

Searching for

THE TRUTH

- ◆ Khmer Rouge Genocide Against Cham Brought to Trial
- ◆ Brother of History

“Even though many Cambodians survived the genocide, the experiences continue to impact families, communities and the country in unspoken and often indirect ways.”

-- Youk Chhang

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Cham people is reading Searching for the Truth magazine

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Contributors: Farina So, Pheana Sopheak , Bunthorn Som, Seiha Chea **Staff Writer:** Sarakmonin Teav and Veng Chheng **Editor-in-chief:** Bunthorn Som **English Editor:** Cindy Coleman **Publisher:** Youk Chhang **Translators:** Ammaroith Chhim, Seyla Em and Pheana Sopheak **Graphic Designer:** Bunthorn Som **Distributor:** Sorn Leak.

CAMBODIA: KHMER ROUGE GENOCIDE AGAINST CHAM BROUGHT TO TRIAL

Farina So

On Monday September 7, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) opens the first genocide evidentiary hearing against the senior Khmer Rouge leaders for committing genocide against the Cham, an ethnic minority group residing in Cambodia for centuries. Between 100,000 and 500,000 Cham perished during the regime, about 36 per cent of the Cham population in Cambodia. However, the term genocide was first heard by many in Cambodia in 1979 and the crime of genocide, was indicted by the People's Revolutionary Tribunal in the same year. This tribunal was created by the People's Republic of Kampuchea with support from Vietnam, among other socialist countries at that time. Only two KR top leaders, Pol Pot and Ieng Sary, were tried in absentia and found guilty of genocide in 1979. The verdict, however, was not recognized by the international community, for it failed to provide a fair trial for the accused.

Hundreds of Cham Muslims were bused and

brought to the courtroom today to hear a segment of the genocide trial. The crime of genocide has created, among its victims, a comparison of relative pain and loss and has left the victims divided, with a sense of resentment, disagreement and uncooperativeness. From former Yugoslavia to Rwanda, where genocide charges are brought before the international courts and hybrid court, and ongoing animosity against the Rohingya Muslims in Burma, critiques and challenges are paramount to such a justice seeking process. Genocide, according to the UN's definition of genocide, is "the acts with intent to kill in whole or in part members of ethnic, religious, racial, and national groups. This involves selective killings and targeting of specific groups." This means victims who are specifically members of an ethnic minority group should receive special attention and recognition, given their unique experiences.

However, the case of Cambodia is slightly different from the above cases. Although the genocide charge is brought to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) for the acts with intent committed by senior Khmer Rouge leaders against ethnic Cham and Vietnamese, a sense of division or resentment is conceivably minimal. Yet, a sense of unity is optimal on the grounds that the majority, who are ethnic Khmer, understood that they also suffered from genocide. They join hand in hand with other survivors to seek justice



Chams people in Kampong Cham province

at the tribunal.

The charge of genocide was brought by the ECCC in 2010, but was delayed for a long time. Although the ethnic Vietnamese are included in the charge, this genocide segment focuses on the Cham only. This hearing is believed to act in accordance with the international standard as it assures due process and a fair trial for both victims and the accused.

Whether the KR atrocity fits into the UN definition of genocide is still debatable. Interviews with Cham and Khmer survivors shed light on this issue.

Math Him from Kampot province believes that the Khmer Rouge committed genocide against both the Cham and Khmer, except only a few Cham remained in leadership positions in the Democratic Kampuchea government. Him witnessed Khmer executing Cham or Khmer killing Khmer, but he did not hear or witness Cham killing Khmer. While acknowledging similar suffering that both the Cham and the Khmer endured during the regime, Him asked why the KR treated his people harshly even if they never caused any big troubles to the regime or claimed any autonomous land.

For San Sok, an ethnic Khmer from Takeo province, he supports the genocide charge without reservation. To him, genocide means widespread execution of people and “killing and extermination of those who go against KR policy.” This, then, “can be characterized as violence, authoritarianism, and revolution.” Generally, he acknowledges that both Cham and Khmer suffered from KR genocide.

Although a line is not clear here, what is clear is the common understanding that “genocide” took place and that they all suffered.

Remarkably, the intent to target the Cham people took place in the East Zone and the Southwest Zone even before armed resistance took place in Cham villages, although the search was on a small scale. The KR forbade any form of Islamic religious practices and ordered the collection of holy

Qur’an for destruction. Over a hundred mosques existed in the early 1970s but were profaned or demolished and Cham religious leaders and teachers were arrested and then disappeared during the regime. After some Cham protested and even began an armed resistance against the KR in areas of Cambodia, such as in Koh Phal and Svay Khleang villages of Kampong Cham provinces, the situation got worse.

Many Cham villagers in the East Zone were lined up and asked “are you Cham or Khmer?” -- if they answered Cham they would be killed, if they answered Khmer they would be forced to eat pork. If they refused or appeared to dislike it, they would also be killed.

These stories perhaps make Monday’s evidentiary hearing and the whole segment of the hearing interesting, given it offers a common understanding from the point of view of a local context. This local understanding of genocide might not fit well into the UN’s definition of genocide, but they know that they all suffered from the atrocity.

A sense of solidarity and even unity prevails because KR survivors have thought that the KR committed genocide and other crimes against all people, so they feel this sense of survivor identity and engage in this truth and justice seeking process.

While it is hard to conclude that the treatment against the Cham could be considered genocide by its definition, there is potential evidence that could establish such a case. Thus, I think it would be a good time for us to view the testimonies and debate today-- and the entire segment of the hearing--to see if they can restrict the definition or if that definition should be broadened. By participating and closely following the court, Cham survivors can make a decision on the upcoming genocide verdict whether it is just: This act of remembering and bringing justice to the victims is a step toward healing and genocide prevention.

Farina So

BROTHER OF HISTORY

Youk Chhang

Myanmar continues to suffer from a conflict that has been described as the longest-running civil war in contemporary history.

While economic and political incentives certainly play a role in the conflict, it is also, without a doubt, driven by difference. Difference can take many forms. Some of mankind's most horrendous conflicts and instances of mass atrocities were/are predicated on ethnic, national and religious difference.

But are people really different? Our universal humanity stands out before all differences. So when we look to a people in a neighboring country, province, village or house, as many differences we can list, there are just as many (and more) similarities as a result of our shared humanity. It is a lesson that post-conflict countries learn the hard way. Cambodia has much to say to Myanmar's government and people.

From 1970 and until the surrender of the last Khmer Rouge stronghold in 1998, Cambodia has been one of the most volatile and war-torn regions of the world. Cambodia had suffered from social turmoil and war since the 1960s (and arguably earlier). And when the communist Khmer Rouge captured the country in 1975, they exploited national, ethnic, and religious differences in their campaign to transform the country. Millions of Cambodians suffered or perished. Survivors today, as well as the offspring of people who suffered and died, continue to harbor animosity for what happened. But with time and effort, Cambodia has made significant strides toward national healing, memory, and justice. The journey was hardly easy, let alone without error; which is why Myanmar should look to Cambodia not only for

identifying solutions to ongoing problems, but also lessons learned.

I am close to Myanmar, both in terms of ethnicity as well as background. As a Khmer, I am linked to the Mon ethnic group in our history. I grew up with this ethnic identity, being reminded of such by my family. I also felt a strong affinity for the country when I visited—as if I was re-connecting with my roots. I can imagine that I am not unique among other Cambodians who visited Burma when I asked myself, "Do I look like a Mon person in Myanmar?" And I do.

Many Cambodians and Burmese would be surprised by how much they share in experience as well as culture. Both countries have had refugee populations in Thailand. It was in Thailand that I met my first Burmese friend (Maung Chung). We both shared so much in common that we could have been brothers. Like brothers of history, Cambodia and Burma have also shared in the misery of war, violence, and oppression.

During the Khmer Rouge period, I was put in prison at the age of 15 and one of my most painful experiences was the memory of being severely beaten by the Khmer Rouge security guards during this time. I believed my mother was in the crowd for this 'communist people's court,' and I believed she watched me during this horrible experience. It pained me to think that while being torturing by the Khmer Rouge security guards, my mother chose not to come out and protect or at least beg forgiveness for me. The 'crimes' I committed may have seemed trivial, yet at the time they were seen by the Khmer Rouge to deserve swift punishment by death. I was caught picking mushrooms to feed my sister. She was

pregnant at the time and consequently, lacking adequate food, she suffered from horrible starvation. Without permission from the revolutionary commander, I tried to obtain some mushrooms from the rice field for her. While I was angry with the Khmer Rouge security guards for beating me, I was also angry with my own mother. Thirty-five years later my mother told me that she was not among the crowd. She said she knew I was beaten up and taken away to a prison near-by, but she only arrived at the crime site after the incident.

While the experience occurred nearly thirty-five years ago, it continues to linger as a spot in our family relations—producing great emotion and tension. Even though many Cambodians survived the genocide, the experiences continue to impact families, communities and the country in unspoken and often indirect ways. Sometimes the wounds that heal on the inside are far more grievous than the ones on the outside. While thirty-five years may have covered over Cambodia’s physical scars, the internal and intangible scars are the ones that bear the most intense impacts on a society’s struggle to move forward.

I’ve met many wonderful people such as Chit Min Lay in Myanmar over the years, and I have seen these scars as well. Locked away for political ‘crimes’, many people spent the best years of their lives in prison. Some suffered torture and physical wounds that speak to their intense suffering; however, it is the internal scars that bear the greatest pain on the individual and society. Many former prisoners struggle with reconnecting with their families. Lives were shattered, and family relations were often destroyed.

Likewise, ethnic and religious strife continues in Myanmar. Many people in Myanmar continue to suffer from discrimination, oppression, and the persistent threat of violence solely on the basis of their ethnic, national, or religious difference. Like Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, the concept of difference

continues to overshadow our shared humanity. There is no excuse.

Difference does not have to lead to an “us versus them” mentality; rather, it should compel an appreciation for diversity, which is a critical component to all thriving democracies. It is the life force of modern civilization. Myanmar will never move forward as a country until it recognizes that the vitality and future of its country is directly tied to the extent to which it is able to harness the full participation of its entire population. Countries that ignore (or in many cases, trample) their minorities are, in the least, trading a perceived increase in the security of the majority for the full potential of their country. In the worst, they are gambling the future of their country.

While Cambodia has made significant strides in its post-conflict development, it has also made many mistakes that other countries should learn from. It has taken Cambodia over 35 years since the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime to come to grips with the horrors of its history. While the prison walls built by the Khmer Rouge have been weathered by time and development, sometimes the greatest walls are not the physical ones. It is the walls that exist in our mind, built by years of oppression, discrimination, fear, violence, and atrocity that demand our utmost attention. The longer a country waits in confronting these walls, the greater the effort required to surmount them. Cambodia is a lesson in history, but it is hardly alone. The Middle East, Africa, and even the United States, stand as examples of the difficult struggle that arises when countries fail to confront their problems (or rather differences).

Burma stands at an opportune time to move forward and learn from Cambodia’s experiences. As brothers of history, Burma and Cambodia have much to learn from each other, and Burma does not have to repeat its brother’s long struggle.

Youk Chhang

REMEMBERING IENG THIRITH'S RADICAL GENDER POLICY

Farina So

Ieng Thirith, the minister of social affairs during Democratic Kampuchea and an accused in Case 002 who was released due to her dementia, died on Saturday.

She died without facing legal justice, but we should not let it pass.

We should remember her tragic policies, especially her gender policy during her time as Minister.

Ieng Thirith studied in France, returning to Cambodia in 1957 with her husband and other communist leaders.

She worked as a professor before she

became the Minister of social affairs. Her husband, Ieng Sary, the accused in the same case, was the Minister of foreign affairs.

He died in 2013. Ieng Thirith was one of a few top women leaders who were influential during the communist regime.

Other women in leadership included Khieu Ponnary, her sister and Pol Pot's wife, who founded a women's association and Yon Yat, Son Sen's wife.

Family transformation was one of Ieng Thirith's radical policies in which she claimed to emancipate women from oppression.

This gender policy emphasized equality and



Photo third from right: Ieng Thirith, former Minister of Social Affairs meets foreign delegations in Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)

self-reliance for both sexes.

