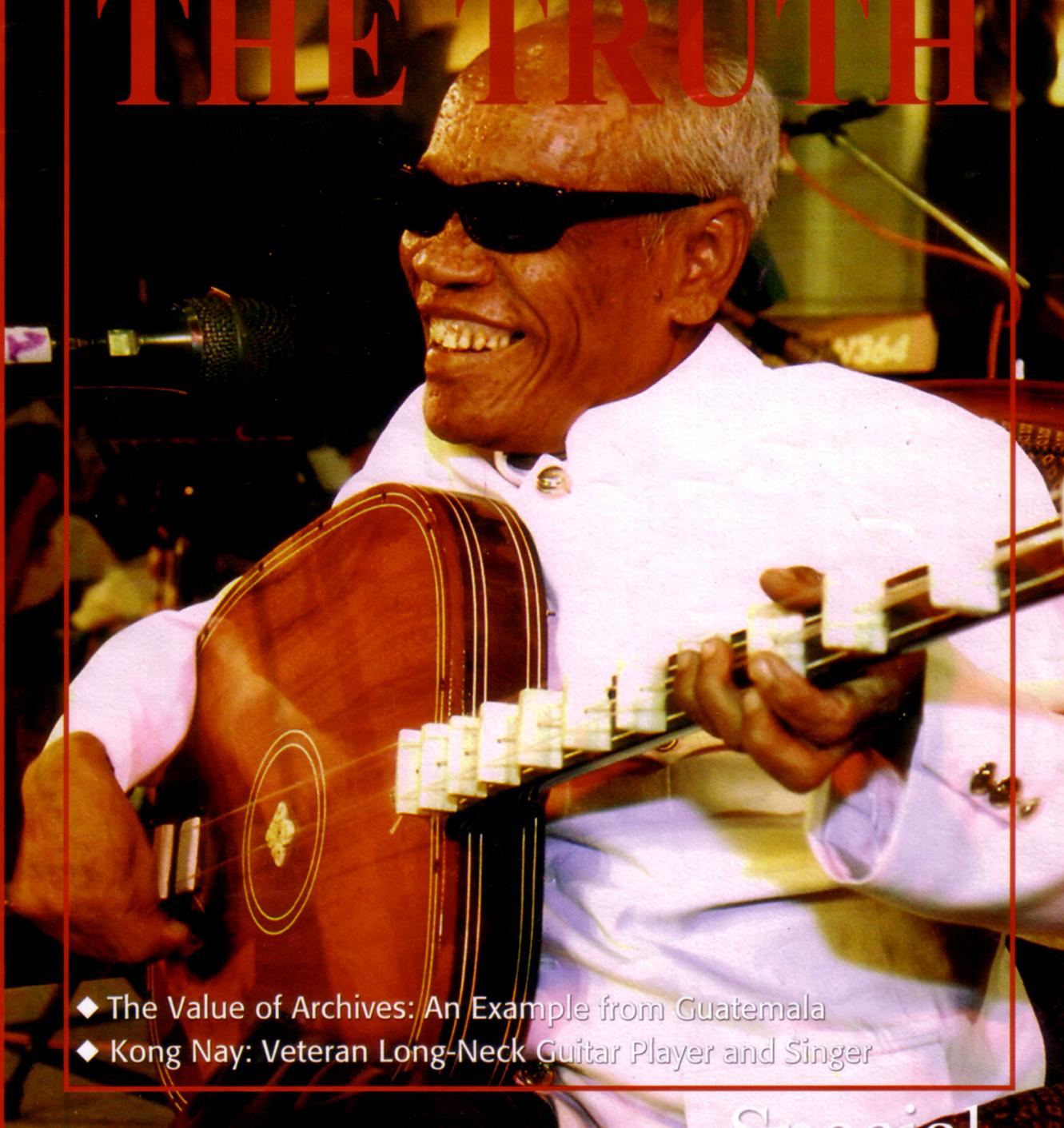


Searching for

THE TRUTH



- ◆ The Value of Archives: An Example from Guatemala
- ◆ Kong Nay: Veteran Long-Neck Guitar Player and Singer

I do not fear death. In my previous life, I must have done lots of evil things; that is why I am blind. In this life, I would never take revenge if you attempted to kill me.

-- Kong Nay

Special
English Edition
First Quarter 2007

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Magazine of the Documentation Center of Cambodia
Special English Edition, First Quarter 2007

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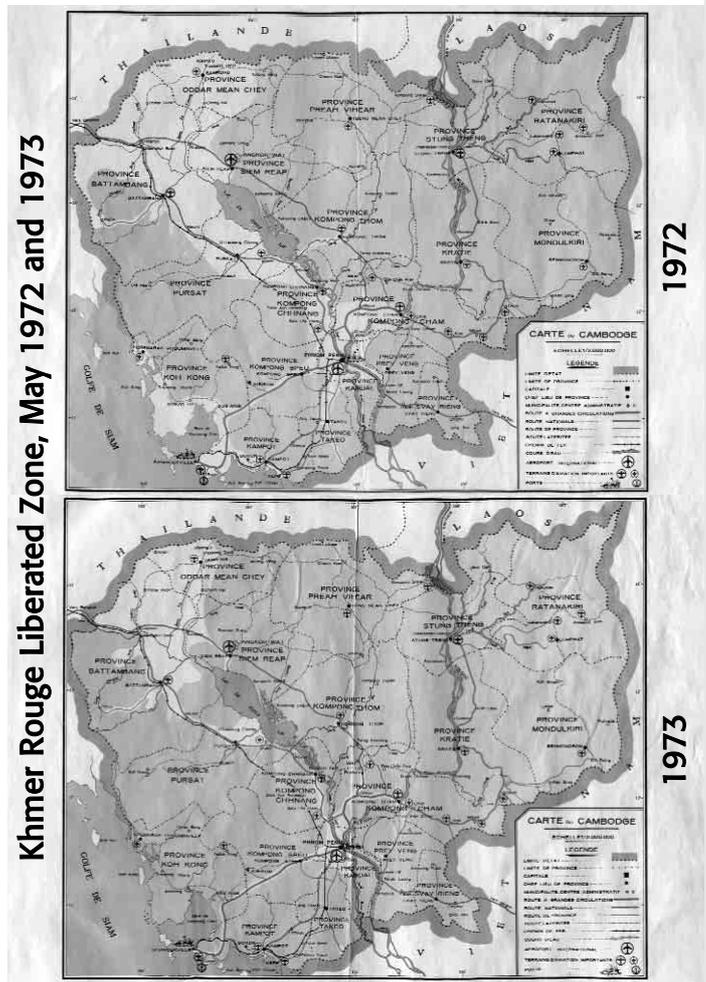
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2 August 1999.

Photographs by
the Documentation Center of Cambodia
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Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

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EDITORIAL:

TAKING CAMBODIA FORWARD THROUGH EDUCATION

Nearly all Cambodians hate the Pol Pot regime. Those who lived through it are really angry at the Khmer Rouge. Those who did not experience the suffering this regime inflicted only know about it through their parents' descriptions of hardship, malnutrition, disease, violent death, and overwork. Yet while many Cambodians try to make their children believe what happened during Democratic Kampuchea, many young people find their parents' recollections difficult to believe.

When I was young, my parents often told me about their lives under the Khmer Rouge's rule. They must have had good luck, because they lived in a village where the cooperative chief did not harm the villagers. I found their stories funny.

But when I started to work as a volunteer for the Documentation Center of Cambodia in February 2005, I learned that all my parents told me is true. I read the documents written by the Khmer Rouge cadres, such as the biographies of prisoners from Tuol Sleng, confessions, and telegrams. More important and interesting than these documents are the photos of prisoners, and of people planting rice, transplanting, building dams and dikes, and digging canals. This was the evidence I needed to know that the Khmer Rouge really existed in Cambodia.

The book entitled *The History of Democratic Kampuchea* by Khamboly Dy, which will be published soon, will bring this evidence to Cambodians who do not have an opportunity to visit Tuol Sleng or DC-Cam. It will also help the Cambodian people to have a clearer understanding about the Khmer Rouge regime. This book is not very long. It covers the important events before, during, and after the regime, and students, teachers and the public alike will find that its information is easy to understand. It also contains many photographs of Khmer Rouge and ordinary people during the regime.

When I was in high school, very little was taught

about the Khmer Rouge regime. Teachers just told their students about their own experiences and suffering. They did not have sources that enabled them to give facts about the Khmer Rouge, such as who the members of the Communist Party of Kampuchea were and how they rose to power.

If we are truly to learn from our history, then we must study more than simply the Angkor period, which was one of great glory for Cambodia. The history of Democratic Kampuchea was very different; it was a very dark period in our past. We should study it to learn and because it will remind us that we must take our country down a path where such a thing could not occur again.

The study of the history of Democratic Kampuchea will help us prevent the return of genocide as well as wars, like the civil war during the Khmer Republic, which provided the conditions the Khmer Rouge needed to come to power. Once this and future generations understand what brought Cambodia to that terrible point, they will have the weapon they need most – knowledge – to constantly be on guard against allowing such conditions to arise again in Cambodia.

Once the final disagreements are overcome that are now occurring within the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, we will come to another important event in our history: the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. If it succeeds, Cambodia will have taken important steps toward a more just society and one in which it will be difficult for unrest to arise. If the court fails, Cambodia will lose an invaluable opportunity to become a truly peaceful, reconciled and independent country.

Many non-governmental organizations, locally and internationally, have cooperated in order to disseminate information throughout Cambodia on new innovations, social education, environmental effects, and history. On such event, the Youth festival occurred

in March in Kampong Cham provinces. The Documentation Center of Cambodia joined the Youth Festival, which was sponsored by the International Republican Institute. Many of the students DC-Cam spoke with there showed interest in their own history, especially the history of Democratic Kampuchea.

The value that many Cambodian students are now placing on learning history is a good step forward. *The History of Democratic Kampuchea* is the first

such history text written by a young Cambodian, and it will be widely distributed throughout the country in the coming months. Studying it will help keep this notorious part of our history from disappearing before our eyes and light the way to a more peaceful and bright future.

Chamroeun Bann is the Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Special English Edition of Searching for the Truth.

LETTERS FROM YOUK CHHANG:

THE VALUE OF ARCHIVES: AN EXAMPLE FROM GUATEMALA

Guatemala is a Central American country whose area and population are about the same as those of Cambodia. And like Cambodia, it recently emerged from what was perhaps the most tragic period in its history: between 1960 and 1996, the nation experienced an internal armed conflict that left 150,000 people dead. Another 45,000 Guatemalans disappeared, and nearly 2 million people were displaced in their own country or sought refuge in other nations. Thousands of homes were torn apart and more than 600 villages were destroyed.

Most of the victims were poor indigenous people living in the countryside, and were union members and agricultural workers. But others opposed to repression in Guatemala were targeted as well, such as students, judges, attorneys, witnesses, and journalists. Most of them lived in the capital of Guatemala City. These men, women, and children were subjected to countless human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, torture, death threats and degradation.

The individual perpetrators of this conflict – the National Police – were a little more difficult to identify. Like Cambodia's Angkar, they maintained a high degree of secrecy. The National Police had two branches. One branch was visible: the police who wore uniforms. They were feared because they gassed, arrested and sometimes tortured demonstrators and others who disagreed with the government. But

most of the terror was spread by the Secret Police. They dressed like ordinary people, but formed death squads, particularly against the guerilla movements that were forming in the countryside. They secretly kidnapped, tortured, and executed people.

The Archives' "Discovery"

Like the Khmer Rouge, Guatemala's National Police kept extensive records on people who they perceived to be their enemies. But unlike the Khmer Rouge, who burned as many documents as they could when the National Front and Vietnamese were invading Cambodia, the National Police kept all of their documents, perhaps because they did not fear arrest or future prosecution.



The exhumed skeleton of a man from the countryside who disappeared in Guatemala (Courtesy of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation)

Few people outside the police knew about these records until May 5, 2005. On that day, a news report warned the public that there might be a huge explosion caused by the ordnance materials that had been in storage since 1997 at the National Police Academy in Guatemala City.

Guatemala's Human Rights Ombudsman became worried. He had learned that the explosion could destroy an area with a 1 kilometer radius that contained many homes, schools, businesses and a hospital.

On June 17, 2005, residents of the city woke up to the sound of an explosion in another part of the capital. About a ton of unused projectiles left from the internal armed conflict had blown up and produced a white cloud that many people assumed

was toxic, causing widespread fear. This gave the Ombudsman the opportunity to file an appeal to inspect the National Police Academy. And on July 5, his team entered the Academy.

Checking the buildings adjacent to the room where the explosives were stored, the Ombudsman's team found some documents

that caught their attention. As they moved from room to room in the complex, they found more and more documents. The team members were astonished: they didn't believe that the files actually existed (the police claimed that their files had either never existed or had been destroyed), much less that they were housed for more than 20 years in a place that was so accessible. They also found 3,500 explosive devices – such as dynamite, grenades, mortars, and the chemical potassium chloride.

Taking Action on the Archives

The Ombudsman's team was faced with a decision: they could close their eyes to what they

had found or take action. They chose the latter course and requested a judicial order to perform research on the documents and investigate the human rights violations recorded in them. Their request was granted a week later.

In the meantime, others began to take action to prevent the transfer of documents, including archives that were held in old National Police stations in the countryside. The Ombudsman moved quickly and requested that the Minister of the Interior transfer all the archives to the National Police Academy for their protection. The Minister agreed and the National Police Commissioner appointed police officers to guard the archives.

The Contents and Condition of the Archives

When I visited Guatemala in November 2006,

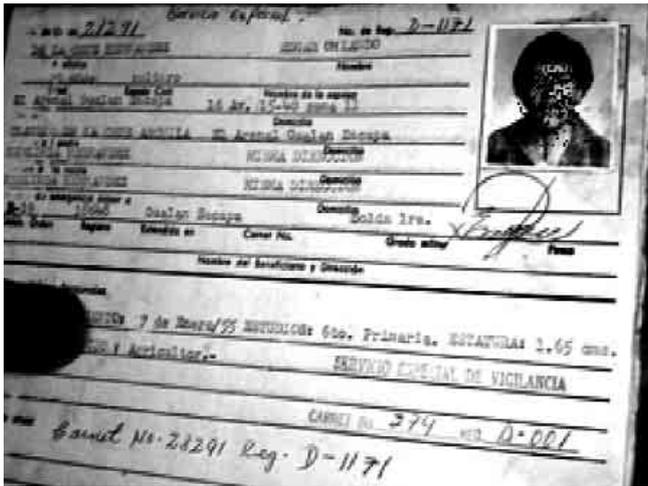


Piles of documents tied in hundles and stacked from floor to ceiling

I was taken to the Archives to see them for myself. The approximately 80 million documents (if laid end to end, they would be about 4.5 kilometers long) stored there were in desperate condition. They were tied in bundles and stacked from floor to ceiling. Many of the rooms had flooded,

destroying some documents, and the constant humidity had damaged many others. Still others had been eaten by insects or plants had germinated on them. Rats scurried among the rooms, and bats and birds flew in through the broken windows at night. Because of poor wiring, there was also the risk of an electrical fire. And no security measures were in place, although personnel were working on the archives.

The Ombudsman quickly implemented measures to protect the documents in these very difficult conditions. The nine women and two men who form the team to preserve the Archives as a



The arrest records of people accused of being communists. Guatemalan National Heritage are assisted by nearly 200 volunteers.

Perhaps 15 to 20% of the documents in the Archives are relevant to the internal armed conflict. The contents of the Archives are diverse; they include applications and paperwork for Guatemalan identification card, applications for drivers' licenses, arrest records for all types of crimes, files on political

crimes (for example, the arrest records of people accused of being communists) and fingerprint documentation.

Few of the documents were organized when they were found. However, the team discovered file cabinets marked "assassinations," "disappeared" and "homicides," and folders on victims of political murder. There were also hundreds of rolls of photography containing pictures of bodies, as well as lists of police informants, video tapes and computer disks.

Today, the files are organized by year, month, day, type, and issuing agent. All documentation is kept, whether it seems relevant to the conflict or not.

The team's work includes locating and preparing the relevant records (the oldest document in the Archives contains arrest warrants from 1885), cleaning them (removing objects such as rusty staples and mold), carrying out research on them, scanning the documents, and entering their contents into a database.



Cleaning the oldest document by removing object such as rusty staples and motel

In less than two years, the team has processed around 2,700,000 folios and cleaned, organized, and digitized nearly 3 million documents. With funding from the United Nations, and the Swedish and Dutch governments, it is following the “3-2-3” rule, putting documents in three formats (hard, scanned, and digitized copies), two locations (Guatemala and the National Archive of Switzerland), and two copies. This is the same procedure that DC-Cam follows. Our documents are in microfiche, microfilm, and scanned copies (we also plan to digitize them), and are stored in Cambodia and the United States, with copies available on CD and over the internet.

The Importance of the Archives

In the past 18 years, the Human Rights Office of Guatemala has received thousands of reports about violations allegedly committed by the State security forces. And some victims have come forward to tell their stories as well. But with the discovery and documentation of the Archives, for the first time, Guatemala is set to reveal and preserve its modern history, which was written by the perpetrators themselves. It can then begin moving toward both judicial and historical accountability.

For at least the next ten years, the team will continue the demanding and challenging task of preserving the documents, and is now taking steps to gain legal authority over the Archives. Once this is done, Guatemala can begin to face its past and reconstruct its recent history. This will help the country to begin building a more egalitarian society and to advance justice.

They have a saying in

Guatemala about the people who disappeared during the country’s internal conflict: Their lives were denied, and now even their deaths are being denied. But this is about to change. With the opening of these Archives, thousands of families have new hope that they will discover the fate of their relatives in the Archives, breaking the silence at last. As in Cambodia, ordinary people can search for their lost loved ones in the Archives, lawyers can use them to advance justice, scholars can conduct research there, and future generations can find in the Archives reasons to work to improve their society.

*Youk Chhang is editor-in-chief and publisher of **Searching for the Truth**.*



The preservation and documentation of the Archives

CHAM MUSLIMS' CONCERNS ABOUT THE KHMER ROUGE TRIBUNAL

Farina So and Lisabeth Meyers

A bus pulls up in front of two large and freshly constructed buildings that dominate an otherwise sparse landscape. Thirty-three men clad in uniform white T-shirts and *kufis* emerge one by one from the bus into the early morning sun. They are accompanied by a single woman dressed in a traditional headscarf. They are leaders of the Cham Muslim community of Cambodia and have come from 12 cities and provinces, traveling from 10 to over 300 kilometers to reach Phnom Penh.

The meeting is part of the Documentation Center of Cambodia's (DC-Cam) effort to bring people to the site of the ECCC, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. On these tours, Cambodians have the opportunity to see the court that will attempt to bring leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime to justice, nearly three decades after the genocide.

Imam Srok (a district Islamic religious leader) from Kratie province was quite moved by the experience and expressed his gratitude to DC-Cam for enabling him to see the reality of the court. "I am very happy to attend the tour and will share [my experience] with my neighbors. Now I know what is going on," he said.

The ECCC and DC-Cam

The ECCC is a joint effort between Cambodia and the United Nations, involving the participation of both Cambodian and international judges and other crucial staff. The court officially commenced operations in February 2006 with the mandate to seek justice for the crimes committed during Democratic Kampuchea and to serve as a role model for court procedure in Cambodia.

There will be two levels of court: the Trial

Chamber and the Supreme Court Chamber. In the Trial Chamber, there will be five judges: three Cambodian and two international judges. In the Supreme Court Chamber there will be seven judges: four Cambodian and three international. The Trial Chamber decides the verdict, while the Supreme Court will handle appeals. It is up to two investigating judges to decide whom to prosecute.

For the past year, DC-Cam has brought thousands of Cambodians to see the site of the future court, as well as two other historical sites: the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and the Choeung Ek Killing Fields Memorial. The Center has also arranged meetings with Parliamentarian Moanh Saphan to explain the legal aspects of the Khmer Rouge Law. DC-Cam hopes that the people who visit the future courtroom will relate their experiences to their local communities, thereby involving the entire country in the process. Youk Chhang, DC-Cam's director, sees these trips as crucial because they can ensure that Cambodians are part of the justice process and provide a forum for their voices to be heard. He believes that by involving large numbers of people, the court will be more transparent.

The visit was also part of DC-Cam's Cham Oral History Project, which seeks to preserve an oral record of Cham experiences during the genocide. The project was launched in 2005 as part of the Center's Living Documents Project and has since become its own project. As there has been little written documentation of the killings of Chams during Democratic Kampuchea, these recollections and testimonies may be essential for the Tribunal.

In late 2006, DC-Cam held two public forums

on “Justice and Reconciliation in the Cham Muslim community” in Kampot and Pursat provinces. Approximately 200 people were invited, including provincial Islamic religious leaders, *hakims*, *tuans* and villagers. Through these forums, DC-Cam hoped to measure Muslims’ expectations of justice for the Tribunal. The participants enthusiastically expressed their opinions, requesting a truth commission for reconciliation with former lower-level Khmer Rouge perpetrators.

Part of the Oral History Project has also involved extensive work with Cham Muslim women, seeking to gain their unique perspective of genocide. Future plans include launching a Cham quarterly magazine and website, as well as distributing a survey in an effort to ascertain how many Chams died during the genocide.

All Cambodians – both victims and perpetrators –suffered during Democratic Kampuchea, regardless of their ethnic, religious or social status. However, there is evidence to suggest that the Khmer Rouge persecuted the Cham Muslims on religious and ethnic grounds. DC-Cam scholar Osman Ysa has posited that Chams were killed a rate nearly double to triple that of the general Cambodian population during the Democratic Kampuchea regime (*Oukabah: Justice for the Cham Muslims under Democratic Kampuchea*, DC-Cam, 2002).

Visiting the ECCC

The Cham Muslim leaders arrived in Phnom Penh in the evening of Monday, January 15 and stayed at a guesthouse near Phnom Penh’s international Mosque. They were given copies of *Searching for the Truth* and t-shirts with Khmer slogans about the ECCC, contributed by staff of DC-Cam.

The leaders prayed together the following morning and set out on the hour-long trip to the ECCC, which lies on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. They were accompanied by journalists and a cameraman to document the trip.

At the ECCC, the Cham leaders were given an informational packet and poster about the court. They were taken on an hour-long tour of the ECCC buildings, spending a large part of the tour in the future courtroom, where they learned about the trial and posed questions to Reach Sambath, an ECCC press officer. They were also taken to see the statue of Ta Dambang Dek, who brings good luck and protection to the ECCC.

After the tour, the leaders were able to meet with the co-prosecutors, a rare opportunity that has not been given to participants on past visits. The Chams gathered around a long conference table where Prosecutors Chea Leang of Cambodia and Robert Petit of Canada introduced themselves and responded to a number of questions. Following the meeting, the group posed for another round of pictures before getting back on the bus.

