



Ikat Weaving and the Ethnic Chinese Influence in Cambodia (Studies in the Material Cultures of Southeast Asia, 15)

John Ter Horst

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This book is a ground-breaking study of the role of ethnic Chinese in the production and marketing of Cambodia's famous weft ikat textiles. Despite the prominence of these textiles little is known about how the ikat weaving industry is organized and about those who produce the ikat textiles. The ethnic identity of the silk weavers and traders has been something of a mystery. As the present study shows, although the Khmer and Cham have been involved in the Cambodian ikat weaving industry, it has been dominated by ethnic Chinese, both in the production and trade of silks. Making use of French colonial archives the author fills this gap and describes under what conditions Cantonese silk weavers and traders arrived in Cambodia at the end of the 19th century. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Cambodia he also describes under what economic, political, and cultural conditions the once humble rural silk industry grew into a global network. This network is not in the hands of the ethnic Khmer, but is dominated by Sino-Khmer (Chinese Cambodians), descendents of the 19th century Cantonese immigrants.

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