

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) MAPPING THE KILLING FIELDS OF CAMBODIA, 1997: khet BATTAMBANG [B-2-battambang/a-cb-bb]

Location	Site Name/ Date	# of graves	Est. Victim	Witness	file # /ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
srok Mong Russey	Wat Ta Loas Chas/ 2 May 1997	100 pits	500-600		R 050203A/ 20601/2/3	N12 ⁰ 48'4498"	E103 ⁰ 28'130 4"
srok Mong Russey	Wat Chrey/ 2 May 1997			Huy kroum ហ៊ុយ ក្រឹម	R 050204A/ 20604	N12 ⁰ 46'5051"	E103 ⁰ 28'204 5"
srok Mong Russey	Wat Thoama Yeth/ 2 May 1997	15 pits	1000	Hak Sophal ហាក់ សុផល	R 050204B/ 20605/6	N12 ⁰ 46'2106"	E103 ⁰ 27'145 9"
srok Mong Russey	Por I / 2 May 1997	2 pits	150	Huy Kroum ហ៊ុយ ក្រឹម	R 050205A/ 20607	N12 ⁰ 46'3404"	E103 ⁰ 26'535 4"
srok Ek Phnom	Wat Sam Rong/ 2 May 1997	100 pits	10008		R 050208A/ 20501/2/3	N13 ⁰ 07'4427"	E103 ⁰ 13'054 7"
srok Ek Phnom	Wat Ek Phnom/ 2 May 1997	200 pits	5000	Khut Gnuon ឃុត ងួន	R 050210A/ 20504	N13 ⁰ 09'4482"	E103 ⁰ 11'223 9"
srok Banan	Chon Loh Kdaong/ 3 May 1997			Phrak Rom ផ្រាក់ រ៉ុម	R 050302A/ 20101	N13 ⁰ 01'0809"	E103 ⁰ 05'360 0"
srok Banan	La-ang Kirirom/ 3 May 1997	5 pits	15700	Prak Rom ផ្រាក់ រ៉ុម	R 050302B/ 20102/3/4	N13 ⁰ 01'1650"	E103 ⁰ 05'519 7"

Battambang province is located 291 kilometers from Phnom Penh. On April 30, 1997, in the afternoon, we departed from Banteay Meanchay province and stayed one night in Battambang. On May 1, 1997, in the morning, we met Uk Vong, chief of cabinet, asking for his permission and

Documentation Center of Cambodia

Searching for the Truth

ស្វែងរកការពិត ដើម្បី ការបដិសេធនៃយុត្តិធម៌

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cooperation with our researcher. Mr. Uk Vong assigned local police and the Cultural staff to work with us. However, we could not coordinate with them, since the police were occupied by the delegation from Phnom Penh, and the cultural staff were off for the day.

Please note that May 1st is Labor day. Therefore, we did not meet anyone in the office we visited. So we decided to take the day off, and wrote Banteay Meanchay's report.

The total death toll of the citizens in Battambang and Banteay Meanchay province was 471761, including:

- 271,541 farmers
- 54,230 civil servants and workers
- 1,525 monks
- 92,573 ethnic

There are 429480 people condemning Pol Pot.

Note: This survey was made before the establishment of Banteay Meanchay province.

Morng Reusey district

On May 2, 1997, we and three provincial policemen arrived at Morng Reusey district, 43 kilometers from Battambang, at 10 o'clock. Morng Reusey district shares its border with:

- Sangke district on the north.
- Bakorn district, Posat province, on the south.
- Banon district, Battambang province, on the west.
- Ek Phnom district and Tonle Sap on the east.

This district, comprised of 11 sub-districts, includes 92 villages which have 1,400 groups of 22,602 families with 117,247 people. 56,043 of them are male. Morng Reusey district occupies the land of 45,970 hectars. In the district office, we met district governor, culture and religion office chief and cultural deputy chief. We learned from the conversation that there are many genocidal sites in the district. We could not verify all of them since the documents were burned after the election. However, we could confirm that there are:

- 1- Bopha Votey pagoda genocidal site which consisted of a prison, a security center and an execution center.
- 2- Koh Keo pagoda, genocidal site, formerly To Los pagoda, containing a security center, a prison, and an execution center.
- 3- Tip Dey mountain, main security center and prison. (We did not go there, for security reasons.)
- 4- Wat Chrey museum, a hospital during the Pol Pot regime. Por pagoda, near the district office, was an execution center. S1 house was the prison.

