

# CAMBODIA



## STYLES & TITLES:

The Cambodian court, in common with those of Thailand, Burma and Laos, largely follows ancient Hindu traditions. The styles and titles are consequently extremely complex, with an almost infinite variety of gradations expressed with great subtlety.

**The Sovereign:** The Kings of Cambodia, in common with many Asian rulers, adopt a unique series of reign titles at their Coronation or accession ceremonies. However, most Kings have included the titles of *Brhat Pada*, *Samdach Brhat*, *Varman*, *Rajadhiraja*, *Parama*, and *Adipati*. Changes in status of a ruler may be signified by subtle alterations to these titles during a reign. The Anglicised title is King of Cambodia, with the style of *His Majesty*.

European writers have tried to simplify matters by seizing on one or more of the reign titles and used them as names. Sometimes, they have invented altogether new "names" by joining parts of princely titles with parts of personal names. In our terms, the equivalent would be to style our own dear monarch, not as Queen "Elizabeth the Second", but as Queen "Defender the Twentieth" or Queen "Duchess Edinburgh-Alexandra the First". Amusing though these renditions may be, they have now established themselves in modern historical texts. Consequently, I have had to include them [in parenthesis], to ease identification.

Several individuals may legitimately hold the rank and title of King, at the same time. However, the long series of titles enable the use of subtle differences in styles to indicate the precise status of any individual within the hierarchy of kings. The place in that hierarchy depends on the use of the following words and phrases:

- 1) *Samdach* together with *Sdach*: Supreme King. Usually signifies the existence of one or more other Kings at the same time.
- 2) *Sdach* without *Samdach*: King. Usually signifies the existence of a Supreme King.
- 3) *Maha Upayavaraja*: 'Great Joint King'. Usually borne by Kings who had abdicated but retained executive powers. Sometimes also conferred on powerful regents who exercised executive powers.
- 4) *Snag*: Deputy. Usually signifies the exercise of executive powers by a ruling King alongside the existence of a reigning monarch.
- 5) *Maha Uparaja*: 'Great Secondary King', or Viceroy. Usually borne by the Heir Apparent, but not necessarily the eldest son of the reigning monarch.

The senior wives of the Sovereign: Traditionally, the three principal wives of the sovereign were styled as follows:

- 1) Queen (*Samdach Brhat Anga Akka Mahasuri*), with the style of *Her Majesty*, for the principal wife, if a paternal half-sister.
- 2) Queen (*Samdach Brhat Anga Mahasuri*), with the style of *Her Majesty*, for the principal wife, if a Royal princess, married to the King by a Brahmin priest, and presented with a Conch and white parasol at the marriage ceremony.
- 3) Queen (*Samdach Brhat Anga Raj Devi*), with the style of *Her Majesty*, for the second wife, if a Royal princess, married according to a less formal marriage ceremony, but also presented with a conch and white parasol).
- 4) Princess (*Samdach Brhat Anga Jaya*), with the style of *Her Royal Highness*, for the third wife, if a Royal princess not presented with a white parasol or conch, during the marriage ceremony.

The junior wives of the sovereign, who were not of Royal rank, were styled *Chao Chom* and divided into six ranks:

- 5) *Brhat Priya* or, *Brhat Parama*.
- 6) *Brhat Snam* or, *Brhat Mnan*.
- 7) *Brhat Sri Ngar* or, *Brhat Me Nan*.
- 8) *Brhat Karuma Kar* or, *Brhat Nan*.
- 9) *Brhat Sri Kar* or, *Anak Mnan*.
- 10) *Brhat Kam Nan* or, *Anak Nan*.

The sons of the Sovereign hold the rank of *Brhat Raj Putra*, and enjoy the following titles:

- 1) Prince (*Samdach Brhat Raj Urasa*), with the style of *His Royal Highness*, for a son of the Chief Queen, or second Queen.
- 2) Prince (*Samdach Brhat Parama Raj Putra*), with the style of *His Royal Highness*, for a son of the Chief Queen, or the second or third Queen's.
- 3) Prince (*Samdach Brhat Arya Putra*), with the style of *His Royal Highness*, for a son of the Chief Queen, or second or third Queen's.
- 4) Prince (*Brhat Anga Machas*), with the style of *His Royal Highness*, for the sons of the sovereign by his third Queen, or conferred by brevet on the children of a *Chao Chom* or an *Anak*.
- The first two titles usually conferred by brevet, in the form of promotions.

