

3-Societies and Economies

Urban Society: "Orthogenetic" and "Heterogenetic" Cities

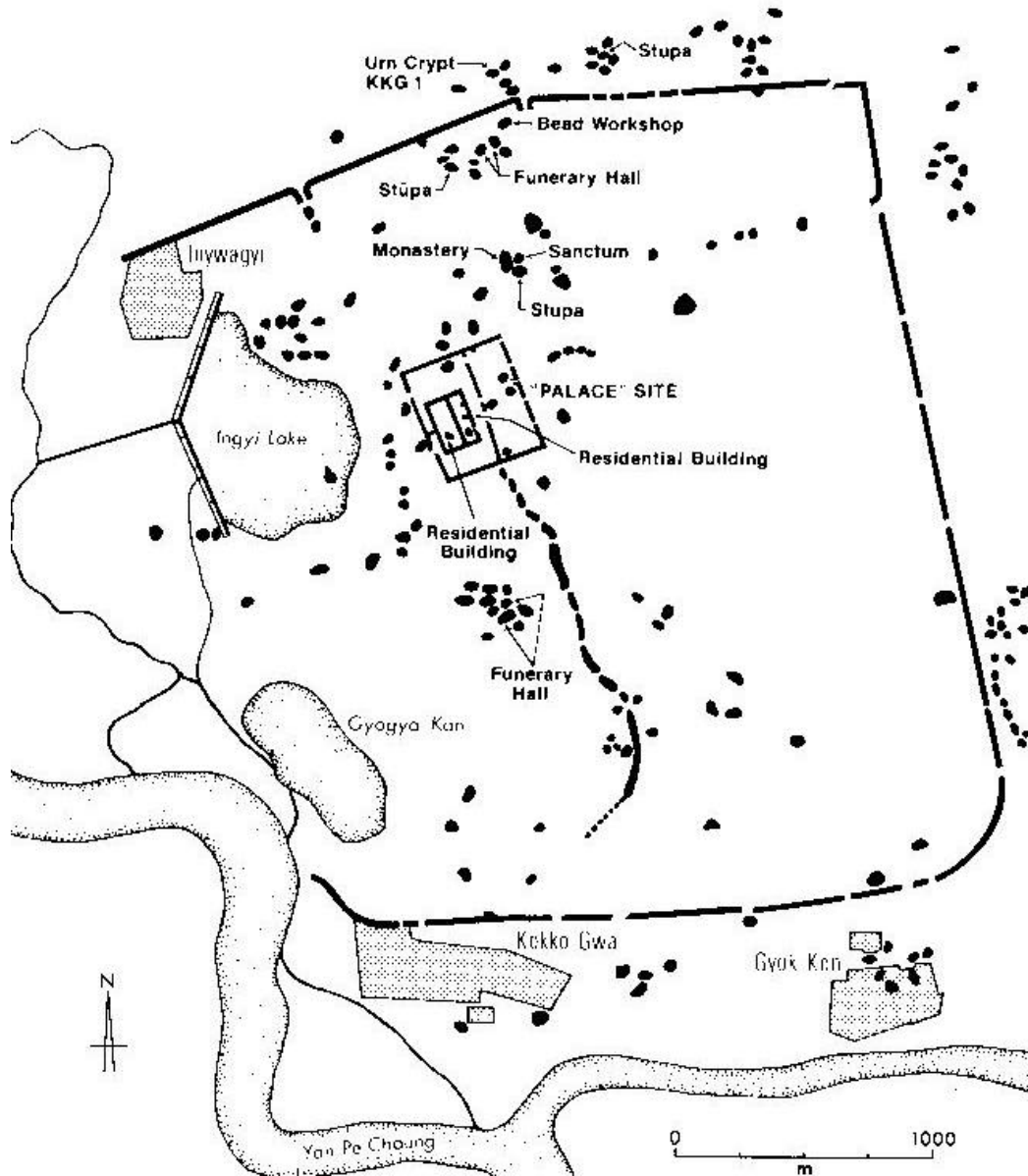
Reading: Michael D Coe, *Angkor and the Khmer Civilization* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), pp. 64-68. EUL DS 554.42 Coe; Paul Wheatley, *Nagara and Commandry. Origins of Southeast Asian Urban Traditions* (Chicago: UC, Dept. of Geography, Research Papers Nos. 207-208, 1983), chapters 3-4. EUL HT147.A785 Whe

There were many cities during pre-modern times in both mainland and insular Southeast Asia, which may be delineated in terms of two main categories.

