

Spring 2022 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
 Gifts of Rivers and Resources: Art and Power in Ancient Asia
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The Ancestors of Angkor: Early Civilizations in Mainland Southeast Asia

Alison Kyra Carter, University of Oregon
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Chronology of mainland Southeast Asia

Time Period	Dates
Neolithic Period: introduction of agricultural communities and widespread appearance of sedentary villages. Frequently associated with widespread use of pottery.	Approx. 2200 to 1600 BC *Some Vietnamese archaeologists use the term Neolithic to extend as far back as the late Pleistocene and Middle Holocene, associated with the Hoabinhian culture.
Bronze Age: introduction of copper/bronze metallurgy	Approx. 2000-1000* to 500 BC *There is considerable debate regarding the timing of the introduction of bronze technology.
Iron Age: introduction of iron technology and widespread contact with South Asia	Approx. 500 BC – AD 500
Protohistoric period: associated with foreign written documents and emerging indigenous inscriptions	Early to mid 1 st millennium AD

Important Terms and Sites

- **Angkor or Khmer Empire/Civilization:** Major regional power in mainland Southeast Asia from the 9-15th centuries CE. The capital was located on the edge of the Tonle Sap Lake floodplain. Khmer refers to the major ethnolinguistic group in Cambodia.
- **Angkor Borei, Cambodia:** Major protohistoric period site located in Cambodia’s Mekong Delta. Believed to be an important center or possibly inland capital of the Funan polity.
- **Dongson Drums:** Bronze drums associated with the Dongson culture (Approx. 600 BCE – 200 CE) in the Red River area of northern Vietnam and widely traded in mainland and island Southeast Asia.
- **Funan:** Kingdom or polity referred to in Chinese historic documents believed to be located in the Mekong Delta region of Cambodia and Vietnam. Associated with the sites of Angkor Borei, Cambodia and Oc Eo, Vietnam
- **Jade/Nephrite ornaments:** Greenstone ornaments, especially earrings, that were widely traded in mainland and Island Southeast Asia during the Iron Age period. The raw materials for the ornaments were believed to have been traded from Taiwan (Hung et al. 2007).
- **Mekong River/Mekong Delta:** Major river that flows through parts of Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Major tributaries include the Tonle Sap River in Cambodia and the Mun River in Thailand. Branches into a delta system around Phnom Penh, Cambodia, which spreads into southern Cambodia and Vietnam.
- **Monsoon Weather Patterns:** Seasonal wind patterns in South and Southeast Asia that impacts climate, but also would have facilitated sailing across the Bay of Bengal. The Southwest Monsoon brings winds from India towards Southeast Asia from May to October/November and associated with the rainy season in Southeast Asia. The Northeast Monsoon brings winds from

Southeast Asia towards India and associated with the dry season in November/December through March/April.

- **Oc Eo, Vietnam:** Major protohistoric period site located in Vietnam's Mekong Delta. Believed to be an important center or possibly capital of the Funan polity.
- **South China Sea:** Part of the western Pacific Ocean that connects the western and southern parts of the Indochinese peninsula, Taiwan, and parts of island Southeast Asia. Several coastal sites in mainland and island Southeast Asia were likely connected through South China Sea trade networks.

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