

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

to concerns of domestic stability. Equally useful is Peou's suggestion that Cambodia's foreign relations have been guided by security rather than by ideological or economic considerations. In Peou's conclusion, the suggestion is made that the direction of Cambodia's future foreign policy will be ASEAN- and China-centered.

Peou's suggestion that Cambodia may be on the road to authoritarian government, due to domestic problems warrants further comparative research in pursuit of a revised model of modern authoritarianism in other Southeast Asian states, particularly Myanmar. Fortunately, Peou does not make a fanciful attempt, as is done too often in similar studies of authoritarianism in Southeast Asia, to find some sort of justification for it in precolonial history. By placing similar trends in modern Cambodia into their modern political context, Peou has put his analysis of the potential for authoritarianism in Cambodia outside of the artificial "traditionalism" framework which has plagued other studies.

Unfortunately, Peou's study has several flaws. Often Peou hints at major issues, but fails to carry them through in analysis. Further, the study is too frequently plagued with vague statements that reduce central observations to superficial statements of the obvious. For example, Peou explains in conclusion: "[i]n light of this study, Cambodia's future foreign policy will either stay the same or change its course depending on changes in international and domestic politics" (p. 13). Peou's conclusion also fails to tie these statements to the much more revealing discussion which preceded it. These flaws do not call for a rejection of the larger portion of Peou's analysis, but they do question whether or not Peou fully understands why *Cambodia After the Cold War* is useful.

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ADAM FFORDE/STEFAN DE VYLDER, *From Plan to Market. The Economic Transition in Vietnam*. (Transitions: Asia and Asian America). Boulder (Colorado): Westview Press 1996. XVI, 358 pp. £ 13.50 (pb.), ISBN 0-8133-2683-4. £ 40.95 (hb.), ISBN 0-8133-2684-2

Vietnam's economic development in the 1990s is a success story. In sharp contrast to most of the other countries of the former Soviet camp, Vietnam can boast of an enormous economic growth since the downfall of the "socialist world order". Vietnam has already been labelled a "New Tiger",