“Orthogenetic Cities”: were located well inland and were correlated with the production of a surplus staple crop – “wet-paddy” rice – which could be commandeered by the authorities. Stability and ritual were the prevailing order, and there were impressive monuments of a religious nature. There was no money and little evidence of large markets and significant trade. The permanent population of the Orthogenetic City was composed of nobles, civil, religious and military bureaucrats, and their staff. In contrast to the Heterogenetic City overall population density was low. The emergence of cities of this type was closely related to the establishment of “wet-paddy” technology complex described in the last lecture. By the seventh-century AD, small Hindu temples were being built in lower Cambodia, notably at Ankor Borei, and also in Central Java, other, probably Buddhist temples have been excavated at Beikthano and Sri Ksetra in present-day southern Burma. These three areas became the principal centres of temple- and palace building and produced a number of major temple complexes- Borobudur and Prambanam (Central Java, eighth-tenth centuries); Ankor (Cambodia, ninth-thirteenth centuries) and Ananda Temple, Pagan (eleventh-thirteenth century). These will be subsequently discussed in relation to the peninsula and insular "empires" which gave birth to them.

Beikthano: During the years ca 250-550 AD, parts of the isthmus of the Malay Peninsula, together with the southern reaches of the Chao Phraya and the lower Irawadi vallies seem to have come under the at least nominal control of one of the rulers of Fu-nan. To the north and west of these lands were the territories of the Pyū, their cities – Beikthano and Hmawza or Sri Ksetra (maps 3.1-2, figure 3-1)- providing excellent examples of this early phase of “Orthogenetic City” development. Beikthano, which seems to date from ca 100-550/600 AD, assumed the form of a trapezoidal-shaped enceinte of some 3.5 square miles enclosed by a wall of baked brick abutting on the east on the Ingyi and Gyogyakan Lakes. The east wall extends some two miles and the north and south two furlongs less. This perimeter wall was pierced by twelve gateways, three on each side. Each gate was formed by projections from the main city wall curved inwards for some 80 feet to form a passage 20 feet wide. Within this passage was placed a double-leafed, wooden gate reinforced with iron and hung on iron sockets. Sentry posts were located within the arms. Situated somewhat to the NNW of the centre of the enceinte, astride the dividing wall, is a brick built enclosure surrounded by a hundred or so substantial brick structures. These

seem to have included buildings for religious, funerary, ceremonial and administrative purposes. In at least one instance the building seems to have served as a workshop. Amongst the structures excavated were apparently residential buildings both within and outwith the palace complex, a religious building containing an inner cella, interpreted as a sanctum and surrounded by a circumambulatory corridor. There were also a number of *stūpas*, funerary halls, a bead-making workshop and what appears to be the living quarters of a community of Buddhist monks (Figure 3.1). Stability and ritual were the prevailing order here, and there were impressive monuments of a religious nature but low population density.



