

Part 322 for Cathy's blog

Monday January 5th and Tuesday January 6th, 2026.

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Temple Day : Ta Keo

Ta Keo is a big temple. It was built by Jayavarman V, in (about) 975. Apparently, it is built entirely of sandstone (you can look at these pictures and decide if you agree with that). The name Ta Keo means "mountain with golden peaks" which does seem to fit the temple, especially in the golden morning sunlight.

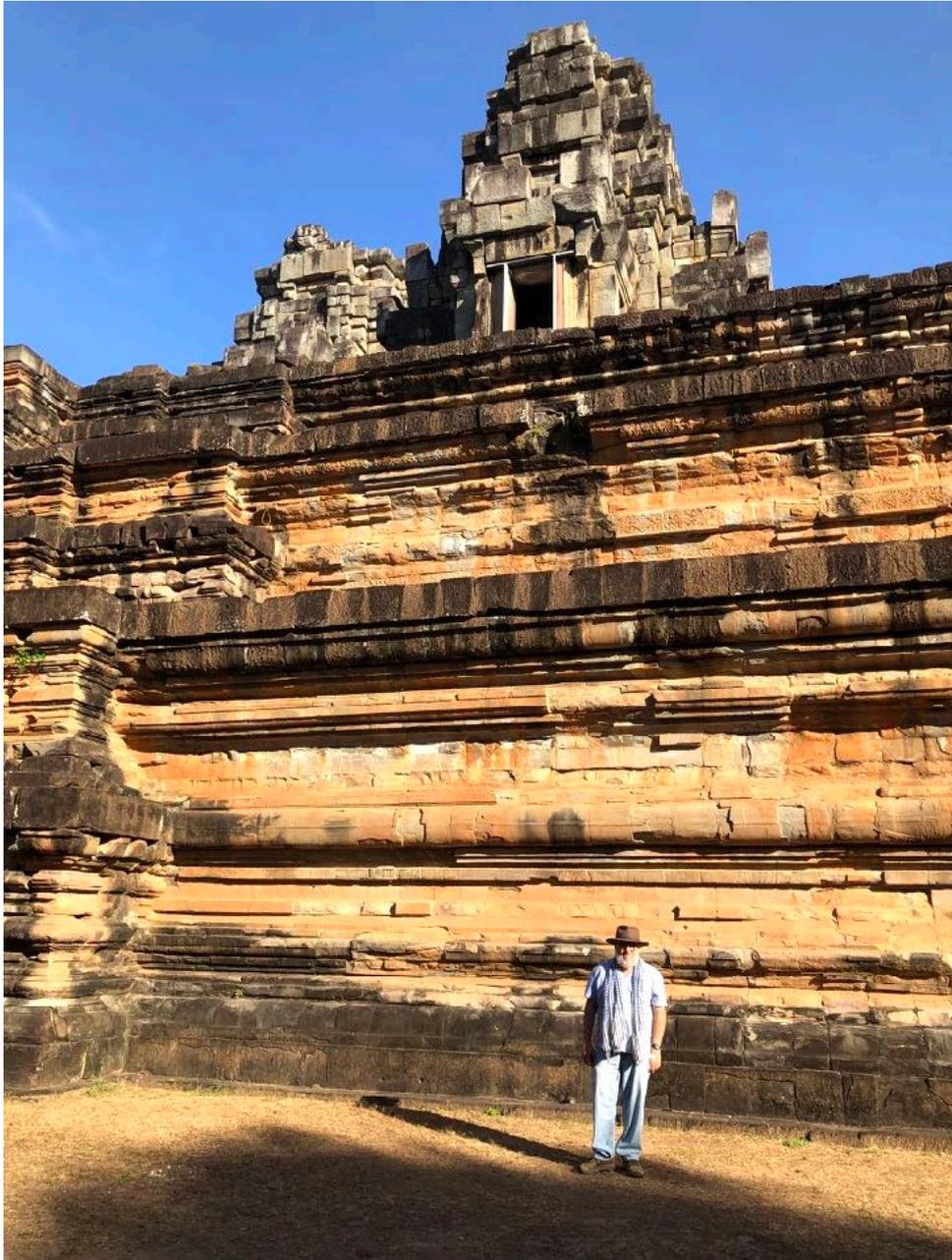
It was never finished. We did read that it was hit by lightning while being built, which is very bad luck, but further research doesn't confirm this.