Once back in Phnom Penh, the leaders met with Farina So, the Oral History Project leader, and Youk Chhang. Ms. So showed them initial copies of a survey she had created which asks participants to describe the deaths of family members during the Khmer Rouge regime. Mr. Chhang told them more about the ECCC’s progress and asked them to appoint an individual they believed would best be able to share what he had learned about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal with the larger Muslim community. This representative would be given the responsibility and privilege of attending the trial later this year and ensuring that the Cham Muslim community remains well informed of the proceedings. DC-Cam also announced its intentions to organize two additional meetings for Cham Muslim leaders not present on this tour.

Speaking on the visit, Reach Sambath said, “It shows a great force to push the ECCC forward. They, as well as other minority groups, are always welcome to visit the ECCC buildings. I hope that they will share what they have seen and learned

with their neighbors.”

Concerns and Reactions

While meeting with the press officer and co-prosecutors, the Cham leaders took the opportunity to voice numerous concerns. Questions were raised regarding the timing and lengthy delay of the trial, and witness and victim protection. However, it appeared that the main concern of the group was the category of individuals who would be prosecuted. The language of the Tribunal states that it will bring to trial only senior leaders deemed most accountable, and many Cham Muslim leaders were concerned that low- and middle-level cadres would escape trial, despite having personally committed numerous crimes and murders.

“Regarding Article 2 [of the Khmer Rouge Law, which is described in the ECCC’s information packet], if all the top leaders who are accused die of natural causes, will other middle or lower cadres be tried instead? asked Haji Sofiyon from Battambang.

Aly Osman, from Takeo, asked a similar question: “Article 2 of the Khmer Rouge Law states that ‘...senior leaders and those who are most responsible for the crimes will be put on trial...’ but some Khmer

Rouge cadres committed crimes, so how will the court decide this case?” Mr. Aly also added his concerns of living side by side in his village with many known perpetrators.

Asked to comment about this concern, DC-Cam Public Affairs Officer Dacil Keo said: “This is an extremely important concern because it shows that legal justice by trying top Khmer Rouge leaders is not enough. Something must be done at the village and commune levels to settle tensions that exist between victims of the genocide and perpetrators of the genocide who live side by side.”

Despite these concerns, the Cham leaders reacted positively to the experience, glad to know a trial would one day occur and only hoping that the process could be hastened. Okhna Khnuor Keteam of Kampong Chhnang remained silent for most of the tour. Finally speaking he said, “I no longer wonder or have any questions...but my neighbors want to see justice done very soon.”

Farina So is team leader of the Oral History Project and is working on the Cham magazine.

KHMER ROUGE HISTORY AVAILABLE ON AIR

DC-Cam has produced a radio program focused on readings from its magazine *Searching for the Truth* and other books published by DC-Cam. Our program can be heard on:

- ◆ FM 102 MHz of the Women’s Media Center, Phnom Penh, every Wednesday and Thursday from 7:30 to 7:45 p.m.
- ◆ FM 93.25 MHz, Kampot, daily from 7:00 to 7:30 a.m. and 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ FM 99 MHz, Preah Vihear, daily from 7:00 to 7:30 a.m. and 6:30 to 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ FM 103.25 MHz, Battambang, daily from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Soon DC-Cam will also extend its radio program to Siem Reap. We anticipate that the program will contribute to the enlargement of people’s understanding on Khmer Rouge history and the prevention of the repetition of such a regime.

For comments or questions on our programming, please contact Sin Sothida and Chheng Sothearin at P.O. Box 1110, Phnom Penh or 023 211 875.

KONG NAY: VETERAN LONG-NECK GUITAR PLAYER AND SINGER

Sopha Ly

On the veranda in front of his small house was a man in sunglasses. He was sleeping with his head resting on his arm. I called out to him, "Uncle Nay!" When he heard my voice, he rose and welcomed me warmly. Despite being sightless, he came toward me.

Kong Nay has worked hard to gain fame as a player of the chapei dong veng (a Cambodian stringed instrument with a long neck, similar to a mandolin or guitar). He was awarded first prize in a chapei dong veng competition in 1991. Later, Prime Minister Hun Sen dubbed him "the respected elderly man Kong Nay."

Kong Nay was born in 1945 in Svay Torng sub-district, Kampong Trach district, Kampot province. He was the fifth of eleven children in a middle-class farming family. At the age of four, he contracted smallpox, which left scars all over his body and the disease spread to his eyes, causing him to go blind.

As a child, Kong Nay thought everybody in the world was sightless like him. When he was seven years old, he asked his mother why either she or one of his siblings always led him by the hand while walking. It was then that he realized that he was disabled.

Desire and Guitar

Unlike other children, Kong Nay did not go to school. One day when he was seven, a nearby village hired chapei players to perform at a ceremony. Kong Nay heard the music and was immediately enthralled and begged his mother to bring him to the ceremony.

He became very interested in playing the chapei, thinking he could earn income to support himself as a musician. He first practiced singing, never giving up on his dream. He then asked his parents for permission to stay in a Buddhist temple

where he could learn poetry from the chief monk Att Loeung. Eventually, with the guidance of Att Loeung, Kong Nay could recite the entire long poem "Rabeuk Ta Chou Chouk."

Every year during the Pchum Ban festival, the elderly men in the village invited Kong Nay to chant this poem, paying him from ten to fifty cents (they tore a riel note in two in order to have fifty cents). Sometimes he got a one riel note for his chanting. At the age of thirteen, Kong Nay tried to make his voice resemble the sound of the long-neck guitar. He did this to entertain the villagers when they took a break from working in the fields. Kong Nay received a little money from the farmers for his efforts. Because it was very difficult to sing without accompaniment, he decided to ask his parents to buy one for him. They bought a chapei from an elderly man in a nearby village for 200 riel. At first, he had his uncle play the guitar for him. Kong Nay listened carefully and sang along, making his voice mimic the chapei's sound and rhythm. His natural aptitude and hard work helped him to learn. When he was able to play the chapei himself, his first song was "Phat Cheay."

Kong Nay's mother became seriously ill when he was 14. He was very close to his mother, and she could not imagine what his life would be like without her. When his father was away from home, Kong Nay would stay with her. During these times, she often gave him advice, which he can still remember. His mother's last words to him were, "My son, I am sure I cannot endure this pain any longer. I cannot look after you anymore. My health becomes better sometimes and worse sometimes. You are sightless, so you will never get married. No woman will consider your proposal. When I die, if

your father marries another woman, you just move out. Do not live with your father, for his new wife will treat you badly. You can stay at Svay Chrum temple with the chief monk Att Leang.”

Hearing his mother’s last words, he cried, thinking that his destiny had been set for hell. He thought no woman would marry a blind man, so he would have a lonely life. Today, Kong Nay still thinks about his beloved mother. He wishes she were alive and could see that he has a happy family. He thinks that his mother would be very glad to see his family.

Kong Nay’s father was a considerate man. He knew that bringing another woman to his house could cause trouble for his children, so he decided to stay a widower.

When Kong Nay was 15 years old, he could play and sing *Phat Cheay Klay*, *Sampoang*, *Nokoreach*, and *Bompe*. He could not sing as well as the seasoned *chapei* players and still had difficulties with rhyming (many of his songs are improvisational). When he discussed his weaknesses with his Uncle Kong Tith, his uncle suggested that Kong Nay read as much poetry as possible, and learn to make good rhymes for his couplets. Kong Nay asked his uncle to help him buy a book of poetry. Kong Tith bought him *Sovann Vong* and *Phkar Roam Toek Roam*, and read them to Kong Nay. Kong Nay listened and tried to catch every word of the poems. Eventually, he could remember all of the poems and produce couplets that rhymed well.

Professional Life

Kong Nay’s fame soon spread from village to village by word of mouth. Villagers in Kampong Trach invited him to sing at the Kartin, Dalean and other ceremonies. On these occasions, he sang “Sovann Vong.” Later on, his fame spread across the province. People in Chhouk, Kampong Trach, Angkor Chey and Banteay Meas all knew him. People further away also heard his name and invited him to sing at their ceremonies. However, it was difficult for him to concentrate during his performances because he was afraid that his mother would die before he

was able to return home. But the income from his performances was enough to pay the doctor bills for his mother’s treatment. Two years later, his mother passed away.

A year after his mother’s funeral, Kong Nay became even more famous. People from different provinces such as Kampot invited him to sing. He also entered a competition which required him to sing back and forth with a one-eyed man named Phirom Chea. This call-and-response style required that the two men answer each other continuously in rhyming couplets. If one of them could not respond in time, he would lose. There was another aspect to the competition: the loser had to listen to the winner’s teasing song at the end of the match. Kong Nay recalled their competition, which began when Phirom Chea sang to him: “Two animals of the same name have three heads and nine legs.” Kong Nay replied, “An [land] elephant has four legs. A hippopotamus [water elephant] has four legs. A mango named Elephant Head lies in a large cup-like dish. The three elephants have three heads and nine legs (including the pedestal of the cup-like dish).” Then Kong Nay asked Phirom Chea, “How many groups of people like listening to long-neck guitar music?” Phirom Chea did not know the answer, which was eight groups: children, adults, laymen, monks, single men, single women, widows, widowers, and the two of us. He then made Phirom Chea sing “Nokoreach.”

As his career progressed, Kong Nay traveled to Kirivong, Tonloap, Chao Kieu in Takeo and Kampot provinces, and some parts of the Kampuchea Krom (formerly, this was Cambodian territory, but the French colonialists ceded it to southern Vietnam).

Married Life

Kong Nay believes that to be born as a human, one must fall in love and settle down with his or her family, and that it is a rule of nature that humans must have love. Even though Kong Nay had not seen a girl since he was four years old, he could visualize a girl’s appearance and personality by hearing other people’s descriptions of her.

Kong Nay fell in love with a girl named Hem Yen from Takhvav village. He asked his cousin for help in asking for the girl's hand for marriage. In this way, Kong Nay could know how she felt before he officially informed her parents. To get the girl he loved, Kong Nay did everything his cousin told him to do. But his cousin had planned to propose the girl himself, not for Kong Nay. Kong Nay said that, "I begged him to find out how the girl felt. He said I must take my long-neck guitar and sing to her as a way of proposing to the girl. In fact, he had officially met the girl's parents. Then I realized that he lied to me."

Later on, Kong Nay turned his heart to Tat Chen, a girl from Svay Tong. He knew she was attracted to him by her voice. Kong Nay still remembers that he started falling in love with her on the eighth day of the waxing moon in the third month of the lunar calendar. On that day Tat Chen visited his older sister's house, which was a little north of Kong Nay's house. Whenever Tat Chen walked by Kong Nay's house, she greeted him warmly and asked him a few caring questions. Her friendly and outgoing personality and her sweet voice made Kong Nay remember her. He fell deeply in love with her and vowed that he would propose to Tat Chen himself.

On the thirteenth day of the waxing moon in the third month of the lunar calendar, 1963, he confessed his love to the girl. Kong Nay asked, "I would like to tell you frankly that I love you. I want you to be my wife. What do you think? If you agree, please say yes. If you do not agree, just let me know, and I will end it here and will not let others know." Tat Chen said yes.

Tat Chen remembered, "When my husband asked me how I felt, I did not take time to consider. I did not hesitate to say 'yes.'" In fact, Tat Chen's interest in Kong Nay began on the day Kong Nay sang and played the *chapei* at her house on the Harvest Ceremony. When she overheard her father and brothers discussing inviting Kong Nay to sing at the ceremony, Tat Chen wanted to see Kong Nay, and went to his house to invite him. In fact, Kong Nay had an appointment to sing at another ceremony, but decided to leave it after he had sung for half an hour. Because he loved Tat Chen, he rushed to her house. He also spent a night there at the request of Tat Chen's father.



Kong Nay with his wife in 2000

Tat Chen also remembered the first time she saw Kong Nay. He was just a little boy, and was grabbing his mother's blouse and hopping like a frog, she recalled. She said sometimes she saw Kong Nay's siblings holding his hand and playing with him. She never talked to Kong Nay. She said she felt no sense of love toward Kong Nay, but had a little compassion for him because he was blind. She wondered who would ever marry such a disabled boy.

Next Kong Nay asked his father to go to Tat Chen's house to request that the couple become engaged. Kong Nay's father was reluctant to go, however, because he thought that Tan Chen's family would surely refuse. Kong Nay's father was right. Tat Chen's family and relatives were adamant, saying that she could not marry a disabled man. But Kong Nay's aunts and uncles supported him, and eventually Tat Chen's parents were convinced.

Even though he had the consent of her parents, Kong Nay had to bear the scornful words of Tat

Chen's other admirers. One of her admirers threatened Kong Nay, saying, "You love Chen, right? Are you afraid of being killed?" Death was not a frightening thing to Kong Nay. He simply replied, "I do not fear death. In my previous life, I must have done lots of evil things; that is why I am blind. In this life, I would never take revenge if you attempted to kill me. I bet you 500 riel that she would never accept you." Kong Nay continued talking to the man. Having listened to Kong Nay's reasoning, the man changed his attitude and apologized to Kong Nay for his disrespectful words. Tat Chen's second admirer said, "Even the hard metal, steel, can be melted. Kong Nay is nothing."

Because Kong Nay had received threats, his and Tat Chen's relatives were worried about his safety. They asked help from Kong Nay's uncle and village-based militiamen to ensure that nobody caused trouble and spoiled the occasion. The wedding took place on the thirteenth day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar. Kong Nay was responsible paying all the wedding expenses. Tat Chen's relatives thought that she would have to work hard to earn money after her marriage, but as a good husband, Kong Nay did not want his wife to face the difficulty of earning income.

Kong Nay made a lot of money from singing and playing the *chapei*. He saved money until he had enough to buy a 6-hectare plot of land and a tile-roof house.

Life during the Lon Nol Regime

After the March 18, 1970 coup d'état that overthrew King Norodom Sihanouk, Kampong Trach district was controlled by Lon Nol soldiers. At that time, people who were loyal to the King ran into the forest, where they joined the revolutionary army of the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge used Sihanouk's name to persuade people to join them. They said, "Now we must gather forces to fight against Lon Nol and the Americans. We must bring our King back to power." Convinced by this propaganda, farmers of all ages volunteered to serve as Khmer Rouge soldiers in hopes of returning the King to

power.

By 1972, the country was in turmoil. People living on the outskirts of the cities were suffering as a result of battles between Lon Nol and Khmer Rouge soldiers. Some people had to abandon their houses and move out, seeking a secure place. Kong Nay's family escaped to the liberated zone, to Samnang village, Khcheay sub-district, Banteay Meas district, Kampot province. They spent three years there.

One day, the Khmer Rouge advised Kong Nay that he should play his long-neck guitar, and sing songs whose lyrics described the suffering of farmers under the feudalists' suppression. Some of the songs compared people's standard of living during the previous regime and under the Khmer Rouge. Others were about Vietnamese and American soldiers (the Khmer Rouge called them the Thieu Ky giant and American giant). Still others were about the fines, collection of funds, levies, manual trades and the oppression by the Americans and Vietnamese, who fought and dropped B-52 bombs, causing mass evacuations and death.

Life during Democratic Kampuchea

After April 17, 1975, the whole country was under the control of the revolutionary army. People throughout the country stood happily, cheering and welcoming the Khmer Rouge's triumph. They thought that there would be no more war. This pleasant situation lasted for a few hours; then it turned to become misery. The revolutionary army shouted into microphones, telling people to leave their homes so it would be easy for them to sweep out the enemy. The country was given a new name: "Democratic Kampuchea." The Khmer Rouge then began investigating the biographies of former soldiers, teachers, capitalists, and officers of the Khmer Republic (Lon Nol) regime. People who came from these backgrounds were killed. Anyone rebelled was regarded as the enemy. In Kampot province, the Khmer Rouge declared, "From now on, if anyone betrays Angkar [the "organization, a name for the Communist Party of Kampuchea], Angkar will execute him or her. Those whose relatives are former Lon

Nol officers will be executed.” Kong Nay knew that one day the Khmer Rouge would kill him if he tried to escape.

In 1975, Kong Nay, his wife and their seven children returned to live in Damnak Kantuot. In 1976 the Khmer Rouge began assigning people to break the piles of earth created by termites and to carry earth to fill the rice fields. During work breaks, Kong Nay was ordered to sing and play his *chapei* to entertain the farmers. The music lasted for 5 to 10 minutes; then a child showed him the way back.

One day Voeun, the unit chief, told Kong Nay at a meeting, “From now on, there should be no more entertainment for farmers in the fields. It should be only in Phnom Penh. We are here to build a strong country.” Kong Nay had to stop playing. He was moved to a vegetable unit and assigned to harvest corn and beans.

After the cooperative system and collective eating were established, Kong Nay realized that the Khmer Rouge had executed people. Families were told, “At the new villages, there is plenty of food supply that is provided individually. You can eat everything you like such as boiled chicken, yams, sugar canes, and so on. You can simply grow and eat your own food.” Kong Nay remembered two district chiefs, Ta Sim and Ta Suos. They once came to propagandize in his village. One of his close friends whispered to Kong Nay, “Do not wonder about what they say. Going to the new villages means taking people to be killed.” Not long after that, the Khmer Rouge militiamen came to distribute the clothes that had been worn by those who were evacuated and were now dead. But instead of telling the truth, the Khmer Rouge militiamen told people that the clothes were just plunder.

In 1977, Kong Nay was evacuated to his home village. There he was assigned to make ropes that were used to tie oxen. It was a very difficult work for Kong Nay, so he begged the unit chief to reassign him to other work. So, the unit chief ordered him to make pails for carrying earth. This was even more difficult for Kong Nay because he

was blind and had never known what earth moving buckets or bamboo looked like. The unit chief said, “If you are willing to do it, you can accomplish any job.” But Kong Nay refused, saying that he could not make the buckets, even though he felt his refusal would mean that he would be killed. Kong Nay still had two other choices: to work a pump at the manual craft house, which made axes and cutters, or making ropes from sugar palm leaves. If Kong Nay did not take either of these jobs, he would be killed. Thinking that the latter choice was better, he decided to take it.

During Democratic Kampuchea, if someone broke even a rice seedling, miss some rice stalks while harvesting, or broke a utensil, he or she would be regarded as an enemy who intended to destroy the revolution. Kong Nay knew that he was in danger, so he asked his unit chief for a favor in advance, in case he made any slight mistake while making rope from sugar palm leaves. The unit chief agreed to grant him a favor, thinking that he was a blind man. In one day, Kong Nay had to finish pounding 20 branches of sugar palm. Sometimes Kong Nay could not complete the assigned amount because some branches were too hard to break. Every time Kong Nay fell behind, he was blamed. His unit chief accusingly said, “This man must have a negative consciousness.” Luckily, Kong Nay received only blame, no torture. He explained his difficulty in doing the job to the unit chief. Some elderly men also supported him and helped him explain.

Despite his physical disability, Kong Nay had to work as hard as other people, but he was provided the same amount of food that patients received—a scoop of porridge—because the Khmer Rouge thought that a disabled man could not work as much as ordinary people. When mealtime came, Kong Nay’s child held his hand, leading him to the collective dining hall where Kong Nay had to eat with the small children.

Working in a women’s unit, Kong Nay’s wife was assigned to work in a remote area. Two of their children were sent to children’s units to cut and

collect water plants that were used as fertilizer, and to dig and carry alluvial soil for fertilizer. Kong Nay stayed home and looked after their other five children.

Disabled Men become Khmer Rouge Targets

During 1977-1978 the internal situation became worse. Suspicion between the high-ranking cadres and the lower-level cadres bred distrust. Some Communist Party of Kampuchea cadres were arrested and killed. Because of such suspicions within the party, there was a change of management. The Khmer Rouge cadres in charge of the Northwest Zone were killed and replaced by cadres from the Southwest Zone; these cadres treated people cruelly and killed many people.

Kong Nay was under Angkar's observation because his younger brother, Kong Len, had escaped from Stoeung Hao. He was accused of being a member of the CIA, arrested and imprisoned. After he was tortured for three months, Kong Nay's brother and five other prisoners were put in an ox-cart, taken to Veal Vong (a French airport) and killed there. Kong Nay's family was then categorized as "candidate farmers." His neighbors, who used to be friendly to him, dared not talk to him because his family was the enemy. Kong Nay did not feel angry with them, thinking that they behaved this way because they were afraid of Angkar. Kong Nay was disappointed with the unit and district chiefs, who were very mean to his family. After the regime ended, only Kong Nay and one of his sisters survived. Now she is living in Kampot province.

On January 1, 1979, the unit chief named Long told Kong Nay to prepare himself to depart the next day. Long warned Kong Nay not to spread this news to anybody. Because Kong Nay was still doubtful, he asked Long if there were other people going with him. Long told Kong Nay that the people leaving were the disabled, women who had just delivered babies, and elderly people. Long added that the rest of the people had to harvest rice. On hearing this, Kong Nay knew that he was going to die. At 3 p.m. on the following day, while his group was being gathered, the unit chief called Kong Nay.

Kong Nay, his wife, and their five children went with the unit chief. After traveling on foot for three hours, they took a lunch break at Thkoeu village. While walking, Kong Nay's child's legs were cut by spikes that had been laid under the earth. The child could not walk. Kong Nay begged the unit chief to postpone their departure. Fortunately, the unit chief agreed.

On January 7, 1979, while the unit chief was preparing to leave the village, the sounds of gunfire



could be heard, and the farmers who were harvesting rice quickly left the fields. The Khmer Rouge's plan to kill disabled and elderly people failed. The Khmer Rouge tried to gather up as many people as they could. While people were congregating at Daung village, the Khmer Rouge intended to bomb and kill them. Before the Khmer Rouge could kill any of them, the soldiers of United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea (UFNSK) arrived and the

Khmer Rouge ran away.

The people made their way back to their home villages. Kong Nay and his family also returned to their home village, but their house had disappeared because the Khmer Rouge pulled it down and used the wood to build the collective dining hall and shelters for soldiers.

New Life under the Roof of the Old House

Kong Nay's wife collected pieces of wood to



build a temporary hut for the family. Again, Kong Nay earned his income from singing and playing. During the 1979 rainy season when farmers were busy transplanting rice, there were few ceremonies in the village. Kong Nay and his cousin traveled for several days by ox cart to such remote areas as Prey Moan and Veal Renh. There, people paid Kong Nay in rice, and his performances earned enough to support his family.

At Veal Renh, a villager promised to pay him 40 kilograms of rice for his performance. After Kong Nay finished, he got only 12 kilograms because that villager secretly escaped. Kong Nay could do nothing, but took the rice back home. While Kong Nay was on his way back home, a villager invited him to play for a ceremony, promising to pay Kong Nay 12 kilograms of rice. Like the previous time, Kong Nay was cheated. He was paid less than the promised amount, but he could not complain because that villager had run away. Thus, from the two unfortunate performances, he had only 20 kilograms of rice to bring home.

