

Southeast Asia 1200-1450 CE: Analysis of Art and Architecture

The states of Southeast Asia had a lot of very distinctive art and architecture. They experienced a lot of cultural diffusion and syncretism as belief structures from East and South Asia came into the region, influencing society, politics, and culture. Let's recognize how the art and architecture reflects those influences!



Borobudur Temple (Central Java, Indonesia)

This is a Buddhist Temple constructed in the 9th Century and continued into the 14th Century. It was abandoned as Islamic influence came into Java, but was renovated 1973 and is now a world UNESCO heritage site. Watch the short video showing drone footage of Borobudur (and read the subtitles as you go) so you can answer the questions below. [Borobudur Temple Video](#)

What Buddhist elements are in this temple, according to the video?

What do you notice are architectural influences that are distinctively Southeast Asian?



Angkor Wat Temple (Khmer Empire, Cambodia)

This was first a Hindu Temple, then became a Buddhist Temple. Angkor Wat was in the capital city of the Khmer Empire (ca. 802 - 1431 CE), and was the largest city of its day. At its height, the empire encompassed modern Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. They had massive building projects like tempes, reservoirs, canals, roads, bridges, and hospitals. The original religion of the region was animism, then was influenced heavily by Hinduism, then Buddhism. Watch the short video showing drone footage of Angkor Wat and answer the questions below [Angkor Wat Temple Video](#)

What do you notice that indicates this architecture is Southeast Asian?	
How does the construction of this structure relate to the concept of "state-building?"	
What are some conclusions you can make concerning the Khmer Empire based on this architecture?	

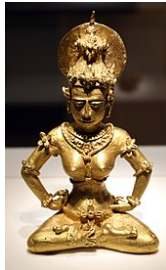
Majapahit (Java, Indonesia)

Majapahit was the last of the major Hindu empires of the Malay archipelago. Buddhism was already a part of the region, so it was a Hindu-Buddhist empire. By this point Islam had entered the region, and Islam was tolerated, and there were muslims in government positions. The kings had divine mandate and a lot of power. It was a uniquely “water-based” empire for its time. It declined due to civil war and outside influence by China and Islamic Sultanates.

What does the map/gif indicate about how the Majapahit Empire expanded?



What does this art piece represent about the Majapahit Empire? (“Golden Statue of the Majapahit State”)



What do the famous “Bajang Ratu Gate (left) and Wringin Lawang (right)” show about the Majapahit Empire?



This is the *Nagarakretagama*, a eulogy/poem to a king of the Majapahit Empire. It was written in 1365 and has many details about the height of the Empire. It describes a lot of temples, palaces, ceremonies, and shows the importance of Hinduism and Buddhism.