Another "story" suggests that the position of the temple is wrong... that it is in the wrong place. Despite this, the King continued to build the temple and then he died and building was halted.

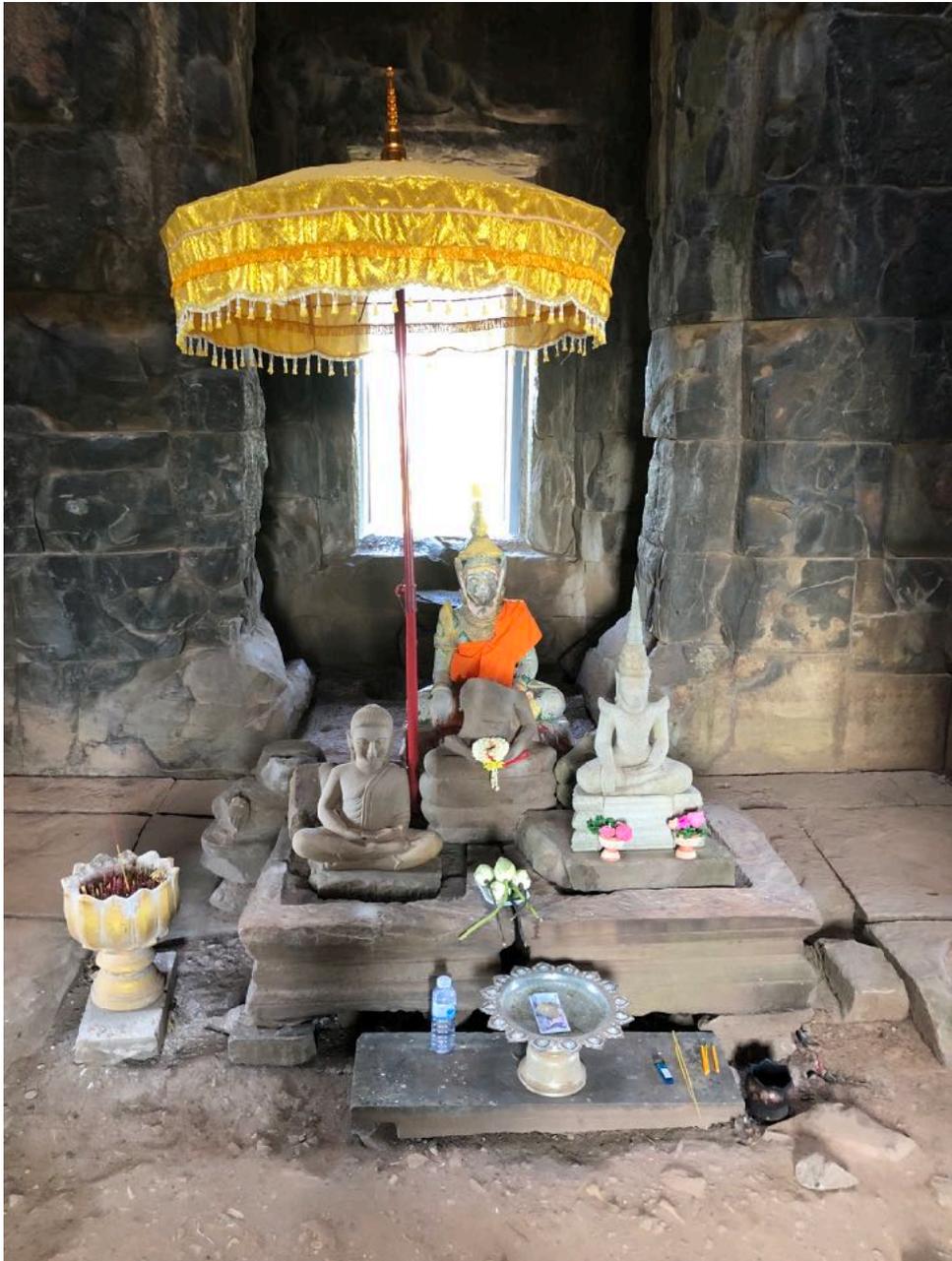
Two Kings later, Suryavarman I gave the temple to a High Priest, who recommenced work on it. It was during this time that the temple was hit by lightning (so the story goes) which proved that it shouldn't be completed.