The grandsons and other male descendants of a Sovereign, in the male line:

- 1) Prince (*Brhat Priya Putra Kshatra*), with the style of *His Royal Highness*, for the sons of:
  - a) *Maha Uparaja* or the *Maha Upayavaraja* by a *Brhat Mahasuri* or *Brhat Raj Devi*.

- b) *Samdach* by a *Brhat Devi*.
  - c) *Brhat Anga Machas* by a *Brhat Jaya* or *Jaya*.
- 2) Prince (*Brhat Anga Machas*), with the style of *His Royal Highness*, for the sons of:
  - a) *Maha Uparaja* or the *Maha Upayuvaraja* by a wife who was not a princess.
  - b) *Samdach*, by a *Brhat Devi*.
  - c) *Brhat Anga Machas*, by a wife of equal rank.
- 3) Prince (*Anak Anga Machas*), with the style of *His Highness*, for the sons of:
  - a) *Samdach*, by a *Brhat Jaya*.
  - b) *Brhat Anga Machas*, by an *Anak Anga Machas*.
  - c) *Anak Mnan*.
- 4) Prince (*Anak Anga Raja Varman*)\*, with the style of *His Excellency*, for the sons of:
  - a) *Anak Anga Machas* by a *Samrap*.
  - b) *Anak Raja Varman* by a wife of the same rank.
  - Not entitled to the use of Royal vocabulary.
- 5) *Brhat Varman*, with the style of *His Excellency*, for the sons of:
  - a) *Anak Raja Varman* by a wife holding a rank less than his own.
  - b) *Brhat Varman* by a wife of the same rank.
  - Not entitled to the use of Royal vocabulary.

The daughters of the Sovereign:

- 1) Princess (*Samdach Brhat Raja Thida*), with the style of *Her Royal Highness*, for a daughter of the Chief Queen or second Queen.
- 2) Princess (*Samdach Brhat Raj Putri*), with the style of *Her Royal Highness*, for a daughter of the third Queen.
- 3) Princess (*Brhat Anga Machas*), with the style of *Her Royal Highness*, for a daughter of a *Chao Chom*.

The grand-daughters and other female descendants of a Sovereign, in the male line:

- 1) Princess (*Brhat Priya Putri Khsatriya*), with the style of *Her Royal Highness*, for the daughters of:
  - a) *Maha Uparaja* or the *Maha Upayuvaraja* by a *Brhat Mahasuri* or *Brhat Raj Devi*.
  - b) *Samdach* by a *Brhat Devi*.
  - c) *Brhat Anga Machas* by a *Brhat Jaya* or *Jaya*.
- 2) Princess (*Brhat Anga Machas*), with the style of *Her Royal Highness*, for the daughters of:
  - a) *Maha Uparaja* or the *Maha Upayuvaraja* by a wife who was not a princess.
  - b) *Samdach* by a Princess of the rank of *Brhat Anga Machas*.
  - c) *Brhat Anga Machas* by a wife of equal rank.
- 3) Princess (*Anak Anga Machas*), with the style of *Her Highness*, for the daughters of:
  - a) *Samdach* by a *Brhat Jaya*.
  - b) *Brhat Anga Machas* by an *Anak Anga Machas*.
  - c) *Anak Mnan*.
- 4) Princess (*Anak Anga Raja Varman*)\*, with the style of *Her Excellency*, for the daughters of:

- a) *Anak Anga Machas* by a *Samrap*.
- b) *Anak Raja Varman* by a wife of the same rank.
- Not entitled to the use of Royal vocabulary.
- 5) *Brhat Varman*, with the style of *Her Excellency*, for the daughters of:
  - a) *Anak Raja Varman* by a wife holding a rank less than his own.
  - b) *Brhat Varman* by a wife of the same rank.
- Not entitled to the use of Royal vocabulary.
- \* in common with Thai practice and until very recent times, these ranks were not usually transliterated as Prince or Princess.