Knowing this information, the deputy governor of the district, cultural staff of district and our researcher went to that place.

Criminal Center

Former Ta Los pagoda (Takeo pagoda) is located 11 kilometers far from district office. A main prison, a security center, an execution center and a museum are located in the old village (Phum chas), former Ta Los sub-district, Mornng district, Battambang province. The Khmer Rouge lived in a monk's house and converted the temple of the pagoda, the sacred place, into a prison. The prisoners were killed near the pagoda's fence, 50 meters from the temple. We found here a witness named Hoy Krem. The prisoners were killed near the pagoda's fence, 50 meters from the temple. During Pol Pot's regime, Hoy Krem lived in Rearm Korn village, Rearm Korn sub-district, Mornng Reusey district. Nowadays, he is a deputy chief of cabinet of Mornng Reusey sub-district.

He claimed that the victims were mostly evacuees, the wealthy, capitalists, civil servants and those who were considered to have committed crimes of immorality, such as stealing food etc. Children were killed along with their parents. Whole families were killed. The victims were high-ranking officials, professors, intellectuals and doctors; none of them were soldiers.

The pits

50 meters from the temple and in the surrounding area are many pits which have not been covered yet. In 1979, when Krem came to see people digging the pits, he could see square pits that measured four meters on each side, rectangular pits, and many other smaller pits. The execution here started in 1976 and continued until 1978. Based on the witness' testimony, we estimated that during these 3 years, 500 or 600 victims were killed at this site. However, the actual death toll might be higher because we have no documentation on which to base this conclusion. The only remaining physical evidence is the bones of the victims. The Chas monks and sub-district officer have disinterred these remains, and every year on May 20 they perform a ritual ceremony blessing the victims with peace and harmony in their next lives.

We arrived at the memorial of Chrey pagoda at 11:20 a.m. We found a Khmer Rouge hospital and bones which were dug out from the pit and placed in an old cottage. Those bones belong to 100 or 200 victims. However, some bones are missing because cattle ate them. The witness,

Huy Krem informed us that the hospital was also used as an execution center. It stocked no medicine. Instead, patients were treated with coconut juice as a placebo. Operations were performed without the use of proper anesthesia. Moreover, the patients were often starved or accused of pretending to be sick.

The criminal center

Ream Kon village, Ta sub-district, Mornng Reusey district, Battambang province. We reached the former Terravada pagoda, a main execution center, at 12:15 p.m. It is now Bopha Votey pagoda, 1 kilometer from Mornng Reusey district office. Located within the village are:

- Security office, temple
- prison
- killing site

Pits line the front border of the pagoda. Pits measuring 4 meters square and 1.5m or 2m deep lie to the right of the pagoda. We have 2 witness. They are:

Mr. Hoy Krem, who lived near this pagoda during the Pol Pot regime. When he went to the pagoda to reclaim his son, whom the Khmer Rouge cadre had taken, he witnessed them dining on fried human livers, and refused their invitation to join them. He also saw the 15m x 60m prison, where prisoners taken from all the cooperatives and work sites in each sub-district and district were shackled together in line. They were interrogated in the temple and taken to be killed at the front of the temple.

Type of victims

The victims were rich people, capitalists, high-ranking officials and their wives, BAC I or BAC II students, intellectuals, and those who were considered to be guilty of immorality. Among those killed were children caught stealing food. The executions took place every day. The security office was established in 1976 and lasted until 1978. During November and December 1978, the number of executions was very severe.

The second witness, Mr. Hak Sophal, was formerly a member of the mobile work brigade cadre of Khmer Rouge. He used to camp near that pagoda. After 1975, the militia denied the public access to the pagoda. One day, the security cadre borrowed a hoe from the mobile work brigade cadre. When Sophal went to retrieve the hoe, he could see the security men frying human liver and putting out 50-60 livers to dry in the sun. The ground was covered with blood.

As he watched that morning, prisoners were taken out of the temple and killed one after another. After they were killed, their abdomens were cut open, and their livers were harvested and placed in a tank to be preserved for food. Once the 20x20 meter pits were filled with corpses, they were covered with soil. The cadre undressed and mocked the women before killing them. Later, the mobile work brigade was no longer allowed to camp near the pagoda.

