



# The Social Life of Teak

## Tim Webster

## Virginia Henderson

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- A fascinating, original and beautiful book examining the many aspects of teak, using oral histories to examine the history of one of the world's most valuable commodities, prized for its durability and beauty over millennia
- All new photographs by renowned photographer Tim Webster

Tracing human interactions with the world's most famous tropical timber species, ***The Social Life of Teak*** maps worlds revolving around teak forests, trees and wood.

What gives *Tectona grandis* such a powerful aura, stoking desires and capturing imaginations? How has teak shaped people's lives, driving fortunes and impacting futures? What has happened to the teak forests and what is their destiny?

In this illustrated anthology of oral histories, people connected personally or professionally to teak speak of survival, change and learning, creativity and destruction, growth and demise. Woven together, these experiences bring to light the ways that teak has been sought, crafted, cultivated, traded and prized over time.

Animist beliefs, creative expression, scientific invention, economic viability, imperialist expansion, peak luxury, violent repression, ecological disaster and the regenerative power of nature all find a home in this global intergenerational tale.

Charting the domestication of wilderness and exposing the era of extinction of a feted natural resource, this book seeks to stimulate conversations about our role as nature's most troublesome offspring.

New Zealander **Virginia Henderson** has been based in Southeast Asia since 1990 and is an oral historian with a doctorate in heritage management. **Tim Webster** is a documentary photographer specializing in theater, dance and architectural heritage photography.

