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MEETEE MEDHASITH SUKSUMRET : THE DEVELOPMENT OF WIANG KUM KAM BASED ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE. THESIS ADVISORS : ASSOC.PROF.SAYAN PRAICHARNJIT AND KONGKAEW WEERAPRAJAK. 298 pp.

The purpose of this research is to study the development of Wiang Kum Kam in three aspects including religious beliefs, relationships between Wiang Kum Kam and other ancient communities, and the roles of Wiang Kum Kam. This study is carried out by comparing, analyzing, and interpreting archaeological evidences found from excavations at Wiang Kum Kam. It is analyzed together with written evidences such as inscriptions, legends, and chronicles.

The study showed that Wiang Kum Kam had three periods of cultural development as stated below.

During the Haripunjaya period in the 12th-13th Century A.D., Wiang Kum Kam was a small community which received cultural influences from the kingdom of Haripunjaya. The people of Wiang Kum Kam practiced Buddhism combined with local beliefs. Archaeological evidences belonging to Mahayana Buddhism from Northeastern India and Lop Buri were also found. There were evidences of relationships between Wiang Kum Kam and ancient communities in the Chiang Mai - Lamphun basin as well as around the Chao Phraya River.

During the 14th Century A.D., King Mang Rai established Wiang Kum Kam as a capital. Buddhism as practiced then was influenced by the Haripunjaya culture, as evidenced by the Chedi Liam or Chedi Ku Kam. Later Wiang Kum Kam was influenced by Buddhism from Pagan, and an evidence was the plan of the vihara at the Chang Kam Kan Thom temple, which was thought to be an offering to the Buddha. Apart from Pagan, Wiang Kum Kam was also communicating with the Kingdom of Sukhothai. Important evidences are the Thai inscription fragments found at the Chedi Liam temple.

During the Lan Na period in the 15th-17th Century A.D., Wiang Kum Kam was a border city closed to Chiang Mai and was an important Buddhist community. There are evidences that the Kings of Wiang Kum Kam practiced acts of merit and were patrons of Buddhism. Wiang Kum Kam communicated with other ancient communities in Lan Na through trades and Buddhism. Its arts were closely related to the arts of Sukhothai, which is a result from the propagation of Lankan Buddhism by the monks of the Suan Dok and the Pa Dang sects. Chinese influences in the arts of Wiang Kum Kam were influences from Chiang Mai.

Department of Archaeology Graduate School, Silpakorn University Academic Year 2009

Student's signature

Thesis Advisors' signature 1. 2.