

## The Value of the Buddhist Art as depicted the Khmer Castles in Surin Province

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**Abstract:** The purposes of this article were 1) to present the Buddhist art as depicted in the Khmer castles, to examine the value of Buddhist art as depicted in the Khmer castles. Historical documents and archaeological evidence were used. The result indicated that: When Buddhism was spread into the Suvarnabhumi region during the 3rd century AD, there was a devotee and dedication to create art related to Buddhism. Thus, this art is called Buddhist art. Among all the important civilizations in this world, the Khmer civilization, which is one of the important civilizations in Southeast Asia. The forms of Khmer architecture or Lopburi architecture can be divided into 3 types: (1) Devalai or temple (2) Dhammasala, accommodation for travelers, or houses with lights (3) Arogayasala (Chapel of the hospital). Surin province is located in the northeast of Thailand. There are a large number of Khmer castles. In this province, the castles of Brahmanism and Buddhism had been settled. The Buddhist arts had reflected through architecture. It was indicated that this area used to have Mahayana Buddhism. Although the Buddhist Mahayana sect at present has deteriorated. Historical evidence and values still exist nowadays

**Index Terms:** Buddhist Art, Khmer Castle, Surin Province

### 1. Introduction

Buddhism spread into the land of Suvarnabhumi during the 3rd-century Buddhist era, resulting in people who had faith and dedicated themselves to creating Buddhist-related artworks to offer Buddhism. It is called "Buddhist Art". The word Buddhist art or Buddhist art can be separated into two words: Buddhism + art, which is a story about Buddhism and is a term used to refer to the Buddha. The word art is a story of beauty, satisfaction in object humans create. Therefore, the overall meaning of Buddhist art is man-made for beauty. It is a Buddhist worshipper in Buddhism. [1] The true purpose of Buddhist art is to create a mentally valuable effect, to bring happiness, peace, and shade, therefore it is said that Buddhist art is like a bridge of merit or a medium that brings faith in Buddhism. Buddhist art that appears in all its areas is a manifestation of the levitation of Buddhist companies for all ages that have appeared in the eyes to the present day. [2] On this connection, Elements of human-made work It is possible to identify what is the art or not. Art must also be a work in which elements with 5 things are (1) human beings, (2) ideas, human intellect, (3) human actions, (4) satisfying beauty, and (5) popularity. [3] Fine art, a branch of art, which is "a work of human perseverance, in addition to hand-trying and with ideas, must be focused on what is done to gain wisdom, thoughts, and feelings of mentality, spout and infiltrate it."

### 2. The Khmer Civilization In Thailand

Among the major civilizations in the world, the ancient Khmer civilization, which thrived between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, was one of the most important civilizations in southeast Asia. It spans from Khmer lake to the lower northeast of Thailand and the southern part of Laos today, including the mouth of the Mekong river in southern Vietnam today. [4]

The arts of the Khmer Castle are classified as building construction, buildings, urban planning (which) are divided into 3 types: (1) woodworking, (2) stone making, and (3) reinforce concrete. [5] Therefore, Religious architecture, which is one of five works of fine art created by mankind in different areas by human race groups in each area. On this point, this religious architecture is a religious site that indicates the prosperity of human society in the area as a nation of shame. Especially the castles that were built in different eras under the Khamarian people. The meaning of Khmer, Chitra Bhommisak assumes that the word "Khmer" is probably from the word "Ka-lom" or "Karaom", meaning south or low. Later, ancient Thais called the ethnic groups that lived in the Mekong and Chao Phraya rivers up to Shan State. [6] There were pieces of evidence in the Sukhothai period inscriptions at Wat Sri Chum at one point: Khmer called the Dhamma, and there is a chronicle of the Ayutthaya period that refers to the Khmer people and the Khmer countries. [7] The word is used in Tai Lue, Tai Yai, Burmese, Lao, etc. with different meanings, but in conclusion, the word "Khmer" is probably derived from the word "Khmer". Probably

from the word “Ka-lom” or “Khamer-khrom” [8] On this point, Santi Mueangsukh shows the attitude of the Khmer art in Thailand that the Khmer art in Thailand or Lopburi art refers to art created under the influence of Khmer culture. If we study the art found in Thailand, it is comparable to the art of Cambodia, and it is similar to the art of Phra Nakhon or Angkor that was spreading in the Northeast and into central Thailand. [9] which is conforming to Mr. Supattaradit Dishul, who expressed his thoughts: Khmer art was widespread in Cambodia and neighboring countries during the 12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century. In the early stages, it resembled a lot of Indian art. Later, it became even more self-centered and featured beautiful ornamental patterns that did not appear in Indian art before. All sculptures show stiffness, and the show of power style is not found in Indian art either. [10]

