Naga in Classical Civilisation of Southeast Asia

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master Course in Southeast Asian Studies
Faculty of Asian Studies
Australian National University

Yuko Miyazaki
July, 2002
What is the faculty of wisdom?

Whatever is the wisdom that is comprehension, investigation, discernment, cleverness, skill, subtlety, clear understanding, thought, examination, breadth, sagacity, leading, insight, clear consciousness, which is as a goad, the wisdom that is wisdom as a faculty, as power, as sword, as terraced heights, as light, effulgence, splendour, as a jewel;

This is the faculty of wisdom.

-Dhammasangani, 16
Acknowledgements

I am highly grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Ian Proudfoot from the Centre for Asian Societies and Histories in the Faculty of Asian Studies for his supervision throughout the development and writing of this paper.

Also my sincere gratitude is given to Prof. Peter Bellwood from the School of Archaeology and Anthropology in the Faculty of Arts for his advises and comments for proto-history of Southeast Asia.

I also would like to thank Prof. Virginia Hooker, to whom I am indebted for her great support and understanding. Also, my appreciation is goes to Dr. Ann Khmer, who provided valuable information of Indonesia.

My great appreciation is to all my friends, especially Southeast Asian students, for their help, advises and great suggestions. Considerable debt is also owed to my Australian friends, who gave of their time to help to correct early draft of the sub-thesis and to help to translate some French texts.

Finally my deepest appreciation goes to my family, especially to the memory of my beloved grandmother, who gave me active encouragement as I began my studies at ANU.

Without the help of many people, a sub-thesis of this scope would not have been possible.

This sub-thesis is the result of my own work, and all sources have been duly acknowledged.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................................................... ii

List of Plates ................................................................................................................................................... v

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 6

2. Nagas in India ............................................................................................................................................ 11
   2.1 Concept of Naga in India ...................................................................................................................... 11
   2.2 The Origin of Naga Worship .............................................................................................................. 14
   2.3 Naga according to Hinduism .............................................................................................................. 19
   2.4 Naga Species ........................................................................................................................................ 22
   2.5 Naga Princess ....................................................................................................................................... 24
   2.6 Naga according to Theravada Buddhism ........................................................................................... 27
   2.7 Nagas in Ceylon ................................................................................................................................... 32

3. Nagas in Southeast Asia .............................................................................................................................. 34
   3.1 Concept of Naga in Southeast Asia ...................................................................................................... 34
   3.2 Rulers of Southeast Asia and Naga ..................................................................................................... 36
   3.3 Ancient Cosmology of Southeast Asia and Naga .............................................................................. 39
   3.4 Java ........................................................................................................................................................ 41
       3.4.1 Goddess of the Southern Ocean Nyai Lara Kidul ....................................................................... 42
       3.4.2 Rice Goddess Dewi Sri ............................................................................................................... 47
   3.5 Srivijaya and Sumatra .......................................................................................................................... 51
       3.5.1 Naga Princess ................................................................................................................................. 52
       3.5.2 Mortal Naga .................................................................................................................................. 54
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3</td>
<td>Skin Disease and Nagi</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Khmer</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1</td>
<td>Soma and the Naga Princess in Khmer</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Sukhothai</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.1</td>
<td>Phra Ruang: Abandoned Son of Nagi</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.1</td>
<td>Naga as a Protector of the Country</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.1</td>
<td>Three Dynasties and Naga Princesses</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.1</td>
<td>Lac Long Quan: Male Naga Dragon</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Dragons in East Asia</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Concept of Dragon in East Asia</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>The Nan-Chao Kingdom: China Frontier people</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note</td>
<td></td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plates</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Plates

Fig. 1 Indian Naga .............................................................................. 120
Fig. 2 Vishnu and Sesa ..................................................................... 120
Fig. 3 Buddha and Naga ................................................................. 121
Fig. 4 Garuda and Naga ................................................................. 121
Fig. 5 Naga at Angkor Wat ............................................................... 122
Fig. 6 Naga as Thai temple finial ...................................................... 122
Fig. 7 Dragon in Vietnamese Temple ................................................ 123
Fig. 8 Chinese Dragon .................................................................... 123

Cover: Naga motif within the hidden wall in the Terrace of the Leper King, Angkor Thom
http://www.griffinbyteworks.com/travel/images/Cambodia2000/image03e.jpg
1. **Introduction**

Gustav Jung once claimed that there were certain things associated with forms that were consistent across all cultures and all times in the world. He called them *archetypes*, or ancient universal models. This concept is no longer accepted without question; nevertheless, it is credible to assume that the terms “serpent” or “snakes” still would represent such archetype.

Across the world, “serpent” serves as an excellent depiction of symbolic patterns of the universe. The use of cosmic serpent is an extremely primeval method of portraying scientific relationships that describe the universe. The people of ancient Minoan in the Mediterranean, Indigenous Australian people, American natives, Aryan-Indians, Nordic people, East Asians, Mesopotamian, Egyptians and so on, all used portrayals of the “serpent” to express the knowledge of Good and Evil, or a macro-micro cosmic image and understanding of the universe.

This phenomenon raises challenging questions with regard to image of “serpent “in Southeast Asia:

(1) Are there any differences, for instance, between “serpent” in Southeast Asia and that in East Asia, and in India and Southeast Asia?

(2) Do we find any localised concepts of “serpent” in the specialised area?

These questions provide the framework for this dissertation.

In an article published in 1925, Jean Przyluski examined myths from India, China, and several states of Southeast Asia. In his argument, Przyluski concluded that Southeast Asian countries seem to share a common scheme: sovereign power is given
by a serpent woman, Naga princess or Nagi, from the sea-water. Also, Przyluski pointed out that the union of a Naga princess with a hero or king symbolised the foundation of a new dynasty in the Southeast Asia.

This sub-thesis will expand and verify the analysis done by Przyluski, and by this means I will attempt to establish the concept of “Southeast Asia” as a united region. In this dissertation, firstly I will discuss the concept of Naga, or serpent, in India. Secondly, Naga myths in the Southeast Asian regions will be thoroughly examined. Thirdly, I will mention dragon myths in East Asia. By highlighting the differences between Naga in Southeast Asia on the one hand, and Naga in India and dragon in East Asia on the other hand, the shape of ‘Southeast Asia’ as a united region will be brought into view.

In the first section, ‘Nagas in India’, the following subjects will be discussed: ‘The Origin of Naga Worship of India’, ‘Naga according to Hinduism’, ‘Naga species’, ‘Naga Princess’, ‘Naga according to Theravada Buddhism’ and ‘Naga in Ceylon’. It is known that ideas about Naga are originally from local serpent worship in India, and later merged into the new religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Naga princess stories that related the supernatural origin of royal lineages were found in several Indian imperial houses, and it is presumed that those have been spread into Southeast Asia. The Naga in Ceylon is particularly important in order to understand the Naga in Southeast Asia. The Nagas among the Thai, for instance, were well developed under the influences of Theravada Buddhism, which imported from Ceylon, not India.

The Naga stories and varieties of worship were delivered to the Southeast Asian regions with the Indianization process. In the second section ‘Nagas in Southeast
Asia’, before analysing Nagas in each Southeast Asian state, I will briefly mention about ‘Rulers of Southeast Asia and Naga’ and ‘Ancient Cosmology of Southeast Asia and Naga’. The rulers in Southeast Asia closely linked with Nagas to gain supreme power. Often they married a Nagi and founded new royal clans. They also occasionally established relationship with Nagas in order to bestow prosperity on the land and the people. It is as well believed that Nagas could provide the power to defend the realm against enemies for the king.

The Ancient cosmological system of Southeast Asia was a belief of dualism: Male and Female principles. However, this concept of dualism is found not only in the Southeast Asian societies, but also Ancient India or China. In Vedic Indian cosmology, it is said that Purusa, the absolute male energy and Prakti, the supreme female energy, produce the universe (Dimmitt and Buitenen 1978). The two principles became more personalised in the pre-Vedic Indian period, such as the God Siva and the Goddess Parvati. In Chinese Daoism, the Yin, the Mother Goddess, and the Yang, the Father God. These Male and Female principles are complementary aspects and interacted with each other. Belief in these dualistic principles is common across Asia in ancient times and became the fundamental notions of Hinduism, Taoism and Buddhism. For instance, in Hinduism, there is the Linga that represents the Father Heaven and the Yoni that symbolises the Mother Sea. In order to procreate and sustain the lives of the universe, those dual elements must be united.

For analyses of Nagas in Southeast Asian states, I will start by discussing the insular Southeast Asian region, namely Indonesia and Srivijaya, followed by an argument about Naga myths in the all states of mainland Southeast Asia. I will tentatively follow this order, since it is considered to best correspond with possible paths trails of the Indianization process in that region; the Hindu-Mahayana culture was firstly
developed in Indonesia, then this idea extended to the Srivijaya kingdom. At the same time, the Indonesian culture was brought to the Khmer. The Khmer culture was taken over by the Thais, and it expanded to the neighbouring states with Theravada Buddhism. Vietnam will the last Southeast Asian states to be discussed, since it was strongly affected by the Chinese influences.

Again, this order of the discussion shall be tentative: In fact, the process of dispersion of Nagas in Southeast Asia is difficult to state simply. In Southeast Asia, a variety of local serpent worship certainly existed in ancient times. It could have developed locally without the Indianized process. Local serpent worship in the distinct Southeast Asian states seems also to have been influenced by the cultures of adjacent states. This makes it hard to identify which would be the really local elements and which would be the foreign. These matters will be fully discussed in the conclusion.

In the section ‘Dragons in East Asia’, Chinese dragons will be analysed in order to clarify the distinction between the dragon in East Asia and Naga in Southeast Asia. This particular dragon, called Ru, originated from China in ancient times and is quite a prominent mythical figure in Chinese mythological narratives.

This Ru dragon strongly affected some parts of Southeast Asia, especially in the case of Vietnam. Vietnamese myths mentioned “dragon”, not Naga. Nevertheless, the characteristics of Vietnamese dragon are similar to that of Naga. In that sense, it could be feasible to suggest that Vietnam sits on the borderline between the East Asian culture and the Southeast Asian Culture. A detailed analysis will be discussed at the last section in ‘Nagas in Southeast Asia’.

In this dissertation, many Asian legendary narratives will be used to discuss about Nagas, since Nagas often appear in the ancient historical records or mythologies
dealing with the foundation of a state. Modern historians have been trying to reconstruct chronological facts using the historical accounts, as stone inscriptions or written records. Nonetheless, in many cases, those chronicles include many fictional stories with little real historical context. Especially, the annals in the classical period contain largely legendary materials, which are mostly chronologically disordered. In consequence, these materials are generally considered to be of secondary importance: however, they should not be overlooked.

We must note that the historians in classical times did not record an accurate history or what was actually happened. Rather, they aimed to establish a splendid background for the royal family in order to justify its claims to leadership. Indeed, the purpose of the writing of history in this period was to affirm the territory claimed by the dynasty and to foster the king’s power and authority over the people.

The myths and legends in the historical records helped to establish social harmony in the kingdom. These mythological narratives evoke and epitomise the spirits of people and have been the central components of the psyches of the local people.

All Southeast Asian states possess such ancient legends and stories, and these stories continue to influence the states in different ways right up to the present. Particularly, it is important to note that since Naga myths relate to the foundation of a state, they are also closely linked with the national identities to the people. Therefore, Naga-oriented mythologies must be carefully examined and analysed to reveal origin of the each Southeast Asian states.
2. **Nagas in India**

2.1 **Concept of Naga in India**

According to Jung, serpent is considered as the most 'important and widespread symbol of chthonic transcendence' (Jung 1990: 154). The cults of the serpent have existed in many ways since ancient times.

Serpent is purely numinous owing to its peculiar gliding motion, the practise of casting its skin, glaring eyes and its venom (MacCulloch 1955:399). Thus, the figure must have aroused the feeling of respect and fear. All the feeling produced many faiths and made serpent the subject of innumerable myths. In the various forms of the cult, there is often found a sense of beneficence given by the serpent.

Serpent usually is considered as an icon of the earth or the sea. As an animal dwelling into the earth, its chthonic character has been suggested. In this view, it is believed that the serpents hold wisdom, secret knowledge and magical power within its body. Serpent is also a guardian of hidden treasures or metals of the underworld. In addition, since some serpents live in the deep seas or lakes, they are thought give or withhold water, which control the life. Thus, the serpent could function as a symbol of fertility, birth, immortality and sometimes, death.

In India, the cult of the serpent is very significant. In no other parts of the world is it more widely developed in various forms. It could come from the fact is that India is the country inhibited by many of kinds of snakes, and the number of the species is no fewer than 450(Crooke 1955:412).
The serpent is called ‘Naga’ in the India. Naga means literally, ‘those who do not walk, who creep’ (Wilman-Grabowska 1932:137). The word Naga might come from the Sanskrit. It could also be a derivation from a Sanskrit phrase nagna, which means naked (Singaravelu 1970). Also it is seems to have been applied to certain tribes in India. The word nag is still the word for snake, especially the cobra, in most of the languages of India.

It is said that the Nagas are closely related to the earth. The close link is stressed in various mythological traditions of ancient India. The Adi-Parvan of the Mahabharata, which is particularly rich in stories connected with the Nagas, tells that Nagas are said to be the thousand offspring of the female Kadru who is a personification of the earth itself (Vogel 1972: 47, Zimmer 1983:52). Also, according to the Uttara-kanda of the Ramayana, the goddess of the earth appears seated on a throne, which is carried by the Nagas on their heads adorned with divine jewels. The earth goddess swallowed all guilt committed by Sita. The goddess and Sita then returned to the nether world with Nagas.

The Nagas are considered to be the offspring of the earth, and they are said to be the rightful owners and protectors of all the earthy treasures. Those treasures were concealed in their wombs (Vogel 1972:26); thus, it could be feasible that female Nagas attract kings due to these special charms.

The Nagas are, like other snakes, specially identified with the water elements. From the nether world, some of them shifted to abodes in the subterranean regions, such as the bottoms of the wells, ponds, rivers and seas. They become keepers of the life energy that is stored in the terrestrial waters. On other hand, Nagas are the embodiment of the life-giving waters issuing from the deep body of Mother Earth; she
is the mother of life. It is therefore inevitable that the Naga is often appeared as
female, in order to represent the primordial creative energy.
2.2 The Origin of Naga Worship

It is argued that the serpent cult in India could have existed from the third millennium BC (Stutley and Stutley 1977: 198), however the origins of the worships are still unclear. Fergusson asserted that Nagas were not originally serpents but serpent worshippers, who were indigenous people, called Turanian, who inhabited in Northern India (Fergusson 1971). Fergusson further observed that the serpent worship originally was not part of Aryan religion, and took it from the Turanian people (Fergusson 1971). Nevertheless, this hypothesis has been rejected. For instance, Vogel strongly opposed this theory, which he said was ‘strange and baseless’ (Vogel 1972:2). Vogel suggested that there were traces of Aryan culture in the Naga worship of India; the names of Naga kings in Indian saga were invariably Aryan.

Oldham offered the different theory that Nagas were originally people who claimed descent from the Sun and had the hooded serpent for a totem (Oldham: 1901). Those people were called ‘Naga’ and resided in Taxila, North India. Taksaka was one of their chiefs. According to the saga, when he returned from a raid into his country, King Janamejaya, who was great-grandson of Arjuna, held his serpent sacrifice. The victims of the occasion were the Naga prisoners and they were burned alive with Brahmanical rites. This theory of Oldham seemingly has met with very little support. As Vogel points out, due to the lack of historical record of King Janamejaya, it is inappropriate to suggest that these events are truly historical fact (Vogel 1972:4).

By contrast with these attempts to link Nagas to historical people, another view is that the Nagas have been unceasingly worshiped from ancient time because of their power over the elements of water. Nagas were indeed water spirits, and they thus
Nagas in India

control the forces of water. They were able to produce heavy rain over sea and earth. This theory stresses that in a monsoonal climate country, water had always been quite important from before the Aryan period. Similarly, it is notable that Chinese dragon seems to have been worshiped from primordial times owing to the same characteristics; dragon is able to bring rainwater.

It is also reported that in ancient India, deceased rulers were sometimes worshiped in the form of a snake (Sinha: 1979 10-11). Although there is no archaeological or historical record to prove this, there are many legends about kings who were changed into snakes in consequence of a curse and as a punishment of their evil deeds. One example is the story of King Nahusha, told in the Mahabharata. The king once insulted the seven Sages and was cursed by Agastya who was the most popular saint in India. As a result the king had to live as a snake for ten thousand years (Vogel 1972:5).

From the above discussion, it is evident that there is a great diversity of opinion regarding the characteristics of the Indian serpent worship. Undeniably, it is impossible to solve this problem in one-sided perspective. For instance, Nagas means often as 'demon-snakes' and simultaneously 'divine-snakes.' Barth once analysed this complicated character of Indian Naga worship (Barth 1963: 265-267). He said that the serpent religions in India form a complex whole and classified the possible origin of the Naga cult into three categories. First, the serpent worship could have been originally the direct adoration of the animal, the most formidable and mysterious of all enemies of men. Secondly, it was purely the specific worship of deities of waters, lakes and rivers that is symbolised the waving form of the serpent. Thirdly, it might originate from a conception which was linked closely with the storms and lighting, also raining.
It is quite feasible that these indigenous primordial beliefs about serpents, Nagas, extend back to Pre-Aryan India around 2600BC. From the archaeological excavations in Indus civilization, it is clear that the great cities had risen above an agricultural society and conducted maritime commerce with Mesopotamia. From the artefacts found in the major sites, it is plausible that the people worshiped deities, which were connected with fertility. Basically, two types of cults are involved here; one is phallic worship and the other is worship of the mother goddess (Ions 1983:12). Such iconographies, especially, female deities, are accompanied by animal ministrants. Serpent figures were often seen along those divines.

Today, it is presumed that another stream of serpent worship in India was born with the Aryan invasions from the Mesopotamia region. Those immigrants from Mesopotamia arrived on the subcontinent in 1500 BC, and the Aryans occupied the north part of India. Here, they abolished most of the beliefs of the indigenous people and established a new cosmology, expressed in RgVeda.