Map 3-1 Beikthano

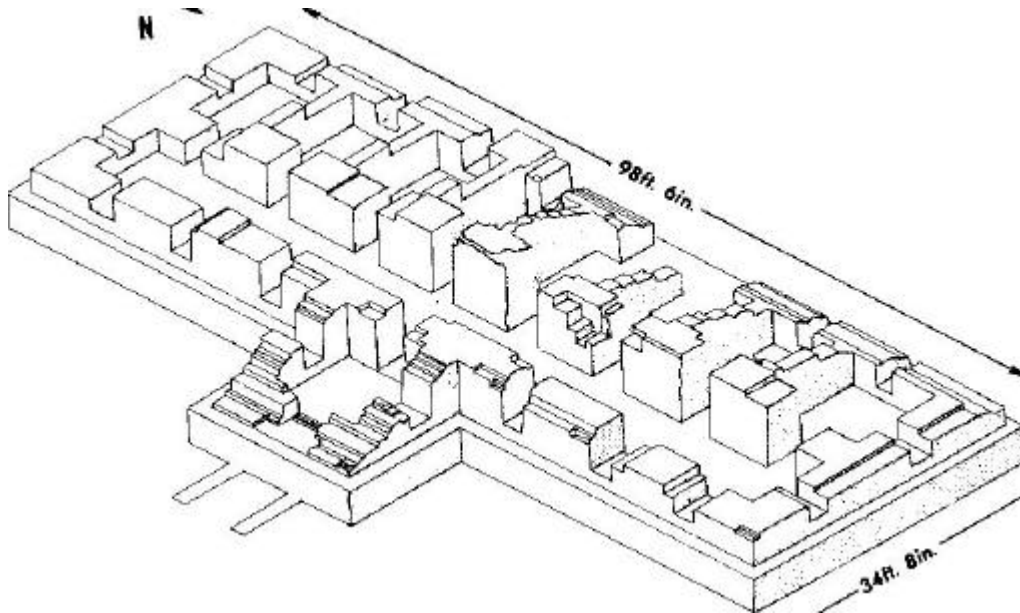
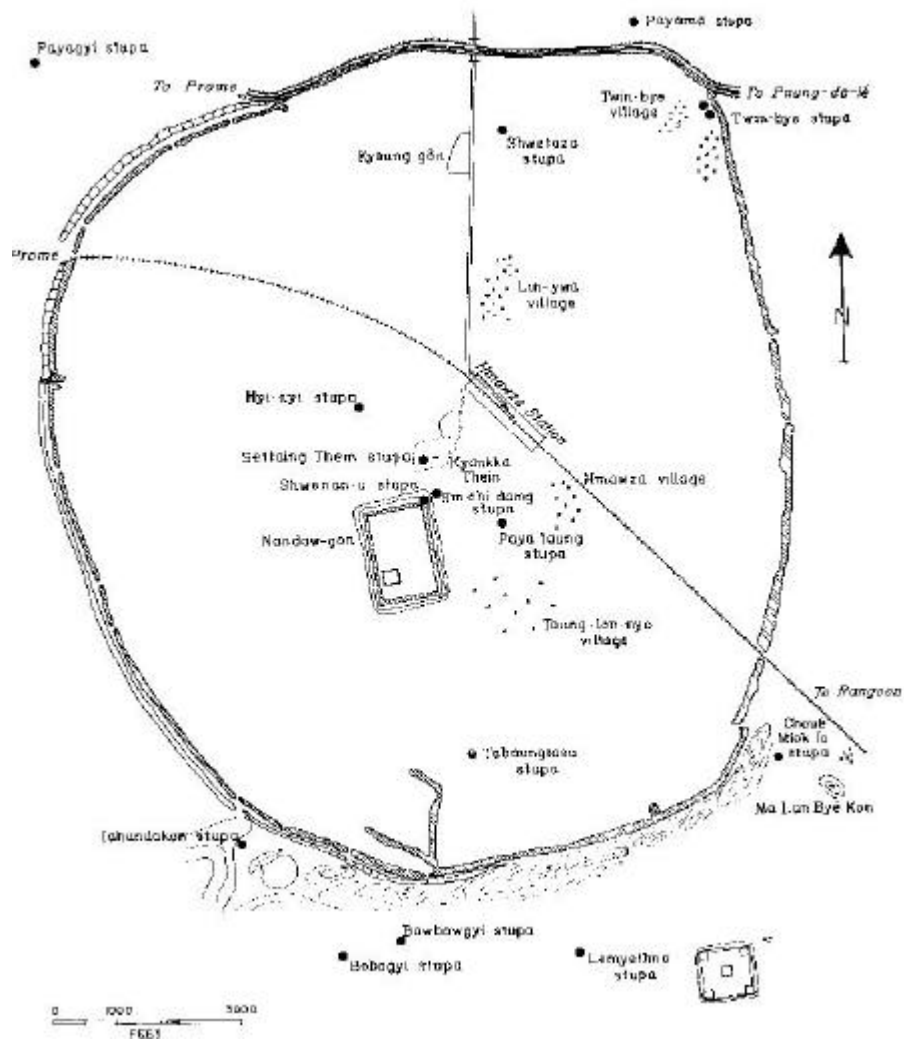


Figure 3-1. Buddhist Monastery

Hmawza or Sri Ksetra. A Pyū foundation of the fifth to eighth centuries it was possibly at that time capital city of that people. Occupying a tract of land in the fork of the river with one shallow branch of the Irrawady flowing across the north and east sides of the city into the Myitmaka. A massive brick wall demarcates a roughly circular perimeter of some 8.5 miles. The palace complex comprised a rectangular precinct set within a rectangular enceinte measuring 650 x 350 meters, situated some distance south of the centre of the city. Both inside and outside the walls are small moated enceintes. Also outside there has survived a number of *stūpas* and *śikhara*-crowned chapels.