Therefore, the forms of Khmer architecture or Lopburi architecture can be divided into 3 types: (1) Devalai or temple (2) Dhammasala, accommodation for travelers, or houses with lights (3) Arogayasala (Chapel of the hospital). [11] 1) The Lopburi art group of the former Mon Dvaravati people, dating between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries 2) The Lavo or Lopburi art group is a Khmer hybrid art in Thailand that dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century or 1010-1237 and (3) a Buddhist high-rise art group that settled in Thailand. It lived between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. [12]

According to archaeological evidence, the Khmer or Khmer civilization in Cambodia reached its peak in the Buddhist 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century, and then spreading into the lower northeastern regions, as pieces of evidence by many Khmer civilizations such as both stone castles, and ancient cities. Surin province is one of the border provinces between Thailand and Cambodia and another province located in the northeastern region of Thailand. In this province, there are a large number of archaeological pieces of evidence of the civilization of Khmer castles and through media from Surin provincial seal, the image of Indra (God) riding an elephant and the back is a picture of a Khmer castle. Surin province has been home to elephants since ancient times, and wild elephants are always adopted. The horoscope of Surin province has a picture of an elephant. The Surin portion of the title is a compound of two words: “Sura” and “Indra” derived from the Sanskrit words which mean the brave Intra, and the picture of the castle in the behind, that the scenes show the construction influence of ancient Khmer, which exists in much of the region. [13]

According to the chronicle of Surin, this area was a major source of Thai nationalism during the powerfull period. The city, named Khunketu, has several ancient creations and Thai characters inscribed in the Northeastern region. Thailand has deteriorated to retreat elsewhere; Khmer kingdom has established the capital at Phimai city. [14] As shown in the stone inscription at Ban Prasat as follows:

*Sitthikariya baromnathjatibhirom Samajatapasikarara Chao Sangharaja Buddhawongsa and Chao Somdej Utamavarapanya and Chao Kes Chao Somdejhotawvongsa Chao vongsa, Chao Nagriwonsa and Chao Meaung Debaraja, Khunkrai, Khunkeaw, Khunsri, Tangta, Khunchan, Old people, parents, siblings, relatives and All the descendants at the same time created 3 Mahadhatu with God's religion for as long as five millennia. Nibbana paccayo hotu”* [15]

### 3. Surin Province As The Land Of The Khmer Castle

Surin province has the following territories: northern territory contacts Mahasakham province and Roi Et province and Sisaket province. To the south, it borders Oddar Meanchey of Cambodia. The east is in contact with Sisaket province, the west is in contact with Buriram province. The capital, Surin province, in the western central region province, is 454km. Surin covers a total area of 381.9,101km [16]

The province is divided into 17 districts. The districts are further divided into 158 sub-districts and 2011 villages. The seventeen districts are (1) Mueangsurin district, (2) champhonpuri district, (3) Thatum district, (4) Chomphra district, (5) Prasat district, (6) Kapchoeng district, (7) Rattanaburi district, (8) Sanom district, (9) Sikhorphum district, (10) Sangkha district, (11) Lamduan district, (12) Samrongthap district, (13) Buachet district, (14) Phanomdongrak district, (15) Srinarong district, (16) Khwaosinarin district, and (16) Nonnarai district. The main castles in Surin province are separated into castle groups of each district. The sort number of castles in ascending order as follows:

Sangkha district: there are six castles, including (1) Prasat Phum Pon, Dom sub-district, (2) Prasatsangsilapachai Krathiam sub-district, (3) Prasat Meechai, Krathiam sub-district, (4) Prasat Yai Ngao, Sangkha sub-district, (5) Prasat Banchan, Banchan sub-district, and (6) Prasat Ban Dan.

