

Module: Southeast and East Asia
Topic Content: Cultural Influences of Southeast Asia

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Module: Southeast and East Asia
Topic Content: Cultural Influences of Southeast Asia

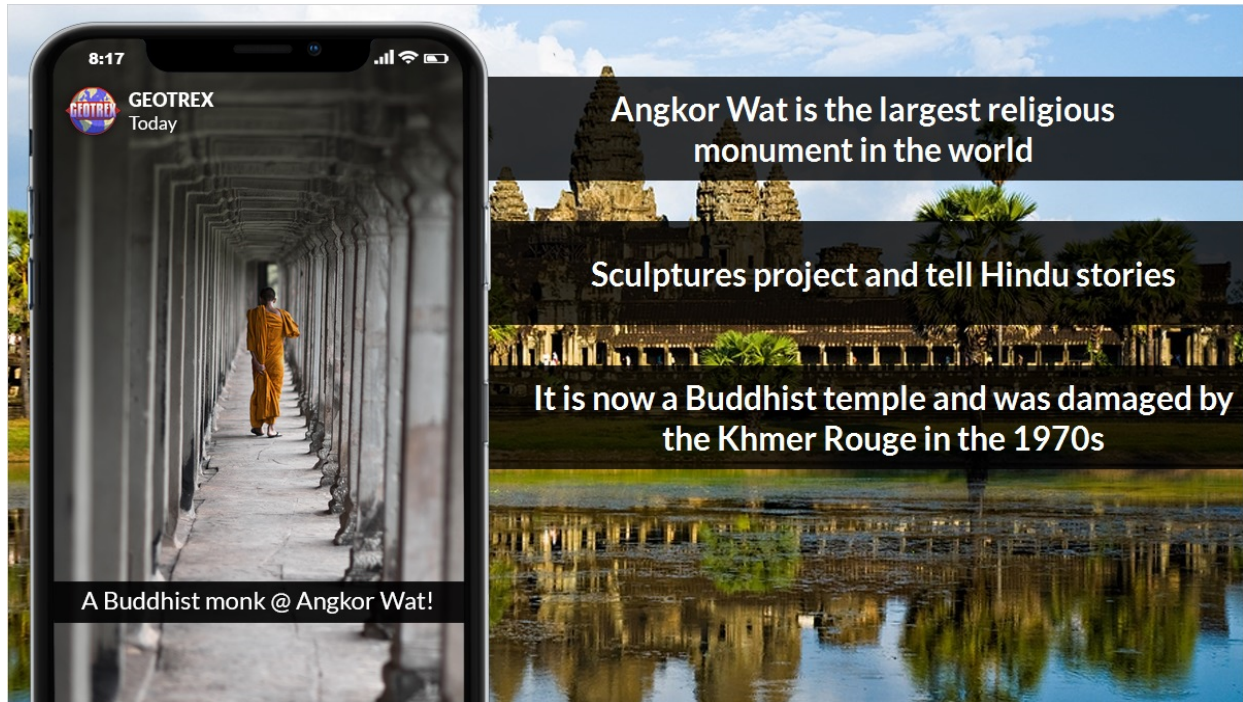
Introduction



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Module: Southeast and East Asia
Topic Content: Cultural Influences of Southeast Asia

