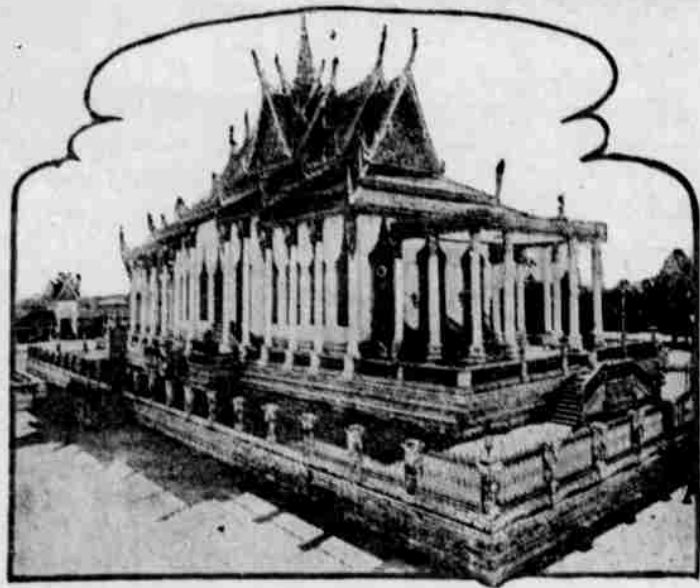


Cambodia



Royal Pagoda at Phnompenh, Cambodia.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

CAMBODIA, one of the important units among France's possessions in southwest Asia, is a hodge-podge of the unexpected. It is a land of forests, damp and leech-infested; of open savannas, of wide rice fields and plodding water buffalo; of tigers and wild elephants; of humble cottagers, all literate, whose chief pleasure is writing poetry; of gilded modern pagodas, and temples, hoary with age, swallowed by the jungle; of automobiles, trolley cars, and electric lights.

The forms of an oriental kingdom are faithfully followed; but behind the king, his five ministers, and his court formalities, stands the French resident-superior, and at his elbow a few French soldiers; for Cambodia is a part of French Indo-China and a protectorate of France. The country is slightly smaller than the state of Missouri and has a population of about two and a half millions.

The Mekong, one of the world's greatest rivers, is the life artery of Cambodia. Seagoing steamers ascend the stream to Phnompenh, the capital, 200 miles from the sea; and smaller steamers and junks traverse the network of streams and lakes hundreds of miles farther inland. But it is not only as a waterway that the stream is useful. On its overflowed lands the country's chief crop, rice, is raised in abundance.

Most of the civilized people are concentrated along the river and between its lower reaches and the Siamese border. The country houses in all parts of Cambodia are set on posts which raise them from six to ten feet off the ground. This is necessary along the river banks because of the high floods, and elsewhere to protect the householders from tigers.

Love Their Mekong.

During the flood season a great lake forms in western Cambodia, into which the waters of the Mekong flow until it becomes a body of water 115 miles long, 18 miles wide, and more than 35 feet deep. When the floods recede, the waters flow from this natural reservoir back into the Mekong and keep its lower reaches well filled. The great importance of the river and its floods is recognized by an annual festival on the stream connecting the Great Lake and the Mekong. A cord is stretched across the stream and at the time of reversal of the flow this is cut with great ceremony by the king from the royal houseboat.

The natives display genuine affection for the Mekong. When floods come they put away their ox carts, travel the old roads in boats and wait for the water to recede. They celebrate with boat races that attract every Cambodian in the vicinity from the king to the lowliest native. Gondolike racing boats, ranging from twenty-five to forty-five feet long, are rowed by a score or more men, seated two by two. If the throngs massed on the river bank are not thrilled by the competition, they are amused by a clown who has his place in each craft.

The highlands to the north are occupied by wild tribes of hunters who must fight for existence against rank vegetation, wild animals, snakes and insects. Slave raids from neighboring countries have made them wary and suspicious and they look upon all outsiders as enemies. Some of them protect their villages by poisoned darts stuck up in the ground.

Practically all of the civilized Cambodians are literate. The country abounds in old temples, built during the Cambodian Golden age, some 700 years ago. In these the Buddhist priests conduct schools which are attended by all children, from those of humble farmers to those of the royal family.

Phnompenh is a colorful capital set upon hills on the banks of the Mekong, its ornate temple spires and

magenta-tiled roofs half hidden by giant palms and flowering tropical trees. In a parklike inclosure on a hill top is the palace of the kings, surrounded by houses for their multitudinous feminine retainers. The kings of Cambodia of the past might be described as monarchs entirely surrounded by women. Some were wives, some servants, and hundreds dancing girls, trained from childhood to perform the intricate movements of dances handed down from the remote past. The present king has found it impossible economically to maintain a feminine army of retainers up to the old standards.

Restful to the Eyes.

Most travelers from the West who visit Phnompenh are on their way to Angkor, venerable city of Khmer culture, which lies farther north. A brief stop at the capital is welcome, for the little Cambodian city among its trees is restful to the eyes of the river-boat passengers after monotonous miles of rice fields, thick jungle growths and swamps that border the river bank nearly all the way from Saigon. And it is a relief to be out of the cruising radius of persistent Mekong mosquitoes.

