

LESSON 4

How big were
ancient kingdoms?

Subject	History/Social Studies
Topic	How big were ancient kingdoms?
Level	Lower secondary
Key idea	There are several theories about the history of the Pyu kingdoms and various sources provide evidence for competing versions.
Key concepts	Architecture Cities Influence Invasion Kingdom Theory
No. of periods/lessons	1 period (1 period is approximately 50 minutes)
Facilities needed	Sources and handouts for distribution
Prerequisite knowledge	Students should gain prerequisite knowledge by completing Handout 1: Pre-reading. This could be done for homework before the activities described below, or in a prior class period.

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate knowledge about the art and architecture of ancient people (the Pyu). 2. Explain how archaeologists use evidence to support their theories. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the evidence for two competing theories about history, and decide which one they find more convincing. 2. Develop the 'historian's habit' of considering their peers' views and presenting their own views respectfully. 3. Use evidence-based reasoning to defend a historical theory about the nature of an ancient Southeast Asian kingdom. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Question the assumption that countries/kingdoms are culturally homogenous, or all the same. 2. Cultivate respect for people from neighbouring countries by considering their similarities.

Section	Lesson Development	Resources and Notes	Rationale
Introduction [10 minutes]	1. Hook activity: Comparing cities Distribute Handout 2 and ask students to complete it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handout 2: Comparing cities 	Handout 2 activates students' prior knowledge to get them thinking about the topic of the lesson.
Development [30 minutes]	2. Teacher talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In ancient times, countries did not have fixed borders like there are today. Instead, there were many kingdoms whose borders changed over time, and there were smaller, independent cities. Show the students Source 6: Map 1 and Source 7: Map 2. Explain that these maps illustrate two different ideas about history: that people in ancient Southeast Asia organized themselves into small, independent cities that existed at different times; and that they organized themselves into large kingdoms containing many cities that lasted for thousands of years. How strong these kingdoms were, or how much power they had, depended on: how many weapons they had, how big their networks of followers were, the amount of money they had, and the number of people in the labour force and the military. Many historians believe that the Pyu people formed the earliest kingdom in the region that is now Myanmar. There are ruins of these cities that we can see today. Archaeologists believe these cities were built between the first and the ninth centuries CE. But historians disagree about how big the Pyu kingdom was, and how long it lasted. It is not clear whether all the cities the archaeologists found were part of one large, long-lasting kingdom (Theory 2), or whether they were small, independent cities that happened to share some characteristics (Theory 1). Today, you will work with your group to consider some sources that provide evidence for these theories, and you will come to your own conclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher's note Source 1: Drawings of burial urns from Beikthano Source 2: Drawings of burial urns from Sri Ksetra Source 6: Map 1 showing the five walled Pyu sites Source 7: Map 2 showing a representation of the Pyu kingdom 	The teacher talk gives students the information they will need to complete the group work.

Section	Lesson Development	Resources and Notes	Rationale
	<p>3. Group work</p> <p>3.1 Break the class into groups of four to six students. Give each Sources 3–7 and Handout 3.</p> <p>3.2 Model the process of finding evidence for a theory. For example, point out that on the first map (Source 6), the cities existed at different times, which could support Theory 1. But Source 4 says that the Pyu moved their capital, which supports Theory 2.</p> <p>3.3 Students spend 10 minutes looking at the sources and writing down more evidence for Theory 1 or Theory 2. Elicit the kinds of things they will be looking for: capitals or major cities, goods or artefacts found there, what historians think, geography, or where the Pyu lived.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 3: Fifth century Chinese description • Source 4: Ninth century Chinese description of Pyu capital • Source 5: Dates associated with four Pyu cities • Handout 3: A history mystery 	<p>This group work activity enables students to consider evidence for competing theories about history and decide which one they find more convincing.</p>
<p>Closure [10 minutes]</p>	<p>4. Sharing our theories</p> <p>4.1 Ask representatives from each group to explain which theory their group supported and why.</p> <p>4.2 Question for consideration: What happens if you find items from a later time at a Pyu site? <i>It could mean two things: the Pyu were adopting practices and culture from another kingdom, either by choice or by force. Or there were new people living there.</i></p> <p>4.3 Remind students that either theory could be correct: historians are still discussing this issue, and now the students are also part of the discussion.</p>		<p>Sharing our theories allows students to share their own ideas, hear other students' ideas, and consolidate what they learned.</p>
<p>Assessment</p> <p>Teacher can assess whether students have met the lesson objectives by considering their responses to the Handout 2 exercise and by listening to their presentations and looking at the answers they wrote on Handout 3.</p>			

Teacher's note, sources and handouts

Teacher's note

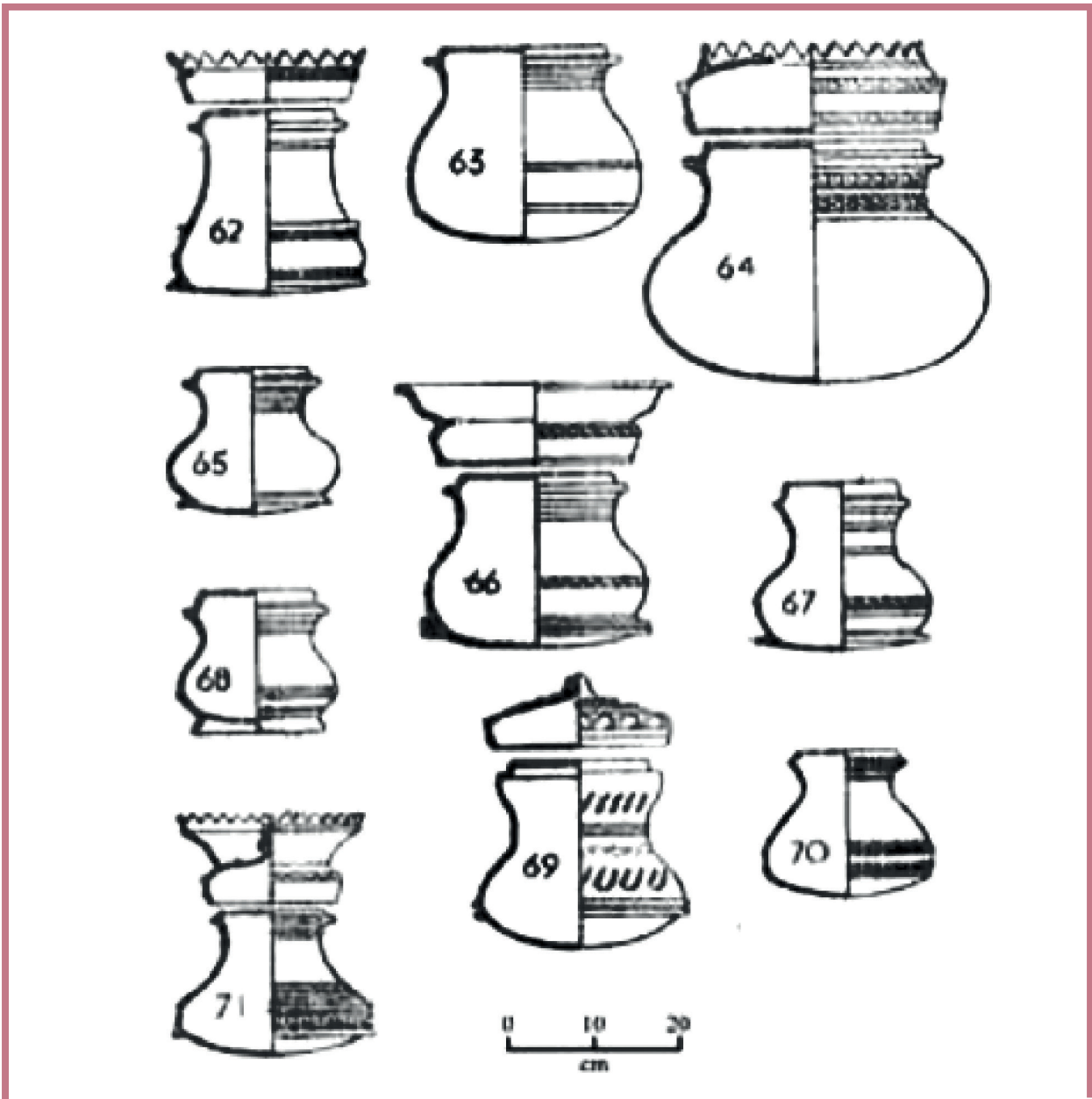
- In ancient times, countries did not have fixed borders like there are today. Instead, there were many kingdoms whose borders changed over time, and there were smaller, independent cities.
- Show the students Source 6: Map 1 and Source 7: Map 2.
- These maps illustrate two different ideas about history:

Theory 1: That people in ancient Southeast Asia organized themselves into small, independent cities that existed at different times; and

Theory 2: That they organized themselves into large kingdoms containing many cities that lasted for thousands of years. How strong these kingdoms were, or how much power they had, depended on: how many weapons they had, how big their networks of followers were, the amount of money they had, and the number of people in the labour force and the military.

- Many historians believe that the Pyu people formed the earliest kingdom in the region that is now Myanmar. There are ruins of these cities that we can see today. Archaeologists believe these cities were built between the first and the ninth centuries.
- But historians disagree about how big the Pyu kingdom was, and how long it lasted. It is not clear whether all the cities the archaeologists found were part of one large, long-lasting kingdom, or whether they were small, independent cities that happened to share some characteristics.
- Today, you will work with your group to consider some sources that provide evidence for these theories, and you will come to your own conclusion.

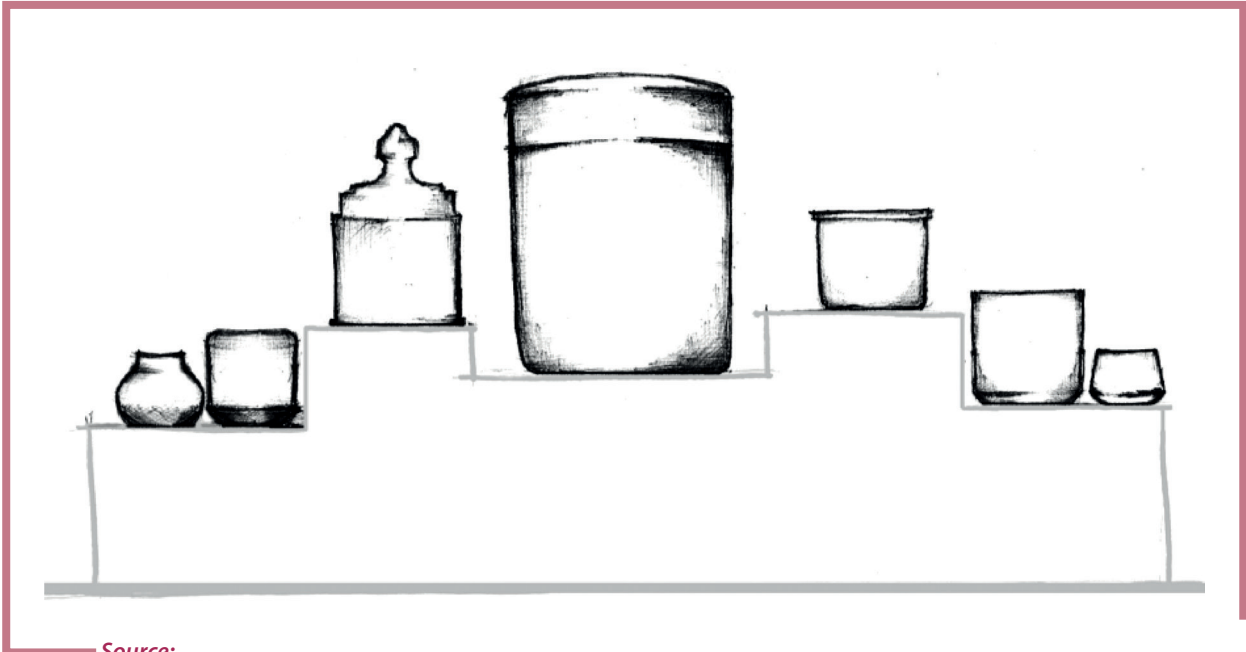
Source 1: Drawings of burial urns from Beikthano



Source:

Aung Thaw. 1968. *Report on the Excavations at Beikthano*. Yangon: Ministry of Union Culture.

Source 2: Drawings of burial urns from Sri Ksetra



Source:
UNESCO.

Source 3: Fifth century Chinese description

Historian Gordon Luce, in his interpretation of Chinese texts from the fifth century, believed that the Pyu were organized as a kingdom as large as the red area in Source 7: Map 2.

'Beyond them, 3000 *li** south-west of *Yung-ch'ang* (an area in southern China) there is mention of a civilised people, the P'iao... Where prince and minister, father and son, elder and younger, have each their order of precedence (meaning the people were organised).'

Note: A *li* is a Chinese unit to measure distance. One *li* is about half of a kilometre.

Source:

Luce, G.H. 1960. 'The Ancient Pyu'. *Burma Research Society Fiftieth Anniversary Publications, No. 2*, p. 309. Rangoon.

Source 4: Ninth century Chinese description of Pyu capital

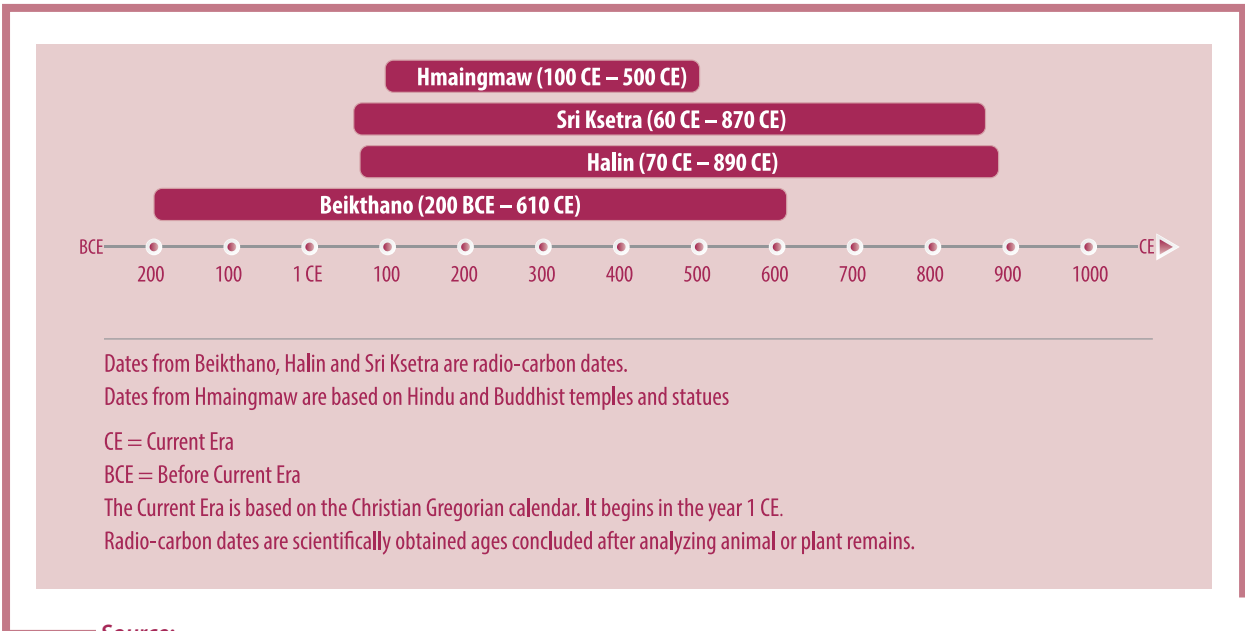
Historian Gordon Luce, in his understanding of various Chinese texts from the eighth and ninth centuries, believed that the Pyu kingdom shifted twice during this period. He believes the description by the Chinese are of the Pyu city of Sri Ksetra (No. 1 in Source 6: Map 1).

'[The Pyu] made up 18 dependent kingdoms [and] 298 tribes of which 32 are important.'

Source:

Luce, G.H. 1960. 'The Ancient Pyu'. *Burma Research Society Fiftieth Anniversary Publications, No. 2*, p. 309. Rangoon.

Source 5: Dates associated with four Pyu cities



Source:

Zaini, Shah Alam. 2016.

Source 6: Map 1 showing the five walled Pyu sites

Map showing the location of walled Pyu sites, five in total: the three sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list as well as Waddi and Mongmao. It also indicates the location of Bagan.

Sites indicated on the map

1. Thiyikittiya/Sri Ksetra (60 CE–870 CE)
2. Beikthano (200 BCE–610 CE)
3. Halin (70 CE–890 CE)
4. Hmaingmaw/Mongmao (100 CE–500 CE)
5. Waddi
6. Bagan



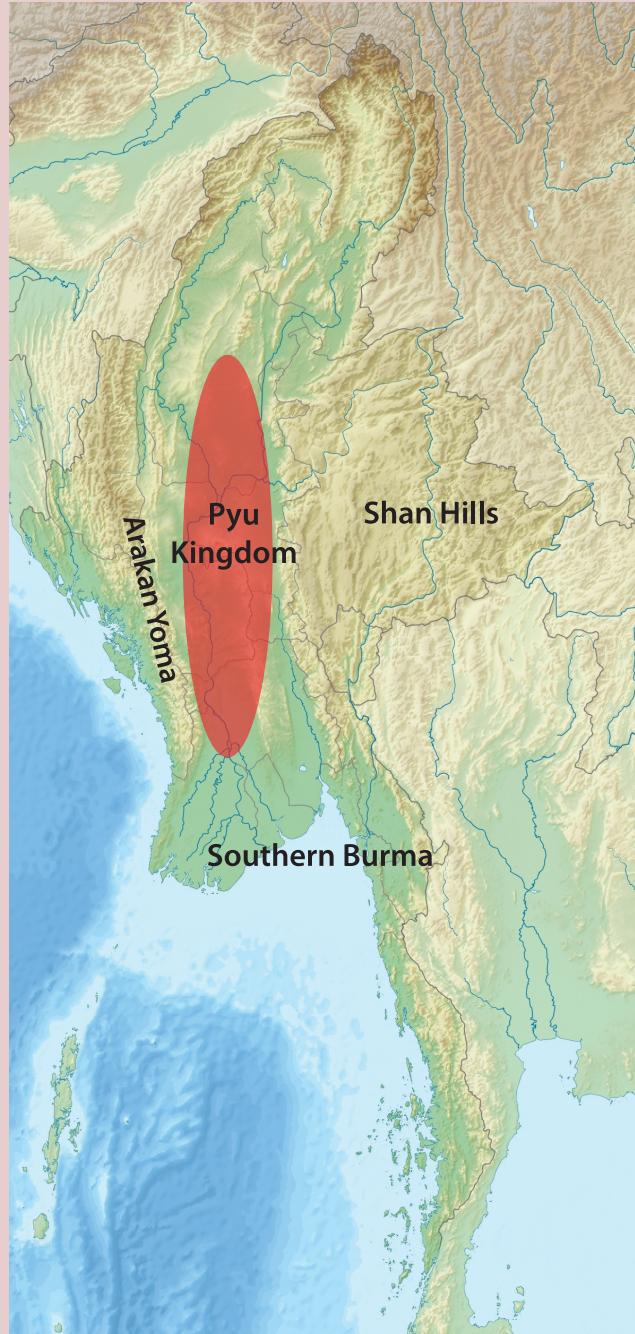
Source:

Baseline map: Dederig, Uwe. 2010. Location map of Myanmar. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Myanmar_relief_location_map.jpg

Additional information: Zaini, Shah Alam. 2016.

Source 7: Map 2 showing a representation of the Pyu kingdom

Map showing how some historians present the Pyu kingdom.



Source:

Baseline map: Dederling, Uwe. 2010. Location map of Myanmar. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Myanmar_relief_location_map.jpg

Additional information: Zaini, Shah Alam. 2016.