When the period of Vosar (when Buddhist monks must stay in the monastery and observe strict rules) ended, Kong Nay and his 9 year-old child traveled to Kampuchea Krom, hoping to earn money there. They walked for several hours before they arrived at Ha Tieng market at about 9 a.m. They had lunch near the market, then took a motor-taxi to Thlok pagoda in Kramuon Sa province. The chief monk invited Kong Nay to sing at the Vosar closing ceremony. The performance lasted two hours, and Kong Nay was paid 1,000 Thieu Ky Dong (500 Thieu Ky Dong equal 1 Riel). Then Kong Nay traveled to Krapeu village for another performance from which he earned 50 Dong. In addition, Kong Nay was invited to sing at different houses. Having been in Kampuchea Krom for two weeks, Kong Nay saved a full basket of rice and 400 Dong. Three months later, he returned to Kampuchea Krom. This time, he earned 300 Dong for his performance. Luckily, he won a lottery for 700 Dong, so he was able to bring 1,000 Dong home. The money and rice he was paid were enough to support his family for the planting and harvest seasons. By the time the harvest season finished, Kong Nay had more business opportunities because a many people held ceremonies during their leisure time.

In 1983 a long-neck guitar competition was held in a theatre in Kampong Trach district. Kong Nay was one of the contestants, and was awarded the first prize.

On January 7, 1984, Kong Nay was invited to

sing at the fifth anniversary of the day of victory. His Excellency Samdech Hun Sen, and his Excellency Khun Ly, minister of transportation, presented awards at the ceremony. A year after this occasion, his Excellency Khun Ly invited Kong Nay to sing at his residence in Phnom Penh. When Mr. Meas Samnang passed away, Kong Nay was also invited to sing for the funeral. Kong Nay was offered a small house if he agreed to move to Phnom Penh, but he decided to continue living in his home village because he was still afraid of the political instability that plagued Cambodia during this period.

In 1987, there was a long-neck guitar contest in Kampot province. Players from Banteay Meas, Angkor Chey, and Kampong Trach districts entered. Kong Nay was awarded the first prize. A candidate from Banteay Meas came in second, and a man from Angkor Chey was third.

In 1991 Cambodia achieved peace after the Geneva agreement was signed, and King Norodom Sihanouk returned to his motherland. In the same year, in Phnom Penh, two contests were held during the annual water festival: *Ayay* (a call-and-response performance) and a *chapei* performance near the royal palace. The governor of Kampot province sent Kong Nay to the contest, where Mr. Prach Chhuon, a singer working for the Ministry of Propaganda and Culture, was a committee member. Kong Nay earned the first prize.

In April 1992, Kong Nay was invited to work at the Department of Long-Neck Guitars based in the Ministry of Culture, and was offered a plot of land in a slum area where he could build a house. Life in the city without a regular salary was quite hard for him. His two daughters had to sell porridge and boiled corn to earn money to support the whole family. A year later, Kong Nay got 40,000 Riel as a monthly salary.

In 1997, Kong Nay was invited to sing in a theatre in Paris, France. This performance was sponsored by the French Ministry of Culture and lasted for 21 days. In the same year, Kong Nay was invited to sing in Thailand and in 1998, in Vietnam.

In 1999, he went to Nigeria for two nights and Belgium for another two nights. Now Kong Nay is retired with a 107,000 riel retirement pension. In addition, he was given additional money from his Excellency Samdech Hun Sen, Oknha Sim Vanna, his Excellency Muth Khieu, and the Amatak organization for Khmer Arts. Kong Nay's younger son, Kong Boran, has followed his footsteps to becoming a *chpei* player. Boran is supported by the Amatak organization. Kong Nay hopes that in the future, his son will replace him.

When recalling the Khmer Rouge regime, Kong Nay is still angry at the Khmer Rouge. During this regime, Kong Nay's innocent younger brother was imprisoned, tortured and killed. Most of Cambodia's singers and long-neck guitar players were also killed. For instance, well known players Ta Chang Kom Prambey (8 canine-tooth grandfather), Ta Pou Thao Day (axe grandfather), Smean Kin, Chen Day Kare, Smean Chheang, Smean Tean, and Acha Try were all killed during the regime.

Even though Kong Nay has not witnessed the negotiations to establish the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and the court premises, he has followed the news broadcasts about the Tribunal. He looks forward to listening to the process of bringing the Khmer Rouge to justice, which is a joint effort of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the international community. Kong Nay is not sure whether the Tribunal will go smoothly because the duration of the Tribunal will be short and the trials have been delayed for so long. He has many questions about punishment and reparation.

But Kong Nay thinks that the Khmer Rouge Tribunal will have two main benefits. First, the younger generation will learn that the cruel murderers must be punished by law. Second, the relatives of the dead victims will feel relieved and peaceful when they find justice through the Tribunal.

Sophal Ly is a team leader of Searching for the Truth.

ESCAPE TO THAILAND ENDS IN S-21

Dany Long

Bot Trang village is in Samrong sub-district, Serey Sophorn district, Banteay Meanchey province, a 25 kilometer drive from the provincial capital. According to villagers, during 1976, 20 Bot Trang residents tried to escape to Thailand – they feared they were going to be arrested and killed by Angkar.

The names of 11 of the 20 appear on the Tuol Sleng Prison (S-21) execution list. The biographies of those villagers, which were written when the men entered the prison, show that one of them was arrested along the border between Cambodia and Thailand, while the rest were caught at O Chreou district on November 23, 1976. DC-Cam's Promoting Accountability Team interviewed relatives of the 11 prisoners.

1. Thang Lai, Lon Nol soldier

Thang Lai was the second son of the 75 year-old Yin Le of Thmenh Trei village (now Bot Trang village). Yin Le stated that Thang Lai would be 50 years old if he were still alive. He married a woman named Prach from his village. The couple earned their living by farming. In early 1975, Thang Lai decided to join Lon Nol's army in Sisophon district.

In 1976, Thang Lai returned to his home village to prepare for an escape to Thailand because he was afraid that the Khmer Rouge cooperative chief was going to arrest him. Thang Lai and several other Bot Trang villagers who had also been Lon Nol soldiers and government workers planned to flee together. Yin Le could remember only a few of their names: Sabb, the Samrong sub-district chief in

Serey Sophorn district; Ham, a 50-house sub-district chief; and Chann Tha, a customs officer.

In 1980, Yin Le also left the village and went to the Cambodia-Thailand border, where she met her uncle Thai. Her uncle had lived in Thailand before the Khmer Rouge regime. Her uncle told Yin Le about Thang Lai. In 1976 he came to Thai's home and stayed with him temporarily. Thang Lai also helped Thai to tile the roof of his house. Later on, Chann Tha, who had taken the risk of escaping to Thailand with Thang Lai, made a complaint that the Thai police had illegally seized his property. The complaint made the Thai police angry with him, so they arrested Chann Tha and the rest of the Khmer refugees, and sent them back to Cambodia. After that, Thang Lai disappeared.

2. Yin Pi, Lon Nol soldier

3. Siev Trob, farmer

4. Khveng Samruot

5. Kuy Sam-at

All four of these men were born in Bot Trang village. They were captured in O-Chreou district. Sixty three year-old Nhib Chhoeun, who lives in Bot Trang village, said that Yin Pi was her first husband. His parents died before the Khmer Rouge regime. They married in late 1960 and earned a living by farming. They had two sons and a daughter. During the Khmer Republic regime, Yin Pi decided to join the army. Not long after that, Nhib Chhoeun and Yin Pi got divorced. Then Yin Pi married a woman named Ry and Nhib Chhoeun married Siev Trob, who was from the same village. Thus, Nhib Chhoeun lost two husbands to the Khmer Rouge.

Fifty seven year-old Phong Phich said that Siev Trob is her older brother. She stated that he first married Horm Chhao, a woman from Chang Ha village. They had two sons. Three years after their



Yin Le, 75

divorce, he married Nhib Chhoeun.



Nhib Chhoeun, 63

Nhib Chhoeun added that Yin Pi, Siev Trob, Kuy Sam-at (her nephew), Khveng Samruot (her cousin), and several other villagers gathered and escaped to Thailand in 1976. Siev Trob was neither a soldier nor a govern-

ment worker for the Lon Nol regime, but he became very frightened after he had seen the Khmer Rouge arresting and killing people. When he was approached by the other men to escape to Thailand, he did not hesitate.

In 1979, Nhib Chhoeun received news about the villagers in Thailand. She heard that the Thai police used a trick to make the refugees return to Cambodia. The Thai police lied to them, saying they were taking the men to another location to have identity cards made. But in fact, the Thai police intended to gather the refugees and send them back to Cambodia.

6. Chhneang Ham, 50-house sub-district chief

7. Chhneang Hoeun, Lon Nol soldier

Both Chhneang Ham and Chhneang Hoeung were born in Bot Trang. Like the others, they were detained in O Chreou district in 1976. Interviewee Chhneang Horm stated that Chhneang Ham was his father and Chhneang Hoeung was his older brother. Chhneang Horm said that the two men had fled to Thailand with several villagers because his father had been a 50-house chief of Bot Trang village during the Khmer Republic. In fear of being arrested, his father took his brother and risked escaping to Thailand. After that day, there was no word of them again.

8. Brok Yim, Lon Nol soldier

Seventy five year-old Keo Nuon stated that Brok Yim was her youngest brother. He married Kam Sokhoeun during the Royal Socialist regime. In the Lon Nol regime, he volunteered to serve in the

army in Svay Sisophon. On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge evacuated him and Kam Sokhoeun to Bot Trang village. While Brok Yim was living in Bot Trang village, he saw the Khmer Rouge arresting Lon Nol soldiers and students every day. He realized that the Khmer



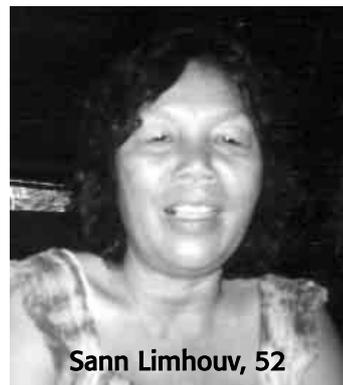
Keo Nuon, 75

Rouge would continue gathering former soldiers, government workers, and students. Thus, he convinced ten villagers with backgrounds in the Lon Nol regime to flee to Thailand.

When Brok Yim and the villagers arrived in Thailand, they found themselves in trouble. Thai Chann Tha, a customs officer in the Lon Nol regime, made a complaint to the American and French authorities who had been in the field interviewing Cambodian refugees in Thailand. The complaint stated that the Thai police illegally took away their gold and money. The complaint aroused the anger of the Thai police. As a result, the Thai police gathered the ten Cambodian refugees and sent them back home.

9. Hok Chhuot, medic

Fifty two year-old Sann Limhouv was the brother-in-law of Hok Chhuot. He stated that Hok



Sann Limhouv, 52

Chhuot went to Samrong Temple for his basic education. Then he moved to Svay Sisophon district. In 1973, he quit school and married a girl named Limhiek. Hok Chhuot was a medic working in Kampong Svay sub-district, Serey

Sophorn district. In 1975, he and his family returned to live in Bot Trang village. In late 1976, Hok Chhuot escaped to Thailand with 26 people from Srah Keo sub-district. Later on, the villagers

heard that all of them were arrested and sent back to Cambodia.

10. Chum Bunroeun, Lon Nol soldier

11. Heav Ngauv, Lon Nol soldier

Forty seven year-old Chuob Saman reported that Chum Bunroeun was her older brother and that Heav Ngauv was her neighbor. Heav Ngauv led a lonely life after all of his relatives died. In 1972, he and Chum Bunroeun served in the Lon Nol army based in Svay Sisophon district. In 1975, they returned to Bot Trang village. Because they were afraid that their backgrounds would lead the Khmer Rouge to kill them, they decided to flee to Thailand with other villagers. No news about them has been heard since the day they departed.

Later, villagers heard that their relatives were arrested by Angkar and imprisoned in Tuol Sleng. The villagers suspected that they were tortured before they were killed. Yin Le said, "Living under

the Khmer Rouge's control, my son was very frightened. He attempted to escape to Thailand, but unfortunately he failed. He was arrested and detained in Tuol Sleng Prison. He surely must have gone through brutal torture and execution."

Chhneang Horm and Keo Nuon stated, "My father and younger brother risked running away to Thailand. They left my mother and their young children to lead a miserable life. They left us because of fear of Khmer Rouge execution. Finally, they were tortured and killed without mercy."

The relatives of the eleven prisoners expressed their bitterness over the torture and execution of their relatives. They eagerly await the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, hoping that it will bring justice to the family members they lost to the Khmer Rouge regime.

Dany Long is a team leader of the Promoting Accountability Project.

RESOLUTION, NOT REVENGE

Sophary Noy

Nut Pann is the second child in a family of six children in Salao village, Romny sub-district, Rovieng district, Preah Vihear province. His father Sao Nut died during the Khmer Rouge regime. His mother Sokh Keo lives in Preah Vihear. Nut Pann, who is now 44 years old, lives in Stung Treng district, Stung Treng province. Although Democratic Kampuchea was toppled nearly 30 years ago, Nut Pann still remembers clearly the day when the Khmer Rouge militiamen took his father out to be killed and the persecution of his family by the Khmer Rouge. To Nut Pann, it seems that these events happened only recently.

When the Khmer Rouge soldiers took over his home village in 1975, Nut Pann was a boy of 13. He helped his parents work on the farm to earn a living.

In 1977, the Khmer Rouge established village-based militiamen units. In the same year, they began

evacuating people out of villages. Nut Pann's family was evacuated to Chy Oak village, Romny sub-district, Rovieng district. In 1978, the commune-based militiamen suggested that Nut Pann join the youth mobile unit at Kampong Sralao sub-district. After he joined, Nut Pann had to live far from his parents. He was transferred from place to place to work, following the mobile unit in Chhep district, Preah Vihear province. The mobile unit he worked for had 50 members, and their duties were to dig canals, build dams in the dry season, and cultivate rice in rainy season.

Having worked in the mobile unit for three months, Nut Pann's shoulders became swollen and his wrist was sprained because the pails of soil he carried were too heavy. Thus, Nut Pann asked his unit chief for sick leave. After the chief gave his permission, Nut Pann stayed in the district hospital

where he met his grandfather, who was also being treated there. A few days later, the Khmer Rouge medical workers came to tell Nut Pann that his grandfather had recovered from his illness and was ready to leave the hospital. But the cadres had lied. Soon thereafter, Nut Pann's family started looking for his grandfather at the hospital. Nut Pann was surprised to learn that his grandfather had not returned home. It was a sign that his grandfather had disappeared forever.

One day in 1978, Nut Pann's older brother came to find him and said that their father had been taken to be killed by a militiaman named Chann Ning, who was also their distant relative. Having heard this terrible news, Nut Pann quickly asked permission from his unit chief to go to see his father. The unit chief, however, denied his request, saying, "Nobody commits such killing here." However, Nut Pann kept begging the unit chief until he was granted permission.

He rode a horse to meet his mother at Chy Oak village and learn what had happened to his father. Nut Pann's mother said, "Your father had been killed by his second cousin, Chann Ning, and other two militiamen who came here. They said they were taking your father to drink sour palm juice and your father agreed. Just after Chann Ning had killed your father, he came to your brother and said, 'Tell my aunt [your mother] that I have killed her husband.'"

Nut Pann's father and other five men were killed at the same time - around midnight - in a forest near Prey Torting Pagoda in Chy Oak village, Romny sub-district, Rovieng district. Nut Pann's mother stole into the forest to look for her husband's body, and she found a rotten piece of foot. She concluded that it was her husband's foot because she recognized the shoes he wore. Her husband's body must have been eaten by wild animals, leaving only a rotten piece of foot. Nut Pann's mother took her husband's

foot, burnt it, and collected the remaining ashes to keep. When Chann Ning saw Nut Pann's mother doing this, he threatened to kill her. Luckily, Nut Pann arrived in time to save his mother from danger.

According to Nut Pann, the place where the Khmer Rouge killed his father and other villagers became a mass grave that is 20 meters long and 5 meters wide. He and other villagers think that this mass grave holds the bodies of about 35 people.

In early January 1979, Vietnamese soldiers liberated Phnom Penh. At the same time, the Khmer Rouge moved people to the west region near the Cambodia-Thai border. Nut Pann was among the people who were evacuated by the Khmer Rouge.

Along the way, Nut Pann always kept his ears open, asking other people about his family. Half way to his destination, Nut Pann heard that his family was waiting for him at O Pur village, Romny sub-district. He succeeded in mingling with the crowd and making his way back to his family. In September, Nut Pann arrived at his home village.

In 1987, Nut Pann moved to Stung Treng province where he met Yi Run and married her. They

have two children. Despite the fact that Chann Ning killed his father, Nut Pann and his family still consider him as their relative because Chann Ning had confessed to his bad deeds. He admitted, "I was wrong. I did kill him. I was under someone else's command. I could not resist doing such a cruel thing. It was an order from my superior."

Because this tragedy happened several years ago, Nut Pann thinks that there is no use in digging up the past and arguing over who was right or wrong. He knows that his father is dead. If he takes eye-for-an-eye revenge, Chann Ning's children will become parentless, living without the warmth of their family.



Sophary Noy is a staff writer for Searching for the Truth.

CAMBODIANS LEARN ABOUT GENOCIDE AND THE ECCC

Dacil Q. Keo

Cham Muslim Religious Teachers' Tour

On February 13-14, 2007, Cham Muslim religious teachers from ten provinces and the city of Phnom Penh gained valuable knowledge on a matter that will affect their lives: the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). Visiting the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, the Choeung Ek Killing Fields Memorial, the ECCC courtroom, and the Documentation Center of Cambodia, and meeting victims from other parts of the country have given participants hope that justice will finally be delivered to victims of Cambodia's genocide, which claimed almost two million lives in less than four years. This was the second group composed solely of ethnic minority Cham Muslims that have participated in DC-Cam's ECCC tours. The tours are aimed at educating Cambodians about Democratic Kampuchea and in particular the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (ECCC).

DC-Cam has been working with the Cham Muslim community for over five years on a variety of research projects as part of the Center's efforts to research, analyze, and document information related to Democratic Kampuchea. Our most recent project involves collecting data (through the distribution of

questionnaires by mosques) on how many Chams were killed during the genocide, as this figure has been contested by scholars.

The 40 participants in the February tour comprised 19 women and 21 men. This was the first time that many of them had been to the three sites. The majority of participants were *tuans* and *hakims* (religious teachers and judges) and a few were villagers. The few villagers who do not hold leadership positions in the community are nevertheless well educated about Islam and devout followers. They asked to attend the tour because they were extremely interested and personally motivated to learn more about the Tribunal and Democratic Kampuchea history. All of the tour participants were survivors of the genocide and as such visiting these places can stir up powerful emotions.

The most important thing about this and other ECCC tours is that they allow victims to have a role in the ECCC process. Activities such as visiting the ECCC courtroom and speaking with officials, and in the future attending trial hearings, are very significant to victims of the genocide, who have waited over a generation for justice. This tribunal is for the nation of Cambodia and for every Cambodian who survived the genocide.

The group of Cham religious teachers, *tuans* and *hakims*, are a special group because they are educated and well-respected in the Cham Muslim community. *Tuans* hold daily classes inside the mosques for Cham Muslim children and teach from the *Mukaddam* (for beginning levels) and the Koran (for intermediate and upper levels). The children are also taught the



The Cham Muslim Community meeting with Co-Prosecutor

Rumi language (Malay in Roman characters). *Hakems* are “judges” of the community who settle disputes and perform tasks similar to those carried out by village chiefs. Through their positions, both *tuans* and *hakims* teach the community about Islam and how to live life in harmony with one another. They are ideal persons to pass on Tribunal-related information and news. This is information they personally receive, question, and verify from the source itself: ECCC officials including the co-prosecutor, principal defender, and press officers. Meeting these officials gives participants the strong message that the ECCC is a real and functioning tribunal created for the purpose of finding justice for the people of Cambodia. This is a message that they will pass on to their community members.

The first day of the tour was busy. For some, the entire morning was spent traveling from their home village to Phnom Penh. Two participants who lived about half a day’s journey from the capital came the day before. Once all the Cham Muslim religious leaders arrived and rested for a short while, tour coordinator Farina So led the group to the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. Ms. So is the Cham Muslim Oral History Project leader for DC-Cam and has worked with the Cham community for several years. Herself a Cham Muslim, Ms. So has conducted extensive research on the experiences of Cham Muslims during the genocide. Combined with the work of author Osman Ysa, their research has given us not only a greater understanding of the Cham community under Democratic Kampuchea, but also of the entire period. Their continued collaborative projects with the Cham community now cover issues of reconciliation, genocide education, and women’s studies.

At approximately 2:00 p.m., the group of 40 arrived at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. After hearing about the museum from other people who participated in past tours, the participants now had the opportunity to visit the genocide museum for themselves. All visitors who come to the museum have similar reactions; they are stunned, appalled, upset, and saddened by what they see. For survivors

of the genocide these emotions are magnified many times over because coming to the museum brings back painful memories.

The four buildings of the museum complex, labeled A-D, were once Tuol Svay Prey High School. Soon after the Khmer Rouge came to power, the abandoned high school became the top security center known by its secret code name, S-21. Prisoners who entered S-21 blindfolded were almost guaranteed death. Once forced hand-written confessions were obtained, and if prisoners had not died yet from malnutrition and torture, they would be transported in groups to Choeung Ek, 15 kilometers away, for execution.

Although Osman Ysa’s research has found that at least 42 Cham Muslims were imprisoned at S-21, there has yet to be a Cham Muslim participant from any of the ECCC tours since February 2006 who has found a photograph of a family member. Photograph or not, however, the graphic displays at the museum are enough to bring tears to ordinary visitors, let alone the survivors of the genocide.

As she studied the prisoner photographs in Building B, Ms. Sin Kha could not hold back her tears. A DC-Cam staff member spotted her crying and went to comfort her. She began to talk about her experiences during the genocide. When Ms. So asked if she would consent to a formal interview, she agreed without hesitation. Sitting on a wooden bench underneath one of the many fragrant plumeria trees at the museum, Ms. Sin revealed the darkest moments in her life.

After losing her younger brother and several other family members, and herself on the verge of death during Democratic Kampuchea, Ms. Sin said that coming to the museum had made the past come alive for her. The arduous physical labor, meager rations of food, climate of fear, and the prohibition of so many things which make life meaningful such as social interaction, were the experiences that Ms. Sin relived in her mind. She recalled all details such as hiding her Cham ethnicity, eating watery rice soup, and even holding the newspaper upside down

so that she would not be suspected of knowing how to read and consequently labeled an intellectual. Intellectuals were one of the first groups targeted for immediate extermination when Khmer Rouge soldiers entered Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975.

