



Three Towers Buddhist Religious Structure: Ancient Temples in Indochina

Pathum Sookaromdee¹, Viroj Wiwanitkit²

¹Private Academic Consultant, Bangkok Thailand

²Adjunct Professor, Joseph Ayobabalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji, Nigeria;

Honorary Professor, Dr DY Patil Vidhyapeeth, Pune, India;

Visiting Professor, Hainan Medical University, China;

Visiting Professor, Faculty of Medicine, University of NIS, Serbia;

Adjunct Professor, Department of Eastern Medicine, Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Abstract

The architectural structure of the religious place is usually specially designed by the famous local artisan. It can reflect the local culture and way of life. In Indochina, Buddhism is a main religion and there are many Buddhist temples in this area. Many old Buddhist temples have its specific design. An interesting style is the three-tower style. In this article, the authors present and discuss some famous examples of ancient Buddhist temples in Indochina that pose specific three-tower structural architects.

Keywords: three, tower, Buddhist, temple, Indochina

Introduction

The renowned local craftsman often creates the architectural framework of the holy building. It may depict the culture and way of life in the area. Buddhism is a major religion in Indochina, and this region is home to numerous Buddhist temples. Numerous ancient Buddhist temples have this particular style. The three-tower form is an intriguing design. The authors of this article present and discuss some well-known examples of early Buddhist temples in Indochina that present unique structural challenges for three-tower architects.

Some examples of famous ancient three-tower Buddhist temple in Indochina

A. Thailand

The most famous case is the Phra Prang Samyot with is an ancient Khmer style temple located at Lopburi province. It locates in the city centro of the province and nowadays is protected as national heritage. There are several monkey in that area.

Another famous case is Wat Phra That Sam Daung which is located at Pan district, Chiangrai province. There are three stupas at this temple and it is the center for local Buddhist worshipping.

B. Myanmar

The Paya-thon-zu Temple in Bagan is the most well-known example. This ancient Buddhist temple is still preserved as national heritage. The three pagodas in the temple are interconnected and have an Indian Buddhist architectural design, which is comparatively uncommon in Bagan. Beautiful Buddha statues can be found inside the main entrance, and the three connected vaults are densely covered in other statues.

C. Lao

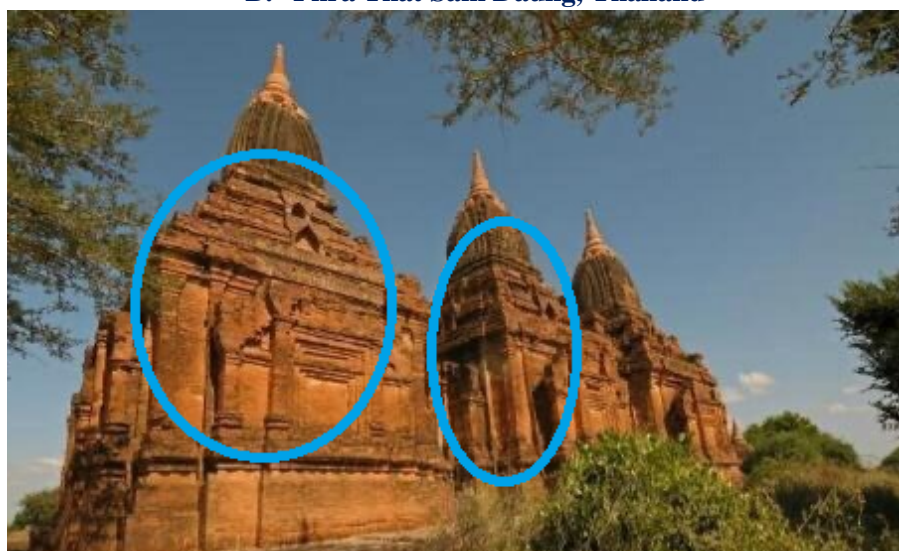
The most well-known case is That Sam Pang, which is located in the province of Cmapasak's Sukhuma district. This ancient Buddhist temple was constructed in the form of the three Khmer towers. It is still in good shape and serves as a place of worship for the neighborhood. There will be a famous local ceremony every year, and thousands of locals will go to pay their respects.



A. Phra Prang Samyot, Thailand



B. Phra That Sam Daung, Thailand



C. Paya-thon-zu, Myanmar



D. That Sam Pang, Lao

Figure 1. Famous three-tower style Buddhist temple in Indochina

Discussion

The Trimrti belief is the most common one in India (trimrti) [1]. The worship of three gods is the central notion. Old Indian architectural design is commonly linked to the concept of Trimrti [1]. This has an effect on the architectural style of regions like Indochina that acquire Indian cultural heritage. There was a religious merging when Buddhism first came in Indochina, producing incredibly unique national religious architecture. In addition, the Rattanatrai, Buddha, Dhamma, and Sagha yantras are highly revered among Buddhists [2]. The local temples' architecture also reflects the devotion to Rattanatrai. In Indochina, there are many well-known ancient temples with three big towers that are the main centers of devotion. Generally speaking, the architecture is well-planned.

The three towers doctrine may be distinct from that of Cambodia, which was the first country to absorb Hinduism from India. Ancient Khmer temples in Cambodia that practice Hinduism typically have five towers, or Prasat Pram, which are gifts to Shiva, Brahma, Narai, Lakshmi, and Murugan. However, the regions that further incorporate ancient Cambodian culture modify the design to fit with the Trimrti and Rattanatrai concepts. As a result, a very particular type of three-tower Buddhist temple becomes Indochina's unique heritage.

Conflict of interest

None

References

- Singlampong E. Trimurti /Sadasiva? Statue from Bangkok's National Museum. *Damrong Journal of the Faculty of Archaeology Silpakorn University*. 2009; 8: 68-80.
- Cholvijarn P. Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha yantras. *J Siam Soc*. 2021; 109: 63-82.