Prasat district: there are four castles, including (1) Prasat Ban Pluang, (2) Prasat Ban Plai (3) Prasat Ban Thanong and (4) Prasat Angkanbho.

Mueangsurin district: there are three castles, including (1) Prasat Mueang Tee, Mueang Tee Sub-district, Mueang Surin district, (2) Oranga, Chaeng sub-district, and (3) Prasat Khao Phanom Sawai, Muang Surin district. In addition to the stone castles, there are traces of ancient towns in the Surin district as reflected at Surin city walls and moats on both sides, the outer and inner floors.

Sikhoraphum district, there are three Prasat namely: (1) Prasat Changpi in Changpi sub-district, (2) Prasat Srikhoraphum or Prasat Ban Ra-ngaeng in Ra-ngaeng sub-district, and (3) Prasat Ban Anan or Prasat Anar in Yang sub-district

Buachet district, only one Prasat is Prasat Ta Moy or Ta Mon in Buachet sub-district, and further one Phoo (hill) known as Phoo Sala which located as seem area.

Thatum district: there are two Prasats namely: (1) Prasat Ban Ballung, Thatum sub-district, (2) Prasat Nang Bautum, and the other archaeological site is: Non Taen, Ponkrod sub-district.

Lamduan district: there are three Prasats namely: (1) Prasat Ta Priang Tia or Prasat Ra Biang Tia, Ta Priang Tra, Sub-district, (2) Prasat Ban kraduk, Lumduan sub-district.

Phanomdongrak district. There are three Prasats namely: (1) Prasat Ta Muen, Bakdai sub-district, (2) Prasat Ta Muen Tuj, Bakdai sub-district, and (3) Prasat Ta Muen Thom

Kapchoeng district: there are two Prasats: (1) Prasat Ban Beng, Prasatbeang sub-district, (2) Prasat Moncharoen, Kapchoeng sub-district.

Khwaosinarin district: there are two Prasats: Prasat Keaw, Ban Rae sub-district, and Prasat Tongh Ta Kuk sub-district.

Samrongthap district: only one Prasat known as Prasat Muensrinoi, Muensrinoi sub-district.

Chomphra district. there is one Prasat: Prasat Champhra in Champra sub-district.

Sanom district: only one Prasat is Prasat Ban Sanom, Sanom sub-district.

From the ancient Castle group, there is also an archaeological site known as Prang (Pagoda). The other two places in Rattanakumburi districts are (1) Prang of Wat Bhosridhatu, That sub-district (2) Prang of Wat Nonghin, Rae sub-district, and the further one archaeological sites of Wat Pa Dong Nam Kham, Chhead sub-district.

#### **4. The Buddhist Art As Depicted In The Khmer Castle In Surin Province**

##### **A. Architecture**

From all the archaeological evidence that has emerged, it was found that the Buddhist castle of Buddhism in the Mahayana Vajrayana sect, as evidenced in the inscription of King Jayavarman VII (which has) mentioned the resolution of the establishment of Arogayasala, or medical facility in the year 1108 (1729), mentioned the resolution of the establishment of Arogayasala, or medical facility in the year 1108 (1729 B.E.), in 1020. [17]

(1) Arogayasala: According to the evidence inscription, Prasat Ta Prohm of King Jayaraman VII stated, eighteen of Arogayasala appears in all similar inscriptions, found in seven digits of Arogayasala, seventeen of which are found in Thailand. There are similarities in "Arogayasala" consists of two parts: (1) a medical facility and (2) Suttalaya (or stone castle) where it is enshrined of "Bhaisajya-guru-vaidūrya-prabhā" or the Buddha, who is the teacher of the doctor who has the light of the province as the radian of Paitoon." [19] As for the management of the medical facility, or Arogayasala, Jaruwan Phuengthian stated, "A large Arogayasala has 200 staff, 50 staff, and he will donate these Arogayasala medicines three times a year." [20] On this point, Nowadays, only in the northeastern region of Thailand, the Suttalaya, a total of the Arogayasala religious sites, nearly a third of the total number of Arogayasala, was found, and 12 Arogayasala stones were found" [21]