Ms. Sin's brother Karim was killed because he was believed to be a professor. Karim was the third-oldest child in their family and did well academically at a university in Battambang province. In the second half of 1975, Khmer Rouge soldiers charged into Ms. Sin's village upon suspicion that she and her family were intellectuals. She recalled how everyone tried to escape by running. Her brother was shot by one of the soldiers while fleeing. His body fell immediately. Ms. Sin told the interviewer, "I remember that his body just laid there, underneath a jackfruit tree." She began to cry again and the interview paused momentarily.

Another dramatic event for her was hearing news that someone she knew was killed. During a village meeting, Khmer Rouge soldiers suddenly stormed into the village and began interrogating and shooting people. Everyone at the meeting quickly fled. Ms. Sin was caught while running by a Khmer Rouge soldier who accused her of betrayal. Fearing for her life, she quickly responded that she was not running away out of guilt and kept repeating to the soldier that she was loyal to Angkar. Her mind quickly flashed back to the time she was caught praying and was questioned by one of the Khmer Rouge spies in the village. The Khmer Rouge soldier who had chased her decided to release her. A fellow villager who also attended the meeting and fled was not so fortunate, however. Mit ("Friend") Chan, who was in her early twenties, was killed by one of the soldiers who had disrupted the meeting. Her body was mounted against two wooden poles and left for display in the open fields.

The final escape from death for Ms. Sin proved to be the most dramatic. In early 1979, just before Vietnamese soldiers entered Phnom Penh, she was rounded up with about 30 other people from her village. The reason for arrest: being Vietnamese.

During Democratic Kampuchea's reign, the Khmer Rouge spy unit in her village worked day and night searching out acts of defiance, betrayal, or any suspicious activity that they would then report to higher levels. The regime had a special hatred for the Vietnamese, who they viewed as an old enemy trying to encroach upon Cambodian soil. Ms. Sin said it was the spies in her village who must have reported to a higher cadre that she was Vietnamese. She was certain that she would not escape death this time. As her life began to flash before her eyes, Vietnamese soldiers suddenly surrounded the group and stopped the planned killing. Her life was saved for a third time.

Ms. Sin was also emotional when talking about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. She had known about the Tribunal before coming on the tour through the radio and her neighbor. She hopes that the Cambodian government and UN can deliver justice to victims of the genocide. For her, the Khmer Rouge must be put to trial because they hurt all Cambodians. Ms. Sin asserted, "what happened to Cambodia is the truth, it was not a joke or a something out of a movie; it is the truth." She added that this "truth," referring to genocide under the Democratic Kampuchea regime, must be told to others, especially the younger generation, so that it will never happen again.

At Choeung Ek, the group walked along the grounds of the former killing field. A Cambodian-style memorial is built there. On the ground floor of the memorial are the tattered clothes found there in 1979. The nine rows above the ground floor contain stacked skulls, which were also found at the site. On that day, the *sleng* trees, which had no leaves except for a few dead ones that lingered on some of the branches, supported several dozen round dark orange fruits. The *sleng* tree is what the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum is named after with "tuol sleng" translating into "opposite the *sleng* [tree]." One of the participants identified this tree to Ms. Sin and commented that the *sleng* fruits are poisonous if eaten raw, but can be used in small amounts to make medicine for various illnesses. It is hard to imagine

that a former area of land where thousands were taken to be tortured and brutally killed is now a place that can provide healing. Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims have prayed at the site in remembrance of those who died at Choeung Ek.

On the late afternoon of Monday, the group of 40 stood side by side with arms raised in the air, eyes closed, and prayed. Led by an elderly *hakim*, the group prayed aloud in the Cham language. They prayed for the souls of those who died at Choeung Ek to rest in peace. A feeling of calmness filled the air. The words of the *hakim* seemed to be carried by the wind which traveled past the *sleng* and other trees at the site towards the memorial where the skulls of those who died rest in rows. After the prayer, the first day of the tour came to an end.

The second day of the tour took place at the ECCC courtroom at 8:30 a.m. This portion of the tour was well-organized by the ECCC Public Affairs Office and the ECCC officials they worked with. A Cambodian security officer spent a few minutes welcoming the group and chatted with them before the program started. The ECCC Public Affairs Assistant, Mr. Chin Hemuichet, passed out ECCC booklets which explain various aspects of the Tribunal. He had also prepared ECCC posters to pass out later.

ECCC Public Affairs Officer Mr. Reach Sambath began the program in his usual gracious and affable manner. He started by asking where everyone was from and if they had been to the courtroom before. Only a few people responded that they had; the rest said that it was their first time. Mr. Sambath then presented general information on the Tribunal, including the physical courtroom, the composition of judges and other units of the ECCC, the detention center, and a brief update of ECCC developments. Chief of Public Affairs, Ms. Helen Jarvis, later entered the courtroom and greeted the crowd in Cham.

Together, Ms. Jarvis and Mr. Sambath answered questions. Many questions were asked, some of which were similar to those asked on past ECCC tours. They included what ranks of Khmer Rouge will be tried, the issue of pardons, if former Khmer Rouge

village leaders who directly carried out killings will be tried, if countries which supported the Khmer Rouge regime will be tried, the matter of different numbers used for the genocide death toll, if other countries knew about the genocide while it was occurring, why the Khmer Rouge were given the seat representing Cambodia in the UN General Assembly, and what kinds of evidence and witnesses are needed in the trials.

Passing out the ECCC booklets prior to the start of the program was beneficial. A few people asked a question by beginning, "In this book it says that..." and both Mr. Sambath and Ms. Jarvis used the booklet as well to answer certain questions. During this time Mr. Sambath also spent a moment to explain the messages on the ECCC posters.

In answering questions, Mr. Sambath talked about his personal experiences during the genocide. He talked the terror and fear that many felt then. He recalled how terrified he was to cross over from one village into another, even though all it took was a single step. The issue of why the majority of people did not fight back against the Khmer Rouge was also mentioned. This is a question that one of Mr. Sambath's kids had asked him before. And in explaining why there are different figures for the overall death toll, he brought up the death of his uncle. Because families were physically broken up during the genocide and did not reunite until much later, or never reunited at all, this created over-counting since some missing relatives were counted twice or even three times. Mr. Sambath said that his uncle – whom he and other family members had presumed dead for 20 years – was actually still alive.

The second segment of the program included presentations by Principal Defendant, Mr. Rupert Skilbeck, and international Co-Prosecutor, Mr. Robert Petit. The first discussed the necessity of having a defense counsel and the role of the defense. The latter talked about the role of the co-prosecutors and gave a general update on his work and the work of Cambodian Co-Prosecutor, Ms. Chea Leang. Many

questions were also asked after both ECCC officials spoke. They included how many defense lawyers there are for each defendant, the issue of Ta Mok's death, what sentences are possible, how Cambodians can keep informed about the trials, why have the trials taken so long, and when will the trials begin. In answering one of the questions, Mr. Petit told the group that while transparency is essential for the Tribunal, certain information cannot be given out immediately due to confidentiality concerns or other reasons. This is important for Cambodians to understand because while undoubtedly they are eager to receive information on the Tribunal and eager for the trials to begin, the Tribunal must operate according to just and standard rules that protect the independence of each unit and must give out information only once it is finalized.

In a calm and clear voice, Ms. Sin asked whether or not it was appropriate for lawyers who did not live through the genocide to be on the defense counsel. Her question seemed to apply to all units of the ECCC and not just the defense, and in particular, international lawyers. Mr. Skilbeck responded that Cambodian and international lawyers can benefit from one another. Cambodian lawyers can learn about international procedures from the international lawyers, while international lawyers can learn about the facts of the genocide from Cambodian lawyers.

Unsatisfied, she went on to say that she preferred lawyers who had been through the genocide because they are more qualified since they know personally about the real suffering of the Cambodian people. The principal defender responded by expanding on his first reason. Not yet persuaded, she added that she does not trust a lawyer who is not a survivor of the genocide. Mr. Skilbeck then explained that lawyers are trained to deal with events that happen to other people and thus do not need to be part of the event itself to understand what happened. This response seemed to satisfy Ms. Sin and she thanked Mr. Skilbeck for his answer. The program ended with Mr. Sambath giving the group a tour of

the courtroom and its outside surroundings.

Afterward, the group visited the DC-Cam and spoke with Director Youk Chhang. Excited to receive the group, Mr. Chhang quickly came downstairs from his office to meet the Cham Muslim religious teachers. He asked them about their session at the ECCC and about visiting Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek. Mr. Chhang then described the Center's current project of gathering statistical data which required the assistance of the *hakims* and *tuans*. He also discussed future DC-Cam events related to the ECCC, in particular the Legal Information Sessions which train participants on the laws of the ECCC and how to monitor a trial hearing, in preparation for their attendance at the trial hearings. After a group picture was taken, the leaders headed back on the bus and went to a Malay restaurant for lunch.

Several news media covered the event including *Reaksmei Kampuchea* and *Somne Thmey*. DC-Cam's magazine, *Searching for the Truth*, was passed out to all participants. The tour's real success is both educational and personal for the survivors of the genocide who participated in the tour. It served to educate them on the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and Democratic Kampuchea that they will share with others once they return to their home villages. Many of the tour participants believe that education on Democratic Kampuchea and the ECCC can also serve to prevent genocide from ever occurring again in Cambodia. They also want others to be educated, especially their children, so that the next generation of leaders will not repeat the horrors of the Democratic Kampuchea government.

On a personal level, the tours bring back to life a painful past. Another woman who was interviewed at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum said that coming on the tour had made everything come alive again. Everything that happened then is still fresh in her mind and it feels as though the genocide did not take place long ago, but just recently. This initial pain was often lessened by the end of the tour. Ms. Sin, who escaped death three times, spoke to a DC-Cam staff on the bus ride to lunch after the tour

ended. She placed her hand over her chest and said, "Coming on this tour has released so much of the pain and grief that I carried inside of me for so many years. I feel as though my heart is lighter now."

Youth Perspectives on Genocide and Cambodia's Future at the Youth Festival 2007, Kampong Cham Province

Thousands of Cambodian young people gathered at the Youth Festival 2007 on March 10-11 to obtain a wide variety of information – from civic involvement to HIV/AIDS prevention to banking services, at the dozens of booths set up inside the Olympica Stadium. Although it was humid inside the stadium, the mood was energetic and fun. The majority of those who participated appeared to be in their mid-teens to late twenties, some of whom wore school uniforms. The event was organized by the International Republican Institute (IRI) in cooperation with the Youth Council of Cambodia and had the support and attendance of 35 organizations and agencies.

The Festival was divided into a Seminars Pavilion, an Interactive Pavilion, and an Opportunities Pavilion. DC-Cam took part in the Seminars Pavilion in addition to having an exhibition booth. The Center's purpose in joining the festival was both to learn about the services and activities of other organizations and to disseminate information related to Democratic Kampuchea and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. Many of Cambodia's youth are not very familiar with Cambodia's genocide, so we hoped that by utilizing the opportunity provided by the festival, we would be able to both understand and reach out to Cambodia's youth.

All of the exhibition booths at the Youth Festival were attractive and lively. Young Cambodians at the booths were eager to share information about their organizations' programs and services. DC-Cam's booth was located several booths down from the main entrance and was staffed by a mixture of members from the Promoting Accountability, Magazine, Living Documents, Print Shop, Genocide Education, and Victims of Torture teams. The team

leaders for the exhibition were Simala Pan (of the Magazine Project) and Sayana Ser (of the Student Outreach Project). Ms. Ser completed her MA in Leisure, Tourism, and Environment at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. Her thesis was on dark tourism. Ms. Pan will be attending the same university in September 2007.

The booth was decorated in a black and red theme, colors matching DC-Cam's *Searching for the Truth* magazine. Shiny red fabric framed the exhibition booth which held DC-Cam books, ECCC (Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia) posters and booklets, enlarged photographs of DC-Cam interviews with genocide victims and perpetrators, T-shirts with messages about the necessity of "searching for the truth," and DC-Cam magazines. DC-Cam staff members shared information about the ECCC and explained to those who visited the booth the importance of documenting Khmer Rouge history.

Several staff members went out in teams to interview people on Democratic Kampuchea history as well their thoughts on the future of Cambodia. The generation born after the genocide will be the leaders of tomorrow and thus their opinions on Cambodia's past, present, and future are crucial. These were the topics that the interviews focused on.

Dressed in her school uniform, Sok Lai toured the booths at the Youth Festival with a bright smile on her face. She is 18 years old and in the 11th grade at Preah Sihanouk High school. This was her first time attending the festival. She heard about the festival from a friend and was interested in attending, but did not know where it was located. As she drove her motorcycle that day, she saw a lot of commotion surrounding the local stadium and knew that was where the Youth Festival was held. She had arrived at the festival about 30 minutes before the interview and thus had not seen all the exhibition booths, but mentioned that she liked the handwriting and chemistry booths.

Like many of Cambodia's children, most of her knowledge about the genocide comes from her parents and other relatives who survived the genocide.

Lai told DC-Cam that when she was a child, her parents use to tell her stories about their experiences. In the 6th grade, her teacher also spoke about Democratic Kampuchea. However, no supporting texts were used and so like her parents, her teacher combined general knowledge of that era with personal experiences. Lai believed what her parents and teacher told her because their stories confirmed one another. She has heard about the tribunal to prosecute former Khmer Rouge leaders for quite some time now and is very interested in it. Lai believes that the Tribunal is a positive thing to have in Cambodia and hopes that it proceeds successfully.

As for the future of Cambodia, she said that she is hopeful. "Cambodia is developing fast," said Lai. She also added that there are now a lot of educated people in Cambodia, especially the younger generation who are attending school and college. In the future, Lai wants to become a doctor so that she can help take care of people.

A sizeable crowd had gathered to listen to presentations made by speakers from IRI and the Youth Council of Cambodia. Twenty nine year-old Nov Sophal was sitting among this crowd; she had a rolled-up ECCC poster stuffed inside her bag. Sophal is a 7th grade teacher and also a second year student of English at the University of Management and Economics. Two of her friends came with her to the festival. It was the first time they had attended such an event. She told the interviewer that she feels very happy about today's event. Sophal believes that this will be a good experience for all the students who attend. She feels that they were very brave to come to the festival for the purposes of expanding their knowledge and receiving valuable skills.

During the Democratic Kampuchea regime, Nov Sophal was just a baby. She was born in 1978, one year before the Khmer Rouge were driven out of Cambodia by Vietnamese troops and the United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea. Both her parents and grandmother often told her stories about the hardships they endured. Her grandmother told her that as a baby, she was very

sick and almost died. She told DC-Cam that her grandmother took great care of her and carried her in her arms while traveling on a wagon. She feels extremely fortunate to be alive today. For Sophal, the Khmer Rouge regime was an evil one that should have never existed. Although she was not taught about the regime when she was in school, Sophal now teaches her students about what happened. She doesn't know if all of them believe her or not, but nonetheless she feels that it is very important to teach them about their country's past.

When asked about whether or not there should be a tribunal to prosecute Khmer Rouge leaders, initially she said that there should not. She felt that because there are so many poor people in Cambodia, the money required for a tribunal would be better spent on alleviating poverty. But when she was told that a tribunal had already been created, Sophal changed her mind. Since it's already here and there is assistance from the United Nations, she said that a tribunal could be a good thing for Cambodia. She told DC-Cam that her mother does not know about the Tribunal and probably would not be that interested in it. Her father died when she was very young and Sophal is the second-oldest of six children. Sophal told the interviewer that her mother does not have much time to focus on matters that do not have an immediate impact on the day-to-day struggle of taking care of her family.

In contrast to Sok Lai, Sophal feels that Cambodia is developing too slowly. She said that neighboring countries in Southeast Asia have also had dramatic pasts which included wars and uprisings, but they have been able to pick up the pieces and develop quickly. She was pleased to visit a booth which showcased some of Cambodia's products, but found their prices too expensive. These products would not be competitive with existing products in Cambodia which are imported from Thailand, Vietnam, and China. According to Sophal, the real problem is that Cambodia does not value people and their capabilities. She believes that there should be much greater emphasis on the educated and those

with professional skills. They should be encouraged to participate in the planning of Cambodia's development. In addition, Sophal feels that lack of safety and investment in human resources are the main issues slowing down Cambodia's development.

For several other students at the Youth Festival, democracy seemed to be the answer for a better and more prosperous Cambodia. During the time of Democratic Kampuchea, there was absolutely no freedom said a 23 year-old male student (he requested that his name be kept confidential). He came to the festival with three classmates from Western University. He is studying business. He learned about Democratic Kampuchea from an early age through his parents and from his father's old textbooks from the time he was a teacher. He told the interviewer that Cambodians did not have any rights from 1975-1979 when the Khmer Rouge were in power. They did not have the right to own property or even the right to express their emotions. There was no freedom then. He then stressed that although some national officials might claim that Cambodia is a democracy, in actuality it is not. People cannot openly express their opinions, especially if they are unfavorable to government policies or personnel. The student felt that this was one of the main issues facing Cambodia. He was most interested in the exhibition booth which addressed the issue of unjust land procurement. He said that the fact that some people are powerless and dare not speak out when their land is taken from them by government officials is a strong indicator that real democracy does not exist in Cambodia. He desires that one day people in Cambodia will have more freedom and the protection of their freedoms. He views the United States as a good model of democracy that he hopes Cambodia will strive for.

He expressed a similar sentiment when talking about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. He said that he often listens to Tribunal-related news through the radio. He told the DC-Cam interviewer that news of a courtroom to prosecute Khmer Rouge leaders had been circulating for a long time but as of today,

no trials have been held. Although he supports the mission of the Tribunal, he is afraid that if the trials implicated important politicians, these politicians might create problems for the Tribunal. He added that local villagers fear that due to the defection of former Khmer Rouge cadres into the current government, there will not even be a trial.

Several other students interviewed also talked about democracy when asked about Cambodia's future. Try Mean Ky, 19 years old, said that in a society with democracy, people are allowed to express their opinions without fear of being blackmailed or hurt. Khin Seang Han, 16 years old, said that in a democracy people are the most important asset in a country. He said that when a country is democratic, there is little corruption and the "voice of the majority" is valued above all else. Eang Chhang Huoy said that she was interested in the concept of democracy, but did not elaborate further on how Cambodia should proceed in obtaining it. She is 14 years old.

All three students were told about the Khmer Rouge regime by their parents. One of them also learned about the regime from a teacher at school. Two knew about the ECCC and one of them told the interviewer that the Cambodian and international sides are currently disputing over the internal rules.

Besides the heavy topic of Cambodia's genocidal past and "democratic future," all six students who were interviewed said that they really enjoyed the festival for a number of reasons. All were excited to see so many other students their age in one place. It appeared that the majority of them came with friends and classmates. The students also commented on the wide variety of exhibitions booths that were set up. Eang Chhang Huoy said she liked the "Elite Youth" and the singing contest booth. Khin Seang Han enjoyed the booths which taught him about the performing arts, how to handle a job interview, and taking care of one's health. Only one out of the five interviewed had the chance to visit the DC-Cam booth before being interviewed. Sophal Nov, who had an ECCC poster in her bag, believed that documenting the past is a critical task that must be

taken seriously. This is one of the reasons why she teaches her students about the Khmer Rouge regime. Whatever the interests of Cambodia's youth may be or the direction in life they choose, it is important that they carry with them the knowledge of the past, especially the recent past of genocide. This past is part of their parent's identity and their country's.

Law Student and Cham Muslim Youth Tour

Cambodia's youth learned about their country's genocide and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal in a special out-of-classroom setting. On Monday March 12th, 100 Cham Muslim youth participated in an educational tour to the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and the Choeung Ek Killing Fields Memorial. On the following day, they were joined by 350 students from the Royal University of Law and Economics for a morning session at the ECCC. With the same schedule of past ECCC tours, this tour was focused on the generation born after the genocide. The participants of past tours conducted in 2006 were overwhelmingly survivors of the genocide aged 40-70, while Monday and Tuesday's group were students aged 17-25. The goal

remains the same however: to educate Cambodians about the genocide and give them a role in the ECCC process.

Almost thirty years after the fall of Khmer Rouge regime, Cambodia's genocide is still not a part of the classroom curriculum. What Cambodia's children know about the genocide comes mainly from stories their parents and teachers tell them. As for the Tribunal, it was once a disheartening subject for those who had been following the rocky United Nations and Cambodian government negotiations over the past nine years. Many had given up hope. The summer of 2006, however, saw a rejuvenated hope of bringing Khmer Rouge leaders to trial with the official commencement of ECCC operations.

The ECCC had now become a hot topic in the local news; part of this is due to the Tribunal being rather transparent. Students in law schools are especially interested. DC-Cam received a formal request from the student leader of the Royal University of Law and Economics for a trip to the ECCC courtroom. The letter stated that approximately 300 students would attend. On Tuesday morning



Law students visit Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum

the student count was 350.

The group of students was kindly received by ECCC Press Officer Reach Sambath, Co-Prosecutor Chea Leang, and Senior Assistant to the Co-Prosecutor Office Pamela Reusch, who discussed different aspects of the ECCC and answered questions. With questions prepared ahead of time, Cambodian students walked up to the microphone, introduced themselves, expressed thanks to the officials, and posed a question. Hundreds of students gathered in one location to learn about their country's past and a tribunal that will deliver legal justice for genocide victims. As the ECCC continues to develop and constructive steps are made, it is hoped that the interest surrounding it and the desire to learn about Democratic Kampuchea by Cambodia's youth will increase.

The 100 Cham youths came from 11 provinces and cities: Kandal, Kampong Cham, Battambang, Kampong Thom, Kampot, Kampong Chhang, Kratie, Takeo, Pursat and the cities of Sihanoukville and Phnom Penh. It was their first time visiting Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek. The program began at 1:30 p.m. as students arrived at the genocide museum. As the young women, some wearing traditional clothing, and young men entered the museum they greeted one another. Some knew each other beforehand and were excited to have friends and classmates participate in the tour. Ms. So, wearing a beaded black veil, led the group to Building A where she talked about the history of the museum.

The Cham Muslim students visited the Museum's four buildings, where graphic photographs, powerful exhibitions, brick and wooden jail cells, and displayed skulls fill the spaces of former classrooms. Some youths appeared to be really moved by what they saw, while others looked at the disturbing images with no more than a child's curiosity.

On the steps outside Building C, just below the barbed wire which covers nearly the entire front of the building, Ms. So interviewed Ly Mei, 20 years old and the oldest of four siblings. Although in the 12th grade, Ly Mei spoke about the genocide and tribunal with great understanding, honesty, and

eloquence.

Before coming to the museum, Mei did not have high expectations for the visit. She assumed that she would see photographs from that time and would learn something, nothing more. As she passed by the S-21 prisoner photographs, she became deeply moved. She told the interviewer, "I was near tears." She said that she never imagined the years from 1975-1979 to be so horrific; coming to the museum has really shown her how much people suffered. She said that as a child, her parents and teachers talked about their experiences under the Khmer Rouge regime.

She recalled that in the 7th grade, her teacher briefly discussed the genocide. Mei told her teacher that she did not believe her. Her teacher responded, "If you don't believe, go and ask your parents then." So she did. Her parents confirmed everything that her teacher had said and more. This began a long-term conversation between the two about the genocide.