Thirith echoed that women in her regime just came home from work and ate.

They did not need to cook or perform domestic chores.

As Elizabeth Becker wrote in *When The War Was Over: Cambodia And The Khmer Rouge Revolution*: “[B]efore the women had to work, to come home and search for the fish, the rice, to cook it, care for the children.

This was terrible. In communal living they only have to come home from work and eat.”

Thus, they didn’t have to engage with their children and family.

Consequently, single women were separated from their parents; married women were separated from their husbands and children.

Maternity leave was very limited. This varied from one region to another.

The longest period for maternity leave was up to one month and the lowest was as short as one week to two weeks.

Worse, pregnant women received little medical care and nutrition and were still expected to carry a considerable amount of work during their pregnancy or after delivery.

Equality in her definition lay in physical strength and revolutionary spirit, not qualities of femininity.

Women were forced to carry out the same type of work as men.

Their hard work and dedication did not earn them much credit or status at the middle and lower rank.

This does not mean women could not be killers or perpetrators during the era.

There were many female killers and perpetrators who were induced by the gender policy and



Ieng Thirith attends the hearing of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal

other Khmer Rouge policies.

The majority of women, however, suffered from malnutrition, lacked basic health care and were overworked, and many were executed.

Women’s health remained one of the main problems after the regime collapsed in 1979.

Despite these tragic policies, Ieng Thirith denied responsibility: “I don’t know why a good person is accused of such crimes and I have suffered a great deal, and I cannot really be patient because I have been wrongly accused.”

Thirith’s many victims, mainly female victims, have died without receiving any justice.

Remaining victims continue to remember Thirith’s policy that tore families apart and contributed to the death of nearly 2 million people.

Farina So

REVOLUTIONARY MALE AND FEMALE YOUTH MUST STRIVE TO DESTROY THE STANDPOINT OF "SUFFICIENT", AND TEMPER OURSELVES IN ORDER TO FIERCELY FIGHT THE ENEMY, NATURE, DEFEND AND COMMITTEDLY BUILD OUR COUNTRY

EXTRACTED FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY FLAG MAGAZINE, ISSUE 10, OCTOBER 1978

Veng Chheng

1) Current situation of Kampuchea's revolution

Until now, the Kampuchean revolution's situation is good in almost every sector including defending and building the country, solving and uplifting the living standards of our people.

For national defense, our Kampuchea Revolutionary Army and our Kampuchean people at the present time, under the correct and wise leadership of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, have combatted and smashed all of the destructive activities attempting to overthrow the government and

the invasion of the enemies from everywhere.

In the west, we have smashed the strategies and tactics of the American imperialists and their lackeys who planned to take over Kampuchea until they could no longer fight or swallow our land.

In the east, on 6 January, 1978 and afterward, we smashed the invasion of the territorial-expanding and genocidal Yuon enemy who were assisted by the Soviet-expansionists until they were shamefully defeated and retreated from our land.

We, therefore, must defend Democratic Kampuchea, defend our Communist Party of

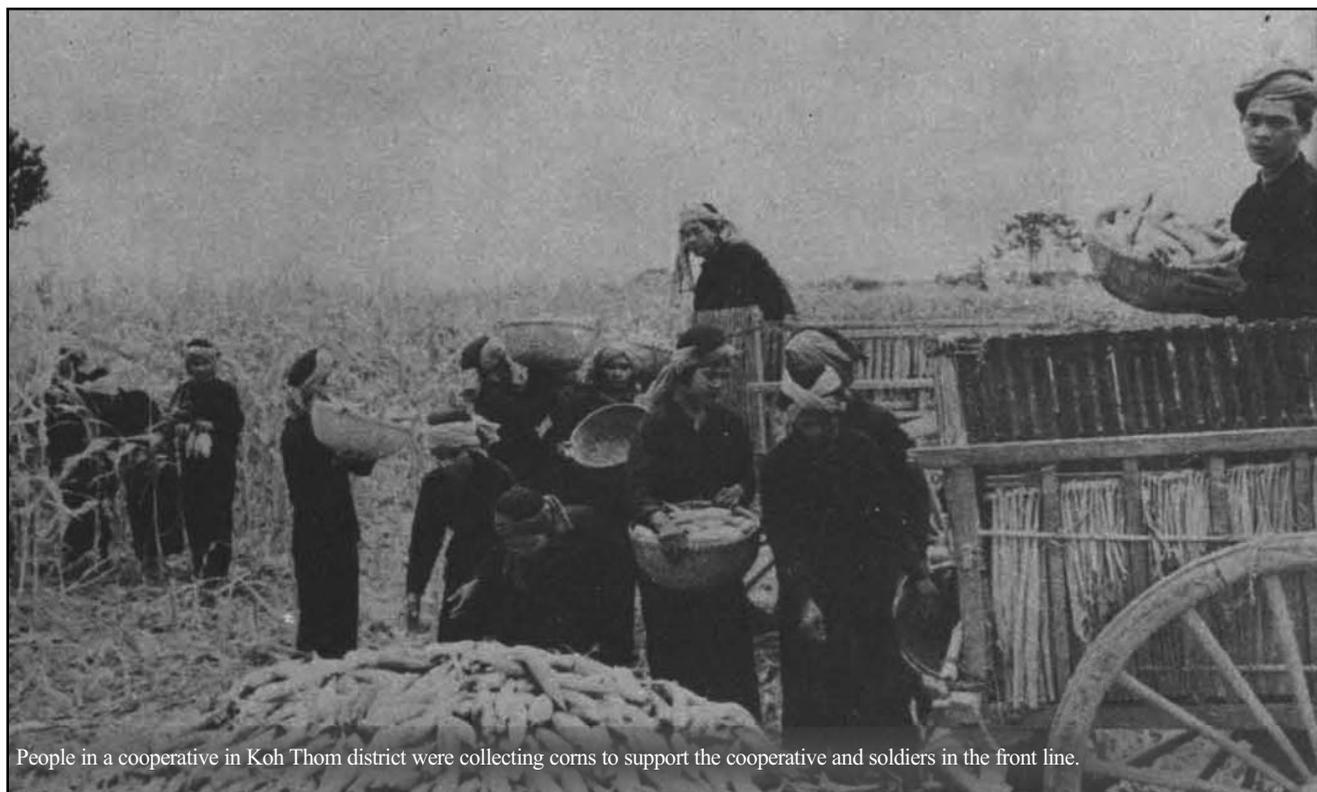


People in a mobile unit were speedily threshing rice in Sa-ang district in order to harvest rice on time.

Kampuchea, defend the Party's worker-peasant state power, and defend the revolutionary products in a masterly manner. We independently protect the boundary of our land, water, sea and islands. We independently protect our border on the east and on the west. We, therefore, independently defend our Democratic Kampuchea. We protect our country and defeat our enemies' militarily, politically, economically and diplomatically. Indeed, we destroyed the strategies and tactics of the Yuon enemy on the battlefield of our land. Their loss also distributes negative impacts to their politics, military, economy and finance. Consequently, we have fought the territorial expanding and swallowing Yuon until they evolve into the worse situation in terms of politics, military, economy and finance. They will eventually be wrecked. On the international stage, the Vietnamese and their lackeys will be shamefully known as the Kampuchea invaders. World citizens, who value independence, peace and justice, will condemn their invasion. The Yuon expansionists, therefore, will be isolated. Subsequently, if they still carry on their policy of invasion on Kampuchea, they will lose their influ-

ence. For the Kampuchean revolution, the more we fight, the more we win. The more we try, the stronger we are. We will continuously have major victories. Likewise, we are gaining more friends internationally while Vietnam is continuously losing theirs. If the Yuon now cannot occupy our land and we have the stronger force, they will become weak and find it difficult to conquer our land, in the future. This is our major victory in defending Democratic Kampuchea.

For country-building, we, in a three-year-period, have fought to restore our economy and to build our country in a great leap forward in almost every sector including agriculture, industry, handicraft, economy, health, and educational culture. Our greatest victory is in the field of agriculture, especially the rice fields, as well as the constructions of water management. For water management, we can handle the water problem at a certain level. We have large-size reservoirs containing hundreds of millions of cubic meters of water in all villages and districts. We have medium-size reservoirs containing several millions of cubic meters of water in all regions and small reservoirs containing millions of cubic meters of water every-



People in a cooperative in Koh Thom district were collecting corns to support the cooperative and soldiers in the front line.

where in all districts and cooperatives. Moreover, we have new dike systems, canals, long and short streams across the rice fields of our country which have transformed the Kampuchea countryside from withering to becoming lively in all seasons again. Likewise, we have millions of hectares of land to do farming once and to do farming twice a year.

Now, from the standpoint of mastery and independence, we have rice to support ourselves as well as to export and sell abroad.

Beside rice seeds, industrial crops such as rubber plants, corn, beans, cotton plants, jute, sugarcane, etc. and other types of crops have been greatly planted in every zone and region.

In the industrial sector, we have set up the light-industrial system that serves the agricultural field as well as our people's living standards. Meanwhile, in all cooperatives and all sectors of handicraft work (wood, metal and weaving, etc.) we have been quickly flourished everywhere which lets us independently and maximally serve the needs in each cooperative.

Social affair and health sector has improved in a great leap forward. In all districts and cooperatives, we have hospitals, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and child centers to cure illness and to protect our people's health on a daily basis. This work can make our people's health stronger and allow them to accomplish all of their duties.

For educational culture, our people, regardless of age and gender, can access education to learn culture, figures, alphabets, technical-science, and politics to constantly improve their ability.

Through the improvement of building the nation in every sector, our people's living standards have been raised. After the three-year destructive war in Kampuchea, our people suffered everywhere. However, they now have enough meals as stipulated by the Party, have appropriate shelter, have clothes, and have medicine to cure and protect themselves from diseases, etc.

All of these achievements illustrate the good situation in terms of building the nation and uplifting our peoples' living standards.

In brief, our current situation in the Kampuchea revolution is good subjectively and objectively, domestically and internationally.

Beside our great victory, we must see our enemies' difficulties, whose ambition is to put our land under their rule.

The American imperialists have strategically lost but they continue attacking us through different means such as separating, spying, sabotaging and so on.

Our Yuon enemy who were assisted by the Soviet expansionists has been defeated economically, politically, and militarily. They, however, are still attacking us militarily, economically and diplomatically.

To not fear our enemies or overestimate them, we must regularly see the enemies' difficulties. We must be cautious in order to prepare to fight any invader all the time in a masterly manner.

Regarding the national defense duty, we must strive to build our nation at a great leap forward speed before our enemies can surpass us and intervene in our affairs. Moreover, we must quickly build our nation and strongly defend our territory in an effective manner. In response to the recent situation, our revolutionary male and female youth as well as our people must work harder than before in order to strongly defend our country and build our nation in a great leap forward. We cannot work by depending on the idea of pacifism and build-ism. To work intensively as requested by our revolutionary male and female youth, we must have a high revolutionary capability. This high revolutionary capability includes the political stance, consciousness in the role of the revolution, ability to work cleverly and creatively, lively thinking, highly saving and the knowledge of culture and technical-science.

To improve our revolutionary capability in all fields, our revolutionary male and female must strive to learn in a careful manner, to learn individually, to

learn every moment on a daily basis.

2) Destroy the standpoint of "sufficient"

In our socialist revolutionary movement, our revolutionary male and female now have perfectly tempered themselves in mass movement and quickly build themselves from the standpoint of politics, proletarian consciousness of the Party, and assignment. They have also improved their revolutionary tasks. At the same time, our revolutionary male and female youth strive to learn numbers, language, and technical-science in order to improve their ability quickly. Therefore, our revolutionary male and female youth have fought and destroyed the enemies on the battlefield as well as battled to clean internally and strived to farm and grow crops. Meanwhile, our revolutionary male and female youth have been appointed to lead the units and carry out the work in an effective manner.

With all of these advantages as a base, some revolutionary male and female youth (only a few) cannot temper themselves in a great leap forward. They are still slow to learn and some people even regress.

There are numerous reasons why self-building is not progressing. The main psychological reason is because they are looking at it from the standpoint of "sufficient."

