

Karma pas, and apparently preserved in a chapel in the southern Tibetan region of Kong po: in fact, it may be pointed out that the better-known manuscript of the lot (DNM-I, published by Damchöe Sangpo, Dalhousie, 1978) was inscribed in one of the sacred sites of gNas Padma bkod. *The Black Treasury* is known in five textual witnesses, all closely scrutinized by Quintman, belonging to two progressive phases of development, and testifying to “syncretism and inclusivity”. In particular, the author interestingly points out several innovations in the plot that were introduced at this stage, and which eventually made their way in gTsang smyon Heruka’s version. These may also be spotted employing the “text outlines and concordances” provided in Appendix 3. It is regrettable, however, that these observations and findings are treated only in a cursory way, since they are of extreme interest for the “biography of the yogin’s life story”, or “the story of biographical transformations over time” that, according to Quintman, constitutes the aim of the book (p. 26). For example, it is noted in passing that the narrative cycle devoted to Mi la ras pa’s journey to Mt Kailash and his subjugation of the Bon po priest Na ro Bon chung makes its first appearance in *The Black Treasury*, but here “the actual contest of miracles is recorded in a most perfunctory manner” (p. 116, and n. 101). Hence, it seems that the very popular episode of the magical contest at Mt Kailash included in the fifteenth-century *Collected Songs of Mi la ras pa*—which was extensively quoted in *The Crystal Mirror* (*Gangs ri chen po ti se dang mtsho chen ma dros pa bcas kyi sngon byung gi lo rgyus mdor bsdus su brjod pa’i rab byed shel dkar me long*), i.e. the 1896 guidebook to the sacred mountain by the 34th ’Bri gung hierarch dKon mchog bsTan ’dzin Chos kyi blo gros ’Phrin las rnam rgyal (1869–1906)—must be considered one of the major and most successful new narrative sections introduced by gTsang smyon Heruka (unless, of course, he lifted it from another, yet unknown, source).

To be sure, the sources studied are problematic in terms of attribution and dating, being often available in later manuscripts or blockprints, and included within wider collections that underwent different degrees of editing. Hence they pose great challenges to the understanding of their relative chronology and mutual relationships, which we are still not able to fully reconstruct, but to which the book under review is certainly the major contribution that has appeared so far. Therefore, Quintman’s engaging exploration of Mi la ras pa’s biographical corpus is a necessary reading for understanding the multiplicity of Mi la ras pa’s biographical tradition, culminating with gTsang smyon Heruka’s best-known version. In fact, *The Yogin and the Madman* is not only a story of books re-emerging from the cracks of history to fill in the blanks of our knowledge of Tibetan literature, but it is also the story of how one of Tibet’s most famous narrative portraits came into being.

Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia.

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Reviewed by Andrew Cock, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, Kyoto

E-mail arcock@gmail.com

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A puzzle of Democratic Kampuchea, the outcome of Cambodia’s descent into hell during the Vietnam War, is why its leadership had such an obsession for precise prison records while at the same time deliberately seeking to dismantle and annihilate the country’s pre-revolutionary institutions, signs of modernity, including markers and symbols that might remind its inhabitants of the outside world. Perhaps part of the answer is to be found in the vocation of a number of the key leaders including Pol Pot. They were schoolteachers before they became revolutionaries. But whatever

the reason, we probably only know about this obsession for records because the Vietnamese military entered Phnom Penh so soon after their invasion of Cambodia in late 1978. It is largely a historical accident—how quickly Democratic Kampuchea fell apart following this invasion—that the prison records of S-21, the most important of the regime’s prison facilities, were not destroyed. Indeed the Democratic Kampuchea Brother Number Two, Nuon Chea, later chastised the commandant of the central prison facility Kaing Guek Eav (Duch) for not destroying all the records.

One of the more ghastly finds of the Vietnamese upon their arrival in the capital was the school in the Tuol Sleng district that had been converted into the central interrogation facility by the defunct regime. While many of its documents have undoubtedly been lost and some may have been taken back to Hanoi for analysis, or to cover up aspects of their own involvement in Cambodia, much was kept inside the country.

These documents, including mug shots of the detainees, have come to form central artifacts of the Tuol Sleng genocide museum set up in 1980 by the newly installed People’s Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) to contrast themselves with their communist brethren and to justify Vietnam’s allegedly “humanitarian” intervention. The photos have undoubtedly played an important role in shaping how we remember and seek to make sense of the madness of those years. They influence and almost certainly distort that understanding by giving prominence to certain types of victims whose visual recording allows us to more readily believe, feel empathy with, and perhaps mourn such horrifying acts done under the pretext of building a more just society. One cannot help wondering if other authoritarian regimes, North Korea, for instance, maintain similar records and how we might think about them were they ever to be released after a precipitous regime collapse. It is the mug shots taken of the prisoners as they entered this prison camp, known officially as S-21, that form the central part of Michelle Caswell’s book.