Mei's father, El Chub, tended water buffalos under the Pol Pot regime. This job, along with many other jobs people were forced to do at that time, could have fatal results. One mistake could lead you to lose your life. In the case of Mei's father, losing one water buffalo could mean losing his life. One day, one of the water buffalos was missing from her father's herd. He was told by leader of his unit that he had three days to find the missing animal. El Chub knew that he would be killed if he did not find the animal within three days. Mr. Chub was unable to find the water buffalo and prepared himself mentally for execution. Perhaps out of pity, the unit leader decided to spare his life. Instead, he was made to shovel dirt and rocks, and was not given any rice soup for a period of time. Mr. Chub survived by catching crabs and secretly cooking them at night. He never believed that he would survive those years. Decades later, her father understandably has difficulty speaking about the past.

As for her uncle, his scars from the genocide are both emotional and physical. Kay Rousat was a child then and worked transporting cow manure.

He was accused of stealing palm juice one day. Mei said the Khmer Rouge began to beat her uncle almost to the point of immobility. Then they hung him by the feet for display. Ever since then his eyesight has worsened; now his daytime eyesight is blurry and he cannot see at all at night. Her uncle also cannot lift heavy objects. Every single time Mr. Kay has tried to speak about the past he begins crying, so he simply does not speak about it anymore.

Ms. So asked Mei whether she thought that there was a difference in Khmer Rouge policy for ethnic Chams and ethnic Khmers. She said that in Svay Rieng the Khmers were separated from the Cham Muslims and were taken to be killed. They were piled on a train in the thousands and transported to a field somewhere for execution. She believes that many more Khmers died than Chams in that area. Chams who were killed had been accused of a crime or had done something against a leader's orders, whereas Khmers were killed in the hundreds or thousands as if it were a set policy. Ms. So did not ask where her information came from, but most likely her knowledge of the Svay Rieng killings originates from her family.

When asked about the Tribunal, Mei expressed mixed opinions. She said that she desired to know the truth from the people who committed the crimes. She is happy that the UN is helping Cambodia because then things will be done according to the law. When asked about whom she wanted tried at the courtroom, she said that it's a hard question to answer. Many people were following orders at that time and risked their lives if they did not obey. It was the leaders who gave them the commands or ideas to enact torture or kill a person. She then paused and in a softer voice said, "To be honest, I don't like to talk about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal." She also said that she is unsure if justice will really be delivered given the long period of time that has elapsed since the genocide and the difficulties which have recently beset the Tribunal. She hopes that there are no more delays and that ECCC officials will do their best to work hard and find the truth since

everyone in Cambodia is anxious for the hearings to begin. For her, if the Tribunal is successful it will provide some justice for the victims. This justice, however, will never erase the painful memories from the era. Mei believes that the survivors will never forget what happened, "it will always remain in their hearts."

Twenty-one year old Sok Veasna also has reservations about the ECCC. Like Ly Mei, she has heard about the Tribunal for some time now. After listening to a recent radio broadcast, Veasna posited that the main problem facing the Tribunal now is not money, but rather cooperation between the two sides. She stated that it will be hard for the Cambodian and international sides to work together due to a number of reasons, and that it will take a long time for everyone to get accustomed to one another. Part of this problem involves understanding clearly what occurred during the reign of Pol Pot.

Also like Mei, Veasna thought that coming to the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum would be an ordinary experience for her. When she first walked through the gates, she said that she felt normal. As she walked further along and viewed the photographs from room to room, a knot began to develop in her throat. She fought the urge to cry. Coming to the museum made her think about both her grandfathers who died during that time. Veasna never got to meet them.

When Veasna was a child, her parents told her stories about the genocide. Her father told her that it was the most difficult period in his entire life because he had no freedom, no food, not even salt. Forced to join a children's unit, he had to wake up in the early morning every day to do backbreaking labor. When she was 14 years old, her teacher also drew upon personal experiences to explain the genocide to her class. Veasna stated that she was very interested in this chapter of Cambodia's history. El Yakin, 20 years old, said that she wanted the history of the Democratic Kampuchea to be a part of her education. She believes that this is one method to prevent genocide from taking place again in Cambodia.

Next, the students were taken to the Choeung

Ek, where as a sign of respect, people who walk up the steps of the memorial must take off their shoes. Many who come to the site obligingly take off their shoes, burn one or two of the incense sticks that are provided, and pray or offer a blessing to the victims killed. After arriving, the students dispersed into groups and began to explore the memorial center. Several only walked around a portion of the center and decided to sit down and rest.

After about 45 minutes, Ms. So called the students to gather so she could explain her project proposal to them. As part of her overall research on the Cham Muslim community and the Cambodian genocide, Ms. So seeks to understand how Cham youth view the years in which the Democratic Kampuchea government ruled. She and other DC-Cam staff then passed out surveys with questions relating to the period of Khmer Rouge regime rule, perceptions of justice, and opinions on ECCC-related issues.

Furthermore, in hopes of fostering interest in this period and encouraging parent-child communications about this topic, Ms. So discussed with them her idea for a writing competition. She handed each person a notebook and pen. The students were asked to write the story of their parents' experiences from 1975-1979. There is no minimum or maximum number of pages for the story. A copy of DC-Cam's magazine, *Searching for the Truth*, which featured articles on people who had survived the genocide, was given to the students. The ten best stories will be given a certificate of achievement and be published in the second and subsequent issues of the Cham quarterly magazine. The students appeared very excited about the project. One asked whether he could write about someone else who survived the genocide besides his parents since they live far away from him. Another asked about the method of sending the completed story to Phnom Penh from her home province.

The second day took place at the ECCC courtroom where 350 students from the Royal University of Law and Economics also joined the tour. The session began at 9:15 a.m., a little later than usual due to

delays on the part of some students. The courtroom contains 600 blue seats arched around a large wooden stage. Bright lights decorate the sky-high ceilings. Traditional *chapei dong veng* music played in the background as Mr. Sambath greeted both groups. ECCC booklets were passed out by Mr. Sambath, Chin Hemvichet (public affairs assistant), and DC-Cam staff as the students took their seats.

Mr. Sambath began to talk about the courtroom structure and the different units of the ECCC,



The students are listening to Reach Sambath at the statue of

and gave an update on general ECCC developments. In his presentation, Mr. Sambath also explained all four of the ECCC posters as Public Affairs Officer Peter Foster held them up. A survivor of the genocide himself, Mr. Sambath posed several questions to the students which his children have asked him. The first was, "If you only had rice soup to eat every day, then how could you have dug such a deep hole?" Many of the students laughed when they heard this. Another question that his children often asked him is, "When they were hurting you and

beating you, why didn't you hit back?" Again, the students chuckled. These are perhaps questions that they themselves have asked their parents when being told about the genocide. Mr. Sambath went on to explain the hardships of that time and the difficulties involved in trying to escape or retaliate against Khmer Rouge cadres.

At about 9:40 a.m. Mr. Sambath finished his presentation and the Q&A portion of the session began. It was evident that both Cham and Khmer



f Lokta Dambang Dek (Grandfather with the Iron Staff)

students had prepared questions in advanced. The questions were numerous and after each student finished asking a question, there was a round of applause. The first question was asked by law school student leader Lay Rithy. He began by summarizing remarks made by the radio station 93.5 FM regarding the delay in finalizing the Internal Rules. Rithy wanted to know if the delays were the result of corruption and the inability to cooperate between the Cambodian and international judges as the radio program had concluded. Mr. Foster responded that at that very

moment the judges were meeting in the Office of Administration to discuss the Internal Rules and most issues should be resolved by the end of the week. He added that on March 16th there would be a press conference to discuss the outcome of this meeting.

Other questions in the first Q&A session included the definition of "those most responsible;" why Cambodian law and international law must be combined rather than using purely international law as in the case of the ICTY; and the circumstances regarding the disagreements between Cambodian and international judges. One student asked a rather unique question. He pointed out that the Tribunal, as its official name states, is an "extraordinary" courtroom created solely to prosecute former Khmer Rouge leaders. Therefore, could there not be another extraordinary court created to prosecute countries or foreigners that supported the Khmer Rouge regime and thereby indirectly assisted in the deaths of two million Cambodians?

At 10:00 a.m. Co-Prosecutor Chea Leang and Senior Assistant to the Co-Prosecutor's Office Pamela Reusch arrived at the courtroom and were received with a round of applause. Ms. Chea talked briefly about Cambodian law and the origins of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. She stressed that it was the Cambodian government who requested United Nations assistance and thus it would not make sense for the Cambodian side to purposefully act in a manner that would obstruct the Tribunal process. She also emphasized that both sides are working very hard and *are* working with one another. After Ms. Reusch introduced herself she, too, reaffirmed that there was cooperation between the international and Cambodian sides. Both presenters then took questions from the students.

The rest of the questions asked that day included inquiries about the guards at S-21; the investigation process; the time-frame of the trial; the Khmer Rouge Tribunal Law; punishment and sentencing; whether prosecutors had talked to senior Khmer Rouge leaders yet; the ECCC budget; how

an indicted person would be brought to the detention center; what choices are offered to the defendant if they disagree with the verdict; and whether the ECCC could serve a model tribunal. Both A female Cham student used an expression to pose her question, she said, "The whole table ate noodles, but only Mok paid." She had to repeat the expression a few times before the ECCC officials understood what she was asking. Her question was that many people were responsible for the death and destruction that overcame Cambodia from 1975-1979; however, only Ta Mok (who died on July 21, 2006) was arrested.

Co-Prosecutor Chea Leang gave the closing remarks. After the session several students approached Ms. Chea and introduced themselves. The tour concluded with Mr. Sambath showing the students the "guardian" statue located behind the courtroom.

A final interview by DC-Cam's film crew was conducted before the law students got on the buses. Lom Chenda is a 23 year old student from the Royal University of Law and Economics. He told the interviewer that he had been interested in Democratic Kampuchea history ever since his family members told him about their experiences. When asked whether he initially believed his parents, he said honestly, "I believed them more than I didn't." Chenda has been reading about Democratic Kampuchea history every chance he has and is very interested in the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. He hopes that the trials will be conducted according to law and that all the people involved will work hard to find justice for the victims. DC-Cam asked if he had any ideas on how to prevent genocide from occurring again. He responded that democracy is the answer to preventing genocide. He added that genocide education is critical. Due to time constraints at the courtroom, Chenda was not able to ask his question. He was curious to know that if relatives of the co-prosecutor or ECCC officials are involved in a case, would it still be acceptable for them to continue in their post without changes or restrictions.

For the 90 Cham youths who attend the ECCC courtroom session on Tuesday, the tour continued

at DC-Cam. There, they met the Center's director and watched a new film, *Behind the Walls of S-21* produced by Youk Chhang, directed by Doug Kass, and narrated by Roland Joffe. The documentary profiles two former prisoners at S-21 and a former high-ranking guard whose stories intertwine and at times contradict each other. From the film students learned about the arrest of the two prisoners, the torture they endured, and how they were able to survive the brutality and starvation at the prison. Their stories challenge that of the former guard, who claims that his activities did not go beyond guard-related duties. While focusing on the impossible struggle of staying alive at the prison, this film also makes the viewer think about the sometimes ambiguous line between being a victim and perpetrator.

Like past tours, this tour proved that there is interest among the young about Cambodia's past and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. For some students, like Ly Mei, this interest had to be sparked by a person, such as a teacher, who was likely the first person to tell her about Democratic Kampuchea. This started communication between Mei and parents about the genocide.

Interest in any subject requires initial exposure. Young people need to be given the opportunity to learn about their country's past. Bringing them to the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, the Choeung Ek Genocide Memorial, and the ECCC are valuable opportunities for them to learn and understand what happened under Democratic Kampuchea. Encouragement is also important in genocide education. The writing contest under the Cham Oral History Project encourages the generation born after the genocide to speak directly to survivors about their experiences. Both conversations with parents and official classroom lectures will help Cambodia's youth to explore this dark chapter of their country's history.

Dacil Q. Keo is DC-Cam's public affairs officer. In 2007, she will begin her PhD program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN D. CIROCIARI

1) What is the current situation with the Tribunal? When will it start?

The process toward criminal trials is quite advanced. The law establishing the Tribunal has been enacted, and a physical site has been established for the trials in a building west of Phnom Penh. Cambodian and international judges, prosecutors, and staff have been appointed and are preparing cases now.

However, the Tribunal is new, and making it operational has proven challenging. The latest hurdle is an impasse among judges to agree on procedural rules to govern the proceedings. Lawyers have also haggled over the type of training that local and foreign attorneys will receive prior to the trials. These problems owe largely to the Tribunal's mixed Cambodian and international character, which creates ambiguities about the sources of law governing the proceedings. Court officials still plan for trials to begin in 2007, and that goal remains achievable if judges are able to agree on procedural rules in the weeks ahead.

2) Can you give us details on those who will be prosecuted? The situations of the former Khmer Rouge cadres seem to be very different, with some imprisoned, some free. Will all former Khmer Rouge be brought to trial?

The issue of who to prosecute has been controversial. After years of negotiation, the United Nations and Cambodian government agreed that it would be impossible to try all former Khmer Rouge officials and cadres. Such an expansive prosecution could also re-ignite civil conflict. UN and Cambodian officials agreed to try only senior leaders and those alleged to be "most responsible" for the crimes of Democratic Kampuchea. In any event, five to ten defendants will probably be brought to trial.

The most likely defendant is Duch, former head of the Khmer Rouge security organization and the infamous Tuol Sleng Prison. Duch has been in prison awaiting charges for several years, and he confessed many of his crimes to journalist Nate Thayer after becoming a born-again Christian in the late 1990s. Two other prominent defendants are likely to be Nuon Chea, former deputy secretary of the Kampuchean Communist Party, and former President of the State Presidium Khieu Samphan. Both men live near the Thai border around the mountain town of Pailin, long a stronghold of Khmer Rouge activity. While they are technically free, both Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan have indicated that they perceive themselves as innocent and would be willing to stand trial.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Ieng Sary may also be brought to trial, but his case is more controversial. In 1996, as part of an effort to end the Khmer Rouge insurgency and achieve reconciliation, the Cambodian government granted Ieng Sary amnesty. He lives freely in a spacious villa in Phnom Penh, and it remains unclear whether the Tribunal will consider his amnesty to be binding. His wife, Ieng Thirith, was also a Khmer Rouge cabinet official and may be tried.

One of the consequences of the Tribunal's long delay is that several architects of terror in Democratic Kampuchea will never be brought to justice. The regime's leader, Pol Pot, died in 1998, shortly after the passing of his Defense Minister, Son Sen. More recently, two regional commanders passed away and will never see a courtroom: Ke Pauk and the one-legged Ta Mok, nicknamed "the Butcher" for his brutal methods.

3) Will survivors be allowed to witness the trials?

Yes, the Tribunal will permit a limited number

of members of the public to witness the trials. The Documentation Center of Cambodia plans to escort groups of Cambodians to the Tribunal to view the proceedings. Staff from the Center will then accompany the observers to their communities and hold local meetings to discuss the process. Media coverage will also play a key role in exposing the public to the trials, and NGOs can help by disseminating educational materials. The Tribunal can only be successful if ordinary Cambodians are able to learn about the history of the tragic Khmer Rouge period and see justice being done.

4) What about the difficult question of genocide? Will the Tribunal be competent to say whether or not what happened in Cambodia between 1975 and 1979 can be called genocide?

Yes, the Tribunal will have the authority to determine whether any of the defendants engaged in genocide during the 1975-79 period. The issue of genocide is one of the most sensitive matters that will come before the court. Under applicable law, genocide means targeting a racial, religious, ethnic, or national group for destruction, in whole or in part. Its association with the Holocaust and the events in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda has given genocide

a status as the "crime of crimes," exceeding all others in infamy.

One can certainly argue that the Khmer Rouge committed genocide, but many of their crimes do not fit the definition of genocide well. The Khmer Rouge often killed for political reasons, and most of their victims were from the country's majority ethnic and religious group. This makes the crimes no less terrible or deserving of justice, but it does make them fit the label of "genocide" less neatly.

Some Cambodians may feel cheated if the crimes of the Khmer Rouge are classified as anything other than genocide. They rightly consider their suffering to be as grave as any the world has seen, and some will see genocide convictions as recognition of that fact. The Tribunal and organizations associated with it have a duty educate the public about the meaning of genocide and other key legal concepts so that observers are better able to assess the Tribunal's verdicts.

DC-Cam legal advisor John D. Cirociari is a JD, Harvard, and senior advisor to the Under and Assistant Secretaries for International Affairs, U.S. Department of the Treasury.

MISSING BROTHER

My name is Gek Ly, age 47, and now I am living in Australia. My father is Bun Duk. In 1975 he had a shoe shop called Nam Yoeung in Kampong Som.

I would like to search for my brother Bun Trach aka Chrouk (he would now be 50 years old), who left home to serve in the revolution in 1970 and other five cousins: Ing Sina (female), Ing Sipha (female), Ing Ya (male) and two younger cousins whose names I do not remember. In Sangkum Reastr Niyum, this family lived near Vimean Tip Cinema, selling shoes.

If anyone has known or heard anything about him, please contact me via phone: 012 909 770 or 012 809 880, or Gek Ly, 1 Bracknell Rd, Canley Heights, NSW 2166, Australia

Mobile: 0402-194-182, Home: (02) 9711-7637

Email: emmatran90@gmail.com

A PRIVATE SOLUTION: THE POSSIBILITY OF PRIVATE DONATIONS TO FUND THE ECCC

Alison Kamhi

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) received its first private donation on Wednesday, January 10, 2007, from Microsoft Singapore in the amount of \$100,000. Such a donation, coupled with ongoing negotiations between the ECCC and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation about providing additional funding, raises the possibility that the ECCC could turn to private donors to supplement its arguably inadequate budget.

In an era of increasing globalization and further concentration of wealth in a few countries (and within fewer households within those countries), it is not surprising that the private sector plays an ever-increasing role in global politics. Such a role must be under constant scrutiny, however, to ensure that international bodies and tribunals remain responsible to their member states and not to private parties, and that any decisions made remain impartial. With no specific guidelines in the ECCC Law, the ECCC must be cautious in accepting private donations and vigilant in regulating them.

If the ECCC wishes to solicit private donations, this article proposes that an agency should be established within the ECCC to monitor how the funds are used. Such an agency could process all private donations, ensuring that large corporations do not gain too much influence in internal Tribunal proceedings as well as preventing individual donations from becoming personal bribes. An agency could also track how the funds are used, providing more overall transparency for the activities of the ECCC. This article begins with the present financial structure of the ECCC, explaining the unique hybrid nature of the court and how private donations would fit within this structure. Next, it examines the legal provisions of the ECCC Law regarding donations and analyzes possible legal bars and other potential

conflicts of interest. The article concludes with a concrete proposal for an agency to accept private donations.

Current Funding

Funding Structure. Currently, the ECCC receives its funding from the Cambodian government, foreign governments, and international bodies. The financial arrangement for the ECCC was the source of much consternation and was one of the topics during the four-year negotiations that took place before Cambodia and the United Nations (UN) agreed on the ECCC's structure. The final agreement was to split the cost of the ECCC between the UN and the Cambodian government, but both parties have since received significant portions of their shares from foreign governments. The ECCC budget is managed by both the Royal Government of Cambodia's Task Force and the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (UNAKT). In total, the UN has received donor pledges from eighteen countries as well as from the European Union (notably, the United States has not contributed), totaling \$42,758,190. Adding Microsoft's recent donation of \$100,000, this figure is quite close to the goal of \$43 million.

Funds for the Cambodian share have progressed less successfully, with only \$3,725,000 of the required \$13,300,000 secured. Cambodia received donations to help with its financial obligation from India, Thailand, and the European Union. Cambodia itself has provided \$1.5 million. The outstanding balance is currently at \$9,575,000 for the Cambodian side. It is then no wonder that the ECCC, and particularly the Cambodians, are excited about this latest donation; even though it was designated for the UN side, it will hopefully be the first of many private donations that will ease the financial burden of the ECCC.

Funding Shortcomings. Assuming that all of the required money is collected, the ECCC will operate

(and is currently operating) on a budget of \$56.3 million. This estimated budget, projected for three years, allows for less than \$20 million a year. While at first glance this sum may seem large for a single tribunal, it is miniscule compared to other international tribunals. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, for example, each currently cost over \$200 million per year. The Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), which had an original budget similar to that of the ECCC, at \$57 million for three years, is now in its fifth year and has already cost over \$107 million. The SCSL has required more money than originally planned not because of poor oversight, but because the tasks involved in the tribunal were simply more costly than previously recognized.

The ECCC similarly needs more money, not due to corruption or mismanagement, but because the current budget does not allow for certain necessities. The Open Society Justice Initiative documented a list of inadequacies in the budget in October 2006. Among other deficits, there is no money in the budget for: convening judges for a plenary session before the trial commences; travel for UN staff to engage in outreach; international witness protection outside of witness transportation; offices (or officers) to develop trial completion strategies; travel for prosecutors; scanners, visual or audio recording equipment; or online legal databases, such as Westlaw or Lexis. Against the backdrop of such shortcomings, the possibility of private donations looms large and promising.

Funding Disparities. Internally, ECCC employees receive salaries dependant on whether they are hired by Cambodia or by the United Nations. ECCC Law provides that the expenses of foreign officials and staff be covered by the UN, while the expenses of their Cambodian counterparts are paid by the Cambodian government. Article 44 of the ECCC Law states:

1. The expenses and salaries of the Cambodian administrative officials and staff, the Cambodian

judges and reserve judges, investigating judges and reserve investigating judges, and prosecutors and reserve prosecutors shall be borne by the Cambodian national budget;

2. The expenses of the foreign administrative officials and staff, the foreign judges, Co-investigating judge and Co-prosecutor sent by the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall be borne by the United Nations Trust Fund;

3. The salaries of the foreign administrative officials and staff, the foreign judges, Co-Investigating Judge and Co-Prosecutor shall be borne by the countries that contribute them at the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Though perhaps appropriate for a hybrid tribunal, such a division of finances inevitably leads to disparities in wages, with Cambodian prosecutors receiving roughly half of the international prosecutors' salaries. As Cambodian judges observe their international counterparts performing similar work but receiving twice the pay, this inequality in salary spurs differences in motivation and perceived self-value. One wonders if there is truth to the Cambodian prosecutor's quip that with only half a salary, the public can expect only half-justice. Private donations could potentially do much to lessen the disparity in resources (even if not in salaries) of the Cambodian and international employees while adding a psychological boost to the Cambodian officials, showing them that the world is indeed invested in their work.

Private Donations

Against the backdrop of such budgetary shortcomings and disparities, the possibility of private donations presents a potential alternative. In theory, it is a plausible solution; international bodies and tribunals have long accepted private donations. In practice, the procedure of receiving private donations will bring with it new complications, as agencies will have to be created to track the funds, monitor for conflicts of interest, and raise funds. Such agencies could bring additional benefits, however, such as increased transparency of ECCC finances and the opportunity for citizens, through financial investments,

to become more emotionally invested in the trial.

