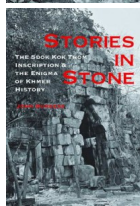
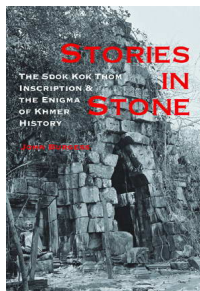


Stories in Stone



The Sdok Kok Thom Inscription & the Enigma of Khmer History

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The founding of an empire, the settling of frontier lands, a king's gifting of gold pitchers and black-eared stallions to a Brahmin priest – these and other remarkable stories come down to us in the Sdok Kok Thom Inscription, one of the world's most important ancient testaments. Recovered at a ruined temple in Thailand close to the Cambodian border, the 340-line chronicle unlocks the early history of the Khmer Empire. Yet temple and text have remained little known outside expert circles. In this full and highly readable account, former Washington Post correspondent John Burgess traces the impact of the great inscription, which was carved onto a sandstone monolith around 1052 AD, abandoned to the wild for centuries, then decoded by French colonialists. He relates the temple's surprise emergence in 1979 as a haven for Cambodian refugees and resistance fighters during the war in their homeland. Today Sdok Kok Thom is again at peace, its mission of preserving history accomplished.

Including photographs of the temple, past and present, Refugee Camp 007 and its refugees and militias; extracts from previously unpublished letters of French savant Étienne Aymonier, the inscription's first translator, written during his months of travels around Cambodia in 1882-1885; a revised English translation of the full inscription by the University of Hawaii linguists Chhany Sak-Humphry and Philip N. Jenner; a glossary of terms; and suggested further readings.