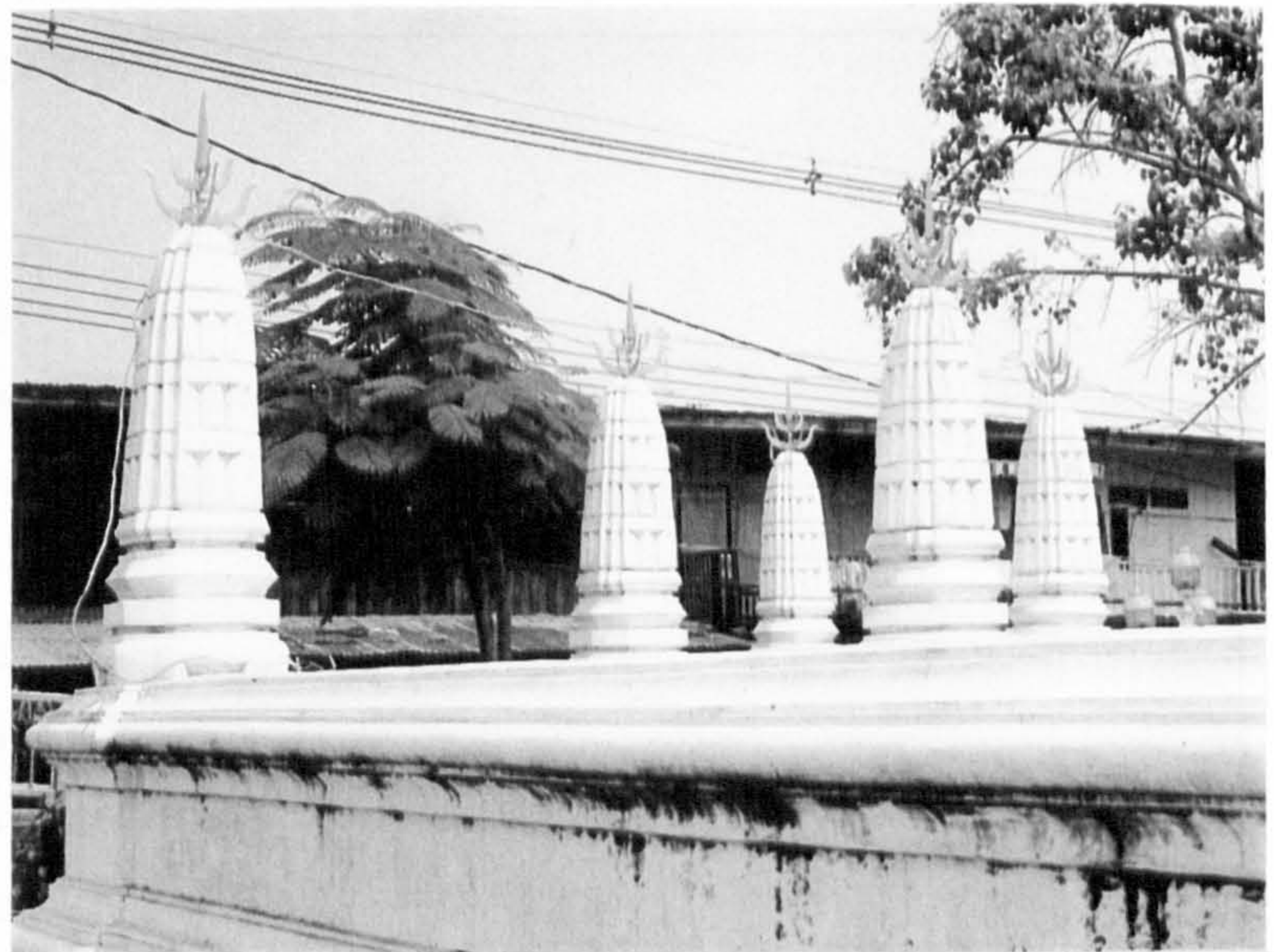


Fig. 5.49 Spires of *prang*, Wat Nangnong

The most remarkable connection between *Wat Nangnong* and the *prang* of *Wat Arun* was implied when the *prang* was completed. On the occasion when King Rama III wanted the finial spire (*noppasun*) to be installed at the top of the *prang*, he ordered the crown, which had already been cast for the crowned Buddha image of *Wat Nangnong*, to be fixed on the top of the *noppasun* (FAD 1978, 20; Damrong 1971a, 104-105). The crown, therefore, might be a surrogate crowned Buddha image which represents the Buddha *rājādhirāja* who resides in the *Mahāprāsāda*, represented by the *prang*. On the other hand, it is also an indication that King Rama III offered his crown to the Buddha *rājādhirāja* imitating King Jambupati or King Dutthagāmanī offering their overlordship to the Buddha.²⁹

This, in fact, concerns a cult of worship of the Buddha as the great *cakkavatti*. King Rama I also had two crowned Buddha images cast and named 'Buddha cullacakka' and 'Buddha cakkavatti'. Both images are in the Grand Palace (Subhadradis 1982, 91). The cult is connected to the veneration of the Buddha's relics, and the symbolic planning of the principal *prang* since the Ayutthaya period. However, although there is no principal *prang* in *Wat Suthat* and *Wat Phra Chetuphon*, the principal Buddha images in the main buildings are enshrined with the Buddha's relics. The buildings also contain symbols of Mount *Meru* and *Jambudīpa*, similar to the *prang*. The Emerald Buddha Image in the *ubosot* of the Royal Chapel is also a crowned Buddha image and enshrined with it are the Buddha's relics (Wannarat 1978, 430). All of these principal *wats* contain the concept of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* as another layer of symbolic planning. As a result, the theory of the symbolic planning of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* may be concluded as follows:

1. The centre of the plan is an overlapping of Mount *Meru* and the Diamond Throne, the centre of *Jambudīpa*.
2. The Buddha's relics may be enshrined in a principal *prang*, a *chedi*, or a principal Buddha image, to represent the presence of the Buddha.
3. There are a number of subsidiary structures surrounding the principal structure, to represent the concept that the *Mahāprāsāda* of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* is encircled by 100,000 *vimānas*.
4. The concept may be clearly emphasized by a crowned Buddha image as the

²⁹ King Rama III also commissioned the construction of a *Lohapāsāda* in *Wat Ratchanatdaram*, similar to King Dutthagāmanī's building of a *Lohapāsāda*, as mentioned in the *Mahāvamsa* (Geiger 1912, 182-186), although it was not completed in his reign.

principal image and the depiction of the scenes from the Legend of King Jambupati.

5. The *Himavanta* mythical beasts may be depicted around the central structure, which is the symbol of both Mount *Meru* and the Diamond Throne.

Having analysed the symbolic planning of the Thai royal *wats* thus far, it is clear that in a royal *wat* there are various concepts interwoven in the structure of the *Traiphum* cosmology. However, they are connected to each other by the concept of *cakkavatti* kingship. We will indicate the relationship between these concepts, which is not only to reassert the theories that have been introduced, but also to clarify the question of why these concepts are put together in the same precinct of a royal *wat*.

5.3.2 The Relation of the Three Major Concepts

Based on the *Traiphum* cosmographical diagram, a principal royal *wat* of Bangkok and Ayutthaya may integrate three major concepts in its symbolic planning, namely *Jambudīpa*, the possession of a *cakkavatti*, and the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* according to the Legend of King Jambupati. These three concepts are connected to each other within the symbolic planning of a principal royal *wat*.

Jambudīpa

The significance of the concept of *Jambudīpa* in a royal *wat* is that it is the basis for the symbolic planning of the whole compound, with its centre located as the Diamond Throne. Because a Buddha and a *cakkavatti* king, who are great men, are to be born only in *Jambudīpa*, so it is connected to two other main concepts, the possession of a *cakkavatti* and the imaginary city of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. In the concept of the *cakkavatti* kingship, *Jambudīpa* is the centre of the kingdom of a *cakkavatti*. The symbolic planning of the royal *wats* indicates that although a *cakkavatti* king rules over four major continents and 2,000 minor continents, conceptually all these elements are gathered in the boundary of *Jambudīpa* in the symbolic planning. The imaginary city of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* is also in *Jambudīpa*. It is very interesting to note that the name of King Jambupati might relate to the name of *Jambudīpa*, indicating that the King is a *cakkavatti* of the continent.

