

3215-6542

The Bayon temple, Cambodia, time of the photograph

Tasking:

Move to the optimum position/location and describe the target focussed on in the photograph.
Describe ONLY the target in detail.



Extra Feedback:

Bayon was the state temple of Jayavarman VII, a powerful ruler in the late 13th century. The temple sat at the center of Angkor Thom, a walled city that served as the capital of the Khmer Empire. Four of the city's five gates sat on axis with the temple, and the walls of the city substituted for the enclosure walls normally found at Khmer temples. The walls sit at such a distance from the temple that the temple seems to rise abruptly from the ground like an artificial mountain. In fact, the temple was intended to evoke the form of Mt. Meru--the cosmic mountain at the center of the world in Buddhist cosmology. In keeping with this cosmic symbolism, the plan of the temple is based on a "yantra", a symbol used by Tantric Buddhists as the basis of mandala diagrams that represent the layout of the universe. The temple honored not just one deity, but a host of gods found throughout the Khmer empire. Its central shrine held an image of Jayavarman VII, who perhaps imagined himself as a god-King ruling in the name of the Buddha.

The temple is best known today for the gigantic face sculptures that adorn its thirty-seven surviving towers. Facing in four directions on each tower, the faces are thought to represent Lokeshvara, a Buddhist deity that projected benevolence outward to the four directions.