(2) Suttalaya: In Surin province, there were five Suttalaya surveys: (1) Ban Prasat castle, Ban Thanon, Krathiam sub-district, Sangkha district (2) Changpi Castle. Ban Chang Phi, Chang Phi Sub-district, Shikharaphum District (3) Chom Phra Castle Ban Chom Phra, Chom Phra Subdistrict, Chom Phra District (4) Ban Chaniang Castle Ban Chao Nyong (5) Castle of Ta Muen Tuj Ban Nong Khanna, Tambol Tahmyeong, Phanom Dong Rak District" [22]

##### **B. The Idols Sculptures**

1) Evidence of the discovery of the sculpture: Based on the archaeological evidence presented in Surin Province, Three main inscriptions were also found in the 7th inscription group: (1) Castle Inscription (Soro.4), (2) Ta Muen Tuj Inscription (Sora.1) and (3) Surin Inscription (Soar.6). [23] During this period, a large number of idolatry sculptures were created, especially idolatry in Mahayana Buddhism, such as the Buddha image, the Nagaprak Buddha, Vajrasat, Vajrapani Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, etc., especially in the two main castles, Prasat Ta Muen and Prasat Ta Muen Tuj. According to the discovery of archaeological evidence, "The stone inscription of King Jayaraman VII on the 7th day of Arogayasala was found in the 1<sup>st</sup> letter of the Sanskrit language, mentioning

Bhaisajyaguru, Bodhisattva, who gave no disease to the revered people, and in the Prasat Chomphra, Chomphra district. Important antiquities were found in the heads of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Vajrasat too.

## 2) Meaning and importance of idol sculpture

### 1. Bhaisajyaguru

The dominant concept of Mahayana Buddhism, which Theravada Buddhism does not have, is about the concept of respect and worship Bhaisajyaguru, especially in Tibet. China and Japan, which have faith in Him As a medical Buddha with the power to treat both physical and spiritual diseases. [24] Therefore, the full name of this Bodhisattva is “Bhaisajya-guru-vaidūrya-prabhā-rāja” His name refers to the Lord, who is the teacher of medicine. A person with a blue radius as Paitoon. Your other names are Bhaisajyaguru Raja Buddha of medicine, Mahabhaisajgururajabuddha.” [25] But in the view of Western Buddhist scholars, his meaning is “The Medicine Buddha” [26] Which means Medical Buddha or Healing Buddha” [27] It means Medical Buddha, and “Master of Healing” [28] Overall, the idea of him is that he is a Buddha about medicine or medicine, intending to help to save animals from diseases such as physical and mental diseases, namely stupidity or disease.

Appearance: the Buddhist appearance or appearance has been created as idolatry, especially in the section Revering the Buddha or Master of Healing. Most of his idols are enshrined alongside The Buddha. He holds a glass of Paitoon and is adorned with dark blue Ratana stone. There is a belief that there are health care properties. His body looks like a Paitoon glass and is illuminated during the period.” [29] There is a difference in the subtleties of each country, as it appears in the Chinese faith, his figure is in a meditation position, with Ratanacetiya placed on his hands, some holding a jar of medicine.”[30] But D. Keown said it was a “bottle of detergent.”[31] In the Tibetan dimension of faith, “...He has a dark blue body, meditation, right hand holding herbal medicine It is considered to be a Buddha that can cure physical and karma diseases of the animal world...” [32] In general, “The image of His majesty is usually located on the left side of The Buddha’s Buddha image and is finished to the east (as opposed to Amitabha) in the Buddha’s punditry, and there are twelve great protectors. The Bhaisajya-guru-vaidūrya-prabhatahagara Sutra Ven. Dhammagup (1702-1667) was translated into Chinese.” [33]