Jambudīpa is a means to *Nibbāna*. Apart from the Buddhas and *cakkavatti* kings, it is also the birth place of Holy Persons, *Pacceka Buddhas* and great meritorious persons. When all these great persons exist, an innumerable number of beings will be freed from suffering (Thampricha 1992, 248-49). With the concept that the kingdom is *Jambudīpa* and the king will lead all the populace to *Nibbāna*, on some occasions it was implied that the king was a *bodhisattva* or a Buddha. Several inscriptions declare the kings' wishes that, according to their good deeds, they wish to become a Buddha in the future.³⁰ These imply that the kings were *bodhisattvas*. The kings are also a *Buddharājā* of a Buddhist state, since the Buddha is an ideal *cakkavatti* of the universe. The Luang Prasert version of the Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya applies the term '*Nibbāna*' for the death of every king to imply equality between the king and the Buddha (see RCA, LP).

The Possession of a *Cakkavatti*

The possession of a *cakkavatti* is another concept which is integrated in the *Traiphum* cosmographical diagram of the symbolic planning of a royal *wat*. The prominent evidence which suggests this connection is the gold treasure from the relic chambers of some principal *prangs* of Ayutthaya. Some royal regalia and royal possessions could not be interpreted as any other concept except the overlordship of a monarch. The elements surrounding the central structure, therefore, are like the satellites of the *cakkavatti* central power. The interpretation of subsidiary *chedis* as the satellite states of a *cakkavatti* is plausible in this layer of symbolic planning. After the completion of a royal *wat*, all possessions, the buildings, land and the treasures in the relic chamber, will be presented to the Buddhist *sāsanā*.³¹ It is a comparable act to King Dutthagāmani conferring on the Buddha's relics the royal possession of Lanka, or to King Jambupati presenting his *cakkavatti* possessions to the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. The whole compound of the *wat* is therefore an overlapping of symbols of the possession of a *cakkavatti* and the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. It is both an offering of a *cakkavatti* and the kingdom of the Buddha *cakkavatti*, to whom it is presented.

³⁰ See for example the inscription of *Wat Phra Srirattanamahathat Supanburi* (Griswold and Prasert 1974, 2), the Khmer inscription of *Wat Pamamuang* (Mango Grove Monastery) of King Lithai of Sukhothai dated 1466 (FAD 1984, 237), and the inscription of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* of King Rama I (FAD 1974, 7).

³¹ '*Sāsanā* connotes teaching, message or doctrine (Buddhadatta 1957, 218). However, 'the Buddhist *sāsanā* includes not only what the Buddha taught, but also the institutions that reflect and serve to perpetuate that teaching' (Trainor 1997, 40, n. 38).

The City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*

The symbolic planning of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* is the interpretation of the imaginary city which the Buddha created from Veluvana in Rājagaha, the city state of King Bimbisāra. The significance of Veluvana and King Bimbisāra therefore may relate to the concept. The important matter which relates to King Bimbisāra is that he was a great lay supporter of Buddhism during the Buddha's lifetime. Jambupati, whose power led him to conquer 101 states, could do nothing to destroy the palace and city of Bimbisāra, because the great merit of the latter provided a protective power. Above all, he was also protected by the Buddha, whose power is the greatest of all in the universe. To establish a royal *wat* to represent the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*, therefore, equals the king's merit and virtue to Bimbisāra's, which will result in a protection from the power of merit and the Buddha. Veluvana was the first monastery (*ārāma*) accepted by the Buddha (Malalasekera 1960, Vol. 2, 936). The *Sanghitiyavamsa* text, which was composed in the reign of Rama I, states that the Veluvana is the only monastery that when it was presented to the Buddha, there was an earthquake (Wannarat 1978, 477). The text also claims that when King Rama I completed a monastery and offered it to the Buddhist *sāsanā*, he did the same as Bimbisāra presenting the Veluvana to the Buddha (Wannarat 1978, 450). This indicates that the significance of the Veluvana was well recognized by the Siamese.

The concept of the royal *wat* which contains this symbolic planning implies the veneration of the power of the Buddha as a great *cakkavatti*. The relics, which are the remains of the Buddha, certainly represent the presence of the Buddha with regard to the Buddha *rājādhirāja* in this contextual symbolism. Trainor indicates that the evidence in *Pāli* textual tradition testifies that the utter passing away of the Buddha did not put an end to his presence, and that this presence was not limited to the teaching he left behind. Through the legacy of his corporeal remains, all of the extraordinary qualities attributed to the corporeal from the Buddha during his lifetime continued to be present in the midst of the Buddhist community (Trainor 1997, 178).³² The *Sanghitiyavamsa* states that as long as the Buddha's relics still survive, the Buddha is present (Wannarat 1978, 572), while the Sinhalese say that the Buddha is present in his relics (Shorto

³² See the discussion about the presence of the Buddha in the relic cult in his study, particularly chapter 5 'Ritual and the Presence of the Buddha'. See Trainor (1997, 136-188).

1971,78).

Because the concept of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* in a royal *wat* is linked to the relic cult, the account of enshrining the relics (*Dhātunidhāna*) by King Dutthagāmanī, is associated with the exemplary relic chamber. One account from the *Mahāvamsa* in the Thai translated version clearly connects the account of enshrining relics (*Dhātunidhāna*) with the concept that the Buddha is a great *cakkavatti*. Before King Dutthagāmanī conferred on the Buddha's relics the royal possession of Lanka, Indagutta *thera* explained to the king about the extraordinary power of the Buddha. He told the king that the power of the Buddha disseminates through 10,000 universes and that the Buddha is *Parama buddha mahācakkavatti rājādhirāja*, i.e. no other kings can be comparable (FAD 1991, 401). It is very interesting that this account does not appear in Geiger's translated version and it might have been added when the relic cult and the architectural symbol were associated during the early Ayutthaya period.³³ According to this account, it brings to light the combination of the meanings of the crowned Buddha images and the eight *prasats* of *Wat Chaiwatthanaram*. The design bears striking correspondence to the statement of Indagutta about the power of the Buddha. If the *prasats*, according to their forms, may be identified with a universe or *cakkavāla*, they are microcosms in the macrocosm of the whole complex. The appearance of the crowned Buddha images in these *prasats* is the manifestation of the power of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* in 10,000 universes.

The power of the Buddha's relics is comparable to the Buddha himself, and is reasserted in the *Pathamasabodhi*. When the seven other neighbouring kings launched their armies to claim a share of the relics after the body of the Buddha had been cremated in Kusinārā, it is recorded that all of the militaries of those seven city states would not have defeated the Malla of Kusinārā, because all the deities who came to worship the relics which were gathered in the city of Kusinārā would support the Malla. The Malla would win the battle (Paranmanuchit 1962, 513). The relics, which are enshrined in a royal *wats*, are therefore the most significant of all. The *wat* is the spiritual centre of the *cakkavatti* kingdom, and it is where all deities come to worship the Buddha's relics. It is the centre of all cosmic powers.

³³ See FAD (1991, chapter 31, 400-401) and Geiger (1912, 209-219).

