

Analyzing the Impact of Indian Architecture on the Architecture of Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia

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Abstract : To appreciate Indian art and architecture by studying it in India alone will only lead to partial understanding of the whole story and the variety of the statement has been amply proved by subsequent decades of patient research. The results of the work of the Archaeological Survey of India forms only one half of the picture, the other half emerges with the studies of the archaeology and art of the Far East that progressed almost simultaneously under the Archaeological Survey of the Dutch East Indies, the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), or French School of Asian Studies, and allied institutions. The conclusions arrived at have only rendered the assertion that India produced her ultimate master pieces only through foreign influences and in foreign lands (the South-Eastern peninsular and archipelagic regions) almost axiomatic. Angkor in Cambodia and Borobudur in Java, undoubtedly the two greatest architectural marvels of Indian genius, for in content and spirit these (and other monuments of varying magnitudes), are purely Indian, would well illustrate the statement mentioned earlier. Stimulated research followed the discoveries and among the many studies and publications of such pioneers like Coedes, Parmentier, Coomaraswamy and many others in Dutch, French and English made growing contributions to the subject. This paper will discuss in detail the impact of India on the architecture of South East Asia by detailed comparison of architectural styles, elements, and construction materials of a few specific architectural master pieces, in both India and South East Asian countries. It will also analyze the reasoning behind the influence of India on South East Asian countries in spite of them being exposed to the equally culturally rich and civilized kingdoms of China. The intention of this paper is to understand that, conquest by war is not always the only reason for architectural influences and impacts.

Keywords : architectural influence, Buddhist architecture, Indian architecture, Southeast Asian architecture

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