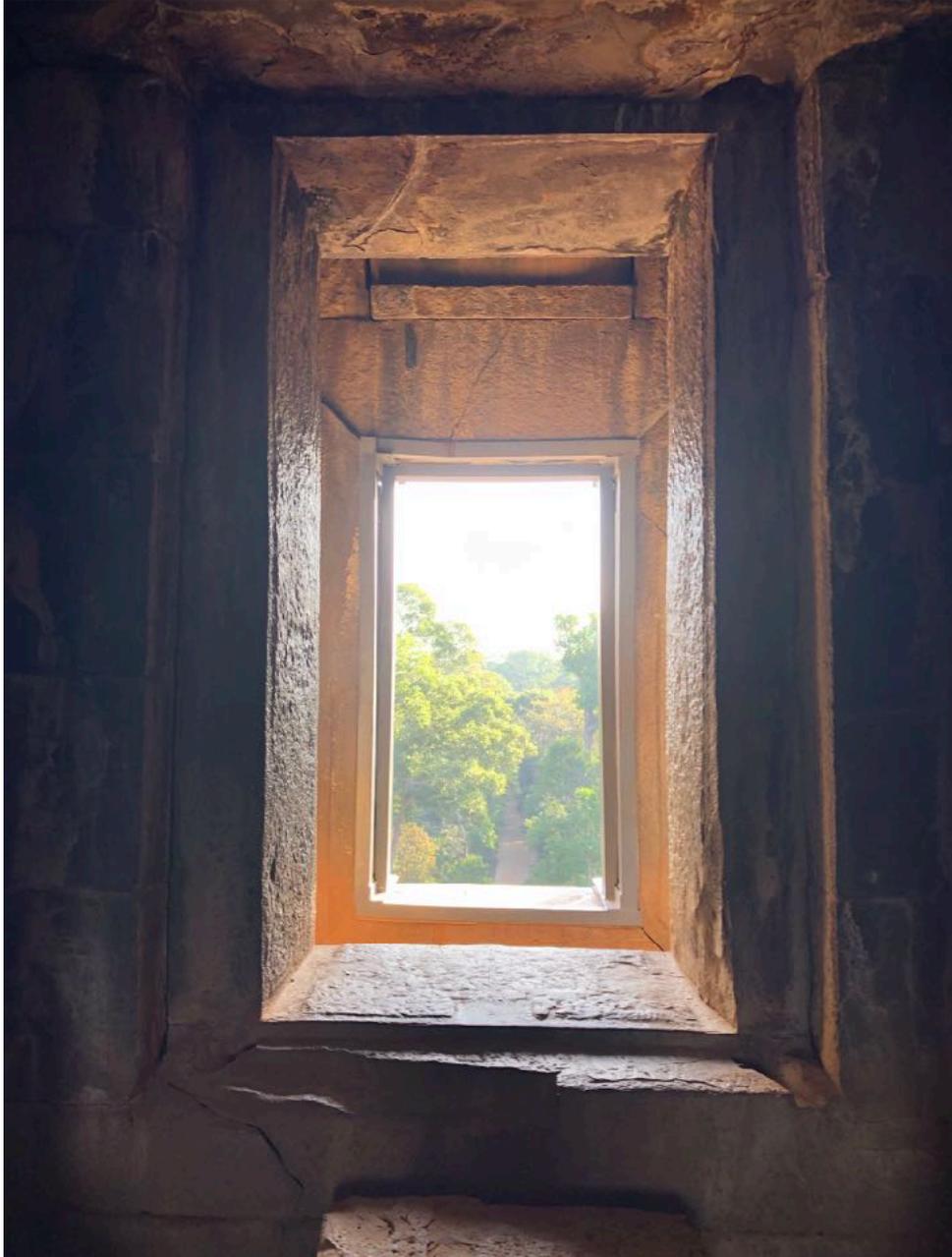
The “mountain with golden peaks”.



David in front of the three tiers to the top level. This is the second level up.



Inside the central tower.

