



Ancient Crossroads

MAIN IDEA

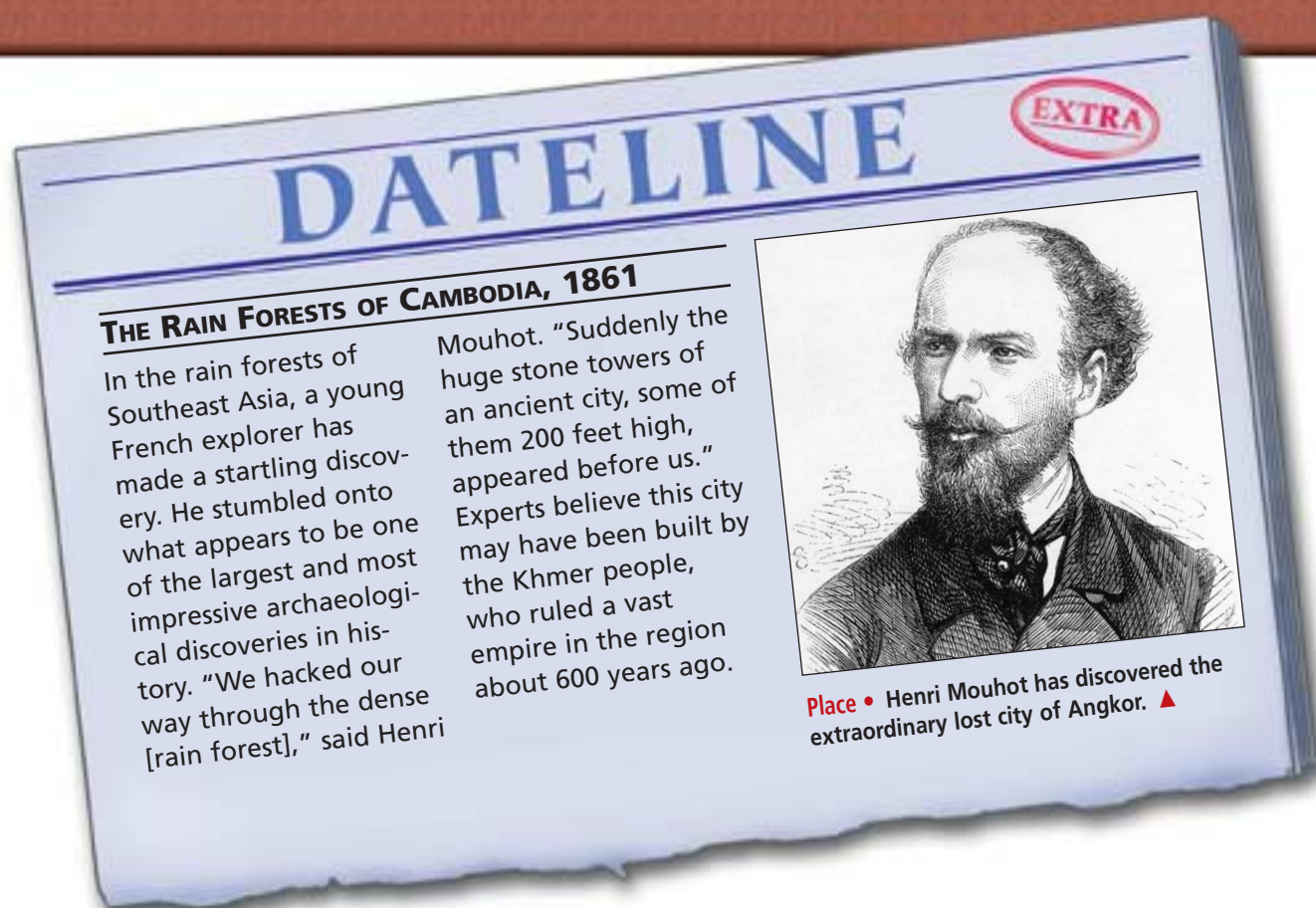
The culture of ancient Southeast Asia was heavily influenced by traders and travelers from China, India, and other countries.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The culture of modern Southeast Asia still reflects the influence of ancient Indian and Chinese cultures.