On the whole, the serpent was assumed to possess demonic aspects in Mesopotamia. According to the Babylonian concept of the universe, the God of water, Ea, had a serpent as his symbol and Ea himself was called ‘god of the river of the great snake’ (MacCulloch 1955:403). The meandering Euphrates could have made people visualize the shape of snake. It is suggested that the Euphrates could have been represented the uncontrollable power of nature and people were in fear of the great river since it often caused floods and destroyed their properties and wealth. The ultimate concept of the snake in Babylonia was exemplified as Tiamat, often identified with seven heads. She represented the primeval anarchic waters, yet was the evil serpent and darkness. This sea serpent had to be conquered by the virtuous god.
The Aryan people who immigrated to India similarly regarded Naga-snakes as evil spirits, while the cult of the serpent was still strong in that area. For example, Naga king Kaliya was a devil defeated by Krsna. Nevertheless, the serpent cult of the Naga was so strong that Aryan people could not eliminate it. They in the end accepted the Naga cult. One example can be found in Mathura. Mathura had flourished from the first to third centuries AD and it is probable that the city was a great centre of Naga worship (Sinha 1979:38). From archaeological excavations, the numerous Naga images and sculptures found in the Mathura district (Blurton 1992: 50-51) and a Sanskrit inscription recovered tells of a local serpent deity, who appeared to have his own shrine in this northern Indian city (Sinha 1979:38).

Yet, it seems undeniable that the status of Naga was reduced after the emergence of Hindu. Aryans put Naga as the king of ‘underworld’ (Nata 2000). Furthermore, the Garuda, presumably also an original deity in India and antagonist of the Naga, became a major holy being in Hinduism. The Garuda was considered as a heavenly creature, and thus it was appropriate if it devoured and killed Naga. This idea of Naga in the northern India reached to the insular Southeast Asia around the early centuries AD.

Meanwhile, indigenous people, such as Tamil, originally inhabiting north India, moved to the south of the Indian continent with the invasion of Aryans. While they continued holding a strong faith in Nagas, they founded distinctive dynasties like Chola, Pandya, or Pallava in the modern states of Tamil and Kerala. Those people also established long traditions of maritime commerce here. For instance, during the Chola period, from the ninth to the thirteenth century AD, an overseas trading network was activated from South India and Sri Lanka to Southeast Asia. It is on account of these contacts that Indian-script epigraphs are recorded from as far as the central
Vietnam coast during the early centuries AD (Blurton 1992: 222). The stories of Nagi of southern India reached to Southeast Asia by this maritime network.

Since another type of serpent cult had been imported from Mesopotamia to India, it is feasible that the local Naga worship and the Mesopotamia serpent beliefs were fused into the Hindu religion. Even though the Naga is a minor divinity in Hinduism, the snake-cult still quite vital element for Saivism, the cult of Siva. Siva was closely connected the supreme power of Naga since it is a symbol of life. Saivism later dominated Southeast Asia during the Indianization process, and in consequence the Naga became an important factor in the classical civilization in that particular region.
2.3 Naga according to Hinduism

In Hindu mythology, the category Naga comprises all kinds of serpentine beings. Under these categories, there are snakes, deities of the primal ocean, spirits of earth and of underworld, and also dragons. The Naga is generally expressed in four ways; the first form is the mystic theomorphic Naga (Bosch 1960: 133), which has an uneven number of heads, mostly five, seven or nine as found in Cambodia. It is said that those uneven number are considered as auspicious (Bonnefoy 1991:214-215). Secondly, the Naga occasionally is illustrated as an amphibious animal such as serpent or dragon. Third form is a human being as appeared in Java. Fourthly, it sometimes is portrayed as half-human and half-snake, which often is found in India (Fig.1).

According to Hindu cosmology, Nagas were sons of Kadru, the principal wife of the great saga Kasyapa (Sinha 1979). She gave birth to one thousand Nagas, who would become the progenitors of all serpent races. The names of her principal descendants are Sesa, Vasuki, Tasksaka, and others. Kadru’s sister named Vinata became the mother of Aruna and Garuda. Aruna was the charioteer of the Sun-God and Garuda was the vital enemy of Nagas. The Nagas were the guardians of the nether regions, Patala, where they kept Vinata prisoner. Some of them succeeded in obtaining immortality from licking up the few drops of amrita which fell to the ground when Garuda came to rescue his mother, Vinata. They became powerful rulers in Patala. As Sinha notes, it is plausible that the story of Vinata and Kadru might indicate a confrontation between two opposed principles: snakes that identified with earth and eagles that represented sky (Sinha 1979: 23).
The homeland of Nagas, known as the Naga-loka or Bhogavati, meaning ‘the city of coiling’ is supposed to be located in Patala, the lowest of the seven regions of the nether world (Vogel 1972: 30, 82-83). The Patala is not a place of darkness, but implies a dwelling of delight and marvellous charm. The term Bhogavati also means ‘place of pleasure’, since the Bhoga signifies not only ‘serpent coil’ but also ‘enjoyment or pleasure’ (Vogel 1972: 83; Wilman-Grabowska 1932: 137).

Hindu epic myths dramatize the two opposed attributes of Nagas: their destructive and beneficial characteristics. Nagas could destroy life by releasing too much rain, causing a flood, or too little rain, causing drought. The King cobra, prototype of the Naga is considered as the manifestation of Siva. It is the largest poisonous snake; its venom could kill a full-grown elephant. Considered as a manifestation of Siva, cobras can annihilate life or renew it. The cobra’s life-giving abilities are said to link with rain: it is said that the cobra presages rain. The first monsoon rains flush out the snakes and they emerge from their lairs, and cobras emerge from their eggs just before the rainy season.

Not only Siva, but also Vishnu is also closely related to Nagas. One of the manifestations of Vishnu, Narayana, lives in the same watery realm as the Naga. In thaw waters or the cosmic ocean, which conceals all phenomena in potential, the sleeping god rests on a serpent named Ananta or Sesa (Dimmitt and Buitenen 1978:30). Waters and Nagas here represent the power of the god and thus source of all creation. Another Hindu myth describes Vishnu releasing water from a Naga. At one time, Naga swallowed all the waters from the world. Everything on earth withered and died, while the satiated Naga lay dormant coiled on top of Mount Meru. To restore life to earth, Vishnu hurled his thunderbolt at the serpent. The water burst free and streamed all over the world (Jumsai 1988:21).
Another important example of a Naga epic is provided by the episode of Krsna, who is one of the incarnations of Vishnu, in Vishnu Purana (Dimmitt and Buitenen 1978:114-116). Krsna went to Vrindavana, nearby Mathura, where historically was a great centre of Vishnu-Krsna worship, and came upon the bank of river Yamuna. There was a deep place in the river where the Naga king Kaliya had taken up his abode. The river was polluted by his poison so that neither cows nor men were able to utilise these water. Krsna decided to punish the serpent. One day, he jumped into the middle of the pool and the enraged serpent caught him with his coil. Naga Kaliya tried to kill him but Krsna subdued the serpent with his supernatural power. Krsna ordered the Naga king and his family to leave the waters of Yamuna and returned to the ocean.

This story certainly is interpreted in a number of points of view. In terms of religious history in India, it might indicate that the local divine figure, which is symbolised as the Naga king Kaliya, was conquered and dislodged. An indigenous serpent-worship was superseded by the widespread, general cult of Krsna, or Vishnu the Supreme Being. The interesting point of the story is that Krsna did not destroy the Naga. And in fact, the divine prince succeeded to control the venomous power, which could have destroyed the new established civilization. Here, local Naga worship was subjugated by the powerful new religion Hindu, represented as Krsna. The Naga cult was eventually accepted by the Aryan people, but the role of Naga in Hinduism was demoted to a secondary role.
2.4 Naga Species

In Hinduism, as discussed above, though some Nagas are considered to evil, some of them are regarded as divine for they have acquired virtue through their connection with the Hindu gods.

Among the Nagas, Sesa or Ananta heads the list of all divine serpents. It is often regarded as the sovereign of this kind. In the Harivamsa where Brahma appoints kings to rule over different classes of creatures, Brahma designates ‘Vasuki as the King of Nagas, Taksaka as the king of snakes and Sesa as the king of all fanged beings’ (Vogel 1972:192).

Sesa is especially known as bearer of the earth. It represents the residue that remained after the earth, the upper and infernal regions, and all their beings had been shaped out of the cosmic waters of the abyss. Also, it is the constant companion of Vishnu. Sesa forms the raft on which the god lies when floating on the cosmic waters at the dawn of creation (Ions 1983:109). The theme of Vishnu resting Sesa Naga is quite a popular scene in ancient Hindu art (Fig. 2). Such icons are found in the many temples not only in India but also in Indonesia, or Cambodia. Furthermore, while divine Krsna is said to be as the incantation of Vishnu, Sesa is believed to be a manifestation of his elder brother, Rama or Balabhada. The Great Epic described the death of Balabhada thus: ‘a huge snake issued forth from his mouth, then left his body and sped towards the great ocean’ (Dimmitt and Buiten 1978:145; Vogel 1972:196-197).

After Sesa, Vasuki is usually figures second in the list of the principal Nagas. While Sesa is absorbed in the duty of bearing earth, it is Vasuki who truly reigns over
the serpent tribes. Vasuki is closely connected with Shiva, as Sesa is with Vishnu. The serpent king is frequently slung round Shiva’s neck. He is worn by Shiva as a girdle and helps him to kill demons. In the famous Hindu Myth, Vasuki was used as the rope at the churning of the milk ocean. The gods and demons pulled the Naga’s head and tail in opposite directions, churning the waters. The amrita or elixir of life emerged from the water and, the gods drank it to become immortal. Meanwhile, Vasuki vomited forth the poison, which would have fatally poisoned all living creatures. Shiva swallowed it to save them, but the venom was burned his gullet so severely that the mark remained forever visible on his throat (Wilman-Grabowska 1932: 121,135). Inspired by this myth are Khmer sculptures carved on the bas-relief of Angkor Wat. Vasuki became Besuki in Java, and the inhabitants of eastern Java must have worshipped the serpent king before the arrival of Islam (Sinha 1979:46).
2.5 Naga Princess

Female Naga, i.e., Nagi, symbolise the power of temptation and attractiveness. While Nagas were considered as fierce creatures, many mythological traditions in India tell the stories about the Naga-princesses conceived as having great beauty and charm. The allure of those Nagis is said to rouse the desires of great heroes among mortal men. Amorous and matrimonial alliance between a Naga princess and a legendary hero is quite popular motif in Indian literary works.

Acknowledgement of the female principle is an essential element for the proper functioning of the realm. Wessing (1997a) argued that the female spirit is the embodiment of wisdom. Thus, her union with the ruler means an achievement of complete humanity, since the king symbolises the substantial human body. Body without spirit means death, and spirit without body is incapable of existing in the world. In that sense, her union with the ruler is necessary to achieve complete humanity.

The female mythic figure is quite ambiguous and contractive. As Durga in Hindu philosophy, certain aspects of femininity express chaos and the source of danger (Wessing 1997a: 332). On the other hand, the female spirit symbolises fertility. Those female powers are embodied in Nagi, since it is the energy of soil and water and the actual fertilizing or creative energy. In Saivite thinking once noted that the force of king is hot and virile while the power of the female spirits is cool and revitalizing. Only she is able to subdue his power and simultaneously control him himself. For the king, by possessing the female spirits, he will become complete ruler.
The Naga princess, representing such female spirits, is invariably conceived as being of great beauty. For instance, in Ramayana, when Hanumant sees beautiful women, he describes them as ‘the Naga maidens with fair hips, and faces resembling the full moon’ and it is the highest praise for mortal women to equal the Naga princess in beauty (Vogel 1972:33). By their great charms, the Nagi is apt to attract a mortal man, the hero and the king.

Matrimonial alliances between the Naga princess and the king, the union between mortal man and immortal woman, is an especially popular theme in the early and the medieval Indian literature. The Great Epic relates, as an example, the marriage between a young prince and a Nagi, in the story of Arjuna, the Pandava hero, and Ulupi, the daughter of a Naga king. After the marriage, Arjuna becomes invincible in the water and all creatures of the water are in his power (Vogel 1972:74). In Buddhist sources, we also find a story dealing with such a conjugal union. In the introductory chapter of Bhuridatta-jataka, it is related that a widow of the Nagas married the exiled prince of Benares. A daughter was born from the marriage, and she later married the sovereign of the Naga kingdom (Vogel 1972: 154-163).

Several royal kingdoms of ancient India claimed Naga or Nagi as their progenitor. The dynasty of Kashmir was asserted to descend from the Naga Karkota. The rulers of the adjacent principality of Bhadarvah declared that they were descendants of serpent King Vasuki. Another example could be found in the ruling dynasty of Manipur, a state between Bengal and Burma (Fergusson 1971:64). It is said that the peculiar god of the royal family was a species of serpent called ‘Pa-Kung-La’, from which the kings claimed descent. Also Bastar the feudatory state on the south coast is ruled by the Naga dynasty. Naga descent is also assigned to the dynasty of the Pallavas who ruled on the Coromandel Coast from the fourth to the eighth century. According to
legend, the ancient ruler of the Cholas married a Nagi, female serpent, and their son became the progenitor of the Pallavas (Coomaraswamy 1965:101). This theme seems to be quite favoured in Tamil poems. One such Tamil poem describes the union between the Chola Ruler Killi and the daughter of the Naga king, named Pilivalai. Another Tamil poem recalls the legends concerning the union between a Chola ruler of Nagapattinam and a Naga princess: the poem implies that this offspring is considered to be an ancestor of the Pallava dynasty (Singaravelu 1970).

In addition, Coedes called the attention to the existence of two Pallava inscriptions. According to the first of these documents, which is a charter of the Skanda Sisya, a daughter of Naga king was assigned as a wife of king Asvatthama, the son of Droma, whom the Pallavas venerated as one of their ancestors. As to the second, which is a charter of Nandivarman III, it refers to a legendary Pallava king named Virakurca, who is said to have married a Naga princess and obtained from her the insignia of royalty (Coedes 1911:391). It is presumed that these stories of Nagi and Pallavas kings were later delivered to Southeast Asian region.
2.6 Naga according to Theravada Buddhism

Theravada Buddhism, which emphasises the original teaching of the Buddha and individual salvation, emerged in India during the fifth century BC. The religion later expanded to Ceylon, Sri Lanka, then spread to the mainland Southeast Asia: Thailand, Burma, or Cambodia. The textual tradition of the Theravada sect illustrates the interpretation of the world and its phenomena. Those Buddhist texts are often called as ‘The History of Three Worlds’ and a number of versions of the manuscripts were exported to Southeast Asia from India.

One of them titled ‘Three Worlds According to King Ruang’ was compiled in Thai by the (Thai) monarch of the Sukhothai dynasty, Phra Li Thai in the middle of the fourteenth century (Reynolds and Reynolds 1982). It is not an Indian manuscript but it is an orthodox Theravada Buddhist theory directly imported from the Indian continent, giving full details of the structure of the universe with the iconographic representations of standard Theravada Buddhism.

In the Theravada perspective, the cosmos is divided into the three spheres, namely the World of Desire, the World of Form and the World of Without Form (Bonnefoy 1991:155-156). Each of these Worlds is composed of ‘lands’. For instance, the World of Desire consists of eleven enumerated domains, including hells, the land of animals, the land of demons or the land of human beings. The World of Form is the heavenly land, where the Brahmans or the gods are enthroned. In the World of Without Form, ‘the domain of infinite place’ opens out.
Nagas in India

According to the text, Naga is found in the land of the animals in the World of Desire, which supports Mount Meru. In the realm, there are pleasant places in where large lakes filled with lotus, trees and flowers. Nagas are said to dwell this place and have silver or golden castles. When a Nagi who lives in the oceans is pregnant, she swims up a river as far as the native place of Nagas. Since the Garuda could not reach here, the Nagi is able to give birth to her child and raises him. When the child is grown up, the Nagi creates a castle for it and goes back to the ocean with the child (Reynolds and Reynolds 1982:90-91).

Additionally, based on the ‘Three Worlds According to King Ruang’, the characters of Naga are described as below (Reynolds and Reynolds 1982: 91-92):

There are two kinds of Naga; one kind is called the Naga born on dry ground, and the other kind is called the Naga born in the water. ... The Naga born in the water can transform themselves only in the water, and cannot transform themselves on the ground. In the place where Naga are born, die, sleep, associate with one another, and shed their skin-in these places and wherever they live, they cannot transform themselves and become other kinds of beings; but if they are going to other places, they can transform themselves to become other kinds of beings. ... If the Nagi want to transform themselves so that they become as pretty as female devata or celestial nymphs, they can do so. ... Sometimes they become the snakes called sai or krasa; sometimes they take the form of a cobra, or green pit viper, or other kinds of snake.

Basically, the Naga cult that survived from the indigenous belief in India plays significantly important role in Buddhism. Here, Nagas are essentially different from those depicted in Hinduism: they are generally represented as devout worshippers of the Buddha. Fergusson argued that Buddhism was little more than a revival of the coarser superstitions of the indigenous races, purified and refined by the application of
Aryan morality, and elevated by doctrines borrowed from the intellectual superiority of the Aryan race (Fergusson 1971:62). In fact, it is told that the Buddha himself belonged to the pure Aryan race (Sinha 1979:5). Assuming the hypothesis is accurate, the Buddha did not establish a new religion, but did set up certain dynamic changes in the existing cult. In that sense, it is not surprising that Buddhist proselytisers accepted the Naga cult, which existed much earlier than Buddhism.

It is probable that early Buddhist proselytisers gradually realised they could not ignore or deny the popular animist snake cult so that they decided to incorporate them. It is said that after the death of the Buddha, the Devas and the Nagas who served the Buddha obtained the relics of the Buddha. In Amaravati, the city of Pallavas along the Bengal Bay, stupas dedicated to Nagas are found (Zimmer 1983:61). The entrance is guarded by the multi-headed Nagas and sculptures of Nagas are used as ornaments of stupas. Also, Nagas positively teem in the abundant monuments to Buddhist belief. Those architecture styles were later conveyed to the Southeast Asia and became a very popular motif, especially in the mainland.

In Buddhism, one of the characteristics of the Naga is that he is described as the future Buddha. Buddhists transformed many Indian legends of Naga to create the Bhuridatta Jataka. The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha’s Former Life are written in Pali and teach the virtue of the Buddhist principles about moral conduct and ideals of forbearance and self-sacrifice. In this story, the Naga king Nagaraja Champeyya was identified with the future Buddha (Linossier 1932:89-90). Wishing to be reborn as a human being, the Naga king took ascetic vows, including never killing or harming any living creatures. While he was meditating, the Naga king was captured and physically and psychologically abused by a Brahman. Despite the torment, Champeyya did not retaliate. As a result, the Naga regained his freedom, then
abandoned serpent shape and reappeared in a human form. He became the King of Benares and later turned into the Buddha.

The other characteristic of Naga in Buddhism, which is more significant, is as a protector and a servant of the Buddha. The most noteworthy story of this kind would be the narratives of the Buddha and Naga Muchalinda (Zimmer 1953:67-68; Jermsawatdi 1979:124). When the Buddha was mediating for seven weeks in different places, he one day started to sit under the Muchalinda tree on the sixth week. It was the home of Naga called Muchalinda Nāgaraja. When an unseasonable rainstorm poured down, Muchalinda rose from its lair. He coiled his body into seven circles surrounding the Buddha and the tree to save it from the storm. Also, though the miraculous power of Naga, Muchalinda lifted the Buddha off the inundated ground and spread its seven hoods to protect the Buddha from weeklong torrent. Later, Muchalinda Nāgaraja disguised himself in human form and came to pay homage to the lord Buddha. At one time, Naga disguised himself as a human, so that he could become a Buddhist monk. When he was detected, he was told that only human beings could be ordained as monks.