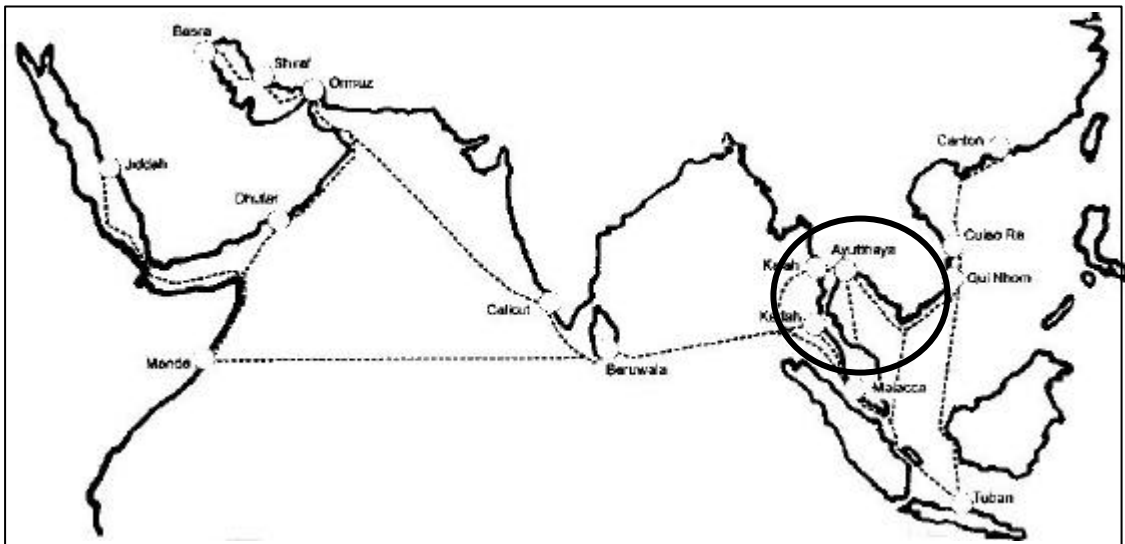
A seventh-century inscription relates that representatives of two Pyū dynasties ruled over the two cities, between which a treaty of friendship had been negotiated under the auspices of a religious teacher. The later Burmese annals, known as the *Tauangdingyi* indicates that the two cities – Hmawza and Beikthano- were ruled by a king, Duttenbaung and a princess Panhtwarr, the latter marrying the said king after her defeat at his hands (in ca 500 AD). The latter phases of Beikthano, when it was subject to the princess Panhtwarr, overlapped with the initial phases of Hmawza or Sri Ksetra whilst it was still ruled by the king, Duttenbaung before he assumed control over both territories.



Map 3-2 Hmawza or Sri Ksetra.

"Heterogenetic" Cities, the Seas, Commercial Activity and Monetary Systems Traders and Pirates "Heterogenetic" Cities are found along coastlines and at the borders of ecological zones rather than at their centres. They had few public monuments and were characterised by the presence of entrepreneurs and intensive trade, as well as by high population densities. Maritime trade systems, however, were subject to environmentally and climatically conditioned, periodic phases of spatial displacement. The infra-structural institutions (commercial cities and emporia), servicing the needs of the merchants engaged in these trade systems lacked, accordingly, that location stability, to which we have become accustomed in recent historic time. As the places, at which ships made landfall constantly shifted, new

commercial cities and emporia arose whilst other previously important centres decayed. As commerce declined in these latter trading centres and their merchants sought new sources of income, moreover, those, who elsewhere continued to trade, had to cope with another problem-piracy. Serving the needs of merchants who operated in a constantly shifting pattern of commercial activity, these cities thus lacked a temporal stability of form, a process exacerbated by changes in shipping technology.