Senior members of the Royal House also receive 'Krum' titles, the equivalent to our 'Royal' Dukedoms or peerages. These are conferred on Princes or Princesses who have held some important public office or position. They are held alongside the regular royal styles and titles, are not hereditary and usually confined to the sons and daughters of a King. The order of precedence is:

- *Samdach Krum Brhat Anga*: usually conjoined with that of *Mahasena* and limited to Princes who have held the post of Prime Minister.
- *Samdach Krum Brhat*
- *Samdach Krum Luang*
- *Samdach Krum Khun*
- *Samdach Krum Muen*

The senior wives of the *Maha Upayavaraja* or the *Maha Uparaja*, traditionally enjoyed the following titles:

- 1) *Samdach Brhat Mahasuri*: for the principal consort, if a Princess and married by a Brahmin priest and presented with a conch and white parasol during the marriage ceremony.
- 2) *Brhat Raj Devi*: for the second wife, if a Princess and married according to a less formal marriage ceremony, but presented with a conch and white parasol.

The junior wives of the *Maha Uparaja* or the *Maha Upayavaraja*, who were not of Royal rank, were styled *Chao Chom* and divided into three ranks:

- 3) *Brhat Karuma Kar*
- 4) *Brhat Sri Kar*
- 5) *Brhat Kam Nan*

The wives of senior Princes (*Samdach*), enjoy the following titles and ranks:

- 1) *Brhat Devi*: for a Princess of the rank *Brhat Anga Machas*, or above. Her children enjoy the title of *Brhat Anga Machas* and rank of *Brhat Urasa* (sons) and *Brhat Thida* (daughters).
- 2) *Brhat Jaya*: for a Princess of the rank *Anak Anga Machas*. Her children enjoy the title of *Anak Anga Machas*.
- 3) *Anak Mnar*: for a wife who was not a Princess. Her children enjoy the title of *Anak Anga Machas*.

The wives of Princess of the rank *Brhat Anga Machas*, enjoy the following titles and ranks:

- 1) *Brhat Jaya*: for a Princess of the rank *Brhat Anga Machas*. Her children enjoy the title of *Brhat Anga Machas* and rank of *Brhat Urasa* (sons) and *Brhat Thida* (daughters).
- 2) *Jaya*: for a Princess of the rank *Anak Anga Machas*. Her children enjoy the title of *Anak Anga Machas* and rank of *Brhat Urasa* (sons) and *Brhat Thida* (daughters).
- 3) *Anak Mnar*: for a wife who holds the rank *Anak Raja Varman* or below.

Her children enjoy the title of *Anak Anga Machas* and rank of *Brhat Urasa* (sons) and *Brhat Thida* (daughters).

The wives of Princes of the rank *Anak Anga Machas*, enjoy the following titles and ranks:

- 1) *Jaya*: for a Princess of the rank *Anak Anga Machas*. Her children enjoy the title of *Anak Anga Machas* and rank of *Brhat Urasa* (sons) and *Brhat Thida* (daughters).
- 2) *Samrap*: for a wife who was not a Princess. Her children enjoy the title of *Anak Raja Varman* and rank of *Urasa* (sons) and *Thida* (daughters). They are not entitled to the use of Royal vocabulary.

The wives of Princes of the rank *Anak Anga Raja Varman* do not enjoy any special titles or ranks, but their children enjoy the following:

- 1) The title of *Anak Anga Raja Varman* and the rank of *Putra Prus* (sons) and *Putri Sri* (daughters) for the children of a Princess of the rank *Anak Anga Raja Varman*.
- 2) The title of *Brhat Varman* for the children of a lady who enjoys the title of *Brhat Varman* or below. They are not entitled to the use of Royal vocabulary.

Precedence of Male Ranks within the Royal Family:

- 1) *Samdach Brhat Raj Urasa*, enjoying the style of *His Royal Highness*.
- 2) *Samdach Brhat Parama Raj Putra*, enjoying the style of *His Royal Highness*.
- 3) *Samdach Brhat Ayya Putra*, enjoying the style of *His Royal Highness*.
- 4) *Brhat Priya Putra Kshatra*, enjoying the style of *His Royal Highness*.
- 5) *Brhat Anga Machas*, enjoying the style of *His Royal Highness*.
- 6) *Anak Anga Machas*, enjoying the style of *His Highness*.
- 7) *Anak Anga Raja Varman*, enjoying the style of *His Excellency* (not entitled to the use of Royal vocabulary).
- 8) *Brhat Varman* (not entitled to the use of Royal vocabulary).

**END.**

[GLOSSARY](#)

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I would be grateful to hear from anyone who may have changes, corrections or additions to contribute. If you do, please be kind enough to send me an e-mail using the contact details at:

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