

SOUTHEAST ASIA

The migration of peoples and ideas from India was the major influence on South-Eastern culture, shaping cultural expression, from art, mythology and written language to religion, mathematics and science.

Seldom in history has one culture been so thoroughly yet peacefully transferred to another.

South-East Asia comprises two large areas: part of the Asian mainland, and the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra.

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While Mahayana and Vajrayana were reported by Chinese pilgrims in the seventh century, Theravada Buddhism came to dominate the region to the present day.

Buddha Muchalinda



The Indian protective serpent Muchalinda became very important... in an area that no doubt had many rivers, jungles and snakes, the stories involving the snake protecting the Buddha became a major theme.

Buddha Muchalinda, Cambodia



Hinduism preceded Buddhism in the region, especially among the ruling class.

But statues of the Buddha were brought from India by monks and traders and Buddhism became widely accepted.

Buddha Muchalinda, Cambodia





The 8th to 10th centuries were most important when powerful kingdoms produced some of Asia's greatest Buddhist monuments.
Borobudur

HISTORY

At the same time, largely Hindu kingdoms of the southern mainland succumbed to the Khmer kings who supported Hinduism and Buddhism.

By the end of the 15th century, Thailand and Burma were often at war, and Cambodia was losing political influence and territory.

Today, Thailand and Burma have remained the most viable Buddhist areas.

Cambodia and southern Vietnam are still Buddhist but their lack of political strength limited artistic development.



Gold was plentiful in Thailand so we see a number of large and small statues of the Buddha made from, or covered with gold.





Largest gold Buddha in Thailand, The Temple of the Reclining Buddha, Bangkok

Buddha, Thailand



Distinct national styles developed in the first millennium but one of the areas shared concepts was the belief in the cosmological role of Meru, the sacred mountain.

The Indian ideal of the temple as the center of the universe came to direct the arrangements of the complex religious monuments resulting in some of the grandest architectural displays in the Asian world.



The Khmer Empire, officially the **Angkor Empire**, the predecessor state to modern Cambodia ("Kampuchea" or "Srok Khmer" to the Khmer people), was a powerful Hindu-Buddhist empire in Southeast Asia



Jayavarman II, led a series of successful military campaigns, subjugating most of the smaller kingdoms, that resulted in the founding of a large territorial state.

In 802 CE he took the title *chakravartin*, “universal ruler”, and that date is used to signal the start of the empire.