All the three main theories of the symbolic planning of Thai royal *wats* are connected by the *cakkavatti* kingship. They are organized and interwoven in the system of the Buddhist cosmological diagram or *Traiphum*. However, the two axial symbols, Mount *Meru* and the Bodhi-tree, are associated to accentuate the sublimity and greatness of the Buddha, so the Buddha is the centre of the universe or cosmic axis (Shorto 1971,78). It is the practice of a *cakkavatti* king to establish or restore a royal *wat* to worship the Buddha *rājādhirāja* or *Dhamma* in order to legitimize his power and proclaim *Dhamma* as the ideology of kingship. The *wat* is offered to the Buddha whose power is unequal, and it is where *sangha* are supported to disseminate *Dhamma*, because *Dhamma* is the most significant power of the universe and will bring peace to the world. The Buddha's relics are worshipped not only by humans but also all gods and deities, whose powers will support the righteous king. Thus the Thai royal *wat* is in fact the proclamation of a *cakkavatti* king who demonstrates that he upholds *Dhamma* to bring prosperity to the universe.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The accounts of the three main concepts of Thai royal *wats*, the possession of a *cakkavatti*, the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* and *Jambudīpa*, are contained in two important Thai texts, the *Traiphum* and the Legend of King *Jambupati*. However, the elements of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* although deriving from the *Traiphum* elements, are arranged slightly differently from the structure of the *Traiphum*. Another influential concept in the symbolic planning of Thai royal Buddhist architecture is taken from the *Mahāvamsa*. The elaboration of the relic chamber of King Dutthagāmanī has been interpreted in the disposition of the relic chambers of some of the principal *prangs* of Ayutthaya.

According to the symbolic planning of the royal *wats* of both the Ayutthaya and Bangkok periods, the *Traiphum* text is a guideline to the setting of cosmological symbols. Similar concepts may be interpreted in quite distinctive architectural expressions. However, the planning of many royal *wats* suggests that the arrangement of the cosmographical diagram as represented in the *Traiphum* manuscript painting of the Khmer version is the closest to their symbolic plans. It might be the authoritative version which may be produced specially for the symbolic setting of architectural planning. Above all, it is inscribed with the Khmer scripts and language, implying that

it is a sacred text because Khmer scripts had been regarded as the genuine script for inscribing religious texts and some others which relate to ritual performing.³⁴ The manuscript of the Thonburi version also provides some significant guidelines for symbolic planning. However, scholars should pay more attention to the *Traiphum* not only to the account of Mount *Meru*. There are many similes and analogies in the text which relate to the decorative and architectural designs of Thai Buddhist architecture.

However, both the descriptive and the illustrated versions of the *Traiphum* texts are of parallel importance in the design process. The Seven Great Places and the Eight Great Places are the most important themes of the symbol of *Jambudīpa* to denote the Diamond Throne. They are systematically categorized in the *Traiphumlोकawinitchai* (Thampricha 1992, 251-256, 263-264), while some *Jātakas* are used to describe the scenes of *Himavanta* Forest (Thampricha 1992, 136-246).

Although the Legend of King Jambupati has been known to be the text associated with the meaning of a crowned Buddha image, the description of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* has never been suggested in any studies of Thai Buddhist architecture. Apart from its significance for the *cakkavatti* kingship, the portrayal of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* is the most important part of the interpretation of the symbolic planning of a principal royal *wat*.

The compatibility between the disposition of the elements of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* and the Brahmanistic concept of cosmology, and between the account of the offering of the royal possessions of King *Jambupati* and of King *Dutthagāmanī*, suggests that the Legend of King Jambupati is the most important treatise of Thai royal Buddhist architectural design. It integrates the pre-existing concepts of the Brahmanistic ideas and the *Theravāda* relic cult from the *Mahāvamsa* text, and was composed to rationalize both the architectural symbolism and the presence of the crowned Buddha images. On the other hand, it also indicates the importance of the *Mahāvamsa* and the Brahmanistic ideas to Thai Buddhist kingship. The *Mahāvamsa* should be recognized as another significant text in the study of Thai royal Buddhist architecture. Although it does not directly affect the main features of architectural planning, the heroic aspect of King *Dutthagāmanī* is another inspiration for some royal

³⁴ Siamese monks during the old days had to learn the Khmer script in order to be able to read the texts (Chai 1980, 58, 62).

wats. Rama III built a *Lohaprasāda* in *Wat Ratchanatdaram* in imitation of King Dutthagāmani's establishment of the *Lohaprasāda* mentioned in the *Mahāvamsa*.

Pathamasambodhi gathā is the best known text of the Life of the Buddha in Siam. It is connected to the symbol of *Jambudīpa* and is usually interpreted in narrated scenes or Buddha images in different iconography. In the reign of King Rama III, there were thirty-four new iconographies taken from the episodes of the Buddha's Life, according to the *Pathamasambodhi* text. (Damrong 1982, 35). The past lives of the Buddha which are represented by the *Jātakas* and the stories of the Buddhas of the past are also subjects relate to *Jambudīpa*.

Although there are some elements of Brahmanistic concepts that appear in Thai royal wats, most of these had been transformed from their original form into the context of Thai Buddhism. The Legend of King Jambupati is included here. The important Thai Brahmanistic text is the Legend of Vishnu's *Avatāras* (Niyada 1997), which is the origin of the *Ramakian* and the Treatise of Principal Gods (FAD 1992a). However, these elements do not affect the main concept of symbolic planning. They are added mostly as parts of architectural symbolism as protecting gods of the cosmos. The case of *Wat Suthat* is the most explicit expression of this concept. Some non-Buddhist literature was included in the symbol system of the royal wats during King Rama III's reign. They are gathered specially in *Wat Phra Chetuphon*.

The completed condition of the royal wats of the early Bangkok period makes the interpretation of the symbolic planning of Thai Buddhist architecture possible, and particularly allows the clarification of many layers of the symbol system. The richest of the symbols of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* leads us to be able to decode many elements of symbolic planning. Although the royal wats of the early Bangkok period developed their architectural planning distinctively from the pattern of the Ayutthaya period, the theory of symbolic planning constructed from them is effective enough to be applied to explain the planning of the Ayutthayan royal wats. On the other hand, some evidence from Ayutthaya in return contributes to explaining some issues of the design of the royal wats of the early Bangkok period and support the theory.

A gallery which traditionally encircles a principal *prang* or *chedi* of Ayutthaya was expanded to be a more significant element since the beginning of the Bangkok period.

The pattern that a *wihan* or an *ubosot* is enclosed by a gallery is therefore a specific pattern of the early Bangkok period (Phiphat 1982, 151-152). During the reign of King Rama I, *Jambudīpa* was accentuated in the designs of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel. However, the *Tripitaka* was the symbol of Dhamma and was placed at the position of the centre of universe. The *Phra Mondop* of the Royal Chapel, which houses the *Tripitaka*, was also a symbol of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. These two *wats* imply that the *Dhammakāya* (Dhamma body), represented by the *Tripitaka*, and the *Rūpakāya* (Physical body), represented by the relics (F. Reynolds 1977, 377), are symbols of the Buddha *rājādhirāja*. However, the *Dhamma* was given its principality in the Royal Chapel in order to establish the *Dhamma* as the ideology of the new kingdom. The *Traiphum* text states that after the Jeweled-wheel (*cakkaratana*) had conquered all continents, the *cakkavatti* king would command a crystal pavilion (Thai - *mondop kaeo*) and be elected to enshrine the wheel, so that people could come to worship it (Lithai 1985, 196). According to the *Mahāvamsa*, when Indagutta *thera* explains to King Dutthagāmanī about the power of the Buddha, he mentions that the Jeweled-wheel is in fact the *Dhamma* (FAD 1991, 401). However, if the Buddha's relics are the symbol of the Buddha, then the *Tripitaka* signifies the *Dhamma*, and the king completed his devotion to the Triple Gems because particular functions of the *wats* are reserved for *sangha*.