Map 3.3

Arabian, Indian and China Sea Trading Systems, 250-550 AD

During the environmentally determined trade-cycle of the years, ca 250-ca 550 AD entirely inadequate records available imply that there was, at this time, a radical difference between the sailing technique practised in the “Arabian-Indian” and “China” Seas (map 3.3). In the “Arabian” Sea both Arab and “Roman” (actually Graeco-Egyptian) ships sailed, from at least the first century, from Cane in south-eastern Arabia to Bharukaccha in north-west India or from Dioscoridis Island (Socotra) to Muchiri, Nelkynda and other ports of Damirica (later known as Malabar). From Ceylon, Sopatma, Poduke, Kamara and Alosyngi (on the Coromandel Coast) large vessels sailed to Chryse (the Malay Peninsula) and Suvarnavdīpa (Sumatra-Borneo). Those aiming to make landfall in the Malacca Straits found the Coconut Islands (Nicobar Islands) a convenient re-victualling place. Thus across the “Arabian” and “Indian” Seas navigation pursued a course dictated by the half-yearly rhythms of the wind-seasons, but in the “China” Seas, where maritime technology was less advanced, coastal sailing seems to have been the rule. Setting sail from the Liu-chou Peninsula, the agents of the Imperial Court coasted the shores of Indo-China as far as the estuary of the Mekong. Here the route divided. North-westward a trail crossed overland to the “Indian” Sea, thereby shortening the journey to India by some four months, while the longer sea-route coasted the Malay Peninsula. The *Ch’ien Han Shu* makes it clear that Chinese trade with the countries of the South Seas at this time was restricted to luxury

goods-glass, precious stones and exotic curiosities of all kinds which appealed to members of the Court. In exchange the Chinese envoys bartered gold and silk.

In these circumstances a new “empire” located on the lower Mekong and known to the Chinese as Fu-nan was created. Parts of the isthmus of the Malay Peninsula, together with the southern reaches of the Chao Phraya and the lower Irrawady valleys seem, moreover, to have come under at least the nominal control of these rulers of Fu-nan. Their principal city of Oc-èo seems to have been of the "Heterogenetic" type.

