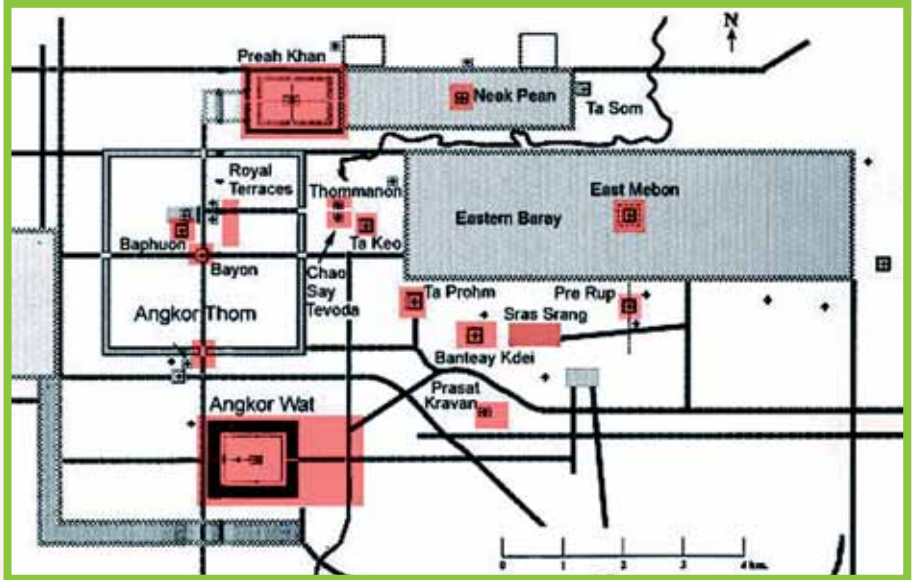


SIEM REAP (ANGKOR)

Siem Reap Provincial City (Angkor Wat), is located 321 kilometers from Phnom Penh on the NR6 and 45 kilometers flight from Phnom Penh, where sits the marvels of Angkor.



ANGKOR WAT

Angkor Wat is located about 7 kilometers north of Siem Reap provincial town



along Charles De Gaul Road. The temple was built the early 12th century during the reign of **King Suryavarman II** (AD 1113-1150) is unrivaled in its beauty and state of preservation. It is an expression of Khmer art at its highest point of development.

Some believed Angkor Wat was designed by **Divakarapandita**, the chief adviser and minister of the king, dedicating to **Vishnu Brahmanism**. The Khmer attribute the building of Angkor Wat to the divine architect **Visvakarman**. There has been considerable debate amongst scholars as to whether Abgkor Wat was built as a temple or a tomb.



Angkor Wat, according to Coedes, is a replica of the universe in stone and represents an earthly model of the cosmic world. The central tower rises from the center of the monument symbolizing the mythical Mount Meru, situated at the center of the universe. Its five towers correspond to the peaks of Meru; the outer wall to the mountain at the edge of the world; and the surrounding moat to the oceans beyond.



The causeway leads to the cruciform gopura or entry tower. The gateways at ground level on each end of the gallery probably served as passages for elephants, horses and carts, whereas the other entrances are accessed by steps and lead onto the central promenade. From the ventral entrance turn right and walk along the columned gallery coming to the end, where the quality of carving and intricacy of decoration on the false door is of exceptional beauty.

Angkor Wat Galleries Of Bas –Reliefs

The galleries of bas-reliefs, surrounding the first level of Angkor Wat, contain 1,200 square meters of sandstone carving. The bas-reliefs are divided into eight sections, two panels flanking each of the four central entrances and additional scenes on the bas-reliefs run horizontally, from left to right, in a massive expanse along the walls. Sometime decorated bodes are added. The scenes are arranged in one or two ways: either with out any deliberate attempt to separate the scenes; or in registers which are some times superimposed on one another.



Phnom Bakheng Temple



Phnom Ba Kheng temple was built on a natural hill. Commonly referred to as Temple Mountain because it is an earthly facsimile of Mount Meru, it is located on the left side of the road from Angkor Wat to Angkor Thom and attracts scores of tourists who come to watch sunset or sunrise. The temple was cut from the rock that

formed the natural hill and faced with sandstone in the late 9th and early 10th centuries, during the reign of **King Yasovarman I** (AD 889-910), dedicating to **Shiva Brahmanism**. Phnom Ba Kheng is 65 meters high and the temple has 109 towers. Phnom Bak Kheng temple was a replica of Mount Meru and the number of towers suggests a cosmic symbolism. The seven levels-ground, five tiers, upper terrace of the monument represent the seven heavens of India in Brahmanism mythology.

The temple must have been spectacular site in its entirety because originally 108 towers were evenly spaced around the tiers with yet another one, the central sanctuary at the apex of them all. Today, however, most of these towers have collapsed. Besides the central sanctuary, there were four towers on the upper terrace, 12 on each of the 5 levels of the platform, and another

44 towers around the base. The brick towers on the different levels represent the 12 year cycle of the animal zodiac. It is also possible that the numerology of the 108 towers symbolizes the 4 lunar phases with 27 days in each phase. The arrangement allows for only 33 of the towers to be seen from each side, a figure that corresponds with the number of Brahmanism deities.

