



WOODY TRUNKS OF TREES, ALMOST CROWNLESS SURREPTITIOUSLY ENGULF WHAT REMAINS OF THE ONCE ROBUST, STONY EDIFICE, WOVEN WITH THE SWEAT AND BLOOD OF MANY A CRAFTSMAN



# IN CAMBODIA

In the battle between man and nature, who wins?



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Principal architect at Samira Rathod Design Associates, Mumbai, Samira celebrates design and considers every project an opportunity to critically test parameters. About herself, she says, "I am an architect and enjoy being one".

**W**alking through these ruins was like walking through a surreal painting. A painting of empty white skies, slashed by the sliver of tree trunks and washed with an unnerving stillness, a vacuum in the whispering rustle of leaves. The clatter of footsteps on dark rocky ruins, and the chatter of human aliens that gaped at the site, like parading ghosts in awe and anguish, were perhaps the only sign of a waking moment in a lucid dream.

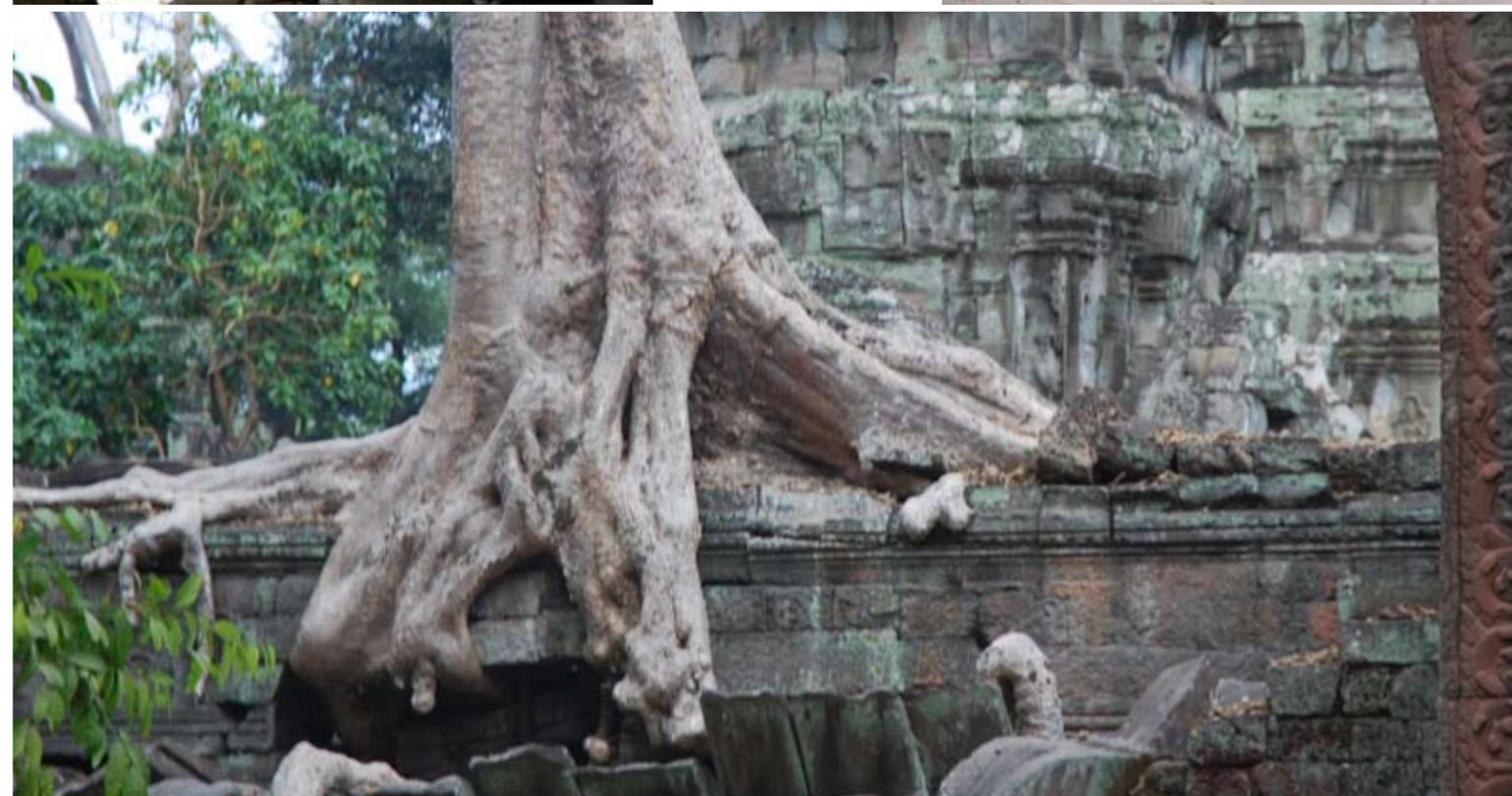
Humongous woody trunks of trees, almost as if crownless, as they loomed far above my myopic gaze, surreptitiously engulf the remains of what