Example #1: some of our male and female youth said that "If I am assigned to do practical work, I can do all the tasks that I am assigned to. But if I am appointed to do something else, I don't think it is possible since it is hard to think." Our comrade's statement is correct on some points but it is fundamentally wrong. If we only carry out our practical work without learning about our Party's policies, we cannot grow. How can we know which work is right and which work is wrong? Sometimes, we make a mistake without realizing it. Therefore, if we improve our working skills without acknowledging whether it is right or wrong, how can we quickly and strongly carry out the tasks? And if we work without improving

our skills in order to eliminate the mistakes, we, in the future, will be stuck and unable to find ways to solve our problems. Consequently, our comrades will become pessimistic until they lose their working direction, and fail to carry out the duties. They ultimately will resign themselves from their work.

To carry out the practical work, achieve the revolutionary duties quickly and strongly, and serve the revolutionary movement effectively, our revolutionary male and female youth must learn theory of political line, conscious line, and organizational line which were determined by the Party on a daily basis and use them to guide and reflect on our daily duties. By such action, our comrades will improve their knowledge of theory, their understanding, as well as their work ability.

Example #2: some of our comrades believe that "I have enough knowledge because I have been in the revolutionary movement for a long period of time and the line of the Party as the foundation is still correct. From the National Democratic Revolution period to the Socialist Revolution period, I have been strong. I have faced death or life situations but we still won. Therefore, in the current period, we're still strong."

Our comrades' thought is correct in some points but it is fundamentally wrong since the revolution is evolving constantly. Thus, new experiences keep arising. If our comrades do not learn about the line, movement, and work experiences, our comrades will be unable to follow the movement. Our comrades, therefore, cannot understand new revolutionary movements.

For instance, in the National Democratic Revolution period, we fought our enemies such as the American Imperialists, the traitor Lon Nol, and their lackeys in order to liberate our nation and to liberate our people. However, in the period of making a socialist revolution, building socialism, and defending our country, we are still fighting with our enemies but who is our biggest enemy? They are the territorial-

swallowing, expansionist, and genocidal Yuon. We fight to protect our territory, protect our nation and protect our revolutionary goods, etc. But if we do not learn about the line of the party, and learn about the masses movement, we cannot smash our biggest enemy. We, instead, fight the minor enemy. This, therefore, could affect gathering forces as well as national defense. Hence, our Yuon enemy will wait until we are neglectful. Then, they will swallow our land. Therefore, having the standpoint of sufficient, being lazy to learn and being lazy to inspect the revolution of the mass can cause devastation.

Example #3: some of our revolutionary male and female youth think, "Our country now has been liberated. We are independent and peaceful. We should just focus on building our country and working on the tasks assigned by the Party. Why should we study? Nobody wants to be powerful anymore."

Our comrades who have unconditionally obeyed Angkar's principles have been doing perfectly and have trusted the leadership of the Party. No matter the Party assigned any kind of task, our comrades strive to do it. But where is the party? It is within each

individual and each cadre who are responsible for all the units across the country. Furthermore, the duty to either strongly or poorly build our country is dependent on the revolutionary male and female youth who work in the units and the bases. If our comrades carry out the duties without learning all the Party's line, those duties, either big or small, will fail subsequently. This can bring risks or failures. There will be no improvement for individual and the revolutionary duties will be stuck. Therefore, we cannot achieve the revolutionary duties well or quickly.

Example #4: our male and female comrades think, "I have joined the revolution and liberated people and my country. The nation is now independent. I don't want anything else. I want to build my own family with husband or wife and some children. I don't want to be a leader. Therefore, I don't need to learn about anything." In our revolutionary line, we do not focus on who has power but we focus on the duties that nation, people and the Party has set. Can you achieve them or not?

We fought our enemies such as the American Imperialists, the traitor Lon Nol, and their lackeys, in



Farmers were ploughing and growing plants to support themselves and soldiers in the battlefield

order to liberate our nation and to liberate our people. We have liberated our country and our people. We received independence 100%. The problem is, can we protect our country or not? On behalf of the sons and daughters of Kampuchea, we can immediately say we must absolutely protect our nation.

All in all, under any circumstances or instances, our revolutionary male and female youth have duties to fulfill for our nation, our people, our Party, and our proletarian class. From month to month, year to year, the revolutionary movement has evolved forward quickly. Therefore, new knowledge and new experience keep continuously happening. If our male and female comrades do not focus on learning how to draw experience from the revolutionary mass movement and works on a regular daily basis, we cannot understand or follow the movement. According to the material theory, we are either progressive or regressive. Therefore, nothing stands still. We, too, do not stand still. If we are not making progress, it means we are regressing. According to the material theory, the standpoint of sufficient is not correct. Sufficient stands still. According to the material theory, nothing stands still. Therefore, for something to be sufficient means regression.

In our revolutionary movement, there is no sufficient, since the revolutionary movement keeps evolving. The revolutionists must fight to overcome all the obstacles including nature, the technical and hostility. Our revolutionary male and female youth must overcome the mentioned obstacles so we can move forward in a great leap forward. To overcome the obstacles, we must learn. Therefore, in the revolutionary movement, "sufficient" means defeatism, confession, and hiding. Our male and female revolutionary youth must not take this term personally and must not have the viewpoint of sufficient.

Our revolutionary male and female comrades who are in adulthood are very brave. They are physically, mentally and consciously brave. They are able to quickly absorb new things. Therefore, our comrades

must not let the adulthood pass in vain. Our comrades must pay attention on learning to build ourselves in order to strive to fulfill our duties, to strongly defend our country and to quickly build our nation.

Learn about what?

1). Learn political line, conscious line, and organizational line of the Party. Learn at school, learn through short or long course, or learn individually by reading the documents when one is free from their core duties.

2). Learn through drawing experience of the practical work in daily life or through self-observation. We keep up with the mass revolutionary movements which are emerging everywhere.

3). Learn culture, numbers, and language in order to raise the cultural capability, to understand the Party's lines in all sectors, as well as to learn the technical-science for national defense and country-building.

Learn technical-science, that is, the needs of our country including the raising of dike techniques, increasing productivity techniques and smashing the enemy techniques, the small and large manufacturing machines operation techniques, medical techniques, building construction techniques, cooking techniques, nursing the infants techniques, etc.

This knowledge is highly necessary for national defense as well as country building. If our revolutionary male and female youth strive to learn this knowledge on a daily basis, our comrades' view of the revolution will continuously increase. Moreover, the working capability in all sectors keeps improving. Our comrades will draw new experiences continuously. Our comrades, therefore, can successfully fulfill the duties, strongly defend our country and build our nation in a great leap forward. Through this, our Democratic Kampuchea will be enriched with prosperity, independence, sovereignty and excellence in the framework of our territorial integrity.

Veng Chheng

FORMER GUARD AND GRANDSON OF THE SECRETARY OF THE EAST ZONE, SO PHIM ESCAPED THE ARREST

Bunthorn Som

Sin Ing lives in Sangkum village, Korkisaom commune, Roduol district, Svay Rieng province. Today Mr. Ing is 58 years old and the chief of



Sin Ing at his home village

Sangkum village. Ing was a grandson and a bodyguard of So Phim, the secretary of the East Zone during the Democratic Kampuchea regime. Mr. Ing survives until today because he managed

to escape from being arrested by the Central troops surrounding him in Arey-Ksat.

Ing's father Yos Sary died in 1969 in Battambang province and his mother is Sin Pen. Later on, his mother remarried his step-father named Meak Sim. When he was child, he went to Korkisaom school until only grade 10 [former regime] and dropped out of school in 1969. At that time, the Khmer Rouge arrested his step-father who was alleged as a spy of King Sihanouk and threatened to kill the whole family with a grenade. Therefore, his mother decided to migrate to live with her younger brother and his wife in Peanea commune, Sy-Thor Kandal district, Prevey province. There his mother rented a villager's land to settle down and for growing rice. Ing's mother had a difficult time making her living.

In 1972, Ing and his mother returned to their home in Korkisaom village, Romduol district, Svay Rieng province. However, his family was shocked again by the bombing. The American air force dropped

bombs on the cattle and villagers. For example, the [American] bombs were dropped and killed the whole family of Ta Loek in Tbaeng village, Korkisaom commune, near his village. At the same time, there were also Viet Cong troops [North Vietnamese troops] crossing the village. While the Americans dropped more and more bombs, the Viet Cong soldiers hid themselves among the villagers. About 10 to 20 bombs were dropped from the planes each time. That lasted about 2-3 hours after midnight. Consequently, every family had to dig a trench underneath their house for self-protection.

Ing and his mother earned their living by growing rice until 1975 when he was included in a mobile unit. Ing had to work on digging and carrying earth in all villages of Korkisaom commune and Prasot district whose chiefs were Saliv and Samen. Ing worked in the mobile unit for one year, and in 1976, So Phim, the secretary of the East Zone (Ing's grandfather because his mother was So Phim's niece), ordered his subordinate cadres to bring 19-year-old Ing and other relatives to live with him. So Phim's original name was Prak Cham. His father was Prak and his mother was Mom. So Phim had 3 siblings: 1). Brother, Prak Chum 2). Sister, Prak Chhun 3). Prak Cham (So Phim) and 4). Prak Dul (AKA Tit) who was the Chhloung district chief in the Khmer Rouge regime. So Phim's wife was named Yeay [grandma] Karo whose home village was in Chreuo village, Krabao commune, Kamchay Mea district, Prey Veng province.

Those who were selected to live with So Phim at that time included only 9 people, 6 of whom were from Sangkum village, the same as Ing, and the

other 3 from Tbeng village. Among those people, only two people survived the Khmer Rouge regime,



including Ing and Prak Choeun, who was the chauffeur, bodyguard and food tester for So Phim. Nowadays he [Prak Choeun] lives in Kumpot Tuk village, Korkisaom commune.

Ing drove a Chinese-made car toward a farm in Tuol Samrong where there was a wedding celebration between So Phim's daughter Sy and Ruos Nhim's son. That night, Ing slept over inside the wedding hall which had not yet been removed. First, [at the farming department] Ing met So Phim's wife Yeay Karo. There he saw people from all different places living and growing crops. All morning they had to clear and burn down the forest in order to clear land for growing rice. Ing was living in the farming department for about 10 days until a cadre from the defense department came to drive him to Suong, along with 8 other people from the same home village. When they arrived, So Phim called and questioned Ing and the other people one by one—"Where are you from? Who are your parents?" After that, So Phim told [us], "Try to work hard! Because when the old have all gone, only the young can replace them just like a [bamboo] sprout growing from a bamboo."

Later on, Ing was trained in how to remove and fire a gun and how to crawl. The trainer was So Phim's cousin Prak Choeuk. More than a trainer, Choeuk was also the chief of defense unit for So Phim. So Phim would not dare to go out [on a mission] unless Choeuk already examined the way in advance.

Ing spent about 2-3 months getting trained in the defense department with 60 trainees in total (including families of the guards). Their mission was

to patrol around So Phim's house at night by taking turns every hour and to grow vegetables during the daytime. On the other hand, So Phim assigned the old guards to work in some departments, ministries and in the bases, instead. Only three [old guards] stayed with him—they were Yun, Song and Sreng. So Phim lived in the defense department located next door to the Zone department, so anyone who wanted to contact him for work could see him at his place [in the defense department]. He went to Rong commune for all brigade meetings.

The bodyguards close to So Phim were only those 9 young cadres who were also his relatives. They ate the same food as So Phim including KoKor, Samlak and Prahaer [typical Khmer soups]. His cook was named Soth. However, all bodyguards had to eat after So Phim. Besides eating food in his department, So Phim also received meat such as deer and turtle meat from some cadres. Ing could also go for a meal in other departments besides the defense department.

In addition to his protection job, the driver sometimes brought him along to transport things to villages. For those who were caught at moral misconduct in the department, Angkar withdrew their position or detained them inside Sre Spey prison, which was a security center of the East Zone with Sen as its chief.

Ing drove So Phim to visit his wife in the farm in Tuol Samrong for 3-4 days or one week in every half a month. Sometimes, So Phim did not sleep in his wife's place; he just came back to his defense department afterwards. When hearing the sound of his car, all workers in the department became quiet because they were afraid of him.

