



Stories in Stone

The Sdok Kok Thom Inscription and the Enigma of Khmer History

John Burgess

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- A personal and historic account of Sadok Kok Thom Temple, weaving in the archaeology of Angkor with the political turmoil of Cambodia during the 1960s-'70s

In the final months of 1979, a city was born in dry forestland along the border of Cambodia and Thailand. It was a city of refugees. The Khmer Rouge had been recently overthrown, and Cambodians fortunate enough to be alive were free to pick up and go where they wanted. Many chose to make for a frontier settlement that became known as Camp 007. The camp was located close to Sadok Kok Thom Temple, which became a focus of worship for the refugees. The temple contained one of the most important inscriptions in Khmer History, written by a high ranking Brahmin and detailing important political and religious events that took place in the Empire. The author discusses the history of the inscription, from its creation to the modern day as well as how modern and ancient history have merged around the temple over the past forty years.

"While reporting on Cambodians fleeing war and revolution in 1979, John Burgess came across an ancient Khmer temple hidden in the bush...30 years later he returned to that temple to decipher its history. The result is this lovely book that tells the story of the temple and the larger Angkor Empire leavened with Burgess' own odyssey to recover that history." **Elizabeth Becker**, author of *When the War was Over*

John Burgess is a former *Washington Post* foreign correspondent with much experience in Southeast Asia. He first saw Sdok Kok Thom in 1979 while covering the Cambodian refugee exodus that followed the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge. More recently, he spent two years running down the history of the temple, its people ancient and modern, and its remarkable inscription. He lives in Washington, D.C. with his wife Karen.