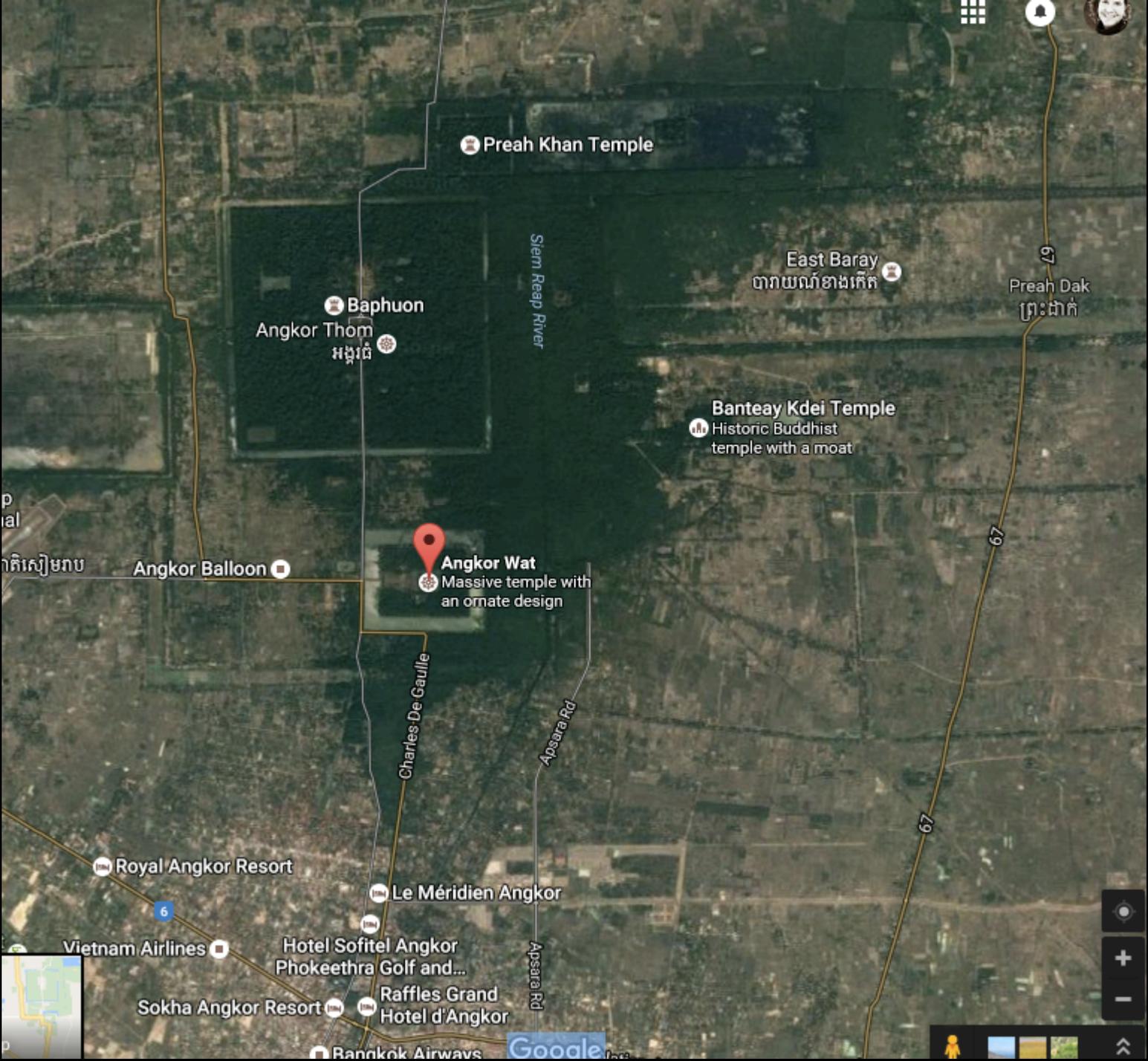


The Khmer were great builders, filling the landscape with monumental temples, huge reservoirs and canals, and laying an extensive road network with all sorts of bridges -the main highways are 800 km long.

The most stunning temple, Angkor Wat, is a microcosm of the Hindu universe and defies imagination as the world's largest religious complex.

Nowadays it is crowded with tourists amazed with ruins that until recently were covered by the jungle. Its construction took some 30 years and was started by one of the greatest kings, Suryavarman II, around 1122 CE.





Preah Khan Temple

Baphuon
Angkor Thom
អង្គរធំ

East Baray
បារាយណ៍ខាងកើត

Preah Dak
ព្រះដាក់

Banteay Kdei Temple
Historic Buddhist temple with a moat

Angkor Wat
Massive temple with an ornate design

Angkor Balloon

ភាគីសៀមរាប

Charles De Gaulle

Apsara Rd

67

Royal Angkor Resort

Le Méridien Angkor

Vietnam Airlines

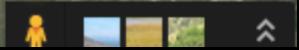
Hotel Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Golf and...

Sokha Angkor Resort

Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor

Bangkok Airways

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The grandest example is Angkor Wat, a Hindu monument, and the nearby Buddhist structure, the Bayon...

With the main shrine in the center, the temple complex was oriented to the cardinal directions with other components used to express the linkage between the human world and that of gods...between heaven and earth. Angkor





Cambodian shrines became elaborate arrangements of walls, moats and bridges surrounding a raised platform, usually with five towers to correspond to the five peaks of Mt. Meru

Angkor



Angkor Wat, Angkor, Cambodia, first half of twelfth century.



The illusion of passing from one world to another was repeated with entrance gates, bridges, etc. Angkor



The empire's greatest king was Jayavarman VII (r. 1181 CE - 1215 CE). The scale of his construction program was unprecedented: he built temples, monuments, highways, a hundred hospitals, and the spectacular Angkor Thom complex - a city within a city in Angkor. Angkor Thom Bayon, Cambodia



Another important feature was the concept of the god-king...the identification of a ruler with the deity which served to elevate the status of the king to divine.

Portrait of Jayavarman VII...physical likeness and wisdom with omnipotence and serenity...



Each Temple complex was dominated by a single sanctuary, housing cult images of deified ancestors.. further linking the ruler and his family with the divine.

Angkor Faces, Bayon 13th Century



Jayavarman also expanded the empire's territorial control to its zenith. Jayavarman VII (reigned about 1180-1217) a staunch Buddhist, was convinced to be a Bodhisattva, the faces could be created after his face.



Angkor, Neak Pean— small shrine on the complex built as a simplified model of an aspect of the Buddhist cosmology— the southern island of Jambudvīpa. This is the home of humans with sacred springs visited by Buddhas, bodhisattvas, saints, hermits and afflicted people.



Angkor, Neak Pean— the myth of Jambudvipa speaks of water flowing out of the lake through fountains in the form of lion, elephant, horse and bull. (the same animals found on the famous Sarnath lion capital.