Estimates show that each big pit contained 60 to 100 dead bodies and the small pits each contained 2 or 3 dead bodies. Hoy Krem claimed that, in 1979, he could see 300 skulls that had been dug out of the mass grave and many other bones he did not count. At that time, people dug up graves looking for gold. The bones and skulls, that had been placed near Mornng bridge, were stolen and burned.

In conclusion, during the 3 years of terror, 300 to 1000 victims were buried there. All the bones which were removed from the execution center and placed near district office, in front of the inhabitants' house at the beginning of the bridge, were stolen and burned.

Por village, Ta sub-district, Mornng Reusey district, Battambang province

Criminal center

There is a house near the Mornng Reusey village office which was used to detain prisoners who had defected to the Vietnamese group. In 1979, the Vietnamese troop cooperated with Ranakse united front of national salvation to attack the Khmer Rouge. When they retreated, many inhabitants went with them. Unfortunately, 50 families of those inhabitants were arrested by the Khmer Rouge and were killed before January 7, 1979. Hak Sopal, who witnessed these events, now works at the Documentation center.

This killing site is 100 kilometers from the Mornng Reusey village office. Children and adults were imprisoned at different places. The children had their hands bound and were clubbed or bayoneted to death. The adults were killed with hoes and thrown into nearby canals or dikes. Between 50 and 150 families were killed at that killing site.

Samrong village, Samrong sub-district, Ek Phnom district, Battambang province

At 2:00 PM, we departed from the Mornng district office and took national road 5 to the Samrong pagoda execution center, Ek Phnom district, 43 kilometers from the Mornng district office and 1 kilometer from the provincial office. We met a witness, Chhorn Sovann, 57, an achar of Samrong pagoda. During 1970-75, he was a monk but was disrobed by the Khmer Rouge in 1975-76. This execution center has:

- Security center, former monk's house.
- Prison, former eating hall.
- Interrogation center.
- Execution center

This important witness told us that in 1975, 300 monks were gathered from everywhere to live in this pagoda. In 1976, those monks were sent to work in paddy fields and were not allowed to enter this pagoda again. During 1976-78, the pagoda was turned into a prison, a security center and an execution center. Victims at this center were killed after being interrogated. A number of grave pits are still being identified.

Type of victim in this execution center

The victims were the families of civil servants, militants, policemen, professors and soldiers. The witness said that he was the first person to come to Samrong pagoda. At that time, he saw 2 bodies lying dead in the prison. The prison was covered with human blood and shackles. The shackles have since disappeared. Now, the only thing that is left is the photograph that the witness showed us.

In 1980, when the witness dug up the bones of the victims, he could see that one pit contained 40 to 60 skulls. The execution center covered 40 square meters. There were uncovered pits everywhere.

At 4:00 PM, the witness took us to observe the pits, which are located around the museum. There are 90 to 100 pits, a well, small dams and a store, which contain the bones of 1008 victims. Only the documents can tell the exact death toll. However, the documents, which were initially found in 1979, have been lost. We recorded the interview with the witness on audio tape.

Chhorn Sovann, the witness, is now living in Samrong village, Samrong sub-district, Ek Phnom district, Battambang province. He is an achar in Samrong pagoda. At 4:45 PM, our researcher went to a place 7 kilometers from provincial office. This site, located in front of Ek Phnom pagoda, had a prison, a security center and an execution center, but no museum.

The execution center is located in Ek Phnom pagoda, Ta Kom village, Pearm Ek sub-district, Ek Phnom district, Battambang province. There, we met Kut Ngurn, our witness, 73, an achar of Ek Phnom pagoda. He lives in Ta Korm village, Pearm Ek sub-district, Ek Phnom district, Battambang province.

The witness testified that during the Pol Pot regime, Ek Phnom pagoda used to be security center and prison. 300 meters in front of the pagoda, in an orange plantation, was the execution center of Khmer Rouge. It covered 1 hectare. The pits were found throughout the orange plantation, salting the soil and harming the orange trees.

The victims at this site were 1975-76 evacuees, those who stole food from Angkar, and inhabitants from region 4. The pagoda's temple and eating hall had been turned into a prison. The Khmer Rouge's office was in Thmor mountain, behind the temple.

