

Vihear Phnom Bei វិហារភ្នំបី (Three-Mountains Monastery)

Kulen Area



<p>Geography</p>	<p>Southernmost part of the Phnom Tbeng mountain range, arching from Preah Vihear (Northeast of Cambodia) to form the foothills of Kulen Mountain.</p> <p>Nowadays, belongs in Svay Leu District, Siem Reap Province. The range delimits Siem Reap and Preah Vihear provinces.</p>
<p>Archeology</p>	<p>Part of a chain of spiritual retreats-monasteries (Vihear, in Khmer), often dedicated to the god Shiva. Mountains were sacred places.</p>
<p>Buildings</p>	<p>The pagoda itself has been in existence for at least three generations (90 years). The frescoes depict several scenes from the Jataka, tales and stories related to the Buddha's former lives.</p>
<p>Modern Times</p>	<p>Also called Wat Phnom Bei (Three-Mountains Pagoda), the monastery is serviced by a small community of monks and nuns.</p> <p>Villagers from the area gather for prayer services for rain during drought and dry spells.</p> <p>Locals say that one of the Buddha's statues (2nd row, center) had two emerald gemstones in the eye sockets, robbed at some point in the 1960s.</p> <p>An ancient ceremonial drum (Skar Chey, ស្កាតធីត) is kept on the eastern side of the esplanade.</p> <p>A list of donors is etched on a masonry panel at the entrance of the stairway. On the western wall of the gallery, donors' names are painted inside the frescoes, with the sum they contributed to the wall paintings.</p> <p>Close to the monastery, there is a quarry still in activity. Sandstone from this area was the main building material for many Angkorian temples and buildings.</p>
	