The Muchalinda and the Buddha motif turned out to be the most prominent iconographic scene of the Buddhist Art in Southeast Asia, especially Thai Lopburi and Khmer art (Fig.3). As Zimmer notes, this is a special Buddha-type that stresses this supreme harmony between the saviour and who has overcome the bondage and of nature and the serpent of who represent this very bondage’ (Zimmer 1953:66). However, Indian artists curiously neglected the Buddha seated under the Naga, although there are many representations of Nagas in early Indian iconography and sculpture. It is feasible to suggest that the Indian artist did not attach importance to the association between Nagas and the Buddha, or to the genial principle of the Naga.
It seems that the ancient Indian people regarded the Naga as a ferocious creature. The Hindu gods Indra or Vishnu subjugated Nagas, but the Buddha did not conquer them. One of the Naga stories actually preserved in the early Buddhist scripture relates to the struggle between the Buddha and a savage Naga (Vogel 1972:93). The fight ensued throughout the whole night, and at last the serpent was caught in Buddha’s alms bowl. Nevertheless, this type of Naga is exceptional in Buddhism; with the development of Buddhism and adaptation of the serpent images and characteristics, the ferocious Nagas became strong allies of the Buddha. Undeniably, Buddhists must have modified those Hindu sagas in order to accept the primal world of nature peacefully without any conflict. Zimmer wrote, ‘according to the Buddhist view, all the genii of nature rejoice, together with the highest gods upon the appearance of incarnate redeemer’ (Zimmer 1953:66), and the Naga is no exception
2.7 Nagas in Ceylon

Besides Naga, there is another type of nature spirits called Yaksha. Sometimes they appear as an elephant. Yakshas were ‘by nature cruel of heart, and habitually violent’ (Dimmitt and Buitenen 1978: 332) but they were later loyal servants of Siva and the Buddha. Yakshas were chiefs of devoted and valiant warriors who protected these divinities. Nagas and Yakshas had been very popular beliefs in the pre-Aryan tradition in India, and while Nagas have been water spirits, Yakshas have represented spirits of the earth and guardian of treasures from the enemies.

According to the Buddhist scriptures of Ceylon, this land was inhabited by the serpent worshippers when it was conquered by India (Fergusson 1971:56). More interestingly, the indigenous people in Ceylon were called Yakshas and Nagas by the Indian people and thus, Ceylon was once known as the country of Yaksha and Nagas.

Ceylon is said have been conquered in the fifth century BC by the Indian settlers from the mainland, by a prince named Vijaya or Victory (Zimmer 1983:170). Buddhism entered into the island at the time of Asoka of the Maurya Dynasty, who was the great emperor of Northern India, who sent missionaries to the various regions during the third centuries BC. Ceylon thus became Buddhist, and a stronghold of the Theravada sect. The canonical teachings of Buddhism were recorded as texts in the Pali language, and transported to the island. Many Buddhist doctrines tell that the Buddha had subdued Yakshas and Nagas who later became his dedicated supporters. It is also noted that the image of Buddha sitting on the Muchalinda Naga was much observed in the Ceylon. It is probable that the concepts of Nagas and this particular Buddha iconography would have spread to Southeast Asia from the island.
In 993 AD, the Chola king again invaded the northern part of Ceylon. This occupation lasted about fifty years, and then Mahendra VI was put on the throne and he started to reconstruct Buddhism. During this occupation by the Cholas, many Ceylonese monks scattered; some would have gone to the Mon country, Burma, or South Siam (Chanchirayuwat 1976:37). Mahendra VI was succeeded by Vijayabahu I, and the Ceylonese Buddhism was revived and expanded under his reign (1070-1110). While Ceylonese sects were united in the middle of the twelfth centuries, again this island started to face internal struggles and invasions from the foreign powers, such as the Chola dynasties. This period continued until the beginning of the fifteenth century AD, and this is also the time when the Theravada Buddhism, especially Singhalese sect, spread over to the Southeast Asia.

It seems that while the mainland Southeast Asian kings were seeking spiritual dogmas that would enhance their political and physical power, the Ceylonese kings required the spiritual doctrine for renewal of their political and physical power. In this period, the Ceylonese kings sent many monks to Southeast Asian states, such as Burma or Thai in order to spread their teachings, and to retrieve the written documents destroyed by the wars (Coedes 1962:114-15; 140).
3. **Nagas in Southeast Asia**

3.1 **Concept of Naga in Southeast Asia**

When considering Naga worship in Southeast Asia, it seems to be unarguable that the beliefs in serpent spirits had existed in the Southeast Asia before the great religions arrived in the region. For instance, Mus discussed the possibility of indigenous serpent worship in the mainland (Mus 1975). Nonetheless, nowadays, those original cults of serpent in Southeast Asia are difficult to reconstruct except through a few remnant examples, like the Ngadju Dayaks.

The context of the cult in Southeast Asia is also not known yet, nevertheless, it could be plausible that the local people borrowed the idea of ‘Naga’ from the India and adapted it to their own culture. However, in the present state of research, it is still an unresolved debate when and how Indian Naga elements were merged into the snake-worship in Southeast Asia.

Regarding the Naga legends in Southeast Asia, it has been suggested that it might have been at first developed among ‘Austronesians’ or the Malayo-Polynesian people as an indigenous phenomenon (Przyluski 1925; Taylor, K.W. 1976). Meanwhile, it is also probable that similar mythical themes from the expanding Chinese and Indo-Aryan dynasties spread into the Southeast Asian states, such as Vietnam, Laos or the Khmer. Briggs, for instance, inferred that the Naga beliefs in Cambodia were not of Khmer origin, but came from South India (Briggs 1951:20-27).

Unlike India, people in Southeast Asia regarded Nagas as genial genii. Nagas in Southeast Asia were believed that they supported the realms. Nagas were strongly
connected to the political powers of Southeast Asia. The economic resources of the states also relied heavily on water supply, which only Naga would provide. And some states, like the Khmer or Laos, regarded Nagas as the protector of the kingdom itself (Jordaan 1997; Wessing 1997a). Additionally, as the rulers were actively involved in maritime trade to obtain new power resources, such religious ideas or exotic materials, they would have good reason to propitiate the Naga spirits, who controlled the sea.

The importance of the Naga is attested by the fact that in many Southeast Asian civilizations, the state and founding dynasties evolved from the serpent spirits. This motif takes a particular form: a local princess, who was a water spirit Nagi, married a powerful newcomer and found a royal dynasty. And often its sovereignty was transmitted by the Naga princess. It should be noted that although the legends of Southeast Asian countries are different from each other in detail, they share common elements. It is therefore plausible that the Naga, although it was shaped under foreign influences, represents a distinctive feature and relic of an older civilization in Southeast Asia.
3.2 Rulers of Southeast Asia and Naga

During the last centuries BCE, and the early centuries CE, a concentration of political power was made possible by increasing population in the more habitable and strategic regions of Southeast Asia. Growing centres of population came to exert political influence or military domination over surrounding territory. The successful ones gained valuable resources and built a central municipality. A powerful chieftain became a ruler or a king, was popularly characterized as ‘man of prowess’ (Wolters 1999). He could succeed in imposing his ascendancy over neighbouring centres of power and expanded his kingdom.

As rulers became increasingly powerful through control of larger populations, they legitimised the power of the king, by borrowing ideas associated with Indian Gods from Brahmans who visited the realms. One of these ideas is that the king is the centre of the World Cosmos.

As Heine-Geldern points out, the ancient Southeast Asian kingdom is an image or reflection of the World Cosmos, and the state should be a microcosmic image of the macrocosms (Heine-Geldern 1956). The centre of the state is perceived as Mt. Meru, the Cosmic Centre, and where Indra’s heaven is located. The centre could be a real or a symbolic mountain (Wales 1977; Jumsai 1988), which makes the intersection of the Father Sky and the Mother Earth. Moreover, the centre is also the core of vital force or the supreme energy of the universe.

The top of the Mt. Meru is occupied by the king. This characteristic of the ruler was indicated by the title of King of Mountain (Mabbett 1980). As a consequence, he is considered as residing at the centre of universe, represented as the embodiment of
power of the Supreme Beings, such as Siva, Vishnu or sometimes other types of sacred god. As a representation of or reflection of the Gods, the king should maintain the proper order of the Cosmos. The power of the king affects the circumstances of his realm. Thus, as the king of the universe, the ruler also has to maintain proper order of his earthly empire.

The appropriate ruler was the one who was able to gather the gods' divine energy and utilise it for the benefit of his realm. Since he occupied the very core of the universe, the great amount of energetic power was, logically, concentrated in his person. And then the ruler distributed the power from the centre to all directions in his realm. When the ruler was appropriate, and with proper access to cosmic energy used for the benefit of his kingdom, prosperity and fertility would ensure.

In order to gain cosmic power, rulers in Southeast Asia had to link with Nagas, aquatic spirits. In Southeast Asian states, the fertility and fruitfulness are in reality created through the provision of water: For agrarian people, the water is indispensable to conduct rice farming or grow other crops. For piscatorial people, the sea or river is the place of their economic activities. In these circumstances, it seems inevitable that the kings should establish relationship with Nagas in order to bestow the prosperity on the land and the people.

Furthermore, Nagas sometimes functioned as protectors of the kingdom itself. Even when kings succeeded in creating large agglomerations of power, these were frequently short-lived or unstable due to wars with similar polities, or internal conflicts. Since the aquatic spirits symbolised the lively energy of the king and his realm, thereby it is believed that Nagas also could provide the power to defend the
realm against such enemies for the king. In short, if Nagas were allied with the king, his kingdom would be prosperous; However, if not, it would deteriorate.

Also, in the Southeast Asia there are many royal clans, which claimed to be descendants from Naga princess and great kings. The marriage between rulers and Naga princess are seen in most of the foundations of Southeast Asian states. Certainly it indicates that the life energy of water be supplied to the realms of the king. By marrying the ruler of water/sea, the heavenly kings justify the right of the ruling both spheres: sea and earth.

It has been suggested that the narrative of kings and Naga princesses of the Pallavas in India has been conveyed to Cambodia to become the Kaundinya-Soma Story. From Cambodia, this idea could have spread across the Southeast Asian region. It might also have directly reached Southeast Asia from India through maritime trading or the expansion of Buddhism.

Indeed, the notion that the power of rulers stems from water- Naga is evident in the official histories and common beliefs in Southeast Asian states, and seems to be rooted in Southeast Asian traditions.
3.3 **Ancient Cosmology of Southeast Asia and Naga**

(As regards) the cosmological system of Malayo-Polynesian people or the Austronesians had a fundamental belief of dualism (Bonnefoy 1991:157-163; Bellwood 1997:153). This means that the universe is made up of two opposed and complementary principles. They are namely:

1. **Male Principles** – physical power, live, active, upper stream, right side, sky/mountain, sun, light

2. **Female Principles** – psychological power, death, inactive, lower stream, left side, sea/earth, water, darkness

There was an ancient myth among the Austronesians peoples that described a marital union between the sky and the seawater, and it was their view of the world creation. One example can be given through the case of the Ngadju Dayaks, who are the largest population group of southern Borneo. According to Wales, the Ngadju people still very largely reflect the Megalithic civilization modified to a considerable degree by Dong-Son culture (Wales 1977). The religious concepts of Ngadju on the whole are free from influences from the great religions, such as Buddhism, Hindu or Islam. Scharer (1963) argued that Hindu influences in Ngadju were confined to only the name of deities.

According to Ngadju belief, they live in the sacred land surrounded by the primeval waters, between **Upper World** and **Under World**. The **Father Sky** deity, known as **Hornbill** lives on the primeval mountain in the sky, while the **Mother Earth** deity, known as **Water Snake** lives at the deep junction of streams. The dual structure of the world, the **Father Sky** and the **Earth Mother**, is the essential cosmology of the Ngadju people. Their legends state that the world began with the unification between two
parties, then later a fight occurred and the Father Sky and the Mother Earth were again separated. It is from this disjunction that the new world order and the human beings arouse.

Eliade pointed out that the world of Ngadju people is enclosed in a circle formed by the ‘Water Snake’ biting its own tail. They thus live in the land wholly protected by the ‘Water Snake’. The Ngadju people clearly distinguish between their lands and the ‘other world’ (Eliade 1967:155-158; Scharer 1963). Therefore, it is plausible that the ‘Snake’ symbolises their local land and the identity of the people. This perception can be observed other Southeast Asian regions.
3.4 Java

The indigenous Naga deities also can be seen throughout the archipelago (Wales 1977, Eliade 1967, Jessup 1990). As discussed above, Ngadju people in southern Borneo, believe that the earthly world lies among the primeval seawaters, between the Upper world and the Underworld, and rests on the back of the Water Snake. In Kalimantan, there is a myth of origin that talks about a snake princess who emerged from a mass of form in seawater. The Batak people in Sumatra believe that they are descended from the daughter of a great serpent-king. One Sumatran legend depicts that Naga Padoha, the serpent ruler of the Underworld or the sea, creating land and mountains (Jessup 1990:68).

The worship of Naga had been spread in Java since ancient time. Yet, interestingly, the Naga most of time is appeared as human being. On the historical monument of Java, Borobudur, the Naga is invariably shown in human form, even in those scenes in which the legend clearly required the animal shaped creature (Vogel 1972:46). It is not clear yet whether the anthropomorphic Naga figure was delivered from India at the very early period, or whether the indigenous serpent spirit was in human form. It should be notable that in a later stage of Javanese art forms, when the Hindu influences finally made way for the truly Indonesian inspiration, the Naga in its animal form became more prominent. The most interesting examples could be seen in the Panataran temple, called as the Naga monument, in East Java. The temple was constructed around the middle of the fourteenth century AD. It is decorated with nine figures carrying four huge serpents, the heads of which protrude at the four corners of the temple (Bosch 1960:133; Vogel 1972:46).
For the kings and monarchs in Indonesia, ‘sea’ has been quite essential as the sea trading has been inevitable for economic/political expansion and development. Hence, boats are indispensable to enlarge the power of kings. It is the very interesting fact that most of the royal boats in Java have the carved figureheads of the Naga. It is suggested that the amphibious nature symbolises the duality of the king’s power over the foreign land and the sea (Jessup 1990: 61). It is feasible to consider that the king’s majesty is enhanced by the power of the water serpent vessel, while the boats go forward to the sea.

3.4.1 Goddess of the Southern Ocean Nyai Lara Kidul

In Indonesia, Nyai Lara Kidul or Roro Kidul is regarded as the local Goddess with serpent form. This is indeed one of the wider patterns of mythological figures, which spread over Southeast Asia. The appearance of the goddess is not apparent, but it is believed to be a snake-deity (Jordaan 1984:109; Wessing 1997b: 98). It seems that Javanese people certainly regard Nyai Lara Kidul as Naga (Jordaan 1997).

Nyai Lara Kidul has been known under several names. As Ricklefs stated, the names of the God of the Southern Ocean were quite various (Ricklefs 1974:200). In addition, she has very complex characteristics since Nyai Lara Kidul has been influenced by elements from a variety of sources, combining Hindu and Islamic associations with the indigenous snake cult in Southeast Asia. She is, according to Woodward statement, a mythological figure whose ‘position in the state cult and in popular religion in.... Java would require monograph-length study’ (Woodward 1989: 261).
According to certain sources, Lara Kidul in a former life was a beautiful princess in the West Javanese kingdom of Pajajaran (Ricklefs 1998:10). The reason for her transformation from a princess of the court into the Goddess of the Southern Ocean also varies. The most common explanation is that she once was a beautiful young woman but due to evil magic contracted a skin disease. She had to leave the court and was banished into the forests. She wandered until she came to the cliffs overlooking the Southern Ocean. After hearing voices of sacred spirits, she threw herself into the waves from the cliffs. The sea restored her life and beauty then made her queen of the Southern Ocean (Wessing: 1997a).

Lara Kidul is famous for her alliance with the Javanese court. Until quite recently, the sultans of Yogyakarta in Central Java went to the top of a tower that was located in the palace, and married Lara Kidul (Bosch 1960: 93). This parallels a legend of the Khmer kings who united with the Naga princess in Angkor. Even today several sacred rituals for the goddess are observed in Central Java. In the Sultan’s court, on the anniversary of the accession to the throne, the monarch attends a sacred dance, with nine female dancers and Lara Kidul, whom he alone sees (Ricklefs 1998:7). Once a year on the first the month of Suro, the ruler visits the South Sea to hold a ceremony called ‘Labuhan’. In this ceremony, he offers special gifts to her such as his own hair, various food and women’s cloths. These gifts are placed within a box, and placed in the water. When the box floats way from the shore and comes back as empty, it is believed that the gifts have been accepted by Lara Kidul (Terada 1994:143).

The cult of Nyai Lara Kidul is also strong among the common people, especially fishermen, who are required to go out on the dangerous Indian Ocean. The goddess undeniably also has been responsible for the welfare of those communities (Jordaan
Nagas in Southeast Asia

1987:124). In many places along the Javanese southern coast, the rural people held regular ceremonies to gain her protection and blessing (Bonnefoy 1991:157-163).

The goddess is yet also known for fierceness and for dangerousness (Woodward 1989). It is said that she demands the lives of several young men whom she is said to take to her undersea palace. When her prerogatives are ignored, she becomes quite vicious. There is a story about a young fisherman, named Kerta: When Kerta had eaten food offerings meant for the goddess of the South Sea, the queen became enraged then punished him. The boy had to live the rest of his life as a monitor lizard or a snake (Terada 1994).

Nyai Lara Kidul certainly possesses power to control life and death. It is believed that she never ages, since she is able to control even her own time. Even though Nyai means ‘elderly woman’ (Jordaan 1984:101), she is always described as a beautiful young woman. It is said that she has often shed her age like a snake sheds its skin, and has got married to the successive Javanese rulers as a young maiden. It is also reported that the Nyai Lara Kidul could be related with moon, since she might become young during waxing of the moon and grow older with the waning of the moon (Jordaan 1984:107).

According to the Babad Tanah Jawi stories, the powerful goddess was first associated with the founder of the Second Mataram dynasty, Senapati. It is said that this Sultan reconstructed the ancient kingdom of the First Mataram in the end of the sixteenth century. This dynasty continued until the middle of eighteenth century, and it was the most powerful and the longest of modern Javanese dynasties.

