



Lost Civilizations: Cambodia, The Khmers Empire at Angkor



The Khmer Krom, and indeed the kingdom of Cambodia, consider themselves the descendants of the Khmer Empire which ruled the region from the 9th century to the 16th century.

The empire is thought to have been founded by Jayavarman II. He built his capital north of Lake Tonle in 1802.

Under his rule the Empire reached its peak, and achieved its greatest territorial expansion, covering Cambodia and large areas of Laos and Thailand.

Symbolic of the mountain summits where the Gods and monarchs lived in splendour, the mountain temple of Angkor Wat was built in tiered layers on top of an artificial mound.

It was the masterpiece of Suryarman II (1113-1150) whose reign is sometimes said to have been as great and as glorious as that of Louis XIV.

As King, he managed to obtain control of the whole of Southern Indochina. This was the summit of Khmer genius, a time of perfect harmony.

The Bayon temple is built on various levels, with the world of the Gods surmounting that of the Kings. It is dominated by a series of towers decorated with enormous smiling stone faces, and it is also famous for the hundreds of metres of bas-reliefs lining its walls, with depictions of daily life, of dances and wars, such as the naval battle against the Chams.

The Bantey Srei temple is one of the best known, entirely built out of pink sandstone, the sculptures of Apsaras and young warriors are exquisitely beautiful.

Ta Prohm, the most romantic of all the temples, serves as a reminder of the state in which the other temples were found before their restoration, with creepers and trees growing on and through the ancient stones.

We also set out to discover Siem Reap.

The town has been thriving since the end of the war, but the Khmer Rouge attacks continued here until well in to 1994, and the Khmer influence is still highly present, manifest in the architecture and some of its unusual spaces.

Directed by Jacques VICHET A documentary of 52'

French Version
English Version

High Definition
HD Cam & Digital Betacam 16/9