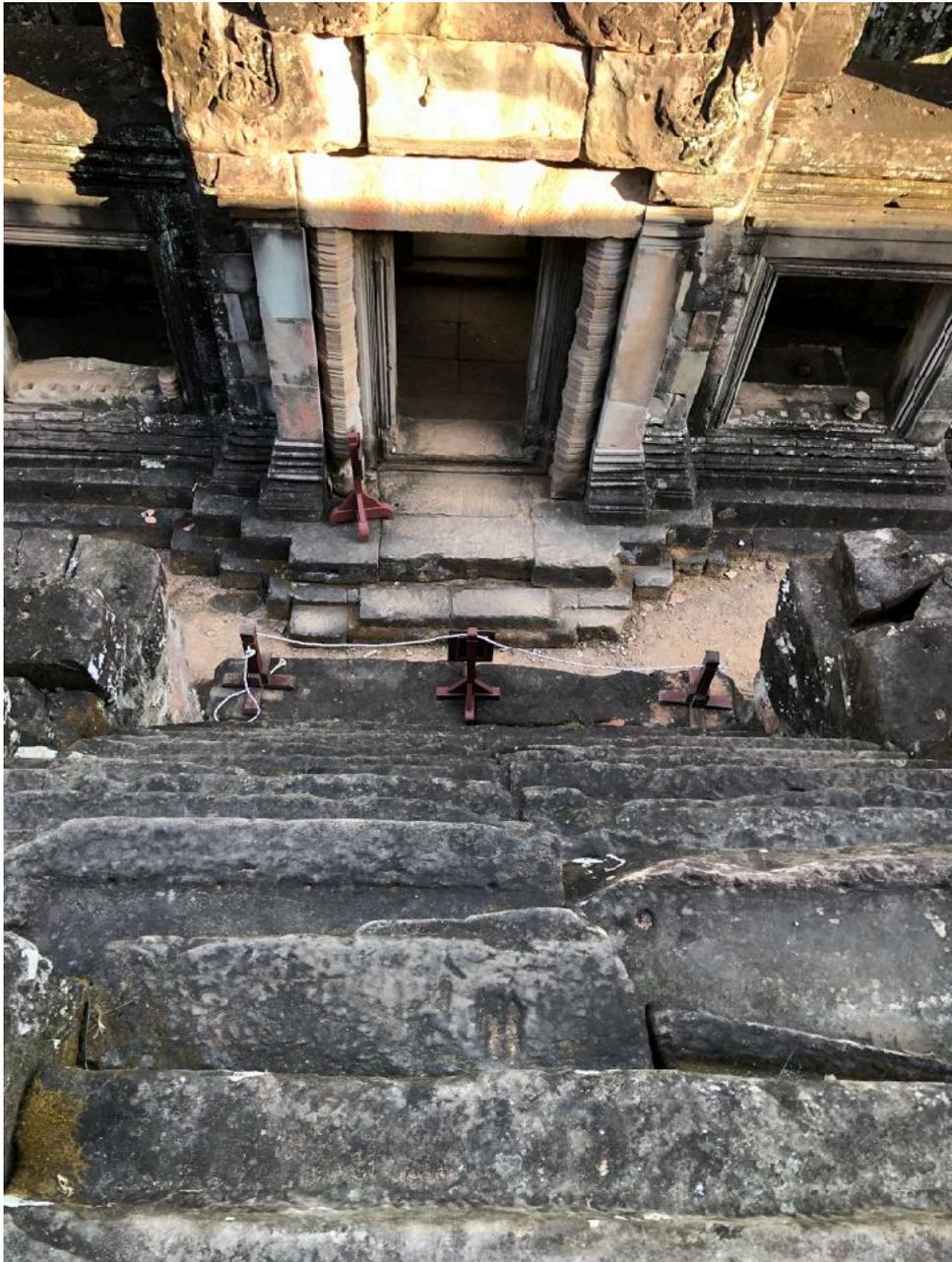


The view from the windows of the central tower.

This is 45m from the ground.



The outer wall is to the left. This terrace has steep steps and there are windows along the gallery.

