Talk

Pre-Angkorian State Formation:
Preliminary Results of the Thala Borivat Archaeological Project

in Khmer and English

by Heng Piphal

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By the 7th c. CE, epigraphy highlights three successive kings: Bhavavarman I, Mahendravaman, and Isanavarman. The period from the 7th to 8th c., known to scholars as “pre-Angkorian period”, corresponds to a State called “Chenla” in different Chinese accounts. Thanks to an important inscription corpus, the period is well known for its religious architecture and statuary. However, archaeological evidence of civil infrastructure, mundane activities and settlement system is yet to be explored.

The ThalaBorivat Archaeological Project includes surveys and excavations between 2011-2014. Our preliminary results suggest socioeconomic and political change and continuity from the protohistoric to the pre-Angkorian period that occurred during what could be called “transition period” (c. 3rd - 6th c. CE). There is also evidence of the adoption of Indic religions that occurred during the 5th century.