The Second Mataram dynasty was a Muslim state, but more importantly, it revived a rich mythological tradition of the Hindu-Buddhist ideas as well as indigenous
Javanese religious beliefs. Senapati’s father, Pamanahan, was said to have been a descendant of the last king of Majapahit (Ricklefs 1993: 40). And Senapati concentrated his spiritual power through meditation and asceticism like ancient Javanese rulers.

It is said that Senapati conquered the Mataram district and established his own court in the 1580s. However, since Senapati appeared only in later Mataram chronicles, some argued that the Mataram chronicles attempted to create a fabricated history and Senapati could have been just a mythical character (Ricklefs 1993: 40-41). However, it is true that by the time the first Dutch power reached Java at the end of the sixteenth century, Mataram had already established legitimacy by a certain powerful figure, which might be Senapati.

According to the chronicle accounts, Senapati received supernatural power from the goddess, and eventually become a ruler of all Java. One tale in the Babad runs as follows (Ricklefs 1998: 11; Knappert: 1977):

During the conquest, Senapati went to the shore of the Southern Ocean to learn God’s will and started meditation. His mediation was so powerful that the ocean boiled up and its tranquillity was disturbed. Nyai Lara Kidul came to the surface to ask him to moderate his meditation, which he did, and the storms subsided. Having read his thoughts, Lara Kidul told Senapati that his prayers had been granted and that he and his descendants would be rulers of Java. They went to the undersea palace where the king stayed for three days. She also instructed Senapati in statecraft and promised him that if there were ever a danger, she and her spiritual armies would defend the realm. Senapati went back to the shore then he met Sultan who brought Islam to Java. The Sultan admonished him to rely on Allah, nevertheless Senapati succeeded to the throne of Java.
Following Senapati’s reign, the alliance between Nyai Lara Kidul and Mataram was continued. It is said that Sultan Agung, descendant of Senapati and the greatest conqueror in Mataram, took the goddess as his bride and often stayed in the under water palace (Jordaan 1997:302). Also those Javanese rulers sometimes went to a cave near the southern coast to meditate so that they could meet the goddess. It is also well known that this mediation of the rulers was intended as consultation with Lara Kidul about important political matters of the state (Jordaan 1984:100).

Since the legend of Nyai Lara Kidul is found in Babad accounts, it might be perceived that the goddess appeared in Java after the arrival of Islam. However, the cult of Nyai Lara Kidul most likely existed before the days of Senapati and her original belief may be very ancient. Indeed, even though the origin of the veneration is not clear, Lara Kidul is certainly a Javanese indigenous deity. There are some indications of the existence of her cult in the Majapahit dynasty in the fourteenth century (Pigeaud 1962: 211; Ricklefs 1998:10). It is also pointed out that Lara Kidul originally is an ancient Austronesian mystical holy being, which represents a chthonic power (Pigeaud 1962: 319). Also it has been suggested that the indigenous serpent deity was probably connected to the Hindu Goddess, Durga (Jordaan 1984) or Laksmi (Knappert 1977) under the Indianization process, and later became the mystical cult of Nyai Lara Kidul under the Islamization.

Historically, it is reported that at the time of the foundation, the new Mataram polity was small state and politically unstable (Moedjanto 1986). It often challenged by the neighbour kingdoms such as Surabaya and also by the Dutch interferences. Hence, it is plausible to point out that the rulers of the kingdom elaborately created the legend of Lara Kidul in order to strengthen official legitimacy. They believed that union
with her would enhance the charismatic power of the king and bring prosperity to his realm.

This is close to God-King concepts of the Hindu-Javanese dynasty periods. Although she provides supernatural power, Nyai Lara Kidu is certainly not an orthodox Islamic figure, but based on mystical ideas. It is suggested that the kings of Mataram were merely supporters of Islam (Moedjanto 1986:136) and they might have only admired the numinous part of the new religion (Ricklefs 1998). As Islam in Java became localised and synthesised Hindu-Javanese concepts, it strengthened the mystic parts of the cult of the Nagi Lara Kidu. By marring the sea goddess, the king became the personification of all Supreme Beings, including the Hindu gods, and Allah.

3.4.2 Rice Goddess Dewi Sri

In ancient Southeast Asia, the economical resources were highly dependent on the crops of agricultural products. Thus the fertility of the realm was a critical premise for the Southeast Asian rulers. Rice became so important for the people that they believed that rice had a soul, and indeed in some Indonesian languages there are words for it the same as for the human soul, such as Tondi in Batak (Jessup 1990:59).

Various myths regarding the rice goddess Dewi Sri have been recorded in the literature (Rassers 1959), and in essence her legend details how this goddess in her manifestations is transformed into important crops, especially rice. Major versions of the Dewi Sri stories involve her brother Sedana. One story relates that they were children of the Ruler of Mendang Kamulan. The ruler of Mendang Kumuwug wanted to marry Dewi Sri, but she refused, and she and her brother, Sedana, ran away from
the palace together and refused to return. When they fell in love and had sexual intercourse, Gods became angry and they changed Sedana into a swallow, and Sri into a large snake. Sri then entered a field of ripening rice, became the goddess of rice (Wessing 1990; Rassers 1959).

Other versions of the legends also report Sri’s association with a large Naga. One of the rice origin stories tells that Dewi Sri ultimately originated from tears of Naga Antaboga. According to the story, the tears changed into two eggs, and Antaboga hatched out two eggs for Batara Guru, the Chief of Javanese Gods. From the eggs, Dewi Sri and Sedana appeared and Batara Guru took care of Dewi Sri. After she had grown up into a beautiful young woman, the Guru wanted to marry her. To prevent the Guru from marrying Dewi Sri and thus committing some form of incest, the other gods killed Dewi Sri. She was buried and from her body many types of vegetation were sprouted, included rice (Wessing 1990; Terada 1994).

Another variant of the origin of cultivation story also links Dewi Sri and Nagas. Here, she and Sedana were born as vomit from the mouth of Naga king. Both children were raised by Batara Guru. When Sedana was grown up, he intended to marry Dewi Sri. The furious Batara Guru placed a curse on Sedana, who immediately died. His corpse became all sort of marine and wild creatures. Meanwhile Dewi Sri too disobeyed Batara Guru’s order, and then she was also cursed and fell dead. She was buried in the earth, and rice and other cultivated plants appeared from her body (Koutsoukis 1974).

Significantly, like Nyai Lara Kidul, Dewi Sri became quite important in the early days of the Second Mataram dynasty. Based on these stories, a ritual performance for the goddess, Dewi Sri was started. This annual ceremony was performed in the king’s
Nagas in Southeast Asia

palace and, the most important thing is that, the king himself cooked the rice. This ceremony is called Garebeg, which is one of the religious cerebrations where Islamic devotions are infused with indigenous beliefs (Heringa 1997:365).  

It is very clear that there is a close association between the rice Goddess and Naga. It is suggested that she also may on occasion appear as a Naga as well. Both Naga and Dewi Sri are sources of wealth and prosperity, and Nagas were closely associated with water as is Sri (Jordaan 1987). At base, while Wales considered that Sri was to be identified with the rice goddess in Bengal (Wales 1961:111), this particular goddess of the agriculture or fertility is generally considered as a manifestation of Laksmi, who is another consort of Visnu (van Setten van der Meer 1979:102; Blurton 1992:151). Furthermore, her brother Sedana is believed to be a transformation of Visnu, of whom Naga is a favoured sacred creature.

The ruler, who occupied the centre of the state and the cosmos, was responsible for the prosperity and fruitfulness of the realm. The duty of the ruler was not only to impregnate his consorts but also to fecundate the soil in his realm. This could be imagined as a marriage between the ruler and the realms (De Josselin De Jong 1980), and an appropriate marriage is indicated by the prosperity, while an inappropriate one could cause negative results, such as epidemic diseases or destruction of the kingdom.

In order to enhance the energy within the realm, the king had to, as part as his coronation, circumambulate his capital or plough a furrow around it (Heine-Geldern 1956, Wessing 1990:247). Also one of the duties of a ruler was to inaugurate the agricultural season by ploughing the first few furrows (Stutley and Stutley 1977:278), thereby infusing the soil with his internal powerful energy and producing a good harvest.
It has been pointed out that there were certain conceptual relationship between Dewi Sri and Lara Kidul (Wessing 1990; Jordaan 1997). Both are fertility goddesses, who would bring the prosperity to the kingdom and both are connected with Naga. This correlation could be inferred from one Central Javanese legend, in which Tisnawati, who is the local goddess of the rice, introduces herself as ‘the sister of Lara Kidul’ (Jordaan 1984:112). It must also be more significant that the cult of the both goddesses became prominent during the Second Mataram dynasty, perhaps indicating the political instability of the new Muslim state.
3.5 Srivijaya and Sumatra

The historical record shows that a dynasty springing from ‘a king of the mountains’, ruled over the old Sumatran kingdom of Palembang or Srivijaya from at least the seventh to the fourteenth century (Winstedt 1926: 413). It is suggested that a king who controlled over Central Java, Sailendra, as early as 778 AD expanded its power to the Sumatra (Coedes 1968:88). It is presumed that it is this king who brought the Mahayana Buddhism to Srivijaya from Java.

The kingdom named Srivijaya developed through maritime commerce, which linked with Sumatra and China, India and the West. It is very remarkable that the historical record of Malaysia tells that the founder of the state was Alexander the Great. Moreover, the ruler of Muslim Minangkabau, which later took over Palembang after the collapse of the Srivijaya, was also designated to be one of descendants of Alexander.

The Malay Annals, or Sejarah Melayu was firstly compiled in the seventeenth century under the Malacca royal clan (Brown 1970). There are several versions, with some differences between these texts, yet, on the whole all versions tell that Alexander the Great or Raja Iskandar Shah was the mythical founder of the Malay royal family. The chronicles demonstrated that the founder and kings of Malacca are successors of a divinely established kingdom located in Palembang of Sumatra.

In the Sejarah Melayu, Nagas act in various and significant key roles. These diverse characteristics are summarised and discussed as below.
3.5.1 Naga Princess

The Malay tradition starts from the Raja Shulan of the Kalinga or Tamil Kingdom, who was a great conqueror and extended his power to the east. He was recorded to have captured the West coast of Malay Peninsula in the eleventh century (Coedes 1968:143). The ruler of the region, named Raja Chulin, who held mastery of the sea trade. Raja Chulin died during the battle with Raja Shulan. Raja Shulan married the daughter of Raja Chulin, Onang Kiu, and then returned to India. By Onang Kiu he had a daughter named Chendani Wasis who married the grandson of the Great Alexander. Chendani Wasis was bore three sons with her husband. One of them, Raja Chulan, was adopted by his grandparent Raja Shulan (Brown 1970:6-9), and became an important figure in the Malay history.

In the course of time Raja Shulan died and, according to the chronicle, was succeeded on the throne by his adopted son, Raja Chulan (Brown 1970:9): He is considered to be the direct founder of the Malay royalty. On all grounds he could be considered a fit ruler in the Malay Peninsula, since his grandmother came from the peninsula and also he was a descendant of Alexander. More noticeably, it is reported that he married a Naga princess from a kingdom in the depth of the sea, like other kings of ancient Southeast Asian states.

The Raffles 18 version of Sejarah Melayu emphasises the greatness of the power of Raja Chulan. It is said that he successfully expanded his kingdom further than in his grandfather’s era and the whole of India and neighbouring kingdoms were subject to him (Brown 1970:9). Only China refused to acknowledge his suzerainty. Raja Chulan decided to invade China with all his forces and armed vessels. It took many months, yet eventually their armies reached as far as Temasik, Singapore. However, Raja
Na gas in Southeast Asia

Chulan was deceived by the tricks of the Chinese, and discouraged this venture. In spite of the incident, Raja Chulan decided to descend into the sea to get some new experiences. He then met the king of the sea, Raja Aftabu’l-Ardl, who was presumably a Naga king. The king of the sea seated Raja Chulan upon the throne of sovereignty. He married with daughter of the sea king. After three years staying in the deep sea, he decided to return to the earth. He left precious treasures for his children and returned to the Tamil lands and then died at the place.

From his marriage with the daughter of sea king, Raja Chulan had three sons. The youngest son, named Nilaranam, later was given the title of Sri Tri Buana and stayed at Palembang in Sumatra and became the great ruler of that place. Also he was eventually considered the ancestor of the future sultans of Malaka. Thus Sri Tri Buana was to be the first of the Malay rulers, at first in Sumatra, then afterwards in Malaya.

Przyluski (1925) suggested that the story of Raja Chulan could have related to the Naga legends, which spread into Southeast Asia. It is quite possible that Raja Aftabu’l-Ardl is actually a Naga, although Sejarah Melayu does not clearly indicate so. Like other Southeast Asian and Tamil tradition, it is probable that Raja Chulan was able to gain the power of sovereignty by marriage to the daughter of the sea king.

The Sejarah Melayu version edited by Shellabear tells a different story about Raja Chulan and Raja Shuran (Shellabear 1967). According to this version, Raja Chulan was the king of the West coast of Malaya Peninsula, conceivably part of a Thai kingdom. Raja Chulan died in the battle with Raja Shuran. And Raja Shuran married the daughter of Raja Chulan.

Furthermore, it was Raja Shuran who went down into the sea and married a princess of a kingdom in the depths of the sea, and had three sons there. The youngest son,
Nagas in Southeast Asia

named. Nila Utama married the daughter of the Palembang chief. Later, he was given the title of Sang Sapurba and established a kingdom in Minangkabau.

3.5.2 Mortal Naga

This youngest son of Raja Shuran is the protagonist in the Sejarah Melayu according to Shellabear’s version. Sang Sapurba or Nila Utama did not stay in Sumatra. He travelled to Java, Borneo, Bentan, and the end he in sailed to Minangkabau where the chiefs waited for a king who would bring fortune. The locals told Sang Sapurba that they and their land were devastated by an immense snake, named Sakti Muna, and desired him to destroy it. Sang Sapurba agreed to their request and battled with the mythical snake using a miraculous sword. He slew the snake and became the king of Minangkabau (Shellabear 1967: 24-34).

There are various Malay stories told about the slayer of the snake, and interestingly all the slayers are descendants of Alexander Great. One of the interesting variations is in the legend of an ancient place named Pulo Perca located between Palembang and Jambi. According to this version, an itinerant king slew the great serpent and later became king of Palembang. Also one of his descendants was driven out by the Javanese Mataram kingdom and then he founded the Minangkabau dynasty (Winstedt 1926:415).

In the story of Minangkabau, the role of the snake Sakti Muna, evidently Naga, is totally different from other Naga legends of Southeast Asia. This Naga represents evil spirits and thus was to be destroyed. Assuming that the Naga was the symbol of indigenous community, it could be feasible to suggest that the Naga was the local
people themselves who rejected the power of aggressor, while they were conquered. Once the conqueror became new sovereign, those local people could have been represented as evil Naga. One hypothesis indicates that the slaying of Sakti Muna could have meant the conquest of Palembang by Java in the fourteenth century (Winstedt 1926:415).

The story of Sakti Muna is parallel to the Hindu notion, as the Naga Kaliya was defeated by Krsna. The idea of malicious Naga was indeed also seen in Indonesia, and was derived from Hindu and Mahayana Buddhism. Some sculptures of the Indonesian temples in the eleventh century depict the wicked Naga, which is overpowered by Garuda (Fig.4). By the conquest of Indonesian kingdom in the eighth century, this distinctive concept of Naga might have spread to Srivijaya with Buddhism.

3.5.3 Skin Disease and Nagi

In the Raffles 18 version of Sejarah Melayu, the youngest son, Sri Tri Buana is associated with another interesting legend. Sri Tri Buana established a new kingdom in Palembang with himself as the new king. Its chief minister was the chief of Palembang. The new king desired to marry. Nonetheless, every girl given to him in marriage appeared to contract chloasma, a certain kind of skin-disease, after he had slept with her, ‘whereupon he abandoned her’ (Brown 1970:15). Sri Tri Buana then asked the chief of Palembang to give him his daughter in marriage. The chief minister agreed, on the condition that he and the king first entered into a solemn covenant with each other. They did so, and the chief minister promised that his descendants would be subjects of the king’s descendants, if they were treated justly and well. ‘When the covenant had made and strict promises mutually given ‘(Brown 1970:16), the chief of
Nagas in Southeast Asia

Palembang gave his daughter in marriage to the king. Unlike other girls, she appeared not to be affected by the skin-disease the morning after the wedding. He and his bride then underwent the bathing ceremony and became the founder of the Palembang dynasty.

This story, as De Josselin De Jong suggested, could be considered as a demonstration of the king’s power (De Josselin De Jong 1980). First, this power of the king was not sacred; it was noxious and inappropriate. Sri Tri Buana is indeed held to be responsible for the sickness of his consorts. He and his power are the cause of the troubles. In spite of the fact that he makes them ill, he abandoned the brides who contracted chloasma. However, when Sri Tri Buana married to the daughter of the chief minister, the two parties finally reconcile. The king promises never to humiliate his subjects, and this promise purify the power of the king.

This type of legends is found in many places of Southeast Asian region, and more interestingly the Naga always involved in the story. For instance, Sri Tri Buana is undoubtedly a child of Naga daughter and the human king. And another example could be seen in a myth of the Cham, an Austronesian people who formed an independent nation called Champa in the end of the fourth century (Coedes 1968:42-45). They were later dispersed after the conquest by the Vietnamese, Dai Vet, in the fifteenth century. The myth describes the life of the deified ruler Po Klong Garai, known to the Cham people as the founder of Cham dynasty and also as the inventor of rice cultivation. It is said that his mother had been born out of sea-foam. She became pregnant after drinking holy water. Her son was born but suffered from leprosy. One day the boy met a Naga. And the Naga cured boy’s leprosy by licking and made him aware of future greatness (Jordaan and De Josselin De Jong 1985:267-268). Additionally, an analogous legend is also found in Khmer. It is said
that one king had contracted leprosy due to infection by the blood of a Naga. This king was later called the ‘Leper King’ and is linked in folk memory with the archaeological remains in Angkor Thom (Poree-Maspero 1964:677).

It will be recalled that Nyai Lara Kidul in Java was also said to be involved in certain type of skin-disease. According to some tales, in her previous life of Lara Kidul was a beautiful princess of Pajajaran, who contracted a skin-disease and then was callously treated by everyone. She for this reason committed suicide by throwing herself into the sea. Later the sea restored her beauty and made her queen (Jordaan 1984). And as revenge, she supported Senapati and made him the founder of the Second Mataram dynasty. Like Nyai Lara Kidul, in Insular Southeast Asian myths, skin diseases are often attributed to female deity, who is somehow connected with the fertility and prosperity (Jordaan and De Josselin De Jong 1985), and the deity appears to be associated with sea and Naga.