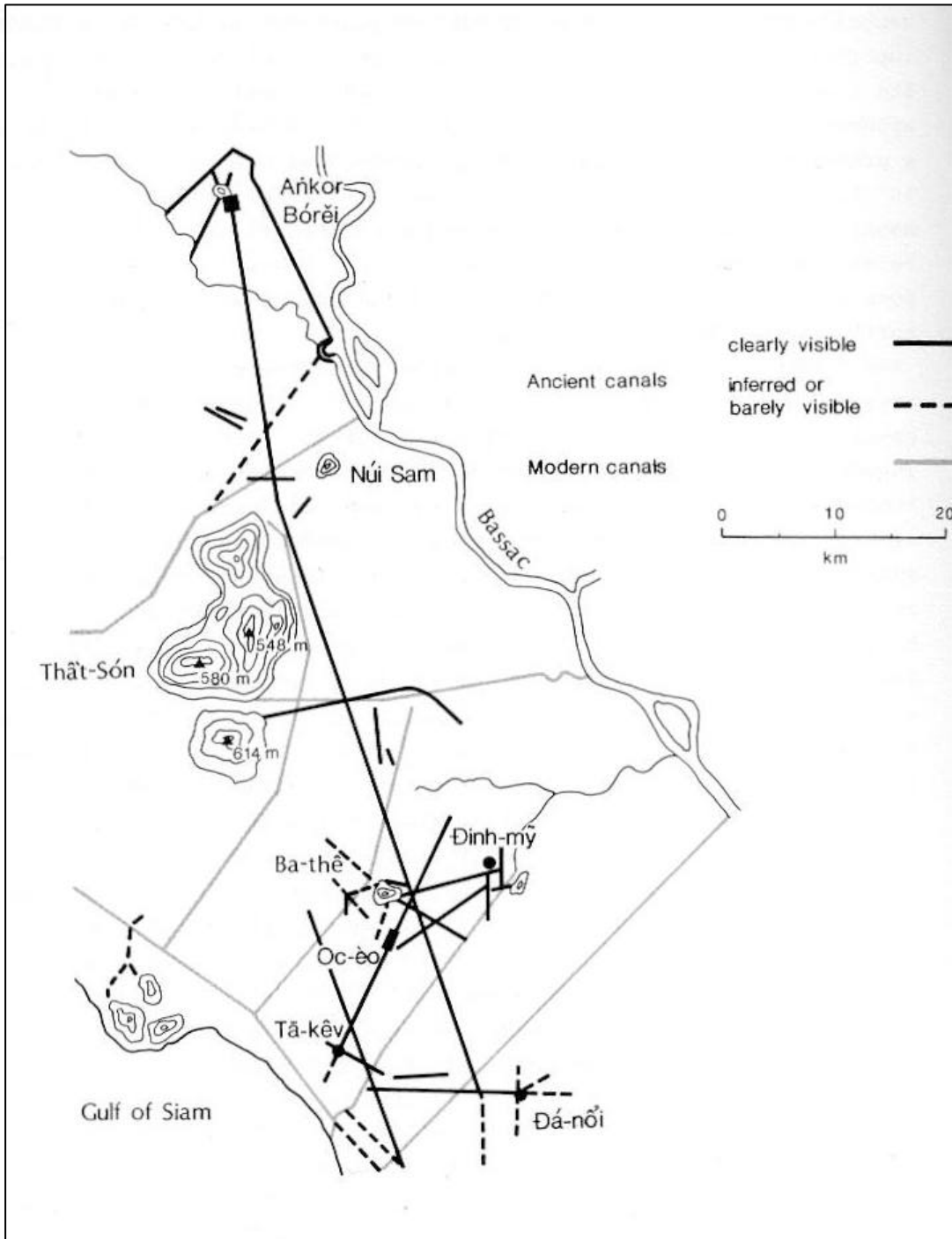
Oc-èo, lies about nine miles inland from the Gulf of Thailand and 18 miles from the Brassac arm of the Mekong. It is placed in the midst of a network of ancient canals that criss-cross the low, flat country of the Delta (map 3-4). One of these went from Oc-èo to what seems to have been the city’s seaport- Tã-kêv- on the Gulf of Thailand. Another runs about forty-two miles NNE to *Angkor Borei*, possibly the capital, which was said, in a Chinese report to be 500 li (200 km) from the sea. It was a rectangular, planned town bounded by multiple enceintes: the outer enceinte was some 0.9 miles x 1.9 miles and probably supported palisade walls. The entire town covered some 1¾ square miles and may have encompassed many thousands of people. A canal longitudinally bisected Oc-èo and there were four transverse canals, along which pile-supported houses were probably located. Living within the city were glass-workers, potters, gold beaters, jewellers, engravers in many media, and craftsmen in bronze, iron and tin, who have left abundant evidence of their activities in the form of their manufactures, tools and refuse. Traders from the West brought a variety of goods of which the following have survived: a gold piece of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, a coin of Marcus Aurelius, a rock-crystal seal with erotic scenes. There were also silver coins of Indian provenance marked with the conch and trident symbolic of the god Vishnu. Local craftsmen, provided not only locally manufactured pottery, both wheel-made and of paddle-and-anvil fabrication, but also manufactured seals and finger-rings, engraved in Sanskrit with the owners’ name or with a protective formula.

Reports of the Chinese emissaries Kang Dai and Zhu Ying who visited the country in ca. 250 AD, having been sent by the Emperor Wu to gather information on the route to India, allow us to build on this picture. They place the mythical origins of the state, which they named Fu-nan, in the first century AD and relate how the original founder- an Indian prince Kaundinya- gave authority to his son over seven settlements. A later member of the dynasty, Hun Panhuang, attacked and conquered chiefs on the periphery of his domain, shortly to be followed by further consolidation of the polity and its extension by the subjugation of ten chieftains, situated along the shores of the Gulf of Siam. Already by ca. 250 AD therefore Fu-nan had established its hegemony over polities situated along the trans-isthmus trade route. They describe the people as living in walled settlements and stressed the importance of agriculture, which Kang Dai describes in the following manner:

“The inhabitants of the region engage in farming. They sow in one year and reap in three”

a description of ratooning the rapidly growing “floating” variety of rice, which is native to the Delta, and which involves the planting of the perennial “floating” rice and allowing it to sprout at the internodes during successive years. There was a system of taxation, paid for in gold, silver, perfumes and pearls. The local population

was also aware of Indian scripts and the two Chinese themselves encountered a representative of the Indian Murunda king during their visit.



Map 3-4 *Oc-èò*