Belief: Bhaisajyaguru is widely revered among Mahayana Buddhists, but does not have its sect-like Amitabh. He has the Vidruya pure land that is like the great pure land of the Amitabh. It had mentioned in scriptures of Bhaisajyaguru-vaidūryaprabha-saptabuddhapurvapanidhana Sutra also. He said that he was one of the seven Bhaisajyaguru disciples: Suriyapraha Bodhisattva and Candrapraha Bodhisattva. The Pavaresa-metal Buddha image was created exclusively in the Kingdom of Thailand. Because Buddhism is very similar to Bhaisajyaguru. [34] Therefore, the faith of Mahayana Buddhists is believed to be the Buddha of medical treatment. He cures all kinds of diseases, including ignorance. In this context, the Bhaisajyaguru-vaidūryaprabha Tathagara Sutra discussed His resolution to keep animals free from all diseases. [35] On this connection, for the respect of his worship, especially in the Chinese health care ritual, the people had to keep eight verses over 7 days, pay tribute to the monks, worship the Buddha, and recede His Majesty the Buddha 75 times, and then create seven more of His idols, and then contemplate the Buddha image, which is his idol. For reasons to want to liven up with His spiritual and healing powers. At this point, it is to encourage those who believe in the power of faith towards Him. [36]

2.Vajrasattva: The supreme Buddha of the Tantra sect refers to the strongest buddha, which is considered to be the highest principle of unity. The word “Vajra” here refers to the eye, and the word “Sattva” refers to the purity that appears in all things in the universe. Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva is also considered to be pure, devoid of morality, possessing the universe, and the axis of all Dhamma. Vajrasattva describes Vajrasattva as one with Dhammakaya but sometimes describes it separately as the 4<sup>th</sup> body of a Buddha called Sahaskayana. The evolution of the idea of Vajrasattva when describing Vajrasattva as the ordinary of the Buddha or the Adhibudha, which has five meditative attributes linked to five Dhyani Buddha are Vairochana, Ratanasambhava, Amitabha, Amoghasitthi, and Akshobhya Each of them is great above the five aggregates namely: corporeality, sensation, perception, mental formation, and consciousness respectively, consort of Vajrasattva is Vajravarahi or Prajnaparamita. Nepalese tradition prefers to write hand-stamped images of crescent moons over diamonds in the middle of lotus flowers on the summit of the Sumeru mountain, which is considered the center of the universe. Vajrasattva is popularly formed as a link, meaning the birthplace is Adhibuddha. In Tibet Vajrasattva usually sits on a lotus flower in a diamond scrub, but sometimes hangs his right on a lotus, crowned in the same way as Dhayani, his right hand is at chest level, and his left-hand holds a hip-level bell, as is usual in a yap-yum position, where his feud holds a cup made of a skull. Vajrasattva is a poster worshipped at a ceremony only for those attending the ceremony in Vajrasattva. [37]

3. Vajrapani Bodhisatta: If translated according to the terminology, it can be translated as “The Bearer of The Vajra” as believing a bodhisattva instead of the whole power of Buddha, as Avalokitesvara symbolizes greatness and Manjusri as a symbol of wisdom. Thus, Vajrapani Bodhisatta believes that he can eliminate all patsy, sometimes with the king in Yap-Yum poster. The foot pedals the man in the sign of defeating ignorance. [38]

4. Avakokitesvara: He has a bodhisattva status, one of the most important of which is Mahayana Buddhism. He is the majestic bodhisattva of the Buddha, consisting of mercy and grace to save the animals from adversity, especially when traveling or experiencing fires, etc. One incarnation of Avalokitesvara is a feminist namely Guan Yin, a Buddhist bodhisattva in East Asia, namely China, Japan, and Korea. In Tibet, worship Tara, the king of Avalokitesvara, and worship da Lai Lama XIV as one incarnation of this Bodhisattva too. [39]

## **6. The Value Of Buddhist Arts In Surin Province As Related To The Khmer Castle**

The value of Buddhist art appeared in the Khmer castles in Surin province. From studying the documents and field data studies. It found that in seven aspects.

1) The uniqueness of the province: Surin is a province where many castles appear, so one of the mottoes of Surin is that Surin province is the city of a castle, and also, Surin provincial seal including the flag of Surin province and castle holes in it. This is because the Khmer castle is the center of faith, which assistances support the unity of the Surin people.

2) Educational aspect: since the castle doesn't have written recordings, the value lies in the Khmer castle that tells the story of history and stories by engraving them. Therefore, the Khmer castle is a historical learning center, enhancing the knowledge that must be preserved forever and also reliable. It is pronounced, educational, historically stereotyped. It is highly valued for the way of life of locals, such as culture, belief, beauty, humility. Also, the stories that appear in the inscription in the castle give us an idea of history. Events conducted by ancient peoples, including culture, education, governance. The characteristics of letters and evolution, which are especially useful in the field of letters.