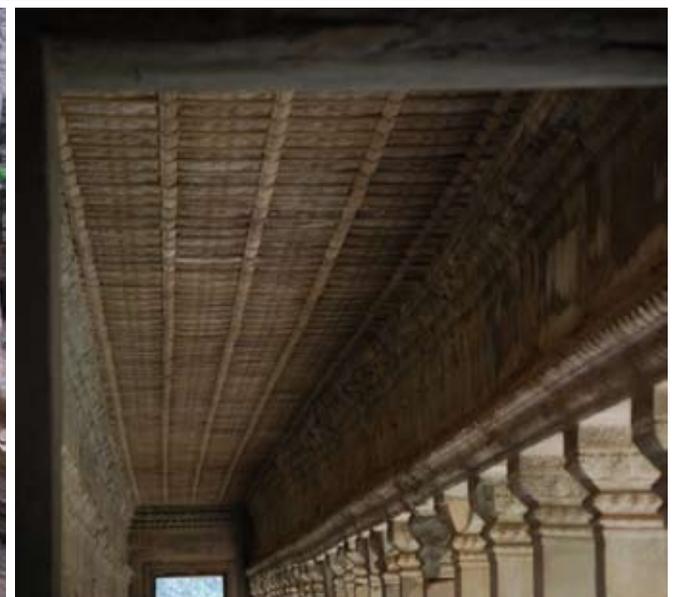
must have once been a robust, stony edifice, woven with the sweat and blood of many a fine craftsman.

A strange battle must have been fought here, stranger still, the enemies.

I walk through this battleground, where remains the corpse of a mutilated temple. Dead.

Perhaps, its soul still undelivered, lingering in the mist of the air. Conquered, defeated, gasping for a breath, shackled under the treacherous clutches of these green monsters, every stony morsel is as if beckoning for mercy. Beckoning to be spared of what remains of it, not so that it may live, but only so, that it may leave...





This is the temple site of Ta Prohm, in Angkor Wat, Cambodia.

For aeons, man has ruthlessly fought nature. Devoured it for his clandestine consumptions. He has abused... Erased forests, wrung flowing waters and demolished entire mountains.

A frozen moment in time where the trees, as if in revenge, through some freak

stroke of witchcraft, gathered might and fiery momentum to slide under and uproot the stony temple: an icon for the human species.

Almost ironically, trees such as these are usually removed, to save heritage buildings. But here, every act of restoration is taken to protect the trees, as the building is allowed to perish naturally.

**MAN HAS ABUSED NATURE...ERASED FORESTS, WRUNG FLOWING WATERS, DEMOLISHED WHOLE MOUNTAINS... AND HERE AS IF IN REVENGE THE TREES UPROOT THE STONE TEMPLE**