TERMS & NAMES

Buddhism
Siddhartha Gautama
Four Noble Truths
Eightfold Path
Khmer
Angkor Wat



Crossroads of Culture

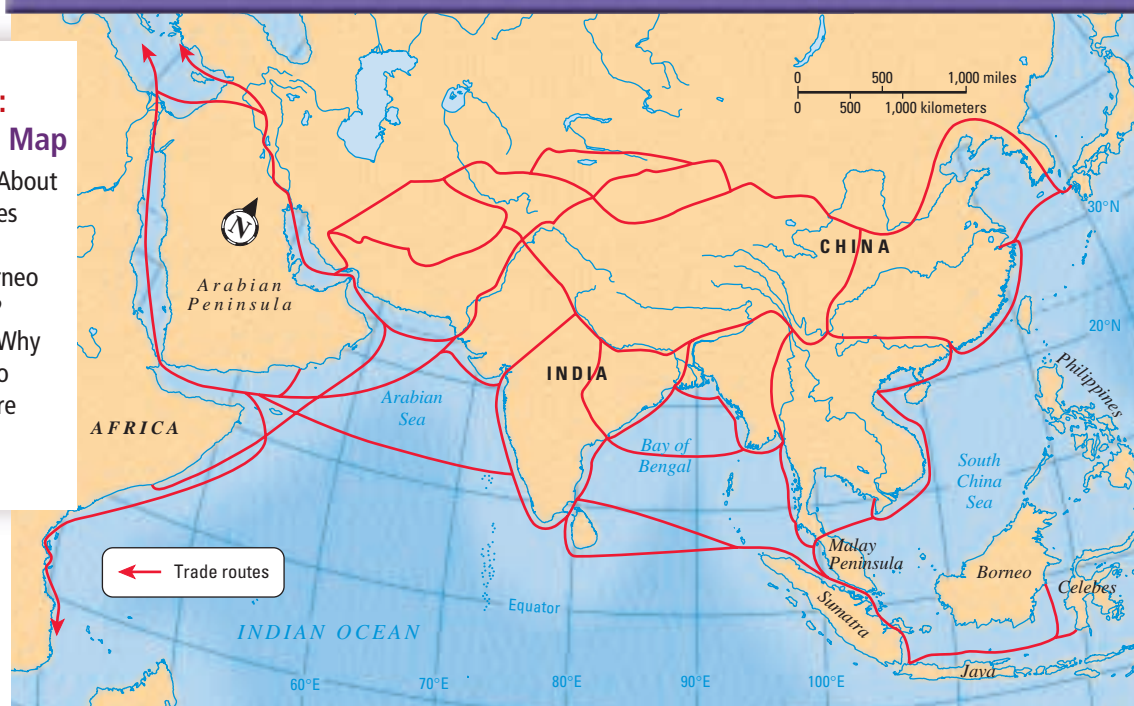
The ancient city that Mouhot found was Angkor. It contains an impressive temple complex dating back to the time when the region was one of the crossroads of the ancient world. A crossroads is a place where people, goods, and ideas from many areas come together. In ancient times, travelers from India, China, and other countries came to Southeast Asian shores and made a lasting impression on the region.



Trade Routes in Ancient Southern Asia

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting a Map

1. **Movement** • About how many miles does the trade route from Borneo to India cover?
2. **Movement** • Why do you think so many routes are by sea rather than land?



BACKGROUND

Coastal traders used monsoon winds to sail their ships. They waited for favorable winds before sailing from India to Southeast Asia. When the winds shifted, the traders would sail back.

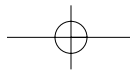
Early History Many important skills were developed in ancient Southeast Asia, including making tools from bronze, growing yams and rice, and sailing. In the past, historians thought that people from China or India brought these skills to the region. But now it seems clear that this knowledge was developed in Southeast Asia. Bronze Age items found in Thailand have been dated as far back as 3000 B.C. That is before bronze work was done in China. Eight to nine thousand years ago, rice was grown in Thailand. Yams and other roots were grown in Indonesia between 15,000 and 10,000 B.C. This is one of the earliest examples of agriculture ever found.

Trade and Travel Look at the map above. You can see that the central position of Southeast Asia made it a likely crossroads of trade for the area. Southeast Asia is in the center of the sea trading routes of the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Traders from India began to visit Southeast Asia around A.D. 100. Southeast Asian goods reached both India and China. From there, they traveled on to East Africa and Southwest Asia.

Southeast Asian trade goods included rice, tea, timber, and spices such as cloves, nutmeg, ginger, and pepper. Gold and other metals were also traded. Many ideas were shared as well. Religious ideas and knowledge spread. Skills such as farming and metalworking, as well as art forms and techniques, crossed to and from Southeast Asia.