More than his bodyguard, Ing was also assigned to carry secret messages from So Phim to other brigades in the battles such as the Brigade 5 led by cadre Kem, Brigade 4 by cadre Rin, Brigade 3 and Brigade 2 by cadre Tat, travelling by a motorcycle C.L along with another cadre. The two of them were armed. Sometimes Ing enjoyed a meal with cadre

Rin, and Rin also gave jackfruits to him. Ing somehow found it difficult to carry those jackfruits due to bad road conditions.

Ing also drove So Phim to see Ta Salat, alias Sim (So Phim's wife was a relative of Ta Salat's) in Stung in Ponhea Krek district three times. When he got there, Ing just waited underneath the house while So Phim and Ta Salat had a meeting about their work in the upper house. In addition to this, Ing also drove So Phim when he had to work in districts and such regions as region 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 in the East Zone. So Phim had meetings with the Zone committee and was instructed about the plan set by his superiors [for him] to implement. When he went off to work, there were always a cook and a medic going along with him because it sometimes took a month before he could come back to the defense department. During those days, a medic who came from Phnom Penh by car or helicopter due to poor road conditions also measured and took his blood to be the examined in Phnom Penh regularly twice a

week because So Phim mostly suffered from limb ache and diarrhea.

In addition to his job in the East Zone, Ing also drove So Phim for meetings in a department at the Royal Palace and sometimes placed him at Wat Unalaom, which was used as a messenger department of the East Zone, before another car came to pick him up. After that, Ing had to wait at the messenger department in Wat Unalaom, whose chief was Oeun, until the meeting ended, and then he could go to take So Phim back to his zone. However, if So Phim could not finish the meeting in one day and had to sleep over in Phnom Penh for 2-3 days, Ing had to return to the defense department in Suong. He came to take So Phim back only when the meeting ended. Ing was in charge of taking So Phim for meetings in Phnom Penh twice a week alongside his own chauffeurs, Kim and Nim (currently they live in Doun Tey commune). In every travel, there were about 4-6 people and 2 cars—a white Mercedes and another car and in each car there were 2-3 people.



Photo from right: So Phim, Pol Pot, Nuon Chea and Ieng Sary at the Congress of the Communist Party of Kampuchea in Phnom Penh

In the [defense] department, there were about 30 cars. Some of those cars had to be examined before being used such as a Land Rover car because it was bumpy on the road that was destroyed by bombs during the war. The driver departed from Suong at 8 AM and arrived in Phnom Penh at 12 PM.

From 1977-1978, the border dispute between the Khmer Rouge and Vietnam started. Ing often drove So Phim to have a meeting with Ke Pork and went to the battle in Stung very often. They met unit chiefs at the frontier and went to the southern part near National Road 7 and some places near Krabao. Ke Pork, the secretary of the central zone, also stayed in the messenger department with Ing, and he asked So Phim to take Prak Choek, the chief of the defense department, and Ing to stay [work] with him. However, So Phim refused the request saying, "If I let Choek and Ing go, I will not have anyone to work for me because Choek knows the geographical conditions well." Ke Kork came to stay in the defense department once a week with Ing, when there was a terrible fight between the Vietnamese and his Central Zone troops, which wore a uniform different from those in the East zone and the South-West Zone: Only the commanders could recognize the uniform of their own troops.

During the dispute, Ing saw that Pol Pot, Nuon Chea, Chuon Choeun and Vorn Vet had meetings in the defense department of So Phim, and those senior [leaders] always came at night. During 1977, Nuon Chea stayed in the defense department 4 times. Every time Nuon Chea came, there were about 20 or 30 cars accompanying him and many bodyguards protecting him. In particular, there were visitors from Cuba, France and especially China visiting in the East Zone, and a Chinese delegate, Chhoeng Cheang-Kuy, stayed in the defense department.

When Angkar alleged that the East Zone was traitorous, Ing saw that So Phim always drank alone for about one month. Ing mentioned that before the allegations were made, many cadres in the North-

East Zone were arrested, some of whom were thought to have escaped to the East Zone. At that time, many cadres in the East Zone were arrested too, and So Phim left the defense department to live in a farm in Tuol Preap in Doun Tey commune. After that So Phim went to live with comrade Rin in the East Zone office in Prey Veng province because comrade Rin was sick and being treated there. At the same time, there were many brigade chiefs who escaped arrest such as comrade Vanna, Kim and other comrades whom Ing did not remember. They most often had meetings with So Phim. Some days later, So Phim told Rin that he had to go to Phnom Penh for a meeting to solve the situation when Angkar alleged "the East Zone" were traitors. He left a word to comrade Rin saying, "If I do not return in a week, you have to escape into the forest and gather the remaining people to fight back against Pol Pot's troops."

When Khmer New Year in 1978 ended, So Phim, alongside Ing and his chauffeur, cook, guards and messenger—9 people in total, left the office in Prey Veng province. Everyone had an A-K short gun, and So Phim's was kept in his clothes basket. They travelled across Svay Antor, Snay Pol, Prek Tamak, and along the riverside. Ing and the others arrived in Arey Ksat in the afternoon and were about to enter Phnom Penh by boat. However, So Phim did not get into the city because there was a heavy rain and escapees [of the arrest] from Phnom Penh who lived in Arey Ksat said, "You should not go [to Phnom Penh]. You go to get arrested. All East people in Phnom Penh were arrested." Anyway, So Phim ordered his assistant Cheng to write a letter. The letter read, "I [So Phim] arrived in Arey Ksat already. Shall you come to pick me up?" The letter was sealed and delivered by his messenger to Pol Pot in Phnom Penh; the messenger also was waiting for a return letter. In contrast, about three hours later, his messenger appeared without a return letter. Still with a little hope, So Phim wrote another new letter deliv-

ered to Pol Pot by his messenger, but it was still rejected. Thus, So Phim with his guards and his messengers stayed in a wooden house in a farm in front of the Royal Palace.

At about 2 AM, Angkar assigned their troops armed with A.K rifles and C.K.C to surround and capture So Phim, but they then had a firing fight with the soldiers who had escaped arrest in Phnom Penh and were living in the farm. Unable to recognize where those troops came from, Ing shot back, and then shooting from the city troops came out of everywhere. Seeing that, Ing stopped his group from firing. At the same time, there was a cadre who had worked in the messenger department in Phnom Penh and then escaped to live in Arey Ksat. He told So Phim, "I know a way to escape. You do not need to drive your car. The soldiers will arrest you because of your car's sound." While walking from his house for about 50 meters, So Phim ordered his messenger to go to the Lvea-Em district office on foot to get a car to get him out. Upon reaching the main road where two big trees stood, they saw the city soldiers, who hid themselves nearby. Those soldiers came to grab the hands of So Phim's guards Proeung and Phy, and another person who was carrying So Phim's clothes and who was walking behind Phal, and then they screamed out loud several times to So Phim's group to put their hands up. Immediately, Ing shot down one soldier on the spot, and then his group started to fire back. Ing retreated and helped So Phim back to the farm house. When he arrived, So Phim just sat helplessly and said, "I cannot go anywhere." Immediately So Phim attempted to get his short gun from the basket, but Ing stopped him because Ing knew that he was exhausted. As the firing was getting better, Ing asked Phy to protect the house, and he himself ran to stop the frontline guards from firing. He told them, "Grandpa [So Phim] already got back, so we need to retreat to protect him."

Later on, Ing brought a specialist to examine a motor-driven boat at the river bank. He examined

the oil container and started the machine in order to get ready for So Phim's escape. Ing and the boat driver started the machine waiting for So Phim for half an hour; yet they did not see him appear, and then they shut off the machine. Ing put his gun on the boat's head and took a bath while being nervous. Suddenly, he saw shadows arriving at the river banks one by one and heard a sound of someone hitting the oil containers placed at the bank. Ing told the boat driver that someone was coming. Being told that, the driver just escaped then. Ing was thinking that he was going to die because he did not know the geographical situation there well. He walked from the back to the front of the boat to get dressed, and he pointed his gun at the city soldiers who were bending down at the river bank. Ing jumped into the water and moved across the boats placed at the bank in order to escape with his life. After leaving for about 20 meters, Ing saw the city soldiers getting down to his boat. Seeing no one on the boat, they went back. So Phim escaped walking along the river bank before a car from Lvea-Em office came to pick him up that night. (Ing was informed of this event after he met the Khsach Kandal district chief).

After the escape, Ing had thought that So Phim and his guards would have died, so he went back to the farmhouse. Unexpectedly, when he got there, he saw about 200-300 soldiers staying underneath and on the house and some soldiers taking off and cleaning their guns. Assuming that those soldiers were his companions, Ing told them yelling, "Here I come to fetch my car [the car that So Phim had left]". Immediately, those soldiers screamed out an order to Ing to put his hands up before Ing knew they were the city soldiers. Thinking he was going to die at last, Ing just fired at them with his gun and escaped. Those soldiers tried to shoot him down but always missed him. Ing hid himself under some water hyacinths, and those city soldiers shot over the water hyacinths. Still, the soldiers jumped into the water in search of Ing and his gun, but they did not see him

because Ing had swum to hide underneath the water hyacinths which were shot down and spread all over the water. After those Khmer Rouge soldiers moved away, Ing crept onto a bar that people used for taking a bath. He raised himself up, and then the Khmer Rouge soldiers fired again, making villagers shocked. When Ing looked at the road, [he] saw Khmer Rouge soldiers driving So Phim's car. Ing hid on the other side of road and ran into a house. He had escaped through the backdoor while those city soldiers could only surround that house.

Ing ran across the fields behind people's houses and across the forest for three days before reaching Vihear Suor in Khsach Kandal. The local people caught and tied Ing to a pillar of their house. Due to a fever, exhaustion and starvation, he fell a sleep there. When he woke up, Ing saw 2-3 people with [long-handled] daggers in their hands. Then, someone was running to report to the Ksach Kandal district chief that they had caught a person of the South-West. However, they did not meet the cadre chief but only those in the art unit. When the art unit arrived at the detention site, they recognized that Ing was So Phim's guard. They untied and released him. The commune chief apologized to Ing.

At 5 PM of the same day, the district chief named Sie asked Ing to the Ksach Kandal office and told him that So Phim was still alive and living in Prek Por, Srey Santhor district as he [Sie] had met him in a meeting. Sie wrote a request letter to So Phim asking him to allow Ing to work in Khsach Kandal with him. While Ing was working in the district office for 6 days, he often saw people coming to report that cadres from the South-West were coming to arrest commune chiefs, soldiers and cadres in the nearby departments. Because of fear, Ing escaped secretly at night; he persuaded other two cadres in the art unit to go with him. They dressed like civilians.

After knowing that Ing had already escaped, some cadres in the Khsach Kandal office also escaped afterward. Ing spent about 2-3 days to reach

Prek Por and stayed in a vermicelli noodle factory. At about 4-5 PM, central soldiers came to capture Ing and his companions at gunpoint in order to surround and arrest So Phim; they were standing along the street 300 meters from his place to the Prek Por office, where Sor Phim lived. Fortunately, those central soldiers knew the cadres of the art unit who came along with Ing, because those soldiers had been in the zone art unit; but Angkar later assigned them to be central soldiers. Those soldiers told cadres of the art unit who were staying with Ing that they did not arrest So Phim, but he just killed himself. At the same time, his subordinates and his soldiers from the South-West and the East Zone were being captured. Hearing the news, Ing just hid himself at the corner of a broken stone wall, and carried on listening. After he heard motorcycles of those central soldiers leaving, Ing appeared and begged those art cadres who came along with him not to reveal his identity; otherwise, he would be arrested also. Since then, Ing no longer trusted those art cadres.

Three days later, Ing escaped from Prek Por and traveled to Rorka Khnuoch (about 5 kilometers from Suong city), and he met an old man who worked in a mechanic unit and knew Ing. He hid himself in that old man's house. The art cadres who arrived in Suong were all arrested and escorted past the house where Ing was staying. Seeing that, Ing told the old man that he was going back to his hometown. He lied to the soldiers watching the street by saying that he was sick; he was just coming from being cured at the P-2 hospital. Ing then arrived in the North of Svay Rieng provincial town, and was captured in Wat Kdey Romduol by the soldiers of the South-West. He was alleged to be a relation of the traitor So Phim. Ing was detained for one month until the Vietnamese troops entered. Then, he could come back home.

