

I am not aware of any more detailed social surveys of Dhaka, and there are probably few on other cities of South Asia. The book, therefore, is highly recommended to all those working on the socio-economics of Bangladesh, and not just to those working on urban affairs, since the study shows the many and intensive linkages between this major centre and the rural areas.

Wolfgang-Peter Zingel

DAVID A. ABLING & MARLOWE HOOD (eds.), *The Cambodian Agony*. Armonk/London: M.E. Sharpe, 1987. 418 pages, \$ 35.00

This selection of articles emanates from an international conference "Kampuchea in the 1980s: Prospects and Problems" which was held in November 1982 at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University. Although the conference papers were obviously updated and expanded for this publication, one might still think that such a collection would be out of date by now. But this is (unfortunately) not the case, which in itself demonstrates the continuing agony of the Khmer people.

There is hardly a country in this world that has, in such a short time, gone through so much radical upheaval and socio-political transformation in its recent history. From the days of the overthrow in 1970 of Prince Sihanouk, who had ruled the country in his own flamboyant and patronizing feudal style to the victory of the Cambodian Communist Party, Cambodia suffered massive saturation bombing by the US-Air Force and an unusually violent civil war. But this was not the end of the Khmer tragedy. Whereas the other two ex-Indochina countries, Vietnam and Laos, could recover from two devastating wars, after three years of brutal "class struggle" under the leadership of the Pol Pot-group, Kampuchea's already decimated population had to face a third Indochina War beginning with the invasion by Vietnamese troops in December 1978. Twelve years later there is still no *realistic* solution in sight, since this conflict combines the worst aspects of a civil war with a die-hard international confrontation involving Thailand, Vietnam, the US, China and the Soviet Union in an unholy alliance against a peaceful settlement in Kampuchea.

This collection of papers provides the scholar of Khmer affairs with a solid background and some in-depth research. The book contains the works of prominent experts like Michael Vickery who writes on refugee politics and the "volag" (voluntary agencies) camps, David W.P. Elliot with an article on deadlock diplomacy (Thai and Vietnamese interests in Kampuchea) and John

V. Dennis, Jr. who provides an excellent account of Kampuchea's ecology and resource base as well as the natural limitations of food production strategies. Several articles deal competently with topics like appropriate development aid for Kampuchea (Joel R. Charny), the rebuilding of Kampuchea's food supply (Orlin J. Scoville) and the "concentration camp syndrome" among Cambodian refugees (J.D. Kinzie). A well written introduction by the editors M. Hood and D. Abling on the "path to Cambodia's present", research on Khmer village culture and on the Cambodians in the United States complete this commendable volume.

Several of the contributors have been working for Oxfam (in Phom Penh) and hence derive their experiences mainly from the Heng Samrin-government side of the conflict which holds a bias against the "other side", namely the three so-called coalition forces which regrouped along the border with Thailand in 1979. Only the former correspondent of the French daily *Le Monde*, Serge Thion, ventures (with his contribution on the patterns of Cambodian politics) into truly hot water by claiming that events and mechanisms in Cambodia under Prince Sihanouk, General Lon Nol, Pol Pot and Heng Samrin were in fact quite similar and should be interpreted within the same framework of cultural and social analysis. Further, according to S. Thion the real plight of the Khmer people was that in their recent history they were not blessed with a *dharmaraja*, a just and righteous ruler. This is certainly a sociological dream and in this reviewer's opinion such a "source of harmony" (S. Thion) would probably not have survived the turmoils of current Khmer history, if he chose to stay in the country.

Hans U. Luther

BETTINA GRANSOW/MECHTHILD LEUTNER (eds.), *China: Nähe und Ferne. Deutsch-chinesische Beziehungen in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Zum 60. Geburtstag von Kuo Heng-yü*. Frankfurt am Main/Bern/New York/Paris: Peter Lang, 1989. 456 pages, DM 90.-

The celebration of Kuo Heng-yü's 60th birthday provided the appropriate occasion to invite more than twenty-five Chinese and European scholars to participate in the publication of a joint volume that would do due justice to the event. For more than twenty-five years Professor Kuo has been engaged in supervising, carrying out and inspiring studies in a field of research that has been attracting wider interest among German sinologists and historians only since the late '70s. Through his tutorials, his published works and his initiative