Reading Social Studies

A. Analyzing
What effect did India have on Southeast Asia?



Influence of India Southeast Asia had a thriving culture of its own. However, it learned from and adopted customs from traders and travelers of other countries. Around A.D. 100, traders, Hindu priests, and Buddhist monks began to bring Indian culture to Southeast Asia, including art, architecture, and religion. These ideas were gradually adopted in the region.

Buddhism in Southeast Asia

Buddhism came from the same religious roots as Hinduism. It began in India around 500 B.C., although Hinduism and Islam eventually became more important religions in India. The ideas of Buddhism, however, spread to East and Southeast Asia, where it is still strong today. It is one of the major religions of the world.

The Signs of the Buddha The founder of Buddhism was **Siddhartha Gautama** (sih•DAHR•tuh GAW•tuh•muh). He grew up as a wealthy prince and a member of the warrior class. Gautama lived in luxury in a palace with his wife and son.

One day, while out driving, he saw an old man. On other days, he saw a sick man, a corpse, and a holy man. Gautama interpreted these as signs to show him that life involves aging, sickness, and death. He believed that the holy man was a sign telling him to leave his family and seek the causes of human suffering.

For the next six years, Gautama was a wandering monk. He practiced self-denial and ate very little. However, he did not discover the cause of human suffering.

One day, he decided to stop living a life of self-denial. He sat under a tree and began to meditate. Through meditation, Gautama gained enlightenment, or religious awakening. He now felt that he knew the reasons for human suffering and how to escape from it. News of his experience spread. People began to call him the Buddha, or the Enlightened One.

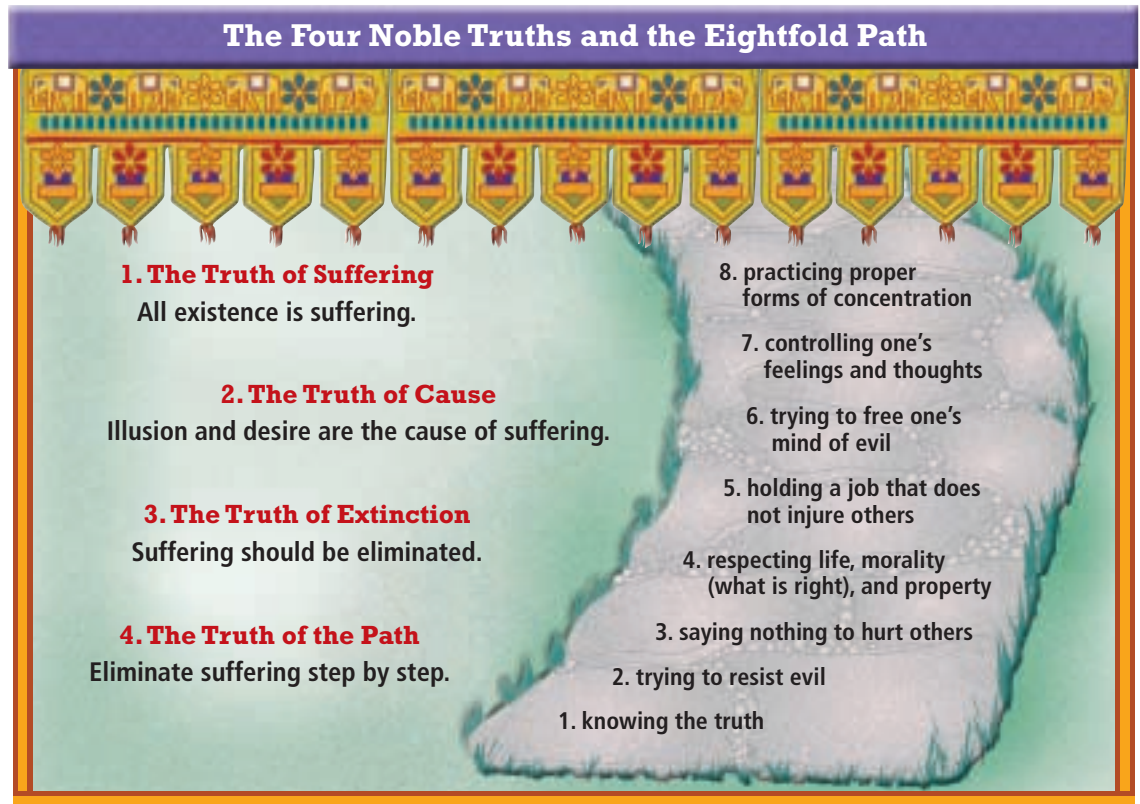
Buddhist Teachings The Buddha had once studied Hinduism. He was influenced by the Hindu beliefs in karma and reincarnation. These taught that life is a continuing cycle of death and rebirth. However, he did