In the reign of King Rama III, the restorations of *Wat Phra Chetuphon* and the Royal Chapel and the construction of *Wat Suthat*, are new interpretations of the Thai principal *wat*. The main structures of these *wats* are built in the forms of an *ubosot* or *wihan*, representing the symbols of Mount *Meru* overlapped with *Jambudīpa*. The *prang* of *Wat Arun* is evidence to show that they have the same concept, and the *prang* is the only large *prang* of the early Bangkok period.³⁵

The *cakkavatti* kingship which is represented through the Legend of King Jambupati is more explicitly manifested in the reign of Rama III. Although *Wat Nangnong* is in a Chinese influenced style, it is another interpretation of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* as described in the Legend. It is also related to the *prang* of *Wat Arun*, which conveys the same concept. The restoration and establishment of the principal

³⁵ King Rama III attempted to establish another *prang* at *Wat Saket*, but its foundation subsided (Thiphakorawong 1995, 143-44). Only its base had been built, and it was later altered to be a mountain named *Phukhaothong* (Golden Mountain).

royal wats of King Rama III, in which the concept of the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* was emphasized, may relate to domestic and external politics. The establishment of the *Thammayut* Buddhist sect affected the unity of Siamese *sangha* and also Rama III's righteous kingship. The arrival of the British and their defeat of the Burmese was also a great concern for Rama III. The construction of the *prang* of *Wat Arun* when the British defeated China is another piece of evidence which supports the argument that these contexts relate to the concept of worshipping the Buddha *rājādhirāja*, as a spiritualization of the kingdom. The establishment of the royal wats, therefore, was part of Rama III's legitimation as a righteous king and worship of the Buddha, whose power would protect the kingdom.

The result of the decoding of the symbolic planning of the royal wats of the early Bangkok period brings about the basic theory of *Traiphum* symbolic planning in Thai Buddhist architecture. The theme from the Life of the Buddha is a central element of the symbol of *Jambudīpa*, and denotes the Diamond Throne. The *Pathamasambodhi* and *Cakkavāla* paintings are traditional patterns of symbols that denote the spatial and temporal concept of the Enlightenment of the Buddha. Buddha images in a gallery, which represent the Buddhas of the past, also symbolically denote *Jambudīpa*. However, the *Himavanta* concept is related to the themes of *Jātakas*, *Pacceka Buddhas* and hermits.

As for the vertical symbol of Mount *Meru*, the arrangement of the statues of *Deva*, *Garuda* and *Asura* is the essential pattern which may be applied to small structures such as a *Tripitaka* cabinet and also to a large *prang*. Mount *Meru* may be symbolized by mural paintings of its components put into the upper part of a building, while the subject of *Ariyapuggala* (the Holy Persons) is related to the symbols of *Brahmaloka*. A bell tower and a *kanprian* are related to the symbols of *Yamaloka* and hells respectively.

The basic theory of each concept is connected by a planning system of axis organization. On the main east-west axis the symbolic planning of the lower realm is generally located to the east and the higher realm is to the west. As for the main north-south axis of a symbol system, the higher realm is located to the north while the lower realm is to the south. However, there are some exceptions which orient in different directions from this theory, but the relationship between the components in the system

are similarly arranged. The theory can also be applied to an analysis of the symbolic planning of other periods of Thai traditional Buddhist architecture.

Within the total concept of planning, the *Traiphum* cosmographical diagram is only a means to represent the main underlying concepts of a royal *wat*. The concept of *cakkavatti* kingship is expressed by three major aspects of symbolic planning: the possession of a *cakkavatti*, the City of the Buddha *rājādhirāja* and *Jambudīpa*. It is the possession of a *cakkavatti* king that is offered to the Buddha, the *Dhamma cakkavatti*, in order to proclaim the righteous kingship and worship the *Dhamma*.

All the evidence of which the theory has been constituted indicates that mural paintings and some other adornments in Thai Buddhist architecture are not only an instructional means or decorative elements, but they are also symbols of space. The theory of symbolic planning that has been established in this study can be applied to clarify the meanings and symbolic planning of other *wats*. This will contribute to a greater understanding of Thai cultural history, and also the direction of the management of both physical and spiritual dimensions concerning Thai Buddhist architecture.

Finally, the result of this study of symbolic planning in Thai Buddhist architecture is that many questions have consequently come to be of interest, that are either related to Thai cultural history itself or that connect to neighbouring countries of South-East Asia. The process by which the Siamese of both Sukhothai and Ayutthaya transformed and legitimized some aspects of Brahmanistic and *Mahāyāna* concepts into the paradigm of *Theravāda* Buddhism is the critical issue. The result will also, in return, contribute to a better understanding of the concepts of Angkorian and Pagan architecture, which influenced Thai Buddhist architecture. As for the period after the early Bangkok era, the changing process toward the modern nation state after the arrival of westerners is another topical issue. The question of how the *cakkavatti* kingship which was expressed in Thai royal Buddhist architecture has been adapted to respond to the age of modernization is another critical issue. It might clarify the process of how this traditional knowledge has been lost.

Abhaya mudrā: Sign of fearlessness. The gesture that the right forearm is bent at more or less of a right angle, the hand turned out to show the palm and the fingers straight and extending upward.

Añjalī: A gesture that hands pressed together in salutation.

Arahanta: Worthy one; perfected one; one who has attained *Nibbāna*.

Ariyapuggala: A noble individual; noble one; holy person.

Arūpabhūmi: The Realm of the Formless; world without material factors.

Asura: A semi-god at war with the *devas*; a titan.

Atthamahāthāna: Eight holy places of Buddhism comprises the four holy places: the place where the Buddha was born, the place where he attained Enlightenment, where he began to turn the Wheel of the Doctrine and where he attained complete *Nibbāna*; and another four places where the Buddha performed miracles.

Avatāra: Descent; incarnation of a divinity, usually refers to *Vishnu*.

Ayutthaya, Ayudhya: The capital of Siam or Thailand from 1350-1767. The name derives from the Sanskrit *Ayodhya*, the city of Lord *Rama* in the epic of *Ramayana*.

Bhikkhu: Buddhist monk.

Bhikkhuni: Buddhist nun.

Bhūmisparsa mudrā: Earth-touching gesture. Used by the Buddha to call the earth goddess to witness his right to take his seat beneath the Tree of Wisdom, the Bodhi-tree.

Bodhi Gaya: Site of the Buddha's Enlightenment in north eastern India.

Bodhi-tree: Tree under which the Buddha meditated at the moment of Enlightenment.

Bodhisattva, Bodhisatta: A Buddha-to-be; one who has resolved to attain enlightenment for the helping of his fellow-men.

Bot: See 'ubosot'.

Brahma: One of the three principal Hindu gods, with four faces. Three are usually shown in painting and sculpture. In Buddhism, the inhabitants of the higher heavens have the form of this divinity, and are called *Brahmas*.

Brahmaloka: The abode of *Brahma* deities. It consists of twenty heavens of *Rūpabhūmi* and *Arūpabhūmi*.

Brahmin: Hindu priestly caste.

Buddhawat: the sanctuary or public precincts of a Thai Buddhist monastery.

Cakkavāla: A world system.

Cakkavatti, Chakravartin: A universal monarch; universal ruler.

Cātumahārājika: The Four Guardian deities; the realm of the Four Great Kings.

Chatta, Chattra: umbrella; multi-tiered parasol.

Čhedi: Thai word for *stūpa*.

Dasajāti: The Ten *Jatakas*; the ten longest birth-stories of the Buddha, regarded as the most important.

Dasapāramī: The ten perfections; the ten principal virtues practised by a *Bodhisattva*.

Deva, Devatā: An angel or heavenly being.

Devaloka: The worlds or heaven of gods; celestial realm.

Dhamma, Dharma: Truth, teaching, doctrine, righteousness, piety, morality, justice, nature, all things and states conditioned or unconditioned, etc.

Dhammacakka, Dharmcakra: The Wheel of the Law, emblem of the Buddhist *Dhamma* or Law, derived from an ancient solar symbol.

Dharmacakra mudrā: Gesture of teaching or turning the Wheel of the Law. The right hand is held before the chest with the tips of the thumb and index finger joined to touch one of the fingers of the left hand, which is turned palm inwards.

Dharmacetiya: A shrine in which sacred texts are housed; a shrine of the Doctrine; doctrinal monument.

Dhātu: relics.