The ECCC Law specifically allows non-governmental contributions in its Expenses Section:

The Extraordinary Chambers may receive additional assistance for their expenses from other voluntary funds contributed by foreign governments, international institutions, non-governmental organizations, and other persons wishing to assist the proceedings.

While specifically permitting donations from non-governmental organizations and private parties, the clause does not mention any bar to accepting these donations. The operative words might be “*may receive*,” presumably allowing the ECCC to reject a donation if its receipt would create a conflict of interest. For a comparison, the Iraqi Special Tribunal similarly does not preclude private donations; the lack of criteria for private donations has nevertheless been interpreted to mean that donations can be accepted provided they do not endanger the court’s neutrality, which would violate the Tribunal Statute’s impartiality requirement.

The harder question is how to determine if a donation would affect a court’s neutrality. Microsoft’s recent donation was earmarked to be used for the UN’s share of the ECCC budget. Though Microsoft designated the money to be used to ease the UN’s financial obligation (as opposed to Cambodia’s), the UN, and in particular the ECCC, retains control over how that money is ultimately used. The situation might have been more complicated if Microsoft had directed that its funds to be used for a specific ECCC activity, such as protecting witnesses.

While such a donation is not legally prohibited, it has the potential to influence the internal ECCC agenda by prioritizing certain activities differently than the ECCC might have done if simply given the money. If such donations happen frequently, the UN (and the ECCC) could become tethered to private wishes.

Similar concerns have been raised regarding private donations to the UN in general. In 1997, Ted Turner pledged \$1 billion to the UN; at the time,

this was the largest single donation ever made to any one organization. The concern raised was that if the UN became reliant on private sources, it might become more responsible to private individuals than to member states. Additionally, the act of encouraging individual donations was seen as a possible way of relieving UN member states of their financial obligations to the UN and thus undermining membership accountability. In part to alleviate such concerns, Turner established a United Nations Foundation (UNF) to distribute his donation in annual increments of \$100 million for ten years. The UN also established a foundation to receive the funds, the United Nations International Partnership Trust Fund Office (UNFIP), which made the decisions on which programs qualified for UNF money.

If the ECCC plans to encourage more private donations, a similar foundation would have to be established to accept the money. Though the ECCC Law, unlike the UN Charter, explicitly allows private donations, the creation of an agency within the ECCC to disburse the funds would substantially decrease the influence individual donors would have over their funds. Even if the agency still acted under broad guidelines from donors (such as Microsoft’s direction to give the money to the UN side of the hybrid tribunal), the agency could work with (and within) the ECCC to ensure that the money was being spent to fund projects the ECCC prioritizes (and not those that donors choose).

To assure donors that their money is being used efficiently, the agency could keep documented records of how, when, and where the donated money was spent. Such record-keeping would increase the financial transparency of the institution and inspire confidence in its daily affairs. This financial documentation would be especially beneficial for an institution such as the ECCC, which, despite its relatively small budget, has already been lambasted by the Cambodian government as a poor use of money; as reported in *The Cambodia Daily*, “Assembly President Prince Norodom Ranariddh dismissed the Tribunal’s value Monday, saying its projected budget would be better

spent improving the nation's agricultural sector." Meticulous financial records could show the public what is being accomplished by detailing the projects funded.

In addition to fears about private corporations having too much influence over the Tribunal's activities, an entirely different problem of conflict of interest arises when considering donations from private individuals. A private party might be interested in contributing funds not to persuade the UN to concentrate on certain issues, but rather to sway judicial decisions in a particular case. The ECCC Law does not specifically prohibit participants in the Tribunal from donating money, but such a contribution would hopefully be rejected by the court. Attorneys, defendants, witnesses, and joined civil parties should be barred from donating to the ECCC in order to prevent any real or perceived bribery attempts. Although many victims of the Khmer Rouge understandably wish to contribute funds to the ECCC to ensure that the court succeeds, the idea of possible plaintiffs funding their own prosecutors and judges seems contrary to the system of law the ECCC is trying to implement; no one should have to pay for justice. Additionally, in order for the victims to receive justice, the judges must be impartial. To have victims pay to support their own court would paradoxically ruin the credibility that the court – and they themselves – will receive.

A more complicated case might arise if an individual were allowed to donate, and then later decided to join a suit as a civil party. Should an individual be barred from bringing a case (essentially losing the right to trial) because of a previous donation? The United States, for example, does not prohibit civil parties from donating to judicial elections and then presenting cases to the same judges whose campaign they financed. While a slightly different situation, the potential for a conflict of interest is similar: judges hearing cases from parties who have given them money. Again, though there is no legal bar, the possibility of victims having financial influence over their future judges seems to present a significant

conflict of interest. Since it is currently unclear whether the ECCC will even allow complaints from private individuals, this potential conflict might be moot.

In the event that such complaints are permitted, however, the agency could use its discretion under the ECCC Law ("*may receive*") to reject donations from parties who might affect the court's neutrality. Such an arrangement seems susceptible, however, to abuse of discretion. Alternatively, the agency could keep all donor information confidential; the agency could manage the funds and erect a "Chinese Wall" to prevent prosecutors and judges from knowing who contributed what.

Another option is that the ECCC could simply require that all donations be donations of goods specifically to be used for the Tribunal and not money. In-kind donations have been successful in the past with international tribunals. In 2000, for example, a group of American prosecutors worked with IBM to deliver \$3 million in computers, technology, and training to the United Nations War Crimes Tribunals in Bosnia and Rwanda; this gift marked the largest private donation in the history of the tribunals. Such a restriction on donations, however, is not in the best interest of either the ECCC or the donors. It is often much more beneficial for the ECCC to have money to spend as it pleases (on both technology and outreach projects, for instance); additionally, it is often much easier for private corporations and individuals to write a check than to ship expensive equipment overseas. Furthermore, accepting in-kind donations does not necessarily reduce the chances of donations being used to influence the court or bribe judges. Buying expensive cars for prosecutors (no matter how much they are needed for transportation) could be just as powerful a corruption tool as paying them in cash.

The creation of an agency, however, such as previously mentioned to combat the financial influence of private corporate donors, could similarly neutralize individual donations. Conflicts of interest could be avoided by requiring that all individual donations be handled by an independent foundation.

The same foundation that could disperse funds made by larger corporations to the Tribunal could also accept and distribute individual donations. After being funneled through the foundation, individual donations would be part of a larger pool of money and rendered essentially anonymous.

Proposal

♦ If the ECCC is serious about soliciting private donations, it should establish an internal office to receive and disperse the funds.

♦ This agency should cooperate with the ECCC accounting office to stay informed of where gaps are in the ECCC budget.

♦ This agency should then work to match the

financial needs of the ECCC with donors' directives (or restrictions).

♦ The agency should produce audit reports to keep donors and the public aware of how the ECCC is spending its money.

♦ If private complaints are allowed, donations from current civil parties should either be absolutely barred or accepted only as anonymous contributions through the independent agency.

Alison Kamhi is a Harvard JD candidate and Chayes Fellow, Human Rights Program Fellowship Winner, who is working on the access procedure for documents DC-Cam holds.

MISSING SIBLINGS

March 15, 2007

Dear Mr. Youk Chhang,

I came across some information about your organization's assistance in locating missing family members and would like for DC-Cam to help me locate my siblings who were separated from me in 1975.

My twin sister and I were born in January 1975 in Phnom Penh. We were taken to a Phnom Penh orphanage called Canada House a week or so after we were born and in March 1975, we left Cambodia to be adopted by a Canadian family. We are looking for information about our older brother and sister who were left behind in Phnom Penh.

We do not know the names of our family members or which area of Cambodia we came from. We only know the small bits of information that we learned from the Canadian women who worked in the orphanage.

Our father had died before we were born and was likely a soldier for the Lon Nol government. By the time our mother delivered us in 1975, she was so weak from malnutrition that she could not take care of us. Somebody told the orphanage staff about us, so they searched for us until they found us lying on a pile of garbage in a hut. They brought us to Canada House and moved our mother to a hospice across the street. Our sister, approximately age 14, worked at the orphanage and our brother, approximately age 7, stayed with our mother.

There were 40 orphaned babies in Canada House, which employed about 10 - 15 Cambodians to help look after the babies, all of whom were taken to Canada for adoption. It was run by several Canadian women. Naomi Bronstain traveled back and forth from Cambodia and Canada to arrange the adoptions, while Dolly Charet and Anna Charet helped take care of the babies.

While we do not have many specific details about our family, we hope that this information about our background and Canada House may be familiar to someone who knew our brother and sister. I thank you in advance for DC-Cam's assistance in helping me to find more information about my family and possibly to reunite with them.

Sincerely,

Naomi Hamersley

KHMER ROUGE IRRIGATION DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBODIA

Jeffrey Himel

"If we have water, we can have rice. If we have rice, we can have everything."

There has never been a modern regime that placed more emphasis and resources towards developing irrigation than Democratic Kampuchea from 1975-1979. The Khmer Rouge emptied all cities and towns, and put practically the entire population to work planting rice and digging irrigation dikes and canals. Yet, over 20% of the population died of exhaustion, starvation, disease and execution, and the overall rice production likely never attained that of the peak output of the 1960s. This paper describes what the Khmer Rouge did to develop irrigation on such a massive scale and the reasons behind their policy and its failure.

The Khmer Rouge leadership believed that they were implementing the purest socialist revolution the world had ever seen based on their having distilled a unique "correct line" of socialist thought. Society was completely restructured along military lines for agriculture to cut people's ties to the land and each other. Rice production targets were set for the first year at more than triple the pre-war average for the entire country. This huge increase in yield was to be attained without chemical fertilizers, expertise or mechanization – the Khmer Rouge intended to prove that technology was not needed; the sole requirement for success was the collective will of the revolutionary people. Thus, this case study provides an antithesis to modern irrigation understanding that confirms current practice, particularly the importance of appropriate technology and its proper application and farmer-led agriculture and irrigation management.

Introduction

"In order to adhere closely to plan and to resolve problems in a timely fashion, in the direction decided upon of three tons per hectare...Choose as models, districts which have increased production to three tons

per hectare so that they can fly the flag of the "Great Leap Forward."... The real key is three tons [per hectare]"

The speaker of these words, believed to have been Pol Pot, was explaining to the Khmer Rouge cadres of the West Zone that they should more than triple their rice production from peak pre-war levels in the coming season. Although this region was one of the poorest in Cambodia and one year removed from five years of civil warfare, the speaker foresaw the task ahead to be a relatively simple and easily attainable one. After all, according to the Party Center of the Communist Party of Democratic Kampuchea (CPK):

"We have leaped over the neo-colonial, semi-feudalist society of the American imperialists, the feudalists and capitalists of every nation, and have achieved a socialist society straight away. The situation is completely different from other countries... As for us, we have a different character than them. We are faster than they are... Our time is correct, both in terms of strategy and tactics... Our characteristics are different. Our line is different... Our revolutionary movement is a new experience, and an important one in the whole world, because we don't perform like others."

These speeches and the policy documents that were produced by the leadership of the Khmer Rouge articulate a confident, clear and consistent policy for the rapid economic and political development of a pure socialist state, in their phase of "a Super Great Leap Forward." The leap was to be powered by a massive increase in agricultural production countrywide. This agricultural surplus then would provide the capital for moving into light, then heavy

industry. The most important factor in the success of this revolution was harnessing the force of the people and applying it collectively to the obstacle of the land,

“because technology is not the decisive factor; the determining factors of a revolution are politics, revolutionary people, and revolutionary methods.”

Only two and a half years later, the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed, leaving a desperate population wandering shocked across the countryside in search of other family members. It is estimated that approximately 1.7 million people died from exhaustion, disease, starvation, privation and execution under their leadership. Most of the deaths occurred within these three and a half years, as the harsh living conditions took their toll on the people and a series of widening purges implemented by the Party Center spiraled out of control.

How was this “Super Great Leap Forward” to occur?

A new social order. First, and foremost, was the complete restructuring of society. This was vital in order to transform the people into revolutionaries and to best harness their labor along with the other “means of production” to apply to the land. The cities were emptied immediately upon the Khmer Rouge victory in April 1975, with people moved out to the rural areas to become farm labor. The population was reorganized along military lines into “production groups,” consisting of “cooperatives” and “mobile brigades.” The people were assigned groups according to their age, physical condition, gender and civil status, with some constantly on the move within regions and others attached to a commune. The production groups were then exhorted to produce more rice using “storming offensives” to attack the land.

All land, tools and livestock were collectivized, and people were assigned various agricultural work including children and the elderly. Practically all people were mobilized for the digging of dikes and canals throughout the country. A subversive motive

behind this restructuring was to break up family units – children were generally allowed to visit their parents only once every two or three months and were brainwashed into trusting only the “Angkar,” i.e., the Khmer Rouge. In order to replenish the population, marriages were arranged by local cadres without any consultation or consideration of the people involved.

An additional and primary consideration of the Khmer Rouge was maintaining constant “class struggle” so as to eliminate what they perceived as internal and external enemies who were opposed to the revolution. This would also serve to purify the Party gradually and consolidate control with the Party Center. Anyone who was a poor farmer from an area that had supported the Khmer Rouge during the war was by definition of the proper class, while anyone who was a better-off peasant, bourgeois, non-Khmer Rouge soldier, educated or from an area opposed to the Khmer Rouge during the war was a class enemy. The population was thus segregated into the “base” or “old” people who could be trusted and the “new” people who could not. The violence of the revolution ensured that local orders and national policy were followed without question, even where it was clear that mistakes were being made.

A new agriculture fueled by irrigation. The key strategy for the increase in rice production was to double- and triple-crop as many areas as possible through irrigation. Cambodia’s pre-war rice cropping area had been approximately 2.5 million hectares, of which only 74,000 hectares was irrigated. In December 1975, Pol Pot noted in an interview that the plan was to irrigate 1.5 million hectares of land. The strategy was described by Pijpers:

“To reach these [national increases in production] objectives a national ‘land reclamation plan’ was launched, based on a very simple technical approach:

1. a nationwide chessboard of leveled 1 ha plots in productive areas and in the reclaimed forest;

2. water management (irrigation and drainage) needed for high yielding varieties through a rectangular pattern of ditches and canals:

a. canals in a 1x1 km grid following the coordinate lines shown on the 1:50,000 topographical maps [or aligned with the national roads] and with a base width larger than 3-5 m;

b. within each 1x1 km grid, ditches each 200 m surrounding a unit of 4 has;

In Takeo province the satellite picture shows also a 10x10 km grid of larger canals

3. The creation of reservoirs by constructing long dykes along depressions or by damming natural depressions and alleys; dykes were often projected along a canal at the coordinate lines of the 1x1 km grid;

4. the construction of river closures with control structures to divert water into reservoirs or the canal/ditch system;

5. the building of water control structures using given general guidelines;

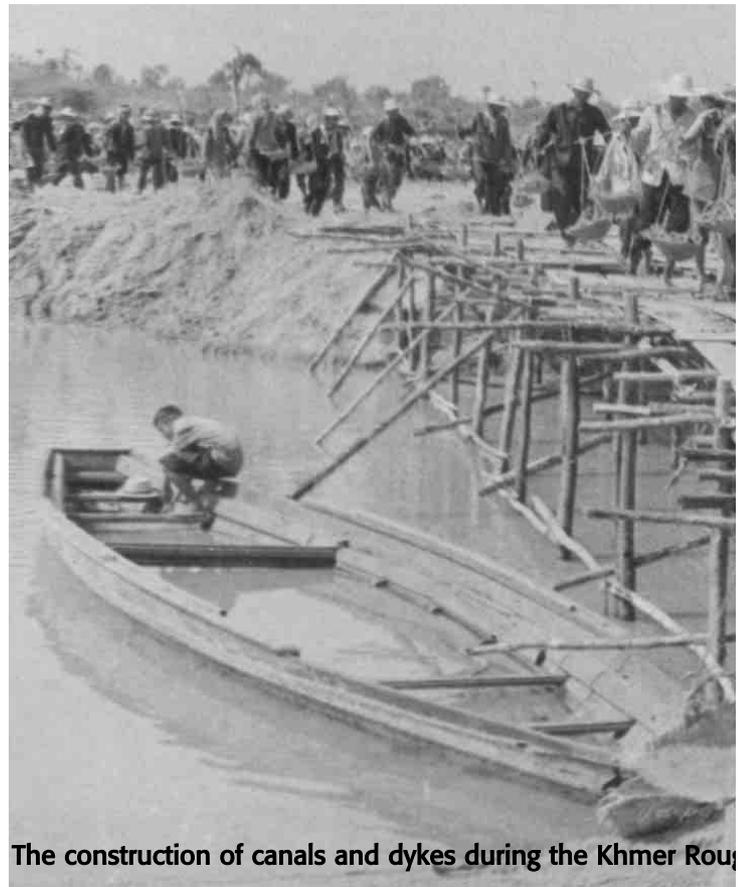
6. the construction of pump stations to supply additional water for the canal/ditch system.

This approach reduced the plan to setting out alignments, using even given standards for cross sections of canals, ditches and dykes, providing materials and organising labour. Each village chief had to fulfill a certain programme of works in his area... First priority at village level was continued rice growing but earthworks for the 'reclamation activities' were almost as important... Everything was done by hand with only a few hand tools. Materials were in short supply and houses were demolished to provide rebar and bricks. There was no technical or quality control of the works.

A result of all this work during the Pol Pot era is an inheritance of an enormous amount of canals, dykes and structures all over Kampuchea. Only mountainous terrain preventing canal construction..."

In places where traditional irrigation structures or French-constructed structures existed, the Khmer Rouge enlarged the dykes to expand the reservoir areas and built new canals. The reparcelization into the grid network described above proceeded in new areas and in the lower-lying and most productive soils. This breaking down of the traditional paddy field arrangement served also to separate the people from the lands that they had owned before, another strategy to promote collectivization.

The extent of the construction of the works



The construction of canals and dykes during the Khmer Rouge

was so astonishing that W.J. van Liere, a noted expert on Cambodian agriculture and irrigation working at the Mekong Secretariat, was able to track the development using low resolution satellite imagery. In an inventory of Cambodian irrigation systems conducted in 1993-1994, fully 79% of the schemes had been constructed in the brief period of Democratic Kampuchea – and practically all schemes existing prior to this era had been altered by the Khmer Rouge.

In terms of agricultural practices, almost

everything was changed. The traditional rice seeds were gradually replaced by higher yielding varieties imported from China by 1977-1978. Even small details such as the distance between transplanted seedlings and the number of seedlings per bunch was changed as a general policy across the country. With the lack of imported materials such as fertilizers and insecticides, a tremendous effort was made to maximize the use of available materials for green manuring, compost and production of natural insecticides. Human fertilizer was used extensively



ge regime

despite the cultural abhorrence of this method. Some insecticides were imported from China in exchange for rice, but these limited amounts were used only on land that had been designated as having the highest production potential.

The Results of the New System – Irrigation Work

Examination of the irrigation works in the post-Khmer Rouge period has allowed clear definition of the many problems caused by the new system. The hydrology of the overall system was deeply

flawed. Canals of tens of kilometers in length were dug connecting adjacent watersheds together. But this complex interweaving of canals and catchments was controlled by local cadre according to their immediate needs. Thus, there was no way to predict or adjust the effect of one canal or weir closing on the rest of the system nor any communication between those operating different parts of the system. The natural drainage patterns were badly disrupted and the new routes caused unexpected flows to occur that could not be predicted by the local people who had lived there for their entire lives.

The irrigation works were built anywhere it was possible without consideration of the overall water requirements or stream capacity. As a result, there was more infrastructure than could be served by the catchments and no control or rational sharing of the resources according to where the highest or most equitable benefits could be gained. Most of the large canals above the floodplain block overland runoff and were built with minimal cross-drainage. Therefore they caused flooding when runoff pooled and could not be drained and were eventually breached by overflows, causing major repairs and constant maintenance.

The dikes were built in flat areas, so often flooded as much area as they were meant to irrigate. Manual labor was exclusively used for dike construction, even on very large dikes, so compaction was poor and the dikes prone to piping and settling. This problem was exacerbated by the exclusive use of local soils for dike construction regardless of their suitability and the extremely high daily volume of soil that was required to be dug by each worker.

Lack of technological expertise for design and materials for structures meant that spilling structures were inevitably under-sized and usually built too high. It was only a matter of time before they were over-topped or undercut and formed a large hole in the dike. Then the dikes served to channel flows from the periphery of the shallow valleys to the center, whereupon they quickly drained through the natural channels and grid of ditches into the

Mekong River system. This is the opposite effect of the traditional smaller dikes built by the Khmer farmers that served to spread flows out from the center of the watershed to the periphery where they were captured in the paddy and in small tanks.

The Khmer Rouge systems always used the spilling structure for irrigation as well as drainage, so the main drain functioned as a primary canal when spilling wasn't required. Thus the primary canals were too wide and deep, didn't command many of the fields they were meant to serve, and inevitably were eroded by the annual flood flows.

As the local leaders lacked the expertise or technicians to design canals and canal structures properly, all reservoirs had a "sub-dyke" below the main dyke that served to pool water below the main structure and enable flows to enter the canals. This increased the water lost to infiltration and evaporation, and took the pooled area out of production; it was thus very inefficient. When flood flows had to be spilled, they had to be spilled through the sub-dikes as well, resulting in damage to both and heavy maintenance requirements.

The reparcelization of small paddy fields into larger uniform 1 hectare plots destroyed the intricate system of paddy cells that had been constructed carefully over centuries to capture and distribute rainfall and runoff, and take advantage of the specific conditions of soil and traditional seed varieties.

The canals/ditches surrounding them were dug as shallow, wide, flat channels with low bunds and so were ill-suited for both irrigation and drainage. The lack of topographic survey and poor standards to which canals had been constructed meant that the grid of canals essentially served to drain higher paddy lands, leaving them prone to drought. In lower-lying areas, the drained flows concentrated and were blocked by dikes and the larger canals, and so caused flooding. Often canals ran uphill or were simply dug lower into the ground next to the fields so they could not carry water to the paddy they were meant to serve. The checkerboard grid constructed over much of the productive paddy

area contained thousands of junctions – yet there were no construction materials or expertise to build permanent regulation and distribution structures. Therefore the ability to distribute and control flows within the network was severely compromised and the canal network required constant attention for operation and maintenance.

The Result of the New System – Agriculture and the Social Order

Cambodia had over the centuries of rice cultivation developed thousands of indigenous varieties of rice, each suited to the particular soil, water and other conditions of the area where they grew. Certain varieties were simply not planted, such as deepwater, or "floating" rice, as the Khmer Rouge judged them to be valueless. As floating rice was the only variety that could be planted in the deepwater areas, this otherwise useful land was left fallow. The optimal conditions for the higher yielding varieties preferred by the Khmer Rouge were attainable in some places but unsuitable in most. Thus, the potential benefits for the substitution of the new varieties were lost by rigidly uniform and overly accelerated implementation.

