

**Buddhism and Brahmanism in the Dvāravatī Period of Thailand: Interpreting
Epigraphy, Sculptures and Architecture**

Natpiya Saradum *

Dvāravatī is the earliest period of Thailand that can be found its trace by the remaining evidence dated around the 6th -12th centuries CE. With regard to the evidence of epigraphy, sculptures and architecture of the Dvāravatī, its sovereign state could have been a kingdom. The centre of this kingdom could have been located at central Thailand around Nakhon Pathom province. Its political and artistic traditions could have influenced other ancient cities by a loosely *maṅ ḍala* system. Most evidence indicates that Theravāda Buddhism was the main belief of its people. However, Mahāyāna Buddhism and Brahmanism could have also influenced the Dvāravatī tradition. Particularly, the Brahman evidence suggests that it was significant as a royal insignia. Dvāravatī kings could have supported both Buddhism and Brahmanism. These two religions could have influenced the Dvāravatī society in the different functions. Therefore, this article will clarify the propagation of Buddhism and Brahmanism in the earliest period of Thailand as comparative studies with regard to the analysis of epigraphy, sculptures and architecture of the Dvāravatī period. The Dvāravatī remaining evidence and other relevant sources will be used as references in this research.

Keywords: Dvāravatī, Buddhism, Brahmanism, comparative studies.

* Researcher, Dhammachai International Research Institute (DIRI) of Australia and New Zealand.
natpiya215@gmail.com