Bunthorn Som

THEIR TURN NOW

Pheana Sopheak

August 7, 2014 is the date when the pain of most Khmer Rouge survivors were provided with justice. It is the date when the senior KR leaders, Noun Chea and Khieu Samphan were sentenced for life. This date means a lot to those survivors. Oum Yik, a La-ang Prison survivor, is feeling satisfied with the result that those leaders have gotten.

Oum Yik, 66, is a farmer who lives in Chamkar Bey Village, Pong Tik Commune, Damnak Chang-eu District, Kep Province. He is native to Damnak Trayoeng Village. Since his childhood, he could read and write. In 1970, he settled down and had four children. Besides being a farmer, he also dug rock to sell at Touk Meas Market. His ordinary life went on. Until April 17, 1975, eight of the 17 April people were evacuated to live with him. Because he was assigned to be the Khmer Rouge cadre, he was ordered to take away two 17 April people to the cow stable at Kbal Tinh Mountain. However, he refused, for he knew that if he took them away, they would be taken to be killed. This let him have the name in the Khmer Rouge's list.

In mid-1977, he was assigned to be head of the cattle unit, whose unit chief's name is On. His task was to look after 50-60 cattle. There were also three old and two young members in his unit. One day, there was a baby cow which did not want to go back to the stable. It was stubborn. Not being able to think of any means to persuade it, he left it there. Unfortunately, the village chief took it to eat. Two or three days later, Yik was taken away. He was sent to join the army and fight in the battle field at Prek Chik which was near the border of Vietnam. One day, one came to him and told him that his children were sick and allowed him to return home for one month. He

was happy to be back united with his family. Conversely, instead of taking him home, they sent him to Touk Meas Prison. He was accused of releasing two 17 April prisoners and killing that baby cow. They decided to send him to Kampot. It took him one night to reach there. To transport him there, they tied him and put shackles on his legs and threw him into a truck.

Upon arriving at Kampot, he was shackled and tied. The first three days, he was taken to be interrogated, and he was interrogated and beaten three times per day. During the interrogation, he was asked what he did wrong. He kept replying that he did nothing wrong. The Khmer Rouge did not listen. They believed that he must have done something wrong. They said, "If you did nothing wrong, Angkar would not arrest you. Angkar never arrests one without reason." They asked his background, and he told them that he was just a farmer. Moreover, they kept asking the reason he was sent there. For giving an unsatisfying response, i.e. he did nothing wrong, he was hit with the window bar. Not being able to endure the pain, he fainted. Lastly, he was put in shackles. Two meals, which included rice and gruel, were given to him. There was also a bullet container reserved for him to urinate into. There were 10 prisoners in one cell, and they were put on a long iron bar and shackled together. Some died. The smell was odourous because for one day and one night, both the corpse and the container were left in the room. He spent his nights with the corpses around him. He could not have any bath at all. He was there for three months and 20 days. After that, he was sent by truck, which contained 10 prisoners, to a new area, La-ang. At La-ang, he was assigned to do farm work, carry

earth, and log in the jungle to clear land for growing crops. There were 600 people, included both males and females, in total. What they were given for meals were rice mixed with cassava. There were also some women who defected and were arrested. After being arrested, they were tied for two days and two nights. Then, the Khmer Rouge arranged a meeting, where all the prisoners were asked to line up, and those who were arrested were allowed to ask for a guarantor who guaranteed that they would never defect again. No one dared be the guarantor. Consequently, those females were killed. Yik witnessed the incident thrice. Two females were killed by a hoe, and a male was killed in front of him and all other prisoners.

In 1978, there were only 300 prisoners left; the number was reduced by half. In that year, since the Khmer Rouge had to fight against the Vietnamese soldiers at Koh Sla, all the prisoners were sent to help. They were assigned to carry rice and salt for the Khmer Rouge soldiers. At one point, he saw a prisoner was killed, and he thought they might kill him, too. Then, they came to check the prisoners and started killing them. To survive, Yik decided to defect. He

managed to escape. It took him 12 days and 12 nights to reach Kbal Romeas, and he could run only at nighttime because he was afraid of being seen. It took him 15 days more to build a house there. Then, his father drove a horse cart to take him home.

After learning that Khieu Samphan and Noun Chea are convicted with life imprisonment, Yik is very satisfied and pleased. The verdict could heal his pain to some degree. Still, he is quite disappointed that even though Khieu Samphan and Noun chea are imprisoned, they receive enough food and sleep in a nice place. He said: "It is never equal." He eagerly wants to harm them, yet he understands the country has laws, and that all citizens have to follow them.

Though Khieu Samphan and Noun Chea will live or be detained in a sufficient facility which is far different from his notorious jail term during the Khmer Rouge era, Yik thinks that to live the rest of their lives as criminals serves them right. It is their turn now!

Pheana Sopheak



People in a mobile unit were digging canal during a Democratic Kampuchea period

THE CONCEALMENT OF PAIN

Pheana Sopheak

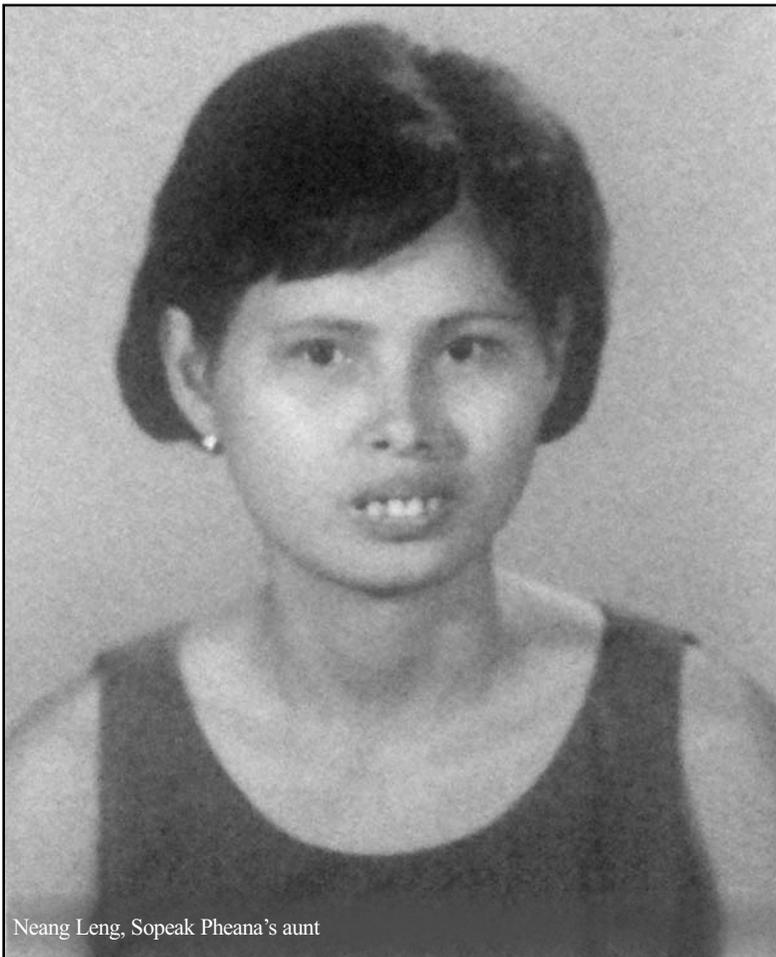
My aunt is an outgoing person who always puts a smile on her face. At first glance, she is like someone who has no worries at all. However, when reminded of the Khmer Rouge (KR) Regime, her face dramatically changes to depressed and grievous. This occurred due to the deepest pain of losing the love ones during this evil regime.

In 1969, a happy family was established. A newly married couple, my aunt and my uncle, had been living peacefully. As the gift for this gorgeous married life, a baby girl was born. This led the family to be more contented. Good things did not last long; in 1972, the war occurred; my aunt's family and her

uncle's family left their village to Phnom Penh. In Phnom Penh, they had to start a new life from zero. They got land to build a small hut to live. About two years, the living was quite better. In 1974, because of the existence of war almost everywhere, the military forces were needed. Most men were sent to serve as soldiers. To flee from being captured to serve in the military, my aunt's family and her uncle's family, except her mom, my two other aunts and my mother, decided to move from Phnom Penh to Poipet. Arriving at Poipet, at Ou Chreou District, both families started a new life with less worrying. About a year later, on March 24, 1975, another significant spot in

her life timeline happened. It was the ascendance of the KR Regime. On that day, the KR announced to all the villagers to prepare clothes and some rice to leave the villages for three days; after the three days, they would be allowed to come back. Without thinking much, everyone prepared their things and left.

When being evacuated, everyone had to walk. Every village road was filled with the flood of people. Because the distance was quite short, they did not face any big trouble while being evacuated. Finally, my aunt's family and her uncle's family were stopped and sent to Ta Bao Dam which was located in the village in the jungle. There, they had to find wood to build a small hut to live. The two families were living together. There was no food distributed to them; they cooked the rice they brought along with them and went to find fish. Living there for a bit, Angkar called them to take the rice from



Neang Leng, Sopeak Pheana's aunt

the village. They went to find the wild tree leaf which was not poisonous to eat with rice.

Staying at Ta Bao Dam for a few months, the two families were evacuated to another village, Ponlech Village. In Ponlech Village, they had to ask the old people for a house to share. In that small house, there were four families living together. At the same time, my aunt, her husband and her cousin were assigned to different units, while her aunt and uncle, her daughter and her other small cousin remained at home. My aunt was assigned to transplant seedlings; her husband was sent to tend cattle; and, her cousin was sent to Kong Neary (Female Unit). About a month later, my aunt's family was evacuated to one another village, Phnom Chornh chaeng, at Sereisophorn. She was separated from her uncle's family. At Sereisophorn, she lived in the hut with another family. She was assigned to Kong Ty Dobpy (Unit twelve) and ordered to plant cotton, while her husband was sent to the guard team. Her

little daughter was kept with the elder women. The task she was asked to do was planting cotton, yet the actual task was to dig up tree stumps. She had to work very hard. She worked nonstop. Luckily, the food was solid rice.

One day, the team chief came to her and asked for her husband. Immediately, she realized that her husband would be taken to be killed. This was because in the prior few days, her husband had brought up the life when they were able to eat and drink comfortably, which was heard by the other family staying in the same hut with them. They reported to Angkar. The team chief said that her husband was assigned to guard at some other place. Before departing, her husband told her that if they really take him to be killed, he would run away to let them shoot him rather than hit him to death. She kept waiting, yet he did not come back. That night, at around 12, she suddenly heard the sound of shooting. She knew that it must be her husband who



Photo of Pheana Sopheak and her aunt taken on November, 1994

ran away and was shot by the KR. Helplessly, she could only pray to let her husband rest in peace. At around one o'clock, the team chief came to her again and asked, "Bang Leng, Bang Leng! I come to pay respect to the team member. Is Bang Nam here?" She replied, "He is not here." Through this dialogue, she was sure that her husband was dead.

In the morning, along the way to the work site, she heard others whisper about her husband's death last night. Then, she went to ask those colleagues of her husband, "Bang! Along the way, if you see my husband [dead body], please help to have it buried." They agreed to, yet she was not sure whether they did it or not. For two or three days of not seeing her father, the daughter kept asking for her father. She asked, "Why are there only two plates? Normally, there are three plates, where is father's plate? Why he does not come to have the meal with us? Where is he?" The questions were cutting her flesh out, my aunt told her daughter that her father was ordered to be educated at the far place and could not come back very soon. Time passed; her daughter stopped asking for her father, and her pain could be a bit relieved.

After the death of her husband, she kept doing her task with pain inside. Her colleagues warned her not to talk to them, for her husband was a convict. Involving themselves with her could lead them into danger. Having no choice, she had to isolate herself from the others. Not long after, her daughter was sick, and she brought her to the hospital. They stayed there for two months, while the cadres always kept an eye on them. Afraid of being killed, she asked to leave the hospital. Back in the village, she kept moving on with her tasks. Then, she was ordered to build the dam instead of digging stumps. The work was very heavy, yet the food was just watery gruel. Having no energy because of doing too heavy work, her legs were swollen. To survive, she had to keep performing the job. After a time, her swollen legs were better.

