The Bay of Bengal as a Mediterranean

Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia

- Places: Amaravati; Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Gampola, Kandy; Pyu city states, incl. Sri Ksetra; Pegu (now Bago)/Hanthawaddy, Thaton, Martaban (Mottama), Pagan (Bagan), Ava (Inwa), Arakan (Rakhine); Chiang Mai, Lan Na, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Nakhon Si Thammarat; Angkor, Phnom Penh; Lan Xang

Pali and its importance; the “Pali sphere”

- Other important scriptural languages: Sinhalese (Sinhala), Sanskrit, Mon, Burmese, Shan, Central Thai, Northern Thai (Lan Na), Lao, Cambodian (Khmer)

“Theravada” Buddhism

“Theravada” Buddhism and Buddhist art in Sri Lanka and areas of mainland Southeast Asia:

*What they have in common*

- Many Pali texts (Tipitaka/Tripitaka)
- Some monastic lineages and practices
- Focus on the life of the Buddha (Shakyamuni)
- Some characteristics of Buddha images
- Vessantara and other jatakas
- Buddhas of the past and of the future (Maitreya)
- No omnipotent creator god, but a variety of other gods such as Brahma and Indra (Sakka/ Shakra)
- No savior bodhisattvas
- Importance of relics
- Cosmology

*What they don’t have in common*

- Pali texts composed in Southeast Asia
- The crowned and bejeweled Buddha
- Phra Malai (and connection with Vessantara story and the coming of Maitreya)
- Rama epic
- Customs for royal coronations, important funerals, etc.
- Most frequent mudras of Buddha images
- Copies/evocations in the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodhgaya
FOR FURTHER READING

THERAVADA BUDDHISM:


ART:


HISTORY: