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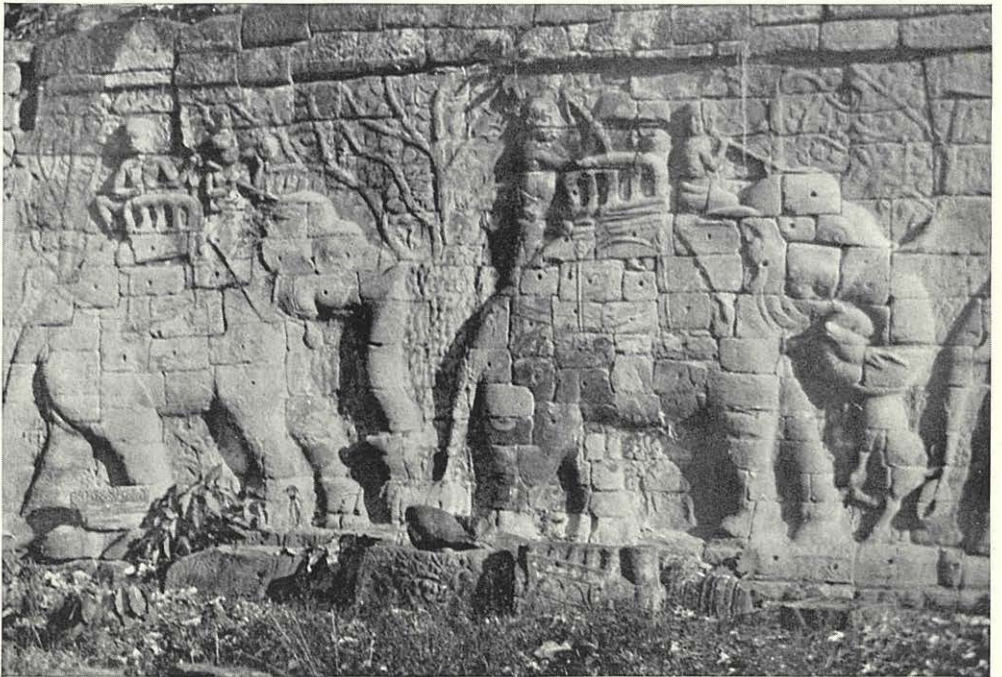
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Photograph by Gervais Courtellemont

AN IMPROVED DRESSING ROOM

A course in the proper and most effective use of powder, cosmetics, and drapes constitutes a part of the training given the Cambodian court dancers.



Photograph by Mrs. Emma L. Rose

THE EXPLOITS OF LONG-FORGOTTEN KHMER HUNTERS ARE STILL RECORDED ON THE TERRACES OF THEIR ANCIENT CAPITAL

FOUR FACES OF SIVA: THE MYSTERY OF ANGKOR

BY ROBERT J. CASEY

FAR up in the jungles of French Indo-China, some 300 miles from the doorstep of the world as measured in distance, a thousand years in the past as measured in time, and æons back in the unknown as measured in history, is Angkor, one of the most puzzling works ever contrived by the hand of man.

Temple and town and network of dim and forgotten shrines, it represents a culture that must have been far in advance of anything coeval with it and a power that must have been virtually irresistible even in Asia, where men at arms were plentiful and warfare was a favored business.

But the culture died and the men who had built it disappeared, and for hundreds of years the forests of banyan and bamboo hid from the eyes and memory of the world what had been a metropolis of a million inhabitants.

Two generations ago a French naturalist broke through the wall of jungle in a search for specimens of tropical life and came upon a spectacle such as the slaves of the lamp might have contrived for Aladdin. Before him, in the quivering silence, rose the five towers of a vast step pyramid, a stone tapestry representative of an art and architecture like nothing else within the ken of man.

TIME HAS DEALT LIGHTLY WITH THIS MAGIC TEMPLE

A moated wall surrounded it and a cloistered gate opened upon a causeway that led to its rocketing staircases; and, for all that jungle growths were close about its lower stage and odd clumps of verdure grew from its arched roofs, it seemed that life had been in its shadowy galleries only a moment ago. The temple was virtually intact.

The astonished visitor looked about for the ashes of altar fires and stood listening for the footsteps of returning priests. It seemed incredible that a people could have evolved a civilization such as that typified by the great temple and then have van-

ished without any of their neighbors hearing of it.

But there were no human beings in the empty halls, nor was there trace of man, save in the ruin of his works in the walled city to the north.

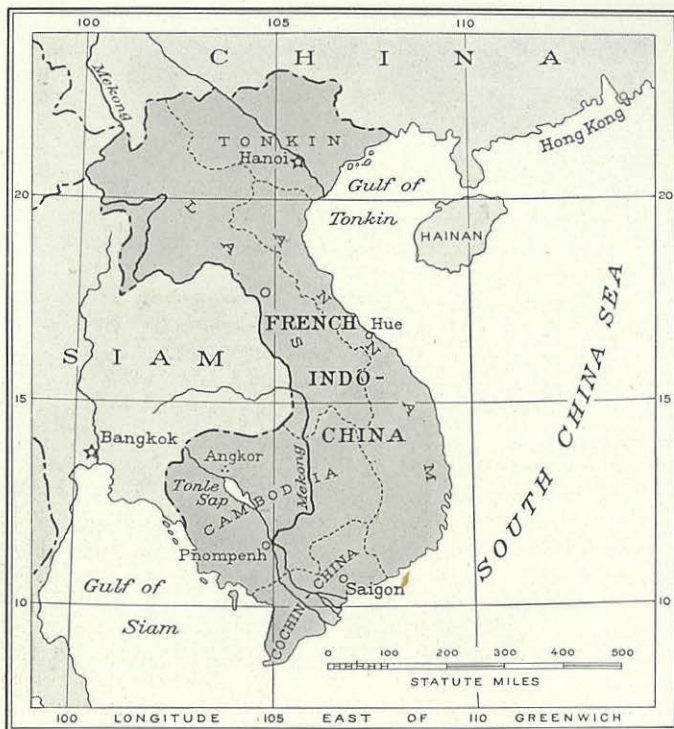
It is now more than sixty years since the stunned eyes of Mouhot, the naturalist, looked upon the magnificent heights of Angkor—more than sixty years since the greatest detective story in the history of the world was laid out with its million stony clues to puzzle the savants. Today, with its principal remains classified and ticketed, its inscriptions translated, and its monuments lifted out of the jungle, Angkor is still the vast and silent mystery that it was in the beginning.

AUTOMOBILE ROADS NOW LEAD TO THE GREAT MYSTERY

The world knows more about it now. Splendid automobile roads, cut through what was once a thicket of bamboo and is now an endless rice field, bring the traveler, on regular schedule and with little personal discomfort, from Saigon, at the foot of Asia, to the bungalow on the edge of the Angkor moat, in a few hours. Yearly hundreds of visitors from all parts of the world are seeking out this odd corner and carrying away with them amazed reports that will lure other hundreds.

And yet, were it not for the fact that these tremendous zikkurats remain much as they were when they were first built, defiant of time and weather, by the Tonle Sap (Great Lake), the incredible tale of the civilization that built them and vanished would rank as it did in Mouhot's time, as a none-too-cleverly-constructed myth.

But the monuments are there and no mere shutting of the eyes will dispose of them: Angkor Thom, a walled city within whose metropolitan area at one time must have lived more people than were to be found in the Rome of Augustus or the Carthage of Hannibal; and Angkor Vat, supreme architectural effort of this strange culture, not only the most grandiose tem-



Drawn by A. H. Bumstead

FROM ANGKOR THE KHMERS RULED A VAST EMPIRE

ple of the group, but one of the most stupendous undertakings begun by man since the cornerstone was laid for the Tower of Babel.

ANGKOR'S PEOPLE DESERTED THE FINEST METROPOLIS IN ASIA

About Angkor Thom are scattering remains of earlier edifices, and far in the jungle are capital cities built and abandoned with that prodigality which seems always to have been characteristic of oriental monarchs. Traces of this lost civilization have been found wherever a lean tributary of the Mekong River branches out toward the north, and there is plentiful evidence now that the temple builders were part of a population which may have reached a total of thirty millions.

Here at Angkor was the finest metropolis in Asia—a town whose swaggering splendor is permanently embossed in temple wall and tower and terrace. It was the perfect expression of a race of conquerors and must have been as wealthy as Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. And yet, for some cause which an archeologist can only

guess, the populace walked out of it and never came back. The jungle moved in and engulfed it for five centuries.

There begins and there ends the mystery of Angkor.

Little enough is known about the origins of the race that evolved the culture which centered in Angkor Thom. The people were called the Khmers and were either of Hindu extraction or the diligent pupils of Hindu teachers. That about sums up the available information concerning them. What became of them is a puzzle much more intriguing than their origin and apparently much less likely to be solved.

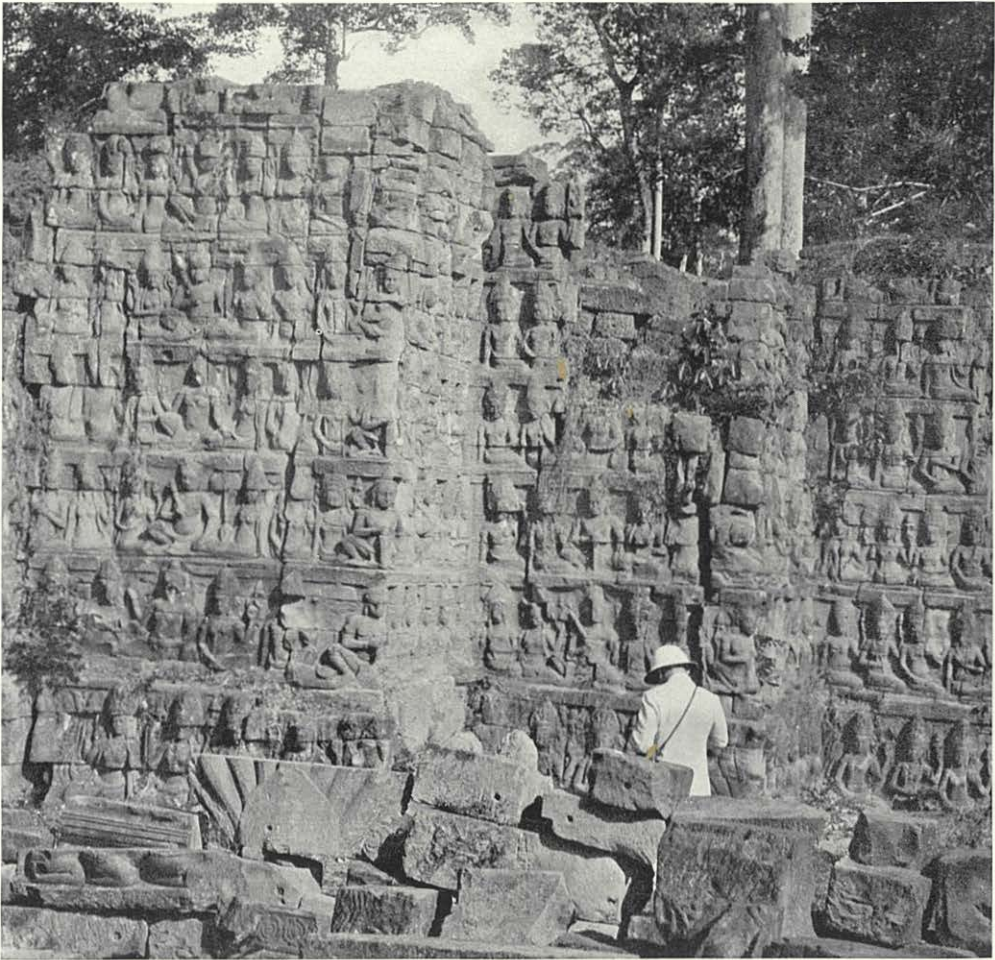
There is mention in Chinese records of a kingdom under Hindu

direction, if not domination, in Indo-China as early as the year 238 of our era, and there is evidence that the Khmers were still flourishing in the thirteenth and possibly in the early fourteenth centuries; but, strangely enough, their civilization, wonderful as it was, made little impress on the neighboring nations.

It seems impossible that a culture such as that which built the pyramid of Angkor Vat could have perished without a word of its demise reaching the civilizations with which it must have been in constant touch. But such appears to have been the case.

THE WORLD HAD NO INKING OF JUNGLE-BURIED TEMPLES

Two generations ago the modern world had never heard of Angkor. A dense forest spread across Indo-China. French trade was confined to the coast, and there was no commercial traffic on the Mekong River north of Pnompenh for the reason that Cambodia's resources, the same resources that had given this region a possible identity as the Golden Chersonese of



Photograph by Mrs. Emma L. Rose

FINELY CARVED FIGURES OF INFINITE NUMBER AND VARIETY ADORN THE RUINS OF ANGKOR

legend, were as deeply carpeted with useless verdure as the hidden cities of the north.

Pnompénh, the capital of the Kingdom of Cambodia (western portion of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula), was a village of nipa thatch and bamboo, a comic-opera metropolis, where a despot ruled in fear of his life over a semisavage, if not completely savage, people.

Saigon, the present capital of French enterprise in the East, was just rising from the marshes south of Annam. What might lie hidden in the masses of foliage to the north no one knew. The world had heard, but had forgotten, the tales of Portuguese missionaries of the seventeenth century, that marvelous cities with leap-

ing towers stood dead among the trees of the Tonle Sap. Wherever there is unexplored territory one is certain to hear of such cities, and the world had grown too wise and too skeptical to pay attention to such nonsense.

True, there had been a Chinese traveler, Tcheou-Ta-Quan by name, who had written what purported to be a chronicle of his service as ambassador to some kingdom in the Mekong Valley. It was conceded that the writer might actually have had some such service, but it was obvious that in his description of the marvels he had found in his dubious kingdom he was merely a pleasant liar.

If the Cambodians were to be considered as the heritors of these theoretical

grandeurs, then the lie stood proved; for the world had seen something of Pnompenh, the one aspiration of Cambodia toward civilization, and Pnompenh seemed to be a good deal like every other jungle town on the face of the earth.

During these troublous times M. Mouhot passed up the great river into Tonle Sap and made his discovery.

Archeology, already thrilled by the translation of the Rosetta Stone and the unbelievable bit of detective work which led to the decipherment of the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions, turned its attention at once to this new field.

The tigers and elephants, which for centuries had made their homes in the forests of the Mekong, suddenly found that the jungle was becoming overpopulated with bearded and bespectacled gentlemen, who wandered about without thought of danger or personal discomfort. They moved northward and left the Angkor region to the savants, and word by word the fragmentary history of the Khmers was pieced together.

The region then belonged to Siam. It was not ceded to France until 1907. But Science declined to recognize any frontier. The galleries of Angkor Vat were cleared of the massed shrubbery. The inscriptions on the walls and pillars of Angkor Thom, all of which were in an alphabet derived from the Sanskrit, were copied and deciphered.

For half a century learned men toiled here unceasingly to prove at length only what had been suspected from the first, that a highly intellectual people had built up in this valley a civilization, and that however inconceivable experience might show such a thing to be, their marvelous culture had been sunk without a trace.

ON THE ROAD TO PNOMPENH

The road to Angkor is interrupted by numerous ferries, most of which are nearing replacement by bridges. A group of rowers takes one across the first arm of the Mekong Delta, a narrow, placid river that is virtually without banks and is distinguishable from the rest of the landscape only by its gray-brown color.

Beyond the opposite terminal a butte, blue-black and hazy, rises out of the green like a volcanic cone—a bare, lone peak that presently is left behind. No other

heights are visible for nearly an hour and a half, and then the rising ground that seems almost mountainous as viewed from the distance, turns out to be three jagged little hills that in any other locality might be taken for a slag heap.

Flat and green, flat and green, cane and coconut, banana and bamboo, poinsettia and rhododendron, and rice and rice and rice; and through it all a straight red road—smooth, dusty, interminable.

One crosses the Mekong into a new country. For a while there is a typical patch of jungle land, a tangle of foliage and root and branch, creeping up to the red road and threatening to swallow it. Purple hyacinths bloom in great banks in marshes along the highway. Blue flowers and red and tiger lilies of orange and yellow break in unexpected fireworks out of the green.

CAMBODIA'S CAPITAL IS THE HEIR TO ANGKOR'S GLORY

Siamese temples with elephants' trunks waving from their gables, and spires that rise in a succession of tapering cones appear suddenly in the clearings. Languid birds perch upon the backs of water buffalo, and through all this one comes at last to the ferry, just beyond which is Pnompenh, the capital of Cambodia.

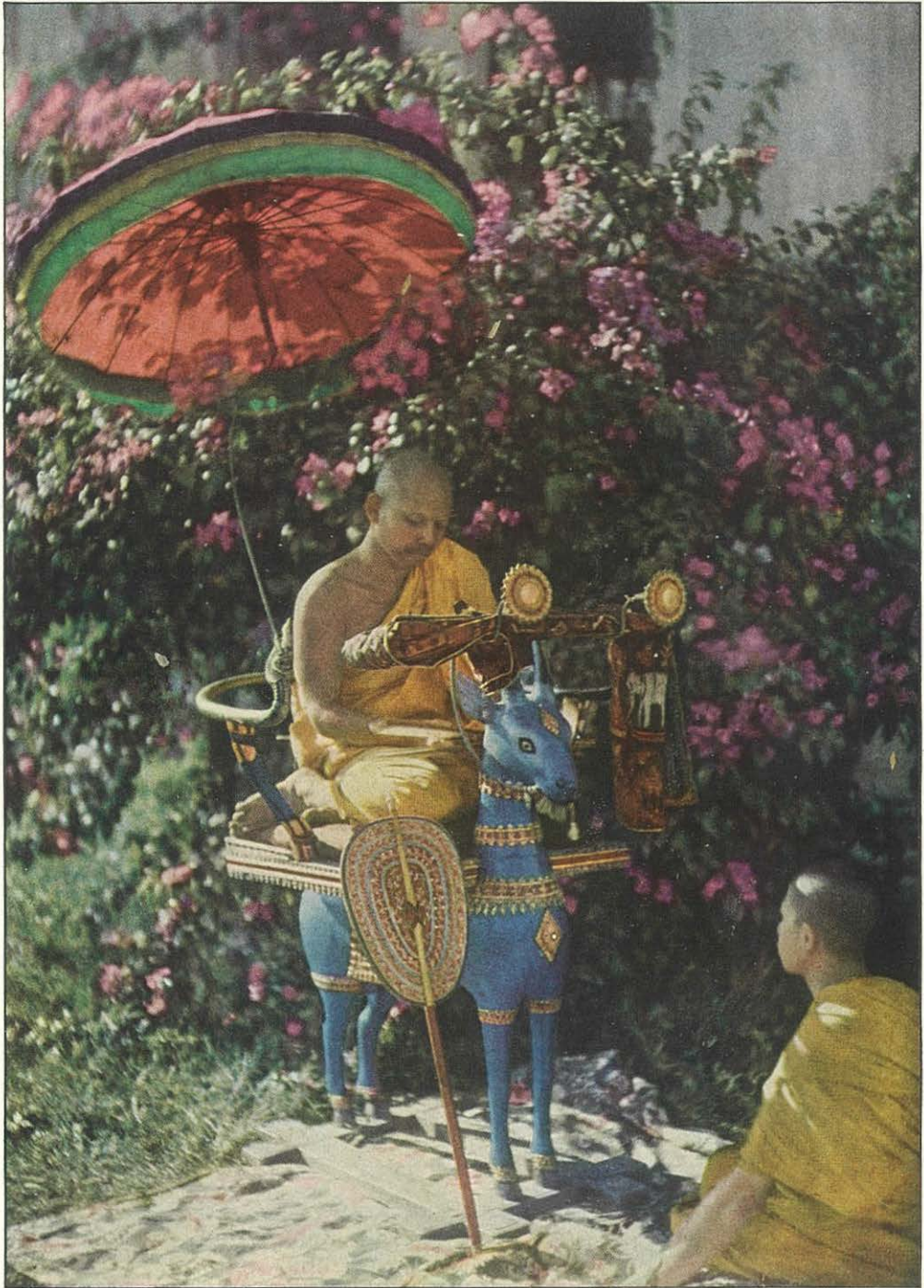
Once, and not so long ago, the journey to Angkor could be made only by boat—a tedious passage that took about five days. The stories of travelers who made the pilgrimage in those days are long recitals of hardship and continuous descriptions of impenetrable jungle.

There is no reason to believe that these accounts were at all inaccurate. But conditions change rapidly in Indo-China. A lace pattern of paved roads has been traced all across this end of Asia.

Motor transport, more flexible and faster than the typical oriental railroad, has brought the upper reaches of the Mekong Valley to within a few hours of Saigon; and paddy fields, spreading out and beyond the old horizons, have pushed the jungle steadily northward.

To-day one may ride for hundreds of miles without seeing any trees save in far scattered clusters, and it was only yesterday that the tiger and elephant walked here, unmolested heritors of the physical kingdom of the Khmers.

THE ENIGMA OF CAMBODIA



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THE TRAVELS OF SAKYA-MUNI ARE COMMEMORATED IN THIS PULPIT

“The hermit of the race of Sakya,” better known as Gautama the Buddha, is reputed to have ridden about the country preaching the doctrines of his new-found truth. In remembrance of this, some of the Cambodian *bonzes*, or priests, teach their *chelas* (neophytes) from a pulpit built in the shape of a horse.



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NAGA RADIATES GRACE AND POWER

The great serpent demigod was deeply venerated by the founders of Angkor as the parent of their race. The vibrant strength and beauty of his sculptured image are among the highest achievements of Khmer art.



Autochromes by Gervais Courtellemont
CAMBODIAN BUNGALOWS ARE BUILT ON STILTS

The primary reason for placing nearly all habitations several feet above the ground is to avoid their destruction in the flood season. However, the practice also safeguards the homes from snakes.



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IN THE SILKWORM NURSERY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL AT PNOMPENH

The French Administration in Cambodia is endeavoring to revive the native arts and industries of that colony. At the left a Cambodian girl is handling cocoons preparatory to their conversion into silk thread. At the right the silk yarn is being wound.



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THE TOWERS OF ANGKOR VAT REFLECT THEIR ANCIENT MAJESTY IN STILL WATERS

❖ A mile south of the ruined royal city of Angkor Thom rises this most perfectly preserved example of Khmer art and architecture, surrounded by a moat of lakelike proportions (nearly 700 feet wide and with a perimeter of more than three miles). It was begun about the middle of the 12th century and was probably finished by the beginning of the 13th. The shrine has served at various times as a place of worship for followers of both Brahma and Buddha.

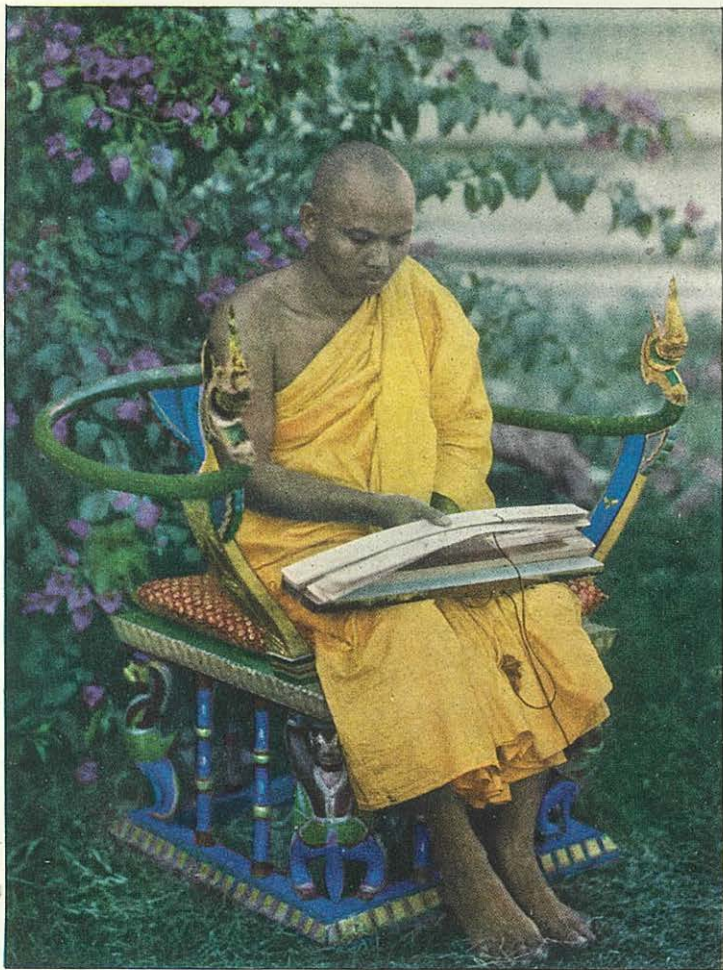


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THE MONUMENTS AT ANGKOR DRAW ONE IRRESISTIBLY BACK INTO THE VAGUE MYSTERIES OF THE PAST

This is one of two buildings in the first great court of the Vat. They have been called libraries, but were more probably chapels.



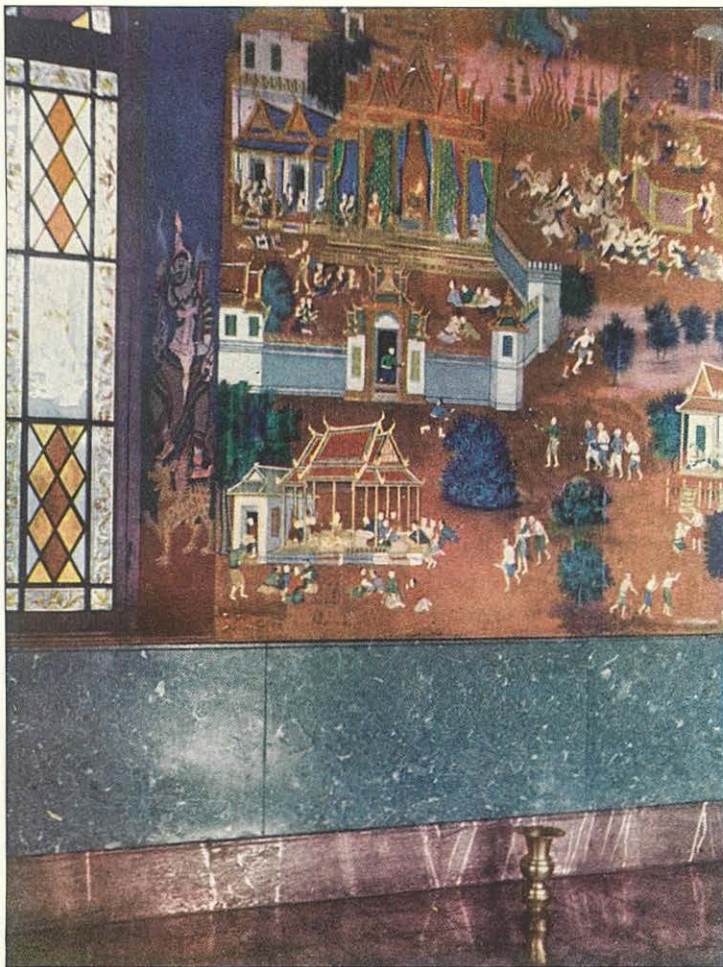
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A CAMBODIAN PRIEST READS ONE OF HIS
COUNTRY'S CLASSICS

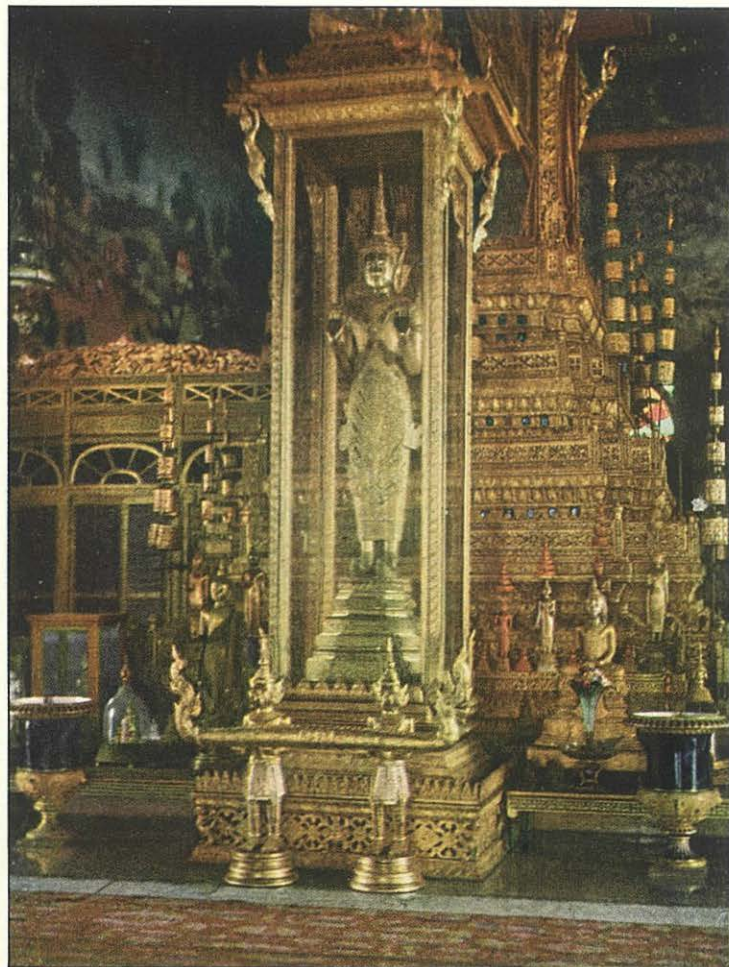


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THE WEDDING GOWN OF A PNOMPENH WOMAN
OF FASHION



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INTERIOR VIEWS OF THE FAMED SILVER PAGODA AT PNOMPENH

Into this gorgeous temple, kings of Cambodia have poured an enormous treasure. Its main room, 36 feet wide by 120 feet long, is paved with tiles of silver. The high walls are frescoed in brilliant colors with scenes from the life of Buddha and vivid representations of the horrors of hell. The most notable possession of the pagoda is a golden image of the Buddha, six feet high and ablaze with diamonds.



AN ANCIENT NAGA STILL REARS ITS PLURAL-HEADED BULK AT ANGKOR THOM

According to legend, the Nagas, or many-headed serpents, were the original lords of Cambodia (see also Color Plate II). This god is supported on the knees of a succession of carved Brahman divinities and has withstood the ravages of time and strife better than most of his fellows.



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IN THE HEART OF CAMBODIA'S JUNGLE WERE BATHS TO RIVAL ROME'S

The great Khmer king, Yaçovarman, who came to the throne, A. D. 889, built at Angkor Thom a city which could vie in magnificence with anything that Europe has produced. The royal baths, marvels of beauty and luxury, were decorated with Brahmanic figures.

THE ENIGMA OF CAMBODIA



IN ITS HEYDAY ANGKOR WAS LARGER THAN THE ATHENS OF PERICLES

The ancient capital of Cambodia presents a vast area of temples and palaces whose grandeur of conception and beauty of decoration grip the imagination and claim for themselves and their builders a secure niche in the world of art.



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SEVEN CENTURIES AGO THE KHMERS BUILT THIS BRIDGE OF STONE

The principle of the arch was unknown to the architects of Angkor, consequently they had to place the piers of their bridges very close together and so much silt has collected against these supports, just outside the ancient capital, that they have practically become a wall.

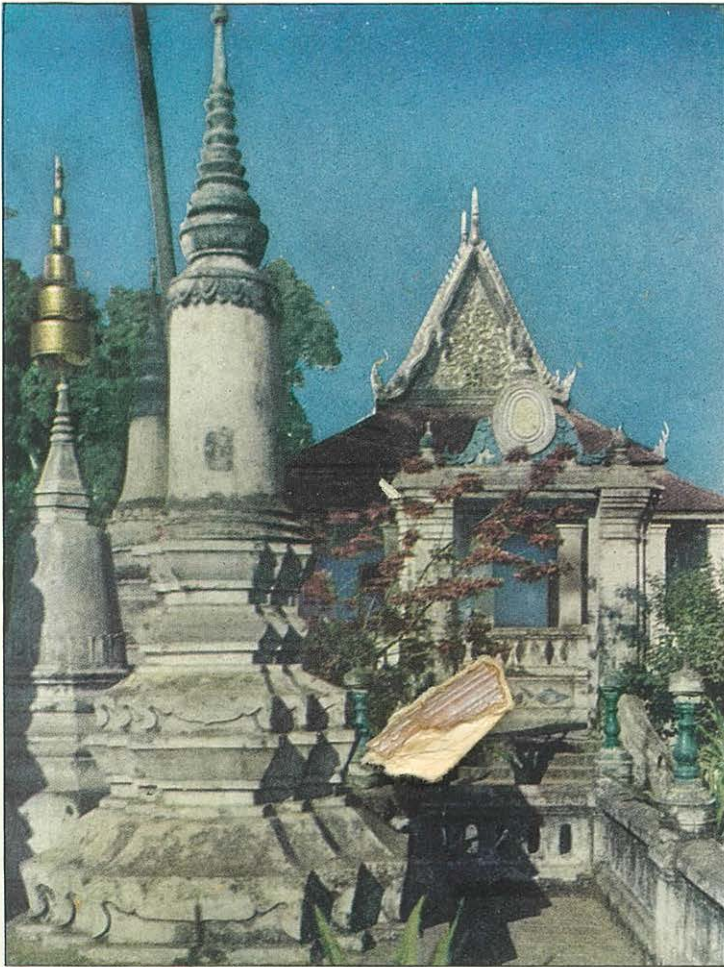


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HERE THE BROTHERS OF THE SAFFRON ROBE DO HOMAGE TO THEIR GOD

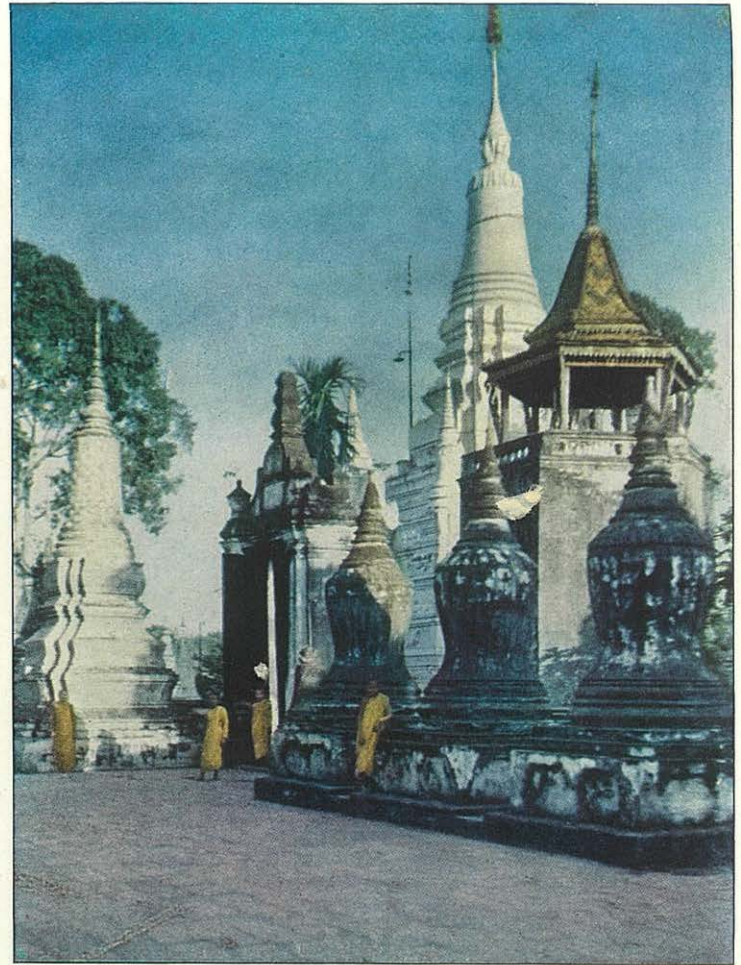
The sermon or lesson is read by one of the bonzes while seated in a beautifully carved pulpit. The congregation is composed of men attached to the Royal Pagoda at Pnompenh, who have in their care treasures of great value. The relics are kept in glass boxes which are not locked but sealed with paper and stamped with the royal mark. This procedure serves as a most effectual safeguard, for no Cambodian, regarding his king as the representative of God on earth, would ever dream of stealing from him.



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THE DELICATELY SCULPTURED SPIRES OF PALACE AND PAGODA PRESENT A FANTASTIC HARMONY AGAINST THE AZURE OF PNOMPENH'S SKIES

Little remains to Cambodia of the glory that was hers when the Khmers ruled a great empire stretching from the Bay of Bengal to the China Sea, but the artistry of her religious edifices still breathes memories of those ancient days.



Autochromes by Gervais Courtellemont



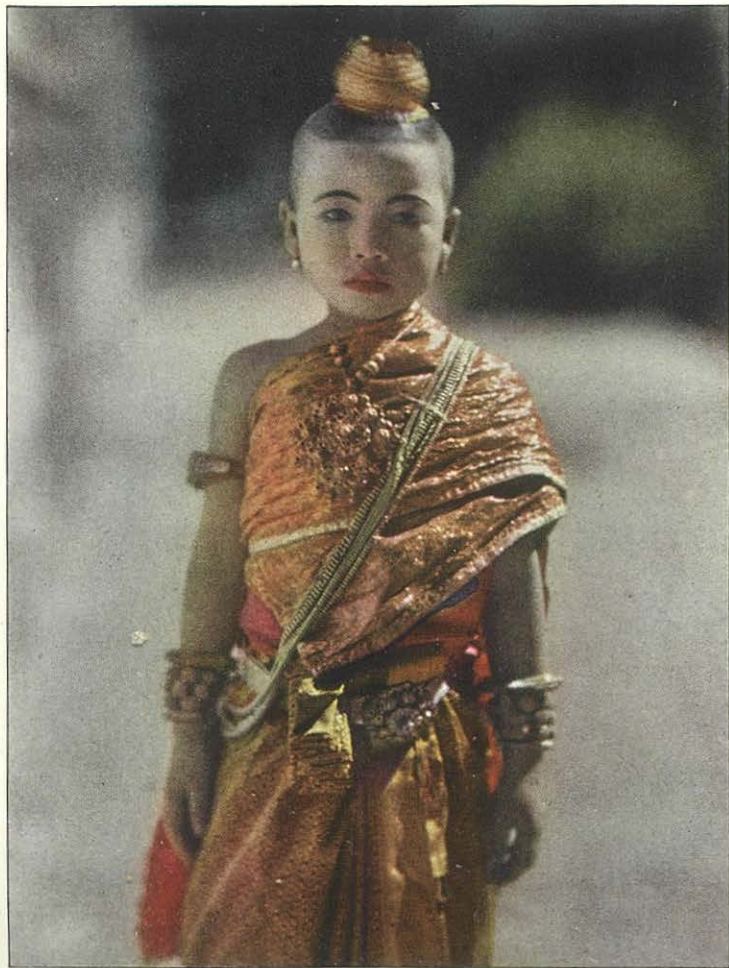
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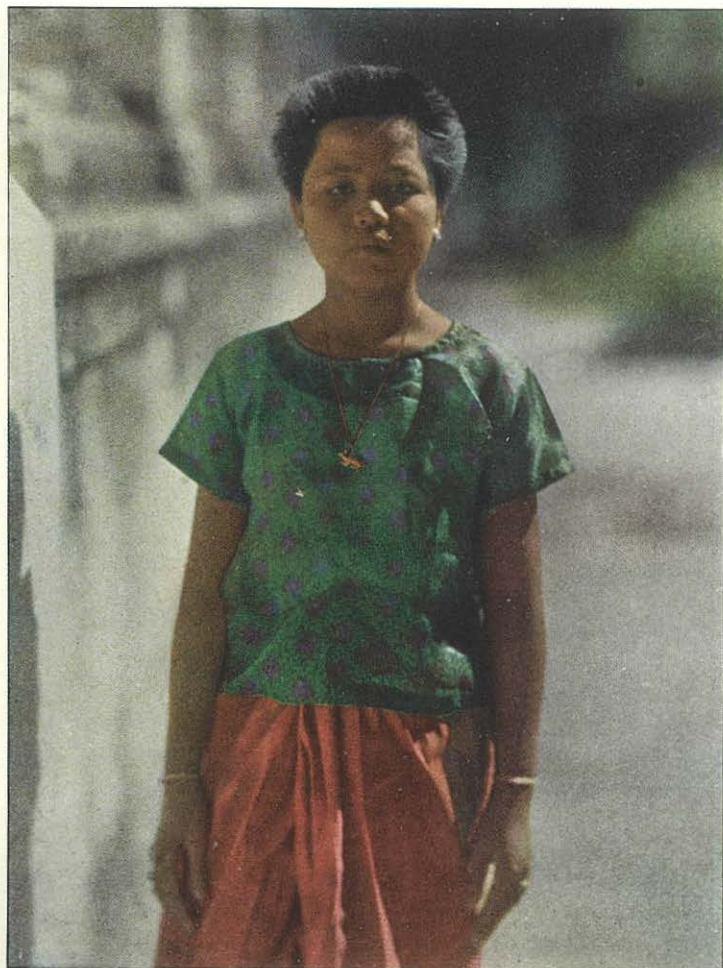
Autochromes by Gervais Courtellemont

THE BALLET DANCERS OF CAMBODIA ARE INCARNATIONS OF RHYTHM

In a state-maintained ballet school at Pnompenh, graceful girls learn to perform the delicate and intricate steps that accompany symbolic dances which still adhere to the classic examples depicted on the walls of Angkor. The "King of the Monkey" is here seen preparing to elope with an unprotesting young princess. Notice the whiteness of the dancer's face and arms, an effect obtained by generous applications of powder.



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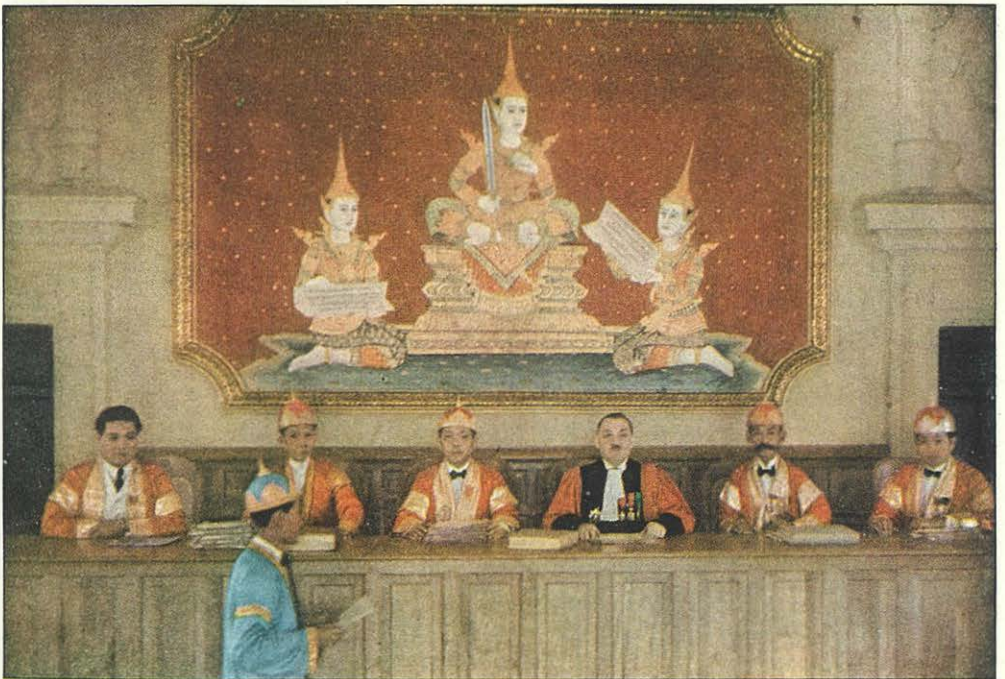
LADIES OF THE ROYAL COURT AT PNOMPENH

The girl at the left is dressed in finery for the ceremony of hair cutting which will formally mark her transition from girlhood to womanhood. As a child only a single tuft of hair has been allowed to grow on her head. This is inclosed in the small gold bowl she wears. When the tuft is cut off, all the hair is allowed to grow out. The woman at the right is clad in everyday costume and her hair represents the regular "Cambodian bob."



THE KING OF CAMBODIA IS A LIBERAL PATRON OF THE DANCE

Dancing has long been an honored institution among the Cambodians. Their classic dances combine dramatic effect with grace of movement. The most beautiful girls of the upper classes are especially trained to perform for the king.



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FRENCH AND CAMBODIAN JUSTICES SIT SIDE BY SIDE

The law is administered in the capital city by a mixed tribunal. Native magistrates predominate in numbers, but the voice of the French representative is a potent one. The fresco behind the bench depicts the traditional figure of justice.



THE ANCIENT ARTS ARE STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE

The elaborate ceremonial masks used in dances representing phases of Cambodian mythology and religious belief are now made in the industrial school at Pnompenh fostered by the French (see also Color Plate III).



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CROWNS RESERVED FOR OCCASIONS OF STATE

Uneasy, indeed, lies the head that wears such crowns. Fortunately for Cambodian royal comfort, however, they are articles of ceremonial dress and are not worn every day. Both the crowns and swords are ancient.



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THE SELF-STYLED "KING OF ANGKOR"

This demented Buddhist priest has convinced himself that he is lord of all he surveys at the ruined capital of the Khmers.

Pnompenh, where seven-headed cobras guard the bridges and spires of gold and stupas of stone rocket out of the greenery and into a vivid blue sky, is the reliquary of the culture that was Angkor.

There is a fascination about the city that one does not realize from the descriptions of it given by casual travelers, in the days when the boats of the Messageries Fluviales were the only transport to the north.

It is a town of wide, well-shaded streets, clean, white buildings shining in the sun, a royal palace, a pretty park, and a vast and picturesque array of markets; but to the traveler who has come here after a long trip down the Chinese coast it is something else—it is an expression of a people.

ANCIENT ARTS OF THE KHMERS ARE BEING REVIVED

Pnompenh seems to lack the occidental atmosphere of the Chinese treaty ports. It is *sui generis* and its parklike avenues are places of continuous surprise.

True, there is plentiful evidence here of French influence. If the legends are true, the old capital of Cambodia was merely a haphazard enlargement of the usual nipa village. That it is a city to-day is due, of course, to the directing energy of the "elder brother," who stands not too well concealed behind the gilded throne of the puppet king. But with French impetus, French artistry is to be found here, as elsewhere in Cambodia, the more remarkable because unobtrusive.

The Cambodian museum of Pnompenh is as much a part of Angkor as the ruined cities of the Khmers. M. George Groslier, one of the foremost authorities on the history of Angkor, has served for many years as its curator, and it has become the principal source of information concerning the antiquities of Indo-China.

A distinct effort has been made to revive the ancient arts of the Khmers. The Cambodian dances, through which the poesy, not to say drama, of the Khmers has been kept alive, are enacted here by troupes of young women whose training for their task is begun in babyhood (see Color Plates XII and XIV). Manual-training classes are conducted in connection with the museum, and there the casting of bronze statuettes and the

weaving of the old Cambodian patterns and fabrics are taught to the people who should have inherited the glories of Angkor (see Color Plates III and XV).

The town itself is filled with hundreds of open-faced shops operated by Cambodians for Cambodians. Men and women in sarong and pajamas stand in them as proprietors and clerks. Other men and women, similarly attired, come all day long to haggle over purchases.

The streets are littered with itinerant food shops, where half-clad chefs roast bananas over charcoal braziers or ladle flaky rice out of the steam pots of portable stoves.

Women walk the water front—strange women, with betel-stained teeth and close-cropped hair (see Color Plate XIII), who can be distinguished from the men only by their superior grace of carriage. Like the men, they wear the sampot, a sarong caught up diaperwise between the legs and knotted at the belt, and their faces are as hard and masculine as they were in the legendary days when the females of Cambodia turned a tide of battle against the Thais and earned the right to ape the dress and appearance of warriors.

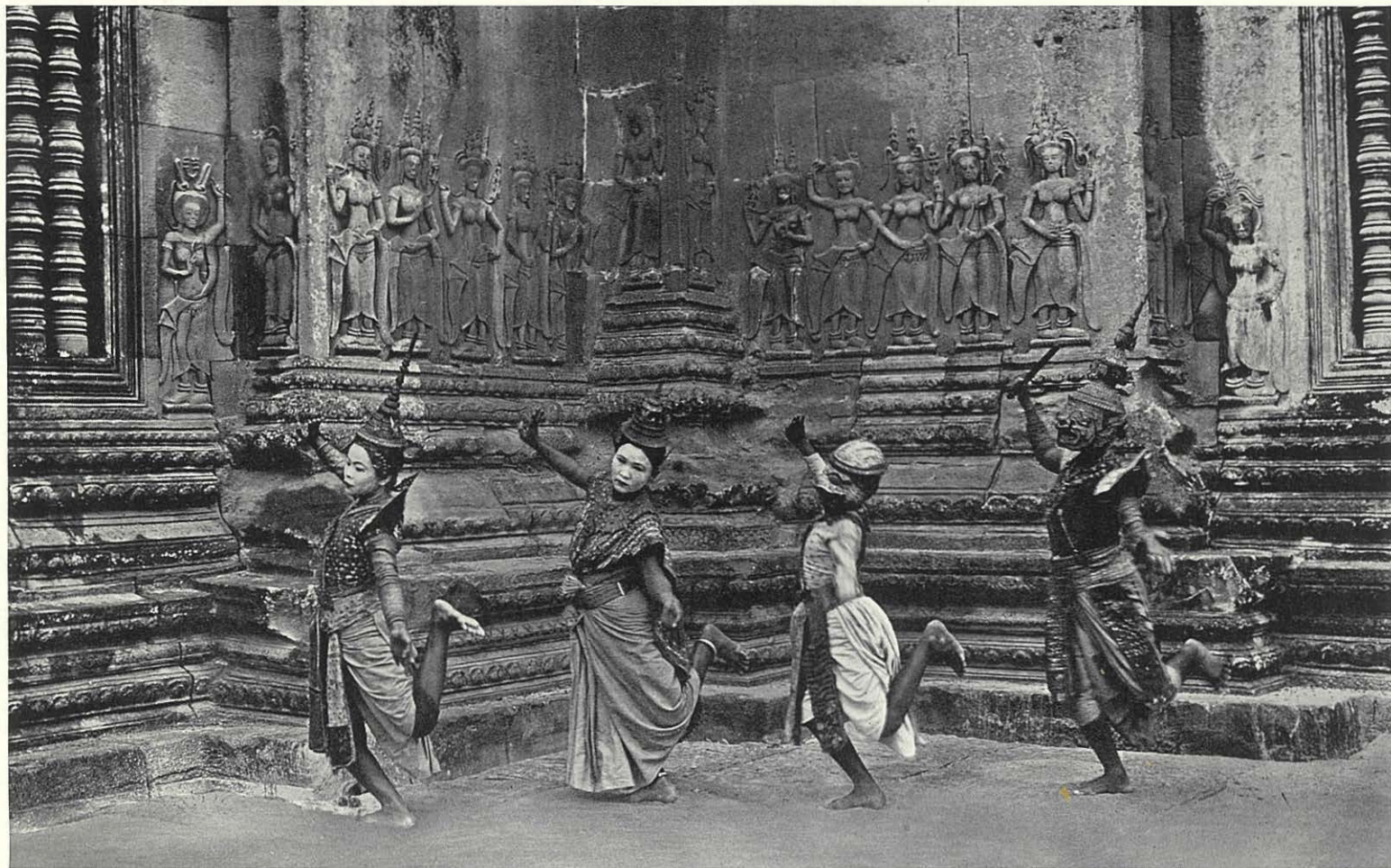
There are hundreds of Buddhist priests here. In bands they journey across the town, trailing the flame of their yellow robes through the twilight of the shaded streets.

By day the capital is Cambodia in panorama. By night one lies awake listening to the heartbeat of tom-toms, the plaint of pipes, and the weird melody of the bamboo xylophone, as the spirit of the Khmers is conjured out of the dead ages by the necromancy of unseen dancers.

THE MEKONG IS ANOTHER NILE IN ITS GIFT OF FERTILITY TO ITS VALLEY

One sets out from Pnompenh in the dawn to resume the journey through the rice fields across a flat and fertile land, as productive a land, probably, as is to be found anywhere on the face of the earth.

Small wonder that this valley propagated a wealthy and powerful civilization. The Mekong is another Nile, but in its territory a greater Nile. Cambodia is another Chaldea, but more fecund. And history is a singularly unimaginative workman. What it has done in one place it repeats in another.



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CAMBODIA'S ROYAL DANCERS PRACTICE THEIR ART IN THE SHADOW OF ANGKOR'S CRUMBLING GLORY



Photograph by Services Economiques de l'Indo-Chine

SAMPAN DWELLERS OF PNOMPENH

Many of the inhabitants of the Far East's waterways seldom set foot ashore. Nearly their whole life is passed aboard their floating homes. The babies are equipped with pieces of bamboo, tied about their waists, to keep them from sinking when they fall overboard. Ducks have long strings attached to their legs so that they may swim and fish, but not take unbidden leave.



Photograph by Services Économiques de l'Indo-Chine

HE CONVERTS BUFFALO HIDES INTO SANDALS: A COBBLER OF INDO-CHINA



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A LONG AND ARDUOUS TRAINING IS NECESSARY TO MASTER THE INTRICACIES OF THE BALLET

To qualify for the Royal Corps de Ballet in Cambodia a girl must be a dramatic artist as well as a proficient dancer. Old ballerinas who have outlived their dancing days apply the science of make-up to their successors.



Photograph by Services Economiques de l'Indo-Chine

DISCIPLES OF THE DANCE BEGIN THEIR TRAINING EARLY

In order to attain the lithe and supple muscular development required for their difficult dances and symbolic contortions, the court dancers begin their course of instruction when very young girls.

Even without second sight, one senses the presence here of the millions who are gone. Once they stood out there in the paddy fields as these newly arrived Cambodians are standing, laying out irrigation ditches in the same pattern, transplanting the rice shoots with the same laborious hand process, plowing with the same old wooden plows, and wearing the same negligible scraps of clothing.

The ancient realm of King Kambu gets no older. Here, in the rice marshes, it has been restored again as Siva, its destroyer god, was said to restore the crops of the harvested fields. In a moment the men and women of the fields will be leav-

ing their work, dropping their sickles and wicker sieves to take the road in a pilgrimage to Angkor, as they journeyed in that forgotten existence when Siva was younger.

ANGKOR VAT AT SUNSET

Beyond a bank of water lilies in the still moat, beyond a cloistered wall that seems to have neither beginning nor end, the great bulk of Angkor Vat drives its stone wedge into the sky (see Color Plate IV). A pilgrim looks upon it through misty eyes and with an odd constriction of the throat, for there is only one Angkor Vat. There is no such monument to a vanished people anywhere else in the world.



NAGAS GUARD THE APPROACH TO PNOMPENH'S PRINCIPAL PAGODA

An excellent view of the city may be obtained from this temple, which crowns an eminence of about 80 feet. One of the city's most popular and beautiful parks surrounds it.

The sun is setting now, and the gold has come back to the minarets. The lacerwork of carved rock is fragile as cobweb in the gathering shadow, and with the half light of early evening the central pyramid has taken on an awe-inspiring size. It seems futile to record its grandeur. One does not describe an Angkor. He sits and gazes at it in silence and amazement.

The name Angkor has been somewhat loosely applied to these ruins. There are two principal groups: Angkor Vat, the temple and Angkor Thom, the town. The word Angkor is believed to be a native

corruption of the Sanskrit Nagara, meaning capital. Thom is a local word, meaning great or grand. Vat is an appellation designating a temple and is generally associated with Buddhism.

Angkor Vat was the last important work of the Khmers and remains to-day the finest expression of their peculiar art. Built as a shrine to Hindu gods and apparently devoted to Vishnu, Siva, and Buddha in turn, it has departed a long distance from the parent architecture of the Hindus. It is a step pyramid which rises through three cloistered stages to a group of five miterlike towers, of which the one in the center is dominant.

The temple area is about a quarter of a mile square and is surrounded by a moat and a high wall. A causeway crosses the moat and strikes through a gate pierced in the middle of the western wall, whence it leads to the portico of the

first stage. The lower galleries measure nearly 250 feet on a side. The façade is five times as wide as that of Notre Dame of Paris.

It is the history of Angkor Vat that no beholder can judge accurately how high it really is. The towers are loftier than the tallest palms of the jungle, but they are lifted still higher by tricks of perspective that form the most interesting part of their design. In the mass, Angkor is as impressive as the Pyramids of Egypt, more striking as an artistic ensemble than even the Taj Mahal. But it is not for these attributes that the dazed pilgrim

would classify it as the most fascinating place in the world.

The sun has vanished. The last trickle of gold is gone from the carved façade. A cloud of birds has come out of the forest and is sweeping across the face of the central pyramid. The towers are wrapped in silence and loneliness, and one realizes that whatever science has done to trace the origins of Angkor, its major mystery remains, grim and unsolved.

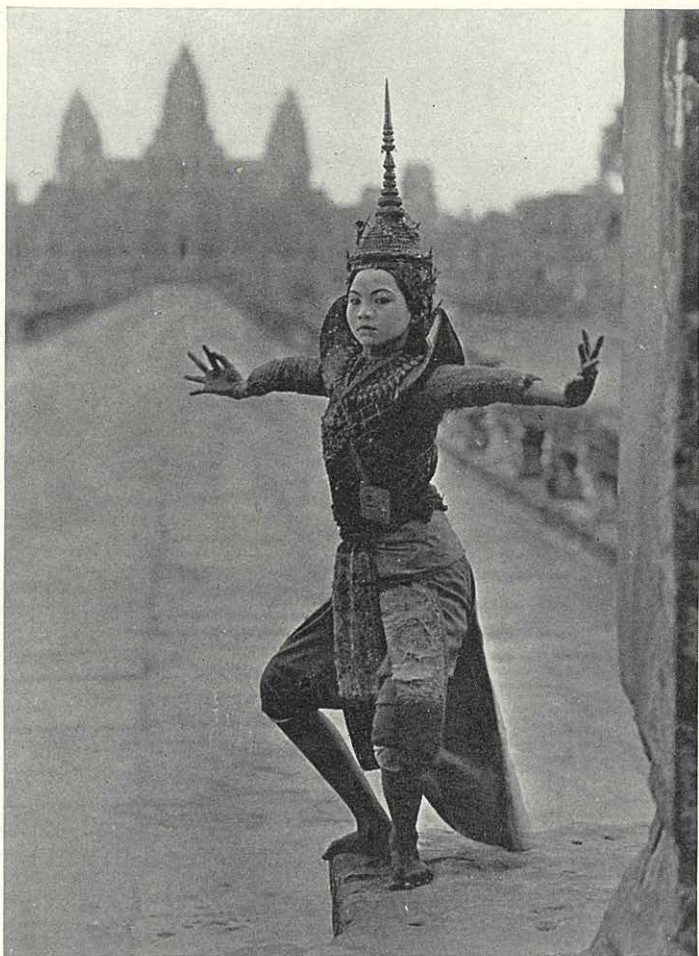
SIVA THE DESTROYER
LEERS DOWN UPON
THE WORLD

About two-thirds of a mile to the north of the temple one comes to the wall of Angkor Thom, where the seven-headed Naga, legendary deity of the Khmers, is upheld in the arms of stone giants to form a balustrade for the entering causeway. Access to the old capital is through a tower, from each of the faces of which a head of Siva the Destroyer leers down upon the world.

Inscriptions show that Yaçovarman, the King of Glory, who ruled the Khmers from 889 to 908 of our era, built the city. He moved his court to the royal terrace of Angkor Thom within ten years after work had started on its walls.

It is one of the most pretentious capitals of antiquity. Its walls, most of which are intact to-day, measured nearly two miles on a side, and it contained a temple, the Bayon, which was almost as large as Angkor Vat.

Siva the Destroyer was the patron deity of this capital. His four faces are to be seen in each of the fifty towers that rise



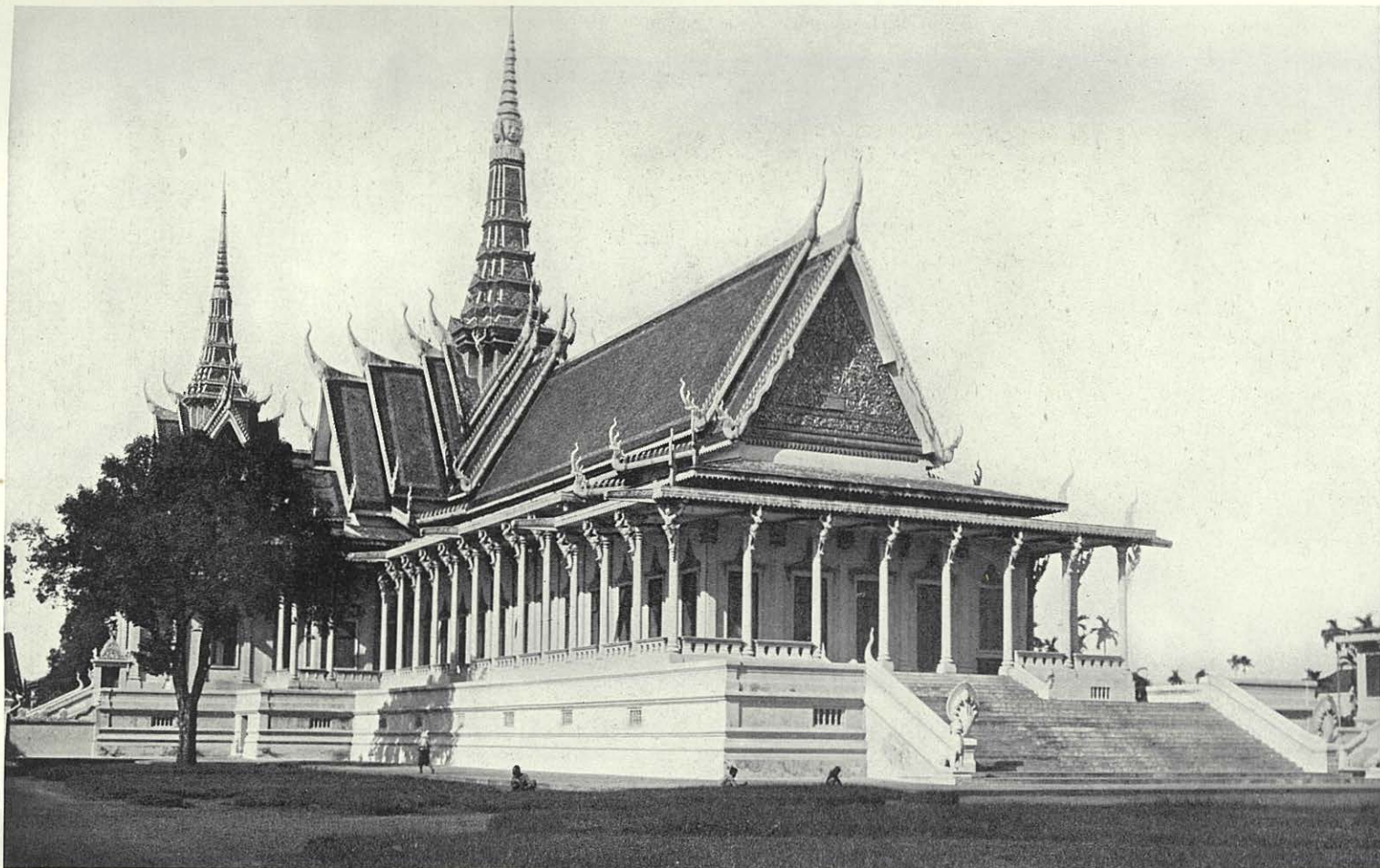
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A LIVING COUNTERPART OF ANGKOR'S SCULPTURED
DANCERS

