

function due to their race/ethnicity, are primarily involved in liquidating transactions and capital accumulation. This is one component of the recently developed theory of the *traders dilemma*.

In sum, the book provides a valuable discussion of a number of approaches in economic anthropology and is an example of excellent field research.

Heiko Schrader

IAN MABBET & DAVID CHANDLER, *The Khmers*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1995. xiv. 289 pages, \$ 31.45. ISBN 0-631-17582-2

This book is only one instalment of the general series "The Peoples of South-East Asia and The Pacific" under the direction of the general editors, Peter Bellwood and Ian Glover. Although Ian Mabbett wrote the first fifteen chapters and David Chandler the last two chapters, the authors together take full responsibility for the book in its entirety due to shared discussions about its general content. Added to these chapters are two appendices and an extensive bibliography which serve as useful guides for those who intend to pursue more in-depth study.

Ian Mabbett, whose work on the Indianization of Southeast Asia has been standard reading for students of early Southeast Asian history, and David Chandler, who has provided not only the standard survey of Kampuchean history used in both general and specialized courses of Southeast Asian history, are well-suited to the present task of producing a general introduction to Kampuchean culture and history. Reflecting the division of labor among the two authors and their respective research interests, the first fifteen chapters of the book, written by Mabbett, examine Kampuchea prior to the fifteenth century, while the final two chapters, written by Chandler, examine the five centuries which follow.

Many of the chapters reiterate points and cover topics already developed and presented by David Chandler in his previous book *A History of Cambodia* (Boulder 1992), but here they are represented in a more easily digestible style, at a less specialized level, which makes it an ideal introduction for students. Especially valuable for teachers of Southeast Asian history surveys is the ninth chapter, "The Immortals." The introduction of the spectrum of religious beliefs and activities in early Southeast Asian kingdoms to students unfamiliar with Southeast Asian culture is often difficult, especially so due to the process of domestication of Indian relig-

ions in the Southeast Asian context of a pre-existing spiritual domain filled with local spirits. Indian religions in early Southeast Asia, often misleadingly appraised in their pre-imported form by scholars, really came to reflect rather than challenge indigenous Southeast Asian beliefs, presenting a situation more of continuity than of change. This is not a new view, but its concise and thoughtful presentation in this chapter will make it easily understood by the beginner. The themes here have relevance to early Southeast Asia generally, and students should not just read about Angkor, but also about early Thailand, Pagan and Arakan.

Fortunately, the authors discuss a variety of theories concerning the fall of Angkor, including Michael Vickery's stimulating ideas on a mixed Mon-Thai-Khmer elite and views – presumably stemming from O. W. Wolters' thinking on the effect of the increasing volume of Chinese overseas trade connections during the Southern Sung, Yuan, and early Ming dynasties on archipelagic polities – of the attraction of maritime connections to the Southeast of Angkor. Both of these views question whether we should see the demise of Angkor as really a "fall" or as a shift of power among regional elites. Also discussed, but of less relevance to current research, are Bernard Groslier's views on the negative effects of a hydraulic system increasingly difficult to manage and Rhoads Murphey's conjecture concerning the spread of malarial mosquitos to mainland Southeast Asia some time around the fourteenth century. The impact of maritime commerce on the Angkorian polity is confirmed elsewhere by the tireless and thought-provoking work of Anthony Reid on Southeast Asia as a whole, and I think that it is in this direction that we will increasingly look for new and better answers concerning the demise not only of Angkor, but also of other early mainland Southeast Asian kingdoms, such as Pagan.

If there are any reservations to be made about this book, they would concern the overwhelming focus on early Kampuchea. To be sure, the authors suggest this focus in their initial chapter, arguing that they intended to examine the forces which conditioned the beginning of Khmer civilization. But civilization and culture, identity and beliefs are not monolithic, static entities that emerged in a distant past to determine and construct the future. Culture and identity change over time, depending upon the context of foreign influence and domestic change. To view the situation otherwise, would be to misunderstand the flexibility and creativity of the Khmer people and their complex development. Likewise, one might otherwise be unable to account for the confusion of goals and effects of Khmer Rouge rule in more recent times. This problem, of reading too much into the distant past for clues to the present identities and justifica-

tion for present activities, in studies of other mainland Southeast Asian societies, has produced similar problems of overemphasizing a moment or moments in the past to explain and even justify military rule and authoritarian excess, as in Burma. We simply know too little about the early period, due to the loss of records and the limited range of "voices," to make such claims.

Despite this problem, however, *The Khmers* is a very good introduction for students of Kampuchea, not only of history and anthropology, but of a wide range of other disciplines.

Michael W. Charney

SORPONG PEOU, *Cambodia After the Cold War: The Search for Security Continues*. (Centre of Southeast Asian Studies Working Paper 96). Clayton, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, 1995. 13 pp. ISBN 0-7326-0634-9

In *Cambodia After the Cold War*, Sorpong Peou attempts to determine what influences condition Cambodia's relationship with the international community, and forces within it. Specifically, Peou focuses on whether these influences are internally-derived or externally-forced.

Peou's discussion of the attempts of the current Khmer government to kindle a close relationship with China, in the hope of further alienating the Khmer Rouge from its chief foreign backer, is of some value. At the same time, this observation illustrates the continuing mainland Chinese influence in modern Cambodia and points to a reconstellation of the external political forces which have dominated the course of Cambodia's foreign policy and history since the 1950s.

Likewise, Peou correctly views Cambodia's efforts to join ASEAN not only in light of its foreign diplomatic initiatives, but also of issues of domestic stability. Again, central to these efforts has been concern over the revitalization of the Khmer Rouge threat. Peou, however, may be understanding the importance of Cambodia's move away from isolation (at times in the past externally- and internally-promoted) and towards greater interaction with the international community in a cooperative way.

This move is much more dramatic in ways that transcend Cambodia's foreign policies and a simple desire for domestic stability and has affected Cambodian life economically, culturally and socially. Generally, however, Peou has provided a useful observation of the subservience of geo-politics