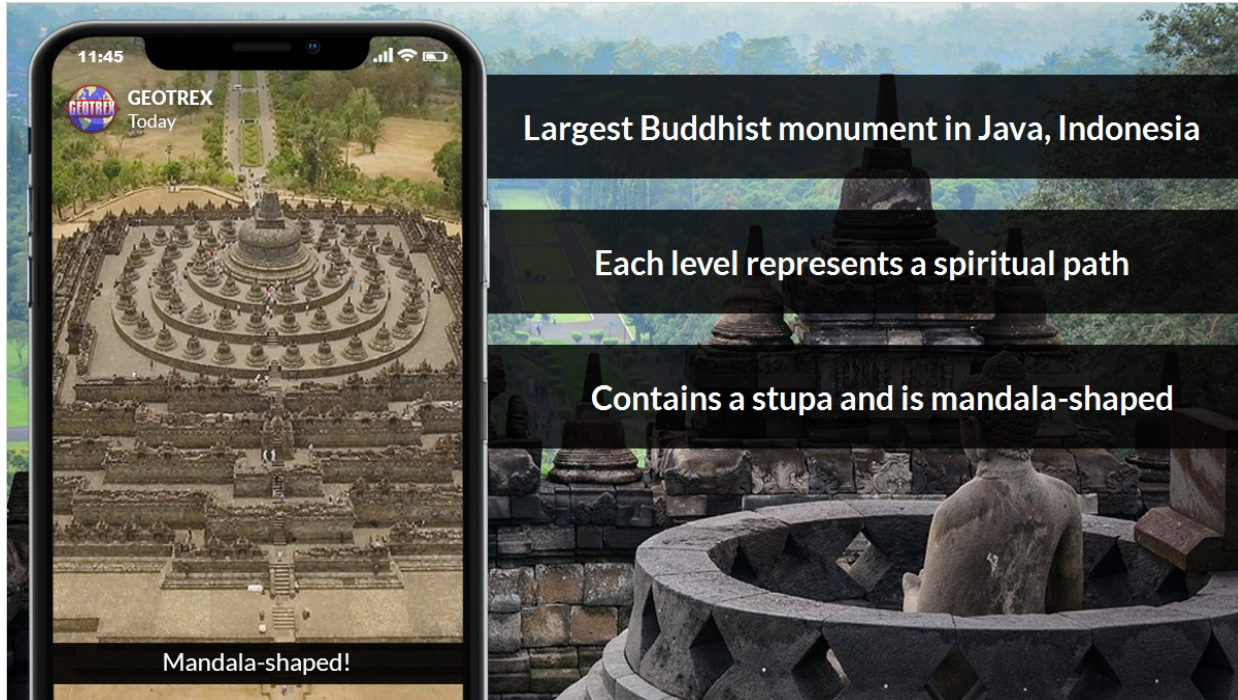
Angkor Wat



Built as a Hindu temple in the 1100s, Angkor Wat is the largest religious monument in the world. Its in northern Cambodia, and was dedicated to the god Vishnu. Sculptures project from the structure, and tell Hindu stories. Although Hinduism was once widely practiced in Southeast Asia, today, the number of practitioners in the region is small. Angkor Wat is now a Buddhist temple. Unfortunately, the Khmer Rouge badly damaged Angkor Wat in the 1970s.

Module: Southeast and East Asia
Topic Content: Cultural Influences of Southeast Asia

