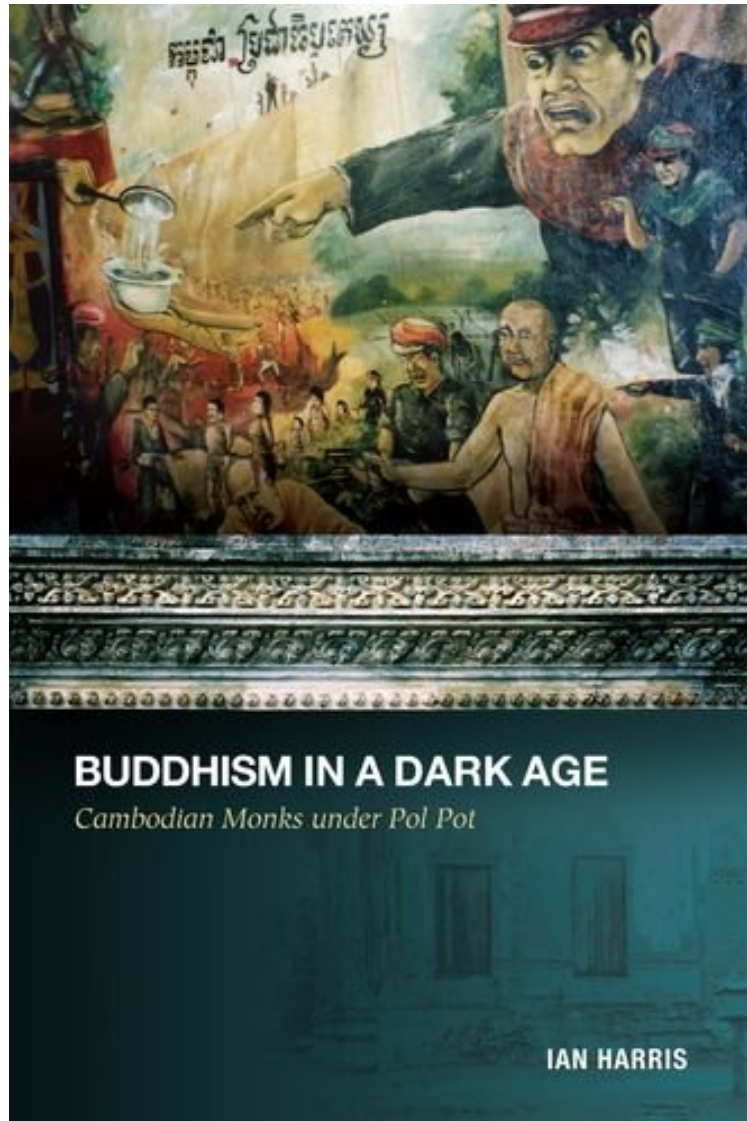


[Free download] Buddhism in a Dark Age: Cambodian Monks under Pol Pot

## Buddhism in a Dark Age: Cambodian Monks under Pol Pot

*Ian Harris*

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**Ian Harris : Buddhism in a Dark Age: Cambodian Monks under Pol Pot** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buddhism in a Dark Age: Cambodian Monks under Pol Pot:

This pioneering study of the fate of Buddhism during the communist period in Cambodia puts a human face on a dark period in Cambodia's history. It is the first sustained analysis of the widely held assumption that the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot had a centralized plan to liquidate the entire monastic order. Based on a thorough analysis of interview

transcripts and a large body of contemporary manuscript material, it offers a nuanced view that attempts to move beyond the horrific monastic death toll and fully evaluate the damage to the Buddhist sangha under Democratic Kampuchea. Compelling evidence exists to suggest that Khmer Rouge leaders were determined to hunt down senior members of the pre-1975 ecclesiastical hierarchy, but other factors also worked against the Buddhist order. Buddhism in a Dark Age outlines a three-phase process in the Khmer Rouge treatment of Buddhism: bureaucratic interference and obstruction, explicit harassment, and finally the elimination of the obdurate and those close to the previous Lon Nol regime. The establishment of a separate revolutionary form of sangha administration constituted the bureaucratic phase. The harassment of monks, both individually and en masse, was partially due to the uprooting of the traditional monastic economy in which lay people were discouraged from feeding economically unproductive monks. Younger members of the order were disrobed and forced into marriage or military service. The final act in the tragedy of Buddhism under the Khmer Rouge was the execution of those monks and senior ecclesiastics who resisted. It was difficult for institutional Buddhism to survive the conditions encountered during the decade under study here. Prince Sihanouk's overthrow in 1970 marked the end of Buddhism as the central axis around which all other aspects of Cambodian existence revolved and made sense. And under Pol Pot the lay population was strongly discouraged from providing its necessary material support. The book concludes with a discussion of the slow re-establishment and official supervision of the Buddhist order during the Peoples Republic of Kampuchea period.

Buddhism in a Dark Age is a well-researched and thorough analysis of the struggle of Buddhist monks over the past century. Harris' book is both a long overdue contribution to the literature on the Cambodian genocide and an ambitious study that reminds us of the Buddhism in Cambodia—even to those who sought so feverently to eradicate it.--Matt Galway, The University of British Columbia, Pacific Affairs (Vol 88: No 2) (June 2015)"The present work makes use of sixty-seven interviews, conducted over 2003 and 2004 . . . These interviews provide an unparalleled glimpse into religious life under the Pol Pot regime that would be impossible to glean from any other sources. They are part of what makes Buddhism in a Dark Age such a valuable contribution to understanding not only the history of Cambodia and Cambodian Buddhism but also the intractable relationship between religion, state, and power in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.-- "Philosophy East West" Buddhism in a Dark Age is a well-researched and thorough analysis of the struggle of Buddhist monks over the past century. Harris' book is both a long overdue contribution to the literature on the Cambodian genocide and an ambitious study that reminds us of the Buddhism in Cambodia—even to those who sought so fervently to eradicate it.-- "Pacific Affairs" The present work makes use of sixty-seven interviews, conducted over 2003 and 2004 . . . These interviews provide an unparalleled glimpse into religious life under the Pol Pot regime that would be impossible to glean from any other sources. They are part of what makes Buddhism in a Dark Age such a valuable contribution to understanding not only the history of Cambodia and Cambodian Buddhism but also the intractable relationship between religion, state, and power in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. (Philosophy East West) Buddhism in a Dark Age is a well-researched and thorough analysis of the struggle of Buddhist monks over the past century. Harris' book is both a long overdue contribution to the literature on the Cambodian genocide and an ambitious study that reminds us of the Buddhism in Cambodia—even to those who sought so fervently to eradicate it. (Pacific Affairs) About the Author Ian Harris is emeritus professor of Buddhist studies at the University of Cumbria and visiting senior research fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.