Dhātucetiya: A shrine over the Buddha's relics.

Dhyāna mudrā: Gesture or pose of meditation. The hands rest in the lap, the right above the left with all fingers extended.

Dvaravati: The name of a Mon Kingdom in Thailand emanating from the central plains to other regions in Thailand, which existed between the seventh and eleventh centuries A.D. The term also refers to an art style of that period.

Dvārapāla: Door guardian.

Erāvana: The three-headed elephant that serves as the mount of the God Indra.

Gandhabba: A heavenly musician.

Garuda: Mythical bird, has a human body and the wings, legs and beak of bird, and serves as the vehicle of Vishnu (or Nārāya).

Gotama: Name of the clan to which the Buddha belonged.

Hamsa: Sacred goose, Brahma's mount.

Himavanta: A mythical forest in *Jambudīpa*, the southern continent; inhabited by both imaginary and real animals.

Ho Trai: Library for Buddhist texts.

Iddhi: Supernormal power; magical power.

Isvara: Lord, epithet of Siva.

Jambudīpa, Jambudvīpa: The name of the southern continent in Buddhist cosmology.

Jātaka: A 'birth story' referring to one of the 550 previous lives of the Buddha, collectively known as the *Jātaka* Tales, in each of which a particular virtue is practised to perfection.

Jhāna: Meditation; absorption; a state of serene contemplation attained by meditation.

Kailasa, Kelāsa: Mountain home of Siva.

Kamma, Karma: Volitional action, action, deed.

Kanprian: Study hall of a monastery, often known as the preaching hall.

Kappa, Kalpa: An aeon; world-age.

Khmer: Used either as a noun or adjective, referring to language or the people of Cambodia, both ancient and modern.

Kinnara: Masculine equivalent of *kinnarī*.

Kinnarī: Female semi-divine being whose upper half is human and lower half, bird; lives in the *Himavanta* Forest.

Koti: Ten million.

Khattiya, Kshatriya: The princely or warrior caste in Hinduism.

Kumbhanda : A kind of celestial beings who has a huge stomach.

Kuti: An abode of a Buddhist monk or novice; a monk's cell; living quarters of monks.

Lanna: Originally the name of northern Thai kingdom based on Chiangmai and flourishing, for the most part independently, between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. The term is also used to describe an extensive region of the north, as well as the arts of the north, up to and including the present day.

Linga: Phallic symbol, one of the forms of Siva.

Lokadhātu: A unit of the Universe; world; sphere; another name for *Cakkavāla*.

Mahādhātu, Mahathat čhedi: A *stūpa* or *čhedi* enshrining the Buddha's relics.

Mahāpurusa: Great person, epithet applied to the Buddha.

Mahāyāna: 'Great Vehicle', form of Buddhism of later development, now mainly followed in China, Japan, Korea and Tibet.

Maitreya, Metteyya: Name of the next Buddha to come.

Majjhimadesa : The central region of *Jambudīpa*. In commentaries the Majjhimadesa is extended to include the whole of *Jambudīpa*.

Mon: Early inhabitants of Thailand and one of the earliest people in Burma.

Mondop: A square building with a crown-like cupola.

Meru, Mount (Sineru): In Hindu and Buddhist cosmology, the axis or mountain at the centre of the universe; abode of the fabulous creatures. Indra's *Tāvātimsa* Heaven is at the summit.

Mudrā: A codified bodily gesture having specific iconographic significance.

Nak: Alloy of gold and copper, gold bronze.

Naksidhi : Ascetic or hermit.

Nāga: A divine serpent; a serpent-like water-god in Buddhist mythology.

Nibbāna, Nirvana: The extinction of the fires of greed, of hatred and of ignorance; the supreme goal of Buddhism; extinction of all defilement and suffering.

Niraya, Naraka: Hell; woeful state.

Pāli: The language of the Buddhist scriptures, an ancient language of India closely connected to *Sanskrit*.

Pacceka Buddha, Paccekabodhi: An independent or private Buddha, a Buddha who has won enlightenment by himself, but does not teach others.

Paribhogacetiya: A tree, shrine, dwelling, etc. used by the Buddha and consequently remindful of him and sacred; the monument of the Buddha's utility.

Parinibbāna: The final or complete *Nibbāna*; the complete extinction of all passion; the final release from the round of rebirth; the Great decease of the Buddha.

Paritta: Verses of protection or safeguard; protective chants; holy stanzas; safety runes.

Pātimokkha: The fundamental precepts, the fundamental rules of the order.

Peta: a departed being; ghost; hungry ghost; the ghost of the departed.

Phutthawat,: the sanctuary or public precincts of a Thai Buddhist monastery.

Pisāca, Pisat: Devil; goblin.

Prang: A form of *stupa* in Thailand which derives its form from the *Prasat* of Khmer architecture.

Prasat, Prāsāda: The term, meaning 'palace', is applied to both royal and religious architecture that features on its roof-line a tiered spire-like tower or pyramidal finial.

Rāhu: Deity representing the planetary node believed to cause the solar and lunar eclipses.

Ramakian: Thai literary epic based on the Indian Ramayana and the legend of Vishnu's incarnations.

Rishi: Hermit

Rūpabhūmi: The Realm of Form; world with only a remnant of material factors.

Sala: A roofed open pavilion.

Sangha: The Buddhist monastic order.

Sangkhawat, Sanghāvāsa: The monastic precincts; living quarters of monks.

Sattamahāthāna: The Seven Great Sites where the Buddha spent each of the seven weeks following the Enlightenment.

Siam, Siamese: Old name for Thailand, not used officially since the Second World War. Siam is a name used by neighbouring peoples for the Thai, and appears as early as the twelfth century in Cambodian inscriptions.

Siddhartha: A proper name of the Buddha.

Sima: Boundary, Sima stones -the markers designating the official boundary of the ordination precinct. *Mahasima:* the great *sima*.

Singha: lion, usually mythical in form.

Sukhothai: The name of an extensive Thai Buddhist kingdom and its capital. The term is also applied to an art style.

Sutta: Discourse, sermon.

Tathāgata: The Accomplished One; the truth Winner; an epithet of the Buddha.

Tāvātimsa: The heaven of the God Indra, situated at the peak of Mount *Meru*.

Thera: An elder; a senior member of the Order; a senior monk.

Theravāda: The doctrine of the elder; teaching of the elder; the school of Buddhism.

Thonburi: The capital of Thailand from 1767 to 1781, located across the river from Bangkok.

Tipitaka, Tripitaka: Three Books, usually called 'Three Baskets'. The three main canonical divisions of the Buddha's teaching into *Vinaya* (Code of Discipline), *Sutta* (Discourses) and *Abhidhamma* (higher Doctrine, Philosophy and Psychology).

Tiveda: The three knowledge; the three divisions of the Brahminic canon of authorized religious teaching and practice.

Traiphum: Three worlds of Buddhist cosmology.

Triple Gems, Three Gems: (*Triratana*) the Buddhist trinity comprises the Buddha, *Dhamma* (teaching of the Buddha), and *Sangha* (the Order of monks).

Ubosot or Bot: The ordination hall in a Thai monastery, differentiated from an ordinary assembly hall by the presence of *sima* markers.

Uddesikacetiya: Shrine by dedication; memorial object of worship referring to the Buddha. i.e. a Buddha image.

Upasaka: A lay devotee, lay Buddhist.

Upasika: A female devotee.

Varada mudrā: Sign of charity, generosity. The right arm is extended downwards, with the hand rotated outwards, palm open, fingers more or less straight.

Vijjadhara: A knower of charms; a sorcerer.

Vihāra: Buddhist temple with the building in which monks live.

Vimāna: A celestial mansion; a celestial palace.

Vinaya: Discipline, the monastic rule.

Vitarka mudrā: Sign of reasoning, or explanation. The right forearm is bent, but tends to be held closer to the body; the fingers are slightly bent, and the index finger touches the thumb. The gesture can be made in a seated posture or standing.