At the top of the hill, Phnom Ba Kheng is set on a tiered platform of five levels. There are stairways of a very steep gradient on all four sides. Seated lions flank the step at each of the five levels. The complex is surrounded by a laterite rampart with gopuras. Beyond there is a small structure to north with sandstone pillars in which there are two lingams. A modern footprint of the Buddha is in the center of the path. Two libraries are opening only the west on either side of that part.



As the bas-reliefs at Angkor Wat were designed for viewing from left to right, the visitors should follow this convention for maximum appreciation. Enter the gallery of bas-reliefs at the middle of the west side. Turn right into the gallery and continue walking counter-clock-wise. Visitors who start from another point should keep the monument on their left.

Baksei Chamkrong Temple

Baksei Cham Krong temple is located about 150 meters north of Phnom Ba Kheng. The temple was perhaps begun construction by **King Harshavarman I** (AD 910-944) and completed by **King Rejendravarman** (AD 944-968), dedicating **Shiva Brahmanism**. Inscriptions on the door reveal the date of the



temple and mention a golden image of **Shiva** and the mythical founder of the Khmer civilization. The temple is a simple plan with a single tower on top of a square, four tiered laterite platform. Three level of the base are undecorated, but the top platform has horizontal molding around it that sets off

the sanctuary. A square, central brick tower stand on a sandstone base shaped like a cone. It has one door opening to the east with three false doors on the other sides, which are in remarkably good condition. Most of the lintels are in poor condition, but, on the east, Indra riding a three-headed elephant is till recognizable and is finely carved. The interior of the tower has a sunken floor and a corbelled vault.

Angkor Thom

Angkor Thom, the last capital of Angkor Period (AD 802-1432) until the 15th century, was indeed a Great City as it name implies, and it served as the religious and administrative center of the vast and powerful Khmer Empire. The capital of **King Jayavarman VII** (AD1181-1220), Angkor Thom, is a microcosm of the universe divided into four parts by the main axes. Bayon temple stands as the symbolic link between heaven and earth. The wall enclosing the city of Angkor Thom represents the stone wall around the surrounding moat suggests the comic ocean. This symbolism I reinforced by the presence of god Indra on his mount, the three headed elephant.



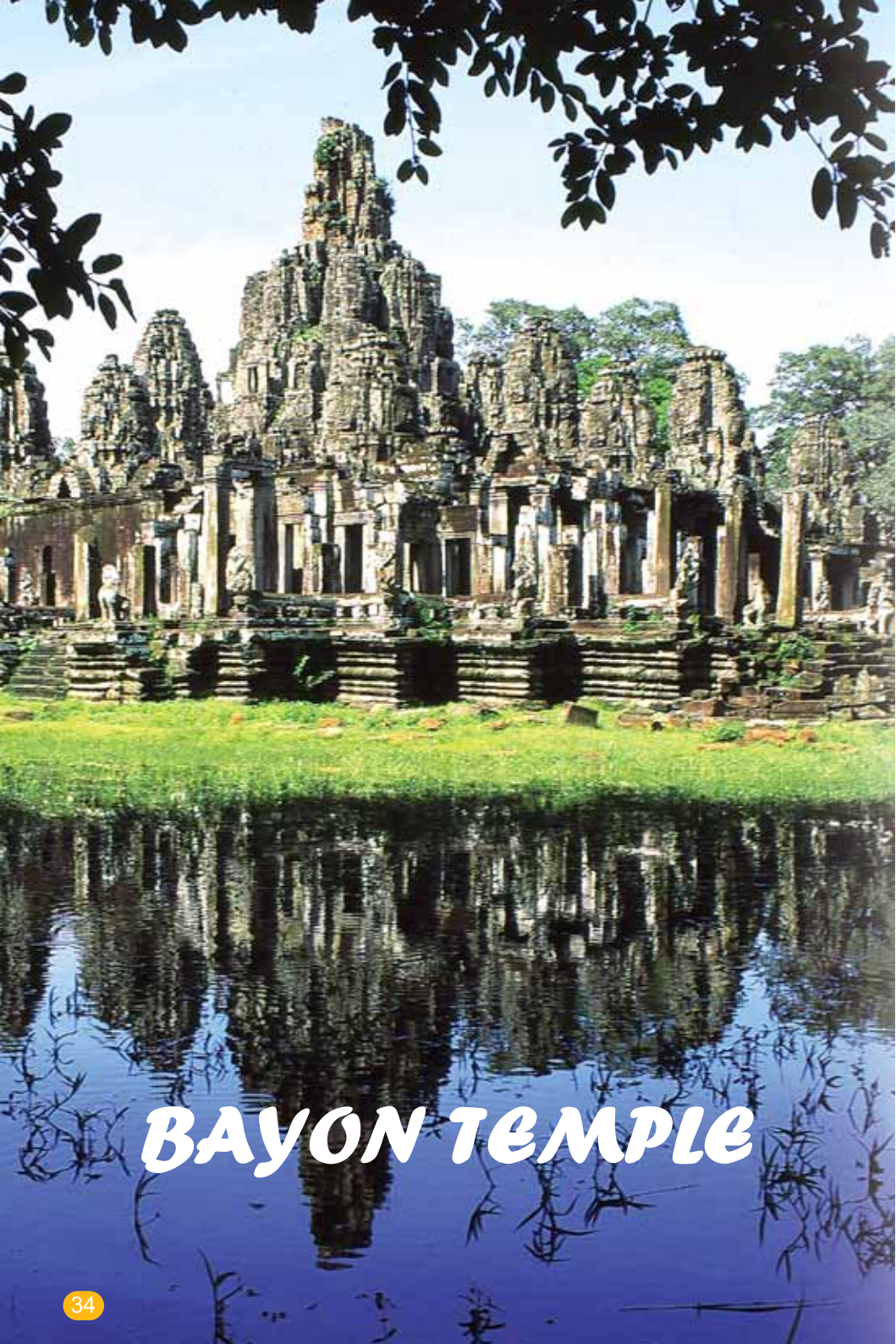
Angkor Thom is enclosed by an 8 meter-high laterite rampart that is had laid put on a square grid of 3 kilometer long on each side. A moat with a width of 100 meters surrounds the outer wall. The city I accessed along five great causeways, one in each cardinal direction-Death Gate (east), Dei Chhnang Gate (north), Takao Gate (west), and Tonle Om Gate (South)- plus an additional victory Gate on the east aligned with the terraces of the Elephants and the Leper King. A tall gopura distinguished by a superstructure of four faces bisects the wall in the center of each side.