The Santebel (“security police”) of Democratic Kampuchea are known to have operated at least 196 prisons (p. 8). Apart from some documents from a facility in Takeo, only the records of S-21 survived. These records include orders, the detailed logbooks of torture sessions, organizational material, forced confession statements, and photographs. The documentation unit of S-21 photographed prisoners on arrival as part of the registration process, and before they were tortured. The prisoners (who were for the most part Khmer Rouge soldiers as well as Party cadre and in some cases their family members) were subjected to physical interrogation and ultimately forced to sign statements detailing their backgrounds, connections, and supposed crimes. Of the approximately 14,000 people who were put through the facility, all but 202 were murdered (p. 9). It remains uncertain as to whether all the prisoners were photographed or whether thousands of photographs were destroyed or lost in the chaos of early 1979. Some 5,190 mug shots are known to have survived, with more discovered in 2012.

The mug shots are closely linked to the violence of S-21 and for Dr Caswell, this raises three questions: (a) “how are we to understand the ongoing impulse to save, reprint, and talk about these mug shots, and why are there so many efforts to document their reuses?”; (b) “[w]hat is the focus of the discussion of these mug shots, and what is missing from it?”; (c) “[w]hat light can anthropology, history, visual studies, and archival studies shed on these prolific photographs?” (p. 9). Using the lens of archival studies, Dr Caswell seeks to question and ultimately interpret the ways in which these mug shots continue to speak to us, including what these records of incarceration, and the truly horrifying ends to the lives of these people, tell us. Obviously no single answer can be given to such complex, heart-wrenching questions. In this regard, Dr Caswell’s book is a very sensitive study of how different groups – the few surviving victims, the families of the dead, former cadre, academics, and tourists who visit the museum—have come to think about the photographs.

The author also has the underlying ambition of introducing scholars from other fields to the potential contributions that archival theory can make to discussions about evidence, power, and historical

production. Dr Caswell uses a case study of the “social life” of a collection of mug shots taken at S-21 to reveal a “complex layering of silences”: “the silences of the soon-to-be-dead victims looking back at us in the photographs, the silences of the overwhelming majority of the victims who were not photographed, and the silences of those victims whose Tuol Sleng mug shots disappeared in the chaotic aftermath of the regime” (p. 7). In this documentation of victimhood, the book admirably achieves its aims.

Core to the book’s argument is Dr Caswell’s contention that a community has developed around the records “that asserts a sense of agency in their exhibition, reception, and reuse”. This “community of records” has, as its members, archivists, survivors, and victims’ family members. These members have strategically deployed the mug shots in legal testimonies, documentary films, and still photographs of Cambodians and tourists viewing these records of long-dead prisoners. They create “a new archive of responses” to the Khmer Rouge. Thus one of the key claims Dr Caswell makes in the book is:

These new records perform human rights by memorializing the dead, holding those responsible legally accountable, and warning the current regime that such abuses will not be tolerated in the present.... Through the use of these photographs, Cambodians are supplanting a narrative of victimhood with a narrative of witnessing, transforming records that document an unspeakably violent past into agents of social change for the future (p. 7).

After an introduction to theoretical debates concerning archival research, the following chapter examines the emergence in colonial Cambodia of an impulse to make these types of records of prisoners and how this carried over into the operation of the security apparatus of Democratic Kampuchea. As Dr Caswell puts the issue: “In the midst of a radically agrarian, Maoist regime, why such an emphasis on documentation in general and mug shots specifically?” (p. 52). Subsequent chapters document how archives were made from interrogation records and the associated photographs of prisoners, and how narratives have come to be made out of these archives. Much of the material in these chapters is fascinating, while leaving the reader offended by the seeming insensitivity of some of the organizations and individuals who have appropriated the photographs for various uses. For instance, one group that acquired images of doomed internees claimed copyright and sold them to the Los Angeles County Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. In 1997 the MoMA organized an exhibition of twenty-two photographs of prisoners, displaying them as artworks (p. 74). While these efforts, including a book called *The Killing Fields* produced by Twin Palms Publishers, may have been rationalized as necessary to raise funds for the preservation of these deteriorating photos, it is unlikely that the MoMA would have conducted an exhibition that rendered photos of incarcerated Holocaust victims as art. Much more might have been said about the thinking of the curators behind this exhibition, as it seems so obviously distasteful and lacking respect for the dead. Other uses examined by Dr Caswell were clearly more admirable, including efforts of the Documentation Centre of Cambodia (DC-Cam) to reunite the mug shots with the names of unidentified victims (those incarcerated before 1978), and subsequently with their interrogation files.