Wat: A group of structures constituting a Buddhist monastery in Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

Wihan: One of the principal buildings of a Thai Buddhist monastery, it is used as a worship or assembly hall by monks and laity.

Yakkha : A demon.

Yama: The lord of the underworld; ruler of the kingdom of dead, death.

Yamaloka: The Realm of the Lord of Death.

Yāmā: Name of a heavenly realm in the Realm of Desire (*Kāmabhūmi*)

Yojana: A measure of length; a distance of about 10 miles.

ABBREVIATIONS

CC	Collected Chronicles [<i>Prachum phongsawadan</i>], Khurusapha Edition, Bangkok, 1964
CS	Collected Stories [<i>Prachum Pakaranam</i>], Khurusapha Edition, Bangkok, 1963
FAD	Fine Arts Department
NA	National Archives
OPM	The Office of the Prime Minister
RCA, CC	The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Cakkraphatdiphong (Cat) Version
RCA, PC	The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Phan Canthanumat (Coem) Version
RCA, LP	The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Luang Prasoet aksonnit Version
TAT	The Tourism Authority Of Thailand
VL	Vajiranana Library

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APPENDIX 1

The Kings of the Čhakkri Dynasty (Bangkok)

Name	Reigned between	The important wats of the reign
Rama I (Phra Phutthayotfa čhulalok)	1782-1809	- The Royal Chapel (<i>Wat Phra Srirattana satsadaram</i> or <i>Wat Phra Kaeo</i>) - <i>Wat Phra Chetuphon</i> - <i>Wat Suthat</i> (foundation)
Rama II (Phra Phutthaloela naphalai)	1809-1824	- <i>Wat Arun ratchawararam</i> (<i>prang</i> foundation) - <i>Wat Suthat</i> (continued)
Rama III (Phra Nangklao čhaoyuhua)	1824-1851	- <i>Wat Ratcha-orot</i> - <i>Wat Phra Chetuphon</i> (restored) - <i>Wat Suthat</i> (completed) - <i>Wat Thepthidaram</i> - <i>Wat Ratchanatdaram</i> - <i>Wat Chaloemphrakiat</i>
Rama IV (Mongkut)	1851-1868	- <i>Wat Sommanatwihan</i> - <i>Wat Makutkasat</i> - <i>Wat Ratchapradit</i> - <i>Wat Pratumwanaram</i> - <i>Wat Prakeaw</i> (Phetchaburi)
Rama V (Chulalongkorn)	1868-1910	- <i>Wat Ratchabopit</i> - <i>Wat Benchamabopit</i> - <i>Wat Thepsirin</i> - <i>Wat Niwetthamaprawat</i> (Ayutthaya)
Rama VI (Vajiravudh)	1910-1925	- <i>Wat Rachathiwat</i> (restored)
Rama VII (Prachadipok)	1925-1934	- <i>Wat Ratchabopit</i> (restored)
Rama VIII (Ananda Mahidol)	1934-1946	
Rama IX (Bhumipol)	1946	

APPENDIX 2

The Kings of Ayutthaya

(Wyatt 1984, 312-313)

Ramathibodi	1351-1369
Ramesuan	1369-1370
Borommaracha I	1370-1388
Thong Chan	1388
Ramesuan (second reign)	1388-1395
Ramaracha	1395-1409
Intharacha	1409-1424
Borommaracha II	1424-1448
Borommatrailokanat	1448-1488
Borommaracha III (in Ayutthaya)	1463-1488
Intharacha II	1488-1491
Ramathibodi II	1491-1529
Borommaracha IV	1529-1533
Ratsada	1533-1534 (for 5 months)
Chairacha	1534-1547
Yot Fa	1547-June 1548
Khun Worawongsa (usurper)	June-July 1548
Chakkraphat	July 1548-January 1569
Mahin	January-August 1569
Maha Thammaracha	August 1569-June 1590
Naresuan	June 1590- 25 April 1605
Ekathotsarot	25 April 1605-October 1610/ November 1611
Si Saowaphak	1610-1611?
Song Tham (Intharacha)	1610 or 11-13 December 1628
Chettha	13 December 1628- August 1629

Athittayawong	August- September 1629
Prasatthaong	September 1629- 7 August 1656
Chai	7-8 August 1656
Suthammaracha	8 August- 26 October 1656
Narai	26 October 1656- 11 July 1688
Phra Phetracha	11 July 1688- 1703
Sua	1703-1709
Phumintharacha (Thai Sa)	1709- January 1733
Borommakot	January 1733- 13 April 1758
Uthumphon	13 April 1758- May 1758
Suriyamarin	May 1758- 7 April 1767

APPENDIX 3

The relic chamber of King Dutthagāmaṇi

(Geiger 1912, 203-07)

'...In the midst of the relic-chamber the king placed a bodhi-tree made of jewels, splendid in every way. It had a stem eighteen cubits high and five branches; the root, made of coral, rested on sapphire. The stem made of perfectly pure silver was adorned with leaves made of gems, had withered leaves and fruits of gold and young shoots made of coral. The eight auspicious figures were on the stem and festoons of flowers and beautiful rows of fourfooted beasts and rows of geese. Over it, on the border of a beautiful canopy, was a network of pearl bells and chains of little golden bells and bands here and there. From the four corners of the canopy hung bundles of pearl strings each worth nine hundred thousand (pieces of money). The figures of sun, moon and stars and different lotus-flowers, made of jewels, were fastened to the canopy. A thousand and eight pieces of divers stuffs, precious and of varied colours, were hung to the canopy. Around the bodhi-tree ran a *vedikā* made of all manner of jewels; the pavement within was made of great myrobalan-pearls.

Row of vases (some) empty and (some) filled with flowers made of all kinds of jewels and filled with four kinds of fragrant water were placed at the foot of the bodhi-tree. On a throne, the cost whereof was one *koti*, erected to the east of the bodhi-tree, he placed a shining golden Buddha-image seated. The body and members of this image were duly made of jewels of different colours, beautifully shining. *Mahābrahmā* stood there holding a silver parasol and Sakka carrying out the consecration with the *Vijayuttara* shell, Pañcasikha with his lute in his hand, and Kālanāga with the dancing-girls, and the thousand-handed *Māra* with his elephants and train of followers. Even like the throne to the east (other) thrones were erected, the cost of each being a *koti*, facing the other seven regions of the heavens. And even thus, so that the bodhi-tree was at the head, a couch was placed, also worth one *koti*, adorned with jewels of every kind.

The events during the seven weeks he commanded them to depict duly here and there in the relic chamber, and also the prayer of *Brahmā*, the setting in motion the wheel of the doctrine, the admission of Yasa into the order, the *pabbajjā* of the Bhaddavaggiyas and the subduing of the *Jatilas*; the visit of Bimbisāra and the entry into Rājagaha, the

accepting of the Veluvana, the eighty disciples, the journey to Kapilavatthu and the (miracle of the) jewelled part in that place, the *pabbajjā* of Rāhula and Nanda, the accepting of the Jetavana, the miracle at the foot of the mango-tree, the preaching in the heaven of the gods, the miracle of the descent of the gods, and the assembly with the questioning of the *thera*, the *Mahāsamayasuttanta*, and the exhortation to Rāhula, the *Mahāmagalasutta*, and the encounter with Ālavaka, of the (robber) Angulimāla and the (*nāga*-king) Apalāla, the meeting with the Pārāyanakas, the giving up of life, the accepting of the dish of pork, and of the two gold-coloured garments, the drinking of the pure water, and the *Parinibbān* itself; the lamentation of gods and men, the revering of the feet by the *thera*, the burning (of the body), the quenching of the fire, the funeral rites in that very place and the distributing of the relics by Dona. *Jātakas* also which are fitted to awaken faith did the noble (king) place here in abundance. The *Vassantara jātika* he commanded them to depict fully, and in like manner (that which befell beginning at the descent) from the *Tusita*-heaven even to the Bodhi-throne.