Again, she was assigned to do another task; it was transplanting the dry season seedling. She brought along her daughter to the field, for no one looked after her. In 1978, her elder and younger brother in law ran to Thailand and died in the jungle. My aunt, again, was recorded in the blacklist of the KR. In addition, her younger brother in law's wife, who was Vietnamese and could not speak Khmer properly, always came to weep with her. This had burdened her with more trouble. She had to live with the fear of being taken away to be killed. One day, her neighbor, whose husband ran to Thailand just a few days before, came to her and asked her to run away, for living here, they would die. That night, she decided to run away. She held her daughter's hand and ran through the jungle. They dared not walk on the road; they descended to the ditch to hide from being seen. In the dawn, they arrived at a village. Her neighbor went to her village, while she and her daughter came to Ponlech Village. She asked the cadre to live in the village with her relatives; at first, the cadre did not allow. Because of her begging, the cadre, who was quite kind, at last was persuaded and allowed her to enter the village. When she reunited with her relatives, she realized that her aunt was dead because of being unable to deliver a baby. There were only her uncle and a cousin left. They continued living and performing the assigned tasks until the collapse of the regime.

All in all, this harsh regime had taken her beloved husband and relatives. She prays not to let it take place again. She is delighted that the history of this regime has been included in schools to educate the younger generation. This will help prevent the regime from repeating or happening elsewhere in the world. Although going through such pain, my aunt always conceals this pain and fills her remaining life with the smile to prove that she is brave enough to accept this loss.

Pheana Sopheak

A HISTORY CLASSROOM AT FORMER KHMER ROUGE S-21 PRISON

The Khmer Rouge regime turned public schools and pagodas into prisons, stables and warehouses. Tuol Sleng prison, also known by its code name of "S-21," was created on the former grounds of Chao Ponhea Yat high school, originally constructed in 1962. The Khmer Rouge converted the school into the most secret of the country's 196 prisons.

Experts estimate that somewhere between 14,000 and 20,000 people were held at Tuol Sleng and executed. Only seven known prisoners survived after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed. The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) held that at least 12,273 prisoners passed through Tuol Sleng in its trial judgment against former Tuol Sleng commander Kaing Guek Eav alias Duch. As the number of survivors has received less attention, most Western media repeated the figure

of seven survivors and this has been repeated for over 30 years. However, after several years of research, the Documentation Center of Cambodia estimates that at least 179 prisoners were released from Tuol Sleng from 1975 to 1978 and approximately 23 additional prisoners survived when the Vietnamese ousted the Khmer Rouge regime on January 7, 1979.

Today the four buildings in the compound of the prison form the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, which was opened to the public in 1980. People from all over the world visited the museum and currently, approximately 250 people



visit on an average day. Many Cambodian visitors travel to Tuol Sleng seeking information about their relatives who disappeared under the Khmer Rouge.

While the museum has been a success in generally raising awareness of the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge, it still lacks a thorough educational dimension, which could make the experience of visiting more dynamic, educational and memorable. Since its conversion from a place of learning to a place of horror and degradation, Tuol Sleng has never reclaimed its original status. However, in the future, in order to reclaim the positive, educational heritage of Tuol Sleng and add an educational element to the museum, a classroom has been created to provide free lectures and discussions on the history of the Khmer Rouge regime and related issues, such as the ECCC. The classroom will also serve as a public platform for visitors and survivors to share information and preserve an important period of Cambodian history for future generations to learn from.

◆ **LECTURERS:** Staff members from the Documentation Center of Cambodia and Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

◆ **GUEST SPEAKERS:** National and International Scholars on Cambodia and S-21 Survivors

◆ **TOPICS COVERED:** Who were the Khmer Rouge? ◆ How did the Khmer Rouge gain power? ◆ The Khmer Rouge Hierarchy ◆ Khmer Rouge Domestic Policies ◆ The Khmer Rouge Security System ◆ Office S-21 (Tuol Sleng Prison) ◆ Khmer Rouge Foreign Policies ◆ The Fall of the Khmer Rouge ◆ The Verdicts of the ECCC.

◆ **SCHEDULE:** Monday 2pm-3pm ◆ Wednesday 9am-10am ◆ Friday 2pm-3pm.

◆ **VENUE:** Building A, top floor, 3rd room.

PUBLIC INFORMATION ROOM

DC-Cam's Public Information Room (PIR) is open to students, researchers, government and non-government organizations, and interested members of the public who want to learn more about the history of Democratic Kampuchea and the developments of the coming Khmer Rouge tribunal.

DC-Cam is the largest repository of primary materials on Democratic Kampuchea (DK). The materials in its archives are consequently of the utmost historical interest and has served as important evidentiary materials in any accountability process relating to the DK regime. To disseminate the truth about the DK period and to promote lawful accountability and national reconciliation, it is imperative that materials be made available to historians, judicial officials, and other interested members of the public. Through the PIR, the public can read the documents and use them for research. The documents in our possession include biographies, confessions, party records, correspondence, and interview transcripts. We also have a database that can be used to find information on mass graves, prisons, and genocide memorial sites throughout Cambodia. The PIR offers three services:

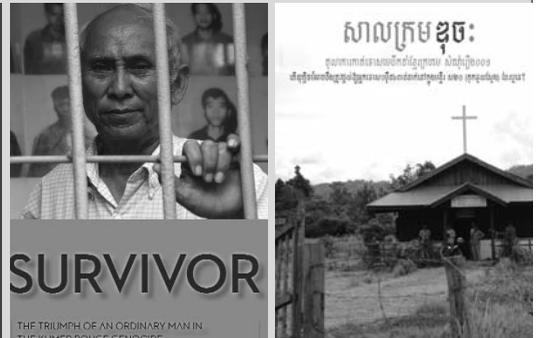
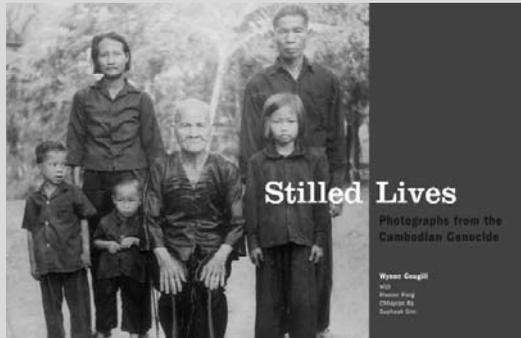
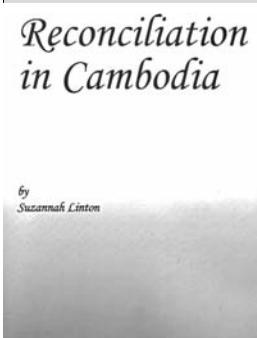
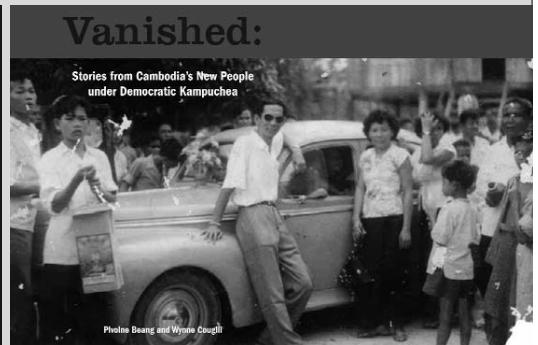
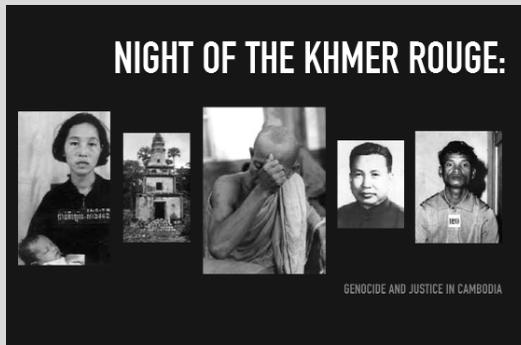
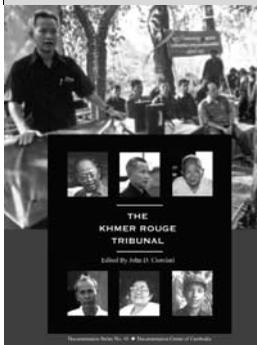
1. Library: Through our library, the public can read documents, books and magazines, listen to tapes, watch documentary films and view photographs held at DC-Cam, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, National Archives and other locations.

2. Educational Center: DC-Cam shows documentary films and offers lectures on Khmer Rouge history, the Khmer Rouge tribunal, and other related subjects.

3. Tribunal Response Team: Our document and legal advisors have provided research assistance to the tribunal's legal experts from both Cambodia and the United Nations, as well as to the public.

Khmer Rouge documentary films are shown everyday upon request.

The PIR is located at House 66, Preah Sihanouk Blvd, east of the Independence Monument. It is open to the public from Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information or if you want to arrange a group event, please contact our staff, Soday Un, at truthsoday.u@dccam.org or at 023 211 875. Thank you.



ECCC ANNOUNCEMENT: FIRST GENOCIDE CHARGES TO BE HEARD AT ECCC

Extra Ordinary in the Court of Cambodia

Starting from 7 September 2015, the Trial Chamber of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) will for the first time hear evidence related to charges of genocide when the trial in Case 002/02 against Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea moves to the next trial sequence which focuses on allegations related to the treatment of the Cham group. Fourteen witnesses, Civil Parties and one expert are scheduled to testify during this part of the trial.

lages and prohibited from practicing their religion. Cham religious leaders and elders and those who continued to practice their religion were imprisoned and killed. Cham culture, language and dress were further prohibited according to the Closing Order. The Closing Order points to evidence that 36 per cent of the Cham people in Cambodia died during the regime of Democratic Kampuchea. The Closing Order alleges that Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea through their various roles within the Communist

Party of Kampuchea bear individual criminal responsibility for the crimes committed against the Cham group.

Case 002/02 is the second trial against Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea and includes charges of genocide against the Cham and Vietnamese, forced marriages and rape, internal purges, alleged crimes committed against Buddhists and former Khmer Republic officials and crimes allegedly committed at four security centers, three work-

sites and one group of work cooperatives. As it starts this third trial topic, the Chamber has to date completed hearings on cooperatives and three worksites with the testimonies of 65 individuals: 39 witnesses, 25 Civil Parties, and 1 expert over the course of 98 hearing days.

More information on the allegations related to the treatment of the Cham is available on the ECCC website: <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/crime-sites/treatment-cham>



Cham people at an unknown mosque

The Cham are an ethnic minority within Cambodia who share a common language, a common culture and Islam as a common religion. According to the Closing Order, people who belonged to the Cham group were systematically killed and the Communist Party of Kampuchea implemented a policy to destroy, in whole or in part the Cham group as such. The Closing Order states that the Cham were systematically and methodically targeted and killed on account of their membership of the Cham group and forcibly moved and dispersed into Khmer vil-

WHAT CHUM MEY INSPIRES ME

Pheana Sopheak

Because the Khmer Rouge Regime existed for 3 years, 8 months and 20 days, most survivors from this regime have been impacted severely. Some prefer not to bring up this experience they suffered. However, Chum Mey, S-21 survivor, who was injured by torture during the regime, prefers not to turn his back on this cruel regime. He said, "I come every day to tell the world the truth about the Tuol Sleng prison... so that none of these crimes are ever repeated anywhere in the world." His courage has deeply impressed me.

In his 80s, Chum Mey still keeps going to Tuol Sleng Museum, where he strove to survive during the KR Regime, every day to spread his bitter experience to the visitors. Within the interview, he claimed, "I cry every night - every time I hear people talk about the Khmer Rouge it reminds me of my wife and children." To him, being reminded of the Khmer Rouge Regime is just like cutting his flesh out. In the attempt reach his goal, he, however, decides to face it every day. His bravery teaches me that whatever obstacle we have encountered in life, even if it hurts or discourages us, do not fear it. Go for it. Use what we have

to defeat it. There is nothing that could not be won over if we are determined. His enthusiasm also reveals to me that we cannot change the past, or make it better; do not let the past take control of you. What you have to do is to become its owner and use it to brighten your future, accomplish your goal.

