

find the book a useful summation of a number of ongoing and interlinked processes of land-use change.

PAMELA MCELWEE
Rutgers University

Cambodia

Love and dread in Cambodia: Weddings, births, and ritual harm under the Khmer Rouge

By PEG LEVINE

Singapore: NUS Press, 2010. Pp. 219. Bibliography, Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463412000501

A number of important early books on the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) period in Cambodia (the 'Pol Pot regime') helped us understand the overall trajectory of the period and much of its underlying politics — and the incredible horror it represented. I, for one, remember myself once wondering whether anything more of great significance could be produced, although that now seems naïve. New materials — including books (such as Ian Harris's *Buddhism under Pol Pot*), documentary films, and perhaps some of the Khmer Rouge tribunal testimonies — have underlined how much more can and will be said; they are changing our understanding of how the regime was experienced on the ground. Peg LeVine's *Love and dread in Cambodia: Weddings, births, and ritual harm under the Khmer Rouge*, meticulously researched, is a major contribution to the study of the period, which opens up significant new directions of scholarship.

LeVine was trained in clinical psychology, including Japanese schools of cross-cultural psychology. A fascination with DK birth and marriage rituals led her to pursue a second doctorate in anthropology to study it more systematically. Her research draws on extensive interviews with Cambodian couples, including the use of film to document responses when they returned to sites of weddings and births. She develops the concept of *ritualcide* to describe the psychic disorientation generated by the radical reorganisation of society:

Without ritual and access to safe spirit places, there is no protection. Without protection, people fear unpredictable, vicious forces. I remind myself again that many could not even wander in their own minds for fear their minds could be read, or worse yet, possessed and manipulated to do grave harm ... Herein the Khmer Rouge ruptured people's participation in cosmic ordering, which depended on their ritual engagements; in turn this generated a cosmic betrayal that I underscore as *Ritualcide*. (p. 14)

Like some of the other new work, she questions some truisms about DK and thereby gives us a more realistic and human sense of what it meant; this is an important step, even if these works risk seeming to diminish the importance of very real atrocities. Her closing chapter is entitled 'Not so simple: Neither benign nor hideous'. She is groping toward an understanding of how DK really functioned in human terms, without

passing judgement. Nevertheless, powerful descriptions of her informants' psychic pain leaves us with no doubt that she understands just how horrific the period could be.

While the book should not be reduced to the single issue of DK marriage, this is where she most clearly questions standard interpretations. She criticises standard references to DK 'forced marriages'. What she describes is something more nuanced, where there were varying degrees of coerciveness in a process where state authorities assumed roles traditionally taken by relatives in arranging marriage, typically performed in mass ceremonies. For at least some participants, these marriages were positive to the degree that they entailed greater hope of survival. (I find her argument convincing, although I suspect that many scholars and journalists will continue to use 'forced marriages' as short-hand for the peculiarity of the practice.)

Just as central to her argument is her detailed description of psychic pain caused by the ways the regime divorced people from ceremonial practices (many involving spirits) which gave meaning to their lives — at a time when death and disruption made such practices all the more necessary. LeVine's disciplinary training as a clinical psychologist is evident. Although she touches on questions of why the *ritualcide* occurred, she is finally more interested in what occurred and its effect on people. The book includes a discussion of her own 'atrocious saturation', samples of her field diaries while conducting research, and, most importantly, pictures of sculptures she created as part of her own attempt to deal with her research experience. I am usually wary of this type of public introspection; nevertheless in the end it was effective in underlining the painful interactions coming into play in the research process itself.

Not everything in the book rang true to me. I agree with LeVine that the word *angkar* (literally 'organisation') came to be almost personified in DK usage and was used metonymically to refer, not just to the Party organisation but different, sometimes intangible aspects of it. I feel she goes too far in suggesting that Cambodians related to it as a spirit, or that it could link to medium practice.

On one occasion she criticises one of the standard histories for referring to Khmer Rouge 'puritanism'. Granting that the word 'puritanical' may be too Western in its implications, DK killings for sexual offences are well documented. It would have been relevant to her discussion to explore this.

JOHN A. MARSTON

El Colegio de México, Mexico City

Indonesia

Maskulinitas: Culture, gender and politics in Indonesia

By MARSHALL CLARK

Monash papers on Southeast Asia no. 71

Caulfield: Monash University Press, 2010. Pp. 182. Notes, Bibliography, Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463412000513

In this wide-ranging and intriguing study of Indonesian arts, especially those that appeared during the first 10 years following Suharto's fall, Marshall Clark looks at