At the four quarters of the heaven stood the (figures of) the four Great kings, and the thirty-three gods and the thirty-two (celestial) maidens and the twenty-eight chiefs of the *yakkhas*; but above these *devas* raising their folded hands, vases filled with flowers likewise, dancing *devatās* and *devatās* playing instruments of music, *devas* with mirrors in their hands, and *devas* also bearing flowers and branches, *devas* with lotus-blossoms and so forth in their hands and other *devas* of many kinds, rows of arches made of gems and (rows) of *dhammacakkas*; rows of sword-bearing *devas* and also *devas* bearing pitchers. Above their heads were pitchers five cubits high, filled with fragrant oil, with wicks made of *dukūla* fibers continually alight. In an arch of crystal there was in each of the four corners a great gem and (moreover) in the four corners four glimmering heaps of gold, precious stones and pearls and of diamonds were placed. On the wall made of fat-coloured stones sparkling zig-zag lines were traced, serving as adornment for the relic-chamber. The king commanded them to make all the figures here in the enchanting relic-chamber of massive wrought gold..'

APPENDIX 4

Sattamahāthāna (The Seven Great Places)

(Thampricha 1992, 251-63; Malalasekera 1960, 2 Vols.)

1. Bodhirukka (Bodhi-tree)

The Bodhi-tree under which the Buddha attained the Enlightenment (Vol. 1, 319).

2. Animisa-cetiya

The spot where the Buddha spent a week after the Enlightenment, gazing unwinking at the seat at the foot of the Bodhi-tree, the seat of his great victory. It was to the north of the Bodhi-tree (Vol. 1, 77).

3. Ratanacankama-cetiya or Ratna-cetiya

A place near the *Animisa-cetiya*, close to the Bodhi-tree, on which the Buddha spent the third week after Enlightenment, walking to and fro in the Jewelled Walk (*Ratanacankama*) (Vol. 2, 711).

4. Ratanaghara-cetiya

The site of the Jewelled Hall (*Ratanaghara*), which was created by the gods to the north-west of the Bodhi-tree. There the Buddha sat during the fourth week after the Enlightenment, revolving in his mind the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* (Vol 2, 711).

5. Ajapāla-nigrodha

A banyan tree which was to the east of the Bodhi-tree. In the fifth week after the Enlightenment the Buddha went there from the *Rājayatana*. It was then that the Brahmā Sahampati appeared to him and persuaded him to preach the doctrine, in spite of the difficulty of the task. This was immediately after the meal offered by Tapussa and Bhalluka. When the Buddha wished to have someone as his teacher, Sahampati appeared again and suggested to him that the *Dhamma* be considered his teacher (Vol. 1, 30-31)

6. Mucalinda

A tree near the *Ajapāla-nigrodha*, to the south-east of the Bodhi-tree. The Buddha spent the sixth week after the Enlightenment there. There was a great shower of rain, and the *Nāga-King*, *Mucalinda*, of the tree, sheltered the Buddha's body and held his

hood over the Buddha's head. The space provided by *Nāga's* coils was as large as the floor-space of the *Lohapāsāda*, and the *Nāga* King lived in a pond near the tree (Vol. 2, 638-39).

7. *Rājāyatana*

The name of a tree, at the foot of which the Buddha received a gift of wheat and honey from the merchants Tapussa and Bhalluka in the eighth week after the Enlightenment (Vol. 2: 728). Tapussa and his friend, Bhalluka, while on their way to Rājagaha, saw the Buddha at the foot of the *Rājāyatana* tree, in the eighth week after the Enlightenment. Urged by a deity, who had been their relation, they offered the Buddha rice-cakes and honey in a bowl provided by the Four Great Guardian Deities (the *Cātumahārājika*). They became the first lay disciples of the Buddha. The Buddha gave them, for worship, eight handfuls of his hair, which he obtained by stroking his head. They took the hair with them to their city (Vol. 1, 991).

APPENDIX 5

Atthamahāthāna (The Eight Great Places)

(Thampricha 1992, 263-64; Malalasekera 1960, 2 Vols.)

1. Bodhirukka (Bodhi-tree)

The Bodhi-tree under which the Buddha attained the Enlightenment (Vol. 1, 319).

2. Lumbini

A park, situated between Kapilvatthu and Devadaha, where the Buddha was born (Vol. 2, 784).

3. Isipatana

An open space near Benares, the site of the famous Migadāya or Deer Park. It was eighteen leagues from Uruvelā, and when Gotama gave up his austere penances, his friends, the Pancavaggiya monks, left him and went to Isipatana. After his Enlightenment, the Buddha, leaving Uruvelā, joined them in Isipatana, and it was there that he preached his first sermon, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, on the full-moon day of *Āsāḥa*. There, also, the Buddha spent his first rainy season (Vol. 1, 323)

4. Sāla-grove

A grove of the Mallas, Kusinārā, which the Buddha made his last resting place, and died (Vol.1, 653).

5. Pārileyyaka

A town near Kosambī. When the Buddha found that he could not persuade the Kosambī monks to refrain from quarrelling, he left Kosampī alone and unattended, and went to *Pārileyyaka*. There was a certain elephant who, finding communal life distasteful, had left his herd, and waited on the Buddha, ministering to all his needs. The elephant's name was *Pārileyyaka*. He looked after the Buddha, omitting nothing, even to the extent of finding hot water for his bath. There was also a monkey there who offered the Buddha a honeycomb (Vol. 2, 191-92).

6. The Descent from Tāvātimsa at Sankassa

Sankassa was a city, thirty leagues from Sāvatti. It was there that the Buddha returned to earth, after preaching the *Abhidhammapitaka* in *Tāvātimsa*, following the

performance of the Twin Miracle under the *Gandamba* tree. The descent of the Buddha took place on the day of the *Mahāpavāra* festival. Sakka provided three ladders for the Buddha's descent from *Sineru* (*Meru*) to the earth: on the right was a ladder of gold for the gods, on the left a silver ladder for Mahā Brahmā and his retinue, and in the middle a ladder of jewels for the Buddha. The assembled people covered the earth for thirty leagues round. There was a clear view of the nine Brahma-worlds above and *Avīci* hell below. The Buddha was accompanied by Pancasikha, Mātali, Mahā Brahmā and Suyāma (Vol. 2, 974).

7. *Nālagiri*

The location in Rajagaha where the Buddha tamed the Nālagiri elephant which Devadatha let loose to attack the Buddha. Nālagiri, moved by his benevolence, knelt at his feet and was instantly cured of his murderous insanity, and the Buddha taught him *Dhamma*. Marvelling at the sight, the assembled populace threw all their ornaments on the elephant's body, covering it entirely, and henceforth the elephant was known as Dhanapālaka. (Vol. 2: 58).

8. *Yamaka-pātihāriya* (The Twin Miracle at Sāvatti)

When the Buddha laid down a rule forbidding the exercise of supernatural powers by monks, following the miracle performed by *Pindola-Bhāradvāja*, the heretic went about saying that henceforth he would perform no miracle except with the Buddha. *Bimbisāra* reported this to the Buddha, who at once accepted the challenge, explaining that the rule was for his disciples and did not apply to himself. He, therefore, went to Sāvatti, the place where all Buddhas perform the miracle. The Buddha performed the *Yamaka-pātihāriya* (Twin Miracle), so called because it consisted in the appearance of phenomena of opposite characters in pairs- e.g., producing flames from the upper part of the body and stream of water from the lower, and the opposite. Flames of fire and a stream of water also proceeded alternatively from the right side of his body and from the left. From every pore of his body rays of six colours darted forth, upwards to the realm of *Brahmā* and downwards to the edge of the *Cakkavāla*. At the conclusion of the Miracle, the Buddha, following the example of his predecessors, made his way, in three strides, to *Tāvatisa*, there to preach the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* to his mother. The Twin Miracle can only be performed by the Buddha (Vol. 2, 682-83).