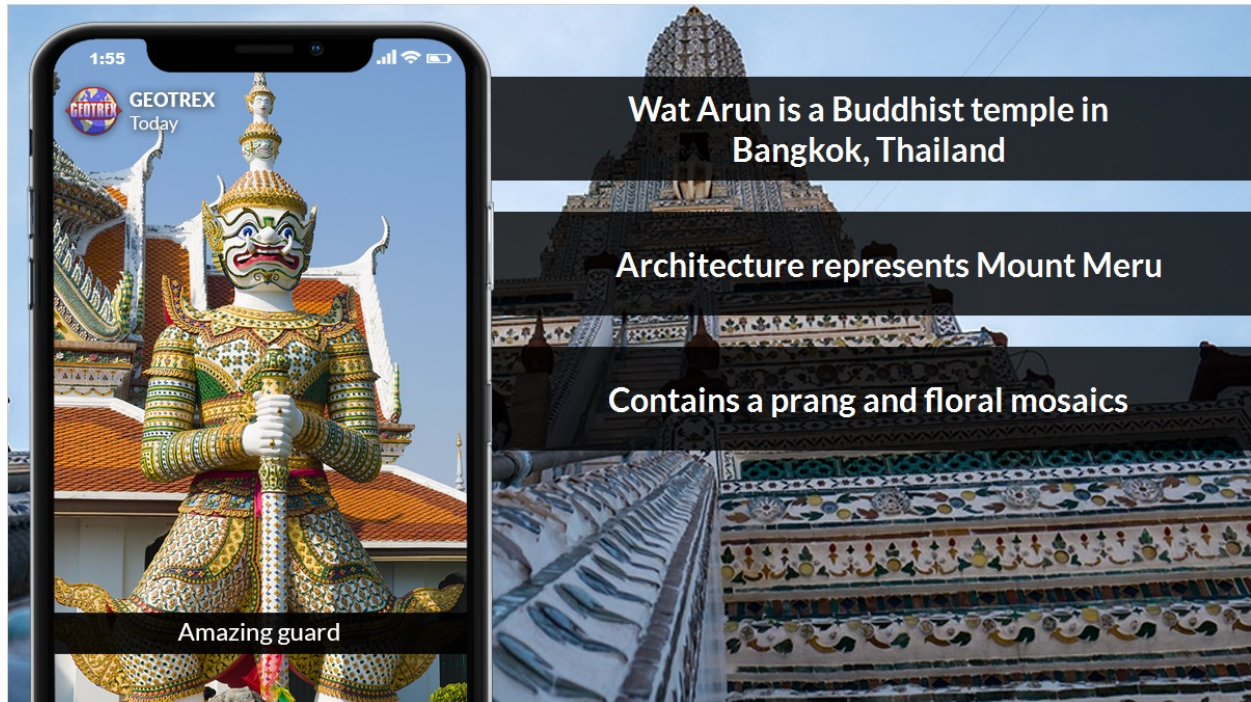
Borobudur



Borobudur is a large Buddhist monument in Java, Indonesia. It was built between 778 and 850. However, volcanic ash covered the temple from 1000 to 1814. The structure is shaped like a stepped pyramid with three main levels. Each level represents a spiritual path toward enlightenment. Indian art influenced Borobudur's architecture. It has a stupa, which is a mound containing holy relics. It is also shaped like a mandala, which is a Buddhist symbol of the universe.

Module: Southeast and East Asia
Topic Content: Cultural Influences of Southeast Asia

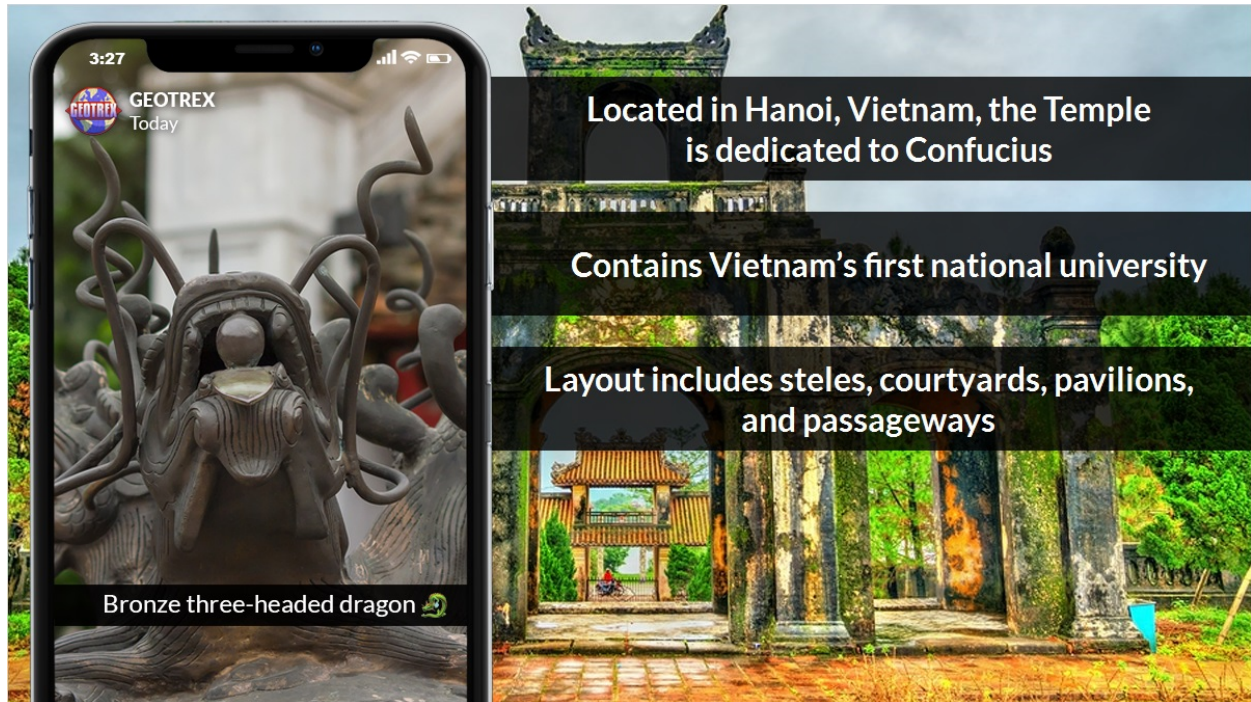
Wat Arun



Buddhism is the predominant religion in Southeast and East Asia. Wat Arun, or the Temple of Dawn, is a Buddhist temple in Bangkok, Thailand. The wat was named after the Indian God of Dawn, Aruna. Its architecture represents Mount Meru. In Buddhist mythology, Mount Meru is the center of the universe. Wat Arun has an eighty-two foot high tower, or prang. There are also floral mosaics made of Chinese porcelain and murals.