Every position assumed by the Cambodian dancer, every motion of her body, is of symbolic significance in her performance. Note the peculiar positions in which the fingers are held.

from the battered hulk of the Bayon, and even a god of chaos must be satisfied with the scene of desolation which his leering masks survey.

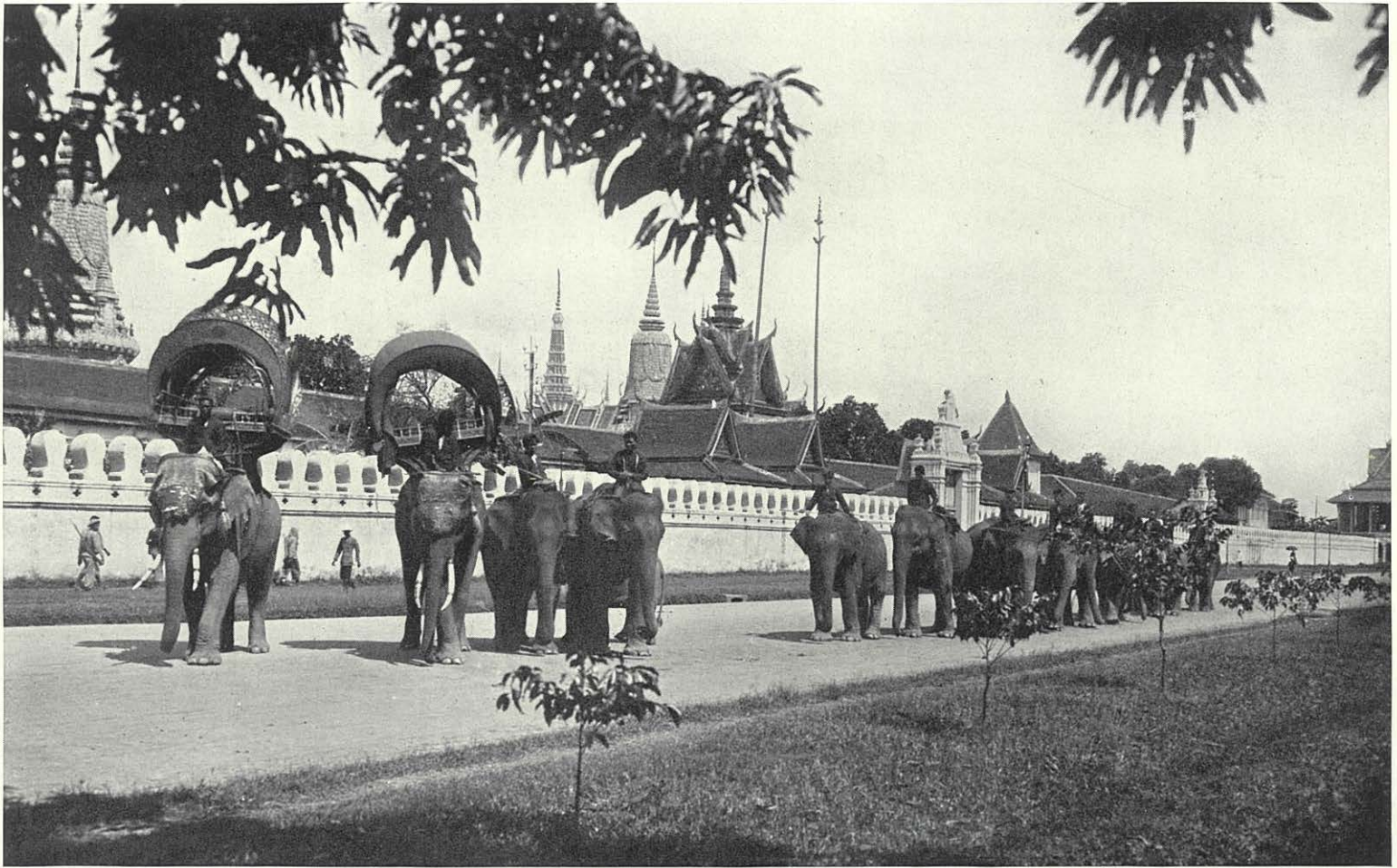
The more one sees of the works of the Khmers the more he wonders where they went and what became of them. He can trace the flight of the old gods with the coming of Buddhism. He can readily see in the survival of that religion in Cambodia a remnant of Khmer thought if not of Khmer culture. He can be convinced that the present-day dwellers in Pnompenh are the physical descendants of the men who built Angkor. But



Photograph by Services Economiques de l'Indo-Chine

MODERN CAMBODIAN ARCHITECTURE STILL REFLECTS A SPARK OF THE GENIUS OF THE KHMERS

The Royal Palace at Phnom Penh is not one structure, but a series of buildings surrounded by a rectangular wall. This is the Throne Hall and is among the parts of the palace inclosure open to visitors.



Photograph by Services Économiques de l'Indo-Chine

THE ROYAL ELEPHANTS PROMENADE IN FRONT OF THE PALACE

Although the King of Cambodia now has a fine motor car in which to travel about, he still maintains a number of elephants for use on state occasions. The great beasts lend a distinctly oriental color touch to his court at Pnompenh and are a source of never-ending delight to the capital's populace.



Photograph by Services Economiques de l'Indo-Chine

THIS FEARSOME-LOOKING CONTRIVANCE IS BEARING A WELL-TO-DO ANNAMITE ON HIS LAST EARTHLY JOURNEY

this seems to complicate rather than solve the mystery.

There are three theories regarding the collapse of the Angkorean civilization.

The first holds that the Khmers, after long warfare with the Thais, a coalition in which the Siamese were an important factor, were defeated and driven out of their capital. This, however, does not explain why, having been driven out, they failed to return, or why the conquerors, having taken the finest city in Asia, neglected to keep it.

The second theory would have it that a plague eliminated thirty million Khmers with efficiency and dispatch; but that, too, is an inadequate explanation, inasmuch as no traces of human remains or human accouterments have been found anywhere about Angkor.

The third, which has the support of M. Groslier, is that the slaves, who must have constituted a large portion of the population, if such works as Angkor Vat are to be taken as any indication, revolted and destroyed the intellectuals. And this seems reasonable enough. With the teachers gone, it would be natural enough for the remainder of the population to lapse into savagery, as the Khmers undoubtedly did.

The inscriptions themselves give little

hint of the dénouement of the tragedy. They go on recording the exploits of kings well up into the thirteenth century, and then they trail off into the shadows. The history of the Khmers drops back into the silence from which it so slowly emerged, and nothing remains but vast, empty halls and tall, crumbling towers and the eternal question, Who were these people?

M. Pierre Dupont, of the French road engineers, came out of the bungalow hotel on the west side of the moat and stood for a moment in the moonlight.

"Do you remember the *Marie Céleste*, Monsieur?" he inquired at length. "You have heard of her, of course, and how she was found on a calm sea with all sail set and the table spread and a fire going in the cook's galley and not a soul on board.

"Well, to me, Monsieur, Angkor is another *Marie Céleste*. There stands the temple, just as it was when the Khmers walked out of it. One might expect to find the altar fires still burning.

"It is not a ruin. The roofs still turn the water and the galleries are just as they were hundreds of years ago; and yet we know that a whole people deserted it."

And that seems to epitomize the mystery of Angkor. It is not a question of who built it, but of why it was left to the malevolence of the jungle.