Stevedores literally swarming over cargo boats at the quay indicate that the capital is important commercially. As the town is situated at the junction of a branch from the Great Lake of Cambodia and the main channel of the Mekong from the Tibetan hills, large quantities of fish, rice, indigo and cotton from Upper Burma, portions of Siam, Laos, and northern Cambodia are brought there for marketing. In addition smaller cargoes from nearby farms and paddy fields arrive in the hundreds of sampans and smaller craft that dart about the tiny harbor like so many water beetles.

When a boat with tourists aboard docks there is a rush for the "Permission Office" where "permissions" are granted to visit the king's palace. But those who expect to see a richly adorned abode of an eastern potentate are soon disillusioned. Without, the several buildings called the palace are unpretentious, and within there is little that would attract more than ordinary attention except a life-sized Buddha of solid gold studded with diamonds and a hallway floor laid with engraved silver tiles.

Cambodian women present a strikingly modern appearance with their short hair and what might be mistaken at first sight for knickerbockers. This nether garment is the "samtot." In making it a width of cloth is girded about the waist, then the ends are folded between the legs and tucked in at the waist line. Both men and women wear the samtot, and it is often difficult for a Westerner to distinguish between them. The men, however, wear a sort of jacket above the samtot, while the women for the most part wear a cloth or scarf draped over one shoulder and under the other arm.

The West Introduced.

But though the capital is soaked in eastern atmosphere, the west has been introduced by the handful of French officials and business men. Electric street lights twinkle among the hanging flowers of tropical trees; tram cars lumber by; and one may book passage to outlying towns in motor busses that ply over well metalled roads.

Evidence of the high culture and power of the Cambodians at the height of their Khmer empire, from the Eighth to the Fourteenth centuries is seen in the remarkable ruined temples and palaces of the old capital city of Angkor-Thom, now deserted and surrounded by forest and jungle. The terraces and walls of the old structures abound in excellent stone work, intricate carvings, and highly artistic sculpture. Despite the difficulty of access, thousands of visitors go annually to see the wonders of this old capital city.

Fox Collar

Here's a new idea. And very attractive it is, too. The body of a fox is worn as a collar, high up around the face. Then two tails are attached by a silken rope about six inches long, and are permitted to dangle there, separated from the collar itself.

Yellow or White for Sports

Lemon yellow continues to be the smartest color for sports outside of white.

Summer Bags

To carry with summer frocks and hold all the odds and ends so vital to feminine comfort, there are large pouch bags made of material resembling awning striping and featuring the same brilliant colors.

Petticoats Are Back

Petticoats are back and some of the younger women are wearing their first lace-trimmed, bow-knotted underskirts. A correspondent writes from Paris.

A Few Little Smiles



TOO MUCH TO BELIEVE!

The chauffeur was holding forth in the village inn.
"Yus, my young gov'nor rowed for Hoxford a little while back, 'e did."
His audience stared.
"Yus, 'e wins 'undreds of races," went on the chauffeur, warming to his task. "An 'e always 'as the name an' the date painted on 'is skull."
But this was too much for one listener.
"On 'is skull?" he echoed indignantly. "Lumme, 'e must 'ave an 'ead like an elephant!"—London Answers.

Snappy

A young man walked into a baker's shop and asked for two dozen loaves. The shopkeeper looked surprised.
"Have you a tea party on?" he inquired.
"No, said the man. "I'm working at the menagerie, and the kangaroo has kicked the elephant, so I want to make a bread poultice."

CAN'T FOOL 'EM ANYMORE



"Young man, I don't believe you could even buy my daughter's clothes."
"Why sure I could! She don't wear hardly none at all."

Patriotic

Our father slipped upon the ice
Because he couldn't stand;
He saw the glorious Stars and Stripes
We saw our father land.

A Nutty One

"My cow has run away; did you see anything of it around the village?" asked the farmer who lived on the edge of town.
"No," grinned the village half-wit, "but why don't you borrow a locomotive from the railroad; it has a cow-catcher!"

Slight Mistake

"My little boy wants one of those cross-word puzzles."
"They are some old checkerboards, madam."
"So they are. I haven't seen one in years."

NUT SO FAR OFF



"Say, Jim, is that fellah a nut?"
"Not so loud Bill! He's one of today's most popular song writers."

Reminiscence

Fond memories cause strange unrest,
Though festive be the present mood;
And just when we are happiest,
A little 'ear will still intrude.

Taken to Task

"Are you a registered pharmacist?"
"Yes."
"Expert at compounding?"
"I hope so."
"Then why do you put cream dressing on a lettuce sandwich?"

Impatient Patient

"How is the patient?"
"He died during the night, doctor."
"I feared it. The medicine I prescribed does not take full effect until after a month."

Must Put Up With It

Mother—Yes, my daughter is studying the violin. She has a real old instrument.
Visitor (sympathetically)—"Well, perhaps she can have a new one some day."

In Modern Terms

City Banker (visiting the farm)—I suppose that's the hired man?
Farmer (who had visited banks)—No, that's the first vice president in charge of cows.

OUR COMIC SECTION

FINNEY OF THE FORCE

That Nursery Aroma



Along the Concrete



THE FEATHERHEADS

Yes, a Beautiful Thought