APPENDIX 6

The Ten Levels of Knowledge

(FAD 1974, 91-96)

1. ***Sammasana-ñāna*** : The Knowledge of investigation.
2. ***Udayavayānupassanā-ñāna*** : The Knowledge gained by meditating upon the rise and fall of composite things.
3. ***Bhangānupassanā-ñāna*** : The Knowledge gained by reflecting on the perishable nature of composite things.
4. ***Bhayatūpatthāna-ñāna*** : The Knowledge of what is to be feared
5. ***Ādinavānupassanā-ñāna*** : The Knowledge gained by reflecting upon the danger of wretchedness of composite things.
6. ***Nibbidānupassanā-ñāna*** : The Knowledge gained by contemplating repulsion.
7. ***Muñcitukamyatā-ñāna*** : The Knowledge associated with desire for release.
8. ***Patisankhānupassanā-ñāna*** : The Knowledge that reflects upon the analysis of composite things.
9. ***Sankhārupekkhā-ñāna*** : The Knowledge of indifference to composite things.
10. ***Anuloma-ñāna*** : The Adaptive-knowledge.

APPENDIX 7

The Eight Holy Persons (*Ariyapuggala*)

(Prayuddha 1985, 90-91)

1. ***Sotāpattimagga***, a person who is established in the Path of Stream-Entry.
2. ***Sotāpanna***, a person who has entered the stream; one established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry.
3. ***Sakadākāṃimagga***, a person who is established in the Path of Once-Returning.
4. ***Sakadākāmi***, a person who is established in the Fruition of Once-Returning.
5. ***Anākāṃimagga***, a person who is established in the Path of Non-Returning.
6. ***Anākāmi***, a person who is established in the Fruition of Non-Returning.
7. ***Arahantamagga***, a person who is established in the Path of Arahantaship.
8. ***Arahanta***, a person who is established in the Fruition of Arahantaship.

APPENDIX 8

The Legend of King Jambupati (*Ruang Thao Mahachomphu*)

(Abridged version from VL 1921)

When the Buddha was residing in Veluvana monastery near Rājagaha, there was a king named 'Jambu' (or Chomphu), who possessed great merit. When Jambu was born, the golds which were under the ground then rose from the ground; the golds which were at the tree tops fell down to earth; and the golds which were in the water rose from the water to the port of the Pañcāla City. The jewelled shoes also flew from Mount Vipul to hold his feet. These miracles were beheld by all *brahmins*. They then predicted that the prince would rule an independent state and become a great king of Jambudīpa and the *Nāga* realm.

When Jambu had grown up, he was able to shoot arrows as far as seven *yojana*. It went one *yojana* into the earth and one *yojana* into the water. After he ascended the throne, the arrow was his envoy to all around Jambudīpa, and conquered all rulers to come to him. If any ruler refused to do so, the arrow would string his ears and lead him to the audience hall of Pañcāla City.

One day, King Jambupati flew through the air and beheld the palace of King Bimbisāra. He thought that the *prasat* (*prāsāda*) was so high and wondered who it belonged to. With a temper of acrimony, he kicked the spire of the palace. Due to the great merit of Bimbisāra, as he was the great Buddhist layman, his palace was protected by his virtue and Jambupati's leg got injured and bled. Jambupati was enraged, and he slashed the spire of the *prasat* with his sword. However, because of the protection of the Buddha, the *prasat* became as hard as jewel and iron, and was still not damaged, but the sword was destroyed. Returning to his palace, Jambupati commanded his arrow to fly to Bimbisāra to string his ears. Hearing the sound of the flying arrow, Bimbisāra was frightened and went to the Buddha in Veluvana. He was protected by the Buddha, as the latter created a Buddha *cakka* (Buddha wheel) to suppress the arrow to fly back to Pañcāla City.

Considering that Jambupati possessed great virtue and wisdom, which will achieve the

arahantaship, the Buddha then commanded the God Indra from *Tāvātimsa* as an envoy to invite King Jambupati to come to him. Jambupati exercised his power with the envoy Indra, but he was defeated and agreed to have an audience of the Buddha. The Buddha realized that it was the time for the *Tathāgata* to subdue King Jambupati. He called an assembly of all *devas*, Indra, Brahmā, *Gandhabbas*, *supannas*, *nāgas*, and created an imaginary city accomplished with seven gems, greater than any city of a *cakkavatti* king. The *devas*, Indra, Brahmā and all the beings transformed themselves to be guardians and city folks of the city. Their appearances were of unsurpassed beauty.

The Buddha, by his power, created Veluvana monastery as a great city. It has seven encircling walls and comprises 100,000 *vimānas*. The *Mahāprāsāda* where the Buddha resides is situated at the centre of all the *vimānas*. It is the highest, has 1,000 stories, accomplished with seven gems, and is encompassed by rows of jewels, strings of bells, and various sizes of *chatta*. The Buddha also created himself as a great king, a *Rājādhirāja*, who rests on the throne in the *Mahāprāsāda*. His appearance is as beautiful as *Mahābrahmā* (*Thao Mahaphom*). Behind the *Rājādhirāja*, the *Mahābrahmā* God is holding a divine white *chatta*. Next to the *Mahābrahmā*, at the front and back, are 100,000 *Gandhabbas* who are musicians. Next to the front are 16,000 disciples who represent themselves as rulers of dependencies. The Sun God and the Moon God represent guardians, situated at the left and right of the city gate.

When King Jambupati arrived at the imaginary city, he saw that all the city folks, horses and elephants were much more graceful than his. Beholding the *Cātumahārājika*, who guarded the four directions, which each commanded 100,000 retinues, King Jambupati then sat down, and was misled into thinking that they were the *Rājādhirāja*, because of their gracefulness. Also, when King Jambupati saw either the disciples, the Sun God or the Moon God, he repeatedly misunderstood them to be the *Rājādhirāja*, causing him to be ashamed and nervous.

When confronted with the *Rājādhirāja*, he even lost control and fell into a seated position. However, due to his perseverance, he fought with the *Rājādhirāja*. He never won but was ashamed in front of his retinues. The *Rājādhirāja*, then, taught him to be aware of merit and demerit, and preached the *Dhamma* to him. He was devoted to the

teaching, took off his crown, and offered it to the *Rājādhirāja*. His ministers and one hundred and one rulers of his tributary states also offered their headdresses to the *Rājādhirāja*. The Buddha, in the appearance of the *Rājādhirāja*, then ordained him to realize the result of *kamma*, and see heavens and hells. He was devoted and offered his five regalia to make a veneration. All one hundred and one rulers did the same.

King Jambupati then asked the *Rājādhirāja* of how to achieve *Nibbāna*. He was given the answer that if he wished the fruition of *Nibbāna* he should leave his royal possessions and enter the priesthood. Jambupati asked how to get ordination. The Buddha then created the imaginary city to become Veluvana and he himself appeared as the Buddha. Finally, Jambupati conferred himself and the royal possessions of Pañcāla to the Buddha, and was ordained as a *bhikkhu* and attained arahantship.

APPENDIX 9***Cakkavatti-vatta* (Duties of a universal king)**

(Prayuddha 1985, 298-30; Thampricha 1992, 452-57)

1. To observe the supremacy of the law of truth and righteousness.
2. Provision of the right watch, ward and protection for one's own folk.
3. Provision of the right watch, ward and protection for the army.
4. Provision of the right watch, ward and protection for colonial kings and administrative officers.
5. Provision of the right watch, ward and protection for the royal dependants and civil servants.
6. Provision of the right watch, ward and protection for *brahmins* and householders, the professionals, traders and the farmers.
7. Provision of the right watch, ward and protection for town and country dwellers, townsmen and villagers.
8. Provision of the right watch, ward and protection for the religious.
9. Provision of the right watch, ward and protection for beasts and birds.
10. To let no wrongdoing prevail in the kingdom.
11. To let wealth be given or distributed to the poor.
12. To go from time to time to see and ask for advice the men of religious life who maintain high moral standard; to have virtuous counsellors and seek after greater virtue.