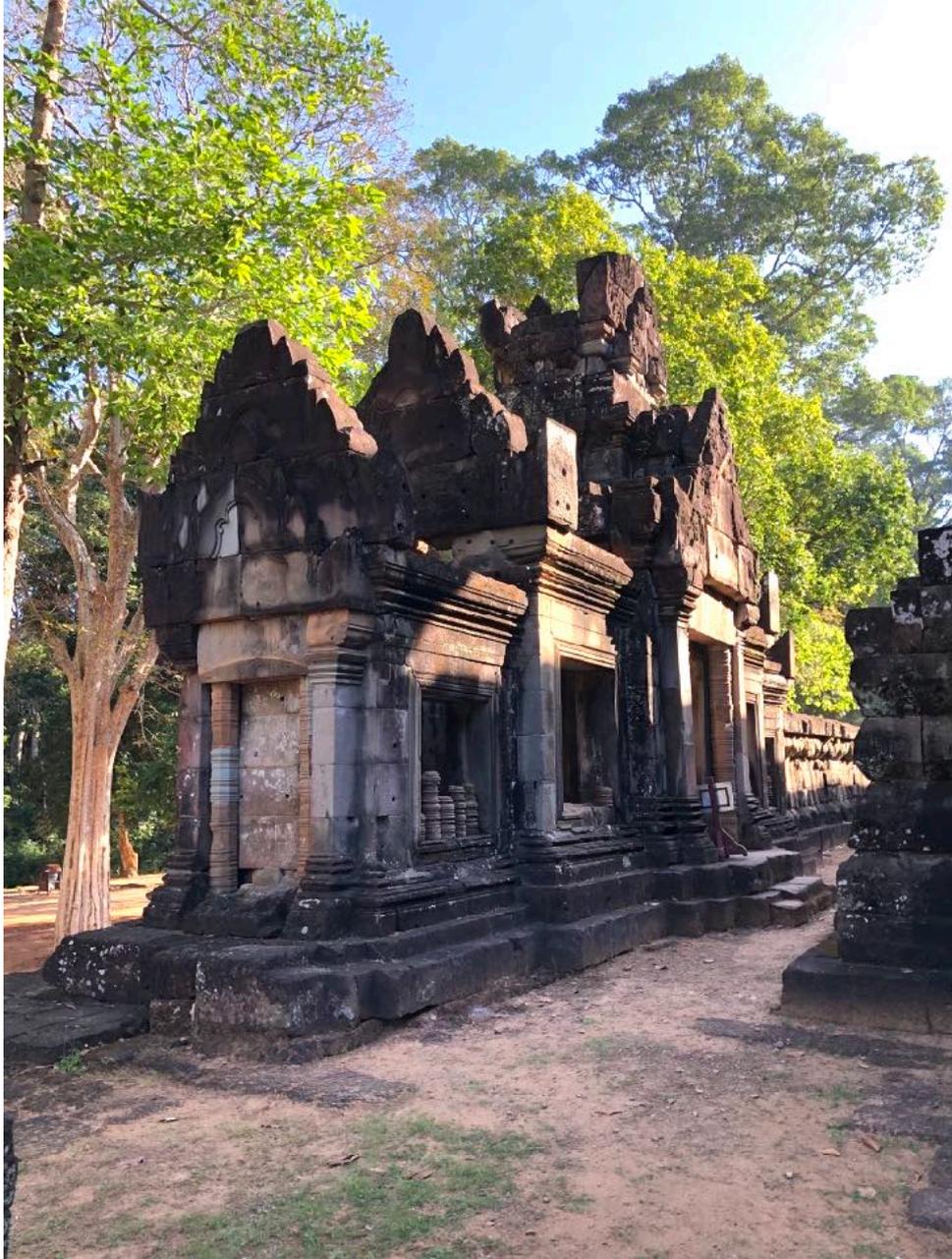


Steep steps. There are four sets of stairs up to the main platform with the towers.

The east facing steps have wooden stairs built over them, but the handrail is wobbly. David couldn't continue the climb!



Collection of the window supports (called balusters or colonnettes).



A library building on the first level.