In addition, his past not only serves his goal but also helps the victim and vulnerable people. Through the selling of his autobiographic book, Mey can earn a sum of money which enables him to live well. However, he does not take all the money to use for his own sake. He has created a charity center to gather the surviving victims of the Khmer Rouge Regime and the orphans who are unable to afford their living. He said, "We are all Khmer; we have to help each other." This spirit proves to me that we should do what we can do and help more people.

Last but not least, he values life very much. During the KR regime, he has been tortured almost to death, such as shocked by electric wire, pulled out his nails, shot with a gun, and hit on the head. Getting such tortures, some people would commit suicide to end their suffering. Conversely, Mey is different. He

did his best to keep his fragile life alive. This has brought me to a very significant message. It is "Do not easily give up your life. The hardship will pass."

Indeed, though it hurts to face your bitter past, Chum Mey has bravely done that. Even though half of his body does not operate properly, he still goes all-out for his goal. After the interview, I am motivated to move enthusiastically toward my goals.



Photos from left: Chum Mey with 6 survivors from the Tuol Sleng prison. This photo was taken after the Khmer Rouge collapsed in 1979

Pheana Sopheak

JOURNEY TO ESCAPE FROM DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

THE REAL STORY OF CHEA SEYHA

The sorrowful day

The most unforgettable day came. April 17, 1975, Khmer Rouge soldiers entered Phnom Penh. The general public were proud of the victory of the soldiers as they hoped that their country would be awarded peace, a pure society and freedom.

At that time, my family and I lived at Phsar Nimet Kaun Damrey, along national road number 5, which was about 6 kilometers away from Poipet city center. We had no idea about what happened later in Phnom Penh as the national radio channel no longer provided clear information, and, later, we got no signal at all. We lived in the northwest zone of the country, which was far away from Phnom Penh. People and the arm forces were waiting for the Khmer Rouge. Three days passed, yet there was no sign of any Khmer Rouge. Rumors were heard everywhere. Some elites left their homes for Thailand.

In the morning of the fourth day after the victory of the Khmer Rouge, there were soldiers standing in a line along the border and the border was closed in order not to let anyone pass. Their soldiers announced for the elite and the high ranking individuals to welcome King Father at Battambang. They would be dressed based on their rank and leave from Poipet City. Around an hour later, motor-cart drivers told one another that the high ranking individuals who were transported by cars were all taken to be killed at Bat Trang Village. The next day, the Khmer Rouge announced over the loudspeaker, asking people to leave their houses for the countryside.

People were evacuated from the city to remote areas of the countryside, including Ta Kong Village, Aur Veng, Say Sarman, Chronik, and Anlong Samnar.

My family travelled, following the direction the Khmer Rouge military pointed, with the hope that we would have a pure society with no war.

Along the way, there were rumors that the Khmer Rouge were killing big business holders, those who disobeyed the order of the military, or those who tried to escape from the journey. Besides, former customs or migration officers were told that they were allowed to go back to perform their previous jobs. At the same time, teachers were demanded by Angkar to do a census and collect the biographies of the people. Later, those teachers and officers disappeared, as Angkar sent them to be re-educated. From day to day, our energy declined due to exhaustion and the endless journey, both day and night, under the hot April sun. We could only stop to cook. The food also decreased though we had done our best to save it.

When we started off the journey from Nimet Village, I contacted the truck owner at Phsar Nimet in order to let my aging, sick father, my pregnant wife, and my small children go with him. I and my other children walked. We reunited at Kaub Tauch Village in the afternoon. We, then, had a meal together and hurried to continue our journey. We told one another we would meet at Ta Kong Village. My oldest child and I joined with other villagers and reached Ta Kong Village at night. Upon my arrival, I tried to look for my father, my wife and my small children, yet I got no information about them. I could not even see the truck which they rode on. My children and I rested at Ta Kong Village with the crowd for three days to search for my separated family members. As there were a huge number of people at Ta Kong Village, the Khmer Rouge Military divided the people into different

locations. I and one other evacuated family, who I had known before, went to Ta Bay Dam, a dam located around two kilometers away from Ta Kong Village. Staying there for a day, I still got no information about my father, my wife and my children. I, then, decided to leave and look for them. I borrowed a bicycle from someone I knew. I left Ta Bay Dam at dawn. I left my two children who came with me, i.e. my oldest child and my fifth child, with my friend family who also had joined the journey to Ta Bay Dam. I went by bicycle back to Kaub Tauch Village, where I met my closest friend's family who lived near me at Phsar Nimet. According to this family, the truck owner and my family had continued their journey together with a Laotian businessman, Sun, to Banteay Neang, which was in the east. My friend's family packed a package of rice, boiled eggs and some salt for me to eat along the way. I headed east and asked for information about the truck from the travelers whom I met along the way. According to a group of evacuees, four days ago, they saw a truck, loaded people and stuff, that drove through the jungle and headed east.

I went through a number of villages until I came to the village where the Laotian businessman lived. I searched for the businessman Sun, yet no Laotian family knew him. I saw that those Laotian families were trying to hide Sun's address from me. Hence, I lied to a Laotian family saying, "businessman Sun asked me to bring news to his wife." Immediately, a Laotian took me to businessman Sun's wife's house, which was about 20 meters away from where we had the conversation. Meeting with my father, my wife and my four children, I could only cry. In the evening of the same day, we held a discussion to make a mutual decision on what we should do in this frightening situation; businessman Sun was the most important advisor in this discussion. Eventually, we decided to return to Ta Kong Village. A man whose name was Loeu gave us directions in order to let us stay away from the Khmer Rouge guards. Businessman Sun suggested that we should

flee to Thailand on the next night with his family. I was indecisive. I thought that the Khmer Rouge would not kill their own citizens, as the country needs its citizens to develop. I also assumed that the Khmer Rouge revolutionary leaders were not cruel people, as they were scholars who had studied in western countries. Also, though businessman Sun and his wife were so kind and gave us great advice, I had not known them before. I could not risk my family's lives and mine on their advice. Finally, I had no braveness to leave my beloved motherland.

The next day, I heard that businessman Sun and his family had left Ta Kong Village and headed west. My family and I voluntarily followed the group chief who travelled to Aur Veng Village, which was about three kilometers away from Ta Kong Village. Approximately ten families arrived at Aur Veng, around 10 am. The group chief was the oldest among the crowd. We elected him to be our group chief. He called all the family representatives for a meeting to discuss how to build a new village. After the meeting, each family representative chose the appropriate location for his/her own family. Nothing remained from the old village. At the east of a big hill, there was a natural lake. It was not deep, and its water was very muddy. At around 100 meters in the west of the hill, there was a big flatland, filled with Kak Plants. From one bush to another, there were muddy puddles. Those muddy puddles produced an odorous smell. Because of hunger and thirst, we took water from those puddles to boil and drink. Each family did their best to build their own house as they were afraid of the upcoming rainy season. The former Ta Kong villagers took materials from their old house to build a new house at Aur Veng. We, the evacuees from far places, had to go into the jungle to look for building materials. My wife went to cut some hay to bind together in order to build the roof. My oldest child and my second child went to take and filter the water from the puddles. My father was sick, and he could not do anything. He was our counsellor. I carried the

shackle on my shoulder and tied an axe at my waist with a new Krama and headed into the forest. It was the first time in my life that I held such tools.

Sihanouk, the chief; Hou Yon; Hou Nim; Khieu Samphan; Chuon Mom; other local skillful scholars; and, the revolution leaders from France. In the previous, With my two hands, my wife's two hands, and my children's hands, we successfully built a big house. We were proud of this. Our house was built of wood, vines, and hay. However, it was not linked together with nails or wire as we could find none of them.

The insufficiency in life went on. It was just the end of July, but it rained hard that year. Our team started ploughing, building dikes, and transplanting rice on approximately one hectare of land.

Each of us was so busy with the house constructing work, farming, and finding food to support our family. I was so afraid of starvation and diseases. The food taken from our old house decreased rapidly. We finished our milk-can of sugar. There was only a small amount of rice which remained. My first and second children were in charge of taking water from the puddles. Besides taking water, the children also hunted small animals, including small fish, small insects, small wild frogs, snakes, and crickets and picked wild vegetables, i.e. several kinds of mushroom, daily. In order to avoid having poisonous mushrooms, we always asked the older people in the group who had a clear knowledge of mushroom. Wild tree leaves, such as Yiev leaves, were ground to cook together with wild bamboo shoots and fish. We learned from the villagers about how to live in the jungle. We tried to adapt ourselves, as others did. We always paid close attention to our food. My father was not healthy and suffered from chronic diseases. I had some medicine to cure his illness. He could get better with the help of vitamin pills and diabetes medicine. I also suffered from the chronic disease – enteritis. It bothered me all of the time, especially when I was hungry.

In the morning of July 8, 1975, there was an unforgettable event. That morning, I was searching for mushroom in the bushes. Suddenly, there was the sound of guns shooting quite close to me. In open ground, there were a group of people wearing black clothes who were shooting and stabbing people wearing colorful cloths. They were the young, the elderly, males and females who died one after another. The small kids' legs were tied together. They were hit with the tree trunk, stabbed with a knife, or shot with rifles. It was the most brutal action and lasted for 10 minute. Around 200 citizens who escaped from the evacuation were killed. The number of the dead people was obtained from those who were tasked with burying the dead bodies. Since then, I realized that the Khmer Rouge treated the evacuees, or the April 17 people, as parasites or enemies.

Second evacuation

In the morning of July 12, 1975, a group of Khmer Rouge militiamen came into the village and shot into the air, yelling: "Hurry to leave your house! The Siam soldiers are coming. Hurry up!" I saw three Khmer Rouge militiamen were standing in front of my house, pointing their guns at my wife and yelling: "No need to bring anything out of the house! Just leave!" My wife was standing in the stairway and bent down to take medicine and medical materials out of the house. Suddenly, a militiaman fired the gun; it almost hit her. I shouted at my wife and told her to come down to the ground, without taking anything. The Khmer Rouge also yelled at my wife: "Wanna die!" My wife hurried to descend the stair and took as much of the belongings as she could. She held the children's hands and left. I immediately went to take my sick and aging father. I also carried some stuff along with him.. I asked one of my neighbors to let my father go with their cart, and he agreed. I carried the luggage and held my small children's hands. My wife cradled my youngest child and carried a basket of stuff. Leaving Ta Kong Village, we arrived at Ta Bay Dam and headed toward Kaub Tauch Village. All of

us felt hungry as it was lunch time. We dared not stop to cook as we walk quite slowly compared to others. The other villagers went ahead. They unloaded my father from the cart and let him wait for my family. We were told not to walk too slowly as the Khmer Rouge would kill us. My family and I increased our walking speed.

We walked for days and days, through rain and cold. I carried my ailing father piggy back as he was so weak that he could not walk.

One morning, we walked out on to national road number 5. Here, there were cars, motorcycle carts, and trucks, waiting to transport people to the location where Angkar had set. My family stopped to rest in front of the former Chroy Sdao agricultural center since my father was too exhausted and could not move on. There were militiamen who came to warn us to leave, but, seeing my father's condition, they left us alone. The crowd followed one another leaving from the location. Some of them went to Nikom Villager; some went to Kork Khmum, and some others went to Kien Kes Village. Only my family stayed at the location. The sun went down. We had no idea where to go, so we stayed at here for one more night. All of a sudden, my friend, Yi, walked toward me. We were friends since we were at Phsar Nimet, Kampong Long. He told me that he had asked the Tuol Kor Village chief to let my entire family stay at that village. We hurried to depart for the village. Tuol Kor Village was not far from Chroy Sdao Village. We walked as fast as my father could do. I helped him walk and carried some luggage. Soon, we arrived at Tuol Kor Village. The village was situated on a 30-meter hill; there was a canal across the center. On that hill, there were about 10 families, who were the evacuees from Chroy Sdao Village. The house was in linear setting, surrounding the hill border. In the center, there was a booth, serving several function, including cow booth, kitchen and meeting hall. Upon my family's arrival, the village chief asked us to stay in that booth.

