

HISTORY_Khmer Empire

As the expansion policy continued forward, many of the Angkorean temples were in the process of construction, and massive irrigation projects altered the landscape drastically to accommodate sustaining agricultural and infrastructure systems for more than two million Khmers.

The collection, processing, and manufacturing of woods, stones, and metals to build these structures were brought in from local quarries and jungles and contributed to the ecological breakdown of the Empire.



So, while we may admire the magnitude of the accomplishments, with Angkor Wat and other temples, it was this desire by rulers to build bigger and better temples that eventually led to the decline of the Khmer kings.

Angkor Wat, Cambodia

HISTORY_FAST FORWARD 1960s

By the 1960s Buddhists were being persecuted in Vietnam by the government controlled by President Diem. The Mahayana Buddhist monk, Thich Quang Duc set fire to himself on a busy street in Saigon to bring attention to the situation.

While the act put pressure on the government in Vietnam, the persecutions continue with nationwide raids on Buddhist temples. Several other Buddhist monks then set fire to themselves in protest. Marshal Law is imposed.

This puts pressure on President Kennedy to back a coup against the President Diem.



Photograph of Buddhist Monk, Quang Duc by Photojournalist Malcolm Brown. Vietnam, 1963

This photo won the World Press Photo Award in 1963

HISTORY_1960's

President Kennedy was killed November 22, 1963. Two days later, now President Johnson tells advisers, he will not “lose Vietnam.”

Vietnam War and after

The Vietnam War was a long, costly armed conflict that pitted the communist regime of North Vietnam and its southern allies, known as the Viet Cong, against South Vietnam and its principal ally, the United States.

The divisive war, increasingly unpopular at home, ended with the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 1973 and the unification of Vietnam under Communist control two years later.

More than 3 million people, including 58,000 Americans, were killed in the conflict.



US troops in Mekong Delta, 1967
US soldiers in Phuoc Tuy, 1966



HISTORY_1960's_Vietnam War

At the heart of the conflict was the desire of North Vietnam, which had defeated the French colonial administration of Vietnam in 1954, to unify the entire country under a single communist regime modeled after those of the Soviet Union and China.

The South Vietnamese government, on the other hand, fought to preserve a Vietnam more closely aligned with the West.

U.S. military advisers, present in small numbers throughout the 1950s, were introduced on a large scale beginning in 1961, and active combat units were introduced in 1965.



HISTORY_1960's_Vietnam War

The human costs of the long conflict were harsh for all involved.

Vietnam finally release its official estimate of war dead: as many as 2 million civilians on both sides and some 1.1 million North Vietnamese and Viet Cong fighters.

The U.S. military has estimated that between 200,000 and 250,000 South Vietnamese soldiers died in the war.

Many Americans, mostly college students held protests against the Vietnam War for many reasons.

The killing of a student at Kent State University was one of many incidents that changed attitudes about U.S. involvement in Vietnam and Cambodia.



Vietnam War Protests, 1968-70

Kent State, 1970 (The National Guard shot and killed a college student protesting the war.



HISTORY_1960's_Vietnam War

By the 1970's the war was winding down, mostly as a result of the unpopularity of the war at home, the low troop moral, and incidents like the one at Mai Lai.

The Mai Lai massacre was one of the most horrific and violent incidents committed against civilians of the Vietnam war. It occurred in the small village of Mai Lai where more than 500 people were raped and murdered by American troops. The incident was covered up by the American government for years until it was reported in the American press.

The massacre ended when helicopter pilot Hugh Thompson landed his aircraft between the soldiers and fleeing villagers threatening to fire on the Americans if they continued.



Vietnam civilians after the Mai Lai massacre, 1968

Helicopters and soldiers in Vietnam.



HISTORY_CAMBODIA_Khmer Rouge

On April 30, 1975 the US pulled out of Vietnam, as the last helicopters left Saigon.

In the four years that followed, the Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia. It was responsible for one of the worst mass killings of the 20th Century.

The brutal regime, in power from 1975-1979, claimed the lives of up to two million people.

Declaring 1975 “Year Zero” in the country, Pol Pot isolated Kampuchea from the global community. He resettled hundreds of thousands of the country’s city-dwellers in rural farming communes and abolished the country’s currency. He also outlawed the ownership of private property and the practice of religion in the new nation.



A film still from the film, *The Killing Fields*, 1984
Work camp in Cambodia, renamed Kampuchea.



HISTORY_CAMBODIA_Khmer Rouge

Under the Marxist leader Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge tried to take Cambodia back to the Middle Ages, forcing millions of people from the cities to work on communal farms in the countryside.

As part of this effort, hundreds of thousands of the educated, middle-class Cambodians were tortured and executed in special centers established in the cities.

During his time in the remote north-east, Pol Pot had been influenced by the surrounding hill tribes, who were self-sufficient in their communal living, had no use for money and were "untainted" by Buddhism.

**Pol Pot, the
Cambodian dictator,
caused the death
of 25% of Cambodia.**



Pol Pot's attempted to create a Cambodian "master race" through social engineering.