In addition, it seems that such disease symbolises the power of the ruler. In case of the story of Sri Tri Buana, the disease means the cruel power of the king that would make the people suffer. In case of the story of Nyai Lara Kidul, the disease of the princess was the fundamental cause of the establishment of the new empire. Her emotional power became magical and dominant and it was given to Senapati. In case of the Cham, the skin disease visually indicates the extraordinary potential of the boy as a future king. At all events, the water Nagas are responsible to energise the power of the rulers.
3.6 Khmer

Bernard Groslier essentially stressed the importance of the chthonic character of the Khmer religion. He argued that there were the fundamental cults of waters and the soils in Khmer society under the Indian influence, and the Naga as the aquatic divine was the central figure of the Khmer religion (Groslier 1957). As mentioned above, beliefs in water snakes are widespread in ancient Asia, but, the faith has been especially quite strong in Khmer. The Khmer empires were claimed as a land of the Naga and the God-King. In Khmer, the Naga is a symbol of the water in the realm. And it is the water Naga that brings economic and agricultural prosperity.

The water Naga is also the most omnipresent feature in Khmer architecture. It appeared on pediments and balustrades throughout the kingdom over many centuries. Especially, the Naga sculptures are principally located along the access bridges and around the reservoirs in the Angkor complex. Here, Naga also plays as a protector of the temple (Fig.5). Furthermore, as Mus indicates, those Nagas might symbolically play the role of the mediator between the world of men and the world of the gods (Mus 1937).

The Naga also protects the land and the king himself. The Khmer people held to one ancient serpent cult called ‘Krong Peali’. According to this belief, the serpent ‘Krong Peali’ supports the Earth and all the lands belong to the subterranean serpent (Mabbett and Chandler 1995:109-110). This local spirit was later influenced by Hindu and Buddhist thoughts, and was transformed into a Naga. The Naga-Krong Peali became the guardian of the realm of the Khmer kings.
3.6.1 Soma and the Naga Princess in Khmer

The water Naga played a prominent role in legends relating to the mythological origins of the kingdoms in the Cambodia. Historically, the first known polity in Cambodia region was called Funan, which located in the Mekong Delta and near the current Cambodian border, established around the first century CE. The kingdom flourished as a seaport between India and China, and many Indian traders brought new culture to the region. In the middle of sixth century, Funan was conquered by the Khmer people who had come down from the middle reaches of the Mekong River (Briggs 1951). It is said that Funan was generated from the marriage between a Brahman and a Naga princess. And this cultural heritage of Funan was passed on to the Khmer people. According to the Sanskrit tradition, the legend goes as follows (Srivastava 1994: 32; Coedes 1968:37):

One Brahman named Kaundinya, who originally came from South India, dreamt that a god gave him a divine bow and asked to him to take to sea in a trading vessel. In the morning he went to the temple of the god and found a bow. He embarked on a vessel and the god changed the course of the wind, so that he arrived to the coast, now called Funan. There he met the daughter of the king of Nagas, whose name was Nagi Soma. The king of Nagas was the sovereign of the country thanks to his supernatural force. His daughter wanted to pillage the ship and seize it, so Kaundinya, shot an arrow from his divine bow that pierced through the Kaundinya’s ship. She was frightened and Kaundinya took her for his wife. Here, the king of Nagas helped the Brahman with his power and Kaundinya was able to establish new dynasty.

In the legends, the name of the hero, ‘Kaundinya’ is mysterious and meaningful. ‘Kaundinya’ is indeed the name of the highly renowned Brahman clan in South India (Kulke 1986:155-156). The Chinese historical records in the third century AD, which
also mentioned the foundation of Funan, did not give the founder a name of which can be interrupted as ‘Kaundinya’ at all: he is called as Huen-chen and is impossible to be identified as an Indian. Furthermore, Huen-chen married an indigenous queen, named Lie-ye, who is a human being and is nowhere identified as Naga princess. (Mabbett and Chandler 1995:71) It is possible that the Chinese account might have genuinely reported some historical figures, like Huen-chen, while the Kaundinya-Soma story could be just fabricated.\(^7\)

This story of the Kaundinya-Soma could have developed in this manner. Since it is suggested that this type of the story originated from South India, under the Pallava dynasty, the legend would have reached Funan in the early centuries AD by the sea-trading route. Later, it could have gradually spread to the early Indianaized states in the mainland Southeast Asia, such as Zhenla or Champa. It is reported that the sovereigns of Zhenla officially adapted the Kaundinya-Soma story in the seventh century (Gaudes 1993:349). Also, similar version of the myth is found in the inscription from Cham territory, dated around the middle of the seventh century (Coedes 1968:37-38; Singaravelu 1970:13).

It could be generally accepted that the Kaundinya-Soma story of Zhenla was later adopted by the Khmer. However, the relationship between the Khmer and the Cham could not be ignored. One version of the legend tells that the daughter of the Naga king helped the Khmer prince to conquer the Chams and then he seized the throne of the Cham king (Mabbett and Chandler 1995:9). Another story claims that the first king of the Khmer was a Cham, whose ship ran aground at Kok Thlok (Mabbett and Chandler 1995:9). It could be plausible that the Khmer kingdom was indeed founded by conquest from the Chams, although there are neither convincing nor substantial evidences to support this hypothesis.
The oral tradition among the Khmer people tells quite a similar story to the above. In this case, the hero who later became first king of the Cambodia is named Phra Thong, not Kaundinya:

Phra Thong was exiled from the Indraprastha (Delhi) kingdom and arrived the island in the oceans called Kok Thlok or 'the land of the thlok tree', perhaps in the area of current Phnom Penh (Mabbett and Chandler 1995:9). Although all the land had been covered by water, the island Thlok slowly rose above the surface of the sea at this time. The Naga king or Phaya Nakh and his daughter Nang Nakh often went to the island from their underwater palace in order to sunbathe. Price Phra Thong met the princess and married her. The Naga king expanded his realm by drinking off the water, and established new kingdom. The area was named Kampuchea (Gaudes 1993; Briggs 1951:24).

It is said that this folklore originated after the thirteenth or fourteenth century, the period when the Khmer empire started to decline in the face of the new Thai forces. More interestingly, the hero’s name, ‘Thong’, is not a Khmer native name: it is a Pali name, thus with Buddhist character (Gaudes 1993:351). In addition, Coedes (1951) points out that it might be Thai since ‘thon’ means ‘gold’ in Thai. Therefore, it seems that while the Thai absorbed the Khmer culture, the Khmer people might have learned Theravada Buddhism under the strong Thai influences.

Both legends talk about the union between the man who ‘visited’ from the outer world and the princess who symbolised the realm. Such stories could be found everywhere in the world. In many cases, the ‘visitors’ usually act as culture heroes who bring new civilization and ethos to the marginal realms. For example, one of the versions of Kaundinya-Soma legend tells that the Brahman taught the princess how to wear cloth (Srivastava 1994:19), which signifies new and more sophisticated culture of India were brought to the uncivilized country.
Nagas in Southeast Asia

In these stories the Naga princess appears as the ruler of the land and thus represents the fertility of the realm. Also the marriage clearly indicates that the local ruler began a cultural dialogue with India. Moreover, it is important note that the Naga king, ruler of the land, established the kingdom by drinking up the water, and the Indian aristocrat settled on the indigenous land. That suggests that the Indian aristocrat bowed down before the local ruler and stayed within his society. It is plausible that the stories literally express the localization process of the Indian cultures.

As stated, according to the Sanskrit version, the daughter of the king of Nagas is named ‘Soma’. It could be just a person’s name (Gaudes 1993:350), but the name does have certain meaning. In Hindu Mythology, ‘Soma’ is a particular plant name, which produce intoxicating water (Stutley and Stutley 1977: 282). The Soma juice brings ambrosia, or sacred immortal energy, to the heavenly God. Also ‘Soma’ could mean moon in the Hinduism (Stutley and Stutley 1977: 284). The moon is thought to be the divine storehouse of Soma water and it scatters the juices as rain and the land is fertilised (Bonnefoy 1991: 151). As a consequence, in the Khmer beliefs, Soma could denote ‘the everlasting life energy which is given to the king and land’.

It is conceivable that the Khmer court was truly in awe of the force of water, since it governed their livelihood and country. Indeed, for the Khmer people, water was a critical element for survival. As in other civilizations, prosperous agriculture was key to development of the Khmer people. However, unlike Insular Southeast Asia, the Khmer were not surrounded by the sea, and thus it was essential to efficiently utilise water obtained from lakes or rivers. Nonetheless, due to the geographical reasons, water supply was irregular and therefore agricultural production had been unsatisfactory even though the soil fertility was quite rich.
The Khmer kingdom was established close by Tonle Sap, a lake feeding into the Mekong River. The lake was the source of drinking water and cultivation in the realm. In order to ensure an annual harvest, the Khmer authorities introduced highly developed hydraulic technology from the beginning of the ninth century, just after their independence from Java (Dumarçay 1997). Many canals, dams, reservoirs and dikes were constructed to connect with the lake for irrigation and transportation purposes. Even the Angkor complexes were surrounded by artificial lakes.

It seems that water was regarded as sacred in the Khmer country. As in Indian legend, water was originally derived to the Khmer land from the serpent at the time of the beginning of the world (Jumsai 1988:21). The ruler, the King of the Mountain, symbolically sat on top of Mount Meru and had to see that the water of life flowed down through the canals or dikes so as to preserve the well-being of his subjects. Nevertheless, in order to maintain the water flow, he had to unite with the water Naga continuously. Otherwise, the realm would have faced drought and this would have eventually led to collapse of the kingdom.

Additionally, it was believed that the power of the water snake spirits also strongly affected the welfare of the kingdom and the life of the ruler itself. According to Chinese sources in the thirteenth century, the kings of the Khmer dynasty went high up to into the tower of the royal temple, the Phimeanakas, in the Angkor Thom complex every night, and stayed with the Naga princess, who had a nine heads and was the master of the land of the whole kingdom. It was an indispensable duty for the king to sleep and unite with her; if she failed to appear, it was considered as a sign of the death of the king; if the king did not stay a night with her, the Khmer realm would be face imminent danger (Vogel 1972:37; Gaudes 1993:334). In fact, the Khmer realm
often suffered from internal and external conflicts. It seems that only the king was able to control such situation, with the unification with the Naga.

From this foundation, the power of Khmer kingdom depended greatly upon the ability of its kings to unite with Naga spirits: The Khmer empire began, and ended, with the relationship between the ruler and the Nagas.

The Khmer flourished in the twelfth century, yet, after the period the empire declined gradually. The new Thai polity Sukhothai gained power later established independence from Angkor in the thirteenth century. After a long period of warfare, the Khmer lost its power and the Thais, who were Buddhists, took over the legacy of Khmer culture including Naga cult (Coedes 1966; Jumsai 1988). In other words, the power of Naga was taken away by the Thais, so that the Khmer decline: In the fourteenth century, the Khmer people evacuated the capital city. The glorious Angkor Wat was for this reason discarded and the highly developed irrigation system was destroyed. This was indeed the end of the magnificent Khmer kingdom.
3.7 Sukhothai

Thai people are spread out over a large part of Southeast Asia. The largest portions reside in now Thailand. People in Laos, the Shan states in Burma, Assam, south-eastern China and north-eastern Vietnam also speak Thai languages, and are regarded as descendants of original Thai people. We may assume that those people had a common religion from ancient times.

It is said that the Indian merchants began trading with the Mon polities in Thailand by the sea route from the early Christian era. Chanchirayuwat argued that Buddhism also had been introduced to this area by the sixth century AD (Chanchirayuwat 1976:41). In this period, the Mons established Dvaravati kingdom in central Thailand. The Mon Dvaravati adhered to Theravada Buddhism. However, the Mon kingdoms came under the political and cultural influence of Indianized Srivijaya between the ninth and tenth century AD. And in the eleventh century, Dvaravati was annexed by the Khmer empire to the east. It seems that the Buddhist Mon did not produce any written documents (Guillon 1999), but they left a brilliant culture legacy by producing many statues and sculptures. They also launched a new perspective of Nagas: the seated Buddha protected by the Naga king Muchalinda.

The Mon established another kingdom, Lamphun, in Northern Thailand. Here, Mon art continued to flourish until the late thirteenth century. There is no surviving written chronicle for the Mon states in Thailand. However, according to the Annals of Siam, compiled at the end of the nineteenth century, Lamphun was founded by Princess Camadevi (Guillon 1999:100-102). After she was enthroned at Lamphun, she gave birth to male twins. The theme of twin brothers is also found in Burma.
From the eleventh to the thirteenth century, the branch of the Thai people called Siam settled in the northeast valleys. They established a principal centre later called Sukhothai that became the first independent state in Thai history (Coedes 1962:139). With the expansion of Khmer power, Sukhothai became part of the Angkor Empire from the twelfth to the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Khmer culture strongly influenced local Thai art, which is now called Lopburi art style. Lopburi artists used the Mon idea of a Naga-protected Buddha, but executed the sculpture with Khmer style.

The Thai Sukhothai kingdom ultimately gained freedom from the Khmer in the first half of the thirteenth century, after the death of Indravarman II in 1243 (Stratton and Scott 1981: 3). Although the Thais were apparently linked racially and linguistically with Southern China, it was the Indian-Buddhist ideas assimilated into the Mon and Khmer traditions that formed the basis of Sukhothai culture.

Presumably, Sukhothai was converted to the Theravada Buddhism by their neighbours, the Mons, in the twelfth century. Consequently, the kingdom produced a new culture that was a mix of original Thai ideas and Buddhist Legends, under the influence of Mon cultural concepts. One of such legends portrays the Naga king Nandopanda. He was originally a deadly serpent who threatened to bar the Buddha’s way up the Mount Meru. One of the disciples of the Buddha overcame the evil Naga. After the reconciliation, Nandopanda turned into a committed supporter of the Buddha (Taylor, Y.T. 1994:63). In Thai, the Naga was given key positions on Buddhist temples since he had faithfully served the Buddha. Nagas appear on not only pediments or balustrades, but also on finials of the temple (Fig.6).
Also the Thais took over elements of Khmer culture after overwhelming the Angkor Empire. In particular, the Thai kingdom adopted the Brahmanical concepts, which were parts of the Khmer tradition. Indeed, the notion of Naga among the Thais is originally one of the legacies of Khmer cultures. And the first king of Sukhothai legitimised his claim to the throne by saying he was descended from a Thai chieftain and a female Naga (Taylor, Y.T. 1994: 59).

3.7.1 Phra Ruang: Abandoned Son of Nagi

The chronicles of Sukhothai were presumably written in the middle of fourteenth century, and according to those, the legendary founder of the dynasty was named Sri Indraditya or ‘Glorious Sun King’ (Stratton and Scott 1981: 4). He was said to hold title of ‘Phra Ruang’ (Gosling 1991:20).

In the reality, between the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, the Thai people continuously challenged the powerful Khmer empire, which extended its political and cultural domination to Laos, Champa and Siam. They finally emerged victorious in the middle of the thirteen century. The victor, after his investiture, became the first king of the Sukhothai and founded the dynasty that was to rule for almost for 200 years. The new ruler, Sri Indraditya, or ‘Phra Ruang’ eventually defeated the Khmer empire.

This legendary figure is very popular. ‘Phra Ruang’ is still honoured as a national hero for people in Thailand in our day. Interestingly, the story of Phra Ruang appeared in the dynastic chronicles of Ayutthaya (Hagesteijn 1989:39) and in Lopburi and Chiengmai (Chanchirayuwat 1976:1). It is also claimed that the legend had already
been recorded in the seventh century. According to this account, Phra Ruang started the Siamese subject, which dated on 638AD.

On the whole, the legend of Phra Ruang can be surmised as follows (Hagesteijn 1989:39, Yamamoto 1941):

A king of the kingdom in northwestern Thailand became involved with the daughter of the Naga king, who took the form of a woman. The princess conceived the King’s child, but she could not stay in the world of human beings anymore. The king gave her a ring and a woollen cloth and then left her. She laid an egg in a sugar cane field and returned below earth. After some time, the egg was seized by the local people, and from the egg, a boy was born. He was named Phra Ruang. The boy was immortal and possessed miraculous power. He was so powerful that he could make barren trees flower by wishing (Gosling 1991: 3). The king recognised the child as his son thanks to the ring and the cloth, and took the boy into the palace. One day, Phra Ruang asked his father whether the kingdom was still sending tribute to the Khmer empire. When his father answered affirmatively, Phra Ruang ordered that henceforth no more water be delivered. Upon receiving word of this rebellion, a Khmer expedition was deployed to execute Phra Ruang. Eventually, Phra Ruang defeated the Crown Prince of Angkor in battle with the power given by Nagas, and the local kingdom declared independence, with the name Sukhothai.

Phra Ruang should be only identified with Sri Indraditya, however, alternatively, the name of Phra Ruang could also refer to another of the Sukhothai kings: Ram Kamhaeng, Phya Loe Thai or Phya Maha Dharmaraja Li Thai. Phya Loe Thai was known as a strong devotee and a promoter of Singhalese Buddhism, and Phya Maha Dharmaraja Li Thai was a very famous Buddhist scholar and also an author of Three Worlds. According to King Ruang (Chanchirayuwat 1976:1, Reynolds and Reynolds 1982).
Nowadays ‘Phra Ruang’ is generally used as an appellation for the Great Ram Kamhaeng (c.1279-1298) (Coedes 1968:206). During the reign of Ram Kamhaeng the Sukhothai kingdom was vastly expanded. By the end of the thirteenth century, lower Burma, parts of Laos and the entire Malay Peninsula were tributaries of Ram Kamhaeng. And after his death, there was no powerful sovereign in Sukhothai kingdom. Coedes argued that the cult of Ram Kamhaeng flourished during his reign. (Coedes 1968:353-354). Thai people considered the king as ‘the lord of the mountain’ or ‘superior to all spirits of the country’. The king indeed symbolised the unification of the territory, and of the all spirits, and he himself functioned as protector of his realms.

Even though the name of Phra Ruang has been applied to the kings of the Sukhothai as mentioned, this particular name is never found in contemporary Sukhothai sources (Chanchirayuwat 1976, Griswold and Prasert 1992). This fact could be interpreted in two ways: First, the legend of Phra Ruang existed in the era of Sukhothai but had been handed down in only by word of mouth for many generations. Secondly, the legends of Phra Ruang could have been-only developed after the end of the Sukhothai period, perhaps even after the middle of the nineteenth century.