We lived temporarily in the booth. Two or three days later, we moved to our own hut, located on a field. My children and I looked for wood, while my wife looked for hay to build this hut. We combined all the materials we could get to build this hut, which was in appropriate size to protect us from rain and sunlight. We adapted our lives as the other workers or peasants. They frequently were not friendly to us. We carefully performed the assigned tasks. We learned how to farm, build dam, dig canal, carry rice sack, filter rice, and transplant rice as others did. We had never performed such brand new tasks before; thus, it caused us unbearable exhaustion. Under the hot sun, we stayed in mud to perform hard labor; we could eat very little food and had no energy to walk. Pain filled our palms and legs. Later, the village chief allowed me to work in the kitchen. I got up to work at 3 am. I put on the fire to cook water gruel, i.e. a pan of water with five cans of rice. At 5 am, the workers came to have their gruel before leaving for work. They had the other one again in the evening. At that time, Angkar's principles were not so strict. We could look for other stuff to save us from hunger. Besides cooking, I also looked for firewood, carried water and cleaned the kitchen. The villagers ate their meals together at the eating hall. We no longer had our possessions, except old clothes, a plate and spoon. We put our new clothes into the mud in order to make them old, to avoid being too fancy. All the valuable belongings, such as jewelry, had to be hidden from Angkar. If Angkar found anything, they would confiscate it. They would take us to be re-educated. This depended on their decision. They could also accuse us of going against Angkar or not giving up the thoughts of feudalism. Our lives went on this way, in the hope of a better future. My father's health became better. He looked for the mild tasks in the village to perform. My two older children joined the children unit. My third daughter looked after her younger sibling in the collective hall.

By the end of August, I observed that my

father became thinner, and his legs were swollen. I had no ability to cure him under such circumstances. A few days later, he could no longer walk. He could only stay on a mat. On the night of September 3, 1975, one side of his leg got putrid. The pus came out until his leg remained only bone and skin. The next night, the same thing occurred on his other leg. It was 4 pm of September 4, 1975 when my father passed away.

Life in the cooperative

At the beginning of November, Angkar gathered around 100 families from small villages to live together in the cooperative, i.e. Snol Kaong Cooperative. Snol Kaong cooperative contained four villages, including Tuol Kor Village, Snol Kaong Village, Aur Prakeap Village, and Kork Pradak Village. All the four villages had three mutual eating halls. The eating halls were named after the worksite.

Living in Snol Kaong cooperative, my family members were tasked with different tasks. I worked at the social work center (hospital) and farmed. My wife made rice. My oldest son and my third daughter worked in children mobile unit. My fourth and fifth children were in small children unit. My sixth and seventh children were still very young. Both of them were left at the eating hall to be looked after by the elderly women. In the evening, my wife took them back home.

The meeting on daily living was conducted every evening after dinner. Such a meeting was held at a quiet place. One would admit his/her wrongdoing, causing the revolution to become weak. Those wrongdoings could be laziness, carelessness, or disobeying the instructions of the youths. Finally, one would ask his/her team members to remind him/her to behave well in serving the revolution by saying "[It] seemed like my back was covered with mud, so I could not see it. Thus, if comrades see it, please help me to remove it!" During the meeting, each member took turns to say this. The meeting ended when everyone had admitted wrong doing.

Then, they would return home. At night, one would always fear losing his/her life. If a spy came to take him/her at night, one would never be able to come back. The Spy unit was under the control of the cadre. At night, the spies walked toward their target to eavesdrop on the conversation in each villager's house. This was to spot the the villager who disobeyed the principles, both physically and verbally, stole food, complained about the living conditions or the assigned labor, or spoke ill of Angkar. Spies eavesdropped everywhere, under the house or near the walls. For they did not know how to farm. They could only invent planes.

Being accused because of trusting too much Angkar accused me. I befriended and trusted my neighbor, whose name was Saut, originally from Kampuchea Krom. I whispered to him: "Bear it! When our turn comes, they would see. The old said: "One man's loss is another man's gain."A few days later, the cooperative chief came to call me for a meeting. The meeting location was a quiet place, in the middle of a field. It was dark. Arriving there, I could see no one. I heard the cooperative chief order me to say out phrases in the normal meeting. I started: "I would like to pay my respect to comrades, beloved people, and all the cooperative members. All the wrongdoing that I have done to Angkar, comrades and everyone took place unintentionally as I was still foolish and could not give up everything. However, I will do my best to have discipline and follow the assignment of Angkar. I will do my best in completing three tons of rice per hectare, as set by Angkar's plan. Now, I have made mistakes. Yet, it was just like the mud on my back, so I did not realize it. Thus, I sincerely ask comrades and all the beloved people to help me correct it to enable me to be pure and continue serving the revolution." Saying this phrase, the deputy cooperative chief yelled at me: "How about the sentence, "One man's loss is another man's gain." you have mentioned that?" "I would like to pay my respects to the meeting. I did state this sentence. However, I said

this to motivate Puk Saut, for he always complained about the work. He said that Angkar mistreated him. He was aging, but Angkar still ordered him to do this and that. I always reminded him that he was formerly rich and looked down on the worker. Now, Angkar appointed the workers and peasants to lead the country. Thus, you should not be disappointed. It was just like the old saying: "One man's loss is another man's gain." I just said this much. He suddenly was mad at me and exclaimed that I was young, but why I dared to advise him? I dared to advise him because Angkar always educated us to correct our other comrade's mistakes. Correcting could let our revolution be successful. It was just what I said. If I committed any wrongdoing to Angkar, I beg Angkar to take me to be reeducated. From now on, I will no longer advise Put Saut." The chief said, "Comrade Eng (my name at that time)! You did not make any mistake, for you did your best to correct our comrade. You should keep up this good job." The cooperative chief announced the end of the meeting. When I returned home, my wife and two elderly women who were my neighbors nervously looked at me. They asked: "What happened? We were so frightened. Did Angkar blame you for anything?" I replied that Angkar did not blame me.

Being accused because of my children

One day, at the end of March 1978, there was a cruel event that happened to my fourth child, whose name was Youpea. Youpea was just 6 years old at that time. Youpea and other children who were in the same group were assigned by Angkar to collect cow dung along the field. Those children did not attentively follow the orders and offended Angkar's principles as they killed a rat and took it to grill for food. This action was seen by a spy chief, whose name was Pum. He was so furious and took those children to receive punishment. The punishment was so harsh. Those children were put into sacks, and the sacks were tightly tied. Being not able to breathe, some children fainted, while some others resisted

inside until they peed. Youpea was also in that children's crowd. At that time, there was a child who ran to tell me about this matter. I was filled with anger and could not control myself. I then grabbed a paddle and headed to that location to free my child from the sack, though I might have to fight. Half way there, a friend came to stop me and beg me to calm down. He advised me that if I did not stop, I, my family and the entire cooperative would be in trouble. Meanwhile, there was another friend came to tell me that Youpea was freed from the sack and was not in danger. To avoid being in trouble, I returned to the field. All my reactions were known by my cooperative chief. In the evening of that day, it was early evening, and the bell rang, alerting the cooperative members to attend the meeting at the north field. When everyone was there, a cadre came to give a speech on the correct path of Angkar.. After that cadre's speech ended, the female chief of the cooperative came to talk. That female chief whose name was comrade Yen was the wife of cooperative chief Than. Both of the spouses were notorious for being fierce. All the new people, newly evacuated from the distance and not the people who lived near the location, were always asked about their background. Whenever meeting them, one would be stared at as if they were the enemy. Both spouses did their best to find out people's mistake and reported them to their commander. At that moment, the female chief, Yen, asked for me in the meeting and said: "I heard that comrade was angry with Angkar for putting your child into the sack, is it right?" I responded: "I was not angry at Angkar because Angkar has a deep merit to me. Angkar liberated me from the American Imperialists. However, I pitied my child who was taken to be put into the sack until he fainted. This was because I have not given up my possessive mindset completely. I would end my word here." Later, comrade Yen threatened me that I had to confess my wrongdoing, i.e. anger at Angkar. I replied that I had admitted everything at the moment, and how could I admit

any other thing if I did not make any mistake? Comrade Yen responded to me that because I did not confess everything to Angkar, I was considered as disloyal to Angkar; I sat still. Comrade Yen threatened me to honestly and clearly confess everything again. Comrade Yen forced me to confess again. Seeing I had no reaction, Ta Tao made me to confess by saying: "The current Angkar is so powerful; you may do the confession, doctor!" As soon as Ta Tao ended his words, comrade Yen asked: "Who said that Angkar was so powerful, at the moment?" There was no response. The entire meeting participants remained silent. Thus, comrade Yen announced to end the meeting. Ta Tao was called away at night and disappeared. I was furious about the offense conducted against my child. I had given up everything, ranging from my dignity, property, social status, and freedom. Still, I could not give up on my wife and my children. That night, I could not sleep. I was thinking about a plan to escape from this cooperative.

After the tense meeting of comrade Yen, every single person in the cooperative, especially me, seemed to be under harsh tension. Everyone remained silent and sad. Everyone was afraid. I talked to myself in the next few days. If I escaped, would the Khmer Rouge mistreat my wife and children? Ta Tao, who did nothing wrong besides reminding me to confess my wrongdoing, was taken away by the Khmer Rouge. How about me? Being a former Lon Nol official, would Angkar forgive me? If I still had to die, why didn't I stand up and fight again? This would be better than staying still and waiting for death like others did previously. Indeed, fleeing to Thailand was the best way. In Thailand I could join the Free Khmer Forces and return to rescue my family.

Escape

ATwo days later, I was prepared to go. I realized when I came to my hut that from this evening on, I would permanently leave it. I went into the hut to check the belongings which I have prepared to take along with me. Knowing that everything was all

set I walked to the cow booth to take my children back home. I thanked the elder women for taking such good care of them before I took my children home. I realized that my wife would arrive home shortly, after her work at the rice mill. It was my last time to be with my children. I took them to bathe and put clothes on them. I told Chaty to look after Voly. I hurried to say goodbye to my children. I knew that I had to leave before my wife arrived to avoid my grief in front of her.

It was the fifteenth day of my journey. It was April 20, 1978. In the morning, I followed the animals' footprints as usual. I found a canal, cover by tree branches. It seemed like a road for people to crawl. Covered by the tree branches, the canal was so dark. I did my best to move forward. After a while, I could see light. Reaching the end of the canal, I saw a dead big tree on the ground. It connected one side of the lake to the other. The lake was small but deep I hurried to move onto that tree, heading to the other side of the lake. As soon as I reached the other side, it was night. I saw a hill, with a few fruit trees, in the front. It seemed like a farm and village. Nearby, there were banana trees, jackfruit trees, and coconut trees, which were burnt. There were no houses. Based on the view from that location, I knew clearly that I had entered Siam territory because the lake I had crossed was the border line between Thailand and Cambodia

Mr. Chea Seyha had been severely injured during his long, difficult journey out of Democratic Kampuchea. He was interned in a Thai Detention Center, Borey Ram. Eventually, a French Priest visited the detention center and arranged for him to be resettled as a refugee in France.

In 1980, Chea Seyha received word that his wife and their children had made it to Thailand. His family arrived in France in October, 1980.

Chea Seiha

THE BOOK OF MEMORY OF THOSE WHO DIED UNDER THE KHMER ROUGE



The Documentation Center of Cambodia is writing and compiling a book of records of names of those who died under the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 to 1979 and those who disappeared during the period, who are still not known by their relatives. It also includes a section for family tracing purposes.



DC-Cam already has in its database up to a million names of those who may have died under the Khmer Rouge. If you would like to have your relatives' names, who died under the Khmer Rouge or disappeared then, appearing in this book,

Please contact Vanthan.P Dara Tel: 012-846-526

Email: truthpdara@dccam.org

Website: www.dccam.org or www.cambodiatribunal.org





DC-Cam: #66, Preah Sihanouk Blvd, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Tel: (855) 23 211 875, Fax: (855) 23 210 358, Email:dccam@online.com.kh, Homepage: www.d.dccam.org.

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