An interesting section of the book charts how the mug shots have come to constitute the basis for a variety of narratives in the form of testimonies, documentary films, and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal process. The analysis of various permutations of the use of the mug shots as part of the act, or then again perhaps it is an art, of “witnessing” is particularly intelligent and deeply thought out. Indeed, an example of the sensitivity and intelligence of Dr Caswell’s book is a point she makes

concerning the silences embedded in the particular patterns of evolving use of the S-21 images. She notes:

There is a danger that if we frame Cambodian human rights in the context of the Khmer Rouge's mass murder, more immediate but comparatively less egregious violations of human rights in terms of land and labor will go ignored. There is also a danger that, in the construction of new narratives, the victims of Tuol Sleng have come to stand in as representatives for all the victims of the Khmer Rouge, despite the unique position of Tuol Sleng at the apex of Khmer Rouge surveillance. Indeed, this focus on Tuol Sleng may hide or distort how most victims of the regime died – from starvation, disease, and exhaustion – rather than from the efficient and systematized incarceration, torture, and murder at Tuol Sleng (p. 134).

For all its merits the book comes across in certain places as being more precisely aimed at highlighting the sophistication of the author's engagement with archival studies than with keeping the needs of prospective readers in mind. This may narrow the book's appeal and its ability to convey what is of itself a very interesting story. There are also unresolved puzzles, especially concerning how the mug shots have made these people victims in an absolute sense. It is easy to forget that some, perhaps many, were surely part of the revolutionary machine until they were themselves incarcerated and "smashed", in the parlance of the regime. For instance, reading the case of Yuk Chantha, a government official before the Khmer Rouge takeover accused of being a Soviet spy (p. 119), I found myself wanting to know why he was sent to Tuol Sleng. Why was he worth incarcerating and interrogating in the pinnacle of the Khmer Rouge prison system? Another puzzle is that Dr Caswell refers (p. 157) to "Khmer Rouge bureaucrats" but never quite explains who this group was, although presumably a substantial number ended up being processed through S-21. Why were some surviving bureaucrats not traced? With perhaps some exceptions, the "victims" of S-21 were deemed important enough to have their activities and networks documented and recorded presumably because they, their relatives, or their patrons, including their commanding officers, held positions of power and thus at least some small ability to subvert or undermine regime goals. How do the living now perceive the role of their dead relatives? Apart from deep sorrow, do they feel pity for relatives who hitched themselves to such a misguided cause? Do some feel shame about the part their relatives may have played in egregious acts such as the forced evacuation of Phnom Penh, the slaughtering of Cham and Vietnamese, or the treatment of so-called "new people"? If answers could be found to such questions, we might have a more rounded understanding of the type of memories these archives evoke.

Certain elements of the book concerning the production of the photographs seem to be under-analyzed. As an example, Dr Caswell notes: "Khmer Rouge bureaucrats . . . adopted and adapted the format of their colonial predecessors by implementing the use of standardized photography at Tuol Sleng with the hope of creating a modern and efficient bureaucracy at the prison. The mug shots, together with other Tuol Sleng records, allowed officials to compartmentalize labor, alienated bureaucrats from the violent consequences of their actions, and encouraged a culture of thoughtlessness at the prison" (pp. 157–58). But the evidence for the ambition or "hope" to create a modern and efficient bureaucracy at the prison is not spelled out. One cannot help thinking that the work of Hannah Arendt, Primo Levi, and particularly Zygmunt Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* might have been harnessed to locate Democratic Kampuchea in relation to other twentieth-century instances of the creation of deliberate, purposive total institutions.

On the role of the bureaucracy in relation to the operation of Democratic Kampuchea, Dr Caswell notes: "The records were not neutral by-products of activity . . . but an integral part of that activity;

they made the incarceration, torture, and murder possible” (p. 158). But presumably incarceration, torture, and murder were undertaken just as ruthlessly at all the other facilities around the country where very few records seem to have survived. The language Dr Caswell uses is likewise often puzzling to this reviewer. The label “genocide” and the regular reference to the victims as “Cambodians” seem to muddy the identity of the perpetrators. Ultimately *Archiving the Unspeakable* is a study in victimhood. The perpetrators remain largely silent. As has long served the purposes of the PRK/CPP, the perpetrators are personalized in the form of Duch and a few other top leaders. We gain little sense that many of those consumed by Tuol Sleng whose mug shots and associated memories endure may have been actors in the implementation of the policies that led to a far greater number of deaths beyond the boundaries of Cambodia’s emptied cities. Deploying the label “genocide” for what occurred during those three years, eight months, and twenty days, seems far more problematic than Dr Caswell is willing to admit, and part of the story of these photographs remains to be told.