



## ***Teacher's Guide***

### **Khmers: Creating Heaven on Earth** **Cultural Legacies of Ancient Civilizations Series**

**Grade Levels:**

7 - 12

**Subject Areas:**

Social Studies

World History

World Geography and Cultures

**Synopsis:**

Recreates Henri Mouhot's astonishment when he came across the ruins of Angkor Wat in 1860 while searching for zoological specimens in what is now the Cambodian jungle. Highlights architectural details that enabled scholars to determine that the ruins of this vast temple complex expressed the Hindu concept of Heaven, a Heaven built on Earth. Traces the biography of King Suryavarman II, the god-king who built Angkor Wat to honor his relationship with the gods. Observes the secrecy that surrounded the king as he began to establish himself as the people's sole intermediary to Vishnu, the chief Hindu god.

**Learning Objectives:** Students will:

- Explain why Suryavarman II built Angkor War as an architectural expression of Heaven on Earth.
- Describe how Suryavarman II became a cult figure as he moved toward god-king status.
- Explain why religious ceremonies that maintain political power are often held in secret.
- Describe the significance of carvings that were found on the inner and outer walls of Angkor Wat.

**Vocabulary:**

enraptured, relics, enigma, gleaned, hierarchy, reliefs, exquisite, stonemasons, ornate, Hindu, cosmic diagram, conical, conduit, divine, spiritual grace, accrued, temporal power, spiritual purity, affirmation, royal divinity, god-king

**Pre-Viewing Discussion:**

*New Dimension Media • 307 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 500 • Chicago, IL 60601  
Toll Free: 800-288-4456 • Fax: 312-642-9805*

Why do most of us know the word, “Khmer?” Who were the Khmer Rouge?  
What country did they control in 1975?

What is Angkor Wat? When was it built? When was it rediscovered? Did it survive the regime of the Khmer Rouge?

What other extinct cities or temples once rose up in jungle environments? What could be the connection between ancient architectural masterpieces and the existence of once-powerful empires?

What is the predominant religion in India and other territories settled by people of South-Asian origin?

### **Post-Viewing Discussion:**

How were scholars able to determine that Angkor Wat was a vast temple complex? What were the convincing signs?

What is the significance of reliefs carved into the inner and outer walls of the complex?

What architectural form will always be associated with the ruins of Angkor Wat? What is the religious significance of this form?

Why was King Suryavarman II called the “Michelangelo of the East?”

### **Further Activities:**

Further investigate the significance of the carved images that were found at Angkor Wat.

Find a map of the Khmer Empire at the height of its power in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Compare this map to contemporary maps of the area to discover the true extent of the Khmer Empire.

Further investigate the elaborate water system developed by the ancient Khmers.

Investigate the historical and religious significance of Khmer sites located in Thailand.

### **Related New Dimension Media Titles:**

Great Civilizations of the Ancient World Series  
Technology & Architecture in Ancient Civilizations Series  
Beyond Our Borders Series  
History Happened Here Series  
Christianity in World History Series  
The 14 Wonders of Our World Series

*New Dimension Media • 307 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 500 • Chicago, IL 60601  
Toll Free: 800-288-4456 • Fax: 312-642-9805*