3) Economic aspect: the Buddhist art of the Khmer castle appeared in Khmer castle. It is an economic stimulus that is when each castle is important both historically and psychologically important to society. Nodaway, the Khmer castle is generally a tourist attraction both inside and outside the country. Therefore, the government has established a system for tourism around the castles. Besides, products related to the Khmer castle have been created such as silk pattern design, shirts, souvenirs, coins, mock stone castles, print castle motifs to weave, and more or even the imitation side building to shape the Khmer castle to build a modern office building. etc.

4) Political aspect: the Buddhist art of the Khmer castle appeared in Khmer castle as a means to govern the people of the kingdom of the leaders. This is for the unity of people in society, which, if any society has a solid faith in the sacred things that appear through Buddhist art in Khmer castle, will not be possible. The society of the community is in a normal way, free from physical and mental harm.

5) Social aspect: the values of Buddhist art that have appeared in the Khmer castle of society are Buddhism and Brahmin Hinduism. Buddhism, in particular, has been passed down to the present day and influenced the creation of arts and culture as well as the way of life of people living in Surin province. Therefore, the Khmer castles are the center of the hearts of local Buddhists. Even though almost all the castles, ordinary, were built in Hinduism castle before becoming a Buddhist later, so there is a mixed-faith background between ghost-Brahmanism-Buddhism. In each year, residents living around the castle hold annual sacrifices for the well-being of the people of society, and food security too. Therefore, the Khmer castle is a great means to control people in society together, directly or indirectly. Besides, the Khmer castle is also a showcase of the civilization of the Surin people from the past to the present.

6) Aesthetic aspect: This aesthetic value, architecture, figures, castle motifs satisfy the mood or feelings of beauty, imagination, love, kindness to sentient beings, etc. The Buddhist art that appears in the Khmer castle is a great legacy of the nation of Thailand and is a particulate matter in Khao Phanom Dong Rak that reflects the way of life, social well-being, belief, tradition dress, code, etc. It is the artistic nature of the collective garden of the people in the Phanom Dong Rak mountain regain. Therefore, if you the Buddhist art that appeared in each of those days has its aesthetic characteristics. Art has changed and passed down to society due to the inter-community relationship. People with higher cultures have more magnificent art. There are techniques for creating better work, it will always convey both faith and art to communities with inferior cultures. At this point, the Buddhist art that appears in the Khmer castle most often conveys that the natures of Buddhism which is peaceful, bright, and clean that appears in people's minds and then reflects outside.

7) Other aspects: culture, traditions, villagers educators teachers in the arts and culture line have removed patterns from the Khmer castle to make costumes for performances, including aspects such as the legendary of Prasat Pan Pee (Millennia), which is associated with the Khmer castle, and the story shows are tied to the path to the castles, especially the Buddhist castles that appeared in both idolatry and beliefs along the route from the golden-era center to the Kingdom of Thailand at presently.

## 7. Conclusion

Therefore, according to the pieces of evidence of the Mahayana Buddhist objects that appeared in these Castles, it is archaeological empirical data, which can indicate that in the area of Surin province, there used to be an area where Mahayana Buddhism, the Vajrayana, was passed down before Theravada Buddhism. This Vajrayana has a significant influence on beliefs and deep roots in the minds of the people of the area. Until, there were Buddhists who had a firm faith in the Tri-ratana, and created Buddhist objects and sculptures to become Buddhist worshippers, and proclaimed the power of faith towards the principles of Buddhist teachings. In Surin province, a Buddhist monastery was built and idolatry was created, as the carvings of Bhaisajyaguru were found. Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara Animal watch, or the pattern of the castle that appears in front of the bun. It all represents the beliefs and influences of influential Mahayana Buddhism in Surin province. These Buddhist arts evidence represent the prosperity of the ancient kingdom of Khmer with archaeological evidence since the time of the kingdom of Jenla, which has influenced the area of the southeast, especially Surin for more than 1,000 years, as well as the creation of architecture and idol sculptures due to Buddhist art to the general public. In the area of Surin and nearby provinces, which are still valuable and influence the beliefs and lifestyles of the people

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