The security center, prison and execution center were established in 1975 and lasted until 1978. The witness estimated that there were 200 pits in the campus and in orange plantation.

The second witness, Ngim Rann, 69, lives in Kul Hal village, Pearm Ek sub-district, Ek Phnom district, Battambang province. Children and adults were taken from every part to be killed in this place. The dead bodies were tied to tamarind trees with cigarettes in their mouths, and left to the elements. He gave the same information as the first witness. At 6:00 PM, on 2 May 1997, we finished our work in Ek Phnom pagoda.

On 3 May 1997, we continued our work in Svay Por district, Battambang province. At 7:30 AM, we met district governor Sa Salah, the district deputy governor and the chief of district religion. This district contains only a memorial in Po Veal pagoda. Inhabitants were encouraged to collect bones from paddy fields and other places to be given a ritual ceremony on 20 May, the Hatred day.

Since there was no genocidal center, our researcher left that district and headed to Bannor district and to Sampao mountain, a big genocidal center. Between Sampao mountain and Kadou mountain is located a former prison, a security center and an execution center. The former interrogation center is located at the edge of the mountain. The execution took place at the top of Kirirom and Sampao mountains.

The temple of the pagoda was turned into an interrogation center. Victims had their throats cut with saws. Their blood was drained through tubing fashioned for the purpose. The execution center was:

- The cave at the top of the mountain- Teng Klun cave
- Lokorn cave
- The cave at the top of the mountain

According to a nun, Kong Kimlee alias Kim, who had read a document found in 1992, 15,700 victims were killed there. When we reached the place, we met two witnesses.

- a. Prak Rom, chief of Samnang village in Sampao sub-district, Bonon district, Battambang province.
- b. Chief of Sampao sub-district, lives in Phnom Sampao village, Phnom Sampao sub-district.

The two witness accompanied our visit to the prison, the security office, and the cave at the top of Kirirom mountain, 400 steps high. The memorial is located in the cave of Teng Klum and Lokorn mountain. The two witnesses collected all the bones from western mountain and from every cave at the top of the mountain, and placed them in the memorial. They had monks preaching sermons and blessing the spirits of the victims.

Types of victims

In 1977, the Khmer Rouge brought inhabitants and starving people by truck to this site and imprisoned them. The same activities took place every day.

Around 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the victims' hands were bound, and they were tied to one length of rope. They were then taken in a group to be interrogated at the top of Kirirom mountain (Sampao mountain). Victims was starved for a certain of time before they were executed. None of them survived.

Prak Rom farmed at the top Kadong mountain. He witnessed victims disguising themselves as farmers in an attempt to escape from the prison. Ten- and twelve-year-old children who had stolen fruit were also taken to be killed there. The old men were forced to make earth-husking baskets and to feed pigs.

Before 1978-79, only those victims who were specifically listed on Khmer Rouge documents were gathered and killed. However, during 1978-79, the Khmer Rouge began to indiscriminately gather both listed and unlisted victims. Children were killed without interrogation. Adult victims were interrogated before having their throats cut with saws.

At 10:15 AM, we visited the three killing fields and the interrogation center. There were 2 prisons-one at mountain's edge and the other near the top of the mountain. The temple was turned into prison and an interrogation center. Victims were killed and thrown into the cave. The total death toll is 15,700.

Conclusion

Our research in Battambang province had faced some difficulty due to national political situation, which was especially precarious at this time.

The chief of the district was called to join the meeting in Phnom Penh, which affected our administrative correspondence with him. The district officers we had to work with were not disciplined, often being absent from work or failing to keep appointments. Additionally, May 1st was a public holiday, Labor day, and May 3rd was Saturday.

We arrived in Battambang on May 1st. Therefore, we had little time to carry out the research. We worked only on May 2nd. We are also worried about being able to find the pits, which are becoming increasingly difficult to identify. Many of the bones of the victims have been stolen and burned. Those bones that do remain are stored under conditions that do not promote their preservation. Often, the bones are not properly secured.

We met many witnesses, but not all of their information will be useful to us. Some of our witnesses were imprisoned during the Pol Pot regime. Others were aware of the situation or saw the activities. The breakaway Khmer Rouge cadre will be the best witnesses. If possible, we should look for the chief of a security center and a prison to be our witness.