Culture •
According to legend, the Buddha was sitting under a bodhi tree when he received enlightenment and the inspiration for his religious teachings. ▼





Culture • People in many parts of the world today still try to follow the teachings of the Buddha. ►



not like the part of Hindu philosophy that was based on the Vedas, the ancient Aryan texts. In particular, he rejected the caste system and the role of priests.

The basic teachings of Buddhism are the **Four Noble Truths**. The first truth is that life is full of pain. The second truth is that suffering comes from the desire for possessions. The third truth explains that if people stop desiring these possessions, they will no longer suffer. The Buddha taught that the goal of life is to be free from desires and pain. Then one can progress to nirvana (nur•VAHN•uh), a state of happiness and peace.

Reading Social Studies

B. Making Inferences What challenges might a person face in trying to follow the Eightfold Path?

The fourth truth says that people can escape suffering by following the Middle Way. The Middle Way is a set of guidelines called the **Eightfold Path**. These eight guidelines are as follows: right understanding, right purpose, right speech, right conduct, right means of livelihood, right effort, right awareness, and right meditation.

The Spread of Buddhism After the Buddha's death, his followers spread the new faith throughout southern India, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia. Buddhism also spread to Tibet, central Asia, China, Korea, and Japan. Buddhists organized schools and spiritual communities where monks and nuns could live and work.



Indian Influence in Southeast Asia

As the influence of India spread, new images and religious art became part of Southeast Asian culture. Historians can trace these images from one country to another. Empires were founded on the beliefs of Hinduism, Buddhism, and, later, Islam. The success of empires often depended on the ongoing popularity of these beliefs.

Empire of the Khmer In the sixth century A.D., the **Khmer** (KMAIR) people established a great kingdom in present-day Cambodia. This kingdom was Hindu and very much influenced by Indian culture. The Khmer built great Hindu temples, including the huge complex, **Angkor Wat**. The Khmer kingdom spread through much of Southeast Asia. Then, as Buddhism grew in influence, the number of Hindu followers declined, and the Khmer lost power. The Khmer retreated south to the area near the city of Phnom Penh.

Indian influence in the form of Buddhism was also felt in the island nations of Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, a huge Buddhist temple called Borobudur was built in the sixth century. The builders used about 2 million cubic feet of stone to build the temple. It is shaped like a pyramid, with three terraces, or levels, which contain relief carvings. At the center, the temple is 103 feet high.

Reading Social Studies

C. Making Inferences How do you think Buddhism spread to other areas?

The Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism, 500 B.C. – A.D. 600



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting a Map

- 1. Region •** Which area of India was home to Buddhism?
- 2. Movement •** Which religion spread to China?



Place • The Ananda temple is located at Pagan, the old capital city of Myanmar, which was an important Buddhist center. ▲



Place • Borobudur is located in Indonesia on the large island of Java. The temple has three levels. Each represents a stage of spiritual perfection. ▲



Indian culture also spread to Myanmar. There, Buddhism was firmly in place by the fifth and sixth centuries. In the 11th century, the powerful king Anawrahta established a strong Buddhist kingdom in the capital city of Pagan. There were soon thousands of Buddhist temples and buildings in the kingdom. The most famous is the Ananda temple.

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Terms & Names

1. **Identify:** (a) Buddhism (b) Siddhartha Gautama (c) Four Noble Truths (d) Eightfold Path
(e) Khmer (f) Angkor Wat

Taking Notes

2. Use a graphic organizer like the one below to show the ideas and goods that came into and out of Southeast Asia.

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Main Ideas

3. (a) Why is Southeast Asia a cross-roads for trade and cultural exchange?
(b) How did Buddhism affect Southeast Asia?
(c) Why did the Khmer kingdom decline?

Critical Thinking

4. Making Inferences

Why do you think Southeast Asians adopted Indian culture?

Think About

- ♦ the level of development of Indian civilization
- ♦ the activity of Buddhist and Hindu monks

ACTIVITY -OPTION-

Imagine you are a traveler from ancient India, passing through the Khmer Empire. Write a **letter** home describing some of the sights you see and your feelings about them.