



Earth In Flower: The Divine Mystery of the Cambodian Dance Drama

Paul Cravath

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"A wartime twist of fate resulted in a rare eyewitness account of Southeast Asia's most esoteric female performers: the dancers of the ancient Cambodian ballet. More than 30 years after the Khmer Rouge genocide their intriguing story will be published as *Earth in Flower*."

Mystical Origins

Since the dawn of recorded history, Khmer royalty nurtured a dance style unique to their Asian kingdom, yet instantly recognizable throughout the world. Spiritually, the graceful dancers embody the essence and strength of the Khmer race.

Analysis of a Hidden Art

Earth in Flower thoroughly covers choreography, musicology, costuming and stagecraft. The surprise is learning how these women profoundly affected Asian history for a millennium, as living goddesses, priestesses, queens, concubines, hostages and diplomats.

Extraordinary Access

A twist of fate gave the author rare access to the formerly sequestered troupe of royal dancers, teachers, theater and archives. *Earth in Flower* offers new insights into this beautiful art, its long-hidden history, and how the dancers balance the Khmer relationship between heaven and earth.

A Wartime Twist of Fate

In 1970, a military coup deposed King Sihanouk and seized control of the royal dancers. Surrounded by war, scholars sought to document this cultural treasure by engaging researcher Paul Cravath. He arrived as a circle of war gripped the capital city, becoming one of the only Westerners in history to gain firsthand access to the dancers.

Lost Heritage Restored

In April 1975 Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, initiating one of the worst genocides in human history. Cravath escaped Phnom Penh only ten days earlier, with his research intact. The archives he accessed were destroyed. Most of the dancers perished in the Killing Fields. *Earth in Flower* is his historic account of their Cambodian legacy.

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