

### *The Oath of Allegiance to a Khmer Sovereign*

Lawrence Palmer Briggs writes, "Having subdued all the [Khmer] Empire, Sūryavarman I [1002–1011] called on all the officials to come to the Royal Palace and to take the oath of allegiance to him. Eight inscriptions, in Khmer, containing the oath, are found on the pillars of the Gopura of the Royal Palace, in which about 4,000 names may be counted. Here is the oath" (The Ancient Khmer Empire, p. 151).

In 933c\* (A.D. 1011) . . . August–September . . . This is the oath which we, belonging to the body of *Tamvrac* (guard) of the first (second, third, or fourth) category, swear, all, without exception, cutting our hands, offering our lives and our devotion gratefully, without fault, to H. M. Srī Sūryavarmadeva, who has been in complete enjoyment of sovereignty since 924c\* (A.D. 1002), in the presence of the sacred fire, of the holy jewel, the brahmans and the *ācāryas* [teachers]. We will not revere another king, we shall never be hostile (to our king), and will not be accomplices of any enemy, we will not try to harm him in any way. All actions which are the fruit of our thankful devotion to H. M. Srī Sūryavarmadeva, we pledge ourselves to perform them. If there is war, we promise to fight and to risk life, with all our soul, in devotion towards our King. If there is no war and we die by suicide or sudden death, may we obtain the recompense of people devoted to their masters. If our existence remains at the service of His Majesty up to our death, we will perform our task with devotion to the King, whatever may be the time and circumstances of our

Lawrence Palmer Briggs, *The Ancient Khmer Empire* (Philadelphia, Pa.: The American Philosophical Society, 1951), p. 151. By permission of The American Philosophical Society.

\* The designation "c" means that the date in this inscription was reckoned in the Śaka system of computations, introduced into Indochina from India about the fifth century.

death. If His Majesty orders us to go far away, to obtain information on any matter, we will try to learn the thing in detail and each of us to keep this promise in whatever concerns us. If all of us who are here in person do not keep this oath with regard to His Majesty, may He still reign long, we ask that He inflict on us royal punishment of all sorts. If we hide ourselves in order not to keep this oath strictly, may we be reborn in the thirty-second hell as long as the sun and the moon shall last. If we fulfil this promise without fault, may His Majesty give orders for the maintenance of the pious foundations of our country and for the sustenance of our families, because we are devoted to our master, His Majesty, Sūryavarmadeva, who has enjoyed complete sovereignty since 924 śaka (A.D. 1002); and may we obtain the recompense of people devoted to our masters, in this and the other world.

*master* *lord* *sovereign* *was not by ourselves*