The reparcelization into larger 1 hectare fields made working the field more efficient; however, the fields were very uneven in their levels. As a result, parts of the field were exposed and prone to water stress and provided haven for pests while other areas were in deep water. The same rice varieties were planted throughout the field so conditions varied within the same field and reduced yields accordingly.

Many of the other efforts to maximize production through the use of locally available materials were also wasted through poor implementation as detailed by Martin:

"The leaders of the new regime had other ideas: produce more, indeed, but also apply the same methods everywhere... The agronomists who worked in the rice growing said that the human fertilizer, in some places, was badly utilized: it was spread

prior to the ploughing during the dry season, allowing evaporation, the wind and the sun's rays and the rain to eliminate the fertilizing elements, most notably the nitrogen. Often the same was true with the compost which had been dried out by the sun before being spread on the fields... [for the new transplanting arrangement] The Khmer Rouge adopted a method which, according to them, existed prior to 1970, perhaps in a uniquely experimental state as it is unknown to the peasants and agronomy staff interviewed... All peasants, technicians, engineers, and agronomists who participated in the transplanting emphasized the major inconvenience of this modification: the rice bunches were less fat with less developed plants, the grains were shorter, the maturation of the grains was poor and in extreme cases, the husks were empty... It is probably the combination of these different factors which explains the average results, even mediocre in terms of yield, at least in the beginning.

Other schemes contained within CPK documents demonstrate the lack of understanding of the leadership in agricultural and industrial development. The plans were hastily thrown together and inconsistent, and contained tables filled with numbers for production that appear to have been plucked from the sky. Numerous instances demonstrate how the leaders were naive and plans were far-fetched:

"[on improvement of rice varieties] we must set up a meteorological station... [on coal] we start thinking about our own coal from now on...*if there's any we'll find it.* We must set up factories to refine them... [on the problem of fertilizers] The possibility of using human urine hasn't been exhausted either. *Urine has yet to be collected. We collect thirty percent.* That leaves a surplus of seventy percent. There's also the urine

of cows and buffaloes. We could make enclosures for them and at night they could urinate into troughs and we could gather the urine. In this way we could fulfill the 1977 plan."

The plans outline the big picture, including shopping lists all of the different items that were to be produced for the population and the quantities in tons of each item to be made for each year. Yet it also defines in detail the lives of each person, including the actual meals and numbers and types of desserts that are to be eaten on a weekly basis.

With the rapid and sweeping changes and limited number of trusted people available to the Khmer Rouge, it was necessary that there was a high degree of decentralization with wide variance in terms of local application of policy. It is equally clear that there were attempts to control every aspect of agriculture and irrigation from above. As noted by Twining based on his interviews with refugees from Democratic Kampuchea:

"According to numerous refugees, for example, rice was planted on soil whether it was good or not; each administrative entity had to undertake a specified amount of irrigation work, whatever the need... The word of when to plant, when to weed, when to harvest, was often transmitted from on high. An entire region might begin planting all on the same day, although the water conditions over such a large expanse and could hardly be expected to be uniform."

A consequence of the segregation of the people into "new" and "old" people and the constant maintaining of "class hatred" was that in many places the educated technical people (including engineers and agriculturalists), as well as better and more innovative farmers, were eliminated or turned into silent laborers under severe hardship while the poorest people became their overseers and leaders. The poorest people were often the least equipped

to manage the agricultural production and irrigation works and their lack of capacity caused many of the failures observed.

Finally, the overly ambitious targets for rice production resulted in local cadre collecting the rice produced and shipping it back to the central authority without keeping sufficient food for the people. The meager rations, harsh working conditions, heavy work load, lack of medicine, and often unsympathetic cadres led to many deaths from exhaustion, disease, starvation and execution. The workforce was progressively weakened and reduced as their workload increased. Internal purges of the local and regional leadership resulted in changes in leaders and large movements of people, thereby further destabilizing agricultural production.

The Root Source of the Problems

The Khmer Rouge were fanatically self-reliant and determined to prove that their revolution could succeed with a bare minimum of technical knowledge and assistance. While there were instances where technically-trained people were used, including Chinese and North Korean technicians brought in to assist in the development of irrigation and industrial plants, it is clear that technical assistance was anathema to the leadership. Most of the irrigation works were deliberately built by a trial and error methodology as shown in Vickery:

“Clearly more important than development of industry was the mania for self-reliance and building on a poor-peasant base without using technological expertise from the old society. Early in 1977 Khieu Samphan said, “whether the dams and reservoirs that we have built last only 5 or 10 years does not matter,” for the people would learn by doing (implicitly without the help of irrigation engineers like Pin Yathay)...”

But the lack of engineering technical know-how resulted in useless or grossly inefficient irrigation works causing a huge waste of effort and loss of life in building and repeatedly repairing the works. The

lack of agricultural extension and research caused a failure to achieve benefits from the heavy labors. This was ignored though because technology was a threat – people who possessed it had a power that did not stem from revolutionary consciousness and obtained their knowledge from the corrupt society the Khmer Rouge sought to replace.

“Compared to other countries, in industrial terms, we are extremely weak. Moreover, we don’t use old workers, because if we used old workers without carefully selecting and purifying them first, there would be many complications, politically, which would lead to more difficulties for us.”

Thus, Khmer students who were abroad when the revolution began were exhorted to return to help rebuild the country. But when they returned, they were either killed or imprisoned for the remainder of the regime. Even an early Khmer Rouge defector who had been working with the Mekong Secretariat on pioneer projects to develop irrigated agriculture was not used in this capacity – instead he was also held at the Boeung Trabek prison.

The speed of implementation and scale of the irrigation works and changes in agriculture were far too ambitious and not based on a complete or competent understanding of the issues. There was no local development process and no trials to develop successful approaches or local adaptations. As a result, the ambitious Khmer Rouge irrigation development failed catastrophically, leaving the wreckage strewn across the landscape. Dealing with this failed infrastructure and the lack of human resources remains one of the most pressing and difficult challenges faced by Cambodia today.

The Responsibility for the Problems

The responsibility for the catastrophe of Democratic Kampuchea ultimately lies within the Party Center, the small core group within the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) who led the revolution. This group was responsible for developing

the “correct line” of policies that have been described. Their words in speeches and surviving documents demonstrate astonishing hubris in the certainty that their policies were infallible and a viewpoint that everything was essentially political in nature.

“We do not blame the objective conditions.”

Achieving success in the revolution was entirely a result of maintaining proper class consciousness and following the correct line; it had nothing to do with whether rainfall was timely or other “objective conditions.” Consequently, those who didn’t reach the targets set by the leadership were impure, unpurged of their base elements rooted in the unjust society. This explains why the poorest peasants were to be trusted while the “new” people could not. One’s class consciousness was demonstrated irrefutably by one’s material conditions.

The failure to achieve production targets threatened the entire foundation of the revolution as the surplus rice being produced was not providing near enough to rapidly industrialize and arm the military for a war with the “hereditary enemy” of Vietnam. Thus, not achieving production targets became incontrovertible evidence that there were traitors within the CPK in these areas who were sabotaging the revolution – it was only a matter of time before the Party Center would purge them to find out who was responsible. The cadres identified were then taken to Tuol Sleng prison and brutally tortured until they confessed to being counter-revolutionary. This provided evidence to support the original charge; and the victims would name their friends and associates who would then be brought in to be tortured to death in an increasing deluge of blood and misery.

As for the results of the agrarian revolution, it is well summarized by Martin:

“One can always ask oneself if it was necessary to overthrow the politics of the country, to demolish the family structure, to abolish at a single stroke centuries of culture and civilization, to mobilize the majority of the population for rice-growing,

to work at a brutal pace in order to produce pretty much the same, as it seems, as that produced in the 1960s and to establish a general famine in a country where food shortages were not existing before, at least in quantity. Those who were carried away by disease, starvation or violent death during this work, “hardly more than a million” say the officials of Democratic Kampuchea, can no longer pass in silence. They explain by themselves the unpopularity of a regime whose priority was the success of agriculture and that the population, including peasants, vow today to forget.”

The Lessons Learned from the Khmer Rouge Experience

The main lessons that can be summarized from the sad experience of Democratic Kampuchea serve as a confirmation of much that has evolved as modern irrigation practice, including:

1. The importance of proper technical design and implementation.
2. The need to identify innovative, competent and popular local leadership free of outside politics.
3. The necessity for local adaptation, bottom-up planning and flexible approaches to irrigation and agriculture.
4. Maintaining a step-by-step and learning approach appropriate to the capacity of the people and agricultural system.

Jeffrey Himel is managing director of Aruna Technology Ltd.

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THE NEED TO STUDY THE HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

Sampeou Ros

Should the younger generation of Cambodians be taught the history of Democratic Kampuchea? Since 2002, no text on Democratic Kampuchea's history has been included in the public school curriculum. If there is no collaborative effort and initiative, this and future generations will know only a little about the hardships that occurred in their own country's past. Therefore, children born after the Khmer Rouge regime should be taught about the causes and effects of the Cambodian genocide. Providing them with education about genocide would help to teach them that the same mistakes should not be repeated, and it would be a great asset in building a bright future for themselves and Cambodia.

Education on the topic of Democratic Kampuchea is probably the most effective way to prevent genocide and violations of human rights from happening again in the future. Furthermore, this method can promote reconciliation between victims and perpetrators. It has been nearly 30 years since the collapse of Democratic Kampuchea. Most of the survivors from this regime have been hiding their bitter experiences for years. Some of them do not want to share their life stories, while others are willing to reveal their experiences but they have little chance of doing so beyond telling their families. While describing their lives during Democratic Kampuchea, some parents complained that their children do not believe that such brutality existed in Cambodia.

Every year on the New Year and Pchum Ben holidays, my wife and I always bring food to the monks in the pagoda, where we dedicate our good deeds to our ancestors' spirits, as well as those of my parents and my two older siblings who died during the Pol Pot regime. When my wife and I were offering food to the monks, burning incense, and praying, my five year-old son suddenly asked me what I had said. I told him that I was thinking of his grandparents, aunts and uncles who were killed during Democratic Kampuchea.

Hearing my response, my son expressed his

doubt through his face. He continued asking, "Why were they killed? Who is the Khmer Rouge?" I was stunned on hearing his childlike question. Then, my son said, when he grows up, he wants to be a policeman so he use a gun to shoot the Khmer Rouge who killed his grandparents, aunts, and uncle.

These were the words of a young boy, the son of a survivor, and a grandson of victims who lost their lives during the Khmer Rouge regime. Having heard what my son said, I was very shocked. I asked myself what we should do to make the young generation understand the history of the Khmer Rouge regime.

His words, like those of many other Cambodian children, are a sign that not describing Cambodia's acts of genocide can menace the country's future. Teaching the younger generation the details of the events of Democratic Kampuchea would make the survivors of genocide feel relieved because they would be given a chance to share their bitter experiences with their children. In addition, the study of Democratic Kampuchea will create debate on this topic. Students can absorb knowledge about the regime and discuss what they have learned in class with their teacher and parents who have lived through this regime.

The establishment of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC, popularly known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal) shows that the study of Democratic Kampuchea is even more important. Students should be taught about the history of Democratic Kampuchea so they can be ready to participate in the process of the ECCC. Hopefully, the students would help strengthen the justice system in Cambodia. If Cambodian people understand the history of Democratic Kampuchea, they would be well-prepared to participate in the process of the Tribunal and be capable of joining discussions about Cambodia's justice issue.

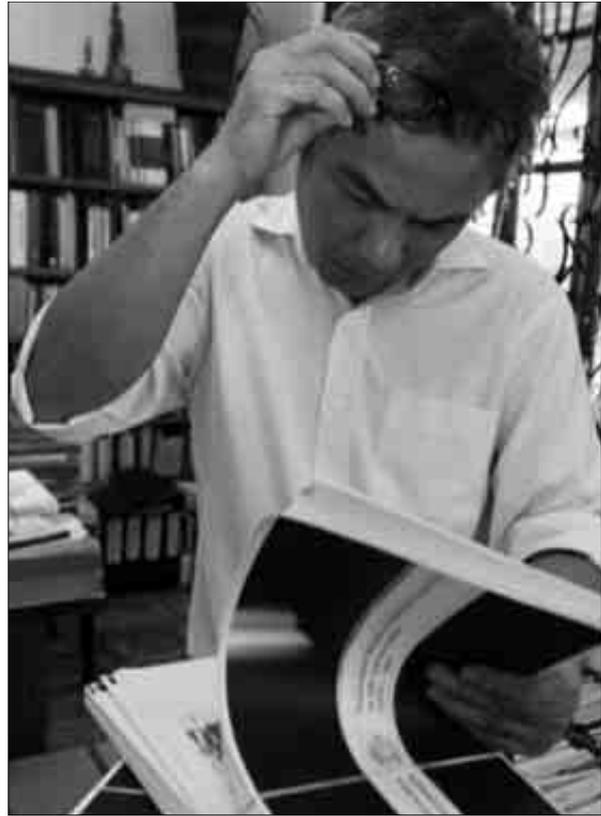
It could be dangerous if the history of Democratic Kampuchea is continuously omitted from the school curriculum. If this subject is absent from the curriculum,

the next generations could experience genocide again. I truly hope that the text of the history of Democratic Kampuchea that DC-Cam recently prepared will be included in the school curriculum. Young Cambodians have to be given chance to learn their own history.

Understanding their own history can build their ability to lead their country toward a prosperous future.

Sampeou Ros is the manager of DC-Cam's Database Team, which archives documents at the Center.

DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA DOCUMENTS RECEIVED FROM SWEDEN ON FEB 12, 2007



TWO SIBLINGS LOST IN THE KHMER ROUGE REGIME

Ieb Duch

This is the story of Suon Sorn, who is living in Chrey Tnaot village, Tramkak sub-district, Tramkak district, Takeo province. Even though these bitter events happened 30 years ago, Suon Sorn still grieves over his two beloved siblings who lost their lives during the Khmer Rouge regime.

In addition, Suon Sorn's parents passed away from old age, and two of his other siblings died of disease during the regime. The grief he suffered from their deaths faded away sooner than the pain caused by the deaths of his two siblings who were killed by the Khmer Rouge. This bitter memory still haunts him.

Sometimes Suon Sorn tries to picture the scene in which the Khmer Rouge tortured his siblings. He wonders what kind of torture they used and how they killed them. He cannot imagine the fear and pain his younger siblings had to bear before they were killed. This is not an ordinary bereavement.

Suon Thuon is a wife of one of Suon Sorn's sibling. Together they had two daughters. Suon Thuon still keeps her husband's photos.

After the Khmer Rouge were toppled, freedom of religion and belief came back into our lives. We Buddhists hold a religious ceremony to dedicate good deeds to our ancestors. Holding the ancestors' photos, we walk around the temple three times to show respect and honor to our ancestors. Then we place the photos in the temple. This is the only way we have to lessen our grief and bereavement.

In order to preserve the historical events of the hardship we endured during Democratic Kampuchea and commemorate the loss of two million Cambodians, I would like to give my photos to the Documentation Center of Cambodia. The Center can keep these photos as evidence and publish my article in *the Searching for the Truth*. The following is the story of Suon Sorn's family.

In Saut was born in Chrey Tnaot village, Tramkak sub-district, Tramkak district (known as District 105 by the Khmer Rouge), Takeo province (Region 13). His wife's name was Seng Yang, whose hometown was Trapaing Thom village, Rornameam sub-district, Traing district (District 107), Takeo province. Seng Yang died in the 1980s. In Saut and Seng Yang had four sons and one daughter. They were Suon Sorn (son) born in 1940; Suon Sam-Ol (son), 1945; Suon Thuon (daughter), 1954; Suon Sam-Oeun (son), 1957; and Suon Chan (son), 1961. Their children all were born at Trapaing Thom village.

1. Suon Sorn

When Suon Sorn was a child, he became a monk and went to Trapaing Thom Pagoda for his elementary school with the other monks. In 1969, Suon Sorn enlisted in the Royal Khmer Armed Forces. He worked at the Sloek military barracks in Phnom Penh. After March 18, 1970, Suon Sorn was moved to Prey Sandek Barracks located in the center of Traing district. At that time, Kim Kou, who had been a teacher, was appointed governor of Traing district.

Soon after, war broke out and quickly spread throughout the country. The Khmer Rouge, Viet Cong, the Vietnamese, and Lon Nol soldiers were all fighting. The war became worse and worse. People who lived near a military barracks feared and suffered the most. For instance, houses and other property around Prey Sandek were abandoned after people fled to more secluded areas. The National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK) and militiamen were in charge of defending the country. Both NUFK and the militiamen had higher morals and earned the faith of the common people, unlike Lon Nol's soldiers.

Most Cambodians still had sympathy and loyalty to King Norodom Sihanouk, and they turned their anger toward Marshal Lon Nol and Sirik Matak They

regarded these two men as traitors who had made Cambodia an imperialist American colony. The disgrace of French colonialism had left its mark and remained in the minds of the Khmer people. The word “colony” automatically stirred up patriotism in Cambodians.

Lon Nol began importing weapons to prepare for defending his regime. His regime conscripted youth into the army and commando units. Ordinary people were forced to leave their homeland and go to places where battles constantly took place. According to an old saying “Do not block the adze. Do not block the battle.”

In Saut and Seng Yang escaped to his homeland in Chrey Tnaot Village, Tramkak sub-district. Other people also moved to the villages where their relatives or friends lived so that they could ask for help.

The country was in political turmoil, and this situation was favorable to the Khmer Rouge and Viet Cong, who were collaborating with NUFK, headed by King Norodom Sihanouk. At that time, King Sihanouk was also the head of state. He appealed to his people to struggle against the Lon Nol soldiers.

Both the Viet Cong and Khmer Rouge carefully planned and quickly organized their infrastructure in each village, sub-district, and district. In each village, they had their authority. They provided courses, arranged frequent meetings, and spread their United Front’s political propaganda every day and night to households and the public.

Wearing royal logos on their shirt pockets, the Viet Cong soldiers also counted themselves as soldiers of King Sihanouk. The soldiers of the King were warmly welcomed by the people. Viet Cong soldiers had more modern weapons than the Khmer Rouge. In battles with the Lon Nol soldiers, despite their skinny appearance, the Viet Cong soldiers were braver than the Khmer Rouge.

The National United Front’s policy including their strong will and the many youths who were determined to serve the Front of Cambodia. Older people said that having weapons for the battle was

the best thing, even though there were no salaries or military uniforms.

Under District Governor Kim Kou, Prey Sandek village became isolated. The surrounding villages were abandoned and silent. There were no ordinary people except the militiamen, security guards, and spies who were trying to uncover their enemies. The Khmer Rouge leader of the NUFK formulated a theory that “Humans are everything. Labor is always an infinite resource.”

Having heard that his parents and relatives had been evacuated to Chrey Tnaot, Suon Sorn dropped his weapons and secretly ran back to his parents in 1971. He then joined the National United Front by hiding his former identity of being a soldier. He was placed in an arts unit.

2. Suon Sam-Ol

Sam-Ol was Suon Sorn’s younger brother. He



Suon Sam-Ol

was a student at Otey Public High School in Takeo province. In 1966, Sam-Ol passed his junior high school exam and took an entrance exam to become a non-commissioned soldier.

After the March 18, 1970 coup d’état, Sam-Ol got married. His wife was the daughter of a man who held the military ranks of both major and general. As a result of his father-in-law’s influence, Sam-Ol was promoted to be an officer responsible

for defending Pochentong Airport. Sam-Ol would take direct command from general So Kamkay. At Pochentong, the flights were taking American diplomats in and out of Cambodia. Sam-Ol was also offered an opportunity to travel by plane, but he could never leave his wife and children.

On April 17, 1975, Sam-Ol was at Pochentong

Airport. When the Khmer Rouge won the war, they immediately placed their soldiers there. It happened so suddenly that Sam-Ol could not get back to his wife and children. He was forced to leave the city in the direction in which the Khmer Rouge ordered him. Sam-Ol walked helplessly alone along National Road 3. While walking, Sam-Ol was hopeless and feared for his safety.

Arriving at Chrey Tnaot, Sam-Ol was very disappointed to learn that his parents had already left. But he did meet his sister Suon Thuon, her husband, and her children. Like Sam-Ol, his sister's family had just been evacuated out of the city.

Actually, In Sot and Seng Yang had moved to their motherland in Trapaing Thom village, Rorameam sub-district after the National Front captured Traing District in 1974. Both then returned to Chrey Tnaot village after they learned that their children had settled down there.

April 17, 1975 was supposed to be the day when a cease fire would occur and Cambodia would be at peace after having waged war for five years. This day should have been a day of pride and happiness. However, everything turned upside down. The smiles that glowed on people's faces turned to become tears and sad expressions. Almost all people had relatives who were evacuated and, thus, considered as 17 April people.

Since the day of the Khmer Rouge triumph, the political frameworks of the Super Great Leap Forward of the Great Cultural Revolutionary Movement and the ideology of the proletariat were put into practice. These political frameworks were like a tiny swinging bridge lying across a deep valley of death. While people walked on this tiny swinging bridge, millions of them failed and lost their lives in the valley. Most young people who had joined the army were seriously injured. Some of them became handicapped. Their devotion was rewarded with a miserable outcome. Some of them were put into reeducation camps to be tortured or taken to the killing fields.

Even King Norodom Sihanouk, the leader of

the National United Front of Kampuchea, was made to stay behind locked doors at the Royal Palace. He had no freedom to travel. Everything had to be done with the permission of the Khmer Rouge. During both the war and post-war, the King was never exposed to the common people. Everybody lost their freedom.

Seng Yang had a relative who was a chief of Rorameam sub-district. Through this connection, she was permitted to take her children back to her homeland in 1975. Seng Yang wanted to live with her children in her homeland because she felt that this homeland would keep her hopes up. Actually, "living together as a family" in Democratic Kampuchea meant "living in the same sub-district," not living under one roof or eating from the same pot of rice. People who were born after this regime cannot understand this sort of suffering.

Angkar had very strict regulations to direct people's destiny. The Khmer Rouge policy told us what to do and what not to do. People were living like soldiers. Parents, wives, husbands, and children were divided into separate units. The Khmer Rouge established units for youth, adults, children, widows, and so on. The pattern of living – what you said, what you ate, and what you did – were all under their unit chiefs' command.

Ten days each month, families were allowed to gather. Usually, it was the 20th of each month. Sometimes, people were able to see their families only if they were permitted by their unit chiefs. In 1978, there was an important meeting. The meeting was held to inform people about the elimination of the three classes: full rights people, candidates, and new people. After this meeting, there was cheerful shouting. This was a sign indicating that people needed to restore their reputations, honor, and much more. Although the Khmer Rouge started the revolution struggling for equality in Cambodian society, they ignored the fact that people need these things. However, the reform announced in the meeting seemed to come too late. And despite the declaration of reform, there was neither change

nor progress. The same old pattern continued.