Some historians pointed out that Sukhothai histography was re-examined during the last half of the nineteenth century, due to the growing Thai consciousness in the middle of that century, which was produced by the Western penetration into Southeast Asia (Hagesteijn 1989:40; Gosling 1991:3). This consciousness was probably influenced by idea of the nation-state and a mild form of nationalism, and as a result it looked back to the period of Sukhothai as the first Thai state independent from the foreign power.
Michael Vickery suggested that the name of Phra Ruang was not an actual name at all; the word might have denoted ‘ancestral spirits’ in ancient times and became linked to the identity of Thai people in a later period. In the inscription, the root of word ‘Phra Ruang’ could have appeared in a disguised form. One of the names of ancestral spirits of Thai was called Pu Ron, ‘ancestor Ron’ (Vickery 1978: 194). In terms of pronunciation, the word could be said as Ruon or Roan. It is also interesting that Pu Ron was also the ancestral spirits of other Thai-speaking people (Vickery 1978: 194). Thus, it could be suggested that name of Phra Ruang are neither specific for Sukhothai, nor Ayutthaya. It could be part of a body of ancient common belief which was carried and modified by the different Thai peoples after they split and moved from their original homeland.

Other indigenous Thai people in Southeast Asia have a different concept of foundation myths. In fact, the title of ‘Phra’, meaning ‘King’, is found only in the stories of Siam people. The word is actually found in the stories of Cambodia (Gaudes 1993), therefore ‘Phra’ might be originally Khmer. On the other hand, according to other Thai people’s legends, the person who firstly ruled the land had title of ‘Khun’ and usually came from heaven. (Barua Golap Chandra 1930; Vickery 1978: 195). ‘Khun’ could have a Chinese origin (Gogoi 1968:64), with the meaning ‘Lord’. In such stories, power is transmitted from a father to his son, and thus is strictly patriarchal. Also in this scenario, a Naga princess was not involved in the birth of ruler.

As Thai people originally migrated from the Southern China, it is credible that they should have inherited ancient Chinese traditions. Nevertheless, the Sukhothai case is unique. It is likely that the Khmer and Mon traditions were influential in this Thai
kingdom, and the Siam people preserved the general Thai legacy only in the form of the name ‘Ruang’.
3.8 Laos

Lao people are one of Thai groups. But in the modern state of Laos, there are many minorities, which belong to the Mon-Khmer sub-group and were separated from a common source some 4000 years ago, possibly from the upland regions of southeastern Laos or northeastern Cambodia.

In the early eighth century, ‘Land Zhenla’, locating its centre in the north Cambodia, expanded its territory to the southern parts of current Laos. In addition, the Chinese record suggested that another polity, Wen Dan, emerged in Laos around the same time. Wen Dan was presumably a Mon kingdom (Stuart-Fox 1998:17). The Mon had already established the Dvaravati kingdom in current Thailand from the sixth century, and it seems that Dvaravati extended its political and cultural influences to the Khorat plateau by the late eighth century.

From the later eighth centuries, Tang Chinese dynasty started to decline, and the newly founded kingdom of Nan-Chao arose in Yunnan. It is reported that Nan-Chao troops were dispatched to the Mekong and attacked Burma, Vietnam and the Zhenla (Simms and Simms 1999:14). The dynasty remained powerful in Laos until the ninth century.

After the decline of Tang and Nan-Chao Chinese influence in Mekong area, the new powerful Khmer empire extended its boundary to the Khorat plateau. An inscription indicates that by the late ninth century, part of the southern Khorat plateau has already been absorbed into the expanding Khmer Empire (Briggs 1951). Thereafter the empire steady enlarged its power to the central Khorat plateau in eleventh century, and to central Laos by the end of the twelfth century.
Thus, when the history of Laos state began, the upper, middle and lower Mekong, were subjected to very multifarious cultural influences (Stuart-Fox 1998:21-22); In the south, the polities were incorporated into the expanding Indianized Khmer Empire. The middle Mekong, by contrast, seems to have been culturally dominated by the Buddhist Mon. On the upper Mekong, both Mon and Khmer influences were attenuated, but Nan-Chao left its cultural legacies (Lebar and Suddard 1967:7-8).

The recorded history of the Lao started with the reign of Fa Ngoun (c.1353-73). It is said that Fa Ngoun had been exiled while still very young to the court of Angkor together with his father (Lebar and Suddard 1967:10; Stuart-Fox 1998:37-38). Fa Ngum was educated in Angkor and there he married Khmer princess, and at the behest of his father-in-law, converted Theravada Buddhism (Souneth 1996).

Later Fa Ngum went back to the Mekong regions, and consolidated the small Laotian principalities of the Mekong from the border of Nan-Chao to what is today northern and eastern Thailand, then declared independence from Sukhothai. In 1353, he united his conquests as the Lao state Lan Xang. The founder Fa Nguan was renowned for his military prowess and earned the title of 'the Conqueror' (Gogoi 1968:231).

3.8.1 Naga as a Protector of the Country

The principle chronicle of Lan Xang is called ‘The Nidan Khun Borom’. It was firstly compiled in the fourteenth centuries (Souneth 1996:29), under the time of the Great King Fa Ngum. It describes the foundation of the Lao state and subsequent
historical events, and the later version of the Nidan Khun Borom also depicts the fall of Lang Xiang kingdom in the nineteenth century.

The first chapters of the Nidan Khun Borom describe the legendary hero Khun Borom, who was the creator of the world, from whom Fa Ngum claimed that he was descended (Simms and Simms 1999:36). This legend illustrates the cultural complex of Lao states: Angkor Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism and Chinese beliefs. In Lao legends, the Naga also has quite an important role in the narratives, but it differs slightly from the versions in other Southeast Asian countries.

The Lao foundations myth has much in common with the foundation myth of the Khmer, but shows strong influences of the Theravada Buddhism. According to the Nidan Khun Borom, a Yakha, or Yaksha, from Ceylon visited the Laos state and married the local Naga princess and they founded the very first royal lineages. This earthy Yaksha was named Nanda. His serpent wife was called Phara Maha Devi. They gave birth to a daughter named Nang Kang Hi, and this royal lineage became the progenitor of a line of rulers in Laos. Nang Kang Hi is said to have the very first ruler of the Lang Xang region, and later married with the son of Cambodian king (Souneth 1996:506).

In this myth, the noble person who visited the domain was not Indian, but Ceylonese. As mentioned above, the term of Yakha is designated for the indigenous people in Ceylon (Zimmer 1983:363-364). In addition, in Theravada Buddhism, Yaksha is regarded as a guardian of earthly treasures and a vital supporter of the Buddha. Hence, Yaksha could have meant as a symbol of Theravada Buddhism in Ceylon, Singhalese. In that sense, the ‘Yaksha’ who visited to the Laos, represented
the new religion and culture of Ceylon. In fact, Ceylon had become the intellectual and the spiritual centre for Laos by the time when the Lang Xang arose.

Although the king and his subjects accepted Theravada Buddhism as the official religion, the Lao continued to worship ‘Phi’ (Bonnefoy 1991:145). They were the numerous natural and supernatural spirits of the indigenous folk religion. It was believed that three kinds of ‘Phi’ existed: spirits of their ancestors, heavenly spirits and Nagas. It is suggested that the indigenous people of Mekong River worshipped the cult of Nagas (Souneth 1996:365-366), and it could have been the fundamental belief of the Lao of ‘Ph’.

According to the chronicles, the second Lao dynasty was founded by a certain king named Khun Sua (Stuart-Fox 1998:20). The story goes as follows (Sounth 1996:113-115, Yamamoto 1941):

It was during Khun Sua’s reign that the region was saved from the ravages of tyrants. Two royal hermits then went to the junction of the Mekong and called together fifteen Naga kings, each governing a particular territory: caves, shelters under high cliffs, rapid rivers, or small hills. The hermits charged those Nagas to protect the country, also that Buddhism would flourish. He said that this place was suitable for building a palace for the holy men, so the Naga kings must combine together to preserve the water, the mountain ranges in the north and the south, as well as the soil and sand, rivers and streams in all areas. Some Nagas were characterised as the protectors of the aquatic river and the south. Some were depicted as the guardians of the mountainous earth and north. Hereafter, the Naga kings transformed into soldiers and were presented at the royal court.

This myth has three important factors to be examined. First, the fifteen Nagas kings could refer to the indigenous people. It is said that they originally had inhabited the fifteen districts around the Mekong River before the arrival of the Lao (Souneth...
Those indigenous people, again, perhaps worshipped particular local Nagas. When the Laotians subdued those local people, the central government at the same time could have absorbed the Naga cult. It seems that the belief was incorporated into the official account, as the Nidan Khun Boron claimed that the co-founder of the first dynasty of Laos, Phara Maha Devi, was actually Naga princess.

Secondly, unlike other Southeast Asian states, these fifteen Nagas who associated with the Lao king are males, not females. The very first dynasty described in the Nidan Khun Borom was started from local Naga princess, indicating matriarchy. Nevertheless, after the emergence of Khun Borom, the chronicle becomes quite patriarchal. It focuses on the genealogy of the descendants of Khun Borom, including Fa Nguan. In fact, Khun Borom himself was a heavenly king came down to the earth from the Sky. This mythical theme seems not to belong to Southeast Asia, but to be a Chinese conception. It is possible that Chinese culture, with its patriarchal concept of political organisation, intruded into Indochina peninsula via Nan-Chao, and obliterated the earlier Austronesian matriarchal society.

Thirdly, this myth emphasises a specific role of Nagas as protectors of the territory. Since the Laos Lan Xang state is far from the sea, we should not expect to find any association of Naga with the sea. It is as well noteworthy that in this Lao myth, Naga are also not connected with water spirits that might produce a good harvest. It seems that this legend, and the Nidan Khun Borom itself, such characteristics are not considered important.

Lan Xang was established in the middle of fourteenth century, and the circumstances of mainland Southeast Asia in that period are quite interesting; the Nan-Chao was completely fallen to the Mongol Chinese Empire; Angkor was severely
weakened; the Thai Sukhothai dynasty and Mons was gradually taken over by the new and more vigorous Thai states. In reality, this specific time could have been the only one chance for Laotian to establish own kingdom.

The Lan Xang was, in fact, politically and socially quite unstable after the foundation since it had been constantly challenged from the adjacent kingdoms and from every direction, including Annam, Champa, Ayutthaya, Chieng Mai and China. For this reason, the officials might have needed the spiritual symbol to amalgamate and unite the country; and used the Nagas for this purpose. The Lao dynasty also required strong military forces, denoted as Nagas, within the territory in order to resist the external intrusions.
3.9 Burma

Burma is located on the westernmost side of mainland Southeast Asia. In the Irrawaddy basin, three ethnic people were established: the Mons and Pyus, and the Burmese (Coedes 1968; Taylor, K.W. 1999). The oldest residents were the Pyu, who belonged to the Tibetan group. The Pyu occupied the central basin before the Christian era. Later, the Burmese arrived from the Shan Plateau at the end of the eight and the beginning of the ninth centuries. Also the Mon people had established a realm in the lower delta by that time. Those small ethnic polities had competed each other for a long time until unification by Pagan.

In the fourth century, the Pyu people firstly founded Thayekhettaya, or Srikshetra, dynasty with the capital of old Prome. The people in Prome enjoyed commerce with the neighbouring nations. (Coedes 1962:110-111). The polity flourished until Nan-Chao from China invaded and demolished Prome city in the middle of the ninth century.

With the decline of Prome, Burmese people who were also Tibetan groups (Coomaraswamy 1965: 169) established the new polity Pagan in the upper Irrawaddy basin. It started to gain political power in conjunction with expeditionary operations of the Nan-Chao in the early ninth century AD (Taylor, K.W. 1999:165).

Around the same time, at the beginning of the ninth century, the solitary Mon kingdom Thaton appeared. The Burmese came into contact with the Thaton in order to establish trading link with Indian subcontinent. The Mons introduced their Indic script and Indian religion, Mahayana school, to the Burmese. As a result, Pagan prevailed under the strong influence of Tantric Buddhism in the eighth century.
Pagan expanded its territory from the middle of the eleventh century, by the King Anoratha (Coedes 1968:149). Meanwhile, the Mon country maintained cultural contact with the Indian subcontinent and was intensely edified by Theravada school in Ceylon. Here, Pagan king Anoratha then organised an expedition against the Mons and conquered Thaton in 1057. Anoratha brought back the Theravada Pali scripts from Mon Thaton and declared it as the official religion instead of the Tantric Mahayana. (Coomaraswamy 1965: 170). Also, in order to refine its civilization, the Burmese in Pagan learnt Buddhist text, art and architectural forms from the Mon intellectuals.

The Burmese dynasty was confronted with Mongol troops and became weak during the middle thirteenth century. With the decline of Pagan, the Mon people established new polity, Pegu, on the southern coast of Burma in 1281 (Taylor, K.W. 1999:167). For the next few centuries, the Pagan kingdom and Mon Pegu pursued their ambitions to expand its political authorities.

3.9.1 Three Dynasties and Naga Princesses

The process of foundation of Pagan and the Pyu is written in the Burmese chronicles. It is named ‘Glass Palace Chronicles of the Kings of Burma’, produced by command of King Bagyidaw in 1829 (Guillon 1999:96). This five volume chronicles make use of eleven different chronicles, which date from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. ‘Glass Palace Chronicles’ are Royal Annals in Burma, however the history of Buddhism and various local legends are mingled with historical facts in those texts.
A) Foundation of Pyu Dynasty

According to the chronicle, the Pyu dynasty or Thayekhettaya was established by King Dwattabaung (Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1923:14-15). The emergence of King Dwattabaung was predicted by the Buddha. The capital city Prome was constructed by the Lord Sakra and Nagas, and Sakra anointed Dwattabaung as the first king of Thayekhettaya and invested the king with the emblems of royalty, the sword of virtue and Three sacred gems; the flying lance, the big bell and the drum. He was married to the Naga princess Besandi. The king subdued the land of Nagas, and received contributions from them. Nonetheless, his glory drastically collapsed due to his deception. Three sacred gems no longer aided him: One saint counselled that those gems were like serpent Naga since when they are wrongly touched, ‘a man may lose all his fortune, may fall into danger and calamity, may even forfeit his life’ (Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1923:18). As foretold in prophecy, the king gradually lost all his powers in wars and could not demonstrate his authority. In due course, the Naga princess Besandi left him and the Naga king sent Dwattabaung off to the Naga country.

This story could reflect the Naga cult of the Khmers. Like the Khmer kings, it seems that the Pyu kings believed that the resources of their supreme power came from Naga. Indeed, when he lost the Naga princess, he was fated to fail.

B) Foundation of Pagan Dynasty

After the decline of the Pyu due to the wars, Prince Pyusawhti founded the Pagan. According to the chronicle, Pyusawhti was the descendant of the Sakya family (Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1923:29-30). In the seventh century AD, Chinese pilgrim
Hiuen-Tsiang mentioned that Sakyas were a noble family in India, whereof the Buddha had been born, yet, when the family was attacked by the fierce king of Kosala, they were driven away by their clansman and each fled in a different direction (Vogel 1972:123). One of them arrived in the Burma state and established a kingdom, which later became the Pagan dynasty.

There are two types of the legends regarding with the birth of Pyusawhti. The first story tells that Pyusawhti was born as a prince of the small polity and he was quite adored by the Naga King and queen's family (Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1923:30-33). Later he went to the country of Pagan, with blessings from the Nagas and sacred treasures of Sakya family given by his royal father. Upon the journey, Pyusawhti saw the large bird that was had eaten maidens for many years in the Pagan polity. Thereupon, he killed the fiend using a bow and arrows. Subsequently, Pyusawhti became successor of the Pagan and established the great dynasty. 

This story is rather like the story about Minangkabau Malay legend. In this account, Pyusawhti conquers the evil 'bird' with unnatural forces, and consequently became the king. Interestingly, unlike Malay accounts, the antagonist of the hero was illustrated as a 'large bird'; it could have been Garuda, the crucial foe of Nagas.

Second story about the birth of Pyusawhti is more noteworthy. According to this version, Pyusawhti was the son of a Naga princess, called Zanti, and the Sun prince, who was one of Sakya family (Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1923:33-34). While Zanti was staying on a Malay mountain, she met the Sun prince, and then became pregnant. However, the prince deserted her. She became distressed and laid the egg embryo on the mountain, and returned to her country. One day, this egg was found by a hunter and carried to an old couple in Pagan. From the egg, a young boy was born named
Pyusawhti. When he was of age, his father the Sun prince came and gave him the royal treasures; bow and arrows. Later Pyusawhti was adopted as a son of a king of newly founded dynasty, Pagan, and became the successor of the kingdom. During his reign, Pagan dynasty flourished enormously. It is said that Pyusawhti married the daughter of the former king and the daughter of Naga king.

Like Angkor, Pagan had a well-developed system of irrigation (Coedes 1968:149) in the rice-fields area. Also the Burmese constructed a striking rectangular monument called Nagayon, in 1090, which was dedicated to Nagas (Guillon 1999: 128). Thus, the Burmese must have had strong faith of the Naga spirits, which would bring prosperity and good harvest.

The Naga was a strong cult in the Upper Burma areas of Pyu and Pagan, and was the initial form of the worship of Thirty-Seven Nat (Temple 1991:8). In fact, in Pagan the Naga cult became Nat worship, a traditional religious practice among the common people. The Nats cults exemplify vestiges of the indigenous Naga worship. For instance, according to the folktales, one of Nats, the very famous Mahagiri was married to a Naga princess. Mahagiri is even today the symbol of Mount Popa and the spiritual and religious icon for Burmese people:

Mahagiri was originally named Nga Tinde. He was a blacksmith of Prome and well known as a man of great strength. When a King of Tagaung, the polity of Upper Burma, heard about him, the king ordered the valiant blacksmith to be brought before him. Nga Tinde rejected the order and took refuge in the jungle. Here, he met the Naga king’s daughter and married her. Meanwhile, the king married Ma Sawde, the sister of Nga Tinde, and persuaded him to return. Nga Tinde did return, but he was captured by the king and burnt alive. His sister tried to save him and rushed into the fire. Yet, Ma Sawde lost her life. Meanwhile, the Nagi wife of Nga Tinde laid two eggs in a rural area and she died of grief at
death of her husband. Those eggs were later found by the hermit and taken home. After a while, two boys came forth out of the two eggs. King Dwattabaung of Pyu, who was the son of Ma Sawde and the King of Tagaung in this folklore, heard a prophecy that those two boys in the future would overthrow him as their vengeance. Thus King Dwattabaung captured them, and the two boys were forced to fight each other as a measure of policy. Both of the brothers were dead during the struggle. Here, Nga Tinde, his wife, his sister and his children all became Nat spirits and have ever since been worshipped among the people (Temple 1991:41-47).

The interesting point is that the story of King Duttabang in the official records is somehow mixed up with that of Nga Tinde in Nat folklore. In the history, King Duttabang got married to the Naga princess. His father had twin younger brother, named Sulathambawa (Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1923:14). And the historical narratives tell that Sulathambawa was linked with Mount Popa. Meanwhile, in the Nat legends, it is Nga Tinde who married Naga princess. He had twin children and Nga Tinde himself was closely related to Mount Popa. Furthermore, King Duttabang is regarded as a malicious person in the Nat cult tradition of the Burmese people, while the official record portrays King Duttabang as virtuous and magnificent.

