This monograph presents evidence that state and non-state actors sought to restore relationships between former adversaries after Cambodia's 1975-1979 genocide ended. The tactics deployed advocated forgiveness for individual culpability. The author/researcher analyzed original and secondary documents and conducted nearly one-hundred interviews with surviving victims; their macro (state) and micro (individual, community) reconciliation efforts permeated every facet of society, providing Cambodians opportunity and means to find peace of mind and, in doing so, consider forgiving their transgressors. In the Cambodian culture, forgiveness follows from behavioral change, not from apology.

The research revealed that individual Cambodians relied less on political rapprochement or the retributive justice of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia than on diverse socio-political, cultural, legal, educational and traditional strategies, each adapting them to his or her specific circumstances. Sporadic post-genocide vengeance meted out between former adversaries as Democratic Kampuchea fell gradually transmuted itself into the institutional rule of law, a renewed sense of common humanity and fatality in the face of evil, the rebirth of religious devotion, and the memorialization and dissemination of Khmer Rouge history.

Through its research into and analysis of these dimensions, this dissertation serves to further inform Cambodia's reconciliation process. Cambodia's surviving victims' diverse healing odysseys serve as models for other societies deeply scarred by mass atrocities at they search for avenues of reconciliation within the confined of their culture, religions, and national identity.

Cover photo: Vietnamese soldiers were leaving Cambodia in 1989.

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