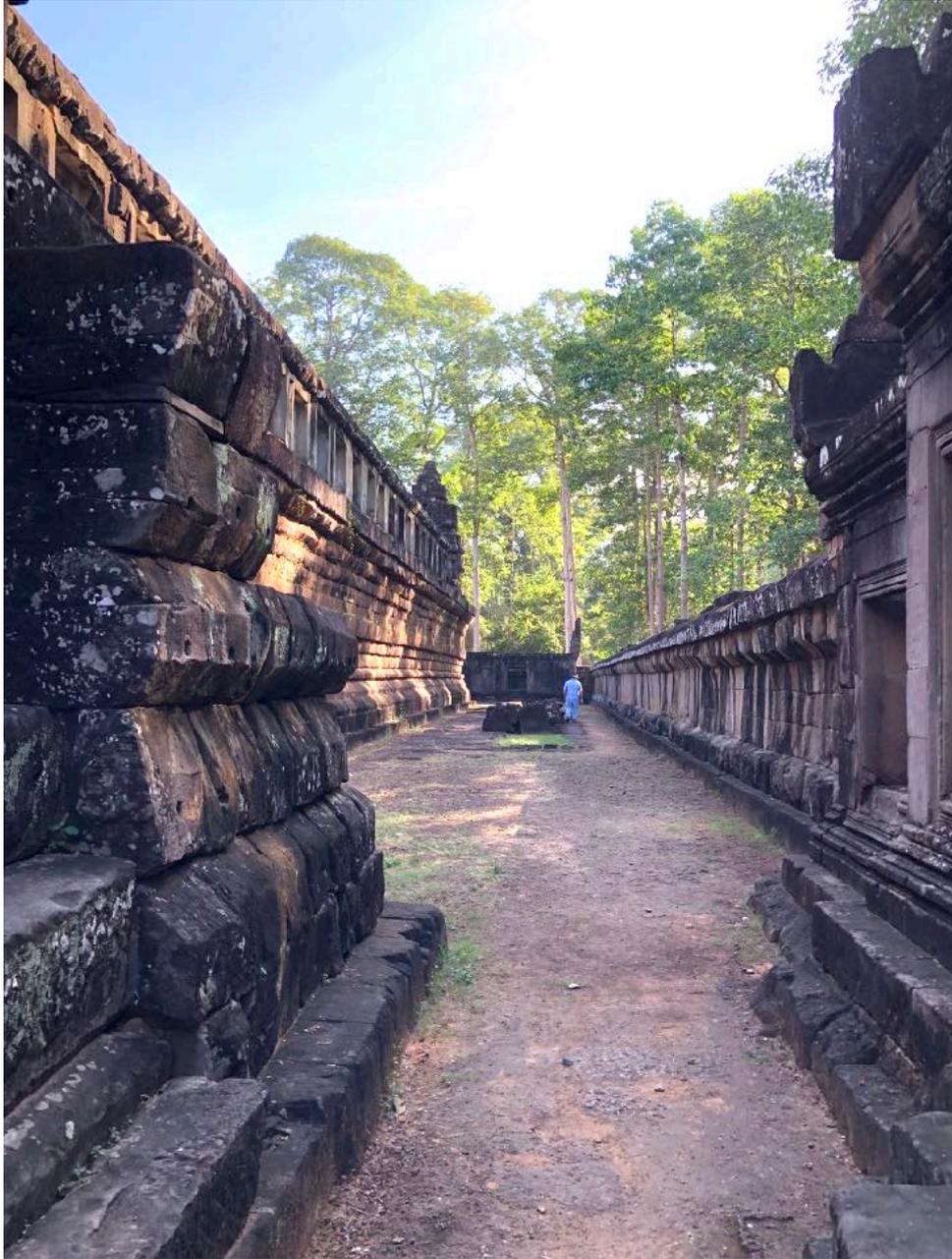
West gopura on the first level and the wall up to the second terrace. ...looks like laterite to me.



Found this St. George Cross spider... the biggest one I have seen.



David on the first level. The wall has gone, perhaps collapsed and the stones taken for use elsewhere. It is a 5.5m drop to the ground here, with just a little warning sign close to the edge.



David in the distance and the wall intact. You can see the windows in the wall of the second terrace.



The rickety wooden steps getting a quick dust by the Apsara staff (blue uniforms).



Looking at Ta Keo, from the south.



Ta Keo temple moat.



**one
(a
taken
video).**



**Monkeys
playing and
walking by
screen shot
from a**

**We
at the toilets at the Ta Prohm car park, where I met this
cat.
stopped in**



Riding along the road outside Ta Promh, we saw many snake skins caught on the rough laterite blocks of the outside wall.



Tuesday 6th January, 2026.

Temple Day : Leak Neang Temple.

Behind Ta Keo temple is a small temple hospital, Leak Neang. It was built by Jayavarman VII as one of the 102 hospital chapels he commissioned. We were surprised to find so many carved blocks here.



Exposed and worn, but still visible.



Leak Neang has a single tower. It has a laterite walkway up to it and the remains of an eastern gopura. The trees around it are well established.



Eastern gopura doorway and foundations and window frames.