Basically, the historical narratives include many fabricated events in order to authenticate and glorify the power of the rulers. Therefore, the real figure of the kings could be found in the folk stories told by the common people, who might have been despised by their despotic overlords. The King Anoratha in Pagan actually tried to demolish the Nats traditions and install Buddhism orthodoxy as the official religion (Bonnefoy 1991:145). However, Anoratha eventually decided to accept the Nats cults, and he utilised this concepts to reinforce territorial unification and a sense of nationalism among the people.
C) Foundation of Pegu Dynasty

The Mon people also have their own chronicles, and called ‘Lik Smin Asah’ or The Book of king Asah, compiled during the nineteenth century AD (Guillon 1999:97; Halliday 1923). The first few chapters basically describe how Thaton was authoritatively and appropriately succeeded by a new dynasty called Pegu and its narratives are quite similar to the second story of Pyusawhti of Pagan. Since the Pagan culture was strongly influenced by the Mon, it is quite possible that the Pyusawhti of Pagan story could have just been a reflection of the Mon legend.

According to this account, a Naga princess, who was disguised as human, had intimate relation with a wizard and fell pregnant. Nonetheless, when the wizard found out that his wife was actually a serpent, he abandoned her. She was distressed. After laying an egg, she went back to her Naga country. One day, a hermit found the egg and kept it. Later, a young maiden was born from the egg. The king of Thaton, named Sināganga, heard this news, and made her his queen in the royal place. She gave birth to male twins, Sammala and Wimala. Both of them later on became founders of the new Mon kingdom, Pegu (Halliday 1923).

The essential point is that foundation of all three dynasties, the Pyu, the Pagan and the Pegu, involve female Naga. And those legends seem to be closely interconnected with the Khmers and the Thais: First, as in the Khmer legends, a Naga princess gets married to a human being. Secondly, as in Thai legends, the Naga princess is deserted by the husband but before her disappearance she leaves an egg. The person appearing from the egg becomes the progenitor of the royal lineage. These cultural elements could reflect common beliefs among the mainland Southeast Asian populace.
Alternatively, cultural exchanges might have occurred among the people in Burma, the Khmers and the Thais in ancient times.

We have very few historical details concerning the relation between Burma and neighbouring states. It seems that Anoratha in Pagan was a great conqueror, who actively sent his expeditionary forces against his surrounding states. The chronicle of the Thai principalities of the upper Menam relates his military campaign to Cambodia. However, such a campaign is not found at all in contemporary Khmer sources (Coedes 1968: 150). Thai traditions might be brought to Burma by the Thai Shan people who took over Pagan in the fourteenth century AD. Also Thai and Khmer cultures might derive from the Mon polity Dvaravati in central Thailand, although the liaisons between the Mon in Thailand and the Mon in Burma are less well known.
3.10 Vietnam

In case of Vietnam, conditions are different from those in other Southeast Asian countries. The country has been culturally and politically influenced from China, and the legends related to the foundation of the kingdom also reflect the ideology of this immense nation.

In the Neolithic period, from 4000 to 2000BC, horticulture appeared in China along with some domestication of animals. During this period, one of the Chinese tribes named Yueh lived by fishing and cultivating rice in southeast and south China. With gradual pressure from the Mongol tribe, the Yueh people, taking them much of their original culture, moved into mainland Southeast Asia, and settled down in the littoral plain in what is now northern Vietnam. These people are presumably the ancestors of the Vietnamese (Chapuis 1995:4).

There were small settlements and weak social organisation in central Bac Bo, North Vietnam in the third millennium BC. From the 2000BC, the Bronze Age culture of Vietnam called Dong Song flourished. It was in this context of cultural exchanges with other Southeast Asian regions, that the legends of the Vietnamese kingdoms Van Lang and Au Lac were created. As in China, dragons were quite important icons in their mythology and culture (Fig. 7). The Vietnamese kings bore their thigh the tattoo of Dragon until the middle of fourteenth century AD (Yamamoto 1970).
3.10.1 Lac Long Quan: Male Naga Dragon

The most well known Vietnamese historical record is known as Dai Viet su ki toan thu, or Comprehensive Writing history of Great Viet, written in the middle of fifteen century. It covers from the remote past until 1427, when the Chinese Ming dynasty ended its rule over of Vietnam (Yamamoto 1970:71). As the title indicates, it is considered as a comprehensive history of Vietnam, and compiled under the guidance of Vietnamese Emperor Thanh Tong of the independent Le Dynasty, when Vietnam was at the height of its prosperity. The chronicle tells about the local kings who claimed descent from Lac Long Quan, or Lac Dragon Lord. Lac Long Quan was a hero who resided in the sea and conquered the Hong River plain, in Northern Vietnam.

Traditional Vietnamese history begins with legends, which are closely related to those of China. The Chinese legendary emperor Shen Nung (2838-2698BC), who was said to bring agriculture to China, had a great grandson named De Minh (Chapuis 1995:11). He married an immortal and his youngest son Luc Tuc or Kinh Duong Vuong became the king of North Vietnam. Later Luc Tuc got married to the daughter of Naga Raja of the Yangtze River named Than Long Nu or Lady Dragon Spirit. They had a son Lang Long Quan. Lang Long Quan and his wife Au Co are regarded by the Vietnamese as the progenitors of their race (Taylor, K.W. 1983:1).

According to legend, Lang Long Quan subdued all evils in the lands and civilized the people, teaching them to cultivate rice. An emperor from the North, i.e. China, entered the land and claimed it for himself. This Chinese king named De Lai was also the grandson of De Minh. Lang Long Quan rescued the land and people from the Chinese monarch, and in turn married the daughter of De Lai, Au Co.  

8
Au Co produced one hundred eggs, from which emerged one hundred sons. Lang Long Quan continued to live with his own mother in her sea palace, and the one hundred sons were under his wife’s care. It indicates Vietnamese society was originally matriarchal. One day, Lang Long Quan told his wife that, ‘I belong to the dragon race, while you belong to the immortals. You came from the northern kingdom, and I came from south. You are fire and I am water. Thus, we are opposing elements, and cannot live together’ (Chapuis 1995:11; Nhat Han 1993:17). He also promised that whenever any threat arose, he would come to help. They parted, with each with fifty children. Lang Long Quan and his group went to the South Sea, while Au Co and her group of sons went to north mountain area. Their son, named Hung Vuong, established the first dynasty in Vietnam, Hung, which lasted from 2879 BC to 258 BC (Chapuis 1995:12).

In this foundation myth of the Vietnamese state, many Chinese cultural elements can be observed. For instance, in the beginning, the legendary Chinese monarch was regarded as the ancestor of Vietnam, since descendant of Shen Nung was the first ruler. In addition, one of the legends relates that when Luc Tuc or Kinh Duong Vuong ruled Vietnam, his elder brother De I was ruling China (Yamamoto 1970:81). This indicates that that relationship between the earliest China and Vietnam was seen as like that of brothers, referring to the elder as ‘De’, which means emperor and the younger as ‘Vuong’, which means king (Taylor, K.W. 1983). It implies a distinction of rank between the two states; the status of China was higher than Vietnam. These descriptions, which give priority to the Chinese elements, show that the Chinese cultural and political influences were strongly involved in the foundation of Vietnam country.
However, the legends also emphasise the higher authority of local elements. The story places Luc Tuc over the Chinese monarch both in talent and personality. It was Luc Tuc who married Chinese Nagi and gained the mystic power of Naga in order to rule the country. Moreover, the hero Luc Tuc was initially assigned to reign over China, yet he declined and took Vietnam instead (Yamamoto 1970:82).

It is significant that, unlike other Southeast Asian countries, the local female serpent does not appear at all in the narratives of foundation of the Vietnamese dynasty. In Vietnam, it is a male dragon Naga that is a local divine and also culture hero. Lang Long Quan is in effect the national forefather. He is described as a person with supernatural power who not only performed miracles but also first instructed the people in agriculture, sericulture and the moral order between the ruler and the ruled.

The matrimony between Lang Long Quan and Au Co also is quite noteworthy. Lang Long Quan coming from aquatic origin and Au Co from mountain, thus having completely different natures. As noted above, the ancient Vietnamese society was originally matriarchal since Lang Long Quan had lived with his own mother until his divorce. Nevertheless, after the separation, the idea of the bilateral family system is reflected in the story as the children were divided into two groups. Later, Lang Long Quan returned to the water palace, and he chose the eldest son of the fifty children as his successor. Here, the social system became patriarchy. From that period onwards, the successor to the throne has been chosen from the father’s side, in preference to the mother’s side.

Yamamoto argues that the idea of selecting a new monarch from the sons of the father side was not of Vietnamese origin, but Chinese (Yamamoto 1970:84). It is probable that it is aimed to add prestige to the official historical record under the
influence of Confucian patriarchal concept, imported from the China. To achieve this, Vietnamese officials used Chinese ideologies, rather than Indian, to reinforce political authority and legitimisation.

Interestingly, although the Vietnamese was heavily influenced by China, they considered China as enemy. One story regarding Hung Vuong relates that while his kingdom was attacked by Chinese military forces, Hung Vuong asked his father, Lang Long Quan, for help. Subsequently Lang Long Quan appeared to give advice to his son. Later, a young man helped king Hung Vuong during the war and defeated the Chinese. The boy was said to be manifestation of Lang Long Quan (Yamamoto 1970:86). This suggests the interpretation that the land was protected by mystic power from the water spirits against foreign invasion. As Lang Long Quan once told his wife, it truly seems that Lang Long Quan appeared from the sea to defend his land when the Vietnamese state was suffering incursion from the outside.

The legend of Lang Long Quan was revived the era of the king Trieu Quang Phuc of the North Vietnam, in the period from 541 to 579 AD (Yamamoto 1970:91; Taylor, K.W. 1983:316-319). Trieu Quang Phuc was the commander in chief of resistance forces against a Chinese military attack and later proclaimed himself as a new ruler. He also called himself King of the Marsh, a swamp site of Hong River, which was traditionally the holy land of Lang Long Quan (Taylor, K.W. 1983:151-152).

According to the Vietnamese chronicles, when Trieu Quang Phuc was invoked the spirits while hiding in the marshland after his defeat by the Chinese imperial forces, a holy immortal, presumably Lang Long Quan, descended astride a dragon and gave the king a claw of the Naga dragon. Gaining this miraculous power, Trieu Quang Phuc ultimately succeeded in overcoming all Chinese enemies.
At this point, two important issues can be argued. First, the dragon Naga of Vietnam clearly indicates its geographical and cultural position of Vietnam. The state is located between East Asia and Southeast Asia. Lang Long Quan is said himself as dragon, thus he should have possessed the characteristics of Chinese dragon. Nevertheless, like Nagas in Southeast Asia, he belonged to the watery realm. And he is the source of political power and legitimacy of the Vietnam. These concepts of the legend are similar to other legendary themes in Southeast Asia.

Secondly, the fabricated story of Trieu Quang Phuc emphasises the importance of the local cultural values, and the values are represented by the dragon-Naga. The ‘dragon claw’ in fact could be interpreted as a symbol of military invincibility and political sovereignty in the Vietnam, which struggled against the foreign military power.

The Vietnam had been under control of the Chinese Empire from the third century BC, (Chapuis 1995) and from that period people had been looking for the independence. Trieu Quang Phuc was certainly a critical person in the Vietnamese history, since he brought the sense of the independence and the patriotism to the people, although it actually took another three centuries to achieve the independent Vietnamese state. For the Vietnamese people, the dragon Naga symbolises not only local culture elements but also the sense of nationalism and patriotism.
4. Dragons in East Asia

4.1 Concept of Dragon in East Asia

In East Asia, there is a similar mythical figure of Indian Naga, called Ru, or Chinese dragon. The Ru in East Asia, and the Naga in India and Southeast Asia are quite different in terms of appearance. In China, a dragon is regarded as the chief of the three hundred and sixty reptiles (Werner 1984:208). While Naga almost always has shape of snake with some exceptions, the body of dragon bears no resemblance to a serpent. The dragon is said to be the origin of all living beings, and it exists beyond the world of human nature. It is a supernatural creature. Its horns are those of deer, its head is that of a camel, its abdomen is that of a large cockle, its scales are those of a carp, its feet are those of a tiger, its ears are those of ox (Werner 1984:208). Essentially, its body consists of different parts taken from many kinds of animals. It is sometimes represented as having the head of horse, and the tail of snake with wings on its sides. Unlike the Indian water-serpent, the dragon has four legs (De Visser 1969:1). Certain types of dragon have five claws on each foot, while other dragons have only four.

According to Mahayana Buddhism, there are several types of Chinese dragon distinguished by visual features; the water snake, the eel-dragons (Kiao), the dragon, the horned dragon and the winged dragon (De Visser 1969:72-82). A water snake will change into a Kiao after five hundred years. After a thousand years, the Kiao changes into a dragon. The dragon transforms into a horned dragon five hundreds years later, and finally the horned dragon will become a winged dragon after a thousand years.
Among them, the Kiao dragon or eel-dragon is notable here. The shape of the Kiao consists of the body of a fish and the tail of a snake. And more importantly, it is considered as the god of water animals. The Kiao usually lives in rivulets and pools and under rock caves. This particular type of dragon is able to transform into human beings. It is not known whether this concept derives from Indian Naga, but interestingly, this type of dragon-Naga might be found in Laos, and also in Japan as discussed below.

In addition, while the Indian Naga performs many duties, the Chinese dragon does not take multiple responsibilities. It is said that dragons are divided into four classes by individual duties: first, the heavenly dragon which guards the Palace; secondly, the divine dragon which causes rain; thirdly, the earthly dragon which drains off rivers and opens sluices; fourthly, the hidden dragon which protects the treasures of the Lord.

Among them, the most definitive dragon is the divine dragon, the rainmaker. The Mahayana Buddhism doctrine in China tells story another story of the Naga king Muchalinda and the Buddha (De Visser 1969:10-11). According to the Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia, the Naga king Muchalinda shielded and protected the Buddha with the coil and hoods from the heavy rain and winds for a week. Compare this with the version of the same legend found in the Mahayana doctrine Tripitaka.

In this version, the Naga dragon king Muchalinda was living under a river. The Buddha went to the river, and while sitting under a tree, reached Enlightenment. The brilliant light emerging from the Buddha penetrated into the Naga’s palace. The Naga, delighted to see the New Buddha’s light, arose from the water. Muchalinda
surrounded the Lord with the seven coils and covered him with seven heads (not hoods). The Naga then produced the rain and wind for seven days.

With the arrival of Buddhism from China, Japan also received the concept of the dragon as the rain-master. In ancient times, the dragon was said to live in the pond of the Sacred Spring Park in the capital city (De Visser 1969: 158-168). Often the Emperors and the Buddhist monks held ceremonies in front of the ponds if they suffered from droughts. When the dragon answered their request, it flew to the sky and brought thunder and heavy rains.

Characteristically, the dragon in China is always a male with supernatural powers (Anesaki 1937; Arakawa 1998). It is said that the dragon is also a benefactor of the people and of sovereignty. Therefore, the sovereigns in East Asia often claimed that they were descendants of the dragons and the dragon became the sacred symbol of the emperors and the imperial house (Arakawa 1998) (Fig.8).

Nevertheless, although the emperors were closely involved with the dragons, they did not have esoteric power to communicate with this supernatural spirits. Unlike Southeast Asia, the imperial monarchs were not regarded as the centre of the Universal Cosmos, so that the spiritual powers of the imperial monarchs were not absolute. It was not those rulers but the monks who were able to contact the sacrosanct spirits during the ceremonies (Bonnefoy 1991:288-289, 299). Thus the rulers could not but bow down before the monks and pray earnestly to the dragons for rain and prosperity. Also, the dragon does not protect the realms; it does not provide any power to defend the realm against enemies for the king.

The Mahayana Buddhism canon in East Asia depicts that serpent as wicked and vicious (Arakawa 1998:26-27). Indeed, the Nagas symbolise evil nature according to
the early Mahayana Buddhist doctrines, as we saw in Indonesia, and this concept probably took root in East Asia. Significantly, serpents are always illustrated as a female in China or Japan, indicating that the woman is the embodiment of a malicious and revengeful aspect of human beings. Buddhist doctrines in Japan explain that monks should avoid woman because of her serpent’s nature (Anesaki 1937: 264).
4.2 China

In China, there has been the dragon worship from the ancient period, which is in some ways the counterpart of the Naga cult in India. The dragon is always a male and considered as the symbol of enthusiasm, strength, courage and wisdom.

Indeed, as the Chinese dragon consists of many parts of animals and as its shape is different according to the time and place, there is a hypothesis that the Chinese dragon is a mix of different totems of various Chinese primeval tribes (Chang 1988). Assuming that the dragon is a symbol of Chinese united nation, it is feasible to suggest that each body part of the dragon denotes the different aboriginal people in ancient China.

According to one of the ancient works of Chinese literature ‘Sanwu Liji’ written in the third century AD, it is said that the world was created by Panku, who was a semi-Devine creature coming from heaven (Bonnefoy 1991:235). Subsequently, his successors, Fu Xi and Shen Nung marked the transition of between legendary Panku era of god kings and the historic period of human emperors. Fu Xi was considered the first emperor in China, ruling from 2953 to 2838 BC (Werner 1984:81). Several legends tells that Fu Xi invented the eight diagrams, which became basis of the universe, and also created many cultural activities of human beings including musical instruments, hunting, fishing and so on. More interestingly, Fu Xi had a human face and a body in the shape of a snake’s tail, like the Indian Naga.

After Fuxi, the second Chinese sovereign, Shen Nung, introduced fire and agriculture to the human beings. It is suggested that cult of Shen Nung was originally
rooted in Southern China, and was closely connected with the wet-rice agriculture (Taylor, K.W. 1983:303). His cult might have reached as far as Vietnam, since his legends were associated with the Vietnamese ancient narratives, which relate that Shen Nung was the progenitor of Vietnam.

Ancient Chinese mythology includes several female figures who play a more important role than males. The most famous deity is named Nu Kua. She was the sister and the wife of Fu Xi and often regarded as a Mother (Bonnefoy 1991:241), since Nu Kua created the first men. Like her husband, she also had the body of a snake and a human head. In the iconographic images, the two tails of Nu Kua and Fu Xi are intertwined, and Fu Xi holds a carpenter’s square while Nu Kua holds a compass. It means that they are visually a pair of demiurges who holds in their hands the symbols of their creative and civilizing virtues.

The story of Nu Kua signifies that ancient Chinese society could be bilateral, while China in today is different. Nu Kua and Fun Xi both contributed to create ancient civilization in China and Nu Kua is visually indistinguishable from Fun Xi. However, the appearance of dragon in Chinese history indicates the transformation of the social system. With development of the social order, familial organisation turned into the patriarchal system. Progressively, many polities appeared in the realms and as a result warfare among the powerful clans became incessant. Under such circumstances, ‘dragon’ firstly could have been picked up as a supernatural symbol in order to demonstrate the competence of a ruler.

