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Dvaravati, Si Thep, and Wendan.

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to better define the historical position of Wendan (Land Zhenla), an 8th-century kingdom known from Chinese sources, which had a capital in northeastern Thailand. The material evidence from Thailand, primarily in the form of Buddhist boundary stones, will not yield a coherent story until it is studied more deeply, with careful attention to issues of chronology. Architectural ruins in the Angkor region show that temple building (in contrast to what some have previously thought) fell off dramatically in about the second quarter of the 8th century, consistent with the hypothesis that the area fell under the domination of Wendan. For evidence that Angkor-region craftsmen were taken north by Wendan, it is necessary to look at sculpture and monumental remains taken from or remaining in Si Thep, a city likely to have stood west of Wendan's political center. Evidence from the Delta region ("Water Zhenla"), finally, dating from the second half of the 8th century, reveals contact with Si Thep in this period and also indicates that at least some of the craftsmen who worked on Mt. Kulen (probably beginning prior to Jayavarman II's coronation in 802) were likely to have been brought from this region.

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