Four small temples, all called Chhrung temple, stand at each corner of the wall around the city of Angkor Thom. Made of sandstone and designed in a cross plan, the temple built by **King Jayavarman VII** to worship Bodhisattva Avalokiteshavara. An inscription tells about its construction.

The stone causeways across the broad moat surrounding Angkor Thom with their unique gopuras, are one of the great sight at Angkor, never ceasing to fill visitors with wonder. The causeway leading to the gopuras are flanked by a row of 54 stone figures on each side-gods on the left and demon on the right-to make a total of 108 mythical beings guarding each of the five approaches to the city of Angkor Thom. The demons have a grimacing expression and wear a military headdress, whereas the gods look serene with their almond-shaped eyes and conical headdress, headdresses. The gods and demons hold the scaly body of a naga on their knees. This composition defines the full length of the causeway. At the beginning of the causeway, the naga spreads its nine heads in the shape of the fan.

The five sandstone gopuras rise 23 meters to the sky and is crowned with four heads; one facing each cardinal direction. At the base of each the gate are finely modeled elephants with three heads. Their trunks are plucking lotus flowers, in theory out of the moat. The god Indra sits at the center of the elephant with his consorts on each side. He holds a thunderbolt in his lower left hand. Stand in the center of the gopura, visitors will see a sentry box on each side. Also remains of wooden crossbeams are still visible in some of the gopuras. Beneath the gopura visitor can see the corbelled arch, a hallmark of Khmer architecture.



BAYON TEMPLE

The Bayon temple is located in the center of Angkor Thom. The temple is one of the most popular sites in the Angkor complex. It was built in the late 12th and early 13th centuries by **King Jayavarman VII**. The architectural composition of the Bayon exudes grandness in every aspect. Over 200 large faces carved on the 54 towers give the temple its majestic character, which at that time represent the 54 provinces in Cambodia. The iconography of the four faces has been widely debated by scholars and some think they represent the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, in keeping with the Buddhist character of the temple, it is generally accepted that the four faces on each of the towers are images of **King Jayavarman VII** and signify the omnipresence of the King. The plan of Bayon is presented in three separated levels. The first and second levels contain galleries featuring the bas-reliefs. A 16-sided central tower dominates the third level, which is cruciform in plan. Despite this seemingly simple plan, the layout of the Bayon is complex due to later additions, a maze of galleries, passages and steps, connected in the way that makes the levels practically indistinguishable and creates dim lighting, narrow walkways and ceiling.

Besides the architecture and the smiling faces, the highlight of Bayon is undoubtedly the bas-reliefs. The bas-reliefs on the inner gallery are mainly mythical scenes, whereas those on the outer gallery are marked departure from anything previously seen at Angkor. They are unique and contain genre scenes of everyday life—markets, fishing, festivals with cockfights and jugglers and so on—and historical scenes with battles and processions. The bas-relief is more deeply carved than at Angkor Wat, but the representation is less stylized. The scenes are presented mostly in two or three horizontal panels. The lower one, with an unawareness of the laws of perspective, shows the foreground, whereas the upper tier presents scenes of the horizon. They both exhibit a wealth of creativity. Descriptions of the bas-reliefs in this guide follow the normal route for viewing the Bayon. They begin in the middle of the east gallery and continue clockwise. Visitors should keep the monument on their right.