Ten days before the meeting took place, Sam-Ol was arrested in the camp where his unit was working in Kampong Sleng Pagoda, about 4 kilometers southeast of the provincial town. Sam-Ol was sent to Cheung Chab Pagoda, a major prison based in Traing District (107). At that time, he was 42. He lost his family and his life in Cheung Chab Prison. Suon Sorn sadly said that, "We managed to survive after the five years of war, but we still could not get out of the Death Valley." My two younger siblings had stumbled into this Death Valley at the same time.

3. Suon Thoun

Suon Thoun was Suon Sorn's younger sister.



So Sim

She is currently a farmer in Chrey Tnaot village. Suon Thoun got married in 1968. Her husband is So Sim, a son of So Kum and Set who were farmers in Trapaing Thom village, Takeo province. So Sim was born in 1945.

He was a student at Otey Public High School. In 1945, Sim passed his junior high school exam and took an entrance exam to become a royal guard.

After the coup by Lon Nol, Sirik Matak, and Cheng Heng on March 18, 1970, the royal guards led by Um Manaurin, King Norodom Sihanuok's brother-in-law, were completely dissolved. All people working in the police force were moved to the Khmer military unit. The responsibility to ensure public security fell into the hands of the National Khmer Army (Army of the Republic of Kampuchea). Thus, Suon Thoun became a foot soldier in Military Unit 13, which served Chanraingsei at Chbar Morn Military Barracks in Kampong Speu province. His other duties were working as an accountant and cashier in charge of managing salaries for the soldiers in his unit.

After April 17, 1975, Suon Thoun and her two

daughters So Sokhchea and So Saoly moved to Chrey Tnaot village where they met Sam-Ol, who had just been moved out of Phnom Penh. So Sim's mother-in-law took him, his wife, and children back to Trapaing Thom village. There they lived together with his parents and other relatives. On the same day, So Sim, along with his brother-in-law, was sent to the same place to be reeducated.

Today, only the family's two younger sisters, So Son and So Chrin, survive. So Son has a husband who is a jeweler; they live in Tramkak district. So Chrin still remains in her home village. So Sim's two daughters, Sochea and Saoly, are also alive. Now they are living in Chrey Tnaot. While Sochea and Saoly were telling the story of their father, they were too choked with emotion to speak out. They said their father was good looking and gentle. They can still remember when he carried, kissed, and bathed after he arrived home from work. Their father was gone forever, leaving only a photo of himself for his daughters. This photo represents their father, who remains in their hearts forever.

4. Suon Sam-Oeun

Sam-Oeun is the fourth child in the family. Between 1967 and 1968, he attended Prey Sandek Junior High School. Then, Suon Sam-Oeun dropped out of school because there was political disorder as a result of Lon Nol's coup d'état. Since the day of the coup, there were always mass demonstrations held by common people. Responding to the demonstrations, Kim Kou ordered his armed soldiers to spray the crowd with bullets. The tanks opened fire on the demonstrators, causing them serious injuries or death. Students were conscripted into the army or commando units.

Because of conscription, Suon Sam-Oeun decided to drop out of school and return to live with his parents in Chrey Tnaot.

In 1972, Suon Sam-Oeun married Chheng Hoeun, a daughter of Uy Chheng and Chhim Bou. Unfortunately, their wedding took place on a bad day. The Vietnamese Thieu Ky soldiers (Nguyeng Vanthieu and Nguyen Kaoky) were chasing Viet

Cong soldiers that had invaded the liberated region.

The Vietnamese soldiers did not enter into a direct battle with the Khmer Rouge (the army of the National United Front) or Viet Cong. Instead, they came for the purposes of invasion, robbery and rape. They robbed people for money. They used violence to take valuable property such as gold, silver, bronze, copper, domestic animals, and kitchen equipment. The Vietnamese soldiers ransacked all pagodas where there was a lot of valuable property. The loss of Khmer property was a result of the ignorance of the Khmer politicians who were tricked by foreigners. Because of such ignorance, Cambodia was harmed by battles between the Vietnamese Thieu Ky and the Viet Cong. These two sides took Cambodian territory as their arena for fighting, so there would be less damage to their own country.

The marriage ceremony of Sam-Oeun and Chheng Hoeun did not go smoothly. Most of the relatives and guests were running away. The ceremony was performed dully and briefly. Only the important parts of the ceremony were performed. This marriage was constantly accompanied by the sounds of gunfire and bombardment. Instead of blessing the couple by sprinkling holy water over them, planes were continuously dropping bombs as if it were flowers thrown down from the heavens.

Even though Suon Sam-Oeun had just got married, he volunteered to join the National United Front Movement. Luckily, the sub-district chief did not let him go to the front lines. Instead, Suon Sam-Oeun was appointed to be an assistant to the sub-district chief. His main duties were to prepare documents and bookkeeping. His ability to carry out this task was limited since he was only a student of the petty bourgeois.

Suon Sam-Oeun could neither become a member of the party nor be promoted to a cadre because the party seemed to close the door for those whose biographies did not fulfill the party's strict requirements.

After the disappearance of Sam-Ol and Some, Yang and her family lived in misery and danger. Suon

Sorn, Sam-Oeun, Thuon and Chan (the youngest son) realized that they were no longer considered good people by Angkar. They tried to adapt to this sudden change to survive. Hopelessness haunted them everyday. If they were a little neglectful or made a slight mistake, they will be in grave danger. Everything they did, even though it was against their own consciousness, was to please Angkar and to earn pity from their leader. Being on Angkar's side was very essential to ensure their safety. Everybody had to do that; otherwise, they would disappear.

On January 7, 1979 Hoeun just delivered her third baby. Her husband, Sam-Oeun, carried her to the ox-cart, preparing to escape from the war between the Khmer Rouge and the Communist Vietnamese soldiers who took an opportunity to invade Cambodia. Unable to take such long trek, Sam-Oeun and his wife were too exhausted to move on. They stopped at the area of Phnom Thom in Chum Kiri district, Kampot province. At that time, Hoeun became sick because she was too weak after giving birth to her third baby. They were hiding with fear because there were fierce battles in the surrounding area, and many people were killed or injured.

Finding himself in such a dire situation, Sam-Oeun decided to ride his ox-cart back. A couple months later, his wife died leaving three children and an aged mother with Sam-Oeun. Although both the Vietnamese soldiers in cooperation with the United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea (UFNSK) had toppled the Khmer Rouge regime, Sam-Oeun still felt negative about the future of his country. He thought that this was only "a new driver of the same old vehicle." He thought that his motherland was falling into the trap of Vietnamese communist Ho Chi Minh who had planned to control Indochina since the time of French colonialism.

With his willingness and consciousness, Sam-Oeun secretly joined the Free Khmer Movement ("Moulinaka") in 1982. Most of government officers based in villages, sub-districts, and district of this new regime secretly served the struggling movement and

acted against the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Because of this internal rebellion, the Vietnamese changed Cambodia's political structure and its components many times to remove the two-faced authority.

The Vietnamese specialists were sent to manage all state institutions. The Vietnamese specialists were appointed to replace the Khmer two-face authorities, who were fired or imprisoned. Consequently, the T-3 prison at Trapeang Phlong and other prisons throughout the country were crowded with political prisoners, who were chained with the Khmer Rouge or Khmer's Moulinaka. From this, it could be concluded that the enemy of Vietnam was not the Khmer Rouge alone. Whatever party was against the Indochina Union's politics was regarded as the enemy, including King Norodom Sihanouk and Seun San.

The refugee camp along Thai Border was the support base of the struggling Khmer Rouge forces. At that time, the three-party coalition government was established, and it was recognized by the international community. The establishment of a coalition government marked patriotism, reunification, independence, and sovereignty, which acted as a force to guard against Vietnam's plan of wanting to transform Cambodia into a vassal state of the Indochina Union.

In the area around the Thai border, communication was difficult as a result of financial problems and the loss the ability to travel. The new government established solidarity groups for production increases, and they had strict rules.

Sam-Oeun did not belong to this group. He became involved with the forces of the defeated Khmer Rouge, who settled along Mount Damrei Rormiel. Communication within the forces of the Khmer Rouge seemed easier since their members kept close together so they could be easily reached. Their propaganda stated that the only aim of their movement was to liberate the country from being Vietnam's lackey and from establishing a communism in Cambodia. There was a new strategy. They said we should not act against the United States because it was better to be a lackey of the United States than to serve Vietnam. They also said that

the three-party coalition government should be based on this strategy because in the future we should not allow any other ideology or lifestyle meeting within the party. The way of leading the country was fundamentally dependent on its people. All in all, power should be in the hands of common people, not a political party.

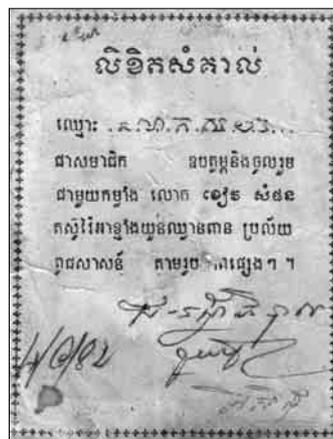
Because of this convincing strategy, Sam-Oeun had faith in the Khmer Rouge. He was very



active while working for this movement. At that time, Khieu Samphan reappeared, acting like a new person with membership cards distributed to his followers.

In 1983, Sam-Oeun married a woman named Neang Ouch, a villager in Rorkar sub-district,

Daun Keo district, Takeo province. Choosing to live with his new wife, Sam Oeun abandoned his house and left his motherless children with his old mother-in-law. Besides farming, Sam-Oeun had a small business. He had a microphone for rent. He received additional income from renting his microphone to weddings or religious ceremonies. His small business not only supported his family, but also helped to secretly



disseminate messages to convince people to have faith in the Khmer Rouge movement. It was his mind and his willingness that guided him to this course of action.

Sam-Oeun and Neang Ouch had a daughter named Rith.

At the same time, Sam-Oeun had a close friend who was his former classmate. This man was a soldier in a military unit based in Takeo. He was a chief of logistics and in charge of weapons storage. This man

secretly provided guns, bombs, and mines to the Khmer Rouge. This man was the one who laid mine at the entrance to the Vietnamese military barracks near Chheu Teal Pagoda. He also tried to strengthen military forces. Unfortunately, while he and his force were on their secret mission, the Vietnamese spies discovered them. Eventually, they were arrested. Worse, Sam-Oeun was considered as being involved in this secret mission, so danger was coming to him.

Sam-Oeun as detained in Takeo prison and tortured; he was whipped, electrocuted and suffocated by wrapping plastic bags tightly around his face. Although he had been tortured this way several times, Sam-Oeun would never mention any of his friends from the struggling force. The Vietnamese experts and the police ran out of ideas for how to get answers from Sam-Oeun.

Three months later, Sam-Oeun was sent to T-3 prison in Phnom Penh. There, he was tortured even more seriously than in the provincial prison. His whole skinny body was covered with bruises, scars and itching blisters. Yang, Bou, Suon Sorn, and Thuon sometimes dared to pay him a visit. To see the prisoner, they had to bribe the guards with gold.

Sam-Oeun was in T-3 prison for six years. During these bitter years, his mother and siblings spent a large amount of money on bribes. As a result, they became penniless. Without help from

his family, Sam-Oeun would not have survived. He would have died of malnutrition in the sunless cell. His family spent 6 *damloeng* of gold (1 *damloeng*= 37.50 grams) on Sam-Oeun's freedom. If his family had not pay this bribe, Sam-Oeun would have been sent to Trapaing Phlong prison, where he would have sentenced to life in Kampong Cham. Life in prison was a common penalty for those who acted against the Vietnamese.

After Sam-Oeun was released from prison, the relationship between Sam-Oeun and Ouch became troublesome. Sam-Oeun thought that during his several years of absence, his wife had been unfaithful to him. Being unable to bear it any longer, Sam-Oeun decided to take his children and return to live with his mother-in-law.

The process of ceasing Cambodia's internal conflict took several years to reach a solution. This process had gone through the first and second Jakarta international meetings, Tokyo, Pattaya, and Paris before an agreement was signed in 1991. Following this agreement, UNAMIC (United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia) arrived first, then UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia).

Sam-Oeun anxiously waited for a chance to escape to a refugee camp. Not waiting long, he moved quickly to a refugee camp near the Thai border. Becoming a member of the royalist party Funcinpec,

he lived and studied in Ta Tum refugee camp. Next Sam-Oeun moved to Office 48, which was located in Phnom Penh. The agreement stated that all the political prisoners had to be automatically released. In Phnom Penh, Sam-Oeun built up his network, trying to convince people to join Funcinpec. He tried hard to get people to join his party. He also collected people's portrait photos to make membership cards. Sam-Oeun was a sort of naive and immature person. Because he was inexperienced in convincing people, he failed in his work.

Once he ran into a spy who was mingling with common people. Bumping



So Sim with his friends during the Lon Nol regime

into such spy was a great danger for people with Sam-Oeun's job. At that time, there was no arrest or imprisonment as a result of any political activity. However, a killer group armed with guns was established. The killer group wore simple clothes and looked for armed robbers and those who made false propaganda nationally and internationally. Sam-Oeun was the target of the killer group, although he did not know this.

One day, Sam-Oeun left for his mission in Trapeang Thom village, in Rorameam sub-district without knowing that he was being closely watched by the killer group. The killer group was waiting for an opportunity to rob Sam-Oeun's motorbike and kill him in a quiet place, but there was no such opportunity. Luckily, Sam Oeun arrived at Trapeang village safely and spent a night in his relative's house. Not giving up their aim, the killer group secretly broke into the house to arrest Sam-Oeun. While the killer group was entering the house, Sam-Oeun was startled by their presence. He gave out a loud cry, waking up all the villagers. In fact, the killer group's background was police in casual clothes. Because Sam-Oeun's loud cry had alerted the villagers, the killer group did not dare to murder him.

Accusing Sam-Oeun of making improper political propaganda at the wrong time, they arrested him and sent him to the district inspector's headquarters in Traing. Actually, the killer group only used this accusation as a pretext.

While being detained, Sam-Oeun was interrogated about his network. Apart from the interrogation session, he was told to quit his job. A few days later, Sam-Oeun was sent to the provincial office where his relatives were forced to fingerprint a contract

stating that Sam-Oeun should be brought home to be reeducated. After a month at home, Sam-Oeun secretly ran back to his previous office (Office 48). Later on, Funcinpec's branches mushroomed throughout provincial areas. Sam-Oeun moved to work in its Takeo office.

After the 1993 election in Cambodia, Sam-Oeun became a province-level policeman. After the 1998 election, he was transferred to work in Sihanoukville.

Sam-Oeun was promoted captain of the national police. He worked for the office of city police.

Even though both Sam-Oeun and his second wife had been married before, Sam-Oeun found happiness in his second marriage. He also had a daughter whom he adored. Sam-Oeun earned enough money to support his family life in the city. He went to work in Kampong Som province while his wife kept busy with household chores and looking after her elderly mother.

Besides his work for the government and Cambodia's citizens, Sam-Oeun and his friends were trying to buy land, which is becoming a lucrative business nowadays. When the price of land shot up, Sam-Oeun decided to sell his land. Having received the deposit, Sam-Oeun gathered his friends for a party in a restaurant.

Sadly, bad news was carried through a phone line, saying that Sam-Oeun lay dead in his house. Nobody knew the cause of his death, and his family was suspicious about it. His wife and beloved daughter were in deep mourning when they took his body for a funeral in Chrey Tnaot village before they buried it under the land where he was born.

The owner died, and so did his property. Responding to this matter, there is an old saying:



So Sim

“the money was lost because its bag was torn off.” Sam-Oeun’s family tried to search for any legal document to claim their inheritance, but they found none. Sam-Oeun wife and daughter had nothing left from him.

This is the life story of Sam-Oeun, the fourth son of Yang and Suon Sorn. A few months later, Yang became gravely ill and died. Sam-Oeun’s wife became a widow after her second marriage. Her first husband died during the Pol Pot regime, so on the days of Pchum Ben and Chinese New Year every year, she brings food to her husband’s tomb, burning incense and offering food to her husband’s spirit.

5. Chan

Chan was the youngest son of the family. He grew up during the 1970-1975 war. Chan was in a youth unit. According to Angkar’s policy, the important duties were listed as: building dams, digging channels, farming, transporting foodstuffs and weapons to the front line, and carrying injured and dead soldiers back to the support base. Everybody had to serve both the front line and support base. Besides these duties, there were meetings and short courses that people were required to attend.

In 1983, Chan married Tieng, the daughter of a family in his village. After their marriage, Chan began a new life as a farmer. Together, they lived peacefully, but without enough income. In 2004, Chan had been sick for a few days before he died at a young age. After his death, his wife kept in touch with his relatives. Whenever his wife returns to their home village, she usually stays in the house of Chan’s brother.

Attached to this narrative about the bitter experience of Yang’s family are old photos. This life story is not different from those of more than two million people who lost their lives during the Khmer Rouge regime.

Headed by its director Youk Chhang, the Documentation Center of Cambodia and its staff have been working hard to compile valuable documents to reveal the true history of the dark regime for people of the next generation.

It is my wish to send you the photos attached to this essay. I hope you will accept my best regards. Thank you.

leb Duch is a survivor of Democratic Kampuchea.

SEARCHING FOR MISSING FAMILY MEMBERS

Missing Sister and Brother

My name is Chhun Rum, age 53 and I am living in Manh village, Raluos sub-district, Prasat Bakorn district, Siem Reap province. I have five siblings. My father is Chhun Phorm and my mother is Khun Roeun. I would like to search for: 1) my sister named Chhun Ran and her husband (a brother of the famous singer Meas Saman), a marine before 1975, and they lived in Phnom Penh. I have not heard anything about them since the people were evacuated by Angkar, and 2) my brother named Chhun Rien who joined the Liberation Army in 1972 and disappeared after that. Before leaving the village with other combatants, Rien sent his family a letter saying that he had left the village and told the family to take his bike at the training center near the sub-district office.

If my sister and brother have heard or read this announcement, please contact me through the address above or the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Thanks.

Missing Sister and Brother-in-Law

My name is Khou Siem Eng, age 54. In the past, I lived in Khsa village, Da sub-district, Kratie district, Kratie province. Now I am living in Khang Cheung Stung village, Khnar Kandal sub-district, Kantay Srei district, Siem Reap province. My father's name is Khou Peng Sea and my mother's name is Vann Savun. I would like to search for my sister named Khou Siem Cheng and brother-in-law named Ching Haing Veng. In 1975, they lived in Phnom Penh. Then they were evacuated to Battambang province. After that I heard that my brother was dead and my sister was still alive. In 1979, it was heard that she lived in Tik Thla, Phnom Penh. However, since then, I have had no more information about her.

If she or anyone else knows the names above, please contact me through the above-mentioned address. Thanks.

Missing Son

I am Chhoeun Uy, age 83. In the past, I lived in Svay Chek village, Svay Chek sub-district, Puork district, Siem Reap province. Now I live in Svay Chek village, Tatrav sub-district, Angkor Thom district, Siem Reap province. I would like to search for my son named Duong Tuy. He joined a Khmer Rouge arts group and disappeared in 1973. Tuy is the third child in our family of seven children. During the Sangkum Reastr Niyum, he studied until grade 11. In 1970, he was a Khmer Rouge militiaman and patrolled the village. Then when Angkar made an announcement for an arts group, he joined it. In 1973 when my family was evacuated to Svay Leu district, we lost connection with him. In early 1979 my family returned to our hometown and heard that he was a chief of the mobile arts group.

If anyone has heard or knows anything about him or he lives in a particular place, please come to meet me through the address above.

Missing Son and Nephews

I am Kruoch Kan, age 63 and living Trapeang Chhouk village, Chralong sub-district, Baray district, Kampong Thom province. I would like to search for my son named Net Chien and my two nephews named Sai An and Chea Lun. They disappeared when the commune chief of the mobile unit assigned them to the front line in 1976.

If anyone has known or heard anything about them, please contact me through the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Thanks.

Missing Son

My name is Pech Yann, age 66. Now I am living in Trapeang Chhouk village, Chralong sub-district, Baray district, Kampong Thom province. I have five siblings. I would like to search for my son named Hor Ol, who disappeared when he went with the Khmer Rouge army at Kuk Pagoda in Chralong sub-district with Lorn (disappeared) before 1975. At that time Ol was 16 years old. There been no information about him since then.

If anyone has known or heard anything about him, please contact me through the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Thanks.

ធនាគារជាតិកម្ពុជា

វិស្វកម្ម

ការពិភាក្សា



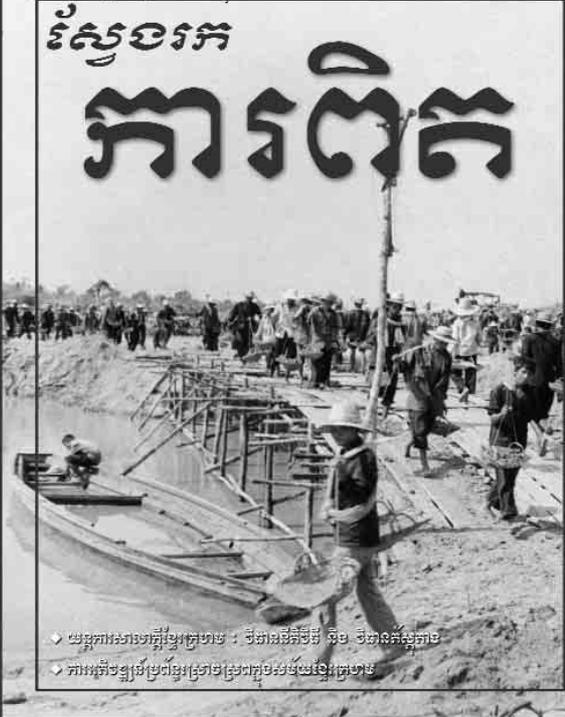
- ◆ សុំឱ្យមានការពិនិត្យការងាររបស់ក្រុមហ៊ុន
- ◆ ការកាត់ទោស ទុន ជា ពីមធ្យមក្រិដ្ឋកម្មស្រ្តាម

លេខទូរស័ព្ទ: ២៣ ២១១ ៨៧៥ លេខទូរស័ព្ទ: ២៣ ២១០ ៣៥៨

ធនាគារជាតិកម្ពុជា

វិស្វកម្ម

ការពិភាក្សា



- ▶ យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រការងាររបស់ក្រុមហ៊ុន : វិស័យសេវា ផលិត វិស័យកសិកម្ម
- ▶ ការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ប្រព័ន្ធស្រោចស្រពក្នុងស្ថានភាពស្រែកម្ពុជា

លេខទូរស័ព្ទ: ២៣ ២១១ ៨៧៥ លេខទូរស័ព្ទ: ២៣ ២១០ ៣៥៨