After the unification, the dragon became closely linked with the imperial court and the emperor. It is reported that by the third century BC, the five-clawed dragon had already became the emblem of the Chinese Emperor and symbolised the prowess of
the supreme ruler (Chang 1988:59). The first appearance of the dragon is dated back to the Xia dynasty in the twenty-first century BC, when two dragons came from heaven to visit the royal court (Chang 1988:9). Also the Emperor Yao was said to be a son of a red dragon: His mother was touched by a flying dragon amid thunder and darkness, whereupon she became pregnant and gave birth to Yao (De Visser 1969:123). A similar story is told about Kao Tsu, the founder of the Han dynasty.

Again, the Chinese dragon is a benefactor of the realm since it flies to the sky and brings rain to the earth. Yi Jing, Book of Changes, tells that when the dragon flew high above it, the land would be prosperous, and when it lay inactive, the vital energy of the land would become low (Chang 1988:33). Therefore it is credible to say that the dragon was considered as the controller of the environment of the state.

Unlike Southeast Asia, China did not rely on maritime trading in ancient times to receive foreign cultures. The imperial government conducted overland trading and Buddhism was brought to the central court from India via Central Asia by the land route. The conception of Nagas was also introduced to China from India by this route, and Nagas here were employed to designate evil spirits (Werner 1984:208) as in early Mahayana Buddhism doctrines. In China, Nagas were also applied to the indigenous people who had lived in mountainous or frontier districts (Werner 1984:208), for the reason that those inhabitants were probably considered as dreadful and harmful to the imperial government.
4.3 The Nan-Chao Kingdom: China Frontier people

Such mountainous or frontier people were once considered as evil Naga, since the imperial court could not always control such tribes. One of them, ‘Man’ people, who lived in the western China, was despised as ‘Southern barbarian’ by the Tang Chinese government (Taylor K.W. 1983:344). They founded their own kingdom of Nan-Chao in the 790’s (Simms and Simms 1999:14) in the western Yunnan region, which is now located between China and Burma.\(^\text{10}\)

It seems that the Man had conquered the Ailao-Yi people, who originally inhabited southern Yunnan by the end of the eighth century, taking over Ailao-Yi myths and legends as their own (Backus 1981:50). According to the Ailao-Yi mythology, the Ailao-Yi people were descendants of a human female named Chayi who touched a water male dragon and conceived (Gogoi 1968:42-43). When one of the strong families, Meng, established Nan Chao, they declared that they were descendants of Ailao-Yi, and thus the progeny of mythical dragon.

After the unification of the Kingdom, the ruling Meng family ordered a chronicle to be composed, called ‘Wan Shu’. It was compiled in the era of the eleventh king, named Shih-Lung (the headman of dragons). He reigned from 859 to 877 AD and called himself ‘Emperor’ (Gogoi 1968:85). The specific term ‘Emperor’ was officially permitted only for the Chinese emperor around this time. It seems that Shih-Lung had decided to demonstrate his prowess and power and started challenging the Chinese Tang dynasty by compiling an official history of the Nan-Chao and by declaring himself the heavenly emperor. In this chronicle, he proclaimed that he was born from a mother who touched a golden water dragon as in the older Ailao-Yi myths.
It is feasible to suggest that the culture of Nan-Chao is on a borderline between East Asia and Southeast Asia. In their myths, the supernatural creatures are clearly stated to be ‘dragons’; in this respect, the culture of Nan-Chao fundamentally belonged to the Chinese pattern. Nevertheless, the dragon in Nan-Chao is, like Nagas in Southeast Asia, purely water-natured and unable to fly. It is possible that the Nan-Chao rejected Tang Chinese culture, and imported some conceptions from a Southeast Asian civilization, possibly Laos or Burma, in order to establish their own separate nationality.
4.4 Japan

In ancient Japan, people used the word ‘Naga’ to indicate serpent. According to the origin myth, the island was constructed by the two Gods, Iza-Nagi and Iza-nami. These unidentified words ‘Nagi’ and ‘Nami’ could have meant ‘Naga’ (Yamada 1997a).

Interestingly, today the Hindu word ‘Naga’ is still used to indicate a blue-green serpent in the Southern island of Japan (Kojima 1991:8), while the sea serpent in Java, Nyai Lara Kidul, is very fond of the colour green.

Hanihara Kazuo, the most influential biological anthropologist in Japan, has suggested that the first occupants of the Japanese Islands came from somewhere in Southeast Asia in the upper Palaeolithic age to become proto Japanese. Result of dental, cranial and DNA tests showed that the Jomon (10,000BC-300BC) people were closely related to Javanese (Hanihara1991). From the data, the Jomon people seem to have had a southern genetic locus, probable traceable to Java. In fact, there are some close similarities in certain cultural aspects, especially folktales and ancient beliefs, between Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, and Japan, even though the distance was too far for direct contact at that time (Matsumura 1958). Currently, it is suggested that the some Indonesian people might have migrated to the Southern island in Japan via the Philippine by boats.

From 300BC, many immigrants from the Chinese mainland began to settle in Japan. Additionally, ancient historical records noted that there was another wave of immigrants (either volunteer immigrants or war refugees) from the Korean Peninsula
or China between the sixth and the seventh century (Barnes 1999:171, Hudson 1999: 201-202).

The cultural exchange between China and Japan started from quite early period. It is said that the one of the strong chiefdoms in Japan had already started diplomatic trading and gift exchanges with Han dynasty in China in the 100BC (Barnes 1999:181-191). They absorbed the continental cultures and governmental schemes and laws from China to gain political strength. Later such a strong polity established a central administration in western Japan, declaring itself the Yamato (Japanese) state.

The ancient official chronology in Japan is recorded in two historical collections, the Kojiki and Nihongi. The former was compiled in the beginning of the eight century AD, and the latter was compiled in 720 AD by imperial orders. In those books, the most well known story is the legend of the Sea King’s daughter. The legend is noticeably similar to the stories of the Naga princess in Southeast Asian states:

Ho-ho demi who was a descendant of a deity from heaven one day lost a fishhook that had borrowed from his elder brother Ho-deri. When the former was urged by his elder brother to return the hook, he was troubled as to what he should do. His older brother demanded that he travel across the sea. Accordingly, Ho-ho demi passed over the sea in a boat and unknowingly arrived at a palace under the water. It was the residence of the Sea King and there he met the daughter of the dragon, named Toyo-Tama Hime (Abundance Spirits Princess). The couple married and they lived together for three years. At this time, the husband wished to go back to his home but first revealed to her that he had come to her realm in search for the lost fishhook. The Sea King gave the hook to Ho-ho demi together with magical jewels. Thereupon the couple journeyed back to his homeland. After receiving the lost fishhook, Ho-deri became insolvent. The devastated brother violently attacked Ho-ho demi. Nonetheless, the jewels protected him. Eventually the elder brother was
subjugated to Hoho-demi. Meanwhile, Toyo-Tama Hime was going to give a son, and she asked to her husband not look into the chamber that was especially built for the purpose. In spite of the promises, he looked into the chamber and saw her original shape: that was ‘Wani’, a crocodile (Philippi 1968:157). Angry and ashamed, Toyo-Tama Hime abandoned her husband and child, and then returned to her home in the sea. Hoho-demi was dead soon after her departure. The child left after his father’s death became the father of the first emperor, Jimmu. 12

In Japan, there are many legends told about the marriage between the maiden of the water and a human being (Anesaki 1937: 263; Obayashi 1974), as we also find in Southeast Asia and India. In particular, the story of Toyo-Tama Hime is significant since it indicates that the marital union between Toyo-Tama Hime and Hoho-demi generates the first imperial lineage in Japan. In addition, the hero succeeded to conquer his enemy using supernatural power given by the daughter of the Sea King. Parallel concepts are also observed in Java, Sukhothai and Vietnam.

In this story, the word ‘Wani’ is still matter of controversy. It is frequently interpreted as a crocodile, with a shape of sea serpent. However, one version of the Hoho-demi relates that the sea princess changed into a sea dragon at the end of the story (Yamada 1997b: 327-328). Indeed, there is a hypothesis that the Wani could have been of Chinese origin, even though the notions about the Naga-princess are easily recognised in this story (De Visser 1969:140). In many paintings, the Sea King and his daughter are illustrated as human beings with dragon’s heads (De Visser 1969:141). Also it has also been suggested that Wani is probably the Chinese Kiao dragon (Yamada 1997b: 327-328). On these grounds, it is convincing that the Sea King is indeed a dragon, and his daughter is a dragon princess.
The legend could be originally an ancient Japanese tale. However, it shows strong influences from Southeast Asian and Chinese culture. Japan is geographically located close to East Asia, but it is possible that even though the Japanese people actively accepted Chinese conceptions after the Christian era, they kept traditions of Southeast Asia origin that could have arrived in the Jomon period.
5. Conclusion

In summary, the Naga in the Southeast Asia generally is an aquatic creature, and it is believed that the Naga has influence over agricultural fertility. Furthermore, the Naga is said to bring prosperity and stability to the kingdom by uniting with the king. The Southeast Asian kings declared that they were descendants of Naga, and often married a princess who originates in watery realms in order to legitimate their own political authority and enforce sovereignty. And this sovereignty was transmitted by the princess. These are the common themes among the Southeast Asian states: An implication of this is that some credibility can be given to the concept of “Southeast Asia” as region sharing common cultural elements, long predating the time of colonization by the western countries.

At this point, the answers for the questions given in the introduction can be scrutinized:

(1) Are there any differences, for instance, between “serpent” in Southeast Asian and that in East Asian cultures, and in India and Southeast Asia?

(2) Do we find any localised concepts of “serpent” in the specialised area?

To the first question, the answer will be yes. First, Naga in Southeast Asia and Chinese dragons are quite different in character. Both sacrosanct creatures are said to bring rain to the realms, and are thus considered as benefactors for the people. Nevertheless, Naga is also regarded as a protector of the realm in Southeast Asian states, while for the Chinese, the dragon is simply admired as a rainmaker. Furthermore, the Ru dragon is significantly different from the Naga in terms of
outward appearance. The dragon apparently never has the shape of a serpentine creature. In addition, while Naga often symbolise a female or matriarchal society, the Chinese dragon indisputably represents a male and patriarchal culture.

Secondly, even though ideas about Naga in Southeast Asia were clearly strongly influenced by India, there are some differences between Naga in India and Naga in Southeast Asia. Both kinds of Nagas are often presented as Nagi princess and relate to the original myths of the royal lineages in kingdoms. Yet, Naga in India are generally fierce and sometimes described as evil. Also according to the Hindu religion, Naga is just minor divine being. In Buddhist legends, the Naga eventually became benevolent, however, the particular idea of “Naga protecting Buddha” was rarely seen in India, while this image was prominent in mainland Southeast Asia.

Regarding second question, there is not a clear answer, yes or no. Basically, most Southeast Asian states share the common Naga theme. However, as discussed above, the Naga legends in the Southeast Asian states point to individual local Naga elements. For example, the Vietnamese Naga stories show strong influences from the Chinese patriarchal culture. In case of Laos, the Naga princess has no important role at all in the myths, which principally depict the male Naga as the protector of the realms. The Chinese cultural influence might be involved here, but further historical research is needed to confirm this.

Moreover, these Naga elements in the Southeast Asian states could have been influenced from the neighbouring states. For instance, the Naga cultural elements in the three dynasties in Burma were obviously interconnected with each other, and also raise the possibility of connection with the kingdom of Thais and the Khmer. Also it
seems that the Khmer shared similar concepts with Cham. However, the historical relationship between Cham and Khmer has not been fully clarified yet.

Due to these complex interrelationships, the Naga in Southeast Asia, and the Indianization process itself, cannot be discussed in any simple order. This fluidity could have been caused due to the lack of strong centralised societies in the ancient times. Higham (1984) and Bellwood (1997) suggested that only scattered communities of population were found in the Southeast Asia around the Christian era. Many indigenous tribes were mobile, and thus they were able to share culture elements and languages with distant people. Significantly, it is argued that a large proportion of the populations in the mainland had entered to the Indonesian archipelago via the Malay Peninsula before at least 1000BC (Bellwood 1997:87). However, at the same time, there is also the possibility of a migratory route from the archipelago to the mainland Southeast Asia has been pointed out (Jumsai 1988:106). As a result, the civilizations in the Southeast Asia were closely related, but it is not well known how and when their cultural components were interconnected. This phenomenon could be the reason for the formation of the cultural mosaic region that is Southeast Asia.

Wolters argued that ‘The continuous flow of foreign materials, especially Indian ones, over the single ocean’s always open communication could have introduced regionally shared themes, which, in historical times, offset the multi-centred way of life inherited from prehistory ’(1999: 66). But at the same time, we observe cultural diversity.

In Southeast Asia ‘the nature and extent of cultural diversity were elusive’ (Wolters 1999: 66). And the nature of Naga in Southeast Asia is also multifactorial. In order to
explicate the detailed characteristics of Naga, the research about the localization processes of the Naga in the different subregions will be required. The local texts, including local folklores, arts forms or/and languages could be effectively used as the study tools. This study eventually might lead to 'a comparative study of the literatures and a further elucidation of the cultural mosaic and shape of history in earlier Southeast Asia' (Wolters 1999: 67). It will require a deeper investigation of the root of individual Southeast Asian state. My survey has, I hope, indicated some of the possibilities of such an approach.
Note

1. According to the Khmer version, it is the Naga king Ananta who became the rope, not Vasuki (Marchal 1932:219).

2. It was originally considered that those epigraphic records belonged to the eleventh century. Today, the date has been disputed (Minakshi 1977, Goloubew 1924).

3. In Thai legend, at one time, Naga disguised himself as a human, so that he could become a Buddhist monk. When he was detected, he was told that only a human being could be ordained as a monk. Here Nagas asked the Buddha to preserve his name. Henceforward, young Thai men seeking to become monks have been called Naga or nak until their ordination occurred (Taylor, Y.T 1994:66-67).


5. After 1756, the ritual spread over three different annual state rituals, now one is held on the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, and other two are held on Islamic holidays (Heringa 1997;365).

6. In Indian mythology, Rig Veda, Soma means moon, and generally represented by a male deity (Zimmer 1983:164). Soma was, most probably, introduced to Cambodia by the Brahmans from India, and then became female (Bonnefoy 1991:151). It is possible that Cambodia could have been influenced by China, in which lunar myths evoked a female being.

7. The rulers of fifth century in Funan also bore the name of Kaudinya in their title (Mabbett and Chandler 1995:74-75). It is possible that a certain historical tradition related to this specific name legitimately existed before this time. One version claims that Au Co was initially a wife of De Lai, Chinese Emperor (Taylor, K.W. 1983:303-304).

8. Interestingly, Trieu Quang Phuc himself and his legends in the sixth century context were not discussed in Chinese historical chronicles at all (Taylor, K.W. 1983:155). As a Vietnamese ruler, he accentuated the indigenous and local notions of political legitimacy and rejected Chinese rule, and thus as a result he might have been denied by the Chinese officials.

9. Man people had classically been considered Thai. Nevertheless, today this assumption is rejected. Based on linguistic study, it is now thought that the basic population of the Nan-Chao dynasty was Tibeto-Burman, who could be identified with the modern Lolo and Minchia people (Backus 1981:46-52; Coedes 1968:189, compare Simms 1999; Gogoi 1968).

10. Linguistically, the ancient Japanese languages may in fact originated from the insular
Southeast Asia (Kumar 2000).

It is reported that strikingly similar tales of Toyo-Tama-Hime have been found in Indonesian islands, such as Kei or Minahassa islands (Dixon 1964; De Visser 1969:141-142). In the Kei version, the man who had lost the hook, lent to him by his brother, entered the clouds in a boat and eventually found the hook in the throat of a fish. In the Minahassa legends, he dove into the sea to find the hook and arrived at a village in the bottom of the sea. There he discovered the hook in the throat of a girl. Like Hoho-demi, the hero went back home and punished his brother. According to Kojiki, Ho-deri was the ancestor of indigenous clan in South Japan, called Haya-to (Falcon People). It has been pointed out that Haya-to people could have been culturally, and even racially, related to the Indonesian people (Matsumura 1958).
Bibliography


and Ancient Cambodia, Washington: National Gallery of Art: 93-100


Gogoi, P., 1968. The Thai and The Thai kingdoms, Gauhati:Gauhati university


Halliday, R., 1923. Lik Smin Asah, Rangoon; American Baptist Mission Press


Bibliography


Koutsoukis, A., 1974. *Indonesian Folk Tales*, Adelaide: Rigby


Kumar, A., 2000. *Lexical Evidence for Early Contact between Indonesian Languages and Japanese*, unpublished research paper


Mus, P., 1975. *India Seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa*. Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Paper on Southeast Asia No.3


Winstedt,R.O, 1926. ‘ The Founder of Malay Royalty and his Conquest of Saktimuna, the Serpent’, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol.4.no.3: 413-419


Fig. 1 Indian Naga

Tisa Naga image is from a base relief entitled "Arjuna's Penance" or "the Descent of the Ganges" at Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu. It dates from the Pallava Dynasty (7-8th AD).

http://www.yogamagik.com/yogamagik/links/links_research.htm

Fig. 2 Vishnu and Sesa Naga

Vishnu sleeps over Sesa during intervals of creation. The sculpture is from Gupta Temple, Deagarh, 425 AD

http://www.ultonart.com/history/Asia/India/sleepvishnu.jpg
Buddha, while posing of meditation, seated on a coiled-up nine-headed Naga. This stature features Lopburi art style. Ayutthaya, 13thC AD

http://www.trincoll.edu/classes/relg254pics/relg254pics/class9/it00000e.jpg

Vishnu is sitting on Garuda, shown fighting his enemy Nagas. The statue was originally in the back wall of Belahan in East Java. Middle of 11thC AD

http://www.majapahit.virtuala ve.net/Bhineka/bhineka.htm
Fig. 5 Naga at Angkor Wat

Five-headed Naga near by the water reservoirs of Angkor Complex.

http://www.hatano-uncet.ocn.ne.jp/.../naga/thumbnail/dsc08324.jpg

Fig. 6 Naga as Thai temple finial

Naga decoration from the top roof of the Buddhist Wat. Sukhothai art style. 14th century.

www.escaiti.com/photos/sukhot hai/style/naga.jpg
This dragon sculpture is on the roof of the Temple of Literature in Hanoi, built in 1070. It was regarded as a symbol of the protection of the country

Dragon is always closely linked with Chinese Imperious house. This dragon image is taken from ‘Nine Dragon Wall’, which surrounds Forbidden City in Beijing. This wall was built in 1756.