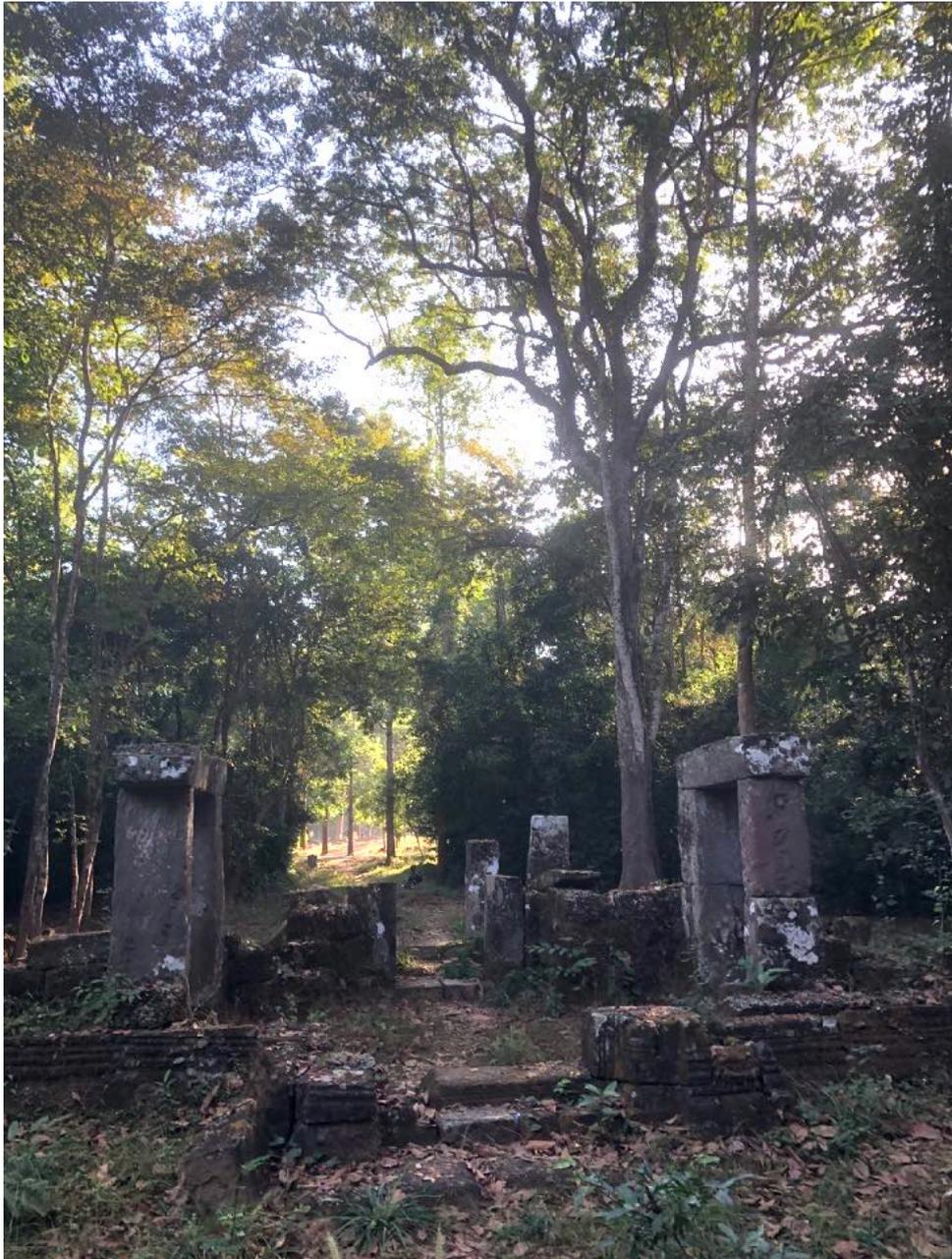
My favourite carving!



One of many figures carved in a lintel which now sits on a block on the ground.



The remains of the gopura. The open space in the distance is the back corner of Ta Keo.



A lintel still in place over the doorway of Leak Neang.



A little further on, past Ta Keo and the turn off to Ta Nei Temple, lies Prasat Top West, one of our “favourites” because of its unusual shape (it’s indented corners make it look almost octagonal). The flooded forest has dried and we could walk in to it today.



There are always a lot of insects here.



This butterfly is plain brown on the underneath of its wings. The scalloped edges make it look just like a leaf when the wings are closed.

(Perhaps it is *Abisara abnormis*... but I am not sure.)

Another *Nephilia* spider spinning its web.



And more dragonflies.