Handout 1: Pre-reading

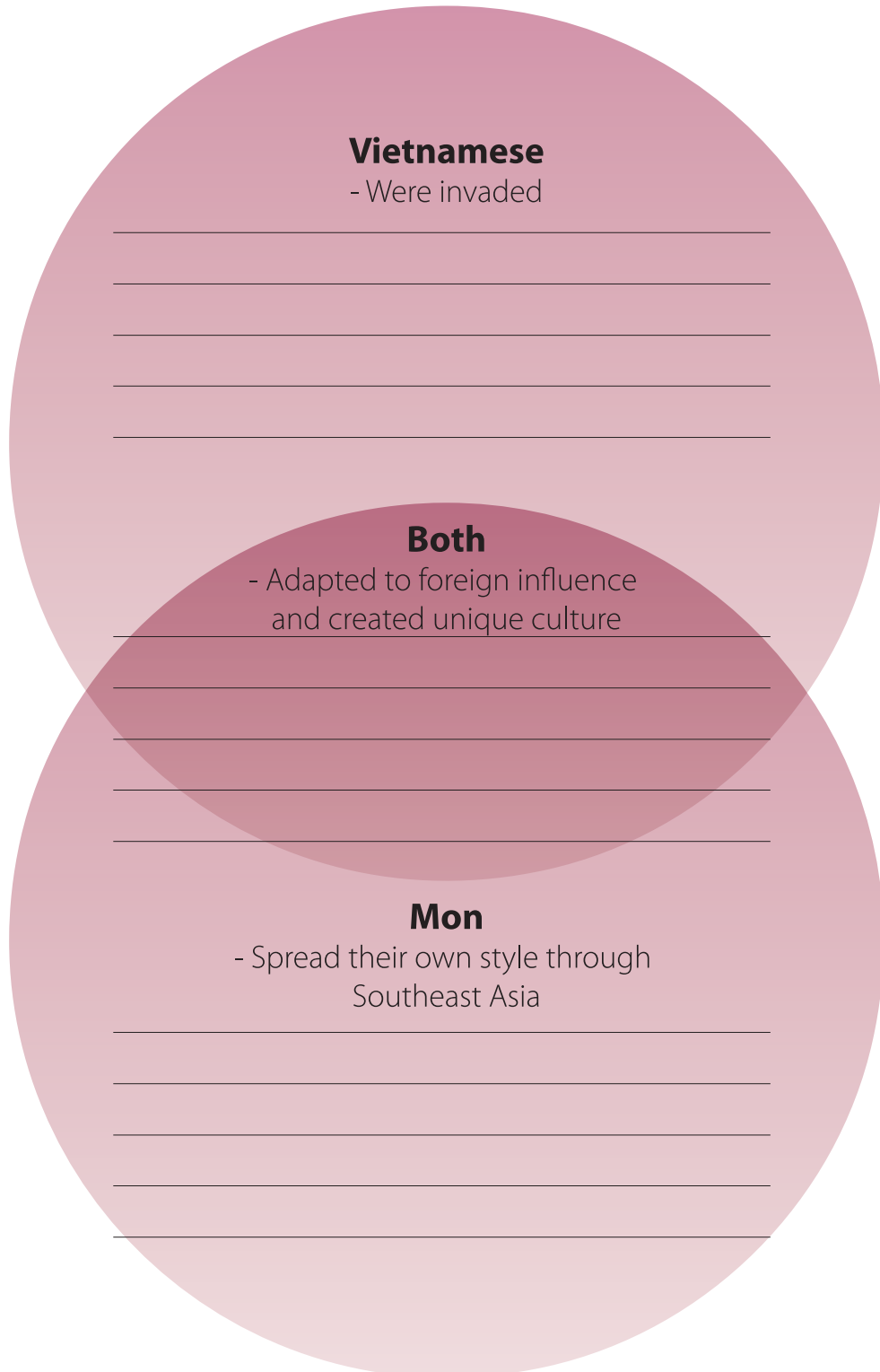
Southeast Asia is located between two major ancient centres of civilization: India and China. Southeast Asian communities adapted elements from Indian and Chinese cultural elements to suit local needs.

For that reason, Southeast Asian art and architecture have strong influences from Hinduism and Buddhism, both of which originated in Ancient India. But Southeast Asians did not just copy Indian art. Instead, they used Indian influence to create their own unique styles of art. For instance, Mon people, who were a major power in the area that is now Thailand until the twelfth century, created Dvaravati *Dharmachakra* sculptures. These sculptures showed Indian Buddhist influence, but they were unique to Mon culture. This new Mon style then spread to other parts of Southeast Asia.

Another major way that cultures mixed and spread was through invasions. For example, Chinese forces invaded what is now the northern part of Viet Nam in the second century BCE. The Chinese rulers introduced their own system of government, writing system, and religious beliefs. But the local people did not become Chinese. They kept some elements of their own culture, and adopted some Chinese practices. When they expelled Chinese forces from the region, they kept some Chinese influences, but adapted them to local ideas.

Handout 2: Pre-reading exercise

Use what you've learned in the Pre-reading to fill in this Venn Diagram to compare how Mon and Vietnamese cultures experienced outside influence or spread their own influence. Some answers have been filled in for you to give you an idea of how to do the exercise.



Handout 3: Comparing cities

Question 1: Think of a city or town in your country that is MOST DIFFERENT from the one where your school is located. For example, if your school is located in a small coastal village, you might name a large inland city: _____

Use the chart below to brainstorm the similarities and differences between your city/town, and the one you named above. Think about what kinds of jobs people do, what religions they practice, what ethnic groups they come from, what languages they speak, what types of music they listen to, what foods they eat, and what kinds of houses they live in.

Similarities	Differences

Question 2: Now think of a city or town in a NEIGHBOURING country that is MOST SIMILAR to the one where your school is located: _____

Use the chart below to brainstorm the similarities and differences between your city/town, and the one you named above. Think about what kinds of jobs people do, what religions they practice, what ethnic groups they come from, what languages they speak, what types of music they listen to, what foods they eat, and what kinds of houses they live in.

Similarities	Differences

Question 3: Two thousand years in the future, how would historians know that the city/town you named in the first question was in the same country as yours, whereas the city/town you named in the second question was in a different country? Think about maps, road signs, national flags, and money. How could historians prove that the cities were or were not part of the same country? Explain below.