Module: Southeast and East Asia
Topic Content: Cultural Influences of Southeast Asia

Temple of Literature

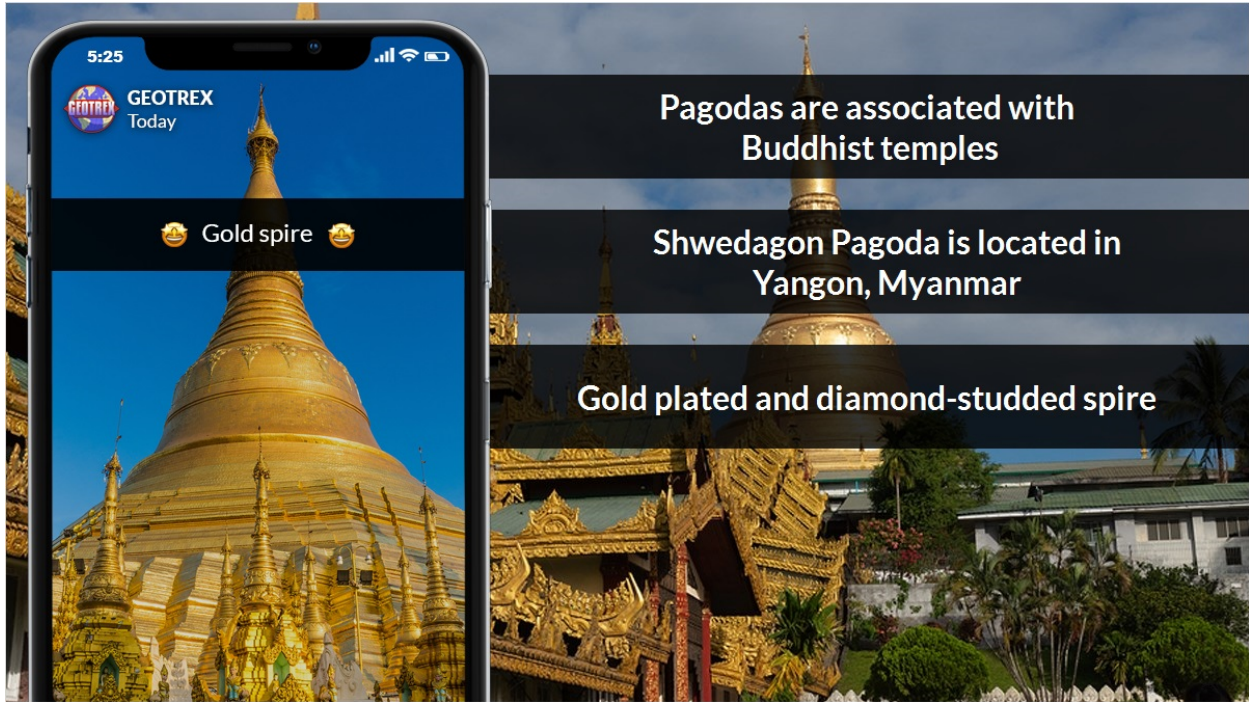


Confucianism is a moral, social, and political philosophy developed from Confucius' teachings. The main goal of Confucianism is to create and maintain social harmony.

Built in 1070 and located in Hanoi, Vietnam, the Temple of Literature is dedicated to Confucius, sages, and scholars. Vietnam's first national university, Imperial Academy, is within the temple. The Temple of Literature has statues of Confucius and his disciples and scholars. Its layout was modeled after Confucius' birthplace. It has steles, courtyards, pavilions, and passageways once used by royalty.

Module: Southeast and East Asia
Topic Content: Cultural Influences of Southeast Asia

Shwedagon Pagoda



Pagodas are associated with Buddhist temple complexes. They are structures that look like towers, and are made of brick, stone, or wood. Pagodas often have murals and a place for relics and funerary objects.

The Shwedagon Pagoda is in Yangon, Myanmar. It is more than 2,500 years old. It is gold plated with a diamond-studded spire. The Shwedagon Pagoda is the most sacred location for Buddhists in Myanmar.

Module: Southeast and East Asia
Topic Content: Cultural Influences of Southeast Asia

Black Nazarene



Located in the Quiapo Church in Manila, Philippines, the Black Nazarene is a life-sized wooden statue of Jesus Christ. The icon has dark skin, and is kneeling and carrying the cross. Many Filipino Catholics believe the Black Nazarene is miraculous. Some feel that touching the icon can cure their disease. Every January, millions of people take part in a religious procession to celebrate the Feast of the Black Nazarene.