During what became known as the "Cambodian Genocide" an estimated 1.7 to 2.2 million Cambodians died .

HISTORY_CAMBODIA_Khmer Rouge

The Khmer Rouge government was finally overthrown in 1979 by invading Vietnamese troops, after a series of violent border confrontations.

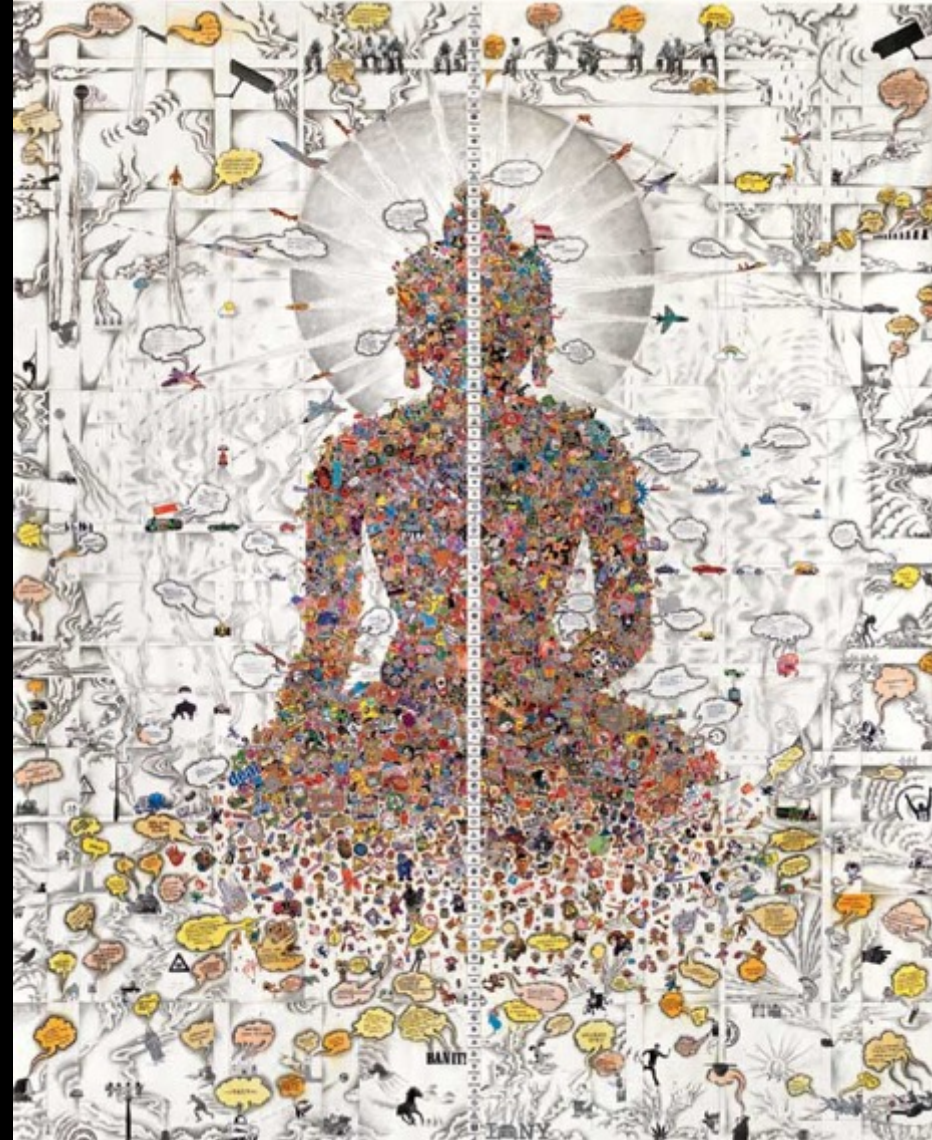
Today, Theravada Buddhism is the official religion of Cambodia, practiced by 95% of the people.



SUMMARY

As we look back over the development of Buddhism from its origin in India to the varieties of Buddhism we experience in East Asia, we can see that Buddhism has changed so much that it is difficult to see what makes it 'Buddhist'.

Evolving from the four Noble Truths to include traditions of devotion to celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattva.



When we come back to Buddhism in a couple of weeks, it's too look at Contemporary directions

Gonkar Gyatso (born Lhasa, 1961). *Dissected Buddha* (detail), 2011

REVIEW

This week we moved farther east to see how Buddhism evolved in Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia.

Entering from China, Buddhism brought many influences from that area while expanding and shifting to incorporate already existing ideas of Zen and Son.

We see the Mahayana tradition expand with Pure Land ideas in some areas but the Theravada tradition holding firm in others.



We continue to see some similarities with the traditional historic Buddha but many changes as well.

NEXT CLASS

Next week we return to Hinduism.

Islam came to India as early as the 7th Century. Muslim rulers dominated the north from about the 12th century.

The Mughal Rulers were Muslim but unified the diverse people and beliefs in India in about the 16th century.



This is where we see the influence of the Mughal courts with Persian styles and Hindu subjects.